



BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM
Monday, April 25th, 4:15 p.m.

**SWORDS AND SORCERY: WHAT CAN WEAPONS TELL US ABOUT
LATER BRONZE AGE SOCIETY IN THE BALKANS**

Barry Molloy

University College Dublin

Some of the most striking pieces of material culture from the Bronze Age world are the many novel forms of weapons, including swords, shields, spears, axes and armour. These represent a parallel growth in the complexity of the art of the smiths producing the weapons and the craft of the warriors using them. This apparent transformation in two major fields of social discourse are paralleled by significant changes in the management of metals, notably visible in the vast increase in the quantity of bronze consigned to deposition in large hoards containing material culture from a wide range of social activities.

This phenomenon occurs throughout much of Europe and so is not peculiar to specific regions or cultures, though notable variation occurs. This paper uses the case of the Central and West Balkans because these lands lie at the interface between the traditions of the Urnfield world and the heterogeneous groups that inhabited the Balkan peninsula, including the Mycenaeans to the far south. It will look at the character of craft practice for manufacturing weapons drawing on new metallographic research and will combine this with an analysis of changes in the technological and martial characteristics of weaponry, including the results of new use-wear studies. The objective will be to explore the character of two parallel developments (smithing and warfare) that would have had significant effects on societies at this key European crossroad.

Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204