

LIVING WITH THE DEAD:

The social role of burial in the Iron Age and Roman northwestern provinces

Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge

16–17 April 2012

All welcome

Outline

The value of funerary remains to inform broader aspects of human relations has long been acknowledged in archaeological research, whether this be the visibility of the dead in shaping the habitation of the living, the desire for distance or proximity to the dead, or the differential treatment of certain social groups. However, too often the material remains themselves become relegated to specialist appendices or separate ‘burial’ chapters which divorce treatment of the dead from consideration of the living both literally and figuratively. Consequently, their potential for integrated interpretation is easily overlooked.

The Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains published in 2009 by Rebecca Gowland and Christopher Knüsel provided a major step towards the reconciliation of the archaeology of death and the archaeology of life. This two day colloquium in Cambridge aims to continue along this path but with a geographical and chronological focus on northwestern Europe during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. The papers have been arranged thematically in order to focus discussion on specific areas of funerary behaviour; examples include burial at rural sites, commemoration, and ‘deviant’ burials. Our aim is to provide a forum for in-depth discussion on the nature and changing dynamics of relationships between the living and the dead by examining various aspects of mortuary behaviour which pertain to shared cultural experiences, and to explore new ways to promote and advance the profile of mortuary evidence within the wider framework of social archaeology.

Programme

All papers will take place in room 1.04 at the Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue

Monday 16th April

12 noon Lunch and registration

1:00–1:40 Martin Millett: *Infants - burial rite or disposal pattern?*

1:45–2:20 Rebecca Gowland: *Embodying Roman Britain: a bioarchaeological perspective*

2:20–2:45 Discussion

- 2:45 Coffee and tea
- 3:15–3:55 Paul Booth: *Across the Styx in the sticks - some aspects of 'social archaeology' in rural cemeteries in the Upper Thames region*
- 3:55–4:25 Anthony King: *Human remains from Romano-Celtic temples in Britain and Gaul. Human sacrifice in the Roman period?*
- 4:25–5:00 Discussion
- 7:00 Dinner for delegates (venue tbc)

Tuesday 17th April

- 9:00 Coffee and tea
- 9:30–10:10 Nick Thorpe: *Burying 'the other' in Iron Age Europe – desecrating or commemorating the disabled and other socially-marginal individuals and groups*
- 10:10–10:50 Katie Tucker: *Romano-British decapitation burials: a post-mortem burial rite?*
- 10:50–11:30 Stephany Leach: *The Deposition of human remains in 'non-normative' burial locations in the Late IA and Roman period*
- 11:30–12:00 Discussion
- 12 noon Lunch
- 1:00–1:40 Laura Crowley: *Burial in the villa landscapes of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany*
- 1:45–2:20 Joris Aarts: *The person and the community in death: tracking change in the Batavian funerary ritual*
- 2:20–2:45 Discussion
- 2:45 Coffee and tea
- 3:15–3:55 Tony Wilmott: *Commemorative deposits and ritual closure? The fort cemetery at Birdoswald on Hadrian's Wall*
- 3:55–4:25 John Pearce: *Commemoration in Roman Britain: monuments and setting*
- 4:25–5:00 Discussion

For more information, please contact Belinda Crerar (bjc45@cam.ac.uk) or Katie Tucker (phibroptik_ramm@yahoo.co.uk).