

Tim Grünewald, **Rituale im Kontext jung- und spätneolithischer Grabenwerke im westlichen Mitteleuropa und Südsandinavien**. Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie, volume 381. Publisher Dr. Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 2022. 449 pages with 100 illustrations and 13 tables.

This is a doctoral dissertation written in 2014–2018 and defended in 2019 at Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. It contains a study of 249 Neolithic causewayed enclosures in western Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia, 166 of which, dating between 4400 and 2800 B. C., have been subjected to more or less extensive archaeological excavations. In his Master-Artium-thesis of 2011, »Zur Funktion jung- und spätneolithischer Grabenwerke in Mitteleuropa«, at Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel, the author examined the function of the enclosures, whilst in this dissertation he focuses on possible evidence of rituals. The method used in this investigation is a traditional archaeological comparison of all features and finds documented by excavations and surveys, which are listed in thirteen tables at the end of the book, after a forty-two page catalogue containing summary information about the 249 enclosures, including references.

The main text of the book is based on these sources. In the introduction (chapter 1) the author refers to the many conflicting theories about causewayed enclosures. Grünewald does not propose a new interpretation of the phenomenon, but, on the basis of the collected dates, aims to illustrate the tendencies and developments of the enclosures within time and space, as well as to explain the significance of rituals associated with the structures. In the section about terminology and research (chapter 2) he prefers the term »Grabenwerk« instead of »Erdwerk«, the latter being most often used in German archaeology, as »Graben«, meaning ditch, is the feature that defines causewayed enclosures. In the following text, he summarises the research history and discusses current interpretations of these structures, adhering to the theory that they were central, communal places for performing ritual activities.

It seems reasonable to pause here for a moment. Were these rituals solely religious or were there also ceremonies which were more associated with everyday life? Such a question is not irrelevant in the context of German archaeology, where we often encounter a distinction between sacred and profane. But were the people of the Neolithic actually aware of the idea of profanity? The word profane comes from Latin *pro fanum*, which means »outside of the temple«. It was used by the Romans when referring to a multi-ethnic and thus multi-religious society meeting separate rules for justice and behaviour. Such a distinction between sacred and profane may not have existed in the Neolithic. Johannes Müller addresses this issue and is quoted by Grünewald (p. 300): »Profane and sacred often go together in life, profane actions were at the same time ritual«.

So how should rituals be defined in an archaeological context? The author has a highly critical attitude towards the identification of rituals, which he presents in chapter 4, dealing with methodology and problem analysis. His approach is characterised by a sober respect for alternative interpretations. However, the wealth of information in this book provides ample opportunities for the reader's own evaluations. As the final conclusion demonstrates, Grünewald only permits certain recurrent find contexts to constitute evidence of rituals, such as depositions in the bottom of ditches and complete pottery vessels, as well as flint or stone artefacts, deposited in pits inside the enclosures (chapter 11).

Western Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia is a large area to examine, given the numerous individual culture groups with specific, archaeological characteristics and developmental courses, as well as mutual influences, when causewayed enclosures were constructed and used. Fortunately, especially for a Scandinavian, Grünewald provides a good introduction to the area »reflected by the research« at the beginning of chapter 3. There is also a useful section on chronology, which includes a timetable comparing the chronologies of Western and Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia. The boundary between »Jung- und Spätneolithikum« (Young and Late Neolithic) is placed at 3500 B. C. The period between 4400 and 2800 B. C. is divided into six phases, which are used in the following for quantitative comparisons of features and finds within a practical timescale.

The following chapters deal with the causewayed enclosures in relation to time (chapter 5), space (chapter 6), features (chapter 7) and finds (chapter 8). These chapters and sub-chapters are structured in very much the same way. The geographical distribution is illustrated with maps, and diagrams show the recorded features and finds in relation to the six chronological phases. There are 83 distribution maps and 42 statistical diagrams. Both types of illustrations are informative, but the reader is not provided with illustrations showing the physical appearance of the causewayed enclosures, in the form of site maps, excavation plans and photographs. Nor are there any illustrations of the finds. This means that the reader requires access to a fairly large library, containing the monographs and articles cited in the references, and in which illustrations of the individual sites can be found. It is not known why the graphical documentation has been limited in this way, but it would certainly have been a different book if at least illustrations of some of the more important sites had been included.

Chapter 9 presents the results of the investigation in seventy-eight (unnumbered) points. I cannot go through all of these here, but a few should be mentioned. The first involves contemporaneity between the use of causewayed enclosures and burial monuments in Northern as well as Central Europe. At Sarup on Funen, dolmens were built during Sarup phase I, circa 3400 B. C., and passage graves were constructed during Sarup phase II, circa 3200 B. C. In eastern Holstein, activities at the causewayed enclosure at Büdelsdorf occurred at

the same time as activities associated with funerals at the nearby megalithic graves at Borgstedt, as demonstrated by comparison of the pottery from both these sites. The causewayed enclosures were in use both when the burial monuments were constructed and in ceremonial practice. This relationship extends back to some of the earliest causewayed enclosures of the Cerny Culture in France, such as the one at Balloy in the Paris Basin dating to the middle of the fifth millennium, when burials were placed in non-megalithic barrows in close proximity to an enclosure.

Ethnoarchaeological studies have recently focused on the construction of monuments, which are comparable with the megalithic tombs of the Neolithic period in Europe. Such activity has been shown to occur right up until the present time, for instance, in Indonesia and north-eastern India, and has been recorded in the studies of, amongst others, Christian Jeunesse and Maria Wunderlich. It is interesting how these recent construction projects are organised and how the social structure functions in societies with various degrees of hierarchisation. The person who orders the building of a monument requires the backing of families or clans, because considerable expenditure is involved, such as needs to provide the workforce with food and drink during the construction process. The completion of the work is usually celebrated with a great feast, in which domestic animals are slaughtered and their meat is distributed among and consumed by the participants. Feasts have important social functions. Could the causewayed enclosures have been arenas for such feasts? In this case, part of their function can be determined, at least for many of the enclosures of the Funnel Beaker Culture. At the enclosures of the Michelsberg Culture, however, the people of which did not construct burial monuments, feasts may have been held for other reasons. Although Grünewald's chapter 10 is devoted to ethnography, he does not mention the above, possible analogies.

One of the results mentioned in chapter 9 concerns the finds of animal bones in the ditches of the causewayed enclosures. Analyses indicate that most of these are from domestic animals, with cattle dominant. This is not inconsistent with the above suggestion that feasts were held at the enclosures. Meat from domestic animals did not normally constitute part of the daily diet of these early agricultural societies.

Human bones have been found, mainly in the ditches of the enclosures, but also in grave-like features within and outside, containing complete or fragmentary skeletons of human individuals of both sexes and all ages, which are either burnt, partially burnt or unburnt. These remains are important for the interpretation of both the function of the enclosures and the rituals that took place at them. In chapter 8, Grünewald devotes twenty-five pages to this topic. There is plenty of evidence for physical violence, which brought about the deaths of these people. Some heads or crania were mounted on poles and could have been trophies of con-

flicts between different groups. There are also finds that may represent evidence of ritual killings. This leads to the question of human sacrifice. There is definite proof of human sacrifice in Northern Europe during the same timespan as the causewayed enclosures, circa 3650–3000 B. C. Such sacrifices do not generally seem to have been associated with causewayed enclosures, although human bones have also been found at these locations, but took the form of the bog bodies of the Neolithic. This encourages us to suppose social inequality and slavery at that time.

In chapter 11, focusing on interpretation, Grünewald proposes his definition of rituals at the causewayed enclosures, as mentioned above, but also states that even the construction of the enclosures may have had the character of a ritual. It was a collective undertaking that strengthened the cohesion and identity of the group. Taking this a few steps further, the author would probably have reached the conclusion proposed above, that causewayed enclosures were used for feasting. When all the pieces of information in the book are combined, this does not contradict such an interpretation. But it is reasonable to remain objective, as the author does. The discussions about the causewayed enclosures will continue. During this process, Grünewald's book will retain its value as an important source for the study of this complicated subject.

Finally, Grünewald briefly provides information about the circumstances that affected his work on this dissertation (chapter 12), which is followed by summaries in German and English (chapter 13).

Copenhagen

Poul Otto Nielsen