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Editors' Foreword

Following Volume X of Trowel, our aim was to live up to the expectations created by last years success and hopefully broaden its horizons. The new sophisticated style of Volume X, which included book reviews and reflections from well know archaeologists, has been retained this year due to its popularity. For this we would like to thank the editors of Volume X, Niall Kenny and Brian Dolan, for the innovative work with the journal. As editors, we hope that Trowel will continue to grow each year, with each editorial team adding its own enhancements. This volume we have broadened the contributions to include not only UCD researchers, but also post-graduates from NUI Galway and UCC. In this way we are hoping that Trowel will become a national institution and a voice for students from all over Ireland. The book review section in Volume XI is experimental in

nature as we have incorporated publications from other disciplines such as classics and feminist theory and broadened opinions on these through a number of joint reviews.

The completion of Volume XI would not have been possible without help and support from many people. We would like to express our thanks to the various sponsors and contributors who worked hard to maintain the high standard of Trowel. On a more personal note we would like to thank Brain Dolan who took on the role as personal advisor, Conor McDermott, for much advice over many cups of coffee and Aidan O'Sullivan for his guidance. Thanks to the School of Archaeology UCD for facilities, support and a friendly atmosphere in which to work towards completing this journal. Thanks also to Miriam Cassidy for designing the cover illustrations and to Sean Bonner for formatting the journal.

Last but not least, thanks to you, the reader, for purchasing the journal and showing your support for Trowel and its contributors.

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Irish Late Prehistoric Burial Practices: continuity, developments and influences.

Tiernan McGarry*

In Ireland today there are not many readily-available options when it comes to the transformation and disposal of the remains of a deceased person. In the case of cremation, we can receive the fine ashes in an urn and later choose to deposit them at a place of personal or spiritual importance but, compared to some modern cultures and probably most ancient ones, cremation here normally involves a higher degree of physical and visible separation between the deceased and the mourners at the time when the rite or 'process' takes place and this may deny an opportunity for closer involvement, witness and closure. Where inhumation of the deceased is involved the options are normally even more restricted. Unless plans are made in advance of death, a combination of doctrine, tradition, convention and convenience will often ensure that large numbers of lapsed believers, and even agnostics and atheists, are finally laid to rest in distinctive rectangular graves marked by very durable inscriptions and Christian symbols. Such practices might serve to warn us against trying to extract the essence or reality of personal beliefs from the evidence of inanimate conventional or traditional public symbols and inscriptions, but they are at least closely datable.

This, unfortunately, is generally not true of burials from late prehistoric Ireland (c.800BC—AD400) because, although currently relatively scarce compared to earlier and later times, human remains from this period have been found in a very wide variety of funerary, ritual, and distinctively secular archaeological features that are generally not, in themselves, chronologically-diagnostic and the burials within them only seldom produce artefacts, or betray practices that are conclusively of this period. As a result, unlike earlier and later periods, we are currently very dependent on radiocarbon as a means of identifying burials from late prehistory; while this emphasis encourages a tendency to order and examine matters chronologically, it is also the case that limitations of that methodology too often restricts the dating of a burial only to the nearest half a millennium or so (McGarry 2005)¹. Nevertheless, an examination of the evidence currently available has revealed some patterns and this issue of Trowel provides a useful opportunity to attempt to clarify some of these.

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¹All radiocarbon determinations are 2 Sigma 95.4% unless otherwise stated.

Transitional LBA—Iron Age period c. 800—400BC

Unlike the preceding two centuries there are as yet no cremations known to have been radiocarbon-dated from human bone samples to 800—400BC, and we are consequently placed somewhat at the mercy of 'old-wood-effect' when trying to interpret the true dating of following examples. Samples taken from abundant charcoal, which the excavator thought represented the remains of the cremation pyre, from the lower levels of the small ringditch surrounding a central pit cremation at Ballybeen, Co. Down (Mallory 1984), are now mainly calibrated by OxCal to within this period.² At Rockfield, Co. Kerry, a charcoal sample from a feature with a cruciform flue at its base that was interpreted by the excavator as a crematorium, also produced a result from this period (Collins 2003),³ as did charcoal samples from beneath a mound that produced a burnt human femur at Rathbane South, Co. Limerick (Coyne 2002).⁴ *Corylus* and *Pomoideae* charcoal samples, that potentially have a considerably shorter old-wood-effect than *Quercus*, produced results that span this period for the fills of two of the pit cremations in the cemeteries on a hillside overlooking the Latoon river at Manusmore, Co. Clare (Hull 2005, 5-6 and pers. comm.)⁵ and it would appear likely that other cremations from there date from this time. There is also the possibility that a few cremations currently considered earlier might just belong to this period on account of old-wood-effect or Dowris-type associations but, if so, most probably to the earlier part of it.



Pl. 1. The burial mound at Furness creates a curve in the line of the field fence in the middle distance.

Photo: T McGarry

There is a small quantity of unburnt skull bones from

² UB-2640: 2660±70BP (1000—560 cal BC; but 1000—740 cal BC @ 88.9%) and UB-2641: 2530±70BP (810—410 cal BC). The averaged result calculated at the time of 2595±50 (Mallory 1984, 4) now calibrates to 900—540 cal BC, but to 850—540 cal BC @ 94.3%.

³ 780-380BC.

⁴ Charcoal from cut features, apparently beneath the mound, produced dates of 930-790 BC and 800-410 BC: <http://www.aegisarchaeology.com/>

⁵ Beta-207734. 2350±40 BP. OxCal: 730-360BC (but 550-360@ 92%) from *Corylus* charcoal. Beta-211587. 2460±40 BP. OxCal: 760-410BC from *Pomoideae* charcoal.

wetland sites such as Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath (Bradley 1997), and Crannog 2 at Ballinderry, Co. Offaly (Waddell 2000, 264-6) that are possibly from this transitional period, but the peculiarities make it far from clear that these represent 'formal burials' as we would generally understand them. However, A woman and child recovered from the bog at Derrymaquirk, Co. Roscommon, and a man from the bog at Gallagher, Co. Galway, produced quite broad radiocarbon date ranges of c. 800—200 cal BC and 510-160 cal BC respectively (Brindley & Lanting 1995). Otherwise, at the time of writing, no extended, crouched, flexed, or disarticulated inhumation burials, or even isolated unburnt post-cranial bones, are known to have been demonstrated to belong, beyond reasonable doubt, to this period; this presently also appears to be the case for the preceding two centuries.

Iron Age Cremations

As a result of rescue and development-led excavations carried out over the past two decades, the number of cremations dated beyond reasonable doubt to c. 400BC—AD400 has increased considerably, and there are approximately three times as many cremation burial sites presently known for this period than for the preceding 600 years. Published sites include Kilmahuddrick, Co. Dublin, where a sample of human cremated bone from the ditch of an earlier ringbarrow produced a radiocarbon result of c. 375—97 cal BC (Doyle 2001), and



Pl. 2. Kiltullagh on the Roscommon-Mayo border: the horse is standing at the edge of a low burial mound on the Mayo side and the standing stone is visible just over the field wall on the Roscommon side.

Photo: T McGarry

Ballydowny, Co. Kerry, where a charcoal sample from a cremation pit adjoining a ringditch segment produced 400—170 cal BC (Kiely 2004). New developments, such as the placing of chronologically-diagnostic personal ornaments and other artefacts with burials occurred at sites like Kiltierney, Co. Fermanagh (Foley 1988, 24-6), Ballydavis, Co. Laois (Keely 1999), and Fore, Co. Westmeath (Raftery 1994, 196-7), from the last centuries BC onwards and are a welcome alternative to

complete dependence on radiocarbon. There is currently no obvious decline in the incidence of cremation until approximately the fourth century AD. At the end of the period, the latest securely-dated cremation would appear to be that, possibly associated with a fragment of blue glass bracelet, from a low mound at Furness, beside Longstone Rath, Co. Kildare (Pl. 1), where charcoal from a central stake-hole produced a radiocarbon result of 1540 ± 30 BP (Grogan 1984) which OxCal now calibrates to 430—600 cal AD (but old-wood-effect might make the true date of this burial later still). As in the earlier part of the first millennium BC, it is also the case that quite a number of sites or features of an apparently funerary or ritual nature, and securely dated by radiocarbon to the period, have produced cremated bone that has been too fragmented to facilitate species identification.

Iron Age Bog Bodies

Other than the human remains from Derrymaquirk and Gallagher where radiocarbon results overlap with the Early Iron Age, bog bodies from only four other sites are known to have been dated securely to this period: Baronstown West, Co. Kildare, Kinnakinelly, Co. Galway, Clonycavan Bog, Co. Meath, and Old Croghan Bog, Co. Offaly (Brindley & Lanting 1995. Kelly 2006). While it may never be possible to conclusively prove or disprove that bog bodies from approximately forty other locations associated with important boundaries are actually of Iron Age date (Kelly 2006), the occurrence of several dry-land Iron Age burials in close proximity to political or natural boundaries may well suggest



Pl. 3. Crouched burial of possible Iron Age date from Rath, near Ashbourne, Co. Meath.

Photo: Holger Schweitzer

a pattern worthy of more detailed investigation. The most striking of these dry-land sites is, perhaps, on Kiltullagh hill which is crossed by the county boundary between Roscommon and Mayo (Pl. 2). Here an extended inhumation (c. 406—532 cal AD) was found beside a probably earlier pit cremation, ringbarrow and a standing stone on the Roscommon side of the field wall, while bones of at least four adults and one child were found at a low mound on the Mayo side (Robinson et al. 2000).

Iron Age Crouched and Flexed Inhumations

The first known dry-land formal inhumations to appear since before 1000BC are crouched inhumations like that from the ringditch at Rath, Co. Meath (Pl. 3) which produced evidence for the wearing of toe-rings, a practice not yet paralleled elsewhere in Ireland but with some incidence in Britain (Schweitzer, H. 2005). Rath itself awaits conclusive dating, but the earliest date for this type so far published, from a sample of human bone from Burial 10 at Knowth, Co. Meath, is 190-50 cal BC, and Iron Age adult crouched inhumations are also known from Rath of the Synods, Tara (O'Brien 2003). With the exception of Lambay (below), all of the other crouched burials known to have been dated beyond reasonable doubt to this period are those of children, these include: a burial accompanied by a glass bead and bronze earring, dated on typological grounds to c. 200BC, from a very extensive shell midden at Culleenamore, Co. Sligo (Burenhult 1984, 337-42), an infant from between that time and approximately 239 cal AD (or possibly later depending on old-wood-effect) from within the ditch at Rath na Riogh, Tara (Roche 2002, 45-59), and the last of those known is a child from within a rock-cut grave at Platin Fort, Co. Meath, dated from a bone sample to 1800±40 BP (Conway 2003, 316-7), which calibrates to some time during the second to fourth centuries AD. Only two other (but unpublished) sites are known to have produced radiocarbon results or artefacts that provide a reasonable probability of a date before the fifth century AD for crouched or flexed inhumations; both of these are in Meath and in both cases the radiocarbon results also provide a probability of about 50% that they are actually later.

It would appear that crouched or flexed inhumations are not only uncommon during the Irish Iron Age but also that they are currently very restricted geographically, with only Culleenamore being beyond the environs of Meath.⁶

⁶. Although samples from two extended burials from the ditch of Tumulus I at Carrowbeg North (Willmot 1939) have recently produced 15th—17th century AD radiocarbon results (Lanting & Brindley 1998), Skeleton 1 was not tested; Willmot's description of the posture of this burial suggests she was crouched or flexed and it was she that was accompanied by twelve bone beads and a bronze locket. The possibility remains that she may date to the Iron Age. Elsewhere, somewhat more circumstantial evidence might suggest a Late Iron Age date for a crouched burial in an oval rock-cut pit at Freestone Hill, Co. Kilkenny, where Roman artefacts have been found (O Floinn 2000. Raftery 1969, 6, Fig. 4), but at present this would appear at least as likely to date, like the cremations there, to the Bronze Age.



Pl. 4. The view from Lambay towards Drumanagh promontory fort.

Photo: T. McGarry

The numbers are quite small, but it may be that child burials and burials at high status or ritual sites were most likely to encourage this particular burial rite.

The burials from Lambay Island, Co Dublin, are clearly both exotic and unique and have therefore been left until last. The small cemetery of at least two apparently crouched inhumations disturbed in 1927 during harbour construction on the West of Lambay Island produced militaria and personal ornaments suggestive of a late British 'warrior burial', possibly a Brigantian, from the first or second century AD (Rynne 1976). Whether they are more likely to represent a community fleeing a Roman advance (Raftery 1994, 200-210) or one somehow associated with activities that reportedly produced a significant quantity of Roman material at nearby Drumanagh (Pl. 4), some of it of the first and second century AD (*ibid.*), is difficult to tell until archaeological artefacts and features from the latter site are published, but it may be worth noting that these exotic burials were also found in the vicinity of Meath.

Iron Age Extended Inhumations and Roman Influence

Contemporary writings by Tacitus, Ptolemy's map references, and surviving artefacts provide good evidence for contact and trading between Ireland and the Roman world, but the discovery of burials with unambiguous Roman

characteristics at Stoneyford and Bray added an extra, and essentially human, dimension to this relationship. The extended inhumations found at Bray, Co. Wicklow, in 1835 had Roman copper coins on or near their breasts, presumably for paying the Stygian ferryman, Charon (Raftery 1981; Davies 1989). The cremation burial discovered in 1852 at a site (now lost) in the vicinity of Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny, was contained within a glass jar and accompanied by a bronze mirror and a lachrymatory (Bourke 1989). While artefacts of Roman type have been recovered from other Irish burial sites, no other burial with evidence for similar exotic customs to those above appears to have since materialised. Although these burials and those from Lambay appear very likely to be of non-natives, they nevertheless accounted until recently for a significant proportion of the small number of identified Irish Iron Age burials (Raftery 1981; Raftery 1994, 200–219), and may have strengthened some otherwise arguably difficult contentions (e.g. Di Martino 2003 *passim*) for a considerable Roman presence here. A broad discussion of this wider question is beyond the scope of a this article, but an insight may be gained from an examination of the evidence for Roman influences on Irish burial practices during the first four centuries AD.

All three of the burial sites mentioned above have been dated by artefact typology to the first or second centuries AD (O'Brien 2003, 63–72) and it has been estimated that an extended burial at Rath of the Synods is also of that time or slightly later (O'Brien 1990, 38 and *pers. comm.*). From then onwards, in Roman Britain extended inhumation became firmly established, becoming predominant in the fourth century, and some archaeologists have logically linked the emergence of extended inhumation burials in Ireland with influences from there, possibly resulting in a gradual introduction of this rite from early in the

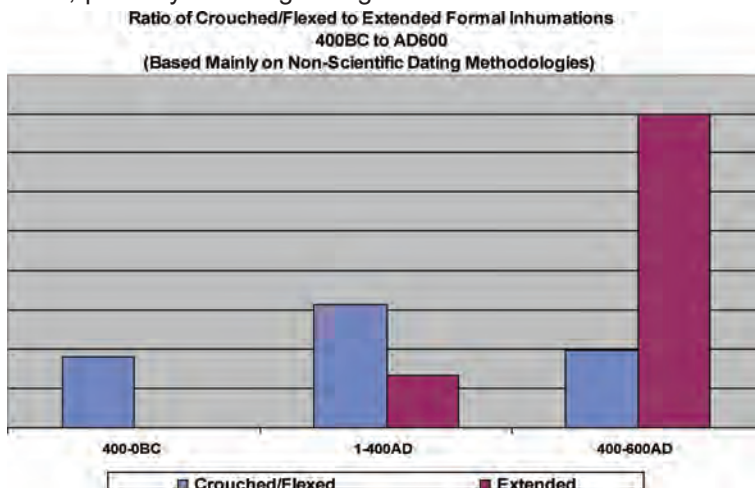


Fig 1. This chart attempts to view developments chronologically and represent the relative prevalence of formal crouched/flexed and extended inhumation at 34 of the most securely dated burial sites used between 400BC and AD600.

fourth century onwards (O'Brien forthcoming).

As we have already seen, unlike cremation and crouched inhumation, apart from bog bodies there is no clear evidence for the rite of extended inhumation in Ireland during the last millennium BC. Consequently, at present there appears to be little doubt that Christian extended inhumation as practiced in Ireland was, as in Britain, most immediately derived from Roman customs. From this project's perspective the key questions therefore appear to be as follows: to what extent did the rise to dominance of extended inhumation in Ireland actually run parallel with developments in Britain, and how likely is it that some of the

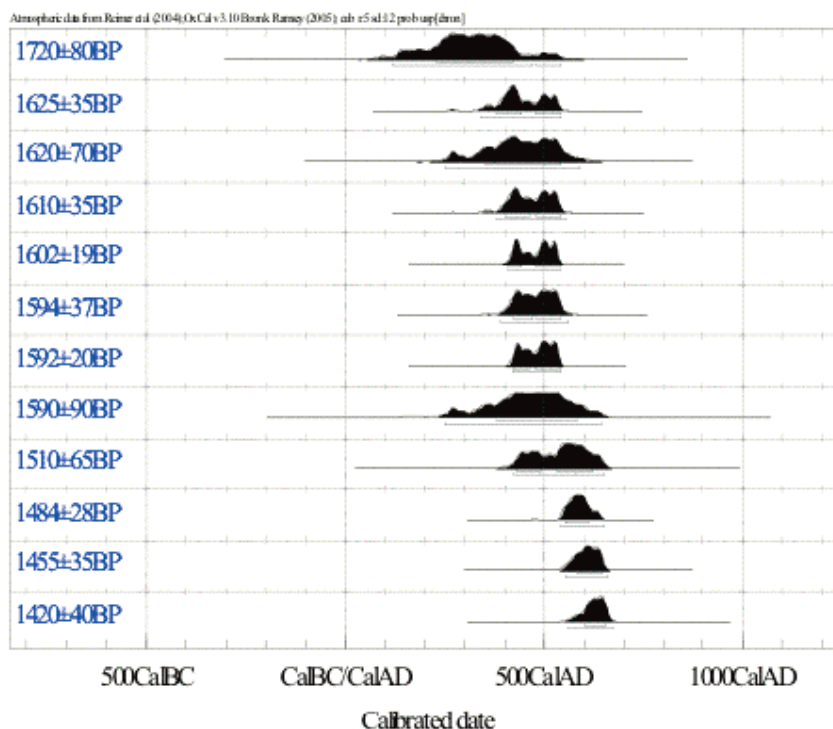


Fig. 2. OxCal graph of radiocarbon determinations derived from samples of human bone from formal extended inhumations at (from top) Claristown 2 (I Russell ACS Ltd. pers. comm.); Ballykeel South (Cahill 1989 and pers. comm.); Pollacorragune (Lanting & Brindley 1998); Greenhills (Keeley 1991); Kiltullagh (Robinson 2000); Peterstown (Murphy 1999); Ballymacaward (O'Brien 1999); Belladoan (Hedges et al. 1993); Ninch (Sweetman 1983); Mount Gamble (E O'Donovan, Margaret Gowen & Co. Limited pers. comm.); Cooleeshalmore (Neary 2003); Ardnagross (Hedges et al. 1996). Graph reproduced with the kind permission of Dr Bronk Ramsey (Bronk Ramsey 1995, 2001).

extended burials previously assigned to the Irish Iron Age on account of 'non-Christian' practices (e.g. oriented with head at North or the presence of grave artefacts) actually belong to the period?

Although the above chart appears to reflect a somewhat similar increase in extended inhumation c. 1–400AD to that experienced in Britain, it might be quite misleading. This is because the burials it represents have been dated by a variety of methods including typology of associated artefacts, stratigraphic relationship to datable material, distinctive mortuary practices (e.g. 'overtly pagan' ones), and radiocarbon determinations from both wood and human bone. Radiocarbon results and artefacts of this period seldom provide a date tighter than to within a couple of centuries; for this reason, individual burials associated with them were as part of this exercise of necessity often distributed across more than one of the sub-periods in the chart according to estimated probability. As this could have a distorting 'levelling' effect, it was decided to focus instead on radiocarbon results derived solely from human bone samples from dry-land⁷ 'formal extended inhumations' (articulated bodies laid out in a grave deliberately created for that purpose). Figure 2 shows results for twelve individual burials that have, in the main, been published elsewhere; others with similar date ranges centring after c. 1600BP are known but are, as yet, unpublished.

The estimations from human bone above, like those from charcoal and artefact typology, have broad date ranges. They have, however, several distinct advantages: they are most certainly directly related to the date when the individual died, and they do not have any possible 'old wood effect' or 'artefact heirloom' factors which could make burials appear earlier by several centuries (McGarry 2005). That being the case, the most significant findings are that, while it certainly remains statistically possible that several of the extended inhumations listed in Fig. 2 are from before the fifth century AD, only that from Claristown 2 (Russell, I. 2002 and pers. comm.) has greater than a low probability of being so. OxCal currently calibrates the date range for this Claristown burial at 120–540 cal AD @ 95.4% (and 120–470 cal AD @ 90.2%). It is regrettable that the burial does not have a tighter date range but, as it stands, there appears to be a moderate possibility that the burial actually dates from later than c. 400AD.

Unlike the early extended inhumation burial sites at Bray and Rath of the Synods (Raftery 1994, 194-5, 212. O'Brien 1990, 38-9), the Claristown site has not produced Roman artefacts to suggest that this central burial might be that of a non-native or person otherwise exposed to considerable contact with the

⁷ The female and infant bog bodies from Derrymaquirk were reported to have been found in a 'dug grave' (O Floinn 1995, 140).

Roman world. Instead, the Claristown burial (Pl. 5 and Fig. 3) has many characteristics shared by extended inhumations of the fifth century and later: absence of grave goods, oriented W—E in a stone-lined grave, and buried within a circular enclosure that later became a focus for other burials. The doubt surrounding the true date of the Claristown burial encourages two main, but quite different, interpretations of the timing and causes of the change to extended inhumation in Ireland.

The first of these is based on the assumption that, in line with the high probability indicated by the radiocarbon result, the man from Claristown actually dates from before the fifth century. There seems to be no clear reason to dismiss the possibility that he may have been an early Christian from considerably before the time of Palladius who, according to Prosper of Aquitaine, was sent in



Pl. 5. View from the east of the extended inhumation of an adult male at Claristown. Photograph and plan courtesy and © of Ian Russell, ACS Limited.

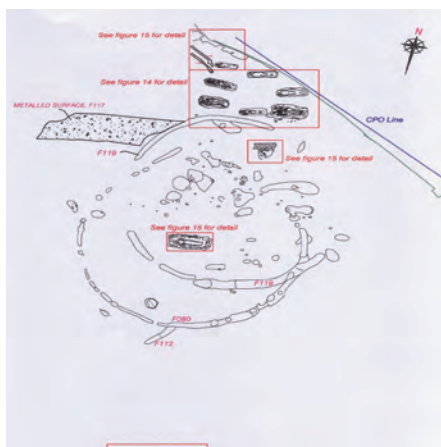


Fig 3. Site plan of Claristown, Co. Meath showing the extended inhumation placed centrally within the later ringditch.

431AD to be the bishop of Christians already present in Ireland (Charles-Edwards 2000, 204-5). How the presence of Christians before the fifth century might be explained must be largely a matter for another day but it would appear not unreasonable that some Irish had been converted while visiting, raiding or living in Britain or some British Christians had come to live in Ireland, perhaps as marriage partners, kin of natives, or as slaves (De Paor 1996, 34-5). That Claristown should be in Meath, where we have crouched burial evidence that could suggest similar earlier links with Britain, probably makes this even more plausible. There must, however, be a caveat that, in the same way that a

modern burial with Christian characteristics is not a conclusive indicator that the deceased was a Christian, it remains quite possible that Roman or Christian burial practices could have been adopted by Iron Age, or later (O'Brien forthcoming), people that did not share the same beliefs themselves. Nevertheless, this acceptance of an early date for the Claristown burial not only provides a more rationally-explicable lengthier period for the rise to dominance of extended inhumation in Ireland, but also creates the possibility that other less-securely dated extended inhumations may belong to the Iron Age proper after all. The second interpretation, however, would be that the radiocarbon result is so out of line with all other known dates from extended inhumations that we should assume that in this case the lower probability date range during the fifth or even the sixth century is the correct one. A later date would also be in agreement with results from human bone produced by other burials from outside the ringditch at Claristown which range from the fifth to the middle of the seventh centuries (I Russell pers. comm.).⁸ This assumption, combined with the other evidence listed in Fig. 2, arguably leaves us in a position whereby we should conclude not only that, unlike Britain, extended inhumation did not emerge to any significant extent before the fifth century AD, but also that it also became dominant over any other visible funerary rite during the course of that century throughout Ireland (because apart from Furness there are extremely few cremation burials with dating evidence for the fifth century or later and in each case their radiocarbon date ranges could also make them earlier). We could try to explain this phenomenon by accepting that Christianity, or at least the Romano-Christian burial custom, spread very swiftly once it reached Ireland, but can we reconcile such rapid adoption with views on the depth and antiquity of indigenous Irish Iron Age religious beliefs and traditions (e.g. De Paor 1996, 23-37)?

The second interpretation does seem the less satisfactory and most untidy of the two but the Claristown radiocarbon result is isolated and very unusual compared to the many other results that argue for acceptance of this very scenario. However, it would seem most sensible to reserve judgement on Claristown until further radiocarbon determinations emerge from elsewhere either to support an early date or to make it more unlikely. We will probably also have to wait until then to clarify the timing of the undoubtedly strong Roman influence on, or legacy to, Irish extended inhumation and to decide what view to take on the apparently indigenous 'un-Christian' or 'overtly pagan' extended inhumations previously assigned to the Iron Age (e.g. Rynne 1975).

Burial 3: Beta-185350; 1480±40BP: OxCal 440—660 cal AD.

Burial 6: Beta-185351; 1540±60BP: OxCal 400—640 cal AD.

Conclusions

This exercise has, of course, involved a simplification of complex and very incomplete evidence for Irish mortuary practices during late prehistory. Even if we halve the 'guesstimate' of population level of about 500,000 during the period (Cooney & Grogan 1999, 218) to 250,000, and give each a very generous life expectancy of about 40 years, then roughly 10 million people should have died during the period. To put matters in perspective, at the moment the entire corpus of evidence known from 1000BC to 600AD probably represents the bones of less than 1,000 securely-dated individuals from less than 150 sites. Hopefully it will be possible to identify patterns from these sites that allow us to include others that have hitherto been less securely dated but, until this can be done convincingly or we have further new evidence, we run the risk of identifying artificial trends based on limited and unrepresentative evidence. Nevertheless, some patterns and developments do tentatively suggest themselves.

It would be ideal to have many other securely-dated cremations from c. 800—400BC but the small quantity currently known is neither surprising nor a cause for immediate concern. It is quite possible that some cremations known to be somehow associated with coarseware pottery, glass beads or Dowris-type artefacts from earlier excavations are actually from this period but, as matters stand, none of the cremations that have been recently dated securely to this period were demonstrably associated with any artefacts other than the largely earthen features they were placed in. A particular difficulty in differentiating burials of this period from earlier ones is that coarseware pottery, when present, is generally not amenable to close typological dating. Another hindrance is that the degree of deliberate or inadvertent fragmentation or crushing of cremated bone, in contexts that have been radiocarbon-dated to this period, too often makes visual species identification all but impossible. We must also take into account the fact that radiocarbon dating has only recently become common, and that it is only during the past decade that new techniques have facilitated the processing of cremated human bone rather than associated organic material for this purpose (Lanting and Brindley 1998). Despite this, radiocarbon dating during the past two decades has greatly increased the quantity of Irish cremations securely-dated to late prehistory, and patterns suggest that it is very likely that additional cremations from 800—400BC will emerge from future excavations and research.

Elsewhere, there is a very small number of unburnt skull bones from wetland sites from c. 1000BC onwards, possibly continuing into the Early Iron Age, but these may represent ancestral relics, a trophy-taking 'head cult', or some other

active or passive ritual-related behaviour rather than 'burials' as we would generally understand them.

Instead, it appears at the moment that, bog bodies apart, cremation was the only formal burial rite on the island from about 1000BC until crouched inhumations emerged, at a small number of high status or ritual sites in the Meath region in particular, during the second or first century BC. These could indicate contacts between people there and others from some regions of Britain where this rite was also practiced (Whimster 1981, 190-6) and, initially at least, would probably have been regarded locally as an exotic or alien way of dealing with the needs of the deceased and of the mourners.

It would appear that cremation remained the dominant adult mortuary rite in Ireland (including Meath) from before 1000BC until extended inhumation succeeded it because there is very little to suggest that crouched inhumation lasted long enough, or was practiced over a wide enough geographical area, to have been an intermediate rite. The relatively low archaeological visibility of simple and often very fragmented cremations makes it difficult at present to estimate when it became a minority rite but, although the radiocarbon evidence for cremation from the fourth century is currently insufficient to allow full confidence in its widespread survival during that time, there is little to suggest that extended inhumation became established to any significant extent in Ireland before around the time of end of the Roman occupation in Britain. This delay of approximately a century since it had become dominant in Britain could be due to an interruption or weakening of relationships, or because at an insular level those relationships were never of the right type or actually widespread or strong enough, or perhaps for a variety of other reasons. Whether the man from Claristown is an aberration, or the tip of an iceberg, in this respect remains to be seen.

The apparently sudden change to extended inhumation from the native cremation rite that had dominated for perhaps two thousand years or longer is arguably the most widespread and uniform change ever to have taken place in Irish burial practices. However, it remains possible that formal burial of any variety was actually quite unusual until the relatively highly visible extended inhumations emerged, or that there were other mortuary practices that continued into the fifth century and later that now leave few detectable traces of human bone, and consequently some possibility exists that the rise to dominance of extended inhumation was not as dramatic or sudden as it now appears.

This brings us to the bodies we have not yet found. Excarnation is always a

strong candidate (Parker Pearson 1999, 49, 131, 151), and cannibalism should not be ruled out (Taylor 2002 *passim*) just because it is currently generally regarded as somewhat taboo and repulsive, but one weakness common to both of these explanations is that insufficient human bones have been found in any type of late prehistoric context, let alone human bone with butchering or gnawing marks. Ireland's acidic soils are certainly responsible for some of the lacuna but, because burials appear to have been protected only very rarely by slabs or stones (and possibly only ever accompanied by pottery vessels prior to the Iron Age), empty graves or burial pits are not generally recognisable and it is therefore difficult to estimate how many burials have succumbed to adverse chemistry. One mortuary practice that is guaranteed to render burials invisible other than in exceptional circumstances is one that we are certain they employed: simple unaccompanied token pit cremations that often produce highly fragmented bone. It is regrettable that viable samples from many of this burial type are still not processed for radiocarbon dating because they could help to answer many important questions about late prehistoric Ireland.

As matters stand there is very strong evidence for continuity of indigenous burial practices throughout the last millennium BC and until some time towards the middle of the following one but, as we have seen, the crouched inhumations found in Meath would also appear to represent at least a small degree of change resulting from external relationships during the Iron Age, most probably with Britain. Contacts with Britain during that period are long known from artefacts, including those deposited with cremations, but these could always have been interpreted as resulting from trading or, in the case of late Roman material in particular, from historically-attested raiding or Irish residents there. Likewise, the exotic burials at Bray, Stoneyford and Lambay are generally viewed as those of Roman traders or isolated British refugees and, as such, perhaps not indicative of deeper relationships. Exotic crouched burials occurring at the important centres of Knowth and Tara, however, arguably signify influential political, religious or blood relationships between important people on both sides of the Irish Sea around the turn of the first millennium AD, a time when British tribes were coming under increasing pressure from the might of the Roman Empire, and it will be interesting to see if they are found elsewhere in Ireland.

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Dress, ornament and bodily identities in early medieval Ireland: An archaeology of personhood.

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Introduction

Archaeological approaches to identity in the past are relatively recent, but the topic is increasingly receiving attention, with issues of identity forming a growing field of study in early medieval archaeology. Archaeologists argue that it is possible to consider issues such as gender, status, age, and perceptions of identity and its possible subversion, through the remains of material culture (e.g. Gilchrist 1999). Key points in the debate include the concepts of fluidity and complexity of identities, which are seen as changing over the course of life (e.g. Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Meskell & Preucel 2004; Gilchrist 2004). The archaeology of personhood – the achievement and interpretation of being a person (Fowler 2004) – is also relevant to issues of identity, particularly in relation to the tensions and interaction between the individual person and the norms and perceptions of their society.

Approaching identity in early medieval Ireland through the archaeological evidence is a relatively new field. To date, historians using textual evidence have focused primarily on high-status individuals and the role of women (e.g. Ó Corráin 1995; Bitel 1996). Archaeological approaches have similarly tended to emphasise issues of status, with a focus on settlement patterns, and royal sites in particular (e.g. Warner 1988, 1994; Stout 1997; Newman 1998), but also with some more recent work on identifying low-status settlement sites (e.g. Fredengren 2002; Boyle 2004). However, there has been little study of how individuals or social groups expressed their identity through the presentation of the body and the self. While there have been some studies of dress styles and particular types of ornament (Deevy 1998; Dunlevy 1999; Whitfield 2001 & 2004), there has been little co-ordinated work on how costume and bodily presentation as a whole was used to express identity/identities in the period. Religious identity has been considered in looking at whether particular burials represent pagans or Christians (O'Brien 1992), but there is much more which can be learned from mortuary practices concerning how identity was presented in death, and how the use and treatment of the body in life, as evidenced in the skeleton, may reflect issues of activities and health which would have formed part of the identity of the living person, and which may also be related to gender

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or status identity.

Definitions

To begin with, let me briefly define the terms used in my research project. Chris Fowler (2004, 7) has defined personhood as

“the condition or state of being a person, as it is understood in any specific context. ... a condition that involves constant change, and key transformations to the person occur throughout life and death ... attained and maintained through relationships not only with other human beings but with things, places, animals and the spiritual features of the cosmos ...”

Much of the archaeological work on personhood to date has focused on prehistory, but the concept can equally be considered in relation to the early medieval period. I see it as an overarching term, whose elements of change and transformation, and relationship to material objects, make it particularly relevant to my examination of how identities could be expressed through dress and the body.

Identity, in turn, is a concept open to multiple interpretations and definitions. It can be defined as “the way(s) in which a person is, or wishes to be, known by certain others” (Cohen 1993, 195). Thus it can be something which is generated internally, within the person, but it can also be assigned by others as a label or means of categorisation. We might make a distinction between personal and social identities, or see both processes being involved, perhaps simultaneously. It is increasingly suggested in the literature on identity that it is less a fixed entity than “a more mutable, fluid set of identifications that are open to re-evaluation and reflexivity” (Meskell & Preucel 2004, 122). On the other hand, Brubaker and Cooper question why “what is routinely characterized as multiple, fragmented, and fluid should be conceptualized as “identity” at all” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, 6). To address what they perceive as the problematic use of identity as an analytical concept, being “riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations”, they suggest the use of other terms such as “identification”, “categorization” and “self-understanding”, “commonality” and “connectedness” (ibid., 34, 14-21). Some recent work on identity (e.g. Craib 1998) is also influenced by psychoanalysis, and its strong emphasis on internal processes could be difficult to apply to the early medieval period. In seeking to understand what was perceived as identity in early medieval Ireland, and how it was expressed through bodily performance, therefore, it will be necessary to tease out these issues of terminology and understanding of what is identity.

A further nuance is that I am approaching identity through its expression on or by the body. The body has become a focus of sociology within the past decade or so, with increasing emphasis on how it is perceived, presented and interpreted (e.g. Turner 1991; Shilling 2003, 2005). This focus on bodily identity and embodied personhood may provide a useful theoretical approach for my research. However, much of the recent work is very strongly centred on modern experiences of the body, and I will need to consider the extent to which such modern and post-modern theory can be extrapolated back to early medieval Ireland. Indeed, this caveat applies to any post-Renaissance or Enlightenment philosophy, including Descartes' famous distinction between body and mind as the seat of the self. We must strip away such modern understandings and consider the specific cultural context and contemporary perception of identity in the past (Meskell 2001). Towards this end, the work of Norbert Elias and Mikhail Bakhtin (Elias 1978; Bakhtin 1984) may provide useful routes into understanding the early medieval body. This is not, however, a case of looking for a 'natural' body, predating the 'cultural' changes of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The body, and expectations about it, are always socialised, and changing the body has a long history (Evans 2002, 2). In this respect, Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1977) will also be potentially useful.

Finally, I am using dress in the sense of "an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings" (Eicher & Roach-Higgins 1992, 15). This includes not only clothing, accessories and ornaments, but also how hair and skin and the body in general are treated. While the vocabulary of modern fashion may seem anachronistic in the context of early medieval Ireland, elements of the theoretical discourse are worth pursuing. For example, did dress in that period represent a boundary, "meant to trace a neat line between self and other" or a margin, which "connects the individual to other bodies, ... links the biological entity to the social ensemble and the private to the public" (Cavallaro & Warwick 1998, xvii). In both cases, dress is seen as a system of communication, which, although it lies on the surface of the body, may express "submerged dimensions of experience" (ibid., xxiii). Dress and ornament are therefore forms of material culture, archaeological objects which "can be mobilised and deployed in identity struggles" (Meskell 2001, 189). While Meskell's remark is made in the context of modern perceptions, and constructions, of identity, perhaps it might equally be applied to earlier time periods. Can we see identity being created, and performed, using dress, accessories and body modifications? In this regard, Goffman's work on the presentation of the self (Goffman 1971), particularly his metaphor of people acting differently before different audiences, helps to suggest

how costume and bodily presentation help people to enter into a part and convincingly play a particular role.

Early Medieval Ireland

As already noted, identity can be seen as a composite of different aspects, which may change over the course of a person's life, for example with age, marital or parental status, or religious affiliation. I want to look at some of these aspects in the context of how we might expect to find them expressed and experienced in early medieval Ireland. An important point to keep in mind is that identity would not have been a static construct over the period from 400 to 1200 AD. These centuries saw religious change in Ireland, with the conversion to Christianity, and also potential ethnic changes involving contacts with peoples such as the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. If identity is seen as a badge used to associate oneself with others, or to distinguish oneself from them, can we see people in early medieval Ireland reacting to such socio-political changes through the medium of bodily expressing their identity? Some initial ideas and questions in this regard are outlined below; while different aspects of identity are set out separately, in reality they may have been intermingled in various ways, which will have to be taken into consideration in assessing the evidence

Ethnicity

There are broad issues here about what is 'ethnic' identity, not least the danger of using anachronistic labels. Ideas of an Irish 'nation' in the early medieval period are largely the product of nineteenth and twentieth-century nationalistic interpretations. But was there really a single, unified 'Irish' identity at this time, or was group identity in early medieval Ireland located in a sense of belonging to a much smaller group, such as the tuath or the kin-group? While Irish origin myths were written down at this time, can we assume that all people in early medieval Ireland were aware of such political constructs, let alone in agreement with them? Would people with a lower status or role in society have felt encompassed by such myths and identities, or were these constructed for, and used by, those of a more exalted rank or role? In any event, ethnicity is not simply a construction relating to nationalism, although that may be the prime modern manifestation. Archaeologists have also used 'ethnicity' in respect of the relationship between the group and the individual (Meskell 2001, 189). In such a usage, ethnicity in early medieval Ireland might encompass a variety of levels, including the relationship between the individual's sense of identity and that of the wider group; possible expression of membership of a particular kin-group through material culture, as bodily identity/representation; and whether we can see an 'ethnic' identity at the level of the tuath or larger geo-political regions.

Looking for evidence of ethnicity in dress also implies seeking outside influences, from contacts with such peoples as Romano-Britons, Anglo-Saxons or Scandinavians. These could have had either ephemeral or more lasting effects on identity and the representation of personhood in Ireland; they might also be geographically restricted to particular parts of the country. It would be interesting to see the extent of such influences, and consider whether they represent a direct influx of people, either through migration or marriage alliances (Connolly 2005, 225-6), or the wider influence of ideas. If such contacts contributed to the composition and writing down of origin myths, does this represent a new sense of identity being formed in opposition to a recognised, different 'Other'? While this might be seen as an issue of group identity, can we find any evidence of how it might have impacted on personhood?

Religion

Religion may have formed an important aspect of identity in the early medieval period, particularly during the conversion period when pagans and Christians co-existed. The eighth-century pagan burials discovered in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry (Connolly et al 2005, 174) suggest a long survival of non-Christian identity, which may be replicated elsewhere. In contrast to the popular perception of Patrick rapidly converting the entire country in the fifth century AD, such late pagan burials, taken with evidence for Christian concern over such survivals, as shown in the writings of Muirchú and Tírechán (O'Brien 1992, 133-5), present quite a different picture of early medieval Ireland which needs to be considered in terms of the implications for personhood and identity. Did conversion make a significant, recognisable impact on personhood, adding a new layer or facet, or replacing some existing elements? Did any change in identity take some generations to become widespread, or was it most noticeable among recent converts? If identity is regarded as, in part, a factor which expresses unity or shared experience against others, perhaps the expression of a pagan or Christian identity might have been a particularly important element within a person's sense of self during the conversion period. Depending on how influential particular converts were, this could influence or even form the broader society's perceptions, and potentially the treatment of those who did not comply with such norms. Would religious identity have faded in importance once the majority of the population was Christian, only perhaps to surface again in the Viking period with the arrival of a new pagan element in Ireland?

Christian teachings, including imagery of the body of Christ, the ideology of the immortal soul, and views on the place of women, and on clerical celibacy, or movements such as the *Céli Dé*, may also have impacted on identity. Medieval

church practices, including emphasis on bodily mortification, fasting and self-flagellation as “the external manifestation of internal worth” (Cavallaro & Warwick 1998, 11), may be worth pursuing in this regard. Can we look at contemporary issues within the early medieval church in Ireland, such as sin, flesh/body, sex, etc., and see how they are treated both in writings such as the penitentials, laws, saints’ lives and, perhaps, in the material evidence? There is also the issue of the treatment of the body in death – does the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body have implications for the wider perception of the early medieval body? If there is resistance to Christian burial, perhaps through non-compliance with the ritual, does this imply the possibility of resistance in living bodies too?

Gender

Roberta Gilchrist has defined gender identity as “the private, individual experience of gender, which is also conveyed outwardly through physical and material expressions”, and gender roles as “the activities and statuses that are associated with specific genders in each society” (Gilchrist 1999, xv). These two definitions remind us that gender is not a biological definition but one ascribed by society (Meskell 1996), which also prescribes appropriate activities and roles associated with each gender which it recognises. Status is then assigned to people of each gender, based on biological notions or on the roles deemed appropriate for particular genders in particular circumstances. Archaeological, historical, literary or other evidence may tell us about gender roles in early medieval Ireland, but this still may not give us access to what individual people thought about their own gender identity. However, given Gilchrist’s contention that private gender identity can be conveyed “through physical and material expressions”, then material remains may provide clues to such individual experience and expression of identity. It would be interesting to pursue this avenue of exploration, looking at the evidence from early medieval Ireland of how people may have expressed their gender through their dress and bodily self-representation.

Much has been written about the role and place of women in early medieval Ireland (e.g. Ó Cróinín 1995, 125-34; Ó Corráin 1978, 1995; Bitel 1996). This is, of course, only one aspect of gender, and it assumes that the social position of men is the norm. What can we see of the representation of gender in early medieval Ireland, and what questions might we ask – for example, does the conversion to Christianity raise any issues in this regard? It has been suggested, for example, that portrayals of strong women in sagas such as the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* suggest a different view of women existed in pre-Christian times. Does this have implications for personhood and the portrayal of gender identity in

terms of how women expressed themselves or were permitted to do so? Have we any representations of women from the period which are not subject to the filtering effect of Christian writers or artists?

Socially-ascribed identities might be found in written descriptions of how male and female roles were defined and how people of these perceived genders were expected to act and dress. There are difficulties in taking at face value the scenario as presented in many of these texts, which are largely normative and prescriptive; however, they may contain nuggets of truth, from which we may begin to reconstruct how people and society (or at least those involved in composing or writing down texts such as the laws) viewed issues of gender and identity. The lives of the saints may offer insights into how some individuals, at least, responded to society's perceptions and prescriptions and displayed their own ideas of gender. It has been noted that some medieval holy women used asceticism to create a status outside of that allowed by contemporary ideology (Frank 1991, 47); are there examples of early Irish saints taking on a bodily identity/role which transcended the limitations of their secular counterparts, suggesting that people had internalised senses of gender identity which might be expressed in particular circumstances?

Status/social rank

Our view of early medieval Ireland is coloured by documents such as law tracts, which tell of a strongly hierarchical society governed by a system of laws and contracts, the dissolution of which would bring about chaos (Kelly 1998, 159). The law tracts also suggest that a strict hierarchy of persons existed, but in reality, were people conscious of having a fixed status or role, or was there scope for movement? To what extent, if any, was status the defining element of identity: was it more important than kin-group, for example, or religious affiliation? How did people's individual identity relate to their broader social identity?

Can we see different social status in how the self was presented; for example, did slaves and the semi-free have different self-images, different opportunities for self-presentation owing to their low status? At the other end of the social scale, the concept of sacral kingship involved the idea of the *flathemon*, or justice of the king: that the justice and prosperity of the people and the *tuath* depended on the right conduct of the king, whose body had to be unblemished (Kelly 1998, 18-19) – a parallel with the idea that the body of an African king produces “the fertility of the tribe” (Frank 1991, 51). To what extent did the Christianization of kingship from the seventh century onwards change such views of certain bodies as incorporating and representing not just the individual but also the collective entity? Given the kin-group's responsibility for and power over its members,

does this have implications for how an individual person's body might be viewed – in terms of the greater good of the kin-group, for example, or in terms of relationships with others?

Social role

A person's identity may also be linked to their role in society. An area I particularly want to look at in this regard is the extent to which the manufacture of clothing was a factor in identity. If, as Hodkinson suggests, this was a centralised craft with possible "areas of specialisation and local centres of cloth production" (Hodkinson 1987, 49), would this give a particular status to the task, and thus contribute to some people's sense of identity? What does it do to a sense of identity to be the person making clothes for a king, or to see your handiwork used by others in portraying their identity? Texts suggest that "the woman who embroiders earns more profit even than queens" (Kelly 1998, 78); does this mean that special decoration of clothes was a high status prerogative, or a particularly specialised and valued craft? More generally, were those who made the clothes able to make decisions about their own appearance, regardless of constraints which others might have sought to impose on them? There is a strong overlap between issues of social role and gender; in many societies, the manufacture of clothes is seen as women's work. But such stereotypical assumptions can be problematic, and it will be important not just to assume, for example, that spindle whorls automatically mean women were present or acting in a particular way. Simply "rendering male and female activities visible, or at least a version of them based on our assumptions regarding the sexual division of labour" (Gilchrist 1999, 40-1), will not bring us any closer to actual ideas of identity and personhood. However, we cannot talk about dress and identity without some consideration of how, and by whom, that dress (in its widest sense of clothing and other accessories) is made and provided.

Age

Age is one of the aspects of identity which necessarily changes over the course of life. I want to look at two ends of the spectrum in particular – childhood and old age – but there may also be intermediate stages/transitions which can be examined. Can we trace a coming-of-age, a transition to adulthood, in any form (bearing in mind that modern age groups or stages may not be applicable)? An issue in relation to children in particular is whether they were active in self-representation, or was their personhood and identity largely determined for them by others? What do written or pictorial representations of children from early medieval Ireland tell us about their identity? Do children's burials offer evidence about possible different treatment of the body before adulthood?

At the other end of the age spectrum, how was old age defined, and viewed, in early medieval Ireland? Would it be too centred in modern conceptions of ageing, ageism and defiance of age to consider whether people in early medieval Ireland were concerned about the appearance of age – or was age a desirable and valued element of identity? Do we have representations of the appearance, and acceptance, of older bodies? Were elders presented or dressed differently from younger people – and if so, was this a standard, cross-society pattern or did it differ according to other elements of identity, such as status, gender or social role? Are older people treated differently in the presentation of the body in the grave, and can we see skeletal evidence which might how suggest the physical treatment of the body over a lifetime may have impacted on their identity?

Health

We also shouldn't forget the diversity of human bodies, and the implications of particular disabilities and illnesses. Evans (2002, 3) speaks of “the obviously different material world which the sick, the disabled, the overweight and the physically frail inhabit”. While the reference is to the modern world, did the body's physical limitations impact on participation in early medieval Irish society; how do views of a limited or less-able body impinge on identity, social standing and role? This also overlaps with age, with the very young and the old generally seen as less able or weaker. But the physical limitations of childhood and old age can be experienced by all people, so in this sense, age might be seen as a temporary ‘handicap’ or impediment affecting the presentation of identity. In terms of the treatment of ability and illness across different social ranks, the law tracts claim that a king must “have a perfect body, free from blemish or disability”, but also state more generally that any person's standing under the law could be limited by physical disabilities (Kelly 1998, 19, 94-5). In terms of general health, osteological evidence may indicate whether poor diet, hard physical work and/or degenerative illness are a feature of particular people or groups in society; if so, what does this tell us about how such people perceived themselves, or were perceived, and treated, by others?

Material and methodology

In applying these theoretical approaches to early medieval Ireland, I will be using a range of material drawn from archaeology, history and early Irish literature to discover what people wore and how they presented the body, and to consider how this may have expressed their view(s) of identity. As already noted, the complexity of identity means it is unlikely to have been presented simply, or in unchanging fashion. Instead, both the evidence itself and the context from which

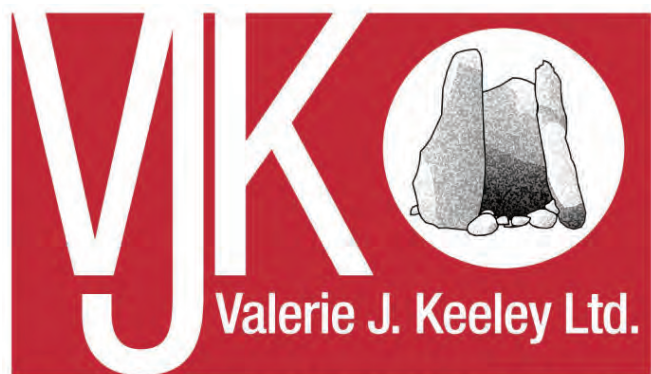
it comes will have to be carefully examined to tease out potential meanings and interpretations.

The archaeological material takes a number of forms. Firstly, osteological evidence may tell us about people's diet, health, disability or activities in life, which may have impacted on, or contributed to, their sense of identity. Taken with determinations of age and biological sex, this type of evidence from bones should contribute to considering some of the aspects of identity referred to above, and may show patterns of potential shared or socially determined identity. If we argue that identity contributes to the creation of bodily materiality (cf. Sofaer 2006, 85), then potentially we can read back from the body what that identity may have been. As well as the bones, burials may also provide other useful evidence. While grave goods are generally absent from early medieval Ireland, any differential treatment of corpses by the living, such as in the form and location of the grave, or the placement of the body, may be informative about perceived/ascribed identity, particularly when taken in context with any osteological indications of difference. Secondly, the depiction of people in sculpture, metalwork and manuscripts, showing their dress, hairstyles, stance and gestures, may provide information about the presentation of the body, indicating aspects such as status, role or gender identity. Such images, however, may be strongly influenced by artistic or iconographic conventions. They may also not be representative of the full range of people in early medieval Ireland, perhaps concentrating largely on portraying kings, clerics, saints or Biblical characters. It will be interesting to see if there are particular groups or types of people who are not represented, or primarily shown in the form of stereotypical norms, and to consider the implications of this for identity issues; one area that comes to mind is whether there are many representations of women and children, other than the Virgin and Child. Thirdly, I will be looking at material evidence of dress (textiles, clothes, shoes, headgear, etc.) and ornaments (brooches, pins, combs, etc.), and their inherent meanings. Consideration will also be given to how people made, wore and discarded these items, which may help to elaborate their meanings and the ways in which they were used to express identity.

I will also be examining early medieval written sources, including law tracts, annals, sagas and hagiography, for references to identity and how it was expressed through the body. These may include descriptions of clothing, accessories or bodily adornment or treatment, and references to deportment and behaviour, as well as concepts of what was deemed appropriate for particular people or groups of people. Account will have to be taken of the normative or fictional characteristics of some of these texts, as well as the

extent to which such descriptions may be deliberately engineered for particular purposes, rather than reflecting a true picture of what people wore. Nevertheless, such deliberate constructions in themselves may have a lot to say about how identity was perceived and performed through dress and the body.

A final caveat is necessary: in using modern theories of identity and the body, there may be a tendency to fit the early medieval evidence to a set pattern of categories and interpretations. To do so would be to miss potential insights into possible fundamental differences between experiences of identity in early medieval Ireland and the present day. As with the example of normative texts noted above, it may turn out to be the apparent anomalies, the inexplicable (to us) strangeness of early medieval Ireland, that ultimately prove to be most informative about bodily identities and personhood.



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Ireland's Largest Cluster of Wedge Tombs- a matter of opinion or fact?

Connie Gorman & Donna Gilligan

Introduction

The Burren, County Clare is undoubtedly one of the most unusual landscapes in Ireland. Its geomorphology consists of an extensive expanse of karst limestone pavement, and there is no other area in Ireland where exposed rock cover dominates so much of the landscape. Such a unique environment would also have been very distinct in the past. The imprint of prehistoric human occupation is evident throughout this landscape, and most especially in the several large complexes of spectacular funerary monuments within it. Over eighty megalithic monuments are recorded within the landscape, and the Burren has been described by Tim Robinson as resembling 'one vast memorial to bygone cultures'. The often dramatic topography of the Burren is characterised by high quality grassland in the valleys, interrupted by mountainous areas of exposed limestone. This karst topography provides vast quantities of readily accessible limestone slabs, which have been used extensively for the construction of monuments throughout the landscape.

The following report is based on the survey and research of an archaeological complex upon a hilltop ridge that extends between the townlands of Parknabinnia and Leana in the South-East of the Burren. The survey was undertaken during the field-school of the NUIG Department of Archaeology's M.A in Landscape Archaeology programme in Spring 2006. Our initial aim was to carry out a general landscape study of an area of which we had no previous knowledge. While roughly thirty sites of archaeological significance were previously recorded within this landscape, our brief survey uncovered an additional fifteen sites. Our research lead us to unveil a landscape used extensively throughout prehistory, for both burial and domestic purposes, where, it appears, both settlement and ritual practices were cleverly and efficiently adapted into the natural environment and topography. The survey highlighted the difficulties inherent in attempting to classify megalithic tomb type and the complexities of the ritual landscapes that exist within the Burren.

Parknabinnia/Leana

The small townlands of Parknabinnia and Leana are situated within the karst landscape approximately five kilometres southwest of Carron and roughly one kilometre north of Killinaboy. Several impressive archaeological features are located upon an elevated and prominent ridge within this landscape. The entire

ridge measures approximately 4 km in length and 1.5km in width , has a northeast-southwest orientation and is rich in archaeological remains. The ridge is divided into two sections - In the South-West lies Roughaun Hill in the townland of Parknabinnia, while the North-Eastern part comprises of a higher summit situated in farmland within the townland of Leana (see fig. 1). For the purpose of this discussion both of these areas combined are referred to as the 'ridge'. It is interesting to note the contrast in terrain that exists in these two sections of the ridge. While the southern section consists mainly of fertile grassland, the northern section comprises largely of bare limestone. The ridge shows remains of activity that have occurred over a long time span, with the majority of archaeological features mostly funerary and domestic sites dating from the Early Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age. These include a variety of archaeological features including wedge tombs, cists, cairns, enclosures, hut sites and prehistoric field systems. Sites previously identified as wedge tombs appear to dominate as the main archaeological monument type. Reasons for this could include the abundance of suitable construction material and perhaps a long-standing tradition for such tomb construction in the Burren. The area around Roughaun Hill has the highest recorded density of wedge tombs in Ireland. However, there also exists several other types of megalithic monuments, namely chambered tombs and unclassified types. A detailed study of Roughaun Hill, undertaken by Carleton Jones (2004) provided us with a good research template for our exploration of the landscape. His extensive work has shed significant light on our understanding of this unique cultural landscape, its monument types, ancient field systems and its use throughout time.

The concept of visibility is an extremely important aspect of this landscape. This is evident by the deliberate use of the elevated prominence of the natural landscape, which provides commanding panoramic views from a number of points along its summit. The great extent to which the ridge has been used, both for ritual and domestic purposes, indicate its importance and significance to prehistoric people. Undoubtedly the ridge is an excellent choice for the prominent display of funerary monuments, as the main monuments placed at the very peak of the ridge have a commanding silhouette against the skyline. Even monuments placed upon the slopes of the ridge have high visibility from other specific points in the landscape. Visibility has always been a subject of discussion in the placement of funerary tombs. Both the height and location of these monuments exude the message of power, territory and connection to the landscape. This seems to have been especially relevant for the monuments upon this ridge. Due to the strategic placement of the monuments it can be assumed that they would all have been clearly visible throughout the surrounding hinterland during the prehistoric period. This is based on the likely assumption that the dominant and

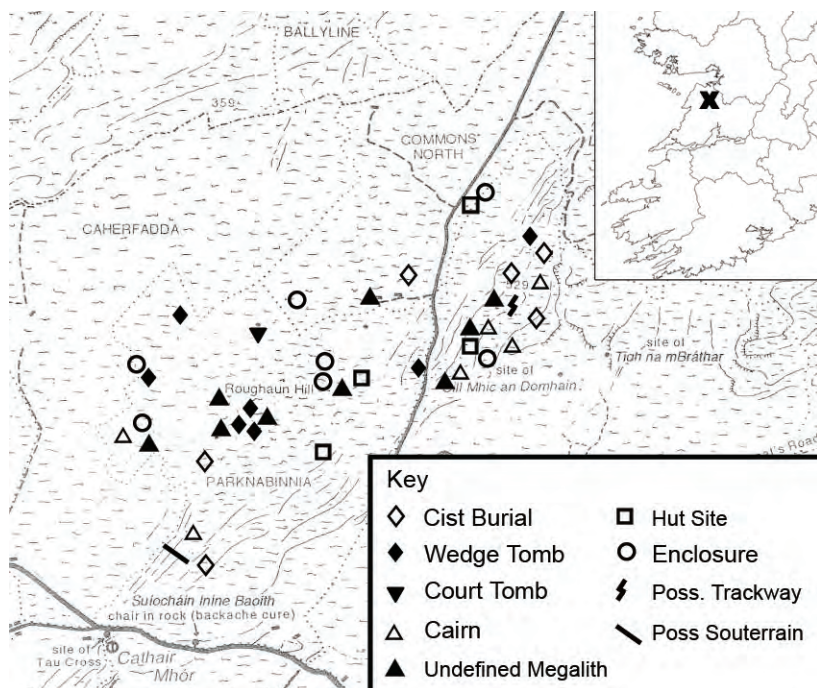


Figure 1: Distribution map of monuments

expanding hazel shrub which obscures views today, would not have been present then. The number of sites and monuments upon the ridge demonstrate a dramatic use of the landscape and clever exploitation of its natural elements. Inter-visibility between key monuments is also an important element in the understanding and interpretation of this landscape. We have noted that all of the prominent individual monuments afford specific views, and that many monuments share a line of sight between them. The principal monuments demonstrating inter-visibility are the three main sites located upon the peak of the ridge, and those located on the adjacent Roughaun hill. Specific wedge tombs are clearly visible from the peak of the ridge and form a line along its spine. The silhouette of the three monuments on the peak is also clearly visible from other specific sites. It is also significant to note that a cairn is visible on the top of the mountain, located approximately five kilometres North-East of the ridge summit.

Our survey noted forty-four sites, just under thirty of which have been previously recorded in the RMP and in Robinson's (1999) and Jones' (2004) recent studies of the Burren. The forty-four sites included mound walls, a possible track

way, seven wedge tombs, nine megalithic structures, six cairns, seven enclosures, three hut sites, six cists, a possible souterrain and a chambered tomb. Out of these, two cists, four megalithic structures, one wedge tomb, two enclosures, one mound, one possible souterrain, one possible track way and remains of a field system were previously unrecorded. The field study revealed a new insight and understanding of certain site types, in particular the identification of cists which had been previously recorded as wedge tombs.

We encountered quite a number of monuments which had previously been recorded as wedge tombs, but that we are now inclined to classify as stone cists. These structures differ significantly from the other wedge tombs, in terms of size, construction, position and orientation. In general terms a cist can be defined as a rectangular or square shaped burial chamber constructed of stone slabs, sometimes placed within a mound or cairn, within which cremation or inhumation burials were placed (Waddell 1990, 16). The sides of the cist frequently supported a flat cover-slab. In contrast the wedge tomb consists of a relatively large wedge or trapezoidal shaped chamber plan which decreases both in height and width from front to rear. The main chamber consists of orthostats and is roofed by one or more large capstones. However, there were apparent discrepancies with several of the monuments recorded as wedge tombs within our survey area. Firstly, there are considerable differences in terms of size. Some were notably smaller than other definitive wedge tombs on the ridge. Secondly these structures are composed of much flatter, thinner slabs compared to the broad sizeable slabs used in the construction of the other wedge tombs. Thirdly, they are composed of a more box-like structure, in contrast to the inwardly sloping chamber of the wedge tomb, and are set slightly sunken within the body of the surrounding mound or cairns, unlike the wedge tombs which are located on top of mounds. Fourthly, they have a much simpler structure, being constructed of four slabs placed in a rectangular shape with a large covering capstone. In contrast, wedge tombs are mainly composed of multiple rows of overlapping orthostats, with additional stones often placed at the entrance and rear. Finally, their orientation also differs markedly from the orientations commonly associated with that of wedge tombs, where a westerly orientation, facing the setting sun, is a common pattern. (Waddell 2000, 96). The monuments in question do not follow this pattern, as we observed them to have a tendency towards an easterly orientation.

Cist or Wedge tomb?

It is interesting to note that while discussing the archaeology of the townland of Parknabinnia, Westropp (1916, 104) mentions two cists which he encounters within the main complex of tombs - "a main group of cists". He also states that

“West (from the N.E. cromlech) is a small wrecked cist six foot square...South West from it is a small cist twelve foot by eight foot, nearly embedded in a mound, and surrounded by seven slabs three foot high” (Westropp 1916, 39). Robinson (1999) has also marked several cists upon his recent map of the Burren. During our fieldwork we noted six cists and feel that further research could unearth even more. As with wedge tombs, cist graves would have been an understandably effective form of burial practice in an area where there is such an abundance of loose, flat, karst limestone slabs available for tomb construction. Clearly the different choice of funerary tombs illustrates the differing traditions or beliefs of the time. In the past, certain researchers have referred to the cists as a simple form of wedge tomb. To confine the majority of megalithic structures in the area to one tomb classification is inappropriate, considering the relatively little amount of field research that has been carried out on the northern part of the ridge. In our field survey, we encountered predominately cist-like structures, and we believe that such contrasting structural differences, in an area with such a high density of one style of tomb is significant. The location of the monuments obviously makes a statement in terms of ritual significance and monument type. For example, the cists located on the northern peak are smaller, of a simpler plan and have less visual impact compared to the larger complex wedge tombs, and yet they are located on the most prominent part of the ridge. In contrast, the wedge tombs are mostly situated within the lowland slopes and hence have poorer visibility. The significance of tomb type and placement of cists within this ritual landscape must therefore have had a distinct meaning for those who constructed them.

While very few vase and bowl vessels normally associated with cist burials have been found in Co. Clare, and mainly occur on the South and East coast, it is important to take into account that only three excavations of megalithic tombs have taken place in the Burren. These were carried out at Roughaun Hill (Jones 1998-2001), Poul nabrone (Lynch 1985) and Poulawack (Hencken 1934). All three unearthed ceramic types were unusual in terms of type and style, hence illustrating the possibility of non traditional types and forms existing within the Burren. Excavation of Poulawack cairn, five kilometres to the north-west of the ridge revealed cists of the Linkardstown style, indicating that this form of burial tradition is present in the Burren archaeological landscape. The Poul nabrone excavation illustrated a complex re-deposition of burials, while the tomb excavation at Roughaun Hill, previously thought to have been a court tomb type was in fact, something of a much more complex nature; hence it is referred to by Jones (2004) as a chambered tomb, yet another example of one of the many tombs of the Burren which does not fit into any clear classification. As only a cursory study of the archaeological monuments has been undertaken on the

northern part of the ridge, we feel that it is entirely possible that the cists may have been previously overlooked or incorrectly classified.

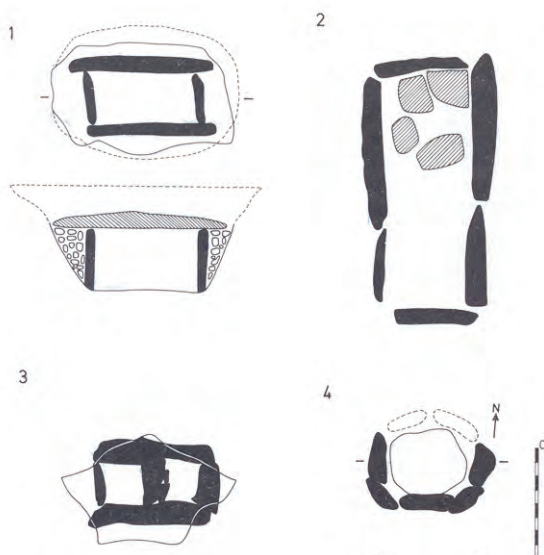


Plate 1

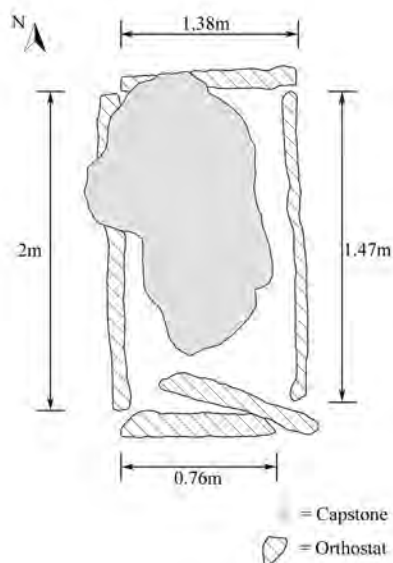


Plate 2

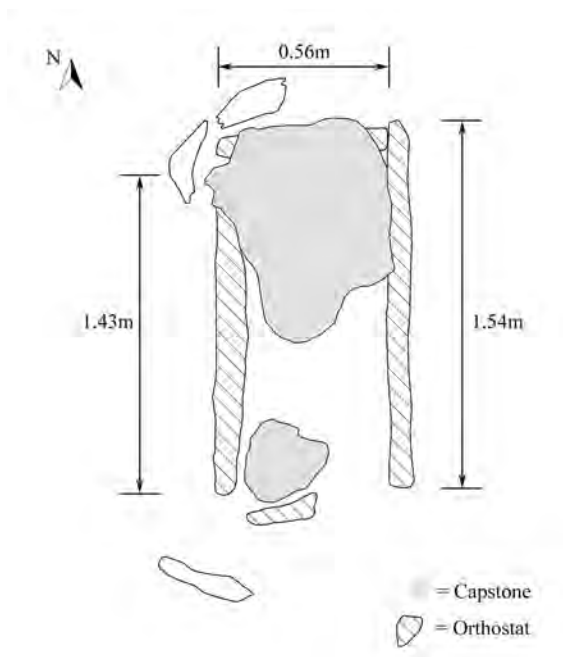


Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5

Future research

There are a number of ways in which future research carried out within our study area of the ridge would increase our understanding of this important archaeological landscape. Most especially, there is great potential in researching the northern part of the ridge. Due to the fact that there has been a focus on the southern part, a study of the northern section would provide a more complete study. This would provide a clearer picture of the archaeological remains of the entire ridge.

A conspicuous feature of a greater part of the landscape is the presence of numerous potentially prehistoric field systems, some of which are joined or associated with enclosures and monuments. These systems create a network linking various monuments on the ridge. Hence, this is clearly an area open to further research, which would possibly help to provide a better understanding of the archaeological features of the landscape. G.I.S analysis of the cist and wedge tomb distribution would further advance our understanding of the monuments and complexes along the ridge. This approach would help to better visualize the variables of inter-visibility and siting within the landscape between cists and wedge tombs.

Possible links between different monuments and their locations also requires further research. An intensified and systematic field survey may identify other unrecorded monuments within the landscape. This is important as a renewed distribution map containing the correctly classified monument types may provide a new insight into the past use of the ridge and how it was perceived in

prehistory. Due to the miniscule number of excavations carried out within the Burren, excavation of select cists and wedge tombs would possibly provide us with further knowledge of the nature and significance of these different tomb types. Jones has suggested that many of the unopened cairns could contain cists within the Roughaun-Leana Complex, due to the presence of an exposed cist on Roughaun Hill. (Jones 1996, 100).

Our survey of the ridge at Parknabinnia/Leana has shown that the area is an extraordinarily rich archaeological complex. Taking into consideration our limited knowledge about this area prior to our survey, and that our work was carried out over a five day period, our extensive field methodology proved to be particularly rewarding. Our identification of cist monuments from wedge tombs leads us to believe that cists should hence be entered as a separate and important class of funerary monument within this landscape in their own right. This should be further researched in terms of visibility, placement, prominence and relationship to wedge tombs. Our work shows that it is possible that the stricter classification of cist and wedge tombs could have meaning well beyond the boundaries of the Burren, as the dichotomy of cist and wedge tombs may also be viable elsewhere. The claim that this area boasts the largest cluster of wedge tombs in Ireland may be, on the basis of this research, not a true reflection of the facts. Ultimately we hope that our research will lead to an increased understanding of the complex burial traditions of this ridge, and perhaps even of the Burren itself.

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Techniques for estimating age-at-death in human skeletal remains: Is the ilio-sacral joint a real contender?

Ian MaGee*

Introduction

Mortuary ritual is a phenomenon established by our ancestors more than 70,000 years ago (Brothwell 1985). Evidence for this has manifested in material culture, which in turn has inspired conjecture concerning the motivation of the populations that practiced the rituals thus far examined. Investigation, by anatomists, and more recently forensic anthropologists, has sought to broaden the sphere of knowledge beyond the mechanics of mortuary behaviour, to include the health of our ancestors through the paleodemographic study of the remains themselves. From the estimation of morbidity and mortality rates, researchers can subsequently seek to make inferences about the health of and stresses on different groups within a population (Brooks 1955). To this end, the establishment and verification of methodology to produce accurate results have remained a persistent concern among forensic anthropologists during the past 100 years.

Fundamental to any investigation into archaeologically retrieved human remains is the estimation of age-at-death of the individuals. This is attempted through the use of anatomical points of reference, which undergo physical transformation over a predictable time period. Improvements in the accuracy of forensic analysis of these points of reference are continually being sought, and the research by the anatomists Igarashi et al. (2005) is among the latest, in this case using the auricular surface of the iliosacral joint as one of these points of



Plate 1a: right
pelvis enlargement
of auricular surface



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reference (Plate 1)

And as methodologies such as this are established using modern samples, there is a requirement for their application to archaeologically retrieved human remains to establish their accuracy for use in this context, and their usefulness in application to future archaeologically retrieved assemblages.

Paradoxically, as forensic techniques are sought in the pursuit of procedural accuracy, for the whole range of metric investigation, the limitations of existing standards are highlighted. In estimation of age-at-death of skeletal remains, a high degree of accuracy can be expected in regard to remains of infants, sub-adults and young adults, given the presence, though not exclusively, of teeth and long bones amongst the skeletal assemblage. With older adults, however, metric accuracy is proving more elusive in regard to age-at-death.

Modern forensic and osteoarchaeological research into individual techniques for estimation of adult age continues to seek similar definitive points of reference in aging adult skeletal remains at death. This includes an important review of existing methods, their refinement and their combination, in degrees of influence, with other methods, creating a more formulaic frame of reference.

Ground Rules of Age Estimation

The crossover between modern forensic practice and osteoarchaeological analysis has led to improvement and refinement in the processes, methodologies and standards employed by both disciplines. In 1982, and again in 1985, Bocquet-Appel and Masset argued that adult aging standards up to that time, developed as they were from large archaeological samples of unknown age-at-death, created ‘...misconceptions about longevity in past populations...’(Scheuer 2002, 302). This, Scheuer argued, created a bias of underaging adults over 40 years old. In recent times, methodology can be tested on modern remains, with a known age at death, or, as in the context of mass burials from war crimes, where age can be confirmed retrospectively. Work on mass graves in the Balkans represents a high profile example of the potential for this kind of contribution (Skinner, Alempijevic & Djuric-Srejc 2003). They can then be applied to archaeological material.

However, modern samples are subject less to the taphonomic impact and cultural, dietary and occupational activity variations between populations evident in the samples of archaeologically retrieved human remains. In work on estimating age from cranial vault sutures, Singh, Oberoi, Gorea and Kapila concluded that ‘other factors that are likely to affect age are: racial, nutritional,

endocrinal and hereditary determinants' (2004, 10). These influences can reduce the accuracy of methodology and standards employed to age the remains, devised through analysis of the modern material, although tests of newly devised methods, and in established standards, are incorporating more and more as standard some of the criteria mentioned in their analysis of results.

The combination of the knowledge of age-at-death and remains from the archaeological record are indeed rare. One such rarity is the Spitalfields collection. Excavations between 1984 and 1989 under Christ Church, Spitalfields, in London, uncovered 987 burials, of which 387 contained remains of known-age-at-death, as well as names. The burials took place between 1729 and 1859 (Cox 1996). The importance of the historical information is not to be underestimated as not only were comparisons facilitated of established aging and sex determination techniques, but pathology, medical records, social status and living environment permitted in depth demographic analysis.

In published reports on the analysis of skeletal material, age-at-death labelling is most often referred to as either 'estimation' or 'determination'. The term 'estimation' is correct as whilst the sex of an individual may be determined as either male or female, there are a number of age ranges from which to establish a likely age-at-death and 'estimation' is, therefore, more appropriate.

What 'age' actually measures is twofold. Chronological age measures the amount of time the individual was alive and is measured in years for adults and, in western societies, in weeks for fetuses and months for infants. Developmental age is different. This measures the growth of the skeleton through the process of biological maturation. It is independent of the individual's chronological age and is influenced by biocultural factors such as diet and disease/illness, important indicators of population and societal health to pathological and paleodemographic analysis. Associated with the latter is 'cultural age'. Categories such as childhood and adulthood are marked by societally and/or culturally determined rites of passage. The end of childhood is marked variously through religious, economic and legislative criteria. However, whilst physical activity associated with adulthood may have a subsequent bearing on skeletal development, it is questionable that developmental points of reference such as tooth emergence and epiphyseal fusion are affected other than as anomalous biological events.

Analysis of two aspects of skeletal remains categorise estimation of age-at-death. The first refers to the biological growth and development of the individual and the second to degeneration. Ironically, it is these confined

categories that define the importance of a non-specific age range in an archaeological context (though within as narrow parameters as possible). Just as the human biological episode does not fulfil a criterion of mutually expressed emotional experience, nor does its physical growth and degeneration. Bodies develop and degrade chronologically as complex individual genetically and culturally influenced combinations and it is these combinations that determine the rates of maturity and their physical manifestations within individuals and populations.

Commencement of skeletal formation is prenatal. Ossification, the replacement of other tissues with bone, is well underway at birth. Indeed estimates suggest that by the 11th week there are approximately 806 centres of foetal bone growth, which, after growing and uniting, become 450 at full term birth. The centres of bone growth continue to grow and fuse until there are 206 bones at maturity (Bass 1971).

There are two types of ossification. Intramembranous ossification occurs when the cells in fibrous connective tissue and embryonic dermal layers differentiate into osteoblasts (cells that are the building blocks of bone). This type of ossification normally occurs in the deeper layers of foetal dermis (skin). Examples of intramembranous ossification include the frontal and parietal bones of the cranium, the mandible, the clavicle and the patellae.

The second type, endochondral ossification, begins with the formation of a cartilaginous template, the ossification process subsequently replacing it with bone. Limb bones represent a good example of this type of remodelling with the primary centres of ossification (e.g. long bone shafts) complete by birth (Martini, et al. 2006).

Estimation of foetal and neonatal age-at-death relies, to a large degree, on measuring bone growth. Endochondral ossification typically corresponds to a chronological template of increasing length in long bones. Bone size is also important in considering other bones e.g. scapula, ilia, cranial bones, whether ossification occurs intramembranously or endochondrally.

The secondary centres of ossification, the epiphyses (in the long bones these would be the ends), also respect a known chronology of developmental morphology. This regularity of development is useful in infant and sub-adult age determination, as it provides a temporal table of reference from which to draw when estimating age. The epiphyses of the distal femur, calcaneus and talus are most often of the secondary centres present at birth. If not present at full term

birth, the proximal tibial epiphysis will have ossified by 2 months and the proximal femoral epiphysis by approximately age 6 months. In contrast, the medial clavicular epiphysis is the final secondary centre of ossification to appear, typically at about age 17 years for males and 16 for females (Schulz et al 2005).

The third phase of bone development, when the two centres of ossification join, is called epiphyseal union. The epiphyses and diaphyses (main body of bone) grow toward each other, ultimately fusing together, the union indicating skeletal maturity. Sequentially, epiphyseal union is quite predictable. It generally begins with the elbow joint (distal humerus and proximal ulna) and concludes with the fusion of shoulder epiphyses (scapula and proximal humerus). The chronology of epiphyseal union is slightly more varied, but predictable enough to represent a fairly consistent frame of reference in estimating the age-at-death of young adults, female skeletal maturation generally 1-2 years before males (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994).

Almost all of the 206 individual bones in the human adult body have been looked at with a view to estimating skeletal age-at-death. It would, however, be very difficult to specify a certain age range using only one aging technique. Where taphonomy and 'sympathetic' excavation procedures facilitate, multiple techniques provide the most accurate estimates. The narrowest and most accurate range of possible age-at-death will be achieved through multiple anatomical references and, therefore, aging techniques.

Standard Age Estimation Techniques

Whilst all human remains are subject to damage or loss of elements due to



Plate 2: post-excavation damage to auricular surface

peri-mortem and post-mortem trauma, disturbance, and natural taphonomic processes, variation in the aging process stems from numerous internal and external factors. Given that damaged or incomplete skeletal remains constitute a substantial portion of the samples submitted for analysis (ibid) a variety of methods for estimating age-at-death

are required by the observer, appropriate to disparate skeletal points of reference (Plate 2). Relatively precise estimates of age in sub-adults can be achieved through the evaluation of epiphyseal union and dental development (Bass 1971; Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994).

The long bones represent a fairly straightforward example of epiphyseal union as a frame of reference for age estimation. The humerus is the longest bone in the upper limb. Union occurs at the proximal end, at approximately 19 to 20 years, at the distal end at approximately 14-15 years and at the epicondyle, 15-16 years (Chamberlain 1994). The proximal radius fuses at 14-15 years, the ulna 14.5-15.5 and both distal at 18-19 (McKern & Stewart 1957). In the lower limb, epiphyseal union in the femur usually occurs by 21 years, the distal end fusing last. Similarly in the tibia and fibula, fusion is complete by 21-22 years (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994). Archaeologically retrieved human remains do not always provide all centres of epiphyseal union with which to estimate age-at-death in sub and young adults. Whether due to pre-depositional ritual, taphonomic processes or damage during excavation, other techniques for estimating age-at-death are required.

Teeth are of particular interest to forensic anthropologists, providing information not only on age at death, primarily of sub-adults (plate 3), but potentially informing as to health and stress, genetic attributes, cultural occupation and diet. During early, postnatal growth, two sets of teeth form. The primary set is comprised of the deciduous (milk) teeth. These number 20, five in each of the four quadrants of the dental arcade. The central incisors are the earliest to erupt, between 6 and 10 months, the lower usually first. The upper primary second molar is the last of the deciduous teeth to appear, usually between 20 and 24 months (Martini et al 2006).

The secondary, permanent dentition number 32. The lower central incisors and both upper and lower first molars erupt at approximately the same time, 6-7 years. Formation of the majority of the permanent teeth ends with the eruption of the upper 2nd molars at approximately 12-13 years, and no later than 15 years. However the upper and lower 3rd molars (the wisdom teeth) may not erupt before 21 years, if they appear at all (Martini et al. 2006). This is too variable to be a reliable age indicator and demonstrates the difficulty in estimating age at death in adult skeletal remains.

Occlusal wear has also been suggested as a possible indicator of age-at-death, of adults. Several methods have been suggested for scoring wear patterns on occlusal surfaces. The molars have attracted most attention, likely for their



Plate 3: Lower canine eruption pattern in juvenile mandible

involvement in the normal chewing process (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994).

Miles produced an intra-group wear pattern assessment in 1962. Each of the three molars was allocated chronological scales according to their separate functional age. The wear pattern for the 1st molar was measured in increments of 6 years, the 2nd 6.5 years and the 3rd 7 years. Whilst age estimation using this technique may not be any less accurate due to the non-presence of a third molar, the test did require a sub adult sample as a baseline, and this obviously may not always be available in an archaeological sample, either through non interment, or taphonomic reasons.

Following the theme of wear pattern, Scott (1979) and then Brothwell (1981) introduced surface wear scoring systems, which also represented the patterns diagrammatically. However, given the dietary range of man, temporally, socially and spatially, there would always be a degree of bias built into any attempt to devise a system of wear identification based on one group. Smith's (1984) dental attrition scoring method was based on studies of multiple samples, indiscriminate of subsistence patterns. The method also included wear patterns for the incisors, canines and premolars.

Whilst this is more inclusive in many respects, it does not greatly improve the use of dental attrition as an age indicator in archaeological context, as there are historically unknown factors determining the wear on teeth within a group, e.g. occupation and social ranking. Indeed the difference between groups not just spatially but temporally would also have some impact on the accuracy of results based on molar wear patterns, where high or low grit content in food, processing and cooking techniques and food substance will all have an influence on dental attrition. Dental wear patterns may, however, be used in conjunction with other aging techniques (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994).

Scientific response to this difficulty has resulted in the evaluation of a number of age related changes that occur throughout the adult skeleton. Whilst numerous procedures have been devised to aid age estimation, the variation of physically expressed age-related changes observed in the human skeleton, render several of these techniques unreliable (Brooks 1955; Meindl & Lovejoy 1985).

Research into the sutures of the cranium has focussed on when endo- and ectocranial sutures close. Initial research, carried out at the beginning of the twentieth century focussed on juvenile skulls and derived three very broad categories for closure of the sutures, centred around the age of seven (Bolk 1915). Todd and Lyon (1924, 1925a, 1925b, 1925c) published the findings from their work on adult males of different ancestry, concluding that notwithstanding the absence of complete closure in some specimens, 'lapsed closure', the rate of cranial suture closure was linked to the final stages of skeletal growth and they were able to produce estimated age ranges with a mean deviation of 6 years.

Todd and Lyon (1925c) also concluded that neither endo nor ectocranial suture closure chronology are significantly different for males of western and African ancestry, that ectocranial closure is more erratic, slower and less complete than endocranial closure and that lapsed union is characteristic of all ectocranial sutures, although it does not appear in all individuals. Subsequent research, however, failed to replicate the results of Todd and Lyon (1924, 1925a, 1925b, 1925c) and determined that cranial sutures were chronologically too erratic to provide reliably accurate estimations of age-at-death (Brooks 1955).

In 1985, Meindl and Lovejoy re-examined the Hamann-Todd Collection and concluded that a combination of 5 lateral anterior sites was the best overall predictor of age, the average mean deviation being 7.5 years, and 14.2 years. Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994) proposed combining several aging methods, based on different cranial sutures including, Meindl and Lovejoy (1985) and Todd

and Lyon (1924, 1925a, 1925b, 1925c) to predict age.

However, recent research has again concluded that cranial suture closure is too variable within populations to provide accurate estimates of age (Singh et al. 2004). Key, Aiello and Molleson (2005) compared several techniques for estimating age-at-death using the Spitalfields collection. They concluded that a truly accurate age-estimation technique would require more information on the nature of '...causes and functions of suture closure in human population' (193).

This technique remains questionable as to accuracy but as Todd and Lyon concluded, estimates from cranial suture closure, '...are of distinct value, however, when taken in conjunction with indications given by other parts of the skeleton' (1924, 380).

Other techniques have proven more successful, but create practical problems for the researcher. Cortical bone histology, for example, requires a certain amount of bone destruction. This may raise ethical questions as well as provoke those sections of society that advocate re-interment without scientific intrusion or study. Furthermore, there is often a requirement of specialized training and equipment.

This would render methods like this both less desirable and fiscally prohibitive to some researchers.

Forensic anthropologists frequently rely on methods that evaluate progressive surface changes at disparate sites in the human skeleton. In older adults, these changes often manifest as exponential degeneration. One anatomical element offering potential as a point of reference for estimation of age-at-death of adult skeletal remains is the auricular surface.

Auricular Surface

The earliest observation of age-related change in the ilio-sacral joint (plate 4) was the recording of significant incidence of ankylosis by Brooke in 1924. Ankylosis is defined by Martini et al. (2006) as abnormal fusion or bone growth in a joint as a result of friction or in response to trauma. Within a sample of 105 males Brooke recorded that 37% of his sample was ankylosed. However, the percentage jumped to 76% for those over the age of 50 years (44 out of the 105). He observed no ankylosis in his sample of 105 females, and concluded a significant sex bias.

In 1930, Sashin described changes that had occurred in the hyaline cartilage of the ilio-sacral joint. Within his postmortem examinations of 257 auricular surfaces (of both the sacrum and ilium), he divided his samples into 3 age groups: 0-29 years (43 cases), 30-59 (111) and 60+ (103). He described the

surface of the cartilage lining the ilium in the first group as striated and grooved by transverse radiating lines, giving it a somewhat striped appearance. He noted the cartilage to be thin and varying in thickness from a half to two millimetres.



Plate 4: auricular surface covered by hyaline cartilage

In describing the second group, however, Sashin noted that 'the iliac cartilage... becomes irregular, granular, often very roughened... in the fourth decade...the changes are likely to be more pronounced...very irregular and coarsely granular... at the fifth decade, one very frequently finds the cartilages irregular...erosions, tears, and fibrotic changes...' (1930, 909).

His observations of the third group maintained the theme of deterioration and further emphasised the degeneration of the joint and its articular cartilage. He interpreted the changes as osteoarthritic and concluded that not only were they proportionate to aging but that they '...increase in extent and intensity with the age of the individual' (Sashin 1930, 909). Further observation in 1938, by Schunke, confirmed Sashin's findings. He also concluded that the surfaces of the joints themselves become somewhat roughened after the age of 30.

Resnick et al. (1975) conducted histological analysis of the subchondral bone of the iliosacral joint. They also concluded that the surfaces of the joint, particularly the para-articular region, become more ankylosed with age. They further suggested that this increase, from the fourth decade onward, may be chronologically exponential.

Lovejoy, Meindl, Pryzbeck and Mensforth (1985)

In 1985, Lovejoy et al. proposed a new method for determining adult skeletal age at death, by observing and recording these chronological changes in the auricular surface. Their study was based upon detailed observation of over 250 well preserved auricular surfaces from cadaver material stored as the Libben collection (Kent State University), and a sample from the Todd Collection (n=500), housed in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. They also

included 14 forensic cases. The material included female and male and also Western and African samples.

The test primarily involved marking the presence of granulation (a grainy appearance on the surface), which they believed increased exponentially with age, beginning with a fine granulation, indicating youth. Unlike Brooke in 1924, their results revealed no significant sex bias in the samples.

The study described five phases in the general chronological transformation of the auricular surface, the first beginning in the mid-twenties and the fifth not generally observable till the mid-fifties onward. The transformations in the auricular surface, however, are complex and the method proved difficult to apply given the necessarily wide parameters of chronological definition. The authors concluded, however, that the technique was at least as accurate as pubic symphyseal age estimation and was more useful given the higher rate of preservation of the auricular surface. An added advantage was the continuation of physical change beyond the fifth decade, which facilitated the aging of much older skeletal remains than was possible using the other techniques (Lovejoy et al. 1985). It should be considered, however, that ankylosis may render part of a sample aged > 50 reliant on other aging techniques. In their conclusions, Lovejoy et al. raised the question of interobserver reliability and the accuracy of the test as an age estimator. They concluded that through blind testing they were able to satisfy both queries. The test was applied to other sub-samples of the Todd collection, which had not been used in devising the test initially, and was applied by a selection of briefly instructed observers. The same results were achieved.

This method, developed by Lovejoy et al. (1985) was subsequently tested by Murray and Murray (1991) on 189 indigent individuals, age >20, from the early 20th century Terry collection, housed in the Smithsonian Institute. Their sub-sample of the collection contained both male and female individuals of both European and African ancestral types. Whilst they found the study to be 'unbiased regarding race and sex (Murray and Murray 1991, 1166), they also discovered a consistent underestimation of the age of older individuals, as only 21% were placed in the >50 group although 67% were actually over fifty years old. There was also over underestimation of younger individuals, the method placing 75% of the sample in the 30-50 years old group, but only 28% actually belonged to that group. They suggested that the discrepancies might be attributable to the bias in age groupings between the Todd and Terry collections. They also concluded that this method was too variable to be used independently in age estimation but would be useful used in conjunction with others.

Santos (1996) found similar results when replicating the Lovejoy et al. (1985) methodology with a similar sample from the University of Coimbra, Portugal, the major difference being that this sample was of exclusively European ancestry. Results from both studies showed identical auricular surface stages, and they were similarly identical in regards to their divisions of real ages. However, the discrepancy between chronological and physiological ages reflects '...built-in biases of the method, probably determined by the characteristics of the reference population' (Jackes 2000, 431), especially in terms of age groupings of each of the samples.

The Lovejoy et al. (1985) method was also tested on an archaeological sample of known age at death from Belleville, Ontario, in 1992, by Saunders et al. The results determined accuracy in estimating age-at-death in the lower age groups, but underestimation of the >45 years old sample. The authors also found that in many cases, estimates for age at death and modal group criteria were mutually exclusive, leading Saunders and co-workers to conclude that variation in individual aging sequences may not be accounted for by the 1985 test. They further concluded that a high intra-observer error was probably attributable to the difficulty of ascribing some of the specimens with less clearly defined features to the prescribed modal groups.

A replication of the test by Bedford et al. in 1993 used a sample, which included 54 males and 1 female, from the Grant collection. They found that those individuals aged 49 years and younger were over-aged by up to seven years. Those in the 50-59 years group were under-aged by approximately five years and individuals >60 were found to be under aged by up to 10 years.

A more recent study by Schmitt (2002) applied the Lovejoy et al. (1985) method (n=124) to a sample of Thai remains, which had been collected since 1990. The sample was comprised of unclaimed indigent bodies as well as those left to scientific research. Results suggested a marked difference in the under estimation of the >50 years old individuals. Schmitt suggested that the disparity significantly reduced the effectiveness of the Lovejoy et al. (1985) method for use on skeletal remains of Asian ancestry. However, it should be emphasised that, the same test had been used on two different racial types previously without significant bias by Murray and Murray (1991). Furthermore, Schmitt suggested that the increased errors in the result could possibly have been due to the bias in favour of older individuals in the Asian sample. It is likely that Bayesian statistical analysis of the data would determine the true potential of the method for use on Asian samples, at least for the <50 years old group.

Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002)

A revised method for age estimation using the auricular surface was proposed by Buckberry and Chamberlain in 2002. As well as endorsing the critique by Murray and Murray (1991) of the Lovejoy et al. (1985) test, they suggested that the 5-year intervals in the 1985 scoring scheme were too narrow. They cited the Suchey and Brooks method (Brooks and Suchey 1990) as a methodological standard for age estimation in the innominate, in terms of '...the dispersion of age at death for each morphological stage of the pubic symphysis' (Buckberry & Chamberlain 2002, 231). Furthermore, they believed that the apparent dismissal as 'residual' of certain persistent physical traits over several age groups, was overly simplistic and non inclusive. They considered this particularly contributory to '...uncertainty and in some cases confusion, in assigning individual auricular surfaces to a particular age stage' (Buckberry & Chamberlain 2002, 232), reflecting the conclusions of Saunders et al. in 1993.

Buckberry and Chamberlain set aside the modal age stages employed by the Lovejoy et al. (1985) method and employed a quantitative analysis of the auricular surface. They proposed that the observer would attribute numerical scores to individual features commensurate with progressive degrees of representation. Through statistical standardisation, they then sought to increase objectivity in observer assessment.

Preliminary testing was conducted on an archaeological collection from Sheffield University, to gauge its ease of use. The new scoring system was then applied to a sample (n=180) of the Christ Church, Spitalfields, collection, from the Natural History Museum, London. Each surface was scored twice, two weeks apart, and discrepancies in the scores noted. Where possible, the observer avoided contact with other skeletal parts that may have been age indicators.

The test confirmed results previously replicated by Murray and Murray's 1991 retrial of Lovejoy et al. (1985) as to the lack of bias between sexes or races. A lack of bias was also evident between the left and right sides. This is particularly valuable in an archaeological context where period of interment and taphonomic processes dictate degrees of preservation, which in turn prescribes the skeletal parts available for forensic testing.

Buckberry and Chamberlain also concluded that the revised method demonstrated not only similar age ranges to those produced by Brooks and Suchey (1990), but also produced '...scores that have a higher correlation with age than the Suchey-Brooks pubic symphysis system for the Spitalfields

sample' (2002, 236). And although the age estimates produced by the test were wider than those in the original Lovejoy et al. (1985) test, the revised methodology is easier to apply, producing reduced observer error and, therefore, safer estimations of age-at-death.

A comparative test of both Lovejoy et al. (1985) and Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002) was carried out by Mulhern and Jones (2004). They applied the revised test to a sample from the Terry collection, a sample from which Lovejoy et al. devised their original test, as well as the Huntington collection, housed with the Terry collection in the Smithsonian Institute. Three hundred and nine individuals were used in the sample, evenly distributed as to sex and race categories. Following the age parameters of the original test, the sample used fell into a range aged 20-69.

Mulhern and Jones (2004) agree with Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002) as to the lack of sex and race bias in the revised method. They also agree that the method is easier to implement, and may be particularly useful for inexperienced observers. They determined, however, that the Lovejoy et al. (1985) method was the more accurate in testing individuals from the 20-49 years of age group, and the revised Buckberry and Chamberlain method more accurate for the 50-69 years age group. Whilst they did suggest that the revised method does provide an age indicator for individuals > 60 years, they recommended its use only in conjunction with other aging strategies.

Igarashi, Uesu, Wakebe and Kanazawa (2005)

A further revision of the method for age estimation using the auricular surface

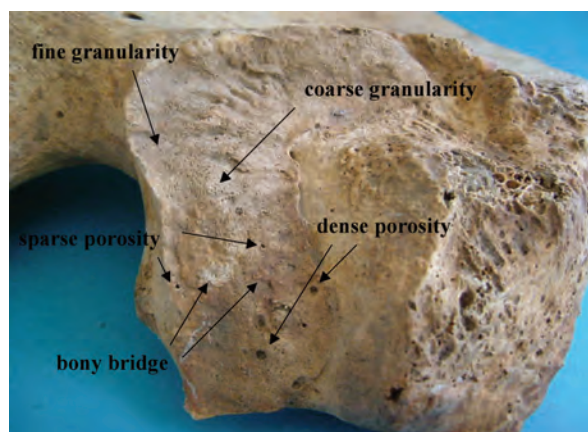


plate 5: several features scored by Igarashi et al. (2005)

was proposed by Igarashi, Uesu, Wakebe and Kanazawa in 2005, who sought to simplify examination of the auricular surface through macro observation of features on the surface, including coarse and fine granularity and sparse and dense porosity (plate 5).

Whilst Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002), proposed that the observer

would attribute numerical scores to individual features commensurate with progressive degrees of representation. They awarded scores based on any presence of the feature on an individual surface. The Igarashi method also differs somewhat from the previous methods in that an actual age is provided, rather than a broad 10 or 5 year grouping.

Igarashi et al. (2005) agree with the Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002) conclusion that the apparent dismissal by Lovejoy et al (1985) as 'residual' of certain persistent physical traits over several age groups, was overly simplistic and non inclusive. Furthermore, they have included a previously non-included feature, 'bony bridge'. They define thirteen possible scoring features for males and twelve for females.

Igarashi et al. (2005) used a multiple regression analysis based on the examination of the skeletal remains of 700 modern Japanese. The sample was comprised of collections from the universities of Tokyo, Niigata, Nagasaki, Kyushu and Jikei.

In adding the 'bony bridge' feature, Igarashi et al (2006) implied a bias between sexes, previously unobserved by Lovejoy et al. (1985) and Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002). Despite this addition, however, there was a significant reduction in accuracy for the female samples. Igarashi et al. concluded, therefore, that '...the mode of chronological change in the auricular surface differs between males and females, and that the morphology of the auricular surface was more variable in females' (2006, 337). They offered pregnancy as one biological event, which may explain the difference.

Due to the homogenous ancestral history of the sample, there could be no conclusion as to any ethnic bias, although research is presently being conducted by the author to establish any bias using a modern sample of western ancestral origin. Also, as Igarashi et al. (2006) used both sides of each sample independently, grouped by sex and age there was no conclusion from the statistical analysis as to any bias between the left and right sides.

Igarashi et al. (2005) further concluded that, whilst the method offers a reasonably accurate format for age estimation of skeletal remains, as with previous techniques, it is best employed with other methodologies from different anatomical points of reference to more accurately estimate age-at-death, rather than as a 'stand alone' formula. This conforms to accepted practice in other osteological methodologies.

Conclusion

The refinement of forensic metric analysis of human remains is as important for archaeologists as for criminal pathologists. Fundamental to any metric analysis of archaeologically retrieved human remains is the estimation of age-at-death. The various methodologies for metric analysis provide varying degrees of accuracy, none more so than in age estimation in adults. Whilst the usefulness of the auricular surface of the ilio-sacral joint in the process of age-at-death estimation for adults appears limited, used in conjunction with other anatomical points of reference it can indeed contribute to age-at-death estimation. Given its better degree of preservation than many other skeletal parts in archaeological contexts, it could prove extremely useful as part of an adaptable range of anatomical reference points from which age-estimation formulae can be established.

Whilst means and methods of testing and information extraction, like those using the auricular surface, are presently comprised of the mundane, though fundamental necessity of metric analysis and recording, the combined corpus of results of osteological enquiry, including non-metric analysis such as observation of pathology and physical indications of cultural stresses, can lead to profound indicators of the cultural, community and social constructs of our ancestors. Widening the parameters of investigation, cultural inference might be made about the social unit in which the individual/s lived, possibly facilitating intra as well as inter-community observation.

Perhaps emphasis could now be put on reflecting existing cultural and social inferences back on the methodologies of skeletal analysis, the osteoarchaeologist looking not just for a timetable of physical development but a social or cultural affected rate of maturing and degeneration, determined by influences on the body, not just within.

Whereas in some branches of archaeology the individual/s, can be rendered 'invisible' by the labelling of material cultural, paleodemographic inference, through osteological enquiry, can identify ancient populations more as living communities, and not just from standard historical archaeological labels. It would, perhaps, be negligent, therefore, to overlook the impact of cultural and social influences on the physical human existence, especially given the emphasis in archaeology on attempting to understand cultures, and the materials that signify them. A lateral revision of what metric analysis attempts to determine would be a start.

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Feasting at Lughnasadh: A reconstruction of domestic space in early medieval Ireland

*Brian Kearney**

Writing in 1953 Marc Bloch, warns of the dangers of applying common-sense in the interpretation of archaeological artefacts by saying '...the worst of common sense is that it exalts to the level of the eternal observations necessarily borrowed from our own brief moment of borrowed time' (Moreland 1997, 164). So for more than fifty years the chroniclers of the past have been warned of the consequences of imposing contemporary value judgments on our interpretations of that past. The warning is well justified if at times overbearing as it can also have the effect of stifling the imagination. Let us for a brief moment unfetter ourselves from that convention which shuns the overly subjective interpretation. Let us have some fun with the past and try to imagine a medieval household on the eve of the feast of Lughnasadh which, in the Irish medieval calendar, marked the beginning of the harvest. In this attempted reconstruction we begin by giving some context to the settlement type. Then, using data gleaned from the historical texts combined with archaeological findings from Deer Park Farms, Glenarm, County Antrim, we shall attempt to explore how people organised, understood and inhabited domestic space in early medieval Ireland

The evidence from archaeological excavation

Chris Lynn tells us that '[t]he dwelling house is the most important single artefact for the characterisation of any group of people at any time' (1994, 82). Using an argument similar to that of Ian Hodder he tells us that the house (Hodder's domus) is '...a principle focus for the nexus by which all contemporaneous activity and, therefore archaeological material on a site is related' (Ibid., 82). In other words, by focussing on the house and its environs we may get a glimpse of how people lived, their culture, technologies, and subsistence strategies and by comparison with other sites, possible regional variations and social relations. In early medieval Ireland the principle settlement type is thought to have been the ringfort or rath which O'Sullivan tells us '...are typically seen as the settlement par excellence of the early historic period' (1998, 102). Lynn and Stout say that ringforts probably had their origins in the fifth or sixth centuries AD but their 'heyday' was between the sixth and ninth centuries (O'Sullivan 1998, 102). They are generally thought to represent predominantly rural lifeways that reflect a common European settlement pattern with 'Celtic or Germanic' origins, known

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as 'einzelhofe - or dispersed individual farmsteads' (Stout 1997, 32). When excavated, which is not very often, it is within the confines of these ringforts that we typically find the early Irish medieval roundhouse (see Figure 1).

The morphology of the early medieval roundhouse in Ireland.

Although archaeological excavations in advance of motorway building continue to unearth early medieval sites such as at Killickaweeny, Co. Kildare (Walsh & Harrison 2003, 33) or Balrigan, Co. Louth (Delaney & Roycroft 2003, 16) possibly the best preserved Irish early medieval round house to be recorded to date was at Deer Park Farms. During a rescue excavation that began in 1986 Chris Lynn revealed a sequence of occupation from perhaps about 600 AD to 1000 AD at what he describes as a 'raised rath' in the Glenarm Valley north of Belfast (Lynn 1996, 195). The primary rath was raised by the continuous accumulation

of midden material (which helped preservation) and the deliberately collapsed walls of presumably defunct houses in a process that mirrors the build up of a Near Eastern tell site. At one level of the settlement five wicker-built (Figure 2) houses were found dating from around 700 AD (Lynne 2001, 127). Of the five houses, one was separate and two were what might be described as double houses each comprising of a c. 7 meter diameter house joined by a smaller house c. 5 meters in diameter (see Figure 1). Some of the artefacts found included; '...three-pronged flesh-forks, a bill-hook, a pruning-hook, shears, a wooden axe, a plough-sock, a drill-bit and candle holders...staves and tub components, a bronze brooch ... various glass beads and a finely carved wooden shoe-last' (Lynn 2001: 130). It is from the excavations at Deer Park Farms that we shall draw upon the archaeological imagination to conjure an impression of a day in the life of a medieval roundhouse.....

I do not know how old Blind Cormac is, but I certainly know how wily and wise his reputation. Father says that he was to be oige (guest) in the little house that I have just taken with my new wife Dearbhla. I think Blind Cormac's wisdom comes from asking so many questions during the day which he then distils at night for the amusement of the elders. It is my fervent hope that this year I shall

DEER PARK FARMS GLENARM COUNTY ANTRIM

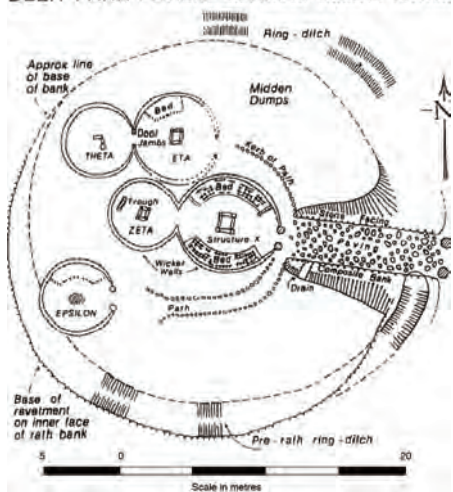


Figure 1:
A plan view of one level of the rescue excavation at Deer Park Farms (After Lynn 1996: 195)



Figure 2: A full size, partial reconstruction of a medieval round-house based on the basket-weaving techniques discovered at Deer Park Farms (From Lynn 2001: 128)

be invited to listen to him at tomorrow's feast of Lughnasadh. What a time Lughnasadh is. Father says that the sun has shone on the king's horserace¹ for the last twenty summers although it is hard to imagine the sunshine on this chilly damp morning. Already my fosterling half brother Daladnach is sweeping the airdrochat² (paved entrance to the enclosure) in preparation for

the day's guests among whom Blind Cormac shall be the first to arrive. When Daladnach is finished sweeping I shall get him to shake out the used bed-covering of sheepskin-fleece and collect fresh and scented leaves for new bedding. This was a favourite chore of mine not so long ago...I still have the beautiful blue and white glass beads (Figure 3) that I found under the guest bedding three summers ago. My new wife Dearbhla wears them now.

Blind Cormac is a legend in these parts - some say he is as old as the ancients whose bones are buried at Tara but this surely cannot be true...can it? He certainly holds no store with what he calls the new ways of this new God. Father makes allowances for Cormac's great age and just about tolerates this blasphemy but he might also be just slightly wary of the old raconteur's acerbic wit. A near neighbour, O'Brien, shall forever rue the day he crossed Blind



Figure 3: Beads excavated from Deer Park Farms (After Lynn 2005)

Cormac because since that fateful day he has been known far and wide as Methal Mòr - Cormac, you see, honed in on O'Brien's unusually large buttocks³

¹. Lynn tells us that throughout the written sources the horse is associated with high rank and horseracing a regular entertainment for kings and at regular public gatherings such as the feast of Lughnasadh held in August (Kelly 1997: 99).

². All old Irish words with their translation are taken from Kelly 1997, MacNeill 1923 and Lynn 2005.

³. Unusually large people were sometimes said to have buttocks like half a large cheese or methal as it was called (Mc Cormick 1983: 264).

and made them the focus of much hilarity ar fud na haite.

I must be sure to be at the entrance to father's house to greet Cormac lest he wake the entire kin although I'll be sure to know when he arrives because the dogs go wild at the scent of him - which reminds me, I must chain the big dog to the cleth (stake) or Blind Cormac will be sure to claim for injury even if the dog just gets to lick him.⁴ Dearbhla has already joined mother in father's backhouse and is preparing a breakfast of lichtiu (oat porridge), lemlacht (fresh milk) and some rye-bread although given the day that is in it I am certain that honey to sweeten and cheese to savour will be provided. The sun has just risen by less than a single hand when Blind Cormac arrives, heralded by the crowing of the cock, the bleating of the sheep penned in the lias cairech just outside the entrance and the snarling of the dog chained to the inside fence. Blind Cormac travels with a slave-girl hardly thirteen years old with wild hair and eyes, dressed in a raggedy bracken-dyed yellow tunic and who seems able to anticipate his every need. With his hand on the shoulder of the slave-girl he approaches the entrance to the les (inner courtyard) and announces himself loudly but thankfully not loud enough to wake father. I take his arm to guide him up the path to my house where I position him on the bed just to the right of the entranceway. The room is filled with the smell of last night's tallow and the fire still smoulders, lit up by a shaft of weak sunlight from the open doorway.⁵ The slave-girl, in competition with the spring piglets, is already rummaging in the dump adjacent to my house. A week later and she would have had better luck, as father was arranging for the young pigs to forage for themselves in his private oak-woodland of which hazel is the under-storey⁶ (from where the seven leagues of coppiced hazel-rods needed to build my house had recently come from!).

Speaking of hazel-rods, the first thing Blind Cormac did after sitting on the bed, was to lean back nonchalantly, arcing his back so as to rub it along the inside wall of the house...just as well I was up to his tricks or I could have been the butt of his jokes tomorrow night. You see he was looking to find a pointed hazel rod-end

⁴. The law texts state that fierce dogs should be restrained from attacking legitimate visitors (Kelly 1997, 148)

⁵. According to Lynn the doors of houses were usually oriented to the east or south for a couple of possible reasons; first to shelter the doorway from the prevailing winds, secondly most raths or ringforts were situated on slopes and having an easterly aspect for the entrance and house doors meant that rain water drained away from the houses and enclosure through the entranceway and down the slope (2001: 128)

⁶. The domestic pig from this period was small, long legged and hairy – farrowing took place in the spring with up to nine piglets – they were kept within the farm until August when they were considered hardy enough for woodland foraging (Kelly 1997: 82).

jabbing into his back from our newly built house.⁷ He has ruined many a reputation for hospitality by using just such a ruse. He might also use it as an excuse to complain to father...you see he would normally stay in the big house. To look at Blind Cormac you would never know his rank nor would he tell you - he is wearing such an array of colours it might make one laugh if one dared; his leine (linen tunic) is the madder dyed red usually worn by the son of a lord and his brat (woollen cloak) is the black of sheep denoting the son of a commoner. To top it off he wears round his waist a blue sash the colour worn by royalty and which, according to Blind Cormac was dyed using the woad from the Queen of Tara's very own glaisengort (private woad garden).⁸

As Blind Cormac noisily relishes the breakfast brought him by Dearbhla he begins the inevitable interrogation - questions he knows most of the answers to but insists on asking in the hope of catching me out. What rank is it your father is again says he with a slight grin ...a mruigfer says I...is that so says he, then what animals does he possess?...quick as a flash I reamed them off; twenty cows, two bulls, six oxen, twenty pigs, twenty sheep, two brood sows and a saddle-horse with a fancy bridle⁹ ...very good says he and what then is the value of his land? Again I was ready... he has land worth three times seven cumals¹⁰ says I...and what of tools says he...the snout of a plough says I as well as full ownership of a plough, knives for cutting, a pair of shears, an axe, a grindstone, a billhook, spears for killing cattle, a cauldron to fit a hog, charcoal for the blacksmith to make iron...enough says Blind Cormac laughing...what about houses says he...Seven houses he has, a kiln, a barn, a share in the mill where he grinds for others and ...stop, stop says Blind Cormac...it is only a son and heir that could list off with such familiarity a fathers possessions. By the time the initial interrogation was finished and Blind Cormac's breakfast reduced to a few crumbs on his mias (wooden serving platter), the rest of the settlement was bustling into life. It was to be a busy day's preparation for the forthcoming feast at which father was hosting the Aire forgill (noble of superior affirmation)¹¹ of the Tuath, first cousin to an Ri.

⁷. At Deer Park Farms the walls of the houses were constructed almost entirely from hazel rods using a basket weaving technique. The double-walled structures were designed to provide a cavity for insulation consisting of a grassy packing. The sharp cut-ends of the hazel rods were woven so as to protrude into the inside of the cavity only – the wicker house found on Moynagh Lough crannog was also double-walled (Lynn 2001: 128-129).

⁸. The legal texts laid down strict codes of dress to be worn by the various ranks of society (in *Early Irish Farming*, Kelly 1997, 263-4 from cited in Lynn 2005).

⁹. See MacNeill 1923 291-293, cited in Lynn 2005: 14 for a description of the various ranks of commoners and nobles translated from the *Crith Gabhlach*.

¹⁰. A cumal was originally the value of a female-slave but in *Crith Gabhlach* approximately equivalent to three cows.

¹¹. Also in MacNeill 1923, 299 – 300 – see note 9 above

Throughout the morning there is a stream of callers to the rath each paying respect to father at the entrance to his house before being directed hither and thither by the self-appointed overseer Blind Cormac. A sight to see perched on the tree stump young Callum used for splitting wood, Blind Cormac sniffed under the gills of salmon and trout brought as tributes from father's tenants, the boaire (independent farmer) and ocaire (lowest free grade who farmed rented land) each paying tribute to the visiting lord according to their means. The sen chleithe (serfs) who bore the heavier tributes of their masters such as joints of meat from sheep or cattle and once even the entire carcass of a wild deer and boar – each were subjected to the flailing swipes and torrents of vitriolic abuse from Blind Cormac. The children of my two brothers and sister were kept busy under the direction of mother and Dearbhla, collecting and cleaning vegetables from the lubgort (enclosed garden) just south of father's house; vegetables such as onion, wild garlic, celery, leeks and that new plant braiseach (cabbage) that they use in those monasteries¹². The children were also responsible for collecting the hen eggs for the feast – particular care been taken to collect the goose eggs the lord so much prefers.



Fig 4: An artists impression of a medieval rath (After Mallory and McNeill 1991, 260)

My sister Madhbh left mid morning after milking the cows, on a cart driven by a serf and pulled by two oxen to go to the water-mill located three leagues from our rath. It is a trip she does not make too often as the quern in mother's house can usually handle the quantity of flour we need. However the lord and his retinue do not only eat their fill of the delicious

wheatmeal bread they also fill their voluminous pockets. In anticipation Madhbh is carrying five miach (bushels) of wheat grain for grinding, each miach to make 28 loaves¹³. On the cart Madhbh also carries the hub and paddle from the water-mill which father always keeps overnight. Meanwhile at the rath, my younger unmarried brother Callum is sitting outside the small house he shares with the children, and with the wooden shoe-last he himself had carved clamped

¹² See (Lynn 2005: 4) for a list of vegetables possible eaten in early medieval Ireland as taken from the texts.

¹³ See (Lynn 2005: 4) for different types of bread eaten in early medieval Ireland as noted in the texts

firmly between his knees, he was putting the final touches to the shoes he always made for mother on the eve of Lughnasadh. Callum is blessed with the hands and makes the finest things from wood and leather. Have you seen the fine stout oaken door frames at father's house (Figure 5)? Or the deftness of his hand in the making of the staved churns for mother's butter? My surly older brother



Figure 5: The excavated doorframe from Deer Park Farms (After Lynn 2005).

Lachlan is sitting cross-legged, chipping the clay moulds from the three bronze brooches my father had commissioned for the daughters of the Aire forgill. Nobody quite knows how to take Lachlan or his craft - from fire, smoke and noise he fashions objects of beauty, war and work - even among his family he was treated with deference and not a modicum of fear. When not working as a smith and travelling throughout the Tuath, Lachlan often helped me with the ploughing of father's land in spring and autumn - the plough socks and coulter made by Lachlan

are the envy of the Tuath as they last beyond three seasons without hardly a single sharpening.

In the late afternoon the roasting pits were being dug alongside pits for heating the stones needed to boil the meat for tomorrow's feast. The precious salt cakes bought from local traders and stored in father's house were broken into the cauldron of water to flavour the meat. This is so much more flavoursome than the murluath (boiled seaweed ash) that we normally use. Dearbhla and mother were removing the various cheeses and wooden churns of butter they had made in the previous weeks from the backroom where they had been kept cool. Father and Blind Cormac were doing what they do best - sampling the cuirm (beer made from malted barley). The cows which had been led out to pasture in the morning by the eldest son of Lachlan were now being led back to the fields closer to the rath (Figure 4) where Madhbh can again milk them. Madhbh's youngest daughter Caradoc of the curved spine, whom no one ever had heard speak, sat quietly combing the wool she would later spin into thread - another gift for the great lord on the eve of the great feast.....

What I have attempted to do is enter, however awkwardly, into a stream of Irish consciousness using a mix of archaeology and Irish history. Bearing in mind that we must always be cautious about any attempt at interpreting the psyche of our forebears I hope to have given a sense of class hierarchy, deference and the nuances of lord-client relationships in medieval Ireland. After all, were these

people not the progenitors of contemporary Irish culture? Are there not perhaps the vestiges of that consciousness, those narratives of being, still guiding the unique identity-formation processes of Irish people today? This article would not have been possible without the meticulous excavations at Deer Park Farms by Chris Lynn. His work was the inspiration for this day-in- the-life fictional account of a medieval homestead. The article also drew heavily on the Fergus Kelly's interpretations of the written historical texts particularly the Crith Gabhlach. The food described for the feast is again largely drawn from the texts; however scientific examination of food-remains from dated contexts in various sites has largely corroborated the findings from the historical texts. Far from Hobbe's description of men living out lives that are 'nasty, brutish, and short' the indications from the archaeology are that medieval life may well have been quite to the contrary.

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Clondalkin Round Tower: The problems of suburban archaeology

Nicole Mc Mahon*

Clondalkin is a sprawling suburb in the south west of Dublin. It has a long history but very little is actually known about it, or at least there is very little information on it (Doherty 2000, 182). Located within the village of Clondalkin are the remains of an early medieval monastery, including a Round Tower and the remains of the church and a later medieval tower house. There are two or three medieval castles located within the townlands of the Parish of Clondalkin as well as the remains of at least one medieval church. What this paper will centre on is the early medieval remains, including the Round Tower. The focus of the paper is how one accesses a place like Clondalkin from a landscape perspective. It is hoped to highlight the problems or difficulties surrounding suburban archaeology.

A Brief History:

As already mentioned there is very little written on Clondalkin, especially regarding the pre-Norman period. Ball (1902, 108) notes “Only the slightest information is available about Clondalkin in the period preceding the Anglo-Norman invasion, the period in which the place was perhaps most famous, and after the invasion, owing to the frequent changes in the residents and number of owners in the parish, continuous narration is even more than usually difficult.” However, some account of its history can be obtained. Clondalkin is one of the few places in Co. Dublin which the Scandinavians are known to have inhabited (Ball 1902, 107). Evidence for this comes in the form of annalistic references, one of which states that in 832 the foreigners plundered Clondalkin (Ball 1902, 107).

Documentary sources, with reference to Clondalkin after the Anglo-Norman invasion, refer mainly to the passing of the monastic lands to the Archbishop of Dublin and the residence of the Archbishop. For example, Archbishop Alen’s Register describes the extent of the manor of Clondalkin in 1326 as being “ a chamber and a chapel badly roofed with shingles, a stone stable badly roofed and two small houses badly roofed with thatch, no value, for no one would hire them;” (McNeill 1950, 185). The evidence from Archbishop Alen’s register would

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appear to suggest that the manorial extent of Clondalkin was, at this time, great (Ball 1902, 110).

In the sixteenth century, we are told, that Deansrath Castle, which lies in the outskirts of Clondalkin village, and a large extent of land belonged to the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral (Ball 1902, 112). Ball (1902) also notes that toward the end of the century the castle becomes somewhat prominent. In 1584 the castle was occupied by one William Collier who was later appointed seneschal of the King's county and knighted. Then in 1596 the castle was owned by Nathaniel Smith and it was at this time that the castle is mentioned as being one of the castles guarding the Pale (Ball 1902, 113). It is believed that the castle was demolished in the seventeenth century. Ball notes that as a result of the 1641 Rebellion Sir William Parsons advised the castle to be demolished "to ease the town and to help to free the country" (Ball 1902, 117). Remnants of the castle can still be seen today.

The Civil Survey 1654-1656 tells us that in Clondalkin village "there stands ... a stump of a castle and some Thatched Houses with a high watch Tower" (Simington 1945, 292). The watch Tower to which it refers is presumably the Round Tower.

In the eighteenth century there was an explosion at the mill located in Clondalkin. It is said that this explosion shook the church of the monastery. A new church was built on the grounds. Ball notes that the construction of the church caused much commotion at the time as it was oriented the wrong way (1902, 124). This is the church which still exists today.

The Archaeology:

Traces of the early medieval monastery are to be found within Clondalkin village. Still to be seen are the remains of the church and a possible section of the wall of the monastery. It must be pointed out that these lie on present church grounds and are not an obvious feature outside the church grounds. In fact, they only became visible to me while sitting upstairs on a double decker bus. The gates to the grounds of the church have been locked each time I have passed by and is therefore not easily accessible. However, there is one remarkable feature which one cannot help but notice. This is the fantastically intact Round Tower. It is one of only a few which still has its original capstone. In fact Lalor (1999, 135) notes "it is the only complete tower which has not had its cap reconstructed or re-set during the intensive conservation work carried out by public and private bodies on Round Towers during the late 19th century". It is noted that Clondalkin's Round Tower is one of the narrowest in the country (O'Keeffe 2004;

Lalor 1999; Barrow 1979). It is built of local stone, known as Dublin calp limestone. The base of the tower is surrounded by a one-metre wide circular masonry buttress (Lalor 1999, 135). It is believed this buttress was added not long after its construction so as to strengthen the unusually slender base of the tower (Barrow 1979 & O'Keeffe 2004). The steps are believed to be a much later addition. O'Keeffe believes this to be the case due to the fact that they ascend in an anti-clockwise fashion (2004, 140). The doorway faces east towards the present parish church (Lalor 1999, 135). It is quite possible the doorway also faced the entrance of the medieval church but as such a small fragment of the church survives this is by no means an assertion.

There is a certain sense of the surreal attached to the medieval remains in Clondalkin. It is very much an early medieval landscape submerged in a modern one. The Round Tower is a dominant feature in the landscape. But no doubt it does not fit into the landscape in the same way it was originally intended to. It is now surrounded by a McDonalds, a shopping centre and a super size Garda station, all of which almost take away any sort of meaning that the Round Tower may once have had. It is a landscape which appears to be very confused. It is a landscape which is trying to move forward or change with the times, hence the McDonalds, the shopping centre and the Garda station, but yet is dragged back into the past by the presence of the medieval remains. It is this that poses the biggest problem for archaeologists, in particular those interested in landscape studies. So one must ask the question, how do you approach the medieval landscape of Clondalkin?

Clondalkin: a landscape perspective?

So how does one approach Clondalkin from a landscape perspective? One must also ask if it is possible to detach the medieval landscape from the modern one? Is it possible to carry out a landscape study in a suburban setting?

There have been various approaches carried out by archaeologists when looking at landscapes, both prehistoric and medieval. One such approach has been Tilley's (1994) 'phenomenology of landscape'. The phenomenological approach stems from French philosophical thought regarding space. Here space is dealt with in terms of what the human consciousness perceives at a particular moment; what is not perceived at that moment does not exist! This is something which Merleau-Ponty (1945) discusses in *Phénoménologie de la perception*; "We have been led to bring out as the condition of spatiality the fixation of the subject in an environment and finally its inherent belonging in the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 325).

Tilley (1994) applies the phenomenological approach to the studies of landscape in archaeology. However, there are many problems in doing so, many of which have been dealt with by Brück (1998, 2005). One of the main problems I have with this approach is that it cannot be applied to all situations. Suburban Clondalkin shows the phenomenological approach to be fundamentally flawed. Within phenomenology there is a lot of talk about 'experiencing' the landscape. But this is impossible in Clondalkin village. One cannot go out and fully 'experience' the medieval landscape of Clondalkin because it is submerged in a modern landscape. One must ask if it is truly possible to experience the landscape in the same way the people from the past did. As Brück (2005, 54) puts it, "perhaps the most important question ... is whether contemporary encounters with landscape ... can ever approximate the actual experience of people in the past? This is an assumption which underlies Tilley's approach. Tilley (1994) believes that the human body and the physical landscape act as constants, that 'we and the people of the past share carnal bodies' (Brück 2005, 54). But one cannot say that the human body and the physical landscape are constants. Landscape is something which is ever changing. One only has to look at Clondalkin to see this to be the case. The landscape of Clondalkin, as already mentioned, has change dramatically since the medieval period and therefore I cannot 'experience' it in the same way the medieval inhabitants did. After all, as one walks by the Round Tower today they are confronted by the aforementioned McDonalds, shopping centre and Garda station. One has to wonder what the medieval inhabitants would think of the present landscape! Not only this but landscapes can look and feel different depending on the time of year and time of day. Interestingly Tilley (1993), in his discussion on Neolithic tombs in Sweden, notes that "the same tomb changes and alters its character according to the weather conditions, the qualities of the light, the seasons of the year. "It is never exactly the same place twice" (Tilley 1993, 54). One must question why he later refers to the physical landscape as being a constant! As mentioned above, phenomenology, within French philosophy, looked at space as perceived by the human consciousness at a given moment. This in itself highlights the problems of its use within archaeology. After all it can only be your experience of a given landscape in a given moment on a given day. So one must ask what it can tell us about past experiences of the 'same' landscape. It is also problematic to represent the human body as a constant as it is not a universal. People may experience the same landscape in very different ways. As Brück (2005, 55) notes there is considerable variability in the human form throughout the world. For example, there are differences between the young and the old, men and women and the able-bodied and the infirm (Brück 2005, 55). While there are many problems with the phenomenological approach one must accredit it with broadening our minds when it comes to past landscapes,

not to forget the people who moved within these landscapes.

As you can see a phenomenological approach is not going to work in Clondalkin. Perhaps one should look at the positioning of the monuments within the landscape with the use of maps and field walking. For example, one could look at the relationship between the Round Tower and the church. Is there ease of access between the two, in other words did entrance orientations facilitate movement or perhaps order movement between the two? In other words, is there any sense that the monuments dictated movement within and around the monastery? This is something which Thomas (1993) looked at in his discussion of Avebury. Thomas believed that the monuments dictated movement within the landscape. As already mentioned there is the possibility that the doorway of the Round Tower faced the entrance of the medieval church. If this is the case it could tie into O'Keeffe's (2004) idea that Round Towers had a role to play in the medieval world of relics and processions and did not just function as a bell tower. It is possible those pilgrims may have been guided along a certain pathway through the monastery and that they were led from the church to the Round Tower. One could also look at the relationship between the monastery and the wider landscape. For example one could look at the relationship between the monastery and contemporary sites in the area. It might be a good idea to look at how the monastery fits into the wider landscape. For example, is there any evidence of a pilgrim path in the area? There are remains of medieval churches in the suburbs of Clondalkin, Deansrath, for example. It could be the case that pilgrims stopped off at these churches on their way to the monastery. However, how one proposes to do this is a problem. The use of GIS might be valid, though it is not without its problems, such as the tree issue, the generic human and so on. Even doing the work on the ground poses a problem as you are surrounded by so many modern buildings, some of which are quite tall. These modern buildings pose obstacles that would not have existed in the past.

Symbolism within Clondalkin:

As already stated, very little is written about Clondalkin. Yet so many locals are aware of its rich history. There is great respect for the Round Tower, attested by the fact that it has not been vandalised in any way. Hence the uproar when it was proposed to build a super pub on the small amount of land left surrounding the Round Tower. In many ways the Round Tower is a symbol of the community; it is one of the things which is most associated with Clondalkin amongst locals. The local GAA club is named after it and both the local music school and music store use a picture of a Round Tower in their logo. Also SIAC, the local quarry, have a mini replica of the Round Tower at the entrance to their site. Perhaps this is reinforcing earlier connections between the Round Tower

and the local stone! One worrying fact about the Round Tower is that it is potentially in great danger due to its location on the side of a busy road. There is a constant flow of traffic including heavy vehicles such as Dublin Bus, which run quite regularly. Therefore, it would be wise to monitor any evidence of destruction on the tower.

Conclusion:

As you can see there are many problems which face archaeologists when in a suburban context. One major difficulty is how one attempts to do a landscape study in a suburban area like Clondalkin. We have seen how the phenomenological approach does not work. In Clondalkin, it is unclear as to whether one can fully detach the medieval landscape from the modern one. It would seem that Clondalkin is potentially a place with a rich history but it is apparent that it is hard to trace both in the historical and archaeological records. There is so little found in the documentary sources. The fact that the medieval landscape is submerged in the modern one makes it very difficult for the archaeologist. It is clear that more archaeological work needs to be done in the area. It is just a matter of how one goes about doing so!

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Homes, homelands and identities: an introduction to the archaeologies of nineteenth-century Irish peasantry and its diaspora

*Julie Richko**

The forthcoming archaeological project and doctoral dissertation is an investigation of nineteenth-century Irish peasantry 'at home' in Ireland and overseas using a theoretically-informed archaeological analysis of its material culture(s) and domestic space(s). The principle guiding this research project is

- o To document aspects of the material culture and domestic-spatial organisation of Irish peasant society during the middle of the 1800s, both in Ireland and in its overseas places of settlement;
- o To explore how these materialities and spatialities were transformed by, or resisted transformation during, the experiences of Famine-era rent strikes and eviction on the one hand, and of trans-national Diaspora on the other;
- o To explore how those transformations, or resistances to transformation, reflect four particular conceptualisations and negotiations of identity at critical moments of political, social, geographical or ecological rupture: the national/political/ethnic ('Irish'), the social ('peasant'), the gendered, and the 'self'.

that society is constituted materially and spatially, and that sensitive analysis of any society's objects and landscapes of habitation, from the household-scale upwards, is necessary if it is to be understood in any holistic sense. Using selected case-studies, the aims in this thesis are:

This project is grounded within the tradition of Historical Archaeology, the field of archaeology that is concerned with the recent historic past and with the interrelationships of historical and archaeological records. It is a discipline that is strongly anthropological in nature. Well-established in North America and, increasingly, in Britain, South Africa and Australia, this is a relatively innovative field in Ireland.

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Earlier research

There is an extensive literature on the history of this period, and of the post-Famine Irish overseas. However, despite some excavation of Famine-period Irish settlement sites (Macdonald 1997), and an enlarging corpus of the material culture of the period, especially from urban excavations, there has been no systematic attempt to generate an archaeology of nineteenth-century Ireland or of any of its social classes. Professor Charles Orser has provided a manifesto for a global-scale, theoretical, archaeology of the recent historic past, and locates Ireland at its centre (Orser 1996 & 2004), but Irish archaeologists have not generally risen to his challenge.

Methodologies: Choosing case-studies

I envisage a series of case-studies, but the exact number and geographical spread of examples has yet to be decided. My case-studies will be of household sites (hence the word 'home' in the title): the household is one of the primary cultural units in archaeological analysis (Henry 1996, 236; Krucsek-Aaron 2001), with many archaeologists analysing domestic space in the context of household activities to discern gendered identities and familial roles (Lawrence 1982).

At this preliminary stage of the research it is apparent that, for Ireland, a series of excavated rural house-cluster sites, especially those excavated by Professor Orser at Ballykilcline (Roscommon) and Derryveagh (Donegal), will feature prominently; indeed, I will be working over several seasons on a programme of excavations with Professor Orser at Derryveagh, an abandoned village site where 47 families were evicted by a local landlord in April 1861 (Dolan 1980; Vaughan 1983). Case-studies from the Diaspora also have to be decided, but places occupied by migrant rural Irish peasantry in the mid- to late 1800s, and for which archaeological data is being made available by excavators, include the Five Points area of New York (Griggs 1999; Yamin 2000). Historical accounts claim many Derryveagh evictees travelled to, and settled in, New South Wales, Australia, through the efforts of the Donegal Relief Fund (McClintock 1991).

Data gathering

In addition to the data from the excavations at Derryveagh, I will collect primary data from excavations of other nineteenth-century rural sites in Ireland and contemporary Irish-occupied sites in eastern America. I will also carry out my own survey work (building survey; licensed surface collections) at selected other sites.

Analytical philosophy

My intention is to work primarily within a perspective that can be broadly defined as Marxist. Historical Archaeology within this tradition is directly related to the study of “social difference, tension, conflict and negotiation” (Saitta 1992, 887). I draw upon Marxian theory to emphasize the social rather than functional aspects of material (and landscape) culture, but will do so cognisant of the fact that other archaeologists have used different approaches for gauging social and economic class status in the past (Bell 2002; Delle 2002; Levy 1999; Scott 1991; Wall 1991).

My interest in identity brings me into contact with theories of ethnicity (Malesevic 2004), of gender construction (Gilchrist 1999), and of cultural psychology (Benson 2001) and selfhood (Seigel 1999). This year will be the first season of many archeological investigations at Glenveagh National park, in County Donegal. Sponsored by The Archaeology of Rural Life in Ireland Project and Illinois State University, the archaeological field school will examine the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries which witnessed the rise of agrarian capitalism, the implementation of the cause of improvement, dramatic cultural changes among the native Irish, and the beginning of tenant farming. The archaeological field school will be engaged in examining these and other important issues this summer.

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Association of Young Irish Archaeologists - What's It All About?

Kerri Cleary*

How do we exist?

The Association of Young Irish Archaeologists was founded in Belfast in 1968 by a group of students, it was a strong precursor to the Irish Association of Professional Archaeologists (IAPA), later to become the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI). Membership of the AYIA is automatic for individuals who are members of the associations affiliated societies in the various Universities, Institutes and Colleges around the country, however, recent graduate students, those relatively new to the profession and people with a keen interest are also eagerly encouraged to participate.

The AYIA governing council is elected annually. It is their responsibility to encourage membership and organise the conference for that year. The purpose of the association, as per its constitution, is to 'further communication and co-operation between interested parties, to provide a forum for new ideas and to foster interest and enthusiasm for archaeology at a 'junior' level in Ireland'. As is clear from this, the use of the word 'young' is somewhat misleading as the AYIA's members may include individuals of any age who are undergraduates, postgraduates or relatively new to the profession and related disciplines.

What's the annual conference about?

The level of activity of the AYIA has fluctuated over the last thirty-eight years, unfortunately sometimes demonstrated by the lack of an annual conference. The conference, however, is the associations main event and is hosted in rotation by the various student societies. Assistance is also acquired from departments within the host university and, on occasion, funding support from external organisations, such as the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Environment and The Heritage Service (NI) and The Heritage Council of Ireland. The 2004 conference was jointly hosted by Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, Queens University Belfast had the honour in 2005 and University College Cork took up the challenge in 2006.

The conference usually consists of an opening lecture and wine reception on

*AYIA Chairperson 2006

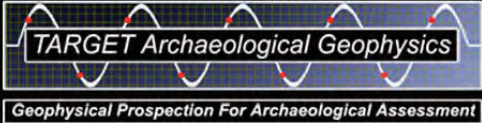
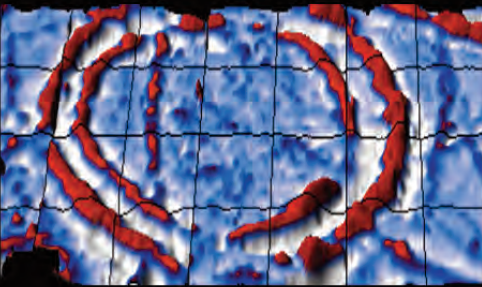
the Friday evening, followed by a day of twenty-minute lectures on the Saturday and a local fieldtrip on the Sunday. The 2006 conference was officially opened by a founding member of the AYIA, Prof. Peter Woodman, who reminisced about the early days of the association and the importance of maintaining strong membership and activity levels. This was followed by the inaugural lecture by Dr. Marion Dowd, who delved into the role of caves for funerary activity in the Neolithic. The topics covered on the Saturday proceeded to appeal to a broad range of interests. We opened with a social archaeological discussion about the Mesolithic west of the River Shannon, next was an exploration of the taphonomic processes affecting the stone tool assemblages uncovered on Lambay Island and this was followed by an examination of Beaker associated settlement in Leinster. We began after tea break with a look at Ptolemy's map of Ireland, followed by a discussion on the importance of salt during the European Iron Age and the session ended with an examination of the continuity and change of a 'water cult' throughout Irish prehistory. Lunch was succeeded by a paper on rotary querns, their technology, importance and visibility in Irish archaeology, this was followed by a more social approach to Medieval town walls, using Waterford as a case study and then an examination of the fortified houses of Co. Cork, exploring the origin, fabric, form function and social space. The final session kicked off with a look at the organisations and policies affecting underwater archaeology, followed by an examination of the relevance studies of desert environments have to environmental archaeology and anthropology, utilising Central Asia as a case study, particularly Kazakhstan. The last paper of the day was a reflection on the way archaeology is portrayed in the media and the affect this can have on the general public's perceptions of archaeologists and the discipline as a whole. This wide variety of papers is typical of the annual conference and it certainly offers something of interest to everyone. The Sunday fieldtrip was also of note, taking in the impressive site of Drombeg, with its stone circle aligned on the mid-winter sunset, next was the well preserved 17th century fortified house of Coppinger's Court and to finish off was the large trivallate ringfort at Garranes, where excavation in the 1930s revealed extensive evidence for metal- and glass-working.

Why is it worth getting involved?

The Association of Young Irish Archaeologists is a dynamic group that offers valuable opportunities to all students and recent graduates of archaeology, no matter what period or type of archaeology interests you. The three-day conference is an invaluable opportunity for the participants to present a twenty-minute lecture on a particular topic they have researched. The AYIA, therefore, is a platform through which people can present their unique views and open the floor to discussion. It can often be the first opportunity for people to present their research in public and with the reputation of a friendly atmosphere there

can be no better place to take this first step. Overall the conference weekend is always great fun and productive in terms of future contacts and appraising the types of research being undertaken across Ireland. This group is a fantastic starting point for the future archaeologists who will lecture in Universities and Institutions, run companies, direct important excavations and advise on our national heritage.

Any enquires can be directed to Kerri Cleary at the Department of Archaeology, University College Cork or k.cleary@ucc.ie or visit our Yahoo Group Page (www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ayia/), become a member and keep up to date with what's going on. A web page is also under construction and can be accessed through the Queens Archaeological Society page at <http://quis.qub.ac.uk/archsoc/>.

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Ground-breaking Archaeology: A discussion with Professor Mick Aston

Every archaeologist will at some stage have come across the long-running and renowned TV show 'Time Team'. One of the stars of the show is surveyor, excavator and writer; Professor Mick Aston. Known to most for his stripey jumpers and his role in Time Team, this interview reveals Mick Aston's ambitious, enthusiastic and friendly nature. Mick's knowledge of archaeology gained through his extensive archaeological career is evident here, where Mick draws out issues that everyone working in archaeology today should address. Of key relevance here is the presentation of archaeology to the public: a theme which Mick speaks passionately about in this interview. In his view, reaching the public and making archaeology accessible and interesting for non-archaeologists is vital for the future of the profession.

The unmissable chance to meet Mick Aston arose when he and his partner Theresa came to Ireland in early February 2006 and visited the School of Archaeology in UCD which included a reunion with his friend, Prof. Tadhg O'Keeffe. In UCD he gave an evening presentation on the behind the scenes activities of the programme before retiring with a large body of archaeologists to the Forum Bar for some well-deserved refreshments. Mick's fame and reputation beyond the archaeological world immediately became obvious as Belfield FM soon snapped up an hour of his precious free time for an interview the following day. At the evening reception in the Forum Bar he was greeted by a number of non-archaeological students, dared on by their friends, who took the opportunity to introduce themselves to the man himself. Mick was chatty, amicable and easy going and we, the writers, lost little time in asking him to conduct an interview, of which he kindly accepted. The following morning we met Mick and Theresa in Tadhg's office in the School of Archaeology at UCD.

We first asked Mick about why and how he first got involved in archaeology?

'Oh that is easy' he replied. 'My father who was a cabinet maker was always interested in things like castles, stone circles and burial chambers and things like that so for as long as I can remember I got dragged around to these places. We went to Stonehenge one evening and after reading Atkinson's book on the place found it very interesting and so my interest developed from there. I think I said last night [at Mick's talk about Time Team] that it was largely helped by my school being so antagonistic towards archaeology. I remember my school teachers telling me I ought to do something serious rather than worrying about

something like archaeology and of course, me being the sort of person I was, that was a real spur to me. The fact that they were very anti-archaeology meant that I was very keen. So my interest actually developed quite late considering that a lot of people claim that they were interested in archaeology by the age of three! I was around fifteen when I started to go to Cornwall on the train with my tent to explore different landscapes and it took off from there. It was really when I got to University that I found out that I was not a freak, as the school had made out, there were other freaks there as well'

We felt that we could empathise with Aston on this point having also experienced and witnessed some strange reactions when we told others that we were studying archaeology, including being asked 'that question': Have you dug up any dinosaurs recently? We agreed to put all this down to prevailing misconceptions between the public and the archaeological world and moved on.

We asked Mick then to describe the important characters and factors that influenced his early years in archaeology.

I went to Birmingham University and my tutor was a chap called Robert Donkin who had written enormous amounts about the Cistercians in Britain. His approach to things was very similar to that of William Hoskins and Maurice Beaufort, who were all interested in the same sort of things: landscapes, the medieval period, multi-source and multi-disciplinary stuff. And then I suppose on the purer archaeological side, it was Philip Rahtz. Philip was an archaeology lecturer in the history department in Birmingham. At that time in the early 60's, the history professor Rodney Hilton, thought that history students should understand archaeology. Before lecturing, Philip lived an itinerant existence while digging various threatened sites for the Ministry of Works as it was before English Heritage. He got started in the fifties, so in about fifteen years, he had dug every type of site in all parts of the country. He had enormous experience. When I first met him, I think he was only unhappy that he had not dug Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire, which we subsequently went on to dig together. When he was lecturing, he used to take us out at weekends and you just dug whatever was next. You never knew what you were going to do really! It was fantastic training. In contrast to Universities today, the teaching was done in a pub, over a coffee, at lunch time having pie and chips. It was very informal and very one-to-one, the best way to learn! Lecturers and students just sitting around chatting: that's the way to do it!

Mick had evidently dug an enormous amount of sites either as a student or through 'TimeTeam'. We asked him what his favourite site was and why?

"Well I am not a digger. This is the strange thing because I got involved in television for other reasons and in effect ended up running a digging unit which Time Team sort of is. But I am really a field worker who likes field survey, earthworks and aerial photography; I do a lot of that, that's what really I am interested in. I am a landscape person. So if you ask me a favourite site; I tend not to think in terms of sites, I tend to think of entire landscapes, such as the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, West Penwith in Cornwall or the Isles of Scilly. Because of my interests I can be dropped almost anywhere and find it interesting. Favourites are difficult. I like a really good deserted village site with really good earthworks, something that allows you to see how ordinary people operated. I have never been interested in wealthy or influential people except for monks. Because I come from a working class background I am interested in how working people lived, because they created the hedges, dug the ditches, constructed buildings, they were the craftsmen, they are the interesting people, not the toffs!

It was evident then that Mick's understanding of the world was grounded in the love of landscape which Hoskins and Beresford had brought to their great works. It was people's everyday actions that kept a way of life ticking and flowing through the past and into the present which mattered. Mick's idea of archaeology is also about telling the story of marginalised communities which have been generally neglected in the traditional historical narratives. Mick's pride in his working class background is evident in his eagerness to represent the ordinary people in the archaeological record.

We asked Mick about the challenges facing archaeology, particularly for the next generation of archaeologists.

"There are a whole load of challenges. The main challenge, especially in a British and Irish context is to survive. I think financial support for archaeology could be very easily cut off from Universities. Building hospitals, building roads; that is essential. Archaeology is not. A lot of people in archaeology think it is essential, possibly because there appears to be a career structure. You can get a job with various units and companies when in fact it is very vulnerable to money and cuts. The very big challenge is to get the general public to feel that is important, relevant and significant. I don't know the Irish situation very well; but I detect a lot of tension, like your Carrickmines castle (We mentioned here the situation with Tara and the building of the M3 motorway). Whereas if the public were with

you; they would say 'no, it is important, we must know about this sort of thing'. A lot of that has come about because people think archaeology is an established and stable discipline. It is not. It is very vulnerable. I think the children are your trump card. You have to visit schools and establish young archaeology clubs. Children are important because introducing archaeology to them can promote an interest and appreciation for archaeology in the future and ensure the survival of the discipline.

The primary challenge for archaeology therefore appeared to be reaching out to the general masses and involving them within the archaeological process. We asked Mick if this meant engaging the public through different media.

Yes, if you are going to reach a lot of people; using different media, such as television, is the most efficient way to of doing so. I am sure a lot of people who watch Time Team are watching it because it is a bit of a soap opera. They wonder what Phil is going to do this week. Has Mick still got his stupid pull-over on. I don't care. If that holds their attention then it works for us. There is no point in some of our colleagues being cynical about what we do on Time Team. I have been on a mission all my life. I have got to get people interested because that is the only way they will value archaeology and think it is important and that ensures archaeology will continue to be relevant. One of the things I would like to see done; this is real heretical talk for a lot of people, is an excavation done entirely for the public's benefit. What I mean by this is to choose something that you have a lot of. (Ringforts sprung to mind here!) You start out with what we know about these and what we don't know. What could we find out about this one! In other words, you have a long project before you do any practical work explaining the background to the site and then you do all the non-destructive stuff like earthwork recording, geophysics, geochemical and phosphate analysis. You carry the public with you. You have a visitor centre with a café, loos and carpark. You have tours around and you televise it. You change what's going on every month so people can keep coming back. You stick it next to a centre of population so you can bus the school kids out and people can visit it. And then you dig it. And you dig it very slowly over five years and you get the public involved so that they can see what you are doing and if possible let them dig. Heretical you see! I am sure the bureaucracy in Ireland would throw its hands up in horror at that. (Emmett chimed in here with the insightful comment "For the one site you dig up heretically, you could save another hundred"). When the excavation is completed, you rebuild it and have all the finds on display in a museum on the site. You have a sort of Ferrycarrig that you use as a teaching and tourist aid. You do a ten or fifteen year project over the whole thing and I

think not only you would learn something, but the investment in attracting the public and grabbing their attention would be enormous. I have told lots of people that idea and they usually end up thinking that it is ridiculous. We are not ready for it because we don't think the situation is bad enough to have to do something like that. (Who would take the risk to fund something like that?) Well I think a lot of funds are available because there is a tourist component to it, there is an educational component to it and there probably is an employment component.

Time Team is therefore an important archaeological instrument which can draw people's attention to the discipline and maintain its relevance in an ever-changing society. Mick had also mentioned that Time Team was not simply an archaeological programme but also something of a soap opera.

We asked him whether he thought that it was the soap opera or archaeological aspect of the programme that was a real draw for the vast majority of people.

I think it is both. One of the problems of Time Team is that it is almost the only thing like it and it has been going for thirteen or fourteen years now. It is there for everybody to snipe at, everybody to criticise. I know that people get different things out of it at different levels. There is a big middle-class, middle-aged, relatively well-educated section of the population. The sort of people who subscribe to the National Trust, probably read Archaeology Ireland and who look at it with an interest in the subject. But there is another population group who think it is a bit of a soap opera and there is probably children watching it because they like diggers and machines and things like that. I actually don't think it matters. What matters is that on our site, the archaeological integrity is intact and we fought a lot of battles early on with various television people about not doing things for the television but only doing things we would normally do. Luckily the director we first had, Ran Dickson realised very quickly, that he could get a programme out of it. He did not need to ask us to do anything. There was enough going on and enough characters to get a programme out of it. He didn't have to say "well would you just dig a trench over there or would you just do this" because the answer was no. As long as we are happy that the archaeology is being properly conducted it doesn't matter what different experiences people get out of it. Phil and I talk about that and we are still happy with what we are doing. Most of us are in the IFA (The Institute of Field Archaeologists) and there is a code of conduct that we follow during our work. If the different experiences that people get out of the program stimulates debate then we have achieved our goal. The number of people who just come and just say can I shake your hand because we wouldn't have discovered this or got interested in it if hadn't been

for Time Team. If I go to a Museum or go and visit an English Heritage site there is very often somebody there who comes over and say thank you for getting me interested in this. Once, when we were golfing we had to stop the van because a couple of dustbin men were reversing and a couple of them came over and said how interesting the show was. Another occasion, we were pulled up in a car one day eating our sandwiches and I was told to wind my window down which I did and a chap in the next van said are you that cool dude off Time Team. That seems to me to be important; if people like that are somehow taking this on board, that's good because they might gain an interest in and respect for the archaeology.

We decided to continue to be rather boring and pursue some important theoretical issues (Please don't switch off yet, Mick makes a very interesting point with which many students would agree!!!). We asked Mick rather seriously for his views about the significance of processual and post-processual theory today.

'I don't know anything about it. I don't even understand the terms. I am a Professor in three Universities and I don't understand what these terms are and they don't interest me really. I leave that up to Tadhg; he will tell me if there is anything interesting about it. It doesn't really seem to have much to do with the real world to me. (It's not like its involved in the field). Well we are often accused of not having a theoretical basis in Time Team. To this I say I can hear the millions of televisions being turned off and returning to your earlier question about the challenges facing archaeology; one example is for theoretical archaeologists to make academic archaeology intelligible. If they can make it intelligible to the eleven to fifteen years olds then you are have a winner. But if you cant you might as well shut up because otherwise you are preaching to your navel. I am being very flippant. It's important; but it's only important if it is intelligible and you as students know that it's written in obscure language. If you write in such an unintelligible way; I really question what people's motives are. Because we are in the business of communication in some shape or form and if somehow you are not communicating; because of the jargon and the way it is written, then you are failing.

Are you researching or writing any books at the moment or do you have any plans to do any?

There is nothing obvious on at the moment. We (Time Team) are likely to write a Geophysics book for the general public; that might happen this year. Tony and I wrote a book called 'Archaeology is Rubbish' (Good Title!). Tony got the

impression that archaeology was all the stuff people were throwing away! He wanted to write it and wanted me to write it with him. From the profession, the silence has been deafening about it. But I have discovered that various people have put it on the first year reading list. Because actually it is a book about how an excavation comes about, why it comes about and how it develops and it is understandable and I know people who have taken it to University with them as their first book because it has got things like context sheets and environmental stuff. It was obviously the title that our academic colleagues threw their hands up in horror about. Current Archaeology did not review it for example. The thing I want to do is on Early Pre-1100 monasteries and I have been mucking about that for the last five years but it keeps growing and getting too big and I keep doing new things. Last year I went to France for three weeks and I got interested in that as well. I would like to think I could do it in the next two or three years but I would have to see.

Moving away from archaeology then, we were determined to find other hidden and previously unknown sides to Aston. The first question (as requested by our fellow MA student Shane Burke) focused on ascertaining the nature of his CD assemblage!

Oh you are not going to like this at all. Actually what is in my CD player at the moment is the first CD of Gerterdam! by Wartner! (What!!!) Wartner's ring's cycle. (We hope these are spelt correctly) I got heavily into Opera you see. I have Rolling Stones stuff and things like that but I suppose for the last ten or twenty years I have listened to nothing but classical stuff. And my main expenditure other than books is concerts, quartets, symphonies and operas and stuff like that. Cost me a fortune every six months. I don't like Bristol, but the only good thing about Bristol is that it has a little concert hall called St. George's Brandon Hill which is a converted Georgian church and its acoustics are absolutely fantastic. It has jazz meetings and Third World music. (Were you ever in the National Concert Hall of Ireland) No, I have been to the Welsh one, Welsh Millennium centre, which is fantastic. I am not over here long enough to go there. So, usually what's in the CD player is late Beethoven's quartets or Mozart's operas (Not any Dance Music?) No I think my dance days are probably over!

Well his dance days may be over, but surely he had other hobbies outside archaeology and Opera music!

Yes I do. I like landscaping. I don't have enough ground to do a lot of it. It would be lovely to have 5,000 acres and plant trees, dig canals and create pools.

Walking. I am a great walker. (Have to, to get around archaeology!) Oh well that's true. See we both work at home now. The house has got about three or four studies in it and my journey to work is to cross a corridor from one room to another. If you don't, go out and do some walking. So, we are invariably walking along the Somerset coast and up over the headlands. We try to do that two or three times a week. I am also very interested in botany. It's interesting to look at the hedges and ground floor (to this we nodded in enthusiastic agreement.....!?). So, I planted all these hedges around the garden with twenty odd species with all the stuff out off the prehistoric pollen record in Somerset. I also watch a lot of television. (Of course). I like detective stuff. People like Morse and Poirot!! Things like Father Ted and Red Dwarf. (So you are a Spike Milligan fan?). Yes! Anything that is irreverent, scurrilous and a bit surreal. I am the same with artists. I like people like Salvador Dali! People that make you think a bit. I like that sort of reaction from people. I don't like safe things really. (Challenging the Establishment?) Yes. I have always been a rebel. I have come from a working class, left-wing background. I wouldn't be interested in anybody with a suit. I don't wear a suit. People hide behind a suit. Bureaucrats hide behind suits. So I was brought up to be very sceptical of people in offices.

And there we called a halt to the discussion with Mick for he had to rush to the aforementioned meeting with Belfield FM for those not fortunate enough to enjoy an hour with this legendary archaeologist in person. We learned a great deal about Mick, his visions for archaeology and most importantly the significance of communicating archaeology in today's world of information. We hope you too have learned something new about archaeology's Mick Aston who has graced the screens of so many televisions for over a decade in both Ireland and Britain. We wish him the very best when he is listening to opera, doing landscape archaeology, landscaping in his back garden and staring at interesting hedges!! We hope his energy and strong opinions, expressed so passionately, do not wane and that he continues to pass on his vast knowledge of archaeology to the next generation of archaeologists and also that he continues to challenge our perceptions of what archaeology should be and its place in our ever-changing society.

Reflections

'Reflections' is a forum for people with different involvements in the world of archaeology providing a platform for them to share some of their thoughts and experiences of archaeology and the study of the past with each other and of course, with you, the reader!

Irish Archaeology Today

Almost 39 years ago I became auditor of the Archaeological Society in University College Dublin, then a place very different from what it is now. It was still in Earlsfort Terrace and our meetings took place, appropriately enough, in the old Pathology Theatre on Thursday nights. We looked forward to these eagerly as they presented by far the most reliable way that we as students could hear from other archaeologists outside Dublin or outside the university system entirely, professionals such as curators from the National Museum and archaeologists from the National Monuments Service of the Office of Public Works. All of these were liable to provide a frisson of excitement by going against the grain of our teachers' doctrines and we felt a delicious and mildly revolutionary excitement at the thought of hearing from the late Professors Brian O'Kelly and Michael Duignan or from one of the great heresiarchs, Professor Frank Mitchell of Trinity College who, in those far off days, actually believed in the existence of a Mesolithic Period in Ireland. They were in fact by comparison with today rather innocent times but there was one remarkable comparison. Then as now a great deal of Irish archaeology was unknown territory. The Archaeological Survey, though not yet publishing, had begun to open up our knowledge of the range and distribution of field monuments in the country. Almost any excavation was bound to throw up information so new that it demanded a rethink of fundamental assumptions about the archaeology of this island. I can think of Professor Eogan's excavations at Knowth, the burgeoning field of archaeology of the medieval period fed largely by excavations undertaken in advance of monument restoration, and the renewed cycle of field work on flint collecting sites in Northern Ireland. It was the time too, though less publicised than now, of Dudley Waterman's ground-breaking excavations at Navan Fort and the winding-up of O'Kelly's long campaign at Newgrange.

I have always thought that the most over-rated archaeological reaction to a discovery was one of surprise. Why should we assume that pretty much the whole field of knowledge has been mapped and that there is very little left to learn so that anything that comes our way is 'surprising'? We are living through what amounts to a revolution in public archaeology in Ireland at present although it is something which makes a lot of people uncomfortable. 'Surprises' have

been almost daily occurrences in recent years. New types of sites have emerged through excavations along motorways and other developments, the range of material found often also extends our knowledge of the artifactual heritage of prehistoric and early-medieval Ireland. Who would have thought that a conservation laboratory would be wrestling with the problems of conserving an ancient set of what looks like pan- pipes? Or that we might indeed see in the most recent Archaeology Ireland what amounts to an early Irish workshop for the manufacture of the ecclesiastical bells? The vastly increased range of Bronze Age burials, particularly those in reasonably carbon-dated contexts contained in plain, rather crude pottery, together with the identification of village-like clusters has enormously enriched knowledge of Bronze Age settlement. When I was studying archaeology the discovery of a Neolithic house, despite the record of Lough Gur, was considered to be unlikely and the finding of even one would have been regarded by my teachers as revolutionary.

Now we have to absorb the lessons that there are several known clusters of Neolithic houses while the record of some excavations has finally laid to rest the notion of the utterly pacific peasant societies beloved of older text books. We have to deal with the patently obvious fact that in the period as long as the Neolithic a simple monolithic interpretation of the nature of society (perhaps above all its peaceableness and lack of group competition) is a thing of the past and happily so. Who would have thought that the excavation of so much of our countryside would have produced a finding that the burnt mounds (as we used to call them *fulachta fiadha*) are amongst the most numerous archaeological monuments to be found?

Peter Woodman in his address to the EAA in Cork in 2005 began to fret about what we were not finding and why were we not finding it in the rash of excavation which has taken place in recent years. One of the reasons I suppose is that despite all the arguments about development and the rape of our landscape, the fact of the matter is that where possible public authorities choose to build their roads in as much on the marginal land as is consistent with a practical route.

This cannot always be so – the Ashbourne bypass for example in Co Meath is on pretty good lowland of considerable agricultural potential. But as a rough approximation, we can say that the routes of roadways are not chosen to provide a representative cross-section of archaeology. What we have seen in the last five to six years with the systematisation of archaeology on our roads has been little short of revolutionary and this brings me to the crux of my reflection.

Broadly speaking, the standard of archaeology being practiced on our roads nowadays is good. Remote sensing is routinely applied to identify otherwise

undetectable sites that might be at risk through road building and to explore known sites more fully. This process has brought to light in recent years a vast richness of archaeology. If we are to extrapolate from the road building schemes we would have to revise our estimates of the total populations of individual site types in the country. The material being excavated is routinely recorded in stratigraphical reports which are soon to be publicly available. Substantial amounts of analysis are carried out in post-excavation work at a level unprecedented in the past. Where there has been a lag is of course in publication but processes are in hand now to correct the worst deficiencies there. We are in a position to begin to revise heavily our classic notions of archaeological periods in Ireland and to enrich with remarkable detail even the traditional picture where we cling to it. We have not for example, fully digested the implications of the remarkable find of an organised cluster of Bronze Age

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dwellings at Corrstown in Co Derry nor have we fully integrated such a highly specialised, well equipped grain processing site as Raystown, Co Dublin into our thinking of the organisation of agriculture, food production, trade and social relationships in early-medieval Ireland. Nor indeed the very similar complex of tidal mills at Nendrum, Co Down which shows the scale achievable at the time.

The roads have all have produced a remarkable variety and quantity of material which will take time to assimilate. The basic field working nowadays tends to a standard much higher than I experienced when I was a student. This is all to the good.

The developments in the countryside do bring a lot of people disappointment, anger, frustration and heartache and I share some of it myself when well-loved sites and places are touched by the hands of the developer.

But on balance, in the absence of heavy investment in comprehensive public transport, in the wide dispersal of population around the country without any thought to systematic planning, for the foreseeable future bypasses and motorways will continue to be built. If they proceed despite the most vehement objections, then the archaeological work has to be done and as far as I am concerned the people who have to do it will then deserve whole-hearted support. If we are to be successful in protecting what is most precious about our archaeological heritage in the face of all this change, then the people charged with the management and protection of our heritage will have to get more clever and at the moment the signs are that they don't think strategically. One could set up an argument that the furore over Carrickmines led directly to the significant changes which were made to the National Monuments Act in matters effecting development. The net effect of this was when the highly predictable dispute about Tara came along, the principal weapon in the defensive armoury had been impaired and was not available in any meaningful sense to mount a coherent legal defence of that or any other archaeological landscapes. I would go further, and say that we have a long tradition in this country of defending important principles at the outermost limits of credibility and arriving at a situation when we really need all the weapons at our disposal that they are gone, they have been derided by a large part of the public and dismissed by the Courts. There have been great and worthwhile battles which have yielded important advances for archaeology – in retrospect one can say that the Wood Quay dispute of the 1970s did promote the cause of archaeology rather than the reverse. But we seem to be seeing a reversal of the tide that began to come in the late 70s and early 80s where protection as apposed to excavation is concerned.

Dr. Michael Ryan

Landscapes: Archaeology and History

I was born and reared in Derry. Each Sunday when I was young my father walked the children out the Hill Road, as it was called, to Greenan (Grianán Ailech) five miles away. It was straight up 800 feet with little respite. It was exhausting except that the way home was all down hill. It was always a great thrill to come up on the brow of the hill and see the great rampart loom ahead. No matter how tired we were we always had a race to see who would get inside first. And it didn't stop then for there was the race up the steps of the terracing to see who would be the first to the top. In the winter we spent most of the time huddled beneath the parapet but in the summer we could look out on the magnificent views in all directions.

Grianán lies on a hill overlooking a valley that separates it from the Inishowen peninsula to the north. In ancient times 'the land of Eoghan' would have been a true island. Looking north from Grianán there would have been water stretching between Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle on the floor of the valley below. The mountains of Inishowen form the spine of the peninsula with the two loughs on either side. Looking towards the south the two rivers, Swilly and Foyle, that feed the loughs recede like silver streams into the distance. The mountains of west Donegal, of Derry, and the Sperrins of Tyrone stretch out on the horizon. This was a place fit for a king.

We were told stories of the ancient kings of Ailech — how the place got its name from a man who had to carry a large stone on his back until he arrived at the place. When he was relieved of his burden he cried "Ail ach, Oh Stone, you have broken my heart" and he died on the spot. We also looked for the tunnel that supposedly went from Greenan to another fort at Elaghmore just outside Derry City. We were told of the ancient warriors who slept beneath Greenan standing in their armour ready to come out to fight for Ireland.

The past and the present were not very far apart in our young minds. The stories we were told may not have been history but they filled the imagination. They gave me an interest in the past that led to my academic commitment to the subject, Early Irish History. They also gave me an interest in the landscape as something that had a story to tell of itself. Indeed the landscape is our most precious document. The story of man is written on its face. Our place-names are gateways to the past as are the stories associated with them. Today this fragile document is under constant and unrelenting attack. Unlike a manuscript in a library that can be revisited by scholars, when the document of the landscape is torn there is no going back.

Today many disciplines have become very specialised—indeed to the point where some imagine that their own discipline has all the answers. Of course it is such hard work getting on top of one's own discipline that there is little time or appetite to become familiar with another. Yet it is necessary to gain sufficient knowledge to at least understand the scholarly debate in neighbouring areas. An historian need not take part in an archaeological dig but he should at least be able to read a report critically. An archaeologist needs to keep up with the historical debate in those areas for which there is historical documentation. And both would do well to read extensively in the anthropological literature if we are to have some sympathy with or have an empathy with the people of the past.

These are the approaches that I take myself and I think that there has never been a greater need for co-operation among the disciplines. In these days of 'rescue' archaeology there is often little time for research before the dig takes place but in so far as it is possible archaeologists should have some idea of what to expect, as a result of historical enquiry, before the ground is disturbed. The amount of excavation at present is staggering. The few results that have been made public so far show that historians and archaeologists will need to engage in teamwork if there is to be a proper interpretation of the evidence. The imagination of the child can have free reign but scholars have no such luxury. We have a duty to use our imaginations but the richness of the vision must be informed by a wide interdisciplinary approach.

Charles Doherty

From post-office to post-ex!

So how did a postal worker of twenty odd years end up studying archaeology in UCD? I left school in 1982. It was, I'm ashamed to say, a joyful occasion. School and I did not get along. As the statutes of limitations ran out a good while back, I can confess to the crime of 'going on the hop' quite a lot; I probably spent more time wandering the Wicklow mountains observing nature than I did doing schoolwork. There was however, one aspect of my early academic career that I thoroughly enjoyed. That was the Grave Diggers Society.

In first year in C.B.S. Colaiste Chaomhin, Parnell Road, Crumlin, we had a teacher who introduced me (and a few others) to the antiquities of the Irish countryside. He set up an archaeology appreciation club of sorts. Unfortunately, he allowed the students to choose the name; thus the Grave Diggers came to be constituted. The name was inspired by the semi-punk band Rocky de Valera and the Grave Diggers. Other suggestions for names cannot be mentioned here for legal and moral reasons. We met on Fridays and I think we paid ten pence a week to bolster our funds to pay for the diesel for our trips. We (the students) ran the club with minimum interference from the school hierarchy, and I have to admit we did it quite well. I cannot recall who picked the destinations for our trips; it may have been a fifty-fifty decision between us and the teacher. I do remember, though, the great 'craic' we had on them. We used to arrive at the school early on Saturday mornings bearing the obligatory packs of sandwiches and thermos flasks of soup, packets of crisps and cassette tapes to play on the dodgy stereo fitted in the mini-bus. This was a venerable old Ford Transit, 1970's vintage. Off then to our chosen destination for the day.

I still remember with awe my first visit to the complex at Tara. I vividly recall the feeling of being somewhere special, somewhere full of a sense of the past. I got the archaeology bug there and then! Another great experience was climbing the wooden ladders to the top of the round tower at Monasterboice. The view from the top was spectacular. It was one of those bright, cold early spring mornings and the plains of Meath were spread out before us. We were the last group, I believe, to be allowed that privilege. Public access was withdrawn shortly after. A pattern is emerging here of Meath being the focus of our interests. This is not true but due to the fact that this wonderful county was so close and so full of sites we did go there often.

My first ever visit to Newgrange was with the Grave Diggers too. Impressed as I was by the great passage tomb, I feel I was more impressed by the complex at Fourknocks. It was, I think, the intimacy of the smaller site that appealed to

me. I remember us trying to de-code the artwork and some of the explanations we arrived at still make me cringe when I think of them today. The 'Funny Man' (as we called the piece of art) on the wall of the tomb just inside the chamber on the left was the subject of great speculation among the group. Little did we know the teacher who was our guide was doing his masters thesis on Neolithic art at this time; I shudder to think what, if any, influence we had on his findings! The Boyne Valley and other parts of Meath still bring back fond memories to me today.

As I said, we occasionally ventured to other parts of the island. Wicklow was a good resource to us. On one trip we climbed Baltinglass Hill in a blizzard. That was quite a scary experience. We were told about the great archaeological features on the hill, but 'nary a one' could we see under the three feet of snow: many years later I returned to the locus and sat there thinking how close to disaster we had been that day. On another trip, this time to Seefin, we climbed to the passage tomb which is on the edge of Kilbride army rifle range. (I was to have good times on this range later- see below). The teacher had a great time explaining the orientation of the tomb entrance towards the east until one clever little student, who happened to have a compass with him, pointed out the fact that it didn't face that direction at all. On the way back down the mountain, in sight of the bus, Brendan 'Jack' O'Rawe tripped and fell. We had a field trip to the casualty department of the Adelaide Hospital, too, that day. Jack had broken his arm, just weeks before we sat the Intermediate Certificate Examination... I remember all of us thinking "lucky sod!!"

There were many more days out and the above are just a sample of them. We did walking tours of Dublin and even took part in the demonstration to save Wood Quay (my first of many protests). Art galleries and museums were on the agenda when the weather did not permit travel to the countryside. There was a week long trip to the Dingle area too, but for some reason I cannot remember I couldn't go on that. Anyhow, as I said, I was not the greatest at applying myself to studies so I drifted out of school and into work as a Junior Postman. I got to ride a motorcycle around Dublin and even got paid for the pleasure. The F.C.A. became the new outlet for my interests and instead of looking at parts of Wicklow I got to blow bits of it up with mortars and field guns; great fun!! The love of archaeology though, stayed with me from those days and I always managed to plan any trip I was making to the country around the sites, great and small. I expanded my knowledge in this way and became an avid reader of journals and books on the subject. When I was diagnosed as being unfit to continue working in An Post due to ill health (much to the managements delight- union activities were also a passion!) I knew that I had to do something with this passion. I

returned to studies with the Adult Education Program in UCD. I completed the Return to Learning certificate course and applied through the CAO for a place on the BA degree course in this college. To my delight I was accepted, and that is how a postal worker came to study archaeology in UCD.

I suppose I should give you the name of the teacher who first set me on the course my path is taking. His name is Muiris O'Sullivan; I'm sure you have all heard of him; he's quite good on Neolithic art I believe. I still worry about the effect the Grave Diggers may have had on his thesis.

Enda Fahy

Book Review Section

Writing Archaeology: Telling Stories About the Past
Fagan, B 2006 Left Coast Press, California.

Brian Dolan

At first glance *Writing Archaeology* appears to have cornered a gaping hole in the market: thousands of procrastinating students, over-worked lecturers and pressurised commercial archaeologists struggling with their archaeological prose and searching for the key to easing their exertions. Indeed, Brian Fagan seems the ideal man for this job; a prolific author who has churned out numerous archaeological tomes and, it seems, managed to stay sane. Alas for all of us, as Fagan makes clear in his preface, his audience, and his message, are much more narrowly defined. This is a book designed to teach archaeologists how to reach the masses. It is a practical, technical and very honest guide to the self-discipline, hard-slog and passion required to be a proficient general writer. Fagan's goal is to provide archaeologists with the skills to present archaeology to the public in a clear and enjoyable way. He goes beyond the technicalities and minutiae of writing and provides practical information on the publishing industry, proposing books, working with editors, the production process and even the marketing of books post-publication. Importantly, Fagan's considerable experience writing general books translates into a straightforward style and a personal tone.

The book is split into easily digestible and logical chapters; each dealing with a specific theme and centred on one of nine writing 'rules'. The first of these rules 'Always tell a story' introduces a chapter on the art of writing. This is the only generalised chapter and it deals with the importance of passion, imagination and perseverance in writing as well as the practicalities of inspiration, how to write and dealing with the 'hard slog'. The next chapter deals specifically with the world of short articles, magazines and a genre of general writing I had previously been ignorant of: the 'op-ed' article.

The following six chapters are the guts of the book and are an incredibly informative tour through the world of book writing and publishing, a journey fascinating in itself. Fagan draws heavily on personal experience, particularly when describing his relationship with his editors and his own struggle with that old familiar demon procrastination. Of particular interest to those interested in entering the publication world are the chapters on writing a proposal and the production and editing process. These provide valuable information that it would

be difficult to find from any other source.

The final chapter deals with the challenge of writing textbooks for the academic market; an entirely different ball game from the more general writing covered earlier. This section will likely be of use to a very small number of this book's potential readers but at the same time its personal tone gives it an inherent fascination for those interested in the publication world. Fagan's final contribution is a handy list of 'resources for writers' consisting of websites and books dedicated to various aspects of writing in general and writing archaeology, each with handy comments about their usefulness.

This volume certainly achieves its stated goals; as a guide to general writing it is exemplary. In some ways the book is actually more than what Fagan states at the outset. Its personal style and human anecdotes give an insight into the author and his career that goes beyond the confines of a simple manual. The book also serves as a platform for Fagan to promote general writing among archaeologists. This is an important and particularly relevant message in Ireland where engagement between archaeologists and the public is sorely lacking and the proper dissemination of important interpretations, discoveries and ideas rarely happens.

In an Irish context parts of the book are a little out of touch. There is a definite stateside focus and this is particularly obvious in chapter two where all the examples of magazines and newspapers given hale from America. Fagan's account of the publication and production process is also, for obvious reasons, based on his American experience. As someone who has not yet managed to publish a book in Ireland I am not really qualified to judge if this is relevant in an Irish context but I suspect much of the simple advice given would transfer. One final minor gripe which may jar with Irish sensibilities is the author's frequent use of his own books as examples of how to do things right. This is a little immodest if perhaps justifiable considering his experience and success.

Writing Archaeology achieves exactly what it sets out to achieve and a little more. While its target audience is perhaps fairly narrow, its personal tone, supremely practical tips on writing and its fascinating details about the otherwise arcane world of publishing mean it is a book that should appeal to a wide audience. Fagan's basic message is that anyone can 'write archaeology' even if it is quite hard. With this in mind his admission that Writing Archaeology took six drafts to write is a nice reminder that writing is a struggle, even for the pro's.

Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice 313-450

Finn, R. 2006 Oxford University Press.

Lorcan Harney & Conor Smith

This book forms part of the Oxford Monograph series, which seeks to examine the promotion and practice of almsgiving in the later Roman Empire between 313-450 A.D. It is a comprehensive historical study that explores the donation of money, food and clothing to the poor in Late Classical Europe. Finn identifies the problems with previous research on the topic; namely the lack of attention given to its function, status and role in the negotiation of power relations. After his brief introductory overview of the historical context, Finn divides this study into a number of chapters, each of which tackles themes and issues identified by the author.

The next two chapters examine the distinctive forms of almsgiving practiced by bishops, ascetics, emperors and prosperous lay people. Finn suggests that Episcopal almsgiving, particularly to widows and orphans, was a crucial way in which the bishop's status and identity as an important leader in a Christian society was affirmed. He also proposes that monastic almsgiving, particularly in the context of the bestowment of the ascetic's property to the poor, threatened to both undermine the monk's pursuit of isolation and to diminish the authority of local bishoprics, who in some cases were failing to provide adequate alms to the local poor.

Chapters four and five attempt to examine how Christian discourses and ideals promoted through a range of media, including treatises, hagiographies and sermons actively sustained , developed and inscribed meaning to the practice of almsgiving in this period. He examines how these Christian discourses articulated by preachers espoused ideas about how people of different rank should behave and interact with each other and differed in many respects to traditional pagan euergetism and charity. Finn then considers how such exhortation had the effect of reformulating relationships between the donor and recipient of the alms. This was achieved through the conception of almsgiving as the exchange of gifts, whereby the material goods of the wealthy donor would be reciprocated by the spiritual prayers of the poor for the wealthy donor. This new relationship ensured that the recipient was not completely deprived of all honour and respect, but yet had the subtle effect of casting the donor of the alms as a virtuous paternal figurehead and father of the poor.

Finn finally seeks to understand how these Christian ideals interacted with and emerged from older Classical charitable and cultural traditions. He suggests that traditional civic *euergetism* in the form of building projects co-existed with new Christian practices of almsgiving. Further, he explores how the Classical arts of rhetoric and writing were reworked and re-evaluated to provide and develop a Christian moral philosophy that had roots in such a cultured past.

One of the major strengths of this book, particularly from an archaeological viewpoint, is that Finn understands the promotion and practice of almsgiving as deeply embedded within and part of ideologies of power and authority in hierarchical social relations. He analyses how the practice of almsgiving had the effect of redefining the identity and status of the participants and subtly reinventing new concepts of governance under a Christian theological dressing. The distinctive forms and ranges of almsgiving also meant that the practice could carry different meaning for different people in a variety of contexts. Such concerns with how ideologies and particular discourses, often mentioned in historical texts, were articulated materially, are also a relevant concern for archaeologists, particularly with the growth in interest in archaeologies of practice and identity in recent theory.

Concerning the relevance of almsgiving in the early Irish church, it must be stated that there exists major differences with the Late Classical world in terms of chronology, material culture and ecclesiastical practices. Ireland remained geographically peripheral to the Roman cultural and political milieu and this was reflected in the traditional historical and archaeological narratives which have conceptualised the early church as monastic in form and peculiarly insular in character. The dominance of this overarching monastic model ensured that these settlements were often treated in isolation from the local community. Recent scholars such as Etchingham and Sharpe have stressed the social dimension of the early medieval church and its role in providing pastoral care for the lay society (Sharpe 1992; Etchingham 1999). This book is based largely on historical evidence from late Classical society on the continent. Almsgiving and its various forms in providing material support for the poor were obviously different in an Irish context. Yet it perhaps highlights the need for both early medieval archaeologists and historians to begin to think about examining evidence for this activity and building it into Irish church-society studies. Not an easy task, but perhaps a worthy one nonetheless.

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Medieval Pottery from Wood Quay, Dublin: The 1974–6 Waterfront Excavations.

McCutcheon, C 2006 Dublin: RIA, NMI Medieval Dublin Excavations 1962–81 Ser. B. vol. 7 (2006).

Thomas Cummins

Clare McCutcheon has written the definitive contribution to archaeological ceramics for medieval Dublin. Every facet of this book places it at the centre of Irish archaeology, both as a reference for professionals and as a foundation for students. Strangely, the very richness of Dublin's medieval ceramics is a material reflection of the site's unlikeliness as a capital. Sand bars in the bay, a shifting estuary, and a shallow-water port make this a tricky place for ships to come in—prejudicing against the import of heavy ceramics, and giving rise to an early pottery industry while other ports such as Cork and Waterford continued to be dominated by imported wares.

McCutcheon's historical research shows that since potters had low status, and were not formed into guilds, most evidence for their work is fragmentary and indirect. There was a colony of potters in an as yet unidentified Crocker Street, outside the walls on the continued alignment of today's Cook Street into Oliver Bond Street. It is astounding that there is no known production site at this location, though there have been manufacturing finds elsewhere.

The book is a catalogue of wares. Each ware is described, usually in terms of its fabric (the composition of clay and temper as altered during firing), form (jugs, bowls, and a host of preposterous-sounding utensils), and decoration including glazes, applied clay strips, and a surprising range of animal and especially human figures. Presenting the photographs and formal technical drawings together is a real bonus. The photographs show the extent of primary material, while the drawings show what can be inferred from that. Used together, we can see the evidence base from which the interpretations are made.

There are a great number of imported wares described. The complexities only begin with separating the wares, not least since there appears to have been a mistakenly simple model of medieval French ceramic imports. McCutcheon has been forced to dismantle the accepted history, and return to the physical evidence. In order to find the origins of these ceramics, she has begun scouring provincial museums in France, a work that is likely to take several generations. The French material is principally from the Saintonge area. Marks scratched onto the bases of the Saintonge green glazed jugs have been thought of as

makers' or merchants' marks. McCutcheon proposed in the report of the Waterford excavations (Gahan & McCutcheon 1997) that these were owners' marks. Now in the Wood Quay volume, she lays out the arguments, and I think wins her case: the marks are not on all vessels, show inconsistent patterns, are informal, crude, overglaze, and are only on this one very uniform type. The marks were for owners to identify their own jug. As with the French provenancing, this is one of several instances where it is clear that she has earned great authority in this field, based on good mentors, familiarity with the complete material record, and independent thinking.

The four Dublin-type wares are at the centre of this work, and the type names are formally defined. These are of the utmost importance to archaeologists and students alike, but previous publications have been short on colour illustration. This illustrated catalogue is supported by several authors contributing appendices, and an introduction to the excavations. The ceramics database is backed by the other volumes in the series, ultimately leading to the full publication of the city's foremost archaeological site, and a formative element in the identity of the capital. While that work proceeds, this volume is recommended as an indispensable source for archaeologists in Ireland.

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Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought
Zajko, V. and Leonardo, M (eds). 2006

Oxford University Press

Amy McQuillan & Patrizia La Piscopia

Mythological archetypes have been used and manipulated by many disciplines to reify modern concepts and ideas. Classical myth has been rewritten and reinterpreted also in the field of feminist speculation. This volume is composed by a collection of essays attempting to analyse the way in which myth has been central to the development of feminist thought.

In the introduction to the book the editors outline the importance of the French feminist writer Hélène Cixous as an essential component to the book's message. In 1975 she published a literary essay titled: "The Laugh of the Medusa" in which she exhorts her female readers to use their body to express themselves; going against the structure of the current phallogocentric society. Medusa is a mythic figure taken by Cixous as an example of how a man-made myth can transform a beautiful female creature in something monstrously evil, the French intellectual deconstructs the traditional male perception of the myth and affirms that Medusa "is not deadly, she's beautiful and she's laughing".

Whoever is laughing with medusa has achieved the awareness that there is nothing to be frightened or intimidated by in the female nature, women need simply to take the path of personal research to gain their own voice with no fear of obstacles. Therefore, starting from the title this volume expresses a strong support and agreement to Cixous's vision of the myth in feminist thought. The essays that compose this volume are structured in five chapters, each of which is focused on a predefined antithesis that opposes Myth to a particular 'social topic'. This interdisciplinary anthology addresses the impact of classical myth and feminist thought on psychoanalysis, politics, history, science and poetry.

Myth and Psychoanalysis

This section analyses how myth has been used in modern psychoanalysis. Psychologists use myths as examples of human behaviour and see myths as laden with behavioural implications.

In Richard Bowlby's paper on 'The Cronus Complex', he uses the myth of Cronus as a basis upon which to analyse childhood loss of self. The Cronus myth is based on how Cronus castrated his father and was later betrayed by the only one

of his children he had not eaten (Crandell, 1984, 109-110). The castration complex emerges from this myth and is seen more as a realisation of self in humans that separates males from females. The paper is based on Freud's idea that at a young age, female's endure the tragic realisation that they are lacking a penis, and are thus inferior to males and destined to spend life wishing they would gain a penis or in other words, suffer from penis envy. Males can disassociate themselves with the Oedipus complex and move from family orientation into culture through the realisation of self and identity. The author uses the above myth and the use of it in psychoanalysis to illustrate how these views are seen as outdated in our modern and liberated society.

This section also includes a paper by Griselda Pollock on mythical figurations of the feminine. This paper addresses depictions of the feminine in classical art and how figures such as Antigone and Eurydice can signify sexuality and aesthetic beauty as well as political and intellectual conflict. A discussion as to why muses are always female carries art and imagery from the classical period into the feminist forum.

Zajko's paper 'Who are we when we read' addresses issues relating to personal identity and a readers identification with characters in classical texts. Questions of how mythical characters provide role models and inspirational resources for feminists arise in this paper.

Myth and Politics

As commonly recognised, feminism had a strong impact and influence in the evolution of the political role of women in contemporary society, but how is myth involved in this process of social evolution? Miriam Leonard's essay, first of the section 'Myth and Politics', traces an interesting developmental process that starts with the exemplification of Freud's Oedipus, seen as a mainly masculine prototype of psyche. Freud's use of mythological archetypes is then compared to Lacan's use of an alternative heroine, Antigone that is considered a politically engaged character that challenges the established order. Family and state are central in Lacan's thought; fundamental is the critic and the negation of the passive character of the heroine that Lacan shares with Irigaray, against the traditional Hegelian vision of Antigone. Sophocle's Antigone has a central role also in the two following essays, which recognises the symbolic value of this alternative mythological figure and analyses her role in the evolution of feminist discourses.

Myth and History

This section addresses the way in which myth has shaped history and the way

in which modern thought has used myth to interpret historical events and people. O' Gorman's essay, 'A Woman's History of Warfare', addresses the way in which war has traditionally been portrayed as fought on behalf of women and how the revulsions associated with battle have been sanitised and made suitable for assimilation by the delicate female mind. This view not only marginalised women, but emphasises that fact that war, seen as the action that determined the most important political actions and outcomes in the administration of the world, was a place in which women would never belong.

Stanley's essay on the role of feminism and myth in the discovery of America raises important issues about the how feminist myth has affected the interpretation of history. In this case, the contemporary view of women during the age of discovery impacted the perception of travellers to new lands and the identification of land as female, emphasised by the fact that the continent's names were derived from mythical female figures. Before the advances during the Age of Discovery, geography was very much based on myth. Unknown and often feared places were referred to and thought of as female. Here again, Medusa is addressed as a figure laughing from the margins at the perspective of men, who had placed themselves at the privileged centre of the known world.

Myth and Science

This section addresses the myth versus science dichotomy in modern society, and how feminists can infiltrate this dichotomy in an attempt to assert feminist thought in modern society.

Duncan Kennedy's paper on 'Atoms, Individuals and Myths' analyses how myth has always been used by societies to justify their origin and existence, and how this trend has been replaced in recent centuries by the explanation of human origin through science. In this paper, science is seen as gendered. Images of science can depict it as a conquest, an aggressive male entity challenging the passive female entity of nature. The human desire to explain everything to its finality, like the origin of the human species, is seen as a masculine trait, one which can be challenged by a more female resistance to reductionist explanations of culture.

Alison Sharrock's paper on 'The Philosopher and the Mother Cow' uses a poem to analyse how western intellect privileges science over myth. The poem is analysed through feminist scrutiny with the resulting observations of feminist undertones that seem to betray the patriarchal agendas of its time. The reoccurring theme of science as male and nature as female emerges here. Nature is endowed with freedom from control. The mother cow here is poet, who

is traditionally female, and the philosopher or scientist is male. The poem is seen as implying that the scientist undermines the poet, and that the role of the poet reinforces the dominance of the scientist.

Genevieve Liveley offers a unique insight into the interface between myth and science in her paper on 'Science Fictions and Cyber Myth: Or do Cyborgs dream of Dolly the sheep'. This paper begins by tracing the depictions of robots and cyborgs since classical times, such as Talos, the bronze giant who was an amalgamation of man and metal. Cyborgs are made in the image of humans, but have special characteristics that set them apart from humans and also abilities that make them superior to humans. Cyborgs can be seen as void of gender, which means that they transgress cultural boundaries set out by the cyborgs creator. The definition of cyborgs supplied here indicates that the category can include any human that has been chemically or mechanically enhanced, which includes humans with artificial limbs, pacemakers, anyone who has been cosmetically enhanced or has a dependency on chemicals or medicines. This paper analysis how the boundaries we have created can be broken by artificial images of ourselves. Science fiction is seen here as the new mythology, a forum in which modern mythology can be created and interpreted. This forum has been seen as a place in which feminists can reconfigure modern perceptions of the feminine, as cyborgs represent a 21st century depiction of human identity, we are creating modern mythical monsters in our own image.

Myth and Poetry

The affinity that ties myth to poetry is traced in the last section of the book, where a series of interesting questions are raised more than answered. Why are the Muses feminine? Have they just a passive role inspiring the male artist or they achieved an active and creative role? Penny Murray's pages go through different ways of interpret these characters offering various examples of reclamation of the image of the muse, trying to find an alternative to the traditional scheme of active male/passive female.

This compilation facilitates the discussion of issues such as the role of history as the successor of myth, how psychoanalysis uses myth as a basis within which to explain human behaviour, how science has arisen in recent centuries as an opposition to myth, and how this can encapsulate issues of gendered discourses and the dichotomy of male versus female.

This volume raises issues that are subtly present within archaeology, such as the role of myth and history and how gendered biases can dictate our interpretation of the past. We interpret the past based on our own cultural identities and what

we have been programmed to believe. Gendered archaeology can broaden interpretations of the past. We use both myth and ethnography to justify means of interpretation that extend beyond the norms of modern western views. Archaeology has always been credited with the label of a multi-disciplinary discourse. This book demonstrates the role of classical myth and feminist thought within various disciplines, and archaeology is another in which these issues could be applied and utilised in order to maximise the potential of our analysis of the past.

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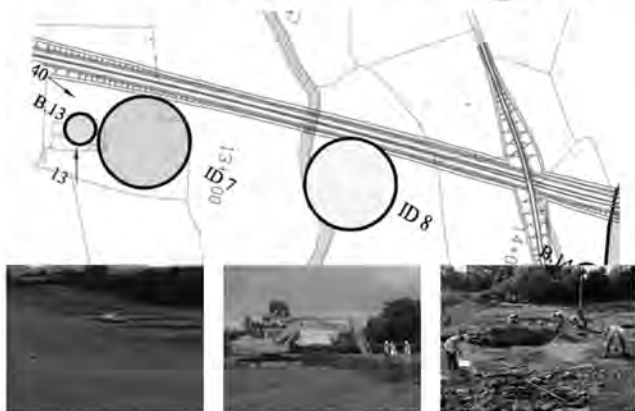
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