

This work was highly desirable from a research point of view and fills a sensitive gap. The style is transparent, concise, and to the point and will, I hope, prove exemplary for future publications on similar themes.

Translated by Isabel Aitken and Sandy Hämmerle.

D-18055 Rostock
Neuer Markt 3
E-mail: hans-joerg.karlsen@uni-rostock.de

Hans-Jörg Karlsen
University of Rostock
Heinrich Schliemann-Institut für
Alturtumswissenschaften
Chair of Pre- and Protohistory

HANS-JÖRG NÜSSE, Haus, Gehöft und Siedlung im Norden und Westen der Germania magna.

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ISBN 978-3-89646-523-8. 390 pages with 316 figures.

The present publication is based on the habilitation thesis submitted by Hans-Jörg Nüsse (surname acquired by marriage: Karlsen) to the Department of History and Cultural Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, in 2010. For publication in 2014, the text was partially revised and expanded. The comprehensive study aims to develop a regionally differentiated classification of house plans, farmsteads and settlements from the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD. The main area under study extends from North Brabant to the Danish Isles. In addition, the study includes an overview of adjacent areas in southern Sweden, central and southern Germany, Brandenburg, and Saxony. Thus, from a geographic point of view, the title of the work is rather modest, since the investigation also expands beyond the Roman border to the left of the Rhine. Due to the vast study area, only published settlements were taken into account. Furthermore, the study confines itself to the largest buildings of the farmsteads or to 'main buildings' respectively – a term used synonymously to residential building, longhouse or residential house. Outbuildings were not included. However, in some cases, such as in sites which were not completely excavated, it is not always easy to decide whether a structure should be defined as an outbuilding or a main building. In total, about 2000 house plans of more than 400 sites were evaluated.

The author wants the publication to be understood as a representation of the status quo (p. 13) and thus as a starting point for further research. Consequently, the book comes with numerous greyscale illustrations and some coloured maps, both of which have mainly been adopted from other publications. The floor plans of houses and settlements used for comparison are thus easily accessible for the reader, but some of them are difficult to decipher due to size reduction (e. g. fig. 246,1). A site directory including basic information on the house types represented at each settlement, its general dating, and the most important literature accompanies the study. Given the abundance of sites used for comparison, it is not surprising that occasional misspellings or confusions occur. For example, the site Hatzum-Boomborg consistently appears as Boomburg-Hatzum and Wangenheim sometimes is referred to as Wangendorf. However, misleading references only marginally hamper the work with its extensive study.

The interpretative part of the study includes five chapters. After some introductory explanations, the first chapter presents the criteria used for the typological classification of the evaluated house plans and their dating. The second chapter introduces the evidence in northern Germany and the Netherlands. An overview of the supraregional state of research precedes an extremely concise presentation of the research situation in northern Germany and the Netherlands, focusing

mainly on monographic investigations. In a subchapter, the Northern German and Dutch buildings are considered separately according to one-, two-, and three-aisled or combined constructions. In somewhat lengthy sections, the current state of research regarding house typology, chronology, and chorology is compiled, with the established nomenclature being used. For some house types, such as the Noordbarge type, only a few safe examples are known, so it remains uncertain whether these can be concretely defined as types. The author notes that this holds particularly true for house types of combined construction, since these houses might have emerged from later additions and conversions of houses of uniform construction. In general, the structure and classification of the types are straightforward and well thought out.

In two further subchapters, the plans of farmsteads and settlements in the Dutch and Northern German working area are examined. The author identifies three types of farmsteads that differ essentially in the location of the main building within the courtyard complex. At first glance, the settlement plans show a relatively wide range of variation, since a distinction is made between individual farmsteads or hamlets, clustered villages, large fenced agrarian villages, large fortified settlements, settlements on dwelling mounds, and potential long villages. Settlements on dwelling mounds, however, are a phenomenon limited to a special landscape, and long villages and fortified settlements are rather rare exceptions.

The third chapter considers Jutland and the Danish islands. While the structure of this chapter essentially corresponds to the one before, an introductory presentation of the state of research in Danish settlement archaeology is missing. This is inexplicable, especially in a study that sees itself as a starting point for further research. As a result, for example, it is not always clear if the definitions of house types come from the author or are based on older works.

The fourth chapter includes an overview of southern Sweden, central and southern Germany, and eastern Germany, which essentially means the states of Brandenburg and Saxony. Only for southern Sweden, however, can real house types be identified. In southern and eastern Germany floor plans can only be structured according to the prevailing method of construction (one-, two-, or four-aisled, three-aisled) due to lack of findings and missing publications.

In the fifth chapter, results are compared on a supraregional level. A key element of the comparison is the mapping of the different house types over six horizons spanning from the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD (figs 256–261). In this context the term “tradition area” (“Traditionsraum” – landscape of a certain house type tradition) is introduced in addition to the term “house area” (“Hauslandschaft”), which traditionally refers only to the one-, two-, and three-aisled construction principle (p. 263 f.). The new term, “tradition area”, is used to designate areas with unbroken lines of house type development, while, according to the author, the term “house area” should only be used to designate clearly defined areas with identical house types.

Five tradition areas are defined for the area under investigation (fig. 262): Jutland, southern Sweden, and the islands of Denmark represent a (southern) Scandinavian tradition, which in turn consists of several regional groups. The classical three-aisled byre house is representative for the North Sea coast area. The Netherlands and Westphalia, which form the third large tradition area, are characterised by the two-aisled house, which is succeeded by innovations from the West in the course of the later Roman Iron Age. Two more tradition areas in the northeast and southwest of Germany are tangible only from the late Roman Iron Age onwards. However, these definitions are rather provisional due to the scarcity of archaeological evidence in these areas.

The author states that the distribution patterns of house types at least partially coincide with other archaeological evidence (p. 264 f.). It would have been interesting to pursue the proven or postulated correlations somewhat more intensively, at least in individual cases. For example, it

would have been exciting to investigate the problem of the so-called “diffusion zone” of two- and three-aisled buildings north to the Central German Uplands and the question of the spread of building innovations since the later Roman Iron Age.

In subchapters 5.2 and 5.3., longhouse sizes as well as farmstead layouts and sizes are compared. For methodological reasons, the study focuses on total houses only, while the relation between house and stable remains unconsidered. The statistics, supplemented with charts and maps, show the common observation of an increase in building lengths during the Roman Iron Age in almost all study areas. In Jutland there are oval and trapezoidal farmsteads with individually fenced buildings already materialising in the late pre-Roman Iron Age. In the course of the older Roman Iron Age, new layouts appear and sizes of farmsteads generally increase. In the Dutch and northern German areas, however, fenced farmsteads of usually large rectangular shape are found only in sites from the later Roman Empire Age onwards.

The comparison of settlement plans (chapter 5.4) confirms the well-known picture according to which village-like structures first developed in central and southern Jutland during the pre-Roman Iron Age. At this point, the discussion seems a bit too simplistic. For example, the separation between large enclosures with symbolic or legal-religious enclosures on the one hand and fortifications for “clear defensive purposes” on the other hand is by no means as uncomplicated as the present publication implies. This is illustrated by the recently altered interpretation of the Dutch site Rhee, which is no longer considered to be a fortified market or seat of power, but a cultic centre with a predominantly social and religious function (RGA² 34, 495 f. s. v. Zeijen [H. T. WATERBOLK]). The same applies to places such as Archsum-Burg, Tinnumburg, and Trælbanken on the west coast of Schleswig, which – unlike Rhee – remain excluded from consideration by H.-J. Nüsse for precisely this reason (p. 294). At the same time, recent discoveries show that such sites are more common in certain regions than previously assumed (I. AUFDERHAAR, *Der Raum Sievern und das Land Wursten – Zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung einer Region mit zentralörtlichen Merkmalen im westlichen Elbe-Weser-Dreieck. Siedlungs- u. Küstenforsch. südl. Nordseegebiet* 38, 2015, 123–144). The interpretation always depends on the archaeological criteria used in the actual case. Thus, a more differentiated view and consistent categories for evaluating the various findings would have been of great use for future research.

Although outbuildings are not the subject of the study, the quantitative ratio of pit houses to main buildings is examined (chapter 5.5). The author refers to an increased number of pit houses if the ratio to the main buildings is higher than 2 : 1. Settlements with an increased number of pit houses became more common in the course of the later Roman Iron Age. Earlier exceptions include Warburg-Daseburg and Hitzacker-Marwedel, of which the latter plays a major role in the concluding chapter dealing with the so-called chiefly farmsteads (“Herrenhöfe”).

The last chapter appears like a digression, since there are only a few references to the preceding sections. Evidently, the excavations led by the author at the early Roman Iron Age settlement at Hitzacker-Marwedel (Wendland region, Lower Saxony) provided the opportunity to explore the socio-topographical concept of chiefly farmsteads. The study approaches the topic via a detour leading from the chieftains’ farmsteads of the Hallstatt period and the rectangular ditched enclosures of the Latène period. However, only little reference is made to the complicated research history of the concept in general. Instead, eight positive criteria are presented, which are thought – singly or in combination with each other – to characterise a chiefly farmstead (p. 305). The subsequent discussion leads to the unsurprising result that none of the presented sites meets all the criteria.

One of the criteria treated as important is the occurrence of elite or “princely” graves in the immediate or wider environment of possible chiefly farmsteads. Consequently, since the settlement of Hitzacker-Marwedel is located in the vicinity of two early Roman Iron Age elite burials, it is classified as a chiefly site right from the start. However, finds and structures from Hitzacker-Marwedel hardly deviate from the average spectrum of contemporary settlements – a fact that cannot be concealed by exchanging the term chiefly farmstead with the term princely site. The thematically very heterogeneous chapter ends with an outlook on the conditions in the later Roman Iron Age without, unfortunately, answering the fundamental question regarding the suitability of the concept of chiefly farmsteads or princely sites in the given context.

Regrettably, the author does not provide the data for many of his evaluations (house lengths, sizes of farmstead, number of pit houses, etc.), so his results cannot be reproduced. The maps showing the distribution of house types in different phases are also impossible to verify, since no overview of the temporal allocation of the individual house plans is given. Furthermore, in future publications the image of the magnetic survey from Hitzacker-Marwedel should be provided with a scale of nanotesla values, so that the picture can be compared with data from other sites.

Given the outlined shortcomings, the conclusion of this discussion is ambiguous. Shortfalls like the missing review of the state of research in Danish settlement archaeology or the largely unpublished database reduce the value of the study. The last chapter on the so-called chiefly farmsteads seems thematically overloaded and with little reference to the rest of the work. Moreover, the a priori classification of the settlement of Hitzacker-Marwedel as a chiefly farmstead impedes an appropriate discussion of the site. However, the study is of great importance as similar comprehensive works are already several decades old. The book provides quick and up-to-date access to house plans, farmsteads, and settlement types of the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period. Hence, the work will be an important reference for anyone involved in settlement archaeology in the period under study.

D-38516 Gifhorn
Postfach 1360
E-mail: ingo.eichfeld@gifhorn.de

Ingo Eichfeld
Landkreis Gifhorn
Abteilung 8.3 – Bauordnung und Ortsplanung
Kreisarchäologie

ARNULF KRAUSE, Runen. Geschichte – Gebrauch – Bedeutung. Marix, Wiesbaden 2017. € 6.00.
ISBN 978-3-7374-1056-4. 223 pages, 18 illustrations.

The first question many readers of Arnulf Krause’s new book about runes might ask is: Do we really need another introduction to runology? As a matter of fact, some relevant books on runes written by well-known runologists do already exist. The fourth edition of “Runenkunde”, a brilliant and well-known introduction written by one of the most famous experts, Klaus DÜWEL, was published in 2008 (Stuttgart, Weimar; 278 pages), a fifth edition is planned by the author. For countless students and scholars of German / Scandinavian Philology and disciplines like History and Archaeology, this introduction has been an essential guide and a basis for getting into runological research. It provides insight into all relevant runic traditions from the beginning to the High Middle Ages and beyond, discussing the main problems of research, offering an extensive bibliography which represents the current stage of research and other useful information like the addresses of runic research institutions or information about places where runic finds are kept today. K. Düwel’s book is written in a way that makes it useable for students and scholars as well. Mention