

CHAPTER 47

ROMANIA, MOLDOVA, AND BULGARIA¹

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THE three countries considered in this chapter have varying histories and traditions of research, as well as differing environments and archaeological cultures. Figure 47.1 shows the main regions and sites discussed.

A HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Interest in the archaeological remains of Romania goes back to the eighteenth century, mostly concentrating on the Roman period in a search for the ancestors of modern Romanians. After Aiud (1796) and Sibiu (1817), most major museums became active during the later nineteenth century. Archaeological site catalogues were first published for Transylvania, and a first general sketch of the pre-Roman history of Romania was published in 1880. The most important milestone and the first systematic discussion of prehistory was the extensive study by Ion Nestor published in 1932, where the major Bronze Age cultures were named for the first time and placed in a systematic order (Glina III = Schneckenberg [dated to the Eneolithic], Periamuş [also known as Periam-Pecica or Mureş/Maros], Otomani, Wietenberg, Monteoru, Tei, Vattina, Bordei-Herăstrău).

It was only from 1960 onwards, starting with the *History of Romania* (Nestor 1960), that the Bronze Age in general, in specific regions or individual cultures of the period (some newly identified), was again treated in comprehensive studies. While the foundations had thus been laid, after the political changes at the end of the 1980s, new views on many aspects of the Bronze and Early Iron Age were presented and site catalogues became accessible online (see, for example, <http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/ARH/RAn/sel.asp>).

Research in the Republic of Moldova (the term 'Moldavia' should strictly speaking embrace both the Republic and the eastern province of present-day Romania) was initially closely connected to that in Romania, with a focus on Greek and Roman antiquities of the Black Sea coast, as well as on the spectacular monuments of the Eneolithic Cucuteni-Tripolye culture.

¹ In this chapter in-text references are mostly not given; the Bibliography includes the most important items for the Bronze Age in the countries concerned.

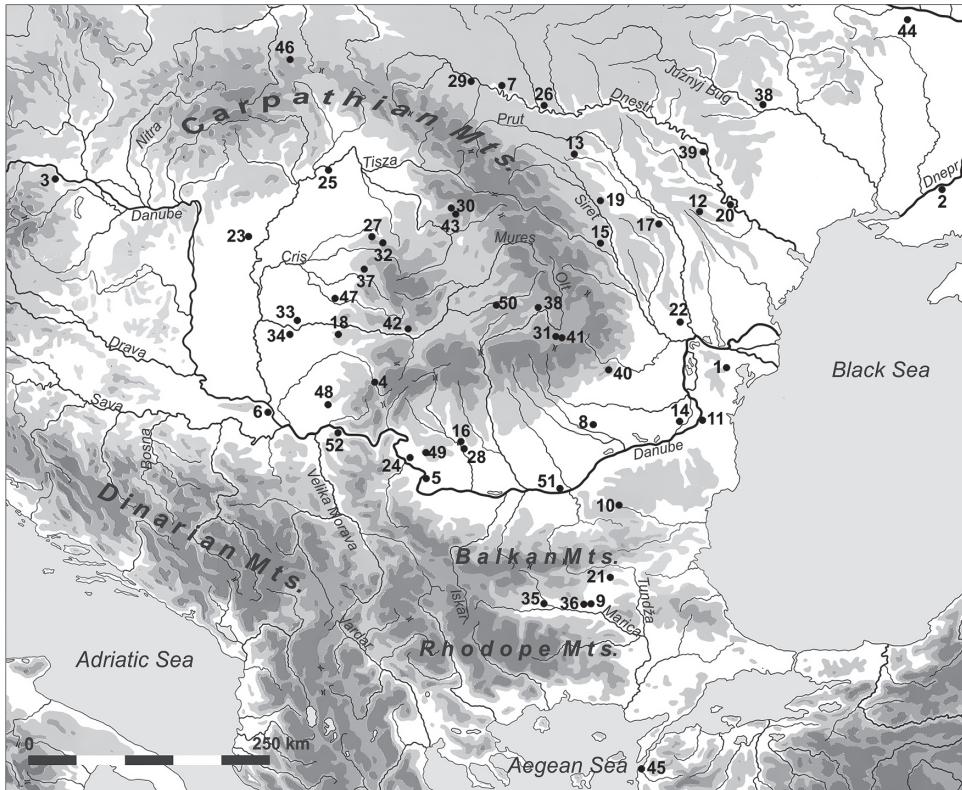


FIG. 47.1 Map showing eponymous sites for cultures or groups in Bulgaria, Moldova, and Romania: 1. Babadag, 2. Babino, 3. Baden, 4. Balta Sărătă, 5. Basarabi, 6. Belegiš, 7. Bialy Potok, 8. Bordei-Herastrău /Bucureşti/Glina /Popeşti/Tei, 9. Čatalka, 10. Čerkovna, 11. Cernavodă, 12. Chișinău, 13. Corlăteni, 14. Coslogeni, 15. Costișa, 16. Coțofeni, 17. Cozia, 18. Cruceni, 19. Cucuteni, 20. Delacău, 21. Ezero, 22. Foltești, 23. Füzesabony, 24. Gîrla Mare, 25. Gáva, 26. Holihrady, 27. Igrița, 28. Ișalnița, 29. Komarov, 30. Lăpuș, 31. Noua, 32. Otomani, 33. Pecica, 34. Periam, 35. Plovdiv, 36. Păeničevo, 37. Roșia, 38. Sabatinovka, 39. Saharna, 40. Sărata Monteoru, 41. Schneckenberg, 42. Şoimuș, 43. Suciu de Sus, 44. Tripolye, 45. Troy, 46. Trzcinica, 47. Vârșand (Gyulávarsánd), 48. Vatina, 49. Verbicioara, 50. Wietenberg, 51. Žimnicea, 52. Žuto Brdo (Gray-scale stages are at 500, 1000 and 1500 m above sea level).

Map: author.

After World War II the influence of Soviet Russia dominated; the results of research on the Bronze Age of Moldova since the 1950s were viewed more in an eastern context and primarily published in Russian, but here too new views were published after the political changes of the late 1980s. A database of archaeological sites and materials is in progress at the National Museum (Muzeul Național de Arheologie și Istorie a Moldovei), but not yet available online.

In modern Bulgaria, founded as a monarchy only in 1878, early archaeological research was initially carried out by foreigners, since the Ottoman empire had no institution specifically occupied with historical research. The National Museum originated from a permanent exhibition in 1892 in the Büyük Dzhamija mosque in Sofia, and by 1921 the Archaeological Institute had been founded. In the 1920s and 1930s Bulgarian archaeologists drew up catalogues of prehistoric sites and these are still valuable today.

CHRONOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The number of radiocarbon dates available in these countries is still insufficient, nor do they cover all phases or cultures, so that it is mainly relative chronologies that are used, absolute dates usually being provided through comparison with neighbouring regions (Fig. 47.2).

A specific feature of Romania is the 'transition period', represented mainly by the Coțofeni group of central and southern Romania, which also spread into part of northern Bulgaria. In the west its neighbour is the Baden complex, to which it is so closely related that Coțofeni

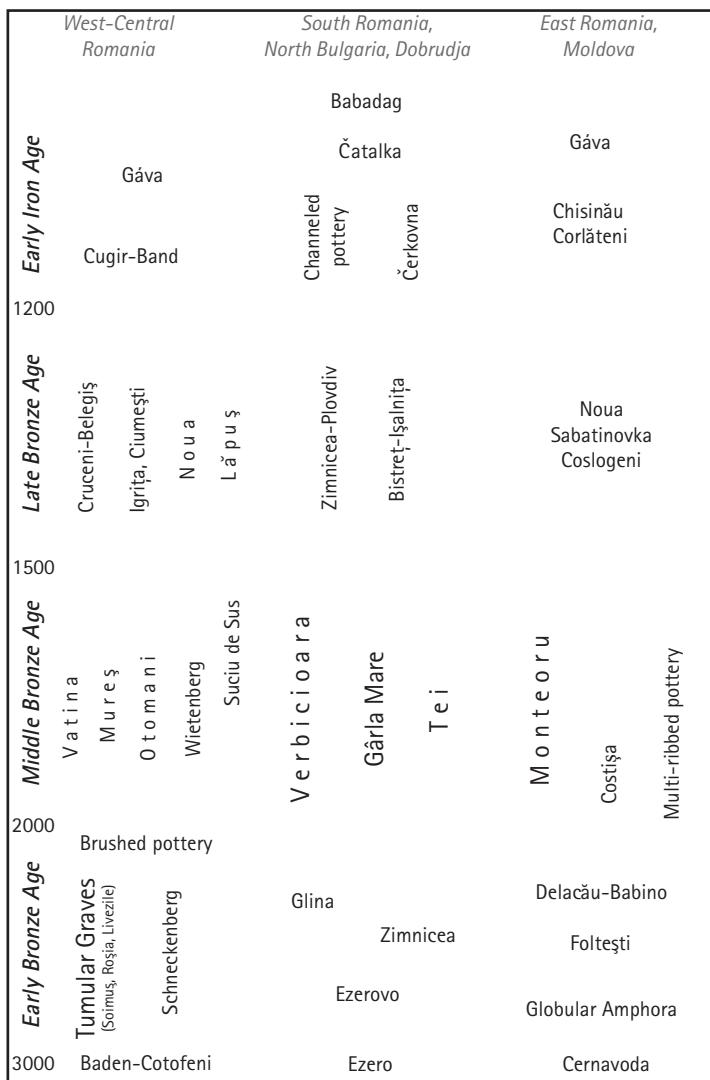


FIG. 47.2 Chronological table of the main Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cultures in Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova.

could be considered as the eastern variant of Baden, while it is unclear what phenomena correspond to this in the east. The later Coțofeni phases, datable in absolute terms to the first half or middle of the third millennium BC, have more recently been included by some authors in the Early Bronze Age. If the Bulgarian chronology (see below) becomes more widely accepted, then the Baden complex, including the Coțofeni group, as well as the partially present Beaker and Globular Amphora groups, would fall into the Early Bronze Age. This may be justified by the general cultural changes (pottery, metallurgy, transport, etcetera), but would have nothing to do with the naming of the period, since ‘bronze’ in the strict sense of tin-copper alloys, does not actually appear before the Middle Bronze Age in local terminology.

The ‘classical’ Early Bronze Age is accepted as beginning with the Glina-Schneckenberg culture and early Zimnicea. These are followed by the well-established Middle Bronze Age cultures, for which the stratigraphic sequences of Sărata-Monteoru, Periam, and Derșida may be considered as the most important. The Romanian Late Bronze Age begins with phenomena such as Igrita in the west and the widespread Noua-Coslogean complex ranging from Moldova to central Romania and into Bulgaria. Early Hallstatt cultures, closely connected to the central European Urnfield societies, mark the beginning of the Iron Age in Romanian terminology. At present the Bronze Age can thus be placed roughly between c.3000/2500 BC and 1200/1100 BC, although it should be mentioned that (tin) bronze becomes widely used only from the Middle Bronze Age, beginning around 2000/1900 BC onwards. While the central European periodization of Paul Reinecke and Hermann Müller-Karpe (especially for the Early Iron Age or Hallstatt period) is still often used for bronzes, the pottery-defined cultures are usually only placed within in a relative chronological framework.

The Moldovan research tradition was originally close to the Romanian one, then influenced strongly by the Soviet Union, but is now rebuilding its own identity. Although many aspects of the Early Bronze Age in eastern Romania and Moldova are still unclear, eastern elements (Yamnaya, Katakombnaya; see Chapter 48) together with some late Eneolithic/Early Bronze Age north-western influences (e.g. Globular Amphora or Trzciniec culture) are present. The Moldovan Bronze Age has an intermediate position between that of Romania and that of Russia, with some local phenomena especially in the Middle Bronze Age (e.g. Mnogovalikovaya pottery), and can principally be dated in accord with Romanian chronology.

The Bulgarian Bronze Age has in recent times been classified in a similar way to the Romanian, the principal difference being an earlier absolute date for the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, justified by radiocarbon dates from the type site of Ezero, around 3200/3100 cal BC, in other words almost half a millennium earlier than further north. Here too the period after 1200/1100 BC is considered as Early Iron Age, ending around the ninth/eighth century BC.

CULTURAL EVOLUTION

First it must be stressed that most so-called archaeological ‘cultures’, ‘groups’, or ‘cultural aspects’ in the region have not generally been precisely defined, and are mainly identified by pottery shapes and decoration styles, while features such as burials or settlement structures have rarely been included. Any theoretical discussion of the terminology used is completely lacking. Internal or foreign parallels are largely limited to single-shape or ornament

analogies, while statistical comparisons, for example of the frequency of ceramics, are hardly possible given the very selective publication of materials that exists at present.

The Eneolithic cultural basis of the Bronze Age in the region discussed here is largely provided by widespread phenomena such as the Baden-Cernavodă-Coțofeni complex (if this is not included as the beginning phase of the Bronze Age) for the western and southern part, and the late Cucuteni-Tripolye complex in the east. Local features of the Early Bronze Age may sometimes be explained by this background. Some influences from Greece and Turkey are visible in the south.

Early Bronze Age (*c.3000/2500–2000/1900 BC*)

A general characteristic of Early Bronze Age pottery in this region, in contrast to the preceding Eneolithic, is the disappearance of incised and incrusted (e.g. Coțofeni) or painted (Cucuteni-Tripolye) decoration and a dominance of plastic knobs and ribs (cultural groups: Șoimuș, Roșia, the Tumulus grave group of western Transylvania, Glina-Schneckenberg, Foltești, Delacău-Babino, early Zimnicea, Ezero) (Fig. 47.3, lower part). Another widespread common characteristic, derivable from early western cultural groups (e.g. Ljubljana, Mondsee), are vessel-rims with exterior sleeve-like thickening. Among other older traditions, small footed bowls, the foot sometimes in the shape of a cross, may be mentioned, which may be derived from the Bell Beaker culture (see Chapter 3), and which are found in Glina and Ezero contexts far to the south and as far east as Romanian Moldova (e.g. in Bogdănești and Corlăteni), often together with cord-impressed decoration. Wide, open, angularly profiled bowls, sometimes with rims containing a channelled interior, were already a feature of the Baden complex and continue into the pottery of the Transylvanian Tumulus group and the Foltești phenomenon of Moldova (Fig. 47.3, lower part). In the latter, monochrome painting still occurs sporadically, recalling the final phase of the preceding Cucuteni-Tripolye communities (Fig. 47.3, lower right). A feature considered specific to the southern Glina variant of the Glina-Schneckenberg complex are so called hole-knobs under the vessel-rims, produced by impressing a small blunt round point into the soft clay. New shapes, presumably originating in the south, are asymmetrical jugs and *askoi*, which are found in Ezero and Ezerovo (Bulgaria), the Early Bronze Age cemetery at Zimnicea (southern Romania), Foltești (Romanian Moldavia), and as far north as the Schneckenberg group (south-east Transylvania) (Fig. 47.3, lower, centre and right), a specific form continuously developed throughout the Middle Bronze Age Monteoro culture of eastern Romania (Fig. 47.3, Monteoro). In south-eastern Bulgaria influences from the Troad in Turkey have become clear, although the potter's wheel, well established in Troy itself, was not adopted—the very few wheel-thrown fragments are most probably imports.

In the developed Early Bronze Age, vessels with brushed or combed lower body (Fig. 47.3, Ezerovo, Foltești), in Transylvania also with textile impressions, are a chronological indicator, well known from the Early Bronze Age of Hungary. This feature may again be observed as far south as Bulgaria (e.g. Ezero, Dyadovo) and up to Moldova in the east (e.g. Bogdănești, Iacobeni), and continues in the early phases of some of the classical Middle Bronze Age cultures (e.g. Mureș, Otomani, Wietenberg). It may have had the technical aim of enlarging the outer surface (microstructure) of cooking vessels for better heat absorption and/or higher porosity for the cooling of liquid contents by evaporation through the walls.

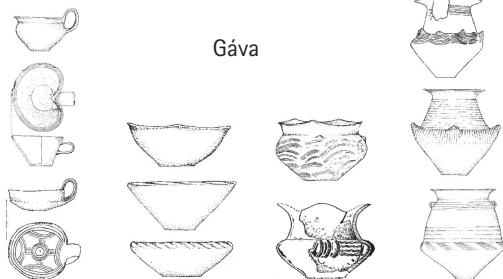
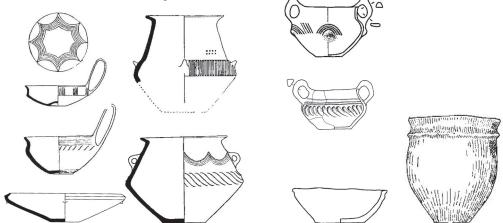
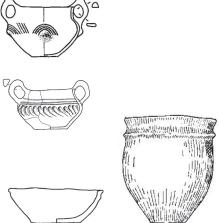
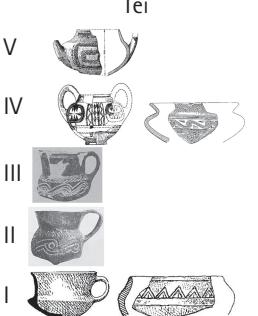
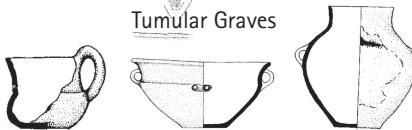
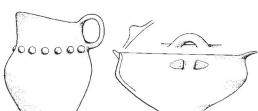
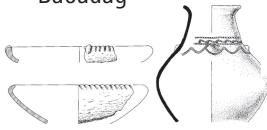
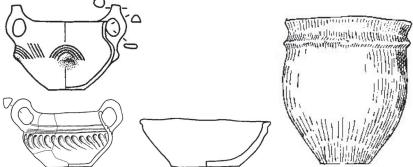
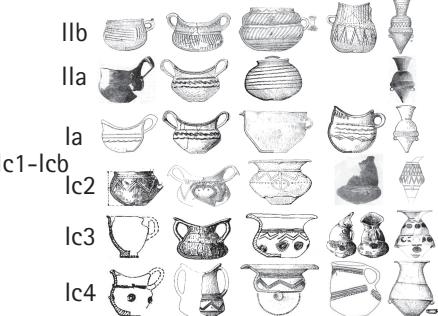
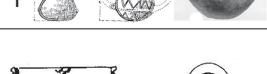
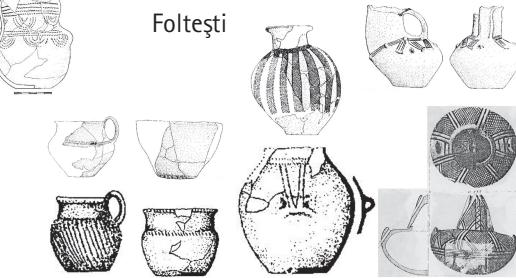
	West-Central Romania	South Romania,	
Early Iron Age	Gáva 		
Late Bronze Age	Berkesz, Igrita, Ciumești 	Noua 	Čerkovna 
Middle Bronze Age	Wietenberg D (IV)  C (III)  B (II)  A (I) 		
Early Bronze Age	Schneckenberg  Tumular Graves 	Ezerovo  Zimnicea 	

FIG. 47.3 Evolution of selected pottery types for some important Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cultures in Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova. Various scales.

Source: various (illustration R. Boroffka).

North Bulgaria, Dobrudža	East Romania, Moldova
Babadar 	Chișinău-Corlăteni 
Pšenicevo 	Noua 
Coslogenii & Zimnicea-Plovdiv 	Monteoru Ia Ib Ic1-Ic2 Ic3 Ic4 
Verbicioara IV-V  III  II  I 	Globular Amphora Foltești 

Some metal finds, such as the massive golden lock-rings known from Ampoiţa in Transylvania, Tărnava in Bulgaria, Mala Gruda in Montenegro, and on the western Greek island of Levkas, or silver spiral lock-rings known from several sites in southern Romania, Bulgaria, and far to the east in Moldova or Ukraine, illustrate a system of wide-ranging exchange networks in high-status goods. Similar long-distance contacts are also expressed in some zooarchaeological material, such as the bones of fallow deer, at that time native to Turkey east of the Bosphorus but found as imports as far north as Poiana Ampoiului (Romania), Feudvar (Vojvodina), or Ripač (Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Burials of this period are mostly inhumations and found in fairly small groups, as large cemeteries so far are not known. Funerary structures are rather varied: mounds with earthen or stone covering are frequent in western Transylvania (Fig. 47.4, below left; Fig. 47.5), stone slab cists are found in eastern Transylvania, Moldova, and large parts of southern Romania (Fig. 47.4, below right). On the northern Danube shores, the flat inhumation burial cemetery near Zimnicea should be noted. In southern Romania and Bulgaria we also know of earthen mound-burials of 'ochre' or Yamnaya-type. The eastern slab-cist graves could possibly be derived from the Globular Amphora tradition documented in Romanian Moldova and south-eastern Transylvania.

Most settlements have not been extensively excavated, so that no reliable data are available either on house structures or the internal structure of habitation sites. In southern Romania and Bulgaria, however, some older tell sites were still used in the Early Bronze Age (e.g. Glina, Yunatsite), although it is not clear whether this is a continuation from the late Eneolithic or a resettlement after an interruption.

Middle Bronze Age (c.2000/1900–1500/1400 BC)

Regional differences, visible during the Early Bronze Age in spite of the common features, are accentuated in the following Middle Bronze Age cultures. Although some groups either continue features or evolved from the later Early Bronze Age (Monteoru, Mureş, Otomani, Tei, Wiertenberg, possibly Verbicioara), pottery shapes and decoration display much higher variety in the Middle Bronze Age (see Fig. 47.3, lower middle row).

In the earlier part of the period, pottery shapes already present in the Early Bronze Age become a frequent and characteristic shape common to most cultures (Otomani, Wiertenberg, Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica, Verbicioara, Tei, Monteoru, Costişa), varying only in details. Besides common elements, each culture may be defined by its own ceramic forms (see Fig. 47.3). The pottery is generally the main defining criterion, more comprehensive definitions (including burial rites, settlement structures, economics, or ritual elements) not usually being taken into account. This has obviously led to a rather unsatisfactory characterization of 'cultures' and 'groups', some of which have their centre of gravity in neighbouring regions (Otomani, in Hungary under the name of Füzesabony and Gyulavarsád; Vatina, in former Yugoslavia; Costişa, often included in or connected to Biały Potok-Komarov from Ukraine and south-eastern Poland). While for southern Romania and northern Bulgaria the Middle Bronze Age includes Tei and Verbicioara and later Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo (see Fig. 47.3, lower middle centre), this period is still largely unknown in southern Bulgaria.

Pottery becomes more and more decorated, sometimes over the entire surface including even the base. Most decoration, especially in the earlier Middle Bronze Age, is incised by various techniques (simple incision, cord, impression, lines of pricked decoration) or

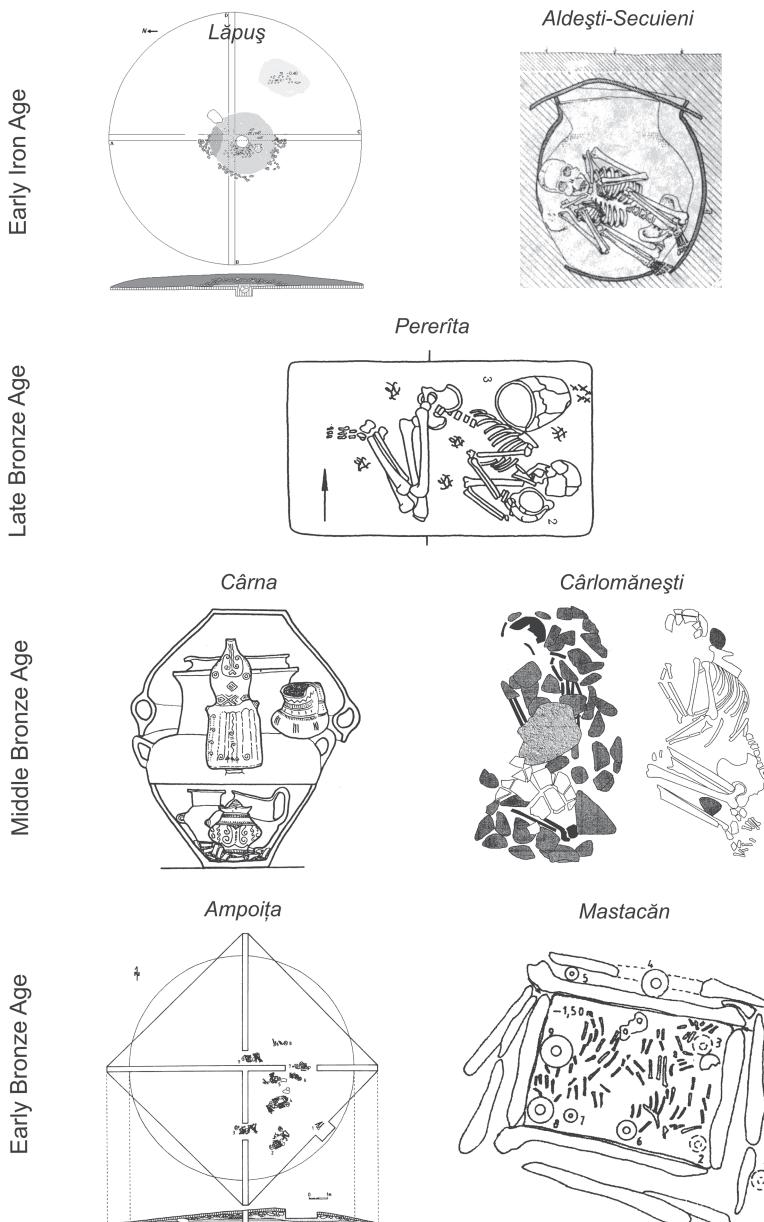


FIG. 47.4 Selected Bronze Age/Early Iron Age burials from Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova. Various scales.

Source: various (illustration: R. Boroffka).

stamped (e.g. comb-stamps in Wietenberg, concentric circle stamps in Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo), and probably held incrusted material, which is, however, seldom preserved (though it is well documented in Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo and Tei). Decoration techniques or ornaments may be specific to particular cultural groups (see Fig. 47.3, lower middle row) and can generally be described as spiral-meandroid.



FIG. 47.5 Early Bronze Age burial mounds at Meteş, western Transylvania. Note the typical situation on high hill crests.

Photo: author.

Further east, in Monteoru, a quite different development takes place: cups and *kantharoi* were in use together throughout the evolution. These, as well as the bowls, offering vessels, and *askoi* were initially decorated by finely incised zigzags and 'solar' circles filled by fine concentric lines, and then mainly with zigzag motifs produced by fine applied ribs, changing to finely incised 'stitched' patterns, often accompanying shallow channelling, in the later phases (see Fig. 47.3, lower middle row, right). Neighbouring Costişa (north) and Mnogovalikovaya (east) are less clearly characterized by elongated hatched triangles and applied rib ornaments respectively, although they are present only on a low percentage of the ceramic production.

Generally some overall tendencies may be observed: 1. there is an evolution from spiral to meander motifs; 2. channelled decoration, usually oblique, but sometimes following spiral shapes, appears in the developed phases of most Middle Bronze Age cultures; and 3. a replacement of one-handled cups by other vessel shapes, all presumably for drinking, takes place. Characteristically in Tei and Verbicioara the cups are replaced by *kantharoi*, while in Wietenberg, and to some extent in Otomani and Suciu de Sus, they are replaced by weakly profiled, shallow open bowls, often with an *omphalos* instead of a handle (see Fig. 47.3, lower middle row). Exceptions to this are Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica in the south-west and Monteoru in the east (Costişa is probably later replaced by a Monteoru expansion to the north). While the *kantharoi*, in spite of continuity in Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica and Monteoru, may be a southern influence, especially since very similar shape and ornament combinations are widely known in southern Romania, Bulgaria, and northern Greece, it is less clear where the shallow *omphalos* bowls originate. At present, one may only remark on the apparent change in drinking habits.

High-status goods probably belonging to the Middle Bronze Age are represented, for example, by the golden daggers and silver axes from Perşinari. They do not occur in

settlements or graves, but are deposited separately in hoards. Long-distance connections are indicated by bone psalia (bridle parts), with round plate-shaped variants of the cheek-piece (as in Monteoru and Wietenberg) probably originating far to the east in the steppes, while bar-shaped cheek-pieces appear to be a local development in the Carpathian Basin. Some of these bone objects are ornamented with spiral-based motifs (so-called ‘pulley-ornament’), which may be followed as far east as the Ural region, or south to Mycenaean Greece, where they are later in date.

Just like the pottery, burial rites show great variation. For Otomani (mostly known from Hungary), Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica (known from Hungary and former Yugoslavia), Monteoru (crouched inhumations; see Fig. 47.4, lower middle row, right), and Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo (cremation; see Fig. 47.4, lower middle row, left), larger cemeteries have been excavated, which may include over a hundred and up to more than a thousand graves (e.g. Cîndeşti, with over 1,500 claimed burials, although still very insufficiently published). Geographically in between, only small cemeteries (not more than 50 graves) are known in the Wietenberg area, while for others, for example Tei and Verbicioara, our knowledge is still extremely scanty. The actual burials also vary: crouched inhumations with vessels, jewellery, and sometimes tools or weapons are characteristic for Otomani and Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica; simple cremation burials in urns, rarely with supplementary grave goods, are specific to Wietenberg; cremation and deposition in urns with complex arrangements of vessels, clay figurines, or miniature axes (only in children’s graves) are the rule in Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo (see Fig. 47.4, lower middle row, left); and crouched inhumations, with vessels, jewellery, and some tools or weapons are encountered in Monteoru (see Fig. 47.4, lower middle row, right). However, for the latter group cremation is also documented and the funerary environment may be complicated, ranging from simple pits, stone cists, stone rings on the old ground surface, to catacomb-like subterranean structures. Further east the Mnogovalikovaya culture practised inhumation burials in large rectangular pits, often with wooden structures and sometimes under earthen mounds (kurgans). Bone belt-buckles, circular with a large central and, sometimes, a small lateral hole, are characteristic grave goods besides pottery.

Settlement structures appear to be determined by landscapes rather than the pottery-defined cultural groups that inhabited them. In the western plains we find multilayer tell sites (e.g. Periam and Pecica for Mureş/Maros/Periam-Pecica, or Derşida for Wietenberg), which are also known in the south-west (e.g. the eponymous site of Verbicioara). For the western sites combined wood-clay architecture is documented (better known from Hungary) and this may hold true for the south-west too, although published excavations over large areas are still lacking. Most sites in Transylvania are not stratified, although some of them were settled for longer periods, judging by the finds. This is also the case in the south-east of Romania, where a single stratigraphic sequence from Popeşti is known for the Tei culture, although no clear house plans are published. Similarly, several sites of the Monteoru culture (e.g. Sărata Monteoru, Bogdăneşti) show many layers (see Fig. 47.6), but house plans or interior settlement structures cannot be reconstructed. Fortification of sites is rare. Further east the Mnogovalikovaya culture is known mainly from burials, and in Bulgaria no well-excavated Middle Bronze Age settlement is known, most finds being either from caves (e.g. Devetaki) or without clear context. The explanation offered for this in these eastern areas is a nomadic way of life based mainly on a mobile pastoralist economy, which left few settlement traces identifiable archaeologically. For the Wietenberg and Monteoru cultures, in fact, a few posthole-plan sites have been published, which together with burnt wattle-and-daub remains have led to the idea of mainly wood-based houses built with supporting posts.

However, a look at traditional buildings in the region today indicates that posts fixed in the earth are rarely used—a more likely possibility are block-houses or houses built on (raised) foundation beams, in both cases the gaps in the wooden structure being sealed by twigs and clay (wattle and daub). These would also leave few traces, even in the case of fire, and would be difficult to identify archaeologically.

Late Bronze Age (c.1500/1400–1200/1100 BC)

The Late Bronze Age is marked by two cultural groupings, a south-eastern (Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni) and a western (channelled pottery). Both have roots in the developed Middle Bronze Age, with which they partly overlap chronologically, but become much more unified and widely distributed. In the west and south-west this is to some extent the result of less variation in vessel shape (see Fig. 47.3, upper middle row, left). Characteristic forms are bowls with rims turned inwards, hemispherical cups with high strap-handles, and larger biconical vessels, and firing technology now aims at a black exterior on vessels, sometimes combined with red interiors. Simultaneously the incised decoration is largely replaced by channelling, typical motifs being oblique or garland-shaped channelling (e.g. Ciumeşti, Lăpuş I, Igrita, Belegiş-Cruceni, Bistreţ-Işalniţa). This change is often described as ‘Hallstattization’ in the local terminology and continues into the Early Iron Age. In the east and the south *kantharoi* become the characteristic shape, widespread in the Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni complex of Moldavia (both Romanian and Moldova), Transylvania, the Dobrudja and north-eastern Bulgaria, and in the related Čerkovna/Zimnicea-Plovdiv group of central and western Bulgaria (see Fig. 47.3, upper middle row, centre and right). In the latter, a revival of older pottery shapes may also be observed and a special mention should be made of the fact that at Čerkovna and Plovdiv groups of complete vessels were intentionally deposited in wells which had ceased to function. A similar situation may have existed at Govora (late



FIG. 47.6 Sărata Monteoru, eponymous site of the Monteoru culture. Excavation situation in 1995 with complex stone structures and multi-layer stratigraphy.

Photo: author.

Verbicioara), where a contemporaneous group of vessels was discovered as a hoard. While in Čerkovna/Zimnicea-Plovdiv (and late Tei and Verbicioara), the pottery remains decorated with incised, originally encrusted, ornaments, similar to those found in northern Greece, the material of Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni is usually undecorated or sparsely provided with channelling or incisions.

The western and south-western ‘Hallstattization’ is often explained by western influences, first from the Tumulus cultures, then from early Urnfield phenomena, although vessel shapes can be derived from the larger Middle Bronze Age repertoire, and channelling, although not predominant, was already present in most cultures.

In the south we see a continuous and natural evolution from the late Tei and Verbicioara phases, possibly with an expansion southwards as far as northern Greece. On the other hand, Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni in Moldavia (both Romania and Moldova) and Transylvania is usually considered an eastern intrusion, reaching far back into the Ukraine and southern European Russia, where it may be connected to the Srubnaya culture (see Chapter 48). The reduction of the repertoire of vessel forms, together with specific settlement structures and a presumed pastoralist stock-breeding economy spreading westwards (see below), are interpreted as proof of a highly mobile nomadic society, although this rather simple model has been contested in recent works. While the Noua ceramic repertoire does not have precursors in Transylvania and may indeed be intrusive there, most pottery shapes (and ornaments) can be derived from the preceding Monteoru culture of western Moldavia.

Long-distance connections are illustrated by ‘Mycenaean’ rapiers discovered in Bulgaria and Romania, mostly belonging to the Late Bronze Age. Stone sceptres of phallic shape (probably originating in the east), or in the shape of axe-sceptres with inward curled tip and mushroom-shaped butt (Drajna, Lozova II, Ljulin, Pobit Kamăk), have good analogies in the example found in the Bronze Age shipwreck of Uluburun off the south Turkish coast. Gold vessels similar to Late Bronze Age shapes, such as those from Vălcitrăn (Bulgaria), Rădeni (Romanian Moldavia), and Kryžovlin (Ukraine), illustrate a high-status exchange network oriented roughly south-west to north-east. Characteristic pins (with perforated head and knobs on the neck) of the Noua group have, conversely, been found as far south as northern Greece.

In the western early channelled pottery groups, the dead were cremated and buried in urns (e.g. in the Belegiš-Cruceni and Bistreț-Ișalnița groups of south-western and southern Romania), although for some groups no clearly defined burials are known (Ciumești, Igrita). In Lăpuș (north-western Romania) the cremation graves were also covered by complex earthen mounds, and a similar situation may have existed in the south-west at the possibly slightly later site of Susani, where, however, in the partly disturbed mound no human bone remains were identified. The Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni communities, in contrast, practiced inhumation in a crouched position, with few vessels, and (rarely) jewellery and tools or weapons as grave goods; apart from minor details, this situation occurs fairly uniformly throughout Moldavia (Romania and Moldova) and Transylvania (see Fig. 47.4, upper middle row, centre). The cemeteries sometimes included burials in or on older tumuli, but mounds were not raised anew. To the south crouched inhumation burials are also documented from Zimnicea and Krušovica, while cremations under mounds with Čerkovna/Zimnicea-Plovdiv pottery were excavated at Batak.

Fortified settlements, some of enormous size (e.g. Cornești, with an inner rampart enclosing an area of 72 hectares and the fourth outer one encircling 1,722 hectares: Szentmiklósi

et al. 2011), are known from south-western Romania. However, the houses and the internal structuring of these sites are as yet unexplored. In the large open site of Dridu in south-eastern Romania (unfortunately still largely unpublished), mainly settled in the Belegiš II period (the transition between Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age), several dozen loosely strewn shallow pit houses were excavated. In southern Romania and Bulgaria, Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age layers are encountered in tell settlements, but there are generally no preceding Middle Bronze Age traces and the houses or interior structures remain largely unknown. In north-eastern Bulgaria (Durankulak) rectangular stone foundations have been attributed to the Coslogeni group. To the east, in Moldova and Ukraine, a specific settlement type of the Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni complex is the so-called ash-mound (*zolnik*), usually round or oval low mounds with whitish-grey soil showing up against the darker surroundings. They are often found in groups and may contain pits and fireplaces, but their formation and function is still controversial. The unusually large quantity of animal bones they contain, their presumed temporary use, and the limited ceramic repertoire, have been interpreted as indicating a mobile pastoralist society (see above). Such ash-mounds are still unknown for the western Noua group in Transylvania, the traces of which are often found together with late Wietenberg pottery.

Early Iron Age (c.1200/1100–800/700 BC)

The Early Iron Age sees the disappearance of the steppe influence (Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni) and the spread eastwards of the early Hallstatt channelled pottery groups, closely connected to the Urnfield groups further west. A large northern block, represented by the Gáva-Holihrady culture, extends from eastern Hungary through the whole of Transylvania to Moldova (see Fig. 47.2, top row, left). Belegiš II-type pottery spreads in the Romanian Banat, throughout southern Romania and into Moldova, including a slightly later eastern variant, the Chişinău-Corlăteni group. Both groups are characterized by channelled pottery, usually fired black on the exterior and reddish inside. A major difference between the two groups may be observed in the larger vessels, which in Gáva-Holihrady are often provided with exaggerated large hypertrophic upwards-curving knobs on the body (see Fig. 47.3, top row, left), while the Belegiš II urns bear smaller paired knobs pointing both upwards and downwards (see Fig. 47.3, top row, right). Some ceramic shapes and decorations clearly show continuity from the Late Bronze Age (see Fig. 47.3, top row). In the Dobrudja, Bulgaria and, somewhat later in parts of Moldova, the channelled pottery may be combined with stamped and incised decoration (Babadag, Čatalka, Pšenicevo, Cozia, Saharna) (see Fig. 47.3, top row, centre), which may represent the origin of the widespread later Basarabi culture. Interestingly, the Bulgarian channelled pottery, apart from the generally common features, displays connections to the Gáva-Holihrady group of the north, rather than to the immediately neighbouring Belegiš II types of southern Romania. Traces of these elements may also be found further south in Troy VIIb or in the so-called 'Barbarian Ware' of Greece.

The Belegiš II society disposed of their dead by cremation and burial in cemeteries (e.g. at Belgrade-Karaburma, Serbia) and this was probably the case throughout the extensive territory where this type of pottery is distributed, although we know only isolated graves from the region discussed here. Similarly the burials of the Gáva-Holihrady complex are known only from isolated finds, also by cremation and deposited in urns. Cremation graves

are also mentioned for the pottery groups with channelled and stamped/incised ware from Bulgaria, but none has been excavated professionally. Inhumation in large typical Gáva-Holihrady vessels is also known (see Fig. 47.4, top, right), but again only in a few cases. Several inhumation graves in settlement pits, crouched or extended on the back, have been excavated in Babadag sites, but it is not clear whether this was the regular burial practice. The Lăpuş group still raised earthen mounds over the burials (see Fig. 47.4, top left), but this may be a local tradition also observed in the pottery. However, in southern Romania (e.g. Meri) and Bulgaria (e.g. Sboryanovo) inhumation graves under tumuli are also known from the Early Iron Age.

Some of the fortified sites from western Romania (e.g. Sântana) were erected or still in use in this period and similar settlements are known starting from the early Gáva period in Transylvania (e.g. Teleac). At Teleac wooden beams had been built into the rampart and the location of houses could be determined by roughly rectangular patches of burnt wattle and daub, presumably from collapsed walls, but there are few data on the actual construction of these houses and the excavated surfaces are too small to allow conclusions on the general interior layout of the site. Fortified sites, and rectangular pit houses or patches of burnt wattle and daub have also been documented in Moldavia (Romania and Moldova) (e.g. Grăniceşti, Trinca, Saharna), but large areas in settlements have not been exposed. From Bulgaria we know Early Iron Age layers from several tell sites, but here too preservation or the extent of excavations do not allow a proper reconstruction of interior structuring.

METAL

Metal finds have so far hardly been mentioned: they are known in fairly large quantities, rarely from graves or settlements, often from hoards, a phenomenon already well known from the Eneolithic period, and from isolated finds. Copper, gold, and silver were widely available in Romania and Bulgaria, but had to be imported to Moldavia (Romania and Moldova). Tin deposits are known from the Transylvanian Carpathians, although their possible prehistoric exploitation is not certain (Boroffka 2009: 120, Fig. 1; list of minerals by site, 141–6).

For the Early Bronze Age, hoards of torcs with curled ends (*Ösenhalsringe*), for example at Deva, or of shaft-hole axes, for example at Vâlcele (Fig. 47.7, bottom right), may be cited as representative, the latter types even going back to Eneolithic precursors. In both cases mainly a single type of object was deposited, complete and not fragmentary, indicating a specific selection of objects that is difficult to reconcile with the purely materialistic explanation that hoards were a form of wealth accumulation (see Chapter 7). From settlements and/or graves, flat axes, early leaf-shaped daggers, often with grip-tongue or spike, pins, spiral spectacle pendants, the earliest forms of crescentic pendants with inward curling ends, and gold and silver lock-rings (see above) are also known, so that tools/weapons and jewellery are all present. The various shaft-hole axes especially continued to develop in a characteristically Carpathian manner throughout the Bronze Age (see Fig. 47.7, right columns). All analysed objects from this period have proved to be of copper, sometimes with added arsenic, while tin-bronzes appear only from the Middle Bronze Age onwards.

The Middle Bronze Age sees the appearance of several new features, besides the introduction of tin-bronze. Bracelets with large protective spirals may be connected to the

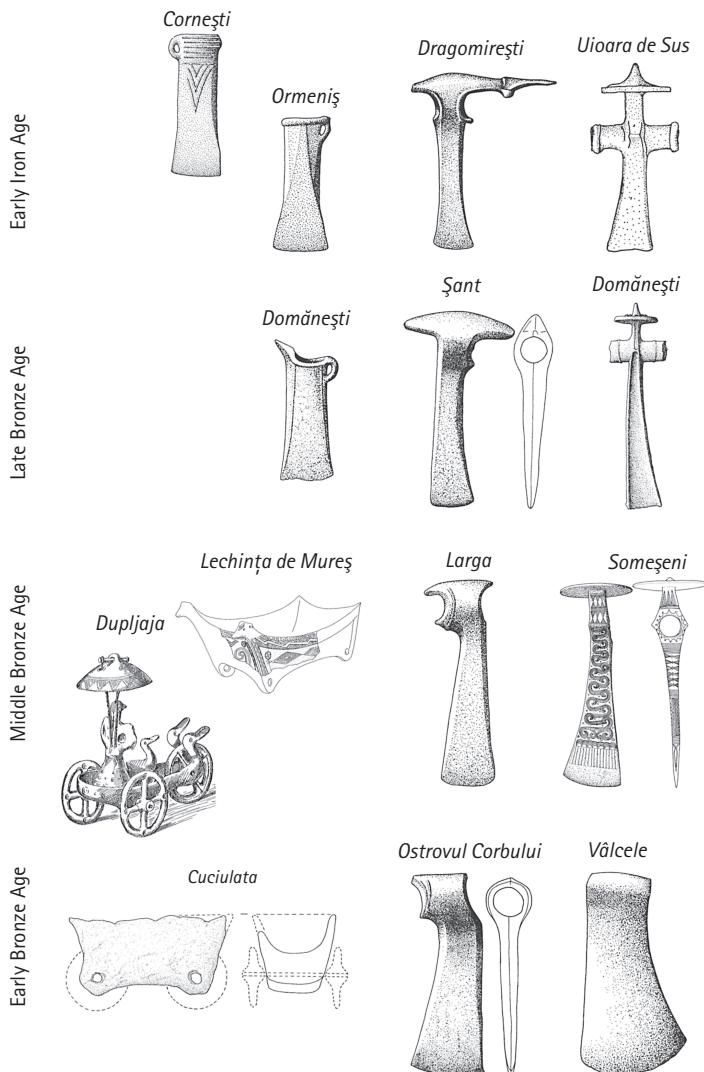


FIG. 47.7 Outline evolution of clay vehicle models, metal shaft-hole axes and axes with disc (and spike) in Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova. Various scales.

Source: various (illustration: R. Boroffka).

introduction of swords and daggers with riveted grips, all of which may be richly decorated with spiral motifs reminiscent of the dense and complex ornaments encountered on the pottery of this period. Socketed spearheads also occur for the first time, as do metal knives and sickles. Pins and pendants are more frequent and closely connected to types widely spread through central Europe, such as those with perforated globular head, or the so-called Cypriot pins. The lock-rings evolve to shapes with boat-shaped solid or hollow ends, which are very widespread throughout the Old World, including the Near East and Asia. Most metal objects are again known from hoards, with mainly jewellery being represented in the burials of some cultures (e.g. lock-rings, frequent in Monteoru graves), while settlement finds are

generally rare. We know of few hoards datable to the later Middle Bronze Age and the transition to the Late Bronze Age, but since the typological evolution, for example of shaft-hole axes and axes with disc or pointed butt, appears to be continuous up to the Early Iron Age (see Fig. 47.7, right column), this may rather be a problem of correctly dating the hoards, which often contain only one type of object and thus cannot always be cross-dated. On closer inspection, swords and spearheads are actually quite rare, whereas traditional shaft-hole axes (now with more profiled shaft-hole) and newly developed axes with disc butt are very common. They are also often decorated with complex spiral motifs of the Apa-Hajdúsámos style, echoing the pottery, although this is gradually reduced in the course of time. While the function of the shaft-hole axes may theoretically have been as tools or weapons, the disc-butted axes, later also those with pointed butt, were more probably used as weapons, presumably also with representative and/or symbolic meaning. Thus we observe here a major difference in weaponry, and presumably fighting tactics, from central Europe to the northwest and Greece to the south—in those regions daggers and swords are used, while in the Balkan-Carpathian region ‘battle-axes’, if we can call them that, were the preferred weapon, both in fighting and as objects of display. The sword, adapted to local taste by decoration and other details (e.g. Apa), in spite of rare local developments (e.g. the Boiu-Keszthely type), may have been more important in demonstrating high-status ‘foreign’ contacts. In Moldova, and to some degree in Bulgaria, the evolution of the dagger especially is more connected to the eastern tradition with grip-tongue or spike, rather than to the western one with riveted grip, and combinations of the two methods may even occur.

In the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, hoards, which can individually include around 1,000 kg of metal (e.g. Aiud, Špälnaca II, Uioara), are the main find category for bronze objects. Several object types continue a logical evolution: sickles, diversifying into many variants, shaft-hole axes with more and more baroque elongations, axes with disc and spike butt (see Fig. 47.7, right column) (both axe shapes gradually becoming rarer), and the latest types of lock-ring. Besides these, a large number of new forms begin to replace traditional ones. In the first place socketed axes, mainly the Transylvanian type and the ‘beaked’ type (with asymmetric socket mouth), both occasionally already present in the last phases of some classical Middle Bronze Age cultures, become frequent and widely distributed (see Fig. 47.7, top, left). Later they develop in various ways, and become decorated with triangular ribs that have many variations. Two further aspects of the socketed axes may be mentioned: 1. the inner-Carpathian examples are usually provided with an ‘ear’ near the socket for fixing, whereas those outside the Carpathians, in Moldova and Bulgaria, often lack this ear and are perforated on one of the broad sides instead; 2. the eastern axes seem, on present knowledge, to be the oldest and may go back to Eurasian roots (the Sejma-Turbino culture area), now dated as far back as the turn of the third to second millennia BC (see Chapter 48).

A further category, specific to the region, is represented by the large and richly decorated belts made from sheet bronze. Besides these local developments, during the Late Bronze Age a strong eastern influence may be observed, especially in the shape of the daggers, but also on some sickles and pins. This, however, does not persist long into the Early Iron Age. At that time, similar to the central European connections visible in the Urnfield-related pottery, strong relations to the west or north-west predominate, represented for example by swords, jewellery of all kinds, and metal vessels, of types well known and very widespread in central Europe. Although iron is present in the Early Iron Age, in isolated instances also in Bronze Age contexts, it is still rare and can hardly be considered a material in common use.

TRANSPORT AND THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF VEHICLES

The exploitation of animal traction had major consequences for transportation, communication, and warfare. The Carpathian region, among others, is known for early clay models of four-wheeled carts from the Baden complex, probably drawn by bovid pairs (see Chapter 22). They do not appear to have any direct connection to a specific phenomenon of the Carpathian Basin, where in the Bronze Age clay models of vehicles again occur frequently, in contrast to other parts of Europe. These are mostly of rectangular shape and four-wheeled, with few indications of having been drawn by bovids (shown by horned protomes, e.g. on those from Derşida and Lechinţa de Mureş) (see Fig. 47.7, middle, left). The earliest such models, undecorated, are known east of the Carpathians from Glina-Schneckenberg context (see Fig. 47.7, lower left), and they remain in use throughout most of the Middle Bronze Age in Hungary, Transylvania, and along the lower Danube (Otomani, Wietenberg, Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo), but disappear from the record in the Late Bronze Age. These models, as well as the bone cheek-pieces, indicate both transport and the use of horses as traction animals. The domesticated horse is documented since the Early Bronze Age from bone material found on both sides of the Carpathians (e.g. Poiana Ampoiului, Năeni), so that the connection is further corroborated.

A use in warfare, even of the four-wheeled carts, cannot be completely excluded. In the Near East similar heavy vehicles, indeed pulled by equids (possibly onagers), are clearly shown in the context of fighting. The Middle Bronze Age wagon models of the Carpathian Basin, often with a raised front, formally correspond well to some of these early fighting wagons of the Orient.

Models of light spoked wheels are also present in almost all these cultures and may be connected to the light chariot. Clay models, not just of spoked wheels but also of chariots, are only known from the Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo culture (see Chapter 22), where they are also combined with bird-headed figurines and sometimes have water-bird protomes as well. One model from Dupljaja carries a bird-figure on the front edge of the vehicle body and two bars projecting forwards, ending in bird heads and with a third spoked wheel placed in between them for stability (see Fig. 45.5b; Fig. 47.7, lower left). This is the earliest indication of a forked pole, inside which the traction animal would have stood. Although harnessing by a yoke is possible in principle, collar-harnessing would transmit power more effectively and be more likely, even though collars are otherwise not known before the first millennium BC, even in the Near East.

It is likely that the cart and chariot had not only a practical function for transportation, but also bore ideological meaning. The models, as symbols of real wagons, carry a transcendental meaning as transport for the transition to another world from as early as the Baden culture, where such finds come exclusively from graves. This aspect later peaks in the European wagon graves of the Hallstatt and La Tène periods, and actually continues to the present day in the form of especially ostentatious hearses or car-shaped coffins. Besides this, they probably mark a special social position of the buried individuals, since not everyone could afford to keep a vehicle, along with the animals required to pull it.

Although such a symbolic-ritual aspect is not so clear for the Bronze Age models from the Carpathian Basin, which come mostly from settlements, it is not entirely absent. Most of the Middle Bronze Age models of the Otomani culture were discovered in tell settlements, which

must be considered as ‘central sites’. The Middle Bronze Age in the Carpathian Basin, from which most wagon models are known, is a phase when an elite social class had achieved a dominant social position and was concerned to demonstrate it, amongst other things by valuable treasures and by fortifications. Part of these demonstrations of power also featured the ownership and display of vehicles, which are reflected in the concentration of wagon models at the ‘central sites’. The cart depiction from Velle Raškovce (see Chapter 44) belongs in a funerary context, and wagon models or their parts were found in funerary contexts at Nižná Myšľa (Slovakia), as well as in the Gîrla Mare/Žuto Brdo and Wietenberg cultures. Representations of animals in Wietenberg are found only on wagon models or as bird-shaped vessels. During the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age these models disappear from the archaeological record (see Fig. 47.7, left column), to reappear only in the Hallstatt B₃/C period as cauldron-wagons, again in combination with water-bird protomes, both in funerary contexts (Bujoru) and in hoards (Vaidei/Orăştie).

CONCLUSION

Widespread uniformity may be observed in the Early Bronze Age of this region in ceramic shapes and decoration styles. Local differences in this aspect are largely due to influences from neighbouring regions (Hungary in the west, Poland and western Ukraine in the north, the steppes in the east, Greece and Turkey in the south). Settlement structures and details of settlement sites are insufficiently known, while burial practices underline regional differences, and could be more extensively used to define cultural groups than has been the case so far. Prestige goods with wide-ranging parallels are especially important for underlining long-distance interconnections.

The Middle Bronze Age of this area too may in a way be bound up with greater regional variety of pottery shapes and a general tendency for spiral-based ornamentation. However, the rich ornaments also make geographically restricted development more evident. Prestige goods are still present, but display fewer long-distance connections, probably with the exception of the horse gear. Again settlement structures and details of houses are largely unknown. Funerary practices underline the regionalization visible in the pottery styles. Outside influences are still present from the adjacent areas, but appear less striking—the period could actually be characterized as one where local groups reached their high point.

In the Late Bronze Age the western margin of the region discussed here continues a local development, characterized by western influences. Much of the east and the south are, in contrast, dominated by eastern and southern elements visible in pottery and metal objects, to some degree even in settlement types (*zolniki*) or burials. Long-distance interconnections seem to reinforce the eastern and southern orientation.

This dramatically changes in the Early Iron Age, although some local traditions continue. The eastern and southern orientation is markedly reduced, while western elements penetrate as far east as the steppes or western Turkey. Some antecedents are present (channelled decoration, some metal types) and combine to form cultures connected to the central European Urnfield tradition, also visible in new bronze objects brought in to the area from outside. This is also supported by the appearance of very large fortifications, though the inner structure of these is still little known due to a lack of large surface excavations. Few graves are known, but besides some local continuity, appear to follow the same westerly trend towards cremation and burial in urns.

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