

Proceedings of the 17th Iron Age Research Student Symposium, Edinburgh

29th May - 1st June 2014

Edited by

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Access Archaeology



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD
Gordon House
276 Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 7ED

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978 1 78491 357 1
ISBN 978 1 78491 358 8 (e-Pdf)

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Introduction

Paul Miller, Graeme Erskine, Piotr Jacobsson and Scott Stetkiewicz

The Proceedings of the 17th Annual Iron Age Research Student Symposium, University of Edinburgh, 28 May – 1 June 2014

Since its conception in 1998, the Iron Age Research Student Symposium (formerly ‘Seminar’) has provided postgraduates in the archaeology of Iron Age Britain an opportunity to present their current research in a friendly atmosphere. During the course of both formal seminars and informal outings (such as field trips, dinners, and the traditional pub quiz), the Iron Age Research Student Symposium (IARSS) gives students the ability to discuss their research with colleagues and peers, in addition to a number of outstanding lecturers and professors in Iron Age studies. Previous proceedings volumes (Davis et al. 2006; Humphrey 2003; Sterry et al. 2010), also offered participants the prospect of publishing their seminar paper. As a result, IARSS has become a fixture in the development of new academics while at the same time contributing fresh perspectives to Iron Age dialogues.

In many ways, the 17th IARSS reflected its predecessors. Over the course of four days, participants presented nearly thirty seminar papers, competed in the traditional pub quiz at Teviot Row House, and enjoyed the closing IARSS meal. Nonetheless, the 17th IARSS stood out in the minds of many participants of previous Symposia, in part due to the implementation of breakout sessions and panel discussions. These new features allowed the participants to engage directly with the ideas brought forth in each session, providing both the audience and the presenters a chance to collaborate. This opportunity to collaborate was essential to the 17th IARSS, which highlighted interregional cooperation and interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity was highlighted by the pre-symposium visit to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) 14C and AMS facilities, as well as SUERC’s Professor David Sanderson’s keynote lecture on application of Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating technique to the problems of Iron Age geoarchaeologies world-wide.

The 17th IARSS in Edinburgh also benefited from a broad geographic scope. Papers on the Iron Age in Estonia, the Balkans, Corsica, Sardinia, Austria, Germany, Spain, France, and Italy complemented the typically British focus of the Symposium. The first keynote of the Symposium, by Dr Manuel Fernández-Götz (Edinburgh), on the evidence for migration in the Aisne-Marne and Hunsrück-Eifel regions of modern-day eastern France and western Germany, is accompanied within this volume by papers of Scott Stetkiewicz (Edinburgh), Cristina Manzaneda Martín (Alicante), Dr Paul Miller (Edinburgh), and Dr Katja Winger (Freie Universität Berlin). In addition to the broader settings of the seminars and the proceedings volume, the 17th IARSS were headed by session chairs whose areas of interest were similarly interregional, including Dr Alžběta Danielisová (CAS Prague) and Prof Christopher Pare (Mainz). When addressing Britain and Ireland, the 17th IARSS paid considerably more attention to the Iron Age in Scotland and northern England than the previous Symposia. Of the sixteen papers in this volume, ten feature Irish or northern British archaeology, reflecting the continuing deconstruction of the old narratives of the British Iron Age, with their traditional southern English focus. The field trip of the final day of the Symposium to Traprain Law and the Chesters Hillfort further highlighted the Scottish setting of the 17th IARSS. Fraser Hunter (NMS) guided a comprehensive tour of both sites, with his personal excavation experience on Traprain offering an illuminating account of both the history of the site and the lesser-known secrets of its remains. By tangibly connecting several seminar themes with real Iron Age sites, participants were able to enjoy a more holistic understanding of the research presented at the conference.



This proceedings volume is organised thematically rather than by region. Similar to the Symposium itself, this volume begins with Dr Manuel Fernández-Götz's paper on migration. Dr Fernández-Götz revisits this concept through the lens of combining the palaeoclimatic records with the discussions of classical writers on the subject of instability among the Celtic communities north of the Alps. In doing so, his paper contributes to the growing body of research on human-environment interactions that go beyond climatic determinism. This paper is then followed by Alexandra Guglielmi's (UC Dublin) summary of the evidence for pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age activity at Lagore crannog in Ireland. This work demonstrates that the site was in use before the construction of the crannog itself and also forces a renewed set of questions on the continuity of Iron Age traditions and hence acts as a counter-point to Dr Fernández-Götz's change-oriented argument. This tension between change and continuity is then given a very different guise in the succeeding paper on Roman mortaria in Cumbria, by Jennifer Peacock (Worcester). Peacock demonstrates just how implausible it is to assume the functional continuity of the mortaria between heartlands of the Roman Empire and Cumbria. The theme of interaction between different values or communities concludes with Helen Chittock's (Southampton/ British Museum) paper on the role that pottery forms from earlier periods may have played in the Arras culture of eastern Yorkshire.

The next group of papers turns to material culture in its own right and how objects bind together categories, enable social interaction and control technical choices. Dr Anna Lewis (Leicester) writes about equine imagery on terrets, showing how these objects transgress boundaries between the practical and the symbolic. Yvonne Inall (Hull) focuses on martial burials. On the specific level her contribution points out the importance of taking into account the defensive equipment, such as shields, as well as offensive weaponry whenever discussing these features. On a broader level, Inall's paper demonstrates the entanglement of the various objects used in the performative nature of the martial burial rite throughout Britain. The final paper of the group, by Scott Stetkiewicz (Edinburgh) explores variation in socio-technical choices as evidenced by ferrous slag in Scotland, England, and France.

The third theme of this proceedings volume is concerned with the built environment. The papers by Cristina Manzaneda Martín, Dr Paul Miller, Michael Stratigos (Aberdeen), Nick Garland (UC London), Dr Katja Winger, Simon Wood, Jonathan Horn, and Murray Cook et al. encourage the reconsideration of how built structures are identified or interpreted. Manzaneda Martín evaluates the creation of cave sanctuaries by the Oretani of south-central Spain and explains how both the built environment and collective memory reveal a common, cultural ideology based in ritual and élite status. Miller reconsiders evidence for Villanovan-period building techniques in central Italy, identifying changes in construction techniques between structures of the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. Stratigos notes the effects loch drainage has had on evidence for crannogs, and argues that, with significant, man-made alterations to the landscape, archaeologists have under-identified crannogs in eastern Scotland. Garland re-examines the classification of oppida and other enclosed structures in Britain. Following Garland's re-examination of British enclosures, Winger reports on the E.ON excavations at Manching, identifying new settlement areas of the oppida, as well as a new location for one of the major roadways through the oppida. Similar to Garland, Wood reviews the classification system used to identify Scottish hillforts, meanwhile acknowledging that, without re-categorisation, archaeologists will fail to recognise the complex differences in enclosures throughout western Scotland. Horn, too, focusses on Scottish hillforts, discussing the possible methods for creating a more robust chronology. Lastly, Cook, Watson, and Cook identify how vitrified hillforts were created, displaying how different methods of destruction are the likely causes through differing case studies in Stirling and Aberdeenshire.

This proceedings volume, through the three themes mentioned here, accomplishes two things. First, it provides an accessible survey of emerging concepts, ideas, methods, and fieldwork that will shape future study of the Iron Age. Second, it is an outline, not just of what the 17th IARSS accomplished, but also of a broader scheme envisioned by the organisers for future events in this Symposium series. It is the



(perhaps wide-eyed) expectation of the organisers that the IARSS can and should expand to offer further opportunities to research students of the Iron Age, and they firmly hope that this volume aids in the promotion of this annual Symposium, as well as the ideas of the contributing authors.

Organising a symposium of this size and scope depends on more than the organisers themselves, but on the aid and coordination of numerous individuals and institutions. Foremost, the organisers would like to express our gratitude to the sponsors of the 17th IARSS. Without their generous support, our attempts to make this IARSS more interdisciplinary and interregional would have been impossible. With their sponsorships we were able to offer speakers who would otherwise not have been able to attend the conference due to distance, funds, or both the chance to attend, thus demonstrably broadening the scale of the Symposium. Our thanks to:

- Edinburgh University Institute of Academic Development;
- Glasgow University College of Science and Engineering;
- SUERC 14C laboratory;
- The Prehistoric Society;
- The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland;
- National Museums Scotland;
- British Archaeological Job Resources;
- Historic Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland) and;
- AOC Archaeology.

In addition, the organisers offer their sincerest thanks to the both the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Edinburgh University and the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre for being supportive hosts. Acknowledgements are also due to the session chairs: Dr Alzbeta Danielisova, Dr Melanie Giles (Manchester), Dr Martin Goldberg (National Museums Scotland), Dr Peter Halkon (Hull), Dr Derek Hamilton (SUERC), Dr Fraser Hunter (National Museums Scotland), Dr Christopher Pare, Dr Rachel Pope (Liverpool), and Dr Tanja Romankiewicz (Edinburgh), as well as our keynote speakers, upon whom the organisers so heavily relied. The newly added breakout sessions and panel discussions would never have succeeded without their contributions and leadership. Finally, many thanks for all of those who participated in the 17th IARSS, either as speakers, poster-presenters, or volunteers. We hope that the 17th IARSS will be fondly remembered as thought-provoking and innovative for years to come.

