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## In Memoriam Karl Jettmar.

in: Franke-Vogt, Ute – Weisshaar, H.-J (Hrsg.), South Asian archaeology 2003: proceedings of the Seventeenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, 7–11 July 2003, Bonn 11–12.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34780/mvc3-3u6b>

**Herausgebende Institution / Publisher:**  
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

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## Obituary



### *In Memoriam Karl Jettmar*

8<sup>th</sup> August 1918 – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Karl Jettmar was born in Vienna on 8 August 1918. His father, Rudolf Jettmar (1869–1939), painter and etcher, was a member of the Vienna Secession and a Professor at the Academy of the Visual Arts in Vienna. Karl Jettmar attended school there and in 1936 enrolled at Vienna University to study History and German. In 1938 Austria was unified with the German Reich and many of his teachers had to leave Vienna; Robert von Heine-Geldern in particular is worthy of mention. In 1940 Jettmar was conscripted into the Wehrmacht. Study leave in 1941, however, enabled him to gain his doctor-

ate in the faculty of philosophy with a thesis on smiths in the subject of European ethnology (Volkskunde), but his interest had now turned to anthropology and prehistory. Over a glass of good wine Karl Jettmar could wittily discuss his experiences, including the War, where he was deployed to various fronts. Typical of Jettmar is an episode when he was asked by a senior officer in front of all the men why, as an intelligent person with a doctorate, he was still a private soldier. Jettmar answered: if you, as my superior, don't know that, I, as your inferior, am far less likely to know it. From then

on, Jettmar was posted on various officers' courses. In 1943 Karl Jettmar married Dr. Senta Heidrich, who actively and selflessly supported him in all of his work. As an artilleryman Jettmar was often deployed as an advance observer and was therefore frequently wounded. He met his wife in a military hospital. The couple had a daughter and a son. In November 1945 Jettmar returned from American captivity and tried to support himself and his family in various ways – with the post office, as a translator (for example, of works by Thor Heyerdahl), as a toy salesman. It was not until 1954 that he was given a permanent job at the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna.

Jettmar had now intensively occupied himself with Russian archaeological literature and broadcast it to western readers. Such as 1950: *The Karasuk culture and its south-eastern affinities*, 1951: *The Altai before the Turks*, 1952: *Zu den Anfängen der Rentierzucht*, 1954: *Les plus anciennes civilisations d'éleveurs des steppes d'Asie centrale*, 1964: *Die frühen Steppenvölker. Der eurasiatische Tierstil. Entstehung und sozialer Hintergrund* (American translation 1967).

In 1955/56 Karl Jettmar took part in the German Hindu Kush expedition led by the Mainz ethnologist Adolf Friedrich and for the first time encountered the jagged rockscapes in northern Pakistan, to which he later dedicated all of his working life.

In 1958 Jettmar was appointed Reader in the Ethnology and Palaeoethnology of Asia as the successor of Robert von Heine-Geldern, who returned to Vienna after the War.

In 1961 he was appointed Reader for Anthropology in Mainz, and in 1964 he became Head of the Ethnology Department at the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University, where he was also given a readership in Ethnology.

In 1967 Karl Jettmar became a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute and an ordinary member in 1980.

In 1969 he became a member of the Heidelberg Academy of the Sciences, where a research centre for rockscapes in the Hindu Kush and the Karakorum, especially in northern Pakistan, was headed by Karl Jettmar, even after he was given emeritus status.

On many expeditions (1957, 1964, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1975 and 1979) Jettmar gathered new material and new findings on the ethnology and archaeology of northern Pakistan. In 1975 his book *Die Religionen des Hindukush* was published in the series *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, in the third volume of which, published in 1962, Jettmar reconstructed an overview of the religions of Siberia since the Palaeolithic on the basis of recent archaeological findings.

Jettmar was aware that interpretations of the past are always based on the materials that are accessible at any given time. Added to this is an artistic aspect, which shows the influence of his father's understanding of art, which Jettmar became more and more involved with in his last years.

After a serious illness Karl Jettmar died on 28 March 2002.

Peter Snoy