Part II
Landscape Studies
Settlement and Landscape in Iron Age Europe: Archaeological Mainstreams and Minorities

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1 INTRODUCTION

A few years ago Eric Hobsbawm said in Barcelona that ‘Europe is, on the one hand, more united than ever and, on the other, more divided than ever’, adding with certainty that ‘Europe still tends to define itself in national terms and this is something that, at the moment, isn’t going to change’ (Hobsbawm 2008). Like the famous British historian, we can suggest today that the study of the European Iron Age is, in some ways, more united than ever, but it is still divided into national archaeological traditions (Champion 1987; Collis 1984, 1994; Thurston 2009). The Iron Age is defined, basically, in national terms and literature on the European Iron Age is in dozens of languages: ‘one studies the later prehistory of one’s own country, or some part of it’ (Champion 1987: 99). At most there are odd cases of bilateral relations between regions that unite two national traditions, a sort of minor ‘transnational Iron Age regions’, for example the heart of Central Europe (eastern France and southern Germany) and within Southern Scandinavia (essentially Denmark and southern Sweden).

National archaeological traditions are deeply rooted in fieldwork, archaeological research methods, the history of their institutions and the theories and paradigms used to construct them. This is probably one of the aspects of archaeological thought that has received the least attention in recent decades. I am not talking about the history of archaeology in each country, but the archaeology practised in each country, the way its archaeological communities do archaeology: the synthesis of ideas, methods, ways of talking, writing, publishing, and spreading knowledge of the past; although the mechanisms of talking, writing and publishing are virtually invisible (Chippindale 2005).

Ten years ago the Czech archaeologist Neustupný (1997–8) made a brilliant observation offering an illuminating analysis of how mainstreams and minorities can be identified within archaeological traditions. He stated that archaeological communities, which are more or less confined to modern states, are important in structuring our disciplinary frameworks and should be given
serious consideration. For Neustupný, archaeological mainstreams have the following features: (1) a large community with diversified institutions; (2) a hierarchy of archaeologists based on the principles of academic merit and curriculum; (3) the possibility of professional promotion within the community; (4) a common language that facilitates communication; (5) access to extensive up-to-date international archaeological literature and the opportunity for close contacts with outstanding specialists in other disciplines; (6) numerous meetings and conferences, formal and informal, at which ideas and information are rapidly disseminated; (7) a large territory with considerable regional and historical variation (i.e. a rich and varied archaeological heritage); and finally, (8) the country is highly developed economically and politically stable.

Britain is obviously an archaeological mainstream, today the most important and influential in Europe, and if we want to look at it in terms of the vibrancy of research within specialities, this is clearly the case for Iron Age archaeology (Cunliffe 1995, 2009a; Hill 1989; Haselgrove et al. 2001; Haselgrove and Moore 2007a; Haselgrove and Pope 2007). The reasons for this are that, in addition to all the factors noted above, in the case of Iron Age archaeology must be added, first, major developments in theory and methodology, the most innovative in Europe; secondly, the capacity for organizing international conferences; thirdly, the presence of British specialists doing research in other countries; and fourthly, as a result of all these factors, its leadership in producing European syntheses. On the European continent, archaeologists research, write, and teach mainly about the archaeology of their own country, but British archaeologists are the most cosmopolitan in the world outside of the USA. It is true that the French and German Iron Age traditions, at least, are clearly mainstreams, but it is important to recognize that not all mainstreams are of equal influence. There is also a hierarchy within the mainstreams and no doubt by using and quantifying various indicators, it would be possible to try and determine the rank of each mainstream.

Archaeological minorities obviously do not meet all the same requirements, and in particular fail on points 1, 2, and 3, which are very closely related, and have difficulty fulfilling points 5 and 6 (Neustupný 1997–8: 15). But, in my opinion, there is one crucial point that Neustupný fails to give sufficient weight to, and that is the language used for written research. It is not enough to be a large community, and have a common language: in addition that language has to have a minimum level of recognition in the international community. The Spanish tradition is a case in point. Despite the fact that Spanish is spoken by more than 400 million people, the limited knowledge of it within the European archaeological community is the most serious obstacle to it becoming a mainstream tradition (Venclová 2007).

Seen in this light, the Spanish tradition in general can be regarded as moving towards mainstream status, and very importantly, so too can its archaeology of the Iron Age. I see this trend towards mainstream status visible in two aspects: first, the strong and sustained growth in the last two decades of archaeological institutions, conferences, contacts, and the capacity for doing archaeology in other countries, all of which is possible because of Spain’s political stability and economic growth; and secondly, clear efforts have been made to strengthen relations with the most influential mainstreams. In this respect, Spanish archaeology has swung away from its customary links with French and German traditions towards
closer engagement with British archaeology. This is largely due to the Erasmus grants, which often lead to young researchers from overseas getting their placements in British archaeology departments, which is undoubtedly having an effect on Spanish archaeology. What I find most significant is the major increase of Spanish contributions to international archaeological journals, series, and monographs, mainly published in English. In an ongoing study it is quite evident that more than 80 per cent of the research published in international journals is undertaken by very young archaeologists who do not generally have tenure (Ruiz Zapatero and Rodríguez in press).

In a European panorama other traditions that can be considered in ‘transition to mainstream’ are Italian archaeology—highly relevant and interesting for its eclecticism and pragmatism due to its character as an ‘archaeologically invaded’ country—and Polish archaeology. Other very valuable traditions with their own identities include Scandinavian, Dutch, and Czech archaeology, but all of which come up against the problem of being very small linguistic communities. These are however succeeding in developing their influence and importance—largely through the publication of their own journals in English—putting them on the European archaeological map with their own special status within the ranking of mainstreams and minorities.

Following this general analysis of archaeological traditions it is worth stressing that one of the great values of European archaeology—and of course Iron Age archaeology—is the diversity of its traditions. A diversity that is enriching and which we should preserve (Thurston 2009). On other hand, the concept of pan-European Celticism has been replaced by the recognition of regional diversity across Iron Age Europe (Harding 2009: 3). It is also very important to understand that there are deeper and more innovative archaeological traditions, which have opened and are opening up new approaches to Iron Age societies. Minority traditions should not overlook this fact. At the same time mainstreams that ignore the minorities are also missing out on something valuable.

2 RESEARCHING THE EUROPEAN IRON AGE: LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

I now want to look at the European Iron Age as a period of late prehistory and make some observations about the nature of its archaeological research. Little more than twenty-five years ago Champion and Megaw (1985: 1) began their introduction to the study of population and society of the first millennium BC in Western Europe by saying that ‘of all the periods of European Prehistory the Iron Age is the one with most abundant material evidence’, to the point that this extraordinary amount of information was the main reason why we could not see the ‘cultural wood’ for the ‘typological trees’. As a result, archaeology adopted a very uniform interpretive approach to the Iron Age throughout the whole of Europe, but with a difference: the old connection of Iron Age groups with modern societies led to Mediterranean areas remaining within the tradition of classical archaeology while temperate Europe Iron Age groups were studied
through the lens of prehistoric archaeology (Champion 1987). The fact is, however, that regional fragmentation of archaeological studies of this period has been greater than in the case of any other period of prehistory. Rather than a single European Iron Age, different Iron Ages have existed and continue to exist (Hill and Cumberpatch 1995). Some are considered more important than others; some are dealt with fully in works of synthesis whilst other Iron Ages are virtually excluded from visions of the standard European Iron Age. A quick glance at some of the, now standard, texts on the subject clearly reveals these privileged areas (Figure 2.1) and shows up the ‘black holes’ (Brun 1987; Collis 1984; Cunliffe 1994). This has been undertaken in such a way that we can conclude that study of the European Iron Age has been done on a ‘selective highlights’ basis (Harding 2009: 2); this has not been done purely from a British perspective but also by the other European countries.

There are several factors that break up the uniformity, or rather ‘common standards’, in the study of the European Iron Age:

1. The existence of national archaeological traditions with very different characteristics, and with different trajectories throughout the past century. Although the true history of the discipline has been achieved too late (Trigger 1989; Schnapp 1993), we are just at the beginnings of the history.

Figure 2.1. Geographical areas studied in European Iron Age syntheses.
of Iron Age archaeology and we certainly need these kind of studies (Hingley, Ch. 30 this volume) if only as a way of being more aware of each other in a European context, and so promoting interest in foreign archaeological traditions (Callmer et al. 2006). In more or less detailed analysis we have historiographical overviews on French archaeology (Gran-Aymerich 1998), German archaeology (Härke 2002), British archaeology (Cunliffe 2009a: ch. 1; Sharples, Ch. 33 this volume), Italian archaeology (Barbanera 1998) and some other minority traditions such as Central Europe (Sklenár 1983) or Northern Europe (Klindt-Jensen 1975). In Spain there are some relevant recent contributions (Gracia 2009), but we lack a general synthesis, and certainly an approach to the history of Iron Age archaeology (but see Fernández-Posse 1998).

2. The role of geo-cultural areas identified in the period, because these entities tend to influence how study areas have been constructed. For example, Britannia was a fairly clear unit, but in Spain the Celtic and the Iberian Iron Ages are so distinct that there are journals, meetings, and syntheses that deal with each area separately, rather like the situation in France, with the division between Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean France. All in all, this feature is due to the prevalence of the historical paradigm in those archaeological traditions. It is extremely hard to remove such traditional conventions which are deeply rooted in archaeological communities. The problem is that such accepted geo-cultural areas are imposing barriers preventing reintegration of regions which have often been studied in isolation in order to understand developments across broader areas. We need to retain holistic and general views of Iron Age Europe as the only way for understanding the history of Iron Age communities (Kristiansen 2008).

3. Different theoretical paradigms which are not known in every country. For example, a text commissioned in the early 1990s from J. D. Hill, ‘Rethinking the Iron Age’, published in Spanish (Hill and Cumberpatch 1993), which I found very illuminating was largely misunderstood by my colleagues in Spain. A similar situation existed with Wells’s synthesis on the Iron Age (Wells 2002) with its thematic rather than descriptive approach to culture, which proved difficult for the students of my Prehistory of Europe class to get to grips with. So the different weight given to theoretical paradigms means different levels of understanding. The spread of theoretical debate in Iron Age studies, which originated in UK, into other national traditions, such as German archaeology, is quite restricted although some new proposals can be detected within these old traditions (Maier 2000; Birkhan 2007). In France, more or less traditional approaches remain the standard treatments (Audouze and Buchenschutz 1989; Rieckhoff 2006), with a limited number of interesting new approaches developed using processual archaeology but with their own personalities (Brun 2002; Brun and Ruby 2008; Garcia 2004). In Italy, the coexistence of many international archaeological traditions researching in the country has led to a significant interest in those traditions by Italian archaeologists, especially an early interest in Anglo-American processual archaeology (Cuomo di Caprio 1986; Guidi 1996; Bietti Sestieri 2000), and the development of eclectic and original
approaches (Bietti Sestieri 1996). In Spain, culture-history approaches remain dominant although processual and Marxist paradigms are growing, as are, with less vigour, postprocessual approaches (Cunliffe and Keay 1995; Díaz-Andreu and Keay 1997; and especially for the Iron Age see Alberro and Arnold 2004–8).

4. The absence or weakness of common research structures (conferences, journals, projects). Meetings and conferences on the Iron Age are organized on a national basis or, preferably, a bilateral basis, with the other partner as a minority guest, as at the meetings of the AFEAF (Association Française pour l’Etude de l’Âge du Fer) in France (<http://archeo.ens.fr/site-afeaf/index.htm>) since 1983. In Central Europe, the German conferences organized by Arbeitsgemeinschaft Eisenzeit (<http://www.ag-eisenzeit.de>) are promoting foreign participation. The Iron Age Research Student Seminars (IARSS) in Britain are broadening the European scope for young researchers (<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/archenvi/events/IARSS/index.php>), although only a few have been published (Davis, Sharples, and Waddington 2008; Humphrey 2003; Sterry, Tullet, and Ray 2010). Papers on the European Iron Age are disseminated through a wide range of national and regional journals but there is no one journal dedicated to the Iron Age. The problems of writing in English, French, or German by those in the archaeological minorities are less than a generation ago, largely thanks to the mobility of young researchers. However, at meetings the archaeologists from minority traditions have unequal opportunities, particularly in debates and discussions; it is important to remember that it is not just a question of being fluent in a second language (Venclová 2007: 210–11). The same can be said about transnational projects; there are some examples but we are far from a true Iron Age network.

5. Finally, but no less important, the diversity of languages involved in studies of the European Iron Age (Thurston 2009: 348), in practice acts as a barrier to knowledge and often makes it necessary to depend on research published out of the minority languages into other languages and on many occasions means the most important literature is inaccessible (Kristiansen 2008: 18–21). On other hand, it is certainly evident that patterns of scholarly reading are notoriously resistant to broadening, particularly in archaeology (Shott 2005: 9). If the present publication structure of European archaeology is predominantly national and regional in scope, as Kristiansen has correctly shown, this situation is even stronger in the case of European Iron Age archaeology (including a strong tendency towards monolingual or bilingual—local language plus English). In this way it is difficult to undertake what Venclová (2007: 207) has called ‘inner’ communication, in other words communication within the archaeological community itself. Coming back to European general synthesis, it is evident that there is a bias in the available archaeological record, and another bias in the forms of different archaeological research traditions (Harding 2009: 2). This is true, but not entirely so because the ‘invisibility’ of regions with large amounts of published evidence on settlement and cemeteries can only be explained by the bias of language.
All these factors explain the strongly regional/local character of the Iron Age and the fact that European Iron Age studies have swung between two extremes: strictly regional or local studies at one end of the spectrum and large-scale interpretive generalizations and incomplete syntheses, often lacking critical rigour and omitting whole regions, at the other. The acceptance of the apparent normality of this intense regionalism reaches exaggerated extremes, especially from the theoretical perspective of historical archaeology. In short, recognizing the diversity of Iron Age records, methods, and approaches enables us to become aware of a more diverse, more complex and more contextual picture, and one which is more critical on a comparative continental scale, providing us with a better insight into the world of Iron Age communities.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAINSTREAMS AND MINORITIES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The archaeological traditions of the British and Spanish Iron Ages have developed differently and this is such a case where we must try to learn from each other—although I will say in advance that some of us have more to learn than others. My focus concentrates on three aspects: theoretical approaches, organization of the discipline and, finally, archaeological practice.

The first aspect is archaeological theory. In British archaeology the evolution of theoretical approaches is well known: against a background of historical archaeology the New Archaeology began to emerge at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, gaining strength ever since and ultimately becoming the most important paradigm. At the beginning of the 1980s the postprocessual movement developed as an alternative to processual archaeology (although, as Colin Renfrew has argued, it should really be called anti-processual) and certainly opened the door to topics that had never formed part of the processual research agenda. I believe the tension between the two perspectives and their influence on each other to be a very positive feature of British archaeology. For the Iron Age in particular these two paradigms have implied ‘two revolutions’ (Collis 1994). The first, in the 1980s, was the ‘economic’ revolution involving the wider use of faunal and palaeobotanical analyses and, in particular, using them to understand the subsistence strategies of Iron Age communities. The second revolution, in the 1990s, was the ‘symbolic’ revolution arising from the discovery of the symbolic significance of the orientation of the entrances to hillforts and roundhouses, of ritual deposition in settlement features, and symbolic aspects of material culture. Now we must add a ‘third revolution’ with the emergence of a detailed, more contextual, and less dogmatic approach in the last decade.

In Spanish archaeology the overwhelming predominance of traditional archaeology has been the most characteristic feature (Lull 1991; Vázquez Varela and Risch 1991). The influence of the New Archaeology arrived late, in the 1980s, and did not make a significant impact. Spatial archaeology and, to a lesser extent, the archaeology of death were the topics that served to introduce it (Mederos 1997). The postprocessual approach did not take so long to arrive, and the first studies
using this theoretical approach were produced in the 1990s (García Santos 1998; Lull and Micó 2001–2). But they were, if anything, even more marginal than processual studies. It should be added that the historical-materialist approach became relatively important in Spain from the 1980s onwards; its origin lies in anti-Francoist political militancy and it began to develop in the early years of the Spanish democracy (Vicent 1994). Compared with the strong theoretical character of British archaeology, Spanish archaeology stands out as quite the opposite. Even many academics think, unfortunately, that archaeological theory is a passing fashion that makes little or no sense. However, the youngest generations, in particular are changing this state of affairs (see contributions in Alberro and Arnold 2004–8).

My second point is the organization of the discipline. British archaeology is well established in universities, and has a rich and varied range of courses (Anonymous 2009). Undergraduate degree courses in archaeology are available in many universities and a wide range of master’s degrees and postgraduate studies are offered (Collis 2008a). In Spain archaeology has usually been studied as part of a history degree (Ruiz Zapatero 2005), and we have just begun with new courses in archaeology (Ruiz Zapatero 2009). Our tradition is far from the professional reflections on the teaching of Iron Age seen elsewhere (Collis 2009); in fact we have a poor tradition on considering issues regarding the teaching of archaeology. Master’s degrees are beginning to be introduced as part of the Bologna process and construction of the ESHE. A true specialization in Iron Age studies, however, can only be achieved by doing a doctoral thesis. Other related questions, such as meetings and conferences, are not organized on the Iron Age as a generic theme, but rather on a regional geographical basis.

The third and final aspect is archaeological practice. In the UK, archaeological research is not narrow and directly associated with the immediate region of the archaeology centre. On the other hand, although the weight of contractual archaeology has continued to grow, ‘Archaeological Units’ offer a mixed structure of public and private units. In other words, commercial archaeology is not entirely in the hands of private companies (Kristiansen 2009). The importance of universities in archaeological research and fieldwork is still considerable and there is little suggestion that research will ultimately only operate through publications (Carver 2009: 362–77). The centralized organization of British archaeology through a number of institutions and the leading role of university archaeology (Collis 2008a) make it possible to understand how a valuable report, such as Understanding the British Iron Age (Haselgrove et al. 2001) can emerge. This thorough document analyses the state of Iron Age research and evaluates five major themes for current research. The state of each line of research is assessed by identifying the areas that need more research, making suggestions for identifying priorities, and considering changes that should be introduced. The report as a whole is an aid for decision-making at a local level and a point of departure for producing research agendas at a regional and national level.

In the Spanish tradition, the practice of archaeology over the last twenty-five years has been profoundly affected by the decentralization of its management, because the autonomous communities (regional governments) are entirely responsible for archaeology (Martínez Díaz 2002). The most notable fact, therefore,
is that research has been regionalized. Irrespective of the political consideration that a state made up of autonomous communities may deserve, archaeology has suffered from a process of 'localism' (Almagro Gorbea 2004). It is a serious matter that there is no central government institution responsible for coordinating and processing the archaeological data from the seventeen autonomous communities (Ruiz Zapatero 2006). Another notable development of recent decades is that commercial archaeology has come to the fore, with most excavations now undertaken by private archaeology companies (Moya forthcoming; Parga-Dans 2009). The universities have lost some of the nearly exclusive control they once had and the number of excavation projects has tended to decline. Many regional governments have preferred to finance a small number of spectacular projects that make a big impression on the public, but none of them has managed to propose a genuine policy for archaeological fieldwork. The autonomous communities have made no commitment to publishing archaeological excavations and the volume of studies published seems, in my opinion, to be relatively low.

4 APPROACHES TO IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND LANDSCAPES

The complexity of recent approaches to Iron Age settlement and landscapes in Western Europe can be understood as a matrix where there are four main components: theoretical paradigms, archaeological traditions, scales of time, and scales of size (Figure 2.2). Although obviously there are dominating trends in each component the possible combinations between them are multiple. In terms of theoretical approaches we still remain dominated by the culture-history paradigm, especially in Spain (Lull 1991; Vicent 1994) and to a lesser extent in France (Brun 2002), but principles of processual archaeology are relatively strong in the younger generations outside Britain, and to a lesser extent postprocessual archaeology is improving its presence. Marxists paradigms, as a minority approach, are significantly relevant in Spanish Iron Age archaeology (Ruiz Rodriguez and Molinos 1998). Considering archaeological traditions British Iron Age archaeology is a clear mainstream (Collis 1994; Champion 1987; Cunliffe 1988, 1995, 2009a) with strong influences on continental archaeological traditions. In recent decades, minority traditions are introducing theoretical and methodological elements taken from such mainstreams, especially British archaeology, but interestingly also from others. Even more so, in some cases these include developments with their own personality. In that sense the 'adoption-transformation' process may turn out to be a very promising one, although we are far from a true European Iron Age research network.

Time scale is an interesting issue because of the obsession of the culture-history paradigm with the establishment of periods defined by the traditional typochronological approach, which has been the most common approach to chronology in Iron Age archaeology. This is being complemented by the introduction of other dimensions of archaeological time, such as concepts of the longue durée (Cunliffe 2001) and the consideration of generations as an appropriate scale of
past human time (Buchsenschutz 2007: 261). There is also a promising research avenue in looking at the time span of cemeteries, attempting to establish generations correlated with standardized grave-good sets, as undertaken by Almagro Gorbea et al. (2008) at Medellin cemetery in western Iberia. The biography of houses is also a powerful tool for understanding the significant values of dwellings (Gerritsen 1999a, 1999b) and differences between long-lived structures, with modifications and complex process of construction, which can be as long as 300 years at some wheelhouse and brochs in northern areas of Britain (Armit 2007), continuous reconstructions in timber roundhouses, and more ephemeral structures of just one or two human generations using mud-brick material (Romero, Sanz, and Álvarez 2008: 676).

Finally, regarding the scale of studies, these can extend from analysis of a single house unit to a significant fraction of the total area of settlements with an increasing number of large-scale, area excavations. The scale of analysis also extends from the settlement surroundings to supra-regional entities (Galaty 2005), from local (tens or hundreds km$^2$) to regional frameworks.

**Figure 2.2.** Matrix with factors involved in the study of Iron Age settlement and landscapes.
The immediate locality of settlements permits the locating of cemeteries and shrines, especially in continental Europe, whilst detailed surveys of the surrounding countryside can also reveal a great number of non-settlement components, such as wells, shallow pits, pathways, places of salt production, iron mining and smelting, and stone quarries (Haselgrove et al. 2001: 11) which complement the information provided by the famous ‘Celtic fields’ (Klamm 1993; Spek et al. 2003), and demonstrates that settlements are part of their contemporary landscape rather than isolated features. Our aim must be to promote integrated studies of all elements of the inhabited landscape to investigate the ways in which people structured the landscape in which they lived and gave it meaning according to their cosmology (Fokkens and Arnoldussen 2008: 8). I am convinced that the ‘archaeology of settlement surroundings’ will be a key issue for research in the next decade, although it is a highly time-consuming line of research, without quick and easy results. In some ways it may be better to think in terms of an archaeology of ‘local communities’, as argued for by Gerritsen (2006).

It is a challenge to define properly the wide kind of relationships between sites and their surroundings, the local territory, the regions, and the general dynamics which can be drawn on a European Iron Age scale (Brun and Ruby 2008: 151). For theory building in this area we need to establish firm grounds: I support Collis’s (2010: 29) claim of rejecting the Culture Group concept and envisage instead the view of many small Iron Age societies interacting with one another and exchanging ideas, in a way which has been defined as ‘peer polity interaction’ (Renfrew and Cherry 1986). The concept of ‘connectivity’ recently used by Cunliffe (2009b: 59) for archaeological study of interaction networks between populations separated in different areas, even in different moments, is quite close. The possibility of relating archaeological approaches with modern DNA analysis is certainly an exciting new way to study origins of populations and population movements, although such study is in its infancy. Archaeology can provide some insight into the changing intensity of cultural interaction by explaining the diversity of contacts and influences between communities in separated areas, as Cunliffe proposes, and can explore more persuasively borders, boundaries, and frontiers in the Iron Age. But for an ‘archaeological measure’ of interaction networks we need to develop protocols for homologating data in different areas and to produce acceptable comparison methods, the great challenge emphasized by Renfrew (2007: 222). These new analytical frameworks for appropriated comparisons in specific Iron Age topics and processes will also need, at the same time, to retain a global perspective.

Different scales of time and space are appropriate for studying different problems in the European Iron Age; a wide variety of archaeological paradigms are ongoing in researchers’ minds and a diversity of archaeological traditions is the rich heritage of European archaeologists (Thurston 2009: 397). All the above constitutes a powerful position to envisage the Iron Age along new strands (Figure 2.3). What we need is to develop intelligent new questions and implement the required scales and frameworks to answer them.
5 IRON AGE LANDSCAPES: THE FRAGMENTATION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH

The landscape and landscape archaeology constitute one of the final frontiers, for now, of the old spatial studies (Kantner 2008: 57–9, 61–2). Landscape is the environment perceived and categorized through the eyes of those who live and move in that space, and in that sense landscape exists only as it is ‘perceived, experienced, and contextualized by people’ (Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 1). Landscape archaeology has been more closely informed by postmodern researchers, at least in the last couple of decades, regarding landscape as an ideational construction of human mind (Brück 2005). Some of the excesses and misunderstandings of postprocessual landscape archaeology have been intelligently criticized by Flem- ing (2006) with brilliant arguments, which have recently been extended (Barrett and Ko 2009).

It is necessary to ensure that studying the ways in which places and landscapes were used enables us to understand how the peoples of the Iron Age perceived and understood their world (Armit 1997; Barrett 1999). This is being approached through, on the one hand, the agricultural archaeology of the Iron Age (e.g. Jones 1996; Hambleton 1999) and, on the other, the study of the symbolic dimensions of the landscape (e.g. Barrett 1999). An understanding of Iron Age communities in the future will progress successfully by means of an agricultural archaeology (Haselgrove et al. 2001: 10–11) capable of reconstructing human scale chronologies, crop cycles, scale of activities, social organization, and many other aspects involved in communities’ forms of subsistence (Bradley and Yates 2007).

An analysis of the symbolism of the landscape might have been more spectacular. In Britain, this task has been undertaken by examining the structured deposition of weapons and metal objects in rivers and bogs, of coins on dry land, bronzes and pottery in wells and ditches (e.g. Bradley 1990; Fitzpatrick 1984; Hunter 1997), and by studying the perception of the past in the past (Bradley 2002)—that is, considering the sites/monuments of former times as ‘ritual foci’ (Hingley 1999, Gillings and Pollard 1999). At the same time, as Barrett and Ko (2009: 290) have lucidly remembered, ‘there is a remarkable poverty in so much of contemporary British archaeology which seeks the symbolic in every kind of artefact, deposit and structure, and where explanation amounts either to
demonstrating that the material is “structured” (that is—ordered), and therefore “must be” symbolic, or to actually claiming to know what the symbols signify’. In some way we are entering into a post-postprocessual approach, which means, to some extent, a post-symbolic perspective. This is not to deny symbolism in the Iron Age but simply to claim more contextualized and informed analysis in which symbolism may be just a part of explanations.

Landscapes are not just an economic resource or neutral backdrop, and at the same time they are not static elements, but instead dynamic ones (Haselgrove and Moore 2007b: 6). Rennell (2008) has stressed two interesting points: first, we need to explore dynamic landscapes because the landscapes of everyday life in the Iron Age were landscapes of practice and activity, and, secondly, can we afford the possibility of exploring non-visual sensory experience of landscapes? Certainly hearing, touch, smell, and taste all participate in one or another way in the perception of architectural structures, although it is harder to approach them in an analytical way (Letesson and Vansteenhayse 2006: 97), and equally this can be said about these sensory approaches to past landscapes, especially sound (Rennell 2008). Despite this, the exploration of aspects of everyday experience and the creation of place within an Iron Age landscape—looking at different visibilities and perceptions of the sea, different landscape zones, and local, regional, and distant landscapes—has allowed the discovery of the sense of being and meanings behind creating sites in the Hebridean Iron Age (Rennell 2008). Visibility studies have grown with the extremely important possibilities opened up by GIS, yet with a frequently common problem: the lack of precise dates for features analysed (Llobera 2007: 67). Another possibility of approaching the relationship between settlements and production places (pottery, querns, etc.) is exploring the importance of prominent, visually impressive ‘natural places’ in the landscape, although it is not easy to prove the precise meaning of these special locations (Moore 2007).

The most recent and exciting approach, without doubt, is the analysis of skyclapes, the study of celestial phenomena and the ways in which Iron Age peoples perceived and included themselves in their world view (Kruta, Kruta Poppi, and Magni 2008). The exploration of the Iron Age sky is a growing research area. The perceptions of Western Iron Age peoples are encoded in some exceptional objects, such as the ‘pitcher’ of Brno-Malomerice (Kruta 2006; Kruta and Berluzzi 2007) and in the astronomic orientations recognized in the position of tombs and stelae in Iron Age cemeteries of central Spain (Baquedano and Martín Escorza 1998, 2008, 2009; Rodríguez et al. 2006), in sacred monuments related with oppida (Pérez Gutiérrez 2009), and finally in structures of north-western Iberian castros (García Quintela and Santos 2008; Parcero-Oubiña, Criado, and Santos 1998).

In the Iberian peninsula we have some interesting recent studies that analyse the symbolic construction of the landscape, or perhaps better the presence of community power in landscape. In the Iberian area the case of the monument/sanctuary of El Pajarillo (Huelma, Jaén) in eastern Andalusia is spectacular (Molinos et al. 1998). In the first half of the fourth century BC the aristocratic rulers of the area constructed a strange monument at the head of the valley of the river Jandulilla. More than 80 m long, it consisted of a fortified false front, on the side of a small hill. Overlooking the monument is a tower crowned with a set of statues. The main scene is a ‘hero’ fighting a wolf in front of gryphons and lions that are protecting him (Chapa et al. 2006). The monument is an authentic
construction of the landscape; it controls access to the valley at a time when territorial power in the area was being reordered and testifies to a real programme of political expansion that we know lasted barely fifty years. The aristocratic elite imposed itself on the landscape, carefully choosing the site, in order to impress visitors and establishing a foundation myth of aristocratic power.

In Celtic Iberia, an example of constructing and ordering the landscapes is in the west of Spain, in the territory of the Vetton people, with the presence of verracos, granite sculptures of bulls and boars that are found throughout their territory (Álvarez Sanchís 1999). The research we have been doing for more than a decade (Álvarez Sanchís and Ruiz Zapatero 1999; Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez Sanchís 2008) has led us to propose a new hypothesis to explain the significance of these enigmatic zoomorphic sculptures within a landscape perspective. They have traditionally been interpreted as elements related with the fertility of the livestock, as landmarks on tracks used by livestock and boundary stones to mark possible frontiers. There are more than 400 of them, and although their original position is not always known, an acceptable sample is available today, particularly in the Amblés valley (Ávila) (Álvarez Sanchís 1990; Álvarez Sanchís and Ruiz Zapatero 1999). The fact that they are mainly situated some distance from the castros (2–3 km), are usually associated with grazing lands and the absence of any other element or archaeological remains close by, leads us to interpret them as markers of grazing lands, critical resources in summer and in times of severe drought as they are closely distributed in the best pasture lands. The artisans who made them would have been in the service of the elites who controlled the Vetton oppida and other settlements (Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez Sanchís 2008). The verracos thus offer an exceptional way of categorizing the landscape in the European Iron Age, organizing it by using physical and visual symbols that express power over and control of the territory’s resources. They are a very valuable symbol of how the territory was used and Vetton communities’ perception of the landscape. The verracos are constructions of Iron Age people’s perception of space and place, meaning and memory. The suggested function in grazing areas should be related to seasonal ceremonies at the site of the sculptures. So these meaningful actions were the ways in which communities fixed meanings and events into the landscape, and so into social memory (Loney and Hoaen 2005: 374).

Certainly many aspects remain unknown, no palaeoenvironmental studies have been carried out, and the precise relationship of sites and sculptures still need to be dated. On other hand, the thinly populated character of these areas, their almost total lack of industrialization and the survival of traditional forms of agriculture and animal husbandry, presents a remarkable feature: in some respects they remain almost untouched Iron Age landscapes.

6 IRON AGE SETTLEMENT STUDIES: ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY VERSUS FIELDWORK

The general pattern of the Western European Iron Age is of scattered permanent settlement with the changing importance of farms, hamlets, homesteads, villages, hillforts, and oppida (Audouze and Buchenschutz 1989; Buchenschutz 2007:
In some regions of Southern Europe a clustered and defended habitat is the norm (Almagro-Gorbea 1995; Garcia 2004; Parcero-Oubiña and Cobas 2004; Ruiz Rodríguez and Molinos 1998) while in other regions, such as central-eastern England, open lowland settlements prevail (Cunliffe 1995: 14–15). It is not easy to draw the big picture of Iron Age settlement and, although we have some good regional analyses, the common impression is to imagine a complex mosaic of territories with different, changing, and sometimes specialized features (Buchsenschutz 2007: 74), as Cunliffe (1995: 11–18) demonstrated for late Iron Age Britain. The huge number of settlements excavated in different countries makes it extremely difficult to keep up to date with new data, and the danger is to retain old overviews. Regarding the type of sites it is obvious there continues to be a bias towards emphasizing defended sites with fortifications while open or unenclosed sites—probably very important in many areas—are underestimated because of their transparency in the majority of landscapes (Haselgrove *et al.* 2001: 9).

It is commonplace to say that there is a preference for roundhouse structures in Britain and Atlantic Europe (Alberro 2008; Ayán 2008; Harding 2009; Pope 2008), and for rectangular plans in the rest of the continent (Webley 2007; Härke 1979). Without denying that behind this rough picture there is a basic cultural election (Buchsenschutz 2007: 81) the house-type distribution is much more complex than usually has been assumed (Buchsenschutz and Mordant 2005; Harding 2009: 297; Le Bechennec, Laporal, and Dambièle 2009; Moore 2003). Beyond functionality, Iron Age buildings exhibit a ‘deliberate design’ (Romankiewicz 2009) as it is clearly demonstrated by cases with different house-types in the same region (Le Bechennec, Laporal, and Dambièle 2009: 52). If this is so, then design processes of houses may enclose traits and influences from distant regions (architectural *koine*) and, at the same time, individual or local group choices (Romakiewicz 2009: 392). On this aspect it must be remembered that the form of buildings does not depend only on function (Harding 2009: 271), and that this necessitates the development of different inquiry lines for interpreting building features (Cutting 2006; Trebsche 2009).

At the site level, British Iron Age archaeology has paid more attention to settlement organization and the deposition of artefacts. The revolution that came in the 1990s with the demonstration—especially by Hill (1995a, 1995b)—that deposits in pits, silos, and ditches were not, at least not always, random rubbish dumps is well known. This opened the door to symbolic interpretations of many aspects of Iron Age people’s everyday and domestic life (Bradley 2003; Hill 1989, 1993, 1996; Hill and Cumberpatch 1995). The central focus of Iron Age archaeologists, however, has been domestic architecture and the use and meaning of domestic space (Kent 1990). Interest has focused on analysing domestic space, exploring questions such as the accessibility of houses (Cutting 2003; Foster 1989) and, in particular, symbolic and display aspects such as the gender inner-separation of activity areas (Hingley 1990; Pope 2007), the orientation of the doors of houses, or the main entrances to the hillforts (Fitzpatrick 1997; Hill 1995b, 1995c; Oswald 1997; Parker Pearson 1996). Especially in the case of Wessex, it seems that these domestic arrangements were intimately bound up with the cosmology of the Iron Age peoples of southern England, or at least that was the general, wishful thinking of the 1990s (Parker Pearson 1999). Some recent overviews are more
balanced (Lock 2007) and Pope (2008: 19–20), with a larger data set, has proposed
that most houses simply chose the east/south-east orientation looking for a light/
shelter optimum. In this way the smaller proportion of houses with a north-east
door-orientation could be explained as houses used during the summer months.
And probably more detailed research is also needed into such factors as local
topography. New non-destructive analysis for discovering the archaeological
record preserved inside hillforts is throwing light on their complex internal
anatomies (Payne, Corney, and Cunliffe 2007), a research line completely under-
developed in Spain (Almagro-Gorbea and Dávila 1995; Blas and Villa 2002).

The roundhouse has been the main focus of attraction in Iron Age Western
Atlantic Europe (Henderson 2007), as well as the leitmotif of symbolic analysis
roundhouse’? When we think of such a thing we are envisioning images which are,
to a great extent, our own subjective visualizations, but certainly there never
existed an idealized ‘Iron Age roundhouse’; instead we can follow the develop-
ment processes of different architectural structures (Le Bechennec, Laporal, and

Two lucid studies on roundhouses (Harding 2009; Pope 2007) offer a nearly
complete research of this Atlantic-type house, and in the last few years new
research on the French and Iberian Atlantic rim has appeared (Dechezleprêtre
and Ginoux 2005; Ayán 2008; Ramírez 1999). On a theoretical and practical basis
roundhouses are more economic in construction materials, more resistant to
strong winds, and the conical roof is quite well adapted to a rainy climate
(Romankiewicz 2004). On the contrary a circular house plan, as opposed to
rectilinear, has serious disadvantages for space extension (Ruiz Zapatero, Lorrio,
and Martin 1986). Finally, in settlements with constrained space, rectilinear
structures allow a more economic use of space than circular ones (Harding

In Britain Iron Age roundhouses, with an estimated number of about 4,000
from more than 300 sites (Pope 2008), provide a huge amount of architectural
variation (Armit 2006; Harding 2009: 273–9), and they are the result of a long-
lived architectural tradition as they were built for 3,000 years (Pope 2008: 21). On
the economic aspects there is need for better knowledge of livestock accommo-
dated inside the houses (thirty cattle could be stalled in radial compartments in
some houses!) or about the possible function of brochs as cereal storage centres
(Harding 2009: 280, 282). The social meaning of roundhouses is much more
complex; with nuclear and perhaps extended families it is probable that the social
structure of Iron Age Britain populations was based on kinship. A difficult and
slippery approach using Irish textual sources has been proposed by Karl (2008).
He has related some of the basic features of Iron Age houses and hillforts
(ideological orientation and internal organization, households as centres of pro-
duction in a self-sufficiency economy, and the heterarchy of hillfort commu-
nities), with similar features identified in early medieval Irish literature, and he
suggests that social similarities can be explained because both belong to a Celtic
social organization. Assuming that medieval Irish and Welsh sources do not
provide a ‘window on the Iron Age’, it seems acceptable they are ‘an exceptionally
useful source of analogies, many of which might even be actual homologies’ (Karl
2008: 76).
I am absolutely convinced that in many aspects theoretical issues in Iron Age, especially British Iron Age, studies have developed very rapidly in the last three decades, proposing a huge variety of new ideas in social, economic, ideological and political spheres but research based on fieldwork in order to find data to support these theoretical hypotheses has been slower. In that sense archaeological theory is usually developing at a quite different speed to archaeological fieldwork. This is a worrying consideration in hard times when financial cuts are reducing the funding for survey and archaeological excavation.

On the other hand, the attention given to enclosures, ditches, and ramparts has made it possible to discover cases in which their apparently defensive function could not be demonstrated in terms of ‘military’ strategy and others where the enclosures at least were also a way of displaying the community’s power and prestige (Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989). There is, however, no doubt that ritual and symbolic interpretations have been imposed on many aspects of Iron Age peoples’ lives, perhaps too many. In recent years the symbolic Iron Age tide is lessening and more critical and contextual analysis are being constructed.

Excavation of ramparts has been an obsession of Iron Age archaeologists during the last 150 years (Collis 2010: 27) but certainly not in Spain, where they have seen more limited interest, although recently this has been growing (Alonso et al. 2003; Berrocal-Rangel 2004; Berrocal-Rangel and Moret 2007). Traditional approach to ramparts and gateway constructions has relied mainly on the establishment of types, the accumulation of descriptions, and the assumption that they are in all cases defensive elements (Ralston 2006: 43–89; Ruiz Zapatero 2003). Ramparts represent the major collective work of Iron Age populations and the major visible investment by the community (Collis 2010: 31). The construction of ramparts involves: (1) a huge quantity of wood, stone, and iron for nails and spikes in the case of murus gallicus; (2) collective labour and time investment which can be estimated from the volume, size, materials, and techniques implied in their construction; and (3) a sense of social instability and search for personal/group security and, in consequence, some degree of coordination between constructors. On the whole, Iron Age ramparts are, in some way, a combination of tradition (the transfer of cultural features between communities and generations), adaptability (the capacity to solve defensive devices with available local materials and environmental conditions) and innovations (the introduction of new formal constructive elements); overall this means that ramparts offer very different models which leads to difficulties in reducing them into a simple typology (Berrocal-Rangel 2004: 83–4). Innovations can appear among any of the societies involved (Collis 2010: 29), and consequently it is a misunderstanding to assume a traditional diffusion approach to explain the spread of types over huge areas, such as the three main basic type of European defensive walls: Kelheim type, murus gallicus, and ‘dump’ ramparts (Ralston 2006: 43–63). However, regional traditions in rampart styles can contribute to the recognition of population identities, as Berrocal-Rangel (2004: 79–82) has proposed for different rampart models in Iberia with a basic distinction between Continental European traditions and Mediterranean ones connected to trading colonial agents.

The symbolic interpretation has used a limited number of cases where basic military principles do not appear to apply (Bowden and McOmish 1987) in order to question the general assumption of a defensive purpose for hillforts. But the first
requirement for discussion of the defensive or symbolic dimension of ramparts is the availability of effective excavations, such as single narrow trenches over extensive areas to retrieve the complete rampart structure (Collis 2010: 31–2), as has been done at Bibracte, Gergovie, Mont Vully, and other sites. In this direction the fundamental analysis consists of detecting universal features of fortifications that are unequivocally military in function and include features such as V-sectioned ditches, bastions, and defended gates, all of which can be traced archaeologically (Keeley, Fontana, and Quick 2007). A defensive role is also supported by caches of sling-stones or the existence of ‘war-cemeteries’ (Harding 2009: 8). Another consideration is that fortifications have long been extremely powerful symbols of possession, wealth, status, and political power, and ramparts have always served to symbolize the distinction between insiders and outsiders (O’Reilly 2008: 386); but the symbolism of fortified settlements is always predicated on their military function, and furthermore they are most symbolically useful when they are militarily functional (Keeley, Fontana, and Quick 2007: 81). In some cases vast multi-defensive ramparts with no apparent military function may express a certain statement of status to be seen by outsiders (Harding 2009: 8).

The study of defensive artificial devices at enclosed sites leaves out an important aspect: their topographic or geographical setting (Keeley, Fontana, and Quick 2007: 83). Traditional approaches to topographical settings in Iron Age settlements have considered elevation, natural barriers, and visual control as key issues to recognize a defensive purpose. But is there any objective evaluation of the defensiveness in Iron Age sites? Martindale and Supermant (2009), in a North American context, have proposed an index of defence (DI) based on commonly invoked constituent measures of defensiveness. The basic factors are: visibility, elevation, accessibility, and area. We must remember that the essence of defensiveness is the control of the movement of people through space (Keeley, Fontana, and Quick 2007: 56) and European Iron Age communities, as others have in different areas and times, tried to protect themselves by means of physical separation, elevation advantage, and visibility at the moment of choosing natural locations for their settlements (Martindale and Supermant 2009: 192). The proposal of a quantification of defensiveness is attractive because the measure estimates the defensibility of a spatial system separating inhabitants (insiders) from outsiders. The index of defence both estimates the defensiveness of landscapes and locates the significance of each variable in the overall calculation (Martindale and Supermant 2009: 202). The approach allows a more systematic method for defining physical defensibility at sites, and although their proponents press for further research to test its effectiveness it seems to me a heuristic device which could be easily applied to the huge published archaeological datasets on European Iron Age sites.

This is not to deny the symbolic dimension, which certainly existed in the Iron Age but not everything can be explained in symbolic terms. For example, the model of warrior societies proposed decades ago (Cunliffe 1995: 97) has given way to another inhabited by peace-loving peasants with more or less egalitarian societies (Crumley 1995), ultimately depicting a rather implausible bloodless past, as has recently been stressed by James (2007) assessing an overly pacific British early Iron Age. Indicators of warfare have been detected in other regions, including southern France (McCartney 2006), north-western Iberia (Freire 2005; González García 2006, 2009; Queiroga 2003; but see Fernández-Posse and
Sánchez-Palencia 1998; Sastre 2008), and many other Iberian regions (Lorrio 2009: 61–3; Peralta 2009: 81–8; Quesada 2010), although it is absolutely true that it must be studied within the wider social practices of communities involved (Armit 2007: 35). In any case, it is not an entirely bloodless Iron Age, since the very creative capacity of British Iron Age archaeology makes it possible to find new ways of exploring hillfort ramparts in terms of defence and attack, such as Finney’s (2006) interesting study on warfare in the middle Iron Age in central-southern England, in which he has demonstrated—very convincingly—the offensive and defensive capacity of the sling by assailants and settlers in hillforts. He has used mathematical models, experimentation, and analysis of specific cases in a good number of sites, searching the possibilities of understanding a very specific form of Iron Age warfare. Other imaginative approaches are exotic comparisons of British hillforts with Maori Pa (Armit 2007) or Thailand enclosures (O’Relly 2008). It may also be worthwhile exploring the relationship between enclosed surface area and the length of ramparts and moreover, to calculate through demography estimations of the number of potential defenders per 100 m of ramparts (Ruiz Zapatero 2003: 24–5). This would imply a better knowledge of the assault systems in Iron Age warfare with generally reduced warrior groups, but perhaps in some cases with organized militarized units (Wells 2002: 346).

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Settlement and landscape are traditional issues in European Iron Age archaeology, with different approaches in each archaeological tradition and language barriers to sharing results and knowledge. We need to contextualize Iron Age studies in a more European context for creating common agendas in research and teaching and looking at the same questions from different backgrounds (Collis 2006, 2008b). I am not arguing that we have to believe in a uniform European Iron Age. As with the misguided approach to the Celts, there were features shared across Europe, what Woolf (1997: 341) has called a ‘wider Iron Age European culture’, but these need to be defined in the near future. I do not believe in a Celtic Europe as I do not believe in an Iron Age Europe constituting a homogeneous entity. However, I am convinced we need to widen our national interests and to develop new forms of constructing common platforms for research and for publishing relevant data beyond the traditional journals, collections, and series, respecting each tradition and promoting true interest in every tradition, independently of being a mainstream or a minority (Figure 2.4).

On the other hand, Western Europe has a rich and varied heritage in Iron Age sites, going from the spectacular stone towers of northern Britain, the brochs (Armit 2003), to timber roundhouses or complex rectangular houses, or from the huge and very visible oppida to small castros in north-west Iberia (González Ruibal 2006–7). We should also remember that it is on the Atlantic rim where we can find some of the most impressive landscapes, with many quite well preserved. These landscapes, with histories going back to the Iron Age, deserve future protection. Iron Age Archaeology must include protection, preservation, and display of settlements and landscapes for present and future generations.
The mainstreams and minorities of Iron Age Archaeology are a fact of life, but we should all make a little more effort in getting to know each other. If we do, I’m sure that we—and, of course, European Iron Age Archaeology—will all gain and I feel sure that the Durham conference and this volume are a firm step in that direction.

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