
Book Reviews:

Iron Age Fen-Edge Settlement at Black Horse Farm, Sawtry, Cambridgeshire

Jody Joy

Riversides: Neolithic Barrows, a Beaker Grave, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon Burials and Settlement at Trumpington, Cambridge

Catherine Hills

Commemoration in medieval Cambridge

Elizabeth Leedham-Green

Contested Reformations in the University of Cambridge, 1535–1584.

Thomas S Freeman

Iron Age Fen-Edge Settlement at Black Horse Farm, Sawtry, Cambridgeshire.

Andrew A S Newton, British Archaeology Report, British Series 640, 2018. Oxford: BAR, 140pp, 45 figs, 35 tables & 10 Graphs. £31. ISBN-978 1 407316574

Cambridgeshire has seen rapid development in the past decade or so with developer-funded archaeology transforming our understanding of the prehistory of the region. This publication of the excavations undertaken by Archaeological Solutions Ltd from 2004–5 and in 2008 at Black Horse Farm, Sawtry, is a welcome addition to this growing body of work. Initially inhabitation of the site from the Middle to Late Iron Age, was brought to an end by flooding during the Later Iron Age. There is also evidence for further agricultural activity during the drier Romano-British period.

The first phase of the site (c. fifth to second centuries BC) was dominated by roundhouses, alongside smaller ancillary structures. The interiors of the roundhouses were relatively well-preserved and a balanced argument is presented concerning the potential symbolic or practical significances of the positioning of artefacts and finds. The presence of an infant burial positioned outside the entrance to one of the roundhouses could have symbolic importance, but it also fits into a wider pattern of the incorporation of infant burials into settlements. The overall impression of the character of the Middle Iron Age settlement is that it is similar to other fen edge sites such as at Colne Fen and Wardy Hill. In the Later Iron Age (first century BC to first century AD) a series of large enclosure ditches were dug, which were regularly maintained and cleared out. These may have been associated with attempts to drain water away from the houses, but their effectiveness is questionable, and alternative purposes are suggested, such as a means of denoting ownership, or a link to status through the 'command' of labour. I agree with the author,

who suggests that enclosures such as this may have served a range of different purposes at the same time. Finally, in the later phases (from the mid-first century AD) excavations uncovered strip field systems, with the settlement perhaps shifting a short distance to the north. Parallel ditches, provide evidence for a trackway possibly for moving livestock. These changes in the patterns of land use over time are of particular interest because they provide further evidence of the influence of the environment and weather patterns on prehistoric life.

Overall, the report is well written with nice illustrations and even colour photographs. The individual specialist reports are also all of a high standard. Whilst the site itself is not very unusual, many of the details contained in this report, particularly regarding the roundhouses and enclosures, the different phases of occupation and also the children's burials, will be of wide general interest. The publication of the Black Horse Farm site also adds to a number of recent high-quality excavations in the region, providing increasingly detailed knowledge about prehistoric settlement and life in the region.

Jody Joy

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Riversides: Neolithic Barrows, a Beaker Grave, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon Burials and Settlement at Trumpington, Cambridge.

Christopher Evans, Sam Lucy and Ricky Patten. New Archaeologies of the Cambridge Region (2). Cambridge: McDonald Institute. xviii 484pp many figs. ISBN: 978-1-902937-84-7

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit, since its foundation in 1990, has carried out many excavations within

the city and in the surrounding region. Their investigations range in scale from a lift shaft dug through a medieval university building to extensive prehistoric and Roman landscapes around the city, and in date from the Mesolithic to the twentieth century. They have also worked in the fens, finding sites buried below marine and riverine deposits, most notably the Must Farm site. Some of these sites have been published in PCAS, but many have appeared as monographs like the one reviewed here, each of which provides an impressive wealth of information, presented through excellent graphics and brilliant photographs, many by Dave Webb (see CAU web page for details of publications). These are serious contributions to scholarship as well as to the record, setting standards for excavation, record and publication, and providing a substantial resource for future research. Each volume is "authored" by many people, all of whom deserve credit for their contribution, within a consistent format achieved by the editors.

The Riversides volume is the second in a series of "New archaeologies of the Cambridge Region": reports on the archaeology of the hinterland of Cambridge, mainly excavated in advance of large scale developments. The first volume, *Borderlands*, (Evans 2008), related to the area within and around Addenbrookes. This second volume, *Riversides*, is on the archaeology of the area to the east of Trumpington village, part of Trumpington Meadows. Both volumes also include material from other local excavations, some not previously published, such as the War Ditches Anglo-Saxon cemetery, excavated in 1949–50 by the university Field Club.

It is not possible to do justice to all of the contents of this book, here some aspects are highlighted. Prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon phases of occupation, including settlement and burial, were discovered, but there was an unusual lack of substantial Roman activity, contrasting strongly with sites around Addenbrookes and north west Cambridge. What was discovered proved to be of national and international significance for more than one period of the past. The beaker period burials from the site have contributed to recent international research using aDNA which is changing our view of prehistory: many media and scientific reports on this research are illustrated by the photograph of a grave from Trumpington which contained the skeletons of a young male and a female, each with a beaker vessel, who were related but not siblings, and whose ancestry was not local.

In the early Iron Age this was primarily a settlement site with many pits, originally for grain storage. The deposits in such pit assemblages, found across southern England, have recently been seen as partly ritual, involving deliberately placed deposits of human and animal bones. Here this interpretation is queried, suggesting instead that some such deposits are simply redeposited midden material or disposal of sick animals. Human bones also occur in these contexts, including some pieces that have been worked. Does this represent ritual honouring and memory of the dead, or alternatively a deliberate and

derogatory use of human remains- or just convenient pieces of bone?

A small group of four inhumations of Anglo-Saxon date included one with a bed, a gold and garnet cross and gold and garnet linked pins. This is discussed by Sam Lucy in the context of seventh century Anglo-Saxon burials and their significance in terms of evidence for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Other local bed burials include the one from War Ditches, here fully published (as far as records permit). The girl buried at Trumpington with these exquisite but tiny objects came from a family with access to wealth, and also knowledge of Christianity. The C14 dates showed that the bed burial was the latest of the group, buried late in the seventh century, perhaps beyond the date currently argued for the end of furnished burial in the 670s AD. The finds have been donated to the museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and are displayed there.

This volume is an impressive achievement, both in terms of the original excavation and its analysis and publication. My only reservation would be that I sometimes found it difficult to track down the specific information I was looking for, and some interesting sections are buried in small print. Also the discursive nature of some of the general discussion works better as literature than as information.

Knowledge of the past of the Cambridge region has been transformed over recent decades through the work of the CAU and the other archaeological units active here, this book is a significant contribution to that knowledge.

Catherine Hills

References

- Evans, C, 2008, *Borderlands The Archaeology of the Addenbrookes Environs, South Cambridge*. New Archaeologies of the Cambridge Region (1). Cambridge: Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

Commemoration in medieval Cambridge.

John S Lee and Christian Steer, eds. The history of the University of Cambridge: Texts and studies, no. 9, The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, and Cambridge University Library, 2018. xiv, 193pp, 14 col. and 22 b&w plates. £60. ISBN: 9781783273348

The title of this splendidly informative book might suggest a more narrowly focused theme than is the case. It takes its origins from a conference organised by the Monumental Brass Society in Trinity Hall in April 2013. Some of the chapters are based on papers given at that conference, others were commissioned for this volume. Most of the eight chapters deal almost exclusively with Cambridge, and Cambridge as a university town, the only partial exception being Sir John Baker's chapter on 'A comparison of academic and legal costume on memorial brasses' which

ranges farther afield and demonstrates the author's amazing eye for details which would escape or baffle most of us. Monumental brasses are also the topic of Nicholas Rogers who discusses the reasons for the presence and absence of them in Cambridge (significantly fewer here than in Oxford). The cover, indeed, depicts the brass for Richard Billington (d. 1432), recently stolen from St Bene'ts Church but, happily, more recently retrieved.

John Lee in characteristically masterful fashion discusses in detail the wide variety of modes of commemoration — not just monuments in stone or brass, but benefactions of money, of real estate and of books to churches, religious houses and, indeed, colleges, many of whose founders looked for intercessory services for themselves and their families. Richard Barber reveals that the foundation of Corpus Christi College, notably *not* founded by royal or aristocratic patrons but rather by the merged town guilds of St Mary and of Corpus Christi, also entailed notable figures in the City of London as well as Henry, Duke of Lancaster, named as alderman of the united guilds.

Other chapters record forms of commemoration in various institutions: the Friars Minor (Michael Robson), Trinity Hall (Claire Gobbi Daunton and Elizabeth A. New), King's College (Peter Murray Jones) and Lady Margaret Beaufort's household (Susan Powell).

Christian Steer, in the Introduction, draws all these themes together with footnote references to an immense number of old and new sources of information.

Perhaps the dominant theme of the volume is that it reminds us, very vividly, of the strong communion of the living with the dead, something for many nowadays quite foreign.

Elizabeth Leedham-Green

Contested Reformations in the University of Cambridge, 1535-1584.

Ceri Law, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018; 245pp. £50. ISBN 978-0-86193-347-1

In 1958, H C Porter's *Reform and reaction in Tudor Cambridge* was published. The work was well-received and influential, partly because it was well-written, partly because it was based on impressive research into the archives of the University of Cambridge and its colleges, and partly because it filled a considerable gap in the existing scholarship on the English Reformation. Porter described a precocious Protestantism beginning in Cambridge as early as the 1520s and dominating the University by the first decades of Elizabeth I's reign. Catholicism barely appears in Porter's accounts of post-Marian Cambridge. (The word 'reaction' in Porter's title is more of an alliterative flourish than an accurate description of the contents of his book). What Porter described instead were the conflicts in the University between the ad-

herents of the Elizabethan settlement and its more radical Protestant critics.

Six decades later, Ceri Law has not demolished Porter's work, but she has thoroughly and persuasively revised it. Where Porter emphasised puritan dissent, Law gives at least equal attention to conservative religious non-conformity. Law has replaced Porter's clear narrative of Protestant triumph, and subsequent division, with a more nuanced and complex account of a Reformation in Cambridge that was gradual and, by Elizabeth's death, only partially complete, and a university community that was not so much divided as remarkably diverse.

Law begins by undermining legends of early Protestantism in Cambridge and convincingly describes the Henrician university as a place where currents of evangelical belief swirled busily, but not powerfully, around rocks of religious conservatism. And while Law declares that outward conformity to Protestantism was largely achieved in Cambridge during the reign of Henry's son Edward, she also draws attention to continuing religious conservatism in Cambridge and observes that there were many influential religious conservatives within the university. Law's painstaking review of the evidence regarding Protestants who fled Cambridge during Mary's reign is a highlight of her book and her conclusion, that 'Protestant reports of a flood of the faithful from the university during the Marian years were as much wishful thinking as accurate reporting' (p.89), while decidedly revisionist, is based on thorough research. Law is similarly revisionist not only in her emphasis on the incomplete and tentative nature of the restoration of Protestantism in Cambridge in the first five years of Elizabeth's reign, but also in her suggestion that the fabled restraint of the Elizabethan regime in dealing with religious nonconformity at Cambridge may have been a matter of weakness rather than policy.

Law goes on to discuss one of the most scrutinised aspects of early modern Cambridge: the dealings of central figures in the Elizabethan government such as William Cecil, Matthew Parker and Robert Dudley with both the University and with certain colleges. Yet even here, Law discovers new dimensions in well-known episodes such as the attempt to eject John Caius as master of Gonville and Caius, the college which he had re-founded. As a faction within the college sought to oust Caius for his suspected crypto-Catholicism, he received outside protection from his friend Matthew Parker. In fact, Law focuses on the personal relations within the colleges, which she maintains could create a degree of latitude, even acceptance, for those in the colleges with Catholic sympathies. This in turn meant, that depending on the college and other factors, religious changes in Cambridge were experienced differently and their impact only minimally affected some of the students and the fellows at the University. As Law observes, to attempt 'to ascribe a confessional identity to Cambridge, is a distortion, reliant on an idea of "the university" as a fixed entity with a religious character

which was somehow independent from the collected beliefs and practices of its members. Institutions are made up of people, and people disagree' (p. 189). Of course, this diversity, and the tensions between the different groups in Cambridge, contributed not only to the instability of the university but to its intellectual achievements as well. At the same time, the inability of any early modern English government to impose religious uniformity on Cambridge, despite their frequently demonstrated desire to do so, says a great deal about the future of England in the seventeenth century.

Law bases her conclusions on a wide range of sources. She not only draws on college and University records but, in her quest to discern religious beliefs, on wills, probate records, book inventories and records of payments to craftsmen for physical changes to chapels and churches during the reigns of Henry VIII's children. Law's arguments are presented in a lucid style. This style, Law's careful organisation, her refusal to digress and the relatively short length of the book, make Law's work quite accessible.

The downside to these qualities is, almost inevitably, a reader will feel that more should have been said about certain subjects. For example, Law is silent about the University's relations with the city of Cambridge during the Reformation. There are a number of ways in which there must have been significant interactions between the two, but in Law's book the city is barely mentioned. A crucial way in which the Cambridge colleges influenced the course of the English Reformation was through appointments of their fellows to livings under their patronage. This topic is largely unexplored — and Law can hardly be blamed for neglecting it, as it would entail a great deal of research — but it would be interesting to try to ascertain if particular colleges sent clergy of particular ideological positions into these livings and thus disseminated a particular religious position far beyond the shores of the Cam.

But if there are flaws in Law's book they lie largely in what she does not cover. What she covers, she covers admirably. Her erudition and good judgement make her book one that should be read, not only by students of Cambridge during the Reformation, but by all students of the English Reformation.

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