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INGO LÜTJENS, **Archsum LA 65 (Melenknop)**, Schichtpaket A. Eine Siedlung der jüngeren vorrömischen Eisen- bis frühen römischen Kaiserzeit. Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie Band 149. Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 2008. € 107,-. ISBN 978-3-7749-3449-8. 2 volumes with 574 pages, 243 figures, 10 plates and a CD-Rom.

For some reason the archaeology of settlements, understood as the archaeology of dwelling places of the living, does not have the same esteem as the archaeology of graves, the resting place of the dead. Strange as it may seem, the reason may simply be that to archaeology the most important and basic building stone of knowledge is not the artefact itself but its context. While graves usually offer sealed contexts, this is not as often the case in settlement archaeology. Being the place of the living, settlements are places of continuous activity and change. At places settled through longer periods of time, this may mean that what originally were sealed contexts may have been reopened and redeposited several times. Since it is the place of the living, simple activities such as cleaning up or collecting manure may remove artefacts from their functional context and place them in foreign environments, leaving their original place without traces of the activity. Furthermore, most of the activities at dwelling sites consist of things or acts that leave only rarely or not at all a trace in the archaeological record, such as meetings, celebrations, ceremonies, production including organic material, etc. Thus settlement archaeology is full of challenges, and researching them is time consuming and may seem little rewarding. This may be the reason why so few excavated settlements have reached near-to final publication. But when they have, they have often assumed an almost iconographic status. It is in this light that one should consider the present work of Ingo Lütjens.

The aim of the publication is to present the results of the excavation of the settlement mound Melenknop at the North Frisian island Sylt. More precisely, the task is to sort out and reconstruct the buildings and the settlement development of the site during the Late Pre-Roman and Early Roman Iron Age.

The investigations at Melenknop were carried out during a period of ten years from 1963 to 1972 under the direction of Georg Kossack. Within the framework of a DFG-research programme, the 90 times 125 m large settlement mound was completely excavated (i.e. about 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>). From a settlement archaeological point of view this may seem a relatively small site, but this was compensated by its complexity, since prehistoric activities from the Neolithic up to the Migration period had produced up to 1.5 m of occupation layers. Due to the complexity of the documentation and the site, the book only considers a part of the archaeological deposits: the occupation layers dating from the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and the transition to the Early Roman Iron Age, the so-called "Schichtpaket A". Thus the work is not a "stand alone" but must be read and understood in conjunction with previous and possible future publications of the site.

Ingo Lütjens did not take part in the investigations himself. He was not born at the time they started. His involvement began in 1995, when he was offered the material as a theme for a PhD by one of the excavators, who also offered advice and assistance with interpretation of the documentation. Thus, the author cannot be criticised for the excavation methods or for the documentation or

choice of scientific analyses. Neither did he have free hands to do so. These facts are important to bear in mind when considering the work that has been done and the way it is presented.

The publication consists of two printed volumes and a compact disc. The first volume, “Teil 1” which includes the main text and 243 illustrations is 510 pages large, the second, “Teil 2”, is about 70 pages and contains lists, 10 plates showing important cross-sections, and a CD. The CD contains ready-to-print pdfs of volumes II (468 pages) and III (216 pages). Furthermore, it contains pdfs of the two printed volumes, and includes the cross-sections of Teil 2 but in colour for an easier study. Thus the CD is worthwhile studying. Since the book does not include an index of the CD it will be useful to provide it here:

- Contents of Volume II
  - Part A – description of archaeological features (1–308)
  - Part B – Catalogue of pottery (309–466)
- Contents of Volume III
  - Part A – Excavation plans (plates 1–201)
  - Part B – Selected pottery (plates 202–208).

The contents of volume I can likewise be summed up as follows:

- 1) Excavation and documentation methods (1 page, p. 5–8)
- 2) The stratigraphy (24 pages, p. 8–31)
- 3) Reconstruction of houses and house phases (355 pages, p. 32–386)
- 4) Analysis of the singled out house and settlement phases (28 pages, p. 386–414)
- 5) Pottery chronology and dating of the site (73 pages, p. 414–487)
- 6) Economy (1 page, p. 487)
- 7) Comparative material and conclusion (7 pages, p. 495–501)

In volume I, the first issue to be dealt with is the stratigraphy of the archaeological deposits. For many reasons this is a necessary step, first and foremost because the site was excavated and documented in artificial horizontal strata not following topography or layers. Thus the plan documentation consists of plans of 12 artificial strata documented at every 20 cm (presented as 201 plans in volume III). The result is that the outlines of larger features like house floors, wall-lines, etc., have to be reconstructed from plans from several levels. Furthermore it indicates that the reconstructed houses or house phases were never completely uncovered at one time during the excavation. Due to the chosen excavation strategy it is also difficult to relate specific finds and minor features to specific buildings and phases. The only way to turn this into “chronological strata” is through a thorough study of the many cross-sections running across the site. This demonstrates the huge amount of work behind the interpretations which Lütjens presents as easily intelligible house plans in his book and which must be considered a major result of his work.

The second and by far the largest section of the text book is dedicated to the reconstruction of plans of individual buildings and building phases. This is a thorough work in which every single detail of the suggested houses and phases is documented and discussed. In the end, 48–50 buildings are considered as sufficiently well documented for further consideration. The majority of these have one or two phases, but at house sites 2–6, a more complex situation is at hand with up to five phases in each building.

The typology and function of the houses and the development of the settlement is discussed in the following chapter. Lütjens singles out three functional house types; “Wohnstallhäuser” (dwelling houses with fireplace and traces of byre), longhouses without byre (houses with fireplace but no traces of byre), and outhouses (houses without traces of fireplace or byre, economy buildings). The author demonstrates that there is no big difference between the overall picture displayed by house

length (fig. 193) and total inner area (fig. 194), because the width of the houses does not vary much. Based on the latter he singles out six size classes; class 1 houses larger than 110 m<sup>2</sup>, class 2 92–99 m<sup>2</sup>, class 3 69–85 m<sup>2</sup>, class 4 50–60 m<sup>2</sup>, class 5 38–45 m<sup>2</sup> and class 6 17–26 m<sup>2</sup>. However, Lütjens does not appear too convinced of this classification himself and therefore he merges classes 1 and 2 and 4 and 5.

Hereafter follows a discussion of construction elements of the houses, such as roof supporting structure, walls, floors, fireplaces, stone pavements, and the like. At the end of the chapter, a few pages are dedicated to the description of the five settlement phases (figs. 237–241) which Lütjens has been able to reconstruct during his painstaking work earlier in the book. Though the first three and especially the last phase are rather incomplete, it seems that the settlement developed from two centres, an eastern and a western. The space between these two centres is only settled during the fourth and best documented phase (“settlement phase 10”). Four “Wohnstallhäuser” (dwelling and byre houses), one or two longhouses without byre and three to four outhouses can be ascribed to this phase. Three of the outhouses seem to belong to the north-eastern dwelling and byre house, while the other three dwelling and byre houses and one of the byre-less longhouses are connected by stone paved paths running from door to door. The following phase is heavily disturbed by the reorganization of the site during the succeeding settlement phase of Schichtpaket B. This ends the analysis.

The following chapter deals with the artefacts. The aim of this chapter is to reach a dating of the various phases of the site and therefore the study is limited to the pottery. To this purpose an overwhelming amount of find material is at hand, but the majority of the find contexts are not sealed. However, the author chooses to deal with general tendencies and argues that post-depositional processes have a minor and negligible influence on the overall stratigraphic distribution. Though questionable, this seems a necessary step in order to proceed. The study focuses on the rim section of the pottery and three types are singled out as diagnostic. These types do not exclude each other; it is rather the relative occurrence of the types that is chronologically significant. In this way, the five settlement phases are divided into three pottery phases which subsequently are compared with other recent attempts at establishing a pre-Roman pottery chronology in the region. The most important part of this study is Lütjens’ application of his rim typology to the pottery of the large cemetery at Hornbek and the chronology of Rangs-Borchling. He demonstrates the widely accepted but hitherto not too well documented fact that several rim types coexist, and applies the result to support his own chronology and to pinpoint the dating of his settlement phases.

The economy of the site is dealt with in short at page 487. It is concluded that cattle keeping must have played an important part in the economy, but also agriculture, since the surrounding fields during the life time of the village had been fertilized and built up by plaggen soil. Further economic activities are not documented at the site, but Lütjens suggests that pottery and other daily necessities were produced locally / at household level.

The final chapter is a very brief review of contemporary settlements in North Western Europe (Jutland, Schleswig-Holstein and Northwest Lower Saxony), and it is concluded that Melenknop fits in well with the general building and settlement tradition of the area.

The presentation of the early settlement phases at the settlement mound at Melenknop, Sylt is a major accomplishment for the author and settlement archaeology. As hinted earlier, the mere reconstruction and interpretation of house plans and phases has been a painstaking and time consuming task. It is therefore no wonder that the wider issues suffer to a great extent. Some of the chapters dealing with these aspects are so brief and the analytical depth so superficial that the book would have benefited from their omission or better that these aspects had been reserved for further study and publication in subsequent volumes. This especially goes for the final chapters in which the

economy and comparative material are discussed. A further frustrating element is the lack of analysis of the settlement structure. Even in the comparative chapters, where books are quoted in which social analysis of settlements is carried very far, this is neither mentioned, nor attempted for Melenkop. It is only in the first pages of the analytic chapter on house plans that one feels that the author may have considered such an attempt, but for some reason he refrains from this. The only result in this direction is the reconstruction of the five settlement phases (pages 410–14, fig. 237–241), but this is done and presented without an attempt to interpret what it means. While looking at and comparing the plans it is striking that it is not until the fourth phase that the space between the eastern and the western building clusters is occupied. This area is the topographically highest point of the settlement and when it finally is settled, it is by the largest house at the site (house 4b). That is surprising compared to contemporary settlements elsewhere, where the founder farm is usually the largest and occupies the commanding position of the settlement. This anomaly is surely worth of discussion, but Lütjens refrains from this, though his distribution analysis shows that the high quality pottery was concentrated to the area around this house, and he had previously paralleled this observation with the situation at Hodde. Another discussion that is lacking is the fact that one farm has two to three outhouses, while most have none. And what was the difference in social status between people living in houses with and without byre? In the very brief chapter on economics, the economy of the site is described as a subsistence economy, but does that refer to the individual households, and if so, how did the settlers in the byreless houses survive? A further lacking element is a critical discussion of excavation methods and source criticism, and even a short review of the progression of the excavation would have helped the reader to fully understand the limitations and the potential of the site.

In conclusion – there is no doubt that this publication is an important contribution to the settlement archaeology of north-western Europe offering a unique insight into the settlement tradition in a corner of this region so far less well illuminated. The weaknesses pointed out above are understandable on the background of the immense work connected with the mere reconstruction of the plans, but the work would have presented itself better if the consequences of this had been taken and the analytical chapters omitted for future further study. Therefore the main value of this book lies in the plans that are presented which constitute excellent grounds for further research and interpretative studies. One may hope and can only encourage the author to make use of this material in future papers.

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**ERIC MICHAEL VRBA, *Ancient German Identity in the Shadow of the Roman Empire*.** The impact of Roman trade and contact along the middle Danube frontier, 10 BC–AD 166. BAR International Series 1881. Archaeopress, Oxford 2008. £ 48,00; € 56,00. ISBN 978-1-4073-0361-1. 355 pages, 208 figures and 58 plates.

The monograph reviewed here is a modified version of Eric Michael Vrba's dissertation 'Beyond the Roman Frontier: A Case-Study in Slovakia of the Impact of Roman Trade and Culture on Ancient German Settlements', which was defended at Boston University in 2007.

The theme of trade and contact between Romans and Barbarians has become the subject of several publications (e. g. H. J. EGGERS, *Der römische Import im freien Germanien*. Atlas Urgesch. 1 [Ham-