

Time Signatures: The Temporality of Monuments in Early and Middle Neolithic Britain

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Analysis of radiocarbon dates has established the chronological contexts of three kinds of Neolithic monument in Britain: long mounds or long cairns, causewayed enclosures, and cursuses. It is more difficult to appreciate how such structures developed over time. The building of a barrow or cairn was sometimes the final act in a place that had already experienced a longer history. The construction of the monument brought activities to an end, and the site was effectively closed. Individual sequences were shorter than once thought but might be repeated at different locations over several hundred years.

On the other hand, the construction of causewayed enclosures according to a widely accepted template occurred almost simultaneously. Once those earthworks were established some went out of use, but a few others were adapted and changed so that they could play an increasing variety of roles over a longer period. The same contrasts are illustrated by cursuses. Timber structures in the north had finite histories before they decayed or were destroyed by fire, whilst earthworks had a wider distribution and enjoyed a longer currency. A similar approach might shed light on later monuments, including henges, stone circles, and round barrows. It is important to consider how the chronologies of all these structures are related to past conceptions of time.

Keywords: long barrows, causewayed enclosures, cursuses, timber monuments, earthworks, radiocarbon, Bayesian chronologies

Three main kinds of monument were built in Britain during the 4th millennium BC, and in some parts of the country examples of all these types can be found together. Renfrew's (1973) influential account of Neolithic Wessex commented on the concentrations of long barrows around causewayed enclosures, while Loveday's (2006) study of cursuses emphasised their proximity to other earthworks. Both accounts placed a special emphasis on lowland England, but Millican's (2016) analysis of structures identified by aerial photography in Scotland found equally complex patterns there (Fig. 1). In the past it was easy to describe such concentrations of different structures as 'ritual landscapes'. It was useful to investigate the placing of separate sites in relation to one another, but in the light of dating programmes using Bayesian analysis it is equally important to consider their chronologies. Not all of them lasted for the same durations, and each

had its distinctive 'time signature'. The morphologies of different kinds of monument have been established by a century of field survey, but the ways in which they were intended – or not intended – to develop over time have yet to be studied in detail.

For many years specialists on Neolithic Britain had a hazy conception of time, and three different kinds of structure floated in a chronological vacuum. In the earlier part of this period there were long barrows and long cairns, as well as causewayed enclosures. It seemed that cursuses were built during the Late Neolithic. There was little direct evidence of sequence and part of that framework was wrong. Bayesian analysis has played its part in the study of all these structures. There have been detailed accounts of long mounds and long cairns in lowland England (Bayliss & Whittle 2007). Enclosures in Britain and Ireland were reassessed in the project published as *Gathering Time* (Whittle *et al.* 2011), and the few dates from cursuses have been analysed by the same method (Barclay & Bayliss 1999). This research has improved our knowledge of particular monuments and has

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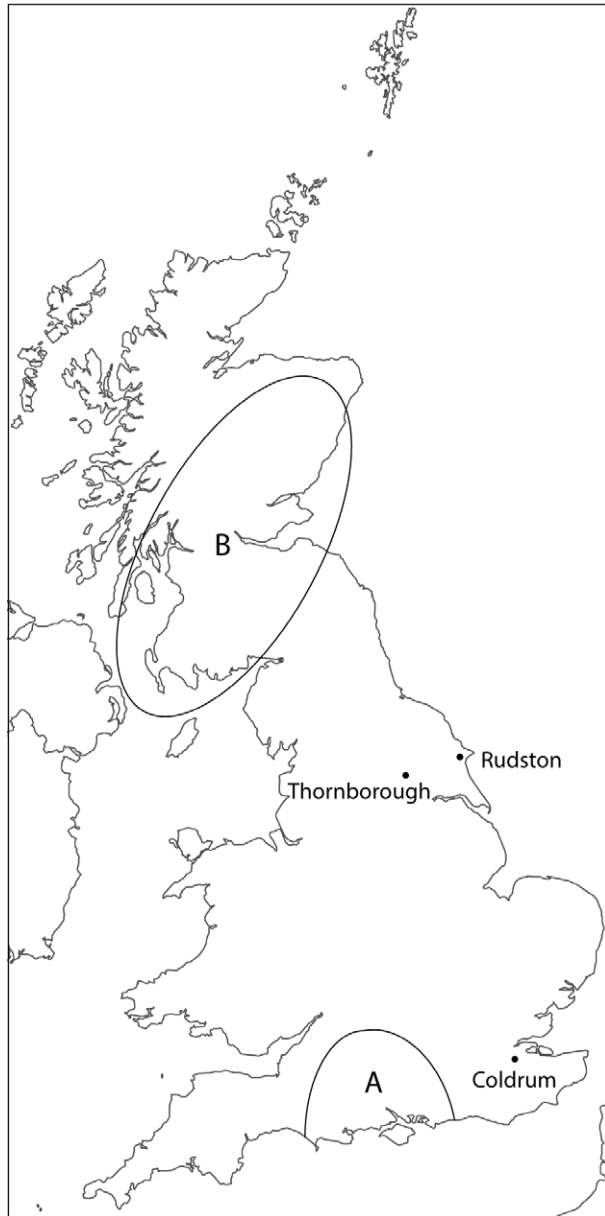


Fig. 1.

The locations of monuments referred to in the text. Area A contains the following long barrows, long cairns, causewayed enclosures, and cursuses: Ascott-under Wychwood; Crickley Hill; Dorchester on Thames; the Dorset Cursus; Fussell's Lodge; Hambledon Hill; Hazleton North; Maiden Castle; Peak Camp; Sale's Lot; the Stonehenge cursuses; Wayland's Smithy; West Kennet; Whitesheet Hill; and Windmill Hill. Area B indicates the area with timber cursuses. The specific sites referred to in the text are: Bannockburn, Holm, and Kilmartin. The map also shows the locations of three other monuments referred to in the text. Drawing: Courtney Nimura

established the order in which they were constructed and used but that comprehension may have been achieved at a cost, for chronological precision in itself does not offer any insights into ancient perceptions of time (Whittle 2018, 23–40).

The results of all three projects were surprising. Most long barrows in lowland England dated from the first half of the 4th millennium BC. With the uncertain exception of Coldrum (Wysocki *et al.* 2013), none was built there before 3800 BC or much after 3500 BC. That had been expected but it turned out that they were not built simultaneously, and individual examples were used for shorter periods than generally supposed. They rarely lasted for many generations and occasional examples had exceptionally short histories (Bayliss & Whittle 2007). Their chronology overlapped with that of causewayed enclosures but many of those earthworks were built during the 37th century BC. Most were soon abandoned but some remained important for a longer period. In this case it was possible to talk about a 'horizon' of earthwork building (Whittle *et al.* 2011). Cursuses presented more problems. There were fewer radiocarbon dates, and not many excavations provided suitable samples for analysis. Even so, two points became clear. These were Early or Middle Neolithic constructions and were not Late Neolithic after all (Barclay & Bayliss 1999). Still more important, they could have started as timber structures in northern Britain before earthwork monuments were created in the south (Thomas 2006; Brophy 2016). Thus their origins differed across time and space, and they could not be assigned to a single phase. Those conclusions were consistent with the findings of field archaeology. Human remains seem to have been removed from chambered cairns or long barrows and some of them might have been deposited at enclosures. Cursuses (or in one case an allied structure, the bank barrow at Maiden Castle) cut across those earthworks and put them out of use (Oswald *et al.* 2001, 123–32 & 134–5).

It is important to understand that these types of monument had distinctive chronologies but the kinds of sequence recognised on individual sites are important too. They raise the possibility that the people who built them had some notion of how those histories were intended to develop. This account is limited to enclosures, long mounds, and cursuses, but a similar approach could be taken to the houses, halls, and round mounds built during the same periods.

The dating projects followed the conventional classification of field monuments but even this posed problems. Long mounds were constructed of different materials from long cairns. Stone was a durable substance but wood was not. Megalithic structures could maintain their stability after their active use was over, and those in northern Britain had more extended histories than the others; they are not considered here. Timber, on the other hand, would decay or could be set on fire. The same applies to cursus monuments. Those conceived as settings of posts might rot or burn to the ground (Noble 2006, 45–72; Thomas 2007; Brophy 2016, 61–9 & 112–28), but their earthwork equivalents would silt up only gradually, meaning that their traces could still be recognised. The same is true of causewayed enclosures but, in this case, there is evidence that their ditches were partly filled by human agency (Oswald *et al.* 2001, 35–46).

In many cases the surface appearance of these monuments – the basis on which they must be classified today – is at odds with the evidence provided by excavation which documents the complex sequences by which they attained their present forms. In particular, the histories of enclosures differ from those of other structures.

LONG BARROWS AND CAUSEWAYED ENCLOSURES

Long barrows

Long mounds and long cairns are among the elements shared between insular monuments and sites on the Continent. They have features in common with structures built at different times between Poland and western France and it seems increasingly unlikely that the British examples had a single prototype (Bradley *et al.* 2016, 86–98; Whittle 2020). In some respects the closest links between excavated monuments may be between those with timber structures in Britain and South Scandinavia, and they were broadly contemporary with one another (Rassmann 2011).

In the case of southern English long barrows field projects show that superficially similar constructions developed from different starting points (Kinnes 1992). In some cases their sites could be occupied by a variety of structures before a mound was built. Their forms were not consistent from one place to another and similar features existed in isolation. These elements included settings of split tree trunks (with or without human remains), timber facades, enclosures, pits, middens, cairns, cultivated plots,

and even domestic buildings (Bradley 2019, 57–62). It was when a mound was built that it conformed to a single style of architecture, but that happened on the closure of the site, and it makes little sense to see it as the fulfilment of an architecture blueprint. A surprising number of these structures were set on fire (Bradley 2019, 61–2). The entrances of chambered tombs were often blocked (Darvill 2004, 173–86). Of course some mounds and cairns were later modified, but that did not always happen.

If there was structural diversity, there was chronological diversity as well. One of the unexpected outcomes of Bayesian analysis was the recognition that examples which had gone through the same processes and incorporated similar elements were not contemporary with one another – they were built at different times (Bayliss & Whittle 2007). Just as important, they were used for shorter periods than their excavators had believed. These earthworks may have resembled one another at the point when the structures were closed, but the same processes were followed over 300 years.

It follows that individual long barrows and long cairns did not have a single point of origin. The mound was a way of concluding the use of a particular place – a process that often involved the deposition of human remains – but it was not the outcome of a carefully planned programme of work. The mound did not establish the importance of a particular locale: sometimes it ended its period of use. Until that point construction projects were characterised by improvisation (McFadyen 2007). They followed few, if any, standard procedures, and the end result could be a burnt shell rather than a standing building.

People in the past must have shared a conception of how the use of particular places would unfold. They would have been aware of the comparatively short period over which it would extend because it could be reckoned in generations and did not transcend the limits of human memory. Once that process was over, it could be repeated somewhere else. The most important element was not necessarily the final form of the monument, but the stages through which it had gone and the length of time that passed before its completion.

These points are illustrated by six monuments in Wessex and the Cotswolds where the results of major excavations have been subjected to radiocarbon dating (Bayliss & Whittle 2007). They are: Ascott-under-Wychwood and Fussell's Lodge (the earliest),

followed in chronological order by Hazleton North, West Kennet, and two successive monuments at Wayland's Smithy. All were constructed between about 3700 BC and 3400 BC. In four cases the final monument was a trapezoidal mound or cairn. The exception was an oval barrow (Wayland's Smithy I) which was replaced after an interval by a larger structure with a kerb and stone chambers (Wayland's Smithy II).

In their final forms the mounds looked like one another. Their plans were strikingly similar and in four cases their dimensions overlapped; they were between 40 m long (Fussell's Lodge) and 55 m long (Wayland's Smithy II). West Kennet long barrow was even longer but was probably extended during a secondary phase. Three of the monuments were flanked by side ditches and the other two by quarries. Although they shared a similar appearance, the sites were used over different lengths of time: the briefest was at Wayland's Smithy I and the most protracted at Ascott-under-Wychwood. The range was probably between one and six generations.

The monuments may look alike but they reached their final forms in different ways. That certainly applies to the covering mound or cairn. In fact, three of them were extended in the course of their histories. The most obvious modification was at Wayland's Smithy where an oval mound was encapsulated within a larger trapezoidal monument, but the cairn at Ascott-under-Wychwood was extended at one end, and surface indications suggest that the mound at West Kennet barrow was augmented by a tail, making it more like a bank barrow. Comparable structures on the Cotswolds incorporated the remains of circular cairns (Darvill 2004, 60–2; Smith & Brickley 2006).

All these structures were associated with human remains but their contexts varied from site to site. They took three forms: a wooden chamber or box flanked by split tree trunks (Fussell's Lodge and the first phase at Wayland's Smithy); rows of slab-lined cists (Hazleton North and Ascott-under-Wychwood); and transepted chambers formed of massive orthostats (West Kennet and Wayland's Smithy II). The relationship between these elements and the mound or cairn is not always obvious. The timber 'mortuary houses' at Fussell's Lodge and Wayland's Smithy were established before the long barrows and, on some sites, structures of this kind may already have decayed before any earthwork was built (Noble 2006, 78–86). In contrast, the burial area at Fussell's Lodge seems to have been

extended before it was closed and a mound was constructed there. Stone chambers present more of the problem. They were probably installed together with the cairn but it is possible that the cists at Ascott-under-Wychwood were originally freestanding (Benson & Whittle 2006, 132–6).

There was even greater diversity in the early uses of the sites. In two cases – Hazleton North and Ascott-under-Wychwood – the oldest dates refer to middens, hearths, and ephemeral wooden buildings which were there well before the cairns. In each case the sequence could have started at the beginning of the 4th millennium BC, although the monuments themselves were not constructed until significantly later. At Ascott-under-Wychwood there was evidence of cultivation before the cairn was built and there seems to have been similar activity at Wayland's Smithy (Evans 1972, 265). A pit and a line of post-holes at Fussell's Lodge may have pre-dated the long barrow, but there is no evidence of earlier activity at West Kennet where only a limited area of the land surface was exposed. There was a comparable sequence at Sale's Lot on the Cotswolds, where the first cairn seems to have been erected over the remains of a house (Smith & Brickley 2006, 245–8). Like the midden at Hazleton North, it included human bone. The unusual selection of artefacts found beneath the oval mound at Wayland's Smithy suggests that this was another site that played a special role before a monument was built. Even though such locations may not have been used continuously – the dates suggest that there were intervals between the middens and the monuments that overlay them – it is clear that the placing of the chambers at Hazleton and Ascott-under-Wychwood was influenced by the positions of older structures on these sites.

If individual sequences were shorter than expected, they were repeated in different places at different times. Those at Hazleton North and Ascott-under-Wychwood resemble one another. They had comparable histories and were built almost simultaneously but that does not apply to other pairs of monuments with features in common. West Kennet long barrow looks like Wayland's Smithy II, yet they were separated by almost 200 years. Similarly, the wooden mortuary structure at Wayland's Smithy I was very like that at Fussell's Lodge but their creation and use took place more than a century apart. In each case they pre-dated the mounds on the same sites. In one case (Fussell's Lodge) the structure was used for between four and

six generations; then it was extended and received human remains for one or two generations before it was closed. At that stage it was covered by a cairn and the barrow was built. At Wayland's Smithy a strikingly similar feature was used for less than one generation before the building of a mound.

Comparison between these results supports two observations which apply to all six monuments in this sample. Similar sequences might have been followed at separate sites but they extended over different lengths of time. Although these developments had much in common, they did not happen together and were spread over as many as 300 years. It was only when individual structures were closed that they assumed the forms that archaeologists classify today. The configuration of these monuments offers no clues to the ways in which they had developed.

Causewayed enclosures

Another form of monument with a wide distribution was the causewayed enclosure but here there were important contrasts. Earthworks of this kind had a long history on the Continent, extending from the 5th millennium BC to the beginning of the 3rd. There they formed regional groups which developed at different times (Whittle *et al.* 2011, fig. 15.13; Müller 2017, 81–93). The evidence from Britain and Ireland need not be exceptional. The restricted currency of enclosures in these islands is recognised because their dates have been analysed in a Bayesian framework, and it is possible that some groups on the mainland were built over equally short periods.

Unlike British long barrows and long cairns, these earthworks adopted a common format from the outset (Oswald *et al.* 2001). That is why they have been easy to identify, even by remote sensing. There is little to suggest that the character of these places changed significantly until they had assumed this form. Then certain sites were adapted, expanded, and rebuilt over different lengths of time. Some examples provided a focus for communal gatherings; a few contained houses; while others were provided with defences and were attacked and set on fire (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 716–19). During their periods of use groups of artefacts, human remains, and animal bones were displayed in the ditches or pits and the earthworks might be levelled in order to conceal them. During subsequent phases those deposits were uncovered and inspected, and further items were added. Such

places were constantly modified. In contrast to the evidence from long barrows and allied structures, sequences generally began with the creation of a widely accepted form but, in some cases, the sites became increasingly diverse. Most enclosures went out of use after a short period but others had extended histories during which their character changed (Oswald *et al.* 2001, 75–7; Whittle *et al.* 2011, 704–12).

Causewayed enclosures illustrate a different temporality from long barrows. Most were constructed and used between 3700 and 3500 BC, although a few sites retained their significance as late as 3300 BC; there were differences between separate regions, and local peaks of monument building. The construction of enclosures would have run in parallel with that of long barrows in southern Britain and they can be found in the same places. At the same time those enclosures shared the stereotyped form of earthworks on the Continent. It must have been important that they should conform to a common template but their establishment provided the stimulus for developments which included the expansion of long-distance exchange, communal feasts, displays of human remains, raiding, and warfare. These processes are evidenced at a few monuments but there is no sense that their histories were pre-ordained, nor does it seem likely that their overall lifespan had been foreseen from the outset – instead the future was open to negotiation. Unlike long barrows, there is little to suggest that these structures were decommissioned. Once they had been built their histories diverged.

There are other contrasts between the monuments dated by Bayesian analysis. Long barrows and long cairns had comparatively short histories – histories that were repeated from one site to another over a finite period – and comparatively few people need have been involved in their construction. The use of these places could have followed the tempo at which bodies and timber settings decayed. They were set in a domestic landscape and may have been the work of local communities. Perhaps the timescale was that of the lineage and was restricted to a few generations.

Enclosures, on the other hand, came in different sizes and remained in use for different lengths of time (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 704–12). Some of these episodes might have been shorter than the lifespan of a barrow, but other structures were elaborated and rebuilt. Certain sites were used for as little as 25 years, but a smaller number remained important for two or three

centuries and were reconstructed during that period. Some of the longest-lasting monuments were especially large and had three or four concentric earthworks (Whittle *et al.* 2011, fig. 14.31). Their construction and maintenance must have involved a large number of people who had come there for the purpose; perhaps it happened on special occasions. These structures could be constructed in liminal areas or in places which were accessible from a wider hinterland. The size and complexity of a few examples suggest that they were used by more than one community. The largest monuments operated at a different tempo from the others and epitomise what Gosden (1994) calls 'public time'.

Again, these points can be illustrated by recently dated monuments in Wessex and the Cotswolds (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 60–206 & 434–75). Not only did their distributions coincide with those of long barrows and long cairns, their radiocarbon chronologies overlapped, and both kinds of monument are found together at sites like Hambledon Hill. Some enclosures were used for much longer than others. For instance, radiocarbon dating shows that those at Whitesheet Hill and Maiden Castle were short-lived, while Windmill Hill, Hambledon Hill, Crickley Hill, and Peak Camp had histories that extended for three centuries or more. During the currency of these earthworks their layout changed, and the three circuits at Windmill Hill were built in sequence, albeit over a short period. The enclosures and outworks at Hambledon Hill were separated by greater intervals and the same applies to the earthworks and palisade at Crickley Hill.

Some of these places may have changed their character over time and both Hambledon Hill and Crickley Hill were reconstructed as hillforts. Both sites seem to have been attacked and burnt. It could also have happened at Maiden Castle. Their roles became more diverse. At the same time neighbouring enclosures could have played various roles. The two examples at Hambledon Hill contained artefacts made from different materials. There were contrasts between the deposits of portable objects, and human and animal bones associated with this pair of monuments (Mercer & Healy 2008, table 11.5). Similar contrasts can be recognised in other cases. The structural sequence at Crickley Hill was more complex than that at its neighbour Peak Camp, yet the latter site was used over a longer period. Although causewayed enclosures were established according to a common

template, their uniformity soon broke down, and examples assumed distinctive forms. There is evidence that they also played more roles.

CURSUS MONUMENTS

In time causewayed enclosures were supplanted by a new kind of architecture. Unlike the structures considered so far, cursuses were an insular invention and are thought to have originated in northern Britain where Middle Neolithic enclosures are rare. In this case a different contrast is important. At least some of the first cursuses were built of wood and were partly or completely destroyed by fire. Other examples were earthworks which may have been later in date (Brophy 2016, 81–6). Their distributions overlap. Aerial photography suggests that timber examples were restricted to northern Britain (Thomas 2006; Brophy 2016, 235–7). Their earthwork counterparts are also found in the south where some of them were built on an enormous scale.

These points are based on a limited number of sites, and there remains a need for new research. Most examples in northern Britain are recorded as crop marks. In principle these structures might have been defined by lines of pits rather than wooden uprights but that is not substantiated by the few excavated examples. Only one of them, at Bannockburn, was interpreted as a setting of pits, yet the latest structure on that site was a timber monument (Rideout 1997). Parts of the wooden enclosures were set on fire, but there are problems in assessing the radiocarbon dates from them because they were built of oak. There is a risk that the samples included heartwood and did not reflect the time when the monuments were built. In fact, this problem was considered when the samples from Holm and Kilmartin were chosen, so that only the outer part of the post was selected (Brophy 2016, 82). The full range of radiocarbon dates extends between 4000 BC and 3600 BC, and even the most cautious account accepts that these structures were built about 3700 BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 830). That is consistent with the few samples of hazel charcoal found in the same contexts (Brophy 2016, 82). On any reckoning such estimates pre-date those for cursus monuments in the south which are usually assigned to the later 3rd millennium BC (Barclay & Bayliss 1999). Perhaps the most detailed study is of two earthworks close to Stonehenge (Thomas *et al.* 2009). In each case their age was between 3630 and 3370 BC. The

argument is consistent with ceramic evidence. Timber cursuses have been found with Carinated Bowls in the north, but the earthwork monuments in lowland Britain are associated with sherds belonging to the later tradition of Impressed Ware, which originated about 3600 BC and was widely distributed by 3400 BC (Ard & Darvill 2015).

At the same time the history of cursuses in the north must have overlapped with the development of barrows and enclosures in the south. Elsewhere the relationship between these structures was more complex. In lowland England cursuses were established in between groups of causewayed enclosures, as happened in the Thames Valley (Hey & Barclay 2011, 293–302), but at two sites in East Anglia they cut across them, putting them out of use (Oswald *et al.* 2001, 134–5). Some cursuses incorporated existing features like long barrows and Neolithic round mounds and provided a focus for building other kinds of monument (Loveday 2006).

Timber cursuses

The sequence in northern Britain echoes some of the contrasts described in the south but in this case they concern just one kind of structure. The timber cursuses have similar histories to long barrows, while their earthwork equivalents recall the evidence of causewayed enclosures. It is due to radiocarbon dating that the difference can be recognised.

The wooden monuments with which the sequence started shared features with other kinds of building. Their rectilinear outlines could be related to those of houses and halls (Thomas 2006). Two features lend weight to this comparison. A high proportion of the structures had been set on fire; in the case of wooden halls they may have been filled with fine pottery and grain before it happened (Sheridan 2013; Debert 2016). A second feature that timber cursuses have in common with other sites is that the original building could be supplemented or replaced by a similar monument on the same site and occasionally on the same footprint. That process might be repeated more than once (Millican 2016).

It follows that when people built them they must have accepted that the buildings would have a limited lifespan. They may even have known when such these structures would be set on fire. If parts of these monuments were allowed to survive, they would gradually decay. When the wooden enclosures were built people

would have been capable of envisaging the dissolution of those buildings. Like the various features covered by mounds the biographies of these sites were pre-ordained.

Earthwork cursuses

The building of earthwork cursuses was a significant development. They were distributed over a larger area than their wooden precursors and some of the newer structures, such as the Dorset Cursus or those in the Rudston complex, grew to enormous proportions; the same is true of the bank barrows which they resemble in many respects (Bradley 1983). Like causewayed enclosures, the building of cursuses must have required the participation of many people (Startin & Bradley 1981). In its final form the building of the Dorset monument was the outcome of half a million worker hours (Barrett *et al.* 1991, 45–6) – a similar total to the enclosures on Hambledon Hill not far away. In fact, the last use of that complex seems to have pre-dated the construction of the Dorset Cursus (Barclay & Bayliss 1999, 22–3; Mercer & Healy 2008, 748–53).

The contrast with other kinds of monument is both striking and well documented, and it has been tempting to think in terms of a model in which local polities drew on the labour of ever larger workforces (Renfrew 1973). That is possible, but the evidence has another implication. Unlike their timber prototypes, earthwork cursuses remained intact, and there is nothing to suggest that any of them were destroyed. The ditches could be cleaned at intervals and the earthworks could be enhanced by extending them at both ends or building similar structures nearby (Loveday 2006). A local precedent was provided by the remains of causewayed enclosures which were common in the south. It seems as if a cursus with a bank and ditch was meant to have a lengthy history, and a few of the more elaborate examples – the Dorset Cursus, and those at Thornborough and Dorchester on Thames – were directed towards the rising or setting sun at the solstices (Bradley 2019, 75). These were phenomena that could be observed every year and to all appearances would remain the same over a protracted period. Perhaps these structures operated on a different timescale from their wooden predecessors with their characteristic cycles of destruction, decay, and rebuilding.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARGUMENT

The contrast between early cursuses and later examples raises the same issue as the histories of long mounds and enclosures. Both are described as ‘monuments’, but they illustrate different notions of time. Those conceptions are brought into focus by radiocarbon dates and new methods of analysing them.

There is an important distinction between structures that were built *to close* the active use of particular locations, and those which provided *the starting point for fresh developments*. If the construction of long barrows marked the end of a longer history, the establishment of a causewayed enclosure could be only the beginning of a lengthy sequence. Of course there are exceptions to both propositions but virtually the same duality is illustrated by the history of cursuses. Early structures made of wood were short-lived and were often replaced, whilst their later equivalents were defined by banks and ditches which continued to influence the ways in which the landscape was organised during later phases. Some may have supplemented existing monuments, but there is nothing to suggest that any of them were destroyed.

Although the clearest evidence comes from the Early and Middle Neolithic periods, that may be because their chronology has been studied in more detail during recent years. New dating programmes will help to redress the balance, and it already seems likely that similar contrasts apply to Late Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Early Bronze Age monuments. In some cases the largest and most impressive structures were erected as the use of places came to an end. This applies to a number of henges where the earthwork perimeter restricted access to structures that had already been used for a long time (Gibson 2010). In particular instances its construction may have been the last act in a lengthy sequence. It was also true at sites where a stone circle enclosed an earlier cairn (Bradley 2000 & 2005).

The alternative is where a monument was built according to a widely accepted model but was used in a variety of ways. That was the case with Bronze Age round barrows which, like the causewayed enclosures of the Neolithic period, assumed a form they shared with structures on the Continent. On one level, covering graves by a mound restricted the use of these locations, but the importance of such a structure was seldom confined to a single phase. While some were indeed short-lived, many of these earthworks were adapted, enlarged, and rebuilt over long periods of

time (Bradley 2019, 170–81). By that stage they could have played many roles. They were employed in different ways, even when their appearance was much the same.

In such cases the simple contrasts illustrated by Early and Middle Neolithic monuments assume a new significance. It remains to be seen whether these ideas will gain an added dimension as more projects employ radiocarbon dating in a systematic manner. Chronology is important, but so is a better understanding of prehistoric attitudes to time. The beginnings and endings calculated by Bayesian analysis were not confined to the histories of monuments. In their different ways they reflected ideas shared by people in the past and these constructions provided a medium in which to express them.

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RÉSUMÉ

Signatures du temps: Temporalités des monuments de la Grande-Bretagne du Néolithique ancien et moyen de
Richard Bradley

Une analyse de dates au C¹⁴ a établi les contextes chronologiques de trois types de monuments néolithiques en Grande-Bretagne: les tertres allongés ou longs cairns (long mounds'), les enceintes à talus et fossé (causewayed enclosures'), et les cursus Il est plus difficile de comprendre comment de telles structures se sont développées au cours du temps. La construction d'un tertre ou d'un cairn était parfois le dernier geste à un endroit qui avait déjà fait l'expérience d'une longue histoire La construction du monument mettait un point final aux activités et le site

était effectivement fermé. Les séquences individuelles étaient plus courtes qu'on ne l'avait imaginé à un certain temps mais pouvaient se répéter en différents lieux sur une période de plusieurs centaines d'années.

D'un autre côté, la construction des enceintes s'allées empierrées, selon un modèle communément accepté se déroula presque simultanément. Une fois que les travaux de terrassement furent accomplis certaines cessèrent d'être utilisées mais quelques autres furent adaptées et modifiées si bien qu'elles purent jouer une variété foisonnante de rôles sur une plus longue période. Ces mêmes contrastes ont été illustrés par les *cursus*; les structures en bois dans le nord avaient des histoires limitées dans le temps avant de tomber en ruines ou d'être détruites par le feu tandis que les travaux de terrassement avaient une répartition plus étendue et jouissaient d'une plus longue durée de vie. Une approche similaire pourrait nous éclairer sur des monuments plus tardifs, y compris tels que les cromlechs, les cercles de pierres dressées et les tertres ronds. Il est important de considérer comment les chronologies de toutes ces structures sont liées à des conceptions anciennes du temps.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Zeitsignaturen: Die Zeitlichkeit von Monumenten im frühen und mittleren Neolithikum Großbritanniens, von Richard Bradley

Mit Hilfe der Auswertung von Radiokarbonaten konnten die chronologischen Kontexte von drei Arten von neolithischen Monumenten in Großbritannien festgestellt werden: von Langhügeln („long mounds“ oder „long cairns“), von „causewayed enclosures“ und von „cursus“ Monumenten. Wie sich derartige Architekturen im Lauf der Zeit entwickelten, ist schwieriger zu bewerten. Das Errichten eines Hügels war manchmal der finale Akt an einem Ort, der bereits eine längere Geschichte erfahren hatte. Der Bau des Monuments führte Aktivitäten zu einem Ende und der Platz wurde endgültig versiegelt. Individuelle Sequenzen waren dabei oft kürzer als zunächst angenommen, doch könnten sie an verschiedenen Stellen über mehrere hundert Jahre wiederholt worden sein.

Andererseits wird weithin akzeptiert, dass *causewayed enclosures* fast zeitgleich angelegt wurden. Sobald diese Erdwerke fertiggestellt waren, wurden einige davon nicht weiter genutzt, während andere angepasst und verändert wurden, so dass sie über einen längeren Zeitraum eine wachsende Zahl an Rollen spielen konnten. Die gleichen Unterschiede sind bei *cursus*-Monumenten erkennbar. Holzstrukturen hatten im Norden begrenzte Biographien bevor sie zerfielen oder durch Feuer zerstört wurden, während Erdwerke eine größere Verbreitung hatten und länger in Gebrauch waren. Ein vergleichbarer Ansatz könnte Licht auf spätere Monumente werfen wie z.B. Henges, Steinkreise und runde Hügel. Es ist wichtig zu bedenken, wie die Chronologie all dieser Strukturen mit vergangenen Zeitvorstellungen verknüpft sind.

RESUMEN

Tiempos distintivos: la temporalidad de los monumentos en el Neolítico inicial y medio de Gran Bretaña, por Richard Bradley

El análisis de las dataciones radiocarbónicas ha permitido establecer el contexto cronológico de tres tipos de monumentos neolíticos en Gran Bretaña: los túmulos alargados ('long mounds' o 'long cairns'), los recintos de fosos ('causewayed enclosures') y los *cursus*. Sin embargo, es más difícil apreciar cómo estas estructuras se desarrollan a lo largo del tiempo. La construcción de los túmulos alargados fue, en ocasiones, el evento final, en un lugar que contaba previamente con una larga historia. La construcción del monumento supuso el final de las actividades y el sitio fue efectivamente cerrado. Las secuencias individuales fueron más cortas de lo que inicialmente se consideró, pero podían repetirse en diferentes lugares durante varios cientos de años.

Por otro lado, la construcción de los recintos de fosos atendiendo a la gran variedad de casos bien aceptados debió ocurrir prácticamente de forma simultánea. Una vez que estas construcciones fueron establecidas, algunas de ellas quedaron en desuso aunque en otros casos fueron adaptadas y modificadas de tal manera que jugaron una gran variedad de roles durante un gran período de tiempo. El mismo contraste se ilustra en los *cursus*. Las estructuras de poste de madera en el norte tuvieron historias previas a su degradación o destrucción por el fuego,

mientras que los movimientos de tierra tuvieron una distribución más amplia y disfrutaron de una mayor popularidad. Un enfoque similar podría arrojar luz sobre los monumentos posteriores, incluidos los henge, círculos de piedra y los túmulos redondos. Es importante considerar cómo las cronologías de todas estas estructuras están relacionadas con las concepciones pasadas del tiempo.