CHAPTER 35

Ritual Traditions of Non-Mediterranean Europe

Greg Woolf

Introduction: Written Testimony and its Limitations

The subject of this chapter is the archaeology of ritual in temperate Europe, during the period 500 BCE–500 CE. Many of the practices described may be traced back to the Bronze Age, whilst in Scandinavia and northern Germany some continued until the conversion to Christianity. Within such a broad geographical and chronological frame there were naturally many variations, and some specific ritual forms are accurately characterized as local. But it has become increasingly apparent that there were also broad commonalities across non-Mediterranean Europe (Bradley 2005; Parker Pearson 2006). It is now also clear that notions of "Celtic", "German" or "Nordic" religion have no discernible archaeological correlates (Fitzpatrick 1991; DuBois 1999). A number of practices such as the ritual killing of humans and the deposit of their remains in bogs, the ritual destruction of weapons and the differences between the sacrifice of domestic food animals and animals that were not consumed occur widely across supposed ethnic divides. Certain ritual practices, such as cult at springs or on mountain peaks, were also common in the Mediterranean World even if the specific rituals performed in such locations – weapons thrown into lakes or burned offerings (*Brandopfer*) on mountain tops in Europe – were distinctive.

Around the turn of the millennium, a large part of this vast region was forcibly incorporated into the Roman Empire. That cultural encounter transformed ritual practices and knowledge about them, the modes of representing the gods, and ideas about the proper roles of religious specialists and sacred places. This chapter is not concerned with the religious institutions or practices of the region under Roman rule, which reflected in part the influence of Italian and Mediterranean norms and in part local traditions (Derks 1998; Woolf 1998: 206-37; Van Andringa 2002, 2006). That cultural encounter, however, also generated the greater part of the ancient textual evidence in terms of which prehistoric religion has – until very recently – been mainly understood.

The principal literary sources for pre-Roman ritual are the accounts offered of Gallic and Germanic religion by Caesar (*De bello Gallico*, especially 6.13–21) and Tacitus (*Germania*, especially 9–10) to which may be added other scattered testimonia also mostly generated in the last and first centuries. Most of those texts concentrated on aspects of Iron Age cult that struck Greek and Roman observers as bizarre. Consequently, these texts say less about aspects of rituals that seemed more familiar, such as the idea that there was a multiplicity of gods, or that gods should receive sacrifices of the same domesticated species as humans consumed, or that much ritual should revolve around the agricultural year and be organized at household level.

These texts tended to exaggerate both similarities and differences from classical norms. So local deities might be translated by the names of more familiar ones (Ando 2005), or else attention might be focused on human sacrifice even when animal sacrifice was more common (Rives 1995). Occasionally this presents apparent incongruities. Notoriously, the Druids are variously presented as implacable enemies of Rome who practiced horrific human sacrifice *and also* as natural philosophers whose teaching on the transmigration of souls can be compared to those of other wise men stereotypically located near the edge of the earth, such as Indian Brahmins and Ethiopian Gymnosophists. Roman period monuments often (but not always) assimilate deities in ways that ~~often~~ preserve a sense of their difference, for example through double naming (such as Mars Lenus or Mercurius Nodens); through assertions of hierogamy between (male) Roman gods and (female) local goddesses; or through portraying local deities with the iconographic attributes of more familiar classical gods such as Hercules. All these documents – literary, epigraphic and iconographic – are products of that cultural encounter around the turn of the millennium; they are hybridizations and translations that can only be understood in the political context of that encounter, and none of them offer disinterested information about the situation prior to Roman expansion.

Conversion to Christianity initiated slower transformations than Roman conquest. Evidence for the destruction of temples and divine images in the northern provinces of the empire clusters in the last decades of the fourth century CE. Beyond the imperial frontiers – in areas such as Germany, southern Scandinavia and Ireland – high-profile conversions were still occurring as late as the end of the first millennium CE. (The first Norse settlers of Iceland in the ninth century CE included worshippers of Thor.) Most accounts of pre-Christian religion in these areas were written much later and in a Christian context. The mediaeval Irish epic poem, the "Táin", is known from eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscripts, although it draws on a written tradition dating back to the seventh century CE, and described an epic age constructed as pagan. The main sources for pagan Scandinavian religion are the works of Snorri Sturluson writing in thirteenth-century Iceland, again drawing on a centuries-old tradition of poetry, some of it contained in the broadly contemporary compilation the *Poetic Edda*. These mediaeval texts are good sources for mythic narratives and for the names and characters of particular deities and heroes, but they are poor guides to rituals, beliefs or the social context of pre-Christian cult practices.

The question of what constitutes an adequate interpretation of ritual is a problem for every kind of religious studies. One difficulty is the potential difference between the (emic) understandings of the participants, and our own (etic) understanding of what was going on. But with the ritual systems of late prehistoric Europe we have to contend with

these additional sets of understandings created by Greek and Roman witnesses and Irish and Scandinavian/Icelandic poets and scholars, and these can be misleading. Many classical authors (e.g., Diodorus 5.31; Cicero *De Divinatione* 1.41) interpret Druidism largely in terms of the Roman notion of divination, whilst Snorri interpreted at least one instance of blood sacrifice to Odin in terms of the Christian notion of expiation (DuBois 2006). Only recently have researchers begun to realize how much allowance must be made for the distortions created by this perspective.

These limitations of the textual evidence mean that archaeology provides by far the best evidence for ritual and cosmology among the northern peoples. Recently, there has been a move away from interpreting evidence for ritual activity in terms suggested by Tacitus, Snorri and other writers, towards attempts to identifying ritual activity in the material record. The remainder of this chapter surveys the results of these initiatives.

Small–Scale Societies

Throughout the Iron Age, most of the population of temperate Europe lived in small settlements. Typically this meant some combination of scattered farms and small open villages of around 10 hectares in area (Audouze and Buchsenschutz 1989). In some parts of Europe there were episodes of fortification building, often on hilltops. Even these sites rarely sheltered more than a few hundred permanent residents. The trading centers that began to emerge in southern Scandinavia, southern Britain and northern France during the early mediaeval period were of roughly equivalent size. A small number of much larger nucleated sites – often known as *oppida* – were occupied for a few generations at the end of the Iron Age in an area that extended from eastern France to Bohemia. Their populations may have numbered in the low thousands. The same may be true of the more dispersed settlement concentrations that appear in the same period in some regions of Europe, including eastern and southern Britain and Rumania. None of these had populations larger than the smallest category of Mediterranean city.

The political organization of Iron Age societies is a matter of debate. Most were probably tribes and chiefdoms. The wider groupings recorded in classical accounts of wars and migrations were often fragile and temporary. Whether or not states of some kind existed in Europe prior to the Roman conquest is a matter of debate: the strongest contenders are in central France, but the evidence is slender (Collis 2000). States certainly did not exist in Scandinavia and other parts of northern Europe before the middle of the last millennium CE (Randsborg 1980).

It is not surprising, then, that temperate Europe had little resembling the great public cults of the Mediterranean world, nor the great regional sanctuaries that began to appear from the eighth century BC, broadly contemporary with the rise of the city-state. Perhaps more surprisingly, neither was Iron Age Europe characterized by extensive sacred landscapes like the megalithic complexes created in the Neolithic at Carnac, Callanish and on Salisbury Plain. The first farming communities of Atlantic Europe had devoted great energy to the construction of chambered tombs, stone circles, henge and cursus monuments that involved great earthworks, and processional routes marked by alignments of stones which were occasionally transported long distances and then orientated with some astronomical precision. Their use and elaboration continued into the Bronze Age

in many regions. Traces of Iron Age ritual have been detected at some these sites, but it suggests reuse of monuments rather than continuity, let alone social memory. Despite the much greater human and economic resources available to Iron Age societies, the greater part of the evidence for ritual is localized and small scale. Most ritual activity took place on domestic sites; that is, on farms, in villages, on hill forts and in their associated funerary complexes. It has recently become apparent that late prehistoric populations concentrated much of their energy on ritualizing central aspects of their everyday lives, notably the construction and abandonment of buildings, the burial of the dead and the rhythms of the agricultural cycle (Bradley 2005). Burials of humans and animals are often found in boundary ditches. The entrances of British roundhouses share a particular cosmological orientation (Oswald 1997). It is against this background of ubiquitous domestic ritual activity that we need to interpret a small number of sites of intense cult practice. These included a series of major sanctuaries sometimes within oppida; exceptional deposits of weapons and human remains probably associated with battles; and a few very rich deposits of metalwork that plausibly represent the final outcome of extensive patterns of gift exchange managed across very long distances by the most powerful members of Iron Age societies.

Structured Deposition

Particular attention is currently devoted to what is most often referred to as "structured deposition". Objects and assemblages found in ditches, under floors and especially in pits, and once dismissed as "rubbish", frequently turn out to be the end result of very carefully performed rituals (Hill 1995). Many of the objects underwent very careful manipulation, including ritual destruction, prior to deposition. They were then arranged very carefully in combinations and on orientations that seem to follow elaborate rules. This care, elaboration and apparent redundancy of effort through which the mundane is defamiliarized are in all societies the hallmarks of ritualization (Bell 1992; Liénard and Boyer 2006).

The ritualization processes characteristic of the European Iron Age (or at least some of them) have left some distinctive archaeological traces. These include human bodies placed on the very bottom of grain storage pits and then covered with other objects; swords that have been deliberately broken into a number of pieces or else tied into knots; musical instruments that have been carefully rendered unusable; and whole or partial animal skeletons of very particular species, placed on specific orientations or associated with particular objects. The places of deposition were carefully chosen, or else created specifically for these assemblages. The material itself might include human and animal remains, metal tools and weaponry, horse equipment, cooking and eating wares and a very large proportion of the coinage found in archaeological contexts (Haselgrove and Wigg-Wolf 2005). One reason that the significance of these deposits was for so long missed is that both the things deposited and many of the places in which they were deposited had also had conventional mundane uses. But towards the end of their use-life, both objects and their contexts underwent processes of ritualization. Depositional practices of this kind occur on domestic sites, scattered and nucleated; on oppida; and on sanctuary sites such as that at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy (Brunaux 1988, 2000).

Structured deposition often involved the deliberate putting out of use of items of value. They might be destroyed, as in the ritual killing of animals or people, or the breaking of swords. Coins might be deliberately defaced, and amphorae cut into pieces. Objects might be put to use by being consigned to places from which they could not be recovered, such as river beds or bogs. It is easy to imagine ceremonies by which the powerful converted economic into symbolic capital by orchestrating ritual destructions of wealth, and we can compare these occasion to large communal feasts for which the powerful provided great quantities of meat and imported wine.

But conspicuous consumption provides only a partial explanation for structured deposition, which might in any case be performed on quite a humble scale as well as in a great public gathering. For a start, destruction was only one component of the treatment given to these materials. When animal remains are found in these deposits they are generally articulated or semi-articulate; in other words, entire or partial corpses were deposited rather than the waste products of butchery and feasting. Animal carcasses were occasionally manipulated by the removal of limbs, by decapitation, or by the arrangement of stones or pottery around them. Typically, they were aligned very carefully, facing a particular direction or lying on one side or the other. The general principles of careful selection, manipulation and arrangement were widely observed, and the objects involved are broadly the same across Europe. Yet individual sites and regions varied in precisely which species were selected and exactly how they were arranged: sheep were common at Corent, and cattle further north. Regional variation also applied to deposition of human bodies. Human burials in grain storage pits, for instance, are particularly well known in northern France and southern Britain; elsewhere, they are more likely found in watery sites, and perhaps in other places they were disposed of in elaborate ways that have left no trace. The level of elaboration in the treatment of these items shows that destruction/ putting out of use was at best only one among several aims of ritualization processes.

The choice of objects deposited is sometimes suggestive. It is no surprise that weapons were particular objects of cult: iron-working is often associated with magical practices (Hingley 1997). The choices of species deposited was obviously important, as was the age at which they were killed. Horses and dogs were perhaps associated with hunting and particular social classes, or perhaps the fact they were not consumed led to them being treated in similar ways to humans. Swords were closely connected with warrior status in all these societies. At Snettisham in Norfolk (Eastern England) a series of pits contained perhaps as many as 200 torcs made of gold, silver and bronze (Garrow and Gosden 2012). The aggregate value put out of use on this one site is extraordinary. Deposits of elaborate metalwork such as the Battersea shield or gold torcs are perhaps best understood in terms of the generalized use of such valuables in European societies. Assembling the materials for the construction of these objects may well have involved the activation of very long-distance links, and perhaps the expenditure of significant social and economic capital. Acquiring materials and finding craftsmen for their production made them enormously valuable; they were likely exchanged as gifts and passed down as heirlooms, and perhaps invested with part of the personhood of those who used them (ibid.; Garrow, Gosden, and Hill 2008). Putting treasures like these out of use represented an ostentatious renunciation of the social power they might otherwise have conveyed. It is possible to trace some of these uses of metalwork back to the Bronze Age (Bradley 1990). The most extravagant depositions can be thought of as the culmination of processes of extraction,

processing, craftsmanship and exchange that connected communities across Europe. It may not be fanciful to compare such activity to the megalith building of earlier periods.

Other deposits were not so carefully structured but may have been the result of equally elaborate rituals. At the site of La Tène, a wooden bridge over the outlet of Lake Neuchatel was used for the disposal of weapons and human remains. A similar structure recently excavated at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire was used to make offerings through the late Iron Age of weapons, tools and human and animal remains and in the early Roman period of pots and metal vessels (Field and Parker Pearson 2003). Weapons and metal-work have been recovered from major rivers including the Rhône and the Thames. A similar range of material has been recovered from bogs and lakes across northern Europe. Deposits of this kind continue to be attested from the early Roman period. Roman military equipment has been a common find (Haynes 1997; Nicolay 2007). Most recently, attention has been drawn to the continued ritual manipulation of animal remains during the Roman period (Groot 2008).

Rituals of Death

The other main locus of ritual action – alongside structured deposition on settlement sites and the deposit of weapons and other valuables in watery contexts – was in connec-tion with the treatment of the dead. Funerary rituals during the European Iron Age were very diverse by contrast with those of the periods that preceded them, and regional tra-ditions emerge very clearly. Cremation was probably still the most-used means of dis-posing of the dead, but there were many variations. Two categories of special funerary rite stand out: those that seem to have followed the deliberate killing of individuals, and those funerals accorded to the richest members of Iron Age societies.

The subject of ritual killings is both controversial and well studied (Parker Pearson 1986). Bog bodies, many of which show signs of violent and ritualized murder, have been found in the peat sphagnum bogs of Ireland, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and northern Germany, where acid conditions prevent the decay of soft material. The victims might be of either sex and can be young or old, often seem not to have under-taken significant manual work during their lives, sometimes had consumed a final meal of fairly unusual ingredients and were killed in a variety of ways including strangulation, stab wounds and perhaps suffocation. All these features suggest a ritualized killing. The bog-bodies probably represent only a fraction of ritual deaths, since classical testimony adds to a range of methods of execution several that would have left no distinctive archaeological trace including burning humans alive. Fragments of human skeletal material mixed in structured depositions are plausibly connected with ritual killings.

Understanding the rationale for ritualized killing of humans is not easy. The notions that Druids killed humans as part of divinatory rituals and that Vikings might make human sacrifices as expiations have been mentioned already. An Arabic account survives of the killing of a female child at a Viking funeral near Kiev. Was this to provide a female slave in the next world (by analogy with wine to drink and weapons to use after death)? Humans might, of course, be simply considered as valuable objects, and so particularly apt objects of destruction just like torcs and swords. Ethnographic parallels remind us of the range of explanations given for human sacrifice. Human victims might be scapegoats

or gifts for the gods or servants for the dead. Some ritual killings were of individuals identified as witches, as those who had transgressed religious rule or simply as outsiders (Wait 1986). If we cannot be sure whether unchaste Vestals were buried alive as a punishment, in expiation for their acts or as a remedial measure to restore an order disrupted by their actions, what hope have we in understanding why this or that Iron Age society conducted the ritual killing of some of its high-status members?

Rich burials, like structured depositions, varied considerably. Local societies often seem to have made their own appropriation from older repertoires of funerary ritual (Guichard and Perrin 2002). Inhumation as well as cremation is known, burials were sometimes grouped in enclosures, a few placed in underground chambers, and in rare cases as at Hayling Island, associated with sanctuary sites. A few areas continued wagon-burials, once common across Europe. Some continued the tradition of raising barrows over burials. Burials with rich grave goods were common in most areas, and there is generally a relation of mutual exclusion with other kinds of ritual deposition in the same region. Many of the same objects – weaponry, tools and drinking vessels, for example – appear in both funerary and votive contexts, including human remains, tools and weaponry. It is rare to find the same objects hoarded and used as grave goods in the same society, but common to find one means of deposition replacing the other over time (Bradley 1990).

Collective Rituals

Most prehistoric populations probably gathered in large numbers only rarely, and perhaps most often at time of war. Some of the largest ritual deposits in the archaeological record were probably formed as a sequel to battles between communities or tribes. At Ribemont in Picardy a structure was built to display hundreds of armed corpses (Brunaux 1991). Great quantities of weaponry were found at Hjortspring on the Danish island of Als in a deposit dating to the fourth century BCE (Randsborg 1995; Kaul 2003). A growing number of deposits of this kind have now been documented, many or all perhaps the result of major battles (Jørgensen, Storgaard, and Thomsen 2003; Abegg-Wigg and Rau 2008). A similar monument may have existed on the site of the Varian disaster, but those human remains that have been recovered seem to have been reburied, perhaps by Germanicus' army (Wilbers-Rost et al. 2007). These rituals were exceptional and rare events, although we can easily imagine they were long remembered.

There is, however, little trace of regular large-scale participatory rituals like those that characterized the political life of the classical city (Burkert 1987). The general absence of large structures designed to accommodate audiences has suggested that spectacles did not play as prominent a part in late prehistoric religion as they did in the classical cities of the Mediterranean. A semi-circular structure built of wooden posts very recently found in the hilltop settlement at Corent, near Clermont Ferrand, flanking a large open space (an *esplanade*) could be a structure designed to allow observation of collective rituals (Poux 2012; and the interim report 2011). Constructed in the last decades before the Gallic War it was perhaps modeled on classical theaters, one of which eventually replaced it. At present, it is unique in pre-conquest contexts, but competitive events could have been staged in open spaces or in valleys. The Situla Art, that appears on most

major sites dated to between 650 and 300 BCE in what is now eastern Switzerland, Austria, the Italian Tyrol and Slovenia, depicts not only martial scenes, hunting, and funerary processions but also boxing and chariot racing. The style of these images, although not the bronze buckets on which most appear, suggests connections with Etruria and other Mediterranean societies (Frey 1969; Zaghetto 2007). The musical instrument known as the carnyx, consisting of a long bronze tube and a wide mouth, often elaborately decorated, is often associated with use in battle (as it is portrayed on the Gundestrup Cauldron) but perhaps may have had wider ritual uses, at least in the post-conquest period, and perhaps before as well (Hunter 2001: 96–7). One example was found in a Roman period temple at Mandeure and images of the instrument figure on some altars. Five Iron-Age examples were found recently in the French sanctuary of Tintagnac, in a deposit that also included weapons, helmets and metal standards in the shape of animals, and another was deposited in a bog at Deskford in north-east Scotland.

By far the best evidence for large-scale collective ritual is provided by the remains of communal feasting. Classical testimony included accounts of occasions on which chiefs provided meat and drink for various categories of dependents, perhaps only slightly exaggerated in importance by the interest of Athenaeus whose *Dining Sophists* is the source for many fragments. Fragments of imported wine amphorae are found in very great numbers on most late Iron Age settlements in central France. At Corent, there are signs that wine amphorae were ritually destroyed in and around the sanctuary. Wine amphorae, sometimes enclosing strange deposits such as wild birds, occur in some rich burials. An early Iron Age female burial at Vix in Burgundy contained an enormous crater that was probably made in the Peloponnese.

Feasting equipment was also constructed locally. Roasting spits and firedogs are common finds on late prehistoric sites in France. At Chiseldon in Wiltshire, a ritual deposit of at least a dozen bronze cauldrons, with their contents, was found in 2004. Late Iron Age graves from central France include bronze and pottery drinking equipment, amphorae of wine and even the occasional animal carcass. Large assemblages of animal bones on some north European sites have been interpreted as the remains of feasting. Hosting feasts, like elaborate funerals, might have provided the powerful with ways of converting their wealth into social esteem (Dietler 2005). It is more difficult to know what cosmological resonances such events may have had, although there is increasing evidence that major ritual events were concentrated at particular times of years including the midwinter solstice (Parker Pearson 2006).

The sacrifice of animals in the classical world is regularly linked with the consumption of meat. Doubtless some prehistoric feasting was associated with sacrifice to the gods: huge numbers of sheep were apparently slaughtered and butchered around the open spaces in the center of oppidum at Corent, and cattle in the corresponding areas of the Titelberg. The range of skeletal material from the Titelberg suggests that some meat was transported off-site for consumption elsewhere (Méniel 2008). But in at least some cases, animals were slaughtered and not consumed. This is especially evident with the slaughter and ritual deposition of horses. A series of deposits outside the oppidum of Vertault (Côte-d'Or) and the small Roman town that replaced it, include articulated remains of horses and dogs, which were not butchered and were orientated in a particular directions (Bénard 2010: 125–33). The horse burials – usually in pairs or trios but on one occasion numbering 10 individuals – were carried out over the last two centuries BCE and the first CE.

A number lie underneath the Gallo-Roman temple. Dog burials – at least 200 were deposited at Vertault – are apparently a feature of the Roman period. Carcasses of older cattle, also not butchered, were deposited in elaborate ways in the sanctuary of Gournay (Méniel 2008). The different treatment of animals normally eaten and those not eaten (in which we should include sacrificed humans) suggests a conceptual differentiation of rituals that perhaps corresponded to a differentiation among living beings.

Sanctuaries

Processes of ritualization did on occasion mark particular places as sacred (Brunaux 1991; Haffner 1995). Most sanctuaries were quite small, although the long period over which some were used has resulted in rich deposits.

One example is provided by the offerings of human and animal remains, pottery and tools thrown into a pool surrounded with fences at Oberdorla in Thuringia. The site was used for over one thousand years. Unusually, a series of wooden images that originally surrounded the pool have been recovered. Deposits of this kind were not rare, but it is only occasionally that it is possible to reconstruct their original setting in this way. Classical testimony provides several accounts of sacred lakes and springs, such as the stories about the gold deposited in the Lake of Tolosa and allegedly plundered by the Roman general Caepio. Cult was paid at river sources and rivers were treated as deities in Greek and Roman culture, of course, and it is not always easy to be sure whether post-conquest cult reflects local ideas, Roman ones or both. Some early medieval Irish texts suggest that lakes might be seen as entrances to other worlds, and the story of Beowulf suggests some such locations may have been seen as the homes of threatening beings. Might the bottom of pits and ditches also have been viewed as key points of contact between different worlds? Other kinds of spatial liminality certainly attracted particular types of ritual: the deposits found at enclosure ditches of farmsteads and hill forts are a case in point.

Specialized religious structures are rare in Iron Age Europe but there are places where sanctuaries have been identified. The pool at Oberdorla had very little architectural elaboration: perhaps many shrines were like that. A group of sanctuaries have been identified in northern France (Brunaux 1991). Best known is Gournay-sur-Aronde where a sequence of enclosures was focused on a pit which, after a period of disuse, became the site of a Gallo-Roman temple. The rituals conducted here seem to have involved the ritual killing and display of domesticated animals. Unlike many instances of structured deposition some of the carcasses in question were left in the open air for some time.

Another group of sites once identified as sanctuaries are the so-called Viereckschanzen of central Europe; these were square enclosures with low raised banks, several of which have produced evidence for ritual deposits (Buchsenschutz and Olivier 1989). But their interpretation as sanctuaries has become controversial, partly because of the discovery of domestic waste within some enclosures, partly because sites allocated to this category vary considerably in form, and partly because the ubiquity of ritual action on domestic sites makes the deposits in square enclosures seem less significant. The utility of the category is seriously in doubt. Elaborate pit deposits have been discovered on several sites, and on some hill forts from southern Britain to central Europe various structures

have been identified as shrines (Haffner 1995). It has become more common to seek continuities between Iron Age structures and the more distinctive temple-types of the western provinces. Many Gallo-Roman fana seem to be located above sites of pre-Roman activity: often, as at Vertault, no structures have been identified in the prehistoric levels, but this may reflect the move from post-built to stone-built shrines. At Gournay, there is a clear link between the Iron Age sanctuary and a Roman shrine, many former oppida are the sites of Gallo-Roman temples and occasionally, as at Hayling Island or in the hillfort of Corent, something like a Roman temple appears in the final Iron Age occupation periods. But in many other regions nothing similar has been identified. Perhaps, as with funerary rituals and structures, we should envisage highly variable local appropriations from a continent-wide repertoire of ritual forms and practices.

Interpretating Late Prehistoric Ritual

The interpretations that have emerged from the careful contextual archaeology of the last few decades have transformed our view of both Iron Age societies and also Iron Age rituals to the point where neither is now discussed without reference to the other (e.g., Hill and Cumberpatch 1995; Gwilt and Haselgrove 1997). Yet it remains difficult either to be certain about how all this ritual activity related to belief. The life- or use-cycles of buildings also seems to have been marked by rituals, and the foundation deposits of buildings and the deposition of human bodies and other objects in grain storage pits has also been mentioned. Did rituals conducted near the end of the use-period of a storage pit aim to ensure a continuation of fertility? The association between the burials of individuals and the storage of grain has suggested to some that connections were made between the annual agricultural cycle and the social reproduction of the community (Bradley 2005). Was the burial in the ground of bodies, seeds and treasure on the one hand seen as a means of guaranteeing the appearance of new crops and wealth from the earth? The connection to astronomical cycles makes this seem likely. But it is difficult to be sure.

It is even more difficult to link these practices with the cosmologies attributed to various northern peoples by classical and Christian writers. It would be bizarre if there were no continuities between Iron Age practice and the ways in which their religious world views were translated in antiquity and the middle ages. Yet the difficulty of interpreting as rich an iconographic source as the Gundestrup Cauldron should perhaps be a salutary warning. All the same, the energy devoted to the Roman translation of prehistoric deities into familiarized hybrids should remind us of the enduring hold of these deities on the imagination and of the great gap there was to be bridged between the religious traditions of the Mediterranean world and those of temperate Europe.

Guide to Further Reading

The best succinct guides to the pre-Roman ritual traditions of Britain, France and Germany are Wait (1986), Brunaux (1988), Todd (2004), and Goudineau (2006). For Scandinavia see Hedeager (1992) and Andrén, Jennbert, and Raudvere (2006). The most thoughtful analyses are contained in Bradley (1990, 2005). Those primarily interested in

the Roman period sequel should consult Derks (1998) and Van Andringa (2002). An idea of the great range of approaches to this material is given by the papers collected by Häussler and King (2008).

Acknowledgment

This chapter has been greatly improved by the comments of participants at the Rome conference, and in particular those of Thierry Luginbuhl, Wolfgang Spickermann and William Van Andringa.

REFERENCES

Abegg-Wigg, Angelika and Andreas Rau (eds.) 2008. *Aktuelle Forschungen zu Kriegsbeuteopfern und Fürstengräbern im Barbaricum: Internationales Kolloquium, unterstützt durch Carlsbergerfondet, Schleswig 15.-18. Juni 2006.* Schriften des Archäologischen Landesmuseums Ergänzungsreihe 4. Neumünster.

Ando, Clifford. 2005. "Interpretatio romana." *CP* 100(1): 41–51.

Andrén, Anders, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere (eds.) 2006. *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions.* Lund.

Audouze, Françoise and Olivier Buchsenschutz. 1989. *Villes, villages et campagnes d'Europe celtique.* Paris.

Bell, Catherine. 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice.* Oxford.

Bénard, Jacky (ed.) 2010. *Gaulois et Gallo-Romains à Vertillum: 160 ans de découvertes archéologiques (communes de Vertault et Molesme, Côte-d'Or).* En Crausaz.

Bradley, Richard. 1990. *The Passage of Arms: An Archaeological Analysis of Prehistoric Hoards and Votive Deposits.* Cambridge.

Bradley, Richard. 2005. *Ritual and Domestic Life in Prehistoric Europe.* London.

Brunaux, Jean-Louis. 1988. *The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries.* London.

Brunaux, Jean-Louis (ed.) 1991. *Les sanctuaires celtiques et le monde méditerranéen.* Dossiers de Protohistoire 3. Paris.

Brunaux, Jean-Louis. 2000. *Les religions gauloises: Nouvelles approches sur les rituels celtiques de la Gaule indépendante.* Paris.

Buchsenschutz, Olivier and Laurent Olivier (eds.) 1989. *Les Viereckschanzen et les enceintes quadrilatérales en Europe celtique.* Paris.

Burkert, Walter. 1987. "Die antike Stadte als Festgemeinschaft." In Paul Hugger (ed.), *Stadt und Fest: Zu Geschichte und Gegenwart europäischer Festkultur.* Unträgeri. 24–44.

Collis, John R. 2000. "'Celtic' Oppida." In Mogens H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures.* Copenhagen. 229–39.

Derks, Ton. 1998. *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices: The Transformation of Religious Ideas and Values in Roman Gaul.* Amsterdam Archaeological Studies 2. Amsterdam.

Dietler, Michael. 2005 *Consumption and Colonial Encounters in the Rhône Basin of France: A Study of Early Iron Age Political Economy.* Lattes.

DuBois, Thomas A. 1999. *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age.* Philadelphia.

DuBois, Thomas A. 2006. "Rituals, Witnesses, and Sagas." In Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere (eds.), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions.* Lund. 74–8.

Field, Naomi and Mike Parker Pearson (eds.) 2003. *Fiskerton: An Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings: The 1981 Excavations.* Oxford.

Fitzpatrick, Andrew P. 1991. "'Celtic (Iron Age) Religion': Traditional and Timeless?" *Sheffield Archaeological Review* 8:123–9.

Frey, Otto-Hermann 1969. *Die Entstehung der Situlenkunst.* Berlin.

Garrow, Duncan and Chris Gosden 2012. *Technologies of Enchantment? Exploring Celtic Art: 400 BC to AD 100.* Oxford.

Garrow, Duncan, Chris Gosden, and J.D. Hill (eds.) 2008. *Rethinking Celtic Art.* Oxford.

Goudineau, Christian (ed.) 2006. *Religion et société en Gaule.* Paris.

Groot, Maaike. 2008. *Animals in Ritual and Economy in a Roman Frontier Community: Excavations at Tiel-Passewaaij.* Amsterdam.

Guichard, Vincent and Franck Perrin (eds.) 2002. *L'aristocratie celt à la fin de l'âge du fer (du IIe siècle avant J.-C. au Ier siècle après J.-C.).* Bibracte 5. Glux-en-Glenne.

Gwilt, Adam and Colin Haselgrove (eds.) 1997. *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies.* Oxford.

Haffner, Alfred (ed.) 1995. *Heiligtümer und Opferkulte der Kelten.* Hamburg.

Haselgrove, Colin and David Wigg-Wolf (eds.) 2005. *Iron Age Coinage and Ritual Practices.* Mainz.

Häussler, Ralph and Anthony C. King (eds.) 2008. *Continuity and Innovation in Religion in the Roman West.* Providence, RI.

Haynes, Ian. 1997. "Religion in the Roman Army: Unifying Aspects and Regional Trends." In Hubert Cancik and Jörg Rüpke (eds.), *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion.* Tübingen. 113–26.

Hedeager, Lotte. 1992. *Iron-Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD700.* Oxford.

Hill, J.D. 1995. *Ritual and Rubbish in the Iron Age of Wessex: A Study on the Formation of a Specific Archaeological Record.* Oxford.

Hill, J.D. and Christopher Cumberpatch (eds.) 1995. *Different Iron Ages.* Oxford.

Hingley, Richard 1997. "Iron, Iron-Working and Regeneration: A Study of the Symbolic Meaning of Metalworking in Iron Age Britain." In Adam Gwilt and Colin Haselgrove (eds.), *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies.* Oxford. 9–18.

Hunter, Fraser. 2001. "The Carnyx in Iron Age Europe." *Antiquaries Journal* 81:77–108.

Jørgensen, Lars, Birger Storgaard, and Lone Gebauer Thomsen (eds.) 2003. *The Spoils of Victory: The North in the Shadow of the Roman Empire.* Copenhagen.

Kaul, Flemming. 2003. "The Hjortspring Find: The Oldest of the Large Nordic War Booty Sacrifices." In Lars Jørgensen, Birger Storgaard, and Lone Gebauer Thomsen (eds.), *The Spoils of Victory: The North in the Shadow of the Roman Empire.* Copenhagen. 212–23.

Liénard, Pierre and Pascal Boyer. 2006. "Whence Collective Rituals? A Cultural Selection Model of Ritualized Behavior." *American Anthropologist* 108(4): 814–27.

Méniel, Patrice. 2008. "Les restes d'animaux de l'espace public de l'oppidum du Titelberg." In Daniel Castella and Marie-France Meylan Krause (eds.), *Topographie sacrée et rituels: Le cas d'Aventicum, capitale des Helvètes: Actes du colloque international d'Avenches 2–4 novembre 2006.* Basel. 167-73.

Nicolay, Johan 2007. *Armed Batavians: Use and Significance of Weaponry and Horse Gear from Non-Military Contexts in the Rhine Delta (50 BC–AD 450).* Amsterdam.

Oswald, Alisdair. 1997. "A Doorway on the Past: Practical and Mystic Concerns in the Orientation of Roundhouse Doorways." In Adam Gwilt and Colin Haselgrove (eds.), *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies.* Oxford. 87–95.

Parker Pearson, Mike. 1986. "Lindow Man and the Danish Connection: Further Light on the Mystery of the Bogman." *Anthropology Today* 12(1): 15–8.

Parker Pearson, Mike. 2006. "The Origins of Old Norse Ritual and Religion in European Perspective." In Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere (eds.), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions.* Lund. 86–91.

Poux, Matthieu (ed.) 2012. *Corent: Voyage au coeur d'une ville gauloise*, 2nd ed. Paris. [Original: 2011].

Randsborg, Klaus. 1980. *The Viking Age in Denmark: The Formation of a State.* London.

Randsborg, Klaus. 1995. *Hjortspring: Warfare and Sacrifice in Early Europe.* Aarhus.

Rives, James B. 1995. "Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians." *JRS* 85: 65–85.

Todd, Malcolm. 2004. *The Early Germans*, 2nd ed. Oxford. [Original: 1992].

Van Andringa, William. 2002. *La religion en Gaule Romaine: piété et politique (Ier- IIIIème Siècle Apr. J.C.).* Paris.

Van Andringa, William. 2006. "Nouvelles combinaisons, nouvelles statuts: les dieux indigènes dans les panthéons dees cités de Gaule romaine." In Daniel Paunier (ed.), *La romanisation et la question de l'héritage celtique.* Glux-en-Glenne. 219–32.

Wait, Gerald. 1986. *Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain.* Oxford.

Wilbers-Rost, Susanne et al. 2007. *Kalkriese 3: Interdisziplinäre Untersuchungen auf dem Oberesch in Kalkriese: Archäologische Befunde und naturwissenschaftliche Begleituntersuchungen.* Römisch-Germanische Forschungen 65. Mainz.

Woolf, Greg. 1998. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul.* Cambridge.

Zaghetto, Luca. 2007. "Iconography and Language: The Missing Link." In Kathryn Lomas, Ruth D. Whitehouse and John B. Wilkins (eds.), *Literacy and the State in the Ancient Mediterranean.* London. 171–81.