

STEFANIE SCHAEFER-DI MAIDA, *Unter Hügeln. Bronzezeitliche Transformationsprozesse in Schleswig-Holstein am Beispiel des Fundplatzes von Mang de Barga (Bornhöved, Kr. Segeberg)*. Scales of Transformation in Prehistoric and Archaic Societies Volume 16. Sidestone Press Dissertations, Leiden 2023. € 150.00 (Hardback); € 75.00 (Paperback). Open Access (PDF e-Book). Two volumes. Vol. I: 540 pages with 173 figures and 14 tables. ISBN 978-9-464280-48-7 (Paperback). ISBN 978-9-464280-49-4 (Hardback). doi: <https://doi.org/10.59641/q9013tc>. Vol. II: 446 pages with 370 plates, 22 figures and 17 tables. ISBN 978-9-464280-51-7 (Paperback). ISBN 978-9-464280-52-4 (Hardback). doi: <https://doi.org/10.59641/r0902ud> (PDF e-Book).

The book presented by Stefanie Schaefer-Di Maida is highly impressive, consisting of two volumes with nearly a thousand pages, featuring countless colour illustrations and plates. It is the printed version of the author's PhD thesis, defended at the University of Kiel in 2020. The research was conducted within the framework of the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1266 project "TransformationsDimensionen – Mensch-Umwelt Wechselwirkungen in Prähistorischen und Archaischen Gesellschaften, Teilprojekt D3: Bronzezeit in Nordmitteleuropa", which needs to be considered when evaluating the study's focus.

The book is dedicated to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mound site "Mang de Barga", which also includes subsequent Iron Age urn burials, located near the modern town of Bornhöved, dist. Segeberg, Schleswig-Holstein, in Germany. Completely excavated burial mound cemeteries are rare in Central European archaeological research, as many highly visible mounds were targeted for early excavations in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These were often conducted without adequate documentation or complete recording of the finds.

Traditional studies of burial mounds, especially those dealing with the Bronze Age, tend to focus on chronological aspects and social themes, such as whether the barrows were used as burial sites for the entire Bronze Age population or only for certain groups, presumably the elite. Analysing transformational processes at a barrow graveyard is therefore an innovative approach. The study starts by the author's definition of the term "transformation" during analysis of archaeological data as a point of no return to previous structures.

The Mang de Barga burial mound cemetery is part of a complex site that includes an Iron Age urnfield and a contemporary settlement. All of them had partly been destroyed by a gravel pit. In 1976, 23 mounds and one earthen long barrow were mapped by the *Landesamt für Denkmalpflege*. Unfortunately, the revised study does not attempt to explore early written or cartographic evidence of the site, its gradual destruction by gravel mining, or agricultural activities. Old aerial photographs could also have provided valuable information. The first excavations took place in 2005 (six mounds, of which two assumed barrows yielded no significant results), and further excavations in 2014 investigated seven additional mounds, parts of the urnfield, and the settlement before the gravel pit was expanded. As part of the aforementioned University of Kiel project, another mound was excavated in 2017 in combination with geoarchaeological research and extensive geomagnetic surveys.

Despite the site's poor state of preservation, a lot of evidence had been gathered allowing to evaluate its archaeological significance. In this context, the revised study represents an encouraging attempt to advance research on barrow cemeteries that have all but disappeared from the landscape. The book starts with a description of the chosen methodological approach, followed by an introduction to landscape and chronology of the Nordic Bronze Age. The main part of the volume is dedicated to the analyses of the Mang de Barga site, which is contrasted with the Bronze Age the

development in Schleswig Holstein. The volume is completed by an extensive appendix including the complete documentation.

In the beginning the author provides a detailed overview of the current research results from Mang de Barga (pp. 54–98). Numerous excavation plans and drawings of finds in the second volume offer a comprehensive documentation. The finds are briefly discussed in relation to the structures within the barrows with a more detailed analysis following later. The synthesis for the first part focuses on the construction phases of the barrows, stone circles, primary and secondary burials, and the number of grave goods. The urnfield in the southwest, incorporating three barrows, is also included. Some possible settlement structures and cooking pits are mentioned as well.

The discussion of the archaeological finds (pp. 136–185) begins with silex material, amber, and bone. One bronze dagger, one sickle, one razor, and several needles were found during excavations in burials inside the barrows. Fragments of two swords, one knife, and one ring were discovered during metal detector surveys demonstrating that most of the barrows were significantly disturbed before excavation. Most of the ceramics belong to secondary burials or the urnfield and were associated with cremations. The typological analysis is supported by an impressive number of ¹⁴C dates from various types of organic material (pp. 191–194 fig. 60). The chronological analysis reveals (pp. 200–201 figs. 67; 68) that the cemetery originated in the late Neolithic with the construction of two barrows followed by a 450-year hiatus. Only minimal activity is documented during the early Bronze Age, but burial activity resumed at the beginning of Period II, during which most of the barrows were constructed. By the start of Period III, the last barrows were built, and the practice of secondary cremation burials became prominent. Their number increased during Period III, peaking around 1000 BC, at which point cremation burials surpassed inhumations entirely. A decline in burials is noted during the early Iron Age, with a resurgence between 350 and 250 BC before the cemetery ceased to be used around 60 BC. Cremation remained the predominant burial custom until the graveyard's abandonment.

On this site, the chronological results of the analyses could be seen as spatial patterns. Unfortunately, the maps showing these chronological results are presented on a very small scale, crowded with numerous symbols in different colours, making them difficult to interpret (pp. 203–205 figs 71–74). The study is complemented by anthropological, botanical, and paleoethnobotanical analyses and a discussion of the site's regional context. The first part of the study concludes with an analysis of the graveyard's development (pp. 234–244), viewed through the lens of the transformational processes described earlier. Stefanie Schaefer-Di Maida identifies the following phases:

- Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age: Change in material culture.
- Period I to Period II: Change in material culture and an increasing number of burials.
- Period II to Period III: Change in burial customs/cremation.
- Period III: The practice of constructing barrows is abandoned.
- Period IV to Period V: A turning point in burial activities.
- Period VI: A new range of grave goods.
- Transition to the Iron Age.

The author summarises those seven phases of change of the site had been worked out from the Late Neolithic to the early Iron Age which affected the life of the population in different intensities. The continuous use of the cemetery during the whole time allows to determine a *longue durée* (a term not used by the author) without any collapse of the society. Only the change in the burial customs seems to be a crucial event and should be understood as a complex process.

Whether one sees this as a new and innovative insight or is reminded of similar ideas from comparable studies (cf. RANDSBORG 1968; 1972), the work of Schaefer-Di Maida is convincing and

thorough. It demonstrates that even a heavily disturbed site like Mang de Bergen can serve as the basis for substantial archaeological research of high scientific quality.

However, the volume does not end with these insights. In the following section, the author compares the results of her study on the “micro level” at Mang de Bergen with those on the “meso level” in Schleswig-Holstein. This means handling an enormous dataset, including a vast number of published and unpublished sources. The author counted 4363 barrows with 5878 graves, but she also investigates numerous depots and settlements, dealing with questions such as “the building structure of the barrows” (pp. 257–261), “settlements” (pp. 272–281), “depots” (pp. 267–270), and she also extensively discusses the typology of Early Bronze Age ceramics (pp. 296–315). In her conclusion, the author concludes that it is possible to establish four supra-regional phases of transformation for Bronze Age Schleswig-Holstein (cf. p. 331):

1. around 1500/1400 BC: new social and architectural organisation
 - 1.1 expansionary phase
 - 1.2 maximum and turning point;
2. around 1300 BC: change in burial customs (cremation);
3. around 1150 BC: change in the construction of graves;
4. 1100–700 BC: no transformation?;
5. around 700 BC: smaller houses and a new spectrum of finds (iron objects).

Two short chapters follow: First, the author compares the “micro” and “meso” levels and the identified transformation phases (pp. 333–336). The final chapter (pp. 337–338) is more of a statement explaining the role of the study in the context of the SFB, as mentioned initially. The last pages are dedicated to the referenced literature and a catalogue of the structures excavated at Mang de Bergen. The catalogue of finds is not printed but is available online. Pages 495–508 contain the plans of the excavation trenches (different scales!), followed by the main sections and radiocarbon dates (pp. 509–517).

The second volume is devoted to documentation. It begins with 357 (!) plates, rather unusually numbered both as plates and as pages, which may lead to some confusion. In general, the layout of the plates is suboptimal. Many drawings, particularly those of the sections, should have been reproduced at a smaller scale (1 : 50). Some plates are perplexing, such as plate 259. Unfortunately, the scales of some plans are inaccurately stated in the captions for example, in plates 2–9 and 11, 13–15. It is advisable to refer to the dimensions mentioned in the drawings themselves, where possible. Is the inhumation burial LA 58.1 truly 7 m long and 2.5 m wide, as shown in plates 158–161? While I did not verify all the indicated scales, this issue seems to extend beyond these plates. To be fair, there are numerous high-quality photographs of objects and well-executed drawings, such as the plans of the aforementioned grave or plate 211. However, do we really need eight drawings of this burial in different excavation stages? Additionally, why is a simple pot, as depicted in plate 163, shown both as a photograph and as a 1 : 1 scale drawing? The same question arises with plate 217, which features three unspecific silex-objects. In some cases, the plates show excellent field drawings produced by the *Landesamt* (plates 224–237; 240–242; 245–263). However, once again, the reader is confronted with significant confusion regarding the scales, such as in the plan of LA 69 Bef. 6 on plate 246 and the section of the same structure on plate 247. Looking at plate 247, something went wrong with the graph paper in the background. Burial LA 69 Grab Bef. 1 is presented in plates 249–251 with three plans of successive excavation stages, each with a different orientation and none in accurate scale. In summary, volume 2 raises concerns: so much material, yet so poorly

organised. Archaeology is not merely about collecting every piece of data but about presenting it in a coherent and structured manner.

In conclusion, Schaefer-Di Maida's publication on the Mang de Bergen cemetery is an impressive achievement. However, the disorganised documentation in the second volume detracts from its otherwise high scientific value. Whether the concept of "transformation phases" offers new insights to archaeological research will depend on the perspective of the reader. The change from inhumation to cremation and the end of the practise of building barrows is a phenomenon, that could be observed throughout central Europe and there are a lot of competing concepts (e.g. BÉRENGER et al. 2012). Nonetheless, Mang de Bergen will undoubtedly remain a central point of reference for future research on Bronze Age cemeteries in northern Germany.

References

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TOBIAS MÖRTZ, Spätbronzezeitliche Waffendeponierungen Nordwesteuropas. Logos Verlag GmbH, Berlin 2024. € 89.00. ISBN 978-3-8325-5660-0. 507 pages with 92 figures.

Hoard finds appear throughout the European Bronze Age with distinct chronological and chorological peaks. Their meaning has been discussed controversially for more than 150 years, fluctuating between the polar opposites of profane metal collections and votive offerings. During the last three decades, following seminal works like those by Svend HANSEN (1994) or Christoph SOMMERFELD (1994), a growing number of studies have shown that hoards are constituted due to regionally and chronologically differing rules on the categories and conditions of objects included, the arrangement of objects within the hoard, the placement of hoards in the landscape, and others more, thus providing arguments for hoards as evidence of a social praxis rooted in religious beliefs.

This opens the way for new questions regarding the intentions behind selection, accumulation and deposition of metalwork. The work by Tobias Mörtz, a revised version of a doctoral dissertation supervised by S. Hansen and defended at *Freie Universität Berlin* in 2019, focusses on one specific group of hoards from northwestern Europe to approach these questions: depositions of weapons. The area addressed in the monograph includes the British Isles and Ireland and a part