

**THOMAS LINK / HEIDI PETER-RÖCHER (eds), Gewalt und Gesellschaft. Dimensionen der Gewalt in ur- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit.** Internationale Tagung an der Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, 14.–16. März 2013. Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie Volume 259. Dr. Rudolf Habelt Verlag, Bonn 2014. € 65.00. ISBN 978-3-7749-3929-5. 297 pages with numerous illustrations.

Studies of violence in the pre- and protohistoric periods have seen a surge since the start of the millennium. The collation of diverse datasets and interpretative approaches through the publication of many edited volumes is a welcome development for archaeologists, osteoarchaeologists and historians alike (C. KNÜSEL / M. J. SMITH [eds], *The Routledge Handbook of the Bioarchaeology of Human Conflict* [Abingdon 2014]; D. L. MARTIN / R. P. PÉREZ / V. R. PÉREZ [eds], *The bioarchaeology of Violence* [Gainesville 2012]; R. SCHULTING / L. FIBIGER [eds], *Sticks, stones and broken bones. Neolithic violence in a European perspective* [Oxford 2012]; J. PIEK / T. TERBERGER [eds], *Frühe Spuren der Gewalt – Schädelverletzungen und Wundversorgung an prähistorischen Menschenresten aus interdisziplinärer Sicht* [Schwerin 2006]). Th. Link and H. Peter-Röcher's volume "Violence and Society" ("Gewalt und Gesellschaft") adds to this growing body of literature and is the outcome of an international conference in Würzburg in 2013, the programme of which is included at the start of the volume. While not all participants were able to contribute to the final publication, it nevertheless represents an extensive collection of papers with a geographic focus on Western Europe.

The volume starts with an introduction (pp. 15–18) by the editors, followed by more general discussions on violence and conflict in the pre- and protohistoric periods ("Allgemeine Beiträge", pp. 19–64) as well as sections on the Early Medieval / period Late Antique ("Frühmittelalter und Spätantike", pp. 65–91), the Bronze / Copper Age ("Bronze- und Kupferzeit", pp. 93–185) and the Neolithic, with one contribution by G. Daković focusing on hunter-gatherer societies. The latter is also the only contribution in English, while the remaining chapters, all in German, include both German and English abstracts.

The editors' introduction stresses the importance of a contextual approach, i. e. considering violence in its particular cultural-historical context, and rightly rejects simplified linear models of the development of violence in human history. This is hardly news but important to reiterate, especially as such an oversimplified picture of our diverse human past has most recently been popularised and advocated by Steven PINKER in his volume "The Better Angels of our Nature. Why Violence has Declined" (New York 2011) – clearly failing to capture the diversity of human society and indeed of violent interaction in general. Importantly, Link and Peter-Röcher also reject the equation of violence with warfare and highlight the importance of considering 'everyday' violent interaction as well as post-mortem manipulations of the body when trying to understand the importance, meaning and impact of violence in the past. This distinction is often lost, and less 'spectacular' evidence of violence (e. g. non-fatal, involving few individuals, etc.) tends to be overlooked in favour of sites or assemblages that represent larger scale violent events.

The general papers at the start of the volume introduce a diverse set of wider-reaching issues when considering past violence. U. Veit (pp. 19–32) focuses on how to present violent narratives and explores the opportunities and challenges of drawing on diverse disciplinary approaches. He also highlights the danger of dramatising the past in the pursuit of popular impact, something that is certainly a recurring feature of the translation of academic findings into the public sphere. J. Wahl (pp. 33–44) provides a comprehensive overview of skeletal trauma analysis and interpretation, with an interesting focus on victim – perpetrator relationships and potential causes of and motivations for physical violence. This is balanced by W.-R. Teegen's exploration of violence

against animals (pp. 55–64), stressing the scope and importance of animal palaeopathology. All three contributions are thorough and engaging, and help to create context for some of the later chapters.

H. Peter-Röcher (pp. 45–54) highlights sedentism and state formation as the key points in human history that shaped and altered manifestations of violence. While providing a good historical overview of previous attempts to pacify the human past, her characterisation of violence in non-hierarchical versus hierarchical societies is rather too neat. It oversimplifies earlier prehistory (the Neolithic in particular) and neither the use of a probably highly stylised rock art representation of inter-group violence from the Levant or the often referred to ethnographic example of the Dani in New Guinea provide convincing evidence for the predominance of ritualised fighting in the small-scale societies of prehistoric Western Europe. Recent work (e. g. M. J. SMITH, *The war to begin all wars? Contextualizing violence in Neolithic Britain*. In: KNÜSEL / SMITH 2014, 109–126; SCHULTING / FIBIGER 2012) on skeletal trauma, both at population and site level, has clearly shown how diverse the context and intensity of violent interactions in this period were, ranging from minimal to lethal, from individual to inter-group conflicts and involving men, women and children.

The larger part of the volume's papers work their way chronologically back in time to explore event horizons, sites and artefacts. Chr. Meyer, K. Wirth and K. W. Alt's excellent paper (pp. 65–79) on violence and social status in Early Medieval Germany is a model on how to successfully combine a range of diverse sources of information (biological, palaeopathological, archaeological, historical) to provide a considered interpretation of past life experience. It is skilfully highlighting how Merovingian high status male burials accompanied by bladed weapons actually reflect the real life use of these weapons of violence, as shown in the high prevalence of skeletal blade injuries in this group – a direct link between grave goods and lifeways that in archaeology is much too often simply presumed without sufficient evidential support. The contrast between prior assumptions and actual evidence is also the topic of R. Prien's paper (pp. 81–91) in his exploration of the Magnentius-Horizon in the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire, calling for caution in expecting neat matches between archaeological and historical evidence.

These days no volume on prehistoric violence is complete without discussing the Bronze Age conflict site in the Tollense valley in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The articles by Th. Terberger, A. Dombrowsky, J. Dräger, D. Jantzen, J. Krüger and G. Lidke (pp. 93–109) and by U. Brinker, St. Flohr, J. Piek, A. Schramm and J. Orschiedt (pp. 111–120) discussing the discoveries from the Tollense river (one more site and finds-based, the other discussing the skeletal evidence for trauma) provide a good summary of the work to date as well as convincing arguments to consider this a site of large-scale conflict with inter-regional consequences, i.e. a site of war. Societal status as well as social re-integration of those committing acts of violence and war are the focus of T. Mörtz' (pp. 121–132) and J.-H. Bunnefeld's (pp. 133–143) contributions, with a UK and Scandinavian focus respectively. Like F. Klimscha's (pp. 145–158) discussion of specialised assault weapons in the Levant, all of these papers are artefact-based but transcend the artefact focus to explore the social meaning and impact of violent actions in the Bronze Age. This theme is continued in S. Hansen's (pp. 159–167) exploration of the hero as a social type or coded model in European prehistory and H. Vogel's (pp. 169–185) re-examination of attendant burials, which question how violence may or may not inform and direct social relations. These issues are very much at the heart of violent interaction everywhere, independent of space and time.

Chronologically moving into the Neolithic, J. Petrasch examines levels of violence throughout this period, considering skeletal trauma and weapons in graves as the most reliable evidence (pp. 187–202). The question of weapons is an interesting one for the Central European Neolithic,

as one could argue that few (or even no) specific weapons of interpersonal violence can be confidently identified in this period. For the Neolithic the term weapon can be applied to any implement that could have been used as such. Focusing on axes, which are multi-purpose wood-working implements as much as potential weapons, seems too simplistic to assess violence potential, especially in view of the cautionary approach advised when aligning grave goods with real life experience or even identity. Petrasch's skeletal data, while extensive, should be treated with caution as it combines assemblages that have undergone varied levels of more or less detailed skeletal analysis. Bioarchaeological methods have changed and progressed, and nowhere is this more apparent than in trauma analysis. Presenting these sites as a coherent dataset is highly problematic, as are more recent changes in the Neolithic skeletal record that have not been considered, including the re-analysis of already excavated assemblages as well as new data on more recently completed sites. Petrasch sees the apparently elevated violent potential of the late Bandkeramik as the prehistoric norm when compared with other periods, while H.-Chr. Strien, J. Wahl and Chr. Jacob's assessment of the Talheim mass grave (pp. 247–255) as well as A. Zeeb-Lanz's interpretation of the skeletal as well as ceramic finds from the Herxheim enclosure (pp. 257–270) argue for a notable increase in violence during the late Bandkeramik. Zeeb-Lanz in particular puts this into a wider context of finds that are not limited to mass-graves like Talheim but include other burial and depositional sites. She explains this through crisis of an ideological nature, the exact origins of which remain elusive, as neither climatological nor socio-economic data seem to show sufficient discontinuity to explain the phenomenon.

In contrast, Th. Link (pp. 271–286) argues for giving cult and ritual a greater role when accounting for some of the late Bandkeramik mass fatality sites such as Schletz in Austria, where he proposes that the almost universal presence of cranial trauma potentially argues against rather than for an interpretation of the remains as resulting from large-scale fighting. Even at Talheim, a mass-grave universally agreed to result from an inter-group conflict event, not all individuals acquired cranial injuries. Alternatively, the extremely high frequency of cranial trauma at Schletz may also be seen as representative of coherent, large-scale ritual actions comparable to the evidence from Herxheim – societally sanctioned, planned and executed violence within what is considered the norm at the time. This is an interesting argument, but does not necessarily preclude the existence of a perceived crisis, whatever its roots. Societal norms change and adapt to lived experience, and these widespread physical manifestations of violence towards the end of Bandkeramik period did not emerge in a vacuum. Sites like Talheim, Schletz and more recently Schöneck-Kilianstädten (e. g. Chr. MEYER / Chr. LOHR / D. GRONENBORN / K. W. ALT, *The massacre mass grave of Schöneck-Kilianstädten reveals new insights into collective violence in Early Neolithic Central Europe*. PNAS 112,36, 2015, 11217–11222) and Halberstadt present a distinct temporal and to some extent geographically contained cluster. Whether we want to term it crisis – ideological or otherwise – is not as important as the fact that evidence for real, physical violence does exist and is arguably more prevalent than in the immediately preceding and succeeding periods.

This is further emphasised when comparing the Bandkeramik to I. Heske and S. Grefen-Peters' discussion of evidence for violence in the Bell Beaker assemblages of Lower Saxony (pp. 203–216), A. Neubert, J. Wicke and H. Bruchhaus' useful summary of links between cranial trauma and weapons in Corded Ware graves (pp. 217–224) and E. Biermann's discussion of mace heads and axes (pp. 237–246). Individual graves with good evidence for violent interaction provide insights into underlying levels of day-to-day violence in society, while mass graves and other large-scale conflict sites, including enclosures with indications for attacks such as those evident in Th. Saile's re-consideration of the Altheim site (pp. 225–236), point towards larger-scale inter-group violence. Whether the term war as we understand it can be applied is a more complex issue. War is a loaded term and used throughout the volume by many of the contributors, but its meaning and

definition appear to subtly change depending on chronological period and context. As G. Daković rightly points out in the final paper of the volume (pp. 287–297), it is easy to bias interpretations of the deep human past through the over-simplified use of recent ethnographic examples or popular interpretative models and present-day concepts without adequate archaeological evidence.

The volume as a whole falls short of sufficiently addressing some of the fundamental problems and debates that underpin current discussions on prehistoric violence and conflict. These include definitions of war and the question of how we should define weapons in societies that do not produce specialised, single function implements. The rather undifferentiated use of published skeletal data, by J. Petrasch and H. Peter-Röcher in particular, is another recurring problem in prehistoric violence studies that does not receive enough attention. At the same time while Th. Link and H. Peter-Röcher might not provide any surprises or much that is completely new, they have assembled interesting chapters by many of the German-speaking scholars that have shaped discussions about prehistoric violence and conflict in particular in the last couple of decades. “Violence and Society” therefore presents a good summary and starting point for those setting out to engage with prehistoric violence studies.

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**RAIMAR W. KORY (ed.), Lebenswelten von Kindern und Frauen in der Vormoderne. Archäologische und anthropologische Forschungen in memoriam Brigitte Lohrke.** Paläowissenschaftliche Studien Band 4. Curach bhán publications, Berlin 2015. € 59,50. ISBN 978-3-942002-21-9. XXII and 354 pages.

Brigitte Lohrke (1969–2008), a German archaeologist, passed away very unexpectedly. Her former colleagues, Niclot Krohn and Raimar W. Kory, initiated a volume of essays in her memory to honour her achievements in archaeological research. A total of 23 contributions was published under the title ‘Lifeworlds of Children and Women in the Premodern Era. Archaeological and Anthropological Research in Memory of Brigitte Lohrke’.

Both the idea to memorise and appreciate Brigitte Lohrke with a book focusing on her research topics and the fact that so many scholars, colleagues and friends followed the invitation to contribute to this volume is highly welcomed. The book explains its history of origin in the first pages. Next, Brigitte Lohrke’s *curriculum vitae* is outlined with special regard to her research interests, followed by a list of her publications. The main part consists of 18 contributions in German and five in English. The field of authors is international. The articles are presented not in a thematic, but in alphabetical order by the authors’ names.

Due to Lohrke’s research interests the topics of the contributions were predefined, focusing on women and children in archaeological contexts, but the majority of articles concentrate on children.

On the positive side, it is much appreciated that several contributors start their article with referring to Brigitte Lohrke herself (e. g. T. Seregély; D. Gutmiedl-Schumann) or to a specific part of her research interest inspiring the article (e. g. G. Lillehammer). However, the term ‘lifeworld’ (“Lebenswelt”) unfortunately is rarely taken up (for exceptions see the contributions by H. Chor-