

Michael Gebühr, *Der Trachtschmuck der älteren römischen Kaiserzeit im Gebiet zwischen unterer Elbe und Oder und auf den westlichen dänischen Inseln*. Göttinger Schriften zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 18. Karl Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster 1976. 256 Seiten, 171 Abbildungen, 4 Tafeln.

The title of this book is lengthy, but precise. The author has studied in depth the brooches, buckles, strap-ends and other metal dress-fittings, both functional and decorative, found in the Iron-Age cemeteries of the region between the lower Elbe and Oder and on the Danish islands of Fünen (Fyn) and Langeland. He presents a me-

thodological study, based on published sources, designed to answer three questions: 1. what was the function of these dress-fittings; 2. what was the social standing of their wearers; 3. what was their distribution and chronological development. The implications of this material for contemporary clothing fashions elsewhere in Iron-Age and Roman Europe are, deliberately, not pursued.

After an opening statement on his aims and methods, Gebühr reviews the character and context of the dress-fittings in the inhumation burials of Fünen and Langeland. In 31 graves the precise positions of brooches and other fittings have been recorded and form a firm starting-point for research. The author's catalogue of grave-furniture is thorough, but without the illustrations in the original publications to hand his arguments are not always easy to follow. He discusses the general significance of the position in the grave of one, two or three fibulae and makes perceptive comments on how the fibulae were fastened through the cloth. Fibulae on the shoulders were normally worn with head down, in Gebühr's opinion; it is a pity that he missed the supporting evidence from the migration period (Germania 14, 1930, 227 ff.; 17, 1933, 47 ff.). Hair-pins and other items are considered briefly.

The material from the inhumation burials in the area between the lower Elbe and the Oder by contrast is disappointingly thin and without the Danish finds it would have been far harder to interpret. It is unfortunate that the rich graves of Juellinge on the island of Lolland are exceptional in content and too few in number to carry weight in this study.

To many readers the conclusions which Gebühr draws at this juncture from a comparison of his data with the evidence of the surviving Iron-Age garments from the bogs of North-West Germany and the representations of native dress in the art of the Roman Rhine and Danube provinces will be the most significant in the book. Gebühr argues cogently that the hair-pins found with the female burials in his area held in place a variety of bonnets and head-dresses, of the kind represented in provincial-Roman art. The enigmatic fastening over the right ear of the Ubian matronae of the Rhineland is now revealed as an elaborate hair-pin. The girls and married women shown in Iron-Age dress on the tombstones of the Danube frontier wear almost exactly the same costume as is suggested by the dress-fittings from the cemeteries of North Germany. Male attire in North Germany, although simpler than the female, is also echoed in the Roman provinces. Gebühr resists the temptation to follow this line of research further, but it would certainly be rewarding.

The author turns next to the total body of material from all graves of the relevant date on Fünen and Langeland, whether they be inhumation burials or one of the three types of cremation. He analyses the results for each type separately, the data for which are set out in a series of correlation tables (Abb. 40–42). Criteria for establishing the sex of a burial and the position of the deceased on the social scale are then examined. Further correlation tables and histograms indicate a notable increase in the number and quality of costume accessories in womens' graves and suggest increasing wealth in the communities under review in the years 50 B. C. to A. D. 50.

Gebühr introduces at this stage his coding scheme for the various combinations of dress-fittings (eg. FGNS: fibula[e], belt-fittings [Gürtel], hair-pin[s] [Nadel], jewellery [Schmuck]). Analysis throws up 6 categories of female dress-fittings; but Gebühr does not state whether he regards them as reflecting 6 distinct types of clothing or ensemble. Men's costume, at most held by a fibula and a belt with metal fittings, offers less scope for sub-division.

In the text section the meagre sum of the data for Vorpommern, Mecklenburg and Brandenburg is examined. The distribution of finds and their character is indicated on a series of maps (Abb. 146–171) which form the basis for discussions in the text. The 23 pages of tables (181 ff.) carry all the essential statistics. Gebühr marshals his material to illustrate social distinctions which are visible in the grave contents (162 ff.). In Period BI (c. 50 B. C. – A. D. 50) the accoutrements of female dress in the richer graves are very varied, but hair-pins are common across the social spectrum. Later (A. D. 50 – 150) there is an element of standardisation, and fibulae and belt-fittings are worn by most wealthy ladies. The Elbe-Germanic women set a number of fashion trends, as the maps reveal. As always, the dress of the men is almost bare of metal fittings. In his concluding chapter Gebühr repeats the questions which he set himself in the introduction and answers them in summary form.

The author's analytical assessment of the fibulae and related dress-fittings from the graves of his chosen Forschungsgebiet offers a new approach to cemetery archaeology which has wide implications. This is the book's forte. While Gebühr's trust in the published word may not be followed so readily by other archaeologists, his method of exposition, his clear reasoning and his regular summaries are an excellent model. The abundance of tabulated information may overwhelm the reader; but the silhouetted figures with schematised dress-fastenings are a splendid way of conveying information simply and directly. The Reviewer has a few reservations, mainly minor. The sections and chapters should have been numbered in series; for in a work that is of necessity repetitive it is easy for the reader to lose his way. Likewise a general map of the whole research area should have been appended. There are very few illustrations of the objects mentioned so often in the text; here, a few pages of simple line-drawings could have been very helpful. The lack of an index is sad.

The Karl Wachholtz Verlag has served its author well. The standard of book-production is high and misprints rare.