

## Reviews

MANFRED RECH: *Studien zu Depotfunden der Trichtbecher- und Einzelgrabkultur des Nordens*. Offa-Bücher 39. Karl Wachholtz Verlag, Neumunster 1979. 134 pp., 12 plates, 7 maps.

Since 1948, when C.J. Becker published his disputation *Mosefundne Lerkar fra yngre Stenalder (Neolithic Pottery in Danish Bogs, Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie 1947)*, nobody has attempted to publish a comprehensive study of the various sacrificial finds from the Neolithic Period in South Scandinavia. Becker's starting point was the finds of pottery in the bogs, but his dissertation went on to include certain propositions about other types of deposits, hoards of flint and amber.

Manfred Rech provides in his book a comprehensive overview of those types of deposit which in time have been categorized as hoards, votive finds, sacrificial finds, and sacrificial sites. Only sacrificial finds in megalith graves, and "certain deposits on settlement sites" are excepted. The geographical range is South Scandinavia and North Germany, the traditional "nordischer Kreis" (Nordic area). Chronologically, the finds of the early and middle Neolithic are considered: i.e. the Funnel-beaker and Single-grave cultures.

It is the find contexts which differentiate hoards from other sources. Rech's term "Depot" thus covers "every deliberate deposit, as long as it is not a case of grave-furnishing or settlement finds". Single objects are therefore reckoned as *Depotfunde* in those cases where the find circumstances qualify them as "deliberately deposited". They do not however appear in the book's basic subject-matter on equal terms with finds containing several artefacts simultaneously deposited.

*Studien zu Depotfunden* contains a survey of types of find which are otherwise found dealt with on their own in the literature. The primary subject-matter is hoards of flint and stone, and of amber. There are detailed catalogues of these two groups of material. Although there is no complete registration of all finds in all museums, the lists comprise a substantial portion of the material. The former group alone comprises 436 finds, mostly deposits of thin- and thick-butted flint axes. For finds of different composition, the study proceeds mostly by reference to already published finds – for the pottery from the bogs, by reference to Becker's catalogue of 1948. Besides the above-mentioned types of find, hoards of copper goods, bone tools, wooden objects (vessels, axe-shafts, wheels, dug-out boats, and complete wooden constructions), and finds of animal and human bones, are also examined.

This is the first time that all these types of find have been considered on an equal basis. Earlier works, that have ended

up remembered as interpretative models, such as Müller's, Rydbeck's, and Becker's, have taken a starting point either in "closed finds" or in the bog-finds. One therefore reads Rech's book with great anticipation, as it promises a general survey of the same scale as Geisslinger's *Horte als Geschichtsquelle* of 1967.

The first major chapter deals with finds from dry land, the second with finds from bogs. Together, these two chapters comprise over half of the book's text. The principal thesis is that there is no difference in the composition and whole character of the finds from dry land or near water. Yet they are dealt with separately. These two chapters are followed by one on finds in and near springs, and one on finds in watercourses, after which geographical and chronological parallels are drawn. Then follows the long and important chapter *Interpretation*, after which the book is concluded with a short summary. The catalogue is as full as one could expect without the documentation being overwhelming. Different soil-types are marked on the 7 distribution maps, but the basic soil map is so simplified that the information this conveys is very limited. Finally the 12 tables, with certain exceptions, depict finds which are also illustrated elsewhere.

The neolithic hoards from this area form a rich and multi-faceted find-material. They are a rich source for chronological studies in particular. The dating of the individual types of hoards is important if the culture-historical conclusions are to have any substance. For a reader with C.J. Becker's chronology and M.P. Malmer's fine typological methods behind him, Rech's use of typology and find-combinations appears comparatively thin and superficial. Rech uses already identified artefact-types with little accuracy, and does not establish any new classification of the material. The result of the chronological treatment of the hoards is thus far from impressive: the earlier, and most numerous, of the hoards are placed in "the thin-butted axes' period" (dolmen period), the later in "the thick-butted axes' period" (passage-grave period).

It is clearly the religious aspect of the deposits which has most interested Rech. The description of the sacrificial sites in the bogs takes a central place in his dissertation. Some unpublished material is used here, and this section thus supplements C.J. Becker's 1948 publication of the pottery from the bogs and their find contexts. In the *Interpretation* section, the reasons for deposit are discussed, first for the closed finds of flint and stone tools, next for the bog-finds containing pottery, and animal and human bone. An excellent discussion of interpretative possibilities is presented in connection with the former group, with considerations for and against the possible sacred

and secular causes evaluated. The author allows one consideration to decide the case, as already S. Müller had argued, that the hoards comprise unusually large objects, artefacts which therefore may be presumed to have been made for ceremonial use. In the same section, the discussion of the interpretation of bog-deposits of animal and human bone is carried further, and parallels drawn with other religious deposits in northern and central Europe, with considerable reference, *inter alia*, to finds of human bones in and outside settlement sites. The result, in summary, is: "Although one does not attain clarity in individual cases, the common idea which must lie behind the finds becomes clear" (p. 91). The author consequently interprets all forms of deposits (with the exception of hoards of flint blanks and the large wooden objects in the bogs) as sacrificial finds. The discussion halts here, and one may ask oneself, what form of complex institution gave rise to such multifaceted activities on a single ideological basis. There is no answer to such questions in Rech's work. He restricts himself to a discussion of the material and would appear satisfied to have presented a possibly religio-historical source-material.

There are many points in this book, some important, some less important, which invite further discussion. I shall limit myself to a few.

Amongst the more important conclusions must be reckoned the demonstration of the point that, working from the religious deposits, no continuity between the late Funnel-beaker culture and the Single-grave culture can be shown. This assertion is quite acceptable as far as the bog-finds are concerned (although there are some single-grave pots found in bogs), but the problem with regard to the flint deposits is not so simple. There are three reasons for this:

1. There are a number of North German hoards with thick-butted flint axes which are difficult to attribute either to late Funnel-beaker culture or the early Single-grave culture, since they consist of coarsely dressed roughed-out works, which are difficult to classify.
2. Deposits of thick-butted flint axes of types which chronologically fall together with the early part of the Single-grave culture, but which are not otherwise anchored in any certain cultural context, are found in eastern Denmark and southern Sweden. They do not, however, belong to the Funnel-beaker culture (cf. Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie 1977 pp. 41-47).
3. A comparatively small number of hoards with flint and battle axes are known from the Single-grave culture in Jutland (cf. K. Ebbesen in *Acta Archaeologica* 53, 1982).

A radical break in the practice of depositing such objects of flint and stone can not therefore be certainly shown within the whole area under consideration. The changes which happen occur rather as culturally determined, qualitative changes, which at the one time influence to different degrees the composition of the hoards, and the frequency of deposits, within individual areas.

In many places, the utilization of find-combinations in the hoards with regard to chronology is dubious. The find from Forst Mützelburg, Kr. Ueckermünde, for example, is used to establish contact between the late *Bandkeramik* culture groups

and the northern Funnel-beaker culture (p. 18). The pointed-butted stone axe in the find, however, cannot be directly compared with the late *Bandkeramik* culture's pointed-butted slate axes. The similarity is too general for one to postulate contemporaneity. The discussion of the find-combinations (p. 26), and the combination-statistics (fig. 5), also show that Rech is uncertain about the Danish finds, on the subject of both source-criticism and the dating of artefact-types. Thus several finds from dolmens are used which are not certainly closed finds. The find from Blandebjerg with a thin-butted flint axe and a flint halberd is incorrectly placed in the early group of finds. Both the flint axe and the halberd are middle-neolithic.

In his discussion of the earliest finds of wooden disc wheels (p. 60), Rech attributes these to the Funnel-beaker culture, in contrast to other researchers who, with the help of C 14 datings, place them in the Single-grave period.

In judging the work one must also take into account the fact that it has been a long time coming. The dissertation was presented in 1973, the manuscript for the book finished in 1976, and it finally appeared in 1979. In the course of the 70's much has occurred which has changed the picture of the cultural relationships and chronology in the early and middle Neolithic of southern Scandinavia. Nowadays the dating of the types discussed by Rech would be based upon a finer chronology, worked out on the basis of C 14 dates and analysis of find-combinations. Nowadays fresh elements would be brought into the discussion of sacrificial practices in the Neolithic - *i.a.* causewayed enclosures, first and foremost Sarup, with its many sacrificial pits with cereals, pottery, and axes.

*Studien zu Depotfunden* will undoubtedly maintain its value, if not for its chronological section, at least for its assemblage of the comprehensive comparative material, which forms a background for the consideration of the Scandinavian hoards, and for its detailed discussion of interpretative possibilities.

Poul Otto Nielsen

INGEGERD SÄRLVIK: *Paths Towards a Stratified Society. A Study of Economic, Cultural and Social Formations in South-West Sweden during the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period.* Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 3. Stockholm 1982. (125 pp., illustrated, plus a 25-page bibliography and a summary in Swedish).

#### Introduction

The monograph under discussion is divided into four parts:

- 1) Introduction (9 pp.),
- 2) Economy and settlement (48 pp.),
- 3) Material culture (46 pp.),
- 4) Social formations (9 pp., plus 2 maps).

Each of these main parts contains several sections, some of which are divided into subsections. In all, the book contains 44 subsections. Parts 2, 3 and 4 all end with a summary.

Part 1 presents an outline of previous research into the Iron Age of South-West Sweden, a discussion and definition of the concept of culture based on Clarke's work in *Analytical Ar-*

*chaeology* (1968, revised 1978), together with an account of the author's theoretical position, which takes the form of a discussion of Sanders and Webster: "Unilinealism, Multilinealism, and the Evolution of Complex Societies" (1979) (in *Social Archaeology: Beyond Subsistence and Dating*, ed. Redman et al.). The latter work is an attempt to broaden the application of the neo-evolutionary model of development, primarily on an ecological and deterministic basis. The main emphasis is placed on the interaction between potential food production and the size and density of the population, as well as the technological level of society.

Part 2 presents the natural and geographical conditions of settlement in South-West Sweden, e.g. in the sections dealing with soils, climate, flora and fauna. There is a brief description of the archaeological evidence of settlement (graves, sites etc.) in each of the areas of Halland, Västergötland and Bohuslen, and the location of settlements in these areas is outlined in terms of their specific natural and geographical factors. The following sections discuss a number of individual elements that make up the general subsistence economy of iron Age settlements: agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, iron and pottery manufacture, bone and leather work etc.

Three districts in South-West Sweden are selected for special examination: Southern Bohuslen, the area of Varnhem in Central Västergötland, and Käringsjön in Southern Halland. In each district the natural environment is examined within a radius of 1 km from a number of sites. The results of these investigations are shown in a diagram specifying the ecological resources of each locality within the area. This makes it possible to determine how settlements were placed within a varied natural environment, and how many ecological resources were available. The majority of settlements are invariably found on fertile soil; in Bohuslen and Halland there is also a considerable expansion towards areas with scarcer ecological resources – an expansion which in Central Västergötland took place as early as the end of the Late Bronze Age/Pre-Roman Iron Age. The possibility of seasonal occupation is discussed. In Västergötland the investigations also show that not all fertile soil is exploited. The relationship between the carrying capacity of the land and Iron Age technology is considered briefly. Finally the author makes a number of demographic calculations based on existing grave sites. In Bohuslen, for instance, each burial site is said to represent between 7 and 12 co-existing people, i.e. the population level of isolated farms. In the district of Varnhem, by contrast, the population is calculated to have been 16 or 17 co-existing individuals. This would have been an adequate population level for small villages during the Roman Iron Age and the Migration period. The third district examined, Käringsjön, is a swampy area where natural conditions are unpropitious and where permanent settlement probably did not occur.

Part 3 discusses the various cultural elements: burial customs, hoard finds, settlements, and material finds classified according to gold, silver, bronze, iron, amber, organic material, and ceramic ware. This section is accompanied by a number of general distribution maps and diagrams showing the presence of specific grave types and grave material in the

investigated area, which is here divided into five sections. The section on votive finds goes through all known weapon deposits from the area. The section on settlements contains an account of existing traces of settlements within each district.

These three sections on graves, deposits and settlements are primarily a descriptive account of the archaeological material, centred on regional variations in distribution. Thus the author demonstrates, for instance, that graves containing weapons and graves with Roman imports are concentrated in Västergötland, that weapon deposits are also concentrated in this area, whereas votive finds of pottery ("bog pots") show a more scattered distribution. As far as housing is concerned, excavations show that Iron Age houses were long houses with living quarters and livestock stalls under the same roof. Only single farmhouses have been found. Sites manufacturing iron have been found in Västergötland, Halland and Dalsland, but not so far in Bohuslen.

However, the author abstains from any kind of detailed analysis of the archaeological material. Thus the passage on hoard finds is primarily a catalogue of sites containing weapon deposits, with some discussion of "bog pots"; similarly the passage on settlements is a description of the locality of sites – all accompanied by distribution maps.

The section on material finds is restricted to objects that can be safely dated to the Roman Iron Age and the Migration period. Here, too, each subsection merely describes what objects have been recovered and where they were located geographically within the area investigated. Thus the author demonstrates that there are many large finds of gold from Västergötland and many small ones from Bohuslen. Finds of silver are fairly few. Most of the bronze objects are fibulae, of which the cruciform fibula is the most common. Roman imports as well as weapons are discussed earlier (in the passage on burial customs) and are therefore not considered in the section on material finds. The pottery comes mainly from Bohuslen and Southern Halland. The total of 300 pottery vessels are analysed in terms of shape and ornamentation. These fairly detailed analyses show a wide discrepancy between pottery from different sites. The author feels able to conclude that pottery was produced locally.

The many factual details presented in part 3 lead to an interpretation of cultural elements of South Scandinavian (Zealand), Jutlandish or Norwegian origin, respectively. The South Scandinavian element includes graves oriented north-south, amber beads, pottery vessels with handle spouts, and vessels with meander ornamentation. These elements are present in Halland, Västergötland and Southern Bohuslen (map 11). The Jutlandish element includes graves oriented west-east, a single silver cup and a cruciform fibula found in Bohuslen and Central Västergötland (map 12). The Norwegian element comprises graves oriented east-west, cruciform fibulae, embossed pottery, bucket-shaped pottery vessels and flat hair pins made of bone. Their distribution is concentrated in Northern Bohuslen, but they are also found in Northern Halland, Dalsland and Central Västergötland (map 13).

The author is thus in a position to conclude that Northern Bohuslen belonged culturally with Norway; that Halland was

part of a South-Scandinavian culture and that Central Västergötland with adjoining areas of Western Västergötland formed an independent culture with contacts in all directions. This conclusion is reinforced by the existence of two types of cruciform fibulae which, according to Reichstein (1975), originate in the area.

Part 4 is entitled "Social Formations". It is divided into the following sections:

- 1) Access to basic resources and specialization (2 pp.),
- 2) Cultures and social formations (1½ p.),
- 3) Chieftoms and tribal societies (1 p.),
- 4) Evolution into a stratified society (3½ pp.).

This part presents the conclusions about the Iron Age society of South-West Sweden which the author feels justified in drawing from her investigations. The Iron Age society of South-West Sweden must be regarded as a society with a low density of population inhabiting isolated farmsteads (in theory conditions exist in Central Västergötland for village settlement). The distribution of valuable objects indicates no actual stratification of society, but rather that certain areas were more affluent than others. There is some relation between areas with varied natural resources and the presence of valuable objects.

The author discusses evidence of specialized production but reaches the conclusion that everything from the production of iron and pottery to weaving and woodwork took place locally. The first signs of specialization appear only during the Migration period, and then in handicrafts only.

On the assumption that the presence of weapon deposits, small fortifications and votive offerings reflect a more highly developed social organization, the author regards Central Västergötland as more developed than the rest of the area examined.

Finally, the author relates the results obtained to her theoretical starting point, Sanders and Webster's model of the development of complex societies. Central Västergötland is the area with the highest density of population, the greatest affluence, the most weapon deposits, and incipient specialization in handicrafts: criteria that are all consistent with Sanders and Webster's definition of a chieftom. Halland and Northern Bohuslen show a certain resemblance to Västergötland, and thus to a chieftom as defined by Sanders and Webster. The remaining areas of South-West Sweden may still have been organised as tribal societies. According to Sanders and Webster's model of social evolution (in Meso America), the development from an egalitarian society to a state is faster in small, ecologically heterogeneous areas and slower in large homogeneous areas. By contrast, the present study of South-West Sweden seems to indicate that the reverse was true: the homogeneous Central Västergötland exhibits the characteristics of a chieftom, whereas the more heterogeneous areas are better interpreted as tribal organizations.

The treatise ends with some reflections on why Västergötland must have been a chieftom rather than a stratified society, which, according to Sanders and Webster's model, is the only path towards the development of a state. However, a prerequisite of the development of a stratified society is that all natural resources in the area are exploited, and that is far from

being the case in Västergötland. The path towards statehood is a long one, and the transition was complete only some time during the Middle Ages.

#### *Discussion*

The aim of the study is to investigate social developments in South-West Sweden during the Roman Age and the Migration period. The author attempts to test the validity of an ethnographical model (from Meso America) by applying it to archaeological primary material from Sweden. This intention determines the structure of the book: parts 1 and 4 contain the theoretical introduction and conclusion, while parts 2 and 3 present the actual empirical data. In the following these two sections will be discussed separately.

The empirical section forms the cornerstone of the book (60 pp., tables and maps). Actual analysis of the archaeological material is limited to pottery, and the emphasis is placed on the proportions and ornamentation of the pottery vessels. The fairly comprehensive analysis (c. 300 pottery vessels) leads to the conclusion that there is such variation in the shape of pottery that it must have been made locally. The ornamentation, on the other hand, is uniform throughout South Sweden – an interesting phenomenon which, however, is not discussed any further. For an assessment of the pottery analyses it is important to bear in mind that the author is not concerned with possible chronological variations. Thus, in theory, the pottery material represents more than 500 years.

There is also a preliminary analysis of grave goods when the author examines the assemblages from weapon deposits. The remaining grave goods are listed numerically in tables. As for weapons and the rest of the grave goods (Roman imported objects, coins, drinking-horn mounts, berloques etc.) the analyses comprise only directly observable geographical variations between the five main areas. Individual groups of objects are discussed as isolated phenomena, without reference to their context and regardless of chronology. Thus the accompanying tables show that there were two graves in Central Västergötland with swords, spears, lances and shields, and that the same area has yielded 4 Roman situlae, 4 glass beakers, 4 drinking-horn mounts etc. But it is impossible to decide whether, for instance, the 4 situlae and the 4 glass beakers were found in the two graves with a full set of weapons mentioned above, whether they came from one and the same grave, or whether they might have been recovered from 8 different graves – a factor of some importance if we wish to understand more fully the social variations of Iron Age society.

Though the aim of the study implies a dynamic perspective, i.e. the process of change in Iron Age society, the author refrains from a chronological analysis, which the graves in particular – with their goods which can be safely dated – would have made feasible. As a result the temporal perspective vanishes completely, and with it the chance to observe possible geographical changes when find material representing more than 500 years of burial customs is discussed collectively. What does it mean, for instance, that richly furnished women's graves are particularly numerous in one area of Central Västergötland, and weapon deposits in another? Do they

reflect a chronological or a geographical difference? This important question cannot be answered because of the way the study is structured.

A treatise like the one under discussion, in which the geographical distribution of individual phenomena forms the primary analytical tool, ought to give a prominent place to a discussion and clarification of the geographical representativity of the archaeological material. For example, do the "white dots" on the distribution maps always – and in equal measure – indicate areas with no actual finds? What determines the discovery of e.g. settlement traces as opposed to finds of weapon deposits?

Ultimately, the conflict in the study resides in the relation (or lack of it) between the presentation of the archaeological material and the interpretation of it in a social perspective. This is because there is no analytical link to connect the two levels.

The theoretical section. As mentioned above, the author seeks to test the validity of Sanders and Webster's evolutionary model (based on social developments in Meso America) by applying it to Swedish material. It seems natural first of all to consider the appropriateness of this procedure, which is fairly common among archaeologists. It consists of: 1) the selection of an archaeological area of investigation, 2) the selection of an ethnographical model, 3) the mapping of archaeological data, and 4) the interpretation of these as a direct expression of the social organization within the framework of the selected model.

Any anthropological theory is debatable. This is the basic problem for archaeologists who attempt to use ethnographical models without a sufficient command of theory. As is also the case with the present study, the result is often a mechanical interpretation of social phenomena which does not increase our knowledge about prehistoric cultures, but merely adds new designations to them and forces them into a preconceived framework. To take a concrete example: the weapon deposits from Sweden's Early Iron Age do not necessarily reflect a society that is more stratified than does an area without weapon deposits. The relationship between the social superstructure and the archaeological material is not as simple and mechanical as that. Let me illustrate this with an example from the book.

The author assumes that weapon deposits, major finds of gold and Roman imported goods etc. are direct evidence of a more strongly organized society. She therefore regards Västergötland as more stratified than the other South-West Swedish areas. Yet according to the model as well as ecological considerations this is not supposed to be the case – on the contrary. In other words, "centralisation" occurs in the wrong area. The theoretical value of the study would have been enhanced considerably if the author had also attempted to work out an alternative model of developments in South-West Sweden. As it is we are left with the unsatisfactory situation that the model does not work, but is used nevertheless.

Readers who expect this book to provide a fresh analytical and theoretical contribution to research in the Scandinavian Iron Age will be disappointed. The title of the book does not

cover its actual content, which is a pity since it is by no means an unimportant study of the Swedish Iron Age. It appears as a valuable and meticulous account of all the data, archaeological as well as ecological and geographical, for a large area. Part 2, which deals with the ecological and economic requirements of Iron Age settlements, is particularly useful and contains a number of important investigations and observations that may serve as an inspiration for future research. However, the overall interpretation could refer to practically any area during any period from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages.

Lotte Hedeager

HANS NEUMANN: *Olgerdiget – et bidrag til Danmarks tidligste historie*. Skrifter fra Museumsrådet for Sønderjyllands amt, 1, Haderslev 1982.

The book about the *Olgerdige* was Hans Neumann's last and most substantial contribution to Denmark's earliest history. It deals with the author's homeland in Schleswig, and is a study firmly rooted in a narrow strip of land between Urnehoved, south-west of Åbenrå, and Gårdeby, south of Tinglev. Here, at one time, *Olgerdiget* ran through the landscape, broken only by lakes and marsh, in a form which as late as the beginning of the 19th. century could still be seen in the unploughed heath, and that since has been re-discovered through archaeological excavations. Neumann undertook painstaking excavations during nine summers, from 1963 to 1972, on this prehistoric monument, and during the following nine years he was occupied with answering the problems which *Olgerdiget* set him. This led him far outside the local archaeological field of study, and deep into the marginal land between prehistory and history which is so fascinating, but dangerous to enter. For *Olgerdiget* appeared to Neumann to be a key to the understanding of the political events which from the 2nd. to the 10th. centuries led to the existence of the Danish state. Such events are not directly disclosed by the archaeological find-material, and therefore the sparse historical sources which can illuminate the situation in Scandinavia at this period are once more brought before us, analysed, and interpreted; the domestic situation is continually set in the context of the rather clearer political development of southern and western Europe. These were centuries packed with activity, during which the continental Germanic tribes gather into continually larger and larger confederacies in order finally to stand up against the western Roman empire and establish themselves in newly-formed states, and during which the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons correspondingly invade and settle Britain. All this provides a background for, and contributes to, the historical reconstruction which is built around the results of nine summers' excavations in the present work.

Along this 12 km. long stretch, investigation of the *Olgerdige* proceeded through a series of excavations at different points. Naturally these only cover a small part of the whole length, but they present a consistent picture of the form of the structure. To the west it consists of 3 – 5 rows of palisading, running

parallel, formed of oak tree trunks standing close together. Some metres to the east of this there is a broad, flat-bottomed ditch, in certain places along the east side of which traces of a low bank were seen, certainly composed of the earth cast up from the ditch. The structure did not take this form all in one go: the outermost palisades, and possibly the ditch and bank, represent later extensions and reinforcement of the barrier. But the uniformity of the structure must demonstrate that in its original form it was built to its full length in very little time. It was a land barrier, covering all accessible areas between wet areas with palisades. It is estimated that altogether 90,000 oak trunks went into the whole palisade, and although in the original phase this involved a single row of stakes, this is in consequence a construction which in terms of timber and labour employed corresponds to the later Viking period's largest commercial centres, Trelleborg, Ravingbroen, etc. However *Olgerdiget* brings us back to the Roman Iron Age: although the available C 14 dates are not consistent in the dates they indicate, it appears probable that the palisade was constructed in the 2nd. century A.D., and was extended and maintained through several centuries.

It would not, in these days, have immediately been expected that this palisade should face the North-West, and therefore have been built by the folk who lived south and east of it, but close analysis of the placing of the palisade in the landscape strongly supports such an interpretation, and in further agreement Neumann is able to point to close similarities between the construction of *Olgerdiget* and the boundary-wall with which the Romans sought to consolidate their frontiers against the Germans in the 2nd. and 3rd. centuries. Here too it is a palisade which marks the frontier, later extended with a bank and ditch to the rear. It was rather ambitious for a folk-group in south-eastern Schleswig, when at some time in the 2nd. century it wished to define its territory's north-western frontier, to take the recently constructed *limes*-defences as a model. *Olgerdiget* was not, any more than the Roman *limes*-defences were, intended as a true defence work from which military attacks could be repelled – but it could make surprise attacks difficult, and facilitate the observation of the frontier and legal traffic which by this means was directed to controllable passages.

The establishment of such a frontier boundary in the east of south Jutland is not particularly surprising in the transition to the later Roman Iron Age, because the major weapon-hoards in a series of bogs in western Fyn and eastern Jutland indicate precisely this area, around the Lillebælt, to have been a “war-zone” in the period from the 2nd. to the 5th. centuries, and provide furthermore an insight into the organisation and specialised ornament of some quite significant military units. The barriers of stakes by the navigable entrance to the Haderslev fjord also belong to this period, and in the other archaeological material at just this period there appears a cultural boundary which is congruent with the line of *Olgerdiget*.

It has long been recognised that the finds of the Roman Iron Age, especially on the Jutish peninsula, divide the country into a series of culture-provinces, in which, *inter alia*, the burial practices and ceramic production display unmistakable local characteristics. Such areas have sometimes been identified

with different, admittedly usually anonymous, tribes. Rather more often, however, more neutral characterisations of such areas are made, as settlement or communications areas (Siedlungs- or Verkehrsgebiete), since really one does not know how far the community extended ethnically, religiously, or politically. In the earlier Roman Period, South Jutland and Schleswig, from the Skjern river to the Ejder, form one such uniform settlement area, but subsequently, through the later Roman period, one notes both in burial practices and pottery production an essential difference between the northern and southern parts of the area, and the find picture in the southern part aligns itself in this later period more closely with that of the islands of Fyn than with the neighbouring part of Jutland. The border of this province is marked by *Olgerdiget*, and further west by the Vidå.

This, then, briefly, is the archaeological basis for Neumann's further politico-historical studies. The excavation results are comprehensively presented and documented, and there are really only three points which require supplementary investigations.

Firstly, *Olgerdiget* terminates south-west of Urnehoved, where a (?) later bank, *Skansen*, covers the (?) later Army Road (Ox Road). Even if one accepts, like Neumann, that the north-south traffic in the early Iron Age followed the same route in the landscape west of Urnehoved which to all appearances was used in the Stone and Bronze Ages, it remains incomprehensible that the frontier wall should leave so obvious a weakness towards the north.

Secondly, there is a striking discrepancy between the excavation results and those descriptions of *Olgerdiget* which survive from the time when it was still visible and accessible in the heathland. Outzen and J.N. Schmidt both speak of a mighty earth bank which had a broad ditch to the east(!), and it is difficult to accept that both of them, familiar with the locality as they were, mistook the points of the compass. But Neumann, of course, could only describe what he saw. However new geophysical methods of analysis, if they fulfil what they seem to promise, should make it possible to determine whether at a given place a grave-mound or earth bank has been raised, even if later ploughing has removed all traces of it, and it will be intriguing to employ these methods on selected parts of *Olgerdiget*.

Thirdly, at some time, a series of supplementary samples for C 14 dating and dendrochronological analysis should be taken, because so much depends on the dating of the monument: a more accurate dating than we at present have should now be within reach.

The further archaeological evidence, both local and foreign, which is introduced into the work consists largely of well-known material, which Neumann nevertheless never fails to assess critically, thereby both supplementing and verifying earlier observations. This applies not least to the consideration of the ceramic evidence, which illustrates similarities and differences within the Schleswig/South Jutland area in the earlier and later Roman Periods respectively. Here we have new and substantial observations which correct the basis for our understanding, and it would therefore have been most wel-

come if the book had provided corresponding analytical studies of many further elements of the Iron Age find-material. No-one was more familiar with this than Neumann. This could possibly have clarified problems relating to Iron Age routes, because it is contentious to assume that the routes of the Bronze Age continued in use unchanged. This could have thrown light on the relationship between Fyn and Schleswig, which is ascribed such decisive significance in the later Roman Iron Age. And this could possibly, as has recently been done in other parts of the country, have thrown some light on the social stratification in the population which was capable of completing a building project of such mighty dimensions. All this lies within Archaeology's reach.

But Neumann, historian as he was as well, had quite different purposes in his book about *Olgerdiget*. Although he did not generally accept Kossina's view, formulated in 1911, that clearly bounded archaeological culture-provinces are always identical with folk-groups, he found in this material strong indications that the two later Roman Iron Age culture-provinces in South Jutland and Schleswig can be understood as tribal areas similar to those which are known and described in that part of Germania which bordered on the Roman Empire. The group which was responsible for the establishment, extension, and maintenance of *Olgerdiget* must have been united in a sufficiently stable political organisation for common business to be planned and directed by a central authority, and the necessity of a frontier barrier of such striking dimensions may well imply a comparable political power in the neighbouring area against which defence was organised. Neumann identifies the two groups north and south of *Olgerdiget* as the Jutes and Angles respectively, and thus understands the Jutes to have dominated the whole area from the Skjern river to the Ejder in the early Roman Period, while the Angles pressed them back north of the border which is delineated by *Olgerdiget* and the Vidå in the 2nd. century. Since the finds in the area of the Angles, as has been stated, show a relationship with the find-material on Fyn, it appears that the presence of the Angles in the area could be the result of an invasion from the east.

There is little literary foundation for this identification. The jutes (*eudoses*, *eudici*, or, in a presumed error in Ptolemy, *fundisi*), are occasionally mentioned as inhabitants of the Jutish peninsula along with the *Cimbri* and the *Harudes*, just as Tacitus (1st. century) includes the Jutes and Angles amongst the groups who worshipped Nerthus, whose sanctuary was situated on an island in the Ocean (the Baltic?). In Ptolemy (2nd. century), however, the Angles are located in Thuringia, an area the group-name is still associated with in the 7th century, and the question of the origin of the Angles has therefore produced extensive and learned debate, involving philologists and place-name specialists, as well as archaeologists and historians.

Since Germanic peoples were often involved in migrations (examples of this are legion), and since it was hardly on every occasion that whole nations left a place, it should not really be a source of any great wonder that the same group-name should turn up in different places on the map of Europe, certainly not when the classical authors have obviously had only vague

notions of the groups and places involved. On this issue, as generally in the book, Neumann gives a thorough account of all divergent opinions, and one may well follow him in concluding that the Angles who took part in the expeditions against England must be presumed to have been a group with a knowledge of seafaring, and access to the North Sea. Such conditions exist in contemporary Angeln and neighbouring parts of Schleswig, and a localisation of the Angles in this area is supported by a late English source, in that Bede (c. 672–735 AD) informs us that before the invasion the Angles were settled between the Saxons and the Jutes.

But what Bede in the 8th. century relates of the Angles in the 5th. century obviously tells us only a little of their activities and location at the start of the millenium, and if, like Neumann, one takes Tacitus's statement (1st. century) to imply the location of the Angles in Jutland, alongside the Jutes, one must concurrently accept that at that time they formed part of a homogeneous settlement area, which stretched from the Skjern river to the Ejder. This naturally does not exclude the possibility that in the 2nd. century they could have won mastery over the southern part of the area by force, and on this occasion have fortified their northern frontier, but the historical sources say nothing of this – no more than they support the hypothesis of an Anglian invasion from the east.

This invasion-hypothesis is, then, also associated with another folk-group, whose introduction into the historical arena has interested Danish historians rather more. These are the *Danes*, of whom Jordanes (6th. century) relates that they were an offshoot from the *Svear* tribe who drove the *Heruli* from their lands. Of the *Heruli* we know, amongst other things, that from the 3rd. century onwards they wandered quite homeless around the continent, until a part of the tribe, after a defeat in the Balkans in 505, were permitted to settle in Illyria, while the others began a migration back towards the north. Procopius, who also was writing in the 6th. century and therefore is closely contemporary with the events described, tells of this migration. Here we follow the route of the *Heruli* up through Poland and North Germany. "After that they passed quickly by the Danes, without those barbarians doing them any harm, and came to the sea". Then they took ship, and subsequently settled on the Scandinavian peninsula close by the *Gautar*. This migration history may well increase the probability that originally – and therefore before the 3rd. century – the *Heruli* were settled in southern Scandinavia; that there was still a tense relationship between themselves and the Danes, who in their time had expelled them; and that these Danes, at the beginning of the 6th century, occupied the areas in the southernmost part of the Jutish peninsula. Evidence, not always especially reliable or chronologically well-associated, has been assiduously pursued, both in the archaeological material of Denmark and the distribution of place-names, for an invasion of Danes from the east occupying the land in the first centuries of our era. The evidence of the bog-finds for military activities around the Lillebælt in the 3rd.–5th. centuries should, in such a case, denote the war-zone where the Danes' westward advance was temporarily halted, and Neumann now adds to this his substantial evidence for a tribal area in Schleswig whose



material culture points to connections in the east, and where the population quickly raised a frontier-barrier against the north.

If one assembles all this evidence in an historical reconstruction, the “culture-shift” in Schleswig becomes a result of the advance of the Danes. It is they who in the 2nd. century establish a bridgehead on the east coast and fortify the boundary against that part of Jutland which would not so easily allow itself to be overrun, and it is they who later expanded their territory right across the peninsula. Accordingly, Frankish sources from the 6th. century speak of the Jutes and the Danes as two independent nations within the Frankish king’s sphere of influence, and history’s first named Dane, King Chochilaicus, comes before us at the same time, because around the year 515 he was slain on a pirate raid on the Gallic coast. But what has become of the Angles in this history? They can only be fitted in if one supposes that *Angles* and *Danes* are synonymous – that the Angles are one of the groups of the Danes, or that the Danes who conquered southern Schleswig took the name of the local population and the region, which was *Angel*. Perhaps that part of the Danish empire in Schleswig was independent for a while – an *Anglia*? In the travelogues of Ohthere and Wulfstan (shortly before 900) a distinction is drawn between South Danes in Jutland, and North Danes on the islands and the mainland (Skåne and Halland) and this distinction could possibly reflect contemporary or past political realities. All this, however, is speculation, on a very slight foundation, and when Neumann insists upon identifying *Olgerdiget* with the Angles this rests only upon the place-name *Angeln*, Tacitus’s vague statement, and last but not least, in the deductions concerning the origin of the Angles which English sources allow. For with the invasion of Britain by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in the 5th. century, these folk-names take on a new and rather more tractable significance.

The Jutes maintain a rather shadowy existence in this course of events, because, as Neumann notes, they neglected to write their own history. Their territories, moreover, were rapidly incorporated in Saxon southern England. In recent decades, however, elements have been observed in the archaeological material from Kent, the area indicated by Bede to be where the Jutes settled, which affirm connections with Jutland, or southern Scandinavia at least, and Neumann also argues for reminiscences of the Jutish power in literary sources, although Anglian and Saxon historians seem certainly to have repressed information about this. But what Neumann is particularly preoccupied with in this part of the book is the legendary tradition which is preserved in the Old English genealogies and poetry, for a similar tradition is found later in Sven Aggeson and Saxo, and it may therefore be presumed that the English and Danish legends have a common background in the culture-province between the Jutes and the Saxons whence the Angles emigrated.

In the poem *Widsith*, which was written down in West Saxon in the 10th. century, but which contains so many Anglian forms that it must have existed in an earlier Anglian recension, Neumann finds further indications that sections of the poem must have been in existence before the emigration of the

Angles to Britain. Of 31 identifiable groups and places mentioned in the poem, 29 are associated with the North Sea and the Baltic, the furthest reaches of which were known to the poet, while the poem’s comprehensive descriptions of northern Europe exclude only Ireland. In the list of critical battles and victories within the poem, not a word is said of the invasion of England. On the other hand one of the verses concerns the king *Offa*, who ruled *Angel*, and who won his greatest kingdom while yet a boy. With “one sword”, or “by the sword alone”, he accomplished “the most glorious deed” and “marked the border”. This is Saxo and Sven Aggeson’s *Offa-tale* in an Anglian version, but instead of a dual on an isle in the Ejder it tells of a campaign, which established or expanded the Anglian kingdom (across Jutland?) and secured its border (with *Olgerdiget*?). Neumann recognizes that there is no historical evidence that it was Offa of Angel who built *Olgerdiget*, but still characterises these lines of *Widsith* as the “most important source for the history of Schleswig in these centuries”. It is in any case a charming idea that the poem about Offa I of Angel could have been composed for Offa II of Mercia (757–796), who himself became famous for having “marked” the border of his kingdom against Wales with the famous Offa’s Dyke.

In the same way the poem *Beowulf* also betrays a comprehensive knowledge of Scandinavian legend, and the knowing manner in which the poet alludes to this in brief references presumes a corresponding knowledge of the material amongst his audience. The poem, which to all appearances was composed in the 7th. or 8th. century, revolves aspects of the Scandinavian situation in its fabulous narrative – wars between the Jutes (*Geats*), Danes, and Swedes, and their expeditions against the Franks and Frisians. One of the events can be verified: Hygelac’s (= Chochilaicus’) expedition against the Franks in *circa* 515. There is clearly evidence of a living historical tradition which was common to the Angles both in England and on the continent. This may well have its background in unbroken connections between these areas.

In the context of the English tale, the Jutes and Angles emerge as independent groups who were even located as far from one another as it was by then possible, and, as already mentioned, Frankish sources of the 6th. century also speak of the Jutes and the Danes as two separate groups. The division which is established around *Olgerdiget* in the 2nd. century thus seems to last this long, and as Neumann understands it this was still the situation at the end of the 9th. century. Through a close reading of Ohthere’s travelogue – from North Cape to Hedeby – he notes that during his long voyage Ohthere describes the coastal lands he passes by, and mentions their political alignments. Thus we learn that Halland belongs to Denmark, just as we also learn from Wulfstan’s contemporary travelogue that Bornholm has its own king, and that Blekinge, Öland, and Gotland belong to Sweden. Since Ohthere sailed down the Lillebælt, he had Jutland to starboard and the islands which belonged to Denmark to port, and came straight from there to Hedeby which also belonged to Denmark. Jutland’s political situation is thus not stated – no more is Denmark’s, and it is a tempting explanation that Jutland was still an independent kingdom. This situation first changed in the 10th.



century, when the king of the Jutes at Jelling, Harald Bluetooth, conquered all of Denmark and Norway, and christianized the Danes. Then, after 700 years, *Olgerdiget* first lost its significance – and became an ancient monument.

Around this monument, Neumann portrays Denmark's earliest history. In the foregoing, some major issues are picked up in order to give an impression of the subject-matter and the problems which are considered. Both the subject-matter and the problems are much more extensive than could be shown here. Denmark's earliest history resides in fragments of a pattern, which may be put together to present a whole: very small fragments of a very large whole. Many have attempted this, and one must allow Neumann that he examines and presents his source material with a highly critical sense, with the result that there are many fewer internal contradictions in his reconstruction than many earlier attempts. But in the midst of his scientific sobriety, Neumann could nevertheless be captured by his own visions. The Anglian kingdom in Schleswig, which is said to have been a military and cultural centre of power in Scandinavia for 700 years, is thus no historical reality. It lives in the book, but the historical sources which ought to document its existence are internally contradictory and far too scanty. But still it lives in the book, which despite its broad-ranging, scientific weight, is also captivating and easily read.

Mogens Ørsnes

The reviews in this volume were translated by Ole Bay-Petersen and John Hines.