

TELLING A STORY: TEACHING THE EUROPEAN IRON AGE

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Abstract

In the last decade there has been a tendency to reject 'grand narratives' in describing the European Iron Age, with greater emphasis on local developments, ideologies, etc. However, I would argue that we still need to look at the big picture as local societies were reacting to processes of acculturation and eventually conquest, and both elements, the local and the 'international' need to be discussed. But what grand narratives do we teach? Are the concepts of culture groups (Hallstatt, La Tène, Jastorf, etc), or ethnicity, or *ex oriente lux* too compromised to be useful, and if so, what takes their place to allow students to gain an overall meaningful picture of often very disparate groups. Core periphery models, trade, technological or sociological 'progress', case studies? We actually know very little about how we each teach our subjects, and perhaps it is a good moment at which to exchange ideas.

Keywords

Grand Narrative; Iron Age Europe; undergraduate

Introduction

As with any university course, the first questions we need to ask are, why teach the European Iron Age, and what is the message to be put across? After my lecture at Krakow, it was suggested that if one wants to deal with a subject such as the Iron Age in any depth, it might be better to teach something more regional such as the British or the Danish Iron Age, especially if one's approach is 'Post-Processual'. Personally I find this too narrow a basis from which to start, and, especially, 'Post-Processual' approaches tend to be too fragmented for the students to gain a coherent picture of the period. I prefer to give the big picture (that is European) before giving more specialist in-depth courses on specific regions or topics; local trends are not really comprehensible without the wider view. For students new to archaeology, as most university students are, I also see little point in attacking traditional views and trying to replace them with a new approach as this will mean nothing to new students with no theoretical or factual basis with which to develop a critical approach. So, to start, I like to tell a story which the student will be able to grasp, with firm pegs on which to hang the narrative in terms of both time and place. Thus, one must encourage the student to build up a firm grasp of the geography of Europe, the main mountain ranges and rivers, the sea, river and land routes that allowed contact and interaction, and how this relates to modern political geography.

This is best done by the continuous use of maps in lectures, and repeatedly pointing out, for instance, the course of the major rivers, the Rhône, the Rhine, the Danube, and the countries through which they run. The chronological framework is best achieved by sticking to a strict chronological sequence rather than trying to teach thematically.

In giving a series of lectures, I always like to follow the precept of J.D. Blackmore's hero John Rudd, in telling the story of Lorna Doone, that people like to 'hear a simple tale simply told'; complexity and questioning of the basic story can be added later and in other contexts such as in essays and

tutorials. A few years ago, after a meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists where there was a disastrous failure of lecturers to communicate with their audiences, I wrote an article entitled 'talking to foreigners' which was later incorporated into a booklet for the EAA (Collis, Darvill and Wilkes 1999, recently up-dated on the web). Despite the advent of PowerPoint which makes the combined use of text and illustrations much easier than in the days of slides and overheads, I still find it depressing how few lecturers have grasped the basics of how to lecture, both to native speakers and to speakers of other languages, that is to speak slowly, with simple grammar and simple words; this is especially true when dealing with new students. The most difficult things to grasp are the names of people and places, as well as numbers, and these need to be spelt out on the screen. Text should be short and in big letters (I use the PowerPoint slides as my lecture notes so that I do not have to bury my head in a written text), and likewise illustrations should not be too complex, especially if they are integral to the argument rather than providing background interest. I also like to change the colour of the background of the slides to emphasise when I am moving from one topic to another. The point I am trying to make here is that students, especially in their first year, are 'foreigners' to the data we are trying to put across, to the jargon which we are using, indeed often to the whole way in which we think.

I also like to teach 'Grand Narratives' despite their rejection by certain 'Post- Processual' archaeologists. The first millennium BC for Europeans at least is an exciting period when the modern world as we know it was beginning to take shape, when we can start putting names to peoples and individuals, and investigate the stories which form the basis for modern myth-making about our national origins. The Grand Narratives are also stories that our students can grasp relatively easily, and, with first year students, many of whom will give up archaeology courses, I hope they will leave with something which will help make sense of the world in which we live.

For me lectures are the primary means to introduce the Iron Age to the students. Most of them will know little about the subject, and will probably not have done any reading, and for Anglophone students they will probably be entirely dependent on the limited English literature. Even if they have done some reading, the text books are likely to be out of date (my own, *The European Iron Age*, is already over twenty years old, but still selling!), or with a slant different from that which the lecturer wants to pursue; so lectures need to be primarily descriptive. They need to be supported with handouts or, more commonly now, with PowerPoint presentations which can be made available locally on the web. One problem is the copyright of images which can be used in lectures but not on the web, something which in Britain we are trying to resolve by setting up a central bank of images which can be cleared of copyright and used for lecturing by any lecturer; this is held by the Archaeology Data Service at York, and is administered by the Higher Education Academy (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/image_bank/). Best, of course, is to publish one's own text book; I have managed this with a couple of courses, but usually the book appears just as I stop teaching the course!

Grand narratives

As I have said, my introductory courses into the European Iron Age which in Sheffield were normally given to First Year students (but now to Second Year students), were given in a strict chronological sequence starting with the first appearance of iron objects in the 3rd millennium BC and going up to the Roman conquest of substantial regions of Europe in the 1st century BC, but concentrating on the first millennium BC. The amount of detail would depend on the number of lectures allotted to the Iron Age (usually between 8 and 12 hours of lecturing), supplemented by tutorials or seminars, though once I had to do it in 30 minutes at a conference in Japan, an experience I can thoroughly recommend as it does concentrate the mind on what the big themes really are. The essential structure is that laid out in my book *The European Iron Age* (though updated since that book was written in 1984). As in the book, I took a number of themes or 'Grand Narratives' which would appear as threads running through the lectures: the spread of iron working, orientalisering, urbanisation, state formation, the evolution of a 'world economy', culminating in the first European empires (Greek, Macedonian, Carthaginian, Roman). I have also found the concept of 'diffusion' useful in dealing with these processes, but purely in a descriptive way, not as an 'explanation' of what was going on. The various themes included the following:

Socio-political

The 1st millennium was certainly a period of increasing social complexity, which in terms of anthropologically based evolutionary typology can be characterised as a development from 'chiefdoms' to 'states' (city and tribal), and finally 'empires'. This can be documented in the increasing size and complexity of settlements, of production, and, with a certain caution, of burial rites.

Socio-economic

This can be documented in a number of ways. Initially there is the development (or revival) of the Mediterranean trade systems initiated in the early first millennium by the Phoenicians, and then the Greeks. This linked in with pre-existing trade systems which had been less affected by the collapse of the Mycenaean and Hittite worlds at the end of the 2nd millennium in the eastern Mediterranean. So we can document the continued links from Italy across the Alps as far north as southern Scandinavia, links which became increasingly important throughout the first millennium, though with some periods of regression, for instance in the 4th century BC. By the end of the period we can talk of a 'world economy' based around the Mediterranean, with a 'core' which shifted from Mesopotamia and Egypt at the beginning of the period, to Greece, and eventually to Carthage and Italy. A 'periphery' in central and northern Europe can be defined, but rather different from the exploitation which we associate with the 'world economies' of more recent times, though processes such as colonisation and empire building do also appear. With the increasing complexity, the nature of exchange is likely to have changed, from gift exchange and barter to, eventually, some aspects of a monetised market economy. The social structures are also likely to have changed, and concepts such as 'big men' 'chiefdoms' and 'states' can be used to explore the mechanisms of exchange. With the processes of centralisation and urbanisation, we can see situations in which 'central places' of various types might have emerged, both administrative and dendritic, with the appearance of emporia and 'ports of trade' of various kinds, and variations on 'monopolistic', 'administered' and 'competitive' trading systems.

Technological diffusion

This can be best documented with obvious innovations such as the adoption of iron working or the potter's wheel, but clearly extended to a wide range of innovations in transport, building techniques, crafts, etc.

Artistic diffusion

The concept of 'orientalising' has formed a basis for artistic studies of Iron Age societies of the Mediterranean and temperate Europe, with the development of Greek, Etruscan and Iberian variations of 'classical art' and more eclectic forms such as Situla Art and La Tène Art. The development of monumental architecture and of sculpture form part of the same process.

Ethnicity and language

It is impossible to avoid ethnic terms in teaching the Iron Age – the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, inevitably make their appearance. Much of the literature on the Iron Age makes basic assumptions about the relationships between material culture and ethnicity, and especially the concept of the 'Culture Group', linked with migrationist interpretations of the past. I usually used my discussion of the Early La Tène period to consider the problem of identifying the Celts, and as an example of the difficulties of linking language, ethnicity, historical sources and archaeology.

Problems with the 'Grand Narratives'

One major difficulty with the Grand Narratives is that they are too descriptive and bland, and they tend to homogenise the information over large areas and so lose the nuances of local reactions and developments. This can even be masked by the archaeological nomenclature; so in France scholars often refer to '*la civilisation des oppida*', but both in terms of the nature of the sites and the period referred to, it is something totally different in the south of France from what it is in the centre and north. This is even more true when we use terms like 'Hallstatt' and 'La Tène Cultures' or ethnic terms like 'Celtic'. Also major areas may seem peripheral to the pan-European trends; what was the relationship of societies, for instance, in the north of Scotland or in southern Scandinavia to the development of a 'World Economy'? Were they in fact integrated into it, despite our problems of demonstrating the links, or was what was happening further south simply irrelevant? These societies

were on a different trajectory from those of the societies further south, and so urbanisation in Scandinavia is not something which can be discussed in any meaningful way until the Viking period.

In dealing with such large subjects, there is a natural tendency to take spectacular sites as case studies typical of their period. Thus, for Hallstatt D, no discussion would be complete without including the *Fürstensitze* and rich burials such as the Heuneburg, Mont Lassois, Vix and Hochdorf, but these sites are certainly not typical of the vast majority of Europe at this time, indeed they may represent extremes when the norm was something much simpler. They are also tempting to deal with because the finds are spectacular, much more has been written about them than other situations, and it is easier to construct stories around them. In contrast, when dealing with the origin of the Celts, the territory assigned to them by Caesar in the 1st century BC in central and western France is limited in its archaeological data – few burials, settlements which are limited in the amount of data which they produce, and so difficult to put across to new students. Inevitably the story which will be told will be biased, and will exclude large areas even in the core areas of the Mediterranean and central Europe; there is no way round it at this level of analysis.

I would use tutorials as a means to question the story that the students had been told in the lectures, and examination questions, especially at Second Year level, would be phrased to encourage a critical look at the traditional stories. I remember as an undergraduate having to sit an examination which caused consternation to all the students who sat it, firstly because it did not reflect what most of us had been working on with our tutors, but also because of the poor way in which the questions had been set, encouraging mere description rather than any thought and discussion. One question was 'What is the evidence for flint mining in Neolithic Europe?' which just demanded a list of where flint mines had been found. Had it been phrased 'What was the importance of flint mining in Neolithic Europe?' it would have led on to discussion of its relative importance in relation to stone, copper and bronze, while still giving the students the opportunity to show off their knowledge. So, with the questions I set on the Iron Age, they would be of the sort 'How typical was the Heuneburg of Hallstatt D in central Europe?' or 'What are hill-forts?', or 'What are oppida?' to allow a questioning of how the terminology could mask a great variety of phenomena, and also to discuss concepts like 'central places'.

Another useful mechanism I found, in situations where students had to take a sat unseen examination at the end of the course, was to hold 'revision seminars' to which the students, now hopefully more familiar with the data on which I had been lecturing, to come with their own questions, and to discuss them in the form of a seminar, and I would run through what I thought were the salient points. The unseen sat examination has been much criticised over the years, and I am no advocate that one's future degree should be decided entirely on one's performance over the period of a week or ten days at the end of the year as happened with my generation. None the less, revision does give the student a chance to review the material accumulated over the previous term or semester, and the coverage of an examination is usually much wider than, say, one prepared essay written in the student's own time; it is also a counterbalance to plagiarism which is becoming an increasing problem with the development of electronic data and presentation. There was inevitably the element of 'question spotting', and I remember as a First Year student getting a useful series of topics to revise from John Coles over coffee; inevitably none of them came up in the papers! As an examiner, I soon realised that, as the papers were usually set several months before the examination, I usually had no idea what I had set. I remember being very unpopular after one of my revision seminars, because we had discussed a topic in some detail; it turned up almost word for word in the examination, but no-one had revised it because of they assumed I would not have discussed it in such detail had I known it was on the paper!

Problems in teaching

The British system of university education has been under increasing pressure in recent years, problems which other countries in Europe are equally affected by, though not yet perhaps to the extremes suffered in Britain. Firstly there is the decision of the present British government that it hopes to see an increasing percentage of the population attending university, at present around 40%, but planned to increase to 50%. This is based on the premise that there are many people leaving school who would benefit from Higher Education, especially from the lower classes who have traditionally been poorly represented. There is still a debate whether this will lead to a lowering of

standards for entry, whether there needs to be an elite division of universities which will take the best qualified, leaving a second class of universities to produce a lower level of degrees taught by second rate staff who only teach rather than engage in research. This is perhaps less critical for a subject like archaeology, as it is difficult to envisage anyone teaching archaeology who is not engaged in research in some form or another. But it is a matter of debate whether we have been forced into 'dumbing down' our courses (making the academic context simpler, with a lower level of standards to pass the examinations). Many would argue that the increase which has taken place in recent years has seen the number of female and of middle class students increasing, but less so with students, especially males, from more deprived backgrounds, partly because of cultural differences between different class and ethnic groups in the importance accorded to education, partly because of the variable quality of schools and the percentage of their students progressing into Higher Education.

This expansion has placed a considerable financial burden on the system, and this inevitably has been passed on from the government to the universities (less funding per capita), and by the universities on to students in the form of the reduction or elimination of grants for subsistence, and the expectation that students who can afford it should pay something towards their fees. For students the best way to avoid spiralling debt is to undertake part-time work, which inevitably eats into the time students have to read, or even to attend classes. This in turn means that students are unlikely to read beyond the obvious sources and to grasp the extra detail which leads to a critical approach to the information they have been given. Equally, students will be less likely to attempt reading sources in foreign languages, a major problem with Anglophone students, especially now that learning a second language is no longer compulsory in British schools.

This mass production of students (when I first taught the First Year students at Sheffield I might have a class of 30 or 40, more lately it might be 80 or 100), has meant that teaching methods have had to change. In the 1970s I would myself give the students tutorials in their First Year in groups of five or six, every three weeks, and they would produce essays which I would criticise, and, if they got them in early enough, I would make them read one another's. More recently senior academic staff have been exempt from this tutorial work, and have concentrated their teaching on Second and Third year students, while the First Year tutorials have been done by research students (as I had myself done as a research student in Cambridge) and other graduates; good though this may be for the research students planning an academic career to get teaching experience, it has required training for them on how to do this effectively (something I never got!), and what the key points were in the essay topics, which were still set by the senior staff to achieve uniformity. Increasingly these essays, rather than being purely training exercises in which a more critical approach could be introduced than in the lectures, have been treated as part of the final mark for the module, with less emphasis on a final unseen examination. I have missed this more direct link with the new students, and especially the opportunity to give them feedback on their essays; this is a problem which has extended into the Second and Third Years as well as teaching time becomes more constricted by the lack of time available for both students and staff due to increased student numbers and students' financial situations.

Generally my courses contained no practical component (visits to sites and museums, handling of artefacts). In part this was due to Sheffield being in an area poor in deposited material (largely aceramic in the Iron Age, and limited deposition of metal objects), so, despite having one or two important items such as the Ebberston sword and the Dinnington torc, Sheffield Museum had little to offer. Like many museums its emphasis is now on providing resources for school children and the local community rather than more academic purposes. Visiting local sites (e.g. Wincobank, Mam Tor) was hampered by the lack of transport, and especially in more recent times lack of time. Changes in the structure of university teaching did not help. With the change to a modular system, one of whose aims was to allow students from other departments to take courses across the university, meant that it was impossible to timetable a period when all students were likely to be available, even for very local visits. So, visits to local sites were largely arranged by the student society. The solution I had for the Iron Age was to encourage students to take part on my excavations and field surveys, both in Britain, France and Spain. This naturally gave students a good hands-on experience of pottery and other finds, and increasingly I used to include evening lectures on both local and more general topics, and visits to local sites and museums on the days off. These were completely voluntary, and did not count in any way towards course credits, so attracted only the more interested students (those who went through it include the present Professor of European Archaeology at Oxford, and the Directors of both the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the Council for British Archaeology!).

Some solutions

Amongst its prescriptions for teaching in universities, the Quality Assurance Agency, set up by the British Government to investigate and improve the standards of teaching in Higher Education, was the concept of 'progression', that is the academic content and requirements of courses should increase from the First through the Second and Third Years, with the final year being the most academically demanding. With my professional training hat on, I was opposed to the narrow interpretation of this; I see progression in both terms of greater depth, but also in greater width, and some less demanding courses could be taught in later years if it extended the student's knowledge, something which will inevitably have to happen in their professional careers. Nonetheless, most of us already used the principle, and I would therefore take aspects of Iron Age studies as an opportunity in looking in greater depth and more critically at methodology and interpretation than was covered in the First Year. In recent years I have used two courses to do this, 'The British Iron Age' and 'The Celts'.

'The British Iron Age' started with lectures on the history of Iron Age studies, firstly to show that the change of paradigm could affect the way in which the subject was conceived, the questions asked, and the way in which research progressed; secondly we all have to deal with some of the older literature, and so need to understand the biases that occur in the literature, for instance in the way in which chronologies were constructed, and how little one can trust the dates given by earlier researchers. This took students through Antiquarianism, Culture History, the New Archaeology, and Post-Processual approaches. I found this was not popular with students who had difficulty in grasping its importance, and were more interested in modern approaches. I would then take them through some basic general approaches, dealing with, for instance, the way in which modern chronologies are constructed and the basis for them, and some of the basic principles in the methodology and theoretical ideas which lay behind them. I would look at the bigger patterns – the changing relationship with the continent, the role of hill-forts, of production (why was much of Britain and Ireland aceramic during the Iron Age, or rather, why make pots when you can get by without them?). I would then take some case studies looking at specific regions and problems:

The Iron Age of eastern Yorkshire, and how we can interpret burials in their local context. Questions discussed would include:

- Under what conditions might we identify a foreign incursion?
- How do we measure similarity and dissimilarity in terms of material culture and ideological manifestations?
- What are the causes of change in local situations?
- How is our perception of a society biased by its relative visibility, e.g. in burial rites or settlements such as hill-forts.
- What do we mean by words such as 'continuity' and 'change'?

Wessex hill-forts would cover topics such as:

- Is the concept of a central place relevant to hill-forts, and if so, how might we identify and use it?
- To what extent can we identify social differentiation in Iron Age societies?
- What were the different roles of hill-forts and smaller settlements in industrial production?
- How far is it legitimate to use analogies from other parts of the world or other societies contemporary with the one we are studying to interpret our archaeological societies, e.g. 'Celtic' society, 'chiefdoms'?

For the Late Iron Age in south-eastern Britain in the century before the Roman conquest, I would discuss questions like:

- How far can information from historical and archaeological sources be reconciled?
- What might the causes of increasing social differentiation be?
- What might have been the impact of international trade have been?
- To what extent might a core-periphery model be relevant to these societies?
- What was the impact of Rome both before and after the invasion in 43 AD?

- Are concepts like 'urbanism' or 'market economy' useful for these societies?

In each of these cases I would look at a range of aspects such as settlement patterns, evidence of production, of pottery, metal, agricultural goods, and the evidence of social structure. Students would have to prepare two essays, a first one which would be something general half way through the course, and then a topic of their own choosing for the final essay (e.g. looking at the Iron Age in their own home area). I never did produce the text book for this course! However they did have the overview of Barry Cunliffe's Iron Age Communities in Britain as a starting off point, and which he kept well updated (Cunliffe 1974, 1978, 1991, 2004). This course therefore placed an emphasis on providing students with a theoretical and methodological basis rather than a synthesis of the period, an approach which perhaps benefited those who were planning to develop their academic careers further rather than those who would move into non-archaeological careers.

The second course, 'The Celts', was a deconstruction of the standard books and concepts of the Celts, and was finally incorporated into a book published in 2003. This course ranged over the historical sources from the classical world, the historiography of the Celts including the development of the classification of languages, and the rise of artistic and archaeological interpretations of the Celts. It also looked at the way in which the Celts are defined in the modern world, and so dealt with the ethnic and political interpretations of archaeological and linguistic material. This course presented some problems for the students since I was a major protagonist in an often vitriolic discussion on the identification of the Celts and so it was difficult for them to take an impartial view of what was going on; on the other hand they were involved in a very real and lively debate whose implications could be applied in other spheres of archaeology and other disciplines.

The problem I found with this approach to the Iron Age was that, in a large department such as Sheffield, the majority of students would be given the basic outlines in their First Year. In the Second and Third Year, under the Sheffield system, students would have some basic core courses which everyone was expected to take: major period syntheses, which could include the Iron Age, but especially courses in methodology and theory which are applicable to a wide range of archaeological contexts. More specialist course like the Celts and Iron Age Britain would be 'option courses' which students could opt for if they were interested. Because of its size, the department was able to offer a wide range of such courses, so inevitably only a minority of students would do any particular course, even the most popular ones.

This problem is inevitable; we cannot learn everything! However, as educationalists we need to have mechanisms whereby we can all have access to the education we need both for our own personal development and to carry out our work efficiently. Students generally have little idea about what they will need for their future careers, and the choice of modules tends to be based on criteria other than what will be useful to them in the future or what makes a coherent set of modules. In part the solution within the British system is that students, who graduate with a Bachelor degree and then start work, often come back to do a specialist Masters degree when they are clearer about what they want. The teaching of Masters Degrees is an innovation in Britain which only started to be important in the 1980s, so this is relatively recent development. Personally I have found the teaching at Masters level more satisfying, as it allows greater contact with the students, especially with discussion based around seminars, something which has become increasingly difficult at the undergraduate level, and the students tend to be more motivated.

However the situation is rather different on the continent. Firstly, many universities are making the change from the Humboldt to the Bologna system with its Bachelor and Masters levels. In many countries such as Germany the Bachelor level is not considered adequate for those entering the profession, in contrast to Britain. It means that universities changing over to the new system have the potential of planning their courses over a five-year cycle rather than the three-year cycle in Britain. It gives more possibilities in providing both greater breadth and a more logical sequence of increasing 'progression', though this has not always been realised, and in some countries such as the Czech Republic there have been concerns that one just ends up teaching the same things at the two different levels. In part this is because of the small size of most continental departments in

comparison with Britain; in Germany the usual size of a department is 3–5 lecturers, in Britain 12–20 is the norm, and small departments cannot offer the breadth of teaching of a large department. The traditional solution in German universities was that students would often spend a year or two away from their home department, as well as studying courses in other departments (the *Nebenfach*); many universities have separate departments for the Palaeolithic, for Pre- and Proto-History, for Roman, for Classical, and for Medieval Archaeology, whereas in Britain these tend to be grouped into one large department. Certainly one of the major anxieties expressed by both students and staff in Germany is that the flexibility of moving around to different universities will be lost under the new system. In Britain this is achieved by many students changing universities between the Bachelor and the Masters level, and, to a lesser extent, between the Masters and the Doctorate. It will be interesting to see how this develops in the future. Will British universities start planning four- or five-year courses to incorporate both the Bachelor and Masters levels? Will German departments start to group themselves into larger entities (small departments are vulnerable in the new competitive climate which is appearing in German universities)?

What of the future? We of course have the traditional approach to disseminating information through text books or general syntheses, such as Barry Cunliffe and I have attempted for the Iron Age. Overviews of a number of countries exist, for instance for southern Germany (Rieckhoff & Biel 2001) or southern France (Py 1993), but there are not many attempts at larger regional or European syntheses (exception include Aubet 1993; Kristiansen 1998; Garcia 2004), and most volumes which transcend country boundaries are either collections of papers rather than true syntheses, or are based on traditional Culture History foundations, for instance the numerous books on the Celts (e.g. Cunliffe 1997). There is little incentive to put such information on the net for general consumption; for authors the book has greater prestige and potential for financial returns. However, readers need to have a critical approach to these books, and this suggests that university courses should concentrate on giving students the tools to do this, with an emphasis on theory and methodology rather than data. There is also potential for a more planned approach to the education of students, with the development of 'Student Centred Learning' in which students have to think about their future careers, using information like the National Occupational Standards to direct their thinking (Carter & Robertson 2002), prepare 'Personal Development Plans' to decide on which modules will best suit their purposes, and so develop more coherent combinations of choices. Degree courses also need greater planning, perhaps by auditing courses as outlined in my article of 2002 to ensure that students obtain the full range of theoretical and methodological training, and in a coherent order.

However, all students will pass through the university system with large gaps in their knowledge, and, while much can be picked up in reading and attending conferences, we need to develop better mechanisms for archaeologists to obtain training outside the context of the university curriculum. One problem I have encountered in university teaching is that it is often difficult to maintain the momentum of a course with only one lecture a week; students (and lecturers) tend to forget what happened a week before, and students will often miss one or two vital lectures. Had timetabling allowed it I would have like to have experimented with intensive block teaching, where, for a period of a month the student would have concentrated on two or three topics, rather than the study of several topics being spread over a whole term or semester. In the context of 'Life Long Learning' or 'Continuing Professional Development', however, such courses should be easier to arrange. Continuing Education Departments in British Universities have for many years put on weekend courses, usually with a number of invited lecturers, to explore a topic, but they have generally been oriented to the amateur market rather than the professional.

Increasingly in Britain we are seeing specialist courses being put on for professionals, but they do not tend to encompass topics such as the European Iron Age, so this could be an innovation for the future, with just one or two lecturers giving a series of lectures and seminars. In France Mont Beuvray is putting on courses on specialist subjects for university students such as Iron Age pottery or numismatics, but again, perhaps these could be extended to wider topics. I have also been impressed by the 'cursos de verano' organised by Spanish universities, in which specialists, often from abroad, give a week's course which can attract both the interested public and university students, and, for the latter, credits are available for attendance. They have the added advantage of attracting outside funding from organisations such as banks which see it as a prestige activity in which to be involved. I also wonder if there is a potential in study tours put on by some of the national archaeological societies in Britain, but also specialist tour companies such as Andante Travel. Is there a market for giving some of these a more professional slant, with lectures and seminars?

Conclusions

I suggest that the European Iron Age is best taught as a chronological story using a number of 'narratives' to provide a link between the various areas and periods. This then can be used as a basis for more detailed courses given at a later phase of the student's training, using specific topics or areas to provide a more critical approach to Iron Age studies. We should also explain to the students what we are trying to do in the course, with hoped-for outcomes. However, we should not merely be thinking in terms of university education, but also ways in which training can be provided to the profession as a whole.

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Appendix Titles of lectures in Iron Age courses

These courses were not necessarily given at the same period of time, and some courses were shared with colleagues as part of courses with a longer time range.

Urban communities (1st Year)

- 13: The origins of iron working and orientalisng.
- 14: The impact of Mediterranean trade.
- 15: The Hallstatt period 750–475 BC
- 16: La Tène A, 475–400 BC.
- 17: La Tène B–C and the Celts.
- 18: La Tène Art.
- 19: The birth of the town.

Urban Communities (2nd Year).

- 1: Geographical and economic approaches to urban communities.
 - 2: The function of hill-forts.
 - 3: Danebury and Wessex hill-forts.
 - 4: Wessex – minor settlements.
 - 5: The Hunsrück-Eifel in La Tène A.
 - 6: The Heuneburg in Hallstatt D.
 - 7: Oppida in Britain.
 - 8: Continental oppida.
- Students would subsequently have lectures on Roman and Medieval urban settlements.

The British Iron Age (2nd year).

- 1: History and development of Iron Age studies 1580 – 1955.
- 2: History and development of Iron Age studies 1955 – 1985.
- 3: Problems of dating the British Iron Age.
- 4: Outline of the pottery sequence.
- 5: Socio-economic and ideological approaches.
- 6: The Yorkshire Wolds.
- 7: Wessex 1.
- 8: Wessex 2.
- 9: The southern trade system (Hengistbury Head).
- 10: The eastern trade system (Colchester).

The Celts in History and Archaeology (2nd Year).

- 1: The classical sources.
- 2: The origins of the British.
- 3: Linguistic Celts.
- 4: Archaeological Celts.
- 5: The French historical tradition.
- 6: Joseph Déchelette.
- 7: The classical sources revisited.
- 8: Archaeological problems.
- 9: Present problems (linguistics, genetics, etc.).
- 10: The Celts and politics.

The chapter headings in my book and the content of the chapters follow the lecture course quite closely.