

Transforming Identities – New Approaches to Bronze Age Deposition in Ireland

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This paper explores the interpretation of the deposition of artefacts in Ireland from c. 2500 to c. 800 BC, combining a contextual analysis with post-processual ideas about materiality, artefacts, and their biographies. Hoards, single and burial finds are shown to be complementary strands of the depositional record and the result of deliberate deposition. It is argued that both the symbolic value of these items as well as economic and practical rationales determine the depositional mode. The paper attempts to infer social practices and rules that determined the differential treatment of materials and object types. The main structuring factor in the depositional record is the type-specific meanings of individual artefacts, which embody social identities beyond the utilitarian function of the object. The act of deposition facilitates and legitimates the literal and symbolic transformation of artefacts and the concepts they embody. The need for a separation between ritual and profane interpretation is removed, as deposition is understood as the reflection of prehistoric concepts rather than labelled according to modern notions of functionality. It is also argued that both dry and wet places are meaningful contexts and that different forms of wet landscapes were conceptualised differently.

Keywords: Deposition, hoards, single finds, Ireland, Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, identities, transformation

The interpretation of hoards and deposition has always attracted debate, the seemingly irrational abandonment of large quantities of valuable metalwork requiring an explanation. In Ireland vast amounts of gold, bronze, and other artefacts were found in bog, river, and dryland contexts, either singly or as hoards, which stands in stark contrast to the lack of artefacts found in burials and settlements. This paper explores the depositional record in Ireland from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) around 2400 BC to the end of the Late Bronze Age (LBA) around 800 BC. Encompassing hoard, single and burial finds, a methodology is presented that allows identifying patterns, their change over time and an interpretation of the phenomenon to be developed.

THE STUDY OF DEPOSITION

Explanations for deposition can broadly be divided in two: the artefacts were profane deposits that, due to

unfortunate circumstances, could not be retrieved; or they were ritual deposits that were never meant to be retrieved and thus also served a concrete purpose (eg, Bradley 1998). Debate has mainly focused on hoard deposits, the deliberate character of which was self-evident, as they by definition consist of two or more artefacts. Single artefacts are often seen as the result of loss, or the remnants of disturbed and unrecognised archaeological contexts. The exceptions are single finds from rivers or bogs which could, in certain regions, be biased towards certain artefact types, particularly weapons, and are more readily accepted as deliberate deposition. The acceptance of single finds as intentional deposits raises the question of how they relate to hoards.

In regions where deposition in bogs was dominant, the interpretation of hoards and single items as votive deposits was suggested early on (Müller 1898, 422ff; Worsaae 1866, 313 ff). In areas of Europe dominated by dryland hoards containing broken and incomplete objects, concealment in times of crisis was the dominant interpretation (eg, Falkenstein 1997; von Brunn 1980; Holste 1937). Both viewpoints immediately raise

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questions about the ownership of the metalwork, the reason for its deposition, and, in the case of a profane interpretation, why the material was not retrieved. The interpretation of hoards has changed little, although attempts to move away from the original classifications of ‘founders’, ‘personal’, or ‘merchants’ hoards were accompanied by efforts to establish more objective ways of recording and analysing the material. Strict categorisations of evidence for ritual or profane deposition were devised. The first attempt (Stein 1976) was followed by many others who introduced their own categorisations, based on assumptions about the character of sacred and profane depositions which often were completely contradictory (cf. Fontijn 2002 for a systematisation of the different arguments). The main problem of these approaches was the *a priori* interpretation of the criteria (for critique of Stein 1976 see von Brunn 1980, 93). These were either based on characteristics of exceptional hoards, anthropological parallels (Levy 1982), or conjecture. The interpretations reached vary from a wholesale interpretation as ritual (eg Maraszek 2000; Hänsel 1997; Hansen 1994; Taylor 1993) to the view that both phenomena might have existed side by side (eg Huth 1997; Eogan 1983; Levy 1982; Stein 1976, 111).

Some approaches have added a further dimension to the interpretation of ritual hoards. Authors such as Barrett (1985) and Bradley (1998; 1988; 1982) were concerned with the potential social function of votive deposition, such as the display of status – competitive consumption – or the destruction of valuables to control the amount of metalwork in circulation to reduce social inequalities. Bradley (1982) added another perspective to these explanations by setting them into the context of competitive gift exchange and comparing it to the North American potlatch, a ceremony in which the competitive mass destruction of goods served as a sacrifice to the spirits and gods (Mauss 1990, 16), as well as a display and a means of acquiring social status and prestige (Gregory 1980). This was seen as an analogy for hoard deposition (Bradley 1998; 1982). In contrast to the prestige momentarily gained by gift giving between humans, gifts to the gods could not be returned and thus increased the prestige of the giver (Bradley 1982). These concepts usually go hand-in-hand with the identification of these practices as votive deposition, without necessarily addressing the nature of votive deposition itself. Similarly, studies such as those by

Kristiansen (1989; 1979) or Taylor (1993) primarily strive to extrapolate information on social and economic organisation from the hoard record and are less concerned with the interpretation of its function and meaning.

All these approaches see the gain of personal prestige as motivation for deposition or destruction. The apparently reasonable, economically sound explanation of the irrational act of deposition (cf. Fontijn 2002, 18–19) explains the popularity of the concept, and reference is often made to two options – votive or prestige – as though they could, even conceptually, be separated from each other (Verlaeckt 1998; Taylor 1993).

The interpretation of hoards as votive deposits has gradually found wider acceptance and established itself as the dominant interpretation (eg Bradley 1998; Hansen 1994; Fontijn 2002; Hänsel 1997; Vandkilde 1996; Hansen 1991), to the point that it is now considered self-evident and a possible utilitarian function has to be proved (Hänsel 1997, 15). However, it could be argued that the votive explanation cannot be proven either and remains a hypothesis. It is notable that few authors (with the exception of, for example, Hansen 1994; 1991; Maraszek 2006; 2000) engage with the question of what the concept of votive deposition, which is directly borrowed from the Greek world, actually entails and if it is applicable to the material at hand. Instead, in many recent discussions the word ‘votive’ has simply replaced the problematic term ‘ritual’ as another placeholder for the inexplicable. The problematic *concept* of ritual remains. The narrower meaning of ‘votive’ actually causes more problems as it suggests a particular, religious function directed at supernatural powers for a specific purpose. This term presupposes detailed knowledge about participants, recipients, and purpose of the deposit. While using the word ‘ritual’ remains unhelpful, the way forward lies in what Brück (1999) called for: gaining a more detailed understanding of the archaeological record and the past practices that may have led to its formation.

Developing a contextual approach to deposition

Composition, arrangement, and find contexts of hoards are the most frequently considered aspects and remain the key data we have to work with. However, there are problems with past interpretations, as discussed above. For example, the arrangement of

finds in a particular way has often been read as indicating a non-utilitarian function of the deposit (Geißlinger 1984, 327), though finds can also be arranged for purely practical reasons (Genthe 1874, 100f, quoted in Hansen 1994, 325) or be the result of the former presence of an organic container. The presence of food remains, ash, or animal bones in a deposit has also been used for the identification of ritual hoards (eg, Levy 1982, 22), as they could be part of a ritual or ceremony protecting the depositional act. But any kind of deposit – be it permanent or non-permanent, retrievable or irretrievable – may have been accompanied by a ceremony that leaves no trace.

Even the most clear criterion – the divide between wet and dry contexts – can be refuted as a clear pointer for the type of act. Deposition in bogs or rivers has been seen as indicating the permanent surrender of the valuables, as their retrieval is impossible (cf. Levy 1982, 21). However, recovery from a variety of wet contexts is theoretically possible, and a decision to deposit something in a wet milieu might have been influenced by the greater security benefit (Needham 2001, 290–1). Bog contexts can be extremely varied (cf. Geißlinger 1984, 322–3); drier areas would allow retrieval. Concealment of valuables in bogs in times of crisis is evidenced elsewhere in historic times (Petersen 1890, 209ff in Willroth 1985, 16).

Neither does the reverse argument hold true. Deposition in dry places does not necessarily indicate that the objects were meant to be retrieved (cf. Kristiansen 1996, 255), no matter how accessible or prominent the spot. Physically unprotected deposits may have been protected by social or religious rules or sacred places in the landscape (Geißlinger 1984, 323). The marking of the find location and the deposit itself may also be a way of mythically increasing the value of the place and the object (Torbrügge 1985, 18).

To avoid the dependency on a fixed set of criteria, some recent studies have moved away from the individual find and its circumstances, concentrating instead on the compositional characteristics of hoards and patterns of deposition across a broader body of finds and types of deposits. Patterns in the record are seen as evidence for deliberate deposition, pointing to deposition of some material in wet contexts as the deliberate giving-up of objects, suggesting a ritual purpose (Maraszek 1998, 315). However, dry-land deposition is not considered as the expression of a different depositional intention. Instead, the

interpretation of wet deposits is extended to the rest of the material. This has led to a situation in which context is only of secondary importance or its relevance denied (eg, Maraszek 2000, 290; Hansen 1994, 325; 1991, 183; Verlaeckt 1998, 266).

The recognition of patterns in the depositional record that span different types of deposit categories suggested that single finds could also be the result of deliberate deposition. Kristiansen's observation that over the course of the Bronze Age a complementary and oscillating relationship between burials and hoard finds can be observed also underlines the notion that different parts of the depositional record may be interdependent aspects of an overall depositional system (Kristiansen 1998, see also Hansen 1994; Torbrügge 1970/1). The need to understand hoard deposition within the general framework of depositional practices over time has already been recognised elsewhere (eg, Bradley 1982) and studies integrating the different strands of depositional practice have concentrated on the patterns or structures (Hansen 1994; 1991) or selectiveness of the record (Needham 1988). They aim to identify repeated actions in order to differentiate between traditional practices and random activities (Torbrügge 1985, 18).

Focus of this study

This study abstains from considering the ritual or profane function as a crucial question to answer. Instead, a focus on the variability of depositional practices over the course of the Bronze Age will aid further interpretation. The demonstration of non-random patterns in the record needs to be the departure point of any study that aims to identify and interpret deliberate deposition.

For this, the concept of context needs to be expanded. The treatment of artefact types across places and forms of deposits is an important aspect of depositional articulation. If an inter-relationship between hoards, single finds, and burials is assumed, the treatment of artefacts across these different categories needs to be examined.

Rather than despairing over the inconclusiveness of known criteria, an alternative data-led approach is proposed here. This paper suggests that interpretative possibilities are not so limited, once freed from the known set of options and criteria, one re-engages with the data on a broad, comprehensive basis. The identification of structured or selective deposition

is not the end of the discussion. Contextual, compositional, and conditional characteristics can reveal meaningful patterns and also potentially provide information about the rationale behind the formation of the record.

This approach depends on the availability of contextual information and single finds are notoriously badly documented. This is here compensated for by creating a substantial database of the material, taking a diachronic approach from the earliest beginnings of the Irish Bronze Age to the end of the period. In addition, the patina of bronze artefacts from hoards was assessed in order to confirm the validity of information on hoard contexts or suggest contexts for finds without provenance (Becker 2006). Comprehensiveness is crucial in order to be able to capture variations and patterns in the record; all types of artefacts that occur in these contexts, including gold and non-metal artefacts, were therefore included. This is, however, restricted by our ability to recognise and date types. So it may not be possible to date certain classes of stone artefacts, plain amber beads, or jet and shale objects, and even some metal objects that are not typologically distinctive types, when they are in a 'single find' context. The numerical comparison of such artefacts when found in other parts of the archaeological record is therefore not possible (cf. Needham & Burgess 1980, 445–7). This particularly affects non-metal artefacts for which, after the EBA, no typologically distinct forms exist. While, for example, amber beads are found in Middle (MBA) and LBA hoards, the corresponding singly deposited forms cannot be securely attributed to either period. Caution must also be exercised with some of the metal objects that are not diagnostic.

The data (Becker 2006) was compiled from published and unpublished catalogues and sources. In total 1686 objects from metal hoards were considered, as well as a number of non-metal hoards, and 322 burials were recorded. Of these, 201 could, on the basis of typologically distinct artefacts or independent dating evidence, be assigned to either part of the EBA. For both burials (Waddell 1990; Kilfeather 1991) and hoards (Eogan 1983; O'Flaherty 1995) as well as for most artefact types it was possible to build on existing publications (see caption for Fig. 1), whereas, for LBA spearheads, all specimens in the National Museum and the Ulster Museum were recorded as a representative sample. About 8900 single finds were recorded in the database (for a full

catalogue see Becker 2006). Single finds and hoards are rarely encountered in excavations and the recent upsurge in excavation activity has not significantly added to the corpus of EBA burials with grave goods.

STRUCTURED, TYPE-SPECIFIC DEPOSITION IN BRONZE AGE IRELAND

The material record of prehistoric Ireland differs significantly from that in other European regions. Most striking is the lack of artefacts from settlement sites throughout the Bronze Age and the lack of non-ceramic burial goods after the EBA. The overwhelming majority of artefacts are found in the natural landscape, in rivers and bogs and to a significant extent on dry land.

The lack of artefact association in stratified contexts creates chronological problems and the Irish Bronze Age chronology mainly relies on the phasing of the metalwork dated by comparison with typologies elsewhere, particularly in England and Scotland (eg, Eogan 2000; 1994; 1964; 1962). The chronology adopted in this study (Fig. 1) is designed to allow the comparative analysis of types and is kept broad to legitimately allow the postulation of loose contemporaneity and thus comparison of what are mostly floating, relative typo-chronological sequences, augmented only at times by radiocarbon dates. While the application of radiocarbon dates has in the case of the pottery led to a relatively stable chronological framework for the EBA (Brindley 2007), the metalwork phases cannot be correlated directly to this, and for the MBA and LBA no distinct typological development of pottery types exists. The relative chronology of the metalworking phases is anchored in absolute chronology by radiocarbon dated associations and artefacts (eg, Needham 1996; 1990; Needham *et al.* 1997; Brindley 2001).

The artefacts in this study reveal some striking patterns over the course of the Bronze Age. While the number of single finds increased steadily (Fig. 2a), hoard and burial events fluctuate (Fig. 2b–c). The number of burials containing grave goods increased during EBA2 (Fig. 2b), while the number of burial goods remained broadly stable (Fig. 2c), reflecting a decrease in number of finds per burial. While a rather modest range of objects, few of metal, were deposited in graves in EBA1 (Tables 1a–c), in EBA2 metal objects that might indicate status, such as bronze razors and daggers, were deposited in burials in greater numbers,

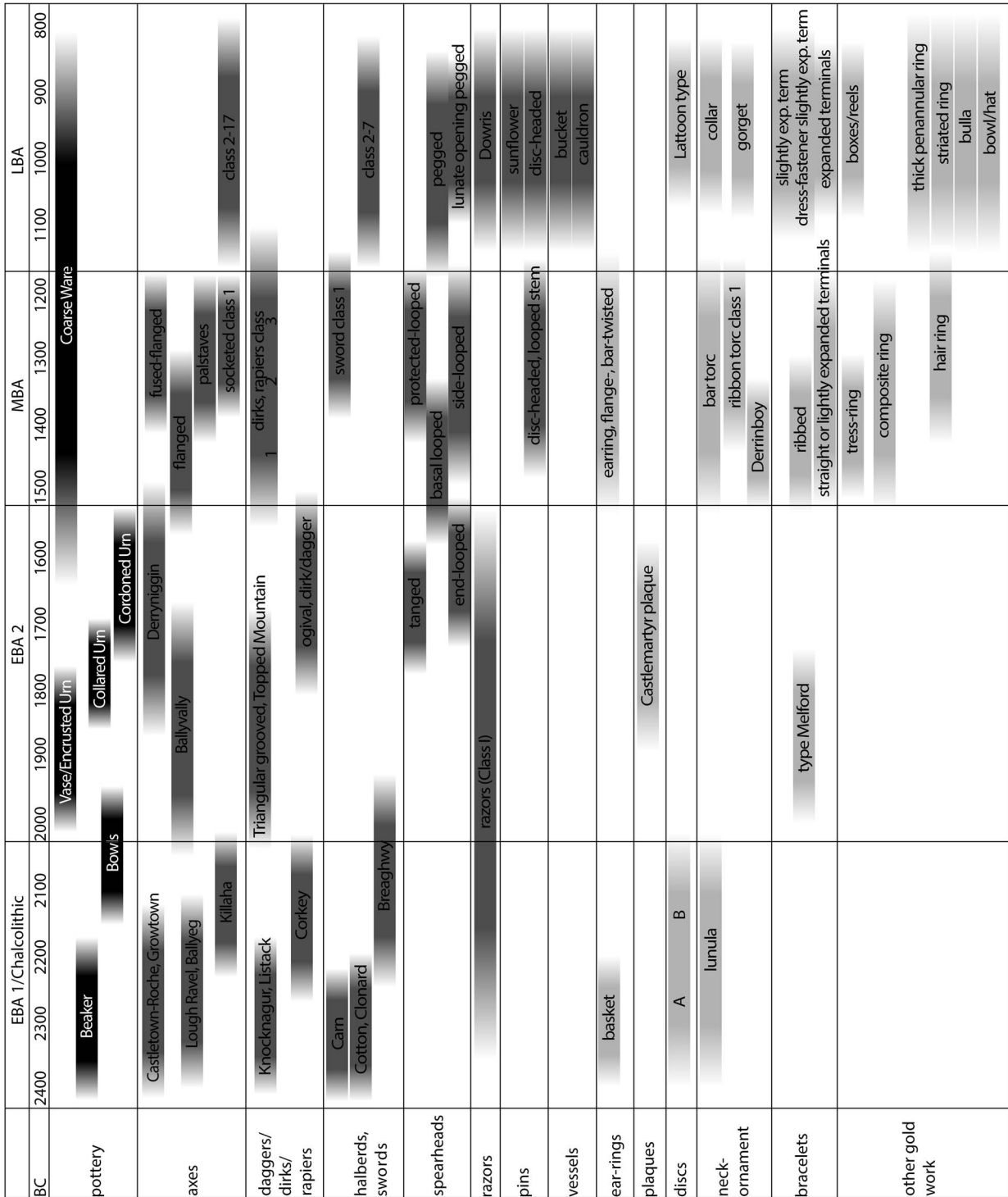


Fig. 1.

Dating of the main Irish Bronze Age artefact types. The phasing is based on Waddell (1998), Needham (2005; 2000; 1996; 1990), Needham *et al.* (1997), Brindley (2007), Eogan (1964; 1962) and individual find associations. A full discussion of the phasing adopted here and dating of individual types can be found in Becker (2006)

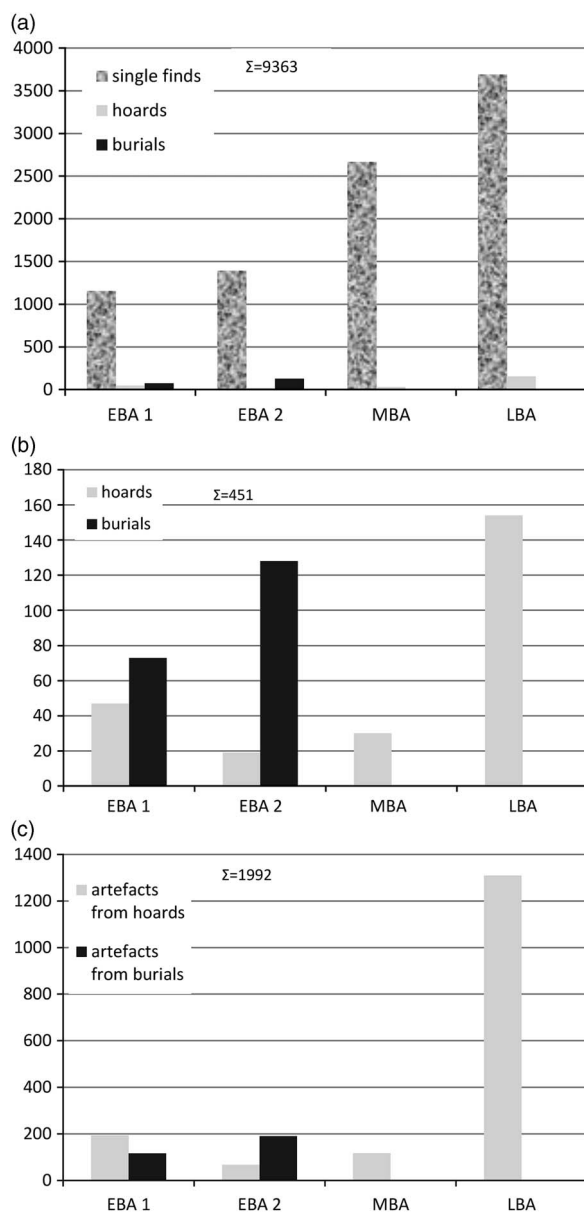


Fig. 2.

Number of a) depositional events, ie, single finds, hoards, and burial deposits; b) hoard and burial finds containing artefacts; c) artefacts from hoards and burials in the summary stages EBA 1/Chalcolithic, EBA 2, Middle & Late Bronze Age

as well as a small number of amber and faience objects, battle axes, a halberd, and a spearhead (Tables 2a–c). Also, for the first time, a small number of gold finds can clearly be tied to the burial record.

The number of hoards that can be assigned to the EBA2 are small in size, a trend that continues in the MBA (Fig. 2b, Tables 9a–c) where only a small increase in hoard numbers can be observed (Fig. 2a). From this phase on, burials lacked aceramic grave goods. Gold hoards, however, were deposited in greater numbers than before (Tables 9a–c). The range of bronze artefacts deposited in this period was severely limited, whether in hoards or as individual deposits of weapons and axes (Tables 3a–c). Hoard deposition rose in the LBA to its highest level in terms of frequency of depositional events (Fig. 2a) as well as the number of objects (Tables 2b & 4). The range of objects deposited widened significantly in this period to include bronze ornaments and tools other than axes, but hoards still contributed a significantly lower amount of objects than the single find record (Table 4a–d). Throughout the Bronze Age some non-metal artefacts were deposited separately in hoards as for example Early Bronze v-perforated buttons in two bog deposits (Harbison 1976, 15), MBA stone moulds and LBA wooden mould patterns (Becker 2006).

Deposition as one option

In the normal course of events, the majority of the artefacts would have been recycled and the metal would thus have gone back into circulation. Deposition has to be considered an exception to the norm (cf. Needham 2001). And indeed, the absence of some artefact types from the spectrum of finds could be representative of selectivity in deposition, to the extent of the exclusion of certain types from deposition altogether. It is striking, for example, that after the deposition of grave goods ceased at the end of EBA2, razors all but disappear from the record, to re-appear again in small numbers in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 1, Tables 2a, 3a, 4a). While it is possible that the production of razors was discontinued, it seems more likely that their deposition ceased. The same appears likely for some forms of early spearheads and sickles. Bronze ornaments are similarly rare. Typologically distinct bronze ornaments were not generally deposited, but have been found in the MBA hoards from Bishopsland, Co. Kildare (Eogan 1983, 36, no. 16), Annesborough, Co. Armagh (*ibid.*, 27, no. 7), and Cloneenbaun, Co. Roscommon (*ibid.*, 44, no. 26), and rare examples of moulds for casting of bronze ornaments are occasionally found on MBA settlement sites (eg, Knockadoon, Lough Gur, Co. Limerick (Ó Ríordáin 1954); Corrstown, Co. Antrim

TABLE 1: QUANTITY OF OBJECTS FOUND AS BURIAL GOODS, HOARD COMPONENTS, OR SINGLY FOR EACH MAIN GROUP OF ARTEFACT TYPE IN EBA1/CHALCOLITHIC

a) Copper

	Single find		Hoard		Burial		Σ N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
axe	745	86.6	114	13.3	1	0.1	860
halberd	150	92.6	12	7.4	0	0.0	162
dagger	43	78.2	6	10.9	6	10.9	55
chisel	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
awl	0	0.0	3	50.0	3	50.0	6
cake	0	0.0	8	100.0	0	0.0	8
wire	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
object	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
Σ	939	85.7	143	13.1	13	1.3	1095

b) Gold

	Single finds		Hoards		Burials		Σ N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
basket-earring	4	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	4
disc	2	10.0	18	90.0	0	0.0	20
ear-ring	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
lunula	72	80.0	18	20.0	0	0.0	90
band	0	0.0	5	100	0	0.0	5
Σ	79		41		0		120

c) Other materials

	Type	Single find		Hoard		Burial		Σ
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
stone	axe	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100	3
	battle-axe	52	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	52
	bracer	39	92.9	2	4.8	1	2.4	42
	hammer-stone	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
	loom-weight	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	mould	8	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	8
	hone/stone	0	0.0	3	23.1	10	76.9	13
	quern	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	vessel	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	tusk		0	0.0	1	33.3	2	66.7
jet	necklace	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	40.0	5
	beads	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	1
shale	necklace	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
amber	beads	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	ornament	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	100	7
var	button v-perf.	21	87.5	0	0.0	3	12.5	24
	pin	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	100	7
	arrow-head	20	80.0	1	4.0	4	16.0	25
flint	blade	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100	3
	var	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	100	35
	knife	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	100	14
antler	pick	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
Σ		142		9		103		252

Here and in Tables 2–3, typologically distinct types, which have the potential to show up in the single find record, are highlighted in bold. Other artefact groups are either too small in number or would only appear in the burial or hoard record as they are typologically indistinct and thus unrecognisable in the single finds record (eg, amber beads, bone implements, and ornaments, and various stone and flint implements. For a full catalogue of the artefacts which are in the main drawn from the sources listed below, see Becker 2006: Armstrong 1933; Binchy 1967; Bourke 2001; Brindley 2001; British Museum 1904; Burgess & Gerloff 1981; Cahill 1983; 1994; 1995; 1998; Coghlan & Raftery 1961; Coles 1962; 1963; 1971; Collins 1970; Dowd forthcoming; Eogan 1969; 1974; 1981; 1983; 1994; 1997; 2000; 2001; 2002; Evans 1881; Flanagan 1959; 1961; 1964a& b; 1979; 1980; Fox 1939; Gerloff 2004; Green 1980; Halpin 1984; Harbison 1964; 1967; 1968; 1969a & b; 1976; 1978; 2004; 1993; Hawkes 1961; Hawkes & Smyth 1957; Herity 1969; Hodges 1954; 1956; Hurl 1995; Ireland 2003; Jockenhövel 1980; Jope 1951; 1953; Kavanagh 1991; Keeley 1982; Kilfeather 1991; Macwhite 1954; Mcevoy 1997; Mitchell *et al.* 1941; Northover 2000; O’Brien 2004; O’Brien *et al.* 1990; O’Carroll & Ryan 1992; O’Connor 1975; 1983; O’Flaherty 1995; 2002; O’Kelly 1969; 1970; Ó Néill & Macdonald 2004; O’Sullivan 2005; Prendergast 1960; Proudfoot 1955; 1956; Raftery 1973; 2004; Ramsey 1989; 1991–2; 1995; Ramsey & Simpson 1990; Roe 1968; Roth 1974; Rynne 1962; 1972; Sheridan & Northover 1993; Simpson 1986; 1988; 1989; 1990; 1996; Sproule 1968; Taylor 1970; 1980; 1994; Waddell 1990; Warner 2004; Weatherup 1975; Whitfield 1992; 1993; Wilde 1857; 1862; Williams 1980; Williams & Gormely 2002; Williams *et al.* 1992

(Grogan 2012); Ballyprior Beg, Co. Antrim (Armit 2003)). The fact that the rare examples of bronze ornaments in hoards are often in fragmentary condition supports the notion that they were in circulation but usually not deemed suitable for deposition unless as scrap. This is the case in the Bishopsland tool hoard where both a sickle and bronze bracelet are present in fragmentary form, as well as the two torcs from the Annesborough hoard (here beside two intact

plain bracelets). The general lack of Bronze ornaments in Ireland led to the discussion of these items as imports (Eogan 1994). In contrast it is here suggested that particular types of bronze artefacts were in use, but were recycled and only rarely entered the depositional record. This would also counterbalance the large number of gold ornaments which have dominated our understanding of levels of affluence of Irish society at the time.

THE PREHISTORIC SOCIETY

TABLE 2: QUANTITY OF OBJECTS FOUND AS BURIAL GOODS, HOARD COMPONENTS, OR SINGLY FOR EACH MAIN GROUP OF ARTEFACT TYPE IN THE EBA

a) Bronze

	<i>Single finds</i>		<i>Hoards</i>		<i>Burial</i>		Σ N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
axe	1142	95.9	48	4.0	1	0.1	1191
dagger	53	86.9	0	0.0	8	13.1	61
dagger-knife	1	20.0	0	0.0	4	100	5
dirk	11	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	11
rapier	7	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	7
razor	12	25.5	0	0.0	35	74.5	47
bracelet	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	1
pin	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	1
awl	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
beads	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
boss	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
spearhead	19	95.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	20
halberd	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
object/fragment/wire	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100	3
Σ	1245		50		57		1352

b) Gold

	<i>Single finds</i>		<i>Hoards</i>		<i>Burial</i>		Σ N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
bracelet	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	2
disc	0	0.0	4	100	0	0.0	4
pin	0	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	1
hiltguard	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
plate	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	2
Σ	1		6		3		10

c) Other materials

	<i>Single finds</i>		<i>Hoards</i>		<i>Burial</i>		Σ N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
axe	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
arrowhead	0	0.0	1	8.3	11	91.7	12
battle axe	56	90.3	1	1.6	5	6.1	62
macehead	33	94.3	0	0.0	2	5.7	35
bracer	53	98.2	0	0.0	1	1.9	54
pebble/stone	0	0.0	1	10.0	9	90.0	10
mould	7	50.0	7	50.0	0	0.0	14
whetstone	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
knives	0	0.0	1	4.8	20	95.2	21
tools	0	0.0	0	0.0	30	100	30
various	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	100	4
pommelmount	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
beads	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100	3
beads	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	100	11
beads	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
ornaments	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	100	17
other objects	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100	3
ball	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1
	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	100	5
Σ	149		11		130		290

TABLE 3: QUANTITY OF OBJECTS FOUND AS BURIAL GOODS, HOARD COMPONENTS, OR SINGLY FOR EACH MAIN GROUP OF ARTEFACT TYPE IN THE MBA
A) BRONZE B) GOLD C) MOULDS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF EACH TYPE IN THE OVERALL ASSEMBLAGE

a) Bronze					
	Single finds		Hoards		overall
	N	%	N	%	N
axe	1170	99.2	10	0.9	1180
sword	22	100.0	0	0.0	22
spearhead	790	99.5	4	0.5	794
dirk	486	100	0	0.0	486
rapier	15	100	0	0.0	15
ring	1	100	0	0.0	1
pin	2	100	0	0.0	2
bracelet	0	0.0	6	100	6
sickle	0	0.0	1	100	1
wire	0	0.0	2	100	2
anvil	0	0.0	1	100	1
scrap	0	0.0	4	100	4
chisel	0	0.0	2	100	2
graver	0	0.0	1	100	1
hammer	0	0.0	3	100	3
hook	0	0.0	1	100	1
plate	0	0.0	1	100	1
ring	0	0.0	2	100	2
saw	0	0.0	1	100	1
torc	0	0.0	2	100	2
tweezers	0	0.0	1	100	1
Σ	2486		42		2528

b) Gold					
	Single finds		Hoards		Overall
	N	%	N	%	N
ribbon torc	4	19.1	17	81.0	21
neck-ring	0	0.0	1	100	1
bracelet, penannular	11	21.6	40	78.4	51
bracelet/ring	17	100	0	0.0	17
tress ring	1	14.3	6	85.7	7
ear-ring	12	75.0	4	25.0	16
hair ring	136	100	0	0.0	136
ring, composite	1	20.0	4	80.0	5
ring	0	0.0	3	100	3
Σ	182		75		257

c) Moulds			
moulds	Single finds	Hoards	Σ
	33	5	38

Selective deposition – single finds, hoards and burial goods

The most obvious evidence for selective deposition in the Irish Bronze Age record is the clear distinction

between the types of artefacts and materials found in burials, and those comprising hoards and single finds (Tables 1–4).

Some artefact types are over- or under-represented in certain contexts and if we can identify types that were deposited only or predominantly as single finds but were not included in hoards (or burials), we can assume that a selection was made. Gold and bronze artefacts (Tables 1a–b, 2a–b), as well as battle axes and v-perforated buttons (Table 1c and 2c) for example, were rarely deposited in EBA burials. Taking issues of preservation and recognition into account, the under-representation of types in the single find record compared to closed assemblages as hoards or burials is only possible in the case of recognisable, distinct forms. As the aforementioned sickles and bronze ornaments, also the absence of Late Bronze Age tools such as socketed gouges or chisels in the single-find record (Table 4a) is likely to reflect prehistoric reality, especially given the fact that neither river-dredging schemes nor a survey of Irish river and bog finds has contributed significant numbers of these types (Bourke 2001; Halpin 1984). Other types were predominately deposited as single finds and never (rapiers and dirks of the MBA) or rarely (LBA axes: 3.5%) included in hoards.

Such patterns suggest a selective process, both in the case of artefacts selected for – or excluded from – deposition in burials and those for which hoarding or single deposition was the preferred choice. This demonstrates that deposition in these latter forms is not an automatic by-product of production and circulation, but that deliberate choices appear to structure the record.

Type-specific depositional patterns

These deliberate choices can be demonstrated to structure the record further and the selectiveness can be demonstrated to be artefact type-specific, as already suggested by the broad patterns outlined above. Within the single find record it is possible to identify type-specific associations between particular artefact types and places in the landscape (Tables 5–8). After axes, weapons constitute the largest group of artefacts throughout the Bronze Age. They were usually deposited singly in wet contexts, especially in rivers. This pattern conforms to the treatment of weapons across Western Europe in general (cf. Hansen 1994; Bradley 1998; Maraszek 1998). However, distinct

TABLE 4: QUANTITY OF OBJECTS FOUND AS BURIAL GOODS, HOARD COMPONENTS, OR SINGLY FOR EACH MAIN GROUP OF ARTEFACT TYPE IN THE LBA A) BRONZE B) GOLD C) MOULDS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF EACH TYPE IN THE OVERALL ASSEMBLAGE

a) Bronze						b) Gold					
	Single finds		Hoards		Overall N		Single finds		Hoards		Σ N
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%	
spearhead	436	82.4	93	17.6	529	collar	2	18.2	9	81.8	11
sword	559	90.0	62	10.0	621	torc	1	33.3	2	66.7	3
chape	22	81.5	5	18.5	27	gorget	7	58.3	5	41.7	12
shield	6	85.7	1	14.3	7	bracelet	113	34.2	217	65.8	330
axe	2057	95.5	109	0.5	2166	dress-fastener	80	74.1	28	25.9	108
knife	38	61.3	24	38.7	62	sleeve-fastener	79	78.2	22	21.8	101
gouge	4	15.4	22	84.6	26	thick penannular ring	4	26.7	11	73.3	15
awl	0	0.0	1	100	1	striated ring	17	94.4	1	5.6	18
chisel	16	44.4	20	55.6	36	lock ring	16	59.3	11	40.7	27
trunnion axe	1	100	0	0.0	1	bulla	4	57.1	3	42.9	7
hammer	0	0.0	5	100	5	ear spool	2	28.6	5	71.4	7
hook	0	0.0	1	100	1	box	1	14.3	6	85.7	7
anvil	0	0.0	1	100	1	pin	2	40.0	3	60.0	5
sickle	35	89.7	4	10.3	39	pin-plating	0	0.0	3	100	3
razor	9	60.0	6	40.0	15	ring	2	25.0	6	75.0	8
tweezers	0	0.0	2	100	2	hat/vessel	4	100	0	0.0	4
necklace	0	0.0	1	100	1	bowl	0	0.0	1	100	1
chain-collar/chain	2	50.0	2	50.0	4	disc	1	33.3	2	66.7	3
ring	7	1.8	374	98.2	381	ingot	0	0.0	3	100	3
bracelet	4	25.0	12	75.0	16	scrap/object	0	0.0	4	100	4
dress-fastener	1	33.3	2	66.7	3	Σ	335		342		677
ear-ring	0	0.0	2	100	2						
pin	92	71.9	36	28.1	128	c) Moulds					
horn	37	28.5	93	71.5	130	<i>Moulds (stone)</i>		N	%		
cauldron	10	66.7	5	33.3	15	single finds	7	100			
bucket	7	70.0	3	30.0	10	hoards	0	0.0			
bowl	0	0.0	1	100	1	Σ	7	100			
cup	0	0.0	1	100	1						
vessel	0	0.0	1	100	1						
crotal	2	3.7	52	96.3	54						
phalera	4	100	0	0.0	4						
rattle-pendant	3	100	0	0.0	3						
scrap	0	0.0	15	100	15						
ingot	0	0.0	1	100	1						
cake	0	0.0	1	100	1						
mould gate	0	0.0	4	100	4						
tube	0	0.0	1	100	1						
object	0	0.0	3	100	3						
neck-ring	2	66.7	1	33.3	3						
Σ	3354		967		4321						

differences are clearly present between different types of weapons and between sub-forms.

The deposition of specialised, and particularly bladed weapons differs considerably from that of axes and spearheads; the former are found far more often in river contexts, this is particularly true for the more elaborate and little-used pieces. This tendency can be traced from the EBA to the LBA, and begins with EBA1 halberds (32%), daggers (36.4%), and

stone battle axes (82.4%) coming from river contexts (Tables 5a–c) which contrasts starkly with that for metal axes at 21.2%. The trend continues in the MBA when rapiers and dirks show a high level of river deposition (66% and 90%), and an even higher rate for Lissane-type rapiers, which are particularly large, technically perfect, and probably of ceremonial function (Ramsey 1989, 60). This is in stark contrast to the rate of river deposition for contemporary axes (34.7%) and spearheads (39%) which show a higher rate of bog deposition instead. In the LBA, swords (53.4%) and spearheads (57.6%) continue the pattern with both types being predominately deposited in river contexts. There is a trend for spearheads deposited in rivers to be relatively large in size (Bourke 2001, 113). Similarly, in the MBA some of the most elaborate and probably non-utilitarian forms of spearheads are predominantly found in wet contexts (Ramsey 1989, 329). This distinction between small utilitarian

TABLE 5: SINGLE FINDS BY FIND CONTEXT IN EBA1/CHALCOLITHIC

a) Copper

	<i>Axe</i>		<i>Axe ingot</i>		<i>Dagger</i>		<i>Halberd</i>		Σ
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
river	11	21.2	2	66.7	4	36.4	8	32.0	25
bog	24	46.2	1	33.3	6	54.6	11	44.0	42
lake	5	9.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	7
dry	2	3.9	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0.0	2
mountain	1	1.9	0	0.2	0	0.2	0	0.1	1
stony	1	1.9	0	0.3	0	0.3	0	0.2	1
sand	2	3.9	0	0.4	0	0.4	0	0.3	2
monument	0	0.0	0	0.5	1	9.1	0	0.4	1
megalithic monument	3	5.8	0	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.5	3
clay	1	1.9	0	0.7	0	0.0	2	8.0	3
hill	0	0.0	0	0.8	0	0.0	2	8.0	2
quarry	2	3.9	0	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	2
Σ	52		3		11		25		91

b) Gold

	<i>Lunulae</i>	
	N	%
bog	6	46.2
lake	1	7.7
dry	1	7.7
mountain	2	15.4
quarry	1	7.7
megalithic monument	1	7.7
rocky	1	7.7
Σ	13	

c) Non-metals

	<i>Arrowhead, barbed & tanged</i>		<i>Button, v-perforated</i>		<i>Battle-axe</i>		<i>Macehead</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
bog	4	22.2	1	14.3	1	5.9	0	0.0
river	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	82.4	3	75.0
lake	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.9	0	0.0
mon	3	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
copper mine	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.9	0	0.0
meg. mon	11	61.1	6	85.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Σ	18		7		17		4	

spearheads and large more ostentatious examples is also reflected in the LBA hoard record, with small spearheads deposited in complex hoards and the larger examples in one-type or single-category weapon hoards. This may reflect a functional specialisation and the combination with ornaments and tools places the small pieces in a more domestic or personal context. Wear and damage suggests that the spearheads in weapon hoards were less-used prestigious ceremonial items, while the small ones were extremely worn, resharpened and often damaged, indicating frequent use. This may suggest a distinction between utilitarian and ceremonial forms as

the basis of this differentiation; the two LBA spearheads decorated with gold foil found in wet contexts (Coles 1971a) further emphasise the prestigious or ceremonial potential of larger examples. The difference between combat and hunting spearheads may also be represented in these differences (cf. Bridgford 2000, 34).

The deposition of Late Bronze Age specialised ceremonial objects such as cauldrons, buckets, and horns in bog contexts (100% each), but not in rivers, mirrors that of gold artefacts. Except for one LBA bulla and the Near New Ross, Co. Waterford hoard (Eogan 1994, 144; 1983,164, no. 145), as well as the

TABLE 6: SINGLE FINDS BY FIND CONTEXT IN EBA2: BRONZE

	<i>Axe</i>		<i>Dagger/ dirk/rapier</i>		<i>Razor</i>		<i>Spearhead /knife?</i>		<i>Overall</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
river	29	46.0	3	42.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	44.4
bog	27	42.9	1	14.3	0	0.0	1	100	29	40.3
lake	1	1.6	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	4.2
wet	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
hill	0	0.0	1	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
rocky	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
quarry	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
sand	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	1	1.4
monument	2	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.8
lead mines	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
Σ	63		7		1		1		72	

TABLE 7: SINGLE FINDS BY FIND CONTEXT IN MBA

a) Bronze

	<i>Axe</i>		<i>Dirk</i>		<i>Rapier</i>		<i>Spearhead</i>		<i>Sword</i>		Σ	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
river	26	34.7	62	66.0	9	90.0	53	39.0	5	0.7	155	0.5
bog	42	56.0	22	23.4	1	10.0	69	50.8	2	28.6	136	42.2
lake	3	4.0	9	9.6	0	0.0	11	8.1	0	0.0	23	7.1
sand	1	1.3	1	1.1	0	0.0	1	0.7	0	0.0	3	0.9
monument	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
dry	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.6
island	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
mountain	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.3
Σ	75		94		10		136		7		322	

b) Gold

	<i>Hair ring</i>		<i>Torc</i>		Σ	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
bog	1	50.0	2	50.0	3	50.0
meg. monument	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	16.7
rocky	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	16.7
burnt mound	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	16.7
Σ	2		4		6	

EBA Belville hoard, gold ornaments never seem to have been deposited in rivers during later prehistory (Tables 5–9; Becker 2011). Apart from a brief phase of inclusion of sheet-gold artefacts in this phase in the EBA2 Knockane, Castlemartyr or Topped Mountain burials, gold was deposited on dry land and in bogs throughout the Bronze Age. This suggests a depositional intention distinctly different from that of bronze artefacts. Also notable is the largely separate deposition of gold and bronze in the hoard record, which only changes in the LBA, when bronze is found in association with gold with tools, bronze rings, and amber in some hoards (see below).

A substantial proportion of axes were deposited in wet contexts; this increased over the course of the Bronze Age, while the proportion of these as river finds declined from 46% in EBA2 to only 28.4% in the LBA. Contrast this with the high proportion of river contexts for bladed weapons in this period. This in conjunction with the changes in the associative patterns in hoards (see below) suggests a change in the role of the artefacts axe over time.

Hoards

The hoard record can also be shown to be selective and structured by type-specific depositional rules.

TABLE 8: SINGLE FINDS BY FIND CONTEXT IN LBA

a) Bronze

	<i>Spearhead</i>		<i>Sword</i>		<i>Chape</i>		<i>Shield</i>		<i>Axe</i>		<i>Knife</i>		<i>Sickle</i>		<i>Gouge</i>		<i>Razor</i>		<i>Chain</i>		<i>Horn</i>		<i>Pin</i>		<i>Cauldron</i>		<i>Bucket</i>		<i>Rattle pendant</i>		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
river	53	57.6	71	53.4	2	66.7	2	40	48	28.4	1	50	2	66.7	2	100	4	57.1	0	0.0	0	0	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0.0
bog	29	31.5	38	28.6	0	0.0	2	40	72	42.6	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	8	100	1	33.3	8	100	7	100	0	0.0	
lake	7	7.6	17	12.8	1	33.3	1	20	22	13	1	50	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
wet	1	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	42.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	
marsh	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
dry	1	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
hill	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
clay	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
sand	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
island	0	0.0	2	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
forest	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
mountain	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
rocky	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
stony	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
gravel	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
gravel pit	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
outcrop	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
quarry	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
monument	1	1.1	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
meg. mon	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
stone circle	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
furnace	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Σ	92		133		3		5		169		2		3		2		7		2		8		3		8		7		1		

b) Gold

	<i>River</i>		<i>Bog</i>		<i>Dry</i>		<i>Sand</i>		<i>Rocky</i>		<i>Urn?</i>		Σ
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
gorget	0	0.0	2	66.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	3
bracelet	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2
dress-fastener	0	0.0	4	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4
thick penannular ring	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	2
box	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
bullae	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2
pin	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
hat/vessel	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
Σ	1		10		1		1		1		2		16

Type-specific patterns can be identified in the form of compositional groups that can be correlated with different depositional contexts. Some of these associative patterns between objects and place show a striking stability throughout the Bronze Age.

The hoard record can be broadly divided in three different groups: one-type, single category and complex hoards (Fig. 3b, Table 9a–d). While one-type hoards contain a single artefact type, single category hoards contain different artefact types from the same functional spectrum, eg exclusively weapons or ornaments. Complex hoards contain a variety of different artefact types, sometimes of different materials. These hoard types can be recognised in all stages of the Bronze Age, however, the greatest level of differentiation is visible in the LBA with its greater range of artefact types.

One-type hoards contain small numbers of used but complete objects (mainly one type of weaponry, axe, or ornament). These artefacts also show the greatest rate of single-find deposition and within hoards the objects are usually in good condition and display only limited evidence for breakage (Table 10a). The only exceptions to this rule are the Late Bronze Age sword hoards in the southern part of the main cluster of sword hoards: here the swords seem to have been intentionally destroyed and damaged. In the EBA, axes and halberds were deposited in one-type hoards (Table 9a, b). Only three one-type axe hoards of both MBA and LBA date (Table 9d) have been found in Ireland, whereas they are more common in Britain and continental western Europe. For example, in Britain two-thirds of all LBA hoards consist of axes only (Huth 1997, 127). One-type sword hoards are a specific feature of British and Irish depositional practice. However, the majority of the British examples are two-piece hoards (Huth 1997, 127), while in the Irish assemblage up to four swords can be deposited together.

LBA horns were also deposited in one-type hoards (Table 9d). Broken horns are rare, although sometimes only parts of them were deposited and the mouthpieces are usually missing, which implies dismantling before deposition. The only occasion on which a horn was deposited in a hoard with other artefacts was in the Booleybrien, Co. Clare hoard where, however, the horn was broken. The exceptional Dowris find, which also contained horns is here not considered as a hoard in the strict sense as it does not appear to represent a closed, chronologically

coherent assemblage (cf. Coles 1971b). Most cauldrons and buckets were deposited singly and complete, which is in marked contrast to the depositional mode outside Ireland and northern Britain. In southern Britain and continental Europe the majority of both Atlantic and Urnfield buckets are only found as fragments in complex hoards (Gerloff 2010; 2004, 126, 128). The only known associations of cauldrons and buckets in Ireland are in the unusual mass finds at Dowris and the Bog of Cullen.

One-type hoards also have a geographically distinct pattern compared to other hoards. This is clearest in the LBA, with two foci for the deposition of horn hoards in the south-west and north-east of the country (Fig. 4). Between these in the midlands, one-type sword-, spearhead-, axe-, and ornament hoards are located, with a certain degree of overlap between the sword and horn hoards in the north-east. In the MBA, one-type bronze hoards show a pattern that contrasts with that of the complex hoards and gold hoards of the period. While there is a slight shift in distribution, the general area in which these hoards are found is the Leitrim, Fermanagh, Sligo area. One-type hoards tend to be associated with wet contexts, most clearly visible in the case of weapon and horn hoards (Table 10b).

Single-category hoards are a feature of the Late Bronze Age, and while the lack of context information often hinders differentiation there is some suggestion that they also follow type or category specific depositional rules: LBA bronze single-category ornament hoards show a strong link with wet contexts, while those consisting only of tools were deposited in dry and specifically rocky/stony contexts (Tables 10b, 9).

Complex hoards often contain collections of material, including fragmented objects that would be suitable for recycling, unfinished objects, and raw materials. This is the case in some EBA hoards and it is striking that those that contain copper cake are from dry land (Table 9a). Within the Late Bronze Age variation within the group of complex hoards can be observed: while most tend to be deposited to a greater degree in wet contexts (Table 10b), the group of hoards that contain swords in combination with other objects stands out in having been deposited primarily in dry contexts (87.5%: Table 10b). This is also the group which shows a greater degree of damage with 90.9% of hoards containing at least one incomplete item (Table 10a). Similar patterns can be observed throughout considerable parts of the European

TABLE 9. HOARDS: A) EBBI/CHALCOLITHIC

Findplace	County	Bronze										Complex									
		Halterd	Dagger	Axe	Axemin	Awl	Cake	Stone	Hone	Arrowhead	Tusk	Original no.	Wet/dry	Patina def.	Context	Concealment/marker					
Frankford	Galway	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	wet	an	bog						
Corton	Down	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	wet	an	bog						
Clashbredane	Cork	1	1	25	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	wet	ae	bog						
Carhan	Kerry	1	1	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	wet	ae	marsh	rock crevice, stone slab cover					
Cappeen	Cork	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	-	ae	-	stone packing					
Vicarstown	Cork	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	dry	ae	dry						
Lough Ravel	Antrim	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	-	ae, slow	-						
Ballybeg East	Cork	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	dry	ae	quarry	on & covered by flagstones					
Castletown Roche	Cork	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	-	ae, slow	-						
Tallaght	Dublin	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	dry	ae	sandpit						
Cahore	Wexford	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	dry	ae	clay						
Crubeen	Laois	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	-	-	field						
no prov.1	Tipperary	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	dry	-	gravelpit						
Cullinagh	Kerry	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	-	ae	field						
Cordal	Kerry	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	wet	-	bog						
Clontoo	Kerry	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	dry	ae	quarry	rock crevice					
Dublin	Dublin	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	-	an	-						
Knockannaun	Clare	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	dry	ae	dry	boulder					
Frankford	Offaly	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	wet	an	bog	between slab & boulder					
Killaha East	Kerry	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	dry	ae	outcrop	rocky crevice					
Whitespots	Down	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	dry	ae	rock						
Knocknagur	Galway	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	7	wet	an	bog						
Carrivemurphy	Antrim	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	wet	-	bog						
Growtown	Meath	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	6	-	ae	field						
Boghil	Clare	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	wet	an	bog	woollen cloth nearby shelf of rock					
Nash	Wexford	1	1	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	7	dry	ae	cave						
Knockasarnet	Kerry	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	dry	an	bog, sandy spot						
Toormore	Cork	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	dry	ae	monument						
Monastery	Wicklow	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	5	dry	ae	gravel pit						
Σ		12	6	112	2	3	8	2	1	1	1	148									
%		8.1	4.1	75.7	1.4	2.0	5.4	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	100									

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: A) EBA1/CHALCOLITHIC (CONT.)

<i>Findplace</i>	<i>County</i>		<i>Disc</i>	<i>Bracer</i>	<i>Lunula</i>	<i>Bead</i>	<i>Band</i>	<i>Original no.</i>	<i>Wet / dry</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Container marker</i>	
Tedavnet	Monaghan	Gold	2	0	0	0	0	2	dry	dry		
no prov.2	Roscommon		2	0	0	0	0	2	-	-		
no prov.4	Wexford		2	0	0	0	0	2	-	-		
Ballina, Rappa Castle	Mayo		2	0	0	0	0	2	-	-		
Baltimore	Cork		2	0	0	0	0	2	-	-		
Cloyne	Cork		2	0	0	0	0	2	-	-		
Kilmuckridge	Wexford		2	0	0	0	0	2	dry	dry		
Ballyshannon	Donegal		2	0	0	0	0	2	dry	meg. mon.		
Banemore	Kerry		0	0	3	0	0	3	wet	bog	folded	
Dunfierth	Kildare		0	0	4	0	0	4	dry	gravel	gravel in bog	
Midleton, nr.	Cork		0	0	2	0	0	2	-	-		
West Coast	Mayo		0	0	2	0	0	2	wet	bog		
Rathroeen	Mayo		0	0	2	0	0	2	dry	dry	boulder	
Sligo, nr.	Sligo		0	0	2	0	0	2	wet	bog	plaited	
Cairnlochran, Maghermesk	Antrim		0	0	3	0	0	3	dry	monument	monument	rolled
no prov.3	Cavan		0	0	0	0	0	2	2	-	-	
Belville	Cavan		0	0	0	0	0	3	3	wet	riverbed	
Corran, near Armagh	Armagh	Complex	2	2		1		5	wet	bog		
Σ			18	2	18	1	5	44				
%			40.91	4.55	40.91	2.27	11.36	100				

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: B) EBAZ

Findplace	Country	Axe	Axe min.	Pm	Stone	Arrowhead	Slug knife	Battle-axe	Bracelet	Disc	Original no.	Wet/dry	Patina def.	Context	Container/marker	Arrangement
Clonminch	Offaly	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	wet	-	bog		
Ballyvally	Down	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	dry	ae	mountain		
Bandon	Cork	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	an	-		
Carrowleeken	Mayo	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	ae	-		
Connor	Antrim	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	ae	-		
Fivemiletown	Tyrone	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	wet	an	bog		
Glenalla	Donegal	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	dry	ae	highland	under rock	
Glenwhirry	Antrim	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	ae	-		
Knockaun	Waterford	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	dry	ae	quarry	ledge	
Scrabo Hill	Down	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	dry	ae	hill	hillslope	piled
Tullamore	Offaly	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-		
Glencar	Sligo	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	wet	an	lake		
Tullowbeg	Carlow	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	ae	-		
Ballynascullige	Wicklow	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	an	-		
Derryniggin	Leitrim	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	wet	an	bog		
no prov.5	Tyrone	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	an	-		
Clonmore	Carlow	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	dry	-	dry	boulder	
Ballyvourney	Cork	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-		
Ballydehob	Cork	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	4	dry	-	rocky	cleft of rock, stone pavement	
Σ		45	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	60					
%		75.0	5.0	3.3	1.7	1.7	3.3	1.7	1.7	6.7	100					

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: C) MBA

<i>Findplace</i>	<i>County</i>			<i>spearhead</i>	<i>axe</i>	<i>bracelet</i>	<i>torc</i>	<i>tressring</i>	<i>earring</i>	<i>ring</i>	<i>neckring</i>	<i>twire</i>	<i>rod</i>	<i>plate</i>	<i>scrap</i>				
Tattenamona	Fermanagh	Bronze	Weapon/axe	1-type	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Derryfadda Lwr.	Mayo				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Doagh Glebe	Fermanagh				-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Kilnamanagh	Sligo				-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Clooneenbaun	Roscommon	Gold	Ornament	1-type	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Newtown Forbes	Longford				-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Vesnoy	Roscommon				-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Tremblestown	Meath				-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Downpatrick 2	Down				-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Ballyrashane	Derry				-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Tara	Meath				-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
no prov.	Armagh				-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Tara	Meath				-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Coolmanagh	Carlow				-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Ballymorris	Laois				-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Enniscorthy 1	Wexford				-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
no prov.	Tipperary				-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Castlereagh	Roscommon				-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Downpatrick 1	Down				-	-	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Herbertstown	Limerick				-	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Tipper	Kildare				-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Saintjohns	Kildare				-	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Derrinboy	Offaly				-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-		
Skelly	Tyrone				-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Cappeen	Cork				-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-		
no prov.	Westmeath				Bronze	Complex		1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Annesborough	Armagh							-	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bishopsland	Kildare							-	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	4
Dysart	Westmeath							-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Σ								4	10	47	19	6	4	4	1	2	1	4	
%					3.4	8.5	40.2	16.2	5.1	3.4	3.4	0.9	1.7	0.9	0.9				

Bronze Age and has led to suggestions of a functional divide between ritual and utilitarian hoards. While large scrap hoards as found in Britain or continental Europe are virtually unknown in Ireland, these Irish complex hoards nevertheless show breakage and the combination of objects from different functional spheres, an inherent characteristic of scrap hoards as also observed by Bradley (1998).

If single finds can be considered intentional deposits that are structured by type-specific depositional rules, the fundamental question that arises is how they relate to the hoard record. Hoards cannot

be regarded as a homogeneous class of finds; they appear in a variety of forms in which, for example, one-type deposits can be shown to be subject to the same depositional rules as the single finds. In the EBA and LBA, when single-weapon deposition in rivers was accompanied by one-type weapon hoards, these hoards adhere to the same depositional pattern. Also some single category deposits appear to reflect the specific meaning of the objects contained within them, while the associative patterns and condition within the range of complex hoards seems to be the structuring factor.

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: C) MBA (CONT.)

<i>saw</i>	<i>tweezers</i>	<i>toilet article</i>	<i>sickle</i>	<i>hook</i>	<i>anvil</i>	<i>vice</i>	<i>hammer</i>	<i>chisel</i>	<i>graver</i>	<i>vessel</i>	<i>Wet/dry</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Patina def.</i>	<i>Container/ marker etc</i>	<i>Arrangement</i>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog	an		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog	an		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog	an		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	marsh			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	clay		st. packing	piled
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	mon			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog		knoll	piled
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	clay		st. packing	piled
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	mon		st.	rolled
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	field			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog	an		wrapped
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	mon?			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	wet	bog			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dry	dry	ae		
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1		dry	dry	ae	near river	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	dry	dry		boulder	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	117				
0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.6	1.7	0.9	0.9	100				

INTERPRETING DEPOSITION – DISCUSSION

Patterns can reflect a variety of habitual practices such as the daily movement of people, the organisation of production, or the distribution of raw materials or products, and identifying habituality or even deliberate deposition of items does not reveal anything about its purpose. Rather, it is the *intentionality*, the understanding that there is a purpose beyond what is achieved in the act of deposition that sets the practices observed here apart from everyday, functional processes.

The significance and meaning of type-specific deposition

The clearest indicator of intentionality is the differential treatment of artefact types through deposition in burials or in the landscape. Aceramic artefacts deposited in EBA burials in Ireland are made of non-precious, mostly non-metal materials and are defined by their everyday functionality and their personal character, such as domestic items and tools, as well as items of personal ornament made of stone or more rarely jet, amber, and other materials. Objects interred

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: D) LBA

<i>findplace*</i>	<i>horn</i>	<i>original no.</i>	<i>patina def.</i>	<i>context</i>	<i>Findplace*</i>	<i>sword</i>	<i>spearhead</i>	<i>shield</i>	<i>axe</i>	<i>original no.</i>	<i>patina def</i>	<i>context</i>	
1		4	4	ae	monument	16				4	ae	monument	
2		3	-	an	bog	17				4	an	-	
3		6	6	an	bog	18				3	an	bog	
4		15	15	an	bog	19				3	an	lake	
5		3	3	-	-	20				3	an	bog	
6		4	-	an	bog	21				3	ae	field	
7		2	-	an	bog	22				3	an	bog	
8		8	-	-	-	23				2	an	bog	
9		2	2	-	-	24				2	an	lake	
10		4	4	an	bog	25				2	an	river	
11		2	-	an	-	26				6	ae	monument	
12		3	3	an	bog	27				2	an	-	
13		2	2	an	-	28				2	ae	-	
14		4	4	-	-	29				1	ae	quarry	
15		3	-	-	-	30				1	an	bog	
						31				2	an	-	
						32				-	1	1	-
						33				2	ae	dry	
						34				2	-	-	
						35				2	an	marsh	

in burials are often thought to indicate social status (cf. Shennan 1982) and thus to directly reflect the identity of the person buried; recent debates (eg, Brück 2004) also highlight the agency of the mourners in the selection of burial goods. Either way, the deliberate character of the selection seems likely to reference the identity of the person interred. Artefact types excluded from burials and instead deposited in the landscape would seem not relevant in the construction of the identity of an individual at this point; in the Early Bronze Age this is strikingly the case for gold ornaments, which are clearly for the decoration of body or dress. It appears likely that they relate to other social identities that may have been held by an individual in different contexts, rather than those circumscribed in the burial context. Possibly being of communal character (cf. Taylor 1994; 1970, 56), they may have also been connected with a specialised identity not permanently affixed to an individual, but representative of a particular role taken on during a particular phase of a person's life.

Stone and metal axes in Ireland, as elsewhere, were largely excluded from EBA burials, so they were not

directly connected with the identity of the person at burial. There is a strong indication that stone axes were still in use in the earliest Bronze Age (Becker 2006), though they were in deposition strictly separated from metal axes, which obviously belonged to a different depositional and transactional sphere (cf. Vandkilde 1996, 273). The same is also the case for battle-axes which, unlike metal axes, were never hoarded but deposited singly, with a clear emphasis on river contexts. Like axes and halberds, they did not belong to the range of objects that were deemed suitable for deposition in burials (cf. Simpson 1990), with only exceedingly rare examples of these types having been found in burials. It can thus be argued that it was the artefact type 'axe' that was excluded from the burial rather than the material of which it was being significant. In contrast, the large number of metal axes deposited in hoards or singly suggests that no underlying economic rationale shaped the development of this particular depositional taboo (*contra* Vandkilde 1998, 254-5; 1996, 26; Kristiansen 1989, 21f; O'Flaherty 1995, 14; but see Bradley 1988, 250-2). Rather, axes were not related to the persona

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: D) LBA (CONT.)

findplace*																original no.	context conclusion	context	
	axe	knife	chisel	gouge	hammer	sickle	ring	pin	bracelet	razor	tweezers	object	necklace						
36																2	-	-	
37																2	ae	dry	
38																10	ae	rocky	
39																3	ae	-	
40																3	ae	-	
41																3	ae	cave	
42																4	ae	stony gravel	
43																5	ae	clay	
44																5	an	bog	
45																9	ae	-	
46																150	-	-	
47																8	an	bog	
48																5	an	crannog	
49																3	an	field	
50																30	ae	settlement	
51																11	ae	dry	
52																5	an	lake	
53																50	ae	settlement	
54																2	-	-	
55																3	an	bog	
56																2	55	an	-
57																21	-	-	
58																37	an	bog	
59																6	ae	quarry	

*For list of findplaces see p. 26.

at burial. Strikingly, an item that could be considered to be of more personal character – the perforated buttons of Beaker background – were hardly ever included in burials (but at times as secondary deposits in megalithic tombs), and only one bracer was found in a burial context. Their deposition singly, or in one-type hoards, suggests that they also were connected with a particular identity that was not relevant at the point of burial.

The contrast between the treatment of gold ornaments and weapons, with deposition of gold hoards or single finds in dry or bog and the absence of gold ornaments or other gold artefacts from rivers – the

primary context for the deposition of weapons – is striking. This implies that gold and bronze had a contrasting and complementary relationship, which may be reflective of different social personae.

It is tempting to suggest that if weapons can be related to the male sphere, gold ornaments might represent the female sphere in the record. This was suggested by Waddell (1990, 13) based on the observation that gold hoards were predominantly deposited in dry and weapons in wet contexts. Such a gender attribution for gold ornaments is however problematic as it is based on our present day conceptualisations of the artefacts and their connection

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS: D) LBA (CONT.)

<i>findplace*</i>		<i>ring</i>	<i>pin</i>	<i>collar</i>	<i>gorget</i>	<i>bracelet</i>	<i>dress fastener</i>	<i>sleeve fastener</i>	<i>striated ring</i>	<i>thick penannular ring</i>	<i>lock ring</i>	<i>ear spool</i>	<i>box</i>	<i>bullae</i>	<i>disc</i>	<i>pin plating</i>	<i>ingot</i>	<i>necklace</i>	<i>original no</i>	<i>context conclusion</i>	<i>context</i>		
60	Gold	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	
61		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
62		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
63		-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	an	bog
64		-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
65		-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
66		-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	an	bog
67		-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
68		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
69		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
70		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
71		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
72		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
73		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	an	lake-shore field
74	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	
75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	
76	Gold	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	ae	clay		
77		-	-	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	ae	clay		
78		-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-		
79		-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-		
80		-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-		
81		-	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	field		
82		-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-		
83		-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	ae	rocky		
84		-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	an	bog		
85		-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	7	ae	hill		
86		-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	an	river		
87		-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	an	bog		
88		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-		
89		-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	an	crannog		
90	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	-	-			
91	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-			
92	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	7	-	-			
93	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-			
94	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-			

with gender. Furthermore, in EBA Britain discs were placed in Beaker burials with males and Wessex group gold plaques continued this tradition, while females were buried with amber necklaces (cf. Eogan 1994, 39).

The evidence for a divide between different and directly contrasting personae within the Irish Bronze Age is further underlined by the fact that LBA hoards containing gold hardly ever contain weapons. Amber appears to be conceptually closely related to gold

ornaments and is rarely found in hoards containing only bronze

In contrast, two contextualised bronze sunflower and disc-headed pins were deposited in rivers, thus apparently relating them more closely to the weapons than to the gold ornaments of the period – a pattern that can also be observed in the Danish Bronze Age record (Jensen 1972, 129–31). This difference is further accentuated by the fact that pins were only rarely deposited in bronze or mixed-material hoards

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS D) LBA (CONT.)

findplace*		sword	chape	spearhead	axe	knife	chisel	gouge	hammer	awl	sickle	ring	chain collar	pin	bracelet	dress-fastener	scrap	cake	mould gate	razor	horn	necklace	tassle	vessel	original no.	patina def.	context	
95	Complex bronze	2	3	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	200	-	-	
96		1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	ac	settlement	
97		1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	ac	-
98		1	-	4	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	ac	dry
99		1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	ac	garden
100		1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	ac	quarry
101		1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	settlement
102		1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	ac	dry
103		1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	11	-	wet
104		1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	ac	dry
105		-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	19	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	ac	rocky
106		Sword, tools+	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	ac	mon
107			-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	an	-
108			-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	cave
109			-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	an
110	-		-	1	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	an	bog
111	-		-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	an	bog
112	-		-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-
113	-		-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	ac	crevice
114	Tool, ornament	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	ac	-	
115		-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	ac	settlement	
116		-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	an	bog	
117		-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	field	
118		-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	ac	mountain	
119		-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	an	field	
120		-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	5	an	bog	
121		-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	16	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	35	an	bog	
122		-	-	-	3	1	2	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	ac	dry	
123		-	-	-	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	an	bog	
124		-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	ac	dry	
125		-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	50	an	bog	
126		-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	an	bog	
127		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	an	bog	
128		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	ac	-	
129	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	an	bog		

and were not combined with gold ornaments with no further bronze association. The clear bipolarity of the record implies that starkly contrasting roles are represented by weapons and bronze pins on the one hand and gold ornaments on the other.

Here, however it is argued that differential treatment of types of objects can be understood as a reflection of variation in their type-specific meaning that is primarily identity-based. The continuation of trends of deposition throughout the Bronze Age also indicates a great longevity of ideas about objects and the identities reflected in them. The strict depositional rules applied to battle-axes and maceheads of the EBA foreshadows that of the later weapon forms, particularly the swords. The emergence of clearer associative patterns, particularly in the LBA hoard record,

appears to be due to the greater functional differentiation of object types – with the function and meaning of axes, for example, becoming narrower after the introduction of specialised tool and weapon forms. While the associative variation of the greater range of gold ornaments could at first sight reflect their move from a communal, ceremonial context in the EBA into the personal realms, the pattern of dryland or bog deposition underlines the continuity of the underlying ideas attached to objects of this material.

Places and objects were brought together in a consistent manner (cf. Bradley 2000, 39; Yates & Bradley 2010), suggesting that particular places may have held particular relevance for ideas about different social personae. The differentiation of bog and river contexts in the case of bladed weapons and gold objects

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS D) LBA (CONT.)

<i>findplace</i>	<i>sword</i>	<i>chape</i>	<i>spearhead</i>	<i>axe</i>	<i>knife</i>	<i>gouge</i>	<i>hammer</i>	<i>anvil</i>	<i>ring</i>	<i>chain</i>	<i>pin</i>	<i>collar</i>	<i>gorget</i>	<i>bracelet</i>	<i>dress fastener</i>	<i>sleeve fastener</i>	<i>striated ring</i>	<i>thick penannular ring</i>	<i>bullae</i>	<i>disc</i>	<i>scrap</i>	<i>bar</i>	<i>mould gate</i>
130	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
131	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
132	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
133	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
134	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
135	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
136	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
137	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
138	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
139	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
140	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
141	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	17	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
142	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
143	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
144	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
145	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
146	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
149	6	1	36	36	8	6	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
150	8	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	8	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
151	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	165	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
152	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
153	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

suggests a complex categorisation and understanding of these places and their properties, beyond wet and dry (cf. Yates & Bradley 2010). Places may have been seen as the abode of supernatural spirits or entrances into the otherworld, especially potentially liminal places such as lakes, rivers or bogs. While aspects of the character of wet places are more recognisable for us today, that of most dry places has become more or less invisible: trees, springs, etc. are known from anthropological examples (Bradley 2000) or classical sources

(Torbrügge 1970) to have been special places in some societies. Only sites of an imperishable character such as outcrops, boulders, or caves, are still visible today. A good example is the association of hoards in Ireland with outcrops, boulders, or megalithic tombs (eg Toormore: O'Brien *et al.* 1990), as frequently observed in the EBA record (Becker 2006). The reasons for the relevance of places thus goes clearly beyond their simple physical properties and may have held a symbolic as well as a functional dimension (see below).

TABLE 9 (CONT.): HOARDS D) LBA (CONT.)

Findplace		<i>tube</i>	<i>ingot</i>	<i>razor</i>	<i>tweezers</i>	<i>hook</i>	<i>object</i>	<i>crotal</i>	<i>cup</i>	<i>bowl</i>	<i>cauldron</i>	<i>bucket</i>	<i>horn</i>	<i>block</i>	<i>wetstone</i>	<i>bead</i>	<i>necklace</i>	<i>tusk</i>	<i>original no.</i>	<i>patina def.</i>	<i>context</i>
130	Complex bronze Spearhead, orn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	an	bog
131		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	ae	field
132		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	an	marsh
133		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	an	bog
134	Complex gold bronze Weapons/tools, ornaments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
135		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	an	bog
136		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
137		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	ae	dry
138		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
139		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	ae	field
140		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	ae	hill
141		-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	26	an	marsh
142		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	an	bog
143		Complex gold bronze Ornaments	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5	29	an
144	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	12	an	bog
145	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	ae	dry
146	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	17	ae	field
147	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	-
148	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
149	No. categorisation	1	-	3	-	-	2	52	-	-	3	3	27	4	3	-	-	-	196	an	lake
150		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	an	bog
151		-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	170	an	lake
152		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	an	bog
153		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	an	bog

How type-specific meaning creates structures in the record – single finds and hoards

Type-specific patterns and evidence for selective deposition demonstrate that single finds can be considered to be the result of deliberate deposition. If type-specific meaning is seen as the main structuring factor in the genesis of the record, their relationship to the hoard record is a central question. Associative patterns between certain types of hoards and particular types of context have been demonstrated and the consistency of find contexts for one-type hoards and single finds consisting of the same

object types pointed out. The prime examples for this are swords or other bladed weapons, which also maintain a connection with wetlands in the hoard record. However, it appears that type-specific meaning can have different degrees of variability and determining force in its depositional consequences. For example, while the rules applied to the deposition of bladed weapons are very clear and restrictive, those for personal ornaments and tools seem weaker, evident from the greater variability in their associations and depositional contexts (Table 4). These artefacts can be deposited in combination and

Key to findplaces 1. Ballynure, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim; 2. Carrigounnel, Co. Limerick; 3. Chute Hall (Clocherclemin), Co. Kerry; 4. Cork/Mallow, Co. Cork; 5. Corracanvy, near Clough Oughter Castle, Co. Cavan; 6. Drumbest, Co. Antrim; 7. Drunkendult, Co. Antrim; 8. Dungannon (Barony of), Co. Tyrone; 9. Dunmanway, Co. Cork; 10. Killarney, nr., Co. Kerry; 11. Macroom, Co. Cork; 12. Moyarta (Barony of), Co. Clare; 13. no prov., Co. Cork; 14. no prov. Co. Mayo; 15. no prov., Ireland; 16. no prov., Co. Tyrone; 17. Athlone, nr., Co. Roscommon/Westmeath; 18. Ardlow, Co. Cavan; 19. Ballycroghan, Co. Down; 20. Drumcrample, Co. Fermanagh; 21. Latteragh (Latera Upper), Co. Tipperary; 22. Relagh Bog, Co. Tyrone; 23. Carran, Upper and Lower, Co. Donegal.; 24. Inishleague Island, Co. Fermanagh; 25. Belturbet/Stragheglin, Co. Cavan; 26. no prov., Co. Offaly; 27. Knockadoo, Co. Roscommon; 28. Youghal, Co. Cork; 29. Ballyroe, Co. Limerick; 30. Tully More (Moolagh), Co. Donegal; 31. Tempo, Co. Fermanagh; 32. Athenry, Co. Galway; 33. Silvan Park, Co. Dublin; 34. Granny, Co. Roscommon; 35. Calverstown, Co. Westmeath; 36. Ballydivlin, Co. Cork; 37. Boa Island, Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh; 38. Forth Commons, Co. Wexford; 39. Crevilly-Valley (Connor), Co. Antrim; 40. Booltiaghadine, Co. Clare; 41. Brother's Cave, Ballygambon Lower, Co. Waterford; 42. Newgarden North, Co. Limerick; 43. Ross, Fern Field, Co. Tipperary; 44. Crossna, Co. Roscommon; 45. Killulagh, Co. Westmeath; 46. Lackagh, Co. Derry; 47. Frankfort, nr., Co. Offaly; 48. Derrycoagh, Lough Gara, Co. Roscommon; 49. Garryhinch, Co. Offaly; 50. Headford, nr., Co. Galway; 51. Inch Island, Co. Sligo; 52. Waterstown, Co. Westmeath; 53. Seacon More/Seacon Hill, Co. Antrim; 54. Knockglass, Co. Roscommon; 55. Annagh, Co. Roscommon; 56. Portlaoise (nr. Maryborough), Co. Laois; 57. Brockagh (Braca), Co. Westmeath; 58. Ballykeaghera, Co. Galway; 59. Kilshanvy, Co. Galway; 60. Castle Coote, Co. Roscommon; 61. Athlone, nr., Co. Westmeath; 62. Killyleagh, Co. Down; 63. Cooga Lower (former Kilcommon), Co. Limerick; 64. Athlone, nr., Co. Roscommon; 65. Liverour or Oldcastle, Co. Mayo; 66. no prov., Co. Louth/Meath; 67. no prov., Co. Galway; 68. Tara, Co. Meath; 69. no prov., Co. Mayo.; 70. Craighilly, Co. Antrim; 71. Downpatrick 3, Co. Down; 72. no prov., Co. Clare; 73. Annaghbeg/Monastereadan, Lough Gara, Co. Sligo; 74. Enniscorthy, nr., Co. Wexford; 75. Mullingar, Co. Westmeath; 76. Cogan, Co. Offaly; 77. Gorteenreagh, Co. Clare; 78. no prov., Co. Limerick; 79. Askeaton, Co. Limerick; 80. Cashel, Co. Tipperary; 81. Drissoge, Co. Meath; 82. Clonleigh, nr. Lifford, Co. Donegal; 83. Bruree, nr., Co. Limerick; 84. Kilmoyly North, Co. Kerry; 85. Ballinesker, Co. Wexford; 86. New Ross, nr., Co. Waterford; 87. Lattoo, Co. Cavan; 88. no prov., Ireland; 89. Killymoon, Co. Tyrone; 90. no prov., Co. Limerick; 91. no prov. (formerly Mull), Co. South of Ireland; 92. Arboe/Killycolpy (Lough Neagh hoard), Co. Tyrone; 93. no prov., Ireland; 94. no prov., Ireland; 95. no prov., Co. Roscommon; 96. Rathgall, Co. Wicklow; 97. Newport, Co. Mayo; 98. Dreenan (Boa Island), Co. Fermanagh; 99. Blackhills, Co. Laois; 100. Drumany, Co. Leitrim; 101. Moroe, Co. Limerick; 102. Cooga, Co. Sligo; 103. Boolybrien, Co. Clare; 104. Park, Co. Meath; 105. Luffertan, Co. Sligo; 106. Ballinliss, Co. Armagh; 107. Tuam, nr., Co. Galway; 108. Kilmurry, Co. Kerry; 109. Kish, Co. Wicklow; 110. Knockmaon, Co. Waterford; 111. Bootown, Co. Antrim; 112. Grange, Co. Kildare; 113. Ballygowan (Reade), Co. Kilkenny; 114. no prov., Co. Westmeath; 115. Teernagloghane, Co. Clare; 116. Lahardan, Co. Clare; 117. Doon Upper, Co. Galway; 118. Glenstal, Co. Limerick; 119. Trillick, Co. Tyrone.; 120. Armoy/Cromagh, Co. Antrim; 121. Derryhale, Co. Armagh; 122. Enagh East, Co. Clare; 123. Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath; 124. Ballyvadden, Co. Wexford; 125. Callanagh, Co. Cavan; 126. Killycree West, Co. Fermanagh; 127. Killevy, Co. Armagh; 128. no prov., Co. Fermanagh; 129. Gardenhills, Co. Fermanagh; 130. Annagh/Menesterlin, Co. Derry; 131. Money Lower, Co. Laois; 132. Ballycurrin, Co. Mayo; 133. Knockanbaun, Co. Sligo; 134. Strabane, Co. Tyrone; 135. Kinnegoe, Co. Armagh; 136. no prov., Co. Wicklow; 137. Kilbride, Co. Mayo; 138. Belfast, Co. Antrim/Down; 139. Mountrivers (Coachford), Co. Cork; 140. Killersherdiny, Co. Cavan; 141. Ballytegan, Co. Laois; 142. Oghermong, Co. Kerry; 143. Rathinaun, Co. Sligo; 144. Tooradoo/Cnoc na bPoll, Co. Limerick; 145. Banagher/Meenwaun, Co. Offaly; 146. Scotstown, Co. Monaghan; 147. no prov., Co. Mayo; 148. no prov., Co. Sligo; 149. Dowris, Doorsheath, Whigsborough, Co. Offaly; 150. Cullen, Co. Tipperary; 151. Mooghaun North (Great Clare find), Co. Clare; 152. no prov., Ireland; 153. Tamlaght, Co. Armagh.

are found in a variety of contexts, whereas complete swords for example can only be deposited with other swords and in wet contexts.

It also appears that less 'meaningful' objects cannot be deposited on their own in multiple item deposits. For example, the small number of tools deposited singly, together with their association with ornaments and other artefacts in the hoard record, can be seen as indicating that their relevance in the depositional system was only acquired in combination with other artefacts. This is underlined by the fact that the

artefacts that are most frequently deposited singly – particularly swords – are also those that, if they occur in the hoard record, are deposited in one-type hoards. Perhaps the different depositional strategies refer to different levels of need to protect the symbolic value of an individual type of artefact: most clearly visible in the case of bladed weapons. On the other hand, variation in depositional contexts and associations of axes seems to reflect their multi-functional character, which allows single deposition but also makes them suitable for inclusion in hoards in combination

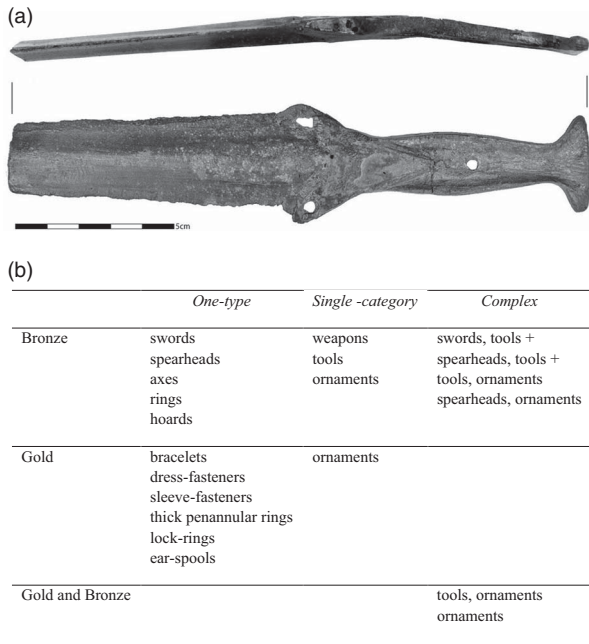


Fig. 3.

- a) sword fragment from the Park hoard, Co. Meath, with evidence for forceful bending and breaking (NMI 1974:38);
 b) Irish Late Bronze Age hoard types based on associative patterns

with other artefacts. Rather than just their different functions, it is the connection with certain identities – which in the case of the axes may have been variable – that appears to be the determining factor.

The intentionality of the deposit seems to determine its form and mode. They reflect in their articulation – primarily visible in the selection of artefact type and place – different roles, people, genders, occasions, and events. Variation in the occasion of the deposition, the depositional purpose, and the person or subject represented in the depositional act create the patterns in the record visible to us today. It is striking that that these rules transgress morphological boundaries of hoard and single finds and determine the patterns within both categories of finds – rendering them essentially redundant if it were not for the complex hoards that deviate by their very nature from the patterns observable across the single find and one-type hoard record.

Transforming identities – the function of deposition

Why were these symbols of social identities deposited? What was the bringing together of place and object meant to achieve?

A key to the answer may lie in the differences between the types of context considered suitable for deposition. The liminal character of particular wet contexts and the clear correlation of weapons with rivers has been pointed out; their absence from burials in Ireland may suggest that they do not stand for a fixed, permanent identity connected with the individual until death. Rather, it may be shed in a rite of passage which involved the deposition of the sword in a riverine or watery place (Fontijn 2002, 230). Such an explanation would conceptually come close to considerations of hoards as an alternative burial rite that has been discussed as a possible explanation for the similarity and complementary relationship between hoard deposits and burials in some areas (Eogan 1983; Hundt 1955; Aner 1955, 41). These deposits of bladed weapons may represent the burial or shedding of a particular social, impermanent identity.

The impermanence of social identities may also be visible in the depositional treatment of ceremonial items and particularly gold neck ornaments throughout the Irish Bronze Age. EBA lunulae were deposited in the landscape and are absent from burials of high status individuals of the period. Rather than interpreting this as evidence for their communal character, they may have been connected with a specialised identity not permanently affixed to an individual, but representative of a particular role taken on during a particular phase of the person’s life. In the case of the gold neck ornament, this may have been a ceremonial identity which may not even have been continuous, but episodic and perhaps taken on or shed on a regular basis throughout the year or in a community’s life cycle. This finds support in the frequent evidence for the repeated folding and rolling of these objects (Cahill 2005) and the frequent deposition on dry ground near recognisable places in the landscape such as outcrops or megalithic tombs, which would have facilitated their retrieval (Tables 5, 9a; Becker 2008). The concealment, retrieval, un-rolling, and re-rolling and reconcealment of the item may have played a crucial role in the adoption and shedding of a particular, ceremonial identity. This re-use may have extended over considerable time, with the object passed on through generations (cf. O’Brien 2012, 223) and with it the particular role or identity embodied in it. Similarly it is argued here that the deposition of LBA ceremonial items is a reflection of a similar character of use, for which permanent abandonment in a river would not be suited.

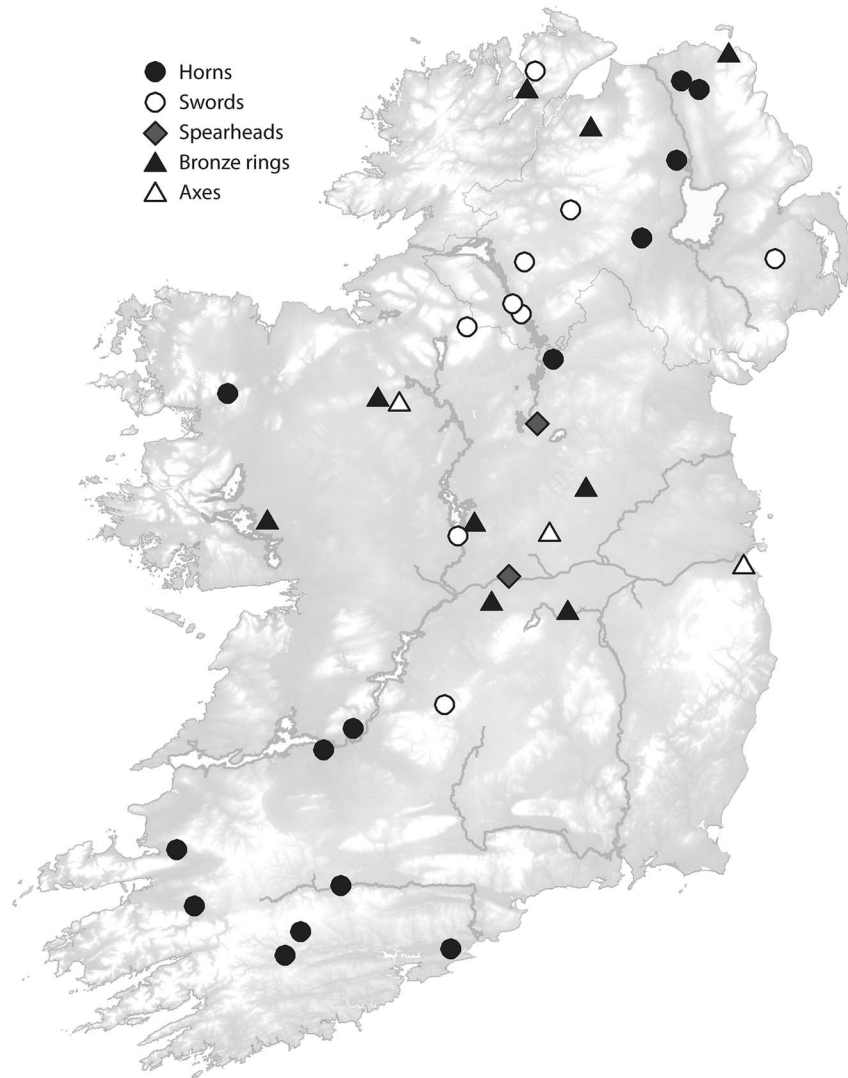


Fig. 4.
Distribution of bronze one-type hoards

Thus it is possible to suggest that, rather than the representation, the transformation of identities is the purpose of these deposits and place and retrieval potential correlate to different objectives and contexts of these transformative processes. This also opens up a way of thinking about those deposits that have evaded the type-specific categorisations, due to their mixed nature – the complex hoards.

Transforming objects – recycling metals

In spite of there being, with the exception of the Co. Roscommon hoard, no classic founder or scrap

deposits in Ireland, a small group of complex hoards contain broken objects, scrap, and raw materials. Similar patterns with limited evidence for scrap hoards and mixed hoards can also be observed in parts of Denmark (Kristiansen 1996, 258–9) and has here been related to the availability of metal, which also may be a key factor in the lack of proper large scrap hoards in Ireland.

The Irish complex hoards were predominantly deposited in dry contexts, and often in outcrops, stony, and rocky places, rock clefts, or caves – a pattern particularly notable in the EBA. In these

TABLE 10: LBA HOARDS

a) Hoards with broken and incomplete objects present, by hoard type

	<i>Containing complete objects only</i>		<i>Containing at least 1 incomplete artefact</i>		Σ
	N	%	N	%	
weapon (1 type)	10	90.9	1	9.1	11
weapon (1 category)	4	66.7	2	33.3	6
axes (1 type)	3	100	0	0.0	3
tools (1 category)	5	55.6	4	44.4	9
rings (1 type)	6	66.7	3	33.3	9
bronze ornaments (1 category)	3	50.0	3	50.0	6
gold ornament (1 type)	15	100	0	0.0	15
gold ornament (1 category)	18	90.0	2	10.0	20
horns (1 type)	15	100	0	0.0	15
swords/tools +	1	0.1	10	90.9	11
spearheads/tools +	7	87.5	1	12.5	8
tools + ornament	11	68.8	5	31.3	16
spearheads + ornaments	4	100	0	0.0	4
gold, bronze, weapons/ tools, ornaments	7	77.8	2	22.2	9
gold, bronze, ornaments	6	100	0	0.0	6
Σ	115		33		148

b) Hoards with context information by hoard type & ratio of finds containing incomplete artefacts. Excludes unclassified hoards (see Table 9d). The context identification as wet or dry includes such derived from the assessment of the patina of bronzes as detailed in Tables 5–9

	Dry		<i>incomplete objects</i>		Wet		<i>incomplete objects</i>		Σ
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		
weapon one-type	2	22.2	1	50.0	7	77.8	1	14.3	9
weapon single category	1	50	1	100.0	1	50	0	0.0	2
tools one-type (axe)	1	50	0	0.0	1	50	0	0.0	2
tools single category	5	83.3	1	20.0	1	16.7	0	0.0	6
rings	3	50	1	33.3	3	50	1	33.3	6
bronze ornament one-sided	1	33.3	1	100.0	2	66.7	2	100	3
gold one-type	0	0.0	0		3	100	0	0.0	3
gold single category	4	50	0	0.0	4	50	0	0.0	8
horn	1	12.5	0	0.0	7	87.5	0	0.0	8
swords, tool +	7	87.5	7	100.0	1	12.5	1	100	8
spearheads, tools+	3	60	0	0.0	2	40	0	0.0	5
tools, ornaments	4	33.3	2	50.0	8	66.7	0	0.0	12
spearheads, ornaments	0	0.0	0		3	100	0	0.0	3
gold, bronze, weapons/tools, ornaments	2	40	2	100	3	60	0	0.0	5
gold, bronze, ornaments	1	33.3	0	0.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	3
Σ	35				48				83

hoards, types are combined which are otherwise stringently kept apart. Objects such as LBA swords or horns, which follow strict depositional rules in the single find record and in single-type hoards, can occur mixed with other objects deposited in dryland contexts. The absence of any association of swords with other artefacts in ‘normal’ hoards indicates that, in the case of scrap hoards, the sword has lost its

original meaning and can be deposited with other types of object. One could argue that the breaking of objects removes their symbolic integrity and reduces them to their pure material value, lifting any restrictions guiding the treatment of the complete items.

While the overall composition of the scrap hoards may not be subject to strict compositional rules, the treatment of swords appears strictly regulated.

In the period with the most clearly identifiable patterns, the LBA hoards containing swords are, with the exception of the Teernagloghane, Co. Clare hoard, characterised by a very specific feature: they contain a single fragment of a sword, usually in combination with complete and still usable artefacts (eg, Park, Co. Meath: Fig. 3a). It has been suggested that scrap hoards represent collections of raw material to be melted down and re-used as needed (eg, Huth 1997). However, it has also been argued that the fact that the pieces do not match should be seen as an intentional *pars pro toto* deposition of the artefacts (eg, Hansen 1994).

The fact that only one sword fragment was ever deposited in each hoard suggests that an intentional selection was made, rather than random scrap collection. Patterns indicating that artefacts in scrap hoards were subject to specific selection and treatment have also been noted elsewhere (Turner 1998) and, specifically, the mode of deposition of sword fragments has also been seen to display patterns elsewhere (Bradley 2005, 154–60; Rittershofer 1984; Verlaeck 1998).

The repetitive inclusion of single sword fragments in the dryland scrap hoards of the LBA can perhaps be best understood in terms of the destruction of a particular form of identity. The inclusion of raw material in some of these hoards, in combination with the sword fragments, reinforces the notion that an act of transformation was important. The fact that they were deposited in dry contexts, often in significant locations, might imply that the deposition of only part of a sword could be understood as the legitimisation of the transformation of a highly symbolic object. As Barrett and Needham (1989, 138) suggested for the British Carp's Tongue hoards, the breaking of a sword may have been a requirement for their transformation into a commodity. However, the Irish evidence further indicates that not only breaking, but also a very specific mode of deposition, was required to legitimise this act and that it was not just about commoditisation, but also the symbolic properties of the object.

The significance of rocky places and outcrops may be linked to their connection with the process of raw material procurement, so the deposition of raw materials and scrapped artefacts at such places could be seen as completing the cycle. As frequently argued (eg Budd & Taylor 1995; Reid & MacLean 1995; Rowlands & Warnier 1993), the transformative process of metal production was possibly accompanied

by a variety of rituals and taboos (cf. Bradley 2005, 150–1; Brück 2001). As anthropological comparisons demonstrate, smelters and smiths sometimes regard themselves as facilitating a natural process of transformation (Rowlands & Warnier 1993). The fragmentation of the artefacts in scrap hoards has been seen as the ritual symbolisation of this process of transformation (Brück 2001, 156–7): deposition might symbolically return to nature what had been taken from it. It is not the relinquishing of the artefact, but the transformation of its social dimension and the marking of liminal events that are facilitated by deposition, at the same time legitimising and facilitating the transformation from object to raw material. It has also been argued that objects were broken and kept as tokens of economic or social transactions and relationships (Chapman 2000, 38) which could be reconciled through deposition (*ibid.*, 6). However, this appears unlikely for the Irish material as the fragmented artefacts are accompanied by complete artefacts and breakage is mainly restricted to swords. It seems more likely that the breaking and depositing of a single sword fragment is a reference to the act of transformation of an otherwise strongly regulated and protected object and, to legitimise its transformation, part of the artefact had to be consecrated while the missing fragments could be melted down.

The importance of copper and bronze relates not only to their functional advantages as a material but also to the physical properties that allow fragmentation and their potential for recycling and regeneration (Chapman 2000, 6). These properties make it likely that metalworking gained a strong metaphorical potency for conceptualisations of regeneration and death and birth (cf. Budd & Taylor 1995). Smelting as a transformative and regenerative process is in some cultures symbolically and metaphorically linked to human reproduction (Reid & MacLean 1995, 149–50). The link between fragmentation and regeneration has been made elsewhere (Brück 2006; 2001; 1999; Turner 1998, 134) and the deposition of fragmented metalwork as marking out liminal states (Brück 2006; Turner 1998, 122, 129). Turner saw scrap hoards as symbolising a transformation from life to death (*ibid.*, 115–16), arguing that objects lose their meaning through destruction (*ibid.*, 118).

However, the special emphasis on the treatment of swords could be considered indicative of a specialised transformative occasion, connected both to metalworking and male identity. Instead of being a direct

reflection of metalworking episodes (*contra* Turner 1998), which is also unlikely in view of the almost complete absence of other items associated with metalworking in the Irish hoards, they appear to represent a means of legitimising the transformation of artefacts subject to strict regulations. It may have been dangerous and difficult to destroy and combine them into new artefacts (cf. Bradley 2005, 163). A ritual act may thus facilitate a profane purpose – the transformation and recycling of both item and its symbolic property, in order to facilitate a utilitarian re-use of the object.

Transforming foreign identities

Gold hoards sometimes contain broken objects. The most striking examples are the MBA finds from Downpatrick, Co. Down. Two hoards containing both raw material and finished objects were deposited in a prominent location on a hilltop, each covered with a stone. The alloys of which the objects were composed are similar enough to suggest that they were produced over a short period of time, possibly in the same workshop. Four objects in hoard 1 – fragments of a torc with clear cut marks, a decorated bracelet, and two more bracelets – form a separate group with a higher copper content (Shell *et al.* 1998, 253). The two bracelets appear to have been cast from the missing half of the torc. It has been argued that the inclusion of the incomplete torc indicates an intention of future use and a founder's hoard (*ibid.*, 256–7). The torc is so far the only of its type from Ireland and could be an import from France (*ibid.*, cf. Armbruster 2010, 135–8). A connection with metalworking is compelling in view of the compositional evidence, and the scrapping of a foreign object for the production of local types has been suggested elsewhere. In the Netherlands imported Geistingen axes were probably converted into local types and their deposition seen as facilitating or referencing this transformation process (Fontijn 2002, 254–5; 2008), building on observations and suggestions made elsewhere about the treatment of foreign objects outside their original area of production and use (eg, Bradley 1998, 125–7; 1985, 697). The cargo of the Langdon Bay shipwreck, which contained objects such as Taunton-Hademarschen type axes and tanged and collared chisels, was found outside the original area of distribution of the artefacts and was probably also destined to be converted into locally acceptable forms (Muckelroy 1981, 295); similar processes may have led to the deposition of the material

in the Dutch Voorhout hoard (Fontijn 2008). The Downpatrick find most clearly demonstrates the actual transformation from foreign into local and rather than seeing this as a random snapshot of a particular step in the production sequence, it is suggested that the act of deposition deliberately references and legitimises the transformation of a foreign identity.

If gold artefacts stood for a very specific local identity, the need to transform imported items into appropriate forms becomes understandable. This seems to be reflected in other hoards such as the Bishopsland find or the fragment of a possibly Portuguese gold torc at Crieve-row, Co. Armagh (Stuart 1819, 512, fig. opposite p. 513), and could explain the general lack of imported goods alongside the clear evidence for contact with the outside world throughout the Bronze and Iron Age of Ireland.

Thus, collections of finds with a clear connection with dry contexts may represent deposits that are concerned with the transformation of items that stand for a particular identity.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive examination of the Irish Bronze Age artefact record has revealed that single finds, burial finds, and hoard finds constitute different aspects of one depositional system in which single finds can also be demonstrated as having been deposited intentionally. The correlation of specific forms of artefact deposition with certain contexts indicates that deposition was a meaningful practice, in which distinct qualities and meaning were attached to both the artefacts as well as the depositional contexts. Type-specific depositional patterns reflect rules that were in place for different types of objects (cf. Kristiansen 1996, 256). While the retrieval potential of places seems to be of relevance in the emergence of associative patterns, the specific symbolic meaning of the different places seems to have differed as well and challenges us to look beyond the simple dry/wet dichotomy which the record at first sight appears to represent.

Different artefacts were affected to differing degrees by the recycling or deposition strategies. The lack of tool deposition, for example, indicates that a higher proportion of these were recycled than of axes or weapons. Tools and personal ornaments also show a greater variability in their associations and depositional contexts, in contrast to very clear and restrictive patterns of deposition for bladed weapons.

The small number of tools deposited singly, in conjunction with their association with ornaments and other artefacts in hoards, suggests that their relevance in the depositional system was only acquired in combination with other artefacts and their own meaning was less strictly defined. This difference to other types is accentuated by the fact that the artefacts that are most frequently deposited singly are also those that, if they occur in the hoard record, are deposited in one-type hoards – such as swords or spearheads. It would therefore seem that the different depositional strategies might refer to different levels of the need to protect the symbolic value of the artefact: this is most clearly visible in the case of bladed weapons, which show the most exclusive patterns. In contrast, the great variability of depositional contexts and associations of axes seems to reflect the multi-functional character of these tools, which allows single deposition but also makes them suitable for inclusion in hoards in combination with other artefacts. With the development of specialised tool and weapon forms in the LBA the functional and symbolic narrowing of the conceptualisation of the type ‘axe’ becomes visible in the record in form of more specific contextual patterns.

The bias of weapons towards river contexts and gold and ceremonial items towards dry or bog contexts, as well as their exclusive associative patterns in the hoard record, suggest that they represented different identities, which were perceived as being of a contrasting nature. Gold and ceremonial artefacts appear to reflect communal concerns. What defines and characterises these items is that they appear to stand for identities which are not linked to the individual, as demonstrated by the EBA record and, indeed, also the lack of grave goods altogether in the later phases of the Bronze Age. While also referencing metalworking, ‘scrap’ hoards can be argued to reference and legitimise the transformation of special types of artefacts, such as highly symbolic or foreign items. The interdependency of the different classes of depositional context implies that we should, indeed, see the different modes of deposition as part of one system, with the individual modes reflecting different people, roles, genders, occasions, or events.

The contextual associations of the different artefacts in turn also suggest that places were imbued with specific meanings and differentiated not only between wet and dry but also between river and bog contexts: such an ideational landscape might encompass the notion of sacred places (cf. Knapp & Ashmore 1999,

12–13). The correlation between artefacts and locations points to significant combinations of artefacts and places with symbolic meanings, which were intentionally brought together (cf. Bradley 2000, 39). The equation of watery contexts with permanent surrender and dry land with potential retrieval is too simplistic to explain the complexities of the record and the correlation between find context and artefact type has a symbolic dimension that cannot be reduced to the simple physical properties of the find context. The difference in the treatment of weapons and gold artefacts is the most striking example of this. They have in common the fact that deposition in the ground or in water assigned the respective artefacts to environments that appear to have had a significance that went beyond the mere physical fact of ‘solid ground equals retrievable’ or ‘water equals irretrievable’.

However, the potential for retrieval should not be disregarded or considered unimportant. While the deposition of artefacts in rivers is a clear example of permanent disposal, the deposition of scrap material in dry contexts, often at marked locations in the landscape, represents the far end of the spectrum of possibly quite variable recovery intentions. It is therefore argued here that deposition was a transformative act – the transformation of the artefacts themselves, and of the specific identities symbolised by them, through deposition in liminal places such as bogs, rivers, rock outcrops, or burial monuments, bridging thus the divide between ritual and functional practices. In fact, the possibility of retrieval may have been important in the case of both the gold and other ceremonial items as well as the complex hoards – if, however, with different objectives.

Type-specific deposition is a reflection of the complex ideas attached to the significance of artefacts, and their symbolic meaning in the conception of personal identity and transformation processes in general. The differences in the treatment of the various types of artefact are seen to be a reflection of their inherent meaning and the social and functional context of the transformation process with which they are connected. It is only by breaking through the artificial boundary between the profane and ritual concepts that a coherent interpretation of the practice in general, including an explanation for the scrap hoards, becomes possible.

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RÉSUMÉ

Changements d'identités – nouvelles approches des dépôts de l'âge du bronze en Irlande, de Katharina Becker

Cet article explore l'interprétation des dépôts d'objets en Irlande d'environ 2500 à 800 av.J.-C., combinant une analyse contextuelle avec des idées post-processuelles sur la matérialité, les objets et leurs biographies. On montre que trésors et trouvailles individuelles ou sépultures sont des facettes complémentaires des vestiges de dépôts et le résultat d'une déposition intentionnelle. On argumente que ce sont aussi bien la valeur symbolique de ces trouvailles qu'un rationnel économique et pratique qui déterminent le mode de déposition. L'article tente d'en déduire les pratiques et règles sociales qui déterminèrent le traitement différent apporté à certains types de matériaux et d'objets. Le principal facteur structurant dans les vestiges de dépôts sont les significations attachées à un type pécifique d'objets individuels, qui incarnent des identités sociales dépassant la fonction utilitaire de l'objet. L'acte de déposition facilite et légitime la transformation littérale et symbolique des objets et des concepts qu'ils incarnent. Le besoin de séparer interprétation rituelle et profane disparaît car la déposition est comprise comme le reflet de concepts préhistoriques plutôt que cataloguée selon les notions modernes de fonctionnalité. On argumente aussi qu'endroits secs et humides étaient tous deux des contextes riches en signification et que différentes formes de paysages humides étaient conceptualisées différemment.

ZUSSAMENFASSUNG

Identitäten Transformieren – Neue Ansätze zur Interpretation bronzezeitlicher Deponierungen in Irland, von Katharina Becker

Dieser Beitrag widmet sich der Interpretation von Artefaktdeponierungen in Irland aus der Zeit von ca. 2500 bis ca. 800 BC; zu diesem Zweck wird eine kontextuelle Analyse mit postprozessualen Ideen zu Materialität, Artefakten und deren Biographien kombiniert. Horte, Einzelfunde und Grabfunde werden als sich ergänzende Stränge der Gesamtheit von Deponierungen und als das Resultat gezielter Niederlegungen präsentiert. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Art und Weise der Niederlegung sowohl durch den symbolischen Wert der niedergelegten Objekte bestimmt wird als auch durch ökonomische und pragmatische Überlegungen. Der Artikel zielt darauf ab, soziale Praktiken und Regeln, die den unterschiedlichen Umgang mit Materialien und Objekttypen bestimmen, zu erschließen. Der wichtigste strukturierende Faktor für alle Niederlegungen ist die jeweils typenspezifische Bedeutung individueller Artefakte, welche auch soziale Identitäten jenseits der utilitaristischen Funktion des Objekts umfassen. Der Akt der Niederlegung selbst ermöglicht und legitimiert die tatsächliche und symbolische Transformation der Artefakte wie auch der Konzepte, die sie inkorporieren. Die scheinbare Notwendigkeit einer Trennung zwischen ritueller und profaner Interpretation wird überwunden, da die Niederlegung als Widerspiegelung prähistorischer Konzepte verstanden wird und nicht anhand moderner Vorstellungen von Funktionalität angesprochen wird. Es wird auch argumentiert, dass sowohl trockene als auch feuchte Niederlegungsorte bedeutungsvolle Kontexte waren, und dass unterschiedliche Formen von Feuchtbodenlandschaften unterschiedlich aufgefasst wurden.

RESUMEN

Transformando identidades- nuevas aproximaciones a los depósitos de la Edad del Bronce en Irlanda,
por Katharina Becker

Este artículo analiza la interpretación de los depósitos de artefactos en Irlanda entre *c.* 2500 al *c.* 800 BC, combinando el análisis contextual con las ideas post-procesuales sobre la materialidad, los artefactos y sus biografías. Depósitos, hallazgos aislados y enterramientos se presentan como partes complementarias del registro depositado y como el resultado de una acción deliberada. Se argumenta que tanto el valor simbólico de estos objetos, como razones económicas y prácticas determinan la forma de deposición. El artículo trata de inferir las prácticas sociales y las reglas que determinan el tratamiento diferencial de materiales y tipos de objetos. El principal factor estructurador de los registros de depósito es el significado específico de los artefactos individuales, que encarna identidades sociales más allá de la función utilitaria del objeto. El acto de depósito facilita y legitima la transformación literal y simbólica de los objetos y los conceptos que representan. Se elimina la necesidad de una separación entre la interpretación ritual y profana, ya que el depósito se entiende como el reflejo de conceptos prehistóricos en lugar de una clasificación acorde con las nociones modernas de funcionalidad. También se argumenta que tanto los emplazamientos terrestres como los humedales son contextos de gran significado, y que las distintas formas de paisaje fueron concebidas de modo diferente.