

Session title: TERRAINS OF CONFLICT: APPROACHES TO WARFARE IN THE EUROPEAN PAST

Organisers: The ESTOC group: European Studies of Terrains of Conflict
Convenor: John Carman, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham, UK

Time: Thursday morning

Room:

Session abstract:

The ESTOC group – founded in March 2007 in Oudenaarde, Belgium – brings together leading archaeologists, historians, architects and heritage professionals from eight European countries to promote research into and the preservation of places of conflict in the European past. Current members of the ESTOC group – and we seek more from other parts of Europe – are representatives of the following organisations: Åland Board of Antiquities, Finland — The Battlefields Trust, UK — University of Birmingham, UK — University of Bradford, UK — Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, University of Glasgow, UK — DIDPATRI, University of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain — Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Interpretation, Belgium — HALBARDE (Histoire, Archéologie et Littérature des Batailles de l'Artois sous le Règne De l'Espagne), France — University of Leeds, UK — University of Osnabrück, Germany — Riksantikvarieämbetet, Sweden — University College Cork, Ireland — Varusschlacht, Museum und Park Kalkriese, Germany.

Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the EAA meeting to discuss issues of conflict at the location of momentous past military activity, this session seeks to promote the work of conflict archaeologists by providing an opportunity for researchers into past European conflict to present their work to the European archaeological community. We accordingly seek contributions from archaeologists – members and non-members of the ESTOC group alike – that explore the wide range of archaeological work on human conflict, relating to landscapes, artefacts and human remains from all periods, from prehistory to the present.

Paper abstracts:

WARFARE BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD: APPROACHES TO EVIDENCE GATHERING

Julie Wileman, University of Winchester, UK

Archaeologists have looked for evidence of warfare in prehistory through studies of fortifications, weaponry, skeletal trauma, iconography, and more rarely, within settlements. This paper suggests that evidence of fighting is possibly least likely to be

found; fortifications, weaponry and other traditional sources of enquiry are often too ambiguous in meaning to be particularly helpful.

It may be more useful to consider the phenomenon of warfare as a set of human behaviours with causes, preparations, actions and effects that could be traced in evidence of change in landscapes, trade, ritual behaviour and settlements. Different types of evidence can be exploited to trace changes in social landscapes which may have arisen because of hostilities, and the complexity of warfare, its precipitating factors and results may become less obscure;

If, as some maintain, prehistoric warfare was an integral part of the development of socio-political systems in the past, its archaeological identification becomes an essential part of the understanding of the rise of cultures. A firmer base for the identification of its occurrence and effects thus becomes an important focus for the development of a more inclusive methodology.

PROTECTION IN ACTION: RITUAL ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH DEFENCES IN THE IRON AGE NORTHERN IBERIA

Silvia Alfayé and Javier Rodríguez-Corral, Universidad del País Vasco/ Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Through a contextual lecture of the archaeological record, this paper offers an approximation to the symbolic dimension of the spaces and structures which delimitate the Iron Age settlements of Northern Iberia, pointing out the existence of foundational and protective rituals dedicated to sacralise and strengthen the prophylactic character of these areas of passage. We propose a revaluation from a symbolic point of view of unusual findings spatially related to the gates and ramparts of these settlements, such as vessels containing cremated human remains, animal votive pits, metallic deposits, singular constructed structures, or infant and adult burials. Considering the archaeological data and the existence of coetaneous parallels for these ritual practices, we state the accomplishment of collective magical-ritual practices at and around the defences aimed to obtain the divine protection of the settlement by the indigenous societies of the Iron Age Northern Iberia. Within these prophylactic ritual activities we can include the intentional collocation of deer antlers embedded in the walls, the accomplishment of animal sacrifice – and its later votive deposit – the construction of *heroa* or public sacred places articulated around the presence of human bones, the placing of images of the gods at the gates, the burial of infants along the walls, and so on. Therefore, we propose to rethink the fortifications also as ceremonial places in which the communities of the Iron Age Iberia celebrated occasional or periodical rituals which contributed to protect the community through the actualization of its relationship with the supernatural powers, and to reinforce its internal cohesion and its social identity against the Other.

CONFLICTIVE EVIDENCE: WEAPONS AND SKELETONS IN THE BRONZE AGE SOCIETIES FROM SOUTHEAST IBERIA

Gonzalo Aranda Jiménez, Departamento de Prehistoria y Arqueología, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Granada, Spain

Sandra Montón Subías, Departament d'Humanitats, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain
Sylvia Jiménez-Brobeil, Facultad de Medicina, Laboratorio de Antropología,
Universidad de Granada, Spain

Margarita Sánchez Romero, Departamento de Prehistoria y Arqueología, Facultad
de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Granada, Spain

Argaric culture (corresponding to local Bronze Age in southeast Iberia) has been traditionally characterized by the increasing presence and eventual institutionalization of violence and by the emergence of warriors. Different type of evidence has been used to draw such a picture. Most significantly:

- a) The location of settlements, usually built on the terraced slopes of steep mountains and hills with natural defence systems and a wide territorial control of the surrounding area.
- b) The frequent presence of complex artificial defences: stone walls, towers, bastions and stone enclosures protecting the highest points of the settlements.
- c) The expansion of the Argaric settlements into new territories, interpreted in terms of colonization and demographic increase.
- d) The appearance, by first time in the Iberian Peninsula, of specialized weapons, mainly swords and halberds, exclusively deposited as grave goods in male tombs.

In relation to this issue, recent advances in paleoanthropological research have thrown unexpected but extremely interesting conclusions. On the one hand, skeletons show an absolute lack of sharp injuries. On the other hand, the only detected traumatism correspond to impressions or depressed fractures in the outer deck of the cranial vault. According to their predominant situation on the right-hand side of the frontal bone, to their size and their shape they seem to result from deliberate aggression. By no means, however, could they had been produced by sharp weapons such as swords and halberds. In this paper, we will propose a hypothesis to explain this apparently contrasting evidence.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR IN HELLENISTIC CRETE

Amanda Kelly, National University of Ireland, Ireland

Crete was in a state of almost continuous warfare and hostility during the Hellenistic period. Due to constant take-overs, territorial boundaries became fluid phenomena, and naturally, this flux was reflected in the epigraphic corpus of inter-polis relations. In east Crete the predominant sites of Hierapytna, Praisos and Itanos carved up the majority of petty states between themselves, absorbing them into their city-state hinterlands. This trinity survived until, probably as a result of the final withdrawal of the Ptolemies in the 140s BC, Praisos was suddenly destroyed by Hierapytna. Hierapytna replaced Praisos as the dominant power in eastern Crete with just one abrupt campaign; however, in incorporating Praisos' boundaries into its city-state, Hierapytna came into direct conflict with its new neighbour, Itanos.

As a direct consequence of this manoeuvre, Rome was asked to arbitrate over the resulting territorial disputes between Itanos and Hierapytna, as outlined in the Toplu Inscription. In the Toplu arbitration the Hellenistic city-state of Itanos makes ancient claims over the sovereignty of key territories, such as the sacred lands

associated with the temple of Diktaean Zeus. The verdict, favouring Itanos, implies that ancient claims were recognised as valid by the legislative authorities abroad.

The outcome raises questions relating to the endorsement of ancient territorial claims and how such constructed permanence was physically manifest. Were ancient monuments, then visible within the Hellenistic landscape, harnessed to create a traceable progressive development pertaining to state boundaries? In an effort to affect a spatial continuum, did Itanos exploit her position within a prehistoric archaeological landscape in the heartland of the ancient Eteocretans?

The scenario demonstrates the strength of legislative arbitration (often conducted by a third and sometimes a fourth party) as the alternative to war and illustrates the impact of a third party in maintaining a controlled peace.

MÄSTERBY 1361- THE FATAL SMALL-SCALE BATTLE THE DAYS PRIOR TO THE BATTLE OUTSIDE VISBY TOWN WALL

Maria Lingström, Sweden

The Danish invasion of the island of Gotland in 1361 is well-known amongst archaeologists, not least because of the Korsbetningen mass graves in Visby. What is perhaps not commonly known is that a small-scale battle took place near the lake Fjäle in Mästerby parish on central Gotland, the days prior to the battle outside Visby Town Wall.

The 1361 battlefields of Gotland have not yet been investigated; the one at the Danish landing site on the west coast of Gotland simply because the actual spot is not known, and the battlefield in Visby since it is long gone due to exploitation. Except for a minor metal detector survey, the Mästerby battlefield was until 2006 unexplored too.

With the wish to emphasize the battlefield as a source of knowledge to the Danish invasion, the project group *Mästerby 1361* was founded in 2005. The group comprises the battlefield archaeology team of the Swedish National Heritage Board, the local heritage association and the author of this paper. Hitherto four field surveys have been conducted, and somewhat 60 objects with relation to the 1361 events have been localised.

TALAMANCA 1714: MOUNTAINOUS BATTLEFIELDS IN THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

Xavier Rubio, Universidad de Barcelona, Spain

The beginning of the XVIIIth century brought important changes in the nature of European warfare.

Different factors changed the way conflicts were managed, limiting their impact on the population in contrast with the previous century. Commanders based their campaigns on the conquest of fortified places, although major engagements in open terrain could be decisive, too. At a tactical level, technical evolution as well as changes in drill and command led to the creation of lineal tactics, conducted by regular regiments of infantry and cavalry.

This classical point of view is based upon the studies made on the northern

theatre of the war, where the allied troops, commanded by Marlborough, won several engagements against the French army. In Spain the war developed on different terms, as the number of fortresses was very limited, the terrain was rough, and the armies were smaller.

This study will show the results of the archaeological excavation of Talamanca battlefield, where more than 5.000 soldiers fought on a mountainous terrain, without space neither for big cavalry charges nor lineal tactics. The results of this analysis show that the importance of light infantryman would have been underestimated, specially on the Spanish theatre of war.

WHITE WARSCAPES: TERRAINS OF CONFLICT IN THE ALPS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Franco Nicolis, Italy

Global warming is changing the alpine landscape. The retreating of the glaciers is a climatic emergency, but is taking with it a cultural emergency. The melting of ice is bringing to light evidence of the human presence at high altitudes from prehistory to contemporary times. The icon of this phenomenon is Iceman, discovered in September 1991 in Schnalstal. But a lot of other evidence is coming to light from the Alps, first of all the remains of the highest battlefields in the world, fought during the First World War, the so called "Guerra Bianca" ("White War").

In this paper the role of archaeology and of the archaeological method in the collection and the documentation of the evidence of the WWI in glacial environments is highlighted, and a first case study is presented. During summer 2007, the Archaeological Service of the Autonomous province of Trento, the Museums of the War of Peio and Temù have carried out an archaeological excavation of a campsite of the Austrian Army on the Piz Giumela (3593 m asl) on the massive of Ortles-Cevedale. The site is not far from Punta San Matteo, where the highest battle of the world has been fought (3678 m asl!).

MYTHOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE, LOCAL PATRIOTISM OR "THE SHOW MUST GO ON"

Uroš Bavec, Slovenia

Medieval borough called Mokronog (German: Nassenfuss, it means "wet feet") is placed in the central Slovenia. Five kilometres from Mokronog in the hilly surrounding landscape is a small village Trebelno with a little Romanesque church, placed in the woods with charnel house and ruins of medieval castle. This area, which has not been populated since last two hundred years and shows a very atypically colonization, is of our research interest. We could follow the history of colonization from the late Roman period (refugi), the early medieval time with slavic settlement and castle till the late medieval time (?), when the Christian parish was founded.

With this archaeological site is present also in our oral tradition, tales. Especially some areas of the site became mythological and also some historical persons find their place in the local historical legends. Only after the excavations it

came up that the site is placed on the border between two parishes, what caused the conflicts between their inhabitants. At the beginning the nature of conflict was showing as a kind of faith for prestige. We were astonished by the power of it, which manifested in threats and in destroying the notice board at the site.

We find out that the origin of this conflict is very old. We as archaeologists became through the mechanisms of the pub gossiping a part of new mythology. Traces of bloody violence between the inhabitants of these two parishes we find in the local oral tradition, historical and even epigraphic evidence. The continuity of conflicts remains even between the Second World War and after it; it shows in different political opinion of lads.

FROM WHITE BUSES TO RECREATION AREA: AN EXCAVATION OF A POST-CONFLICT SITE IN GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

Maria Persson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

In May 1945 thousands of survivors from German concentration camps came to Gothenburg, Sweden with the famous rescue action "The white buses". Many of the refugees came to stay at the refugee camp "Skatås" which was in use 1945-1946. When the camp was shut down in 1946 the area and the former refugee cabins were sold to Gothenburg city and started to be used as a recreation area. Skatås is still today known as a very popular place to jog, ski and enjoy nature, but the site is totally unknown as a cultural heritage of the Second World War.

The aim of the project "From white buses to recreation area" was in a general view to prove that the archaeological method can be used to address a variety of important topics of interest in modern society, and in this case specifically in terms of the Second World War, Sweden's stance of policy to this War, the WW2 refugee situation and how Swedes in 1945 society reacted to this.

During the excavation of the site in spring 2008 the memories of this site came to life through the archaeological finds and the history of the site was retold.

THE IRISH BATTLEFIELDS PROJECT

Damian Shiels, Headland Archaeology, Ireland

In March 2008 work commenced on an ambitious project to map the locations of the key battles in the Republic of Ireland. An expert advisory panel drew up an initial list of some 130 sites to be examined ranging in date from the 8th to the 18th centuries. The project was commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and is being undertaken by Headland Archaeology Ltd and Eneclann Ltd.

The first phase of the project sees historical research take place in order to identify locational evidence relating to the sites. Subsequent to this, cartographic and landscape analysis will be conducted in order to delineate key areas of the battlefields and mark them on modern mapping. A report will be compiled on each battle, with work due for completion in November 2008. This paper will outline the scope of the project, as well as examining some of the methodologies being employed and questions being asked, which go beyond simple delineation to explore

aspects such as archaeological potential, developmental pressures, future management and memorialisation. The end result will lead to a vastly increased knowledge of Irish battlefields, which in turn will hopefully assist in raising the profile of some of these important engagements among the Irish public.

PUTTING PAST CONFLICT AT THE SERVICE OF THE NEW EUROPE: THE ESTOC GROUP AND ITS AIMS

John Carman, University of Birmingham, UK

The emergence of the European Union has led to European states no longer making war on each other. The long history of war in Europe, however, has had an inevitable impact upon European identities: from the emergence of city-states in Greece and Italy, through the rise of Athenian, Alexandrian and Roman Empires, to medieval feudalism and the modern nation state. However, the new peace that prevails has meant that in formulating a new sense of pan-European identity, past wars are treated as matters best left untouched lest they revive old hostilities. The emergence of Conflict Archaeology as a sub-discipline has also meant, however, a renewed interest in past conflict among archaeologists in Europe. This has been confirmed by the formation of the ESTOC group – European Studies of Terrains of Conflict – which aims to promote the study of past conflict as a pan-European project. Drawing upon the aims and objectives of the ESTOC group, this paper will outline an approach to the archaeological study of conflict in Europe's past that can contribute to the creation of a sense of identity in Europe that owes nothing to supra-nationalism, but meets the conditions of the era of pan-European concord.