

GÜNTHER KAUFMANN (ed.), *Archäologie des Überetsch*. Schriften des Südtiroler Archäologiemuseums volume 5. Universitätsverlag Wagner, Innsbruck 2015. € 44.90. ISBN 978-3-7030-0895-5. 776 pages.

This monumental volume of more than 700 pages on the archaeology of South Tyrol, edited by Günther Kaufmann, contains 37 contributions, many of which are authored by the editor himself, while others are written by several authors working in the region. The editor is a prehistoric archaeologist responsible of the Tiroler Landesinstitut of the South Tyrol Cultural Institute and curator at the South Tyrol Archaeological Museum.

The scope of the volume is to summarise the knowledge and results of the archaeological research carried out in South Tyrol / Südtirol / Alto Adige. This is indeed a unique mountain region of northern Italy (Trentino-Alto Adige), located in the eastern Alps close to Austria. It is one of the few bilingual regions (Italian and German are both official languages) with a special administrative status (Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bozen / Bolzano) of the Italian Republic. This is the reason why the contributions are written partly in German and partly in Italian with extended summaries in both languages. Moreover, this special administrative autonomy implied that in 1999 the responsibility of the protection of the archaeological heritage was definitively transferred from the Italian State to the Autonomous Provinces.

In particular, the name Überetsch / Oltradige refers to the region of South Tyrol located west of the Adige River and south-west of the town of Bolzano: it is a hilly area, at c. 200–500 m above sea level, along the slopes of the Mendola, where the lakes of Monticolo and Caldaro are located. The Oltradige includes the towns of Appiano / Eppan and Caldaro / Kaltern. The area is rich in medieval castles.

At present, this region is characterised by vineyards. Geologically, it is very heterogeneous due to various glacial and post-glacial deposits. In the eastern part of the territory, morainic deposits constitute the main geological substrate, whereas in the western part calcareous debris is the prevailing substrate for soil formation. These differing geological and geomorphological conditions explain the origin of many different and often contrasting soil types that characterise the region.

The volume can be divided into two parts: The first includes contributions overviewing the various archaeological periods known in the area. The second contains contributions that describe in detail single archaeological sites or research results. Since neither these parts nor the chapters are numbered, they follow each other seamlessly. Therefore, it is not easy for the reader to understand where one section ends and the next begins.

In the first part, after an introduction by the editor on the history of the studies and archaeological research in this region of South Tyrol, the chapters present the status of knowledge regarding the earliest phases of human activity in the region: the stone age (Mesolithic and Neolithic) and the metal ages (Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages). It needs to be emphasised that this small, apparently remote Alpine region was instead the crossroads of many researchers of different nationalities who were active in the area, among whom are to be mentioned the late Paolo Orsi, Oswald Menghin, Raffaello Battaglia and Richard Pittioni.

H. Oberrauch is the author of the second chapter “Die Steinzeit im Siedlungsraum Überetsch”, reviewing the present knowledge of the peopling from the Mesolithic to the early Copper Age of a territory comprising the municipalities of Eppan, Kaltern, Mt. Mendel / Mendola and Nonsberg-Nonstal / Val di Non. The systematic recurrence of Mesolithic sites is interpreted as due to seasonal frequentations and hunting camps. The author reports the results of excavations carried out in 2006 at the site around Lake Tret, in the upper Nonstal, at 1604 m of altitude. The lake that

extends over a surface of 3.84 hectares has already been illustrated in the historic “Atlas Tyrolensis”, published by Peter Anich and Blasius Hueber in 1774, the first map of the entire region ever published with geodetic measurements. The human presence along its shores has been radiocarbon dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and attributed to the early Mesolithic period. Among the first traces of Neolithic activity in the area are those documented at Montiggler / Monticolo. In all cases, they are attributable to a period not earlier than the diffusion of the middle Neolithic Square-Mouthed Pottery Culture / *Cultura dei vasi a bocca quadrata*. Therefore, the earliest traces and the modalities of the neolithisation of this Alpine area are presently unknown.

The following chapter by G. Kaufmann, regarding the Metal Ages in the Überetsch, comprises more than 70 pages (pp. 75–150). It shows continuity of settlement from the Copper to the Iron Ages, with a special density of sites attributable to the Copper Age. This process is best represented by the archaeological evidence gathered from the hill-settlements of Putzer-Gschleier and Fuchsberg, where a long-lasting life of c. two millennia has been recorded.

However, the data at our disposal show the probable existence of two main periods of settlement crisis in the area, during which the number of sites decreased. The first corresponds to the early Iron Age, the other to the second part of the Iron Age that coincides with La Tène B–C. Nevertheless, as the author correctly points out, this pattern might be biased by the limited number of well datable finds combined with a consistent occurrence of isolated finds that have been included in the statistics. However, it is not a mere coincidence that the most important caesura is indeed glimpsed at the time of the Roman conquest. The Roman settlement-system drastically changed the distribution pattern and settlement strategy compared with the previous periods, in favour of an almost exclusive occupation of the morainic terraces.

The Roman period and the Middle Ages are described in the chapters that follow. The first consists mainly of detailed topographic studies presenting many new clues.

In particular, the contribution by C. Marzoli, G. Bombonato and A. De Leo is to be mentioned. It regards the discovery made in 2005 of a large late Roman villa, with mosaics and fragments of painted frescos near the village of Saint Paul. The data gathered from rescue excavations show that an important communication road crossed the settlement during the Roman period.

The catalogue and etymological analysis of the numerous praedial toponyms in the Appiano and Caldaro region presented by G. Kaufmann are also of interest. They show the permanence of place names testifying for a continuity of land use from Roman times to the Middle Ages.

As mentioned above, the second part of the volume (from p. 193 onward) consists of 32 report papers of individual archaeological sites, of which the majority present new evidence and materials from already known sites, with some reports describing sites so far absolutely unknown. These contributions deal with the most important archaeological sites and finds discovered during the last years, among which are metal objects from illicit metal-detector use (see the contribution by C. Marzoli and H. Steiner, pp. 193–202), or results obtained from new studies of old collections. This is the case for the chapter by A. Alberti regarding the metal objects from the famous hoard of Vadena / Pfatten otherwise known as Caldaro / Kaltern, discovered in 1860. Important manuscripts discovered by the author in the archives led to the definitive attribution of several finds to the same cache, whose total number now amounts to 40 pieces of different age and typology, mostly intentionally damaged, ready to be melted and attributed to the activity of a metal smith of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

One entire chapter written by G. Kaufmann describes the finds from Fuchsberg Hill (pp. 413–466). On the top of the hill are the ruins of the 13<sup>th</sup> century castle, where a long-lasting settlement

sequence is documented thanks to the recovery of several surface finds and the excavation of test trenches. They show that the area was settled from the early Bronze Age Polada Culture (Bz A1b) to the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Among others, the contribution by G. Bombonato (pp. 723–759) is also to be mentioned. It reports the results of the investigations carried out at the ruins of St Peter's church in locality Castelvechio / Altenburg near Caldaro. The excavations of the church revealed indeed the existence of one of the most ancient cult places of the entire region. The fact that this location might have been settled in antiquity had already been suggested according to its toponym, which recalls the presence of an "ancient castle". It was in the late 1900s that the restoration of the ruins started, involving also archaeological explorations of the site. These investigations permitted to ascertain not only the existence of a palae-Christian phase of the building, but also of an Iron Age layer attributable to the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

To sum up, this volume is a commendable careful reconstruction of the history of this region that exploits archaeological sources and archive documents, past and present finds, combining the results obtained from new excavations with the study of old collections. It is a complete synthesis of our knowledge on this Alpine region with a more comprehensive bibliography.

The volume is nicely illustrated with excellent quality colour and black and white drawings and photographs. However, although many detailed micro-regional maps are provided in the different chapters, a general, large-scale map with the main localities of Trentino / Alto Adige within the surrounding regions (Austria, the Veneto, Friuli and Überetsch / Oltradige within South Tyrol and Italy for instance) is unfortunately missing. Thus, the location of most of the sites presented in the different contributions is difficult to interpret to a reader who is unfamiliar with the area. In my opinion, this is the main fault of the volume that nevertheless represents an important and useful contribution to the knowledge of the archaeology of South Tyrol and the Alpine region in general. Literally, its heavy weight mirrors very well the "weight of knowledge".

I-56126 Pisa  
Via dei Mille 19  
E-Mail: elisabetta.starnini@unipi.it

Elisabetta Starnini  
Department of Civilizations and  
Forms of Knowledge  
University of Pisa

**RÜDIGER KRAUSE, Archäologie im Gebirge. Montafoner Zeitmaschine. Frühe Besiedlungsschichte und Bergbau im Montafon, Vorarlberg (Österreich).** With contributions by Lisa Brिंगemeier, Rudolf Klopfer, Astrid Röpke, Astrid Stobbe, Franziska Würfel. Dr. Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 2015. € 19.80. ISBN 978-3-7749-3981-3. 147 pages, 213 illustrations.

The archaeology of the highlands can draw on a long tradition of research in the eastern Alps. More than a century ago, numerous prehistoric finds and sites were discovered, mostly in conjunction with the then still active mining of copper in the Alps, and these findings were reported for the first time then. There has been no loss of interest in pre- and protohistoric mining since, and techniques appropriate for its investigation have evolved steadily. It comes as a surprise that specialists in uplands archaeology have so far paid scant attention to the Montafon, and consequently the site was almost a blank spot on the map. This situation changed completely when the investigations presented in the book under review were set in train. Within a few years, a comprehensive interdisciplinary project was established and brought to fruition.