

ger Bayern und Thüringer wieder fester in ihre Herrschaft integrierten, war die landwirtschaftliche Produktion also bereits erheblich intensiviert worden.

Ein sehr hilf- und umfangreiches Sach-, Orts- und Namenregister beschließt den Band.

Der Band enthält also je fünf Beiträge, die sich mit schriftlichen und archäologischen Quellen auseinandersetzen. Die Kombination macht deutlich, wie wichtig ein interdisziplinärer Ansatz ist – ohne ihn bleibt es stets bei einer einseitigen Perspektive. Auch steht dieser Band nicht allein, sondern sollte zusammen mit zwei halbwegs parallel erschienenen Tagungsbänden wahrgenommen werden: H. CASTRITIUS / D. GEUENICH / M. WERNER / Th. FISCHER (Hrsg.), *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer. Archäologie, Sprache, Geschichte*. RGA Ergbd. 63 (Berlin, New York 2009); H. FEHR / I. HEITMEIER (Hrsg.), *Die Anfänge Bayerns. Von Raetien und Noricum zur frühmittelalterlichen Baiovaria* ²(St. Ottilien 2012, 2014).

Alle drei Bände vereinen Archäologie, Geschichtswissenschaft und Philologie, wenngleich in unterschiedlicher Weise: Der Thüringerband konzentriert sich auf die Textquellen, während der Bayernband der Archäologie fast die Hälfte des Umfangs einräumt. Letzterer verfolgt als Einziger eine raumbezogene Perspektive und führt nicht einen Bezug auf ‚Volk‘ oder ‚Stamm‘ im Titel wie die „Thüringer“ und der hier zu besprechende Band. Dessen Wert liegt letztlich in der vergleichenden Betrachtung zweier Regionen (wie bereits der Band über Franken und Alemannen von 1998), womit der Isolierung des Gegenstands hinreichend vorgebeugt ist. Allerdings sind es eher die archäologischen Beiträge, die Beobachtungen aus beiden Regionen thematisieren; demgegenüber bleiben Philologie und Geschichtswissenschaft überwiegend auf eine Region fokussiert. Des Weiteren präsentieren die Beiträge jeweils spezifische Aspekte, die nicht unmittelbar aufeinander bezogen werden – dem Leser fällt daher die Aufgabe zu, sich selbst ein komplexeres Bild über grundlegende Strukturen und Verhältnisse zu machen.

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Josef Sauer (1872–1943), the German theologian, Christian archaeologist and art historian, concluded his report describing various Christian monuments of the southern Crimea, which he had visited in 1929 during his research trip to the one-time territories of the Crimean *Gothia*, with the following words: “A careful, professional, and meticulous research will surely result in several new discoveries and, first and foremost, in the enrichment of our knowledge in addition to what we already know. [...] It would be a challenging task, especially for us Germans, to undertake a thorough and systematic investigation of the entire region from an archaeological and ethnographic viewpoint, and to give a concrete and vivid meaning to the term *Gothia*, which has so often been discussed in the earlier literature.” (J. SAUER, *Die christlichen Denkmäler im Gotengebiet der Krim*. *Oriens Christianus* 20, 1932, 188–202, here 201–202; translated by reviewer.) However,

the history of the subsequent decades of the 20th century was hardly conducive to fulfilling this major task, conceived through the understandable scholarly interest of the German scholar. Still, the history and archaeology of the Crimean peninsula has lost none of its importance and neither has the interest shown in this region faded during the past almost one hundred years. Local specialists have discovered, rescued and evaluated an impressive amount of archaeological material ever since the beginning of professional archaeological work in the 19th century. Unfortunately, however, the greatest part of these site reports and synthetic works has not been published in languages generally accessible to western scholarship. Thus, in addition to the site reports and synthesising works in Russian, most Western European scholars could principally rely on the summaries published in English, German or French.

The research project entitled „Transformation und Kulturaustausch am Rand der mediterranen Welt. Das Bergland der Krim im Frühmittelalter”, led by the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, thus opened new avenues and perspectives for researchers interested in the late antique and early medieval history and material culture of the southern Crimea. One can hardly overestimate the importance of the very fact that as a result of this project, comprehensive studies based on the assessment of the available material (e. g. A. I. AJBABIN, *Archäologie und Geschichte der Krim in byzantinischer Zeit. Monogr. RGZM 98* [Mainz 2012]) and the 4th- to 12th-century Byzantine literary sources (ST. ALBRECHT, *Quellen zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Krim. Monogr. RGZM 101* [Mainz 2013]), as well as a series of reports on late antique and early medieval cemeteries are now available in German for western scholarship (e. g. A. I. AJBABIN / È. A. CHAJREDINOVA, *Das Gräberfeld beim Dorf Lučistoe. I: Ausgrabungen der Jahre 1977, 1982–1984. Monogr. RGZM 83* [Mainz 2009]) or will soon be published. The volume reviewed here can be fitted into this series; it publishes the finds from three burial grounds associated with the late antique and early medieval fortified settlement known as Mangup kale (Adym-Čokrak and Južnyj I and II, all lying south of the fort). The book published as part of the series presenting the findings of the RGZM project is a fine example of the collaboration between scholars working in the Römisch-Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt am Main, the University of Łódź, the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University of Bonn and the Simferopol University.

The book's preface (pp. VII–IX) by Jan Bemmman and Falko Daim offers a short history of the two projects mentioned in the above, emphasising that it soon became obvious that the available documentation on the finds and the burials in the three cemeteries published in the volume does not provide sufficient data for analyses conforming to the expected standards in modern European archaeological scholarship. The sorry consequences of ancient and modern grave-robbing, the only partial excavation of some burial grounds, the partly lacking or insufficient documentation, the partially missing anthropological material as well as the general lack of *in situ* finds are also noted by the authors in the Introduction (p. 1) and throughout the main text of the volume. Each of these factors would in itself severely constrain the potentials of the archaeological evaluation of these cemeteries, but taken together, they greatly limit the very issues that can be addressed. This circumstance undoubtedly explains why, following a brief description of the three investigated cemetery sections accompanied by illustrations (pp. 2–15), the authors principally undertake the determination of the chronological position of the available find material (pp. 17–29). The concise summary of the chronological assessment (p. 31) is followed by a description of the graves and a catalogue of their inventories (pp. 33–98), and the bibliography of the quoted works at the end (pp. 99–100). One of the greatest merits of the catalogue, in addition to the minute descriptions complete with the necessary measurements, is that when reading through the text, readers unfamiliar with the find circumstances immediately become aware of the missing portions of the original documentation. The volume is rounded off by 61 colour tables containing drawings of graves and mostly good quality photos of the surviving artefacts as well as drawings when necessary.

Even though the assessment of the three cemetery sections covered in the volume is only partially possible owing to the lack of much crucial data, the finds themselves raise a spate of intriguing questions. The first of these is chronology, which is discussed in detail by the authors, according to whom the finds would suggest that all three burial grounds were used simultaneously, roughly from the earlier or perhaps the mid-6th century to the earlier 8th century. The greater part of the finds falls into the later 6th and the earlier 7th century of the two centuries of the cemeteries' use. This chronology is essentially based on various bead and belt buckle types or, more precisely, on the chronological position of these artefact types in Western European (mainly Merovingian) chronological systems. In the case of artefact types such as cross pendants, finger-rings, earrings, certain belt ornaments etc., whose chronological position cannot be determined from analogies among Merovingian finds, the authors turn to the chronological sequence elaborated by Aleksandr I. Ajbabin and Ėlzara A. Hajredinova for the late antique and early medieval costume accessories of the Crimean peninsula. However, the authors voice various reservations concerning this sequence, which is in part derived from the system set up by Anatolij K. Ambroz in the 1970s, which was strongly criticised by both Russian-Ukrainian and Western European scholars (p. 17). Thus, they disregard this scheme whenever possible; and although they do mention that certain artefact types are assigned to the 7th–9th century or the 8th–9th century by local specialists, the authors treated these dates rather sceptically and rarely quoted them in the comprehensive discussion of the overall chronology of the burial grounds. This is the main reason that while the possible 8th–9th-century date of certain artefact types proposed by local specialists is invariably mentioned, the end date of the burials is tentatively determined as the earlier 8th century (p. 31) based on two buckles with analogies in the Saltovo culture (p. 19), with the caveat that they might equally well come from a time of a secondary use of the Južnyj I cemetery (p. 31).

However, of the two buckles from Burials 8 and 10 of Tomb 8 of the Južnyj I cemetery, the lyre-shaped buckle of Burial 8 is hardly exclusively typical for the Saltovo culture, given that this buckle type had a fairly wide distribution from the 8th century onward (cf. A. V. KOMAR, *Predsaltovskie i rannelsaltovskij gorizonty Vostočnoj Evropy [voprosy hronologii]*. *Vita Antiqua* 2, 1999, tab. 2; L. RÉVÉSZ, *Lyraförmige Schnallen in dem Karpatenbecken*. *Acta Arch. Acad. Scien. Hungaricae* 39, 1987, 257–286). At the same time, the cast belt ornament of copper-based alloy recovered from Catacomb 26 of the Adym-Čokrak cemetery (pl. 14,9) and the belt ornament from Catacomb 52 of the same site (pl. 24,9) can be much more confidently assigned to the Saltovo complex. Both can be dated to the later 8th century and the onset of the 9th century (cf. KOMAR 1999, 130; 132 tab. 4, I/II–II), meaning that they are roughly contemporaneous with, or only slightly later than, the two quoted buckles of the Južnyj I cemetery. It is also interesting to note here that although the authors generally assign various band finger-rings to between the later 5th and the 9th century in the Crimea, quoting the local chronology (p. 28), these articles are hardly cited when determining the chronological position of the investigated sites, the obvious reason for this being that it is rather difficult to find analogies to these finger-rings in the Merovingian material with its fine-resolution chronology, while the analogies cited from Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean cannot be dated with the necessary accuracy. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of the finger-rings recovered from the burials can be fitted into the general 6th–7th century chronology proposed for the cemeteries. However, it seems to me that the finger-rings discovered in Catacomb 23 (pl. 8,24) and Catacomb 52 (pl. 52,8) of the Adym-Čokrak cemetery, whose date is based on Ė. A. Hajredinova's chronology, according to which finger-rings decorated with monograms were popular during the 7th century in the Crimea, should rather be assigned to the 8th century because both can be seen as the formal prototype of the Byzantine band finger-rings with widening bezel that became widespread from the later 9th century. It is perhaps no coincidence that one of the finger-rings in question was recovered from Catacomb 52, which also contained the above-men-

tioned early Saltovo type belt ornament. In the light of the above, I would suggest that some of the catacomb tombs of the Adym-Čorak and the Južnyj I cemeteries were still in use deep in the 8th century, even if this later use was apparently much less intense than that of the 6th–7th centuries.

The above brief survey again serves to highlight the well-known fact, one also emphasised by the volume's authors, that the 7th- to 9th-century material culture of the Crimea can hardly be automatically dated according to the Western European chronological schemes. At the same time, the obviously far too late dates proposed by local scholars are viewed with reservations by scholars specialising in other regions. Let me quote a single example for illustrating this point: while the Corinth class buckles appearing in these cemeteries represent artefacts which in the Crimea (as well as on other sites of the Eastern Mediterranean) do appear to have been used beyond the first decades of the 8th century – the date regarded as marking the end of their use by western scholarship – their assignment to the 9th century in some publications on Crimean archaeological material can be convincingly rejected, at least on the testimony of the current evidence. These uncertainties are doubtless a consequence of late antique and early medieval burial customs, to which the contemporaneous burials of the Crimea are bound by many strands, namely that the catacombs represent family burials, with one tomb containing six to ten or even more consecutive burials, meaning that closed assemblages are much rarer than in the case of communities that buried their dead in separate grave pits. Thus, the use-life of these tombs cannot be accurately determined, in part because of the burial rite and in part because of their long use, and neither can their date be restricted to a shorter period (one of the main goals in dating for scholars working in the continental tradition). Also, the tombs were often visited already at the time of their use, meaning that they were easy targets for the grave looters of antiquity (as well as for the robbers of more modern times), which again decreases the chances of discovering closed assemblages for modern scholarship. Thus, physical anthropology should play a prominent role in the assessment of these cemeteries because the evidence provided by this discipline can be crucial in determining a tomb's use-life – however, there are few examples of employing this approach even in the case of less extensively robbed burial grounds. In the light of the above, it is painfully clear that the dating of these family burial sites will hardly attain the desired accuracy of a chronological assessment in the continental tradition, and any attempts to narrow the use-life of individual tombs or cemeteries following the practice in the continental tradition will lead to questionable results.

Readers might find it unjustified to speak about a “Mediterranean funerary tradition” in relation to the cemeteries discussed here. This is undoubtedly true insofar as Russian-Ukrainian archaeologists designate the greater part of the published tombs as “catacomb” burials / graves, which local research derives from steppe traditions, noting that this burial form was later also widespread in the Saltovo culture. However, the family burials and burial customs associated with this burial type in the discussed cemeteries share numerous similarities with the ancient, late antique and early medieval hypogea and certain rock-cut tombs that are widespread across the Mediterranean (whose occurrence has also been documented in the Roman and Byzantine territories of the Crimea). This is all the more interesting because the surviving vestiges of this burial rite and the surviving grave inventories in the cemeteries discussed in this volume barely contain any features that can be expressly linked to steppe or Germanic traditions. While this is quite striking, we can wholly agree with the authors, who prudently chose to refrain from engaging in the ethnic interpretation of the sites and their finds. Still, the burials offer a wealth of information about the cultural contacts of the communities burying their dead in the three cemeteries even without a discussion of their possible ethnic background. There are very few artefacts among the finds from the three burial grounds that would be out of place in the find spectrum of contemporaneous eastern and central Mediterranean Christian burials. Belt mounts as well as the regularly deposited larger iron buckles represent the more uncommon objects in the Christian burials of the Mediter-

anean; moreover, the latter most likely reflects burial practices that can be associated with the “Barbarian origins” of the communities using the cemeteries. The finds from Catacomb 5 of the Južnyj II cemetery (pl. 49–50), one of the earliest burials of the three cemeteries, have their best analogies among the grave goods of the contemporaneous steppe peoples (cf., e. g., R. RAŠEV, *Prabългарite prez V–VII vek* [Sofiâ 2005] esp. Tab. 19–20), suggesting that the people laid to rest in these burial grounds included individuals with a steppe background. Still, the overwhelming majority of the finds represent articles that enjoyed widespread popularity in the Mediterranean and on its fringes, which are traditionally regarded as “Byzantine” by the period’s research. In addition to a variety of earrings, pendants, beads, finger-rings, bracelets and belt buckles, these also include small bells that commonly occur not only in the cemeteries of the Caucasus and the Crimea (pp. 24–25), but also in the graves of the Eastern Mediterranean (cf. Á. BOLLÓK, *Apotropaion* and burial in Early Byzantium. Some preliminary considerations. In: E. Juhász [ed.], *Byzanz und das Abendland. Begegnungen zwischen Ost und West* [Budapest 2013] 227–241). Even though we know that the burials were extensively looted, it is striking that only a single fragment of a “Gothic eagle-shaped brooch” came to light from the three cemeteries, which lie in the heart of the Crimean *Gothia* (p. 19). Taken together with the crosses carved into the wall of some catacombs (p. 7), the above would suggest that the three cemeteries had been used by a population made up of groups with diverse cultural backgrounds who were slowly becoming Christian – a population that lived beyond the political borders of the empire, but nonetheless maintained close cultural ties with Christian Byzantium, which is not the least surprising, given that the late 8th / early 9th-century *Notitia Episcopatum* mentions a bishop’s seat in the heart of Crimean *Gothia*.

In conclusion, it is hardly an exaggeration to claim that this volume provides invaluable data and fresh avenues for attaining the goal of a better knowledge of Crimean *Gothia* and the colourful world of the Crimea as proposed by Josef Sauer almost a century ago. The meticulous description of the finds (which is especially welcome in view of the older Russian-Ukrainian archaeological tradition of only publishing a selection of the finds), the excellent documentation with colour photos and the detailed chronological discussion (and particularly the incorporation of the previously rarely employed bead chronology in Crimean research) all add to the volume’s merits. A few minor oversights may be briefly mentioned, which, however, hardly detract from the volume’s usefulness: on p. 24, the cited results of André Grabar’s 1951 study are outdated; on p. 28, the reference to the illustration of the finger-ring from Burial 26 of the Adym-Čorak cemetery is erroneous (it is shown on pl. 17,7 instead of pl. 51,6 specified in the text); on p. 29, there is no reference to the illustration of the two finger-rings described among the stray finds from the Južnyj II cemetery (pl. 61,3). It is regrettable that there was no means of incorporating the findings of a few works published after the closing of the manuscript, which would have made the authors’ task easier regarding a few issues: these include, for example, the studies on carnelian beads with etched decoration (Ch. EGER, *Indisch, persisch oder kaukasisch? Zu den Karneolperlen mit Ätzdekor der Gruppe C nach Beck und den östlichen Fernkontakten der Provinz Arabia*. *Jahrb. RGZM* 57, 2010, 221–278) and on the pyramid-shaped earrings of the sixth–seventh centuries (C. BALOGH, *Az avar kori gúlacsüngős fülbevalók* [Die awarenzeitlichen pyramidenförmigen Ohrgehänge]. *Kuny Domokos Múzeum Közleményei* 20, 2014, 91–157). In conclusion, the authors and the publishing house are to be commended for making the finds from the three cemeteries available to scholarship in this excellent volume.

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