

Aspects of Franconia

Kosbach

The approximately 130km-long Bethang trail takes you around the periphery of Nuremberg, Fürth and Erlangen. The odd-sounding name comes from BE (NürnBERg), TH (FürTH) and ANG (ErlANGen) and has a distinctive green and magenta logo (note the three rings representing the three cities).



I know of it from the woods near Kraftshof, but the other day I stumbled over it in Kosbach, the village just outside Erlangen known for its carp ponds and restaurants, in one of which, Oberle, we celebrated our 35th anniversary in 2019!



Kosbach is also known for its pre-historic past, as witnessed by the reconstructed “Kosbach Altar”, next to a Grabhügel or Grave Barrow (below) dating to the 6th-5th century BC. The excavations of 1913 brought to light a number of bronze objects as well as pottery, suggesting that this was indeed a burial site of some importance.



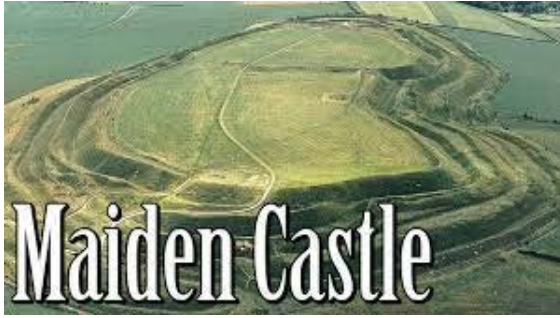
The Late Bronze Age culture in question bears the name “Hallstatt” after the lakeside village in the Austrian Salzkammergut southeast of Salzburg, where there was a rich salt mine, and where some 1,300 burials are known, many with fine artifacts like this bronze bull now in the GNM Nuremberg.



Small bronze statue of a bull, Hallstatt period (7th/6th century BC), Hallstatt, Upper Austria.

Incidentally, “Hall”, meaning salt, appears in the name “Hallplatz” in Nuremberg where salt was traded in the Middle Ages, as you would know, of course, if you were Welsh, the Welsh word for salt being “halen”!

So, there you have it. Erlangen has a Late Bronze Age site in the village of Kosbach. It isn't, I would say, particularly spectacular, but I am spoilt as I come from Dorset which is littered with Bronze Age burial sites and hill forts. It's difficult to compete with Maiden Castle in Dorset,



the largest Iron Age Hill Fort in Britain

but it is still fascinating to consider how some of our forebears were once part of a civilisation that stretched across Europe, from Franconia and beyond to Wessex and beyond.

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