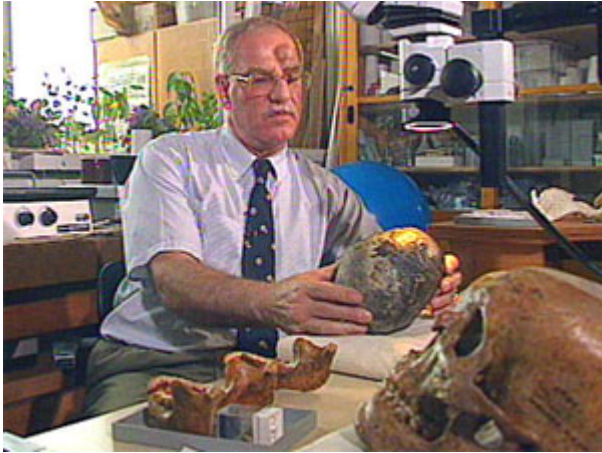


ARCHAEOLOGICAL FAKES IN THE GERMAN ACADEMY



A fascinating item today in the Guardian – History of modern man unravels as German scholar is exposed as fraud

Flamboyant anthropologist falsified dating of key discoveries

Luke Harding in Berlin

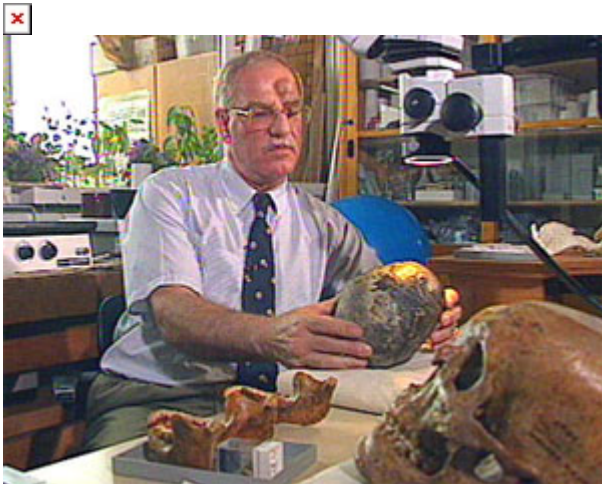
It appeared to be one of archaeology's most sensational finds. The skull fragment discovered in a peat bog near Hamburg was more than 36,000 years old – and was the vital missing link between modern humans and Neanderthals.

This, at least, is what Professor Reiner Protsch von Zieten – a distinguished, cigar-smoking German

anthropologist – told his scientific colleagues, to global acclaim, after being invited to date the extremely rare skull.

However, the professor's 30-year-old academic career has now ended in disgrace after the revelation that he systematically falsified the dates on this and numerous other "stone age" relics.

Yesterday his university in Frankfurt announced the professor had been forced to retire because of numerous "falsehoods and manipulations".



Archaeological scientist, friend of Governor Arnie, studies the bones of Hitler and Eva Braun?

During their investigation, the university discovered that Prof Protsch, 65, a flamboyant figure with a fondness for gold watches, Porsches and Cuban cigars,

was unable to work his own carbon-dating machine.

Instead, after returning from Germany to America, where he did his doctorate, and taking up a professorship, he had simply made things up.

...

German police began investigating the professor for fraud, following allegations that he had tried to sell the university's 278 chimpanzee skulls for \$70,000 to a US dealer.

...

Other details of the professor's life also appeared to crumble under scrutiny. Before he disappeared from the university's campus last year, Prof Protsch told his students he had examined Hitler's and Eva Braun's bones.

He also boasted of having flats in New York, Florida and California, where, he claimed, he hung out with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Steffi Graf. Even the professor's aristocratic title, "von Zieten", appears

to be bogus.

Far from being the descendant of a dashing general in the hussars, the professor was the son of a Nazi MP, Wilhelm Protsch, Der Spiegel magazine revealed last October.

The university is investigating how thousands of documents lodged in the anthropology department relating to the Nazis' gruesome scientific experiments in the 1930s were mysteriously shredded, allegedly under the professor's instructions.

They also discovered that some of the 12,000 skeletons stored in the department's "bone cellar" were missing their heads, apparently sold to friends of the professor in the US and sympathetic dentists.

Yesterday the university admitted that it should have discovered the professor's fabrications far earlier. But it pointed out that, like all public servants in Germany, the high-profile anthropologist was virtually impossible to sack, and had also proved difficult to pin down.

...

Yesterday the professor, who lives in Mainz with his wife Angelina, didn't respond to emails from the Guardian asking him to comment on the affair. But in earlier remarks to Der Spiegel he insisted that he was the victim of an "intrigue".

"All the disputed fossils are my personal property," he told the magazine.

Another case of intellectual property tied so intimately to personal identity?

[Link]