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ABSTRACT

Case Studies in a Contextual Archaeology of Burial Practice in Roman Britain

Richard John Hunter Pearce

This thesis investigates burial practice as a source of evidence for Romano-British society. Previous work in this field is criticised for its empirical shortcomings and its interpretation of differentiation in burial practice as a direct reflection of social difference. The presentation of the dead is instead considered a transformation of the identity of the living. This premise is the basis for interpreting samples of data from Roman Britain, examining separately the burial practices of elite and non-elite groups. The main emphasis lies on the early Roman period but both the late Iron Age and the later Roman period receive consideration.

Given that Iron Age burial practices are largely archaeologically invisible, the extent to which distribution of archaeologically visible burial practice characterises the Roman period is examined and shown to be highly biased by period, site association and region. The bias to the late Roman period is argued to be the product of several different factors, one of which is the extension of burial norms to the majority of the population as long term process rather than an immediate consequence of Romanisation.

Current hypotheses for identifying the social status of rural burials are shown to be inadequate, in particular the classification of individual or small groups of burials found on settlement sites rather than in formal cemeteries as those of low status individuals. Recurring preferences for the placing of the dead around settlement sites are identified which are interpreted as a means by which the settlements of much of rural Roman Britain were organised and related to by their inhabitants.

The use of death rituals to project social status by elites is examined through the location of burial display. Display is defined according to existing assumptions and by quantitative methods based on regional bodies of data. The comparison of aspects of mortuary ritual prior to final burial is shown to be problematic and the archaeological identification of pre-burial elements of mortuary ritual is investigated further, in particular of pyre sites.

The distribution of mortuary display is explored in relation to the landscape of particular settlements and to different types of site across the landscape. Urban sites are shown to be a much more significant focus for burial display than previously appreciated, although the stereotype of the 'street of tombs' of the Roman world cannot be applied without reservations. The identification of burial display at small towns shows their importance as ceremonial as well as economic centres. The composition of the burial assemblages is interpreted as evidence for the social practices by which elite groups defined themselves, in particular through dining rituals and physical presentation. This provides a complementary emphasis to other accounts of the Romanisation of elites based on architectural and artistic evidence.

In summary burial evidence is demonstrated to be an essential and hitherto unappreciated source for reconstructing Romano-British society.

Case Studies in a Contextual Archaeology of Burial Practice in Roman Britain

(2 volumes)

Volume 1

Richard John Hunter Pearce

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Archaeology

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1999

23 AUG 1999

I, John Pearce, declare that no part of this material has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or any other University

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What virtue yet sleeps in this
terra damnata and aged cinders...

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) *Hydriotaphia or Urne Buriall*

CONTENTS

Volume One

Extended Table of Contents		ii
List of Figures		viii
List of Tables		xv
Acknowledgements		xvi
Preface		xvii
CHAPTER ONE	Introduction	1
CHAPTER TWO	The distribution of Roman period burial evidence in England and Wales and its implications	19
CHAPTER THREE	The funeral pyre - criteria for identification, the organisation of cremation and cultural differences in pyre-related ritual in Roman Britain	37
CHAPTER FOUR	Burial practice and burial location in urban cemeteries in Hertfordshire	63
CHAPTER FIVE	Burial practice and burial location in Roman Winchester	76
CHAPTER SIX	Rural burial practice and the placing of the dead on rural settlements	92
CHAPTER SEVEN	The geography of funerary display	124
CHAPTER EIGHT	The character of burial display	148
CHAPTER NINE	Conclusion	168
	Notes	178
	List of abbreviations	187
	Bibliography	190

Volume Two

FIGURES		257
---------	--	-----

CONCORDANCE		479
APPENDIX ONE	Data for figures associated with Chapter 2	491
APPENDIX TWO	Descriptions of features discussed in Chapter 3	499
APPENDIX THREE	Data for figures associated with Chapter 4	521
APPENDIX FOUR	Data for figures associated with Chapter 5	526
APPENDIX FIVE	Data for figures associated with Chapter 6	533
APPENDIX SIX	Data for figures associated with Chapter 7 and burial assemblages discussed in Chapters 7 and 8	571

EXTENDED TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume One

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1	Introduction and aims	1
1.2	Current debates in 'Romanisation'	1
1.3	Burial and the dead in Roman Britain and other provinces	5
1.4	Two perspectives for research	12
1.5	The structure of the thesis	16

Chapter 2: The distribution of Roman period burial evidence in England and Wales and its implications

2.1	Introduction	19
2.2	Sample compilation and classification	19
2.3.1	Trends in the recovery of Roman period burial evidence	24
2.3.2	The distribution of burial evidence by date and type: the dating of cremation and inhumation	24
2.3.3	The distribution of burial evidence according to settlement type	25
2.3.4	The regional distribution of burial evidence in England and Wales	26
2.4	Factors influencing the distribution of burial evidence	28
2.5	The implications of the distribution of burial evidence	31
2.6	Conclusion	35

Chapter 3 The funeral pyre - criteria for identification, the organisation of cremation and cultural differences in pyre-related ritual in Roman Britain

3.1	Introduction	37
3.2	Sources of evidence	38
3.3	The form of the pyre	39
3.3.1	Archaeological evidence for the pyre site	39
3.3.2	Graves and other features from the cremation cemetery	42
3.3.3	Literary and epigraphic evidence for terminology and description of pyre sites	48
3.3.4	Conclusions	51
3.4	The organisation of cremation	51
3.4.1	Archaeological evidence for the organisation of cremation	51
3.4.2	Literary and epigraphic evidence for the organisation of cremation	52
3.4.3	Conclusion	54
3.5	Regional patterns in the destruction of artefacts on the pyre in Roman Britain	55
3.5.1	The distribution of sources of evidence	55
3.5.2	Pyre deposition in the LPRIA	56
3.5.3	Pyre treatment in 'northern' Romano-British cemeteries	57
3.5.4	Pyre treatment in 'southern' Romano-British cemeteries	60
3.5.5	Conclusion	62

Chapter 4 Burial assemblage and location in urban cemeteries in Hertfordshire

4.1	Introduction	63
4.2	Braughing-Puckeridge	63
4.2.1	Skeleton Green	63
4.2.2	Braughing 'B'	64
4.3	Welwyn	65
4.4	Baldock	66
4.4.1	Human remains within the settlement in the Iron Age and Roman period	66
4.4.2	Wallington Road	66
4.4.3	Walls Field	68
4.5	Burial practices in St Albans and minor centre cemeteries compared	69
4.6	The location of the dead in the LPRIA and early Roman period	70
4.7	The context of burial display	72

Chapter 5 Burial practice and burial location in Roman Winchester

5.1	Introduction	76
5.2	Early Roman cemeteries	76
5.2.1	The development of the Hyde Street cemetery	76
5.2.2	Description and analysis of inhumation burials	77
5.2.3	Description and analysis of cremation burials	77
5.2.4	Other early Roman burials from Winchester	79
5.2.5	The relationship of burial to settlement in the early Roman period	80
5.3	Late Roman burials in the northern suburb	81
5.3.1	The Victoria Road cemetery	81
5.3.2	The Hyde Street (Late) and other burials from the northern suburb	83
5.3.3	Lankhills	83
5.3.3.1	The development of the Lankhills cemetery	83
5.3.3.2	Burial hierarchy and intrusive burials at Lankhills	84
5.4	Late Roman cemeteries in the eastern suburb	86
5.4.1	Chester Road	86
5.4.2	St Martin's Close and other sites	87
5.5	Oram's Arbour and the western suburb	88
5.6	The relationship of burial to street frontage and the 'managed cemetery'	88
5.7	Differentiation in burial practice in Winchester's late Roman cemeteries	90

Chapter 6 Rural burial practice and the placing of the dead on rural sites

6.1	Introduction	92
6.2	Burial and the archaeological record in Hampshire	92
6.3	Principal trends in burial in Iron Age and Roman Hampshire	93
6.4	Early Roman burials	95
6.4.1	Burial practice at Owslebury	95
6.4.2	Other rural burials	98
6.4.3	The East Hampshire tradition	98
6.5	Burial practices in late Roman rural Hampshire	99
6.6	The relationship of burial to settlement space	100
6.7	Roman burial and the archaeological record in Hertfordshire	103
6.8	Principal trends in burial in Iron Age and Roman Hertfordshire	105
6.9	Burial practice in early Roman Hertfordshire	105
6.9.1	Burial practice at Cross Farm, Harpenden	105
6.9.2	Burial practice at Boxfield Farm	106

6.9.3	Other rural burials in early Roman Hertfordshire	107
6.10	Late Roman rural burials in Hertfordshire	107
6.11	Monumental burial traditions in rural Roman Hertfordshire	107
6.12	Burial and settlement space in rural Roman Hertfordshire	108
6.13	Current models - social and tenurial distinctions in burial	110
6.14	An evaluation of current models	111
6.15	Infants and other burials on settlement interiors	113
6.16	Burial and boundaries	115
6.17	The context of funerary monuments	118
6.18	Cemetery nucleation in rural Roman Britain	119
6.19	An alternative model for the relationship of burial to settlement space	119
6.20	The historical context of burials around settlements	121
6.21	Conclusion	122

Chapter 7. The geography of funerary display

7.1	Introduction	124
7.2	The relationship of burial to the urban landscape	124
7.3	Streets of tombs in Roman Britain?	129
7.4	Funerary display in the wider landscape	131
7.5	The distribution of burial display in Hampshire and the <i>civitas</i> of the Belgae	132
7.6	The distribution of burial display in Hertfordshire and the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni	134
7.6.1	The identification of burial display	134
7.6.2	The distribution of burial display in the LPRIA in Hertfordshire	135
7.6.3	The distribution of burial display in the Roman period in Hertfordshire	136
7.6.4	The identification of Roman period burial display in and beyond the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni	137
7.6.5	The distribution of burial display	139
7.7	Themes in the location of burial display	140
7.7.1	The context of burial display - settlement type and <i>civitas</i> location	141
7.7.2	London as an exception?	145
7.8	Conclusion	146

Chapter 8 The character of burial display

8.1	Introduction	148
8.2	The composition of early Roman burial assemblages	148
8.3	Recurring themes in early Roman burial assemblages	156
8.4	The social interpretation of early Roman burial display	160
8.5	The composition of late Roman burial assemblages	163
8.6	The social interpretation of late Roman burial display	164

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1	Summary of themes and future work	168
-----	-----------------------------------	-----

Notes	178
List of Abbreviations	187

Bibliography	190
---------------------	-----

Volume Two

Figures	257
----------------	-----

Concordance to Iron Age and Roman cemeteries and burials from Britain referred to in text and location in later appendices.	479
--	-----

Appendices

1. Data for figures associated with chapter 2

1	Data for figures 2.1-2.40	491
---	---------------------------	-----

2. Descriptions of features discussed in chapter 3

2.1	Pyre sites from Britain and other provinces	499
2.1.1	‘Permanent’ pyre sites from Roman Britain	499
2.1.2	‘Permanent’ pyre sites in other Roman provinces	500
2.1.3	‘Temporary’ pyre sites from Iron Age and Roman Britain	503
2.1.4	Temporary pyre sites from other provinces	509
2.2	A sample of <i>busta</i>	514
2.3	Inscriptions including references to <i>ustrina</i>	517

3. Data for figures associated with chapter 4

3.1	Note on unpublished cemeteries from Baldock and St Albans	521
3.2	Data for figures 4.5-4.9, 4.11-4.14, 4.17-4.19, 4.22-4.26, 4.28-4.34	522

4. Data for figures associated with chapter 5

4.1	Note on unpublished cemeteries from Winchester, with particular reference to the date of late Roman cemeteries	526
4.2	Data for figures 5.4-5.7, 5.10-5.13, 5.17-5.24, 5.26, 5.28-5.30, 5.33-5.36, 5.39-5.40	529

5. Data for figures associated with chapter 6

5.1.1	Data for figure 6.1	533
5.1.2	Data for figures 6.25-6.26	538

5.2	Data for figures 6.5-6.7, 6.9-6.11	545
5.3	Descriptions of the relationship of burial to settlement features from a sample of rural sites in southern Britain discussed in Chapters 6.15-6.18 (see also figures 6.34-6.85)	547

6. Data for figures associated with chapter 7 and burial assemblages discussed in chapters 7 and 8

6.1	Data for figures 7.1-7.2	571
6.2	Data for figures 7.18, 7.20-7.25, 7.26-7.30	572
6.3	Burial assemblages of the 'East Hampshire Tradition'	577
6.4	Burial assemblages in and in the environs of the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni	584
6.5	Other burial assemblages from southern Roman Britain	594
6.6	Burial monuments in and in the environs of the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni	599

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 2 (pp. 257-82)

Figure 2.1	Dated cemeteries from Hertfordshire, Hampshire and Cambridgeshire	257
Figure 2.2	Types of cemeteries from Hertfordshire, Hampshire and Cambridgeshire	257
Figure 2.3	The number of cemeteries from five counties in different sources	257
Figure 2.4	A comparison of dated and undated cemeteries in different data sources	258
Figure 2.5	A comparison of dated cemeteries from 3 counties (Hertfordshire, Hampshire and Cambridgeshire) in different data sources	258
Figure 2.6	A comparison of cemetery types from 3 counties (Hertfordshire, Hampshire and Cambridgeshire) in different data sources	259
Figure 2.7	The number of cemeteries recorded in 5 year periods (JRS / Britannia)	260
Figure 2.8	The percentage of cemetery types recorded in 5 year periods (JRS / Britannia)	260
Figure 2.9	The percentage of dated cemeteries in different data sources (JRS, Britannia, Philpott)	261
Figure 2.10	The percentage of dated burials in different data sources (JRS / Britannia)	261
Figure 2.11	The percentage of cemeteries of different types in different data sources (JRS, Britannia, Philpott)	262
Figure 2.12	The percentage of burials of different types in different data sources (JRS / Britannia)	262
Figure 2.13	The percentage through time of different cemetery types (Britannia)	263
Figure 2.14	The percentage through time of different cemetery types (Britannia simplified)	263
Figure 2.15	The percentage through time of different burial types (JRS)	264
Figure 2.16	The percentage through time of different burial types (JRS simplified)	264
Figure 2.17	The number of cemeteries from different settlement types (JRS)	265
Figure 2.18	The number of cemeteries from different settlement types (Britannia)	265
Figure 2.19	The number of burials from different settlement types (JRS)	266
Figure 2.20	The number of burials from different settlement types (Britannia)	266
Figure 2.21	Excavations on different Roman period site types 1969-1989 (data from Evans 1995)	267
Figure 2.22	The percentage of dated cemeteries at different settlement sites (JRS)	267
Figure 2.23	The percentage of dated cemeteries at different settlement sites (Britannia)	268
Figure 2.24	The percentage of dated cemeteries at different settlement sites (JRS / Britannia)	268
Figure 2.25	The percentage of dated burials at different settlement sites (JRS / Britannia)	269
Figure 2.26	The percentage of cemetery types from different settlements (Britannia)	269
Figure 2.27	The percentage of cemetery types from different settlements (JRS)	270
Figure 2.28	The percentage of burial types from different settlements (JRS / Britannia)	270
Figure 2.29	The distribution of Roman period cemeteries by county (Philpott sample)	271
Figure 2.30	The distribution of Roman period cemeteries by county (JRS / Britannia)	272
Figure 2.31	The distribution of Roman period cremation cemeteries (JRS / Britannia)	273
Figure 2.32	The distribution of Roman period inhumation cemeteries (JRS / Britannia)	274
Figure 2.33	The distribution of early Roman cemeteries (JRS / Britannia)	275
Figure 2.34	The distribution of late Roman cemeteries (JRS / Britannia)	276
Figure 2.35	The percentage of cemetery types in selected counties (JRS / Britannia)	277
Figure 2.36	The percentage of cemetery types in selected counties (Philpott)	278
Figure 2.37	The percentage of dated cemeteries in selected counties (JRS / Britannia)	279
Figure 2.38	The percentage of dated cemeteries in selected counties (Philpott)	280
Figure 2.39	The number of Roman period excavations by county (from RCHME 1995: 316, Fig. 4)	281
Figure 2.40	The number of Roman period cemeteries by county (JRS / Britannia)	282

Chapter 3 (pp. 283-289)

Figure 3.1	Experimental and reconstructed pyre sites and traces of pyre structure in <i>busta</i>	283
Figure 3.2	Permanent pyre sites from Wels (Rieß 1974: 156), Rheinzabern (Ludovici 1908: 185, 201-2), Salzburg (Ruprechtsberger 1983: 23) and Innsbruck (Ruprechtsberger 1983: 23)	284
Figure 3.3	Section through the <i>ustrinum</i> at Carnuntum (from Wenham 1968: Fig. 8, 24 - derived from von Groller 1900)	285
Figure 3.4	The relationship of pyre sites to enclosures XXIX to XXXII to the <i>Gräberstraße</i> at Mainz-Weisenau (from Witteyer 1993: Fig. 2 71)	286
Figure 3.5	Excavated examples of <i>Brandschüttungsgräber</i>	287
Figure 3.6	Excavated examples of <i>Brandgrubengräber</i>	288
Figure 3.7	Pyre site and cremations at Trentholme Drive (from Wenham 1968: Fig. 6, 22)	289

Chapter 4 (pp. 290-323)

Figure 4.1	Roman period Braughing with cemeteries (after Burnham and Wachter 1990: 105)	290
Figure 4.2	Composite site plan, Skeleton Green (from Partridge 1981: Figure 5, 32)	291
Figure 4.3	The Skeleton Green cemetery (from Partridge 1981: Figure 90, 246)	292
Figure 4.4	The distribution of samian-dated burials, Skeleton Green	293
Figure 4.5	The amount of cremated bone in burials from a sample of Romano-British cemeteries	294
Figure 4.6	The number of burials with different artefact types, Skeleton Green	295
Figure 4.7	Numbers of different ceramic forms, Skeleton Green	295
Figure 4.8	The number of burials with different ceramic forms, Skeleton Green	296
Figure 4.9	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics, Skeleton Green	296
Figure 4.10	Braughing B cemetery (from Partridge 1977: Fig. 29, 74)	297
Figure 4.11	The number of burials with different artefact types, Braughing B	298
Figure 4.12	Numbers of different ceramic forms, Braughing B	298
Figure 4.13	The number of burials with different ceramic forms, Braughing B	299
Figure 4.14	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics, Braughing B	299
Figure 4.15	Roman period Welwyn in relation to the modern village (after Rook 1986: Fig. 28, 107)	300
Figure 4.16	The Grange Road cemetery, Welwyn (from Rook 1973: 2, Fig. II)	301
Figure 4.17	Numbers of different ceramic forms, Welwyn	302
Figure 4.18	Number of burials with different ceramic forms, Welwyn	302
Figure 4.19	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics, Welwyn	302
Figure 4.20	The distribution of cemetery areas, Baldock (from Burleigh 1993: Fig. 3, 44)	303
Figure 4.21a	The Wallington Road cemetery, Baldock (from Stevenson in Burleigh and Matthews in preparation)	304
Figure 4.21b	Central area of the Wallington Road cemetery (from Stevenson in Burleigh and Matthews in preparation)	305
Figure 4.22	The number of burials with different artefact types at Wallington Road	306
Figure 4.23	Numbers of different ceramic forms, Wallington Road	306
Figure 4.24	Numbers of burials with different ceramic forms, Wallington Road	307
Figure 4.25	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics, Wallington Road	307
Figure 4.26	Numbers of different vessel forms in the later phases, Wallington Road	307
Figure 4.27	The Walls Field cemetery, Baldock and its context (schematic representation of Westell 1931: Fig. 1, 253)	308
Figure 4.28	The number of burials with different artefact types, Walls Field	309
Figure 4.29	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics, Walls Field	309
Figure 4.30	The percentage of burials with cremated animal bone from urban and	310

	minor centre cemeteries	
Figure 4.31	The percentage of burials with ceramic accessory vessels from urban and minor centre cemeteries	310
Figure 4.32	The average number of ceramic accessory vessels in burials from urban and minor centre cemeteries	311
Figure 4.33	Samian as a percentage of ceramic accessory vessels in burials from urban and minor centre cemeteries	311
Figure 4.34	The percentage of burials with glass accessory vessels from urban and minor centre cemeteries	311
Figure 4.35	General distribution of Iron Age and Roman burial and settlement evidence at Baldock (from Burleigh 1995b: Fig. 16.1)	312
Figure 4.36	The distribution of LPRIA burials, Baldock (from Burleigh 1995b: 180)	313
Figure 4.37	The distribution of LPRIA burials, St Albans (from Niblett 1992: Fig. 1, 918)	314
Figure 4.38	The distribution of Roman burials, Baldock (from Burleigh 1995b: 181)	315
Figure 4.39	The distribution of Roman period burials, St Albans (after Niblett forthcoming)	316
Figure 4.40	Composite site plan of 1930s and 1980s excavations at St Stephens, St Albans (from Niblett unpublished)	317
Figure 4.41	Area 15: the Royston road cemetery in its context (from Burleigh in preparation b.)	318
Figure 4.42	The Tene burial and other deposits, Baldock (from Stead and Rigby 1986: 36, Fig. 10).	319
Figure 4.43	Burials at Clothall Road (Site D), Baldock (from Stead and Rigby 1986: 62, fig. 26)	319
Figure 4.44	Area 15: the Royston road cemetery (eastern section) (from Frere 1989: Fig. 22)	320
Figure 4.45a	Site A cremations, the Folly Lane site and its environs (from Niblett 1995a: Fig. 43, 100)	321
Figure 4.45b	LPRIA and Roman period features at Folly Lane (from Niblett 1992: Fig. 2, 919)	322
Figure 4.46	The 'William Old' and 'Lindum Place' burial and other pre-Roman and Roman features south of the Silchester Gate (after Niblett 1993: Fig. 9, 88)	323

Chapter 5 (pp. 324-351)

Figure 5.1	The cemeteries of Roman Winchester	324
Figure 5.2	The northern cemetery area at Winchester (after Qualmann in preparation)	325
Figure 5.3	The Hyde Street cemetery from the first to early third centuries (from Ottaway 1992: Fig. 3.9, 77)	326
Figure 5.4	The distribution of phase 1 burials in the Hyde Street cemetery	327
Figure 5.5	The numbers of cremated and inhumed burials over time, Hyde Street	328
Figure 5.6	Cremated and inhumed populations, Hyde Street	328
Figure 5.7	The orientation of inhumation burials, Hyde Street	328
Figure 5.8	The location of <i>Brandschüttungsgräber</i> and <i>Brandgrubengräber</i> , Hyde Street	329
Figure 5.9	The location of burials with certain artefact types, Hyde Street	330
Figure 5.10	The number of burials with different artefact types, Hyde Street	331
Figure 5.11	The number of burials with different ceramic forms, Hyde Street	331
Figure 5.12	Numbers of different ceramic forms, Hyde Street	332
Figure 5.13	The number of burials with different numbers of ceramics	332
Figure 5.14	The location of burials with four or more accessory vessels, Hyde Street	333
Figure 5.15	The location of burials with three or more non-ceramic artefact types, Hyde Street	334
Figure 5.16	Site plan of Victoria Road cemetery (after Qualmann in preparation)	335
Figure 5.17	Numbers of burials over time, Victoria Road	336
Figure 5.18	The distribution of burials over time, Victoria Road	337

Figure 5.19	The percentage of burials with coffins by phase, Victoria Road	338
Figure 5.20	The number of burials with different artefact types, Victoria Road	338
Figure 5.21	The orientation of all inhumation burials, Victoria Road	339
Figure 5.22	The orientation of phase 1 inhumation burials, Victoria Road	339
Figure 5.23	The orientation of phase 2 inhumation burials, Victoria Road	339
Figure 5.24	The orientation of phase 3 inhumation burials, Victoria Road	339
Figure 5.25	Site plan of Hyde Street (Late) cemetery (after Qualmann in preparation)	340
Figure 5.26	The orientation of all inhumation burials, Hyde Street (Late)	341
Figure 5.27	Phases of burial, Lankhills (from Clarke 1979: Fig. 9, 118)	342
Figure 5.28	The number of burials with different artefact types, Lankhills	343
Figure 5.29	The orientation of all inhumation burials, Lankhills	343
Figure 5.30	Average NAT of burials with different attributes, Lankhills	344
Figure 5.31	The distribution of burials in Winchester's eastern cemeteries (after Qualmann in preparation)	345
Figure 5.32	Site plan of the Chester Road cemetery (after Qualmann in preparation)	346
Figure 5.33	The number of burials with different artefact types, Chester Road	347
Figure 5.34	The orientation of all inhumation burials, Chester Road	348
Figure 5.35	The orientation of inhumation burials, phases 1 and 2, Chester Road	348
Figure 5.36	The orientation of inhumation burials, phases 3 to 6, Chester Road	348
Figure 5.37	Site plan of the St Martin's Close excavation (after Qualmann in prep.)	349
Figure 5.38	Monument F57 and associated burials, St Martin's Close (from Morris 1986: Fig. 4, 344)	350
Figure 5.39	The proportion of burials with grave goods in late Roman cemeteries at Winchester	351
Figure 5.40	The average NAT per burial in late Roman cemeteries at Winchester	351

Chapter 6 (pp. 352-444)

Figure 6.1	The distribution of Roman period burials in Hampshire	352
Figure 6.2	The distribution of infant burials and infant skeletal elements from Portchester Castle (after Cunliffe 1975: Fig. 20, facing p.64)	353
Figure 6.3	The excavated areas at Owslebury (from Collis 1970: Fig. 1, 249)	354
Figure 6.4a	The distribution of burials at Owslebury (from Collis 1977: 28)	355
Figure 6.4b	Cemetery 1 at Owslebury (from Collis 1977: 29)	356
Figure 6.5	Numbers of burials of different type over time at Owslebury	357
Figure 6.6	The number of ceramic forms at Owslebury	357
Figure 6.7	The orientation of burials at Owslebury	358
Figure 6.8	Burials (numbered features) on Site P at Owslebury (from Collis 1968: 24, Fig. 3)	359
Figure 6.9	The number of late Roman rural burials with different artefact types, Hampshire	360
Figure 6.10	The number of late Roman rural burials with different numbers of artefacts, Hampshire	360
Figure 6.11	The orientation of late Roman rural inhumation burials in Hampshire	361
Figure 6.12	The cemetery at Alton (from Millett 1986: Fig. 3, 47)	362
Figure 6.13	The distribution of late Roman burials and bone fragments at Balksbury (after Wainwright and Davies 1995: Fig. 8, 8)	363
Figure 6.14	The distribution of burials at Burntwood Farm, Site R6 (after Fasham 1980: Fig. 4, 42)	364
Figure 6.15	The location of burials in Trench 1 Choseley Farm, Odiham (Morris 1986a: 92)	365
Figure 6.16	The location of burials at Daneshill (Millett and Schadla-Hall 1992: Fig. 3, 86)	366
Figure 6.17	Burials and other features at Old Down Farm, East Meon (Whinney and Walker 1980: Fig. 2, 155)	367
Figure 6.18	Middle to Late Iron Age settlement and Roman period burial (820) at Micheldever Wood (Fasham 1987: Fig. 5, 5)	368
Figure 6.19	Cemetery location relative to third century settlement at Neatham (from Millett and Graham 1986: Fig. 101, 152)	369

Figure 6.20	The cemetery at Area F, Neatham (from Millett and Graham 1986: Fig. 41, 54)	370
Figure 6.21	The distribution of burials at Oakridge II/ VI, Basingstoke (from Oliver 1992: Fig. 3, 58)	371
Figure 6.22	Burials within Bronze Age linear ‘scoop’ at Odiham (Jenkins 1990: Fig. 2, 8)	372
Figure 6.23	Roman and other burials at Snell’s Corner, Horndean (Knocker 1956: Fig. 2)	373
Figure 6.24	The distribution of Romano-British burials at Winnall Down (after Fasham 1985: Fig. 26, 33)	374
Figure 6.25	The distribution of LPRIA period burials in Hertfordshire	375
Figure 6.26	The distribution of Roman period burials in Hertfordshire	376
Figure 6.27	Boxfield farm early Roman cemetery (from Going et al. forthcoming)	377
Figure 6.28	Cremation burials recovered in part of 1992 excavation of Cross Farm early Roman cemetery (outlying burial ABA omitted) (after West: excavation archive)	378
Figure 6.29	Settlement and burial in Area 1, Foxholes Farm (from Partridge 1989: Fig. 4, facing 22)	379
Figure 6.30	The corn drier, burial and possible mausoleum wall from Gadebridge Park, west wing (from Neal 1974: 39, Fig. 25)	380
Figure 6.31	Late Roman burials in relation to the Park Street villa (from Saunders 1961: Fig. 2, 103)	381
Figure 6.32	The late Roman cemetery (B) and mausoleum (Building 1062) at Welwyn Hall (from McDonald forthcoming)	382
Figure 6.33	General plan of site at Wood Lane End (from Neal 1984: Fig. 1, 194)	383
Figure 6.34	Composite plan of Iron Age and Roman settlements and Roman burials at Abingdon Vineyard (from Frere 1990: Fig. 17, 335)	384
Figure 6.35	Phase 2 Late prehistoric enclosures, burials, and earlier prehistoric spectacle enclosure at Alington Avenue Phase 3 Roman period settlement and burials at Alington Avenue (from Davies et al. 1985: Figs. 2 and 3, 105 and 108)	385
Figure 6.36	The cemetery, trackway and Roman and Iron Age enclosures at Appleford (from Hinchcliffe and Thomas 1980: Fig. 13, 33)	386
Figure 6.37a	Settlement, cemetery and shrine at Bancroft from the early first to late third centuries AD (from Williams and Zeepvat 1994: Fig. 5, facing p.6)	387
Figure 6.37b	Settlement, cemetery and shrine at Bancroft from the late third century AD to the post-Roman period (from Williams and Zeepvat 1994: Fig. 6, facing p.8)	388
Figure 6.38	The Late Iron Age and late Roman phases at Barton Court Farm (Miles 1985: Figs. 5 and 8, 8, 11)	389
Figure 6.39	Composite plan of burials and settlement at Biglis (after Robinson 1988: 21, Fig. 7)	390
Figure 6.40	The Woodyates settlement and burials at ‘Bokerly Junction’ (from Hawkes and Piggott 1947: Fig. 13)	391
Figure 6.41	Settlement and burials at Bradley Hill (infant cemetery in building 3) (from Leech 1981: Fig. 2, 179)	392
Figure 6.42	Fourth century settlement at Catsgore, with burials added (after Leech 1982: Fig. 5, 8)	393
Figure 6.43	The Romano-British inhumation cemetery at Dunstable (from Matthews 1981: Fig. 2, 4)	394
Figure 6.44	First to third century AD cemetery and settlement at Each End, Ash (Bennett and Panton 1993: Fig. 8, 378)	395
Figure 6.45	Settlement features and burials at Eyewell Farm, Chilmark (from Fitzpatrick and Crockett 1998: Fig. 2, 13)	396
Figure 6.46	Settlement features and burials at Figheldean, Site A (Graham and Newman 1993: Fig. 8, 20)	397
Figure 6.47a	Fordington Bottom, Dorchester. Burial and settlement evidence from periods 1 and 2 (Bronze Age and Late Iron Age / early Romano-British) (Smith <i>et al.</i> 1997: Fig. 90, 204)	398
Figure 6.47b	Fordington Bottom, Dorchester. Burial and settlement evidence from	399

	periods 4B and 4C (earlier and later Romano-British) (Smith <i>et al.</i> 1997: Fig. 91, 205)	
Figure 6.48	Settlement area, cemeteries and burials at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet (Leach 1990: Fig. 2, 50)	400
Figure 6.49	Second to fifth century settlement and cemetery at Foxton (from Price <i>et al.</i> : 1997: Fig. 15, 33)	401
Figure 6.50	The distribution of burials in relation to principal Iron Age and Roman features at Frocester Court (after Price: archive)	402
Figure 6.51	Mid Roman burials in relation to contemporary features at Godmanchester: A14/604 junction (after Wait 1991: Fig. 10, 88)	403
Figure 6.52	Iron Age and early Roman settlement at Hayton and early Roman burials (from Halkon and Millett 1997: 4-7)	404
Figure 6.53	Settlement and burials at Herriott's Bridge (after Rahtz and Greenfield 1977: Fig. 35, facing p. 72)	405
Figure 6.54	The barrow burial at Holborough in its landscape context (from Jessup 1954: Fig. 1, opposite 2)	406
Figure 6.55	The late Roman cemetery at Icklingham (from West and Plouviez 1976: Fig. 32, 68)	407
Figure 6.56a	Composite plan of settlement and burials at Ilchester Little Spittle (Leach 1982: Fig. 34, 60)	408
Figure 6.56b	Phased plan of settlement and burials (phase V) at Ilchester Little Spittle (Leach 1982: Fig. 35, 62)	409
Figure 6.57	Composite plan of settlement and burials at Ilchester Townsend Close (from Leach 1982: Fig. 51, 92)	410
Figure 6.58a	The Keston site in relation to its local landscape (from Philp <i>et al.</i> 1991: 3, Fig. 2)	411
Figure 6.58b	Period IV settlement and burials at Keston (from Philp <i>et al.</i> 1991: 39, Fig. 9)	412
Figure 6.58c	Period VI settlement and burials at Keston (from Philp <i>et al.</i> 1991: 67 Fig. 17)	413
Figure 6.58d	Period VI cemetery at Keston (from Philp 1969: 75)	414
Figure 6.59	Settlement and cemetery at Laxton (Jackson and Tylecote 1988: Fig. 3, 278)	415
Figure 6.60	Temple - mausoleum and villa at Lullingstone (from Meates 1979: 25, Fig. 2)	416
Figure 6.61	The excavated area, courtyard enclosure with burials and cemetery at Lynch Farm (Jones 1975: Figs 3 and 4, 97, and 99)	417
Figure 6.62	Human and animal burials, pyre debris deposits and other features at Maddington Farm, Shrewton (after McKinley and Heaton 1996: Fig. 2, 46)	418
Figure 6.63	Period 4C (fourth century) burials and settlement at Maiden Castle Road, Dorchester (Smith <i>et al.</i> 1997: Fig. 48, 63)	419
Figure 6.64	Roman period enclosure, burials and other features at Fox Covert Farm, Market Deeping (after Trimble unpublished)	420
Figure 6.65	Settlement and burials at Marshfield (from Blockley 1985: Fig. 5, 13)	421
Figure 6.66	Roman burial, Bronze Age ring ditch and backfilled ditch of a Roman period trapezoidal enclosure from Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham (from Gray 1977: Fig. 5, 10)	422
Figure 6.67	Settlement and cemeteries at Odell (from Goodburn 1978: Fig. 11, 443)	423
Figure 6.68	Three Roman barrows on Overton Down (from Smith and Simpson 1964: Fig. 1, 69)	424
Figure 6.69	Composite plan of all excavated features and phase 4 (late Roman) features at Plant's Farm, Maxey (from Gurney <i>et al.</i> 1993: Figs. 58 and 61, 74, 78)	425
Figure 6.70a	Late Iron Age / early Roman burials at Poundbury and associated settlement (from Farwell and Molleson 1993: Fig. 4, 8)	426
Figure 6.70b	Peripheral cemeteries at Poundbury (from Farwell and Molleson 1993: Fig. 10, 17)	427
Figure 6.71	The Roden Downs cemetery and its context (from Hood and Walton 1948: Figs 2 and 3, 57, 59)	428

Figure 6.72	Late Iron Age and Roman period settlement and burials at Rotherley, Wiltshire (from Hawkes and Piggott 1947: Fig. 4, 38)	429
Figure 6.73	Settlement and burials of all periods at Roughground Farm (from Allen <i>et al.</i> 1993: Fig. 69, 98)	430
Figure 6.74	Staniwells Farm, Hibaldstow 1988. Burial and settlement (from Whitwell 1989: 55, Fig. 1)	431
Figure 6.75	Duckend Farm and Duckend Car Park sites, Stansted. The distribution of cremation burials (from Frere 1988: Fig. 23, 304)	432
Figure 6.76	Trackway and cemetery at Stanton Harcourt (from McGavin <i>et al.</i> 1980: 115, Fig. 2)	433
Figure 6.77a	Early Roman settlement and cemetery at Stanton Low (from Woodfield and Johnson 1989: Fig. 4, 140)	434
Figure 6.77b	Late Roman settlement and cemetery at Stanton Low (from Woodfield and Johnson 1989: Fig. 5, 141)	435
Figure 6.78a	Syreford Mill. Plan of excavated features including burials and animal bone deposits (from Darvill in Timby 1998: 306, Fig. 128)	436
Figure 6.78b	Syreford Mill. Settlement and burial from late Iron Age to late Roman period 1A to 3 (from Darvill in Timby 1998: 309, Fig. 130)	437
Figure 6.79	Settlement and cemeteries at Wakerley (after Jackson and Ambrose 1978: Fig 5, 199)	438
Figure 6.80a	Mid-first to mid-second century features from Area B, Wavendon Gate (from Williams <i>et al.</i> 1995: 26, Fig. 16)	439
Figure 6.80b	Late third and fourth century features from Areas A and B, Wavendon Gate (from Williams <i>et al.</i> 1995: 76, Fig. 45)	440
Figure 6.81	Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon burials at Area 2, Westhampnett (from Fitzpatrick 1997a: Fig. 6)	441
Figure 6.82	Composite site plan of Whitton villa with cremations indicated (after Jarrett and Wrathmell 1981: Fig. 2, facing p.5)	442
Figure 6.83	Inhumation burial and other features at Wollaston Bypass (from Chapman and Jackson 1992: Fig. 2, 70)	443
Figure 6.84	The distribution of Late Iron Age and Roman burials at Woodcuts (after Hawkes and Piggott 1947: Fig. 6)	444
 Chapter 7 (pp. 445-474)		
Figure 7.1	Numbers of funerary inscriptions from the towns of Roman Britain	445
Figure 7.2	Types of funerary monument from Romano-British towns from which inscriptions derive	445
Figure 7.3	Area 1, Stane Street and principal excavation within the Roman cemetery, Chichester St Pancras (from Down and Rule 1971: 68, Fig. 5.11)	446
Figure 7.4	The Roman cemeteries of Colchester (from Crummy <i>et al.</i> 1993: Fig. 8.4, 262)	447
Figure 7.5	The Derby Racecourse cemetery (from Wheeler 1985: Fig. 98, 223)	448
Figure 7.6	The Petty Knowes cemetery with location of monuments (from Charlton and Micheson 1984: Fig. 1, 2)	449
Figure 7.7	The Caerleon - Cardiff road and cemetery, Lodge Hill, Caerleon (Evans and Maynard 1997: Fig. 3, 173)	450
Figure 7.8a	Excavations at Avenches - 'En Chaplix' - Funerary enclosures (1 & 2), temple (3) and cemetery (4) (from Castella 1993: Fig. 1, 230)	451
Figure 7.8b	The port cemetery and road at Avenches (from Castella 1987: Fig. 5, 15)	452
Figure 7.9	The eastern cemetery of Fréjus on the via per Alpes Maritimas (Saint-Lambert) (Béraud and Gébara 1987: Fig. 3, 33)	453
Figure 7.10	The northern cemetery of Fréjus (Le Pauvadou) (Béraud and Gébara 1987: Fig. 2, 32)	454
Figure 7.11	The northern cemetery at Kempten (Mackensen 1978a: Beilage 1)	455
Figure 7.12	Cemetery to the south-west of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux (Bel and Tranoy 1993: Fig. 10, 105)	456
Figure 7.13	The eastern cemetery at Seebruck (from Fasold 1993a: Beilage 1)	457

Figure 7.14	Cemeteries and roadside settlement at Sontheim / Brenz (from Nuber and Seitz 1995: 157)	458
Figure 7.15	The south-west cemetery at Tongeren (excavations 1972-81) (Vanvinckenroye 1984)	459
Figure 7.16	The Late Iron Age and Roman cemetery at Wederath (Cordie-Hackenberg and Haffner 1991: Beil. 8)	460
Figure 7.17	The cemetery at Mainz-Weisenau (from Fasold and Witteyer 1995: 20-21)	461
Figure 7.18	The distribution of burials in the East Hampshire Tradition	462
Figure 7.19	Coinage zones from LPRIA Britain (from Millett 1990a: Fig. 3, 14 (after Haselgrove 1987b))	463
Figure 7.20	The distribution of stone and lead coffins and monumental burials in late Roman Hampshire	464
Figure 7.21	Burial assemblages from Hertfordshire with six or more accessory ceramic vessels	465
Figure 7.22	Burial assemblages from Hertfordshire with three or more artefact types as grave furniture	466
Figure 7.23	The distribution of certain types of burial container from Hertfordshire	467
Figure 7.24	The distribution of early Roman burial monuments in Hertfordshire	468
Figure 7.25	The distribution of late Roman burial monuments, stone and lead-lined coffins and tile graves in Hertfordshire	469
Figure 7.26	The possible boundaries of the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni and major settlements within the <i>civitas</i>	470
Figure 7.27	Burial assemblages from the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni and neighbouring areas with six or more accessory ceramic vessels	471
Figure 7.28	Burial assemblages from the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni and neighbouring areas with glass and metal accessory vessels	472
Figure 7.29	Burial assemblages from the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni and neighbouring areas with three or more artefact types as grave furniture	473
Figure 7.30	The distribution of first to third century funerary monuments within the <i>civitas</i> of the Catuvellauni	474

Chapter 8 (pp. 475-477)

Figure 8.1	Section and plan of burial 2, Winchester Grange Road (Biddle 1967: 232, Fig. 5)	475
Figure 8.2	Section and plan of burial, St Albans William Old (from Niblett and Reeves 1990: 445, Fig. 3)	476
Figure 8.3	The burial at Avisford (from Roach Smith 1848: Pl. XLIV)	477

List of Tables

Table 2. 1	Burial populations and 'real' populations	32
Table 3.1	The identification of different cemetery features	47
Table 8.1	Samian 'services' in early Roman burial assemblages from Britain	151

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Preface

In order to avoid repetition sites with burials from late Iron Age and Roman Britain are referenced by name only in the main text of the thesis. Bibliographical references to these sites are given in the Concordance, listed in alphabetical order under the names used in the text. Where burials derive from the cemeteries of a particular town their name is prefixed by the name of that town, for example 'Winchester Hyde Street'. In the Concordance the reader is directed to the relevant appendices if more detailed information from a particular site has been exploited. Cross-referencing between chapters is by the chapter and section number (e.g. 3.6.5), to appendices by prefixing the number with 'appendix' (e.g. Appendix 5.1.1). To avoid confusion reference to the end notes is prefixed with 'note' (e.g. note 3.1). For ease of use the figures referred to in the main text are gathered together in volume 2. The data which supports these figures as well as arguments in the main text are gathered in the appendices.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Aims

The dead were constantly recalled in the everyday lives of provincial Romans, not only through funerals and ceremonies of the dead. Their monuments lined the approaches to towns or appealed to the rural passer-by, while graves were dispersed across the landscape in half-remembered association with hedges, banks and ditches defining settlement enclosures or fields. Yet they have not intruded with equal force into the archaeology of Roman Britain and other provinces, in contrast to the central place of burial in the archaeology of many other periods, including those which frame the Roman era in Britain, the late pre-Roman Iron Age and the early mediaeval period. The aim of this thesis is therefore to suggest routes for their integration into more general debate.

From the different possible meanings of a contextual archaeology (Hodder 1991), for the purposes of this thesis it is taken to mean the archaeology of a social practice, burial, within its particular social context. That death and burial is related to its social context is not specific to a post-processual perspective. It was one of the major achievements of the New Archaeology to demonstrate that variation in burial form was related to variation within the burying society rather than solely to differences in afterlife beliefs or ethnic affiliation (Binford 1972b; Chapman et al. 1981). However the contextual position is this, that different treatment at burial does not directly reflect the position of an individual within the burying society but represents a transformation of it, dependent on contextual attitudes to death and the dead.

This thesis therefore examines burial practice in Roman Britain, from a perspective informed by recent developments in the archaeology of mortuary ritual. In this first chapter the context within the wider study of Roman Britain to which an analysis of burial practice may contribute is identified (1.2). The frameworks for interpreting Roman period burial practice in Britain and other provinces are evaluated in the light of wider developments in the archaeological interpretation of mortuary ritual (1.3). A full history of archaeological approaches to burial practice is not given here, as there are many recent accounts and critiques of the changing theoretical positions on burial practice (Beck 1995; Binford 1972b; Chapman 1987; Chapman et al. 1981; Hodder 1982b; Morris 1987; 1992; Parker Pearson 1993). More general issues in the interpretation of burial data are introduced when relevant to the particular topics addressed. The themes to be pursued through the thesis are then discussed (1.4) and the structure of the thesis summarised (1.5).

1.2 Current debates in Romanization

The last two decades have witnessed the explicit overturning of approaches to the archaeology of Roman Britain centred on political and military history. The principal preoccupation of archaeological study of the Roman period in Britain and also other north-western provinces, especially of the early

Roman period, is now with the nature of the cultural change subsumed under the term 'Romanization' and the contribution of different agents involved in that change. Post-colonial re-examinations of imperial encounters have shown the heavy dependence of imperialism on central systems of cultural values in relation to which other value systems encountered are classified as the inferior 'other' (Said 1978). A central implication of this critique for the study of the Roman provinces is that the use of the term Romanization perpetuates a similar central value system for the evaluation of the archaeological record, implying superiority of Roman over native cultures and a one way transfer of culture (Mattingly 1997; Webster 1996a). The suggested motivation for adoption of a Romanized material culture because of its innate superiority has been discredited as an over-identification between Roman culture and nineteenth and twentieth century British / western imperial values, although the extent of this identification continues to be debated (Freeman 1996; 1997; Hingley 1991; 1997). The propositions of an interventionist imperial policy to promote or enforce Romanization, and the role of the army as the instrument of such a policy have also been discarded. It is instead on the co-opting of local elites that both the structure of the empire and the diffusion of a Romanised lifestyle has been seen to depend (Brandt and Slofstra 1983; Brunt 1976; Macmullen 1990; Millett 1990a; 1990b; Roymans 1996b). According to this argument the adoption of a Romanized material culture offered to provincial elites the reinforcement of their position within local social hierarchies. Variation in the intensity of Romanization has been argued to depend on the structural properties of local societies; for example the 'closed' or 'open' character of local elites may underlie the difference between Britain and other provinces in the adoption of the epigraphic habit and of euergetism expressed in public buildings (Millett 1990a; 1990b).

The strategic use by elites of Roman connections and Romanised material culture has been explored in major studies of the Romanisation of Britain and other provinces (Alcock 1993; Millett 1990a; 1990b; Millett and Blagg 1990; Roymans 1996a; Woolf 1998). In the developing discussion of elite response and motivation it has become increasingly clear that too much emphasis has been placed on the Romanized forms of material culture as expressions of power without sufficient consideration of the ideological context of this adoption, with ideology defined as;

' a system of ideas, values and norms which structure human behaviour and thought. In this sense ideology cannot be isolated from the religious, social, political, or economic aspects of Romanization, for it is central to them all.' (Millett et al. 1995: 2)

This direction is congruent with a more general recent emphasis in archaeology, to seek historical explanations centred around human agency created in particular historical contexts. Against the traditional Marxist characterisation of ideology as false consciousness, it has been defined as a lived perspective on the world that not only suppresses but also creates subjects; giving *power to* as well as *power over* (McGuire and Paynter 1991b: 5-7; Miller and Tilley 1984b: 7-8; Treherne 1995). It is this emphasis that the above definition has appealed to, although as Treherne argues ideology is not simply reducible to a world view. The effect of social practices which are considered a natural component of self-definition can still generate a partisan and unequal perception of the world, disguising uneven power

relations, representing partial interests as universal, or reifying them as natural and immutable (Shanks and Tilley 1982: 131-32), although the extent to which dominant ideologies may be believed beyond dominant groups is questionable (Hodder 1991: 67).

A reconsideration of the ideological domain has stimulated re-evaluation of the *laissez faire* character of the 'Roman' part of this cultural exchange. For example it has proved difficult to account for the contemporaneous spread of a very similar urban form across the western provinces in the late first century BC and first century AD, regardless of the length of time in which different regions had been incorporated within the empire by completely independent acts of emulation (Lomas 1997; Millett 1990b: 40; Woolf 1995: 9-10). Woolf (1995; 1998) has argued for the generation of these similarities in this period by a dissemination of values from the centre of the empire through two processes: the systematisation of the institutions of imperial government, necessitated by the expansion of empire, with their interface at the local elites, and the reformulation of an elite Roman identity in the late Republic through a new ethic of civilised conduct, designated as *humanitas*. The values were internalised through a Roman-style education, through the iconography of monumental public architecture and through other areas of social practice, although these and their material components have yet to be so intensively investigated. Gallic elites therefore had to acquire a form of 'cultural competence' compatible with *humanitas* in order to allow the sort of interaction through which relationships of friendship and patronage could work (Woolf 1998: 63). In the literary sources provincials can be observed developing their relationships with metropolitan elites by imitating them (MacMullen 1990). As Brunt puts it (1976: 169);

'At every stage in Roman history the aristocrats who ruled at Rome found it most natural to support men like themselves elsewhere'.

The response of provincial elites to conquest and incorporation within the empire is also being rewritten with greater emphasis on the interaction between value systems in mind. Woolf (1995) has argued that our task is to define context specific areas of social practice around which cultural identities cohered. These are more easily identifiable in parts of the eastern empire, for example language for Greeks and diet for Jews but the almost total dependence on archaeological evidence makes the identification of such a process more difficult in the western empire and as yet rarely attempted. One exception is Roymans' exploration of a persistent value system based on martiality and pastoralism in the lower Rhine area (Roymans 1993; 1996b). However as Haselgrove (1987a: 116) envisages, through tribute or plunder conquest could remove traditional accoutrements of authority leaving a *tabula rasa* where Roman connections were the symbolic quarry to be exploited by default.

The occurrence of many categories of 'Romanised' material culture has been documented across what must have been wide variations in social status, for example in the distribution of samian in Roman Britain (Booth 1991; Griffiths 1989; Millett 1981; Willis 1997), the increasing number of villas in first to fourth century Britain (Millett 1990a: 94, 117-18), or of tombstones from the first to early third centuries

in Gallia Belgica (Wightman 1985: 163). However the mechanisms behind this diffusion have been much less extensively investigated. The existence of a fault line in the rate of Romanisation between elite and non-elite groups has been hypothesised, suggested to be based on the limited penetration of Roman power of these areas of life (Macmullen 1990; Terrenato 1997). Whittaker (1997: 155) considers that direct Romanisation acts at an elite level whilst that of the poor happens through osmosis. Millett has proposed the dispersal of Romanised material culture as the more active local emulation of elite behaviour:

‘progressive emulation of this symbolism down the social hierarchy was self-generating, encouraging others to aspire to things Roman, thereby spreading the culture.’ (Millett 1990b: 38)

To what degree the patterning satisfies the conditions proposed by Miller (1982), for example of differences in the chronological horizon of different attributes at different levels, or the restriction of the resources used in emulation, has yet to be explored in detail, as Freeman (1993) has pointed out. Emulation of social superiors is only one of the strategies for which innovative material culture is adopted. To interpret it as such is to follow what is often an elite reading of the changing practices of non-elite groups, rather than consider its importance within those groups (Campbell 1993). The epigraphic and sculptural representation of freedmen, especially on funerary monuments, provides a good Roman period example of the selective uptake and redefinition of a form of elite material culture in a Roman context (1.3).

It is in this area that post-colonial theory has perhaps had greatest impact. Attention has been drawn to the existence of alternative and resistant value systems differentiating Roman and non-Roman, elite and non-elite (Hingley 1997; Mattingly 1997; Webster 1996). Resistance has been classified on two levels, active violence and rebellion, and resistance in the sphere of everyday practice, ‘hidden transcripts’ by which subordinate populations acquiesce to elite power in points of contact with them but find greater freedom of expression in alternative arenas. In the context of Roman Britain these have been located in minor centres rather than the *civitas* capitals, the home and the private sphere and in aspects of religious practice (Hingley 1997; Webster 1996; 1997a). As with emulation the dichotomy of dominant and resistant is too simplistic a characterisation of power relations. The bodies of theory from which the arguments on the distribution of social power have been drawn have emphasised that the encounter between dominant elites and insubordinate subordinates is only one of a number of power relationships. Recent analyses have drawn attention to some of the indirect consequences of incorporation within the Roman empire. Alcock (1994) for example has argued for connections between changing tax regimes and patterns of settlement and agricultural exploitation of the landscape of Roman Greece. The impact on the organisation of production, with its consequences for household and gender relations was not explored by Alcock, although the archaeologically detectable impact of changing imperial structures at household level have been explored in non-Roman contexts (e.g. Hasdorf 1991; Tringham 1991). There are therefore different fields of social interaction contact and conflict of which that between elites and non-elites is only one. Indeed Barrett (1997b) has argued that the ‘reading’ of material culture should

begin at this level, the perspective of everyday practice, rather than from the 'top-down' perspective of Romanisation.

In summary therefore the changing value systems or world views of both elite and non-elite groups have been identified as areas which will repay future concern, although it should be noted here that 'elite' and 'non-elite' are used here as shorthand of which some of the problems are discussed below, and is used for the convenience of isolating separate bodies of material for discussion. A by-product of the same debate has been to draw attention to neglected areas of study, especially those which pertain to the realm of ideology in the more traditional sense on the 'ladder of inference' proposed by Hawkes (1954), particularly religion, burial practice, art, language and literacy (Freeman 1993; Millett et al. 1995: 3; Woolf 1992;). In the following section therefore current approaches to burial practice, especially in Roman Britain, are evaluated to identify reasons for this neglect and to develop an appropriate approach to burial data.

1.3 Burial and the dead in Roman Britain and other provinces

A number of important studies of burial practice in the north western provinces (e.g. Fasold et al. 1998; Ferdière 1993a; Galliou 1989; Philpott 1991; Struck 1993a) now complement previous sporadic attention (e.g. van Doorsaeler 1967; Reece 1977a). These have included a number of general surveys of burial practice, of which Philpott's is the only example of the analysis of burial practices of an entire province. The emphasis of many surveys is now more localised (e.g. Ferdière 1993a; Polfer and Thiel 1997; Feugère 1993). However, as Jones (1993a) has pointed out a lack of explicit theoretical consideration of the relationship of burial practice to society persists. Given recent critiques of approaches to burial practice in Britain and other western provinces (Jones 1993a: 1993b) and the relevance of much of Morris's (1987; 1992) criticism of approaches to death and burial in the ancient world to Britain, only a brief critique of previous approaches to the burial practice of Roman Britain is offered here.

In the accounts of Roman Britain based on a military and political narrative, burial has only been exploited with reference to a small number of episodes. Hawkes and Dunning's (1930) linking of burials of the Aylesford tradition to Belgic migration is no longer accepted. The chronological horizon of the burial tradition has been empirically shown not to be contemporary with the ceramic and numismatic elements of the 'Belgic' culture complex (Birchall 1965) and is now discussed within the framework of status legitimation (Fitzpatrick 1997a; Haselgrove 1982; 1984; 1987a). At the other end of the Roman period, although the signifiers of 'Germanic' affiliation identified by Hawkes and Dunning (1961) can no longer be critically accepted as such (Clarke 1979; Baldwin 1985), the question continues to be defined in similar terms. While population movements are much better attested in the literary sources, there has been less consideration of the relationship of burial practice to ethnicity, as Halsall (1992) has also indicated in the case of northern Gaul.

Otherwise discussion of burial practice has been located within the descriptive accounts of provincial life (e.g. Alcock 1996; Liversidge 1968; Salway 1981), although even from some of these it is almost entirely missing (e.g. Frere 1987b; Potter and Johns 1992), and the use of burial evidence is substantially absent from many more recent discussions of the nature of Romanisation (e.g. Hanson 1994; Hingley 1989; Jones 1991a; Millett 1990a, Todd 1989). The low profile of burial evidence must also be a factor of the abundance of the Roman period archaeological record, of which it represents only one relatively unspectacular component, in contrast to the dominance of other periods by mortuary archaeology. The invisibility of burial is also likely to be due to the dominance of the intellectualist mode of interpretation in the study of burial practices in the classical world (Morris 1992: 15-18). Within the context of Roman Britain individual aspects of burial assemblages are interpreted as evidence for native or Roman afterlife beliefs or a fusion of the two, and in the later period as pertaining to the 'mystery' religions (Alcock 1980; Black 1986; Macdonald 1977; Henig 1984: 190-205). This approach not only often offers simplistic interpretation of funerary symbolism but also evaluates burial ritual entirely in terms of religious belief. It is only in the discussion of conversion to Christianity therefore that such an approach has impinged on more general debate. Given the lack of more dependable forms of evidence, certain dimensions of burial practice, have been a central, albeit cautiously employed source for assessing the popular penetration of Christianity in late Roman Britain (Green 1993; Thomas 1981; Watts 1989), although our ignorance of indicators of Christian burial and at what period an explicitly Christian burial form emerged has perhaps been insufficiently taken into account (Bullough 1983; MacMullen 1984a).

While Romanisation of burial practice in Britain has been conceived of primarily in religious terms, in Gaul and the German and Danube provinces the issue of cultural and / or ethnic affiliation in burial practice has been of equal concern. The depositional relationship between pyre debris, cremated bone and grave goods has been argued to be particularly significant for determining the ethnic cultural affiliation of the burial rite and thus of the buried and burying population (van Doorsaeler 1967; Nierhaus 1959; 1969). The hesitancy in producing general assessments since the work of van Doorsaeler and Nierhaus of the chronology and cultural affiliations of grave types is due to both increased awareness of local burial traditions, especially in the early Roman empire, and of the occurrence of burial types previously considered particular to the north-western empire in the Danubian provinces, Italy and Asia Minor (Bridger 1996; van Doorsaeler and Rogge 1985; Fasold et al. 1998; Vermeulen 1992: 233; Struck 1993b). The difficulty of assigning ethnic origin to a particular practice is well illustrated by Struck's (1993b) identification of four possible areas in the empire from which the *bustum* burial type in Britain might have been derived. There is also an increasing realisation of the poverty of archaeological knowledge of 'Roman burials' themselves as a basis for identifying the distribution of a Romanized burial rite in the provinces. The non-epigraphic and non-monumental dimension of burial practice in central Italy of the late Republic and early empire are poorly understood (Fasold 1993b: 386-87; Fasold and Witteyer 1998). In Britain the lack of excavation of military cemeteries also obstructs the identification of intrusive burial traditions (Jones 1984b) (note 1.1).

Jones (1987; 1991b; 1993b) has offered a multi-layered model for the expression of cultural identity in burial practice, arguing that different burial rituals can be associated with cultural rules shared by communities at local, regional and empire-wide levels. However although the characterisation of burial types is becoming more refined, these approaches have still to consider the demonstration that the identities given the dead are not the direct equivalents of those which defined them in everyday life (Hodder 1982a: 142-43). The presentation of identity through mortuary ritual has been shown to be an active construct; the identification of social practices including burial, which develop into explicit ethnic markers, must be argued for and not assumed (Jones 1995).

The most explicit consideration of adoption of Romanised forms of burial practice has been the exploration of provincial elite uptake of certain aspects of Roman funerary culture, especially monument types, probably because the distinctive monumental traditions of many provinces are the best known aspect of the burial record (Toynbee 1971; Hatt 1986; von Hesberg 1992). Different regional and local chronologies of epigraphic monumentalisation have been established (e.g. Hope 1994; 1997) within the general manifestation of the 'epigraphic habit' (MacMullen 1982a; Woolf 1996). A recurring theme is the selective local adoption of certain monumental forms from the range erected at Rome. In the eastern empire new construction techniques, new tomb types and sculptural motifs and the use of new materials joined the existing repertoire of monumental funerary architecture (McCormack 1997; Schmidt-Colinet 1997). In Africa Benabou (1976: 281-84, 494-96) interpreted the third century AD popularity of the cupola as a preference for a form of monument most closely resembling a widespread pre-Roman form. The provincial choices can be reflected in absences as much as presences. While the range of monuments known from the Iberian provinces is wide, one of the preferred monument types at Rome, the altar, is absent (von Hesberg 1993). In south-western France and the Moselle region there is a particular preference for 'piles funéraires' (Hatt 1986; Sillières and Soukassian 1993). On such monuments in the Moselle region the presentation of individuals in local rather than Roman dress and the representation of agricultural and commercial activities (Freigang 1996) depict local magnates in a way that would have been differently read by a Roman audience (e.g. Kampen 1981; Zimmer 1982). The cultural affiliations of tumuli, the most popular monumental form in Britain, Gallia Belgica and Noricum / Pannonia, have long been debated as either a revival of a native form or the imitation of late Republican examples at Rome, specifically the tomb of Augustus (Becker 1993). The emphasis of Wigg (1993a) and Morris (1992: 51), with regard to tumuli in the north-western provinces, that their power related to their resonance both within indigenous and Roman traditions for different audiences, is a perspective more generally preferable to Benabou's concentration on funerary culture as a manifestation of resistance alone.

The artefactual components of provincial burial assemblages have received less attention in such terms but there are exceptions. Haselgrove (1987a) has argued that innovation in burial practice represents one dimension of a re-orientation of the symbolic behaviour of elites in mid first century BC Belgic Gaul after conquest removed traditional symbols of authority (1.1):

‘At burial sites such as Goeblingen-Nospelt the message is re-iterated in everything from large-scale wine consumption to the cremation rite: the power and continued success of the ruling groups was indissolubly linked to the Roman alliance’ (Haselgrove 1987a: 116)

However the large-scale deposition of grave goods, especially ceramics and amphorae burial rite does not resemble contemporary practice in Rome for elite and imperial funerals which are characterised by the deposition of goods on the pyre rather than in the grave (Fasold and Witteyer 1998; Flower 1996; Price 1987). As Struck (1995) has also argued, the presence of Roman artefacts by themselves does not in itself indicate a Romanisation of burial practice.

This consideration of the representation of provincial elites introduces the area of study identified in 1.2, the representation of provincial Roman elites and non-elites in burial practice. While general associations between lavish display in burial and high social rank are not new, more systematic analysis within the Roman provinces is relatively rare. The identification of ranking within provincial Roman society was the concern of Jones (1983) survey of first to third century cemeteries in the western provinces, of which individual elements have been published (1977; 1984a; 1984c), although the latter, a study of the cemeteries of Ampurias, has a statistical flaw (M. Millett pers. comm.). The study is the most extensive application of a processual approach to Roman period burial evidence. Jones’ approach followed Binford’s proposition that

‘we would expect that the facets of the *social persona* symbolically recognised in mortuary ritual would shift with the levels of corporate participation in the ritual and hence vary directly with the relative rank of the social position that the deceased occupied in life.’ (Binford 1972b: 229)

In other words burial provided a more or less direct presentation of the roles of the deceased individual and the analysis of a cemetery or group of cemeteries a measure of social complexity, based on the number of different dimensions of the social persona which could be identified.

Like most processual analyses of burial practice (J. Brown 1981), Jones’ analysis concentrated on the social status dimension of identity, although other variables, for example age, sex and circumstances of death were also considered in Binford’s original formulation. Jones identified burial norms across the western provinces subdivided into local variants. Through multivariate analysis of cemeteries he defined groups of burials which he associated with social rank. The principal conclusion that provincial Roman society was stratified is unsurprising, but even if this particular approach has not been repeated on other samples it has engendered a more rigorous quantitative approach to the analysis of cemeteries (e.g. Bridger 1996; Millett 1993; Struck 1995). An alternative approach is to analyse status from individual attributes. This has most often been impressionistically applied to burial monuments and certain artefact types, usually based on their scarcity, for example metal vessels or precious metal jewelry (e.g. Nuber 1972; Philpott 1991). Van Lith and Randsborg’s (1985) identification of glass as a symbol of

high investment in burial from its recurrent association with larger grave assemblages is a rare example of more systematic analysis.

Criticisms of Jones' approach are possible within a processual framework. It remains to be proven that the burial form within which he analysed variation was that followed by all social groups. Morris (1987) has for example demonstrated that the proportion of the population receiving the 'normal' burial practice in parts of Greece fluctuates markedly between the Geometric and Classical periods, but this approach has been little applied elsewhere. In Britain the same might well be considered; as in most other parts of north-western Europe where the existence of visible pre-Roman burial traditions is patchy and other areas also lack a visible separate burial tradition (Collis 1977c; Ferdière 1993d; Hessing 1993c; Pion and Guichard 1993; Stary 1991: 85; Whimster 1981). Whimster (1981: 195) noted that although the emergence of some regional burial traditions could be identified in the late Iron Age, the burial of much of the population, perhaps even in those areas characterised by a visible tradition remained invisible to the end of the period and that;

'How long this archaeologically invisible rite may have maintained its popularity...is extremely difficult to determine, although it is probable that detailed and much needed analysis of post-conquest native burial traditions will eventually reveal many of the same lacunae that we have had to face in the pre-Roman period.'

The same is suggested by Millett (1995b: 125). Given the pre-Roman lacunae in the archaeological record in Britain it remains to be demonstrated that the visible form of burial to which analysts make recourse represents all social groups. The lack of knowledge of the overall distribution of burial evidence also obstructs assessment of the importance of individual artefact distributions identified by Philpott (1991).

Secondly, Jones analysis was usually based on grave goods alone. Artefactual assemblages are usually the most reliably recorded aspect of burials as long as such grave goods were reasonably well preserved, but it is a commonplace that deposition of grave goods need not represent the part of the ceremony where most effort was expended. It is increasingly appreciated within the study of Roman period burial practices that other parts of the cremation ceremony may have seen an equivalent or greater destruction or deposition of artefacts than the grave. In sites where there is only one or a small number of graves and good preservation these deposit types can be reconstructed into a convincing sequence of ritual from the systematic analysis of cremated bone and collection of fragmentary artefactual material and pyre debris (Blänkle et al. 1995; Kreuz 1995; McKinley 1989a; 1994b; Lepetz 1993; Marinval 1993). The opportunity to pursue this type of analysis is most obvious at sites where a complex of features related to an individual burial has been excavated. A recent spectacular example is the probable cremation and burial sites of the emperor Galerius and his mother (Srejovic and Vasic 1994) but there are also several examples from LPRIA and early Roman north-western Europe where such an approach is permitted, for example at Clemency (Metzler *et al.* 1991) and Folly Lane, and barrow burials in the Trier

area (e.g. Abegg 1989a), Belgium (Roosens and Lux 1973; 1974) and southern Britain, for example at Knob's Crook and Holborough. In larger cemeteries used over a long period of time distinguishing features related to individual ceremonies is not so easy but it is still possible to reconstruct the sequence of ritual in more general terms (e.g. Haffner 1989b; Polfer 1993). Westhampnett and east London represent recent examples of cemeteries from Britain where this approach has been fruitfully applied. The differences in ceramic forms between pyre and graves (Polfer 1996: 109) or the shifting emphasis from grave to *Aschengruben* at Wederath in the second century (Haffner 1989b: 114), illustrate the closer assessment of the importance of burial as a context of deposition that this approach allows. In this respect developments in research into Roman period burial practices mirror those in other periods (McKinley 1997).

Jones' analysis was based on analyses of large and well-recorded but often isolated cemeteries. The opportunity only occasionally existed, for example at Braughing or Ampurias, to compare practice between cemeteries around one site or in one region, although some generalisations were made that are examined below. A single cemetery is unlikely to encapsulate all the variation in the status-determined burial practice of a particular society; a regional approach is therefore necessary even if this compromises data quality (J. Brown 1981; 1995; Goldstein 1995).

The most obvious objection that may be levelled against interpretations of this kind is the assumption that variation in funerary rite is the direct reflection of the status of the deceased. This has been shown in many ethnographic examples not to be the case; the identity attributed in death often does not reflect that given in life (Hodder 1982b; 1982d: 146; Parker Pearson 1982; Ucko 1969). The funerary culture of freedmen, over-represented in the epigraphic record at Rome provides an example of this (Dyson 1992: 151-52). In Roman Britain the inscribed funerary monuments from both the towns of southern Britain and the northern frontier do not generally derive from either high status indigenous groups or from higher ranking soldiers (Biró 1975; Hope 1997). Burial treatment does not therefore directly represent the status of the deceased. This position has been most emphatically set out by analysts drawing on structural Marxism. Death is considered to be an indirect reflection of society because funerary ritual manifests an ideologically conditioned view of the world (1.2) (e.g. Parker Pearson 1982; Shanks and Tilley 1982).

In summary the critique is that insufficient consideration is given to the place of the dead within a particular context. The emphasis of recent work is that to establish context involves comparison across the conventionally separated elements of the archaeological record (Hodder 1984; Morris 1987; 1992). Parker Pearson's (1993) approach for establishing context encompasses some of the earlier discussions in a threefold analysis which comprises the spatial relationship of the dead to settlement areas, the structure of cemetery and settlement by age, sex, status or other variable, and the deposition of artefact types across cemetery, votive and settlement deposits. These relationships must be studied through time, in order to determine for example the relative proximity of settlement and cemetery.

Several of the building blocks of analysis are not easily established in themselves, for example the relationship of age and gender to settlement layout, and many data sets, including that exploited by Parker Pearson, are dominated by cemeteries, settlements or monuments (e.g. Bradley 1984). The emphasis in Parker Pearson's survey of artefact deposition was to identify the context in which items of value were deposited in order to assess burial as a sphere of display in comparison to other possible areas of display, for example votive deposits or public architecture. In this respect both processual analyses and structural Marxist approaches encounter a further objection. Why does the expression either of social status or of a 'dominant ideology' assume a particular artefactual or monumental form (Hodder 1982b; 1984; Treherne 1995: 116-17)?

Developing earlier work on burial symbolism by Pader (1982) in recent study of Beaker burials both Thomas (1991a; 1991b) and Barrett (1990: 186; 1993: 118-19) have stressed how the artefacts placed with the dead are signifiers of which the connotations resonate beyond the sphere of burial and evoke other areas of social practice, and draw their power from these allusions, in this case to feasting and warfare. Thomas has stressed that unlike the burial practices associated with long barrows, where human remains were continuously accessible for re-manipulation, in Beaker burials bodies were visible for a relatively short time and the power of the ceremony derived from the presentation of highly stereotyped images of the dead;

'these beaker funerals were singular events, in which particular identities for the deceased had to be produced and fixed for the deceased in the minds of the onlookers' (Thomas 1991b: 40)

Treherne (1995: 124) has further developed this study of the aesthetics of mortuary ritual. He has extended the 'beautiful death' of Homeric epic (Vernant 1982) to a much wider span of European pre- and protohistory as a response to the 'Angst' of death by the presentation of the male corpse as the epitome of a particular male virtue. The corpse was carefully groomed, and furnished with sets of artefacts related to personal care, shears, razors and toilet sets, and weapons and armour, either as full sets and panoplies or as individual artefacts acting in metonymic relationship to the whole assemblage. The display of the dead does not allow a specific attribution of the status of the deceased but can be exploited as a guide to central areas of social reproduction beyond the mortuary sphere.

This approach does require fuller development. It is not difficult to find ethnographic examples in which during part of the funerary ritual at least the dress of the deceased and the artefacts placed with them evoke the ideal qualities by which members of the living communities are measured. For example weapons, animals and farm produce evoke the achievements as farmers, hunters and warrior of men and baskets, calabashes and soup pots the fertility and household economy of women amongst the LoDagaa in Ghana (Goody 1961: 80-83). The representation of ideal types in Roman funerary art provides a further example (e.g. Zanker 1990). However the approach is yet to be substantiated on the cross-cultural basis on which processual approaches were arguably founded, although the legitimacy of these can be challenged (Hodder 1982b). Other circumstances intervene. For instance Danforth and Tsiaras (1982) show that these

idealised representations depend heavily on the age of the deceased individual while Huntington and Metcalf's (1992) ethnographic studies show the dependence of funerary ceremonial on the 'history' of the burying group, both its ability to fund funerary ceremonial, and the coincidence of the death and / or funeral, irrespective of the status of the deceased, with occasions for display. That the identities presented in death represent contested values, the ideals of part of the population only, must also not be lost sight of in such analyses; interpretation must still therefore take account of critiques of the dominant ideology thesis (1.2). Nevertheless these approaches offer an avenue of interpretation which offer an impetus and framework for examining the artefactual elements of burial assemblages of other periods more closely.

1.4 Two perspectives for research

In 1.1 the need for other research into the archaeology of the values of elites and non-elites in the Roman provinces were identified and in 1.2 critiques of current approaches to burial archaeology in the Roman provinces offered a framework for interrogating the burial data and guidelines for its interpretation. The critique of processual approaches suggested the need for caution in identifying elites and non-elite groups in burial. For the purposes of analysis the thesis separates the treatment of the two into the areas conventionally defined as pertaining to elite and popular burial practice, but the meaning of the distinction will be re-assessed in the course of analysis.

The advantage of the Roman period is that it offers the opportunity to pursue an analysis which can relate burial more directly to both settlement type within a settlement hierarchy and to its physical setting within a settlement landscape. Primarily on the basis of architecture a characterisation of the relationship of elites to the settlement landscape has been offered. Briefly summarised, this model envisages the continued residence on, and use as a 'theatre' of display by, elites of rural settlements rather than central places in both the LPRIA and the Roman period. Classification of later Iron Age oppida as central places (e.g. Cunliffe 1976b) has been contested (Haselgrove 1986; Woolf 1993). In Britain those settlements traditionally described as such appear to comprise dispersed residential elements and sometimes craft or shrine / cemetery areas within large dyke networks (e.g. Bryant and Niblett 1997). The distribution of high status metalwork and imported ceramics supports elite residence in smaller rural settlements (Millett 1990a: 23). In the Romano-British period occasional literary and epigraphic evidence and the existence of standard suites of monuments suggests that the *civitates* of Britain like other provinces had central places which were the seats of local *ordines*, their location largely determined by pre-Roman settlement patterns (Millett 1984). The monumental and epigraphic evidence suggests only a limited adoption of the civic euergetism characteristic of Mediterranean towns (Blagg 1990). The vitality of the late Roman *civitas* capital in Britain has been given two differing assessments, no more than administrative villages for Reece (1980; 1992), although others have offered a more nuanced characterisation. Town walls, the occurrence for the first time of villa type housing and of the clustering of villas around *civitas* capitals suggests a continued administrative and social importance (Esmonde Cleary 1989: 71-81; Millett 1990a: 142). However villa evidence has been interpreted as demonstrating

the continued residence of elites from the early Roman period in the countryside which was the principal location of conspicuous consumption (Millett 1990a: 107).

Burial display has been occasionally appealed to as supporting evidence for this model of muted urbanism. According to current orthodoxy elite burials took place on rural settlements rather than at central foci/oppida in the LPRIA (Millett 1987; 1990a: 23; Collis 1990; Haselgrove 1989: 11) and rural rather than urban contexts in the early Roman period (Esmonde Cleary 1992: 38; Jones 1983: 81; Millett 1987a; Philpott 1991; Rodwell 1978; Struck forthcoming a). Philpott (1991: 218-19) and Struck (forthcoming a) also suggest that minor centre cemeteries, especially their smaller burial plots, are a similar focus. Less attention has been given to the late Roman period from this perspective, although Millett (1990a: 142) and Woodward (in Farwell and Molleson 1993: 239) both propose that large late Roman urban cemeteries are evidence for the continued role of towns as symbolic or social centres and Esmonde-Cleary (1992:38) has tentatively suggested an increasing importance in the late Roman period of towns as 'an acceptable (though not mandatory) place for the making of social statements through burial ritual'.

However for neither period has the relationship of burial display to the settlement landscape been examined in detail. It is therefore examined more systematically here. The analysis of distribution patterns includes two stages. A commonplace of Roman archaeology is that the first impression of a Roman city was of its dead and sometimes those still living who through monuments and inscriptions lining the approach roads appealed to the living to note their achievements:

'Outside each city the traveller saw memorialised a well-ordered society in which the best and brightest were encouraged to advance through ability and hard work, whilst the ruling elite justified its privileged position through service and generosity towards the community.' (Dyson 1992: 153).

Recent work has however shown that the street of tombs (*Gräberstraße*) is not a constant of all cities of the early empire. There are different regional preferences for different monuments and different chronologies of monumentalisation (see above). Within the general relationship to the road frontage subtle but important changes have been elicited within the well preserved cemeteries of Pompeii, Ostia and Rome by von Hesberg and Zanker (1987b). While tombs continue to be associated with the roads approaching towns, a number of changes can be traced from the first century BC to second century AD of which the global effects are a change from the projection of individual status by highly varied and massive monuments to a greater emphasis on the decoration of tomb interiors rather than exteriors and some withdrawal from the street frontage as the primary focus of display.

However as Roth-Congès (1990) notes, it was not established whether this central Italian sequence was valid elsewhere, probably because of the lack of the detailed preservation conditions to permit an equally detailed approach. Leveau (1987b: 287-88) identified alternative forms of organisation in urban cemeteries in north Africa where individual monuments were sited with a view to visibility in

the wider landscape. A coarser perspective is therefore adopted here; to what extent is the road frontage preferred around the towns of Roman Britain for the erection of monuments or deposition of large assemblages. In other words, is the *Gräberstraße* characterisation even valid?

The spatial organisation of cemetery space in Roman Britain has been predominantly exploited as evidence for town planning and population. It has been demonstrated at a small number of sites in detail (Crummy et al. 1993: 263; Hurst 1985: 62-64) and more generally at a larger number (Esmonde Cleary 1987) that early cemeteries tend to be at a greater distance from the Roman towns than later. This has been interpreted as indicating the area initially designated for settlement and late Roman replacement of abandoned occupation by cemeteries. A different approach is offered here based on the relationship of burial to the street frontage. Esmonde Cleary (1987: 168) has drawn attention to the possible preference for certain locations, for example on the major routes from towns, especially to London. It is this aspect that is examined further here, using the limited contextual evidence for burial monuments, and the distribution of the evidence for larger assemblages in excavations where a portion of the road frontage has been excavated in conjunction with the cemetery or where the relationship of road to cemetery can be reliably established.

Von Hesberg and Zanker gave little consideration to the location of monuments beyond the confines of the urban cemetery and the penetration of the countryside by burial display. The next stage of analysis is therefore to consider the relationship of burial display, defined using the criteria discussed above, to the broader settlement landscape. Taking sample regions basic patterns of deposition are established quantitatively using the evidence of large well recorded urban, minor centre (note 1.2) and rural cemeteries. Where available information is exploited from different points of the cremation ceremony, the efficiency of cremation, the deposition of artefacts on the pyre, the collection of cremated bone, and the grave goods. Save in exceptional circumstances (e.g. Audollent 1921; Green et al. 1981; Radolescu et al. 1973) information on the sequence of ritual is less available from inhumation cemeteries and is here restricted to grave preparation, body container, and grave goods. These provide basic parameters against which individual and small groups of burials and less well recorded assemblages can be compared. The comparison of depositional practice at different types of site will allow the definition of regionally valid thresholds of display. The distribution of burials which exceed these thresholds can then be studied. The distribution of attributes traditionally assumed to represent the burial of elites, based on energy investment (Struck forthcoming a), for example burial monuments and stone or lead coffins is also examined.

It was argued above that the process of quantitative comparison distracts attention from the composition of burial assemblages in many burial analyses. The next stage of the analysis is therefore to examine the composition of the assemblages identified which exceed the thresholds of display. The uptake by provincial elites of certain monumental forms and their advertisement of their Romanised lifestyles through burial display has been noted (1.2). That the artefactual assemblages are not only evidence for a Roman connection, but also for a Romanisation of social practices, especially in the sphere

of eating and drinking has been mentioned elsewhere (e.g. Dannell 1979; Trow 1990). Roymans (1993; 1996b) has interpreted the continuing deposition of weapons in burials in the northern part of Gallia Belgica in the first century AD as evidence for a 'cultural focus' on martiality, a feature of indigenous society that was enhanced by heavy Roman recruitment from these areas into the auxilia, although in the north-western provinces as a whole this is an atypical custom. However in general burial data has received little exploitation from this perspective and can support much greater development. Areas of social practice alluded to in the burial assemblages are identified from the recurring presence of certain artefacts. Two forms of contextual evidence are briefly used to assess the significance of the assemblages as evidence for display, depositional practice in other contexts and a brief consideration of the literary evidence for the connotations of different activities identified.

Two aspects of 'popular' burial practice are singled out for further attention here. It has already been noted that the degree to which burial forms considered typical of the Roman period in fact are relevant to all of the population is a problem which has never been suitably addressed and rarely even problematised (see above). The first dimension of popular burial practices to be characterised is therefore the penetration of cremation and inhumation burial across Roman Britain; what is the chronological and regional distribution and relationship to site type of archaeologically visible burial practice?

The second aspect is a re-examination of another area identified as the domain of low-status burial. Large scale excavation of Roman rural sites in Britain often reveals individual or small groups of burials dispersed across settlements. Rural burials in Britain have remained relatively invisible in terms of the proportion of archaeological analysis devoted to them, with occasional exceptions (Collis 1977b; Esmonde-Cleary 1992; forthcoming; Philpott and Reece 1993). In the rejuvenated study of rural Roman settlement space, burial and other depositional practice remain the poor relations of villa art and architecture (Hingley 1989; E. Scott 1990b; S. Scott 1994; 1995; J. T. Smith 1978; 1982; 1997). This is surprising as the hypotheses for the structure of rural society based on settlement evidence, as J. T. Smith (1978; 1982; 1997) and Hingley's (1989) characterisations of multiple occupancy and inequality of elements within extended kin groups should be susceptible to examination through the burial record.

An agenda for bringing burial evidence to bear on the wider study of Roman rural society has been proposed for rural Roman Gaul based on the relationship of burial to the organisation of space and property boundaries, rural demography, status differentiation and the degree to which a distinctly rural 'faciès' of burial practice existed (Ferdrière 1993a). The relationship between rural burial and demography is given some attention, but to criticise rather than exploit it as a demographic source. Both Ferdrière (1993b) and Esmonde-Cleary (1992) argue that in terms of grave goods and burial rituals there is little evidence for a distinctive rural 'faciès' of burial in Gaul and Britain respectively. The principal aim here is to explore the organisation of burial in relation to rural settlement space structure and the spatial expression of status differentiation in burial.

Initial examination of material from Britain suggested that burials did not derive from formal cemeteries, but consisted of individual or scattered groups around settlement sites. Such burials are typically interpreted as those of individuals of low status (Collis 1977b; Jones 1987: 828; Philpott 1991: 232; Philpott and Reece 1993: 422) but have not been studied in detail. Techniques of mortuary analysis which depend on the existence of large sample sizes can only rarely be applied to such data from Britain. Potential analysts are deterred by small sample sizes, and often by the lack of grave good assemblages which lend themselves to analysis of social hierarchies or structures, and thus claim that the sample is inadequate for detailed analysis (Jones 1975).

In the rare cases that it is possible to do so intra-site differentiation is examined to test the status-based hypotheses. The more detailed relationship of monuments and large burial assemblages to their immediate surroundings is briefly examined to compare with that observed in the urban samples. Where such information is lacking the burial treatments and grave furniture of these burials are compared with the averages identified in the larger regional burial samples from both urban and rural contexts. The next stage is to re-examine the relationship between burial and settlement features, not specifically to examine the hypothesis that burial marks land divisions, but rather to further the interpretation of rural settlement space from the perspective of burial, from the premise that settlement space is not only the passive reflection of social relationships, but is also the active medium through which relationships are moulded (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994b). The importance of depositional as well as structural evidence for the organisation of rural space has been recognised (Hingley 1990a; Meadows 1995; Rippengal 1993) but has yet to be approached through burial evidence, with the exception of infant burials (E. Scott 1988; 1991). The disjuncture between the treatment of the dead which the application of 'mortuary theory' with its demand for particular types of analysis based on statistical examination of large burial samples can thus be circumvented by contextual comparison to other types of deposit (Hill 1995). Comparable analysis of depositional practice to Hill's study of Iron Age sites is not pursued here; rather the more general relationships of burial to site layout is the focus of attention.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

To accommodate the areas of interest identified the thesis is organised as follows. The distribution of Roman period burial evidence from England and Wales, by period, settlement type and region is outlined in Chapter 2 in order to assess the penetration of an archaeologically visible burial form. Further analysis of more localised burial distributions is pursued in Chapter 6. The distributions cannot be taken at face value and consideration of the taphonomic factors which have conditioned the available sample is also required.

The examination of burial treatment associated with different settlement types begins in chapter 4. The selection of regions depended on a broad internal homogeneity of burial practice which was assessed using the evidence assembled by Philpott's survey (1991). It was hoped that a small number of sample areas would offer an adequate sample of urban, rural and minor centre burials to satisfy the

requirements of the regional approach outlined above, but this proved not to be the case. The areas with the largest samples of *civitas* capital and minor centre burials either lacked a large sample of rural burial data, or the rural and urban burial data were not contemporaneous. Even where large samples were available from an individual urban settlement there is no instance where they are evenly distributed through time. A compromise was reached using samples from two counties, Hampshire and Hertfordshire, the former providing data from *civitas* capital and rural settlement, the latter *civitas* capital, minor centre and some rural burial evidence, although with differing chronological emphases. Initial results suggested the value of exploring the relationship of burials to *civitas* boundaries. This is explored further (note 1.3). The main emphasis of analysis lies on the early Roman period but the nature of the sample sometimes requires a consideration of the later Roman period, especially with regard to the small groups of rural burials.

Moving on to the analysis of differentiation within the visible burial sample, the importance of understanding pre-burial stages of ceremony is increasingly appreciated not only as a pious aspiration but also in practical archaeological recovery strategies (see 1.4). However the exploitation of such information at the regional level in the same way as that of other burial evidence did not prove possible. It is too rarely available to make such an approach meaningful, although it may prove more profitable in other provinces where there has been greater emphasis on the deposition of pyre debris as an indicator of cultural / ethnic affiliation. The identification of artefacts as pyre rather than grave goods depends on an ability to identify pyre deposits, but there is increasing awareness of the various possible formation processes behind cemetery deposits which makes it difficult to take older identifications of pyre debris at face value. Some attention is therefore paid to the contexts from which pyre material might be derived and the criteria for identifying pyre sites and other deposits of pyre debris are therefore discussed. The interpretation of archaeologically known pyre sites in the north-western provinces also proved to be dependent on assumptions about the organisation of cremation at Rome. These are investigated further using epigraphic and literary evidence. Although local analysis is not currently possible the difference identified by Philpott (1991: 220) between northern and southern Britain in the relative preference for pyre and grave as a focus for artefactual deposition *is examined further. As this material stands outside* the regionally based analysis of the bulk of the thesis the identification and nature of pyre sites and regional patterns in deposition are considered separately in chapter 3.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 the basis is laid for identifying a regional threshold of burial display by analysing patterns of deposition in minor centre, urban and rural cemeteries within the study areas. The relationship of burial display to the landscape of individual settlements is considered in relation to towns in the different sample areas in chapters 4 and 5, and for rural sites in chapter 6.

In chapter 6 the validity of current status characterisations of rural burial and the character of rural settlement space as seen through burial practice are assessed. The establishment of regional levels of burial furnishing in earlier chapters allows an assessment of the effort expended in burial treatment of the individual and small groups of rural burials scattered around settlement sites in comparison to more

general trends, as well as some analysis of internal differentiation within the rural sample. The analysis of the relationship of burial to settlement features in the Hertfordshire and Hampshire samples revealed preferences of which it was difficult to assess the significance given the small sample sizes. The examination of this aspect of burial practice is therefore supplemented by an examination of burial samples excavated within rural settlements from southern Britain as a whole.

In the first part of chapter 7 the relationship of burial to settlement space on the urban sites within the sample area is compared to that from a wider range of urban centres within Britain. In the second part of the chapter, using the thresholds defined in earlier chapters the relationship of burial display to the broader settlement landscape is considered within the sample areas and briefly in other parts of Roman Britain. In chapter 8 the artefactual composition of the assemblages defined on a quantitative basis is exploited for its insights into the self-definition of elites through the social practices represented in burial.

Chapter 2: The distribution of Roman period burial evidence in England and Wales and its implications

2.1 Introduction

Most analyses of burial practice in Roman Britain or its constituent areas have proceeded directly to the investigation of particular aspects of burial practice, of the presence of container or artefact types (1.3). Less attention has so far been paid to the extent to which the distribution of burials with given attributes relates to the overall distribution of known burials, to identify areas where the recovery of burial evidence is a particular priority, and to establish to what extent an archaeologically visible burial tradition develops within Roman Britain. At a regional, county, or individual settlement level this information can be extracted from only a relatively small number of Royal Commission county survey volumes, in the post-war period on Cambridgeshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Northamptonshire, and from a small number of other surveys at a local or regional scale (Faull 1977; Faull and Moorhouse 1981; Hall 1996; Heighway 1980; Hurst 1975; Leech 1980; Taylor 1993). The stereotypes of abundant burial evidence from southern, especially south-eastern Britain, and from urban sites and sparse data from northern, western and rural Roman Britain disguise much local variability (Leech 1993; Millett 1995b: 125; Philpott 1991). A comparison of Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) data provided by Hertfordshire and Hampshire County Councils and published for Cambridgeshire (Taylor 1993) showed a considerable variation in the periods in which cemeteries are best represented and in the proportion of cremation and inhumation cemeteries (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) even within the well represented area of southern / south-eastern England.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to offer a characterisation of the Romano-British burial record according to selected variables, type of burial, date of burial, site association, and region. The collection of the burial sample and the classification procedure are first described. The distribution of burial evidence based on type, date, regional distribution and site association is then established. The influence of post-depositional processes on the distribution patterns are considered and implications for the study of Romano-British society through burial evidence explored.

2.2 Sample compilation and classification

The proposal to establish a database of all Roman burials in Britain has yet to be fulfilled (Chambers 1980). The closest approximation to a distribution map of all Roman period burials and funerary monuments in the National Archaeological Record (NAR) was published by Leech (1993) but acknowledged to be only a preliminary assessment from records collected up to 1991. The full investigation of the burial sample should be based on an updated NAR, but the SMRs on which it is based are not yet compiled to a comparable high standard nor are even the best exhaustive. The effort expended in processing SMR data from a small number of counties also suggests that even an exercise enjoying a fully documented NAR will demand a massive investment of time.

However alternative sources exist for studying the distribution of burial evidence. The text and appendices of Philpott's (1991) survey of aspects of Romano-British burial practice reference nine hundred and twenty three cemetery sites. Philpott made no claim to have produced, and indeed deliberately eschewed a comprehensive listing of all known Romano-British cemeteries (1991: 2). His distribution maps were compiled 'on the basis of a particular trait, which appeared to be reliably, though not necessarily comprehensively documented.' (R. Philpott pers. comm.), and these were only systematically collected from England. Only burials with particular grave good types, burial container or grave construction were used in analysis. Nebulous references to poorly known, unquantified and badly recorded groups of Roman graves were therefore omitted, but other important categories were also not included. Cremation burials only accompanied by ceramics, the most frequently occurring type of burial from early Roman Britain, were not listed or plotted, and reliably documented but unfurnished burials were also not included. Philpott (pers. comm.) acknowledged that the absence of the latter was likely to cause the later Roman period to be under-represented.

An alternative source of these general data is the reference to cemeteries or burials in the annual summaries of excavation in Roman Britain from the *Journal of Roman Studies* (JRS) and *Britannia*. Reference to cemetery or burial excavations has therefore been collected from JRS (Vols. XI to LIX, 1921-1969) and *Britannia* (Vols. I-XXVIII, 1970 to 1997). Two hundred and seventy three and five hundred and thirteen cemeteries were referenced in JRS and *Britannia* from which were recovered approximately three thousand four hundred and six thousand nine hundred individual burials respectively. The completeness of both sources must be questioned. Especially in the earlier decades of the JRS surveys of excavation in Roman Britain the non-existence of systematic archaeological monitoring of development work and of a widespread network of correspondents must mean that many burials went unreported. Notification of burial discovery or inclusion may also have been based upon artefact presence. Comparison with urban and minor centre cemeteries published during the same period suggests that the number of burials is underestimated by approximately 1,000. However in contrast to the Philpott sample the combined JRS / *Britannia* evidence should allow a fairer representation of areas or periods where unfurnished burial was the norm.

Some measure of the degree to which the samples drawn from JRS / *Britannia* and Philpott are representative of the total available sample can be derived from comparison with SMR data (Fig. 2.3). The figures from Devon and Cornwall confirm that the poorest represented counties in the JRS / *Britannia* or Philpott samples have a generally scant burial record in the Roman period. The Cornish figures represent the maximum possible number of Roman cemeteries in the county: in Cornwall and other areas, especially northern England (Faull 1977; Faull and Moorhouse 1982), Wales (H. James 1992) and Scotland (E. Alcock 1992) a combination of long-lasting burial practice and poor dating impedes the attribution of burials to a specific point from later prehistory to the mediaeval period. Comparison within samples of better represented counties, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Hampshire, suggest that the JRS / *Britannia* and Philpott samples represent approximately 15% to 30% of

the total numbers of cemeteries. However as the SMR compilation sometimes subdivides cemeteries represented in the other samples as single sites, this percentage represents a slight underestimate.

Comparison of the proportion of cemeteries of different date shows that undated cemeteries are under-represented in the Philpott and JRS / Britannia sources compared to the SMR data (Fig. 2.4). When dated cemeteries only are compared (Fig. 2.5) there is less divergence between the samples. Little difference is also visible in the type of burials represented in the different samples (Fig. 2.6) (see below for conventions). The principal exception is Hertfordshire, where the divergence between the different sources may be explained by the large number of long used cemeteries in the county classified as intermediate in provisional reports in JRS / Britannia but later more securely dated. The higher proportion of late inhumations in the Philpott sample contradicts the general tendency of late inhumations to be underrepresented by Philpott. This appears to be due to a relatively high frequency of grave goods in the small sample of late Roman inhumation burials from Hertfordshire (6.10). However in general the comparison suggests that the Philpott and JRS / Britannia samples are not unrepresentative of the total available evidence.

The following data for each cemetery was compiled from the Philpott and combined JRS / Britannia sources, site name, date, type and context of the cemetery and the number of burials (Britannia and JRS only). All sites were attributed to the counties in existence between 1974 and 1998. References from JRS and the earliest Britannia volumes were re-attributed where appropriate. To avoid manipulation of a large number of very small samples the different Welsh counties were considered as one unit, although the number of Roman period cemeteries is likely to have been under-estimated because of long-lived burial traditions. Scotland was not examined because similar problems were particularly acute.

Terminology is defined as follows. 'Cemeteries' from the Philpott sample may comprise one or more burials. As Philpott does not record the size of the cemeteries from which burials he discusses were derived, it is impossible to know whether their provenance was an isolated context or larger cemetery. The date and type of a cemetery, whether cremation, inhumation or both, was established from all the references in Philpott's listings to it and where necessary by checking against the published source. Data from JRS and Britannia have been quantified differently. Each reference in JRS / Britannia to the excavation of one or more burials is counted as a separate 'cemetery'. This will produce some over-representation of large urban cemeteries excavated in several seasons, such as Dorchester Poundbury or Winchester Lankhills. Individual or groups of only infant burials have not been included as the reporting of these is extremely inconsistent. In any case the distribution of infant burials over space and time has been studied elsewhere (Struck 1993c). Total numbers of burials from larger cemeteries do include infant burials but these are too small to affect significantly the comparisons made here.

'Early' (E) cemeteries comprise those dated to the first and second centuries AD, though the use of some began in the first century BC and may extend into the third century. 'Intermediate' (Inter.)

cemeteries span the second to third century transition, beginning either in the first or second centuries AD and ending in the mid to later third to early fifth centuries AD. The category includes cemeteries in which burial was sporadic or continuous over these periods. 'Late' (L) cemeteries are those dated between the third and early fifth centuries. The majority of these are dated to the fourth century but this is in part due to problematic third century dating. The late category may accidentally include post-Roman burials, but cemeteries with only post-Roman burials have been omitted (see further 6.15). The final date category is Roman but otherwise unknown (U).

The dates follow those given by Philpott or by JRS / Britannia. The re-dating of older cemetery excavations was not attempted by Philpott. More secure dating of local or regional pottery and the increasing awareness of the possibility that samian, the chief dating criterion for many cemetery assemblages, may be deposited in burial sometimes many decades later than its production (Wallace in prep.; Going in Crummy *et al.* 1993: 49) suggests that the date of burial assemblages may require some re-evaluation. This is certainly possible where the material itself or adequate records still exist (Fabrizi 1984; Lyne 1994; Monaghan 1983) but is outside the scope of this study. Fabrizi's (1984) re-assessment of the date of the pottery from Westell's excavation at Baldock validated the original date range but suggested changes of emphasis within it. Re-examination of date is therefore unlikely to affect seriously the very coarse dating parameters used in this study.

Of greater potential significance is the use of conventional dating for cremation and inhumation burials in Britannia and JRS where no other apparent dating evidence is available or mentioned, especially in early references in JRS. Comparison with later publication of cemeteries does not suggest that this is a significant problem, save for some over-representation of the intermediate period, but the dating of older excavations without full publication is impossible to re-check. It is mostly individual or small groups of inhumations that are affected. The difficulty of dating burials to, let alone within, the Roman period, means that northern and western Britain are likely to be under-represented in the samples.

Use of more refined dating has produced evidence for significant difference within the periods compared here, both in Britain (Struck forthcoming b) and neighbouring provinces (e.g. van Doorsaeler 1967: 29-30; Polfer and Thiel 1997). However these analyses depend on a quality of data only available from a smaller number of cemeteries, and also have to take into account differential visibility of different periods caused by both fluctuations in the general availability of the diagnostic chronological indicators (e.g. Marsh 1981) and by the relationship of ceramic assemblages from burial to those from other sites; Tuffreau-Libre (forthcoming) for example has noted the absence of samian from a number of first century AD northern French cemeteries despite its presence on contemporary local cemeteries. Whilst the coarseness of the data must be appreciated, the method adopted here retains the largest possible sample for the study of change over a longer period.

My dating categorisation introduces some further biases, in particular a possible smoothing of chronological trends by the 'intermediate' classification. This takes no account of different numbers of

burials from different periods or of the continuous / sporadic use of the cemetery, although this is balanced with some discussion below of the relative importance of different phases within the category. The coarse categorisation system may also contribute to the reification of the difference between the early and late Roman periods but in urban cemeteries at least the late second or early third century has been identified as the major period of discontinuity (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 175-76).

Four categories of cemetery type have been used, cremation (C), joint cremation and inhumation (C&I), inhumation (I) and unknown (U). The number of joint cremation and inhumation cemeteries has an artificially high representation, as in many instances one type is predominant throughout the use of the cemetery or in different phases of use. Where necessary the balance of cremation and inhumation cemeteries within this category is scrutinised in further detail.

The number of burials reported in JRS and Britannia has also been recorded; in order not to count the same burials twice either numbers of burials excavated in each year or summary statements on the total number recovered over several seasons have been used. Numbers of burials are not provided consistently and quantification is hampered by vague references to 'several', 'many' or 'hundreds' of burials especially in early JRS volumes, as at Irchester. A much larger proportion of the JRS (28%) than the Britannia sample (16%) lack information on burial numbers. Imprecise estimates are not used in quantification. A comparison of numbers of burials from urban and minor centre cemeteries with over 50 burials in the JRS / Britannia sample with numbers derived from published or archive urban and minor centre cemeteries of the same size excavated in the same period suggests that the total from this site type is under-represented by only c.1000 burials, roughly 15%. The number of burials is also prone to distortion by a small number of extensively excavated sites. This is less problematic for the urban sites of which several large cemeteries have been excavated and for villa and rural sites of which samples of larger than one hundred burials are scarce: Laxton and Wasperton represent rare exceptions. However Ospringe and in particular Baldock provide over half of the minor centre burials and over two thirds of burials from military/*vicus* sites come from Caerleon Lodge Hill, Derby Racecourse, Brougham, Brough and Low Borrowbridge.

In the excavation summaries from Britannia and JRS the context of burial is usually noted and has been classified here according to five site types, urban, minor centre, military/*vicus*, villa and rural. Other categories initially chosen, for example temple or prehistoric site were later discarded as the number of cemeteries was very small and the references were subsumed within the rural or urban categories. The 'urban' sites comprise the public towns, *civitas* capitals and *coloniae*, 'minor centres' the small towns, roadside settlements or local centres listed by Burnham and Wachter (1990), Millett (1990a: 152-3) and R. F. Smith (1987: 126-9). The 'military / *vicus*' category includes military sites and settlements attached to them, both fortresses and forts, the latter those sites listed by Sommer (1984). The category excludes cemeteries possibly associated with early military phases of urban sites and minor centres, as it is very difficult to distinguish military associated burials from others on such sites (Jones 1984b; Struck forthcoming b). These have been classed with the relevant urban or minor centre. It is

also not easy to distinguish urban and rural cemeteries. The attribution in the reports has usually been followed but since urban cemeteries could extend for up to several kilometres outside large towns, isolated or small groups of burials recovered on the fringes of modern successors to Roman towns, here classified as rural may have belonged to urban cemeteries. To separate 'villa' and 'rural' burials begs the thorny question of rural site typologies (Hingley 1989). Burials are attributed here to villas if the JRS / Britannia or subsequent report explicitly relates them to a 'villa' when a building of 'architectural pretension', usually of stone masonry, is implied. The 'rural' category includes villages, individual or small groups of structures, production sites, fields, track and driveways and isolated or small groups of burials with no contextual information. Rural sites may be under-represented as individual or small number of burials recovered in non-cemetery excavations may be less likely to be mentioned than those from larger urban cemeteries.

2.3.1 Trends in the recovery of Roman period burial evidence

Romano-British graves have been 'excavated' from the Roman period onwards but only with the regular publication of excavation summaries in JRS can the number of cemetery or burial excavations be easily quantified. The intensity of investigation of Roman cemeteries (Fig. 2. 7) has followed the same trends as other types of site in the excavation history of the 20th century, diminishing in the war years and rising in the latter third of the century to a level almost three times as great as in earlier decades (cf. Hingley 1989: 5; Wilkes 1989: 247-9). The cemetery sample has yet to reflect the slight decrease in the number of all Roman period excavations in the 1980s (cf. Wilkes 1989: 247-9). The proportion of cemeteries reported of different types has not changed substantially (Fig. 2.8). In the earliest reports cremations and inhumations were recorded in similar proportions, but if the smaller samples from the middle years of the century are disregarded, from the mid-1930s twice as many inhumations as cremation cemeteries have been consistently reported.

2.3.2 The distribution of burial evidence by date and type: the dating of cremation and inhumation

A high proportion of cemeteries is undated in both the JRS, Britannia and Philpott sample (Fig. 2.9). The different sources suggest different biases in the proportions of dated cemeteries. Early Roman cemeteries are better represented in the JRS sample, late Roman slightly predominate in the Philpott sample, while the Britannia sample shows a more pronounced bias to the late Roman period. The proportion of undated burials is much smaller than of undated cemeteries as it is mostly isolated burials or small groups that are undated (Fig. 2.10). The intermediate period accounts for a much higher proportion of dated burials, a product of the small number of long-used large urban and minor centre cemeteries within this group. The difference between the early and later periods becomes more marked in the burial sample, although the balance shifts towards the early period in the JRS and the later period in the Britannia samples. The majority of burials fall within the late category when the two samples are combined. Investigation of the more precise dating of burials in the intermediate category suggests that

they divide approximately evenly between the early and late periods. With this adjustment in total just over 30% of burials date to the early and almost 50% to the late Roman period.

Inhumation cemeteries predominate in all samples (Fig. 2.11). The greater likelihood of cremation cemeteries to have been furnished with grave goods probably explains their slightly higher representation in the Philpott sample. When numbers of burials are counted the proportion of burials in joint cremation and inhumation cemeteries assumes a much greater importance (Fig. 2.12). If cremation and inhumation burials in the joint category are separated inhumation burials account for 62% of the total and cremation burials 32%.

When the number of cemeteries of different type from each period is quantified (Figs. 2.13 and 2.14), the high number of joint cremation and inhumation cemeteries obscures the relative importance of cremation and inhumation in the early and intermediate periods. The cremation and inhumation burials from joint cemeteries were therefore separated (Figs. 2.15 and 2.16). Both numbers of cemeteries and numbers of burials sustain the orthodoxy of the prevalence of cremation in the early Roman period and inhumation in the later. Inhumations do however comprise a more substantial fraction of the early Roman burial record than hitherto appreciated, 23% of cemeteries and c.19% of burials in the Britannia sample. The different results from the JRS and Britannia samples can be explained with reference to the lower general representation of inhumation cemeteries and burials and dated cemeteries and burials in the former (Figs. 2.9 to 2.12). The lower representation of early inhumations in the JRS sample may be due to a more unquestioning dependence earlier this century on inhumation as a criterion of late Roman date.

2.3.3 The distribution of burial evidence according to settlement type

Rural sites are by a narrow margin the best represented of all site types in the cemetery and burial samples, with a shift towards urban sites in the Britannia sample that must reflect the impact of rescue projects (Figs 2.17 and 2.18). In contrast to other aspects of rural settlement archaeology (Hingley 1989: 4-5), villas do not predominate in the cemetery record, although given the diversity of contexts included in the rural sample (2.2) it is unfair to compare rural and villa cemetery samples directly. A bias to urban sites emerges from quantification of numbers of burials (Figs. 2.19 and 2.20) and the share of the rural and villa samples is greatly reduced. The latter are only usually recovered in small numbers in excavation of rural settlement sites (6.16, 6.18) whereas a small number of large scale cemetery excavations have produced the urban sample.

The JRS and Britannia cemetery data associated with different types of settlement are distributed differently according to date, although in both the date of a large proportion is unknown (Figs. 2.22 and 2.23). When combined the sources show a general bias to the late Roman period, with the exception of military / *vicus* and rural sites (Fig. 2.24). The latter contrast with the strongly marked bias to the late period on villa sites. Quantification of numbers of burials from the combined JRS / Britannia sample again illustrates the predominance of the late period in the urban and villa samples (Fig. 2.25). Given the

high proportion of urban burials within the overall sample (Figs. 2.19 and 2.20), the late urban bias is responsible for the bias to the late Roman period in the total JRS / Britannia sample (Figs. 2.9 and 2.10). The proportion of intermediate and late burials rises in the rural sample, but the most striking difference lies in the massive increase in representation of the early period from the military/*vicus* sites and of the intermediate period on military /*vicus* and minor centre sites. The proportion of early and intermediate burials from military/*vicus* sites is heavily affected by large samples from Brougham, Caerleon Lodge Hill and Derby Racecourse, while the minor centre sample is dominated by Baldock and Ospringe (see above). If these cemeteries are not considered the proportion of dated burials from the military/*vicus* sites and minor centres more closely follows the average. The higher proportion of undated burials in the rural and villa sample is produced by the recovery of isolated or small groups of burials without stratigraphic or artefactual evidence to permit more precise dating.

Inhumation cemeteries predominate on rural, villa and urban sites by a ratio of between 2:1 and 4:1 while cremations are better represented at minor centres and especially military/*vicus* sites (Fig. 2.26 and 2.27). The comparison based on numbers of burials (cremation and inhumation burials from joint cemeteries are again separated and re-assigned) shows similar tendencies (Fig. 2.28). The strong deviations from the average are produced by a small number of large cemeteries at military / *vicus* sites and minor centres.

2.3.4. The regional distribution of burial evidence in England and Wales

The total number of cemeteries and the number of cemeteries of different date and type were calculated for each of the English counties and Wales as an index of regional variability. Numbers of burials were not calculated as samples from urban and minor centre sites in a small number of counties, Hertfordshire, Essex, Greater London, Dorset, Hampshire and to a lesser extent Gloucester and Yorkshire, would have dominated the sample. The use of the county as the smallest unit of analysis disguises localised variation (6.2, 6.7). The availability of burial evidence from a narrower period is calculated by *civitas* by Struck (forthcoming b).

The Philpott and JRS / Britannia samples (the JRS and Britannia samples are combined in these analyses) are in general agreement (Figs. 2.29 and 2.30) and confirm the principal assumptions about the differential distribution of Roman period burial evidence in Britain (2.2). Both plots allow three broad zones to be differentiated. The best represented counties are those from south east England, especially Kent, Greater London, Hertfordshire and Essex although parts of the south-east are poorly represented, for example East Sussex and Surrey, and the least those from northern and western England and Wales. Between the two an intermediate zone from Dorset and Hampshire stretches north-east to Lincolnshire. The differences in the relative representation in the different samples of different counties is due to the differing regional patterns in grave furnishing. The high representation of North Yorkshire in the Philpott sample in comparison to neighbouring regions to the north and west is a product of the frequent nineteenth century recording of furnished burials in the cemeteries of York. Dorset's high visibility is

due to the frequent furnishing in the Durotrigian burial tradition which persists into the late first and early second century AD (Whimster 1981: 37). Conversely the lower representation of Humberside, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk in the Philpott sample must be due to a lower than average furnishing of inhumation burials. The different representation of Wiltshire is less easily explained by these criteria. Examination of the sources for the Philpott sample shows it to be heavily dependent on nineteenth century records when reporting must have been biased to furnished burial.

Given the rise in numbers of cemeteries reported in the last 30 years, one would expect samples collected from Britannia from each county to be c.85% larger than those in JRS. However Britannia samples from Kent and Avon were smaller by 13% and 80% respectively than JRS samples and Dorset (20%), Hertfordshire (16%), Cambridgeshire (10%), Somerset (10%) were characterised by significantly smaller increase in sample size than anticipated. In contrast the Britannia samples were much greater than anticipated from Hampshire (145%), Oxfordshire (214%), London (354%), and Gloucestershire (600%). Some of these differences are more readily explicable than others. The increases in the London and Oxfordshire samples must be related to increased archaeological monitoring and greater intensity of development work and gravel extraction. Such factors may not have affected the south-western counties to the same degree, although it is difficult to invoke this as an explanation for the lesser growth from Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Kent. Possibly the existing strength of antiquarian and archaeological investigation in places like Cambridge has influenced this recovery pattern. The differing fortunes of Gloucestershire and Avon appear in part to be a product of the changing balance of investigation between the cemeteries of Gloucester and Bath. *These changing regional histories require future investigation.*

The general distribution maps mask a change in the availability of burial evidence of different types and over time. Comparison of Figs. 2.31 and 2.32 derived from the JRS / Britannia sample shows that while the distribution of cremation cemeteries is heavily biased to the south-east, especially Essex, inhumation cemeteries are more evenly distributed across southern and central England. The concentration of burial evidence in Gloucestershire has been produced by the relatively large-scale examination of cemeteries in both Gloucester and Cirencester. Similar differences between south-eastern and the rest of southern and central England are visible in the distribution of early and late cemeteries (Figs. 2.33 and 2.34), although of a lesser degree because the large number of undated cemeteries are omitted.

The examination of the proportion of cemeteries of different date and type within the same counties in a sample of counties with 10 or more dated or typed cemeteries supplies similar results (Figs. 2.35-2.38). The characterisation of individual counties in each sample is usually similar; differences are very broadly consistent with the slightly greater representation of cremation and early cemeteries in the Philpott sample and intermediate cemeteries in the JRS / Britannia sample (Figs. 2.9 and 2.11). There is a much larger than average proportion of cremation burials in two areas (Figs. 2.35 and 2.36). The first comprises south-eastern counties, West Sussex, Essex, Kent (Philpott sample only), Surrey (Philpott sample only), Suffolk (JRS / Britannia sample only), and Buckinghamshire. Hertfordshire (JRS /

Britannia sample only) is characterised by a very low number of inhumation cemeteries and its joint cemeteries are dominated by cremation burials. The second area with a high representation of cremation is the north-west, Cheshire (Philpott sample only), Derbyshire, Cumbria, Shropshire and Wales. Many of the counties from central southern to north-eastern England are characterised by a higher than average proportion of inhumations, including Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Avon, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

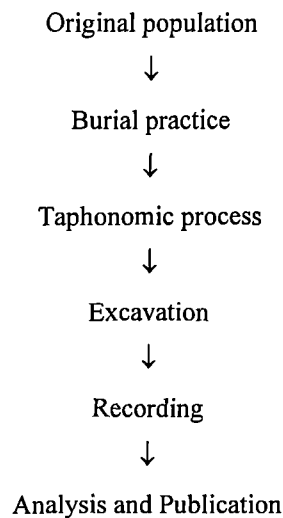
Similar broad distinctions are also reflected in the dated cemeteries (Figs. 2.37 and 2.38). The early and intermediate periods are strongly represented in some south-eastern counties, especially Essex and to a lesser extent West Sussex, Kent, and Buckinghamshire, although with the exception of Cheshire and to a lesser extent Wales this does not apply to the north-west. Late Roman cemeteries predominate to a greater extent than average in some counties from southern and central England, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire, and to a lesser extent Hampshire, Avon, Warwickshire and North Yorkshire. Cambridgeshire, London and Norfolk correspond roughly to the average. In two of the better represented counties, Dorset and Hertfordshire, different sources give different results. The high proportion of late cemeteries from Hertfordshire and early cemeteries from Dorset in the Philpott sample must be a product of frequent grave good deposition.

2.4 Factors influencing the distribution of burial evidence

Two forms of evidence suggest an increased visibility representation of burial in most regions in the later Roman period. The first is that of dated cemeteries and burials. In only the Britannia sample does the number of late Roman cemeteries strongly predominate (Fig. 2.9), but this sample has been argued to be more representative than others. The combined JRS / Britannia sample suggests that over half of all dated burials derive from the later Roman period (Fig. 2.10). Analysis of dated burials and cemeteries showed that the conventional dating of cremation and inhumation cemeteries is broadly correct, although a surprisingly large proportion of inhumation cemeteries and burials dated to the early period (Figs. 2.13-2.16). Inhumation cemeteries and burials are better represented in all samples by a considerably greater margin than late cemeteries and burials (Figs. 2.11 and 2.12). The total number of inhumation burials is twice that of cremations. Inhumation cemeteries and burials are also the best represented at all types of site with the exception of military/*vicus* sites (Figs. 2.17-2.20). The prevalence of inhumation can therefore be used with caution as proxy evidence for the predominance of the later Roman period in the cemetery record from Roman Britain.

However these results cannot be accepted at face value as an undistorted sample of the distribution of archaeologically visible burial practice in Roman Britain. The forces which have influenced this sample can be divided into intrinsic factors, for example age, sex, corpulence, health, and bone type and extrinsic, related to burial practices, cremation and inhumation, grave protection and depth, the post-depositional burial environment, for example pH, drainage, temperature, oxygen availability,

flora and fauna, post-depositional disturbance and erosion, and bias in excavation and reporting (Garland and Janaway 1989; Henderson 1987; Waldron 1987).



The effects of individual processes as well as their cumulative impact is not entirely clear but some propositions may be put forward with differing degrees of security for their impact on the sample considered here.

The relative representation of different periods is heavily dependent on the relative archaeological visibility of cremation and inhumation practices. The relatively constant ratio of cremation and inhumation cemeteries recovered from the middle of this century onwards (Fig. 2.8) suggests that whatever the causes behind the recovery biases, their combined effect continues to operate at a fairly constant rate. A number of factors affect the visibility of different burial types but their effects will not be similar.

Cremation burials are better preserved than inhumations in a wider variety of burial environments (Mays 1998: 209) but are often shallower and especially when un-urned are more vulnerable to post-depositional disturbance (Ferdrière 1993d: 436). Cremation burials, especially when un-urned or without grave goods have also been argued to have been less visible to antiquarian or earlier archaeological investigation than inhumations (Philpott and Reece 1993: 418). More recent careful excavations of some urban (East London), minor centre (Baldock), and rural (Owslebury) cremation cemeteries have suggested the potentially high proportion of this burial form.

The reporting of burials is likely to be affected by the presence of grave goods. Older discoveries of inhumation burials without grave goods or obvious connection to a Roman period site are more likely to have passed unreported. The visibility of burial types is also affected by selection from the existing archaeological literature. The extent of unaccompanied cremation and inhumation and of late Roman burials is systematically underestimated by Philpott's method of data collection. The over-representation of early cremation cemeteries by a concentration on grave goods and certain types of

burial container has been shown by the comparison of the Philpott to the Britannia samples (Figs. 2.9 and 2.11).

The bias in our knowledge towards urban sites has been previously recognised (Esmonde Cleary 1992: 28) but should not be overstated. Comparison suggested that as many cemeteries have been recovered from rural as from urban sites (Figs. 2.17 and 2.18), although only half as many burials have been recovered from the former (Figs. 2.19 and 2.20). Comparison of the Britannia sample (Fig. 2.20) to Evans' (1995) quantification of the percentage of excavations on 3016 different site types recorded in Britannia from 1969 to 1989 (Fig. 2.21) shows that the predominance of urban sites is characteristic of both samples. An increasing bias to cemeteries from urban sites, likely to be due to rescue imperatives, was visible in the comparison of JRS and Britannia data. The minor centre cemeteries are also poorly represented in comparison to the urban sample. Urban centres accounted their cemeteries have received a disproportionately high degree of attention (2.5).

Military sites account for a much higher proportion of total excavation than of the cemetery sample. In the study of the northern military zone the recovery of burial evidence from military/*vicus* sites has been of a low priority. In synthetic works almost no attention is devoted to burial evidence (e.g. Breeze and Dobson 1987; Sommer 1984), even though much of the information on the wall garrison and *vicus* inhabitants comes from a mortuary context (Salway 1965). From many of the Hadrian's Wall sites even the location of cemeteries remains to be identified. The principal evidence for cemeteries associated with military sites is concentrated in a very small number of sites, of which two largest published samples come from sites further south (Caerleon Lodge Hill, Derby Racecourse).

The representation of rural sites is better in the cemetery sample than in the total excavated sample, even if urban areas predominate to a disproportionate degree. This is partly a product of different methods of compilation of data: Evans does not include field systems for example, and his 'other' category includes sites which are placed here in the rural sample. Villas are much better represented in the total sample of excavations than in the cemetery sample. Excavation practice affects the visibility of evidence from both villa and rural sites. Only excavations which examine the locations in which rural burials are located, in particular on settlement boundaries (6.16), are likely to recover burial evidence but the majority of attention continues to be focused on central structural evidence. Large-scale rescue excavation of rural sites obliges emphasis on major features and relationships rather than single or small groups of small features such as those for cremation burials. This practice may explain the small proportion of early cremation burials and the emergence only in the later Roman period of a more obvious burial record in areas like the Thames Valley which are otherwise characterised by reasonable conditions for human bone preservation and have been subject to extensive recent large-scale archaeological work. The lack of burial evidence from villas must be due to the persistent bias towards the excavation of principal buildings (Hingley 1989).

The distribution by county of all excavated Roman sites in England held on the RCHME database, from a total of 10,308 excavations (RCHME 1995) is in broad agreement with the general distribution of Roman period burials (Figs. 2.39 and 2.40). The particular lack of burials from several former metropolitan authorities, for example the West Midlands, South Yorkshire, Merseyside or Greater Manchester is likely to be due to the generally low levels of Roman period excavation. The best represented counties in both samples are also broadly similar.

There are however a number of discrepancies to be accounted for. Other northern counties with a healthier number of excavated sites, for example Cumbria, Northumberland, Derbyshire and Lancashire also lack burial evidence. This can be attributed to the research agendas of military archaeology. The problem of attributing burials to the Roman period within a context of long enduring practices (2.2) also impede the recovery of a burial sample. The over-representation of Hertfordshire in the burial sample appears to be due to a particular antiquarian and archaeological concentration on burial practices within the county.

The cemetery distribution also broadly supports the conventional attribution to poorer preservation of inhumation burials in acidic soils of the relative absence of evidence from northern and western Britain (Philpott 1991: 5; Philpott and Reece 1993: 418). Like all generalisations about the 'Highland' and 'Lowland' zones, this requires qualification. Many areas within southern and eastern England are also characterised by relatively poor soil conditions for bone preservation, including some counties with a substantial burial record, for example Essex or Hertfordshire. This may to some extent explain the relatively low proportion of inhumations from the latter. Systematic analysis of regional bias in human bone preservation has only so far been initiated in a very abbreviated form for certain areas (Mays 1991; 1994a; 1994b). Consideration of the Hertfordshire and Hampshire samples (6.2, 6.7) suggests that differences in preservation conditions can be highly localised.

2.5 The implications of the distribution of burial evidence

This survey has taken a very general view of the complex pattern of distribution of burial evidence and the processes contributing to it, which in several respects remain poorly understood. While this complexity should be appreciated, a number of implications can be derived from the general picture.

Roman period cemeteries have been used for demographic reconstruction (Van Doorsaeler 1967; Wightman 1984) but increasing caution has been exercised both within (e.g. Willems 1984: 83) and beyond the Roman period (Morris 1987; 1992). Is extrapolation from this data to changing population levels justified? The very uneven distribution of available evidence suggests caution. The relationship of the sample to the original burial population from Roman Britain can be estimated (Table 2.1). The exercise uses Millett's (1990a: 185) population estimates for late Roman Britain (rounded to the nearest 50,000) and a death rate of 25/1,000 p.a., an appropriate comparative rate for pre-modern populations (Jones 1977; Morris 1987: 74; Wrigley 1969: 162-3), as a basis for approximate predictions

of the original number of burials. No account is taken here of potentially different mortality rates between urban and rural populations (Molleson 1992). With the exception of the Dorchester comparison the known burial populations are derived from the combined JRS / Britannia sample. Infant (under one year old) burials are substantially under-represented in Romano-British cemeteries, although there is a good deal of variety in their proportion of the cemetery populations (Watts 1989; Pearce forthcoming). They might be expected to account for 25-30% of all burials in a pre-industrial population at the extreme margin of demographic viability (Hopkins 1966). No formal allowance is made for them here but their absence from the sample should be remembered.

Table 2. 1 Burial populations and 'real' populations

1. Total burial population

RB population x expected mortality rate = annual death rate:	$(3,650,000 / 1,000) \times 25 = 91,250$
Annual death rate x length of Roman period = predicted burial population	$91,250 \times 400 = 36,500,000$
Known burial population as proportion of predicted population	$10,300 / 36,500,000 = 0.028\%$

2. Urban burial population ('urban' sites and 'minor centres')

RB urban population x expected mortality rate = annual death rate:	$(240,000 / 1,000) \times 25 = 6,000$
Annual death rate x length of Roman period = predicted urban burial population	$6,000 \times 400 = 2,400,000$
Known urban burial population as proportion of predicted population	$4,594 + 2,141 / 2,400,000 = 0.28\%$
Known late urban burial population as proportion of predicted population	$3577 / 1,200,000 = 0.3\%$

3. Late Roman Dorchester - burial population (sources: Davies *et al* 1985; Davies and Thompson 1987; Farwell and Molleson 1992; Green *et al.* 1981; Startin 1981)

Dorchester population x expected mortality rate = annual death rate:	Minimum $(2,000 / 1,000) \times 25 = 50$ Maximum $(5,000 / 1,000) \times 25 = 125$
Annual death rate x length of late Roman period = predicted Dorchester burial population	Minimum $50 \times 200 = 10,000$ Maximum $125 \times 200 = 25,000$
Known Dorchester burial population as proportion of predicted population	Minimum $1,600 / 10,000 = 16\%$ Maximum $1,600 / 25,000 = 6.4\%$

4. Rural burial population (rural + villa totals)

RB rural population x expected mortality rate = annual death rate:	$(3,300,000 / 1,000) \times 25 = 82,500$
Annual death rate x length of Roman period = predicted burial population	$82,500 \times 400 = 33,000,000$
Known rural burial population as proportion of predicted population	$2,747 / 33,000,000 = 0.008\%$

The biases which lie behind the total proportion of burials from a hypothetical original population may be countered by considering only better represented subdivisions of the sample. However if early and late periods are considered separately the latter will be only be characterised by a slightly higher proportion (c.0.04%). Even the proportion from better represented counties will only rise to 0.05-0.1%. The small size of this sample *per se* need not frustrate extrapolations to a broader body of data but further caveats must be offered. The most striking effect is achieved by considering urban and rural burials separately. Taking into account the 1,000 burials omitted from the JRS / Britannia sample (2.2), later Roman urban cemeteries account for between 0.35 and 0.4% of the predicted original burial number. The study of late Roman Dorchester shows that the proportion is considerably higher at urban sites with extensive cemetery excavation records. Dorchester is not atypical in a much higher representation of late than of early cemeteries (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 175). However a straightforward interpretation of urban population growth is not acceptable, not only because of archaeological biases but also because these urban cemeteries need not have included only urban inhabitants (Millett 1990a: 142). It is not currently possible to distinguish the burials of town and country dwellers. Rural and urban burial rites are similar (Esmonde Cleary 1992) and the bone pathology based methodology offered by Molleson (1992) is unsatisfactory as urban and rural populations are unlikely to have had distinct occupations to the degree to which she suggests. The proportion of known rural burials is approximately forty times lower than the urban proportion. One must look for overall population trends in Roman Britain in rural areas where the vast majority of the population lived but the tiny sample of burial evidence however cannot sustain or reject any hypothesised trends.

A further argument against the use of this material as demographic evidence is the rate of change in the sample. The growth of population between the Iron Age and the Roman period in many areas would be of a degree which would not be supported by any other form of evidence nor by feasible demographic models (cf. Morris 1987). For example the number of late Roman cemeteries declines in Essex and Hertfordshire by c.300% and rises in Somerset by 1400% according to JRS / Britannia data.

The evidence suggests, as Whimster predicted (2.1), that as in the Iron Age many lacunae exist in the burial record of the Roman period. The conquest period is not a significant threshold in archaeological visibility of burial practice, the emergence of which occurs over a longer time span. A number of taphonomic factors affect the visibility of burial, but nevertheless there are areas with good preservation conditions and a relatively high intensity of archaeological activity where the burial record is heavily biased to the late Roman period, in a group of counties from Hampshire, Wiltshire and Somerset

north east to Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire. With occasional exceptions, especially at Gloucester and Cirencester but also at Ashton and Ancaster rural burials predominate in this sample. Other surveys have found that infant burials also become more widely visible on rural settlement sites in the late Roman period in Britain (E. Scott 1990a; Struck 1993c).

The emergence of visible burial appears to be as significant an artefact of the Roman period as fashions of burial rite or grave furnishing and appears to become increasingly visible over a long period from the late Iron Age. The trend in the appearance of a visible burial tradition in a particular region is not always linear. For example East Yorkshire has a well characterised Mid-Late Iron Age and early mediaeval burial tradition (Stead 1991; Whimster 1981; Lucy 1998) but much less is known of Roman period burial, in contrast to the settlement archaeology, of which Roman period evidence is much better known than Iron Age.

The assumption that visible burials represent a sample from the burial practices of the whole population is the basis for the isolation of burial groupings based on numbers or types of grave good and their interpretation in terms of social hierarchies. In this context unaccompanied cremation or inhumation burials have been interpreted as those of the lowest social stratum (e.g. Jones 1983; Philpott 1991). However according to the evidence assembled here archaeologically visible burial is itself not constant. Thus the status characterisation of unaccompanied inhumation and cremation burials deserves re-consideration, especially in areas where they are the only visible burials. Many areas outside the south-east lack evidence of a burial hierarchy expressed through grave furniture. Although on the basis of grave good deposition late Roman burial traditions in Britain can be characterised as impoverished, on the basis of this evidence it is a period during which an archaeologically visible burial is extended to an increased proportion of the population.

The data assembled have however also suggested an important caveat to such a conclusion, based on the chronological relationship between cremation and inhumation. Although the general trend is for inhumation to replace cremation as the dominant burial practice at some point during the third century (Jones 1981), inhumation burials have been shown to account for a significant proportion of early Roman burials. The practice is likely to have a particularly regional dimension. Inhumation has long been recognised as the probable majority burial practice of early Roman Dorset, through the frequent presence of dated grave goods. Other parts of central and southern Britain are characterised by very few cremations and large numbers of undated inhumation burials. From the presence of only two cremation burials in a sample of fifty cemeteries from Somerset and north Dorset, and from the occasional presence of first and second century AD ceramics with otherwise findless inhumation burials, Leech (1980: 341) argued that inhumation was probably always the majority tradition. The same may also prove to be true of other south-western and central English counties with few cremation burials and a high proportion of undated inhumations, for example Gloucester, Avon or Lincolnshire, although it is worth noting that in areas where a more systematic programme of radio carbon dating has been applied, for example in the Thames Valley, cemeteries of unfurnished inhumations have produced late and post-Roman dates (6.16).

In other areas of Britain, for example in northern Britain or in Cornwall the problem of dating unaccompanied inhumation within a much broader span from later prehistory to the mediaeval period has already been established (2.1). In summary the evidence from Britain suggests an increasingly localised relationship between cremation and inhumation but there is an obvious requirement for a more systematic programme for dating unaccompanied inhumations.

2.6 Conclusion

A number of coarse-grained trends have been suggested in the distribution of cemetery evidence by date, type, site association and region. The likely influence on these distributions of taphonomy and archaeological selectivity has been noted, although many dimensions of both remain little studied. Fuller analysis may also be possible when compilation of the NAR is completed. However even after close scrutiny of the existing literature the burial evidence from a number of areas will still be highly inadequate. Inevitably an improved sample will result from gradual accretion of information, but it is also necessary for an explicit desire to recover burial evidence to be incorporated into project design. At the micro-level greater attention could be directed to the parts of rural sites where burial evidence is likely to be recovered (chapter 6) and at the macro-level the *cemeteries connected with military sites*, especially those of the northern frontier, are very much an unknown quantity.

This material is not suited to demographic analysis but has implications for the social interpretation of burial and the construction of burial hierarchies. Social status or projected status is usually read off from the treatment of the body or grave furniture. However if it can be established for example that 'simple' cremation or inhumation burial is the only form of burial evidence available from a particular area, interpretations which categorise these as low-status burials may need to be challenged. This theme is resumed later in the discussion of rural burials (6.13).

Consideration of the Romanisation of burial practice has centred on differentiation within archaeologically visible aspects of burial practice, the relationship of cremation to inhumation, types of furnishing, and funerary monuments (e.g. Struck 1995). The increasingly visible deposition of the dead in graves in separate cemeteries in the later Iron Age has been argued by Hill (1995) to be one of several manifestations of the material culture of the individual. This survey has given an indication of the possible time depth of this process, although the possible corollary of this argument, the continuity of Iron Age practices of the deposition of individual body parts on settlement sites is explored later (6.3-6.4). An artefact of Romanisation may therefore be the appearance of an archaeologically visible burial tradition but the coincidence of the incorporation of north-western Europe within the empire with a more general trend to archaeologically visible burial in the very late first millennium BC and first millennium AD related to longer term processes (Hill 1995: 122-24) may be confused. The same problem characterises burial as other areas of study, i.e. distinguishing the effects of incorporation in the empire from more general patterns of long term change (Reece 1990). Such a process is unlikely to have been specific to Britain. Comparison of patterns from Britain with neighbouring areas of north-west Europe is

rarely possible because of lack of quantified data. In the only other area in the Roman world with which quantifiable comparison is possible, north-east Gaul, the same increase in the late Roman period is not visible; rather a decline in the number of cemeteries is recorded in both van Doorsaeler's older survey (1967: 29-30) and more recent smaller scale work (Hessing 1993b; Willems 1984; Polfer and Thiel 1997). Late Roman burials in the northern part of this area in particular are scarce, probably because of population decline, poor preservation of inhumations and lack of grave goods. More context specific hypotheses for increased manifestation of visible burial in a rural context in late Roman Britain are also considered below (6.20).

Chapter 3 The funeral pyre - criteria for identification, the organisation of cremation and cultural differences in pyre-related ritual in Roman Britain

3.1 Introduction

Although pyre treatment has been identified as an integral aspect of any analysis of early Roman funerary ritual, the poor quality and complexity of the data mean that it is better treated outside the regional approach to burial ritual that structures later chapters (1.5). In Roman cemetery archaeology the pyre site is the poor relation of the grave. Despite frequent archaeological use of the term *ustrinum*, its meaning in a literary or epigraphic context has yet to be analysed in detail and its archaeological correlates remain obscure (Fevrier, in Béraud and Gébara 1987: 29). The poor condition of artefacts from pyre sites in comparison to grave assemblages ensured a lack of interest on the part of earlier generations of antiquaries and archaeologists (Polfer forthcoming) but pyre sites merit only cursory attention in more recent discussions (Mackensen 1978a: 134, n.1; Plesnicar-Gec 1972: 146; Riedel 1980). In this respect the Roman period does not differ from others in which cremation was a majority practice, for example Bronze Age or early mediaeval Europe (A. Harding and S. Lucy pers. comm.) (note 3.1).

The opportunity to exploit information from non-burial as well as burial features is therefore currently limited to a few scattered burials and cemeteries in Britain. Despite the poverty of evidence, Philpott (1991) argued for a major differences in the provision of grave goods of all types in cremation burials between south-east England and Wales and northern England. These were plentiful in south-east England, especially in areas with a pre-Roman tradition of cremation burial, but very infrequent in the latter area. He argued that this scarcity could be accounted for by the observation that;

‘A further tendency observed in the north, at early military sites elsewhere and in the most heavily Romanised urban centres is the destruction of offerings on the pyre rather than placing them intact in the grave’. (Philpott’s (1991: 220)

Philpott contrasts an emphasis on pyre goods in the cremations of intrusive populations with an indigenous emphasis on grave goods. This is a potentially important contribution to the difficult area of the identification of non-indigenous burials and burial practices (1.3). The relative emphasis on pyre and grave from both older and more recent cemetery excavations is therefore more fully assessed here exploiting information from the various contexts identified as sources of pyre residue.

However a necessary pre-requisite to the study of the relationship between pyre and grave is an adequate understanding of the archaeological correlates of the pyre site. My intention in the first part of this chapter is to use the archaeological, literary and epigraphic evidence to describe the range of archaeological features classified as pyre sites and to determine how they are to be distinguished from potentially similar features excavated within cremation cemeteries. Examination of the literature on Roman period pyre sites revealed the existence of further assumptions on the organisation of cremation

which have not yet been supported. The '*ustrinum publicum*' or 'öffentlich Verbrennungsplatz', in other words some sort of permanent municipal cremation facility, has become a commonplace at least of German-speaking cemetery archaeology (Polfer 1996: 20; Ruprechtsberger 1983: 23; Sági 1954: 109; Topál 1981: 76; Zsidi and Furger 1997: 299, 308). The existence of such an installation is examined from the perspective of the archaeological, literary and epigraphic evidence. As direct evidence for the context of cremation is limited, the hypothesis will also be tested against wider evidence for the role of public authorities in burial provision.

3.2 Sources of evidence

The nature of most pyre sites militates against their archaeological visibility. The most common ethnographically attested type of pyre consists of a framework of timbers layered at right angles to one another, braced by upright posts at the corners or sides and stuffed with kindling material, sometimes with a pit or flue for ventilation beneath (McKinley 1994a: 80; Wahl and Wahl 1983) (Fig. 3.1). Only a relatively small residue of ash and charcoal is left (Note 3.2). The effects of heat on the ground surface depend on soil type and usually penetrate to a depth of only a few centimetres (Gaitzch and Werner 1993; McKinley 1997: 134). Pyre features consisting of surface debris and heat modified soils will therefore be highly susceptible to subsequent truncation unless the pyre structure assumes a more permanent form or includes earth cut features, its debris is re-deposited in another context less prone to erosion, or it is protected by other features. Preservation beneath barrows is the likely explanation for the better representation of Bronze Age pyre features than those of other periods in Britain (McKinley 1997: 132).

From ethnographic observation (McKinley 1994a; Wahl and Wahl 1983; 1984), experimental work (Gaitzch and Werner 1993; McKinley 1997) and more refined excavation and analysis (Polfer 1996; forthcoming; Struck 1993c; Witteyer 1993; Vernhet 1987) a more critical perspective has recently questioned the extent to which we understand the formation processes behind archaeologically known pyre sites. It has shown that the variety of cremation - related features has not been sufficiently appreciated in the past, thus casting uncertainty on previous identifications of pyre deposits.

With the exception of imperial pyre sites (Boatwright 1985; Price 1987), there has been little interest since the nineteenth century encyclopaedic treatments (e.g. Blümner 1911; Marquadt 1886; Daremberg and Saglio 1896) in literary and epigraphic evidence for cremation sites. With well known exceptions, most famously Virgil's account of the burial of Misenus (Aeneid VII), information on cremation and the pyre site in the literary sources is scarce, perhaps not only because such things could be taken for granted, but also because literary funeral scenes evoked an atmosphere of romantic or familial piety (Foulon 1987) or political theatre (Arce 1988; Flower 1996; Price 1987) which did not require an attention to the detail of funerary arrangements. The proscriptions around the behaviour of the *libitinarius* (undertaker) may also explain the impropriety of alluding to them in a record of ceremonies of state and of family, unless with the intention of shock (Dumont 1995; Hinard 1995b). The *mancipes* to whom the contracts for municipal undertaking were given are not likely to have advertised themselves as

libitinarii on funerary monuments because of the opprobrium and proscription from public office associated with the profession. The other terms to designate undertakers, especially *praeco* and *dissignator* are not exclusive to funerary orchestration. The slaves or employees of the *libitinarius* are likely to remain invisible because of their low status (Purcell 1987: 39, n.66). One of the principal *raison d'être* of a *collegium*, mutual support for burial expenses, was also not relevant to them. Chronological distance leads some authors to comment in greater detail on funerary rituals no longer practised at the time of writing, as demonstrated by Servius' detailed explanation of cremation related vocabulary in his commentary on the Aeneid (In Verg. Aen. III. 21-23. 6-12; XI. 201.).

The *leges Libitinae* from Puteoli and Cumae (AE 1971: 88, 89), probably of the first half of the first century BC (Bodel 1994: 74-76), and *collegium* regulations (e.g. CIL XIV 4114) are more informative on the contractual relationship between undertaker and client or the financial responsibilities of the *collegium* and its membership than on the regular arrangements of conducting funerals. The inscriptions which make explicit reference to cremation, in particular those mentioning *ustrina*, are few and limited mostly to Rome but have not yet been systematically explored (note 3.3).

In contrast to the art of neighbouring areas in previous centuries (Garland 1985: 21-34; Jannot 1987; Steingräber 1986), artistic representation of funerary ritual is almost absent from the art of central Italy or the western empire throughout the imperial period, with very occasional exceptions (Kleiner 1992: 105, 196-199). The only pictorial evidence depicts the pyres of emperors (von Hesberg 1978; Price 1987).

3.3. The form of the pyre

3.3.1 Archaeological evidence

By its nature the pyre is unlikely to survive as an archaeologically detectable feature. Occasional traces of timbers have survived from the original structure, for example at Tongeren and Westhampnett; *busta* offer the best current examples of preserved elements of pyre structure (3.3.2) (Fig. 3.1). The presence of the carbonised remnant of pyre fuels has been noted from a substantial number of cremation cemeteries in Britain and other provinces, but too rarely analysed. This neglect is reflected in the omission of the pyre and grave as a source for palaeobotanical information by the standard works on archaeobotany (e.g. Dumbleby 1978; Lee Smart and Hoffmann 1988; Pearsall 1989; Renfrew 1973). The small number of existing detailed studies suggest that worthwhile results will be obtained both on burial practice and on the local environment from retrieval and analysis of this material from excavation (e.g. Blänkle *et al.* 1995; Bridger 1996; Gale in Fitzpatrick 1997a: 77-83).

Evidence for the pyre more commonly derives from features ancillary to the cremation process or from the pyre debris. Polfer's (1996: 20) distinction between pyre sites constructed out of permanent materials and earthcut features or surface spreads and dumps of pyre debris is followed here.

Polfer has identified a form of permanent pyre site occurring in several provinces, comprising square, rectangular or occasionally circular small walled enclosures built in stone or brick and tile, and sometimes with multiple walls in concentric form (Fig. 3.2 and 3.3). The degree to which the function of these features is understood should not be exaggerated. Most were poorly preserved and poorly reported, and even where well preserved, only limited observation can be made as to their function. The dry stone construction of some (Wels, Linz, Fréjus St Lambert, Briord) was probably intended to mitigate the effects of heat (Polfer 1996: 20). Some structures appear to have comprised a platform on which cremation took place, for example at Reichenhall or Linz, although it seems more likely that cremation at Linz took place to the side of rather than on top of this platform. The walls may have supported a platform, on which a pyre was constructed, but as the superstructure of these features has not survived this is impossible to state definitively. Perhaps masonry-lined pits, as at Carnuntum and St Paul-Trois-Châteaux enhanced ventilation beneath the pyre in a similar way to the pits of *busta*. The setting up of the pyre within the walls of the larger structures to prevent collapse would certainly have been possible (e.g. Wels, Innsbruck, Salzburg). Layers of pyre debris has been recovered from the interior of most of these features, less frequently deposited in nearby pits and ditches (e.g. Vernes, Gravelotte). Larger such structures, at Cologne or Louroux, are more likely to have separated the pyre area from the rest of the cemetery than to have been part of the pyre structure itself.

The pyre sites from Mackwiller and Beska suggest the combustion of a corpse in kiln-like structures but there is no definite evidence that either feature was actually cremation related. Indeed there is no evidence to suggest that the Mackwiller features are not what they are argued to resemble most closely, tile kilns. These structures in general may have endowed pyre sites with a more monumental form rather than have been related to their function, perhaps to commemorate an act of munificence by a patron (3.4.2). The concentric form is reminiscent of that of the monumentalised imperial pyre sites (Boatwright 1985). The presence of urned cremation burials within these features at Salzburg, Innsbruck and possibly Wels also suggests that some of these features may have combined pyre site and monumental tomb; it is not impossible that some of these features, for example that at Carnuntum, represent *Brandschuttgräber* (3.3.2) within funerary monuments.

A small number of features interpreted as permanent pyre sites have been recovered from Romano-British cemeteries, but rarely sufficiently well preserved or recorded to derive usable information. The identification of 'permanent crematoria' from St Albans St Stephens and Colchester Gurney Benham House (Black 1986: 210) is not based on adequate evidence, although 'burning chamber 3' at the former site may not have been dissimilar to some of those discussed above. Other features identified as 'permanent pyre sites', at Springhead, Corbridge and possibly Densworth are platforms, either of tile or clay and cobble, the size of which would allow for the construction of a pyre above.

Earth-cut features are occasionally interpreted as flues, for example at Westhampnett or Oakley Cottage. Post holes have also sometimes survived in association with possible pyre sites, perhaps from

posts to brace the pyre, but it is often difficult to resolve them into a clear plan (e.g. Septfontaines-Déckt). Other funerary structures not related to the pyre may account for these, for example shelters or platforms for the corpse prior to cremation, as for example at Clemency (Metzler *et al.* 1991: 139).

In most cemeteries the majority of pyre-related features are pits identified as pyre sites from evidence for burning around or within them and from the inclusion of pyre debris and cremated human bone in their fill. These features appear to fall into groups of rectangular or subrectangular pits of two different sizes, those equivalent in size to *busta*, roughly 2m x 1m and larger features from 4-6m x 2-4m. The latter include examples from Sampont, Seebruck, Tongeren and Overpelt. They may be explained as areas repeatedly re-used for cremation, formed by the continued re-excavation of pits beneath pyres but the recording of the features is usually not adequate to assess this suggestion and the lack of examination of cremated human bone from most of these features makes it impossible to suggest the number of individuals cremated. At Seebruck and possibly Kempten pyre debris seems to have been deposited in nearby pits. The distinction between these and dumps of pyre debris is not always obvious, especially when, as at Kempten for example, evidence for their identification is not published. Similar but smaller features, for example at Lellig, Landscheid or Dreiborn probably served for the cremation of the small numbers of burials lying within the same enclosures as the pyre features. The existence of pyre features used only for single cremations was suggested by Nierhaus (1959: 22-8) but criteria for their identification have been set out most comprehensively by Witteyer (1993) on the basis of excavations at Mainz-Weisenau (Fig. 3.4). These features were similar to *busta*, but lacked evidence of grave goods and the amount of cremated bone one would expect from an adult cremation (3.3.2). There was also clear evidence for the sorting of their fill. There was frequent cutting of earlier cremation pits by later, whereas graves rarely disturbed one another. The location of the pits away from the street frontage, in contrast to the majority of monuments adjacent to it, also supported the interpretation that these features were not tombs.

Pyre sites identified by the presence of debris will often be difficult to distinguish from re-deposited pyre debris and *Brandschuttgräber*. The layers of pyre debris, cremated bone and burnt soil at Destelbergen and Velzeke are unusually clear examples of the accumulation produced by several decades of repeated deposition of pyre debris in the ditches. Smaller dumps of pyre debris, for example at Oakley Cottage or East London raise interpretative problems as they are not easily distinguished from *Brandgrubengräber*.

Pyre debris also sometimes survives as surface spreads of burnt soil, charcoal, ash, cremated bone and the remains of pyre goods. Such deposits are particularly susceptible to post-depositional disturbance so it is not surprising that these are represented only by ephemeral traces, for example at Chichester St Pancras, Melandra Castle or Braughing, of which the identification as pyre sites is often uncertain. Better preserved and more substantial examples from Britain include spreads of pyre debris from York Trentholme Drive, Baldock Royston Road and in the east London cemetery. Substantial and

well recorded spreads of debris up to twenty metres across and up to half a metre deep from neighbouring provinces include features from Septfontaines-Dëckt, Vatteville-la-Rue, Lazenay and Wederath.

3.3.2 Graves and other features in the cremation cemetery

The identification of pyre sites is also complicated by the number of features of which the archaeological traces are similar. Particular confusion is caused by the deposition of pyre debris in graves. Studies of Romano-British burial practice have defined cremation burials by the type of container for the cremated bone and/or the associated grave goods (Jones 1983; Philpott 1991). In contrast the typology of cremation burials in neighbouring provinces is based primarily on the relationship between the deposition of cremated bone and of pyre debris (1.3). The many terms in this typology have often however been imprecisely or differently defined by different researchers, as Bridger has exhaustively demonstrated (1996: 220-26). Van Doorsaeler (1967: 89-98) adapted Nierhaus' (1959) classification to produce a scheme which with subsequent modifications has been simplified by Bechert (1980a) into the most widely accepted usage, although some reservations over Bechert's scheme should however be noted (note 3.4). A burial typology must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate local variety whilst also allowing the burial data to be used in synthetic study of the changing representations of different grave forms. This is best achieved by very explicit definition of burial types within the use of these generic labels.

The terms and categories in Bechert's scheme (1980a: 256) are therefore the basis for what follows, although some of the criticisms are taken into account. Bechert distinguished the processes clearly which might produce different types of grave deposit but there has been less study of the archaeological expectations. This brief review will detail the expected characteristics of the different types of cemetery deposit which can be confused with pyre sites and assess the criteria by which different features can be distinguished.

Bustum (Fig. 3.1)

The description of the *bustum* is based on graves from cemeteries most of which are from outside Britain (note 3.5). Of the possible examples from Britain most have been insufficiently documented to be certain of their attribution (Struck 1993b). The *bustum* is defined by in-situ burial on the site of the pyre. Evidence for the pyre structure has occasionally been recorded, for instance post holes on the edges of pits, or remains of the timber structure either within the fill or at its base. The survival from a pyre site or *bustum* at Beckfoot, Cumbria, of an oak bier or bed, as well as a charred feather stuffing, is exceptional.

The pits are usually as large as or larger than those of adult inhumation burials and rectangular or sometimes oval in plan, with near vertical sides and flattish bases. Traces of burning reaching to a depth of several centimetres have often been noted on their edges, sides and less frequently bases. It may

be possible sometimes to distinguish whether the pyre burnt over or within the pit from differential burning to its sides or base. At La Favorite, Lyon, for example Tranoy (1987: 44) distinguishes between two types, one with evidence for burning of the walls all the way down to the base, the other with burnt strips around the edge of the feature. The former may represent the construction of the pyre within the pit, the latter over it. Erection within the pit would have inhibited ventilation, especially as pyre debris accumulated at the base of the pyre, but the structural evidence and distribution of burning suggests both possibilities.

Within the fill experimental pyres have taught us to expect a layered deposition of charcoal and burnt human bone still in approximately correct anatomical position after the collapse of the pyre structure (Gaitzch and Werner 1993; McKinley in Fitzpatrick 1997a: 65). However inadequate recording or publication may obstruct the identification of *bustum* stratigraphy. This layering has only occasionally been recorded at cemeteries considered here, for example in grave 1 at La Calade. The positions of cremated bone and sometimes remnants of dress occasionally suggest that the body still lies as it was on the pyre (Bura 1996; Hatt 1964: 78; Vanvinckenroye 1963: 128-29) but this important criterion for distinguishing *busta* from other features has been all too rarely investigated. McKinley's (1997: 136) recent analysis of Bronze Age pyre sites from Linga Fold suggests that sorting cremated bone from pyre debris may leave the vertical stratigraphy relatively intact but will disturb the interrelationship of anatomical elements in the horizontal plane. Close observation of the stratigraphy has suggested that the cremation residue could be more significantly manipulated before the grave was filled. In *busta* from Neuss and Mainz-Weisenau it was often noted that after cremation the pyre debris was sorted through and the grave goods, selected human bone and fragments of pyre goods placed on the pit base, with pyre debris re-deposited above them.

Within the fill, or distributed between fill and possible container, we might expect the full amount of cremated bone, which for an adult will vary between 1.5 and 3 kilograms (McKinley 1989: 66; Mays 1998: 220). However the expected amount has rarely been recovered in the few *busta* from which the human bone has been analysed and is often lower than in other types of cremation burial, in Britain (Struck 1993b: 82; McKinley 1997), Germany (Erbericher Hof, Okarben, Neuss Münsterplatz, Ergolding) and France (La Favorite, Lyon). The small amounts of cremated bone have led McKinley (forthcoming a) to dispute the interpretation of many such features as *busta*. However the lack of whole-earth sampling may account for the missing cremated bone; hand recovery of cremated bone will miss both the smaller bone fragments and the less well burnt material which is darker in colour than the fully calcined white bone. Preservation conditions may influence recovery, although the preservation of cremated bone is poorly understood (Mays 1998: 209).

The *Flächenbustum* form, in situ-cremation on the surface rather than in or over a pit, is much rarer. The majority have been recorded beneath barrows in the Hunsrück-Eifel area and in Noricum and Pannonia (Struck 1993b: 84). The Flavian period barrow burial at Riseholme is a rare illustration of such

a feature from Britain. If not covered by a barrow such features would be much more susceptible to truncation by disturbance to the upper layers of a site.

The *Ustrinatum* grave

Otherwise the body was cremated on the pyre but buried elsewhere. This type may be subdivided into two forms, burial of the cremated bone only, within a container, usually a ceramic vessel (urned burial) or as a heap which had perhaps originally been in an organic container, or scattered in the grave (unurned burial), and burial with the pyre debris (*Brandschuttgrab*). The latter category is subdivided into the *Brandgrubengrab*, the burial of cremated bone and pyre debris together unsorted, and the *Brandschüttungsgrab*, the burial of the sorted cremated bone with pyre debris (Figs. 3.5 and 3.6).

Jones (1991b: 117) and Bridger (1993b) have both noted the scarcity of *Brandschuttgräber* from Britain, although there are a larger number in some unpublished cremation cemeteries (3.5.1). Bridger attributes the scarcity of *Brandschuttgräber* in Britain to inadequate recording, but this need not be the only reason. Even where a greater sensitivity exists to the significance of the presence of pyre debris it has not been recorded; for example in Switzerland urned burials are the most common type (Berger and Martin-Kilcher 1976: 154). Well recorded examples from Britain are even scarcer. The best published instances of *Brandschüttungsgräber* include examples from York Trentholme Drive and the Mount, Derby Racecourse 1, South Shields and Lankhills 60. Reliable published examples of *Brandgrubengräber* include those from Ben Bridge, Knob's Crook and Holborough. For larger samples reference should be made to cemeteries from other provinces, of which Bridger (1996) has provided a wide-ranging listing of recent examples.

Many aspects of these burials, size, shape, container of cremated bone and grave goods are characterised by a great diversity which relates to local funerary rituals (Bridger 1996). The pyre debris recovered from these graves can only represent a fraction of the amount of debris generated by cremation. This is made clear by the variation in the amount of pyre debris deposited with *Brandschuttgräber* in cemeteries where they are well represented. The pyre debris generally includes fragments of artefacts placed on the pyre, and occasionally more specific residues. For example the 1.5m deep fill of *Brandschüttungsgrab* 1 at Cucuron was composed largely of clean charcoal (Hallier *et al.* 1990: 152). At Hoepertingen a deposit of pyre material in grave I contained a concentration of cremated animal bone (Roosens and Lux 1974: 44).

The weight of cremated human bone from pyre debris is often not recorded separately from that in the urn but at Ergolding these data are available (Struck 1996). In almost half the graves no cremated human bone was recovered from the pyre debris and only very small amounts were recovered from others, although the recovery method is not stated. The pyre debris was not therefore deposited in order to bury cremated human bone which had not been collected for deposition in the urn. The low amount of cremated human bone in *Brandgrubengräber* has been noted even where the graves themselves are very

large, for example less than 40g from many graves at Sint-Denijs-Westrem (Vermeulen 1992: 230) and less than 100g in burials in the valley of the Escaut (van Doorsaeler and Rogge 1985). Comparison with other grave types in the same cemeteries at both Stettfeld (Wahl and Kokabi 1988: 36) and Ergolding (Struck 1996: 29) showed that the average amount of cremated bone in *Brandgrubengräber* was lower, although if truncated lack of burial container may make them more vulnerable to disturbance than other burial forms.

Aschengruben and other features

Other features are also potentially confused with pyre sites and *busta* or *Brandschuttgräber*. Wigg (1993b) (also Abegg 1989b) has defined the category of *Aschengruben*. These consist of features often similar in size to graves, the fill of which with ash, charcoal, burnt ceramics, wood and bone artefacts, coins, molten glass and metal, burnt animal bone, plant and other food remains but no human bone is likely to be related to funerary ceremonies other than the cremation or burial. Occasionally the sides or base may be lightly burnt through the deposition of hot material. This term was originally applied to a type of deposit originally best known from the Treveran area, with well documented examples at Siesbach (Abegg 1989a), Büchel (Eiden 1982) and Wederath (Haffner 1989b: 90), where over five hundred examples have been excavated, but equivalent features have also been recorded beneath barrows in Belgium (Wigg 1993b).

Similar but larger deposits also lacking cremated human bone and probably produced by repeated rituals have also been recorded, for example deposits of burnt and unburnt ceramics, animal bone and other artefacts from a number of cemeteries in central France, including Roanne (Vaginay 1987: 110-11), St Paul-Trois-Châteaux (Olive 1987: 98), St Marcel-sur-Indre (Allain *et al.* 1992: 26-28) and Nuits St Georges (Planson 1982). There are only possible examples from Britain. The lower levels of Feature 38 at Brougham, a large circular pit, were filled with charcoal and burnt ceramics but with no cremated bone, but conditions of excavation and recording may compromise the record from this site. At Caerleon Lodge Hill a large first and second century pottery assemblage associated with a layer of charcoal but only a minute quantity of cremated bone was recovered from section 157 of the west-east ditch. It is not impossible however that it derives from redeposited burials.

Aschengruben are among the more obvious deposits amongst a range of non-burial deposits, sometimes but not always associated with individual graves, comprising isolated ceramics, deposits of coins and animal burials recovered from Britain at Friary Field, East London, Willersey and Winchester Hyde Street and from other provinces (van Doorsaeler 1967: 108-110; Ebel 1989: 90-91; Lepetz 1993: 42; Nierhaus 1969: 253; Nuber and Kokabi 1993). Groups of whole ceramics from many cemeteries which despite good preservation conditions lack cremated bone have been commonly interpreted as cenotaphs (Allain *et al.* 1992: 39; van Doorsaeler 1967: 105-106; Noël 1968: 107; Wahl and Kokabi 1988). While *collegium* regulations prescribe the ceremonies to be conducted when the body was not available for burial (Hopkins 1983: 215; Waltzing 1970: 271), at least some of these 'cenotaphs',

especially when present in such large numbers as at Sampont (Noël 1968), should be considered as products of cult practice rather than burial.

Criteria for distinguishing between features

There are therefore a range of features, both types of cremation grave and non-grave deposits to be expected from a cemetery site. The differentiation and classification of feature types, the analysis of their formation processes and relating them to the sequence of funerary ceremonial may be more challenging than hitherto recognised. Burials without pyre debris are not considered further as their attributes are fairly self-evident, although it is likely that sometimes pyre debris in grave fills has not been recorded. In a well preserved and recorded sample the distinction between the different types of *Brandschuttgräber* should be fairly clear as it depends on one characteristic.

However there are several sources of possible confusion between pyre features, especially of the non-permanent type, and deposits of pyre debris, *busta*, *Brandschuttgräber*, in particular *Brandgrubengräber* and *Aschengruben*, all of which will be characterised by the presence of burnt debris. Analysis of cremated bone and attribution to human or animal provenance is obviously essential to the identification of *Aschengruben*. Distinguishing between the other feature types depends on the feature characteristics, the fill, especially the cremated bone, and less certainly the relationship to other features (Table 3.1).

Evidence of the pyre, whether by the occasional preservation of pyre timbers or in negative form by post holes or discoloration by the effects of heat will permit a distinction between *busta* and pyre features and graves, although the deposition of hot pyre debris in graves may also burn the grave cut, as for example at Knob's Crook.

The presence of container for cremated bone and grave goods serves to distinguish burial from non-burial features. Where lacking the cremated bone is the most important source for classifying cemetery features. The amount of cremated bone has been considered the arbiter for distinguishing the grave from the pyre or debris deposit (McKinley forthcoming a; Witteyer 1993: 74). However as has been argued above the amount of cremated bone from *busta* and *Brandgrubengräber* is very low and cannot be used by itself as a defining characteristic of a burial. The distribution or condition of the cremated bone is likely to be a better guide to feature identification.

Table 3.1 The identification of different cemetery features

Type	Features	Pyre debris	Dimensions	Container	Amount of human bone expected	Grave goods
<i>Bustum</i>	Structural evidence for pyre, heavy burning on sides (and base) of cut	Yes	c. 1 x 0.5m to 3 x 2m. Many at upper end of range.	Yes, or heaped bone	Full, possibly still in anatomical relationships.	Sometimes
Urnengrab	Grave cut only	No	Very varied	Yes, or heaped bone	Full*	Sometimes
<i>Brandgrubengrab</i>	Possible burning of sides/base of cut from deposition of hot material	Yes	From 0.7 x 0.5m to 3 x 1.4m. Many at upper end of range	No	Full*	Sometimes
<i>Brandschüttungsgrab</i>	Possible burning of sides/base of cut from deposition of hot material	Yes, often only small amount	From 0.5m ² to 1.5 x 1.25m. Most at middle of range	Yes, or heaped bone	Full*	Sometimes
'One-off <i>Ustrinum</i>	Structural evidence for pyre, heavy burning on sides (and base) of cut	Yes		No	Little, possibly poorly burnt	No
<i>Aschengrube</i>	Possible burning, usually under barrow	Yes	2m x 1m	No	None: cremated bone should comprise only animal bone	No

*'Full' means an amount equivalent to that found in other types of graves in cemetery / nearby cemetery (Chapter 3.3.2, 4.2.1).

Dimensions of *Brandschüttungsgräber* are based on samples from cemeteries in Germany and Belgium

The relationship of the feature to its immediate environment may also provide further evidence. Analysis of the spatial distribution of pyre sites suggests that they are not respected to the same degree as graves and where the cemetery is organised along a road pyre sites are less likely than graves to be located on the road frontage (2.3).

This can only be a very broad working guide to the identification of features. Given the detailed evidence required, there will be a limit to which evidence from older excavations can be re-analysed. Witteyer (1993: 80) has questioned the identification of *busta* from many previous excavations, although her re-interpretation in many cases as one-off pyre sites lacks the necessary data to assess it. Many of the *busta* cited by Struck (1993b) could be challenged as potential pyre sites.

A group of features from St Albans St Stephens illustrate the problems of interpretation but also the value of detailed recording. Ten rectangular pits were excavated, similar in size to *busta*, all with evidence for in-situ burning, usually on the upper edges. The fill comprised large deposits of charcoal, nails, pot sherds and burnt animal bone and small poorly burnt amounts of cremated bone never from more than one individual. Grave goods were not recovered nor was there evidence of monument or marker. The pits clustered in two groups behind the burials on Watling Street (Fig. 4.40). Several interpretations may be suggested, *busta*, pyre sites, or *Brandgrubengräber*. The signs of in-situ burning need not rule out an interpretation as the latter, as material may have been deposited while still hot, but it is unlikely, especially as the edges rather than the bases of features were scorched. The poorly burnt condition of the cremated bone, difficult to distinguish from the pyre debris, rather than the low amount tells against an interpretation as a *bustum*. The lack of grave goods or marker and location away from the street frontage, while most burials are ranged along it, also suggest that these features are not to be interpreted as graves. McKinley (forthcoming b) interprets these features as ‘one-off’ pyre sites rather than *busta* from the small amount of cremated bone. Other arguments presented here strengthen this conclusion.

3.3.3 Literary and epigraphic evidence for terminology and description of pyre sites

In the earliest legal sources, the ‘Laws of Numa’ and the Twelve Tables, dated to the fifth centuries BC the meaning of *bustum* is ambiguous (note 3.6). The distinction in archaeological terminology between *ustrinum* and *bustum* relies primarily on Festus’ second century AD epitome of the Augustan period etymological work by Verrius Flaccus, but that too can be shown to be ambiguous, as Bridger (1996: 220, Anm. 1142) has noted, as can comments by Servius on interpretation of pyre related vocabulary (note 3.7).

Festus’ distinction seems artificial in comparison to attested literary usage. The pyre is most frequently referred to as *rogus* (e.g. Mart. 8. 75.9-10; Ov. Tr. 3. 13.21; Plin. Nat. 35.49; Tac. Ann. 1.8.5; Suet. Jul. 84.1); *pyra* (Verg. A. 6. 216), *ignis* (Luc. 8. 738) and more rarely *ara* (Ov. Tr. 3.13.20-21) are alternative terms. The description of the pyre sites in the opening part of Book XI of the Aeneid well

illustrates the variety of terminology. *Bustum* can denote the pyre (Verg. A. 11. 201; Luc. 8. 740) but more often the tomb or ensemble of tomb and monument (Verg. A. 12. 863; Mart. 5.37.14; Mart. 12.72.1; Cic. Att. 7.9; Tusc. 5.101). Bridger (1996: *ibid.*) has argued that *bustum* becomes an alternative term for grave above all in late Latin literature but these references clearly indicate that it is used as such much earlier. No reference has been encountered where *bustum* in a literary source actually refers to in-situ cremation and burial, although few ceremonies are described in sufficient detail to assess this properly. Different nuances of meaning could be developed further, but it is sufficient here to indicate the ambiguity of *bustum*. *Ustrinum* is hardly ever used in the literary sources (Boatwright 1985: 493), and where encountered it is used in a figurative rather than literal sense (Apul. Met. 7.19; Sol. 19.13).

In an epigraphic context *ustrinum* is used when the size of the monument, its donation by a patron or its legal protection are recorded. *Bustum*, *rogus* and occasionally *pyra* are more often used within poetic epitaphs. *Bustum* more often refers to the tomb than to the pyre, (e.g. CIL II 4314; VI 16193; VI 27383; XIV 2737). The pyre is recorded as *rogus* many times (e.g. CIL VI 51613; VI 12307; VIII 9392; XII 5275); again *pyra* (e.g. CIL VI 6976) and *ignis* (e.g. CIL VI 35987; VI 27278; XII 4756; AE 1959, 20) are alternative terms. The otherwise unknown term *crematium* (CIL VI 9202) presumably refers to some sort of permanent feature. Some inscriptions explicitly contrast the *rogus* as pyre with the *bustum* as tomb (CIL VI 10097; XIV 2765; CIL VI 22513). An epitaph from Rome (CIL VI 10237) contrasts *ustrina* and *bustum* as pyre and tomb; the features of the *cepotaphion* (funerary garden) including *ustrina* (l.12) together form a memorial lest the tombs, *busta*, be forgotten (l.19). Where epitaphs refer to a monument having been raised on the site of the pyre, the formula *hic crematus/a est* is used rather than *bustum* (e.g. CIL V 6022; VI 21516; VIII 2094).

Literary and epigraphic usage therefore suggests that the distinction made by Festus between *bustum* and *ustrinum* may not have always been recognised by contemporaries. Struck (1993b) has already identified several sources for derivation of the *bustum* from an archaeological perspective. Both literary and archaeological evidence therefore caution against the reification of the *bustum* as a fixed and distinct Roman burial form; when used in an archaeological context the term is best used in its descriptive sense only. *Ustrinum* always designates a pyre site only, and its use is largely confined to an epigraphic context.

As for the appearance of pyre sites most evidence relates to the temporary structure of the pyre. The injunction not to build the pyre with wood shaped by the axe or trowel (note 3.6) is one of the funerary sumptuary laws in the Twelve Tables (Flower 1996: 118-9). Later literary references to the form of the pyre suggest that it sometimes took the form of an altar and was at least part built from cypress and painted logs, and combustion assisted by pitch and papyri (Marquardt 1886: 381, n.6; Daremberg and Saglio 1896: 1395). The comparison by Vitruvius (II.ix.15) between the form of the pyre and that of a siege tower has not been previously noticed (A. Reis pers. comm.).

CIL I² 591 distinguishes between *ustrinae* and *foci ustrinae*, from which Bodel (1994: 48) infers the existence of temporary and permanent pyre sites. Inscriptions against opportunistic use of other monuments as sites for cremation (*huic monumento ustrinum applicari non licet* - 'it is not permitted to attach an *ustrinum* to this monument') suggest that the term by itself could signify both temporary and permanent features. The distinction is also difficult to translate into specific structures. Although occasionally inscriptions recording *ustrina* have been found *in situ* (CIL X 8284), the context has never been well enough recorded to suggest their form. Archaeological evidence for the *ustrinum* in the cemeteries of Rome, Pompeii and Ostia is slight in the extreme. None had been convincingly identified at Pompeii (Kockel 1983: 39-41) until recent excavations outside the Porta Nocera revealed scatters of charcoal and cremated bone within the corners of tomb enclosures C and E to the north of the road (D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1987: 202). At Ostia the only examples are from two *columbaria* of virtually identical plan which incorporate an *ustrinum* within their structure at the rear of the monument (Boschung 1987: 124, Abb. 24).

The most likely interpretation of sites identified as imperial *ustrina* is that they were the monuments raised perhaps on the sites of the pyres and are of little relevance to understanding cremation procedures (Boatwright 1985). Boatwright accepts the *ustrinum* of Augustus as the only authentic imperial *ustrinum*. This 17th century discovery consisted of a travertine paved area with 6 *cippi* found in association, recording the cremation and sometimes the burial of members of the Julio-Claudian family. Like the other imperial *ustrina* this must represent its monumentalised form, perhaps part of the monument described by Strabo (v. 3.8) of a wall of white marble surrounded by a ring of black poplars and an iron fence in the centre of the Campus Martius.

In many inscriptions there is no evidence for the form of the *ustrinum*. The location of the *ustrinum* at a fixed position within a complex of monuments (see below), the explicit statement of dimensions of the *ustrinum* (see below), and the affixing of the inscription to the *ustrinum* itself (CIL VI 4417; VI 29519; VI 34565; XIV 604) suggest that it took a permanent form. The dimensions of many *ustrina* where recorded most frequently correspond to the commonest tomb plot size at Rome, ten or twelve feet square (Purcell 1987: 36-38).

The *ustrinum* is frequently recorded as a single element within a complex of features belonging to a monument (e.g. CIL VI 4415-4417; VI 10243; VI 11576; VI 10346; VI 23808; VI 36632; X 6414; AE 1898, 15); more rarely were they distinct monuments (CIL VI 4417; X 34565; possibly VI 9202, X557). Even these are likely to have been related to a complex close by, an association supported in the case of CIL VI 4417 by nearby inscriptions (CIL VI 4414-4416).

The relationship of *ustrinum* to monument shows some diversity. Occasionally *ustrina* must have lain directly on the street frontage (CIL VI 11706; VI 24374/VI 27145) but this is the exception rather than the rule. Others record or imply that the *ustrinum* lay behind the tomb (CIL V 8308; VI 34476; X 6607; VI 10237 ll. 12-13). Elsewhere a distinct separation was achieved. According to CIL VI

10346 the *ustrinum* lies 'trans via', while the purchase of further land allows the *ustrina* recorded on CIL VI 10237 to be relocated outside the burial enclosure with a path laid to them.

3.3.4 Conclusions

The most frequent form of evidence for the pyre is of often poorly recorded burnt areas and spreads or dumps of burnt debris. Archaeologically there is scope for confusing the identification of pyre sites with other features. Criteria have been offered for making such distinctions, but only limited re-analysis of older features is usually possible.

Only occasionally is there evidence of the form of the pyre, in the form of flues or remnants of the pyre structure. The archaeological evidence and the literary descriptions suggest that the form broadly corresponded to the common ethnographically based reconstruction of the pyre. The archaeological remnant of Roman period pyre sites comprises mostly the pits over which the pyre would have been constructed to provide for ventilation and, if the pyre site was only used once, as a repository for pyre debris. Possible flues were recovered from a very small number of sites. As for the larger pits, it is not clear whether or not pyres were set up within or above them. Perhaps they represent repeated re-use of the same area. The interpretation of the more sophisticated permanent structures has been shown to be problematic. The most likely explanation is that pyres of wood were set up above or within these features. Whilst there are ethnographic examples of 'industrial' cremation installations (Parry 1994; Wahl and Wahl 1983), their existence in the Roman world has yet to be convincingly demonstrated.

Examination of the literary evidence warned us not necessarily to expect a specific *bustum* burial type. Of the epigraphically attested *ustrina* we know little. Their dimensions are likely to relate more to the sizes of plot on which they were established. We remain ignorant of whether they were platforms on which the temporary structure of the pyre was erected, with or without aids to ventilation, and whether the term also applied generally to areas that were given over to the purpose of cremation rather than for the establishment of tombs.

3.4 The organisation of cremation

3.4.1 Archaeological evidence for the organisation of cremation

Polfer (1996: 20) has suggested that the more substantial permanent structures identified above were required for the higher volume of cremation in urban cemeteries, while the ephemeral and *ad hoc* structures served the less intensively used small rural cemeteries. As he admits, this distinction is not always observed empirically. Rural examples of permanent features include Briord, Louroux, Gravelotte and Vernes. In other cases they seem to have been connected to particular graves within a larger cemetery, for example at Springhead and St Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Since the function of these features

continues to be poorly understood their use for frequent cremation should not be insisted on; monumentalisation of the pyre site may have been as significant.

Pyre sites not in permanent materials are also known from the majority of the urban and minor centre sites considered here, most extensively from Wederath. There are several large concentrations of 'Aschenfläche', the probable remains of pyre sites, along routes through the cemetery and at its eastern extremity, but cremation also took place within or next to many individual 'Grabgarten'. The latter site exemplifies the apparent existence in the same cemetery of separate pyre sites or groups of pyre sites in contemporary use interspersed amongst the burials, also recorded elsewhere, for example at Hooper Street site in the east London cemetery, St Albans St Stephens, the south-western cemetery from Tongeren and the northern cemetery at Kempton. Probable pyre sites and graves also mingled at Chichester St Pancras. However on other sites a clearer distinction was maintained between areas dedicated to cremation and to burial. At Mainz-Weisenau the cremation area clustered on the south-west side of the street to the rear of burial enclosures. Cremation burials avoided the partially excavated pyre area at York Trentholme Drive, although later inhumation burials cut through it. The pyre sites and associated pits of debris were in the centre of the cemetery at Seebruck-Bedaum and separate from contemporary if not later cremations (Fig. 7.13). Pyre sites at Salzburg and Reichenhall also lay on the periphery of the burial area. At Baldock-Royston Road the cremation area lay between the burials and the ditch that separated the settlement area from the cemetery. At several large rural cemeteries also cremation and burial areas were separate (Chantambre (*Murail forthcoming*), Schankweiler, Sampont, Septfontaines-Déckt, Vatteville-la-Rue).

In several urban cemeteries the graves and monuments lay on the street frontage and the associated pyre sites to their rear. For example at Mainz-Weisenau the one-off pyre features clustered on the south-western side of the road and behind enclosures XXIX to XXXII (Figs. 3.4 and 7.17). Two of the groups of pyre sites at St Albans St Stephens were situated behind burials on the southern side of Watling street (Fig. 4.40). Pyre sites were situated to the rear of the burials and monuments in the northern cemetery at Kempton (Fig. 7.11). With one exception (C-D/2-3) pyre sites were not close to the road frontage at Tongeren (Fig. 7.15). A line of burials lay between the pyre sites and probable course of the road at Seebruck-Bedaum. The position corresponds to that commonly identified for *ustrina* in the inscriptions.

3.4.2 Literary and epigraphic evidence for the organisation of cremation

The *ustrinum* is usually mentioned on inscriptions attached to the monuments of some form of corporate group, *collegium* or *familia*, often with freedmen and clients. Like tombs or plots of land they could be paid for by patrons (Patterson 1992; Purcell 1987). Heads of the household are explicitly attested as providing an *ustrinum* with the rest of a monument for their families and freedmen (CIL VI 24374; VI 29519; VI 34476). Other sponsors of monuments and *ustrina* include the patrons of *collegia* (CIL VI 10346; 10237). Given the price of land in the suburbs of first and second century Rome (Purcell

1987: 34; Duncan-Jones 1982: 127-31), such permanent cremation places taking up a plot normally occupied by a tomb represented substantial expense.

The evidence for publicly organised or funded cremation is extremely slight. Three inscriptions use the term *communis* in relation to *ustrina*, CIL V 3554, VI 24471 and VI 37597. *Communis* can imply 'public' but the context of VI 24471 suggests that its sense is that of something pertaining to or shared by a group; the other inscriptions are too fragmentary to analyse its context. That *ustrinum* could be used for the occupants of a number of different groups is illustrated by the complex of monuments recorded in CIL VI 4414-4417. The burden of the evidence is that *ustrina* were provided by patrons for *familiae* or *collegia*. The reference by the third century AD writer Porphyry to *ustrinae publicae* of two or three centuries earlier, which he locates next to the *puticuli* on the Esquiline (S. 1.8.11) is the only piece of direct evidence for the provision of cremation facilities for the masses. Bodel (1994: 38, 107, n.153) argues that the small number of other references to these are based on this reference.

Is it likely from indirect evidence that there would be a 'public crematorium'? There are two principal agencies which epigraphic and literary sources reveal as taking care of funerals in general. Epigraphy shows us that the *familia* and *collegium* were most often the providers of tomb space (Patterson 1992; Purcell 1987; Waltzing 1970). Like other acts of munificence 'the tomb was a gift' (Purcell 1987: 39); sponsorship of funerals extended the patron-client relationship to the grave. Emperors and other patrons not only provided for the burial of slaves and freedmen in the family tomb, or sponsored a columbarium or other monument for a *collegium* but also acted on a larger scale. For example Nerva paid a *funeraticum* (i.e. a subsidy for funerary expenses) to the plebs at Rome of 250 sesterces each (Hopkins 1983: 211), the same amount as that spent on members' funerals by the Lanuvium *collegium* of Diana and Antinoos (CIL XIV 2112) (Duncan-Jones 1982: 131). At Sarsina a mid-first century BC inscription (CIL XI 6528) records the donation of land for burial by a certain Horatius Balbus to the poor of the town. However general grants of funerary expenses were very rare, probably, as Veyne (1976: 291-92) suggests, because the audience was much smaller than for other forms of civic euergetism, for example public buildings or banquets. The site of cremation, often not in permanent form, nor usually situated on the street frontage, was perhaps also not considered an appropriate monument on which to record sponsorship.

There is also a body of evidence for the intervention of the public authorities in the disposal of the dead. This can be considered under two main headings. The first of these consists of legal interventions in burial. An outline of the complex interplay over time between private, sacral and public law and the public and pontifical authorities in the field of burial has been provided by Robinson (1975). The concern for a spatial separation of living and dead at Rome is re-iterated from the fifth century BC to the edicts of Julian. Outside Rome municipal foundation charters prescribed a similar distinction. The aediles were made responsible in the *lex Ursonensis* for demolishing any tombs constructed within the pomerium and protecting tombs against vandalism or re-use. The pontiffs were responsible for settling disputes caused by the presence of burials, as *loci religiosi*, on land no longer owned by the relatives of

the deceased (de Visscher 1963). The boundaries set up between living and dead were not only spatial but social. Those involved in the disposal of the dead were barred from public office and their behaviour and that of their employees was highly regulated by the *leges libitinaria* (Dumont 1995; Hinard 1995b).

The best known examples of public intervention in providing for burial are the *puticuli* on the Esquiline, probably the mass inhumation graves of which the excavation was observed by Lanciani in the nineteenth century. By the late Republican period there is firm evidence, especially from periods of epidemic, for the association of the temple with the registration of deaths and the charge of funerals through the *libitinarii* (undertakers) based there (Bodel 1994). Scattered pieces of evidence, for example references to groves or cults of Libitina and the barring from political office of those associated with undertaking, and the possible basis of the Cumae and Puteoli *leges* on arrangements on the Esquiline imply a widespread distribution of *libitinarii* (Bodel 1994). Like other 'public services', the disposal of the dead was contracted out to *libitinarii* (Robinson 1992). The *manceps*, the contractor acting as *libitinarius*, was responsible for the disposal of the dead, both through funerals and clearing corpses from the streets, and for the execution of the condemned and the provision of equipment for private punishment of slaves (Dumont 1995; Freyburger 1995). *Libitinarii* are recorded as participating in funerals of the nobility, to co-ordinate the large numbers of people and provide props (Flower 1996: 116). The contractor also had a monopoly on the provision of private funerals but there is little record of the participation of the *libitinarius* in an actual 'average' funeral, of the slave, freedman, or freed poor.

The interaction of the agencies identified here is therefore extremely difficult to study. Whether *collegium* members themselves carried out burial, whether a *libitinarius* was commissioned to put arrangements into practice, or if private individuals used funds provided by the *collegium* in direct negotiation with a *libitinarius* will remain unknown. Therefore if there was such a thing as a 'common *ustrinum*', it is likely at most to have been an installation run by a *libitinarius*. While the existence of such facilities is not entirely improbable, the burden of the available evidence is that cremation took place in the context of the most commonly documented form of burial provision.

3.4.3 Conclusion

The distribution of cremation sites across urban cemeteries suggests that several pyre areas were in operation at any one time, even in cemeteries where permanent cremation structures appear to exist. Some distance was maintained between pyre sites and burials in their immediate vicinity, but the organisation of whole cemeteries by the separation of cremation and burial areas is uncommon and more frequent in rural than urban cemeteries. The scattered location of pyre sites across cemeteries supports the argument for the organisation of cremation within relatively small groups. This is more obvious on both urban and rural sites when pyre sites are directly related to burial enclosures. In urban contexts a common but by no means universal location for the pyre site was behind the graves on the road frontage.

That *ustrina* should relate to small numbers of burials is consistent with the epigraphic evidence. *Ustrina* were often situated within monumental complexes, comprising *hortus* and tomb, although the *ustrinum* is one of the least mentioned elements epigraphically. The most common location for *ustrina* is also at the rear of burial enclosures behind the grave monuments. This location perhaps explains the scarcity of epigraphic announcement of its presence. Cremation was only a brief moment in the dialogue between living and dead, whereas the tomb was the point of longer-lasting contact. That the heat and flames would also disfigure any structure built for cremation may also have inhibited a record of its provision.

The provision of pyre sites in the monuments for larger groups recorded epigraphically adds a further dimension to our understanding of funerary sponsorship by patrons which has already been detected in other areas of funerary ritual. Their size and frequent association with large *horti* suggest that only wealthier individuals could purchase space to install them, either in association with their own monument or with that of a sponsored group. The provision of pyre sites as a facet of sponsorship may explain the elaborate form taken by some examples in the northern provinces. There is only very limited evidence for mass communal pyres at Rome or elsewhere. Like a place for burial itself, the provision of the place of cremation was a further product of the systems of patronage and sponsorship and affiliation to *collegia*. It is to such groups that the archaeological evidence from the northern province should be envisaged to belong.

3.5 Regional patterns in the destruction of artefacts on the pyre in Roman Britain

3.5.1 The distribution of sources of evidence

The focus of this final part of this chapter returns to Britain to evaluate the regional and site type difference in emphasis on the pyre and grave proposed by Philpott (3.1). The approach adopted here is to use selective examples to show that this characterisation cannot be sustained in its present form. Three principal types of evidence are examined, the destruction of artefacts on the pyre in LPRIA Britain, the relative emphasis on pyre and grave goods between 'northern' and 'southern' cemeteries (crudely defined for this discussion as the area either side of a line from the Wash to the Severn), with some discussion of the site types represented within this area.

The sources for deposition of artefacts on the pyre from the pre-Roman period are confined to a small group of cemeteries from south-eastern Britain within the area of the Aylesford tradition where the cremated bone has been analysed and the pyre sites and debris features from Westhampnett. The sources for pyre ritual from the Roman period are more varied, including pyre sites and pyre related features, debris deposited in *busta* and *Brandschuttgräber* and the animal bone and small fragments of pyre good collected with cremated bone but their distribution is not even. Pyre sites or pyre debris deposits with even partially recorded artefactual assemblages remain rare. The two principal examples from larger cemeteries available for consideration here are from Trentholme Drive and east London. Struck has

established that the distribution of *busta* (1993b) and *Brandschuttgräber* (forthcoming b; pers. comm.) favours the northern part of Britain and the latter to a lesser extent the south-west. There are other large unpublished cemeteries from the north with large samples of *Brandschuttgräber*. At Brougham, Cumbria, the presence of pyre debris in substantial quantities was recorded from at least one third of the two hundred and fifty graves for which reasonable documentation exists. Most cannot be more closely identified but there are definite examples of both *Brandgrubengräber* and *Brandschüttungsgräber* (note 3.8). *Brandschuttgräber*, possibly of third century date have also been excavated at Low Borrowbridge, Cumbria. However *Brandschuttgräber* have also been identified in excavations in south-eastern cemeteries, including Baldock Royston Road, St Albans St Stephens and the east London cemetery where pyre debris was included in c.45%, 50% and 23% of burials respectively (McKinley in Barber *et al.* in prep.). The majority of these are likely to be *Brandschüttungsgräber*, but in all cases definitive identification is awaited. The distribution of examined cremated bone assemblages is however much more southerly and urban in emphasis. The only large available samples north of the Severn-Wash line derive from Derby Racecourse and Caerleon Lodge Hill. Some difference in date in the emphasis of the samples from northern and southern Britain should also be noted. The latter date mostly from the first and second centuries, but cremation at several of the former persisted into the fourth century.

3.5.2 Pyre treatment in the LPRIA

The evidence for pyre goods from pre-Roman or conquest period graves in Britain is limited to a small number of sites. The deposition of pyre debris with burial was uncommon, although the reporting of grave fills is often inadequate (3.3.2). We therefore depend on the pyre goods that were collected with cremated bone and on a small number of pyre debris deposits, although in a number of recent excavations pyre residue has been more extensively excavated.

Fragments collected with the cremated bone were the only source of evidence for pyre goods from King Harry Lane (Millett 1993; Pearce 1994). Animal parts were deposited with between a fifth and a quarter of burials over time. Other pyre goods, mostly represented by fragments of copper alloy and molten glass were scarcer and associated with phase 1 'focal' burials (Niblett forthcoming). The glass vessels and some of the identifiable bone and copper alloy objects, for example the wine strainer and pyxis were not represented among the grave goods. Animal remains were also represented among the grave goods but were lost prior to analysis. While items of personal ornament may have been represented on pyre and in grave, ceramics were exclusively recovered as grave goods, although sherds from the grave fills were not reported (R. Niblett pers. comm.). At Westhampnett pyre goods recovered from pyre debris and graves comprised predominantly dress fittings and animal parts, as well as some ceramics. Ornaments and dress associated items were also deposited in the grave and pots were more frequently recovered as grave than pyre goods.

The wealth of grave goods is the primary characteristic of 'Welwyn' burials (Stead 1967) but recent examples suggest a contrasting emphasis on the incineration of artefacts. Pyre sites and deposits

of debris have been recovered in association with the mid first century BC 'bucket' burial from Baldock California and conquest period burials at St Albans Folly Lane and chambers in Enclosures 3 and 4 at Stanway. Pyre debris at the former included cremated and uncremated bone of horse, cattle, sheep/goat, pig, fowl, amphibian and fish, chain mail, bronze and iron fragments probably from vessel fittings and personal ornaments. The debris from Folly Lane included a similar assemblage and fragments from an ivory-inlaid chair or couch, remains of a cart or chariot, horse gear, molten silver, amphorae and imitation Gallo-Belgic wares. Pyre debris from Stanway comprised predominantly molten copper alloy. Artefacts were broken as well as cremated. At both Folly Lane and Stanway the fills of the destroyed burial chambers included large assemblages of broken ceramics, and many of the objects deposited in the Lexden tumulus were in broken or fragmentary form.

3.5.3 Pyre treatment in 'northern' Romano-British cemeteries

Although the different *busta* and Brandschuttgräber from this region have been examined in differing degrees of detail, a substantial variability can be established in pyre and grave emphasis between individual cemeteries.

Some sites are characterised by the tendency identified by Philpott to destroy artefacts on the pyre rather than bury them in the grave. Of the thirty nine first to mid-fourth century cremation burials at Derby Racecourse which survived damage by later inhumation burials, only 1 contained a large grave good assemblage. Others were rarely if at all accompanied. However grave fills and other charcoal deposits within the walled enclosure revealed an assemblage of burnt and broken ceramics, in which amphorae, flagons and non-local fine wares were represented in much higher proportions than in contemporary local settlements. Burnt glass fragments were also recovered. Cremated animal bone, pig and chicken was recovered with approximately one third of burials. Animal bone is however the only certain pyre good. The ceramics and glass may have derived from the activities of the mourners rather than from objects placed with the dead.

Among the second to third century cremations from York Trentholme Drive were ten certain *Brandschüttungsgräber*, five with pyre goods. The thirty-eight other scattered patches of pyre debris cannot be confidently classified and might derive from several of the feature types identified earlier (Fig. 3.7). Only one grave certainly contained grave goods but the majority of the grave groups were not preserved intact. Pyre goods recovered from the graves included ceramics and glass, animal bone, burnt bone counters, a coin and a large deposit of iron nails. The most substantial assemblage in 32 comprised the burnt remnants of a beaker, flagon, glass vessel, a bone counter, nails and bones from a cremated fowl. Within the large pyre debris deposit the artefact range was similar, consisting of hundreds of nails, ceramics including incense cups, ten glass vessels of which one was identifiable as an unguent bottle, a small number of personal ornaments, four coins, and oyster shells (the cremated bone was not examined). The ceramics were not fully reported, save for the samian vessels and incense cups. It is difficult to quantify but almost half of the samian assemblage derived from decorated vessels.

There is a further example from the Mount cemetery at York where samian from the pyre was recovered from a *Brandschüttungsgrab*. The cremated bone was contained in a grey ware jar and around it lay large fragments of eleven plain samian vessels which, although not remarked on by the authors, forms a set not dissimilar to that from burials elsewhere (8.2). Sherds from the same vessels showed very different degrees of burning, which Dickinson attributed to their shattering and dispersal on the pyre, and Wenham to deliberate breakage prior to burning. The former seems more likely to explain this fragmentation (cf. Polfer 1996: 118-20).

Other examples with apparent emphasis on the pyre include the large assemblages of burnt ceramics from Herd Hill, Cumbria, recorded in insufficient detail to assess properly. A fragmentary finger ring, glass (fused lumps including an unguent bottle), and pottery (lamp and beaker) derived from the late first century *bustum* at Riseholme outside Lincoln, but no grave goods.

The second to fourth century cemetery at Brougham, Cumbria, revealed a different *emphasis*. Pyre goods were recovered from at least one hundred and five burials, over 40% of all burials, despite in many cases only token excavation of pyre debris. Joining pieces of bone inlay recovered from separate graves suggest that this proportion may be exaggerated by contamination of assemblages by collection of cremated remains from a common pyre. The pyre goods comprised ceramics, glass (from beads and vessels) and bronze fragments from vessels and from personal ornaments including pendants, brooches, ear-rings, a chain, a ring with intaglio and more frequently beads. Nails and hobnails were also recovered. The most frequent pyre good was bone inlay (from seventy two burials) which have been argued to derive from bone-inlaid caskets. However although evidence for such inlay has been occasionally recovered from graves in other provinces (Struck 1996: 85), metal fittings are more frequent (Martin-Kilcher 1976: 60-61; Manuela Struck pers. comm.). Bone inlay or veneer has been much more frequently recovered from the couch or bier on which the deceased was cremated on the pyre. Only one example of a bone inlaid couch is known from Roman Britain, from Folly Lane); a larger sample is known from Gaul and Germany and Italy, especially around Rome and Ostia, and predominantly of first century AD date, earlier than the Brougham cemetery (Béal 1991; Heinzlmann 1998; Letta 1984; Obmann 1998). At present the derivation of this material from Brougham must remain open, especially as a further sample of material is likely to be derived from future examination of the cremated bone. The additional pyre goods recovered in the small number of cremated bone assemblages analysed (five of eight) suggests that this proportion will increase when analysis is completed. These included worked bone from three assemblages and cremated animal bone from two.

There is no obvious difference at Brougham between the artefacts placed on the pyre and in the grave. The most frequent of the latter are ceramics, from a high proportion of graves. Of the other grave goods glass vessels were the most frequent. Personal ornaments were recorded in small numbers, including earrings, bracelets, bronze tweezers and jet buttons while other items, a knife, coin, pipeclay figurine, unburnt bone inlay, a bell and arrowhead, and enamelled bronze vessel also fall within the

known repertoire of Romano-British grave goods (Philpott 1991). The scarcity of animal remains and the very poor preservation of the few known examples must be a consequence of the acidic soil conditions.

There are other smaller groups of burials where artefacts were deposited at cremation and burial. At High Torrs (Wigtownshire) a late second or early third century burial probably of non-local origin had been furnished with joints of meat on the pyre, cattle and cattle or sheep / goat. Probable grave goods comprised an iron ring with onyx intaglio, samian, casket fittings and a crucible and slag. The pyre debris from the two *Brandschüttungsgräber* at South Shields included burnt bone, charcoal and burnt and the nearby dump of probable pyre debris glass and ceramics. One of the two held fragmentary but unburnt ceramics and the other two intact flagons and copper alloy fragments. Wright's (1872: 235) account of cremation burials at Wroxeter implies a similar pattern. Fused and molten unguent bottles were recovered from many graves, but glass and ceramic grave goods were also relatively common, although a detailed account of grave furniture can no longer be established. An unspecified number of grave goods including a bronze mirror were excavated with four possibly Flavian period cremation burials at Lincoln Monson Street while unguent bottles and at least some of the other glass vessels had been distorted by the heat of the pyre.

Other cemeteries however suggest that large artefact assemblages were neither destroyed on the pyre nor deposited in the grave. The burial furniture with the second to fourth century cremation burials from Petty Knowes comprised small numbers of hobnails, nails and ceramics, although it is not always clear from grave descriptions which were burnt. Artefactual material was also scarce from the *busta* and *Brandschuttgräber* at Lanchester which could be identified among the twenty nine second and third century cremation related features, all highly truncated. Apart from probable containers for the cremated bone a small number of sherds, hobnails from seven features and nails from two cists were recovered. The fill of pyre features at Camelon comprised only burnt sand, soil and bone. A similar impression emerges from the small portion of the first and second century cemetery excavated at Corbridge but given the degree of damage to the burials and the loss of the cremated bone in post-excavation work this evidence should not be pressed too far. The only pyre goods were fragments of molten glass. Grave goods were few but included individual artefacts of high quality, for example an enamelled bronze vase.

There were no *Brandschuttgräber* amongst the other principal military associated cremation cemetery of the late first and second centuries at Caerleon Lodge Hill. The absence of buried pyre debris and the small proportion of cremated bone buried in comparison to other cemeteries (Fig. 4.5) are likely to influence the archaeological visibility of pyre goods. Animal and plant remains were recovered from 9% and 4% of burials respectively. Uncremated animal and plant materials buried unburnt are unlikely to have survived. As for other categories of grave goods, unburnt ceramics were recovered from a larger proportion of graves (55%) than burnt (10%). Hobnails were recovered from 22% of burials, but only in a few cases had they been cremated with the deceased on the pyre. Glass vessels were recovered from 6% of graves and showed no evidence of having been subject to heat, although a small number of glass counters and beads had passed through the pyre. In summary the evidence from the cemetery suggests

that neither pyre nor grave was the focus of destruction or deposition but certain factors bias against the visibility of pyre materials. Recent excavations at the Coed south-east of the fortress have revealed very much more substantial grave assemblages, so the Lodge Hill cemetery cannot be considered typical of Caerleon as a whole (S. Fox pers. comm.).

3.5.4 Pyre treatment in 'southern' Romano-British cemeteries

In cremation cemeteries from southern Britain, principally south-eastern Britain, the main sources of evidence for pyre goods are those artefacts collected with the cremated bone. Cremated animal bone represents the most frequent pyre good from this context. It was recovered for example from between a fifth and a half of burials from urban, minor centre and rural cemeteries within the Hertfordshire sample (Fig. 4.30). Molten copper alloy fragments and staining of the cremated bone in a small number of burials at St Albans St Stephens suggested that ornaments had been deposited on the pyre or that individuals were cremated dressed. The presence of fused glass unguent bottles in burials from the Joslin collection at Colchester is relatively frequent, especially as only the better preserved examples are likely to have been recorded, but the concentration is unparalleled elsewhere in southern Britain (Philpott 1991: 117).

The occurrence of pyre debris itself is rare although it has been recorded in more recent large-scale cemetery excavations. The best recorded pyre assemblages are those from pyre related features and graves from the east London cemetery. The partial account which was available (note 3.9) suggests relatively frequent deposition of pyre goods, especially animal parts. There was a broad overlap between pyre and grave goods. The commonest species represented in the animal assemblage were pig and chicken, but recovery of pyre residues from graves and pyre sites on a greater scale than on any previous cemetery excavation in Britain allowed a wider variety of species to be identified than that from other cremation cemeteries (Philpott 1991: 198), including not only sheep / goat and cattle but also a variety of fish and bird species. There were minor differences between burnt and unburnt species but this can be explained by preservation differences.

The London assemblage is the first significant evidence from the Roman period in Britain for plant remains from funerary feasting. Plant macrofossils previously recovered from late Iron Age or Roman cremation features are most likely to be accidental inclusions from the local environment or from kindling materials (Hinton in Fitzpatrick 1997a: 85-7; Green in Millett 1986: 77; Murphy 1990; 1992). Charred lentils (now also noted at St Albans (Niblett 1995b: 73)), peas and Celtic beans were deposited in features with cremated human bone. The raw state of the lentils may be significant; literary evidence records that at early Roman funerary feast the food given to the dead was raw, a contrast to the cooked food eaten by the living (Scheid 1984). The cereals recovered may be derived from background material, kindling or part of a 'semi-cleaned' crop placed on the pyre. The grape pips, melon seed and peppercorn recovered in the plant macrofossil sample must have derived from exotic foodstuffs placed on the pyre but water logged fruit pips may have derived from feasting deposits or the local environment. The

variety of species which may be recovered from analysis of further samples is suggested by deposits from cremation cemeteries in Gaul and Germany (Kreuz 1995; Marinval 1993).

There was a broad overlap between the personal ornament and other small finds recovered as burnt pyre goods and grave goods, for example bone hair pins and needles, pipeclay figurines, a burnt bone comb, bone and jet counters and dice and finger rings. Molten unidentifiable fragments of copper alloy and bone staining suggested that further items of personal ornament may also have been deposited on the pyre.

The ceramic assemblage from East London suggests strong differences between the pyre and grave, but full information was not available. The number of ceramic accessory vessels was fairly low, similar to that at Winchester Hyde Street (Fig. 5.13). The small sample did not include samian which was however recovered as 8% of the ceramic assemblages from one of the pyre debris sites. A small number of graves included molten or deformed glass. Unguent bottles predominated amongst the recognisable forms in the burnt glass, whereas a wider range of forms was deposited in graves.

A small number of *Brandschuttgräber* were excavated in the Hyde Street cemetery at Winchester. The *Brandschüttungsgräber* included large samples of burnt artefacts but few grave goods. The presence of coins, lamps and unguent bottles in these burials or in those closely associated with them support their attribution to non-local origin. These are the diagnostic grave good types identified in contemporary burials in central Italy (Fasold and Witteyer 1998), and this association is sometimes mirrored in early first century AD burial assemblages in the Rhineland, for example at Haltern (Berke 1991). However they comprise only a very small proportion of the total sample at Hyde Street (5.2).

At Baldock Royston Road pyre sites, pyre debris deposits and *Brandschuttgräber* were all excavated. The average number of grave goods was the lowest in Baldock's cemeteries (Burleigh 1993: 43); a preliminary view of the pyre residue does not suggest that it includes a large artefactual element to compensate for the missing grave goods.

Individual large pyre assemblages have also been recovered from rural contexts in southern Britain. The *Brandgrubengrab* and pits of pyre debris from the Flavian period burial at Knob's Crook included burnt and broken pieces of bronze from vessel(s) and fittings, a glass vessel, eight samian vessels and burnt soapstone objects including a button, beads and a possible bracelet. There were no grave goods. The burial and pits of pyre debris from the late second or early third century burial at Holborough included burnt animal remains, glass, ceramics and an iron stool, with broken fragments from at least five amphorae at the side of the main burial. The probable *Brandgrubengrab* from Thatcham Butter Cross included a large deposit of burnt samian, other ceramics, molten glass, nails and charcoal.

Older accounts also suggest the existence of substantial pyre assemblages from first and second century cemeteries in south-east England. Within the burial enclosure at Langley, Kent for example, north of the square tomb possible pyre remains comprised charcoal, burnt bone, ashes and sherds. A similar deposit was excavated at Bayford, Sittingbourne, and implied at Bedford and Crendon. However given the problem of identifying pyre sites the evidence from none of these must be pressed too hard.

3.5.5 Conclusion

This brief survey has shown that Philpott's distinction cannot be sustained. Although analysis of LPRIA burial practices has concentrated on grave goods, increasing evidence from recent excavations shows that the pyre was also the location for significant artefact destruction. Emphasis on the pyre by itself is by itself therefore no indicator of Romanisation. In the Roman period pyre debris may be more visible in northern Britain because of the greater frequency of *busta* and *Brandschuttgräber*. However examination of a small number of cremation cemeteries suggests highly variant emphasis on pyre and grave amongst cemeteries from a military or northern context. Emphasis on the pyre is not therefore an attribute of the military zone, though the inclusion of pyre debris in burial may be more frequent here than in southern Britain. Pyre treatment in southern Britain remains more obscure to us because of the lack of pyre debris in graves. The glimpses of pyre treatment do not however suggest that burial practices in 'highly Romanised' urban settlements privilege the pyre over the grave as a focus of artefact destruction, although there are occasional examples of particular preferences, for example the fused unguent bottles at Colchester and London. It is in combination with preference for certain artefact types that intrusive burial traditions may be identified. Struck (forthcoming b) has also identified an association of 'immigrant' burial practices with the same milieu, based on the distribution of *busta* and *Brandschuttgräber* and of artefact types, particularly coins and unguent bottles, which fall within the limited range of grave goods deposited in contemporary burials in central Italy (Fasold and Witteyer 1998). However by itself an emphasis on the pyre is insufficient to demonstrate such a connection.

Chapter 4 Burial assemblage and location in urban cemeteries in Hertfordshire

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the first stage of the assessment of the hypothesis of greater display in funerary ritual in minor centres and rural cemeteries than in urban centres. Trends in burial practice in a sample of mainly post-conquest to early third century AD cemeteries from the minor centres of Hertfordshire are elicited here to compare with the results derived from mid first to third cemeteries from St Albans. For the purposes of this analysis and that in Chapter 5 burials up to one kilometre from the centre of settlement areas were considered as related to urban or minor centre cemeteries. The sample of cemeteries to be analysed in detail was chosen on the basis of availability of over 50 burials with adequately recorded assemblages. Differentiation within the Braughing cemeteries has already been explored in detail using multivariate analysis of grave goods and burial containers, with burial groups distinguished by this analysis related to social status (Jones 1983). The ceramic combinations have already been explored by Philpott (1991: 34), although Philpott included the vessel containing the cremated bone in his analysis of combinations. This is treated separately here. Here instead comparison between cemeteries is based on the different aspects of funerary ritual separated into its stages through time, where possible both pyre and grave treatment. Save for Baldock Walls Field and the 1930s excavation in the St Stephens cemetery all the cemetery samples considered here allowed some comment on both pyre and grave ritual. Grave size was not consistently recorded and is too dependent on site preservation to be a useful measure of comparison between sites. With the exception of Baldock and to a lesser extent St Albans late Roman burials are scarce and are therefore largely ignored.

The general relationship of cemeteries to settlement and routeways within the early Roman period is then considered and the distribution of burial monuments and burial assemblages greater than cemetery specific and general thresholds to routeways is examined. To this end important individual or smaller groups of burials have also been exploited. This survey is used together with the results of the examination of rural burials (6.9) as a basis for defining regional thresholds of burial display (7.6) and for exploring the character as well as the distribution of burial display through the artefactual components of larger grave assemblages (8.2-4).

4.2. Braughing-Puckeridge

Well documented early Roman burial evidence is confined to cemeteries on the western side of the settlement. The slim evidence from Fordstreet suggests that contemporary burial practices to the north-east of the town were similar.

4.2.1 Skeleton Green

The cemetery lay 50m west of Ermine Street (Fig. 4.1), on the western margin of the Roman settlement. Trial trenching suggested that settlement contemporary to the cemetery lay on higher ground to the north and east (Stead 1970: 38). In the late first century AD the earliest burials were cut through flint cobble platforms from buildings which had gone out of use half a century earlier (Fig. 4.2). It is not stated in the report whether the earlier east-west road was still in use but its continued use is implied by the different cemetery phase ditches continuing to respect it. The main period of use of the cemetery was the late first to mid-late second century. The excavator proposed that burial began in the southern enclosure, closest to the road and surrounded by the horse shoe shaped ditch and later spread north, necessitating an expansion of the enclosure (Fig. 4.3). However although the 'heirloom factor' makes dependence only on samian for burial dating dangerous (2.2), plotting burials dated by the samian vessels in their assemblages shows that both areas of the cemetery could have been in use from the late first century (Fig. 4.4) (note 4.1). There is therefore no current proven case for a 'horizontal stratigraphy' in the cemetery.

All the cremated individuals were efficiently burnt (Wells, in Partridge 1981: 290). The amount of cremated bone deposited was similar to that at other minor centre sites in southern Britain (Fig. 4.5). As usual by no means all of the total expected amount of the cremated bone was recovered, despite the relatively good preservation of the burials (cf. 3.3.2). As Wells noted, *the virtual absence of skull bone*, sometimes despite the collection of a very large proportion of the cremated bone (e.g. 1294g in 39), is a striking characteristic of several graves but one difficult to assess because the distribution of cremated bone between different body areas was not quantified. Little pyre debris was recorded with the cremated bone, although grave fills were not described. Save for a fragment of burnt samian, the only known pyre goods comprise cremated animal bone, predominantly cattle, sheep and fowl, recovered from 27% of burials.

The majority of graves were earth cut and sub-circular or sub-rectangular in shape. The only exception was the wooden cist in 28 within which a wooden box containing the cremated bone and grave goods had been deposited. Most burials were placed in the grave in jars in local fabrics. Of these five were also placed inside wooden boxes, and one deposit of cremated bone was perhaps bagged before placing in a wooden box. Five burials were deposited in caskets with lion head fittings.

Ceramics were by far the most common type of grave good (Fig. 4.6). The different vessel forms (Fig. 4.7) are evenly distributed between graves (Fig. 4.8). The typical assemblage is of flagon, beaker and samian dish or flagon and dish (Philpott 1991: 34). Sets of hobnails, coins, glass and personal ornament were recovered with almost 10% of burials. The most spectacular assemblage was that of at least eleven glass vessels in 49. The 'equipment' category comprised mostly nails of which the origin could not be established.

4.2.2 Braughing 'B'

Cemetery B lay 200m and cemetery A c. 80m west of Ermine Street, both on the extreme western fringe of the settlement (Fig. 4.1). As the two sites are over 300m apart it is unlikely that they formed part of a continuous cemetery. Of the 104 cremation burials excavated at Braughing B (Fig. 4.10), a few were possibly of late first or early fourth century date, but the majority dated to the second or early third centuries.

The vast majority of burials were efficiently cremated (Wells, in Partridge 1981: 290). Skull bones were absent from a number of undamaged burials, but again the distribution of bone between different body areas was not quantified. Whether or not pyre debris was deposited with the burials is unknown as grave fills were not reported. 37.5% of burials contained cremated animal bone, cattle, sheep and fowl bone predominating.

Grave cuts were circular, oval or subrectangular earth cut features, save for one (65) possibly lined with wickerwork. With the exception of one burial in a face pot the rest were deposited in jars in local fabrics. The predominant grave goods were ceramics (Fig. 4.11). The 'equipment' category consists entirely of nails and corroded iron objects. The different ceramic forms were evenly distributed between graves (Figs. 4.12 and 4.13), most commonly in combinations of flagon, beaker and dish, flagon with dish or beaker, or beaker with dish (Philpott 1991: 34).

4.3 Welwyn

Only one large Roman period cemetery area has been investigated, across the river from the settlement area on the road to Braughing (Fig. 4.15). Rook (1973) suggests that it originally contained several thousand burials, but this estimate depends on the extent to which isolated observations derive from a single cemetery. The third century mausoleum and nearby inhumation cemetery on the same site were separate from it (6.11). Principal information from this cemetery derives from Rook's 1967 salvage investigation (Fig. 4.16) (note 4.2). Dated samian suggests the use of the cemetery from the Flavian to late Antonine periods, although the broader cemetery area continued in use until the late Roman period. Lack of information impedes any understanding of the extent to which this cemetery is typical of the whole, although a poorly recorded boxed cremation burial from Welwyn Grange with a large assemblage of personal ornaments, ceramics and glass vessels suggests that assemblages from the excavated area of the cemetery do not represent the whole range of intra-cemetery variability.

The lack of detailed information hinders systematic examination of cremation ritual. According to Wells' (in Rook 1973) analysis the majority of individuals were efficiently cremated. In comparison to other sites relatively small quantities of cremated bone were recovered but this is likely to be the result of the salvage conditions. 25% of burials included burnt animal bone. Few species could be identified with certainty, but the range included pig as well as those recovered from the Braughing cemeteries.

83 % of (the eighty undamaged) burials were urned, usually in jars in local fabrics. Unurned burials may have been deposited in other containers, but only in one case (46) was this certainly a wooden box. Grave goods apart from ceramics are extremely scarce. The different ceramic forms were evenly distributed between graves (Figs. 4.17 and 4.18). The commonest ceramic assemblages were similar to those from Braughing A.

4.4 Baldock

The archaeological examination of LPRIA and Roman cemeteries at Baldock during the last seventy years has been more extensive than at any equivalent site in Britain (Fig. 4. 20). Some have been fully published (Stead and Rigby 1986; Westell 1931) but only preliminary overviews are available of most excavations from the 1970s to 1990s (Burleigh 1993; 1995a; 1995b). Full publication will ultimately allow detailed comparison of burial practice from the first century BC to early fifth century AD at a single settlement. Here detailed analysis is offered only of two cemeteries but information from others is exploited in discussion below (4.6-4.7) (note 4.3).

4.4.1 Human remains within the settlement in the Iron Age and Roman period

Skeletons or individual bones have been recovered from non-cemetery contexts of both the Iron Age and Roman period. A solution hollow adjacent to the enclosure around the LPRIA barrow burial at California deposits included human bone fragments as well as occasional complete bodies from the fifth century BC to the LPRIA (Burleigh 1995a: 105). Deposition of fragmentary human remains continued in the early Roman period. Re-examination of the context of predominantly skull fragments suggests that their deposition was not only the product of disturbance of earlier burials. In three pit contexts (A111, A414 and B50) bone fragments coincided with assemblages of complete pots from pit fills. Stead and Rigby (1986: 258) noted the relative frequency of the latter and drew an explicit parallel with ceramic deposition in burials but did not note the presence of human bone. The placing of these deposits at junctions and entrances of features suggests further care in deposition.

Whole or parts of thirty five infant inhumations were recovered from Roman period settlement enclosures A, B and C. Adult inhumations were also occasionally recovered within the same settlement area in the early and mid-Roman periods (Henderson in Stead and Rigby 1986: 391) and in other parts of the site (Applebaum 1932), in ditches and within the top filling of wells in the late Roman period (Stead and Rigby 1986: 87; Burleigh 1993: 46). Their presence was interpreted by Stead and Rigby as evidence for the dereliction of the settlement, but should rather be seen in the light of long term intra-settlement deposition and 'rites of termination' elsewhere (6.15).

4.4.2 Wallington Road

The excavation of the cemetery during house construction and previous deep ploughing of the site had damaged or removed a significant proportion of burials (Figs. 4.21a and 21b). The excavators estimate that 90% of the cemetery was examined, although the scattered burials to the south-east imply a larger original cemetery area.

The cemetery was in use from the mid first century BC to the early fourth century AD, although intensity of use varied over that period. From a minimum of 0.16 burials per year from 50 BC to AD 70, use of the cemetery peaked at 0.87 burials per year from 70 to 200, and declined to 0.19 from 200 to 310. The cemetery lay within a series of strip enclosures rather than close to routeways (Stead and Rigby 1986: Fig. 3, 30, Site S). Ditch lengths revealed during excavation of the cemetery may have related to this broader enclosure network. In the first and early second centuries AD these bounded the cemetery on its north-western and south-eastern sides but during the second century they silted up and burial took place outside them.

Burials of phase 1 and 2 were predominantly inhumations, but from the late first century cremation was the exclusive form. Most inhumations were oriented north-east south-west, or south-east to north-west. Where skeletal evidence survived the head was laid to the east. The north-east south-west orientation of the strip enclosures in the general area of which the cemetery was situated may have influenced this orientation. With one exception inhumation burials were not furnished.

The vast majority of cremation burials were well cremated. The range of cremated bone collected is very similar to that in other contemporary neighbouring sites (Fig. 4.5). There is no evidence for any particular body part having been preferentially deposited or excluded from burial. Whether grave fills contained charcoal or other pyre debris is not recorded. It was certainly present in other cemeteries in Baldock (Burleigh 1993: 43). Pyre debris was however noted in analysis of the cremated bone, including occasional charcoal fragments and cremated animal bone, the latter with 10% of cremations. Cow, sheep / goat and bird were the preferred species. Other pyre goods comprised a bone pin, lead object and glass bead, and much more commonly nails and iron staining (in 27% of graves). McKinley and the excavators argue that these derive from cremation in a coffin or on a bier.

In the few cases where a burial cut was recorded it was oval or less commonly sub-rectangular in shape. The vast majority of cremations were placed in the centre of the grave. In the nine of the fourteen burials in which cremated bone was placed off-centre it had been placed between the southern and eastern corners of graves. This preference may be related to that of the eastern side of the grave as the head end of inhumation burials.

Almost all cremation burials were urned in cooking jars in local fabrics, many of which showed signs of use. A number of these had been trimmed before burial but it was not always possible to assess this because of the extensive damage to many burials. Ceramics were the predominant grave good (Fig. 4.22). With the exception of nails other artefact types were recovered from a very small number of

graves. The most frequently occurring were hobnails recovered from seven burials. The most commonly occurring vessels were again flagons, beakers and samian dishes (Fig 4.23) which were evenly distributed between burials (Fig. 4.24). Some accessory vessels were either seconds or had been damaged prior to burial. Within the cremation sample the average number of ceramics per burial remained constant but there were changes in the representation of different forms. The proportion of jars and flagons decreased over time, that of dishes increased and later diminished and, as Matthews noted, that of beakers, especially colour coats, came to predominate in phase 5 (Fig. 4.26).

4.4.3 Walls Field

A 200 ft by 45 ft area within the Walls Field cemetery was excavated in the late 1920s (Fig. 4.20 and 4.27). An area free of burials in the centre of the site separated two groups of burials, both of which were in use for the whole period of use of the cemetery, the late first to probably the fourth century. The vast majority of burials were cremations but a number of inhumations, south-north and west-east oriented, disturbed earlier graves. There is insufficient evidence from these inhumations to consider them further here. A roadway ran along the north of the site (Applebaum 1932; Burleigh 1995b: 178, Fig. 16.1). The cemetery has been recently re-analysed by Fabrizi (1984). The significance of her re-investigation for the chronology of the cemetery and the analysis of ceramic forms is summarised below but other aspects are also re-investigated. No information was published on the cremated bone or the burial fill.

Fabrizi's re-examination of Westell's samian-based chronology by comparing samian dates to those derived from other ceramics suggested that the number of first century burials had been exaggerated and those of the third century underestimated, but in both analyses the majority of burials are dated to the second century. In view of the predominance of the second century no further systematic analysis of changing practice over time is undertaken here.

With rare exceptions the vast majority of cremation burials were deposited in large storage jars. Of the ten unurned burials two were possibly in caskets but the report is insufficiently detailed to state this with certainty. Casket fittings were recovered from other graves but are more likely to have derived from grave goods. The majority of burials were accompanied by ceramics but other grave goods were rare (Fig. 4.28). The equipment category comprised primarily iron lampholders and lamps from five and casket fittings from six graves respectively. The glass assemblage comprised bottles, flasks and 'decanters' which occasional illustrations show to refer to bottles or flasks. Glass vessels were deposited with twice as large a ceramic assemblage as the general average.

Analysis of the ceramic forms is hampered by the absence of comprehensive illustration and vague descriptions, especially the use of 'vase' which according to the illustrations applies to jars, beakers and bottles. According to Fabrizi's re-analysis the most frequent forms comprised dishes (and a small number of cups), flagons and beakers. The remainder of the identifiable vessels were jars,

occasionally bowls and a number of miniature vessels (cf. Tuffreau-Libre forthcoming). As at Wallington Road a greater proportion of beakers in the accessory assemblage of later burials was noted by Fabrizi. The most common combination of forms was of beaker, dish and flagon.

4.5 Burial practices in St Albans and minor centre cemeteries compared

The results derived from the analysis of assemblages in the cemeteries of these minor centres are now compared to those derived from a previous study of contemporary cemeteries at St Albans, especially older and more recent excavations at St Stephens (Pearce 1994). Efficient cremation, colouring most of the cremated bone white, typified all the sites in the sample. The slight differences in the proportion of cremated bone collected for burial is only likely to be the product of different preservation and / or excavation (Fig. 4.5). Common to several of the samples discussed above and to St Albans St Stephens (McKinley forthcoming b) is the absence or the very poor representation in a larger number of cranial fragments. The distribution of this practice is not confined to Hertfordshire; examples can be cited from Winchester Hyde Street (5.2.3), Wotton (McKinley unpublished) and east London (McKinley in Barber *et al.* in prep.), as well as beyond Britain (e.g. Wahl and Kokabi 1988; Winkler 1978).

The percentage of burial with cremated animal bone shows a wide degree of variety between different sites (Fig. 4.30). Although the worse preservation of burials at Wallington Road might explain the lower representation of animal bone, preservational differences do not account for other differences in the sample. Different cemeteries were characterised by differing species preferences; pig and chicken dominated the St Stephens and Baldock samples, but at Braughing, Welwyn and post conquest cremations at Folly Lane cow, sheep/goat and bird were the commonest species. The differences in species preference were particular to individual cemeteries rather than groups of cemeteries connected to particular settlements.

The most frequently occurring archaeologically visible container at all sites was the ceramic jar. Caskets and wooden boxes were only used in any number at St Stephens and Skeleton Green. The percentage of such burials at Skeleton Green (20%) is approximately double that at St Stephens.

The percentage of burials with ceramics from the *civitas* capital was lower than those from the minor cemeteries (Fig. 4.31). Plotting the number of burials with different numbers of ceramics from the minor centre cemeteries considered above (Figs. 4.9, 4.14, 4.19, 4.25 and 4.29) showed overlapping but not identical distributions within fairly narrow bands. Comparing the average number of ceramics from each cemetery to that from the cemeteries of the *civitas* capital was considered therefore not to be a misleading measure of differences in depositional practice. The average number of ceramics per burial was also lower in both *civitas* capital cemeteries (Figs. 4.31 and 4.32). A low average also characterises the small samples from Verulam Hills Field and post-conquest burials at Folly Lane. The better representation of ceramics in the part of the St Stephens cemetery excavated in the 1930s may reflect

failure to excavate unurned burials without grave goods rather than a difference between areas of the St Stephens cemetery.

The majority of ceramics at all cemeteries were in local fabric types. Samian was the principal non-local fabric. The only other numerically significant non-local ceramics were the colour-coated fabrics which formed an increasing proportion of ceramic assemblages in the later phases of cemeteries at Baldock. The proportion of samian in the assemblage was lower in the cemeteries of the *civitas* capital than in most of the minor centres (Fig. 4.33) and in the rural assemblages at Boxfield Farm and Cross Farm (6.9.1-6.9.2). This is related to a preference for particular forms. Flagons, beakers and dishes were the most popular forms on all sites, but the most significant difference is the low representation of dishes / platters at St Stephens, to a greater extent in the recently excavated assemblages than in those from the 1930s excavations.

The presence of glass vessels varied by individual cemetery rather than between settlement types (Fig. 4.34). Other artefact types were too rare to allow meaningful comparisons between cemeteries. In total other artefact types were only recovered in more than a few instances from Skeleton Green, (32%) St Stephens (13.6%) and Baldock Walls Field (12%).

It is therefore difficult to identify a consistent differentiation between the civitas capital and minor centre cemeteries. The most obvious is the difference in number, fabric and form within the ceramic assemblages. The stronger difference to emerge is that between cemeteries in the same settlement, especially at Braughing and Baldock, as other workers have already noted (Burleigh 1993; Jones 1983). This difference offers only very qualified support to the model of greater 'investment' in burial in minor centre cemeteries (1.4). The relationship of display in burial practice to local urban and minor centre landscapes is now explored.

4.6 The location of the dead in the LPRIA and early Roman period

Bryant and Niblett's (1997) recent re-analysis identified burial and ritual centres at the heart of the dispersed settlement complexes at Baldock and St Albans. It is argued here as more plausible that in the case of Baldock the concentric relationship of cemeteries around a settlement area anticipated that of the Roman period minor centre. Existing landscape divisions and routeways appear to condition the location of the first century BC burials at Baldock (Fig. 4.35). Several groups of cremation and inhumation burials in ditched enclosures, at least two with central barrows, were located beside the route-ways running south-west north-east through the site and immediately north of an Iron Age pit alignment transformed in the first century BC into a continuous bank and ditch (Burleigh 1995a: 105). Viewed from the settlement area to the south-west the barrows would have been prominent on the skyline. To the east complete LPRIA ceramics from Walls Field suggest the presence of contemporary burials. The 'Tene' burial remains the sole pre-Roman burial recovered on the south-western side of the town (Fig. 4.20). While the area later occupied by the Roman town was less intensively settled than in the Roman

period, the number of currently known Iron Age burials (approximately 60 or 70) does not demand a burying population larger than that likely to have been living within the central area at the time and need not imply that the cemeteries served a larger catchment area. The relationship of this core area with its ring of cemeteries to the other elements of the complex is difficult to assess without further attention to the undated cropmarks in Baldock's environs.

At St Albans King Harry Lane, probably a communal burial ground for dispersed settlements (Pearce 1997) and the smaller group of burials from Verulam Hills Field were peripheral to the area which later developed into the Roman town (Fig. 4.37). However the validity of the concentric model for St Albans is challenged by the presence of a small number of cremation burials were excavated in the St Michael's area. The nature of the pre-Roman occupation of this central area is very poorly understood but the large ditched enclosure suggests that it was an important focus (Bryant and Niblett 1997: 274; Frere 1983b: 3).

At other sites the extent of cemetery excavation is too limited to suggest general organisational schemes. At Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City known burials are widely scattered across the settlement complex, possibly at the former in association with elite enclosures (Bryant and Niblett 1997). Later Iron Age burial evidence from Braughing is scattered but slight and attests to a variety of practices, a possible Welwyn type burial (Whimster 1981: 373), a few urned but unfurnished cremation burials and a deposit of unburnt skeletal fragments with evidence for excarnation from at least fourteen individuals mixed with animal bone and pottery in fills in ditch F1, Station Road, dating from the late first century BC to mid first century AD.

In the Roman period the 'concentric' relationship of burial around settlement characterised all of the sites considered here. Adult burials within the settlement area of the minor centres were scarce although not unknown (e.g. Applebaum 1932). The extensive samples from Baldock and St Albans illustrate the range in cemetery sizes from individual or small groups of burials to large communal cemeteries. The best evidence for this concentric relationship again derives from Baldock. In the early Roman period the relationship of settlement to cemetery showed broad continuity from the preceding period but with some degree of change. To the north-east settlement expanded over Iron Age barrows and enclosures at California (Fig. 4.41). Given feature relationships noted on rural sites (6.16) the location of an early Roman corn-drier in the centre of the barrow in Area 1 is unlikely to be accidental. A road was driven through the centre of probable burial enclosure A497 in area 10. However further to the north LPRIA cemeteries at Royston Road, Icknield Way and to the east at Wallington Road continued in use. The principal period of burial at Walls Field and Clothall Road to the east began in the early Roman period. Other small groups of early Roman burials have been recovered from the southern side of the town. Burial continued until the early fifth century at Royston Road and Icknield Way in the cemeteries on the northern side of the town and resumed closer to the core of the settlement in the California area in the late Roman period. A large inhumation cemetery to the south of the Tene also probably dates to the late Roman period.

The area is unusual in having two cemeteries, St Stephens and Royston Road Baldock, where the conjunction of cemeteries with roads has been extensively excavated. Both offer rather different relationships to the road frontage. The St Stephens site comprises a thin strip of burials on the north side of Watling Street cutting earlier settlement evidence and a much broader zone of cremation burials on its southern side extending for several hundred yards, although it is not clear if this spread is continuous (Fig. 4.40). In the central portion of this zone the thinning of burials away from the road frontage is misleading as early twentieth century housing probably destroyed earlier burials (Frere 1987a: Fig. 15, 328). There was also an alternative axis through the cemetery; if the course of the road excavated in 1935 is projected northwards it traverses the area free of burial to meet the causeway over the roadside ditch. However the importance of Watling Street as a structuring feature should not be exaggerated. The earliest burials were dispersed across the whole of the cemetery which must have developed from a number of different foci, served by different paths and cobbled areas served. The pyre sites identified by the cremation pits to the south of the burials adjacent to Watling Street and the brick-built 'crematoria' identified by Davey probably also served individual groups (3.4).

The organisation of the Royston Road cemetery at Baldock offers an alternative form of organisation (Fig. 4.41). To the immediate east of the settlement area, separated from it by a ditch were the pyre sites, to the east of these the burial area, then finally on the north-eastern margin of the cemetery quarry pits which served as a dump for pyre debris and redeposited material from burials. The funerary process had a spatial manifestation that increasingly distanced the dead from the area of the living, from the pyre to eventual deposition on the furthest margins of the cemetery and to oblivion by the destruction and scattering of the burial.

4.7 The context of burial display

All of the settlements considered here allow some comment on the relationship of burial display, defined by either assemblages or burial monuments, to its local context, in particular to routeways.

At Baldock Walls Field the burials were subdivided into three groups, southern, central and northern (note 4.4). The average number of vessels per burial in the southern area (3.7) was much higher than that in the other areas of the site (2.45 and 1.72 respectively), and all burial assemblages with six vessels or more were recovered from this area. The five iron lampholders were all recovered from this area and four of the eleven burials with glass vessels were recovered from the same area, even though the area as a whole accounted for only 10% of the burials. The largest burial assemblages were therefore concentrated on the opposite end of the roadway which ran along the north of the site.

The largest burial assemblages from Baldock derived from small groups of burials on the western and southern side of the town. A possibly late third century cremation burial of a juvenile with many lamps and pedestalled cups, along with other non-burial deposits of ceramics and animal remains

was excavated at the Tene close to the first century BC cauldron burial (1) (Fig. 4.42). Three predominantly mid first century AD burials were excavated on Clothall Road (Fig. 4.43) and a single early second century burial further to the south at Convent of Providence. Their shared features are the deposition of cremated bone unurned or in a wooden box or casket, uncremated and / or cremated bone from several animal species and many more ceramics than the average in the larger cemeteries of the site, including multiple samian deposits at Clothall Road and the Convent of Providence. Iron Age and Roman settlement evidence lay north and west of the Clothall Road burials, between them and the Walls Field cemetery. Three of the burials cut an earlier ditch and one was cut by a later ditch. Their location on an enclosure boundary is reminiscent of the location of rural burials (6.16) but larger-scale examination of this area is needed to confirm this hypothesis. The context of the Convent of Providence burial appears to be isolated, but cemeteries in this area are not so well characterised as on the north side and a single further cremation burial was recovered forty feet away. The burial was not close to known routes. The lamp burial is the latest dated deposit in a long sequence of deposition of ceramics and animal remains around the late Iron Age 'Tene' burial. It appears not to be part of a large cemetery but the poor knowledge of its context must be stressed.

The Royston Road cemetery provides further negative evidence against a hypothesis of preference for the road frontage. According to its position on the immediate edge of the settlement, close to a road junction and in a prominent position on the ridge above the settlement the cemetery was in an apt situation for display (Fig. 4.35). This position had been exploited by the builders of the Iron Age barrows. However the average accessory vessel assemblage was the lowest of all of Baldock's cemeteries (Burleigh 1993: 45) and even within the low level of deposition in the cemetery the plot of assemblage types suggests no preference for placing burials with larger assemblages on the road frontage (Fig. 4.44).

Nor is an association between larger grave deposits and roads supported at Braughing. The Skeleton Green site, where the average level of deposition was highest, lay at the rear of a settlement area; a relationship between cemetery location and the earlier road to the south is possible though not proven and in any case this is not a major route. Within the cemetery burials with exceptionally large ceramic and non-ceramic assemblages, 49 and 33, as well as most of the casket burials were in any case deposited in a semi-enclosed area in the northern part of the site. The small group of burial assemblages from Braughing A were exceptional for their containers, two bronze decorated wooden caskets and one glass bottle, the high average number of ceramic vessels (5.4) and the number of glass vessels. The small scale of excavation makes it impossible to assess the size of the cemetery from which the Braughing 'A' group derived, although human and animal bones and ceramics in the small section of ditch excavated may suggest that the burials are part of a larger cemetery. The cemetery was located on the settlement margins and almost one hundred metres from Ermine Street.

The only funerary monument to be recovered near one of the minor centres was the third century Welwyn Hall mausoleum, separate from the large cemetery at Welwyn Grange. It was highly visible in the local landscape but its position is considered further below (6.17).

At St Albans the impact of the Folly Lane burial was achieved by the massive size of its enclosure and its position on the crest of the hill north-west of the town, further enhanced by the mound on which the pyre had been built. The layout of the complex was closely integrated into the initial establishment of the town's monumental core. The main north-east south-west axis of the insula which later contained the forum was aligned on the first Folly Lane enclosure entrance. The earliest street grid and the Folly Lane enclosure were set out in approximate contemporaneity in the late 40s or 50s of the first century AD. The monumentalisation process continued with the construction of the temple and the recutting of the ditch in the late first century AD, although the enclosure now faced east onto the Colchester Road rather than south-east towards the town.

There is little evidence for monuments of an equivalent scale but to the north of the town the fragment of a probable funerary monument recovered from the bed of the Ver (Blagg and Hunn 1984) as well as the possible mausoleum detected on an aerial photograph north-west of the road running to the north-east gate indicate the possibility of monumentalised street frontages worth further investigation (Niblett 1987). Within the St Stephens cemetery burials the largest structures, dated to the first century were concentrated on the road frontage. These included two rectangular enclosures to the south of Watling Street, one with a burial at its centre and another of cill beam construction around which a group of first century burials clustered, and to the north of Watling Street a six post structure beneath which the cremation with the largest grave good assemblage from the cemetery was recovered. The continuing attraction of the road line is shown by the early third century deposition of a lead coffin at right angles to the course of the road cutting the lip of the roadside ditch. The margins of the paths and cemeteries which subdivided the cemetery may also have attracted monuments, for the burial with the flint foundation bordered on the large cobbled area. However burials with the largest ceramic assemblages and those marked by four post structures were distributed without any particular concentration across the cemetery.

Other large assemblages and in one instance a possible monument occurred with small groups of burials rather than the extensive cemeteries. South-west of the LPRIA King Harry Lane cemetery and approximately 150m south-west of the Silchester Road at Lindum Place was a rectangular enclosure, likely to be of Iron Age and Roman date, of which the 'Wheeler ditch' formed the north-eastern side (note 4.5) (Fig. 4.46). The site was subdivided into three enclosures. The second to third century cremation century was in the northernmost with an undated aisled building, although separated from it by a ditch. One cremation was at the centre of an 8m square enclosure, of which one side was excavated with postholes in the two corners. The Antonine period burial 27 at Folly Lane lay in area A, approximately 50m south-west of the entrance to the conquest period burial enclosure, one of eleven burials of which the majority were of pre-Flavian date (Fig. 4.45a). This group and other small clusters

of cremation burials were situated between the temple enclosure and shafts and pits to the south attesting to second and third century industry and settlement close to the Colchester Road. Two minor roads may have traversed the area, but evidence for the extension of one to the immediate east of the cremations on site A was not recovered during the Folly Lane excavation (Niblett 1995a: 101; Fig. 4.45b). These small groups of burials seem to derive from extra-mural settlement, perhaps connected to these industrial areas or to the temple rather than a large cemetery. The 'William Old' burial was 12m south-east of the Silchester Road (Fig. 4.46). It may provide a further example of an isolated large burial deposit; according to current information the site is not associated with a known cemetery, but its environs have received little recorded investigation. Whether settlement comparable to the contemporary buildings on the opposite side of the road (Stead and Rigby 1989) lay between the burial and the road is unknown.

In the consideration of this first sample therefore an ambiguous relationship to the street frontage can be observed amongst the sample of burials considered here. Some monuments show a clear affinity for extensive visibility by their location close to the road and their more general position in the landscape but the evidence of burial assemblages does not generally indicate a similar preference. Discussion of this issue is resumed below (5.6, 6.17, 7.1-3).

Chapter 5 Burial practice and burial location in Roman Winchester

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a detailed analysis of burial assemblages from both early and late Roman cemeteries from Winchester. As large numbers of burials are not available from any neighbouring minor centres this survey together with the results of the examination of rural burials from Hampshire (6.4) provides a basis for defining a regional threshold of burial display and exploring the distribution of burials which exceed it (7.5), as well as a further sample of burials for exploring the character of burial display based on its artefactual composition (8.2-8.4), although it must be stressed that the different cemetery areas are very unequally represented in recent excavation (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 153-6; Kjølbbye-Biddle 1992). The proportion of well-preserved and properly excavated burials is too small from some cemeteries to warrant detailed analysis but their evidence is included in discussion. In contrast to the sample discussed in the previous chapter available burial evidence is biased to the late Roman period in Winchester, but there is still a sufficient early Roman sample to consider change through time.

The general relationship of cemeteries to settlement and roads at Winchester throughout the Roman period is considered and the distribution of burial monuments and burial assemblages greater than cemetery specific and general thresholds to routeways is examined. The directly excavated relationship between burial and road frontage as well as indirect evidence allows the analysis of this relationship into the late Roman period.

5.2 Early Roman cemeteries

5.2.1 The development of the Hyde Street cemetery

The Hyde Street cemetery was in use between the third quarter of the first and the late second or early third centuries AD (Fig. 5.3). Burials were attributed to two main phases, the late first to mid second centuries and the mid-second to early third. These phases have been used in analysis as the number of burials that could be more closely dated was too small. The numbers of phase 1 burials (one hundred and thirty six) is greater than that from phase 2 (forty nine).

The southern edge of the excavated area lay 10m to 20m north of the junction of the Silchester and Cirencester roads outside Winchester's north gate (Fig. 5.2). The cemetery was bounded to its west by the Cirencester road and initially to the east by an Iron Age and early Roman parallel track and ditch, c. 20m west of the later Silchester road and also leading to the entrance to the Oram's Arbour enclosure, later the site of the north gate. The base and fill of the northern portion of the Iron Age ditch were cut by first phase 1 inhumation and later cremation burials and by the end of the first century was probably no longer a significant feature. In the late first century the first of three north-west south-east ditches on the north-eastern part of the site cut across the line of the hollow way. At its eastern end the outermost and latest of these turned southwards, perhaps to run parallel to the Silchester Road. In later use the cemetery

therefore comprised a strip roughly 20m wide running parallel to the Cirencester Road. The lack of burials east of the late Iron Age and early Roman track suggest that it marked the eastern limit of the cemetery, but the area was heavily disturbed. The distribution of phase 1 burials suggests that all excavated areas of the cemetery were used from the beginning (Fig. 5.4).

Numbers of inhumation and cremation burials were approximately even in the first phase but the proportion of the latter increased over time (Fig. 5.5). Infant inhumations, either singly or in small clusters and cremation burials were distributed across the site, but adult inhumations concentrated in the north-eastern part of the site close to and within the late Iron Age ditch where they were the earliest burials in the sequence (Fig. 5.3).

5.2.2 Description and analysis of inhumation burials

There was a clear division in the burial ritual practised at Hyde Street according to age. The vast majority of inhumations were of infants under 2 years of age (Fig. 5.6), most of these aged between birth and 3 months. The proportion of infants within the inhumation sample increased over time from three quarters to thirteen fourteenths. Since infants of any period have only occasionally been recovered from the intra-mural area (e.g. Cunliffe 1964: 43; Kjølbye-Biddle 1992: 211; Zant 1993: 33) it is likely that most were buried outside the town. Whether this area was preferentially used for the deposition of infant burials because of its position near the gates is difficult to assess because of the lack of contemporary cemeteries. Certainly the proportion of infant burials is higher than the proportion of infants to die in the first year at the extremes of viability of pre-industrial populations (cf. Hopkins 1966).

The shallow depth of most inhumation grave cuts and their location in an area of intensive burial subjected adult inhumations to extensive damage. *Infant burials were mostly deposited in the foetal position and adult burials extended and supine.* As well as one crouched burial other adult inhumations were in unusual positions; three adult female inhumations were deposited prone, one decapitated, and the legs of two had possibly been tied before burial. A further inhumation comprised the disarticulated bones of an adult male and female over which the sacrum, pelvis and femur of a horse had been placed.

Most inhumations were placed with their heads pointing to between east and south (Fig. 5.7). Infant burials followed general preferences, but adult burials were more often placed with the head to north or south. Several adult inhumations had been buried within or close to and parallel to the north-south oriented ditch. With two exceptions there was no evidence for inhumations having been buried in coffins and grave goods were scarce. A miniature iron shovel was recovered above an infant inhumation which lay over the upper body of a decapitated adult. Two infant inhumations were furnished with coins, one of these also with a vessel.

5.2.3 Description and analysis of cremation burials

Pyre related features were not recovered within the excavated area. The uniformly white or light grey colouring of the cremated bone suggests efficient cremation in most instances. The principal exception was an uncremated skull and an articulated vertebral column and ribs on a bed of charcoal and cremated bone in grave 489. Lack of soil discoloration suggests that cremation had not taken place in the grave (3.3). Rather than represent inefficient inhumation, this may be a further example of semi-cremation occasionally noted elsewhere, for example at Baldock Royston Road, Derby Racecourse and Guilden Morden. The amount of cremated bone excavated from intact burials suggest that the deposition of cremated bone was very similar to other sites in southern England (Fig. 4.5). The small amount of skull bone in two graves (550 and 560) suggests that bone from certain parts of the body may have been kept from burial (4.5).

Fragmentary artefacts that had been subjected to cremation were deposited in twelve graves. Lamps were only recovered among the pyre goods and most glass vessels had been burnt but otherwise artefact types did not differ from grave goods. The largest assemblage of pyre goods included eight burnt samian vessels, other burnt ceramics, molten glass and burnt nails (438). The bone inlay was suggested by Ottaway to derive from caskets, but its possible derivation from couches or biers should be noted (3.5.2). The nails may derive from wooden objects placed on the pyre. According to the manner of pyre debris deposition three burials were *Brandgrubengräber* and three *Brandschüttungsgräber* (3.3.2). The latter were located in close association in the western part of the cemetery on the road frontage (Fig. 5.8). These burials and those in their immediate vicinity were characterised by the presence of pyre goods rather than grave goods, and a restricted group of artefact types, lamps, unguent bottles and coins as well as some otherwise absent imported finewares (Fig. 5.9). Ottaway (1992: 79-80) identified the same spatial cluster on the criteria of coins, unusual imported ceramics and pyre debris, and suggested a military association, but the evidence for a fort at Winchester (Wacher 1995: 291; Biddle 1975: 296-7, 1983) is not yet convincing. However lamps, unguent bottles and coins are the diagnostic grave good types identified in contemporary burials in central Italy and some military cemeteries on the Rhineland (3.5.4). Other early Roman southern British cremation cemeteries provide no parallels to this co-occurrence of pyre debris, pyre goods and certain artefact types in close proximity. These burials are therefore likely to represent non-local and probably non-insular tradition, but they only account for a very small proportion of all burials and are unlikely to distort significantly the statistics derived from the cemetery as a basis for regional practice.

Grave pits were all simple earth cut features, usually of the minimum size to receive the deposit. Approximately 60% of burials were urned in both phases. Jars in local or regional fabrics were the most frequent form of cremation container (83% of containers). One third of graves included ceramics (Fig. 5.10). Local and regional fabrics dominated the ceramic assemblage. Samian accounted for most of the non-local fabrics (16%), but ten of the eighteen vessels were recovered from one grave (566). Some ceramics were damaged before burial, for examples by holes pierced in cremation containers (524, 536, 558). As in other cemeteries some burial vessels were kiln wasters or of a soft and crumbly fabric perhaps meant only for burial deposition (cf. Philpott 1991: 36; Tuffreau-Libre forthcoming).

An approximately even number of graves contained flagons, beakers, dishes/platters and cups (Fig. 5.11), but dishes and cups were the most popular forms in the overall accessory vessel assemblage (Fig. 5.12) because of their high representation in a small number of graves. In the few graves with four or more accessory vessels (Fig. 5.13) there is often a regular number of each, supplemented by a flagon.

Almost half the graves contained some other type of artefact, most frequently nails derived from wooden objects, boxes and possible residual finds and occasionally hobnails (Fig. 5.10). Various unidentifiable iron artefacts were probably derived from similar sources. Other non-ceramic artefact types included gaming pieces and a small bronze wheel. Figure 5.10 represents the maximum number of graves where animal bone recovered from the fill may have been deposited with the burial. The minimum number is eight.

Struck (1995: 145) and Ottaway have already noted the decline in average number of ceramics per burial over time. My analysis is consistent with their results. While approximately a third of burials contained ceramics in both phases, the average number of ceramics per grave declined by half from 1.23 to 0.61. All but one of the deposits of more than five vessels occurred in phase 1. The form composition showed little change. The proportion of burials with non-ceramic artefact types remained constant; the largest such assemblage with the widest variety of non-ceramic artefacts, 466, dates to phase 2.

A four-post structure marked 600 and a small number of other graves were possibly marked by post-holes and or by building materials. One certain masonry monument (F272) lay close to the Cirencester road, with a possible example to its south disturbed by burials and by later activity. There were other non-burial deposits of animals and artefacts within the cemetery. Some are likely to have been deposited in relation to individual graves, while others were isolated deposits. Animal burials appear to have been associated with the eastern and southern cemetery margin (Fig. 5.3). The large non-grave good ceramic assemblage recovered during excavation may relate to funerary activity but various possible formation processes, including occupation and dumping on the site contributed to its accumulation. It is not therefore considered further.

5.2.4 Other early Roman burials from Winchester

There are very few reliably excavated burial assemblages contemporary with the Hyde Street cemetery. A small number of burial assemblages of late Iron Age or early Roman date was noted by Ward -Evans (in Hawkes *et al.* 1930: 183), but not described in any detail. First century cremation burials with large grave deposits lie at Nun's Walk, Highcliffe and Winnall lie at several hundred metres from the settlement area; they do not seem to lie within urban cemeteries and their distribution and composition are considered within discussion of the East Hampshire Tradition (6.4.3, 7.5 and 8.2-8.4). The only known contemporary burial monument from Winchester was a structure over a second century

cremation burial associated with a substantial extra-mural building to the west of the town (Haverfield 1900: 287).

5.2.5 The relationship of burial to settlement in the early Roman period

Fragmentary bone from the Lower Brooks site (Kjølbye Biddle 1992: 214) and a possible cremation from the Crown Hotel site are the exceptions to the absence of non-infant burial evidence from the settlement area. The separation of the dead from the earliest occupation period corresponds with other elements of the planned town, for example the Neronian / Flavian earthwork, and the forum and street grid probably laid out by the end of the first century, although there are earlier pieces of evidence for the latter which cannot be resolved into the principal alignments (Qualmann 1993: 75-6). The sequences from The Brooks (Zant 1993) and Wolvesey Palace (Biddle 1975: 321-5), beginning in the Flavian period with a dense arrangement of strip buildings, comprise the earliest substantial evidence from non-public buildings

The Hyde Street cemetery extended along the frontage of the Cirencester Road although understanding its development is complicated by the existence of the Iron Age hollow way to the east of the site. Plotting of the earliest burials did not show a preference for roadside location. It is also possible that the inhumation and animal burials were deposited as part of the demarcation of the cemetery boundaries, but they did not demarcate the same areas, and although the inhumation burials were the earliest part of the stratigraphic sequence in the central and northern part of the cemetery, there is no evidence that the earliest cremation burials were confined to the west of the ditch. A clearer organisation emerged by the second century when the ditch sequence to the north-east of the site and the Cirencester road to the south-west define a strip aligned along the Cirencester Road.

Neither larger ceramic nor non-ceramic assemblages were deposited in a roadside position (Figs. 5.14 and 5.15). The only burial group located close to the road is that with pyre good assemblages, which may simply reflect the spatial distinction of this group rather than necessarily a preference. The change to a preference for monuments in the second century accompanies a shift to greater emphasis on the street frontage. Only from the late first century does the cemetery assume the more obvious form of a *Gräberstraße*.

The Hyde Street cemetery is an important site within a wider context as it is one of the few sites within Britain to allow examination of an aspect of Mediterranean funerary culture rarely considered in the study of the cemeteries of the northern provinces. Epigraphic evidence sometimes identifies the provision of a public funeral and burial place as a mark of honour to decurions in provincial towns, often by the city gates and by special grant of the *ordo* on the edge of the *pomerium* (DareMBERG and SAGLIO 1896: 1408; DYSON 1992: 149; MARQUARDT 1886: 344, 350). This tradition derived from the voting of funerals at public expense as a mark of honour which developed at Rome in the second century BC and which in the imperial period was confined there to the imperial family and those enjoying its favour

(Flower 1996; Price 1987: 64). However study of the social group to whom this honour was paid and the distribution of the practice is as yet unrealised and would be a valuable contribution to the character of the cemetery as a public space. Recent small - scale studies are important, especially at Pompeii where the context of these inscriptions can be reliably re-established. Seventeen such inscriptions, all to magistrates and comprising a high proportion of all members of this group commemorated at Pompeii, recorded that either the land was donated by or the cost of the monument supported by the state (Kockel 1983: 12-14). Of these thirteen lay at an approximate distance of 30m from the city gates which other epigraphic evidence suggests to have been the distance of the *pomerium* from the town walls.

Scattered sources of information do however suggest that the practice is not universal. Reusser for example (1987: 244) notes that such inscriptions are relatively scarce around Aquileia and that there is no evidence for their concentration close to the city's walls, although the likely zone of the *pomerium* has scarcely been examined. There are occasional instances from Gaul, for example CIL XIII 5110 from Avenches and CIL XIII 2669 from Autun. Their absence in Britain is only to be expected given the general minimal uptake of the epigraphic habit (Biró 1975) and the lack of urban euergetic culture (Blagg 1990).

The distribution of burial monuments around towns may be a proxy form of evidence, although again this must take account of differential examination of different areas and is impeded by the lack of many modern studies of the distribution of monumental material and the complications of monument re-use. The position of the 'tomb of the Julii', immediately adjacent to the triumphal arch at Glanum suggests its candidature as an example for this type of monument, although the inscription makes no mention of it (Rolland 1969).

The position of the Hyde Road cemetery was situated in a primary context of display according to this model. Its southern tip was only 40m from the north gate of Winchester, therefore likely to be close to the *pomerium*, and only 10-20m from the junction of the Cirencester and Silchester roads (Fig. 5.2). The scarcity of funerary monuments from Winchester makes evaluation of those from Hyde Street difficult, but there is no evidence for a concentration of monuments here. The cemetery includes only two burials from which the number of accessory vessels places them above the threshold defining the 'East Hampshire Tradition' and they are among the smallest assemblages within this grouping (6.4.3).

5.3 Late Roman burials in the northern suburb

5.3.1 The Victoria Road cemetery

The excavated area lay to the west of the Cirencester road and north-west of the Hyde Street cemetery (Fig. 5.2 and 5.16). Burials on the site dated to between the late third and early fifth centuries, although a few in the secondary silt layers of the road boundary ditch and destroyed by a later ditch may date to an earlier period. The earliest inhumation and cremation burials were interred immediately south-

west of the roadside ditch and parallel to the Cirencester road. Later inhumation burials were further to the west and oriented west-east at an oblique angle to the road line (Fig. 5.18). The division of cemetery use into four phases has been established from stratigraphic relationships and alignment. For analysis burials belonging to the third and final phase, between which there is no clear distinction, have been amalgamated. Unequal numbers of burials were recovered from different phases (Fig. 5.17).

Cremation burials were recovered from all phases of use. They were usually urned and deposited in small shallow cuts, save for 95 which was very deep, well formed and equivalent in size to an inhumation. The majority of burials however were inhumed. Most graves were dug with care and grave sides were vertical or close to vertical and grave cuts were rectangular in shape, occasionally tapered at the east end. Two graves were larger than average and had been stepped at 1m depth, from which a normal size grave had been dug. All the shallow and/or irregular graves dated to the final phase. Corpses were laid out supine, with legs extended and arms either by the side, slightly flexed to lie on the pelvis, or folded across the trunk. Positions in the final phase showed more variety, including all bodies laid prone or on their side.

The presence of coffins was established from the number and distribution of nails, and more occasionally from coffin stains. Certain evidence was recovered from 28% of burials and possible evidence from 23%. The proportion of coffined burials varied over time (Fig. 5.19), as Qualmann has noted; in phase 3 no bodies had definitely been placed in coffins, although damage to these shallower burials may account for the lack of evidence. Numbers of nails suggest that some coffins must have been very elaborate, especially in phase 1: the average number of nails per coffin in phase 1 (58) is much higher than in phase 2 (14). Graves had occasionally been packed with stone.

One third of burials were accompanied by grave goods (Fig. 5.20). The 'equipment' category comprised mainly iron and bronze fragments of unknown original function. As some of these may well have been residual the proportion of burials with grave goods is probably exaggerated. The proportion of furnished burials declined over time from over 60% in phase 1 to 30% in later phases.

The predominant orientation of burials was with head to the west but there was significant change over time (Figs 5.21-5.24). The predominant north-south and north-west south-east orientation of the few phase 1 burials was parallel to the road alignment. West-east (over 95%) was the dominant orientation in phase 2 and remained the most frequent orientation in the final phase but characterised only a minority of burials.

The phase 1 burials, both inhumations and cremations, were distinguished from the later burials by the frequency of large ceramic deposits, elaborate coffins with hundreds of nails and stepped grave construction. A deposit (109) of five vessels and other artefacts in a wooden box placed at the end of phase 1 burial 108 is better interpreted as a grave - side offering rather than a cenotaph as no human bone was recovered in good preservation conditions. Save for the more frequent recovery of grave goods from

coffined burials in phase 2 (69%) than in phase 2 as a whole, further associations between grave structure, burial container and grave goods were not identified.

5.3.2 The Hyde Street (Late) cemetery and other burials from the northern suburb

Fifty four graves, probably of the second half of the fourth century were recorded at Hyde Street (Late) to the north-east (Fig. 5.2) but many were only observed during building work. Thirty were partially or wholly excavated, most within a small open area excavation (Fig. 5.25). Corpses were normally laid out in the same positions as at Victoria Road but four burials had been placed prone and one had been decapitated. Only 10% of fully excavated burials had any evidence for a coffin and 20% were furnished, usually with hobnails. Orientation of burials in both the excavated and observed sample shows the same degree of west-east preference as other sites (Fig. 5.26).

Late Roman burial practice in other parts of the northern cemetery outside Lankhills appears to have been similar to that at Victoria Road and Hyde Street. For example at the Cattle Market site up to sixty south-west north-east oriented inhumations were excavated in the 1930s. Collis (1978: 142-49) also reports small groups of similar east-west and usually unaccompanied inhumations. An exception to this is represented by the Eagle Hotel, just north-west of the North Gate and west of the Victoria Road site. The site comprised a small late Roman cemetery of approximately twenty five unaccompanied west-east inhumations, several of which were stratigraphically later than a single north-south orientated adult male inhumation in a lead coffin in a very deep grave shaft, with a coin of Constantine close to his right hand.

5.3.3 Lankhills

5.3.3.1 The development of the Lankhills cemetery

The use of the Lankhills site for burial dated from some point in the first three decades of the fourth century to the early fifth century. The cemetery was probably bounded to its west by the Cirencester Road and initially perhaps by feature 12. Burial spread from west to east during the fourth century, although the western area was still in use in the latest period. The precision of dating of different areas of the cemetery may be disputed but the broad outline of the spread of burial from area W to O during the course of the fourth century is convincing (Fig. 5.27).

Six cremations were recovered in the main excavation and a further three in earlier salvage. The context of two unurned cremations in a layer of topsoil in the better preserved burial sequence in feature 12 suggests that many similar burials have been lost. Two urned cremations were recovered and an inhumation sized *Brandgrubengrab* (60) and *bustum* (359). The dating of four cremations to the second half of the century demonstrates the persistence of the rite as a minority practice.

The predominant burial mode was inhumation. Most grave pits were rectangular in plan and in cross section. Exceptions include fourteen 'step graves', abnormally large pits stepped in at a depth of c. 0.5m with normal size graves cut in their base. Wood fragments occasionally suggested that the 'steps' had supported a wooden platform over the grave. In two instances vessels may have been placed on these platforms. Most graves were carefully shaped but the proportion of these declined over time. Of the seven irregular shaped graves six dated to the latest phases. Gullies interpreted as bedding trenches for hedges delineated rectangular enclosures around four graves. The profiles of better preserved graves in feature 12 suggest that most burials were marked by mounds.

83% of burials were coffined although the proportion was less than half in area O. The presence of brackets indicated more elaborate coffins in four burials. 8.4% of graves were lined with flint and tile. The frequency of packing in area E suggests that it was more frequent in the final third of the fourth century. Corpses had been laid out in the same range of positions as at Victoria Road. A much larger proportion of individuals were buried on their side, placed prone or decapitated in area O than elsewhere, indicating that this was becoming more common in the latest phase of use.

54% of all graves and 63.2% of intact graves contained grave goods. The numbers of graves with different artefact types are represented in Fig. 5.28. The slightly higher than average proportion of graves with burial furniture in area W suggests that the general incidence of grave furniture declined over time, although not in all categories, for example the proportion of burials with coins and worn personal ornaments was greater in area O than area W. Complex patterns of within-grave location of grave goods were elicited by Clarke but are not analysed further here.

There are several examples of post-burial deposition, of ceramics, coins, ornaments and animals. For example the fill of the 'cenotaph' (400) included two dogs and five coins. A group of personal ornaments had been deposited in the fill of grave 100, and two pewter bowls in 408. The frequency of coins and ceramics deposited on the surface of graves in the fill of feature 12 must again be a function of better preservation of graves within this feature.

The predominantly west-east orientation of graves (Fig. 5.29) does not apply to the whole cemetery however. Burials with heads to the south-west and west-south-west were concentrated in the western part of the site (Clarke 1979: Fig. 10, opposite page 131), perhaps aligned at right angles to the Cirencester Road, projected to run 20-30m to the west of the site. Burials with a predominantly western alignment in the eastern half of Area W, in area F and E were at right angles to feature 12. In area O burials were characterised by a much greater diversity of orientation.

5.3.3.2 Burial hierarchy and intrusive burials at Lankhills

Principal emphasis in the interpretation of differences in burial practice at Lankhills has been on identifying ethnic rather than status difference. Clarke identified two groups of intrusive burials to which

he ascribed a non-local origin, the first from Hungary, either from within or beyond the empire, perhaps officials running the *gynaecium* possibly associated with Winchester in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the second Anglo-Saxons settled in the late fourth or early fifth century as soldiers or officials in Roman service. The latter group has commanded little acceptance and while the former group has met with more respect the empirical basis for the identification of the former has been contested. Baldwin (1985) has questioned its degree of internal consistency and Baldwin and Philpott (1991) have pointed out the diversity of the background of late Romano-British burial practice against which Lankhills must be compared. This is now better characterised than at the time of Clarke's survey. Philpott (1991: 144-6) has established that late Romano-British burials with only worn bracelets rarely show signs of 'casual' burial. Provision of worn personal ornaments and other grave goods is not unique to Lankhills, if indeed all the ornaments at Lankhills were worn (Esmonde Cleary 1983). Examination of other late Roman cemeteries in Britain with burial assemblages of worn ornaments suggests some diversity of practice. Ornaments were not worn in general in burials at Butt Road (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 39, 130) or Poundbury (Woodward in Farwell and Molleson 1992: 232) but the majority were worn in the eastern cemetery at London, as at Lankhills mostly on the left wrist or arm.

Further comment on the ethnic association of these burials is reserved to Chapter 8.5-6. The question of burial status is considered further here. Clarke (1979: 191-97) argued that there was a spatial association between the intrusive graves and other high status burials, which he identified from stepped grave construction and the presence of particular artefact types, ivory, pewter, glass and silver, although he did not justify these criteria. This is therefore tested here by comparing the number of artefact types (NAT) of burials with these attributes to the NAT of burials with other attributes (note 5.2). The average NAT for stepped graves is 2.06 compared to the site average of 1.11. As grave with grave goods have a minimum NAT of 1, the NAT of graves with the attributes identified by Clarke was compared to the average NAT of burials with grave goods only of 1.79 (Fig. 5.30). The attributes identified by Clarke as indicative of higher status are confirmed to be amongst those with the higher NAT values. However burials with a number of items of female ornament and brooches and knives also have the highest NAT value. However the categories of female ornament and silver artefacts overlap in the case of some rings and pins.

Burial differentiation can therefore be couched in the following terms, incorporating Clarke's discussion of the changing importance of different grave good types over time. In the first half of the fourth century certain burials were distinguished by a number of characteristics, stepped construction and location within enclosures, more elaborate coffins (as Clarke noted (1979: 336) associated with stepped graves), greater numbers of artefacts and certain artefact types. Large post-burial deposits were also placed in graves characterised by either large grave good deposits or grave construction. In the second half of the century the proportion of graves with grave good decreased but a number of burials were characterised by a high number of artefact types and by being buried with or more often wearing ornaments, of differing type partly dependent on age or sex. While a more rigorous analysis of their spatial relationship to other graves of Clarke's intrusive groups is needed, it is certainly true that they are

not clustered but distributed across the cemetery, suggesting their integration with groups already using the cemetery. The grave good types are also those within the general *koine* employed at Lankhills. The provision of large quantities of personal ornaments, worn and unworn, to children and adult females characterises many late Romano-British urban cemeteries, although with the possible exception of York (RCHM 1962) rarely to the same extent as Lankhills (Philpott 1993a). The ornaments and their burial in large numbers had their place within an existing frame of reference. The burial of a group of males in the symbols of late Roman authority is more innovative within a Romano-British context. The types of grave good are considered further in 8.5

5.4 Late Roman cemeteries in the eastern suburb

The eastern suburb's topography, including the course of the road to Neatham, is poorly understood (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 150). 19th century references to cremations from Water Lane suggests the existence of early Roman cemeteries (Esmonde-Cleary 1987: 152) but most known burials are late Roman in date and have been discovered from St Martin's Close to the north to the slope of St Giles' Hill to the south (Collis 1978: Haverfield 1900). These are unlikely to derive from a continuous cemetery area (Fig. 5.31).

5.4.1 Chester Road

Burial evidence from Chester Road was recovered primarily from the western part of Trench III, from which one hundred and ten burials were excavated, the eastern side having been destroyed by 19th century housing. Until its latest phases the cemetery was subdivided by a ditch and later a fence on a line 1m to the south running east-west across the southern half of the site (Fig. 5.32). Both sides of this divide received burials throughout the use of the cemetery. No difference could be demonstrated between burials on either side of this line. In the final phase a trackway ran north-north-west south-south-east on the western margin of the site, overlying earlier graves. Contemporary graves appeared to be oriented at right-angles to this track. The relationship of this track to the Neatham road is unknown.

The area was used as a cemetery from the late third to early fifth centuries. The high frequency of stratigraphic relationships between graves allowed burial phases to be more easily established but the transfer of absolute dates from changes in burial practice at Lankhills is again contested (appendix 4.1). The changes in burial practice between phases are not therefore assigned absolute dates within the period of cemetery use.

Cremation burials were recovered from several phases but inhumation was the main burial mode. The majority of graves were well shaped in all periods. The principal exceptions were three unusually deep graves. However of the seven irregular shaped graves six dated to the latest phases. According to Qualmann the frequency of intercutting increased in the final phase. Corpses were laid in the same range of positions as at Victoria Road. Three burials were deposited prone and up to four on

their right side, but these 'irregularities' did not characterise a single period. Certain evidence of coffins was recovered from 33% of graves, and possible evidence from a further 21%. The proportion was lower than in other cemeteries probably because of the damage inflicted by intensive re-use of burial space. The proportion of coffined burials did not change over time. Occasionally graves were packed with flint and stone. 25% of burials were provided with grave goods, the proportion changing little through time. Hobnails were the predominant accompaniment (Fig. 5.33). The predominant west-east orientation on the site masks the change over time from north-south in phases 1 and 2 to west-east in later phases (Figs. 5.34-5.36).

Burial 530 of a 17-25 year old female was distinguished by exceptional treatment in several respects. It was the only burial with extensive personal ornament, wearing several worked bone bracelets and a single bronze bracelet, and had been placed in a coffin in one of the three exceptionally deep grave cuts and its sides packed with flint. Burials from which there was definite evidence for the presence of a coffin were more likely to contain grave goods (43%) than those from which there was no evidence of a coffin (6.2%), but further associations between grave structure, burial container and grave goods were not identified.

5.4.2 St Martin's Close and other sites

Fifty two burials were identified at St Martin's Close but only thirty one excavated, most of these only partially (Fig. 5.37), though more extensive excavation took place only around mound F55 (Fig. 5.38). The site was dated to the second half of the fourth century, again by comparison with Lankhills. The massive predominance of adults in the age profile is not surprising given excavation conditions. One third of burials had been definitely placed in coffins, seven also packed with flint or lined or roofed with limestone roof tiles. A lead lined coffin was recovered from one grave. Otherwise rarely occurring grave goods were frequent, a box inlaid with bone veneer strips containing a comb (36), a silver pin with bird-shaped head (38), and gold thread (57). The predominant orientation was west-east.

Other late Roman burials from the eastern cemetery deserve a brief comment. Small groups of late fourth century unaccompanied inhumations were excavated in Water Lane and by the Blue Boar, but there were some exceptional burial treatments and furniture elsewhere. The only other lead coffins from Winchester were also recovered from the eastern cemetery, 200-300m to the south of St Martin's Close in St John's Street. One comprised a 'double leaden coffin additionally protected with iron bars' the other a lead-lined coffin from which a gold coin of Constantine was recovered (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 152; Haverfield 1900: 287). What looks like the loop of a Type IIA buckle (cf. Hawkes and Dunning 1961: Fig. 17, g) was found in a grave on Blue Boar Hill but the context must be regarded as doubtful as the other objects from the grave were a first to second century fibula and a mediaeval rowel-spur (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 152; pers. comm.). This site does however suggest that the type of metalwork identified at Lankhills was not exclusive to that cemetery.

5.6 Oram's Arbour and the western suburb

Occupation evidence in the western suburb is confined to the substantial but scantily reported buildings destroyed by the railway cutting (Haverfield 1900: 287) and the area to the south of the Old Sarum Road used for agriculture and then for dumping of bone waste at the end of the first century (Wilson 1975a: 278-9). Of the small groups of burials recovered, the principal information derives from sections through the Oram's Arbour Iron Age enclosure ditch. Burials were deposited in the ditch from the late third to the early fifth century. The principal ditch sections have revealed a population profile markedly different from that of other Winchester cemeteries. The vast majority of burials were of infants; over half less than three months old. At both Carfax and New Road the depositional sequence consisted of small groups of burials interspersed by periods of disuse in which the ditch gradually silted up. Only a very small proportion of the infant burials were coffined, but graves for adults had been deeply and carefully cut, and the bodies had been coffined and provided with grave goods to the same degree as contemporary burials elsewhere. At Carfax some separation was exercised between adult and infant burials; four adult burials were beside rather than in the ditch. West-east was the most common orientation.

Some spatial distinction was also exercised between the northern and western sides of the ditch. A higher proportion of adult burials characterised the latter. On the western side of Oram's Arbour an entrance was excavated, through which a minor road ran in the Roman period (Biddle 1968). On the inner edge of the north ditch of the entrance one infant, one child and two adults had been buried. In salvage excavations at 22-34 Romsey Road at the southern end of the western ditch section only adult burials dated to the late second or early third century were recovered.

Other isolated burials or small groups have been reported from the western suburb. Outside the ditch enclosure isolated adult inhumations were recovered during observations along Clifton Terrace. The 45 Romsey Road excavations also suggest the existence of a normal late Roman cemetery further to the west on West Hill near the Old Sarum road.

5.6 The relationship of burial to street frontage and the 'managed cemetery'

Direct evidence for the relationship of cemetery to road is unusually plentiful at Winchester. The changing layout of the cemetery at Hyde Street suggested that by the second century this section at least of the Cirencester Road had become a *Gräberstraße* (5.2.5), a relatively narrow strip of burials aligned along the road frontage with occasional monuments, although large grave good assemblages were not deposited in this area more than any other. The absence of third century burials impeded the tracing of developments in the relationship between street frontage and burial. The exceptionally large graves of the first phase at Victoria Road, probably dated to the late third century, are close to and aligned on the Cirencester road, but in subsequent phases burials were not on the road frontage and orientation was not influenced by the road line. The apparent orientation of burials at right angles to the trackway in the final

phase of development at Chester Road suggests that a close relationship between may have persisted into the late fourth or early fifth century, but it is not clear whether the trackway was any more than a cemetery pathway the line of which was influenced by the orientation of burials.

Although other relationships between burial and road frontages have not been excavated, other evidence is indirectly relevant. For the first part of the fourth century at Lankhills burials are estimated to have been aligned roughly at right angles to the Cirencester Road, although the interface of the cemetery and the road was not excavated. West-east became the dominant burial orientation in all the Winchester cemeteries during the course of the fourth century. Local features may still be influential on burial orientation, as the relationship of burial to feature 12 at Lankhills demonstrates, but such features only to appear to influence orientation within the general framework of west-east orientation. A much stronger relationship between local features and burial alignment has been noted in the rural sample (6.6). The distribution of enclosed and more structurally elaborate graves, as well as those with certain artefact assemblages at Lankhills also shows at least that the road frontage was not the only context in which burial display could be located (note 5.3).

The development of Winchester's cemeteries over time provides a useful starting point to comment on the 'managed cemetery'. From initial suggestions by Thomas (1981: 232-3), the 'managed cemetery' characterised by its 'initial choice of sites, allocation of plots, and a degree of small minded fussiness about order, arrangement and alignment' has become a commonplace of the archaeology of fourth century Britain (Esmonde-Cleary 1992: 33; Philpott 1991, 1993b; Philpott and Reece 1993: 421; Watts 1991). Philpott (1993b: 417) has argued that 'semi-professional undertakers' replace family organisation of the funeral and introduce regularity of layout and practice. Standardisation of practice and the choice of new sites manifest an extension of civic control to the cemeteries of larger settlements. A similar view allows Burnham and Wachter (1990: 31) to extrapolate from cemetery organisation to the vigour of civic life:

'organised disposal of the dead in large communal cemeteries, set aside for the purpose, is a useful indicator of more complex communities, so that the appearance of isolated burial plots can be instructive; at Ilchester the late burials within the extra-mural plots might well be indicative of the later Roman decline in standards within a contracting settlement.'

Visual comparison of the plans of Hyde Street with Winchester's late Roman cemeteries renders the 'managed cemetery' a superficially attractive hypothesis but the 'managed cemetery' hypothesis can be disputed on both general grounds and from specific data sets. In general organisational principles behind rectangular inhumation graves on a common orientation suggest themselves to the eye much more readily than scattered circular or irregular shaped cremation burials. Implicit to the argument seems to be the proposition that settlements of greater size and complexity will demand unified and highly regulated cemetery space. The examples of ancient Rome (Hopkins 1983; Purcell 1987) and nineteenth century London (Curl 1980) show that while urban populations can generate intense demand for land for burial

on urban peripheries, regulation of burial space is often a response to rather than an anticipation of such pressure. Nor is the converse of the proposition supported. Complex 'organised' cemeteries exist without either large nucleated populations or any obvious regulatory authority, for example early mediaeval 'row grave' cemeteries.

With reference to the specific examples from Winchester a different but equally 'managed' form of cemetery organisation governed the development of the Hyde Street cemetery. The principles by which the earliest burials were organised is difficult to interpret but by the second century the cemetery was clearly organised. Other general evidence suggests the existence of some form of management of cremation cemeteries, for example the spatial separation of cremation and burial at Hyde Street and the majority of other early Roman cemeteries (3.4), or the rarity of mutual disturbance by graves in the majority of early cremation cemeteries, for example at Chichester St Pancras, Baldock, St Albans Stephens, or east London. Epigraphic and literary evidence suggests a limited role for civic intervention in the running of cemeteries (3.4.2). Some of the late 'managed cemeteries' are likely to be *ad hoc* developments from groups of burials on the boundary ditches of settlement enclosures like those at Ilchester; examples include Butt Road (Crummy *et al.* 1993), Newarke Street, Leicester (Cooper 1996a) and Poundbury (Farwell and Molleson 1993). The 'rise' of the managed cemetery has been exaggerated. It does not distinguish the early from the late Roman period, nor is it useful evidence for the vigour of civic institutions.

5.7 Differentiation in burial practice in Winchester's late Roman cemeteries

The cemeteries of late Roman Winchester shared a common ritual language based on a very similar form of inhumation in all the cemeteries considered, accompanied by a common range of grave goods; comparison of figures 5.10 with 5.20, 5.28 and 5.33 shows that in all cemeteries the proportion of burials with ceramics decreased and that with hobnailed footwear and personal ornament increased, albeit to different degrees.

The above analyses have drawn attention to the differences within individual cemeteries, between buried individuals and between different phases of use, especially noticeable at Lankhills and Victoria Road. However differences between cemeteries also emerge. The lack of sufficient evidence from the western and southern sides of the town obstructs a comparison of social difference in different burial areas. To Esmonde Cleary (1987: 155) the 'poorly dug graves' and 'low quality' grave goods at Oram's Arbour suggested that 'this land of marginal utility may have been used for the burial of the marginal in society'. However the site seems to account for some of the infants of which sufficient numbers are lacking from the majority of late Roman cemeteries to account for likely mortality rates (Watts 1989). The treatment of adult burials was similar to the average elsewhere. The evidence of the northern and eastern suburbs suggest a difference in cemetery areas within suburbs.

At Lankhills the proportion of graves with artefacts and the average NAT per grave are higher than other cemeteries in the northern suburb (Fig. 5.39 and 5.40). The deposition of later offerings in the fill of or on the surface of the grave and elaborate grave constructions and enclosures are also more frequent than in other areas of the northern cemetery, but it should not be forgotten that a larger area has been excavated from this than from other cemeteries. The evidence from the earliest phases at the Eagle Hotel and on the road frontage at Victoria Road Late suggests that it is the persistent deposition of grave goods with a high proportion of graves into the late fourth century that differentiates Lankhills from other cemeteries in the northern suburbs.

Monuments, more elaborate coffin types and grave goods were recovered less from the most extensively excavated area in the eastern cemetery, Chester Road, than from the small groups of burials, at St Martin's Close, St John's Street and Blue Boar Hill. Whether these monuments derived from large urban cemeteries is difficult to assess although it seems likely in the case of St Martins Close.

The difference in the sample size also makes it impossible to compare the eastern and northern suburbs directly. Current evidence suggests some differences in the culture of burial practice between the two areas. For example 'plaster' burials and lead-lined coffins, which in comparison to other late Roman towns are rare in Winchester (cf. Green 1993; Toller 1977), have been recovered from the eastern suburb but not the northern. The northern cemetery is however characterised by much larger assemblages in personal ornaments and dress fittings. Therefore while the assessment of burial practice from Winchester provides a basis for a regional threshold of burial display based on a large sample, the internal differentiation must not be forgotten.

Chapter 6 Rural burial practice and the placing of the dead on rural sites

6.1 Introduction

There are two aims within this chapter, to summarise burial practice in the rural cemeteries in order to permit the comparison in chapter 7 with the *civitas* capital and minor centre burial assemblages of Hampshire and Hertfordshire explored in chapters 4 and 5, and to examine current hypotheses for rural society based on the spatial relationship of burial to settlement.

For each county the bias introduced by local research activity to the study of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) and Roman period burial practice is briefly demonstrated; this supplements the demonstration of differences at the coarser regional level in burial distribution (Chapter 2) and is a necessary prerequisite to the analysis of the distribution of different types of burial assemblage. The different stages of burial practice in the rural cemeteries are summarised in order to allow the subsequent comparison with the *civitas* capital and minor centres.

Differences between burials in the rural sample are examined in order to assess current hypotheses on the visibility of status differentiation in rural burial and the location of burials on rural sites in the samples from both counties is then examined in detail (1.4). The Hampshire sample offers one of the most extensive published bodies of rural burials recovered within a broader settlement context but nevertheless remains a small sample. To assess the relative importance of the preferences identified in the location of burial in the Hertfordshire and especially the Hampshire sample a broader survey of burial evidence from villa and other rural settlements was effected (note 6. 1).

6.2 Burial and the archaeological record in Hampshire

Urban development and road building, antiquarian or recent archaeological activity and geology condition the archaeology of the LPRIA and early Roman period in Hampshire. The first two factors have produced intensive examination of sites along the M3 corridor and A303 widening scheme, and at some urban sites, particularly around Winchester, Alton / Neatham, and the environs of Basingstoke (Champion and Champion 1981: 39; Cunliffe 1993: 179-80; Hughes 1994; Johnston 1981). The chalk downlands of the north of the county are much better known than the river valleys in the south, of which only relatively recent excavation is recovering settlements of the late Iron Age and Roman period (e.g. Adam *et al.* 1997; Crockett 1996).

There is also a bias to site type in recent activity. The domination of Iron Age settlement archaeology by the study of hillforts has been mitigated by recent examination of a wider range of open and enclosed sites. However relatively extensive downland settlement, occupied over long periods, although not necessarily continuously, from the Early Iron Age into the Roman period, bounded and / or subdivided at certain periods of their history by large ditched enclosures and thus highly archaeologically

visible have attracted most recent archaeological effort. Several of these have been very extensively examined (e.g. Winnall Down, Easton Lane, Owslebury). A variety of other Roman rural settlement types have been investigated, although the burial record from these is scant. Johnston (1978) has summarised the evidence for the variety of villa types in the county and the variables that might influence their distribution. With the exception of East Meon, there has been little recent large scale villa excavation; most attention has been devoted to subsidiary buildings (Johnston 1981: 48). The distribution of villas again illustrates a similar bias to the chalk downland (Johnston 1978: Fig. 22). Chalton is the only excavated example of a village site from Hampshire (Cunliffe 1973; 1977).

There is little information on the minor centres. Neatham is the only such site to have been excavated on a large scale (Millett and Graham 1986). The burials from Neatham are discussed in conjunction with the other rural examples of the East Hampshire Tradition (6.4.3). Some information is available on Bitterne (Cotton and Gathercole 1958), whilst other comparable sites are poorly known archaeologically, for example the roadside complex at East Anton near Andover (Cunliffe 1993: 246; Johnston 1981) and Nursling (Adam *et al.* 1997).

The burial record of all periods is the product of the same forces. For example the majority of long barrows (RCHME 1979: frontispiece) and Iron Age burials on settlement sites (Whimster 1981: figs. 4, 7 and 10) have been discovered on downland in the northern half of the county. Examination of the distribution of Roman burials recorded in the SMR reveals a concentration in (local government) districts in the north of the county (Basingstoke, East Hampshire, Test Valley and Winchester), in particular around the towns of Winchester, Alton, Andover and Basingstoke. Districts in the south-west and south are under-represented, especially the New Forest but also Portsmouth, Southampton, Fareham, Eastleigh and Havant (Fig. 6.1). The distribution of early Anglo-Saxon burials is also biased to the same parts of the county (Hawkes 1986: Fig. 6), although from Bitterne and Southampton there are many undated burials which are likely to belong to the early mediaeval period (Cotton and Gathercole 1958: 30; Wendy Barrett pers. comm.). The difference is also affected by the different preservational environments within the county for human bone, which have been characterised at a coarse level within a more general consideration of burial environments in Wessex (Mays 1991). The extensive chalk downland provides relatively good preservation condition for inhumation burials in particular, but the tertiary clay and sand in the Hampshire basin and the heathland of the New Forest offer a less favourable environment.

6.3.1 Principal trends in burial in Iron Age and Roman Hampshire

For the majority of the Iron Age the visible form of burial practice in Hampshire, like much of central southern England, was the deposition of human body parts, whole corpses, articulated limbs or fragments of bone, usually with other material, in a variety of depositional contexts around settlements (Wait 1985; Whimster 1981; Wilson 1981), although occasional evidence exists for discrete burial in the Early Iron Age (EIA) (Piggott 1953). Recent work has elicited recurring depositional associations between human bone and other artefacts (Wait 1985; Hill 1995). In the Late Iron Age the deposition of

complete rather than part bodies forms an increasing part of the burial record (Wait 1985: 116; Whimster 1981: 191). The classification of the context of deposition as grave or other type of feature is problematic (Hill 1995), as contexts such as pit 5 at Viabes Farm illustrate (Millett and Russell 1982). Nevertheless in the first century BC, an increasing proportion of bodies are buried within graves occasionally within demarcated cemeteries (Whimster 1981: 191). Of this the principal example is Owslebury.

The deposition of skeletal fragments and part rather than whole bodies does not disappear entirely in the Roman period. Different depositional practices, for example whether material is deposited on the surface or within pits or ditches will also bias the survival of fragmentary human remains but to an extent that cannot yet be modelled. Recovery of fragmentary human skeletal material also depends heavily on the recovery strategies for faunal samples.

At some sites where large deposits of faunal remains have been examined the practice of partial deposition ends at around the time of the Roman conquest. At Old Down Farm (Andover), the Middle Iron Age (MIA) human remains assemblage comprises whole inhumations and skeletal fragments, but in the LIA and early Roman period only whole inhumations were recovered, the distribution of which has been plotted by Wait (1985: 106-7). The absence of fragmentary human bone from faunal samples from Neatham or Ructstalls Hill is further negative evidence against the continuing deposition of fragmentary remains within settlement sites in the Roman period. The age profile of the human skeletal fragment assemblages within the settlement area at Winnall Down (Fasham 1985: 120) may suggest changes from the Iron Age to Roman period. In the MIA fragments from adults and under one year olds were recovered from within the settlement area in a ratio of 14:10; in the Roman period this changes to 5:16.

Although the samples are smaller and largely comprise infants the distribution of skeletal fragments appears to show significant patterns. In the fourth century animal bone assemblage from Portchester Castle (over 36,000 fragments, of which 10,000 are Roman) infant skeletal material was recovered from twenty seven contexts, as burials from four pit fills and one layer and as individual fragments from nine pit fills and thirteen layers. Almost all of the fragmentary material derived from long bones, although hand recovery must bias the assemblage towards larger bones. Within the fragmentary assemblage the skeletal areas of greatest bone density are best represented. It is striking that the admittedly small sample of skeletal fragments is biased in the lower limbs to the right of the body by a ratio of greater than 4:1 (Fig. 6.2). Hooper (in Cunliffe 1975: 376) noted that skeletal fragments from infants were derived from pits of which the fill frequently included the bones of very young animals, especially pig and sheep. An association with whole cat skeletons, cat bones (pits 47, 86, 92), and ox skulls (pits 46 and 129) can also be observed. However the distribution of infant burials or fragments does not appear to correspond to the spatial divisions elicited from cluster analysis of the faunal remains which were accredited to different emphasis on butchery, food preparation and consumption (Creighton 1985: 45-49). The presence of infant burials was interpreted by Cunliffe (1975: 427) as evidence for the residence of women in the fort, 'who adopted the accepted expedient of disposing of dead infants with

little ceremony in convenient places'. However the recurring associations suggest that the deposition of infants and other elements of pit fills was not only structured by expediency.

Occasional evidence for deposition of adult body parts on settlement sites persists into the late Roman period. At Cowdery's Down a skull fragment probably from an adult male and two infant burials were recovered from the terminal of late Roman enclosure ditch 2. At Balksbury single large fragments of adult skulls were recovered from the late Roman fills of Gully 8 and pit 14, within the settlement area and close to another late Roman burial (Fig. 6.13). Examples from Owslebury are detailed below.

Within the burial sample the dates of cremation and inhumation burials within the Roman period broadly follow the conventional dates for Roman Britain. There are occasional MIA cremations, for example from Easton Lane and Owslebury of the second or first centuries BC. In the LPRIA and early Roman period occasional inhumations are recorded (Neatham, Old Down Farm (Andover)) but cremations comprise the majority of known burials. In the late Roman period inhumation predominated, although the date of change is hard to document, and cremation persisted into the fourth century at Winchester (5.3.1, 5.3.3) and Owslebury. The predominance of the late Roman period and of inhumations in the burial sample within Hampshire has already been established (Fig. 2.1). Both figures were biased by the large sample from Winchester's urban cemeteries but when these are removed the rural sample shows the same predominance, albeit to a lesser degree. The plotting of burial evidence suggests different regional representation of cremation and inhumation, the latter favouring the west of the county (Fig. 6.1). The county lies on a boundary between the predominantly cremating early Roman south-eastern England and predominantly inhuming Dorset, but as very few of these inhumations are dated it is not clear whether this reflected a bias in the western part of the county to the late Roman period or an early Roman preference for inhumation (cf. 2.5).

6.4 Early Roman burials

Discussion of early Roman burial practice is subdivided into three sections, examination of the largest rural burial sample from Owslebury, a brief description of other early Roman evidence and the 'East Hampshire Tradition'.

6.4.1 Burial practice at Owslebury

A multi-period rural settlement was excavated at Owslebury in the late 1960s of which the principal occupation dated from the third century BC to fourth century AD. It comprised several enclosures integrated into a system of trackways (Fig. 6.3), initially a single banjo enclosure, from the first century BC to the first century AD a 'multiple defined entrance' settlement (Collis 1970: 256), with several trackways radiating from a central area and finally a mid- and late Roman phase in which the subdivision of the site by ditched enclosures and defined entrances was not so obvious. Owslebury offers a hierarchical model of rural burial practice to be tested against later data (Collis 1977b). The extent to

which this model is generally valid is tested below (6.14) but here practice at Owslebury itself is examined.

Burial evidence was recovered in varying quantities from all occupation periods (Figs. 6.4 and 6.5), although the dating of inhumation burials is problematic as they lacked grave goods and are rarely stratigraphically related to other features. The date of several burials is based on neighbouring features. Given the degree of plough damage it is unlikely that the complete burial sample was recovered which originally existed within the excavation area. However change in the number of burials appears to be a factor of changing preferences in the location of the dead rather than in the site population; occupation evidence does not imply equivalent changes in population.

The burials associated with the third to second century BC banjo enclosure comprise a child cremation (69) near the entrance and two infant inhumations to the rear of the enclosure. In the first century BC the settlement was radically remodelled and one area, cemetery 1, lying in a loop of outside the settlement enclosure ditch was specifically devoted to burial until the second century AD. Within the earlier western half of cemetery 1 the first burial (39), dated to the first half of the first century BC is an extended male inhumation with weaponry. Other burials within the enclosure were cremations. Until the first century AD the only burials outside the enclosure were of infants but in the second century adult inhumations were buried in the area where infants had previously been deposited, outside one entrance to the north of the site (22 and 23), and a joint adult cremation burial (1) on a trackway leading from the southern entrance to the site (Figs. 6.4 and 6.8). In the final phase adult and infant burials were scattered without obvious concentration. In all periods burials were located on the edge of the site or on the margin of individual enclosures, although it should be noted that the central area of the site was not excavated.

Three forms of burial practice were recorded, cremation, inhumation and the deposition of unburnt skeletal fragments in settlement features. Much of the latter comprise undated, isolated and so far unreported infant bones. Most other fragments of which any skeletal information is available are skull fragments. The female skull in a c. 4m deep fourth century pit is unlikely to derive from a disturbed burial (Collis 1968: 30) and is the most obvious example of a the deliberate deposition of individual body parts persisting until late in the Roman period. The distribution of human skeletal fragments requires more detailed analysis in conjunction with that of other depositional practices.

The colour and condition of the cremated bone testify to a high efficiency of cremation. Only small amounts of cremated bone seem to have been buried, although with lack of quantification it is impossible to compare Owslebury to other sites. Poor preservation must have influenced the amount of bone which could be archaeologically recovered. The only exception was burial 1, where a much larger proportion of both individuals present had been excavated. Pyre debris was not deposited in the grave. The cremated sheep, pig and bird remains from burial 1 were the only pyre goods recovered.

The majority of cremations of all periods were unurned; the small number of urned burials dated to the first century AD or later. The most frequently occurring grave goods were ceramics. In most cases grave goods had been deposited intact but in one case (41) some of the vessels must have been broken before deposition or placed in the grave as fragments only. Plough damage had disturbed many ceramic assemblages. Using the maximum figures, there were an average of 7.2 ceramics per grave. This average rose from 4.9 in the first century BC to 7.1 in the first century AD. The largest ceramic deposit of at least 36 vessels in burial 1 dated to the second century AD.

The earliest ceramics were in local fabrics. In the first half of the first century AD they were complemented by small numbers of imported vessels, Gallo-Belgic wares and from the mid first century occasional samian vessels, the arrival of these imports possibly the outcome of Owslebury's changed position within exchange networks (Collis 1990: 215). Samian comprised only 4% of all vessels, and five of seven vessels were recovered from one mid first century grave. The majority of vessels in 1 had been made in the same soft fabric, probably deliberately for burial. A shift in form preference is visible between the first century BC and first century AD. Jars were the commonest form in the first century BC burials but the form of the majority of the other vessels could not be reconstructed. Dishes and the majority of cups were recovered only from first century AD burials (Fig. 6.6). Flagons were rare in comparison to urban assemblages. Identification of services is frustrated by damage but most burials seemed to comprise a combination of dishes and drinking vessels with jar or bowl. There were larger 'services' accompanying burial 45, two flagons, two samian dishes and two samian cups, and burial 1 in which the vessel forms closely correspond to those identified in samian burial groups (8.2).

Other grave goods were rare and mostly associated with the larger ceramic assemblages. Burial 1 contained several pieces of unburnt decorated bone inlay, possibly from a box (cf. 3.5.3) and 41 an iron razor, one or possibly two whetstones and a pig's jaw. The three brooches with an adult male cremation burial (45) further undermine the hypothesis that three brooches are evidence for 'Menimane's costume' (Wild 1985) and thus for female burial (see also Allason-Jones 1995: 23-4; Bridger 1996).

From the first century BC to second century AD inhumation was reserved for infants and occasionally older children up to 2 years old (66). The most frequent orientation of inhumations was north-south (Fig. 6.7) but preferences changed over time. All burials with head to the east date from the third or second century BC to first century AD, but those with head to the west or north-west dated to the second century AD and later. The position in which inhumation burials were laid was largely age dependent, infant burials being most commonly crouched or flexed and adults extended. Evidence of coffins was recovered from five graves, all of the second-third century AD or later and all with one exception of adults. With the exception of the weaponry from burial 39 no grave goods were recovered with inhumations.

Collis identified an increasing hierarchy in burial practice over time at Owslebury, which in the second or third century AD divided into 'rich cremations', confined or extended inhumations and

irregular inhumations distinguished by their lack of coffin and burial in existing features. The main problem is the difficulty of establishing the contemporaneous date of the different groups. Few of the inhumations can be closely dated; the settlement features with which they are associated provide the best dating evidence. An alternative characterisation not contradicted by the burial data is of a phase of concentration of most adult burials in cemetery 1 on the settlement periphery, followed by a phase of dispersal.

6.4.2 Other rural burials

With the exception of Owslebury there are few known cremations or early burials outside the 'East Hampshire Tradition' group. Individual burials were excavated at Old Down Farm (Andover), Old Down (East Meon), Ructstalls Hill, Finkley and Oakridge. Of these a high proportion were buried with grave goods, including some with several ceramics (Old Down (East Meon), Finkley and Oakridge) or ornaments (Old Down Farm (Andover), Old Down (East Meon)). There are only a very few unfurnished cremation burials (e.g. Ructstalls Hill, Owslebury, a secondary burial at Hurstbourne Tarrant, South Wonston). The apparent high frequency of burials with grave goods may be misleading since the presence of artefacts will have increased their chance of recovery and of dating. However the average number of ceramics in the larger sample of cremation burials from Owslebury may suggest that such provision is not atypical, at least of burials that are archaeologically visible.

6.4.3 The East Hampshire tradition

Cremation burials from Hampshire with extensive ceramic assemblages like those at Hurstbourne Tarrant were initially assumed to be outliers of the Aylesford Swarling tradition (Hawkes and Dunning 1930; Whimster 1981: 151-2). Although many of the relevant sites were excavated early this century, the regionally discrete nature of a cluster of burials dated from the Claudian period into the second century, located in eastern Hampshire, Surrey and West Sussex was first identified by Millett (1986; 1987a). The criterion used by Millett of graves with greater than ten vessels is also used here to distinguish this grouping; for convenience the group is referred to as the 'East Hampshire Tradition'.

The grouping has been considered as analogous to the Essex-Hertfordshire group of well furnished pre- and 'cusp' of conquest burials (Millett 1987; 1990a: 23). However the earliest of the latter date to a century earlier than most of the East Hampshire Tradition assemblages. A heterogeneous group of burials with large or unusual artefact assemblages is contemporary with the earlier Essex-Hertfordshire examples, for example the Owslebury warrior burial, the Hurstbourne Tarrant cremation burial, the mirror burial from Silchester (J. Creighton pers. comm.) and, if dated to this period, the double female burial from Viabes Farm. This variety of innovative burial types characterised much of the last century of the Iron Age in Hampshire and neighbouring areas to the west, for example the 'warrior burials' at Coleford, Gloucestershire and Whitcombe, Dorset, the cremation with dagger from Ham Hill, Somerset, the in-situ cremation under a barrow at Handley, or the 'mirror' burials at Birdlip, Gloucestershire and

Portesham, Dorset. Burials at Whitcombe and Portesham included typical elements of 'Durotrigian' burial assemblages but were distinguished by the presence of artefacts that connected the burials to much wider traditions, weapons and a mirror and imported bronze pan respectively. A clear regional burial tradition is however impossible to isolate before the very latest pre-Roman period. The distribution of the East Hampshire burial assemblages is considered in chapter 7 and their composition in chapter 8.

Contextual information on the association of these burials is poor and it is difficult to find recurring characteristics. In some cases they were situated within cemeteries with other less well furnished burials (Haslemere, Owslebury). Elsewhere they were separate from other graves (Neatham, Alton and Daneshill). There is little evidence for above ground monuments but the linear layout at Alton and Neatham, and the general lack of intercutting suggests that graves were marked. The Daneshill and Owslebury burials were associated with large non-villa enclosed settlements. The small cemetery at Neatham lay on the fringe of the minor centre, although the limited contextual evidence suggests that it was not located within a large cemetery. The settlement layout contemporary with the burials is not as well understood as in the later period. Collis (1978: 40) suggests that burials of this type in the environs of Winchester, Winnall, Highcliffe, Milland and Nun's Walk were associated with extra-mural settlements. Contemporary settlement approximately 100m west of the Winnall complex comprised a fairly extensive settlement that had been occupied since the Middle Iron Age though little is known of its layout. A stone building of possible Roman date was recorded at Highcliffe in the nineteenth century.

The overall distribution of burials of this type shows some connection to the road network, especially if the Winchester to Silchester road is restored to the distribution map (Millett 1987a: 64, Fig. 1, Fig. 7.18). However the local relationship to road networks is less easy to examine. Millett and Graham (1986: 51) suggest that the burials may lie on the road running south-east from Neatham but the burials lie c.10-15m from the projected course of the road; perhaps instead they lay to the rear of roadside settlement. Burial 1 at Owslebury is the clearest example of a direct association with a routeway.

6.5 Burial practices in late Roman rural Hampshire

Inhumation is the principal burial practice of the late Roman period. Graves at Burntwood Farm were distinguished by exceptionally large grave cuts sometimes over three metres in length, but otherwise graves were simple earth cut features of sufficient size for the coffin. Approximately one third of the reliably recorded sample of rural inhumation burials had evidence of having been deposited in wooden coffins; to judge from the thickness of the timber stain and the number of nails the coffins at Burntwood Farm were of particularly massive construction. A small number of lead and stone coffins have also been recorded from the county (Appendix 6.2).

The commonest grave goods from rural burials, hobnails and vessels mimic those at Winchester (Fig. 6.9). A few other poorly recorded burials reveal a wider range of grave furnishing; a group of miniature vessels was placed in the Binsted stone coffin and four glass bottles in a lead coffin at

Bishopstoke. Few graves contain more than one grave good (Fig. 6.10); the most common combination is of a vessel and hobnails. The proportion of burials with grave goods (53%) surpasses that in all of the late Roman cemeteries at Winchester save for Lankhills (Fig. 5.39). However this is likely to be a product of reporting biased to burials with grave goods, and because the date of burials depends heavily on the presence of grave goods. The lack of any grave goods in all save one of the late Roman graves from Owslebury may be more typical but the high proportion of burials with grave goods in other well recorded small burial groups should be noted (e.g. Middle Wallop, Snell's Corner, Burntwood Farm, Odiham).

Extended inhumation was the dominant depositional mode although there were occasional crouched or flexed burials (Balksbury 75). Three decapitated burials have been recovered from rural sites (Choseley Farm, Cowdery's Down and Andover (Southern Distributor Road)). By what means burials were marked is not usually clear but the lack of intercutting and the careful layout of aligned burial groups suggests that most interments must have been indicated on the surface. Figure 6.11 represents the end at which the head was placed in adult inhumation burials. The high degree of variability must be a product of the close relationships of burials to features in their immediate locality (6.6). However a general avoidance of placing the head between north-east and south-east, and a preference for the north or north-north-west can be identified. Whimster (1981: 191-2) records a consistent favouring of the area between north and east for the Iron Age crouched inhumations of this area. Although the north is still favoured, emphasis has shifted from east in the Iron Age to west in these late Roman rural examples. The orientation of burials from rural sites is very different to the Winchester cemeteries. Although the exact date at which roughly west-east orientation with the head to the west became the norm is difficult to establish, it predominated in all the late Roman cemeteries in Winchester during the fourth century (5.6).

6.6 The relationship of burial to settlement space

It is from the large enclosed sites that the majority of rural burial evidence derives, both in the LPRIA and the Roman period. Save for infant burials, lead coffins from Twyford and Bishopstoke and the stone coffins from Soberton and occasional post-Roman burials, the burial practice of villa occupants remains very poorly known (2.3.3), even for the late Roman period when villa complexes are at their most extensive (Cunliffe 1993: 255; Johnston 1978; RCHME 1983).

Rural cemeteries in Hampshire generally contain few burials. This may sometimes be attributed to the loss of burials to disturbance or to incomplete excavation. However when conditions have been more propitious, large numbers of burials have not been produced (Burntwood Farm, Odiham, Snell's Corner). The concentration of first century BC to second century AD cremation burials in one enclosure on the northern periphery of the Owslebury complex is currently atypical of the Hampshire corpus as is the possibly very large late Roman and early mediaeval rural cemetery indicated by watching briefs at Itchen Abbas.

The majority of interments were recovered as single or small groups of burials in association with boundary features, usually the ditches and gullies which defined settlement and other enclosures, but also field boundaries and occasionally landscape features of greater antiquity. This association takes a number of variant forms.

Burials were often aligned along or deposited within boundary ditches, whether of a settlement, (Balksbury, Owslebury, Martin's Down, Oakridge, Winnall Down) or fields (Burntwood Farm). It is a commonplace that rural or small settlement Roman burials were located in close relation to enclosure ditches at the rear of settlements (Leech 1982; Philpott and Reece 1993; R. F. Smith 1987). However the front and rear of enclosures is not always easily established, even on large scale excavation, where it can be confused by multi-period use of sites and the presence of contemporaneous multiple entrances, as for example at Owslebury. Nevertheless within the Hampshire sample the rear preference has possibly been over-emphasised. Some burials were placed to the rear of sites (e.g. Winnall Down, Cowdery's Down 2 and 3), but deposition in or close to entrances can be more commonly observed. On site P at Owslebury burial 24 was deposited at the entrance to a pre-Roman enclosure and burials 22 and 23 lay just beyond the entrance to the first century AD enclosure. During the brief salvage work at Old Down Farm (East Meon) single cremation burials were recovered near to different entrances to the site. At Martin's Down a child and at Cowdery's Down two infants were deposited in ditch terminals at the entrance. Burials were also placed at entrances to internal sub-divisions of settlements. A cremation in a mortared cist was deposited beneath the eastern doorway of the possible villa at Finkley. and two cremation burials were located between enclosure ditches 3 and 4 at Daneshill, possibly the entrance to a rear portion of the enclosure. A possibly analogous location for burial is at junctions of features, for example burial 54 at the junction of field boundary and trackway ditch at Burntwood Farm.

The location of burials on site margins sometimes appears to be influenced by other features on settlement peripheries. The association of infant burials with 'corn driers' has been noted by Scott (1988; 1990a) but adult burials have also been found in close proximity to these features (note 6.2). Two adult inhumation burials were aligned on the north wall of corn drier at Choseley Farm. However their relative date is uncertain; the corn drier is dated to the fourth century, but the graves cannot be closely dated within the Roman period. At Rockbourne the inhumation burial which cut the wall of the corn drier must have post-dated use of the installation.

In some instances burials were placed beyond the site enclosure ditches, the required distance varying from immediate proximity (Oakridge, Ructstalls, Old Down (East Meon)) to many tens or hundreds of metres (Old Down Farm (Andover), Cowdery's Down, Burntwood Farm). The latter were buried along a field boundary. The complete late Roman beaker containing 6 bronze comb-like plates recovered during scrub clearance from a lynchet near Chalton perhaps also derived from a disturbed burial in a similar setting. The 'off-site' area in particular is likely to be under-represented and it is no accident that burials from these areas have often been discovered beyond the limits of formal excavation



(e.g. Cowdery's Down, Oakridge). The importance of the distinction between burial and settlement space is well illustrated on site P at Owslebury where the regular form of the late Roman rectangular enclosure is interrupted to keep earlier burials outside the boundary ditch.

Burials were also distanced in time as well as in space. Often these enclosure features selected for burial dated from earlier periods, for example the fills of Iron Age enclosure ditches (Suddern Farm, Old Down Farm (Andover), Micheldever Wood) or earlier Roman period ditches (Balksbury, Owslebury, Martin's Down, Oakridge, Winnall Down), although regrettably few reports record the stage during the formation of the fill at which the burials were placed and the importance of these features in the landscape is not clear. Features of greater antiquity were also sometimes chosen for burial, for example the Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows at South Wonston, the Bronze Age boundary feature at Odiham, and long barrow at Giant's Grave, Old Winchester Hill. At Snell's Corner Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon burials were aligned on a Bronze Age round barrow. The distinction between features one or two centuries or one or two millennia old should not perhaps be over-emphasised. The relative dating of different features in the palimpsest of surrounding landscapes must have become indistinct.

Infant burials comprise the most frequent exception to burial on settlement boundaries. Infants formed the majority of burials from the interiors of sites from the LPRIA to the late Roman period. (Owslebury, West Park, Rockbourne, Micheldever Wood, Sparsholt, Portchester, Ructstalls Hill). Only in joint burials are infants more likely to be deposited on site peripheries (e.g. Old Down Farm (Andover), Choseley Farm). At most sites the small numbers of burials and especially of child burials impede the recognition of the age at which an individual would be accorded separate burial in the company of adults; at Owslebury it lay between 12 and 18 months. A strict interior/exterior distinction is not always observed. At Winnall Down for example a more complex pattern emerges, although unfortunately there is insufficient information on context in the report to assess the spatial distribution of bone fragments in the Roman period. Whole infant burials were found at greatest distance from the site, in two cases, 6289 and 8581 in the areas used for deposition of human remains in the MIA, as opposed to other burials which lay on or in the Roman period enclosure ditch (Fasham 1985, 134-6). At Cowdery's Down also infant burials were recovered from the ditch terminal, and even on the interior of sites infant burials clustered on internal boundaries (e.g. Owslebury).

Conversely adult burials intruded on settlement interiors, although it is often difficult to assess whether sites were still occupied. An adult inhumation was placed within the top of a well filling at London Road, Holybourne. Grave 75 at Balksbury appears to lie within the settlement area. The most spectacular example is the deposition of a minimum of twenty four adults and three children at various points in several episodes of a well infill sequence between the late third and seventh centuries at Oakridge, although little is known of the site context for this. The excavator suggested that the human burials and many animal carcasses represented the hasty disposal of plague victims. However the bodies were deposited in groups rather than at a single point of the infill of the well. The skeletal sample did not represent a 'normal' population sample but as in cemeteries lacked infants, the group most susceptible to

plague. The associations with complete pots and complete animals, sometimes in very large numbers, suggest that like the fill of other Roman period wells (Merrifield 1987; Scott and Poulton 1993; Wait 1985) this deposit was carefully structured. In this respect Maltby's analysis of the animal bone (1993) is disappointing, given the undoubted non-pragmatic deposition of animal burials in other contexts (Dark 1983; Merrifield 1987; Scott 1990a). The association of human and animal burial has been noted at Portchester and will deserve more detailed exploration at Owslebury (J. Collis pers. comm.). At Thruxton burials argued to be post-Roman were deposited on the mosaic floor. The practice shows the continuous use of older features for burial already noted in the early Roman period but such burials are not easily dated (6.15).

The location of burial also influenced subsequent behaviour. The sequence of activity at Burntwood Farm illustrates this well. The roadway and field boundaries which divided up the landscape with little reference to their Iron Age predecessors were probably in use throughout most of the Roman period. The graves were cut in the fourth century, parallel to and three to five metres to the north of Feature 8, a ditched boundary. A late or sub-Roman period line of post-holes (Line 2) was later established later along the line of the graves, sometimes cutting their fills, rather than the earlier boundary. The disruption to the late Roman enclosure on site P at Owslebury by earlier tombs has been noted. Less tangibly the scale of the settlement features associated with many of the burials discussed here, albeit sometimes 'deceased' features, imprinted the place of burial more emphatically on visual experience. Principles in location of rural Roman burial are explored further below (6.13-6.21).

6.7 Roman burial and the archaeological record in Hertfordshire

Archaeological knowledge of the LPRIA and Roman period in Hertfordshire is also biased by region. Archaeological interest has in general concentrated more in the north and west of the county on the Chiltern dip slope and the valleys which cut it than on the clay plateau areas of the east of the county (Bryant and Niblett 1997: 280; Niblett 1995b: 74), as well as on certain corridors of development, particularly the A1 (Niblett 1995b: 8). The distribution of villas within the county is likely to be a product of this bias (Ordnance Survey 1991). Areas such as Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, Hertford and Watford lack the long tradition of antiquarian and archaeological interest in the St Albans and Letchworth/Baldock areas.

The biases to types of site excavated differ from the Hampshire sample. Known EIA and MIA sites are few (Bryant 1995; Bryant and Niblett 1997). The number dated to the LPRIA is greater, over 150 with excavated evidence, and more if morphological evidence is accepted as an indicator of date (Hunn 1992; 1994). However with occasional exceptions (Applebaum 1933; 1949; Moss-Eccardt 1988) research continues to be directed towards characterising the LPRIA 'oppida' and large-scale dyke systems (Bryant and Burleigh 1995; Haselgrove and Millett 1997).

The majority of work on Roman period sites outside St Albans has been devoted to the minor centres at Baldock (although mostly on its cemeteries rather than settlement) and to Braughing (Potter and Trow 1988; Burnham and Wachter 1990: 103-111). Other minor centres have been less extensively examined; archaeological activity at Welwyn has been biased to villa sites and cemeteries rather than the roadside settlement itself (McDonald forthcoming; Rook 1986: 110) and excavations at Ware (Walker and Zeepvat forthcoming) and Cow Roast (Bryant and Niblett 1997; Reece 1982b) remain substantially unpublished. Villas particularly around St Albans and in the south-west of the county continue to dominate the study of the rural landscape (Branigan 1973; Hunn 1992; 1994; Neal 1978; Niblett 1995b). Many non-villa sites have been identified (Hunn 1992; 1994; 1996; Morris and Wainwright 1995) but only a few have been extensively excavated (Burnham *et al.* 1995: 354-5; Hunn 1996: Going *et al* forthcoming; McDonald 1997; Moss-Eccardt 1988; Partridge 1989). 'Village' settlements, for example Slip End, Ashwell (Burleigh 1976), have received very little archaeological attention.

The shape of Hertfordshire's LPRIA and Roman period burial record is a product of the same forces that have shaped the general state of archaeological knowledge of this period (note 6.3). In both the LPRIA and Roman periods the distribution of burials favours the centre and north of the county and are almost entirely absent from the south (Whimster 1981: 150; Figs. 6.25 and 6.26) (see further 7.6.4).

Beyond the extensive cemetery excavations at the *civitas* capital and some of the minor centres, there are clusters of burials to the south of Welwyn, Baldock and Ware, as well as a small group near Cow Roast. The distribution has implications for the comparison of urban and rural practice. The immediate hinterlands of towns appear to be devoid of burials, up to ten kilometres around St Albans and two to five kilometres at Baldock and Ware. Hunn's survey work in the environs of St Albans certainly suggests that rural settlement is not absent from this area, although almost all of these sites are noted from fieldwalking and aerial photography. Burials are less likely to be revealed by survey and it is more likely that their absence is the product of fieldwork bias rather than evidence for the area from which the rural dead were conveyed to urban cemeteries.

A potential association with the Roman road network emerges from Figure 6.26. Burials appear to concentrate on roads from St Albans to Welwyn and Braughing, Dunstable to Baldock, Cow Roast to St Albans and Ware to Enfield. The line of burials through the centre of the county also follows the line of the A1 (Ermine Street), as do settlements (Niblett 1995b: 8). This distribution is likely to be influenced by the intensity of excavation related to modern development. According to Niblett (1995b: 74), evidence for Roman period settlement concentrates in the river valleys coming off the Chilterns but this concentration is not so marked in the burial sample.

The predominance of cremation over inhumation in the total burial sample (Fig. 2.1) is also likely to be a product of the relative hostility of soils in much of the county to bone preservation, for example the clay with flints overlying the chalk plateau of the dip slope of the Chilterns to the north and west of the county and the tertiary sands and clays in the river valleys (Niblett 1995b: 8).

6.8 Principal trends in burial in Iron Age and Roman Hertfordshire

Like most aspects of the Early and Middle Iron Age archaeology of the county (Bryant 1995), evidence for burial practice is minimal. The principal evidence for the deposition of part skeletons or fragments is from Baldock and from Braughing in the LPRIA and Roman period (4.2.2, 4.4) but it has also been recovered from MIA contexts from the substantial EIA/MIA to Roman period enclosure on the Blackhorse site, Letchworth and the perimeter of the Wilbury Hill settlement occupied from the EIA to first century AD. In neither case are many of the skeletons or individual bones from well dated contexts. From the mid to late first century BC cremation predominated until some point in the third century, inhumation thereafter. Cremation cemeteries and those of LPRIA and early Roman date predominate in the rural sample as well as in the total sample from the county (Figs. 2.1 and Fig. 6.26). There is little difference in the date or type of cemetery from different parts of the county. The decline in the availability of evidence in the late Roman period continues into the early mediaeval period; especially from the mid fifth century onwards cemeteries are notoriously scarce in Hertfordshire, as students of the Anglo-Saxon period have appreciated (Malim *et al.* 1996: 112). That this deficit also characterises the late Roman period has not previously been noted.

6.9 Burial practice in early Roman Hertfordshire

Burial data outside the LPRIA ‘oppidum’ sites is too scant to analyse in detail and is only considered here in terms of its location. In comparison to the many well recorded urban and minor centre grave groups the quality of evidence for rural burial is poor. What follows studies two early Roman rural sites for which detailed examination of a reasonable number of artefact types is possible and concludes with a summary of sites with a small number of burials or poor records.

6.9.1 Burial practice at Cross Farm, Harpenden

The settlement context of the late first and second century AD cemetery at Cross Farm is unknown. The recovery of a scatter of calcined bone during fieldwalking prompted further examination of the site but only part of the cemetery has so far been examined and its full extent is unknown. The portion of the cemetery excavated in 1992 revealed two clusters of burials (Fig. 6.28) (note 6.4).

The pyre goods comprised burnt animal bone recovered from three graves. It is likely that the visibility of animal bone is affected by collection procedures, as the cremated bone assemblages from these three graves were amongst the largest from the site. The weight of cremated bone was very similar to other urban and minor centre cemeteries (Fig. 4.5). The only evidence for selective retention of body parts from burial was the virtual absence of lower limbs from the otherwise well preserved 006/204 with 1290g of cremated bone.

Grave cuts were mostly of sufficient size for the urn; in one case a layer of flints had been placed around the urn base (23), and in others (21 and 22) urns had fallen into the centres of pits, possibly when other artefacts had decayed. Most burials were deposited in jars and accompanied by at least two accessory vessels. Samian accounted for 27 % of the twenty six vessels in the accessory assemblage. The most common forms were flagon and dish. Two glass vessels and a finger ring with intaglio comprised the only non-ceramic grave goods. Occasional evidence was noted of deliberate damage to objects in well preserved burials. A flagon in 25 lacked its rim and there were missing pieces from the rims of glass flasks in 21. It is not clear whether poorer artefact assemblages are the product of original depositional practice or subsequent disturbance. No difference in practice could be identified between the burial clusters.

6.9.2 Burial practice at Boxfield Farm

The Boxfield Farm cemetery comprised twenty five cremations, dated from the mid-first century to the Antonine period, most to the latter (note 6.5). The cemetery enclosure lay to the north of the double enclosure which comprised the settlement site, but is not marked on the settlement plan (Hunn 1996: 61, Fig. 15). It is difficult to detect any principle behind the cemetery layout, especially as many shallower burials have probably been destroyed by ploughing (Fig. 6.27). The only obvious spatial distinction is the distance of the large pit GAP from other burials. It appeared to be lined with carbonised wood, but no artefactual material or cremated bone was recovered from the fill. The excavators suggest that it was a 'poor man's mausoleum', but it might also have been the location for a non-burial deposit.

A fragment of melted glass in GBA, burnt samian sherd from GAZ, and a fragment of possible bird bone from GAL and possible animal bone from GBH2, comprised the evidence for pyre goods. Charcoal and burnt flint were often deposited in burials. Whether these are some type of *Brandschuttgräber* cannot be stated conclusively as the volume of material is not specified (see 3.3.2). The heavy damage invalidates any detailed assessment of the amount of cremated bone, which not surprisingly survives in small quantities in comparison to other sites. McKinley (in Going *et al.* forthcoming) does not mention any abnormal representations of skeletal areas.

The plough damage renders any comment on grave layout impossible: a maximum of 0.1m of deposit survived in most graves. Most cremation burials were deposited in jars. In some cases iron fragments may be a clue to the original presence of wooden boxes, and there was one example of a probable casket with five lion-head studs (GBA). The typical burial assemblage comprised a dish and drinking vessel; flagons are less well represented than on minor centre sites (4.5). Samian comprised 43% of the thirty two accessory vessels, a higher proportion than that from any minor centre site. The only non-ceramic grave good recovered apart from iron fragments was an unusual form of glass cup (Isings 27). This vessel and probably some of the samian vessels were damaged before burial. There was little differentiation between grave good assemblages. The maximum number of accompanying vessels was four (GAX).

6.9.3 Other rural burials in early Roman Hertfordshire

Other information on contemporary burial assemblages is slight. Large well recorded burial assemblages are absent from rural contexts from the mid first century, save for the possible assemblage of many glass vessels from the Watford barrow. Burials probably associated with the villa at Boxmoor were urned in glass vessels as were barrow burials from Youngsbury, Pickford Mill and probably Watford. That from Pickford Mill was probably further enclosed in a stone cist.

Ceramic assemblages from Little Wymondley and Foxholes Farm are similar to those at Boxfield and Cross Farm. The typical accompaniment for cremation burials at Foxholes Farm was simply a flagon or beaker, although assemblages were poorly preserved. Burials from another non-villa settlement at Thorley were however rarely furnished. Poorly recorded evidence from other sites, for example at Slip End and Foxley Hill (Ashwell), Hinxworth New Inn, Barley Homestall Farm, Great Wymondley, and Kelshall The Crown, suggests the frequent deposition of grave furniture typical of burial assemblages in south-east Britain in the early Roman period (Philpott 1991). However in such a sample unurned or unaccompanied burials will have gone unreported.

6.10 Late Roman rural burials in Hertfordshire

The only recently well excavated and recorded sample of any size is the Welwyn Hall cemetery, a small late fourth or early fifth century cemetery of twenty one graves established close to a demolished mausoleum and overlying earlier field boundaries (Fig. 6.32) (note 6.6). The possible fifth century date was derived from the extremely worn and fragmentary state of the ceramic grave goods.. The cemetery comprises twenty six east-west orientated inhumation burials, one of which had been surrounded by a penannular ditch. One fifth of burials had been placed in wooden coffins. Evidence for grave goods was recovered from over half the burials, principally ceramics, many of which were fragmentary or broken before deposition, and also hobnails, ornaments and animal remains.

A single stone coffin was recovered at Ayot St Lawrence, and two examples, one with a lead lining, at Park Street and at Bishop Stortford; one at the latter was a 'plaster burial' (Appendix 6.2). The third century sarcophagus of Greek origin of which fragments were recovered from demolition debris at the Welwyn Hall site remains unparalleled in Britain. Poorly recorded evidence from the same sites as in the early Roman period again suggest that provision with grave goods may have been relatively frequent. The only suggestion of more lavish burial assemblages are the silver pins recovered from female burial 2 at Park Street.

6.11 Monumental burial traditions in rural Roman Hertfordshire

There is an unusually plentiful concentration of monumental burial forms from rural Hertfordshire, most dated to the early Roman period. The barrow is the more common monumental form, of which Hertfordshire has an unusually dense concentration (Dunning and Jessup 1936; Jessup 1962). None of the Roman period barrows in the area have been subject to adequate modern investigation. The standard of antiquarian reporting is extremely diverse, but we can rarely be sure that assemblages are completely reported. The majority of the standard corpus are not even securely dated to the Roman period (Dunning and Jessup 1936; Foster 1986: 192-4; Fox 1923). Comparative maps exaggerate the trend of barrow building within Roman Britain (e.g. Becker 1993: 361, Abb. 1; Dunning and Jessup 1936: 40). Given the variety of Roman re-uses of prehistoric barrows (Dark 1993; Williams 1998a), the mere record of Roman material associated with barrows is insufficient. Of the barrows excavated within Hertfordshire (Appendix 6.6), the Roman period date of Youngsbury and Pickford Mill, Harpenden is established from burial assemblages, from antiquarian reports of Roman material at Hoddesdon and Watford and from the location next to a Roman road at Six Hills, although the example of the prehistoric barrows by the roadside at Badbury Rings cautions against this as a reliable lone criterion of Roman date (Fowler 1965).

Architecturally more elaborate monuments, 'temple-mausolea' from Wood Lane End, Rothamsted and Welwyn Hall have been more recently documented. The concentration of these structures together with that at Folly Lane is not paralleled elsewhere in Britain. All offer different variations of this relationship between temple form and burial, and it should be emphasised that the association between burial and the central monuments at Wood Lane End or Rothamsted is not certain. At Wood Lane End other buildings were related to probable cult activity, including a bath-house and possible *schola* for a guild (Black 1986). Niblett (1995a) has proposed a similar relationship at Verulamium between the Folly Lane temple and the bath-house and theatre to its south-west.

The monumental evidence is less plentiful for the late period and in both cases associated with a villa. Part of a grave superstructure was excavated at Park Street and there was also evidence of a possible mausoleum at Gadebridge. Further comment is restricted to a consideration of the relationship of burial monuments to the immediate landscape.

6.12 Burial and settlement space in rural Roman Hertfordshire

With occasional exceptions even large-scale villa excavations such as Gorhambury (Neal, Wardle and Hunn 1991), Gadebridge Park (Neal 1974), or Dicket Mead / Lockleys (Rook 1986) have recovered only a very small sample of burial evidence. In this respect Hertfordshire corresponds to the national pattern (2.3.3). Where cemeteries are recorded in association with settlement sites non-villa enclosures such as Foxholes Farm, Boxfield Farm, Thorley, and Little Wymondley are most common.

There is greater evidence than from Hampshire for larger groups of rural burials. Early Roman example include Cross Farm, Boxfield Farm and late Roman Welwyn Hall. Some older imprecise

records suggest substantial rural cemeteries, cremation cemeteries north-east of Great Wymondley and at Hinxworth New Inn, mixed cemeteries at Slip End and at Foxholes (Hitchin) and inhumation cemeteries at Hinxworth Place (Hinxworth) and at Sawbridgeworth. However as in Hampshire smaller groups or individual burials scattered across settlement sites have also been recorded, best illustrated at Thorley.

The predominant location of burials as in the Hampshire sample is on settlement margins, for example at Gadebridge Park, Park Street, Foxholes (immediately outside the south-west corner of the enclosure and bounded by an earlier ditched feature) and Little Wymondley, on field boundaries as at Welwyn Hall, and beyond the settlement enclosure and possibly close to a driveway at Boxfield. Burials were also associated with other site features. At Gadebridge Park the head of a possible male adult west-east oriented inhumation lay less than a metre from the stokehole of a corn-drying oven of the mid second to mid-third century, although it may have been associated with a possible mausoleum. A pre-Roman example of an association with craft-related features was noted at Dellfield where three later first century BC cremations were located close to a possibly contemporaneous shaft furnace for smelting iron. The cemetery at Boxfield lay within a larger system of enclosures dated from the mid-first to fourth centuries AD.

Burials at Thorley were also distributed across a series of settlement enclosures but the initial assessment suggests a particular concentration of evidence for mortuary rituals around enclosure B (note 6.7). In its initial phase, dated to the LPRIA, it comprised a ditched enclosure 40 x 15m, oriented north-west south-east with entrances at both ends. In the north-west part of the enclosure was a gully defining a rectangular area given a preliminary interpretation as a mortuary structure, although the basis for this is not stated. Three cremation burials of the first and second centuries AD and two undated inhumations were recovered from the southern half of the enclosure, and a further inhumation just beyond the southern enclosure ditch. Animal and part animal deposits were also placed around the enclosure perimeter, a cattle skull to the north, several horse mandibles in a pit by the southern ditch and a dog had been buried in a pit cut into the terminal of the eastern enclosure ditch. A second century deposit of unburnt sheep bone and possibly human cremated bone was recovered from the western ditch fill. The enclosure was therefore the periodic focus for the deposition of human and animal remains. Occasional deposits of fragmentary bone are also recorded from other sites. A skull was associated with the stone 'face' in a well fill from the villa at Northchurch and a disarticulated skeleton was recovered from the well in the NW corner of the site at Little Wymondley.

It was proposed in discussion of the Hampshire material that there was a relationship between burial and the 'history' of settlement features. A close chronological relationship has also been proposed in a Hertfordshire context between burial and foundation or significant re-organisation of a site. Saunders (1961: 122) noted that the burials at Park Street were roughly contemporaneous with the rebuilding of the villa in the late third or early fourth centuries. The Welwyn Hall mausoleum was constructed at roughly the same period as the building of the Dicket Mead complex across the river (McDonald forthcoming), although the chronology for the inter-relationship of Dicket Mead and

Lockleys is controversial and the most suggestive evidence for the inter-relationship of mausoleum and villa is the Greek names in graffiti from the villa and the Greek origin of the sarcophagus. Like the burial groupings in Hampshire these monuments seem to have been significant for a relatively brief period. The use of the entire Wood Lane End complex was confined to the second century AD, during which time Building 1 was demolished and its material probably re-used in building 6. The Welwyn Hall mausoleum was constructed in the mid third century and demolished during the fourth, although its influence on local topography persisted as an orientation point for a field boundary and later an inhumation cemetery.

These monuments were also visible in the broader landscape. The Welwyn mausoleum appears to have been visible from the main Welwyn cemetery, the settlement beyond the river, Lockleys and Dicket Mead villas. The Wood Lane End tower was likely to be visible over a wide area of the plateau west of St Albans (Neal 1984), indeed from as far away as Folly Lane on the other side of the valley of the Ver (Hunn 1994: 46). The impact of both structures was increased by their great height and by their rendering in white. Both monuments were sited close to although not directly upon roads, although the course of the Silchester road from Verulamium which passed to the south of the Wood Lane End enclosure is not securely established (Neal 1983: 74).

6.13 Current models - social and tenorial distinctions in burial

The organisation of rural cemeteries has been attributed to social distinctions within the rural population. Although the idea itself is not new (van Doorsaeler 1967: 24), Martin-Kilcher (1993a) has offered the most fully developed model for social differentiation of villa cemeteries in the north-west provinces. This model locates the graves of the villa workforce and slaves in small poorly furnished and largely invisible tombs outside the villa enclosure, often to the rear. In contrast the graves of the owner and family simultaneously obtained privacy through their enclosure in 'jardins funéraires' but visibility through their prominent position in relation to the main buildings of the villa or to its principal access routes. Other classifications of rural burial have drawn similar distinctions between burials enclosed in formal cemeteries and those dispersed across settlements. According to Collis' (1977b) characterisation of rural burial in Britain the lower echelons of the hierarchy on non-villa settlements were also those individual or small groups of burials buried outside formal cemetery areas and scattered around settlement sites, often within or close to other types of feature. To Philpott the implication of minimal effort by exploiting existing features prompted an identification of individuals buried at such locations as social outcasts:

'the substantial group of burials in disused features such as ditches, corn-drying ovens, pottery kilns or wells may be the result of indifference or laziness on the part of the grave-diggers, violent or illicit death, or disapprobation on the part of the family or community.' (Philpott 1991:232).

May suggested too that the burials dispersed across the settlement at Dragonby were not 'part of a regular tradition' and were those of 'low status or diseased' individuals (1996: 125-6). Jones' (1987: 828) contrast between 'ordered' and 'disordered' rural cemeteries implies a similar distinction. Such burials have been explained as deposition in convenient places which required less effort to excavate, often on land by previous use or poor quality rendered unusable for agriculture (van Doorsaeler 1967: 26; R. F. Smith 1987: 115-18; Swan 1984: 50).

Philpott and Reece (1993: 422) have argued that different burial locations also reflected tenurial position: while landowners and their families maintained a formal burial space over several generations to legitimate their right to the land, tenants and workers devoted less effort to maintaining for any duration a formal cemetery on land to which they lacked a long term attachment. Although an explicit connection has not been drawn, this suggestion recalls the influential hypothesis of the relationship between disposal of the dead in a formal bounded cemetery area and the legitimization of rights to critical contested resources (Chapman 1981; Goldstein 1981; Morris 1991). One might hypothesise the manifestation in burial of such a pattern based on the 'degraded kin' hypothesis which has been offered to explain the change in rural Romano-British settlement layout (1.4). Such an approach could also draw on skeletal data. The high frequency of certain non-metrical traits occasionally suggest a possible kin relationship within small groups of rural burials (Fell 1956; Jones 1975).

The empirical basis for such an observation has yet to be sufficiently established as a pattern deserving analysis. The first step taken here is therefore to examine this at a general level. Such approaches have also not given sufficient consideration to the demonstration that burial practices do not directly reflect social relationships (1.3). An alternative characterisation of the data is then offered

6.14 An evaluation of current models of rural burial practice

Martin-Kilcher's survey identified only a very small number of sites where this distinction could be detected, and some of her examples can be contested. At Köln-Mungersdorf for example the separate cremation and inhumation cemetery were not contemporary (Fremersdorf 1933) and at Courroux only a single cemetery was located. The very extensively excavated villa settlements from the Hambach forest west of Cologne (Gaitzch 1986; 1993) offer a further opportunity to test this model but in interim analysis only at two of the five sites with more than twenty burials (Hambach 69, 303) was Gaitzch able to detect distinctions in numbers or types of grave goods between different groups of burials.

Martin-Kilcher did not discuss Romano-British rural cemeteries, nor did Philpott and Reece propose specific examples to illustrate their theory. Occasional evidence suggests a status distinction between different cemetery areas on the same site, but several of these examples are undated, for example Litlington or Woodyates. In a small number of cases different contemporaneous burial areas have been recovered. Some of these lend some support to the model; for example at Bradley Hill F115 was spatially distinct from other burials and was the only burial from which there was evidence for a

monumental marker, an earth mound revetted by an unmortared wall.. Subdivisions of burial enclosures on other sites (Owslebury, Roden Downs, Roughground Farm, Stanton Low) do not suggest distinction in the provision of coffins or grave goods. The differences in burial practices between different groups of burials at Frocester Court were more suggestive of the different ritual traditions of different groups than of burial investment. The clustering of groups of second and third century cremations at Alington Avenue may indicate a similar difference.

Collis' (1977b) analysis of differences in burial practice at Owslebury has been contested (6.4.1). It may be better characterised by a chronological distinction between a phase of cemetery nucleation and of dispersal on the settlement periphery. Nor is it easy to replicate the model of an enclosed cemetery contemporary with scattered burials elsewhere.

This approach is too dependent on the small sample of sites excavated on a large scale. To bring a greater number of sites to bear on the hypothesis that villa owners or elites were buried separately from other elements of the rural population, the context of monumental burials or those with large grave good assemblages was examined. Secondary burials are occasionally present in barrows (Riseholme, Holborough) but the scale of excavation in neither case shows whether or not the barrows were set in larger cemeteries. In so far as the nineteenth century excavations summarised by Jessup (1959) may be trusted, burials were not associated with monuments or are few in number, for example at Southfleet and Joy Wood. The lack of burial evidence contemporary with the early Roman burial monument at Roughground Farm and Marshfield Farm provides more recent confirmation of this separation. However other burials discovered in the small area excavated around the monuments at Keston, or the antiquarian reports of skeletons excavated around the barrows at Bartlow Hills and Limlow Hill may suggest that monuments could sometimes be the focus for larger cemeteries, but too small an area was excavated to assess this fully. This survey is however largely frustrated by the lack of excavation of the environs of the vast majority of funerary monuments from Britain .

As for large burial assemblages, current evidence suggests that most if not all of the East Hampshire Tradition burials were separate from other rural burials, but only in a small number of cases is there good contextual information (6.4.3). At Stansted two large second century assemblages were buried separate from the rest on the Duckend Car Park Site. Isolated large burial assemblages were also deposited at Little Waltham and Birchanger Lane. In the late Roman period occasional discrete groups of burials can be identified as higher status on the basis of container or grave goods, for example at Abingdon Vineyard or Park Street (6.10) but sufficient contextual information is absent from most of the sample. Counter-examples can also be identified where cemeteries include assemblages that span most of the contemporary local depositional range, for example at Bancroft or Westhampnett.

Reece and Philpott also proposed that elite cemeteries were distinguished by their maintenance over several generations. However the lifespan of monuments and mausolea rarely surpassed three of four generations. At several sites monumental tomb construction and major building work within the

settlement appear to be contemporaneous. The possible relationship between funerary monument and the re-organisation of settlement space at Welwyn Hall has already been noted (6.12). The excavators of Bancroft suggested that the construction of the temple mausoleum, the shift in settlement emphasis from the spur to further down the slope and the construction of the villa were contemporaneous, although these processes seem to have taken place in the same general period and precision over their relative dates is not possible. However the Bancroft mausoleum and those at Keston, Lullingstone and Wood Lane End were abandoned and demolished within a few decades or a century at most after their construction, although other monuments sometimes later used the same sites. Nor did groupings of large burial assemblages see use for more than a century, for example at Alton, Neatham, or the Bartlow Hills. The life of monuments and of cemeteries was no longer than that common to the use of most rural cemeteries (6.17).

The final element of this reconsideration applies to the individual and small groups of burials which the current characterisation suggests were expediently deposited in convenient existing features. The Hampshire sample showed that burials in these locations were as often confined and provided with grave goods as contemporary burials in urban cemeteries and were oriented according to general rules as well as influenced by neighbouring features. This pattern needs substantiation elsewhere, but for present purposes it is considered sufficient demonstration that the burial ritual was no less formal than those in urban cemeteries. Consideration of the Hertfordshire and Hampshire sample has suggested also that the placing of the dead followed recurring preferences rather than random deposition in convenient features. However both the county samples were relatively small so the location of burial was examined exploiting a larger sample (note 6.1).

6.15 Infants and other burials on settlement interiors

This survey begins with site interiors. The commonest burials excavated on site interiors were those of infants. Within rural settlements half of infant burials were made within structures, close to corners and walls, and a high proportion within yards, although they more occasionally occur on settlement margins (Struck 1993c: 315). Infant burials and other deposits or features, especially animal burials and corn driers were often closely associated (E. Scott 1988; 1991). As at Owslebury there are also occasional examples of areas with a concentration of infant burials (Bradley Hill, Barton Court Farm, Frocester Court, Owslebury, Hambleton). Infants are generally absent from both early (Bancroft, Each End Ash, Rectory Farm, Stansted, Westhampnett) and late rural cemeteries (Bradley Hill, Radley Barrow Hills, Cassington, Icklingham, Lynch Farm, Stanton Harcourt, Winterton). The infant::interior as adult :: exterior distinction is occasionally demonstrated on the same site (Alington Avenue, Catsgore, Frocester Court, the first centuries BC and AD at Owslebury and Poundbury).

Adult burials occasionally intruded on site interiors in several manifestations. The burials on boundaries between different compounds are discussed below (6.16). Skeletal material from non-cemetery contexts of the Roman period has been recovered in fragmentary form. Most investigation of

this phenomenon has been directed to the obvious 'ritual' deposits such as the Walbrook skulls (Cotton 1996; Marsh and West 1981; Merrifield 1987) and other well / pit contexts where circumstances of deposition and bone condition bear evidence of gruesome ritual, for example the scalped heads at Folly Lane (Mays and Steele 1996). Fragmentary material from probable 'execution' as well as 'sacrificial' contexts has been recently identified, although principally from urban sites (Isserlin 1997). While obvious similar instances can be identified on rural sites, for example at Odell and Herriott's Bridge, less attention has been paid to the smaller less easily identified pieces, often recovered in post-excavation work on the faunal remains. Lack of information on the context from which such material derives often makes analysis of its depositional origin impossible. Publication of such material is usually inadequate for further analysis, for instance to ascertain its possible derivation from disturbed graves; for example at Dragonby scattered human bone was derived from all (Iron Age and Roman) contexts from a minimum of fourteen individuals but no information other than phase was provided. However overall the deposition of body parts does not seem to have been as common as in the pre-Roman period.

Wells were also the occasional repositories of whole cremated or inhumed individuals (Fishbourne), though rarely on as spectacular a scale as at Friary Field. Often burial was the final depositional act in a well infill sequence (Rudston, Baldock) where the nature of contemporary settlement is often unclear. This is one manifestation of the re-use of the interior of abandoned sites for burial. At Curbridge late Roman inhumation burials post-dated a Romano-British settlement of which they overlie the features. Fourth to seventh century burials overlay the villa at Kempston. At Figheldean scattered late Roman inhumation burials cut through Iron Age and Roman period features. Inhumation burials at Syreford Mill in possible association with animal burials overlay an area earlier used for quarry pits and rubbish dumping. However given that burials could also be placed in areas from which habitation had shifted to another part of the site, for example at Gatcombe or Whitton, such evidence does not conclusively indicate general abandonment of a particular settlement.

In the absence of other dating evidence a post-Roman date is also possible, as the re-use of Roman sites for post-Roman burial has been attested on a number of occasions. Percival's list (1976: 217, n. 1) of burials on villa sites can be supplemented by further references, which are in no way proposed as a complete list (Bancroft, Barton Court Farm, Beadlam, Kingscote, Kingsweston, Llantwit Major, Roughground Farm, Southwell, Winterton), although the post-Roman date of many deposits is assumed rather than securely established and neither the number of examples nor the size of cemeteries is equivalent to that from Gaul (Percival 1976: 187-200; 1992).. A further association to have emerged since Percival's discussion is that between burials and contemporary or earlier temple sites in the south-west (Rahtz 1977; Watts and Leach 1996), although Esmonde Cleary (1989: 185) has challenged the particular significance of this association within a general re-use of Roman period sites.

The hypothesis of widespread violent slaughter which used to account for these burials has long been discredited (Webster 1969: 233). Webster attributed the change to a decrease in the concern to bury at a distance from settlements as part of a breakdown of Roman values. However the practice does not

seem to be specifically post-Roman but represents the continuity of the Roman period practice of burying on abandoned areas of settlement. Whether the striking choice of location for such burials, for example on the Bacchus and Orpheus mosaics at Thruxton and Winterton respectively, is the most visible manifestation of a more generally structured choice of burial place would repay further examination.

6.16 Burial and boundaries

The boundary feature as already noted is the most visible influence on the location of archaeologically visible burials. Within this general trend a variety of locations can be identified. Burial occasionally took place to the immediate exterior of structures (Newhaven, Stonea), the internal boundary ditches between different parts of a settlement or the entrances that led from one area to another (A14/604 junction, Catsgore, Dragonby, Woodcuts, Woodyates). External boundaries were more frequent locations for burial. Occasionally fragmentary human and animal skeletal material (North Shoebury, Marshall's Farm (Prittlewell) and more often burials were deposited in or ranged along the inside of what seems to be an external perimeter (Alington Avenue (second to fourth century), Frocester Court, Little Spittle, Poundbury, Townsend Close, Wakerley, Market Deeping, Woodcuts).

Burials could be an integral part of boundary formation. Three LPRIA / early Roman cremation burials were deposited at the base of a lynchet prior to or during its formation at Asham. Late Roman animal and human burials and cremation debris pits were spread across site which lay on Roman period field boundaries at Maddington Farm, Shrewton.. The human burials and pyre debris pits interleaved with phases of lynchet formation. At Scole Dickleburgh seven cremation and one inhumation burials were deposited within and close to an 8m x 4m midden deposit on the site boundary. The midden sealed the timber lined inhumation burial of a juvenile and was contemporary with the cremations.

Sometimes the alignment of burials itself suggests the existence of archaeologically otherwise invisible boundaries (Eyewell Farm, Maiden Castle Road). Other groups of burials seem to have been deposited immediately beyond the perimeter (Alington Avenue (first century AD), Frocester Court, Hayton, Lynch Farm, Marshfield (late Roman), Odell (first century AD). Burials were usually aligned on or within these neighbouring features, but occasional examples suggest other influences. The orientation of burials in late Roman Hampshire has been shown to be conditioned but not determined by local features. At Market Deeping burials were aligned north-south or east-west rather than on the settlement boundary ditch, and at Frocester Court the head was preferentially placed to the south-west in both adult and infant inhumation burials.

Cemetery enclosures were also located on settlement margins (Bancroft (first century and mausoleum), Rectory Farm, Roughground Farm, Stanton Low, Woodyates). The boundaries sometimes co-opted existing (Wavendon Gate) or relict (Maiden Castle Road) features but the bounding of the dead was sometimes achieved by surrounding the cemetery with a ditch (Boscombe Down, Rectory Farm, Stanton Low, Wasperton, Winterbourne Down, Woodyates) or wall (Litlington, Sutton Valence). An

alternative or sometimes complementary distancing was realised by locating the cemetery or individual burials away from the settlement area by several tens of metres (Bancroft mausoleum, Keston (circular tomb and associated burials), Laxton, Litlington, Winterton) or sometimes several hundred metres (Boscombe Down, Barton Court Farm / Radley Barrow Hills, Foxton).

Isolated burials as at Tattershall Thorpe, which lacked any evidence for contemporary activity despite the wide area investigated, are also likely to represent burials out in fields. Such locations may account for many rural burials of Roman date excavated with little information on their immediate context. The occasional occurrence of burials in marginal locations provides a further illustration of this distancing. Cave sites were frequently used for burial, although given evidence for the other forms of use to which they were put they should not necessarily be classified as isolated contexts (Branigan and Dearne 1992). There are occasional examples of burials from other context types away from permanent settlement. For example at Hartlepool a late Roman double inhumation burial was recovered on the edge of salt-water tidal flats, although the charcoal deposits in the fill could be a product of ritual or of nearby activity. Again in a wetland environment an isolated burial in a stone coffin was recovered on a fen island at Stuntney.

Especially in areas of Britain with long traditions of unaccompanied inhumation burial (2.3.2) and without an obvious relationship between burials and settlement then the relative dating of cemetery and settlement phases will be almost impossible. Only in a small number of areas, in particular in Somerset (Bell 1990: 80; Rahtz 1977; Watts and Leach 1996) and the Thames Valley has regular radio carbon dating been adopted. In the latter area different cemeteries with very similar burial rituals (i.e. east-west unfurnished inhumation) have been dated to the Roman (Chambers 1976a; 1978), late and sub-Roman (Chambers 1987: 66) and middle Saxon periods (Chambers 1973; 1976b).

Other features were also selected for burial within the wider landscape. The relationship of Roman burials to prehistoric sites has been the subject of recent surveys and is not examined in detail here (Dark 1993; James 1992; Murphy 1992; Williams 1998a), although it seems much less frequent than in Brittany (Galliou 1989) or parts of Gallia Belgica (Vermeulen and Bourgeois forthcoming). Dating evidence for the majority of these burials from Britain is poor and many might date to the post-Roman period, when the use of prehistoric sites is much more widely attested in England and Wales (Williams 1998b). The re-use of monuments in other contexts has been interpreted as a physical manifestation of a fictive genealogy, but the trend in Roman Britain is too diffuse and poorly established to be compared to perhaps more systematic appropriation of prehistoric monuments (e.g. Alcock 1991; Hingley 1996b). Such features may also have been chosen for their role in the contemporary landscape, for example as boundary features, or because the recurring preference exploited the same topographical characteristics. At Westhampnett Roman period burials represent one phase in the intermittent use of a site for burial in the Bronze Age, late Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon. At Bancroft too the same location is re-used, albeit over a shorter period, in the first century AD, the late second century and the late or post Roman

period. In both cases the choice of such sites seems likely to relate to both a sense of place endowed by its previous use and the prominence of the site in the local landscape.

Where individuals were not buried in the communal cemetery of minor centres, preference for the rear of settlement enclosures has been demonstrated in several examples (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 279-81; Clarke 1988: 51, 58; Neal 1987; Rudling 1990: 22; R. J. Smith 1987; Wickenden 1986: 63; 1988). The difficulty of establishing the front and rear of settlements has already been referred to. While a preference for the sides and rear can be established at some extensively excavated rural settlements (Alington Avenue, Frocester Court, Herriott's Bridge, Ilchester) this model cannot yet be applied too generally in a rural context. The location of burials at entrances, either to sites or between the constituent parts of larger settlements has been noted in Hampshire (6.6) but not so frequently elsewhere. At Longthorpe a cremation burial was recovered from the northern antenna ditch leading into Yard I, although other burials were located at the rear of the settlement. At Woodcuts inhumation burials were deposited in the ditches in the south-eastern approach to the settlement and a mound immediately outside a possible entrance to the west had a secondary cremation of Roman date. A relationship between burial and trackways has been identified by others (Millett 1995b: 121-31; Philpott and Reece 1993: 421) and can be illustrated by a number of examples (Boscombe Down, Each End Ash, Litlington, Roden Downs, Stanton Harcourt and Winterbourne Down).

The associations between burials and other features placed on site boundaries identified in the Hampshire sample (6.6) can be substantiated by further examples. The juxtaposition of burial and corn drier at a few metres from one another (Roughground Farm) may owe more to common principles behind the location of both, and in others to the spread of burial over abandoned areas of sites (Figheldean). However in the cases of stratigraphic connection or immediate proximity it is difficult to explain this relationship as a product of chance. At Kemp Farm a well furnished cremation burial was deposited into a corn drier / oven and at Lambs Lea a possible cremation was found on the floor of the main flue. The most direct association is the charred skeleton placed head first into the stoke hole of a corn drier at Welton Wold. Elsewhere inhumation burials were cut into or deposited adjacent to corn driers (Broadwell Spring, Plant's Farm, Biglis, Eyewell Farm, Wollaston, Woodcuts). The early Roman phase of the Fordington Bottom Trench K mixed burials, a mortuary structure, corn driers and other work-related features. The association with corn driers may be subsumed within a wider association of burials with craft / industrial activities, which has been noted by Swan (1984: 50). The association takes various forms, the deposition of an adult inhumation head first into a kiln flue (Little Chester), the juxtaposition of burials and kiln sites (Friary Fields, War Ditches), and the re-use of disused kilns for burial (Crambeck, Wakerley). However examination of the microfiche to Swan's (1984) report suggests that the association characterises only a very small proportion of kilns and in most instances is an indirect product of the general situation of both kilns and burials in extra-mural areas.

It is a regular characteristic of the burial groups considered here that where closely datable they derive from a relatively short time period, rarely more than a century and often a shorter period. All types

of cemetery appear to be characterised by this relatively short-lived usage. In some cases this might be attributable to the small areas excavated, but sites explored on a larger scale illustrate this phenomenon particularly well. For example at Bancroft despite continued occupation of the site there is a probable gap in the burial record between the late first and late second century, and a more likely gap between the mid third and the mid fourth centuries. At Frocester Court small groups of burials show a high degree of similarity but neither burial ritual nor location seems to be perpetuated over a long period of time. The punctuated visibility of burial at Wavendon Gate is a further demonstration of this point, although the site is heavily damaged. The sequence at Owslebury suggests that burials could also undergo phases of agglomeration and dispersal. There are occasional instances of a more extended use of one area for burial stretching over two centuries, for example at Alington Avenue, Fordington Bottom, Foxton, and possibly Guilden Morden and the western cemetery at Stanton Low. These however represent the exception.

6.17 The context of funerary monuments

This consideration of the spatial relations of burials to settlement concludes with some brief comments on the relationship of funerary monuments to the rural settlement landscape. The positioning is likely to combine visibility from the site with that in the broader landscape. Rodwell and Rodwell (1985: 32-3, 48) have argued that a funerary monument was set up within the 'prospect' of the Rivenhall villa on an axis bisecting the villa compound, although evidence of the monument's existence is suggestive rather than conclusive. Nor do monuments at Keston, Lullingstone or Bancroft lie on such axes. One of the few recurring characteristics is the raising of monuments at a greater height than the settlement buildings (Keston, Lullingstone, Bancroft).

Monuments were occasionally in very close proximity to buildings, as at Lullingstone. Roman Farm, Pitney may be another example but the context recorded in RIB for RIB 182 and 183 in the courtyard of the villa is unlikely to be correct. Of the monuments considered a distance of between 30m (Keston) and 250m (Roughground Farm) or possibly further (Ben Bridge) is maintained from settlement.

Monuments were certainly sited with their visibility in the wider landscape in mind, as discussion of the Hertfordshire sample showed. It is a commonplace of literature on burial monuments in Britain, Gaul and Germany that close relationships to roads determined monument location (Ebel 1989; Grenier 1934: 213-22; Dunning and Jessup 1936; Martin-Kilcher 1993a; Roth-Congès 1993; Wightman 1985), although recent re-examination of barrows in north-eastern Gallia Belgica (Wigg 1993a: 379) has also suggested that the strength of this relationship may have been exaggerated. While there are undoubtedly examples in Britain of burials closely related to roads, for example the barrows at Emmanuel Knoll (Godmanchester), such a relationship has yet to be established in the majority of cases. Other monuments were situated several hundred metres away but still visible from roads or ridgeways; the Overton Down palisaded mounds were visible from the road from Mildenhall to Sandy Lane, the mausoleum at Bancroft was visible from Watling Street 2.5 km to the south-east and that at Keston must

have been visible from the London - Lewes road 1.25 miles to the west. The Holborough barrow was situated on the final crest of a spur overlooking the valley of Medway, 'commanding a fine view of the surrounding countryside' (Jessup 1954: 2). Other communication routes may sometimes have influenced the placing of monuments; Rodwell (1978: 19) considers only the landward relations of villa, mausoleum and barrow on Mersea Island, but the visibility of the monuments from the sea may have been equally important (cf. Purcell 1987).

6.18 Cemetery nucleation in rural Roman Britain

To apply the term cemetery to rural Roman Britain is somewhat misleading, as small groups or individual burials account for much of the evidence. Philpott and Reece (1993: 421) have proposed that well defined rural cemeteries of several tens or hundreds of burials became more common in the late Roman period and appeared for the first time in certain areas, especially the Thames Valley and Somerset. Such cemeteries are argued to be the rural equivalent of the contemporary 'managed' cemeteries in towns and small towns (Philpott 1993b).

The degree to which such a process characterises late Roman rural burial should not however be exaggerated. While some surveys of burial distribution in small areas of south-east Britain do suggest that early Roman cemeteries were small and scattered (e.g. Bell 1976; Pitts 1979; Philp 1963; 1973), examples of early cemeteries with several tens of burials and more can be cited, including not only Owslebury, Cross Farm, Boxfield Farm and other poorly recorded sites in Hertfordshire (6.9) but also Guilden Morden, Litlington, Rectory Farm, Sutton Valence and Westhampnett and Durotrigian cemeteries (e.g. Jordan Hill, Maiden Castle, Fordington Bottom, and Poundbury) still in use in the post-conquest period.

Given that all rural burials are better represented in the late Roman period, a larger number of nucleated cemeteries might in any case be expected, even if the proportion of such cemeteries had not changed. The case for 'nucleation of rural cemeteries in late Roman Britain must therefore remain unproven. Van Ossel (1993) notes the persistence of small groups of burials in Gallia Belgica in contradiction to Wightman's argument for an increased nucleation of cemeteries in the late Roman period. Most of the late Roman nucleated sites identified by Philpott and Reece, (e.g. Bradley Hill, Lynch Farm, Radley Barrow Hills, Stanton Harcourt, Wasperton, Winterbourne Down) and other sites (Charlton Mackrell, Boscombe Down, Bletsoe, Kempston, Foxton, Fosse Lane, Laxton and Uffington) are similar in size to the earlier cemeteries. The distinction is perhaps better made between this relatively frequent occurrence and very late Roman cemeteries especially in the Thames Valley and West Country where burials may be counted in their hundreds and of which the later phases were sometimes contemporary with the much larger rural Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Rahtz 1977).

6.19 An alternative model for the relationship of burial to settlement space

This survey has identified recurring trends in the placing of burials around settlement sites. The recognition that the organisation of settlement space is an active medium through which experience and social relationships are moulded and re-negotiated (1.4) has been explored in a Romano-British context through the study of villa architecture and art much more than through depositional practice. Burial evidence is only one dimension of the latter, but it does suggest some themes in the organisation of settlement space non-villa as well as villa sites, in particular the structure of settlement space through time.

The maintenance of distance between living and dead on both rural and urban sites is a commonplace of Roman archaeology. It is not therefore surprising that the boundary feature has emerged as the recurring context of burial, both dispersed interments, larger cemeteries and burial monuments. The locations of these burials provide a classic illustration of liminality (van Gennep 1960), as has been previously alluded to but not developed (Hingley 1990a). The ambiguous object, the corpse or cremated bone, was deposited in at interfaces between spaces of different character, the enclosure ditches between different parts of settlements or between inhabited area and fields, entrances and routeways at the point of transition with an outside world, and abandoned and prehistoric sites. A front / rear distinction does not appear to characterise this distribution pattern so well as a concentric ordering (cf. Hingley 1990a: 143). The innermost ring comprised infant burials, closer to the interior of settlement space and within structures, the outer rings child and adult burials on the settlement periphery and at more distant locations in the landscape.

The affiliation with boundary features has potentially a more specific purpose in a Roman context. Roman rural burials have been regularly interpreted as markers of property or estate boundaries (Dyson 1992: 144; Fasham 1980; Miles 1985: 40). Fragmentary references in the *agrimensores* discuss the relationship between tomb and boundaries (Meffre 1993). According to these placing tombs on the edges of property caused their frequent confusion with property boundary markers, as the texts identify other locations for tombs, by the roadside or on any part of a property in ground that was stony or uncultivated as long as there was a minimum distance from settlement. The purpose of advertising ownership is explicitly acknowledged in these references and burial could serve as evidence of ownership in legal disputes (Keppie 1983: 126-7; Meffre 1993; Vermeulen and Bourgeois forthcoming).

However this does not mean that all tombs should be interpreted in such a specific light. For example given the scattering of elite landholdings across and between provinces (Todd 1987), where should their burials be deposited? Given the high degree of uncertainty over the nature of land and property ownership in the north-western provinces (Gregson 1987) and the problems of identifying estates (Hingley 1989; Percival 1981), the hypothesis is difficult to pursue. The context of burials considered here is in any case settlement boundaries, although the off-site sample of burials is certain to be under-represented. Literary evidence suggests a more fruitful line of approach. The designation of a grave as a *locus religiosus* protected the grave from destruction and was related to the right of descendants to access to ancestral graves in land that might no longer be their own (Robinson 1975: 177-

79; de Visscher 1963). Literary evidence for elite self-definition through graves as the repository of ancestors on family estates has been documented by Bodel (1997). This cue that is more profitably exploited than very specific relationships to landholding and is likely to be relevant below the elite level. Tombs guaranteed access to ancestors as much as they did property rights. The relationship was through rather than to land or property. To inhabitants the presence of ancestral graves was the physical embodiment of group identity in settlement space, a sense of which the enduring or timeless quality was endowed by the placing of burials in features related to a near or more distant past. The linear layout of burial noted in the Hampshire sample in particular was a powerful metaphor for lineages that allowed the living to define their own genealogical position.

However as ethnographic case studies collected by Bloch and Parry (1982b) show, the relationship of burial and concepts of time like the relationship of burials and space also seems to have been ambivalent. Burials were distanced in time from the living by physical distance, or by the location of burial on abandoned or prehistoric sites distanced the dead in time. Burial sometimes appears to have been the final act in a sequence of deposits like other 'rites of termination' identified by Merrifield (1987: 48-50), for example in the tops of wells. However the locations chosen for burial also integrated burial and the dead in cyclical rhythms. The association of burials with field boundaries, corn driers, kilns and animals inserted the burial of the dead within the cycles of transformation of the agricultural year. Placing of burials in proximity to ditches, at least part of the time filled with water, may have evoked metaphors of mortality and moisture, decay and regeneration.

This association with other features is also likely to be the reason why groups of burials were short-lived. The location of burial asserted itself on the daily visual experience of settlement inhabitants not only by the marking of graves but also by the obviousness of the larger features, like boundary ditches with which burials were associated. Ethnographic evidence suggests a possible context for burials, an informal focus point of social activities, usually taken for granted and periodically remembered in a more ritualised fashion (Goody 1961). Yet when such features became redundant the place of burial seems to have shifted, although older features could also sometimes be exploited as a burial location. This explanation offers an alternative pragmatism to that previously suggested (6.13). The choice of burial location was influenced by the contemporary 'history' of the site and was connected to the lifecycles of sites as well as to other temporal rhythms.

Given the small number of rural burials (2.3.3), should the practice which accounts for the majority of the archaeologically visible burial record be considered an atypical burial rite applied only to deviants? This characterisation might even be reversed. In view of the very small visible proportion of rural burials, might those known archaeologically be those in whose burials sufficient energy was invested to make them archaeologically visible?

6. 20 The historical context of burials around settlements

Little attempt has been made here to differentiate practices over space and time within the Roman period. However some historically specific dimensions of this practice can be suggested. The majority of the examples considered here date to the late Roman period, which is to be expected given the general greater visibility of burial in southern and central England in this period (2.4). Although evidence of the continued deposition of individual body parts on settlement into the Roman period is not hard to find, examination of the Hertfordshire sample shows that the practice is less well attested than in the pre-Roman period. It is also not possible to discern any chronological trends in its representation within the Roman period, although a large sample remains to be systematically collected and examined. The 'emergence' of burial in at least some parts of rural Britain in the late Roman period is not therefore currently attributable to the abandonment of the excarnation process (Carr and Knüsel 1997) which is likely to account for some of this fragmentary material. An alternative explanation is that the preferential context of burial may have shifted closer to settlement sites in this period. Generalisations have been proposed on the basis of increasingly visible forms of burial, closer to settlements, within formal bounded cemeteries as indicators of a strategy to legitimise access to critical resources (Chapman 1981; Goldstein 1981). This connection has however been more often asserted than demonstrated, and leaves unclear the question of what constitute critical resources (Morris 1991), although agricultural land is often implied, and population pressure considered the main motor.

It is difficult to apply such a scenario unambiguously to late Roman Britain. No evidence for population increase in late Roman Britain has yet been assembled. The extent to which the late Roman economy was increasingly disembedded, as proposed by Hodder (1979), can be questioned (Millett 1990a). However there is evidence for changes in the late Roman rural economy; the possible development of the colonate and the changes in the taxation system suggest greater demands made on the lower levels of rural society (Millett 1990a). Agricultural innovation also has implications for the demands made on the rural economy. These changes had consequences for use or control of land and thus for the organisation of agricultural production at the household level. E. Scott (1990b) and S. Scott (1994; 1995) have argued that these processes drew an increased number of 'strangers' to villas where architectural and artistic elaboration was deployed in order to structure this increased interaction with outsiders. The greater frequency of visible burial, in the fourth century, giving greater emphasis to settlement boundaries, may be one component of an analogous elaboration of settlement space on a wider range of site types. The possible threats to group integrity were met with an intensification of group identities, of which one dimension was the deposition of the dead. The monument or marker of an interment, or possibly the memory of a ceremony, could also have conditioned the experience of the 'outsider' arriving or passing through by alerting them that the space they were entering or traversing was differentiated from that whence they had come.

6.21 Conclusion

The first parts of this chapter showed the very localised variation in the availability of burial evidence from Hampshire and Hertfordshire. Quantitative examination of rural burial practice

established burial assemblages and monumental patterns in early and late Roman Hampshire and in early Roman Hertfordshire which will be compared to urban and small town practice in the following chapter. From an examination of the relationship of burial to settlement in detail in Hampshire and Hertfordshire and a wider sample from Roman Britain a number of preferred locations have been identified in the distribution of individual, small groups of burials and larger cemeteries and monuments in relation to settlement sites. It remains difficult to evaluate the strength of different associations although previous emphasis on the rear of settlement enclosures may have been exaggerated. The use of most cemeteries for only a few generations has been shown not to be a function of scale of excavation but a genuine characteristic of rural burial. Within broader changes in the visibility of burial different sites undergo particular rhythms.

The previous characterisation of burials in close association with settlement features as those of low status individuals was considered within a broader re-evaluation of current hypotheses for the expression of social hierarchies in rural burial sites and rejected as inadequate. This is not to say that the question is not of interest; rather however as currently formulated it does not characterise much of the evidence. It also appears to be based on assumptions about the spatial relationship of elite and non-elite burials that need not be warranted. Urban funerary epigraphy in Italy shows that *familia* and clientship could be incorporated within the same tomb; links of patronage were perpetuated beyond death (Patterson 1992; Purcell 1987). Burial space in rural Italy may have been similarly donated, although it is not well documented (Dyson 1992: 145). An alternative characterisation has been offered which places burial within the evolving structure of settlement space and suggests its influence on contemporary experience of the landscape.

Inevitably the discussion produces a composite picture which must be nuanced by more detailed analysis of regional samples. Initial work suggests some regional differentiation. For example single burials in field ditches and entrances seem to characterise the burial record in Cambridgeshire (J. Taylor pers. comm.) rather than the small groups identified in Hampshire. Such nuances are occasionally alluded to but should be a fruitful area of future analysis. The location of burial in the wider landscape has not yet been systematically examined. Initial surveys of the landscape location of non-monumental burial have so far proved inconclusive (van Doorsaeler 1967: 24-5; Lintz 1993: 275) but study of Roman period rural burials in Britain would certainly benefit from similar approaches. The position of monuments in the landscape can be more fully and systematically addressed through recent advances in landscape archaeology, especially in areas with a large and reliably dated corpus of in-situ burial monuments.

Chapter 7. The geography of funerary display

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the location of burial in relation to the arguments introduced (1.3) on the relationship of burial display to the settlement landscape. The current consensus of opinion is that urban cemeteries were not the focus of large-scale deposition or monumentalisation but that larger grave groups were deposited within a rural context. This question is approached here in two stages. The first assesses the relationship between burial display and the street frontage around urban centres, using the evidence already considered in the Hertfordshire and Hampshire samples, and a broader body of monumental and depositional evidence from Roman Britain. The second moves beyond the confines of the urban cemetery to explore the relationship of burial display to the overall settlement landscape. This is based primarily on two study areas, the first being Hampshire and the *civitas* of the Belgae, the second Hertfordshire and the *civitas* of the Catuvellauni. The nature of the sample is considered in detail where appropriate.

7.2 The relationship of burial to the urban landscape

The distinction between cemetery and settlement areas, with the latter surrounding the former was adopted almost universally around *civitas* capitals and colonies in Britain (Esmonde Cleary 1987; Wachter 1995). The few examples of intra-mural burials do not seriously challenge this model. For example the first and second century cremation burials from the intra-mural area of western London may derive from individual plots related to houses or from a larger cemetery area outside a *pomerium* superseded by a later limit further to the west (Shepherd 1988). The plot from which two intra-mural first century cremation burials were recovered at Canterbury Castle (Area II, Rosemary Lane Car Park) lies close to the later walled circuit. On minor centre sites the distinction is not so clear cut. Large cemeteries on settlement margins are known from the early and late Roman periods, in the Hertfordshire minor centres and at Ospringe, as well as at Ashton, Ancaster and Baldock. Throughout the Roman period burial also took place in the 'backlands', i.e. the rear of settlement compounds; early Roman examples include Braughing and also Coggeshall, Billericay, Great Dunmow and Fenny Stratford, late Roman Ashton and Hibaldstow.

The creation of cemeteries distinct from the settlement area and beyond the *pomerium* was an explicit aspect of Roman town foundation (Rykwert 1976), although it could accommodate intrusion of burial within the town in certain circumstances, for example in Asia Minor where tombs of civic benefactors continued to be erected in an intra-mural context (Cormack 1997). There is some evidence for this distinction in Britain prior to the Roman conquest. Hill (1995) has recently characterised the later Iron Age in Britain as a period of growing spatial distinction between the archaeologically visible deposition of the dead and settlement area. The relationship of settlement space to burial at St Albans and Baldock as well as in a small number of other situations suggests that this distinction acted not only

at the level of individual settlement but also where there was some degree of settlement nucleation, although this is not the only model. At Welwyn (4.6) and Colchester for example small groups of cemeteries related to individual elements of the settlement complex characterised the burial record (Crummy 1997b). The convergence between the indigenous and imported 'templates' should not therefore be underestimated.

The distribution of cemeteries around towns is not therefore contentious, and Esmonde Cleary (1987) has demonstrated the general relationship of cemeteries to the exit roads. At issue rather is the degree to which the characterisation offered by Dyson of the cemetery as a vision of the great and good is applicable to the cemeteries of Roman Britain (1.4). At Winchester there was some complexity in the relationship of burial to the street frontage at Hyde Street which was argued in part to relate to use of the cemetery by groups of different cultural origins (5.2.4). The largest burial assemblages exceeded the threshold for inclusion within the East Hampshire tradition but around Winchester and Neatham the preferred location for such assemblages was several hundred metres or a few kilometres beyond the settlement, usually amongst small groups of burials. A more monumentalised street frontage may have characterised the Hyde Street cemetery in the second century, but the excavated length of well preserved street frontage was too short to assess this properly. Evidence from St Albans was more ambivalent (4.7). In the mid first century and late first or early second century the location at Folly Lane of the burial complex and subsequently the temple was highly conspicuous in relation to the local landscape. At St Stephens the largest funerary structures were located on the road frontage but as at Hyde Street there was no continuous band of monuments. Fragmentary evidence indicates the existence of more imposing monuments elsewhere around the town. Larger burial assemblages were not preferentially deposited by the road but were scattered across the cemetery. Several similar interments took place in small cemeteries, probably connected to extra-mural settlements and not close to major routes.

Use of evidence from other Romano-British towns raises a number of problems. Large-scale excavations of the relationship of early Roman cemeteries to roads are lacking. We depend on occasional small scale excavations and on more general distribution patterns of burial assemblages and funerary monuments, a dependency which incurs further problems of its own. Outside the south-east two important attributes are also absent from most towns, a large sample of reliably recorded early Roman burials from either urban cemeteries or their hinterlands and the quantities of pyre and / or grave furniture which facilitate the establishment of burial hierarchies.

The distribution of inscriptions and funerary sculpture is also uneven. Recent discoveries have not changed the general characterisation that inscriptions were adopted to only a very limited degree in both a funerary and non-funerary context in most of non-military Roman Britain (Biró 1975; Blagg 1990; Hope 1997; Mann 1985). Military tombstones predominate, especially those related to the first century garrisons; amongst the rest individuals of non-insular origin are massively over-represented in comparison to their likely numbers in the population of Roman Britain and outside York the *civitas* elites are largely absent from the epigraphy. A small number of towns, Lincoln, London and York monopolise

the small corpus of inscriptions from urban centres (Fig. 7.1). Funerary inscriptions from London and York also derive from a wider range of monument types than is common elsewhere (Fig. 7.2), including *stelae*, sculpted sarcophagi, statue bases, and fragments of monumental tombs (Merrifield 1977; 1996; RCHM 1928; RCHM 1962; Tufi 1983). The provenance of both inscriptions and sculpture is often very approximate.

The St Pancras cemetery on Stane Street east of Chichester allows some limited examination of this question. The long axis of the excavated area was at right angles to Stane Street but the immediate relationship of cemetery and road was not excavated (Fig. 7.3). Part of the cemetery nearest the road was removed by a large third or fourth century gravel pit which destroyed some burials. However the better preserved area was devoid of burials even though earlier features survived. Other evidence also does not support the primacy of the road as a focus of the cemetery. Trenches (D and E) closest to the road showed no greater density of burial than other areas of the site. Dated samian does not support a shift over time in burial away from the road; for example burials in Trench E are dated by samian accessory vessels to the Antonine period but the earliest burials, six with Flavian samian, were recovered from the eastern edge of the cemetery. Nor were graves with larger assemblages located closer to the road but in trench Z north of trenches D and E in Area 1 and in trench G in Area 4, much further from the road. In sum the road frontage was not a favoured area of burial in general or of large-scale deposition.

Colchester is unique within the sample here for the combination of funerary monuments and large grave assemblages. Funerary epigraphy, sculpture and monumental foundations are restricted to the western cemetery area and their distribution suggests a monumentalised road frontage from the area of the cross-roads south-west of the Balcerne Gate along the road to the latter (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 263; Hull 1958: 252-54) (Fig. 7.4), although the enclosure excavated by Hall (1944) represents the only reliably documented in situ element of this monumental *Gräberstraße*. Of those commemorated on Colchester inscriptions (RIB 200-206) four are military and one a Roman *eques*; pre-Roman burials are not known within this area (Hawkes and Crummy 1995) so the cemetery may owe its origins to the legionary fortress burial ground. Within the Joslin collection from the western cemetery of the town there are several examples of large first and second century grave assemblages of ceramics, glass, and personal ornament (7/43, 8/68 and 9/30), as well as the extra-ordinary collection of figurines in the 'child's grave (3/124), although the reliability of grave groups in the nineteenth century collections must be questionable. There is no information on the relationship of such burials to the road frontage.

Elsewhere the monumental evidence is the chief source for addressing this question. The recovery of apparently in-situ monuments at Wroxeter allows some reconstruction of funerary monumentalisation (Wright 1872: 341-362). The principal cemetery excavations reported by Wright took place outside the East Gate. While trenches close to the town wall recovered no burials, a concentration of cremation burials and four inscriptions and possibly parts of funerary monuments was noted 200 metres to the east and to the south of 'The Lane'. RIB 293-295 were excavated close to one another, and to their north-west RIB 292 was recovered close to the foundations of a large building

possibly associated with a cremation burial (note 7.1). All these inscriptions were located on a bank which Wright observes to have been the highest point in the local landscape. In the field opposite to the north of the Lane Atkinson excavated a small group of poorly preserved cremations, where datable deriving from the second century (Collingwood and Taylor 1922: 253). One of these lay within a stone foundation six metres square, 'possibly the base of a very considerable funerary monument'. Both excavations imply the existence of small groups of monuments rather than a continuous frontage, but it is doubted whether either excavation would have recovered slighter earth-cut features related to wooden monuments. The relationship of burial to Watling Street in this area is uncertain as the course of the road has not been confidently reconstructed. The military predominance in the funerary epigraphy suggests that at least part of this cemetery originated as that of the legionary fortress, although RIB 295 shows that it was not exclusively devoted to soldiers. The burials excavated by Atkinson show that it continued in use after the final military departure in the 90s AD.

The recovery of funerary monuments around London from poorly known contexts or from re-use in bastions obstructs understanding of their relationship to local topography (Blagg 1983: 132; Hall 1996). Recent excavations in the east London cemetery gave ambiguous results; while in-situ monuments were closer to the city walls and to the roads, redeposited material from monuments was concentrated in the excavated areas most distant from the walled circuit. Shepherd (1988: 11) notes the highly visible position, to those approaching from the west, of the burial area with a concentration of burials with unusual cremation containers from Warwick Square, although there is no evidence for how these tombs were marked. While current evidence implies some difference in numbers and types of grave goods between London's cemeteries, favouring that to the north (Hall 1996: 66-73), further assessment must await the gathering of larger samples of reliable excavated data to compare to the eastern cemetery. A clear example of the concentration of funerary monuments on the road was very recently identified at Southwark Great Dover Street. Four funerary monuments, comprising three enclosures around the bases of masonry structures and a possible mausoleum were constructed adjacent and parallel to Watling Street. Architectural fragments from the monuments included a pine cone and head of a river god, and cremation and inhumation burials were scattered within and around the enclosures.

The epigraphic sample from Lincoln is the largest outside York and London (Fig. 7.1) and the sculptural evidence, inscriptions and antiquarian observation imply a diversity of monument types, including a possible *hypogeum* and barrows (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 109-13; Huskinson 1994; Jessup 1959: 1; Richmond 1946). Monumental evidence has been recovered from all sides of the town but there are two principal concentrations, one on Ermine Street south of the river and the other on the road east from the upper town. The majority of inscriptions derive from the former area and commemorate soldiers, although the division between military and non-military epigraphy in this area is not absolute. The origins of the cemetery south of the river seem to lie in the military phase. Recent excavations in Monson Street from which several soldiers' tombstones were formerly recovered (RIB 253, 258 and 260) have confirmed their provenance from a first century cremation cemetery (M. J. Jones 1988). These

groups lie well south of the legionary fortress established to the north of the river, but some of the tombstones may relate to an earlier phase of campaigning. The late first century AD Riseholme barrow eight hundred metres east of Ermine Street and four kilometres north of the Newport Arch is most likely to be connected to an extra-mural settlement in Lincoln's environs.

The vast majority of funerary inscriptions and sculptures from Roman York both derive from the cemeteries south of the colony centred on the Railway station and the Mount (RCHME 1962). Both Roman period re-use of monuments and nineteenth century conditions of recovery impede reconstruction of monument context. Nevertheless Jones could identify patterning in the monumental distribution; within the Railway station cemetery there was a greater concentration of monuments closer to the road, although possibly a road serving only the cemetery. A preference for greater prominence given by greater height may explain the overall greater concentration of monuments around the Mount rather than in the Railway cemetery (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 163). The particular concentration of monuments close to the junction of the Tadcaster and Aldborough roads also suggests a similar concern to erect monuments in more visible locations by the military and civilian occupants of the cemeteries.

At Carlisle too burial monuments appear to have been raised at the most visible points. Within the London Road cemetery, which probably extended for at least a mile south-south-east of the town inscriptions (RIB 954, 955, 959) concentrated on Gallows Hill (Charlesworth 1978; Esmonde Cleary 1987: 29; Patten 1974). Two monuments were also recovered from Murrell Hill to the west of the town (RIB 958 and CSIR I.6. No. 497 (Coulston and Phillips 1988: 167-68)).

At Gloucester first century soldiers' tombstones (RIB 121 and 122) as well as another first century tombstone of a twenty year old man (Raws and Wills 1996: 176-77) were recorded at Wotton Pitch approximately a kilometre north-east of the north gate of the city, at the junction of the roads between Cirencester and Kingsholm and that branching to the east gate at Gloucester. This point was higher than the fortress at Kingsholm or the site of the city (Heighway 1980: 60). However this was not the only monumentalised area; to the west on the probable course of the road to the east gate were traces of probable burial monuments at St Margaret's Hospital (Heighway 1980: 64), and a late second or early third century tombstone of a veteran of the twentieth legion has been recovered from the Kingsholm cemetery (Hassall and Tomlin 1984: 333).

The number of funerary inscriptions from Cirencester is the largest of that of any *civitas* capital but contextual information is usually poor, or where better the monuments were no longer in situ (McWhirr 1973). Small scale excavations have given ambiguous results. The location of a stone walled enclosure with a stone platform at its centre and an urned cremation burial in its north-eastern part (monument 1103) close to the Fosse Way west of the town hints at the existence of a monumentalised street frontage (McWhirr *et al.* 1982: mf. 5/5, B13). In view of the recovery conditions the significance of the inscribed panel of the tombstone recovered from Oakley Cottage facing south-east away from the road (Reece 1962: 53) is difficult to assess (note 7.2). A group of largely first century inscriptions

(based on epigraphic formulae) were found south of the Silchester gate and close to the road, one close to the gate (RIB 111) and others (RIB 108-110) at Watermoor approximately one hundred metres further south, just south of the fort rampart. Although the association between the tombstones and either of the two military phases identified at Cirencester (McWhirr 1988) is by no means certain, that military tombstones were raised as the first memorials in this street of tombs seems likely. Three tombstones (dated possibly to the early third century) recovered from the rampart probably derived from the same cemetery show its continuing use in monumental form (Hassall in McWhirr 1973: 212-13).

As for minor centres at present there is an insufficient sample of early Roman cemeteries to make detailed comparisons to the Hertfordshire sample. In the latter a tendency was observed for larger grave assemblages to be deposited with small groups of burials rather than in large cemeteries. No grouping of such assemblages on the road frontage was noted, indeed an opposite preference was sometimes indicated where burials were located on backlands. The large sample of funerary inscriptions or sculpture from Bath is exceptional within the corpus of minor centres (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982; RIB 155-165). According to the poor contextual evidence those early monuments not from the town walls were recovered from the Walcot area on the Fosse Way some 600-700m to the north of the town, which must have been a *Gräberstraße*. The existence of a *Gräberstraße* has been proposed at other small towns, for example at Water Newton (Wilson 1975b), but this awaits confirmation by further survey and excavation. The contrasting examples of Great Dunmow and Ospringe suggest the variety of locations possible in the deposition of larger burial assemblages. At the former a large burial assemblage was excavated within a small cemetery plot on the corner of two subsidiary roads. The location of the entrances suggest that it was accessible from the settlement compound of which it was a component rather than from the street. In the minor centre cemetery at Ospringe burials with larger assemblages were scattered amongst the several hundred burials.

The development of cemeteries at Winchester (5.6) suggested that the street frontage was still valued in the late third or early fourth century but from a combination of direct and indirect evidence in the course of the fourth century the road frontage no longer appears to have been the axis for daily engagement of the dead and the living. There is little other direct evidence for the relationship between burial and road frontage in late Roman Britain, although late Roman burials in the northern cemetery at Baldock continued to lie alongside the road. The same indirect evidence elsewhere, including the increasing prevalence of west-east burial orientation, albeit with some influence from the local environment, and the distribution of monuments across cemeteries rather than only on the road frontage, for example at Butt Road or Poundbury, supports the same interpretation. The example of Poundbury, where Green (1982: 64) noted that the cemetery commands a fine view of Dorchester to the east, suggests that movement away from the street should not be confused with a total abandonment of burial in more conspicuous locations.

7.3 Streets of tombs in Roman Britain?

It is tempting to interpret the evidence presented here as evidence for the existence of two funerary cultures. At sites with a close military connection in their foundation, for example the presence of a legion for several decades, colonial foundation, or military patronage, monumentalised cemeteries characterised urban approaches, particularly at York, London and Lincoln, to a lesser extent at Bath, Wroxeter, Carlisle, Colchester and Gloucester. Often military commemorations account for a large proportion of the funerary inscriptions at these sites and are the earliest inscriptions in the sequence even if these are not always conclusively associated with particular phases of military occupation. Esmonde Cleary (1987: 168) has identified a preference for location of burial inscriptions on routes to London; road junctions and topographically prominent features can also be included amongst the preferred locations. An element of Mediterranean funerary culture for which there is as yet no evidence is the location of large monuments or assemblages near to the line of the *pomerium* (cf. 5.2.5), but the existence of this feature of central Italian cemeteries has in any case not yet been widely demonstrated in other provinces.

Fragments of possible *Gräberstraße* excavated or still visible from military sites in Britain include Derby Racecourse (Fig. 7.5) and Petty Knowes (Fig. 7.6), as well as occasional individual funerary monuments, for example Shorden Brae. Sheer numbers of inscriptions as well as more occasional sculptural fragments or in-situ grave monuments suggest that extensive streets of tombs must have existed at Chester and Caerleon. The southern cemetery at Chester extended for up to a kilometre south of the Dee, according to antiquarian discoveries of burials, fragments of funerary sculpture and inscriptions and occasional in-situ monuments (Mason 1987: 164-65; Richmond and Wright 1955). The sheer number of inscriptions suggest that the northern cemetery is likely to have equally extensive. The numbers of inscriptions suggest the existence of similar cemeteries at Caerleon, although the relatively extensive stretch excavated at Lodge Hill suggests that monuments are unlikely to have been continuous (Fig. 7.7) (Boon 1972).

The second mode is exemplified by some *civitas* capital cemeteries in south-eastern England and also by the Hertfordshire minor centres. Burial display is more frequently revealed by deposition of large grave furniture assemblages than by funerary monuments. The location of the latter does not show a preference for the more visible parts of larger cemeteries and were frequently located among small burial groups associated with extra-mural settlements. However the contrast should not be over-emphasised. The existence of inscriptions makes monuments from a small number of sites much more visible than the majority of towns where an extensive epigraphic culture was not adopted and where early Roman cemeteries have not been investigated in a way likely to recovery more fragmentary or ephemeral traces of funerary monuments, for example enclosure ditches or foundation trenches or postholes for wooden structures. Where this has been the case, excavation at both St Stephens and Hyde Street revealed the existence of small concentrations rather than of unbroken lines of monuments along the street frontage. This is not unique to Britain. Several examples from Gaul and Germany (Figs. 7.8 - 7.16) suggest the occurrence of single or small clusters of monuments over several hundred metres on roads passing through cemeteries leaving towns. This is likely to be the more common form of *Gräberstraße* in the

north-western provinces, rather than continuous rows of monuments. Indeed the numbers of inscriptions from many *civitas* capitals (Fig. 7.1) may suggest a similar degree of monumentalisation. The possibility of more massive monumentalisation should not be dismissed. Of this Mainz-Weisenau (Fig. 7.17) offers the best extensively excavated example from the north-western provinces, although the degree of monumentalisation of the cemetery is unique for Mainz (Witteyer and Fasold 1995). Plans made during late nineteenth century road construction suggest a similar development along Aachener Straße or Luxemburger Straße in Cologne (Gabelmann 1987). Similar cemeteries are also known from Lyon (Audin 1979) and Trier (Rheinisches Landesmuseum 1984) but are not yet known or hinted at in Britain.

However this discussion has considered only the use of space in towns and their immediate environs. To draw conclusions from this pattern of distribution alone may be premature as it may study only the variation within what may not be the most significant theatre of funerary display. The following section therefore considers the relative emphasis in funerary display between town and country.

7.4 Funerary display in the wider landscape

Using the evidence assembled from Hertfordshire and Hampshire the association of display in burial practice with different settlement types will now be re-assessed. These areas are particularly appropriate for re-evaluation as they provide the basis for the general positions outlined above (1.4) (Millett 1987: 64; Philpott 1991: 18-19). The location of burial display is examined from the LPRIA to the late Roman period, but principal emphasis lies on the period between the early first and the early to mid-third centuries AD. Using the information assembled on the composition of assemblages in each area, regional thresholds of 'burial display' are defined and the distribution of burial assemblages above this threshold are examined. Association with urban centres is here considered to be indicated by location within known urban cemeteries or approximate cemetery zones. The issue is not only explored in terms of the immediate context of association, which can often be only coarsely defined, but on analogy with recent study of villa location (Hodder and Millett 1980) the degree to which burial evidence clusters around towns is also explored. Simple visual examination was employed as the data quality did not satisfy the demands of the methodology used by Hodder and Millett (note 7.3).

Although the use of county boundaries facilitated the collection of information, the use of county units obscured the relationship between burial and Roman period political boundaries, between which occasional observations have suggested a close relationship. Sjöström (1993: 88) for example has observed that Roman period funerary monuments in Tripolitania lie on tribal boundaries, although the point is not substantiated. Initial examination of the data considered here also suggested that this was a worthwhile relationship to explore further, although the procedure raises several methodological problems.

The first is that of establishing *civitas* boundaries. LPRIA coinage zones have long been used as the bases for Roman period *civitates*, with the support of some literary evidence (Rivet 1968). The

relationship of the coinage distributions, most rigorously plotted by Kimes *et al.* (1982), to the pre-Roman social groupings, has been modelled by Haselgrove (1987b). We know little of the precise basis on which social formations were organised into Roman period *civitates* and a variety of administrative and territorial expedients may be postulated in the immediate post-conquest period (Haselgrove 1984) and the boundaries derived from these distributions are better envisaged as zones than strict lines of demarcation (Millett 1990a: Fig. 16, 67). The use of the *civitates* which extend over much broader areas than the counties require both an assessment of the degree to which burial practices were sufficiently similar to justify quantitative and qualitative comparison across them and of the underlying distribution of all burial evidence.

7.5 The distribution of burial display in Hampshire and the *civitas* of the Belgae

Prior to the early Roman period a peer group burial tradition comparable to the Welwyn type could not easily be identified in Hampshire and central southern England. Instead burials with exceptional assemblages, defined either by type or numbers of artefacts, drew on a wide range of traditions of artefact deposition and monument construction (6.4.3). The associations of these few LPRIA examples do not permit any strong generalisations. The Viables Farm and Owslebury burials were associated with smaller enclosed sites. The Hurstbourne Tarrant barrow lies 30m south-east of the entrance to a banjo enclosure (Corney 1989: 112) but this enclosure lies within a wider dyke system. The location may be analogous to that of the robbed barrow with in-situ cremation at Handley in Dorset (White 1970) immediately to the north-east of the northern passage through the multiple ditches of the Gussage Hill complex (Corney 1989: 120-21).

From the conquest period a more coherent grouping can be distinguished by the recurring inclusion of a larger number of ceramics as accessory vessels, the East Hampshire Tradition. Millett (1987a) used a minimum of ten vessels as the threshold of inclusion (6.4.3). The average burial assemblage in the urban cemeteries included an average of just over one accessory vessel (5.2.3) while that with rural burials was higher, over seven vessels at Owslebury (6.4.1) and several vessels in the small number of other assemblages (6.4.2). The presence of ten accessory vessels is therefore retained as a satisfactory approximate threshold of display.

Very few such burials were excavated in early Roman cemeteries at Winchester (5.2.3). Although the only sample of urban burials available for study, the evidence of the Hyde Street cemetery is particularly significant because of its location, which on a particular model one would expect to show a concentration of monuments or large burial assemblages (5.2.5). The immediate context of the East Hampshire burials was rural (6.4.3), but re-examination suggests that the majority of the burials cluster in three groups. A group of predominantly first century burials is concentrated between a few hundred metres and a maximum distance of five to six kilometres from Winchester (Fig. 7.18). A second cluster of first to third century burials lies in and within three kilometres of Neatham. In contrast the small third

cluster in the Basingstoke area, (only one of which is reliably documented) and the scatter in Surrey are not obviously focused on any known settlement.

The location of Neatham lies at the received junction of the *civitates* of the Belgae, Atrebates and Regni and of Thiessen polygons drawn around their *civitas* capitals (Millett and Graham 1986: 156). The Basingstoke and Surrey groups are also both likely to lie outside the *civitas* of the Belgae, the former in that of the Atrebates and the latter in that of the Regni. The received area of the Roman period *civitas* of the Belgae in the LPRIA comprised part of the kingdom of Cogidubnus, divided by the Roman administrative framework between the Belgae and Regni (Cunliffe 1993: 211; Millett 1990a: 68; Rivet 1968). The only boundary in the Iron Age coinage zones likely to be reflected in the border of the Roman period *civitas* of the Belgae is that between the Southern and South-western zones between the Stour and Test (Kimes *et al.* 1982: 123) (Fig. 7.19). Doubt has been expressed as to the validity of Ptolemy's inclusion of Bath within the Belgic *civitas* (Rivet and Smith 1979: 120-21) which extends the north-western boundary of the *civitas* in an arm through central Wiltshire to the Bristol Channel, thus including part of Avon and southern Gloucestershire which cuts the boundary zone of the distribution of the South-western and Western coinages. If this area was included within the *civitas*, the chef-lieu at Winchester must have been so distant as to have possessed limited significance as an administrative, social and economic centre.

The different funerary culture of this western strip of the *civitas* impedes any comparison based on funerary data. Although the mortuary practices of the whole area were similar in the Iron Age (Whimster 1981), they developed on a differing trajectory in the early Roman period. Very few early Roman burials are known from Wiltshire, northern Somerset and Avon and inhumation rather than cremation predominated (2.3.4). The monumental record of the area is also different to that of central and eastern Hampshire. Although the contribution to provincial Roman barrow traditions of local prehistoric landscapes has been argued elsewhere (Wigg 1993a), with exceptions (Fowler 1964; Smith and Simpson 1964) this region rich in prehistoric barrows lacks a reliably documented Roman period barrow burial tradition. Rather there is a thin scatter of funerary inscriptions and sculpture from the minor centres and rural settlements from rural northern Somerset, Avon and Gloucestershire (RIB 108-18, 120-3, 133-4, 136-7, 184; Cunliffe and Fulford 1982; Henig 1993). The thickest concentration of such monuments is that from Bath, probably from a *Gräberstraße* connected to the town and unparalleled in southern Britain (7.3). There is no focus of rural monuments around Bath however. The material seems to be more relevant to the community resident at Bath itself, a product of the different 'epigraphic habit' of its cosmopolitan population (Millett 1990a: 110).

In the late Roman period different criteria for comparison apply. Certain assemblage types and grave forms were shown to differentiate different groups within the burial population in both urban (5.7) and rural Hampshire (6.5), although their co-association could be better demonstrated in the urban sample. The different criteria used produce different results. The provision of lavish ornaments to the corpse, for example crossbow brooches, belt sets, precious metal jewellery and large quantities of

bracelets and beads, was characteristic of burials in Winchester's urban cemeteries rather than the environs of the *civitas* capital or of rural areas. This pattern fits Philpott's (1993) more general observation on the deposition of large sets of ornaments characterising town rather than country. Hawkes and Dunning's survey (1961) did not recover belt fittings from non-burial contexts outside Winchester or Silchester, although in the light of the subsequent collection of metalwork through metal detecting their distribution map must demand substantial revision. Occasional finds, for example a gold crossbow brooch from Odiham (Johns 1996: 168) suggest that this difference may characterise burials only. Elaborate grave types, characterised by depth, size or construction, and monuments / gullies concentrated in Winchester's cemeteries, and there is a similar small grouping around East Anton, in the boundary zone between the Belgae and the Atrebates. Elaborate wooden coffins, distinguished by the numbers or size of nails or brackets, occurred in both the Winchester cemeteries and in some rural contexts. Stone and lead coffins have a wider distribution within Hampshire, often in association with villas (6.6), and have been rarely recovered from Winchester nor, with the exception of Twyford, its peri-urban area (Fig. 7.20).

The comparison of practice with the western arm of the *civitas* is mitigated by the homogenisation of funerary culture across Britain in the late Roman period (Philpott 1991) but complicated by the favouring of the latter area with supplies of lead and of stone in comparison to Hampshire. The distribution of lead coffins shows a concentration in the cemeteries of Bath and in rural sites to the north between Bath and Gloucester (Toller 1977: 3, Map 1). No systematic analysis of the distribution of stone coffins has yet been conducted but the distribution is likely to be similar. Mausolea have been recovered from minor centres at Nettleton Scrub and Shepton Mallett on or close to the *civitas* boundaries (Leach 1990; Wedlake 1982) and in rural contexts, for instance at Wells (Rodwell 1982).

The most obvious change in the late Roman period is in the relationship of burial display to Winchester and its immediate hinterland. All the indicators of display selected here have been recovered from the urban cemeteries rather than the town's environs. The early Roman development at Neatham has no late Roman equivalent, but the area in any case lacks late Roman burial evidence of any sort. The scatter of rural evidence and associations with minor centres at East Anton and in the west of the *civitas*, however show that Winchester enjoyed no monopoly of burial display within the *civitas*.

7.6. The distribution of burial display in Hertfordshire and the *civitas* of the Catuvellauni

7.6.1 The identification of burial display

From the presence of recurring artefact types, in particular hearth furniture and amphorae, Stead (1967; 1976a) has distinguished a 'Welwyn' group, divided into Welwyn and Lexden phases, from other Aylesford burials north of the Thames. Whimster (1981) and Rodwell (1976a) followed this classification and divided other Aylesford burials into two further groups based on the size and content of assemblages, thus producing a tripartite distinction argued to reflect degrees of social status. The validity

of neither of these classifications has yet been systematically tested, but less subjective methods of differentiating elite assemblages based on numbers of artefact types have isolated a similar group of burials to that differentiated by Stead (Haselgrove 1982). The latter and recent additions to it (Baldock California, Stanway, and Dorton) are accepted here for the purposes of this brief analysis.

Analysis of the minor centre, urban (4.5) and rural cemeteries (6.9) showed that average provision of ceramics on all sites varied between two and three vessels. Doubling the latter to six accessory vessels provides the threshold used here as a minimum. The sample differed from that from Hampshire in that non-ceramic artefacts were also extremely common in burial assemblages. The presence of metal, glass and ceramic vessels in combination was also used as a criterion based on the previous demonstration that these vessels occur with larger assemblages (van Lith and Randsborg 1985; Nuber 1972; Philpott 1991: 230) but as it isolated only one assemblage within the Hertfordshire group was only plotted within the broader context of the *civitas* (Fig. 7.28). To amalgamate more rarely occurring artefact types graves with a minimum NAT of 3 were selected, again doubling the highest urban or minor centre average in the area, which was that at Skeleton Green of 1.61 (4.5). Certain container types, stone cists, lead coffins, and lion-head caskets and others with metal fittings also shown to occur with larger assemblages (Philpott 1991: 230) were also plotted, but not stone coffins as there are currently no dated stone coffins from the first and second centuries (Struck, M. forthcoming b)

Monuments have been classified as indices of display on the basis of energy invested in their creation. Four categories of funeral monument have been plotted, barrows of definite and probable Roman date, and epigraphic, sculptural and other monumental evidence, which includes temple mausolea and other stone monuments, timber structures and walled enclosures. The associated burial assemblages have little in common, varying from unaccompanied cremation (Emmanuel Knoll, Borough Hill) to relatively modest assemblages (Standon, Pickford Hill) to the most lavish grave groups (Bartlow Hills, Rougham). The distribution of grave furniture and monumental evidence are therefore initially considered separately and conclusions then compared.

7.6.2 The distribution of burial display in the LPRIA in Hertfordshire

Previous characterisation of the location of Welwyn and Lexden-type burials has suggested that they were associated with rural sites rather than 'oppida' (1.4). However Bryant and Niblett's recent discussion of a number of LPRIA 'oppida' in Hertfordshire suggests that Welwyn type burials were associated with three of six of these, Welwyn, Baldock and St Albans (4.7). A possible Welwyn type burial has also been noted close to Braughing (4.2). Welwyn burials are also associated with other LPRIA centres beyond Hertfordshire, for example the Lexden and Stanway burials with the dispersed complex at Colchester (Hawkes and Crummy 1995) and Cambridge, although almost all of those associated with Cambridge are poorly recorded and the 'oppidum' designation has not been fully argued (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 246). However the strength of association should not be overemphasised. The many poorly known potential Welwyn type burials are widely distributed across the Aylesford area

and some better recorded examples (e.g. Dorton, Snailwell, Hertford Heath) are not close to currently known LPRIA centres. Shifts within the Aylesford tradition area in the regions characterised by increasing differentiation in burial as suggested by Haselgrove (1982; 1984) require future examination. However detailed re-analysis is considered premature here as the numbers of burials remain sufficiently small for individual new discoveries to modify any scheme radically. Bryant and Niblett (1997) have recently demonstrated that our knowledge of the context of these burials depends heavily on research traditions biased to a few settlements and that the number and nature of LPRIA centres within Hertfordshire and undoubtedly elsewhere will be expanded by further fieldwork (cf. Corney 1989). However currently available evidence at least allows current orthodoxies on the relationship of LPRIA burials to central places to be problematised. There is a stronger relation to the 'oppidum' complexes than previously acknowledged.

7.6.3 The distribution of burial display in the Roman period in Hertfordshire

Plots of the different assemblage types show that they derive predominantly from the cemeteries of St Albans and from minor centres (Fig. 7.21 - 7.23). The only rural examples are the occurrence of certain container types at Boxfield Farm and at Pickford Mill. The environs of neither St Albans nor the minor centres are favoured by large assemblages. Examination of assemblages from Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire within a ten kilometres radius of Baldock only produced one assemblage, from Astwick, which would be included on this plot. The distribution of monuments suggests a concentration within the cemeteries of St Albans itself, usually timber mortuary enclosures and post settings, although the probable tomb fragments hint at more grandiose structures (Fig. 7.24). Barrows and temple mausolea have been recovered within seven to eight kilometres of the town. Single monuments are closely associated with minor centres, for example Welwyn and Ware, but otherwise there is little coherent pattern save a proximity to roads which in any case characterised the overall distribution of burials (6.7).

These results are however compromised by the lack of adequately documented rural assemblages and their absence from the hinterlands of certain settlements, including especially Braughing and St Albans (Fig. 6.26). There are greater numbers of burials from the environs of Ware, Baldock and Welwyn but the standard of documentation is generally very poor. The number of exceptional assemblages identified according to the criteria above are proportionately equal to the intensity of excavation of the cemeteries related to a particular settlement. Baldock and St Albans are therefore best represented. St Albans is distinguished from other settlements by the number of burial monuments. In summary therefore a number of centres have been identified for burial display, of which the *civitas* capital is one.

Late Roman evidence is too poor in Hertfordshire to offer strong characterisations but the distribution of stone and lead coffins and late Roman monuments (Fig. 7.25) again demonstrates a concentration around St Albans and minor centres, including individual monuments in the cemeteries of

or in the environs of Braughing and Baldock, in and around Welwyn, Ware and the possible minor centre at Bishops Stortford (Niblett 1995b: 68).

7.6.4 The identification of Roman period burial display in the *civitas* of the Catuvellauni

The core of the Catuvellaunian *civitas* lay in Hertfordshire but it included portions of all of the surrounding counties (Rivet 1968: 145-8). The Roman period *civitas* lies within the Eastern coinage area (Fig. 7.19). The boundaries of this coin series are the rivers Thames to the south and west, the Ouse to the north-west and the Stour to the north-east. The south-western border of the East Anglian series has a fairly clear boundary with the Eastern fifteen to twenty kilometres south of the river Lark. The overlap between the East Anglian and Eastern as far south as Camulodunum may be due to the very small numbers of coins from Suffolk (Kimes *et al.* 1982). The Thames estuary and south-east Essex are also beyond the boundary of the Eastern series. The other ambiguous area is that on the Fen edge north from the confluence of the Cam and Ouse to Godmanchester and Water Newton, which lies between three coinage zones. The major problem for the purposes of this analysis is to use the different issues of the eastern series to delineate a boundary between the Catuvellauni and Trinovantes. The distributions of different issues have been interpreted as evidence for the changing political and military fortunes of these tribes (e.g. Allen 1944; Peacock 1971; Rodwell 1976a), or more recently as evidence for individual polities within the eastern group and the fluctuating sphere of influence of paramount chieftains over subordinates (Haselgrove 1982; 1984: 25). Whilst several issues of the Eastern series have a restricted distribution, they do not conform to any of the boundaries which have been hypothesised below.

Burial evidence has occasionally been employed as evidence for tribal boundaries. Peacock (1971: 175) suggested that Dressel 1 amphorae in burials and the 'Welwyn' burial rite at Welwyn, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford Heath marks the limit of Trinovantian territory, at least in the second half of the first century BC, although he acknowledged that graves with other amphorae types and other 'Welwyn' graves were discovered to the west of this line. Rodwell (1976a: 219) argued that the distribution of Birchall's (1965) 'Middle Series' (i.e. those up to the end of the first century BC) of Aylesford burials provided supporting evidence for the extent of the Trinovantian area as reconstructed from some coin series, but the absence of burials from southern Hertfordshire has been shown to be a long-standing characteristic of the burial record rather than specific to this period (6.8). It is much more likely to be a product of taphonomic process, in particular the northward expansion of London, and the intensity of archaeological activity.

Roman period evidence is little help for determining boundaries. Ptolemy lists the tribal affiliation of too small a number of settlements apart from *civitas* capitals and *coloniae* to be of substantial help. His inclusion of Salinae amongst the Catuvellauni, if the latter is to be equated with Droitwich, does not enhance his credibility as a source for *civitas* affiliations (Rivet and Smith 1979: 120-21).

The area included within the *civitas* is defined as follows (Fig. 7.26). The western and southern border with the Dobunni and the Atrebates probably constituted by the Thames and Cherwell is the least controversial. The watershed between the Nene and Welland valleys in Northamptonshire probably marks the northern extension of this western border, although analysis of Iron Age coinage may extend the Catuvellaunian boundary slightly to the north (J. Taylor pers. comm.). The towns of Dorchester-on-Thames and Alchester, and Towcester, Irchester and Ashton therefore lay close to the boundary between the Catuvellauni with the Dobunni and the Corieltauvi respectively. Water Newton lay at the extreme northern point of the *civitas*; it may have become the centre of a *civitas* in its own right by the late Roman period (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 90). In this area the coin distributions leave a gap. The border with the Iceni and Catuvellauni, following the coin distribution, has been assumed to lie to the east of Godmanchester and Cambridge, the latter lying very near the point where the *civitates* of the Iceni, Trinovantes and Catuvellauni met. The course of the border south-east of this point between the Catuvellauni and Trinovantes is probably the most problematic. Dunnett (1975) argues that the boundary follows the river Lea and that the Thames forms the boundary between the Cantiaci and Trinovantes. Rivet (1968: Fig. 9, 161) places the Catuvellaunian / Trinovantian boundary from the Godmanchester / Cambridge area to Heybridge, allowing the smallest area to the Trinovantes, but its location is not justified. Millett's boundary lies to the west and ends instead at Southend, following the recent coinage analysis, and it is the latter that is broadly followed here. London was probably on tribal boundaries, although it may have lain formally within the territory of the Cantiaci (Millett 1996: 35). The minor centres plotted are derived from Burnham and Wachter (1990) and R. F. Smith (1987) with some omissions from the latter where the existence of a minor centre has not yet been demonstrated.

Burial evidence is not equally available across this sample area. Aylesford burials are most densely distributed across its centre and sparse in Greater London, Berkshire, Northants, Suffolk and Norfolk. The difference in overall availability of burial evidence within the likely area covered by the *civitas* has already been established (2.3.4). In particular burial evidence is better represented from Hertfordshire, Essex, Greater London and Cambridgeshire than from the counties in the western part of the *civitas*, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire. Within counties the distribution of burials is also uneven (Hull 1963b: 19; RCHME 1980: sheet 12; Taylor 1993: Fig. 6, 213). Of particular importance is the distribution of burial evidence within Greater London. The vast majority of burial evidence derives from the cemeteries of the Roman city (Hall 1996), although there is a scatter of burials, mostly cremations, from other settlements in northern Greater London (Celoria and MacDonald 1973; Merrifield 1983: Fig. 20). The context of the cemeteries investigated across the *civitas* and its margins also differ from those in Hertfordshire. The cemeteries of minor centres have nowhere been investigated to the same degree.

Despite the differential degree of attention, the attributes considered, monuments and large burial assemblages, may be more likely to be reported than simpler burial type sites and thus may mitigate the sample bias to a limited extent. The assemblages in small cemetery samples available from these other counties, for example from Bancroft, Fenny Stratford, Great Dunmow, Rectory Farm

(Godmanchester), and Stansted suggest that the thresholds defined from the Hertfordshire sample (7.6.1) are appropriate for wider exploitation. However the differences in the area must not be forgotten, the most obvious being the representation of different burial types and periods. The central and south-eastern part of the area is biased to the early Roman period and the north-western part to the late Roman period (2.3.4). As the early Roman period is better represented in the bulk of the *civitas*, analysis is restricted to it.

The *a priori* most likely contexts for the practice of different cultural traditions in burial within this area are the cemeteries of London. London's burial rites are highly likely to have drawn on different cultural traditions, but with occasional exceptions, for example lead ossuaria (Philpott 1991: 28), early Roman intrusive burial traditions have yet to be identified. Unlike the western cemetery at Colchester (May 1930) there is no evidence for a greater frequency within the London cemeteries of the stereotypical signifiers of Mediterranean burial traditions, coins, lamps and unguentaria (Fasold and Witteyer 1998), either in older or more recent excavations (Hall 1996; Barber *et al.* in prep.). Artefact deposition fits easily within the range characterised for Roman Britain, consisting primarily of ceramic accessory vessels and more rarely other artefact types, principally coins, animal bone, personal ornament and equipment. The main respect in which burial practices in London differ from those elsewhere is the high proportion of early inhumation burials, but in itself this is no indicator of ethnic affiliation (2.3.2).. The main difference lies in the much greater number of funerary monuments from London than other towns in the study area (Fig. 7.1); the number has been enhanced by excavations in the eastern cemetery but is impossible to calculate because the fragments in context of re-use derive from an unknown original number of monuments. This material is therefore not represented in the plot of burial monuments (Fig. 7.30) but is considered further in discussion below.

7.6.5 The distribution of burial display

The different plots of different types of grave assemblage produce concentrations of assemblages in recurring locations (Figs 7.27 - 7.29), the cemeteries of St Albans and Baldock and along the eastern *civitas* boundary area between Godmanchester, Cambridge, Braughing, Great Dunmow and Great Chesterford. A further group of burials with large assemblages but which fall outside these specific criteria derive from the latter area, for example at Arrington, Hauxton, Girton and Stebbing. From the Cambridge-Great Dunmow zone the graves with the largest and most diverse assemblages of metal and glass vessels are particularly concentrated in the area around Stansted between Braughing and Great Dunmow and east of Great Chesterford. A small number of assemblages, for example at Radnage, Bancroft and Dorchester on Thames lie in the western part of the *civitas* although in no particular concentration. Burials from Great Dunmow and Dorchester-on-Thames supplement those already known from minor centre contexts within Hertfordshire but the sample of rural burials is much increased in comparison to Hertfordshire.

Figure 7.30 shows the previously identified cluster of monuments at St Albans and a second concentration within five to eight kilometres of Great Chesterford, Cambridge and Godmanchester, in the boundary zone of three *civitates*, the Catuvellauni, Iceni and Trinovantes. Scattered monuments are broadly associated with the boundary of the *civitates* of the Catuvellauni and the Corieltauvi, all save Hampstead Norris, from Thornborough and Bancroft north to Water Newton. A small number of pieces of funerary sculpture and inscriptions are associated with minor centres, Towcester, Irchester, and Water Newton in the north-western part of the *civitas*, and around Cambridge and Godmanchester in the north-eastern part of the *civitas* but in general the distribution does not allow a more precise classification than broadly rural, where the context is known in association with villas, at Arbury, Wansford, Bancroft, Borough Hills, and possibly Bartlow Hills and Litlington.

There is some difference in the distribution of individual monument types. Funerary sculpture and epigraphy were more frequently recorded in the northern, especially the north-western part of the *civitas*. This is the part of the *civitas* closest to sources of suitable stone at Barnack. Temple-mausolea concentrate around St Albans, with outliers at Welwyn and Bancroft, while barrows mostly derive from the eastern part of the *civitas*, especially south of Cambridge. If undated barrows sometimes argued to be of Roman date are considered then the eastern part of the *civitas* is also favoured (Foster 1986: 191).

The distribution of large grave groups and burial monuments therefore overlapped in two principal areas. The first was within and around the *civitas* capital at St Albans. The second includes the zone where the *civitas* of the Catuvellauni met those of the Iceni and Trinovantes, centring on the area between Cambridge and Great Chesterford. There were slight differences in emphasis within this area; the distribution of monumental evidence extended to the northern part of this area, while the concentration of burial assemblages between Braughing and Great Dunmow was not matched by monumental evidence. Along the western boundary of the *civitas* the distribution of exceptional burial assemblages and monuments was sparser, the latter distributed within the boundary zone but not the former. As with stone coffins the concentration of sculpture and epigraphy towards the northern end of the *civitas* may reflect the greater availability of stone, especially Barnack Rag (Taylor 1993), although stone could certainly be imported from a greater distance, as the Greek origin of the marble sarcophagus from Welwyn Hall shows.

The distribution patterns detected here are likely to have been influenced by regional differences identified above in the intensity of study. The absence of burials and monuments from northern Greater London for example may reflect the general scarcity of burial data, and the long-standing archaeological tradition around Cambridge may be in part responsible for concentrations of evidence. The distribution must therefore be considered as only a provisional statement on the distribution of original practice. Nevertheless it allows us to challenge current perceptions of the distribution of burial display.

7.7 Themes in the location of burial display

7.7.1 The context of burial display - settlement type and *civitas* location

Consideration of the samples from the two counties and *civitates* has not furnished identical results but this is partly a product of the different strengths of the data sets considered. Re-evaluation has confirmed that the 'East Hampshire tradition' burials were rarely deposited in urban cemeteries but from the Claudian period the peri-urban area of both Winchester and Neatham have been identified as foci of burial display. The funerary epigraphy at Bath, primarily of the first and second centuries, coincides in date with the first monumentalisation of the spring area from the mid first century AD, but similar monuments were largely absent from the site's hinterland.

In the late Roman period the emphasis of funerary display around Winchester shifts from peri-urban burial to urban cemeteries. With the exception of Twyford burial evidence is lacking to accompany the concentration of the more monumental stone built third and fourth century phases of fourth century villas around the town (Johnston 1978). There is slightly more congruence in the grouping of both of villas and burials around East Anton, but the burial evidence is too slight to be insisted on. The distribution of lead coffins in Bath's rural environs as well as the town's cemeteries complements the villa evidence which suggests that like some other late Roman minor centres it was a local focal centre (Millett 1990a: 192). The early Roman importance of Neatham as the focus of large burial assemblages hints at the importance of the *civitas* boundary but the differences of practice within the *civitas* and the differing availability of burial evidence frustrated further exploration of the relationship of burial display to *civitas* structure.

Within the Hertfordshire / Catuvellauni sample 'Welwyn' burials of the first centuries BC and AD favoured several different centres, although with the exception of St Albans most dated to the first century BC and a relationship to central places does not account for all examples. In the early Roman period both the *civitas* capital and minor centres were the locales of burial display. In contrast in the area of the *civitas* outside Hertfordshire rural contexts predominated, but this distribution is heavily influenced by the predominantly rural source of burial data (7.6.4).

As at Winchester there was a hinterland zone of burial display around St Albans; the greater distance from the latter may be due to differences in excavation of the two settlements. Beyond the centre of the *civitas*, rural burial assemblages or monuments occasionally cluster on a particular centre but these clusters lie within a broad zone of similar burials. The most obvious absence of a 'halo' of rural burial assemblages or monuments is around London (7.7.2).

The location of display is therefore better characterised by a series of zones rather than attachment to a specific settlement type. These comprise the *civitas* core, i.e. around St Albans, the minor centre cemeteries of Braughing and Baldock and rural burials on the probable boundary with other *civitates*, to the west with the Corieltauvi and Dobunni and to the east from Water Newton to Great Dunmow and Braintree, with a particular concentration in a tract of territory where the *civitates* of the

Catuvellauni, Trinovantes and Iceni met. A small number of similar burial assemblages around Southend lay in a less confidently identified boundary zone.

In the late Roman period in the Hertfordshire sample the distribution of stone and lead coffins and late Roman monuments again concentrated in St Albans and its environs and in association with some of the minor centres. The distribution of stone coffins elsewhere suggests an association with certain centres, for example Cambridge and Godmanchester (Taylor 1993: 212). However this was not examined in any detail.

Therefore contrary to previous characterisations burial display did take place in the cemeteries of *civitas* capitals and their immediate hinterlands. Early Roman evidence elsewhere can be cited in support of this observation. At pre-conquest period Colchester there is a scattering of burials distinguished by assemblage composition and monumental form across the 'dispersed oppidum', for example the Lexden tumulus, Stanway, Lexden and Barnhall (Crummy 1997b: 27). Post-conquest examples include the multiple ceramic and brooch deposit at St Clare Drive in the Lexden area, the continuation of the Stanway sequence, and large pre-Flavian assemblages from the Sheepen complex, but only at Sheepen was the burial of such assemblages prolonged beyond the first century. Within the Joslin collection from the western cemetery of the town there are several examples of large first and second century grave assemblages (7.2).

The concentration of large burial assemblages in the south of the *civitas* of Regni in the Sussex coastal plain has been a key example for the model of rural display (Philpott 1991: 218-19), but reconsideration suggests that the urban / rural difference has been exaggerated. At Chichester St Pancras several burials are furnished with assemblages equivalent in size to the smaller assemblages of the East Hampshire Tradition. Rural assemblages distinguished by their large varied artefactual assemblages were recovered across the Sussex coastal plain (Avisford, North Lancing, Marquis of Granby, Westhampnett 20820 or Westergate, Worthing) but in contrast to Winchester there was no obvious clustering around Chichester.

In the early Roman period *civitas* capitals were not avoided for burial display but were the focus of burial display in the form of monuments or grave assemblages, either in large urban cemeteries, small plots or located in the peri-urban area at a distance from several hundred metres to several kilometres. In this respect the funerary culture of Roman Britain is comparable to recurring trends in extra-mural landscapes in Roman Italy and other provinces, the distribution of rich funerary monuments or assemblages (von Hesberg and Zanker 1987a: *passim*) for several kilometres outside the urban perimeter. 'Haloes' of burial monuments or large-scale deposition have been identified for example around Cologne (Gabelmann 1987; Noelke 1984), Aquileia (Reusser 1987: 244-47) and Salona (Cambi 1987: 269). The distances of the burials from the town do not preclude part of the burial ceremony taking place within it, and later transport of the corpse or cremated bone a few hundred metres or few kilometres to the rural

burial place; literary evidence from Italy records the carriage of bodies from the town to rural estates (Dyson 1992: 144).

Another mechanism for engaging more popular involvement was through cult practice centred on 'heroization', extensively attested in the Roman period in Asia Minor (Cormack 1997: 141-43). In Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor the dead of one family were made public by endowments for mass feasting in the funerary cult, thus embracing a wider section of the population than those immediately associated with the deceased (Schnitt-Pantel 1982). The latter may be suggested for a small number of monuments in Britain. Niblett (1995a) has proposed that the temple over the pyre mound at Folly Lane may have been one location in a ceremonial sequence involving monuments from the temple and theatre on the opposite side of the valley up to Folly Lane. That other tombs also became the focus for cult activity is implied by the facilities at Wood Lane End (6.11), and examples can be cited in other provinces, for example at Avenches (Castella 1993). Forcey (1998) has drawn attention to a connection with death and burial as a more general connotation of Romano-Celtic temples, although the number of monuments where the presence of burials supports this is limited. More general participation by the urban and rural population in the funerals of which the assemblages represent the final residue is likely but in the absence of literary and epigraphic evidence difficult to establish in any particular instance.

The survey also confirms the previously noted relationship to minor centres (1.4). The implications of this association have not been considered, neither by students of burial practice nor those of minor centres. Minor centres raise persistent problems of classification and function. Hierarchies of settlement below the *civitas* capital based on status within the administrative system and function have been proposed to classify minor centres (e.g. Burnham 1995; Burnham and Wachter 1990; Rivet 1975; Todd 1970: 117). Both approaches differentiate a small group of settlements difficult to distinguish archaeologically from *civitas* capitals, a larger group characterised by defences, street grid or occasional monumental building and a large rump of settlements, many known only from field survey of which the numbers continue to grow (e.g. Gurney 1995). The *civitas* of the Catuvellauni and its margins provides examples of all types of site. The monumental character of Water Newton distinguishes it archaeologically from most other centres (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 90-91). There is occasional evidence for monumental buildings elsewhere, for example at Braughing (Partridge 1977: 65-67), and possible *mansiones* at Chelmsford (Wacher 1995: 209) and Godmanchester (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 126-27). The most frequent 'public' monuments are the walled circuits of which the distribution is largely restricted to the *civitas* boundary zone. The dates of erection of several of these lie very close together (Woodfield 1995). In the eastern part of the *civitas* there is a very dense network of other local centres of diverse origins of which the degree of archaeological knowledge is extremely variable (Burnham 1986; Burnham and Wachter 1990; Millett 1990a: 143; R. F. Smith 1987).

The approximate average distance between such settlements broadly fits a model for a role as local centres within a day's travel for rural dwellers to exchange produce or acquire goods or services (Hingley 1989: 114; Millett 1995a), although that these centres actually played such a role remains to be

demonstrated (Burnham 1995; Condrón 1995). Their role as cult centres in Britain and especially Gallia Belgica and Germania Inferior has received growing emphasis (Hiddink 1991: 218; Hingley 1989: 92; Millett 1995a: 36; Slofstra 1991; Vermeulen 1995). Within the area considered here there are examples of more monumental temple contexts, for example at Frilford (Hingley 1985) or Chelmsford (Wickenden 1992), as well as architecturally less formal evidence of cult practice, as at Cambridge (Selkirk 1978) or Great Dunmow (Wickenden 1988).

Correlation between a concentration of burial and other characteristics of minor centres was sought, for example origin or degree of monumentalisation, but could not be identified. The date of these burials is however more significant. From other indicators, for example density of occupation or the construction of walled circuits, the general *floruit* of the minor centres has been dated to the late Roman period (Millett 1990a), although an earlier date has been preferred (Burnham 1995: 12-14). Their development has been related to their patronage by local elites as alternative foci to *civitas* capitals, within a devolution of social power and economic importance to *civitas* peripheries (Millett 1990a). However the burial evidence brings to prominence minor centres and *civitas* peripheries at an earlier date. The association of single monument and minor centre is reminiscent of that observed between single villa and minor centre (Todd 1970) but a cluster of monuments or assemblages is more frequent, for example around Cambridge or Neatham.

Several factors behind the development of *civitas* peripheries in the late Roman period advanced by Millett (1990a) are not inapplicable to the early Roman period. These include the role of inter-*civitas* exchange, and the use of peripheral centres by elites in areas incorporated into the *civitas* structure but perhaps without a role in the *ordo*. The distribution of monuments and assemblages on the eastern boundary of the *civitas* implies the existence of elite competition expressed through burial to a greater extent than through the monumental architecture which has attracted most attention as evidence for elite display. Some of the burials defined here were deposited within the cemeteries of these smaller centres, although more often in smaller groups rather than larger cemeteries, although it is less easy to identify the halo of such assemblages in the hinterlands of these settlements than at the *civitas* capitals.

Hiddink (1991: 220) attributed the substantial second and third century funerary monuments from the cemeteries of minor centres in Gallia Belgica to 'middlemen' between distant patrons from elsewhere in or beyond the *civitas* and local communities, although did not demonstrate in detail a difference in the character of monuments between the two types of settlement. This position does not entirely do justice to the scale or numbers of monuments at Neumagen, for example (von Massow 1932) (although the provenance of several monuments from Trier on Neumagen in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum is not securely established). A burial hierarchy that elevates core over peripheral areas from Roman Britain could not be established, and horizons of burial display are contemporaneous. Nor could clear differences be detected in the degree of display in burials centred on the *civitas* capital or on minor centres.

Although most attention here has been devoted to civitas capital and minor centre burials and monuments, the survey has also shown that a considerable fraction of the bodies of evidence considered derive from a rural provenance. The location of monuments and burial assemblages in relation to rural sites has already been discussed (6.13 and 6.17).

7.7.2 London as an exception?

An exceptions to the pattern identified above is the distribution of burial display in London and its hinterland. The forms of burial display defined here are absent from London's hinterland north of the Thames, where it parallels the absence of villas (Bird 1996; Merrifield 1983: 136), although burial assemblages are admittedly more prone to destruction without record. The burials related to the city's cemeteries are rarely further than 400-600m beyond the walls (Hall 1996) Yet the monumental funerary evidence from London from a funerary context has already been shown to be more frequent and more diverse than that from other urban centre in Britain save York (Figs. 7.1 - 7.2; 7.6.4).

The character of the burial record from London thus appears to support the distinction offered above (7.3) between existing settlements and new foundations. Neither London nor York developed from a pre-conquest focus. Whether or not London was a provincial capital, whether this is even a meaningful category (Millett 1996), and at what stage it was elevated possibly to municipal or colonial status (Wilkes 1996) is less important here than current models of its origins. The best characterisation which can be offered for the foundation of is as a *conventus civium Romanorum*, a self governing body of Roman citizens and traders, often freedmen (Morris 1982: 92; Millett 1996; Wilkes 1996). This was sufficiently organised to plan settlement layout from the outset (Perring 1991) and on analogies with such settlements elsewhere would have had its own magistrates. In these circumstances, the intense epigraphic and artistic funerary culture in comparison to the rest of southern Britain on first consideration coincides with what might be anticipated from a population deriving from areas with a more intense epigraphic habit (Millett 1996), recorded for a high proportion both of inscriptions from London and other towns in southern Britain (Biró 1975), an initially fluid set of social relationships and a large freed element in the population (Woolf 1996).

Yet the numbers of monuments do not correspond with those at other known *conventus*, for example the funerary monuments of Roman merchants recovered from a *Gräberstrasse* on the Magdalensberg in Noricum (Alföldy 1974: 70-72), or of freedmen and holders of magistracies in Narona and elsewhere on the Dalmatian coast (Wilkes 1969: 297-98). Nor does London's monumental record compare well with that from sites in neighbouring provinces equivalent to London's later status as provincial capital, for example Mainz (Boppert 1992a; 1992b; Hope 1994), Cologne (Galsterer and Galsterer 1975), Trier and Reims (Wightman 1985: 166-67) or Lyon (Audin 1979). The monumental record from York is both more substantial (Figs. 7.1-7.2) and includes a higher proportion of civilians of high rank; for example members of the *ordo* are represented either as commemorated (RIB 674; Hassall and Tomlin 1987: no. 5), or commemorator (RIB 683; Wright 1970: no. 14). The influence of

taphonomy on relative representation is unclear. While at some sites considered above, such as the Magdalensberg, the lack of modern development provided good opportunities for in-situ preservation, at most of these sites including London re-use in bastions accounts for a good number of known monuments (Blagg 1983: 130). However it is difficult to demonstrate that London's walls have received a different degree of examination to these other cities. Other cities were also situated in regions with relatively little stone suitable for building and depended on the import of stone for burial monuments (e.g. Horn 1987: 157-60; Savay-Guerraz 1990). On this assessment taphonomy cannot therefore currently excuse the relative poverty of inscriptions and sculpture from London. The funerary record from London therefore has two faces depending on the perspective from which it is viewed. In comparison to the rest of Britain the monumental character of London's cemeteries is much more substantial, but from an inter-provincial perspective like the rest of the province the corpus of epigraphic and architectural evidence is relatively slender.

7.8 Conclusion

On the evidence considered here the previous consensus over the distribution of burial display has been challenged and a different characterisation offered, both of the LPRIA and early Roman periods, although better established for the latter. The degree of association between central place and burial display in the LPRIA has been under-estimated, but the current information base is too scanty from both a settlement and burial perspective to permit confident generalisation.

In contrast to earlier models of predominantly rural burial display, the evidence presented here, both of the *Gräberstrassen* outside towns and the haloes of burial distribution associated with extra-mural settlements around them, shows that any understanding of the ceremonial life of public towns should not omit consideration of burial. It is not possible to identify the social stratum from which these burials emanated, but this evidence certainly shows that the town was considered an appropriate arena in which to make statements of display through burial. Little difference could also be identified in the forms of display taken between urban, small town and rural contexts, which implies that there was an overlap in the groups participating in the rituals in the different contexts, even if they were not identical.

London and Bath may represent exceptions to the regional patterns identified here, with an early Roman concentration of monuments in the cemeteries of the towns themselves but without any halo of display in their rural hinterland. The lack of villas around London, in contrast to their clustering around many *civitas* capitals, has been attributed to the social isolation of the settlement (Millett 1990a: 88). Such a pattern in the funerary culture may be attributed to the same reasons and suggests an alternative model of funerary display based on the degree of integration between settlements and their hinterlands.

The burial evidence also offers a rather different evaluation of the minor centres to that previously derived from settlement evidence. Local centres on *civitas* boundary zones emerge from the post-conquest period as contexts of burial display. The date of burials implies an earlier *floruit* for these

centres than the settlement evidence. On the evidence assembled here the importance of these centres for ritual, which has received much less consideration than their economic role, cannot be denied.

Both St Albans and Winchester suggested the continuing importance of the *civitas* capital and minor centres as foci of burial display. The distribution of certain characteristics of burial around Winchester suggested an increasing emphasis on urban burials compared to peri-urban in the late Roman period, but late Roman developments require further examination than is possible here.

We should not be over hasty in re-locating burial on the spectrum from public to private on the strength of this new characterisation (cf. 1.3). An equation of urban burial with public and rural with private is inadequate. Funerary monuments in the rural landscape (6.11, 6.17) could be highly visible, while burial assemblages in urban towns or peri-urban setting were often not deposited in the most visible location. The distinction between monuments and assemblages characterises the evidence slightly better. Where there is decent contextual information monuments both in an urban and rural context were located with a view to their visibility in immediate and / or more distant perspective. This seems to have been a lesser concern in the location of burial assemblages, although some large assemblages were associated with monuments, for example at the Bartlow Hills.

Having discussed the distribution of burial display, attention is now turned to its composition.

Chapter 8 The character of burial display

8.1 Introduction

The discussion of burial location in previous chapters was primarily dependent on the simple criteria of numbers of ceramics and numbers of artefact types. In this chapter emphasis is placed on examining the artefactual contents of burial. It considers the same group of burial assemblages from the perspective outlined earlier (1.4), where it was argued that the objects placed in burial evoke central areas of social practice. The intention in this chapter is to identify the recurrent contents of these burials, to establish the repeated associations of their artefactual contents and from this to discuss elite expression and self definition through the Roman period. It should be stressed that the assemblages considered here are not all assumed to be those of elites. The variety within them probably crosses a fairly wide social range. Many of the individual items considered also occur in burials with smaller assemblages. Emphasis is placed here on the co-occurrence of different types of artefacts. The definition of particular social ranks is considered here as subordinate to the identification of the appropriate media of self-expression in higher social strata.

The burials considered here contain almost as wide a variety of artefact types as those recorded in Britain as a whole (Philpott 1991) but only commonly recurring features are identified here. The question of change in the degree and nature of burial display from the Late Iron Age, and within the early Roman period is also considered. The burial assemblages were derived from the study areas already examined and elsewhere in south-eastern Britain, and occasionally from further west and north (note 8.1). This does not exhaustively document graves from Britain outside the sample area which meet the criteria used in chapter 7, but uses examples to support arguments developed from the core sample and to suggest variation in other parts of Britain. The documentation provided by Philpott (1991) is also used to support the recurring associations. It should be noted that funerary monuments, which are the subject of study elsewhere (Struck forthcoming a) are not considered in detail here. Nor is the iconography of the small sample of funerary monuments examined, although it certainly provides complementary evidence for the approach outlined here (e.g. Freigang 1996). The late Roman period is considered in much less detail but offers a valuable counterpoint in that it demonstrates particularly well that burial assemblages represent only a partial representation of such practices.

8.2 The composition of early Roman burial assemblages

The cremated bone was usually deposited within caskets or glass or ceramic vessels, although in occasional instances it was still deposited scattered (Owslebury 1, Grange Road 2, or Neatham 2). At Alton the weight deposited in the undisturbed burials (over 1000g in three of four instances) was much higher than in contemporary urban cemeteries (4.5, 5.2.3). The same was not noted in equivalent burials north of the Thames where such information was available (e.g. Baldock Clothall Road, Braughing A, Stansted), although it is observable in some comparable assemblages in neighbouring provinces (e.g.

Roosens and Lux 1970: 19; 1973: 56). The care for the cremated bone contrasts with its frequent scattering in Welwyn type burials.

The most salient characteristic of the burial assemblage is the emphasis on dining through the deposit of large numbers of ceramics and also glass and metal vessels, usually in the grave but occasionally also on the pyre (3.5). There is some regional variability in practice. For example the number of ceramics with the East Hampshire Tradition burials, especially at Alton is generally much larger than that from elsewhere in south-east Britain, whilst conversely metal and glass vessels are much more common in the latter area. However ceramics accounted for the majority of vessels in most assemblages. As in the overall funerary ceramic assemblage (Philpott 1991: 36) tablewares rather than storage or preparation vessels predominated. Amphorae have only been recovered from burials in the conquest period (Stanway, Folly Lane, Stanfordbury, Snailwell), save for occasional later examples of smaller types (Stansted 25, Thornborough). The ceramic assemblage was typically composed of a single or small number of flagons, beakers and jars, often but not always in local fabrics, and many cups and dishes more often in imported fabrics, or in local wares imitating imported forms. Numbers of serving vessels are roughly equivalent between burials but the greatest difference lies in the numbers of dishes and cups. 'Services' with smaller numbers of flagons or jars and larger number of cups and bowls are anticipated in some pre-conquest burial assemblages, for example Welwyn Garden City and Hertford Heath.

Some change in the imported fabrics in burial assemblages can be observed. In the pre-conquest period samian is largely absent from burial assemblages but in any case is only present in settlement assemblages in very small quantities (Fitzpatrick 1989). The absence of pre-Flavian samian from burials, despite its presence on contemporary settlement sites (Willis 1997: 46), and the favouring of Gallo-Belgic wares has been explicitly noted (Drury 1978; Millett 1993; Wallace forthcoming). This position is supported by further examples (Colchester-St Clare Drive, Stanway - warrior burial) but some caution must be expressed. King Harry Lane is of questionable value in this regard, given doubt over the attribution of phase 3 burials to the post- rather than pre-conquest period (Haselgrove 1997). Several pre-Flavian examples can also be noted where samian accounted for a substantial proportion of the ceramic assemblage, often in combination with Gallo-Belgic imports (Baldock Clothall Road 6 and 7, St Albans Folly Lane, Sheepen).

From the Flavian period samian comprised most of the dishes and cups. Whilst with the exception of Bayford 2 the largest samian assemblages, with ten or more vessels all date to the later first century, there are as many assemblages with over six samian vessels dated to the second as to the first centuries (note 8.2). Large second century deposits of samian as grave goods or remnants of funerary feasting also continued to occur in Gallia Belgica (e.g. van den Hurk 1984; Roosens 1976; Abegg 1989a).

Analysts of cemeteries in other north-western provinces (e.g. Abegg 1989a: 216-17; Bayard 1993; van den Hurk 1984; Mackensen 1978a: 170-72; Martin-Kilcher 1976: 84-7; Nierhaus 1959: 40-48;

Struck 1996: 103; Schucany 1995) have used the services proposed by Drexel (1927) as a framework for the interpretation of samian burial assemblages although the validity of the concept has been questioned (Ettliger *et al.* 1990: 46-47). From the close correspondence between the inventory of a silver table ware set in a first century AD papyrus and several samian burial assemblages in Germany Drexel advocated an ideal samian 'service' comprising a larger dish or bowl with four dishes, four larger and four smaller cups or bowls, although variants were also recognised. More recent analyses have recognised a greater number of variants although still based on a similar principle. The lack of correspondence to the norm is likely to be in part a product of the passage of the ceramics through the pyre and the vagaries of collection by both the mourner and the archaeologist, but the tendency in analysis to coin a new service for each new combination of samian vessels and to neglect the contribution of non samian vessels can also be noted.

The archaeological identification of these services has not been a pre-occupation of students of samian in Britain (S. Willis pers. comm.). 'Sets' in a British context refers to pairs of vessels, usually a bowl and cup / dish of similar form but different size, for example Dr 35 and 36 (Tyers 1996: 106; Webster 1996: 18). Yet while only one burial assemblage corresponds exactly to the twelve piece service identified by Drexel (St Albans William Old) several more show a very similar range of combinations of samian or imitation samian (Table 8.1). There is a notable cluster of such burials around first century Winchester (Crab Wood, Grange Road 1 and 2, Highcliffe, Milland, Winchester Hyde Street 566). In a large proportion of the burial sample listed in appendices 6.3-6.5 there are combinations of smaller numbers of samian vessels. Decorated samian, which accounts for between one in three and one in four vessels (Willis 1997: 39) in first century settlement assemblages, is surprisingly absent from most of the assemblages considered here. A similar absence can be noted in the samian assemblages of some other provinces (e.g. Berger and Martin-Kilcher 1976: 161; Ebel 1989: 40).

Burial assemblages could also include cup and dish forms in other fabrics. The combination of samian with other vessels at Folly Lane to produce an overall assemblage of ten cups, ten dishes and ten platters illustrates this well. 'Services' without or largely lacking samian are also visible in other fabrics, for example in terra rubra (Colchester St Clare Drive, Stanway, Colchester Taylor Collection No. 4), and in an unrecorded fabric at Jordan Hill, and in a soft fabric probably made for burial in Owslebury 1, with seven or eight examples of each of the following forms, cups imitating samian forms, larger cups and dishes. In Neatham 1 and 2 the number of Farnham Ware bowls is almost exactly half that of the dishes, providing respectively nineteen or twenty and thirteen or fourteen services of one bowl and two dishes.

While the many ceramic combinations cannot be accommodated within a restricted group of services, consideration at least serves to focus attention on the structure of burial assemblages. Burial ceramics clearly do not represent a random accumulation but structured combinations of vessels. The

Table 8.1 Samian services in early Roman burial assemblages from Britain

Grave	Samian assemblages
Arbury Road	Three Drag.36 and one Curle 15 dishes, two Drag.35 and one Drag.46 cups
Colchester Joslin 8/68	Two Drag.18 and two Drag.15 (i.e. 15/17) dishes, four large Drag.27 cups and four Drag.24/25 cups
Grange Road 2	A larger Drag.18R dish, four Drag.18 dishes, four larger and four smaller Drag.27 cups
Crab Wood	Four Drag.18 dishes, three Drag.35/36 and one Drag.42 larger cups and five Drag.27 smaller cups
Highcliffe	One larger Drag.18R dish, four Drag.36 and three Drag.35/36 small dishes / bowls, one Drag.46 and eight Drag.35/36 bowls, four Drag.27 cups
Milland	1 larger Curle 11 bowl, five Drag.15/17 and one Drag.36 dishes, four Drag.33 larger cups, four Drag.35 and Drag.27 smaller cups/bowls
Hyde Street 438	Two Drag.18 dishes, four Drag.15/17 dishes and two Drag.24/25 cups
Hyde Street 566	Five Drag.18 dishes and five Drag.35 and Drag.27 cups
Neatham 3	Two small Drag.42 dishes, two larger Drag.42 dishes and 2 Drag.42 cups, Drag.67 beaker
Rochford	Two Dr18/31 dishes, two Drag.33 and one Drag.35 cups, and Drag.67 decorated beaker
St Albans William Old	One large Drag.18 dish, four Drag.18 dishes, four larger Drag.27 cups, four smaller Drag.27 cups
Stansted 25	One Drag.18 and two Drag.42 dishes, four Drag.35 and one Drag.33 cups
Stansted 26	One decorated bowl, one Drag.18/31 dish, two Drag.35 and one Drag.27 cups
Sompting	Two Walters 79 dishes, one Drag.31 dish, two Drag.33 and two Drag.39 cups
York The Mount	One small Drag.18 / 31 and two larger Drag.15/17 dishes, four Drag.27 cups (two large and two small), four Drag.35 cups (one large and three small)
Baldock Clothall Road 6	One Drag.29 decorated bowl, five Drag.18 dishes, two Drag.27 cups

Grave - Assemblages with a minimum of six samian vessels are described.

Assemblage - The form descriptions (i.e. cup / dish etc) are taken from Webster (1996). The descriptions from older (Bartlow Hills 4, Hallaton, Bayford 1 and 2, Astwick) or unpublished excavations (St Albans Lindum Place, Wotton Hillfield Lodge) suggest the existence of similar services. Large sets of imitation samian vessels have also been identified, for example at Chichester St Pancras 199 (eight imitation Drag. 27 cups, four of each size) and Winchester Grange Road 1 (one Drag. 36 and and five imitation Drag. 18 dishes and six imitation cups (four Drag. 27, two Drag. 35/36).

'services' of vessels are usually assumed to represent the dining equipment of a single individual (Nierhaus 1959: 42) with vessels for several courses in which food was presented with different sauces in separate bowls, as well as drinking vessels (Balsdon 1969: 41-42). This depends on the extent to which the use of the 'service' transferred unaltered to the north-western provinces. The consumption of particular foods or use of particular dining equipment is unlikely to survive a translation between contexts unchanged (Goody 1982; Walvin 1997). Probable use of the *crater* at the Roman *convivium* as a container for wine rather than for mixing it with water provides an illustration from the period in question (Dunbabin 1993). It is likely that use of these vessels in the provinces differed from the 'Roman' norms (Meadows 1995: 137). In some graves, (e.g. Alton and Neatham) the number of ceramics is certainly too great to be accommodated within this single service. It is also highly likely that the burial assemblage may evoke dining rather than represent the full necessary complement of materials. The safest characterisation which can be offered is perhaps that that some burials represent the dining accoutrements of a single individual or small group.

Evidence for actual burial feasting, rather than its symbolic representation, may be suggested in a few cases but it is usually impossible to distinguish pyre goods from the residue of funerary feasting, for example in the backfills of funerary chambers at Folly Lane and Stanway, or in grave fills from Alton. Amphorae smashed around the burial at Holborough may have derived from funerary drinking, but the origin of burnt ceramics recovered in the non-burial deposits is less clear. This aspect of funerary rituals is better attested in *Aschengruben* (3.3.2) associated with similar burials in neighbouring provinces. For example Abegg (1989a) estimated from an approximate seven piece set of samian per person that between eighteen and twenty people participated in the funerary feast at Siesbach.

There are occasional instances of glass vessels in LPRIA (e.g. Hertford Heath) and pre-Flavian graves (e.g. Baldock Clothall Road 5) but the horizon of larger glass assemblages dates to the later first and especially the second century (Philpott 1991: 116). As in the general burial assemblage the most popular forms in the sample considered here are bottles and jugs (Philpott 1991: 115). Their high representation is paralleled in the changing proportions of vessel forms in settlement glass assemblages (e.g. Cool and Price 1995: 235-36). Some of the multiple glass vessel deposits consisted of bottles (Arbury Road, St Albans St Stephens 11, Weston Turville). There are occasional examples of burials from other provinces where multiple vessels were deposited boxed (Koster 1993; Roosens and Lux 1974). This was not the case at Arbury Road and the grave layout is not known in the other two examples. Bottles are usually considered as storage rather than table vessels, although different bottle types probably fall into different categories (van Lith and Randsborg 1985: 424; Cool and Price 1995: 222). *Totenmahl* tombstones from lower Germany sometimes show very similar forms to large glass bottles Isings 50 and 51 beneath or beside the three-legged tables on which food was served (e.g. Noelke 1974: Nos. 10 and 11). Similar forms are also represented on the Simpelveld sarcophagus. Other assemblages comprised a combination of storage, serving and drinking vessels (Braughing Skeleton Green 33, Girton and Stansted 25) although there are no known equivalents from Britain to the glass 'services' of multiple smaller and larger bowls and plates, excavated from barrow burials at Vervoz

(Philippe 1962) and Esch (van den Hurk 1984). As Philpott (1991: 116) notes the combination of glass jug and bowl (e.g. Hallaton, Radnage) occasionally mimics the pairing of metal vessels. Fine imported glass vessels are occasionally present in burials, for example the bowls from Girton and Radnage.

In the pre-Roman period both silver drinking cups and copper alloy jugs and pans were deposited in graves (Stead 1967). Save for their possible deposition on the pyre at Folly Lane, the former have not been recovered in the post-conquest period but the deposition of copper alloy vessels continued. These occur most often as the jug and pan (note 8.3), but also occasionally as dishes (Baldock Convent of Providence), bowls (Bartlow Hills, Godmanchester Nun's Bridge), cups (Elsenham, Bayford 1) or strainers (Stanway 'doctor'). A small number of these vessels were gilded, silvered or enamelled and the handles of most are decorated with animal heads, mythological figures or scenes (Toynbee 1964: 317-27). Nuber's examination (1972: 153) suggests that in Britain, as in other provinces, the *floruit* of the jug and pan pair is the late first and second centuries AD but the larger sample gathered by Philpott (1991: 124) suggests little change in the frequency of deposition of metal vessels from the LPRIA to the second century. Although scholarship continues to relate this pair of vessels to the mixing of wine and water and the pouring of wine libations (e.g. Henig 1984: 131, 193; 1995: 70), their most frequently attested function in artistic depiction is for hand washing, especially in the context of purification before a sacrifice, but also before and between courses of a meal and as part of toilet scenes (Nuber 1972: 96-112, 117-25)..

The presence of several different animal species, cremated or uncremated, distinguishes graves considered here from normal funerary faunal assemblages (Baldock Clothall Road 6 and 7, Grange Road 2, Little Waltham, North Marston, Milland, Owslebury 1, St Albans Folly Lane, Winnall A). The predominance of pig in funerary assemblages in Gaul and Germany (Kreuz 1995; Lauwerier 1983; Lepetz 1993; Méniel 1993) is not replicated in the sample considered here. The principal domesticates are evenly represented, although chicken is better represented than in settlement faunal assemblages. Wild species, most often deer but also hare and woodcock, which are rare in settlements (Grant 1989: 144; King 1984; Parker 1988) and otherwise rare in graves from Britain, Gaul or Germany (Philpott 1991: 197; Lepetz 1993: 42) have been recovered from a small number of burials (Baldock Clothall Road 7, Milland, Winnall, Youngsbury).

Of implements possibly related to dining, the deposition of bone and tinned bronze spoons occurs in three graves of the East Hampshire Tradition, all of the *cochleare* type with small round bowl and handle tapering to a point. Other examples derive from graves with substantial assemblages (Philpott 1991: 282). Spoons, even of bone, are perhaps then a hitherto unrecognised burial 'prestige good' (note 8.4). Paired spoons have been recovered from a small number of Late Iron Age burials but the function of their particular form, much larger and of different shape, remains enigmatic and is unlikely to be the same as that of the *cochleare* (Stead, in Parfitt 1995: 105-07). Knives are also frequent in the East Hampshire graves (Alton 1, 2 and 5, Grange Road 2,) and are associated with larger cremation burial assemblages (Philpott 1991: 281). Longer knives with a straight blade, often found in association with

animal remains (Philpott 1991: 176), probably served for eating, but their representation together with other sacrificial implements on altars suggests that they also served for sacrifice. Triangular knives have been interpreted as craft tools or razors; a small number of other knife forms (e.g. Birdlip) may have been toilet-related (Boon 1991; Stead and Rigby 1989: 105).

Vessels were sometimes stacked (e.g. Arbury Road, Welshpool) but in most examples were laid out on the floor of the grave, sometimes differentiated by form or function. Figures 8.1 to 8.3 represent some examples of burial layout. In the Stanway 'doctor' and 'warrior' graves amphorae, serving vessels and dishes and cups were separated. Closed forms, especially cups were placed around the sides and dishes in the centre of the St Albans William Old grave pit. At Grange Road 2 joints of meat were placed with a dish, cup, two knives and a spoon on the shale trencher. The jugs of bronze and glass were to the south with three samian cups, and to the west a line of samian plates containing further cups, ending in a jar and flagon. At Baldock Clothall Road 6 the joints of meat had also been placed on a wooden tray between two rows of pots. In the neighbouring grave at Baldock Clothall Road 7 the different joints had however been placed in separate pots. In Hyde Street 566 the grave contents were arranged concentrically with the cremation vessel at the centre and a ring of flagons and then of bowls around it (Ottaway 1992: 79). Vessels in graves at Neatham (2, 3 and 5) were arranged in a 'crescentic' pattern. Therefore whilst many deposits were clearly carefully structured, no consistent layout could be identified, save for the preference at Neatham and Chichester St Pancras for a crescentic layout. The graves do not therefore present any simple guide to place settings, (cf Philpott 1991: 237). The location of cremated bone within the grave cut was also examined, but no consistency was identifiable, save at individual cemeteries (Pearce 1997: 178).

Ornament and items related to care of the body were more frequently deposited than in the pre-Roman period, although some items, for example copper alloy mirrors decorated with La Tene artwork disappear from the toilet repertoire (Farley 1983; Fitzpatrick 1996). There are a small number of burials in the mid first century AD with a large number of brooches (e.g. Bancroft 4, Colchester St Clare Drive and Joslin collection 9 (May 1930) and St Albans King Harry Lane 86 and 370) but in later first century and later graves brooches were an infrequent element in a repertoire of dress-related items (Philpott 1993a) which occasionally form a substantial component of grave furniture (Linton, Southfleet, Winchester Hyde Street 466). A gold ring (Alton 2, Bartlow Hills II, Southfleet) in the early empire was a senatorial and equestrian privilege (Henig in Millett 1986: 57) but the privilege was transgressed at Rome (Wallace Hadrill 1994: 144) and is unlikely to indicate specific status in Britain. The association with a child at Southfleet throws further doubt on the association. The sceptres recovered from the burial at Brough-on-Humber have been argued to be symbols of religious authority but again their precise significance is uncertain. Other items, including cosmetic sets and toilet sets, razors, toilet knives and shears and unguent flasks were also frequently recovered within these assemblages, especially at Alton (Philpott 1991: 182). The deposition of large numbers of ornaments and items of personal care in burials from the western cemetery at Colchester in the Joslin collection is unparalleled in other urban samples, for example in groups 7, 69 and 81b (May 1930). The validity of these grave groups is not certain but

the overall effect is nevertheless impressive. The deposit of strigils, in one case tripled (Bayford 2) elsewhere paired (Bartlow Hills IV, St Albans William Old) or single (Bayford 1, Prittlewell and St Albans Folly Lane 27), or bath flasks (Bayford 1, Sheepen) may have evoked the more specific sphere of bathing.

A small number of weapons were recovered, principally in burials of the conquest period, including shields, (Stanfordbury A, Stanway warrior), spears (Little Walden, Old Newton, Stanway warrior) and in one instance chain mail (Folly Lane) and a sword (Toppesfield) but unlike the pre-conquest period there are no instances of full panoplies (Collis 1973; Parfitt 1995).

Occasional pieces of furniture were recovered, fragments of bone inlay from a couch from St Albans Folly Lane, a tripod for serving food from St Albans William Old and folding chairs in Bartlow Hills IV and Holborough. The chairs have been interpreted as the seats of magistrates (*sella curulis*) or army commanders (*sella castrensis*) (Struck forthcoming a) but both the latter have a common origin in a domestic form from which these and other archaeologically known examples are impossible to distinguish (Jessup 1954: 28; Nuber 1972: 171). At most they may evoke such authority. Lamps, lamp holders and occasionally candelabras were a much more frequent component of the assemblages considered here (Philpott 1991: 191). Usually they had been placed in the burial but at Rougham one projected from the wall of the tile cist and at Avisford were apparently placed on 'corbels' in the cist's corners.

Sets of gaming pieces, sometimes set on a board, sometimes scattered, and dice occurred both in Welwyn (Welwyn Garden City), conquest period (Alton 2; Winchester Grange Road 2, Stanway warrior and doctor; Stanfordbury), and second century AD burials (Elsenham and Old Newton). Their distribution is mostly confined to burials with larger assemblages (Philpott 1991: 185). Writing equipment was also recovered from this group of burials, for example two styli and a seal box from Grange Road 2 and an inkwell from Takeley Street. Otherwise however burials associated with writing related artefacts are relatively modest (Philpott 1991: 185; Crummy 1993: 497; Griffith 1912).

Items largely absent from this inventory but for which there is occasional evidence are wooden vessels (Bartlow Hills, Welshpool) or textiles, indicated by corrosion products in the Stanway warrior burial. Empty areas within graves also indicate the likely original presence of organic grave goods.

Roymans (1990: 245) and Haffner (in *Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier* 1984, 286-87) have argued that the disappearance of weapons in early Roman graves in northern Gaul indicate a decreasing emphasis on status attainment through warfare in favour of one achieved by craft specialisation symbolised in the appearance of sets of tools in burials (e.g. Bachmann and Czysz 1977; Boyer 1990; Henning 1991; Künzli 1982). While the significance of these assemblages has received insufficient exploration, they are very rare in Britain and occur elsewhere with less frequency than the artefact types described above.

8.3 Recurring themes in early Roman burial assemblages

The reading of these assemblages takes its cue from Richmond's observation on early Roman burial assemblages in Essex:

'A quiet revolution in manners can be seen to have taken place, providing a commentary upon the Roman faith in '*conviviorum elegantia*' as a civilising medium. (Richmond 1963: 19).

The comment is explicitly related to the passage on the enthusiastic assimilation by British elites of Roman values (Tacitus *Agricola* 21.3) and lies within a now discredited archaeological discourse which endowed Roman material culture with innate civilised qualities (1.2). However the observation is worth further development, although it has been hitherto little considered. As well as a general lack of attention to the burial sphere (1.3) two further reasons can be offered for this neglect. It has been argued that the LPRIA media for burial display, in particular imported amphorae and table wares, were devalued as prestige goods by their ubiquity in the post-conquest period. What were once scarce commodities, amphora-transported products such as wine and olive oil (Sealey 1985; Fulford 1991) and imported pottery, especially samian (Booth 1991; Griffiths 1989; Millett 1981; Willis 1997) were available in much greater quantity. They could also be acquired from a wider variety of sources than allowed by pre-conquest exchange networks (Trow 1990). It has been argued therefore that burial display reached its acme in the conquest period but that ostentation and conspicuous consumption shifted to public and private architecture (Millett 1987; 1990a; 1995b: 123-24; Philpott 1991: 31, contradicts himself at 1991: 231; Struck 1995: 147; Trow 1990: 108).

This however is a mis-characterisation of trends in burial evidence. In burials of the East Hampshire Tradition the decline in numbers of ceramics is undoubted (Millett 1987). Such a change is however difficult to trace elsewhere and there are some counter examples; for example at Chichester St Pancras the number of large burial assemblages increases in the second century (Jones 1993b: 251), and most of the well furnished burials on the Sussex coastal plain are second century in date (7.7). The persistence of samian as a substantial component of burial assemblages has been identified, and it is in the second century that glass and metal vessels were more frequently deposited. The number of funerary monuments, especially barrows, also increases in the second century (Struck forthcoming a). Where resources which had previously been the media for status differentiation became more widely available, the deposition of possibly more exclusive items, in this instance glass and metal vessels, complemented the existing repertoire. The process envisaged by Miller (1982), in which the symbolic behaviour of elites continually modifies in response to its emulation by subordinate groups, is an attractive analogy for the evolution of the funerary sphere identified here, but requires working out in detail.

The implications of a more elaborate etiquette of consumption and necessary *savoir-faire* are as potentially significant as the presence of 'luxury'. The presence of jug and pan may signify an adoption

of hand washing practices that typified the Roman meal (Feugère 1993: 153) and the use of spoons the adoption of a Romanised form of eating not known before the conquest, although the presence of knives possibly does not reflect Roman eating habits (Strong 1966: 129). Changes in the food consumed are currently visible only at the coarse level of change in dietary preferences (e.g. King 1984). The vessel assemblages have more direct implications for increasingly elaborate modes of serving and consuming food, separating elements of the meal into different vessels and different courses. The aesthetics of such services, the effect of the diffuse light shed by the lamps and candelabras, colour and iconography, deserve further consideration (cf. Brown et al. 1997). The importance of colour in particular has probably been underestimated. Colour frontispieces of burials at Berlingen (Roosens and Lux 1973) and Helshoven (Roosens and Lux 1974), where the organisation of burial space by ceramic form also separated the burial assemblage by colour, with red table wares, white flagons and grey / black storage jars in different corners of the grave, illustrate the potential impact of colour.

The disappearance of certain items from the burial repertoire may reflect change in the context of dining as much as their devaluation as a currency of prestige. Although access to wine and olive oil was increasingly less exclusive in the post conquest period, this does not by itself explain the absence of amphorae, as imported ceramics continued to be deposited. The manner of serving and consumption of the varied commodities transported in amphorae may have taken precedence over mere access to them. The disappearance of hearth furniture, ubiquitous in pre-conquest assemblages (Stead 1967), may also reflect the separation of the sphere of cooking and preparation from that of serving and consumption. The presence of glass bottles in burials need not contradict this argument (see above).

A potential counter-objection to an interpretation of grave assemblages as conspicuous consumption is that precious metal vessels, those in the highest place in the hierarchy of value (Fulford 1985), were no longer deposited in burial. In early imperial Italy literary evidence and finds from Pompeii show silver table ware to be widely available (Strong 1966: 124-25). It is difficult to know how far to extrapolate from this to the north-western provinces. Assessing the availability of bronze and especially precious metals is complicated by their recycling and by the dependency of their visibility on hoarding practices. Save for pre-Roman graves and the Hockwold deposit (Johns 1986) there is little evidence for silver table vessels from Britain until the hoarding practices of the third and fourth centuries render them more visible (Strong 1966: Johns 1990). The contents of the first century AD hoard from Hildesheim, and the earliest pieces from third century hoards from Gaul, for example at Berthouville, Chaourse or Rethel (Strong 1966: 126; Johns 1990: 39) may suggest what was available as domestic plate in Britain. As for bronze vessels, Eggers' survey (1966) shows that their distribution is also biased to grave and hoard finds. The archaeological visibility of pewter is also distorted by the similar late third and fourth century horizon of hoards or votive deposits (Beagrie 1989: 175, 179; Poulton and Scott 1991). In the absence of an equivalent survey for Britain to that of van Lith and Randsborg (1985) the relationship of glass burials from grave and other contexts is difficult to assess but the quality of grave glass, defined by the proportion of storage vessels to table wares or presence of imports, is not inferior to that from settlements. According to literary evidence glass occupied a higher place than ceramics in the

hierarchy of materials (Fulford 1985). There are definite differences between burial and other assemblages, as the example of the absence of decorated samian shows, but the best current characterisation does not suggest that burials are systematically impoverished in comparison to settlement assemblages.

Nor alternatively, as has been documented in some colonial contact situations, is the material culture of burial in this case a complete inversion of everyday habits (Barley 1994: 73). Occasionally the underfired fabric of some or all the burial vessels in services rendered them useless for practical purposes (Alton 8, Daneshill, Neatham 1 and 2, Owslebury 1, possibly Radnage). This might be attributable to poverty but is better considered in the light of widespread evidence for the use of useless, broken or 'killed' objects which can symbolise appropriate qualities but also mark the separation of the dead from the living (Hodder 1982c: 199).

According to Toynbee (1964: 317-27) the iconography of animals, deities and mythical creatures on copper alloy vessels indicates their use for ritual, but this seems an unnecessary explanation given the ubiquity of such iconography in everyday material culture. Nevertheless one attested function of the jug and pan was for hand washing in the context of sacrifice as well as in that of the meal. The animal species represented may support this interpretation. The inclusion of wild animals alerts us to the particular quality of the funerary meal, where normal food taboos may have been transcended. The simultaneous sacrifice of animals from several species is most familiar in a Roman context in the *suovetaurilia*, the pig, sheep and bull sacrificed together on several occasions including the *Ambarvalia* and the inauguration of a military campaign (Scullard 1981: 124). Although not previously noted the *suovetaurilia* is represented or alluded to on the Bayford jug. In one instance (North Marston) the combination of species corresponds exactly but this is not surprising as there are almost as many combinations of species as there are burials, even in contemporary burials from the same cemetery (e.g. Baldock Clothall Road 6 and 7). The connotation of sacrifice may be particular to the funerary ritual (cf. Alcock 1980: 63), or it may suggest that contemporary dining practice also partook of the character of sacrifice.

The jug and pan, strigils, unguent and oil flasks, cosmetic and manicure sets, razors and shears were perhaps used to groom the corpse, as described in the literary sources (Scheid 1984; Toynbee 1971: 43-8), perhaps for its display, as in the chamber at St Albans Folly Lane and Stanway, or on or beneath a post supported structure at Holborough. They may also have served for purifying the participants in mortuary ritual. However they also evoked a broader discipline of physical presentation. Hill (1997) has drawn attention to the increase in numbers of toilet sets as a general phenomenon of the late Iron Age and early Roman period, a development mirrored in that of cosmetic sets (Jackson 1985). In burial however they are largely confined to a particular assemblage type. This suggests that the bodily disciplines which they imply were not universally practised. The strigils and oil flasks evoke bathing and possibly exercise and forms of sociability associated with the bath house (Toner 1995: 54-55; Yegül 1992: 31-42). The strigil is symbolically potent, if bearing differing connotations, in Greek and Etruscan art and grave

furniture (Thuillier 1989), but has received less attention within a Roman or provincial Roman context, although elaborately decorated examples show that it was not a simply functional artefact (Boon 1980).

Several of these items have been used to sex grave occupants where the cremated bone was not examined or did not allow diagnosis of sex. However there is little basis for the female attributions which have been made on the strength of these items (note 8.5). This should not be surprising given the long standing association of such items with both sexes (Treherne 1995). Related to the emphasis on care of the body may be the apparent greater concern for the cremated bone itself in the early Roman period, both the amount collected and the type of container in which it was deposited. In Homeric epic the collection of the whitened cremated bone is integral to the purity of the 'beautiful death' (Vernant 1982). A similar aesthetic concern may have operated in this context.

The largest assemblages of personal ornament are associated with child inhumations (e.g. Linton, Springhead; S. Puttock pers. comm.). Items related to dress are relatively rare, especially in comparison to that from some cemeteries in neighbouring provinces (e.g. Martin-Kilcher 1993b). The large numbers of brooches suggest that they were sometimes deposited as votives rather than related to the dress of the dead. Care must therefore be taken in using different numbers of brooches to reconstruct costume (cf Wild 1968). Britain lacks a sufficient number of funerary sculptures (Mattern 1989) to assess the dress preferences that are occasionally visible elsewhere in sculptural traditions (e.g. Freigang 1996).

References were also made to other areas of elite activity which might be classified within the general realm of *otium*, or appropriate leisure. Bathing has already been considered. The presence of wild animals and occasionally of weapons probably used in hunting, as in northern Gaul (van Doorsaeler 1969; Reinert 1993a), may recall a privileged access of elites to wild game or evoke demonstrations of hunting prowess. The burial evidence anticipates the emphasis on hunt related scenes in elite self definition seen in artistic evidence from the Antonine period onwards (Anderson 1985; Aymard 1951).

The presence of writing related equipment has a wide range of evocative power, as examination of its sculptural depiction (von Boeselager 1989; Freigang 1996: 216) and the various social contexts of literacy suggest (Bowman and Woolf 1994). The frequency of representation of the parchment roll or other writing equipment has been interpreted as an expression of pride in entering an elite community united by education in a common literary tradition (Freigang 1996; Goudineau 1980: 362). The exchange of letters was also a medium of patronage and a mechanism of *amicitia* (Bowman 1994: 123; Stowers 1986). Other possible realms of allusion include registering for census and taxation. Possible magico-religious connotations should also not be ignored, not only the specific context of letters to the dead sent by the Gauls (Diodorus Siculus 5.28, 6) or curse tablets inserted in Roman tombs (Gager 1992), but also that writing, from altars to curse tablets, was in Britain a new and socially restricted mode of communication between the human and divine.

Gaming pieces and dice evoked an activity which according to literary sources for Rome took place both at the dinner party and in the porticoes of fora and temples (Balsdon 1969: 49, 154-57). Archaeological illustration includes gaming tables scratched into pavements (Toner 1995: 90) and a concentration of gaming pieces recovered from excavations in Vindonissa in one of the forum porticoes (Holliger and Holliger 1984). The association with the possible divining instruments in the doctor's burial at Stanway suggests possible symbolic associations between gaming and prediction.

8.4 The social interpretation of early Roman burial display

The cluster of recurrent associations, of dining, the world of hygiene, and appropriate leisure suggests the central themes of social reproduction which it was the task of this chapter to identify. Treherne (1996) has drawn attention to the persistence from the Bronze age to the early medieval period of the 'beautiful death' of the adult male warrior, associated with weapons and toilet equipment. This topos is reflected here but these assemblages also represent a variation on another theme with a long pedigree in prehistory, the deposition of items related to the consumption of food. There is however a more specific context for which these assemblages have implications. The correspondence between the burial assemblages and Tacitus' description is even closer than that indicated by Richmond as citation of the famous passage in the *Agricola* shows:

'little by little the Britons went astray into alluring vices: to the promenade, the bath, the well-appointed dinner table (*porticus et balnea et conviviorum elegantiam*). The natives gave the name of 'culture' (*humanitas*) to this factor of their slavery' (Tacitus *Agricola* 21.3)

There is a close correlation between the themes of burial and the values adopted by the Britons in their mistaken reading of *humanitas*. Tacitus' description cannot be taken at face value but represents a particular reworking of the discourse on *humanitas* (1.2), in which he combines the justification of Roman imperialism as the propagation of *humanitas* with another long-lived theme, that of Roman decadence (Woolf 1998: 68-71). Tacitus perhaps also reacts to the reflection offered on *humanitas* by another culture's selection of what it was to be Roman, which he may perceive as stereotyped values won through imitation rather than the development of a cultivated discrimination. Nevertheless just as the passage, if read appropriately, remains informative on the interaction between Roman administrators and native elites, so the tricolon *balnea et porticus et elegantia conviviorum* also have further implications.

In this regard the most important aspect of burial assemblages is that they reveal the broad adoption of a Romanised lifestyle, rather than any particular symbols of rank; possible examples of the latter, like gold rings or certain chair types cannot be confirmed as such. If burial represents equipment for an afterlife of pleasure, then pleasure had been Romanised. As Webster (1997a: 328) points out different social practices or *habitus* may obstruct the negotiation of relationships, especially given the value judgements which are put upon barbarian social practices (Woolf 1998). The burial assemblages imply styles of dining and of self-presentation that were compatible between or tolerable to parties in the

elite contacts that the empire engendered. The cumulative effect of the symbolic constellation was to communicate commonality of culture (cf Wiessner 1990). *Burial makes visible a culture of manners in the areas of dining, of hygiene and cosmetic practices and of education and appropriate leisure perhaps analogous to that defined by Elias (1978) in late mediaeval and early modern Europe. Elias explored the value system inculcated through childhood training and social expectation. Signification of the behaviour proper to a person of standing demanded accomplishment in the presentation of self to the world in these realms of eating, drinking, physical appearance and manners related to bodily functions.*

All of these qualities were ambiguous. The perspective of the Roman literary sources shows the balance to be achieved between sophistication and excess in the presentation of food and dining (e.g. Gowers 1993). The adoption of certain cosmetic practices also risked characterisation as effete and 'Greek' (MacMullen 1982b: 178). Bathing was connected with a proper hygienic regime but it was also physically and morally debilitating (Toner 1995). The context of gambling, the occasion and the social level of the participants, were also crucial to its valuation (Balsdon 1969: 154-57; Toner 1995: 94-95). *Otium* was differently defined and valued by elites for themselves and for the masses:

'it was seen as entirely proper to treat leisure with due regard for the status of its participants.' (Toner 1995:25)

The cluster of themes identified in burial also partially corresponds to the trope in funerary epigraphy of *balnea vina Venus*, a response to death by the appeal to sensual pleasure less constrained by refinement (Kajanto 1969).

However the Roman perspective should not be the only one from which burial assemblages should be judged. It has been noted above that many of these tendencies in burial, for example the deposition of dining services or items related to personal care are already visible in the late Iron Age. Burial assemblages show an evolutionary development, rather than the radical breaks in form visible in settlement morphology and architecture. The burial assemblages allude to long-lived themes in elite social practice further shaped through pre-conquest contact with Gallic elites. Even the type of contact between Roman governors and provincial elites implied by Tacitus' description of interaction between Agricola and British *principes* need not imply a great difference in some areas of culture, especially when Roman officials could be derived from a northern Gallic background, for example Classicianus.

Freigang (1996: 218) explains the popularity of the scenes 'de repas en famille' on Moselle funerary sculpture as a manifestation of love of family life 'retiré dans une sphère privée idyllique'. This emphasis seems too modernist. Dining space in houses at least in Rome and the Campanian cities occupied a more ambiguous position on the spectrum between public and private and was penetrated by less formal social and political transactions (Wallace-Hadrill 1988). The *convivium* was a locale for the reproduction of hierarchy within patron-client relationships, simultaneously including, discriminating and offering opportunity (d'Arms 1990). Beneath the ideology of equal treatment of dinner party guests

distinctions operated through the quality of food, speed of service, or the demeanour of servers, but the *convivium* also offered access to potential friends and patrons.

The importance of the *convivium* and rituals of presentation and reception to the creation of hierarchies in the western provinces is now appreciated to a much greater extent for the late Roman period, based on both the subject matter of mosaic pavements and the interrelationship of villa art and architecture (S. Scott 1994; 1995; Slofstra 1995). From the evidence for the symposium in villa art and architecture Slofstra infers the development of patronage as an institution in the provinces. Surprisingly he makes no reference to grave assemblages of the early Roman period. The burial evidence therefore reveals under-exploited areas of elite self-definition. The importance of dining in this respect has perhaps been underestimated, although it has attracted increasing attention as an expression of cultural identity (Hawthorne 1997; Meadows 1995; Okun 1989; Willis 1997). It also suggests that the dichotomy between public and private, which has been proposed as a 'fault line' within Romanisation (Terrenato 1998) needs re-evaluation, both as a relevant dichotomy and in the degree of penetration of its halves.

It is paradoxical that although the burial assemblage evoke a 'Roman' lifestyle, the style of burial is not 'Roman' in that it does not correspond to the burial practices of central Italy in the first century BC and AD (Fasold and Witteyer 1998). The deposition of much feasting related material in the grave in north-western Europe has therefore been considered as evidence for a lack of Romanisation in the burial sphere (Struck 1995: 146-7). From a study of burial practice at Winchester and St Albans Struck (1995) has identified a discrepancy between the rates of Romanisation of burial practice and that of other spheres of social life, with the former considered to be much slower than the latter. Wightman (1985: 188) posited a similar difference which she attributed to the 'natural conservatism' of burial. Against the argument of common sensibilities developed above, the different form of funerary practice might jar to a Roman observer. However the deposition of quantities of ceramics and glass in similar combinations is common to large burial assemblages across the north-west provinces, in France (Bayard 1993; Feugère 1993; Simon-Hiernard 1993), Belgium (Amand 1960; Roosens 1976), the Netherlands (den Boesterd 1973; van den Hurk 1984; Koster 1993; Philippe 1962), the Moselle (Ebel 1989; Wigg 1993c), the Rhineland (Pirling 1986) and southern Germany (e.g. Struck 1993d; Walke 1963), Switzerland (Castella 1993; Castella and Flutsch 1993; Schucany 1995) and Hungary (Fitz 1980; Mocsy 1974: 148). The other recurrent elements identified, the jug and pan set, personal ornaments, cosmetic sets, styli and other writing equipment, gaming pieces, tripods and folding stools, also occur from burials from Britain to Bulgaria, often beneath barrows (Becker 1993: 370; von Boeselager 1993; Nuber 1972: 162-71).

Such burial forms are not ubiquitous. They are absent not only from large parts of Britain but also of western and central France (Ferdrière 1993c; Galliou 1989; Provost 1993). The distribution of metal vessels illustrates well the punctuated distribution of such assemblages on a larger scale (Nuber 1972). There is also diversity within the group. The burial of horse gear and cart remains is common in Hungary and to a lesser extent northern Gaul in the LPRIA and Roman periods (Becker 1993; Mariën

1979; Roymans 1990: 244-45) but there is only one such assemblage from Britain (St Albans Folly Lane). In contrast to some parts of northern Gaul (Roymans 1993) burials with weapons from Britain are also scarce. In Britain the association of several animal species with larger grave groups assemblages is stronger than in the Treveran area (Cordie-Hackenberg et al.: 1992) and Gaul generally (Ménier 1993: 288).

Nevertheless although dissimilar to the rituals of central Italy, this style of burial characterised large areas of northern Europe within the empire. The question of what is a 'Roman' burial practice is therefore moot. With what for example would Julius Classicianus, probably of Treveran origin (and his wife certainly from that *civitas*), but in Britain as Roman procurator, have been buried beneath his altar tomb? In view of this distribution the burial evidence is not as inconsistent with other aspects of a Romanised culture as has been implied. It alerts us to common patterns of social practice across the empire that need not radiate from Rome as an explicit package but which develop within the interaction of provincial elites, from participation in the military or Roman bureaucracy, and through the persistence of networks of economic and social relations reconstructed from the late Iron Age.

8.5 The composition of late Roman burial assemblages

A less comprehensive examination is offered here of trends in late Roman burial practice in Britain. However comparison is both suggestive of social change and also instructive in that it shows that burial only offers a partial view of the media of status expression. The changes in the Winchester sample are used for the purposes of this discussion but the degree to which they are representative of broader changes is also considered.

Personal ornament formed a much more significant part of burial assemblages at Lankhills than in early Roman cemeteries in Winchester or in the East Hampshire burials around Winchester. The same trend can also be argued at the majority of late Roman cemeteries in Britain. The items associated with males, belt sets and / or cross-bow brooches, have a relatively restricted distribution and are found nowhere else in a similar concentration to that at Lankhills. Rather there are individual examples within larger cemeteries, for example Brougham, Gloucester Kingsholm or East London and as isolated burials, for example at Shorden Brae or Water Newton Normangate Field. Hair pins, ear rings, beads, rings and especially bracelets have a much wider but predominantly urban distribution, being recovered with a varying proportion of female and child graves in almost all of the large late Roman urban cemeteries, although with the possible exception of York (RCHME 1962) not to the same extent as at Lankhills (Philpott 1993a). Within this sphere toilet instruments became a much diminished component in comparison to dress items and ornaments (see also Feugère 1993: 155).

Chance preservation, usually through the medium of the 'plaster' burial, occasionally allows a more detailed examination of the appearance of the individual. Textile fragments or 'plaster' impressions are usually interpreted as the remains of shrouds, although only in exceptional instances is this proven

(e.g. RCHME 1962: 108-109; Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier 1984: 212). Cloth fragments could also derive from artefact wrappings (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 129; Wild 1970a: 91-94). Fabric fragments, for example of silk at Butt Road (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 128), or of gold thread (Winchester St Martin's Close, Poundbury and Verulam Hills Field) illustrate a form of burial investment normally not preserved. Occasional examples of dress from other provinces, for example from Xanten and Wallis (Wild 1970b) or from St Victor, Marseilles (Roche-Bernard and Ferdière 1993: 15-16) bear fuller witness to the possible splendour of the fourth century corpse. The heads of hair preserved from York (RCHME 1962: 79) and particularly from Dorchester Crown Buildings illustrate further facets of the cadaver's careful presentation.

The change from the earlier period is not absolute. The deposit of a paired set of glass, ceramic and metal vessels and crossed knives and spoons in the 'temple-mausoleum' at Lullingstone, along with a set of glass gaming pieces, indicates the persistence of the predominant burial elements of the early Roman period (Meates 1979). Glass or ceramic assemblages related to grave-side ceremonies were also deposited elsewhere, for example broken fragments of up to six conical beakers were deposited in the lead-lined coffin and the grave fill at Welford-on-Avon.

In the change in burial practice the community of burial culture can be seen to extend across the same area as that identified in the early Roman period. The metalwork with male burials can be situated within a distribution which spanned several provinces (Böhme 1974; 1986; Keller 1971; Lányi 1972). Similarly the deposition of large numbers of ornaments in female graves has a much wider distribution (Feugère 1993: 155; Lányi 1972). As in Britain large ceramic or glass assemblages continued to be deposited in parts of northern Gaul in the late third and fourth century (e.g. Follmann-Schulz 1989; Noelke 1984; Rheinisches Landesmuseum 1984: 210-19; Pirling 1993; Young 1977: 37). Silver spoons are a not infrequent late antique grave find (Sherlock 1973). Other artefact types, for example glass bowls with figure cut and engraved decoration (Price 1995) or pewter vessels (Beagrie 1989) were also more likely to be deposited in burial in northern Gaul than in Britain.

8.6 The social interpretation of late Roman burial display

Personal ornament with late Roman male burials has captured most attention because of its potential significance for identifying the settlement of groups originating beyond the empire as *laeti* and *foederati* (Hills 1979). Although belt sets were originally argued to have a particular military association (Hawkes and Dunning 1961), subsequent scholarship has identified a less exclusive group of belt wearers. Literary and artistic evidence suggests that belt sets were worn by both soldiers and late Roman government officials (Bishop and Coulston 1993: 178, 192; Tomlin 1976): the association was sufficiently strong for '*cingulum sumere*' and '*cingulum ponere*' to become metaphors for entry to and exit from imperial service (Jones 1964: 566). Both artistic evidence and the very widespread distribution of belt fittings on all types of site suggest that wearing of belts was not confined to imperial service (Ager 1987; Clarke 1979: 289; Keller 1971: 171-73; Simpson 1976). Cross-bow brooches are also argued to

identify the same group of late Roman soldiers and officials in imperial service (Zabehlicky 1980), but that crossbow brooches were worn only by those holding official rank is also unlikely (Clarke 1979: 263; Keller 1971: 171-73).

Within the general corpus certain types of belt set or crossbow brooches may have been particular to certain groups, although this is only made explicit by the presence of inscriptions (Noll 1974). Clarke (1979) for example proposes that the two-strap form of belt, represented in Lankhills 376 was worn in life by an official. The especially elaborate cross-bow brooches in Lankhills 322 and 373 may be more likely candidates. However where to draw a line between metalwork related to office holding and that worn by both male and female civilians, is not clear. S. James (pers. comm.) suggests that the wearing of these belt sets and brooches may have been strictly military until the late third or early fourth century, when it expanded to include those in the imperial bureaucracy, whilst by the end of the fourth century the association may have become much less exclusive. It is to the latter period that the graves considered here date.

Halsall (1992) has also argued against the association of crossbow brooches and belt sets with a particular ethnic or military group in late Roman Gaul. Instead he suggests that it reflects a more overt display of power in burials, related to the assumption of power by local leaders, perhaps the *Bagaudae*, as the power of central Roman authorities retreated temporarily in the later third and more permanently in the late fourth / early fifth centuries. This seeks too quickly to replace one specific group to whom this metalwork was attached with another. This burial symbolism characterises only the second of these periods, and its geographical extent does not coincide closely with that where the operations of the *Bagaudae* are attested.

Even if the living community which this metalwork designated could be identified with greater confidence, it is possible that the associations may change in the context of burial. For example it is possible that the two belts with chip-carved buckles placed by the head of nine to eleven year old child at Butt Road (Crummy et al. 1993: 145) were presented as a grave gift rather than as the equipment of the deceased. It is sufficient for the purposes of this discussion, that both crossbow brooches and belt sets may have evoked the credentials of late Roman authority without necessarily identifying office holders. There is a broader context for this funerary display. Status was expressed or aspired to within the late Roman world through dramatic costume, jewellery and insignia to a much greater degree than in the first to third centuries (Macmullen 1964; Wild 1968: 176; 1985: 413).

'Had Cicero...stepped into Ammianus' world, what certainly would have made him stare the most would have been people's clothing: children in red tunics, riders on horses decorated with silver plates and fancy harness in black and red, magistrates in long jewelled chlamydes, some wearing the red leather belt of imperial service' (Macmullen 1964: 450).

Late Roman elites would have manifested themselves thus on a spectrum of occasions from the imperial *adventus* to meetings of the town *curia*, court sessions, visits to the baths or amphitheatre, temple, or church to the reception of guests and clients at home (Brown 1978; 1987; Macmullen 1981; 1984). A rare indication of such activity from Britain is the turn-out of the Pelagians 'resplendent in dress' (*veste fulgentes*) to meet St Germanus in the early fifth century (Constantius *Vita S. Germani*: 14: 261, 9). Grave goods have occasionally been alluded to as evidence for this increasingly elaborate late Roman apparel (MacMullen 1964: 440) but not used as evidence for the appearance of the late Roman corpse itself.

Cemeteries are most familiar within urban life of the late Roman period as hosts to the vast crowds drawn for celebrations *ad sanctos* (Brown 1981; Février 1980: 434-40). However the organisation of the cult of the saints by 'ecclesiastical impresarios' was a major component of the assimilation of urban ceremonial by the church calendar during the fifth century (van Dam 1985; Harries 1992a: 90-95). Archaeological evidence from the Rhineland suggests the same date for the development of cult foci around earlier tombs (Borger 1995). Likewise in Britain literary evidence confirms the existence of martyrial cults by the fifth or sixth centuries in Britain at St Albans and elsewhere (Thompson 1984: 49-50), but archaeological evidence for the existence of an earlier cult centre is inconclusive (Biddle 1986: 16). The interpretation of the basilical building at Butt Road (Crummy et al. 1993) as a cemetery church has been seriously questioned on the grounds of date and of the extent to which the form sustains the interpretation as a church (Millett 1995c). Other dimensions of the social and ceremonial role of the late Roman urban cemetery require study.

The archaeological evidence permits no certain conclusion as to when and for whose benefit the 'beautified' corpse would have been visible. Earlier literary sources refer to the display of the body of the deceased, especially of the elite, prior to the funeral (see above). At what stage of the ceremony the body was placed in the coffin, or when coffins were closed to view is unknowable. However it has already been noted that around late Roman Winchester there was some evidence for the return of burial display into the urban cemetery, even if the more elaborate tombs no longer necessarily concentrated on the street frontage (7.5). Perhaps in late fourth century Winchester and other towns the cortège on which the more important individuals, or those connected to them, would have been accompanied by their peers amongst decurions, churchmen, soldiers and officials, local patrons and landowners, as well as other clients, household members, and slaves and other townsfolk. No systematic collection of relevant literary evidence exists of evidence for late Roman funerary rituals. Certainly funerary feasting centred on the family group persisted in the Mediterranean (Février 1977; Krautheimer 1960). Some of the splendour of the funerals of emperors (Price 1987) or of saints, for example of Germanus of Auxerre or Martin of Tours, the latter attended by the whole town and likened by the latter's hagiographer Sulpicius Severus to a triumphal procession (Février 1980: 436), may have extended to members of the late Roman elite.

The differences between the early and late imperial periods in the importance of dress should not be over-emphasised. Source materials for the reconstruction of dress, principally tombstones from the

earlier period and mosaics and wall painting from the later influence appreciation of its impact. The creation of difference through fabric or colour of cloth, the latter suggested by some literary evidence (Wild 1985: 408-9), will have a very different archaeological visibility to that achieved through dress accessories and personal ornaments of metal. A strong emphasis in burial evidence in late Iron Age and to an even greater degree in the early Roman assemblages in the presentation of the body was identified (see above). It has already been noted that it is in the late period that there is much greater evidence from non burial contexts, both architectural and silver plate and pewter hoards, for elaborate dining rituals, in contrast to a diminution of this element in the burial sphere. Therefore not all the media of articulation were visible. An explanation for the change in choice may be related to more general change in the representation of links between elites and non-elites, a change in the representation of patronage.

The 'model of parity' of the earlier imperial period which the early Roman *convivium* could represent has already been discussed. However an ideology of distinction between elites and non-elites has been identified in the later Roman period, in particular its manifestation in the increasingly ceremonious nature of private space and domestic architecture, usurping functions previously in the public arena (Brown 1978; Brown 1980; Ellis 1988; S. Scott 1994; Thébert 1987). This need not be a direct product of the increased distance in the late Roman period between *honestiores* and *humiliores*. Cameron (1993: 109) has argued that the lack of social mobility within the later Roman empire has been exaggerated. A diversity of overlapping routes to authority has been identified, the army, imperial bureaucracy, church, land-ownership or control and wealth, and the exercise of naked force permitted by these sources of power, engendering increasingly complex patronage networks (Garnsey and Woolf 1989; Macmullen 1963, 1984; Whittaker 1993). Patrons and clients still needed each other, perhaps to an even greater degree than before because of the plurality of conflicting sources of power. The potential for other forms of material culture to contribute to this argument has been alluded to (e.g. Evans 1990: 98) but, save for some examination of costume has not been developed in any detail. This analysis has suggested that the 'beautiful dead' of late Roman cemeteries were rendered as untouchable as their living counterparts. It was no longer as dispensers of largesse that the late Roman elites were depicted.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Summary of themes and future work

The main conclusions from individual analyses have been drawn at the end of individual sections and are not repeated in any detail here. They are summarised briefly in relation to the two areas of concern with which this thesis opened, the relationship of elite and non-elite groups to burial practice. Other avenues of research to develop the approaches offered here are then indicated.

The first area to be summarised is the interpretation of non-elite burial practices. A highly uneven distribution of archaeologically visible burial evidence characterises the Roman period in Britain as it did the Iron Age (Chapter 2). The sample of available evidence shows a high degree of regional and local (6.2, 6.7) variation but in total is much greater from southern and central England than from other areas. Even within this area the chronological horizon of the appearance of formal burial differs appreciably. In south-eastern counties and Dorset the early Roman period is either better represented than or equally as well represented as the later, but in counties north-east from Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire to East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire the bulk of available evidence dates to the late Roman period. To some extent therefore regional trends to a visibility of burial practice established in the late Iron Age continue into the Roman period, although not in all areas. Although it can only be proposed tentatively, the horizon of archaeologically visible burial is generally stretched over a longer time period than other aspects of the Romanisation of burial practice, for example the selection of artefact types described in chapter 8. The tempo of the process which Hill (1995; 1997) has characterised as the increasing organisation of many dimensions of the archaeological record around the individual in the late Iron Age therefore requires further examination.

Before insisting too heavily on this conclusion, the biases in the availability of burial evidence must be established with much greater security. A sophisticated approach to analysis of taphonomy is also required, in particular of the relationship of burial distribution to the burial environment which was only characterised at the coarsest level here. A more systematic approach to dating inhumation burials is also required, given the significance of the relationship between cremation and inhumation within the Roman period and the need to distinguish Roman period burials from later examples. It must also be stressed that this survey has in most cases been based on a sample of the evidence, not all the available data, although the sample was argued to be fairly representative. The exercise therefore deserves repetition with a fuller data set, exploiting the NAR when available.

The balance of available evidence is biased both absolutely and in proportion to the Roman period distribution of the population to urban sites, especially the public towns and to a lesser extent the minor centres. The low representation of military cemeteries is due to a long lasting low priority given to their

excavation and also to the generally poor bone preservation in the areas under permanent garrison. In southern Britain military burials are also difficult to distinguish from those of other groups. The general under-representation of rural burials from areas where conditions for bone preservation are good is likely to be due to a lack of excavation of site peripheries, the possible lower visibility of burial features, particularly perhaps individual unurned cremation burials, and the lack of extensive excavation of enclosure ditches where burials have been shown to cluster. However, save that cremations might be less visible than inhumations, this does not explain why the bulk of such evidence dates to the late Roman period from the central / southern sample. Although the burial of skeletal fragments and individual body parts has been shown to continue into the Roman period to an extent that has not been appreciated before (4.4.1, 6.3), in the Hampshire sample the practice is much less frequent than in the Iron Age (6.20). The excarnation practices which may have produced this fragmentary material are unlikely to have been as widespread as in the Iron Age. Instead we must contemplate funerary rituals that either left no visible remains or burial in the rarely examined off-site area; the late Roman graves are mostly recorded on or closer to settlement sites. The agglomeration of burials in the late Roman period may also render cemeteries more obvious and more likely to be excavated, but it is not exclusive to the late Roman period nor the dominant trend within it.

These groups of rural burials, scattered around settlement sites, often of late Roman date have previously been categorised as those of individuals of the lowest social status. However this classification must be challenged. First, in light of the analysis of the overall availability of burial evidence, such burials often represent the few known from a rural context (2.5). Second, burials of this type are as likely as 'typical' burials on urban and or small town sites to be buried within containers and to be accompanied by the same types of grave goods (6.10). The social distinctions which have previously been proposed as structuring rural burial practice of elites and non-elites could also not be identified with any regularity, although this was attempt was hampered by data quality (6.13-6.14) and the hypothesis must remain unproven rather than be dismissed. Given the rarity of rural burials, it is possible to argue that the characterisation of these burials as those of non-elites may be misguided. These are the burials which were in greatest contact with the living and associated with the features which impinged most strongly on their daily lives. Third, a number of different locations were identified as favoured for burial, both the rear of, and the entrances to, settlements and fields, close to 'corn driers', by or in the ditches of roads and trackways, and in abandoned and prehistoric sites. Nevertheless the placing of the dead is not as fortuitous or careless as has been previously argued. Site boundaries can be identified as the most important location throughout the period (6.16). The expression and experience of group identity was increasingly conveyed through the burial of individuals around settlement sites (6.19). Its effect was to increasingly associate site boundaries with group identity. The increasing appearance of burials coincides with other changes in the character of settlement space, although these have mostly been identified with regard to villas (6.20). The burial form follows broader changes in burial practices, but the location of the dead is one facet of the increased demarcation of space on rural settlement sites. We therefore see burial as one of the lived

dimensions of the indirect consequences of economic and social change on the population of later Roman Britain (1.2), being both a product of changed attitudes to settlement space and shaping attitudes to it.

The existence of these many individual and small groups of burials should not therefore cause despair (cf. 1.4). Although some of the weapons in the methodological arsenal of mortuary analysis are not appropriate in their analysis, this does not mean that they do not reward closer scrutiny. However this account can only be provisional. A number of areas can be identified where future work is necessary. Above all a larger sample of burial evidence is necessary, in order to better quantify the preferences in the features associated with burial and to explore regional variation. This sample will inevitably be produced by a slow accretion of data, given that only small numbers of burials are often excavated from large rural sites, but recovery of burial evidence must remain a priority. The appeal for excavation of the peripheral areas of rural settlements and of more substantial sections of enclosure ditches is still pertinent. The 'off-site' area is likely to be under-represented in the currently available sample, as it is rarely privileged in excavation. There is little current research to remedy this deficiency; for example the Wroxeter hinterland survey had no specific intention to recover cemetery evidence, nor was any recovered (R. White pers. comm.). Fragmentary human bone from on-site contexts also requires more detailed reporting; analysis of fragmentary samples from Hampshire showed that patterning is potentially identifiable within this material. The study of Iron Age settlement sites suggests that depositional practice is more fruitfully approached by the comparison of different classes of evidence (Fitzpatrick 1997b; Hill 1995; Parker Pearson 1996). The deposition of both whole and part bodies in the Roman period should also be integrated with that of other deposit types. Individual examples, as at Scole Dickleburgh, demonstrates that burials need not have taken place in pristine and separate space but have been interwoven with other deposits (6.16).

The analysis of burial in the landscape should not be restricted to its relationship to settlements but should consider its broader position in the settlement landscape, for example the visibility of burial, using more sophisticated approaches than employed here, or its relationship to other features, for example quality of land, slope, drainage etc, the more common emphasis in the analysis of prehistoric monuments (e.g. Chapman 1981). While the analysis of topographic preferences was pursued by van Doorsaeler (1967), and has occasionally been more recently considered (e.g. Lintz 1993), the subject deserves fuller attention. A more methodologically sophisticated approach to the location and visibility of monuments in the landscape, for example exploiting GIS, is likely to prove fruitful.

The second area of study was of aspects of elite culture accessible through burial evidence. As with the groups of burials dealt with above, the problem of identifying status is acute. Immediately encountered was the problem of recognition of elites in burial (1.3). Some help is afforded in other provinces of the empire where epigraphy identifies the commemorator or commemorated, but the epigraphic record from Britain, especially the sample areas on which attention was focused above, was

slight. Therefore the emphasis was re-characterised as on burial 'display' (1.4), without seeking to define the identity of the deceased or the participants in the funeral too precisely. Two aspects of this were examined, the distribution of display in relation to the settlement landscape and the character of burial assemblages.

The data from Britain do not sustain the model of a monumentalised *Gräberstrasse* that we might extrapolate from cemeteries around Rome, Pompeii or Ostia (1.4). The area close to the town gates, probably on the *pomerium*, was not a focus of burial display, either through the erection of monuments or the deposition of assemblages in Britain nor in other north-western provinces (5.2.5), although the epigraphic evidence which might clarify the analysis of any such preference is lacking and this area has rarely seen excavation. As for the more general relationship to the road frontage, the placing of monuments along the exit roads to towns in Britain and neighbouring provinces was sporadic rather than continuous (7.2), although a preference could be noted for a more visible position both in relation to roads and the wider landscape. The same concern for visibility in the wider landscape was true of many rural funerary monuments (6.11, 6.17). At only a few cemeteries of the north-west provinces, for example at Mainz-Weisenau, must the *Gräberstrassen* of some central Italian cities have been rivalled. A greater degree of monumentality was suggested to be associated with Romano-British towns with a strong military connection and / or colonial foundation, but their monuments may be rendered more visible by their epigraphic element.

The data did not permit a simple characterisation of the relationship of burial to the road frontage. The location of burial assemblages and monuments in relation to the road frontage for example offer differing conclusions. Nevertheless previous descriptions of the distribution of burial display in Britain as located outside the public sphere (as defined by the *civitas* capitals) have not been supported (1.4). The *civitas* capital cemetery or immediate hinterland of the town has been demonstrated to be just as much a zone of display through monuments and burial assemblages as other contexts, either minor centres or rural settlements in the early Roman period, and from limited examination the *civitas* capital continued to be important in this regard in the late Roman period also (7.7). This runs against the grain of some current interpretations based on other criteria of half-hearted urbanism (1.4) and shows the *civitas* capital as a centre for ceremonies beyond only those connected with civil government. However small towns were also confirmed as foci of burial display. This supplements a growing realisation of their role as social and ritual as well as economic centres. The evidence of burial also demonstrates their significance in an earlier period than that which is normally assumed to be their *floruit*. The distribution of monuments and assemblages occasionally suggested that the *civitas* boundary zone, both around and away from the small towns was also a zone of burial display but this requires further examination. This pattern of display did not characterise all areas. The argument can be made that the monumental development of a town's cemeteries is in inverse proportion to its degree of integration with its hinterland, as exemplified by London (7.7.2).

These conclusions have only been arrived at on the basis of a small sample predominately early Roman in date. Comparison of the results with the more detailed study of other parts of Roman Britain is anticipated, although given the difficulty of making comparisons which do not depend on grave good assemblages, the south-east is likely to monopolise attention. Only very limited consideration was given here to the late Roman period, mostly followed through the context of Winchester.

With regard to the relationship between burial and the road frontage, two forms of further examination can be proposed in addition to the incidental accretion of information from cemetery excavations. Re-examination of the context of older discoveries of inscriptions from Britain can produce some worthwhile information on the nature of funerary monumentalisation, but it will be more profitable when applied to larger groups of material than those available in this province. In some cases, for example Nîmes, information is too poor to allow such a re-evaluation (Hope 1994) but in others re-examination has allowed a fairly precise identification of context and assessment of monument distribution, for example in York (Jones 1983), Cologne (Gabelmann 1987; Spiegel 1994) and Mainz (Boppert 1992a; 1992b; Hope 1994). Such detailed analyses remain the exception rather than the rule.

Where lack of modern development permits, in Britain for example at Silchester or Wroxeter, this new perspective on cemeteries could be put into practice by programmes of geophysical survey to establish the degree and character of cemeteries and traces of monuments in relationship to road frontages and examine chronological trends in that relationship through selective excavation. This offers an alternative approach to burial archaeology to the usual aim of acquiring a large enough sample of burials to allow analysis with greater statistical support. Military sites on Britain's northern frontier of which the cemeteries have for so long been neglected could also benefit from such a programme, as has recently been shown at Birdoswald (Robinson pers. comm.).

It has also been shown that the changing relationship of burial to the street frontage in the late Roman period remains an unexplored area both in the north-western provinces and in the Mediterranean core (5.6). It does not feature in von Hesberg and Zanker's (1987b) characterisation of the changing place of burial to the street frontage. With the advent of the late Roman period the agenda of a Christian archaeology of burial practice appears to dominate consideration of mortuary rituals. Certainly by the fifth century the church has usurped the road frontage as the privileged burial location, but we should be wary of absorbing the previous century into this picture. The distribution of late Roman burial monuments at some of the type sites for the development of Christianity in the north-western provinces, for example Cologne and Trier, offers the opportunity to make such re-evaluations, although not all relevant excavations are not fully published (Borger 1995; Paffgen 1992; Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier 1984).

With regard to the broader distribution of burial display in the landscape the same approach might be better applied to the much greater samples of funerary epigraphy, architecture and sculpture as well as grave assemblages in other provinces, with the greater potential for quantification of results. In parts of Gaul for example there is a much greater potential to address this issue using a larger database of monumental evidence. The results of current studies suggest contrasting results. The distribution of mausolea in south-eastern France is associated with the road network, especially the via Domitiana, although no direct clustering characterises the immediate environment of the *civitas* capitals (Roth-Congès 1993: Fig. 1, 391). 'Piles funéraires' in south-west France have been argued to show a rural distribution, but even if the immediate context of these monuments was rural, their distribution still clusters around *civitas* capitals, especially Auch and St Bertrand-de-Comminges (Sillières and Soukassian 1993: Fig. 1, 300). Wightman's comparison of urban and rural epigraphic, sculptural and architectural assemblages from Gallia Belgica suggests that neighbouring *civitates* are characterised by very different use of urban and rural space as locales of burial display (1985: 163-8), although it is impossible to reconstruct the distribution of rural evidence from her presentation of the data. The characteristic of Wightman's and other studies is the use of only one monument type alone. The Treveran area is a very good example of a potential study area which offers the opportunity to compare distributions of grave assemblages and epigraphic, sculptural and architectural evidence over the long term, although we should not be distracted by this abundance of evidence from analysis of other areas in Gaul where regional surveys have been carried out (Ferdrière 1993a: *passim*).

The examination of the artefactual components of assemblages identified on a quantitative basis as burial display revealed the recurring presence of groups of artefacts which were argued to represent the evocation of a number of areas of social practice (8.3-8.4). The early Roman burial assemblages were argued to identify a number of areas which have been insufficiently appreciated in study of the Romanisation of elite lifestyles which has been concentrated on architecture, a constellation of practices which corresponded quite closely to a Tacitean formula of *humanitas*, in particular based around dining, leisure, and ornament, personal presentation and hygiene. The assemblages of the late Roman period, although less extensively investigated, shows clearly that areas of social practice which were previously important in burial assemblages and which other evidence demonstrates to be important, in particular dining rituals, need not be visible in burial. Together with a re-evaluation of its spatial context (see above), alternative lines of enquiry can be proposed for late Roman cemeteries where the questions of religious or ethnic affiliation have monopolised the research agendas.

Early Roman burial assemblages in several important respects, in particular the deposition of large quantities of grave goods, did not follow contemporary practice in Rome (8.4). However the deposition of large assemblages of similar composition characterised a very large area of the north-western provinces, at least from Gaul to Pannonia, that was suggested to be produced through the interaction of provincial elites (8.4). The distribution begs the question of what a 'Roman' burial rite is. What is perceived to be Roman

is likely to vary both chronologically and spatially along the trajectory of assimilation into different provincial societies of different aspects of Roman practices. Thus the interpretation of burial as a conservative realm (1.3) on the basis of these assemblages is unfair.

Although considerable attention has been applied to the literary evidence for the organisation of burial practice and its social dimensions in recent years (e.g. Hınard 1987; 1995a; Flower 1996; Maurin 1984; Morris 1991; Scheid 1984) there has been relatively little investigation of the relationship of burial to practice to a Roman identity although references in literary sources show that it was an area of sensitivity. These sources remain to be fully exploited for the light they may shed on the relationship to the cluster of social practices which mediated *humanitas* (Woolf 1995). A *mos Romanus* in burial was occasionally identified by Roman authors (Morris 1992: 31) and contrast was made with the burial practices of other cultures presented as curious or indeed repulsive (e.g. Montserrat 1997: 38-39). The most obvious example of the propagation of a burial custom is the requirement, as explicitly ordained in foundation charters, for burial and cremation to take place at a minimum distance from a town (Robinson 1975; Rykwert 1976). The continuation of intra-mural burial in Greece and Asia Minor illustrates that even this was not universally followed (Cormack 1997).

The discussion of burial display relied on a quantitative analysis but also on traditional assumptions on the identification of 'prestige goods' in Roman period burials. These assumptions require further examination from several perspectives. Van Lith and Randsborg's remains the only survey to show the association of a particular artefact type with larger assemblages. Impressionistically some if not all of the artefacts considered in chapter 8 also seem likely to occur in similar contexts, but this demands further examination. However more sensitivity is also required to the change over time in the associations of such artefacts (Bradley 1988). For example van Lith and Randsborg (1985) themselves document that the range of vessel forms produced in glass changes substantially during the Roman period but nevertheless use it as a constant measure of high investment in burial.

The spatial variation in the value of such artefacts also requires further consideration. In the late Roman period for example lead or stone coffins are considered to be indicators of high status. The degree of investment will perhaps most obviously vary according to proximity to sources of appropriate materials. The regional analysis in Britain of the provenance of stone coffins or of their typology remains rare. Taylor's (1984) discussion of stone coffins from Cambridgeshire is an exception (cf. Savay-Guerraz 1990). This would complement patterns of late Roman trade reconstructed from other artefact distributions. The geographical context of the wearing of potential symbols of official power should also be considered. In areas with greater contact with imperial hierarchy the constituency of wearers may have been more restricted. For example in London it may have been more difficult to wear such items without specific entitlement than in Winchester or at Dorchester-on-Thames (S. James pers. comm.).

Some observations were made about the occurrence of different types of artefacts in different archaeological contexts, to measure burial as a context of display and to establish the connotations of burial assemblages (8.4). This aspect of the study can be developed much more fully by the quantified analysis of occurrence across different contexts suggested by Parker Pearson (1993), to consolidate the identification of indicators of display, reconstructed from their presence in burial in larger assemblages, but also to note what may be omitted from burial, as was noted in the case of decorated samian vessels. The Roman period offers an opportunity to pursue this type of contextual analysis that is not available elsewhere.

Whilst some of the non-grave good data was exploited in the survey, the quality of evidence meant that burial container, number and type of grave goods was often used as the common denominator for the comparison between assemblages, although well preserved Roman cemeteries, especially of the early Roman period should contain a variety of assemblage types (3.3). Where other information was available, for example on grave size and construction, and in the case of cremation cemeteries from pyre debris, they were treated simply as an alternative dimensions of burial display to deposition of grave goods. Given the rarity of available data deposition of artefacts on the pyre could not be analysed but at a coarser inter-regional level. The inter-regional patterning that has previously been hypothesised was not supported by a re-examination of this evidence (3.5). It certainly demonstrates that pyre treatment is as deserving in southern as in northern Britain of greater archaeological attention.

In cemetery analysis such different parts of the ritual are often treated as such alternatives, a justification for conclusions from grave goods being extended to the whole of the burial sequence (e.g. Pader 1982: 42). However it is possible to demonstrate archaeological difference in the material culture of the two phases (1.3). This is not simply a matter of choice between different contexts chosen for display. The identity attributed to the dead changes through the sequence of ritual, within the rites of passage framework of separation, transition, and incorporation (van Gennep 1960; Huntington and Metcalf 1992). It is the increasing emphasis of analysis of Neolithic and Bronze Age burial practice in Britain to reconstruct the sequence of ritual through time (Barrett 1988; 1993; Thomas 1991; Mizoguchi 1993). Roman period literary evidence has also been interpreted from this perspective (Maurin 1984; Scheid 1984) but provincial Roman cemeteries, especially cremation cemeteries, offer the same opportunity (Pearce 1998). Such an approach also requires a better understanding of the formation processes of different types of cemetery deposit (3.3). This survey demonstrated the invalidity of assumptions held about the nature of the cremation process based on the literary and epigraphic evidence, in particular on the form of the pyre site and the organisation of cremation. This evidence was demonstrated to be of only limited relevance to the former, but much more informative on the latter (3.4). The organisation of cremation agrees with other aspects of the provision for the dead as a sphere of patronage. However archaeological criteria remain the most important for the study of these different products of the funerary process in the north-western provinces.

In discussion a distinction has been maintained between the categories of 'elite' and 'non-elite' burials, although these have been used as shorthand terms. An obvious area of further study is the relationship between groups of different status. Does for example a process of emulation characterise the development of burial practice (cf. Cannon 1989; Miller 1982)? As burial has been shown to connect to other spheres of social practice, so change in the realm of burial cannot be considered independently of these spheres.

A major area of study omitted from consideration has been the construction of age and gender identities through mortuary ritual in the Roman period. This is not only true of this thesis but also of most other work on Roman period burial practices, save for infant burials which have received extensive recent attention (E. Scott 1988; 1990a; 1990b; Struck 1993c). This contrasts with the much greater attention to the epigraphic record in this respect, demonstrating the impact of broader processes, for example developments in household relationships within Roman forms of urbanism that have impact on the valuation of age and gender categories and their treatment in death (e.g. Saller and Shaw 1984; Shaw 1984; 1991). There have been some initial attempts to explore both the burial populations (Davison 1997) and artefactual associations (Foster 1993) but this deserves much more critical scrutiny (8.3). It was not possible to detect distinctive gender associations amongst the assemblages considered, although the cremated bone associated with almost all the cases with large assemblages of personal ornament had not been examined. The few instances in which cremated bone has been examined in the burial sample considered in chapter 8 show that the funerary treatment described was appropriate for both men and women. At first view therefore women were associated in burial with metaphors for the same types of cultural engagement in Romanised practice as men. This evidence must be taken into account in the more general characterisations of women as less involved in the 'public sphere' and therefore less affected by Romanisation (MacMullen 1990: 63; Okun 1989; Terrenato 1997). In the sample of rural burials from Hampshire it was observed that one gender dominated the sexed burials, most strikingly at Owslebury but also the other smaller groups of burials, although it was a sporadic rather than regular characteristic of the cemetery populations. Previous approaches to the engendering of rural settlement space (e.g. Hingley 1989) are naive and an adequate basis has yet to be established. The sphere of burial practice is an appropriate form of evidence to explore this problem that has not yet been exploited.

This thesis has exploited only a part of the rich variety of data spanning the different parts of the archaeological record which permit a contextual archaeology of burial practice from Roman Britain. Nevertheless it has shown that burial evidence is an effective source for both complementing and modifying interpretations of provincial Roman society based on other forms of archaeological evidence.

Notes

1.1

The identification of intrusive burial traditions within Roman Britain is the subject of a forthcoming paper by Struck (forthcoming b).

1.2

Minor centre is generally used here as a catch-all shorthand for the settlements perceived as lying between the public towns and villages, rural settlements and villas. The definition spans the overlapping but partially distinct categories used by Burnham and Wachter (1990) and R. Smith (1987).

1.3

Detailed assessment of the existence of *civitas* specific burial practices is not pursued in detail. The relationship of burial practice to the *civitates* of Roman Britain is currently being explored by Struck (forthcoming c).

3.1.

Of sources of reference for archaeological evidence for pyre sites (Fasold 1993a: 88; Ludwig 1988: 61; Polfer 1996; forthcoming; Witteyer 1993: 73), Polfer's is the most important synthetic work. The pyre sites considered here are described in appendix 2.1. The list is by no means comprehensive. Instead information from better documented sites from Britain and other provinces has been exploited to illustrate the range of features related to cremation, draw attention to problems of interpretation of these structures, and to test and develop hypotheses on the nature and organisation of pyre sites.

3.2

For example of Gaitzsch and Werner's substantial experimental pyre (1993: 67, Abb. 12), little was left of half a ton of wood, a pig carcass and replica grave goods. Very limited residue from lavish pyres was recorded at Acy-Romance (Metzler *et al.* 1991: 139, n. 93).

3.3

Boatwright (1985: 493, n.39) lists most of the instances but only to illustrate the comparative rarity of the term. There has been no previous collection of epigraphic references to *ustrina* or related terms. Of the 30 references to *ustrina* 25 derive from Rome although other terms, for example *rogum* or *bustum*, are more widespread. The following discussion is based on a collection of references to *ustrina* from the indices to the CIL volumes. In these *ustrina* are usually referred to under 'Variabilia nota', or 'sepulchralia'; *ustrina* and other terms of interest, *bustum*, *crematus*, *combustus*, *ignis*, *rogum* are not however consistently located so occasional references may have been missed. The indexes to Ephemera Epigraphica and L'Année Epigraphique from 1893-1993 have also been consulted. These have yielded only three references to *ustrina* (AE 1898, 15, AE 1971, 88, AE 1979, 71), the latter a re-evaluation of a previously known inscription. Consultation of more recent various national and local corpora of

inscriptions did not reveal further examples. Therefore although this collection of references may not be exhaustive, it is very unlikely that many others are omitted. The relevant inscriptions are listed in appendix 2.4

3.4

Some of the type labels are tautologous and extend Latin terminology beyond its attested usage (van Doorsaeler 1983: 917-918). Indeed Latin usage of certain terms is not as precise as the scheme implies (3.3.3). The use of Latin terminology should not cause us to forget that some burial rites, for example the *bustum* (Struck 1993b), have antecedents in several different areas of pre-Roman Europe. Bridger (1996: 220-21) points out that the scheme ignores other attested burial forms and does not accommodate the degree of variation within the different types at the local and regional level (e.g. van Doorsaeler and Rogge 1985; Vermeulen 1992: 233).

3.5

Details are given in appendix 2.2

3.6

<<<rogum ascea ne polito>>> (*Roman Statutes*. Law 40: Twelve Tables X. 2)

'He is not to make a pyre with hewn / polished timbers' (Crawford translates this as 'he is not to smooth the pyre with a trowel').

<<<*bustum* propius aedes alienas sexaginta pedes ne adicito>>> (*Roman Statutes*. Law 40: Twelve Tables X. 9)

'He is not to place a *bustum* within 60 feet of another's house'

<<<forum *bustum*ve religiosus esto>>> (*Roman Statutes*. Law 40: Twelve Tables X.10)

'A fore-court or *bustum* is to be *religiosus*'

Bustum is usually translated in this context as 'pyre' or burning mound' (e.g. Robinson 1975: 176).

Crawford leaves it untranslated and refers to the distinction made by Verrius Flaccus, but this is ambiguous (note 3.6). In this earlier source also *rogum* appears to denote the pyre. The meaning of *bustum* is not clear but there seems no reason why it is not equally likely to denote tomb or pyre.

Roman Statutes refers to Crawford 1996: 583

3.7

'*Bustum* proprie dicitur locus, in quo mortuus est combustus et sepultus, quasi bene ustum; ubi vero combustus quis tantummodo, alibi vero est sepultus, is locus ab urendo *ustrina* vocatur; sed modo *busta* sepulchra appellamus.' (Festus, Pauli Exc. 29L)

Bridger (1996: 220, Ann. 1142) too has drawn attention to the ambiguity of the interpretation of *busta* in this passage, of which the final clause is not often quoted. Servius' fifth century commentary on the Aeneid gives more detail on other cremation vocabulary (In Verg. Aen. III. 21-23. 6-12; In Verg. Aen. XI. 201). The first reference to *bustum* and *ustrinum* broadly supports that of Festus, whilst in the second he himself refers to some divergence of opinion on definition. Daremberg and Saglio have also noted that Festus is not consistent in his use of *rogum* and *pyra* (1896: 1394-5).

3.8

The Brougham cemetery was excavated in the mid 1960s but with the exception of notes on individual artefacts (e.g. Cool 1990b) remains to be published. The archive is currently held by Wessex Archaeology and information from it was kindly provided by Quita Mould. Further information was provided from several AML reports (Bayley 1986; Bayley and Martin-Hoogewerf 1978; Cameron 1985; Mays n.d.), for the collection of which I am grateful to Justine Bayley. None of these individuals is responsible for the opinions advanced here except where explicitly credited in the text. It is difficult to give very precise statistics of the frequency of different burial types because of the degree of robbing of the site, the difficult salvage conditions of excavation which incurred incomplete recovery of the pyre debris and cremated bone assemblages, and dispersal of records since the excavation.

3.9

A copy of the draft report on recent excavation in the East London cemetery (Barber, Bowsher *et al.* in prep.) was kindly made available by Andrew Westman of the Museum of London Archaeology Service. Full specialist reports on every aspect of the burial assemblages were not however ready so the information contained in this section must be considered provisional pending final publication. None of the individuals responsible for different sections of the draft report are responsible for the opinions advanced here except where explicitly credited in the text.

4.1

Other burials (20, 28, 32) within the horseshoe shaped enclosure are dated by Partridge (1981: 246) to the earliest period without argument for their date being presented.

4.2

Of the ninety five burial groups listed, Rook considered thirty nine as reliable, but did not specify which. The groups recovered during machining south-west of the dashed line are here considered unreliable, as are those where the burial description indicates damage.

4.3

Site nomenclature is derived from a summary publication (Burleigh 1993) although in final publication a new site numbering will replace this. Burleigh's nomenclature differs from that of Stead (1986). This difficulty will be compounded by the recently established designation of areas by numbers rather than

street names, although it should ultimately provide standard nomenclature. The table in appendix 3.1 correlates the terms used by different workers.

4.4

Groups	Burial numbers	No. of intact burials
Southern	1-23 (also 136-157 which were heavily damaged)	20
Central	40-135	96
Northern	24-39 and 271-320	79

4.5

The site is usually plotted as part of the pre-Roman landscape of Verulamium (e.g. Fig. 4.37) but is also a Roman period settlement. It was excavated in 1971 but was also referred to under the general heading of King Harry Lane. To avoid confusion with the cemetery excavated by Stead and Rigby usage here follows Niblett (1993: 78) who refers to the site under the name of Lindum Place. To avoid a similar confusion the burial reported by Niblett and Reeves in the King Harry Lane area is referred to under the name of William Old, again following Niblett's usage (pers. comm.).

5.1

The phasing of individual cemeteries is discussed in appendix 4.1. The absolute chronologies of the later Roman cemeteries have been established by Qualmann with reference to changes in burial practice at Lankhills. Problems of this method are discussed in this appendix. The phases are examined in the main text without assigning them an absolute date within the fourth century.

5.2

The number of artefact types (NAT) was calculated on the basis of different numbers of these categories, following Hedeager (1978: 218). Ceramic, glass and metal vessels are each counted as a single category, other items individually. The advantage of the technique as a summary measure of grave goods is that it avoids the subjective weighting of grave goods involved in 'wealth score' attribution (Arnold 1980: 108). It is also a suitable technique to allow rather poorly recorded or damaged burial assemblages to be used in quantitative analysis, as it does not require precise numbers of grave goods to be known. For this reason it is used in the regional comparisons in chapter 7.

The technique is not without its problems. The subdivision of the assemblage into artefact types is a subjective judgement not dealt with by Hedeager. In the case of Lankhills the method gives a high NAT to female and child burials because of the many items within the suites of worn or unworn ornaments. The method also makes no attempt to take account of the differential emic value of different grave goods. On this method a gold ring and pair of hobnailed shoes are given the same value. To counter this the artefactual composition of these burials is therefore given further consideration in chapter 8.

5.3

The slightly higher position of the areas with more elaborate graves both in the northern cemetery at Lankhills and the eastern cemetery at St Martin's Close and St Johns Street may also be significant, allowing a better view of the town from the grave and where the burial was marked by a monument a greater visibility from the town. However possible cemeteries on the more prominent parts of Winchester's immediate surroundings on St Giles Hill and West Hill have yet to be explored to the same degree (Esmonde Cleary 1987: 155).

6.1

An exhaustive compilation of rural burial data is not intended. Rather only the relatively few rural sites with sufficient quality of information on relationships between burial and other features are examined, including that from extra-mural settlements. The majority of examples have been extracted from main national and local journals from 1970 onwards although sites published prior to that date are included where appropriate and some unpublished sites are also exploited. The total rural burial sample is strongly biased to southern and eastern England (2.3.4) and it is from this area that most sites examined here are derived. Sites from the first half of the first century AD to the first decades of the fifth century are included, but most date from the fourth century (2.3.2). The detailed location of Hampshire and Hertfordshire cemeteries is discussed within the text; the sites discussed in 6.15-6.18 are recorded in detail in Appendix 5. All the sites with adequate site plans are illustrated, and references to the illustrations are given in the concordance.

6.2

The term 'corn drier' is used here as a shorthand for features of which the function remains debated but is probably associated with the germination of grain for malting (Reynolds and Langley 1979; van der Veen 1989).

6.3

According to Niblett there are over 7,000 burials known from Roman Hertfordshire (Niblett 1995b: 107) but this is a gross over-estimate which appears to be based on Rook's (1973) guess of the original number of burials from the Grange cemetery at Welwyn.

6.4

Information was kindly made available by Simon West of St Albans Museums on the artefactual assemblages. Information on the cremated bone was available from two seasons (thirty-six burials) (from a report by J. Roberts, (ARCUS, Sheffield University), and on grave assemblages from the thirteen burials from the first season of excavation.

6.5

Information was kindly made available by Tom Macdonald of Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust from the forthcoming publication of the site (Going et al. forthcoming).

6.6

Information was kindly made available by Tom Macdonald of Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust from his preparation work for publication of the site (Going et al. forthcoming).

6.7

Information was kindly made available by Tom Macdonald of Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust from his preliminary assessment of the site for post excavation analysis.

7.1

According to Wright (1872) this cemetery lay only to the south of the road, but according to Haverfield and Taylor (1908: 399-402) the cemetery lined both sides of the road. Wright and Haverfield give different accounts of this monument and its funerary purpose is questionable. *Contra* Esmonde Cleary (1987: 160) this is not the only known Roman cemetery from Wroxeter. Cremation burials have been recovered in the Norton area and inhumations of possible Roman date to the south-west of the town (Haverfield and Taylor 1908: 399-402; Wright 1872: 341-62).

7.2

The lower half of the tombstone recovered from Oakley Cottage was embedded vertically in the clay as if its top half had been broken off. That its inscribed panel faced south-east away from the road (Reece 1962: 53) may suggest a qualification to the model of the road as the primary determinant, but given the salvage conditions of excavation whether or not the monument was really discovered in situ cannot be known.

7.3

The urban sample is much larger than the rural sample and therefore a potential source of bias to the distribution. An alternative approach adopted elsewhere has been to examine the proportion of certain burial types as a proportion of the total burials from urban, minor centre and rural contexts (Struck forthcoming a and b). However this method also has its drawbacks. Whereas the urban sample is derived from large scale excavations which recover burials of all sorts of types, rural burials have often been accidentally recovered as isolated assemblages and quite probably reported because of their size. A straightforward plot of burial distribution is therefore preferred here and its biasing effect is considered in discussion.

7.4

The basis for calculating NAT is described in appendix 6.3. The method is discussed in note 7.1.

8.1

Individual burial assemblages outside the sample areas already considered are described and referenced in appendix 6.5. In Kent there were probably more similar size assemblage to those identified in neighbouring counties but with a few exceptions, for example Bayford, the records only hint at their existence, for example at Canterbury Ramsgate Road and Chattenden, both with many samian vessels (Haverfield *et al.* 1932: 76, 150).

8.2

First century examples of assemblages of which samian comprises more than six vessels include Folly Lane, Bartlow Hills 4, Colchester Joslin Collection Grave 8/68, Baldock Clothall Road 6 and 7, St Albans 'William Old' and Lindum Place, Grange Road 2, Crab Wood, Highcliffe, Milland, Hyde Street 566. Second century examples include Neatham 3, Stansted 25 and 26, Rochford, Arbury Road, Cambridge, Baldock Walls Field, Baldock Convent of Providence, Girton, Marquis of Granby, Wotton Hillfield Lodge and Bayford 2.

8.3

See appendix 6.2 for the terminology used here to describe metal vessels..

8.4

In contrast to late Roman graves (Böhme 1970; Sherlock 1973) the presence of spoons in early Roman graves has received little comment. It was promised in Philpott (1991: 182) but seemingly accidentally omitted from the text.

8.5

This is not intended to be a full examination of the gender association of small finds, simply to point out that some assumptions about the sex of individuals in some of the graves considered here, based on small finds, are not warranted. The comparison of osteological information with grave goods is throwing increasing doubt on traditional assumptions over the relationship of grave goods to sex (e.g. Bridger 1996).

Millett attributed a female gender to burials 3 to 5 at Alton because of the presence of cosmetic sets and a pyxis. However the female association of toilet sets is not sustained by the burials from King Harry Lane (Foster 1993; Gleghorn 1992); individual components from cosmetic sets were also recovered from turrets on Hadrian's Wall (Allason-Jones 1995: 28). The practices of some elite males described by MacMullen (1982b), including in particular depilation with tweezers are further evidence that these were not exclusively female practices.

Brooches present as single or multiple examples do not confirm female sexing. At King Harry Lane neither the presence nor the number of brooches correlated with male or female burials (Gleghorn 1992), although at the later cemetery of St Stephens however the three burials with brooches were all of females. The numbers of brooches from Owslebury also provide a further counter-example.

Grave 2 from Alton is sexed as male from the gold ring and intaglio. Allason-Jones (1995: 27) has challenged the legitimacy of such an *a priori* assumption and other sexed burials with intaglios do not conclusively support a male association. ABL from Cross Farm, Harpenden (6.9.1) is of an adult male, but a single intaglio was associated with a female burial at St Stephens, St Albans, and several intaglios, albeit not set in rings, were recovered from a young female burial in London.

On the basis of the styli in burial 2 at Grange Road, Biddle (1967: 248) challenges the possible female sexing suggested by the cremated bone. There are no other sexed cremations with styli but there is no basis for denying any association between women and literacy at many social levels in the Roman world (e.g. Kampen 1981; R. Rodgers pers. comm.). Biddle (1967: 248) (implicitly followed by Henig 1995: 70-71) also argues that the presence of drinking and gaming equipment suggest that the occupant is male, in contrast to the female identification of the cremated bone.

The suggestion that shears suggest a male grave occupant is supported by one probable male burial from King Harry Lane (Foster 1993). However in the larger sample at Tönisvorst-Vorst of the thirty nine graves with shears male graves predominate to a slight degree but the association is not exclusive (Bridger 1996: 158, 260).

Abbreviations

- AE L'Année Epigraphique*
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AML Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Arch. J. Archaeological Journal
Antiq. J. Antiquaries Journal
BAR British Archaeological Reports
BROB Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek
CBA Council for British Archaeology
CIL Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CSIR Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani
DAJ Derbyshire Archaeological Journal
DurAJ Durham Archaeological Journal
EAA East Anglian Archaeology
EAH Essex Archaeology and History
HAR Hertfordshire Archaeological Review
HAT Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust
JBAA Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JRA Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRGZM Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz
JRMES Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies
JRS Journal of Roman Studies
KJVF Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte
LAHST Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions
LHA Lincolnshire History and Archaeology
OJA Oxford Journal of Archaeology
PBSR Papers of the British School at Rome
PCAS Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society
PDNHAS Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society
PHFCAS Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society
PPS Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society
PSA Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London
PSAS Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
RIB The Roman Inscriptions of Britain. Volume 1. Inscriptions on Stone (Collingwood and Wright 1965)
SANH Somerset Natural History and Archaeology
SMR Sites and Monuments Record
SxAC Sussex Archaeological Collections

SyAC Surrey Archaeological Collections

TBGAS Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

TBWAS Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society

TCWAAS Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society

TEHAS Transactions of the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society

TLMAS Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society

TSAAAS Transactions of the St. Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society

WANHM Wilshire Archaeology and Natural History Magazine

YAJ Yorkshire Archaeological Journal

Abbreviated references to classical texts are taken from the Oxford Latin Dictionary.

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ABSTRACT

Case Studies in a Contextual Archaeology of Burial Practice in Roman Britain

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This thesis investigates burial practice as a source of evidence for Romano-British society. Previous work in this field is criticised for its empirical shortcomings and its interpretation of differentiation in burial practice as a direct reflection of social difference. The presentation of the dead is instead considered a transformation of the identity of the living. This premise is the basis for interpreting samples of data from Roman Britain, examining separately the burial practices of elite and non-elite groups. The main emphasis lies on the early Roman period but both the late Iron Age and the later Roman period receive consideration.

Given that Iron Age burial practices are largely archaeologically invisible, the extent to which distribution of archaeologically visible burial practice characterises the Roman period is examined and shown to be highly biased by period, site association and region. The bias to the late Roman period is argued to be the product of several different factors, one of which is the extension of burial norms to the majority of the population as long term process rather than an immediate consequence of Romanisation.

Current hypotheses for identifying the social status of rural burials are shown to be inadequate, in particular the classification of individual or small groups of burials found on settlement sites rather than in formal cemeteries as those of low status individuals. Recurring preferences for the placing of the dead around settlement sites are identified which are interpreted as a means by which the settlements of much of rural Roman Britain were organised and related to by their inhabitants.

The use of death rituals to project social status by elites is examined through the location of burial display. Display is defined according to existing assumptions and by quantitative methods based on regional bodies of data. The comparison of aspects of mortuary ritual prior to final burial is shown to be problematic and the archaeological identification of pre-burial elements of mortuary ritual is investigated further, in particular of pyre sites.

The distribution of mortuary display is explored in relation to the landscape of particular settlements and to different types of site across the landscape. Urban sites are shown to be a much more significant focus for burial display than previously appreciated, although the stereotype of the 'street of tombs' of the Roman world cannot be applied without reservations. The identification of burial display at small towns shows their importance as ceremonial as well as economic centres. The composition of the burial assemblages is interpreted as evidence for the social practices by which elite groups defined themselves, in particular through dining rituals and physical presentation. This provides a complementary emphasis to other accounts of the Romanisation of elites based on architectural and artistic evidence.

In summary burial evidence is demonstrated to be an essential and hitherto unappreciated source for reconstructing Romano-British society.

