

SZILVIA BÍRÓ, Die zivilen Vici in Pannonien. Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums volume 131. Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz 2017. ISBN 978-3-88467-264-8. € 78.00. 402 pages with 232 figures and 25 tables.

This publication results from the project “Transformation. Die Entstehung einer gemeinsamen Kultur in den Nordprovinzen des Römischen Reiches von Britannien bis zum Schwarzen Meer”, which was initiated in 2004 under the auspices of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz and which was funded by the European Commission. In 2007, the project was successfully completed. As one of the results, an open access web presence was installed (<http://www.rgzm.de/Transformation>; last access 27 November 2018). It features detailed texts on a range of central issues of the project. The exhibition “Im Schutz des Limes”, which was held in the Kurfürstliches Schloss Mainz at the end of 2007, additionally presented insights into research foci and results of the project. Barbara Pferdehirt, who also contributed a short preface to the volume at hand, edited a companion to this exhibition.

The present publication on the *vici* in Pannonia was collated during the project and accepted as a dissertation at the University of Freiburg, Germany. The primary focus of both dissertation and publication centres on the continuity of indigenous settlement after the Roman occupation of Pannonia and on the development of small settlements in its rural territories. The basis of investigations was formed by excavation reports and publications of excavation results from Hungary, Austria, Croatia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The extent and content of these publications differed significantly, ranging from detailed monographs to sketchy preliminary reports. Dealing with such a multitude of data presented an ambitious project. The investigations in the Pannonian *vicus* of Budaörs and their successive, monographic publication (K. OTTOMÁNYI, *Római vicus Budaörsön* [Der römische vicus von Budaörs]. Régészeti tanulmányok [Budapest 2012]) were clearly beneficial.

The volume comprises eight larger thematic chapters, each one divided into several clearly structured subsections. It starts with the “Einführung” (Introduction, pp. 1–28), followed by the single chapters on “Methodik und Forschungsprobleme” (Methods and Research Problems, pp. 29–43), “Siedlungsstruktur” (Settlement Structure, pp. 45–152), “Wirtschaftliche Faktoren” (Economic Factors, pp. 153–174), “Funktionen der Vici” (Functions of the Vici, pp. 175–193), “Beziehungen zwischen Villen und Vici” (Villa – Vici Relations, pp. 195–209), “Gesellschaftsstruktur der Vici” (Social Structure of the Vici, pp. 211–248) and “Veränderung des ländlichen Siedlungsnetzes von der Stufe LT D bis in die spätrömische Zeit” (Changes in settlement networks from phase LT D until the Late Roman Era, pp. 249–291), which are eventually recapitulated and concluded by the “Zusammenfassung” (Summary, pp. 293–308). In this final section, a complete and alphabetical tabular register of all Pannonian *vici* (tab. 25, 11 pages) supports the statements of the résumé. The text itself refers often to the information given in the two annexed catalogues; an epigraphic catalogue (“Epigraphischer Katalog”, pp. 319–322) and a general catalogue of the *vici* (“Katalog”, pp. 323–381). At the end of the volume, the indices “Literatur” (Literature, pp. 383–399) and “Abkürzungen” (Abbreviations, pp. 401–402) are added.

Archaeological research in the territory of Pannonia has long focussed on investigations of military complexes and villas. By focusing on the *vici*, however, the author aims at a complete assessment of the Romanisation processes and settlement patterns in the province of Pannonia. In doing so, the provincial borders of *Pannonia Inferior* and *Pannonia Superior* are not considered. In fact, the author treats Pannonia as a single entity.

A main aspect of the author’s approach to the topic of Pannonian *vici* is the organisational and administrative differentiation of *vicus* / *pagus* / *civitas*, as it has already been defined for the western

provinces, where research on *vici* has a long-lived tradition. She especially pinpoints difficulties to bring in line the Roman '*vicus*' as a legal term and the '*vicus*' as a specific form of settlement. Ancient text sources have, thus far, not provided consistent explanations for the *vicus per se*. Hence, the term has generally been used for settlement structures that did not have administrative urban status or cannot distinctly be called a villa. The author indeed applies the term to all types of settlements without official status; yet, she tries to refer to the broad interpretational scheme of the '*vicus*' whenever possible. Accordingly, she compiles a specific set of conditions for a *vicus* and aims at assigning these criteria to the Pannonian *vici*. Among these criteria are the function as a central place, the location at or nearby a road, an organised society, public buildings, traces of urbanisation, evidence for cultic activities, a considerable local / indigenous population and commercial production. In Pannonia, the term '*vicus*' has so far been applied to military / auxiliary *vici*, indigenous village-settlements, production sites, and pre-municipal / quasi-urban settlements. The epigraphic record, however, comprises 22 inscriptions that name *vici*. An analysis of these inscriptions facilitated the localisation of several *vici*; it also showed that many settlements, which emerged from the LT D-period, should be identified as *vici*. Thus, the author reached the conclusion that villages and rural settlements should not be excluded from the rank of civilian *vici*.

The author starts her historical outline with the 1st century AD since she sees this period as a decisive factor for the emergence of *vici* in Pannonia. This time frame is especially important for the main *civitates*-sites, which, as the author believes, developed out of indigenous, local settlements. In Pannonia, however, the identification and localisation of these *civitates* has been challenging so far. Hence, the author acts on the assumption that most of the *civitas*-centres had received municipal rights under Hadrian and that, in the turn of these events, *civitas*-territories merged with urban territories. At this point, Bíró mentions large-scale economic and societal changes in the province. These are, however, not further characterised. The historical outline on the Pannonian *vici* and their background ends quite abrupt, which surprises the reader as well, as there is indeed evidence for the existence of *vici* in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

The definition of a '*civilian vicus*' is central for the author, and she recurrently discusses the matter throughout the study's different chapters. In doing so, she seeks comparisons in the *vici* of the western provinces, where the term '*vicus*' is only used if literary sources or epigraphic evidence clearly indicate it. Smaller settlements, which form the majority of Pannonian sites that might be referred to as *vici*, are mostly denominated as 'small towns' or 'non-urban settlements' in the West of the Roman Empire. Yet, it should be inevitable to incorporate different circumstances and conditions of the local, provincial structures and developments in thoughts on settlement characterisation and settlement patterns. Regarding this aspect, the author clearly succeeded with her thorough and encompassing study on the Pannonian *vici*. To fully determine the settlement pattern, however, it is necessary also to consider settlements with agricultural functions, which mostly display continuity from pre-Roman times and a distinct connection to the local, indigenous population, even if such settlements fall out of the pattern of *vici* in the western provinces. In Pannonia, Roman period *vici* that follow the definition used in the western provinces are only rarely attested. Hence, the typical Pannonian, agriculturally characterised villages that clearly functioned as central places should indeed be addressed as *vici*.

Despite the diverse nature of attested and available evidence on Pannonian settlement in general and *vici* specifically, the author clearly managed to produce a coherent overview of settlement patterns in Pannonia. The study only incorporated settlements which could be connected to archaeological sources and features. Settlements with official administrative status, villas, and *canabae* were not discussed. Decisive criteria for the identification of *vici* have been clearly outlined. Here, central factors that should be considered are the function as central places (in religious, economic,

or administrative terms), multiple dwellings and areas of economic purpose that display certain signs for distinct spatial organisation, the existence of specific buildings with specific functions, the location at or near an important road, and overall agricultural character. It is, however, central that these criteria rather serve as basic guidelines, as they do not have to be invariably applicable but might have differed from case to case.

The publication's catalogue lists 133 sites, which have been archaeologically investigated to differing degrees, in alphabetical order. Large-scale archaeological investigations have thus far only been conducted in the *vici* of Budaörs and Páty. In many *vicus* sites, architectural features are only fragmentarily preserved; hence, detailed information on the architectural organisation does not exist. Nevertheless, the overall appearance of the sites and their settlement characteristics can still be assessed. Within Bíró's study on the Pannonian *vici*, more detailed investigations are carried out for those village-like settlements that revealed pit houses and post houses, which can often be traced back to pre-Roman settlement structures. The *vici* that have the character of small towns are not extensively treated. This, however, does not devalue the impact of the study. The overall size, sprawl, and scope of *vicus* settlements in Pannonia have been determined only occasionally. The author was able to show that in certain cases (e. g. in Győr-Ménfőcsanak and Páty) large areas, which cover spaces of up to 50 hectares, were not simultaneously inhabited. In fact, much smaller settlement spheres had rather shifted recurrently over a period of three centuries.

The internal structure of the *vici* mostly displays simple square or rectangular plot allotments, which had been delineated by small trenches. In some of the settlements, archaeological investigations were able to confirm a functional structuring into spatially separated dwelling and economy areas. These areas, especially pottery and metal workshops, had partly also been bordered by fences. Street networks and open squares have been determined in the extensively excavated *vici* of Budaörs and Győr-Ménfőcsanak. Most of the *vici* had not been laid out directly at the intra- and interregional main roads but were located in slightly more peripheral areas that were, however, still connected to the larger roads. Complex internal structuring and plot organisation has primarily been identified in the *vici* that later received official administrative status (e. g. *Carnuntum*, *Vindobona*, *Aquincum*, *Brigetio*). In these cases, however, the pre-urban architectural organisation of building plots and overall settlement system was picked up in the later towns, resulting in spatial coverage and multi-layered sites. The southern-Pannonian *vici* revealed structures like strip houses, baths, and temples. Moreover, they show a predominant use of stone architecture as well as an Italic settlement pattern and Italic building types and techniques. The general individual character of the Pannonian *vici*, however, becomes especially apparent when the author discusses the most common buildings of civilian *vici* in Pannonia. The pit house is a characteristic feature of the Pannonian *vicus per se*. Pit houses are generally popular dwelling structures in the Noric-Pannonian and Dacian settlement areas. As a reference, the author mostly uses the well-researched pit houses in the *vici* of Budaörs, Győr-Ménfőcsanak and Páty. Mappings of all *vicus* settlements in Pannonia show that an emphasis on pit houses is clearly traceable in the hinterland of the Limes and to the south of the Lake Balaton, whereas the southern part of the province did not reveal that many pit house structures. In terms of wooden architecture, post houses and constructions with sleeper beams are predominant after they gradually emerged during the 2nd century AD. These buildings often have a simple, rectangular floor plan that in some cases was completed by a portico-like hall at the front side. Due to the mappings of these buildings by the author, post houses are common in southern Pannonia. In contrast to wooden architecture, stone buildings have mostly been dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. The highest number of stone buildings has been identified in the *vicus* of Budaörs, where more sophisticated floor plans are already attested for the 2nd century AD (long, rectangular houses with intermediate walls or a central vestibule). In general, the author was able to show that more than half of the

identified *vici* of Pannonia had Celtic predecessor settlements with pit or post houses, making these structures local traditions that were inherited in Roman times.

Harald VON PETRIKOVITS (Kleinstädte und nichtstädtische Siedlungen im Nordwesten des römischen Reiches. In: P. Jankuhn et al., *Das Dorf der Eisenzeit und des frühen Mittelalters*, Abh. Akad. Wiss. Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 3. Folge 101 [Göttingen 1977] 86–135, s. 98–115) has classified settlements into categories according to location or function: settlements at traffic arteries, mining settlements, craft settlements, military settlements, settlements at thermal springs or baths, and settlements at sanctuary sites. Due to the large amount of rural settlements in the Pannonian provincial territory, such a classification is, as Bíró rightly shows, difficult for Pannonia. Many Pannonian *vici* rather fall into the category of ‘rural centres’ outlined by H. A. HIDDINK (Rural centres in the Roman settlement system of Northern Gallia Belgica and Germania inferior. In: N. Roymans / F. Theuvs [ed.], *Images of the Past. Studies on Ancient Societies in Northwestern Europe. Stud. Pre- en Protohist. 7* [Amsterdam 1991] 201–234). According to Bíró, one of the main reasons for this agricultural and rural character of Pannonian settlements is the general lack of villas in the 1st to 3rd century AD in Pannonia. As a villa supply network did not exist, the *vici* had to take over commodity production and trade and agricultural supply. Apart from the large number of agricultural, rural settlements, Pannonian *vici* might also be – if rather in single cases – classified as settlements at thermal springs, settlements at traffic arteries, craft settlements, or villages with self-sufficient economic modes. The relationship between *vici* and *villae rusticae* differs depending on the geographical region. In areas with a continuing indigenous influence and persistent traditions, villas are only attested scarcely (*Aquincum*, *Brigetio*, *Vindobona*, south of the Lake Balaton). In southwest-Pannonia and along the amber route, however, villas are indeed present in larger numbers. To grasp this relationship, Bíró has coined the term of the *Villensiedlung*. With this term, she refers to both villas with an attached *vicus* settlement and conglomerates of smaller, single villas. This so-called *Villensiedlung* seems to have become more important during the 3rd century AD; yet, the author does not elaborate on this development or its reasons. This is comprehensible, as the investigation of villas would initiate a new thematic discussion. However, a study on such *Villensiedlungen* might be of specific importance, especially regarding the social changes in the Severan period.

The origin and social structure of *vicus* inhabitants is also discussed. Here, the author tries to get a glimpse into movements and social dynamics by analysing aspects like the characteristic pit houses, the epigraphic material, or specific types of pottery. These characteristics are explicitly present in the *vici* with pre-Roman roots and settlement tradition; they are also encountered in newly founded settlements. In the period between the 2nd and the early 3rd century AD, these characteristics gradually decline and disappear. This marks the process of Romanisation in Pannonia. In terms of cultic activities, Jupiter Optimus Maximus was predominantly popular. This is confirmed by the large amount of epigraphic evidence. Especially in *vici* with local, indigenous traditions Diana and Silvanus were worshipped as well.

The last larger thematic section of Bíró’s study (“Die Veränderung des ländlichen Siedlungsnetzes von der Stufe LT D bis in die spätrömische Zeit” [Changes in the settlement network from Phase LT D through the Late Roman Era]) revisits the initial question of what had happened to the LT D period settlements and population after the arrival of Romans. The central issue of this question clearly is the persistence of indigenous and local traditions. Here, Bíró shortly introduces pre-Roman settlement patterns in Pannonia, which mostly comprised small villages centring on an oppidum. These small villages often consisted of just a few dwelling plots with pit or post houses. The majority of oppida, however, were abandoned in the time of the Roman occupation at the latest, whereas the late Celtic farmsteads and the lowland settlements persisted. The author comes

to the conclusion that the settlement network and pattern was gradually re-structured during the early Roman period and continuing Principate. The settlements with a long-lasting history were, therefore, mostly located slightly off the main traffic arteries and had a predominantly agricultural and rural character. Another considerable part of the previous LT D-settlements lay near a Roman central place. These settlements changed their function to become surplus-producers (“Überschuss produzierende Versorgungsvici”, p. 303, e. g. Budaörs). Moreover, Bíró speaks of ‘re-settled’ *vici* in cases where the archaeological evidence points towards the emergence of a settlement in the direct vicinity of a LT D period settlement. The second larger group is comprised of *vici* that did not reveal any hints of pre-Roman inhabitation but are explicitly Roman in their layout and modes of daily life-style. A main part of this group is formed by *vici* that could be called ‘small towns’ or ‘settlements along traffic arteries’ (“Verkehrssiedlung”) in accordance with the characterisation of these categories in the western provinces. These traffic-artery settlements developed around or next to a road station. In the discussion of these two types of *vici*, Bíró repeatedly stresses the differing geographical distribution of settlements with LT D-tradition and newly founded settlements. Here, the settlements with Roman character centre on the amber route and in southern Pannonia, while LT D settlements are mostly found in the hinterland of the Limes and in northwestern Pannonia. A certain impact on the civilian *vici* of Pannonia of the Marcomannic wars has thus far not been identified. However, one third of the *vici* revealed larger-scale destruction layers from the time of the Barbarian raids and inner-provincial turmoil during the 3rd century AD. Eventually, the *vici* were slowly abandoned, and in the second half of the 4th century AD, estimates range around 25% of *vici* persisting compared to the total numbers of attested vicus settlements of the 1st to 3rd centuries AD.

In the final section of the publication, Bíró again summarises the different development tendencies of both *vicus*-groups. The traditional, agriculturally characterised *vici* clearly served as guarantors for a persistence and continuity of the Pannonian provincial economy until the 3rd century AD (crafts and agriculture, attested in Budaörs, probably in Győr-Ménfőcsanak, and in Wien-Unterlaa). The Roman *vici*, however, rather provided connections with the road stations and traffic arteries and centred around thermal springs or cultic centres.

In summary, Bíró clearly succeeds in presenting an encompassing study of settlement structures and patterns in Pannonia. The selection and placing of the 232 illustrations is elaborate. Discussions of material from older excavations are clearly and coherently re-evaluated. A fundamental contribution is also provided by the 25 charts that partly serve as summaries of the previously discussed data and, thereby, offer a good overview of the respective topics. With the publication of her study, Bíró has managed to provide colleagues with an essential contribution to the discussion of the historical development of settlement patterns in the province of Pannonia.

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