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KARINA GRÖMER, Prähistorische Textilkunst in Mitteleuropa. Geschichte des Handwerkes und der Kleidung vor den Römern. With contributions by Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer and Helga Rösel-Mautendorfer. Verlag Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Wien 2010. € 35,00. ISBN 978-3-902421-50-0. 474 pages with 202 figures and a map.

Karina Grömer's book on prehistoric textile crafts in Central Europe is a comprehensive overview of prehistoric textiles in most of Europe, and a general introduction to the theme of archaeological textiles. It is aimed at a wide audience: historians, dress historians, archaeologists and people interested in the history of textile crafts.

The book springs from an international research project, "DressID – Clothing and Identities. New Perspectives on Textiles in the Roman Empire", financed by the EU Culture program. A partner in the DressID project, the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna owns an important collection of prehistoric textiles preserved in the salt mines of Hallstatt, and these form the core data of the book.

The first chapter gives a brief outline of the prehistory of Central Europe, from the Paleolithic to the arrival of the Romans, and offers a basic structure of chronology, main innovations and important finds to the non-specialist. It is followed by a section on the relationship between conditions of preservation and the recovery of archaeological textiles, e. g. in connection with corroded metal, in salt, in waterlogged conditions, or in ice.

The second chapter explains the processes that turn raw materials into textile items, interlinked with the research processes that have led to current knowledge. Raw materials include flax, hemp, nettle and a variety of tree basts, as well as sheep and goat wools, horsehair and badger. The various work processes are described and illustrated, both with detailed photos of the processes themselves, and how they are reflected in samples of archaeological textiles and textile tools. Types of spindle whorls and loom weights are sorted into chronological groups, and relationships between form, weight and intended yarn and fabric types explained and illustrated in a variety of diagrams. Band weaving techniques such as the rigid heddle and tablet weaving are explained and demonstrated, including how patterns are created, and how band weaving may serve as starting or finishing borders in larger webs. Useful illustrations show the construction of borders and selvages. The workings of the warp-weighted loom are also explained, as well as indications of other loom types, followed by a discussion of how different weaves such as tabby and twill were accommodated, and the archaeological evidence of this. Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer's contribution on dyeing deals with colour in textiles, how they are obtained from various dyestuffs, and how scientists are investigating archaeological textiles to establish if and how they have been dyed. The section also gives a brief overview of dyed textiles from Prehistoric Europe. In the following section Grömer describes ways of decorating textiles by various forms of woven patterns with and without the use of colour, applied decoration

such as embroidery, beading, painting, or by structural decoration such as fringes or the insertion of pile to give a shaggy appearance. Finishing processes such as brushing, napping and fulling (wool), and bleaching and smoothing (linen) are also described, with examples from Prehistoric Europe. Helga Rösel-Mautendorfer's section on sewing and tailoring concludes the chapter. The archaeological evidence in the form of needles and stitching is presented, illustrated by drawings of stitch types accompanied by photographs of archaeological samples. An overview of seams and hems in prehistoric textiles is followed by a discussion of their role in the construction of garments by supplying flexibility or enhancing the shape of the clothing.

The third chapter discusses textile crafts in prehistoric societies. The archaeological evidence is scrutinized in relation to modes of production such as household production, household industry, attached specialist production and workshop production. Evidence in iconographical sources such as rock art, engravings and paintings on pottery, depictions of textile work and / or clothing on bronze artefacts and in *situla* art is used, along with investigations of grave finds and settlement sites in attempting to identify consumers, producers and production sites of textiles. Grömer concludes that modes of production most likely were intertwined, but that the Hallstatt period saw centres of specialization, and the Latène period early stages of mass production. Women of all walks of life seems to have been in charge of spinning and weaving, while the gender of those in charge of sheep shearing, dyeing, fulling and tailoring appears to have been more mixed.

The fourth chapter challenges the tendency to assume that textiles primarily were used for clothing, addressing the question of how we can identify shrouds or other types of textiles used at burials. This particularly applies to what now appears as a widespread habit of wrapping metal artefacts, various forms of soft furnishings, bedding, and other forms of household textiles. Textiles for transport, re-used textiles and textiles as linings are also discussed against a backdrop of iconographic evidence, grave finds, settlement finds and textiles from the Austrian salt mines. A model illustrating the various types of textiles and their primary and secondary uses concludes the chapter.

The final chapter deals with clothing in prehistoric Central Europe. It starts with a definition of dress, drawing attention to the archaeologists' habit of equating "dress accessories" with "dress", and gives an overview of sources and problems related to them, followed by an overview of the evidence. The section on Neolithic dress supplies an overview of iconographical sources, i. e. figurines, and discusses how they compare with the archaeological finds of clothing – and remains of it – of the Ice Man (so called Ötzi) and from the Alpine lake dwellings. Neolithic clothing is made of skin and various vegetable fibres. With the Bronze Age, wool became an important material for clothing. A group of complete garments recovered from oak coffins in Denmark form the starting point for an overview of iconographical and archaeological sources from Central Europe - figurines, textile remains, and dress accessories and the position of other bronze artefacts in grave finds. The section on Bronze Age clothing concludes that the people in the Danubian part of present Lower Austria wore different dress to those in Bohemia and Hungary, and that both regions saw several changes during the Bronze Age. The function of bronze pins and their possible effect on the fabric are discussed as potential evidence for the introduction of a peplos-style garment. Finally, samples of Bronze Age head wear and evidence of shoes are presented. For the Iron Age, iconographical sources for clothing are more plentiful. Inhumation graves replace the cremations of the preceding period, offering richer data sets, and written sources also supply some information on Late Iron Age dress. As complete Iron Age garments from Central Europe are few (a pair of leggings and socks from a glacier in South Tirol, and some caps and hood remains from the salt mines of Hallstatt), bog finds from the Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age of Denmark and Germany are surveyed as a backdrop. Sadly, the clothing of a man found 1734 in the salt mines of Hallstatt has not survived. Further examples of Iron Age garments (cloaks and mantels) have been found at the Villanovan site of Verucchio. The available garments, dress accessories from grave finds such as the princely grave from Mitterkirchen,

La Tène period cemeteries and other sources are compared with the iconographic and textual evidence, and discussed, ending in an attempt at characterizing male and female clothing of the Hallstatt and particularly the La Tène period. The evidence for, and the form and suggested appearance of female dress (peplos, mantle and linen shift) is presented and illustrated by a series of drawings and colour photos. The chapter, and the book, end with sections discussing the meaning of dress as a mark of gender, age, rank and other aspects of identity, and emphasizing the value of clothing in a pre-industrial society where all textiles were made by hand. At the end Grömer summarizes her findings and makes it clear that the appearance of the Prehistoric peoples of Central Europe was a far cry from the popular image of wild-eyed creatures with unkempt hair, wrapped in coarse sacking or animal skins. They were well dressed, mostly in tailored garments that protected them against the excesses of the climate. Fashions changed over time; towards the end of the Iron Age draped garments like those of the Mediterranean cultures seems to have gained popularity.

Grömer's book is an excellent introduction to archaeological textiles and clothing. It is a lively account, easy to read, and has much to offer to professionals as well as to the general reader. The archaeologist, the textile historian, the general reader, and the many who are interested in the recreation and reenactment of Prehistory will all find something useful and new. The illustrations are superb, combining photos and drawings to explain details and work processes. Diagrams and models are particularly successful, such as the textile production processes (p. 46–47 fig. 12), the introduction and development of various techniques (p. 225 fig. 118), typologies of tools (p. 88 fig. 34), figurines and human figures on pottery and situlas (p. 247 fig. 124; p. 311 fig. 152; p. 365 fig. 182), and the various uses of textiles (p. 290 fig. 145). These are extremely informative and useful tools for the reader. The rich collections of the *Naturhistorisches Museum* in Vienna are employed to good effect in illustrating anything from Palaeolithic dress or lack of it (the Venus of Willendorf) to botanical samples of flax collected 200 years ago. For Central Europe, it is fully updated and represents the state of the art of textile archaeology. In addition, it contains several new observations. The book is less precise on Northern Europe, and has little information on Western Europe. Grömer has a tendency to prefer German language sources, even when they are secondary to original sources published in English. An unpublished doctoral dissertation from the University of Kiel is thus the standard reference to what is in fact mainly the reviewer's work, published in 1986 in the book "Forhistoriske tekstiler i Skandinavien / Prehistoric Scandinavian Textiles. Nordiske Fortidsminder B 9" (Copenhagen 1986); likewise, a German source is given for fig. 70 (p. 142); it was made for another of the reviewer's publications, and the correct reference should be "© J. Kraglund, Skalk". References to the works of Margrethe Hald on the Danish Bronze and Iron Age garments (M. HALD, *Costumes of the Bronze Age in Denmark* [Copenhagen, London 1940]; *IDEM*, *Ancient Danish Textiles from Bogs and Burials* [Copenhagen 1980]) also appear somewhat irregular. This particularly applies to references to M. HALD's "Ancient Danish Textiles from bogs and burials" where pages quoted are wide of the mark! Still, these are minor problems, but something that should be corrected if the book is to be reprinted, or translated into English like the "Kingdom of Salt – 7000 years of Hallstatt" (A. KERN ET AL. [eds], *Kingdom of Salt – 7000 years of Hallstatt* [Vienna 2009]), another useful overview published by the Verlag Naturhistorisches Museum Wien. In conclusion, Grömer's book is to be warmly recommended. It is a difficult art to address scholars as well as laymen at the same time. Karina Grömer has succeeded to do that in a way that is attractive and readable, as well as scholarly. The book fills a lacuna both as an introduction to archaeological textiles and as an overview of prehistoric textiles in most of Europe, and it deserves to find a wide readership.

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