

MIDDLE LA TÈNE WAFFENBRÜDER IN THE RHINELAND-PALATINATE? EVIDENCE FROM TWO SWORDS FROM A CHARIOT BURIAL IN THE CEMETERY OF THÜR (LKR. MAYEN-KOBLENZ)

The fertile region on the eastern edge of the Eifel has evidence of human settlement commencing in the Neolithic. Following the quarrying of volcanic pumice from the Laacher See, between 1994 and 1997 some 1385 sites were excavated ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Middle Ages. Apart from a few Late Bronze Age finds, a considerable settlement complex was uncovered dating to Ha D-Lt C at Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz)¹; the community was exploiting the local sources of basalt for the making of millstones which was to be found in the region between Mayen and Kottenheim (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz)². To the north of the Middle La Tène settlement was a large cemetery consisting of cremation graves associated with a large post structure. That this was in turn associated with a élite group is evidenced by a number of chariot graves³ and several burials with horse and rider.

The establishment of this cremation cemetery complex was marked by a richly furnished late Lt C2 chariot burial within a 3 m × 3 m square burial chamber containing numerous bronze and iron chariot fittings while the two wheels with their iron tyres were dismantled and placed across the body of the chariot. The corpse itself had been cremated and the ashes placed in a wooden box under the chariot. The grave goods comprised a pair of omphalos bowls and barrel-shaped jars. There were also bronze fittings for a pair of drinking-horns. Apart from the two swords (figs 1-2), there were three spearheads, a *Hiebmesser* or single-edged knife, a rectangular shield-boss, two Middle La Tène brooches and fittings for a sword belt – all in iron.

(A. v. B.)

THE SWORDS: DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF THEIR FORM

Sword and scabbard 1

Sword with a preserved length of 800mm; preserved length of the tang 100mm; height of the crosspiece 30mm. Preserved length of the blade 700mm; width of the blade 50mm; thickness 5mm; incomplete⁴.

The sword (fig. 1a-c), bent at an acute angle two-thirds of its length, partially protrudes for 160mm from the scabbard. The rivets of the hilt and the ends of the tang and of the chape are not preserved. Total length preserved 800mm. Straight iron sword with a two-edged blade, lenticular in cross section. The blade appears to end in a slightly sharpened point. The cross section of the tang is rectangular. At the top of the hilt, a support provides a seating for the bell-shaped metal crosspiece. The blade bears, on the right side, about 10mm below the crosspiece, a double stamp with gold leaf inlay (fig. 3). The crescent-shaped motifs are arranged, one horizontally, with the indented side facing upwards, the other vertically, with the indented side facing to the left. Though difficult to identify, the stamps appear to represent winged human heads (see below).



Fig. 1 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 1: (a) as found; (b) image manipulated to show decoration; (c) reverse. Current length as restored 800 mm. – (Illustration M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).

Fig. 2 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 2: obverse (a) and detail of the suspension loop (b). Total surviving length 620 mm. – (Illustration M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).

Scabbard with a preserved length of 740 mm; width of the opening 55 mm; height of the opening 23 mm; length of the loop 25 mm; surviving length of the chape 75 mm; the length of the tip of the chape cannot be ascertained.

The iron scabbard, despite appearances, is only partially preserved. The rounded tip of the chape is the result of modern restoration. The scabbard is crimped closed by the front plate closing over the back with lateral grooves which are barely discernible. The bell-shaped scabbard opening is reinforced with a loop-plate which fastens to the back of the suspension-loop of the hanger (José Maria de Navarro's »frame type«) (fig. 4)⁵ and closes on the front by means of two broad foliated grips featuring openwork at the centre. The guard is attached by means of two small rounded washers. The rivet heads protrude. The chape is incomplete. The tip, truncated, has been recently restored, which might lead to the erroneous conclusion that the chape is rounded and unusually short. At its opening, the chape-clamp, perfectly preserved, is decorated with bird-shaped finials (flanges on the front and a spacer on the back) (fig. 5)⁶. The eyes are suggested by circular cut-outs and the beak by a small hooked beak pointing downwards on the front and by a triangular protuberance ending in an upward-pointing curl on the back; chevron-shaped hachures decorate the centre of the triangular space.

The upper plate is covered with *chagrinage* for its entire length and is additionally decorated with an engraved design with gold leaf inlay (fig. 3). The opening is decorated with a left-turning triskele, slightly raised. Secondary curls extend the rounded arms of the triskele (Lejars' type E1⁷), while the triangular interstices are enhanced with gold leaf. The design is bounded above by a thin strip following the line of the opening and below by a chevron pointing upwards, while the sides are defined by the reinforcing clamps.

The whole area is divided into three sections separated by oblique panels decorated with a series of S-curves. The volutes alternate with three triskele-decorated discs flanked by slender S's which expand at their ends (Lejars' type E2)⁸. The triangular openings are again enhanced with gold leaf (fig. 6a-b).

Sword and scabbard 2

The sword (fig. 2a-b) is incomplete and has been bent inwards in a convex curve. The lower part (about one-third of the total length) and the end of the tang are not preserved. Total preserved length 620 mm; preserved length of the tang 70 mm; height of the crosspiece 30 mm; preserved length of the blade 550 mm; blade width 50 mm; thickness 9 mm.

Straight iron sword with a double-edged blade, lenticular in cross section. The tang, rectangular in cross section, is incomplete. At the top of the hilt, a support provides a seating for the bell-shaped metal crosspiece. The blade bears, on the

Fig. 3 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 1: upper part of obverse. Width c. 50 mm. – (Illustration M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).





Fig. 4 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 1: reverse with remains of the suspension-loop. – (Photo M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).



Fig. 5 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 1: restored chape-end. – (Photo M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).

right side, about 10mm below the crosspiece, a double stamp with gold leaf inlay. The crescent-shaped motifs are arranged horizontally, the first with the dished side facing upwards, the other side facing downwards (fig. 10b). The stamps are considered further below, the lower one being difficult to identify.

Iron sword scabbard partially preserved. Preserved length 490 mm; width of the opening 55 mm; length of the guard 70 mm; length of the suspension-loop 25 mm.

The scabbard is crimped closed by the front plate closing over the back with lateral grooves which are barely discernible. The bell-shaped scabbard opening is reinforced with a clamp (incomplete) which fastens to the back of the loop-plate (again de Navarro's frame type 5 [fig. 2b]) and closes on the front by means of two broad grips. The guard is attached by washers which are ogival in shape. The rivet heads are protruding and rounded. The upper plate of the scabbard is covered with *chagrinage* throughout its length producing a



Fig. 6 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 1: **a-b** details of decoration on the obverse of the sword. – (Photos M. Neumann, GDKE, Direktion Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).

grainy effect at its lower end (fig. 7). In addition, it is decorated at its mouth by a left-turning triskele – again Lejars’ type E1 – slightly raised and supported by pairs of secondary S-curves. The design is bordered at the top by a thin line following the opening of the scabbard, below by a flattened V pointing upwards edged by a wavy line, and on the sides by the grips of the reinforcing clamp. Traces of organic material, possibly leather, are preserved on the rear side near the break. These await analysis.

Discussion of the grave context

The rest of the grave goods is typical for the Middle La Tène. Both swords had been bent before deposition while in the case of scabbard 1 some 160 mm of the blade extends from the scabbard⁹. Despite their condition, these are amongst the most remarkable known from Western Europe and clearly are, if not the work of a single metal-smith, then of the same workshop. Both are marked as objects of particular value by the pairs of stamps, one pair placed in the upper right-hand corner of each sword-blade and both inlaid with gold leaf.



Fig. 7 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword 2: detail of *chagrination*. – (Photo V. Megaw).



Fig. 8 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz) *chagrination*. Sword 2: upper part of the obverse. – (Photo V. Megaw).

It is clear that there are many similarities between the two swords. The incomplete state of the items, unfortunately, does not allow us to gauge the most significant dimensions – their total length and chape length –, so it is perhaps simpler here to concentrate on the descriptions connected to the form and to the production techniques and to discuss their probable dating, some further stylistic details being covered in our final section. One can note for the swords, the lenticular cross section of the blade and the quadrangular cross section of the tang. As far as the hilt is concerned there is a clearly discerned support on which sits a bell-shaped metal crosspiece which corresponds to markings on the lip of the scabbard, and finally, we note the presence of stamped marks which are crescent-shaped. For the scabbard, we can note the absence of any central rib running along the upper plate, and for the structure, a crimping imposed from the front around the back with lines faintly marked, a simple longitudinal incision indicating where the front plate was folded back. The bell-shaped lip belongs to the group of low, narrow, triangular shapes representative of the site La Tène (Ct. Neuchâtel/CH)¹⁰. At the back, the quadrangular loop-plate (**figs 2b; 4**) is attached by means of fixings, domed on sword 1 or ogival on sword 2 and protruding, rounded rivets. The frame assembly is reinforced with a staple which covers the plate and comes around to the front to be closed up by means of broad, foliate shaped grips (frame type). The upper plate is distinguished further by a rich engraved design, including the triskele at the opening and the *chagrination* background, to which we must add the bird terminals of the chape clamp and the partially preserved chape (sword 1) (**fig. 5**). The stamped markings on the swords and on the first scabbard are also notable for their gold leaf inlay.

Overall, these characteristics are identical to those of the weapons of group 2.2 from the La Tène site¹¹, formerly group B as defined by de Navarro in his pioneering study of the eponymous deposit. De Navarro distinguished three groups, two of them distinct (groups A and B), and a third (group C) sharing a certain number of characteristics with the two previous groups¹². These characteristics are also those of the weapons from group 6 at Gournay-sur-Aronde (dép. Oise/F)¹³.

One may add some further details of scabbard 1; as noted, although poorly preserved, the suspension-loop clearly belongs to de Navarro's class of frame reinforces (**fig. 4**)¹⁴; that on scabbard 2 is of the same type

and is better preserved (**fig. 7**). The chape of scabbard 1 is unusually short and its tip is missing but the chape-bridge with its conjoined stylized birds' heads is a common feature of Middle La Tène swords, here back-to-back and with their bodies filled in with parallel hachures (**fig. 5**) with a close parallel in the sword from Hart bei Wildon, grave 11 (Bez. Leibnitz/A) in Styria also with a frame reinforce¹⁵. The whole of the front of both Thür scabbards is covered with *chagrinage* (**fig. 7**). Especially to be noted is the additional low relief decoration on the front of both pieces. Immediately below the entry to both scabbards is a variation of the triskele or trefoil motif which has a long life. Here, cut into the iron, the triple setting is flanked by a pair of additional circles, all five filled by ballooning commas¹⁶ and linked by a continuous line, the apex being marked by a small roundel and the triangular voids between the circles by a triangular droplet of gold – a feature to which we shall return. Scabbard 2 has much the same design but executed much less carefully but as on scabbard 1, the lower edge of the trefoil design is marked by a flattened V, its apex pointing upwards and consisting of parallel lines bordered by a scalloped edging (**fig. 8**).

However, the most striking decoration on scabbard 1 of Thür are the three diagonal bands filled with linked S's constructed of similar fat commas to those decorating the scabbard mouth (**figs 1a; 6a-b**). In between each band is a slender tendril formed of fine parallel lines similar to those that run down both edges of the scabbard. At the centre of each band is a simple triskele ending in a knob or button¹⁷; further gold triangles mark both the centre of each triskele and the juncture of the tendrils with the triskele. Only the upper limit of the tendril design seems short of perfection; two opposing gold triangles mark what seems to be an incomplete pattern.

The evidence of graves indicates that these swords are most often associated with leather belts with rings and staples, and shield umbos (shield bosses) with trapezoid or short rectangular wings, occasionally the wings are long and rectangular or divided into two (see **tab. 1**). The spearheads which accompany them have a narrow, convex blade and a long socket, or are biconvex. There also exist some large spearheads whose blade is broad at the base, then with straight edges and a triangular point. The brooches, most often iron, belong to the range of Middle La Tène types, with a rectangular or curved bow, and either a wide diameter short spring (with 2 or 4 coils), a longer spring (with 6-10 coils) or yet again with more than twelve coils. In the most developed examples, iron variations of the Mötschwil type brooch¹⁸ have been recorded. As to dating, one can place the sword/scabbard combinations of the type exhumed at Thür in an »early« part of Lt C2 to the extent that elements characteristic of Lt C1 are generally lacking¹⁹. This »early« Lt C2 precedes the »classic« C2 of the »Mötschwil« phase as set down in the scheme previously proposed by F. R. Hodson (1968), W. E. Stöckli (1975) and B. S. Stähli (1977)²⁰. This interpretation differs from the idea of a relatively short C2 phase, illustrated by the Mötschwil brooch and proposed by P. J. Suter (1984). This »early« or »initial« C2 phase corresponds to the »recent« C1 phase to which some authors refer²¹. These associations also point to the »classical« C2 phase as evidenced by the presence of brooches related to the Mötschwil type. Moreover, these are no longer present in the transitional phase leading to the final stage of La Tène. In absolute chronological terms then, one can envisage for the oldest associations a date in the final two decades of the 3rd century BC. Assigning the beginning of Lt D to the years 160/150 BC, one can propose for our swords a *terminus ante quem* in the years 180/160 BC²². (T. L.)

GENERAL STYLISTIC DISCUSSION

While similar decoration of the scabbard mouth can be seen on swords from Dobova, grave 23 (obč. Brežice)²³, Formin pri Gorišnici (obč. Gorišnica; **fig. 9a**)²⁴, and Slatina v Rožni dolni (obč. Celje), grave 9 – with a stamp (**fig. 12a**) – and grave 27²⁵ in Slovenia and from another waggon grave at Odžaci/Odžak (Zapad-

| sites | Lejars' type | length (mm) | width (mm) | length of the chape (mm) | decoration | associated objects | references |
|---|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Germany | | | | | | | |
| München-Obermenzing, inhumation grave 7 | 2.2 | 715 | 46 | 192 | triple »bird finial« | umbo with trapezoid wings, belt with rings, spearhead with long socket, razors, surgical instruments, iron armband | Krämer 1985 |
| München-Obermenzing, inhumation grave 12 | 2.2 | 812 | 43 | 174 | | umbo with trapezoid wings, belt with rings and staple, spearhead with long socket, 2 Lt C type iron brooches, hollow iron armband, 1 pot | Krämer 1985 |
| Austria | | | | | | | |
| Hart bei Wildon, cremation grave 2 | 2.2 | 740 | 46 | 140 | | umbo with trapezoid wings, spearhead | Szabó/Petres 1992 |
| Croatia | | | | | | | |
| Zvonimirovo, cremation grave LT 2 | 2.2 | 760 | 45 | 202 | curvilinear | umbo with divided wings, small spearhead, belt with rings and staple, enamelled ring with notch, 2 iron brooches type Lt C | Dizdar 2013 |
| Zvonimirovo, cremation grave LT 22 | 2.2 | 780 | 48 | 172 | | umbo with trapezoid wings, large spearhead, knife, punches and razors, double-stranded chain, belt with rings and staple, enamel ring with notch, 13 iron brooches type Lt C, »brooch« and 2 beads, 6 pots | Dizdar 2013 |
| France | | | | | | | |
| Mathay, cremation | 2.2 | - | - | - | triskele | umbo with long rectangular wings, spearhead, knife, punches and razor, 2 type LT II iron brooches with crossbow-form springs, 7 pots | Mougin/Passard/Urlacher 1994 |
| Italy | | | | | | | |
| S. Maria di Zevio »Mirandola«, cremation grave 86 | 2.2 | 782 | 52 | 155 | | umbo with long rectangular wings, spearhead with biconvex blade, large knife, 2 Lt C type iron brooches (crossbow-springs), 7 pots | Salzani 1996 |
| Slovenia | | | | | | | |
| Brežice, cremation grave 65 | 2.2 | 815 | 48 | 145 | triskele | umbo with divided wings, belt with rings, belt with rings & staple, 2 pots | Szabó/Petres 1992 |
| Dobova, cremation grave 23 | 2.2 | 740 | 48 | 144 | triskele | umbo with trapezoid wings, large spearhead with convex blade, 2 iron brooches (one a variant of the Mötschwil type), 4 pots | |
| Slatina, cremation grave 19 | 2.2 | 850 | 47 | 200 | triskele + curvilinear | umbo with rectangular wings, spearhead, iron type LT II brooch (variant of Mötschwil type) | Pirkmajer 1991 |
| Slatina u Rozni dolini, grave without number | 2.2? | 0 | 48 | 0 | | umbo with trapezoid wings, 2 large spearheads, belt with rings and staple, enamelled ring with notch, knife, punches, razors, meat hook, 2 LT II type brooches, iron spiral bracelet | Pirkmajer 1991 |

Tab. 1 Middle La Tène burials with shield umbos of trapezoid and rectangular type (excluding Switzerland). – (After Lejars 2013, fig. 143).

no-Bački okr.) in Serbia (fig. 9b)²⁶ – all with *chagrinage* – much closer at hand is one of the swords from Plaidt, »Nesselbüsch« (Lkr. Mayern-Koblenz; fig. 9c-d)²⁷. The key feature of the decoration of the two Thür swords is, however, the diagonal curvilinear decoration on the front plate of scabbard 1. While the upper section might have been intended to be an echo of a »dragon« pair²⁸, there are few parallels for the diag-



Fig. 9 Comparative details of Lt C decorated iron scabbards: **a** Formin pri Gorišnici/SLO, width 47 mm. – **b** Odžaci/Odžak, Bačka/SRB, width 58 mm. – **c-d** Plaidt »Nesselbüsch«/D. Details of two swords, width 60 mm. – (a photo Pokrajinski muzej, Ptuj-Ormož; b photo Arheološki institute, Belgrade; c-d photos Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier).



Fig. 10 Zvonimirovo-Veliko polje, grave LT 2 (Virovitičko-podravška žup./HR). Detail (a) of the sword scabbard and reverse (b). – (Photos courtesy M. Dizdar).



Fig. 11 Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz). Sword stamps: (a) on sword 1; (b) on sword 2; width of stamps c. 10 mm. – (Photos M. Neumann, GDKE, Landesarchäologie, Koblenz).

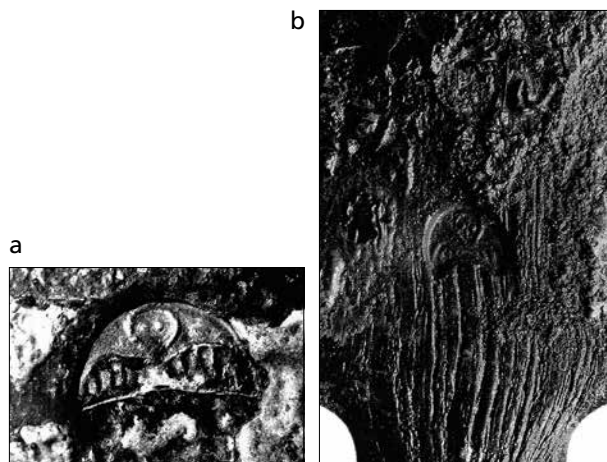


Fig. 12 »Cherub« type sword stamps. Width of stamps 9mm: a Slatina v Rožni dolni/SLO, grave 9. – b Römerberg-Heiligenstein/D. – (a photo Pokrajinski muzej, Celje; b photo RGZM).

onal decoration as a whole, perhaps intended to represent a sword belt but, be that as it may, the earliest example of diagonal decoration on a La Tène scabbard is the vegetal ornament of a sword with a Type II »dragon« pair from Litér (Kom. Veszprém/H)²⁹, comparable with the sinuous »snakes« of two Late La Tène swords and indicative of the longevity of certain motifs³⁰. However, closer in detail is the Lt C2 sword from Zvonimirovo-Veliko polje, grave LT 2 (Virovitičko-podravška žup./HR) which shares with Thür a bent sword blade, a diagonal band of linked S's – but only a single example –, birds' head chape-bridges, a sword stamp and *chagrinage* (fig. 10a-b)³¹.

We have observed that there are sword stamps on both Thür sword blades; such stamps are found both on the Continent and in the British Isles and Lisa Deutscher has recently presented us with a full corpus of some 155 examples extending from Hungary to Wales and dating from Lt C-D³². The four stamps on the Thür swords are, as is the general rule, high up on the blade and on the left-hand side when facing the sword (fig. 11a-b). Close examination indicates that though at first sight, the Thür stamps are identical, this is not the case. Variations of these half-moon motifs are the most frequently represented, many being enigmatic human faces shown full frontal supported cherub-like but what look like wings (fig. 12a-b)³³; several other examples are also embellished with gold leaf, that from Böttstein (Ct. Aargau/CH), having no less than three stamps in the shape of a boar, two on one side and the third on the reverse³⁴. There has been considerable discussion as to the purpose of these stamps. While a number of stamps on short swords have been associated with astral symbols³⁵, the crescent-shaped stamps with stylised heads may be maker's marks – the near-magical power of the smith in the Celtic world and later and the power possessed in the translation of raw materials into finished objects has been frequently debated assisted by ethnographic models³⁶. Another symbol associated with swords is, of course, the so-called dragon pair more or less contemporary with the stamps but decorating not the sword but the scabbard. We have suggested that the »dragon« pair was a symbol of rank and achievement in battle as well as possessing apotropaic powers³⁷. It is noticeable that there is only one example of simple stamps and »dragon« pairs occurring on the same sword³⁸ while »dragon« pairs are found much more frequently than stamps. Of the two swords in Dobova, grave 10, one has a dragon pair and the other a stamp. Could there have been two classes marked by the two symbols, a craft brotherhood and a warrior class?

This brings us to another aspect of the Thür chariot grave – the fact that there are not only two decorated swords in the same grave, albeit that one is finer than the other, and that there is a feasting set also for two. There are other hints of *Waffenbrüder* or more frequently a single burial with a pair of swords such as Dobova-Kosovka, grave 10. Katarzyna Czarnecka provides a useful overview of La Tène graves containing more than one set of weapons³⁹ pointing out that there are both double graves with swords and single graves with two sets of weapons or single graves with two swords⁴⁰. While supporting the theory that double weapon graves – found as early as Ha D – may indeed indicate members of a shared élite, the concept of the *Waffenbrüder* has its parallel in the Classical world such as Achilles and Patroclus let alone the heavenly twins, Castor and Pollux; their existence in chariot or waggon graves also suggests a élite warrior and his driver as Mitja Guštin interprets the double grave from Odžaci where again both swords have stamps. At Thür, scabbard 2, the less spectacular of the swords, might indicate that this was the mark of the charioteer.

Finally, there is the question as to where exactly the Thür swords may have been produced; to a degree, this might be regarded as an un-question or certainly one for which there is no easy answer. In the absence of material evidence for specialist swordsmith's workshops but with the widespread occurrence of finely decorated swords in Lt C – certainly status markers – it is perhaps easier to surmise where they were not produced. Rather than a limited number of regional centres it seems much more likely that there were, within this wide distribution, a number of local production centres. Certainly, there are several features which have led to swords of this type to be classed with de Navarro's »Swiss sword« style most recently discussed in detail by Thierry Lejars⁴¹. De Navarro indicated what he considered to be the distribution of »Swiss« swords found outside Switzerland as well as those copying Swiss models⁴². It is true that the scarcity of such swords from the Rhineland might suggest that these few – which include our Thür swords – could be regarded as the product of gift exchange or the trophies of military activities in a period when there is ample evidence of movement throughout Europe. Certainly, as Marko Dizdar has noted⁴³, the increasing number of parallels from Central and Eastern Europe, notably the southern Alps – the territory of the Taurisci – and

south-eastern Pannonia – latterly the home of the Scordisci – confirm Transdanubia as just one of the centres for many of the swords cited here as well as what later have been termed products of the »Hungarian« sword style. And while *chagrinage* has been considered a feature of sword-makers in northern Switzerland, its presence on several of the swords mentioned here, for example, Formin, Dobova, Slatina and Zvonimirovo, might suggest that the technique was also adopted by the Balkan workshops, a region which was to see movements both to and from the west⁴⁴. (V. M.)

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was always there to welcome our visits to Slovenia – and Boris Kavur (Koper); Lisa Deutscher (Freiburg) freely exchanged ideas about the form and possible significance of sword stamps. – Lois Zweck and Andrew McKenzie (both Adelaide) assisted with translation while Robert Breen and Leah Morrison at Flinders Press prepared the images for the press. Unless otherwise indicated, all images have been provided by GDKE, Außenstelle Koblenz.

Notes

- 1) In 2006 during the course of collecting material for a forthcoming supplement to Paul Jacobsthal's seminal work »Early Celtic art« (Oxford 1944; reprinted with corrections 1969) one of the present authors (V. M.) visited the collections of the Landesmuseum Koblenz where one of the swords, here numbered Sword 1, was on display. In view of the unique nature of both the sword, its companion piece and the grave in which it was found, the present note has been prepared as a curtain raiser to a final publication of the cemetery which is in preparation: A. von Berg, Das Gräberfeld von Thür. Berichte zur Archäologie an Mittelrhein und Mosel. – Brief accounts have appeared: Wegner 1987; Oesterwind/Schäfer 1992; von Berg 1992-1996; Wegner 2012.
- 2) Wefers 2012.
- 3) The most comprehensive listings of Iron Age waggon graves – much more inclusive than their titles suggest – are Schönfelder 2002 and Trachsel 2004, vol. 2.
- 4) It has not been possible so far to remove the surviving sword blades from their scabbards.
- 5) de Navarro 1972, 26. 158-160 fig. 6, 4. – See also Lejars 2013, 93-95 fig. 63, bottom right.
- 6) de Navarro 1972, esp. 189-196; Lejars 2013, 402-404.
- 7) Lejars 2013, 386-392.
- 8) Ibidem 387 fig. 286.
- 9) Ibidem 92.
- 10) Ibidem 92.
- 11) Ibidem 102-103.
- 12) In the author's study of the La Tène material in the Schwab collection now in the Nouveau Musée de Bienne, formerly the Musée Schwab (Lejars 2013), it is proposed to reduce to two groups – 2.1 and 2.2 – the weapons found at the site as it is considered that the third of de Navarro's divisions is really not supported by the evidence. Group 2.1, which embraces the greater part of de Navarro's group A, is also the earliest (late Lt C1) while group 2.2 equates to de Navarro's group B (dating to the end of Lt C1 or the beginning of C2). If the former equates to Middle La Tène (Lt C), the latter reflects the classic forms of the period.
- 13) Lejars 1994, 52-53.
- 14) See note 5 above.
- 15) Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. no. 77; Dizdar 2013, 109-110 fig. 31.
- 16) Lejars 2013, 386-392 fig. 286.
- 17) Ibidem fig. 286, form E1.
- 18) For the type see most recently Márton 2012.
- 19) Lejars 2013, 232.
- 20) Ibidem 340.
- 21) See Müller 1990; 2007.
- 22) Kaenel 1990, 256.
- 23) Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. no. 116.
- 24) Ibidem cat. no. 118.
- 25) Slatina, grave 9: Pirkmajer 1998, figs 6-9; 1991, fig. 10 is incorrect; Dizdar 2013, 100 fig. 25, 1. – Slatina, grave 27: Pirkmajer 1991, fig. 14; 1998, fig. 13; Dizdar 2013, esp. 120-121 fig. 26; for material from another male Lt C2 grave with a *Hiebmesser* of the »Dürrnberg« type, the first found in the region, see Gaspari et al. 2004. – For the most recent discussion of the Balkan swords in the context of the »Swiss« sword style see Dizdar 2013, 115-122.

- 26) Notably another cremation grave with two swords, one with a scabbard of frame type, a zoomorphic mount and bit, iron tyres and other evidence of the chariot: Guštin 1984, 121-127 pls 5-7; Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. nos 131-132; Dizdar 2013, 102-105 fig. 27.
- 27) Discovered in 1952, Plaidt is significant both because of its proximity to Thür and the presence of parts of a chariot: eye spikes (*Ösenstifte*), hub frets (*Nabenringe*), elements from the upper part of the chariot (*Kastenbeschläge*), lynch-pins (*Achsnägel*), wheel tyres, harness rings, phalerae, a pair of bits as well as the two decorated swords: Wegner 1987; Oesterwind/Schäfer 1992.
- 28) One can also compare these »pseudo-dragons« with the terminals of the S just below the upper oblique band of decoration and the beaked terminals of some chapes from the type-site: see Lejars 2013, fig. 294B.
- 29) de Navarro 1972, esp. 82-83. 98-99 pl. 130, 1a-c; Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. no. 39.
- 30) Jacobsthal 1944, no. 105; de Navarro 1972, no. 71. An interesting sword with all-over scabbard decoration with a fine triskel at the scabbard mouth comes from Ensérune, grave 1 (dép. Hérault/F); so far only a brief note has appeared in print: Jimenez 2006, 102 fig. 22.
- 31) Dizdar 2013, 94-114 figs 20-21.
- 32) Deutscher 2012.
- 33) Deutscher 2012, 272-277 figs 8-9. – Compare Thür with the stamp on the sword from Slatina, grave 9: Pirkmajer 1998, figs 6-7.
- 34) With two boar figures: Drack 1954/1955; Kelten Aargau 1982, 72 figs 27-28; Fitzpatrick 1996, 379 fig. 6; Deutscher 2012, cat. no. 4. – From Syon Reach on the River Thames comes to a sword with two highly stylized representations inlaid not with gold leaf but with brass – the earliest known use of the alloy north of the Alps: Deutscher 2012, cat. no. 113; for colour illustrations of this piece see Megaw/Megaw 2005, pl. 61. – For the occasional use of gold leaf on other swords see those from Aiud, grave 1 (jud. Alba/RO) and Gödöllő (Kom. Pest/H), respectively: Crişan 1974; Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. no. 13.
- 35) Fitzpatrick 1996.
- 36) See, for example, Hingley 1997 and Lejars 2013, 117 for a more recent summation of possibilities.
- 37) Megaw/Megaw 1990, esp. 71-72.
- 38) In 1890 at Corgnac-sur-l'Isle (dép. Dordogne/F) during railway construction the contents of what seems most likely to have been a grave was recovered: Boudet/Chevillot/Gomez de Soto 1986 (Bordeaux); Deutscher 2012, cat. no. 90. – Most notable of the Corgnac finds were a sword and two fragments of the scabbard. On the blade was the stamp of a stylized raptor's head while on what must have been a section of the rear of the scabbard was a version of the three-part whirligig associated with the »Swiss sword« style: Lejars 2013, 386-388 fig. 286. The other section of the scabbard has preserved the mouth whose decoration can be read as a pair of backward looking birds or as a variation of the late Type III »dragon« pair. Either way, there is a comparison with Eastern European swords such as that from a grave at Sremski Karlovci (Južno Bački okr./SRB): Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. no. 139.
- 39) Czarnecka 2007. – See also Egg 1999.
- 40) Most recently finds, now in the Landesmuseum Kärnten, have been published from what appears to have been an amateur excavation of a small Middle La Tène cemetery in Central Carinthia (Dolenz 2004): grave 1 of three identified had a fine if undecorated helmet of the *Eisenhelme mit angesetztem Nackenschutz* type (see Schaaff 1974), shield mounts, two spears and two Middle La Tène brooches, a belt-chain with stamped links and two bent swords, both with a marked mid-rib and fine decoration to be compared with those from Formin (fig. 9a), Szob (Kom. Pest/H) and Bölscke-Madocsahegy (Kom. Tojna/H): respectively Szabó/Petres 1992, cat. nos 5-6. 63. 118.
- 41) de Navarro 1970, 307-312; Lejars 2013, 379-411.
- 42) de Navarro 1970, fig. 36.
- 43) Dizdar 2013, 115-122. – For an outline see Dizdar 2015.
- 44) Tasić 1992.

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Mittelatènezeitliche Waffenbrüder in Rheinland-Pfalz? Der Nachweise von zwei Schwertern aus einem Wagengrab im Gräberfeld von Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz)

Ein Wagengrab stellt eines der reichsten Gräber der Mittelatènezeit im Brandgräberfeld von Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz) dar. Obwohl es kein Anzeichen für eine zweite Bestattung gibt, liegen hier zwei Schwerter mit verzierter Schwertscheide und Stempelmarken auf den Klingen vor. Nach einer detaillierten Untersuchung der typologischen Einordnung werden die absolute Datierung der Schwerter und der Dekor unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Stempelmarken und ihrer Bedeutung diskutiert. Weiter folgen Bemerkungen zu anderen Funden von einem Paar Schwertern in Gräbern für eine Person. Haben wir es hier mit einer Gruppe von Waffenbrüdern zu tun, wie sie bereits für die homerische Zeit beschrieben werden? Der Artikel schließt mit einer kurzen Diskussion des möglichen Herstellungsortes dieser Schwerter.

Middle La Tène *Waffenbrüder* in the Rhineland-Palatinate? Evidence from Two Swords from a Chariot Burial in the Cemetery of Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz)

One of the richest graves in the Middle La Tène cremation cemetery of Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz) contains a chariot burial. Though there is no sign of a second interment there are two swords both with decorated scabbards and stamps on the sword blades. Following a detailed consideration of the swords' typology, their absolute date and the style of their ornament with particular consideration of the stamps and their possible significance, some remarks are added to other La Tène finds of a pair of swords in a single grave. Are we presented with evidence for a caste of *Waffenbrüder* as recorded as early as Homeric times? The article concludes with a brief discussion of the swords' possible place of manufacture.

Des »frères d'armes« à La Tène moyenne en Rhénanie-Palatinat? Le témoignage de deux épées d'une tombe à char de Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz)

Une des plus riches tombes du cimetière à incinération de La Tène moyenne de Thür (Lkr. Mayen-Koblenz) se signale par le dépôt d'un char. Bien qu'il n'y ait aucun signe de la présence d'un second individu, la tombe contenait deux épées avec leurs fourreaux décorés et des estampilles sur les lames. Après un examen détaillé de la typologie des épées, de leur datation absolue et du style de leur ornementation, avec une attention particulière aux estampilles et à leur signification possible, nous nous proposons de revenir sur quelques découvertes de La Tène avec deux épées dans une tombe simple. Avons-nous ici des preuves d'une caste des »frères d'armes« comme on en connaît dès l'époque homérique? L'article se termine par une brève discussion sur le lieu de fabrication des épées.

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Rheinland-Pfalz / Latènezeit / Schwert / Scheide / Kunst
Rhineland-Palatinate / La Tène period / sword / scabbard / art
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