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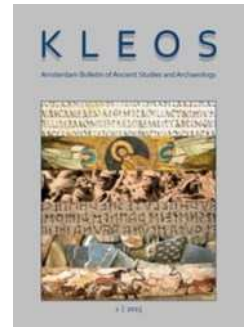
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KLEOS – AMSTERDAM BULLETIN OF ANCIENT STUDIES AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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EDITORIAL

ARTICLES

IRIS DE FUIJK, A miniature bronze wheel-shaped object from the Plakari hill in southern Euboea, Greece	8
NATALIA ZHURAVSKA, Bodies in showcases	24
BERBER VAN DER MEULEN & VINCENT VAN DER VEEN, The bridge on the river Meuse	33
ROBERT NICKOLAI MUSSERT, Identity - a material approach	46

DIALOGUE ARTICLES

<i>Introduction to a dialogue:</i> KARIN SCHARRINGHAUSEN	57
<i>The urban start-up of the Heuneburg: A dialogue – Part 1: Review</i> KARIN SCHARRINGHAUSEN	59
<i>The rise of urbanism in Early Europe: A dialogue – Part 2: Response</i> MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ	73

REVIEWS

E. H. Cline (ed.), <i>1177 B.C. The year civilization collapsed</i> (T. E. LYSÉN)	82
W. S. Hanson / I. A. Oltean (eds.), <i>Archaeology from historical aerial and satellite archives</i> (M. E. BEKKEMA)	87
<i>Satricum - Scavi e reperti archeologici</i> / M. Gnade (ed.), <i>Satricum. Trenta anni di scavi olandesi</i> (N. STEENSMA)	90

Introduction to a dialogue

KARIN SCHARRINGHAUSEN

Kleos publishes several types of papers; one of these is a dialogue paper by at least two authors. The dialogue may be an opinion piece and one or more critical responses, or a critical review of a research paper and a response from the reviewed author, or a critical review of a research seminar presentation and a response from the reviewed author. For the first dialogue of this series of articles, Karin Scharringhausen invited Dr. Manuel A. Fernández-Götz to respond to her review of his lecture “Path to complexity: Centralization and urbanization processes in Early Iron Age Europe”, given on 2 October 2013 at Free University Amsterdam.

Starting in 2012, the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and Free University Amsterdam (VU) offer research seminars which are part of the Master’s programme in Archaeology.¹ These research seminars offer students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with and discuss current research developments in archaeology from various theoretical perspectives for different periods and in various geographical areas. The second lecture of the 2013 series of research seminars was given by Manuel Fernández-Götz. He argued that the recent fieldwork carried out at the Heuneburg site and other central European centres of power provide new and challenging insights into processes of centralization and urbanization, the earliest stages beginning in the Early Iron Age. Thus, challenging the traditional view that the oppida were the first urban centres of the Late Iron Age.²

In her review of the lecture Karin Scharringhausen focusses on the theoretical approach of Fernández-Götz. The *Kleos* dialogue review, *the urban start-up of the Heuneburg*, begins with an overview of the content of the lecture given by Manuel Fernández-Götz. Next, it reviews critically his line of argument and the use of archaeological data by comparing them to the existing literature on urbanization processes in the Iron Age of Europe or theories on ancient urbanization. In the conclusion, the innovativeness, the usefulness of the conducted research and the possibilities for further research is discussed.

Manuel Fernández-Götz kindly wrote the response to Scharringhausen for the first *Kleos* dialogue. His contribution, *the rise of urbanism in Early Europe*, presents his complementary thoughts rather than a direct response. First, he reflects on the diverse nature of the concept of Early Iron Age

urbanism and the lack of continuous development on a European scale. He then discusses the early process of centralisation and urbanisation that led to the development of the *Fürstentum* and was followed by a phase of decentralisation that set in at different times in different areas. In conclusion, he explores the possible explanations for these cyclical phases.

NOTES

- 1 The master programmes for Archaeology and Classics and Ancient Civilizations are offered by ACASA (the Amsterdam Centre for Ancient Studies and Archaeology) a joint venture of the Free University and the University of Amsterdam.
- 2 See for the content of the lecture the open access article available at [►academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) (last accessed at 22-04-2015); or the article: Fernández-Götz, M./ D. Krause, 2013: Rethinking Early Iron Age urbanisation in central Europe: the Heuneburg site and its archaeological environment, *Antiquity* 87, 473–487.

The urban start-up of the Heuneburg: A dialogue - Part 1: Review

KARIN SCHARRINGHAUSEN

INTRODUCTION

Fernández-Götz is not the first scholar to suggest proto-urban beginnings for the Early Iron Age. Over the past decade, there has been an increasing interest in early state formation and (proto)urbanization in the Early Iron Age of Central and Western Europe.¹ Large scale research projects have been carried out in Germany and France which provided new evidence, supporting the view that not the Late Iron Age Oppida should be considered to be 'the first cities north of the Alps', but rather the proto-urban settlements, or 'centres of power', developing during the Early Iron age (ca. 600 BC until 400 BC).

The lecture by Fernández-Götz consisted of three parts. The first section gave an overview of five 'centres of power'. The lecturer continued mapping out the extensive evidence of the sixth 'centre of power' the Heuneburg site, one of the best-researched archaeological sites of this period, situated at the Upper Danube (Germany) and the main focus of the lecture. In conclusion, Fernández-Götz, discussed the relevance of this evidence for early processes of centralisation and urbanization.

Karin Scharringhausen is a Research Master's student in Archaeology at ACASA, University of Amsterdam. Her research interests include archaeological theory and method with emphasis on social space, quantification and materiality, and centre on European and Mediterranean Prehistory.

► [Profile page](#)

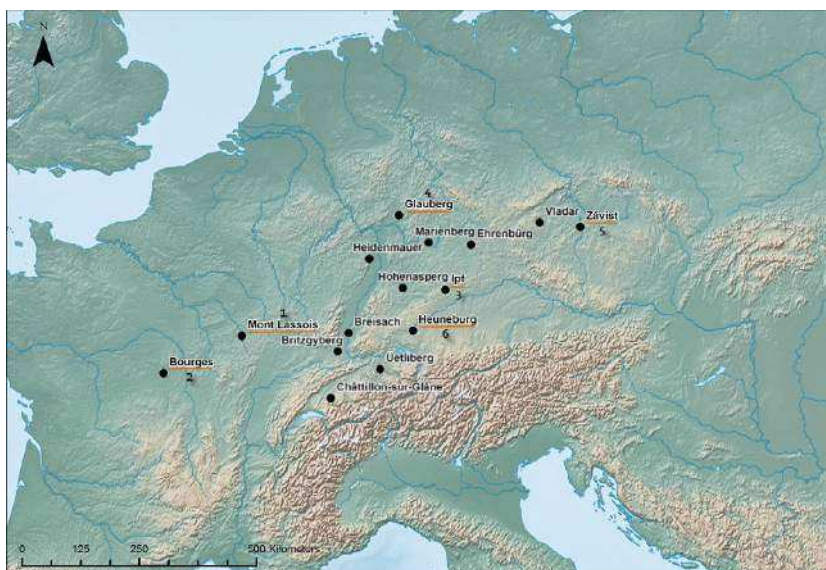


Figure 1
Map of part of Early Iron Age Europe showing the six key-sites including the Heuneburg. These fortified sites might be reconsidered to be proto-urban settlements (illustration adapted by author after Fernández-Götz, M./D. Krausse, 2013, Figure 1, original created by C. Steffen, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege).

CENTRES OF POWER

The five key-sites, or 'centres of power', Fernández-Götz mentioned are Mont Lassois (Bourgundy), Bourges (Central France), IpF (Germany), Glauberg (Germany) and Závist (Bohemia). They are spread over a vast area reaching from Western to Eastern Europe (see Figure 1). All of these sites offer evidence for early settlement patterns, specifically from ca. 600 BC (Hallstatt D) till ca. 400 BC (La Tène A), preceding the often more well-known oppida. Furthermore, these Early Iron Age sites seem to set the pace economically, politically or religiously in the surrounding area. Considering this (inter)regional role we can understand why they are preferably labelled 'centres of power'.²

The first site Mont Lassois is located at the upper reaches of the river Seine in Burgundy, Central France (Figure 2). Traditionally, the fortified hill-fort has been described as a Late Hallstatt princely site (*Fuerstensitz*-) settlement. It is well-known for its associated 'princely' grave; The Vix burial. This grave of a woman of high status offers evidence (jugs, mixing vessels and cups) of the importance of feasting and especially drinking and ancestor worship. Most importantly, the famous 'Vix' krater is interpreted as a diplomatic gift and thus an indicator of relations with people from the Mediterranean. The research programme "*Le Mont Lassois et son environnement*" (initiated in 2001), deals with the structure and specific development of the site.³ The results of geomagnetic survey provided evidence for planning organization and complexity (a town plan). Recent discoveries regarding the Early Iron age include apsidal buildings, adorned with wall paintings and Mediterranean imports such as amphora, and Greek pottery. These structures are thought to be places for assembly, feasting, or political and cultural activities. In short, the sixth century BC settlement of Mont Lassois, already seems to have been a centre of political authority and a central hub in an interregional trade network.

Figure 2

Mont Lassois, France, location of the ancient hill-fort of Vix, seems to have been a centre of widespread political authority and extensive trade relations, during the sixth century BC (aerial Photo by René Goguet).



The second key-site is Bourges in Central France located on the river Loire (Figure 3). This hill-fort site is commonly known as the late Iron Age *oppidum Avaricum*, the old capital of the *Bituriges Cubi*, which Caesar occupied and chose to call an *urbs*.⁶ Less well-known is Late Hallstatt and



Figure 3

Bourges, Central France (after aerial photo from Office du Tourisme de Bourges).⁴ The central promontory occupied by the modern core of Bourges, set around its magnificent cathedral, is believed to be the focal point of an Early Iron Age town. The fate of Bourges' fragile Proto-state system fits into a larger pattern of mid-fifth century BC collapse seen in sites such as Mont Lassois and the Heuneburg.⁵

Early La Tène Bourges, which was recently excavated as part of more comprehensive programmes in Eastern France and Western Germany.⁷ The excavations, covering 15ha, revealed the appearance of several settlements dating from the end of the sixth till well into the fifth century BC.⁸ These proto-urban centres reveal to urban organisation of the area, which is supported by the fact that the initial Hallstatt settlement is surrounded by other settlements.⁹ In addition, proof is found of rich burials, an acropolis, artisanal subunits (fifth century BC), and an impressive number of Mediterranean imports. The site was abandoned towards the end of the fifth century BC. Around the same time, the Mont Lassois and Heuneburg sites were abandoned or destroyed. In sum, fifth century Bourges appears to have been an outsize type of proto-urban settlement.

The third site is mount Ipf, a Celtic hill-fort near Bopfingen, Baden-Württemberg in Southern Germany (Figure 4). The hill-fort built on an elevation, dominates the neighbouring landscape of the crater formed by the impact of a meteor, and was occupied from the eighth till the third century BC. The summit contained a large number of finds from the Hallstatt and a few finds from the Early La Tène, including Mediterranean imports. Evidence of a proto-urban settlement consists of the associated urn-fields, tumuli, and the contemporary settlements on the edges of the

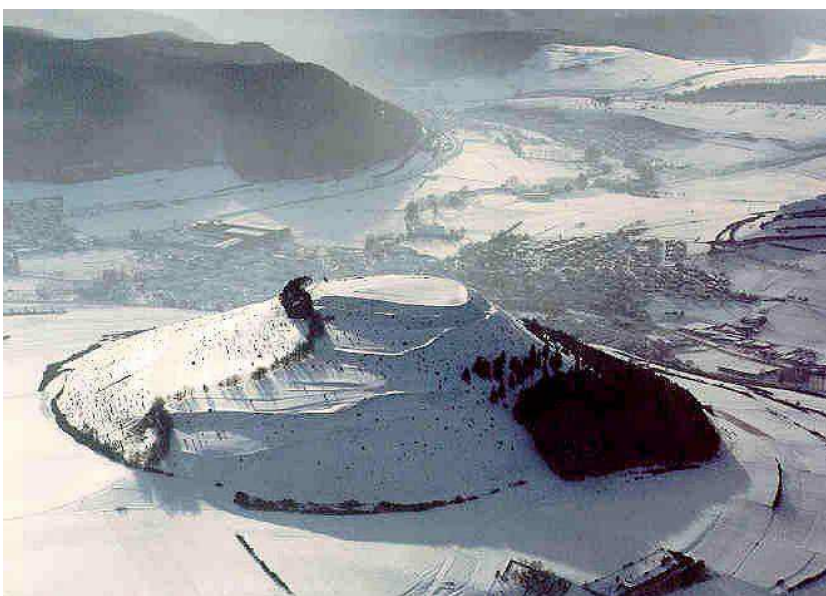


Figure 4

Mount Ipf, Southern Germany (aerial Photo by Otto Braash).

crater,¹⁰ which imply a structured landscape and a hierarchy of settlements.¹¹ However, I question whether we can identify Ipf as a proto-urban settlement; since there is evidence that the nearby Goldberg hill-fort is competing for the same territory.¹²

The fourth site is the Glauberg situated on the east edge of the Wetteau (Germany) and the most north-easterly site (Figure 5). The unique life-size sandstone statue, the Glauberg Prince, is the most intensively discussed artefact. The Glauberg is called a 'princely seat'. It constitutes a typical fortified hill-fort with several burial mounds; however, it is different from the previous settlements, as it has several non-defensive structures that were found in recent years, such as a processional road leading to the largest tumuli, an open air sanctuary and a calendar structure. This late Hallstatt and Early la Tène (sixth – fourth century BC)¹³ ritual complex is a unique monument indicative of creating and sustaining memory in prehistory. The Glauberg probably functioned as a regional ritual centre around fifth century BC.¹⁴ This function, in combination with the presence of imported materials and elaborate burials, results in the re-classification of the Glauberg as a proto-urban centre of power, trade and cult, unique but befitting the various constellation of Early Iron Age power centres.

The fifth site was found in the Natural Cultural Monument of Závist in Central Bohemia, Czech Republic (Figure 6) and is called the sacred mountain, possibly a *nemeton* or *locus consecratus*.¹⁵ An acropolis dated from the sixth until the fourth century BC on which complex structures and Mediterranean imports were found.¹⁶ At this place a settlement continued from 175 BC and shows the characteristics of an *oppidum*. To be able to assess whether this site is rightfully listed as an early centre of power, but for its religious function requires further investigation.



THE HEUNEURG PROJECT

The sixth and final site, being the focus of the lecture, is the Heuneburg (Figure 7). A fortified site situated at the upper Danube, in Baden-Württemberg Germany, and traditionally identified as an early Celtic 'Princely Seat' (650-475 BC). Manuel Fernández-Götz was personally engaged in the recent excavations as coordinator of the Heuneburg project in the state office for cultural heritage Baden-Wurttemberg.

The Heuneburg site has known a long history of excavations, which



Figure 5

Lidar image of the Glauberg and surrounding territory in Germany. Beneath the elevated fortifications in the centre, the large tumulus and remains of the processional road, consisting of two parallel lines, are clearly visible.

(after Posluschny 2008, Fig 5.)

Figure 6

*Závist, Czech Republic
(after Photo by Lujerista on Google maps).*



Figure 7

The Heuneburg site in Southern Germany (after Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2012a, Fig 119).

produced a wealth of notable finds; the discovery of the mudbrick wall inspired by Mediterranean prototypes, and associated tumuli containing rich grave goods, such as golden neck- and arm rings, wagons, and expensive bronze vessels, all associated with elites. Until recently, the Heuneburg settlement was thought to be confined to the acropolis on the central hilltop. The chronology, expansion and function of the Heuneburg and external settlement became clear during the excavations of the last 20 years.¹⁷ The site started out in the seventh century BC as a scatter of farms and hamlets and grew around 600 BC into a densely and uniformly built settlement. This period is called the mudbrick phase. It was destroyed by fire around mid-sixth century BC; then site occupation continues with the traditional less dense settlement pattern.¹⁸ Before the mudbrick phase possibly a proto-urban settlement pattern had emerged. During this rather complex phase of the Heuneburg three different areas came into being: a densely built citadel (hill-top acropolis), a lower town and an outer settlement (Figure 8).¹⁹



Figure 8

3D reconstruction of the Heuneburg site in Southern Germany (after Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2012b, 28-Fig 1).

The overview shows the sixth century BC Heuneburg citadel, surrounded by its lower town and outer settlement.

Starting out, the lower town's discoveries were discussed. The Middle Age defences have been reassigned to the Late Hallstatt period (ca. 590 BC), based on dendrochronological analysis of the wood from the newly discovered bridge giving access to the lower town. In addition, it became apparent that the lower town was densely packed during the Late Hallstatt, Early La Tène occupation (Figure 9); for example, sloping areas were levelled to provide extra room for houses. Furthermore, a sixth century BC monumental stone gate was excavated. The gate house consisted of mudbricks set on a stone foundation and was integrated into the 5m tall rampart.²⁰ Viewshed analysis points to a relation between the gate of the Heuneburg and the surrounding monuments in the landscape, such as the tumuli arrangement that ensured the visibility of the Altheburg, nine kilometres away.²¹ Fernández-Götz explained these finds as symbols of power.

Next, the discoveries of the outer settlement and beyond were evaluated. The enormous extent of the outer settlement of ca. 100ha is striking. Equally striking (Fig. 8) is the division of the settlement into quarters, by means of ditches and banks occupied by sets of closely spaced rectangular shaped farmsteads, which may represent a different kinship group.²² Furthermore, a large structure (320m²) with several rooms was erected, suggesting an Etruscan influence.²³ An agglomeration of contemporary hillforts (Hallstatt D1) was located in the vicinity of the Heuneburg. It is assumed that this agglomeration is subordinate to the Heuneburg however, no evidence has been found to substantiate this assumption. Nonetheless, the subordinate nature of this relation is the key argument for a hierarchy of settlements, with the Heuneburg as the supra-regional hub or centre of power.²⁴

CENTRALISATION AND URBANISATION PROCESSES NORTH OF THE ALPS

The third section of the lecture by Fernández-Götz consisted of a reflection on the beginning of centralisation and urbanisation processes of Western and Central European societies within the Hallstatt and La Tène periods. New evidence offered by several 'Princely' sites including the Heuneburg, has led to new insights into these processes.

Importantly, he concludes that these communities mark the transition from complex chiefdoms into early states.²⁵ To support this view he particularly emphasises the vastness of the territories and multitude of populations, the monumental fortifications and the diversity in functions, ranging from administration, religion, production and consumption. These findings imply that the political and demographic dimensions of Western and Central European societies (sixth – fifth century BC) thus far have been underestimated.

In addition, some important patterns have emerged. Fernández-Götz acknowledges that Iron Age societies cannot be easily classified presenting a diverse, variable picture. Furthermore, from the seventh until the fifth century BC and again regarding the third and the second century BC a

pattern of centralisation emerges as opposed to the decentralisation in other periods.²⁶ In brief, as well as there is no single Iron Age society there is neither a continuing evolutionary development.

DISCUSSION

As a closing remark, Fernández-Götz stated, quoting J.D. Hill, that there is no such thing as *the* Iron Age.²⁷ The evidence offered, to support the hypothesis that the Hallstatt/ Early La Tène periods of the Heuneburg and contemporary sites north of the Alps are indeed the first (proto-)urban centres, is of a diverse and variable nature. Notwithstanding the fact that the evidence is very convincing, allowing for diversity and variability does not mean that anything goes. Maybe, to avoid such a practise, Fernández-Götz does not use all six of the discussed sites to build his case.²⁸ Thus, the question arises with what purpose he discusses them? What theoretical framework was used to typecast the 'Princely' sites of Western and Central Europa as proto-urban? To answer such questions I will first analyse the criteria that were applied to explore urbanism in the Early Iron Age and then have a closer look at the arguments offered to classify the Heuneburg site as a proto-urban centre of power.

I would also like to cite J.D. Hill. Hill indeed proposes that the diversity of our data suggests that potentially very different Iron Age societies existed at the same time in different parts of Europe. However, he also emphasises that we should not primarily focus on manifestations of hierarchy or elitism, since most Iron Age societies were probably not clearly hierarchical or ruled by a small elite.²⁹ More importantly, he warns us to avoid further poverty of definition and not to concentrate on a few regions, such as the oppida; this will lead to downplaying the scale and degree of variety we could otherwise experience.³⁰ When we critically review the six sites discussed by Fernández-Götz, we find only the later oppida preceded by elevated, fortified sites. This bias can easily be explained by the topical research questions pursued by the large funding programmes that prefer to focus on these famous heritage sites.³¹ As a result, most new evidence comes from a particular type of site and period. However, the fact that from most of these sites an early urban pattern emerges is an interesting phenomenon. But, how can we define urban with regard to this early pre-historic period?

URBANISM

Obviously, the early urban centres that we discuss here cannot be compared to our modern concept of cities. Furthermore, archaeologists can only analyse material remains. How then can archaeologists define the term urban centre or early city? There are multiple definitions of the term urban or city. Fernández-Götz follows Smith's functional definition of urbanism: "urban settlements are centres whose activities and institutions – whether economic, administrative or religious – affect a larger hinterland".³² Fernández-Götz and Krause obviously inspired by Smith's

definition, offer their definition of 'city': "a numerically significant aggregation of people permanently living together in a settlement which fulfills central place functions for a wider community".³³ Fernández-Götz and Krause stress the context-dependent nature of this definition which allows for a high level of variation existing within different urban traditions and times. Unfortunately, the bias towards a selection of similar, elevated sites, which become oppida, deprives these researchers of the opportunity to intensively explore a broad spectrum of context. Thus, what opportunities does this definition offer? Again according to Smith, Fernández-Götz lists the criteria which were used to ascertain the existence of urbanism.

- 1 Demographic criteria, such as substantial settlement size, a relatively large population,³⁴ significant status differences and craft specialization.
- 2 Functional criteria, such as artisanal and technical functions (craft production), economic and mercantile functions (exchange and trade), political status (monumental structures, wealthy burial, and import) and religious authority (ancestor worship and sanctuaries).³⁵

However, with these criteria he insufficiently substantiates the notion of people permanently living together. It seems that he fails to address the following questions: How long is 'permanently'? How do we assess the term of 'living together'?³⁶ During the lecture Fernández-Götz also referred to Wirth's social approach of urban developments. Wirth defines a city as: "a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals"³⁷

Wirth explains that large numbers and the factor density have different social implications and that the notion of heterogeneity must comprise of more than might be expected from a large assembly of people. To make sure that a city is viable; its heterogeneity must be tolerated and favoured. In addition, the acceptance of migrants will stimulate the heterogeneity of a population.³⁸ Furthermore, Wirth does clarify the terms 'permanent' and 'living together'. The first is required to reveal the human characteristics of city life and the second is combined with the dense built-up and thus requires the development of a more or less technological structure.³⁹ A social approach of urbanism could, according to Wirth, be measured by, for example, the rate of segmentation and specialisation, the increase in complexity of social structures, social mobility, and the segmentation of the city plan (districts).⁴⁰ It would be interesting to explore the workability of such a theoretical framework to assess Early Iron Age settlements. However, availability of archaeological data to quantify these factors offers a challenge in itself.

In retrospect, the definition proposed by Fernández-Götz and Krause may be interpreted as a pioneering attempt to combine the available data, often based on research questions focussing on demographic or functional aspects, with a more social definition of urban settlements. Yet, without specifying all factors the term proto-urban will still be associated with programmed and inevitable progress as opposed to multiple and varied forms.⁴¹

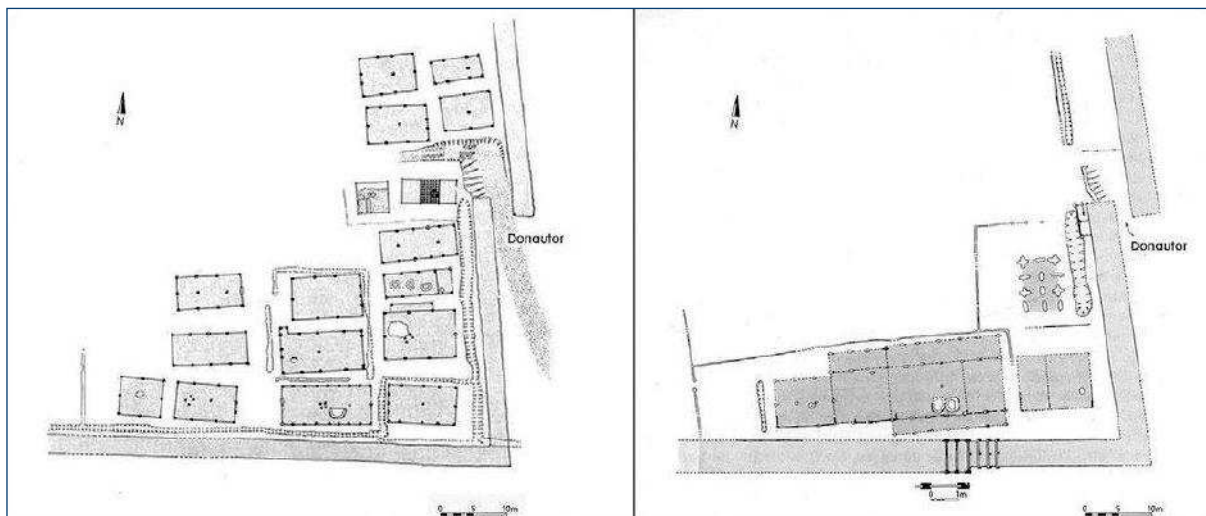
THE CASUS OF THE HEUNEBURG

Was the Heuneburg an urban centre and a centre of power? Could the Heuneberg indeed be the *polis* of Pyrene that lay at the Danube?⁴² Fernández-Götz argues for the proto-urban status of the Late Hallstatt Heuneburg (the period of the mudbrick wall ca. 600/590 to 540/530 BC).

First, he has stated that the population density for that period, including the outer settlement of more than 100ha, is estimated at 5000 inhabitants.⁴³ In actual fact, the outer settlement has not been completely mapped; a conclusive find would be the recovery of additional burial grounds, giving more substantial evidence to support an estimation of population density.⁴⁴ Still, the estimated number of inhabitants implies that the Heuneburg largely depended on its outer territory for basic products.⁴⁵

Second, Fernández-Götz emphasized the substantial settlement size and showed that the settlement pattern of especially the mudbrick-wall period was very dense when compared to the previous and succeeding period of occupation and to other settlements in the region. This was very clear from, for example, the ground plans of the citadel (Fig. 9).

In sum, he proposed that the Heuneburg possessed important central functions. First, it must have been an important production and distribution centre. Arguments that support this statement are the wide range of



artisanal workshops and wares that were found, including pottery, textiles and *fibulae*.⁴⁶ This is ample support for the function as a production centre; however, no evidence was presented of control over the distribution of site characteristic wares. Proof of external trade relations is weak; the majority of Mediterranean imports date from a more recent period than the mudbrick wall period. Second, there was some evidence found of ritual activity and the tumuli, in the vicinity of the Heuneburg site, point to ancestor worship, but we cannot speak of an explicit ritual centre function.⁴⁷ Third, the rich burials found in these associated tumuli and the recovery of a richly endowed child burial give evidence of elite presence

Figure 9

Successive ground plans of the citadel of the Late Hallstatt Heuneburg settlement.

Left: plan of the structures during 'mudbrick' phase.

Right: plan of the structures following the 'mudbrick' phase (after Fernández-Götz/Krause 2012a, Fig. 131, 133).

and are a reflection of the position of power and elevated social position of the deceased (Fig. 10).⁴⁸ These conclusions are supported by monumental structures, such as, the monumental gate, the monumental building in the outer settlement and the fortifications. Furthermore, the spatial distribution of sites, such as the Heuneburg, and the uniformity of elite material culture suggest that the origin of such settlements should be sought in the application of the peer-polity-interaction model in which a polity equals the political unit of a settlement and its territory.⁴⁹ Importantly, Fernández-Götz argues that the prime mover for the development towards proto-urban centres is demographic growth accompanied by an increase in internal inequalities. Power and status, in such early agrarian societies, are derived from land ownership and the control of local production.⁵⁰

Even though not all possible central functions are convincingly argued for, there is ample proof based on the settlement size and central functions (administration, trade, craft and protection) to propose that the mudbrick-wall period of the Heuneburg qualifies as a proto-urban centre.



Figure 10

Several important finds from the rich burial in the Bettelbühl necropolis, 1.5 miles (2.5km) south-east of Heuneburg, that give evidence of elite presence and reflect the position of power and elevated social position of the deceased (after Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2012b, 33).

CONCLUSION

The lecture provided an exciting new perspective and thus challenged traditional views on the social organisation of the Early Iron Age. It was well structured and aimed at an audience of students of archaeology and ancient history and could certainly be of interest to a wider audience. Although the content of the lecture offered new insights and presented convincing arguments for the existence of proto-urban beginnings in the Early Iron Age, some important questions remain unanswered. For example, what are the selection criteria for the discussed 'Princely' sites and what exactly do they contribute to the debate? Why only focus on a particular Iron Age site, fortified hilltops, which became oppida during the second and first centuries BC?

These gaps in our knowledge make it difficult to assess the contribution of this research with regard to the larger picture of Iron Age Europe. Based on the evidence we can conclude that the Late Hallstatt Heuneburg is a proto-urban centre, but what kind of society was this? The mudbrick wall period stands out as quite different from the traditional settlement patterns seen before and after that time. Is the mudbrick wall occupation to be associated with a new group of migrants or merely a periphery influenced by Mediterranean culture or does it represent a different lineage within the original population? These questions are being investigated by analysing material culture and using genetic analysis. The first results point towards a pattern of continuity.⁵¹ But, do the rather short-lived (max. 60 years) and distinctive architectural features (mudbrick and plan of large house) of the Heuneburg contribute to new insights into urbanism of the Early Iron Age? Obviously, this exceptional type of urban settlement is even difficult to classify within the sphere of 'Princely' sites. Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly an urban beginning that was short lived as it was destroyed by crises unknown. Does a social definition or rather the context-based definition of cities by Fernández-Götz and Krausse create a niche for the remarkable urban start-up of the Heuneburg site or was it a rare exception? To be able to answer this question I think that first the theoretical framework needs to be made more explicit and concrete. Hence, Fernández-Götz may be too optimistic concluding that this phase of the Heuneburg is part of a dynamic multi-layered society.

During his academic career the notions of power and identity have dominated Fernández-Götz's theoretical perspective. As regards the Heuneburg his research is led specifically by the notion of power. A refocus on questions concerning the social identity and organisation of early city-dwellers may help the further exploration of the diversity as well as the similarities of Iron Age centralisation and urbanisation processes. Without a doubt, further research is needed to answer all these exciting and challenging questions.

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NOTES

- 1 For example, Augier, Buchsenschutz, & Ralston 2007; Biel & Krausse 2005; Böttinger; Chaume & Mordant 2011; Echt; Gersbach 1995/6; Herrmann 2005; Hill 2006/7; Kaenell 2010; Kimmig 1983; Krausse 2005/8, Krausse-Fernández-Götz 2012; Kurz 2010; Milcent 2007; Schenk; Sievers & Schönfelder 2012.
- 2 Centres of power can be defined as localized regions in the world where political, economic and cultural influence are dominant for a time, hence defining a particular age within history.
- 3 ► artehis-cnrs.fr accessed on 25-10-2013.
- 4 ► bourges-tourisme.com accessed on 22-04-2015.
- 5 Ralston 2010, 70-88.
- 6 "A town which is one of the most beautiful and strongest towns in Gaul and the ornament of the country ... " (Caesar, The Gallic Wars VII).
- 7 Including a German Schwerpunktprogramm, directed by Professor Alfred Haffner and Dr Jörg Biel, ► ianralston.co.uk accessed on 25-10-2013.

- 8 Fernández-Götz mentioned that this might be the kingdom of Ambigatus, the legendary king of the Biturges tribe according to Livy (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*). Unfortunately, this is for now mere speculation.
- 9 ► ville-bourges.fr accessed on 25-10-2013.
- 10 Fernández-Götz mentioned the association with a rectangular earthwork enclosure (*Viereckschanze*) but this is dated third till second century B.C.) after the sparsely represented Late La Tène phase and excavated in the valley of the Eger south to the Ipf, ► home.bawue.de accessed on 25-10-2013.
- 11 ► fuerstensitze.de accessed on 25-10-2013.
- 12 ► slideshare.net accessed on 26-10-2013.
- 13 In the fourth century BC the hill-fort appears to have been abandoned.
- 14 Herrmann 2002, 95-98.
- 15 Fernández-Götz proposed the label *nemeton* (a sacred space of ancient Celtic religion primarily situated in natural areas) or *locus consecrates*, which also refers to a sacred place associated with the realm of the ancestors.
- 16 ► arup.cas.cz accessed on 25-10-2013.
- 17 From 2004-2010, the priority programme 'Early Celtic Princely Centres' funded large-scale excavations and prospection of a substantial part of the surrounding area of the Heuneburg , Bad Dürkheim, Ipf and the Glauberg ► fuerstensitze.de accessed on 26-10-2013; Ongoing research focusses on the chronological and functional connection between the Heuneburg central settlement, the defensive ring and the external settlement (► fuerstensitze.de accessed on 26-10-2013).
- 18 Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2013, 482.
- 19 Ibid. 475.
- 20 Ibid. 476.
- 21 The Alteburg which is partially excavated offers ample indications for ritual activity.
- 22 Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2013, 477.
- 23 During the lecture the evidence for this Etruscan influence was questioned and debated. See for references Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2012b, 32.
- 24 Some of these Hillforts continued after the destruction of the Late Hallstatt settlement of the Heuneburg (Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2013, 477-8).
- 25 Ibid. 484.
- 26 Ibid. 485.
- 27 Hill 2006, 172, 179.
- 28 For example Ipf and Závist are ignored in the argumentation. Furthermore, the evidence of the quite similar Hohenasperg is ignored.
- 29 Hill 2006, 169.
- 30 Ibid. 172.
- 31 See notes 7, 9, 13, 19.

- 32 Smith 2007, 4.
- 33 Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2013, 480.
- 34 Population overlaps with settlement size, because settlement size is a factor in the calculation of the population estimate.
- 35 Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2013, 479-480, 484.
- 36 The problems with these aspects of the definition may be due to the fact that 'permanently living together in a relatively small area' is part of definitions of the modern city, of which the movement of a significant larger number of the people (>50%) from rural to urban areas is a defining characteristic (Long R. 1998: *Urbanization Sociology*. Encyclopedia Britannica Article, [▶csbs.utsa.edu](http://csbs.utsa.edu) accessed on 25.10.2001).
- 37 Wirth 1938, 8.
- 38 Ibid. 9-10.
- 39 Ibid. note 10.
- 40 Ibid. 12-16.
- 41 See e.g. Kaenel 2010, 568-570.
- 42 Herodotus, Historiën II, 33.
- 43 The references that state this number of inhabitants are Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2012a, 120 and Fernández-Götz / Krausse 2013, 478, which do not offer an explanatory calculation. Calculations are available in Kurz 2010, and Kurz 2005, 23.
- 44 [▶fuerstensitze.de](http://fuerstensitze.de), last updated on 21-2-2008 and last accessed by author on 22-04-2015.
- 45 See for a crop estimation of the 1.5km surrounding radius of the Heuneburg [▶slideshare.net](http://slideshare.net) (slide 81) accessed on 01-10-2013.
- 46 Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2013, 483.
- 47 For example, the Glauberg and Závist present clear examples of such a regional cult centre function.
- 48 Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2013, 480-481.
- 49 Snodgrass 2006, H13.
- 50 Fernández-Götz refers to Gosden 1985 (Fernández-Götz/Krausse 2013, 479). In addition, the discovery of a wealthy burial for a young child is an indicator of inherited status (ibid.480).
- 51 Murray and Arnold: working research design, theme 2 [▶pantherfile.uwm.edu](http://pantherfile.uwm.edu) accessed on 01-10-2013.

The rise of urbanism in Early Europe: A dialogue – Part 2: Response

MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE HALLSTATT PERIOD: A COMPARATIVE VIEW

The genesis of large fortified central places is one of the most important phenomena in Later Prehistoric Europe. In temperate Western Europe, the origins of urbanism have long been identified with the emergence of the *oppida* of the second and first centuries BC, considered to be the 'earliest cities north of the Alps'.¹ However, large-scale research projects carried out over recent years have started to challenge this long-established view, to the point that nowadays it is possible to assert that the term 'urban' already applies to some of the so-called *Fürstensitze* or 'princely sites' of the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène periods, i.e. around 400 years before the Late La Tène *oppida*.² The purpose of my 2013 lecture in Amsterdam was to present and develop these new insights, which continue to constitute one of my central research interests.³ Studying cities in a long-term and cross-cultural perspective links the past with the present, allowing a better understanding of one of the most important developments in human history.⁴ In what follows I will present some reflections that complement the comments made by Karin Scharringhausen in her review.

The 'classic' model of the Late Hallstatt *Fürstensitze* was presented by the Tübingen professor, Wolfgang Kimmig, in 1969. It was based primarily on the results of the excavations at the Heuneburg. He defined the discovered sites as political and administrative centres with a separate fortified central area on an elevated site. There were finds of objects from the Mediterranean, and sumptuous burials in the surrounding area. For a long time this picture remained the standard model in Central European scholarship. Authors such as W. Kimmig, E. Sangmeister and H. Zürn reconstructed a vertical stratification of society in Württemberg with three or four layers. Analogous to medieval feudal society or the aristocracy of the Early Archaic period, the richest burials were attributed to a ruling or aristocratic stratum which was proposed to stand at the top of a social pyramid. The middle of the pyramid consisted of a more or less wealthy class of persons who were free. Opinions varied as to whether the poor at the bottom were free men, or serfs.

However, since then the results of recent years have led to the conclusion that the settlements that are described as *Fürstensitze* are in

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fact structurally much more complicated. They did not constitute in anyway a unified group of settlements.⁵ They were rather centres of power that often differed significantly from each other concerning the date of their establishment, their architecture and their function as a central place. Common to almost all of them is the fact that they were inhabited for a relatively short period that only spanned a few generations, mostly for 100-200 years. Given these new results, it seems appropriate to apply the term 'town' to at least some of these centres of power such as the Heuneburg during the mudbrick wall period, or Bourges (Figure 1).

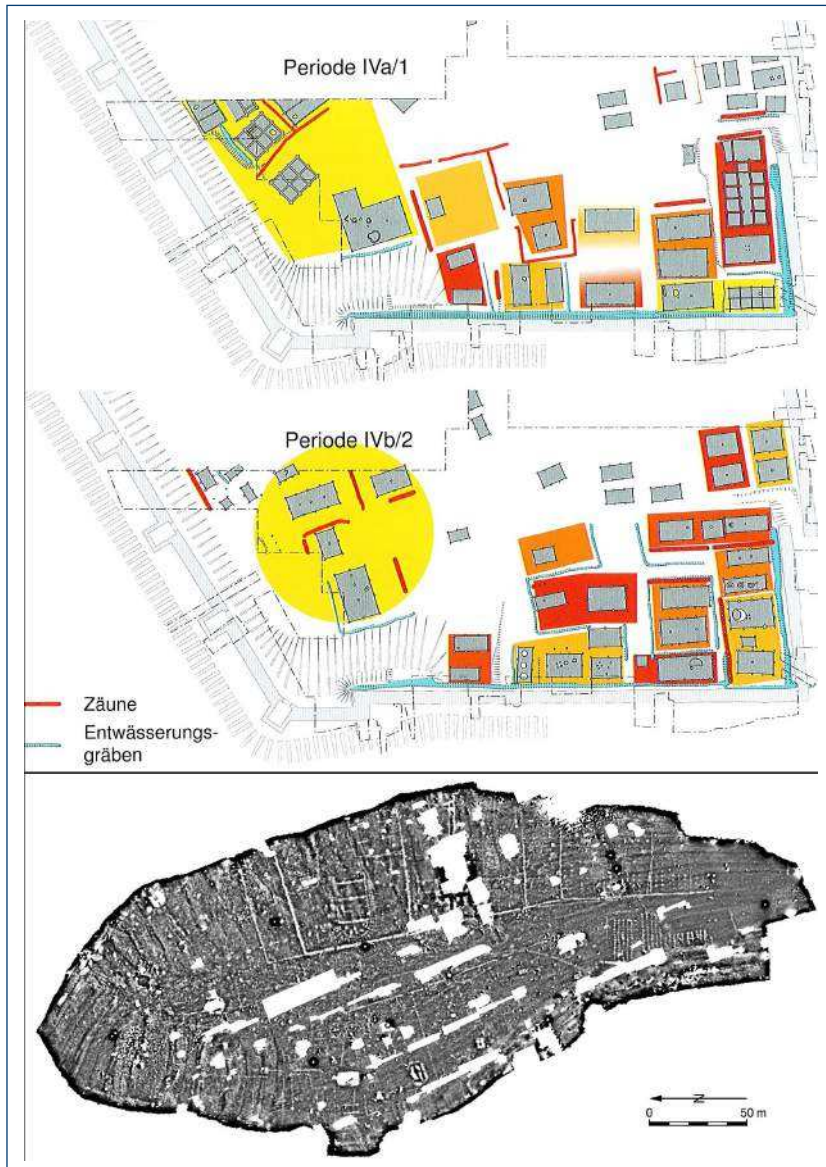


Figure 1

Two examples of regular settlement layouts as evidence for town planning in the Late Hallstatt period.

Top: Heuneburg, plans of the settlement during the mudbrick wall phase.

Bottom: Mont Lassois, geomagnetic plan of the plateaus

(after Krausse et al. 2012).

But other central places like the Glauberg these seem to have been enormous assembly places, refuges or cult sites rather than 'towns'. Reflecting on the diverse nature of the concept of Early Iron Age urbanism Michael E. Smith has recently stated:

"From one perspective, the question of whether the Heuneburg is classified as an urban settlement is not important. For our understanding of

that site, it is far more important to describe and explain the particular manifestations of Iron Age life and society than to classify the settlement [...] But from the broader perspective of comparative urbanism, re-classifying the Heuneburg as an urban settlement has two big advantages. First, it allows data from that site – and other Early Iron Age sites – to contribute to discussions of the nature of urbanism around the world. Comparative urban scholars can add another case – a unique and fascinating case – to our sample of early urban societies. Second, archaeologists who work at the Heuneburg can draw on the concepts and insights of comparative urban studies to add richness to their reconstructions of life, society, and change at the Heuneburg”.⁶

‘TRIANGULAR’ SOCIETIES AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES

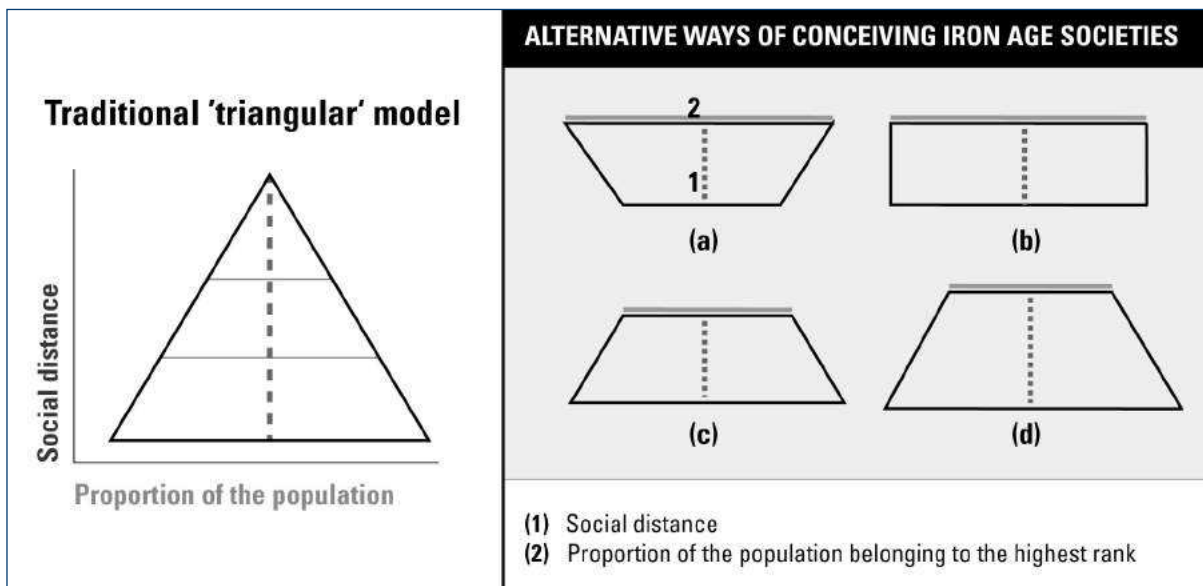
Apart from the mudbrick wall, in the case of the Heuneburg, evidence of Mediterranean contact and influence is minimal until the restructuring that took place after the big fire of around 540 BC.⁷ Thus, trade with the Mediterranean was not the main drive of cultural change, but rather a consequence of population growth and increasing internal inequalities. In other words: even if the genesis of the *Fürstentum* cannot be analysed completely independent of the simultaneous processes of urbanisation in the Mediterranean, it will have been above all indigenous factors that were responsible for their foundation. Rich burials of the phase Hallstatt C in Germany, such as Gomadingen on the Swabian Alb or the Prunkbestattung from Frankfurt-Oberad, bear witness to the fact that the increase in social hierarchisation and the development of powerful local elites had begun several decades before the arrival of the Greek colonists in the South of France and the foundation of Massalia (Marseille) soon before 600 BC, and so were primarily of an indigenous nature.

Analysis of the vegetational history indicates that in the sixth century BC for the first time there was dense settlement in the highland regions north of the Alps, areas with relatively poor climatic and agricultural conditions. This process of settling new land must have been immediately preceded by a period of increase in population.⁸ We can assume that apart from technical innovations such as iron production and politico-organisational improvements, a period of climatically favourable conditions in the late seventh and sixth centuries BC also led to a growth in population and the settlement of new areas. These factors – population growth and an increase in available arable land and other economic resources – formed the real basis of the wealth of the social elite that is so impressively visible to us in the form of the so-called ‘princely graves’ (*Fürstengräber*). It is probable that the political and social upper class played a decisive role in the process of centralisation, because without suitable social conditions to guarantee exchange, trade and a minimum degree of social stability, it is hard to imagine the extent of growth and centralisation visible in the archaeological record.

In fact, Late Hallstatt communities – or at least a significant number of

them – constitute a good example of the social ‘triangular’ model described by Jeremy D. Hill in 2011.⁹ Two main characteristics of Hill’s model are: a significant social distance between the members of Iron Age societies, and very few individuals occupying the highest level, whether they are referred to as chiefs, elites or aristocracy. However, archaeological evidence reveals very varied patterns of societies during the First Millennium BC in Europe, from those that display marked signs of social hierarchy, such as the communities of the so-called Late Hallstatt ‘princely seats’, to others such as those of the Iron Age Sorian hillforts in Central Spain where social differentiation was much less pronounced.¹⁰ Regional differences, synchronic and diachronic, need to be recognised and evaluated, since different types of communities with a variety of social configurations, settlement and burial patterns, ideologies, etc. would have coexisted and interacted (Figure 2). There was no uniform Iron Age society, but several Iron Age societies. The task is therefore to reconsider Protohistoric societies from the perspective of diversity, but at the same time being aware of the danger of replacing one monolithic model of ‘triangular’ hierarchical warrior societies with another, which is equally simplistic and static, in which there was little or no social differentiation before ‘Romanization’.

Figure 2
Traditional ‘triangular’ model of social organisation and alternative ways of conceiving Iron Age societies (created by author adapted from Hill 2011, Fig. 10.1).



CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONTESTED POWER

It is important to stress that the early process of centralisation and urbanisation that led to the development of the *Fürstentum* was followed by a phase of decentralisation that set in at different times in different areas. In fact, if we take a broader look we can assert that there was no continual evolutionary development on a European scale from simple to more complex forms of settlements and socio-political organisation during the Iron Age, but rather multi-layered, changing and dynamic cycles of centralisation and decentralisation.¹¹ Very generally, and still in peril of

over-simplification, it is possible to establish the following sequence in the area immediately north of the Alps:

- 1 a first phase of centralisation occurred in the *Fürstensitze* of the sixth and fifth centuries BC;
- 2 followed by a phase of decentralisation, which largely coincided with the stage referred to as the 'Celtic migrations';
- 3 and a new phase of centralisation that would lead to the development of large unenclosed centres and of the fortified *oppida* of the second and first centuries BC.

This sequence is in marked contrast with the developments that can be observed in wide areas of the Mediterranean world, where many major settlements show a continual, relatively gradual development from the Early Iron Age to Roman times, and sometimes even up to the present day.¹²

The reasons for these structural shifts and changes in the landscape of power are still unclear. But it can be assumed that the changes did not always take place peacefully. For example, at Mont Lassois the heads of two statues at the sanctuary of 'Les Herbues', situated in front of the hilltop, were broken off. Apparently, this took place towards the end of the Hallstatt period. Probably at the end of Period 1 the fate of the Heuneburg was sealed by a catastrophic fire that almost completely destroyed the fortification and the buildings within the acropolis. The fact that the destruction level was relatively full of finds goes against the idea that the abandonment of the site was planned. It would seem that soon after 400 BC nearly all of the early centres of power had come to an end. It is likely that this change was linked to the social processes that were involved in the migration of 'Celtic' groups to Italy and as far as the Balkans that are mentioned by historical sources.

The circumstances leading to the decline of the *Fürstensitze* most likely operated at different levels, so that explanations based on a single cause are insufficient. But there are indications that one of the catalysts was climate change: analysis of cores from the Greenland icecap indicate that as early as the first half of the fifth century BC temperatures dropped in the entire northern hemisphere, followed by a rapid environmental degradation around 400 BC.¹³ The cooler climate certainly will not have made the areas settled in Southern Germany or Eastern France uninhabitable, but it could have led to poor harvests in the areas which had been colonised just a few generations earlier.¹⁴ This may have led to famine and migration. At the macroperspective level, the main climatic periods of the first millennium BC do indeed correspond with the most important stages of the processes of centralisation and decentralisation that took place north of the Alps.¹⁵ The processes that led to the establishment of the Late Hallstatt *Fürstensitze* or the Late Latène *oppida* coincide with climatically warmer periods, while the Celtic migrations of the fourth century BC took place during a colder period (Figure 3). However, if we look at the situation in detail, then numerous nuances and exceptions must be

taken into account. Thus the environmental indicators do not explain so clearly why some centres of power such as Heuneburg or Mont Lassois were abandoned half-way around the fifth century BC, while others such as Breisacher Münsterberg or Hohenasperg continued to function during the second half of the same century.

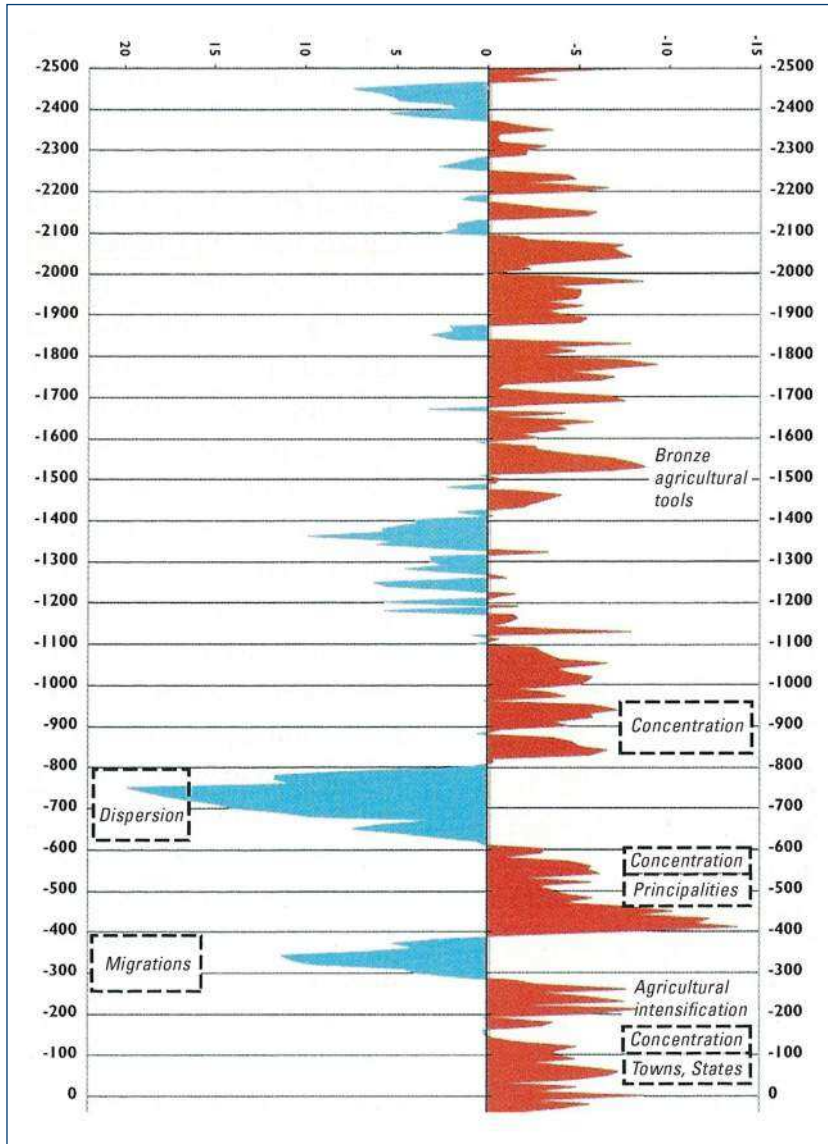


Figure 3

Evolution of solar activity between ca. 2500 BC and the beginning of the Common Era, with cold periods marked in blue and warmer periods in red (after Brun/Ruby 2008).

An explanatory model that should be considered, and is perhaps complementary to the climate change model, concerns the role of migration as a mechanism for regulating power relationships. The emigration of part of the population can indeed be a means of reducing social inequalities. As a whole series of historical and ethnological studies demonstrate, during the course of history societies have employed various strategies in order to counter the development of state organisations. The separation of part of the group is a mechanism that is often used in this process, and in the case of the early Celtic societies could also have served as a reaction to the increasing social inequalities of the sixth and fifth centuries BC north of the Alps.¹⁶

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NOTES

- 1 To paraphrase the title of the famous book by Prof. John Collis, 1984: *Oppida: earliest towns north of the Alps*.
- 2 Krause 2008, 2010; Sievers and Schönfelder 2012.
- 3 See e.g. Fernández-Götz 2014b; Fernández-Götz and Krause 2013; Fernández-Götz and Krause forthcoming; Fernández-Götz et al. 2014.
- 4 Clark 2013; Smith 2012.
- 5 Krause 2008; 2010.
- 6 Smith 2014, v.
- 7 Krause et al. 2015.
- 8 Fernández-Götz 2014a; Krause 2006.

- 9 Hill 2011.
- 10 Ruiz Zapatero/Fernández-Götz 2009.
- 11 Fernández-Götz 2014a; Salaç 2012.
- 12 Garcia 2013.
- 13 Maise 1998; Sirocko 2009.
- 14 These areas were less favourable for settlement, but cultivated due to population growth.
- 15 Brun/Ruby 2008, 55; Fernández-Götz 2014a, 134-137.
- 16 Demoule 1999; Fernández-Götz 2014a, 138-141.