

The volume concludes with a very useful “Synthese” (by M. Mainberger et al.), which not only summarises the entire Degersee project, but also discusses a number of crucial points highlighted throughout the chapters. Amongst them we have, for instance, the significant change in agricultural activities from the early to the late Neolithic, the remarkable woodland management linked to the seven secondary-forest cycles, the study of the surrounding landscape carrying capacity with the prediction of higher demographic impact and more inland settlements, and finally the unexpected cultural connections and contact networks. The authors also dare to discuss the clear link between human activity, settlement dynamics, and climate without falling into a too obvious environmental deterministic trap. The overwhelming evidence of settlement occupations coinciding with drier and warmer climatic phases is carefully discussed, taking into account lake-level fluctuations and human impact on the surrounding landscape. Once the reader is almost convinced of the inexorable prevalence of climate over people, with an interesting twist the authors advance the idea of the Degersee’s Neolithic groups taking advantage of the unfavourable climate of the region (p. 534). If we consider the complexity of micro-climates around the Circum-Alpine region lacustrine areas, this suggestion is more than plausible.

Apart from the usual typos and minor editing imprecisions (e. g. the m ü NN, pp. 25–26), it is difficult to criticise such a volume. In fact, it should be praised for the remarkable amount of information that it provides. It also shows how synergetic efforts between the various disciplines lead to better and more reliable results. The fact that the methodology is clearly explained and the data used are readily perusable facilitates comparative analyses and future elaborations. My only criticism is on the designation of the Neolithic periods. In Chapter 1 and in the “Synthese”, Mainberger uses the *Endneolithikum* straight after the *Jungneolithikum*. This could be confusing especially if absolute dates are not listed because the majority of scholars in Germany use the five-period division, placing the *Spätneolithikum* between the two (e. g. *Altneolithikum*: 5500–5000 BC; *Mittelpneolithikum* 5000–4400 BC; *Jungneolithikum*: 4400–3500 BC; *Spätneolithikum*: 3500–2800 BC; and *Endneolithikum*: 2800–2200 BC; see J. LÜNING, Erneute Gedanken zur Benennung der neolithischen Perioden. *Germania* 74,1, 1996, 233–237). It is of course understood that Mainberger’s division (*Jungneolithikum* [4400–3500 BC] → *Endneolithikum* [3500–2200 BC]) is not wrong; some scholars do use it, but this difference should at least be pointed out in the publication. Nonetheless, this is a book that all archaeologists should have on their bookshelves.

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ANDREAS SATTLER, Die Gräber der Aunjetitzer Kultur im Saalegebiet. Zum Totenritual auf Grundlage der älteren Befunde. Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie Band 267. Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn 2015. € 55.00. ISBN 978-3-7749-3941-7. 216 pages with 15 figures, 9 tables, 6 maps, 6 plans and 1 supplement.

As we read in the introduction (I. Einleitung, pp. 1–5) to this book, which is the published version of Andreas Sattler’s PhD thesis, from the University of Halle / Saale, the author reanalyses graves and grave goods of the Únětice culture from the Saale Valley that were originally investigated and published prior to 1989. Graves investigated after 1989 were, as he notes, analysed in detail elsewhere (s. Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft FOR 550 “Der Aufbruch zu neuen Horizonten”). Unpublished graves and cemeteries were not considered in this work. For example, the cemetery of

Großbrennbach, with 81 graves, surprisingly remains unanalysed, although it is one of the largest Únětice cemeteries in central Germany.

The author focuses on the question of whether or to what extent an impression may be gained of the practical handling of death by the interring community by describing the graves (“ob oder inwieweit sich über die Beschreibung der Gräber ein Eindruck vom paktischen Umgang der bestattenden Gemeinschaft mit dem Tod gewinnen lässt“), and on the examination of the spatial and temporal relationships between different types of features (“in welchem räumlichen und zeitlichen Verhältnis die verschiedenen Befunderscheinungen zueinander stehen”; p. 1). These questions depend on the assumed low quality of available data. The author’s observation that the most recent comprehensive analysis of Únětice grave finds from the Saale Valley was performed 60 years ago by Ulrich FISCHER (*Die Gräber der Steinzeit im Saalegebiet. Studien über neolithische und frühbronzezeitliche Grab- und Bestattungsformen in Sachsen-Thüringen* [Berlin 1956]) is somewhat discouraging. It should be pointed out that Fischer’s work devotes only twenty pages (170–190) to the Únětice culture (in the conclusion), and the accompanying illustrations are not representative of Únětice culture specifically; many observations and comparisons are presented in the general chapter on burial customs (III. Vergleichende Gräberkunde, pp. 191–245).

With regard to the geographical framework, A. Sattler works in a space defined years ago by Bernd ZICH (*Studien zur regionalen und chronologischen Gliederung der nördlichen Aunjetitzer Kultur. Vorgesch. Forsch.* 20 [Berlin 1996]) as the “Circumharzer Gruppe”, roughly dating from 2200–1600 BC (p. 1).

The data for A. Sattler’s catalogue derive from the mentioned works of Fischer and Zich and the unpublished work by Erika THIELBEER (*Die Grabformen Mitteldeutschlands während der frühen Bronzezeit und die aus ihnen abzuleitende soziale Gliederung der damaligen Bevölkerung. Unpublished thesis* [Halle / Saale 1952]), as well as a concurrent dissertation on Únětice finds from central Germany by Maik Evers. A. Sattler supplements this information with archival data (Ortsakten) from regional archaeological offices and regional museums in Halle, Weimar, Wolfenbüttel, and Dresden.

One of the greatest shortcomings of A. Sattler’s work is the fact that it hardly contains any illustrations, a total of 15 in the entire book which can illustrate the discussed issues only partially, an absence that has a negative impact on the work. The catalogue does not comprise drawings of finds or features. This is surprising given the effort the author must have made in reviewing the find contexts and the documentation, because it not only diminishes the accomplishments of the author but also seriously complicates subsequent work with the data presented. If the defended dissertation included this documentation, it should also be part of the publication.

The introduction is followed by shorter chapters dealing with the individual aspects of the burial ritual and its archaeological manifestations based on the pre-1989 data. These chapters (II–IX) are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Chapter II, Sources (Quellen, pp. 7–12), addresses the problems associated with the sources of data. A commentary on unpublished sites is missing, which as a result are not included in the analyses (e. g. what percentage of finds / graves they represent); figure 2 (p. 8), presenting the number of analysed sites (a total of 348) in the ten-year intervals in which they were originally investigated, is missing information on the percentage of finds from barrows (though the figure includes the curve of data from barrows). In the section devoted to a criticism of sources (as well as elsewhere in the text), I would welcome the use of clearer and simpler terminology, e. g. in place of “Kleinaltertümer” (small antiquities), it might have been better to use “Funde / Kleinfunde” (finds / small finds). The author states here that the analysis included 294 “Befunde” (meaning graves – review-

er's note) with information on architecture or burial type ("mit näheren Angaben zum Grabbau oder zur Bestattungsweise", p. 10). I would also welcome a key for the list on p. 10, which consists of sites with numbers in square brackets, e. g. "Apolda [14/2.8], Apolda [15/1]", which are not explained. In the case of figure 3 (p. 12), which presents the publication status of recorded "Fundeinheiten" (find units), I am missing an explanation as to what the author actually has in mind. The simple comparison of the stated numbers – 348 "Fundstellen" (sites) in Figure 2 and 677 "Fundeinheiten" in Figure 3 – indicates that one "Fundstelle" has 1945 "Fundeinheiten". Unfortunately, we do not know whether the author means individual analysed graves (in which case two graves at one site would truly be very low), or artefacts from graves, etc. Certain terminological ambiguities could at least use a footnote explanation.

Chapter III, "Bestattungsorte" (Burial Locations, pp. 13–20), is noteworthy for the differentiation of burials both at cemeteries and in man-made mounds on older barrows, which, with only a few exceptions, are completely lacking in the Únětice environment. The author presents some interesting information, for example, on types of activities that resulted in the discovery (and investigation) of particular cemeteries, which include: 1. surface mining; 2. ploughing and other field work; 3. construction of buildings and utility lines; and 4. road and railway construction. Unfortunately, readers interested in percentages are forced to make the calculations on their own (1: 34 sites, 174 graves, i. e. 5.1 graves per site; 2: 23 sites, 70 graves, three graves per site; 3: 38 sites, 57 graves, 1.5 graves per site; 4: twelve sites, 31 graves, 2.6 graves per site). The author also draws attention to the occurrence of burials in settlement pits or, more precisely, human remains discovered at settlements or in cut settlement features.

Chapter IV, "Bauweise der Gräber" (Grave Construction, pp. 21–34), could also use some terminological revision. For example, I am not certain whether the direct division into "Erd- und Steingräber" (earth and stone tombs) is entirely appropriate, since both could be subsumed as graves in pits, those with and those without stone construction. Also, the designation of coffins as "Holzeinbauten" (wooden fittings) is inappropriate. It is necessary to differentiate between wooden structures that are part of the immovable structure of graves / tombs and coffins as portable containers for human remains. The lack of illustrations or at least simple drawings for individual examples is a great drawback at this point, as they could perhaps help explain some of the terminological ambiguities left unclarified by the text itself. The described "Steingräber" are supposed to involve a more extensive expansion of the stone grave pit. But here again the author's definition of exactly when a grave has a more extensive expansion ("umfangreicherer Ausbau der Grabgrube") and when it is still a 'simple' one is missing. A more precise definition would also be desirable in the case of the term "Mauerkammer" (walled chamber) – as the author, for example, differentiates it from the archaeologically identical structure created by filling an empty space between coffins and the walls of grave pits with smaller and larger stones. After the disintegration of the coffin, this type of structure also looks like a stone-lined tomb. In the case of the phenomenon connected with the barrows in Leubingen and Helmsdorf and described as "dachartige Holzkonstruktionen" (roof-like wooden constructions), it should be mentioned that a similar structure, though one made with stone slabs, is known from several Únětice culture flat cemeteries in Bohemia.

In Chapter V, "Niederlegung der Toten" (Placement of the Dead, pp. 35–47), very brief mention is made of the issue of "Primär-" and "Sekundärbestattungen" (primary and secondary burials). The limited geographic and thematic spectrum of the cited literature on many of the issues related to burial in general is a methodological weakness of the work. For example, the highly relevant volume edited by Nils MÜLLER-SCHESSEL ('Irreguläre' Bestattungen in der Urgeschichte: Norm, Ritual, Strafe ...? Koll. Vor- u. Frühgesch. 19 [Bonn 2013]), and works by M. Parker Pearson and others were not cited. In general, I regard the terminology of the work as one of its short-

comings. As a result of not consulting recent literature on the interpretation of burial practices, the work relies almost uncritically on the terminology of U. Fischer from 1956. In the case of “Sekundärbestattungen”, the author presents observations from grave 28 at the Schalkenburg bei Quenstedt site (p. 43), where parts of the skeleton were no longer found in their natural position (“im natürlichen Zusammenhang”) but according to the usual orientation of Únětice culture graves (p. 43); several previous authors had already suggested that the dead had been exposed (or ‘stored’) prior to burial (“dass man die Toten längere Zeit zwischengelagert hatte”) rather than buried secondarily. Here we can point out similar practices evidenced by means of osteological, archaeological and phosphate analyses at cemeteries in Prague-Miškovice (cf. M. ERNÉE / A. MAJER, Uniformita či rozmanitost pohřebního ritu? Interpretace výsledků fosfátové půdní analýzy na pohřebišti únětické kultury v Praze 9-Miškovicích. Arch. Rozhledy 61, 2009, 493–508; M. ERNÉE, Uniformität oder Kreativität im Totenbrauchtum? Zum Bestattungsritus der Aunjetitzer Kultur aus Sicht der Phosphatanalyse. In: N. Müller-Scheeßel [ed.], ‘Irreguläre’ Bestattungen in der Urgeschichte: Norm, Ritual, Strafe ...? Koll. Vor- u. Frühgesch. 19 [Bonn 2013] 227–238). In the case of graves with stone structures, in which multiple burials are sometimes found, it is often also necessary to consider whether it was possible for graves covered with very heavy stone structures, composed of dozens to hundreds of stones, to have been used for subsequent burials due to the difficult technical nature of opening them repeatedly. The author also mentions, perhaps *pro forma*, the existence of sporadic cremation graves, despite the fact that no such evidence is known from the Saale Valley and from the following time horizon (up until 1990).

Chapter VI, “Ausstattung der Toten” (Grave Goods, pp. 49–60), is also burdened by terminological inconsistencies, gaps in cited literature and a one-sided view of the issue of classifying artefacts found in graves. For example, we find the term “Beigaben” (goods), under which the author classifies a) vessels; b) clothing accessories (“Trachtbestandteile”); c) tools; and d) others (“Sontiges”). The author then evaluates patterns (“Ausstattungsmuster”), concluding that little can be said (“lässt sich nur wenig sagen”, p. 58). Missing, for example, is any response to the discussion on individual categories of artefacts from grave pits by François BERTEMES (Das frühbronzezeitliche Gräberfeld von Gemeinlebarn: Kulturhistorische und paläometallurgische Studien. Saarbrücker Beitr. Altde. 45 [Bonn 1989]) who distinguishes “Beigaben”, “Zugaben”, etc. for the Gemeinlebarn cemetery, despite the fact that Bertemes was the author’s mentor and supervisor. In table 4 (p. 51), key chronological information on the number of vessels in graves, at least that of the early-late Únětice culture type, is missing. The author describes “Trachtbestandteile” (clothing accessories or traditional features) as all artefacts that appear suitable for attaching or adhering to the body or clothing, especially pins, “Noppenringe”, “Spiralröllchen”, perforated animal teeth and shells and pearls, as well as, for example, amber. We learn little about the number of these artefacts which did not occur separately but were part of larger collections, very often including opulent necklaces. The text tells us nothing of whether pins are analytical for the author on the level of the entire necklace or only as one of its parts (pearls, spirals, etc.) Also further functions of work stones (“Arbeitssteine”) beyond their suitability for grinding or sharpening are not discussed; the author was either not aware of the work of his fellow student Katja MARTIN on this subject (Was bleibt ... Der Metallurg und sein Handwerk im archäologischen Befund. In: H. Meller et al. [eds], Metalle der Macht – Frühes Gold und Silber. 6. Mitteldeutscher Archäologentag vom 17. bis 19. Oktober 2013 in Halle / Salle [Halle / Saale 2014] 309–319; ID., Die Metallurgengräber der Späten Kupfer- und Frühen Bronzezeit Mitteleuropas. Unpublished graduate thesis, Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg) or simply disregarded it.

The very few lines in Chapter VII, “Alte Grabmanipulationen” (Old Interventions, pp. 61–63), add little to the issue of the manipulation of graves. For example, without any deeper analysis or comparison with the existing literature (e. g. Silvia SPRENGER, Zur Bedeutung des Grabraubes für

sozioarchäologische Gräberfeldanalysen. Eine Untersuchung am frühbronzezeitlichen Gräberfeld Franzhausen I, Niederösterreich. Fundber. Österreich, Materialh. A 7 [Wien 1999]), the statement that reports are frequently made of green staining of bones, which could have come from previously-removed copper or bronze artefacts is not particularly helpful.

Chapter VIII, “Verbreitung und Datierung” (Distribution and Dating, pp. 65–78), is the longest analytical chapter in the book. The author familiarises readers with existing relative chronological systems of the Únětice culture in central Germany and certain critical opinions (Helle Vandkilde), especially on B. Zich’s work from 1996. The author himself attempted a computer-based revision of Zich’s chronology, resulting in the statement that while generally Zich’s division is correct, the boundaries of his first three chronological stages cannot be followed (“Zichs chronologische Einteilung zwar tendenziell bestätigt, die Abgrenzung seiner ersten drei Stufen aber nicht nachvollzogen werden kann”, pp. 69–70). And as in the majority of cases, he also states here that the new chronological table does not allow for more extensive statements (“im Übrigen lässt die neu geordnete Tabelle kaum weiterführende Aussagen zu”, p. 70) and refers back to U. Fischer’s work from 1956 (p. 70–75, fig. 15). From my perspective, if the author continues to use the division into “Frühaunjetitz-, Hochaunjetitz-” and “Metallgruppe” (e. g. tab. 7–9, p. 76), his personal view on the reasons for their continued use would be useful, especially on the interrelationship between the chronologically contemporary phases “Hochaunjetitz-” and “Metallgruppe”. In the sub-chapter entitled “Funde und Befunde”, it would be more appropriate in the case of the tables on page 76 to use a graphic presentation of the data instead of text-only tables.

The work closes with chapter IX, “Schlussbemerkungen” (Conclusion, pp. 79–80), and the catalogue (pp. 81–171), which represents 53 % of the total volume of the work.

The work shows Sattler’s scepticism towards the quality and value of the analysed data. He thus closely follows existing interpretations, restraining from critical arguments. From both the perspective of methodology and the manner of presentation, the work veers between being unsophisticated and being overly-detailed and very traditional. As noted earlier, the terminology used throughout is problematic, as are the low number of illustrations and superficial literature review, hampering the future use of this publication. Moreover, the inclusion and analysis of as-yet unpublished earlier cemeteries, such as Großbrennbach, would be very helpful.

When evaluating any type of work, be it a book, article, grant application, master’s degree thesis or PhD dissertation, I always ask two questions after reading the text:

- a) How original is the work and what is the author’s unique contribution? Did the author contribute toward an understanding of the relevant topic in a different and / or fundamentally new way?
- b) What does the evaluated work offer in terms of understanding the relevant subject? How does the new knowledge enrich or expand our understanding of the subject?

In response to both questions, I unfortunately must say that the given work provides nothing new. However, it would be appropriate to ask whether the subject and the method of analysing pre-published material could in fact lead to a deeper understanding of the beginnings of the Bronze Age. What can be learned from old finds when hundreds of graves exist that were investigated using a wide range of up-to-date scientific analyses (other than just radiocarbon dating)? What is the goal and value of this kind of work? It is as though the author himself partially answered this question by writing in a way that radiates deep doubt. He adopts the majority of opinions and schemes from earlier works and reduces discussion to a minimum. Little effort is made to advance

our knowledge on the Early Bronze Age, and little progress is made in our understanding of the beginnings of the Bronze Age in Central Europe.

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SIEGFRIED GRIESA, Der Burgwall von Lossow. Forschungen von 1909 bis 1984. Mit einem Beitrag von Norbert Benecke. *Lossower Forschungen Band 2 – Materialien zur Archäologie in Brandenburg Band 6.* Verlag Marie Leidorf, Rahden / Westf. 2013. € 24.80. ISBN 978-3-86757-316-0; ISSN 1866-6744. 176 pages, 195 figures, 10 plates.

INES BEILKE-VOIGT, Das jungbronze- und früheisenzeitliche Burgzentrum von Lossow. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 2008 und 2009. Mit Beiträgen von Norbert Benecke, Anja Buhlke, Ulrich Cubasch, Roland Freibothe, Stefanie Graf, Klaus-Dieter Jäger, Georg Kaufmann, Janina Körper, Sandra Lehninger, Andreas Mehner, Ernst Pernicka, Hans-Peter Stika und Burkart Ulrich. *Lossower Forschungen Band 3 – Materialien zur Archäologie in Brandenburg Band 8.* Verlag Marie Leidorf, Rahden / Westf. 2014. € 34.80. ISBN 978-3-86757-318-4; ISSN 1866-6744. 436 pages, 38 figures, 179 plates and 1 fold-out.

The (semi-) circular earthwork at Lossow, located c. 7 km to the south of Frankfurt / Oder on a high plateau separated from the river Oder by several valley cuts, is one of the most discussed archaeological sites in Brandenburg, Germany. This is not so much due to the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age and Slavic settlement activities at the site, but more to the fortuitous discovery of several up to 7.5 m deep ‘sacrificial pits’ during railroad construction work in 1919. These pits, dated to the Göritz Group of the late Lusatian Culture (6th / 5th century BC), and containing large amounts of human and animal bones with cut marks or traces of perimortem trauma, respectively, have fuelled discussions on Early Iron Age ritual for decades. The site has a long and partly unfortunate history of research that has been in the focus of an earlier publication (I. BEILKE-VOIGT / F. SCHOPPER [eds], *Lossow I. Alte Forschungen und neue Projekte. Lossower Forsch. 1* [= *Mat. Arch. Brandenburg 4*]. Rahden / Westf. 2010). Many of the older finds and documentations were lost during the Second World War. Work undertaken after the war brought new insights, but remained largely unpublished. Lossow thus was on the best way to be added to the long list of important archaeological sites that are cited over and over again in discussions without any possibility to check the quality of statements against the actual archaeological record.

The two volumes discussed here come to close that gap. The first volume, authored by S. Griesa, focuses on systematic excavation work undertaken by him in the years 1980–1984, but also systemises and presents the evidence from earlier work at the site, starting with the first scientifically documented excavations by R. Agahd and M. Ebert in 1909. The second volume is the final report on a new project conducted by I. Beilke-Voigt in 2008 and 2009 aiming to understand the development of a Late Bronze Age central (?) settlement, the shift in function to a ritual site in the Early Iron Age and the final abandonment of the site. Considering the supra-regional importance of the site, expectations toward these two volumes are naturally high.

Following a short introduction (pp. 8–10) to the location that also features some possible resonances in local folklore (and some curious interpretations in archaeology, as Carl Schuchhardt’s deliberations whether Lossow could be the sacred grove of the Semnones mentioned by Tacitus),