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Scales of Conflict in Bronze Age to Iron Age Britain: Enemies both Outside and Within

In this paper I assess two archaeological phenomena in Bronze to Iron Age Britain: the expanding scale of conflict over the period and the practice of what is often called 'deviant burial',[1] and consider whether they may be linked in some way. Conflict and warfare within these periods have been studied in great detail,[2] but these studies naturally tend to focus on what seem to be fairly direct forms of evidence. While there has been some concern with the wider implications of ancient conflict and warfare in terms of their impact on non-combatants, this has often been historically-based.[3] Further, with the identification of physical evidence of conflict involving non-combatants, this may be attributed to domestic violence,[4] and thus perhaps not connected in any particular way to the incidence of deviant burial or of wider social conflict. The argument for these burials being connected to a wider pattern of social violence is the general observation that community setbacks need to be explained away, and often this requires scapegoats to take the blame, as seen in a variety of historical examples, including Classical Greece.[5] The suggestion that some met their deaths not as direct victims of warfare, but as a result of being identified as 'the enemy within' has largely been limited to the discussion of multiple burials in Eastern Europe, especially in the Bronze Age.[6]

Starting with the Early Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1400 BC) Racton in Sussex (**Fig. 1**) provides a classic example of what one might describe as a warrior aristocrat[7] in the form of a dagger burial. Examination of the skeleton located a peri-mortem cut – made at or near the time of death – on the right upper arm bone, close to the elbow. There is no trace of this wound having healed. These traces of actual combat suggest that Racton Man's dagger (**Fig. 2**) was not just for display.[8] His position in society may indeed have depended on prowess in fighting. However, this may be something of an exception in Britain, as there are few traces of combat on daggers,[9] except for some examples from the River Thames.[10] Some British daggers also seem inappropriate as weapons, as they are too small, have highly polished and unworn blades, very wide blades, or rounded tips.[11]

However, what we do not have from this period is anything to suggest that conflict, although probably socially significant, was on anything other than a very local scale, as we lack the associated infrastructure of warfare,[12] especially any examples of defended sites. There are also only a small number of barrow, cairn or cist burials showing potential signs of combat, from the thousands of skeletons examined (to admittedly very varying degrees of quality of analysis). In Somerset, the Court Hill round barrow covered the primary burial of a young adult male with his left upper arm chopped through, probably the cause of death.[13] The barrow at Withington, Cheshire,[14] contained the primary burial of a cremated young adult female (radiocarbon dated to ca. 1700 BC), who had a head injury in the process of healing. At Cnip, Isle of Lewis, Scotland, an older adult male (also dated to ca. 1700 BC), buried with an undecorated pot, had extensive, but healed, facial trauma.[15]

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1 Aspöck 2008.
2 E.g. Harding 2007; 2016; Horn/Kristiansen 2017; O'Brien 2014; Smith 2017; Wileman 2009.
3 E.g. Gaca 2018.
4 E.g. Redfern 2008.
5 Bremmer 1983.
6 See Rittershofer 1997, for a number of case studies, Hårde 2006 for a listing, and Thorpe 2013 for a brief update.
7 Kristiansen 1999.
8 Needham *et al.* 2017.
9 Wall 1987.
10 York 2002.
11 Gerloff 1975, 46. 55; Mercer 2006.
12 Mercer 2006; Thorpe 2006; 2013.
13 Grinsell 1971, 120.
14 Wilson 1981.
15 Dunwell/Neighbour/Cowie 1995.

Fig. 1 Excavation of Racton Man, Sussex (photograph courtesy of J. Kenny)

An adult male dating to the Earlier Bronze Age (accompanied by a food vessel and a battle axe) from Callis Wold 23 barrow in Yorkshire[16] had received an extensive wound to the left wrist, causing the hand bones to fuse with those of the arm.[17] Also in Yorkshire, buried at Langton Barrow 2, was an adult male aged 25–35, who had been struck with a blade or axe. This resulted in a wound to the right side of his forehead, which had started to heal before he died.[18] Other possible cases have fairly minor injuries which could have easily been accidental.

Neither do we have more than a handful of possible deviant burials, even though the skeletal record for the period is more substantial than any other in prehistoric Britain. The most famous of these few cases is at Stonehenge,[19] where the burial of a young man was found in the ditch, accompanied by a wrist-guard and three barbed and tanged arrowheads. The tip of one of these was embedded in one of the ribs, while another arrowhead tip was found in the sternum, probably having passed through the heart, and one rib has a groove cut in it by an arrowhead.

A prehistoric bog burial, which probably dates to the Earlier Bronze Age, was found at Pilling in Lancashire in 1864. A decapitated female skull was discovered wrapped in cloth, together with two strings of jet beads, one with a large amber bead at the centre.[20] A probable dryland decapitation burial directly dated by radiocarbon to the beginning of the Earlier Bronze Age has been discovered at the foot of the Gog Magog Hills just outside Cambridge.[21] Following a possible decapitation, the remainder of an adult male was buried in a pit, which was later reopened in order to remove further portions of the body.

Fig. 2 Racton Man's dagger (photograph courtesy of S. Needham)

A less clear case, which might be a combination of domestic violence and scapegoating, comes from Barrow 3 at Cowlam in Yorkshire,[22] which

16 Mortimer 1905, 153–156.
17 Brothwell 1959–1960.
18 Walsh 2013, 107.
19 Evans 1984.
20 Edwards 1969.
21 Hinman 2001.
22 Watts/Rahtz 1984.

Fig. 3 Bronze Age fields on the slope of the hills above Lewes, Sussex (author's photograph)

covered a grave containing two burials, both women.[23] Burial 1 was aged 40–50 at death. She had survived numerous physical hardships, including fused neck vertebrae and severe osteoarthritis of the spine, perhaps both derived from a neck injury; she also lost the end of a finger. The most serious was a traumatic injury to the top of her head, made by a club; this wound had healed before the woman's death. Finally, near the time of her death she suffered fractures to her lower spine.

There is a clear transformation to be noted once we enter the Middle to Later Bronze Age (ca. 1400–800 BC), however, with the development of a dominant idea of enclosure, with both the construction of defended sites and far greater control over land,[24] connected to direct evidence of conflict on a larger scale.[25] As J.C. Barrett puts it, this period sees the development of a "place-bound sense of being".[26] We also see more deviant burials, even though the burial record towards the end of the Bronze Age becomes far less substantial than that from the earlier part of the period.[27]

In Britain we see smaller defended enclosures as well as hillforts. Among the extensive field systems of southern England (**Fig. 3**) are a number of enclosed settlements which have been dubbed 'ringforts'[28] or 'ringworks'. These vary in size from only thirty metres in diameter to a few over two hundred metres across. The main roles of ringwork enclosures seem to be overlooking and overseeing agricultural production and monitoring movement along river valleys,[29] which clearly fits with the new emphasis on land boundaries, and also with the increasing presence of the horse in this period.[30]

23 Walsh 2013, 136–139.
24 Roberts *et al.* 2017.
25 Thorpe 2006.
26 Barrett 1994, 147.
27 Brück 2017; McKinley 2017.
28 Needham 1992.
29 Yates 2007.
30 Bendrey 2012.

The first large enclosures in some 2500 years are also constructed at this time: there are only a few definite examples, including Ram's Hill (in Berkshire) which encloses ca. one-half hectare, was defended by a ditch and internal rampart, and has possible internal features of circular houses and four-post storage structures.[31] These appear to be defended settlements with substantial earthen banks and timber ramparts.[32] There are examples with fairly convincing dating evidence in the form of radiocarbon dates or artefact assemblages from the ramparts and ditches from England and Wales.[33] Many of these hillforts appear to have relatively slight defences, at least compared with Iron Age hillforts, but this need not mean that their wall-and-fill ramparts[34] were of negligible defensive value. Indeed, the lack of evidence for successful assaults may mean they were successful in deterring attacks. One issue concerns their number: although many Iron Age hillforts do produce Late Bronze Age material, this cannot in itself determine the date of the defences.

At present, the only Later Bronze Age hillfort with claimed direct evidence of conflict is Dinorben in Wales, with defences apparently dated to around 800 BC by radiocarbon dating.[35] "In the bottom of the ditch there were three fragmentary male skeletons, one with its skull cleft in two", according to the report by W. Gardner and H.N. Savory.[36] This need not, of course, represent an episode of conflict between groups. In any case, re-examination of the excavation records, and further excavation of the rampart producing more radiocarbon dates, has provided strong evidence that the defences actually date to the Early Iron Age.[37]

Linear ditch systems are generally dated to this period,[38] but it is not clear if they were constructed at the same time or accumulated over a longer timespan: large areas of land were crossed by them. Their primary function is land division. They act as territorial markers, sometimes mainly visible to those inside (rather than outside) a territory. They are also connected to some ditched enclosures. Furthermore, they can be on a very large scale: for example, Windy Dido, Cholderton (in Wiltshire),[39] was a coaxial field system (a system with one prevailing axis of orientation, in which most of the field boundaries are either aligned with this axis or run at right angles to it) of over 95 hectares, which was laid out in one operation, perhaps as early as 1000 BC.

There is also a clear development in weaponry, with the leaf-shaped sword, shields and other weapons such as spearheads and halberds. The edge notching seen on most swords in Britain is argued to be the result of direct impact on their edges,[40] and is most likely to have occurred during the use of swords as weapons. These edge-damaged examples can be distinguished from heavily damaged and hacked swords, which are interpreted as having been deliberately destroyed. Moreover, later swords have a wider blade and a balance point further down the blade, making them more suitable for a slashing weapon.[41] Also in relation to swords, K. Anderson has noted that, among those found in northern Britain, there is a small group of short swords, which could imply that some swords were made for women.[42]

Relating to the effectiveness of swords, it has been argued that the most common British shield type ('Yetholm type') is too thin to resist a determined blow,[43] while there are only two examples of the thicker 'Nipperweise' type known from Britain.[44] On the other hand B.P.C. Molloy correctly notes that much depends on how the different shields were used (**Fig. 4**).[45] Perhaps related to this is that bronze arrowheads are rare in Britain, where there are only some 25 examples known.[46] There are rare cases of shields being pierced by spearheads,[47] as at Long Wittenham in Oxfordshire and Beith in southwest Scotland. Spearheads found both in the River Thames[48] and in northern Britain[49] have frequent damage to the tips.

Finally, T. Mörtz has argued that some Bronze Age weapon hoards in Britain may represent the

31 Bradley/Ellison 1975; Needham/Ambers 1994.
32 Avery 1993.
33 Thorpe 2006.
34 Avery 1993, 122–127.
35 Savory 1971.
36 Gardner/Savory 1964, 45.
37 Guilbert 2018.
38 Yates 2007.
39 Cunliffe/Poole 2000.
40 E.g. Molloy 2007.
41 Kristiansen 2002.
42 Anderson 2017.
43 Coles *et al.* 1999.
44 Needham 1979.
45 Molloy 2009.
46 Parker Pearson 2005.
47 Needham 1979.
48 York 2002.
49 Anderson 2011.

Fig. 4 Replica Bronze Age sword and shield in action (photograph courtesy of B. Molloy)

armament of warrior groups and thus war booty offerings.[50] Although an attractive idea, the difficulties with turning the composition of such deposits into army units are clear; A.F. Harding expresses a sensibly cautious response.[51]

The increased level of general conflict we see in this period, along with the evidence for controlling land, strongly argues that warfare was occurring at this time.[52] Direct evidence is rare, but there are some relevant examples. At Dorchester-on-Thames a spearhead broke off in the victim's pelvis as it was being pulled out, suggesting the use of great force.[53] The date is around 1100 BC.[54] There is also a plausible massacre site at Tormarton in Gloucestershire, where five bodies of children and men were dumped in a boundary ditch, two killed by spearheads, which was then backfilled.[55] An argument over land, perhaps? A potentially similar case linking ditches and violence, although less directly, comes from Middle Farm in Wessex.[56] In the fill of a linear ditch containing Middle Bronze Age pottery were the skeletons of four adults (two males, a possible female and one unsexed). Of these, an adult male, with a direct radiocarbon date of ca. 1400 BC, had a healed fracture of the forearm.

However, another discovery of mass violence is much less plausible as a case of conflict between groups. This comes from a back-filled possible

50 Mörtz 2017.
51 Harding 2007, 165–168.
52 Wileman 2009, 75–92.
53 Knight/Browne/Grinsell 1972.
54 Osgood 1998, 21.
55 Knight/Browne/Grinsell 1972; Osgood 2006.
56 Smith *et al.* 1997, 75–79. 157.

quarry at Cliffs End Farm in Kent, an unusual burial location. This contained half a dozen people in varying degrees of articulation, in several closely successive deposits in ca. 900 BC within a large pit, forming a unique deposition.[57] The focus of the deposit was an elderly woman with multiple death-dealing sword cuts in the back of her head. Their placement is consistent with the woman having been kneeling down, thus the suggestion that she sacrificed herself willingly.[58] Smith *et al.* have also argued that the care taken over the deposit suggests that she was not the victim of an execution.[59] However, a scapegoat may accept the inevitable, and an execution may have been accompanied by elaborate rites to ensure that this violent action was effective in terms of influencing future events. The woman had a pair of new-born lambs resting in her lap, so this event took place in springtime. A group of bones from an adult male had been bundled up on the opposite side of the pit, with the corpse broken apart while still partially articulated. This man had originally come from Scandinavia, according to strontium and oxygen isotope analyses. Also present were two children and two teenagers, a probable and a possible girl. The body of the likely girl (the older of the two teenagers) was laid out across the feet of the old woman, with her head resting on a cow's neck and head. The older child's head seemed to have been forcibly turned while still partly articulated, while the younger teenager's head was possibly removed and broken into pieces. The younger child (potentially of Mediterranean origin) was the last of the Late Bronze Age burials in the pit; their forearms and hands are missing. Elsewhere at the site, a midden deposit produced a disarticulated rib bone from a young adult with a sharp cut from a dagger or knife.[60]

Returning to bodies in ditches, a case which seems more like a scapegoat burial is that from Horse Down in Wiltshire. There a young adult woman with a facial injury was apparently thrown face down into the end of a ditch terminus,[61] dated to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. Possibly of the same type is the burial of an adult man at Porton Down, nearby in Wiltshire, placed face down near a ditch terminal, but without signs of a violent death.[62]

There are occasional finds of worked human bone in settlement sites, for example at Green Park in Berkshire part of a skull turned into a disc (or roundel) was found in a waterhole.[63] It had a central perforation, across which the roundel had broken (or been deliberately snapped), following a long period of use, judging by the degree of wear on the edge of the perforation hole. This might be a memento of an ancestor, or equally it could be a trophy.

An ancient channel of the River Soar in Leicestershire had become a peat bog by ca. 1000 BC, when the body of a man was deposited there.[64] The head and upper vertebrae were recovered (together with parts of the right leg), and these showed that the head had been removed with a metal knife. Several skulls with evidence of trauma have been recovered from the Thames as a result of dredging:[65] dated examples include a possible man with an unhealed blunt-force injury from the Middle Bronze Age, and an adult with an unhealed axe trauma from the Late Bronze Age.

Caves were used occasionally for burial in the Later Bronze Age. Raven Scar in Yorkshire has a domed entrance chamber that had been artificially blocked at some point. A narrow passage leads from this to the back of the cave, approximately 20 m. The human skeletal material present was heavily chewed, with many tooth scores and pits, probably made by lynx, who carried the human bones off to a den at the back of the cave, ca. 1000 BC.[66] It appears that several bodies were left for the lynxes over time. These outcasts were thus not just punished by remaining unburied, some following injuries, but additionally by becoming animal feed. An equally odd location for burial is the nearby cave of Antofts Windypit, entered through a small inconspicuous entrance and then involving a descent down a vertical rock face. An elderly woman who had been killed with a sword was buried in the cave in ca. 1200 BC.[67] The Sculptor's Cave in northeast Scotland was the scene of

57 McKinley *et al.* 2015, 31–64. 93–133; McKinley 2017.
58 McKinley 2017.
59 Smith 2017, 118.
60 McKinley *et al.* 2015, Pl. 4.8.
61 Ellis/Powell 2008, 184–186.
62 Andrews/Thompson 2016.
63 Brossler/Early/Allen 2004; Brück 2017, 219. 223.
64 Ripper/Beamish 2011.
65 Schulting/Bradley 2013.
66 Leach 2005.
67 Leach 2015.

Fig. 5 The hillfort defences at Maiden Castle, Dorset (photograph courtesy of T. King)

a variety of rituals, including the defleshing of a child's skull in the Later Bronze Age; bones from three other children, an adolescent and an adult were also found in the cave.[68] The cave itself is an obvious candidate for a liminal space, readily accessible from the beach only at low tide,[69] but a deep, wide and tall space once entered.

Once we are into the Iron Age (ca. 800 BC–AD 43) we see the intensification of conflict, warfare and deviant burial, the period traditionally being seen as "suffused by war".[70] For example, we see the emergence of a group of what have been termed 'warrior burials',[71] of which some one hundred have now been identified,[72] although approximately half of these come from a single part of Britain, East Yorkshire. It is, however, notable that S.S. King's studies comparing trauma from the Wetwang Slack cemetery in East Yorkshire with a number of Hampshire sites showed that the Hampshire sites had a both a far higher incidence of violent trauma overall, and a much greater level of perimortem trauma.[73] So those who died in warfare may only rarely have been buried as warriors. One possible exception comes from Acklam Wold in Yorkshire, where an adult man had received two sword blows on the head (both front and back) at the time of death; he was buried in a prominent location in the landscape, and with a sword (bent to 'kill' it).[74] The cause of trauma may also be different in the two areas, with possible sling stone (see below) injuries only present in Hampshire.

The most prominent feature of the archaeological record in Britain, for most of the Iron Age, is hillforts.[75] From the 6th century BC they spread across the landscape. Early univallate (a single line of bank and ditch) hillforts were quite common, which is often taken to imply a warlike soci-

68 Benton 1931; Armit *et al.* 2011.
69 Armit *et al.* 2011.
70 James in press.
71 Collis 1973.
72 Inall 2016.
73 King 2010a; 2010b; 2014.
74 Giles 2015.
75 Brown 2008.

ety. Then in the 4th century BC these fairly simple hillforts were replaced by much larger developed hillforts. These are multivallate and were heavily defended, with several lines of bank and ditch (up to 25 m deep at Maiden Castle; **Fig. 5**) and extra defences at the gateways, including platforms for slingers; in the west country there were stone obstacles. In some cases, e.g. Danebury,[76] only a single gateway is maintained and the other blocked, making everyday access more difficult. Defences symbolised the prestige of individual hillfort communities, and their defeated neighbours may have been forced to labour on grandiose earthworks, reinforcing their lowly status.

The massive oppida from the end of the Iron Age are less well known, but the oppidum at Stanwick in Yorkshire produced evidence of violence from a ditch terminal. This was in the form of the upper vertebrae and skull of an adult male, who had four sword or axe blows on the head, bringing about his death, and several cutmarks on the vertebrae from removing the head.[77]

Smaller sites were also defended. Glastonbury Lake Village in Somerset was constructed in the 2nd century BC.[78] It is a crannog, an artificial island, defended both by a wooden palisade set in the surrounding water and more symbolically by the display of decapitated heads, which may have taken place over the length of the settlement (not as a massacre of the inhabitants as claimed by Boyd Dawkins[79]), next to the landing-stage that provided the only access to the site.[80] Other human remains from the site include a perforated skull roundel.[81]

Sling stones are an uncelebrated element of war, but undoubtedly significant,[82] with pits filled with them at hillforts (e.g. at Danebury[83]), suggesting larger numbers of people involved in warfare. Related to this was the development of the Celtic war trumpet (the carnyx), used both to rally the troops and intimidate the enemy.[84] Depictions of the carnyx on Iron Age coins confirm its military role;[85] because they were held vertically, and they were very visible on the battlefield.

Despite the major defences at hillforts, some were successfully attacked; the most recently excavated example is Fin Cop in northern England.[86] Here, although there was a substantial ditch and rampart wall, the wall was pushed into the ditch at the same time (ca. 400–300 BC) as at least 15 individuals (four women, an adolescent male, an adult, a child and eight babies) were thrown into two different parts of the ditch. Not all, or even perhaps most, victims of Iron Age warfare were warriors. The site was then abandoned.

The site of Kemerton Camp in Worcestershire was also attacked. The event was assumed to date to the Roman Conquest when excavated in the 1930s,[87] but radiocarbon dating places it at about 100 BC, so in the Middle–Late Iron Age.[88] Weaponry, especially spearheads, and human remains were found in the inner gateway. The skeletal remains were those of at least 36 individuals: 29 adults (mostly fairly young and mostly male) and seven children. There were sword injuries and blunt-force trauma, mostly to the head. Rodent gnawing on bones shows that the bodies were left exposed for some time before their final burial, so perhaps they were the defeated. An example of mutilation of bone also occurred, with a femur (thigh bone) chopped away to leave a pointed stump: this could be seen as an act of disrespect, treating the enemy as less than human. A.G. Western and J.D. Hurst refer to "… the single deposition of a large quantity of abandoned, denigrated bodies including men, women and children…"[89] as suggesting an all-out external attack.

The largest group of Iron Age burials in southwest England are those in the Maiden Castle 'war cemetery'. R.E.M. Wheeler believed these to be the victims of Roman invasion, buried with "haste and anxiety",[90] but they are actually in careful single or double graves.[91] They did, however (apart from the children), have a very high level of traumatic injuries at nearly 90 %. Although some were inflicted by Roman weaponry, there were also many healed in-

76 Cunliffe 2003.
77 Wheeler 1954, 53.
78 Bulleid/Gray 1917.
79 Boyd Dawkins in: Bulleid/Gray 1917.
80 Coles/Minnitt 1995, 170–174.
81 Armit 2012, 6.
82 Robertson 2016.
83 Cunliffe 2003, 171.
84 James in press.
85 Swan 2018.
86 Waddington 2012.
87 Hencken 1938.
88 Western/Hurst 2014.
89 Western/Hurst 2014, 174.
90 Wheeler 1943, 119.
91 Sharples 1991.

juries from earlier episodes of conflict.[92] This could relate to the liminal location of this burial area, outside the main hillfort, but within the outer bank. A different kind of liminal burial space has been found at nearby Ham Hill, where in the 2nd century BC an enclosure ditch inside the hillfort produced parts of some 20 individuals (mostly female); a few were nearly complete and placed with care; the remainder were heads or scattered bones dropped into the ditch fill.[93]

At the major hillfort of Cadbury Castle in Somerset a young man was buried in the rampart belonging to the final Iron Age phase of the defences. Skeletal analysis revealed that he had suffered from a number of conditions, which may have reduced his mobility.[94]

Within hillforts, burial was carried out both in a formal and in a clearly informal fashion in old storage pits, including suggested massacre victims with smashed bones – these show an attempt to remove any individual identity (and memory). Are these unsuccessful attackers, victims of internal conflict, or slave labourers as scapegoats? Pit burials inside hillforts are well known from sites such as Danebury in Hampshire, but they are found far more widely. Traditionally these were rather neglected as mere casual burials, but more recent evidence and re-examination of records suggest a wide variety of body treatment from the careful to the apparently deliberately contemptuous. Occasionally there is evidence of binding, crushing and weighting down by blocks of chalk, which has led to the suggestions that some of these burials may be of socially marginal individuals.[95] That these may be inhabitants of the hillfort itself rather than outsiders is suggested by recent stable isotope analysis of the Danebury skeletons:[96] thus, more likely to be the enemy within. R. Luff noted three cases in which people appear to have been butchered, i.e. subjected to an extraordinary degree of violence;[97] at Danebury (the pelvis and upper legs of a young adult male), and at Wandlebury in Cambridgeshire (a legless child wrapped in a cloth, then buried prone (face down), and an adult woman with most of her legs removed). A similar case has been found at Castle Hill, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire, where a single Middle Iron Age pit contained an adult man at the base, an adult woman in the middle and an infant inserted into the top of the fill in the Late Iron Age.[98] Cutmarks on bone showed that the woman had been dismembered into four sections.

Perhaps related to these pit burials at hillforts is the remarkable discovery of an elderly woman, a horse and an ill-treated dog near the base of the ditch at Blewburton Hill, Berkshire.[99] The woman may have been tied to the horse and the pair then rolled down the rampart into the ditch, as suggested by the original excavator.[100] In southeast Scotland, recent re-analysis of the human remains from Broxmouth has revealed clear differences in treatment of the dead buried in a formal cemetery outside the hillfort and three young women in irregular graves inside the hillfort.[101] One had healed rib fractures, another was placed face down with peri-mortem fractures to the hands and arms, while the third was in a grave lined with large stone slabs, placed in the hillfort entrance road so as to be visible. The excavators suggest that "these may be the graves of witches or other feared individuals who were thus kept isolated in death from the remainder of the community …".[102] Perhaps these were both feared and revered to varying degrees, given the prominence of the third burial.

Such deviant burials are also well known from other settlements. A highly unusual *in situ* partial cremation was undertaken ca. 300 BC in a pit, which had been cut into a ditch at the small settlement at Latton Lands in Wiltshire.[103] An adult male with severe spinal degenerative joint disease and a healed skull injury had been pressed face down (thus a prone burial) between burning timbers that partially cremated the body, which was then covered with soil. In Cambridgeshire, at Bluntisham, an elderly man was buried with bound legs and in a prone position in a pit.[104] A young man missing the head and neck was placed prone (in a grave, too small for the body) in the line of the wall of the

92 Redfern 2011.
93 Brittain/Sharples/Evans 2014.
94 Jones/Randall 2010.
95 E.g. Wait 1985, 118–120; Cunliffe 1993, 12–13; Green 1998.
96 Stevens *et al.* 2010.
97 Luff 1996.
98 Allen *et al.* 2010, 32–33. 37.
99 Bendrey/Leach/Clark. 2010.
100 Collins 1952, 31.
101 Armit *et al.* 2013.
102 Armit *et al.* 2013, 93.
103 Powell/Laws/Brown 2009.
104 Burrow/Mudd 2010.

roundhouse at Spring Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.[105] At West Lane, Kemble, Gloucestershire, a young adult male was buried prone in a pit with his wrists possibly tied to his ankles, and the pit then covered by a large block of stone.[106]

At Great Houghton, in Northamptonshire, a woman was apparently bound, then buried prone against the side of a shallow pit at the edge of a settlement, just inside the Middle Iron Age enclosure ditch.[107] The only grave good present was a lead alloy torc (one of only two torcs made of this material known from Britain) found around her neck, with the opening placed at the back rather than the normal front position. Traces of crude reworking after breakage due to the material employed suggest that the item may have been hastily prepared for the burial. The excavator suggests that a lead torc was the best they could do to provide the grave goods for a respectful burial, but this seems a more plausible case of an outcast burial of an internal enemy.[108]

One strange discovery at Middle to Late Iron Age Oram's Arbour enclosure, near Winchester in Hampshire, was made in a pit next to a roundhouse, together with pieces of an oven and the skeleton of a sheep or goat.[109] Two joining pieces of an adult cranium were found to have been coated on the inside with pine resin, so that it could be used as a container.[110] A ditch near the main roundhouse at Watkins Farm, Northmoor, Oxfordshire, contained a skull cut into pieces.[111]

The excavation of a 'banjo' enclosure at Winterbourne Kingston in Dorset produced a series of Late Iron Age individuals, formally buried in reused storage pits.[112] However, in one case, an adult (male according to Russell *et al.*,[113] but later re-identified as being female according to M.Smith[114]) was discovered near the base of a pit, lying prone on top of a deposit of horse and cattle bones, unaccompanied by grave goods. An unhealed cut on her collarbone points to her throat being cut.

A remarkable case of deviant burial has been found at Heslington in Yorkshire.[115] The head and vertebrae of a man were discovered in a pit on this settlement, with the brain within the cranium preserved by rapid burial. After removal with a knife, the head was placed face down at the bottom of the pit and speedily covered. His maternal line DNA was of a group otherwise unknown in Britain (but identified in Italy and the Near East), which might suggest he was an outsider and, thus, an ideal person to identify as the enemy within, and, thus, take the role of the scapegoat.

In a riverine context in Cambridgeshire is the riverside settlement at Trumpington by the Cam.[116] Excavations revealed two graves and a series of pit burials. Some of the pit burials appear to represent casual or disrespectful disposal of the dead, particularly infants, two of whom appear to have been dropped or thrown into the pits. One adult male had suffered two significant injuries: a broken collarbone and a fatal blade wound to the head, perhaps in a single incident; and an adult woman's body had the torso and head twisted round within the pit, and was accompanied by an unusual deposit of crow's bones. Individual human bones were also present at the site, believed to represent people who had initially been interred in the midden, but were later disturbed: four of these bones (three femurs and a tibia, all of men) had been made into tools.

Beyond settlements, but still within the settled landscape, excavations at Sovell Down in Dorset revealed a linear ditch containing the headless skeleton of a man, buried ca. 300 BC.[117] The unusual body position suggested that it had been rolled or thrown into the ditch. Cutmarks were found on the top two remaining bones of the spine (the 3rd and 4th cervical vertebrae; **Fig. 6**). The man had several other injuries on the right side of his chest, all blows dealt from behind. There were five cuts to his right scapula (shoulder blade), three of which had gone through the bone (**Fig. 7**). The man's ribs had four similar cutmarks, which had penetrated the chest some slicing through the ribs. The head was perhaps removed as a trophy, suggesting headhunting. The midden site at All Cannings Cross produced a perforated roundel.[118]

105 Allen/Kamash 2008, 17. 57.
106 King/Barber/Timby 1996.
107 Chapman 2000–2001.
108 Chapman 2000–2001, 32.
109 Qualmann *et al.* 2004.
110 King 2010a, 204–206; Armit 2017.
111 Allen 1990.
112 Russell *et al.* 2014.
113 Russell *et al.* 2014.
114 Smith 2017, 151–153.
115 O'Connor *et al.* 2011.
116 Evans/Lucy/Patten 2018.
117 Tucker 2014, 228–229; Smith 2017, 137–140; both based on McKinley 1997.
118 Armit 2012, 6.

Fig. 6 Vertebrae from Sovell Down, Dorset (photograph courtesy of K. Tucker)

Fig. 7 Shoulder blade from Sovell Down, Dorset (photograph courtesy of K. Tucker)

Away from settlements, our two surviving British bog bodies are both from northwest England. Lindow Man in Cheshire suffered a triple death by stabbing in the throat, garrotting and hitting over the head with a blunt instrument.[119] Worsley Man in Lancashire had a remarkably similar series of injuries: his throat was cut, he was garrotted, hit over the head, and finally decapitated.[120] Also in a wet context, but a riverine one, several Iron Age skulls with evidence of trauma have been recovered from the Thames.[121] Dated examples include a woman with an unhealed blunt-force trauma, a possible woman with an unhealed sharp force penetrating blow, and a possible man with an unhealed blunt-force trauma from the Early Iron Age, a male with a healed injury, a possible man with an unhealed blunt-force trauma, and a possible man with a healed injury from the Middle Iron Age, and a possible man with two small healed injuries from the Late Iron Age. On a sand island in the River Great Ouse, in the Cambridgeshire fenlands, a ritual site developed, resulting in a spread of animal and human bone.[122] The human remains included examples with cut- and chop-marks, and a perforated adult skull, with several parallels as individual finds at nearby fenland sites.

At the site of Mine Howe on Orkney in Scotland, near to its unique underground structure, the burial of an adult man, who had been fatally injured by sword and spearhead wounds, was placed or thrown into a shallow and undersized grave, then covered by several large stone slabs.[123]

At the Baldock Bypass site in Hertfordshire a number of Iron Age burials were placed next to a group of Bronze Age barrows. These burials were of cremations, with a single exception.[124] This was an adult male in a grave, who appeared to have been decapitated following a sharp slicing blow down the back, with the skull placed under the arm in the grave. In Kent, the Pepper Hill site produced the prone burial of a man[125] – the only indication of activity there in the Later Iron Age. Similarly, at South Marston in Wiltshire there were just two graves from the Later Iron Age:[126] one contained the burial of an elderly man with a substantial boulder of stone (needing two people to carry it) covering his chest and stomach. One of the burials at the small cemetery near the Little Woodbury settlement enclosure in Wiltshire was of a pregnant woman and *in utero* foetus.[127] She was buried pressed against one side of the grave, with her head bent back, leaving a large apparently empty space behind her; several large flint nodules were then placed around her head, crushing the skull.

Finally, to return to caves: Fishmonger's Swallet (a sinkhole) in Somerset yielded disarticulated human remains from six individuals, one with a curved spine, thus visibly different, some having

119 Brothwell 1986; Joy 2009.
120 Garland 1995; Denton *et al.* 2002.
121 Schulting/Bradley 2013.
122 Evans 2013.
123 Orkney Sites and Monuments Record 2005.
124 Phillips/Duncan/Mallows 2009.
125 Booth *et al.* 2011, 235.
126 Reynolds *et al.* 2014.
127 Powell 2015.

met violent deaths.[128] The bones included a split femur with cutmarks and percussion damage, interpreted as possible evidence of cannibalism[129] in the form of removing the bone marrow – what seems to be a clear case of the denial of humanity. Similar finds have been made together with Iron Age pottery at the nearby Read's Cavern,[130] although the association has yet to be confirmed by radiocarbon dating. Still in Somerset, a swallet hole related to the Wookey Hole cave system produced the skeleton of an adolescent with intact hair and glass beads, who was recorded as being found near the base of the hole, tied to a stone.[131] The skeleton has now been dated by radiocarbon to the Late Iron Age,[132] in line with the accompanying beads. In Derbyshire, the Carsington Pasture Cave contained the remains of a woman, dated to the Early Iron Age, together with four infants, whose legs had been cut off below the knees.[133]

The specific cases considered here may, of course, be interpreted differently by others (e.g. some may well be individual acts of violence, rather than those sanctioned by the wider community), and it is undeniable that in relation to deviant burials there are specific difficulties in identifying them successfully – the general lack of burial evidence making it difficult to define normality in burial practice and the regional variability. Nevertheless, the general trend is clear enough: there is a move to conditions favouring war and conflict during the Bronze Age, which largely sets the scene for the Iron Age. At the same time there is an increase in deviant burial and in particular what seems to be dehumanising acts against the living or recently deceased of the kind which would be in keeping with their having been scapegoated as an enemy within.

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[128] Marcucci/Kerns 2011, 182; Wilford 2016, 391.
[129] Loe/Cox 2005.
[130] Marcucci/Kerns 2011.
[131] Balch/Troup 1911.
[132] Lane 2015.
[133] Wilford 2016, 305.

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Nick Thorpe, Scales of Conflict in Bronze Age to Iron Age Britain: Enemies both Outside and Within

In this paper I assess two archaeological phenomena for Bronze to Iron Age Britain: the expanding scale of conflict over this period and the practice of what is often called deviant burial, and I consider their possible connection. Such burials may relate to a wider pattern of social violence, given that community setbacks need to be explained away, perhaps requiring scapegoats to take the blame, who met their death as a result of being identified as 'the enemy within'. Although burials with weaponry occurred in the Early Bronze Age, there is little evidence of conflict and few deviant burials. The Later Bronze Age and the Iron Age, by contrast, provide significant evidence at varying scales of both warfare and deviant burial practices.

Nick Thorpe, Ausmaße des Konflikts im bronze- und eisenzeitlichen Britannien: Feinde von Innen und Außen

In diesem Artikel bewerte ich zwei archäologische Erscheinungen im bronze- bis eisenzeitlichen Britannien, nämlich das zunehmende Ausmaß des Konflikts im Laufe dieses Zeitraumes und der Brauch der – häufig so genannten – irregulären Bestattungen, und erörtere ihre mögliche Verbindung. Solche Bestattungen könnten in Beziehung zu einem breiteren Muster sozialer Gewalt stehen, da die Rückschritte einer Gemeinschaft erklärt werden müssen, vielleicht mittels Sündenböcke, die die Schuld auf sich nehmen und deren Tod auf ihre Identifizierung als "Feind von Innen" zurückzuführen ist. Obwohl in der Frühbronzezeit Bestattungen mit Waffen vorkommen, gibt es wenig Nachweise von Konflikten und wenige irreguläre Bestattungen. Im Gegensatz dazu gibt es in der späteren Bronzezeit und in der Eisenzeit signifikante Hinweise auf unterschiedliche Ausmaße sowohl an Krieg als auch an irregulären Bestattungen.