

Jan Johannes Ahlrichs, Kai Riehle & Nurzat Sultanalieva

The Production of Liminal Places – An Interdisciplinary Account

Abstract

Using the concept of liminality, this paper provides a comparative study of ritual places. The concept was introduced by Arnold van Gennep in his study „rites de passage“, in which he differentiated between rites of separation (préliminaires), rites of transition (liminaires) and rites of aggregation (postliminaires). The main characteristics of liminality were elaborated by Victor Turner: of crucial importance are the temporary dissolution or reversal of existing social structures and the visit of places that are set apart due to their geographical or cultural location. Accordingly, these places enhance the emotional and physical experiences of the individuals participating in the rituals. We discuss case studies from Prehistoric Archaeology, Classical Archaeology and Ethnology: (I) the Heidendor near Egesheim on the Swabian Jura in southwestern Germany, used during the Hallstatt and the La Tène period, (II) the Early Iron Age ritual complex of Francavilla Marittima close to the Ionian coast of Calabria in southern Italy and (III) the recently used pilgrimage site in the Manzhyly-Ata Valley on the shore of Lake Yssyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan. The comparative analysis focuses on the spatial and material expressions of liminality and its social significance: the history of origin and usage, special forms of artifacts involved in the rituals and the geographical or cultural location. Due to the exceptional nature of the case studies, their location and long (dis)continuous histories of use, they differ from contemporaneous structures. Altogether, the concept of liminality provides new perspectives on ritual sites and how they were embedded in their surrounding landscapes.

Keywords: Liminality, Theory, Prehistoric Archaeology, Classical Archaeology, Ethnology, Heidendor, Francavilla Marittima, Manzhyly-Ata

Archäologisch-ethnologische Perspektiven auf die Konstruktion liminaler Orte

Zusammenfassung

Gegenstand dieses Artikels ist eine komparative Untersuchung rituell genutzter Plätze unter Berücksichtigung des Konzeptes der Liminalität. Der Ursprung des Konzeptes geht auf die von Arnold van Gennep vorgelegte Arbeit „rites de passage“ zurück, in welcher er zwischen Riten der Trennung (préliminaires), des Übergangs (liminaires) und der Zusammenführung (postliminaires) differenzierte. Zu den zentralen Charakteristika von Liminalität gehören nach Victor Turner die temporäre Aufhebung oder Umkehrung bestehender gesellschaftlicher Strukturen und der Aufenthalt an Orten, die sich aufgrund

ihrer geographischen oder kulturellen Lage am Rande alltglich genutzter Infrastrukturen befinden und somit die individuellen Erfahrungen der an den Ritualen teilnehmenden Personen verstrken. Die hier gewhlten Fallbeispiele stammen aus der Prhistorischen Archologie, der Klassischen Archologie und der Ethnologie. Diskutiert werden (I) das whrend der Hallstatt- und der Latnezeit aufgesuchte Heidendor von Egesheim auf der Schwbischen Alb im Sdwesten Deutschlands, (II) der frheisenzeitliche Ritualkomplex von Francavilla Marittima nahe der ionischen Kste Kalabriens in Sditalien und (III) die rezent genutzte Pilgersttte im Manzhyly-Ata Tal am Sdufer des Yssyk-Kul Sees in Kirgisistan. Eine komparative Betrachtung wird durch eine Fokussierung auf die rumlichen und materiellen Ausprgungen von Liminalitt ermglicht: Betrachtet werden die Entstehungs- und Nutzungsgeschichten sowie Formen des materiellen Niederschlags der Rituale, die geographische bzw. kulturelle Lage sowie die soziale Signifikanz. Die Fallbeispiele grenzen sich aufgrund der Auergewhnlichkeit der Orte sowie ihrer Lage und langen (dis)kontinuierlichen Nutzungsgeschichten mit wechselhaften Neuinterpretationen der Rituale von zeitgleichen Strukturen ab. Letztendlich kann festgestellt werden, dass durch die Bercksichtigung des Konzeptes der Liminalitt neue Perspektiven auf Ritualorte gewonnen werden knnen.

Schlsselwrter: Liminalitt, Theorie, Prhistorische Archologie, Klassische Archologie, Ethnologie, Heidendor, Francavilla Marittima, Manzhyly-Ata

Liminality

The concept of liminality was first introduced by the French ethnologist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) and became known to a wider public in the late 1960s through the works of the anthropologist Victor W. Turner (1920–1983). In the early 20th century, van Gennep (1909) published a large study on transitional rites („rites de passage“) in traditional societies. He was convinced that the life of a human being consists of a plurality of successive cyclical transitions and changes, which are accompanied in traditional societies with so-called rites of passage. In this regard, van Gennep classified all those rites as rites of passage, which accompany the change of place, social status and age of a person (Turner 1967, 94). This definition has been modified by Victor Turner. According to him, rites of passage refer to any change in a culturally recognized status (ibid. 94).

Rites of passage in principle exist in all societies. However, they are much more pronounced in small and relatively stable societies in which life cycles are associated with biological and meteorological rhythms or recurring events such as the change of seasons – in industrialized capitalist societies this is mostly not the case (ibid. 93–94). On the basis of a large literature survey on rites in non-industrial societies van Gennep (1981, 20) developed a model, according to which transitional rites consist of the following three phases:

- Rites of separation (*rites de sparation; prliminaires*)
- Rites of transition (*rites de marge; liminaires*)
- Rites of aggregation (*rites d'agrgation; postiliminaires*)

It is important to stress the fact, that he extracted this model from a large set of ethnological data, while other scholars like Émile Durkheim used artificially *a priori* developed models (Thomassen 2009; 2013). According to van Gennep, transitions represent a disruption of the current *status quo* and bear a certain danger for the established structures as a whole. Therefore the main task of the rites of passage is to accompany these transitions and to control them. They ensure an as smooth as possible transition from one culturally recognized state to the next. Consequently, rites of passage can be understood as tools (Carson 1997; Teodorescu/Călin 2015, 98) that enforce and control the transformation of social structures, while ensuring a safe transition for all individuals concerned (Crosby 2009, 8). The accentuation of each of these phases varies, depending on the ritual context (Turner 1967, 95; Crosby 2009, 8–9). For example, during burial rites the participants focus on the separation (Turner 1967, 94), while engagements emphasize the transition to marriage. Marriage itself focuses on integration.

The concept of liminality is strongly related to the second phase, which van Gennep (1981, 20) associated with the words *marge* and *limen* (Turner 1967, 95; Crosby 2009, 9). One finds the etymological origin of the latter in the latin *limen* for ‚threshold‘ (OED 1989, 964). It should be noted in general, that time, place/location and accessibility as well as visibility and the number of people involved in liminal phases vary with the ritual context. However, the central characteristics of liminality have been repeatedly discussed with reference to rites of passage dealing with the transition from childhood to adulthood, e. g. initiation rites (Turner 1967).

As all rites of passage these rites also start with rites of separation, i. e. the spatial and/or social exclusion of girls or boys from their communities. For a limited time period, the initiates have to live outside the village. During this transitional phase, they are perceived neither as children nor as adults. According to Turner (1967, 95), „the subject of passage is, in the liminal period, structurally, if not physically invisible“. They become transitional beings, that „are at once no longer classified and not yet classified“, not alive and not dead but something in-between (ibid. 97). Therefore, „their condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories“ (ibid.). This ambiguity and ‚anti-structure‘ is often accompanied with the use of specific colours and various symbols, inverting profane categories related to sex, gender and age. In addition, for the time of these rites of transition the involved individuals often have no names, obligations, rights and possessions. Because of this inversion the liminal phase is characterized by a chaos and uncertainty that has the potential to profoundly shake and change the identity of the involved individuals (Turner 1967, 99–101; Thomassen 2009, 19; Teodorescu/Călin 2015, 97–98). Altogether, liminality can be considered as a realm of pure freedom and possibility with an unknown outcome (Turner 1967, 97; Thomassen 2009, 5; Cross et al. 2015, 2; 6) – „a formless reality“ (Thomassen 2009, 23). Both, the physical experience and the altered state of mind force the involved individuals to reflect upon the very basics and foundations of their society (Turner 1967, 105). The liminal phase can therefore be regarded as a cultural construct that is used as an educational tool. The complete dissolution or reversal of existing cultural norms, however, also has the effect that the liminal people can truly „be themselves“ (ibid. 101). This inversion of customary structures has the effect that all persons involved are of the same rank – they form a group of equal individuals. This phenomenon has been described by Turner (1969, 96–97) as *communitas*.

But *communitas* must not be seen as ultimately separated but deeply interwoven with underlying social structures and their hierarchies as former initiates returning into these structures to reproduce them by taking into possession their new positions (ibid. 129).

Given that liminality predisposes a separation and a reunion in an altered physical and/or spiritual condition, there are always new thresholds to cross, and this deeply individual experience is lived out in a certain place, which implies a presence of a physical environment built to fit the liminal practices. Such places are often falling themselves into the category of the liminal simply by their geographical location, or rather remoteness, which in turn creates a feeling of estrangement, experienced on either an emotional or physical level. In a nutshell: „liminal places can be unsettling, physically isolating and places where individuals are cut-off from the outside world“ (Cross et al. 2015, 6), often representing thresholds or borderlands themselves (Turner 1973, 214; Thomassen 2009, 16). A general feature of these places is, that they are never permanently inhabited (Cross et al. 2015, 6). Consequently, F. Martínez (2015, 372) stated that the study of liminality always is a study of marginality. The liminal place is an in-between place creating experiences of place, time and emotions that are inherently different from everyday reality. In other words, a liminal place is a place, where one experiences certain ambiguities in self/group alteration. Already the journey to these places, commonly known as procession and/or pilgrimage along sacred ways flanked by other sacred locations, liberates the initiates from social structures increasingly the closer they come to their aim (Turner 1973, 204–205; 217–219). Thus, leaving, passing and returning to liminal places seems not only to mirror the three stages of rites of passage but also the interdependence of structure and *communitas* (ibid. 213–214).

A liminal place, being located in spatial margins of borderline situations, is the visible and material expression of anti-structure in society. For the *communitas* to be manifested in its fullest, it needs a place of „dissolving structures“ (La Shure 2005). Liminality as an analytical tool to approach geographically remote areas is best understood as an operator with respect to actions and practices people exhibit near such ritual places. It serves as a support instrument, which aids in the construction of a relationship of these places with the „other“, exposed through the spatial expression of rituals by the people at such places. The liminal place is thus a geographical space, usually a borderline/remote area formed as a result of passage and transition. However, one should note that the concept of a liminal place is not limited to a morphological dimension of borderlands. Given the above mentioned idea, the liminal place is that area where the „relationship in a social structure is managed and where the social status of this relationship is determined“ (Turner 1987, 3–19; Fourny 2013, 2). Therefore, a liminal place is also characterized by a mediating state between stable locations, with clear cut functions and meanings. The liminal place implies the absence of identity (Fourny 2013, 2), making it a place, without semantic borders, though physically representing a border situation. According to Fourny (ibid. 3) such places allow the management and control over the „uncertainty inherent in the acquisition of a new identity“ (see also Turner 1969; Bhabha 1994). There is a variety of geographical places that could be addressed as liminal places: caves, borderlands, cross-roads, wastelands. The unifying feature of such places is their remoteness and absence of constant and continuous service, which points at the social and spatial estrangement of these places from the structured life. As Fourny (2013, 4) puts it, such places indicate their

„in-betweenness“, which „does not reflect the way in which space may be deployed for the management of the passage between states“. Liminal places reflect the most complex process of the individual's separation from the ordered chronological system, on the one hand, and his integration in an alternative, anti-chronological, anti-temporal system on the other hand (Ratiani n. y., 4).

In order to achieve a successful application of the case studies to the theoretical concept used in the current paper we ask:

1. Could Liminality be an analytical instrument in comparative studies of sanctified places?
2. Are there cross cultural similarities in the structural development of sanctified places?
3. What resources are important for maintenance of the liminality of the sanctified places?

Case study 1: The Heidentor at Egesheim, distr. Tuttlingen, SW Germany

Natural setting

The Heidentor is a natural rock formation in the form of a six-meter high and four meter wide gate (Figure 1). It is located on the Heuberg in the southwestern part of the Swabian Jura close to the village of Egesheim (distr. Tuttlingen) at the edge of a ridge called Oberburg. The gate is situated about 925 m above sea level on a north-facing slope, whose steepness partly exceeds 50 degrees (Biel 1987, 236–237; Dehn 1992, 102; 104; Bauer/Kuhnen 1995, 52). The rock formation probably represents the remains of a collapsed karst cave. Evidence of changes in the landscape is provided by massive layers of Jurassic limestone on the slopes (Bauer/Kuhnen 1995, 52–53 [citing Berz 1987; 1995; V. Schweizer 1994]). Leaching and weathering processes cause rock falls and sudden landslides in this region until today (Bauer/Kuhnen 1995, 54). Due to the geographical setting, the site is set apart. In the early 20th century, visitors depended on the guidance of local people in order to see the Heidentor, since the area is covered by forest (Durst 1905, 13).

History of research

The first reports of archaeological finds were made after World War II by P. Reiser. He conducted surveys on the Oberburg, where he discovered prehistoric and medieval sherds, „especially at the Heidentor“ (Reiser/Schick 1962, 232; Ströbel 1962, 138). Nevertheless, despite the rather unique natural setting of the site and the character of the finds, initially no considerations as to the meaning and function were expressed. In the late 1980s the site was heavily damaged by looting.¹ Because of that, between 1991

1 Kuhnen 1991; Dehn 1992, 102–103; Fig. 66; Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 239–240; Legant 2008, 153–154; Schöller 1993, Fig. 3.



Fig. 1: The Heidantor near the village of Egesheim, distr. Tuttlingen. Photo © Chris Miera 2016.

and 1993 rescue excavations were carried out to assess the damage and to protect the site against further illegal excavations (Dehn 1992, 103–104). According to the leading archaeologist R. Dehn more than 90 % of the site were destroyed during the looting (ibid. 105; Dehn 1993, 104; 1998, 25). However, the re-excavation of the ransacked area showed that the looters were selective. Apparently, their interest was mainly focused on fibulae, while smaller metal objects, glass beads and pottery fragments were left behind (Dehn 1992, 102–103; Dehn/Klug 1993, 103).

Archaeological finds and their dating

Until today, both a summary as well as an exhaustive analysis of the recovered finds are still pending out. In addition, one has to keep in mind that the archaeological inventory of the site is incomplete and always will be due to the looting. In the early 1990s some of the individuals involved in the looting were prosecuted. In the course of the judicial investigations it was possible to gather clues pointing to the discovery of bird-headed fibulae and anthropomorphic pendants, whose whereabouts remain unknown (Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 240).

So far, preliminary reports on the fibulae and the pottery finds from the rescue excavations have been published (Dehn 1992; Dehn/Klug 1993). The most comprehensive analysis was done by S. Bauer and H.-P. Kuhnen dealing with some of the metal objects from the looting (Kuhnen 1991; Bauer/Kuhnen 1993; 1995). Both the small finds and the pottery were studied within the framework of two master theses. However, the results have not been published in detail (Denk 2006; 2012; Nowak-Mohr 2014). Plans of the

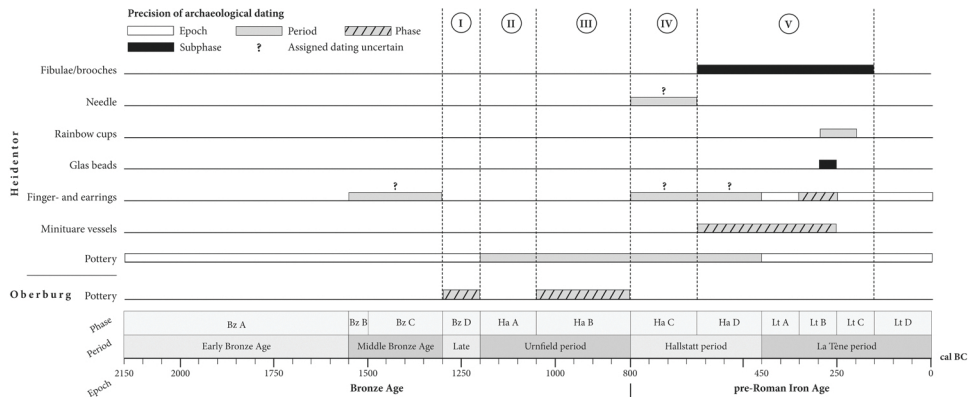


Fig. 2: Correlation of phases of the ritual use of the Heidendor with the settlement on the adjacent Oberburg based on different artifacts categories mentioned in the preliminary reports. (I) Settlement on the Oberburg, the Heidendor is not used. (II) Settlement on the Oberburg gets abandoned, Heidendor may have been used in ritual contexts. (III) New settlement on the Oberburg, Heidendor may have been used in ritual contexts. (IV) Settlement on the Oberburg gets abandoned, Heidendor may have been used in ritual contexts. (V) There is no settlement on the Oberburg, the Heidendor is part of a liminal landscape and used within ritual contexts. The chronological scheme is based on Haffner (1989), Sangmeister (1993), Maisie (2001), Guggisberg (2008), Rieckhoff (2008), Hald (2009), Wendling (2012), Della Casa (2013) and Stockhammer et al. (2015).

excavated areas and the distribution of the artifacts have not been published yet. Nonetheless, according to the preliminary reports on the rescue excavations the distribution of artifacts concentrates on the slope area below the Heidendor (Dehn/Klug 1993, 99; Dehn 2012, 741). This observation is taken as an indication that the objects were thrown through the rock formation down the slope (Rieckhoff/Biel 2001, 195; Müller 2002a, 177–178). The most important categories of the archaeological finds will be presented below based on the preliminary reports, with a particular emphasis both on the duration and intensity of use of the Heidendor.

Among the metal artifacts, fibulae take the largest share. So far, this artifact category provides the most detailed insight into the archaeological dating of the site and the intensity of its use. The chronologically oldest fibulae date to the phase Hallstatt D1 (620–530 cal BC), while the most recent ones date to the middle La Tène period, 250–150 cal BC (Bauer/Kuhnén 1993, 241–250; 1995, 51; Figure 2). A quantitative analysis of the datable fibulae suggests that the frequency of visits and/or number of visitors increases significantly from Hallstatt D1 to Hallstatt D3 and decreases in the subsequent La Tène period (Bauer/Kuhnén 1993, 241–247; Fig. 1–7; Fig. 10; 1995, 51). Therefore, the site was not used constantly and/or continuously throughout the centuries. It was most frequently visited in the late Hallstatt period, Hallstatt D3 (Bauer/Kuhnén 1993, Fig. 10). It is assumed that most of the fibulae were still holding textiles together at the time of their deposition, since they were found intact and closed (ibid. 251; Dehn 2012, 741). In fact, as K. von Kurzynski (1996, 106) noted, textile remains were found on at least one fibula. Altogether, the fibulae from the Hallstatt period predominantly represent local forms from the Western Hallstatt circle and imply connections to eastern France. This is in contrast to the La Tène period. Fibulae dating to this period indicate contacts

to upper and middle Franconia, southern Thuringia and the upper Palatinate (Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 251).

Finger rings represent the second largest group of metal objects. Two of them may date to the Middle Bronze Age, 1550–1300 cal BC (Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 248; Fig. 7.65–66; Figure 2). The other rings mostly date to the early La Tène period, 450–250 cal BC (ibid. 249; Figure 2). Therefore, one can see a change in the type of artifacts involved in the ritual activities. It is possible that this change in material culture also represents a change in the content of the rituals themselves.

During the rescue excavations about 143 kg of pottery were uncovered (Denk 2010, 9). In contrast to the metal objects, the pottery finds can only be dated to periods in general but not to a specific phase or even sub-phase in particular. According to Denk (2010, 9) the majority of the pottery finds consists of sherds from bowls and dishes dating to the Urnfield and Hallstatt period.² Some of them date to the La Tène period as well (Figure 2).³ From the spectrum of pre-Roman pottery so-called miniature vessels stand out.⁴ Vessels like these have often been found in the context of ritual sites (Schattner/Zuchtriegel 2013). Finally, a small portion of the sherds dates to the Middle Ages and the modern era (Reiser/Schiek 1962, 232; Dehn/Klug 1993, 100).

Among the more extraordinary finds there are at least two translucent glass beads, dating to La Tène B2 (Schönfelder 2007, 308–309; 318; Figure 2). The main distribution area of these beads is located in southeastern Europe and northern Italy. Therefore, the finds from the Heidendor are the westernmost representatives of this artifact category (Schönfelder 2007, 308–309; Fig. 2).

The youngest find dating to the La Tène period so far is a so-called rainbow cup that was deposited at the Heidendor probably in the 3rd century cal BC (Denk 2010, 9).

Finally, during the rescue excavations about 3 kg of bones were found, in total 2029 pieces. However, they have not been analyzed yet (Denk 2010, 9). Considering the vast amount of pottery and bones, it is possible that ritual activities were accompanied with the consumption of food.

Constructing liminality on the Heuberg

History of archaeological research in the area

In order to get a better understanding of the activities at the Heidendor, it is necessary to consider the settlement dynamics on the Heuberg during the Bronze Age and the pre-Roman Iron Age. Altogether, the state of the archaeological investigation can be described as good (Ahlrichs et al. in press; 2016; Ahlrichs 2017). The first systematic field surveys were conducted in the 1930s by H. Stoll (Stoll/Gehring 1938; Stoll 1943),

2 See also Reiser/Schiek 1962, Pl. 28.B.1; Ströbel 1962, 138; Biel 1987, Pl. 1.F.1; Dehn/Klug 1993, Fig. 62.1–3; Fig. 62.12; Dehn 2012, 741.

3 Reiser/Schiek 1962, Pl. 28.B.14–15; Ströbel 1962, 138; Biel 1987, Pl. 1.F.15–16; Dehn/Klug 1993, Fig. 62.7–8.

4 Reiser/Schiek 1962, Pl. 28.B.1; Groezinger/Reim 1980, Pl. 96.B; Biel 1987, Pl. 1.F.6; Dehn/Klug 1993, 102–103; Fig. 63; Dehn 1993, 104; Dehn 1998, 24; Legant 2008, 159.

followed by P. Reiser in the 1940s (Reiser/Schiek 1962). In the 1980s, B. Schmid and V. Nübling systematically visited and recorded archaeological sites. This was accompanied with aerial surveys done by O. Braasch.⁵ Due to all this fieldwork, the distribution of the known archaeological sites on the Heuberg can be considered as authentic, i. e. reliable information about the use and perception of this landscape during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age can be drawn from the sites.

Urnfield period, 1200–800 cal BC

Based on the pottery finds the Heidendor was visited at least as early as in the Urnfield period (Reiser/Schiek 1962; Ströbel 1962, 138). The pottery finds reported by P. Reiser were later on used as an argument for a settlement on the plateau of the Oberburg (Biel 1980, 30; Fig. 1). This assumption was confirmed, when both the rescue excavations and the accompanying field surveys provided evidence for a settlement on the plateau dating to the late Bronze Age and the younger Urnfield period as well (Dehn/Klug 1993,

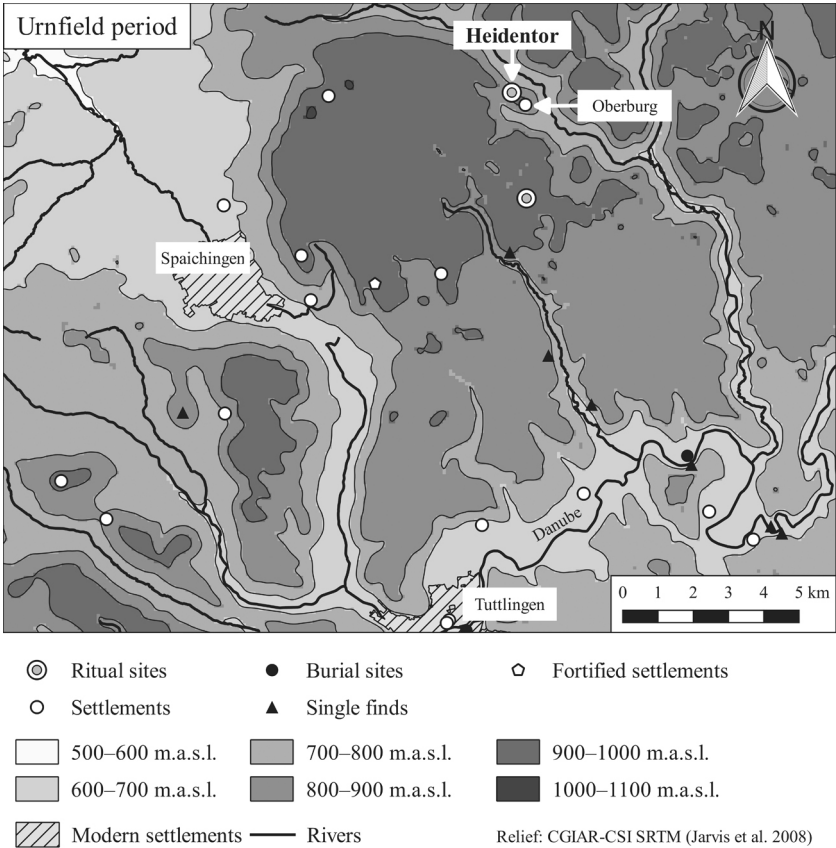


Fig. 3: Land use on the Heuberg during the Urnfield period.

5 Nübling 1984; Nübling 1985; Schmid 1991, 20–22; 75–76; Müller/Nübling 2010.

99–100; Dehn 1998, 24). On the Heuberg, pottery finds indicate settlements dating to the Urnfield period at Gosheim (Schmid 1992, 28; Kreutle 2007, 392; 600) and Mahlstetten (Schmid 1992, 62; Kreutle 2007, 395; 609). A fortified settlement existed probably near Dürbheim (Schmid 1992, 13) and on the Dreifaltigkeitsberg.⁶ Single finds also indicate the use of caves along the Lippach River (Kreutle 2007, 609–610). Finally, pottery finds are known from the so-called Götzenaltar at Königsheim (Schmid 1991, 46; 68; 1992, 6; Kreutle 2007, 591).⁷ The overall conclusion concerning the land use during the Urnfield period is that the site density was very low. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the finds from the Oberburg and the Heidentor are in an apparently isolated location from the rest of the known contemporary sites. The closest sites are at least 4 km away (Figure 3).

Hallstatt period, 800–450 cal BC

Those pottery finds from the Heidentor, which can be ascribed to the Hallstatt period, have been repeatedly interpreted as remains of a settlement.⁸ As the plateau of the Oberburg was investigated in the course of rescue excavations, it turned out that there is „no evidence for a simultaneous settlement“ for both the Hallstatt and La Tène period finds from the Heidentor (Dehn/Klug 1993, 99). Therefore, it can be stated that the settlement on the Oberburg was abandoned with the transition from the Urnfield to the Hallstatt period. When the deposition of fibulae started in the late Hallstatt period, there was no settlement on the Oberburg.⁹

In general, the settlement density of the Heuberg was low during the Hallstatt period. The closest settlement from this period is located about 4 km to the west near Böttingen (Schmid 1992, 4). Other settlements existed very likely on the Dreifaltigkeitsberg¹⁰, at Dürbheim (ibid. 13), Mahlstetten (ibid. 62) and in the south of the Heuberg (ibid. 13; 66; 80). In addition, there are numerous groups with stone and/or earth mounds. Some of them actually contained burials dating to the Hallstatt period (Stoll/Gehring 1938; Streng 1960, 28–31). The rest of them may contain burials from this period as well. However, without further archaeological investigation this cannot be stated with certainty.

When considering the Hallstatt settlement and burial sites from the Heuberg, it must be taken into account, that most of the sites can only be dated to the Hallstatt period in general. Since an exact dating for most of them is not possible, it is hard to say how

6 Ströbel 1961; Biel 1980, 29; 31; Fig. 1; Biel 1987, 317; Müller/Nübling 2010.

7 With regard to the criteria proposed by C. Colpe (1970) for the identification of ritual places (Eggert 2003a; 2003b; 2015), it can be assumed that this site was also used for ritual purposes during this period.

8 Stoll 1943, 106; Streng 1960, 30; Seiffer 1972, 82; Biel 1987, 237; Bauer/Kuhn 1993, 256–260; 1995, 54.

9 During an archaeological survey in 1981, about 47 mounds of stones were recorded on the plateau of the Oberburg (Schmid 1992, 16). Although none of them has been excavated, some authors addressed them as burial mounds (ibid. 16; Bauer/Kuhn 1993, 256; Dehn 1998, 22). This idea may at first be obvious due to the finds from the Heidentor. However, it should be considered in this context that the Oberburg was used for agricultural purposes in the 19th century (Stoll 1943, 106; Streng 1960, 30; Biel 1987, 237). Thus, it cannot be ruled out that these mounds are just piles of collected rocks, which were simply put aside to facilitate the agricultural use of the plateau.

10 Nübling 1984; Biel 1987, 317–323; Schmid 1992, 105; Müller/Nübling 2010.

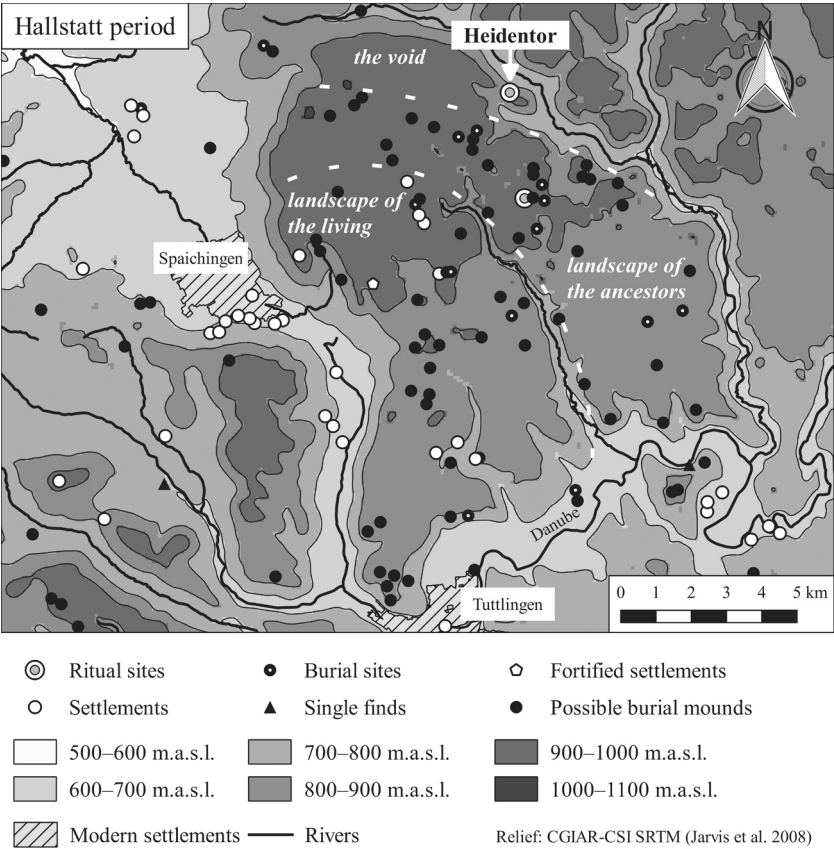


Fig. 4: Land use on the Heuberg during the Hallstatt period.

many of them were used simultaneously to the Heidentor. The only settlement, which can definitively be correlated with the Heidentor, is the one from the Dreifaltigkeitsberg, it dates to Hallstatt D1 (Biel 1987, 317–323).

By taking a closer look at the distribution of the Hallstatt settlements and burial sites, a pattern can be seen (Figure 4). While the settlements are located in the west and southwest of the Heuberg, the majority of the excavated burial mounds and the potential burial mounds are predominantly situated in the area in-between these settlements and the Heidentor. Finally, within the closer vicinity of the Heidentor, there is an area with no archaeological sites at all. Therefore, the Heuberg can be subdivided into the following three landscapes: (I) The „landscape of the living“ in the west and southwest of the Heuberg, indicated by settlements and some burial mounds. (ii) The „landscape of the dead and the ancestors“, indicated by the sole occurrence of burial mounds as well as several groups of stone and/or earth mounds that have not been investigated so far. (iii) The „void“ in the immediate vicinity of the Heidentor. This area is characterized by the complete absence of archaeological sites (Figure 4).

It is argued here that these three landscapes are the result of an intentional structuring of the Heuberg. Furthermore, the „void“ is interpreted as a material expression of anti-

structure, i. e. the conscious inversion of known structures, which is typical for liminal phases. Against the background of this „void“, rituals were performed at the Heidentor, set apart from existing infrastructures. Consequently, the rituals did not start at the Heidentor itself, but much earlier. They probably started with the separation of a small group of people in one of the settlements in the south or southwest of the Heuberg. The crossing of the landscape of the living, the landscape of the dead and the ancestors, and the void was most likely an important component of those rituals that went hand in hand with the deposition of metal objects and the consumption of food at the Heidentor. Therefore, the concept of liminality offers new perspectives not just on the Heidentor, but on the entire landscape in which it was embedded.

La Tène period, 450–15 cal BC

While the density of the sites increased with the transition from the Urnfield to the Hallstatt period, it decreased significantly in the subsequent La Tène period. According to the known sites, large areas of the Heuberg were not settled during this period. However, pottery finds indicate that the settlement on the Dreifaltigkeitsberg was still inhabited during the early La Tène period (Ströbel 1961, 76–78; Nübling 1984; Schmid 1991, 68; 72). In addition, three possible settlements can be located in the vicinity of Königsheim, one of them dates to the early La Tène period as well (Reiser 1962). The other two settlements cannot be dated precisely (Schmid 1992, 60; Wieland 1996, 292).

Finally, there are two sites dating to the late La Tène period, i. e. La Tène D. One of them is a cave in the south of the Heuberg (Wieland 1996, 292) and the other is a potential settlement near Bubsheim (Bittel 1934, 89–90; Schmid 1991, 72–73; 1992, 8). This is noteworthy, because after the ritual use of the Heidentor came to an end in the middle La Tène period, settlements can be seen in its closer vicinity in the late La Tène period (Figure 5). This indicates a change in both the perception and the cultural construction of the landscape.

Previous interpretations of the Heidentor

In their analysis of the finds from the looting, Bauer and Kuhnen presented an interpretation for the site that has been taken up by various researchers afterwards.¹¹ Bauer and Kuhnen (1993, 262) interpreted the Heidentor as a „natural sanctuary“ (*Naturheiligtum*) with a long-standing „tradition of offering“. Accordingly, the site was used by a society that worshiped non-personalized natural deities at open air sites that were perceived as „sacred“ places (ibid. 260). The authors argued that basically any of the discovered artifacts could have had an apotropaic function (ibid. 251–254). Considering both the topography of the site and the composition of the finds, it seemed most likely to them that mainly women visited the site and offered different kinds of jewelry in order to gain health and/or fertility (Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 261). Bauer and Kuhnen as well as

11 Dehn 1998; Rieckhoff/Biel 2001, 195–196; Müller 2002a; 2002b; Kuckenburg 2007, 84–85; Morrissey 2011; 2012; Reim 2012; Wieland 2012; Cicoclan et al. 2015.

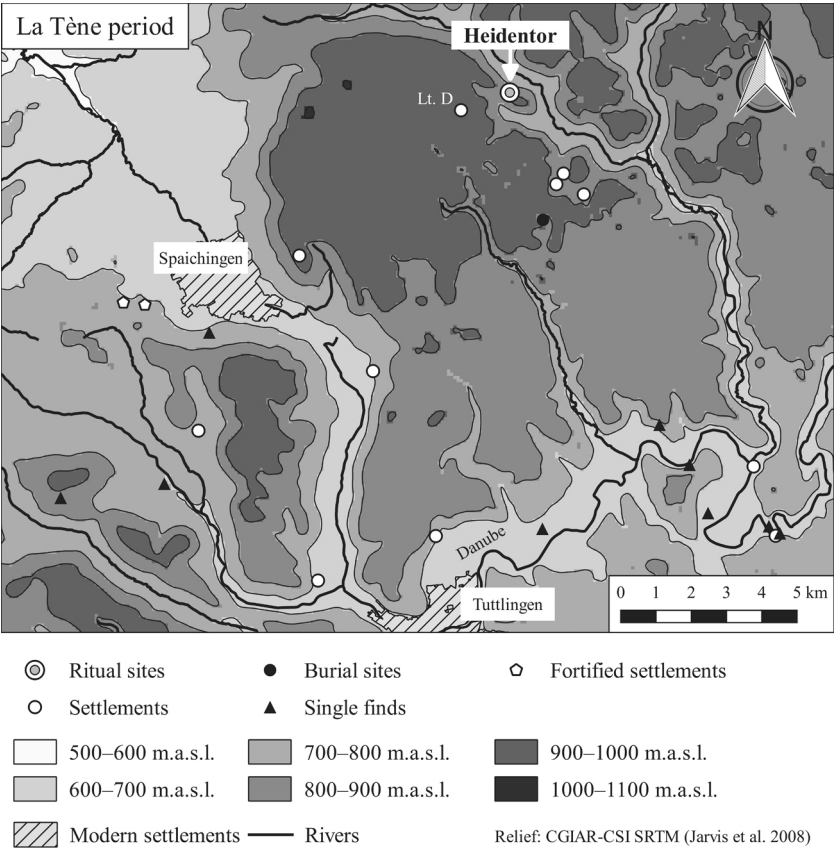


Fig. 5: Land use on the Heuberg during the La Tène period.

other authors argued that the existence of a spring in the southern part of the Oberburg further strengthens the idea that the rituals were connected to fertility and health (Müller 2002a, 177–178; Kuckenburg 2007, 83–84; Haupt 2010, 62). According to written sources, even in the late 19th century people went there to fetch water for the sick, because it was generally believed that it has special healing powers (Bauer/Kuhnen 1993, 261 [citing Birlinger 1861, 137]).

Concluding remarks

Altogether, the interpretation offered by Bauer and Kuhnen (1993) mainly focuses on the metal artifacts and the rather unusual shape of the rock formation, while the huge amounts of pottery and bones as well as the integration of the site within the cultural environment are not considered. In addition, they did not discuss the term „natural sanctuary“ on a theoretical level. Therefore, it remains unclear, what they actually meant when they described the site as a „sanctuary“ and what kind of cultural connotations they had in mind. In general, the term „natural sanctuary“ implies the existence of a „sanctuary“

given by nature but this is impossible, since every place is a cultural construct (Meier / Tillessen 2014, 60–69; Scheid 2015). In addition, the archaeological evidence from the Heidendor itself indicates that the site was culturally constructed at a certain moment in time and was used discontinuously for a few hundred years for ritual purposes, i. e. whenever and how long it was considered to be necessary. Since the chronological analysis of the archaeological finds provides no evidence for any activities during the phase Hallstatt C, there is a temporal gap between the oldest securely datable finds (Urnfield period) and the deposition of metal artifacts starting in Hallstatt D. Furthermore, it seems likely that the contents of the ritual activities changed over the centuries: There are only pottery finds dating to the Urnfield period, while during the pre-Roman Iron Age pottery and different kinds of metal objects were thrown through the gate.

In addition, the rituals at the Heidendor were obviously set apart from the main settled areas. This spatial liminality existed already in the Urnfield period, even though a settlement existed at that time on the plateau of the Oberburg. During the Hallstatt period and the La Tène period the closest settlements were at least 4 km away. It seems likely that this distance was necessary for performing the rituals and the maintenance of the site itself. Perhaps, for the people involved even the journey to the site might have been an important part of the rituals and an experience that was out of the ordinary.

Case study 2: Athenaion, Francavilla Marittima

Introduction

The interdependencies between the setting of sanctuaries¹² and the sociopolitical development of related groups have been a subject of discussion within classical studies for years. Perhaps the most familiar example is the study of the rise of the Greek polis from the 8th century BC onwards conducted by François de Polignac, already published in 1984 and subsequently revised (De Polignac 1984; 1994; 1995). De Polignac pays special attention to sanctuaries frequently placed in transitional zones between mountains and plains and/or land and sea, set apart from but belonging to the settled nucleus of a polis. According to him, these extra urban sanctuaries not only structure the physical environment of a polis territory consisting of the urban core (ἄστυ), its agriculturally used surroundings (χώρα) and a peripheral zone (ἑσχατιά), but also mark its political border (De Polignac 1995, 32–39). Thus, they appear as frontier sanctuaries, both in political

12 In classical studies, the term sanctuary is basically used to describe a place set apart from everyday use, often paraphrased as secular, where various groups embedded in superstructures like a specific ethnos or a polis perform religious rituals (Burkert 1979, 142–163; Sourvinou-Inwood 1993, 10–11; Pedley 2005, 29). Recently Öhlinger (2015, 25) distinguishes between group related sanctuaries and family related private cults. In Greek language, the place of a sanctuary (ἱερός) is called *Téμενος* derived from *τέμνειν*, usually translated as *cut off* or *resected* (Zaidman/Schmitt Pantel 1994, 55; Horster 2004, 24). The literary link to the concept of the *set apart sacred* of Durkheim (1994, 62–63; 75) seems to be obvious, but at least in times of Homer, *Téμενος* can be referred to a parcel of land given to an individual by a higher authority, too (Ulf 2011, 268; 270).

and environmental terms.¹³ However, beside their function as focal points of exclusion in relation to the outer world, he regards extra urban sanctuaries as strong forces of inclusion in relation to the sociopolitical body of a polis and the collective identity of its citizens as well, expressed not least by ritual processions from the ἱερόν to the remote cult places.¹⁴ Simultaneously, the channeling of external contacts underlines their twofold integrative function, thus blurring distinctions between functional centrality and spatial liminality (De Polignac 2009, 434–435; Funke 2014). For the core regions of ancient Greece, these functions are regarded as the terminal point of a long-term development: before turning into markers of a common polis territory with its social implications, extra urban sanctuaries served as central places of exchange and competition between various groups of the surrounding hamlets, forming the later polis (De Polignac 1994).¹⁵ Once again, spatial remoteness becomes central. However, according to different circumstances in the Italian destination areas of the so-called Greek Colonization¹⁶ contemporary to the rise of the polis, this process would have taken place much faster (De Polignac 1994, 12–16; 1995, 98–99; Veronese 2006, 27). Even though De Polignac regards the Greek Colonization obviously in terms of sudden foundations and a greek-indigenous dichotomy based on ethnicity, a position rightly rejected during the last years (Osborne 1998; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2006; Yntema 2016), there seems to be common ground in the perception of landscape between Greece and its settlements in Southern Italy. The creation of spatial liminal places of worship turns out to be an integral feature in the sociopolitical forming and geographical anchoring of Greek groups in relation to their environment, not starting with but enhanced since the 8th century BC. The inclusive and exclusive dualism of extra urban sanctuaries finds itself reflected in the history of the *Athenaion* in Francavilla Marittima (Calabria), at the Ionian shore of Southern Italy.

The Setting

The region known as the Sibaritide is one of the earliest destination areas of Greek Iron Age migration.¹⁷ It consists of a large flood plain fed by the major watercourses and is limited to the north by the Pollino Mountains (2267 m), to the south by the Sila Moun-

13 With regard to Greek sanctuaries in archaic Sicily see recently Veronese (2006, 35; 631–632). For the Italian model of *Santuari di frontiera* see Greco (1999) and B. Schweizer (2007, 317–318) with further references. For the conception of polis see the extensive introduction in Hansen/Nielsen (2004).

14 Zaidman/Schmitt Pantel 1994, 56; De Polignac 1995, 40; 2009, 438; 442; Funke 2014, 55–56. For processions see also Stavrianopoulou (2015). Already Turner (1973, 200; 220) related the *communitas* of a pilgrim group to their underlying structural embedding in his anthropological observations on pilgrimages.

15 For a non-polis centered viewpoint of spatial organization in Early Iron Age Greece, see Morgan 2003.

16 For a strong summary of the overwhelming releases in regard to the Greek Colonization see Tsatskheladze (2006) for the various conceptions of colonization the various contributions recently published in Donnellan et al. (2016b).

17 See Pacciarelli (2000, 277) for a synopsis of chronological systems from Italy, the Aegean, and Central Europe.

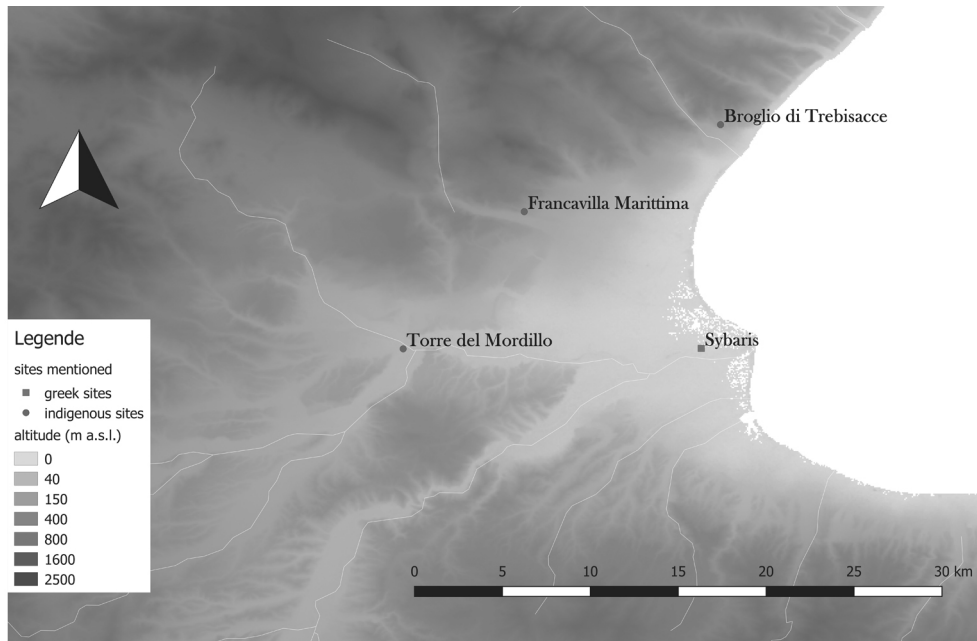


Fig. 6: Map of the Sibaritide with sites mentioned in the text.

tains (1928 m) and to the west by the Monti Orsomarso (1987 m) (Kleibrink 2006, 15; Attema et al. 2010, 82). The transitional zone between plain and steep mountains formed by series of marine terraces up to 700 m surrounds the lowland like an oversized theater overlooking the shore. In contrast to its present course, the Early Iron Age coastline was 2.5 km further east, followed landwards by densely wooded marshland (Cucci 2005; Vanzetti 2013, 24–28; Attema 2017, 461–462). To what extent these conditions have been decisive for human occupation in the area is hard to assess. However, from the Middle Bronze Age on, the marine terraces and not the plain form the scenery for more or less continuous settlement activity, for example in Broglio di Trebisacce or Torre del Mordillo, just to name two familiar sites (Peroni 1994, 834–872; Vanzetti 2013, 14–15; Quondam 2016, 247–248). Another site is to be found on the Timpone della Motta (280 m), a hill about 2 km south of the modern village Francavilla Marittima (Figure 6). Flanked by the watercourses of the Raganello to the south and the Dardania to the east, the hill consists of four plateaus cut into the Pliocene conglomerate most probably by fluvial activity (Kleibrink 2006, 19–21; Attema et al. 2010, 96; Fig. 4.6 A–B). Ancient Greek writers refer to the population of the entire area as Oinotrians (Aristot. Pol. 7, 9; Lykophr. 983; Strab. 6, 1, 1) and since there are no remains of a pre-Greek self-definition, this designation is still in use today.

The Site

Like at most sites in the Sibaritide, settlement activity on the Timpone della Motta also reaches back to the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁸ However, except for a defensive trench of the Late Bronze Age surrounding some huts at the lowest southern plateau, major structural features do not appear before the late 9th and early 8th century BC (Kleibrink 2006, 35–44; 2016a, 236). Two extraordinarily large timber houses with apses oriented south-east (structures Ia and Vb) from this period have been unearthed on the hilltop called Acropolis, while the simultaneous burial ground *Macchiabate* is situated on the opposite riverbank of the Dardania.¹⁹ On the Acropolis, structure Vb in particular points strongly to ritual activity (Figure 7): in the western part of the building a hearth has been uncovered, surrounded by high amounts of objects made of bronze and iron, flanked by locally manufactured pottery, incised loom weights and spindle whorls. Suspected as debris of sacrificial pyres, a thick ash layer outside the southern wall belongs to the same phase, since it contained the same kind of pottery besides unburnt animal bones. Within the eastern part, rows of incised loom weights of up to 1.2 kg *in situ* indicate an extraordinary large standing loom, which led to the buildings designation as *House of the Weaving* by the excavators (Maaskant Kleibrink 2000, 171–176; Kleibrink et al. 2004, 78–84; Kleibrink 2006, 118–135).

First structural changes occur during the last quarter of the 8th century BC. By this period, the Greek settlement of Sybaris had been founded at the shore midst the plain some 13 km southeast of Francavilla by groups from eastern Achaia, as the ancient Greek literature wants us to believe.²⁰ On the Timpone della Motta, the two wooden buildings gave place to rectangular buildings of nearly the same size and orientation (Structures Ib and Vc), supplemented by a new rectangular structure in-between them (Structure IIIa). All structures were carried out in traditional techniques of earth fasten postholes and walls of wattle and daub. However, the internal division of building Vc into a central chamber with two attached rooms to the east and the west seems to be unusual, and reminded the excavators of a typical Greek-style layout of *Naos*, *Pronaos* and *Adyton* (Maaskant Kleibrink 2000, 176–179; Kleibrink et al. 2004, 48–55).²¹ The related finds once more included loom weights, spindle whorls, fibulae and local pottery, while for the

18 For a detailed access to the research history of Francavilla Marittima see De Lachenal (2007) with references to the fundamental works of Paola Zancani Montuoro, Maria Wilhelmina Stoop and Dieter Mertens.

19 For the timber houses see basically Kleibrink (et al. 2004, 43–48; Kleibrink 2006, 111–171) and with different interpretations Guzzo (2011, 222–226). For useful accounts concerning the long history of research of the *Macchiabate* necropolis, see Kleibrink (2004, 54–75) and several contributions recently published in Brocato (2014). For the current excavations of the Basel University, see Guggisberg (2016) and the annual reports in „Antike Kunst“.

20 Ancient authors pass down a date of 720 BC. This seems to be confirmed roughly by archaeology (Hansen/Nielsen 2004, 295–299; Guzzo 1982, 241; 244; 2011, 213–217). For an overview of the written sources Bérard (1957, 140–151) is still useful.

21 For the slightly different arrangement of the technical features within the buildings Ib and Vc see also Kleibrink (2006, 112–113; 173–174).

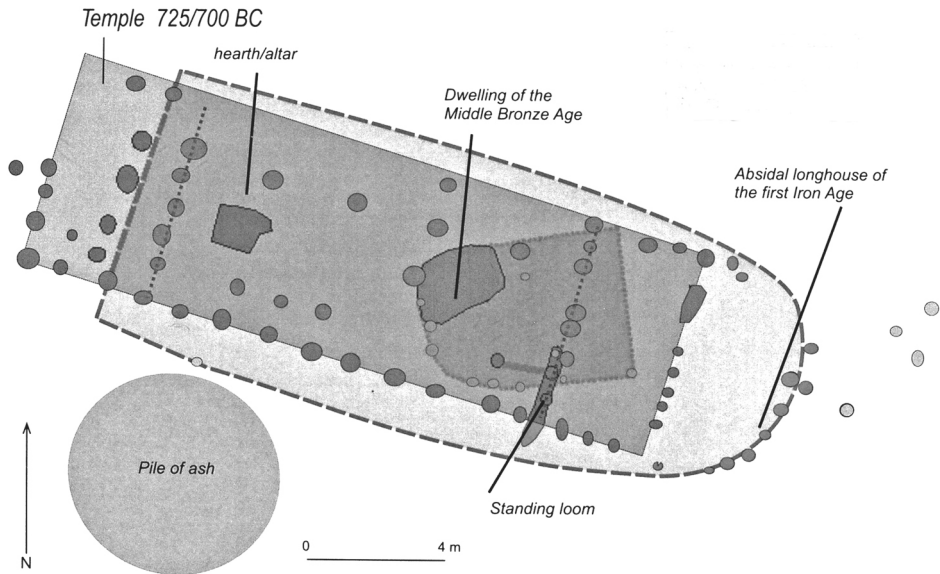


Fig. 7: Phases b and c of building V (after Kleibrink 2006, 116 Fig. 37a).

first time typical Greek drinking vessels occurred.²² From approx. 700 BC onwards, an increasing amount of handmade miniature baskets (*Kalathiskoi*) and miniature pouring vessels (*Hydriskoi*) were found as well.

Around the midst of the 7th century BC, building Vc got replaced by its successor Vd, followed slightly later by both Ib and IIIa to Ic and IIIb (Maaskant Kleibrink 2000, 179–180; Kleibrink et al. 2004, 55–61). Traditional construction techniques seemed to have been abandoned, as the mudbrick walls were now based on pebble foundations. Regarding the finds of this period, a fast growing amount of typical Greek-style pottery was observed, while traditional-style pottery almost disappeared. The count of the *Hydriskoi* was now growing into the thousands while *Kalathoi* and *Pyxides* were still present, supplemented by numerous figurines and *Pinakes* made of clay. Some of them show either young women offering folded garments, or a seated goddess receiving such offerings (Figure 8).²³ Iconography, inscribed sherds as well as the famous inscribed bronze tablet of *Kleombrotos* leave no doubts on the identity of the goddess on the Timpone della Motta, at least from the 7th century on: it is Athena, worshipped in her *Athenaion*, her sanctuary (Maaskant Kleibrink 1993, 8–14).²⁴ Further changes of structures took

22 For studies of the Indigenous pottery see Kleibrink (et al. 2012; 2013; Kleibrink 2015; 2015a; 2016b), for the Greek-style pottery e. g. Kindberg Jacobsen/Handberg (2010).

23 For the highly interesting debate on the themes of *Pinakes* and terracotta friezes from Francavilla, focusing their relation to other pieces from Indigenous and Greek sites of Southern Italy, see recently Kleibrink (2016a, 269–282).

24 See also De Lachenal (2007, 19; 24–25) with further references. For the bronze inscription, see as well Genovese (2009, 140; Fig. 53).

Fig. 8: Terracotta Pinax, depicting a seated deity with a folded or rolled garment on her knees. 650/25 BC, Museo Nazionale Archeologico della Sibaritide (Maaskant Kleibrink 1993, 8 Fig. 6).



place during the 6th century BC, when the older edifices were replaced once more as new ones were erected, too (Maaskant Kleibrink 2000, 180–181; Kleibrink et al. 2004, 61–62; Kleibrink 2016a, 240).

Discussion

As already mentioned, typology, context and amount of objects found on the Acropolis and especially within building V point strongly to ritual activity from the Early Iron Age on. The bulk of loom weights, spindle whorls, and *Kalathoi* refer to ritual textile production, confirmed by the huge standing loom in the eastern part of Vb (Kleibrink 2016b, 25–26). Similarly, weaving tools are a common feature within female burials of the Early Iron Age throughout Italy (Gleba 2008, 171–174; Norman 2011, 42–43). Bronze pendants of a couple both from the Acropolis and the Macchiabate necropolis, showing a pair embracing each other (Figure 9), further express the gender related context of these finds (Kleibrink 2006, 118; Guggisberg et al. 2016, 62–63).²⁵ Even though their iconography brings to mind Greek and Levantine depictions of *Hierogamy*, the emphasis of the female part reflects the local color.²⁶ Recently, these pendants have been taken as indications for the worship of a goddess of matrimony, fertility and regeneration within Structure Vb, ascribed to eastern influence (Granese 2013; Kleibrink/Weistra 2013; Kleibrink 2016a,

25 Similar pendants are known from other sites in Calabria and eastern Sicily as well. For examples from Torre Mordillo, Canale Ianchina, Centuripe and Catania see Kleibrink/Weistra (2013, 43; Tab. 1).

26 Two types of pendants can be distinguished in Francavilla: an older Type A and the subsequent Type B. The female emphasis refers just to Type A (Kleibrink/Weistra 2013, 37–38; Kleibrink 2016a, 249–250).

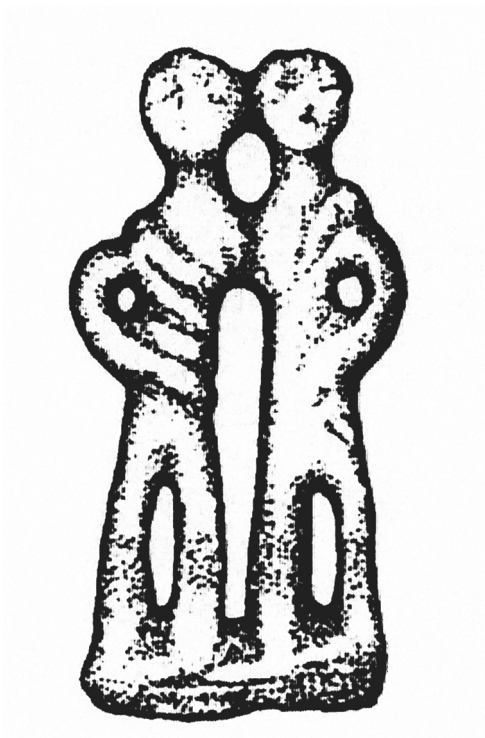


Fig. 9: Bronze pendant showing a couple, found within building Vb. Early 8th century BC, Museo Nazionale Archeologico della Sibaritide (Kleibrink 2006, 122 Fig. 38b).

241–254). Although this kind of cultural transfer can hardly be proven, finds like the famous Phoenician bronze bowl or scarabs of the lyre-player group from northern Syria in the necropolis suggest such contacts (Zancani Montuoro 1970/71; 1974/76, 58–64; Kleibrink 2004, 57–59).²⁷ Through this lens, the settlement of Francavilla appears as a central point of activity, while the sanctuary on the Motta played possibly a mediating role between local and external groups.

This seems likely to have been the case for the Greeks making landfall in the Sibaritide during the late 8th century BC. While there are strong indications of Greek presence within the native settlement around the Motta already during the first half of the 8th century BC (Kindberg Jacobsen / Handberg 2012; Attema 2012, 199–204), the first restructuring of the sanctuary has to be ascribed to the founding of Sybaris.²⁸ Even though very little is known about the earliest phases of this new settlement and its territorial organization (Guzzo 1982, 243; 2011, 215–217), there are some issues pointing towards that direction: besides the chronological coincidence, it's the altered layout of Ib and Vc next to the growing amount of Greek-style offerings. Certainly, this is not due to an implantation of a fully developed polis in the plain. We should rather expect some nuclei of huts including

²⁷ Further finds of egyptianized scarabs on the acropolis are suspected as products of east Greek workshops. Maaskant Kleibrink (2000, 176–177).

²⁸ Kleibrink (2016a, 240) sees a clear-cut relation between the Athenaion and Sybaris not before the phase of Vd (approx. 650 BC).

a population of diverse origins, as recently Yntema (2016, 214–219) has proposed for Siris/Policoro and Metapont, just some kilometers up north the coast. For the inhabitants of the nuclei in the plain of the Sibaritide, sanctuary and settlement on the Motta was a highly attractive contact zone, albeit at the edge of their direct surrounding. The impact of the new arrivals is also revealed in the decline of other Indigenous settlements around 700 BC, for example Broglio die Trebisacce and Torre del Mordillo (Guzzo 1982, 241; Arancio et al. 1995; Moffa 2002). The same seems to apply for the *Macchiabate* necropolis of Francavilla, where in contrast to the 8th century BC only very few burials can be ascribed to the 7th century BC (Quondam 2016, 252). By this point, at the latest, it was obviously the sanctuary and not the attached settlement that caused the interest of visitors. However, changes in ground plot and material record are no indications of a hostile takeover, as pointed out in former views on the Greek Colonization in general, particularly implemented in De Polignac (1995, 108–109) for Francavilla.²⁹ Instead of a brand-new and purely Greek sanctuary founded on the ruins of a conquered and subjugated hamlet, the *Athenaion* and the related finds prove its integrative character:³⁰ traditional building techniques occur with new ground plots, the spectrum of indigenous artefacts remains the same, enriched by Greek wares. Furthermore, the ongoing offerings of weaving equipment, now extended to both locally made *Kalathiskoi* and Greek style *Pyxides* for the storage of unspun wool (Kleibrink et al. 2004, 53–54), fits well to the worship of Athena. The prevalent epiclesis *Ergane* points to her role as inventor of weaving and patroness of crafts, which is why production and offerings of garments concerning her worship was widespread through ancient Greece (Barber 1992, 105–106; Scheid/Svenbro 1996, 17–21; Brøns 2017, 155–156).

In this regard, it seems that on the Motta the cult of an older goddess related to weaving gave a strong link to the contemporary worship of Athena, carried by the new arrivals of the coastal plain. However, despite the common aspects of ritual textile use, the following absorption of a Greek goddess appears not without changes in ritual behavior. Particularly the use of water seems to be a new feature, indicated not least by the thousands of *Hydriskoi* offered in the course of the 7th/6th centuries BC. Already the image on a Greek-style Pyxis of about 700 BC found on the site depicts a female procession carrying a *Hydria* to a seated goddess (Granese 2013, 65–66; Kleibrink 2016a, 254–265). Since there are no traces of springs or wells on the Motta by now, the water used for this new kind of ritual activity had to be brought up the hill from the Raganello at its southern foot (Kleibrink et al. 2004, 59–60).³¹

29 In addition, Greco (1999, 239) and Guzzo (2011, 222) argues for Greek supremacy in late 8th century BC Francavilla. In contrast e. g. Kleibrink (2016a, 240): „There is no evidence to suggest that the site suffered a violent Greek takeover, and there is no knowing whether the rituals were carried out by the native elite or by the first Greek colonists“.

30 Probably, it was the idea of „colonial“ border sanctuaries as markers of military conquest, that let Kleibrink (2006, 15; Kleibrink/Weistra 2013, 35; 51) reject De Polignacs model for Francavilla Marittima explicitly. Veronese (2006, 33) emphasizes the integrative character of frontier sanctuaries in general.

31 On the other hand, the geomorphological situation of the marine terraces in Southern Italy seems to be beneficial for water supply (Morter 2010, 16). Therefore, it is not to exclude that the absence of water sources points rather to a gap of knowledge.

The evidence of an important sanctuary of Athena, its location north of Sybaris, and the use of water for ritual purposes let the excavators connect the *Athenaion* of Francavilla Marittima to the myths of the Greek hero Epeios, also known as the constructor of the Trojan horse.³² According to Lykophron (930), Epeios, after returning from Troja, founded the town of Lagaria and a corresponding sanctuary for Athena, before he dedicated his weapons and tools to the same goddess. Strabon (6, 1, 14) in turn places Lagaria north of Thurioi, the successor of Sybaris after its destruction in 510 BC (Hansen/Nielsen 2004, 297). Another story refers to Epeios as water bearer of the Atrides, whose awful fate caused Athenas mercy (Athen. deipn. 10, 456f–457b). Since all aspects mentioned in the myths are to be found in the sanctuary on the Motta, the site has been identified as the mythical Lagaria (Maaskant Kleibrink 1993; Kleibrink 2006). It is of secondary importance here if these myths, related to the genre of *Nostoi*, indeed reach back to the 7th century BC, or whether they are of later invention.³³ In any case, they appear as crucial factors in the construction of cultural memory, linking place and time to a distant past (Assmann 2013). This applies primarily to the inhabitants of Sybaris, to whose territory the Timpone della Motta can be counted.

However, it is hardly possible to gain detailed information about the performance of the rituals, as their assignment to rites of passage in a strict sense is left open for speculation.³⁴ Although the change, offering, and production of garments seems to be a common feature in Greek ceremonies of initiation (Brøns 2017), its occurrence on the Motta is difficult to verify, even against the backdrop of a native cult probably related to fertility and matrimony. Certainly, the offerings of textiles and the use of water were part of ritual processions, not only confirmed by the lack of natural water sources and the iconography of images and objects (Kleibrink et al. 2004; Kleibrink 2016a; Granese 2013). If the *Athenaion* played indeed a prominent role in relation to Sybaris, the physical distance alone requires movement. Such movements performed as processions are usual practice in ancient Greek religion (with further references Stavrianopoulou 2015, 351–354). Vice versa, the strong social cohesive forces formed and expressed through processions may be embodied in ritual textile production too, at least in Greek terms. Within Greek literature, the interweaving of fibers served not only as a metaphor for marriage, but also for the unity of political associations and confederations.³⁵ Applied to the polis of Sybaris, its *ῥᾶστυ* appears as interwoven with its *Χώρα* and *Ἑσχατιά*, thus forming the territory of the town. One pole is marked by the urban core, the other by a sanctuary at the frontier zone, the *Athenaion* on the Timpone della Motta.

32 For Epeios as builder of the Trojan horse see Hom. Od. 8, 492–495; 11, 523–527; Verg. Aen. 259–264. For his various myths and roles see also Malkin 1998, 213; Kleibrink et al. 2004, 60; Zachos 2013).

33 Maaskant Kleibrink (2000, 182) and Genovese (2009, 173–178) argue for a rather early appearance of these stories, while Malkin (1998, 15–16) dates them down to the 6th century BC. In contrast, Zachos (2013, 13–22) regards them as much younger inventions.

34 With rites of passage in a strict sense it is referred to the „classical“ (not in terms of chronology) rites concerning marriage, coming of age and/or mysteries. See for instance Burkert (1979, 390–395) and Zaidman/Schmitt Pantel (1994, 66–80).

35 Plat. polit. 305e; 308d–309c; 310e – 311c; Aristoph. Lys. 567–586; Paus. 5, 16. See basically Scheid/Svenbro (1996, 9–34), and recently for Athens also Bundrick (2008).

Conclusion

From a Sybarian point of view, the genesis of the sanctuary on the Timpone della Motta gives a good example for the construction of a liminal place in the spatial sense. Setting the city of Sybaris at the core, the *Athenaion* on the Motta appears as a border sanctuary in multiple ways, be it as a political, geographical, or cultural threshold to the areas beyond the agricultural used *Xώρα*. In opposition to former assumptions, its creation was not related to sudden colonial military conquest, but evolved out of longtime cohabitation, underlining the more process-like character of Greek migration into that area.³⁶ Thus, the *Athenaion* occurs also as a place of mediation beyond ethnical and/or cultural borders, underpinned by the finds of Indigenous, Levantine and Greek origin from sanctuary and necropolis, and the fusion of Indigenous, Levantine and Greek gods.³⁷ A double function of inclusion and exclusion with altered emphasis through times is not a contradiction. Recently, P. Funke (2014) underscored once more the multifunctionality and openness of Greek sanctuaries. Concerning the Native historical past of the Timpone della Motta, it seems to have been recognized, respected and used by the Sybarites, be it with Greek or Indigenous background. However, for a collective anchorage of that place, the historical past was just the point of departure for its linkage with specific Greek myths, expressed, encouraged and reproduced through ritual. The particular importance of the *Athenaion* for the people of Sybaris turns its spatial liminality into sociopolitical centrality, at least for the time of religious feasting. Both aspects appear as mutually dependent.³⁸

Case study 3: Manzhly-Ata, southern shore of the Yssyk-Kul lake, Kyrgyzstan

The place

Manjly-Ata valley is located on the southern shore of the Yssyk-Kul lake, between the villages Kaji-Sai, Ton and Bokonbaevo. It attracts people due to 17 water springs which local people consider to be sacred. The use of the water from these springs varies from those of domestic and ritual use. The valley of these sacred springs could easily be represented as a labyrinth of rather shallow ravines between the mud steppe hillocks. Each of the many small springs is ascribed certain healing properties, thus attracting local residents from neighboring villages, and further locations within the country. The attractiveness of the sacred place for the people visiting it is not season dependent, but rather need-dependent, when a person would visit a place, with a specific purpose of worship and/or prayer to achieve his/her goal.

36 Riehle (2017) also emphasizes the process-like character of the 8th century BC Greek migration to the west.

37 Also the emphasis on (mixed) marriages, drawn by Kleibrink (2016a, 253; 285), underlines the issue of mediation.

38 In Turner (1973, 200; 213) exemplified e. g. by the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca.

The gorge of Manjly-Ata is best pictured as a semi-arid landscape, approximately 800 meters away from the Yssyk-Kul lake, leading visitors into the depths of sandy hills, between the steppes and a local cemetery. Given the arid steppe environment of the place, the gorge is even more sanctified due to the numerous springs and riverines found in an otherwise unlikely landscape. The spectacular and unique landscape of the field site is reinforced by the presence of 8 green and leafy willow trees which are hosting 12 main and 5 additional springs. The water comes out from the depths of the ground, and further absorbed into the mud, forming a natural miniature pond, with no visible flow of the water. Each spring has its own name, specific taste, due to various mineral and saline compositions, and thus is ascribed certain healing properties.

The physical properties and understanding that this oasis-like place, amidst an arid mountainous landscape contributes to the special position the place has been ascribed by the people living by it for centuries, therefore channels the uniform elements of liminal places: betweenness, and borderland situation between inhabited villages in the region, predisposing a classic 3-stage process of entering liminality both in spiritual and physical aspects. At the same time, Manjly-Ata is also a place of pilgrimage and ritual performances, including animal sacrifices and other forms of worshiping, which makes this place stand out from the social structure, thus blurring the norms of social classes, contributing to the creation of *communitas* and anti-structure in a rigidly defined location (Turner 1969).

Stepping feet in the sanctified place

The site has no previous extensive academic research, and has left little to no written records, the only source of tracing the time variable for the site is from the oral history that people are living by and transcending through generations, a method widely used in anthropology, and extensively used in current paper.

The name of the place is believed to be traced back to a person named Manjly who lived there. He is regarded to be a wise sage man having certain healing powers. Upon his death, his body was buried in the area, a fact, which further triggered the development of certain ritual behavior at the place. The combination of a natural and unique landscape with the presence of springs in an otherwise arid zone advanced the sanctification of the place (van Gennepe 1981).

There are no exact explanations of how Manjly-Ata came to be known as a sacred site. The place is mentioned in *Manas* epic, where it is ascribed special powers of granting wishes of the people visiting it, especially those, willing to have children. One of the earliest oral traces of the site back in history could be found in the words of Karga Ake, who is believed to live in the 17th century: „Joo kūsösön Jungarga chabaarsyn, bala kūsösön, Manjlyga bararsyn“, translating from Kyrgyz as „If you want enemies, you go to the Jungars (China), if you want children, you go to Manjly“. This little passage from local oral history gives us a glimpse into knowing that the site of Manjly-Ata has been known as far as in 17th century, and was having a similar sacral meaning to the people, as it does today. Given that the site has acquired a reputation of a sanctified place, it has

been attracting pilgrims, as well as curious tourists wishing to see the ritual complex and experience the awe of the place.

Manjly-Ata is told to be distinguished from other mazars of the region in by having loyal guardians and protectors, who take care of the site. The role of the guardians is to maintain the site, keep it clean and welcome the pilgrims, tell them the story and secrets of the site, thus passing on the oral history of the site, and ensuring its effectiveness in modern times.

Given that this sanctified place is underrepresented in academic literature, its true value is brought up by the people living and practicing at the place, while also empowering it through stories of oral history. These stories mostly evolve around the concept of healing and/or fertility, which are a manifestation of a transition of a body from one state to another. Thus, the notion of liminality appears in the place in a twofold aspect, and are therefore advancing the argument of the current paper, that the liminal place serves as an operator with respect to action, through its different roles as support, tool, reference system or material in the construction of the relationship with the other, and that the spatial expression of the rituals be examined in relation to these roles. It is within this conceptual framework that Manjly-Ata is approached as a sanctified place where roles, social structures and other attributes of an ordinary lives of the people is altered, leading to a profound transformation, where the place no longer has the same status or same values (Fourny 2013, 2).

The application of the concept is advanced by the fact that the site represents a wide geographical ritual complex, with springs, trees, and gorges sprinkled across the mountains, and the route visitors are taking, is truly contributing to the perception of the action as a pilgrimage. The most favored spots within the complex pilgrims visit are the springs of Umai-Ene, Kyrk-Chilten, hero Köbö, Ilim, Bala the tree of Bugu-Ene, the grave of Moiyt ake and of other prominent personas for the local history. The waters of the springs of Manjly-Ata each have a different flavor and according to the knowledge of the traditional practitioners they all have different healing abilities, and are prescribed accordingly to those wishing to stay at the place for a longer period of time.

Removing the ritual obligation from liminality also causes the distinction between a liminal place and sanctified place, as the only thing distinguishing the two is the fact that the latter does not promise resolution, whereas liminal place does. If a liminal place is no longer a midpoint in a rite of passage in Manjly-Ata, then there is no reason why it cannot describe the condition of the sanctified place that the mazar is.

Landscape alterations

Being located on geographical margins of the Ton district in Yssyk-Kul region, the mazar is found in-between the two villages, thus marking the liminality in a larger geographical and borderline sense. Having said about the physical placement of the mazar complex, its natural setting has been formed not only by the nature, but also displays direct human interference and landscape modifications people exhibit at the place. Such spatial alterations are observed through the construction of a dilapidated mosque, and stone plates

welcoming the visitors at the entrance gates of the complex, that have constructed in the late 1990.

Manzhyly-Ata, as a pilgrimage site has been gaining attention from various groups of people, which triggered the construction of various zones and development of basic infrastructure for hosting pilgrims and visitors. These zones include: an area for ritual sacrifice; an area for preparation and arrangement of ritual food with a place for eating; a place where pilgrims can spend the night; and a room for those who guard the site. The top of one of the hills at the entrance to the site features a modern mosque built in 1998, built with the support of a Kyrgyz political figure.

Among the many concepts used to express the sanctified site of Manjyly-Ata, it also represents a possible category that is rarely used. The place characterizes, particularly in geography, a space resulting from passage and transition that people visiting it exhibit there, and it does not only consider the morphological dimension of an intermediate border zone that the Manzhyly-Ata is: it represents a liminal place where the relationship in a social structure is managed and where the social status of this relationship is determined (van Gennep 1981; Fourny 2013).

This arid mountain zone on the southern shore of the Issyk-Kul lake, which for a long time was used, and still continues to be actively used to incarnate the healing properties of the natural water springs for healing properties, and which has been altering the rationality of a border situation of the place itself that was linear and fixed, is today confronted with the vision of the mazar as a place of spiritual wholeness.

Conclusion

The description of the case study Manzhyly-Ata is contributing to the overall paper argument of liminal places, and shows this sanctified place as a reflection phase in which people are facing a transition state from separation to incorporation both on a spiritual sense, and also on a spatial sense (van Gennep 1986). A person entering the ambiguous space of the mazar is transported in an altered state named by the pioneers of the concept as a „threshold stage“, where the individual is giving up one's self to eventually acquire a new state.

The case study of the Manzhyly-Ata is therefore reflecting on the following aspects that the paper intended to address: being a sacred place, this mazar is culturally and socially constructed to meet the needs of the people, but beyond that it is also having its agentive powers in that it suggests a certain identity alterations, where a transition from one state to another is taking place, e. g. the separation and integration into the normality, as stated by the concept. It is however argued, whether all sacred places could be addressed as being liminal places, and the case study has shown that the geographical remoteness in combination with cultural and geographical borderline position of the site contributes to the ‚threshold‘ concept where a person is symbolically detached from her ordinary lifestyles to integrate into a transitional state of acquiring certain qualities necessary for the successful implementation of the ritual.

Furthermore it is not only the remoteness of the place that is advancing the perception of these places as having special meanings, but also the fact that the mazar has been

known as having supernatural powers in previous centuries by the people inhabiting the area, which is reflected in the remains of the oral history and sayings people use today. The stories of origin of the place stem as far as to the 17th century, and contributes to the common argument of the paper that liminality in Manjly-Ata has been historically produced due to the natural setting, set-apartness, and traditions of usage in the past.

Results and concluding remarks

Despite the spatial, chronological and cultural differences of the case studies spanning from prehistoric central Europe via the ancient Mediterranean to modern day Kyrgyzstan, there are certain structural features forming a common ground. Initially it is their cultural remoteness. Each examined place can be regarded as a point of reference in the particular construction of landscape used for rituals in some distance to the daily social environment of the performing groups and individuals. There's no naturally given ritual place or sanctuary. However, their relative isolation in respect to centers as/or their location in scenically transition zones is not due to accident. Bridging this spatial liminality by actions of pilgrimages and/or processions, as it is observed or at least highly probable in each case, is a crucial point in forming *communitas* and thus structure as well, to speak with Turner (1973). Vice versa, the idea of something like spatial liminality has to be expected as existing already in the mental framework of the mentioned groups.

Furthermore, it is not only the spatial liminality or the set apartness, to speak with Durkheim, charging these locations with special meanings. What consistently could be noticed is their previous usage as sanctified places in cultural as well as in chronological terms, although with some differences in particular. While for Manzhly-Ata there seems to have been no interruptions or major changes in ritual behaviour from the 17th century AD on, a chronological gap with a subsequent altered material record could be observed at the Heidendor. On the other hand, the evidence stemming out of the continuously used sanctuary of Francavilla points rather to a gradual transformation between culturally distinct groups than to sudden change. Based on the historical past of each place, they appear as well as related to a mythical past incorporated in different narratives of cultural memories. The healer and/or hero Manjly of Manzhly-Ata corresponds to the hero Epeios of Lagaria respectively Francavilla, both regarded as founders in distant and vague antiquity. Therefore, these figures and their stories can be seen as lynchpin in the anchorage of groups within their conception of time and space. As for the Heidendor no mythical founder is handed-down, the resumption of ritual activity in the late Hallstatt period as well as the attribution to some special power in the 19th century AD are possible indicators for similar processes.

To conclude, liminality of all three sites discussed in this paper is culturally produced; it is not given by some natural entity. It is the spatial liminality next to the historical and mythical past of the mentioned places creating and maintaining their special meaning and should therefore be regarded as important resources. They're offering a point of reference for the identity and self-positioning of groups and individuals in their own socio-cosmic conceptions.

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Jan Johannes Ahlrichs

Professur für Ur- und Frühgeschichte am Historischen Seminar der Universität Leipzig,
Ritterstraße 14, D-04109 Leipzig
jan_johannes.ahlrichs@uni-leipzig.de

Kai Riehle

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Fachbereich Altertums- und Kunstwissenschaften,
Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Schloss Hohentübingen, Burgsteige 11, D-72070 Tü-
bingen
kai.riehle@uni-tuebingen.de

Nurzat Sultanalieva

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Fachbereich Asien-Orient-Wissenschaften, Abtei-
lung für Ethnologie, Schloss Hohentübingen, Burgsteige 11, D-72070 Tübingen