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ANNA FLÜCKIGER. 2021. *Kaiseraugst zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Eine siedlungsarchäologische Studie* (Forschungen in Augst 55). Augst: Museum Augusta Raurica; 978-3-7965-4529-0 hardback CHF80.00.



The Roman site at Kaiseraugst in Switzerland is characterised by its abundant archaeology as well as its continuous archaeological exploration and is famous for its impressive silver hoard from the fourth century AD (Guggisberg 2003). The latest results are regularly published by the site's own series 'Forschungen in Augst'. The volume being reviewed here is the adaptation of Anna Flückiger's doctoral dissertation written at the Department of Ancient Civilizations, University of Basel, supported by the 'Schweizerischer Nationalfond'.

As promised in the title ('Kaiseraugst between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. A settlement archaeological study'), Flückiger explores the settlement at Kaiseraugst at the transition from Late Antiquity to Early Middle Ages, more precisely the period from the fourth to the early sixth century AD. The chronological and geographical context is promisingly chosen since the epoch is still rather obscure along the Rhine frontier due to various historical and research-related factors and traditions.

The late antique military fort, *Castrum Rauracense*, as well as its surroundings lent themselves to the project. The fortification itself was built close to the riverbank c. AD 300 when the territories east and north of the Rhine were abandoned and the frontier was relocated to the river once more. Previous research argued for some recurring use of the site and architectural structures, but clear evidence for a continuous occupation beyond historically known catastrophe horizons (e.g. usurpation of Magnentius AD 350–353) was scarce. Bearing in mind current research problems, such as the unreliable chronological framework of material culture and the problematic dark-earth phenomenon in settlements, Flückiger chose three excavations from 1993, 2007 and 2008 for her in-depth study. Evaluation of the features and finds from these excavations pursued three main objectives: 1) closing chronological gaps by refining dating approaches of finds; 2) investigating the continuity question of the settlement; 3) examining subordinate aspects regarding the occupation of the fort, the significance of the place and the exchange with areas on the right bank of the Rhine.

The author starts with an analysis of the 3D positioning of the coins from the 1993 and 2008 excavations to gain a better insight into the evolution of layers obscured by dark-earth packages. Furthermore, this facilitates dating approaches and understanding of approximately when objects were lost. Both of these excavations lay outside the fort in areas that were formerly (c. first to third century AD) used as stone quarries, then backfilled and developed into a *suburbium* in front of the earlier fortification located to the south on a small headland. While the excavation of 1993 mostly served as a pilot test in the 3D measurement process,

Flückiger continues with a comprehensive assessment of layers and structures of the 2008 excavation. In combination with the finds it becomes clear that the place was levelled several times and had different amounts of use over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries. After the closure of the quarry this plot was developed into pasture and later used as a production site (e.g. smokehouse). The material culture nicely reflects its surroundings as it is characterised by militaristic and civilian activity.

Focusing on the established chronological framework, Flückiger compares her results with the features and finds from the third excavation, which took place in 2007. Set within the walls of the fort, the central feature of the primary excavation trench is a pottery furnace that was abandoned and filled in the early sixth century AD. Relying on the rich material culture from the 2007 and 2008 excavations, in particular the different wares and types of pottery, the cumulative evidence is combined in a detailed chronological evaluation and synthesis. The results portray the site's eventful history and offer new insights into life at the frontier between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

Flückiger presents an impressive volume that offers a window into the long and rich occupation of Kaiseraugst. The focus on relevant research problems and questions clearly outlines the objectives of this project. It is apparent that the research process was characterised by a reflective advancement that clearly exploits the potential of the excavations and highlights closely related research issues, such as the precise construction date of the fort. Some of the methodological approaches are innovative (e.g. 3D measurements of coins) and give a new perspective on dating layers via lost coins. The evaluations of the layers and finds follow an established process and are complemented by colour-coded graphics of the stratigraphy (see catalogue and tables) which facilitate a straightforward tracing of information. The extensive analysis of the evolution of the area set within the *suburbium* (2008) is broken down comprehensibly for the reader and supported by excellent illustrations. The dating of the abundant finds assemblages is based on associated finds from the relative assemblage and parallels from other settlements (e.g. Pfyn, Switzerland) and burial sites (e.g. Krefeld-Gellep, Germany). Overall, Flückiger skilfully illustrates the complex occupation history that took place in the evaluated excavation areas and contextualises it within its surroundings. As the author points out several times, this work provides potential for further theoretical and practical research approaches on a regional and national level. The finds assemblages, for example, suggest the phenomenon of *Hackbronze* (similar to *Hacksilber*) and the possibility of a continuing late antique monetisation on the basis of weight of a valued material, a topic that Flückiger is currently researching in greater detail.

This volume offers a comprehensive analysis of a modern excavation that presents a coherent chronology of a late antique frontier settlement, as well as insightful interpretation of the activities of its population. Strong referencing supports understanding of contemporary settlements and burial sites in the region. Most importantly, Flückiger provides another voice that demonstrates the end of the Western Roman Empire was characterised more by transformation than outright collapse.

## Reference

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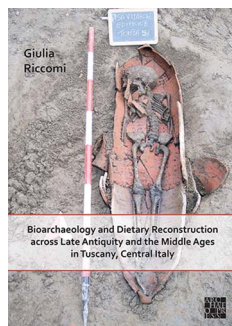
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GIULIA RICCOMI. 2021. *Bioarchaeology and Dietary Reconstruction across Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Tuscany, Central Italy*. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-865-7 paperback £34.



Multidisciplinary studies in bioarchaeology that combine skeletal analyses with biomolecular methods increasingly contribute to the rich context of human health and behaviours against a backdrop of global socio-political and environmental change. Giulia Riccomi's book seeks to add to this expanding dataset with the comparison of 'indicators of stress' (e.g. reduced stature, cribra orbitalia, cribra cranii, dental enamel defects, non-specific periosteal lesions) and dietary analyses measuring carbon, nitrogen and oxygen stable isotopes from Late Roman (third to fifth centuries AD) and early medieval (sixth to thirteenth centuries AD) Tuscan populations.

The book is a published version of Riccomi's PhD thesis and reads as such, both in scope of content and structure. The introductory chapter primarily focuses on biological concepts of stress to initiate the foundation for the research questions and objectives within this work. Chapter 2 focuses on the history of Tuscany in the first millennium AD and provides a useful and comprehensive overview of the region. This includes the municipal divisions of the region post-Roman Empire, interesting details of the agrarian economic systems, and alterations in the geographical landscape. The background information is well presented, well written, and essential for the biocultural context needed to interpret the skeletal remains being studied. Chapter 3 provides the archaeological specifics for the skeletons in the study, focusing on three archaeological sites: Via Marche (Pisa) (third to fifth centuries AD, urban site, n=169), Vicus Wallari/borgo San Genesio (Pisa) (sixth to thirteenth centuries AD, rural site, n=57) and Pieve di Pava (Siena) (tenth to twelfth centuries AD, rural site, n=164). This chapter also reviews some of the variations in burial practices of the region,