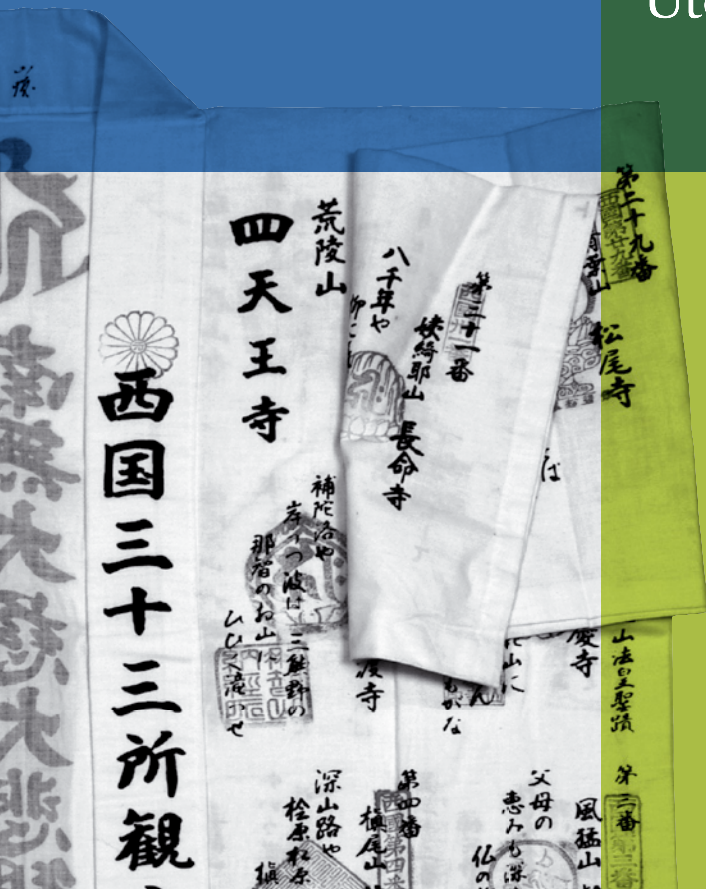
Approaching the Sacred

PILGRIMAGE IN HISTORICAL AND INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Ute Luig (ed.)



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PILGRIMAGES HAVE BECOME extremely popular in times of postmodernity. Technological innovations, processes of social dynamism and the blurring boundaries to tourism have changed the conditions under which they take place. In order to understand these transformations but also to discover ongoing continuities, the volume analyzes pilgrimages and processions in different historical epochs and cultural traditions.

The great variety of cultural traditions allows insight into the social and physical organizations of non-European pilgrimages and their expansion by diaspora communities to different continents. The various meanings and construction of sacred places, understood as landscapes of imaginations, reflect the creative processes of which pilgrims are part. In establishing such sacred topographies, questions of identity in relation to state power become important in many studies.

Written by an interdisciplinary group of authors the texts display a wide range of methods and controversial issues of theories adding to our understanding of pilgrimages as cultural archives.

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Cover image: Pilgrim's shirt (detail) with seals of the 33 Saikoku Kannon temples, Japan, cotton, ca. 1970–1990 (Philipps-Universität Marburg, Religionskundliche Sammlung, inv. no. Nu 193). The shirt shows the names of 33 numbered pilgrimage temples dedicated to the Buddhist deity Kannon as well as short pilgrim songs for each temple. The shirt is covered with red seals proving the pilgrim's temple visit. – Michael Pye, Katja Triplett: *Pilgerfahrt visuell: Hängerollen in der religiösen Alltagspraxis Japans*. Veröffentlichungen der Religionskundlichen Sammlung der Philipps-Universität Marburg, Bd. 5. Marburg: diagonal-Verlag, 2011, 29 no. 13. Photo: Christopher Triplett.

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Ute Luig

Approaching the Sacred. Pilgrimage in Historical and Intercultural Perspective

Summary

The aim of the volume is a comparative study of non-European pilgrimages under different historical conditions and changing power relations. Historic transformations but also continuities in organization, bodily and spiritual experience, as well as individual and collective motives are discussed. Written by an interdisciplinary group of authors, their various disciplinary perspectives offer insight into the differences in methods, theoretical reflections and the use and meanings of objects in ritual performances. The construction of sacred spaces as landscapes of imagination reflects a wide range of meaning in regard of the growing complexity and social dynamism in times of postmodernity.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary approach; non-European pilgrimages; transformation and continuity; theories of pilgrimage studies

Ziel des Bandes ist eine vergleichende Analyse außereuropäischer Pilgerreisen unter verschiedenen historischen Bedingungen und Machtverhältnissen. Untersucht werden historische Transformationsprozesse, aber auch Kontinuitäten bezüglich der Organisation, der körperlichen und spirituellen Erfahrungen sowie der individuellen und kollektiven Motive der Pilger. Die interdisziplinäre Zusammensetzung der Autoren vermittelt Einblicke in unterschiedliche Methoden, theoretische Reflektionen sowie den Gebrauch und die Bedeutung von Objekten in rituellen Performances. Die Konstruktion von heiligen Orten als Landschaften der Imagination reflektiert eine große Vielfalt an Bedeutungen in Bezug auf die komplexen und dynamischen Prozesse im Zeitalter der Postmoderne.

Keywords: Interdisziplinäre Arbeit; nicht-europäische Pilgerschaft; Wandel und Kontinuität; Theorien der Studien zur Pilgerschaft

The idea for this book originated from the Excellence Cluster, *Topoi, The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations*, (C-III, acts). As an interdisciplinary group of pre-and protohistorians, classical and musical archaeologists and social anthropologists, we shared a common interest in the construction of sacred spaces and

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ritual landscapes in different historical and cultural settings. Our main aim was to understand the entanglement of physical space with social acts, images, material objects and its transformation into sacred or sacralised space. The understanding of long term processes of transformations, of continuities as well as discontinuities went hand in hand with the problematization of methods and terminology in an interdisciplinary context. Although only a fraction of the group (Hammerschmied, Kubatzki, Schäfer, Luig) is represented in this volume, the engaged discussions we had for three years played an important role in the conception of the present book. I thank my former colleagues Sven Hansen, Ortwin Dally and Ricardo Eichmann for a time of fruitful cooperation and the administration of Topoi for its financial and organisational support. John Eade was an inspiring and diligent critic and I am grateful for the time he put into this project. The printing of this book which was beset with some time consuming difficulties was made possible by the painstaking engagement of Gisela Eberhardt and Hanna Erftenbeck, with the production process and the support of Carla Dietzel who helped me with the corrections and the technical organisation of the volume in its early phases. Last but not least I thank Orla Mulholland the difficult task of correcting our written English.

1 Introduction

1.1 Theoretical approaches to pilgrimages

Parallel with a revival of pilgrimages and processions in the Western world an enormous output on pilgrimage studies occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s, referring predominantly to non-Western countries. As Eade remarked, their theoretical focus concentrated either "on social structure and function" or with a "Marxist emphasis upon power, conflict and structural transformation."[1]

Since the beginning of the 1990s feminist theories have also played their part.[2] In addition, the regional focus changed due to the hype over pilgrimage in Europe. Traditional pilgrimage centers in Spain,[3] Portugal,[4] and France[5] were analyzed in relation to the many changes induced by ever denser global relations. Prominent among them was and still is the route to Santiago de Compostela,[6] but also rather marginal pilgrimage sites in Sweden and in the Balkan states have been investigated.[7]

1 Eade 2013, x.
2 Dubisch 1995.
3 Crain 1997.
4 Scheer 2006.
5 Eade 2012.
6 Reuter and Graf 2014; Hervieu-Léger 2004; Stausberg 2010. Heiser and Kurrat 2014, 8, report that in the past ten years more than 1.3 million people went by different paths to Santiago de Compostela.
7 Eade and Katić 2014.

The detailed consideration of new regions in pilgrimage studies has also led to a greater variety of theoretical approaches. While most of the earlier studies were written by authors from Anglophone countries, a recent book by Albera and Eade focuses on the contributions of scholars from non-English-speaking countries in order to demonstrate the richness of other scholarly traditions.[8] The book contains chapters of Japanese, Polish, Irish, French, Hungarian, Italian, and German-speaking histories of pilgrimage studies. For a German-speaking audience the chapter by Helmut Eberhart is of great interest.[9] He describes a long tradition of pilgrimage studies in German-speaking countries by folklore specialists, whereas German-speaking anthropologists have paid rather little attention to these movements.[10] The same situation existed in German sociology. According to Kurrat and Heiser sociologists discovered the topic only recently thanks to a new understanding of religion in times of global modernities.[11]

Despite the new theoretical framings and new insights that recent pilgrimage studies have offered, the path-breaking work of Edith and Victor Turner is still discussed, which underlines its outstanding quality. In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* Edith and Victor Turner described pilgrimages as a trajectory from the secular to the spiritual world and back.[12] Innovative in their analysis was a performative approach which they translated into social dialectics. The empowering potential of this theory was grounded in a utopian model which they turned into a condition of social change itself. Although the fascination with utopian models was in a way congruent with the revolutionary ambitions of the time, the explosive force in this construction was not social struggle but, according to the Turners, the transformation of an inner self through the confrontation with transcendent powers, be they God, the Virgin Mary, or the spirits of the mountains. It is a process of transformation which detaches the pilgrim from the local world of social structure and enables him to experience a state of *liminality*.[13]

For the Turners this situation was of special interest because of its potential for overcoming order. What fascinated them was the encounter with "comradeship and communion or *communitas*".[14] *Communitas* marks a phase of creative disorder, of spontaneity and inventions, where play and faith meet, where joy reigns as well as solemnity, devotion, and worship.[15] The experience of the journey, which is undertaken out of free will, the closeness to and identification with (whatever) transcendental beings, transforms the inner self of the pilgrim.[16] In Muslim societies it also leads to a higher

8 Albera and Eade 2015.
9 Eberhart 2015.
10 For an exception see Girtler 2005.
11 Heiser and Kurrat 2014, 12.
12 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978.
13 The term "liminality" is derived from Latin *limen* "threshold." V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 250, characterized liminality "as undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential, I-Thou (in Buber's sense)."
14 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 249.
15 See also: V. Turner 1969; V. Turner 1989.
16 See the moving account of the Black Panther Malcolm X, who described in his autobiography that during his pilgrimage to Mecca he could accept even white Muslims as equals and brothers, against

social status.[17] The experience of *communitas* is therefore in no way limited to individual transformations, but also has social repercussions as well. According to the dialectics of the movement *spontaneous communitas* passes over into *normative communitas*, which is stripped of its spontaneity and gives way to routinization or even bureaucratization.[18] This boldness of construction assigns to pilgrimages a highly transformative potential for the individual, but at the same time has socially integrative functions.

1.2 Challenging Turner

Despite their increasing datedness and the serious criticism, they have engendered, the Turners' ideas are still widely discussed.[19] The bulk of recent criticism of their pilgrimage analysis has been directed toward the existence of *communitas* as being a prime characteristic of pilgrimages. Many authors have criticized its assumption of equality and brotherhood and have stressed that hierarchy, regarding e.g. class structures, ethnicity, or kin relations, continue to exist or are even reaffirmed through pilgrimages.[20] Especially in Andean anthropology the existence of *communitas* has been denied as Sallnow, Skar, and also Schäfer have maintained that pilgrimages are organized according to the social structures of the villages and include the existence of conflicts between them, which in some situations are also openly played out.[21] Eickelman and Huber even sharpened this argument by suggesting that pilgrimages are focal points for conflicts and social division and that they function to preserve social hierarchies instead of minimizing them.[22] In these tit for tat arguments Skar offered a more differentiated solution.[23] He argued that in many pilgrimages some kind of pendulum exists between companionship and aggressiveness, equality and hierarchy, which reminded him of Bateson's term *schismogenesis*, which contains complementary forms of differentiation. This solution refutes the universal applicability of Turner's model but leaves more room for understanding the complexity of pilgrimages under diverse social and historical conditions.[24]

Although the Turners were aware that the increase and popularity of pilgrimages were part of modernity, their model, which classified pilgrimages in four categories – primordial, archaic, medieval, and modern – was too abstract to capture the great diversity that pilgrimages have exhibited. Bowman attributed these shortcomings of Turner's

whom he had had many racial prejudices before, here cited according to V. Turner 1974, 168. Further examples of such forms of *communitas* in Ross 2011 [1978], xxix–lvii.

17 A very well-known example is the very respectful title Hadji for a pilgrim returning from Mecca.

18 Turner himself regarded *communitas* as a very exceptional situation. In his later texts he compared it with situations in industrial societies where he located an ideological *communitas* (V. Turner 1969).

19 Huber 1999, Skar 1985, and Schäfer, this volume.

20 Huber 1999, 8; Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 45; Morinis 1984, 258.

21 Sallnow 1987, Skar 1985, and Schäfer, this volume.

22 Eickelman 1976; Huber 1999, 8.

23 Skar 1985.

24 See also Berg 1991, 342–343.

theory to the fact that "his model was dangerously divorced from political and cultural processes which heavily influenced the organization and the course of pilgrimages."[25] Taylor shares this critique and adds that in contrast to Turner's assumption that pilgrimages exist in liminal spaces,[26] being in and out of time, they represent in reality the very center of modern urban society.[27] "Most contemporary pilgrimage sites are anything but liminal; instead, they address the economic, social and cultural concerns of the places from which pilgrims are drawn".[28] Although their destinations are very often situated in liminal places, on borders, mountaintops, or in caves, "they serve as nodes or cogs for the transfer of ideas and practices between centers of population and from centers to hinterlands."[29] Pilgrimage sites thus express a multitude of meanings for different groups of people, which reflects their creative but also contradictory flows of ideas and representations.[30]

2 The volume

2.1 An empirical overview

The intention of this volume is a comparative analysis of past and present pilgrimages. The interdisciplinary composition of the authors raised stimulating questions of methodology which have allowed us to take a fresh look. Whereas anthropologists can rely on interviews and/or participant observations, historians and archaeologists have to tap new sources and resources, such as text fragments (Messner, Triplett), ceramics, images, sounds (Kubatzki), or architecture (Hammerschmied). In contrast to the much publicized failure of the conference in London in 1998 between historians and anthropologists the interdisciplinarity of our group gave rise to interesting discussions and enriched our disciplinary horizons.[31]

25 Bowman 1985, 3.

26 Taylor 2004, 16.

27 Soheila Shahshahanis' publication *Cities of pilgrimage* is a good example of this assumption (Shahshahani 2009).

28 Taylor 2004, 16.

29 Taylor 2004, 15.

30 Eade 2013, xiii, therefore proposes "to deconstruct the very category of pilgrimage", since one can no longer be sure that the meaning of pilgrimage is shared by its participants. The conclusion he draws from this insight is that "the thrust of our analytic endeavour should be not towards the formulation of ever more inclusive, and consequently ever more vacuous, generalizations but instead towards the examination of the specific peculiarities of its construction in each instance". It is this insight, coupled with another result of Coleman and Elsner's 1995 intervention that was seminal for the organization of the present volume (Coleman and Elsner 1995). Coleman and Elsner 1995, 202, wrote in a critical reflection on Eade and Sallnow's work: "In other words, the emphasis on the idea of pilgrimage sites being void of intrinsic meaning does tend to ignore the considerable structural similarities in pilgrimage practices within and between traditions. There are indeed parallels in behaviour to be found across time and culture, even if the implications and meanings of such behaviour vary enormously."

31 Eade 2013, ix; Bowman 1988.

Given the rapid transformation pilgrimage has undergone through technological innovations and changed religious and social needs, it seems necessary 1) to preserve our knowledge of older organizations of pilgrimages, and 2) to gain comprehensive insight into past pilgrimage practices in order to analyze their differences and understand eventual similarities. Consequently, a spectrum of dense empirical case studies in a historical and interdisciplinary perspective is offered. Starting from ancient Greece the trajectory leads through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pilgrimages in China and Japan up to the present, which is represented by studies of pilgrimages in Bhutan, Madagascar, Peru, Morocco, and Germany.

The historical perspective is conceived on the one hand as a longitudinal study of pilgrimages under specific constellations of time, of power relations, and of social relationships. Unlike Coleman and Elsner's book on historical pilgrimages it does not concentrate on world religions, but rather focuses on regional and transnational religious sites – except in the cases of Japan and China. On the other hand, the past is traced inside particular pilgrimage traditions. One of the determining criteria for selection was that pilgrimages not be viewed as static but be analyzed as a dynamic process in which religious beliefs, political power structures, and economic endeavours are deeply intertwined and are the objects of change.

In contrast to earlier studies in the tradition of the Turners' approach the focus of this volume is not so much on the individual or social experience of pilgrimages but more on their organizational structure in their national or transnational surroundings. Although the extent of 'person to place centered' (Schrempf, Berriane this volume) and 'text centered' (Triplett, Messner this volume) sacredness[32] is represented in our case studies, the transformation of space into sacred places through ritual performances, objects, and the behavior of pilgrims is of foremost interest. How are these places constructed, and what kind of personal histories of saints, myths, and narratives are embedded in them? Why and under which circumstances did they become sacred, and what does 'sacred' mean in an intercultural context? What role do texts play in attributing sacredness, and what do we learn about the change of ritual practices under different power structures?

Sacred landscapes are understood and interpreted as landscapes of imagination, offering insight into the modalities of place-making through ritual performances. In establishing such sacred topographies questions of identity in relation to state power become important in many studies.[33] They also bring up the thorny question of the difference between procession and pilgrimage. There exist numerous definitions of these, and theoretical discord about the two terms among disciplines is widespread.[34] Etymol-

32 Eade and Sallnow 2013, 8.

33 Hammerschmied, Kneitz, Schrempf, Luithle-Hardenberg, and Schäfer this volume.

34 Gutschow 2008, 399; Jones 2007, 119; Werbeck, Galling, and Campenhausen 1961, 668–669.

ogy is helpful here. According to Grimm's dictionary the term 'procession' originates from the Latin word *processio*, which meant in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, "ein feierlicher, besonders kirchlicher aufzug, bittgang, umgang."[35] The term 'pilgrim' originates in the Latin word *peregrinus*, which means stranger or foreigner.[36] The term described a wanderer to a faraway sacred place but was also used without religious connotations, meaning just wandering about. The opposition between distance and familiarity of space is thus already present in the original meaning of the two terms, and these turn out to be an important criterion of differentiation in the following case studies.

Gutschow differentiates between linear and circular processions.[37] They are undertaken inside a limited area, such as a field, a (quarter of a) town, along a river, or to a mountainside where springs are found. They take place in local surroundings, without crossing unknown territory. Their organization is most of the time under the control of the local administration and is often disliked by the official clerics because of the secular festivities which follow the religious parts of the ceremonies.

Processions embody the veneration of the gods, which is marked by the presentation of sacred objects which are shown during the procession to the wider public. Besides expressing veneration and gratitude processions are also performed to ask for the well-being of the people and their animals as well as for good harvests. In general, they symbolize collective aims, such as the perpetuation of the relationship between the gods and the humans, or the continuation of historical traditions and local identities. Their celebration is set for a particular time and mostly follows a monthly or annual routine; others are held more irregularly, depending on the constellation of stars or different calendar practices.

In contrast pilgrimages are defined by longer journeys, traversing national boundaries, parts of deserts and wilderness, or high mountain slopes. These journeys lead into strange territories which demand detailed organization and challenge the endurance of the pilgrims. Their experience is correlated with bodily suffering and hardship, or with the acquaintance of power and knowledge, as Messner describes for China.[38] In their organization pilgrimages are free from direct political or ecclesiastical control, although regarded as potentially subversive by the official clerics. However, as some of the examples in this volume demonstrate social control is practiced by local organizers of collective pilgrimages.[39]

35 J. Grimm and W. Grimm 1889a, 2157. This reads in a free translation: "procession… is a ceremonial, especially religious parade or *rogation procession*."

36 J. Grimm and W. Grimm 1889a, 1848.

37 Gutschow 2008, 400.

38 Lienau 2014; Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume.

39 Schäfer, this volume; Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume. Jones' descriptions of pilgrimages contradict this characterization, however. He differentiates between informal (Jones 2007, 125) and formal pilgrimages (Jones 2007, 120). Informal pilgrimages are directed to local places of power in the landscape which are not consecrated, whereas formal pilgrimages have a greater extension. In contrast to the above argument Jones describes informal pilgrimages as being under less control than the formal ones.

Besides distance and spatial intimacy, the motivation of participants is another difference between processions and pilgrimages, although one that is less clear cut. According to many authors pilgrimages are undertaken for very individual reasons:[40] to overcome a personal crisis, transcend a new stage in life *(rites de passage)*, find a new kind of inner balance, to fulfil a religious obligation as in Islam, or to thank the gods for help, be it in relation to health, job security, or other personal problems. Kurrat classifies these motivations into five categories: 1) to draw up a biographical balance sheet, 2) handle a biographical crisis, 3) take biographical time out, 4) live through a status transition, or 5) start a new life.[41] He correlates these motivations with the expectations pilgrims have towards their co-pilgrims and gets interesting results. Those pilgrims who belong to category 1 are hardly interested in communication with their fellow pilgrims. They talk rather to God when evaluating their life. Pilgrims belonging to category 2 and 5 on the contrary hope very much for discussions and proposals to solve their problems, whereas those in category 3 and 4 expect security and advice.[42] I have quoted these research results at length because they allow a differentiated analysis of what *communitas* means for different categories of pilgrims. According to their biographical situations *communitas* has different dimensions or is even not wanted for their experience as pilgrims. It thus becomes clear again that Turner's structural exposition of *communitas* was far too generalized to comprehend individual situations. Kurrat's research results also prove that the transformation of the present or status quo into the future is one main motive for pilgrims, who show a strong will for change.

Despite these differences the motivations of participants in processions and pilgrims can and do overlap. Gratitude, repentance, and asking for help are widespread among participants in processions, not to forget the desire for social interaction. The organization of a communal ritual calendar plays a role as well. Axel Schäfer (this volume) convincingly demonstrates that processions and pilgrimages constitute a unified sacred event when the ritual season stretches over a longer time. Yet, forms of organization and control differ in regard to local or regional hierarchies. I will therefore argue that processions can either be performed singularly, i.e. they stand for themselves, or are part of a wider pilgrimage structure, as Luithle-Hardenberg describes for the Jain and Hammerschmied and Kubatzki for Greece. Despite the differences that exist in regard to space, time, and scale in the organization of procession and pilgrimage, it seems impossible to formulate a universally applicable differentiation because of the many changes and dynamics that processions and pilgrimages undergo.

New landscapes of imagination are created in the diaspora in which new traditions of pilgrimage emerge. They allow fascinating insights into how far transnational net-

40 See the articles in Heiser and Kurrat 2014.

41 Kurrat 2014.

42 Kurrat 2014, 179.

works influence structures of religious belief and into the ways in which diasporas appropriate new urban spaces for religious practices.[43] The immediate gain of such a wide comparative time span is obvious. It respects the cultural and social conditions of each pilgrimage site and ties in with the hypothesis that despite the many changes pilgrimages have undergone their main structure and key orientations have remained stable.

2.2 A theoretical overview: From spaces to sacred places

The internal dynamics of pilgrimage sites demand a closer theoretical inspection of spaces and their transformation into sacred places. Discussions of space and place are intimately linked with the spatial turn which originated around the 1980s. Categories of space had been neglected by the social sciences since the rise of sociological theory at the beginning of the twentieth century.[44] Durkheim and Simmel had prioritized social over physical relationships, with the consequence that the analysis of space was left to the natural sciences in the following decades.[45] The abuse of space through Nazi politics *(Volk ohne Raum)*, and later on the challenges of postcolonialism and geopolitics led to a basic change of paradigm in social geography.[46] The new approach was based on the insight that space was not considered as naturally given or as an 'empty container' but as having been constituted through human interactions, based on a creative interplay of movements, ideas, objects, and symbolic meanings.[47] This relational understanding of space, which was conceived as part of social practice, opened new research perspectives also for the discussion of pilgrimages.[48] The inscription of movements, ideas, objects, and symbolic meanings led deep into what Schlögel calls the materiality of space.[49] For him as a historian this included the search for traces of time and history that give spaces their particular singularity and transform them into places with identities of their own. Objects, too, play an important role in this process, as is shown in some case studies in this volume (Schrempf, Schäfer, Luchesi, Hammerschmied).[50]

In contrast to this constructionist conceptualization of space Maurice Merleau-Ponty stressed humans' "being in the world"[51] as a form of emplacement but less through active interaction than by emphasizing "the essence of human existence as being emplaced".[52] This notion of place, which underlines feelings of home and belonging, is insofar open to critique as it understands place as an innate category of human beings and not as contexts of interaction.[53] But "it is social interaction that turns them into

43 See also Werbner 1996.
44 Haller 2009.
45 Durkheim 1976; Simmel 2013 [1903].
46 Bachmann-Medick 2006; Schlögel 2007; Soja 1989.
47 Dünne 2013, 289.
48 Lefebvre 1991. See also: Löw 2001.
49 Schlögel 2007, 60.
50 For a more theoretical discussion see Kohl 2003.
51 Merleau-Ponty 1962.
52 Desplat 2012, 19.
53 Giddens 1992, 39.

cultural sites," declare Olwig and Hastrup,[54] and into sacred places, one hastens to add. While there is wide agreement in the literature about the many strategies to be applied in order to achieve this transformation – through rituals including praying, singing, and offering sacrifices, but also through different kinds of movement such as circumambulation or prostration – the notion of what holy or sacred means in an intercultural context is open to interpretation.

2.3 Deconstructing the sacred

In many texts the word 'sacred' is still used as a kind of universal, referring to Durkheim's ground breaking text on the elementary forms of religion.[55] For Durkheim the separation of the sacred from the profane was an essential part of all religions, a generalization that was rejected on empirical grounds by most British social anthropologists, among them Goody and Evans-Pritchard.[56] Evans-Pritchard continued a long-standing debate which, according to Evans, can be summarized into two theoretical strands.[57] On the one hand there is a substantivistic understanding of the sacred as a "transcendent reality," on the other a situational-constructive approach which relates it to human agency.[58] Otto as a representative of the substantivistic approach described sacredness as a fundamental category of religious experience which could not be adequately expressed through language or through morality or rationality. For him the experience of sacredness was in itself ambiguous, since it contained opposite feelings, such as the *mysterium fascinans* on the one hand and on the other a mixture of fear (in the sense of cringing), terror, and awe which he called the *mysterium tremendum*.[59] The constructivist approach refers back to Lévi-Strauss, "who proposed that the sacred is open to the reception of any meaning".[60] Like the debates about space this argumentation opened the floor to attributing sacredness to human agency and action instead of an essentialist understanding. The most prominent and radical representatives of this approach in the realm of pilgrimage studies are Eade and Sallnow. They refer in their introduction to the many, often controversial meanings the term bears for different groups, such as official clerics, shrine custodians, and pilgrims, not to mention the different interpretations among the pilgrims themselves of the place they visit.[61] The sacred means for Eade and Sallnow a "religious void, a ritual space, capable of accommodating diverse meanings and practices."[62] And, contrary to substantivistic arguments which reiterate the sacred qualities of particular places as naturally given, Eade and Sallnow underline that it is

54 Olwig and Hastrup 1997, 26.
55 Durkheim 1976.
56 Goody 1961; Evans-Pritchard 1969.
57 Evans 2003.
58 Desplat 2012, 24.
59 Otto 1991, 42–43.
60 Quoted in Desplat 2012, 24.
61 See e.g. Crain 1997; Bowman 2013.
62 Eade and Sallnow 2013, 15.

the very quality of absorbing the plurality of discourses that "confers upon a shrine its essential, universalistic character."[63]

The case studies in this volume facilitate an approach to the diverse meanings the term 'sacred' bears in different societies. In the Greek language no direct equivalent exists for the word 'sacred' since the words *hierós*, *hósios*, and *hágios* have different connotations. *Tà hierá* denotes sanctuaries, sacrifices, or rites. *Hósios* relates to the norms of God, but can also be applied to objects that are no longer holy, while *hágios* stresses what is forbidden. *Témenos*, translated as "holy district", originates in the verb *témnein* which means to cut or to separate. Consequently, *témenos* is often characterized by *horoi* (boundary stones) or by *períboloi* (walls). The Latin word *sanctus* stood for persons, places, and objects which were thought of as inviolable and whose protection was guaranteed by the community. The adjective *sanctus* originates from *sancire*, which is translated as "to sanctify" or to make invulnerable by dedication. Already in ancient times *sacer* "denoted a place set apart as *sanctum*, usually a temple",[64] while its surroundings symbolized the mundane, or the *profanus*, which originally meant being situated before the sanctified district *(fanum)*.[65]

The association of the sacred with setting apart is also present in the Arabic root *q-d-s* (as in *qudsi* or *muqaddas*). A second sense of the sacred in Arabic is represented by the word *haram*, which can be translated as "l'interdit ou l'illicite", a correlation which is also found in other religions.[66] For example, in Oceania the word *tabu* or *tapu* is associated with something that is forbidden, e.g. a powerful sacred object that should not be touched.[67] In sharp contrast to the above examples the term 'sacred' in China refers to knowledge (composed of magic and medicine) and wisdom which are located in the mountains. It is conceptualized as a counter world which is symbolized through "longevity and immortality".[68]

The digression into the intercultural variability of the term 'sacred' pursues a deconstructed understanding of the sacred in its relation to place or place making. The great variety of holy places underlines that these places are created by different social and religious practices and embody a vast range of emotional experiences. However, despite the many differences some similarities remain: 'Sacred' in its different meanings refers either to something forbidden or exceptional, be it in regard to everyday practices or to superior knowledge. It may engender different sets of emotions ranging from the empowering to fear or horror, but also those of protection and awe. These various constructions of the sacred allow for a wide variety of usages. It gives meanings to objects, persons, and buildings, turning spaces into places. Shrines of the dead, often founders

63 Eade and Sallnow 2013, 15.
64 Desplat 2012, 24.
65 Quoted after Werbeck, Galling, and Campenhausen 1959, 146.
66 Berriane 2014, 30.
67 Hirschberg 1988.
68 Messner, this volume.

of religions,[69] trees, e.g. the one where Buddha experienced enlightenment, or mountains are widespread examples of sacred places which are quite often combined with legends or myths, but also with temples or religious statues. They thus create a kind of sacred topography or sacred landscape of which several examples are discussed in this volume.[70]

3 The case studies

3.1 Landscapes of imagination

Sacred landscapes are landscapes of imagination transformed through ritual encounters and past events as well as through the narration of myths and legends. Historical evidence which dates from prehistoric times onwards bears witness to such place-making, which reveals that sacred spaces are quite often part of territorially connected networks. In India, the Himalayas, and in Japan and China pilgrimage circuits constitute sacred topographies which are organized and numbered according to historical or religious events. Their sacredness is confirmed either by circumambulation of one temple or by undertaking the whole circuit described in the texts. If such sites were visited regularly, they developed a central sanctity, which had the potential to become a nodal point of regional, national, or international relations. Famous examples are found in all continents: Stonehenge, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Mecca, or Benares, to name just a few. Benares, writes Michaels, "condenses the abundance of the Hindi world and turns it into a paradigm for many other sacred spaces in India without being the center of them."[71] One of them is the vast temple complex Shatrunyaya which consists of 108 temples and about 1000 smaller shrines. It is called *tirthadhiraja*, "the king of pilgrimage places."[72] It is believed to have been founded by the 24 Jinnas, called fordmakers *(tirthankaras)*, who are the founders of Jain religion. These ascetic saints and prophets are believed to have laid out "the ford, '*tirtha*', across 'the ocean of rebirths' *(samskara)* to humankind before they attained spiritual salvation."[73] Since the Jain, an Indian merchant caste, do not have a territory of their own, their identity and continuity as a group is dependent on these pilgrimages, which can unite up to 10 000 people. They consider the mountain Shatrunjaya to be "one of the few places of eternity within a vast and constantly changing universe."[74]

69 See Berriane, this volume.

70 See articles by Messner, Triplett, Hammerschmied, Schäfer, Luithle-Hardenberg, Schrempf, this volume.

71 Gutschow and Michaels 1993, 12.

72 See Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume.

73 Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume.

74 Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume.

Equally impressive is the *Shikoku circuit,* described by Katja Triplett, which extends 1400 km and includes 88 pilgrimage sites on Shikoku Island. The pilgrimage is done on foot, although recently cars or buses have been used. The founder of the circuit, the monk Kukai (774–835) later known as Kobo Daishi, is referred to by the pilgrims as Daishi-Sama, Lord Great Teacher. The path which leads through all four provinces of Shikoku Island is partitioned into four stages which symbolize resolve, discipline, insight, and nirvana. The aim of the pilgrims is to gain merit for themselves which can also be transferred to others; the transfer of merit is especially valued, since it is seen as a precondition for the "insight into the basic emptiness of all phenomena".[75]

The *Saikoku circuit*, which has existed since the fifteenth century,[76] is more complex and less rigidly organized than the Shikoku path. It presents an interesting contrast to the Shikoku path which, until the building of a bridge in 1986, was situated in a rather remote region that had the reputation of being mystical and poor, whereas the Saikoku path leads around the former imperial city of Kyoto. It touches 33 pilgrimage temples, most of them devoted to the bodhisattva Kannon, who is known outside Japan as Avalokiteshwara. This bodhisattva cares for the well-being of the people by liberating them from suffering, ignorance, and disease.

During the eighteenth century there was an unsuccessful attempt to connect the two pilgrimage paths into a unified form of sacred landscape by including 20 more temples, in order to reach the mystical number 108, which stands in Buddhist thought for luck.[77] Triplett refers to 100 temples and dates this fusion to the eighteenth century. Yet, each path defends its particular identity. In contrast to the remoter Shikoku paths the 33 circuits of the Saikoku have always included sites of both "serious asceticism" and worldly recreation, underlining fixed rules combined with individual creativity. It is this combination of spirituality and tourism, Triplett argues, that is responsible for the ongoing popularity of this pilgrimage circuit around the bustling town of Kyoto.

Angelika Messner points out that recreation and spirituality were also part of Chinese pilgrimages.[78] In China of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, mountains (*shan* 山) were the paragon of sacredness and were therefore preferred pilgrimage sites. Mountaintops were regarded as entrance to heaven and residence of the deities. Five prominent mountains formed a chain known as the five holy mountains (*wu yue* 五嶽), which were central for the national order. The fact that kings went to pray and made offerings there conferred a special aura on them, which was reflected in the analogy between the five mountains and the imperial city. However, beyond their symbolic meanings as places of magic as well as of *materia medica*, the mountains were also places of relaxation and

75 Triplett, this volume.

76 The practice of visiting 33 temples is already known from the twelfth century.

77 Gutschow 2008, 411.

78 See also Luithle-Hardenberg and Schrempf in this volume.

well-being. Messner quotes a rich pilgrim in the seventeenth century who reported in his travelogue that he saw in one of the inns more than twenty stables for horses, an equal number of rooms for theatrical performances, and separate rooms with prostitutes. He also mentioned that there were three categories of rooms which differed in price and in the amenities offered. After the successful climbing of the mountain lavish banquets with wine were offered in the evening.

Messner's article is a good example for Schlögel's claim that pilgrimage sites reveal the materiality of spaces and give insight into their history. It lays open the organization of the pilgrimages with agencies, hostels, and restaurants as well as a diversified class structure, which she delineates through the different social backgrounds of the pilgrims. The comparison of past and recent sacred landscapes created through pilgrimages thus reveals astonishing analogies. They are not only landscapes of imagination which refer to very different contents but also places of communication, of pleasure and well-being, of trade and money-making, as well as emblems of power.

3.2 Texts, images, architecture

A study of past pilgrimage experiences immediately poses the question of sources to which archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists have different access. The case studies in this volume offer interesting different approaches. The archaeologist Kristoph Hammerschmied can base his analysis on a wide range of excavation materials, which allow insight into the construction and orientation of temples. Furthermore, temple inscriptions and the remains of statues enable him to decipher their symbolic meanings. Determining for the interpretation are also the orientation and sequence of the buildings, and the epigraphic and pictorial evidence of temple friezes which facilitate reconstructions of the procession through extrapolation. Since ancient Greece was a literate society, texts also exist. Written by historians, they are compilations of myths and legends which describe the foundation of particular towns or sacred spaces. Prominent among these were the narratives about the Trojan War which can be seen as a crystallization point of a Panhellenic identity.

Jana Kubatzki, a musico-archeologist, draws attention to the role of musical instruments in greek processions and analyzes in depth the various paintings on walls and vases. Some of the earliest paintings are found on the Sarcophagus of Hagia Triada in Crete from Minoan times. These paintings, which exist on all four sides of the sarcophagus, can be read as a complex narrative referring to "life, death, sacrifice, homage, passage and regeneration".[79] The analysis of different styles through the centuries allows interesting insights into the development of processions, ranging from mere dances to

79 Walgate 2002, 1.

fully developed rituals. However, vase paintings are insofar problematic as it is not clear whether they depict concrete realities or may be poetical reflections rather than documentations of cults.

Written texts and wall paintings or hangings are also important sources for the reconstruction[80] of pilgrimages in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in Japan and China. In Japan different text genres exist that give instructions for pilgrimages. The most important of these texts is the Lotus Sutra, which prescribes rules and precise behavior during the pilgrimage.[81] It also contains details about the 33 manifestations of Kannon, the most revered bodhisattva in Japan, who is better known as Avalokiteshwara. Besides the sutra, itineraries and lists of temples and places are instrumental for the organization of the journey. Whereas the itineraries have remained unchanged since the sixteenth century, the lists which contain practical guidelines and knowledge of hostels along the way have undergone constant transformation. Another important source was the pilgrim's book, in which pilgrims painstakingly noted down which temples they had visited, the donations they gave, and the seal and calligraphy they received. These books are not souvenirs, according to Triplett, but the "material testimony of one's piety and dedication".[82]

The detailed scriptural report of one's pilgrimage documents the very close link between religious piety, memory, and historical traditions. These traditions are also documented by *foundation legends (engi)* which contain information about the history of specific temples and their deities. *Engi* consist of historical information, moralistic stories, fairy tales, and esoteric or philosophical reflections. *Miracle stories* refer to extraordinary deeds of the deities who supported the faithful in difficult situations. During the seventeenth century miracle stories were compiled into manuscripts which also contained prints and songs. Such texts are still popular to this day and are reproduced on the website of the temples or even in Manga stories. Their publication is not only valuable for historical reasons; it also indicates the contribution of religious texts to the expansion of Buddhism and its adaptation by a society with a high degree of literacy at the time.

Perhaps even more powerful than the diverse texts were the pilgrimage maps and other religious paintings. They depicted real temples and scenes of rituals combined with representations of deities and pilgrims, thus creating a symbolic scenery where natural and imaginative worlds were fused. They invited the viewer to participate in the world of Kannon and other deities as well as in the lives and histories of important monks from China and India who brought Buddhism to Japan.

80 In an interesting article Feldman argues that texts are not only used to reconstruct pilgrimages but actually to constitute them in relation to landscape and past histories (Feldman 2007).

81 The idea of a "textual pilgrimage" (Eade and Sallnow 2013, 8) which Bowman describes for Jerusalem, offers itself for comparison but would need a more detailed analysis.

82 Triplett, this volume.

The reconstruction of pilgrimages in China during the seventeenth century also depends predominantly on texts that were produced by literary intellectuals of the time. Since most pilgrims were illiterate, the content of these texts was quite different from the ones in Japan. They did not contain practical information for the pilgrims but reflected the different interests of the literati. Some were primarily interested in literacy and in the aesthetics of the countryside, while others went to the mountains to seek medical knowledge. Although texts do play a role in anthropological case studies as well in the form of archival sources, their main resources are interviews with pilgrims and all sorts of officials as well as direct participation. Documentation by photographs and films also plays an increasing part.

3.3 Approaching the sacred: Social organization, ritual, objects

Pilgrims' movement in space represents complex performances consisting of the worshippers, the spaces which they traverse, the rituals they undertake along the way, and finally the arrival at the sacred site.[83] On these journeys territorial, ritual, and intellectual experiences are made, which are synthesized into one performance. The complexity of these movements needs long-term planning, special ritual and material knowledge of objects, songs, texts, and myths, as well as knowledge of the territory to be traversed.

Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg describes painstakingly the elaborate and very costly preparations for Jain pilgrimages that are needed in order to lead hundreds or even thousands of persons through the desert to the temple complex of Shatrunjaya (see above, page 18). To organize a pilgrimage of such dimensions is an extreme challenge regarding organizational know-how, time, and finances. Many older well-to-do Jains have the wish to invest their earnings at the end of their lives for their spiritual salvation and arrange for a pilgrimage. They are supported by their wives and younger family members, who organize the erection of tent camps along the route; besides food and shelter, other provisions have to be bought and transported as well.

The aim of the journey bestows on it from the beginning something extraordinary, which is expressed in special dress of the travellers,[84] marking them as pilgrims. A specific walking order of the group reveals their social relationships in everyday life, but also marks their functions in the ceremonies on the way and at their final destination. The structure of Jain processions, for example, are manifestations of the fourfold community (of ascetics and lay people): musicians are followed by male lay pilgrims who dance in honor of the male and female ascetics who follow behind. A picture of their deceased leader Acarya is carried and displayed in the procession.

83 See Hammerschmied, Kubatzki, Schäfer, Luithle-Hardenberg, this volume.

84 See Triplett, Schäfer, Kubatzki, this volume.

In other processions Marian statues,[85] or local or national saints as in Peru,[86] are carried along. These sacred objects[87] form, besides the prayers, songs, and dance, the core of the processions.[88] They embody sacred powers which are thought to be transferred to the believers by touching them.[89] Touching a sacred object conveys intimacy with it and thus deepens the process of spiritual and bodily healing.[90]

Ritual performances are the culmination of processions and pilgrimages. They are either solemn or enthusiastic interplays of visual impressions and sensuous feelings including colors, odors, and sounds. Colorful garments mark the functions of the participants in the processions and merge with the smells of flowers and other decorations. Incense heightens the sensory experience together with the sounds of music, the ecstasy of dancers, or on the contrary the silence of meditation and prayer. It is the sensory richness of the rituals and performers that appropriates and transforms space into sacred places. The rituals also structure the spaces in between, mediating between the ordinary at the beginning and the triumph of the extraordinary at the destination of the pilgrimage.

In several pilgrimages the traversing of the wilderness as a space-in-between is important for its success. Wilderness, defined as uninhabited, uncultivated, but also threatening space, can have different physical appearances. In the case of the Jain pilgrimage the desert is conceived as wilderness which has to be passed with little or no water. Similar 'wild passages' had to be mastered in Japan along the Shikoku path which led across deep forests and rivers, while Schäfer describes the steepness of the Andean mountains up to 5000 feet and their extreme climatic conditions. The willingness to suffer and endure bodily hardship – such as walking on foot, prostration, dietary prohibitions, or increases in the load to be carried – seem to be a widespread universal of pilgrims' search for salvation and redemption.[91] These times of crisis may lead to the outbreak of conflicts[92] or foster strong social support among the group, as Luithle-Hardenberg describes for the Jains. Despite the temptation to consider the Jains' situation as *communitas*, the notion "brotherhood in pain"[93] seems to be more appropriate, since Jain pilgrimage confirms structure instead of negating structure.

85 Luchesi, this volume.

86 Schäfer, this volume.

87 A detailed report on sacred objects can be found in Coleman and Elsner 1995, 100–103, 108–112.

88 Recent research has given increased attention to the materiality of objects, including their symbolic as well as practical meaning. For further discussions see also Bynum 2011, Kohl 2003 and Kubatzki, this volume.

89 Schäfer, Luchesi personal communication, Shahshahani 2009, 15–16.

90 Geissler and Prince 2013, 11, analyze touch in new ways as a form of merging, and link it to cultures of relatedness.

91 Eade and Sallnow 1991 and Eade and Sallnow 2013 stress in their introduction the importance of the suffering body as a form of penitence and salvation while Dahlberg 2013 concentrates her analysis on the sick pilgrims and their search for healing.

92 Sallnow 1987, 7.

93 Oliver-Smith 1999.

Axel Schäfer's contribution to this volume describes the complexity of the ritual structure of pilgrimages in the Peruvian Andes. His research results show a ritual calendar of several months in which procession and pilgrimages were neatly intertwined. He argues against Turner's strict dichotomy of local cults (processions) being hierarchical and exclusive while pilgrimages are described as voluntary, equal, and inclusive. Besides, the conflicts between several groups of pilgrims regarding access to the mountain sanctuary which are ritually fought out refutes the idea of equality and inclusiveness among the pilgrims and also contradicts the hypothesis that pilgrimages and processions are separate events. Some of the pilgrims to the *Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i*, a local mountain deity responsible for the health and well-being of people and animals, also participate in the Christian festival of Corpus Christi in Cuzco, which is the most important festival in the region. Schäfer argues that the procession and the pilgrimage are closely interwoven as regards the participants, the time of performance, and the reverence for their local patron saints. He opposes the evaluation by Sallnow that Corpus Christi is a local festival, by addressing the origins of the participants, who come from different and distant communities. Sallnow's interpretation appears in fact as an attempt to "center religious practice on the Catholic functionaries and on the places and objects that they dominate"[94], leaving the local populations aside.

3.4 Governments, identities, and the negotiation of meaning

The historical depth of the case studies in this volume enables the reader to situate pilgrimages in their social contexts under various political conditions. It soon becomes obvious that although pilgrimages are conceived as religious practice they have deep political effects and are affected at the same time by political power relations. Several case studies in this volume are concerned with their political dimension in addition to their social functions, which ranges from the construction of identity to the interference by central authorities (the polis) or the 'government.'

In the Middle Ages the emperor and the church were concerned about the well-being of Christian pilgrims. They decreed that pilgrims had to be given food and shelter by the monasteries or religious foundations, that they were freed from customs, and that criminal acts against them had to be severely punished by law. However, these privileges did not arise out of purely humanitarian considerations. The constant increase in pilgrims from the fourth century, but especially in the years of the plague, proved to be an important economic resource, on the one hand.[95] On the other, the acquisition of reliquaries by national or regional governments, which led to new pilgrimage centers,

94 Schäfer, this volume.

95 Coleman and Elsner 1995, 83–84.

contributed to the political power and social status of the rulers and the church.[96] Thus from the early beginnings of Christianity pilgrimages were intertwined with politics. At first the relation had all the characteristics of a gesture of support but later on, during the Inquisition, it exhibited forms of atonement.

Political ambitions over the control of pilgrimages were, however, not limited to Christianity but, as Kristoph Hammerschmied describes in his paper, were also part of the policy of the Greek polis. Due to the wish for representation the poleis organized pilgrimages on a transregional level. They fulfilled numerous functions. Besides the obligation to honor the gods, they were vehicles for status appraisal by the respective polis and an appropriate means to confirm their identity.[97] In order to publicize their festival, messengers were sent to every corner of the Greek world to invite participants in several days of worship, games, and lavish entertainment. These festivities demanded smooth organization and catering for several thousand people. They also included costly building measures, be they in the form of renovations or the construction of new temples. The sacred aura of these places enabled them to serve "as spatial markers of the sacral legitimization of political power" and in this capacity they became symbols of a Panhellenic identity.[98]

Hammerschmied's article underlines that already in ancient Greek times pilgrimages were embedded in a dense web of religious, social, and political motives and therefore were used by governments for their own ends. Axel Schäfer's article, however, is an interesting example of how such forms of political instrumentalization are resisted by the population, who impress their own meaning on them. His case study deals with the negotiation of meaning of the Corpus Christi procession and its leading saint, Santiago. After the defeat of the Inka kingdom Spanish administrators created the Corpus Christi procession as a direct celebration of their power and the repression and humiliation of the Inka population. Especially the Cathedral of Cuzco was turned into a synonym of subjugation. The colonial state conceptualized Corpus Christi as a triumph of the social order. The symbol of this official interpretation was the saint Santiago, who is depicted as a horse rider swinging a sword in his right hand. According to the Catholic colonial church he represented the successful battle against the Inka. The fact that this aggressive symbol of Spanish colonial power became one of the most prominent local saints seems at first rather surprising. However, the descendants of the Inka challenged the Spanish interpretation of Santiago as subjugator of the Inka by reversing the colonial interpretation. They celebrate Santiago as their own God, *yallapa*, the master of lightning and ruler of the universe. Schäfer's analysis describes in great detail how carefully the procession during Corpus Christi orchestrates a revision of the official hierarchy of the saints

96 Coleman and Elsner 1995, 108–110.

97 See also: Kubatzki, this volume.

98 Hammerschmied, this volume.

by appropriating them as local. Many of these details remain hidden from the officials so that both sides are able to uphold their own interpretation. Schäfer's description thus confirms Eade and Sallnow's thesis of the ambiguity of pilgrimages, which may have an inbuilt potential for subversion.[99] It is this particular characteristic which explains why they are feared and sometimes even forbidden by politicians and religious institutions. His example also proves that pilgrimage sites are important icons of history, representing the embodied memory of a place or nation. They can also be read as a cultural archive in which their changing functions and organization are revealed.

The contribution of Peter Kneitz highlights this dimension. His analysis centers on the transformation of a once royal residence into a pilgrimage site *(doany)* in postcolonial Madagascar. Particularly striking in his analysis is that his description is a rare example of the development of a pilgrimage *in situ*.
The *doany* Miarinarivo is at present a famous meeting place for possession,

> which allows the participants to worship ancestors of different historical epochs simultaneously and to establish thereby a particular way of communication, or, among others, […] regional and ethnic identification, including the political.[100]

In contrast visits to the royal palace in the nineteenth century had predominantly political grounds, since the subjects came to pay tribute to the king as well as to the ancestors to confirm their loyalty. The main ritual, called *fanompoa*, which included the anointing of the relics of the ancestors, was predominantly considered a political act of loyalty and the acknowledgment of Sakalava identity. Things changed, however, with the arrival of French colonial power in 1896. The kings lost their active political influence, although the structures of the kingdom remained intact. The dynamic of the political process in postcolonial Madagascar led to more than 50 *doany* – meaning royal residence and shrine at the same time – and the foundation of several sub-shrines, that is secondary *doanys*. Not surprisingly, the different shrines which together formed a sacred landscape developed along different trajectories. While some gradually lost their religious attraction, others, such as the *doany* of Miarinarivo, became prominent centers that turned into national and international foci of pilgrimage and tourism. The several case studies in this chapter not only represent the rich diversity of pilgrimage sites but also display the direct link between political power and sacred places. Sacred places and their sanctuaries have a strong dynamic of their own which may either allow for their liberation from state control, as in Madagascar and to a certain extent in Cuzco, exhibiting a subversive potential, or else they may submit to state orchestration, as in ancient Greece.

99 Eade and Sallnow 2013, 10–14.

100 Kneitz, this volume.

3.5 Sanctuaries and tourism: Pilgrimage sites in a globalized world

Pilgrimages and processions have undergone a kind of revival in recent decades in the Western world despite or because of the fundamental transformations by modernity. The reasons for this intensified interest are numerous. Although official religious membership is decreasing in many European countries, spirituality on a non-organized level has increased for several years.[101] Compared with earlier pilgrimages there are numerous alleviations which make pilgrimages accessible to a wider public. At present most places of worship can be reached by plane, truck, car, or bicycle, while the classic tradition of walking on foot is on the decrease.[102] Besides, many pilgrims no longer organize their route themselves, but rely on commercial offers either by monasteries or by religious or commercial travel agencies to organize and facilitate their journey. The many advertisements found in travel agencies that market holy places all over the world create a ritually structured landscape on a worldwide scale.[103] This kind of religious topography is no longer only physically explored but can easily be substituted by visual pilgrimages, saving time, effort, and money.[104]

Although the motives for pilgrimages had never been exclusively religiously oriented, as the case studies in this volume prove, under the conditions of globalization the difference between pilgrims and tourists has narrowed. With their combined attractions of religious experience, social interactions, and spiritual and physical adventures pilgrimages fulfil some fundamental aspirations of modern life. In a globalized world where time and space are condensed, they promise modes of *Entschleunigung*,[105] a term which is difficult to translate. It implies more than just to slow down, since the promise of tranquillity and the chance to encounter one's inner self go with it. It is for this reason that some authors identify 'the pilgrim' as an emblematic figure of the contemporary world.[106] Discussing Baumann's ideas of "liquid modernities" or Clifford's older version of a world "en route" makes the many facets of movements a dominating topos of (post)modernity.[107] However movements in a globalized world are not only voluntary but are imposed on millions of people because of social and political conditions. Failed states, internal wars, natural disasters with resulting food shortages, poverty, and a steady increase in global inequality has led to waves and waves of migration and the foundation of diasporas. One of the results of these movements is that Western cities

101 Berger 1992.

102 See articles by Luithle-Hardenberg, Triplett and Schäfer in this volume.

103 E.g. http://www.pilger-buero.de/ (visited on 20/07/2017), Diözese Freiburg. However, churches and abbeys supported and facilitated pilgrimages already in the Middle Ages (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 110). Characteristic for modernity is not the engagement of religious institutions but their kind of marketing.

104 Hill-Smith 2009. See also Ross 2011 [1978], xlvii–xlviii, for further consequences of digitization on religion.

105 Rosa 2013.

106 Coleman and Eade 2004, 5.

107 Baumann 2000; Clifford 1997.

have undergone a "conquest of space," as Pnina Werbner framed it, since migrants have erected mosques, temples, or churches in their countries of arrival, which are imbued with new moral and cultural orders.[108]

Brigitte Luchesi describes in detail the efforts Tamil immigrants have undertaken in Germany since the 1980s when they arrived in great numbers due to the civil war in Sri Lanka. But in contrast to many immigrant groups who at first have to use buildings in industrial settings for their worship,[109] Tamil Hindu migrants in Germany were soon able either to erect their own temples or to use Christian churches for their services, if Catholic. A very special act of 'sacralizing conquest' is the Tamil pilgrimage to the Catholic Marian shrine in Kevelaer, which represents after Altötting the second largest pilgrimage site in Germany. Kevelaer is renowned for its copperplate print depicting the Mother of Christ as Our Lady of Luxembourg, which dates from 1623. By coincidence, a small group of Tamil Catholics were invited by their parish in Essen to participate in the pilgrimage to Kevelaer. Being intrigued by the similarity of the Kevelaer Madonna with their own Madonna in Sri Lanka, they adopted the former as their own. A constant increase in pilgrims was the consequence, reaching from 50 in 1987 to 15 000 in 2002. The interesting point is that not only Catholics but also Tamil Hindu families have adopted the Kevelaer Madonna, although by slightly changing her meaning since she is not interpreted as the mother of Jesus, but as the wife of some Hindu gods. Important for all Tamils is her power to bring peace. Luchesi insists that the worship of the same goddess by representatives of different religions is quite usual in India and is not an outcome of their diaspora situation in Germany. What is typical however for pilgrimages in a global context is that the same sanctuary engenders different meanings, which enforce a constant process of negotiation. While the first generation of immigrants experience the Kevelaer pilgrimages as a kind of spiritual empowerment that symbolizes their integration into German society, for their children – it seems – socializing and shopping for East Asian food and other goods in the market in front of the cathedral is more rewarding. The current trend that pilgrimages tend to change more and more into touristic endeavors, although their religious concern is still upheld, has been observed and described for other pilgrim groups as well.[110] The present popular pilgrimages on the road to Santiago as well as to El Rocio in Andalusia, or to Fatima in Portugal are cases in point.[111]

Very similar forms of movements are also discussed in Johara Berriane's paper, which analyzes the pilgrimages of Senegalese followers of the Tidjaniyya, a Sufi cult, to the shrine *(zawiya)* of their founder in Fez. From the very beginning the cult was

108 Werbner 1996, 309. – For further examples see Eade 2009.

109 See Adogame 2010.

110 For a summary of this literature see the introduction by Eade 2013.

111 Crain 1997.

embedded in transnational networks, because after the death of the founder Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez his sons and disciples spread his teachings in West Africa. Due to the mass migration of many Senegalese to France and other parts of Europe the Tidjani network also spread to Europe. Many Tidjani followers, including women, dream of a pilgrimage to Fez. Being close to their saint Ahmad al-Tidjani is seen as a source of empowerment since a strong belief exists that he fulfils one's wishes. His followers also combine the journey with economic opportunities and if possible with a visit to Mecca as well. Conditions for such a journey were facilitated by the fact that an old established trade route existed between Senegal and Morocco whose importance increased when air fares became cheap and affordable. The increasing role of the *zawiya* in Fez was instrumentalized by the Moroccan state for its own political aims to mediate between the two countries and West Africa in general but also by the tourist agencies in Fez. The latter were quick to offer extended visits to other Moroccan religious sites in order to promote tourism in their country. The close relation between tourism and pilgrimages opens new markets which generate new sacred topographies. They are no longer focused only on historic sites related to the Tidjaniyya but include the mausoleum of Mohammed V as well. In this way new itineraries are created which celebrate active and lived Islam, transcending ethnic as well as national boundaries.

Mona Schrempf's article also comprises detailed information about the interplay between the state, monastic authorities, and tourist agencies regarding the transformation of a popular pilgrimage site and festival in eastern Bhutan. She gives a detailed account of how local and national bureaucracies and the Buddhist clergy appropriated both the sacred place and the ritual structure of the festival, which used also to be an important trading market among the many different ethnic groups in this borderland area with India. In colorful pictures Schrempf narrates the development and different aspects of a local popular pilgrimage festival into the Gomphu Kora Tsechu, a recently established state monastic dance performance and procession in honor of the great Tantric master Guru Rinpoche, who in the eighth century left his magical traces here. Many thousands of pilgrims circumambulate his 'paradise' rock at the time of the festival and visit his nearby meditation cave in order to participate in the various powers of Guru Rinpoche that are embodied in this landscape. They circumambulate, recite prayers, and ingest substances for fertility, a long life, and a better rebirth.

The festival of Gomphu Kora has long been an important event in this border region, since it combined local trade with social encounters of different ethnic and linguistic groups in this easternmost part of Bhutan, including their neighbors from India. The popular festival celebrated the diversity of life. Pilgrims and locals were engaged in local folk dances and songs, sexual encounters and intermarriages, and the exchange of local products as well as in prayers and circumabulations for a better rebirth. How-

ever, Buddhist representatives of the Drukpa Kagyu order of Vajrayana Buddhism – the state religion of Bhutan – as well as the local and national government transformed this local sanctuary and festival into one of the main tourist attractions in this otherwise impoverished and remote area. In order to counter outmigration and subsistence farming, a state tourism plan instigated economic development in this area by newly establishing and organizing well-known state performances by the Drukpa Kagyu clergy, which are regularly performed elsewhere in the country as a heavily promoted routine tourist attraction. These ritual masked dances in honor of Guru Rinpoche, called *tsechu*, are *the* trademark of Bhutan's 'traditional culture' for tourist display. To the Gomphu Kora Tsechu, a new *tanka* display and ritual procession were added, perfectly and professionally represented to a growing international audience. Through various measures the rich and diverse religious folk festival of earlier times was replaced by an officially and state orchestrated cultural event. As a result Schrempf concludes:

> The new standardized performance seems to have extinguished a rich diversity of folk dances and songs, languages, and customs which has turned formerly active multi-ethnic and multi-lingual agents into more passive audiences and consumers of a state religious display.[112]

Commercialization, tourism, and state interests went hand in hand to transform a very potent religious site and festival into one of standardized cultural heritage in which the richness of local traditions has become streamlined into a festival which is still presented as an important religious event but exhibits all the signs of a tourist spectacle.

4 Conclusion

The articles in this volume underline the dynamic nature of pilgrimage, which has characterized its existence right from its beginning. Being embedded in and part of different religious, socioeconomic, and political structures, pilgrimages have changed their meanings and adapted their forms over time according to changes in society, but they still do embrace "tradition and change," as Ross has aptly remarked.[113] The constant flow of ideas, practices, and knowledge which is part of the globalized world as well as the many technological innovations discussed above have rather enriched than weakened this practice. In general, the social composition of pilgrims has broadened, as have their motives for undertaking the journey. Although most motives to undertake a pilgrimage have existed for centuries – such as seeking health, fertility, wisdom, gratitude

112 Schrempf, this volume.

113 Ross 2011 [1978], xlii.

for support in a crisis situation, trade, or social entertainment – new ones have come into play. To ask for wealth or a good job, to meet relatives and friends, to enhance one's social status, or to find inner harmony are powerful reasons which mix with older ones. It is this malleability that enables an institution such as pilgrimage to contain different and contradictory meanings and cope with fundamental changes in religious practices. The transformation "from a culture of obligation to a culture of consumption"[114] which stresses the free decisions of individuals to undertake pilgrimages out of pleasure instead of obligation has broadened the field of how to construct pilgrimages in (post)modernity. The very popularity that pilgrimages enjoy in present-day Europe is the result of these transformations which, however, seem to pose new questions regarding secular and religious pilgrims as well as the role of states. Yet, these questions are not altogether new, since Turner and Turner remarked that "a tourist is half a pilgrim if a pilgrim is half a tourist".[115] And Coleman and Elsner discuss in their work the interference already of the medieval state in the commercialization of pilgrimages and sacred sites. What is new in (post)modernity, however, is a change in balance between the religious and the secular, with the latter – sometimes via the process of hybridization – gaining more importance.[116] Although the long-term perspective of our analysis invites us to draw this conclusion, we have to keep in mind that terms like modernity or postmodernity are difficult to generalize even in one country and even more so between countries. It is therefore necessary to continue the trajectory that this volume has undertaken through careful historical and political contextualization in order to grasp the individuality and specificity of future pilgrimages.

114 Ross 2011 [1978], xlii.
115 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 20.
116 Schrempf, this volume.

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Approaching the Sacred in Chinese past Contexts

Summary

Recent scholarship on sacred sites and pilgrimage convincingly demonstrates that the conceptual separation of belief and knowledge as well as the dichotomization of the 'secular' and the 'sacred' both in the case of the Chinese historical and present-day contexts are most inappropriate as a methodological framework. With a strong focus on practice and embodiment and by breaking away from a single discipline approach, my paper is concerned with the question why and how people narrated their own encounters with the Sacred. In the center of my discussion are the mountains as the paragons of Chinese history. They display multiple identities as part of imperial ritual, of mysticism, nature and history, of life, fertility and death and as part of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist sites of worship and for performing self-cultivation which were used by literati to project something of themselves into the future.

Keywords: Mountains; sacred sites; definitions of the sacred; texts of literati

Die konzeptionelle Trennung von Glauben und Wissen ist irreführend und sollte dementsprechend ebenso wenig als methodologische Grundlage dienen wie die Dichotomisierung von ‚heilig' und ‚säkular', davon zeugen neueste Forschungsbefunde mit Blick auf die Geschichte von Pilgern und Heilige Orte im chinesischen Kontext. Der vorliegende Beitrag fokussiert Berge, weil ohne sie keine Diskussion um das Heilige in China möglich ist. Mit Blick auf konkrete Praktiken, die auf die Kultivierung des Selbst abzielen und durchgängig mit körperlicher Einleibung (Embodiment) von Vorstellungen des Heiligen verquickt sind, sucht der Beitrag die Frage zu beantworten, auf welche Weise Menschen ihre eigene Begegnung mit dem Heiligen erzählen. Die Berge dienten als Orte kaiserlicher Ritualhandlungen, sie waren und sind mit Mystik, Natur, Geschichte, Leben, Fruchtbarkeit und Tod verbunden, und als Orte konfuzianischer, buddhistischer und daoistischer Verehrung dienten sie Gelehrten als Projektsmöglichkeit ihres Selbst in die Zukunft hinein.

Keywords: Gebirge; heilige Orte; Definitionen des Heiligen; Gelehrtentexte; Selbst-Kultivierung

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1 Introduction

The conceptual separation of belief and knowledge as well as the dichotomization of the secular and the sacred are most inappropriate as a methodological framework, both in the case of the Chinese past and present. The same also applies for pilgrimage in China that since earliest times is linked to mountains. Beginning with the third century BC through the periods until the decline of the Chinese Empire in 1911 Sacred Mountains were approached periodically by the emperor for performing the state sacrifices. Moreover, mountains served as sacred places for all those who individually sought for longevity and other forms of self-cultivation. Such pilgrimages epistemologically based on the notion of mountains as inheriting the finest Qi 氣 ("vapor", "breath" and "finest influences") which was needed for the bodily and spiritual exercises that in turn referred to the view of the human self as being a sacred space e.g. as a mountain itself. The idea of 'inner pilgrimage' promoted the perception of a body-self (*shen* 身) seen essentially as the intrinsic space where the Sacred 'is located' and where it can be developed and lived with, as such this was the prerequisite for achieving the state of immortality.

Starting with a short overview on the state of research on religious practices in the Chinese past, this contribution dwells on both the 'outer' and 'inner' pilgrimage, based on textual evidence from 3rd century AD as well as from the 12th and 17th centuries.

2 State of research

Jesuit scholars and missionaries living in China in late 16th through early 17th century worked hard for gaining acceptance and respect by the Chinese scholar official elite in Hangzhou and at the court in Beijing. Besides studying Chinese to a high level, teaching and writing about mathematics, astronomy and medicine, they appropriated Chinese vestimentary customs from scholar-officials in late Ming-style. They tolerated the formal Confucian imperial rites as well as the ritual practices of honoring ancestors, and hence gained many followers among the Chinese elite. This in turn aroused the envy of less successful congregations in China such as the Dominicans and Franciscans. The latter reported to the Pope in Rome criticizing the Jesuits for not acting as proper Christian missionaries, since they tolerated the Chinese ritual practices by considering them as civil ritual.

Ultimately the Jesuits' view lost ground during the rites controversy which led to the expulsion of catholic missionaries from China in early 17th century. However their influence on research in Chinese religion and philosophy lasts until today. Their insistence on the "this-worldliness, material and secular" nature of Chinese religious practices was foundational for tolerating the Chinese rites and this rhetorical move had

made them compatible with Catholicism. This perspective was taken up later on by the Dutch Sinologist and historian of religion, J. J. M. De Groot (1854–1921). He characterized the different schools and practices by subsuming them all under the term of (this-worldly) "Universism".[1] Similarly, the eminent historian of Chinese science and technology, Joseph Needham (1900–1995), classified Chinese religious and philosophical thought in terms of (this-worldly) 'organizistic thinking', referring to the idea that an organism with its integral parts, orders and pattern in their correlations and references together build up one extensive and grandiose pattern.[2] This should be seen, in Needham's view, in sharp opposition to Western analytical and ontological perspectives. A few decades later Donald Munro followed up with the term 'holism' denoting the Chinese idea that each single action would trigger one or more other actions which again would potentially affect the actions at the beginning of the cycle.[3]

Likewise reductionist views on Chinese religious thinking and practices were put forward by Chinese scholars. Banning any mythological and metaphysical signs from their realm of research by declaring such signs as superstitious, Chinese historians emphasized the materialistic and 'this-worldliness' of Chinese philosophy. Thus they were not interested in research of religious practices.[4]

Beginning with the 1980ies when Chinese sociologists and anthropologists in high numbers started to study folk religious practices, the general perception of these practices changed. Yet, contending themselves with accumulating huge amounts of data this research lacks substantial argumentative and explanatory analysis.[5] On the other hand researchers of Western provenience decidedly distance themselves from previous views which stated that China would lack religious thinking and practices at all.[6] Moreover, differently to former views which had reduced the highly complex landscape of Chinese religious practices to a single essential feature, recent research justly dwells on the high variety of religious practices.

Until the end of the 19th century the Chinese language did not provide one single comprehensive term for religion. The compound noun *Zongjiao* 宗教 which at present is the usual term denoting 'religion' literally means "teaching from the ancestors". It was introduced as a Japanese loanword during the days of reform in 1898.[7] Nevertheless, in the Chinese historical and contemporary contexts about a dozen different religions can be counted, if we include believe systems such as historical traces of Manicheism and Nestorianism, Judaism and Christian forms of Catholics and Protestants as well as

1 De Groot 1918, 2.
2 Needham 1956, 281.
3 Munro 1985.
4 See Bauer 2001, 23, with reference to Feng Youlan, who was among the most prominent Chinese historians of philosophy in 20th century.
5 Ownby 2001, 139–158.
6 Exemplary voices of this critical view are Teiser 1996, 3–37; Lagerway 2002, and Overmyer 2003, 307–316.
7 Paper 1994; Liu 1995.

Islam. The borderline between folk religions and the so-called official religions such as Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism is difficult to draw. Similarly, the 'three religions' resist to any attempt to a clear cut separation between them.

The only verified evidence in the Chinese case which applies to all three is the absence of a personified Creator God and thus the absence of a monotheistic religion.[8] As a minimal account in this regard we should mention the most important and prominent myth of origin which says that the visible world of the prenatal chaos (*hundun* 混沌) was developed in line with the world-principle (*dao* 道).[9] The categories *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 and the *wuxing* 五行 (five movements/five agents) can be seen as signs of attempts to bring an order into the 'whole'.[10]

As pointed out already recent research shows that the phenomena of transcendence and sacred are not absent from the traditions of genesis myths or narratives of the paradise. In opposition, they show evidence for an omnipresence of the "numinous" and the supposed sacred and the Divine.[11]

3 Approaching the sacred

There is no singular and fixed definition of the sacred. Etymogically *sheng* 聖 (holy, sacred) is correlated to *sheng* 聲 (voice, sound), as such referring to the meaning "sensitive", and simultaneously to *cong* 聰 which means "smart, clever". Thus, *sheng* 聖 refers to a high-graded ability to understanding out from slightest signs or tokens. This term is therefore superordinated to the terms "knowledge" (*zhi* 知) and "wisdom" (*zhi* 智). A *shengren* 聖人 (a wise/sacred person) knows before others will know (*qian zhi* 前知): *zhi* 智 is a virtue, but *sheng* 聖 is more than a virtue, it is superordinated to every virtue, as such also to *zhi*.[12] A *shengren* 聖人 is a "sage", who in the daoist tradition is also associated with immortality. The idea of immortality in this context relates to ancient ancestor worship. This fostered a tight connection between the living and the dead. The latter were thought of being full of authority on the earth. The idea of immortals attaining transcendence, obtaining wonderful powers, walking through walls, flying through the air and communicating with the death, is still very popular today as symbols of long life and of happiness.[13]

For the purpose of longevity and immortality people needed to nourish the Qi 氣 ("vapor", "breath" and "finest influences"). Qi is the stuff which everybody and the whole

8 Birnbaum 1986, 119; Hahn 1994, 169–183, here 170.
9 Major 1978, 9–10; Girardot 1983.
10 Major 1978, 13–15.
11 See for instance Lagerway 2002; Reiter 2002, 49.
12 See Lüshi chunqiu, chapt. 20, 8, in Chunqiu 1984, 686.
13 For a brief overview on this issue see Kohn 1996, 52–63.

cosmos was made of. Life is seen as a consolidation of Qi, whereas death means the scattering of Qi.

In the context of body techniques for life prolongation and immortality the component energy or life force figures integrally in Qi. Therefore, first of all, one had to seek to hold Qi together, to not to disperse it *via* exhaustion, due to too much work, too much talking, too much worrying, too much eating and drinking and too much sexual activity. These warnings against overdoing and exhausting Qi are part of a whole range of practices which are aimed to help at nourishing Qi and at prolonging life (*Yang sheng* 養生).

Qi in its most subtle and pure form was to be found within the mountains. Sacred places in China are places which are *sheng* 聖 (holy, sacred) or *ling* 靈 (efficacious, powerful, magic, curative). *Ling* is "directly connected with the powers of the earth and the *dao*".[14] *Shengdi* 聖地 are places which are curative and sacred. This particular association of magic, curativeness and power with the mountains (*shan* 山) has been textualized since Han-tines (200 BC).

The phrase *chaoshan jinxiang* 朝山进香 was and still is the common term for pilgrimage. It does however not imply a hint to a journey or to a circuit. *Chao shan* 朝山 literally means "paying one's respect to a mountain". *Jin xiang* 进香 means "to present incense". This refers to the practices of bringing and burning incense and to get in contact with the transcendental sphere. Emperors used to perform sacrifices at the sacred mountains to perform the *fengshan* 封禅 offerings to the mountain, the rivers, for the heaven and the earth.[15] In opposition to this the expression *shaoxiang* 烧香 refers to the ordinary or daily burning incense in front of the family altar or in the village-temple.[16]

3.1 Sacral geographic space and mountains (shan 山)

Mountain regions in historical accounts are often discussed as hideaway in times of distress. When bandits or troops of invaders approached their villages, people abandoned their houses and hided in nearby mountain forests. Moreover, mountain regions were important places for several professions such as dyers, physicians and ordinary herbalists.[17]

The analogy 'sacred and mountain', moreover, is revealed in the expression *shanmen* 山門 (door/entrance to the mountain). These two characters are to be found in almost every single temple (including all those in the flat lands) denoting the 'entrance to the

14 Hahn 1994, 171.

15 On these sacrifices see Lewis 1998 and Reiter 2002, 72–73.

16 Naquin and Yü 1992, 11–12.

17 Ch'ü 1981 [1972], 209; Tanigawa 1985, 104–110; Schmidt 1996, 19.

Fig. 1 The Five Sacred Mountains in China: Huashan, Hengshang (North), Taishan, Songshan, und Hengshan (South).

sacred'. Similarly, the term *xian* 仙 or *xianren* 仙人 (literally "the sacred", "the immortal") directly refers to a man/a person who stands nearby a mountain (*shan* 山).

Shan can denote one single mountain but also a group of mountains or a mountain chain, grottos within a mountain or even an island. In ancient China heaven and the ancestor ghosts had been regarded as powers, for which sacrifices had to be delivered. Mountains and waterways were seen as a kind of symbolic reticule defining the empire. This evidences the constructional character of the sacred places as well as the interaction between sacral and profane. Mountain tops were regarded as entrance points into heaven and as dwellings of deities. Not all pilgrimage places were mountains, but mountains were the prototypes for pilgrimage and eremitism – mountains were throughout associated with powerfulness and efficacy, curativeness and holiness.

Chinese historical accounts since the first century BC paid great attention to the description of the sacral-geographic order within Chinese space. The religious-geographic order with the Five Sacred Mountains (*wu yue* 五嶽; Fig. 1) as cornerstones of this order and their interrelation with the political order has been described by Sima Qian 司馬遷

(145–90 BC) in his *Shiji* 史記, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 109 BC.[18] He depicts the space of China as resulting from an act of culture which is linked to the legendary culture hero Yu 禹. According to this account the first legendary emperor undertook 'sacrifice tours' on the sacred mountains. He and all the following emperors gained the religious legitimation of the space China by ritually imitating this first act of culture.[19] *Via* oracle he determined the month and day for the audience with the regents of the four directions and the various provinces. The second month of the year he approached the *Taishan* (literally: the peak of the highest freedom and utmost heal) in the east, in the present Province Shandong. He burned the brunt offering to the heaven, harmonized the calendar order for the seasons and the month, corrected the order of the weeks, standardized the length of the flutes and the measurements for length, space and weight. On the fifth month he travelled to the sacred peak in the South, Hengshan (literally: the vertical transverse mountain) in the present Hunan Province. Thereafter he left for the peak of the West, Huashan (literally: the blossom peak), in the present Shenxi Province. Lastly, he visited the Mountain in the North, Hengshan (literally: mountain of the steadiness), in the present Shaanxi Province.

The State ritual was modified continuously, also in terms of naming and numbering of the sacred mountains, from its beginnings in 200 BC until the end of the empire in early 20th century. Only in Han-Times (200 BC–200 AD), when the number 'five' was to become the significant order-number, the Songshan (literally: the high, lofty mountain), in the present Henan Province, was added as the fifth sacred mountain, as the mountain at the center. And only in the 8th century the five Sacred Mountains have been assigned to Daoism.[20] According to the Five Phases paradigm *(wuxing)* the Taishan for instance correlates with the east and the phase 'wood', which again is associated with spring and growth. This was foundational for this mountain to become the interface between heaven and earth, between life and death.[21] It was believed that heaven (*yang* 陽) loved the dark (*yin* 陰), thus one had to admire the principle of the dark at the foot of a high mountain and to offer sacrifices. Similarly it was believed that the earth (*yin* 陰) loved the principle of the light (*yang* 陽). Therefore sacrifices had to be offered to the earth on a round hill on the flat land. The spatial implemented spiritual infrastructure at the Sacred Mountains provided the emperor with orientation and discursive power for his (imperial) ritual interaction with the heaven. This same spatial infrastructure is to be found in Beijing: the Forbidden City is marked exactly by five spaces, namely the Heavenly Temple in the south which is an exact visualization of the Heaven-Altar of the Taishan, the Moon temple in the East, the Sun temple in the West, the earth temple in

18 Qian 1973, vol. 28.

19 Kiang 1975, 183.

20 Yü 1992; Landt 1994, 8–9.

21 Cedzich 2001, 9–10.

the North. The Inner, the Forbidden City with the residency of the Emperor – in analogy to the Holy Mountain in the Center (the Songshan) – is the Center of the Empire which is ritually legitimized and supported.[22] The five Sacred Mountains served as spatial markers of the sacral legitimization of political power, and simultaneously also as ritual centers for popular religious practices.

4 Pilgrims, travelers and literati

Pilgrimage was not a religious duty. It was not specifically forced by religious professionals neither in Buddhism nor in Daoism. Pilgrimage was also not fortified within the Confucian classics. However, the emperors' sacrifice tours throughout the history were almost compulsory for legitimizing political power. Similarly, people, when seeking to approach the numinous and deity followed the same sacral geography.

The focus in the following is the 17th century which was characterized by a variety of religious specialists, besides Confucian scholars, Buddhist and Daoist clerics of both genders, diviners and geomancers.[23]

In Late imperial China, pilgrimages to the Sacred Mountains were undertaken due to varying reasons. Wanderers traveled in order to find a master in the daoist tradition. Students and Literati wandered as seekers of learning and visited the centers of learning. Others traveled for self-cultivation (*xiu shen* 修身, literally: correction of the self).[24]

When beginning in the 16th century leisure travel activities dramatically increased and travelogues (*youji* 游记) started to appear in high numbers on the book market, narratives about individual experiences of pilgrimage are only rarely to be found among them.[25] One reason for this might be seen in the fact that pilgrims mostly were illiterate.

The travelogues mostly stemmed from literati who approached the holy peaks[26] with multiple identities: they were at the same time administrators, poets, historians and seekers of longevity and mystical experience. Mundane desires such as sightseeing and retracing the footsteps of famous poets, emperors, sages and philosophers[27] were only part of their interests.

Literati emphasized literacy, correct moral and aesthetic judgment. To be sure, literacy was a crucial element in the offerings, paper money as well as in the prayers. However, on the other hand site oral recitation and repetition of poems and singing were also part of the activities on the holy mountains.[28] Women pilgrims visiting the holy

22 Shatzman Steinhard 1999.

23 Goosaert 2004, 699–771, here 699–700.

24 Goosaert 2004, 732.

25 Wu 1992, 66.

26 The most famous peak was and still is the Tai Shan (Mount Tai). See Chavannes 1910.

27 Dott 2004, 1, 195–197.

28 Dott 2004, 20, 231.

peaks for praying for sons as heirs were not necessarily literate. Among others a sheer number of pilgrims approached the holy peaks in late imperial China for religious devotion, for seeking health, a higher official position, good crops or greater control over conquered territories (such as the emperors).[29] Literati or scholar officials lodged for the night in a comfortable hostel, and after bathing in the morning they literally went on the backs of others (on sedan chairs or also on a donkey) to the peak.[30] Their accounts were not primarily 'eye witness accounts' of their experiences of pilgrimage: Literati at that time were fascinated with historical appreciation and with the appreciation of beautiful scenery. They went out to viewing historic sites and to describe them also in poems. They eagerly wanted to walk in the footsteps of famous cultural heroes, poets, emperors and philosophers. Their thinking was dominated by the general principles of Neo-Confucianism, which were a synthesis of earlier Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist contents.[31] In 16th and 17th century a number of edifices in honor of Confucius were built by scholar officials on the Taishan.

Hence, sacred mountains were no more remote places, but very much populated. Pilgrimage tours were facilitated by agencies, restaurants, guesthouses and the many sedan chair bearers who offered their services to everybody who could afford it.[32] Sacred Mountains more and more were visited by wealthy people like Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1684?), who wrote their private and personal accounts on the experiences as travelers and as pilgrims.[33] Any dichotomization of the secular and the sacred however would be inadequate since the conceptual separation of belief and knowledge is not at stake here.

Zhang Dai, a wealthy literati and descent of a prominent family in Shanyin[34] (present Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province) was not forced to pursue an official carrier. He could afford to travel and to enjoy beautiful sceneries wherever he loved to. He went to the West Lake in Hangzhou (which is about 52 km away from his home town) several times, but also to Yangzhou (which is about 290 km distant to Shaoxing) and to the Sacred Mountain Taishan (which is about 250 km away from Shaoxing). It is well known that traveling even in 17th century, still required time. People traveled over land and water, from Nanjing to Beijing for instance. This distance of about 1200 km required at least thirty days.[35] When Zhang Dai traveled to the Sacred Mountain, the Taishan, he was on the road for a dozen days. He wrote:

29 Dott 2004, 231.

30 Wu 1992, 68–70, mentions Wang Shizhen (1526–1590).

31 Dott 2004, 204.

32 Wu 1992, 73–74.

33 On this quite personal account on experienced pilgrimage see Wu 1992, 66–67; Liscomb 1993; Eggert 1994; Landt 1994; Strassberg 1994; Ward 1995 and Riemenschnitter 1997.

34 The cultural centers Shanyin 山陰 Kuaiji 會稽 both belonged to the prefecture Shaoxing 紹興. Since the 16th Shaoxing was among the richest districts (*xian* 縣) in Southern China. See Cole 1986, 6.

35 Pang 1996, 82.

泰安州客店

客店至泰安州，不復敢以客店目之。余進香泰山，未至店里許，見驢馬槽房二三十間；再近，有戲子寓二十餘處；再近，則密戶曲房，皆妓女妖冶其中。余謂是一州之事，不知其為一店之事也。投店者，先至一廳事，上簿掛號，人納店例銀三錢八分，又人納稅山銀一錢八分。店房三等。下客夜素早亦素，午在山上用素酒果核勞之，謂之「接頂」。夜至店，設席賀，謂燒香後，求官得官，求子得子，求利得利，故曰賀也。賀亦三等：上者專席，糖餅、五果、十餚、果核、演戲；次者二人一席，亦糖餅，亦餚核，亦演戲；下者三四人一席，亦糖餅、餚核，不演戲，用彈唱［９］。計其店中，演戲者二十餘處，彈唱者不勝計。庖廚炊爨亦二十餘所，奔走服役者一二百人。下山後，葷酒狎妓惟所欲，此皆一日事也。若上山落山，客日日至，而新舊客房不相襲，葷素庖廚不相混，迎送廝役不相兼，是則不可測識之矣。泰安一州與此店比者五六所，又更奇。

When people came to an inn in Tai ’an prefecture, they dared not to take it an ordinary inn. On my pilgrimage to Mount Tai (余進香泰山) I stopped at an inn. Before I reached the inn, I saw twenty to thirty stables for horses and donkeys. Nearer the inn, there were more than twenty theatre quarters. Still closer, I saw secret chambers where pretty and coquettish prostitutes were housed. I had never known that the Prefecture’s phenomenon had its origins in the inn.

For guests, they have to first register in a hall, each one has to pay the inn a standard charge of 3 qian and 8 fen, and pay the mountain tax of 1 qian 8 fen.[36]

Rooms had 3 types. For common guests both evening and morning were vegetarian meals. They were entertained with plain wine, fruits and nuts at noon in the mountain, called “reaching the summit” (*jie ding* 接頂). When they returned to the inn at night, there were congratulatory (he 賀) (final) banquets, believing that after they offered incenses (燒香) their wishes for promotion, a son and profit would be granted. The congratulatory meals also had 3 types. The most expensive type provided a separate table for each pilgrim and had five fruits, ten dishes, sweets, cakes, and a choice of dramatic and musical entertainments: the middle grad sat 2 to a table, with sweets, cakes, dishes and nuts, and dramatic performance. Those paying the cheapest rate were crowded in 3 or more to a table, also provided with sweets, cakes and dishes, but were regaled with only music, not theatricals.

36 In Ming times, a normal worker earned about 20 liang 两 a year. 1 两 =2000 钱，1 钱 =10 分。At that time, one 斤 (half kg today) of pork is about 20 钱，and one 斤 of noodle is about 10 钱。Thus 三錢八分 is not a big amount, but I guess it was only the basic fee for the inn, and other charges depended on what you ordered (personal communication by Lee Cheuk Yin, Singapore University).

> The inn had more than 20 places having dramatic performances, and countless musical performances. It also had more than 20 stoves in the kitchen and helpers amount to one to 2 hundred men. When (the visitors) came down from Taishan, they ate meat, drank wine, and sought pleasure with prostitutes, doing whatever they wanted. All this happened within a day. It was strange that despite the heavy traffic up and down the Mountain, there were still enough rooms and manpower for it. All the new arrivals never found their rooms unready; vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals never got mixed up, nor did the employees ever fail to anticipate every need of the guests. It was even stranger that there were five to six inns which could match this in Tai'an Prefecture.[37]

This extract from Zhang Dai's late 17th century travelogue offers vivid insights into the ways pilgrimage had become an integral event involving touristic structures that allowed thousands of people to be employed. To be sure, the Taishan was the most prominent among the Sacred Mountains. Whether or not other mountains also 'offered' such well-organized pilgrim-tour-packages, there were masses of people "on the roads".[38]

5 Rescuing the world from disease and death

Students, scholar officials or wealthy merchants could afford to make use of such well-organized pilgrimage to the Five Sacred Mountains that helped people (*xiang ke* 香客) to perform their prayers for sons, wealth and an office. These were the most common goals why they were supposed to approach the Sacred Mountains. Yet, there were also those who sought to transform their selves towards immortality, and to rescue the world from disease and pain.

They needed to know some more details which shall be explored with the help of Chen Shiduo 陳士鐸 (1627–1707).[39] He lived during the same period and at the same place, namely the early 17th century Shanyin, as the above quoted Zhang Dai. Chen was an equally ambitious writer as Zhang. Yet, he did not contribute to written literary pieces but merely to knowledge texts in the realm of medicine and *yangsheng* 養生

37 Tao'an mengyi 陶庵梦忆 – "Dream Memories from the T'ao Hut", written ca. 1659–1660 by Zhang Dai 張代 (1597–1684?).

38 On the increasing significance of pilgrimage and wandering as seekers for a master in late imperial China, see Goosaert 2004, 732–733.

39 His life dates can only be reconstructed on the basis of a single passage within the Shanyin 山陰 Gazetteer from 1804, saying that he died at the age of 80 (see Shanyin xianzhi 山陰縣志, 1804, quoted according to Liu Changhua 柳長華 et al. (eds.): Chen Shiduo yixue quan shu 陳士鐸醫學全書. Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, 1999, (hereafter quoted as CQS): 1137).

(self-cultivation aimed at health preservation).[40] As a *shengyuan* (licentiate) he was educated enough for participating at higher level-examinations, what he did, but failed like so many of his contemporaries. An increasing number of highly educated people who never made it up the examination ladder and therefore never attained any official position; a surplus of educated people who were in need of alternative ways for their career and income[41] catered to the increasing demand for encyclopedias of useful everyday knowledge (*riyong leishu* 日用類書), which to a significant part also included medical knowledge. Medical activity as an alternative professional career had been known at least since the 11th century, and in the mid-17th century, it became specifically the choice of Ming loyalists.[42] This contributed to elevating the social status of medical specialists and of their expert knowledge and also materialized in a significant increase in the writing and publishing of medical books.[43]

Irrespective whether or not Chen Shiduo was regarded as a gifted physician and as the founder of a new (medical) canon, we focus here on the fact that he heavily refers to the virtuous hermits (*yin junzi* 隐君子) and other extraordinary people (*yiren* 異人) who lived in hidden places near the tops of the sacred mountains and whom Chen reports to having met on his journeys. He incessantly consulted aborigines (*turen* 土人)[44] in order to learn from them for his own medical practice.[45] On his own extensive travels[46] he also helped to treat ill people when having been asked, i.e. he practiced medicine as a traveller (*xingyi* 行医).

He moreover reports that among his writings several secret formulas have been included which derived from his grandfather Anqi's 安期 who was versed in the art of *fangshu* 方術 (occult arts). Chen informs the reader moreover that Anqi travelled to Sichuan (Shu 蜀) mounted the Emei 峨嵋山,[47] where a daoist master (*yushi* 羽士) transmitted him miraculous recipes.[48]

40 Today his writings, especially the *Shishi milu* 石室秘录, 1691 (Secret Record of the Stone Chamber), and the *Bianzheng lu* 辨证錄, 1687 (Record of Differentiation of pattern), are easily available in almost every larger bookstore in China. Chen Shiduo's writings are of particular interest due to his 'extraordinary' efficient medical recipes against *childlessness* for instance. See Messner 2016.

41 For detailed numbers see Elman 2000, 140.

42 On Ming-Loyalisms see Struve 2007, 159; Struve 2009, 343–394; Yates 2009, 5–20.

43 Widmer 1996, 77–80.

44 See Chen 1999a 辨証錄, in CQS: 697.

45 It is by no means certain that Chen himself practiced medicine. At least, Prof. Dong Hanliang 董漢良, the editor of *Yueyi huijiang* 越醫彙講 (1994) expressed his doubts in a personal conversation during my research stay in Shaoxing, Winter 2005.

46 He most probably was in Beijing in 1687, where he met the holy masters. In 1693 he went to Beijing again for a second time. See the second prologue to his *Dongtian aozhi,* 1698: "In autumn Kangxi Ding Mao 康熙丁卯 [e.g. 1687] he [Chen] met the Heavenly Master Qi Bo in Yanshi 燕市 [e.g. Beijing] […] In autumn [Kangxi] Gui Hai 癸亥 [e.g. 1693] I again traveled to Beijing. […]." (CQS: 1015).

47 Which today is been regarded as one of the Four Buddhist Sacred Mountains. At Chen Shiduo's time, this mountain was visited even more often by Daoist adepts. See Messner 2016. On the Emeishan in history see Hahn 2000, 683–708.

48 See *fanli* 凡例 in Chen 1999b, in CQS: 1016.

This statement is crucial for his identity-formation as an extraordinary physician: the name of his grandfather (Anqi) can also be read *as posteriori* naming by Chen Shiduo, because Anqi 安期 refers to "Heavenly Master"[49]. His grandfather – he says – was in possession of secret formulas which he again got from Daoist priests, whom he had met during his journeys to the sacred mountains.

These accounts prove the high significance of the sacred mountains and hidden masters for Chen Shiduo's identity building as a great physician. In addition, in several forewords and reading-instructions to Chen's textbooks we find the following biographical narrative: once, in 1689 – Chen was already 60 years old – during his stay in a guest-house in Beijing [it is not clear, whether he was there for the metropolitan examinations or not], he sat in his room, very sadly, sighing loudly. All of a sudden, there were two impressive *Junzi* 君子 (noble men, men of virtue) appearing in front of him; after acquiring about his grief, they quickly realized that Chen's only desire was to rescue the world from disease and early death. His deep and honest desire aroused their pity. They told him the best recipes and the best methods to become a good physician. After that they told him to write down all the valuable information. Chen, only after they had disappeared, realized that he had actually met the heavenly masters and immortals Qi Bo and Zhang Zhongjing.

This account on the transmission of medical knowledge to the adept Chen Shiduo intrinsically relates the virtue of "purity of intention" with immortality: medicine hereby becomes a domain of moral exercise and fulfilment. This however was not an invention of the 17th century. As mentioned above, medical activity since the 11th century was known as an alternative 'scholarly' career. This however did not involve automatically a high status. In opposition, the relation of status and skills in the case of the medical profession was continually negotiated. Yet in 17th century things changed favourably. The borderline between so called scholar-physicians (*ruyi* 儒医) and heredity-physicians (*shiyi* 世医) blurred. Chen Shiduo presents himself as being chosen by two prominent immortals that were highly popular at that time. They transmitted him the miraculous recipes and curing methods for rescuing patients from death.

He shows several modes of the interrelation between the Sacred and rescue, which he had directly learned from heavenly masters. With this, medicine became the knowledge-domain for the powerful *materia medica*. Mountains are places where the power of a deity is manifest,[50] and where the power of *material medicine* was developed. Yet, all this power was only to be accessed by virtuous, truthful people.

The particular conceptualization of the mountain as sacred space is described in detail already by Ge Hong 葛洪 (ca. 283–ca. 343), who was instrumental in the transmis-

49 Since Wu (reg. -140 until -87) this name referred to daoist master and the search for longevity. *Ciyuan*, 0137.3.

50 Naquin and Yü 1992, 11.

sion of various textual corpora in Taoist thought, alchemy, medicine and hagiography.[51] Depicting the ways one had to act and to behave when entering a mountain, he offers insights how philosophical dialogue and an encyclopedia of rites merged into an authoritative advise:[52]

> Everyone who is able to produce medicinal drugs and all those who wanted to escape from political chaos and who (therefore) chose secluded locations, without exception went into mountains. Yet, if somebody enters the mountains without knowing the method of the [ritual] and enters the [sphere of] mountains (*bu zhi ru fazhe* 不知入法者), he will usually encounter danger for body and life […]. Every mountain – either big or small – is filled with holy (sacred) powers (*shenling* 神靈). Big mountains have great power – small mountains have lesser powers. Anybody who enters a mountain without knowing the art [of behaving in a correct way] will inevitably be damaged. Some will suffer from serious diseases and will be injured, they will be shaken by panic fear.[53]

The methods (rites: *fa*) for calling sacred powers – or – for spellbounding negative powers consist in instructions for moving correctly, for arming oneself with talismans and for thinking correctly. The Sacred here clearly appears as a conceptualized counter world – inheriting unpredictable powers. Thus, the methods (rites) are the key for communicating with the sacred, simultaneously they are the precondition for approaching and achieving longevity, and immortality.

6 Pilgrimage as practice for transformation and self-cultivation

The conceptual history of the Mountains as a Sacred Space involves the idea of the human body as a sacred space, e.g. as a mountain. It was textualized and depicted in detailed drawings, so that the adept could visualize the processes and concomitantly 'doing' the transformative processes. As such the idea of transforming oneself towards longevity or even towards immortality was tightly connected to a kind of 'inner pilgrimage'. For approaching the state of immortality, people had to perform techniques in and through the body-self (*shen* 身) – to harmonize the mental and physical life-force with eternal life-force of the heaven (cosmos). The *fangshi* 方士 (magicians, masters of techniques, shamans) were seen as the keepers of the secret of immortality.[54]

51 Pregadio 2008, 443; Company 2002.

52 Schmidt 1996, 17–20.

53 Hong 1985, 299.

54 On early depictions of these seekers of immortality, see DeWoskin 1983.

Historically, the example of the legendary Yellow Emperor became the paradigm for attaining immortality. He presided China's legendary Golden Age (2852–2255 BC), when he taught people how to use fire, to plow their fields and to harvest the thread of the silk worm. It is furthermore said, that his interest in medicine and in nourishing his own vitality finally resulted in experimentations with metals and herbs in order to find the formula for immortality (which is a steady process towards pure yang, the golden elixir *(jinye)*. After taking the drug, he mounted a dragon and flew away to the world of the immortals.

The path to immortality was divided into two streams with different emphasis and methods. The outer *(wai dan)* and the inner elixir *(nei dan)*. The followers of the outer school sought to produce the pill of immortality from metals and herbs through alchemical processes. Their goal was to bridge and unify the apparent duality of human *qi* and cosmic *qi*. The inner school especially, later – by Song Dynasty (960–1279) – became important as a major alchemical pattern.[55] They sought to produce the Golden Elixir *(jinye)* via inner transformations.

A text from the Northern Song, around 1078,[56] the *Chen Xiansheng neidan jue* 陳先生内丹訣 (Master Chen's Internal Alchemical Lesson) explains:

> When the elixir reaches the seventh cycle [when You achieve a certain level in Your exercises], you must remove yourself from the commotion of the market places and enter deep into the mountains. Calmly sit amidst the rocky crags, holding your breath and concentrating your spirit. Cut off the breath that comes and goes through the mouth and nose. Make the true *yin* and *yang* converge inside your belly. Seize the creative power of Heaven and Earth and make it adhere to your four extremities. After a thousand days, your five organs will change completely and the embryonic Qi will transform into immortal bowels.
>
> Then You will feel a hole open up in the gate of the summit, which will emit a red and black vapor. This is the embryonic Qi dispersing. After a thousand days, the hole in the Summit Gate will seal shut. The embryonic Qi is expelled completely, the merit of seven cycles, is complete. From this point onward, the

55 The body vision unique to internal alchemy first appears in the Song dynasty (960–1260). Following the Yuan (1260–1368), it continues to transform in response to socio-political and religious pressures, including new forms of Buddhist tantra transmitted from Mongolia and Tibet. The development of new political dynamics across the western and northwestern frontiers and the transmutation of gender concepts changes during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and led to a new interest in gendered practice. Overall, different schools and masters imagined the body in different ways.

56 Other texts from Southern Song and Yuan (12th–14th century) reflect the classical period of the *neidan* tradition. But in 17th century there seems to be a Renaissance of these traditions. See Eskildsen 2009, 89.

> five viscera will bear fruit, and you will not take in food of the kind cooked in smoke and fire.[57]

This passage says: the only and right place to be where finally immortality is accomplished is the mountain. Immortality is a state or process in which the body-self more and more approaches the state of subtleness and nearly pulverization: pure *yang*.

The ongoing process of transformation towards immortalization is essentially a process in which the inner anatomy transforms. The adept does no longer need to eat, since the five viscera grow their own food (fruit).

The adepts first have to cultivate a trance through inner concentration and breatholding – in which the Spirit grows and expands beyond the border of the body. This goes to the point where it contains the entire universe. With a vision of a bright ball of light coming down (the descending of the elixir), it leaves adepts with numbness in their limbs, which may linger on for quite a while even after coming out of trance (4ab).

Subsequently adepts nurture in themselves a holy fetus (*shengtai* 聖胎), which will be able to exit the body and travel greater distances as it matures (7b–16b) When it reaches its full maturity, it can travel limitless distances.[58]

The conceptualization of the body as an energetic network is a prerequisite for the medical view of the body as being the residence of multiple, complex ongoing Qi- processes and blood flows. In early Daoism multiple deities are seen to be located within the body. The view of the body as a mountain – and as such as the place for inner pilgrimage – is evidenced in the course of the middle ages (3th–9th century), a time in which the Buddhist concept of mountains as sacred pilgrimage sites gradually has been textualized.[59] The oldest extant picture of visualizations of the body as Mountain stems from the 13th century: *Duren jing neiyi* 度人經内意 (Internal Meaning of the Scripture of Salvation)[60] is a Song commentary on the *Duren jing* 度人經 which is a key text of the School of the Numinous Treasure, that was vastly expanded under Emperor Huizong (1101–1125).

Fig. 2 shows the body as mountain. The route is shown in the oval shaped river, in which Qi 氣 is flowing through the body during internal practice. At the foot of the mountain is the Sea of Suffering (*kuhai* 苦海), which is a Buddhist term for the state of all beings forced to drift un-enlightened in the mundane world. The image borrows it to designate the Ocean of Qi (*qihai* 氣海) in the alchemical body. The flow of *qi* originates here, at the mountains foot.

It then flows up through the Governing Vessel (*dumai* 督脉) along the back of the body (left in the image) and enters the energetic cycle at the Gate of Life (*mingmen* 命門).

57 See Zhengtong daozang, 1096. This section heavily relies on Eskildsen 2009, 90–91.

58 Eskildsen 2009, 90–91.

59 Hahn 2000, 683–708.

60 Zhengtong daozang, 91, dat. 1227; Neswald 2009, 32–33.

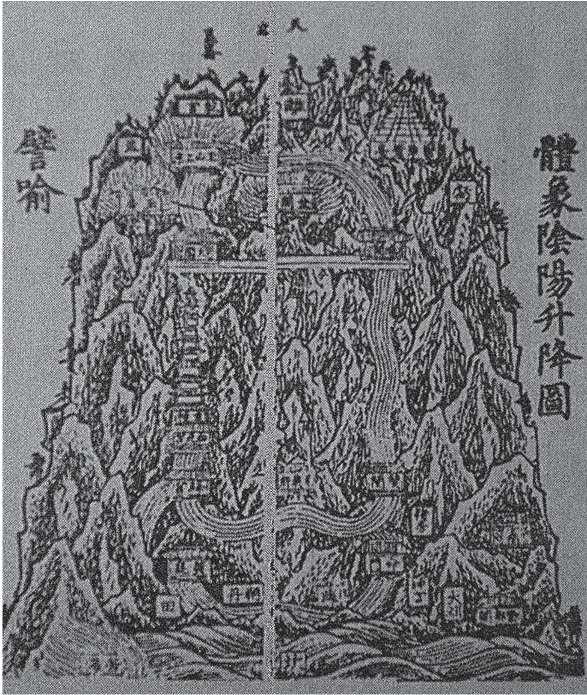

Fig. 2 The body as mountain.

There it feeds the flow of essence (*jing* 精). From there it goes through the Double Pass (*shuangguan* 雙關) to the peak of Mount Kunlun in the head, where the Qi transforms.

After transformation it descends along the Conception Vessel (*renmai* 壬脉) along the front of the body (right side in the image), moving from the Heavenly Pass (*tianguan* 天關)[61] past the throat – usually described as the Twelve-storied Tower (*shier cenglou* 十二層樓) – into the immortal womb at the center of the abdomen, above which the Jade Chamber (*yufang* 玉房) is located. In the womb, the cyclical sign *wuyi* 戊已 represents the internal mating of cosmic water and fire, Qi and *shen* (spirit).[62] The clockwise, left-to right passage of Qi in the body, moreover, accords with the directional movement of the Buddhist pilgrim at a stupa, mountain, or during an internal pilgrimage.

Similar patterns also apply in the tantric vision of the body as cosmic mandala and sacred mountain. The pilgrim's route is marked by a stream that proceeds from the bottom left up along the outer slopes of the mountain and down on the right. In each

61 Which – according to the *Dadan zhizhi* 大丹直指 (Direct Pointers to the Great Elixir), DZ 244 – is located behind the brain.

62 Despeux and Kohn 2003, 185–186.

case visualizations not only work at mountain locations but are equally relevant within the pilgrim's body. Places of power widely spot the mandalized body/mountain/cosmos.

The pilgrim thus circumambulates these places until he or she gains access to the internal altar of the deity, pictured at the very center. Unlike Daoist adepts, Tantrikas usually transform into the deity through intentional visualization; whereas internal pilgrimage in Daoism does not imply that the adept through intentional visualization and identification transforms into the deity. However, in Daoism the internal pilgrimage means to simultaneously affect pilgrimage ritual and access to sacred knowledge and sacred sites and to foster alchemical transformation of the physical and spiritual self.

7 Conclusion

Sacred sites in Chinese past and present alike are associated with mountains. They have been investigated in their multiple identities: as part of imperial ritual (emperors throughout journeyed to sacred mountains in order to perform rituals to legitimate their political power), as part of mysticism, nature and history worship (literati, poets and officials approached these places to connect themselves with ancient and extraordinary sites and scenes), as part of life and fertility performances (women, as part of pilgrimage associations or with their family members, came to pray for baby sons), as part of death and purgatory sites (male villagers came to pray for departed ancestors), as part of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist sites of worship and ritual, as sites for performing self-cultivation and rectification of the minds, as sites which were used by literati to project something of themselves into the future.

In late Imperial contexts when rising numbers of literati required them to seek for alternative professional career, many chose medicine. Transforming medicine from a low regarded practice to a respected profession required to integrating the power of the sacred space as part of the personal (physicians) identity as well as part of the prescriptions. This in turn required moral integrity and the honest and great commitment in what it meant to rescue the world from disease and suffering.

This is the moment when body-knowledge and body practices came into play that included techniques of visualization of the Qi within the own body or also within those of patients. In the end the adept transforms himself into a perfected self, free from pain and disease.

To sum up, the body-self in these 'inner pilgrimage' exercises is not to be seen just as a medium for approaching the sacred, but is seen essentially as the intrinsic space where the Sacred 'is located' – where it can be developed and lived with.

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1 Map drawn by Angelika Messner on the basis of https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/583425311.html.

2 Zhengtong daozang, 91. Number matches to Schipper and Verellen 2004.

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Katja Triplett

Approaching Emptiness: Buddhist Pilgrimage in Japan

Summary

Pilgrimage to religious sites and secular travel culture have been closely linked for many centuries in Japan. Pilgrims in the Japanese Buddhist context usually visit a series of temples that form a fixed set or 'circle' of Buddhist sites thought to be miraculous. The circulatory Buddhist pilgrimage to thirty-three sites in and around the old capital of Kyoto – the Saikoku pilgrimage – is one of the most enduring complex religious institutions known. The article examines possible reasons for the undiminished success of the pilgrimage, highlighting the role of foundation legends and miracle tales in the management of memory. The narratives reveal bureaucratic site administration and are connected to the act of mapping of paths both through the physical and the spiritually endowed landscape.

Keywords: Japan; Buddhism; pilgrimage; mapping; memory; narratives

Pilgerfahrt zu religiösen Stätten und säkulare Reisekultur sind seit Jahrhunderten in Japan eng verknüpft. Im Kontext des japanischen Buddhismus besuchen Pilger und Pilgerinnen eine Reihe von Tempeln, die einen festen Rundgang bilden. Der sechshundert Jahre alte Saikoku-Pilgerrundweg, der zu dreiunddreißig Tempeln in und um die alte Kaiserstadt Kyoto führt, stellt eine der erfolgreichsten komplexen religiösen Einrichtungen dar. Der Beitrag führt Gründe für den anhaltenden Erfolg dieser Pilgerfahrt auf. Zentral für den Erfolg und die Kontinuität der Pilgerfahrt in Japan sind die Erinnerungspflege in Form von Gründungslegenden und Wundergeschichten. Die Narrative zeigen sowohl die Verwaltung der Pilgerfahrt auf als auch die Verortung des Rundwegs in der physischen und der spirituell gedachten Landschaft.

Keywords: Japan; Buddhismus; Pilgerfahrt; Kartierung; Erinnerung; Narrative

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1 Introducing a popular practice

Pilgrimage to religious sites and secular travel culture have been closely linked for many centuries in Japan. Pilgrims and visitors to Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines regard the sites they visit to be miraculous, and their visit to be beneficial in the spiritual sense. Japanese call these sites *reijō* 霊場, roughly translatable as 'numinous site' denoting what in English would be rendered as 'sacred site.' *Reijō*[1] are sites where visitors can directly benefit from the miraculous power of the deity present. The benefits that pilgrims and occasional visitors to a Buddhist temple in Japan strive for are generally referred to as *genze riyaku*, 'this-worldly benefits,' and pilgrimage guide books usually list the particular benefits obtainable at a given temple. It would be misleading to compare this concept with the Christian idea of spiritual benefit, and it will be attempted in the following to show the specific Buddhist understanding of 'this-worldly benefits'[2] in the context of pilgrimage, the deities encountered and the rituals performed. As an aside it must be mentioned that there is an inter-Buddhist debate on *genze riyaku*, and some Buddhist traditions in Japan openly despise the concept of obtaining benefits from practice and discourage their adherents from conducting pilgrimages. It is, however, such a widespread concept that the polemical stance toward it proves its importance.

This article examines the causes for the astonishing popularity of Buddhist pilgrimage practice in Japan, stressing aesthetic components and the role of foundation legends, miracle tales and narrative maps connected with pilgrimage sites. I will present examples from the oldest existing pilgrimage circuit that is performed in and around the former imperial capital of Kyōto, the 'Saikoku Pilgrimage,' and show possible reasons for its popularity in the early modern period and today. The main reason is certainly the overall attractive design of this spiritual practice in that it has combined access to vigorous asceticism as well as worldly pleasure.[3] At the same time, this dynamic between doctrinal Buddhist precepts and possibilities of individual styling has been balanced in such a way as to remain acceptable to both the clerical service providers as well as the pilgrims. In other words, the fickle balance between religious 'fundamentalism' (potentially leading to an over-emphasis on authoritative power) and destructive arbitrariness (potentially leading to the dissolution of authoritative structures) seems to have been successfully achieved. In this article, I will discuss possible motives for the achievement

1 The etymology of the term will be explained further below.

2 For a more general idea of *worldly benefits* in Japanese religious culture see Reader and Tanabe 1998 and Pye and Triplett 2007.

3 See Pye 2005 about the dynamic of traditional specifications and actual practice in modern Japanese pilgrimage. James Foard examines in a seminal article precisely this relationship in regard to the social function of pilgrimage and tourism using the example of early modern developments of the 'Saikoku Pilgrimage.' He concludes that both pilgrimage and tourism "aided the individual Japanese to identify with his national tradition" stressing the unifying character of early modern Japanese travel culture, Foard 1982, 248.

of this balance in both the early modern and the post-war periods. I assume that the motives surface in their respective contexts for various historical reasons but I recognize a certain interaction of guaranteeing and, *simultaneously*, inhibiting creative development. Bourdieu has called this interaction "economy of improvisation" (also: "regulated improvisation") and regarded it as an underlying pattern in social action.[4] According to Bourdieu both "breviary and prayer book function as much as an aid to memory as well as a straight jacket, by which the economy of improvisation is guaranteed and at the same time inhibited".[5] In Japan, the Chinese lineages introduced from Korea and later China itself restricted improvisation by the narrow specifications of how to *do* Buddhism properly. On the other hand, the new teaching of having – relatively – unrestricted access to salvation and liberation from suffering through individual devotional practice and pious activities such as *sūtra* (scripture) copying, giving donations, going on pilgrimage etc. stimulated creative impulses. Aesthetic and cultural production of Japanese Buddhist writing, artefacts, new practices and lineages ensued to a high degree.

With this underlying pattern of a regulated improvisation in mind we turn now to a short general overview of Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage before highlighting individual components of the practice and its circulation.

2 Buddhist pilgrimage in Japan: a general overview

Pilgrims in the Japanese Buddhist context usually visit a series of temples that form a fixed set or circuit (Fig. 1). Pilgrimage in Japan is an extremely popular practice that is in principle organized by Buddhist institutions in a decentralized fashion.[6] Its popularity has increased in recent decades so that we can virtually speak of a 'pilgrimage boom', a trend that we can also observe in other places in the world. Pilgrimage in Japan looks back on a very long tradition – the oldest pilgrimage circuit celebrated the millennial of its (legendary) founder in 2008. In Japanese Buddhism, as in Buddhism in general, pilgrimage practice constitutes a voluntary act. In other words: there is no compulsion or duty for Buddhists to conduct a pilgrimage so that the enormous success of this ritual practice cannot be attributed to the forceful implementation of religious precepts by an

4 Bourdieu, Pialoux, and Schwibs 1979 [1976], 170.

5 Translation of the following quote from the German translation: "Das Brevier und das Gebetbuch fungieren dabei ebenso als Gedächtnisstütze wie als Zwangsjacke, durch die eine Ökonomie der Improvisation zugleich gewährleistet und unterbunden wird." This quote appears in Bourdieu's commentary on Max Weber's interpretation of religion, Bourdieu 2000, 37.

6 This chapter is with some changes the English version of a book section published in German (Triplett 2014). I thank the editors, Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner, for the kind permission to publish it in English. – For a complete overview on the Buddhist pilgrimages in modern Japan see Michael Pye's recent publication: Pye 2015.

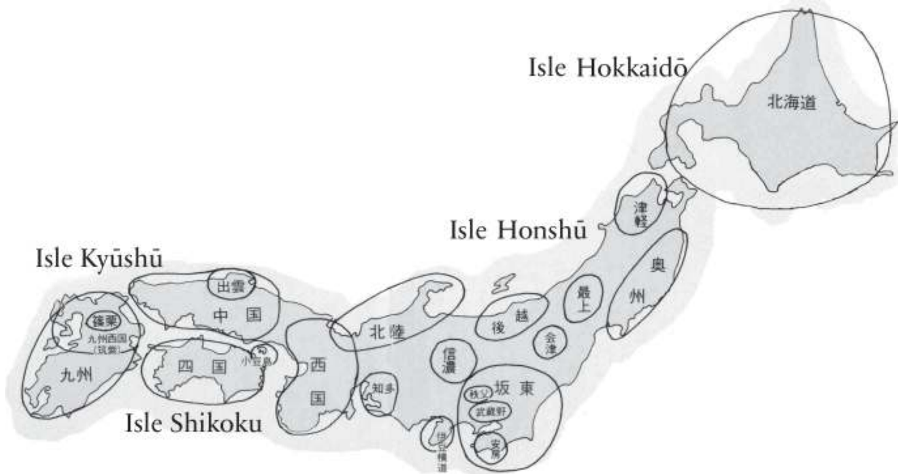

Fig. 1 Map of the Japanese archipelo with a selection of the most popular and well-known pilgrimage circuits, based on a postcard from a pilgrimage association.

authority. According to most Buddhist denominations, one can at the very least do no harm by going on a pilgrimage. Non-Buddhist pilgrims, i.e. non-Asian visitors that are easily recognized as foreign and therefore identified as belonging to another religion, are welcomed at Buddhist temples, and this welcome is extended to both men and women. Neither confession of faith nor membership in a Buddhist denomination are required or expected from the pilgrim. If an ethnically non-Japanese conducts the proscribed rituals at a pilgrimage temple the local populace will assume that the pilgrim has an emotional relationship with the deity venerated at the site and this incites a sense of pride in their local temple.

In the old days, as well as today, Japanese pilgrims become bonded by their devout practice to the long pilgrimage tradition not only in their own country but also, implicitly, to the 'homelands' of Japanese Buddhism: India and China. Pilgrims visit the residence or 'land' of the deity, depending on which deity is venerated at the visited temple and 'encounters' him or her at the site, an idea that will be explained in more detail below. The final aim of a Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage is not well defined. In principal, pilgrims obtain religious merit by their devotion to the deity. This merit is to be ritually transferred to suffering beings in an act that is, in Sanskrit, called *pariṇāmanā*, which Japanese refer to as *ekō* 回向. The transfer of merit is an integral part of all Buddhist practice that will – according to the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition – lead to the attainment of insight into the basic emptiness of all phenomena. Therefore, Buddhist pilgrimage is a practice to ultimately gain this insight.

Fig. 2 Two pilgrims with traditional staff and clothing at Tsubosaka Temple near Nara, Japan, 2008.

The precepts regulating the ritual procedures of the Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage including recitations, songs, time of travel, clothing etc. are specific enough to ensure a fixed, identifiable frame of reference (Fig. 2). At the same time, there is ample scope for individualisation for both a single pilgrim as well as an organized group. As will be shown further below, this particular dynamic between authoritative ritual precepts and individual creativity can be said to be the main reason for the long and stable continuity of this religious tradition in Japan.

Fig. 3 Map of the Shikoku Pilgrim's Way, modern print on paper, H. 38 cm, W. 53.5 cm, private collection.

3 The Shikoku and the Saikoku pilgrimage paths

Two of the numerous Buddhist pilgrimage paths in Japan have a downright paradigmatic character: the Shikoku (Fig. 3) and the Saikoku (Fig. 4) pilgrimage paths. Both pilgrimage paths have been models for numerous imitations in other regions of Japan where priests formed other temple circuits, often linking thirty-three sites of worship of the Buddhist deity Kannon. In many temple grounds visitors also have the opportunity of conducting a full pilgrimage to a circuit of thirty-three or eighty-eight sacred sites in miniature by walking along the respective number of small stone statues representing the principal deities or touching small bags of sand from the original sites.

The paragon of Japanese pilgrimage is the 1400 km long circuit on Shikoku Island, the smallest of the four main islands of the Japanese archipelago, completed on foot and in traditional garb with special hat and stick. A foot pilgrim on the Shikoku path needs approximately six weeks on average to conclude the entire circuit. It leads to eighty-eight temples that are connected by a path all the way around the island. After completing the circuit one has done a complete tour of Shikoku through its four provinces. This path is referred to as *henro* 遍路, which means "connected paths". The monk Kūkai (774–835) is

Fig. 4 Historical guidebook of the Saikoku pilgrimage, woodblock printed booklet, ink on paper, H. 7.9 cm, W. 18.2 cm, dated 1791, Nagoya City Museum.

revered as the (legendary) founder of this path. He is known foremost under his posthumous title Kōbō Daishi, meaning „Great Teacher 'Spreader of Buddhist Truth'" and pilgrims refer to him affectionately as Daishi-sama, "Lord Great Teacher". Kūkai has played a major role as a cultural hero and 'saint' in Japan. The Shingon[7] Buddhist tradition Kūkai introduced from China and developed and established in Japan is a living tradition to this day, also institutionally. This tradition has deeply shaped Japanese culture and religion, and although today it does not belong to the larger religious corporations, it still significantly informs the religious understanding of Buddhist pilgrimage practice.[8] Remarkably, today's eighty-eight Shikoku pilgrimage temples do not all belong to the Shingon tradition (or school) but to other schools such as Zen Buddhism due to historical developments. However, Shingon priests promulgate that pilgrims should start the circuit outside of Shikoku at the Shingon Kōyasan branch head temple in Wakayama Prefecture to strengthen the believers' connection to Kōbō Daishi who is said to rest in meditation in the Kōyasan sanctuary to this day. Nevertheless, the circuit remains decentrally organised, not least because the Shingon school itself has several branches and different local foci. Today, the Shikoku Reijōkai, an umbrella organisation, represents the interests of the eighty-eight temples and the pilgrimage confederations in the local communities, prefectures and with travel agencies.

7 Shingon meaning "true word" referring to the frequently used sacred words *(mantras)*.

The Shikoku path leads to eighty-eight numerically ordered temples in all four Shikoku provinces that stand for the four stages on the path to the final liberation from suffering: resolve, discipline, insight and nirvana. In this way, the landscape becomes a sacred topography that is physically perambulated and experienced. The foot pilgrimage through the mountainous, insular landscape with its steep cliffs, forests and dangerously busy narrow roads enables this direct experience in the most immediate manner. Nowadays, most pilgrims use a charter bus, their own vehicle or go by taxi to visit all eighty-eight or a selected number of temples on the circuit. In its time of formation in the late 16th and early 17th centuries when pilgrimage became popular in all of Japan, walking was the main means of transportation on the circuit; using horse or wagon was limited to a small group of the social elite.

The Shikoku pilgrimage path has been studied thoroughly, also in Western academia where this phenomenon has received much attention.[9] The older of the two paradigmatic pilgrimage paths in Japan, however, the Saikoku path to thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon, the deity of universal compassion, has not found its way into Western language research to the same extent. The reason for this relative neglect of the Saikoku pilgrimage is, in my view, the far less structured or fixed format – compared to the Shikoku path. On Shikoku, pilgrimage is viewed to be a more clearly defined religious practice whereas the much older Saikoku path is more complex, entangling religious and secular endeavours. This has to do with the location of the two pilgrimage circuits: before the construction of the gigantic bridge complex of Seto-Ōhashi in 1988 that connects Shikoku with Honshū, the island was more isolated from the vibrant cultural and urban centres of Japan. Shikoku had the reputation of being remote, mystical and poor – an ideal place for ascetic practice. It also was connected to death, and had a rather dark reputation, because most pilgrims took (and take) vows to dedicate the merit gained through the practice of pilgrimage to one's deceased ancestors or prepare for their own deaths. The Saikoku pilgrimage is quite the opposite: with some exceptions, the temples on the circuit are directly in or around the former capital city of Kyōto with its numerous tourist attractions and sites of national pride. In Japan, religious pilgrimage practice and secular travel culture is traditionally intimately connected, and this connection is particularly close in the case of the Saikoku path. Today, the sacred sites where Kannon resides are often part of temples of enormous historical and cultural, and therefore, national value and comprise important tourist attractions themselves. Some are even

8 For an overview on Japanese religions in history and today, with current membership numbers see Swanson and Chilson 2006. See also the comprehensive volume on the history of Japanese Buddhism: Kleine 2011.

9 Especially noteworthy are the works on the Shikoku pilgrimage by Ian Reader, e.g. Reader 2006. See also Bohner 1931 and Hoshino 1983; about transformation processes and contextualisation see especially Reader 1987, Hoshino 1997, Hoffmann 2004, and again Reader 2007.

recognized as a United Nations Cultural World Heritage (Kiyomizu-dera and Daigo-ji) increasing national pride in these sites.

Since it is neither mandatory in Japan to visit the temples on a pilgrimage circuit in the numerical order assigned to them nor to visit them in one go, the Saikoku circuit lends itself in a particularly large degree to be combined with leisure tours to one or two famous Buddhist sites at a time. The effort and expenditure of undertaking a trip to Shikoku from one of the larger cities on Honshū is much greater, and the idea that a visit to a pilgrimage temple is indeed devotional practice rather than a sightseeing tour will have priority. Moreover, the island of Shikoku is strongly perceived as a geographical unit and an isolated sacred locality whereas the area covered by the Saikoku path is not.

The question now is why this combination of pilgrimage and leisure travel in the region of Kyōto did not lead to the dissolution of the Saikoku path and the connected religious practice centuries ago. The geographical conditions could have facilitated such a development as pointed out above. The Saikoku circuit has astonishingly remained nearly perfectly intact since the 15th century, even as to the order of the thirty-three temples, although some exist only as small offices for the pilgrims and are no longer used for any other Buddhist services.

The Saikoku path has not only continued with just a few changes from the 15th century until today, but also enjoys undiminished and even rather increased popularity. Instead of falling into oblivion, scores of pilgrim-tourists eagerly visit the thirty-three sites and receive proof of their visit in the form of sealed and aesthetically hand-written 'receipts' for giving a contribution for the temple's service. The 'receipts' are cherished and collected in booklets, scrolls or on pilgrim's jackets sold at the temples for this purpose.[10]

4 The Saikoku pilgrimage as the matrix of all pilgrimage paths in Japan

The *circulatory* Buddhist pilgrimage[11] to thirty-three sites in and around Kyōto is probably one of the most stable complex religious institutions known. The number thirty-three is clearly identifiable as the special number of Kannon to which the pilgrimage is dedicated, found in an important Buddhist scripture, as will be explained further below.[12] Kannon is a *bodhisattva*, a nascent Buddha. The name *Kannon* is the Japanese

10 This practice is not special to this particular path but is shared by all Japanese pilgrimage centres.

11 This term was coined by Michael Pye (e.g. Pye 2010). For further in-depth studies of modern and contemporary Japanese pilgrimage and its sources see Pye 1987 and Pye 2000.

12 The number eighty-eight of the Shikoku temples has by contrast several explanations, none of which is conclusive, see Reader 2006.

reading of two Chinese characters 観音 for the translation of the Sanskrit name of Avalokiteśvara, literally *The One Who Perceives (all) Everywhere*. A bodhisattva is constantly in action to free the beings in need with his or her wisdom and compassion from situations that hinder those beings on their path to awakening. These hindrances include disease and accidents. Since there are immeasurable amounts of beings and uncountable misfortunate situations, a bodhisattva naturally has to be extremely powerful and, above all, flexible to be able to alleviate all this suffering. In Japanese Buddhism as well as in other countries shaped by Mahāyāna Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara is regarded by far as the most powerful and flexible bodhisattva. This figure is praised in many Buddhist sūtras (scriptures) with the *Lotus sūtra* (*Hoke-kyō* 法華經) being possibly the most important for understanding the religious and cultural history of Japan. The number thirty-three is derived from the 25th chapter of the *Lotus sūtra* that is dedicated to Avalokiteśvara: in this chapter, also counting as a separate sūtra on its own, Avalokiteśvara is introduced in great detail and highly praised. There is a long list of benefits that he bestows on those who turn to him, chant his name and make offerings. Those who are threatened with burning to death in a great fire are saved, equally those who are to be hurt or killed by a weapon, about to perish in shipwreck etc. Wishes for either a baby boy or girl are fulfilled without fail, and so forth, are vividly described in the sūtra in both prose and verse. These are important passages for the formation of the numerous miracle stories that place the wondrous activities of this bodhisattva on Japanese soil.

The text also lists Avalokiteśvara's various manifestations that suffering beings encounter. The bodhisattva takes on many different forms, both male and female, depending on the situation, to be of assistance and teach the *dharma* (Buddhist teachings) in the best possible and most skilful way. Altogether thirty-three manifestations are enumerated in the 25th chapter. The list of these manifestations starts with the most powerful one, that of a *buddha* (an awakened one).

The text says:

> If there is any land where sentient beings are to be saved by the form of a buddha, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara teaches the Dharma by changing himself into the form of a buddha. To those who are to be saved by the form of a *pratyekabuddha* [private or solitary, non-teaching buddha], he teaches the Dharma by changing himself into the form of a *pratyekabuddha*.[13]

The text continues in this way by enumerating increasingly lower forms of embodying spiritual achievement and manifestations in the shape of non-human beings. The complete list[14] looks like this:

13 Lotus Sūtra, 297–298.

14 Compiled from the BDK English Tripiṭaka translation.

1. buddha
2. *pratyekabuddha* (private buddha)
3. *śrāvaka* (listener to words of a buddha)
4. Brahma (creator god)
5. Śakra (a god, lord of the deities)
6. Īśvara (a god, universal ruler)
7. Maheśvara (a powerful god)
8. the great commander of the deities
9. Vaiśravaṇa (protector deity)
10. minor king
11. wealthy man
12. householder
13. state official
14. brahman (priest)
15. monk
16. nun
17. layman
18. laywoman
19. wife of a wealthy man
20. wife of a householder
21. wife of a state official
22. wife of a brahman
23. boy
24. girl
25. *deva* (deity)
26. *nāga* (supernatural being shaped like a giant snake)
27. *yakṣa* (demonic being)
28. *gandharva* (non-human musician)
29. *asura* (non-human being that battles with the deities)
30. *garuḍa* (supernatural being shaped like a giant bird)
31. *kiṃnara* (half bird-half human, makes celestial music)
32. *mahoraga* (snake-like being)
33. Vajrapāṇi (protector)

This list symbolizes the *entirety* of all classes of enlightened and non-enlightened existences – human, non-human, gods and divine beings alike. The number thirty-three therefore stands for an all-encompassing amount of manifestations and is an expression of the extraordinary power of this bodhisattva.

4.1 Encountering Bodhisattva Kannon in Japan: meeting miraculous images

We could now assume that each of the thirty-three pilgrimage temples on the Saikoku path is dedicated to one of these manifestations. This is, however, not at all the case. The number thirty-three merely points to the fact that visiting all of these temples means that the pilgrim is completely and wholeheartedly devoted to Kannon. The circuit enables practitioners to conduct their devotions to the fullest extent. As we will see below, temples are connected to the content of the 25th chapter if we look at how they quote indirectly from the *Lotus sūtra* in their foundation narratives and miracle accounts and have Kannon appear in the temple, e.g. as a miraculous boy, which is manifestation number 23. The iconographic forms that we encounter in the statuary and the images at the thirty-three temples do not derive, however, from the *Lotus sūtra* but from iconographic systems originally developed in Central Asia and China.

There are two principal systems each having six forms of Kannon. On the Saikoku path pilgrims visit the following icons; the number in brackets gives the total number of appearances on the circuit:

- Shō-Kannon (4)
- Eleven-headed Kannon (7)
- Thousand-armed Kannon (16)
- Wheel turning Kannon (6)
- Cuṇḍī (Mother Buddha) Kannon (1)[15]
- Lasso swinging Kannon (1)[16]
- Horse-headed Kannon (1)

The total numbers of all statues are 36 because at some temples more than one form is revered and these are represented by different statues. Furthermore, it is worthy of note that some forms appear only once whereas some forms are disproportionally frequent such as the Thousand-armed Kannon with 16 instances. Knowledge of six-Kannon systems that ultimately derive from different scriptures and rituals is not really important for doing the pilgrimage. The sets of six should rather be regarded as the iconographic reservoir that the Japanese use in their sanctuaries. Forms are also combined. Especially popular is the combination of the Thousand-armed and the Eleven-headed because the notion of an all-perceiving, tirelessly assisting bodhisattva is perceived to be particularly well expressed by giving the figure multiple arms, that traditionally have eyes on them, and multiple heads (Fig. 5).

The reputation of an exceptionally powerful Kannon (statue) at a given temple led to the fabrication of copies at other temples (Fig. 6) that were connected by the circuit

15 The six-Kannon system of the Buddhist Tendai school does not include this form.

16 The six-Kannon system of the Buddhist Shingon school does not include this form.

Fig. 5 Statue of Thousand-armed Kannon, wood with color and gold foil, H. 192 cm, 13th century, Ryūhō-ji, Kanagawa Prefecture.

but were still in some competition with the others. This is how the uneven distribution of the six forms at the thirty-three temples can be explained.[17]

The famous, miraculous Kannon is the main attraction of the historical temples, but interestingly the statue of the deity is not on public display in many temple halls or is shown only on particular occasions. Some are displayed only once a year, some are unveiled only every thirty-three years, others are completely secret and never on display. Temples celebrate – and have celebrated in the past – the public viewing of rarely shown Kannon statues in elaborate ceremonies. These popular events are not only of spiritual,

17 See Suzuki 2008 in the exhibition catalogue on the Saikoku pilgrimage published on the occasion of ordained emperor Kazan's 1000 year memorial day.

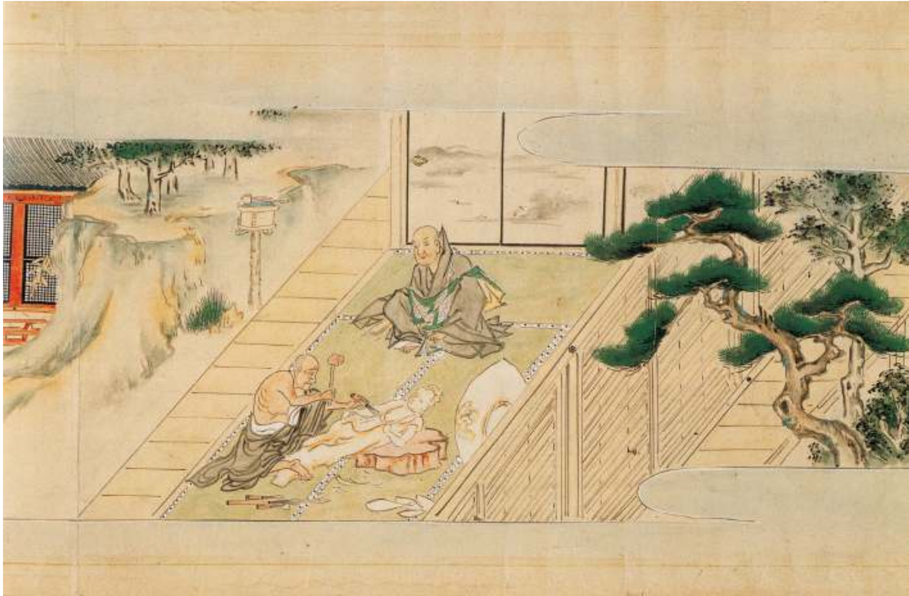

Fig. 6 A sculptor fashions the temple's Kannon statue, from: Illustrated legends of the Kannon of Anao-ji, by Kanō Einō (1631–1697), handsrcoll, ink and color on paper, H. 34.5 cm, W. 1253.2 cm, 1676, Anao-ji, Kyoto Prefecture.

but also of cultural and art historical interest, and contribute to the lasting attractiveness of the pilgrimage practice.

The practice of visiting thirty-three temples dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon can be traced back to textual sources from the early 12th century.[18] The circulatory pilgrimage to a fixed set of thirty-three Kannon sites is for the first time attested to in 15th century sources.[19] Since the 17th century this pilgrimage circuit has been known as *Saikoku sanjūsan kasho Kannon junrei*[20] 西国三十三個所観音巡礼, meaning „Pilgrimage to thirty-three places of Kannon in the Western Provinces". Saikoku, meaning Western Provinces or Lands, are those areas that are west of Edo, the flourishing commercial and political centre and seat of the military government that was in 1868 renamed

18 It is mentioned in a report by the abbot of the Tendai temple Onjō-ji. The abbot, Gyōson 行尊 (1057–1135), started his journey at Hase-dera and not with the current number 1, the Kannon temple in Nachi. However, the group of the thirty-three temples he mentions closely resembles the later, established set (Nara National Museum and NHK PlanNet Kinki 2008, 10).

19 The earliest mention of this is found in a collection of sermons and commentaries of the Rinzai Zen monk Ten'in Ryūtaku 天隠龍沢 (1422–1500) from 1499 (Nara National Museum and NHK PlanNet Kinki 2008, 11).

20 *Junrei* is the most commonly used term for 'pilgrimage' in Japanese. Another important term is *o-meguri*. For an overview on the diverse terminology used in the field of pilgrimage see the introduction to a special issue on Japanese pilgrimage: Reader and Swanson 1997.

Tōkyō, Eastern Capital. During this period, especially in the decades after the Genroku era (1688–1704), numerous imitations or 'copies' (*utsushi* 写し) of this popular practice were created by temple priests in other regions. The two, to this day, most important such copies were established in eastern Japan not far from Edo: the Bandō and Chichibu paths. The traditional Saikoku path was added to these two new circuits to form a super Kannon pilgrimage circuit that amounts to altogether one hundred sites by adding a 34th temple to the Chichibu path. This round number of one hundred has a satisfying ring to it and seems to have contributed to the inspiration for masses of pilgrims to complete this larger circuit.

The imitations are not limited to the two paradigmatic paths with their thirty-three or eighty-eight sites. Additional paths were and are being invented to accommodate temples dedicated to other Buddhist saints and deities, e.g. the Medicine Buddha. The paradigm of the circulatory pilgrimage is so dominant that non-Buddhist religions such as Shintō or those Buddhist traditions that decline the notion of pilgrimage as a means to obtain merit have also invented circuits.[21]

4.2 Performative modes of spirituality and fun: endeavours in 'hagiotourism'

The imitation, miniaturization and invention of circulatory pilgrimage in Japan based on the highly successful older models is a clear sign for the immense popularity of this practice, especially in the centuries following the Genroku era when pilgrimage constituted the only opportunity for the general populace for travel and sight-seeing. The process of reproduction has a strong proliferating and, at the same time, stabilizing effect.[22] One could image that such a proliferation would have a de-stabilizing effect because of the fundamentally competitive situation of the Buddhist temples vying for visitors and patrons. This is not the case in Japan: the associations of the temples as numbered sites on a circuit are nominal and not actual mergers. They are loose enough to provide room for individual operations also, but guarantee profit through the network of sites that are all intrinsic parts of a whole. The rationale for this is the *universal* power of Kannon (or Kōbō Daishi etc.), and pilgrimage stations are understood as *contact zones* to access this power and move the deity to bestow blessings. Since pilgrims and the occasional devout visitor view the site as the residence or 'land' of a universal deity, it is not seen as problematic that there are numerous such sites in Japan, China and India, and other countries and cities even outside of Asia. The focus on one single site of access to the sacred such as Jerusalem for Christians or Mekka for Muslims has not been part of Buddhist doctrine, ancient or contemporary. There were, nevertheless, Buddhist

21 For examples for practices in Shintō that can be recognized as pilgrimage see Pye and Triplett 2011, 41–43; for examples in Buddhism see Pye and Triplett 2011, 33–34.

22 Reader 1988.

pilgrimages to only one destination in the history of Japan: Kumano on the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula in today's Mie Prefecture. This practice was, however, limited to the aristocratic elite and served to legitimize and stabilize imperial power and was conducted for a fairly short period of time in early medieval Japan.[23]

While the Shikoku path provides a perfect ground for conducting ascetic practice ("enlightenment guaranteed"), the Saikoku path in and around the ancient capital with its access to both the sacred and amusement can be seen as a singularly successful combination of pilgrimage and tourism ("fun guaranteed"). For the latter phenomenon, I would like to introduce the ideal-typical term *hagiotourism*. However, finding distraction from the pressures of daily life while on spiritual pilgrimage is not the only reason for the success of the Saikoku path.

The important role of statuary has already been mentioned above, and there are other aesthetic components of the Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage, apart from the literary narratives introduced below in detail that have aided in the stabilizing of this religious practice. Foard introduces a helpful differentiation between pilgrimage itineraries that prescribe the pilgrim's clothes, equipment, songs, prayers, recitations and so on, and lists of additional and optional information such as guides to hostels, regional foods and other specialities. Items on the pilgrim's itinerary are to be performed, whereas the list provides merely information and lists items that can be freely selected from. Both *itinerary* and *list* are included in the popular pilgrimage guides. Foard describes both as 'modes' and notices that itineraries have remained surprisingly unchanged since the Tokugawa period whereas the lists were subject to much change.[24] The itinerary lists performative transactions at the pilgrimage temples that are still observable today. The transactions include lighting candles and incense, reciting liturgical texts and singing pilgrimage songs that Emperor Kazan composed according to legend, donating a small fee and a hand-copied, short Buddhist text (sūtra), and finally dropping off a paper slip announcing one's devotional visit by stating name, birth date, address and current date. Both the Buddhist sūtra copies and the pilgrimage slips are dropped into boxes dedicated to this purpose in the altar hall. Sūtra copying is traditionally an important devotional practice in East Asia. The seal and calligraphy of the name of the temple and the principal deity that the pilgrims (and occasional visitors) obtain from the temple office was originally the receipt of a payment to the monastic staff of the temple to have a sūtra copied professionally. Seal and calligraphy are collected in booklets, on scrolls and the traditional pilgrim's jacket which become cherished devotional objects.

23 This medieval tradition is analysed in a book-length study by Moerman (Moerman 2005). The sacred site under investigation by Moerman is Nachi in Kumano. This site was eventually integrated into the Saikoku pilgrimage circuit as number 1.

24 Foard 1982, 241.

The traditional pilgrimage garb of white jacket, trousers, leggings, wide rush hat, bell and staff includes a practical bag for the paper slips, candles, incense, lighter, brush and ink, booklet with the Buddhist chants and so forth. The colour white symbolizes death: the pilgrimage is seen as a temporary state of dying and rebirth.

The most important symbols of Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage are staff and hat. The hat usually carries a calligraphy of a Buddhist saying that point to the special meaning of the arduous practice:

> Through ignorance the three worlds are a prison
> Through enlightenment the ten directions are empty
> Originally there is neither east nor west
> Where then shall be south and north?[25]

According to basic tenets of the form of Buddhism practiced in Japan, Mahāyāna Buddhism, all phenomena are empty, even the cardinal directions. Ultimately, walking in any direction on a pilgrimage path is therefore pointless or 'empty'; still on the mundane level, in everyday life, the practitioner has to gain insight into this hard to grasp notion and to train hard.

The special design of the Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage as a circulatory practice emphasizes the concept of walking the path without emphasizing that a goal must be reached. Doing the practice, approaching emptiness, is the goal and the personal merit gained is not kept to oneself but ritually dedicated to others. The preliminary goal of the pilgrims is, however, to complete the circuit in its entirety. The completed pilgrim's books etc. are not touristic souvenirs or 'trophies.' Instead, they are collected conscientiously and painstakingly by the pilgrims to create a visual and material testimony of one's piety and dedication. The completed book, garment or scroll illustrate the religious performance and are more than mere evidence of a satisfied urge to hoard objects in order to complete a collection. They demonstrate the pilgrim's full devotion and pride in seeing an arduous and costly practice through to the end for the benefit of others.

4.3 Foundation narratives and miracle accounts of the Saikoku pilgrimage

The Buddhist foundation legends connecting the thirty-three temples of the Saikoku path form a fixed set or group. Such a group is otherwise not found in East Asia although the genre of Buddhist legends was widespread in China and Korea and comprised a typical textual genre. The development of Buddhist foundation legends in Japan actually goes directly back to the Chinese tradition with only slight changes. The compilation of groups of foundation legends, however, connecting a set number of temples

25 Translation by Michael Pye: Pye 1997, 25.

is a Japanese invention. Foundation legends or myths is my translation of the Japanese term for such narratives, *engi* 縁起. *En* 縁 derives from the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term *pratyaya* and means the indirect causes that have karmic consequences. If something specific and unique happens from a direct cause, e.g. when someone finds a statue swimming in the river that later becomes a principal object of worship and 'causes' the foundation of a temple, the second character *gi* 起 is concerned and means roughly "to emerge". An *engi* means that when the time became ripe by certain indirect and direct factors the temple was founded. Gorai Shigeru (1908–1993), a well-known scholar of Buddhist literature and ritual, deems *engi* not to be a Buddhist technical term but rather a term from colloquial speech. Buddhist deities such as Kannon as well as deities from the Shintō world – the *kami* 神 – appear because of a miraculous connection, *en*, to a place of person.[26] Gorai differentiates between 1) historical *engi*, 2) narrative or literary *engi* that developed into moralistic stories and fairy tales, and 3) *engi* of the esoteric Buddhism that touch on philosophical questions. The term is confusingly used as a category of miscellaneous Buddhist writings from chronicles to sermons and reports, and therefore hard to grasp as something in particular. Overall, it is not wrong to state that *engi* are a mixed group of textual genres concerned with the local histories and events of religious sanctuaries. They aim to foster the connection to the local emergence of the sacred and the power of the venerated deity. They are also instrumental in the memory management of these institutions.[27] As of the 12th century, *engi* narratives appear as longer stories that monastics or patrons commissioned as magnificently illustrated picture scrolls to praise the religious institution recounted in the story. Many of those scrolls have survived and are valuable sources for the study of Japanese Buddhism, history and culture.

Miracle stories are called *reigenki* 霊験記 and reports of miracles connected to certain places are referred to as *reijōki* 霊場記. They can also appear as illustrated scrolls. Both are not much different from *engi* stories. The difference lies in the emphasis on the accounts and the portrayal of the power and blessings of Kannon (or other Buddhist figures) and the particular nature of the intervention or 'response' (*reiō* 霊応, *reikan* 霊感) of the divine power. The character 霊 *rei* (also read *ryō*) is important in the idea of how miracles work in the East Asian Buddhist context. The character is usually translated as "soul" or "spirit", but means here more generally something indefinably numinous. The practitioner gets into contact with the universal power and merges with it by rituals of empowerment. Since ultimately the power of the 'divine' and the practitioner is not separate or different and since everything is interconnected, the very fabric of reality and the phenomena can be changed and influenced: the deity responds with healing

26 Gorai 2008, 6.

27 For an example of foundation legends of a temple on the Saikoku circuit, the Tsubosakasan Minami Hokkeji (Tusbosaka-dera), and memory management see Triplett 2010.

an ailment, protection from danger and so forth, grasped as 'miracles' in the ritual of empowerment. The practitioner responds by showing gratitude and offering the merit to the less fortunate. The place where *rei*, the numinous in terms of the particular miraculous intervention of the powerful deity, can be experienced is therefore called *reijō*, 'numinous site,' the typical term for a pilgrimage site in Japan.

The miracle stories often have the character of eye witness accounts and end, as is usual for Buddhist legends, with a moralistic instruction to avoid karmic retribution for unwholesome deeds in the future and praise for the beneficial figure or practice. Since the idea of karma, meaning *action* with ethical implications, was newly introduced to Japan in the 6th century, Buddhist legends explicating instances of the working of karma on Japanese soil were instrumental in spreading the teachings during the first centuries after its inception. The tendency to form and circulate *engi* and miracle stories has not subsided and continues to this day in the new media of communication such as temple websites and *manga* (comics).[28]

The *engi* of the Saikoku pilgrimage is special because it presents the origin and the history of the establishment of the whole *institution* of the pilgrimage circuit. It also includes the *engi* stories of all thirty-three temples.[29] The legend of the institution of the circuit is actually the foundation legend of the Buddhist temple Hase-dera that was formed in the 13th or 14th century. It begins with a vision, resembling a message received in a dream:

> The Chinese monk Tokudō Shōnin 徳道上人 of Hase-dera dies suddenly and faces the ruler of the underworld, King Enma, who sends him back to the world of the living having given him a special mission. He shall establish thirty-three sites for Kannon to enable monastics as well as laymen and women to obtain virtuous benefits. The resurrected Tokudō tries to fulfil this mission but realizes that the time is not ripe for such an undertaking. He thereupon hides a dharma seal with the instruction of the king of the underworld in a stone box at Nakayama-dera so that someone in the future may fulfil the mission. The time passes by until in the middle of the Heian period (794–1185) the ordained emperor Kazan 花山 (968–1008), his Buddhist master Shōkū Shōnin 性空上人

28 A *manga* praising and explaining the Saikoku pilgrimage was published by the pilgrimage association Saikoku sanjūsansho fudasho-kai in 1991.

29 In many of the foundation narratives of the thirty-three temples the founder is described as asking the local mountain or tree deity for permission to erect a Buddhist sanctuary for Kannon. This permission is granted and the founder then either finds or makes the first statue of Kannon. This statue forms the basis for the first cultic activities at the new sacred site. The statue works miracles which are related in the legend. Interestingly, the stories do not make any difference between the deity and the statue that is regarded simply as a manifestation of the deity. For a short overview on the structure and function of the thirty-three Saikoku legends see Foard 1982, 243–244. For foundation legends or 'myths' of the Bandō circuit see MacWilliams 1997.

> and other monks officially establish the pilgrimage path to thirty-three Kannon temples.[30]

We can see clearly that this *engi* connects the lineages of two Buddhist temples – those of the influential Hase-dera and Nakayama-dera. The legendary figure Tokudō Shōnin, a Chinese immigrant monk, is supposed to have lived from 655 to 735 and to have founded Hase-dera although his actual existence cannot be verified. The legend states that a new and distinctive monastic lineage was established and that simultaneously Buddhist teachings were introduced from China. Tokudō can therefore be regarded as a cipher for authority (founder of new temple) and authenticity (through transmission of the Buddhist teachings) in the transfer of Buddhism in early Japan. The *engi* authorized the practice of pilgrimage and the establishment of the specific institution of circulatory pilgrimage that had no precedence in China or Korea. Moreover, the seminal role of Buddhist emperor Kazan makes it unquestionable that this religious institution, the Saikoku path, has real relevance for all Japanese.

The oldest extant manuscript of the Saikoku pilgrimage *engi* dates back to 1536. The text was written by the nun Zenshō 善勝 (dates unknown) who produced the scroll for fundraising purposes and finally donated it to Matsuno'o-dera, which is number 29 on the circuit. Interestingly, the original founder of the pilgrimage is in this version the founder of that temple and not Tokudō. The plot of the main story is recognizable: the temple's founder also received instructions from Enma, the king of the underworld, and Emperor Kazan who meets several other pilgrim monks at the grave of the founder of Matsuno'o-dera, ends up travelling with three monks of *Nakayama-dera* to Nachi, the first of the thirty-three-temple circuit. The three monks had information that *their* temple founder, Tokudō, had also been given a similar mission by King Enma.

This is obviously a somewhat laboured adaption or creative amplification of the prevailing line of transmission of the Nakayama-dera legend. Since around the time when Zenshō wrote down her version of the *engi*, but especially in the Genroku era, members of all parts of society began to participate in the pilgrimage movement. It is no coincidence that the earliest collections of foundation legends and miracle stories of the thirty-three temples fall into this period and became part of the massive popularization of the practice. These collections were published as manuscripts and prints, often illustrated. Aside from a huge rise in the production of practical pilgrimage guides that also contained short summaries of the temple *engi*, this period saw an increasing publication of collections of the pilgrimage songs. As we have seen above, replica circuits appeared at the same time, complete with their own *engi* and miracle story collections. The new needs of an urbanized and rather well-to-do populace in the area of Edo (Tokyo) and

30 See also Foard 1982, 234, for a recounting of the story.

also Osaka was, we can conclude here, met and neatly converged with the offer of book publishers and devout individual copyists.

The oldest extant complete collection of Kannon miracle stories and Saikoku pilgrimage *engi* dates, not surprisingly, back to the 17th century, to the year 1687 to be exact. The collection has the title *Saikoku rakuyō sanjūsan kasho Kannon reijōki* 西国洛陽三十三所観音霊場記, "Account of the thirty-three Miraculous Kannon Sites in the Western Provinces and Rakuyō [= Kyoto]", and was written by Shōyo Ganteki 松誉巌的.[31] The work is categorized as a book of Buddhist sermons, a *kangebon* 勧化本 in Japanese, and comprises one of two textual lineages of such collections. The second lineage refers to the 1726 compilation with the title *Saikoku sanjūsan kasho Kannon reijōki zue* 西国三十三所観音霊場記図絵 by the more artistic writer Kōyo Shun'ō 厚誉春鶯.[32] The 17th and 18th centuries saw numerous editions of miracle stories, often with 'realistic' illustrations of the temple buildings and the main statues, maps of the temple precincts and traffic maps. Some of these works are clearly intended for a general readership that plans to connect the visit to a famous pilgrimage site with touristic sightseeing. Other editions had a more strict focus on the religious practice. At least two groups of professionals were responsible for the various kinds of literary output at that time based either (1) on the Buddhistic work by Shōyo Ganteki who was more interested in the spiritual journey or (2) on the collection of the poet Kōyo Shun'ō. Both[33] have had a deep impact on the selection and new interpretation of the traditional *reijōki* (accounts of numinous sites) in the framework of relatively narrow specifications – a good example for regulated improvisation following Bourdieu.

A common feature of the texts of both lineages is that the *reijōki* are closely connected to the *Lotus sūtra* with its specific praise and set of Kannon miracles, whereas this in not recognizable in the old temple *engi* and miracle tales to such a high degree. Moreover, the early modern compilations prominently give space to descriptions of temple visits by members of the imperial family. In my view, the pilgrimage practice is legitimated twofold in these new compilations: first by the strong reference to the *Lotus sūtra*, thought to contain a path to universal salvation albeit written in a strange and foreign language (Chinese translated from Sanskrit), and second, by reference to one's own nation with its imperial family who are thought be decedents of the Japanese *kami*. This twofold linkage to the 'foundations' of the Buddhist tradition on the one hand, and the nation's divine ruler and the *kami* on the other was quite in line with other intellectual and religious developments in early modern Japan and is not unique to Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage. The popularization of the printed word and the distribution to

31 For an edition see Kannon reigenki kenkyūkai 1986.

32 For an edition of Kōyo Shun'ō's illustrated work see Kanesashi 2007 [1973].

33 I could not find any further information about the lives of these two men.

a readership in the comparatively highly literate society of early modern Japan was, of course, not limited to Buddhist travel books and tales, but was also a general trend.

The military government in Edo instigated severe provisions to control Buddhist institutions and temples and to limit their possibilities of exerting as much influence as they had before. That is why Buddhist temples reverted to concerted efforts to attract visitors and patrons to ensure income. In times past, members of a highly mobile section of society that can be termed 'travellers' had played an important role in the circulation of knowledge about devotional practices. These were predominantly women who donned Buddhist robes and lived as itinerant storytellers and fundraisers for pilgrimage sanctuaries.[34] This tradition petered out in the Edo period, at least in central Japan, because of the stringent measures of the government to limit uncontrolled mobility in order to create a static society with four social strata (aristocrats, samurai, farmers and merchants) without any official possibility of social movement. Since itinerancy became an undesirable life-style in the eyes of the Edo government, and even more so in modern Japan, the tradition of living as a fundraising nun or Buddhist storyteller ceased and information about faraway sanctuaries and their benefits became circulated more and more via printed books. Not much is known about the fundraising nuns because of the scarcity of records. However, numerous narrative maps that they used have survived, mostly from the 16th and 17th centuries. These maps provide unique insights into the phenomenon of Buddhist pilgrimage in that period. We will turn to these sources in the following section.

4.4 Narrative maps, imagined worlds

The public oral presentation of *engi* stories using paintings in the form of hanging scrolls or the aforementioned maps on particular festival days in medieval and early modern Japan had an enormous effect on the level of familiarity with these stories. The audience often is requested at the end of such as story to circulate it because of the immeasurable merit that is accrued by listening to and recounting it. Therefore, the significance of these *engi* stories for the distribution of religious and philosophical ideas as well as ritual practices cannot be overrated. It is particularly interesting to take a closer look at the groups and individuals involved and responsible for the various ways of passing on such ideas. The role of the Japanese retired emperor Kazan in the establishment of pilgrimage as it is given such prominence in the Saikoku pilgrimage foundation legend mentioned above can be said to be – historically speaking – purely hypothetical. Both Kazan and the monk Tokudō as narrative figures had the role of legitimizing the practice. It is, however, quite possible that in the sphere of influence of Kazan's teacher Shōkū, a Tendai monk,

34 Ruch 2002, 537–580.

the worship of Kannon and mountain asceticism became increasingly connected, and that this lead to the formation of a pilgrimage practice of undertaking arduous trips to a set of thirty-three temples. Analysing the sites visited in medieval Japan it can be said that the original route and the entire performance of the Saikoku pilgrimage must have been collectively founded by itinerant, semi-ordained monks and nuns. Inspired by the performances of mountain ascetics they associated the often fairly inaccessible numinous mountain sites with the Buddhist worship of Kannon.[35] We can see here that the Saikoku pilgrimage originated in a Buddhist grassroots movement of 'wild' ascetics who were on the margins of the official and publicly sanctioned temple hierarchy.

Traces of the tradition of mountain asceticism are recognizable in the local legends, for instance, frequently mentioning a waterfall that the ascetics use for austerity practices, special rock formations or other topographical markers. Their path involves the symbolic incubation in the womb, then birth, living, death and rebirth in a purified and more powerful body.[36] Moreover, the pilgrim ascetic encounters numerous deities at particular sites in the mountain wilderness. The aforementioned narrative maps show these important topographical markers from the mountain pilgrimage tradition, often in great detail, and are therefore excellent sources for the study of the way the sacred sites were seen in terms of the combination of non-Buddhist and Buddhist practices.

Narrative pilgrimage propagation maps and other more complex paintings of religious sanctuaries are, in the words of Max Moerman, "more than simply descriptive records"[37]. They are prescriptive and profoundly ideological documents in which social reality and the religious imaginary are conjoined." Moerman follows Bourdieu closely in saying that "they portray a symbolic system as if it were a natural order"[38]. These kinds of paintings are in Japanese called *mandara* 曼荼羅 – from Sanskrit *maṇḍala* ("circle") – pointing to the Buddhist tantric tradition of depicting cosmic spaces as stylized palaces in which deities reside. The *mandara* maps used by itinerant fundraising nuns usually measure 150 x 150 cm. The composition of the images do not in the least resemble *maṇḍala* of the esoteric Buddhist practice in the narrower sense. Rather than being formalistic diagrams such as the Buddhist *maṇḍala*, the *mandara* maps depict temple and shrine buildings set in the 'natural' landscape complete with numerous figures from the local legends, deites and – most importantly – representations of pilgrims, often in couples of man and woman. The prospective pilgrims are shown in different stages of the pilgrimage at places where they would have certain spiritual experiences. These pilgrimage (*sankei* 参詣) *mandara*, a genre of religious paintings that flourished in late medieval

35 Nara National Museum and NHK PlanNet Kinki 2008, 9.

36 The tradition is alive today and groups of such mountain ascetics continue to visit Buddhist temples to perform their rituals, sometimes in combination with explicitly Buddhist ceremonies, see e.g. Miyake 2005.

37 Moerman 2005, 25.

38 Moerman 2005; Bourdieu 2000, 49.

and early modern Japan, go far beyond mere navigation maps (Fig. 7). They invite the viewer to freely browse through the depicted symbolic landscape. The *mandara* maps are teeming with small scenes rendered in charming detail and are reminiscent of 'wimmelbook' pictures of the European tradition.[39] They share with the wimmelbooks a ludic element in that the viewer can visually discover well-known scenes from the foundation narratives, pictures of famous visitors to the site, appearances of various deities and numinous figures that must have been mentioned and embellished in the oral presentations of the itinerant storyteller. Both the *mandara* and the story along with it served not only the proselytizing efforts of the nuns and monks but also played an important role in the memory management of the temple networks that in turn were to strengthen the role of the single site in connection with the other temple institutions on the circuit.

The map of the Kumano pilgrimage that Moerman uses to guide his readership through his study of the Kumano pilgrimage and the religious landscape of pre-modern Japan includes site number 1 of the Saikoku circuit, Nachi.[40] The Kumano Nachi map is perhaps the best-known example of such a pilgrimage *mandara*. The site was (and is) regarded as a realm of rebirth modelled on Buddhist cosmological ideas. The old *kami* deities were identified with Buddhist deities and certain features of the natural landscape regarded as their residences, 'paradises' or 'pure lands' of boundless merit. Famously, the land of Kannon was regarded as being located beyond the ocean accessible from a small temple on the shore in Kumano. However, all thirthy-three Kannon pilgrimage sites represent Kannon's "paradise" which is called Potalaka (Fudaraku 補陀落) and the pilgrims spiritually gain access to it though their devotional practice.

In other words, these Buddhist pilgrimage temples are not merely religious sites where pilgrims conduct rituals. The pilgrimage offers foremost a visit to imagined worlds of the principal deity's land of boundless merit. The pilgrim can partake in the bodhisattva's merit and can experience his or her personal and unique miracle. Moreover, the pilgrim comes into contact with Buddhist masters not only of Japan but also of India and China, the countries of origin of the teachings. The relation to monks from China such as Tokudō and the founder of Matsuo'o-dera who was also supposedly Chinese, has

39 The larger paintings of the Renaissance artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (ca. 1525–1569) usually display a large amount of detailed groups of figures interacting with each other. They are set in landscapes or villages. These paintings count as the origin of the tradition of teeming picture books (wimmelbooks) that are popular today in children's literature, e.g. the picture books by Ali Mitgutsch. For a study on Bruegel's 'pictures within the picture' see Seidel and Marijnissen 1969.

40 The Saikoku pilgrimage exhibition catalogue of 2008 shows two examples of the Kumano Nachi maps (nos. 163 and 164) and those of several other pilgrimage sites (nos. 165–174), all from the 16th or 17th centuries (Nara National Museum and NHK PlanNet Kinki 2008, 191–192, 193–202). For the genre of pilgrimage *(sankei) mandara* see Ōsaka shiritsu hakubutsukan 1987.

Fig. 7 Temple Chōmei-ji Pilgrimage Mandala, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, H. 148.2 cm, W. 165.2 cm, 16th–17th century, Chōmei-ji, Shiga Prefecture.

already been referred to above. Indian monks also played a significant role in this context. Hōdō Sennin 法道仙人, a monk and ascetic from India who allegedly lived in the 6th century when Buddhism took root in Japan, is said to have founded number 16 on the Saikoku pilgrimage circuit, Kiyomizu-dera, and many other temples in Japan. Legends about this figure were circulated especially in the Kamakura period in the 12th and 13th centuries when indigenous forms of Buddhism were formed in Japan. Another Indian monk is said to have initially had a vision of Kannon during his austerities under the monumental Nachi waterfall. This 4th century Indian monk, Ragyō Shōnin 裸形上人, had become shipwrecked in a storm off the southern coast of Japan. He created a small statue modelled on his vision of Kannon and lived at Nachi until his death. Hundreds of years later, a Japanese ascetic named Shōbutsu 生仏 sought to emmulate Ragyō Shōnin and underwent austerities under Nachi waterfall as well, for a thousand days. Finally,

he encountered the Indian master in a dream where he was asked to worship Kannon at the site. Shōbutsu carved a large statue of Nyoirin Kannon in which he inserted Ragyō's small statue. This 'double statue' became the principal object of worship of the temple Seigantō-ji at Nachi thus embodying in a very literal sense both the Indian and Japanese Buddhist traditions.

Material objects mentioned in the temple legends can be directly seen or touched at the locus of the narrative and thereby manifest central events of the temple's (legendary) history in material form. Of particular significance is the personal encounter with Kannon made possible through the statues. The statues prominently feature in the temple legends and are objects of great admiration and awe up to this day. The *mandara* sometimes show the deities as statues in opened temple buildings with worshippers in devotional postures, e.g. in the upper left-hand corner of the *Kokawa-dera sankei mandara* 粉河寺参詣曼荼羅 which comprises number 3 on the Saikoku pilgrimage circuit.[41] Another example is Tokudō's stone box that can be admired at Nakayama-dera.

5 Conclusion

A religious tradition is successful when supply and demand continue to meet even after the initial phase of the tradition's establishment. Clearly, the circulatory pilgrimage as a religious tradition must have addressed and continues to address a particular category of social and spiritual needs. Although with shifting emphases the narrative, aesthetic, topographical and demographic conditions as well as the Buddhist teachings, the 'economy of improvisation' remained in a booming state over a period of nearly 600 years in regard to the Saikoku pilgrimage. Apparently, the dynamic of authoritative ritual precepts and individual creativity continued to level out in the framework of regulated improvisation. The attractiveness of the Japanese Buddhist practice of pilgrimage has persisted therefore less because of a spontaneous experience of a group of pilgrims finding themselves cut off from mundane life – the experience of *communitas* that Victor and Edith Turner saw in Christian and in other pilgrimage traditions[42] – but in the possibilities of embracing and also embellishing the Japanese pilgrimage style and partaking in the celebration of the nation in the framework of a cosmic imagination (Buddhist paradises, land of the *kami*, divine empire, realm of death and rebirth). These possibilities continue to be appreciated deeply although the framework of the Buddhist teachings is seen as complex and difficult to comprehend. Instead of an intellectual pursuit – that

41 Nara National Museum and NHK PlanNet Kinki 2008, 194.

42 For a critique by Foard of the Turner's *communitas* theory see Foard 1982, 240, 246.

is left to the experts – the average Japanese has the option to have personal and embodied access to a universal deity, to obtain benefits and to partake in a respected and 'traditional' pursuit. At the same time the participant can adjust his or her schedule and style. The model provided by the numerous legends and testimonials of the miracles and encounters with the deity in dreams etc. fostered and facilitated the identification with other pilgrims of times past. The term *hagiotourism* is hoped to be instructive in regard to examining the motivations of the 'pilgrims' who move dynamically between their roles as tourists ticking off items on lists and religious practitioners gathering seals and calligraphies as visual proof of their exertion and devotion in this world.

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The Panhellenic Festival of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia-On-The-Meander. A Spatial Analysis of a Hellenistic Procession

Summary

From an archeological perspective, this article discusses sacred mobility and ritual movement in Greek Hellenistic festivals. It focuses on the Panhellenic festival of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia-on-the-Meander. Instructively, this festival shows the various forms of festive movements in ancient Greece and their contextual meaning. Firstly, the article examines movement during the preliminary stages of the festival as an instrument to create a cultural framework. Secondly, it takes a look on the procession conducted in the festival in which the celebrating community mediated an image of its civic identity. The architecture, monuments, and inscriptions of the Magnesian topography are given due consideration to gain information about trajectories, participants, and the procession's ritual framework.

Keywords: Feasts; ritual structures; religious networks and identities; archaeological and epigraphical sources

Der Artikel diskutiert aus einer archäologischen Perspektive sakrale Mobilität und rituelle Bewegung in griechischen Festkontexten hellenistischer Zeit. Im Mittelpunkt steht das panhellenische Fest der Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia am Mäander. Dieser Befund zeigt exemplarisch Funktion und Bedeutung verschiedener Bewegungsformen in panhellenischen Festen: einerseits im Vorfeld der Feste zur Positionierung innerhalb eines größeren kulturellen Bezugssystems, andererseits als konkretes Festritual, in dem die feiernde Gemeinde ein Bild ihrer selbst inszenierte. Die funktionale und inhaltliche Bedeutung der bestimmenden Architekturen, Monumente und Inschriften der magnesischen Festtopographie steht hierbei im Zentrum, um zu Aussagen über Prozessionsroute, Teilnehmer und Rituale zu erhalten.

Keywords: Fest; rituelle Strukturen; religiöse Netzwerke und Identitäten; archäologische und epigraphische Quellen

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1 New 'Panhellenic' festivals – pilgrimage and procession in the Hellenistic period

An examination of the significance of pilgrimage and processions in Greek antiquity cannot omit the 'new Panhellenic' festivals, which took place in large numbers in the Hellenistic period.[1] From the beginning of the third century BC we observe that various local cults were upgraded into Panhellenic festivals in many city-states (*poleis* [Pl.], *polis* [Sg.]) throughout the Greek world. Referring to literary and epigraphic sources, K. Rigsby listed 45 festivals that were enhanced to this new status down to the end of the second century BC.[2] In this context we hear of extensive festive embassies (*theoriai* [Pl.], *theoria* [Sg.]) sent out from various *poleis* to announce the new festivals to all corners of the Greek *koine* (community) addressing other cities, city-leagues, and monarchs.[3] As a core element, the new festivals centred on a large sacrifice for the chief deity of the hosting *polis* to which the festive ambassadors (*theoroi* [Pl.], *theoros* [Sg.]) invited their addressees to send delegations to join the rituals. Together the inviting citizens and the foreign delegates were to partake in festal processions (*pompai* [Pl.], *pompe* [Sg.]) to honour the gods. To attract further visitors the new games included large-scale festivities, banquets, and customs-free markets. A major part in this was played by extensive

1 On the definitional problem of the term 'pilgrimage' for the Greek world see Elsner and Rutherford 2005, 1–14. Compare Friese and Kristensen 2017, 10; Bremmer 2017, 275–284.

2 Rigsby 1996, compare Chaniotis 1995, 164–168; Parker 2004, 18–22. For a general overview see Robert 1989, 35–45.

3 One might compare the Magnesian efforts to those conducted in course of the establishing of the Koan festival of Asklepieia with theoroi sent to Italy, Sicily, Macedonia, the Greek mainland, the Aegean Island, and Asia Minor; see Hallof and Rigsby 2010, nos. 208–233. – In general on *theoria* see Boesch 1908, Dillon 1997, 99–123; Elsner and Rutherford 2005, 7–11; Rutherford 2013. Compare also the article of J. Kubatzki in this volume.

and competitive 'crowned games' *(agones stephanites)* modelled after the traditional Panhellenic festivals in Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia in which the victors were awarded crowns and extensive honours.[4] To provide protection for the traveling visitors a sacred state of inviolability *(asylia)* for the hosting *polis* was negotiated. Various inscriptions about the sending of official delegations (also called *theoriai*) attested the acceptance of the new festivals in the Greek world. But also the further festivities, free meat and drink, as well as the markets attracted merchants, craftsmen, and idlers of all kinds.[5] The Isthmian games in 196 BC, for example, were attended by tens of thousands of visitors.

The increase in Panhellenic festivals is closely linked to the political, social, and economic development that the Greek *poleis* had to endure in Hellenistic times. The military campaigns of Philip II and Alexander the Great, the establishment of the Successors' kingdoms, and the appearance of Rome in the eastern Mediterranean formed central powers that threatened the political sovereignty of the *poleis*. This situation encouraged a kind of civic vitalization within the city-states.[6] The focus on internal policy and the stressing of civic bodies such as the *boule* (city council) and the *ekklesia* (city assembly) formed part of this development. The same applied for the educative institutions of *gymnasion* and *ephebia* to increase the self-identification with the hometown.[7] Great and lavish building measures emphasized the significance of urban space mainly conducted by wealthy citizens.[8] In return the benefactors received extensive honours from their fellow citizens.[9] We can also trace the attempts to underline a city's ideal status in the Greek *koine* by mythography and historiography.[10] Finally, the brisk 'diplomatic' relations between the *poleis* attest the importance of a Panhellenic consciousness. Traveling ambassadors, judges, merchants, artists, athletes, and scholars provided a tight communication network.[11]

Against this background the new festivals formed another way for the *poleis* to mediate civic awareness. As A. Giovannini pointed out, the Panhellenic festivals – the traditional as well as the Hellenistic – served as meeting places for the Greek city-states.[12] The collective worship of the gods, the renewal of kin- and friendship, the negotiation of

4 Parker 2004, 11–12; Robert 1989, 710. For the Koan Asklepieia we observe an intermingling of Pythian and Isthmian style games; see Hallof and Rigsby 2010, nos. 453–454.

5 On the attendees at festivals see Köhler 1996, 148, 150–152. – The significance of ritual feasting during the festival is thoroughly discussed by Schmitt Pantel 1997.

6 For a introductory overview and further literature on specific themes see Giovannini 1993; Gruen 1993; Wörrle and Zanker 1995; Gehrke 2003; Harland 2006; Gehrke 2007; Nijf 2013.

7 The gymnasion was in Greek antiquity a facility for physical training and an educational institution for especially the young members of the community; see Kah and Scholz 2004.

8 Lauter 1986; Hesberg 1994; Heinle 2009; Zimmermann 2009.

9 Habicht 1995, 87–92; Wörrle 1995, 241–250.

10 Chaniotis 1988, 162–173, 372–377; Schepens 2001, 3–25.

11 Giovannini 1993, 274–279; Gruen 1993, 339–354.

12 Giovannini 1993, 280, 283.

political affairs, and the exchange of information, values, and ideas under a sacred truce brought together official delegations and private persons alike and fostered a sentiment of shared identity based on cultural, political, social, and ethical bonds.[13] In addition, the festivals were sites of competition. Political, military, and social rivalries between the *poleis* were a driving force in Greek society to raise a city's profile. The Panhellenic festivals provided an opportunity to stage these rivalries through sporting agonistics: artists and athletes competed for their personal reputation and the glory of their hometowns alike.

Although we may consider the aspect of Panhellenic communication to be paramount for the popularity, for the hosting *polis* the establishment of such an event was interlinked with further-reaching intentions. The endowment of such large-scale festivities gave the host an opportunity for self-display to a Panhellenic audience and the opportunity to stress its affiliation to the *koine*. Accordingly, the new festivals were thoroughly choreographed presenting the political, social, and economic integrity of the hosting *poleis*, their cultic and cultural traditions, their mythological and historical past, as well as their place and status within the Greek community.[14]

The main tool for staging these various contents was the processions that formed a regular feature of ancient Greek festivals since the Geometric period. The original purpose of the procession was the escorting of sacred objects, offerings, and/or victims by the festive community to a certain place where they were sacrificed to a divine recipient.[15] In this function *pompai* were also occasions on which their participants would represent themselves to the gods and fellow men as a pious and united community. The proper execution of the procession was a serious matter regulated by sacred laws *(hieroi nomoi)*. A. Chaniotis pointed out that in the Hellenistic period an increasing effort and diligence was put to regulate every single detail of the *pompai* in order to ensure their appropriate execution:[16] It was determined who may take part in the procession, the right clothing, as well as the adornment of the sacrificial animals. The line-up of the procession was commonly conducted in terms of hierarchical criteria in order to provide a representative and elaborate sample of the festive community – that could be age divisions or civic groups, religious and political functions, birth and social background, gender and beauty, or the status as citizen or foreigner. We find regulations for the position of cult objects and images within the procession, of aesthetic and artistic elements such as musicians, acrobats, and choirs, of athletes and artists. All together, the main concern of the Hellenistic decrees was to stage the procession, as an ideal image of the

13 Kowalzig 2005, 43–44; Rutherford 2007, 23–27; Rutherford 2013.

14 Chaniotis 1995, 160–163; Chankowski 2005, 185–206; Beck and Wiemer 2009, 26–35; Wiemer 2009a, 116–127; Wiemer 2009b, 83–108.

15 Bömer 1952, 1878–1913; Burkert 1985, 99–101. For further literature see Bruni 2004. See also the article of J. Kubatzki in this volume.

16 Chaniotis 1995, 155–160.

civic body, as aesthetically and harmoniously as possible.[17] In this context A. Chaniotis has spoken of the increasing theatricality of Hellenistic ritual.[18]

2 The Panhellenic festival of Artemis Leukophryene – an archaeological approach

While the abovementioned regulations for processions governed the criteria of personnel, structure, performance, and timing, a central aspect of *pompai* concerned space. The reaching of a spatially determined place where the dedications are made can be said to be the primary aim of a procession. This place is regularly the altar of a deity commonly located in its sanctuary (*temenos* [Sg.], *temene* [Pl.]), but the starting point of the procession and the route leading to its goal were also matters of importance. The way to the altar connected significant spaces and structures, which could be specific landscapes and locations, architectures and monuments, streets and gates, or images and statues related in a religious, mythological, historical, political, or social way to the cult, the festival, and/or the self-conception of the festive community.[19] In fact, many of the *poleis* hosting new festivals were greatly concerned with the spatial setting of their festivities.[20] We are informed about large-scale building measures in the *temene* to foster the festive procedures and their significance. This can be seen in the tendency towards holistic site planning and specific architectural forms that promoted ritual performances, for example porticoes, gates (*propyla* [Pl.], *propylon* [Sg.]), monumental stairways, altars, and benches (*exedrai* [Pl.], *exedra* [Sg.]).[21] Together with other monuments, votives, and inscriptions, the buildings merged into proper festive spaces.[22] This development can be traced in the sanctuaries of Asklepios on Kos, of Apollo Didymeus in Miletus, and of Zeus Naios in Dodona.[23]

Among these refurbished sites the certainly most instructive and extensively studied is the sanctuary of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia-on-the-Meander. In 208 BC the

17 Chaniotis 1995, 158–160; Chaniotis 1999; Chankowski 2005, 204–206.

18 Chankowski 2013, 173–174. He defines theatricality as the effort to evoke emotional impacts on an audience to achieve a certain reaction to or perception of sacral conditions through non-verbal communication such as performance, people, physical structure or space.

19 Bömer 1952, 1902–1906; Burkert 1985, 99–100; Bruni 2004, 2; compare also J. Kubatzki's article on this issue.

20 Hesberg 1981, 114–117; Hesberg 1994, 78–88; Mylonopulos 2008, 49–60; Heinle 2009, 41–69; Zimmermann 2009, 23–40; Mylonopoulos 2011, 43–56.

21 Hesberg 1994, 4–29; Thüngen 1994, 30–47; Linfert 1995, 131–146; Becker 2003, 298–302; Hollinshead 2012, 27–66.

22 On images: Hesberg 1994, 97–114. – On honorific monuments: Bielfeldt 2012, 78–122; Ma 2013. – On inscriptions: Witschel 2014.

23 For the sanctuary of the Koan Asklepios see Gruben 2001, 440–448, and Interdonato 2013. – For Didyma see Dignas 2002, 23–24. – For Dodona see Cabanes 1988, and Gruben 2001, 116–119.

citizens of Magnesia established a new Panhellenic festival, the Leukophryena, on the occasion of an epiphany of their patron deity Artemis some fifteen years earlier.[24] The festival should be held every four years and include a sacrifice (*thysia* [Sg.], *thysiai* [Pl.]) for Artemis and festivities (*panegyris* [Sg.], *panegyreis* [Pl.]) with athletic, equestrian, and artistic games that took the Panhellenic festival of Apollo Pythios at Delphi as a model.[25] A crown worth fifty gold coins was awarded as winning prize.[26] To proclaim the new festival several groups of *theoroi* were sent out from Magnesia to travel the Greek *koine* from Sicily to the Persian Gulf (Fig. 1). The embassies' request for acknowledgement of the Leukophryena and recognition of *asylia* was in nearly every way successful: all major monarchs and at least 152 cities and city-leagues accepted the invitation to the new festival. The decrees (*psephismata* [Pl.], *psephisma* [Sg.]) and letters with the positive answers to the Magnesian invitation were arranged, together with the festival's deed of foundation and a transcript of the city's founding myth, in a large epigraphic dossier in the *polis's* marketplace.[27] Together with the Magnesians, the foreign *theoroi* should take part in a large and elaborate procession that formed the core element of the new festival.

Simultaneously with the decree of the Leukophryena, the Magnesians planned an enormous building program. Besides extensive alteration works on the theatre, the focus of the measures was the entire redesign of the city's main places: the marketplace (*agora* [Sg.]; *agorai* [Pl.]), and the adjoining sanctuary of Artemis Leukophryene.[28] For this purpose, the Magnesians commissioned the famous architect Hermogenes. Under his aegis the construction of two vast, portico-framed plazas was initiated featuring new spatial and visual concepts. The centrepieces of the construction work were a great new temple and an altar for Artemis in the sanctuary. In addition, archaeological field research in Magnesia was firstly conducted in the 1890s by a German excavation team led by C. Humann and, secondly, since the 1980s by the University of Ankara under O. Bingöl has produced a large body of architectural remains, monuments, images, statues, and inscriptions.[29] Already during the German campaign it had become clear that the building works in the *temenos* and the *agora* corresponded in terms of content and chronology to the establishment of the festival.[30] Heortological issues remained predominant in the further research on the Magnesian record especially within the historical and philological disciplines. Numerous case studies have been presented on different aspects of the

24 Kern 1900, no. 16 = Rigsby 1996, no. 66. On the date see Thonemann 2007, 151–154.

25 Kern 1900, no. 16 l. 27–35 = Rigsby 1996, no. 66.

26 Kern 1900, no. 16 l. 29 = Rigsby 1996, no. 66. Critical on this topic is Slater 2006.

27 Kern 1900, nos. 16–87. On the dossier see below, section 3.1.

28 For the construction work on the theatre see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 23–26. – For the topographical situation of the *temenos* and the *agora* see below section 3.

29 An outline of the earliest research in Magnesia provides O. Kern (Kern 1901, I–IX). On the German excavations see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, Kekulé von Stradonitz and Kern 1894, and Kern 1901. On the Turkish excavations see Bingöl 2007.

30 Kekulé von Stradonitz and Kern 1894; Kern 1901.

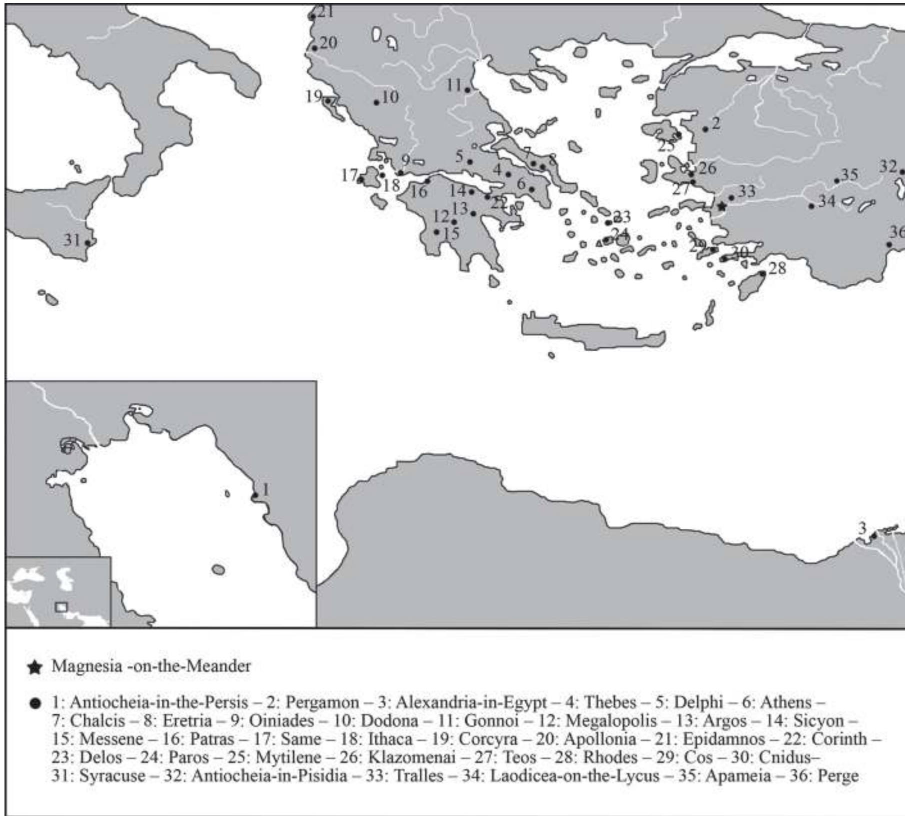

Fig. 1 Catchment area of the Magnesian festival of Artemis.

festival of Artemis. Here, major topics were the epigraphic dossier, the *theoria* and *asylia* related to the Leukophryena, as well as the mythological and historical integration of the Magnesians into the Panhellenic community.[31] On the other hand, archaeological work on the Magnesian site and its monuments has provided a large quantity of data that demand a new archaeological approach to the Leukophryena.[32]

As T. Hölscher pointed out, classical archaeology provides the necessary methods to read ancient sanctuaries as 'significant spaces' of concrete cultic activities. In these spaces

31 Theoria: Boesch 1908; Robert 1989, 711–712; Chaniotis 1999; Flashar 1999. – Asylia: Mainly, the asylia was seen as a protection against the Hellenistic monarchs (compare Gauthier 1972, 270–274; Buraselis 2003 143–156) or pirates (see Gauthier 1972, 270). S. Dušanić proposed that the establishment of asylia was an attempt to gain the Cretan *poleis* as allies against Miletus; see Duganić 1983/1984, 18–48. In a more general sense, K. Rigsby regarded *asylia* as a primarily formal proclamation to enhance a festival's reputation and acceptance; see Rigsby 1996, 179–185. – Identity: Gehrke 2000, 1–9; Parker 2004; Robert 1989; Sumi 2004; Wiemer 2009b.

32 Köhler 1996, 12–13; Flashar 1999, 415.

the natural environment, architecture, images and signs were interwoven with the sacred rituals. Archaeology can make ritual movements visible by interpreting these elements in relation to their infrastructural functions and symbolic meaning.[33] The meaning and memories that lie within symbols can be produced and reproduced in certain actions and have an identity-creating effect. Their deciphering can provide insight into the cultural, social, and political conception of the celebrating community.[34]

To take up this point, this paper's further intention is to examine the topography of the *temenos* of Artemis and the Magnesian *agora* in order to reconstruct the festive procession of the Leukophryena. This attempt has a threefold aim: Firstly, to extrapolate the infrastructure and route, which directed the formal movements of the procession. Secondly, to map out the symbolic landscape, which contained topics related to the civic awareness of the *pompe's* participants. In conclusion, the article will deal with the question of how the civic self-image of the Magnesian citizens was activated and mediated by the personnel composition of the procession as well as its route and ritual performance within the Magnesian topography.

3 The topographical setting of the Leukophryena

The festival's centre stage was the *temenos* of Artemis Leukophryene and the *agora* adjoining it to the west (Fig. 2). Together the plazas occupied a vast area of about 36 000 m^2 in the north eastern part of the city at the junction of the *polis's* two main roads.[35] Simultaneously with the Leukophryena's establishment, an overall reshaping of the plazas was initiated. Vitruvius mentioned Hermogenes as the builder of the great temple of Artemis Leukophryene.[36] However, for good reasons recent research has tended to attribute to him the overall design of the two plazas including the altar of the goddess and the architectural framing of the *temenos* and the *agora* with surrounding porticoes (*stoai* [Pl.], *stoa* [Sg.]) creating two separate plazas connected with a gatehouse (*propylon* [Sg.], *propyla* [Pl.]).[37] The Hellenistic construction works, however, were primarily focused on executing the most essential architectures needed in the festivities, which were the altar and the temple of Artemis in the *temenos* and the southern, western, and northern porticoes of the *agora* with the main entrance to this square. In fact, the completion of

33 Hölscher 2002, 331.

34 Lefêbvre 2000; Löw 2001, 152–230; Langenohl 2005, 51–72.

35 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 8 fig. 1, pl. 2.

36 Vitruvius 3.2.6 (Morgan 1914).

37 For Hermogenes in Magnesia see Kreeb 1990, 103–114. The chronology of the Magnesian building measures has recently been outlined by F. Rumscheid; see Rumscheid 1994, 25–28, 170–174, 198–216.

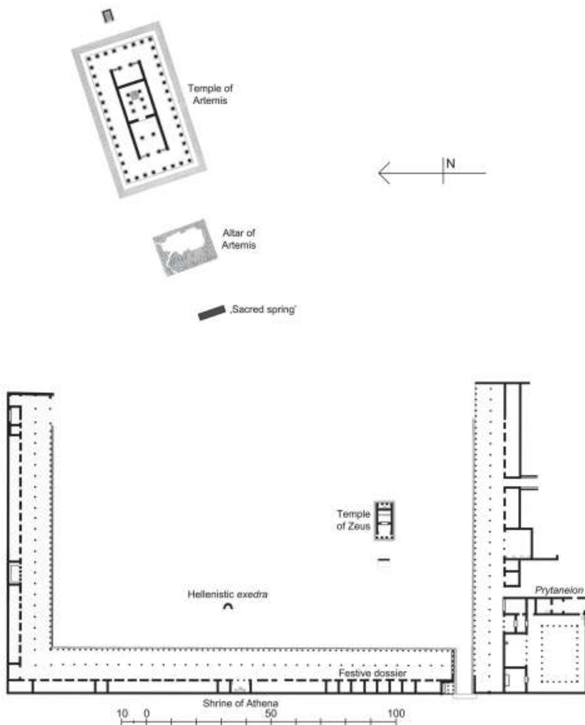

Fig. 2 Magnesia-on-the-Meander. Temenos and agora in the Hellenistic period. Plan of temenos and agora by author based on Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, pl. 2; Gerkan 1929, pl. 1.

the works took some 300 years.[38] In the following, we will concentrate the Hellenistic topography of the two plazas.

3.1 The agora

Hermogenes designed the *agora* as a north–south orientated, great open space of 1.8 ha of oblong, slightly trapezoid, form. It was crossed along its southern edge by one of the *polis's* main roads (Fig. 2). On the northern side of the road, on the area's longitudinal axis, stood a small temple from the last third of the third century BC. Its prostyle façade of four columns faced west towards a small altar.[39] The shrine was dedicated to Zeus Sosipolis, the 'Saviour of the City'. His cult image appeared in the type of the Olympian Zeus.[40]

38 For the situation in the imperial period compare Hammerschmied 2016, 226–231.

39 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 141–157; Rumscheid 1994, 170; Gruben 2001, 424–426; Kreutz 2007, 242–246.

40 The dedication to Zeus is confirmed by an inscription in the northern anta of the temple's porch; see Kern 1900, no. 98. – Fragments of the cult image are

To this architectural situation Hermogenes added a three-sided frame of porticoes. In the southwest a gap between the porticoes took account of the crossing road and formed an entrance. On its north western edge the entrance was equipped with a springhouse with a large water basin.[41]

The *stoai* were two-aisled with a Doric façade. Their load-bearing walls and columns were erected in marble. To the rear of the porticoes we see small square chambers, which probably served as shops and stores.[42] Occasionally the chambers were replaced by different structures. In the western part of the southern *stoa* a large building complex with a peristyle court and annex rooms can be identified with the official rooms of the *prytaneion* where the Magnesian magistrate and the altar of Hestia with the sacred hearth fire of the *polis* were located.[43] Central within the southern portico a large room with columned façade can be identified as the sanctuary of an unknown deity.[44] Analogously, in the axis of the western *stoa* we find a small shrine of the goddess Athena, attested by a cult table and two figurines.[45]

The western portico also housed the abovementioned dossier related to the Leukophryena (Fig. 3). On the marble slabs of the southern flanking wall and along the rear wall to the shrine of Athena 71 deeds were preserved over a stretch of 54 m. The dossier was hierarchically arranged from the south wall to the north. At the beginning the dossier presented the deed of endowment of the Leukophryena followed by an epigraphic account of the foundation myth of Magnesia and two documents claimed to have been preserved from mythological times.[46] The main body of the dossier was made up of letters and *psephismata* first from the Hellenistic monarchs and then from the other *poleis* and city leagues.[47] One remarkable architectural feature are the four large windows in the southern wall of the portico that shed light on some of the documents.

Besides the main architectural structures, we must imagine the *agora* (and also the sanctuary) as being densely filled with smaller monuments, structures, altars, inscriptions, statues, and images of all kind.[48] Unfortunately, the only remaining structure is a single *exedra*, a semi circular seating bench, in front of and facing the shrine of Athena (Fig. 2). Of the honorific monuments and state documents once displayed on the *agora* only a small number survived, mainly the bases of honorific statues of Magnesian cit-

preserved; see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 155–156 fig. 167; also, it is depicted on coin images; see Schultz 1975, nos. 75–76 pl. 6; no. 145 pl. 11; no. 167 pl. 14; no. 170 pl. 14.

41 For the springhouse see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 109–110 figs. 117–118.

42 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 126 fig. 133.

43 An altar of Hestia was found in the complex; see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 112; Kekulé von Stradonitz and Kern 1894, 83; Kern 1894, 94–95; Kern 1900, no. 220.

44 Kern 1900, nos. 230, 231.

45 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 109 figs. 114–115 pl. 3.

46 Kern 1900, nos. 16, 17, 20–21 = Rigsby 1996, no. 66.

47 Kern 1900, nos. 18, 19, 22–87 = Rigsby 1996, nos. 67–131.

48 Hesberg 1994, 120–123; Thüngen 1994, 7–21.

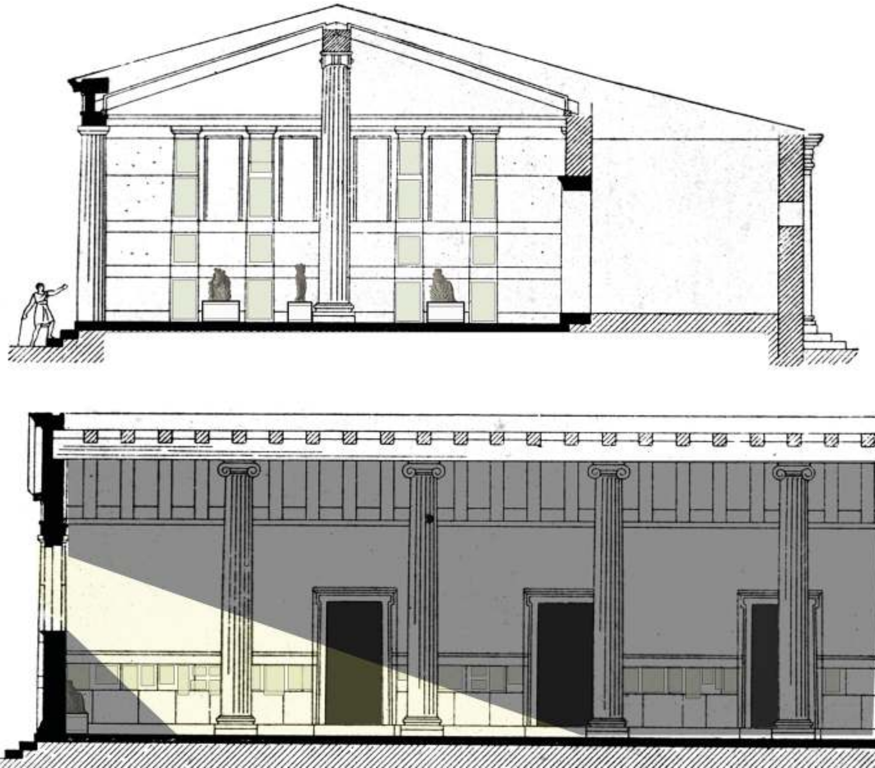

Fig. 3 Festive dossier in the western portico. Reconstruction of the fall of light on the festive dossier in the agora's western portico by author based on Kern 1900, pl. 2; Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 116 fig. 120.

izens and athletes, as well as foreigners, especially Roman officials. Moreover, several male and female statues were discovered during the excavations.[49]

Unfortunately, due to the spotty excavations on the *agora* in the 1890s and the modern re-silting of this area the original spatial arrangement of these monuments cannot be restored with certainty. The greatest number of the monuments was found in the south western entrance of the market, mostly stelae from the third to the first century BC honouring Magnesian embassies and traveling arbitrators.[50] The other monuments were found scattered over the *agora*.[51]

49 Hellenistic statue bases of Magnesian citizens: Kern 1900, nos. 127, 134. – Athletes: Kern 1900, no. 149. – Foreigners: Kern 1900, no. 138. – Romans: Kern 1900, nos. 142–146, 155. – For the statues see Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 175–228; Linfert 1976, 28–51.

50 Kern 1900, nos. 15, 89, 90, 93, 97, 101, 102, 103, 106, 179, 202.

51 Kern 1900, nos. 88, 100a, 100b, 104, 110, 111. – Votives: Kern 1900, nos. 206, 208, 225.

Fig. 4 Sema of Themistokles. Redrawing of a Magnesian drachme, second century AD.

A monument (*sema* [Sg.], *semata* [Pl.]) of seemingly greater importance located on the Magnesian marketplace was dedicated to the famous Athenian statesman Themistocles. Today lost, we know the monument from the literary sources and coin images from the Roman imperial period.[52] The coins show a bearded figure with a sword belt associated with an altar and a sacrificed bull in front of it; the legend THEMISTOKLES hints that it is a depiction of this monument (Fig. 4).[53]

3.2 The temenos

The construction works in the *agora* corresponded with the erection of the major structures in the *temenos* of Artemis (Fig. 2). The sanctuary of the goddess, also ca. 1.8 ha in size, bordered the *agora* to the east. Diverting from the *agora's* north–south direction the *temenos* and its structures lay along an axis oriented from northeast to southwest. This aberrant orientation was owed to the circumstance that the Hermogeneic temple of Artemis followed the direction of an archaic predecessor.[54] Within the sanctuary all major buildings were situated along its longitudinal axis including the temple and the altar of Artemis Leukophryene, a basin in the southwest, and a small shrine (*naiskos* [Sg.], *naiskoi* [Pl.]) in the northeast. A marble pavement enclosed all these structures.[55]

Within the festival, the altar was the place where the sacrifice to the goddess was conducted. In fact, the construction of the altar started shortly before that of the tem-

52 Diodorus Siculus 11.58 (Oldfather 1946–1963); Nepos, Themistocles 10 (Rolfe 1984). – For the coins see Rhousopoulos 1896, 18–26; Schultz 1975, 42–43, 60 no. 103 pl. 7; 85–86, no. 244 pl. 19.

53 On the monument, see section 3.2.

54 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 41.

55 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 38 fig. 27. 100; Hesberg 1994, 182.

Fig. 5 Tethering spots for the sacrificial animals.

ple.[56] Today, only the altar's limestone foundation, some 23 × 15 m in size, has remained *in situ*. Among the preserved structural components of the altar, the most impressive belonged to an over-life-size frieze with a depiction of an assembly of gods. Among them we can trace a seated Zeus, Apollo, Hephaestus, Heracles, Aphrodite, Poseidon, and Asclepius.[57]

Although several reconstruction proposals have been made so far, the form and type of the altar still remains the subject of discussion.[58] Most plausible seems a reconstruction of an altar situated on an elevated platform with a broad flight of stairs to its western side.[59] A narrow portico might have surrounded the platform on the other three sides. However, it can be said that the frieze was facing to the southwest where most of its parts were found.[60] Also in front of the western altar basement two rows of 22 bung-

56 Gerkan 1929, 4 fig. 1.

57 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 175–182, fig. 6.

58 Reconstruction proposals were made by (in chronological order): J. Kothe (in Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 91–99), A. von Gerkan (Gerkan 1929), A. Linfert (Linfert 1976, 164–167), R. Özgan (Özgan 1982, 196–209), W. Hoepfner (Höpfner 1989, 601–634), and C. Çetin (Çetin 1993).

59 The reconstruction of the Magnesian altar similar to the Pergamene altar of Zeus was propagated by A. v. Gerkan (Gerkan 1929) and recently confirmed by T. Becker; see Becker 2003, 199–200.

60 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 91.

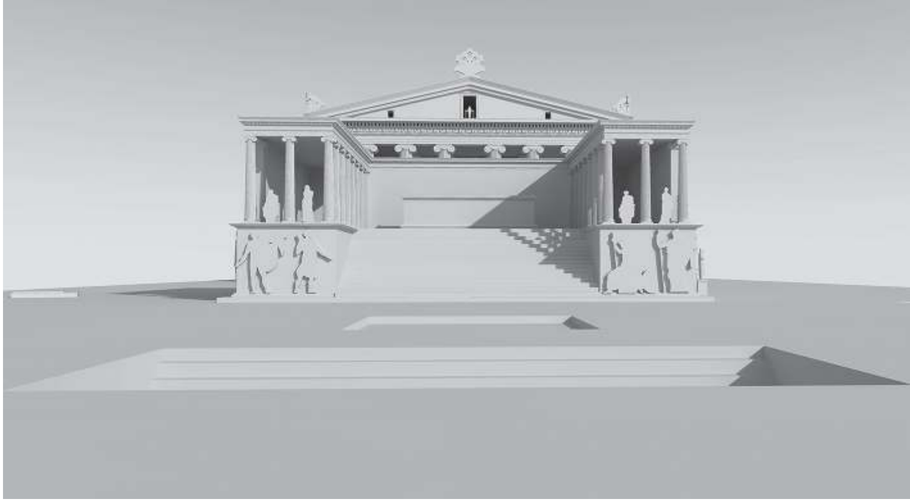

Fig. 6 3D reconstructed elevation of the Magnesian Artemision and the altar.

holes can still be spotted (Fig. 5). They were intended to hold iron rings for tethering the sacrificial animals before their ritual killing.[61]

23 m beyond the altar towered the temple of Artemis. With its 41 × 67 m in size, the building was the fourth largest temple in Asia Minor.[62] According to the Magnesian literary sources, it outshone everything that had gone before in "size and magnificence".[63] Formally, the temple was erected as an Ionic octostyle *pseudodipteros* that featured two constructional specifics. On the one hand, it was the first Ionic temple with a circumferential figural frieze in the entablature zone. The frieze, of which a great part has been preserved, depicted Amazons fighting against Greek warriors *(amazonomachia)*.[64] On the other hand, the western pediment showed three door-like openings, a structural phenomenon the Magnesian building shared with several other temples in Asia Minor, most prominently the Artemision in Ephesos (Fig. 6).

Some 21 m southwest of the altar, a rectangular depression within the *temenos's* pavement was located. It measured ca. 12 × 3 m at the pavement's top level. From the east, six marble stairs led down to a ground floor that was intersected in two parts. The southern part was thoroughly paved and supplied by a water pipeline coming from the west.[65] Similar structures in Delos and Tegea make one think of a well.[66] However, the

61 Bingöl 2007, 82–83.
62 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 39–90; Gruben 2001, 426–431.
63 Kern 1900, no. 100a l. 14–15.
64 Yaylalı 1976.
65 Bingöl 2007, 84.
66 Compare the "Krene Minoe" on Delos; see Bruneau and Ducat 2005, 296 no. 30. For Tegea see Dugas 1924, 69–71.

northern part of the basin had a raised pavement of limestone slabs, which enclosed a large natural rock. It seems that this rock was intended to be visible in antiquity.

About the *naiskos* only few is known (Fig. 2). The small rectangular building had a *pi*-shaped ground plan, its entrance facing to the southwest.[67] There is no evidence for the function of this structure. Comparisons might hint towards a structure for a prominent votive offering or the cult image of a 'smaller' god or hero who was worshipped in the sanctuary of Artemis. However, given the *naiskos's* remote location in the sanctuary, this seems quite unlikely. As on the *agora*, a number of honorific monuments, state documents, and votives from the Hellenistic period were found in the *temenos*. Unfortunately, the original arrangement of these monuments remains even more uncertain than of those in the market.[68]

4 Civic spaces

The spatial outline of the central Magnesian topography will be considered in the following under the aspect of civic self-representation that, as we will see, expressed itself, on the one hand, in the staging of the time-honoured Magnesian past oscillating between cult, mythology, and history. On the other hand, it is the self-representation of the citizens, demonstrating themselves to be a living community in the sense of a traditional *polis* society deeply related to the myth-historical framework of the city.

As H.-J. Gehrke has shown, there was a tendency in Hellenistic culture to measure the ideal rank of a *polis* especially against its ancient and honourable past.[69] A glorious past formed a point of reference within the civic identity standing against the political and social developments and impacts, which the *poleis* had to undergo in Hellenism as well as being a subject of agonal competition.[70] In this context we may think of the increasing importance of historiography and mythography and the 'new interpretation' of old myths, for example, in the widespread creation of foundation myths.[71] In this horizon also belong the new presentation of *heroa* (tombs or shrines of heroic personalities) and other 'ancient' monuments.[72]

67 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 101–102.

68 For the honorific inscriptions see Kern 1900, nos. 2–6, 8–10, 95, 108, 119. – Honorific statues: Kern 1900, nos. 124, 125, 131, 153. – Votives: Kern 1900, nos. 204, 205, 207.

69 Gehrke 2000, 1–9.

70 See above, section 1. Studies of this phenomenon are provided by Leschhorn 1984, Malkin 1987, and Scheer 1993.

71 Lesky 1971, 102; see also below chapter 4.2.

72 Compare the cenotaph of Battos on the agora of Cyrene (see Stucchi 1965, 58–59) or the *theke* of Opis and Arge in the sanctuary of Apollo in Delos (Bruneau and Ducat 2005, 197–198 no. 32). In general on this phenomenon see Pfister 1974; Förtsch 1995, 173–188.

4.1 Cult and mythology – the temenos

For Magnesia a constitutive pillar of the civic identity was the cult of Artemis whom the citizens worshipped as *archegetis*, the founder and leader of the city.[73] A. Laumonier suggested that her cult tied in with that of a pre-Greek Carian goddess who was worshipped at a location called Leukophrys.[74] After the arrival of Greek settlers in Asia Minor, this indigenous goddess merged with the Greek deity Artemis, but kept the toponym as her surname. Anacreon was the first who mentioned the cult of Magnesian Artemis in the sixth century BC.[75] In the fifth century BC Xenophon stated that the cult was related to hot thermal springs and that it had some regional significance.[76] The extent to which the Magnesians cultivated this cultic antiquity can be detected, firstly, by reference to the cult image of Artemis Leukophryene, which is only known from coin images and literary quotes.[77] Although the image was probably a creation of the Hellenistic period, it was mentioned to be a *xoanon*, a wooden, under-life size, and time-honoured statue.[78] Additionally, the image showed some iconographic features, a *polos* and an *ependytes* – a cylindrical hat and a conical apron – that related to very ancient cult images.[79] This type of image that was possibly 'invented' to express cultic antiquity was widespread in Asia Minor. Its most prominent exponent is the famous Artemis Ephesia.[80]

Secondly, the architecture and the orientation of the temple of Artemis give some indications. The temple faced westwards, which is quite unusual for Greek shrines that were normally oriented to the east (Fig. 2). Perhaps this orientation was related to the worship of Artemis as a lunar goddess as it is prevalent in Asia Minor.[81] Furthermore, the aberrant orientation of the Hermogeneic temple, following its archaic predecessor, is relevant here. A topographical continuity between old and new cultic buildings is commonplace in Greek sanctuaries and is widespread all over the Greek world. However, what is striking is how the whole area of the *temenos* stood out against the surrounding *agora* and expressed the greater antiquity of the sanctuary against its surroundings areas, something that must have been evident to all visitors (Fig. 2).[82]

Another element indicating the cult's great age were the abovementioned pediment doors. W. Held has recently discussed their meaning and function. He referred

73 See for example Kern 1900, nos. 16, 18, 19, 50, 89. Compare also Kern 1901, 491; Gehrke 2000, 3, and Sumi 2004, 82.

74 Laumonier 1958, 216, 528–530.

75 Anakreon Fr. 384 (Page 1975).

76 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.2.19 (Straßburger 2005).

77 Kern 1900, no. 100a.

78 On the creation see Bumke 2011, 256.

79 For coin images of the *xoanon* see Fleischer 1973, 140–146. – For the attributes see Fleischer 1973 and Thiersch 1936, 108–110.

80 Fleischer 1973.

81 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 4; Burkert 1985, 200–201.

82 R. Förtsch speaks of an "Isolierung der Objekte aus dem Umraum" to render the greater age of older structures compared to their surroundings; see Förtsch 1995, 181. Compare Hartmann 2010, 150–151.

these openings to the ancient, pre-Greek cult of Cybele in Caria and Phrygia and suggested that they were intended for staging epiphanies in the temple's pediment.[83] This interpretation was already made by C. Humann who proposed that the cult image of Artemis was shown through the pediment doors in occasion of festivals to remember the epiphany of the goddess that led to the foundation of the Leukophryena (Fig. 6).[84] Similar to the *xoanon* type statue, the pediment doors that were quite widespread in Asia Minor first occurred at the Hellenistic Artemision in Ephesus. It seems likely, as with the cult image, made the openings were intended to express cultic authority by quoting antique architectonical forms.

Thirdly, the basin in the southwest of the *temenos* was likewise oriented to match the temple. It seems plausible to relate the structure to the same contextual horizon. O. Bingöl proposed that the basin was a "sacred spring" and the water pipe certainly confirms this.[85] As Xenophon mentioned, Magnesia was famed for its thermal springs.[86] Possibly, the basin referred to that feature. Especially in Asia Minor, thermal springs are assigned to the goddess Artemis.[87] Often such springs were the 'germ cell' of sanctuaries because of mythological events that were said to have taken place there. For example, the spring where Heracles raped Auge at Tegea would become the site of the sanctuary of Athena Alea.[88] Perhaps the Magnesian spring was similarly connoted. As we have seen, the basin also included a natural rock that could be interpreted as some kind of aniconic image of a deity or as a marker of mythological events. Greek religion knows of many such rocks. Especially in Caria pyramidal rocks *(baityloi)* were a common cultic phenomenon.[89] For Magnesia there is unfortunately no clue that could lead to an interpretation of the stone.

The antiquity of the Magnesian cult of Artemis was part of the broader mythological framework that we find depicted within the friezes of the Artemision and the altar. As already mentioned, the temple frieze depicts an *amazonomachia*. Female warriors fight on foot or on horseback against Greek combatants. The Greeks are supported by the *heros* Heracles wearing the lion pelt and wielding a club. H.-J. Gehrke sees in this depiction the topical struggle between the Greeks and the eastern barbarians, which is surely

83 Held 2005, 119–159.

84 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 64; Hommel 1957, 29–31. For different interpretations of the doors see Held 2005, 154–159; Bingöl 1999, 240; Bingöl 2007, 70–71.

85 Bingöl 2007, 184.

86 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.2.19 (Straßburger 2005). See also Athenaeus 2.42–43 (Gulick 1959–1963). – Today, these thermal springs still exist and supply a modern spa near the ruined site of Magnesia.

87 Croon 1956, 193–220.

88 Pausanias 8.47.9 (Jones 1959–1971). Compare the myth behind the springhouses of Glauce and of Peirene in Corinth (Pausanias, 2.3.2–3. 2.3.6; Jones 1959–1971). – About myths connected to springs and wells in general see Pfister 1974, 358–361.

89 In general on this topic see Pfister 1974, 363–264; Gaifman 2012, 131–136. – Compare also the "Leokorion" on the Athenian *agora*; see Batino 2001, 55–66. – For the Carian baityloi see Diler 2000, 51–77.

one possible statement of the frieze.[90] However, as H.-U. Wiemer has mentioned, an interpretation more closely related to the Magnesian past could refer to the Amazons' significance as founding personalities in the mythology of Asia Minor.[91] As one of his twelve deeds Heracles fought the Amazons to gain the famed girdle of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons. As a result of the fight the women were expelled from their homeland at the river Thermon from where they spread out over all Asia Minor and became founders of towns and/or cults such as in Smyrna, Cyme, or, most famously, Ephesus.[92] For Magnesia a connection to this tradition can be traced in the literary work of the historian Possis, who wrote a volume on the history of Magnesia named *Amazonis*.[93] Noteworthy in this context is a quotation by Zenon of Myndos, a writer from the Tiberian period, who mentioned a tomb of Leukophryne in the *temenos* of Artemis, which could be assigned to a female heroine, possibly but not demonstrably with Amazonian roots.[94]

An additional interpretation of the frieze would centre on the person of Heracles. The myth of Heracles in his quest for the girdle of Hippolyta was handed down from at least the sixth century BC in the context of the Argonautica.[95] According to this narrative, Heracles fought the Amazons together with the Argonauts. The *amazonomachia* frieze of the temple of Apollo at Bassai also depicts this topic, which besides, is quite common in Attic vase painting.[96] Seemingly, the narration of the Argonauts was quite important in the Magnesian mythography. According to the writer Possis, the Magnesian founder hero Leukippos was kin to Jason, leader of the Argonauts, and to Glaucos, helmsman of the ship Argo.[97] By referring to the myth of the Argonauts on their temple, the Magnesians could connect to a very prominent Panhellenic narration, which should have greatly underlined the Magnesians' claim for status in the Greek koine. As we will see later, the same strategy was used for the city's founding myth that was adjusted to fit the famed Panhellenic narration of the Trojan War.

In contrast, the altar frieze did not show a narrative scene.[98] It depicts an assembly of gods standing calmly around the altar as it is demanded of pious devotees during sacrifice.[99] We may consider whether the deities depicted the Magnesian *phylai* that were named after the gods or they represented the canonical Greek pantheon. Either way, the altar frieze had the potential to connect local *polis* traditions to a greater Panhellenic background.

90 Gehrke 2000, 6 fn. 34.

91 Wiemer 2009b, 89–90.

92 Generally on this topic see Klügmann 1870, 524–556.

93 Athenaeus 533e (Gulick 1959–1963).

94 Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 3.45 (Butterworth 1919).

95 Pindar, *Nemean* 3.36–40 (Sandys 1937); Diodorus Siculus 4.16 (Oldfather 1946–1963).

96 Schefold 1949, 83.

97 Athenaeus 7.296d (Gulick 1959–1963).

98 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 175. – A narrative scene is suggested by Linfert 1976, 170–171, and Flashar 1999, 417.

99 Burkert 1985, 56.

4.2 Mythology and history – the agora

Since the symbolic landscape of the *temenos* was mainly focused on mythological prehistory of the cult of Artemis, topics on the *agora* were linked to the 'political' past of the city. Most obviously this applies to the dossier of festive inscriptions in the *agora's* western *stoa*. Prominently, just second in its hierarchical order, the dossier presented a copy of the Magnesian founding myth. According to F. Graf, this myth replaced an older version from the classical period.[100] Thanks to Athenaeus we know that the abovementioned Possis wrote his history of his hometown simultaneously with the foundation of the Leukophryena and might have influenced this text.[101] The inscription tells how the Magnesians settled on Crete at the command of a Delphic oracle. Eighty years later, due to a miraculous appearance of a white raven, the Magnesians again sent to Delphi. There, Apollo ordered them to settle over to Asia Minor under the leadership of the Lycian Leukippos.[102] The preliminary events of this myth were reconstructed by F. Prinz: The Magnesians settling on Crete were descendants of the Magnesians in Thessaly who participated in the Trojan War. On their journey home they were shipwrecked and came to Crete. This short sketch is instructive in comparison to the classical version of the myth for it shows that the Magnesians were anxious to set their past in relation to the Trojan War.[103] The Homeric narrative – telling the story of the Sack of Troy as a joint fight of all Greeks against an eastern non-Greek enemy – can truly be said to be the founding myth of a Panhellenic identity. The eager claim to have participated in the war led the Magnesians to show among the other inscriptions of the dossier the copy of an obviously fictious Cretan deed from the mythological times, which listed supplies the Cretan cities were to have provided to the Magnesian settlers for Asia Minor.[104]

A prominent role in the myth was played by the *heros* Leukippos, the founder of the *polis*. His genealogy shows him to be kin to some of the most prominent heroes of Greece as well as of Asia Minor through his ancestor Bellerophon. Mythological relations were major subjects of the *theoroi* when seeking acknowledgement for the Leukophryena. They could refer not only to the Magnesian participation in the Trojan War but also to more intimate mythological contacts between certain *poleis* as it is shown in the *psephisma* from the *polis* of Same on the island of Cephalonia that relates to the kinship between their eponymous heroes, Magnes and Cephalos.[105]

The neat ties between the mythological and historical past are most vivid in the case of the faked Cretan *psephisma*, which rooted in the mythological period but pointed

100 Prinz 1979, 112–121.

101 Athenaeus 12,533d (Gulick 1959–1963).

102 Kern 1900, no. 17; compare Kern 1894; Prinz 1979, 121–137.

103 Prinz 1979, 137; Gehrke 2000, 5.

104 Kern 1900, no. 20; Chaniotis 1999, 61–64.

105 Kern 1900, no. 35 l. 14 = Rigsby 1996, no. 85; compare Scheer 1993, 67–70.

out towards the subsequent historical decrees of the dossier. These letters and *psephismata* were not mere declarations of consent to partake in the Leukophryena but also literal accounts of mythological and historical deeds and benefactions the Magnesians had performed to the Greek community. They recalled the efforts of the Magnesians in the defence of Delphi against the Celts in 278 BC as well as the arbitration of Magnesian delegates in settling a military conflict on Crete.[106] The donation of money for the city wall of Megalopolis and the sending of settlers at the request of the Seleucid king Antiochos I to help founding the city Antiocheia-in-Persis were also mentioned.[107] H.-J. Gehrke characterized the dossier as a carefully arranged panoply of mythological and historical relations which achieved credibility and authenticity by their affirmation through foreign cities and monarchs as well as by their formal official character.[108] The hierarchy within the dossier, beginning with the founding myth, followed by the Cretan *psephisma*, and, finally, going over into the recent letters and decrees, formed a kind of timeline through the history of the Magnesian state that also depicted the relations between the Magnesians and the Panhellenic world.

The abovementioned inscriptions in the *agora's* south western entrance honouring Magnesian arbitrators in Cnidus, Antiocheia, Labena, Samos, and Teos took up this topic.[109] For these inscriptions we can certainly speak of a thorough assembly of monuments communicating a similar message.

Another element in the staging of the past on the *agora* surely was the *sema* of Themistocles (Fig. 4). The honouring of public figures is a common phenomenon in Hellenistic Greece. According to the coin images, the monument of Themistocles comprised a statue and an altar similar to the *sema* of the athlete Theogenes in Thasos.[110] The Athenian Themistocles, victorious admiral of the naval battle at Salamis in 480 BC, was ostracized from his home city in 471 BC. He fled to Persia, where he received the rule over Magnesia-on-the-Meander from the Persian king. In Magnesia he died in 465 BC.[111] Because of his military achievement during the Persian Wars, Themistocles became posthumously a famed figure of Panhellenic history. Although the Athenians brought his mortal remains back to Athens, the citizens of Magnesia honoured Themistocles with a *heroon* on the *agora*. In the festive context of the Leukophryena the prominent location of the *sema* on the *agora* made it certainly an important structure presenting another significant connection between the Magnesian past and the Panhellenic history.

106 For the Magnesian aid to Delphi see Gehrke 2000, 6. – For the arbitration see Kern 1900, no. 46 l. 9–15 = Rigsby 1996, no. 96.

107 City wall: Kern 1900, no. 38 l. 28–29 = Rigsby 1996, no. 88. – Settlers: Kern 1900, no. 61 l. 19–21 = Rigsby 1996, no. 111.

108 Gehrke 2000, 1–9. Compare Hartmann 2010, 468–479.

109 See above section 3.1.

110 Chamoux 1979, 144–153.

111 Literary sources about Themistocles in Magnesia are provided by Diodoros Siculus 11.57.7 (Oldfather 1946–1963); Plutarch, *Themistocles* 29–30 (Perrin 1914); Athenaeus 12.533d (Gulick 1959–1963); Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.2.19 (Straßburger 2005).

4.3 The polis's past and its civic present – the pompe

As we have noted above, the new Panhellenic festivals aimed at the re-creation of a civic awareness as well as Panhellenic bonds between the city-states. Therefore, the cultic, mythological, and historical past formed the core element in constituting a sense of community. In fact, the monumental and symbolic structure of Magnesian festive topography mainly focused on these topics. The last question to deal with is how the celebrating citizens hooked into this thematic map. In this regard the structure and route of the procession gain in importance.[112]

4.3.1 The structure and formation of the pompe

Unfortunately, only few sources give direct information on the personnel structure of the Leukophryena procession. However, some conclusions can be deduced from inscriptions about other Magnesian festivals that seem to have followed a commonly known structure of Greek *pompai* (Fig. 7). For the festival of Zeus Sosipolis and the festival of Eisiteria, celebrated on the occasion of the transfer of the cult image of Artemis into its new Hermogeneic temple, we know that the *pompe* was hierarchically formed up.[113] The high ranking religious and state officials, the priestess of Artemis and the *stephanephoros*, the eponymous magistrate of Magnesia, stood at the head of the procession.[114] Subaltern cult officials and servants who drove the sacrificial animal and carried the cult objects of the goddess followed them, possibly together with the *neokoros*, the warden of the temple of Artemis, and the *thytes*, the slaughterer of the sacrificial animals. Referring to the tethering points in front of the altar, at least 22 victims may be assumed, possibly bulls or cows.[115] Perhaps the *xoana* of the twelve Olympian gods carried in the procession of Zeus were also shown at the Leukophryena.[116] Just beyond would have marched choirs, musicians, and artists, performing sacred chants and ritual performances. A choir of young maidens is mentioned for the Eisiteria, musicians playing the *syrinx*, *kithara*, and *aulos* for the Zeus festival.[117] Also, *aulos* players had, togehter with acrobats, their own dining room in sanctuary of Artemis in the imperial period.[118]

After them marched representatives of the Magnesian citizenship arranged by age and social rank starting with the members of the *gerusia*, the city's council of elders. State officials and priests of the other Magnesian deities followed representing the adult citizens and the *polis's* political administration. Further age divisions – the *paides*, the

112 On this topic in general see the article of J. Kubatzki in this volume.

113 Kern 1900, no. 98, 101a, 101b. Compare Sumi 2004, 86.

114 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 32–34, 100a l. 31–34.

115 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 49–50.

116 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 41–42.

117 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 45. For these instruments in Greek processions see the article of J. Kubatzki in this volume.

118 Kern 1900, no. 237.

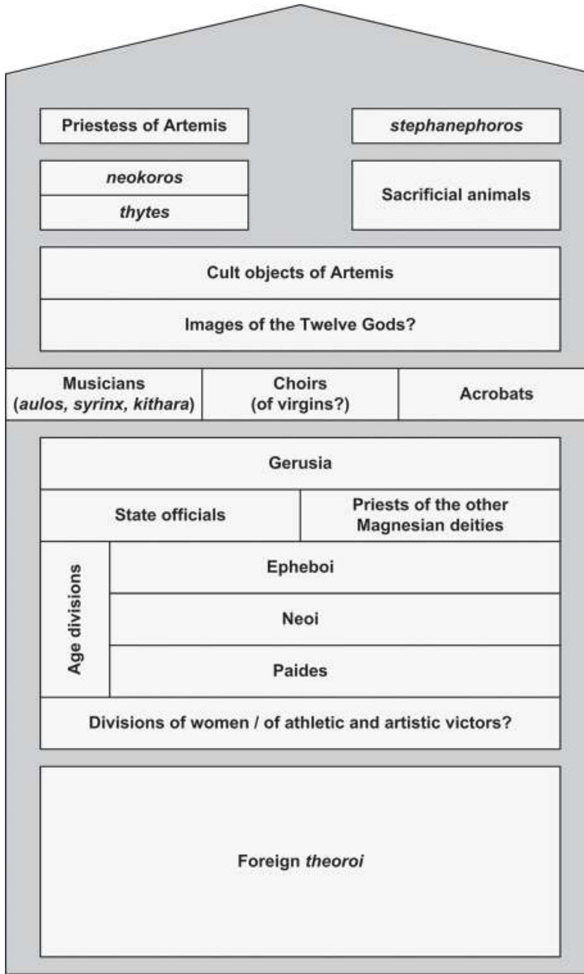

Fig. 7 Ideal procession of the Leukophryena.

neoi, and the *epheboi*[119] – joined the *pompe*.[120] For the Eisiteria a group of women is also mentioned.[121] This social and functional organization of the *pompe* staged an exemplary civic order, in which every age division, every gender, and every institution served its role for the functioning and well being of the city.[122] State delegates from the various

119 The *neoi* ("new ones") commonly include those male youths aged 18 to 30 who had not reached the full citizenship. The *epheboi* consist of those who had reached puberty. The *paides* (boys) had not yet reached puberty; compare Wiemer 2011, 487–539.

120 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 35–40, 100a l. 39–42.

121 Kern 1900, no. 100a l. 26–27; see also Dunand 1978.

122 For the festival of Zeus Sosipolis, this topic has recently been discussed by Wiemer 2009a, 116–127. For the Eisiteria see Dunand 1978. Compare also Chankowski 2005, 187–188.

cities and communities taking part in the Leukophryena joined the Magnesians on parade. If we assume two to three *theoroi* for each delegation, as mentioned in the dossier inscriptions, we could think of ca. 130–200 foreign participants in the procession. By including the foreign delegates, the Magnesians again showed their share in a Panhellenic community.

4.3.2 The processional route

Finally, the various references to a civic identity embedded in the Magnesian topography had to be communicated in the festival. For this purpose, the route of the procession through the topography and its interaction with it were key. The main task of the *pompe* was, as mentioned above, to accompany the sacrificial animals on their way to the altar. In fact, the altar can be defined as the destination for the procession. For its starting point we might consider the *bouleuterion*, the 'town hall', situated just southeast of the *agora*.[123] Therefore, the route between these two spots – *bouleuterion* and altar – must have led through the residential areas of Magnesia before hitting the plaza of the *agora*. This hints towards a centripetal route towards the sanctuary of Artemis, which symbolized a movement towards the sacred core of the civic community. Such routes were common for Greek *pompai* and presented the hierarchy between the different urban areas.[124] This was similarly conducted in the Eisiteria festival in which the residents were requested to set up small altars for Artemis in front of their houses to express individual piety towards the city's main goddess.[125]

The point at which the procession at last reached the plazas would surely be the south western entrance singled out by its architectural, monumental, and functional features. The channelling of the processional route, flanked by the springhouse in the north and the southern *stoa*, could have evoked a changed sense of space: Against the more 'open' residential areas the narrow entrance stressed the beginning of a new section of the route.[126] Perhaps this transgression was marked with some kind of ritual cleansing at the springhouse, which caused the procession to stop.[127] When coming to halt, the participants would have had the opportunity to take in the set of inscriptions that depicted the Magnesians' diplomatic efforts and achievements for the benefit of the Greek *koine*. Especially for the foreign pilgrims such a compilation of the Magnesian reputation could have made an impressive impact. Furthermore, these state documents

123 Kern 1900, no. 100a l. 41; Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, pl. 2.

124 Graf 1996, 57–59. – A route starting from the sanctuary of Artemis is proposed by Sumi 2004, 86–87, which seems problematic in regard of the inscriptions.

125 Kern 1900, no. 100b l. 36–39.

126 Hesberg 1994, 115–116.

127 On ritual cleansing in Greek rituals see Parker 1983, 19–25.

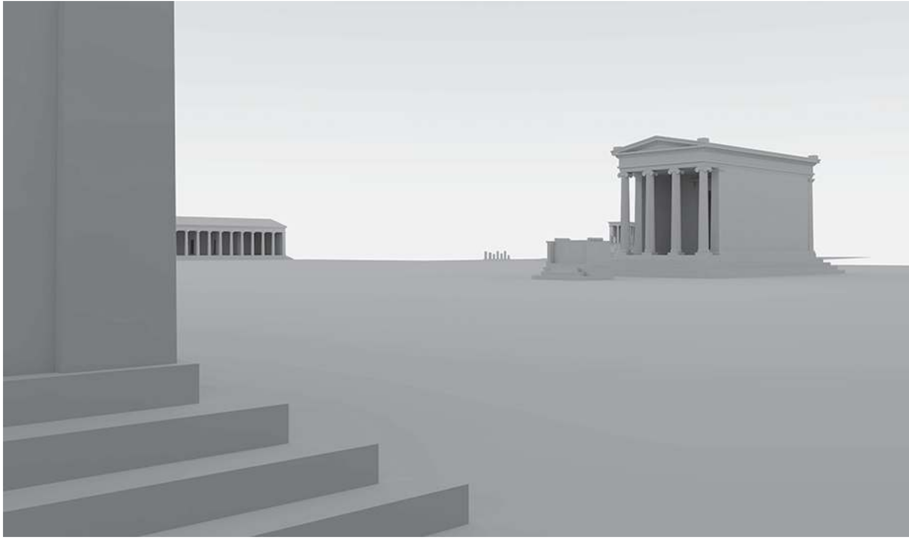

Fig. 8 3D reconstruction of the temple of Zeus situated in the line of sight towards the temenos.

created link to the forthcoming encounter with the city's main civic space, the *agora*, which was situated behind the narrow entrance corridor.

Seemingly, the passing of the entrance was part of a visual strategy. After the narrow passage, the view was widened. Because of the spatial relation between the entrance and the temple of Zeus the entrants' line of sight towards the Artemision was nearly completely blocked (Fig. 8). As a result perception would have focused on the façade of the shrine of Zeus or would have been directed into the vastness of the plaza guided by the rapports of white marble and shadowy *intercolumnia* of its lavish colonnades. This directing of the view was surely intended to lead to a perception of the official market as an independent space that was set off from the urban surroundings by its architectural and symbolic features.[128] The increasing number of enclosed plazas in the Hellenistic period is often stressed by scholars under the aspect of creating a hierarchy between certain urban spaces by isolating them each other. For the *agorai* Ruth Bielfeldt speaks of this enclosure as an emphasizing of civic order that was expressed by the rhythm and the symmetry of the colonnades and surely comprised also an aesthetic perception.[129] For the Magnesian *agora* this impression was even enlarged by its imposing dimensions.

128 This visual staging massively stressed the intrinsic value of the two plazas and aimed at a hierarchy between the 'profane' space of the *agora* and the 'sacred' one of the *temenos;* see Doxiadis 1937, 47–53; Schmaltz 1995, 134–140.

129 Hesberg 1994, 155–156; Bielfeldt 2010, 133–134.

After passing the entrance we can assume a movement along the southern *stoa* following the main road that crossed the plaza in this direction.[130] On this road the procession would have had the opportunity to unfold before the eyes of the spectators that were surely assembled in the porticoes.[131] As G. Kuhn has shown, in the Hellenistic period porticoes were often erected along processional routes to gather the festival's visitors and direct their view on the passing parade.[132] In addition, the *stoai* provided shelter against sun and rain. A hint for a route along the *stoai* is also given by the small *exedra* in front of the western portico. In general, *exedrai* were seating benches for members from the upper social classes of a *polis*. Like the *stoai*, *exedrai* were usually directed towards routings and other spots of interests.[133] Together with the facing *stoa* a pathway between these architectures seems obvious.

The route along the southern stoa would also have led the procession along two places, the *prytaneion* and the small sanctuary in the centre of the portico, that might have been connected to some kind of ritual, which can, however, not be singled out. At the end of the southern portico the *pompe* might have turned northwards to the northern *stoa*.

On this way the procession might have passed the *sema* of Themistocles that played an important role in creating links between the Magnesian and Panhellenic past. But with its location unknown, we cannot say at what point and how that worked. The coins show an altar and a sacrificed bull related to the monument indicating a bloody offering (Fig. 4).

After reaching the northern *stoa* the *pompe* might have followed it over to the western portico. There, the *exedra* formed an index towards the shrine of Athena opposite to the bench that was otherwise hidden in the dark portico. The small sanctuary occupied a conspicuous place in the festive topography as it marked the northern starting point of the great dossier (Fig. 2). Although it remains unknown how Athena was related to Artemis in cult, the procession surely made station at the shrine for a small reference towards the goddess. The cult table hints towards food or incense offerings.[134] Perhaps the offering might have been related to the dossier, which, for sure, was the one of the most prominent monuments on the *agora* within the Leukophryena festival.

The dossier, as we have seen, was not only a collection of deeds that grant the Leukophryena's recognition within the Greek *koine* – a significant fact in itself – but also an extensive report on the mythological and historical past of the *polis* Magnesia. For this

130 A different, clockwise route around the agora is discussed by K. Hammerschmied (Hammerschmied 2016, 238–241; Hammerschmied 2017, 94–96), which is possible but perhaps less convincing.

131 On the role of visitors at the festivities see Köhler 1996, 150–153; Wiemer 2009a, 125–126.

132 Kuhn 1985, 187–308; see also Coulton 1979, 8–18; Hesberg 1994, 120–121.

133 Hesberg 1994, 122; Thüngen 1994, 36–39. As an example of the function of *exedrai,* see the situation at the West Gate Road in Priene: Bielfeldt 2012, 102–107.

134 Humann, Kohte, and Watzinger 1904, 115.

reason already the topographical position of the dossier was meaningful. In the southern part of the western portico it occupied "an important conceptual and rhetorical space" directly opposite the *temenos* of Artemis where it worked "as a counterpart and aetiological guide to the monumental altar and Ionic temple."[135] Of course, due to vast amount of uncountable, small lines of text, it cannot be assumed that these inscriptions were read during the Leukophryena festival. However, the dossier, exhibited next to the *agoras's* main entrance, at one of the plaza's most frequented spots, was surely meant to be noticed by the visitors. Certainly, it was perceived as a physical monument that gained its value and expressiveness from its bare physical existence, its marble material, and its public display. Moreover, their content might have been, at least superficially, recognizable, as comparable deeds existed in every Greek *polis*.[136] When the procession passed along the western *stoa*, as we may assume, the extent and monumentality of the dossier would become visible to the *pompe's* participants. A key spot can be identified at the southern wall of the *stoa* where the four windows shed light on the documents (Fig. 3). We might also consider that on the leg from the shrine of Athena to the southern end of the dossier some kind of vocal recitation – perhaps a hymn sung by the choir[137] – referred to the inscriptions or, at least, their most important passages such as the foundation of the festival and of the *polis*.

After passing the dossier the *pompe* certainly turned towards the temple of Zeus. The procession might have approached the building frontally where the altar of Zeus was situated, but also to come into view of the god present in his image. According to his name, Zeus Sosipolis was the "Saviour of the city" with the *agora* as his domain.[138] Because of his patronage over the city and especially the market, which the *pompe* had just traversed, a ritual reference to Zeus seems more than likely. Additionally, several sacred relations between Zeus and Artemis can be traced that justified that assumption. For the cult festival of Zeus, he and Artemis were – together with Apollo – cult associates with goddess receiving a sacrifice at her own altar in the *temenos*.[139] Furthermore, coin images showing the cult image of Zeus holding the *xoanon* of Artemis seem to confirm this companionship.[140] Lastly, a sacrifice to Zeus would fit the general design of the processional route: The temple of Zeus as the final station of the *pompe* on the *agora* would have reflected the procession's overall centripetal route in a smaller scale by marching around the market place heading towards its sacred centre.

Accordingly, the next movement of the procession should have been directed towards the *temenos*. The route from the temple of Zeus towards the sanctuary must, at

135 Quoted after Platt 2011, 153.

136 Witschel 2014, 116–124. Although C. Witschel refers to situations in cities of the western Roman empire, his thoughts can surely be applied to the Greek east.

137 On hymns, music, and other vocal rituals in the processions see J. Kubatzkis article in this volume.

138 Kreutz 2007, 242–246.

139 Kern 1900, no. 98 l. 50–53.

140 Schultz 1975, cat. 145 pl. 11; cat. 170 pl. 14.

last, have confronted the participants of the *pompe* with the divergent orientation of the *temenos* against its surroundings. This surely exposed the abovementioned fact of the sanctuary's greater antiquity and underlined the hierarchy between the 'profane' *agora* and the 'sacred' *temenos*.

For the Hellenistic period the point of transgression into the sanctuary is unclear. However, we can conclude that the *pompe* entered the *temenos* along its central axis as it is indicated by the position of first century AD gateway and a second century AD assembly place. The passing of the gateway opened, according to B. Schmalz, a *point de vue* perspective on the sacred architectures directed by "symmetries, building lines, and staggered arrangement" (Fig. 6).[141] Such visual strategies appeared already in the Hellenistic architecture and can be spotted in various sanctuaries and can also be proposed for Magnesia.[142]

In this *point de vue* perspective the main cult architectures – the sacred spring, the altar, and the new Artemision – would have merged in one perspective layer. However, this effect would not have come up at once, but was staged in the course of the proceeding rituals. In fact, one must imagine the sacrificial fire on the altar already burning and the ascending smoke hazing the view of the incoming *pompe* on the temple. Accordingly, the sacred spring and the altar were the predominant visual features at this point. Especially the altar with its flight of stairs leading up to the platform would have drawn the attention and directed the movement towards it.[143] Even more, the large frieze depicting the Magnesia *phylengötter* seemed to have welcomed the arriving procession and marked the sacred atmosphere of the place.

Against this background, the sacred spring was the first station of the procession in the sanctuary. At this point the *semata* of spring and rock should have explained the mythological roots of the sanctuary and the cult to the participants of the *pompe* to embrace and understand the high authority of Artemis and the significance of her festival.

How the procession interacted with this monument remains speculative, although the spring situation might indicate an act of purification for the upcoming sacrifice for Artemis. The spring's position directly in the way towards the altar made it necessary for the procession to move around it. By doing so, the participants would have gained a good view on the structure.

The following route should have been directed to the temple of Artemis, which was the pride of the Magnesian citizens. Not only did its pseudodipteral form express

141 Schmaltz 1995, 134, 135–150. – On the assembly place see Bingöl 1998, 41–43 figs. 54–55; Ehrhardt 2009, 104. – On the spatial design of the Magnesian *temenos* see Doxiadis 1937, 48–51, Hesberg 1994, 143–144, and Ehrhardt 2009, 103–104. – In general on urban spatial planning Hellenistic times see section 2.

142 Lauter 1986, 99–113, 180–201; Gruben 2001, 440–485.

143 Becker 2003, 298–302; Hollinshead 2012, 28–32, 55–56.

a new kind of architectural aesthetic, the temple was also the symbolic centerpiece of the *temenos* staging the cult traditions of Artemis Leukophryene framed within the pediment doors and the amazonomachy frieze.[144] To embrace its aesthetic and symbolic content a circumambulation of the temple seems to have been the best way. Especially the frieze would have been recognizable in some detail. P. Hommel showed that the frieze of the Artemision was squared for a view from an angle diagonally below, so a passing of the *pompe* along the temple's edges is likely.[145] On this route also the small *naiskos* on the backside of the Artemision became apparent.

After this possible rounding of the temple, the sacrifice would have been conducted in front of the altar where the animals were staked. For this ritual the members of the *pompe* together with the other audience might probably have gathered in a semicircle around the altar's front. After the sacrifice and the burning of the goddess's portion, directed by the priestess of Artemis, we can expect that the smoke from the sacrificial flame on the altar slowly dispersed and revealed the temple beyond. As indicated above, in this moment altar and temple would have merged into a coherent scenery, forming a narrative of hierarchically ordered themes constitutive of the cult of Artemis (Fig. 5). At the bottom, the gods of the altar frieze represented the religious basis of the Magnesian citizenry and its political constitution of *phylai*. Above, in the temple's entablature, the *amazonomachia* connected local mythology with regional and Panhellenic traditions. At the topmost point, the pediment doors framed an apparition of the goddess herself. If we accept C. Humann's suggestion, an image of the Artemis was presented to her devotees indicating that the goddess had accepted their offerings (Fig. 5). Furthermore, this apparition might have re-staged the epiphany from which her festival originated. By all means, the elevated spot of this staging made perfectly clear the predominant role of Artemis as the divine patron of all Magnesia.

5 Conclusion

As we have seen, the heortological phenomenon of the increasing numbers of Panhellenic festivals in the Hellenistic period was related to the political and social shifts that affected the Greek *poleis* and fostered a strengthened civic and Panhellenic self-awareness. In this context, the new festivals provided a platform for a city-state to communicate its identity to a large Panhellenic audience. For this purpose, the performance of a lavish and elaborate procession was a vehicle to present and mediate civic unity, images of the *polis's* past, and affiliation with the Greek *koine*. Exemplified by the Panhellenic festival of

144 Haselberger and Holzman 2015, 371–391, especially 384–385.

145 Hommel 1957, 54.

Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia-on-the-Meander, it has been shown that the spatial staging of the procession was crucial in communicating these identity-forming contents. Simultaneously with the establishment of the Magnesian festival, extensive building measures were conducted in order to provide a festive topography. The arrangement of architecture and monuments not only formed an infrastructural and visual guideline along which the procession moved through this topography towards the altar of Artemis; moreover, this route focused on various structures, images, and inscriptions that created references to the civic and Panhellenic identity of the Magnesian citizens. Here, the focus was set on the mythological and historical horizon of the Magnesians and their relation to the Panhellenic past by recalling the Magnesians' share in the myths of the Trojan War, the journey of the Argonauts, and the myths of the Amazons in Asia Minor. These links were subsequently drawn into the recent present in order to stress the city's current pertinence to the all-Greek audience. A special emphasis was laid on the city's chief goddess, her venerability and her time-honoured cult, which formed the religious focal point in the civic life world of Magnesia. Indeed, the trajectory of the procession ended at the altar of Artemis so that we can speak of a spatial hierarchy towards the sacred. As far as we can reconstruct the personnel line-up, we witness the Magnesians' intention, on the one hand, to present themselves in the *pompe* as a well-ordered and harmonious civic body and, on the other hand, to integrate participants from all the *poleis* invited to their festival in order to underline the Magnesians' Panhellenic affiliation.

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1–3 Kristoph Hammerschmied. **4** Rhousopoulos 1896, 22. **5** Photograph by Kristoph Hammerschmied. **6–8** Kristoph Hammerschmied.

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Processions and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece: Some Iconographical Considerations

Summary

This paper draws attention to the development of processions and pilgrimages in ancient Greece which originated from so-called delegations *(pompé)* which originally had no religious meanings. However, since the 6th century the term *pompé* meant a 'sacrificial procession' which included animals and gifts presented to the Gods. Besides the official processions which were organized by the cultural and/ or political elite, private processions existed as well. Many of the official state processions were regular events in which incense, beautiful garments and musical instruments played an important role. The paper analyses their different representations on vase paintings but also on ceramics. It stresses the many different functions of these events which transcended the religious sphere due the important social and political roles they had for the Greek polis and the Panhellenic communities.

Keywords: Processions; sacrifices; music; vase paintings; pictorial representations

Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der Entstehung von Prozessionen und Pilgerfahrten im antiken Griechenland, welche ihren Ursprung in sogenannten Delegationen *(pompé)* zunächst ohne religiöse Bedeutung hatten. Ab dem sechsten Jahrhundert wird der Begriff *pompé* für ‚Opferprozession' genutzt, also für Veranstaltungen, bei denen Göttern Geschenke dargeboten wurden. Neben den offiziellen, von der kulturellen und/oder politischen Elite organisierten Prozessionen existierten auch private. Viele der staatlichen Prozessionen waren regelmäßige Veranstaltungen, bei denen Weihrauch, prunkvolle Kleider und Musikinstrumente eine wichtige Rolle spielten. Im Beitrag wird deren unterschiedliche Darstellung in der Vasenmalerei und auf Töpferware analysiert. Dabei wird hingewiesen auf verschiedene Funktionen der Prozessionen, die aufgrund ihrer wichtigen gesellschaftlichen und politischen Rolle innerhalb der Polis und panhellenistischen Gemeinden über die religiöse Sphäre hinausgingen.

Keywords: Prozessionen; Opfer; Musik; Vasenmalerei; bildliche Darstellung

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1 Introduction: procession, pilgrimages, delegations

Linked by streets that were hardly fit for traffic, reliant on slow means of transportation such as horses, wagons, and ships and with only a few scribes, the ancient cultures of Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Greece were nevertheless able to create a cultural unity in language, myth, and education. Greek mobility was predominantly based on the travels of merchants, traders, philosophers, and cultural observers fond of traveling, such as Pausanias. Besides these commercial and individual travels there was a large group of religiously inspired journeys such as processions and pilgrimages, which are the focus of this article. These religious voyages were common and occurred with great frequency in Greek life. As Philip Harland points out, they "account for much of our evidence for mobility and religion."[1] Although the two kinds of travel share many similarities, they differ in their motivation, organization, and function, which I will describe in the following.

Processions are parades of groups who move towards a sanctuary or altar in order to perform a ritual act.[2] In ancient Greece this kind of solemn walk was named *pomp*[3] from the sixth century BCE onwards. Processions were festivities, marked by dance, music, and incense. The participants, clad in their best clothes and adorned with jewellery, marched in a given order with the aim of offering gifts and sacrifices to the gods in the *temenos* (sacred area).

In contrast pilgrimages do not exhibit a festive atmosphere and may be less clearly defined than processions: they are predominantly religious travels to places of worship. They belong to the "extraterritorial religious activities", in the words of Rutherford.[4] In Greek antiquity this kind of travel was not necessarily done in groups or in a specific order, as was usual for processions. Pilgrims travelled to places such as Olympia, Delos, Epidauros, Athens, Delphi, and Miletos in order to attend the celebrations as spectators, to consult an oracle, be healed of a disease in a specific sanctuary, or to do politics or business in the cult area.[5] The difference between a traveller and a pilgrim was marked by a wreath worn in the hair *(stephanos)*, which was meant to protect the pilgrim against enemy attacks.[6] Perhaps it is because of this great variety that the Greeks did not invent a special term for pilgrimage.[7]

There is a long and rich research tradition regarding Greek processions which goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century. However, pilgrimages in Greek antiquity came into the orbit of researchers much later and accordingly the literature dealing with

1 Harland 2011, 5.
2 For definitions of Greek processions see Nilsson 1951, 310; Eitrem 1917, 56; Bömer 1952, 1886–1887; True et al. 2004, 1–2; Tsochos 2002, 21.
3 The etymology of *pompé* is discussed in Tsochos 2002, 21–31.
4 Rutherford 2013, 2.
5 See Rutherford 2013, 2.
6 About the sacred truces of the pilgrims see Dillon 1997, 1–5, and below, section 5.
7 Dillon 1997, xv.

it is scarce.[8] Moreover there is no special term for pilgrimage, such as *theoria*, before the sixth century BCE.[9]

The two types of travel were seldom compared until recently, although the kind of journey and the aim of reaching the temenos indicate structural similarities.[10] Because of this there are no clear-cut demarcations between the two terms in classical studies. It is the aim of this article to stress the structural differences between the two in order to show that processions and pilgrimages differed in their political, social, and ritual functions.

The two religious movement-types were the fabric which held Greek culture together. They linked the cities with their hinterland, but also the cities with one another over smaller or greater distances, sometimes even across the sea. The performance of cults included the movement of people, objects, and gods.[11] My hypothesis is that pilgrimages were much more responsible for the political cohesion between the many Greek cities *(poleis)*, whereas processions served much more to strengthen the ties between humans and gods. They enabled many people to participate in the sacrifices as worshippers or spectators, though only a small group of special cult servants were selected to attend the celebrations.

2 Archaeological sources

The reconstruction of processions and pilgrimages is possible with the help of different sources, such as images on ceramics, reliefs, coinage, testimonies such as texts, inscriptions, and architectural remains of procession streets as well as the locations for assembling. Images from vase paintings and ancient texts are the richest sources and the basis of my research.[12] The sources that are available to us are not easy to interpret since they can have different meanings which are difficult to decipher.

Since processions are rituals and not artefacts, it is quite difficult to assign archaeological data to them. We can try to connect processions with architecture, such as *horoi* (boundary stones), *temene* (areas of the temple, including the altar), and *agorai* (marketplaces) in order to figure out the processional routes. Indeed, from the Hellenistic period (third century BCE) onwards there are architectural manifestations, especially the so-called processional streets. Kristoph Hammerschmied in this volume presents

8 See below, section 1.

9 Rutherford 2013, 1–2.

10 In her detailed article Schlesier mentions religious journeys and discusses processions but does not make any reference to pilgrimages (Schlesier 2000, 129–158).

11 See Schlesier 2000, 130.

12 I refer to the results of my doctoral dissertation about the role of music in antique Greek processions: Kubatzki 2015.

the example of Magnesia-on-the-Meander and explains how the processional street can be read in the order in which it was experienced by the participants.[13]

Written sources give information about the order, outlook, and performances, including picturesque descriptions of festivals and the accompanying procession and sacrificial rituals.[14]

Visual reflections are provided by votive reliefs, marble reliefs (best known is the Parthenon frieze, with the longest image of a procession), seals, some less well known paintings, and of course vase depictions, which can be regarded as the richest source.[15]

Using these iconographical data, the archaeologist Charalampos Tsochos[16] has tried to trace back processions to Minoan times and to draw a line from then up to the Hellenistic age. He stresses the hypothesis that there was a basic consistency in the processional rituals through the ages.[17] Although this may be acceptable from an iconographical point of view, the fact that these pictures only convey a glimpse of the past limits their explanatory value. In fact, they tell us more about the perception of ancient craftsmen and artists than of 'real' daily life.[18] And since these data are few and scattered, they must be seen as mere hints of the processional route and the places that were passed.[19]

3 Greek Processions

3.1 Etymology

The Greek term *pompé*, which is translated here as 'procession,' has undergone several changes of meaning. When the term was first mentioned, in the *Iliad* of Homer,[20] it meant to *escort* or *conduct*, but also *to send away* in the sense of a *mission*.[21] It had no religious connotation at the time. As Fritz Graf suggests, a *pompé* was in this earlier sense a "protecting escort," especially from gods for humans.[22] This brings back to mind the many passages in Greek texts that describe the difficulties of traveling, especially

13 Hammerschmied, this volume.

14 For a brief list of ancient texts concerning processions see True et al. 2004, 2–20 and Bömer 1952, 1878–1993.

15 For a general overview and literature on the archaeological sources see the catalogs of True et al. 2004, 1–20; Bömer 1952, 1878–1993; Tsochos 2002; Brand 2000; Lehnstaedt 1970.

16 Tsochos 2002, 243–261.

17 "Over a time span of more than ten centuries one cannot expect otherwise than that rituals undergo changes and variations. However, their basic characteristics remain the same." – Originally: "Über eine Zeitdauer von mehr als zehn Jahrhunderten hinweg ist es nicht anders zu erwarten, dass Rituale Änderungen und Variationen erfahren. Die grundlegenden Merkmale bleiben jedoch die selben" (Tsochos 2002, 266; translation U. Luig).

18 For a discussion of the representation of Greek life on vessel images and other iconographical data, see: Hölscher 2012; Kubatzki 2015; Laxander 2000.

19 True et al. 2004, 2.

20 Hom. *Il.* 6.171.

21 See Pantelia 2011, key-word *pompé.*

22 Graf 1996, 56.

the danger of being ambushed and robbed. To address this precariousness the Greeks developed the institution of *philoxenia* or *xenia*, and a sacred state of inviolability was negotiated.[23] But additionally these "unsafe conditions require greater, often supernatural protection," as Graf points out.[24]

From the sixth century onwards the term *pompé* meant a "sacrificial procession," referring to the fact that "worshippers escorted gifts and sacrificial animals to the altar." This use of the term became increasingly widespread in Greek writings.[25] This change in meaning may reflect a change in the perception of the gods. In the Homeric epics the gods were considered the stronger entities which protected the weaker humans. They took responsibility for their favorites or accompanied humans to other worlds/places such as Hades or the battlefield. In that respect gods could be regarded as "security personnel" in *rites de passages* or when changing the *heterotopics*.[26] From the sixth century, with Pindar and Pherekydes of Syros, *pompé* was a clearly defined concept of a religious movement oriented towards a certain place. Now the worshippers took the lead in conducting the sacrificial offerings and the sacrificial animals to the gods.

3.2 General characteristics of processions

In general, processions can be described as ritual acts of political, ethnic, and cultic groups which support the cohesion of the community undertaking them, because they take place regularly and are structured in the same way as all rituals which stabilize the community. The archaeologist Tsochos declared processions to be "a ceremonial parade of a religious community in connection with a religious ritual" and summarizes in this way the central features of processions.[27] Other researchers specified that processions consisted of concerted steps towards a place where ritual acts are performed.[28] In contrast to other ritual acts such as sacrifices, processions have a territorial aspect; they appropriate spaces which link the members of processions with the space they have traversed. The territorial aspects are joined by social aspects.

For scholars of classical studies and sociologists, notes about the arrangement of the processions are important indices for the hierarchical structure of society.[29]

In Greek antiquity processions were arranged movements by worshippers with the aim of escorting offerings for a god to a sacred site. Starting from a central place inside

23 On that issue see Dillon 1997 and the article of Kristoph Hammerschmied in this volume.

24 Graf 1996, 56.

25 Tsochos 2002, 25–26.

26 Graf regards the procession as an institution for changing spaces. "Such a procession has its clear, structural place: in the *rite de passage* of the sacrifice, it belongs to the initial phase, which transports the participants into the sacred space or, seen from the sanctuary, from outside inside." Graf 1996, 57 and n. 16.

27 Tsochos 2002, 20.

28 True et al. 2004, 9.

29 Auffahrth 1999, 38; Bremmer 1996, 44–45; Chaniotis 1991, 128–129; Connor 2000, 73; Gengnagel 2008, 11; Graf 1996, 57–58; Laxander 2000, 1–2.

the city, the destination was the sanctuary, especially the altar where the sacrifice was carried out. Two types of procession existed: official processions organized by the cultural and/or political elite, and private processions conducted by families.[30] Many of the official state processions were regular events and were established dates in the festive calendar. The ritual complex of the sacrifice-festival basically consisted of four elements: the procession, the sacrifice, the meal, and the contest.[31] Processions formed a major part of the cult activities and took place frequently in most of the Greek poleis.[32]

The sacrifice of animals, food, garments, and other precious possessions must be regarded as the central point of the whole cult, while the procession was the essential ritual to bring the offerings to the altar.[33] The sacrificial ritual created the sacred space in which communication with the gods could take place.[34] Usually the altar lay inside the sanctuary *(temenos)*, sometimes also inside the temple itself. For that reason, the sacrifice could not be witnessed by all citizens, since the space around the altar was limited and entrance to the sanctuaries was commonly not allowed to all participants, but only to the dignitaries.[35] The rituals of the procession, which were compatible with the masses, and the feast after the sacrifice were necessary in order to bind everyone in the community to the worship of the gods.

My hypothesis is that the processions acquired higher importance with the growing number of inhabitants of the cities. One can notice a correlation between the increase in population and the growing number of processions from the late archaic period (seventh century BCE).[36] I suggest that the urgency of tying everyone individually to the gods in the cultic community (since religion was not based on faith, but on deeds)[37] led to mass rituals such as processions and festivals in which the whole cult-community could join and in whose rituals everyone could participate.[38]

Ancient texts reflect the fact that processions were the biggest spectacle of all cult ceremonies. They are described as well-performed movements with music, incense, animals, gifts, and wagons.[39] In state processions large choirs of maidens sang and danced.

30 Official processions were in Hellenistic times arranged by a benefactor (Kavoulaki 1999, 299; Voigt 2008, 146–160).
31 True et al. 2004, 2.
32 In Hellenistic times they occurred almost every day (Bömer 1952, 1895).
33 Bömer 1952, 1886.
34 Communication is understood in two directions: the worshippers addressed their requests to the gods, and the gods 'answered' by agreeing to receive the sacrifice or not. Without the agreement of the gods, the sacrifice could not take place. The gods usually communicated by natural phenomena such as wind, rain, thunder, or animals. An interesting discussion about the manner of religious communication can be found in Scheer 2001, Frevel and Hesberg 2007, and Koller 1963, 92, 150–164.
35 Bömer 1952, 1911.
36 Compare with the schemata and the analysis in my dissertation (Kubatzki 2015).
37 See the discourse on embedded religions.
38 In the case of sacrifice it meant that everyone got a piece of the sacrificed animals. The anthropologist Jean-Pierre Vernant described this phenomenon of sharing flesh in his *Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks* (Vernant 1989).
39 Presented in the catalog in my dissertation (Kubatzki 2015).

The procession followed a specific route and probably passed many citizens watching the spectacle.[40] The audience was thus an important part of the ritual. Athena Kavoulaki regards processions and theatre in the same category as "viewing occasions," where the focus is on the role of the viewer and "the audience is a constitutive factor of performance."[41]

The performance of the procession is a frame in which the participants should behave differently "in front of the eyes of a beholder;" it is "a frame which in a way sets performances apart from other everyday activities."[42] The texts and depictions also show that the participants were dressed in their finest garments.[43] Especially late antique texts describe the luxury of the garments, such as in Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*.[44] It was the moment of being "on stage" and an outstanding moment to represent the status, hierarchy, and luxury of the polis.

4 The rise of procession scenes in the ancient Greek world: an iconographic analysis

Processions are ancient rituals, as the early wall depictions in Mesopotamia and Egypt reflect and as is known from the first moments of illustrations and texts (third millennium BCE).[45] The younger Greek culture also presented processional scenes in its earliest repertoire of images. In contrast to the depictions of the late Geometric and Archaic periods (eighth–seventh century BCE), the earliest processional scenes were most frequently found on wall paintings and not on vase images.[46]

One of the first depictions, the Sarcophagus of Hagia Triada (Fig. 1), a cultural center of ancient Crete, dates to the middle of the second millennium BCE (late Minoan III A). Since its excavation in 1903, this Minoan sarcophagus has continued to hold the attention of scholars,[47] since it was made out of limestone (from the island of Poros) and not clay as was usual in Minoan Crete.[48] Its painting can be read as a complex narrative

40 Bömer 1952, 1906.

41 Kavoulaki 1999, 294.

42 Kavoulaki 1999, 294. – The philosopher Maria A. C. Otto describes the festival as a necessity for mastering everyday life in its monotony (Otto 2000, 9).

43 "The wearing of festive garments can be assumed as a matter of course." – Originally: "Tragen von Festgewändern darf als selbstverständlich angenommen werden" (Bömer 1952, 1911; translation U. Luig. – See also True et al. 2004, 2 and Graf 1996, 57).

44 Hld. *Aithiopika* III, 34.

45 "The historical genesis of the festival (procession of the gods) in Mesopotamia cannot be grasped by scholarship because at the moment of the first written record an anthropomorphic image of god existed and the cults had already established themselves." – Originally: "Die historische Genese des Festes (Götterprozession) ist in Mesopotamien für die Wissenschaft nicht greifbar, da mit dem Moment der ersten schriftlichen Überlieferung ein anthropomorph gedachtes Götterbild existiert und Kultetablierungen sich bereits vollzogen haben" (Pongratz-Leisten 1994, 3; translation U. Luig).

46 Intensively considered by Blakolmer 2007, 41.

47 For a recent bibliography see Burke 2005, 403 n. 1.

48 Long 1974, 16 n. 26.

Fig. 1 Side A. Sarcophagus of Hagia Triada. Archaeological Museum Iraklio, Greece.

Fig. 2 Side B. Sarcophagus of Hagia Triada. Archaeological Museum Iraklio, Greece.

referring to "life, death, sacrifice, homage, passage and regeneration," as Walgate points out.[49] The sarcophagus is covered in an elaborate polychrome fresco technique and depicts figures on four sides. These scenes show men and women standing or walking in a row carrying offerings. Both long sides show a sacrificial procession with festively dressed worshippers of both sexes. The narrow sides depict goats drawing wagons led by female figures.

Side A (Fig. 1 displays five figures stepping to right. A captive bull lies on a table under which two little goats are squatting. Next to the table a man is blowing a Phrygian *aulos*, wearing a mouth band *(phorbeia)*.[50] He is followed by four women in procession, identifiable by their garments and white-colored skin.[51]

Side B (Fig. 2) illustrates five male and two female figures in two different scenes. The women stepping to the left are accompanied by a lyre-playing man. The first woman conducts a libation.

On the right, the men of the second group are walking towards a smaller figure dressed in a long fur-like robe which hides his arms and legs. This male figure is receiving two goats and a boat in front of a temple or sarcophagus. It seems that the two long sides,

49 Walgate 2002, 1.

50 An *aulos* (pl. *auloi*) is a wind instrument consisting of two tubes. It is more a pipe than a flute and in sound is comparable to present-day oboes. The Phrygian *aulos* is an *aulos* with a specially adapted horn on one of the pipes. This was able to deepen the sound. *Auloi* were the most common wind instruments in Greek antiquity and in myth were connected with Dionysos, the Satyrs, Maenads, and other ecstatic figures of Greek myths.

51 There is discussion over the gender of these figures (Brand 2000, 24–25).

each with two different scenes, essentially belong together and may show either a cult performance or a funeral.[52]

The interpretation of these scenes depends on the interpretation of the figure in front of the building or sarcophagus. If it is regarded as a statue, the whole scene must be understood as a sacrificial procession with gifts, animals, and musicians. But when it is interpreted as a dead person or a mummy, the performance may rather be classified as a funeral procession.[53] A third interpretation is as the epiphany of a god, since the figure has no legs pr arms, and seems to grow out of the ground. This recalls vegetal gods such as Zeus Velchanos, as Erika Simon suggested.[54] Since the painted object itself is a sarcophagus, the funeral context cannot be neglected. But whatever the prominent figure may be – a dead person, statue, or god – the image represents a sacrificial procession with sacrificial animals, offerings, a libation, and music. For that matter it is striking that the blood sacrifice on Side A (Fig. 1) is accompanied by an *aulos*, while in the libation scene a *kithara* is shown.[55] Parallels to the Greek procession scenes a thousand years later can be observed.[56] With regard to the iconography, it can be concluded that particular details of the Greek sacrificial procession have a very long tradition, right back to the Minoan age.

4.1 Geometric Period: the absence of processional scenes

This Minoan procession scene with its clear association with an animal sacrifice was unique for a long time in Greek art. Some centuries passed before the next procession scenes appeared, in the Geometric period (900–700 BCE). In the Geometric painting style, processional acts appeared mainly in funeral contexts as *ekphorai* and *prothesis* processions. The depictions of these performances are quite similar to the later procession scenes, but sacrificial offerings and animals are absent, since this was probably not a typical habit at funerals.[57]

While these Early and Middle Geometric depictions prove that the principle of processional rites was familiar, it is noticeable that no cultic procession scenes outside a funeral context appeared before the Late Geometric style.

The first Geometric depictions that can be interpreted as cultic processions did not exist before the seventh century BCE. They are iconographical combinations of oriental models and Cypriot round dancing scenes, as the archaeologist Nota Kourou has

52 For a discussion of the topic depicted see Long 1974; Militello 1998, 154–155; Brand 2000, 19–29; Walgate 2002, 1–24.

53 Long 1974.

54 Simon 1978, 1417.

55 A *kithara* is a string instrument that was played with a plectrum. It was connected with Apollo, professional musicians, and elaborate music. A discussion of the function of music in the procession is offered below.

56 See also Kavoulaki 1999, 296.

57 Animal sacrifices indicated a ritual for a god or, from classical times, for a hero.

demonstrated.[58] Originating from female circle-dancing scenes, these scenes represent processions, sometimes conducted or accompanied by a male musician.[59] Kourou explains this invention of a new subject on vase images as an adoption of oriental procession scenes which were appropriated by Phoenician craftsmen. On Cyprus this was combined with the traditional dancing scenes.[60] Considering this development, we have to ask why a familiar motif such as the procession, which was well known in Minoan times, could be 'forgotten' in Greek art for centuries and then be reintroduced by Ancient Near Eastern art. The argument of Tsochos, that the cult was not completely established at this time in Greek culture, is questionable, since the lack of images of a cult practice is no evidence for the absence of this practice altogether.[61] We can only assume that for some reason it was more important to depict funeral scenes than sacrificial processions in early Greek art before the seventh century BCE.

4.2 Circular dance scenes as a precursor

Circular dances can be regarded as another precursor of processional scenes, since their iconographical arrangement is very similar. Dancing scenes, as the archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel has been able to show, are the earliest depictions found in Mesopotamia, the Ancient Near East, and Southern Europe of the Bronze Age.[62]

Depictions of circular dances and processions coexisted on a few Cretan vessels[63] of the late eighth century.[64] Aside from this Cretan exception the motif of figures participating in processions with offerings and sacrificial animals did not appear until the middle of the sixth century BCE. The Late Geometric procession scenes mentioned above appear more as dance processions than as sacrificial processions. It is noticeable that the sacrificial procession scenes enter the stage of Greek art at the time when the scenes of circular dances almost disappear.

There is one explanation that can be attributed to the style of painting: the Early Geometric style used human figures, like all other ornaments, as patterns that circled the round vessel.[65] The equality of all items is the reason why there is almost no difference between the dancing figures. Also, the arrangement of the figures in *Wechselansicht* – that is, with legs and heads shown from the side, but the body shown frontally – was useful for illustrations of figures holding hands. An example is the circular dance with musicians from the late eighth century BCE on the Hydria Berlin, SM31573, A1.[66]

58 Kourou 1985, 415–422.
59 Kourou 1985, 418.
60 Kourou 1985, 417.
61 Tsochos 2002, 170–171.
62 Garfinkel 2003, 3.
63 Kunze 1931, 212–213.
64 Tsochos 2002, 174–175.
65 Kleine 2005, 11.
66 See Haug 2012, 164 fig. 132.

The painting technique of *Wechselansicht* may explain why dance scenes were favored in the Geometric period. There are hundreds of vessels decorated with circular dance scenes and only a handful of procession scenes, which are highly debated.[67]

With the beginning of the Orientalizing episode (seventh century BCE) the painters started to show the figures consistently in profile, which marks a break with the Geometric style. The first scenes that could be regarded as processions show "loose" circular dances,[68] e.g. figures in a row not holding hands. Later, in the first third of the seventh century, circular dance scenes disappeared from vessels for quite a long time, but appeared again 100 years later. Kleine gave a convincing reason for this disappearance: she argued that with the beginning of the profile view it was almost impossible to show figures in a row holding hands.[69] However, the lack of processional scenes in *Wechselansicht* in paintings where many similar figurative formations of rows did exist (funeral processions, warriors in a row) is not explained by this argumentation.

The absence of processional scenes in ceramics and other objects before the seventh century must also be explained with regard to the content, not just the form. When the sacrificial procession scenes came into existence in the middle of the Archaic period, their presentation was quite detailed, as is shown on a Boeotian black-figure lekanis from about 550 BCE.[70]

It displays a relatively detailed sacrificial procession for the goddess Athena Promachos (the armed Athena), who is receiving the offerings. Starting from Athena the picture shows an altar with burning flames, a girl with a basket *(kanephore)*, and two sacrificial animals, while the bull is accompanied by an *auletes* (a male *aulos* player), some nude worshippers, and a wagon pulled by two mules. While the men before the wagon are striding towards the altar, the men beyond it seem to be dancing, since their feet are lifted slightly from the ground. Their focus in different directions could also be read as dancing positions. This depiction may show both a sacrificial procession and a ritual dance, because the first group of men are clearly stepping in the same direction, as was usual in processional scenes.

From the middle of the sixth century BCE processional scenes increased in Greek vase painting: Tsochos counts hundreds of them in Greek art, with their maximum frequency in black-figure painting of the Archaic period.[71] A similar event occurred when the sacrifice scenes appeared in Greek art at the end of the black-figure style. Their increase correlates with the disappearance of procession scenes.[72] A reason for this devel-

67 See for instance Tsochos 2002, 167–171, and Kourou 1985, 417–422.

68 Mannack 2012, 96. – Kourou 1985 also interprets these loose dances as processions, as was shown before.

69 Kleine 2005, 41. – On the other hand there are a few exceptions that show that it was possible to illustrate circular dancing in profile view. The best example is a dance row on the Francois krater, sixth century BCE.

70 Kubatzki 2015, 302 fig. 6.

71 Tsochos 2002, catalogue.

72 See Kubatzki 2015.

opment may be found in the painting technique, such as the growing figures which filled the ground of the image and the 'zooming in' to the altar. Simply put: because of the new painting technique of bigger, more detailed figures it was in the end the lack of space on the vessels that led to more scenes of sacrifice on an altar. But socio-political reasons may also be important. The archaeologist Heike Laxander bases her interpretation on a shift from collective scenes, such as dances, funerals, and processions, to more individual scenes, such as single figures, such as a god on the altar, or sacrifice scenes with few figures.[73]

The main difference between the two ritual performances is the way ritual space is treated. On the one hand, circular dance scenes are signified by participants holding hands and dancing around a meaningful object or place such as an altar. This performance fits well for small groups celebrating their identity by worshipping gods, maintaining their social values and rules, which are embodied through dancing, and by creating a safe frame in which communication could take place.[74] On the other hand, processions allow a greater number of worshippers to participate. They can be interpreted as a broken circle – since they have a starting point and a target.

Both rituals are about maintaining communal identity and the worship of the gods, but their body language and performance are different. Their mission is the same: to bring the community together and create a sacred space. However, since processions can assemble more worshippers, they are therefore more useful for larger communities such as states.

4.3 Organization, composition, and ritual performances of processions

Although we have some depictions on vessels showing processions from the seventh century up to the Hellenistic period, their composition cannot be taken as a one-to-one representation of reality. Like all paintings in ancient Greece the particular items must be read as a pictographic language. It was Heike Laxander who pointed out the *pars pro toto* principle,[75] by which each figure in the procession scene symbolizes the participation of one or more persons of a given group (*kanephoros*, musicians, servants, warriors, priests). Also, the order of the participants as shown in the pictures cannot simply be taken at face value, although it does at least inform us about the hierarchy of the positions. More details about the composition of the procession are therefore drawn from ancient texts and epigraphy.[76]

73 Laxander 2000, 16.

74 See above, Voigt 2008.

75 Laxander 2000, 16. – Kurt Lehnstaedt formulated this principle decades previously, though without naming it (Lehnstaedt 1970, 17).

76 First and foremost, the collection of Franz Bömer must be considered who collected more than 350 data about ancient Greek processions: Bömer 1952.

Processions were not spontaneous happenings in a community but were planned by a cultural or political elite; in Hellenistic times this could have been a benefactor or the most senior family member in the case of private processions.[77] The larger official processions most likely followed a special procession route beginning at a central place (most often the agora of the city) and passing the important streets and temples of several gods.[78] Special procession streets, the *hierai horoi*, are known from Eleusis, Delphi, Amyklai, Sykyrion, and Didyma.[79] The goal of processions was the altar, but we have only a little knowledge about the starting point: were the participants assembled in a special place such as the agora or did they start from their own houses, as Graf suggests?[80]

At Athens there was a special building for the assembly of the participants from Hellenistic times onwards: the *pompeion*. It was built at the beginning of the fourth century BCE between two of the boundary gates of Athens: the Sacred Gate and the Dipylon Gate.[81] Important Processions such as the Panathenaia or the procession of the Mysteries to Eleusis started from there.[82]

The *pompeion* consisted of a large open court with a surrounding portico and was built as part of the wall, next to Athens' cemetery, the *Kerameikos*. Since such specialized buildings were not known before Hellenistic times, I argue that this shows a development in the organization of processions. They became more institutionalized and presented a higher level of cultic performance. The architecture turned these transient performances into timeless events, even when the cultic rituals were conducted. They embodied a *permanent act*. The position of the *pompeion* on the boundary between the city and the *Kerameikos*, which lies outside the city walls, created links between the living and the dead as well as between the outside and the inside of the city. Kavoulaki calls this "a transitional point between the city and the wider periphery."[83]

Since the Parthenon on the Acropolis was the goal of the Panathenaia, it was necessary to traverse the whole city. The philologist Fritz Graf has called these inner city processions "centripetal" in opposition to the "centrifugal" ones that started from the center (the *agora*) and led to a sanctuary outside the city,[84] e.g. the Mysteria.[85] It is probable that alongside the procession several ritual performances occurred, such as sacrifices

77 Voigt 2008, 146–165; see also Kavoulaki 1999, 299.

78 Compare with True et al. 2004, 8. For a more detailed description of the route of the Athenian Panathenaia see Kavoulaki 1999, 300 and n. 36.

79 Bömer 1952, 1910; see also Hammerschmied, this volume.

80 "[…] and whether they had already formed a small procession from their home through the city streets. This would seem to have been likely, since they must have been conspicuous, wearing their Sunday best and crowns" (Graf 1996, 57).

81 For a digital reconstruction of the *pompeion* see http://travelingclassroom.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Pompeion_aerial.jpg (visited on 31/07/2017). – On the dating of the *pompeion* see Hoepfner 1976, 112.

82 Bömer 1952, 1907; True et al. 2004, 2.

83 Kavoulaki 1999, 300.

84 Graf 1996, 55.

85 See also Kavoulaki 1999, 300.

for deities, dances, and musical and mimetic performances.[86] The duration of processions could last from some hours to several days, depending on the length of the route.[87] Wagons, such as can be seen in the Boeotian lekanis,[88] refer to those longer trips.

4.4 Order and composition

The procession was usually led by the highest dignitary, but there were also private processions, such as marriages or funerals, which were led by single musicians or choirs of girls or boys.[89] Behind them the community followed in a special order that was controlled by official ushers.[90] The placing of the different social and political groups in the procession is an essential element for their characterization. A position in the first third of the procession, near to the sacrificial animals or the wooden cult image of a god *(xoanon)*, or a position next to the altar marks a high rank in the hierarchy of the polis.[91] These arrangements yield insights into the values that were authoritative at that particular time.[92] Thus, the order of the groups was an opportunity to indicate changes in the political order and in the social hierarchy. This flexibility turned processions into an important political tool by bringing constitutional changes of the polis to a general level of consciousness.[93] "The ritual, in other words, does not support or confirm an order of things but this order is shaped through and by ritual activity," writes Kavoulaki.[94] And Boris Voigt points out that the cultic manifestation of the political order could have been one of the essential aims of the festivals: "Perhaps the celebrations offered the first possibility for the citizens to connect the new stratification of the polis with their own actions and gain some kind of familiarity with it. Therefore, the preoccupation of the Athenians with the new structure of the polis was for an important part the worry about its cultic manifestations. In them the political order experienced its sensual-meaningful readability."[95]

The possibility of transforming administrative processes into a "sensual-meaningful readability" turned festivals, regular rites, and other public exercises into exceptional performances to maintain socio-political systems.[96] One of those translation-capable

86 Xenophon tells us about such performances: the main procession of the Attic Dionysia stopped at different altars for musical performances and sacrifices. Satirical songs are also attested (Xen. *Hipp.*); see also Kavoulaki 1999, 295.

87 See Schlesier 2000, 138–140.

88 Kubatzki 2015, 302 Abb. 6.

89 True et al. 2004, 2.

90 True et al. 2004, 2.

91 Bömer 1952, 1908, regards the middle of the procession as the most important place inside the procession.

92 Compare Graf 1996, 47–48.

93 As Connor 2000, 71, points out, festivals have been used in situations of important political change: "Solon need have done little more than utilize a festival pattern that antedated his reform and extend it to the political privileges as allocated in his new system."

94 Kavoulaki 1999, 298.

95 Voigt 2008, 147.

96 See Kavoulaki 1999, 294, on processions as performances: they are "physically inscribed, it becomes a mode of the body."

performances in ancient Greek processions is the music – including dances, plays, choirs, and musical instruments.

4.5 Music and musicians in ancient Greek processions[97]

Music must be regarded as an important cultural factor in ancient Greek society.[98] Leading philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and also some Pythagoreans wrote about music as a political, institutional element.[99] As the ancient writers thought music to be in closest connection with the soul, and assumed that music was able to change the mood and also the character, a deep relation to cult is apparent.[100] "Both the visual impression of colorful objects and choreographic movement, as well as the acoustic impression of instrumental and often vocal music show that processional performance was an elaborate event with symbolic and highly aesthetic qualities."[101] It is therefore surprising that only a third of all processional scenes on Greek ceramics depict musicians. On vessels with images of processional scenes musicians are more often depicted with sacrificial animals than without. This closeness gives us a hint that there was a functional connection between music and sacrificial animals.

The common musical instruments were the *kithara*, the *lyra,* and the *aulos*.[102] String instruments were common in Geometric-style processions/circle dances, whereas *auloi* dominate the procession and sacrifice scenes from the sixth century BCE. With only a few exceptions all depictions of musical processions feature an *aulos*. The second most common combination is an ensemble of *aulos* and string instruments. Some musical instruments, such as idiophones (rattles, sistra,[103] bells) and percussion instruments, never appear in processional scenes. In contrast, mystery cults, such as for Dionysos, Kybele, or Demeter, are known for their use of ecstasy-inducing musical instruments, as the *Bacchae* of Euripides illustrate colorfully.[104]

It is also remarkable that the singing and dancing in musical processional performances, which are best described in ancient Greek texts,[105] are almost never displayed in

97 For further information, see Kubatzki 2015.

98 The ancient Greek term *mousiké* includes more than just instrumental and vocal music; it also encompasses circular and individual dancing, acting in a play, and poetry. The famous Muses embody all these different performances by each standing for a different kind of 'music.' For a detailed introduction to that term see Murray and Wilson 2004, 1–5, and Kaden 2004, 67–80. For a comprehensive introduction to Greek music in general see West 1992; Anderson 1994; Landels 1999; Murray and Wilson 2004.

99 Plato, *Pol.* III 401d; see West 1992, 31.

100 Hermann Koller traces musical compositions (songs) back to the invocation of the gods by the priests (Koller 1963, 112–122).

101 Kavoulaki 1999, 295.

102 While the *kithara* is made of wood, the *lyra* is a smaller string instrument made of tortoise shell.

103 *Sistrum* (pl. *sistra*): a metal hand clapper that reached Greece from the Egyptian Isis cult.

104 Eu. *Bacch.* 64–166.

105 These forms of ancient music must be regarded as the central performance at every ancient Greek festival in all periods.

procession scenes.[106] In this case, we cannot argue from the painting technique, since we know countless representations of singing and/or dancing figures in other contexts.[107] Obviously there was no need or desire to show choirs or singers as part of the procession. Possibly singing was so common that it was not worth mentioning, but in contrast musical instruments could have been regarded as a kind of luxury. This may be the reason why they were depicted.

At any rate, there is a big gap between the illustrations on ceramics and the ancient Greek texts concerning the reference to musical performances. In spite of the iconographic record it seems likely that music was mandatory in every festival, because ancient writers emphasize festive situations that had to omit music, such as chthonic cults or songs of grief and sorrow.[108]

5 Complex functions of processions

The involvement of large parts of the population either as participants or as spectators turned the processions into lively events at which the Greeks could pay homage to their gods in a very complex and elaborate way.[109] Processional performances can be read as *the staging* of Greek identity, which could be renewed, changed, fixed, and commented upon.[110] Greek processions were complex rituals with multiple functions concerning different spheres in human and superhuman life.

But in comparison with present religious processions the foundation of ancient Greek procession was the very close connection with a sacrificial act, mainly of animals. Its aim probably arose from the wish to accompany the offerings (animals or gifts) in a reverent way to the altar or temple. During the time of the procession the route was transformed into a *sacred space* – it no longer represented a banal street, or a commercial route, but a sacred trajectory where other rules were in operation. This was expressed in the festive atmosphere, which was characterized by the garments and movements of the participants, the musical performances, the smells, etc., all of which marked a difference to daily life.[111]

106 See the analysis of the instruments and musical performances in processional scenes in Kubatzki 2015 and Brand 2000.

107 For example, the singing *kithara* player on an Attic red-figure amphora dated to the fifth century by the Berlin Painter, Metropolitan Art Museum, Gallery 157.

108 See West 1992, 13–14; Zschätzsch 1992, 138.

109 The function of Greek processions has been of interest to several scholars in the last decades: Gengnagel 2008; Connor 2000; Rutherford 2004; Graf 1996; Schlesier 2000; Polignac 1995 [1984]; True et al. 2004; Kavoulaki 1999; and even more.

110 For the comparison of processional performances and theatrical performances see also Kavoulaki 1999, 295.

111 Bömer 1952, 1911. – Since processions are festivals, the same rules were in operation, such as behaving – differently and festively (Kavoulaki 1999, 294–295).

Greek processions touched two different spheres: the human and the superhuman. Hence, different functions can be analyzed. Processions had a territorial aspect.[112] They were the expression of a wide cross-section of the Greek population, which connected the single *phylai* (clans or tribes) with the central sanctuaries. "The procession demarcates space and symbolically appropriates it. The group builds a relation to spatial environment and organizes space, but at the same time it organizes itself through the arrangement of the procession: in the space which is available to the community human relations are formed and power associations are manipulated and negotiated."[113] Other functions included political communication, social interaction, and cultic transformation.

5.1 Religious aspects

The religious motive must be regarded as the most essential and the initial factor for processions. At its core, a procession is an offering: the pomp and glory was meant to delight the gods.[114] The offering was always an exchange, a reciprocal trade. For the most precious gifts a community could afford, the gods offered in return shelter, power over the processes of nature, and support in matters of war. But as Kavoulaki argues: "The procession remains always an attempt. The community, hierarchically arranged, approaches the divinity but divine reciprocity cannot be guaranteed."[115] On the one hand there is the *insurance* character of ritual processions, which can be interpreted as an expression of the powerlessness of humans in the face of superhuman power.[116] On the other hand there is the aspect of communication. The contact between human and superhuman spheres can become physical. The first aspect is the shared meat: by eating the same meat, all participants are connected with each other and with the god who received some parts of the sacrificial animal. The second aspect is the epiphany of the gods as described for Artemis, Dionysos, Apollo, Zeus, Athena, and others: their "appearance" may have been a sensual effect (natural phenomena such as wind, earthquakes, birds, and so on) or real epiphanies: Apollo was said to dance with his followers, and Dionysos appeared in the Bacchae of Euripides.[117] Communication during processions and sacrifices represents an interaction between the two spheres.

112 The territorial aim of processions is discussed in several texts. See for instance Polignac 1995 [1984]; Graf 1996; Kavoulaki 1999, 297; Kubatzki 2015.

113 Kavoulaki 1999, 297.

114 The uniqueness of the processions regards their character as offerings (Voigt 2008, 153). – "By presenting itself, the marching community becomes a gift" (Kavoulaki 1999, 302).

115 Kavoulaki 1999, 3.

116 Nowadays this insecurity still exists, but the gods have changed into large insurance agencies which take the offerings (money).

117 Eur. *Bacch.* Prologue and other verses (Apollo epiphany: Kall. *Ap.* 1); other epiphanies of deities: Papadopoulou 2004b, 347; Papadopoulou 2004a, 48.

Rituals such as processions offered a safe space for the interaction on vertical and horizontal levels with the gods and with other people.[118] A sacrifice always included mediation between the two realms.[119] In this context there is no longer any distinction between religious and psychological aspects: feasting, coming together with others, and overstepping social borders by acting differently are needs of anyone living in any society.

5.2 The psychological aspect

The psychological aspect must be seen as the real first motive for organizing festivals such as processions. The gods were perceived as the most powerful entities, who received the gifts and attention (by performing rituals). The embodying of community in a procession, the closeness to other polis members, *communitas*,[120] feasting, and the creation of another world in which different rules apply (masquerade, marking social boundaries by crossing them) embodied the psychosocial order and were necessary to maintain the identity of both realms, namely the individual member of a polis and the polis itself. The participants were to call to mind their position inside the polis by reenacting their social status by dressing in their best garments and presenting luxury of any kind, which also underlined their economic power. In the context of daily life, to relax in the festivity was a regularly used outlet for destructive emotions and a means of empowerment for facing the everyday hard work again.

5.3 Socio-political aspects

The organization inside the procession of the Great Panathenaia is a mirror of the polis structure and, as Graf points out, "gives a spatial model of how the polis was structured, which individuals and which groups were part of the polis [city, JK] and what their roles were. Again, the procession manifests what Athens is, not only to foreign by-standers but to the citizens and the participants. The moment is well chosen: when the annual cycle begins, the polis remembers and manifests the way in which it is ordered."[121]

Kavoulaki describes it as a kind of self-organization of the polis: "The group builds a relation to spatial environment and organizes space, but at the same time it organizes itself through the arrangement of the procession: in the space which is available to the community human relations are formed and power associations are manipulated and

118 Cf. Köpping and Rao 2008, 22.

119 See Graf 1996, 57.

120 The term *communitas* was coined by ethnologist Victor Turner. *Communitas* means the opposite of structure: it keeps people together in their social structure. At the same time *communitas* is an always desired spontaneity, an intuitive togetherness (Turner 2005 [1969], 122–123).

121 Graf 1996, 58.

negotiated."[122] Both authors emphasize that ritual performances give insight into the political body, revealing its social and political order, but do not change it. Another author, Jan Assmann, underlines the important role of processions and festivals in providing a frame in which the citizens could meet, interact, connect, and trade.[123] As a "marriage market" he considers them to be the original reason for a tribal festival.

Another sociopolitical function is probably the regulation of social conflicts: W. R. Connor noticed a correlation between festivals and war situations in Greek antiquity.[124] Thomas Figueira has also suggested that there was a convergence of the Great Panathenaia and the years of instability in the early sixth century BCE.[125] Romans used the same mechanism of manipulation: they became very famous for their *panem et circenses* (bread and games) to appease the public in rough times with meals, festivals, and circus shows.

5.4 Cultural aspects

In the research literature, festivals such as processions have been described as communication systems and as stages for politicians to establish a new political order (see chapter 4.4 above). I would like to go a step further and add the sensual expressions of Greek processions: *aesthetic performances*, such as dances, plays, choirs, and instrumental music, *sensual acts* such as smelling incense and the scent of meat, and the *festive self-expression* of the worshippers through Sunday clothing and decoration.[126] Among these events music was important for bringing political ideas to a level of awareness, since it enabled the worshippers to remember and maintain ideas by dancing and singing.

5.5 Territorial aspects

Processions that followed a route outside the cities can also be regarded as territorial expressions that connected the single clan or tribe *(phyle)* with the central sanctuaries: by moving through landscapes and cities, processions are like flexible borders. Wherever processions made their way, they marked the territory and so the organizing city claimed the space.[127] The sociologist François de Polignac was one of the first scholars to focus attention on the territorial role of processions by realizing that growing populations from the Greek Archaic period onwards tended to install their sanctuaries in the suburban area.[128] By this the city space was expanded and activated by regular festivals

122 Kavoulaki 1999, 297.
123 Assmann 1991, 23.
124 Connor 2000, 58.
125 Figueira 1984 cited from: Connor 2000, 59 n. 8.
126 Bömer 1952, 1911.
127 Gengnagel 2008, 8; Graf 1996, 55–56; Polignac 1995 [1984], 32–33.
128 Polignac 1995 [1984], 33–36.

Who was reached by processions	Individuals	Cities	Community of states
How were they reached	Religious/Psychological/ Social/Political	Social/Political	Political
What happened	Communication with gods, cultic engagement Coordination and channeling of emotions Communitas (feeling of togetherness) Identification with the polis	Channeling anti-social energies Remembering and realization of social hierarchy Marriage market Market place for trade (economic sphere) Political demonstration of power Identification with polis	Demonstration of polis-power Marking the territory Creating and maintaining a Greek identity

Tab. 1 Systematizing the different functions of processions in ancient Greece.

in these sacred sites. Table 1 and 2 systematize the different functions of processions in ancient Greece.

6 Pilgrimages

Although scholars in the fields of archaeology and the science of religion have since the 1990s focused on the different forms of travel by the Greek populations, the term "pilgrimage" was not mentioned in these studies.[129] Only in 1997 did M. Dillon publish an overview of Greek pilgrimages, differentiating them according to their structures, destinations, and ethnic groups.[130] Rutherford and Elsner edited a volume on the ancient world and late antique period in 2005, in which the delegation/embassy *(theoria)*[131] and the consultation of oracles took centre stage. In that volume S. Scullion published a critical article on the use of the term 'pilgrimage' in relation to ancient Greece.[132] He argued that pilgrimage, according to our present understanding as the "journey of a single person or a group of persons with a religious motivation," had not existed in ancient Greece – at least as a special term. Yet, a vast number of Greeks travelled to the many

129 A detailed bibliography is found in Schlesier 2000, n. 1 and 2.

130 Dillon 1997, xiii–xviii.

131 For introductory articles about *theoriai* see Nilsson 1951, 310; Dillon 1997, 11–20; Schlesier 2000, 141; Tsochos 2002, 32–33.

132 Scullion 2005.

Spheres/realms	Human/Social level	Mythological level Level of writing	Divine/Spiritual Dimension
Effect What did the procession effect	Perception, Realization, and Preservation of the self	Creating or maintaining the collective memory of myth	Satisfaction/gratification of gods
How How did it work	Participation	Staging the story	Offering performance
Mode of action What did they do	Same action by all participants	Bringing down to earth the fictive, the imaginary	Processing
Activity What were the concrete actions	Sensual perceptions (mass of people, music, smells, optical attraction, festival atmosphere) Trade, commerce, exchange of goods	Sensual experience of gods	Feasting Offering donations and animals Making great efforts to celebrate festivals Waste of precious goods

Tab. 2 A more comprehensive overview including all spheres that shows the differences in the way that processions may have had effect.

Panhellenic festivals in order to compete as athletes, to consult an oracle, to be healed of a disease, to make an offering as a representative of their hometown, to participate in the festival as spectator, or, last but not least, to engage in trade.

A pilgrimage, without being specified as such in ancient Greece, was a journey to a place of worship. The motivation for such a journey was not necessarily religious but had different reasons: individual, economic, or political. In contrast to the present understanding of pilgrimage the journey was not ritualized, as Scullion remarks: "[…] whereas the notion of pilgrimage implies that the journey is ritualised, there is little evidence of this in classical Greece".[133]

Most scholars argue that there was not one form of pilgrimage, as a "journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a sacred ideal"[134] in ancient Greece, but many types of pilgrimage.[135] Elsner and Rutherford singled out fourteen motives for a pilgrimage, such as *theoriai*, healing, *oreibasia*, oracle consultation, and sacred tourism.

In the following I want to focus on the delegations, since they seem to be highly important for the political connections of Greek cities and were iconographical quite similar to processions.

133 Scullion 2005, 111.

134 Morinis 1992, 2.

135 Elsner and Rutherford 2005, 5, 11.

6.1 Delegations: theoriai

Theoria means the seeing, watching, witnessing of a spectacle, and derives from the term *theoreo* (= watching).[136] *A theoria* is here defined as a delegation of dignitaries sent from another polis to participate in a sacrifice.[137] Through this practice their city of origin could participate in the ritual *pars pro toto* without the real presence of the whole city: "Possibly the original function of the *theoroi* was to observe the celebrations on behalf of their cities, and to provide official representation," Dillon points out.[138] This was of great importance since rituals only worked for those who attended them.[139] Kavoulaki underlines that the term and practice of *theoria* align participation most closely with the aspect of viewing: "watching the *heorté* (= festival), seeing what was taking place, meant actually participating in the *heorté*."[140] There were two forms of delegates, the hosts and the guests, but mostly these were the same persons. *Theorodokoi* was the term used for the people who were sent out to Greek cities to invite other delegates to a festival as ambassadors, whereas *theoroi* were the visiting delegates.[141]

In general, *theoriai* were religiously motivated delegations that represented the absent polis in large national festivals such as those at Olympia, Eleusis, and Delos. Besides pursuing religious and individual purposes, consultations, and healing, delegations were highly political as regards the question of which city invited which other poleis. The movements of societies' noble and aristocratic men meant a constant contact between different cities and between particular cities and their gods.[142] Delegates served as diplomats, carried information (letters, documents, and gifts), and discussed territorial borders.[143] *Theoriai* were necessary movements in order to sustain the fragile Greek world with its widespread poleis, but in contrast to processions *theoriai* were not sacred themselves, although in the words of Barbara Kowalzig both movements were "mapping out the religious space."[144]

136 Pantelia 2011, keywords: *theoreo, theoria*.

137 Dillon 1997, 11.

138 Dillon 1997, 20.

139 "The whole community asks for the deity's reciprocal protection" (Kavoulaki 1999, 302).

140 Kavoulaki 1999, 311.

141 Pantelia 2011, keyword: *theorodokos*; Dillon 1997, 11–12.

142 "Evidence points towards a high level of inter-city contact based on religious activity" (Dillon 1997, 25).

143 For a brief overview of all the functions of theoroi see Dillon 1997, 11–26.

144 Kowalzig 2005, 69. – That expression she used especially for the songs that were sung by choirs, both in *theoria* and in processions. These songs and melodies, more than other performances and offerings, conveyed the character of the participating city. The great significance of musical performances was briefly considered at the beginning of this article, but of course an intensive analysis cannot be offered here.

6.2 Iconographic differentiations: processions and theoriai

Using archaeological data, especially vase depictions, it is hardly possible to differentiate processional scenes from scenes with *theoriai.* Quite often depictions consist of two or more people in fine garments with wreaths in their hair, holding branches, vessels, and other cult objects in their hands. Sometimes an animal is shown, appearing with or without musicians, as shown above.

Sometimes there are trees, columns, altars, vessels on a wall, and other characteristics that indicate the place of the performance. Basically the depictions suggest an open-air procession. On the first depiction (Fig. 1) we have an almost complete processional scene.

The depictions from the Archaic period show these characteristics of a long procession, but they did not last long after their appearance in the sixth century, when they were replaced by shorter procession scenes. These black-figure paintings are characterized by figures and architectural elements designed in more detail, but they show fewer people.

I propose that short procession scenes without an altar may display a delegation. Whereas ceramics with processional scenes must mainly be understood as offerings for the gods, to show the efforts of the worshippers, the political dimension of scenes with delegations on ceramics is more explicit.[145] Here, the effort of communities is shown, the readiness of several cities to interact and participate in Panhellenic festivals. One interpretation may be that the iconic code of procession scenes could signal 'offerings for gods.' Another interpretation would draw attention to the iconic code of delegations, which refers to cultural identity, symbolizing 'we are Greeks.' If these different meanings of iconic codes of processional rituals are accepted, it seems clear that scenes of delegations replaced processional scenes on ceramics at the end of the sixth century BCE.

7 Conclusion

Concerning scenes of pilgrimage (here: delegation) and procession, an interrelation between political bias and the iconic codes created by the Greeks, is possible. Depictions were not only about representing the daily life of the ancient Greeks, but about communication. Iconic codes could be treated as a language that was understandable to everyone in the Greek community. These iconic codes could be deciphered by ancient recipients through the meaning of the rituals presented. In my analysis I discussed the

145 Laxander 2000, 146.

complex meaning and practices of processions and *theoriai* and also of circular dances. I have linked them to aspects of identity, social hierarchy, and channelling antisocial energies (Tab. 1). I have also drawn attention to their political dimensions. Processions were – more than sacrifices – the place for the demonstration of power and rule. In a broader context they were active performances which created the identity of Greece as a community of states

Altogether, processions and delegations can be regarded as a glue that connected the fragmented Greek cities. Before alphabetical writing became the common medium to transfer values, ideas, techniques, and common notions, the medium had always been the traveling people. Panhellenic festivals were most effective in connecting communities by worshipping the same gods, exchanging goods (arts, garments, food), and of course by marriage, as shown above.

Processions and *theoriai* are communication systems that helped to create and maintain such innovations as a common Greek language, Greek myths, and Greek democracy. Regarding both types of movement (that is, processions and *theoriai*), it is remarkable that the different arts and media of ancient Greece show an increase in religious movements which parallels the increase in population in Greece. Smaller communities – Yosef Garfinkel speaks of pre-state communities in the early Greek eras – produced a different iconic code: that of circular dance scenes, which were the main subject in several arts.[146] Procession scenes marked the era of the beginning democracy, while the *theoriai* became commonplace in the fifth and fourth century BCE.

I would like to hypothesize a contextual relation between the growth of cities and population and the need to perform ritual acts that involved the whole community. The density of those movements increased in parallel to the development of Greek state organization and the growth of population from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period.[147]

146 Garfinkel 2003, 81–82.

147 Kavoulaki 1999, 289–299, speaks of some kind of correlation between processions and democratic politics.

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Ca'ripalit Sangh: Jain Group Pilgrimages on Foot. Defining Sacred Territory and Religious Community

Summary

Jain pilgrimages are an important event of communal identity since the Jains, an Indian merchant caste, do not have a territory of their own. The annual pilgrimage, for the most part on foot, assembles hundreds or even thousands of pilgrims who are prepared to confront bodily pain, hunger and thirst in order to celebrate the founders of their religion. After having walked on foot for days through the sparsely populated countryside pilgrims head for the Shatrunjaya mountains with 108 temples and about 1000 smaller shrines. This temple complex is conceived of as one of the few places of eternity within a vast and constantly changing universe. The article will discuss the composition, organisation and ritual performances during the pilgrimage, its underlying conception of the universe and the constant re-affirmation of Jain identity through the veneration of their ancestral spiritual founders.

Keywords: Sacred landscape; organization and composition of pilgrimages; bodily suffering; identity

Pilgerfahrten sind ein wichtiger Bestandteil der gemeinsamen Identität der indische Händler-Kaste der Jains, da diese über kein eigenes Gebiet verfügen. Die größtenteils zu Fuß stattfindende jährliche Gruppenpilgerschaft versammelt Hunderte oder sogar Tausende von Pilgern, die bereitwillig körperliche Schmerzen, Hunger und Durst auf sich nehmen, um dem Gründer ihrer Religion zu huldigen. Nach tagelanger Wanderung durch spärlich besiedelte Landstriche, machen sich die Pilger auf den Weg in das Shatrunjaya Gebirge mit seinen 108 Tempeln und ca. 1000 kleineren Schreinen. Dieser Tempelkomplex ist konzipiert als einer der wenigen Plätze der Unendlichkeit in einem sich immer wandelnden Universum. Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit dem Aufbau, der Organisation und rituellen Performanzen während der Pilgerfahrt, mit der Frage, welche Vorstellungen vom Universum ihr zugrunde liegen, und mit der ständigen Bestätigung der Jain Identität durch die Verehrung ihrer Vorfahren und spirituellen Gründer.

Keywords: Heilige Landschaft; Organisation und Aufbau von Pilgerfahrten; körperliches Leiden; Identität

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1 Introduction

As recently pointed out by Jacobsen, "religious processions [are] a phenomenon of great importance in South Asia [...]. South Asia it distinguishes itself in terms of the number of religious processions that take place and their sizes." In his enumeration of religious processions, he also mentions "Jain processions" though his volume does not provide a contribution devoted to the ethnographic distinctiveness of Jain pilgrim processions.[1]

However, Jain pilgrim processions in India are all the more interesting for the issue of our volume as their performances are deeply entrenched in the vibrant religious practice of the contemporary Jain pilgrimage to supra-regional sacred centers, such as Shatrunjaya, Sametshikhara and Girnar. Moreover, pilgrim processions are important tools for marking the group identity of contemporary Jain communities.

This contribution will first introduce the mythological and historical backgrounds of Shvetambara Jain pilgrimage in Western India before connecting these rather indological findings with a contemporary ethnographic example of pilgrim processions to the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya in Gujarat.[2]

Unlike other religious minorities, such as the Sikhs in Punjab,[3] the Jains, in general, and the Shvetambaras, in particular, never claimed a clearly defined territory as their homeland. The religious and social core value of non-violence *(ahisma)* of the Jains implies unconditional respect for all forms of life. It not only leads to the strictest form of vegetarianism, but also prohibits armed struggle and historically led to the clear opposition of well-off Jain merchants towards rulers and their respective ideals of the local warrior caste of Western India, the Rajput.[4] Moreover, a politically defined territory, which is to some extent always connected to the idea of agricultural land and its output, had a highly ambivalent meaning for the Jain merchants, who might be landowners, but due to their religious prescriptions refrain from farming or any other agricultural activities.[5]

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that in general, territory defines boundaries and therefore, territorial definitions often play a crucial symbolic role for the imagination of religious, ethnic and political groups.[6] This is also true in regard to the Jains, even though in a somewhat modified sense. Elsewhere I have argued that the Shvetambaras establish

1 Jacobsen 2008, 1.

2 The respective ethnographic data were mainly collected during my long-term PhD fieldwork in Palitana from September 2001 to June 2003 and during earlier and later short-term research periods (1997–1998, and 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013). For a more detailed description of the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011.

3 For a reflection on the demands for Sikh autonomy in 'Khalistan,' see for example Das 1995 and Jodhka 2001.

4 Babb 1996, 138; Tambs-Lyche 1997, 229–232, 252.

5 Luithle 2003, 357; Jaini 1979, 171–172; J. Jain 1992, 15–16; Nevaskar 1971, 196.

6 This interrelation is uncontested in contemporary social and cultural anthroplogy and dates back to Anderson 1991.

the space dimension of their identity in the collective performances at supra-regional pilgrimage centers.[7] In the same way as the local Jain communities, Jain sacred centers are spread across the West, South and East of the Indian subcontinent, where contemporary and historical heartlands of Jainism can be found.

Repeatedly – from early colonial period until today – the Jains have legally fought in Indian courts for the ownership of their sacred places.[8] Up until now, this ownership empowers the Jains to determine the ritual code of conduct within their sanctuaries. This is crucial because only under the condition of ritual purity is the power and effectiveness of their sacred centers guaranteed.

According to the Jain doctrine, the sacred places preserve the potency of the 24 Jinas, the ascetic saints and prophets of the Jains, whose exemplary ascetic life form the foundation of Jain doctrine and practice. They are generally known as 'fordmakers' *(tirthankaras)* as they had appeared in mythological and historical times to lay out the ford, *tirtha*, across 'the ocean of rebirths' *(samskara)* to humankind before they attained spiritual salvation.[9] Because the Jinas are released from action and rebirth and are therefore thought of dwelling in the remote eternal realm of Siddhashila, strictly speaking, they cannot directly interact with the devotees.[10] However, sacred centers are particularly suitable to connect the devotee with the blissful presence of one or more Jina(s), who might have attained omniscience, preached and/or reached to spiritual salvation at/from a particular place – often times located in a remote area, preferably a mountain, which is difficult to reach, if not inaccessible for average humans or even sealed (this interconnection of the sacred with the wilderness is also important for the further understanding of Jain pilgrim processions, as will be displayed below).[11] Eventually the crucial events in a Jina's life resonate into the present when the pilgrims venerate him at the sacred center and thereby the Jina's blessings transcend the dimensions of time and space.[12] Therefore, most of the sacred places of the Jains are referred to as a *tirtha,* 'crossing' or a 'ford'[13], as created by a Jina or *tirthankara*.[14] Conversely, this implies wherever a Jina has appeared and preached, and wherever the eternal doctrine is remembered and kept up by the pilgrims, a *tirtha* is established.[15]

7 Luithle-Hardenberg 2010a; Luithle-Hardenberg 2010b.

8 Banks 1992, 105–106; Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 133–152.

9 Babb 1996, 5.

10 Banks 1991, 249; Banks 1992, 17; Jaini 1979, 130, 133, 159, 273.

11 Luithle-Hardenberg 2014.

12 Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 58–72.

13 For the somewhat different roots of the term *tirtha* in Hindu contexts, see Eck 1983, 34.

14 In addition, there are pilgrimage places for clan goddesses and protector deities, venerated by the Jains; for studies in Osia, Rajasthan, see Babb 1999, Babb 2004, and Cort 2000. Those kinds of places, however, are not exclusive to Jains.

15 On the roots of Jain *tirtha*, see Williams 1991 [1963], 235–237; Granoff 1992; and Granoff 1995. In addition to the meaning of the word *tirtha* in the sense of a spatially fixed pilgrimage site, there exist other meanings of the word which emphasise the central role of the religious community. Even the four-fold

Founded on these mythological and cosmological concepts, these *tirthas* – sacred centers – enable the religious minority of the Jains to overcome limitations of territorial and historical demarcations in the same way as they support the mythological and linear dimensions of time to transcend. Thus, they are able to unify the scattered local communities of the religious minority into one.

2 Pilgrimage as a procession – historical and mythological roots

This concept is all the more impressively illustrated by the ideal performance of collective pilgrimage to sacred centers. References to the extensive Jain scriptures show that the ideal performance of pilgrimage in a group is rooted in the ritual obligation for both public processions and the pilgrimage to sacred places. The pilgrimage to sacred places *(tirtha yatra)* is already prescribed as a ritual performance of the Jain lay people in the early commentaries to the canonical scriptures, which date back to the 5th century AD.[16] The obligation for pilgrimage is also included in the traditional eleven annual duties of the ideal Shvetambara Jain laypeople *(shravakna agiar varshik kartavya)*. These prescriptions are enlisted by the Tapa Gacch abbot, Acarya Ratnashekarsuri in his *Shraddha Vidhi Tirtha Yatra* of 1450 and they show an intimate interrelation of processions and pilgrimage within the ritual observances of the Jains.[17] Three kinds of processions are prescribed within these eleven annual duties: *ashtahnika yatra*, *ratha yatra*, and *tirtha yatra*.[18] Whereas the *ashtahnika yatra* is no longer of vital importance for the contemporary ritual practice of Shvetambara Jains, the second type, the *ratha yatra*, is performed up until present times and mostly during important yearly festivals.[19] This kind of procession through the streets of a Jain neighborhood involves the drawing of a chariot *(ratha)* with an image of a Jina. By carrying the image of a Jina through the streets of their neighborhood, local Jain communities regularly represent their religious distinctiveness as a religious minority in public. The third type, tirtha yatra, the pilgrimage to sacred places, emphasizes this role of a group procession even more by establishing a direct terminological link to the Jina's achievements. Technically, the *tirtha yatra* is a combination of the first two older processions and is observed even more regularly than the *ratha yatra*. Like in the *ratha yatra*, a group of Jains – mostly of a common local origin – assembles in a public procession and an image of a Jina is carried in the heart of the procession, which as a final point leads to a sacred center.[20] This procession can imply several days or

community *(caturvidha sangha)* is referred to as *tirtha*; see Cort 2001, 97.

16 Granoff 1995, 63.

17 Williams 1991 [1963], 235.

18 Williams 1991 [1963], 233–243.

19 Cort 2001, 142, 144, 161–162, 177, 181–182.

20 J. Jain 1979; J. Jain 1980.

even weeks on the trail when proceeding to a more or less remote center of pilgrimage *(tirtha)*.

At the same time, the pilgrims' processions themselves are actively presenting the fourfold community *(caturvidha sangha)*, the ideal religious congregation, which is formed in a circle around any preaching Jina. This congregation is still reproduced today by male and female ascetics (*sadhu* and *sadhvi*) and by male and female lay people (*shravak* and *shravika*). All ascetics imitate the lifestyle of the Jinas for a lifetime once they are admitted into one of the ascetic orders *(gaccha)* by rigorously following five vows: (1) To abstain from violence *(ahimsa)*, including unconditional respect for all life forms, resulting in strict vegetarianism, (2) the love of truth and the care of the language *(satya)*, (3) not to take what is not given *(asteya)*, implying that the ascetics are dependent on the lay practitioners who provide them with food, clothing and shelter, (4) the renunciation of ownership *(aparigraha)*, which also results in perpetual wanderings of the ascetics *(vihar)* and (5) the renunciation of sexual relations *(brahmacarya)*, which causes strict avoidance of the opposite sex.

In contrast to this austere life the lay people are usually entertaining a life of well-being, due to the fact that their minor vows are lessened in comparison to those of the ascetics, but force them to traditionally earn their living in trade and entrepreneurship, instead of investing in agriculture. Moreover, the lay people focus their ritual activities on venerating the living ascetics together with the Jinas, while limiting their own practice of an ascetic lifestyle to periods of outmost religious importance such as pilgrimage and important festivals. Whereas the ascetics are dependent upon receiving material support from the lay people (such as food, clothing and study material), the lay people depend upon the spiritual supervision of the ascetics in order to fulfill a broad range of ritual obligations.

In general, this mutual interdependence is clearly presented in Jain processions. As already pointed out by Jain and Cort, the structure of Jain processions as manifestations of the fourfold community (of ascetics and lay people) is always remarkably consistent and uniform.[21] This applies also to the practice of contemporary pilgrim processions: behind a red and white flag or a banner tower *(dharma dhvaja)*, the symbol of the Jain doctrine and musicians parading either with traditional instruments, or, alternatively, a car is carried along with electronic amplifiers and speakers with the sound of devotional songs at full volume in the manner of Hindi films. Next in the procession is a group of male lay pilgrims who – inspired by the music – dance in honor of the ascetics who follow behind them, determining the pace of the procession with measured steps. Occasionally, the group of ascetics is led by a horse-drawn chariot with a large portrait of their deceased leader, the Acarya. However, the center of the procession is always formed

21 J. Jain 1977; Cort 2001, 161–162, 181–182.

by a larger chariot with at least one image of a ford maker in a miniature temple. The chariot can be either drawn by young men or by elaborately decorated white bulls. The group of female ascetics *(sadhvis)* follows behind, merging with female lay practitioners *(shravikas)* who join them in singing devotional songs in honor of the ford makers and the ascetics.

3 Shatrunjaya, the eternal mountain

This form of procession is also of crucial importance for the contemporary practice of pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya, a sacred center of utmost supra-regional significance for the 'image worshipping' *(murtipujak)* Shvetambara Jains who form the majority of Jains in India.[22] Every year at least 400 000 and up to 1.5 million pilgrims undertake the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya.[23] In accordance with the obligation for pilgrimage *(tirtha yatra)* as inherent to the traditional eleven duties of the ideal lay people, many pilgrims travel regularly, even several times a year. Today, the majority of pilgrims travel by plane, car, train or bus to the pilgrim town Palitana, which is adjacent to the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya. However, in this paper I will focus on pilgrimages on foot.

In fact, at least once in a lifetime, the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya has to ideally be performed on foot and in a 'group of six restrictions' *(cha'ri palit sangha)*. Therefore, even today about one fifth of the pilgrims travel every year by foot and partake in pilgrim processions performed in a 'group of six restrictions' *(cha'ri palit sangha)*. Before we can extensively cover this particular variation of group pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya through a contemporary ethnographic example, we first have to understand how Shvetambara Jains define the importance of their sacred center in Western India. As noted by Sax, the special power of the Himalayan pilgrimages to Nandadevi (and pilgrimages in general) are often times explained by the devotees in terms of the particular qualities of the place and in terms of powerful effects of a particular deity's actions.[24] This of course reminds us of the above mentioned Jain concept of a *tirtha*, which is always attached to a Jina's potency. Thus, rather than pointing to the simple dichotomy of sacred and profane[25] at this point the question should be where and how do the Jains

22 It is very difficult to give exact numbers for the Jain population of India as many Jains claim that the last two Census' of India (2001 and 2011) represent a gross miscalculation of their community (of round about 5 million people) and estimate their numbers as high as 30 million.

23 According to an oral statement of an officer employed by the trust in charge of the pilgrimage place Shatrunjaya, Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi in Palitana.

24 Sax 1991, 12.

25 As introduced by Turner 1995 [1969] and Turner 1973 into the pilgrimage discourse.

locate the sacred nature of Shatrunjaya within the Jain cosmology, and which myths, legends and narratives are attached to it?

The sacred mountain of Shatrunjaya stands at about 600 metres above sea level at the southern end of the adjoining pilgrim town and market place of Palitana, 40 km away from the district capital, Bhavnagar (Gujarat). In contrast to other similarly important pilgrimage places of the Jains, such as Sametshikhara in Bihar, Girnar in Gujarat and Abu in Rajasthan, Shatrunjaya is considered to be one of the few places of eternity within a vast and constantly changing universe.[26] The most important place in this category is *siddhashila*, 'the place of salvation', where according to Jain doctrine all liberated souls dwell, freed from the cycle of rebirth and are in perpetual bliss. In the inner part of the 'middle world' *(madhya loka)*, in the center of the hour-glass-shaped Jain cosmos – that is, in the realm of mankind – only very few islands of eternity exist where time has little to no impact. Among these, Shatrunjaya is the only eternal place accessible to human beings in our 'dark age' *(kali yuga)* and in our part of the world, identified as *Bharata Kshetra*. Shatrunjaya is therefore considered to be *shashvat*, literally meaning 'eternal' and indestructible, even if it expands and contracts in accordance with the ups and downs of the never-ending cycles of time. Some other eternal pilgrimage places, such as the mountains Meru and Ashtapad, and the temples of Nandishvara Dvipa, are not part of the Jain cosmos to which average humans have access to.

Due to this special quality, Shatrunjaya is perceived as a place with a unique link to salvation. As frequently stated by many ascetic leaders during my fieldwork, no other place in our realm of the world is considered comparable to this sacred mountain and countless souls have attained spiritual salvation on this mountain, including important protagonists of Shvetambara myths and legends.[27] As a consequence, pilgrimage to this place is believed to bring a hundred times more spiritual merit to the devotee than pilgrimage to any other sacred place. Shatrunjaya is therefore referred to as *tirthadhiraja*, 'the King of pilgrimage places'.

26 For a comprehensive summary of the Jain cosmography see Glasenapp 1984 [1925], 214–243 and Caillat and Kumar 1981.

27 Some of these legends are referred to in the medieval Shvetambara literature and some are not. The few available translations of primary sources are the aforementioned Weber 1901, and Cort 1993. However, the main sources of my analysis are oral references to mythology and legends from the pilgrims in personal communication. Moreover, I carefully studied contemporary pilgrimage guides, for example: Dhami 2000; Gunaratna Suri 1997; Gunaratna Suri 1998; Gunaratna Suri 1999; Pedhi 1976/V.S. 2031; Varaiya 1980/V.S. 2035. A version of Adinatha's life story in English, although making only occasional reference to Shatrunjaya, can be found in Johnson 1931–1954, vol. I.

4 Adinatha and his heirs

Although all Jinas, except for the twenty-second, Neminatha,[28] are said to have come to Shatrunjaya, the sacred mountain is particularly important in connection with the life of the first Jina, Rshabha or Adinatha, who, according to the pilgrims' frequent claims, came here ninety-nine *purva*[29] times and delivered sermons on every occasion. In Jain mythology, Adinatha ('the first Lord') plays the vital role of a cultural hero who first established the Jain community and Jain kingship before renouncing it upon becoming the first Jain ascetic of our time.[30] After many years of ascetic practice, he attained omniscience, enabling him to teach the Jain doctrine on how to overcome the mundane order he himself had founded. In the context of pilgrimage, devotees always refer to *Rshabha* as 'Adinatha' or 'Adishvara,' thereby stressing this Jina's role as the 'first,' that is, the founding father of the Jain community.[31] As such, he is also responsible for having started the pilgrimage to the eternal mountain Shatrunjaya.[32]

According to myth, Adinatha attained spiritual salvation on another eternal mountain: Ashtapada, a mountain which today is usually associated with Mount Kailash in Tibet, yet the original sanctuary is considered as inaccessible after Adinathas' son Bharata protected it with a seal to make sure that it would not be polluted. As a consequence, Shatrunjaya has become the foremost pilgrimage place for the worship of the first fordmaker.[33] Nevertheless, it is his grandson and first ascetic disciple *(ganadhara)*, Pundarika, who is worshipped on the full moon in Caitra (March/April) for having attained salvation on Shatrunjaya as the first human being of our ages.[34] Therefore, the sacred mountain is also frequently called Pundarika Giri.

28 According to the legend, Neminatha, too, came to Shatrunjaya to perform the pilgrimage but turned back at the foot of the mountain, as he was afraid to pollute the sacred place. However, Mount Girnar (close to Junagadh), the *tirtha* where Neminatha attained salvation, is also considered to be a part of the sacred Shatrunjaya ranges.

29 The measurement *purva* is characteristic for the Jains' general preference for big numbers to classify time and space. A *purva* is equal to the multiplication of 8 400 000 by 8 400 000, which is equal to a number with 14 digits. For the purpose of this paper, it is enough to say that Adinatha visited Shatrunjaya very frequently and he had enough time to do so because he lived for 8 400 000 *purva* years before reaching salvation.

30 Folkert 1993, 152. – For a comprehensive account see Luithle Hardenberg, J. Cort, and Orr 2014.

31 Mahavira, who is frequently regarded as the historical founder of 'Jainism' by scholars (but not by the Jain themselves), does not play a vital role for the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya.

32 This mythological foundation corresponds with the findings of Indology as Shatrunjaya is the only pilgrimage place mentioned in the canonical scriptures of the Shvetambara. Therefore, Dundas 1992, 190, holds that the pilgrimage to this sacred mountain was established at the latest in the 5th century, even though archaeology can prove pilgrimage activities only as early as the 11th century.

33 In addition, the fact that only the site of Adinatha's spiritual salvation is considered inaccessible, speaks for the central significance of this fordmaker as a cultural founder.

34 See Weber 1901, 249, for an early reference in the *Shatrunjaya Mahatmyam.*

However, it was also Adinatha's son Bharata who is said to have contributed considerably in starting the pilgrimage tradition for the lay people. According to the myth, Bharata was the first to bring a group of pilgrims to the place of the preaching assembly of Adinatha on the summit of Shatrunjaya.[35] Moreover, he built the first temple on Shatrunjaya in remembrance of his father on the same spot where the Jina had delivered his sermons. In this way, he set the mythological foundation of the current temple town, consisting of about 108 temples and about 1000 smaller shrines. Thus, he can be seen as the founding father of *group* pilgrimage.

According to the legends, the first temple and its main image of Adinath are supposed to be hidden in an unknown place within the Shatrunjaya mountain. In order to substitute it on the surface of the sacred mountain sixteen renovations of the main temple took place and on all occasions were accompanied by large pilgrim's processions. The last renovation by Karmashah Osval around 1525 CE also included the installation of the main image, which stands at the center of worship till today. This image, called 'Dada Adishvara' ('Grandfather Adishvara') by the pilgrims, is believed to be work miracles *(camatkari)*. Many legends narrate the miracles experienced by pilgrims as a result of this image in the past as well as in contemporary times. Some examples are of ill people being cured of physical and mental diseases, wealth being regained, and families being reunited after the pilgrimage to 'Dada.' Even though pilgrims often maintain that the only goal of pilgrimage is striving for spiritual liberation, stories about miracles generated by 'Dada' are an important aspect of the attractiveness of Shatrunjaya as a pilgrimage place. Most of these stories show how pilgrims miraculously gained enough strength to endure fasting, without even drinking water for an extended period of time – a type of renunciation viewed as a precondition for serious spiritual progress. Such miracles, which strengthen a pilgrim's determination to seek spiritual merits and may even bring about the pilgrim's spontaneous decision to take ascetic initiation *(diksha)* are considered to be the main work of 'Dada' (Adishvar).

5 Jain pilgrims: ascetics and patrons

In the same way as many other pilgrimages, the journey to Shatrunjaya is a complex phenomenon which needs to be tackled on at least two different levels. On one hand, this pilgrimage is the journey of an individual aspirant, who strives for gradual spiritual progress. This first level corresponds with Morinis' general definition of pilgrimage as an individual journey from the imperfect everyday world of the profane to the extraordinary experience of the perfect and sacred spheres of life.[36] On the other, the pil-

35 Also: Cort 1993, 246; Johnson 1931–1954, 362–365.

36 Morinis 1984, 2–3; Morinis 1992, 4, 25.

grimage to Shatrunjaya is a socio-cultural institution which leads the individual to the sacred center of the community and therefore can only be understood in the context of religious tradition. In the Jain doctrine of salvation, both aspects of pilgrimage are deeply interconnected. Elsewhere I have argued that the individuality of the spiritual aspirant is of fundamental importance for the understanding of the Jain community and its *raison d'être*.[37] These findings are also crucial with regard to the main actors of the community of a group pilgrimage.

When asked about the purpose of their pilgrimage, many pilgrims offer an interpretation, stressing the individual spiritual striving by referring to the very name of the sacred mountain. Shatrunjaya literally means 'the conqueror of enemies.' For the pilgrims, this metaphor alludes to the difficult fight against the so called 'inner enemies,' namely the four cardinal passions *(kashaya)*, which are the main cause for karmic bondage and the major obstacles to the ascetic command of non-violence: greed *(lobh)*, fury *(krodh)*, ego *(man)*, and hypocrisy *(maya)*. Thus, pilgrims generally claim univocally that their pilgrimage was nothing but an effective way of striving for spiritual purification by getting rid of *karma* and thereby getting a little closer to the salvation of rebirth.[38] Moreover, as in many other Jain contexts, the purification of the pilgrim's soul is considered to be both a highly individual and a material process.

The idea of individualization of the spiritual aspirant has a long tradition in cultural anthropological research on South Asia. As already stated by Dumont in the general characterization of the South Asian religions, the spiritual seeker becomes an individual outside of the world: "whoever seeks liberation must leave the world and adopt an entirely different mode of life."[39] In the same way, the Jain pilgrim temporarily leaves his mundane place within society in order to devote himself to his individual spiritual progress. Moreover, the spiritually motivated individualism of the pilgrim is even emphasized in the particular Jain doctrine of salvation. While in the Hindu traditions the redeemed soul rises to the united, non-dualistic world soul (*brahman* or *paramatma*), in the Jain doctrine, the redeemed souls *(siddha)* exist in complete isolation from each other. Moreover, Jain doctrine considers spiritual purification as a material process because the karmic matter *(pudgala)* is believed to be a substance attached to the soul *(ajiva)* by the cardinal passions *(kashaya)*.[40] Consequentially, it is necessary to take physical measurements against the karmic matter.

In accordance with that premise, the motto of many pilgrims is: "The bigger the physical efforts during pilgrimage, the greater the spiritual progress and the closer one comes to salvation", as a twenty year old pilgrim once paraphrased while walking to Palitana in a larger group. Since the average lay pilgrim usually resides in a comfortable

37 Luithle 2003, 319–358.

38 Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 97–90.

39 Dumont 1980 [1966], 273.

40 Banks 1992, 17; Dundas 1992, 83, 88; J. Jain 1979, 112, 114, 151.

urban home and avoids walking longer distances in his or her everyday life, every pilgrim has to endure unfamiliar strains when walking barefoot to Palitana and climbing the hilltop of Shatrunjaya.

In contrast to the urban lifestyle of the lay people, the ascetic vows imply homelessness and perpetual wandering. Thus, we can see the role model of a pilgrim in every ascetic. These pilgrims par excellence are copied by lay people who also become ascetics for the time of pilgrimage, as clearly indicated by the 'six austerities' of the *cha'ri palit sangha,* which are strictly observed by all participants. These include:

(1) the strict observance of the purely vegetarian Jain diet,
(2) the limitation to only one meal a day (usually after having completed the day's stage),
(3) walking barefoot,
(4) sleeping on the floor,
(5) celibacy, and
(6) the daily performance of the ritual of forgiveness *(pratikramana)* shortly before sunrise and shortly after sunset.[41]

Thus, all participants of a group pilgrimage on foot follow a collective routine.[42] Pilgrims from lay communities seek instructions from ascetics in order to adhere to the strict discipline during the course of their pilgrimage. In general, I perceived a strong sense of the pilgrims holding each other accountable in observing these rules and rituals. They frequently explained this behavior by referring to the idea of *sat sangha* – 'true companionship' – which requires reciprocal support. In their view, the strict observance of a rule or the meticulous performance of a mandatory ritual inspires others to do the same and guarantees the success of the pilgrimage. Breaking a rule or neglecting a ritual is, on the other hand, considered to be a temptation for other pilgrims to do the same. Such behavior is therefore not only believed to reduce or destroy the karmic success of the pilgrimage, but is thought to bring bad *karma (pap)* to the wrongdoer. In this sense, mutual accountability serves to ensure one's own as well as the others' spiritual progress. Accordingly, most of the pilgrims are convinced that the observances of a pilgrimage are much easier to follow when they are performed in a group.

This crucial aspect of pilgrimage as a group performance leads us to the key role of the patron *(sangha pati)* within the Jain pilgrimage tradition. Only at initiative and

41 Cort 2001, 123–124; Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 191–195. – To be precise, the term *ca'ri palit* must be translated as: 'six austerities with the letter *r*': (1) *sacitta parihari,* (2) *ekal anhari,* (3) *pad chari,* (4) *bhumi santhari,* (5) *brahmacari,* (6) *avakshat pratikramana.* For the historical development of the six austerities it is interesting to note that Ratnashekar (15th century) identified five of the six restrictions whereas Dhaneshvara (7th century) was limited to the general term "fasting" (Weber 1901, 249).

42 It should be mentioned that this routine serves also as a general guideline for the majority of pilgrims, who use other modes of transport to reach Shatrunjaya and who limit the six restrictions to the period of their stay in Palitana.

with the fortune of a wealthy community leader, can a pilgrimage group be formed that ensures mutual support for the pilgrims, who strive for spiritual progress individually. Moreover, by establishing the pilgrim group, the patron is able to transform his worldly power and his mundane wealth into spiritual merit. However, rather than acting for his individual benefit, it is crucial for the *habitus* of a *patron*, to not act as an individual but as a representative of his family and the local community. Thus, the costs are borne by the family fortune. Likewise, relatives often decide to jointly organize and finance a group pilgrimage on foot, where a senior relative would act in the role of the main patron, the *sangha pati* or leader of the group. Otherwise, young leaders of a group pilgrimage on foot usually host it on behalf of deceased relatives, for example their late parents, elder brothers or father's elder brothers *(kaka)*.

This key task of the patron is also convincingly reflected by the mythological figure of the 'universal king' *cakravartin* Bharata, as exemplified above. He provides a role model for all well-off lay people who in the course of centuries led large groups of pilgrims to the wilderness of Shatrunjaya.

6 Experiencing wilderness: imitating historical obstacles to reach the sacred center in a marginalized space

Even today Shatrunjaya mountain is located in a quite remote area in the south-eastern part of the peninsular Saurashtra. Even by modern modes of transport, such as car, bus, train or plane, it takes at least half a day to reach the town from the urban centers in which most of the Jains live today. Moreover, the temple city on the top of Shatrunjaya can only be reached by an exhausting ascent by foot on a path which is considered to lead across the wilderness of the mountain. Thus, the most sacred is conceptualized and actually located in a marginalized space, which is difficult to access.[43]

On one hand, it can be stated that the ritual experience of pilgrimage may involve a general idea of refraining from the every-day world during the liminal stage of pilgrimage and this retreat is expressed by stepping out of urban life.[44] On the other, the exposure to wilderness is taken as a sometimes dangerous challenge that the pilgrims have to welcome as an extra-ordinary experience. This is usually an integral part of the pilgrim's quest and must be considered in relation to different concepts that apply to Indian religions in general and for the Jain asceticism in particular. In fact, the wilderness or the 'forest' is a central element of the ascetic escape from the social world and it is the preferred place of meditation, wandering, the complete fasting and of spiritual enlightenment. In the Hindu traditions, two ascetic lifestyles in the wilderness are particularly

43 Granoff 1999.

44 Morinis 1985, 159.

strongly connected to the last life stages of the Brahmins: the forest hermit *(vanaprasthin)* and the renouncer *(sannyasin)*. Both stages are more likely to be chosen as final life stages of elderly people, but they can also be chosen earlier in life by spiritual seekers.[45] This form of asceticism is convincingly represented by the god Shiva.[46] Likewise, in Jainism each of the 24 Jina attained enlightenment – paraphrased by the term 'omniscience' – after months of roaming in the wilderness of a forest. In imitation of them, the Jain ascetics are still today committed to roaming in the wilderness.

Moreover, as in the case of Shatrunjaya, the wilderness is a preferred location to install sacred objects. Here they can be sealed and deliberately hidden away in order to preserve and protect them from pollution or defilement. In the words of Phillis Granoff, Shatrunjaya can be described as "esoteric holy object[s]".[47] Therefore, the path to it must be arduous and difficult to access.[48] Last of all, the relative seclusion of the accessible sacred realm can be taken as a symbol for the ultimate goal of the even more difficult to achieve Jain pilgrimage: spiritual salvation.

These findings must be connected to contemporary group pilgrimages on foot on different spatial and ritual dimensions. The remoteness of the sacred place is further accentuated by the hardships of the journey to Palitana, which are deliberately strengthened by re-enacting historical pilgrim processions. Well into the late 19th century, the pilgrimage to Palitana was a major undertaking for all Jains who did not belong to the local communities of the Bhavnagar District and it was almost exclusively organized as a group event. In a long procession of several hundred or even a thousand pilgrims, the participants marched on foot for days or several weeks and sometimes even months, across the borders of the kingdoms and chieftains.[49] These group pilgrimages on foot required enormous financial investments and logistical skills and were therefore hardly undertaken more than once in a lifetime by devotees from outside Saurashtra. Even though travel opportunities as well as the traffic connections today have considerably improved, group pilgrimages on foot remain the most beneficial means of proceeding to Palitana in terms of spiritual merits. This is despite the fact – or rather because of the fact – that other modes of transport are faster and less exhausting. Thus, during my long term fieldwork many, pilgrims claimed it was their explicit wish to lead a group of pilgrims as a patron *(sangha pati)* at least once in their lifetime. Others are less ambitious, but nonetheless wish to be invited and to partake in such an exceptional event.

45 Burghart 1983, 638; Hausner 2007, 101, 115; Michaels 2004, 71, 95–98, 101–109; Olivelle 1992, 44–45; Tilak 1989, 24, 37.

46 Doniger O'Flaherty 1981.

47 Granoff 1999, 168.

48 Luithle Hardenberg, J. Cort, and Orr 2014 and Luithle-Hardenberg (forthcoming).

49 S. Jain 2012.

7 Investing family assets into the joint venture of group pilgrimage

Not much different than in the past, the group pilgrimages on foot are outstanding and rare events in the life of a local community. It usually takes a patron more than a year to organize the journey, which includes about 300 to 1000 pilgrims, if not more. During the time of my fieldwork, 37 groups of pilgrims from six restrictions *(cha'ri palit sangha)* traveled to Palitana on foot with a varying number of 200 to 1000 pilgrims per group.[50] On the basis of this same data it can be estimated that an average number of 9000–15 000 pilgrims travel to Palitana in such a 'group of six austerities' every year.

In present times, the group pilgrimages of the six austerities *(cha'ri palit sangha)* show very clear similarities with the organization of historical group pilgrimages on foot and thereby also refer to their similarities with pre-modern trade caravans and military trains. Many obstacles and difficulties that all travelers in India were exposed to until the mid-nineteenth century no longer exist today. Some examples are of raids by predatory bands, inadequate protection during extreme climate conditions, untraceable paths and consequent aimless wanderings, a shortage of supplies and deadly diseases. However, many of the logistical details for a group pilgrimage by foot have hardly changed for centuries. Other aspects may even be more challenging than in the past, such as dangers that occur to pilgrims traveling on foot by road traffic (see below). For all reasons that any lay man who wants to fulfill the honorable task of a *sangha pati*, a "leader of the group",[51] must have, substantial financial resources, high skills of logistics and persistence are essential.

To date, it still belongs to the meritorious obligations of the patron *(sangha pati)* to cover all costs of travel, accommodation and catering for all participants whom he has personally invited (with personalized and costly invitation cards!). During the entire period of the pilgrimage, the patron must supply three meals for the invited participants (regardless of the fact that the majority of the pilgrims would eat only one meal a day due to the dietary restrictions).[52] The patron also provides night shelters for all pilgrims of his groups, usually in the form of tents, at least during their journey to Palitana, as well as room and board in one of the pilgrim hostels of Palitana before and after the ascent to the top of the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya.

Moreover, according to ritual prescriptions, the patron also has to conduct elaborate rituals *(pujas)* for the veneration of Adinatha and the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya on all days of the pilgrimage: He must shower gold and silver onto the sacred mountain as well as organize devotional music to be played. The patron must also take care of the

50 The Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi maintains full lists of larger groups of pilgrims, which I was permitted to see.

51 Sangave 1959, 277; Dundas 1992, 187.

52 Weber 1901, 249; Williams 1991 [1963], 235.

renovation or the new construction of temples at the sacred site or on the road to Shatrunjaya.[53] Last but not least, the *sangha pati's* family leads the procession of pilgrims.[54] Special attention is given to the wife of a patron, who becomes the *sanghavi ma*, the 'mother(s)' of the [pilgrim] group. Together with her spouse she assumes a central role in all rituals of the group of pilgrims. Only the *sangha pati* and the *sanghavi* ma may ride an elephant or a horse, sit in a chariot, sometimes accompanied by their children, or be carried by his relatives, especially when the procession enters Palitana and leads to the foot of Shatrunjaya. Thus, on the occasion of the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya, the *patron* not only presides the pilgrim processions, but he also has a crucial role in displaying and re-enacting the four-fold community *(caturvidha sangha)*: the ideal religious community of the Jains, in public. Thus, the patron is the key figure of the pilgrim procession and is explicitly linked to the by and large strong conviction of the pilgrims that he only benefits the group pilgrimage on foot in underlining the importance of the community for the spiritual quest of the individual pilgrim.

My focus now turns to illustrating the general features of a *ca'ri palit sangha*. In order to illustrate and highlight important features of a group pilgrimage on foot, I will occasionally refer to a case study I observed in January 2002. I will denote this particular case study (in the mode of the Jains themselves) as Shantilalbhai's[55] *sangha* ('group'). I selected this particular case study out of a number of similar samples since I was able to accompany the group and notably the patron's family from the very beginning to the very end of the pilgrimage.

Shantilalbhai started to outline his *ca'ri plait sangha* as early as 1998, when he was in his mid-70s. During his lifetime, he spent most of his efforts on the family business in Mumbai[56] and funding and organizing a group pilgrimage of the six restrictions *(cha'ri palit sangha)* to Palitana was meant to be the grand finale of his fruitful life. Ultimately, this wish was not granted to him: As the preparations for the *cha'ri palit sangha* was gaining momentum in 1998, Shantilalbhai fell ill with cancer and died shortly after. Only three years later, in the spring of 2001, his son Ratilalbhai and his nephews Harshantbhai and Arvindbhait carried on with Shantilalbhais' project and thus continued the organization of the *cha'ri palit* sangha on behalf of the deceased father and uncle. The all had grown up together as a joint family in a large house in Mumbai.

In my view, it is crucial to understand that the planning and organization of these group pilgrimages are always a joint venture – even if the initial impetus comes from a senior relative (deceased or alive) who might stand in front (or might not). Thus, the importance of the family business and its assets must be the emphasis over individual

53 For the social realization of that requirement during the 19th century see also Hawon forthcoming.

54 Weber 1901, 249; Williams 1991 [1963], 233–235.

55 All names have been changed into pseudonyms.

56 To date, the family enterprise produces plastic components for industrial use.

possessions in order to understand the transformation of shared wealth into shared spiritual merits. This interpretation must be understood in a marked contrast to the idea of merit transfer as claimed by Granoff for similar roles of patrons of temple foundations.[57] Strictly speaking, a merit transfer is contrary to the principle of Jain doctrine according to which spiritual merit can only be attained by personal effort (see above and below). However, since income from the family business is always shared between all family members (who, one-by-one, invest individual efforts to take part in the family business) a patron/sponsor, who acts in his own name but in fact spends the family's fortune into a group pilgrimage does, strictly speaking, never act alone.

This can clearly be seen in all stages of the group pilgrimage. From the first preparations to the actual performance of the pilgrimage, the patron and his close kinsmen are constantly supervised by ascetic preceptors in order to guarantee a spiritually effective group pilgrimage.[58] Thus, the patron seeks consultation with a senior ascetic, mostly the leader of a larger ascetic group (Acarya) to whom he feels particularly devoted to for personal reasons. For instance, just before his untimely death, Shantilalbhai had already asked Acarya Narendrasagarsuri of Sagaranandsuri Samuday to act as the spiritual leader of the pilgrim group (he particularly appreciated his spiritual advice after he had met him on the grand occasion of consecrating a temple, which was donated by an affinal relative). In accordance with Narendrasagarsuri's advice, the patron *(sangha pati)* must first specify the route and the dates of the pilgrimage, including an auspicious starting time. For that purpose, the itineraries of the leading senior ascetic and his group have to be considered and fixed as the route of the pilgrimage has to be coordinated with them.

8 The starting point of a group pilgrimage on foot: linking places of origin with ascetic routes and sacred space

At the beginning of the planning stage, the starting point of the pilgrimage is chosen by the patron and his close relatives. In general two option are possible: Either they decide for another pilgrimage site (see below) or the family's place of origin *(mul vatan)*, which nowadays rarely corresponds with the actual place of residence. Whereas the great majority of contemporary Shvetambara Jains live in metropolitan centers outside Gujarat (e.g. Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata), the place of origin (e.g. the birthplace and home of the grandfathers of the patrilineage) is mostly located in the rural part of the Saurashtra peninsula, in Gujarat or in Marvad (Western Rajasthan). In general, the houses are abandoned by the families and often stand empty or only maintained by servants, but relations to the former clients are still nurtured over the years through occasional visits.

57 Granoff 1992, 184.

58 Weber 1901, 249.

If the patron originates from Saurashtra, it is more common that he chooses the birth place of his forefathers as the starting point of his *sangha*.

For instance, Shantilalbhai decided to start the *ca'ri palit sangha* from the village of his ancestors, Akolali, only about 15 km in linear distance westwards of Palitana, which has less than 2000 inhabitants today, none of them being Jain. Many of the trading communities of Saurashtra Akolali Jains started to move out of the village to Mumbai in the late 19th century, among them Shantilalbhais grandfather. However, the family maintained their ancestor's house and kept returning for family gatherings and Shantilalbhai was liked by the villagers and acted as a benefactor for many decades by supporting anyone who needed financial help.

However, in many other instances of group pilgrimages, the patron's family is from mainland Gujarat or from Marvad in Rajasthan – where the distance to Palitana exceeds 200 km. In these cases, the place of origin is rarely chosen as the starting point of a *ca'ri plait sangha* and a pilgrimage place in close distance from Palitana might be chosen as an alternative.

The most popular are Talavdhja, Hastagiri or Kadambgiri (about 25 to 35 km from Palitana) with a travel time on foot to Palitana of two to three days. A pilgrim procession starts in Vallabhipur (55 km) almost as frequently, which results in about a week's walk. All four pilgrimage sites are considered as integral parts of the sacred geography of Shatrunjaya. Occasionally, pilgrimage sites at a further distance are selected as starting points, especially Shankheshvar (Mahesana District, 225 km) and Girnar in Junagadh (175 km). Pilgrim processions starting from there to Shatrunjaya usually take 14 days to three weeks.[59]

Independent of the pilgrimage starting point, the local origin of the patron corresponds with the local origin of the majority of pilgrims whom he invites to accompany him on the group pilgrimage. These are for the most part his consanguineous and affinal kinsmen, who mostly also belong to the same local caste. The shared local origin of pilgrims in a group also implies that the majority of pilgrim groups are associated with ascetics of the Tapa Gaccha, the largest Shvetambara order, whose ascetics prefer to choose (but not exclusively) their wandering routes across Shaurashtra, mainland Gujarat and Maharashtra. Moreover, all lay participants of a group pilgrimage on foot are usually committed to the same ascetic leader and his particular subgroup of the order *(samuday)*, to which their personal guru belongs to.

59 In equally rare cases, longer distances are covered if the residence of the patron is consistent with the place of origin of his ancestors (mostly in mainland Gujarat). In this case, the group of pilgrims may also start from there, even if it implies longer distances. This applies usually for medium-sized or larger cities in Saurashtra or mainland Gujarat with a considerable Jain population such as Rajkot (161 km), Ahmedabad (220 km), Jamnagar (252 km), Patan (318 km), Vadodara (238 km), and Surat (378 km). As a result, the group pilgrimage on foot may take up to three weeks.

Compared to the Tapa Gaccha, the two smaller orders, Khartar and Ancala Gaccha, start out less frequently for group pilgrimages on foot. They need to cover even larger distances from places in Marvad or Kucch respectively – regions which are crossed by the traditional migration routes of the Kharatara and Ancal Gascha's ascetics. In case they start from the native place of the patron, such as the districts of Jalod (527 km) or Bhuj (400 km), the pilgrimage to Palitana takes at least a month. The longer distances from the Kharatara and Ancal Gaccha's heartlands make a *cha'ri palit sangha* from these areas even more exceptional and usually these are jointly sponsored and organized by a board of trustees who lead groups of pilgrims up to 5000 members and may reach Palitana once in five years.

9 Fixing the time, mapping the route and planning the tent cities

Since the ascetics have to interrupt their perpetual migrations during the four months of ritual rainy season *(comasu)* from approximately July to November, a group pilgrimage on foot can only be performed afterwards. Moreover, the ascetics have to organize their itineraries in order to reach the particular starting point on time. After the general schedule has been delineated, the leading senior ascetic fixes the beginning of the pilgrimage up to the day, hour and minute with an auspicious astrological constellation.

In the case study of Shantilalbhai, his son and his nephews first had an informal discussion with the leading senior ascetic Acarya Narendrasagarsuris about their general ideas in spring 2001. Afterwards, the Narendrasagarsuri discussed their request with other ascetics of his Tapa Gaccha sub-group *(samuday)*, who were to accompany him on pilgrimage. Eight male and fourteen female ascetics were selected. At the next, more ritualized meeting the senior ascetic announced the auspicious starting day and time as determined by him to be January 30, 2002 at 3:48 pm. Next, the patrons formally invited his Guru and his ascetic disciples to accompany and instruct the lay pilgrims on the pilgrimage and they sought his blessings by performing the ritual of *guru vandan* ('venerating the Guru').

During the following weeks glossy invitation cards were sent to 600 potential participants, mostly consanguineous and affinal relatives, but also to a smaller number of (Jain) friends and close business partners. Moreover, in order to attract additional prospects, announcements were posted in the temples of the Shvetambara Jain neighborhoods in Mumbai.

The next planning stage generally involves mapping of the exact route from the chosen starting point to Palitana. For that purpose many ritual aspects along with some practical analysis need to be considered. The minimum duration for a pilgrimage on foot

to Palitana is three days, and depending upon its starting point, can be endured for up to three weeks. With the exception of the ascetics, only a few pilgrims are accustomed to getting around on foot, so usually an average of about 10 km is planned for a day's stage. Consequently, a *ca'ri palit sangha* will have to cover at least 30 km. Moreover, the pilgrims are marching in a fixed formation with a chariot in the center of their procession. As a result, their pace is slow and the procession of several hundred people takes up a large proportion of the road. Therefore, main roads and highways tend to be avoided in order to escape the danger and chaos of dense traffic, which usually occurs in India due to a large number of trucks. Zoned sidewalks for pedestrians are rare, would not provide the necessary capacity for a larger procession of pilgrims, and therefore would provoke hazardous overtaking maneuvers, of which quite a number of pilgrims have already been victims.[60] If highways cannot be avoided, the procession has to be adequately shielded by energetic young men who serve as traffic guards with colored flags.

In addition, the image(s) of the Jinas carried along in the procession must be protected from ritual pollution and high traffic roads always involve greater risks to commit ritual transgressions or sacrilege *(ashatna)*, for instance, by accidents which involve injuries of men or animals. Furthermore, as exemplified above, the wilderness or the forest is of a considerable conceptual importance for the implementation of pilgrimage and the ascetic *habitus* of the lay pilgrims. For the same reason, remote country roads are also preferred. Nowadays tracts of land that could be actually designated as wilderness or forest are rarely to be found in western India – not even in the country side – but the area crossed by pilgrim processions is often times barren and deserted and as such marked in contrast to the urban every-day-life of the majority of pilgrims. In the case of Shantilalbhai's *sangha* all these factors and considerations led to the decision for mapping a zig-zagging route from Akolali to Palitana on rather remote roads. Thus, three major goals could be pursued: walking a sufficient distance, having the sensation of 'wilderness' and maintaining a high standard of safety.

Once the route is fixed, the next step of planning must be devoted to designing the tent cities, which serve as accommodation for the pilgrim group. The general favor for remoteness leads again to preferring villages instead of towns or cities for setting up the night quarters of a *ca'ri palit sangha*. Moreover, in order to daily assemble a tent city serving as a mobile hostel for several hundred participants, large pieces of raw land are needed and these can rather be found in the less populated areas.

Above all, the organization of the tent site represents the largest logistical task for the patron. Though the size of a tent city can vary considerably according to the number of participants, they can be characterized by the following general features: In accordance

60 This serious issue is frequently discussed by alarmed lay people, who seek to protect the ascetics in particular, who are too detached from every day concerns and are not rarely affected by incidents, mainly when travelling in smaller groups of their peers.

with the vow of celibacy, a U-shaped structure is formed by two rows of smaller tents – one side for men and one for women. Usually the tents of the male and female ascetics are situated at one end of the respective row. They are protected by large pieces of cloth from onlookers and are located in immediate vicinity to the large and central assembly tent, which connects both rows and serves as a gathering place. It also includes a purified and separated zone for hosting the mobile temple of the procession and for collectively performing elaborate image-worshipping rituals *(puja)*.

A little outside of the closed row of U-shaped tents another large tent is set up for the lay pilgrims to take their meals, which are prepared in the adjacent field kitchen three times a day: before and after the daily processions and before sunset. While the pilgrims decide individually which meal they take (with most of them strictly following the restriction to eat only once a day) the patron has to offer the facilities on every occasion.

In order to ensure the smooth operation of the tent site, the patron also needs to provide the equipment for two tent cities as the dismantling and setting up of the tents takes longer than the day's stage of the pilgrim procession. Consequently, the tent city of the previous night is dismantled immediately after the departure of the pilgrims and transported by trucks to the second to next destination in order to be hurriedly reassembled. This ensures that the tent city is fully set up and meals are prepared for the pilgrims once they reach the next milestone.

After completing the initial planning process of designing the route of procession and fixing its stopping points in tent quarters, at least several months but often times more than a year will pass until to the pilgrimage is actually performed. During this time, all members of the patron's family, the *sanghavi parivar* and their affinal relatives put tremendous efforts into organizing the pilgrimage down to the smallest detail. Above all, the following services must be engaged and tested for quality, involving lengthy negotiations and extensive bargaining for prices:

- tent equipment rental and recruitment of paid and volunteer auxiliary workers who take over the setting up and dismantling of the tent cities
- cooks, kitchen assistants and mobile kitchens with cooking utensils for the respective number of participants
- rental of transport animals (elephants, camels, bulls, horses) and a chariot for the pilgrim procession
- professional photographers
- musicians
- bus operators, who provide transport from the residence of the participants to the starting point of the pilgrimage and back

Apart from the professional service providers, a patron seeks to find a ritual specialist *(vidhikar)* from his own local community, who accompanies the group of pilgrims and takes care of coordinating the details of the rituals that take place during the procession, in Palitana and on the top of Shatrunjaya mountain. This task also includes transactions with the managing trust Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi, which has to provide space, utensils and ingredients for the elaborate rituals at the foot and on top of the sacred mountain. Moreover, village chiefs have to be visited to receive their permission for setting up the tent cities.

10 Getting started in Akolali

A few days before the pilgrim procession is about to begin, either the patron himself or a close male relative travels by car to the starting point of the pilgrimage for the first time in order to supervise the construction of the first tent city and to formally receive the gradually incoming ascetics as well as lay pilgrims. In the case of Shantilalbhais *sangha*, two of his grandsons were assigned this task. However, according to a warning from the senior ascetic, Shantilalbhais' son and his cousins had to avoid Akolali shortly before the commencement of the group pilgrimage since the astrological constellation was considered inauspicious. For this reason, they only arrived by car on same day, as the pilgrimage began. Once all participants were present, the pilgrims gathered to perform a festive procession for the first time, but moving just a several hundred meters through Akolali, only to reach the first tent city, which was set up to host 800 pilgrims and another 150 auxiliary workers.

This event must be taken as the actual and typical beginning of the group pilgrimage. It is celebrated by all pilgrims of the group, but also by the locals of the town or village, which tremendously profits from this occasion through selling large quantities of food and other raw materials to the group of pilgrims. In particular during the first chariot procession at the start of the group pilgrimage, the patron is cheerfully praised as a benefactor by carrying him through the streets at the head of the procession and by throwing colored rice on him. On this occasion, all cognatic members of the patrons' family are equipped with a princely idiom, dressed in festive, bright clothes, turbans and heavy gold jewellery.

In our case study, the honor of leading the procession was given to one of the three patrons, Ratilalbhai, Shantilalbhais son. Meanwhile, the other two patrons handled the task of throwing coins and sweets into the crowd of onlookers, mainly villagers from Akolali. This can be perceived as another display of the patrons' royal idiom and his duty to give ceremonial gifts to the pilgrims as well as to people of the transit villages.

What is less obvious is that this kind of procession also implies an ascetic idiom since it is very similar in appearance to the *varshi dan*, the procession of a future ascetic where he publicly renounces all worldly possessions. We must bear in mind however that the patron incorporates both characteristics of a pilgrim as exemplified above.[61]

Shortly after the processions' arrival in the tent city, the pilgrims gathered for the first time in the central assembly tent by strictly observing the formation of the fourfold community. The senior ascetic, Narendrasagarsuri led the assembly surrounded by the other male ascetics of the group, altogether seated on a wooden throne *(gadi)*. Lay men sat on the right of the ascetics, the women to their left with the female ascetics in front and the lay women in the back rows. The usual seating arrangement of a fourfold community also implied that those present formed a semi-circle around the image of the Jina (Adinatha) placed on a three-tier mobile shrine *(trigadu)* and later carried in the procession. After a short prayer and after blessing of the assembly *(mangalik)*, the senior ascetic delivered a sermon,[62] which again praised the patrons who enabled such a large group of pilgrims to undertake the meritorious pilgrimage *(yatra)* Shatrunjaya. He continued with inciting the pilgrims to make use of the unique chance that was provided by the patron for the period of the group pilgrimage on foot: to focus on the one and only goal to strive for in a human life – spiritual progress *(sadhana)*. Everyone who was born as a human being should lead a group pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime lead to Shatrunjaya in order to burn harmful *karmas*. As a result, spiritual merit *(punya)* was gained and the redemption of rebirth *(moksh)* was palpable. The patrons treated each participant as a VIP and accepting this generosity was the best way to honor the patrons. The patrons and the ascetic leader (viz., he himself, Narendrasagarsuri) share the responsibility for guiding the group. The patron on the one hand, assumes the role of Bharat, who was the ruler of the world *(cakravartin)* and was therefore decorated with the attributes of a prince: a turban, precious jewelry and magnificent robes. The Acarya, on the other hand, is the spiritual leader and thus represents the tradition of the spiritual kingdom of the Jina. The money and gifts *(dan)* of the patron's family to the assembly and even more the devotion *(bhav)* of all participants make the *cha'ri palit sangha* a success. In order to strengthen the devotion and keep up the morale, the strict adherence to the six austerities is crucial (which were exemplified in detail).

After the sermon, the patron stood up in front of the assembly to invite all pilgrims of his group together with the village elders and the whole village (!) to a common feast, thereby again doing justice to his princely duty of feeding his community. However, as

61 Banks 1992, 80–82; Cort 1991, 653; Dundas 1992, 104–143.

62 As ascetics do not allow to record their voices for ritual reasons (e.g. strict abdication of electric devices) the content of the sermon could not be quoted/translated word-by-word.

repeatedly shown below, his duty to spend a fortune in ceremonial gifts to all participants of his *sangha* and the bystanders was just beginning and far from being fulfilled.

11 Going to extremes in mutual support: away from the every-day-amenities of urban life

Usually a group of pilgrims set out for the first day of the pilgrimage to Palitana only on the morning after their arrival to the respective starting point. However, due to the particular astrological circumstances, Shantilalbhai's group of pilgrims started shortly after the patrons' ritual obligation to their ancestors was fulfilled, e.g. without having spent a night in the shelter of the tent city. Some lay man took care that it was commenced exactly on the fixed hour of 15:48. They started pushing their fellow pilgrims to partake into the procession in the typical formation a little bit in advance.

Upon first sight it was amazing that this procession was much less opulent when compared to the grand processions of its first formation in the morning. However, this feature applied to all subsequent days and it was also shared by all other group pilgrimages I observed before and afterwards: during an extended foot march from one stopping point of the procession to another the pilgrims – including the patron and his family – were generally focused on the physical strains. This implied that most of them continued walking largely in silence, even if some were performing a mantra meditation with prayer beads *(jap)*. Moreover, they preferred simple white or pastel colored clothes and only a small number of traditional musicians accompanied the moderate devotional songs. According to their own statements, the pilgrims were engrossed by the experience to be aloof of their every day urban lives.

Even though these endured foot marches were not marked off ritually, they formed the larger part of the group pilgrimage on foot. In fact, the pilgrims themselves discerned these rather unspectacular periods as the 'actual pilgrimage' *(yatra)*, which implies innate contemplation of the individual pilgrim's spiritual quest. This characterization of the interim stages of the pilgrimage are very similar to the circumstances of the steam climb to the summit of Shatrunjaya at the very end of the group pilgrimage described below.

The sensation of wilderness and loneliness was largely cherished by the pilgrims – at least in the beginning of a day's stage – in expressing feelings of euphoria while walking through the most remote areas of Saurashtra. However, after having completed the first five kilometers or so the mood slightly changed to first experiences of exhaustion, especially for those who were not used to walking barefoot and/ or longer distances at all and for those who already started in a rather worn condition due the general excitement of the long bus journey on the previous night.

Moreover, since the pace of the pilgrims varies considerably, the four larger groups of a procession – lay men, male ascetics, female ascetics and lay women, are often clearly fragmented. According to their sex, age, stamina and pace the pilgrims form smaller units, which often stay together for the whole period of the foot march to Palitana and they are formed again on the next day. Here, the idea of mutual support is again put in the fore. In general, the fastest units are formed by young ascetics who are trained to walk long distances at a speedy pace, only equaled by the sporty young men of the respective group. The opposite end of the procession is usually taken by a horse- or camel-drawn wagon which carries the smaller children and people with walking difficulties.[63] Pilgrims of the spontaneously formed units would constantly motivate each other, never allowing their mates to take a rest alone or to drop behind. If someone becomes tired, he or she is encouraged, or even firmly taken in the middle of the group, holding his/her hands and telling him/her to go on. This is particularly important for those pilgrims who include additional ascetic observances into the pilgrimage on foot, e.g. a complete fasting (with or without taking water) for up to four days. As claimed by the pilgrims taking up this kind of fierce asceticism during a pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya will guarantee salvation after three rebirths, a privilege, which is usually attributed to outstanding ascetic leaders only. Despite the high motivation for achieving that goal, this practice regularly leads to extreme exhaustion and many pilgrims collapse while performing it. In many instances the exhausted pilgrims have to be constantly supported by others, who fan air into their faces, put wet napkins on their heads and constantly push them physically and verbally to complete the day's stage.

Though from the very beginning of my fieldwork I regularly heard of people who had died during a group pilgrimage, I never witnessed any of the exhausted pilgrims giving up or interrupting the pilgrimage (or to be encouraged to do so). Instead, any pilgrim who had successfully gone through an extraordinarily exhausting experience enjoyed all the more approval and respect from others. Thus, physical exertion was also rhetorically and explicitly welcomed by all the pilgrims and without exception. In the case of Shantilalbhai's group, this ascetic spirit and the unusual physical hardships even led to the serious consequence of an untimely death. One of the brothers-in-law *(sala)* of the three patrons collapsed already on the first day's stage and died on his way to the hospital in Palitana. Despite the loss, the three patrons were at pains to observe the day's program, as they felt even more responsible for the success of the pilgrimage and held it as their honourable duty to lead the group of pilgrims to the end. In order to not transfer inauspicious grief to the whole group of pilgrims, the widow agreed to tell all other pilgrims that her husband was still alive and in hospital. The death rituals were held the next day but with as little attention as possible.

63 The personal baggage of the pilgrims is transported to the next destination in cars.

A few days later, one of the senior ascetics of Shantilalbhai's group was reflecting upon this untimely death by conceptualizing it in terms of the spiritual goal of pilgrimage: only because the patron's *sala* had acquired sufficient spiritual merit *(punya)*, his soul *(jiva)* was able to leave this life and this particular body while performing pilgrimage, a religious activity *(aradhana)* by which his soul got rid of plenty of bad *karmas*. Consequently, a favourable rebirth was certain to him, an interpretation which was accepted with relief even by his closest relatives.

12 Taking night quarters in the tent city

Having completed a day's stage and arriving at the respective day's stopover destination, the patrons are formally welcomed by the elders of the hosting village. Immediately afterwards, the majority of pilgrims would turn to the canteen tent to take the only meal of the day. The subsequent program is mostly consistent and uniform: a short sermon from the senior ascetic would normally again refer to the consciously applied austerities and physical strains of pilgrimage, including eloquent praises and motivating but also humorous reprimands for those who were too exhausted. On every alternate day, the sermon might be followed by an elaborate and prolonged communal ritual, which lasts for at least three hours and is mostly devoted to Adinatha, Shatrunjaya or one of the protector goddesses. The day's end is marked by the ritual of forgiveness *(pratikraman)*,[64] which is celebrated in gender segregated groups immediately before night's rest.

It must be noted however, that the accommodation in tent cities poses another ascetic challenge for most of the lay pilgrims who are used to urban comfort and a more leisure lifestyle. In the tent cities, they must abandon running water and electricity, moreover, they have to stay in larger groups of 10–15 people in a tent and therefore lack any room for privacy. To ensure the strict observance of the vow of chastity, members of the opposite sex are not allowed in the tents of the ascetics and one also has to leave the tents of the lay pilgrims of the opposite sex before nightfall. Cross-gender relations within families are interrupted and compliance with these directives is strictly monitored, mostly by the ascetics.

This routine is continued for the next days. It implies for the anthropologist that the only chance to talk to pilgrims occurs after sunset – when pilgrims take quarters in their gender-segregated tents. Whenever I paid visits to the tents of female lay pilgrims at the end of a day, I usually found them spread out on their mattresses, where they had dropped. Even though they looked very tired, they were obviously very excited and proud of having successfully finished the day's stage. They used to complain jokingly

64 For further details see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 190–195.

about their aching feet which were swollen and pierced by thorns because they were not used to walking barefoot. However, these complaints were always mixed with the obvious and outspoken satisfaction to provide a visible proof of the physical strains that ultimately would lead to the spiritual goal of pilgrimage. In the same mood, the pilgrims might complain about not getting sufficient sleep, suffering from sore muscles and of losing weight. In the evenings our conversations often came to an end when a maid appeared and offered to massage the pilgrim's legs for a small payment. In contrast to that, other body treatments, which are usually part of the every-day-routine of an Indian middle class women, such as oiling the hair, are denounced as an evidence for vanity, which is an aspect of ego *(man)* and therefore not in accordance with the code of behavior of ascetics and pious lay people. For the same reason, many lay pilgrims abstain from using mirrors during pilgrimage.

13 Proceeding through the pilgrim town: integrating historical with mythological space

The group pilgrimages on foot are always scheduled to reach Palitana one day in advance of the ascent to the summit of Shatrunjaya – the eagerly awaited climax of the pilgrimage *(yatra)*. Once again, a vibrant chariot procession is formed by the pilgrim group to enter Palitana. On this occasion all pilgrims of the *cha'ri palit sangha* wear festival clothes and opulent jewelry. However, the crucial and outstanding role of the patrons(s) as the leader(s) and sponsor(s) of the group is again highlighted by several princely attributes, including turbans and extremely expensive clothes. After a welcome of the patron and the ascetics by officials of the managing trust, the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi at the outskirts of Palitana, the procession moves for several hours on a fixed route through the town. The patron and his closest kin lead the procession while usually being seated on elephants, thereby once again stressing the royal idiom. Sometimes patrons may prefer to go by foot in order to display their attitude of humility and this was also done by the three cousin brothers of Shantlalbhai's group. However, other lay pilgrims of their group would not allow them to do so, but carried them most of the time, even though the patron accepted this kind of special treatment only reluctantly. In several other respects, the procession of Shantilalbhai's group through Palitana very much resembled general features of all processions, which I could witness in Palitana: female members of the patron's family as well as children followed the main patrons at the forefront in horse-drawn carts. From their raised positions, they threw coins, sweets, rice and small gifts to the spectators. A large number of professional musicians, dancers and acrobats (usually of the local shepherd's caste, the Bharvad) were integrated into the procession

and were creating an ecstatic mood among the pilgrims. Also, the image of Adinatha, which was carried in the procession, was very carefully presented by a particularly elaborate decoration of flowers *(angi)*. Moreover, two pilgrims were indicating their devotional dedication by sitting at each side of the image and constantly swinging a fan of yak hair *(camar)*.

Another key element of the grand final procession is the constant pouring of a milk-water mixture in front of the mobile shrine in order to cleanse the earth ritually in front of the car.[65] If procession bulls drag the mobile temple they are particularly festively decorated, else wise (as in Shantilalbhai's *sangh*) young men of the pilgrim group compete and at the same are cheeringly encouraging each other for performing the honorable duty to jointly pull it.

The route of the procession through Palitana not only leads to important Jain temples and shrines of the old town, but it also includes prominent places of general interest, e.g. the main bazaar (1), a large square in front of the destroyed royal palace (2) and, opposite to it, the central mosque (3). As already pointed out by Jain, Jain processions in general are instrumental in conceptually creating a Jain city in a space that is not a priori inhabited by Jains.[66] However, Palitana is considerably influenced and also economically dependent upon the Jain pilgrimage culture. Moreover, even if Palitana is not dominated in numbers by permanent Jain inhabitants, the Jain pilgrims who come to the town to perform their pilgrimage clearly outrun the total number of inhabitants (approx. 52 000) according to the census of 2011).[67]

Therefore, I suggest to interpret the three main breakpoints of the pilgrims' processions to the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya as symbolic milestones of a dialogue, integration and competition with the non-Jain environment. This social and mundane space has to be crossed by the pilgrim procession in order to finally reach the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya. In fact, all of the first three places passed by the pilgrim processions represent important aspects of the Jain community's historical and contemporary efforts to self-assert themselves as an influential religious minority within the society of Western India: the bazaar can be taken, *pars pro toto* for the arena where the Jain traders to date are among the most successful businessmen, where they earned their wealth and where they communicate as patrons with members of almost all other communities.[68] The Darbar Chowk, a central square in front of the former palace of the local rulers, the Thakurs of Palitana (burnt down in 1999) still stands for the political authorities, who were for a period of about a hundred years the main opponents of the managing trust of Shatrunjaya, the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi (serving as the representative of the Jain community). During this period, a substantial revenue was repeatedly demanded

65 See also: Cort 2001, 161; J. Jain 1979, 16–17.
66 J. Jain 1977, 37.
67 Census of India 2011.
68 Bayly 1983, 176, 232, 451.

by the local princes from the Jain pilgrims who, in turn, defended their ownership of the sacred mountain.[69] It is interesting to note that the judicial argumentation of the Jains at British courts against a fixed pilgrimage tax was considerably fueled by a donation of Shatrunjaya Mountain to a prominent leader of the Jain community, Shantidas Jhaveri (hitherto the major (*nagarsheth* of Ahmedabad) which dates back to the 16th century Moghul emperor Akbar, who was famous for religious tolerance and strived to integrate the Hindu majority with the former Muslim ruling elite. Therefore most of the pilgrims pay respect to representatives of the local Muslim community and until today most of the pilgrims' processions stop chanting, playing music and dancing while passing the central mosque (opposite of the former Thakur's palace), in order to not disturb the worshipers.[70]

About fifty meters behind the palace and the mosque a small alley leads to the third milestone of the procession: the oldest Jain temple, Motu Derasar. The patron quickly leaves the procession for a short temple ritual, mostly in the company of his ascetic Guru and his disciples.[71] A few hundred meters further the procession makes a short detour to a dead end off the main road. Within a small walled-in yard the patron performs a short ritual for the footprints of Adinatha under a Rayan tree. This place is called Juni Taleti ('old foot') of the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya. This fourth milestone is a palpable topographical expression for cosmological concepts of the sacred and eternal mountain Shatrunjaya, which is conceived as constantly growing and shrinking in accordance with favorable and unfavorable periods of our world age, but never vanishing completely.

Behind the next corner, the procession turns into the broad alley of Taleti Road, the 'foot road' which connects the bazaar with the northern, contemporary foot of the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya and which is lined by about a hundred and thirty pilgrim hostels *(dharmashala)*. From there, quite a number of bypassing pilgrims (both lay and ascetic) usually join the pilgrim processions for a while or they stop and prostrate on the road in order to venerate the senior ascetics.

Eventually, the procession culminates into an impressive climax of attention when reaching its final goal, referred to as the Jay Taleti ('praising the foot'), a sanctuary at the

69 Finally, from 1926 to 1928, the endured controversy led to a boycott by the Jain community, who abandoned the pilgrimage to the sacred center Shatrunjaya. The boycott led to the effect that the hitherto vibrant market town was threatened with bankruptcy and therefore the Thakur had to withdraw his excessive demands. According to elder members of the contemporary local Jain community of Palitana before (and after) the boycott the patrons of pilgrims' groups were always received by an emissary of the Thakur's court. This practice was discontinued only in the late 30s when Thakur Bahadursingh moved into a modern palace outside of the city, the Hava Mahal. For details see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 141–145.

70 See also Cort 2001, 162.

71 During historical times this integral part of a group pilgrimage on foot was linked to a welcome reception by the elders of the local Jain community who – before the beginning of the 20th century (when many of the pilgrim hostels where started) – were obliged to support any pilgrim and in particular the pilgrim's groups with guidance.

northern foot of the mountain, facing Palitana. Its main attraction is an aniconic piece of rock situated in immediate proximity to the first steps of the ascent and thus also marks the beginning of the ascent to the temple city on the top of Shatrunjaya. This Taleti-rock represents the eternal, sacred mountain itself, considered to be *tirthadiraja*, the king of all pilgrimage places. However, in their worshipping at Jay Taleti, the pilgrims do not only address the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya, but also Adishvar/Adinatha, whose footprints are installed in several shrines around the Taleti rock. Oftentimes, the Taleti rock itself is also said to symbolically represent the feet of the first Jina. Here, the pilgrim group concludes the grand procession through Palitana by entering the Jay Taleti compound under enthusiastic cheers for praising Adinatha. Like all pilgrims, they assemble in front of the Taleti rock for a joint liturgical ritual *(caitya vandana)*, 'prostration in the temple'. The ritual at Jay Taleti completes the procession and is again collectively performed by all participants of the pilgrim group under the guidance of the senior ascetic.

Despite the obvious exhaustion of the majority of participants, this ritual triggers another emotional climax of the group pilgrimage on foot: after days and sometimes even weeks of strenuous walking and hardships, the pilgrims have achieved the foot of the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya. The emotionally most important element of this ritual is the devotional, collective singing. At the end of the ritual, the pilgrims are to throw coins and (more rarely) pearls and 'gems' (most likely imitations made of glass or rhinestones) onto the Taleti rock. Then, the pilgrim group moves on to their last tent city, which in most cases is set up in close vicinity to Taleti. In recent years, however, most of the patrons increasingly choose to quarter their group of pilgrims in one of the many pilgrim hostels in Palitana.[72] Elsewhere I have argued that these hostels are organised in a similar way as the group pilgrimages on foot, e.g according to three aspects: (1) the place of origin of lay pilgrims; (2) the local caste of lay pilgrims; (3) the affiliation of lay pilgrims with a certain ascetic branch or sub-branch (*gaccha* or *samudaya*) and thus can be taken as a more solid representation of the fourfold community (male and female ascetics and lay people).[73] As soon as the pilgrims reach their tent city or their hostel, most activities resemble the daily routine after the previous days' stages.

However, later in the evening all lay people of the group assemble to stage a public auction of donations *(boli)*. In the course of the auction, the highest bidders will be allocated with the honorable duty of paying homage *(bahuman)* to all members of the

72 Accommodation in a pilgrim hostel for a large group is more costly for the sponsor, but it offers more comfort to the pilgrims than in a tent city. While usually comfort should be avoided during the pilgrimage this detail is quite important as the participants of a group pilgrimage on foot often have no facilities to bath at all. However, access to the sacred mountain requires ritual cleansing, including a full ritual bath. This precondition is much easier to accomplish for a large group while staying in a hostel than in a tent city.

73 Luithle-Hardenberg 2006; Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 319–405.

patron's family by garlanding and gift giving.[74] This festive occasion is usually scheduled for the next and final day when the final goal of pilgrimage, the Adinatha temple on top of Shatrunjaya is reached by all members of the pilgrim group.[75]

14 Climbing Shatrunjaya and reaching the final goal of pilgrimage *(yatra)*

The crucial role of physical exertion for spiritual progress and for approaching Shatrunjaya has already been exemplified in the context of the foot march's day stages (see above). It is also the central theme of the ascent to the temple city on the summit of the sacred mountain. The summit can only be reached after climbing at least one and a half hours on a steam path with 3745 steps.[76] The only alternative to walking is a *doli*, a kind of palanquin often carried by herdsmen (of the Bharvad caste) who are employed by aged or ailing pilgrims for money. However, they are rarely hired by participants of group pilgrimages, who are usually quite persistent walkers after having performed the journey to Palitana on foot and usually claim that physical exertion is instrumental for a successful pilgrimage. The procession usually starts out on the last part of their journey in the early morning, as the sun rises (in order to avoid the hotter periods of the day). To reach Taleti, all participants for a last time move together in the formation of a procession, but this time without any ostentation. Another liturgical ritual is jointly performed at Taleti, but in a meditational mood and not as joyful as upon the arrival of the group in Palitana. Moreover, before commencing the ascent to the summit of Shatrunjaya, the pilgrims must individually ask forgiveness for any possible ritual transgression *(ashatna)* which they may commit on the sacred soil of the entire Shatrunjaya mountain.[77] These two rituals at Taleti form the liturgical starting point of the ascent which incorporates five obligatory destinations where all pilgrims have to perform the liturgical worship of the respective main image *(panca caitya vandana)*.[78] All of the five obligatory rituals require the recitation of liturgical phrases, ritual prostrations, and the singing of hymns *(stuti)* and devotional songs *(sthavana)*. The texts refer to myths and legends related to the

74 In these auctions the highest bids reach up to six-figure amounts (in Euros).

75 The money collected in this auction is the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi's due. The trust will then take care that the money will only be used for the maintenance and renovation of the temples of Shatrunjaya. This category of gift giving is summarized as *dev draviya*. For the systematic description of the "seven fields of gift giving" as frequently applied by Jain lay people, see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 209–212.

76 All attempts by the Forest Department of Gujarat to build a motorway to the summit have been univocally prevented by representatives of the Jain community.

77 This is repeated at the end of the pilgrimage when the pilgrims return to Jay Taleti.

78 For a detailed discussion of the five rituals, see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011.

sacred mountain and to the first Jina Adinatha. The liturgical worship may also be accompanied by the 'worship of eight substances' *(ashtaprakari puja)*, which includes the bathing and decorating of the image.[79] However, renunciation and the worship with devotion *(bhava puja)*, not the worship with substances, is considered to be the main aspect of pilgrimage. To 'burn' the results of their deeds *(karma)*, ascetic practices such as fasting, vows of silence, and the meditational repetition of the liturgical rituals are considered to be more effective. Thus, the *panca caitya vandana* forms the core of pilgrimage practices.

Apart from Jay Taleti, the obligatory destinations of pilgrimage are located the in the main temple compound on the summit of Shatrunjaya: Shantinath Temple, Rayan Pagla, Pundarik Temple and the main Temple of Adinatha. Therefore, the main route with its five destinations leads straight to the main temple of Adinatha on the south-eastern peak of the mountain without a detour to the equally large north-western summit. Even though the temple city on the summit of Shatrunjaya spreads over eight square kilometres, most of the pilgrims focus on only nine out of ten temple compounds and the rest is largely ignored. Out of one hundred and eight temples and about eight hundred smaller shrines, only the five most important sanctuaries are chosen and a fixed route is followed for completing the ritual obligations at the five prescribed destinations.

After commencing the ascent at Jay Taleti larger groups of pilgrims are usually dissolved in favor of smaller units and – in the same way as during the previous day's stages –the pilgrims adapt their pace to each other in order to offer mutual support. After having achieved the ascent and passing through three of the five gates *(pol)* the second obligatory destination is reached. This site is a small and quite inconspicuous temple dedicated to Shantinath, the sixteenth Jina, who except for Adinatha, is believed to have visited Shatrunjaya more often than any of the remaining 22 Jinas.[80]

About a hundred meters behind the Shantinath temple the pilgrims come up to the last gate, referred to as the 'diamond gate' *(ratna pole)*. This gate leads directly to the temple of Adinatha. Before the patron passes through, he and his closest family members must take another ritual bath and don ritual clothing[81] in order to carry out the subsequent, concluding rituals of pilgrimage, that demand an enhanced state of purity. Once the patron and his family approach the main temple of Adinatha through

79 For a detailed description of the Jain temple rituals, see Cort 2001, 61–99.

80 According to legend he is perceived to have spent eight rainy seasons on Shatrunjaya and 15 255 777 ascetics attained salvation under his spiritual guidance. See Weber 1901, 250, for a short reference. Modern pilgrimage almanacs give Shantinatha's story in detail; see for example Gunaratna Suri 1997, 164–166.

81 Clothes which can be used in rituals *(puja na kapada)* must be unstitched and new.

the 'diamond gate', other pilgrims of his group, who have been expecting him, loudly join in their cheers for Adinatha.

For the last time the fourfold community of the pilgrim group form in order to publicly appreciate the patron's meritorious deeds by performing the 'ceremony of garlanding at the sacred site' *(tirth mal ni vidhi)*.[82] Although all pilgrims transform their *ritual* status by having completed the pilgrimage on foot, this is *socially* indicated only in the case of the patron as this ritual entitles all consanguine kinsmen of the patron's family to change their family name to *Sanghvi* ('leader of the group'). So unlike most other pilgrims, the patron of a pilgrimage on foot *(ca'ri palit sangha)* clearly and permanently changes his and his family's ritual and social state and consequently enjoys an enhanced status within his local community. Whereas the ritual details of the honoring ceremony of the patron is mainly of particular interest for Jain specialists,[83] I confine myself here to a very general description. After a number of endured liturgical observances, the patron is garlanded with a flower chain in the following manner: it is first blessed by the ascetics and then presented by those particular lay pilgrim of the group who bought the right to do so during the previous night's auction. This part of the ritual is usually accompanied by outbursts of emotion, such as tears of joy, ecstatic dancing and hopping, loud cheers, repeated throwing of rice with sandalwood powder, hugs and general displays of mutual affection. On many occasions of this ritual, so much excitement ensued that the ascetics – mildly smiling about the lack of self-control of lay pilgrims – had to keep their hands protectively covering sacred manuscripts and other ritual objects.

Only after the communal event of the garlanding, the pilgrims of the group complete the obligatory liturgical rituals of pilgrimage at the third, fourth and fifth destinations. Elsewhere I have exemplified these rituals at length, but again I am confining myself at this point to a summary: the third pilgrimage destination is reached behind the main temple after a clockwise semi-circumambulation. At this place, large footprints of the first Jina, Adinatha, are worshipped under a Rayana tree. This tree is believed to be the place where the first Jina had delivered his sermons when visiting Shatrunjaya ninety-nine purva times. Moreover, the image installed by Adinatha's son Bharata in the legendary very first temple on Shatrunjaya is said to be hidden in the tree's roots. Therefore, not only the shrine with the majestic footprints, but also the tree itself is an

82 This public homage of the patron is already mentioned in Shatrunjaya Mahatmyam as an integral part of the group pilgrimage on foot.

83 For details, see Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 280–284. Conspicuously, the awarding ritual for the patron has some significant parallels with the ritual of initiation into the ascetic fold *(diksha)* as well as with the consecration into an ascetic office. Likewise, the ceremony of honoring the patron is similar to a ritual which a lay man or lay woman observes after having performed a longer period of temporary asceticism *(updhan tap)*. All occasions imply that the protagonist changes his or her social status in accordance with his or her outstanding religious commitment, resulting in ritual a transformation.

object of veneration and is circumambulated three times. More than any other place the Rayana tree is conceived by the pilgrims as a gateway to the hidden sacred and esoteric realms of the eternal mountain to which only a few pilgrims with outstanding ascetic qualities are said to have access to. At any rate it is considered as a place where every pilgrim may conceive the extraordinary spiritual energies of the sacred mountain.

The fourth major pilgrimage destination is dedicated to Pundarika, the grandson and first disciple *(ganadhara)* of Adinatha, who was also the first to attain salvation on Shatrunjaya (see above). The entrance of Pundarika's temple is located exactly opposite the eastern entrance of the main temple of Adinatha, with the effect that the two most important images are facing each other.[84]

The last destination on this prescribed route and the main goal for all pilgrims is the temple of Adinatha, the founding father of the Jain community. The main temple is also called Dadanu Derasar after its miracle-working image Dada Adishvara (see above). The liturgical ritual *(caitya vandan)* for Dada Adishvara is considered to be the climax of the pilgrimage. Close to the sanctum facing the main image, Marudevi, Adinatha's mother, sits on an elephant. By standing behind the image of Marudevi during worship, every pilgrim takes up the same position in relation to Adinatha as his mother, the first human being of our time who attained salvation after having seen her omniscient son.[85]

For the participants of every group pilgrimage on foot, worshipping Adinatha is once again connected to the act of appreciating the merits of the patron. This act includes the rare occasion of giving jewelry to the image of Dada Adishvar, implying entering the sanctum and can therefore only be performed by a maximum of eleven selected members of patron's family. In the case of Shantilalbhai's group, the patrons presented a huge ceremonial umbrella, an object made of solid silver with a diameter of approximately one meter. It was carried by four men and shortly held over the image's head for less than 30 seconds, but accompanied by boisterous cheers of their group. Other kinsmen were simultaneously in charge of replacing the flag of the main temple by audaciously climbing the 40 meter high roof with support of the temple servants, the *pujaris*. Both donations serve as substituting the patron's obligation for (re)building temples as part of the pilgrimage (see above). Immediately after the pilgrim group dissolves, most of its participants start to descend the mountain individually.

84 Pundarika's sanctuary is as remarkable as the Jay Taleti rock for being venerated with a ritual that is somewhat unique for the Shvetambara Jain context (Luithle-Hardenberg 2011, 447–450).

85 To avoid confusion, it should be stressed that according to the myth this event did not take place on Shatrunjaya mountain, but on Ashtapada, where Adinatha had gained omniscience.

15 The 'group ritual' (sangha puja) and returning to residential places

While the majority of the participants of a group pilgrimage on foot climb down the mountain without any particular ritual observances, the patron resumes his role to indulge the participants of his group even before they have reached Palitana. This is accomplished impressively by another 'group ritual' (sangha puja), implying the assessment of the performance of each pilgrim of the group. This is accomplished by symbolically washing his or her feet with a milk-water mix, pressing a red mark on the forehead and presenting a coconut and a coin, altogether gifts of mutual respect. Thus, it is the patron's and his family's turn to show respect to every pilgrim of his group for enduring the strains of pilgrimage.

This *sangha* puja is mostly performed right after leaving the temple city, shortly before arriving again at Taleti or, more rarely, immediately after returning to the hostel (or the tent city respectively). However, the patron's duties to his group of pilgrims are only completed by a last communal meal and another ritual gift for all of his travel companions, the *prabhavna*. For this purpose, one and the same devotional object is given to every participant. This item can be a clock, a piece of jewelry or a miniature image of either Adinatha, his footprints or the temple city on the top of Shatrunjaya. The patron gives this to the pilgrims as a parting gift, while the pilgrims are entering the bus for the return journey to their urban places of residence, shortly after the last communal meal is served. Some male members of the patron's family will also accompany the ascetics of their group as they continue their journey on foot, until they reach the city limits of Palitana.[86]

16 Integrating the community by physical strains of pilgrimage: the outlook for the 21st century

Elsewhere I have shown that the main mythological references of the five progressing destinations on the summit of Shatrunjaya correspond with a regression of a pilgrim to mythological time.[87] Regardless of which route a pilgrim takes, he or she would never

86 Back at home, the buses of pilgrims will be received by those relatives, who remained at home. Shortly after his return the patron installs his garland either in his home shrine or in a Jain temple of the neighborhood, where the garland is placed over an archway. They also take care of the bureaucratic formalities that are necessary to change their family name to *Sanghvi.* This includes the printing of new business cards which are of greatest importance in India as they are regularly exchanged and collected on many occasions, including weddings, business meetings and on occasion of meeting friends.

87 Luithle-Hardenberg 2010b and Luithle-Hardenberg 2011.

climb Shatrunjaya by walking around the mountain without a plan, but would always follow prescribed routes, which are part of a mind map, literally and figuratively. With every step, a pilgrim passes an earlier phase of our age until reaching the temple of Adinatha and the origin of the Jain community, Jain doctrine, and Jain practice represented by the first Jina. Moreover, the myths and legends are recalled in the devotional songs and hymns during the obligatory liturgical rituals at all the five major destinations of pilgrimage. In many ways, the rituals of pilgrimage are thus connected to the group's memory and thereby help to construct Shvetambara identity, linking the past with the present.

At the same time, the experience of physical deprivation inevitably makes the pilgrimage a very special, unforgettable event for every individual pilgrim. This role of ritual ordeal has long been recognized as crucial for the ritual process and group commitment (especially for initiation rites and rites of passage)[88] and has recently been discussed again within the frame of cognitive anthropology.[89] Pilgrimage hardships as well as routes, destinations, rituals, and restrictions are altogether pressed upon or internalised by every individual pilgrim. The pilgrim remembers the collective values by recalling the personal, mostly painful pilgrimage and by connecting them with the pilgrimage to the first Jina and the sacred center Shatrunjaya. The impression of collective memories on the individual pilgrim is enforced through liturgical rituals and experiences of ascetic deprivation.

Equally important is the fact that these physical challenges are taken up collectively by participants of group pilgrimages on foot. The joint commitment to identical and ritualized physical strains on a prescribed pilgrimage route and during particular collective austerities enables the participants to create a religious community, in which they actively participate. Thus, the physical strains endured by the participants can be observed as an expression of the shared identity as Jains.

This connection of individual physical experience and ritualized social practices can be seen as an example of what Connerton calls "incorporated bodily practices." According to Connerton,[90] such practices are used as a very effective technique for linking the memory of a group with the memory of an individual. Applying this idea to the group pilgrimages on foot, it can be concluded that the socially important values, rituals, myths and legends of Adishvar and Shatrunjaya are remembered by the individual pilgrim because they are inscribed into the individual memory by the unforgettable sensation of exhaustion.

At the same time, the pilgrimage of Shvetambara-Jains to Shatrunjaya is an example of a phenomenon described in 1997 by Jan Assmann for group memories, which

88 Turner 1995 [1969]; Crapanzano 1981.

89 See for instance Morinis 1985; Jackson 2009; Whitehouse 2004.

90 Connerton 1989, 73–74.

according to him, are particularly persistent when they are attached to special places. Eventually, the respective locality and the group become a *Wesensgemeinschaft*, meaning that the place and the group are completely identifiable with another.[91]

In the case of the Shvetambara-Jains of Western India, this connecting experience of pilgrimage can hardly be overemphasized. In fact, mental pilgrimages *(bhav yatra)* with the help of pilmgrim maps *(pata)* and images of the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya have a long tradition in the ritual practice of the Jains[92] and are undeniably important for a large number of diaspora Jains. On the contrary, the active physical experience of the pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya cannot be substituted by any means: in order to keep up the necessity and standard of regular physical efforts, the sacred mountain is preserved in a marginalized space and the summit of the mountain can only be reached by foot. Ideally, this effort must be increased by even reaching the base of the mountain by foot – despite the fact that other modes of transport are possible and much faster.

This insistence on the remoteness of the sacred realm of Shatrunjaya that must be ideally approached in a long and enduring procession is remarkable. In my conclusion, I therefore relate this persistence with recent findings in cultural anthropology as well as with recent events in the Jain community.

In order to understand the meaning of processions in contemporary India, Van der Veer refers to historical processes that form persisting means of mass mobilization in India.[93] He argues that during the British Empire processions of various religious movements were crucial to challenge the colonial state and each other. Among other tools, such as pamphlets and posters, processions were instruments to articulate religious issues into the formation of the public sphere, a mechanism still at work in the political arena of contemporary India and its democratic policy of numbers. Likewise, he refers to transnational migration as a defining element of the recent development of religious movements in India.

What does this imply for the Jains in regard to their practice of pilgrim processions on foot? By worshipping representations of Shatrunjaya in mental pilgrimages, the sacred mountain of the Jains is ultimately present in every local Shvetambara community, not only in India but also in diaspora communities in East Africa, North America, Europe and Southeast Asia. Moreover, since the late 1990s, diaspora Jain communities have made intensive use of the Internet for propagating the central importance of this sacred mountain, along with spreading other contents of the Jain doctrine and practice. In the beginning this was started to build a network for the diaspora Jains in order to keep in touch with their religious community in India, including their sacred spaces.

91 Assmann 1997, 39.

92 See Luithle-Hardenberg 2015.

93 Veer 2004.

This approach is also identified by Van der Veer as an important feature of the transnational religious communities.[94] Though the diaspora Jains took the initiative in starting religious Internet forums, online sources and online journals for circulating the Jain doctrine and its manifold interpretations, it is by now increasingly referred and added to by residential Indian Jains. Moreover, other non-Jain sources are circulating, such as picture blogs of tourists who have visited Shatrunjaya or *Google Earth* (which gives a full view of the sacred temple city from a bird's eye view). Among the most interesting results of the proliferating information and flood of images is a 1:38 hour long video of the ascent to the top of Shatrunjaya on YouToube.[95] Apparently, this was produced under strict supervision of the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi, the managing trust of Shatrunjaya: remarkably, no images of Jinas are filmed in this video, since displaying the sacred realm to a wider public with the inclusion of a non-sacral sphere would create serious sacrilege *(ashatna)*. For the same reason, in October 2013, orthodox ascetic seniors urged the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi to impose a complete ban of photography and video on the entire mountain. In their own reasoning, the aim of this prohibition is to stem the 'flood of images' of Shatrunjaya or its sanctuaries from circulating the Internet. To great dismay of the religious leaders, the large distribution of these images outside the sacred sphere severely threatens desecration of the sacred Shatrunjaya mountain.

In other words: the sacred mountain Shatrunjaya can only remain the religious center of the Shvetambara community if the sacred realm remains well protected in a remote area. The seemingly unlimited scope of the Internet is terminated by the most effective measurement: disconnection. The access of the Jain community to their eternal mountain Shatrunjaya can only be guaranteed as long as physical effort remains the precondition for the spiritual experience. Otherwise it will be sealed to protect it from pollution in the same way as it was done with Ashtapada.

94 Veer 2004.

95 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWYvpta-WjY, uploaded 08/07/2015 (visited on 24/10/2017).

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Pilgrimage to the Qoyllur Rit'i and the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Relationship of Local to Regional Ritual in Cuzco

Summary

This article critically discusses the categorical distinction between local and regional rituals, especially of pilgrimages and patronal festivals, introduced by Victor Turner and John Sallnow. Based on ethnographical and ethnohistorical data from the Department of Cuzco/Peru, he analyzes the pilgrimage to the Qoyllur Rit'i and the Corpus Christi celebration in Cuzco City, two of the most important religious celebrations in the region, to which Sallnow also referred. In contrast to the latter, however, it is shown that both events merge directly into one another, arise from similar motivation, share many participants and symbols. Thus it is made clear, that local and regional forms of cult cannot be separated clearly.

Keywords: Qoyllur Rit'i; Corpus Christi; pilgrimage; processions; patron feast; Cuzco

Der vorliegende Artikel setzt sich kritisch mit der von Victor Turner und John Sallnow geforderten kategorischen Unterscheidung von lokalen und regionalen Ritualen und insbesondere von Pilgerfahrt und Patronatsfesten auseinander. Er stützt sich auf ethnographische und ethnohistorische Daten aus dem Departement Cuzco/Peru und analysiert mit der Pilgerfahrt zum Qoyllur Rit'i und der Fronleichnamsfeier in Cuzco-Stadt zwei der wichtigsten religiösen Feiern der Region, auf welche sich auch Sallnow bezog. Gegenüber letzterem wird jedoch gezeigt, dass beide Veranstaltungen unmittelbar ineinander übergehen, ähnlicher Motivation entspringen, sich zahlreiche Teilnehmer und Symbole teilen. Damit wird deutlich, dass lokale und regionale Formen des Kultes nicht klar voneinander getrennt werden können.

Keywords: Qoyllur Rit'i; Fronleichnam; Pilgerfahrt; Prozession; Patronatsfeier; Cuzco

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1 Introduction

Since the 1980s pilgrimage has been an established term in the social and cultural sciences.[1] The label 'anthropology of pilgrimages' is used quite frequently.[2] However, the definitions and limits of the concept are still not really clear. Problems result from the transcultural application of the Christian term 'pilgrimage'. Because different elements are subsumed under it, neither does it do justice to specific traditions, nor are equivalent emic meanings found.[3] Moreover, several difficulties exist in differentiating pilgrimage from secular forms of travel, such as mass tourism or trade journeys.[4] This difficulty becomes even more evident in relation to para-religious forms of travel, e.g. Elvis fans undertaking a pilgrimage to Graceland,[5] or the homecoming of black slaves' descendants to Ghana.[6] However, within the Christian context, the usage of the term is more precise. Its scope predominantly results from being distinguished from more locally limited ritual dynamics such as processions. The criteria for the definition are the setting and the range of coverage:[7] pilgrimages have a destination that is reached over long stretches of journeying.[8] In contrast, processions served to celebrate local sanctuaries. Most of the time they were part of patron saints' day celebrations. According to Zika processions were thus exclusively local cults.[9] Therefore, they remained "wholly under the control of local authorities".[10]

A series of formal specifics resulted out of this fact: the movement is festive and ordered. The movement and the speed of the members of the processions are heavily synchronized.[11] Processions are described as civic parades.[12] They serve primarily as forms of prestige and orthodoxy whereas pilgrimages are rooted in folk beliefs, being subversive in character.[13] They are based on individual and free involvement. This is why they develop a totally different social dynamic.[14]

I will argue in the following article that this classification can be traced back to Victor Turner. Thereafter, the relationships between procession and pilgrimage as well as between patron saints' days and pilgrims' celebrations will be checked empirically regarding the Corpus Christi and the Qoyllur Rit'i in Cuzco. Against the background

1 Murphy 1994; Hauser-Schäublin 2008. The anthropological preoccupation with pilgrimages has predominantly focused on V. Turner 1975, and V. Turner and E. Turner 1978.
2 Morinis 1992; Graburn 1989.
3 Glazier 1983; Schenk 2008.
4 Delaney 1990; Badone 2004.
5 Davidson and Gitlitz 2003.
6 Schramm 2004.
7 Davidson and Gitlitz 2003, 7, 17.
8 Gutschow 2008, 400; Hammond and Bobo 1994, 19, show that pilgrimage "is not necessarily a long-distance phenomenon".
9 Zika 1988, 63.
10 Zika 1988, 63.
11 Mullay 1967, 820; Grimes 1987, 2; Fellbecker 1995, 213.
12 Sallnow 1987, 268.
13 Sallnow 1987, 199.
14 Sallnow 1987, 55.

of these two forms of celebration the general problematic of a dichotomized division between local and translocal rituals shall be made visible.

2 Local versus translocal: a spatial classification of rituals

Turner[15] differentiates in his analysis of ethnographic and historical material two types of spatial rituals with varying outreach which refer to two disparate ritual landscapes. On the one hand, Turner and Turner identify a local cult that is linked to the chapels and shrines of settlements, which remains "entangled with its practice in the local situation".[16] This cult is determined by the established social structure and is oriented towards an increase in social status. Through the representation of hierarchy, the static social structure is ritually confirmed or effects even "deeper commitment to the structural life".[17]

On the other hand, Turner identifies "a looser, voluntaristic religious affiliation focused on distant shrines".[18] It distances the believers from the structures of their everyday lifeworld. As an example, he cites Christian pilgrimages. Like in tribal forms of rituals of transition, its participants are removed from their local settlements and as a consequence social structures are dissolved. Turner and Turner understand pilgrimages as a Christian form that generates liminality.[19] The pilgrims step out of their local context, their kin group, and culture. Very often, pilgrimages transcend social, ethnic, and political boundaries.[20] They join a community that is based on free will, self-determination, equality, and friendship.[21] Turner and Turner explain the pilgrimage as a search for *communitas*.[22] In many regards, it could even be described as the realization of a "global *communitas*".[23] The scope of the rituals apparently becomes the point of origin for a qualitative definition. Whereas pilgrimages are described as voluntary, equal, and inclusive, local religion is associated with constraint, hierarchy, and exclusivity. Turner and Turner's analytical categories of structure and anti-structure are thus synchronically pitted against each other.

Turner's theses were intensively discussed. In many cases, they have been used for the description of Latin American pilgrimages.[24] One of the most prominent applications originates from the British sociologist M. J. Sallnow.[25] He problematized Turner's

15 V. Turner 1975, 177, 191.
16 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 15.
17 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 9.
18 V. Turner 1975, 191.
19 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 4.
20 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 6, 16.
21 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 13, 177.
22 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 5.
23 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 171.
24 Crumrine and Morinis 1991; Garma Navarro and Shadow 1994; Barba de Piña Chan 1998.
25 Sallnow 1987.

concept of *communitas*[26] but adopted his spatial categorization. Patronal cults and pilgrimages are opposed as local and translocal rituals. The patron saints' days are dominated by the official religion[27] and the elites.[28] They depict political hierarchies and relations of power and are in the last instance an aspect of exercising political power. The patron saints originate from the standard inventory of saints and have no relation to the local context. Their veneration is determined by residence and custom.[29] They serve to differentiate communities and social groups from each other. Their supporters are accordingly homogeneous. Patronal cults are thus fragmented, "marked off sharply from the translocal and regional".[30] A proof of this is their static nature. Change is described only as degeneration.[31]

In contrast to his view of patron saints' days Sallnow gives a very dynamic picture of pilgrimages.[32] Like Turner he assumes that pilgrimages remain outside ecclesiastical, administrative, and state control. Therefore, they are strongly marked by unofficial religiosity. The normally widely separated spheres of official Catholic religion and unofficial native religion here come into direct contact, whereas normally both spheres are meticulously divided from each other.[33]

Pilgrimages are not determined by social or territorial ascriptions but by "mental disposition".[34] They cut across political and ecclesiastical forms of local administrative and even ethnic structures. Only pilgrimages transcend the isolation of localities, a pilgrimage "joins the community to the macrocosm"[35] and links it to "processes of synchronic articulation and diachronic change".[36] Because of this integrative strength, it is the pilgrimage that defines the important social and historical processes of change. As in the work of Turner a qualitative opposition between local and translocal forms of cult is stressed. In conclusion, it is evident that Sallnow is drawing directly on Turner. He confirms and underlines his distinction between local and translocal cults in all aspects.

3 Pilgrimage and the ceremony of the Patron Saints in Cuzco

In the following I will show that this classification is rather problematic. In a first step I will map the fiesta of the Qoyllur Rit'i, on which Sallnow mainly bases his argument.[37]

26 See Sallnow 1981. Sallnow demonstrates the severe conflicts between different groups of pilgrims. He describes their pilgrimage as the negotiation of diverse cultural and ethnic identities, and political, territorial, and ideological attributions and motives.

27 Sallnow 1987, 6.

28 Sallnow 1987, 98.

29 Sallnow 1987, 167.

30 Sallnow 1987, 98.

31 Sallnow 1987, 98.

32 Sallnow 1987, 166.

33 Sallnow 1987, 3.

34 Sallnow 1987, 9.

35 Sallnow 1987, 201.

36 Sallnow 1987, 99.

37 Sallnow 1987.

Next, the ceremony of Corpus Christi in Cuzco is described, which he cites as an example of a local cult. The comparison will prove that the two festivities have a lot in common and that they cannot be dissociated from each other.

3.1 Qoyllur Rit'i

The ceremony of the Qoyllur Rit'i is the most prominent pilgrimage of the department of Cuzco and one of the largest in the Andes. A minimum of 10 000 pilgrims arrive every year from the department of Cuzco, but also from surrounding regions and even from neighbouring countries such as Bolivia and Argentina. Most of them are indigenous believers. Therefore, the pilgrimage is interpreted as a predominant expression of Andean religiosity.[38]

Qoyllur Rit'i means in Quechua 'shining snow' or 'star of the snow'. It is the name of a glacier positioned at 5000 m height on the Sinkara mountain, which lies in the massif of Ausangate in the province of Quispicanchis, around 150 km southeast of Cuzco. There is a chapel of a figure of Christ, called the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i. He is supposed to be the protector of the poor, of the indigenous farmers and shepherds. His shrine is one of the most popular pilgrim's shrines in the Quechua and Aymara region. According to historical sources it was founded around 1780. The legend attributes it to the apparition of Christ who presented himself to a poor shepherd in the *gestalt* of a fair-skinned youth. He gave him food and increased the number of his animals in miraculous ways. When some priests tried to capture Christ, the shepherd boy died of grief and turned into a cross of stone that was venerated in the neighboring village Tayankany. Christ changed into a rock with the image of Jesus, around which the chapel for the pilgrims was built. In addition, a statue was dedicated in the nearby village of Mawallani, which is supposed to be the birthplace of the shepherd boy.

Anthropologists explain the sanctuary with reference to a pre-Christian mountain cult. The mountain Sinakara with its glacier Qoyllur Rit'i is regarded in the local mythology as son of Ausangate, the holiest mountain in the region.[39] The local population believes it to be responsible for the health and well-being of the people.[40] It is also worshipped as tutelary divinity of the animals, which explains the influx of pilgrims from the highlands.[41] Meanwhile the basis of the cult has widened. It cannot be overlooked that an impressive number of pilgrims have urban and mestizo backgrounds.[42] Flores

38 Brachetti 2002; Alvarez Blas 2006. However, Molinié 2002 is not of this opinion.

39 Valderrama and Escalante 1975; Sánchez Garrafa 1995.

40 Nuñez del Prado Bejar 1970.

41 Ricard Lanata 2008.

42 Also an increasing influence of women can be remarked, Ceram Padilla 1999. They seek help from the Virgen de Fátima for their weaving of textiles.

Lizana, who has interpreted the requests for intercession of recent years, was able to disclose the multitude of wishes, covering all aspects of life.[43] This is also evident at the sanctuary on the *Mercado de Alacitas* where the pilgrims buy the miniatures of desired goods, such as animals and farmsteads, but also vehicles, business enterprises, and even educational achievement. They are certain that Christ will definitely fulfil these wishes.

The ceremony of the pilgrimage is organized by a higher-ranking brotherhood, *Hermandad del Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i*. It predominantly gathers representatives of neighbouring communes that are traditionally in control of the shrine.

The nucleus of the pilgrims is divided into eight groups *(naciones)* according to their origins. The most important are Paucartambo, Urubamba, Quispicanchis, Canchis, Acomayo, and Anta. This division refers to their provinces of origin. It also reflects ethnic and socioeconomic differences.

In Paucartambo and Urubamba it is mostly Quechua of the farm regions who gather. Quispicanchis however represents the cattle-herding Aymara. These groups distinguish themselves through clothes and by marking their campgrounds. Hierarchies between them are expressed in manifold ways and are often defended by force.

The official festivities begin on Ascension Day with the procession of the statue Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i of Mawallani and of the Cross from Tayankany. They are transported by both communes under the leadership of the village elders and other officials to the chapel on the Sinakara glacier. On Sunday the first Mass and a procession of the Holy Host are celebrated. Only after this ceremony, but still during the night, do the majority of pilgrims move to the sanctuary. The majority of them travel by buses and trucks to the road village of Mawallani. From there the last 1000 metres have to be covered on foot. This foot march is extremely exhausting because of the darkness, the difficult path, the thin and extremely cold mountain air, and the weight of the provisions. It is perceived as a sacrifice to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i. At each wayside cross prayers are said and candles are lit. As a result, the sanctuary is reached only shortly before dawn.

Most pilgrims arrive as part of a delegation from communes and brotherhoods. They are led by the officials. Every group of pilgrims is accompanied by musicians and dancers who compete in an almost endless duel. Only with movement and in ecstasy is it possible to survive the five days in the altitude and cold.

Many pilgrims are masked elaborately. Legendary examples are especially the Ukukus, zoomorphic figures who are supposed to express superhuman forces. They are in fact the strongest young men, who either function with their whips as the security guards of the festival, or replace missing dancers and support weaker pilgrims. Also, they are allowed to climb the glacier as representatives of their *naciones* on the penultimate day of the festival. On the peak of the mountainthey fight a ritual combat during the night with

43 Flores Lizana 1997.

demons. At dawn they chop ice blocks from the glacier and bring them down to the valley at sunrise (Fig. 1). They are awaited in a ceremony by the rest of the pilgrims. All kneel down, remove their masks, make the sign of the cross, and greet the sun which rises above the glacier. The Ukukus are led to the chapel in a pageant. There, the ice of the glacier is blessed during a final mass and with a procession to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i. It is believed that the ice and the snow water have a healing and stimulating capacity. The pilgrims put it in small bottles and wear them as an amulet and as a kind of medicine. The Ukukus carry the ice blocks, which can weigh up to 30 kg, with them to their home community. There, the snow water is poured on the fields for fertilization or on kin and animals for therapeutic reasons. The celebrations end for most of the pilgrims with this mass. But the men of Mawallani and Tayankany have the duty of returning the figure of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i and the Cross of Tayankany back to their home villages on isolated mountain paths (Fig. 2). They are accompanied by the Ukukus during this procession of twenty-four hours, which marks the official end of the pilgrimage feast.

It is often overlooked that many pilgrims and also Ukukus take part in the celebrations of Corpus Christi in Cuzco.[44] These begin the following day.

3.2 Corpus Christi in Cuzco

While Qoyllur Rit'i is described as an Andean festival, the ceremony of Corpus Christi in Cuzco is characterized as the "Apotheosis of the Christian Cuzco".[45] According to the dogma of Trent, Corpus Christi honours the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Spanish initiated its diffusion in the whole of Latin America. But since colonial times it has been nowhere more sumptuously celebrated than in Cuzco.[46] It is the most important titular feast of the department and is designed as a fusion of the patron saints' festivals of eight communities. Every year, 50–60 000 visitors are counted. Because of its importance, it became a model for the patron saints' celebrations of the entire region.[47]

3.2.1 The course of the ceremony

The date for the feast of Corpus Christi is not fixed. It depends on the Easter celebration, and so falls between May 21 and June 24. In Cuzco, it is divided into several phases. The main procession takes place on a Thursday after the Octave of Pentecost. However, the central part of the festivities in the cathedral, situated in the historical center of the town, takes nine days. The celebrations continue with the so-called small Corpus in the

44 Brachetti 2002.

45 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 280.

46 Dean 1999, 23.

47 Sallnow 1987, 63.

Fig. 1 Pilgrims returning from the Sinakara glacier.

community churches until the last Sunday in July, the day of the (holy) Santiago (St. James the Great). In addition, it fuses with other feasts taking place at the same time, such as the solstice (Inti Raymi) on June 24. This means that a festival timespan of over two months can develop.

The beginning of Corpus Christi is marked by the 'walk in' *(entrada)* of fifteen saints of the most important urban departments and of the hinterland of Cuzco into the town center. The processions are accompanied by contingents from the communes; they are led by the priest and the sponsors of the festival. The first leg brings them to the convent of Santa Clara directly before the western town gate (Fig. 3). They are awaited by thousands of spectators. In the church of Santa Clara the saints are gathered. They will spend the night there and only on the next morning will they move in a long procession

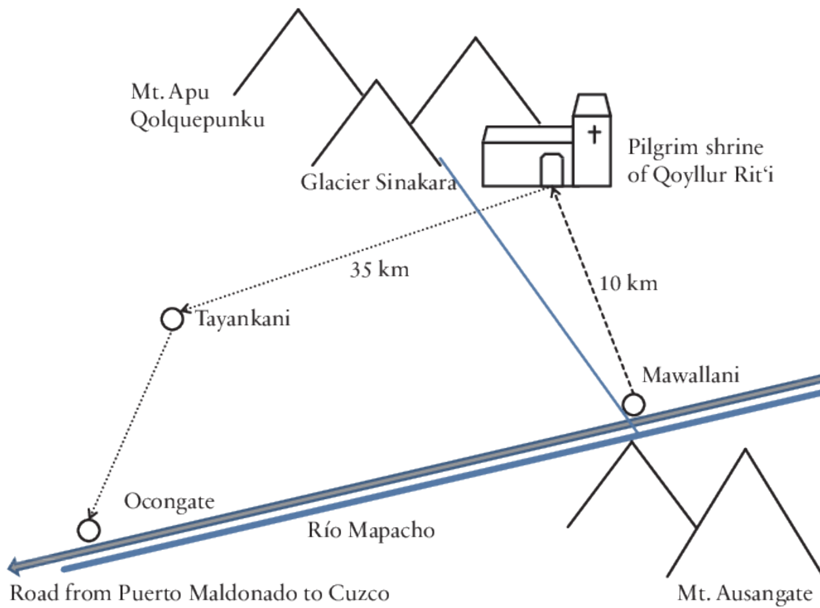

Fig. 2 Map of the pilgrimage route near the sanctuary.

to the cathedral in the center of town. Before the main altar they are arranged into the 'heavenly congregation' *(asamblea celestial)*.

The procession of Corpus Christi proper begins the following morning. From daybreak, the different communities and brotherhoods are eagerly occupied preparing their saints for the big appearance. To this end they are placed outside in a semi-circle in front of the cathedral (Fig. 4).

In the cathedral one mass after the other is read for particular saints. The *Te Deum* ends the ceremony with the blessing of the host by the archbishop.

3.2.2 *The Corpus Christi Procession*

The host is placed in an immense monstrance *(templete)*[48] on wheels in the form of a sun and is then driven outside in the middle of the saints. The religious and political authorities of the town present themselves in front of it. Speeches are delivered and

48 It is massively gilded and decorated with numerous diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls.

Fig. 3 The Saints enter the city.

thanks are uttered. Just before midday the main procession begins to move around the central square. The beginning is made by the monstrance and then follow:

1. San Antonio (St. Anthony of Padua) from the chapel of San Cristóbal
2. San Jerónimo from the chapel of San Jeronimo
3. San Cristóbal (St. Christopher) from the church and city district of the same name
4. San Sebastian from the chapel of the district of the same name
5. Santa Barbara from the chapel of the village Poroy
6. Santa Ana (St. Ann) from the chapel of the same name
7. Santiago Mayor (St. James) from the chapel of the same name
8. San Blas (St. Blaise) from the parish church of the same name
9. San Pedro (St. Peter) from the parish church of the same name
10. San José (St. Joseph) from the chapel of the Virgen de Belén
11. Virgen de la Natividad (Virgin Mary of the Nativity) from the church of Almudena
12. Virgen de los Remedios (Our Lady of the Remedies) from the church of Santa Catalina
13. Virgen Purificada (Virgin Mary of Candlemas) from the chapel of San Pedro

Fig. 4 Preparation of the Virgins for the Corpus procession.

14. Virgen de Belén (Our Lady of Bethlehem) from the parish church of the same name
15. La Linda: Virgen de la Immaculada Concepción from the cathedral

The saints are carried in a convoy around the central square of the town *(Plaza de Armas)*. The distance is not more than 600 m. The convoy stops again and again. The bearers have to rest, the saints receive petitioners, or they pray in front of provisional altars. Also, a plurality of saints and crosses of lesser importance, e.g. from associations or families are carried along and are put into contact with the main saints. The procession is watched by a thickly packed crowd which will hesitantly give way. The spectacle lasts three hours at a minimum. Finally, the saints line up again before the cathedral. They give their blessings to the crowd and to the town with deep bows and are then transported back into the cathedral and are grouped in front of the main altar.

Outside a great feast begins. The active participants are asked into the houses of the festival sponsors to participate in the banquet. The other participants are offered typical food for feasts, like *chiri uchu* (cold chili) or *anticuchos* (grilled hearts of cows). Often the feast extends until the crack of dawn.

3.2.3 End of the celebration

The gathering of the saints in the cathedral lasts eight days *(octava)*. During this time the festival sponsors of their communities provide them regularly with fresh flowers and other presents through small processions. Thousands of devotees flock into the cathedral in order to present their problems and wishes to the saints. To end the *octave* a further joint procession is undertaken which resembles the one from the central day. After that

the saints return to their own churches one after the other. Already in the afternoon Santa Ana and Santa Barbara say goodbye. The other statues return for one more night to the cathedral. It is said that they joyfully celebrate their leave taking *(kacharpari)*. The next morning, however, they too return home. Leaving the central square they bow before the spectators before they leave. And, as belief has it, they bless the town for the coming year. When they arrive home in their parish churches they are welcomed enthusiastically. It is believed that they bring a special blessing with them as well as the licence for the celebrations of the next patron saints' days in the communities *(corpus parroquial)*.[49]

4 Interpretation

4.1 The entanglement of Qoyllur Rit'i with Corpus Christi

I argued in the theoretical introduction that traditionally a deep contrast between local and regional cults, that is between patron saints' feasts and pilgrimages, is emphasized. These two ritual systems can be fundamentally differentiated also in the existing case. During the patron saints' days local saints are venerated whose sanctuaries constitute the center of towns, or their districts. The pilgrims to the *Qoyllur,* however, leave their home places since the shrine is in the mountains, far away from settlements and the political and ecclesiastical centers. Insofar the situation matches exactly the description of Turner and Sallnow.

However, looking more closely several elements oppose a very strictly dichotomized conceptualization. Rather unconvincing is the image of two distinct ritual landscapes. It becomes evident that local and regional cults are entangled in the department of Cuzco. The patron of the pilgrims, *Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i*, and the cross of *Tayankany* are at the same time patrons of their local communities. They are jealously protected from local strangers. Only members of their own community are allowed to transport them; otherwise they would become so heavy that they could not be lifted up again. Their processions open the pilgrimage and also end it. The pilgrimage to the *Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i* overrides local forms of veneration and also builds upon them.

But, above all, the pilgrimage merges directly into the celebrations for Corpus Christi in Cuzco. Many participants describe the two ceremonies as belonging inseparably together. Indeed, Molinié characterizes the feast at the Qoyllur Rit'i as an Andean implementation of Corpus Christi.[50] The ice of the glacier becomes associated with the Body of God. This argument is enhanced by the fact that the two ceremonies are linked in

49 Huayhuaca Villasante 1988.

50 Molinié 2002.

Fig. 5 Pilgrims dancing before a portrait of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i during Corpus processions in Cusco.

time. The pilgrimage always takes place one week before the feast of Corpus Christi and it ends one day before the beginning of the Corpus. This timing enables the pilgrims to participate in the Corpus Christi celebrations, in which they often fulfil important functions (Fig. 5). For instance, the pilgrims from Urubamba traditionally take the lead in the opening procession of the Corpus Christi. First of all, they accompany San Jerónimo (Fig. 6). This saint, officially the translator of the Bible who as a doctor of theology has to insist on the strict observance of dogma, is called by the pilgrims only by the diminutive form, our 'little doctor' *(doctorcito)*. They believe that he possesses healing power and that he also blesses the snow meltwater which they take home for therapeutic reasons.

San Jerónimo starts his procession already at dawn from the district town San Jerónimo, which is 13 km away from Cuzco. At the edge of town, he is already awaited by San Sebastian. Between the two processions a fierce race develops. San Jerónimo has to arrive first in the center so that the coming year will be a happy one. The *Ukukus*, the security guards of the pilgrimage, run in front and clear a path for him through the spectators with their whips.

The contingents of pilgrims not only participate in the opening ceremony but also constitute one of the highlights of the main ceremony. Separated into contingents, they march directly before the main procession into town, where they are received triumphantly. The Ukukus, carrying the ice, also participate in the Corpus Christi procession and are accompanied like saints as their path is cleared with whips.

Fig. 6 Pilgrims and Ukukus leading San Jerónimo into Cuzco.

Pilgrims from Paucartambo accompany the Virgen de la Natividad from the Almudena as dancers. They believe that the Virgin has scratches on her face which resemble the stitched cross on their pilgrims masks.[51]

Many pilgrims link themselves to San Cristóbal. He is the official protector of pilgrims and travellers. There is also a direct association between him and the *Qoyllur Rit'i*.[52] It is believed that this saint, who is identified as *indígena*, carries the Christ child of the *Qoyllur Rit'i* on his shoulder. The river which he crosses is associated with the water of the glacier. Like the massif of the Ausangate, to which the pilgrims' home area belongs, San Cristóbal is also considered to be "the greatest who can be always seen".[53] Characteristics of the pilgrim's home area, such as altitude and water, are thus symbolized in his figure (Fig. 10). This reveals how much, in the perception of many participants, Corpus

51 Roca Wallparimachi 1992.

52 Alvarez Blas 2006, 19.

53 Pilgrims maintain that he was once even taller. His legs had had to be shortened so that he could pass through the door of the church.

Christi is determined by the foregoing pilgrimage. Obviously, the dichotomized differentiation between pilgrimage and patron saints' days does not do justice to the dynamic of the events.

Even in a formal perspective the distinction is difficult to maintain. The mobility pattern, which at first glance seems the most obvious medium to differentiate between procession and pilgrimage, is by no means so clear-cut as is usually stressed.[54] For example, the otherwise loose order of the pilgrim group is enhanced during important phases and can lead into a procession when arriving at the shrine. Often the contingents are ordered hierarchically, carrying their staff of office and other insignia of rank with them. On their way back the pilgrims may organize in less formal groups, which however reorganize as processions when they participate in the Corpus Christi celebration, especially when they march into the center. On the other hand, the movements in the Corpus Christi processions are by no means always ceremonial and orderly. They can change fluidly into normal or even rather playful movements and dance. In an entirely unpretentious way statues of the patron communities are put on lorries in order to overcome long distances. Hence, it may be other factors that suggest characteristic movement patterns.

Of importance is without doubt the theatrical character. The number of spectators and the degree of formality of a situation noticeably influences the form of the movements. Another important impulse for strongly ritualized movements may be the contact with religious symbols. During a pilgrimage the contact with them is progressively intensified by a sequence of stops, but is especially intense at the place of arrival. However, the central symbols and other objects of veneration are carried along during the whole route of a procession. In addition, it can be observed that especially the character of the objects is decisive for the form of movements. If the image of a saint or a similar central collective symbol is carried along, it is done with intensive veneration, formality, and prudence, mostly in the form of a procession. If, however, something of lesser ritual value is transported, it is usually done in a much looser form. But also very banal characteristics of an object, such as height and weight, can have an effect on the form of movement. The massive figures of the saints are normally carried in synchronized movements by the bearers. They try not to bend their knees under the weight of the statues, which leads to a mechanical swaying back and forth that quite often is transmitted to the accompanying crowd. In this context, it is interesting to note that the weight of the statues will be increased intentionally.[55] To carry a very heavy load counts as a sacrifice for the saints.

54 Mullay 1967, 820; Grimes 1987, 2; Fellbecker 1995, 213.

55 For this reason, for instance, a stone was embedded in the base of the sedan chair of San Cristóbal. The stone allegedly originates from the Inca fortress Sacsayhuaman.

Finally, also the *gestalt* of the objects carried affects the form of the movement. In many processions, mimetic intentions are evident. Old San Antonio marches forward with dignity while the youthful Santiago gallops forth but then returns hesitantly. The Virgins follow with small graceful footsteps. The saints greet each other by bowing down; sometimes they bend to the enthusiastic spectators. This mimetic performance confers on the processions a lot of expressiveness and a lot of their typical characteristics.

In summary, we have to conclude that pilgrimage and patron saints' days in Cuzco intertwine. They virtually coincide. In part, the members are the same, and their motivation as well as the symbolism is very similar.

4.2 Feast of Corpus Christi as local ritual?

Sallnow's thesis that patron saints' days are "marked off sharply from the translocal and regional" is not convincing with regard to the described connection between the Corpus Christi and the translocal pilgrimage to the Qoyllur Rit'i.[56] But also in the territorial structure and coverage it is not adequate to describe the feast of Corpus Christ in Cuzco as a "purely local event".[57]

4.2.1 Catchment area, members, and motivation

Corpus Christi was already a translocal or even supraregional feast in colonial times. All communities inside a radius of ten Spanish miles *(leguas)* around the town were obliged to participate.[58] Barrionuevo reports that originally 117 images of saints were involved.[59] The majority of them originated from the indigenous communities in the more distant surroundings. But also images of saints from other departments, like the Virgen de Cocharcas from Huamanga (Ayacucho) participated. Even saints from neighboring countries such as Lorenzo from Tucumán or 'La Peregrina' from Quito arrived.[60] With regard to its catchment area Corpus Christi outreached by far the pilgrimage of the Qoyllur Rit'i, "attracting participation by all castes and estates".[61] This great attraction of the colonial feast is no longer attained at present. But without doubt Corpus Christi is still a translocal feast and it confirms the "unrivaled preeminence of Corpus in the liturgical calendar of the southern Andes".[62] Not only are saints from eight communities of the town summoned, but with Santa Barbara and San Sebastián also saints from other places and districts are directly involved (Fig. 7).

56 Sallnow 1987, 98.
57 Sallnow 1987, 63.
58 Esquivel y Navia 1980 [1749], 41.
59 Barrionuevo 1980.
60 Barrionuevo 1980, 50.
61 Cahill 1996, 84.
62 Cahill 1996, 84.

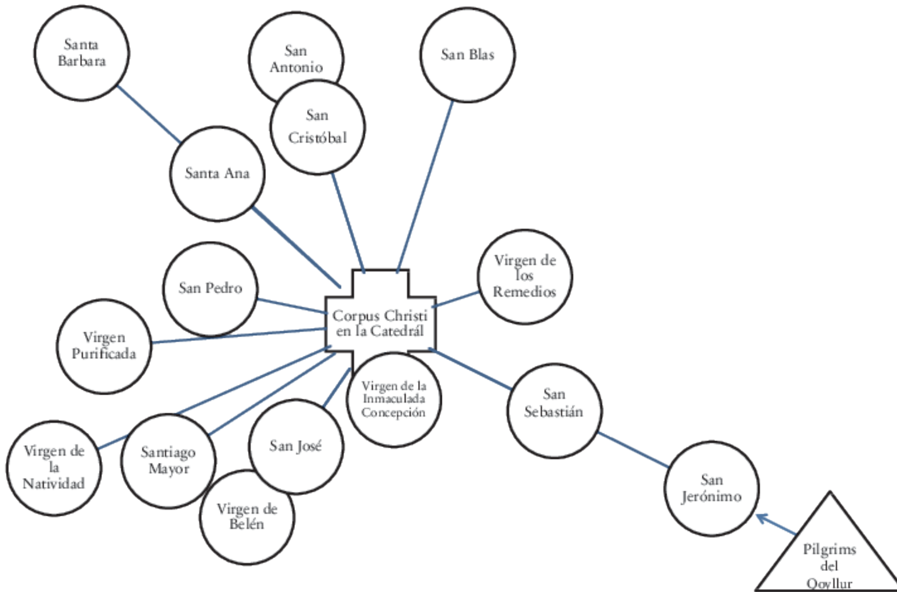

Fig. 7 Spatial presentation of the Corpus Christi in Cuzco.

Already, the basic organization of the feast is multilocal. The infrastructure is the same as the one for the community celebrations. Most of the work and expenditures are supplied by the different parish communities and the local brotherhoods. Their appearance is merged in a central performance. Significantly, even the 'mother community' of the cathedral is totally reliant on the support of the subordinated communities (Fig. 8). Sedan bearers of the parish San Pedro proudly underline that La Linda, the patroness of the cathedral, is not able to leave the church without their help.

It is also to be remembered that the participants only originate partly from Cuzco. Many travel from distant regions, such as the neighbouring departments, Arequipa, or even Lima. Also, international visitors are seen. The majority are spectators who just enjoy the spectacle. But some of them assume important functions. Especially prominent are the musicians and dancers from the province of Paucartambo. As extras, they accompany the Virgen de la Natividad from Almudena. Also, believers from the neighboring department Apurímac accompany this saint. They do not come as single persons but as delegations *(delegaciones)* from their villages. The saint is supposed to be the older kin of

Fig. 8 Procession of sponsors of indigenous neighborhoods bringing gifts for Santa Barbara into the cathedral.

their own patroness. It is the duty of the sponsors of the festival to visit her in the year of their engagement and to dance before her.[63]

Remarkably, many participants come from the far distant Puno and other places in the Altiplano, such as Juliaca or Illave. Even *delegaciones* from Bolivia arrive to demonstrate typical dances such as the *Qollahuada* or the *Diablada*. Their presence is so strong that many Cuzqueños complain. When all these arguments are taken together, the classification of Corpus Christi as a "purely local event"[64] is not adequate.

The assignment to a particular saint during the festival is dependent on the territorial affiliation, as Sallnow remarks. As an inhabitant of a parish one is normally obliged to its patron; migrants uphold their bonds to the patron of their local village. A further criterion which quite often correlates with residential status is the association of saints with specific social groups. Many devotees precisely differentiate between indigenous saints (like San Cristóbal and Santa Bárbara) and those of the mestizo elites (Virgen de la Belén and San Blas).[65]

Nevertheless, Sallnow overlooks the fact that the veneration of saints also results from the functions of their patronage. San Cristóbal is the patron of travelers. This is why his procession is mainly supported by the guild of taxi drivers and by traveling

63 Escobar Medrano 1999.

64 Sallnow 1987, 63.

65 The bearers of San Blas scrupulously ensure that he does not come into contact with saints from subordinate parish communities.

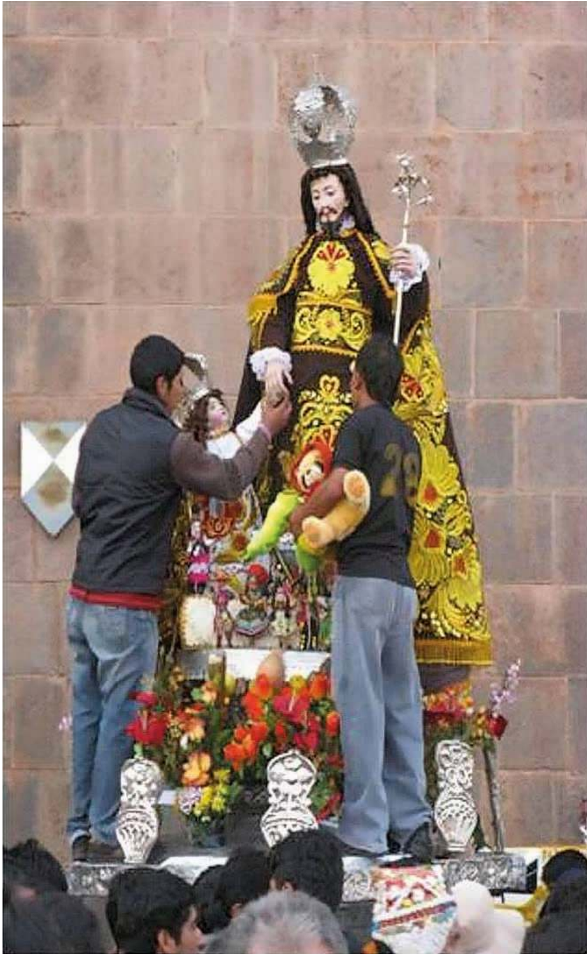

Fig. 9 San José in front of the cathedral decorated by young fathers.

traders. Often the links result from unofficial associations, which are related to iconographic specifics or the life of a saint. For example, Santa Barbara is attributed power over lightning according to legend. She is therefore worshipped by electricians, producers of fireworks, and a battalion of artillery. Often, the classification can be temporary and induced by a direct request. For instance, San José (Joseph) is carried traditionally by young fathers and is presented with cuddly toys, in order to secure the well-being of their children (Fig. 9).

The adoration can reflect highly personal preferences and/or can be grounded in dreams. Accordingly varied are the motives for participation in the Corpus Christi fes-

tival. The membership of the patron saints' days is by far less inevitable, socially determined, and homogeneous than Sallnow maintains.[66] In fact, the Corpus Christi in Cuzco demonstrates that different social and ethnic strata can get together during patron saints' days.

4.3 Corpus Christi: an official interpretation

According to Sallnow patron saints' days are dominated by official religion and by the political elites.[67] Their processions are described as obligatory parades which display[68] political and ecclesiastical hierarchies.[69] Indeed, the festival is quite instructive in its function for the Catholic Church. Corpus Christi is a very Catholic feast. It presents the Body of Christ as a sacrament; its celebration performs the practical transformation of the dogma of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It was founded in its typical form during the Council of Trent and is closely linked with the disputes of the Counter-Reformation.[70]

Actually, one could understand the formation of Corpus Christi in Cuzco as a response to Protestant critique. The saints are gathered around the host as the Body of Christ to receive their legitimation. In the procession, Christ is celebrated as the head of the community of saints. But it can only be accepted with reservation that the procession is a reaction to Counter-Reformation conflicts, since there never was any kind of Protestant danger in the isolated colonies.

It is more likely that in Cuzco the triumph of Christ is oriented against other 'enemies' of the Catholic faith.[71] In fact, the majority of authors have pointed out that the aim was to superimpose Corpus Christi on autochthonous cults. According to the chronicler Polo de Ondegardo[72] the Inka midwinter festival *Inti Raymi* was supposed to be replaced.[73] Zuidema[74] pointed out that Corpus Christi took the place of an Andean harvest festival, while Flores Ochoa[75] demonstrated that the procession was a Catholic version of an Inka procession of the mummies of their ancestors.

The promulgation of Corpus Christi can also be understood as part of a general attempt to increase dependence on the Catholic clergy. As a matter of fact, the feast of Corpus Christi in Cuzco is designed to orchestrate the priesthood as the indispensable administrator of salvation. While images of the saints are accessible without any

66 Sallnow 1987, 98–99.
67 Sallnow 1987.
68 Sallnow 1987, 63.
69 Sallnow 1987, 6.
70 Browe 1928, 111.
71 Voragine 2006, 160. Interestingly, the Virgins are followed by a small dragon, the symbol of Satan and sin, which is kept down by an archangel. Presumably, this is a motif from the Golden Legend. There, the dragon, stricken by Saint George, is not dead and runs behind the Virgin like a timid small dog.
72 Polo de Ondegardo 1916 [1584], 21–22.
73 According to Hocquenghem 1989, 173, celebrations regarding the Pleiades were overwritten.
74 Zuidema 1999.
75 Flores Ochoa 1990.

problems for unorthodox usage or are completely uncontrollable as familiar devotional objects in the domain of the house, the Host is bound to the officially controlled domain of the church. It has to be stored at the Altar, can leave the church only under direct control of the priests, and even at Holy Communion is it not allowed to be touched by the lay people. These rules are illustrated in the celebrations in Cuzco by means of the tabernacle, which is protected by the clergy.

In particular, the archiepiscopal production of the host is cited.[76] It forms the official centerpoint for the other masses of the saints. The images of the saints of the parishes are ordered according to it, which illustrates the dependency of the parish priests on the benediction of the bishop. The celebration obviously serves as an instrument of the confirmation and visualization of metropolitan authority. Only through the consecrated Host in the cathedral do the saints of the neighboring parishes receive their sanctifying power.

All in all, Corpus Christi should be understood as the far-reaching attempt to center religious practice on the Catholic functionaries and on the places and objects that they dominate. In addition, it was intended to make evident the dependency of the local cults and the lower clergy of the diocese.

According to Sallnow the patron saints' feasts in Peru constitute less a religious institution and more an aspect of exercising political power.[77] In the same way, Guido concluded: "The processions of the Catholic saints were expanded in colonial times in order to win the recognition and confirmation of the Spanish rulers. This is particularly evident in the most important festivals, such as that of the Apostle Santiago and Corpus Christi."[78] Indeed, it seems that the impulse for the introduction of the festival was generated by political officeholders. It was begun by the Viceroy Toledo.[79] On behalf of the parliament of town *(cabildo)* all indigenous groups of the neighborhood had to perform under their leaders in the procession, taking the pictures of the saints with them. The locals were followed by Spanish soldiers.[80] From a political point of view the procession was unequivocally planned as a performance of the conquest and thus as the illustration and renewed implementation of subjection.

In order to understand this, it is necessary to analyse the political context of the introduction of the Corpus festival. The wide dissemination of the cult was carried out in the years after the defeat of the military rebellion of Inka Tuti Kusi in 1565.[81] The rebellion was part of a strong messianic independence movement, called Taki Onqoy ('illness of dance'). It pervaded the totality of the southern Andes, aiming at the reconstruction of the Andean cults and the disappearance of all Hispanic elements. Only

76 Unlike in Europe there were no relics as remedies in the New World.

77 Sallnow 1987.

78 Guido 2003, 38 (Transl. by U. Luig).

79 Granados 2003, 153.

80 Esquivel y Navia 1980 [1749], 41.

81 Wachtel 1973.

around 1570 were the Spaniards successful in putting down the rebellion. In 1572, the relics of the Inka kingdom were destroyed on behalf of the Viceroy, and the last emperor of the Inka, Tupac Amaru, was executed.[82] After the rebellion, the local peoples were organized and resettled into *Reducciones de Indios*. Politically, a weakening of ethnic affiliations was pursued, but at the same time administrative aims became important as well. The absorption of manpower was to be facilitated and the integration into the Christian cults had to be secured. A church was built in each *Reducción* and patronage was provided. The new parishes were structured hierarchically.[83]

The extension of the Corpus festival coincided exactly with this intensive phase of consolidation of the political and religious leadership. It was obviously an integrative part of the wide-reaching administrative reform. It is this new order that Corpus Christi ritually reproduced. The town, the district, and even places beyond are presented as a continuously structured landscape which is oriented towards the colonial centre. The introduction of the festival can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to secure performatively the Toledian administrative reform.[84]

4.3.1 Places, routes, appointments: the territorial symbolism from an official point of view

The political as well as the ecclesiastical aim is evident in the territorial symbolism of the celebrations. Saintly figures from nine parishes take part in it. Eight of them, devoted to San Pedro, the Apostle Santiago, San Cristóbal, the Virgin of Belen (that is, Bethlehem), San Sebastian and San Jerónimo correspond to the originally indigenous urban quarters *Chakilchaka*, *Qoqanpata*, *Toqokachi*, *Sañu*, and *Wama*. The ninth parish constitutes the Spanish colonial center of town with the cathedral, incorporating the *sanctum*. During Corpus Christi the saints of the neighboring Indian communities are oriented towards this dominant Spanish center, to which they have to subordinate themselves. In this context one has to remember that the primary goal of the ritual, the cathedral of Cuzco, is far more than a religious symbol. It was constructed as the 'Church of Triumph' which marked the site of the final military victory of the Spaniards. Also, it was directly built upon the base of the palace of Inka Huiracocha, the Sunturwasi, as the still visible foundation walls attest. Insofar the main cultic center is a clear emblem of the military and political subjection.[85] It represents what Dean has called a metonym of conquest.[86]

82 Millones 1973.

83 Celestino 1982, 151.

84 Subordinate saints of poorer quarters or places, such as Santa Ana or Santa Barbara, have to defer to more powerful saints.

85 The site of the procession, the current *Plaza de armas*, was, already in the time of the Inka under the name of *haukaypata*, the main meeting place of the town "used for major events such as victory celebrations, the installation of new rulers, and the culmination of various seasonal festivals" (Dean 1999, 29).

86 Dean 1999, 24.

Coming to the performance itself: at first the direction of the movement is used to identify the center of the festival. In the first part of the performance the processions are centripetal, whereas they become circuitous in the centre. The pictures of the saints are arranged around the tabernacle. At the end of the festival they are brought back in centrifugal directions to their local homes, where they will constitute the centre of gravity in their parishes. By so doing it seems that a complete hierarchical registration of the ritual space, its diverse elements, and people takes place.

The symbols and directions of the festival correlate skilfully with the social and administrative structures. This hierarchical integration begins at the micro-level. Numerous little saintly figures, crosses, or images are carried in the big processions or placed at the wayside. They consist of shrines of subordinated social units, like subordinate parts of the city, professional organizations, or other institutions, neighbourhoods, or even single families. During Corpus Christi, they will all be brought into direct contact with the saints set above them in order to renew their consecrating power. In this way, they are subordinated to the parish saints, who themselves bow before the Body of Christ from whom they will receive legitimation and strength.

Social differentiation and differing hierarchical positions among the saints become visible in the size, facilities, and expense of their processions. In addition, the sequences of the Corpus festival are expressions of traditional power relations. Already at the arrival in town there is clear demarcation, as is shown in the competition between San Jeronimo and San Sebastian. Subordinate saints from side altars and chapels, as in the case of the Virgen Purificada and San Antonio, are oriented towards the patrons of the church and constitute their retinue. Partly, as in the case of Santa Barbara, pictures representing the patronage of the rural communities are assigned to the saints in the city and they are only allowed to enter the center of town in their company. The saints of the periphery have to sleep outside the town gate. The entrance into the convent church of Santa Clara is also determined by prestige. Saints in poorer parts of the city or in rural communities have to wait respectfully before the entrance until the 'great' saints have arrived. Only at the 'vigil' *(velada)* are the saints of the neighbourhood brought into the former Spanish-dominated center. In a final move, they are allowed to enter the cathedral.

The order in the cathedral and during the procession is strictly specified. However, a historical analysis clearly shows a fundamental change in position and a change in the participating saints.[87] These findings contradict Sallnow's thesis concerning the absence of dynamism in local rituals. The actual sequence presents itself as a result of a multidimensional historical process. Presumably, several regulating principles can be

87 Bernales Ballesteros 1981; for the innovations see also Flores Ochoa 2009.

recognized. Bernales noticed that the saints were ordered according to rank and age.[88] For example, Santiago, who was the first saint of the town, initially led the procession.[89] It seems that a certain role is also played by the calendrical position of a saint's day. San Antonio, whose saint's day is in January, i.e. at the beginning of the year, at present begins the festival as the first saint.

Above all, the sequence is regulated by the social functions of the figures. To start with, the monstrance accompanies the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries, such as the archbishop. The nearness to the host reflects the importance of the participants.[90] The first figures of saints to follow in the procession are San Antonio as monk and San Jeronimo as theologian. In the middle walk, Santiago and Santa Barbara as patrons of the Spanish army, followed by San Blas, representative of a priest with choirboys, and Saint Peter. Possibly, this succession visualizes the competition among the persons of religious orders and priests, having a parallel in architecture in the competition between the cathedral and the church of the Jesuits, which was built at the same place, rivalling each other in size and splendour. The end is marked by San José and the images of Mary, expressing the fact that women were normally the last in processions. It has to be remarked that the procession is led by the monstrance and is ended by La Linda, the Virgen de la Asunción. This implies that the two sanctuaries that belong to the cathedral, that is to the colonial Spanish parishes, frame the saints of the other parishes.

According to Sallnow's view processions are used as an expression of social exclusiveness, which is emphasized by the fact that social divisions and specific identities are displayed with the help of the patron saints. On the other hand, the Corpus processions of Cuzco present society as an organic unity. Bernales perceives here a society that "unites all social strata and categories from nobility to slaves without disruption and fissures".[91] If one follows this argument Corpus Christi can also be described with regard to its integrative function.

4.3.2 Iconographic symbolism: Santiago as emblem of the conquista

Santiago is the best example for the thesis that Corpus Christi in Cuzco was conceptualized as the triumph of the colonial order, because only those saints were included who embodied subordination in an especially clear-cut manner. Santiago is portrayed as a helper in battle and represents a Spanish cavalryman. He rides down the nonbelievers while swinging a raised sword.

The beginning of the Santiago cult started directly after the final conquest of the Inka empire, that is after the victory of the Spanish in Cuzco. The reason is the report of the apparition of the saint as a helper in battle. In 1535 the Spanish were surrounded

88 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 285.

89 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 288.

90 Dean 1999, 44.

91 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 277.

by the troops of Manco Inka in the town center of Cuzco. It is said that they were completely overwhelmed and sought a last refuge in a chapel whose roof was already set on fire. In this critical moment, the miraculous rescue happened, according to legend, in the guise of Mary and Santiago. While Mary extinguished the fire, and spread dust or hail in the eyes of the attackers, Santiago rode them down with his stallion. The saint became the first patron of the town and he is thought of as a guarantee that the empire will not fall back into heathenism.[92] The cult is installed in the Church of Triumph, one of the first church buildings in Peru, situated directly at the site of the rescue. The church was built inside the cathedral in the seventeenth century and still today forms its northernmost wing. There, one still finds the life-size figure of Santiago Mataindios, representing a Santiago with a subjected Inka under the hooves of his horse. In the main wing of the church a chapel with an altar is dedicated to the saint. On its triptych he is depicted as a fighter against the Inka. In the main apse, there is a figure of Santiago as apostle, while numerous other paintings are distributed in the interior of the church. Between 1571 and 1572 the Viceroy Toledo ordered the building of a parish church for Santiago outside the then limits of the town. The church belonged to a forced settlement of the Inka population but it was also conceived as forming a centre of the neighbouring *Reducción de los Indios del Contisuyu*, that is the entire southwestern part of the empire.[93] Therefore it is built where the road leads to the *Contisuyu*.[94] Before this church the knights of the Order of Santiago of the whole province were sworn in. The scope of the patronage evidently transcended the parish, which proves again that the description of the patronage as "purely local"[95] is not always adequate.

Several authors and sources confirm that the veneration of Santiago constituted from the very first the centrepiece of the Corpus festival. In colonial times he always led the procession of the saints and was not carried in a sedan chair but, like the monstrance, was taken along in a gold-plated wagon.[96] Inside the Corpus festival cycle a special feast day was attributed to the saint, whose *víspera* and procession marked the most splendid stage of the festival.[97]

The procession with the saint led through the whole center, from the city hall back to the cathedral, where the mass was read. Still in the eighteenth century the splendor of Santiago was proverbial. During the procession his clothes and the silver-plated horse gear was changed three times.[98] Carreño describes this procession as a special spectacle:

92 Vargas Ugarte 1956.
93 It appears that the dedication of the town quarter in Cuzco to Santiago is no coincidence. The first *Reducción de indios* in Lima had been under Santiago's control and was opened on his saint's day (Malaga Medina 1989, 23, 36). The first and biggest *Reducción* in the neighboring valley of the Inka, in Yucay, was also dedicated to Santiago (Esquivel y Navia 1980 [1749], 41). Its feast follows exactly the model of Corpus in Cuzco.
94 Garcilaso de la Vega 1943 [1609–1617], VIII, 3.
95 Sallnow 1987, 63.
96 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 288.
97 Cahill 1999, 9.
98 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 282.

"The statue, which sat on a wooden horse, was decorated with silver plates. It was carried on a low, likewise silver-plated sedan chair. The forced breaks of the sacred burden at each of the manifold altars that had been erected at three places made the procession last until four o'clock in the afternoon."[99]

During this day, the procession was led by two superior festival sponsors, the so-called *alfereces reales*. One presented the Spanish, the second the Inka nobility. The latter had been selected by the representatives of the twelve Inka houses, called the *panacas reales*. Behind them walked the authorities and at the end of the procession a troop of Spanish soldiers, followed by the common people. Without any doubt this implies a "performative metaphor for the triumph of Christianity over native religion, and of Christians over 'pagan' Andeans".[100]

The rapid and long-enduring success of the festival gives the impression that the Spanish calculus worked out. Garcilaso de la Vega,[101] the witness of the first years, reported that the subjected participated from the beginning of their free will. Not only the Inka elite of Cuzco marched in the procession, but even the nobility of the provinces came from afar. Bernales noted with surprise: "Ironically, the *indígenas* were the ones who contributed the most to the celebrations and the pomp of Corpus in Cuzco. Possibly, they had at first been encouraged and instructed, but later the feast was based and is still based exclusively on their motivation."[102]

Of all things, it was Santiago, the emblem of the *conquista*, who was especially hailed by the indigenous participants. The historian Cahill notes: "There is no doubt that it is the most important colonial feast of the Inka."[103] How much the Inka elite identified with the feast of Santiago is shown by several judicial procedures. With the help of them they enforced that the guidon of Santiago could be carried in front only by the highest-ranking Inka nobility.[104] Does this mean that the subjected celebrate their subordination?

4.4 The indigenous and popular interpretation of Corpus Christi

On the basis of everyday consumption practices Certeau has shown that cultural elements are systematically used in a way foreign to the producers.[105] As he explicitly indicates, this is especially the case in colonial and postcolonial contexts: "Thus the spectacular victory of Spanish colonization over the indigenous Indian cultures was diverted from its intended aims by the use made of it: even when they were subjected, indeed even when they accepted their subjection, the Indians often used the laws, practices,

99 Carreño 1987 [1883], 76 (Transl. by U. Luig).

100 Dean 1999, 32.

101 Garcilaso de la Vega 1943 [1609–1617], VI, 8.

102 Bernales Ballesteros 1981, 279 (Transl. by U. Luig).

103 Cahill 2000, 91 (Transl. by U. Luig).

104 Dean 1999, 243.

105 Certeau 2006 [1980].

and representations that were imposed on them by force or by fascination to ends other than those of their conquerors."[106] Certeau's observation is valid in the present case too.

Cahill noticed that the interpretations of the Spanish and Inka elites were completely different as regards Corpus Christi.[107] The Inka nobility understood the feast of Corpus Christi in no way as a form of subordination, but used the triumphal procession as a stage in order to present their own symbols. On this particular day, the places of honor were taken by the Inka nobility clad in traditional garments and decorated with their insignia.[108] The highest class, marked by the *mascapaicha* (a badge which is worn on the forehead), was allowed to march in front. The procession was led by the *alférez real de los inkas* who carried a *champi*, a baton with the image of the sun, which resembles a sceptre. What was planned by the Spaniards as a triumphal procession on their account was evidently used by the conquered to remember their glorious Inka past.[109] Therefore, several attempts were made to forbid the symbols of the Inka.[110] Even in 1781 the bishop of Cuzco angrily declared that the nobles of the Inka still carry their own flags and sculpted images of their ancient Inka kings during the procession.[111]

Similarly, it seems that the recent popular interpretations and practices of Corpus Christi have nothing in common with the official guidelines.[112] For example, the dogma of the Real Presence which is officially the reason for the festival, is either unknown or of second order to most participants. The special mass by the archbishop in the cathedral does not attract much interest. Instead, a countless number of believer's huddle before the inconspicuous side altar of Taytacha Temblores, also known as Brown Christ. *(Christo Moreno)*. His face, darkened by the soot of innumerable candles, is interpreted as an identification with the indigenous believers. Although he plays no role in the official protocol of the Corpus festival, he is made responsible for the feast in the popular interpretation. As host at the cathedral and protector of the town he is thought to convene the congregation of the saints *(asamblea celestial)*.[113] Before him, as it is reported with satisfaction, the fair-skinned saints, too, have to bend the knee and receive his orders and blessing.

Indeed, during the feast of Corpus Christi the saints are arranged in the cathedral directly beside his altar in a single aisle. During the calm of the night the affairs of the town and the different communities are discussed under his chairmanship. The saints

106 Certeau 1988, 32.

107 Cahill 1999; Cahill 2000.

108 Uriel Garcia 1937, 189–190, reported: "They brought all the jewellery and things with them that they had worn at the great Inka festivals. Each tribe carried the emblem of his ancestors." (Transl. by U. Luig).

109 Cahill 1999, 9.

110 AGI, Leg. 21.

111 AGI, Leg. 29.

112 Dussel 1986, 110, observes emphatically that, "Indeed two forms of religious performance exist side by side. One is the practice of the people; the other that of the official church. […] Both practices have totally different meanings. In fact, these are two different religions." (Transl. by U. Luig).

113 Calvo Calvo 1996.

report the urgent problems of their parishes and of their believers. Christ gives advice and directions for the coming year. Sometimes one can hear from outside the low murmuring of the group. However, only the sponsors of the festival who keep vigil with their saints in the cathedral can understand them. In this way they learn something of the destiny of the coming year. Thus, it becomes evident that the congregation of the saints has been completely re-interpreted by popular belief. Instead of the bishop as host, an indigenous saint takes center stage.

During the procession, we find a similar situation. The marvellous monstrance does not receive much notice.[114] The participants focus exclusively on 'their' saints. They gather around them and seek to be near them physically. They are believed to be important identification figures relating to human destiny and the lifeworld of the common believers. It happens quite often that the official symbolism which they represent is thoroughly transformed. An example is San Antonio, who leads the procession. Originally, as has been shown above, the reason for this may have been that the hermit represents the friars, who presumably were the leaders of the procession in former times. Another reason is the fact that his feast as a saint is celebrated at the beginning of the year. But the rural visitors conclude from his position as a leader that he is a *Qollana*, which means the 'chargehand' who, as the busiest worker, leads the work in the fields and determines the pace. These are traditionally the youngest men in the indigenous communities, who have to prove their worth at work. Because of this interpretation, San Antonio is considered to be the patron of the youth. Only they are allowed to carry his statue, because it is believed that he will transmit his power to them.

At present, for many indigenous participants problems of agriculture are at the centre of their interest. San Cristóbal, for example, represents for them the patron of the potato harvest. A chain of particularly big potatoes thus decorates his sedan chair. He is decorated as an indigenous elder, the trunk of the palm tree representing his staff of office (Fig. 10). San Jerónimo is the patron of the vegetable harvest. Therefore, the products are accumulated in front of his chair.

The official ascription of some figures is reversed, for instance in the case of the Virgin of Belén. She is the official patron of the town and is believed by the mestizos to be the queen of the event. Her pomp is legendary. She owns hundreds of clothes, which are displayed before the feast on the forecourt of her church. Her decoration consists of real jewellery and gems. However, the indigenous participants evaluate these riches as an expression of moral degeneration. One says in hushed tones that the Virgin of Belén sells herself during the last night of Corpus to the rich saints of the town. Contrary to her are Santa Barbara and Santa Ana. They return home already in the afternoon of the octave. As decent women, they arrive home before nightfall. Both of them are saints of

114 Flores Ochoa 1990, 117.

Fig. 10 San Cristóbal at Corpus with his indigenous followers.

indigenous market parishes and embody simple women. They show themselves without splendid adornment; 'poor but honest' is the slogan of their followers.

It is reported with pleasure that, ironically, the lordly Santiago is attracted by the indigenous Barbara. Every year he appears on his best charger in order to impress this virgin saint. But he never succeeds in catching up with her because Santa Ana, who is an experienced matron, does not let him pass. This example shows that the saints are entangled in emotional histories in which people participate intensively.

The patron saints may originate from the standard inventory of the saints and were most possibly imposed on the native population.[115] It is however clearly recognizable that by way of popular legends and reports of miracles they were fast ascribed local identities which are witty and unique. They are deeply integrated into the social context of their veneration. Admiration for them is based on the motivation of local actors. A particularly brilliant example of that is Santiago, the patron saint of violent conquest.

115 Sallnow 1987, 199.

4.4.1 *The popular appropriation of Santiago*

Already early colonial sources illustrate that the popularity of Santiago among the indigenous population had nothing to do with the requirements of the colonial rulers. Rather he was linked with lightning because of his celestial intervention in Cuzco. The chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala wrote: "Our master Santiago fell down from the sky with a loud thunder like a lightning bolt, and when he arrived on earth the Indians were terrified and thought that *Yllapa*, known as thunder and lightning, had come down from heaven. And since that time the Indians call lightning by the name of Santiago, because he fell down to earth like lightning *Yllapa*, Santiago."[116] In a worldlier interpretation, the Jesuit Arriaga analysed the event: "The Indians noticed in the battles with the Spanish that they invoked Santiago when they fired their muskets, which the Indians called *Yllapa* or lightning."[117] For this reason, an identification of lightning with Santiago is explained through the parallel between firearms and thunder and lightning on the one hand and with the old Spanish battle cry on the other. Recent anthropological authors confirm that Santiago is still associated with lightning by the indigenous people,[118] which is the foundation of his importance.[119] Also, believers in Cuzco report that Santiago protects the houses and people in the poor quarters where no lightning rods exist.[120]

The appropriation of Santiago seems to have been accomplished by patronage of his urban quarter. The cult that was first imposed changed quickly into a local cult. The inhabitants of this parish call themselves *ayllu* (lineage) of Santiago in the colonial title deeds.[121] The stone cross of Santiago in front of the church of 1606 already contains the names of indigenous sponsors. The church, which was completely destroyed in 1650, was built by the members of the community out of their own means. It is in this way that the identification with the saint may have happened, via the association with this part of town. "The carpenters were settled in the quarter Belén and the silver smiths in the parish Santiago";[122] most probably, Santiago is for this reason provided with a lot of silver. Even his sedan chair is completely clad in rolled silver (Fig. 11). The believers have another explanation for this fact. They believe that he has so much silver because under his church flow two creeks which carry a lot of silver. During the sermon one can hear the murmuring of the water. The silver sounds like little bells whose sounds purify and heal.[123]

116 Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980 [1615], 310 (Transl. by U. Luig).

117 Arriaga 1920 [1621], 52 (Transl. by U. Luig).

118 Bolin 1998; Yaranga Valderama 1979.

119 Claros Arispe 1991.

120 With his splendid horse, he can go everywhere, runs the saying. Some people ascribe his speed to the stylized wings on the knees of the saint's statue. They are, originally, a reference to his celestial apparition in the battle of Cuzco.

121 Gutiérrez Samanez 2006.

122 Malaga Medina 1989, 53 (Transl. by U. Luig).

123 This idea possibly leads back to the practices of traditional healers. They often work with small bells.

Fig. 11 Santiago of the Parish of Santiago/Cuzco.

In sum it is evident that the popular interpretations of the saint do not correlate with the official attribution. It is remarkable that the ideological content of the figure did not have much effect even during colonial times. Rather, it was quickly instrumentalized for the implementation of indigenous interests. What was planned by the Spanish as a demonstration of power led in reality to a rapid appropriation of the saint. Building

They unfold purifying forces and call back the life force of the sick.

on destroyed foundations, or the triumphal procession with the insignia of Inka power, offered points of contact and allowed for the confirmation of indigenous identity.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, we can ascertain that the categorical division between pilgrimage and the celebration of the patron saint drawn by Sallnow does not meet what is required by the dynamics of the festivals described. It blurs insight into the many correlations and commonalities between the two forms of cult. The pilgrimage to the Qoyllur Rit'i cannot be clearly separated from the festival of the patron saint and the processions of Corpus Christi. The two festivals merge, they share the same participants, and have similar motivations and symbolism. In addition, the feast of Corpus Christi has many characteristics that are typically attributed to pilgrimages. The festival can be characterized as being multi- and translocal. The participants are extremely heterogeneous; different ethnic and social groups meet without necessarily generating hierarchical structures or relations of power. Although the saints of the Corpus Christi festival are rigidly ordered to reflect social relations and to differentiate communities and groups, it has become evident that the hierarchies and the ascriptions have been interpreted creatively and in multidimensional ways or even reversed by the participants. Corpus Christi is in no way dominated by the official religion and the elites. The example of Santiago demonstrates the very self-determining appropriation by the indigenous people already since colonial times. As I have shown, the recent perception of most participants has rather little to do with the official requirements. Just these manifold contradictions between official and popular practices and interpretations, between mestizo and indigenous views, seem to be responsible for the wit and the attraction of the festival. Inhabitants and visitors, citizens and farmers, *indígenas* and *mestizos*, laymen and religious authorities, come together despite their different motivations and ideas. In this way the feast of Corpus Christi turns into a social arena. In its framework identities are underlined and at the same time critically questioned; structure and anti-structure meet.

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The Sakalava Pilgrimage as a Royal Service (Western Madagascar)

Summary

My contribution presents a case study of pilgrimage and procession connected to the main shrine of the Sakalava royalty in western Madagascar. Sakalava pilgrimage developed within a cultural logic decidedly outside the Western world and is perceived as one of many aspects of royal work *(fanompoa)*, performed to confirm and to reassure the relationship with royal ancestors. The renewal of family relations, friendship and identity is a natural part of this event, in particular, for those coming from abroad. My contribution will focus on the meaning of what can be described as Sakalava pilgrimage, and its changes throughout time and space. The analysis of more than 300 years of historical changes reveals, among others, manifold impacts of global conditions on the more recent development of Sakalava pilgrimage.

Keywords: Transformation of a royal residence into a religious shrine; colonial policy; negotiation of meanings; Sakalava; Madagascar; Boeny kingdom

Das ethnographische Fallbeispiel untersucht die besonderen Formen von Pilgerschaft und Prozession im Kontext des zentralen Königsschreins der Sakalava im westlichen Madagaskar. ‚Pilgern' entstand hier im Rahmen einer dezidiert nicht-westlichen Logik und wird von den Akteuren zunächst als eine von vielen Aspekten königlicher Arbeit *(fanompoa)* verstanden, wodurch die Beziehung zu den königlichen Ahnen erhalten und gefestigt werden kann. Der vorgelegte Text erörtert die spezifische Vorstellungswelt der Sakalava-Pilgerschaft im Kontext einer mehr als 300 Jahre langen Entwicklung. Die ursprünglich dominierende Funktion einer Bekräftigung der königlichen Machtposition wurde in neuerer Zeit in Folge der Entmachtung der Könige durch vielfältige neue religiöse, soziale und identitäre Aspekte ergänzt.

Keywords: Transformation einer königlichen Residenz in einen religiösen Schrein; Kolonialpolitik; Bedeutungswandel; Sakalava; Madagaskar; Boeny-Königreich

The results presented here are based upon preliminary fieldwork dedicated to the Doany Miarinarivo (about 15 months) between 1999 and 2000 and supported by the German

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Academic Exchange Service. A systematic exploration of the Sakalava *doany* all along the west coast (2005–2008) and a political anthropology of the mid-west district Besalampy and the local Sakalava kingdoms (2010–2013) were subsequently supported by the German Research Foundation. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the above-mentioned institutions.

1 Introduction: approaching the sacred in Mahajanga

On the north-eastern outskirts of the port town of Mahajanga, the urban center of north-western Madagascar, is a place known as Doany Miarinarivo, Doany Andriamisara Efadahy Manankasina, Doany Andriamisara or simply *the* Doany of Mahajanga. Visitors come here to pay homage to the mortal remains of four prominent royal ancestors of the main dynasty of the west coast, the so-called 'Blessed Four Brothers Andriamisara' (Andriamisara Efadahy). A particular occasion within the annual cycle is the ritual of the 'big royal work' *(fanompoabe)* in July, when several thousand people, including many mediums, i.e. individuals possessed by royal ancestors of the west coast dynasty, convene.

The categorization of these visitors as 'pilgrims' in the most conventional sense must be taken as read, given a location deemed sacred or religious in a broad sense, a shrine, which is the focus of the spatial movement of people of very different origins in search of transcendental help and support. The considerations presented here suggest, though, that such interpretation is, within the given social-cultural context, far less common than the dominant Western view, which is impregnated by a Christian or monotheistic iconography, would allow to predict. Arguably, these 'pilgrims' regularly occupy multiple roles far beyond that of being a 'pure' pilgrim: they may be subjects of the dynasty and various local kingdoms, mediums of royal ancestors, members of the royal family or the Sakalava[1] identity group, or even tourists or part of the large diaspora community, paying an annual visit to family and region of origin. The interpretation of the *doany* as a 'simple' place of pilgrimage can also be questioned by looking at its historical background. It may be asked, e.g. if the former signification of the *doany* as a royal residence actually has been given up, or if the spatial transformation of the former royal residence

1 Ethnic denomination of the west-coast population related to the Sakalava kingdoms, a chain of neo-traditional institutions, connected by the supremacy of the Maroseraña dynasty, dynastical kinship relations and by history, located all along the main part of the west coast (between the town of Tuléar and the island of Nosy Be, but including as well Mayotte, the most eastern island of the Comoros archipelago, today a French domain).

into a place of worship of royal ancestors was succesful. Should these and other changes rather be regarded as a tendency towards sacredness or, better, as a form of camouflage in the context of an uneven balance of power? Finally, should the description of the visitors as 'pilgrims' be seen not only as a simple misunderstanding on cultural grounds but also as an anticipated or even deliberate effect by local actors, the result of a long chain of interactions and reflections between 'Western' and Sakalava ideas of sacredness, power and identity in the context of different constellations of politics and economic interests?

The aim of this contribution is to elaborate the complexity and the ambiguity of those relations and networks as they crystallized in particular at the Doany Miarinarivo, and to come to a fuller comprehension of the current dynamic of 'Sakalava pilgrimage' within the modern Malagasy State.

Let us first have a look at some of the constellations of this *doany*, which has been the subject of a number of publications.[2] Based mainly on data gathered between 1999 and 2000, the situation may be described as follows: Viewed from the city center of the port town of Mahajanga, which is situated on a peninsula and projects like a spur deep into the impressive bay of Bombetoka, the shrine appears peripheral. Situated about five kilometeres on the north-eastern outskirts of the town, the Doany Miarinarivo is nowadays in a quarter of the town *(fokontany)* called Tsararano-Ambony ('Upper Freshwater'). Until recently Tsararano was on the edge of Mahajanga, but during the last decades this quarter has developed into a popular residential area of the Malagasy middle and lower social strata. The ongoing construction of new houses and the enlargement of older ones, if possible using stones or concrete, is driven by a fast-growing population and the continual influx of people from rural areas, for whom this quarter serves often as a first stop. The implementation of an urban infrastructure is happening more slowly, but via the construction of roads made of bitumen, access to electricity and the provision of education facilities is leading visibly to increasing urbanization. All this is changing the appearance of the Tsararano quarter year by year. At a crossroads near the university campus the visitor encounters a domain characterized by the features of what may be described as a typical Sakalava village, common along the west coast but appearing unusual, traditional or even old-fashioned within the context of the new urbanity of the quarter: small huts built from the Bismarck palm (*satrana,* scientific name: *Bismarckia nobilis*) are distributed in a rather irregular manner on a small hillside, without the boundaries and shelters such as fences or walls often topped with pieces of broken glass which mark regularly the property within the new urban housing area on the border.

People who are less familiar with this particular locality could easily believe that it is the remnant of an original Sakalava village, which resisted for some hazards the rapid

2 More recently e.g. Ballarin 2000 and Ballarin 2006; Lambek 2002; Kneitz 2003.

evolution to which the surrounding Tsararano quarter was subject in recent years. A plate, though, quite improvised in appearance, draws the attention to a number of rules of conduct, allowing the visitor to comprehend that the *raison d'être* of this location is very different. The striking architectural particularities are, therefore, the result of a conscious effort, of an idea of a place, as will be seen, which underlies a historical 'law' enshrining a seemingly rather conservative view: the boundaries of the small *doany*-village are attained.

Experienced visitors know that the entry to the village is possible every day except Tuesday and Thursday, but to the shrine building itself only on Monday, Friday or Saturday. After a short walk in a north-easterly direction a space lined with mighty mango trees *(manga)* behind the village houses appears. Drawing closer, one comes to understand that the function of this space is to serve as a courtyard to a rectangular stone building *(doany, zomba)* hiding behind an original palisade trench *(valamena)* made out of concrete pickets. This particular construction, situated on the top of a small elevation and encompassing the shrine, is what is called more specifically the *doany*. As the *doany* hill slopes on the eastern side rather steeply and has no pathway, allowing the development of a 'wild' area not put to any particular use, access is clearly limited to the western, southern and north-western parts.

In about 2000, a supplicant desiring to approach the sanctuary would have experienced approximately the following sequence of actions. Arriving visitors usually are dressed up and would sit on the enormous roots of the mango trees, the 'waiting room' of the shrine. One after another they are received by the long-serving guardian Edouard or (with his shortened name) Doara,[3] called as well *fahatelo* (i.e. guardian, his title in the context of the *doany*),[4] in a small hut south of the outer courtyard. The guardian is first informed of the purpose of the visit. The hut offers the opportunity to adapt later one's clothing to the particular demands of the *doany*, in particular a sort of popular cloth wrapped around the waist *(lambahoany)*, instead of trousers and underwear, to remove shoes, socks, watches or glasses, or to weave hair into loose braids. Once this is accomplished, the supplicants walk behind the guardian, passing the entrance of the palisade *(valamena)*, right foot first, crossing the small court (also called the *valaicmena*) and finally reaching the south-western door. They enter a sparsely equipped and ornated chamber, measuring about six by eight meters and plunged into twilight, as only two doors and small window openings allow the light to enter. Only the north-eastern corner is striking: a huge curtain of white cloth *(safoday)* protects it but reveals at the same

3 He has been the guardian for more than two decades – Estrade 1985, 37, met Doara's father in the mid-1970s – and has been decisive in a number of crises and difficult situations.

4 Literally 'The Third', the name usually given to the third-ranking individual of the Boeny kingdom, behind the king and the highest-ranking noble, called *manantany*. Today, in fact, the *fahatelo* is the most influential person in the Doany Miarinarivo and the Kingdom of Boeny.

time vaguely a small wooden stilt-house *(zomba vinta)*. The guardian and the visitors sit down in front of the curtain, and therefore just in front of the hidden stilt house as well, as close as possible to the royal ancestors, the 'Four Blessed Brothers Andriamisara', whose relics are held to be stored in the house. An incense stick is lighted.

The group adopts a particular position for prayer, turning their palms to the ceiling, and Doara starts a prayer with a rather formalized beginning, invoking the four ancestors, before tailoring it to the expressed wishes and expectations of the visitors. Usually a small sacrifice of money, often just several hundred Ariary[5] (but sometimes much larger and even impressive sums), accompanies the prayer, and the visitors receive in exchange some small pieces of limestone *(tanifoty)*, which concretizes the benediction of the ancestors. As a symbol of the benediction received, the visitors' chests are decorated with a white dot or other mark. Once the mission is accomplished, the guardian accompanies the visitors back to the mango trees outside the inner circle of sacredness.

2 Approaching the Sakalava pilgrimage

It seems only natural to term such visitors as 'pilgrims', and to associate the spatial movement towards a holy place with the word 'pilgrimage', especially as it developed within the practice of Christianity[6]. Such a designation is easily made, in particular as it is usual for the leading individuals of the *doany* to compare this place and its practice with Christianity and to use it as a model of reference. "The *doany*", confirmed the guardian Doara during an interview in 1999, "should be understood as the 'church of the Sakalava'", a formulation which first appears at about the same time in a publication by Ramamonjisoa.[7] The use by the guardian of the French word *église* (church) and its Malagasy equivalent *leglizinay*, usually adopted to designate Christian churches (the edifice as well as the institution), is particularly enlightening as it points clearly to a comparison of Sakalava and Christian religious practice. Such an analogy is not an abstract one but derives from personal experience, as the guardian and some of his family are members of the Roman Catholic Church, whereas the king *(mpanjaka)*, called (at time of my research) with his shorthand personal name Dezy[8] is a member of a Protestant church. Like Christians who go to church when they wish to pray, Doara explains, the disciples of the royal ancestors visit their *doany*. Likewise, it may be concluded, as Catholicism developed a worship of saints based regularly upon relics, which again became the center of a phe-

5 One Euro = 2500 to 2800 Malagasy Ariary (MGA) in the year 2000. The initial sacrifice of most visitors has a value of less than one Euro.

6 See the definition by Morinis 1992, 4.

7 Ramamonjisoa 1998; see Kneitz 2003, 2, 55.

8 Prince Désiré Noël Randrianirina. He died shortly after 2006.

nomenon called pilgrimage, the appearance of visitors at a *doany*-shrine can reasonably be seen as the expression of an equivalent behavior.

A more profound knowledge of the Doany Miarinarivo and other Sakalava shrines, the practices related to them, the protagonists and their ideas and historical developments, though, suggests the picture is not quite what it seems. The interpretation of the *doany* as a *Leglizinay Ny Sakalava* (church of the Sakalava) certainly touches on an important aspect, particularly obvious – in comparison with other shrines of the Sakalava – at the Doany Miarinarivo, which has an unusual urban and Christian or monotheistic setting. A closer inspection reveals nevertheless that the analogy sketched above could hide at least as much as it allows us to understand, and this with good reason, as already the existence of a public arena impregnated by secular norms of the Malagasy Republic, emphasizing the separation of politics and religion, and the particular importance of Christian norms and ideas of morality for the state suggest. It can be expected that the new understanding of the *doany* as a shrine is the result of an evolution which blended many different ideas and practices in a complex social process, going far beyond a mere tactical reevaluation in the context of the dominant Christian belief system. One piece in this difficult puzzle is the tendency of twentieth-century Western or European, largely French, individuals to identify the *doany* first of all as a shrine or holy place,[9] and no longer as the royal residence and power center of the king. This view became later accepted by the decisive figures of royalty and was further developed within a situation of strong inequality of power.

The subsequent text considers the phenomenon of the 'Sakalava-pilgrimage' not only as a religious practice but tries to reveal as well its many more layers of significance going far beyond a 'regular' pilgrimage: as a subtle manifestation of the historical relationship of king and subject on the west coast of Madagascar, based on hierarchy and duty, as an expression of an elaborate possession system, which allows the participants, mediums and supplicants alike, to worship ancestors of different historical epochs simultaneously and to establish thereby a particular way of communication, or, among others, as a means of regional and ethnical identification, including the political. 'To pilgrimage' in the context of a Sakalava shrine includes all these aspects, expressed within the basic notion of royal work *(fanompoa)*, as a manifestation of loyalty towards the king and in particular the ancestors of the Sakalava dynasty.

This case study offered within the context of an edition aiming at approaching the sacred is therefore embedded in a rather independent locus of socio-cultural development and meaning. 'Pilgrimage' in the sense of a religious journey, generally perceived as a phenomenon typical of all times and cultures,[10] started to develop within the given context of the western Malagasy or Sakalava coast only quite recently, and the formerly

9 E.g. Rusillon 1912; Estrade 1985; Ballarin 2000, 247.

10 Morinis 1992, 1.

dominant political meanings of the movement towards the *doany* persist in a latent and sometimes subversive way. The study presented follows the historical and more recent elaborations of what seems at first glance a 'classical phenomenon of pilgrimage' within its particular socio-cultural logic but as well as the product of modernization, leading, among others, to the invention of distinctively religious and political spheres.[11] By asking, inter alia, if and why the visit to a *doany*, perceived in pre-colonial times as a royal residence, should be regarded today as a 'truly' pilgrimage phenomenon, the study offers the opportunity to question the peculiarity, the character and even the origin of pilgrimage.

3 Kings and royal work: pilgrimage in western Madagascar from the historical perspective

The word *doany* signifies in present-day western Madagascar 'royal residence' (of all Sakalava kings), 'shrine' (of royal Sakalava ancestors) and 'holy place' in a very broad sense, but typically related to a religious practice perceived as traditional and particular to Madagascar.[12] In spite of the apparent close relationship to the main traditional institution of Sakalava royalty, dating back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, the few clues available suggest somewhat surprisingly that the term *doany* was coined rather late. In historical documents of the 17th and 18th century the royal residences at the west coast are called *donac*,[13] or *donat*.[14] The word *lapa* appears as well, but was perhaps more used in the center and the east of the island.[15] The regular word *doany* appears for the first time at the beginning of the 20th century, in a book published by the French missionary Rusillon[16] on the possession of royal ancestry *(tromba)* in the Boeny region. He presents it without comment as a given or 'natural' word, and it is used in the same way as it is today. I could not find any etymological account of the word *doany* in existing literature, but a high-ranking member of the Boeny royal family[17] suggested that this term derived from the Arabic *doha* (prayer), allowing to comprehend

11 See Coleman and Eade 2004.

12 The latter is the dominant meaning of the terme *doany* in other regions of Madagascar, certainly developed with respect to the particular Sakalava *doany*.

13 E.g. Rennefort 1668, 265, and Rennefort 1688, 125.

14 E.g. Saussay 1722, 205–206, concerning a report of 1663.

15 E.g. A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1903, 343 [publishing a report of Houtman in 1603]. In the book by Flacourt (Flacourt 1995 [1661], 157), the word *lapa* is used for a ceremonial hut at a circumcision feast and meant here something like 'church' ("autant à dire qu'église"). The double meaning of royal residence and 'church' as both a political and religious place is therefore inherent in this term, as in the word *doany* today.

16 Rusillon 1912.

17 Personal communication (2000) from Mr. Bachir Soudjay, former member of the senate and president of the main Islamic association on Madagascar. The royal dynasty of the Boeny is still strongly influenced by Islamic belief.

doany as 'a place of prayer'.[18] This explanation corresponds quite well with the particularly strong relationship between the Islam and the royal dynasty since the conversion of the last king of independent Boeny, Andriantsoly (who reigned from ca. 1820 until 1824).[19] It could allow to make understandable why plausibly the term '*doany*' appears so late, even if the history of Sakalav royal residences goes back to the 16th century. For the moment at least it seems reasonable to sketch the following development: the word *doany* was presumably only introduced within the context of the progressive Islamization of the Boeny dynasty throughout the nineteenth century, a dynamic paralleled by the disempowerment of the kings and the new, more 'religious' veneration of the former residence, eventually enhanced by a linguistic process associating the Arabic based word *doany* with the older words for royal residence, *donac* and *donat*. It seems therefore reasonable to conclude that the denomination of all Sakalava royal residences or shrines on the west coast as *doany* is a rather new phenomenon, which developed perhaps during the second half of the nineteenth century. Both meanings of the *doany*, as royal residence and as shrine, are used today in a parallel and overlapping way all along the west coast, and it depends inter alia on the speaker and the particular place and context, which is preferred. To prevent an unhistorical use of the word *doany*, suggesting a wrong retrospective interpretation, it is used in this article only to designate Sakalava shrines and residences since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Following this short evaluation of the word *doany*, a closer look at the history of the west coast kingdoms, especially the Boeny kingdom, and their royal residences is necessary. The aims are to explain the development from the former historical residence of the Sakalava kings to the modern *doany*, and how a physical movement of the subjects towards the royal residential sites was an important practice and the basis for what might be today referred to as the 'Sakalava pilgrimage'.

A patrilineal dynasty called Maroseraña became since the early sixteenth century entangled in an expansive dynamic all along the west coast, in a south-north direction. This dynamic was marked by the founding of always anew kingdoms in any generation, leading to the development of a chain of connected political units. After the foundation of two main political units, first the kingdom Lahefoty (today Menabe; founded ca. 1650 around the present town of Mahabo) and then Boeny (founded ca. 1685 south of what is today the town of Mahajanga), a growing number of small, semi-autonomous kingdoms emerged, which usually feuded in changing alliances one to another.[20] Step

18 Philippe Beaujard, a specialist in the Islamic communities of the south-east coast, agreed to the suggestion of a rather late and Islamic introduction of this word (personal communication 2011).

19 He sought later refuge on the island of Mayotte, where he became sultan (ca. 1832–1843). It should be noted that the relationship of the dynasty to the Islam was established long before official conversion, as a 1741 Dutch document describing a Sakalava king praying to Mohammed reveals (A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1913, 116).

20 See e.g. Ballarin 2000; Kneitz 2003; Kneitz 2008; Randrianja and Ellis 2009; Kneitz 2014.

by step a chain of political independent units came into light, whose reigning elite were related to another by kinship, the knowledge of Maroseraña ancestry and a common socio-cultural as well as historical background – a situation which, on the other side, was not seen as any sufficient cause to organize alliances against common enemies or to understand themselves as a particular unit. In the nineteenth century, however, the term 'Sakalava kingdoms' started to be used, first by Europeans and other outsiders, later by the population itself, for the combined kingdoms, alluding thereby to overt similarities of the socio-cultural system and marking the start of a truly Sakalava identity.[21]

A synoptic portrayal of these kingdoms and of their particularities, including the specific logic of power and social structures underpinning their dynamics, is still not available, in spite of the number of important primary sources[22] and research work dedicated to specific regions, periods, or thematic fields.[23] What we do know, however, suggests that these kings were absolute rulers who aimed at the subjugation of all the formerly independent clans and sub-groups, often of Bantu origin, living on the west coast once they arrived. One of the main techniques for securing the power of the dynasty, besides sheer military power and intermarriage, was placing the worship of selected royal ancestors at the center of the state at the expense of the worship of family ancestors, formerly practiced.[24] The royal ancestors, venerated at a *donac* or *donat* (as the historical documents cited above suggest), i.e. the royal residence, became the formal owners of the land *(tompont'tany)*, and therefore the uncontested authority of power in a very broad sense. Such a practice legitimized the power of the living king and included for example a guarantee of the protection and security of the population, stipulating therefore the need to ask regularly for their protection and assistance. It is very important to underline the particularity of the sketched ideas concerning the royal ancestors: they assumed not only a passive position, as a reference for royal legitimation, but were and are perceived as active entities as they have the potential to communicate their will through a number of mechanisms such as dreams, natural catastrophes or, usually, via mediums. Vice versa, it is always possible to ask their advice through mediums *(tromba)* or magicians *(moasy)*. They are therefore partially exempted from the laws of the dead. The dead kings are, in short, an integral part of the living community.

21 The word 'Sakalava' is assumed to be a derivation of an ancient Arab word for 'slave' (Molet 1972). Its use in western Madagascar, at first restricted to parts of the Menabe population, alludes among many other things to the historical importance of slavery in this region. The construction of an ethnic identity known as Sakalava along the west coast was strongly influenced by strangers and in particular by European ideas of ethnicity and identity.

22 Still most important for an orientation are C. Guillain 1845 and A. Grandidier, Charles-Roux, et al. 1903–1920, a compilation of old documents concerning Madagascar.

23 E.g. Kent 1970; Lombard 1988; Feeley-Harnik 1991; Sharp 1993; Ballarin 2000; Lambek 2002.

24 See e.g. the letter of the missionary L. Mariano written in 1616 before the construction of Sakalava kingdoms in A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1904, 224–232.

The particular status of the dynasty was imposed on the new subjects not only by military means but through their magicians. Typically, the oral literature relates that the victorious foundation of a new Maroseraña kingdom in a particular area became possible only through the means of sacrifices of 'precious things', namely humans and particularly women, such as a wife loved by the king, virgin girls or children.[25] Such an extravagant sacrifice, it can be read between the lines, was crucial as only its fulfilment allowed the respective king to succeed, i.e. to restructure the defeated population and to govern without opposition.

These factors allow us to understand those conditions better which made the physical movement of the subjects towards the royal residence to an essential expression of today's Sakalava identity. The residences of the kings became, as could be expected, the all-embracing center of the respective political units. They accommodated not only the living kings but the relics, i.e. the ancestors themselves, known today as *dady* in the Boeny or Menabe areas and *manjoka* in the Milanja and Ambongo region, legitimating the position of the dynasty and approving ongoing politics and decisions. The hierarchical relationship between the king and the population was reflected, among others, by rituals which were bound to the duty of presence at the capital of the respective kingdom to confirm loyalty. Following the perception of the king as a 'divine creature' occupying a position outside and above society, each service or work devoted to the king was a ritual act, termed as *fanompoa* (royal work), particularly within the context of the royal residence. A typical *fanompoa* was the construction of a new residence or tomb, or the regular need of their physical rehabilitation, which developed into sophisticated rituals, executed in compliance with the lunar calendar and with respect to forbidden days *(fady)*, and by assigning particular works to specific clans.[26] To accomplish such duties it was evidently necessary for the clans and individuals concerned to appear at the royal residence.

Another occasion was the annual ceremony of the 'big royal work' *(fanompoabe)*, as it is nowadays called in the Boeny kingdom, the ablution and anointing of the receptacles containing the relics, an act aiming at re-confirmation of royal power over land and population, approximating in many aspects to an European New Year ceremony. To that end a complex ritual was performed attended by the majority of the population, who assisted with the solemn display of the receptacles in public, a procession to a river or the sea, and a purification rite. The earliest evidence of such a *fanompoabe* with the participation of thousands of Sakalava visitors comes from the second part of the nineteenth century in Mahajanga, a period when the Boeny kingdom was still subject to the

25 See e.g. a summary of different accounts concerning the Boeny kingdom in Kneitz 2003, 302–308; it was possible for me to document comparable accounts concerning the Milanja region in recent years.

26 A detailed example in post-colonial times can be seen in Feeley-Harnik 1991, Part III, 367.

Merina people.[27] At the end of the nineteenth century the preparation of this important ritual included, as today, a complex procession of territorial sub-centers of Boeny royalty along particular long-established roads to transfer objects like drums or incense to the center to cement the relationships and dependence between the different parts of the Boeny kingdom. There is also the possibility of an opposite movement, as my unique observation of ritual practice in the Milanja region indicates (in the year 2008). The relics (the ancestors) are carried here from time to time in a procession from village to village, allowing, or forcing, the local population to express loyalty, subordination and gratitude towards the king, terminating again with the public anointing of the relics, a ritual certainly to be regarded as an ancient practice. It was only the population of the nearby region, essentially within the frontiers of the kingdoms, which were approaching a royal residence in these pre-colonial times, we can reasonably argue. Following the observation of present practice at a *fanompoabe*, it can be deduced that the population of the respective sub-units of the kingdoms arrived together, as a unit, testifying to their loyalty.

The question of whether the physical movement in pre-colonial times, sketched above, towards the capital of Sakalava royalty may be associated with the term of 'pilgrimage' can now be taken up again. As the realms of politics and religion were strongly related, it is clear that pilgrimage in the sense of a mainly religious movement was certainly not an idea comprehensible to the population at this time. The desire to process to the residence of the king and his ancestors was loaded as much with political as with religious significance. It was perceived simultaneously as an act of subordination towards a divine, absolute king, a confirmation of hierarchical organization, which gave to the king a rank outside the rest of society, and a performance that expressed the acceptance of the royal ancestors as the ultimate protectors of the country and the overall prosperity of the people.

Nonetheless it is necessary to take a closer look to the expression of those parts of the movement which seem to fall in the religious category. The positioning of the royal ancestors as the owners and protectors of the country meant, for example, the practice of demanding aid for all sorts of individual or communal problems. It seems very plausible – even if no document allows us to confirm this – that individuals should have taken the trouble of coming to the royal capital not only for official rituals or events but also to seek advice, much as they do today. The figure of Andriamisara, a central personality of Sakalava ancestry, is particularly significant as it combines kingliness with the particular knowledge of an astrologer and a healer.[28] It should be taken for granted that looking for advice in this context is part of a very old Malagasy 'religious' regard for 'loaded' places and objects, such as a tree, a stone, a source, an animal. All these were

27 Ballarin 2000, 415–417.

28 Ramamonjisoa 1976.

seen as the expression of a transcending sacred force, which became the focus of a pilgrimage exceeding political, social or ethnic borders, including the mythically-inspired wandering and search for meaning by individuals from afar. The appearance of wandering healers or astrologers throughout Madagascar, known formerly as *misara* in the south, is intriguing.[29] Therefore, it seems very reasonable to believe that such expressions of a more 'religious' kind pilgrimage already took place at the former Sakalava royal residences as well. Such practice was always secondary, however, to the dominant political significance of expressing loyalty towards the king. Even if some religious aspects coincided with core aspects of what is regarded today as a typical pilgrimage, it would have not been possible to differentiate them from the political-religious amalgam: the idea of pilgrimage as a pure religious observance was certainly not present.

Things changed visibly with the beginning of French colonial reign in 1896. The implementation of the new power eliminated the kingdoms as a political entity and consequentially the kings as political actors. Even more importantly, the constitution of a secular colonial regime and later, from 1960, the independent Malagasy Republic, meant nothing other than the radical negation of any right of the dynasty to reign. At the same time, however, the Sakalava kingdoms continued to exist, including all their institutional structures, as they were regarded by now as a purely religious and/or traditional practice, without any particular relevance for the new and 'truly' political orientation of the government. This practice of not actively changing the institutional structures of Sakalava kingdoms but of denying their political foundation was the starting-point for a still ongoing dynamic, including for example the tendency to appoint women (instead of men) or to select princes[30] regarded as weak, a slow deterioration of the administration structures or the growing difficulties of performing rituals as the population could not now be forced to participate. More important for this article is the tendency towards a new form of sacralization of the *doany*, as the logic consequence of the negation of the political aspects of the monarchy by the state. The spatial and symbolic centers of the *doany* are by now occupied only by royal ancestors, as their authority can be expressed without constraints, whereas the prince *(mpanjaka)* appears in a secondary position, as it is shown by his new residential site which no longer occupies the symbolic center. He acts nowadays only as a mediator. Behind the ancestral dynastic rituals, it is true, it is often the prince who holds an important informal position as well as official authority, but usually it is only on his death that he becomes the true center of attention through the voice of mediums.

Another new development is the phenomenon of a particularly intensive and 'free' cult of possession of royal Maroseraña ancestors *(tromba)*, once the strong regulation of

29 Ramamonjisoa 1976.

30 The French title 'king' *(roi)* was no longer used after colonization, whereas the Malagasy denomination *mpanjaka* (meaning simultaneously prince and king) remains.

mediums of royal ancestors within Sakalava kingship, inevitable as long as their advice was firmly connected to political authority, was not longer necessary or possible and became lifted.[31] The new possession cult developed its own logic regarding the mediums and the social environment connected with them. Among others it has to be noted that the mediums are related via the ancestral ghosts. The ghosts are regarded as 'sitting' *(mipetraka)* within their body, while the mediums become connected to those regions, kingdoms and *doany* which are seen as historically related to the respective ancestors. Once a royal ancestor has been identified and named for the first time, the medium needs to ask for recognition by other mediums (of the same ancestor) or individuals responsible for the particular place related to the ancestor in question, often in the form of an examination. If s/he passes, the medium has to show loyalty by contributing money or by visiting the particular *doany* of 'his/her' ghost, and by participating at the *fanompoabe* of this particular ancestor.

As 'religion' has been the dominant category since 1896 for understanding what constitutes a royal residence, a *doany*, it seems appropriate to use the terms pilgrims and pilgrimage to indicate what kind of people are arriving and what they are looking for. But as the modern secular state is not an undisputed entity in Madagascar and the political meaning of the kingdoms remains, the Sakalava pilgrimage has to be assessed by an in-depth examination of its practice.

4 Pilgrimage in the land of shrines: an overview of present day Sakalava kingdoms

Some 120 years after the arrival of French colonists the historical kingdoms along the west coast have developed into new neo-traditional entities, difficult to categorize along established lines. They are institutions which combine religious, political, identical, traditional and decidedly 'cultural' (in the sense of cultural heritage) aspects. From a local or Malagasy perspective they are still called 'kingdoms' (*fanjakana*, or in French *royaume*), whereas the living 'kings' *(mpanjaka)* prefer the title 'prince', as noted earlier, to differentiate their new position within the modern state. In the context of a state construction defined as republican and plural their position can be described as a specific neo-traditional, autocratic element of civil society, an element with important influence on the local situation and the decision-finding process.

Through a systemic investigation of the situation between 2006 to 2008, the existence of about 50 such neo-traditional Sakalava 'kingdoms', i.e. kingdoms governed by

31 First documented by Rusillon 1912; see also Ottino 1965 and Kneitz 2003.

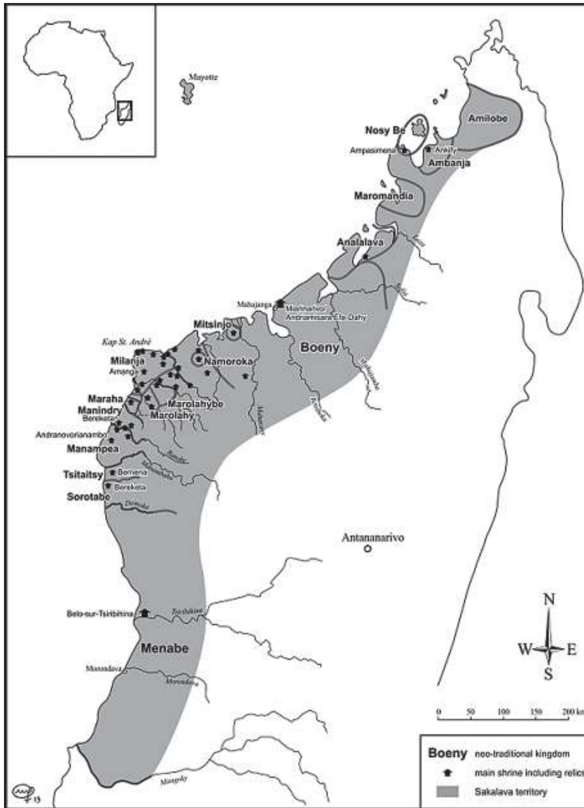

Fig. 1 Overview of Sakalava kingdoms and *doany.*

members of the Maroseraña dynasty, was documented.[32] They, of very different size, are strung, starting in the south-west with the most important kingdom (in terms of territory) of Menabe, north of the river Mangoky, and encompassing several hundred kilometers to the north-west, almost all along the coast, as far as the town of Ambanja and the adjacent island of Nosy Be, and even further to the island of Mayotte, the most eastern of the Comoros archipelago (Fig. 1).[33] This Sakalava territory, composed of many smaller and larger polities, is stretching about 50 to 60 kilometers from the coast to the hinterland. The Boeny kingdom is therefore only one among many similarly construed kingdoms, even if it occupies a prominent position in the internal hierarchy.

32 As some kingdoms in the hinterland are located within a territory called by the Malagasy administration 'red zones' (*zones rouges*, i.e. areas outside public security), it was not possible to work out an exhaustive documentation and the number of kingdoms was therefore estimated, based on local information available outside the 'red zones'.

33 As noted, Andriantsoly, the last king of the independent Boeny, fled to Mayotte from the approaching army of the Merina and founded a sultanate. His

In the symbolical center of each kingdom and sub-kingdom or 'little kingdom'[34] one typically finds a *doany*, meaning simultaneously a royal residence and a shrine, totalling therefore to a number of about 50 shrines. In consequence, the Doany Miarinarivo of the Boeny kingdom is only one among many similarly shrines at the west coast, even while it is distinghuished by many unique aspects. In addition, places of minor importance, difficult to quantify, exist which may be called as well *doany*, because nowadays all places used for religious practice perceived as traditional Malagasy tend to be named as *doany*,[35] for example as well in the central parts of Madagascar. [36] These *doany* are better understood and labelled as 'secondary *doany*' or 'secondary shrines', however, as they are not perceived as capitals of their respective kingdoms (even if some were genuine a *doany*). These are places which play a less important role within the royal rituals or particular historical events. These secondary *doany* are recognizable by the construction of a hut containing usually a *viarara* (ceremonial knife, used for the sacrifice of zebu cows) and the accessories of mediums, but they do not contain relics. There are also royal tombs *(mahabo)* which are never the center of important public rituals. The graves actually are not accessible but to a handful selected persons, but in the case of funerals as well as on the occasion of construction work they are becoming the subject of a 'royal service' *(fanompoa)* and thereby demand the presence of mediums and royal clans, similarly to a *fanompoa* at a shrine or *doany*. Finally there are a number of additional sacred places also assigned to the royal sphere but not characterized by a particular building, e.g. lakes which hold certain parts of the dead bodies, and which may also be called *doany* by local people or specialists. It should be added that the making and eventual unmaking of *doany* continues in the Sakalava area[37] as well as throughout Madagascar.

All *doany*, and eventually all secondary *doany* as well, are pilgrimage sites in the broadest sense, or at least have the potential to become one in particular circumstances. As the *doany* are more or less regularly subject to rituals like the anointing of the relics *(fitampoha, fanompoabe)*, it is necessary for those related to the Sakalava kings to participate and to move to the site itself. On the occasion of a ritual *(fanompoa)* at a more important *doany*, the followers of the subordinated smaller kingdoms are requested to arrive as well. For example, the Doany Amanga, the main shrine of the kingdom of Milanja, is nowadays the center for eight 'little kingdoms', having been erected by the children

Islamic tomb is regarded as a *doany* (a very unusual use of this word, as royal graves or *mahabo* are categorized in the dualistic perception of 'traditional' Sakalava as opposite to the residence of the living king (see Baré 1980, chapter V and VI) and is the scene of an annual *fanompoa* ('royal service').

34 An expression coined in the cultural context of the Indian subcontinent (Schnepel 1997, 47).

35 See for example Rakotomalala, Blanchy, and Raison-Jourde 2001, 65.

36 In this text the word *doany* is used always according to its original meaning as 'Sakalava royal residence and shrine', and not with reference to the more general meaning of a 'sacred place'.

37 A particularly intriguing example is the foundation of a recent *doany* close to the town of Port-Bergé, north of Mahajanga, by a sub-branch of the Boeny dynasty.

and great-children of the founding king. Each *fanompoa* at the Doany Amanga will therefore lead ideally to the participation of representatives (mediums, living members of the royal dynasty) of the children and great-children of the founding king.

At least in principle all these places – *doany* and secondary *doany,* and even the hardly known additional sacred places – can receive individual requests for assistance or benediction by people who have travelled some distance in search of a solution to a particular problem or perhaps because this or that ancestor appeared in a dream. In reality, though, most of these royal places are of mere local relevance, hardly known beyond a very restricted area, without any visitors from outside. One indication of their isolation is the fact that rituals like the anointing of the relics (*fanompoabe*) at many of these shrines rarely take place simply because of lack of means. This concerns particularly those relatively remote *doany* in the west-coast regions like Mailaka, Ambongo and Milanja, in between the southern kingdom of Menabe and the northern kingdom of Boeny, which were historically of secondary rank, following the minor rank of the respective kingdoms in term of power, and whose ancestors were not known in other regions for important deeds and consequently are not known to outsiders.

Only two of all the existing *doany* are in fact the focus of significant pilgrimage, namely the *doany* of Belo-sur-Tsiribihina, the successor of the royal residence of the kingdom of Menabe, and the Doany Miarinarivo in Mahajanga. The performance of rituals in these places in many respects garners much more attention than those of smaller *doany*, as they are in the middle of a particularly important network of mediums and kinship, and as the presence of TV or radio teams on the occasion of the main royal service reveals. Observation suggests, though, that the *doany* in Belo-sur-Tsiribihina is at present far less anchored in the population than it was before. The once hereditary ritual is nowadays executed mostly by members of the dynasty itself and not by the respective clan members, and there is a growing tendency to neglect traditional norms and to relate this place to the quite new notion of '(national) cultural heritage'.[38] Most importantly, the *doany* in Belo cannot be seen as the center of an intensive cult of possession, as it is definitely the case for the Doany Miarinarivo in Mahajanga.[39] It appears then that it is the latter, which is by far the most attractive shrine and the focus for a new phenomenon of Sakalava pilgrimage, transgressing national and international borders and therefore part of those tendencies of modernization and globalization, which have been described for other pilgrimages as well. It is therefore particularly interesting to proceed now to a more detailed analysis of the Doany Miarinarivo.

38 Chazan-Gillig and Haidaraly 2006.

39 Lambek 2002; Kneitz 2003.

5 The Doany Miarinarivo: the dynamic of a Sakalava pilgrimage site (ca. 1685–2013)

The history of the royal residence of the kingdom of Boeny comprises a time span of more than 300 years. The residence has seen many different locations during this long developmment, the latest of which is its recent establishment at Tsararano-Ambony in Mahajanga and known as Doany Miarinarivo, as it was described above already extensively. The evolution of this place contains many aspects which are exemplary of most Sakalava *doany*, but its many specific, and avant garde, particularities should not be neglected. On the most basic level it has gone from a royal residence to a shrine, from subordination to a living king to the veneration of royal ancestors, and from politics to religion. The task of this paragraph is to present the essential steps of the historical evolution of this most important of shrines on the west coast, including changes to its architectural and symbolic design and the ritual practice as well as the changing movements of its adherents.

The Doany Miarinarivo is thought by the population of north-west Madagascar, in particular those of Sakalava identity, to enjoy direct historical continuity with the residential siege of the kings of Boeny, even though the location was established only in colonial times and its architecture and iconography is in many aspects very different. It is possible to date the emergence of the kingdom of Boeny to the period between 1684 and 1686, when Andriamandisoarivo, an unsuccessful pretender to the Menabe throne, wanted to establish his own political unity in the north-west of Madagascar.[40] The first residence, known in the oral tradition as Tongay,[41] was established roughly fifty kilometers to the south-west of the town of Mahajanga, in the southern hinterland of the bay of Boeny, where a rich colony of Islamic merchants on a small island attracted the interest of Andriamandisoarivo and became subdued. The place of the residence changed regularly, as a consequence of a custom demanding the destruction and replacement of the residence following the death of a king, for strategic reasons or later as a result of the conquest of the Boeny region by Merina and French troops. The designation of the Boeny residence changed in consequence repeatedly and appears under many different names in historical documents (Fig. 2).[42]

One of the best descriptions of the early situation of the Boeny royal residence is a Dutch sketch referring to a 1719 report (Fig. 3).[43] The place is called Tananarive,[44]

40 For a detailed reconstruction see Kneitz 2014.

41 Probably near the village Bezavo of today, the most important royal cemetery of the Boeny kingdom, which includes among others the tomb of Andriamandisoarivo (Vérin 1975, 337–340).

42 See Kneitz 2003, 276–278.

43 Valentyn 2002 [1726], 148–151.

44 Antananarivo or Tananarive was the capital of the Merina kingdom in the center of Madagascar (today the capital of Madagascar) since end of the 18th century and became later the capital of the Malagasy Republic. The designation 'Tananarive' for the

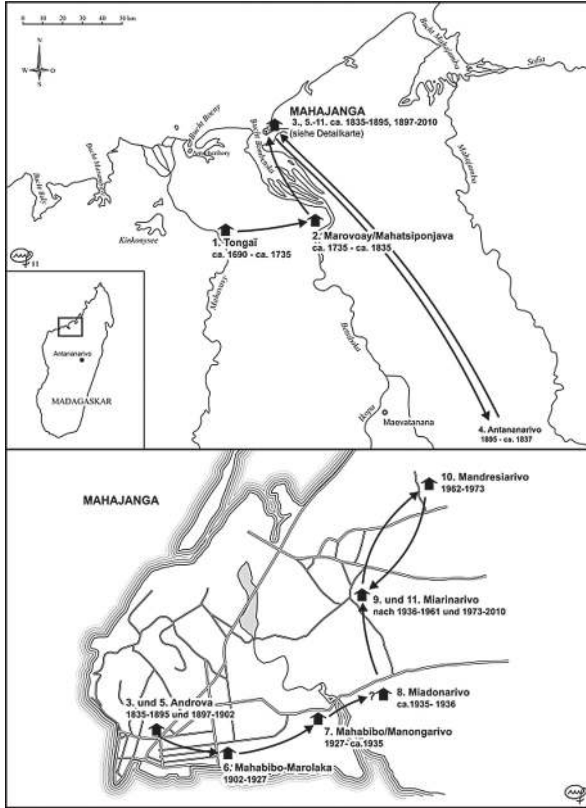

Fig. 2 Some changing locations and names of the Boeny-doany (1685 until today).

recognizably a spacious residential village. The center is clearly dominated by a more important hut made out of planks, surely the king's house. Just in front of it a mighty pole, sharpened at the end, is sunk in the ground, as if to symbolize the center of the kingdom. Nothing similar can be found today at any *doany* I have seen along the west coast, but the pole recalls the *hazomanga*, which were used formerly as a place for sacrifice and as a reference for royalty.[45] Only near a *doany* in the village of Marofatiky (west of Besalampy) is a small *hazomanga* pole displayed, recalling a former location of the *doany.* The sketch also shows a dozen smaller huts distributed around the center, and one in the background has gables distinguished by crossed sticks, sharpened like spears. This symbol of royalty might indicate the location of the relics and other precious things. The whole area is demarcated by a palisade made out of sharpened posts.

Boeny residence appears only in this 1719 document.

45 Goedefroit and Lombard 2007, 53.

Fig. 3 The royal residence of the Boeny kingdom in 1719.

The symbolic meaning is arguably that the residence is placed in the center of the kingdom and even of the four cardinal directions – and therefore pretending to be the middle of the world and the cosmos. Sharpened objects like the palisade or the central pole are found repeatedly as an architectural icon at the royal residence, and are always to be seen as a sign of royal power. These indications, confirmed by other reports,[46] reveal a general construction plan of the royal residence, comparable to most other regions in Madagascar at this time and even today, as far as an incomplete review of historical documents and literature suggests.[47]

Another Dutch report in 1741 points for the first time to the existence of shrines including royal relics:

> On nous a conduit dans une grande Kaaba[48], toute tendue de toile blanche du toit jusqu'à terre afin de la garantir du vent et de la pluie ; à l'intérieur, il y avait une riche collection de beaux et bons mousquets : nous en avons compté plus de cent ; puis, des meubles et des coffres pleins, nous dit-on, de vases et d'objets en argent et un grand trône laqué et doré [...], et, enfin, le reliquaire royal, qui se compose de quatre écussions représentant chacun un des quatre aïeux du roi : Andian Mesorre [Andriamisara], Andian Leyfoetse [Andriandahefotsy],

46 E.g. Westra and Armstrong 2006, 129 (concerning a 1715 report).

47 E.g. A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1903; A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1904; Nativel 2005.

48 The author uses the term *kaaba* repeatedly in his report to describe a particular Malagasy architecture. The association of the shrine with the Muslim Kaaba of Mekka, which at first seems so obvious, is therefore not possible, even if the term does have roots in the Islamic world.

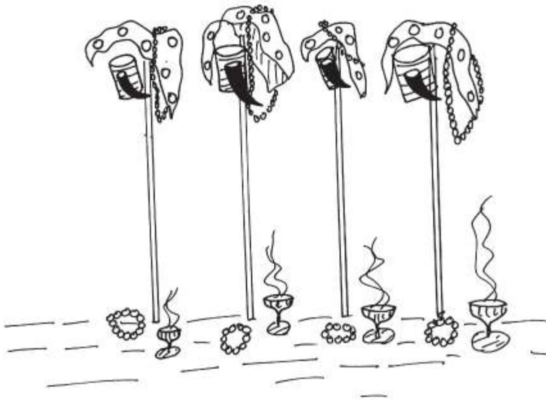

Fig. 4 The reliquary in 1741.

> Andrian Chimenatte [Andriantsimanato, post-humously Andriamandisoarivo, the first king of Boeny] et Andian Tokaf [Andriantoakafo, the son and sucessor of the latter].[49]

The four receptacles made out of gold and silver, one is informed later, are fixed to the top of four posts, and four large crocodile teeth are clamped to them (Fig. 4).[50] Some days later the Dutch negotiator is invited alone to participate at an intimate ritual of the king at the shrine, as a sign of particular confidence. The king, after praying "to Mohammed", took a silver horn, filled it with "Malagasy spirit" and sprinkled it over the receptacles, before he burnt incense and formulated a prayer.[51]

This report is the only available testimony to the shrine in the heyday of the politically independent kingdom of Boeny. In this period – between about 1700 and 1820 – the royal residence of Boeny must have been the stage for regular gestures of submission and loyalty from the population to the king and the ancestors.[52] In particular, the annual ritual of the anointing of relics *(fanompoabe, fitampoha)* as the most important acknowledgement of the socio-political order should have concentrated attention on

49 A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1913, 116. The same royal ancestors are still venerated today at the Doany Miarinarivo. It has to be noted that only Andriantsimanato (now called Andriamandisoarivo) and Andriantoakafo are the historical founding kings of the Boeny kingdom, whereas Andriamisara and Andriandahefotsy are central figures of the older Menabe kingdom and lived before the advent of the Boeny. Their reference (and their relics) are included to claim the priority rights in the dynasty (see Lombard 1988, 22, for a discussion).

50 A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1913, 117.

51 A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1913, 127–128.

52 A particular gesture of submission under Sakalava royalty, nowadays forgotten, was licking the knee of one's master (slaves even licked the soles), as observed repeatedly by Drury (Drury 1826 [1729], 299).

the political, spatial and spiritual center of Boeny, i.e. the residence, including physical movement. To interpret the latter aspect as a purely religiously defined pilgrimage would be therefore certainly misleading under the given historical context. Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence from the pre-colonial period concerning such customs, and it is only possible to deduce the practice from what has been described and documented since the end of the nineteenth century, and more abundantly in the last decades, by anthropologists and historians.

In the course of the first decades of the nineteenth century the kingdom of Boeny was increasingly under pressure from the emerging kingdom of Merina at the center of the island, and at the same time it was faced with a number of internal problems, such as the difficulties of defining a successor so typical of southern and western royalty. In 1824 the capital at that time, Marovoay, and the adjacent region of central Boeny near the river of Betsiboka fell to the army of Merina's King Radama. The shrine was not destroyed but became integrated in the sacral topography of the Merina kingdom, because the royal ancestors of the Boeny were interpreted formally as the ancestors of the Merina kings.[53] The captured shrine was transferred to the new fort of the Merina garrison in the coastal town of Mahajanga, just behind the house of the governor, the local representative and close kin of the Merina kings. Further, one remarkable innovation has to be recognized: the reliquaries were no longer fixed on a pole, but stored in a small "house with a steeply inclined roof", as the French explorer Alfred Grandidier observed, called the 'house of destiny'[54]. Such houses are not typical of the west coast but are found in the interior of Madagascar on the tombs of the Merina nobility, which again are images of royal houses.[55] These iconographic changes are therefore understandable as a material and ideological representation of the royal ancestors of the victorious Merina kings.

The Sakalava population continued their veneration of their royal ancestors throughout the decades of occupation. The rituals, however, changed because of strong security measures put in place to prevent attempts to recapture the relics by force, leading to a replacement of the anointing at the sea or the delta of the Betsiboka by an anointing inside the shrine-house *(zomba)*, as continues today.[56] Importantly, the relics no longer formally legitimated the political power of the Sakalava dynasty, but the power of the new sovereigns in distant Antananarivo. For the first time the idea that the service at the royal residence was not necessarily a sacro-political exercise of the Maroseraña was introduced. The continual move of the local population towards the *doany* (as it can be labelled from then on) certainly has to be interpreted as the expression of continual political loyalty, but more 'religious' aspects and the expression of a particular socio-political 'Sakalava' identity were gradually included.

53 Ballarin 2000, 179–187.

54 *Zomba vinta*, A. Grandidier 1971, 28; translation by the author.

55 See e.g. Nativel 2005, 44–47.

56 Kneitz 2003, 319.

The direct transition of power, in 1896, from the Merina to French administration and its conception of a secular, modern and republican state led finally to a break in the interpretation of the relics. From then on it is grounded upon religion, tradition or identity, and the political meaning was driven underground. Another main consequence of the French conquest for the main shrine of the Boeny kingdom was that the relics, regarded now as purely religious objects, were given back to the Maroseraña dynasty after more than seven decades of control by the Merina authority. The French were very well aware of the potential political implications of the relics and they regarded all that concerned the shrine with suspicion at the beginning of colonization, fearing the possibility of a counter-movement.[57] The balance of power favored the Europeans sufficiently to prevent any such possibilities being realized, and at the same time enforced a further transformation of the *doany*. Rusillon[58] was the first to describe the new 'design' of the *doany* location, now in Mahajanga-Mahabibo (Fig. 5), although the change of symbolic meaning has to be read between the lines. Most importantly, the new central position of the shrine-house *(zomba)* can be noted, replacing the king's house. More precisely, one might interpret this modification as a move from the ancestors and relics into the former king's house and becoming therefore the main focus of attention. The living king *(mpanjaka, prince)*, however, is relocated to a small building outside the inner compound of the *doany*, a building, which clearly no longer constituted the 'middle of the world', even while it remained near to the spatial center. Whereas these arrangements more or less gained acceptance among all shrines on the west coast, one particularity of the Boeny shrine is the insertion of the wooden 'house of destiny' *(zomba vinta)* in the main shrine-building *(zomba)*. One reason for the adherence to this architectural particularity inspired by the Merina, and in spite of their disempowerment, is most probably the inertia of a well-established custom apart, the creation of strong relationships between the Merina and Boeny-Sakalava dynasties through marriages and the development of new lineages.

The *doany* of the Boeny kingdom was at the beginning of colonization first established near the inner city, but later changed its position repeatedly, each time transferring to a more peripheral place (see Fig. 2). The reasons included difficulties in enforcing the respect necessary for a shrine in a fast-growing and polyglot city, in which the influence of political Sakalava authority diminished. Conflicts within the dynastic lineages attributed as well to this development, as their princes and leaders fought intensive legal battles for succession and the right to control the relics. The colorful history of the shrine in twentieth century includes a long legal quarrel which started in colonial times, the theft of the relics, the total destruction of the shrine-house *(zomba)* by fire

57 Ballarin 2000, 217–224.

58 Rusillon 1912.

Fig. 5 The Boeny-doany in Mahajanga, ca. 1910.

and at some period the existence of two competing shrines with two relics each.[59] Conflicts within the dynasty continued until recently, as the manifold problems of finding a widely acceptable successor to Prince Dezy in the years after his death (shortly after 2006) reveal. Nonetheless, the placing of the four relics at the Doany Miarinarivo at Tsararano-Ambony for nearly forty continuous years is remarkable and is the longest period of stability since they were guarded by the Merina in their fort. The main recent innovation is the total reconstruction of the main shrine location, including the palisade *(valamena)*, from concrete in 1999–2000, replacing the wooden structures seen until then as sacrosanct and obligatory (see Fig. 6, a photo of the wooden shrine in 1998, just before the reconstruction). The shrine palisade offers a unique image with its 444[60] concrete posts, sharpened at the end (Fig. 7–8). The reconstruction was explained expressly as a step to combat serious security problems, enhanced certainly e.g. by the memory of the destruction of the shrine building by fire some decades earlier, and to establish the *doany* permanently at the Miarinarivo location. But the changes are appearing at the same time as an evolution towards further sacralization along the lines of Christian iconography. For example, the erection of a *(zomba)* made out of stone can more easily be associated with the image of churches and therefore with a 'pure' religious place – a profound difference from the original symbolism, namely the dialectal

59 See Ballarin 2000, 355–390, and Ballarin 2008 for an extensive investigation.

60 Information supplied by Prince Dezy (1999). The number 4 (and its repetition) is among others a reference for the four cardinal directions and alludes to the perfection of royalty.

Fig. 6 The Doany Miarinarivo in Mahajanga, 1998.

Fig. 7 The Doany Miarinarivo, 1999: the shrine *(zomba)* has been rebuilt in stone.

Fig. 8 The Doany Miarinarivo since 2000: the wooden palisade *(valamena)* has been replaced by concrete poles.

opposition and competition between the 'cold' royal tombs *(mahabo)*, the place of the dead kings and their family, made out of stone, and the 'hot' royal residence, the place of the living king and the government, built out of wood or vegetable materials. [61]

Another particular 'religious' dynamic still has to be described: the development of the 'new' *doany* of Boeny into a center of possession cult of the royal ancestors of the Maroseraña dynasty, far beyond the former boundaries of the Boeny. As long as an independent kingdom of Boeny existed, the possession of royal kings was impregnated by political authority and therefore severely controlled and regulated, at least as far as we can deduce from the rare reports. Further, it was obligatory for the population living within the boundaries of the Boeny state to accept the power of royal ancestors, as an expression of political loyalty. The new situation of powerlessness was therefore decisive

61 Baré 1980, 237.

for a new flourishing of possession, induced by an important number of mediums, often 'occupied' by several royal ancestors (and additional non-royal ghosts as well).[62] As the four ancestors in Mahajanga are remembered as founding personalities of the 'strong' kingdom of Boeny, and the magician Andriamisara in particular as the root of its victory and prosperity, it was the Doany Miarinarivo, which became the center of attention.[63] The 'Church of the Sakalava' is therefore not just the continuity of the old established cult of royal ancestors, but it also contains a new and decisive religious dynamic.

The historical retrospective shows therefore a gradual strengthening of the sacred aspect of the royal residence since the disempowerment of the Boeny kings in about 1825, even if the tendency is far less linear or teleological when considered in detail. Nonetheless, the implementation of the modern state with its separation of the religious and the political made it essential for the responsible actors to adapt the institutional forms. As the living king holds no power and it was no longer possible to compel donations by the public, those actors at the center of the Boeny had to find solutions. That for Doany Miarinarivo means establishing a sedentary and eternal *doany* to secure property rights to the shrine. Such solution is certainly inspired simultaneously as well by the dominant position of Christian belief in the modern Malagasy state and a public discourse, which puts 'traditional belief' on the defensive. The outcome is an avant garde *doany* which comes closest to the image of a pilgrimage site, to attract supporters at home and abroad. Nonetheless it should not be forgotten that behind the new image lies the older requirement of the dynasty to observe the authority of the 'master of the land' *(tompon-tany)*, as shown in the rituals. The principles of sacredness therefore merit detailed analysis.

6 The enactment of the sacred at the Doany Miarinarivo

The principles of a sacred place, as evident today at the Doany Miarinarivo, rely essentially on the same criteria which applied when the living king was visited by his population. Among these it is noticeable that the *doany* village (the former residence) can only

62 This situation is not new, but can be seen as a return to the original situation at the advent of the Maroseraña dynasty. Historical documents sketching a very strong possession movement on the west coast, with the ancestors of the respective families or clans at the center of attention (see e.g. the famous letter of the Portuguese missionary Mariano in A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1904, 224–232, and Kent 1983–1984).

63 Andriamisara (who, as a historical person, lived to the south of the later Menabe kingdom at the beginning of the 16th century) is also venerated at the *doany* in Belo-sur-Tsiribihina, the center of the Menabe kingdom, but he occupies a much less important position than in Mahajanga (where he, paradoxically, never lived). It is only because the victory of the Boeny kingdom (at the end of the seventeenth century) was attributed to him, as represented by relics and mediums, that he became a widely respected personality, not only on the west coast but throughout Madagascar.

be approached on certain days, and that there are a number of rules of conduct, allowing only behavior adjudged 'suitable' for this special area (e.g. it is forbidden to run, to cry aloud, to take weapons). The rigor of applying these rules and the number of rules increase as one is approaching the shrine, whose center is situated asymmetrically in the north-east of the shrine village, while the spatial center of the village is still occupied by the king's house.

A particular feature of the spatial iconography is the alternate obscuring and unveiling of the most sacred part, the 'secret' of the shrine.[64] The approaching visitor is confronted again and again with barriers of different kinds which conceal the secret from the eyes of the public, but these barriers are never impenetrable or hermetic but offer a vague impression of the 'mystery' one is approaching. This structure may be understood as a discrete invitation to proceed, but only on certain conditions. It is possible, for example, to see the shrine house *(zomba)* from a distance, but the surrounding huts of the *doany* village, the mango trees and finally the palisade prevent an unhampered view. After entry is finally permitted, the principle is repeated again: the big white curtain *(safoday)* in the north-east corner secures the inner secret of the shrine, but nonetheless offers a vague impression of the wooden house on stilts *(zomba vinta)*. Even if one is allowed exceptionally to go beyond the white curtain and to approach the small entrance door bending or kneeling, one finds four recipients of a rather modest outer appearance, and the 'real' relics are again well secluded before the eyes in the interior. The idea seems to be, among others that access to the royal ancestors or the living kings, and therefore the secret of their power and their sacredness, is possible, even desirable, but one has to pay a price for it. The closer one comes to this center, the more one has to surrender oneself to a set of regulations, just as when a celestial body enters the gravity of a planet or a star. Formal subordination to the laws of this place is interpreted by its people as a sign of implicit surrender to the forces at work here.

I will now summarize some of the more central architectural and iconographic aspects of the *doany* compound and the shrine observable today:[65] the Doany Miarinarivo in the broader sense of a village comprises an irregular area measuring roughly 300 to 400 meter. A number of residential and ceremonial houses, built from the *satrana* palm and without access to a modern infrastructure of canalization, electricity or paved roads, together create the image of a village. A number of families live here, regularly including mediums, often assuming hereditary tasks. The area is not at all shielded from the neighborhood, but embedded in the local network of footpaths. The *doany* (the actual shrine building) is located in the north-eastern corner of the village.

In front of the shrine building, which appears today as the architectural successor of the royal residence, is a forecourt which was formerly a court between an outer pal-

64 Kneitz 2003, 177.

65 Kneitz 2003, 176–215.

isade (today only marked by the line of the mango trees) and an inner palisade. Along this outer line one finds a row of ceremonial houses, which ordinary are only in use during the more important rituals. They are hardly distinct from the residential houses by a more substantial way of construction. The most northern of these buildings, more or less in the spatial center of the *doany* village, is reserved for the living prince *(mpanjaka)*, and used by him when he attends a ritual. A more careful construction apart, it is not particularly distinguished in comparison to the neighboring buildings. The other ceremonial buildings are assigned to mediums of the various subdivisions of the Boeny kingdoms – and thereby represent the respective royal ancestors and dynastic lineages of these regions.

The royal attribute of a sharpened post, a symbol of power and decision-making, appears for the first time and particularly insistently in the palisade *(valamena)*, which is made out of several hundred sharpened concrete posts, with two doors at intervals. The south door is for the members of the royal dynasty (including its mediums), and the west door is used by everyone else. Above these doors are two crossed wooden sticks representing spears *(volohazo)*. The shrine building (*zomba*, the *doany* in its more distinct meaning) has stood out since 1998 as the only stone building of the *doany* village. It is a rather modest, rectangular building surrounded by a small court (*valamena*, the red court), used among others for the sacrifice of zebu cows, the ceremonial dance of kings *(rebika)* on the final day of the 'big royal work' *(fanompoabe)*, and, most importantly, the procession following the completion of the anointing of the relics which winds once around the shrine building. Entrance to the north-east corner of the interior is restricted to the most important people, like the guardians, the mediums (when possessed) and the members of the royal family. Here one finds the inner shrine, a wooden pole construction in the form of a stilt-house *(zomba vinta)*, under which a number of seemingly old weapons (spears, halberds, sabers and guns), symbols of royalty, are stored. Beside a number of secondary accessories (e.g. earthen jars, needed to produce mead, a fermented liquid made out of honey and used for the anointing of the relics), a safe attracts attention; it is used to store important offerings of money or precious items (Fig. 9). The four receptacles of the relics *(dady)* are to be found in the small room inside the wooden shrine: they comprise elliptical massive boxes, "like ink jars"[66] of tarnished appearance. Here the actual relics of the four Andriamisara are stored, including, according to the literature, finger bones and toenails, teeth and hair.[67]

The differences between the early royal residences of the Boeny kingdoms as described in the above documents and their appearance today are significant. They are not only the result of a turbulent history, including the theft of relics, quarrels about

66 Estrade 1985, 73, translated by the author.

67 Rusillon 1912, 73; A. Grandidier and G. Grandidier 1917, 16.

Fig. 9 The reliquary, 1999: the wooden stilt-house *(zomba vinta)* for storing the relics, and the safe.

property rights and the burning down of the *doany* in 1970, leaving it a matter of dispute if and which of the relics and their receptacles were saved or not, or if and which of them were reconstructed or not, but also the result of the assignment of very different meanings to it. The historical changes are revealing in so far as they suggest that not only the general structure of the political capital of Sakalava royalty changed over time but the objects as well: for example, the receptacles and even perhaps the relics may not be original. Therefore it is clear that the principle of historical originality is not a decisive one for the *doany* personnel in terms of creating the necessary confidence between the worshipper and the worshipped. Rather, it is possible to use a number of techniques to create and trigger authenticity 'on demand', for example by transferring authenticity

and sacral power from objects, relics or places regarded as 'original' to new material, without reducing religious power.

Of particular importance for the construction of sacredness at the Doany Miarinarivo is without doubt the structuring of time and therefore the access to this location. Entrance to the shrine house *(zomba)* – always accompanied by the guardians (the *fahatelo* or one of his acolytes) – is only possible on Monday, Friday or Saturday, from dawn until midday or until 3 pm at the latest.[68] On Tuesday and Thursday mornings access is denied to the *doany* village, a rule related to the days the founding kings died. The interpretation of the position of the moon and the astrological significance of particular months account for even more restrictions: consultation when the moon is waning, and in particular before a new moon, is normally seen as inauspicious, and the door of the *doany* will remain closed, even on the above-mentioned opening days. Moreover, the *doany* remains locked throughout the month of August, which is perceived as an unfavorable month. A comparably small 'window' of opportunity remains of about 80 to 100 days per year. A Sakalava pilgrimage therefore requires reasonable experience and knowledge of the specific conditions.

7 Pilgrims at the Doany Miarinarivo

Who, finally, visits the Doany Miarnarivo and why? Can we characterize visits to the shrine more precisely? Some important clues are revealed by results collected during my stay at the *doany* village between May and October 2000, including a census of pilgrims on a day-to-day basis.[69]

The survey of arrivals at the shrine on the 'opening days' reveals at first a strikingly low number. With the exception of July, which includes the annual ritual of the anointing of relics *(fanompoabe)*, only about 50 to 250 people visit the *doany* every month (excluding those active in performing rituals and the population of the *doany* village). Two months (other than July) are marked by lesser rituals attracting a more significant number of pilgrims.[70] A different image emerges when those 2500 to 3000 people are included who arrive for the main ritual *(fanompoabe)* in July. Nonetheless, considering the importance of the Doany Miarinarivo to the Boeny kingdom, the west coast and the overall cult of royal Sakalava ancestors throughout Madagascar, the number of pilgrims is surprisingly meagre. Further, given that the number of those identifying themselves

68 After 3 or 4 pm local astrology deems the next day to have begun.

69 Kneitz 2003, 220–222.

70 The ritual *toa mainty* (the production of a particular form of mead, used later for the anointing of receptacles and weapons) in June; the ritual *asara be* (a final cleaning of the shrine compound) takes place in September.

as Sakalava has increased to something between one and 1.5 million,[71] the importance of the Doany Miarinarivo appears marginal, to say the least. Is the 'Church of Sakalava' nothing more than an institution embedded in a strong dynamic of decline? But why, on the other hand, is the importance of this shrine nonetheless constantly underlined by various actors? A true interpretation of these results, it will be shown, is only possible by adding knowledge on the structure of the possession cult and its organization to the available data.

First, I would like to look at the geographical origin and the ethnic distribution of the pilgrims. Interviews with almost 100 people showed that more than half of the visitors lived in the town or surrounding region of Mahajanga, and more than a third beyond, i.e. other regions of Madagascar (mainly the west coast, the capital Antananarivo, and Tamatava, the main town on the east coast), from the islands of the Indian Ocean (the Comoros archipelago, La Réunion) and as far away as France. The ethnic identity of visitors corresponds to this finding: only about half of the informants regarded themselves as Sakalava, whereas more than a third labelled themselves as belonging to other identity groups of Madagascar or beyond, among them two people of white European (mainly French) descent. These findings are interesting as they suggest that the attraction of the Doany Miarinarivo radiates far beyond the former frontiers of the kingdom of Boeny and the almost exclusive adherence of a Sakalava population. One important conclusion is that the mobility of the Sakalava population has considerably broadened and is nowadays characterized by a far-reaching mobility, typical of the age of (modern) globalization. Another point is that consultation of the *doany* is no longer the preserve of those of a specific Sakalava identity. Rather, it has gained an universal character as those responsible of the *doany* like to underline when they talk about the 'Church of Sakalava.'

The interpretation of the surprisingly low figures needs now to be interpreted by using additional information concerning the particularities of the possession cult of Sakalava royal ancestors. As already mentioned, available estimations match in that perhaps about one-third of the Sakalava population (on the west coast and in international diaspora) and about two-thirds of women (of different origins) on the west coast have an intimate relationship with one or several Sakalava royal ancestors, in other words, they are mediums possessed by ancestors. Furthermore large numbers of mediums of very diverse origin or identity, particularly in major cities, have Sakalava ancestry and are attached to Sakalava *doany* as well. Even though these are admittedly quite rough

71 This figure is a rough estimation based on the last population census (including ethnic affiliation) at the beginning of the 1970s. On the basis of about 470 000 Sakalava (more than seven million inhabitants) and a tripling of the total Malagasy population, the above number appears to be a reasonable indication.

estimations, as a formal census is not possible, the general finding is evident – including major consequences for the immediate social environment of the medium and for society altogether. It should be noted that it is often members of the family who have not only to acknowledge the presence of the spirits, for example via the establishment of rules of conduct or interdictions (the famous *fady*), but must assist in the case of active possession. Further, mediums of royal Sakalava ancestors are linked to the Doany Miarinarivo by different ways, either via the direct possession of one or several of the 'Blessed Four Brothers Andriamisara' or indirectly via the possession of one or several of other Sakalava royal ancestors, who are seen as subordinate to and dependent on the founding figures of the Doany Miarinarivo, especially Andriamisara.

The dependence is evident in the annual anointing of relics *(fanompoabe)* at the Doany Miarinarivo (Fig. 10). Those mediums who are officially recognized as 'vessels' of one or several of the 'Four Andriamisara' numbered about 500 worldwide in 2000,[72] and are obliged (personal problems apart) to participate personally at the *fanompoabe* and to offer a sacrifice or contribution, mostly money collected from their clients but cattle as well.[73] These mediums are particularly easy recognizable during the ritual in July as they sleep during the night before the anointing *(tsimandrimandry)* at the edge of the western palisade, as part of their obligation. Most of the other mediums and their clients outside Mahajanga cannot afford to come or participate directly, but act through a fellow medium (mostly of a person possessed by one of the four Andriamisara) or sometimes just any another person intending to pilgrim. These messengers function as an intermediary to reveal thereby the loyalty and respect to be payed by all persons connected to Sakalava royalty. Therefore a rather small number are representative of whole regions or important social networks of mediums' clients. 'Pilgrimage' in the sense of a movement through space to a sacred place can in the cultural context described here be delegated and executed in a manner located in a particular conception between the experience of a personal movement and an 'inner' transcendent journey.[74]

Apart from the need for mediums and their clients to testify to their loyalty and their gratefulness for the protection of the royal ancestors, a multitude of reasons can be identified for praying to the 'Four Andriamisara'. The interviews revealed in particular the need to overcome misfortune (e.g. disease, unemployment, familial difficulties), including the need to exorcise 'bad spirits', i.e. unidentified and unregulated spirits, and also to examine the appearance of particular Sakalava royal ancestors in front of the local authority of the Doany Miarinarivo. Many of the pilgrims are accompanied by mediums, attesting to their extraordinary difficulties and their wish to overcome them. It has to be added that these pilgrims have already consulted royal Sakalava spirits (including

72 Kneitz 2003, 258.

73 See Lambek 2002, 143, for details.

74 See Gülberg 2012 for a similar situation in Japan.

Fig. 10 Prince Dezy (at the right, with scarf), surrounded by guests, mediums and the guardians of the *doany* in 2006.

one or several of the 'Four Andriamisara') before arriving at the Doany Miarinarivo, and are advised to present their problems directly. Participation in possession cults appears therefore to be a preliminary stage in a spatial movement towards the shrine, i.e. pilgrimage in a closer sense.

Visits to the Doany Miarinarivo have many other causes, especially for those coming from far away, and they are subject to important changes related to the onging process of modernization. Sakalava pilgrims, i.e. people of Sakalava descent or connected to the Doany Miarinarivo in other ways, take advantage of the modern technologies of transportation and communication, as does everybody else. As mentioned above, many such persons nowadays live abroad, often on neighboring islands of the Indian Ocean, in France, and in a number of other European countries or in North America. While the connectivity to the shrine often continues or is newly re-enforced, through spirit possession, as clients of mediums or as part of family traditions, new reasons for traveling are emerging: Sakalava pilgrims coming from abroad do so today to revive family relations or to enjoy the unique social environment of their origin, to renew and confirm cultural identity, to (re-)integrate themselves into the cultural particularities of Sakalava or more general Malagasy culture – or even just to take a holiday. The new communication tools utilized by mediums, believers, and guardians of the shrine allow them as well to stay in close contact even while a physical visit is not possible or deemed not necessary. Global developments of technology and modernization are thus contributing to the next step in the articulation of a unique set of cultural action, the Sakalava pilgrimage.

8 Conclusions: the Sakalava pilgrimage as a royal service

The present west coast of Madagascar is distinguished by a neo-traditional institution difficult to categorize, the 'Church of Sakalava' and its main material concretization, the *doany* or shrine, which oscillates between the former status of a residence of the politically independent Sakalava royalty and the position of a religious institution. Within the new socio-cultural framework, the meaning of the Sakalava institutions shifted increasingly to a religious direction, with the act of moving to the *doany* can be understood as a form of new pilgrimage following Christian or monotheistic examples.

Appreciation of the historical evolution of these *doany* locations, in particular the Doany Miarinarivo, the successor of the royal residence of the Boeny kingdom, and a closer recognition of the established understanding of these sites by the visitors, has allowed us to acknowledge important continuities and ambiguities in the understanding of the local cultural practice, a dialectical moment quite typical of Sakalava culture altogether since political independence decreased. The movement towards a *doany* – as a movement in space, delegated to mediums or even performed indirectly by participating in a possession cult of a particular royal ancestor – is not only a religious, individual service, but also implies submission to the authority of the dynasty, a royal service. Unlike former times, though, it is mainly perceived as a service towards royal ancestors, and the living representatives (the princes or kings) occupy during their lifetime only a secondary role.

The Doany Miarinarivo is therefore an example of a new pilgrimage phenomenon outside the well-known monotheistic practice, which is historically much older. The 'new' religious *doany* of the Boeny certainly converges in many ways with the practice of 'pure' pilgrimage, and the iconography of a religious shrine, attracting pilgrims not only locally but on a global level, seems to follow this turn. Nonetheless the originality of a royal residence and submission to the political influence of the dynasty of Maroseraña persist, enforcing the interpretation of the Sakalava pilgrimage as a royal service *(fanompoa)*, including silent political sub-meanings. It is predictable within the given context of modernization and in the light of the socio-cultural pressures that the Sakalava pilgrimage will approach more and more the 'true' pilgrimage phenomenon, at least at the Doany Miarinarivo, but the persistence and ongoing reformulation of Sakalava kingship will at the same time not allow a process of simple convergence or fusion.

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Kevelaer – A New Place for Tamil Pilgrimages in the Diaspora

Summary

Kevelaer is one of the most important Marian pilgrimage sites in Germany, deriving its fame from a miraculous picture of the Madonna, known as *Consolatrix Afflictorum* ('Comforter of the Afflicted'). Since 1987, Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka have been meeting in Kevelaer once a year adopting the Kevelaer Madonna as their own Madhu Mata who lent herself to meet the needs of persons who have experienced anxiety and hardships in their homeland and a great deal of uncertainty as immigrants in the West. The focus of the contribution is on ritual aspects distinguishing the *Tamilenwallfahrt* from organized pilgrimages of other groups. Special attention is paid to the fact that not only Roman Catholics take part in the *Tamilenwallfahrt*, but a significant number of Tamil Hindus as well.

Keywords: Marian cults; appropriation of sacred space; Tamil diaspora; ritual performances

Kevelaer, eine der wichtigsten Marienwallfahrtsorte in Deutschland, ist berühmt für ein wundertätiges Gnadenbild, das die Madonna als Consolatrix Afflictorum (Trösterin der Betrübten) zeigt. Seit 1978 treffen sich hier einmal im Jahr tamilische Flüchtlinge aus Sri Lanka. Sie sehen in der Madonna von Kevelaer auch die in ihrem Heimatland hochverehrte Madhu Mata, von der es heißt, sie stehe allen bei, die Angst und Verfolgung erfahren haben. Der Beitrag befasst sich besonders mit den rituellen Aspekten, durch die sich die sogenannte Tamilenwallfahrt von der Wallfahrt anderer Pilgergruppen unterscheidet. Spezielles Augenmerk gilt der Tatsache, dass nicht nur Katholiken zu diesem Ereignis nach Kevelaer kommen, sondern auch eine große Zahl tamilischer Hindus.

Keywords: Wallfahrt; Marienverehrung; tamilische Diaspora; rituelle Performanz; sakraler Raum

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Since 1988 Kevelaer, one of the most important Marian pilgrimage centres in Germany, second only to Altötting in Bavaria, has incorporated a new group of regular visitors in its yearly pilgrimage calendar: Tamil devotees from Sri Lanka living in Europe. The date determined for the so-called *Tamilenwallfahrt* (Tamil Pilgrimage) is the second Saturday in August. On this day up to 15 000 South Asian visitors congregate in the small town in the Western part of Germany near the Dutch border. The majority comes from nearby North-Rhine-Westphalian cities and towns, but there is also a significant number of visitors from other parts of Germany and from neighbouring countries like France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

The annual gathering of Tamils in Kevelaer will be described here. The focus will be on aspects distinguishing this event from pilgrimages of other groups. Special attention is paid to the fact that not only Roman Catholics take part in the Tamil Pilgrimage, but a significant number of Hindus as well. The first part provides basic information on the pilgrimage site of Kevelaer and on Tamils in Germany. It also includes a short description of the events taking place during the annual Tamil Pilgrimage. The second part deals with the importance of Mother Mary for Catholic and Hindu Tamils. The question is raised as to whether the devotional practices of Hindus in Kevelaer are to be understood as a form of convergence brought about in the diaspora. In search of an answer traditional forms of veneration in Sri Lanka are discussed.[1]

1 The Tamil Pilgrimage to Kevelaer

1.1 The pilgrimage site of Kevelaer

Kevelaer is a small city with about 29 000 inhabitants. It calls itself the largest pilgrimage town in Northwest Europe.[2] Its reputation as a pilgrimage site is based on events that took place in the seventeenth century, at the time of the Thirty Years War. They started with the appearance of a small copperplate print depicting the Mother of Christ as Our Lady of Luxembourg, which was soon connected with a number of miraculous happenings.[3] The print – 3 by 4½ inches – was a kind of pilgrimage pamphlet,

1 This contribution is based in part on an earlier description of the Tamil Pilgrimage to Kevelaer: Luchesi 2008b.

2 Official Website of the city: http://www.kevelaer.de (visited on 31/07/2017); see also http://www.wallfahrt-kevelaer.de/index.php (visited on 31/07/2017).

3 They are retold in the religious pamphlets printed with ecclesiastical approbation in various languages which can be purchased in the churches of Kevelaer, and in pilgrimage guides like *Kevelaer. Stätte der Besinnung. Wegweiser und Information,* 2003. Useful information can also be found at http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/kevelaer (visited on 31/07/2017) and in Pötz 1986.

collected in Luxembourg where Mary had been venerated since 1623 as *Consolatrix Afflictorum*, 'Comforter of the Afflicted.' In 1642 it was placed in a simple chapel built by Hendrick Busman, who had heard a voice asking him to perform this task. Due to the growing number of pilgrims attracted by the miraculous picture this building was replaced in 1645 by a hexagonal chapel which from then on has housed the precious item together with jewellery donated by thankful believers over the years. The print shows the Madonna in royal pose with her infant son on her left arm. She is clad in precious clothes and a wide cape, a so-called protecting cloak *(Schutzmantel)*, and wears a crown on her head. In her hands she holds sceptre and imperial orb. In the background on the left the city of Luxembourg can be seen, on the right a church or chapel towards which rows of people with standard-bearers in front are moving. The Latin inscription on the banner above the figure reads, "Consolatrix Afflictorum ora pro nobis" ('Comforter of the Afflicted pray for us'), another text emphasizes that the picture is a "Vera Effigies" ('true copy') of the Luxembourg Madonna.[4]

This print still forms the centre of the religious events in present-day Kevelaer. The hexagonal Chapel of Grace *(Gnadenkapelle)* is situated in the middle of the main town square. An opening in the northern wall makes it possible to have a glimpse of it from the outside. A narrow ambulatory inside the Chapel allows a close view. On the southern side of the square lies the Chapel of the Candles *(Kerzenkapelle)*, erected as early as 1643. Its name refers to the countless candles of different sizes which were and still are offered by individual believers as well as whole groups of pilgrims inside and outside the building. On the other side of the square rises the huge Basilica of the Blessed Virgin, constructed in the nineteenth century; here services for large numbers of pilgrims can be celebrated. Another important place nearby is the modern Forum Pax Christi, a large roofed-over audience hall.

1.2 Tamils in Germany

The Tamil visitors to Kevelaer are for the most part Tamils from Sri Lanka who have settled in Germany. The overwhelming number of Sri Lankan Tamils came as refugees from the early 1980s onwards, fleeing the escalating civil war in their homeland. To give exact numbers of Tamil refugees living in Germany is problematic, not least because a large number have attained German citizenship by now. A rough picture must do: the overall number of persons with Sri Lankan background amounts to about 60 000.[5] Approximately 90 % are Tamils; the remaining ones are probably Sinhalese persons. The

4 English translation given in the pamphlet mentioned in n. 3 (English version, p. 3): "True copy of the picture of the Mother of Jesus, Comforter of the afflicted, as it is well known through the many miracles and venerated by many in the neighborhood of the city of Luxembourg. Anno 1640."

5 Estimated numbers for 2003, cf. Baumann 2003, 41.

majority of Tamils are said to be Hindus – the estimations vary between 38 000 and 48 000. According to Baumann 15.8 % of the remaining persons have declared themselves to be Catholics, and 4.1 % Protestants of various denominations.[6] This means that 9500 persons at the most can belong to the Catholic section. Years ago this number came as a surprise to many Germans who thought that the majority of Tamils were Christians. Today the opposite seems the case: I have frequently met persons who took it for granted that Tamils are Hindus. The opening of a number of Hindu Tamil temples in several German towns in the course of the last twenty years and the media coverage of their public religious activities which have become regular have clearly influenced the public awareness in favour of the Hindu section.

The reference to the new Hindu temples brings to mind an important point in the history of Hindu Tamil immigrants in Germany – the fact that in the 1980s, when the first large waves of immigrants arrived, there were virtually no public religious institutions for Hindus. They had to be content with domestic shrines and makeshift places of worship. Within a short time, however, they created new opportunities to practise their faith by converting industrial buildings and private houses into prayer halls. They even started to construct new buildings, the first and most impressive one so far being the Sri Kamadchi Ampal Temple in Hamm-Uentrop, inaugurated in 2002.[7] In Hanover, a newly built temple was opened in 2009, and in Berlin-Britz the consecration of a new temple building in South Indian style took place in September 2013. The establishment of these prayer halls and temples has brought about the celebration of yearly temple festivals and other major religious events which in turn have called for special festival activities in the South Asian tradition.[8] The most important ones are public processions, which since the 1990s have been increasingly organized by a number of temples. Today more than 40 prayer halls and temples *(alayam)* run by Tamil Hindus from Sri Lanka can be found in Germany,[9] a quite remarkable fact if one looks at the comparatively few religious institutions of other Hindu groups.

The situation faced by the *Christian* Tamils when entering Germany was different. There was no difficulty in finding a parish and a church offering regular Christian services. Difficulties, however, arose with regard to the language used in the services and in pastoral care. A first step to change this situation was taken by the Catholic Church by establishing *Katholische Seelsorge für Tamilen* ('Catholic Offices for the Pastoral Care of Tamils') in Osnabrück. Their main task was to provide services by a Tamil speaking

6 Baumann 2003, 61, n. 25. See also Baumann and Salentin 2006, 307.

7 Luchesi 2003a; Luchesi 2003b.

8 Luchesi 2008a.

9 In 2003, 26 temples were listed (Baumann, Luchesi, and Wilke 2003, 447–448; see also map in Baumann 2003, 66). By 2011 information about 38 was collected (Wilke 2013, 374). Since then the process of opening new ones continued.

priest who routinely visited various German cities. The office was moved to Essen[10] and is presently run by Father Anthony Fernando Bennet.

Another important step was the idea of a collective visit to the Marian shrine in Kevelaer. It was devised by Tamil members of the Essen diocese and realized for the first time in August 1987 when 50 persons made the journey together. It was repeated year after year with steadily increasing numbers of participants. Gradually, people from other parts of Germany joined in, as well as visitors from neighbouring countries. In 2002 the newspapers reported the gathering of 15 000 Tamil visitors, a figure which has regularly been repeated in the press since then.[11] The annual event, which popularly became known as the *Tamilenwallfahrt* (Tamil Pilgrimage), is primarily organized by the Catholic Offices for the Pastoral Care of Tamils in Essen. One of the initiators of the pilgrimage and still a most active organizer is Mr Thuraisingham Camillus, *Pfarrgemeinderat* (parish councillor) of the Tamil parish in Essen, who came to Germany in 1985. Remembering the early years, he told a journalist from the regional newspaper: "In the beginning we were only 50 pilgrims. We had a priest from Osnabrück who by the second year no longer wanted to participate. He felt that for such a small number of people it wasn't worth the effort."[12] Asked why Kevelaer was chosen instead of other places of pilgrimage he pointed to the likeness between the image of the Madonna of Kevelaer and of the Madonna in a famous pilgrimage shrine in Sri Lanka, called Madhu: "When I realised this I took it as a sign. I told myself that this could not be a coincidence. And the way the Tamil pilgrimage to Kevelaer has developed indeed confirms that we chose the right place."[13]

1.3 The annual Tamil Pilgrimage[14]

The term 'Tamil pilgrimage' may evoke the picture of groups *walking* towards Kevelaer from quite a distance or at least entering the inner part of the city together. The Tamil devotees, however, do not set out from their homes on foot or approach the sacred centre in groups led by a pilgrimage guide while singing devotional songs, as many pilgrimage

10 Tamilen Seelsorgeamt, Laurentiusberg 1, 45276 Essen.

11 With regard to the pilgrimage in 2011 see for instance http://kirchensite.de/aktuelles/bistum-aktuell/bistum-aktuell-news/datum/2011/08/15/farbenfroh-fromm-und-politisch/ (visited on 31/07/2017). In 2012 the estimations were for the first time lower, "more than 10 000" http://www.lokalkompass.de/kleve/kultur/jubilaeums-wallfahrt-ueber-10000-tamilen-in-kevelaer-d197770.html (visited on 31/07/2017).

12 "Anfangs waren wir nur 50 Pilger. Wir hatten einen Pfarrer aus Osnabrück, der wollte schon im zweiten Jahr nicht mehr mitkommen. Das lohne sich ja nicht für so wenige Pilger" (*Rheinische Post*, 8. August 2005).

13 "Als ich das bemerkt habe, war es für mich wie ein Zeichen. Ich habe mir gesagt: Das kann kein Zufall sein. Und die Entwicklung der Tamilen-Wallfahrt bestätigt ja auch, dass wir mit Kevelaer richtig liegen" (*Rheinische Post*, 8. August 2005).

14 The description is based on my own observations in 1999, 2001, 2005, 2011 and 2012.

groups from neighbouring towns and villages traditionally did and still do. The Tamils usually approach the centre with the various churches in small individual groups, mostly formed by family members.

Here most of them immediately line up to enter the Chapel of Grace. They clearly do not content themselves with seeing the miraculous image from a distance but wish to come as close to it as possible. For this they have to enter the building, and as only one person at a time is able to step right in front of the small depiction of the Madonna they may have to wait quite some time. Finally, when their turn comes, they are indeed only inches away from the picture which – surrounded by precious donations – is protected by a double sheet of glass. Many just fold their hands and gaze intently at the small print, others are not satisfied with the purely visual contact: they kiss the protecting glass or touch it with both palms, which they then bring to their breast or forehead. Small children are usually lifted up to be at eye level with the picture, and they are often touched by their mother with the hand she has placed on the glass in front of it. These forms of contact are acts of devotion which can be found all over the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka among devotees of all creeds.[15] On a busy day like this it is not possible to spend more than a few seconds in front of the picture; one has to move on. The way leads into the narrow interior of the Chapel, where one may pray for a moment and purchase a bundle of small consecrated candles to take home, and then out again. Some devotees may light one or two of these candles right away and put them on the supports provided on the outer wall of the Chapel of the Candles. Far more common, however, is the custom of purchasing larger-sized candles at the shops catering for the needs of pilgrims. Compared with other pilgrims Tamils buy and place an immense number of candles, especially really huge specimens. Dealers have prepared themselves for this event by putting up stalls in front of their regular shops. They know by now the characteristic custom of Tamil devotees to choose the length of a candle according to the height of the child in whose name they are going to offer it. As this is done not only for infant sons and daughters but also for older ones, candles of one meter length and more are in high demand. Dealers reported that plain candles of this sort are specifically produced for the Tamil customers on the day of the Tamil Pilgrimage.

Many of the visitors will then move to the Basilica to attend the High Mass at 10 a.m. which usually starts with a welcoming address to the assembled pilgrims of the day. There the Tamils are explicitly mentioned. Immediately after the mass they line up again to defile past the reverse side of the high altar where a depiction of the risen Christ can be seen. Many kneel before it and touch the feet of the picture before moving on. Other queues form in front of the desks with visitors' books or paper slips where people can

15 These acts can be observed among Hindus, Buddhists and Christians in South Asia alike. The importance of the visual perception of the sacred in the Hindu context, known as *darśan*, is excellently described by Eck 1985.

note what seems urgent to them: thanks and wishes. Crowds also form around the tables where small lights can be lit, including those in front of St. Anthony. Inside the Chapel of Candles, however, situated on the other side of the central square, no individual lights can be lit. But people like to enter, to sit there for a while quietly and to pray. Here, too, the opportunity is given to write thanks or wishes on a piece of paper which can be slotted in a wooden box.

The main event, the special pilgrimage service for the Christian Tamil pilgrims, takes place in the large Forum Pax Christi, normally scheduled at a quarter to 11 a.m. The organization of the musical accompaniment lies in the hands of members of the *Tamilen Seelsorgeamt* Essen. They are also in charge of putting up and decorating a small statue of the Madonna with Child in front of the auditorium, which they have brought from Essen where it is kept in the office. It is said to represent the Madonna since long worshipped in Madhu in Sri Lanka. This representation, known as Madhu Mata, becomes another focus of veneration at the end of the service. The service starts with the ceremonial entry of the assembled clergy consisting of Tamil as well as German priests, sometimes also priests from neighbouring countries. They are accompanied by young persons and children who have recently taken their First Communion and who are dressed in their festive communion outfit. Welcoming words in German by a German speaker mark the beginning of an elaborate service in the Tamil language. Most of the assembled laypersons, filling the Forum up to the last seat with hundreds standing in the aisles, join in the singing. The Tamil texts are to be found in a leaflet sold at the entrance. I was told that during the time of the civil war in Sri Lanka the prayers always included the request for peace in the war-stricken homeland and the hope to being able to return to the motherland. Now, after the official end of the war, the emphasis lies on the request for a swift reconciliation of the different ethnic and religious groups and for the establishment of equal rights for all. The Jubilee Pilgrimage in 2012, celebrating the twenty-fifth gathering of Tamils in Kevelaer, had as its motto: "Tell the despondent: Have courage." *(Sagt den Verzagten: Habt Mut.)*. Immediately after the end of the service people line up to greet and venerate the small Madhu Madonna which has been put up by the helpers from Essen. Most of them donate money for which a special box is set up near the figure, some offer incense sticks. All are eager to touch the statue, especially women ask for one of the flowers with which the image is decorated. Those having a mobile or a camera at hand try to get a good shot. It seems as if taking photos is a new and generally accepted type of establishing contact with the venerated image.

By now it is nearly lunchtime and before long the open space around the Chapel of Grace is filled with eating and chatting people. In former years the entire sacred square was turned into a sort of huge picnic spot – the food often being brought along in large vessels. Nowadays most of the hungry visitors get what they need from the market

temporarily installed on a lot behind the Basilica. Food stalls sell vegetarian food and soft drinks but also meat dishes, in most cases prepared in South Asian style. But it is not only food prepared on the spot which is sold here; all sorts of food to take home as well as other items can be found, as for instance: fresh and tinned vegetables, various spices, cooking utensils, saris and other types of clothes, cosmetics, Tamil videos and CDs and children's toys. All the goods are to the taste and liking of South Asians, and most of the traders are themselves of Sri Lankan or Indian origin.

Here at the latest, non-Tamil observers become aware that the large crowd which has meanwhile filled the city centre comprises not only Catholic pilgrims but Hindu visitors as well. Or why do statues and posters of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi or the elephant-headed Ganesha find interested customers? For whom are the various items usually used in Hindu *pujas*?[16] Indeed a significant percentage of the assembled Tamils in Kevelaer belong to the Hindu section of the Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka, a fact which was barely mentioned in former years but is meanwhile regularly emphasized by the local newspapers and by reports issued by the Catholic Church. The estimates regarding their numbers vary; Baumann[17] speaks of 20 to 30 % in 1998, later reports of 60 % and more. It is difficult to establish exact figures without a quantitative survey as the activities and the behaviour of the Hindus do not noticeably differ from those of the Christian visitors. Many of the Hindus have come to worship the Madonna in the same way as their Christian brethren: by praying to her in the Chapel of Grace, by gazing at the miraculous picture and touching it, by using the visitors' books to ask her favour and/or thank her. They are as keen as the Christians on buying consecrated candles and lighting larger ones right in the central square. Some of them visit the Basilica to put a small light in front of the statue of St. Anthony or on a tray in the centre of the church and to write down their wishes or thanks, and quite a number join the Tamil service in the Forum Pax Christi.

2 The importance of the Kevelaer Madonna for Christian and Hindu Tamils

2.1 The choice of Kevelaer as a place of pilgrimage for Tamil catholics from Sri Lanka

The so-called Tamil Pilgrimage has not only become a major event in the religious life of Roman Catholic Tamils of Sri Lankan origin but also the largest annual gathering of

16 I remember being quite puzzled during my first visits when meeting an acquaintance from the Bremen Hindu temple and his family in Kevelaer.

17 Baumann 1998, 24.

pilgrims in Kevelaer[18] – a development that was not to be foreseen in the 1980s. That Mr Camillus and his wife – one of the very first Tamil visitors to Kevelaer – came to this place seemed pure coincidence. They had been invited by a parish in Oberhausen to join a bus pilgrimage to the popular place.[19] As asylum seekers they were actually not allowed to leave their place of residence but not knowing where they are going, they went along. Kevelaer with its Marian shrine and many churches left such an impression on them that Mr Camillus started to think of ways to gather Tamils for a joint pilgrimage to the Madonna under the leadership of a Tamil priest. As already mentioned, between 40 and 50 persons took part in the first group journey in 1988; the number grew to 150 the following year and soon – by word of mouth – two to three thousand came together. In the beginning most of the visitors seemed to have come from the region nearby, i.e. North-Rhine-Westphalia, the residential area of a large number of Tamil immigrants in Germany, but before long Tamils from other parts of Germany as well as from neighbouring countries joined. With the help of the church and town institutions in Kevelaer and the *Tamilen Seelsorgeamt* in Essen the annual gathering of Tamils in Kevelaer has developed into a well-organised institution.

That a Marian pilgrimage site was able to arouse the interest of Catholic Tamils is only natural. The Madonna, being central to Catholic theology and devotional practice, is venerated by Catholics of all kinds and origins. Tamil Catholics, too, are known to have been devotees of the Mother of Christ for centuries. A number of churches consecrated to Mary and several Marian pilgrimage shrines in Sri Lanka and the Tamil speaking South Indian regions testify to this devotion.[20] An important European Marian shrine within reach of the newly immigrated could not fail to attract devotees. Moreover, many of the Tamil visitors connect the Kevelaer Madonna with the one in Madhu back home. Mr Camillus has already been quoted; he explicitly pointed to the similarity between the two: "The Madonna in Kevelaer looks very much like the one in Mudhu (sic), our place of pilgrimage in Sri Lanka."[21] Madhu is situated halfway between Mannar and Vavuniya in the North-western Tamil part of Sri Lanka, actually in the part that for many years was controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Marian

18 "Das ist mit Abstand die größte Einzelwallfahrt des Jahres." R. Killich from the Pilgrimage Office Kevelaer quoted in: http://www1.wdr.de/themen/kultur/religion/hinduismus/tamilen100.html (visisted on 31/07/2017).

19 I thank Sandhya Marla-Küsters for sharing this and other pieces of information, which she has collected during her field research, with me. She interviewed Mr Camillus on November 27th, 2012.

20 For Talawila, Kudagama and Madhu in Sri Lanka see Stirrat 1982, for Velankanni and Villiyanur in Tamil Nadu Frenz 2004.

21 "Die Madonna in Kevelaer hat fast die gleichen Züge wie in Mudhu [sic], unserem Wallfahrtsort in Sri Lanka" (*Rheinische Post*, 8. August 2005). He is again quoted in "Kevelaer vereint Flüchtlinge", *Ruhrwort Essen*, 4. August 2012: "Das Kevelaerer Wallfahrtsbild erinnert mich verblüffend an Madhu, unsere große Wallfahrt auf der Insel."

Church in Madhu is dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary at Marudhamadhu, commonly known as Madhu Mata (Madhu Mother). She is represented by a statue which is clearly of the Luxembourg type, like the one in Kevelaer: she and the infant Jesus on her left arm are clad in bejewelled garments which cover most of the two bodies; both are crowned. The crowning was done officially in 1924 by a papal legate.

The likeness of the two Madonnas is not restricted to their outer appearances. In both cases the Mother of God is understood as a motherly helper and protector, and in both cases her representation is said to have miraculous powers. Like the Madonna in Kevelaer Madhu Mata receives ornaments as recognition of her help. The devotion of the Sri Lankan Madonna reaches back to the sixteenth century, to a church in Manati which housed a statue of 'Our Lady of Good Health'. In 1670, during the time of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka, this statue was brought to the present site.[22] Several miraculous events were connected with the finding of the new place where the Madonna soon became renowned again for her healing capacities. Her special domain is said to be help in cases of snakebites. A former school teacher, a Catholic living now near Düren, whom I have asked about the place, told me that wild elephants come to Madhu in winter, "tigers abound" and there are "most deadly snakes but no one has been bitten". People would "dig up the ground" and sprinkle the sand on their fields thus protecting their land and animals from poisonous snakes.

Before the outbreak of the civil war the place was annually visited by at least one million pilgrims. Peak days were around the 15th of August – the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The pilgrims came from the whole island comprising Tamil and Sinhalese Catholics alike. In addition considerable numbers of Hindus did the journey, and even Sinhalese Buddhists visited.[23] During the years of the civil war the shrine housed thousands of refugees.[24] In November 1999 the camp was shelled, killing a large number of people. Although the Catholic bishops called for the Madhu site to be a demilitarized zone with guaranteed security for those who had sought refuge there, the refugees had to flee further north, and the statue of the Madonna had finally to be moved, too. Since the – officially declared – end of the war in 2009 the statue is back in its hereditary place and pilgrims have started to arrive in great numbers again.

Considering the importance of the Madhu Madonna in Sri Lanka and the role this Marian shrine played during wartime it is not surprising that eventually a representation of Madhu Mata was put up in front of the Forum Pax Christi where she can be revered after the service. Displaying Our Lady of Madhu in this form in Kevelaer means that the

22 For the history see madhuchurch.blogspot.de (History of Madhu Church by Prathilal Fernando) and https:/www.catholicsandcultures.org (our-lady of madhu-shrine) (both visited on 20/08/2017).

23 http://libref.ch/?p=51.html (24.11.2005, "Religionen in Sri Lanka", lecture given by Dr Oskar Flück), (visited on 20/08/2017).

24 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrine_of_Our_Lady_of_Madhu (visited on 31/07/2017).

place where she can be met has been moved from the distant Sri Lankan jungle area to an accessible diaspora city. Like the statue in Madhu, she can be looked at by the devotees, who may feel that their gaze is returned. As opposed to the print showing the Kevelaer Madonna this statue can also be directly touched. Most importantly, however, her presence in Kevelaer may give Tamils the feeling of a spiritual home away from home.[25]

Looking for further reasons for the strong appeal of the Kevelaer Madonna to Tamil devotees, it should be remembered that she is explicitly known as Consolatrix Afflictorum, the 'Comforter of the Afflicted.' The Sri Lankan refugees are truly afflicted people, having experienced anxiety and many hardships in their homeland and a great deal of uncertainty as immigrants in Europe. Professor S.J. Emmanuel, the president of the International Tamil Forum and former General Curate of the Jaffna diocese, who lives in German exile too, has been quoted saying: "Many thousands come to the Mother of God, to get rid of their sorrows and distress."[26] Her comfort and motherly concern is sought, but she is also approached as a helping force in very concrete matters. In the course of the years a number of Tamils told me that they had asked for her help and that their prayers were answered by her. Wishes often put forward were help in getting a job or – for the children – to succeed in school. Others were: to recover from sickness, to pass an exam, to find a good husband for a daughter or to get a German passport. The intercession books speak of the manifold wishes but also abound with thanks.

Apart from the individual wishes, there were always collective ones, the request for peace back home in Sri Lanka being the most prominent during the past years. They did not lose significance with the end of the civil war. There is hardly a Tamil in the West who has no relatives, neighbours or friends in Sri Lanka about whose safety and welfare he is still very concerned.

2.2 The importance of Mother Mary for Hindu Tamils and their participation in the Tamil Pilgrimage

In calling the Tamil refugees afflicted people, I of course think of all Tamils, be they Christians, Hindus or followers of other creeds or orientations. Looking at the considerable participation of Hindus in the Tamil Pilgrimage to Kevelaer one may be tempted to understand this phenomenon as a case of religious convergence between Catholic and Hindu Tamils brought about by the diasporic situation. This situation means for many refugees – irrespective of their religious affiliation – dramatically changed living

25 In 2011 one could also find a photo of Our Lady of Madhu on the reverse side of the leaflet with the religious songs which can be purchased before the service – as a sort of counterpart to the coloured print of the Kevelaer Madonna on the front.

26 www.kirchensite.de/popup_print.php?myELEMENT=97554 (last visited on 20/07/2013).

conditions, often economic hardship, the loss of a sense of belonging combined with the constant worry about the wellbeing of the family members back home in Sri Lanka. Most of them were and are in need of consolation and encouragement. Instances of a religious convergence are obvious in Kevelaer – I have pointed out common features in the veneration of Mary in the descriptive first part. But it has to be asked whether these can be called *new* phenomena? In my opinion several beliefs and practices of Tamil Catholics and Hindus are traditionally not as clearly demarcated as one would sometimes assume in the West. Overlaps in the forms of religious practice are quite common. To substantiate this claim I will take a closer look at the significance of Mary and Marian pilgrimage sites for Hindus in Europe and South Asia.

Scholars of South Asian religions have long been aware of the fact that Mary, the Mother of Christ, is considered a divine female by many Hindus. Hindus worship a large number of goddesses. The great goddesses Parvati, Durga, Lakshmi, even the fearsome Kali and the frightening Sitala are referred to as *Ma*, *Mata*, *Amma* or *Tai*, all meaning 'Mother', and the various village goddesses of the South, too, are understood as life-giving, life-protecting and nourishing deities. To include Mary into the Hindu pantheon is unproblematic: the Mother of God becomes the Divine Mother.[27] Father Bennet and Mr Camillus, both official representatives of the *Tamilen Seelsorgeamt* Essen, recognize the veneration of Mary by the Hindus visitors as a genuine religious need, but distinguish their understanding of the Madonna from that of the Christian devotees.[28] According to them Hindus venerate the Madonna not as the Mother of Christ but as the wife of one of the Hindu gods, as for instance of god Murugan. Despite this difference "they do have a sort of faith in our Lady" (Father Bennet) as well as in St. Anthony.

Kevelaer is not the only Marian pilgrimage site in Europe where Hindu visitors can be met. Christopher McDowell was one of the first to describe the attraction of the Black Madonna at Einsiedeln in Switzerland for Tamil asylum seekers.[29] He pointed out that especially single male Hindus of lower castes used to come and to leave wishes and/or promises on pieces of paper near the statue of the Madonna. Damaris Lüthi contested McDowell's view and stressed that Hindus of all castes and classes visit Einsiedeln and the Madonna in Mariastein near Basle.[30] "Both have been popular pilgrimage sites among Tamils since the 1980s".[31] Tamils of all creeds and from different places in Switzerland have been reported to be going on a pilgrimage to Mariastein on 15th of August for a number of years, carrying along their own Madonna statue. Annette Wilke has studied intercession books of the Catholic St Joseph's Church in Könitz near Basle which

27 Cf. Wilke 1996, 280.

28 Information and quotations from Sandhya Marla-Küsters, see note 19. She interviewed Father Bennet on October 10th, 2012, and Mr Camillus a month later on November 27th.

29 McDowell 1996.

30 Lüthi 2003, 302.

31 Lüthi 2008, 105.

include many requests by Christian and Hindu Tamils.[32] According to her there is only one difference discernible between them – the form of address. Christians use *mata* (Mother), whereas Hindus prefer *taye*, a Tamil word meaning 'divine mother' which is reserved for goddesses. But not only Marian pilgrimage shrines were visited by Hindu Tamils, churches with a statue of Mary were equally in demand. Lüthi observed that "the worship of Mata in the churches in the 1980s to a certain extent even served as a substitute before there were Hindu temples".[33] She also stresses in this context that the worship of Mary by Hindus has a long tradition in Sri Lanka and is not a phenomenon brought about by the exile situation.

Another Madonna deeply respected by many Hindu Tamils is the Madonna of Lourdes. Lourdes in France has become quite a popular destination for individual Hindus as well as whole groups. I first learned about Hindus visiting Lourdes in 1998 at the Hindu temple festival in Hamm-Uentrop from a woman who was performing ascetic practices to achieve the recovery of her sick husband. She planned to travel to Lourdes, too, to ask the additional help of the Madonna there. Group journeys have been organized by Hindu temple communities of certain cities – by the one in Bremen for instance in 2003 – or by special travel agents. They are comparatively inexpensive; a flyer distributed in Kevelaer in 2006 offered a five-day trip from and to Stuttgart for 100 Euros per person. Popular souvenirs from Lourdes are plastic bottles filled with water from the pilgrimage place, which is believed to be miraculous. Some Hindus place these bottles, sometimes along with printed pictures of the Lourdes Madonna, in their house shrines.[34] Sandhya Marla-Küsters reports the incident of a Hindu father performing the traditional Hindu ritual of the first haircut in Lourdes.[35] The interest in 'The Lourdes,' as the Madonna is called, is likewise not a recent diasporic phenomenon. Hindus already know Marian shrines consecrated to the Lourdes Madonna from their homelands. Tiwattee in Sri Lanka for instance is such a place, being "deliberately modelled after Lourdes";[36] Kudagama with its shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes is another case in point. Most Catholic churches in South India are reported to have a grotto or even a chapel consecrated to the Lourdes Madonna.[37]

Hindus in South India and Sri Lanka not only know about Marian shrines, in many cases they set out to visit them, too, and venerate the Madonna. An outstanding example from Tamil Nadu in South India is the pilgrimage site of Velankanni, a fishing village on the East coast, about which Matthias Frenz has published a detailed study. On the basis of old reports he was able to prove that this pilgrimage place had since long attracted people from all classes and creeds. And like their predecessors, Catholic observers in

32 Wilke 1996.
33 Lüthi 2008, 105.
34 Personal communication S. Marla-Küsters.
35 Personal communication S. Marla-Küsters.
36 Stirrat 1982, 400.
37 Frenz 2004, 55.

modern times proudly point to the great attraction the Velankanni Madonna exerts on Protestants, Hindus, Muslims and followers of other creeds, which according to them proves the superiority of the Catholic creed.[38] Concerning Sri Lanka especially R.L. Stirrat has mentioned Hindus he met at the Marian pilgrimage sites of Talawila, Kudagama and Madhu in Sri Lanka.[39] I have already dealt with the importance of the shrine in Madhu above. All observers acquainted with the shrine emphasized the religious and ethnic diversity of the pilgrims who set out to reach this place and ask favours from the Madhu Madonna.[40] Catholics I met in Kevelaer reported the same. None of them had any reservation about the participation of Hindus in the activities of the different shrines.

2.3 Convergences between Catholics and Hindus – old and new

As already pointed out in the previous sections the veneration of Mary by Hindu Tamils has a long tradition in the South Asian culture. Catholic Christianity has deep roots in South India and Sri Lanka. At the same time certain Christian elements found their way into Hindu beliefs and practices; most notable seems to be the inclusion of Mary and several Christian Saints – like St. Anthony, St. George and St. Anna – into the Hindu pantheon. In the course of this development forms of worship have developed which apparently not only suited Hindus but could be used by followers of both creeds. Catholics often revered and still revere the Madonna in the same way Hindus venerate Mary and their other gods. Paul Younger has given a vivid description of the main festival of the South Indian Velankanni Madonna, calling attention to practices usually not connected with the Christian code of conduct, like the offering of hair at the shrine, the taking of a cleansing bath in the sea, the giving of food and animal offerings, the presentation of flower garlands which are touched to the feet of the image before being returned, falling into trances, and buying 'holy oil'.[41] According to Frenz most of these practices are developed by the devotees of their own accord; they are more or less adapted by the clergy.[42] Others like rolling around the church or tying pieces of cloth around tree branches or the flagpole as tokens of individual wishes are silently tolerated. Also tolerated is the sale of baskets with offerings comprising candles – a characteristic element of the Christian veneration of Mary and saints – and a coconut which plays a central role in South Asian Hindu worship. Hindus are used to oil and camphor light offerings in their own institutions, so switching to candles in the Christian context does not seem

38 Frenz 2004, 126–127.

39 Stirrat 1978.

40 We should not forget that Tamil-speaking Catholics from the Northern parts are not the only people adhering to the Catholic faith, there are Sinhalese-speaking people from all over the country as well.

41 Younger 2002.

42 Frenz 2004, 157–158.

problematic at all. The travelogue writer William Dalrymple has visited places in Kerala where the Hindu Goddess Bhagavati and Mary are considered to be sisters with equal power. He talked to people of both creeds who reported that they customarily visit both sisters; Christian devotees told him

> that during the annual festival of Our Lady, the pilgrims would all take a ritual bath, shave their heads and eat only vegetarian food to purify themselves. They would join processions under torches, banners and coloured silk umbrellas of exactly the sort used by Hindus in their temple processions.[43]

Here, too, the powers of exorcism have been attributed to Christian churches.

It seems that the same "porousness of religious practice"[44] characterizes the Sri Lankan situation. It evolved in a long process that in the Sri Lankan case must be traced back to the sixteenth century, the period of the Portuguese colonization of part of the island. The first Christian missionary endeavours in the Kingdom of Jaffna in Northern Sri Lanka began in the 1540s, i.e. more than 450 years ago. The Catholic Christians were persecuted by both the Kings of Jaffna and later by the – Protestant – Dutch who defeated the Portuguese in 1658 and became the next colonial power.[45] It was during the time of the Dutch persecution that the Madhu Madonna was brought to the secret place in the wilderness. When the British took over in 1796 the persecution ceased, Catholic missionaries were allowed to enter the island again, but the number of Catholics remained comparatively small. Although a religious minority their standing in the post-colonial religious setting was quite high. Having been persecuted by one colonial government and only tolerated by the next they were not normally regarded as adhering to a religion backed by a colonial power. On the contrary, there are widespread narratives which firmly connect Catholic saints with Sri Lankan places.[46]

One of these places is, as mentioned before, the shrine in Madhu which according to all records has always attracted devotees of different creeds. It is undoubtedly the most popular. Stirrat wrote that Madhu and St. Anne at Talawila "are considered to be particularly powerful, the scenes of many miracles *(haskama)* and wonders *(pudumaya)*".[47] They are thought to be "particularly efficacious channels of grace *(devaraprasadaya)* and sources of blessing *(asirvada)*." Besides these two there are a number of churches dedicated to saints; some of them house "miraculous statues" which are thought to have special power. Among them are the St. Anthony churches at Kochchikade, Dalupotha and Kottapitiya, the St. Anne churches at Wattala, Weligampitiya and Palagature, and the St. Sebastian churches at Katuwapitiya and Velle Vidiya. According to Stirrat they

43 Dalrymple 2008.
44 Dalrymple 2008.
45 Cf. Jacobsen 2008, 118–119; Stirrat 1982, 387–388.
46 Cf. Jacobsen 2008, 119–120.
47 Stirrat 1982, 390.

attract many visitors, especially during the annual feasts. They come to these shrines to gain help in matters like "health, jobs, economic problems and family troubles".[48]

Stirrat points to the festival days as the events which attract most visitors, among them Non-Catholics. It should be noted that Hindus do visit Catholic churches on other days, too. Lüthi reports that some of her Hindu informants in Switzerland told her that church visits were not something they started to do in Europe; they had already done so in Sri Lanka.[49] They may have gone to ask Mary or a saint for help or to seek their blessing. Apart from these motives there is another important reason for church visits: the joint celebration of life cycle rituals of Christian family members. It is a common experience of many people that family and kinship members may adhere to different creeds and celebrate these rituals according to their religious tradition. Mr Uthavan, a Hindu acquaintance, once explained to me: "Back home we always celebrated our festivals together. Some of our relatives are Christians. We take part in their festivals, and they come to take part in ours. Here in Germany we do the same."

The above described circumstances in South Asia will have thrown light on a number of features and practices which at first sight seemed to have originated in the diaspora. Most importantly, Catholics and Hindus do have a common history of Marian worship. This explains why the participation of Hindus in the Tamil Pilgrimage at Kevelaer was expected and welcomed by their Catholic brethren right from the beginning. The way Hindus venerate the Madonna is much in tune with the practices both groups followed in their homeland: going to have a glimpse of the miraculous picture, touching it, lighting candles inside and outside the churches, and taking part in the Christian service. The last point does not apply to all Hindus; not all of them are present in the Forum Pax Christi. This is not due to any form of exclusion on the part of the Catholic side. The Forum is open for everybody, and for years clerical reports, too, speak of the Hindu participants at the Tamil Pilgrimage as something natural. As far as I know the only boundary drawn by the Catholic officials is that Hindus are not expected to attend Holy Communion. And normally Hindus do not request this.[50]

It is of interest in this context that not all Tamil persons of Sri Lankan origin may draw a hard and fast line between creeds or profess adherence to one religion only. In 2006 Martin Baumann and Kurt Salentin published the results of a quantitative statistical study undertaken among Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus in Germany to explore their religiousness and social incorporation into the host society.[51] One of the findings was that 8.1 % of the 874 persons they questioned consider themselves to be both Hindu and Roman Catholic. "The findings of our research underline the existence of double or even triple 'membership' and this needs to be taken into account".[52] These "religious over-

48 Stirrat 1982, 390.

49 Lüthi 2008, 105.

50 Information acquired in several conversations.

51 Baumann and Salentin 2006.

52 Baumann and Salentin 2006, 307.

laps", as the authors call this phenomenon, challenge assumptions of one-dimensional religious adherence. It remains to be seen what present and future research on this topic will bring to the fore.[53]

Having concentrated so far on the traditional convergences between Catholic and Hindu beliefs and practices it remains to attempt an evaluation of the present situation in Kevelaer. As referred to repeatedly, 'overlaps' in the forms of worship of the Madonna are clearly visible. I do not understand them as new phenomena brought about by the living conditions in the diaspora. They are phenomena developed in Sri Lanka and continued as known and accepted practices in the new surroundings. Tamils of both creeds use the annual opportunity to pray and to worship Mary and the saints in the style they are used to – a markedly Tamil style.

A new quality characterizing the pilgrimage event in Kevelaer seems to be the very high percentage of Non-Catholics attending the event. So far I have mainly emphasized the religious interest of Tamils visiting Kevelaer and taken notice of the social factors only in passing. The acquaintance cited above spoke of the mutual attendance of festivals among Catholics and Hindus, referring not only to religious festivals but also to ones within the family and the circle of relatives. Looking at the Tamil Pilgrimage from this perspective it can be said that it has developed into a large Tamil 'family meeting' or get-together of relatives, former neighbours and friends who are now dispersed over the whole of Germany and other parts of Europe. A participant was cited in WZ-Online calling the pilgrimage "a great reunion. One meets acquaintances and relatives from all over Europe."[54] People look forward to getting in touch for a few hours and to seeing the growing children, they are eager to exchange news and to speak their own language or even local dialect. And naturally for young people it is an opportunity to see and to be seen, a convenient occasion to spot or find a Tamil partner. And there is the prospect that a Middle European city's central area will be completely filled with one's own people. For once other pilgrims and Western visitors are in the minority. The event takes on the characteristics of what is called a *Heimattreffen* in German – a meeting of persons with a shared ethnic and cultural background. In this connection the special market put up on the occasion of the Tamil Pilgrimage is of more than only secondary importance. The food is South Asian food, and most of the vendors offer goods which Tamil customers are fond of and which are not – or only with difficulty – available in other places. People visibly enjoy looking for things and exploring the goods on offer, pushing through the narrow passages between the stalls. As I learned in 2011 from two young

53 Important work was done by Sandhya Marla-Küsters who interviewed young Tamils thus being able to present interesting information on the religious orientation of the second generation (Marla-Küsters 2015).

54 The pilgrimage is "ein großes Wiedersehen. Man trifft Bekannte und Verwandte aus ganz Europa." http://www.wz-newsline.de/lokales/kreis-viersen/niederrhein/tamilen-pilgern-nach-kevelaer-1.736444, (visited on 31/07/2017).

women packed with large shopping bags, some people come primarily for the fun of inexpensive shopping. No interest in the religious event, they said, an attitude that is also reported by Sandhya Marla-Küsters who has talked to a large number of young people.[55] But enjoying the market does not necessarily mean disinterest in the religious part of the day. The relaxed and boisterous atmosphere of the market place behind the cathedral complements the solemn mood in the various holy places. Victor and Edith Turner have described this "ludic component" as a well-known element present in nearly all pilgrimage contexts.[56]

I would finally like to return to the role of the Madhu Madonna in the context of the Kevelaer Pilgrimage. Right from the beginning the services in Kevelaer included prayers for peace in Sri Lanka; they are continued although the civil war is officially declared to have ended. The same activities are reported from Madhu in Sri Lanka. On August 15th, 2010 450 000 pilgrims took part in a High Mass celebrated in three languages: Sinhala, Tamil, and Latin.[57] At this and all following important occasions Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the head of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka, called for reconciliation between the different ethnic and political groups and for the recognition of the rights of Tamils and Muslims, especially in North and East Sri Lanka. These appeals are in line with the efforts undertaken by the shrine officials for years – to work towards the peace and unity of Sri Lankan citizens.[58] These reports underline the impression that Our Lady of Madhu has acquired an importance that goes beyond the purely religious realm. She seems to have become an agent for unity and equality in a country torn apart by ethnic and religious diversity. In this capacity she may be understood as a national symbol or political icon meaningful for *all* Tamils and ideally for all Sri Lankans. The Madhu figure which can be seen during the service in the Forum Pax Christi may likewise be understood as a symbol reminding those present to strive for unity.

55 This attitude, too, is not new. Stirrat 1982, 408–409, writes that: "a sizeable proportion of those who arrive at Madhu and Talawila during the feast are not at all that interested in religion […] of their own admission they are there for pleasure *(vinode)* rather than because of any great devotion". Most of the "pleasure seekers" were young men who tried to entice their girlfriends, smoked and drank alcohol and even visited prostitutes.

56 V. Turner and E. Turner 1978, 37.

57 http://www.katholisches.info/2010/08/17/450-000-pilger-feierten-maria-himmelfahrt-in-madhu-auf-sri-lanka (visited on 31/07/2017).

58 It is worth noting that already back in 2001 the statue of Our Lady of Madhu had been taken to a tour through Sri Lanka to encourage the devotees to pray for peace and the end of the war.

3 Conclusion: Kevelaer – a new place of pilgrimage for Tamils in Europe

In the course of a quarter of a century the so-called Tamil Pilgrimage has turned into a well-established institution. For many years the number of participants has exceeded the number of all other 'large' pilgrimages, thus making it the largest pilgrimage by one single group *(Einzelwallfahrt)* to Kevelaer in the annual pilgrimage programme. It remains to be seen whether the number of visitors will continue to be so high in the coming years. In 2012 the estimations were already lower than in former years.[59] Young people belonging to the second generation of immigrants may have other needs and may choose other orientations. The opening of more and more Hindu temples and the grand annual festival at the Hindu temple in Hamm-Uentrop, with a huge South Asian market attached to it, may have an effect on the size of the Tamil pilgrimage.[60] Nevertheless it is to be expected that Catholics and a considerable number of Hindus will still go on celebrating the special event which carries their name.

Kevelaer is famous for its Marian shrine housing the miraculous picture of the Madonna, known as the Comforter of the Afflicted. As all asylum seekers have to face the same political, social, economic and emotional problems, it is not surprising that she attracts not only Catholic pilgrims but also Hindus, who usually consider Mary to be a Mother Goddess. Both groups may ask for help and protection, or wish to thank her. Those attending the service in the Forum Pax Christi make use of the rare opportunity of a mass specifically organized for Tamils and celebrated in the Tamil language. Together with thousands of compatriots they are made aware that they are taking part in "the largest Marian pilgrimage outside their native country".[61] Being so many and taking part in a service held in their own language clearly help to affirm their Tamil identity.

The ways Hindu Tamils venerate Mary in Kevelaer barely differ from those of the Catholics. What at the first glance may seem to be an adoption of Catholic religious practices brought about by the diaspora conditions is in fact the outcome of a long process of mutual influence back in Sri Lanka. Convergences have taken place on both sides: certain elements from Hinduism have entered Catholic practices and certain Catholic elements – although in smaller numbers – have found their way into Hindu worship. This resulted in forms of devotion typical for a great part of Tamil religiosity. Older Tamil pilgrims remember them from their earlier life, and the Pilgrimage to Kevelaer seems to be the apt occasion to apply them again, thus passing them on to the younger ones.

59 See estimation for 2012 in n. 9.

60 Catholics do visit the temple festival in Hamm-Uentrop, too, but in much smaller numbers than the Hindus who used to come to Kevelaer.

61 Statement by S.J. Emmanuel ("größte Marienwallfahrt außerhalb der Heimat"), see n. 24.

The veneration of Mary by Hindus, too, reaches back to the time before they sought asylum in Europe or elsewhere. A dominant focus of pilgrimage activities in Sri Lanka in which Hindus have taken part for a long time was and is Mother Madhu in her jungle shrine Madhu. Emphasizing her likeness to the Kevelaer Madonna, as Mr Camillus has done, has created a connection between the two pilgrimage places right from the beginning. The perceived resemblance evoked a feeling that the German place carried a special meaning for Tamils: it already seems more familiar than other places in the diaspora. The introduction of a separate Madhu statue about fifteen years ago must have intensified this feeling. Kevelaer became another "own place".[62] It may well be that the inclusion of the Madhu Madonna into the religious programme of the Tamil Pilgrimage provided an additional incentive for Tamils formerly less motivated to join the event. By being able to introduce Madhu as another Marian form, Tamil Catholic space has been successfully claimed in Kevelaer.

The side effects of this annual event are not to be underestimated: it offers the opportunity to meet family members, former neighbours and friends who are now living dispersed all over Germany and Europe. Being able to encounter so many of one's own people in one place at the same time raises no doubt the self-esteem of the participants and make them forget for a while the feeling of not belonging. The Asian market, too, fulfils an important function: with its familiar smells, colours and gustatory offers it is a most helpful means of keeping alive and confirming the cultural identity of all Tamils present.

62 Cf. n. 19. The same holds true for Mariastein in Switzerland when Tamils bring a Madhu Madonna along, and for Bergen and Mariaholm in Norway where Tamil Catholics celebrate the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin with a procession including a statue of Our Lady of Madhu (Jacobsen 2008, 127–129).

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When Senegalese Tidjanis Meet in Fez: The Political and Economic Dimensions of a Transnational Sufi Pilgrimage

Summary

The tomb of Ahmad Al-Tidjani in Fez has progressively become an important pilgrimage centre for the Tidjani Sufi order. Ever since the Tidjani teachings started spreading throughout the sub-Saharan region, this historical town has mainly been attracting Tidjani disciples from Western Africa. Most of them come from Senegal were the pilgrimage to Fez (known as *ziyara*) has started to become popular during the colonial period and has gradually gained importance with the development of new modes of transportation. This article analyses the transformation of the *ziyara* concentrating on two main aspects: its present concerns with economic and political issues as well as the impact that the transnationalisation of the Tidjani Senegalese community has on the Tidjani pilgrims to Morocco.

Keywords: Sufi shrine; political and economic aspects; tourism; diaspora

Dieser Beitrag befasst sich mit der Entwicklung der senegalesischen Tidjaniyya Pilgerreise nach Fès. Schon seit der Verbreitung der Tidjani Lehren im subsaharischen Raum, ist der Schrein vom Begründer dieses Sufi Ordens Ahmad al-Tidjani zu einem bedeutsamen Pilgerort für westafrikanische und insbesondere senegalesische Tidjaniyya Anhänger geworden. Während der Kolonialzeit und durch die Entwicklung der neuen Transportmöglichkeiten, hat dieser Ort weiterhin an Bedeutung gewonnen. Heute beeinflussen zudem die politischen und ökonomischen Interessen Marokkos als auch die Transnationalisierung der senegalesischen Gemeinschaft die Entwicklung dieser Pilgerreise.

Keywords: Sufismus; Pilgerreisen; transsaharische Beziehungen; Tourismus; informeller Handel; Diaspora

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This article aims to analyze the different meanings of the pilgrimage of the Tidjaniyya, a transnational Sufi order, to the Moroccan city of Fez, focusing on two main aspects: its present concerns with economic and political issues, and the impact that the transnationalization of the Tidjani Senegalese community has on the Tidjani pilgrims to Morocco.

After the establishment of the Tidjaniyya Sufi order in an Algerian oasis in 1781/82, the Sufi scholar Ahmad al-Tidjani settled in Fez, where he built a Sufi lodge (a *zawiya*). From there the Tidjaniyya teachings spread throughout the region and reached West Africa in 1820. Partly by an armed movement established in 1852 by al-Hajj Umar Tall, different channels of transmission departed from Mauritania towards Guinea, Senegal, and today's Mali. Although the Tidjaniyya order is currently found in a number of countries within the Muslim world, it certainly has more prominence in African countries,[1] especially in Senegal where it represents the first brotherhood by the number of its followers.[2]

The Tidjaniyya order gained considerable impact in the Senegal region in the late nineteenth century. Two Senegalese disciples played a central role in reorganizing this Sufi path, and contributed to the dissemination of the Tidjani teachings in West Africa. Al-Hajj Malick Sy (1855–1922) spread the brotherhood within the Wolof communities and established a Tidjani center in Tivaouane. The second, Abdoulaye Niasse (1840–1922), established a religious center in Kaolack. His son Ibrahim Niasse became a leading figure of the Tidjaniyya of the twentieth century.[3] Like many Sufi orders, the Tidjaniyya has developed many branches over time. It represents at present more a shared heritage of readings and rites and a strong identity than an organized, centralized Sufi order.[4] Today, the religious centers of the various Tidjani branches and families in North and West Africa are centers of pilgrimage that attract not only local pilgrims but also international followers, as is the case of the center of the Niasse family in Kaolack.

Although Ahmad al-Tidjani's successors settled in Algeria after his death,[5] the possession of the tomb of the founding father by the Tidjanis of Fez served to maintain privileged relations between the Tidjanis of sub-Saharan Africa and those of Morocco.[6] Notwithstanding the significant role played by some Moroccan Tidjani scholars in disseminating Tidjani precepts throughout the African continent, it is unlikely that the Moroccan Tidjaniyya would have had the same value for the Tidjani community if the founder had not been buried in Fez. With the burial of Ahmad al-Tidjani in his *zawiya*

1 Triaud 2000, 10.

2 Villalón 1995, 67–68.

3 Triaud 2000, 12.

4 Triaud 2000, 14.

5 Ahmad al-Tidjani nominated as his successor Ali al-Tamasini from Tamalhat. For that reason, the small town of Tamalhat in the east of Algeria became the center of the order after Ahmad al-Tidjani's death, whereas the sons of the founder moved to the birth town of their father in the Algerian oasis Aïn Madi. Today the official seat of the head of the order is Aïn Madi.

6 El Adnani 2007, 181.

in 1815, the edifice acquired even greater value in the eyes of the Tidjani disciples. Thus, large flows of pilgrims from abroad – particularly from Senegal or from Senegalese communities resident in Europe – regularly travel today to Morocco in order to make the pilgrimage to the *zawiya* of Fez.

Due to the large popularity of the Tidjaniyya Sufi order in West Africa, the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez plays an important international as well as national political role in the Moroccan state. At the international level, this Sufi order contributes to fostering relations between Morocco and its African neighbors. When the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1984 recognized the sovereignty of Western Sahara (under Moroccan rule since 1975), Morocco withdrew from the Pan-African organization and since that time has been carrying out numerous bilateral cooperation projects with its African neighbors to compensate for its isolation from the OAU and to gain support for its territorial and economic interests.[7] The Tidjaniyya members have played a crucial role in fostering the bilateral relations between the Moroccan state and its West African neighbors. The Senegalese spiritual guides in particular have been acting as informal diplomatic agents and have been lobbying towards strengthening relations between Morocco and Senegal, these two countries being tied to each other by the Tidjaniyya order.[8]

At the national level, the Moroccan state has been carrying out, since the early years of the twenty-first century, several measures to enhance and promote the Sufi dimension of Islam as a more legitimate and authentic form of Moroccan religiosity. This policy is aimed at weakening radical forms of Salafi Islam that are developing in the country.[9] The rediscovery of Sufism as one of the core elements of official Moroccan Islam goes hand in hand with the valorization of the local Sufi patrimony, such as the Moroccan Sufi literature, Sufi music, and the shrines of local Sufi scholars. This cultural heritage is directed to nationals as well as being used as cultural products to attract international tourists.

Due to its transnational connection with West Africa and to the Sufi heritage it represents, the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani of Fez is nowadays a particular site where both foreign and religious policy issues intersect and are interwoven. Focusing on the perspective of the Senegalese, who represent the main category of Tidjani pilgrims visiting the *zawiya* of Fez, this article aims to analyze the impacts of political, economic, and cultural identity issues on the meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage, and asks to what extent the Tidjani journey to Fez represents a practice that enables Senegalese Tidjanis, from Senegal and from the Senegalese diasporas in Europe, to identify with Morocco.

7 Bouhout 1996, 61.

8 Sambe 2010, 146.

9 Rachik 2007, 59.

To address these questions, I will analyze the meanings of the sacred in the frame of the pilgrimage by describing the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani and by presenting the religious grounds upon which Tidjani pilgrims base their commitment to make the *ziyara*[10] to Fez. In a second part, I will describe the evolution of the Senegalese pilgrimage and discuss its communal and social dimension, focusing mainly on trade and collective pilgrimage practices. Finally, I will focus on the commercialization of the *ziyara* as a tourism product and discuss its effects on the shape and meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage.[11]

1 The *ziyara* of the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani: representations of sainthood and the religious meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage

> The purpose of the ziyara is to renew. It is true that we are Tidjani wherever we go. It is lived everywhere. Making the ziyara is above all to renew the love and fidelity of the follower vis-à-vis his shaykh. It is life […] the physical experience, the feeling. You often wish to visit the tomb.[12]

Islam made the *hajj* – the pilgrimage to Mecca – an obligation for all Muslim believers.[13] However, and without being uncontested among Muslims,[14] the practice of saint veneration has continued to exist at the same time as the *hajj* pilgrimage and is not considered a mere compensation for a non-performed canonical pilgrimage. Making a *ziyara* primarily requires journeying to the tomb of a person perceived as a saint in order to ask for his intercession. The necessity to visit the place where the saint is buried is a particular characteristic of pilgrimages in Islam. This may be explained by the absence of figurative representations or of relics. Since such options are absent in Islam, traveling to the saint's tomb becomes indispensable. The only alternative to "the dictatorship of the place" are visions of the saint.[15] In the Tidjani tradition, such visions also play a central role in the life of the followers. However, despite the possibility of seeing the saint and feeling his presence in all places, a number of Tidjanis aspire to pray, one day, at the tomb of the founder of their Sufi order.

10 Muslim pilgrimage to a sanctuary.

11 This article is based on a fieldwork I conducted in Morocco and Senegal between 2009 and 2011.

12 A Senegalese Tidjani based in Morocco. Interview on March 15, 2010, in Rabat.

13 The *hajj* is considered one of the five pillars of Islam. It is mandatory for every person capable of its performance, physically and financially.

14 Since the ninth century, there has been a crystallization of opposition towards *ziyara* in the Muslim world. According to many thinkers, *ziyara* is perceived as a heretical innovation and the veneration of saints as polytheism. Today, these arguments are still put forward to condemn pilgrimage to sanctuaries. There is a large literature on the religious debates on saint veneration in the Muslim world.

15 Mayeur-Jaouen 2000, 140.

1.1 The zawiya of Ahmad al-Tidjani: a multifunctional religious place embedded in the urban space of Fez

The shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani is located in the old town of Fez, a very densely built part of the city which was founded in 789 and is called *Fas al-Bali*. Today the old town of Fez represents one of the largest car-free areas in the world and is characterized by its large number of Sufi shrines, mosques and religious schools. The *zawiya* has a main door where two caretakers take turns in keeping an eye on the visitors who enter the place, making sure that all have taken off their shoes and women have covered their hair. After entering through the main door, female visitors turn right and cross a courtyard used for ablutions to get to their designated place at the back end of the building, whereas men find their place at the left of the building. The building of the *zawiya* resembles the shape of other mosques in Fez and its architecture combines different elements of Moorish style. Since it functions also as a mosque, the *zawiya* holds a *mihrab* (a niche in the wall that indicates the direction of Mecca, the direction Muslims should face when praying) situated in the part of the shrine that is reserved for men. It is also in this part of the *zawiya* that three high pendulum clocks are placed indicating the time for prayers and showing the richness of this place and its owners. The walls of the whole *zawiya* are covered with mosaic and Arabic letters engraved in plaster; its wooden ceiling is colorfully painted and its floor is covered with green carpets.

The white marble sarcophagus of Ahmad al-Tidjani is located in the center of the building and is surrounded by a golden railing with a door that faces only the section of the *zawiya* that is reserved for men. Before 2010, this door was sometimes open and worshippers (mostly foreigners and Moroccan men) were able to approach the tomb to pray and touch it. In 2010, access to the shrine was restricted and no more visitors were allowed to enter through the golden door and approach the tomb. The area that surrounds the sepulchre became a prohibited space, enhancing by the same way the sacredness of Ahmad al-Tidjani's tomb. Since that time, worshippers only communicate with the saint while touching the railing and looking at the tomb from a distance. Since its foundation in the late eighteenth century the *zawiya* has been renovated and extended several times. The last renovation took place in the early years 2000 and led to larger transformations of the decoration and the spatial organization inside the *zawiya*, contributing to enhancing the visibility and popularity of the place among local inhabitants.

The *zawiya* has numerous functions: it is used as a mosque, a Tidjani lodge, and a shrine. Consequently this place is visited by different groups with different aims: local Tidjani adepts, local inhabitants who do not belong to the Tidjaniyya order but who visit the saint as a means of leisure or to conduct canonical prayers, and foreign pilgrims, mainly Senegalese. Whereas non-Tidjanis consider that Ahmad al-Tidjani is one saint

among many others, Tidjani adepts consider that he is of a particular status. They base their representations of the saint on the religious teachings of the Tidjaniyya. For that reason it is necessary briefly to lay out these teachings and the role played by Ahmad al-Tidjani in the Tidjaniyya in order to understand better the meanings of the Tidjani journeys to Fez.

1.2 Ahmad al-Tidjani: a saint[16] with a particular status

In the Sufi teachings, the world is mythically and mystically divided among saints and according to a hierarchy that governs over the destiny of the world through a celestial court whose earthly effects can be felt at any moment.[17] For the Tidjani disciples, Ahmad al-Tidjani occupies the two most elevated statuses of this hierarchy. He is not only seen as the seal of all saints and the pole of all poles but also as the purest of all saints, a qualifier that he attributed to himself. He is the pivot, the highest rank in the Sufi hierarchy of saints. As the seal of saints, Ahmad al-Tidjani represents the perfect embodiment of sainthood for Tidjanis, like the prophet Muhammad, who is the complete embodiment of all prophetic revelations and the last of all prophets. All the saints who preceded him directed their inspiration towards him and all those who came and will come after him derived their inspiration from him.[18] The idea of Ahmad al-Tidjani's superiority can also be found in the remarks of the Tidjani pilgrims I met in Fez:

> I can't explain this to you … Seydina Shaykh he is … he is really extraordinary, he is really extraordinary […] You know [that] the prophet Muhammad [he] is deceased but [this] doesn't change anything to the fact that, when you are a Muslim, he is the best of all beings for you. He is the most perfect being. In every prayer, we pray for him. You know, it is the same thing with Shaykh Ahmad Tidjani. He is [a being] like the Prophet.[19]

Ahmad al-Tidjani's position is situated between that of prophets and that of saints. This places him at the top of sainthood, and just below prophets and their companions. This high spiritual position is further legitimated by the descent from the prophet Muhammad that Ahmad al-Tidjani claimed and which is another element upon which my interviewees emphatically insisted. It is indeed quite common among Maghrebi Sufi *shaykhs* to claim descent from the prophet Muhammad. It is therefore a criterion which further justifies the sainthood of a person.

16 The concept that is translated here as saint is *wâlî* which means the one who is close to God and who possesses a certain authority and particular powers and capacities. For further details on sainthood in Islam, see Chodkiewicz 1995, 13–32.

17 Mayeur-Jaouen 2000, 144.

18 Abun-Nasr 1965, 28.

19 Interview with a Senegalese pilgrim on May 10, 2010, in Fez. Ahmad al-Tidjani is also known as Seydina Shaykh.

Through the supreme sainthood of the founder of the Tidjaniyya, the sanctuary in which he is buried becomes "the focal point"[20] of the brotherhood. Having been initiated into the Tidjaniyya by a living spiritual master called *shaykh* or *muqaddam*, the pilgrims I met in Fez consider Ahmad al-Tidjani to be their supreme *shaykh*, a *shaykh* whose physical proximity is rewarding and who plays the role of a mediator between worshippers and God.

1.3 The saint as a mediator

Unlike the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is canonized, the *ziyara* does not have fixed rules. Despite this, my interviews and observations reveal that a specific etiquette is being observed among Tidjani pilgrims who come to Fez. In some cases, it is the *shaykh* who gives informal directions and advice to his disciples when they decide to undertake the *ziyara* to Fez.[21] However, in addition to the informal steps prescribed by the *shaykh*, some rites to be performed during the *ziyara* have been institutionalized over time. These rites corroborate the supreme position of Ahmad al-Tidjani in the Tidjani teachings.[22]

The sainthood of Ahmad al-Tidjani becomes discernible in the way pilgrims behave within the *zawiya*, which is perceived as a blessed place. According to them, it is necessary to purify oneself in the form of ablutions before entering the *zawiya*. Subsequently, it is important to pray two *rak'a*[23] in respect of the place. This rite, however, is not restricted to the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani or the Tidjaniyya brotherhood in particular but is also customary for Muslim pilgrims in other Muslim countries, such as Egypt, for instance.[24] Another aspect that is reflected by the practice of these rites during the *ziyara* is that of the saint's role as intercessor. The physical proximity of the sepulchre seems to make this intercession possible. The *ziyara* ends with the following sequence of phrases:

> O! Lord by the law of Your slaves whom when You look at, Your anger ceases, and by the law of those who surround the Throne and by the law of our excellence Muhammad and by the law of our excellence, our shaykh and master Ahmed Tidjani, I implore you […][25]

20 Interview with a Tidjani master of Dakar on October 12, 2010, in Dakar.

21 A *muqaddam* explained that he prepares every disciple individually for his *ziyara* to Fez according to his particular needs.

22 I base this argument on information I collected from Senegalese pilgrims. I also found a handout summarizing the protocol of the *ziyara* in the possession of Senegalese pilgrims from Dakar. This text was written and distributed by representatives of the *zawiya* of Lyon, France, known as "La Grande Zawiya d'Europe".

23 Cycles of prayer.

24 Hoffman 1995, 102.

25 Based on the translation into French provided in the handout summarizing the protocol.

While the pilgrims often talk about miracles that the saint has accomplished for them, in this prayer it is to God that the requests are directed and not to the saint. Although he is considered to be the most perfect of all saints, he remains a human being that should not be worshipped like God. This refers to the dogma of the uniqueness of God in Islam and reflects according to Tidjanis the conformity of the Tidjaniyya teachings with Islam. Ahmad al-Tidjani should therefore not be venerated. He simply plays the role of mediator between the celestial and the worldly.

1.4 For blessedness on earth and salvation in the hereafter

Accomplishing the *ziyara* is, in many cases, motivated either by a specific aim to be achieved in this life, or by the wish to gain salvation in the hereafter. The primary motivation common to all pilgrims is their desire to be close to the saint and to draw from his spiritual energy. As explained by a Senegalese woman I met in Fez: "When you come here, it is as if Seydina Shaykh[26] (he) connects you to something."[27]

The desire to be in close proximity to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani appears in the accounts of the pilgrims as a means of maintaining a privileged relationship with him, of learning about him, and thus becoming a better Tidjani follower. Making the *ziyara* to Fez sometimes serves as a rite of passage into the life of a practicing Tidjani. In the Tidjaniyya doctrine, becoming a Tidjani requires adherence to the *tariqa*. This is achieved by making a pact with the saint in which the adherent commits to perform the Tidjani prayers and rituals that are referred to as *wird*. 'Taking the *wird*' signifies commitment to practice the Tidjani rites[28] in addition to other Islamic obligations. According to the *shaykh* in charge of the *zawiya* of Fez, visiting pilgrims usually take the *ziyara* as an occasion to take the *wird* or to renew it. I met a Senegalese nurse who confirmed having taken her *wird* during her three-day stay in Fez. She experienced this pilgrimage as a passage into a new phase of her life in which religious practice has become essential. I met this woman for a second time in Dakar. She explained that the *ziyara* to Fez not only made her a better Tidjani practitioner but also affected the way people treat her. Since her return from Fez, people call her *sokhna* which in this context means a reputable woman.

Furthermore, making the *ziyara* to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani is also perceived as a means to alleviate problems of everyday life. A Senegalese student from Rabat explained:

26 Ahmad al-Tidjani.

27 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani on May 10, 2010, in Fez.

28 According to Tidjani teachings, there are three Tidjani rites that a disciple has to engage in practicing. For further details, see Abun-Nasr 1965, 50–57.

> When you wake up feeling melancholy, you go to the zawiya because you wish to get the blessing of the shaykh [...] you wish that, by renewing your visits, God will fill you with satisfaction.[29]

During my stay in Fez, I met a number of pilgrims who hoped that the *ziyara* would mitigate their problems: "When someone is sick and believes in the *shaykh*, he goes to Fez and the issue is solved."[30] It is in this spirit that a female Senegalese resided in Fez for several months, hoping to get pregnant and to obtain a visa to join her husband, who works in Europe. She told me:

> You know, [in] this zawiya, you can't pray [here] and not have it fulfilled. You can't ask Sidna Shaykh for something and not have it fulfilled.[31]

The *ziyara* of Ahmad al-Tidjani, therefore, fulfills the same functions as the other Muslim *ziyaras*. They are undertaken either for emotional or sentimental reasons, to gain "an individual spiritual uplift",[32] or to solve worldly issues through the intermediary of the saint. Tidjani pilgrims tend to experience a combination of two types of motivation: "attaining a healthy life through the *ziyara*",[33] and finding bliss on earth.

Particularly to those pilgrims who come from afar and for whom the *ziyara* represents a real sacrifice, praying in the vicinity of their supreme *shaykh* is an 'extraordinary' achievement and may become a passage to another stage of life. If the visit to the sanctuary in Fez represents the major step in this double quest towards blessedness on earth and salvation in the hereafter, the pilgrimage sometimes takes the shape of an itinerary that is long and discontinuous, like a journey with different stages. Furthermore it is a practice that is often linked with everyday life. The recent evolution of the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage was particularly influenced by the international migration of Senegalese and its interrelationship with trade activities.

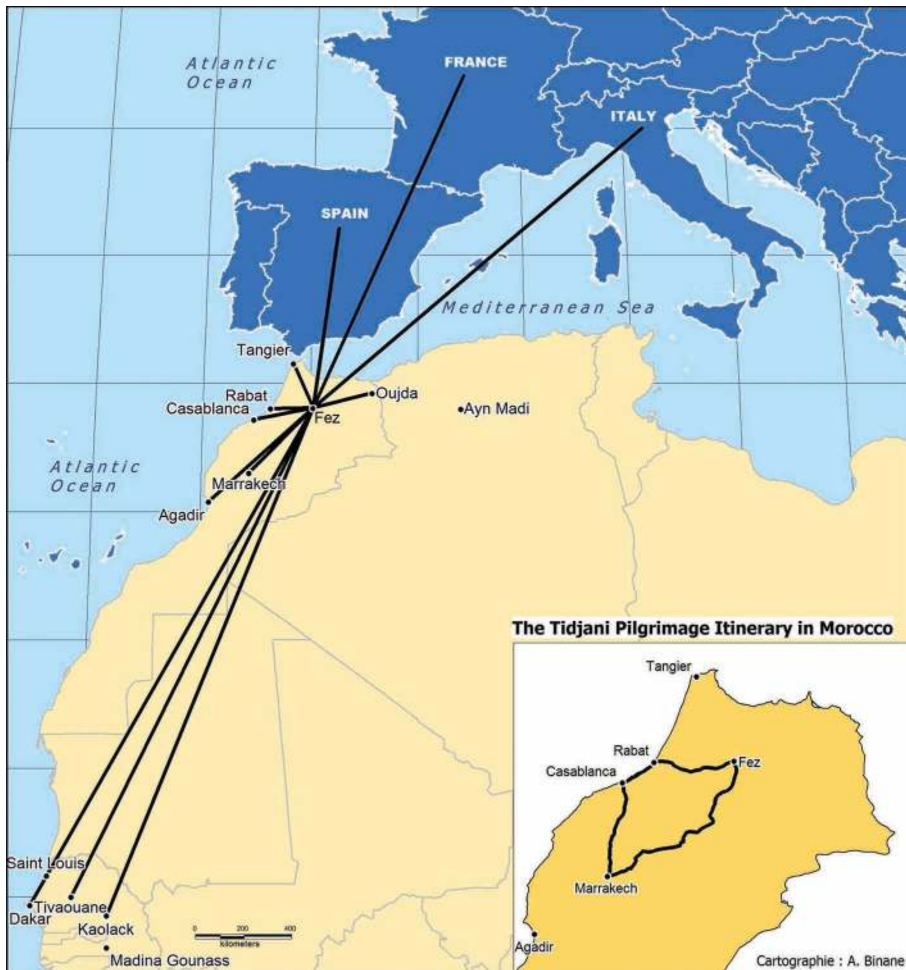

Fig. 1 The transnational dimension of the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez.

2 The *ziyara* of Ahmad al-Tidjani: a drive for transnational Senegalese mobility to Fez

2.1 From the pilgrimage of elites towards a more global phenomenon

The evolution of the *ziyara* to the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani is related to the long-standing relations between Fez and Senegalese Tidjani centers. The Senegalese religious leaders in particular have shown great interest in establishing and consolidating relations with the Moroccan Tidjaniyya. Even though not all of them have sojourned in Fez, these Senegalese religious chiefs communicated with Moroccan scholars on a regular basis and obtained degrees from them.[34] Until the 1920s, however, only religious elites traveled to the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez.[35] With the improvement of means of transportation and the development of Senegalese international mobility, the *ziyara* to Fez has subsequently become more accessible to a larger public.

After the opening of the port of Casablanca in the 1920s, the routes of the pilgrimage to Mecca were diverted northwards: departing from the port of Dakar, passing by North Africa and crossing the Mediterranean towards the Middle East. Between 1928 and 1958, the annual pilgrimage of West Africans to Mecca was made under the supervision of a commissioner of the government of French West Africa. The colonial authorities organized the pilgrimage in order to control all contacts between the Muslims of FWA and the Muslims of North Africa, the latter being suspected of supporting nationalist and independence movements.[36] From that moment on, it became common for boats heading towards Mecca to stop off in Casablanca or Oran. Pilgrims were thus given the choice of using the period of transit to travel to Fez (Fig. 1).[37] While the pilgrimage to Mecca was organized for nationals of French West Africa (FWA), the pilgrims who made the *ziyara* to Fez were in the majority from Senegal. Out of 119 pilgrims from FWA returning from their pilgrimage to Mecca in 1952, 106 Senegalese had made the *ziyara* to Fez during their stopover in Morocco.[38]

From 1958 on, there was a liberalization of these flows and a flight connection between Dakar and Casablanca as well as a bus connection between Casablanca and Fez

29 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on January 15, 2010, in Rabat.

30 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani master on October 8, 2010, in Dakar.

31 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on May 10, 2010, in Fez. – To have the prayer fulfilled means that it will have a positive effect on the life of the devout.

32 Bhardwaj 1998, 72.

33 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on February 15, 2010, in Rabat.

34 The first Senegalese spiritual leader who had been to Fez was Abdoullay Niasse, the founder of the Kaolack branch. Niasse visited Fez on his way to Mecca in 1890 (El Adnani 2005, 11–12).

35 El Adnani 2005, 12–14.

36 Loimeier 2001, 71.

37 O. Kane 1994, 6.

38 Rapport du Capitaine Cardaire, Commissaire du Gouvernement de l'AOF au pèlerinage de 1952 (Archives Nationales du Sénégal).

were established. Consequently, the connections between Senegal and Morocco became more frequent and the number of Senegalese and West African pilgrims going to Fez increased considerably in the 1960s.[39] From the 1970s, however, these flows stagnated because of the closure of the sea connection between Dakar and Casablanca and the establishment of direct flights from Senegal to Jeddah for pilgrims going to Mecca.[40]

2.2 The ziyara to Fez today: a transnational Senegalese pilgrimage

> Everybody dreams of making the ziyara to the tomb of the shaykh Ahmad Tidjani because they consider that the shaykh is Senegalese. Because the Senegalese love the shaykh Ahmad Tidjani more than Moroccans do.[41]

According to the Tidjani master quoted above, the Tidjani *ziyara* is represented as a mainly Senegalese practice. Although official data about the origins and number of pilgrims making the Tidjani *ziyara* to Fez are lacking, my investigations have shown that foreign pilgrims currently coming to Fez are predominantly Senegalese. With the development of Senegalese international migration, the Senegalese traveling to Fez are not necessarily coming from Senegal. Their countries of residence are considerably diversified: the majority of Tidjani pilgrims either live in West Africa or belong to the African diasporas living in Europe. The analyses of the police records of two local families that host Tidjani pilgrims indicate that 90 percent of the guests were Senegalese.[42] But 45 percent of these Senegalese were from Europe, mainly from France.[43]

Since the city of Fez is geographically close to the European continent, accessibility may explain the substantial proportion of Senegalese pilgrims coming from Europe. Moreover, travel costs between Europe and Moroccan cities are rather affordable. This has been the case since the liberalization of the air transportation sector and the opening up of the Moroccan airspace to competition. Since 2006, some low-cost companies started providing services to tourist destinations such as Fez.Nowadays, it is possible to travel to Fez by plane at low cost from Paris and Marseille, as well as from several Italian and northern Spanish cities. This allows pilgrims from Europe to spend the weekend in the sanctuary of their saint.

Trips between Senegal and Morocco are more expensive. Transport fares from Senegal to Morocco are costly since Royal Air Maroc has the monopoly on flights between

39 El Adnani 2005, 21.

40 Interview conducted on September 1, 2010, with the *shaykh* in charge of the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani.

41 A Senegalese Tidjani master based in Dakar. Interview on October 8, 2010, in Dakar.

42 Other pilgrims came from Mali, Nigeria, and Sudan.

43 However, not all pilgrims use this type of accommodation, as some prefer to stay in hotels. Unfortunately, hotels have refused to cooperate by giving information in this regard.

the two countries. A round trip costs approximately 600 euros, which represents a considerable sum for average Senegalese people living in Senegal.[44] Since 2002, a road has linked Senegal to Morocco through Mauritania.[45] This route, which covers a distance of 3000 km and connects Dakar to Casablanca, is frequented by numerous Senegalese tradesmen. Projects aimed at organizing trips by bus for Senegalese pilgrims along this route exist but, for the time being, most of the trips to the *ziyara* are by air.[46]

Another group of Senegalese who regularly visit the *zawiya* of Fez lives in Morocco. They belong to a small community of Senegalese nationals who are either studying or working in Morocco and for whom the *zawiya* represents a hub for religious and community gatherings.[47] During religious holidays, particularly prior to the *mawlid* celebration,[48] these communities move from different cities of the kingdom to celebrate this event in the *zawiya*. For those that reside in Fez, the *zawiya* is also a privileged place for prayers. Among the African migrants living in Fez, the Senegalese seem to feel particularly close to this place here they regularly meet members from their country of origin.[49] The *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani therefore represents a meeting place for Senegalese where they can connect with their fellows and consolidate their transnational ties. Additionally to its role as a place touched by the divine, it represents also a point in the transnational Senegalese Tidjani territory.

2.3 The communal dimension of the trip: the case of collective *ziyara*

The communal dimension of the *ziyara* to Fez can furthermore be observed in the collective pilgrimages organized by Senegalese Tidjani branches. These journeys represent an opportunity for Tidjani adepts to gather around their living spiritual guide. One of the Tidjani branches participating most actively in the organization of collective *ziyara* journeys is the Senegalese branch of Madina Gounass. This religious center, founded in the 1930s by Al Hadj Mamadou Seydou Bâ, hosts a branch that distinguishes itself through the practice of spiritual assemblies. The disciples of this Tidjani branch are encouraged to organize spiritual retreats of a few days during which they recite the Koran and commemorations of the Prophet *(dhikr)*. Nowadays, this branch has adherents in

44 A teacher in Dakar has a monthly salary of approximately 380 euros.

45 In February 2002, the first official point of passage was opened between Western Sahara and Mauritania; see Wippel 2004, 36.

46 All pilgrims I met during my fieldwork in Fez came from Senegal by air. Completing the *ziyara* sometimes requires saving for years or taking out bank loans. I wonder if the high price of the trip to Fez does not contribute to giving it more value and conceiving the *ziyara* as a sacrifice.

47 Interview with a Senegalese immigrant resident, on January 2, 2010, in Rabat.

48 The event commemorates the birth of the Prophet. The day before *mawlid* and seven days later, a night of religious chants is organized in the *zawiya*. These two nights are moments of festivity in the *zawiya* and the gathering of a considerable number of Moroccan and foreign pilgrims.

49 Berriane 2014, 139–153.

different West African, Central African, and European countries, namely in France. Although it was mainly focused on the Fulani and Halpulaar[50] communities, this branch also managed to attract American, French, and Moroccan adepts.[51] In the 1970s, the founder of Madina Gounass initiated collective *ziyaras* to Fez and led every year and for a period of three weeks a convoy of around 300 pilgrims towards Fez.[52] This practice of collective *ziyara* had been carried on by his successor Mansour Baro, who was known to be a tireless traveler who moved to different countries in the course of a major Halpulaar diaspora in order to consolidate the transnational social ties among his followers and to improve their religious education.[53] Mansour Baro also maintained close relations with the Moroccan Tidjaniyya. He came to Morocco up to three times a year and transformed into a *zawiya* a villa in Casablanca that a Moroccan disciple provided for him. Later, he bought a house facing the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani to serve as accommodation for his disciples during their *ziyara* to Fez. The journeys of Mansour Baro to Morocco also took the shape of a collective *ziyara* during which he was accompanied by Senegalese disciples from Senegal, Senegalese Tidjani followers living in Morocco and France, as well as Moroccan disciples. The pilgrimage group would land in Casablanca, then visit the sanctuary of a Tidjani scholar buried in Rabat, and finally travel to Fez in order to visit Ahmad al-Tidjani.[54]

The current representative of the Madina Gounass branch, Amadou Tidiane Bâ, also regularly visits Morocco and every two years, during June, a collective *ziyara* is organized in partnership with local travel agencies. In June 2010, about 200 disciples of the Tidjani branch of Madina Gounass from different countries in Africa and Europe met in Casablanca in order to accompany their religious leaders to the sanctuary of Rabat and subsequently to Fez. This trip, however, did not end in Fez; Amadou Tidiane Bâ continued his journey to France, in order to call upon followers who had immigrated to Europe.

Such journeys of religious leaders are not a specificity of this branch of the Tidjaniyya, nor are they restricted to the Tidjaniyya itself. For Senegalese religious leaders this practice, which is likewise referred to as *ziyara*, entails traveling to places where their disciples live.[55] Since the latter are increasingly to be found today in European countries and in the United States, it has become customary for Senegalese religious masters to travel to their disciples' countries of residence.[56] What is unique to the Tidjaniyya, however, is that the trips not only lead to the disciples' host countries, but also to Fez, which

50 Halpulaar literally denotes the community who speaks Pulaar. It represents an ethnolinguistic group found in various West African countries.

51 A. Kane 2007, 190.

52 El Adnani 2005, 21.

53 Soares 2004, 916.

54 A. Kane 2007, 195–196.

55 In the West African context, *ziyara* means also the travel of a *shaykh* to his disciples in order to collect their donations.

56 For further details on itinerant Tidjani leaders, see Soares 2004, 913–927.

can be seen as a pivotal location. Morocco in general and Fez in particular are both becoming centers for transnational Tidjani Halpulaar community gatherings. However, while the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani is perceived as the main pivot of the *ziyara*, the Senegalese marabouts[57] represent the living pivots around which the *ziyara* takes place. The motivation to experience the physical proximity of the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani is coupled with the possibility of gathering Tidjani adherents and consolidating in this way the transnational social networks that span Senegal, Morocco, and Europe.

2.4 The links between pilgrimage and transnational informal trade

These social networks are also linked to networks of informal Senegalese pilgrim-traders who combine pilgrimage and transnational trade activities. Although most Senegalese pilgrims who come to Fez from Senegal belong to the elite, people from other social classes – who finance their trip through trade activities – also take the road to Fez. As is the case in numerous Muslim pilgrimages, the connection between religion and trade is very common in the Senegalese *ziyara* to Fez, and the development of the Tidjani pilgrimage went hand in hand with the development of informal trade.

In her work on Senegalese traders, Laurence Marfaing demonstrated how the Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez was closely tied to the development of informal commerce between Senegal and Morocco. Indeed, trade between the two countries has followed the same routes as pilgrimage. Merchants initially traveled in caravans on trans-Saharan routes. From the 1920s on, they used vessels as transportation means and transited in Casablanca on their way to Fez. Their main purpose was to obtain merchandise and, on the same occasion, they could make the *ziyara*. Nowadays, traders who fly to Casablanca have their regular suppliers and they combine their business trips with a passage to Fez, where they visit the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani. Women, in particular, have used the pilgrimage as an alibi to engage in commercial activities. Since the 1950s, women have been just as active as men in those activities. The sacred dimension of the journey to Morocco allowed women to travel alone and engage in trade activities during the trip to Fez.[58]

Today, too, Senegalese pilgrims combine their religious journey with trade activities. One of the purposes of the commercial activities is to finance the *ziyara* to Morocco. Some pilgrims bring along Senegalese merchandise (fruit or clothing) and sell it during their journey in Morocco in order to finance their trip. On returning to their home country, they bring back Moroccan merchandise and sell it in Senegalese markets. The mobility of pilgrim-merchants that initially occurred between Morocco and Senegal is nowadays also extending towards Europe. Some Senegalese pilgrims who reside in

57 Religious master in West Africa.

58 Marfaing 2004, 235–260.

Europe use their journey to Morocco to supply themselves with Moroccan products that they later sell to the Senegalese community in Europe.[59] I also met two transnational couples where the husbands lived in France or Spain and the wives in Senegal and who regularly meet in Fez. Their journeys were funded by informal trade activities since the wives return to Senegal with European products while the husbands go back to Europe with Senegalese goods. The journey to Fez was for them an opportunity to meet and to visit the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani. Through these activities, the city of Fez has become a commercial hub for goods circulating between Senegal and Europe, contributing to making the *zawiya* a point in the Senegalese Tidjani transnational territory.

Due to the transnational dimension of the Senegalese community and the existence of Senegalese diaspora communities in Europe and Morocco, the pilgrimage to Fez has a communal dimension and works as a way to gather, meet, and trade. Traveling to Morocco therefore also functions as a tool to build and foster Senegalese social networks spanning from Senegal to Europe.

In his work on pilgrimage, Erik Cohen distinguishes pilgrimage from tourism. While the tourist tends to move towards the peripheries of his world, the pilgrim – as Cohen postulates – proceeds towards his spiritual sociocultural center.[60] To some extent, the pilgrimage practice of Senegalese Tidjanis in Morocco represents the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani as a center towards which Senegalese Tidjanis move. It also represents a social and cultural place of identification for Senegalese Tidjanis, although it is not located on the Senegalese national territory.

But not only the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani appears as part of the Senegalese transnational territory; sometimes, and particularly in the frame of the commercialization of the Tidjani pilgrimage as a form of religious tourism, other Moroccan sites have also been integrated into this topography. The reinvention of the Tidjani pilgrimage points to interrogations of the relationships Senegalese pilgrims have with the Moroccan territory. Although the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage appears as a journey that consolidates social ties based on kinship and Senegalese identity, the Tidjani ziyara functions also as a medium that links up Senegalese Tidjanis with Morocco, symbolically incorporating elements of the Moroccan national heritage into the Senegalese Tidjani identity.

59 This is the case, for instance, of a Senegalese I met in Fez in September 2010. He was a resident of the French town of Nancy and came by car to spend the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan in Fez (September 2010). He took advantage of this first *ziyara* to Fez to buy Moroccan outfits in order to sell them in France to the Senegalese community.

60 Cohen 1992, 47.

3 The reinvention of the pilgrimage: the *ziyara* as a journey

3.1 The promotion of spiritual tourism in Fez

As part of the valorization of Sufi Islam in official discourses and the recent conceptualization of religious or spiritual tourism as new tourism products, the city of Fez has begun also to target Tidjani followers from sub-Saharan Africa. The main NGO working for the development of new tourist activities in Fez is the Regional Council for Tourism of Fez (CRT). This council, which has been created in every Moroccan region to develop local tourism projects, works closely with the national Ministry of Tourism. The main focuses of the tourism projects developed by the CRT in Fez are aimed at promoting the old town (medina) as a tourist attraction and, the city having been able to preserve its 'traditional urban life' and cultural customs, at emphasizing its characteristic as UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981. In this framework, the local Sufi tradition of Fez has been highlighted remarkably. Numerous Sufi shrines and lodges have been renovated by the municipality and opened to international tourists, who can in this way take part in Sufi rituals. Furthermore, two international festivals dedicated to sacred music and Sufi culture take place every year in the city.

The desire to promote spiritual tourism to Fez is furthermore the result of Moroccan politics towards Africa. Since the late 1990s Morocco has aimed to open up economic opportunities on the African continent, which has been perceived as a potential market for Moroccan products, services, and investments. In this respect, the CRT has begun to target the Tidjani followers from sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2007, this council has regularly organized cultural weeks abroad in order to promote the customs of Fez in African cities with large Tidjani communities, such as Bamako, Dakar, Yaoundé, and Kano. The objective is to demonstrate the different aspects of the city to Tidjani disciples who wish to visit Fez and to promote African tourism beyond a mere trip to the sanctuary. In other words, the aim is to incite West-African pilgrims to prolong their journey and to encourage their tourist activities in the city.

At the same time, a project for the promotion of religious tourism has been developed to facilitate pilgrimage for the sub-Saharan Tidjanis. Nowadays a promotional package with affordable prices covering transportation and accommodation is available. However the very recent development of this package was mainly influenced by the existence of Tidjani *ziyaras* that are taking the form of a multiple-stage journey, thus redefining the scope of the *ziyara*.

3.2 Organized trips to Fez: between pilgrimage and tourism

Unlike the Christian tradition, where the trajectory to the sanctuary is an integral part of the pilgrimage and represents an enduring experience of austerity,[61] the journey itself is not necessarily part of the pilgrimage in Muslim contexts. Nevertheless, the concept of the Tidjani *ziyara* is taking different forms in which the itinerary receives a new meaning.

As mentioned earlier, the conception of the Tidjani *ziyara* as a journey is not a recent phenomenon, since the visit to the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani was already organized by colonial authorities in the context of pilgrimage journeys undertaken by the nationals of French West Africa to Mecca. The collective *ziyara* journeys organized by the Tidjani branch of Madina Gounass also take the shape of a multiple-stage journey. Furthermore, for many Senegalese pilgrims on their way to Mecca it remains today a regular practice to stop off at Casablanca before heading towards Fez, thus contributing to propagating the idea that, for the Tidjani pilgrims, the *ziyara* to Ahmad al-Tidjani completes the pilgrimage to Mecca.[62] Many Senegalese pilgrims begin their journey by visiting the sanctuary of the Tidjani scholar ʿArbi Ibn al-Sayih who lived during the nineteenth century and founded a Tidjani *zawiya* in the city of Rabat, where he was buried after his death.[63] Many of the pilgrims interviewed confirmed that this stage is part of the *ziyara* and that the sanctuary of ʿArbi Ibn al-Sayih in Rabat represents the threshold that guarantees access to Ahmad al-Tidjani's sanctuary. In other words, it is necessary to ask for the approval of the saint in Rabat before setting out to visit the shrine in Fez. Similarly, it is also common among some Senegalese to begin their *ziyara* with a visit to the shrines of Tivaouane or Kaolack[64] in Senegal before heading for Morocco.

In the 1990s, some Senegalese travel agencies identified, therefore, a need to organize trips to Morocco, combining the *ziyara* to Fez with visits to other religious as well as secular sites.[65] Since the involvement of the city of Fez in promoting the *ziyara* in 2007, the number of agencies proposing this type of trip has increased. The offer was also expanded to other sub-Saharan countries. These travel agencies have devised offers that are adapted to the *ziyara* to Morocco, with a choice of diverse itineraries to Fez.

In order to illustrate the malleability of the concept of the Tidjani *ziyara* in the frame of the promotion of religious tourism, I would like to present two organized trips offered by a Senegalese travel agency that was among the first to organize tours for

61 Coleman and Eade 2004, 11.

62 This idea is very popular among residents of Fez who live in the vicinity of the *zawiya*. In contrast, all the Senegalese pilgrims and the representatives I interviewed rejected it.

63 ʿArbi Ibn al-Sayih (1814–1892) is well-known for his fundamental writing on Tidjaniyya and is often cited by Senegalese *shaykhs*.

64 Tivaouane is the religious center of the family of Malik Sy, and Kaolack is the religious center of the Abdoulaye Niasse family.

65 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Dakar.

Tidjani pilgrims.[66] These trips are particularly designed for well-to-do customers such as bankers and corporate executives. Travel costs vary between 700 000 and 750 000 CFA[67], the equivalent of 1100 euros. Being the first to offer such trips, this agency managed to bring together 30 to 60 individuals per trip. These two itineraries were planned with the assistance of Senegalese religious leaders who are close to the family of Tivaouane. The trips can, therefore, be interpreted as a reflection of the way Tidjani scholars of Tivaouane envision a *ziyara* that complies with the Tidjani precepts. Besides, they also inform us about the multiple significations of the *ziyara* as a journey, and the relationship that Senegalese Tidjanis have with the Moroccan kingdom.

The travel agency offers a choice of two products related to the *ziyara* to Fez, which depend on the Muslim calendar and distinguish between a festive *ziyara* and a more religious *ziyara*. The more religious trip is scheduled for the last ten days of the sacred month of Ramadan and merely comprises visits to Tidjani sanctuaries and prayer sessions. The journey starts with a first stopover at the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca followed by a visit to various Tidjani sanctuaries, namely ʿArbi ibn al-Sayih in Rabat, the tombs of the Tidjani scholars al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj in Marrakech,[68] and finally the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez. In addition to that, the pilgrims use their stop in Rabat to visit the mausoleum of the Moroccan kings Mohamed V and Hassan II. The second package is more leisure-oriented and takes place in the period of the Muslim calendar coinciding with the commemoration of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday. As in the first trip, the travelers visit the Casablanca mosque and continue to Rabat before spending time in Fez. But, in addition to the visit to the Tidjani sanctuary and the mausoleum in Rabat, additional tours are organized to the surrounding area of Fez; typical examples are trips to Meknes or to the thermal springs of Moulay Yacoub.

Hence, these two offers provide evidence that the *ziyara* is not always limited to the visit to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani or to the visit to the sanctuaries in Rabat and Fez. In both cases, it takes the form of variant itineraries including multiple Moroccan sanctuaries and religious sites. The visit to the tomb of other Moroccan Tidjani scholars – such as ʿArbi ibn al-Sayih, al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj – shows that these Tidjani *shaykhs* have been integrated into the tradition of the brotherhood and demonstrates that a sacred topography has been established around this saint in which not only Senegalese sanctuaries (such as the one in Tivaouane) but also Moroccan scholars have been integrated and beatified.

66 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Daka.

67 Currency in many West African countries.

68 The scholars al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj wrote essential texts about the Tidjaniyya and are well known among Senegalese Tidjanis. Ahmad Sukayridj in particular gave to several West African scholars the authorizations to spread the Tidjani teachings.

But it is yet more surprising when places – as in the case of the tombs of Moroccan kings – that are not related to the Tidjani tradition are included in the Tidjani *ziyara* and take on a religious meaning.

> Every Senegalese who goes to Morocco wants to visit the tombs of Mohamed V and Hassan II simply because they are the descendants of the Prophet. We, for example, do not care about the tomb of the president. No one goes to the tomb of Senghor [...] but visiting Hassan II [...] he is the descendant of Prophet Mohamed before being a king [...] his father had relationships with our ancestors [...] the biggest mosque in Senegal, it is Hassan II who built it. He offered it. So we consider him as a Senegalese. We consider him as our venerated marabout, simply because he is one of Prophet Mohamed's descendants and all Muslims should respect the Prophet's family. As Abdulaziz Sy said, he did a lot for Senegal. There are a lot of Senegalese students there [in Morocco], who learnt Arabic, who learnt the Koran and who are now famous scholars and who helped spread Islam.[69]

For this Tidjani spiritual master, the visit to the mausoleum of the Moroccan kings does not seem to be in contradiction to the precepts of the Tidjaniyya, even though this order forbids the veneration of saints who are not Tidjani. In his interpretation, this part of the *ziyara* is justified by taking into account the Sharifian descent of the Moroccan kings. The act of declaring the kings to be 'marabout' – i.e. religious guides – ranks them higher than mere political leaders.[70] The visit to their tombs is furthermore legitimized by its interpretation as a display of gratitude towards the kings for their religious investment in Senegal. Moreover, the integration of the tomb of the former Moroccan kings into the Tidjani religious journey reflects the closeness of Senegalese Tidjanis to the Moroccan monarchy and the prominent role that the Moroccan kings have played in Senegal since the countries' independence.

The dual image of the Moroccan kings presented in the quotation above (as descendants of the prophet and as benefactors) derives from Morocco's policy towards Senegal, in which the religious status of the Moroccan king is instrumentalized in favor of foreign policy interests and in which the Senegalese Tidjanis have played a remarkable role.

Similarly, according to my informants the visit to the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca is a recognition of the religious position of the Moroccan Sharifian dynasty.[71] Inau-

69 A Senegalese Tidjani master Interview conducted on October 8, 2010, in Dakar. – *Léopold Sédar Senghor* (1906–2001) was the first Senegalese President upon independence. *Abdoulaziz Sy* (1904–1997) was the son of El Hadjj Malick Sy. He was the representative of the Senegalese Tidjaniyya from 1957 to 1997.

70 The Moroccan kings have both religious and political power. Legitimized by Sharifian descent, the King of Morocco holds the position of commander of the believers.

71 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Dakar.

gurated in 1993 by King Hassan II, this mosque aimed at the symbolic recuperation of Islam and its legitimation under the supervision of the informed orthodoxy of the monarchy.[72] Furthermore, this mosque is one of the grandest mosques in the world and is aimed at symbolizing the Islamic prominence of the Moroccan kingdom and its international religious influence.

The marketization of the Tidjani *ziyara* by Moroccan as well as Senegalese tourism agencies has therefore contributed to a certain extent to establishing a new way of doing the Tidjani *ziyara* in Morocco, based as much on the Tidjaniyya teachings as on the national political history of Senegal and Morocco. The development of alternative forms of Tidjani spiritual journeys has therefore contributed to redefining the Tidjani topography of the sacred in which not only Moroccan Tidjani shrines have been integrated but also religious sites that symbolize the religious prominence of the Moroccan nation.

4 Conclusion

The historical evolution of the Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez is above all based on the conviction that the founder of the Tidjaniyya has a particularly core spiritual position and power and that pilgrims can reach and take benefit from it. The development of transportation means, the commercial function of Fez, and the central dimension of the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani have favored this practice among Senegalese Tidjanis, and led to the development of different forms of Tidjani journeys to Fez. Today, the Senegalese migration to Europe also contributes significantly to the consolidation of this practice among Senegalese Tidjanis. At the same time, the optional aspect of the *ziyara* to Fez renders this practice a pilgrimage with blurry limits. Despite the pre-eminence of the figure of Ahmad al-Tidjani, other sites have also been adopted as destinations of the Tidjani pilgrimage, thus contributing to the expansion of a sacred Tidjani topography and promoting tourism by Senegalese to Morocco.

The *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani therefore constitutes a point of meeting and assembly for Senegalese and is an integral part of a transnational Tidjani Senegalese territory. Furthermore the *ziyara* represents a religious practice that favors the symbolic interaction between the Senegalese Tidjani community and Moroccan culture, and functions as a medium binding and consolidating the relationships between Morocco and Senegal. Traveling to Morocco is therefore not only a way to benefit from Ahmad al-Tidjani's blessing but also a way to become closer to the transnational Senegalese Tidjani community as well as to the Moroccan kingdom, which is nowadays symbolically integrated into the transnational Senegalese Tidjani identity.

72 Cattedra 2002, 260.

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Illustration credits

1 Johara Berriane, based on a map by A. Binane.

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Mona Schrempf

From Popular Pilgrimage Festival to State Monastic Performance – The Politics of Cultural Production at Gomphu Kora, East Bhutan

Summary

Over the past two decades, the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Gomphu Kora was transformed into a key travel destination in east Bhutan. The annual folk festival there was famous for attracting different ethno-linguistic groups from Bhutan's far eastern borderland with India. Pilgrims and traders from both sides of the border and local inhabitants were actively involved in social, economic and cultural exchanges including folk song and dance performances. This chapter examines recent developments in cultural production at Gomphu Kora, and how an invention of tradition through state tourism orchestrated by the local monastic and lay administration emerged. It looks at how the former folk religious festival was converted into a generic state monastic event that has lost much of its original popular character.

Keywords: Pilgrimage; folk festival; monastic dance and state performance; tourism; development

In den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten wurde der buddhistische Pilgerort Gomphu Kora in eine touristische Hauptattraktion im Osten Bhutans transformiert. Das dort jährlich stattfindende Volksfest war bekannt dafür, dass es verschiedene ethno-linguistische Gruppen auf beiden Seiten der Landesgrenze zwischen Ost-Bhutan und Indien anzog. Pilger und Händler aus der Grenzregion sowie Ortsansässige waren aktiv durch sozialen, ökonomischen und kulturellen Austausch und an der Aufführung von Volktänzen und -gesängen beteiligt. Dieses Kapitel untersucht neuere Entwicklungen kultureller Produktion in Gomphu Kora, und wie die Erfindung von Tradition durch staatlichen Tourismus und durch lokale Autoritäten des zum Teil klerikalen Verwaltungsapparats orchestriert wurde. Es wird untersucht, wie das ehemalige Volks- und Pilgerfest in eine generische und klösterliche Staatsaufführ-

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rung umgestaltet wurde, die viel von ihrem ursprünglichen, populären Charakter verloren hat.

Keywords: Pilgerfest; Volksfest; klösterliche Maskentänze; Staatsperformanz; Tourismus; Entwicklung

I am thankful to the German Research Foundation (DFG) for financing a pilot study on ritual healers in Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh (Nov. 2011– Jan. 2012) while I was afiliated with the Central Asian Seminar, Humboldt University Berlin, during which I first encountered the pilgrimage place of Gomphu Kora. I wish to thank the Centre for Bhutan Studies for granting me research permission. In particular, I owe my gratitude to Dorje Gyaltsen, Jigme Chöden and Tim Bodt for translations of interviews and text passages, and all my informants for their patient explanations of their points of views. I want to express my gratitude to Mareike Wulff for providing me with several references. Alas, the views presented here are my own. Also, I thank the Museum for Asian Art Berlin for sponsoring my specific ethnographic research trip in March 2012 to produce a 30 min. documentary film on the Gomphu Kora Tshechu for display at an exhibition on Padmasambhava at the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin (November 2013–August 2014), see also Schrempf 2013.

1 Introduction

This chapter examines the various ways and narratives through which the popular pilgrimage place and festival of Gomphu Kora in east Bhutan are socially constructed and culturally produced today. It will discuss their recent transformations and uneven appropriations by a set of key agents. They include local inhabitants, pilgrim visitors, both monastic and lay administrative organizers of the two east Bhutanese districts of Trashigang and Trashiyangtse, as well as tourism companies and entrepreneurs. At Gomphu Kora, pilgrimage and trade, history and myth, institutionalized religion and folk religious practices are reassembled and hierarchically structured under the state's modern development agenda focusing on tourism while trying 'to preserve culture'.

Bhutan's modernization processes were carefully initiated in the beginning of the 1970s by the Third King of Bhutan, Jigme Dorje Wangchuk.[1] Back then, however, small-scale tourism concerned only a couple of hundred foreign tourists visiting, while their number slowly increased to several thousands in the late 1990s. The country underwent further socio-political and economic transformations including a transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy with first elections in 2011. Also, within the last decade

1 Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ('Jigs-med rDo-rje dBang-phyug) reigned from 1952 to 1972.

the national philosophy and policy of 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) became a global trademark for Bhutan, entailing the preservation of the Himalayan Buddhist kingdom's culture and traditions, environmental protection of its unique fauna and flora as well as 'spiritual values'.[2] Over 90 % of international visitors named these items as their main tourism interests. In 2016, 209 570 foreign nationals visited Bhutan – equivalent to over a quarter of Bhutan's population, a considerable increase of 35 % when compared to the previous year alone. Royalties generated by so-called 'gross earnings' via a minimum daily package price (MDPP) for international visitors go to the Royal Government of Bhutan for investment into sustainable development and amounted to US$ 20.28 million that year.[3]

In other words, since the beginning of the new millenium, tourism contributes considerably to Bhutan's much needed foreign currency reserves. These changes also affected the pilgrimage festival of Gomphu Kora where development efforts through tourism are processes that at times correlate, collide or have erradicated local traditions at this place. Religious festivals feature most prominently among tourists' interests and expectations when they visit Bhutan, so the Tourism Council of Bhutan has placed a special emphasis upon developing these festivals into major attractions. However, while some are concerned about the longer term impact of tourism and globalization on local traditions and the environment, there is little reflection about the recent involvement of local governments in the social production and organization of such 'cultural heritage'.[4] Different voices will be presented in this chapter reflecting various ways of engagement and points of views of those participating at the sacred site of Gomphu Kora, where a former lay pilgrimage festival with folk dances, songs, social and economic exchanges has been transformed into a hierarchically structured state monastic performance for tourism development.

The core myth of the sacred place and ritual actions by pilgrims at the site are based on the belief in the presence of powers of the great tantric master Guru Rinpoche. He is also known as Padmasambhava in Sanskrit and Pemajungney in Dzongkha and Tibetan, meaning 'Lotus Born'. Popularly understood as the 'second Buddha', Guru Rinpoche is said to have introduced Buddhism to Tibet and the Himalayas during the eighth century, and through meditation he subdued demons at Gomphu Kora in dramatic battles that demonstrated the superiority of Buddhism. At the time of the festival, thousands of pilgrims encounter and make contact with Guru Rinpoche's transformative, purifying

2 See the *Tenth* and *Eleventh Five Year Plans*, G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2009; G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2013.

3 In 2016 Bhutan's gross earnings were US$ 73.74 million based on international tourists (except for 'regional' Indian and Bangladeshi citizens) who pay US$ 250 MDPP per day during the high seasons and US$ 200 during the low seasons, which covers all their inland costs, fees and charges; *Annual Report*, T. C. o. Bhutan 2016, 31.

4 On local perspectives regarding the impact of tourism on religious festivals, see Suntikul and U. Dorji 2016.

and protective powers through circumambulating a huge rock called Zangdok Pelri or 'Copper coloured Crystal Mountain', representing his sublime paradise. Pilgrims recite prayers, ingest sacred substances imbued with long life and fertility, and with the potential for a better rebirth. Traditionally, the pilgrimage festival at Gomphu Kora was also a trade fair and provided an important space and time for exchanging goods and socialising among various ethnic groups in this region where predominantly the oldest Tibetan Buddhist school of Nyingma is practiced.

However, recent tourist brochures and pilgrimage guide books published by the local government and monastic authorities of the Tibetan Buddhist Drukpa Kagyü school nationalize both place and festival in their own ways. They have turned local myth into a history of state monastic power, attesting and reconfirming the sacredness of the place through visits of key religious and political figures at this site during the past two decades. Thus, they claim their historical presence stretching the whole period between the eight century until today, producing an imaginary, territorial and time continuum that includes the historically and politically rather resistant, eastern part of the country.[5] It should be noted that historiography in Bhutan is a particularly delicate subject since it is closely connected to the legitimation and identity of the Bhutanese state that was based on a dual system of politics and religion dominated by the Tibetan Buddhist Drukpa Kagyü school as state religion. Non-monastic historical sources of Bhutan only start with the late seveteenth century *Gyalrig* claiming – but not proving – that the presence of Buddhist rulers in the area goes back to the eight century.[6]

Against the backdrop of an increasing urbanisation and out-migration driven by wage labour markets in the centre and west of Bhutan – developments which threaten to depopulate this remote and poorer far east part of the country – the local government has created a new tourist attraction. By instrumentalising both the presence of the colourful pilgrims dressed in their fineries and the purported antiquity of the pilgrimage place, the Drukpa Kagyü order was able to extend its monastic presence beyond its premises of near-by Trashigang Dzong. At the same time, the new standardized performance seems to have extinguished a rich diversity of folk dances and songs, languages and customs that has turned formerly active multi-ethnic and multi-lingual agents into more passive audiences and consumers of an invented state religious display at the site. Based upon ethnographic fieldwork at Gomphu Kora during 2011 and 2012, I examine these social transformations of the festival by describing the ways in which different

5 See, for example, Tourism Council of Bhutan http://www.tourism.gov.bt/activities/gomphu-kora-festival (visited on 01/03/2017).

6 Aris 1986. After the rise to power of the royal House of Wangchuk as rulers of Bhutan in 1907 and the initial modernization efforts of the Third King, the most recent democratization policies and new constitution issued by the Fifth King in 2008 resulted in a final separation of religion and politics becoming entirely separate domains.

agents represent their points of views and try to reclaim both the event and this sacred space as their own.

2 The Place – past and present narrated by local voices

The first time that I visited Gomphu Kora, the pilgrimage place seemed unassuming and deserted. Only a couple of old local inhabitants were present. An elderly lady with short grey hair, simply clad in a one-piece cotton *kira*, was stoically swinging her hand-held prayer wheel, murmuring *mantras* while circumambulating the sacred rock, the paradise of Guru Rinpoche. She was willing to be our local guide, narrating various stories of the tantric master's arduous but in the end successful battle against a particularly obnoxious demon here. All the peculiar formations on and around the main sacred rock which is the paradise of Guru Rinpoche, are read like a map of the embodied powers of this greatest of all tantric masters, powers one gets into contact with when venerating the Guru at this sacred site, that includes a stretch along the rocky bank of the Drangme Chu river. The myths are told as an embodied history of the place, authenticating and preserving the heroic and magical powers of the Guru and his 'hidden treasures' (*terbey*) that connect the past with the present and the potentials of the future. To perform 'circumambulation' (*kora*) around the sacred site in effect reconstructs its sacredness, and gives meaning and importance to being at this place. Pilgrims' ritual actions promise the potential for personal transformation in return through an accumulation of religious 'merit' (*sönam*) that might counteract bad *karma*, enabling the purification from moral, cognitive and physical 'defilements' (*drib*). Such defilements are also understood as potential causes for illness and bad luck, and therefore receiving personal protection from the Guru against demons, illness and natural disasters in this life, including blessings (*jinlab*) for a better rebirth in the next, are important this- and other-worldly benefits of his veneration.[7]

We were lucky on that day – the sun was shining brightly from a clear blue sky onto Guru Rinpoche's sacred rock, projecting vivid shadows onto its surface through the wind-blown leaves of a huge old pipal tree leaning against the rock like a giant old witness of former times. Only the sound of the gushing waters of the near-by Drangme Chu river were to be heard. We had slowly followed the old lady walking around the sacred rock in a clockwise direction, listening to her detailed explanations, story by story, imagining Guru's battles with and final victory over evil demons here. Suddenly excited, she motioned Dorje, our translator, to fetch water which seemed to have appeared from

7 Devotional acts of purification, protection and blessing are characteristic of popular pilgrimage around 'holy places' (*ney*) in culturally Tibetan Buddhist worlds; Huber 1999.

nowhere, trickling down over the face of the Guru's paradise rock. "It only happens rarely that the sacred water of Guru Rinpoche appears", she marvels at our good luck. "It only appears to people with good *karma*." While she offers incense smoke at an altar right next to the sacred water source, Dorje translates the myth of how Guru Rinpoche got hold of this 'nectar of immortality' (*chime kyi dütsi*). Originally, it came from another sacred pilgrimage site of Halase-Maratika in Nepal,[8] from where it was fetched by a messenger of the eighth-century Tibetan King Trisong Detsen who had himself been seriously ill and had sent for it as a cure. However, the king had died in the meantime and Guru Rinpoche, who was meditating at Gomphu Kora at that time, had a premonition and asked the messenger to give it to him instead. So he hid the nectar of immortality within the sacred rock at Gomphu Kora as a 'treasure' (*terma*) for the well-being of future generations.[9] With cupped hands, we gratefully received this sacred water from a green pipal leaf rolled up into a small tube that Dorje skillfully prepared for us.[10] I was impressed and decided to come back and explore this place more thoroughly next time, during the Gomphu Kora Tshechu, the big annual pilgrimage festival attracting several thousand people from east Bhutan and increasingly so, tourist from all over the world. The nectar of immortality, however, did not appear again.

Returning several months later during mid March 2012, I first interviewed Lopen (or 'Lop') Kunzang Thinley, one of the foremost scholars of local history and religion in the 'Land of the Thunder Dragon'.[11] I met him together with my research assistant who was a former student of his, Jigme Chöden, at the Karma Café in Thimphu, the bustling modern capital of Bhutan. I was pleasantly surprised to find a man full of enthusiasm for the subject of 'holy places' of the great tantric master Guru Rinpoche.[12] As it turned out, both Lopen and Jigme are Sharchokpas, people from the east of Bhutan who also speak Sharchok or Tshangla, the inofficial lingua franca of that part of the country.[13]

8 The Maratika caves at Halase are a well-known pilgrimage place in eastern Nepal where Guru Rinpoche and his consort, the 'sky-goer' (*khandroma*) Mandarava, performed the practice of long life, receiving a blessing by Amitayus, the Buddha of Longivity, in a vision, placing the nectar-vase with the water of immortality on their heads; Buffetrille 1994.

9 All prilgrimage sites in the Himalayas and Tibet are connected with salvational promises surrounding the Buddhist narrative of remedying a (by now) present age characterized by moral decline and natural desasters. Guru Rinpoche's transformative powers are believed to be embodied in 'treasures' that were hidden by him, and revealed by so-called 'treasure discoverers' (*tertön*) in later centuries.

10 This short scene has been included in my ethnographc film on the Gomphu Kora Tshechu, available for popular view at URL https://vimeo.com/105325261, also published as DVD in Schrempf 2013.

11 See one of the many scholarly works by Lopen Kunzang Thinley, for example, his co-edited work on Bhutan's sacred sites; Thinley et al. 2008.

12 Interview conducted in Thimphu at Karma Café, March 18, 2012, taking notes.

13 Dzongkha is the official lingua franca of Bhutan. On Tshangla and the many different ethno-linguistic groups in East Bhutan see van Driem 2001 and Bodt 2012.

Lopen grew up in a village not far from Gomphu Kora[14] until he was a young man of about 18 years, and moved to the capital of Thimphu. With a big smile on his face, he spontaneously recalled the festival as 'a time of great pleasure' during his childhood and adolescence:

> There was no road in the 1960s at Gomkora. Every family pitched up their own tent for two or three days. We had a black tent made out of wool. The white ones were made out of cotton. I remember well how the young teenage boys were teasing the girls when they did the *kora* ['circumambulation'] at night around the sacred rock, the paradise of Guru Rinpoche. This 'night *kora*' was the main activity of the festival. Also, groups of women and men were performing various local folk dances and singing songs alternately while the old people were praying.[15]

Pilgrims have always come from far and near, in past and present times alike, it seems. Next to locals from the two big regional districts or *dzongkhag*s of Trashigang and Trashiyangtse that are now directly involved in organizing the festival, pilgrims come from other places in east Bhutan, such as Mongar, Kurtö, Pemagatse, Samdrup Jamkhar, Rizang.[16] However, special attention was always given to pilgrims who arrived from across the nearby Indian border, from the region which used to be called the 'Monyul Corridor' in British colonial sources. These are mainly Tshangla-, Dakpa- and Brokké-speakers from Tawang and Dirang districts of present-day Arunachal Pradesh (Northeast India), who share languages and many cultural similarities with their related neighbours from east Bhutan.[17] Looking at their traditional dress when they all gather at the Gomphu Kora festival, it is difficult for an outsider like me to know where they are from.

It is obvious that before national borders were established and enforced, Tshangla-, Dakpa- and Brokké-speakers lived spread throughout the region across and on both sides of this frontier. The (semi-)pastoralist people from the areas of Merak and Sakteng in east Bhutan, who speak a nomadic dialect from the Tibetan Plateau called Brokké, wear exactly the same dress – made out of a characteristic hand-woven dark-red raw silk cloth whose borders are stitched with colourful animal- and plant designs in geometrical shapes – as the locals from Tawang on the Indian side who speak, however, a different language called Dakpa. This ethnic group is also popularly known as the 'Dakpa' or

14 Lopen refers to it as 'Gomkora,' which is the short form for Gomphu Kora, literally meaning 'circling the meditation cave' (of Guru Rinpoche).

15 Interview with Lopen Kunzang Thinley, March 18, 2012, at Karma Café.

16 While east Bhutan is a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic region, Tshangla speakers are in the majority here. Tshangla is also spoken on the other side of Indian border by some Monpas of Dirang and Tawang. On Tshangla language see Bodt 2012, 175–268.

17 See also Pommaret 2002.

'Dhaps'. The particular dress is still worn and also traded at the Gomphu Kora pilgrimage festival, as I was able to witness in 2012.

Both Gomphu Kora and Chorten Kora, the two most important pilgrimage places staging annual pilgrimage festivals in Trashiyangtse Dzongkhag, are regularly visited by Dakpa from Tawang during annual festivals. A lama from Rigsum Gompa recalls a mythical story referring to a girl from Tawang who voluntarily sacrificed herself when the *stupa* at Chorten Kora was built, and this was the beginning of marriage relations between the two groups. Today, people claim that there is still a tendency for Dakpa girls from Tawang and local east-Bhutanese boys to befriend each other. A visiting female Dakpa pilgrim confirmed back in 2002 that "religion, topography, social relations, food and even ways of living are almost same across the border."[18] And it seemed that in the beginning of the millenium the attractiveness of the pilgrimage was still ongoing, especially among young people, from both sides of Tawang and east Bhutan. Another long-term pilgrim from across the border even claimed that in the past 13 years of his visits, "the festival is becoming more attractive every year."[19]

Connections via social relations, intermarriage, migrations, and/or trade ties, though still articulated and discernable, are not yet well researched and remain for the most part unclear in this complex multi-ethnic area across the Bhutan-India border. The famous bags of the so-called 'Monpa' on the Indian side of the border, for example, often come from Eastern Bhutanese weavers even though they are now taken to be a characteristic item of the 'Monpas' of Western Arunachal Pradesh.[20] In any case, both ethnic and linguistic distinctiveness and diversity, as well as social relatedness through migration, trade and intermarriage, were once celebrated jointly at the festival of Gomphu Kora during the past. And even though references to these kinds of activities and their importance for pilgrims remain, interactions and performances at Gomphu Kora have shifted quite considerably in ways that will be examined below. There is no question, however, that the pilgrimage festival used to be a significant multi-ethnic and multilingual social event in this border region, and some of this character still remains to a certain extend. The following pilgrimage song from the early 1990s nicely demonstrates cultural diversity in unity. It is sung alternately in some of the different languages that are spoken in this part of the country – Tshangla, Chöchangacha, Dzalakha, but also in Dzongkha, the lingua franca of the modern state of Bhutan:

Today we came for circumambulation, *le sho le mo ya*

Tomorrow the kora will be empty, *le sho le mo ya*[21]

18 Direct quote, cited from U. Penjore 2002.

19 U. Penjore 2002.

20 They only recently tend to identify themselves as Monpa. Again, there is a group of 'Monpas' living in Bhutan yet they do not seem to be related in any way to those in Western Arunachal.

21 *Thinong kornyi korba le sho le mo ya/ Namning kornyi tongpa le sho le mo ya* (old pilgrimage song sung by

You are like the sun, *le sho le mo ya*

I am like the lotus flower, *le sho le mo ya*

By the power of karma and prayer, *le sho le mo ya*

[We] are meeting here at this great pilgrimage place, *le sho le mo ya*[22]

Back at the Karma Café in Thimphu, Lopen Kunzang Thinley explained the main 'sacred sites' (*ney*) at Gomphu Kora, all of which are located along the torrential river of Drangme Chu at and around Gomphu Kora. Lopen first mentions the main sacred site of Guru Rinpoche's paradise rock, Zangdok Pelri, around which pilgrims perform their circumambulation, but particularly at night. Next to this huge rock, a large, heavy, oval shaped and smooth black stone is laying on the ground. Tradition has it that any nine people (men and women) should be able to collectively lift this heavy stone using their index fingers only. If they can succeed in lifting it properly off the ground, this is a good omen, a sign of fertility, and of impending rainfall according to Lopen.

Later I watched a group of pilgrims at Guru's paradise rock who were trying to do exactly this lifting excercise with the rock while guided around the place by the present monastic organizer of the Gomphu Kora festival, Udzin Thubten Tashi. They were only able to lift the heavy stone for a split second, laughing a lot about their failure to do so. Interestingly, the high ranking monk of the Drukpa Kagyü order of Buddhism reinterpreted this special treasure stone in the characteristic 'official' fashion that one finds all over the country, wherever miraculous tantric powers of Guru Rinpoche are concerned. Accordingly, rather than relating the power of the stone directly to Guru Rinpoche (as public knowledge reiterates), Udzin instead explained that this special stone was a 'treasure' left by Bhutan's most famous local 'treasure revealer' (*tertön*) and Buddhist hero figure Pema Lingpa (1450–1521).[23] In his explantions to the pilgrims, Udzin Thubten Tashi assimilated – apparently in error – the power of this fertility stone to Pema Lingpa's male potency. Infertile couples should pray to Pema Lingpa inside the temple where a

Ata Yeshi, here Tshangla language part, translated by Tim Bodt).

22 *Chö ni thridu nyima* (Wylie, *khyod ni khri gdugs nyi ma*) *le sho le mo ya/ Nga ni pemai meto* (Wylie, *nga ni pad ma'i me tog*) *le sho le mo ya// le dang melam wanggi* (Wylie, *las dang smon lam dbang gis*) *le sho le mo ya/ nechen di ru zombe be* (*gnas chen 'di rung 'dzom bas dba'i*) *le sho le mo ya* (Dzongkha language part with Wylie transliteration in brackets). This old pilgrimage song was sung by Ata Yeshi in the 1990s; it was recorded, transliterated and translated by Tim Bodt whom I thank for his permission to publish both his transliteration and translation.

23 Pema Lingpa from Bumthang, east Bhutan, is said to have visited Gomphu Kora in the 15th century when he traveled through the area. He was a member of the oldest school of Vajrayana Buddhism, the Nyingmapa, whose tradition of 'treasure revealing' was later adapted by the Drukpa Kagyü school. Pemalingpa was crucially active in giving public empowerments and staging displays of revealing treasures hidden by Guru Rinpoche seven centuries earlier. Apparently, treasure revealing was part of his mode of successful conversion, augmenting his group of followers considerably in east Bhutan as well as in Southern Tibet, Lhodrak; Gayley 2007.

'treasure' in form of his petrified phallus would be kept, and that the stone outside was the female counterpart. The Gomphu Kora tourist broschure, however, clearly identifies the 'treasure' phallus as belonging to the Indian tantric master Guru Rinpoche; it is kept safely in a vitrine inside the temple.[24]

Both local inhabitants and pilgrims, however, had their own way of interacting with the site and the relics. On one of the festival days, for example, a tall Indian man who could have been one of the many visiting engineers working on the remarkably well-paved roads of Bhutan (in comparison with those made in his own country, just across the border) or at the huge hydroelectric power project in the south, showed off by carrying the heavy stone imbued with fertility on his shoulder, while walking around the paradise rock on the inner circumambulation path. He was greatly admired by other pilgrims for his strength and tallness. Young Bhutanese men were also testing their skills trying to impress the girls in other ways, and were climbing up the steep and smooth rock face, smiling victoriously when they reached the top of Guru's sacred rock. They looked like they came straight from Thimphu, wearing baggy designer jeans that appeared to almost fall off their hips, and a fancy hair style that was then fashionable among Korean pop stars seen on television and internet. Gesturing through big, dark sunglasses they took selfies and pictures of the sacred place from above with their mobile phones (Fig. 1). I had to recall the warning that Udzin Thubten Tashi had related to a group of mostly older pilgrims earlier on, that the rock should not be climbed since this was a sacrilege. In any case, the majority of locals and pilgrims behaved rather piously and only tried to outdo each other in their colourful traditional dresses – the women in hand-woven cotton or silk wrap-arounds (*kiras*) with brightly coloured shiny jackets (*tego*) and the men dressed in new *gho* gowns as is commonly done at Bhutanese festivals, and for visiting government offices and buildings.[25]

It transpired that Udzin Thubten played a crucial role in the present organization of the Gomphu Kora Tshechu festival. As a 'principal' (*udzin*) from the Drukpa Kagyü monastic congregation of Trashigang Dzong, the nearby district capital across the boundary from Trashiyangtse, he had recently become the head teacher of astrology for a newly established group of monk students at the site of Gomphu Kora. Udzin had been personally and strongly involved in reshaping the Gomphu Kora festival for several years. There is also a pilgrimage guidebook (*ney yig*) for the site published by the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs that he was involved in producing. It was

24 See the tourist broschure of Gomphu Kora in English; Department of Tourism 2007.

25 The socio-economic importance of weaving silk *kiras* for rural women, also for their household incomes, cannot be overestimated. The wearing of traditional clothes during such official festivals in Bhutan used to be strictly reinforced, and is still compulsory for Bhutanese to wear when entering or working at government premises. The trade in cotton and silk came from Assam and Bengal, and via Monyul (present-day Arunachal Pradesh) in the past; Ray and Sarkar 2005, 13.

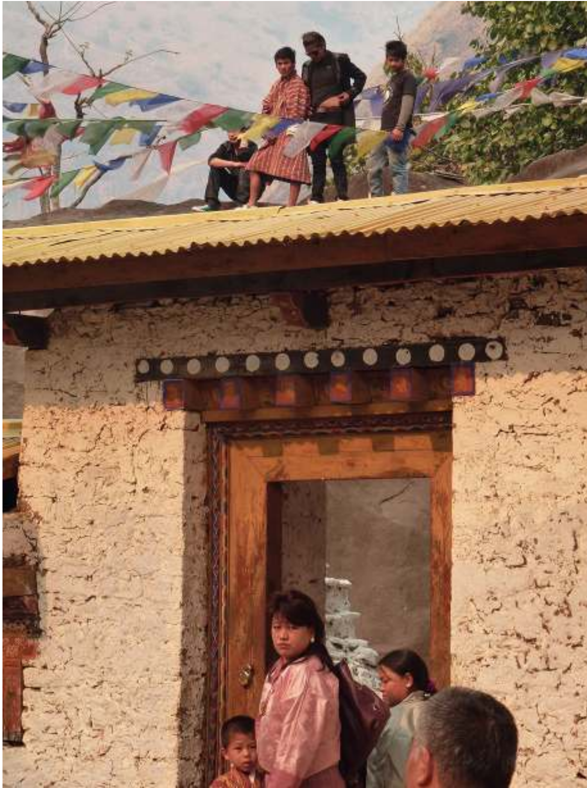

Fig. 1 Young men testing their skills in climbing Guru's paradise rock, Zangdok Pelri.

written in Dzongkha, the official national language based upon Tibetan orthography, and commonly called *chökey* in Bhutan, or the 'language of Buddhism'.[26] Udzin Thubten Tashi also organized the sponsorship of several recently established monastic rituals at the site of Gomphu Kora, following the Bhutanese New Year and preceding the Gomphu Kora festival. He had approached local business people involved in tourism to gain financial support for these newly established monastic ritual performances both inside and outside the temple, and that were ever increasing in size at Gomphu Kora.

26 Dzongkhag 2009. As festival organizer of the Gomphu Kora Tshechu in late March 2012, Udzin Thubten Tashi was one of my main informants. I filmed him during his extended guide tour over a period of four days during which he patiently and full of enthusiasm explained the site to me. Despite my continuous questions about the history of the dance performance at the place of Gomphu Kora, nobody could answer in a satisfactory manner. Only later, through other channels, did I learn of the very recent history and involvement of the Drukpa Kagyü at this site. There is also an increasing number of English language publications on the 'sacred festivals' of Bhutan, see, for example, Phuntshok Tashi (Phun-tshogs-bkra-shis) 2011.

Most of the ritual masked dance performances known as *tshechus* that are performed throughout Bhutan – including those at Gomphu Kora – can be traced to the 4th Druk Desi, ruler of Bhutan, Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1638–1696). In his fascinating biography translated by John Ardussi,[27] it is described how, during the late 17th century, Tenzin Rabgyey created and disseminated the *tshechu* dance performances throughout the country based upon Tibetan models. He had used them as a superstructure for incorporating other local religious dances, such as those belonging to the 'treasure revealer' (*tertön*) traditions, and integrated them into the dual lay-monastic hierarchy of the emerging state's newly established *dzong* administration.[28] Since then, such state-orchestrated *tshechu* performances have always played a crucial political role in the state-building and centralised unification of Bhutan. At Gomphu Kora, however, the *tshechu* was introduced only recently and became a major tourist attraction at the site; it thus replaced the former folk religious pilgrimage festival, as will be shown in this chapter.

Back in the Karma Café, Lopen continued visualising the sacred place that he has not seen for decades. "The less obvious but actual sanctum at Gomphu Kora is the rock cave of Kapalidaphu where Guru Rinpoche dwelt in meditation for three months", he explained. This cave is situated a little bit above Gomphu Kora, overlooking the valley of the Drangme Chu. One of the signs of tantric powers Guru Rinpoche generated through his meditation in this 'cave' (*daphu*) is the miraculous emergence of a sacred spring out of a hole in the rock wall that is shaped like a 'skull cap' (*kapala*), hence the name of the place Kapalidaphu. Guided by Udzin Thubten Tashi, I went to visit this place and was impressed by the stillness and peacefulness of the cave and the surrounding rock platform overlooking Gomphu Kora and the river valley. In March 2012, shortly before the Gomphu Kora festival, the local government had helped to canalize Guru's 'water of longlife' (*tsechu*) into a pipe down to the valley. There it was cast into a well which had the form of a colourful female 'sky-goer' goddesses (*khandroma*), in reference to their role as Guru Rinpoche's consorts who took care of him during his meditation. This well is conveniently placed at the main circumambulation path between the temple and the dance ground, making the visit up to Kapalidaphu now almost unnecessary. The beautiful 'sky-goer' statue is holding a vase in her hand from which the water is poured out during festival times. Pilgrims like to collect it in plastic bottles as a special gift of Guru's blessing and bring it back to their homes.

In stark contrast to the matter-of-fact, glossy English tourist brochure produced by the Department of Tourism for foreign visitors to Gomphu Kora,[29] in which the temple, its 'treasures' (*terma*) and a long history are emphasized, Lopen cautioned me that an old

27 Ardussi 2008.

28 Based on the Tibetan state model, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal had introduced the dual system of governance with the Je Khenpo as the spiritual head and the regent (Desi) as political ruler in 17th century Bhutan.

29 Department of Tourism 2007.

manuscript guide book (*ney yig*) for the site and all the details it contained had been lost, and that what he himself recalls of the place might not be complete. Unfortunately, it seems that the old guidebook had been borrowed by a lama from neighbouring Tawang in India, and never returned. There were rumours about its whereabouts, but nobody knew how to trace and find it. Later, I heard that there was a fire at Gomphu Kora, and the only other copy of the guidebook in existence was burnt during the blaze. Lopen suggested that we visit Gomphu Kora together next time, and he would ask his relatives at his natal place to perform the old folk dances and songs that are now almost forgotten and no longer performed. "I heard it has changed a lot", he said simply. "At least those dances could be recorded with your camera, before they too are completely lost", he added.[30]

The importance of the local folk dances performed at the festival still exist in living memory. An itinerant Buddhist meditator (*tsampa*), whom we picked up on the way to Gomphu Kora in our little car, placed the origin of these local folk dances into the time when Guru Rinpoche was meditating at Gomphu Kora during the eight century. A demon had disturbed the great master in his meditation, he explained matter-of-factly. The demon had eaten up local people one by one. In order to help Guru Rinpoche capturing and defeating the demon, the local people distracted the latter by performing a particular folk dance, so that the great master was able to capture and subjugate the demon. According to Chingkula, the former caretaker of the temple at Gomphu Kora, this dance is called Acho Lam Chham and is only performed by the people of Shingkhar Lauri today. He also claimed that the pilgrimage festival is about 400 years old.[31] However, a representative of Trashigang monastic congregation claimed the same age for the performance of the *tshechu* festival, dating it back by ca. 370 years, and adding that Gyalsey Ngagi Wangchuk had built the *lhakhang* and Tertön Pema Lingpa had consecrated it.[32]

Ayee Pemo, a charming, Chöchangacha-speaking lady in her late sixties, whom we met at Kapalidaphu where she spends her old age living with her husband in a small house right next to Guru Rinpoche's meditation cave, happily recalled the 'good old days' of the Gomphu Kora pilgrimage festival. While constantly turning her handheld prayer wheel, she made special mention of the dances by the Dakpa people from across

30 Unfortunately, folk religious dances have hardly been examined in academic research. On the other hand, monastic ritual masked dances have often been portrayed in glossy coffee table books, while in most of the academic literature the 'religious' or 'symbolic' meaning of monastic dances in Tibet and the Himalayas is usually focused upon, taking for granted and reiterating the point of view of monastic authorities that these dances are used as a 'medium' to teach the uneducated lay people, cf. Pommaret 2006. However, this ignores both their instrumental socio-political and communal significance as a cooperative monk-lay orchestrated event in terms of the active role that the state or monastic communities, as well as lay people, often play in their organization and sponsorship. It furthermore neglects the importance of folk dances that are often staged in connection with monastic festivals. See Schrempf 2000.

31 S. Wangchuk 2005.

32 See Rai 2003.

the border that she liked most of all. Each ethnic group would perform their particular dances, men and women often separately or alternately in rows. Love songs filled the air, and there was a lot of joking, laughing and drinking going on.[33] She reiterated in her eye-witness account that Gomphu Kora only consisted of the sacred rock around which pilgrims circumambulated. There were no houses or buildings, no road or electricity, and also no monastic masked dance performance (*cham*). Apart from a very few individual monks who came to attend the popular festival during the past, and aside from encountering Guru Rinpoche's tantric powers by touching the traces he left embodied in the sacred rock, Gomphu Kora was a place for popular lay people's amusement: a time when the second most important thing was having fun, earning some money through trade or looking out for a suitable marriage partner. With a smile on her lovely face, Ayee Pemo fondly remembers that boys liked to wrestle, and that the cheeky ones were trying to pull the girls away from the circumambulation path at night. In this otherwise thinly populated region, chances to meet someone of the opposite sex who might be 'the right one' to marry were higher than ever during the Gomphu Kora festival, she explained.

In the middle of March 2012, when we visited Gomphu Kora just before the festival began, rumors made the round that three local couples would get married on this occasion, thus invoking the earlier associations the festival had for local people during the past. The rumoured marriage celebrations evaporated into thin air, however. Instead, we watched busy traders and families pitching their blue plastic tents as temporary shelters for sleeping in and selling their mainly plastic goods. It is still a lucrative time and place for selling things. "Commerce and Piety Cheek by Jowl" titled a journalist in *Kuensel Online*, one of the two popular state newspapers in Bhutan, referring to the Gomphu Kora Tshechu staged in 2012.[34] Next to plastic goods from China, local vendors are selling chilli seedlings from near-by Khamdang area, wooden bowls, dried chili, and kitchen items made of aluminum. The customers are pilgrims from other districts and those coming from Tawang. A video parlor, small food stalls and some tables offering games comprises the 'recreational' part of the lay folk side of the present festival. I did not see any particular group of pilgrims performing local folk dances, except for a masked Dakpa dancer rattling with his little bells and offering a 'good luck' dance to those who paid him a donation. He was probably an Ache Lhamo performer from the Tawang area (Fig. 2). The festival obviously must have changed quite dramatically

33 While love songs are now considered as part of Bhutan's intangible cultural heritage, and are also commonly performed at some *tshechus*, at the Gomphu Kora festival they have ceased to be performed following the restructuring of the pilgrimage festival as a masked dance performance. Cf. National Library and Archives of Bhutan 2015, 7.

34 Tempa Wangdi 2012a.

Fig. 2 A Dakpa dancer offers a 'good luck' dance for money.

compared with the past, I thought to myself, while watching everyone enjoying themselves happily with games and mass produced plastic consumer goods. Older pilgrims complain about this new type of commercialization of pilgrimage festivals.[35]

Among the audience, I could make out the characteristic handwoven raw silk cloths dyed in dark-red, worn by both women from Tawang and nomads from Merak/Sakteng (Fig. 3). Only a single trader offered such cloth for sale, although it used to be an important trade item during the festival in times past. I admired a group of female pilgrims from Tawang wearing their traditional, characteristic dark-red costume, and asked them if they would come to the festival often. "Yes, every year", one woman responded. Together with her women friends, she had walked for two days to cross the Indo-Bhutan border on foot as most pilgrims from the Indian side do. They were having a good time, a rare and welcome pause from intensive and physically demanding farm- and housework.

There were no baskets made out of bamboo nor the well-known wooden bowls from Trashiyangtse to be seen. Making my rounds circumambulating the sacred rock and the temple during Gomphu Kora Tshechu, I passed by an elderly ritual specialist (*gomchen*) belonging to the Nyingmapa or 'old school' of Vajrayana Buddhism, who had established himself on the outer *kora* path. He was wearing a monk's robe and a fancy hat for sun protection made of some fur or feathers sticking out above his grey hair and wrinkled face. He offered divination rituals while loudly reciting prayers and *mantras*, pouring water into a bowl as part of his ritual for divination. Not many of the passing pilgrims seemed to be interested. Right next to him sat a young man selling sunglasses and huge teddy bears in screaming artificial colours. Nearby, a quiet monk sold newly painted religious scrolls (*thangka*) depicting Buddhist deities, along with other paraphernalia. It was quite an exotic mix of old and new that seemed to come from worlds apart,

35 See Rai 2003.

Fig. 3 Group of semi-nomadic Brokké-speakers.

Fig. 4 Market stalls alongside the outer circumambulation path of Gomphu Kora.

yet all made available, becoming part of the lived realities at and around Gomphu Kora (Fig. 4).

The third important sacred site at Gomphu Kora that Lopen Kunzang Thinley had mentioned to me was a big white stone called '*korlung*', a pointed triangular shaped rock that arises out of the middle of the paved road before one reaches Gomphu Kora from the lower part of the Drangme Chu valley. We had to drive around it in the car when we approached Gomphu Kora. This stone was placed here by Guru Rinpoche as a protective marker, Lopen explained. Guru had used it once as a 'weapon' (*zor*) for

defeating the demon whom he chased all the way from Samye monastery in Tibet to Gomphu Kora; so Guru Rinpoche demarcated a protective boundary for the site. Not far from the Guru's big 'weapon' rock is another small cave, the 'sacred house' (*neykhang*) of a former local demon called Tsergom Düd whom Guru Rinpoche had bound by oath and transformed into a protective 'owner of place' (*neypo*). This cave is directly accessible from the motor road. Udzin Thubten Tashi showed and explained it to me. Pilgrims visit this place as the last or the first in a row of sacred places of worship, and conduct offerings for protection against evil forces that are always a potential threat to health, wealth and fortune in daily life. Traces of a female sky-goer's footprint belonging to the Guru's beautiful and powerful female consorts and even the heart of the Tsergom Düd in the form of another triangular yet smooth shaped dark stone were placed in this cave on an altar-like rock, surrounded by offerings and candles that people had left here.

A female ritual healer with whom I worked on a different research topic, but whose natal place and present home is near Gomphu Kora and who knows all the local holy sites very well, had a different way of 'reading' of and interacting with the site of the sacred cave and its nearby '*korlung*' stone. She sensed the environment in a particular multi-layered way. She ritually travels through the local cosmological landscape during healing séances while embodying a regionally important mountain goddess, one of the daughters of Ama Jomo, or Gesar, a Tibetan culture hero and warrior who also possesses other spirit-mediums known as *phamo*.[36] She knew every tree and stone in the area, which beings dwell there and how to behave properly so as not to disturb or offend the local spirits. At the *neypo*'s cave, she offered alcohol to all kinds of local gods, including the local lord of the place for placating them, asking for protection and good luck – a way of ritual action that is entirely frowned upon in the eyes of any Buddhist monk since it would be understood as a type of 'demon worship.'

Also, the female healer interpreted the white '*korlung*' rock not as a marker and weapon left by Guru Rinpoche but as a 'feminine' sign of fertility left by his consorts, the female 'sky-goers.' In her narrative, this special rock and another smaller 'related' one located on a nearby village road are powerful sites imbued with the feminine fertility of these flying goddesses, sacred yet also 'sexy' beings (she actually used the English word and smiled at me), meant to be transferred to those who venerate and worship them at this place. According to both the healer's and others' readings of the sacred landscape, there were more special sacred places at and around Gomphu Kora where these *khandromas* – a group of five – play an important role, next to Guru Rinpoche. However,

36 Ama Jomo and Gesar belong to a characteristic hybrid healing cosmology that is both Buddhist and shamanic, imbued with local gods and demonic beings who are directly responsible for well-being or ill-luck of local people, yet who have to obey the orders of higher ranking Buddhist deities. On this female ritual healer and her healing with Gesar, see Schrempf 2015b.

khandromas in the monastic (and always inherently male) interpretation of this pilgrimage site usually figure only as female consorts of the Guru, but not as powerful and autonomous deities in their own right. The female healer, in contrast, closely identified herself with them. When performing a Gesar healing ritual for a sick villager, her altar featured five *torma*, so-called seats embodying the five major 'sky-goer' goddesses. They were placed at the second highest level of the altar, with a small Guru Rinpoche statue at the top.[37]

My two very different guides, the senior monastic principal and the female spirit-medium and ritual healer, once met up in a somewhat socially uncomfortable encounter while I was present at the site. I sensed a great tension between them, and it appeared that they usually didn't talk with each other. There was something close to mutual distrust, almost animosity, palpable, in particular from the monk's side. I admired the healer for her distanced yet self-assured attitude towards the monastic authority, whose body language was quite condescending towards her as I watched them exchanging some words. This was a markedly different attitude when compared to the way in which he had guided the pilgrims around the place, directing their minds to moral and soteriological goals in life, through prayer and veneration of Guru Rinpoche. The Udzin appeared as the present 'owner of the place' in this encounter and made the healer feel unwelcome. Later he privately asked me, slightly astonished, from what context I would have known 'that woman.' After I told him that I was also interested in ritual healing, and had been working with her for a while, he warned me. "Don't give her your birth date and name, otherwise she will harm you. She is not a good person."[38]

Where many people gather, the potential for competition and sometimes conflict is high. Different worldviews might overlap or collide, and more often than not this has to do a lot with the different vested interests and socio-political status of the various groups involved. The female healer did not attend the Gomphu Kora festival, because of the danger of 'pollution' (*drib*). As she pointed out to me, "Where there are lots of people, I can get easily polluted by others." And then her gods become angry with her, she falls ill, and she cannot heal anymore. On a daily basis, she has to obey strict rules of purity, in particular not eat or even have indirect contact with certain 'polluting' foods, such as onion, garlic, egg, or any meats. However, it is also clear from what the high ranking monk from Gomphu Kora had indicated, that she is at least an ambivalent figure representing the low-ranking spirit world that institutionalized Buddhism claims to have overcome since many centuries through its own techniques of subjugation of demonic forces, and, moreover, through its alledged superiority over 'folk' or shamanic religion that it tries to dominate, and at times supress, until today.

37 See Fig. 2 in Schrempf 2015b, 628.

38 On the life of this healer, see Schrempf 2015a and for a short description of one of her healing rituals related to Gesar, Schrempf 2015b.

Ritual contests between monastically backed spirit-mediums, called *terdak*, and so-called 'village healers' who are often associated with lower ranking deities or even demons, have been ongoing in this area – and are still occuring today, across the whole Himalayas. To a certain extend, this conflict reflects the hierarchical structure imposed by state religious administrative structures towards what is known as folk religious or shamanic rituals done by lay ritual healers known as *phamo*, *phawo*, *neljorma* or *jomo*.[39] It is an old conflict that is characteristic of both the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau, where institutionalized religion has displaced 'village religion' in many communities while formerly it was a wide-spread part of the daily web of social life.[40] In east Bhutan, there was hardly any form of institutionalized religion before the mid twentieth century, apart from the 200 year old presence of the monastic fortresses with their *dzong* administration connected with the centre of state power located in the west of the country. Clerical and lay officials of the hierocratic state shared their power over poor tax paying farmers and herders, sometimes so excessively that the latter had to migrate out of the region in order to survive.

Beyond these premodern *dzong* or monastic fortresses run by the Drukpa Kagyü school, the so-called *gomchen* or 'meditators', lay ritual specialists and village lamas of the Nyingmapa or 'old school' of Vajrayana Buddhism, represented the socio-religious sphere in this rather remote area. *Gomchen* took care of the ritual needs for their communities, living side-by-side with other ritual specialists belonging to a spectrum of folk religious practices, all integrated into the social structure of village life. However, today, these *gomchen* have become a rare feature. Local communal rites and festivals are also in sharp decline, mainly due to outmigration and modernization.[41] In contrast to the thriving development of state religious festivals and ritual masked dances (*cham*) known as *tshechu* supported by the government and Bhutan's tourism industry, there is an increasing competition for followers and sponsors among high-ranking representatives of different schools of Vajrayana Buddhism, a religious sectarianism that competes for the same funds among communities of lay sponsors or even against government supported events.

39 An unpublished report on different types of healers in Bhutan (n.d.), dating back to the early 1990s, represents the only comprehensive survey (to my knowledge); see Meyer and Sihlé (unpublished). See also bibliographies in and ethnographies on female spirit-mediums in Bhutan: Schrempf 2015a; Schrempf 2015b, Prien-Kaplan (unpublished).

40 Cf. on 'village religion' in Sikkim; see Balikci 2008.

41 Tenzin 2012.

3 Gomphu Kora – myth and trade routes intertwined

The core myth of Gomphu Kora is quickly told. It is known to everyone, whether local inhabitants or visiting pilgrim, monastic or lay persons. Gomphu Kora is one of many Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas and Tibet where the great tantric master Padmasambhava alias Guru Rinpoche is worshipped in an annual festival. According to local myth, this is the place where Guru Rinpoche was able to finally subjugate one of the most notorious of all demons from Tibet during the 8th century. The Tibetan King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan, 742–ca. 800 CE) had asked Padmasambhava for help building the first Buddhist monastery at Samye in Tibet. A demon (*düd*) had repeatedly obstructed the construction effort. So, Guru Rinpoche pursued him southwards from Tibet across the Himalayas, finally defeating him at Gomphu Kora. In this way he was able to establish Buddhism in the whole region of the Himalayas and Tibet.

This mythical conquest of the demon by Guru Rinpoche is renarrated by older pilgrims at this site as they read the embodied traces of the magical battles in the rocks of Gomphu Kora, the same traces that simultaneously are believed to purify, protect and bestow blessings upon pilgrims. The myth is also retold in tourist and public media as both history, meaning and identity of the place and pilgrimage. Some details of the pursuit and conquest of the demon in this myth are curious, however. According to one version, Guru Rinpoche passed from southern Central Tibet and between the highest Himalayan peaks along the Nyamjang and Tawang river valleys, and was about to reach Tawang when he turned westwards, passing Ombaney, Gongzaney and finally completed his conquest of the demon at Gomphu Kora (see map, Fig. 5).[42]

This route corresponds pretty much to one of the old popular trading routes between Tibet, Bhutan and India, and this might be no coincidence. Tawang used to be an important and southern most trade and tax collection centre of the premodern Tibetan state (1642–1959), situated on an old trade route connecting Lhasa and Tibet with Assam on the Indian plains. From the Nyamjang Chu river in Tibet, one branch of this trade route ran south via Tawang and the Monyul Corridor to Udalgiri in Assam, where a small trading fair was held in February/ March. This trade route also forked off from Tawang westwards along the Tawang Chu, passing Gomphu Kora and reaching Trashigang in Bhutan after which it went south to Hajo in Assam (see map, Fig. 5). Hajo, another pilgrimage place with a religious cum commercial fair attracting both Hindus and Buddhists in winter, was the major end point of the Bhutan-Assam route. Most importantly, Trashigang was set at the confluence of several trade routes used at different

42 There are different versions of this legend as there are with any other legend. Another version claims a different path, yet also an old trade route, taken by Guru Rinpoche, along the Kholongchu which existed until the border was closed in 1962, connecting Bhutan directly with Tibet rather than through the Monyul corridor via Tawang, situated further east in present-day Arunachal Pradesh.

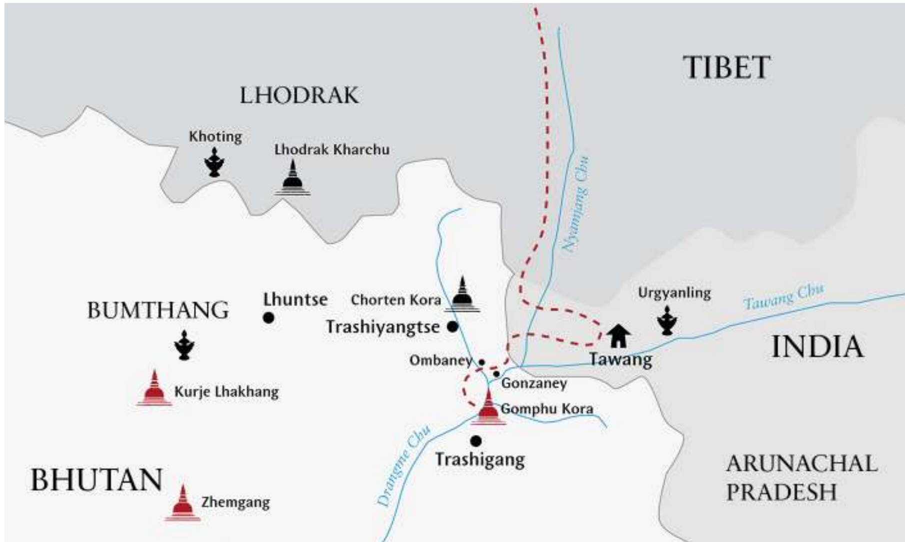

Fig. 5 Map of Bhutan bordering India and Tibet with route of Guru Rinpoche's demon pursuit (red dotted line) from Samye monastery in Tibet to Gomphu Kora.

times in summer and winter, connecting Tibet with India. According to British colonial sources from the 19th century, Trashigang was also considered to be the origin of the Bhutan-Assam trade route.[43] The administration of Trashigang *dzong*, situated very close to Gomphu Kora, was furthermore actively involved in the border trade with British India. Some locally made products from the valley of Trashigang included stick lac[44] and straight iron swords of three feet length that were apparently much saught after. Stick lac was used to dye the characteristic raw silk cloth that Monpas and east Bhutanese used for their traditional dresses. Until today, this cloth is one of the few traditional items that is still worn and sold at the Gomphu Kora festival, as we have seen (Fig. 3).

Yet, most of the goods arrived from Tibet, and Trashigang was an important hub frequented by Tibetan traders, building part of the southern 'silk road'. From there, goods were transported down south to Assam. Both Bhutanese and Tibetan traders sold their products further to pilgrims and Assamese traders at Hajo. Premodern trade fairs connected with pilgrimage sites were main centres for barter and exchange of goods and produce flowing between Tibet, Bhutan and Assam. These also conform to a common pattern encountered elsewhere throughout the Himalayas, where centres and routes

43 Ray and Sarkar 2005.

44 "Stick lac in its natural state that encrusts small twigs and the bodies of lac insects and is scraped off and dried in the shade to become the source of seed lac, lac dye, and shellac wax". See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stick%20lac (visited on 17/10/2017).

of trade and pilgrimage converge in valley locations serving merit, merry and money-making. Tibetans used to bring goods from the High Plateau pasture lands, mainly salt, woolen blankets and ponies, some gold dust, musk, Chinese silk, probably furs and dried meat. Bhutanese bought woollen cloths, rock salts and ponies from Tibet for the Assam-bound trade and exchanged them with cotton and silk cloths for barter.[45]

4 Tourism – new developments and the *tshechu* performance

Nowadays, the cross-border trade which was so important in the past has virtually no more economic significance in eastern Bhutan. Instead, over the past few decades tourism has become one of the most crucial pillars of Bhutan's economy and development plan, also in the so far underdeveloped east of the country.[46] Additionally, tourism is driving both state-orchestrated and private economic developments. This has also had a major impact on Gomphu Kora. While roads had been widened and tarred and other infrastructure had been built up, such as the opening of the south-east borderposts to foreign tourists,[47] Gomphu Kora received a special car parking area to accommodate the increasing numbers of vehicles including tour buses, especially during festival times. Also, a big gate and broadly constructed, cemented stairs have been built not too long ago, leading down to the temple, a row of *stupas* and the enlarged and flattened dance ground area. A new stone terrassed ampitheatre now offers enough space for the audience to sit comfortably and watch the *tshechu* dances.

Tshechu dances in Bhutan play a particularly important historical role in Bhutan, related to the foundation of the state, the dual system of lay-religious government and the Drukpa Kagyu order of Buddhism. *Tshechus* are built on a repertoire of dances that were standardized and homogenized in the 1970s throughout the country. The Third King, who is generally known as the country's major 'modernizer', had already restructured the *tshechu* in 1961, extending their original purpose "beyond religious ceremonies".[48] In 1967 an Institute for Masked Dances was founded of which Dasho Nagphel and then Dasho Sithel Dorji became officially government employed 'dance masters' (*champön*).[49]

45 Ray and Sarkar 2005.

46 Among the strategies of the *Tenth Five Year Plan* is that, "Special support will be provided to promote tourism in eastern and southern Bhutan with Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar to be included as entry and exit points for tourists". G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2009, 99.

47 A new border post has opened as to facilitate tourists' limited (and expensive) time, now allowing foreigners to also enter or exit the country directly through Samdrup Jomkhar at the border with Assam rather than having to drive the long winded and slow way over mountain passes back to Thimphu and Paro. A new airport called Yonphola has been built near Trashigang Dzong, too; it opened in 2012.

48 D. S. Dorji 2001, ii.

49 The most authoritative publication on the masked dances of Bhutan to date was written in Dzongkha by Dasho Nagphel Nagphel (Drag-shos Nag-'phel) 1971/1972. Dasho Nagphel was also instrumental in

Today, the eastern Bhutanese districts of Trashigang and Trashiyangtse are advertising their prestine national parks and wild animals that are already extinct in neighbouring countries and elsewhere, eco-trekking tours through the nomadic areas of Merak and Sakteng and, as everywhere else in the country, the colourful ritual masked dances in honour of Guru Rinpoche during the so-called *tshechu* festivals. These are marketed as a must-see cultural event whose 'uniqueness' is propagated as a photo-opportunity for every tourist in Bhutan, something not to be missed. The *tshechu* are top tourist attractions, advertised by tour operators as Bhutan's trademark tradition. They usually take place in the spectacular settings of the mountain fortresses or *dzong* that served as the premodern administrative centres of each district (*dzongkhag*), a role some of them continue to have today.[50] The Paro Tshechu in western Bhutan is one of the most famous festivals of this type and part of the national holiday calendar, as well as a major tourist event. A novel addition to the international tourist program, however, is that "Pilgrimage is considered as one of several 'new and innovative activities' based on natural and cultural heritage".[51]

Having seen many ritual masked dance performances in Tibetan communities in Indian exile and China,[52] I admired the professionality of the *tshechu* performance in March 2012 at Gomphu Kora, the preciseness, vigour and elegance of the dancers' movements, the well-made beautiful costumes, the impressive staging and smooth organization of the whole event. The morning of the 10th day (*tshechu*) of the second lunar month started with a large procession led by the present Lama Néten from Trashigang Dzong and high lay officials from Trashiyangtse, followed by monks and lay dancers around the sacred rock of Guru's paradise and the temple, offering a 'gold libation' (*serkyem*) (Fig. 6).[53] Next, the huge appliqué scroll (*thangka*) measuring 25 x 39 feet – one of the main attractions for the pilgrims especially made by the lama in residence, and then consecrated in 2001, was unfolded. After a ritual offering by the Trashigang monastic

the standardization of *cham* dances from the 1970s onwards. His follower, Dasho Sithel Dorji, mentions the previously existing local variety of ritual masked dances throughout the country and quite proudly states, "Those differences are now dissolved and the dances have been standardized and developed for the whole country". D. S. Dorji 2001, iii. Clearly, to preserve cultural diversity was not yet on Bhutan's agenda at the time.

50 Back in 2014, except for January and February (winter time) and July and August (monsoon time) *tshechu* festivals were performed several times per month at different temples and *dzongs*. In 2017, however, more festivals were added to the official tourist event calendar, including *tshechus* and newly established mushroom festivals located in the nomadic areas of Haa and Merak in the otherwise low-tourist season of July and August; see the 2017 festival calendar by the Tourism Department, http://www.tourism.gov.bt/calendar (visited on 20/09/2017).

51 G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2009, 98.

52 My PhD topic focused on the performance of ritual masked dances in a Tibetan community of Bonpo in North-West Sichuan, PRC, see Schrempf (unpublished).

53 This is a characteric offering in Tantric Buddhist rituals.

Fig. 6 The 'gold libation' rite *(serkyem)*, an offering by the Trashigang monastic congegration on their circumambulation path around Guru Rinpoche's paradise rock.

Fig. 7 Pilgrims receiving blessings from the large scroll image with Guru Rinpoche in the centre surrounded by his eight emanations.

congregation to Guru in front of an altar, accompanied by six 'sky-goer' dancers performing the Zheshi Pemo, the audience, patiently standing in line around the dance ground, was passing along and touching the hemline of this *thangka* that is called a '*thongdröl*', literally 'liberation through seeing', with their forehead in order to receive Guru's blessing (Fig. 7). The scroll also formed a beautiful backdrop for the ritual and folk dances performed in front of it.[54]

The structure of the ritual masked dance performance is complex yet hierarchically organized and directed by monastic and lay officials of both districts. Monks from

54 A detailed description of the highly structured and state orchestrated performance and the ritual dances at Gomphu Kora is given in Schrempf 2013. See also the video film on Gomphu Kora Tshechu documenting both dance performances and pilgrimage activities, https://vimeo.com/105325261.

Trashigang Dzong belonging to the Drukpa Kagyü congregation perform those ritual dances that go back to the rulers and state builders of Bhutan coming from the West of the country (*gelong cham*), while male lay dancers from Trashiyangtse dance the more 'local' ritual dances connected with earlier *tertön* traditions from east Bhutan (*böcham*). Altogether seventeen different dances were displayed in 2012, alternating with lay folk dances performed by young women from Trashiyangtse, uniformly dressed in pink *kiras*. These folk dances called *shabdro*, however, are not identical with the formerly practiced, diverse local folk dances of the various ethnic groups from east Bhutan, but represent a standardized folk repertoire imported via Thimphu and Paro *tshechus* from the West of the country. In other words, nothing about these dances nor dance costumes represents anything 'local' anymore, and the casual, competitive exchange among pilgrims performing their folk dance and song traditions from east Bhutan and from Tawang across the Indian border has vanished. Instead, the event was organized with compulsory participation rotating among chosen members of local communities from different *gewok*[55] of Trashiyangtse District every year. Thus the former charming appeal and often spontaneous popular performance culture displayed between different neighbouring ethnic groups that eye-witnesses so fondly referred to, utterly changed.

It is also obvious that the new folk dances performed by young women do not contain any sexual references or salaciousness anymore that the old folk songs and dances were famous for but belong to a set of sanitized popular folk dance performances that have been promoted by the government as part of the standardized *tshechu*. In Gomphu Kora, they have replaced the former exuberance, friskiness and chance encounters as well as mock battles that the variety of local folk songs and dances as well as the 'night *kora*' provided, promoting a subordination into a state religious liturgy of an almost generic character. Some villagers expressed their regrets about this loss. The festival does not anymore represent their local traditions, nor does it allow for their own agency as dancers to be included anymore. Instead, they have been turned into audience members of a state religious event, serving as an 'authentic' backdrop in a tourist spectacle (Figs. 8–9).

Fertility was – and to a certain extend still is – an important daily concern in a thinly populated, agrarian society. Fertility concerned not only animals and crops but also humans, and is expressed in many folk cultural practices and even a religious cult that, however, is in stark decline.[56] While images of phalluses still decorate house walls in rural Bhutan, painted and variously adorned with wings or flying bow ties, sculptured in wood hanging from roofs or standing erect while rammed into the earth as protections

55 In Bhutan, larger districts (*dzongkhag*) are divided into smaller administrative units (*gewok*).

56 For example, until the government had established mother and child health care programs, Bhutan had a rather low fertility and high child mortality rate; see the detailed study by Wikan and Barth 2011. See, in particular, Toni Huber's forthcoming book *Source of Life*; Huber (forthcoming).

Fig. 8 Cham dancer in front of temple at Gomphu Kora Tshechu.

against demons, these are now more decorative adornments and at times are commented on with shyness by 'modern' Bhutanese. Nevertheless, it also seems that this topic was absorbed in some of the tantric powers attributed to the great tantric masters. Therefore, it might be no surprise to find popular fertility temples in Bhutan. As we have seen, at the temple in Gomphu Kora, Guru Rinpoche's 'phallus' is kept among the 'treasure' relics in a glass vitrine. *Cham* performances in Bhutan are also famous for their characteristic interpretation of the well-known figure of the Atsara,[57] a type of clown endowed with a big nose (an Indian feature as is claimed) and a big red wooden phallus. As part of the ritual masked dance performances, he loves to entertain the crowd with chasing after women, making fun of dignitaries or tourist cameras.

57 Toni Huber has also worked on the 'Hungla' or ‚Haula' traditions of east Bhutan that surround a similar figure who is, however, wearing a kind of scull-like mask armed with a wooden phallus, a cult connected with the fertility of crops, see Huber 2015, 239.

Fig. 9 Pilgrims as spectators.

However, the issue of 'safety, sanctity and dignity' is also of concern in relation to tourism. Clearly, the Bhutanese state seeks to ensure a low risk environment for high-paying foreign visitors via police presence and other management practices. The tourism department wants to increase tourist attractions, by providing "greater access to cultural and natural wealth, such as Dzongs, Tshechus, religious ceremonies, Neys, parks, rivers and mountains" but also, tourist development needs to "be facilitated with proper rules to ensure safety, sanctity and dignity of people and tourism resources".[58]

Hence, nowadays various new security measures have been put in place at Gomphu Kora. Electric lights have been installed for pilgrim's safety at night when the traditional 'night kora' is performed around Guru Rinpoche's rock paradise. Police controlled the crowds also during the day when I attended. People are divided about these latest developments. Some welcome the new safety measures believing that they became necessary after some sexual assaults that happened to girls.[59] Others recall that traditionally, this was a place for young men and women to meet and have fun, and that in the old times, there were no such bad things happening.[60] A media report from the Gomphu Kora Tshechu in 2003 elaborates on the 'night *kora*', based on eye-witness-accounts:

> By 11 pm, when the few electric bulbs hanging from the roof of the monastery are put off, hundreds of flashlights take over, which are shone directly into

58 G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2009, 99.

59 I also heard rumours that several years earlier some of the older men, however neither locals nor pilgrims but men of authority, were trying to take advantage of young girls at the pilgrimage site.

60 In any case, to be safe my female translator and interlocutor refused to stay overnight in a tent at Gomphu Kora as we had planned in order to observe the festival also at night. That is why, unfortunately, I was not able to participate in the 'night kora' myself.

> the faces of people, mainly women, circumambulating the lhakhang [temple]. While a few young men and women pull and tease each other playfully in romance as is the tradition, groups of cigarette smoking youths do not hesitate to forcefully grab and harass the women despite their resistance and shouts. Others use the torch lights to look for sleeping partners for the night in the tents. The circumambulation continues till about three in the morning. In the past men and women teased each other with songs and verses, he said. Girls would circumambulate the lhakhang and men would grab them in the dark and carry them away. Such incidents would often end in marriages. Not anymore nowadays. Some devotees also expressed concern that the spiritual significance of the tsechu was being diluted by commercialism.[61]

It is interesting to review Bhutanese media, in particular the *Bhutan Observer* and *Kuensel Online*, over time. While over fifteen years ago, pilgrims still commented on and at times criticized the changes that happened at the Gomphu Kora Tshechu performance, and increasing numbers of visitors were taken as evidence for the rising popularity of the festival among pilgrims and tourists, nowadays their dwindling attendance, including visitors from Tawang, is referred to.[62] By now, it also seems to be taken for granted that the monastic performance of the *tshechu* has a long history and tradition at Gomphu Kora. The lay folk dances and songs have already been forgotten. The local peculiarity of the popular pilgrimage festival, i.e. the slightly promiscuous 'night *kora*' and the trade activities surrounding Chinese plastic goods are treated at times as a form of moral decline and a new development of modern commercialisation.[63] In contrast, tourist agencies, such as Bhutan Green Travel emphasize the specific colourful folk character of the festival, advertising its 'exotic' factor, neglecting the fact, however, that Gomphu Kora *tshechu* has lost much of its local flair, through tourism and the more recent state monastic orchestration of the event.[64]

Back in 2009, the government still blamed 'globalisation' for a potential loss of cultural diversity:

> A major challenge for conserving the country's rich culture will be to minimize the effects of globalization that tends to homogenize diverse and rich cultures and causes people's cultural identity to wither often resulting in a dissolution of local languages, knowledge, beliefs and practices.[65]

61 Quoted from Rai 2003.

62 See Tshering Wangdi 2015.

63 "For the thousands who attend the Gomphu Kora Tshechu in Trashiyangtse every year its main attraction, nowadays, is its culture of nightlife and commerce that has evolved around the festival. But [my emphasis] Gomphu Kora is an important nye (sacred site)" S. Wangchuk 2005.

64 Bhutan Green Travel 2014.

65 G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2009, 492.

However, Bhutan's more recent GNH policy acknowledges the impact of modernity and urbanization on its local traditions. The agenda also alligned itself more with UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage politics, including an emphasis on cultural diversity. The *Eleventh Five Year Plan* issued by the GNH Commission states: "The key strategy will be to promote Bhutan as an exclusive destination based on high level of services, diversified tourism products and improved tourism infrastructure facilities. The focus will be on regional spread, addressing seasonality issues and community participation."[66]

During the past few years, more hotels and lodging facilities have been built in Trashigang in order to accommodate the increasing flow of tourists that 'flood' the small town during the festivals at both Trashigang Dzong and at Gomphu Kora.[67] Also, the timing or spacing of *tshechus* in the east reveales the orchestration by Bhutan's Tourism Department. In 2013, the *tshechu* festival staged at the neighbouring Mongar Dzong, a good half day's drive away from Trashigang Dzong, began shortly before the one at Trashigang Dzong with some days of overlap.[68] This allows for consecutive visits by tour groups, who usually arrive from Paro and Thimphu via Bumthang and head eastwards. The scheduling of the Gomphu Kora Tshechu has obviously been following the original date of the old popular trade festival in the second lunar month, ensuring enough pilgrims to attend regularly while conveniently objectifying them as 'colourful culture' for authentic snapshots. Yet, in 2012, I witnessed only about two to three tour buses arriving at the Gomphu Kora Tshechu, and saw not more than about forty foreigners who mainly behaved dignified, remained sitting on a rock, the sun in the back, photographing and filming the ritual dances, using the audience members of locals and pilgrims dressed in their stunning traditional costumes as a convenient backdrop framed by the temple towering above. Hardly any of the tourists were seen on the circumambulation path around Guru's paradise rock. It is possible that they neither had enough time for this given the strict schedule of such 8–10 day tours through Bhutan nor, possibly, were informed about or interested in joining the ordinary pilgrimage activity of circumambulating the sacred rock.

66 G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2013, 18.

67 Tempa Wangdi 2012b.

68 In 2013, Mongar Tshechu was scheduled for Nov. 9–12, 2013; and the Trashigang Tshechu for Nov. 10–13, 2013 while the Gomphu Kora Tshechu usually happens around March/April on the 10th day of the second lunar month, some weeks apart from another important religious festival in the area, the Namgang Kora at the sacred site of Chorten Kora near Trashiyangtse Dzong. Here, too, people from Tawang join in.

5 A short chronology of recent developments

As we have seen, some date the Gomphu Kora fair and folk dance festival as far back as '400 years ago', others also include the present temple (*lhakhang*) and even the monastic ritual dances of the *tshechu* in this time frame. Contradictions remain and dating the place and the festival remains difficult with myth, history and place entangled. Even though locals say that there was no temple at Gomphu Kora until about 30 years ago, Bailey reports that he saw a small temple here in 1913 which might have been destroyed or decayed in the decades inbetween.[69] However, it can be safely stated that Gomphu Kora lay directly at the confluence of important trading routes connecting Tibet with India via Bhutan since the second half of the 17th century when both the Tibetan and the Bhutane states were formed. According to local oral knowledge and some colonial British sources, it was one of few yet important pilgrimage festivals in this area bringing together people from Tawang, possibly formerly also traders from Tibet, with local east Bhutanese traders.

Clearly, the Gomphu Kora pilgrimage festival was an important meeting point for locals, pilgrims and traders, centering around Guru Rinpoche's big sacred rock, with Trashigang Dzong as near-by trading post. Devotional activities such as doing *kora* and the performance of a range of local folk dances and songs performed by a variety of ethnic groups were the two main activities that came together once a year at this site. In 1987, after the temple was built, and under the sponsorship of the Fourth King, the monastic congregation of Trashigang Dzong began to perform the ritual cycle *Soldeb Bum*[70] in honor of Guru Rinpoche inside the small temple of Gomphu Kora. Since then, the *Soldeb Bum* is annually performed during the first seven days of the 2nd lunar month. With the extension of the infrastructure to eastern Bhutan in the early 1990s a new interest in the area, and also in Gomphu Kora as a site, began. This seems to have started off with visits, empowerments, and religious ceremonies held in the east by high-ranking Drukpa Kagyü lamas and authorities.[71] The tradition of country-wide visits and the authoritative performance of state cum religious hierarchies goes back to Bhutan's state founder Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594–1651).[72] In 1993, the local

69 Bailey 1914, 142.

70 *Soldeb Bum* (*gSol 'debs 'Bum*) is a prayer (*gsol 'debs*) for Guru Rinpoche to come back to the present, into this life as the 'Lotus Born' Pema Jungne (Pad-ma byungs-gnas), dedicated to the peace and well-being of the country. It is performed at the small temple at Gomphu Kora.

71 For example, in 1991 the 69th Je Khenpo Geshe Gedun Rinchen visited Gomphu Kora and conducted a public initiation (*wang*) in addition to delivering public teaching. In 2005, Je Khenpo Trulku Jigme Choeda attended the Gomphu Kora festival on his way to Trashiyangtse to conduct the great prayer festival of Mönlam Chenmo in Chorten kora (announcement in S. Wangchuk 2005).

72 Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal also established the dual system of religious (Drukpa Kagyü) and political governance. On this system and the sociopolitical and cultural role of 'rows of auspicious seats' in past and present official ritual performances, see D. Penjore 2011.

Drukpa Kagyü lama in residence at Trashigang Dzong, Lama Néten Rinchen, enlarged the ritual. Following the *Soldeb Bum*, he introduced the first public monastic dance performance (*'cham*) at this place, an offering dance to Guru Rinpoche called Zheshi Pemo. It is performed both inside and outside of the temple by six 'sky-goers' as the first and most important sacred dance of the Gomphu Kora Tshechu until today. Facilitating the newly established dance performance, the ground was leveled and the temple was renovated in 1995, and a small painted scroll depicting Guru Rinpoche was displayed for public veneration.[73]

From 1996 onwards, again at the initiative of a Lama Néten in residence, the Trashigang monastic congregation gradually introduced another series of ritual masked dances at Gomphu Kora by duplicating those already popularly performed at many other *dzongs* across Bhutan (including at Trashigang Dzong). In 2001, a huge new appliqué *thongdröl* scroll depicting Guru Rinpoche and his eight manifestations was publically consecrated by the monastic congregation of Trashigang Rabdey (see Fig. 7). Apparently, thousands of devotees from Trashigang and Trashiyangtse Dzongkhags attended the consecration ceremony.[74] At that time, pilgrims from Tawang still flocked to Gomphu Kora interested in social cross-border relations among the youth as well as in amusement and shopping.[75] In 2004, Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck used the popularity of the festival to help promote the use of condoms as part of a family planning and HIV/AIDS campaign. 7500 condoms were distributed among all age groups of pilgrims and visitors, including children and monks, and also tourists happily joined in their distribution.[76]

According to oral local accounts, the Gomphu Kora Tshechu had maintained its basic folk character until about 2005, yet the increasing involvement of the monastic congregation of Trashigang Dzong and of the secular administration of Trashiyangtse seemed to change its overall character after that. More specifically, for example, resistance among locals and pilgrims arose when the statue of the state founder Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel – that is usually kept inside Trashigang Dzong – was brought down for the first time to Gomphu Kora at the time of the *tshechu*. When the monks asked the pilgrims to pass underneath the state founder's statue in a procession, they refused to do so apparently perceiving this as a gesture of unnecessary submission.

The protocol changed after that, and when I attended the festival in March/April 2012, which was the beginning of the Bhutanese New Year, the special statue of Bhutan's state founder was guided in an unofficial ceremonial procession by the monks from Trashigang Dzong, leading it from there down to Gomphu Kora, where it was temporarily housed at the small temple for the next two and a half months until the Gomphu

73 S. Wangchuk 2005.

74 R. Wangchuk 2001.

75 U. Penjore 2002.

76 Rai 2004.

Tshechu was over. In the same year, the ritual cycle *Soldeb Bum* performed before the Gomphu Kora Tshechu was sponsored by a local wealthy tourist hotel owner who already started to build the next big resort outside of the cramped little town of Trashigang. For this generous donation the lay sponsor was allowed to invite the monks for food and tea into the sponsor's restaurant, and to shortly house the special statue of Zhabdrung thus receiving blessings in return for the tourism venue and business.

Meanwhile, however, the government acknowledges the importance of local oral traditions for preserving the country's unique intangible cultural heritage, as expressed in the latest *Eleventh Five Year Plan (2013–2018)*. Two of nine domains of the 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) Index concern "community vitality, cultural diversity and resilience".[77] In this plan, concerns are also expressed about endangered local traditions, such as local folk dances and festivals, attributed to outmigration rather than globalization at large. Apparently, aims have been reformulated, so "Preserving, promoting and documenting the fading intangible cultural heritage are crucial".[78]

6 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how the pilgrimage site and annual festival of Gomphu Kora have been appropriated and increasingly instrumentalized during the past three decades by local government and the monastic Drukpa Kagyü congregation from Trashigang Dzong. The social transformations at this pilgrimage site need to be understood against the backdrop of Bhutan's ongoing strategy for both modern nation building and economic development through culture tourism. Despite a recently proclaimed call for cultural diversity and preservation, the Gomphu Kora Tshechu has transformed into a generic, sanitized state monastic spectacle for good. The key agents are the district administrations of Trashigang and Trashiyangtse shared by monk and lay officials, the state tourism department as well as private local entrepreneurs involved in tourism who also sponsor the event. Ritual procession, monastic dance performance and the public display of the large Guru Rinpoche thangka are focused on and, in fact, have transformed the whole festival by replacing the local folk dances and songs with a hierarchical monastic and state administrative structure. Last but not least, the former agents – local ethnic

77 "The GNH Index is based on biennial surveys and provides an overview of performance across 9 domains of GNH that include health, education, living standards, ecological diversity and resilience, good governance, psychological wellbeing, time use, community vitality and cultural diversity and resilience." Continuing and expanding GNH, the main objective of the *Eleventh Five Year Plan (2013–2018)* is "self-reliance and inclusive green socio-economic development" G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2013, 3.

78 G. N. H. C. R. G. o. Bhutan 2013, 232.

groups including those from Tawang across the border with India – have been disempowered and instrumentalized, turned into exoticized spectators for the tourist gaze. Socio-moral distinctions delineating the boundaries between monastic and lay populations seem to have shifted from socio-economic exchange and marriage-making to the issue of controlling an alledged (a)moral behaviour among young males during the festival. Frictions occur where generational but also hierarchical political appropriations are pushed too far during the festival, while social inequalities might sharpen the rising gap between urban and rural incomes and lifestyles.

Given the governments' claim of 'preserving culture' through eco-tourism, one wonders a little why the old popular folk dances were not integrated at least into the recently established monastic and lay administrative structure, in a similar fashion as one of the first rulers of Bhutan demonstrated already in the mid 17th century. Tenzin Rabgyey introduced the new ritual masked dances imported from Tibet to Bhutan and incorporated the local folk dances of West Bhutan performed at harvest time into the monastic dance performance in which he himself took part in a key role. Yet, none of the concerns uttered back in 17th-century Tibet concerning the apparently problematic public display of 'sacred' ritual dances performed by monks for a lay audience – and which had provoked a dispute among different Buddhist schools about the appropriateness of 'dancers in the marketplace'[79] – were or are an issue in Bhutan, it seems. In contrast, facilitated by infrastructural development in the area and promotional support by the Tourism Department the Gomphu Kora Tshechu seems to be part of state development focusing on tourism, yet through an invention of tradition. As we have seen, today the *tshechus* are serving as most important cultural tourism asset in Bhutan. It seems that Bhutan's own nationalist cultural politics have helped to co-produce a generic festival that has lost its local specificity. Local traditions involving local communities, however, have only reappeared as a recently proclaimed, desirable 'added value' for a country on the search for its lost cultural heritage and diversity. One can only hope that the older generation still remembers some of the folk dances and songs sung at Gomphu Kora, and that the local governments who had hushed their voices in the first place, will re-encourage their participation in reviving their own cultural traditions and histories that are still embodied in this beautiful landscape of east Bhutan.

79 Cf. Ellingson 1979, 166–174.

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1–4 Mona Schrempf, taken during fieldwork at Gomphu Kora Tshechu in March/April 2012. **5** Map based on a design made and drawn by Britta Paulich for the exhibition and the catalogue *Die Acht Aspekte des Kostbaren Lehrers – Padmasambhava in Kunst und Ritual des Himalaya*, Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2012–2013. **6–9** Mona Schrempf, taken during fieldwork at Gomphu Kora Tshechu in March/April 2012.

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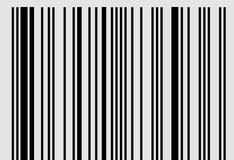

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