All these fantastic cultures? Concepts of archaeological cultures, identity and ethnicity

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Discussions on the idea of archaeological cultures are as old as archaeological thoughts themselves are. The notion of “archaeological culture” has played – and still plays in many parts of the world – a central role in almost every archaeological work. It has been the only theoretical concept which was widely accepted, despite the usual lack of its definition, and used in archaeological reconstructions of the past. The ontological and epistemological nature of the concept of “archaeological culture”, and methods of its use (and misuse) in historical generalizations is a very important question not only when studying theoretical and general approaches but also in studies presenting problems connected with notions of particular “archaeological cultures”, especially those showing changing concepts and definitions, and revealing determinants of such changes. The concepts of cultures are consequently used in different contexts: as chronological descriptions, descriptions of finds, in popularizations terms, in diffuse terms. But here are hesitaters and rationalists among those who formulate the terms; today we also have the extremists, who wish to abolish the concept of culture. I shall discuss the concepts and the meanings of all those cultures, mentioned in the textbook of Polish prehistory, where 96 archaeological cultures with different names have been depicted as self-evident archaeological units.

KEY-WORDS: archaeology, archaeological, cultures, politics, identity.

“Knowledge cannot be gained without the ability to learn. The basis of culture is the ability to accumulate knowledge, receiving it from previous generations and handing it on to the next so that each new generation need not reinvent the toothbrush, wheel, or integral calculus. Communication between individuals is the cornerstone of any culturaledifice”. (L.L. Cavalli-Sforza and F. Cavalli-Sforza 1995)

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and definitions, and revealing determinants of such changes.

Archaeology today is a subject with a multiplicity of aspects, which is also its
strength – an enormous explosion during the last 30 years of ways of looking at
the past (Jennbert 1995:11; Kristiansen 1996). Our vision of “archaeological
cultures” has likewise been changed. Several strategies have been proposed with
respect to our understanding of concepts of archaeological culture in the past,
present and future. The proposals are as follows:

1. To change understanding of concepts of archaeological culture – with
a historical perspective, their history can be seen as a dictionary of dissimilarities
(Le Goff and Nora 1983; Le Goff 1992),

2. Critical analysis of distinguishing of archaeological cultures to absurdity,

3. To observe the confusion of conceptions: “archaeological culture”, “cul-
tural identity”, and “ethnicity”.

There are nowadays also archaeologists who intentionally avoid concepts of
cultures when interpreting material culture, the variety of phenomena, and behav-
iours during the past (Karsten 1994).

The prevailing interpretative frameworks in European archaeology over the
last 150 years suggest cyclical changes between the dominance of general evolu-
tionary explanations and culture-historical explanations in archaeology. This
suggests a wider world-historical regularity linked to cycles of hegemony and
cultural identity (Braudel 1972; Friedman 1989; Kristiansen 1996: fig. 4). The
identification of cyclical change is common to many of the schools of explanation
of cultural changes, constituting an important common ground between otherwise
conflicting theoretical approaches (Dark 1995:191).

Cultural identity is a process; peoples can change identities, groups can establish
identities (can identify themselves) with different social units; cultural identity is
therefore a concept of multi-culturalism in a global system. Decentralization of the
world system, and decrease of hegemony, fortifies cultural identity. Expansion of
hegemony is, on the other hand, related to the transition from a strong cultural
identity to its weaker forms and styles of life (Werbart 1996 in print b). These types of
cycles presumably existed during the greater part of prehistory. The specific process of
incorporation into a world-system can either promote uniformity of culture, or
diversification, depending on different social roles, and interregional interactions.
When groups of people have different roles in production or trade, differences can be heightened promoting ethnic differentiation (Wolf 1982; Knapp 1992b: 83ff.; Hall and Chase-Dunn 1995). The question of cultural identity is also to modify cultural distinctions, not only distinctions between insiders and “Others”, but the more reflexive way of thinking about differences – as a special kind of correlations.

WHO POSSESSES CULTURE?

Are we able to answer what the term “an archaeological culture” really means? Culture or society? Group or complex? Element or type? Style or focus? Today the term culture is usually used to stand for all ideological, social, artistic and economic aspects of a society. Before the 1970s, the term “archaeological culture” was generally used to mean archaeological assemblages recurring together at several sites, and supposed to be equivalent to population (Dark 1995: 200). How could an archaeological culture be defined if the distribution of different items in space were not correlated with each other?

Culture can occur as different systems of divided performances and meanings, or as a kind of a right order of things. Culture can likewise be interpreted as a variation of cultural “message systems”, a hierarchy of different constructions (Fletcher 1992: 47). Two different levels of meaning are involved in the concept of culture – a pattern of behaviour and pattern for behaviour (Keesing 1981: 68; Hanlon and Johansson 1995: 8). In the first meaning culture aimed at phenomena where things and occurrences composed a reflection of a system of ideas; the second meaning of culture aimed at an organized system of knowledge and beliefs, in which an individual creates her/his observations and experiences, and works out their actions. In the first meaning of culture the result was a socio-cultural system, in the second meaning – an ideological system. Culture as a pattern of behaviour corresponds to the archaeological relics, and culture as a pattern for behaviour corresponds to those categories in a culture which are used to be guided in the world around, and to create structure; culture is a way to comprehend and interpret the world. There is a major difference between the concepts of culture which looks upon culture as something outside the human being and that which looks at it as something from within the human being, i.e. between the adaptive and the normative concept (Åkerlund 1996: 23). Culture may also refer to everything that is important in life – “tradition-mediated culture, the ever-changing norms and rules that a group of people used to build a way of life and a form of co-operation in a common physical environment” (Welinder 1993: 51).

Culture is understood, in the context of the “Annales” school, as a system of certain psychological and mental conditions of human behaviour, which exist in a given society at a given period, including habits of mind, and articulation of the
world (Gurevich 1992: 144, Knapp 1990, 1992a, 1992b). To place archaeology in its dialectic context with the “Annales” viewpoint is to test interrelations between social structure and human action. It is difficult to relate our own ideas about the past to ideas actually held in the past. “To inherit the past is also to transform it” (Lowenthal 1985: 412; Knapp 1992a: 1ff.). Time is, according to “Annales”, a process, of long duration and changeable, and not linear; archaeologists tend quite to often to use time as a metaphor (Foucault 1972: 6; Knapp 1992a: 13). The Annalists wanted to construct a total history, attractive also for archaeologists, there the understanding of social, political and economic structures such as power, dominance, conflict, exchange and other activities, played an important role. “What can, consequently, archaeologists learn from the Annalists”, asked Sherratt (1992: 138). He claims, that archaeologists are not good enough to work globally, on a large scale, and to be able to connect archaeology, social anthropology and history. There are a few archaeologists who are interested in anything else other than only European and agrarian issues. There are a few exceptions, like Bernal who pointed out that influences of the Oriental and Afro-Asiatic (North African and Semitic) cultures on European history have been denied and ignored. Another example might be Knapp, who described the Late Bronze Age archaeology in the Levant as a microcosmos of interactions between local changes and influences from Egypt, or Liverani, who described the eruption of the Arameans in the Levant at the end of the Bronze Age as a social concept of ethnicity and ideology within a particular socio-political context (Bernal 1987; Knapp 1992a; Liverani 1987: 69ff.; Sherratt 1992: 140). The thesis about the heterogeneity of cultures holds together with a view of history as a dictionary of dissimilarities, a history of many senses, which must be revisited all the time, a deep ethical-humanistic motive for the historical science (Habermas 1987: 59; Le Goff 1988: 90ff.; Veyne 1988: 145).

Such an interpretation of culture can be connected with the answer to the question “Who possesses culture”? According to the social-anthropological concept of culture, free of value judgments, it is a quality pertaining to every woman, man, child, and society. The view of the history of mentality on the potential of material cultures for studying conceptions and attitudes is a positive starting-point. The critics of history of mentality means, that the concept presuppose a simplified view of “culture”; every individual’s relation to culture is certainly unique.

CULTURE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Identity-culture-cultural identity or “ethnicity” – is there a common denominator and signification or meaning for all these concepts? That the cultural variations are globally very comprehensive must signify that cultures are not only passive
responses to external circumstances (Rudebeck 1996). Identity can be in some way chosen, i.e. the identity of the individual exists prior to and external to her/his membership in a social, or cultural group (Friedman 1992a:365). Ethnicity is a very different form of cultural identity. Ethnic affiliation can easily be changed by geographic mobility or by change in reference. The forms of cultural identity as a global structure are different in different systems: in kinship, in archaic states, or in modern social systems (Barth 1969; Friedman 1992a:351ff, 1992b). Ethnicity must be separated from the regional variations, and be linked up with a self-conscious identification with particular social group; if one defines ethnicity in this way, prehistoric archaeology is in a difficult situation. Spatial variations always exist, but ethnicity is a specific and occasional product or phenomenon (Smith 1986:45; Shennan 1994:17).

The construction of identity in relation to cultural creativity involves local social and individual mechanisms. To rethink the notion and future of culture is also to consider the active process of cultural constitution, a process in which positional identity plays a crucial role (Friedman 1992a:351, 1992b, 1995). The relations between culture and identity is particularly interesting in multi-society systems. The common denominator for the Khazar khaganate and the “Saltovo-Majaki culture”, for example, is the pluralism of the social structures and economy, and the multidimensional character of cultural identity (Werbart 1996). The interpretation of Khazarian material culture, coinage and art have often been made in terms of “ethnicity”, making a distinction between different types of material culture and “peoples”. However, the cultural identity, the multiplicity of the society, the “ethnic” heterogeneity, and the cultural influences are, in most cases, not translated to the material culture, to the grave forms or objects (Werbart 1996:212). Bálint, in his discussion about the Avars, Khazars, and the Slavic finds in Hungary, Bulgaria, and the rest of southeastern Europe, emphasized that it is not possible to distinguish “pan-Slavonic” types of objects as “ethnospecific”, such as S-ended temple rings; this kind of find occurs in a gigantic area within the central European territory (Bálint 1994:192ff.). Many European medieval archaeologists not only connect certain objects with archaeological “cultures”, but also like to interpret them as “ethnospecific”. In spite of many claims to the contrary, no single object is “ethnospecific” as such. Different types of jewellery, belts, mounts, etc., can, perhaps, demonstrate the change of fashion, but not ethnic diversity.

The increasing globalization and multiplicity of the world likewise prompts questions of cultural identity and about belonging to extremes: Who are we, if we cannot see the “Others”? Who is the “Other”? The “Others” are different, mysterious and often dangerous. The “Others” can today be (for instance in the Swedish mass media) skin-heads, Bosnians, “Hell’s Angels”, or bank workers with a golden handshake. Tensions between “us” and the “Others” can only be understood in
a historical perspective, within different state organizations, religions and cultures. Refugees, foreigners, immigrants, minorities are not a new phenomenon, these concepts are as old as the history of humanity.

The traditional archaeological truism to define a complex of pottery and metal objects — "La Tène" — with the presumable spreading of Celts in Europe, is founded on confidence in diversified written sources; in the Roman and Greek documents are "Celts" ("Gallians" or keltoi) a distinct group of people, separated from Scyths in the East and Iberians in the West (Bekker-Nielsen et al 1989: 10f). Relations between Celts and Romans, and Germans and Romans show an overlap between Celtic and Germanic exchanges (Fitzpatrick 1993: 233). At the risk of applying ethnic labels uncritically, the terms "Celts" or "Romans" was used here with the cognition, that it is these peoples and the ways in which they defined themselves and "Others" who are the subject of our studies (op. cit.). Like any delineated and labelled ethnic or cultural grouping, however, Celts are a contingent, multilayered cultural construct. This construct simply reproduces the British Iron Age as an always-already-ahistoric romantic image (Piccini 1996: 87).

To believe that we cannot be mixed with the "Others" without conflict, because we are so fundamental different from them, is a form of cultural fundamentalism. Different people are undoubtedly ascribed to various cultures, with different ways to understand and value our estimations. This cultural fundamentalism is one of elementary components in the wave of nationalism throughout Europe and other parts of the world. Every discussion on multi-culturalism implicates constructions of the "Others" (Jonsson 1995).

The multi-cultural society, as it is presented in the culture-pluralistic rhetoric, is in many ways an unspecified quantity. "Ethnicity is voluntary, it can work more or less like a wardrobe" (Waters 1990: 147ff). The social network may be just as important in describing ethnicity as material culture, since material culture can be shared by several groups (Hill 1994: 240).

The Norwegian archaeologist Brit Solli has at many congresses during the last two years proclaimed that roots have no feet (Solli 1996). The question of roots touch not only geography, but also biography, diaspora-sation ("the digatal diasporas") and affiliation relations. During the 1980s, the age of "roots", discussions about identity were centred on multi-culturalism, increased "ethnification", nationalism, and differences between culture, identity and ethnicity. "Identity" should be, according to the most recent opinions of social anthropologists, replaced with the verb "identification" (or ethnification). So-called "culture meetings" do not exist — culture is an abstract, it is peoples which meet. Culture is a form of social relations, a way to signal how the social space is organized. "Ethnicity" is consequently a social identity with a cultural meaning. Ethnic identity has been politicized too much; therefore discussions have been instead centred on cultural
identity (Werbart 1996 in print b). But what is the difference between ethnic and cultural identity? C. Renfrew stressed “The perversion of ethnicity is the curse of our century”, and without the intention to re-define the critical questions of cultural identity and/or ethnicity, myths about “archaeological cultures” can only be continued (Renfrew 1995: 171).

“Cultures” as a way to classify geographical variations in the archaeological material can be only positive for the purpose of summing up geographical variations; however, such classification cannot be convenient to analysis. Neither can “cultures” be regarded as real historical units; in the same way as “society” within sociology is not a genuine unit (Mann 1986; Shennan 1994). Archaeologist’s ideas about types of groupings and classifications have often been misused for political interests (Ucko 1987, 1989; Durrans 1994; Shennan 1994 op.cit.). Cultural influences on the constructed archaeological map can be shown by arrows, which may point in one or another direction, depending on whether the archaeologist is, for instance, from Poland or Germany; one’s own attitude determines how one looks on the world, even the prehistoric world. Cultural identity, perhaps more than other elements of society, is a mental construct, an attitude or state of mind. Studies of identity, of many possible kinds including ethnic identity, are studies of possible patterns in archaeological records; certain spatial patterns in the Viking colonial structures in, for example, Iceland, can be interpreted as acts of identity. But it is much more difficult to answer the question whether or not it is ethnic identity (Price 1994: 64). The past however has been a reality, where people produced the material we study (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Shennan 1994: 1).

Through studying coexisting cultures with significant cultural variations, and interactions between them, one can conclude multiplicity and multi-culturalism. Inter-ethnic combination is a recipe for successful multi-culturalism. A homogenous cultural identity does not exist. At the same time it is necessary to be sensible of a certain trivializing of multi-culturalism as a kind smörgåsbord (hors d’oeuvre) of different cultures (Galtung 1993; Moussa 1993; Werbart 1996 in print b). “Ethnic” or cultural identity changes through geographic mobility. Cultural identity is something which individuals have, and is different from their social position. Different cultural groups are integrated in larger units in the form of a mosaic – our modern world system.

The question of ethnicity is highly controversial in contemporary archaeology. Indigeneous and nationalist claims to territory, often rely on reconstructions of the past based on the traditional identification of “cultures” from archaeological remains. However, many argue that such associations of remains with past ethnic groups is hopelessly inadequate. There is a need for a reassessment of the ways in which social groups are identified in the archaeological record, but with a comprehensive and critical synthesis of recent theories of ethnicity in the human sciences.
There are emotional and practical/objective aspects of ethnicity. It is namely impossible to "make" an ethnic group from nothing. Donald Horowitz, Professor of Law and Political Science in Duke University, North Carolina, has discussed the key words irredentals and secessions, e.g., forced community within permanent boundaries – for instance ex-Yugoslavia (Horowitz 1993). He writes that separatism is not a solution of ethnic conflicts. In his book about ethnic conflicts D. Horowitz discuss the strong motive power, which exists in ethnicity and nationalism – likewise in the genesis of distinct groups (Horowitz 1985). Many have assumed that a state has only one nation, however Horowitz discounts the ethnic notion of different states, a state can contain many ethnic groups. At the same time, for instance, the present day historical development in East Europe, shows that territorially distinct ethnic groups have a tendency to wish to create their own state, and that the boundary between nation and ethnic group becomes neutralized (Wallerstein 1974, 1982, 1991:83; Friedman 1992b; Ekholm Friedman et al. 1994:8).

A fundamentally different view of ethnicity is a view of cultural identity as a complex dynamic form of identification. This view requires radical changes in archaeological analysis and interpretation (Jones 1996; Werbart 1996 in print b). Recent archaeological investigations in Podlasie in Poland – a current, substantial, multi-period area research project – have, for instance, shown that one possible form of inter-group contacts might have been the intermixing of cultural influences. This model of "fuzzy cultures" as a model of the cultural relationships in a zone of cultural contact should be more widely applied in the interpretation of archaeological materials from other parts of Europe as an alternative to the model of clear "ethno-cultural" frontiers (Barford et al. 1991:157).

The endless debates on the nature of archaeological cultures, on the homelands and genesis of various "ethnic" groups, on the deepness of their roots in modern territories, were characterized of the narrowness of vision, and have become compromised. There is no reality and objectivity in studies of "ethnogenesis". Why was the problem of "ethnogenesis" so overdimensioned in archaeological research in the former Soviet Union? The reasons were ethnopolitical rather than academic, an uncritical co-operation of ethno-cultural paradigm, and "open nationalistic view" (Shnirelman 1995c, 1996).

Archaeologists and historians can no longer accept the ethnic categories, exposed in the historical sources as presentations of real homogeneous ethnic units – in this case we can talk about the tyranny of "ethnicity". An ethnic group like "Slavs", "Balts" or "Germans" is not an archaeological culture.

The rise of nationalism in the post-communist Eastern Europe and its academic use by different political groups has resulted in the production of many popular archaeological and historical publications on the early history, origins of
the nation and clear-cut identities research; for example, theories on the Gothic or Iranian origins of the Croats, the "proto-Etruscan" or Etruscan origin of the Late Neolithic Vinča pottery, the Alanic origin of the archaeological cultures of Dagestan (Berlizov and Kaminskij 1993:94ff.; Slapšak 1993:193). The socio-political role for archaeology as stressed by post-modernists is, according to Slapšak unrealistic when faced with dramatic political changes, war and aggressive nationalism (Slapšak 1993:194). The modern "ethnic revival" (neo-nationalism and the ideas about cultural units) should, however, be separated from unreflecting continuity of Kossinna's position in European archaeology. Friedman connected the phenomenon of the newly awakened interest for cultural identity with general culture trends, which must be seen in a global scale and with the economical reasons (Friedman 1989).

No relations existed between ethnic group and archaeological culture; these concepts can be variable expressions of identity, power, politics, gender, or of more complex phenomenon. The intellectual and political context of the concept of "archaeological culture" was often interpreted with its link with cultural identity. The cultural identity can be expressed as a conglomerate of different cultural manifestations in different societies (Shnirelman 1993b, 1993a, 1995c; Werbart 1994b, 1994c, 1995, 1996, 1996 in print b). The material culture indicated that people constantly renewed and improved their knowledge. Therefore the material culture can contribute to a continuous redefining of the concept of cultural identity. However, the cultural identity, the multiplicity of the society, the "ethnic" heterogeneity, and the cultural influences are, in most cases, not translated to the material culture, to objects or grave forms. Ethnic boundaries are not determined and rigid. The parameters of ethnicity penetrate all aspects of life. Cultural identity between distinct groups are strong or weak depending on degree of the geographic closeness or distance between these groups, language, religious beliefs, attitude to food, etc.

The aim in discussions on cultural identity or "ethnicity" of both social anthropologists and archaeologists today should be to avoid monolithic classifications and divisions. This monolithic classification is our own concept of society and state. The dominance of western culture led to marginalization of other cultures and life styles, which has caused a cultural and cognitive destitution, the so-called TINA-syndrome – an inability to think in alternative ways (TINA = There Is No Alternative). What archaeologists can learn from the Annalists is, that contacts between history, anthropology and archaeology are very necessary, likewise to discuss the problems on a global scale (Sherratt 1992:135ff.; Olsson 1995).

The studies of prehistoric, historic and modern migrations have created a complex picture of past and modern migrations. The archaeological implications of
investigating prehistoric migrations suggest that the material culture in the area of
destination is the same as in the area of origin; only in some cases is there evidence
for internal migrations (Burmeister 1993). If the migrated population assimilated
quickly, there might not be much left of their own culture. In these cases there is
no evidence of migration. The culture of origin must at least in some ways be
preserved (Burmeister 1993). However, still during the 1990s, archaeologists con-
ected “ethnocultural units” as “identical with the culture”, for example in the
description of nomadic Cumanians in Hungary in the 13–14th centuries (Pálóczi-
Horváth 1994:291). Many references in both the Rigveda and Avesta show, for
example, that the issue of “Aryans” in India was not only the question of ethnicity
and culture, and that they were a small select social group, and not a numerous
people. In the Nazi view the German people constituted a pure aryan race, and
they occupied the highest place among the aryans. But speakers of the same
language may not belong to the same “racial” or ethnic stock. As a dominant
social group in India they seem to have given their name to the wider community
and the territory to which they belonged. The aryan therefore came to denote
a linguistic and cultural community (Poliakov 1974; Sharma 1993:36).

Ethno-archaeology has been, for example, discrete from archaeology through
its inter-cultural and inter-chronological analogies. Different types of inter-group
relations are much more interesting than the force of empirical evidence. Maybe
it is possible to recognize the capacity of the single ethnic group to function as an
“ideological umbrella” facilitating the symbiosis of differentiated social groups of
other orders – castes, classes, gender- or age-groups – within an ordered commu-

POLITICS OF IDENTITY

That Bloch took an active part in the French resistance movement, and
sacrificed his life for it in 1944, did not conflict with his vision of history:

“An objective, neutral historical science is not at all possible: historians must regard history
from his present standpoint, and this standpoint must inversely be understood against the
background of history, e.g. we must both understand the past from present times and present
times from the past...” (Bloch 1941).

The most sophisticated politics of identity applies this culture theory, which
was imported from France since the 1960s with Michel Foucault and Jaques
Derrida with their critique of the ethnocentric philosophy’s totalitarian language
(Foucault 1972; Yates 1992:206ff.); during the 1990s it applies Julia Kristeva’s
critique of euroucentrism. These minorities which adopted the politics of identity,
assumed that it is the white, European, and male culture which owns hegemony, in the historical way, and which has shaped the character of education (Kristeva 1991). Multi-culturalism and pluralism are, however, not “modern” any more, according to the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1995). Both the Right and the Left talk today about the differences, claims Bauman; there are mini-Berlin walls in our daily-life, which we create just to distance us from “strangers”.

The Derridas-Foucault confrontation – to read the past in the material remains of human culture – was an unique situation in post-structuralism; archaeology, the aim of which was to reconstruct, has been undermined by deconstruction (Maley 1990: 74). Deconstructionism and culture relativism were regarded as something positive in the post-processual archaeology. But a complete relativism can lead to nihilism and to totally denying, for instance of the historical facts. Cultural relativism can be, for instance, compared with the so-called new-revisionism, denying the historical facts from World War II. The Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen represents, in my opinion, an extreme cultural relativism. He strives for culture relativism and dialogic democracy, and exhorted the intellectuals to be careful and to not conduce to the increasing of the culture conflicts in the world: “In a dialogic democracy it is namely necessary to acknowledge fundamentalists the right to be fundamentalists, and to achieve the fusion of horizons, both parties must give and take: they must try to put themselves in the situation of each other” (Eriksen 1995a). His standpoint has been strongly criticized by Swedish social anthropologists with a debate contribution: “Should science also be tactical?” (Ekhholm, Friedman and Friedman 1995). Eriksen defended, consequently, a dialogic democracy against ignorance. While I think he is correct, I cannot support any form of fundamentalism, which is not synonymous with a democratic view of life, but it can, quite the contrary, be seen as an apotheosis of a dictatorial language. Academic freedom is not justification to declare just everything; theoretically, it can start a civil war (Gellner 1983, 1987; Mogren 1995: 87; Werbart 1996 in print b). The facts about history have been distorted in the name of academic freedom, and the congress forum has been, for instance, often used to spread racist doctrines.

Still, at the end of the 1990s, racist doctrines can be used to support national unity or to legitimate aggression and war: e.g., Bosnia, Chechenia. A frightening example of the success of anti-democratic tendencies was the political tumult at the World Archaeological Congress-3 (WAC) in New Delhi in 1994, where a totalitarian and anti-democratic way to stop debate dominated, in spite of the fact that majority of the delegates recommended open discussions about Ayodhya in the name of academic freedom (Mandal 1994; Colley 1995; Eriksen 1995b; Myrdal-Runebjer and Mogren 1995; Werbart 1996 in print a, 1996 in print c). Madal’s book of 1994 about Ayodye is a powerful defence of archaeology against its
political misuse (Mandal 1994). The differences of opinions about archaeological science don’t, however, always need to be misused; different apprehensions about the skeletal remains of Australian Aborigines, for instance, resulted in a compromise (Pardoe 1992:132 ff.) To involve a whole world of minorities in a presentation of one country’s past is today a matter of course in, for example, Australia (Creamer 1994:138). Indigenous peoples all over the world are separated from their modernized neighbours through the possession of a strong sense of direction, and other views of the past, views seldom included in site management. The cover of Ucko’s book from 1987 show a photography of a Quechua Indian from Ecuador and a Saami girl from Finland in a bus on the way to Stonehenge (Ucko 1987), and indicate the WAC’s idealism: ancient monuments, science and solidarity across the political boundaries. But is it always true?

All knowledge has its consequences, no archaeological investigation is apolitical, but it does not mean that the archaeological practice is the same as political practice. History is ambiguous, you can take which moral or political lesson you want, because practically everything has happened in the past; in that way the history is misused in major parts of the world, indicate, and rightly so, the previous mentioned social anthropologists Eriksen: “Since the history is mediated as moral stories, there are today still Serbs who are furious because of the battle in Kosovo in 1389” (Eriksen 1995b).

Irrespective of the results of studies on different prehistoric monuments (as Ayodhya), nowadays the problems must be solved from the modern requirements. Rhys Jones and Colin Renfrew asked, like many other delegates during the WAC-3 (Myrdal-Runebjer and Mogren 1991): “would we, with our intellectual honour intact, have accepted to keep silent about the Crystal Night with its destruction of Jewish culture, if an archaeological congress with a session Heritage, conservation, management and protection had been held in Germany in 1938 – because some of our German colleagues ‘gave us to understand’ that it was inopportune and dangerous to discuss this subject in Germany?”

At the presentation and intermediating of the past on museums or in popular statements, such social dimensions as class, gender, ethnicity or specific symbolical meanings in the material culture, have often been neglected (Jones and Pay 1994:166). Archaeology on the pages of National Geographic Magazine or the TV programme about meetings with indigenous peoples often show legitimization of asymmetrical social relations, and prejudices about ethnicity and gender. Gender is one of many aspects of social identity, including division of labour, profession, ethnicity, age, religion, class and social status (see i.e. Gero and Root 1994:34; Gilchrist 1994). The exhibitions of American archaeology show all too often the eurocentric view, there the non-western elements have been marginalized; no balance is achieved and no pluralism is shown in ethnic representation. Similar
problems have lately been observed in Sweden; an actions programme for archaeological and historical museums: "Knowledge as strength" has been created for the purpose to work against racism through a reflective and a more balanced image of the past (Blakey 1994: 44; Lundström and Pilvesmaa 1996). For, in spite of opposite opinions, archaeologists can, to a certain degree through different ways of acting, influence the fundamental perspective of archaeology, and maybe we have a moral obligation to act in the society according to our convictions; tomorrow archaeology can give important contributions to questions about human beings and time (Callmer 1995: 42).

The incidents in India, Kashmir, Chechenia, and Bosnia can show how modern war and misuse of political ideologies have influenced the humanistic sciences. The Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian cultural heritage, archaeological objects, and museums, which have in the last few years been supported by international protection of Cultural Heritage and UNESCO, have been destroyed and devastated through acts of war. The war in ex-Jugoslavia is therefore an instance where the existing conventions are not always effective protection, not even for the archaeological sites and museums known all over the world (Krigin 1994: 154). But why worry at all about the destroyed temples, objects of culture, and bridges, when people were being killed every day? What role can archaeology or the archaeological society play in the war? The European Association of Archaeologists was constituted 1993. “Why do we need a EAA?” asked Michael Rowlands in the “Journal of European Archaeology”. Any history and prehistory that stresses holistic and unifying trends, and processes to make European identity possible, suppresses another, the “Old Europe” of differences and xenofobia, war, and expansionsim. Within a territorially defined Europe we have great disagreements as to what constitutes Europe or an archaeology in Europe (Rowlands 1995: 176).

Such incidents (as mentioned above) are rather associated with World War II than with the 1990s. Exhibits in the Archaeological and Ethnographical museum in Łódź, Poland, for instance, were used during the German occupation 1939–1945 for political purposes: an urn with ancient symbolism in the shape of a swastika was exposed in the main exhibition case as a evidence for the proto-Germanic character of Central Poland. Slavonic artefacts were hidden or destroyed. The archaeological SS activity within the Ahnenerbe, an organization created by Himmler in 1935, engaged in excavations to indicate the Germanentum (Germanic-ness), in, for instance Haithabu, Biskupin, Hohen-Michele, Alt-Christburg etc. It also engaged in plundering, during the years 1942–43 H. Jankuhn commanded SS-Sonderkommando in Russia with the aim of “transfer” of prehistoric material from southern Russia and the Caucasus to German museums (Jankuhn 1938, 1949; Kater 1974: 149; Andriolo 1979: 133ff.; Arnold 1990: 468ff.; McCann 1994: 78ff.; Mikolajczyk 1994: 25ff.; Menander 1996: 15). Archaeological excavations carried out by the SS in
Biskupin during 1940–1942 resulted in the re-interpretation of the role of Biskupin, which was presented as an outpost of "German expansion" (Schleif 1942: 43ff.; McCann 1994: 84).

German archaeologists still accept the importance of the concept of archaeological "cultures" as a reality, however, they do not want to regard them other than strictly archaeologically. It is not surprising, that question such as ethnicity and multi-culturalism have been rejected (Gebühr 1987; Veit 1994: 35ff.). The ethnic interpretation of archaeological culture has been linked with the name of Gustaf Kossinna, the so-called "Kossinna-syndrome" (Smolla 1980: 1ff; Veit op. cit.; Werbart 1994c). In many biographies of Kossinna's life and works, he is described as a nationalist, one who equates "Culture" with "Ethnicity"; however, some made a point of accentuating his merits (Schwerin von Krosigk 1982). It is, however, worthy of emphasis, that he was not the first and not the only archaeological nationalist, almost all North European (German and Scandinavian) archaeologists were nationalists. His correspondence with such North European archaeologists as Montelius, Almgren, Aberg, Müller and Kostrzewski etc., touched on the relations of archaeological cultures to "ethnic" groups and nations. Archaeologists from other nations, such as Poland and Russia were also at this time putting ethnic identities on archaeological data (Smolla 1980: 8; Schwerin von Krosigk 1982: 13ff.). For them "archaeological cultures" became, as for Childe, a quasi-ideology, a substitute for the term "ethnic unit". The projection of current ethnic groups into the past, precisely what Kossinna achieved when he developed "culture" concepts, still happens. The same method has been used to explore the definition of ethnic groups in the Yunnan area in China, about 500–100 BC (Wang 1994: 193ff.). Archaeological science is therefore never unpolitical or neutral, because it can easily be converted to a myth, according to Veit (1994: 42).

Archaeologists have a great responsibility for popularizing the subject in such a way, such that it never shall be misused in political purposes. Historically, it has been shown, that interest in archaeology follows fluctuations of society. Even if intermediation of archaeology is not racist or nationalistic by itself, it can after all promote a condition for growth of racist ideology and race discrimination (Welinder 1994: 204). A politically and economically unstable society uses facts and science differently from a more stable society. It is in this context that the misuse of archaeology can be studied. Misuse cannot be buried in silence. A fruitful attitude is to consider fluidity and variability of all groups and identities, and to insist that all history, either written or narrated by archaeologists, religious organizations or groups in the Fourth World, should be open for criticism and exposure. Interpretation of the past is always an active action (Kristiansen 1993; Werbart 1996 in print a; 1996 in print c). Rulers and oppressed, majority and minority, people and élite – are all very different in their interpretation of the past.
Whose past is it? We all make the past and interpret it differently, dependent on our class, ethnicity, age, gender and other factors too. The politics of the past is not a trivial academic game; it is an integral part of every human beings’ heartfelt searching after identity and autonomy. Oppressed societies and nations especially look particularly intensively for mythical and glorified prehistory and history (Lowenthal 1985; 1994: 304ff.; Shnirelman 1996).

That memory and cultural identity are coherent, was pointed out earlier. The cultural identities, which did not leave any written documents after themselves, find it more difficult to keep and celebrate the memory, and to assert themselves in modern society. The Romany people’s (Gypsies) past in early Europe is undocumented in written records, in spite of the fact that five million Romany people live in Europe. Romany people have been objects of prejudice and discrimination, and misinterpretation in every European country; until today they have always been “Others”, without territorial, economic or political rights. In societies, those human beings which are refused by others their identities, they spin the weave of identity by themself. During the 1990s discrimination and violence against Romany people intensified mostly in Eastern and Central Europe. Only in 1994 was the IGF, International Gypsy Federation, constituted.

The new image of nationality and ethnicity has also influenced Saami history. It was assumed previously that the Saami came wandering to the area where they still live with their culture “ready developed”. According to this conception these people, who came to Norrbotten from the South, were of course tall and blond Swedish. Now it is instead meant that the Saami culture arose around the beginning of the 1st century, through mixing of elements from many of these people who moved in the Arctic area – Nordkalotten. Historians have hardly begun to credit the idea that the Saamis may have a long history in Scandinavia. Zachrisson stressed that the concept of “borders” through northern Scandinavia from east to west is dangerous to use. Today’s view is that Saami ethnicity is something which emerges gradually through contacts and co-operation with others. The opposing interpretation of the Saami prehistory and history and the archaeological records connected with this problem, is an example of the way in which archaeology is politically used for different purposes (Zachrisson 1995: 363f.). The Saami culture arose from culture contacts – and the Norrbothenian farming culture was as well a mixed culture, constructed on the elements from both the East and South (Wallerström 1993). When one as Wallerström dissolves the nationalistic categories, a new image of history appears. It is senseless in this jumble of cultures and mixtures of peoples to argue about “who was the first” (Lundström 1993). Norrbotten and Lappland should therefore play an important role in the Swedish debate on linguistic and cultural integration and specific nature.

Likewise the Ancient Middle East was a melting pot, the birth-place of new ethnicities and new languages, which later spread over vast areas in the old world.
Dolukhanov, an expert in environmental archaeology of the ex-Soviet Union discusses the socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic processes in the Ancient Middle East. He suggests that the emergence of new ethnicities and new languages primarily resulted from the adaptation to changing ecological and social environment and never included large-scale migrations (Dolukhanov 1994a). He regarded “ethnicity” in terms of population units, a consequence of the spreading of productive activities, and a specific environment, patterns in social and economical relations, in culture, language, rituals, behaviour models, and in symbolism. Concepts of archaeological culture are, however, inadequate, which can be shown, for instance, by the multivariate analysis of Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic stone artifacts (Dolukhanov 1994a, 1994b).

CONCEPTS OF CULTURE

Concepts of culture can occur in different contexts. There exists enormous pluralism of opinions concerning the concept of cultures, for example, Neolithic cultures (Werbart 1994a). To distinguish an archaeological culture like a “real” existing culture system involves not only issues of definition, but also of identification (Czerniak and Kośko 1988; Gurevich 1992). Between the 1970s–1990s researchers could not agree upon the economic, ceramic or others aspects of the identifying features of some kind of Neolithic cultures and sometimes referred to them as “Subneolithic”, sometimes as “Paraneolithic”, and in some cases as “Ceramic Mesolithic”. All these terms, also including the cultural context, are incomplete, although they do contain information about the prehistoric past, which was real. There seems to be an almost paranoid necessity to constantly construct new terms.... Consequently, what (apart from total confusion) do the terms “Neolithic”, “Ceramic Mesolithic”, “Submesolithic”, “Subneolithic”, “Paraneolithic”, “Protoneolithic”, “Epimesolithic” mean?

Archaeologists often understand “culture” as a patchwork quilt of different phenomena and objects. Culture itself is, however, a very complex phenomenon. The archaeological labelling concepts of cultures with a drastic example of Kulturkreislehre has been transmitted to some more flexible functionalism. The complex phenomenon of cultural requirements can also be composed on economic, political, ritual, social or psychological considerations, the requirements of ritual and time (Bradley 1991: 211; Werbart 1994a: 212).

The desire to avoid labelling is particularly justified when we observe the 36 (!) different names of similar, related or quite identical fishing-foragers cultures within the circum-Baltic region during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC (see Werbart 1994a: Table 2, s. 214). The concepts of cultures are consequently used in different contexts: as chronological descriptions, descriptions of finds, in popularization
terms, in diffuse terms. But there are hesitaters and rationalists among those who formulate the terms; today we also have the extremists, who wish to abolish the concept of culture. In contexts like the “Pitted Ware Culture” or “Combed Pottery Culture” the concepts of cultures were always used in the traditional way, without adequate grounds, and only as assemblages of artefacts that occur together in settlements and in graves. The content of the culture defined in this way is quite hollow, and archaeologists talk about the “Combed Pottery Culture”, “Pitted Ware Culture” or “Comb-Pitted Pottery Culture”, being in the same way, perfectionists in labelling these unknown structures in our “rational” way. How are we to explain the total confusion in the meanings and concepts of cultures? And why at all talk about “Pitted Ware Culture”, when we can instead discuss different traditions, social structures, distinct strategies, variations and mobility within a geographic territory during a given time?

The majority of archaeologists, who work with “Neolithic cultures” do not investigate the concept of culture (see for instance Åkerlund 1996). What does the term ‘archaeological culture’ mean? An archaeological culture or archaeological (prehistoric) society, group or complex, element or type, style and focus? Different taxonomic unities, which are distinguished intuitively or by numerical methods, do not need to reflect different culture systems, but, however, can reflect quite different non-cultural interactions. De facto, it is very difficult to refer to a phenomenon as an archaeological society, where the term culture should not be incorporated.

It has been pointed out many times that the concept “archaeological culture” is a hopeless unsatisfying way to divide the world (Shennan 1994). Analysis of style, identity and variation show that the spatial variations always existed, but “ethnicity” is specific and coincident phenomenon, the product of special situations, a manifestation of group identity. One of the motives to refrain from the idea about archaeological “cultures” is, that the variations depended on distinct factors: different people in different places had different ideas about how to do and use things (Geary 1983: 16; James 1989; Shennan 1994: 12).

Medieval historians for example often started from a misleading conception, that ethnicity or the identity of different ethnic groups was a reflection of an objective people from the past. Patrick Geary regarded for instance “ethnicity” as a situational construction in the early Medieval Period in Europe; in his dissertation about the Langobards during the 8th century, ethnicity is equal to landowning and territorial organization (Geary 1988). According to Geary, the people defined themselves ethnically during the Migration Period, when the specific situations and reasons demanded it, particularly in a political context. “Ethnicity, as defined above, does not exist outside the orbit of early states” (Geary 1983; Shennan 1994: 17). To link up with distinct political groupings, the people defined themself as Visigoths, Franks, Vandals or Romans; they could surely belong at the same time to many different ethnic groups.
The ethnicity was chosen according to situation; ethnicity does not create, consequently, political conflicts, on the contrary, ethnicity was created as a result of conflicts (Harrison 1994: 7). We do not know after all what was considered with an ethnic term in various kingdoms. To argue for instance about Langobards and Goths in Europe with references to the written sources (as, for instance, at Hedeager 1990) is a fully acceptable archaeological method and way of thinking. To ascribe artificial archaeological groupings such as, for instance, the Oksywie or Przeworsk cultures to specific tribes (for example Visigoths, Goths or Vandals), is meaningless (see discussion by Martens 1994a: 28ff., 1994b: 57ff.). Martens claims, that even if historically ethnic interpretations of archaeological material have been misused by both German and Polish scholars, “we shall have to accept that ethnicity and ethnic groups were a part of the organizational system” of the Early Iron Age in Europe, and that the Vandal “question” should be discussed more. But what exactly is the “Vandal question”? He means likewise that there are differences between “historical” and “archaeological” Vandals (sic!). He asks whether it would be wrong to expect that we should be able to follow Vandals all the way through Europe to North Africa (Martens 1994a: 28, 1994b: 63). I think it is, because the material culture cannot “tell us” about “ethnicity”; the territorial, geographical and economical organizations are simply just different things. Neither migration theories nor ethnic terms can be used when discussing such phenomena as the Przeworsk, and Oksywie “cultures” or Vandals. Przeworsk and Oksywie are expressions of local regionality and variation during the Roman Period, and cannot be equated with cultural identity or “ethnicity”. Ethnicity or rather cultural identity can be interpreted as a conglomerate of different cultural manifestations at distinct societies. The so-called “Migration Period” in Europe contained different identity problems: political, cultural and economical. The results of the latest studies of Michael Gebühr show, that the strict chronology of Migration Period objects (for instance fibulae) is sometimes quite useless; in the graves on Fyn and in Schleswig-Holstein, the co-occurrences of both the “old” and “new” forms suggest that these forms were used by different generations, for instance by mother and daughter. The refined chronology of Migration Period phases D and E, and the typology of the so-called West Baltic fibulae (Bitner-Wróblewska 1991: 225ff.), do not consider such factors such as the interpretations of the social changes or multiplicity in cultural manifestations.

MATERIAL THINGS AND CULTURE

During the 1990s it was quite common to look for information about distinct “ethnic” groups in archaeology in styles of different objects of material culture. The relation between style, material culture and ethnicity was emphasized; likewise
a cognitive attitude to the material culture, there the material culture not only reflected the patterns of social behaviours, but the patterns of human understanding as well (Hodder 1990: 44ff.; Sackett 1990: 32ff.; Zubroff 1994: 187). The post-processual archaeological relativism with the roots in post-modernistic deconstructionism denied a connection between material things and culture. It was important to indicate that the culture relativism does not always have to lead to a cultural isolation; a multi-cultural knowledge is possible – several different and not only one interpretation of the past may exist (Shanks 1990: 294ff.; Tilley 1992: 151). Text has often been regarded as a metaphor of the material culture in archaeology. It has been pointed out that the material culture can be read as a text; but if you now read prehistory, you read the prehistoric people (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Shanks 1990; Olsen 1992; Tilley 1992). The post-processual view depict archaeologists as text writers. As Tilley (1990) says: “Archaeology is not so much about reading the signs of the past but a process of writing these signs into the present”. Archaeology is a conversation about the past in the present time.

Material culture is imbued with meanings, and that significance was assigned it by the people using it in the past. People constantly renew and rework their knowledge, and – for that reason – material culture contributes to a constant re-defining of cultural identity. To read material culture, for instance in the case of Bronze Age barrows, is also to ask different questions, not only about the ideas behind the genesis of the monument, but about the meaning of the monument as well – what barrows meant. It comprehends not only our own contemplating, but likewise that of all those who “read” the barrows before us during 4000 years: the Bronze Age women and men, Medieval priests, tourists and nowadays archaeologists (Olsen 1992: 199).

To perceive the world and reality as a text with many meanings, and the visible which become constantly the subject of interpretation, is a fundamental element in the intellectual Jewish tradition, a Talmudistic rule of conduct, which is the exact opposite to “modern philosophy” – instead of linear discussion, it provides for a multiplicity of different interpretations (Dencik 1995: 8ff.). Inquiring after knowledge occur always interactively, in a meeting, a dialogue with the fellow being. There is a relationship between the post-modernistic deconstructionism and the Talmudistic rule of conduct: questions and questions again to text and to reality, and searching after “the truth” which, to the extent it exists, is an infinite multiplicity (Dencik op. cit.). It is often indicated that the cultural identity can be interpreted as a conglomerate of different culture manifestations and memories in different societies.

Most European archaeologists have distinguished different “archaeological cultures” during the Neolithic period and the Bronze and Iron Ages mostly on account of distinct specific forms of pottery (see for example Rouse 1965; Loze
1985; Shnirelman 1996:11), in general, archaeology ascribes such great importance
to ceramics; pottery represented in most parts of the world the main criterion to
distinguish "archaeological cultures". Only lately have some scholars turned away
from connecting archaeological culture with *ethnos*, and started to look instead at
social relations. The role of ethno-archaeology has, for instance, increased with
studies of the social context of the pottery production (Trigger 1992; Shnirelman
1993a:4f.). Olsen interpreted, for instance, the function of Säräisniemi-2 pottery as
an ethnic idiom — the necessity to self-definition as a foragers population in
northern Fennoscandia in relation to the agrarian populations' access to metal
(Olsen 1984:215ff.). This pottery functioned, according to him, as an ethnic
marker for Saami affiliation. This is based on the dating of this pottery relative to
the date assigned to the formation of Saami ethnicity — according to many North
Scandinavian archaeologists, during the 11th century BC (Olsen *op. cit.*; Baudou
1992; Carpelan 1993; Bergman 1995:7f.). Odner considers, however, that the
ethnic differentiation processes first appeared in Nordkalotten during the 4th–7th
centuries AD (Odner 1992). In Sweden, Norway and Finland the question of Saami
rights has led to updating questions about how long Saami have existed in this
area (Baudou 1992; Zachrisson 1994, 1995). In her discussion about "meetings"
between Northerners ("Germans") and the Saami, I. Zachrisson claims that the
archaeological material leads us to a picture of almost symbiotic contacts between
Saami and Germans during the Viking Age and Early Medieval period in Central
Scandinavia (Zachrisson 1994:84ff.). But can one, at all, discuss "objects" which
have been passing over from members of one "ethnic" group to another?

Ethnicity cannot, however, only be read from the material culture, significant
meanings exist likewise in language and tradition (Odner 1992; Mulk 1994).

There are, however, many examples of specific forms of weapon, pottery, and
jewellery which were widespread in different societies, sometimes in delimited
territories. Therefore the "archaeological cultures", classified on the basis of
distinct "leading artefacts", need not coincide with social cultures. "At the borders
between ethnic groups — the more interaction between people, the less the stylistic

MEANINGS OF CULTURE

Back to the concept of culture, with this naive expectation to one could say,
discover, and attempt to add new ideas to threadbare, trivialized subject, and see
it in a new light. How many archaeologists, historians and social anthropologists
have not tried their hand at a "concept of culture"? With an increasing of scope of
the preconceived opinions about ethnicity after the end of the 18th century, the
concept of “archaeological culture” became associated with people. Culture historicism and culture became commonly adopted notions in archaeological and anthropological contexts. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn published a collection of anthropologists definitions of culture. There were 164 to choose from, but none seemed to hit the nail on the head (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

In a recent textbook of Polish prehistory (Kostrzewski et al. 1963) there are 96 archaeological cultures with different names which are depicted as self-evident archaeological units. These are cultures, or culture traditions, or culture groups, but the term “culture” was used in this textbook alternately with terms such as “group”, “cultural group”, “unity”, “element”, and “technique”. Among them there are “cultures” which are described in very detailed terms (details of objects of material culture, graves and settlements), there are culture groups which are schematically mentioned, and there likewise exist supercultures. The Lusatian culture has in this textbook a position of an archaeological superculture (Kostrzewski et al. 1963; Barford 1996, in this volume).

The Lusatian culture is a good example of the link between modern political needs and archaeological interpretation, and for this reason may be worth further discussion here. It is pointless to ascribe a “culture” to people, a “group of pottery” — to another society, and it is fruitless to try to claim that a “Lusatian” Culture from the Bronze Age belonged to Slavs or Germans. The “Lusatian Culture” during quite a long time has been regarded by Polish archaeologists as the fundamental origin territory for the Slavs. German and Polish archaeologists argued about whether the “Lusatian culture” was Slavonic or German, and emphasized the “ethnic indicators” to define the prehistoric social groups (Werbart 1994b, 1994c, 1995). The most important in discussions after World War II between the Polish and German archaeologists was to define the ethnicity of Lusatian Culture during the Bronze and Iron Ages. Only during the 1980s did the substance of discussions move into younger periods and into interpretations of the socio-cultural structures and changes in Poland during Roman Iron Age and beginning of the Medieval period (Kobyliński 1994a: 303ff). Social identity and the group continuity are determined by human identity rather than their real identity, and are not necessarily related to a common history. To look for “place of provenance” for the Slavs is a result of illusory assumptions about cultural identity, influenced by modern conceptions of nationality. The Slavs as an ethnos appear first when their name is mentioned in the historical sources, by the Others, during the Early Medieval period. According to Kobyliński, the Slavic identity was shaped relatively late, and of limited groups, which can be read from analysis of the settlement structures from the 6th century. Isolated groups living in the forest zone of eastern Europe did not necessarily have any ethnic consciousness; the maintenance of “ethnic idioms” can be necessary only in the early stage if contact with other people (Kobyliński 1994a: 310, 1994b).
Quite paradoxically, ethnic "labelling" has come into use for the social groups from the Early Bronze Age, ca. 1500–1300 BC, for example Proto-Slavs during the period II of Bronze Age (according to Montelius 1917).

The "Lusatian culture" was furthermore regarded as a part of the European Urnfield Culture. The material culture from Urnfield period or "Urnfield culture" was expressed by a new burial forms with a grave-fields consisting of urned cremation burials from ca. 1250 BC to ca. 500 BC (Reinecke 1956).

The "Lusatian culture" was, for both German and Polish archaeologists, geographically limited to the territories between Oder and Vistula, to Poland, eastern Germany and northern Czech. The well-investigated grave-fields, settlements and hill forts are commonly known. Arrowheads in Lusatian hill forts from Pre-Roman Iron Age are, however, certainly a part of political history (Callmer 1995: 32). The fortified settlements likewise exist in southern Germany. The "Lusatian Culture" is sometimes presented as an eastern group of the Hallstatt/Urffield culture. Archaeologists created several regional groups and understructures: 15 in 1965, for example the Silesian group of Lusatian Culture, the Great Polish, the Little Polish etc. (Kostrzewski et al. 1961). Terms such as "Proto-Slavs" and "ethnogenesis" became common expressions in the post-War nationalistic archaeology (Werbart 1994b). In Kostrzewski's opinion, prehistoric sources were to be used by archaeologists in their attempts at solving the problem of the ethnogenesis of Slavs, particularly in answering the key question of the ethnic interpretation of the Lusatian and Przeworsk cultures, which were generally associated with "pre-Slavs". A general image of the Germans and Slavs was created by the 1900-century stereotypes of the peace-loving Slavs and aggressive Germans; such was the picture presented in the Polish schools. Archaeologists today, according to Rzączkowski, have practically stopped arguing that the Lusatian Culture was created by the pre-Slavs. In the social consciousness, however, Biskupin is still considered as a pre-Slavic fortified settlement; this popular view is confirmed by schoolbooks and guide books of Biskupin (Rzączkowski 1994). In the current guide to the archaeological reservation in Biskupin for the first time is there no connection made between the Late Bronze Age Lusatian material culture, and the "Proto- or pre-Slavs" (Zajączkowski 1994).

The 96 cultures described in the textbook of Polish prehistory mentioned above (listed in Appendix 1) were divided into different archaeological periods:

* 19 "cultures" existing during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic period
* 19 "cultures" during the Neolithic period
* 10 "cultures" during the Bronze Age, with emphasis on the Lusatian culture, which were on the other hand divided during the Late Bronze Age into 11 "culture groups" (= 21 culture "unities")
* 13 "cultures" during the pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age (with the Lusatian Culture divided into 10 "unities" during the early Iron Age) = 23 cultures
* 6 cultures with 4 "elements" during the younger Iron Age, the Migration Period (=10 cultures), and
* 2 "cultures" with 2 culture groups during the European Early Medieval Period (=4 cultures).

The number of "archaeological cultures" in Polish archaeology has since 1965 been considerably increased. As a drastic (and frightening) example, it can be mentioned about 90–93 "archaeological cultures", which, with associations to "the historical developments of the peoples inhabiting Europe", were classified in the middle of 1970s by Polish archaeologists (Kozłowski et al. 1975).

Can one always understand the basics for the subdivisions of different archaeological cultures? Some examples can possibly give us an insight into classifications of all these fantastic cultures. A Polish archaeologist, Szymbczak distinguished in 1987 the Perstun culture as a separate archaeological culture, at the same time connected with and separated from the {sic!} Bromme-Lyngby Culture (Szymbczak 1987:26ff.). Can differences in only some flint types, nevertheless not specified neither quantitatively nor qualitatively, be a reason for classifications? (Sulgotowska 1989:433). Various culture groups during the European Mesolithic have all too often been interpreted as diversified ethnic groups. J.K. Kozłowski and S.K. Kozłowski distinguished within the younger Paleolithic and Mesolithic material in Europe slightly more than 90 "cultural units" (!), with "Duvense Culture", "Oldesloe Culture" or "Kukrek Culture" for example (Kozłowski et al. 1975:135–137; Kozłowski 1980). New finds from Tybrind Vig in Denmark show, for instance, that different distinctions between the objects (like ornamentation on the wooden articles), indicates only that the material is not homogeneous, and it does not necessarily mean separate "ethnic" groups or "cultural units" (Larsson 1994:210ff.). Differences in Mesolithic burial ritual, in the grave goods from Skateholm I and Vedbaek for example, reflects distinct social structures, and not necessarily on "ethnic" or "cultural" diversities (Larsson op. cit.).

What reality lies behind the different "ethnic" names of archaeological "cultures", like "Baltic Culture", "Slavonic Culture" or "German Culture"? In the first number of the new archaeological Lithuanian review "Baltu Archeologija", the editor A. Girininkas discussed how old the "Baltic" culture is in Lithuania, and suggests, that it is goes back to the Mesolithic period (Lamm 1994:279f.).

"Archaeological cultures", culture groups, sub-cultures and supercultures are various forms of social communication, without relation to "ethnic" reality. Self-determination, identity and cultural identity leave no traces in material culture. Variations within the contents and concepts of culture can represent a great potential, but they are essentially restrictive. The significance which we attempt to interpret in human actions of the past is their own special significance. It is possible to understand this importance only by studying it in the context of its own culture.
It is unique to each particular society and to every given period. The positivistic division of distinguishing archaeological cultures is a notorious misjudgment of the postulates of "objectivization" of culture studies. Classification units used in this way in archaeology such as cultures, and/or sub-cultures were conflated with ethnographic classifications to tribes, clans etc., and this acts actually ignored modern concepts of cultural identity and ethnicity. A definition of "archaeological culture", "cultural identity" and/or "ethnicity" cannot exist without discussions and lively debates on contemporary concepts and contents.

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Appendix 1:

Archaeological cultures discussed in a 1965 textbook of Polish prehistory (Kostrzewski et al., 1965).

**Palaeolithic and Mesolithic**
- Clactonian cultural tradition
- Acheulean and Mousterian "cultures" (Mousterian group of Acheulean tradition)
- Levallois technique
- Prądnice Culture group
- Aurignacian Culture
- Perigordian Culture
- Middle Aurignacian Culture
- Jerzmanowice Culture
- Solutrean Culture
- Szeletian Culture
- Gravettian Culture
- Magdalenian Culture
- Świdärian Culture
- Tarnowo Culture
- Witów Culture group
- Ahrensburg Culture
- Hamburg Culture
- Tardenoisian Culture
- Janiszlawice Culture

**Neolithic**
- Starčevo-Körös Culture
- Linear Pottery Culture
- Želiezovce Culture
- Bukowogórska Culture
- Danubian Culture
- Stichband Pottery Culture
- Lengyel Culture (3 local groups)
- Bodrogkeresztur Culture
- Baden Culture
- Radial Pottery Culture
- Tripolje Culture
- Funnel Beaker Culture (local groups)
- Michelsberg Culture
- Globular Amphora Culture
- Pitted/Comb Pottery Culture
- Corded Ware Culture
- Rzucewo Culture
- Zlota Culture
- Bell Beaker Culture

**38 cultures and culture groups during the Stone Age in Poland**

**Early Bronze Age**
- Unetice Culture
- Iwienisk Culture
- Grobsko-Śmiardów Culture
- Magyar Culture
- Proto-Lusatian Culture
- Trzciniec Culture
- Proto-Baltic Culture

**Middle Bronze Age**
- Lusatian Culture (4 regional groups)
- Baltic Culture

**Late Bronze Age**
- Lusatian Culture (with 11 regional groups)

**21 cultures "units" during the Bronze Age in Poland**
Early Iron Age – Pre-Roman period

- Lusatian Culture (10 local groups)
- East Pomeranian Culture
- East Baltic Culture
- Scythian Culture
- Cloche Grave Culture
- Baltic Culture
- Celtic Culture
- Venedic Culture
- Przeworsk Culture
- Oksywic Culture

23 culture "units" during the Early Iron Age

Younger Iron Age – Migration Period

- Baltic Culture (4 regional groups)
- Hunnic elements
- Venedic Culture
- Scandinavian elements
- European-German elements
- Baltic Culture

14 cultures and culture groups during the Late Iron Age and Early Medieval Period

Roman Period

- Venedic Culture
- Przeworsk Culture
- Oksywic Culture
- Gepid Culture

Early Medieval Period

- Proto-Polish Culture with 2 groups
- Old-Prussian and Jatvingian Culture