

Gerhard Bersu, Die spätrömische Befestigung 'Bürgle' bei Gundremmingen. Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Band 10. München 1964. 8 und 75 Seiten, 5 Abbildungen, 24 Tafeln, eine Karte.

When this book reached the reviewer it could still be hoped that Dr. Bersu would be alive to read these pages. That was not to be: and although we shall, it is hoped, yet read some posthumous works, it is with a deep sense of loss and a lasting memory of the skill and brilliance of Gerhard Bersu that these lines are penned. The publication of Bürgle, excavated by him in 1925, was postponed, suppressed and is only now finally achieved, an epitome of the struggles and vicissitudes of his professional life and of his noteworthy tenacity of purpose, for which we must all be grateful.

The site lies south of Faimingen and west of Aislingen, guarding the route along the southern rim of the Danube valley rather than any northward line of communication. The occupation, dated on numismatic evidence from about A.D. 335 to about 383, belongs to the late-Roman occupation of Rhaetia, though not to its final period. The oval hillock thus chosen was protected by a single ditch, discontinued round the steep north-east angle and broken by wide causeways on north-west and south-east. The stonework of the fortification itself had been very heavily robbed and was discovered in a sand-pit and followed by skilful study of the robber-trenches. The fort thus defined is 66 metres long, 27,50 metres wide at the west end and 22,50 metres wide at the east, a difference due to two rectangular re-entrants on the south front. The defensive wall was some 3 metres wide at foundation. The main east gate lies at the back of a deep forecourt set between an extension of the south wall and the north-east tower, while the north-west gate, a mere postern, is similarly related to a tiny court recessed between the north and west walls.

Internally, the long and narrow fortlet is bordered by timber barrack-rooms set against the main long walls, and each furnished with a hearth, usually at least once renewed. Their fronts are marked by post-holes and separated by a narrow street, and the two last compartments in each row are slightly larger than the others. This leaves ten approximately similar compartments, five on each side, while in the south-west angle and associated re-entrant there is a series of at least five rooms, one heated by a hypocaust. These last apartments can be regarded as the suite of the officer in charge. The accommodation thus suits a *centuria* and its *centenarius*, with his under-officers. The finds are appropriate to such an establishment. There are no luxury articles. Among the weapons the *ballista*-bolts are interesting and compare closely with those from Dura; and they go well with the ditch which, in fourth-century manner, lies far outside the wall, so that curtain-fire from the defenders may cover the point where the ditch hinders attack. Just as the ditch-system is closely related also to the contour of the hillock, so the elongated fortlet is adapted to its shape. The recessed gateways are matched in fourth-century forts at Portchester (Hampshire) and Pevensey (Sussex).

These considerations inevitably lead up to the sole major criticism that the admirable report would seem to invite. Bersu adopts the hypothesis first formed by Reinecke that Bürgle is to be identified with *Pinianis* of the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Occ. XXXV 29) where lay the tribune of the First Valerian Cohort of Phrygians. He concluded that since the entry does not specifically mention a *castellum* it refers solely to the headquarter premises of this commandant, which, as he observes correctly enough, would be fortified. To this it must be objected that neither administrative offices nor living quarters appropriate to a *tribunus* exist at Bürgle, where the planning is consistent only with the quarters of an officer of much lower rank. Nor, again, is it the practice of the *Notitia* to classify *castella* as such, although, on the other hand, it is regularly assumed that when a commandant is mentioned with his unit he is in fact to be associated with the whole of it. It is thus difficult from every point of view to accept the Bürgle as a detached tribune's fortified headquarters. On the contrary, it falls into place very well as the post for a small detachment, which in size and disposition, *mutatis mutandis*, may be compared with such structures as the *burgus speculatorius* of Tisaver (Kasr-Ghelane, see R. Cagnat, *L'armée romaine de l'Afrique* [...] 559). On this interpretation the Bürgle becomes more normal, but in no respect less interesting, and this reviewer at least would reiterate his admiration for the skill with which Bersu defined its many interesting details amid particularly daunting conditions. *Ave, optime fossatorum, atque vale!*

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