

Zentrum für **Baltische** und
Skandinavische Archäologie

Eine Forschungseinrichtung
in der Stiftung Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesmuseen
Schloss Gottorf

Jahresbericht 2021

Herausgeber

Claus von Carnap-Bornheim,
Berit Valentin Eriksen

Redaktion

Berit Valentin Eriksen, Isabel Sonnenschein

Gestaltung und Bildbearbeitung

Matthias Bolte, Cornelia Lux-Kannenber, Jürgen Schüller

Bildnachweis

Soweit nicht anders gekennzeichnet, stammen die Fotos und
Abbildungen von den Autoren der Artikel oder dem MfA.

Bilder Umschlag

Fotos Pilgerzeichen und Grabungsfläche Amrum:
Linda Hermanssen, ALSH

Druck

Druckhaus Leupelt GmbH, Handewitt

Schleswig, im Oktober 2022

Dieser Jahresbericht ist online abrufbar unter
www.zbsa.eu/jahresberichte

Settlement, Conflict, and the social order of East Prussia in later Prehistory

70

Hans Whitefield M. Sc. (Dissertation)

Das ehemalige Ostpreußen im Netzwerk baltischer Archäologie

1 Comparison of intervisibility networks between known hillforts and randomly generated "hillforts". Intervisibility webs suggests some locations were chosen to support visual communication, as random locations lack comparable webs (map: H. Whitefield).

The hillforts of later prehistory are one of the only well documented pan-European archaeological phenomena. Despite their ubiquity and prominence, our understanding of these monuments is largely based on a few large-scale excavations in western Europe from the previous two centuries of prehistoric research. In June 2021 as part of the project "Forschungskontinuität und Kontinuitätsforschung" a regional scale study of the hillforts of East Prussia was initiated in the framework of a doctoral thesis funded by the "Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz".

Broad regional research is most often hampered by a sparse catalogue of known sites. However, East Prussia is ideally suited for this variety of research as the systematic documentation of archaeological monuments, including hillforts, was initiated in 1824 under Oberpräsident Theodor von Schön, first in West and then East Prussia. This early documentation was systematically added to by the members of the »Alterthumsgesellschaft Prussia« and survived multiple regime changes as the Königsberg Prussia Collection, now held in Berlin. Over 400 records of hillforts provide a firm basis for broader GIS analysis.

In the first period of research the quality of these records has been assessed to see what further information is needed to progress regional

research. Using these records along with open-source Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) a methodology has been developed which seeks to identify clusters of hillforts and determine their relationship. This is complicated by the asynchronous nature of the data; most of the sites remain undated. Pioneering work by T. Ibsen in dating these fortifications with minimally invasive techniques will hopefully provide a keyhole to understanding their development when coupled with statistical analysis. Initial results from intervisibility and nearest neighbour analysis already suggest that previously identified sites may have functioned as larger systems. Based on these early results it is tempting to conclude that these sites functioned as systems of control for a local elite, as has long been surmised. However, it is important to confront this narrative empirically and attempt to place hillforts in a broader sociocultural context.

The next phase of research will not only improve the quality of the current catalogue of hillforts by revisiting the source material, but also trace the development of typologies and current theory regarding late prehistoric society. While armed conflict at hillforts is well attested archaeologically and historically, it is worth questioning what role that practitioners of violence played in the broader society.

