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Later Prehistoric Finds Group

Issue 17 Summer 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the LPFG Newsletter. The Celtic Coin Index announces a brand new MicroPasts project, with an invitation for LPFG readers to get involved. Eleanor de Spretter, winner of this year's LPFG prize at the Iron Age Archaeology Student Symposium, gives us an insight into her research on Iron Age razors. There are book reviews too. Tiffany Treadway reviews Melanie Giles' new book, *Bog Bodies: Face to Face with the Past,* whilst Andy Jones offers his thoughts of Leo Webley, Sophia Adams and Joanna Brück's *The Social Context of Technology: Non-ferrous Metalworking in Later Prehistoric Britain and Ireland.* Lastly Jennifer Beamer and Helen Chittock issue a call for finds in the shape of long-handled bone combs. Lastly, there is news on the upcoming LPFG Online Symposium, with details on how to attend if you have not already signed up.

A Gallo-Belgic E stater from Canterbury, Kent (c.60-50 BC); PAS KENT-6FCB74 ©Portable Antiquities Scheme. Find out more details about how you can help with researching these objects on page 5.

Welcome

The Later Prehistoric Finds Group was established in 2013, and welcomes anyone with an interest in prehistoric artefacts, especially small finds from the Bronze and Iron Ages. We host an annual conference and publish a bi-annual newsletter, in addition to a series of datasheets providing short, accessible introductions to different classes of objects. Members receive all our new publications via email, and you can download back issues for free on our website, https://laterprehistoricfinds.com/

Membership is currently free; if you would like to join the group, please e-mail LaterPrehistoricFindsGroup@gmail.com.

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To submit articles, notes or announcements for inclusion in the LPFG newsletter, please e-mail Andrew Lamb at lpfgnews@outlook.com. Guidelines are available on the website, but please feel free to e-mail with any questions.

Who we are at the LPFG

Chair: Helen Chittock

Deputy Chair: Jennifer Beamer

Treasurer: Meredith Laing

Membership Secretary: George Prew

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Lamb

Datasheet Editor: Leanne Demay

Facebook Editor: Andy Ward

Twitter Editor: Lewis Ferrero

Website Editor: Michael Marshall

Committee members: Sophie Adams, Anna Booth, Julia Farley, Emily Freeman, Yvonne Inall, Tess Machling, Andrew Reynolds, Steph Smith, John Smythe and Peter Walker

A Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of the Later Prehistoric Finds Group Newsletter, and many thanks to everyone who's contributed to the content and editing of this fantastic edition.

On behalf of the whole LPFG Committee I'd like to thank our members for their continued support of the group. It's been a challenging time running the group during a pandemic, but because of your interest and engagement we've been able to continue to support and promote the study of later prehistoric finds. I'd also like to give my personal thanks to the committee for their hard work and commitment over the past year and a half.

In 2020 we held our first Online Symposium – many thanks to all who got involved for making it such a success, and many thanks also to AOC Archaeology for lending us their Zoom account for the day. We'll be holding a second Online Symposium in October 2021, and you can find all the details you need to sign up on page 20. This year, we're also asking for donations to keep the group running, and page 20 includes details on how you can donate as part of the symposium sign-up process. We would hugely appreciate your donations, however small, as they will allow us to keep the group free for all.

At the beginning of 2021, we held our AGM as an online event and I'd like to thank all the members who attended. We said goodbye to Matt Knight, whose term as Deputy Chair came to an end this year, and I'm sure our whole membership would like to join me in thanking Matt for his 5 years of service to the LPFG as Social Media Editor, Chair and Deputy Chair. We were delighted to welcome Jennifer Beamer as our new Deputy Chair, as well as Andrew Reynolds as a new Ordinary Member and Andy Ward as our new Facebook Editor.

In April 2021 we launched a new Facebook Group, replacing our previous Facebook Page, thanks to the hard work of Andy Ward and Tess Machling. The group is already providing a fantastic forum for sharing and discussing news of later prehistoric finds. You can find it by searching 'Later Prehistoric Finds Group' on Facebook, and we would love it to continue growing.

In June, we awarded our annual LPFG Prize to the best finds-based paper at the Iron Age Research Student Symposium, which was hosted this year by a group of post-graduate students studying at the University of Liverpool. From an excellent range of presenters, we chose Eleanor de Spretter Yates as this year's recipient of the prize for her fantastic presentation on Bronze and Iron Age razor blades – congratulations Eleanor!

On behalf of the LPFG committee, we hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and we'll hope to see you all at our Online Symposium in October.

All the best,

Helen Chittock (LPFG Chair)

The Celtic Coin Index meets MicroPasts

Alex Budau, Amanda Bianconi, Alec Mason, Chris Ainsworth, Hyelin Lee and Isabelle Haynes

Coinage is an important archaeological and historical resource that can shed light on various aspects of a given society, ranging from patterns of trade to ideas of art and identity. The Iron Age in Britain (c.800BC-43AD) witnessed profound changes which can be studied by different branches of knowledge, including numismatics. For this purpose, Derek Allen and Sheppard Frere set up the Celtic Coin Index (CCI) in 1961; a vast collection of recorded coins housed in the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Oxford. It has been revised in a process of digitalisation since 2019.

Collaborations have been made with other institutions, such as the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and the British Museum. The Institute of Archaeology at University College London has been contributing with crowd-sourcing projects set up on MicroPasts (https://crowdsourced.micropasts.org/). In 2020 the 'Die-Matching the Durotriges' project successfully involved the wider public to create a die-chain by comparing features on coins from the CCI. This year our aim is to bring forward the process of classifying and archiving thousands of coins from the CCI, by digitally transcribing cards so they can better be integrated into the CCI online database.

Iron Age coinage in Western Europe

The earliest examples of coinage as we would recognise it today are attributed to the Lydians of western Anatolia, who began using a standard weight of marked metal between the middle and the end of the seventh century BC (Thompson 2003, 68). However, it was not until its dissemination into mainland Greece between 575 and 550 BC that coinage became an accepted form of exchange in the eastern Mediterranean (Carradice & Price 1988, 29; Kroll & Waggoner 1988, 325–40). The peoples of southern Britain were among the last communities to adopt coinage, yet continued to produce it until the first century AD, when it was replaced by Roman coinage. Iron Age coins, also often referred to as 'Celtic' coins, are mostly discovered in southern and eastern England (Figure 1). These coins are some of the first examples of archaeological material bearing letters in Britain. Some of the earliest examples of coins with letters in Britain can be found on later examples of Gallo-Belgic E coins (58-50 BC), with the letter 'A' on the obverse and an 'S' present on the reverse (Williams 2001, 5). As these coins began to circulate, distinctive local and regional traditions in lettering and designs emerged on Iron Age coinage across Western Europe, attesting to a period of profound social and economic change.

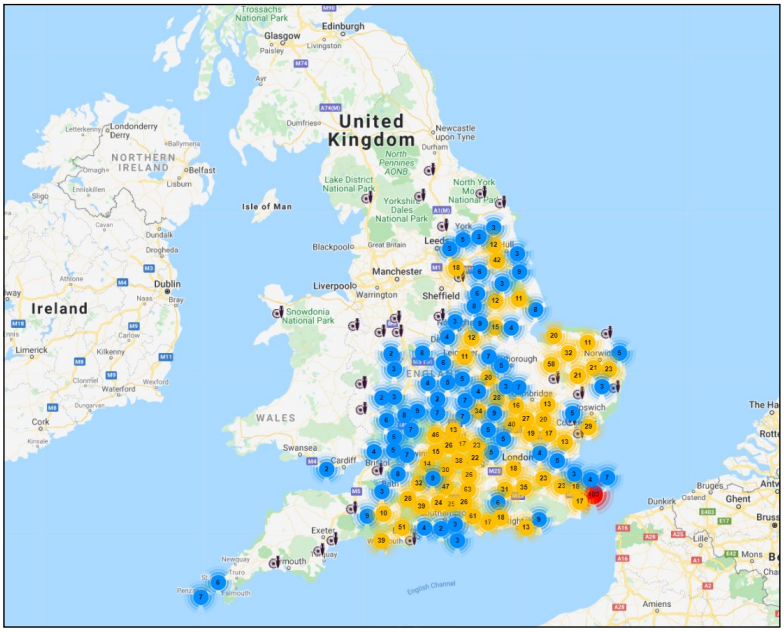

Figure 1 - Iron Age coins recorded by the Portable Antiquity Scheme (https://finds.org.uk)

Iron Age coins from Britain allow researchers to study different regional coinage traditions, how they developed, and create classification and chronological systems (cf. Allen 1960; Scheers 1977; Van Arsdell 1989; Haselgrove 1993). Studies of coinage circulation also contribute to our wider understanding of Iron Age coinage and society. Three periods of production were identified within 'Celtic' coins in Britain, and these appear to relate to continental developments (Table 1).

Period	Date Range	Description
1	Late 2nd century BC	Large quantities of gold imported from Belgic Gaul, largely confined to Kent.
2	End of the 1st century BC	Spread of coinage through East Anglia and the East Midlands alongside a proliferation of silver coinage as Roman *denarii* are imported.
3	c.25-15 BC	"Romanising" of coinage as treaties between Rome and British rulers were established.

Table 1 - The three period of coin production and dissemination in Britain.

MicroPasts and Crowd-sourcing

On the basis of UCL's achievements, we have decided to launch a series of individual projects associated with the CCI on the MicroPasts crowd-sourcing site. The success of these projects will be heavily dependent on the internal action produced by the platform users, since they are based on the crowd-sourced communication model. Crowd-sourcing is a way of obtaining information through the input of various people over the internet; allowing for the faster collation of results than a single specialist could accomplish. MicroPasts is a publicly available crowd-sourcing platform, and perfectly suited for an audience specifically interested in collecting past human records online. Because of this we have aimed simultaneously to promote how we, as archaeologists, try to keep in touch with the past and record the traditional method of handling the data.

Users are encouraged to explore the patterns shown on the coin card, and are welcome to leave a direct contribution toward the project through transcribing the hand-written data online. Each coin card has a unique code and holds specific independent data related to its content, location, owner and image.

How you can help: Potential future research from this information

By participating in our MicroPasts project you will aid us in digitising important information that will be used by archaeologists, numismatists, and historians alike. Kelleher & Leins (2011, 23) have highlighted the potential provided by projects such as the PAS, especially in the study of Roman Britain (see Bland *et al.* 2013). Indeed, by aiding the CCI in digitising its coin records, one of the largest datasets of Iron Age coinage worldwide, and a major source of evidence for Late Iron Age Britain (https://ccid.web.ox.ac.uk/home), we will be able to gain a greater understanding of the pre-Roman period in Britain. Through this, we will be able to extend our knowledge into periods beyond those initially covered by previous projects. Additionally, the information provided by the CCI will allow scholars to approach coin deposits on a more regional level, rather than simply relying on information provided by sporadic hoards. As such, the data recorded by the CCI will provide a more reliable depiction of the spread and use of coins, considering weight, material, and design. While hoard data will no doubt remain useful in the study of this period, the CCI project will allow us to extend beyond the immediate area to identify wider regional trends that could have been disregarded as anomalous within a single hoard. While the CCI holds great potential in the future study of pre-Roman Britain as an individual resource, it will also be used in conjunction with other projects to gain a greater understanding of the (pre-)history of Britain as a whole, meaning that while the CCI focusses largely on the Iron Age period in Britain, its usefulness is not isolated to this period, and as such will help us in the study of Britain as a whole. As more of this data becomes available for individuals to access online, it will become possible to gin a greater understanding of this important period in Britain during which indigenous cultures were subject to considerable amounts of cultural pressure from outside sources.

The Celtic Coin Index MicroPasts Project

The CCI contains almost 70,000 entries, a significant proportion of which remain available only on file cards. By participating in this project, these digitised coins will be able to be used by scholars to facilitate their study of Iron Age Britain, thereby better informing us about this period as more resources become available to us. Given the size of this dataset, a high level of engagement will be key to the success of the CCI Digital (CCID) crowdsourcing project. With that in mind, CCID would like to call on the readership of the LPFG Newsletter to take part in the project, and would be very grateful for any time you can give up to help us make this valuable resource more widely available.

If you would like to take part in our project, please have a look for projects mentioning the 'Celtic Coin Index' in the following section on MicroPasts: https://crowdsourced.micropasts.org/project/category/britishprehistory/

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***Alex Budau**, **Amanda Bianconi**, **Alec Mason**, and **Hyelin Lee** are undergraduate students at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London while **Chris Ainsworth**, and **Isabelle Haynes** are graduates. They are working on this project with **Prof Andy Bevan**, UCL, **Dr Courtney Nimura**, University of Oxford, and **Dr John Talbot**, Celtic Coin Index.*

Razor Blades in Later British Prehistory: Personal Appearance and Identity

Eleanor de Spretter Yates

My current AHRC NWCDTP-funded PhD research explores the relationships between Bronze Age and Iron Age razor blades, personal appearance, and identity. I focus on razors from Wales, Scotland and England, dating from around 1700 BC in the Early Bronze Age, to roughly 500 BC in the Early Iron Age. Razor blades are found across Britain but are more densely distributed in the east of Scotland, east of England, and in the south of England. They occur in a range of contexts including graves, hoards, rivers, and at occupation sites, particularly in postholes and ditches.

Early Bronze Age razors are almost always found in graves; although the sexes of individuals buried with razor blades are mostly unknown, with just seven associated with sexed human remains. Four of the razors were found with male remains, two with female remains, and one with possible female remains. Moving forward in time, Middle Bronze Age razor deposition shifts away from graves, and people begin placing razor blades in hoards, which offers us a glimpse of other objects associated with razors. Hoarded razors are discovered with a variety of objects including tools, jewellery, weapons, and toilet implements. By the Early Iron Age razors are deposited in more varied contexts. For example, one razor from Staple Howe hill-fort, North Yorkshire, was found carefully buried, close to the hill fort entrance (Brewster 1963, 111). It was covered with a large potsherd and rested in a pocket of fine soil that was possibly the remains of an organic wrapping (*ibid.*). Other Early Iron Age razors are placed in hoards, ditches, postholes and rivers.

Some of the razors show excessive use wear. For example, the razor from Staple Howe (Brewster 1963, 111), and another found in the Thames at Sion Reach, London (Jockenhövel 1980, 185), were broken but re-sharpened, thus showing continued use. The outer edge of the loop on the Sion Reach razor is also very worn. Double edged razor blades often have one edge that is more worn than the other, such as a crescentic razor blade from Kinleith, Edinburgh (Smith 1863). Resharpening and wear of razor loops and blades suggests that razor blades were well-used and circulated for long periods of time, with their meaning and associations perhaps changing during the course of the objects' lifespans. Razors have the potential to act as metaphors for identities in and of themselves. Their inclusion in varied, special deposition contexts such as graves, hoards, and the carefully buried razor at Staple Howe, suggests that razors were important objects. The range of deposition contexts and objects associated with razor blades, indicates that people used them in different ways, as symbols for diverse identities.

Razors also have the ability to alter someone's appearance, impacting and constructing a person's physical identity. The connection between razors and personal appearance adds an important dimension to their association with identity. Razors are essentially a negative imprint of the ancient living body. Prehistoric razor blades are often associated with martial masculinity, although a closer look at the contexts in which razors are found reveals a more complex relationship with diverse identities. There is much more that razor blades can tell us about ancient people.

Figure 1 - Endigen type Hallstatt razor, Oxfordshire ©Portable Antiquities Scheme (BH-61CDC5).

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Eleanor de Spretter Yates: *I am currently working on my AHRC NWCDTP funded PhD at the university of Liverpool, specialising in identity in later British prehistory.*

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Book Review

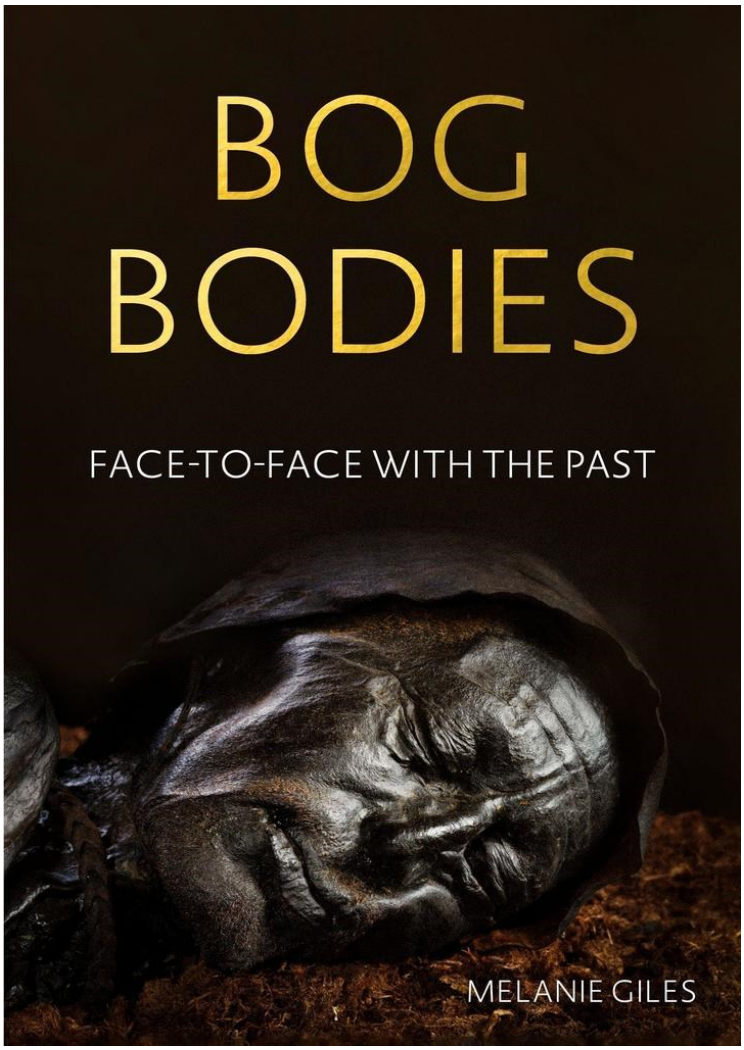
Bog Bodies: face to face with the past.

Melanie Giles. Manchester University Press, Manchester. 2020. 328 pages. ISBN:9781526150196. Paperback, £25.

Tiffany Treadway

For centuries bog bodies have captured the imagination and attention of those who have discovered and researched these individuals. Their natural mummification was achieved through the transformative properties of an anaerobic environment and peat acidity. In her new book, *Bog Bodies: Face to face with the past*, Melanie Giles has produced another vital publication, centring on themes of life, death, life after death, and the social value of bogs. Pulling cases from both new and known archaeological examples, she provides an expanded perspective of the bog body phenomenon. Outlining not only the human remains, both prehistoric and more modern, in addition to objects and faunal remains, Giles provides a comprehensive analysis of bog interaction throughout Britain and the Continent. Giles' compilation of bog bodies differs, as she has stated (2020, 7), from other mortuary research themes because her analysis focuses on the 'life' or living interactions with bog bodies throughout history. Moreover, re-analysis of how bog bodies were produced and interpreted throughout antiquity into the modern era calls for the need to address narratives of 'violence' and 'mortality' (*ibid.*, 11).

Over time, generational opposition to wetlands has developed, including the devaluing of their resources, properties and environments, which were once crucial to the survival of prehistoric peoples in Britain, Ireland and the Continent. Giles explores how people's relations throughout Britain and North-western Europe have changed, and attitudes have shifted towards individuals who chose to interact and inhibit these locations. The degree to which Anglo-Saxon and later ecclesiastical influences changed societal perceptions of bog bodies is fascinating, moving from individuals of reverence to the damned. The previous belief that perhaps the pristine preservation of these individuals indicated their spiritual purity or possible piety elevated several bog individuals to saintly status. However, later interpretations of individuals found in peatlands were influenced mainly by local folklore, fear of revenants, and ecclesiastic explanations of unnatural decay (i.e. preserved). Many naturally preserved individuals were believed to be held in physical purgatory whereby they could not decay due to their sins (Giles 2020, 16-18). As a result, interpretations of bog bodies have ranged dependent upon period and region from accidental death, suicide, murder, execution and judicial or social justice, performative rites, communally designated sacrifice, and self-sacrifice (*ibid.*, 214-5).



I agree with Giles' position that the change in attitude towards wetlands and human remains preserved therein was subject to radically changing local beliefs. However, this change started far earlier than the Anglo-Saxons and was first introduced with the Roman imposition of empiric beliefs during the conquest and the perception of wetlands as marginal locations (e.g. Aldhouse-Green 2015; Herodian III.14.6-8; Pliny v.6.2; Sallares *et al.* 2004).

Giles examines the ways in which bodies of the past, particularly bog individuals and other mummified remains, are discussed, in addition to issues pertaining to the developed respect for the dead. She provides cases of reported dismemberment, talismans, superstitions, and wrongly identified prehistoric individuals as modern murder victims to demonstrate these issues. For example, the pulverised mummified remains of bog individuals as a cheap alternative to 'Egyptian *numia*', along with the practice of taking pieces of the bodies or their attire as an amulet or souvenir. Giles highlights how poorly these remains were treated and the lack of curation prior to and during the Reformation until the Modern Period. It has only been in the twentieth century that discussions of respect for the dead, especially regarding bog bodies, have been addressed. However, desecration of bog individuals was not the only vandalism performed, such as the stripping, draining, and removal of the wetland environments themselves.

The book emphasises that bog individuals were not the only archaeology discovered from bog locations, but also communally or individually chosen objects and faunal remains. Some prehistoric sites possessed a combination of all three, but these tended to be settlements as opposed to deposition landscapes like Must Farm, Peterborough, England. The objects and faunal remains recovered from these landscapes help to define the economic and social elements of the periods in which bog individuals were deposited, providing additional pieces to a prehistoric puzzle. Giles highlights how multifaceted wetlands were to local communities, not only as landscapes of deposition for human and faunal remains and objects but also to exploit natural resources.

Likewise, the medicinal properties of bogs were well known and sought into the 19th century. For example, sphagnum moss was used in the First World War for tourniquets (Giles 2020, 107 -18). Nevertheless, the changing and contradictory attitudes towards wetlands, and thus bog land, as detailed in the book, has led to large-scale destruction. Research focusing on non-traditional landscapes is essential for archaeological analysis. Providing snapshots of the evolution and value peatlands have held historically in Britain, Ireland, and the Continent helps us understand why landscapes in the modern period are still considered 'marginal' when they were central in the prehistoric periods. Additionally, a re-analysis of attitudes and behaviours towards bog bodies helps us better comprehend why so few individuals are held in modern curation.

This book is an excellent resource for individuals who have a prior knowledge of bog body deposition within North-western Europe who are seeking an alternative perspective to the phenomena. I highly recommend reading this book as it is critical to our ever-changing understanding of people and their interactions and interpretations with wetland environments.

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Tiffany Treadway *specialises in wetland object deposition during the British Iron Age. She has recently passed her viva voce at Cardiff University and is currently in her corrections period. Tiffany is particularly interested in object deposition patterns and trends, and their potential representation of social/collective memory.*

Twitter: @nomadic_treads

Book Review

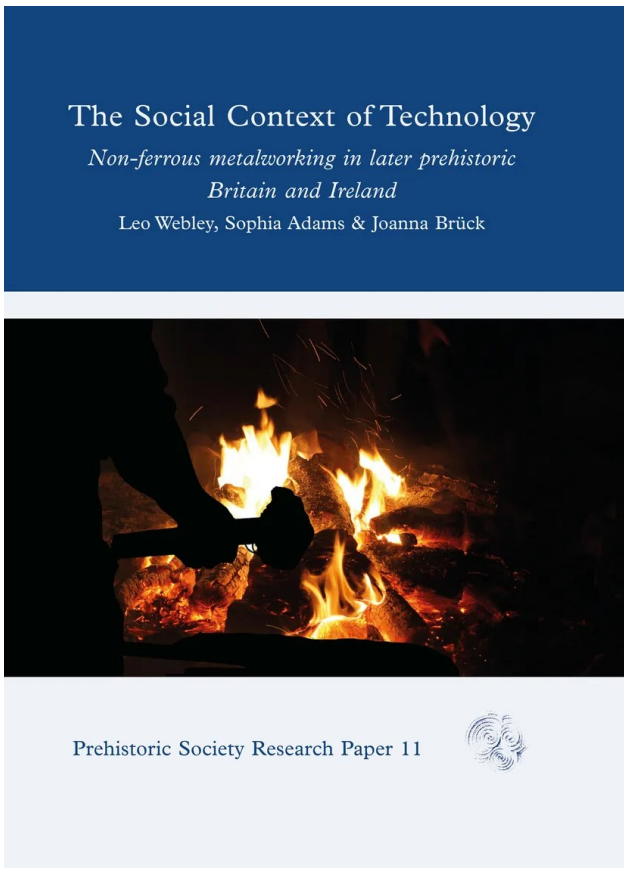
The Social Context of Technology: Non-ferrous Metalworking in Later Prehistoric Britain and Ireland

Leo Webley, Sophia Adams and Joanna Brück. Prehistoric Society Research Paper 11. Oxbow Books, Oxford. 2020. 280 pages. ISBN: 9781789251760. Hardback, £35.

Andy M. Jones

This book is the eleventh volume in the Prehistoric Society research monographs and represents an admirable addition to the series. The volume, which covers the Chalcolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age (to AD 100), is split into six chapters, with five appendices at the end of the volume and online material accessible via ADS. As the title makes clear, the monograph is concerned with the working and social context of all non-ferrous metals (tin, copper, lead, silver and gold), although the main focus is on bronze.

The first two chapters set the background for the following three, which form the majority of the volume. Chapter 1 provides a succinct and useful overview of the background to previous research and perspectives on non-ferrous metalworking from the nineteenth century including Childe's influential theory of the 'itinerant smith', Rowlands reconsideration of specialization and more recent discussions of metalworking and 'ritual', and the all too often overlooked question of the gender of the metalworker. This review is followed by an overview of the use of the non-ferrous metals from the Chalcolithic to the Iron Age along with the sources of metal ores which were available and used throughout this period. One slight omission perhaps here is a consideration of silver, which is not discussed before the Iron Age. Some comment could have been made about the fact that silver was used in Brittany in the Early Bronze Age, and in common with tin, is unlikely to have survived well in acidic archaeological contexts.



Chapter 2 summarises non-ferrous metallurgy from extraction and ore smelting into ingots, to casting, smithing and finishing and finally reusing, melting or deposition. This approach provides a succinct overview of processes in the cycle of metalworking and highlights the gaps in surviving evidence, for example between casting and smithing. Given recent dates from Camerton-Snowshill daggers, the date of the Caerloggas tin slag might be a century or so earlier than the range of 1700-1500 BC cited, but this is a minor quibble. The chapter also introduces the bolding of key sites discussed in the text, which is a very helpful and quick way of locating site information.

Chapter 3 is the first of the chronological chapters and covers the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. It addresses the supposition that metalworking was a science or an industry and reviews the status of metalwork through consideration of the contexts in which it is deposited. The authors draw attention to very small-scale nature of both extraction and production and indeed the limited evidence for recycling, thereby casting doubt on the industrial nature of metal production. Likewise, the idea of the specialist 'itinerant smith' is critiqued. Importantly, attention is given to the deposition of all materials associated with the metallurgical process. By considering moulds as well as finished objects the authors draw attention to the fact that metalworking in the earlier Bronze Age has rarely been found in settlements, and that all elements of metalworking could be treated in contrasting ways. Moulds, for example, are rarely found in settlements or burials, and were deposited in selected places in the landscape. The same is true for the smaller number of 'founder's hoards, which include 'scrap', ingot fragments and worn tools, sometimes deliberately broken, and could be carefully arranged and placed in striking locations, or monuments such as wedge tombs, which it is argued represent more than just stashes for later recycling. The difficulty of establishing status or identity from a few metal objects or items associated with metalworking is discussed in relation to burials. The touchstone from the Upton Lovell 'shaman burial' could, for example, have been associated with magical transformative activities. A key observation is the recognition that different types of artefact (for example, axes and knives) could be treated differently from one another in terms of where they were finally deposited. Some ended up in the grave, others in distinctive places including springs or bogs. These distinctions are significant as they set a pattern for the rest of the Bronze Age and the earlier Iron Age.

Chapter 4 covers the Middle Bronze Age to Earliest Iron Age, a period which saw major changes to settlement organisation and a huge increase in the number of bronze artefacts. In addition, as the authors point out, there is increasing evidence for extraction, smelting and casting. Indeed this chapter, which is the longest in the volume, is very impressive in its coverage of the huge number of sites across Britain and Ireland, many of which have been discovered in recent years. The authors highlight not only the increase in sites but the regional diversity in the evidence, with for example, a preference for stone moulds in the south west of England and bronze moulds in the east. Middle Bronze Age smelting is identified within settlements but these activities are on a

small-scale, perhaps, as the writers suggest, infrequent events undertaken by local craftspersons. The presence of moulds in settlement contexts need not, however, as is pointed out be the actual place of metalworking, but may have been structured deposits, for example associated with the abandonment of houses.

The Late Bronze Age witnesses the widest range of contexts, with evidence for casting being found in the region of forty per cent of excavated sites, although even then the majority of the evidence relates to moulds associated with a small number of artefacts generated by one-off events. Again the authors highlight regional diversity, for example hill-fort sites in Ireland indicating that metalworking may have been a high status activity, whereas in England this does not seem to be the case with metalworking debris and casting evidence being found in a wide range of sites, including settlements, timber platforms, enclosures, midden mounds and ring-forts. This suggests that metalworking was not under an elite control. Interestingly, attention is drawn to the association of metalworking with liminal points in the landscape such as watery places and at striking locations, for example the smelting site at Pentrwyn or the deposition of moulds on Burgh Island. The connection is made between the liminal places where 'ritualized' metalwork hoard deposition took place and the supposedly recoverable 'scrap' hoards of ingots, tools and castings. A convincing case is also made for these ritualized practices to have been considered an essential part of the metalworking process.

Chapter 5 covers the transition to ferrous metalworking, thereby bridging a traditional division in British prehistory. The authors emphasise the slow transition and point out the decline in metalworking until the later Iron Age, when an increase in ferrous and non-ferrous metalworking occurs. The major change, as pointed out, is a shift in technology with items such as brooches and horse equipment being produced. The majority of the chapter adopts a regional perspective, starting with southern Britain (up to and including Yorkshire) followed by northern Britain, with a short section on Ireland. Again the amount of data considered is extremely impressive.

In southern Britain there is a huge increase from 23 sites dating to the Early Iron Age to 134 in the later Iron Age. Despite being widespread, metalworking is often small-scale, although larger-scale events often associated with equine equipment production are known. Some hillforts appear to have been a foci for the deposition of metalworking tools. The authors argue that these artefacts do not necessarily represent the location where metalworking took place and many deposits are selective in terms of content and context (pits, ditches and watery places, etc), and this has probably skewed the archaeological record. Much of the material deposited includes non-ferrous metalworking residues associated with the production of horse fittings, which as the authors suggest might have been associated with the social significance of horses. The majority of metalworking sites are found in the lowlands, sometimes in roundhouses with little to distinguish them from domestic dwellings. The Late Iron Age saw increasing contacts with Continental Europe, followed by the emergence of oppida and the appearance of coinage. Interestingly, the authors observe that the minting of coins was not closely associated with other forms of non-ferrous metalworking.

In northern Britain too there is a paucity of Early Iron Age sites, followed by an increase, albeit in small-scale non-ferrous metalworking in the Late Iron Age. The later period appears to be rather different from the south, and includes sites such as wheelhouses and brochs. These sites have produced evidence for casting but, as the authors note, there have been far less developer-funded excavation of open settlements than in southern Britain. In Ireland, only six sites have been identified with non-ferrous metalworking residues. A significant point here is that this paucity is despite a large amount of developer-funded excavation which has, in recent decades, revealed a huge number of archaeological sites. The Irish evidence may suggest that unlike England non-ferrous metalworking took place at special places, such as the 'royal sites'.

The relationship between non-ferrous metalworking and other crafts is then considered. A cogent observation is the close proximity of different crafting activities to non-ferrous metalworking areas, especially those involving transformation using fire, for example ironworking and glass-making. Rather than viewing these as separate technologies it is possible that they were undertaken by the same craftsperson, or craftspersons sharing a space. Finally, the identity of the smith is considered. The equivocal nature of the evidence is discussed and the possibility of local craftspersons undertaking work, perhaps with visiting smiths making special items. The gender of the smith is also questioned, a small number of individuals buried with metalworking tools are identified as adult males, however, as the authors argue these tools may have carried their own symbolism and the interred person need not have been a smith. They draw attention to the fact that the bodies of men and women were buried with casting debris and at Mine Howe a woman, with copper alloy rings on her toes, was interred within a workshop. These interments should caution us not to take the gender of the smith for granted.

Chapter 6 synthesises the key findings from the previous sections. In particular the idea of an industrial revolution is challenged given the limited number of sites before the Middle Bronze Age. Regional differences are observed, with for example a lack of metalworking as opposed to mining sites in Wales compared with Cornwall where numerous metalworking sites are known. The Irish record differs significantly from England with 'high status' sites being found in the former and widespread small-scale sites in the latter. In England there is little evidence for the 'itinerant smith' or for elite patronage. For the later Bronze Age-Iron Age period a model of part-time local smiths producing most artefacts, occasionally augmented by master craftspersons with a degree of mobility, to produce 'high status' artefacts at spectacular, potentially supernaturally charged events for kin and allies is suggested. This argument is an attractive one, which also makes the point that metalworking did not operate in isolation and would have involved the wider community.

The monograph concludes with appendices, listing sites associated with metalworking tools, debris, and moulds by period. These are valuable, although some sites mentioned in the text and in appendices are not to always easy to cross reference in the bibliography.

Volumes on metallurgy tend to breakdown into those concerned with technical processes and/or artefact typologies, or the application of theoretical models. Either approach is valuable, however, the great strength of this volume is its breadth, which makes excellent use of the vast amount developer-funded data. The long span of time from the onset of metalworking to the Roman Conquest covered by the volume circumvents artificial cut off points, and a broad geographical scope avoids the cherry picking of well-known areas. It is a well-researched, thought provoking book which will undoubtedly become indispensable reading both for researchers with an interest in prehistoric metallurgy and for current perspectives on social organisation in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

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Call for finds: Long-handled combs from Britain, Ireland and the near Continent

Jennifer Beamer and Helen Chittock

This call for finds seeks new data on long-handled combs (see Figure 1), the subject of a new project recently initiated by the authors. The project will begin with an update to the last published catalogue of long-handled combs, which was produced by Tina Tuohy (1999). In total, Tuohy's catalogue has 774 combs from Britain and several examples from mainland Europe. Whilst there have been a few combs that have made headlines (e.g. Fitzpatrick 2020), we would like to be comprehensive in our approach. As such, all long-handled combs are of interest, particularly those found since the early 1990s.

An introduction to long-handled combs

Long-handled combs are a distinctive type of object, primarily dating to the Iron Age but continuing in use into the Roman period, with Bronze Age examples also known. They have distinctive handles and it is this morphological characteristic that gives them their name. Typically, they are divided into two or three sections for archaeological analysis: dentate, handle, and terminal (Fig. 1). They are occasionally decorated with incised linear decoration or ring-and-dot motifs. The dentate is comprised of a series of tines (generally between 6 and 13), spaced evenly across the width of the handle. These tines are generally triangular-shaped in profile and rectangular in cross-section. Some examples have a dentate on both ends, as with several examples from Meare Lake Village (Bullied & Gray 1948).

Project background

Although the functions of long-handled combs have been much discussed, archaeologists are yet to reach a clear understanding of what they were for, or how they were used. Their association with weaving tools at many sites has led to interpretations of these combs as 'weaving combs', but the questions remain over their exact functions within the textile production process. In addition, renewed interest in combs during the past decade has highlighted new questions regarding their decorative and material properties (Chittock 2014). Arguably, now is the time for a reassessment of the full assemblage of long-handled combs from Britain, incorporating the examples unearthed during the past 30 years, using new analytical techniques, and drawing recent archaeological thought and experimental work to answer questions about their functions and distribution.

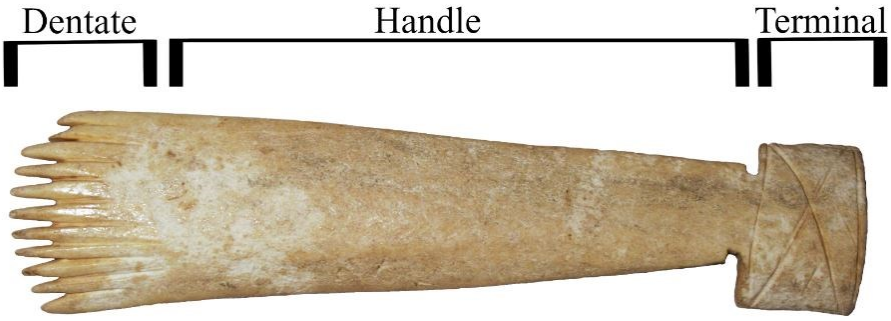

Figure 1 - The anatomy of a long-handled comb. SF642, Danebury Hillfort, held at Chilcomb House, Winchester. Labels added by Jennifer Beamer. Image © Jennifer Beamer. Scheme (BH-61CDC5).

The geographical scope for the project includes Britain, Ireland, and the near continent. There are clear overlaps in the use of textile tools across the Channel, the Irish Sea and the North Sea (Roes 1963; Champion 1975; Tuohy 1992; Webley 2015, 127; see also Baker 2019, 19). We are keen to develop the geographical range of comb distribution to determine its extent and deepen the narrative of textile production and interconnectivity between groups of people. The time period of interest is primarily the Iron Age, though there are examples of long-handled combs from Wales during the Middle and Late Bronze Age (Tuohy 1995, plate OYE1, Ogof-yr, Lesser Garth). The introduction of this tool type is not well understood; therefore we are interested in morphologically similar tools that are found in pre-Iron Age contexts as well as Iron Age and early Roman contexts.

If readers have encountered objects that resemble long-handle combs from anywhere in Britain, Ireland or the near continent, and would be happy to share data or images with the authors, please get in touch.

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The Later Prehistoric Finds Group Online Symposium 2021

Performing later prehistory:

Recent work on Bronze Age and Iron Age Finds

Friday 1st October 2021

Symposium Information

This year's Later Prehistoric Finds Group (LPFG) Online Symposium will focus on the performative aspects of making, using, depositing, and studying Bronze and Iron Age finds. We aim to explore the gestures and experiences associated with everyday practices and repetitive acts, as well as extraordinary events.

The Online Symposium will take place over Zoom. Please join us for what promises to be an exciting day of research and discussion.

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Sign-up and Donations

The symposium is free to attend but this year we are asking for donations from those attending. Although we are a free group, we do have some operation costs and have been unable to generate any income during the pandemic. We recognise that everyone's circumstances are different. We are not asking for a set or recommended amount, and no-one will be excluded on the basis of not making a donation. However, if you can make a small donation, please consider doing so, in order that we can continue to run the group, and keep it free for everyone. Thank you.

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