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Edited by

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Contents

List of Contributors	iii	
Introduction	v	
Paul Miller, Graeme Erskine, Piotr Jacobsson and Scott Stetkiewicz		
The Proceedings of the 17th Annual Iron Age Research Student Symposium, University of Edinburgh, 28 May – 1 June 2014.....		v
Revisiting Migrations in Archaeology: The Aisne-Marne and the Hunsrück-Eifel Cultures	1	
Dr Manuel Fernández-Götz		
Reassessing Migrations: The Baby and the Bathwater	1	
Towards New Lands: The Champagne – Italy Connection	3	
From Centralisation to Decentralisation: The Hunsrück-Eifel Culture	5	
Climate Change and Resistance to Hierarchy	7	
The Future of Migration Studies.....	9	
Bibliography.....	9	
‘My kingdom for a pot!’ A reassessment of the Iron Age and Roman material from Lagore crannóg, Co. Meath	11	
Alexandra Guglielmi		
Lagore crannóg: a presentation.....	11	
The prehistoric and Roman material from Lagore.....	12	
Swords.....	13	
Barrel padlock	14	
Roman pottery.....	14	
Lagore before the crannóg: an Iron Age sacred lake?	15	
Conclusion	17	
Acknowledgements	17	
Bibliography.....	17	
When is a mortarium not a mortarium? Analogies and interpretation in Roman Cumbria	19	
Jennifer Peacock		
Analogies in Archaeology	19	
Interpretation in Romano-.....	21	
British Archaeology	21	
Case Study: Farmsteads and Mortaria in Cumbria	23	
Conclusion	24	
Acknowledgements	24	
Bibliography.....	24	



Technical Weakness or Cultural Strength? Shapeless Jars in Iron Age East Yorkshire.....	27
Helen Chittock	
Investigating change in Iron Age East Yorkshire through Shapeless Jars	29
Changing Ceramic Forms.....	30
Tradition and Identity	32
Concluding points.....	33
Acknowledgements	33
Bibliography.....	33
Divine Horsemen: equine imagery in Iron Age chariot terrets	35
Anna Lewis	
Acknowledgements	41
Bibliography.....	41
Burials of Martial Character in the British Iron Age	43
Yvonne L Inall	
Introduction.....	43
Past Research	43
‘Warrior’ Burials with shield, sword and spear	43
Offensive Weapons.....	45
Spears and ‘Speared-corpse’ Burials	45
Swords, ‘Sword Burials’ and daggers.....	48
Arrowheads and Sling-stones in burials	49
Non-Offensive Martial Objects.....	50
Shields	50
Armour and Helmets.....	50
Ritual Destruction and Inverted Placement of Martial Objects.....	51
Ritual Destruction.....	51
Alternative Placement of Martial Objects: Rites of reversal	51
Conclusions	52
Bibliography.....	52
Supplemental file: Full list of Burials	55
Iron Age Iron Production in Britain and the Near Continent	60
Scott Stetkiewicz	
Methodology.....	61
Technical Characterization.....	61
Non-Reduced Compounds	61



Slag “Optima”	62
Grantown Road, Forres.....	62
Technical Characterization.....	65
Non-Reduced Compounds	65
Slag Optima	66
Interpretation.....	66
Conclusion.....	67
Bibliography:	68
Religion and society. Cave sanctuaries and votive offerings in Oretania	70
Cristina Manzaneda Martín	
Introduction	70
Oretania and the Oretani	70
Tradition and popular religiosity	70
The cave sanctuaries	71
Monumentalization and political sacralization	72
A place for men and women	74
Conclusions	75
Bibliography.....	77
From Huts to Huts: The Early Iron Age transition in the domestic architecture of Etruria.....	79
Dr Paul Miller	
The evidence	79
Buildings of the Final Bronze Age.....	80
Building shapes.....	80
Foundation construction	81
Wall and roof construction.....	83
Building materials and techniques of the Early Iron Age.....	85
Building shape	85
Foundation construction	86
Conclusions	89
Bibliography.....	89
A reconsideration of the distribution of crannogs in Scotland	93
Michael Stratigos	
State of Research: Crannog distribution and the legacy of drainage.....	94
Research Aims and Method	96
Results.....	99



Discussion.....	102
Iron Age Settlement Patterns and Future Research Strategies.....	103
Conclusion	103
Acknowledgements	104
Bibliography.....	104
New perspectives on British territorial oppida: the examination of Iron Age landscapes in time and space	106
Nicky Garland	
Introduction.....	106
Territorial Oppida	108
New Perspectives	109
Case Study	110
People.....	111
Regions	113
Conclusion	114
Bibliography.....	114
High Voltage Meets Research: The E.ON 2002 Excavations in the Oppidum of Manching	118
Dr Katja Winger	
E.ON I	118
Dating	121
Finds	122
Conclusion	123
E.ON II.....	123
E.ON III.....	123
E.ON IV	125
E.ON V	127
E.ON I–V: Results	128
Acknowledgements	128
Bibliography.....	128
The forts of Western Scotland: An interim study of internal area	130
Simon Wood	
Introduction.....	130
What do we know?	131
Internal area – methodology.....	132
Internal area - results.....	134



Conclusions and future work.....	136
Bibliography.....	137
An approach to re-examining the chronology of hillforts and other prehistoric monuments	140
Johnattan A. Horn	
Assessing ¹⁴ C date weaknesses.....	140
Site assessment and categorisation	142
Grade A – Excellent	142
Grade B – Good	143
Grade C – Moderate	143
Grade D – Poor	143
Grade E – Very Poor	143
Grade F – No Dating Information	143
Practical Approach and Considerations.....	143
Application of the grading system to Scottish hillforts	144
Broxmouth, East Lothian – Grade A	144
Eildon Hill North, Scottish Borders – Grade B.....	144
Trusty’s Hill, Dumfries and Galloway – Grade C.....	144
Craigs Quarry, East Lothian – Grade D.....	144
Castle Law, Abernethy – Grade E.....	145
Conclusion	145
Acknowledgements	146
Bibliography.....	146
Burning Questions: New Insights into Vitrified Forts	147
Dr Murray Cook, Fiona Watson, Professor Gordon Cook	
Introduction.....	147
Vitrification	147
Aberdeenshire	148
City of Stirling	149
Discussion.....	152
Conclusion	153
Bibliography.....	154



List of Figures

Revisiting Migrations in Archaeology: The Aisne-Marne and the Hunsrück-Eifel Cultures	1
Figure 1: Diagram of a migratory process (Modified from Anthony 1990: fig 1).....	2
Figure 2: Physical map of the main area covered by the study, with indication of the Champagne, the Belgian Ardennes and the Hunsrück-Eifel region (after Fernández-Götz 2014).....	4
Figure 3: Comparison between Late Iron Age objects found in Marne (France) and Marzabotto (Italy) (after Mortillet 1871, Image out of copyright).	5
Figure 4: Sites of the La Tène A, B, C and D periods in the Hunsrück-Eifel area. The distribution maps clearly reflect the fall in population during La Tène B –here the decline appears to have occurred mainly in La Tène B2– and La Tène C (after Fernández-Götz 2014).....	6
Figure 5: Evolution of solar activity between ca. 1300 BC and 100 AD (after Pare et al. 2009, reproduced with permission).....	8
‘My kingdom for a pot!’ A reassessment of the Iron Age and Roman material from Lagore crannóg, Co. Meath	11
Figure 1: Swords from Lagore ©Hencken 1950: fig.55. Reproduced with permission of the Royal Irish Academy.....	13
Figure 2: Roman barrel padlock from the Rath of the Synods, Tara. ©Grogan 2008: fig. 4.11. Courtesy of UCD School of Archaeology.....	14
Figure 3: Samian pottery from Lagore © Hencken 1950: fig. 57. Reproduced with permission from the Royal Irish Academy.....	15
Figure 4: Lagore in its prehistoric setting: a starting point for a procession to Tara?.....	16
When is a mortarium not a mortarium? Analogies and interpretation in Roman Cumbria	19
Figure 1: Single-tiered archaeological analogies (after Bernbeck 2000: 143)	20
Figure 2: Two-tiered archaeological analogies	20
Figure 3: Three-tiered archaeological analogies.....	20
Figure 4: ‘Nested’ analogies – structuralism	21
Figure 5: A typical mortarium found in Roman Britain (after Cramp et al. 2011: Figure 1: 1340, reproduced with permission).....	22
Figure 6: Hermeneutic cycle of interpretation	22
Technical Weakness or Cultural Strength? Shapeless Jars in Iron Age East Yorkshire	27
Figure 1: The dating of features excavated during the British Museum Yorkshire Settlements Project (data from Rigby 2004). The sample for this paper is shown within the blue box.	29
Figure 2: A Shapeless Jar from Hanging Cliff, Kilham (Pit HA29). The author after Rigby (2004), scale added by author.	30
Figure 3: A table showing the decreasing variety in vessel forms in Rigby’s typological groupings (data from Rigby 2004).	31
Figure 4: Ceramic forms at Hanging Cliff between 900 and 600 BC (data from Rigby 2004).	31
Figure 5: The percentages of Shapeless Jars recorded at sites in the Burton Agnes locality (data from Rigby 2004).....	32
Divine Horsemen: equine imagery in Iron Age chariot terrets	35
Figure 1: Terret from Cold Kitchen Hill, Wiltshire. Image by the author, reproduced with permission of Wiltshire Museum, Devizes.....	36
Figure 2: Close-up of detail on crescentic plaque from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey. Image © Nation-	



al Museum Wales – Amgueddfa Cymru, reproduced under the terms of the Creative Archive Licence of the People’s Collection Wales.	36
Figure 3: Close-up of detail on terret from the Polden Hills hoard, Somerset. Image by Philippa Lewis.	37
Figure 4: Close-up of detail on terret from the Polden Hills hoard, Somerset. Image by Philippa Lewis.	37
Figure 5: “Horse-mask” mount from Stanwick/Melsonby, North Yorkshire. Image © Trustees of the British Museum, reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.	37
Figure 6: Terret from Silverdale, Lancashire. Image © Portable Antiquities Scheme/British Museum, reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.	38
Figure 7: Linchpin from Kirkburn chariot burial, East Yorkshire. Image © Trustees of the British Museum, reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.	39
Burials of Martial Character in the British Iron Age	43
Figure 1: Sites with Martial Burials confidently dated to the Iron Age.....	44
Figure 2: Number of Martial burials by County (confident and possible Iron Age burials)	44
Figure 3: Number of Iron Age burials of martial character by funerary rite.....	45
Figure 4: Iron Age burials including shield, sword and iron spearhead (* indicates a ‘speared-corpse’ burial).	46
Figure 5: Map showing Iron Age burials with shield, sword and one or more iron spearhead/s.	47
Figure 6: Associations between martial objects in Iron Age burials in Britain, burials of confident Iron Age date.	47
Figure 7: Overall sword length (mm) in accordance with Stead (2006). * - indicates incomplete sword	48
Iron Age Iron Production in Britain and the Near Continent	60
Figure 1: Simplified iron production chaîne opératoire.....	60
Figure 2: Normalized SEM-EDS compositional values of the Grantown Road Slag (weight %).	63
Figure 3: Grantown Road slag plotted in ternary space.	63
Figure 4: Furnace slag.....	64
Figure 5: “Tap” slag.	64
Figure 6: Contact slag.	64
Figure 7: NRC bivariate scatter plots of the Grantown Road assemblage.	65
Figure 8: Scottish Iron Age iron assemblages.	67
Religion and society. Cave sanctuaries and votive offerings in Oretania	70
Figure 1: Map of Oretani territory and some of the most important oppida connected by some of the main pre-Roman roads.	71
Figure 2: View of Castellar sanctuary in 1918 (Archivo Cabré, Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España, Nº Inv. 4275) (Copyright in the public domain).....	72
Figure 3: View of the hillside of Collado de los Jardines sanctuary (Santa Elena, Jaén) between 1916 and 1918 (Archivo Cabré, Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España, Nº Inv. 4771) (Copyright in the public domain).	73
Figure 4: A: Ex-voto in a war initiation ritual (Álvarez-Ossorio 1941: Lám. XXXII, nº 202); B: couple in a coming of age rite (Álvarez-Ossorio 1941: Lám. CIV, nº 2360 and Lám. CII, nº 1374) (Image out of copyright).	74
Figure 5: A and B: ex-voti associated to fecundity rites (Álvarez-Ossorio 1941: Lám. LIII, nº 358 and Lám. XXVII, nº 177); C and D: newborn (Álvarez-Ossorio 1941: Lám. XCV, nº 1332) (Image out of copyright).	75
Figure 6: Front view and profile of a pregnant woman ex-voto (Instituto y Museo Valencia de Don	



Juan, Nº Inv. 2591) (Copyright in the public domain).....	76
Figure 7: Scheme of the social operation rites and the cyclic conception of time.	76
From Huts to Huts: The Early Iron Age transition in the domestic architecture of Etruria.....	79
Figure 1: Illustrated reconstruction of Northern Bronze Age Building at Luni sul Mignone (Hellström 2001: 167, reproduced with permission).	81
Figure 2: Plan of Scarceta Section D, Final Bronze Age Structure (Poggiani Keller et al. 2002: 359, reproduced with permission).	82
Figure 3: Illustrated reconstructions of Capanne 1 and 2 at Sorgenti della Nova Section I (Negroni Catacchio 1995: 318, reproduced with permission).	82
Figure 4: Illustrated reconstruction and plan of Abitazione 2 at Sorgenti della Nova Section III (Negroni Catacchio 1995: 342, reproduced with permission).	83
Figure 5: Typology of hut cinerary urns as described by Bartoloni et al. (1987: 123-133, reproduced with permission).....	84
Figure 6: Plan of Calvario dei Monterozzi at Tarquinia (after Linington 1982: 252, reproduced with permission).....	85
Figure 7: Plan of San Giovenale Area E (Pohl 1977: 14, reproduced with permission).	86
Figure 8: The Borgo quarter at San Giovenale. Wall and roof construction	87
Figure 9: Diagram of post systems and roof support types (Büchschütz 2005: 56, reproduced with permission).....	88
A reconsideration of the distribution of crannogs in Scotland	93
Figure 1: Outlined regions have been systematically surveyed for crannogs, and this focus has been particularly intense in Dumfries and Galloway. Regions outside of these areas have seen little targeted assessments of crannogs.	95
Figure 2: Name (NMRS Site Number), Date last excavated. Crannogs that have been excavated since 1950, note the focus on southwest Scotland (5 of 12 having taken place in Dumfries and Galloway alone). The triangle represents Black Loch of Myrton which has been interpreted by the excavators as a loch-side dwelling rather than a crannog (Cavers and Crone 2013: 61). However, the site remains listed as a crannog in the National Monuments Record of Scotland.....	95
Figure 3: The outlined areas are the modern councils in which no systematic searches for crannogs have taken place.....	96
Figure 4: Screenshot of the former Loch Auchlossan as depicted on the RMS at NJ 581 005 on the National Library of Scotland's online version (Sheet C.9.b 20/1a, © British Library Board). This is an example of a loch that was drained before the production of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey in this region, and has a possible crannog, The Houff (NJ50SE 4). A possible paleoshoreline of the loch is shown in Figure 6.....	97
Figure 5: The 1745 identified lochs that are depicted on the RMS (Stratigos in prep).....	97
Figure 6: The area of the former Loch Auchlossan with possible paleoshoreline indicated in orange. In this instance, the paleoshoreline was suggested on the basis of an archaeological feature which was interpreted as being a trackway within the former loch (Sutherland 1989). The upper limit of the suggested paleoshoreline is at the same height above sea level as the trackway.	98
Figure 7: List of possible crannogs identified. (1)	99
Figure 7: List of possible crannogs identified. (2)	100
Figure 7: List of possible crannogs identified. (3)	101
Figure 8: Additional possible crannogs from eastern areas not identified by this methodology.	101
Figure 9: Map showing recorded crannogs (compiled by Cavers 2010 and Lenfert 2012) and possible crannogs listed in Figures 7 and 8.	102



New perspectives on British territorial oppida: the examination of Iron Age landscapes in time and space	106
Figure 1: Oppida in NW Europe: sites mentioned in text	107
Figure 2: Selected territorial oppida in Britain	108
Figure 3: Stanway, Colchester, Essex (re-drawn from Crummy et al. 2007)	111
Figure 4: Stanway - Burials/features (re-drawn from Crummy et al. 2007).....	112
Figure 5: Stanway enclosures (re-drawn from Crummy et al. 2007)	112
Figure 6: Equation for labour estimation (after Ashbee and Cornwall 1961; Brown 1991: 12).....	113
Figure 7: ‘Regions’: Stanway in the landscape of the territorial oppidum	113
High Voltage Meets Research: The E.ON 2002 Excavations in the Oppidum of Manching	118
Figure 1: Manching. Schematic plan of the excavated areas including the E.ON-trenches marked in blue and named with I–V	119
Figure 2: Manching, Plan of the structures in trench E.ON-I. Disturbances marked in orange, trial trenches from 1957 in pink, tree windthrows in green. Sections are 10 x 10 m.	119
Figure 3: Manching, Plan of the structures in trench E.ON-I with ground-plans of buildings and the assumed course of the street running W-E (both in red); modern structures are marked in light grey.....	120
Figure 4: Manching, Schematic plan of the excavated areas and settled sectors at the end of LT C1 (red) and LT D1 (highlighted in light red).....	121
Figure 5: Manching, Inv.-No. 2002/9084g: Fragment of an opaque glass vessel. Cf. Gebhard and Feugère 1995, Figure 1: No. 1–4.	123
Figure 6: Manching, Reconstructed streets with modification of street B (black) according to the results of the E.ON-I excavation (illustration: author after Sievers 2001, Figure 2; reproduced with permission).....	124
Figure 7: Manching, E.ON-III, trench 786A: Pit with 8 skulls and partial burial of a child nearby (illustration: RGK; reproduced with permission).	125
The forts of Western Scotland: An interim study of internal area	130
Figure 1: Distribution of sites classed as ‘fort’ by RCAHMS in Western Scotland. (MiniScale [TIFF geospatial data], Scale 1:1500000, Tile(s): miniscale_relief1_r16, Updated: Jan 2014, Ordnance Survey (GB), Using: EDINA Digimap Ordnance Survey Service, < http://edina.ac.uk/digimap >, Downloaded: March 2014, reproduced under the Edina Digimap licence)	131
Figure 2: Ranachan Hill, Kintyre. Multivallate and probably multi-period drystone fort. (RCAHMS 1971, reproduced with permission).	133
Figure 3: Bennan of Garvilland, Wigtownshire. Multivallate drystone fort. (RCAHMS 1912, Image out of copyright).....	134
Figure 4: The internal area of forts in Western Scotland, listed as the number of sites in each region falling into each size category. Data calculated from RCAHMS/OS plans and mapping, and own fieldwork.	134
Figure 5: The internal area of forts in Western Scotland, expressed as a percentage of the 393 sites for which internal area could be calculated, divided up by region. Data calculated from RCAHMS/OS plans and mapping, and own fieldwork.....	135
Figure 6: The number of forts falling into each area category in Western Scotland. Data calculated from RCAHMS/OS plans and mapping, and own fieldwork.	135
Figure 7: The total and average area of forts in Western Scotland. Data calculated from RCAHMS/OS plans and mapping, and own fieldwork.	136



An approach to re-examining the chronology of hillforts and other prehistoric monuments	140
Figure 1: The weakness scoring system as proposed by Ashmore (2004, 125).....	141
Figure 2: Two 14C determinations from Eildon Hill North (Data from Hamilton 2010, 290).....	141
Figure 3: Summary of weakness scoring system as proposed by Becker et al. (2012, 19-21).....	142
Figure 4: Calibrated 14C dates from Trusty’s Hill, Dumfries and Galloway (Data from Toolis and Bowles 2013).....	145
Burning Questions: New Insights into Vitrified Forts	147
Figure 1: Locations of site mentioned in text	147
Figure 2: Radiocarbon dates (* this data was not included in Main (2006))	149
Figure 3: historical events that could have impacted Stirling. The calibrated ranges of the dates used are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit Calibration Programme (Oxcl3://www.rlaha.ox.ac.uk/oxcal.htm)	150
Figure 4: Mote Hill trench location plan.....	151
Figure 5: the Beheading Stone looking towards Abbey Craig.....	151
Figure 6: Mote Hill rampart under excavation.....	152
Figure 7: Abbey Craig trench location plan.....	152
Figure 8: Abbey Craig rampart under excavation	153



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Introduction

Paul Miller, Graeme Erskine, Piotr Jacobsson and Scott Stetkiewicz

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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