



Identity, Poverty and the Great Irish Famine: Insights from Bioarchaeology



Abstract

Food and diet were identity class markers in nineteenth-century Ireland, which became evident as nearly one million people, primarily the poor and destitute, died as a consequence of the notorious Great Famine of 1845–52. Nearly 1,000 individuals who perished during the Famine were discovered at the site of the former Kilkenny Union Workhouse in 2005, interred in mass burial pits that were excavated the following year. The bioarchaeological studies of the human remains have provided an unprecedented opportunity to expose the reality of life of the impoverished social classes at the time. While the Great Famine was one of the worst subsistence crises in history, it was foremost a social disaster induced by the lack of access to food and not the lack of food availability.

Dr Jonny Geber is a lecturer in human osteoarchaeology at the University of Edinburgh. His research involves broad biocultural and contextual approaches to the study of life in the past from archaeological and historical human remains with a particular focus on social bioarchaeology of the experience of poverty and social marginalisation, health and disease. He completed his PhD at Queen's University Belfast (2012), and is an affiliated Reader in Archaeology at Uppsala University, Sweden (2018).

Details

4pm AEST, 23 September 2021

Zoom Registration

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