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RALF KELLER, Die Siedlung der Eisenzeit und Römischen Kaiserzeit im “Reißwag” bei Lauda-Königshofen im Taubertal. Materialhefte zur Archäologie in Baden-Württemberg volume 100. Konrad Theiss, Darmstadt 2015. € 69.00. ISBN 978-3-8062-2915-8. 528 pages, 107 illustrations, 50 tables, 95 plates.

The book under review originated in a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Tübingen. Its subject is the results of an excavation of a major part of a multi-period settlement at the site of “Reißwag” (mun. Lauda-Königshofen, Main-Tauber-Kreis, Baden-Württemberg, Germany). The fieldwork was conducted by the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Baden-Württemberg between 2004 and 2008. In a lengthy catalogue of almost 200 pages (pp. 343–527), the author describes all the features recorded during excavation and all the finds recovered. Drawings and photographs of all the finds and of selected features are provided in 95 plates. In his discussion, the author concentrates on the features and findings of the Late Hallstatt / Early La Tène period, the Late La Tène period and the Roman Iron Age. A few settlement traces dating to the Neolithic and Urnfield periods are treated rather succinctly, as is the material found in them.

The monograph begins with a reconstruction of the landscape during the later prehistoric period and the Roman Iron Age (pp. 15–17). An overview of the settlement history in the valley of the Tauber follows, setting out the relationship between the “Reißwag” site and the rest of the Tauber valley (pp. 18–37). Finally, the author places the site into the cultural context of the Late La Tène and Early Roman Iron Age between the Mittelgebirge and Mainfranken (pp. 38–94).

The author opens his analysis of the multi-period settlement at the “Reißwag” with a detailed description of the site, including its geology, climate and recent history. A brief review of its research history prefaces a lengthy report on the progress of the excavations, including the research questions worked out before fieldwork began. Finally, all the recorded features are presented in full. Here again, special attention is given to the features dated to the later prehistoric periods; earlier, especially Neolithic, settlement traces receive only cursory treatment.

We share the author’s opinion that it is almost impossible to reconstruct individual post-built structures in this tangle of intersecting features of different periods. The problems are aggravated by severe erosion. Unfortunately, the author remains silent about the dating of the few buildings that could be identified. For this, we must turn to the more synthetic chapter entitled “Summary and Comparison” (“Zusammenfassung und Vergleich”; see p. 68), where the author orders the features according to size and structural elements and discusses them against the background of a geographically and culturally rich reference collection.

The identification of a couple of timber-framed sunken-floored buildings, their dating and the determination of their function seems easier at first sight only. Here the author can compare them to similar structures in other regions and use evidence from ancient literary sources (e. g. Plin. Nat. Hist., on structures used in the manufacture of textiles in Celtic and Germanic societies). Aside from some Late Hallstatt / Early La Tène sunken-floored buildings, most of the remains in the “Reißwag” multi-period-settlement that have been excavated are later in date. According to current

research, the author defines all these building complexes as agricultural or service buildings, a supposition that the structures' modest size and the material found in them appear to support. Many are related to various crafts, including weaving.

The interpretation of the pits, i. e. the majority of the features recorded, is based on their formal diversity. Since much uncertainty surrounds their interpretation, the author has refrained from identifying distinct functional groups among these pits but nevertheless discusses their potential function (pp. 76–88). It is interesting to see that he repeatedly refers to research in experimental archaeology concerned with the preservation and storage of food and even draws on ethnological parallels. Pit 126, although unspectacular at first sight, is given special attention. Its backfill contained burnt animal bones and fragments of Samian vessels among other things. The author's analysis indicates that this assemblage is linked to burial rituals found in Germanic cemeteries of the Rhine-Weser group. A thorough study of a deposit of several vessels (feature 907 B) dated to the "Großromstedt horizon" suggests links with the ceramic assemblage of Großromstedt burials within the primary Großromstedt distribution area in Central Germany as well as with the well-known contemporaneous vessel deposit of Tauberbischofsheim in Baden-Württemberg.

The presentation of the finds constitutes the bulk of the book (pp. 95–222). After a brief description of the Neolithic finds, the author focuses on the rich inventories of the La Tène period and the Roman Iron Age. Since jewellery or dress accessories are rarely found on settlement sites (and the settlement in the "Reißwag" is no exception), it is not surprising that only a few fragments of iron and bronze brooches of unknown type have been recovered. Decorative pins made of bone or metal are extremely rare in La Tène contexts, since pins were replaced by fibulae during the final stage of the Hallstatt period. Yet, in our case, the scarcity of decorative pins can be better explained by influences from the "Großromstedt horizon" and later from the Rhine-Weser Germanic cultural sphere. Parallels for the bronze needle with double-conical head (pl. 67,15) or for a mushroom-shaped head with cruciform notches (pl. 42,5), both dating to the Roman Iron Age, are more frequent than the author implies: they can be found in the whole of *Barbaricum* (see for example Weklice [PL], graves 24, 261 and 271: M. NATUNIEWICZ-SEKUŁA / J. OKULICZ-KOZARYN, Weklice. A cemetery of the Wielbark culture on the eastern margin of Vistula delta [excavations 1984–2004]. *Monumenta Archaeologica Barbarica XVII* [Warszawa 2011] 194 pl. VIII,2; 296 pl. CX,2; 297 pl. CXI,4; Nieszawa Kolonia [PL], feature 99: M. STASIAK-CYRAN, Nieszawa Kolonia, stanowisko 5, powiat Opole Lubelskie. *Interdyscyplinarna monografia osady z okresu rzymskiego* [Lublin 2016] 193 pl. XCV,1). I doubt that Germanic women only used these objects to pin their hair or head cover as the author tends to believe.

Among the rare dress accessories, there were some isolated instances of "sail-shaped earrings" ("Segelohrringe"), "hollow earrings" ("Hohlöhrringe"), rings (even an exemplar in silver), "plaque belt hooks" ("Plattengürtelhaken") and "ring-and-knob belt hooks" ("Ringknopfgürtelhaken"). For the latter type of belt hook, similar specimens are known from weapon burials of the La Tène culture as well as from Germanic contexts. Here they form part of a sword belt and hence should not be regarded as dress accessories *sensu strictu*. Incidentally, some findspots should be added to the distribution map of the "ring-and-knob belt hooks" (p. 106 fig. 50), especially in the eastern Germanic milieu.

Fragments of two iron arrowheads are the only weapons among the finds from the "Reißwag". The number of tools is also limited: the short list includes a fragment of a crescent-shaped razor blade, a ploughshare, two chisels, a bronze nail clipper, two sewing needles (one iron and one bronze), some iron nails and hooks, and some unidentified iron objects.

A failed cast of three bronze chain links (i. e. rod-shaped segments or “Stangenkettenglieder”), found in the sunken-floored building 433 of the Großromstedt phase, indicates that bronze working took place within the settlement. In his discussion of these artefacts, the author points to obvious similarities with chains associated with drinking horns, while also considering a relationship with La Tène-period balances. In my opinion, the first alternative is more convincing, especially since an almost identical object was found together with a brooch of Kostrzewski variant K type and pottery of the Przeworsk culture in a sunken-floored building in the Germanic settlement of Mardorf, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf, Hessen (M. MEYER, *Bemerkungen zu einem spätlatènezeitlichen Trinkhorn aus Mardorf, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf. Germania* 74, 1996, 538–549). It seems that the author was not aware of this article, which provides an excellent parallel.

Local bronze and iron manufacture is attested by finds of casting residue such as slags and a crucible. The glass bracelets from features 300 and 1220 (dated to the La Tène period), two glass beads (one from the Großromstedt sunken-floored building 433, the other from feature 501 (dated to the Roman Iron Age,) as well as fragments of Roman Iron Age glass vessels (from feature 1212) were produced elsewhere. This is also the case of a fragment of a sapropelite ring found in feature 700.

Pottery is by far the most abundant find category at the “Reißwag” site and accordingly it receives the most attention (pp. 123–222). Out of several thousand sherds dating to the later La Tène period and the Roman Iron Age, 1881 fragments were considered diagnostic. The greatest part of the pottery is hand-made; wheel-thrown wares account for just 8 % of the assemblage. One can understand the author’s difficulties when trying to assign individual sherds to specific periods within standard typo-chronological schemes; sometimes it is simply impossible. Residual material in later features impedes an independent chronological ordering of the excavated pottery. Unfortunately, the results of a seriation are far from satisfying. The chronological analysis of the ceramic is primarily based on the occurrence of finds associated with well-dated material. From a methodological point of view, the analysis of the pottery is as sound as it can be: the diagnostic characteristics are elaborately described and well defined. The typological order is clearly presented and described; the fact that plates showing the typological ordering are incorporated into the running text is extremely helpful. This meticulous analysis is not limited to morphological characteristics as the author also discusses these traits at a supra-regional scale. He succeeds in reconstructing the development of the pottery forms at a local level as well as pointing out settlement discontinuities between the Hallstatt / Early La Tène period and the later La Tène period on the one hand, and the “Großromstedt horizon” and the Rhine-Weser Germanic period on the other. The zenith of the settlement (at least within the excavated areas) is in the Early La Tène, as an impressive quantity of finds shows. In the Tauber valley, the Central German Großromstedt group remains clearly extraneous. Most of its pottery is found as large sets of vessels in separate features preceded by some paltry sherds of pottery attributed to the Przeworsk culture. After another discontinuity in occupation, the material culture of the Roman Iron Age is dominated by Germanic types of the Rhine-Weser group. A handful of sherds of imported Roman vessels rounds off the picture.

Following his description of the finds, the author continues with an overview of other pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age sites in the immediate vicinity of the “Reißwag” in the middle Tauber valley (chapter 5 “Die eisenzeitlichen und kaiserzeitlichen Fundstellen im mittleren Taubertal”, pp. 223–237). Our settlement easily fits into the regional pattern in both the Hallstatt / Early La Tène period and the later La Tène facies. This is also true for the final La Tène-period assemblages of the “Großromstedt horizon”, which is found in regular association with later La Tène-period findings. This material appears to be very uniform throughout the entire Tauber valley.

The results of the analysis of the finds and features are supported by a scatter of stray finds. Alongside a large-scale geophysical survey, these findings give a good impression of the development and internal structure of the “Reißwag” multi-period settlement. Settlement density was rather modest in all periods: at any one time only a few houses (post-built sunken-floored buildings) existed, alongside some farm buildings and a variety of pits. The local economy was always based on agriculture. Evidence of crafts (especially ceramic production, iron and bronze processing) is attested on repeated occasions. The clearest indication of metalworking comes from the sunken-floored building 433, which dates to the Großromstedt phase. While settlement continuity from the Early La Tène period to the beginning of the Middle La Tène period is highly likely, findings of a more developed Middle La Tène phase are scarce. A gap seems to exist between the Late La Tène period and the Großromstedt phase. It is not impossible that a Celtic group existed simultaneously within a Großromstedt settlement. After the end of this settlement, after the middle of the 1st century AD, the first traces of Germanic people of the Rhine-Weser group appear at the “Reißwag” site, as they do in the entire region. There is no sign of continued settlement activity after the middle of the 3rd century AD.

It is the great merit of the author that he did not confine himself to a pure presentation of the data, but discussed the results of his analysis against the background of the cultural situation in the Late La Tène period and the Roman Iron Age in Central Europe (chapters 7, pp. 262–277, and 8, pp. 278–288). It is striking that, although he rejects the chronological framework of the Late La Tène period proposed by Sabine Rieckhoff (see pp. 15–17), the author still uses her term “Großromstedt culture” throughout the book. He does so despite being aware of the controversy over the term “Großromstedt culture”; unlike the term “Großromstedt horizon”, the term culture suggests a less sharply defined chronological span, in the sense of a “transition horizon”.

During the Late La Tène period, clear contacts were established with the Großromstedt occupation in Central Germany, following a long period of relations with the southern La Tène culture. An accurate dating of this horizon, which is still linked to the La Tène period, suffers, however, from a lack of well-dated small finds. At the end of the La Tène period, there appears to have been a sharp decrease in population size. We can only speculate about whether this represents a reorientation of the autochthonous population towards new communication networks, or whether it signals a migration from Central Germany of Großromstedt settlers (to what extent can hardly be answered at present). In Königshofen, on the “Reißwag” site, we see a process that has been witnessed and published several times before in Bavarian Mainfranken (for example: Th. VÖLLING, Frühgermanische Gräber von Aubstadt. Materialhefte Bayer. Vorgesch. 67 [Kallmünz 1995]; K. FRANK, Frühe Germanen im Taubergebiet. In: V. Salač / J. Bemmann [eds], Mitteleuropa zur Zeit Marbods [Prague, Bonn 2009] 453–472; see also M. MEYER, Migration und Adaptation – ein differenziertes Modell zur Erklärung der latènezeitlichen Przeworsk-Funde in Deutschland. *Alt-Thüringen* 38, 2005, 203–212).

This monograph, setting out the scientific evaluation of the results of the excavations of the “Reißwag” settlement, is an important contribution to the question of the settlement history of the La Tène period and Roman Iron Age in Mainfranken; it is also a valuable addition to the literature concerning the cultural and historical conditions associated with the expansion of the Großromstedt culture or the “Großromstedt horizon” towards the south. This work is a good example of what a multi-layered settlement analysis can look like.

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