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978-1-107-47542-7 - Bronze Age Cultures in France: The Later Phases from the Thirteenth to the Seventh Century B.C

N. K. Sandars

Excerpt

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## INTRODUCTION

THE BACKGROUND: EARLY AND MIDDLE  
BRONZE AGE

## I. GENERAL TERMS AND SYSTEMS

ANY study of France in the Bronze Age will rightly take its departure from Déchelette's monumental work. Much has, however, happened since 1910; therefore, as with other more recent systems, reassessment and redefinition are required. France, as a whole and in her parts, must be related to neighbouring lands and their changing systems. For this reason it is necessary in a short introductory section to consider these and the related cultures, particularly those of south-west Germany and Switzerland.

No single system of chronology such as Montelius's divisions of the northern Bronze Age will ever be entirely satisfactory for France, open as she always was, by sea and land, to many and various currents, contacts and contingencies. Nor is a horizontal, 'chest of drawers', arrangement of associated objects in recurring groups, such as Hawkes has demonstrated in Britain, yet possible.<sup>1</sup> One part of France may fit smoothly enough into the Montelian 'chest', another into Reinecke's, yet another into the Hawkesian, but it will need a saw and chisel to make the lot run together. Therefore apparent nonconformities and lack of typological synchronizations between the parts should not cause embarrassment but rather be expected: 'archaic' flat axes in one area contemporary with developed flanged axes in another, broad-tanged daggers overlapping with fine metal-hilted triangular weapons, finished 'Urnfield' pottery and rough 'Middle Bronze' wares. Such apparent discrepancies may occur on the same horizontal shelf, but not usually in the same drawer.

*The Reinecke system*

When Reinecke first formulated subdivisions of his Bronze period 'A',<sup>2</sup> he called them respectively the 'Gaubickelheim-Neuenheiligen-AI stage', and the 'Trassem-Lanquaid-Tinsdal-AII stage'. Although this AI spanned most of the Early Bronze Age, it was still basically Neolithic in character beyond the Hungarian-Bohemian provinces. It comprised the earlier Unětice flat graves of Bohemia, also crouched burials in flat graves (or occasionally under tumuli) in central Germany, late corded-ware amphorae, 'geschweifte Becher', flower-pot vases, faceted battle axes, and among metal goods the great metal-hilted daggers and halberds. In 1924

<sup>1</sup> Paper to the Prehistoric Society (1951).<sup>2</sup> Reinecke, 1924, 43.

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the metal-hilted daggers could still be called 'italischer Import', the products of a metal industry already well established south of the Alps; but Uenze has since shown<sup>1</sup> that no one of the various regional groups of these daggers, the Italian, Unětice, Rhône, etc., is demonstrably earlier than the others. On the contrary, all the main groups, with the exception of the most northerly, were the product of more or less contemporary local workshops. It has therefore become necessary to reconsider the original subdivisions of Reinecke 'A'. Societies which had at their disposal the high technical skill of the makers of the metal-hilted daggers would not long remain satisfied with the poor and scarce bronze equipment found buried in Adlerberg and Corded-ware graves.

It is time that AI and AII were redefined. Holste in 1942 took an important step towards solving the dilemma,<sup>2</sup> which was not entirely satisfactory since it crowded all the Straubing type of graves with neck plate (Scheibenkopf) and racquet pins into the same horizon with the Trassem and Lanquaid hoards and left ambiguous the position of the metal-hilted triangular daggers.<sup>3</sup> Some further clarification is necessary when considering France within the European Early and Middle Bronze Age, and for this reason the reader is referred to Table I in which France appears divided into five provinces with her immediate neighbours (vertical columns), while the chronological stages are shown with their provisional correlations in the horizontal columns. This scheme does not provide an entirely satisfactory solution, particularly in the correspondences between regions in touch with central European cultures and those to the west (where such contact is absent) which remain largely conjectural; it does, however, provide a skeleton chronology for the French material, and the following paragraphs of explanation are therefore limited to the chronological aspect of the problem, the skeleton, not the body.

The first horizontal column represents a stage when in the Hungarian and Bohemian-Unětice provinces metallurgy and enterprise were already moderately advanced, whereas farther west society was still basically Neolithic. Its metal component, where such existed, was of eventual Anatolian origin, imported more immediately from east-central Europe. It filtered through Hungary and the Unětice culture, and threw up its farthest tide-mark to the west in the Adlerberg culture of the right bank of the Rhine. I do not think that at this stage it crossed the Rhine.

In Baden, Kimmig,<sup>4</sup> following Holste,<sup>5</sup> distinguishes an older AI phase of the Early Bronze Age; in north Baden the Adlerberg culture, bell-beakers, and people of Michelsberg tradition; in south Baden late bell-beakers, and Battle-axe people, among persisting earlier Neolithic groups

<sup>1</sup> Uenze, 1938, 68.<sup>2</sup> Holste, 1942*a*, 1.<sup>3</sup> See also Eckes, 1938, 88, and Willvonseder, 1937, 1, 242.<sup>4</sup> Kimmig, 1941-7, 266.<sup>5</sup> Holste, 1942*a*, 16.

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such as Rössen and Michelsberg. That bell-beakers, Adlerberg, and corded ware are in part contemporary is shown first by the common undecorated pottery found with both Adlerberg and bell-beaker wares, and secondly by finds such as the Neuses (Kr. Gelnhausen) tumulus,<sup>1</sup> a primary, Single-grave burial (Corded-ware) with early type amphora and a secondary burial with a good bell-beaker. Survival of Corded-ware is also demonstrated by Kelsterbach, Starkenburg.<sup>2</sup> Here a late amphora was associated with copper beads and the so-called Straubing tutulus.

In the second or AII phase Holste distinguished three components: later Adlerberg (decorated jugs), Straubing (*sensu strictu*), and graves with the Horkheim-Donauberg variety of knot-headed pin. Kimmig identifies this phase in Baden as that in which the Straubing culture pushed westward out of Bavaria towards the Rhineland and Switzerland. It is the period of the first indigenous metal industry. Society is now sufficiently organized to support native, or import foreign, craftsmen and set them working to satisfy local taste, and thereby give rise to a local style which is expressed in the decoration of pins and daggers.

This is the phase of my second horizontal series. From Holste's AII, I retain the late Adlerberg element, the early Straubing and the Horkheim-Donauberg graves along with the Gaubickelheim-Neuenheiligen component of Reinecke AI including some halberds and ring torcs, the large decorated racquet pins of the Rhineland and the corresponding trefoil pins of the Rhône province. These are now divorced from the Lanquaid-Trassem axes, ogival daggers and socketed spears, and probably also the great hoards of ring torcs and bars (Spangenbarren), which may still in part be related to an advanced stage of north Alpine metallurgy.<sup>3</sup> Good associations for the triangular metal-hilted daggers are notoriously rare, but flat, triangular blades with similar decoration are sometimes found in graves and small hoards. Such a one is the Neyruz hoard, Kt. Vaud, Switzerland;<sup>4</sup> the dagger is associated with an axe assigned by Vogt to the phase immediately preceding Trassem-Lanquaid.

In Switzerland, Vogt has been able to define two more or less contemporary groups, the one using thin sheet bronze with incised, geometric, rectilinear patterns found on pin heads, dagger blades and axes.<sup>5</sup> This group is centred in the upper Rhône valley. Opposed to it was a second group, centred in eastern Switzerland and on the Swiss plateau, which used a so-called Unëtica axe (flanged axe with semicircular cutting edge),

<sup>1</sup> Uenze, 1951, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Kimmig, 1950, 149; Jorns, 1953, pl. 13, 9 and p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Reinecke, 1930, but see also Witter, 1953, reporting on analyses of copper from hoards showing the raw metal to be derived from several sources.

<sup>4</sup> Vogt, 1948, 54, pl. II, 1-6.

<sup>5</sup> Vogt, 1948, pls. I, 12-13; IV; maps 5 and 6. The Rhône culture was defined by Kraft, 1927-8, 5 ff.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE I\*  
PART I

Periods	Systems	Duration and dates	South and West Germany	Switzerland	North Italy	Britain	Scandinavia
I	†R. A I M. Early Neolithic D. Bronze I (Part) B. Neolithic	Long	{ Late Single-graves (Gelnhausen) Bell beaker Adlerberg First Unétice im- ports }	Late Neolithic Cordé ware Zoned beaker	Danubian-Matera Lagozza Remedello Polada I?	Windmill Hill culture and Secondary Neo- lithic Collective tombs	Early Neolithic 'Group A' Havnelev 'Group B' Dolmens Troldebjerg
II  (Early Bronze Age)	R. A I and A II M. I A (Mid to late Neolithic) D. I and II B. Early Bronze Age	Fairly long  1550?	Single grave amphora (Kelsterbach) First Straubing spread Dexheim-Gaubickel- heim	Early 'Blechstil' Early Rhône culture Triangular metal- hilted daggers	Polada I ( <i>ansa ad acta</i> ) Lagazzi	Bell beakers Necked beakers Wessex: Group B bronzes	Middle Neolithic Early passage graves Blandeberg-Bygholm Late passage graves Stone cists. Pile
III	R. A II/Bi M. I A and B D. I and II B. Early to Middle Bronze Age	Short  1500	Straubing Trassen, Lanquaid, Tinsdal, Sögel hori- zon Lochham Bi Tumuli Ingot torc and bar hoards	Fribourg graves with rilled daggers Unétice bronzes copied Later Rhône culture	Polada II Terrenare I A?  Cascina-Ranza	Wessex (contd.) Groups B and C bronzes Rillaton	Virring-Tinsdal hoards Schulp-Schuby stone cists Faardrup axe-hammer
IV  (Middle Bronze Age)	R. Bii M. II D. II and III B. Middle Bronze Age	Long  1300	Amber spacers, with complex boring Full Tumulus Bronze Age (Bii)	Tumuli Crestaulta	Terrenare I, A-B Apennine culture	Wessex ending Group C and D bronzes Cinerary urns	Stone cists ending Liesbüttel; spiral on bronzes Octagon-hilted sword
V  (Late Bronze Age)	R. C later C/D M. II/III D. II and III B. Middle Bronze Age	1250-1100	Late and Transitional Tumuli Riegsee First Urnfields of Tirol Poppy-pin group	Mels-Heiligenkreuz Poppy-pin group	Terrenare II, A-B Peschiera	Group D bronzes Cinerary urns	

PART II

Periods	Systems	Duration and dates	Alsace and Lorraine	Jura-Burgundy	Seine basin	Rhône valley Mediterranean coasts	Atlantic West
I	R. A I M. Early Neolithic D. Bronze I (Part) B. Neolithic	Long	{ Late Neolithic: Rössen-Michelsberg Single-grave Bell-beaker (Danu- bian group)	Cist graves? Neolithic of Chalain I	Late Danubians Battle-axe periphery	Chambered tombs Beakers Channelled ware Fontbouisse?	Neolithic Cortailod-Lagozza Chambered tombs Beakers?
II  (Early Bronze Age)	R. A I and II M. I A (Mid to Late Neolithic) D. I and II B. Early Bronze Age	Fairly long  1550	{ Single-graves (cont.) First Straubing im- pact Donauberg 12 Riedisheim Eguisheim	Cist graves and tumuli with trefoil pins Rhône culture, Chalain II Rhône daggers Jura, Lozère, Aveyron	S.-O.-M.	( <i>Ansa ad ascia</i> , Polada type) Rhône daggers Channelled ware Chevrons de Ferrières?	Fort-Harrouard I Beakers, tanged daggers First Armorican single-graves?
III	R. A II/Bi M. I A and B D. I and II B. Early to Middle Bronze Age	Short  1500?	Earliest Bi tumuli of Haguenau Hungarian influence Glass beads Bar-ingot hoards	Later Rhône culture graves, rilled daggers Champagnolles; Rames, Onay Ogival daggers Côte-d'Or still with Jura	? Armorican single-grave on lower Seine	Pasteurs des Plateaux Graves with bulb-pins Terremare, circum-alpine pots in caves Saint-Vérédème excised ware?	Armorican Single-grave culture Carnoët, Sengleyriac Cissac Fort-Harrouard II
IV  (Middle Bronze Age)	R. Bii M. II D. II and III B. Middle Bronze Age	Long  1300	Amber spacers Full Tumulus Bronze Age (Bii of Haguenau)	Rapiers, spears, palstaves First Middle Bronze tumuli in Côte-d'Or	Tumulus bronzes appear Spears, rapiers, palstaves Atlantic bronzes?	Terremare bronzes and pots (contd.)	Tréboul hoard Atlantic rapiers Atlantic palstaves
V  (Late Bronze Age)	R. C later C/D M. II/III D. II and III B. Middle Bronze Age	1250-1100	Transitional tumuli in Haguenau Spreading to Lorraine Poppy-pin urnfields Rilled ware? Pépinville	Tumuli and fosse-graves spread First urnfield cremations	C. Tumulus/Fosse-graves Urnfield D. Bronzes only	'Tumulus' bronzes to Isère and graves? Porcieu-Amblagnieu hoard	Fort-Harrouard III Rosnoën hoard Loire swords Atlantic spears and palstaves?

\* Only the main chronological periods are shown and sites of special chronological importance. The British column uses a partly new terminology taken from papers by Professors Piggott and Hawkes to the Prehistoric Society. Dates are merely provisional; Terremare dates from Hawkes, 1950.  
† R. = Reinecke, M. = Montelius, D. = Déchelette, B. = Britain.



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rilled daggers of 'Swiss' type and the Unětice pin.<sup>1</sup> The groups are exclusive in distribution, the one running from the Rhône by the Grisons, and Bavaria (Titmoning) into western Hungary (Kisapostag); hence called 'Rhône-Straubing-Kisapostag Blechstil' group; the other on the plateau and in east Switzerland allied to Unětice. This leads Vogt to question if the Unětice culture is not in fact better represented in south Germany than is usually recognized. Kimmig,<sup>2</sup> however, argues that the flanged axe with semicircular cutting edge is in fact a native Swiss form and that Unětice influence is confined to sporadic imports of choice objects such as had taken place in the Adlerberg corded-ware phase. He quotes the gold Unětice pin from Serrigny, Côte-d'Or, as evidence of the wide distribution of genuine Unětice products, without further cultural consequence or visible connexion, since in France there can be no question of direct contact.<sup>3</sup>

The cemetery of Singen, Constance,<sup>4</sup> emphasizes the Straubing connexion and has chronological importance, for here over thirty flat graves with crouched inhumations have been excavated. The dead were buried with ring torcs, 'Straubing' leg- and arm-spirals, flat triangular rilled daggers, some with a small tongue at the base of the blade, neckplate pins (Scheibenkopf), but no pottery. The same cemetery had corded ware and Middle Bronze *tumuli*. It appears upon balance that both the east Swiss plateau and the west Swiss-Rhône groups are locally differentiated members of a larger undifferentiated 'Blechstil' province (Rhône-Straubing-Kisapostag), which in eastern France (as we shall see below), in Switzerland, in south Germany and in west Hungary oppose both the Unětice and the Corded-ware early-Tumulus provinces. Both Swiss groups are of great importance to France. In their chronological relationship it is possible that the plateau graves with Unětice-derived pins and rilled daggers begin slightly later than the earliest 'Blechstil' graves of the west of Switzerland; Vogt in fact refers them to the Lanquaid-Trassem horizon. The lower limit of the Rhône culture is still undefined and at some sites it lasted as late or later than any of the plateau graves.<sup>5</sup> I think it best to consider both groups as broadly contemporary, both beginning in period II, though the Rhône group may have slight priority within that period, and both certainly continuing through the short following period III.

<sup>1</sup> Vogt, 1948, pls. I, 1-7; III, 9-20; maps 1, 2 and 3.

<sup>2</sup> Kimmig, 1950, 150.

<sup>3</sup> The recent investigation in Germany into the constitution of Straubing and Unětice metals which has shown the majority of the Straubing 'bronzes' to be copper and the Unětice alone tin-bronze, strengthens the argument for distinguishing sharply the two groups and increases the foreign, and so probably imported, character of the Unětice objects. I owe this information to Professor Childe; see now, Witter, 1953, and above, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Preliminary note by Kimmig, 1951, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Lumbrein, near Crestaulta in the Grisons, for example, *J.S.G.U.* 1947, 41.

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This third series, period III, is a reduced Reinecke AII. It has the Lanquaid-Trassem-Tinsdal hoards, those of the Sögel area of lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein<sup>1</sup> with developed forms of flanged axe, ogival daggers and short swords (dirks), and probably most of the great commercial hoards of ring torcs and bars. For Reinecke this was a short end-phase of the Early Bronze Age before the beginning of the Tumulus Bronze Age which superseded it. Holste<sup>2</sup> and Childe<sup>3</sup> have shown the necessity for allowing a considerable chronological overlap between Straubing and Unětice flat-grave cultures and the tumulus-burying people of Reinecke B. Werner, on the other hand, still denies the validity of any substantial overlap.<sup>4</sup>

The arguments on both sides are not easily subject to proof since the sort of contact implied, for example, by the Regensburg hoard,<sup>5</sup> and by the 'Straubing' pottery described by Dehn<sup>6</sup> may be horizontal, different cultures side by side; or vertical replacement of one by another. We shall meet the same difficulty in later periods. The argument from distribution patterns is more promising, and has been used in the past to strengthen the case for overlap; but fresh distributional factors have arisen, and the pattern is no longer so clear-cut. I suggest tentatively that the difficulties are increased by retaining the dual division of Reinecke A; by substituting a triple division we have two well-defined periods preceding the short overlap, beginning of Reinecke B, and the 'developed Bronze Age'. In the table this overlap, period III, is given some fifty years, which represents no more than the shortest period of time likely to be noticed in the archaeological record, and it is put forward as a possible compromise.

Let us now consider the beginning and extent of the supposed overlap. Both Willvonseder in Austria<sup>7</sup> and Holste in Hessen<sup>8</sup> have subdivided Reinecke B. For Willvonseder this becomes Bi and Bii; for Holste it is a 'frühester' followed by a 'späterer Horizont'.<sup>9</sup> For both, the first subdivision is a short period of transition before the main Tumulus development which falls in the following period (IV of this table), which is not yet Reinecke C. How far Straubing and related groups persist through this comparatively long period is difficult to gauge from the material available at present; their relics do not leap to the eye, but further work on the Bohemian and south-east German material might radically alter the picture.

Werner finds a complementary subdivision in Bavaria;<sup>10</sup> he has related the new-found German subdivisions to those of the Hungarian-Transylvanian Bronze Age and to the respectable divisions of the Montelian

<sup>1</sup> Sprockhoff, 1941, 32. 'Sögeler Kreis.'<sup>2</sup> Holste, 1939*b*, 107.<sup>3</sup> Childe, 1948*b*, 70.<sup>4</sup> J. Werner, 1950, 293.<sup>5</sup> Eckes, 1938, 88.<sup>6</sup> Dehn, 1951, 1, *passim*.<sup>7</sup> Willvonseder, 1937, 1, 231.<sup>8</sup> Holste, 1939*b*, 116; also 1938, 95.<sup>9</sup> Holste, 1939*b*, 105-35.<sup>10</sup> J. Werner, 1950, 293. I am indebted to Prof. Werner for additional information by letter.

system of the north. The Transylvanian Bronze Age derived its riches from the exploitation of copper deposits and reaches a great importance with the horizon which produced the bronze battle-axe and the first of the Keszthely-Boiu swords (already decorated with spirals), also short metal-hilted, ogival-bladed swords or dirks, belt clasps and heavy arm spirals. Werner lays great stress on the survival of the spiral motif in Transylvania from Neolithic pot decoration continuing on bronzes throughout the Middle Bronze Age. Wherever these swords and ornaments appear farther west it is in a Bi context, such as the Leobardersdorf sword in lower Austria, and the pendants and pins from some graves of Holste's Lochham horizon (Bi) which have a Hungarian 'air', if they are not actually imports. The same eastern influence will be found to some extent even in Alsace.

### *Montelian correlations*

The question next arises of correlation between the central European scheme and that of Montelius in the north. According to Kersten, Montelius IA is the period of Unětice imports to Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark which do not themselves constitute a Bronze Age in spite of multiple torc necklets, bulb pins and sheet bronze bracelets, while Montelius IB has two components, one purely Nordic with the shaft-hole axe and certain types of socketed spear, the other related to the Sögel area.<sup>1</sup> The Nordic component does not concern us here, but even without it and leaving aside the undoubtedly early horizon of the Riesebusch hoard of Montelius IA<sup>2</sup> which derives from the Unětice province, there are still the Neu-Rathjensdorf and Tinsdal type of hoard of Montelius IA,<sup>3</sup> and there are the daggers and axes of Schulp and Schuby, which are Montelius IB to Kersten, but to Sprockhoff IB/II.<sup>4</sup> There is in addition a western influence at work whose importance has been emphasized by Forssander.<sup>5</sup> The first of these, the component to which the Tinsdal hoard belongs, is really by definition a Reinecke AII,<sup>6</sup> and embodies a change of direction from the Bohemian contacts of Riesebusch, to east Alpine metallurgical centres bringing torcs and 'advanced' flanged axes. The Schulp and Schuby group on the other hand, with Sögel dirk and nicked axe, look towards the Sögel orbit of north-west Germany and its outliers farther south, and consequently belong to Holste's Lochham or Bi Tumulus phase.<sup>7</sup>

The correlation of Sögel area with Tumulus Bi seems established, and therefore with the Montelius IB of Kersten also, while Montelius II is

<sup>1</sup> Kersten, 1935, pl. V, 2-5.

<sup>2</sup> Kersten, 1935, pl. I, with bronze ribbon spirals, flat axes, and riveted daggers.

<sup>3</sup> Kersten, 1935, pls. I, 6-9; II.

<sup>4</sup> Kersten, 1935, pl. V, 3-5; Sprockhoff, 1941, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Forssander, 1936, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Reinecke, 1924, 43, and cp. Heimhilgen, Reinecke, 1930, pl. 10, A.

<sup>7</sup> Holste, 1939*b*, pls. 15, 7-8; 17, 6-7; Sprockhoff, 1941, *passim*.



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aligned with the following Tumulus Bii. The rather equivocal position of the Sögel area for Sprockhoff between Montelius I and II may be due to the relative poverty of full Tumulus or Bii finds in Lower Saxony. Moreover, Kersten's more northerly zone I is slightly retarded compared with zone II (Schleswig-Holstein, Ribe, Vejle, Hanover, etc.), so that the beginning of the Bii full Tumulus phase corresponds to the beginning of IIA in zone II and IIb in zone I.<sup>1</sup> The Pile hoard is characteristic of a group which shows the working of the western influence,<sup>2</sup> and can be related to the central European sequence by its dagger of 'Saxon type',<sup>3</sup> which is a development of the triangular metal-hilted dagger of central and western Europe, coming a little later than the earliest Unětice daggers but before the Malchin, and corresponding in part to those of Oder-Elbe type. It is therefore Reinecke AII and belongs to the end of period II in Table I.

The process of fragmentation could be continued without coming any closer to a clarification of the chronological issue. In defining these components we are not defining periods or parts of periods but simply listing the different regions from which ideas and objects were travelling to the north of Europe at much the same time. If the A-B overlap has any validity as a co-existence of different societies in central Europe, even in the diminished form of our period III, then the Neu-Rathjensdorf-Tinsdal of Montelius IA and the Schülps-Schuby of IB are more or less contemporary, the one showing Straubing/east-Alpine, the other Tumulus-Bronze inspiration. Though not exactly conterminous, both fall mainly in period III. They are not themselves periods, but rather trade contacts, lines of enterprise. So, too, with the western influence which may have begun somewhat earlier, and any hypothetical Transylvanian contacts.<sup>4</sup>

To summarize, we have Unětice influence in central Europe as far west as the Rhine in periods I and II, and in Scandinavia in period II only; the Straubing-Rhône cultures beginning in period II and lasting throughout III, influencing the north in III only; and western influence in the north in the latter part of II, in III, and intermittently thereafter. Tumulus Bi and Sögel area fall in III, with the Lochham horizon and Transylvanian impacts (if any), while Tumulus Bii, along with the revolutionary developments of Montelius II in the north, begin in period IV. The foregoing arguments have been all too perfunctory, but this is not the place for a detailed discussion; and a sketch of the background, however slight, has been necessary in order to relate the French Bronze Age material to the wider European action.

<sup>1</sup> Kersten, 1935, 100.<sup>2</sup> Forssander, 1936, pl. XXXVI.<sup>3</sup> Uenze, 1938, 60 and 85.<sup>4</sup> J. Werner, 1950.

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[More information](#)*Aegean correlations; date of the Tumulus Bronze culture*

Lastly the question arises how far the Reinecke and Montelian systems may be equated with Aegean chronological periods. The only direct synchronism is still that of the Bavarian Tumulus graves having amber spacer-beads with complex boring cited by von Merhart<sup>1</sup> along with Tholos 'A' at Kakovatos, and dated from it to c. 1450. The Bavarian tumuli in question belong to the later phase of Reinecke B as defined by Holste and Willvonseder. Similar beads are found in Württemberg but rarely associated with other distinctive objects; where these exist as at Huld-stetten they are appropriate to the same Bii phase.<sup>2</sup>

Recently two new factors have emerged. First amber beads have been found in shaft graves of the new Grave Circle at Mycenae excavated in 1953 by Dr Papadimitriou; one of the richest of these, the Omicron or Crystal grave had several amber spacer-beads of the type with complex borings, along with ornaments of gold wire, very like those found in south Germany. The date of this grave is considerably earlier than the Kakovatos Tholos: probably well within the sixteenth century, as against a lower limit of 1450 for Kakovatos.<sup>3</sup> If, therefore, we apply von Merhart's arguments, the Omicron grave at Mycenae gives a *terminus ante quem* for the beginning of the Bii Tumulus phase in the sixteenth century.

The second factor is the argument put forward by Professor Werner<sup>4</sup> and others that the amber spacer-beads of the Aegean originated in the Wessex culture of Britain, since only in these two areas do they appear to have formed part of crescentic necklaces like the British jet necklaces and gold lunulae. But while connexions of some sort between Britain and the Mediterranean are undeniable, connexions for the relevant period between Britain and those areas of the Continent where spacer-beads are found are very few, while those same Continental areas are more closely linked with the amber-producing Baltic on the one hand, and the Aegean on the other. Moreover, throughout the earlier part of the Bronze Age, decorative patterns incised in metal (gold or bronze) remain strictly rectilinear throughout Britain, whereas on the Continent, and particularly in the east and north and in Italy, curvilinear decoration, which is closer to Aegean fashions, was freely used from early in Montelius II.

The crescentic shape has been used for necklaces in many periods and different places. The well-known 'hessischer Halskragen' or the bronze chokers of Schleswig-Holstein<sup>5</sup> are also crescentic, there is therefore no

<sup>1</sup> Von Merhart, 1940b.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Dr S. Junghans of the Württembergisches Landesmuseum for information by letter, and to Dr R. Hachmann of Hamburg who confirms this date in general.

<sup>3</sup> *I.L.N.* 27 Feb. 1954. I am indebted to Dr Papadimitriou for his kindness in letting me examine these beads, see p. 77 n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> In correspondence with the writer.

<sup>5</sup> Kersten, 1935, pl. XXXVIII, 33, etc.; Holste, 1939b, pl. 10.