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978-0-521-58579-8 - Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe
Edited by Bettina Arnold and D. Blair Gibson
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Introduction. Beyond the mists: forging an ethnological approach to Celtic studies

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> [A]rchaeology alone, without the texts, in the rustic farmsteads and peasant hamlets; the forts and strongholds of chieftains and tribes; the barbaric panoply of parade and war; even the evidence for rituals including human sacrifice and head-hunting, shows us a picture of a society barbarous and uncivilized in its essentials however much the superficial veneer may have been acquired by exceptional individuals and societies in for instance Gaul. And that we have read the archaeological evidence correctly, the texts amply confirm
> (Piggott 1968:46).

Why the Celts?

To the modern culturally sensitive intellectual it may seem like an exercise in ethnocentric vanity: a group of European and Euroamerican authors coming together to produce a book on the political achievements of the Celts. However, to those of us engaged in Celtic studies, this work marks a sort of emergence from the humanist ghetto – an effort to establish a rapport with those individuals working in the mainstream of the social sciences.

The study of Celtic peoples has been characterized by both insularity and disciplinary fragmentation. This situation is partly due to the extraordinary richness of the material remains of these peoples. In the periods prior to Roman expansion the Celts had spread throughout most of central and western Europe and the British Isles, and came to occupy parts of eastern Europe, central Italy and Anatolia. The often impressive material remains of their cultures have busied antiquarians and archaeologists for over two centuries. Celtic cultures persisted intact beyond the Roman conquest on the fringes of Europe in the British Isles and Brittany. The languages and folklore of the modern Celtic peoples, as well as the written texts of their historic ancestors, have become the province of linguists and philologists. Scholars working in these various disciplines have not really perceived any need to coordinate their researches or to exchange information.

In the past archaeologists were justified in restricting their attention to excavation and the description of artifacts, even in areas where early texts were available. The Celtic texts were and are difficult to read and interpret. Trustworthy translations of many of the important texts, such as the Irish and Welsh law-tracts and annals, have only appeared in a trickle over the past century. Perceived cultural differences between the Celts of the British Isles and the Continent made it seem unlikely in any case that the materials from one area would have any bearing on other Celtic cultural areas (see Patterson, this volume).

We feel that after over a century of work enough archaeological data have accumulated, and a sufficient number of texts have been edited and translated, to warrant synthetic analyses. Indeed, it seems clear that further progress in understanding Celtic Europe will only result from interdisciplinary collaboration. To the editors of this volume, and to many of the contributors, the intimidation that we might have felt in the face of the "problems" of the data has given way to a feeling of anticipation as we have come to realize the potential in the diverse records of the Celts. These sources will permit analyses that will make substantive contributions to the debates on many of the great questions of the historical social sciences.

Despite their common linguistic stock, the Celtic peoples came to exhibit tremendous diversity in subsistence adaptations not only across Europe, but even within regions such as the British Isles. The various Celtic groups exhibit great variation in social integration, as well as in the kinds of social and economic institutions they possess. This diversity is what makes this area an exciting place to initiate research. Like Polynesia, Celtic Europe is a fertile place within which to investigate questions involving the factors which effect and affect social development, as well as the process of social and economic "adaptive radiation." Indeed, a number of the authors represented in this volume (Brun, Collis, Dietler, Haselgrove, Wells) have chosen to examine the variation in social configurations within and between Celtic societies.

It is too much to expect that this volume will influence all scholars in the various fields of Celtic studies to turn their backs on entrenched academic traditions and divisions that are over a century in the making. However, this volume demonstrates the willingness of several

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researchers to initiate paradigm changes in their respective fields. It is hoped that research projects testing explicit behavioral models in the later prehistoric and protohistoric periods will be carried out in Europe in the near future.

A question of identity: defining "Celtic"

The book's title contains three troublesome terms which many readers may question. What precisely is meant by the rubric "Celtic" in the context of this volume? It can be taken to mean a Boston basketball team, or existing groups of modern-day Gaelic speakers, or all Frenchmen, past and present.[1] The adjective "Celtic" has been applied to peoples from Ireland to Czechoslovakia, from the Urnfield period to the present day. It has many different meanings in different contexts, and some will inevitably contradict others. Linguists, social anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, folklorists and sports writers all lay claim to the term, and all use it differently.

The first recorded use of the term "Celts" is usually attributed to Herodotus' description of peoples encountered by Greek traders to the north of Massalia in the fifth century BC. He refers to these peoples as "Keltoi". It is possible that this was a more or less accurate rendering of the term used by the local peoples to refer to themselves, but it is unlikely that the term would have been familiar to contemporary peoples living just slightly further north, much less to groups living in completely different geographic areas in earlier or later times. Celticists assign primarily linguistic significance to the term "Celtic" (Dillon and Chadwick 1972:2–3; Evans 1977:67) and in this sense it is taken to mean those groups of historic peoples known to have spoken Celtic languages. Included in this group are the inhabitants of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man. This language family affiliation may well indicate a common Celtic identity which transcended local polities at various times. For most archaeologists, however, the term "Celtic" refers to peoples sharing a common material culture and a distinctive art style. Included are those areas of central Europe and the British Isles which share these archaeological characteristics, beginning in the late Hallstatt period and continuing until Roman contact. For some archaeologists the time frame is broader, incorporating the whole span of time between the Neolithic and the early medieval period in Ireland, Wales and Scotland (Burgess 1980: 177; Renfrew 1987: 245; Harding 1990).

The term "Celtic," then, appears to be almost dangerously non-specific when applied indiscriminately to what, to some researchers, are different cultural and sociopolitical groups (see Collis, this volume). In a sense its incorporation into so many different disciplines is an extreme example of "lumping," and one which seems inadequate to the task of accurately representing the disparate groups to which it is applied. On the other hand, its pervasiveness requires some explanation other than simple expedience. While it may never be possible to prove conclusively that the prehistoric "Celtic" peoples spoke Celtic languages, certain aspects of material culture, art style, and ideological constructs referred to as "Celtic" by archaeologists, linguists, and historians do reflect a remarkable temporal and spatial continuity.

Definitions: chiefdom/state

Most anthropological research on social evolution has been conducted on non-western societies, and models derived from such studies have then been applied to the reconstruction of European prehistory with varying success (Renfrew 1976; Milisauskas 1978; van de Velde 1979). It seemed both necessary and desirable to present in one volume research which considers how social evolution and political systems might be conceptualized utilizing historic and prehistoric evidence from western Europe. The aim is to bring studies of Celtic civilization into the cross-cultural theoretical mainstream.

The terms "chiefdom" and "state" are almost as problematic as the term "Celtic." Service (1971; 1975) and Sahlins (1958; 1968) are of course the classic sources for definitions of both terms, but the literature on this subject is rife with studies debunking all or parts of the original definitions and assumptions (Webb 1973; Peebles and Kus 1977; Lewis 1978; Sanders and Webster 1978; Carneiro 1981; Feinman and Neitzel 1984; Upham 1987). Though these studies have pointed out many glaring deficiencies in the formulation of a linear social typology, they have not managed to suggest a convincing alternative approach to the study of social evolution.

The static and bounded nature of the developmental stages represented by these types poses difficulties in interpreting and understanding the transitions from one "stage" to the next.[2] Not surprisingly, this is where most attention has been focussed (Sanders and Marino 1970; Sanders 1974; Isaac 1975; Kristiansen 1982; Johnson and Earle 1987). How does a "developed chiefdom" differ from an "early state," and can the two "stages" be distinguished from one another archaeologically? According to Carneiro,

> Our task is to draw lines at different points through this continuum to set off significantly different parts of it. Although this is partly arbitrary, it is not entirely so. Only if the lines between stages are drawn at appropri-

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ate points will the most salient features between contrasting forms stand out (1981:67).

This passage illustrates the dilemma posed by the use of an evolutionary typology. How are the "appropriate" points at which the "lines of demarcation" are drawn determined? And what distinguishes a "salient" feature from a non-salient one? The procedures by which these divisions are identified and, too often, codified, vary from author to author, and the decision-making process involved is seldom justified or even delineated in detail. Two of the few points on which there is general agreement are that "chiefdoms are poorly defined and understood" (Earle 1978:6), and that "our most pressing need ... is for a detailed comparative study of chiefdoms from all parts of the world and at all levels of development" (Carneiro 1981:71).

Refining our models of political organization, rather than rejecting out of hand the use of concepts such as segmentary society, chiefdom, or primitive state, is imperative if progress is to be made in unravelling the past history of the world's polities. Some form of typological control is necessary if only to advance critical thinking on these concepts. Organizational constructs defining the elements of social evolution (such as the degree of social complexity) are essential, or cross-cultural comparisons cannot be carried out. When simple foragers are placed on the same level as complex chiefdoms, or a segmentary society is considered to be equivalent to a state, it is impossible to generate interpretations regarding the significance of any cultural practice or social institution.

The models of political systems discussed above are recent creations of American anthropologists, which have been taken up by processualist archaeologists. However in Europe Celtic political systems have been evaluated within a distinctly different scholarly tradition, a tradition that is also represented in this volume (see Büchsenschütz, Fischer). This school of thought is an outgrowth of history and the study of Classical civilization, and arrives at interpretations of the past primarily through the direct historical approach and inductive reasoning. A brief history of archaeological research on the Celts concentrating on the motivations and methodologies of different European theoretical schools follows in the next section.

Perspectives on Celtic political systems: the direct historical approach

The operating assumption of the direct historical approach is that it is possible to trace back the history of a people in a particular area from the present into the past, moving from the historical sources to the archaeological record without forfeiting continuity or traversing a theoretical threshold in the process. It is an approach favored by many European archaeologists studying the prehistoric Iron Age, and has been applied, for example, by Pauli (1978) in his study of the early Iron Age salt mining community on the Dürrnberg near Hallein in Austria, as well as by various researchers attempting to connect the early medieval period directly with the early Iron Age in southern Germany, with the Classical sources acting as a segue (Fischer 1982; Kimmig 1983a, among others). This approach treats the archaeological record in western Europe like a river of continuous linear development, which can be traced to its source even when it has dried to a trickle and vanishes with the appearance of written records. It is assumed that the trajectory and the people remain the same, and that the gap between history and prehistory can be bridged without requiring a change in the techniques of investigation, or in the analytical approaches applied.

The direct historical approach originated within the context of the intellectual tradition of European archaeology in which a direct link is perceived between the subjects of archaeological inquiry and the researchers themselves. Several citations serve to emphasize this point. Peter Goessler: "Prehistory is an historic discipline, not a natural science ... and it serves historic goals even if its sources are generally quite different ones" (1950:7). Hans Jürgen Eggers: "There is only one history, and prehistory is part of it in its entirety. These two types of scholarship differ only in their different sources: on the one hand written texts, on the other material culture" (1986:16).

There are several problems with the direct historical approach, but perhaps the most telling is its dependence on the written word as the final authority on the actions and lifeways of people in the past. The archaeological record is rarely allowed to speak for itself, and when it contradicts the written sources, or the reconstructions derived from the written sources, such irregularities are simply explained away as minor detractions from the overall pattern of continuity. In theory, the concept is laudable, for the direct historical approach is in some ways a form of ethnoarchaeology. In practice, however, the direct historical approach denies the archaeological record primary validity, and often overestimates the value and dependability of written sources at the expense of the material record.[3]

The European approach to archaeological interpretation has continued to be primarily inductive. Pauli states this very clearly in the following passage:

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> I attempted at that time [in 1978] to combine all the facts available up to that point based on preliminary studies of my own rather than on models borrowed from elsewhere. In the interests of clarity, and in order to bring the details and general patterns of such processes into greater relief for myself, I compared the results with relevant examples from other places and time periods wherever possible. For this reason, which simultaneously reflects the course of my own scholarship, "models" or "case studies" are applied to my work only after the archaeological microanalysis has been done. And that is the way it will stay. (1984:49–50)

The emphasis in west central European archaeology since 1945 has been primarily on gathering and cataloguing information, rather than on its interpretation from a social or processual perspective. One approach has been to map different categories of grave goods, creating pan-European distribution patterns which tell us very little about the people and processes which produced them;[4] another has been to analyze regional sequences with a view primarily to establishing chronologies that tell us even less about cultural process.[5] Both approaches have concrete if limited utility, but unfortunately answer few of the questions which most interest us if we are attempting to understand cultural change and the development of social complexity. Those "old school" European researchers who have the most comprehensive grasp of the material are often the least able to see the forest for the trees.

In archaeology, as in most other disciplines, moderation and a willingness to accept alternative perspectives are the key to developing a more integrated theoretical approach, combining elements of both inductive and deductive reasoning (which are generally present to some extent in all theoretical approaches, even when they are not explicitly identified). In order to realize the potential of the sources for the late prehistoric/early historic periods of Europe, an analytical approach must be developed that integrates questions regarding the social and cultural existence of the Celts with the historical and archaeological data. The data are certainly rich and varied enough to support the kinds of investigations that have been carried out on more historically recent peoples of the non-western world, and we see no reason why the Celtic sphere cannot be scrutinized in the same fashion.

The ethnoarchaeology of Celtic peoples: *potential for Celtic ethnology*

At the dawn of written history, speakers of Celtic languages occupied most of present-day Europe. Though the demise of Gaelic culture commenced with the military defeats of the Cisalpine Gauls at the hands of the Romans at the beginning of the second century BC, the last of the independent Gaelic polities in the British Isles did not succumb until the eighteenth century AD. The protracted interactions of the non-literate Gaelic-speaking peoples of western and central Europe with the literate Mediterranean civilizations, and the lengthy persistence of Gaelic polities at the fringes of Europe beyond the reach of Roman and German expansion, have resulted in a temporally and spatially diverse textual record of their cultures.

The Celtic cultures of the Continent figure among the earliest and most durable subjects of the West's original anthropologists, the classical geographers. These include Poseidonius, Strabo, Caesar, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus and Pliny (see Tierney 1960; Piggott 1968: Ch. 1; Crumley 1974; Champion 1985). Ethnographic accounts of the insular Celts also survive from non-Gaelic writers of the medieval period such as Giraldus Cambrensis (1978a, 1978b, 1982) and Geoffrey of Monmouth (1929). Of significance equal to or greater than this legacy of ethnographic writing is the enormous and diverse body of ethnohistoric writing produced by Irish and Welsh *literati* between the eighth and seventeenth centuries AD. The most prolific and reliable sources on Gaelic social institutions are the Irish and Welsh law texts, produced by a class of native jurists. Next to these in usefulness are the annals and genealogies, which supply much chronological, historical, and social information. And lastly, the mythological cycles, hagiographies, and other literary works inform on ideology, ritual, ethics, and morality of the insular Celts, and give an indication of the significance of roles and institutions such as fosterage, feasting, and chieftainship.

The information contained in the ethnographic and ethnohistoric texts of the Celts, supplemented by over a century of archaeological investigations, is as complete as the sources available for cultural areas more familiar to the modern anthropologist such as Mesoamerica, East Africa, the North American Woodlands, the Pacific Northwest Coast, or Polynesia. The traditional social structures of all of the latter culture areas have been eclipsed in part or in whole by contact with modern state systems, and the cultures themselves were dramatically transformed through their relations with economic and

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social institutions of European origin. The ethnographic and ethnohistoric records we possess for these cultures exhibit limitations and deficiencies equivalent in magnitude and kind to the deficiencies of the Celtic sources from earlier centuries. The cultures that existed within all of these regions exhibit comparable diversity in social complexity, in social and cultural institutions, and in economic adaptations. These regions are also fundamentally similar in that the observations made on specific cultures, such as the Tlingit, Iroquois, Maori, or Irish were made over an extended period of time, and so reflect much *in situ* cultural change. Clearly then there are no qualitative peculiarities of the data base of the Celtic cultures that preclude either the application of the techniques of ethnology, or the use of these data in cross-cultural comparisons.

One would think that the copious and often dramatic remains of the societies of later prehistoric Europe would offer much incentive for theory building in the area of political systems. However, as the next section indicates, much of the past and current thinking on the structure of the societies of the Late Hallstatt and early La Tène periods of west central Europe is rather murky. An ethnological approach to the situation could offer a firmer basis than the limited strategies discussed above for attempting social reconstructions.

The potential of the archaeological record for Celtic ethnology: studies of late Hallstatt period social organization and political systems

As far back in prehistory as archaeological cultures can be identified with the speakers of Celtic languages, their social units and networks were regional in extent. This is not to claim that the Celtic-speaking groups were the first in Europe to achieve a measure of social complexity. Indeed, regionally integrated sodalities can probably be identified as early as the late Neolithic of northern Europe, if not before (Milisauskas and Kruk 1984; Renfrew 1973).

Researchers in several European countries have proposed the appearance of chiefdoms in northern, western, and eastern Europe in the early Bronze Age (Randsborg 1974; Renfrew 1979; van de Velde 1979; Kristiansen 1982). There is tangible evidence that social complexity increased throughout the Bronze Age in Europe. Ostentatious objects in bronze and gold increase in size, number, and degree of elaboration. What this trend no doubt signifies is the expansion and increasing reliability of trade networks in raw materials, and vertical and horizontal expansion of chiefly aristocracies. As the sphere of influence of these aristocracies increased, they would be better able to mobilize and expend capital on the production of sumptuary crafts.

Greater social complexity is more directly manifested in regional florescences in social integration during the later Bronze Age, as is evidenced by the establishment of substantive settlements in the Lusatian area of Poland, in Switzerland, in the eastern Hallstatt Zone, as well as in northern Italy. This trend culminated in west central Europe in the appearance of highly stratified polities during the period 600–400 BC (Hallstatt C, D; La Tène A). So uniform are the cultural manifestations associated with this late Hallstatt florescence that the region over which they are distributed has come to be called the West Hallstatt Zone.

This late Hallstatt cultural florescence is characterized by large fortified hilltop settlements and lavish burials in tumuli. Imported pottery wine vessels, as well as large and exquisitely crafted vessels of bronze, bear testimony to mercantile and/or political contacts with Italy and Greece. Craft production became more intensive and specialized with some products, such as sheet metal work in gold and bronze, clearly sponsored by the elites for their exclusive consumption. Iron was introduced during this period, and supplanted bronze as the material for tools. Pottery production reached new heights with a profusion of forms being produced at *Fürstensitze* such as the Heuneburg. The greater care invested in late Hallstatt ceramics is evident in the finer wares, which are often finely painted polychrome or delicately stippled vessels. The few pieces of fabric that have been preserved in the tombs also show that intricate, multi-colored designs were woven for the aristocrats.

Some writers who have recently addressed the question of the nature of the Celtic political systems on the European continent have refused to see anything like a state or chiefdom in the archaeological Hallstatt Celtic polities, consigning them instead to the ambiguously defined category of *Stammesorganisation* ("clan" or "tribal organization"; see for instance Bittel 1981b:15; Hingley 1984; Fischer, this volume). In the anthropological literature of the present day, however, the notion of the "tribe" has a heavily circumscribed meaning. When it is used at all, it is generally applied only to those societies such as the Yanomamö which have populations gathered into villages, but which lack segmentary organization and big men. So conceived, it is clear from the information we have on the societies of the late Hallstatt and late La Tène periods that their polities were simply too large and complex to be called "tribal."

If we take issue with the position of the "tribal"

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structure of the political systems of the late La Tène period Celts, how should their polities be characterized? An awareness on the part of some researchers that the Hallstatt polities were regionally integrated entities is expressed in synthetic examinations of the site record that have associated the enclosed hilltop settlements, called in German *Fürstensitze* ("princely seats"), or *Adelssitze* ("aristocratic seats"; Kimmig 1969:95), with the large tumuli (*Fürstengräber*). In most cases the geographical focus of these treatments has covered the western Hallstatt area in its entirety (Kimmig 1969, 1983a; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978; Bintliff 1984b). Wolfgang Kimmig was the first to demonstrate that the *Fürstensitze*, taken together with nearby tumulus cemeteries, constituted the focal points of a number of small polities (1969). However, when seeking to explain the nature of these late Hallstatt polities, Kimmig fell back upon familiar historical systems out of Europe's more recent past.

> This suggestion gives rise to the consideration, whether or not in fact it is possible that behind the above mentioned areas where "aristocrat's graves" are concentrated noble territories emerge in outline. If this is the case, then at least in the region of the northwest Lower Alps during the late Hallstatt period a map is produced which may only be compared with a corresponding map of the small German principalities from the time following the Thirty Years' War. (Kimmig 1969:108)

This "feudal model" of West Hallstatt society is another product of the direct historical approach, though it must be said that it is less a coherent model than a collection of appelations. Kimmig never bothered to elaborate his conjectures in any detail, and later proffered a different set of terms. In his 1983 treatment of the results of the Heuneburg excavations, the most important hilltop sites became *Dynastensitze* (dynastic seats), the capitals of *Dynastengeschlechte* (dynastic lineages). Proceeding from his impressions of differences in site size, the number of associated exotic Mediterranean finds, and the trappings of tombs, Kimmig proposed three gradations of late Hallstatt aristocrats: *Burgherren* or *große Herren* (castle or great lords), *kleine Häuptlinge* (small chieftains) and *Bauernadel* (peasant nobels) (1983a:147). Under the rule of the aristocrats were peasants and clients (p. 151; Pauli 1985:30). These terms communicate Kimmig's conviction that late Hallstatt society was variably stratified across the Western Zone, but little else.

The popularity of the feudal model has resulted in a sort of theoretical stagnation in Iron Age studies (Oeftiger 1984:98). Steuer has criticized this "feudal fixation" as obstructing the interpretation of "real" conditions during the early Iron Age (1979:602). It would certainly be of interest to learn whether the polities of late medieval Germany bear anything beyond a mere formal resemblance to the political systems of the western Hallstatt Zone, but those who advocate this scenario have not attempted a structured comparison.

A few investigations into the social structure of late Hallstatt society have been undertaken that proceed from the prolific burial data (Kossack 1959; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1970; Pauli 1978; Hodson 1977, 1979). The artifact assemblages associated with the burials have been analyzed to determine the sex, age, kin-group affiliation, and social ranking of the dead. These studies are difficult to equate as their premises and objectives are so varied. The burial analyses of Pauli and Kilian-Dirlmeier do, however, point toward the existence of polities of regional extent – polities that can be delineated through the distributions of distinctive patterns of style and form in material culture, as well as by peculiarities of the burial ritual. Variations in the position of a grave within a tumulus, and in the quantity of accompanying grave goods, imply the stratification of the polities of the West Hallstatt Zone into nascent social classes.

More recently Heinrich Härke has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the settlement record of the later Hallstatt periods (1979). Though it was not a stated goal of his study, he attempted to estimate the territorial extent of the Hallstatt polities, and put forward some estimates of the gross configurations of the society that produced the settlement record. Both Kimmig's and Härke's studies are premised upon the implicit assumption that the *Fürstensitze* and their associated tumuli constituted political capitals. Härke eschews the 'feudal' model of Hallstatt society, but stops short of offering an explicit alternative (1979:135–6, 1989:185–94).

In their influential paper, Frankenstein and Rowlands applied dependency models, a combination of Wallerstein's core/periphery model and Ekholm's prestige goods system concept, to the West Hallstatt case (1978). Their arguments are premised upon the existence of a four-tiered hierarchy of chieftains, consisting of a paramount chieftain, "vassal chiefs," "sub-chiefs," and "village chiefs." Paramount chieftains became ascendant in the hierarchy by acquiring exotic items from the south that figured in social transactions. Their increased social stature enabled them to sponsor the production of other prestige goods, such as glass and bronze jewelry, that were distributed to their aristocratic subordinates. This explanation of the origin of the Hallstatt polities has been justly criticized by Bintliff (1984:167), who points out the fact

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that Mediterranean imports are relatively rare finds on Hallstatt *Fürstensitze* sites, and that the exotic bronze vessels often have the appearance of heirlooms – being consigned to burial only after several generations of use. However, he finds no fault with Frankenstein and Rowlands' model of Hallstatt political structure:

> [I]n this phase the spacing of centres suggests large territories and even "proto-state" structures, to be linked perhaps to the emergence of paramount chiefs or princes from an aristocratic stratum scattered throughout the region. The paramounts associated with the major putative centres and their particularly impressive prestige burials, seem to have dominated numerous district chiefs whose rich tumuli are found at various points around the suggested territory of each princedom. (1984:165)

The reasoning of Frankenstein and Rowlands is fundamentally similar to Kimmig's in that both stress the importance of exchange in wealth items in generating the perceived social structure.

The West Hallstatt polities: chiefdoms or states?

It is clear from the foregoing cursory synopsis of past research and thinking upon the political systems of the West Hallstatt Zone that early Iron Age polities of regional scale can now be recognized in the European archaeological record with certainty, even if their exact dimensions are unknown. The most prominent signature of these earlier, archaeological polities of the Hallstatt period are the sizeable elevated fortified settlements, the *Fürstensitze*. These settlements advertise their likely role as former political capitals by virtue of their size (1–11 ha), their strategic location at the confluence of major waterways, architectural features such as large enclosing earthworks or walls, and the remains of buildings located both within and outside the walls, as well as by the proximity of these sites to groupings of large burial mounds. Sumptuary Mediterranean imports within the central burials of these tumuli can be taken as sure indicators that members of the ruling kin groups were interred within them.

A "political capital" in the sense used above refers to a site or assemblage of sites that function as the integrative focus or foci of a polity. Polities such as chiefdoms and primitive states are integrated by a variety of forces, manifesting themselves both physically and psychologically, implemented through institutions of leadership. The leaders of chiefdoms and states establish the legitimacy of their rule by acting as mediators in a cult of aristocratic ancestors (see Firth 1936), as well as through attendant notions of sacredness attaching to their person as a result of this role (e.g. *mana* in Polynesia, *neimed* in early medieval Ireland).

Chiefdoms and primitive states are also integrated economically by means of networks consisting of the economic needs, rights, privileges, and obligations that bind aristocrats to craftsmen, freemen, and dependants. Such polities are paradoxically no less integrated through the factions of kinsmen and adherents that cluster around the leading aristocrats. These stand behind and support aristocrats in their bids for power, constitute fighting forces in the pursuance of military goals, and intimidate or physically suppress malcontents and rivals (see Dodgshon, this volume).

All of these elements which serve to integrate polities are given a tangible focus in monuments which concentrate and express them. These monuments may consist of any number of constructions in differing cultural contexts: tombs, memorial markers, temples, or special settlements. Invariably, however, their construction is initiated and sponsored by the leading elements of the society, and so often they communicate and reinforce the legitimacy of this group to lead. A political capital, then, should not be construed as being solely and invariably the *residence* of a ruling kin group, though a royal or chiefly residence may constitute a significant element of the capital. Capitals may consist in part of the cemeteries of aristocrats, religious centers (temples or cathedrals), and craft working centers. These individual elements may be concentrated in one locale or dispersed throughout a territory (see Crumley 1976, and Gibson, Crumley, this volume).

Though no *Fürstensitze* have been completely excavated, the extensive investigation of the Heuneburg in southern Germany has demonstrated that the site was intensively occupied, and contained substantial buildings. The finds from this settlement are evidence for a great range and intensity of craft production. The presence of Mediterranean imports in the form of ceramic vessels from Greece for the drinking ritual and the large exotic vessels of bronze that have been recovered from tumulus burials associated with this and other *Fürstensitze*, as well as other objects and materials such as coral and ivory from the Mediterranean, attest to the substantive contacts that must have existed between the aristocrats of the West Hallstatt Zone and their counterparts in Greece and Etruria.

The large tumuli that occur in the vicinity of the *Fürstensitze* often contain the remains of one or two individuals buried with sumptuary goods in the central chamber.[6] These *Fürstengräber* are tangible evidence of the considerable power that accrued to a narrow class

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within Hallstatt society, consisting of the ruling elites and their families. These manifestations of personal political power point to the existence of a sharply defined aristocracy (see Fischer 1981b:77–84). Such stark social divisions stand in sharp contrast to the finer gradations in rank which one encounters in simpler chiefdoms, and would seem to indicate that the social landscape of the West Hallstatt Zone was dominated by either complex chiefdoms or primitive states (Bintliff 1984b; van de Velde 1985; Pauli 1985:31).

Primitive states, like those of medieval Europe, of the interlacustrine region of eastern Africa in the precolonial period (e.g. Rwanda, Bunyoro, Baganda, Nkore), and throughout Asia, exhibit a central authority with sweeping personal power.[7] The king's authority is manifested in his ability to appoint local administrators, and to exert his rule through a nascent bureaucracy (Maquet 1961; Johnson and Earle 1987:246). Behind the king's authority stands a permanent body of warriors, giving force to his rule.

In primitive states the aristocracy and commoners are sharply distinguished; ties of kinship between the aristocracy and commoners, fictive or otherwise, no longer exist. The king and his family take on a life that is both spatially and socially segregated from the populace. They are distinguished by great affluence, through their possession of sumptuary and ritualistic paraphernalia restricted to their rank and office, and by adherence to a distinct behavioral code. The comportment of the king is meant to communicate his rank and the sacredness of his person. This latter quality is promulgated through rituals that are meant to maintain the state through his special relationship with the supernatural. Many of these aspects of kingship are perceptible in the archaeological record of the West Hallstatt Zone.

Sumptuary restrictions, involving both food and drink, seem to have been one of the distinguishing features of West Hallstatt elites. Analyses of the skeletal remains recovered from the West Hallstatt zone indicate that both male and female elites were often of above average height (Arnold 1991a), indicating possible dietary differences. The aristocratic burials are distinguished by the presence of feasting equipment such as cauldrons and drinking horns. These demonstrate the position of these leaders at the apex of the pyramid of social and ritual exchanges (see Dietler, this volume).

Evidence of the sacerdotal character of leadership in the Hallstatt period is circumstantial but strong nevertheless, consisting as it does of the lavish treatment afforded the chiefly dead. In addition to the inclusion of equipment appropriate to feasting and drinking rituals found in the tombs of leaders, four-wheeled wagons were also frequently interred, and it is certain that these possessed an important ritual function attendant to their association with kingship.[8] Anthropomorphic statues were erected on the tops of some tumuli in southern Germany. The famous ithyphallic statue on top of the Hirshlanden tumulus wears a torc and conical hat, objects found in the Hochdorf central burial which may have been symbols of kingship. Torcs are found on depictions of gods, such as the representation of Cernunnos on the Gundestrup cauldron.[9] Kurt Bittel (1981c:93–5) and Kimmig (1983a) have also noted that several Hallstatt tumulus cemeteries (Heiligkreuztal, Obermachtal, Hohmichele) have adjacent *Viereckschanzen* (Bittel 1981c:93–5, Kimmig 1983a:219). *Viereckschanzen* are now understood to be enclosures where religious rituals were conducted, identified with the *temenos* of the historical sources. Those that have been excavated date to La Tène times, but Bittel and Kimmig argue that they must have Hallstatt precursors, and Bittel suggests their connection to a cult of the ancestors (1981c:93–5).[10]

At this juncture it is difficult to identify the residences of leaders on the nucleated settlements, though a case can be made for the larger, enclosed house at the Goldberg, located not far from the Ipf *Fürstensitz*, and the large house in the Heuneburg outer settlement (Audouze and Büchsenschütz 1992:214–17; Arnold, this volume). The preservation of this house *underneath* a tumulus within a tumulus cemetery could be taken as evidence of ancestor worship, as a house of a dead king could have become sanctified space. Thus it would seem that the late Hallstatt leaders segregated and elevated themselves and their families from the populace spatially, socially, and ritually. If all of these indications cannot be taken to prove the attainment of the socio-cultural level of the primitive state by polities of the Western Zone by late Hallstatt times, the possibility must at least be admitted.

Prospects

From an ethnological perspective, the artifacts, ecofacts, and settlements of complex societies are viewed as pathways to understanding the structure and behavior of the societies, social groups, and individuals that produced them. The ethnological perspective in archaeology encompasses the *region* as the primary unit of investigation, as the cultural systems and processes that we wish to understand were regional in extent. Archaeologists can only ignore the region at their peril, as social integration is a significant causal factor in the production of material culture. Behind the adoption of a regional framework for

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978-0-521-58579-8 - Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe
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the study of Celtic societies lies the tacit assumption that important behaviors and stimuli which had an impact at the level of the community or family originated at the supralocal level. To accept this statement of fact is to abandon the concept of local self-sufficiency. If one embraces this position, then it is necessarily incumbent upon the researcher to consider the potential impact of supralocal influences – whether they be social, economic, or ideological – when explaining phenomena at the individual, household, or community levels.

The regional approach is not directed to prove the existence of regionally integrated groups among the Celts, but to gain an understanding of their structure and constitution, and of the nature of the relationships that existed between them. Moreover, though the Celts were of the same broad linguistic stock and possessed many cultural institutions in common, they were distributed over a vast area with widely ranging geographical and ecological properties. Both the archaeological and the historical evidence suggests that the variation in social complexity and structure among the hundreds of polities in contemporary existence across Europe at any time during the Hallstatt–La Tène periods was considerable. An important application of the regional approach should be to further the examination of inter-group variation in social structure and complexity in Celtic Europe (Murray 1994).

The challenge then is to approach the recovery of archaeological data in a manner that addresses issues such as the course of social development, variation in the social constitution of groups across Europe and across time, the configuration of economic systems, the division of labor, the operation of ideological systems, and the transmission of ideas. We argue that research programs and strategies must be designed at the outset to identify and recover the data relevant to these issues in a systematic fashion. The initiation of archaeological research projects configured to the discovery of social behavior at the regional level of integration should steer archaeologists away from the detailed, particularistic perspective which tends to overemphasize minutiae at the expense of general patterns. Likewise the regional approach should supersede the panglossian surveys of artifact or feature types that, by default, contribute to the false impression of an artificially uniform social landscape. A regional approach could lead to the creation of novel methodologies for the resolution of problems in the areas of human behavior and social evolution.

The papers collected here do not represent the first steps taken upon the path toward a realization of an ethnological approach to the study of the Celts. Rather, this volume brings together several conflicting approaches and agendas for the interpretation of the remains of "Celtic" societies across Europe. The impetus for assembling this varied collection of works was to initiate a dialogue between otherwise isolated national schools, as well as between segregated disciplines. The operating assumptions of each paper are explicitly defined, and in a few instances contrast with other approaches. If scholars in different countries, working with different data sets, can be made aware of the work of others, and if a dialogue is established between them as a result, we will have gone no small distance toward a more unified approach.

Notes

1 Carole Crumley has discussed the Celtic character of French nationalism, and the use of topographic features and archaeological sites associated with the Celtic past of France for political purposes. François Mitterand's delivery of a major policy speech on the summit of the Aeduan stronghold of Bibracte in 1985 (Marquardt and Crumley 1987) is a case in point. "The French were not all Gaullists, but they are all Gallic, insofar as Celtic values define the French nation-state" (Crumley 1988: 8).
2 Tolstoy addresses this problem briefly in his review of Jones and Kautz's 1981 volume *The Transition to Statehood in the New World* when he refers to recent applications of non-linear differential equations, describing the phenomenon known as "chaos," to the study of social evolution (1989:72, 78).
3 These pitfalls in the use of historical analogy were pointed out some time ago by Binford (1967).
4 This ultimately positivist and particularist approach has been described by Herbert Jankuhn as "stamp collecting" (Härke 1989:407).
5 Many regional chronologies have been produced over the past few decades, as the following references illustrate: Zürn 1952; Uenze 1964; Joachim 1968; Haffner 1965; Schaaf 1969; Sangmeister 1969; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1970; Liebschwager 1972; Parzinger 1986, among others.
6 Not all late Hallstatt era tumuli are associated with *Fürstensitze*, and not all *Fürstensitze* have tumulus cemeteries. The Magdalenenberg and the Hochdorf tumuli stand either alone or near open settlements, while the Ipf *Fürstensitz* lacks an associated cemetery.
7 It is ironic that given our familiarity with state structure, the literature on the organization of simple states in anthropology is scanty. Here we have utilized the term "primitive state," which we have borrowed from

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Service (1975), in preference to the terms "formative state" (Steward 1979:186), "early state" (Claessen and Skalník 1978b), and "archaic state" (Johnson and Earle 1987). These latter two terms seem to refer to a heterogeneous group of structures which are only linked by the factor of historical antiquity. The term "primitive state" does not connote the antiquity of the polity under question, but refers instead to the degree of organizational complexity of the unit.

8 From the European Bronze Age we have models of four wheeled wagons bearing sun discs, and from the late Hallstatt period from Strettweg, Austria, there is the famous bronze four-wheeled wagon bearing the likeness of a goddess presiding over a stag hunt. Kossack (1959) was the first to recognize that the Hallstatt four-wheeled wagon was an object that signified high social rank.

9 Similar statues occur throughout western and central Europe during the Iron Age (Bittel et al. 1981:121, 164).

10 In a recent paper, Matthew Murray (n.d.) has evaluated these monuments and argues for their significance as places for holding feasts connected with funerary rites. As such, *Viereckschanzen* would have seen only intermittent use.

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