



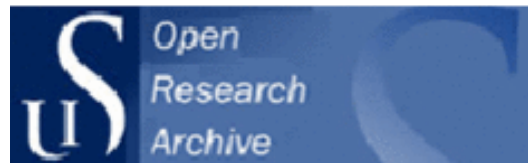
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‘THOSE WHO
SURVIVED THE BATTLEFIELDS’
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
IN A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP NEAR
QUEDLINBURG (HARZ / GERMANY)
FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR

VOLKER DEMUTH

ABSTRACT

In 2004, the site of a prisoner of war camp from the First World War was investigated archaeologically during a large rescue excavation project initiated by highway construction works in the municipality of Quedlinburg in the north of the Harz Mountains in Central Germany. During the excavation, numerous structures and finds from the camp were recorded, throwing light on the everyday life of the soldiers imprisoned there. With the addition of previously unknown historical research about the camp, new aspects of an area of modern history that has hitherto received little attention have been revealed.

Introduction: Digging World War One?

Until recently there have been few archaeological investigations within Germany on sites connected to conflicts relating to the First World War. While the archaeological remains of the battlefields in Flanders and northern France are objects of increasing scientific interest, in Germany there have been a very few, mostly rather small-scale investigations.

One reason for this overshadowing is undoubtedly the fact that the actual battlefields of the First World War, which took the lives of millions of soldiers and civilians, are all situated outside modern German territory. Clearly, the Second World War had a much more fundamental impact on German towns and cities, while the First World War was always at a distance from the civilian population. Nevertheless, there are sites from this period in Germany that are strongly connected to the First World War; specifically, the 175 camps where over 2.5 million soldiers who had been taken prisoner were imprisoned.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the history of these prisoners, while the importance of the system of POW camps, both for the wartime economy and for propaganda, has been recognized as a valid subject for historical research (Oltmer 2006).

Thus, even though these prisoner of war camps were not ‘fields of conflict’ in the traditional sense, they were an integral part of the broader conflict and also a theatre of personal conflict between prisoners and guards. Thus for a ‘conflict

archaeology' that aims to investigate war as complex social phenomena rather than just reconstruct tactical details of single battles, POW camps and their physical remains are an important archaeological resource. For the individuals who were imprisoned there, the camps were fundamental for food, shelter and the maintenance of life; for the economy of the captor countries in wartime, the workforce of the POWs was desperately needed to cover the absence at the Front of a large part of the male population.

The Background to the Excavation

The requirement for a systematic archaeological investigation of a POW camp occurred as a result of construction on the B6n in 2004. From 2003 to 2005, the department for large-scale projects of the *Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt -Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte* undertook one of the largest rescue excavations to take place in Germany. Under the direction of Dr Veit Dresely, a team of over 200 archaeologists investigated over 15 different sites, covering an area of about 800,000m², in the municipality of Quedlinburg, north of the Harz Mountains (Fig. 1). Over 30,000 single context structures were recorded, with almost a million artefacts, dating from the early Neolithic to the modern period.

At one site, the highway crosses a plain on the banks of the River Bode (Fig. 2). Aerial photography revealed numerous cropmarks, many of which indicated prehistoric settlement. However, even more cropmarks seemed to relate to a POW camp that, according to obscure written sources and a memorial monument on the site, existed here between 1914 and 1918. It was decided to record the remains of the camp with the same archaeological methodology as any of the prehistoric structures. Accordingly, between 5 and 10 % of the overall area of the camp was investigated during the excavation, leaving about 90 % as undisturbed cultural heritage in the ground.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, there were very few earlier excavations of WWI camps in Germany to use as a reference point. In Gladbeck in the Ruhr, the remains of a POW workcamp were excavated as part of a larger industrial archaeology project (Hopp & Kiehl 2005). Similarly, in Wittenberg in Sachsen-Anhalt, traces of a POW camp were recorded during a rescue excavation in the 1990s, but unfortunately the site has not yet reached publication (pers comm Andreas Hille, *Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt*). Consequently, the excavators of the Quedlinburg project had to start almost from scratch and there was a definite feeling of entering unknown territory. The legacy of the well-known atrocities committed in the German POW and concentration camps of the Nazi era meant that the excavators had rather mixed



Fig. 1. Map of Germany with the federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt, the Harz mountains and Quedlinburg (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

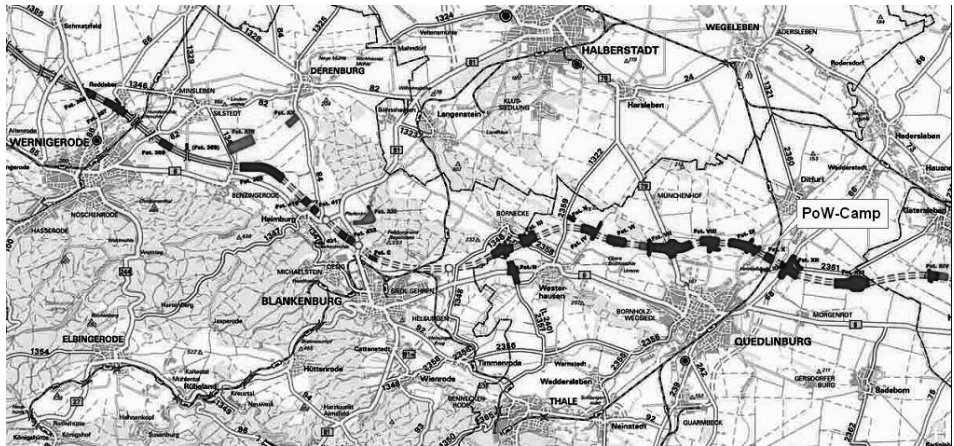


Fig. 2. Map of the surroundings of Quedlinburg with the new motorway, the different archaeological findspots and the site of the PoW-camp (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

feelings about the project before the fieldwork began. However, there was also a feeling of responsibility, that there was a duty for archaeologists to investigate and record the remains of this historical site, which was almost forgotten and had never previously been properly researched. Furthermore, the few known written sources and current historical research indicated also a somewhat humane treatment of the POWs in the WWI camps.

Historical Sources and Research

There was very little historical research about the camps in print when the excavation started. Consequently, an historian was engaged to undertake historical research in parallel with the excavations. It was a fortunate circumstance that the project historian, Thomas Wozniak, was himself born in Quedlinburg; his research contributed a lot of important information to the project. He also established contact with a young French amateur historian, Davye Cesbron, whose genealogical research had investigated the fate of her ancestor Théophile Radin, who died 1918 as a POW in the Quedlinburg camp. Mlle Cesbron published the results of her research, including some editions of the newspaper *Le Tuyau*, which was made by the POWs in the Quedlinburg camp on her personal web-site (<http://www.camp-de-quedlinburg.fr/Tuyau.htm>). The link with Davye Cesbron gave the historical research a new flavour as the history of camp received a human face and moved from the collective to the personal.

One of the major historical sources for the Quedlinburg camp is contemporary photography that shows different views of the camp, including scenes with the prisoners. As for written sources, a contemporary book about prisoner of war camps, written by a German officer and published by the military command, was the only publication available during the initial phase of the excavation (Risse 1916). As an official publication, it reads very much as propaganda; however, it contains statements by army officials that seem to take seriously the rules of ethical treatments of prisoners of war according to the Geneva Convention. A point of particular interest about the book for the project was the very detailed descriptions of technical installations and the internal structures of the camps. There were also detailed photographs and drawings, showing many different elements from different camps. As there seemed to be some level of standardisation of the camps' structure and interior, it might be assumed that pictures from camps at other places could indicate how Quedlinburg camp may have appeared. Finally, Thomas Wozniak was able to discover further written sources, including memoirs of POWs from Quedlinburg and the report of an envoy from the neutral Spanish government who inspected the Quedlinburg camp in 1917 (Dienemann & Wozniak 2009).

When the excavation started, one of the aims was to determine whether the writing of Risse's book was purely propaganda, or if his account could be verified through the results of the excavation. The pictures and descriptions in the different sources were extremely helpful when it came to the interpretation of the excavated structures (Fig. 3).

To summarise the information available in the historical sources: the first prisoners came to Quedlinburg as early as 24 September 1914. One of these was Abel Castel, whose memoir provides a lively impression of conditions for these men. They had to build the barracks themselves on this rather damp plain in the river valley, which was drained by large ditches that themselves had to be excavated by hand. The barracks were built of wood and were heated by iron ovens. There was a large medical complex to give the sick and wounded prisoners appropriate medical treatment.

The number of prisoners in Quedlinburg varied considerably: in the first years of the war, the number was rather small; in 1917, there were about 3,400 men in the camp, but after the last German offensives on the Western Front in the Spring of 1918, the number increased to almost 18,000. Naturally, there was a level of mortality within this population of prisoners and over 700 prisoners died in Quedlinburg. Initially, most of the deaths occurred as men succumbed to the wounds that they had received in the fighting leading to their capture. However, with the much larger camp population in 1918, the number of prisoners that died from diseases increased strongly. In the last year of the war and with general

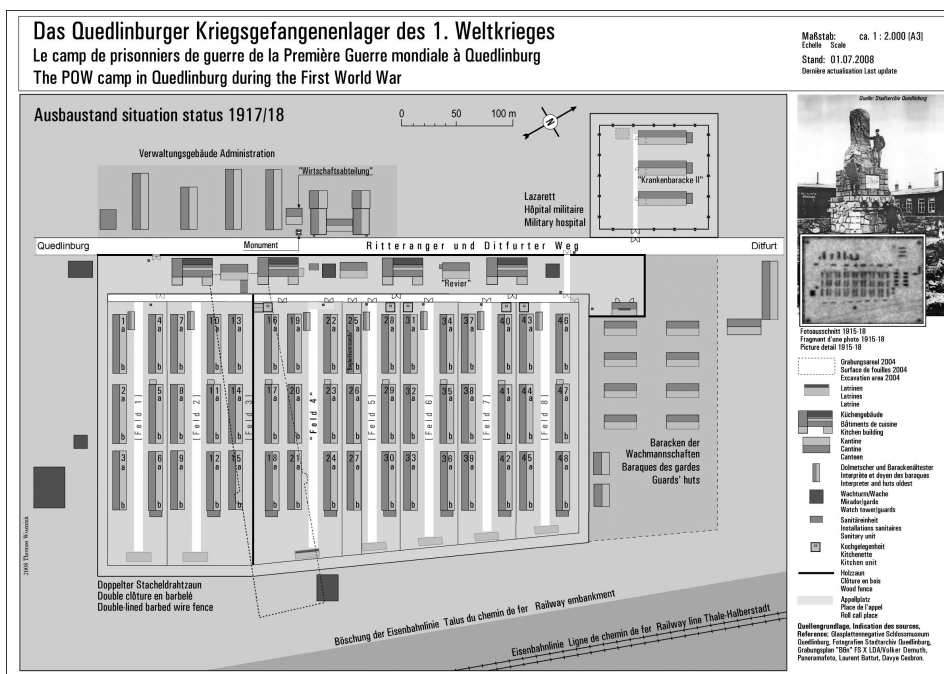


Fig. 3. Reconstructed map of the PoW-camp. With the kindest courtesy of Dr. Thomas Wozniak, Köln.

deprivation on the German Home Front, the food supply was much reduced, weakening the prisoners and leaving them open to pandemics such as typhus; this caused the death of over 300 prisoners in 1918 (Wozniak 2009: 147).

In the earlier phases of the war, Germany had little problem with its food supply and food in the camp seems to have been sufficient, though not overwhelming. The prisoners had to cook their food themselves, but there was also a canteen, where food and beverages could be bought. In addition the prisoners could receive letters and parcels by mail. They also could write letters every month, an important release for those imprisoned so far from home. Boredom is mentioned in prisoners' memoirs as one of the worst aspects of camp life. However, most of the prisoners were set to do some kind of work in or outside the camp. There was also a range of cultural activities such as sports, theatre, music and the camp newspaper *Le Tuyau*, all of which helped to make life for the prisoners more bearable.

In 1918, prisoners from the camp erected a large monument inside the camp as a memorial for those who had died in the camp. This monument still remains, now directly aside the highway, marking the site of the camp. When

the excavation started, it was the only visible trace of the camp. The monument originally had a bronze plate, shown on a contemporary photograph, but this was later removed and has disappeared. There was a schematic map of the camp on the plate, the only contemporary plan of the camp and its buildings.

The Excavation: Infrastructure and Buildings of the Camp

As the topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator, the first structures of the camp became visible. These structures were treated according to standard archaeological methodology: the surface was cleaned by hand; each structure was given an individual number and was photographed, described and digitally measured and drawn in a CAD plan. The undisturbed geological soils varied across the excavated area: some areas were dominated by silty clay, whereas others were compact gravel and sand. These were all derived from fluviated depositions, as the site is situated in a river plain. The gravel parts are older, probably glacial depositions from the Ice Age, while the silty layers date are largely later, some as late as the Middle Ages.

In total, about 600 single context structures related to the camp were found. The majority of these were postholes, of which 478 were recorded. They were all rectangular, many still showing the remains of the round wooden posts. The majority of the postholes belonged to large rectangular barracks (Fig. 4), the quarters for the prisoners of war. Being a military enterprise, the barracks were built according to a very regular pattern and the ground plan of five barracks could be reconstructed, though not every posthole survived. The excavation plan indicates that the contemporary plan of the camp from the memorial (as can be seen in the photograph) could be confirmed and in many ways improved. Perhaps not surprisingly, there are a lot of details from the excavation plan that were not depicted on the historical plan.

The barracks were about 50m long and 15–20m wide, making an area of about 700m². There was a total of 48 barracks in the camp, giving a figure of about 10m² per prisoner in 1917, when 3,469 prisoners were in the camp. In contrast, in 1918 when there were 17,400 prisoners packed into the camp, each prisoner only had 2m² available. However, the historical sources indicate that in periods when comparatively few prisoners were in the camp, many of the barracks were closed and there was thus less of a difference in the available space (Dienemann & Wozniak 2009: 145).

The historical sources show that the whole camp was enclosed by a massive barbed-wire fence, with additional barbed-wire fences separating different sections of the camp. Fragments of barbed wire were thus a frequent discovery throughout the camp. There were a number of postholes in rows that can be



Fig. 4. Overview of part of the excavated area, with one barrack marked (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).



Fig. 5. Site of a washing house, the dark dots are prehistoric pits (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

associated with these fences, giving detailed impressions of the internal structure of the camp.

In addition to the large number of postholes, the other most frequent archaeological features encountered were ditches. Most of these were the remains of the drainage ditches that were excavated during the initial construction of the camp, recorded in the memoirs of the prisoner Abel Castel (Dienemann & Wozniak 2009: 140). The origin of the ditches was demonstrated by the presence in the ditch fills of numerous artefacts relating to the camp, such as ammunition and bottlesherds, and which matched the material recovered from the interior of the camp. Some of the ditches were backfilled prior to the construction of barracks and fences, as in some cases, postholes were recorded in the fill of the draining ditches.

Other ditches belonged to an advanced sewage system that was installed in the camp from about 1916. The sewage was to be drained through ceramic pipes, of which frequent fragments were found. The sewage system included advanced processing facilities, demonstrating that the design of the camp recognised the need for proper sanitary conditions. Before the sewage system was installed, open cesspools were used. A particularly large example was about 20m long and 5m wide. It was about 2m deep; the bottom was sealed with a thick layer of tarpaper. The filling consisted of different layers of mostly organic material, containing a number of artefacts (see below). The fill of the pit was cut by a ditch

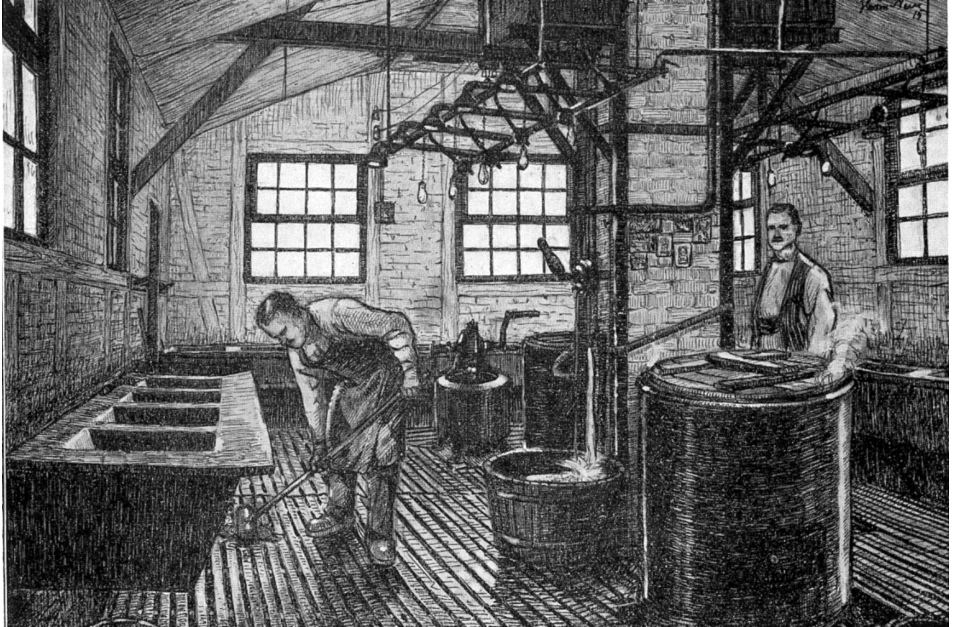


Fig. 6. Contemporary drawing of a washing house in a PoW-camp (J. Risse: Die Kriegsgefangenenlager im Bezirk des IV. Armeekorps. Auf Veranlassung des stellvertretenden Generalkommandos IV. Armeekorps. Halle (Saale) 1916).

with a ceramic sewage-pipe, giving a clear stratigraphic indication that the open cesspools were used prior to the advanced sewerage.

Approximately sixty different pits were investigated, of which 18 were waste and cesspits from different phases of the camp; 13 were sumps, probably mainly for water from the roofs of the barracks. Solid refuse seems to have been dumped in simple pits throughout the camp. The finds from these pits give a good impression of the everyday life in the camps and are discussed below.

In the excavated part of the camp were two pump-shafts with brick walls, where clean ground water could be pumped for the use of the detainees. Coincidentally, these modern wells were situated just a few metres from wells of a prehistoric settlement.

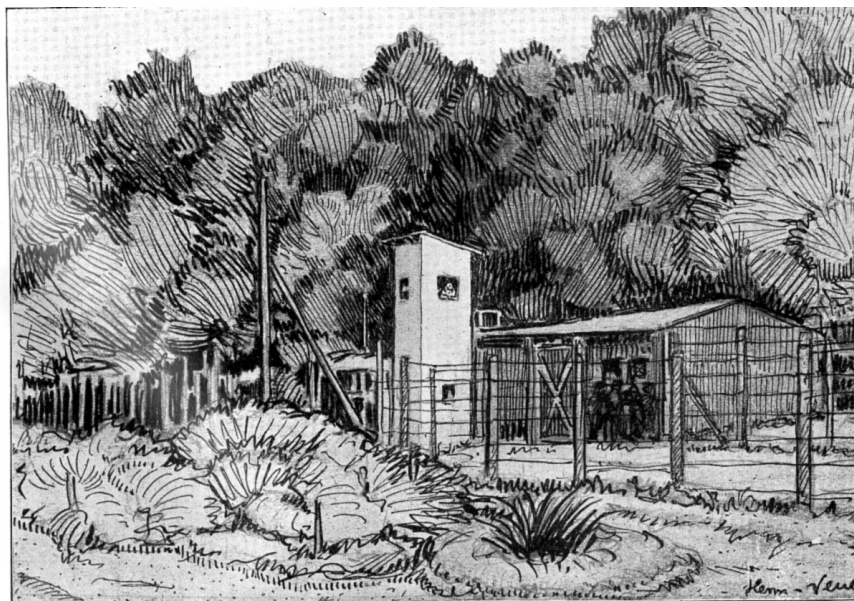
There were also a small number of other brick or concrete foundations. One such rectangular building was situated in the end of one of the dwelling barracks; it was characterized by a brick-built chimney and a pipe connection to the sewage system (Fig. 5). This was a wash-house, and is shown on photographs and on a drawing (Fig. 6) in a contemporary publication (Risse 1916: fig. 30). The remainder of the building appears to have been a kitchen. It is likely that there was one of these buildings per six barracks.



Fig. 7. Excavation of the site of the canteen (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

In an area close to the memorial, there were a number of foundations and buildings that were somewhat different to the quarters. This area was also separated from the living quarters by a large barbed-wire fence, suggesting a rather special function. A long, rectangular concrete foundation was filled with lots of brown coal briquettes and firing peat, as well as the remains of a chimney top. This indicates that the structure could be a part of a power transmission plant, which is mentioned in a contemporary source.

A building that was largely built on posts included a massive brick foundation in one corner and a number of related disposal pits (Fig. 7). A contemporary drawing by Risse (Fig. 8) shows a canteen with a watch-tower from a POW camp in Stendal (Risse 1916: fig. 16), which seems very similar to this structure; it may therefore be interpreted as a canteen. This conclusion is reinforced by the finds from the related cesspits, which contained numerous bottles and drinking glasses, as well as different types of china dishes and animal bones.



16. Stendal. Wachturm mit Kantine. — Tour d'observation et cantine. — Сторожевая башня и лавочка.

Fig. 8. Contemporary drawing of a canteen in the PoW- camp in Stendal (J. Risse: Die Kriegsgefangenenlager im Bezirk des IV. Armeekorps. Auf Veranlassung des stellvertretenden Generalkommandos IV. Armeekorps. Halle (Saale) 1916).

The Finds

Large numbers of artefacts were recovered from the structures of the camp, particularly in the different pits. The recovery was on scale that precluded the archiving of all finds. In particular, the large amounts of barbed wire, tar paper and glass sherds could only be sampled, not at least due to safety reasons. Furthermore, some of the material was physically too large to be stored in archive, and in particular the larger part of the ready made buildings. However, all finds were recorded and as much as possible stored in archive; this material is an important source for the daily life of prisoners of war who used this material nearly 100 years ago. The finds provide a direct connection to those who once used the items and, seen in the context of the structures where they were found, the material can provide detailed information about everyday life in the POW camp.

As mentioned above, large numbers of finds were recovered from pits relating to the probable canteen building. A large proportion of this material provided evidence of the diet in the camp. There were numerous large mammal bones,

mainly from cattle and pigs; these were heavily fragmented, suggesting their use in stews. Considerable numbers of fish bones were recorded, mostly from Atlantic fish such as cod; this represents the use of dried fish, which is mentioned regularly in the written sources.

In terms of the inorganic finds, the most striking type of artefact was the large number of beer bottles, beer glasses and fragments of both. A number of standardised 0.5 litre beer glasses were marked on the base: *Schultheiss*; this is a large German brewery that still exists but in WWI obviously supplied the canteen with barrels for draft beer. The beer bottles were a far more common artefact. As was normal for early twentieth century Germany, the bottles bear marks of the brewery. A number of different local breweries were represented from a surrounding area of about 50km. A preliminary analysis shows that bottles with the marks of *Bürgerliches Brauhaus Gernrode* and *Gero-Bräu Oschersleben* were by far the most common beers in the canteen. A large number of beer bottles could also be found in the living quarters, indicating that beer was also regularly consumed there. In addition to the beer bottles, there were also clear glass bottles, which were identifiable by their maker's marks as lemonade and mineral water bottles. At least in the main camp, non-alcoholic drinks in the form of lemonade and mineral water were obviously available to a certain degree.

One almost complete beer bottle in a waste-pit near the canteen is of strikingly different character. A relief mark identifies it as a product of the *Brasserie de XXieme siecle; Reims*. It seems astonishing to find a French beer bottle in a German POW camp in the heart of Germany. The artefact may have been sent to a prisoner in a packet from home, though an historical source states that it was forbidden to send wine to the detainees (Dienemann & Wozniak 2009: 145). However, the same source says that French wine was sold in the canteen, although no written source reveals whether this also applied to beer.

A peculiar element of the French beer bottle is the way it was opened: the neck of the bottle shows a clean slanting cut, as if it would have been opened with a blow of a sabre. This is a French military tradition, originating with champagne bottles and whose roots are suggested as going back to Napoleon Bonaparte. It is therefore very likely that this specific bottle was opened and consumed by French prisoners of war in the camp's canteen. There were a number of other French beer bottles found across the camp, representing several different breweries.

Further strong evidence for the presence of POWs in the canteen area was the discovery of a little oval metal-plate with a five figured number and holes on the edge, indicating that the item was stitched to a piece of clothing. Many more similar plates were found in different pits in the dwelling area. As every prisoner



Fig. 9. French coffee bowl found in the PoW-camp (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

of war had their own five figured identification number, these are probably ID-marks belonging to the prisoners, which were to be stitched to their clothes. The find of such a plate demonstrates the presence of at least one prisoner in the canteen, and therefore probably that this was an area used by the prisoners. Another find that throws a spotlight on the individuals in this part of the camp was a hair-buckle made out of horn. This was clearly a female item, indicating the occasional presence of a woman in the camp's canteen.

The different pits in the area of the camp with the living quarters contained a slightly different and more varied material than those near to the canteen. As mentioned above, one huge cesspool containing over 200m³ of soil and debris

could be stratigraphically dated to the early years of the camp, about 1914–1916. Time pressure meant that this enormous feature could only be evaluated by a machine-cut trench. The material from the trench and the profiles were closely examined for finds, revealing numerous artefacts. A great number of local beer bottles were recovered, as well as bottles for wine, liquor, lemonade and mineral water. Over 12 kg of fragmented bones demonstrates that meat was available for the prisoners. There was even evidence for what the written sources described as the main food resource in the form of a carbonized potato. There were few finds of fish bones, but this is probably because of the circumstances of recovery, where there was no opportunity to sieve the soil and recover the smaller finds.

A number of ceramic dishes were present, mostly fragments of china table dishes and tea- and coffee cups. Fragments of two drinking bowls (Fig. 9) could be identified by basal marks as products from the French porcelain manufactory of Radonville, revealing that the detainees could receive such material as gifts in packets from home. There were also a few small ceramic flasks and boxes, most probably once containing medicines or toiletries.

Good preservation conditions meant that several leather fragments were recovered, all part of a laced boot. The boot showed signs of numerous repairs, a testimony to the importance of boots to soldiers, which will have been even more the case for prisoners who would have found it difficult to replace worn-out footwear. A large variety of small buttons were also found, as were some fragments of textiles, which unfortunately could not be saved and restored. Personal possessions such as clay-pipes and two game-bricks seem to indicate that there were occasions for rest and relaxation. Many pits contained ink-bottles and pens (Fig. 10) that show how important contact with home and family was for the prisoners. A single find from a sink poignantly illustrates the importance of this contact for the small, yet important needs of everyday life. Between the gravel stones in the sink was a piece of plastic with the legend *Lingerie Charles Broclin Amiens*; this represents the wrapping of a pair of shoelaces, again illustrating the importance of foot wear in the camp.

Whereas the finds mentioned above were found in pits that can be dated to the earlier years of the camp, other finds can most probably be dated to the last period of the camp. In particular, one pit stands out as having a distinctively different composition. Beer and other bottles were completely absent. There were a small number of animal bones, including remains of a sting-ray, a rather unusual fish for human consumption. This probably reflects the problems in the food supply in Germany in the last year of the war; the use of any possible food is repeatedly documented. The pit contained also a great number of items which are clearly very personal belongings of individual prisoners. A number of metal ID-plates as described above were found in this pit together with military buttons



Fig. 10. Personal writing utensils found in the camp (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

from Britain, Russia and the emblems of the French artillery. This represents the three main elements of the Allies fighting the Central Powers prior to the entry of the US into the war in 1917; US troops were not present in large numbers on the Western Front until 1918. This material is likely to represent clothing removed from prisoners who died at the camp.

Within this rather unusual pit, there were also finds related to personal hygiene, such as a toothbrush, toothpaste containers and a comb. The latter is marked as produced in *Hamburg 1915*, giving a *terminus post quem* for the associated material. Other finds seem to be remains of cheap jewellery, maybe a keepsake of someone at home. If this assumption is correct, it is unlikely that the owner threw it away; possible explanations for it to have ended up in the fill of the pit include it having been lost accidentally, that it was stolen and never collected, or more likely, was the possession of an inmate that died of disease and was thrown away after his death.

As a last find from this unusual pit, a clay pipe is particularly noteworthy (Fig. 11). It has the face of a man with a German military cap, an iron cross and a moustache characteristic of Emperor Wilhelm II. It seems as a certain historical irony, that in this way a portrait of the man who bears a strong responsibility for the devastating war ended up in a rubbish pit together with the belongings of soldiers who lost their life or health as a result of this war.



Fig. 11. Claypipe showing the head of German Emperor Wilhelm II (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt; Archäologisches Landesmuseum).

Conclusion

The archaeological investigations in the prisoner of war camp near Quedlinburg offered the opportunity to research this important period in history. The combination of contemporary sources and historical research with the physical artefacts gives the prospect of new perspectives on the life of those soldiers who were taken prisoner of war. The archaeological finds and structures are direct material remains of that period and the individuals who played an historical role. Thus the excavations made clear how valuable and useful archaeological

investigations on sites of modern history are. A detailed plan of the excavated part of the camp was drawn. This completely new knowledge helps to reconstruct the internal structure of the camp, despite of the lack of historical sources on this topic. The archaeological remains also give a detailed picture of certain aspects of everyday life that is hardly found in historical sources.

It is important when examining the finds and structures of the camp that we never lose sight of the fact that the camp, despite of an illusion of comparable normality, was a site of suffering for the detainees, who had lost their personal freedom and of whom over 700 died. Nonetheless, even though so many died in captivity, the chances of personal survival were considerably higher as a prisoner of war than in the trenches on the brutal battlefields of the Eastern and Western Fronts. It is also worth mentioning that those who died in Quedlinburg were given an appropriate grave in the central graveyard in Quedlinburg, where the French artist C.E. Seigner, also a POW, erected a monument with the inscription *IIS QUI PATRIAM NON REVISENT* (to those who did not see their fatherland again). When this monument was opened in June 1918, officials from Quedlinburg and high ranking German army officials were present, showing respect to the dead soldiers. On the rear of the monument, the names of all POWs who died to that date were engraved on the stone.

One of those men who died in the Quedlinburg camp was Theophile Radin, the great-uncle of Mlle Davye Cesbron, whose genealogical research has already been mentioned. As there was prior contact with Mlle Cesbron, the decision was made to invite her to the opening of a special exhibition about the WWI camp in the local museum in Quedlinburg. This visit, which was generously supported by diverse sponsors in Quedlinburg, was a deeply moving moment to all those involved and it is the subject of a detailed publication by Thomas Wozniak (Wozniak 2007). Coincidentally, the opening of the exhibition and the visit of Davye Cesbron to Quedlinburg took place almost exactly 90 years after the beginning of the war. Later, the exhibition was also shown in the French twin-town of Quedlinburg, Aulnoye-Aymeries.

The investigation of the prisoner of war camp, which was already a rather emotive matter because of the recent date of the individuals and events, thus received a very personal aspect. In most other archaeological projects, the subjects examined are either anonymous or chronologically far away, and generally both. Excavating remains from World War I felt really different, as the period is still present through pictures of family members who participated in the war. Thus, when visiting the site of the camp together with Davye and her friend, showing the items that were used by her great-uncle's comrades and discussing the topic over a drink at night, it really brought history quite close. We became aware how precious was the turn of history that brought us together as descen-

dants in peace and friendship, examining our common history, 90 years after our ancestors were sent to kill each other. In this way, a new and peaceful chapter of our history was written.

Finally, a sentence from the propaganda publication of Lieutenant Risse may be quoted, which is as relevant today as it was 90 years ago and which shows that the struggle for humanity and respectful treatment of people in conflict is far from over and must be fought always anew:

Leben und Gesundheit der Kriegsgefangenen sind nach dem geltenden Kriegsrecht unantastbar. Mit ihrer Entwaffnung sind sie aus den Reihen der Kämpfer ausgeschieden und haben Anspruch auf eine Behandlung, welche in ihnen Mitglieder der menschlichen Gemeinschaft sieht und die allgemeinen Grundgesetze der Menschlichkeit achtet.

[The life and health of the prisoners of war are untouchable according to actual rules of warfare. When unarmed, they have left the ranks of combatants and can expect treatment that sees them as members of the human race and respects the common, basic laws of humanity]

(Risse 1916: 15)

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