

**Session title: PLUS ÇA CHANGE? CHANGING
DEPOSITIONAL PRACTICES OF THE EARLY
IRON AGE**

Organizers: Kate Lantzas and Kate Harrell, University of Sheffield, UK

Time: Thursday afternoon

Room:

Session abstract:

The archaeological community is invited to submit abstracts concerning changing depositional practices of European societies in the Early Iron Age. The specific aim of this session is to identify the formative processes, including the redevelopment of social relationships and systems of power, the cultivation of new symbols of identity and status, and the incorporation of innovative technologies, by which Early Iron Age groups developed and defined their social structures in light of and perhaps in opposition to the previously established constructs which defined the Bronze Age. The Early Iron Age is traditionally associated with the reformulation of many societal customs based on the transformation of ideological and hierarchical arrangements made manifest through objects and materials. These transformations in practice are based in a shifting system of artefacts that are associated with one context in the Bronze Age and then with another in the EIA. The aim of this session is to focus attention to these changes on a pan-European scale and to promote the study of social frameworks through the analysis of the variations in depositional practice of objects. These changes in the pattern of material deposition are found across a wide spectrum of types of contexts, including burials, new settlement developments and foundation deposits, middens and household disposal, and sacred and profane contexts. We welcome submissions that incorporate a strong contextual approach to this analysis of the formative practices in the Early Iron Age.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Changing practices of the deposition of material culture and its role in the establishment or
- definition of identity
- Continuity or disarticulation of specific objects and ideological frameworks from the Bronze Age to the EIA
- Changes in cultural memory and transformation in EIA conceptualisation and practice
- The role of agency in EIA contexts
- Formative processes that define community and cultural identity, as well as the “Other”, in light of broad cross-cultural contact during the EIA
- Fresh contributions to earlier trends in research including cultural reawakening after the Dark Ages, settlement development, cultural dispersion and cross-cultural influences

Paper abstracts:

HUMAN REMAINS, CORPOREAL MONUMENTS, AND THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF LANDSCAPE IN THE EARLY IRON AGE OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Matthew L. Murray, University of Mississippi, USA

One of the widely recognized cultural transformations from the late Bronze Age (Urnfield) to the early Iron Age in Central Europe was the change in mortuary ritual and the treatment of human bodies. In the late Bronze Age, a majority of graves were simple cremations in large “fields” of urns that emphasized conformity and community but masked the individuality, inequality, and social division evident in other contexts. In the early Iron Age, the palette of burial practices expanded in a colorful celebration of difference in which the competitive discourses of society were more openly explored. Burials were increasingly the arena for sumptuous displays and destruction of wealth, including the incorporation of human remains (both cremated and inhumed) into permanent monuments, sometimes with stone markers and statuary. In this paper, I will examine these changes in human burial and deposition and I will link them specifically to new information about mortuary landscapes of the early Iron Age. Recent research at sites such as the Glauberg and Heuneburg in Germany and Mont Lassois in eastern France reveals that landscapes were structured on a massive scale with hillforts, burial monuments, habitations, and other depositions linked through systems of ditches and walls. Early Iron Age burial was a process of *incorporealization* of the human body into monumental structures and these “corporeal” monuments were integrated into a large-scale choreography of human action across socially contested landscapes.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS: CHANGES IN THE DEPOSITION OF ARMAMENTS AND ARMOUR FROM THE GREEK LBA TO THE EIA

Kate Lantzas and Katherine Harrell, University of Sheffield, UK

This paper seeks to address how early Greek arms and armour transitioned from suitable grave goods during the Mycenaean period to appropriate votive offerings in sanctuaries by the end of the eighth century BC. Arms and armour are iconic symbols of Mycenaean identity and are traditionally found in the mortuary arena until the end of the Submycenaean period. In the early Iron Age, they continue to be deposited with the dead and play a significant role in defining the identity of the individual. So too, in the subsequent Geometric period military accoutrements are seen adorning the processors depicted in the *ekphora* scenes represented on funerary urns. Yet by the eighth century this pattern in deposition has changed; armaments and armour are now found almost exclusively at sanctuary sites.

We posit that these sanctuary dedications reflect changes in early Iron Age identity resulting from a number of transformations in ideology and practice. This includes developing social proximity through the innovation of a citizen polis and the co-development of hoplite warfare, the identification of the “Other” and the enemy, and the revolution in religious dogma and cultic practice that emphasises personal and communal sacrifice and the importance of receiving divine benefaction through offerings. The result is that the act of depositing armaments and armour is no longer

an indication of personal identity but is rather a representation of the ideals of the polis.

REUSE OF ROCK ART SITES IN SCANDINAVIA DURING THE EARLY IRON AGE

Per Nilsson, The Swedish National Heritage Board, Sweden

During recent years there has been an increasing interest in the performance of rock art excavations in Scandinavia. One interesting, and perhaps surprising result, is that many of the features and finds found beneath rock art sites have been dated to the Early Iron Age rather than the Bronze Age. Scandinavian rock art is usually dated to the Bronze Age, so this raises some questions: How did the Iron Age people relate to these sites? Were the sites and motifs incorporated in myths of the ancestral past, were they abandoned or perhaps forgotten? In this paper I propose that finds and features found in close connection with the rock carvings can be seen as the material remains of a dialogue with the past. It is suggested here that in a time of societal change the past can become the "Other". My aim is to discuss how people during the Early Iron Age related to rock art sites, at a time when the tradition of making figurative motifs had come to an end. I will give some examples from different parts of Scandinavia, the main focus being the rock art region of Himmelstalund, west of the town of Norrköping in the south eastern part of Sweden.

ENCLOSURES AND COMMUNAL OFFERINGS. A CASE STUDY OF MILEJOWICE SITE IN SOUTH-WESTERN POLAND

Justyna Baron, Institute of Archaeology Wroclaw University, Poland

My paper aims to present changing depositional practices with the special focus for the case study as a research strategy. According to many scholars, interpretations emanating from a single case study can have the same general validity as a sweeping, comprehensive approach. My case is early Iron Age enclosure settlement in Milejowice (SW Poland) excavated between 1999 and 2003 in advance of planned road works and producing about 2700 pits on the area of 8 hectares. The site, which is considered to be a high status settlement, strongly influenced by Hallstatt civilization, demonstrates itself unique spatial structure. That comprised of several clusters of post buildings in the northern part with two clear groups concentrated around empty squares. One of the pits - a vase contained animal bones, pieces of ceramics and broken bronze artifacts was probably an offering. The southern part of the site included an enclosure of several rows of palisade or fence which surrounded a number of post buildings, wells and other pits and a bronzework area located nearby. Within this enclosure at least four offerings were discovered. They were several pots, sometimes put one in another and animal bones. In one pit a dog skeleton was put into a vase. The most interesting fact is that the offerings are not connected with individual structures but with the whole enclosure. In my paper I aim to demonstrate they are communal sacrifices connected with several stages of enclosure construction.

MINING IN KRUMLOV FOREST (SOUTHERN MORAVIA): FROM BRONZE TO HALLSTATT AGE

Martin Oliva, Moravian Museum, Brno, Czech Republic

Since the early nineties, the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum in Brno has been surveying the prehistoric mining of Jurassic chert in the region of the Krumlovský les (Krumlov Forest) in southern Moravia. This research follows the recent identification of this area as one of the largest mining areas in prehistoric Europe, both due to the extent of its distribution, and its excellent state of preservation. In the Krumlov Forest we witness local tradition in a specific activity that has been here from Mesolithic until Hallstatt Age.

The extraction culminated in the Early Bronze Age. Shafts from that period predominate in all areas except area VI at least 50 hectares in area. They are up to 8 meters deep and 2 to 4 m across. The fill of each of the shafts amounts to several tons of lithic industry, mostly flakes and discoidal cores at various stages of reduction. The products were transported to the only Únětice culture settlement near Kubšice (at a distance of some 6 kilometers), which can be considered to have been the gathering place of chert knappers during or after the quarrying season. Greater distances were only reached by some of the sickle blades which then were used in a clearly ritual context.

In the Late Bronze Age (the Urnfield cultures), fragments of vessels, ash and burnt bones were sunk in the Early Bronze Age shaft II-9 together with numerous large stones. This probably constitutes a secondary translation of cremated burials. Lithic industry of that time, of very poor quality, is mainly found in the vicinity of seat-like boulders among older pits yet never directly in the shafts.

The mining activity was renewed in the Hallstatt Age. In the eastern part of mining field VI (9-1) and underneath a large boulder a network of shafts of varying depths was discovered. In contrast to the older shafts, they are considerably narrower and some of them do not even reach the chert seams. However, even they do contain accumulations of chipped industry on their bottoms. However, the amount of this industry drops abruptly and there is no evidence of its distribution in both practical and ritual context.

Even though the extraction of local chert served for no practical use (in the technological sense) in any of the periods mentioned, its reasons varied beyond any doubt. In the Old Bronze Age it was obviously connected with the cult of the ancestral underground world, chert being perhaps considered to be the “gift of the ancestors”. In the Hallstatt Age, the local inhabitants would take refuge in the forest from invading Scythians and the contacts with the underground world was merely a rudimentary phenomenon, being probably connected with seeking supernatural protection in that traditionally sacred landscape. At any time, however, these repeated cooperative acts involved expenditure of human energy and, beyond doubt, they contributed to maintaining traditional values and political stability in those prehistoric societies.

HOARDING AND DEPOSITION AT KEY SITES OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE-EARLY IRON AGE TRANSITION IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Martin Goldberg, University of Glasgow, Scotland

The hoarding of prestige metalwork in Britain reached its zenith in the Late Bronze Age followed by an apparent hiatus in the Early Iron Age. The hoards and deposits from the transitional period are of particular interest in theorising about social, cultural and religious transformation. Beyond simple binary divisions of wet and dry or the concept of liminality, important inferences can be made from landscape analysis of the locations chosen for the deposition of certain LBA-EIA hoards. The hoarding traditions and depositional practices of the LBA-EIA transition show a heightened consideration for certain topographic and fluvial factors that have important implications for inter-regional contact, group identity, socio-political organisation and ritual authority

SYMBOLS OF COMMUNITY: THE PEWSEY MIDDENS

Andy Tullett, University of Leicester, UK

Discoveries at Potterne and East Chisenbury during the 80s and 90s highlighted the large number of middens that were present within and around the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire, England. Consistently dated around the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age transition these sites range from 2 – 4.5 ha in area, with a dark humic deposit, rich in animal bone and ceramics between 1-2m in depth. The deposit at East Chisenbury attests to the annual slaughter of thousands of sheep and hundreds of cattle and pigs, potentially supporting, 600 cows and 450 pigs were slaughtered annually, supporting a possible full time population of between 750 and 2000 over a one hundred year period (Serjeantson *et al.* forthcoming). Despite this, only a few structures associated with settlement have been located at the sites.

This paper reviews the implications of these sites on current models of social interaction in British prehistory. It argues that changes to the landscape on the surrounding downlands during the Late Bronze Age facilitated an increase in mobility and allowed a burgeoning in the size of local communities and the herds that they managed. Evidence suggests that the sites were located at pivotal points in the landscape where large groups of people and animals would be drawn together at certain times during the agricultural calendar. As such, these sites were integral to a process reincorporating community ethos for the disparate groups and may over time have become symbolically associated with what it meant to belong to a community.