

THE BRONZE AGE

by

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numerous rivets are so patently allied to the more pointed "daggers", form the starting-point for two specialized knives of our Late Bronze Age. The first has a long blade and a short flat tang, nearly as wide as the blade, that generally bears two rivets (Fig. 11, no. 8). The second, but that it is found associated with the first, might be regarded as evolved therefrom by the addition of a ferrule like the socketed spear-heads of the Arreton Down class; for it is characterized by an elliptical socket with one or two pairs of rivet-holes, that looks just what might have developed out of such a combination with the hypothetical ferrule (Fig. 11, no. 9). Such forms, though commonest in the British Isles and probably native there, are also found in Northern France and as far south as Charente.

Related to our socketed knives is a curious socketed instrument whose leaf-shaped blade is bent round in a semicircle. Outside Great Britain the type is found in Normandy and perhaps Switzerland (Fig. 11, no. 10).

RAZORS

It is quite possible to shave with a flint blade, and some predynastic flints were undeniably utilized in this way. The early Egyptian metal razors exactly copy these flint forms. One type, confined to the Early Dynastic period, was rectangular with four bevelled edges. Another form, going back to Late Predynastic times, looks like a broad double-edged knife with a short tang. Probably most were sharpened along one edge only as is certainly the case with the specimens from Queen Hetep-heres' tomb. A very similar little implement has recently been found in early Sumerian tombs. The Mesopotamian razors, always unfortunately in bad preservation, are regularly found in pairs; it is uncertain

whether both edges were sharp. In the Aegean area the earliest certain razors date from the L.M. III period. The majority are one-edged (Fig. 12, no. 1) but there are double-edged specimens in which the handle was riveted directly on to the blade without a tang.

The majority of European razors belong to the same family. In the earlier graves of the so-called Siculan II period, containing Mycenaean vases imported from Greece, we find a long blade with slightly concave sides and an indentation at the lower end (Fig. 12, no. 3). The purpose of the indent was perhaps to allow the forefinger to feel the skin while shaving. In any case it is a prominent feature in nearly all European double-edged razors. In contemporary North Italian implements the indent is much more pronounced, and, above, a wide slit separates the two blades. An openwork handle, generally terminating in a loop and cast in one piece with the blade, was attached to these Italian razors (Fig. 12, no. 5). They belong to the Middle Bronze Age. Rather later a small group of razors appears in Franconia and Western Bohemia with a very broad double-edged blade, sometimes at least divided by a slit near the end, and an openwork handle cast in one piece with it (Fig. 12, no. 6). Crude razors of this pattern are found at a relatively later date in Holland and Eastern France (Nièvre and Rhône). But the contemporary Central European razors of phase E have already grown into developed horseshoe-shaped blades (Fig. 12, no. 7).

In Upper Italy, on the other hand, during the Late Bronze Age and first phase of the Early Iron Age (Villanova culture), the razor assumes a rectangular outline, preserving the indent in the lower end as an almost circular aperture and provided with a loop of

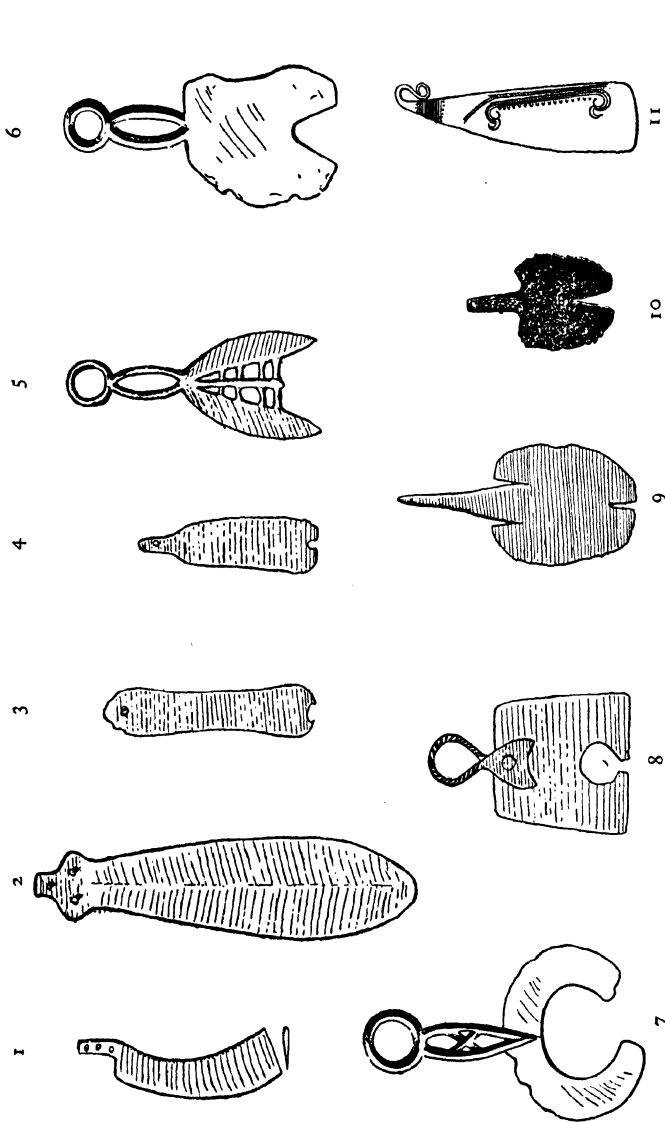


Fig. 12.

- (1) Minoan single-edged razor, Zafer Papoura.
- (2) Minoan double-edged razor, Zafer Papoura.
- (3, 4) Siculan II razors, earlier type.
- (5) Terremare razor, Upper Italy.
- (6) Double-edged razor, Bohemia.
- (7) Horse-shoe razor, South-west Germany.
- (8) Rectangular razor, Villanova.
- (9) Late Siculan II razor.
- (10) Double-edged razor, England.
- (11) Single-edged razor, Denmark.

All 4

twisted wire riveted on to the blade as handle (Fig. 12, no. 8). The same type is found in South Italy and Sicily, but in that island a type, derived from the earlier native form, but with wider blade, more pronounced slit between the edges and a flat tang for handle, is also encountered in the later tombs of the Siculan II period. Similar forms occur in Southern France (Ariège and Charente) and probably give a clue to the ancestry of our British razors⁽³⁵⁾.

The latter resemble a maple leaf in form. A tang to take the handle projects from the base of the blade and is often continued downwards by a wide midrib along its face. In the opposite end is a deep V-shaped indent and just behind it a circular eyelet. Though generally Late Bronze Age in date, one such blade, though without the round eyelet, was found with rapiers and palstaves in Scotland⁽⁶⁰⁾. It is generally believed that these razors belong to the group of foreign forms introduced into Britain by invaders arriving at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The affinities of our razors in any case seem to lie rather with Sicily and the Western Mediterranean than with the countries east of the Rhine.

While the standard European razors of the Bronze Age were double-edged, there is a series in Scandinavia with only one blade. Such are doubtless in the last resort derived from the normal Mycenaean implement (Fig. 12, no. 11, cf. 1).

TWEEZERS

Another surer but certainly more painful method of removing the facial hairs was to pull them out with tweezers. Depilatory tweezers, formed essentially of a bronze ribbon bent double and rather wider at the ends