Felix Müller, Die frühlatènezeitlichen Scheibenhalsringe. Römisch-Germanische Forschungen, Band 46. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 1989. 116 Seiten, 45 Abbildungen, 78 Tafeln, 7 Beilagen.

This welcome publication discusses and illustrates 97 disc torcs of the Early La Tène period. The author attempts to determine their social, sexual and even ethnic significance as well as the questions of materials used and the matter of the organisation of craft production in the Early La Tène period, and their geographical and chronological distribution. Along the way he gives brief but incisive summaries of the earlier relevant literature. The illustrations are a judicious mixture of photographs and drawings, including, à la PAUL F. JACOBSTHAL (Early Celtic Art [1944, rev. ed. 1969]), drawings of motifs found on the rings, although these are not reproduced in their entirety. The book is based on a dissertation submitted at the end of December 1983 and has taken over five years to achieve publication with the inevitable result that little in the bibliography or discussed in the text is later than that date.

After a brief review of the literature on *Scheibenhalsringe* from Tischler in 1886 to Joachim in 1980, Müller examines the technology of casting the disc torcs, of which almost all are bronze. One silver example from Mâcon is now located in the Metropolitan Museum (J. V. S. MEGAW, Ein verzierter Frühlatène-Halsring im Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Germania 45, 1967, 59–69). As is general in the La Tène period, one-piece lost wax casting was used for the bodies of the rings, with a core being used in the case of those with pseudo-buffer terminals. Later working included the use of a lathe on the metal discs which held the inlay. Inlay was held in the discs by means of an adhesive base, possibly pitch, and also by rivets. Many of the rivets have decorated heads. By far the commonest material for inlay is red 'enamel' or more properly, glass, since it does not generally seem to be fused to the metal. The most usual technique was to soften the glass and press it into moulds, possibly also boring the rivet holes while the material was still warm and thus soft. The characteristic opaque sealing-wax red colour is produced by the use of copper and lead in a constant ratio, which can be found on the Basse-Yutz flagons as well as on later pieces such as the Battersea shield (I. M. STEAD, The Battersea Shield [1985] esp. 34 and 49 f.), and on those of the disc torcs which have been analysed. For the purposes of this publication, only one analysis has specifically been done on a disc belonging to a torc from Muttenz. This was performed by Willem B. Stern by means of X-ray

fluorescence (XFA). There is, however, no need to hypothesise a Mediterranean origin for the glass itself as used to be done on the basis of M. J. HUGHES (A Technical Study of Opaque Red Glass of the Iron Age in Britain. Proc. Prehist. Soc. 38, 1972, 98–107. – J. V. S. and M. R. MEGAW [eds.], The Basse-Yutz [1927] Find: Masterpieces of Celtic Art. Soc. of Antiqu. Research Report 46 [1990]).

Few of the *Scheibenhalsringe* contain inlay other than glass; one contains amber. Probably four, two from Rácalmás and Cece (both Fejer m. in Hungary), one from Bruchsal-Untergrombach in Baden-Württemberg and one from Bad Nauheim contain coral, while another three, now lost, may have contained it according to M. One from the Dürrnberg contains walrus or elephant ivory, while that from Pişcolt is probably shell and not coral. M. records far fewer disc torcs as containing coral than the eighteen listed by S. T. CHAMPION (The Use of Coral and other Substances to decorate Metalwork in Central and Western Europe in the middle and later Centuries of the First Millennium B. C., unpub. D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford 1977), and clearly considers that the normal inlay was glass, particularly in the Upper Rhine area.

After this M. moves to one of the central areas of his study: the recognition and definition of different styles and workshop traditions in the production of the disc torcs. There are certain major categories: those with buffer terminals and thus an even number of discs, and those with no buffers and thus an odd number of discs, as in the Upper Rhine region. To make finer distinctions he selects nine criteria. First is weight of the torc, followed by the size and type of buffer terminals, the use of gold for detailing and the type of fastening mechanism; in some cases the torc is one piece, with buffer terminals, or with a fastening under the right ear of the wearer, while in others there are two pieces joined by male-female joints and without buffer terminals. Next comes the decoration, the number of discs, the number and shapes of the swellings separating the discs, the number of decorated areas on the ring portion of the disc torc, the decoration of the outer (not the upper) side of the discs. By this means he defines eleven major groups, with five torcs in an otherwise undefined group. These groups are of uneven size, with some as small as two examples.

Group A contains the five La Tène A (possibly even HaD/LTA transition) period prototype disc torcs, two from Switzerland, two from Alsace and one from Baden-Württemberg. Group B are light-weight rings mostly with three discs, separated by two beads each and three zones of decoration elsewhere, made in one piece with a fastening on the right hand side; two come from Muttenz, two from Allschwil, one from Untersiggenthal, while there are two from the German Rhineland and one from Alsace; dates are La Tène B 1. Group C contains twenty-one heavy torcs with enamel inlay and usually five decorated zones on the ring portion and three very thick discs, made in one piece with a simple fastening under the wearer's right ear; where dating is possible, they are La Tène B 2 or even C, with a wide distribution along the Rhine as far as Alsace, mostly on the left bank.

Groups D (19 examples) and E (12 examples) are essentially the same though D has three discs only and E has five; one additional ring from Schönenbuch has seven discs. All have cast profiled decoration on the ring, mostly in three zones and without inlaid glass or accompanying engraving, and nearly all are made in two pieces. Both groups are concentrated in the Rhine and Neckar areas, but Group E concentrates round the bend of the Rhine at Basel (with some outliers) while Group D has a wider scatter of distribution with examples in the Marne, Tessin and in Hungary. Dating ranges from one La Tène B 1 example through La Tène B 2 (Pişcolt, Hungary) and into the start of La Tène C.

The remaining non-buffer torcs make much less satisfactorily homogeneous groups. Group F has ten light-weight candidates bearing cast ornament in three or five areas on the ring, three, four, five or seven discs separated by knobs bearing varied ornament, with a scattered distribution including one from the neighbourhood of Prague and one from near Lake Balaton in Hungary. They are mostly mid La Tène B.

These torcs make up 79 % of those dealt with by M., and the remaining four groups of buffer and pseudo-buffer torcs are really too small to reveal anything significant in the way of technology, decoration, date or distribution. Indeed, having defined them, the author virtually ignores them from then on, making no attempt to relate them to his Upper Rhine torcs in terms of the later discussion or date, which is a pity. Certainly there is some unity in the four torcs from Marne, France, though one might query the 'buffer' torc description, since Bétheniville and La Cheppe have 'horse hoof' or *Petschaft* terminals, La Croix-sur-Meuse has disc-shaped terminals, and Prosnes has true conical terminals. These date, depending on whose chronological scheme one adopts (a topic intelligently discussed by M.) probably to La Tène B 1.

Group H has true hollow buffers and uses gold in the decoration of the torcs but contains only four examples, three of which no longer survive. The fourth, from Rácalmás, in Hungary, is only about one third of the recorded weight of the destroyed example from Florstadt-Niedermockstadt. All may have contained coral in the discs and elsewhere; the ring portion of three of them has engraved and punched decoration. Dates may be La Tène B 1. The five torcs in Group J have fused buffers and two large discs, while the example from Trebur (Dammelberg) – seriously damaged in World War II – has a true face flanked by tendrils at the rear of the ring and that from Braunfels has a lyre face. All of Group J come from Germany. The final group, K, has fused buffers and consists of two torcs only, each light in weight and with four discs, and found within 30 km of each other in eastern Transdanubia, dating perhaps to La Tène C.

The setting out of these groups is followed by a brief discussion of groups and styles in Early Celtic art. M. points out, as have others, that Schwappach's claim that there are two distinct zones for Celtic art of the La Tène A period, plant style in the west and *Bogenstil* further to the east, is not very valid since it compares decoration on pottery in the east with decoration on metalwork in the West. Frey's insistence that Waldalgesheim style has a totally different geographical distribution from that of the Waldalgesheim Style is, according to M., due to comparing a mapped version of Jacobsthal's cited Waldalgesheim style objects in *Early Celtic Art* with that from Schwappach. He discusses earlier attempts to define or recognize the products of individual Celtic workshops or craftworkers, including Sir C. Fox (Pattern and Purpose: A survey of Early Celtic Art in Britain [1958]), J. V. S. Megaw (Art of the European Iron Age: A study of the elusive image [1970]), E. M. Jope (The Waldalgesheim Master, in: J. Boardman, M. Brown and T. G. E. Powell [eds.], The European Community in Later Prehistory: Studies in honour of C. F. C. Hawkes [1971] 165–180), J. Driehaus (Zum Grabfund von Waldalgesheim. Hamburger Beitr. zur Arch. 1, 1971, 101–113; Der absolut-chronologische Beginn des frühen Latène-Stils [LT A, Early Style] und das Problem Hallstatt-D 3. *loc. cit.* 2, 1972, 319–347), J. M. De Navarro (The Finds from the Site of La Tène I: Scabbards and the swords found in them [1972]), M. Lenerz-de Wilde (Zirkelornamentik in der Kunst der Latènezeit. Münchner Beitr. zur Vor- und Frühgesch. 25 [1977]), A. Haffner (Die frühlatènezeitlichen Goldscheiben vom Typ Weiskirchen, in: Festschr. 100 Jahre Rhein. Landesmuseum Trier. Trierer Grabungen u. Forsch. 14 [1979] 281–296).This coverage is however only partial. Among writings on the subject by one of the current reviewers he omits for example three articles in print before the end of 1983 (J. V. S. Megaw, Style and Style Groupings in Early Celtic Art. World Arch. 3, 1972, 276–292; Celtic Art – Product of Travelling Craftsmen or Chieftainly Vassals?, in: P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta, Les mouvements celtiques du V^e^ au I^er^ siècle avant notre ère [1979] 49–54; Finding Purposeful Patterns: Further notes towards a methodology of Pre-Roman Celtic art, in: P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta [eds.], L'art celtique de la période d'expansion [1982] 213–229) as well as one slightly later one (J. V. S. Megaw, Meditations on a Celtic Hobby-Horse: Notes towards a Social Archaeology of Iron Age Art, in: T. C. Champion and J. V. C. Megaw [eds.], Settlement and Society: Aspects of West European prehistory in the first millennium B. C. [1985] 161–191). The lack here of M. J. Rowlands (The Archaeological Interpretation of Prehistoric Metalworking. World Arch. 3, 1972, 210–223) on the organisation of prehistoric metalworking, or of M. G. Spratling (The Debris of Metal Working, in: G. J. Wainwright [ed.], Gussage All Saints: An Iron Age settlement in Dorset. Dept. of the Environment Arch. Rep. 10 [1979] 125–149) and J. Foster (The Iron Age Moulds from Gussage All Saints. Brit. Mus. Occasional Paper 12 [1980]) on the lessons of Gussage All Saints for any typological division of metalwork leaves out some extremely valuable insights for any Iron Age specialist. This might be explained in part by the insularity of Continental scholars as much as librarians and others but notwithstanding M. also for example omits a highly relevant article by J. Driehaus (Gerätespuren und Handwerksgerät. Ein Beitrag zur Metallbearbeitung während der späten Hallstatt- und frühen Latènezeit, in: H. Jankuhn *et al.* [eds.], Das Handwerk in vor- und frühgesch. Zeit [1983] 50–66). The discussion of the literature is therefore rather less than exhaustive, even up to 1983.

The next major section of the book attempts to define eighteen different motifs used on the 'beads' separating discs or on the ring portion of the torc. These are a little confusing since wave tendrils appear as Pattern L and triskels as Pattern M, while the combination of the two is defined as Pattern N. Nor in this section is M.'s judgment beyond reproach. On plates 24-5, for example, it is hard to see why motif 190 or 192 is included under palmettes (Pattern P) rather than lotus (Pattern Q – the three lotuses to these reviewers don't look very like lotuses either, but in two cases like looped lyres) or the *Blattreihen* of Pattern R. Of the eighteen examples under Pattern R, only the first twelve look like leaf shapes and so on. Agreement on the naming of patterns and the assignment of patterns to named groups is notoriously difficult, but at times M.

seems to group unlike patterns together or to make distinctions between similar patterns in a most un-Jacobsthal-like fashion. He does however, maintain the all too familiar Jacobsthal tradition of having to look up the pattern number in a list elsewhere, which in turn refers you to a number which in turn has to be found in order to find which disc torc is being referred to. This is, to say the least, time-consuming and irritating. So too is the fact that while each disc torc has a number within the text, captions to the plates *(Tafeln)* do not even give the grave number where there are several torcs from the same cemetery, and the catalogue is arranged alphabetically and not by number. In computer jargon the book is not very user-friendly. It has, for example, no proper index, but only the standard list of place names. And in the characteristic German fashion in archaeological publication, distribution maps (carried out on the usual Tübingen base maps) have no place-names, or even numbers by which one can check which dot or triangle is which place; on *Beilage* 6, which maps all the *Scheibenhalsringe,* numbers and a list of names are given, which makes their lack elsewhere even more mystifying. This makes them totally unusable in order to see connections and relationships other than those which have occurred to the author himself, and also makes it nearly impossible to check that the maps are actually correct, without the use of a large amount of detailed atlas research. Possibly all German readers know the map of Europe so well that they can locate with ease every tiny hamlet from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea, but this habit may also be the reason for the frequent copying by many archaeologists – ourselves included let it freely be confessed – of each other's out-of-date distribution maps, since the effort involved in determining which dot is which is too much, and it becomes a major effort to see how many recent finds have actually made it on to the map as given.

In discussing the determination of workshop production or traditions in time or space, M. employs some sensible if very simple models, some presented in graphic form. These are a reasonable starting point, though English (not to mention American, French, Dutch or Scandinavian) readers may find them less theoretically sophisticated than is common elsewhere. This is not always a drawback, since at least the models do not outrun the capacity of the data to support them as can be the case with some archaeologists who expect to glean as much information from artefacts as anthropologists can from direct observation. It is, however worth wondering if first deriving the groups and then seeking their motifs is a sensible way to approach the matter, especially as it leads to the ignoring of those torcs whose patterns do not 'fit' the group to which they have already been assigned. More complex tests of statistical significance, or the use of a computer to group all the selected features might have produced more interesting results.

By assigning patterns to groups M. arrives at the name *Schlichter Stil* or 'Plain Style' for the previously defined groups B and C. Group B uses basically only two motifs, crosses (Pattern B) and S-shapes (Pattern D); the distribution is confined to a radius of 50 km around the Rhine's right-angle bend at Basel and basically restricted to La Tène B 1. Fifteen of the torcs from Group C display the 'paper-chip' or comb motif (Pattern C), 'disintegrated' *(aufgelöste)* S-shapes (Pattern E) and disintegrated wave tendrils *(Wellenranke)* (Pattern K). The date is mainly La Tène B 2 and the distribution a little wider along the Upper Rhine, so that M. suggests that Workshop Group C may have developed out of B, using but not fully understanding the source of the wave tendril. He plots but does not discuss the fact that three of the torcs assigned to Workshop C also carry Waldalgesheim Style elements. It is, however, a pity that the patterns are discussed only as groups rather than as individuals, and that the drawings do not indicate the complete decoration of a particular torc but merely abstract certain elements, without giving the name or number of the torc, which then has to be looked up in a list and thence in the catalogue; nor does the catalogue section in describing each torc indicate what patterns it carries, though this is given very usefully elsewhere in chart form on *Beilage 7*.

While there are few palmettes, true lotuses or lyres on the disc torcs, there are many 'Waldalgesheim' patterns. These are mainly found on groups D and E, which do not, save in one instance, use the same motifs as Groups B and C. Instead with three exceptions in Group D and two in Group E they use wiry spirals (Pattern G), wave tendrils (Pattern J), symmetrical wave tendrils (Pattern L) and wave tendrils with triskels. In addition Group D has two examples which also display Pattern M (triskel), Pattern O *(Fächer)* and Pattern R (leaf rows), while Patterns E (disintegrated spirals) and S (unclassifiable) appear once each. Four of Group D have a tendency to 'Plastic' ornament; these include two without the normal D pattern repertoire which come from Bläsheim and Herrlisheim in Alsace, while the other three come from Pişcolt in Romania, Magyartés in Hungary and Heidolsheim in Alsace; to these torcs showing close connections between Alsace and eastern regions, one can add the incomplete Alsatian example from Sundgau. None of the torcs

in Group E shows any tendency to 'Plastic' decoration, two have Pattern H (running spirals) and lack the pattern repertoire of the others, while Pattern F (lyre) and M (triskel) appear once each. The mutually exclusive distribution and relatively similar dating of Groups D and E suggests to contemporary workshop traditions using Waldalgesheim motifs and co-existing also with the workshop producing the *Schlichter Stil.* There is, by contrast, little unity in the motifs used by the rag-tag collection in Group F, though five have leaf rows.

The remainder of the book attempts to uncover the meaning and function of the torcs for their wearers and for the society in which they were worn. As is general torcs are rarely found together with weapons in the grave, but M. points to two sites in Baden-Württemberg where a disc torc was found with a sword; they are grave 1 in the barrow of Steinheim-Höpfigheim, excavated in 1973, and possibly Öhringen-Möglingen, excavated in 1912. With these exceptions which recall the late Hallstatt tradition even if later in date, the graves are those of women (where the sex can be determined and the grave inventories are reliable). Ages vary from five to six years to as old as fifty to sixty. Measured heights suggest that adult women were about 160 cm tall. Even in the earliest group, the Prototypes, women with disc torcs are found both in barrows and in flat graves. Of the later Upper Rhine groups most come from flat graves in Switzerland and in Champagne and Hungary; in southwest Germany and Alsace some ten disc torcs were recorded as found in *Nachbestattungen* in barrows. Information on the orientation of the corpses with disc torcs is available only from the Upper Rhine area and from the Neckar region. Two-thirds lay N-S or NNE-SSW, with the head four times as often to S or SSW; the W-E, NW-SE or NE-SW orientation has a distribution different from the others. Among the women buried disc torcs were neither universal nor particularly rare. As to use, M. points to the removability of disc torcs, and to the fact that some were carelessly put on dead young women, while one child from Nebringen grave 17 had an adult-size neckring but child-size arm- and ankle-rings. The older the wearer, as in Nebringen grave 4, the more worn was the torc. From this, M. concludes that the right to wear a torc lasted through life, though the torc was not customarily worn until adulthood. It may have signified the reaching of a certain life stage as well perhaps as specific social status or rank.

In the last section of the book, the author tries to use the distribution maps of torcs and of other artefacts to decide whether we have to do with a specific ethnic group occupying a particular geographical area. He concludes that despite the difficulties in determining this from archaeological evidence, it is likely. Finally he considers the four Group D torcs from Hungary and the two Group F from Bohemia. These could have arrived there by means of the movement of individuals (e.g. exogamy), by long-distance or down-the-line-trading, by the travels of craftworkers or by the movement of whole groups of people. Surveying recent evidence that settlement along the Danube and in Transdanubia is earlier than La Tène C, and referring to Lorenz's finding that there were close links in costume between Switzerland and Slovakia, he suggests that these may be due to the eastern movement of Celtic culture being due neither to a mass migration, nor to the vague notion of the diffusion of culture, but rather that the Celtic *Drang nach Osten* was carried out by a large number of small groups of different geographical and cultural origins. The extremely worn condition of the disc torcs found so far to the east of the Upper Rhine suggests both the value to their wearers as mementoes of home and the difficulty in acquiring replacements. They may, M. suggests, have belonged to the women of the 'founding generation', buried in a new land. Curiously, he does not refer to V. Kruta who derives his idea of Danubian settlement in France from a similar introduction of ring ornaments, this time of ankle-rings (V. KRUTA, Les Celtes orientaux et la Gaule. Histoire et Archéologie, Les Dossiers 77, 1983, 70–77; Le port d'anneaux de cheville en Champagne et le problème d'une immigration danubienne au III^{e} siècle avant J.-C. Études Celtiques 22, 1985, 27–51).

All in all, the virtues of this book are many. It shows carefull scholarship and a consideration of many of the major questions concerning Celtic art, art styles, social status and burial, the connections between La Tène A and B in society and art, the particular position of Switzerland in Early La Tène. There is, however, more attention to questions of theory than is always the case in meticulous German research whose major aim, it seems to many non-German archaeologists, is to do no more than arrive at a date – any date – for the material under discussion. The perceived defects of Müller's study are less important, though they do suggest a certain lack of visual awareness, not to mention a lack of sensitivity to the possibilities of making a book of maximum usefulness and accessibility to the reader.

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