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WOLF-RÜDIGER TEEGEN / MICHAEL SCHULTZ, Starigard / Oldenburg: Hauptburg der Slawen in Wagrien VII. Die menschlichen Skeletreste. With contributions from Karl-Georg Beck and Thomas Roth. Offa Bücher volume 86. Wachholtz Verlag, Kiel, Hamburg 2017. € 50.00. ISBN 978-3-529-01186-3. 608 pages with numerous illustrations, tables, and 164 plates.

The voluminous monograph by Wolf-Rüdiger Teegen and Michael Schultz presents the full results of the anthropological and palaeopathological investigation of skeletal human remains from the population of Starigard / Oldenburg, the main gord of the north-west Slavonic tribe of the Wagri. This publication not only stands out by the rather large number and excellent preservation of the skeletal remains but also by the extent of the anthropological investigation including macroscopy, radiology, endoscopy, scanning electron, and light microscopy. Considering the importance of this site within the framework of medieval northern German archaeology, this book has been expected for a long time.

In the preface, the editor, Ralf Bleile, states that the text of the publication was already finished and submitted to the editorial office in 1996 (p. 11). However, he does not further explain the long delay in production of the publication. Unfortunately, the main part of this publication remained on the scientific level of the mid-1990s. Even though current approaches in anthropological and palaeopathological research are accounted for in the epilogue (pp. 226–231) and the bibliography (pp. 232–240), they are lacking in the overall interpretation and discussion of the particular cases and pathological conditions in the main text. Despite the disappointing fact that it took more than 20 years from finishing the manuscript to its publication, it is nevertheless gladly welcomed to have it finally in print. This publication has the potential to become a palaeopathological standard work for research, with full-scale osteoanthropological investigation of skeletal remains from an archaeological context. This is acknowledged even more considering such complex publications are rare to find in the 21st century. In the current, rather ephemeral world of science, which often pants after short-lived projects that have limited hypotheses and little understanding of the big picture of the interdependency of different cultural, social, and biological aspects of a human population, a work as this stands out. Because of this nowadays common, self-induced reduction of research to isolated aspects, the holistic approach of Wolf-Rüdiger Teegen and Michael Schultz, in a way, appears to be fallen out of time. The question is whether this current development is really any improvement to science, or only just a setback.

Following the prefaces of the editor and the authors, the actual text comprises 145 pages, including schemas and graphs. The material of the investigation includes about 150 individuals from the graveyard of the gord and the settlement area as well as another approximately 140 scattered finds of human remains. The age of the manuscript is reflected by the methods used for palaeopathology and the assessment of individual data such as sex, age at death, stature, robusticity, epigenetic traits, and anatomical varieties. However, these methods are nowadays still common. Furthermore, standard palaeodemographic parameters were employed as well as statistical tests concerning significances and possible relations between different traits. These tests are still not regularly employed as part of an anthropological and palaeopathological investigation today and were, without

a doubt, an extraordinary effort during the 1990s. Truly outstanding, however, is the field mapping of the burials in relation to different conditions, such as the distribution of traumata, certain pathological changes, and individual morphological traits within the graveyard. This detailed and time-consuming work opens a vast field of possible interpretations.

On pages 27 to 145, the results and discussion are presented. In contrast to the common practice in life sciences, these parts are not separated into two chapters. On the one hand, this complicates the separation between hard data and the authors' interpretation. On the other hand, this way of presentation is probably more comfortable to read, especially in the case of such a large monography. The chapter "Ergebnisse und Diskussion" ("Results and Discussion") comprises the palaeodemographical analysis, osteometry and epigenetics, and palaeopathology. Reflecting the professional specialisation of the authors, the palaeopathological section holds particular interest, with more than 90 pages presented on an outstanding scientific level. Within the investigated individual sample, many different kinds of pathological conditions have been identified. Among them, deficiency diseases were especially common, such as rickets with 27.1 %, and scurvy 18.2 % of all subadults. Among adults, osteoarthritis and insertional tendopathies were particularly common, which is interpreted as a sign of great physical demand even in individuals of rather higher social class, who were buried in the gord. The general health status of the population is interpreted as rather poor. In surprisingly many individuals (up to 17) possible traces of post-mortem manipulation of the corpse, such as cut marks and scrapes, were detected. The authors see possible connection to a defleshing process, which is historically known from the higher Frankish society of the time. It is questionable whether it is constructive to postulate differences between male and female children below the age of six years concerning mortality rate and general physical burden (e.g. stress markers) based on the osteological sex estimation of children only, and without any further validation by DNA analysis. The overlapping of sexual dimorphism should be too wide in children so small to be able to achieve a reliable distribution. Unfortunately, this interpretation seems to be wishful thinking.

The text continues with six pages each of summary in German and English. All basic data and parameters of the individuals from this investigation, as well as comparisons with other populations from Germany and beyond, are presented in 61 tables (pp. 159–204). The original manuscript from 1996 ends with 15 pages of references. The epilogue from 2016 gives a short insight into the development of palaeopathology and the scientific research on the history of Western Slavs. As mentioned in the beginning of this review, it is unfortunate that this updating was not applied to the whole manuscript, as this would have certainly improved the overall interpretation of many pathological aspects.

The next part of the publication consists of a catalogue of all individuals on 200 pages (pp. 241–440). Such an effort is nowadays generally unseen, even though it probably represents the most important source for comparisons and investigations with a special, limited-question setting. The publication of such an extended catalogue is highly commendable. As a future step for better accessibility to this data, an online allocation of this catalogue would be a great service on palaeopathological research.

The last part of the publication is comprised of figure plates (nos 1–166). Altogether, several hundreds of macroscopic, radiologic, endoscopic, scanning electron microscopic, and light microscopic photographs offer a unique opportunity to view diagnostics and comparisons of palaeopathological conditions. This part of the publication reaches the level of the most important encyclopaedic standard works on human palaeopathology. The only points of criticism of these encyclopaedic-like presentations are the lack of scale on all photographs as well as the arrangement of at least some of the figures, which more closely follows the investigation of the individuals, rather than the

pathological conditions. For example, dental pathologies are shown disconnected from each other on several figure plates. Furthermore, some plates may or may not contain figures of such different pathological conditions as bone necrosis on a tibia or a healed epidural haemorrhage (Pl. 124). Therefore, the book is clearly not written with the intention to become a general reference work. However, the number of microscopic images is extraordinary, in plain as well as polarised light. The latter ones, as well as the endoscopic pictures, are printed in colour. This supports the understanding of important aspects of the diagnostic methods. Also, the overall quality of the print as well as the paper and manufacture of the book are excellent. It is a pleasure to work with this book, and the reader does not experience the disappointment of not being able to recognise the object on the photograph due to a pixelated print. This is, unfortunately, not always the case.

The investigation and publication of the human skeletal remains from Starigard / Oldenburg is, as mentioned before, not flawless. Still, it probably ranks among the most important and useful comprehensive publications on palaeopathology of the last decades, especially, but not only, in the German-speaking anthropological sciences. It should not be missing in the library of any palaeopathologist. The presentation of the results of this investigation, at last, closes the gap in the exploration of Starigard / Oldenburg, which probably generations of students of pre- and protohistory encountered. The detailed results and the holistic presentation, including an extended catalogue, can be understood as an example for the basic analysis, which could then be perfectly extended and completed by continuing research in, for example, genetic or stable isotopic investigations. From a modern perspective, these would form an exciting and extremely valuable extension to the basic, osteoanthropological investigation. However, they should not be misunderstood as its replacement. This volume reminds the reader of the necessity and value of such profound, holistic osteoanthropological work.

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REINHARD BERNBECK, *Materielle Spuren des nationalsozialistischen Terrors. Zu einer Archäologie der Zeitgeschichte*. Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2017. € 39.99. ISBN 978-3-8376-3967-4 (print edition). € 39.99. ISBN 978-3-8394-3967-8 (PDF). 515 pages with numerous illustrations, some in colour, and tables.

“The history of the modern era [... is] one of violence and catastrophe”, as the author explained in a recent interview (https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/die_geschichte_der_moderne_ist_eine_der_gewalt_und_katastrophen?nav_id=7498 [last accessed: 12 December 2019]). The task of dealing with National Socialism, which drove humankind to wage one of the biggest wars ever seen, perpetrated a genocide of unimagined magnitude and changed the political landscape for decades to come, is more pressing than ever, particularly given current racist tendencies. Readers of this book by Reinhard Bernbeck, a prehistorian and Near Eastern archaeologist by trade, are asked to disengage from the notion of a “traditional” publication of finds and features from archaeological excavations. They are asked to pluck up the courage to become involved in the author’s sometimes rather provocative and even uncomfortable deliberations and ideas; not only does he call on his readers to go in search of archaeological traces, he also gives them a political statement to ponder along the way, since, he argues, an archaeology of “interpretative restraint” ultimately amounts to “historical misinterpretation” (p. 230). As is clearly announced in the subtitle, which refers to an “archaeology of contemporary history”, Bernbeck’s work presents far more than just the results