

The Cistercian Grange Rozedehusen and its setting in the landscape

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Rozedehusen (Nordrhein-Westfalen/D); 12th–13th century; cistercians; grange

In or shortly before 1155 Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony granted one of probably three courts in the hamlet of Rozedehusen (Warburg-Bonenburg, Kr. Höxter, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany) to the nearby situated Cistercian abbey of Hardehausen, founded in the same year and situated in Southeast Westfalia within the bishopric of Paderborn. According to another document five hides of approximately 37 ha in total belonged to the court. In order to establish a grange, in 1172 the abbey acquired exemption from paying tithes for the court by buying these rights and, according to

dendrochronological evidence started to build the grange shortly after the winter of 1181/82. Together with another grange, founded after 1188 in Bunessen, the Cistercians controlled a block of land of more than a thousand acres situated directly east of the monastery (comp. fig. 1). The area had been densely populated since Carolingian times and thus was not reclaimed from the wilderness when the white monks arrived. A document from 1297 records that within this area two other small villages were deserted, although there is evidence that the arable land did not fall out of use. So we must presume that the desire to retain control of lands had led to the eviction of tenants.

The remains of the grange at Rozedehusen were still clearly visible in 1995, with traces of buildings and various mounds situated around a dried out fishpond. It was excavated from summer 1995 to winter 1999 with the aid of grants from the “Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Stadtentwicklung, Kultur und Sport des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen” and major contributions from a company, which had been exploiting clay pits within the thick permian layers of Röt and of Liassic age, and whose activity had begun to endanger the ancient monument. The excavation was carried out by the “Westfälisches Museum für Archäologie/Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege, Fachreferat Mittelalter” of the “Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe”. The primary objectives were to reveal the structure of the grange and to investigate the traces of the former hamlet (first mentioned in the middle of the 11th century). The grange contained different areas of occupation, occasionally showing slightly higher amounts of phosphate concentration, and

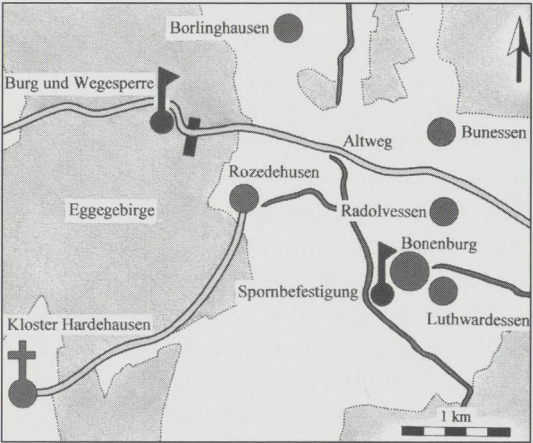


Fig. 1: Medieval settlements east of the Eggegebirge (Westfalia, Germany). *Mittelalterliche Siedlungsdynamik östlich des Eggegebirges (Westfalen, BRD): Die seit der Zeit um 800 n. Chr. bestehenden Weiler Radolvessen und Luthwardessen wurden im 13. Jahrhundert zugunsten der Zisterziensergrangien in Rozedehusen und Bunessen wüstgelegt. Die Aufgabe dieser beiden Grangienhöfe erfolgte im frühen 14. Jahrhundert. An ihre Stelle trat das bis heute fortbestehende, erstmals 1370 genannte Abtsdorf Bonenburg, oberhalb dessen im 14./15. Jahrhundert eine befestigte Anlage bestanden hat.*

covered an area of about 1 ha within a small horseshoe-shaped widening of a valley following the wooded mountain ridge of the *Eggegebirge* to the east. A rectangular lower courtyard was found in the wet ground at the bottom of the widening, surrounded by ditches and drained by a stone-clad subsoil drainage system running straight through the middle of the court. Due to post-medieval stone robbery we found only one stone-faced cellar, built deeply into the wet ground and fitted for this reason with wood supported drains below ground level, furthermore a small six-post-hole building and fragmentary traces of stone foundations for timber-framed buildings, all directly attached to the yard. To the southwest of the lower court the hill slope was terraced at the same time. Due to better conditions of preservation we could recognise a stone building (*Steinwerk*) of 11.3 x 11.7 m at the platform's west end (fig. 2). The 1.2 m thick walls were built of Cretaceous reddish-brown sandstones (occasionally with dividing layers of limestone) in the technique of clay-supported dry-stone walling. The ground level was divided up into two rooms with single entrances. Traces of a small window and of a skilfully constructed drainage system in stone, which ran along the walls on the inside and left the northern room by an outlet were also discovered. Outside the drain passed a rectangular curb which the inhabitants supplied with water from a spring. The stone building at Rozedehusen was roofed with rectangular tiles, very unusual for rural buildings of that age within the region. It formed part of a larger timbered building facing to the east and constructed on rows of stones. The ground level fireplace of this part of the house was made of reused defect roof tiles, square bricks and square ornamented paving tiles (comp. fig. 3 and 4) with a maximum length of 28 cm, either burnt too little during production or fired too hard, leading to deformation of the tiles. The locally made paving tiles show two different types of geometrical design (comp. fig. 4) and were presumably originally intended for the decoration of the representative rooms of the stone building. The house was destroyed by fire and was not rebuilt. Part of the wooden roofing construction, including a rafter with an inlet to insert a purlin (so that we can reconstruct the slope of the roof) were deposited in a rubbish pit dating from the time of the grange's abandon-



Fig. 2: Warburg-Bonenburg, stone building (*Steinwerk*) of the late 12th/13th century within the Cistercian grange at Rozedehusen facing to the east. Warburg-Bonenburg, *Steinwerk* des späten 12./13. Jahrhunderts in der Zisterziensergrange Rozedehusen, Blickrichtung: Osten.

ment. A limestone-plastered path, which had been edged with sandstone boulders led off from this building to the east. Coin finds (dating from the first half of the 13th to the first decade of the 14th century) and many finds of different keys reveal that the upper court was the grange's administrative centre. The lay brethren also lived here. There is neither archaeological nor written evidence for a chapel, so that we must assume that the brethren had to follow a partly still visible hollow way crossing the mountain ridge in order to arrive at the 2.8 km distant monastery to worship. Rozedehusen was not just a large scale farmstead, staffed by lay brothers. Within an area about 50 m north of the administrative centre specialised brass craftsmen produced decorated knives. Further archaeometallurgical investigation has shown that special high temperature alloys (bronze with high contents of tin), that are not found elsewhere in the settlement, as well as lead were used here. The entire production area, with ovens, traces of buildings, ditches and stone-clad drains was documented by excavation, and included two smithies, which had been set at the edge of the grange because of the danger of fire. The buildings and drains, including the well and the craftsmen's area, were laid out in strict rectangular forms. The buildings of the upper court and the craftsmen's area were orientated north-south and east-west (with a deviation of roughly five degrees from true north), those of the



Fig. 3: Warburg-Bonenburg, grange Rozedehusen: Ground level fireplace in the house attached to the Steinwerk with reused defect roof tiles and ornamented paving tiles during excavation. Warburg-Bonenburg, Zisterziensergrangie Rozedehusen: Herdstelle des zum Steinwerk gehörenden Vorderhauses mit verwerteten schadhafte Dachziegeln und ornamentierten Bodenfliesen.

lower courtyard show a deviation of about fifteen degrees from true north.

There is slight archaeological evidence for the presence of women and children within the lay brothers' community, including glazed miniature pottery and spinning implements as well as a simple decorated brooch, but this must not be overstressed, as a different ar-

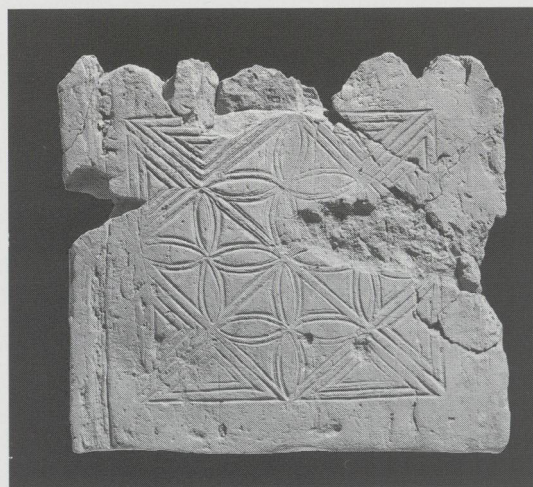


Fig. 4: Warburg-Bonenburg, grange Rozedehusen: Ornamented paving tile from the ground level fireplace east of the Steinwerk. Warburg-Bonenburg, Grangie Rozedehusen: Relief-verzierte Bodenfliese aus der Herdstelle des Vorderhauses.

chaeological interpretation is possible. Iron tools, represented (among other tools) by spade-shoes and sickles, indicate farming activity. A pollen profile, taken from a local swamp with good conditions for the preservation of organic material, and overlaid by a layer of clay dating from the grange's demolition, shows cereal production at a very low level. This agrees with the fact, that the nearest of the granges is mainly covered by poorly drained heavy soils, offering limited opportunities of crop production on the better drained slopes in mediaeval times, but providing valuable pasture grounds in the valley bottom as well as in the wooded mountain area.

Local feuds within the bishopric, culminating in the first half of the 14th century, and the effects of the Black Death presumably led to the collapse of the grange-based economy of the Hardehausen Cistercians. It is certain, that before 1370 the arable land of the grange Rozedehusen was divided up among different tenants and thus showed little difference from other monastic lands. Rural population was then concentrated in the village of Bonenburg (first mentioned in the year 1370) and situated at the geographical centre of the now abandoned former settlements at the foot of a fairly steep hill. There is no clear written evidence of a castle at Bonenburg yet, although the place-name provides strong evidence. Rescue excavation at short notice has revealed a mortared stone building on the hilltop within a field called "auf dem Burghof" ("In the castle yard"). Finds of roofing material (slate), among them fragments bearing still undeciphered notices in gothic letters, as well as two pilgrims' horns and a bone-carving (presumably showing St. John) clearly indicate an occupation of the area by individuals of relatively high social status.

Zusammenfassung

Mit der vom Kloster Hardehausen abhängigen Grangie Rozedehusen bei Warburg-Bonenburg (Kreis Höxter, Nordrhein-Westfalen, BRD) ist erstmals in Mitteleuropa eine derartige Anlage mit archäologischen Mitteln 1995–1999 vollständig untersucht worden. In Folge der im Jahr 1155 formell erfolgten Gründung des Klosters Hardehausen durch Zisterziensermönche veränderte sich das Siedlungsgefüge der Altsiedellandschaft des späteren

Bonenburger Raumes nordöstlich des Klosters in entscheidender Weise. Durch umfangreiche Besitzaufkäufe avancierten die Zisterzienser zum bedeutendsten Grundherren in diesem Raum, legten die Weiler Luthwardessen und Radolvessen wüst und richteten Grangienbetriebe in u.a. Rozedehusen und Bunesen ein (vgl. Fig. 1). Die Grangie Rozedehusen wurde am Rand des seit der Karolingerzeit bestehenden, gleichnamigen Weilers nach dem Winter 1181/82 mit planmäßigem Grundriss

errichtet, bestand bis in das frühe 14. Jahrhundert und wies eine deutliche topographische Binnengliederung auf. Nach Aufgabe des Systems der Grangienbewirtschaftung strukturierte das Kloster seinen Besitz in Form einer Rentengrundherrschaft und gründete nahe der ehemals aufgegebenen Siedlung Luthwardessen das erstmals 1370 bezeugte, sogenannte *Abtsdorf* Bonenburg, oberhalb dessen in Spornlage im 14./15. Jahrhundert eine befestigte Anlage bestanden hat.

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