

Translating art and craft: Human representations, identities and social relations in the Late Bronze and Iron Age of Central Europe

Abstract

This project will study human representations in art north of the Alps, and their relationship to the Mediterranean. Both regions share a number of motifs featuring humans, which are part of the casting of new understandings of identity and society. Examining human representations on a range of object types, including bronze and pottery, will provide insights into the mechanisms of transmission of knowledge, technology and beliefs. Research into group identity will be backed up by an investigation of the human body in life and death.

Background

The £1.75M Leverhulme Trust research programme ‘Tracing Networks’ investigates the network of contacts across and beyond the Mediterranean region, between the late Bronze Age and the late Classical Period (1500-200 BCE). It focuses on networks of crafts-people and craft traditions, asking how and why traditions, techniques and technologies change and cross cultural boundaries, and explores the impact of this phenomenon. The long time-span will help to set technological networks in their larger social, economic and political contexts to expand our understanding of wider cultural developments. We actively combine expertise in archaeology, archaeological science and computer science in closely linked sub-projects.

Material culture is the primary evidence for cultural contact. While local factors contribute to broad cultural developments, extensive contacts between different groups across the Mediterranean are manifested in the regular exchange of ideas, objects, materials and techniques constitutive of individual and group identities. Studying a wide range of material objects at every stage of their production, distribution, use, and consumption across a large geographical region, over a long time period, will allow us to capture the meanings and variety of the intricate socio-political, economic and cultural networks that people built and destroyed.

The concepts of the *chaîne opératoire* and *Cross-Craft Interaction* offer a systematic theoretical framework which allows us to develop comparisons across cultural contexts and diachronically. The *chaîne opératoire* considers all technological and social elements of the production, distribution and consumption of a specific commodity from the procurement of raw materials to the finished item, and extends further into its distribution and subsequent socio-cultural biography. Cross Craft Interaction can best be understood as the ways in which *multiple* crafts studied together have a technological and social impact on each other via human interaction. Where people and objects meet, complex social identities can be constructed and communicated. Both concepts allow us to interweave technologies and their social meanings in studying networks of crafts-people in the past and in proposing new methodologies for developing production-aware service networks in global computing. Methodological rigor will be enhanced by the computer science project, which allows us to analyse and compare data on a larger scale and more systematically.

Partners

Ann Brysbaert: Cross-Craft Interaction in the cross-cultural context of the late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean

Palaces were central nodes where a wide range of crafts were accommodated, controlled or overseen. By studying materials across crafts and studying how crafts were linked to each other, this project will investigate the technological and social interaction between people and how these networks of knowledge contribute to the formation of social identities within larger cross-cultural contexts.

Lin Foxhall: Weaving relationships: loomweights and cross-cultural networks in the ancient Mediterranean

Systematic study of the manufacture and use of loomweights will illuminate textile production across the Mediterranean world, largely a women's activity. Individualizing stamps, fingerprints and imprints suggest that loomweights were valued as personal possessions. They can reveal social links and personal identities, adding new insights to the networks of women.

Ian Whitbread: Plain cooking: ceramics, networks of technological transfer and social change, from the late Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the Greek world

The study of ceramic material during the Bronze Age to Iron Age transition at Lefkandi will help to understand in how far the shift from palace economies to Iron Age societies changed everyday production and consumption. Utilitarian ceramics will centre stage in this investigation of both local and imported ceramics, as diverse raw materials reflect differences in production technologies.

Peter van Dommelen: Colonial traditions: ceramic production in Punic Sardinia, Ibiza and Sicily

Looking at the production of Phoenician-Punic ceramic coarse wares for domestic and productive purposes, markedly different from the various styles of indigenous pottery, this project investigates colonial connections in terms of ceramic traditions. It focuses on fabrics and manufacturing techniques from the 7th to the 2nd century BCE, a time of expansion with large-scale use of domestic pottery and amphorae.

Colin Haselgrove: Mint condition: coinage and the development of technological, economic and social networks in the Mediterranean

The adoption of coinage all over Europe in the first millennium BC represents a significant innovation ideally suited to trace networks that existed within and between communities, as technologies and designs were transmitted and elaborated through the Greek, Italian, Phoenician, Iberian and 'Celtic' worlds. This project will examine how coins and their technical and symbolic dimensions were transformed by the successive encounters with different ideologies and value systems.

Anthony Harding: Salt of the earth: the exotic and the everyday in Bronze Age Europe

Many commodities were moved around the Bronze Age world, but the mechanisms of this movement are still largely unknown. Focussing on exotica like amber, 'Handmade Burnished Ware' and salt production and distribution in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, this project will reconsider links between the Aegean world and the north and west as well as the role of the traveller in the Bronze Age.

José Fiadeiro, Yi Hong, Effie Law and Monika Solanki: Ontology and collaborative environment

The project will provide a logical infrastructure to support the classification, analysis and interpretation of data, as well as provide technical support in a collaborative environment.

José Fiadeiro, Emilio Tuosto: Global ubiquitous computing

Techniques arising from socioeconomic, cultural and 'technological' craft networks of ancient civilisations will be projected to modern computation paradigms, as they provide metaphors for the global challenges of dynamic networks of information.

Project Design: Aims and reasons

The research plan for the next five years is to present individual and social identity, as well as social relations, as fundamental to our understanding of late prehistory. Integrated into a network of contacts across Europe and the Mediterranean, the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Europe will be the focus of investigations. The aim of the study is to better understand prehistoric society by investigating how prehistoric people constructed and negotiated personal identities in the setting of their society, and how societies constructed difference between themselves and others. The particular objectives of the study are to examine

- how gender relations were constituted, maintained and practiced,
- how personal age contributed to the way individuals were perceived,
- how wealth and status came to be significant personal characteristics, and
- how different variables of identity were interconnected.

Further, the project plans to contrast and compare how these aspects of identity differ on a chronological and spatial level, thus investigating

- how aspects of identity changed at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age
- whether and how personal identity was constructed differently in different areas
- what impact the making of personal identity had on the construction of group identities, and
- whether and how group identity on a regional level was deliberately maintained and enforced to create difference to other contemporary groups.

The study is set in an area conventionally perceived as belonging to the "Hallstatt Culture", spread over parts of Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. While study of prehistoric identity in these regions is traditionally a matter of interpreting clusters of similar material objects in terms of ethnicity, other aspects of identity have been rarely addressed and remain underexplored.

In this study the main focus is how people perceive themselves as different and how people do things differently. An emphasis on practice helps to recognize that identities are not fixed and permanent. Rather they are malleable and in constant state of re-negotiation. Personal identities are comprised of a mosaic of elements, of different roles people play within societies, of which some might be termed gender, age, kinship, status, wealth, class, ethnicity or religion. To approach individual identity from a new and different angle, this study takes the human body as the focal point of investigation. The human body can be understood as a medium through which social relations, identities and status categories are negotiated. People are constantly 'made', and much of this construction centres on the human body. Bodily practices, such as the way people move through their environment, how material culture and materials are used, or how the body is treated after death can give us an insight into how Bronze and Iron Age people understood themselves and their world.

Group identity will be explored in the same way. While the existence of distinct political groups will be questioned, a crucial point of this study is whether and how people living in different areas created and maintained difference between each other. Most important is determining whether what archaeologists recognize as 'cultural groups' is the result of people living in different areas or living a different lifestyle (such as farming, mining, pastoralism), or if difference between groups was deliberately made, maintained and played out through contact with each other during the past.

A further issue to explore is the nature of relationships between the Hallstatt area and the Mediterranean. Mediterranean societies had an impact on Central Europe and contributed to social change through the transmission of technologies, ideas and what may be termed 'standard cultural practices'. Contacts between the areas undoubtedly existed, but the form these contacts took, from transfer of ideas and goods to cultural imperialism and dependency, remains poorly understood.

The key methodologies applied in this project will be

- the study of human representations in art, directly addressing prehistoric ideas and ideals of identity
- the in-depth comparative study of burial remains and evidence of mortuary practice

Archaeological setting

The transition from the Bronze to the early Iron Age, and the Early Iron Age in central Europe form the perfect setting for this study. While human representations are virtually absent in the late Bronze Age, the taboo of representing humans is broken in the Early Iron Age and a number of interesting pieces of art are available for study. The re-introduction of human images in art is an example of the fact that differences in identity increasingly become a concern to early Iron Age people. Human representations and narrative scenes will help to understand how people saw themselves and their immediate social surroundings, while narrative scenes inform about us which actions and practises were important enough to be captured permanently.

The change in material culture is accompanied by a number of interesting social developments that directly involve and feature the human body. Archaeologically most visible, bodies become the focus of display in graves, regardless of whether there is a shift from cremation to inhumation or whether cremation remains the dominant rite. Differences in grave construction, furnishing and displayed wealth in the graves increases during this period, and has been taken as evidence for increasing social complexity. Intuitively it has been picked up that important social changes were taking place, yet the nature of these changes remains difficult to pinpoint. The expression of social status as a part of negotiating identity in the mortuary arena does not necessarily imply a different social organisation, but may have something to do with shifting relationships between individuals and groups. Status party seems to be defined by social relations and far reaching trade connections, archaeologically visible through 'imports' of exotic goods and materials.

Theoretical framework and the definition of key terms

While identity in the original sense of the word means 'sameness', there has recently been a vivid discussion of the nature of identity amongst anthropologists (Battaglia 1990, Hallowell 1960, Strathern 1988, Trudelle Schwarz 1997). Some accounts of the individual in prehistory and ethnography have been laden with connotations of post-Cartesian, western ideology, where it refers to an individual's comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity, both as integral and original (Hall 2000). Here, personal identity is the sum of all the idiosyncrasies that make a person unique. Individual identity is constructed through difference rather than on the basis of what people have in common. Related to the concept of individual identity is the concept of group or social identity: in this definition the sum of particular group memberships, such as ethnicity, age-group, gender-group, etc. define the individual (Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2006, Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005). Identity can in this sense be understood as sameness among group members, who are bound together by common characteristics. In that sense identities are contextual and provisional (Cavallaro 2001), situated in a network of social relations (Holland et al. 1998). Personal and group identity is therefore inextricably intertwined: individuals are always part of social groups, and yet groups are more than merely the sum of individuals, social groups can be of very different nature and constitute themselves differently.

Some ethnographic studies, for example in Melanesia (Strathern 1988) or India (Busby 1997), have shown that some societies stress the dividual aspect of identity more; people are perceived as constituent of social relations in a much more literal sense, to the extent that the existence of individuals in the past has been questioned by some scholars (e.g. Thomas 2004). And yet there are individual and dividual aspects in any society (LiPuma 1998). The history of the concept of individuals has a long tradition in Europe that may well reach into European prehistory, and it has been suggested that a notion of individuality may have emerged during the Bronze Age (Bradley 1984, Shennan 1982). In the proposed study, the concept of individual and group identity will be utilized as separate, analytical categories. The nature of the relationship between the individual and the group, as well as between groups, has to be explored.

Identities are neither given nor set at any point in time. Multiple identities can be held, identities can shift and change (Casella and Fowler 2004). Changing identities may be socially marked and accompanied by a variety of practices, famously initiation rites (Gennep 1909) and changes of appearance (Sørensen 1997), both aspects to an extent observable in the past by archaeological means. Social roles as particular aspects of identities have to be learned through personal experience, and are

negotiated with the whole society. The negotiation of identity takes place through interaction with others both on an unconscious level and discursively, but essentially the moulding of identity is a process informed by persons and their immediate social surroundings.

To some extent, identity is in the eye of the beholder. It is constantly ascribed by others, in their constant need to make the world comprehensible through classification and the recognition of the known. Clues as to what aspect of identity to recognize and how to understand the other are given by individuals themselves. The means of communication used, comprised of various aspects such as dress, hairstyle, gait, behaviour, *habitus* etc., carries meanings and messages to the observer (Bourdieu 1977, Bourdieu 1990, Giddens 1984). A few thousand years later, some of these clues may still be interpretable in the fragmentary archaeological record, while others get lost in translation into modern times. To recognize the distance to the past as well as links to the present is an important process in this project.

Burial evidence and the depiction of individuals in art have one thing in common: in terms of understanding identity they are third party evidence. The dead ‘do not bury themselves’ (Barrett 1994, Parker Pearson 1999) although they might have some agency to decide about their own burial during lifetime (Arnold 2001, Williams 2004), and burials are carried out by the mourning community and can be manipulated accordingly. The archaeological evidence therefore carries information about the burying persons as well as the buried person. The depiction of humans in art may carry information about depicted individuals and people engaging in social interactions, as well as information on artists as craftspeople and the people who order and pay for it, if such a system of intermediate people exists in the early Iron Age. How and under which social conditions art is created has to be taken into account for studies of identity.

Studying identity and personhood is best undertaken by using the body as the medium of investigation (Arnold 2007, Hamilakis, Pluciennik, and Tarlow 2002, Joyce 2005), since the body is the primary *locus* of the person, in which the world is experienced and through which action can be performed (Merleau-Ponty 1962). This marks the material, physical and tangible side of personhood. A holistic concept of body/mind is assumed for this study, as well as an ‘enworldment’ (Ingold 2000) of this body encapsulating the mind. Notions of personhood other than individuality, like partiability and permeability have recently been included in archaeological explanations (Fowler 2004). Whether these concepts can prove to be useful for the Bronze and Iron Age societies in Central Europe has yet to be explored. Most important, however, is keeping an open mind to the fact that personhood might have been constructed in a number of ways, which has direct implications of how prehistoric people understood themselves and others.

Research context and relevance to the national and international scientific community

While a vast body of literature on the ‘Celts’ exists that sometimes embraces the Hallstatt areas as ‘Celtic’ (e.g. Birkhan 1997, Cunliffe 1991, Powell 1980, Rieckhoff and Biel 2001), I would like to refrain from this problematic and coarse classification and rather discuss similarities and differences within the project area in terms of the subtleties of group identities. Connecting names of historically known peoples with archaeological evidence is problematic on many levels, especially if the actual historical record does not provide much more than a description of otherness from a Greek or Roman standpoint. It is unknown what ancient historians meant by Celts, how ethnic groups were defined, if the term referred to groups with similar language, material culture, beliefs and identity; and it is unclear if there is an actual link to the modern Celts, defined as speakers of Celtic languages (Collis 2003). While post-Roman, medieval sources in Celtic languages can provide useful analogies to supplement ideas derived from the much more accessible medieval feudal system (Karl 2006), they do not tell us anything about prehistoric notions of identity themselves.

A large number of detailed specialist studies about the Hallstatt Culture exist in all areas of the proposed project, but they have not yet been brought together, contrasted and discussed to create a concise picture of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age identities. The fragmented nature of the data, published in various Central European languages, makes it difficult to access for the international scientific community. The western Hallstatt area is much better represented in the archaeological

literature, while the east of the study area (in particular Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) has been largely ignored, and differences within the Hallstatt Area – the subject of this study - have not been sufficiently recognized. There is little comprehensive literature in English on the late Bronze and early Iron Age in Central Europe beyond a very superficial level (Kristiansen 1998, Teržan 1990, Wells 2001) and a proper synthesis would be most appreciated.

Studying the distribution of different types of finds and their interpretation within the cultural-historical paradigm still governs much of how archaeology is thought of in the study area (Gramsch 2006, Veit 1989). Group identities are widely thought of as approachable and understandable through patterns of distribution of material culture, and boundaries of artefact type distribution and the interaction of groups are often quite literally perceived and interpreted in terms of ethnic groups. Apart from the fact that these assumptions have been challenged and proved wrong in ethno-archaeological studies (Hodder 1982), the level of satisfaction with these kinds of studies is surprising, since they do not tell us much about the actual people involved. The proposed analysis aims to challenge a number of traditional assumptions about the “Hallstatt Culture”. The validity of the very concept of a Hallstatt Culture can quite easily be questioned. It is, however, deeply rooted in and informed by research history (Müller-Scheeßel 2000, Sørensen and Rebay 2008). The term Hallstatt Culture is only useful as a quick reference to time and space of this study, while different identities within the study area will be subject of investigation.

One problem of the existing literature in Central Europe is that in the expectation of publishing archaeological sites in full detail, the question why and for what purpose the data is gathered fades into the background. The academic notion of archaeology as solving intellectual questions about the past becomes overwritten by the necessity to excavate and publish sites under threat. Even overviews on a regional level try to summarise and write about all aspects of the Hallstatt Culture in a given region, rather than undertaking comparative studies of a particular subject domain.

Archaeological studies in Germany, Austria and neighbouring countries still remain under-theorized, which has, together with the lack of studies written in English, enormous implications for the subject domain. The discussion of archaeological method and theory is what binds archaeologists working in diverse regions of the world together. Without the integration of theoretical debates research remains provincial and risks being ignored by the global scientific community. The publication of the proposed study would make the fantastic archaeological record easily accessible for an international audience and thus trigger discussions and debate in a much larger scientific community than it is now the case.

Innovative aspects and expected advances of the subject domain

In recent years, an archaeology of personhood has begun to emerge that is concerned with identifying the forms of human identity, selfhood and embodiment that existed in the past (e.g. Brück 2006, Chapman 2000, Fowler 2002, Fowler 2004, Meskell 2001, Thomas 2005). This is the first broad study of the late Bronze and early Iron Age in Central Europe within the theoretical framework outlined above. The setting of the study and the richness of the data available for study promise interesting insights into how individual identities and social relations functioned in a proto-historic setting. The study of late Bronze and early Iron Age identities will transform our understanding of period in Central Europe radically. The size and complexity of the proposed project forces work with identities on a number of scales, from the body’s individual identity, to social relations and group identities, to social relations between groups. The successful integration of these different scales of data will be a significant advance for the subject domain.

The study of social status and class differences as an important component of identity in the later European Prehistory has recently been neglected, probably because the discussion of status and the emergence of social complexity has been a favourite subject for processualists (Hodson 1986, Hodson 1990, Wason 1993). Post-processualists have criticized and rejected the very mechanical, simple and direct equations like ‘lots of grave goods = rich and powerful person, few grave goods = dependent person’ (Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005) but this is where the discussion broke off. Differences in grave goods and labour investments in the construction of burial monuments remained largely unexplained, and questions of status faded into the background. It seems, however, that with the transition from the

late Bronze to the early Iron Age status becomes a major concern that is negotiated in the mortuary arena like other aspects of identity, but also in other spheres of social interaction such as settlements. It is now time to rethink and reassess how status was constituted, how it was produced in social context, how it relates to wealth, religious and political power, and how individuals gained status, maintained it, and exercised power over others. It will be necessary to find a way to combine quantitative data with a more sophisticated assessment of qualitative data to develop new understandings of status differences. The integration of status as an important aspect of the interplay between individuals and groups and thus an important aspect of identity will be another of the significant advances of this study.

Methodology: Human Images

Human representations provide a good case study of contacts between the Mediterranean and temperate Europe. While in the Late Bronze Age Urnfield Culture human representations are virtually absent and to depict humans seems to represent a taboo, this changes dramatically at the beginning of the Iron Age. Contacts can take a number of forms. There are direct “imports” of objects that were produced elsewhere and transported in the area of consumption, such as the Kratér from Vix or the Greek pottery found on the Heuneburg, but we also have copies and imitations that are locally produced, such as many of the situlae; or alternatively we have objects ‘inspired’ by Mediterranean ideas, but carried out in local techniques and implemented into the local repertoire of decoration.

The objects analysed in this study include bronze objects decorated with ‘situla art’, named after the bronze buckets on which this kind of decoration is often found (although situla art also encompasses other sheet bronze objects such as belt plates and sword scabbards). Characteristic is the decoration technique that can be engraved as well as moulded out in relief. Situlae sometimes carry narrative scenes, which show a common repertoire of scenes, such as feasting, hunting, sport and music competitions, or funerary processions. Other sheet bronze objects can be decorated with different techniques, for instance the punching of little, individual points to form an image. With this technique, the resolution of the images decreases, which limits the number of details that can be expressed. This technique is typical for Styria and some parts of Germany.

The second group of objects with human representations are made of pottery, which forms the medium for art in areas where sheet bronze vessels are uncommon. In the north-east of the Hallstatt culture, for example, metals are rare, but this lack is covered by a huge number of pots in the graves. Images are incised or punctuated into pottery – the same basic techniques are used as on sheet bronze. Common decorative elements like triangles, wide spread in the Urnfield Culture, become transformed to human images by small, anthropomorph additions of arms, legs or heads.

Rock-art is probably the largest body of human representations of the Early Iron Age. Sites like the Valcamonica, Italy, or Mont Bego, France, encompass thousands of human images. Simple and repetitive, they are often excluded from studies of art, not last because of dating difficulties. Some of the themes and objects commonly found on Iron Age art do, however, also occur at rock-art sites. Despite the difficulties with working with this data, rock-art provides spatial security and offers a completely different context for human images: they are fixed in space and are not integrated into the trade and exchange of commodities as many other pieces of art are. Rock-art therefore forms a valuable contrast to the other pieces of art studied.

Figurines and stele - 3D images of humans – are a rather small data set with enormous variability both in terms of their form and the materials used. They are made of bronze, pottery, stone and lead, and therefore presumably in a variety of production contexts and by very different people.

The whole study area shares a common repertoire of images that involves people. The images include horsemen, warriors, hunting, chariot races, feasting and drinking, dancing and music, weaving and spinning, funerals and processions, and ploughing scenes. Despite this common repertoire, the way in which the scenes are carried out is strikingly diverse. This local ‘translation’ of human representations is precisely the interesting point about them. Formal elements of the image create superficial similarities and links, while the meaning of the images can be radically transformed. Comparing images taken from the back of the couch of the burial from Hochdorf and sketched into pottery from Reichersdorf brings this out clearly: Whereas one shows a warrior or contestant, the other shows a ritual or triumphal procession, but both share the wheeled wagon in natural perspective, which signifies some sharing of an idea of image content and formalities. The very choice to produce and place these images in a funerary sphere is clearly inspired by the Mediterranean, while a local way of producing the image leaves room for interpretation.

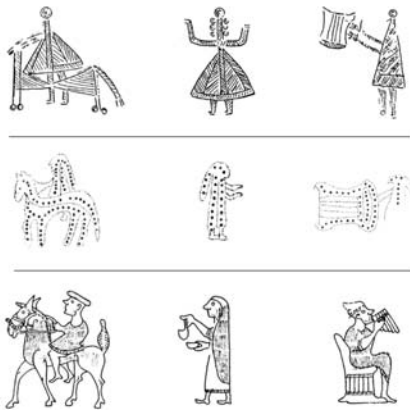


Fig. 1: This example shows how individuals are depicted in different study areas as well as medias. The images in the first row are incised into pottery and are from the north-eastern area, the middle row are representations in sheet bronze from the south-east, and the last row compares similar scenes on Situlae. People differ quite dramatically in the way they are dressed, and particularly the headdress seems to signify social roles (after Urban 1989: 167).

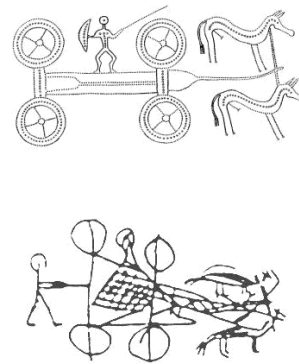


Fig. 2: Despite superficial similarities, such as the four wheeled wagon in natural perspective, people in these scenes are depicted as engaging in very different actions. The upper picture from the back of the couch of the burial from shows a warrior or contestant, the lower picture from a pottery vessel from Reichersdorf shows two people, probably in a ritual or triumphal procession. Scenes of persons interacting can enable interpretations of social relations (after Biel 1985: 94, Eibner 1997: 142).

A detailed image analysis focusing on what people are doing and how they are represented will feed into a network analysis. The information will then be used to create multi-layered networks of materials, decoration techniques and image details. This will reveal a range of connections that do not necessarily overlap; for instance a motif can link objects that would otherwise be treated separately because they are made of different materials.

The chaîne opératoire is a useful tool to think through ‘all the different stages of production from the acquisition of raw material to the deposition of the objects’, and by thinking through the operational sequence I hope to identify individual choices made by humans. Concerning the production of the images I will investigate how the ‘text’ of the image becomes copied, translated, and integrated. For instance, how can the similarity of decoration techniques on pottery and bronze be explained, if they are usually thought of as being produced in different social contexts (specialist workshop and household production)? Concerning the ‘end of the object biography’ I will scrutinise the context in which objects with human images are found to reveal aspects of their use life.

Cross Craft interaction will be a useful framework in which to investigate the technology of sheet bronze and pottery decoration. Human representations are carried out in a variety of decoration techniques that overlap both materials, but no detailed analysis has so far focused on how

representations change according to the use of different media or techniques of decoration. This translation into a “low resolution” version of an image, through punched and punctuated images in pottery and bronze, is particularly important, as it forces a focus on crucial elements of the motif, on elements that are important to understand the image. A body can thus be reduced to a point and several strokes for the upper body and limbs, and still be understood as a body; while in other examples, the focus lies on the dress, perhaps because dress is important for the social categorisation of people.

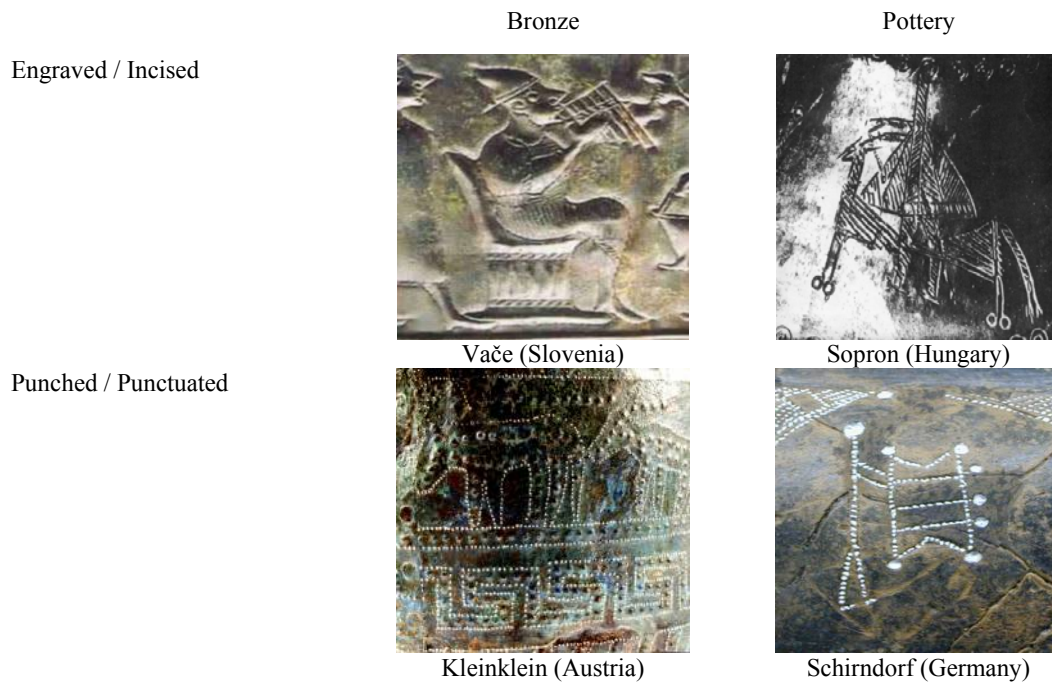


Fig. 3: Techniques of decoration on bronze and pottery

The study of copy fidelity brings us to the essence of an image. Comparing the ‘standard image’ from the belt plate of Magdalenska Gora, to the ‘translated’ image from the couch of Hochdorf, for instance, lets us understand what the really important issues of the image are. It is interesting to see that the trophy in the middle, the price for the winner, is apparently not important enough to be reproduced in the right picture. Other aspects of the image become transformed and the boxing competition is turned into a swordfight. The investigation of how images and narrative scenes get incorporated in regional settings and surroundings will reveal that the import of a particular motif or scene does not always mean that the attached meanings and ideas get imported as well. The depicted people and their involvement in the narrative scenes become moulded to fit social expectations that can be understood in the regional setting. We can think about this in terms of cultural ‘re-interpretations, or better the merging and ‘creolisation’ of ideas informed by different backgrounds.

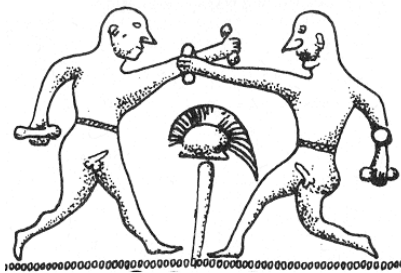


Fig. 4: Fighting over trophies at the belt plate from Magdalenska Gora (after Lucke and Frey 1962)

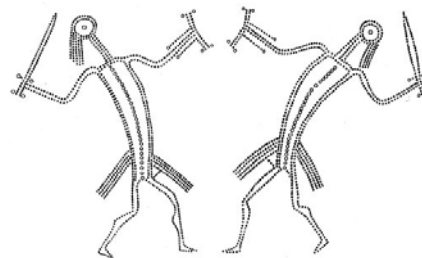


Fig. 5: A swordfight from the back of the couch of Hochdorf (after Biel 1985: 94).

Portraits of humans mediate and visualize identity, either as individual identities or types of identities. The interpretation of such art does, however, challenge the interpreter. The observer has to engage in the dialectic between the artist as the active agent and the portrayed. It is uncertain if an interpreter detached from the practical and symbolic language of prehistory can fully understand it, if it was meant to be seen and understood by everyone at all. One may, however, draw tentative conclusions on aspects of depictions or scene that may not have been the primary concern of the artist: the analysis of different ways of dress and jewellery, the actions in which the people depicted engage, and what kind of material culture is depicted will lead to conclusions about the ways in which identities are constructed through bodily practices.

Methodology: burial data

The study of human representations will be complimented by the analysis of cemetery data along two analytical axes, focussing on how the body is understood and treated in the mortuary sphere.

The first axis is chronological. Studying differences in practices that relate to the body during the transition from the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age as well as within the early Iron Age enables the study of changing attitudes towards the body and individuals and gives the endeavour a time depth that is crucial for our understanding of the past as variable and changeable. The Urnfield/Hallstatt transition is accompanied by drastic changes in the way bodies are treated and understood in different contexts. While in the late Bronze Age much of the treatment of the dead is centred on the deliberate transformation of the body through cremation (Sørensen and Rebay 2007), the body is used as the focus of display in the mortuary arena in the early Iron Age. Around this body different aspects of identity are negotiated, most notably, and different from the late Bronze Age, the negotiation of social status. With this change in practice a wider field of possibilities to study the body in its performed appearance opens up. Material culture is used in many ways to define and accentuate different aspects of identity in the grave. The deceased are portrayed in their particular social roles and grave goods do not only inform about gender, but also about activities and status. Interestingly, age does not seem to be a decisive factor for the selection of grave goods, but this and many other connotations such as the way forms of group identities and ethnicities are expressed in the mortuary arena, have yet to be explored.

The second axis of analysis is spatial and aims to encompass the study of distinct regional groups within the Hallstatt Culture as a study area. It is still unclear whether the existing ‘culture groups’ in the archaeological literature are imposed on the archaeological material, or if there is an actual, material basis for them – if the Iron Age people deliberately used material culture to create their own identities, or used other means of expressing difference. It is essential to move this issue forward, particularly because understandings of the past, as also shaped by archaeologists, have been used politically for claims of land and ancestry as well as justifications of ideologies in these regions (Biehl, Gramsch, and Marciniak 2002, Härke 2000, Sklenář 1983). The study area is spread over a rather complicated modern political setting of nation and language borders, and particularly the divide of Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War had implications on the way the past had been studied previously. This regional scale intends to compare aspects of the West, Alpine, North East and South East Hallstatt groups.

At least two large, published cemeteries (or several smaller ones) of every identified region will provide the dataset for this part of the project. Together with Marie Louise Stig Sørensen I have developed a methodology of in-depth analysis of burial data, in which the perception of the body is the focus of attention (Sørensen and Rebay 2008 -a, -b, -c, Sørensen and Rebay forthcoming). This methodology can be taken as a platform to work from and can be expanded for this project, to address the relationship between the personal and group identity more specifically. Case studies will be selected for their meaningfulness to interpret notions of the body and individual identities. For the Western group that could be sites like Hochdorf, Vix, Magdalenberg or Schirndorf, for the east distinguishing between the Alpine group with sites like Hallstatt, Hallein, Bischofshofen or Uttendorf, the North-Eastern group with sites like Statzendorf, Zagersdorf, Gemeinlebarn, Langenlebarn and Sopron, and the South-Eastern group with sites like Klein-Klein, Frög, Ljubljana and Novo Mesto will

be necessary. Interactions of the Hallstatt groups with contemporary historical peoples such as Greeks, Etruscans and Scythians (Aigner-Foresti 1992, Kromer 1986, Siegfried-Weiss 1979) may be investigated through the study of ‘imports’ found in the graves: these are testimonies of complex and mutual relations between Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Local traditions shape the ways in which innovative elements are being incorporated, and local and regional patterns of acceptance and resistance in the integration of Mediterranean ideas will be subject of this project.

The analysis of burial data will focus on practices around the body, as they may reveal notions of the person. The methodology of this project relies on innovative analytical approaches to burial data, exploring the following concepts:

- the body as the surface of display of identity (e.g. the relationship between the physical human body and material culture like dress elements, tools and weapons)
- the grave as a stage set in which identities are negotiated (Rebay 2002)
- performance at the grave as an expression of relationships to the dead (e.g. rituals and offerings, reopening of graves)

The role of grave goods in the graves is a complicated issue and cannot be pre-defined, but has to be determined contextually. Objects have to be investigated in terms of why and how they are used in the making of meanings for the dead body. On the transition from the late Bronze to the Iron Age objects tend to be increasingly incorporated into graves. This is often taken to indicate identity, in particular to indicate wealth and status. The following examples shall illustrate how issues of identity could be addressed through burial data:

Pottery in graves, for example, can have multiple meanings. Being intended as containers for food and drink to nourish the deceased on the way to or in the afterlife is one popular explanation, but pottery may also have some value in itself, can resemble possessions of the dead as well as gifts from the mourners, or be relicts from burial rituals taking place on the open grave. Pottery can symbolize access to food and drink and the capability to invite guests, thus documenting social relations. The access to food and drink, as perhaps expressed in graves with drinking vessels and feasting dishes can be gender- or age specific, and hint at integration or exclusion of social groups in certain activities such as rituals; where data is available, the health and nutritional status of individuals as documented by bone biometrics can be taken into account. The consumption of alcoholic drinks as an integral part of society is well documented in graves (Kaus 1980, Kossack 1964, Nebelsick 1997) as well as it is particularly emphasised in many narrative scenes in art (Frey 1969, Kastelic 1964).

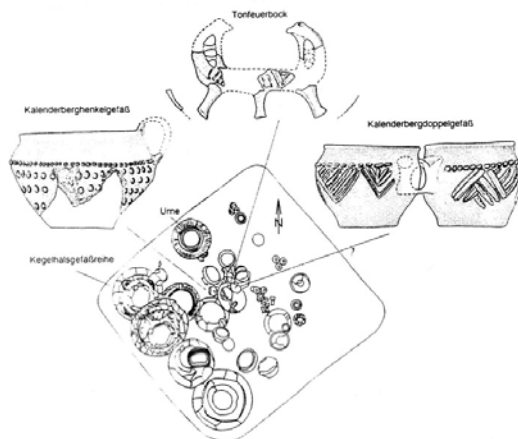


Fig. 6: Cremation grave from Loretto (east) with types of pottery associated with females – the pots with deliberately roughed surface, fire dogs and twin and triple pots may be interpreted in terms of gender specific ritual functions or domestic duties Nebelsick 1997: 42).

Although there is never a straightforward correlation between mortuary attire and the social persona of the deceased, bipolar gender categories appear rigidly fixed in early Iron Age graves. Dress is often only accessible via bronze or iron fittings such as pins, fibulae or belts, while a wide range of jewellery of gold, bronze, iron, amber, jet and glass is in use in the early Iron Age. Some types of objects are used only by men or women, but often the combination of dress elements is important.

Dress is used to create and maintain appearance, which is crucial for the way in which individual identities are perceived by others (Sørensen 1997). Social rules and regulations favoured and restricted ways of which appearance is constructed. An example of this could be the wearing of veils in the Early Iron Age; veils were clearly worn by some women, but not by others. It has yet to be explored which aspects of identity are performed, signified and read by wearing a veil, and if there are regional or contextual differences in this practice.

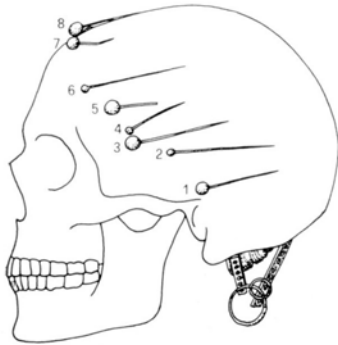


Fig. 2: Pins found in a woman's grave, a secondary burial in the burial mound Magdalenenberg/Villingen. The row of pins around her face indicates that she wore a headdress, a hair band or veil. The position of the pins may lead to the conclusion that her hair was covered completely, which would have altered her appearance significantly (Lenerz-de Wilde 1989).

Recent studies in the Villanovian cemetery of Verucchio (Eles 2002), to name another example, have shown that red garments were already at that time signifying male political power. A number of incredibly fine coloured and woven textiles have been found in the salt mines of Hallstatt, and although they were probably found in a secondary context, they prove the importance and high standard of textile work, which is for a number of reasons believed to be in the hands of women. The patterns have parallels on contemporary pottery and are also displayed in art.

The data collection and analysis will be aided by an image database and spatial analysis in a GIS environment. The image database has already proven to be very valuable and useful for previous works, and its design will be developed in the collaborative environment. The spatial analysis of the gathered data will be analysed on two different scales: firstly, individual cemeteries will be integrated in a 'pseudo GIS environment', which will help tracing internal developments and enable spatial statistics as well as studies of demography. Secondly, the integration of sites and the results of the study in a GIS will open up a number of possibilities to study their relationship to landscape, topography and trade routes, which is crucial for discriminating between 'natural' and 'cultural' boundaries of understandings of identity. It may also be a tool to analyse the effects of population density on the dynamics of prehistoric people in social competition. The network analysis will be a further tool to discover relations of images, objects and sites, and help to examine centrality, concepts of control and bottlenecks of distribution.

In short, this study utilizes all available data on and around the material human body to investigate aspects of identity. Human representations can tell us much about the nature of society, about people and how they were entangled in networks of production and consumption. I believe that through better understanding individual identities in the late Bronze and early Iron Age, we can gain a deeper understanding of social relations and societies as a whole.

Timescale and Work plan

Year 1:

1. review of relevant literature to further refine research objectives
2. refine and finalize scope of art analysis
3. methodology of data collection
4. design image database and GIS environment
5. identify art to analyse in core area

6. data collection and coding
7. establish contacts with other researchers and institutions
8. meeting with mentors and advisers to discuss project progress

Year 2:

9. continue data collection and coding
10. select comparative case studies in the Mediterranean
11. collect and code data
12. data analysis and interpretation – part one: analysis of art
13. network analysis of art elements
14. meeting with mentors and advisers to discuss project progress

Year 3:

15. review of relevant literature on cemetery data
16. refine and finalize scope of grave analysis
17. identify cemeteries to analyse
18. design methodology of data collection
19. data collection and coding of graves
20. meeting with mentors and advisers to discuss project progress

Year 4:

21. data analysis and interpretation – part two: cemetery data
22. comparative analysis of art and cemetery data in the different regions
23. select comparative cemetery data from the Mediterranean
24. integration of results in a GIS environment
25. network analysis of burial data
26. meeting with mentors and advisers to discuss project outcome

Year 5:

27. presentation of results
28. writing-up the monograph (will continue into the following years)

Risks

Amongst the greatest risks in this project is unwise data choice to get comparative results. This will be controlled by working in two steps – a complete survey of human depictions in the core area, and a focused choice of comparative data of other areas.

A further risk may include restrictions and limited access to some of the important objects. This may include limitations to the rights of publishing photographs of objects, or reproducing published images of objects. Purchasing publishing rights may result in costs that are difficult to estimate now. Copyright issues have to be kept in mind and considered throughout the course of the project.

Deliverables and public relations during the course of the project

Information about ongoing research and preliminary results will be published on the project website. This avoids delays in the transfer of knowledge and international discussion. The methodology and bibliography will be made openly accessible. A digital data base on human images, which will provide the basis of the network analysis, will be web-based.

The process of research and the dissemination of its progress should be made as transparent as possible. During the work, the participation on international conferences is planned (European Association of Archaeologists, Deutscher Verband für Altertumsforschung).

Publications and outcome

Several outcomes are anticipated to arise from the research: The primary goal is to provide the basis for a detailed, data rich monograph on the changing identities in the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages

in Central Europe, which would enable me to hand in a ‘Habilitation’ at the University of Vienna. In addition to that, the research shall provide the basis of a popular book about Hallstatt and the Early Iron Age in English, a much needed textbook for academics and students alike. The work will enhance our understanding of Iron Age identities substantially and provide insight into the rich archaeological material for an international audience.

During the five years of the project, several articles of individual case studies will be published. The public promotion of the research will include the participation in international conferences, public lectures and a professional web appearance.

Research base and international cooperation

The research will be based at the School of Archaeology and Ancient History of the University of Leicester, embedded in the Leverhulme Trust ‘Tracing Networks’ programme. Research will profit from the collaborative environment and discussions within the research group.

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen from the University of Cambridge has kindly offered to remain my mentor for further studies on identity in my area of archaeological expertise. She is an expert on European Bronze Age with particular interest in the role of material culture in the formation of identity and the use of burial practices in central and Northern Europe. The partners of the Leverhulme sponsored project ‘Changing beliefs of the Human Body’, in particular John Robb, Simon Stoddart, Oliver Harris, Jessica Hughes and Dusan Boric (all based at the University of Cambridge) will be involved in the study of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age identities due to shared fields of interest in different chronologic periods. Cambridge will therefore be an important institution to cooperate with.

Andreas Lippert and Otto Urban from the Department for Prehistory and Early History at the University of Vienna, have both agreed to provide some of the necessary intellectual support by sharing their extensive knowledge of Iron Age Archaeology in Central Europe. Vienna is an ideal location in terms of accessing monographs and journals in German language as well as Eastern European languages. The library of the Department for Prehistory and Early History is well equipped with the relevant literature, and those missing can easily be obtained by using the resources of the University Library, the library of the Natural History Museum or the National Library.

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