
The Llancadle South Early Medieval Complex: Preliminary Results from 2023-25 Excavations

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Overview

- Project background
- Llancadle South cemetery site
- What we've found
- What it might mean

Please note: the following material contains images of human remains.



So far, we have:

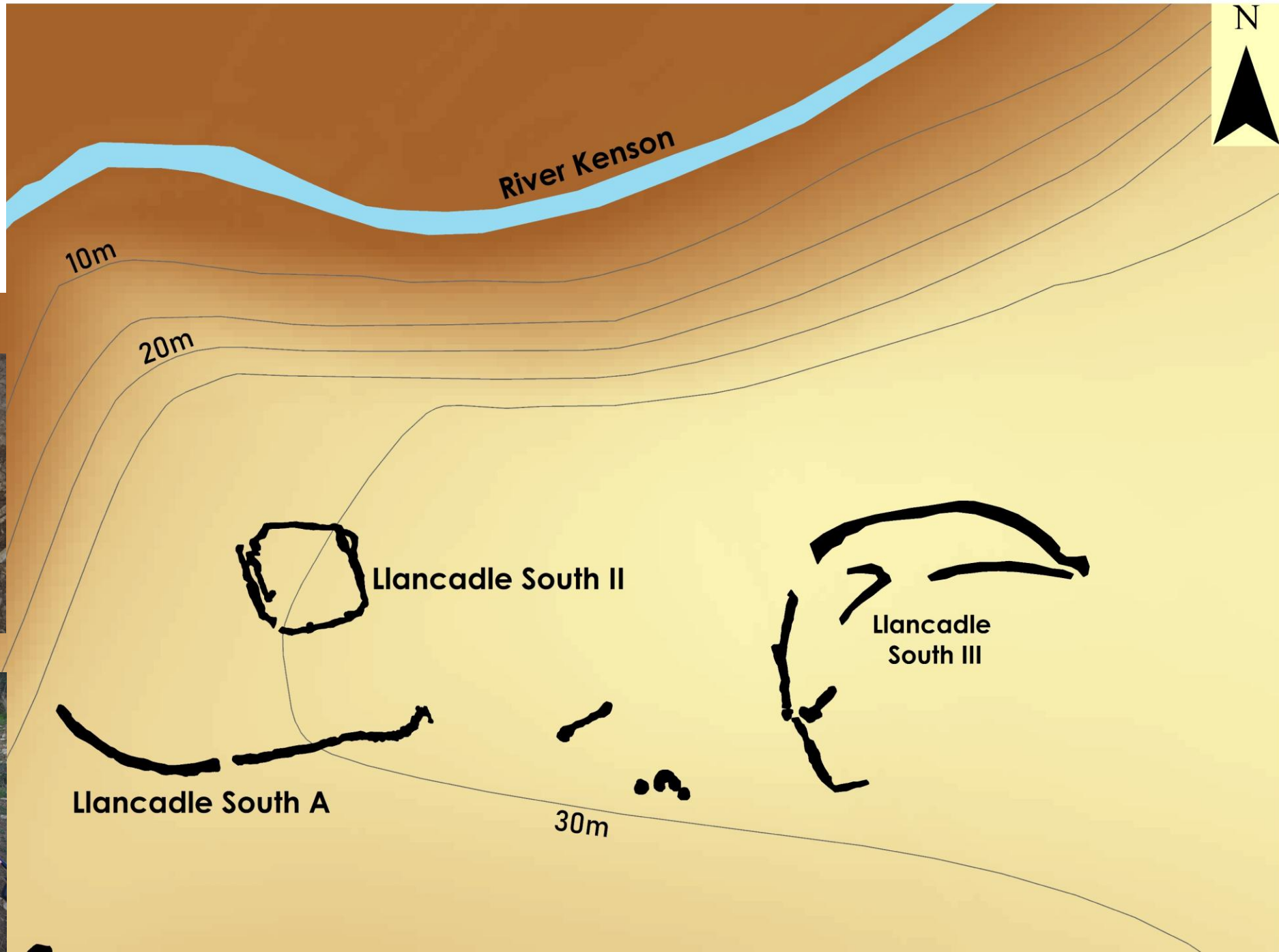
- * At least 8 sites in the demesne.
- * At least 8 more within the wider estate.
- * Large areas still to explore.

Our ultimate aim is to date and characterise all of these and explore the evolution of the historic landscape from prehistory through to the later Middle Ages.

But our focus for this talk is the Llancadle South II site.



Post-Roman (c. 500-650 AD) inhumation cemetery on a ridgetop defined by two enclosures. Initially identified through aerial photography, geophysics, and keyhole excavation.



Post Roman Wales: c. AD 400 to 700

- The centuries after the ending of Roman administration are pivotal in British history:
 - Emergence of kingdoms
 - New cultures, identities, and languages
 - Conversion to Christianity
- But they are notoriously difficult to research – a ‘dark age’:
 - Few historic sources
 - Comparatively few archaeological sites with limited material culture
- The Llancadle South site provide a rare and important research opportunity, which at the time of discovery was being damaged through regular ploughing.
- Research *and* Rescue excavation.

Research Aims

- Comprehensive excavation and analysis of the **entire** burial population – quality and quantity of data.
- Explore the cemetery and associated sites at **scale** to understand their context and function.
- Interpret, publish, and present the results.
- Innovation in recording and excavation.
- Training and engagement.



- Enclosure Ditch
- Potential Structures
- Graves
- Pits, Postholes, and Gullies
- Hearths

Trench 1a
2023-4

Trench 1b
2025+

F1b001

F1a004

B1

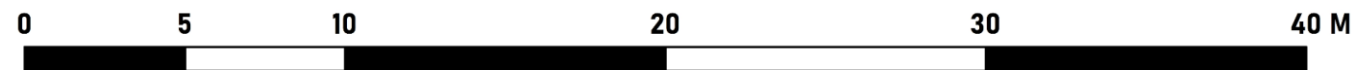
B19

B9

B51

B26

Trench 1 2022



Diversity of Burial Practice



High-Status Material Culture: Imported Pottery and Glass:

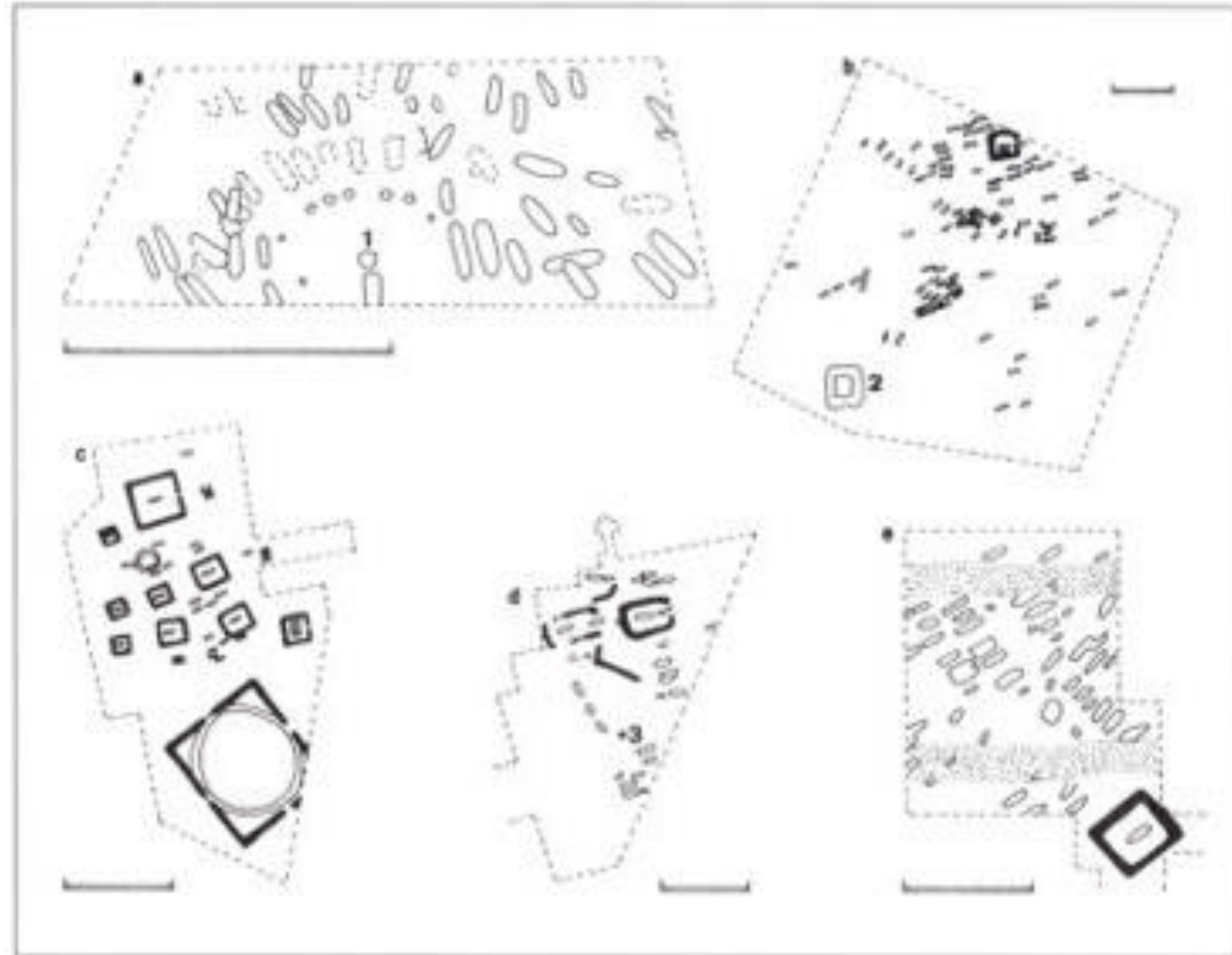


Gilded Brooch with enamelled terminals

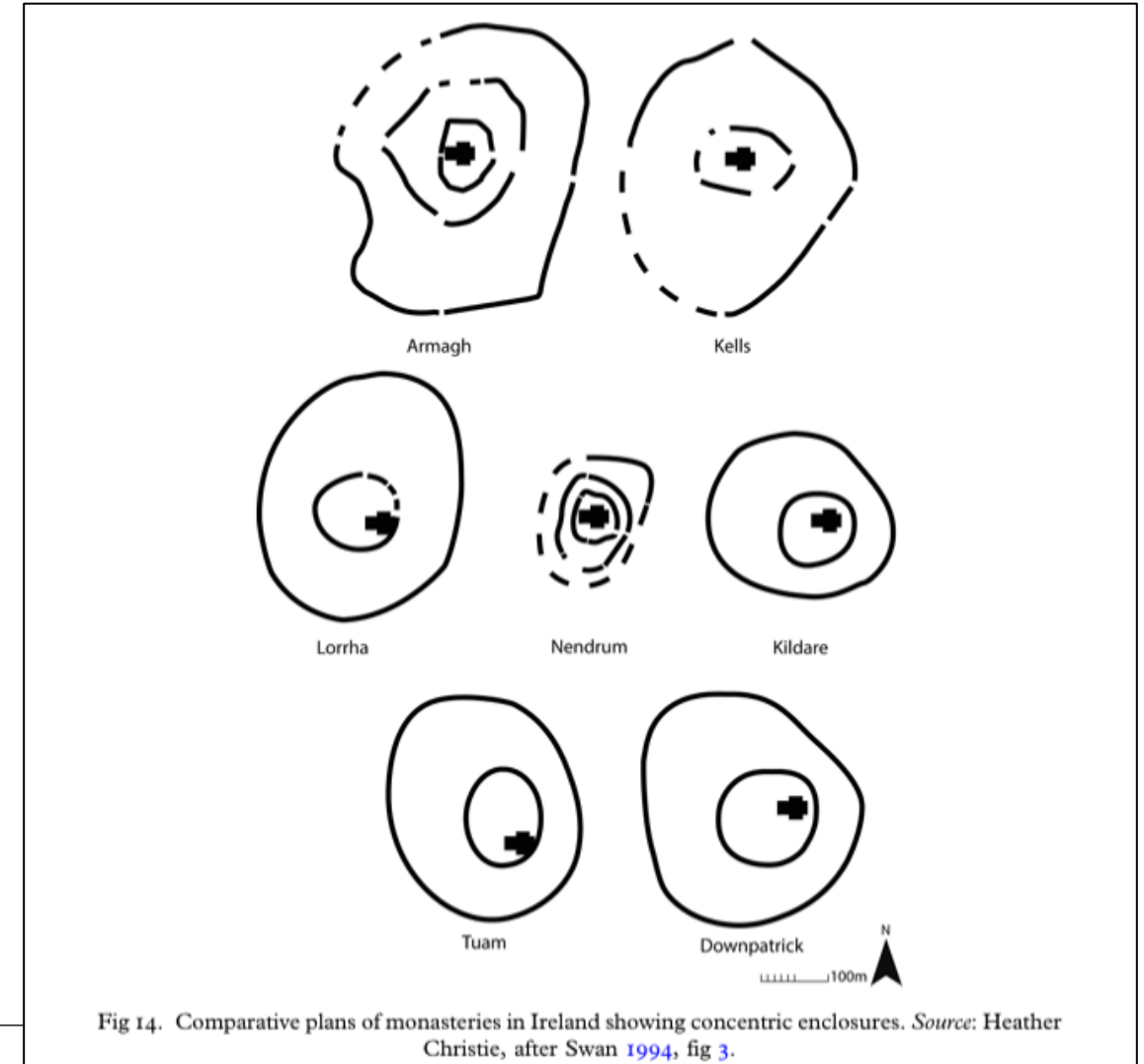
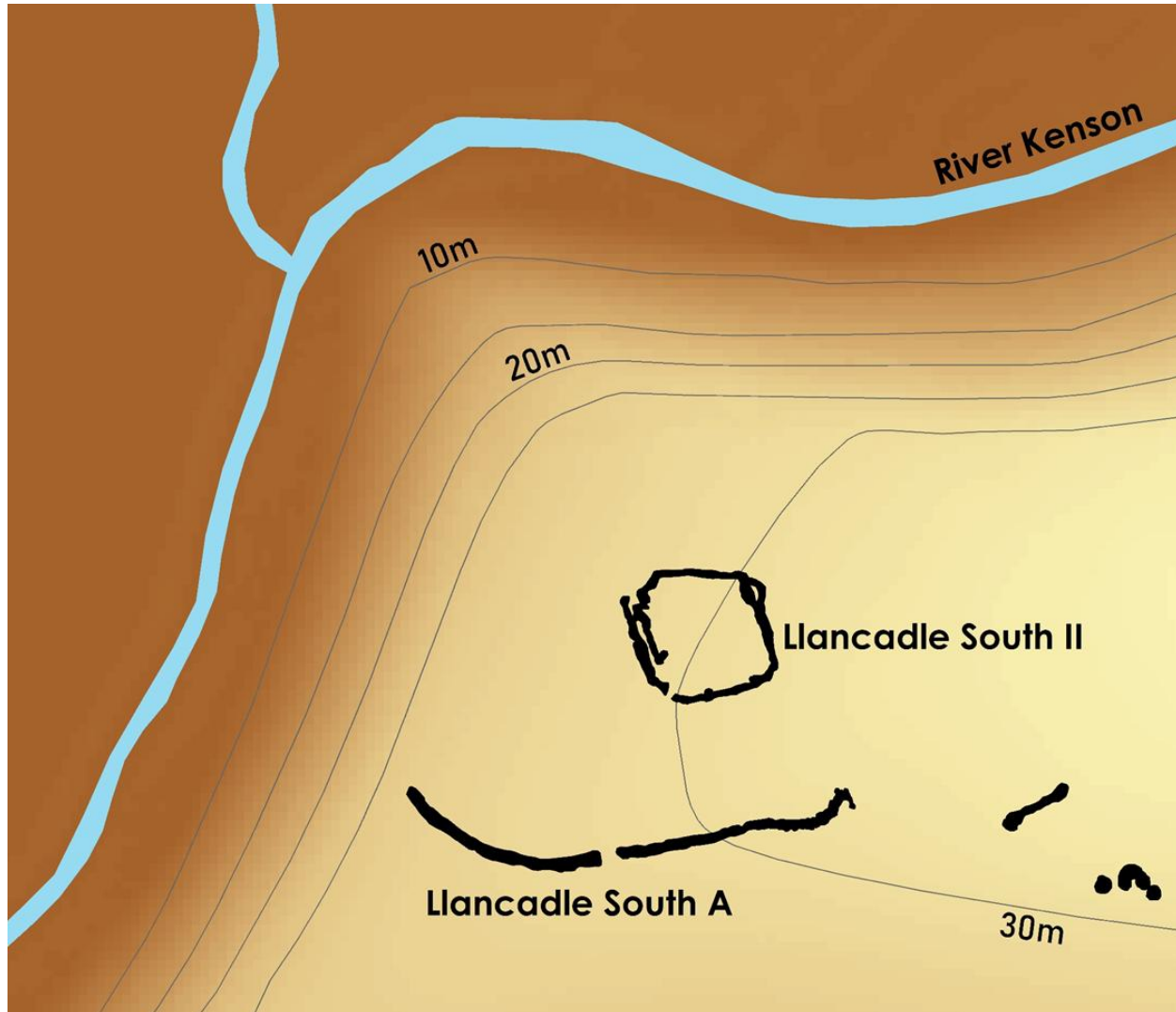


Llancadle South: Interpretation and Context

- It is too early to draw firm conclusions
- We have a lot more research and analysis to do.
- But Llancadle South displays several features that sets it apart from 'normal' early medieval cemeteries in western Britain:
 - Double boundary
 - Structures in cemetery
 - Domestic activity
 - High-status objects
 - Preponderance of women
- How might be explain this?



An early ecclesiastical community of women?



Thank you!

- Students, staff and volunteers
- Please consider donating to the project:
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/fonmon-archaeology>

