



Publikationen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts

Asuman Lätzer-Lasar

Challenging the Concept of »Landscape Biography« – Theoretical Considerations on Cult Transfers in the Roman Empire by Using the Case Study of the Mater Magna Veneration

in: Marzoli et al. - Kontaktmodi: Ergebnisse der gemeinsamen Treffen der Arbeitsgruppen »Mobilität und Migration« und »Zonen der Interaktion« (2013–2018) 85–95

<https://doi.org/10.34780/8663-9o6j>

Herausgebende Institution / Publisher:
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

Copyright (Digital Edition) © 2024 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0
Email: info@dainst.de | Web: <https://www.dainst.org>

Nutzungsbedingungen :

Mit dem Herunterladen erkennen Sie die [Nutzungsbedingungen](#) von iDAI.publications an. Sofern in dem Dokument nichts anderes ausdrücklich vermerkt ist, gelten folgende Nutzungsbedingungen: Die Nutzung der Inhalte ist ausschließlich privaten Nutzerinnen / Nutzern für den eigenen wissenschaftlichen und sonstigen privaten Gebrauch gestattet. Sämtliche Texte, Bilder und sonstige Inhalte in diesem Dokument unterliegen dem Schutz des Urheberrechts gemäß dem Urheberrechtsgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Inhalte können von Ihnen nur dann genutzt und vervielfältigt werden, wenn Ihnen dies im Einzelfall durch den Rechteinhaber oder die Schrankenregelungen des Urheberrechts gestattet ist. Jede Art der Nutzung zu gewerblichen Zwecken ist untersagt. Zu den Möglichkeiten einer Lizenzierung von Nutzungsrechten wenden Sie sich bitte direkt an die verantwortlichen Herausgeber*innen der jeweiligen Publikationsorgane oder an die Online-Redaktion des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (info@dainst.de). Etwaige davon abweichende Lizenzbedingungen sind im Abbildungsnachweis vermerkt.

Terms of use :

By downloading you accept the [terms of use](#) of iDAI.publications. Unless otherwise stated in the document, the following terms of use are applicable: All materials including texts, articles, images and other content contained in this document are subject to the German copyright. The contents are for personal use only and may only be reproduced or made accessible to third parties if you have gained permission from the copyright owner. Any form of commercial use is expressly prohibited. When seeking the granting of licenses of use or permission to reproduce any kind of material please contact the responsible editors of the publications or contact the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (info@dainst.de). Any deviating terms of use are indicated in the credits.

Challenging the Concept of »Landscape Biography« – Theoretical Considerations on Cult Transfers in the Roman Empire by Using the Case Study of the Mater Magna Veneration*

by Asuman Lätzer-Lasar

Introduction

In Antiquity, it was not unusual for the Romans to introduce deities from different geographical regions to their cities, such as Hercules, Ceres or Venus Erycina for instance¹. However, these »cult imports« affected – at least by their materiality – the local society and its culture, the way of quotidian life as well as the religious beliefs. The changes fostered transformations that archaeologists try to understand and reconstruct retrospectively in order to address overarching objectives, such as the globalization of religions in the Roman empire². For this purpose, the frequent use of concepts deriving from different disciplines, such as cultural studies or sociology, enables us to analyze in detail the cultural, social and religious transformation processes. The concept of landscape biography seems a suitable tool for an analytical and interpretative approach to religious change in urban space. Deriving from the discipline of human geography or anthropology, the concept of landscape biography serves as an interface between various disciplines, such as

geography, anthropology, archaeology, history, sociology and cultural studies. The multifold perspective on the research object captures more details of the complex transformation processes and allows comprehensive research objectives.

The paper is structured by focussing on two aspects: the first aspect of »place-making« deals with the location of the main buildings of the Mater Magna veneration in Rome: the Temple on the Palatine and the Phrygianum on the Vatican. The integration of architecture into the existing urban grid led to the creation of a palimpsest consisting of historic layers mirroring the complexity and highly symbolic meaning of the specific urban space. It is the aim of the paper to elaborate the details, especially the mutual transformations that occurred between urbanity and religious practices. The second aspect concentrates on the translocality of the specific Mater Magna cult from the Phrygianum. The sanctuary of this concrete urban spot became famous for its religious city-scape which later resulted in a distribution to the cities of the Roman provinces.

History of the concept

In the late 1970s the human geographer Marwyn Samuels introduced the metaphor of biography to landscape studies to stress the role of human

individuals in the shaping of their environment³. The shaping process included impressions (ideas and images) as well as expressions (physical

* Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – FOR 2779

¹ Orlin 2010, passim.

² Collar 2013; Cancik – Rüpke 2003.

³ Samuels 1979, 51–88.

manifestations)⁴. This paved the way for the development of the concept of object biography by Igor Kopytoff in the 1980s. In the second chapter of the ground-breaking book of Arjun Appadurai Kopytoff elaborates his concept of the cultural biography of things in order to address the same questions to things that until then had been addressed to humans in anthropological studies, such as questions on genesis, careers, cultural markers, change of use in age, as well as end of usefulness⁵. This set of questions allowed to analyze the cultural construction of a given entity in detail.

In the 1990s Kenneth Olwig tried to go beyond a purely aesthetic view on landscape and included lived significances, such as law for instance⁶. The problem of hierarchy was contested, when the post-structuralist Michel de Certeau determined the authors as »ordinary practitioners«⁷. Following this, not only elites of city administrators, but also residents, visitors, and passers-by could shape the environment. Even technology became an actor in this process.

Almost at the same time Denis Cosgrove, a cultural geographer, extended the metaphor to a concept that elaborates the power relations and symbolic representations in a landscape⁸. This phenomenological approach had a strong impact that unfortunately led to a separation of two different research directions: Whereas one part of the researchers focused on landscapes as social and symbolic constructions, the other part pursued to only map and describe the physical characteristics of landscapes⁹.

However, anthropologists, for instance Hans Peter Hahn, who first supported the concept of an object biography, are now withdrawing object as well as landscape biography for the same reasons¹⁰. One of the main three arguments, which were mentioned against an object or landscape biography is that a landscape is not an entity capable of possessing individual features like DNA. Neither has it a beginning (like birth) or a concrete end¹¹. Hahn argues that firstly objects or landscapes are not a single organism, like a cell or a bacterium. They are not born and they do

not die. However, at the same time, he considers archaeological objects zombies with a second life. Secondly, he mentions that landscape is no entity with its own identity. If you would take a piece away from that landscape (like a building or a tree) the landscape would only be a fragment and somehow loose its identity¹². And thirdly, he explains that the single parts of a landscape have a temporal structure. The meaning of every part changes when associated with other parts, or when being looked at separately. In conclusion, according to Hahn, landscape should be rather regarded as an assemblage¹³.

However, on the contrary one could argue that a human being, too, ought to be regarded as an assemblage and not at all as an entity. A body consists of many parts that function independently and/or together with one another, connected by nerves, muscles and veins. Some of these parts might fall apart, such as teeth or hair, but the human being does not necessarily lose its identity then. It might change the identity though. But the same applies to landscapes. Cutting down the trees of a park does not make the park a non-park. It will still be recognized as the park, but its identity as a place with a luscious flora changes just as the perception of the people seeing the park will gradually change. After time, it is likely that the inhabitants will not perceive the former park as such and forget about its original meaning. In adaption to sacred city-scapes in Antiquity this means that removing temples or graves, for instance, will not necessarily destroy the identity of the place as sacred area. Instead it forms a multi-layered complex identity that changes congruently with the collective memory of the city and its inhabitants. The identity of the place being sacred or holy might fade though. Sometimes hints of having been a sacred place once might still remain in the denomination of the place, for instance. However, the issue of transferring the identity of a sacred place to a culturally different place seems to be a more urgent question for this paper and will be analyzed by means of a concrete example: the Magna Mater veneration.

4 Gomez 1998, 8.

5 Kopytoff 1986; Kopytoff 2001, 11 f.

6 Olwig 1996, *passim*.

7 de Certeau 1984, *passim*.

8 Cosgrove 1998, *passim*.

9 Kolen – Renes 2015, 21–47.

10 Hahn 2015, see also Joy 2015.

11 Hahn 2015, 19 f.

12 Hahn 2015, 21–23.

13 Hahn 2015, 23–25.

Case study of the Cybele / Magna Mater veneration

Predecessors of the goddess Mater Magna can be traced back to the Bronze Age. Known as Kubaba, in the Iron Age as Matar Kubeleya, and after the Archaic period as Cybele, the goddess was located in the sparse landscape of Phrygia¹⁴. First cult places appeared in caves or at cut-out places in the rocky hills. The early iconography¹⁵ depicts a goddess standing inside an architectonic form; the narrow naiskos became a standard framing tool in depictions of the Hellenistic period¹⁶. Furthermore, the goddess wears a polos on her head. Her garment seems to consist of several thick layers.

In the Archaic and Classical period, feline predators accompanied Cybele; they sit next to her throne or even on her lap emphasizing her powerful relation to or over nature (*potnia theron*)¹⁷. During the Hellenistic period the goddess evolved into a protector of cities symbolized by a turreted crown on her head. A fixed component of her iconography is the tympanon, which stands for the musical processions or the orgiastic dancing to loud music that took place during the rituals. At that time, the primary role of the priests was to utter prophecies induced by frenetic dancing that resulted in a trance state¹⁸.

The cult spread over Greece and the Greek colonies to Italy. First pieces of evidence can be found in Brindisi and Sicily from the 7th century onwards¹⁹. However, the time of the introduction and first appearance in Rome is yet unclear. There is no archaeological evidence that the cult was practiced in the city of Rome before the 2nd century B.C. Literary sources, which were written much later, such as Livy, Vergil and Ovid, describe the circumstances of the cult introduction in the year 204 B.C.²⁰. According to them, the Sibylline books and the Delphi Oracle foretold that victory over Hannibal and his African troops, who occupied parts of Italy, would only be achieved after the Idaean mother had been brought to Rome. At this time, Rome was battling two strong enemies: Hannibal and the arch-enemy Carthage, as well as king Philip V in the First Macedonian War (between 215–205 B.C.). It seems that the cult transfer could also be

part of a diplomatic tactic to strengthen the Roman alliance with the Pergamene kingdom, the origin of the mythical ancestors of Rome. A similar strategy had been used before in the year 217 B.C., during the Second Punic War, when the Romans transferred the Greek-Punic Venus Erycina from Sicily to Rome²¹. Cult imports were supposed to guarantee military successes. However, Rome also dealt with internal struggles between political parties such as the Gracchi, the gens Cornelia and the gens Claudia. Each political party used the cult transfer to their own advantage. Via the cult they linked their gens with military success in order to strengthen their political party in the collective memory of the city.

These cult transfers brought social and cultural changes with them, as can be seen by the literary and archaeological evidence. The installation in a different physical, social, legislative and cultural environment provoked appropriation tactics. For instance, the physical implementation on the Palatine hill, an exposed place in the core of the city centre, stands in contrast to the sanctuaries known from Phrygia. They could have built the temple of Mater Magna at other places in Rome, for example outside of the pomerium on the Campus Martius, but the political actors chose the closeness to the sanctuary of Victoria and to the mythical remains of the city: the archaic house of Romulus and the Lupercal. In doing so, the political actors created an area that concentrated on displaying and narrating the city's history. By shaping this area into a combination of an open-air museum and a memorial site with special regulations regarding the accessibility of the buildings – only once a year the priesthood of the Mater Magna temple opened its doors and allowed everyday people to enter the sanctuary – the urban flux was controlled by the people governing the city. By not allowing any Roman citizen to become a priest of Mater Magna until the emperor Claudius repealed this law, the area up until then must have been dominated by exotic looking foreigners; people from Asia Minor wearing richly ornamented robes (*regalia*) and long hair (fig. 1).

14 Roller 1999, 45–52; Radner 2005, 544 f.

15 Naumann-Steckner 1983.

16 LIMC VIII (1997), 744–766 s. v. Kybele (E. Simon); Simon 1987, 158 f.; Vikela 2001, 67–123.

17 Roller 1999, 135.

18 Alvar 2008, 276 mit Anm. 176.

19 Pedrucci 2009, *passim*.

20 Berneder 2004, *passim*.

21 Orlin 2010, 76.

With the transfer from Asia Minor to Rome, the poor mythological background of the deity was extended and intermingled with the history of the city of Rome. New myths about the arrival were created and their themes entered the visual culture: An altar from the 1st century B.C., found at the foot of the Aventine near the banks of the river Tiber, shows the key scene of the goddess' arrival (fig. 2)²². The female counterpart of the *vir optimus* named Claudia Quinta stands on the right side holding a rope that is tied around a ship on which the goddess sits. Evidently, the arrival on a ship is a close parallel to Aeneas, the mythical founder of Rome. Even authors like Ovid state that Cybele actually wanted to join Aeneas on his journey to Rome, but could not leave Mount Ida²³.

The inscription names Claudia Synthychē, most probably a freed woman who played an im-

portant role in the religious community, as the donor of this altar and of a second one to Mater Deum and Navisalvia, the saviour of the ship. The latter might be a divinized figuration of Claudia Quinta²⁴. The concrete spot of the altar is not known, however, being near the banks of the river Tiber, it may be that the priestess wanted to display her dedication to this goddess near one of the stations during the *fasti* and the religious processions. At least once a year during the *Hilaria* on the day of the *lavatio* on 23rd of March, the purification day when the statue of the goddess and ritual instruments were washed in the river, people participating in the procession as well as by-standers had the possibility to pass the dedicatory altar, read the inscription and see the image of the Navisalvia scene. Claudia Synthychē claimed this open spot in the city by physically setting her name there.

Place-Making in the city of Rome

When implementing the cult on the Palatine hill the city administrators – according to the building inscription Brutus and Scipio Nasica were two of them – decided to commission a building of a hexastyle pseudo-peripteros in a Corinthian order next to the temple of Victoria²⁵. The close connection between these two goddesses consolidated the primary meaning of the Mater Magna in the collective memory as defeater of Hannibal and redeemer of the city of Rome. The *fasti Antiates maiores* mention that besides Brutus the *vir optimus* of the myth named Scipio Nasica was consul of the year 191 B.C. and sponsored the temple.

During the 1980s and 1990s Patrizio Pensabene and his team conducted extensive excavations on the Palatine hill²⁶. He was able to confirm several building phases of the initial temple: he dates the first phase into the Republican period due to the fact that the dedicatory inscription, which has not been found yet, but is mentioned in the late antique *fasti Antiates maiores*, provides a precise date: the 10th of April 191 B.C. As previously men-

tioned, any primary archaeological evidence of that inscription is lacking though. Furthermore, Pensabene dates the second phase to the year 111 B.C. when Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus restored the building. A basin that was erected during the first and second building phases in front of the temple was then shifted during the third building phase to the back side in the west, which points to a change in the ritual practices at the temple. After the shifting of the basin, the façade established a clear visual relationship with the front space. The widening of the front square might have become an important feature during the festivals for the goddess in order to host a higher amount of people there. In the year A.D. 3 after the fire destruction of the temple, Augustus had it renovated in A.D. 10, as is stated in the *res gestae*. The renovated temple of the Augustan period was not built of marble, but of Peperino tuff with a 1.5 cm thick layer of stucco/plaster on it, and the podium was made of *opus caementitium* and reddish tuff from Fidenae²⁷. Only the

22 Altar of the Magna Mater, Arachne database No. 16367; Helbig 1966, Cat. no. 1175; Jones 1912, 181, Cat. No. 109b, pl. 43.

23 Ov. *fast.* 4.251–254; Gruen 1990, 18.

24 Villogorac Brčić 2012, 373–379.

25 A temple type that occurred commonly in Rome at that time, see Mattern 2000, 153.

26 Pensabene 1979–1995.

27 Mattern 2000, 141.



1 Relief of a priest of Mater Magna, Rome Capitoline Museum, first half of the 2nd century A.D.



2 Altar for Mater Magna, Rome Capitoline Museum, mid 1st century A.D.

floor of the cella and the inner walls were covered with marble plates. However, Torsten Mattern convincingly expounded that the building materials stand in a local tradition of the 1st century A.D. and cannot be interpreted as degradation because of their supposedly poor quality²⁸. It rather seems that the appearance of the façade was adjusted to the historical buildings in the surroundings and emphasized a much more authentic style.

In a fourth building phase during the Flavian period the south area of the temple was extended towards the Circus Maximus. Under Hadrian two more floors of substructures were presumably added. Brick stamps from this construction derived from the *figlinae Macedoniana*, which provides a *terminus ante quem* of A.D. 134²⁹. Again, the sanctuary might have needed much more space for hosting the worshippers, especially during the *fasti* in March and then again in April. Celebrating two festivals shortly after another might have helped to institutionalize the veneration of the goddess, which fostered the long-term development of the Palatine cult for almost 600 years. However, until now, it is still unclear if the sanctuary was active during and after the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410, then by the Vandals in A.D. 454 and later.

With the installation of an official cult on the Palatine hill and its admittance to the Roman pantheon, festival games in honour of the goddess, the so-called *ludi megalenses*, were included in the calendar of the *fasti*. Probably starting in the year of the inauguration of the Palatine temple, the festival was at first celebrated for two days, but was then extended in the Imperial period to eight days (4th to 11th of April)³⁰. Financed by the *curule aediles* the scenic games were held in theatres and on the staircase in front of the temple. Some *curule aediles* minted special editions of coins to commemorate their *euergetism* and disseminate this information to the broad public. While early coinage shows the close connection between Mater Magna and Victoria, a new iconographical type was created in the 1st century B.C.: not Victoria, but Mater Magna was now sitting on a throne-like seat on a *biga* that was pulled by two lions³¹. The semantic

alignment of Mater Magna with the goddess of victory as well as the concept of the silver coin as »*bigati*«, a coin classification for *denarii* usual in Rome³², were the relevant factors for the creation of this new iconographical type.

Although political actors supported and obviously used the veneration of Mater Magna for their own purposes, it did not become a cult for the elites. Catalyzed by limitations and restrictions for both Roman citizens and the priesthood, the goddess was worshipped by diverse social groups, mostly migrants and slaves³³. Self-castration was required in order to become a priest of the Mater Magna, but it was forbidden for Roman citizens. Therefore, until Claudius only peregrines and slaves had in fact the possibility to enter the priesthood³⁴. The appearance of the priests is well attested archaeologically³⁵, as well as through several literary sources. Roman authors, such as Cassius Dio and Juvenal, stressed the effeminacy of the priests and degraded them by stating that the religious practices of the Mater Magna priests were not suitable for a good Roman citizen. The priesthood was governed by Roman law and was subject to severe limitations: extreme rituals, such as the castration, or the orgiastic dancing-parades for instance, were only allowed during the *fasti*. Nonetheless, the cult gained much popularity in Rome.

The goddess Mater Magna was worshipped at different spots in the city. Besides the Palatine temple, another important sanctuary was erected during the imperial period: the Phrygianum on the Vatican hill. The sanctuary was situated on the other side of the Tiber at the margin of the city. In the earlier research history, the reasons for the peri-urban location were sought in conjunction with the bloody religious practices, such as the *taurobolium*, which were suggested to stand in as substitute for the prohibition of the self-castration as an initiation rite. The argument was that for a blood baptism the religious community needed space³⁶. However, considering the already existing size of the sanctuary on the Palatine hill with its wide staircase, other, more profane reasons such as the availability of free open land seem also likely. The establishment of the

28 Mattern 2000, 145.

29 Owner is the suffect consul T. Statilius Maximus Severus Hadrianus, see Bodel 1983, 57.

30 Bernstein 1998, 237.

31 <https://www.coinarchives.com/3e5bdb39fc8ef8f13a848f1db0fa877c/img/roma/e42/image00480.jpg> (02.06.2020).

32 Halke 1909, 43.

33 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II, 19.2–4; Cumont 1956, 52–56.

34 Vermaseren 1997, 97; Lancellotti 2002, 81.

35 Relief with priest, *Arachne* database no. 14203.

36 Biering – von Hesberg 1987, 165; Blänsdorf 2012, *passim*.

taurobolium as religious practice specifically conducted at the mons Vaticanus could be connected to an easily accessible urban infrastructure or the convenient availability of cattle in this area. When a city inhabitant of Rome wanted to participate in his or her initiation ritual, then he or she had to visit this specific urban spot. The Vatican hill became coded with the taurobolium. Evidences of this entanglement between urban spot and religious practice can be traced supra-regionally, for instance in the cities of Lugdunum³⁷ and Mogontiacum³⁸.

Though, the location of the Phrygianum is not ensured. Earlier research argued for a location in the south of what is today St. Peter's Church, where almost 21 dedicatory altars – referring to the sanctuary and the specific ritual of

the taurobolium – were found. They give a strong hint pointing to the circular building that was erected on the spina of the circus Gai³⁹. A copperplate engraving of Maarten van Heemskerck from the 16th century provides a rough idea of how the suspected building could have looked like⁴⁰. Biering and von Hesberg interpreted the construction with trapezoidal pillars, in between which lay eight square niches covered by half vaults, as the Phrygianum⁴¹. It is striking that with the construction of the Constantinian St. Peter's Church in A.D. 318/320 the number of dedicatory altars for the deity increased. Two altars are even dated to A.D. 390 when the pagan cults were already prohibited by law. One could think that this might be evidence for a tactic used by specific religious groups to claim urban space.

Conclusion

Landscape, physical and phenomenological, can be considered a very complex assemblage, consisting of manifold parts that create a specific identity. The identity of a landscape may change dynamically, new components or parts are added, others are extracted or simply dissolve. The identity of a landscape is influenced by social, cultural, historical, political and religious circumstances, as well as by their physical conditions, all in a state of constant transformation. Each part of the assemblage may affect the identity of the landscape, and from each perspective the identity may be recognized as a different one. In regard to the process of creating and possessing complex dynamical identities, which change in a contingent way, landscapes can be set equal to human beings. This is the reason why »landscape biography« appears to be a suitable term to describe and analyze the development of a geographical setting entangled with the social, cultural, historical, political and religious dimensions from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Improvement of the concept »landscape biography« is provided by the definition of Kolen et al. which

stresses the mutual transformation processes between landscape and inhabitants⁴². In my conclusion, landscape biography is advantageous when analyzing a geographical or topographical entity in a more holistic way by stressing and integrating the specifically non-physical perspectives into the investigation. Especially in the analysis of cities or city districts, their foundation, development and decay can be interpreted not only as a top-down process by focussing on the dominant actors. Instead, the concept of landscape biography provides the possibility to take into account also bottom-up processes initiated by actors, places or even imaginaries.

Coming back to the present example of a sacred city-scape, two questions were of importance:

1.) In how far did the transfer of cults to different cities affect the urban space? and 2.) In how far did urbanity shape religious communication, religious practices or the organization of religious groups in the city?

The latter question and the analysis of phenomena relating to this seem to be still under-represented in the discipline of archaeology.

37 Desbat 1998, 237–277; Audin 1986, 19. Two altar inscriptions mention the Vatican sanctuary: Vermaseren 1986, 131–134, No. 385 and 386; Biering – von Hesberg 1987, 163; Alvar 2008, 265.

38 Witteyer 2004.

39 Biering – von Hesberg 1987, 165.

40 <https://www.wikiart.org/en/maarten-van-heemskerck/st-peter-s-basilica-under-construction> (09.01.2018); Biering – von Hesberg 1987, 147.

41 Biering – von Hesberg 1987, 148.

42 Kolen – Renes 2015.

By using the concept of »transported landscapes« and especially the »biography of landscapes« as a working tool, it has become possible to trace the development of specific cult elements, which were extracted and brought to different urban environments. The present paper addressed various parts of the sacred city-scape, such as religious actors in form of worshippers and priesthood, the political strategies of installing a cult in the city, ethnical changes due to immigration or religious restrictions by Roman law, furthermore, architecture, inscriptions, or the interconnection in trans-urban networks were also analyzed in a synoptic perspective.

The concrete example of the Mater Magna veneration showed that the religious practices changed tremendously when transferring the sacred landscape, which consisted of mobile objects (cult statue), religious practices, but also human beings (priesthood), to Rome. Not only was the topographical or architectural frame significantly different from the primordial landscape, but the religious practices involved in the worship of the goddess changed in the »new« urban context due to the fact that inhabitants of the city appropriated them according to their means. New, specifically Roman, components were added with the creation of a mythological background for the deity Mater Magna that connected her to the mythological ancestor Aeneas. This connection led – together with the connection to Victoria – to a placement of the sanctuary on the Palatine hill. Being located at this prominent and historical spot and with aediles introducing festivals with games and scenic plays on the staircase in front of the Palatine temple, the architecture of the sanctuary had to change (renovation works, such as moving the basin to the side, extending the substructures) in order to accommodate the events.

The taurobolium was not originally part of the veneration of either Cybele or Mater Magna. It was not until the 2nd century that this practice was integrated into the cult practices. The epigraphic evidence from at least two cities in the Roman provinces and the explicit references to the mons Vaticanus for taurobolia and criobolia emphasize the fact that specific urban spots created a religious identity that could be transferred to other cities. Again, not permanent parameters, for instance a magnificent temple architecture, are copied, rather ephemeral practices, such as

the bull sacrifice, were crucial for this urban reference⁴³.

In the end, I would like to stress that the concept of landscape biography seems to be very fruitful in terms of »seeing« and analyzing the topic of investigation as a highly complex, entangled and constantly changing entity. However, the concept – providing a historical and somehow linear approach – does not bring into focus the causality and power of single formation phenomena, overlooking the mutual impacts, and their – sometimes opposing – dynamics.

Zusammenfassung

Dem Beitrag liegt die Frage zugrunde, was passiert, wenn gesellschaftskonstituierende Elemente aus einem Stadtbild, wie z. B. ein religiöses Heiligtum, in eine andere Region übertragen werden und inwieweit die Übertragung materieller, religiöser oder symbolischer Inhalte die dortige soziale Struktur und Kultur sowie den physikalischen urbanen Raum veränderten. Gleichzeitig soll der Frage nachgegangen werden, inwieweit die vorgefundenen oder erst generierten räumlichen, administrativen und sozialen Spezifika des neuen urbanen Kontextes Einfluss auf die Verehrung der Gottheit bzw. die religiösen Praktiken des jeweiligen Kultes hatten.

Für den vorliegenden Artikel dient als konkretes Fallbeispiel der Kybele- bzw. Mater Magna-Kult. Teile seiner religiösen Landschaft, beispielsweise in Form der Kultstatue und in Form von spezifischen religiösen Praktiken, wurden während der römischen Republik von Kleinasien nach Rom transferiert. Um die kulturellen, sozialen und religiösen Transformationen in ihrer Verflechtung und gegenseitigen Beeinflussung analysieren und deuten zu können, wurde das Konzept der »landscape biographies« (Kolen – Renes 2015) herangezogen und auf seine Fruchtbarkeit für die Auswertung der archäologischen Hinterlassenschaften diskutiert. Dabei wird der Fokus auf zwei thematischen Aspekten liegen: 1.) Place-Making: Integration in die bestehende römische Stadtplanung und Transformation des Stadtbilds, -lebens und der Stadtgeschichte; und 2.) Translokalität: Transfer des spezifischen, religiös geprägten Stadtbildes von Rom aus in die Provinzen, am Beispiel von Mainz (Mogontiacum) und Lyon (Lugdunum).

Summary

During the Roman Republic and the imperial period cults or religion(s) were introduced to different places for various reasons. Religion as a constitutive element especially of ancient societies had a high impact on culture, the shaping of urban space and urban life, as well as religious beliefs. However, the spatial dimension as well as the urban actors (emperors, aediles, priests, individual worshippers) also influenced religious practices, and consequently led to religious change. By means of a case study – the Mater Magna veneration – the paper seeks to evaluate in what regard the concept of a »landscape biography« might be useful for the discussion of concrete archaeological contexts. The paper will focus on two main thematic aspects: 1.) »place-making«: Where and how were the deity and its sanctuaries situated and integrated in the previously existing city-scape? How did the city-scape, urban life and the history of the city transform? and 2.) »translocality«: Which elements of the religious city-scape were transferred to the provinces (e. g. Mogontiacum and Lugdunum)? Which transformation phenomena can be detected in the religious practices and/or in the cities after the transfer of the religious city-scape?

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Fig. 1 Foto: C. Faraglia, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 5877

Fig. 2 Foto: B. Malter, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 79.441/
Mal317-02

References

- Alvar 2008** J. E. Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras* (Leiden 2008)
- Audin 1986** A. Audin, *Les fouilles de Lyon* (Lyon 1986)
- Berneder 2004** H. Berneder, *Magna Mater-Kult und Sibyllinen* (Innsbruck 2004)
- Bernstein 1998** F. Bernstein, *Ludi publici: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der öffentlichen Spiele im republikanischen Rom*, *Historia* 119 (Stuttgart 1998)
- Biering – von Hesberg 1987** R. Biering – H. von Hesberg, *Zur Bau- und Kultgeschichte von St. Andreas apud S. Petrum. Vom Phrygianum zum Kenotaph Theodosius d. Gr., Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 82, 1987, 145–182
- Blänsdorf 2012** J. Blänsdorf, *Die defixionum tabellae des Mainzer Isis- und Mater Magna-Heiligtums. Defixionum Tabellae Mogontiacenses (DTM)* (Mainz 2012)
- Bodel 1983** J. P. Bodel, *Roman Brick Stamps in the Kelsey Museum* (Ann Arbor 1983)
- Cancik – Rüpke 2003** H. Cancik – J. Rüpke (Hrsg.), *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion: Globalisierungs- und Regionalisierungsprozesse in der antiken Religionsgeschichte. Ein Forschungsprogramm stellt sich vor* (Erfurt 2003)
- de Certeau 1984** M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley 1984)
- Collar 2013** A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire. The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge 2013)
- Cosgrove 1984** D. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London 1984)
- Cumont 1911** F. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Chicago 1911)
- Desbat 1998** A. Desbat, *Nouvelles recherches à l'emplacement du prétendu sanctuaire Lyonnais de Cybèle: premiers résultats*, *Gallia* 55, 1998, 237–277
- Gomez 1998** G. M. Gomez, *A Wetland Biography* (Texas 1998)
- Gruen 1990** E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Berkeley 1990)
- Hahn 2015** H. P. Hahn, *Dinge sind Fragmente und Assemblagen. Kritische Anmerkungen zur Metapher der ›Objektbiographie‹*, in: D. Boschung – P.-A. Kreuz – T. Kienlin (Hrsg.), *Biography of Objects. Aspekte eines kulturhistorischen Konzepts. Beiträge der Tagung des Internationalen Kollegs Morphomata aus dem Jahr 2014*, *Morphomata* 31 (Paderborn 2015) 11–33
- Halke 1909** H. Halke, *Handwörterbuch der Münzkunde und ihrer Hilfswissenschaften* (Berlin 1909)
- Helbig 1966** W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom. Die Städtischen Sammlungen. Die Staatlichen Sammlungen II* ⁴(Tübingen 1966)
- Jones 1912** H. S. Jones, *A Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures Preserved in the Municipal Collections of Rome. The Sculptures of the Museo Capitolino* (Oxford 1912)
- Joy 2015** J. Joy, *Things in Process: Biographies of British Iron Age Pits*, in: D. Boschung – P.-A. Kreuz – T. Kienlin (Hrsg.), *Biography of Objects. Aspekte eines kulturhistorischen Konzepts*, *Morphomata* (Paderborn 2015) 125–142
- Kolen – Renes 2015** J. Kolen – J. Renes, *Landscape Biographies: Key Issues*, in: R. Hermans – J. Kolen –

- H. Renes (Hrsg.), *Landscape Biographies. Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes* (Amsterdam 2015) 21–47
- Kopytoff 1984** I. Kopytoff, Chapter 2 – The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process, in: A. Appadurai (Hrsg.), *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge 1984)
- Kopytoff 2001** I. Kopytoff, The Cultural Biography of Things. Commoditization as Process, in: D. Miller (Hrsg.), *Consumption. Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences 3* (London 2001) 11–12
- Lancellotti 2002** M. G. Lancellotti, *Attis: Between Myth and History: King, Priest, and God* (Leiden 2002).
- Mattern 2000** T. Mattern, Der Magna-Mater-Tempel und die augusteische Architektur in Rom, *RM* 107, 2000, 141–153
- Naumann-Steckner 1983** F. Naumann-Steckner, Die Ikonographie der Kybele in der phrygischen und der griechischen Kunst, *IstMitt Beih.* 28 (Tübingen 1983)
- Olwig 1996** K. Olwig, The Substantive Nature of Landscape, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86, 1996, 630–653
- Orlin 2010** E. Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (New York 2010)
- Pedrucci 2009** G. Pedrucci, *Cibele Frigia e la Sicilia: i santuari rupestri nel culto della dea* (Rom 2009)
- Pensabene 1979–1995** P. Pensabene, *Archeologia laziale* 2–12 (1979–1995)
- Radner 2005** K. Radner, Kubaba und die Fische. Bemerkungen zur Herrin von Karkemiš, in: R. Rollinger (Hrsg.), *Von Sumer bis Homer: Festschrift für Manfred Schretter zum 60. Geburtstag am 25. Februar 2004*, *AOAT* 325 (Münster 2005) 543–556
- Roller 1999** L. E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother. The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (London 1999)
- Samuels 1979** M. S. Samuels, The Biography of Landscape: Cause and Culpability, in: D. W. Meinig (Hrsg.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York 1979) 51–88
- Simon 1987** E. Simon, Griechische Muttergottheiten, in: G. Bauchhenß – G. Neumann (Hrsg.), *Matronen und verwandte Gottheiten. Ergebnisse eines Kolloquiums veranstaltet von der Göttinger Akademiekommision für die Altertumskunde Mittel- und Nordeuropas*, *BJb Beih.* 44 (Bonn 1987) 157–169
- Vermaseren 1977** M. J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis: the Myth and the Cult* (London 1977)
- Vermaseren 1986** M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA): 5. Aegyptus, Africa, Hispania, Gallia et Britannia* (Leiden 1986)
- Vikela 2001** E. Vikela, Bemerkungen zu Ikonographie und Bildtypologie der Meter-Kybelereliefs. Vom phrygischen Vorbild zur griechischen Eigenständigkeit, *AM* 116, 2001, 67–123
- Vilogorac Brčić 2012** I. Vilogorac Brčić, Navisalvia, The Saviour of Cybele's Ship, *Histria Antiqua* 21, 2012, 373–379
- Witteyer 2004** M. Witteyer, *Das Heiligtum für Isis und Mater Magna* (Mainz 2004)
- Woolf 2013** G. Woolf, Ritual and the Individual in Roman Religion, in: J. Rüpke (Hrsg.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford 2013) 137–155

ADDRESS OF THE AUTHOR

Dr. Asuman Lätzer-Lasar
 Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural
 and Social Studies
 University of Erfurt
 Steinplatz 2
 99085 Erfurt, Deutschland
asuman.laetzer-lasar@uni-erfurt.de

