

Englische Übersetzung der Tafeltexte zum Themenweg „Heilige Stätten“**Holy places [Einleitung auf allen Standorttafeln]**

In scarce another region of Germany do the prehistoric graves and the ramparts of prehistory and the Slavic period so shape the scenery as on Rügen. At the start of the 1960s, there were still 645 archaeological monuments on Rügen, including 51 megalithic tombs, 561 tumuli, 5 tumulus cemeteries and 12 ramparts¹ Passing by selected ancient ritual and settlement sites, the “Holy Places” theme trail conveys an impression of the early history of Rügen.

[Board topic]

¹ Knapp 2008 p. 11 et seq.

The legend of a place (Speckbusch Göhren)

Because of the state of findings and the lack of written or picture sources, nothing is known about the spiritual world of the original inhabitants of Rügen, about their temples and gods. All interpretations of inexplicable archaeological findings are based on analogies to those from the Mediterranean area and the regions of the early civilisations, which could be interpreted through the written records existing in those places. Even the end-of-the-12th-century writings of Christian conquerors only give a vague intimation of how varied and complex the beliefs must have been. The following interpretations are thus to be seen merely as models of how it might have been:

The tombs and necropolises of prehistory are frequently striking features of the landscape and have become traditional landmarks. They were sites of mythical events and border conditions, ceremonial and cosmological sites. What our ancestors saw at such sites and how the sites presented themselves upon approach was carefully planned by their builders. Some holy places have managed to preserve their sacred aura into the present day. If we give ourselves up to it, we can still experience the holiness of this site, the Speckbusch, a Bronze Age tumulus, today.

With regard to preserving a relic of the early worldview, ancient “gravesites” should not be reduced to mere places of burial. The early monuments bear witness as holy places to the ancient cultures in the landscape.² They can still move us with their psychological and spiritual significance.

The trail to the “Holy Places” leads you to preserved monuments and places where traces are still to be detected. Let yourself be moved on your path by the beauty and holiness of a landscape.

Fig.: Nobbin megalithic grave from Knapp 2008, p. 39 photo D. Ozerkov

² Paul Devereux (2006), S. 19

Fig.: Silmenitz tumulus near south Garz from Knapp 2008, p. 71

Fig.: Nistelitz from Knapp 2008, p. 70

2. Burial objects (Duke's tomb)

From the Stone Age to the Slavic Age, the dead were given burial objects for their further journey. The burial objects recovered provide information about the time spread of the burials and clues to the social status of the buried and trading relations in the community.

Fig.: Duke's tomb, long barrow with burial chamber from Schmidt, I. 2001: Barrow and Sacrificial Stone, p. 29

As many graves were used repeatedly as burial sites and were accessible over many centuries, grave contents found in excavations generally offered a mixed picture. Cleared-out skeleton parts, pot fragments, amber jewellery - including barrel- and axe-shaped pearls – and stone implements such as ground flint hatchets, axes, arrowheads and flint knives were found in front of the graves.

The duke's grave was excavated in the 1960s.

Fig.: Burial objects from duke's grave from Knapp 2008, p. 59

Fig.: Burial objects from Lancken, Granitz and Burtevitz, from Knapp 2008, p. 58

A drinking glass, which had deliberately been pounded to glass dust before being put into the grave, was found in a Late Roman Iron Age urn grave near Rothenkirchen in west Rügen. The vessel was manufactured in the late 2nd or mid 3rd century AD and evidence of it has been found on numerous occasions on Zealand and in the Lower Vistula region (Poland). Golden rings, also deliberately destroyed before being laid in the grave, were also found there. "Apparently this was to ensure that the position of power that the buried person occupied in life ceased with death and could not be transferred."³

Fig.: Urn from the Roman Iron Age with burial objects, from Saalow and Schmidt, J.-P. p. 123, photo Suhr

Fig: Burial objects from Grave 2 at Fünffingerweg, Lancken-Granitz from Knapp 2008, p. 55 from Schuldt 1971, Fig. 24

³ Saalow, L., Schmidt, J.-P.: Viele Häuser, wenig Gräber – Ausgrabungen zur römischen Kaiserzeit im Verlauf der Bundesstraße B 96n, S. 123 et seq.

3. Sacrificial stones/cup stones from the Bronze and the Neolithic Ages (Goldbusch cup stones)

Sacrificial stones or cup stones are known on the island as single stones or in combination with megalithic graves on the island. The saucers are rubbed or chipped flat, up to 2-3 cm deep and 5-6 cm in diameter. Perhaps offerings were offered up in the saucers in the Neolithic Age through to the Bronze Age. They could have served to receive food offerings on special occasions. Today the cup stones are partly hidden under moss and lichen incrustation.

One of the two former capstones of the burial chamber of the Goldbusch megalithic tomb still exists. On close inspection of its surface, this capstone reveals 27 small cup indentations. The drawing shows the arrangement of the saucers on the stone surface.

Fig.: Arrangement of saucers on the Goldbusch capstone, from Schmidt, I., p. 44

Further cup stones are found on the Jasmund peninsula (by Lake Hertha, in Dwasieden and in Quolitz), in Lonvitz near Putbus and in Steinhof northwest of Bergen.

Fig.: Sacrificial stones on the Isle of Rügen, illustration BÜRO BLAU

The southern one of the two Guardian Stones at the megalithic tomb of Dwasieden lies flat on the ground. On its surface are 40 saucers rubbed into the stone.

Fig. Dwasieden megalithic tomb from Knapp 2008, p. 40, photo H.D. Knapp

The cup stone of the Lonvitz Fleederberg is probably the former capstone of the burial chamber in Fleederberg. It has several grooves running in shallow and deeper circular parings. Four cups are visible in the middle of the surface.⁴

From a distance the Qualitz sacrificial stone looks at first glance like a crouching animal. When one approaches, one notices a deep groove on the stone, which runs across one side. On the surface of the sacrificial stone are many rubbed-in or chipped-in cups.⁵

Fig. Quolitz sacrificial stone, from Zschoche: Auf den Spuren Caspar David Friedrichs auf Rügen, p. 50, photo Zschoche 2007

⁴ Haas, Skultstätten, p. 62

⁵ cf. Schmidt, I.: p. 43

4. The inner life of the megalithic tombs (Fünffingerweg, Lancken-Granitz)

The burial chambers of megalithic tombs were generally covered with barrows of stone or earth. The barrows were then enclosed in circular, rectangular or trapezoid boulder settings, the long barrows.

Occasionally, large stele-shaped “guardian stones” mark the corners of the long barrows, for example on the “Holy Places” trail in Nobbin on Wittow and Dummertevitz near Putbus.⁶

Fig.: Plan of Dummertevitz long barrow and burial chamber from Knapp 2008, p. 50, from Schuldt 1971, Fig. 41

Fig.: Plan of Nobbin long barrow with burial chamber from Knapp 2008, p. 38, from Schuldt 1971, 53

The idea of monumentality was not only realized with megaliths; wood was also resorted to as a building material in the construction of large burial complexes.

Fig.: Lonvitz large dolmen 2 from Knapp 2008, p. 51, photo Bild und Heimat, postcard from 1959

⁶ Schirren, C. Michael 2009: für die Ewigkeit gebaut – Die Großsteingräber, 58 et seq.

The long sides of the burial chambers are always constructed with three (to four) opposing upright large boulders with a smooth inner surface. The narrow side of the chamber is formed by another such stone. The internal structure of the stone chambers varies. Thus the floors of the chambers are spread with clay, burnt flint, regular slab or pebble paving, but sometimes just with sand filling. The gaps between the boulders of the chamber walls are carefully plugged with dry masonry of flat red sandstone slabs.

Repeatedly to be observed is a division of the chambers into sections through vertically arranged stone slabs. The sections were used for depositing burial remains and objects.

Fig 4: Division into sections can be seen in the chamber of a large dolmen at Lancken-Granitz. Light entered originally however only through the small entrance into the interior of the tomb (acc. to Schuldt 1972).

Fig.: Chamber division in a large dolmen in Lancken-Granitz from Schirren, M., p. 60

Fig.: Burial chamber of a grave in Pastitz Forest, Klosterholz from Knapp 2008, p. 41, photo W. Böttcher about 1935

5. The changing burial cult of the Stone Age (Ziegensteine, Dummertevitz)

The social background against which the megalithic tombs were erected in a massive display of energy and organization in a short period remains largely unexplained. On the one hand, the dolmens are explained as signs of times of social crisis, on the other in connection with elaborate earthworks and excavations, which are however (hitherto) unknown in Western Pomerania. Their significance as landmarks, constructed as ancestral sites and as formative elements of a Neolithic cultural landscape, is also discussed. Last but not least, indications are increasing of the significance of the burial sites for a sophisticated Neolithic cosmology.

Single burials during the Neolithic Age were initially in simple earth graves, then in long barrows or tumuli. Out of such single burials there then developed collective burial areas in large chambers. In some graves, the remains of human bones have been found or – according to the era – the ashes of cremation.

The megalithic tombs were built in a relatively short period between 3500 and 3200 BC. For the Funnel Beaker culture region alone, which extended over the North European Plains from the Netherlands to Poland, it is estimated that there were originally about 30,000 sites. The tombs were used as primary burial sites. Intensive continued use then took place up to the end of the 3rd century BC.⁷

Secondary burials in the megalithic tombs continued to take place in later periods. Even thousands of years later, in the Slavic period, the tombs were returned to occasionally for burials.

Fig.: Burial objects find, from Knapp 2008, p. 47 from Schmidt 2001, p. 22

Fig.: Bronze Age funnel beaker from Knapp 2008, p. 58 from Petzsch 1938, p. 21

⁷ Schirren, C.M.: Für die Ewigkeit gebaut – Die Großsteingräber, S. 60

6. Megalithic tomb forms of the Neolithic (Nadelitz)

A distinction is drawn between:

- chamberless long barrows as the most ancient form,
- large dolmens and
- passage tombs

Large dolmens are characteristic of Rügen. The constructions exhibit a length of 4.6 m, a width of 2 m (average dimensions) and a height of up to 1.5 m and are usually furnished with several capstones. Access was via an opening on the front or narrow side. Many of these tombs are distinguished by a vestibule-like forecourt of stone slabs, forming a short passage into the stone chamber, which is usually covered with an earth mound. The appearance of these tombs is so similar that one might believe them to have been built by master builders or specialist groups.

Fig.: Forecourts of the megalithic tombs in Nadelitz, (left) and Dummertevitz (right) from Schirren, p. 57

Many burial chambers are surrounded by a long barrow or stone circle.

Fig.: Megalithic tomb with long barrow, Nadelitz from Knapp 2008, p. 52

Fig.: Goldbusch dolmen; plan and cross section from Knapp 2008, p. 42, from Schmidt 2001, p. 29

Passage tombs with long rectangular chambers and an entrance on the broad side are rare in Western Pomerania. The passage tomb of Nipmerow on the Jasmund is the only example of this type of tomb on Rügen.

Fig: Plan of Nipmerow passage tomb from Knapp 2008, p. 54

Fig: Cross section Nipmerow passage tomb from Knapp 2008, p. 54

Fig.: Nipmerow passage tomb from Knapp 2008, p. 54, photo Knapp

In other parts of Western Pomerania, such as the northern Uckermark, megalithic tombs from boulders are the exception. They are outnumbered here by smaller stone tombs and stone cists.

7. Churches at sites of earlier history (Vilmnitz)

Together with Bergen and Altenkirchen, Vilmnitz is one of Rügen's oldest churches. The genesis of Vilmnitz church may be attributable to Stoislav I, a brother of Rügen Prince Jaromar I, who lived around 1200. In the first documentary reference of 1249, it states that the parish of "Vylmenytze" belongs to the inherited property of the Borante de Borantenhagen and was founded by his forefathers.⁸

The holiness of the Vilmnitz location can still be sensed even in a changing culture. It is an example of a holy place where a succession of different cultures and religions has occurred. The place will continue to be revered when the deities or spirits wear other garment.⁹

After Arkona, the temple fortress in the north of Rügen, was captured by the Danes in 1168, the Slavs on Rügen were converted to Christianity.

It is a striking feature of Rügen that some churches stand nearby former, partly destroyed Slavic ramparts. Alfred Haas listed ramparts at several church sites in the 19th century where sometimes nothing is left today. Alongside Vilmnitz, these are Altefähr, Ramin, Gingst and Schaprode in the west of the island and Patzig and Streu in the middle of Rügen. Some of the tombs and ramparts had probably already been destroyed in the 13th/14th centuries through the building of churches during christianisation and the suppression of heathen cults.¹⁰

Fig: Churches on Rügen near former Slavic ramparts

In a source from 1732 (E.H. Wackenroder: Altes und neues Rügen; p. 8, p. 317) it states¹¹:
"The hills (what is meant are the Bronze Age Neun Berge tumuli in the parish of Ramin, West Rügen) were surrounded with enormous great stones to appease the buried death jars, as then certain families had to secure their places and positions, and the larger they were, the larger were the stones they could roll up. The stones were brought here to satisfy the Christian churchyards, so that most of the churches in Rügen were built on the same mounds of the dead"

⁸ <http://www.kirche-putbus.de/vilmnitz/vilmnitz.htm>

⁹ Devereux 2006, S. 26

¹⁰ Knapp 2008, S. 55

¹¹ Knapp 2008, S. 13

Fig.: Just a few years after the capture of Rügen by the Danes, a Cistercian convent was founded in Bergen in 1193, whose chapel - the Marienkirche – is the oldest preserved sacred building on Rügen. St. Mary's, Bergen from [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.-Marien-Kirche\(Bergen\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.-Marien-Kirche(Bergen))

8. Tumuli and megalithic tombs in hiding (Pastitz Forest)

The Isle of Rügen was relatively densely populated during the Bronze Age. Numerous tumuli bear witness to this for the earlier Bronze Age. 1,239 of these still existed at the beginning of the 19th century. Imposing tumuli such as the “Dobberworth” near Sagard, or tumulus necropolises such as the Woorker Berge still characterise the landscape today. Others by contrast lurk inconspicuously in the woods.¹² A careful inspection reveals countless tumuli not far from the wayside in Pastitz Forest. Please stay on the paths.

Fig.: One of the Woorker Berge from Knapp 2008, p. 70

Fig.: The “Dobberworth” near Sagard, photo Sommer-Scheffler in Schmidt, P.-J. Europa ohne Grenzen, p. 68

The largest Bronze Age tumulus on the Isle of Rügen is unfortunately inaccessible.

Fig.: Bronze Age tumulus in Pastitz Forest from Sommer-Scheffler, p. 87, photo Sommer-Scheffler

¹² Saalow, L., Schmidt, J.-P.: Mehr nur als Gruben und Scherben – Die bronzezeitlichen Neufunde beim Bau der Bundesstraße B 96n auf Rügen, p. 69

Fig. Megalithic tomb with long barrow by the Bergen – Putbus railway, Knapp 2008, p. 40, photo W. Böttcher, 1935

Fig.: Prehistoric archaeological monuments in Pastitz Forest from Sommer-Scheffler, p. 88

It was customary throughout the entire Bronze Age to bury or lay down objects at chosen sites. There are thus currently well over 200 finds from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania of hoards with multiple metal objects alone, including the gold bowl repository of Langendorf, Nordvorpommern district, discovered in 1892. They were laid down either as sacred repositories (votive, sacrificial or devotional finds) or as profane deposits (treasure or store troves) and are found almost all over the state. A clear decline is however to be observed at the end of the Bronze Age; when hoards are almost exclusively to be found in the eastern region.¹³

¹³ Schmidt, Jens-Peter: Europa ohne Grenzen. Die Bronzezeit (2000-550 Chr.) p. 68

9. Slavic fortifications (Serpín)

Slavic fortifications were built for preference in locations of natural protection: on promontories and precipices, in hollows or on islands.

The ramparts were built of wood and earth, in which both simple plank walls and wooden insertions in the form of crossed log and caisson constructions increased the stability of the earth walls. Additional battlement parapets were set on top of the wall. This created high, steep-walled fortifications which were difficult to assault and enabled effective defence. If the castles were not naturally protected by water, marsh or precipices, they were often surrounded by generally water-bearing moats. Access to the castle was almost always over wooden bridges or fords.¹⁴

On the settlement of Garz Castle, the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus reported: *But if the place was deserted in times of peace, now it throngs with dwellings. Three storeys high, so that the lower has always had to bear the load of the middle and upper one. Yes, the thronging was so tight that if stones had been thrown by catapults into the castle, they would scarcely have found a naked piece of ground on which to fall.*¹⁵

Slavic fortifications later also fell victim to stone robbery. For example, many stones from the Slavic rampart in Serpín were used in the 19th century for building the road between Putbus and Bergen. The foundation stones of the nearby Ketelshagen forester's lodge also come from the Serpín rampart.¹⁶

Fig.: Aerial photograph of the Garz rampart, from, p. 156, photo O. Baarsch in Arch. p. 156

Fig.: Zudar rampart, from Messal, p. 155, (photo: O. Braasch), The aerial photograph of the Zudar rampart on Schoritzer Wiek on Rügen still shows impressively today the inclusion of natural phenomena in the construction.

¹⁴ Sebastian Messal: Befestigung, Herrschaftssitz und wirtschaftliches Zentrum – Die Burgen der Slawen, p. 155 et seq.

¹⁵ Schmidt, I. 2001 Hünengrab und Opferstein, p. 62 et seq.

¹⁶ Schmidt, I. (2001) Hünengrab und Opferstein, p. 75, Knapp 2008, p. 66 et seq.

Fig.: Reconstructed Slavic settlement from <http://www.m-vp.de/sehenswertes/images/grossradenm.jpg>

<http://www.holidaycheck.de/data/urlaubsbilder/images/41/1155769643.jpg>

Fig.: Reconstructed rampart at Gross Raden

10. Slavic worship of the gods (Garz rampart)

Construction of the Garz Castle complex began as early as the early Slavic period, in the 7th/8th century AD. The temple fortress on a hill was protected by its position surrounded by marshes and had only one approach through a ford followed by a hill path.

As a centre of faith, the Garz Castle complex played a decisive part in the conquest and christianisation of Rügen in the 12th century.

The settlement in the Garz rampart was remarkable for the buildings of three preeminent cults (gods), decorated in typical local art: RUGIEVIT, POREVIT and PORENUT. The grandeur of local gods had here gained almost as much honour as that possessed by the great regional deity SVANTOVIT in Arkona.

Fixed elements of the Slavic religious cult were annual sacrificial festivals; harvest or animal offerings are reported, but also human sacrifice.

The worship of gods in temples developed among the Slavs on the southern Baltic Sea coast in the 10th century at the earliest. Before, there were ritual places, but no temple buildings as yet.¹⁷

The old Danish (Christian) historian Saxo Grammaticus described the sanctuary thus... *The larger sanctuary lay in the centre of aisles, but both (sanctuary and aisles) were enclosed not with walls but by curtains, the pointed roof rested only on pillars. The commissaries were therefore able after tearing down the vestibule decorations to grasp directly for the curtains of the inner sanctuary. When these had also fallen, the oaken idol was revealed, bearing the name RUGIEVIT, from all sides in most abominable disfigurement. For the excrement of the martins which had built their nests under the rim of the head had trickled evermore down onto the breast of the likeness. A fine deity, whose likeness is so horribly defiled by the birds! For the rest, the head had seven human faces, all covered by one crown. Likewise, the artist had set many proper swords at his side, hanging in sheaths on a belt. He holds the eighth drawn in his right hand. ... The dimensions of the likeness exceeded the human.*¹⁸

Fig.:The four-headed Svantovit as artistic reproduction at Cape Arkona from <http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Svantevit-Statue.jpg&filetimestamp=20060515092152> der Götter

¹⁷ Tummuscheit, A. 2009: Der Herd aller Irrtümer – Die Tempelburg Arkone an der Nordspitze Rügens, p. 157 et seq.

¹⁸ Ingrid Schmidt: "Götter, Mythen und Bräuche von der Insel Rügen, p. 51

11. Iron Age settlement sites (board location entrance to Götemitz estate)

The settler groups of the Iron Age were small and formed relatively independent economic units, who produced the major part of their economic requirements in food and tools themselves.

The byre-dwellings established in Kasselwitz have a slightly trapezoid floor plan and are arranged parallel to each other. The entrance established in one case was south-facing. As was already the case in the Bronze Age, the houses were whitewashed.

Fig.: House floor plans from the Pre-Roman Iron Age and Early Roman Iron Age from Saalow and Schmidt, J.-P. p. 127

Although the amount of evidence of early iron production on the Pomeranian mainland is already clear, it is almost completely lacking on Rügen. It has not yet been possible to demonstrate iron smelting on Rügen.¹⁹

Iron Age cemeteries have not been found on Rügen. Cemeteries found in other regions of Western Pomerania are comparatively small and would probably have been used by small communities, such as a family inhabiting a nearby hamlet or farm.²⁰

¹⁹ Kuhlmann und Saalow 2009: Endlich gefunden Hausgrundrisse der jüngeren vorrömischen Eisenzeit in Lancken Sassnitz, p. 108

²⁰ Rauchfuß, Björn (2009): Ein Rohstoff auf dem Vormarsch – Die vorrömische Eisenzeit 550 v. Chr. – Christ Geburt, p. 99 et seq.

12. Destruction and endangerment of archaeological monuments (Neun Berge near Götemitz)

After the destruction of many “Holy Places” during the time of christianisation, economic booms brought further destructions. Roads around 1900 were paved with stones and hewn boulders. The foundations of houses were built of stone; some houses were built entirely of stone. Tombs and fortifications served as quarries.

The tombs were once holy, but since modern times at the latest this has no longer been part of the social consciousness. Why were they built? – it is forgotten. In the vernacular, they speak of giants, of piles of earth fallen out of the aprons of the giantesses. Knowledge about the holiness of the sites has drifted – and stones are needed. What could be more convenient than tapping into the cairns of our ancestors? Nobody thinks about grave desecration or the destruction of Holy Places.

At the start of the 19th century, according to the calculations of Hagenow, there were for example still 1,239 tumuli; the figure in the 1970s was 561. Of the “Neun Bergen” (nine hills), only two graves remain today. Another example are the “Sieben Berge” (seven hills) of Zudar; situated south of Garz on the island, they are the relic of a barrow cemetery of 75 tumuli.²¹

For a long time it was believed that there had been virtually no prehistoric settlement in the west of Rügen. This was also indicated by the non- or very isolated existence of tombs. Excavations in the course of the planned building of federal highway B 96n proved the opposite. Bronze Age settlements were found between Kasselwitz and Plüggentin. Many Holy Places remain unknown, perhaps forever lost and destroyed.

Fig. Extracts from the Hagenow Map from the region of the Neun Berge

Fig. Barn of large stones from Knapp 2008, p. 51

²¹ Knapp 2008, p. 67 from Sommer Scheffler 2004: Hügelgräber, rügen annual 2004, p. 77-80

13. Slavic castles as places of dwelling and refuge (Rugard)

The first castles in Western Pomerania were built as early as the 8th century, but the significance of Slavic castle building did not increase until the 9th and 10th centuries. This was probably caused both by military threats from outside and by social developments inside.

The castles principally fulfilled manorial functions; they were centres both of large tribal territories and smaller, local forms of lordship.²²

Rugard was the oldest tribal centre of the Rügen Slavs. The documents speak of a three-phase development of the castle.

- Castle A (8th -9th centuries) was apparently a not permanently inhabited castle of refuge on top of the hill.
- Castle B (end 10th -11th centuries) was a permanently inhabited royal castle. This settlement burnt down.
- However, the castle was rebuilt in the 12th century as Castle C.

Knapp (2008) gives an overview of proven and suspected Slavic and Bronze Age fortifications on Rügen.

Fig.: Selection of proven and suspected prehistoric ramparts according to Knapp 2008, Table 3: Frühgeschichtliche Burgwälle auf Rügen, p. 119, figure BÜRO BLAU

²² Sebastian Messal: Befestigung, Herrschaftssitz und wirtschaftliches Zentrum – Die Burgen der Slawen, p. 155 et seq.

²³ Knapp 2008, p. 134

14. Slavic maritime trade centres (Ralswiek)

The seat of the princes in Bergen and the residence of the traders in Ralswiek were directly related to each other. Ralswiek, however, as a traders' settlement and "primary stage of the early town development in the Baltic Sea region", was geographically separated from and relatively independent of the local power.²⁴

Thanks to Rügen's exposed location and the protected location of the harbour in a bulge of the Bodden, with direct access to the open sea, Ralswiek was probably the most important maritime trade centre in the southern Baltic region from the 8th into the 12th century. Ralswiek had a dock in whose trenches deep-sea vessels could run in and dock. There was still access to the sea to the northeast and east owing to an opening of the Schaabe spit near Glowe. Jewellery and other materials found demonstrate wide-reaching trade relations to Scandinavia, the Baltic States and Eastern Europe.

The harbour did not merely enable the trading centre, seaworthy boats were also built in Ralswiek. In contrast to the Viking boats, Ralswiek boats were built without iron nails.

Fig.: Slavic period boats from Knapp 2008, p. 78, from Herfert 1968, p. 214

Fig.: Site of discovery of Slavic boats in Ralswiek from Knapp 2008, p. 78, from Herfert 1968, p.213

As well as Ralswiek, Arkona was also an important maritime trade centre. The presence of merchants in Arkona in the 9th to 10th centuries, demonstrated by finds, became the rule in the 11th and 12th centuries. Helmold von Bosau praised at this time the hospitality of the Ranes and wrote in connection with the herring fair in November, foreign merchants "are free to enter, as long as they pay their due tribute to the God of the land".

There were facilities for landing ships for Arkona at the shore gully of the small village of Vitt.²⁵

²⁴ Knapp 2008, p. 88

²⁵ Knapp 2008, p. 91

15. Slavic period tumuli (Augustenhof Forest)

The burial grounds in Augustenhof Forest are directly linked to the maritime trade centre in Ralswiek. There were extensive excavations in the 1960s. 400 tumuli were classified into nine groups.

Fig.: Tumulus necropolis Schwarze Berge in Augustenhof Forest from Knapp 2008, p. 79 from Warnke 1981, p. 159

The dead were mostly cremated on funeral pyres and the ashes buried in the mounds. Exceptional cases of burying corpses have also been demonstrated for the late Slavic period.

Finds sometimes indicate the Slavs' fear of the return of the "dangerous" dead. In the Schwarze Berge (black hills), for example, one body was laid under a stone packing weighing more than two tons; in one grave a dead man appears to have been nailed to a wooden base.²⁶

²⁶ Wehner, D. Burgwälle, Silberschätze und Handelsplätze – Die Slawenzeit, p. 143 et seq.

16. Tumuli from the Bronze Age (Woorker Berge)

The most striking and today still landscape-shaping evidence of the Bronze Age are the tumuli themselves. According to Hagenow, there were still 1,239 such tumuli on Rügen at the start of the 19th century.

Fig.: Extract from the Special Map of the Isle of Rügen (by Hagenow 1829), tumuli near Woorke from Knapp 2008, p. 68

Whereas the corpse was buried in the Early Bronze Age, the custom of cremation took over in Western Pomerania in the Middle Bronze Age. The process was concluded by the start of the Late Bronze Age (about 1100 BC) and all the dead were thenceforth cremated on funeral pyres and then usually buried in stone-protected urn graves. These could be constructed as flat graves, but there were also primary graves and secondary burials under tumuli.²⁷ In contrast to the prominent tumulus burial sites, the flat grave cemeteries are not perceptible in the landscape.

Due to the need to import metal, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania was linked to other European region throughout the Bronze Age by intensive trade and cultural relations.²⁸ That the cultural relations reached into Central and Southeast European, even into Caucasian-Anatolian territory, is suggested for example by finds from Sellin. A gold ring from Promoisel on the Jasmund peninsula, whose only parallel cases were found on Bornholm, is one proof of contacts to Scandinavia.

Fig.: Gold ring from Promoisel from Schmidt, J.-P., p. 90, photo S. Suhr

²⁷ Schmidt, J.-P.: Europa ohne Grenzen – Die Bronzezeit, Knapp 2008, p. 68

²⁸ Schmidt, J.-P.: Europa ohne Grenzen – Die Bronzezeit (2000-550 v. Chr.), p. 67 et seq.

17. Bronze Age settlement (Moritzhagen by Neuenkirchen)

The Isle of Rügen was relatively densely populated during the Bronze Age. Numerous tumuli bear witness to this for the Early Bronze Age, one of which is the tumulus in Moritzhagen.

The Jasmund peninsula, the areas west of the Jasmund Bodden between Bergen and Neuenkirchen and the regions around Sellin, Putbus and Garz on the south Rugian coast have long been known as favoured settlement areas.

During the excavations before the construction of the B 96n federal highway in the first years of the 21st century, it became apparent that a further, as yet unknown, intensively used Bronze Age settlement area was situated in the region of Samtens and Rambin in Southwest Rügen.²⁹

Fig.: House plan from Saalow and Schmidt, J.-P., p. 77

Well-preserved two-span house plans exist for both the Early and the Late Bronze Ages. The houses were whitewashed. Near these dwellings were storage and working pits as well as areas for material excavation and waste disposal.

²⁹ Saalow, L., Schmidt, J.-P.: Mehr nur als Gruben und Scherben – Die Bronzezeitlichen Neufunde beim Bau der Bundesstraße B 96n auf Rügen, in Arch. p. 69

Fig.: Fire sites from the Bronze Age and house plans from the Bronze and Iron Ages from Saalow and Schmidt, J.-P., p. 76

The basis of food production in the Bronze Age were arable and livestock farming, in which principally emmer, spelt and naked barley were cultivated and cattle were the dominant livestock. At a find spot dated in the period around 1930 BC near Rothenkirchen, einkorn and parallel spent can still be identified.³⁰

Fig.: Mill trough at Plüggentin find spot, from Saalow and Schmidt, J.-P. p. 71

³⁰ Saalow, L., Schmitdt, J.-P.: Mehr als nur Gruben und Scherben – Die bronzezeitlichen Neufunde beim Bau der Bundesstraße B96n auf Rügen, in Arch. p. 72

18. Sunken settlement sites (Breetzer Ort find spot)

As a result of the rise in sea level during the Stone Age, the Mesolithic settlement sites on the coast sank into the sea.

Fig.: Sunken settlement sites from Lübke, p. 44

At the time of Mesolithic settlement, the Neuendorf Wiek must have been more sharply separated from the Breetz Bodden by a small peninsula reaching into the bay from the southeast, so that there was an ideal location for founding a settlement site on the sheltered southern shore of this peninsula.

Excavations revealed three phases of use.

- The most ancient evidence of a settlement is a Late Mesolithic fire site (c. 5600—5500 BC).
- The site was only resettled centuries later (end of the Mesolithic, c. 4800-4500 BC).
- The final settlement evidence was provided by a row of posts, probably a fish trap (late Mesolithic, c. 4200 - 4100 BC).

As at other sites of late Mesolithic settlement on Rügen, no pottery has been identified, although this is already present at contemporary find spots in the western Baltic Sea region.

The then inhabitants adapted rapidly to the changing environment. Whereas in the deeper (more ancient) layers of the excavation exclusively freshwater fish species such as perch, pike or pikeperch are to be detected, the upper have increasingly marine sediments and numerous evidence of sea species such as cod, herring and flounder.

The people of those times used the island world newly created by the rise in sea level not just for sea fishing, but also for hunting marine mammals. Apart from typical game such as red deer, deer and wild boar, the bones of seals have also been found.³¹

³¹ Lübke, Harald 2009: Unter Wasser – Versunkenes Land in den Boddengewässern Rügens, p. 43 et seq.

Fig.: Eel spears find from Lübke 2009, p. 45

Fig.: Chisels from Lübke 2009, p. 46

Fig.: Bone needles from Lübke, p. 45

19. Slavic figure stones (Altenkirchen village church)

The temple fortresses with their altars of the Slavic gods have been destroyed. But with the destruction of the temples, the images do not disappear from the heads of the people.

The simple folk were still beholden to the old gods, even if their rulers ordered them to believe in a new one. The gods of the ancestors had after all dictated their lives over centuries. Thus, the god Svantovit had helped the Ranes (Slavic tribe on Rügen) to win their battles and granted adequate harvests.

What happened now with the figures of gods chiselled into stone after the Danes had conquered the Ranes and Christian belief was taught on Rügen?

In the vestibule of Altenkirchen church, a figure stone with the images of Svantovit is set crosswise into the wall. The god can be recognized by a great horn of plenty in his hands.

Is the power of Svantovit broken, walled in as he now is? What did the people think who still stood close to him when they went to Christian services?

Fig.: Altenkirchen figure stone, www.ruegen.de

Another figure stone is to be found in the Marienkirche in Bergen. The "Monk" bears a cross in his hands. The stone was probably reworked.

Fig.: St Mary's figure stone, Bergen

20. Holy Places in romanticism (Nobbin megalithic tomb)

Ludwig Gotthard Kosegarten, parson of Altenkirchen, waxed lyrical at the end of the 18th century in a poetic tale “*There entered also Rügen’s characteristic adornment, “the barrow”, in the crepuscular light of Ossianic mood into poetry ... Picturesque landscapes everywhere, the most striking views, the most entertaining variety ... groves crowded with tombs and sacrificial altars ...*” For Kosegarten, the Nobbin tomb was “*the most impressive and at the same time the best preserved that I have yet seen upon this island*”³².

On their walking tours of Rügen, painters of romanticism repeatedly made sketches of “Holy Places” and transformed them into paintings. Numerous sketches of megalithic tombs and tumuli have been handed down by Caspar David Friedrich.

Fig. Sketches by Caspar David Friedrich from Zschoche, Herrmann 2007, p. 42 et seq.

Carl Gustav Carus painted the tomb of Nobbin under the influence of C. D. Friedrich.

Fig. Tumulus in moonlight by Carus from Zschoche, Herrmann 2007, Fig. 44, p. 47

³² Knapp 2008, p. 13

The rampart of Arkona was sketched by Caspar David Friedrich from the perspective of Vitt and represented in sepia and aquatint.

Fig. Pen drawing from Zschoche 2007, Fig. 74, p. 69

Fig. Sepia from Zschoche, Fig. 78, p. 73

21. The Slavic temple fortress Arkona

Arkona already adopted a leading role at the start of Slavic settlement in the tribal region of the Ranes.³³ As Rethra Castle, the central Slavic sanctuary in Mecklenburg (generally assumed to have been at the southern end of the Tollense lake in the area of the Lieps), lost in significance, supremacy was transferred to Arkona. Tributes were received from all the Slavic lands. The wealth of Arkona and its very self-confidently professed “unbelief” were the cause of repeated assaults by its Christian neighbours. In 1168, the fortress was besieged by the Danish King Waldemar the Great and Bishop Absalon of Lund, captured and the temple destroyed. This signified the end of Slavic sovereignty and the irrevocable victory of Christendom in the region of eastern Germany.

In the second half of the 12th century, the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus described in the *Gesta Danorum* the cult of the Slavs in connection with the capture of Arkona. He tells of a magnificent temple, which was the centre of the fortress. Inside stood the mighty statue of the four-headed deity Svantovit, a powerful war god and at the same time bringer of a good harvest.

The temple location in the middle of the fortress has today probably long fallen victim to erosion. Traces of sacrificial acts were detected during excavations. In the fortress interior there were several pits in which were deposited arrowheads, knives, glass beads and silver coins, pieces of silver jewellery, as well as spearheads, spurs and parts of swords and shields together with heavy stone packings. They may be interpreted as gifts to the god Svantovit.

Fig.: Sacrificial offerings found in the fortress interior of Arkona, from Tummuscheit, p. 158 (photo: S. Suhr)

Fig.: Jaromarsburg from the air from Tummuscheit, A. 2009, p. 157

³³ Knapp 2008, p. 91