

Spätlatènezeit datiert werden können. Novotný interpretiert die ausgegrabenen Architekturteile als Toranlage. Ihre Zerstörung bringt er wegen etlicher dakischer Keramikfragmente in Zusammenhang mit dem Kriegszug des Burebista um die Mitte des letzten vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts.

In einem Beitrag zur anthropologischen Differenzierung einheimischer Bevölkerungsgruppen von Zugewanderten und zur Geschlechts- und Altersbestimmung hebt schließlich I. Bognár Kutzián (Some Remarks on the Ethnical Background of the La Tène Culture) die Vorteile der Osteochemie hervor.

Insgesamt spiegelt sich in den Referaten sehr deutlich das alte Problem der ethnischen Deutung frühgeschichtlicher Kulturprovinzen. Sie kann aber nur an besonders aussagekräftigen Befunden unternommen werden, die, wenn möglich, durch die Ergebnisse von Nachbarwissenschaften ergänzt werden sollten. In vielen Fällen lagen jedoch nur unklare bzw. widersprüchliche Befunde vor, deren Interpretation notwendigerweise vage bleiben mußte.

Der vorliegende Kongreßbericht bietet jedoch einen ausgezeichneten Überblick über den derzeitigen Forschungsstand und bildet eine unentbehrliche Arbeitsgrundlage für alle weiteren Studien zu Fragen der keltischen Wanderungen.

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G. J. Wainwright: Gussage All Saints: an Iron Age Settlement in Dorset. Department of Environment Archaeological Reports no. 10, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1979. XI and 202 pages, 37 plates, 113 figures and 49 tables.

The chalklands and gravels of southern and central England are well known for their numerous settlements and hill-forts of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age date. After the agricultural activity of the last half century virtually none of the smaller settlements survives as an upstanding earthwork, and many are suffering damage from modern agricultural techniques. Since the excavations of General Pitt-Rivers in the late nineteenth century, with one notable exception, the settlements on the chalk were not the focus of major excavation until the mid-1960's when fairly complete excavations were attempted at Owslebury, Tollard Royal and later Gussage. It marked the change from the primarily historical aims of the 'invasion hypothesis' to broader and more complex social and economic questions.

The one exception was the pre-war excavation of Gerhard Bersu at Little Woodbury, for long the type-site for the culture and economy of the period, and Bersu's interpretations of the pits, 'working-hollows', and post structures were to remain largely unchallenged for thirty years. But Little Woodbury was only a partial excavation, leading to arguments about the status of the site (single farm or village?) and Gussage was selected as a project for a large scale excavation due to its morphological similarity on air photographs to Little Woodbury. Both are enclosures of about 1.5 ha with converging 'antennae' ditches at the entrance (so-called because of the superficial resemblance of the plan to a beetle). The whole of the interior was stripped, and most of the features totally excavated in one season, a rescue operation due to a threat of erosion by ploughing.

The settlement revealed had been continuously occupied from the fifth if not the sixth century B. C. until the late first century A. D. As on most of these chalkland sites, only pits, post-holes and ditches survived, and certainly many above-ground structures have been completely removed by the plough. Thus only two circular houses and a number of 4-post structures could be identified, and the successive elaborate timber entrances which, while not defensive, were certainly intended to impress.

Both excavation and report are generally highly competent; indeed the project was able to attract some of the best young field archaeologists to act as supervisors, and it was not by chance that Dr. Spratling was on site to advise on the excavation of the metal-working remains. If criticism is to be levelled, it is perhaps the lack of innovation and new ideas to be tested, though this problem mainly emerged at the report-writing stage. The excavation team subsequently formed the nucleus for the Department of the Environment's 'Central Unit', charged with dealing with major projects for which local and regional resources are insufficient. While general technical competence is not in doubt, the lack of the director's specialist knowledge will inevitably lead to flaws such as this report shows, and which I shall deal with below.

Firstly the good points. Pride of place goes inevitably to the metal-working remains, especially the pit with moulds for casting bronze harness and chariot equipment, and this will make the report compulsory reading for all archaeologists interested in the European Iron Age and its technology. Mansel G. Spratling's problem orientated analysis puts the find fully into regional and national context, though he could have emphasised more how narrow is the range of items represented; it does not include personal ornaments, weaponry, mirrors, vessels etc. The pottery report in certain respects offers real advances in demonstrating the difference between localised production in the Early and Middle Iron Age, and the centralised production of the Late Iron Age 'Durotrigian' wares of the Poole-Weymouth region 50 km away, the predecessor of the Roman 'black burnished' wares that were to be marketed as far away as Hadrian's Wall. Harcourt's study of the animal bones throws considerable light on the animal husbandry, for instance the evidence that horses were allowed to run wild, and were rounded up at about the age of three years.

The problems with the report largely emanate from the chronology. Though all the pottery types are described and illustrated, and their occurrence in different fabrics is documented, we are nowhere told what actually characterises each phase, other than each pot type being assigned to a phase or phases for reasons not stated. The ditch groups which form the basis of the periodisation should have been quantified. With all the data on the computer, the tabulation of correlations of one type with another could have easily been produced, and some simple sorting of the features into sequence. Are the fine haematite wares early in Phase 1? Was there a period, as in adjacent areas, characterised by a lack of fine wares datable to about the fourth century B. C.? Was the transition from hand-made to wheel-turned pottery slow or rapid? Can early forms of Durotrigian pottery be identified? The report suggests this is something that can be done later, but with much of the basic work on computer, it would have been more efficient to complete the study, and it greatly hampers and flaws other major aspects of the report.

For instance, three bow brooches come from the first two phases of the settlement. There is a Marzabotto brooch of fifth century date in Phase 1, but also one of Middle La Tène construction for which a second century date might be suggested. Phase 2 has one of apparently Late La Tène construction. These associations are *just* possible, but unlikely. Wheel-turned pottery is well established by the first half of the first century B. C. to judge by associations with Dressel Ia amphorae on other sites and so Phase 2 ought to be essentially 'Middle La Tène' (and incidentally a second century B. C. date for the metal-working pit be preferred).

Wainwright's uncertainty with chronology is clearest on p. 193 where he quotes the original Little Woodbury report suggesting a 4th–3rd century date for the occupation there. In fact a 6th, even 7th century date might now be preferred, and it fairly certainly starts earlier than Gussage. This might explain one of the apparent anomalies at Gussage, why there is no substantial 15–16 m diameter wooden house of Little Woodbury type.

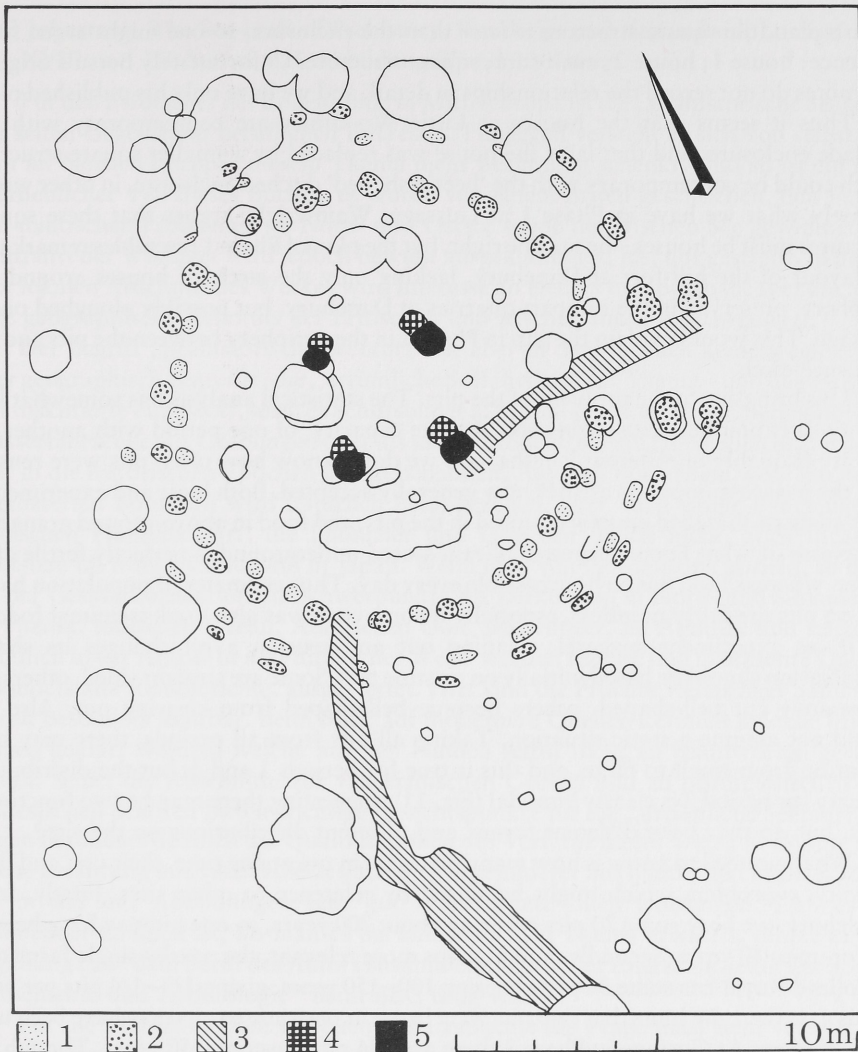


Fig. 1. A reinterpretation of the Little Woodbury house.

The sites are only some 20 km apart, and Pimperne, 10–15 km south of Gussage has produced a similar house. That at Little Woodbury is early, and Harding is inclined to an early date for Pimperne, though the dating evidence is meagre. In both cases one house was superimposed on another, and there was another house at Little Woodbury of similar dimensions, erroneously interpreted by Bersu as unfinished. The absence of such a house at Gussage may therefore be chronological.

We know little about the later layout of Little Woodbury, but an excursus on the house might be useful here, especially on the square structure in the centre of the house, apparently aligned on the entrance porch (Fig. 1). Musson has pointed out that the posts of this square structure have been renewed more times than the posts of the house, implying it is an independent structure. The other features are two 'drains', one of which clearly has nothing to do with the house as it cuts through the post-holes in the wall. In fact it is better to see these 'drains' as either side of the entrance to an enclosure, which has been largely ploughed away. The enclosure is *later* than the house, but according to

Bersu's plan, the square structure is *later* than the enclosure, so one might argue for a sequence: house 1; house 2; enclosure; square structure. Unfortunately Bersu's original field notes do not record the relationships in detail, and we have only his published plan.

Thus it seems that the houses at Little Woodbury are contemporary with the palisade enclosure, and that later the house was replaced by a smaller square structure which could be contemporary with the 'beetle-shaped' ditched enclosure, in other words precisely what we have in Phase 1 at Gussage. Wainwright argues that these square structures must be houses – he may be right, but the plan of Phase 1 resembles remarkably the layout of the hill-fort at Danebury, lacking only the circle of houses around the periphery, preserved in the rampart quarries at Danebury, but possibly ploughed out at Gussage. This would explain the gap in Phase 1 in the periphery between the pits and the enclosure ditch.

This brings us to the problem of the pits. The statistical analysis has somewhat lost its way. It is pointless comparing the 'storage capacity' of one period with another, as they are probably of different lengths, and we don't know how often pits were reused. Also the basic assumptions are not now generally accepted. Both logic and experimental work suggests that seed grain was stored in the pits, and food in above-ground granaries, the reverse of what Bersu suggested. Grain stored underground is perfectly fertile after winter, whereas food has to be accessible every day. Thus estimates of population based only on pits are fairly pointless, especially if some corn was also used as animal fodder.

If, as experiment suggests, cleaning out and reusing a pit changes its shape, classification should be based initially on pristine pits. Some are straight sided, others are deliberately cut bell-shaped, others become bell-shaped from clearing out. Also we should not assume a static situation. Taking all pits from all periods, there may be a gradation from small to large, and this is true for periods 1 and 3, but the distribution capacity for period 2 is clearly bimodal (Fig. 11), suggesting there may be two functional types, but do they have different forms, and different distributions on the site?

What we need to know is how many pits were in use at one time, their use, and their capacity, a problem which might be solved by reference to other sites. Firstly, from Owslebury, we have some 20 pits covering about 200 years, so one pit may have been in use for up to 10 years. Secondly, and perhaps more relevant, the nearby single farmstead of Tollard Royal has some 34 pits covering 100–150 years, giving 1/3–1/4 pits per year. In this case there are hints that two pits were in use at one time so pits may have been used for 6–8 years. At Gussage in Phase 3 there are 184 pits covering 150 years. Though the individual elements may add up to more than the whole, we might suggest that at Gussage there were some 4–5 households in the Late Iron Age.

But further with reinterpretation we cannot go with the data in the report, and without recourse to the original site records, though future Central Unit reports will be furnished with microfiche supplements which will give such vital data. The standard of production is generally competent, though the pull-outs with the site plans should have been placed at the back to aid use while reading the report. The price by some standards is modest, though this reviewer published a similar volume at the same time at one third of the price. The principle of most publishers, even official, is to maximise profits rather than sales.

In brief this is a volume which consists of some excellent sections, and for the metal-working alone it will be a volume that all European Iron Age specialists will need to read if not possess. The major failing is that the final synthesis goes no further than the component parts, and starts from assumptions which were already out of date when the excavation started.

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