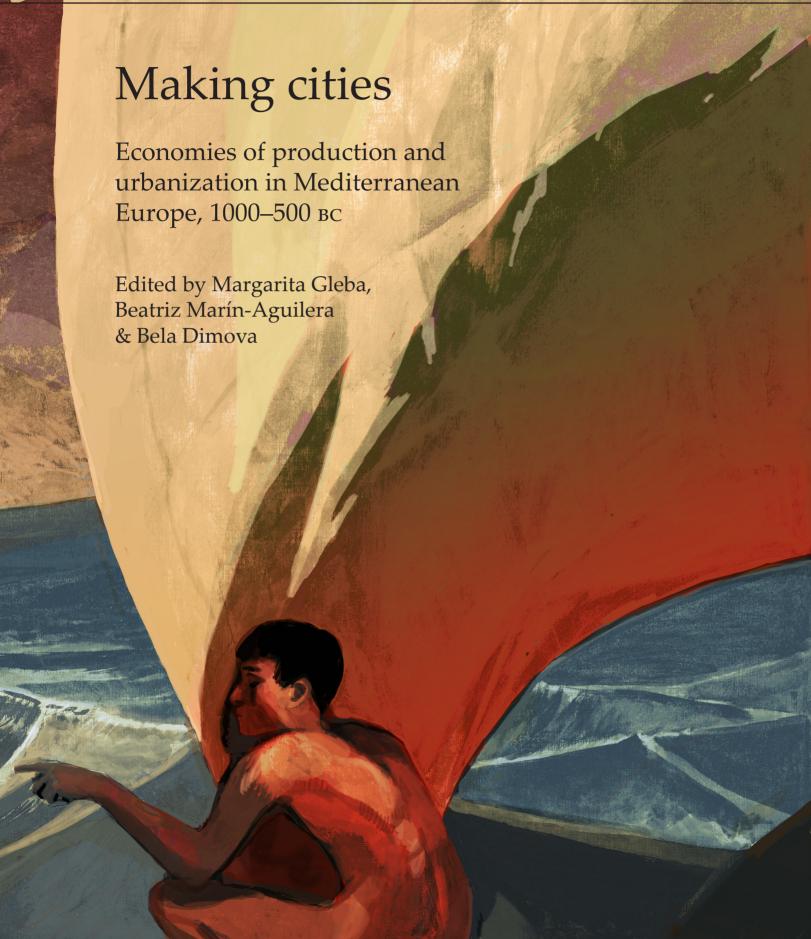


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Making cities Economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 вс

Edited by Margarita Gleba, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera & Bela Dimova

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Chapter 22

Making cities, producing textiles: the Late Hallstatt *Fürstensitze*

Manuel Fernández-Götz & Karina Grömer

The Hallstatt period (c. 800–450 BC) represented a time of fundamental changes for Central European societies. A process of increasing social stratification initiated in the eighth and seventh centuries BC with the appearance of rich elite burials such as those of Frankfurt-Stadtwald and Gomadingen (Fernández-Götz & Arnold 2017). From the end of the seventh century BC, and then increasingly during the sixth century BC, this process was accompanied by the development of some large agglomerations in the area immediately to the north of the Alps (Krausse 2008; 2010; Fernández-Götz et al. 2014; Krausse et al. 2016). These Late Hallstatt centres are traditionally known as Fürstensitze ('princely seats'), a problematic term (cf. Eggert 1989) that has nonetheless become established in the scientific literature and is used here solely as a terminus technicus. Their general distribution ranges from central France in the west to the Czech Republic in the east, with the Heuneburg, Mont Lassois, Bourges, Glauberg and Ipf as some of the most prominent and best-investigated examples (Fig. 22.1).

The 'classic' model of the Fürstensitze, based primarily on the results of the excavations at the Heuneburg, was presented by Wolfgang Kimmig in 1969. He defined the *Fürstensitze* as political and administrative centres comprising a fortified central area on a topographically elevated site, with Mediterranean imports and sumptuous burials in their immediate surroundings (Kimmig 1969). More recent research has, on the one hand, confirmed many of these assumptions and expanded the list of known Fürstensitze, but on the other hand, emphasized the diversity and heterogeneity of the sites which have been classified as such (Krausse 2008; 2010; Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017). Moreover, the scale of many of these centres is sometimes considerably larger than originally thought. For example, at the time when Kimmig wrote his seminal works, the Heuneburg and other comparable sites were assumed to have an area of just a few hectares. However, new fieldwork during the last two decades has uncovered that some settlements were indeed much larger. The most spectacular cases are the Heuneburg, with an outer settlement of c. 100 ha accompanying the three ha of fortified hilltop in the sixth century BC (Kurz 2010b; Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2013; Krausse et al. 2016) (Fig. 22.2), and Bourges, which during the fifth century вс covered an area of 200 ha or more (Augier et al. 2007; 2012; Ralston 2010). In terms of demographic estimations, the approximately 5000 inhabitants that have been proposed as the peak population during the mudbrick wall period at the Heuneburg agglomeration (Kurz 2010b; Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2013; Krausse et al. 2019) surpass the size of many contemporaneous Aegean, Etruscan and Iberian centres.

Although definitions of urbanism are disputed (see Smith 2016 for a recent approach based on archaeological urban attributes), some of the Fürstensitze are increasingly recognized as the first cities or towns north of the Alps (Biel & Krausse 2005; Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2013; Krausse et al. 2016), thus preceding by several centuries the *oppida* of the second and first centuries BC (Collis 1984; Fichtl 2005). However, and in contrast to the urbanization processes observed in large parts of the Mediterranean during the first millennium BC (Osborne & Cunliffe 2005; Garcia 2013; Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2016a), the Fürstensitze were an ephemeral or fragile phenomenon (Brun & Chaume 2013; Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017; Stoddart 2017; Fernández-Götz 2018a), which lasted for no more than 200 years. Although some of these sites continued for one or two generations into the Early La Tène period, by the beginning of the fourth century BC, all of them had been abandoned or were in marked decline (Fig. 22.3).

The economic basis of the Early Iron Age centralization and urbanization phenomenon are still insufficiently understood, with some authors



Figure 22.1. Fürstensitze north of the Alps and selected sites in Mediterranean Europe (after Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017).

highlighting the importance of Mediterranean influences (Frankenstein & Rowlands 1978; Wells 1980; Kimmig 1983) and others giving more weight to internal developments (Gosden 1985; Krausse et al. 2016). Connections with Mediterranean societies became particularly intense during the late sixth and fifth centuries BC; however, they are insufficient to explain the origins of the centralization and urbanization process observed north of the Alps. In general terms, the appearance of Mediterranean imports in temperate European graves and settlements could be regarded mainly as a consequence of endogenous developments such as population growth and status differentiation linked to land ownership and the control of local production and labour (Karl 2015; Fernández-Götz & Arnold 2017; Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017). In this way, Mediterranean goods would have arrived at pre-existing indigenous centres of power, rather than explain the appearance of those settlements (Dietler 1995).

Ongoing research is demonstrating that we need to rethink not only the size and characteristics of the *Fürstensitze*, but also the scale of the exploitation and

processing of natural resources. An example is the discovery of proto-industrial iron production in the north Black Forest during the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène periods (Gassmann & Wieland 2015). One aspect that has traditionally received rather little consideration in relation to general discussions about the *Fürstensitze*, but was central to the economy and culture of other societies in antiquity, is textile production and display (cf. for example Dimova 2016 for Thrace, and contributions in this volume). In what follows, we will present an overview of some of the main settlement and burial evidence of this period, with particular consideration given to textiles.

Monumentality, production and consumption: the settlement evidence

Monumental fortifications are a frequent trait of early civilizations (Trigger 2007), and indeed constitute one of the main characteristics of the Late Hallstatt *Fürstensitze*. The defensive systems would have had, at least in the majority of cases, a protective function against

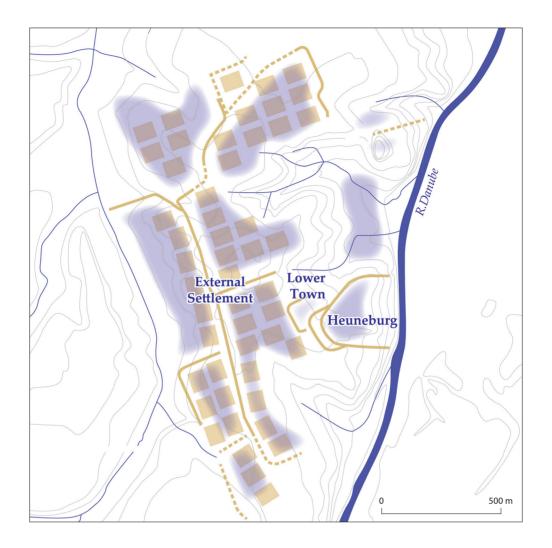


Figure 22.2. Plan of the Heuneburg agglomeration during the mudbrick wall phase (after Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017, based on Kurz 2010b).

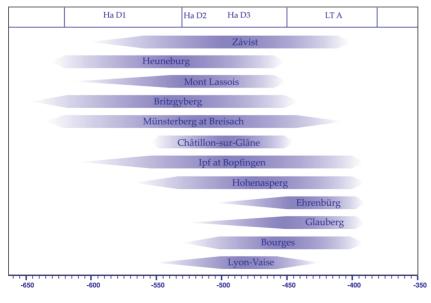


Figure 22.3. *Indicative lifespans of selected* Fürstensitze *sites (after Fernández-Götz & Ralston 2017).*





Figure 22.4. Aerial view of the gatehouse of the Heuneburg lower town during the excavation (after Krausse et al. 2016; photo O. Braasch, © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege im RP Stuttgart) and idealized reconstruction (after Krausse et al. 2016, design F. Courtial, © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege im RP Stuttgart).

potential enemy threats. Simultaneously, they would have also acted as a symbol of status that demonstrated the power of the communities (Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2016b). This is particularly evident in the case of the mudbrick wall that surrounded the Heuneburg plateau during the first half of the sixth century BC, which was enhanced by 17 towers or bastions along its northern and western fronts (Gersbach 1995). This fortification was built following an exotic technique that was widespread in the Mediterranean but exceptional in temperate Europe, and can be regarded as an example of hybrid architecture combining indigenous and foreign influences (Burkhardt 2010; Arnold & Fernández-Götz 2018). The different lines of banks and ditches protecting the Heuneburg lower town at the foot of the hilltop added to the monumentality of the ensemble, which was accessed through a monumental gatehouse over 16 m deep and 10 m wide (Fig. 22.4) (Kurz 2008; Fernández-Götz 2018b).

Although less exotic in their construction techniques, the fortifications surrounding other *Fürstensitze* such as Mont Lassois, Ipf and Glauberg were equally important as an expression of monumentality and community identity. At Mont Lassois, the hilltop

settlement was surrounded by a complex system of various banks and ditches (Fig. 22.5). The massive, excavated banks were typically constructed of earth, wood and stone (Chaume & Mordant 2011). Their enormous dimensions are remarkable, for example, Bank 3 is still preserved today to a height of five m and in some places exceeds 30 m in width.

Monumentality was not restricted to fortification works. At Mont Lassois itself, several large, apsidal buildings have been discovered on the hilltop plateau, and the largest was completely excavated (Chaume & Mordant 2011; Chaume et al. 2013). Its exceptional size (33 × 20 m), shape and elaborate decoration with painted walls are indications that it enjoyed a highly prestigious function. This is further emphasized by the associated finds of fragments of wine amphorae from Massalia, imported Attic ceramics, and impressive quantities of high-quality indigenous pottery, suggesting conspicuous consumption at large-scale meetings or celebrations held within it. At the Heuneburg, during the mudbrick wall period, a large building with several rooms and a floor area of about 320 sq. m stood in the outer settlement, beneath one of the later burial mounds of the Gießübel-Talhau necropolis. This stately



Figure 22.5. Large ditch at the south foot of wall 3 at Mont Lassois (after Chaume et al. 2012).



Figure 22.6. Reconstructed monumental building (so-called Herrenhaus) in the Heuneburg Open-Air Museum (after Krausse et al. 2016, photo M. Friemelt, © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege im RP Stuttgart).

structure has been compared by Stéphane Verger (2008) to palace buildings in Etruria. After the violent destruction of the mudbrick wall around 540–530 BC, some prestigious houses of large proportions, the so-called *Herrenhäuser*, were erected on the hilltop plateau, the largest of which boasted a floor area of more than 400 sq. m (Gersbach 1996) (Fig. 22.6).

Finally, monumentality could also be connected to the sacred, as exemplified by the hilltop sanctuary at Závist (Drda & Rybová 2008), or by the structures at the foot of the Glauberg (Baitinger & Pinsker 2002). In the case of the latter, a processional avenue 350 m long and 10 m wide led to the central tumulus with its associated anthropomorphic stone sculptures. This was in turn incorporated within an enormous system of banks and ditches that dominated and sub-divided the landscape around the Glauberg. The entire complex could have served as a supra-local sanctuary and gathering place related to ancestor worship, serving as a religious focus for the communal identity of various clans and lineages (Herrmann 2005).

Although information is uneven due to varying degrees of fieldwork and conservation, the majority, if not all, of the *Fürstensitze* seem to have been centres

of production and exchange. Most of these sites provide evidence for Mediterranean imports, or even local imitations of southern products, testifying their long-distance connections with places such as Greece, Italy, southern France or even Spain (see for example Bonomi & Guggisberg 2015; Sacchetti 2016). In terms of craft production, at the Heuneburg there is ample evidence that skilled craftsmen produced goods such as ceramics, brooches and sapropelite jewellery (Drescher 1995; Kurz 2010a). There are good reasons to assume that certain ceramic types that are found within the surrounding area and beyond were developed and produced at the Heuneburg. An example of locally produced ceramics are the high-necked, red and white coloured vessels that were apparently traded across wide areas of southwest Germany (Stegmaier 2016). Moreover, zooarchaeology provides interesting information on food supply and consumption: according to isotope analysis, during the mudbrick wall period of the Heuneburg, with its highly concentrated population, a significant proportion of the animals were imported over a distance of 50 to 60 km, sometimes further. This suggests that the needs of the large population of several thousand inhabitants could only be satisfied by importing animals from considerable distances (Stephan 2016).

At the site of Bourges in Berry, sub-rectangular features interpreted as workshops were discovered in St-Martin-des-Champs (Milcent 2007) and elsewhere (e.g. Hôpital Baudens). This area provided evidence for craft activities such as lignite bracelet manufacturing and iron smithing in contexts that also furnished imports indicating wine consumption (Attic red-figure pottery and Massaliote *amphorae*). Similar workshops, also intimating copper-alloy jewellery-making, hornworking and weaving, as well as iron-working, were found interspersed with other features at Port-Sec over an extensive area (Augier *et al.* 2012).

Concerning textile production, clay spindle whorls and loom weights are relatively common finds at numerous *Fürstensitze* (Fig. 22.7). We also have some excavated evidence for looms, for example at the Heuneburg hilltop plateau, where two buildings from the early period IVb showed sill-beam features indicative of the frames for warp-weighted looms (Gersbach 1995). In the area of the Heuneburg lower town, one of the sunken houses was a textile workshop as indicated by finds of spindle whorls and loom weights. The fine imprints in a small shallow ditch could be from a loom that stood in it (Bofinger & Goldner-Bofinger 2008).

Hallstatt period spindle whorls of various sizes and weights indicate that the yarn spun with those spindles had specific qualities. The most common type is the biconical spindle whorl with a weight mostly ranging between 6 and 26 g, thus providing a toolkit that makes it possible to spin thread of various qualities

(e.g. Belanová-Štolcová & Grömer 2010, 11–15). In addition, the loom weights provide an indication of the quality of the textiles that were produced. For example, by using fine yarn of only 0.2 to 0.3 mm in diameter, that was spun with small, light spindles, it was possible to weave both fine, dense, high quality textiles and flexible, even translucent cloth (veil-like textiles; cf. Banck-Burgess 1999). Larger and heavier whorls up to 40 g have also been found at the settlements and were employed to spin thicker threads used for warmer cloth (for a correlation between size and weight of spindle whorls and yarn produced, see e.g. Andersson Strand 2010; Kania 2013; Grömer 2016).

Iron Age textile production was organized at various levels. In Central Europe during the period of the Fürstensitze we know of different settlement types, including isolated farmsteads, small villages and larger central sites, almost all of which contained textile equipment (Grömer 2016, 280-8), primarily spindle whorls, but also loom weights and needles. This likely points to production on a domestic level. Nevertheless, some outstanding sites like Smolenice-Molpír (Belanová-Štolcová & Grömer 2010), with more than 2200 spindle whorls and over 200 loom weights, were likely larger-scale production centres. In the Hallstatt period there are various 'standard' sizes of looms: smaller looms up to 0.9 m wide, medium looms between 1.20 and 1.90 m wide, and large looms of 3-4 m in width (Grömer 2016, 114-17, with examples). The large looms were not only used in fortified hilltop settlements, but also in the lowland ones. Altogether, the ubiquity of textile tools and highly developed textile





Figure 22.7. Fired clay loom weight and decorated and undecorated spindle whorls from the Heuneburg (after Krausse et al. 2016, photos Y. Mühleis, © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege im RP Stuttgart).

art indicate that specialized textile production took place during the Hallstatt period (cf. Grömer 2016, 243–55 for a detailed discussion).

Due to the climatic conditions of temperate Europe, little is known about the actual textiles from settlement contexts. However, mineralized textiles found in graves provide some clues. As textiles in graves are usually preserved in contact with metal artefacts, we are relatively well informed about textiles in elite burial contexts (Banck-Burgess 1999; 2012), but not for poorer graves or those without any metal elements.

Textile use and display in funerary contexts

One of the defining characteristics of the *Fürstensitze* is that they are surrounded by burial mounds that served as the final resting places for members of the social elite and their relatives or retinues (Krausse 2006). Among the most prominent examples are Hohmichele, Gießübel-Talhau and Bettelbühl near Heuneburg, Sainte-Colombe and Vix near Mont Lassois, and Hochdorf, Grafenbühl and Kleinaspergle near Hohenasperg. The concentration of rich burials in the immediate vicinity of the Fürstensitze suggests an important political and administrative role for these central places, which would have served as focal points for their wider surroundings. Some of the richest burials of the period belong to women, illustrating their prominent social roles that included positions of political and religious leadership (Milcent 2003; Metzner-Nebelsick 2009). The recently excavated grave of Bettelbühl, situated across the Danube near the Heuneburg and dendrochronologically dated to the very beginning of the sixth century BC, is among the earliest examples of these sumptuous female graves (Krausse et al. 2017). However, the power of socio-political elites was far from uncontested, as indicated by the abundance of ancient graves that were looted, sometimes relatively soon after their time of construction (Kümmel 2009), as well as evidence of the destruction of settlements by fire, which is sometimes suggestive of violent conflict (Fernández-Götz 2017; Fernández-Götz & Arnold 2019).

The most sumptuous graves from the Late Hall-statt period incorporated elements that distinguished them from the majority of burials. These could include wagons, imported bronze vessels, objects made of gold or with gold appliqués, and valuable textiles. The latter were of high quality and made with various weaving and patterning techniques. Although their fragmentary preservation has often led to an underestimation of their importance, some discoveries in prominent elite burials suggest that textiles could on occasion have a similar value to grave goods such as bronze vessels.

In this sense, textiles can also be interpreted as 'instruments of power' (Banck-Burgess 2012; Harris 2017).

It has been debated to what extent textiles recovered in funerary context were made specifically for the burial or if they were used by people in everyday life and then re-used in the graves. At Hochdorf near Hohenasperg, there is evidence that the elaborately made, high quality textiles found in the grave had been exclusively produced for the burial (Banck-Burgess 1999, 2012). However, in other graves the situation is not that clear (cf. also Grömer 2015). There is also interesting complementary evidence from a very different context: the salt mine of Hallstatt in Upper Austria (Grömer et al. 2013). At this site, salt has allowed for the preservation of textiles that date roughly to the time between the eighth and fourth centuries BC. Hundreds of textiles have been found, some of which were discarded in the mine as rags after wear and tear, and some might have been parts of the miners' gear. The textiles, woven using various techniques, are of different qualities, coarse and fine, the latter with up to 40 threads per cm. More than half feature decorative techniques such as spin pattern, dyes, woven-in checks and stripes, and even elaborate techniques such as tablet weaving (Fig. 22.8). It is likely that these textiles are representative of the textiles used more widely in society. Interestingly, these textiles in all their variety are comparable to textiles found in the graves from the Hallstatt cemetery and from burials across the Eastern Hallstatt region (see e.g. Bender Jørgensen 2005). The variety of weave types is similar, and the yarn diameters and thread counts are within the same range. Therefore, it is likely that the textiles found in graves reflect the common 'textile culture' of a certain period and region (on textile cultures, see Gleba 2017). Nevertheless, there are some technical differences between textiles from the Eastern and Western Hallstatt areas. In the east, single yarn was used, while in the west, plied yarn was employed in the warp (Bender Jørgensen 1989).

During the Hallstatt period, a range of animal and plant based fibres were available to make textiles. Among the animal fibres, sheep wool was the preferred material. Remarkable progress in sheep breeding is noticeable between the Bronze and Iron Age, with the result that fibres became lighter (a prerequisite for being dyed) and finer (e.g. Rast-Eicher & Bender Jørgensen 2013). There is sparse evidence of other animal fibres, for instance from domestic animals such as goat and horse (long tail hair; see summary in Grömer 2016, 58–61), or wild animals such as badger known from Hochdorf (Banck-Burgess 1999, 102–3). Among the plant fibres used in the Hallstatt period, flax can be named, but also some surprising evidence



Figure 22.8. Comparison between grave textiles and other textiles used within a certain period and area. Example from the cemetery and salt mine at Hallstatt, Austria, 800-400 Bc. Scale: small boxes 2×2 cm each (A. Rausch, © Natural History Museum Vienna).

of hemp, which again has been identified at Hochdorf (Banck Burgess 1999, 83, 100–1).

In general, textile qualities of the Western Hallstatt area can be described as highly variable. Different types of cloth were made to meet various needs within the society. Most of the textiles are twills in simple and more complex variants (zigzag, herringbone and lozenge). The threads employed are of fine quality (0.2–0.4 mm in diameter; thread counts between 15 and 30 threads per cm), but also include simpler tabby and basket weaves. Spin as well as colour patterns seem to be a typical way of expressing wealth and status



Figure 22.9. Tablet-woven band, reproduced after a textile from Hochdorf, on display in the Natural History Museum Vienna (S. Galz).

within elite burials. Examples have been identified in the sumptuous grave of Hochdorf (Banck-Burgess 1999), as well as in other graves of the Western and Eastern Hallstatt areas and in Italy (Bender Jørgensen 2005; Gleba 2008; 2012; 2017). Among the colours, blue and red have been detected quite often in rich burials such as those of Hochdorf, Hohmichele and Glauberg (Hofmann-de Keijzer 2016).

The burial at Hochdorf, with its patterned textiles, is particularly relevant for the present discussion (Biel 1985; Banck-Burgess 1999). The technique of tablet weaving plays an important role here and was employed to produce elaborate designs such as meander, swastika and the like (Fig. 22.9). As Johanna Banck-Burgess (1999) noted, textile technology during the Hallstatt period was particularly based on patterns that were made during weaving. Patterns that look like embroidery were created with the so-called 'weft wrap technique' or 'flying shuttle technique.' Those techniques generated diamond patterns and an element in form of the letter 'Z' at Hochdorf (Banck-Burgess 1999), as well as a lozenge and swastika pattern on a larger cloth from the burial of Hohmichele identified near the Heuneburg (Hundt 1962). Other luxury

elements incorporated into textiles are the thin gold strips recovered from the Late Hallstatt elite burials of Hohmichele Grave I (Hundt 1962) and Grafenbühl (Banck-Burgess 1999).

As mentioned above, the *Fürstensitze* display connections to the Mediterranean world, including Greek pottery such as transport *amphorae* and Attic vases. In the case of textiles, insect dyes point to long-distance exchange. Textiles dyed with kermes have been found in Hohmichele, Hochdorf (Banck-Burgess 1999) and Glauberg (Balzer *et al.* 2014). In these cases, the weaving technique used to make the textiles points to local production, whereas the dyestuff (or even the dyed fleece or yarn) was likely imported.

Within funerary contexts, textiles were used in different ways (Fig. 22.10). In cases when textiles were found *in situ* on fibulae or belt buckles on the body of the deceased, those remains would have been from the garments of the buried person (Grömer 2015), used either during their lifetime or only for the funeral. Clothing plays an important role in the representation of the identity of the dead. At Hochdorf (Banck-Burgess 2012), there is evidence for elaborately made textiles that served as wall hangings and floor coverings to

furnish the grave. Mattresses and cushions have also been found. More generally, textiles might have also been used as burial gifts, probably equal in their value to other grave goods such as bronze vessels. This practice is attested in contemporary Greece (Wagner-Hasel 2006) and Italy. At Verucchio, for example, textiles were found folded, suggesting that they were deposited as burial gifts (Stauffer 2012). Sometimes, textiles could be included in a grave as functional components of other artefacts, e.g. inner lining of a sword, dagger or sheath (e.g. at Gomadingen-Steingebronn, see Banck-Burgess 1999).

A common practice that can be found in various graves of the Hallstatt area, as well as in Italy, is the use of textiles for wrapping objects, the corpse or even the cremated remains (Banck-Burgess 1999; 2012; Gleba 2008; 2014; Harris & Douny 2014; Grömer 2015, 2016). This practice could have not only a functional, but also a ritual meaning. Textile wrappings can serve as containers to hold together cremated remains or small

objects. Wrappings also protect the items they cover, depending on the quality of the textiles used. However, as Banck-Burgess (2012) has noted, the act of wrapping is also indicative of rituals and beliefs common in the Hallstatt period. It may have been customary to 'render the visible invisible', to hide something from the viewers, but maybe also to protect the viewers from the objects that might have belonged to the dead person. Thus, the act of wrapping can be seen as an act of communication between the living and the dead. Further suggestions are given by Margarita Gleba (2014), who differentiated between wrappings that were employed to make objects 'invisible' and those that were intended for the opposite effect. Covering artefacts with precious, decorated and patterned cloth, maybe with tablet woven bands, bestows a specific focus on them. In Italy, some urns were dressed like the dead person or tied with ribbons. Through cloth, the cremated bones in a vessel were given a human form again.

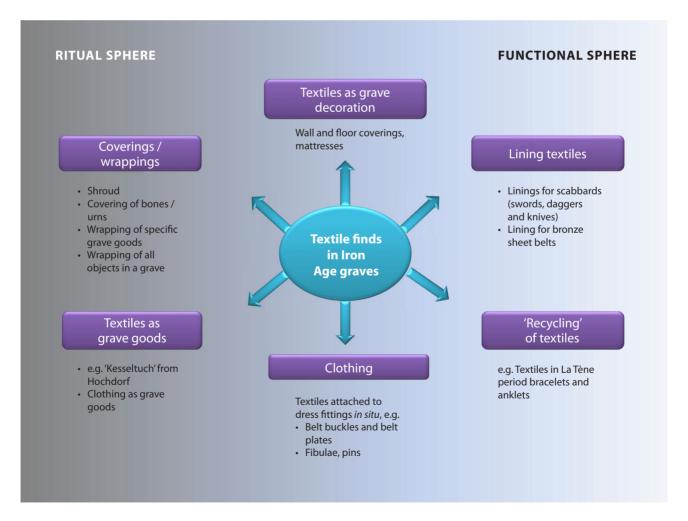


Figure 22.10. Functions of textiles in graves (after Grömer 2015).

Conclusion

Traditional scholarly divides between 'prehistoric' and 'classical' studies, and between 'barbarian' and 'civilized' societies, have long obscured the fact that early urbanization processes similar to those observed in Archaic Greece and Etruria also took place in the area to the north of the Alps (Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2016a; Zamboni et al. 2020). Rather than seeing the emergence of the Fürstensitze as dependent on contacts with the Mediterranean, we can envisage similar social responses to processes of demographic growth and increasing production among interconnected communities (Collis 2014; 2016). Within this framework, textile production and consumption played an important role, not only as an economic activity within settlements, but also as a means of expressing status in both life and death and a way to perform complex ritual displays. Although factors of preservation and visibility make it difficult to determine the exact scale and characteristics of textile production, the recovered evidence clearly demonstrates the high skills and quality reached during the Hallstatt period. Therefore, textiles can be interpreted as the materialization of wider social changes within Early Iron Age societies.

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Making cities

Large and complex settlements appeared across the north Mediterranean during the period 1000–500 BC, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. The region also became considerably more interconnected. Urban life and networks fostered new consumption practices, requiring different economic and social structures to sustain them. This book considers the emergence of cities in Mediterranean Europe, with a focus on the economy. What was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures, social relations and mobility? The authors bring to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that may be unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known cities. The variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics prompts us to reconsider ancient urbanism through a comparative perspective.

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