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Roman towns as meaning-laden places: reconceptualising the growth and decline of towns in Roman Britain

Volume 1

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Adam Rogers

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham

2008

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Abstract

Roman towns as meaning-laden places: reconceptualising the growth and decline of towns in Roman Britain

Adam Rogers

This thesis re-analyses the beginnings and endings of towns in Roman Britain through a critical examination of the archaeological terms of growth and decline. The early phases on the sites of towns provide a context for action and the first part of the thesis examines the evidence for activity in the immediate pre-conquest period. It establishes aspects of the meaning of the sites and the way in which they survived and had an impact on experiences and understandings of the areas into the Roman period. The significance of these sites as places continued into the later Roman period. The second part of the thesis looks at aspects of continuity and transformation within towns in the later Roman period. The importance of these sites as places continuing into the later Roman period contrasts with the more economically-dominated notion of decline. It examines evidence for the use of public buildings in the late-third, fourth and early-fifth centuries (and beyond) demonstrating that many remained significant *foci* of activity and that decline is a simplistic theory for interpreting the material. The themes discussed include 'industrial' activity, structural changes to buildings, timber structures within buildings and 'squatter occupation'. A wider perspective is also introduced at the end of the study by also examining Roman towns of France and Spain. An important part of reanalysing decline is an examination of Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788), its reception and its impact upon archaeology including the study of late Roman towns, the 'Golden Age' and pre-Roman place. The historical and social context in which Roman archaeology developed, together with wider-scale changes from the Renaissance onwards, will have had an impact upon the way in which themes such as place and transformation have been studied. The evidence indicates that towns remained important symbolic, but also viable and functioning, places in the later Roman period despite exhibiting changes in the organisation and appearance of public buildings and urban space. This reanalysis of the evidence for two important phases of these places provides a more challenging context in which to set the 'Golden Age' and approach Roman urbanism in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The research question

This thesis re-examines approaches to Roman urbanism and consists of two main case studies. The first is a reanalysis of late pre-Roman activity at the sites of Roman towns, as the context for the 'beginnings' of Roman urbanism in Britain. Then the second more extensive study looks at the 'endings' of the towns. These case studies provide the basis for a critical examination of the usefulness of the concepts of 'growth' and 'decline' in the study of Roman urbanism. Exploring the late pre-Roman and late Roman archaeological evidence allows an analysis of urban models of development, and contextualises the so-called 'Golden Age' period of towns described by classical authors, archaeologists and historians. Studies of urbanism in the late Roman period have commonly been influenced by the theory of decline and fall (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a; Faulkner 2000a; Haverfield 1912; Liebeschuetz 2000; B. Ward-Perkins 2005), whilst studies of the growth of towns and the nature of preceding settlement have been directed by notions of 'romanisation' and 'civilisation' (*e.g.* Frere 1967; Haverfield 1912; Millett 1990; Wacher 1975). This has encouraged a situation where studies of Roman urban archaeological data have not advanced to the same degree as some other areas of Romano-British studies (such as the countryside and military identity).

To begin the reanalysis of Roman towns in Britain, the first case study examines knowledge and understanding of the growth of towns and their relationship with pre-existing sites, and addresses the pre-conquest uses of the locations within which the towns were constructed. This includes a consideration of whether these places had significance and meaning in social and religious terms within the minds of pre-Roman communities. An analysis of the places is undertaken by assessing the evidence of activity within these locations prior to urban planning and the construction of Roman townscapes. The political significance and spiritual and ceremonial importance of the places are addressed. The process by which these landscapes were transformed by urbanisation, in a way that deliberately took account of, and perhaps absorbed, the underlying pre-Roman political and sacred topography, is also addressed. The continuation and transformation of use of these sites from the late pre-Roman to late Roman periods is analysed in terms of the 'place-value' of these locations.

The immediate pre-conquest period is, therefore, studied in order to assess the extent to which the sites in which towns were situated were also important in pre-Roman times. Evidence for constructions, activities such as metalworking and the use of features in the landscape at each site are documented and discussed. Prior to the conquest in Britain a few structures in the form of shrines existed (*e.g.* Hayling Island, Downey *et al.* 1979, and Canterbury, Frere 1977: 423) but public space would also have been significant in other forms, such as that defined by

earthworks (*cf.* Bender 2001), though artificial constructions need not have been necessary at all to identify this space. Public and ritualised activity could have occurred in any timber structures (*e.g.* the roundhouses at Gosbecks, Camulodunon; Hawkes and Crummy 1995; see 5.6.2), in open spaces (as opposed to constructed buildings) and in 'natural' settings (such as around wetlands, woodland or hills) – places often with long biographies of use. This situation will be important for analysing the use of town spaces in the late Roman period, when the continuation in the significance of the sites as meaningful places, despite there being less emphasis on the maintenance of the public architecture, will be examined.

The second case study investigates the use of public buildings within towns in the late Roman period, as a focus for an evaluation of the usefulness of the theory of decline for understanding urbanism and social attitudes at this time. Public buildings were a significant aspect of towns and the way in which they were experienced, and they were perceived and used in symbolic ways (Boman 2003). They form a well-defined dataset for analysing towns in the late Roman period. As will be addressed, public buildings have been the subject of large numbers of excavations and traditionally have often received greater attention than many other aspects of Roman urbanism, being used as indicators of levels of 'romanisation', of civilisation in the 'Golden Age' and subsequent decline in the late Roman period. That they were examined predominantly through this framework of interpretation might explain why their study has become less fashionable in the last ten years in Romano-British research (see, for example, TRAC volumes such as Carr *et al.* eds. 2003; Croxford *et al.* eds. 2004; Croxford *et al.* eds. 2007).[1] Apart from the production of important excavation reports and the discussions they contain (*e.g.* Fulford and Timby 2000; Yule 2005), there have been relatively few recent studies of public buildings in Britain, especially from theoretical perspectives (with exceptions including Creighton 2006; Mattingly 2006a; Revell 1999). This situation indicates the need for reanalysis and the opportunity to demonstrate the usefulness of theoretical approaches.

Rather than concentrating on defining dates for the end of the use of the public buildings, which is highly problematic, attention will focus on the archaeological evidence for activity within them in the late Roman period. It will analyse the continued significance of the spaces that the architecture enclosed and the importance of the buildings as places. Whilst space is a more geographically definable entity, place is connected with human experience, feeling and thought; its importance need not necessarily be governed by economic circumstances or linear concepts of time (E. Casey 1996: 24-5; Ingold 2000: 149; J. Taylor 1997: 193). The end date of Roman Britain itself is debateable and problematic to define (*e.g.* Bartholomew 1982;

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[1] Whilst this thesis will concentrate on Roman urban settlement as a means of focusing the study, many rural villa sites also had complex biographies with prehistoric occupation and meaningful late Roman use. Detailed study of these goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but section 14.3 contains a brief discussion of some examples.

Esmonde Cleary 1989a; 2004; M.E. Jones 1996). It is not the purpose of this thesis to attempt to establish this date, although a framework for the late Roman period will be taken as the late-third, fourth and early-fifth centuries. Instead, it explores alternative methods for understanding evidence for activity in this period which adopt a more theoretically and methodologically rigorous procedure.

Between the late pre-Roman and late Roman periods lies the so-called 'Golden Age' which is the period addressed in detail in many studies of Roman town life, also drawing on Roman élite viewpoints from classical texts (*e.g.* Fentress ed. 2000; Haverfield 1912; Wacher 1975; Zanker 1989; 2000). There is considerable potential for more study of the 'Golden Age', but it will not provide the focus here.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

Through these two case studies, this thesis aims to reconceptualise Roman urbanism, demonstrating that these periods should not be considered as naturally inferior to the 'Golden Age' towns. The study will hope to achieve this by the following objectives:

1. contextualising Roman urbanism within pre-existing uses of landscape in order to establish the complexity in the 'growth' of towns and the ways in which they were influenced by meaningful places
2. evaluating theoretically the nature of Roman urbanism and the continuation of traditions from pre-existing places
3. emphasising the importance of historiographical approaches for contextualising the data and identifying the influences on the way it has traditionally been collected and interpreted (including the theory of decline and fall)
4. studying the nature of late Roman urbanism that moves beyond decline and fall
5. identifying the use and impact of the perspective addressed here for examining other parts of the Empire and using evidence from the Western Empire to cast light on Britain.

1.2.1 *Contextualising Roman urbanism – considering 'meaning-laden place'*

That 'landscape' is now a complex and problematic term within archaeology has been the subject of much debate (*e.g.* M. Johnson 2007; Tilley 1994). The rational and economic view of land derived from post-medieval Western Europe is not useful for considering the use and understanding of land in earlier periods. Landscapes should not only be studied by empirical means but also through theoretical approaches. The term 'place' puts greater emphasis on the way in which sites were constructed, experienced and used over time (Cresswell 2004).

Especially important is the realisation that 'natural' places could be as significant and meaningful within landscapes as 'man-made' features, while culture and nature would not always have been consciously distinguished as they are today (*e.g.* Bradley 2000; Insoll 2007):[2] "natural places have an archaeology because they acquired a significance in the *minds* of people in the past" (Bradley 2000: 35).

Watery contexts such as rivers, wetlands and the crossing points of rivers, and other natural elements such as hills, could be meaningful – they were not simply mundane aspects of the landscape. A fundamental point in this thesis is the argument that these prehistoric meanings survived, and were used and transformed, into historic periods. Some archaeological studies of landscapes are now emphasising that certain places were the focus of occupation and activity over long periods of time, arguing that there was a "repetition at them of ritualised acts" (Gosden and Lock 1998: 6; see also Miles *et al.* 2003). Places were laden with meaning through continued activity and the way in which features of the landscape were experienced.

A useful example of such a site for this study, recently published, is the timber causeway at Fiskerton, Lincolnshire, constructed across the floodplain of the River Witham in the fourth or third century B.C. (Field and Parker Pearson 2003). Building such a causeway suggests that movement across this wetland landscape was important; that it was a meaningful and ritualised act is indicated by the large number of metal and other objects deposited into the water from the causeway (*ibid.*: 49-113). Crucially, the meaning of this site continued through repeated ritualised actions in the Roman and Early Medieval periods (*ibid.*).

It will be argued here that Roman towns developed in the context of, and were influenced by, pre-existing places and topographies imbued with symbolism and religious significance.[3] The concept of 'meaning-laden places', explored in detail in chapter 5, is developed to examine this issue. Many of the places in which Roman towns were located were already *foci* of activity, which included both 'man-made' features such as earthworks and 'natural' features such as rivers, wetlands and woodland. Roman towns that do not appear to have been located on monumentalised sites were nonetheless influenced by places with existing activity and meaning. Actions were influenced by visible aspects of the landscape, and historical and mythical knowledge of the past (Bradley 2002: 80-1; Gosden and Lock 1998: 6). The

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[2] The term 'natural place' has recently been debated by Insoll (2007) as an inappropriate differentiation from 'man-made places' in prehistory since the use or experience of sites in any way will have made them, in some respects, humanly created. This is an important discussion looking at the blurring between 'natural' places and human spaces. Insoll's study looks at sacred groves and temples or shrines in prehistoric Europe. As an analogy he also looked at sacred places in the Tongo Hills of northern Ghana and demonstrated that even the 'natural' shrines were human constructs because they were 'sustained' or even 'created' by sacrifices, prayers, offerings and other activities.

[3] *Cf.*, for example, Hall and Whyman's (1996) study of the topographic context of the development of the seventh century monastery at Ripon, North Yorkshire. This area had many significant 'natural' features, such as hills, and also a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial and funerary monuments including henges and round barrows. They argue that it is important to consider the likelihood that "this visible legacy influenced the choice of Ripon as a centre of religious and secular power at a later date" (*ibid.*: 63).

continued use of towns in the late Roman period was part of this chronological sequence of meaning on the sites, which was built up over time.

The foundation of Roman towns in Britain also had ritual elements (Creighton 2006; Niblett 2005a: 105; Woodward and Woodward 2004). Studies have drawn on knowledge of Roman town foundation elsewhere in the Empire (*e.g.* Rykwert 1976) but also demonstrated that there would have been local influences and that understanding of the towns and their setting was influenced by places that had pre-existing meaning. Late Iron Age activity on the sites of the Roman towns has not received as much attention as their early Roman histories, although there are exceptions, such as the recent work on Silchester and Verulamium (Fulford and Timby 2000; I. Thompson 2005) and some early projects (*e.g.* Hawkes and Hull 1947; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936). Most of the Roman towns in Britain were located on sites with pre-Roman occupation and activity. No sites are identical, but they all have elements that indicate significant areas.

These sites include *oppida* with monumental earthworks, divided into 'enclosed' and 'territorial' *oppida*, and sites without earthworks that do not traditionally fall within the *oppidum* category. 'Enclosed' *oppida* appear to define an area by earthworks, whereas 'territorial' *oppida* consisted of discontinuous dykes covering large areas (Haselgrove 1999: 120-1). What many of the *oppida* have in common is evidence for metalworking, rich material culture and landscape settings that included rivers and their floodplains, marshland and springs. At certain Roman towns there is no evidence for a pre-Roman *oppidum* but, while being without late Iron Age earthworks, these sites do provide traces of pre-Roman activity, which can include structures, metalworking and material culture. Again, watery areas were integral parts of many of these sites at which Roman towns developed. The 'natural' setting of both '*oppida*' and 'non-*oppida*' was important – the meanings attached to these places will have influenced Roman towns and in turn the towns will have become a part of them. Our knowledge of the late pre-Roman settlement pattern is still very partial. It is suggested below that, rather than putting too much emphasis on the categorisation of sites, it may be preferable to consider the elements that made each place meaningful in its local setting.

To put these arguments into context it is useful to address briefly some broadly comparable examples, the 'royal sites' of Early Historic Ireland and 'central places' of the Roman and Germanic Iron Ages of Scandinavia in the early and mid first millennium A.D. These are comparable in a number of ways to the 'meaning-laden places' of late pre-Roman Britain that are identified further below. The 'royal sites' of Ireland, such as Tara and Navan Fort, were ceremonial places of meeting and ritual, using prehistoric monuments as their focus (Waddell 2000) and usually without much or any evidence for permanent occupation (Wickham 2005:

52). The long-term symbolic significance of the places survived and attracted political and ritual activity including metalworking, which took place on a number of the sites (Aitchison 1994: 152; Warner 1988: 66-7). Evidence for industrial activity is also a feature of the Scandinavian 'central places', as are rich finds assemblages, long sequences of activity and timber hall structures, for example at Gudme and Uppåkra (Brink 1996: 247; Hårdh 2000; Hedeager 2002; Jørgensen 1994).[4] Natural features such as hills, rivers and marshland were important parts of these sites, all of which had religious connotations intertwined with mythology (Fabech 1999: 457). The name Gudme, for example, meant "place of the gods" and this site was surrounded by hills, each of which had names relating to religious belief (Hedeager 2002: 5), and wetlands where deposited items have been recovered (Thurston 2001: 55). There is usually a lack of artificial monumentality, such as earthworks, at these places (*ibid.*: 56) indicating, in the context of Britain, that this need not be a requirement for important sites.

A fundamental issue explored here is that 'meaning-laden places' of late pre-Roman Britain influenced the history and nature of the Roman towns which succeeded them. An important objective in fulfilling the aim of examining the nature of place in the pre-Roman period was the collection of available data for pre-conquest activity within the area of each of the Roman towns. Gazetteer 1 was constructed to display the evidence in an accessible and useful manner.

1.2.2 *Theorising the Roman town*

Throughout the text, the term 'town' has been used rather than 'city', except where quotations have used the latter; both terms have modern connotations but the term 'town' is more usual when studying Romano-British urbanism. Chapter 4 discusses in detail the issue of what a Roman town in Britain was. In Latin, the word *oppidum* was used for an urban nucleus but this term had no strict meaning and could be used to cover a number of different types of settlement including *colonia*, *municipium* and *praefectura* (Purcell 1996a: 1069), as well as the centres in the *civitates* of the Western provinces (Purcell 1996b: 335). These settlement types have been the basis of nearly all discussions of towns in Roman Britain (*e.g.* Wacher 1995). As well as having legal definitions, towns are often defined by aspects such as size, public architecture, population, planning and organisation (R. White 2007: 177) and it is changes to these that have led to assumptions of decline in the late Roman period.

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[4] The site of Gudme on the island of Fyn in Denmark, discovered in the late 1980s, had a rich and large finds assemblage. This included gold, silver and bronze dress ornaments, regalia, weapons, craftman's tools and considerable quantities of material relating to craft activities especially iron-working and jewellery production that are not found on the contemporary village sites (Jørgensen 1994: 53). Investigations of the site of Uppåkra near Lund in southern Sweden have demonstrated a long sequence of activity with occupation layers around two metres thick demonstrating use of the area from the pre-Roman Iron Age up to the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. (Hårdh 2000: 643; Larsson 2002: 19). Metal-detector finds from the site have also dated to the Bronze Age *c.* 1500-500 B.C. suggesting use of the place from much earlier times (*ibid.*: 644). Finds dating from the Roman Iron Age and later consist of a number of prestigious items and there was also considerable evidence for metalworking activities on the site, as at many of the 'central place' sites, including the production of bronze jewellery.

Theoretical approaches more common in areas such as urban geography, phenomenology and landscape studies (*e.g.* Edensor 2000; T. Hall 2006; Massey 2005; Simonsen 2003; Tilley 1994),[5] can aid comprehension of Roman urbanism, urban behaviour and aspects of continuity, transformation and change in urban sites. There is a considerable amount of literature on place and space and the city in humanistic geography, reacting against positivist spatial science. Studies of the city have, for instance, begun to look at the 'lived bodily experience of city life' (Edensor 2000); human action is an important part of these sites. Edensor's work 'Moving through the city' (2000) explored the way in which people act upon the city, inscribing their presence through movement in a process of continual remaking through which the city is continually regenerated. The city and its architecture are the physically and symbolically bounded spaces or stages for movement and interaction and, for Edensor (*ibid.*: 123), these moving 'performative' processes ceaselessly reconstitute the symbolic values of sites.

Within archaeology, phenomenology[6] has mainly been applied to prehistory with far fewer studies relating to the Roman period; a useful exception is Witcher's (1998) examination of Roman roads and their impact on existing landscapes (for a study of the medieval period see Corcos 2001).[7] This has created an unnecessary methodological divide, since phenomenology could also be of use for understanding past cultural meanings in the Roman and later periods, especially for areas such as Britain where there are few written texts.

Simonsen (2003) writes of what she terms 'walking in the city', an act which 'spatialises' the city and turns it into a collection of narratives of meaningful individuals. For her, cities are constituted by people practising in place (Simonsen 1997: 161); they are collections of stories (Massey 2005: 130) which build up over time – as places they have a narrative and 'accretional' quality (J. Thomas 1996: 83). For Pile (2005: 1) an important part of the city is the social processes, customs and traditions of the inhabitants, and for Willis (2007a) towns can be seen in terms of landscape events where visual and phenomenological aspects are important. This focus of study on the city marks a considerable contrast with the dominant economic and political explanations of the 1960s and 1970s, a time of considerable post-war urban planning and, consequently, much archaeological work within towns. These more

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[5] Phenomenology originates largely from philosophical works such as Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1988; first published in 1927 in German with the first English translation in 1962). Here phenomenology is the science of the being of entities. Heidegger's term *Dasein* states that the most important form of being is being-in-the-world.

[6] M. Johnson has argued that the approach of phenomenology in British archaeology "owes more to Romanticism than it cares to admit" (2007: 198; see also 2006: 127-8). Everett (1994: 1) has also suggested that ideas of continuity and tradition within the English countryside are connected with a romantic sensibility to landscape perhaps originating amongst Conservative political thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is a reasonable argument but phenomenology can be an important approach for acknowledging that 'landscape' is created and experienced by people and that places can be the result of agency over many years (it could also be argued that no study can be free from the cultural milieux in which it is written).

[7] Corcos (2001) suggests that the often-perceived advantage medieval archaeologists have because of textual documents is misguided, since many groups of people would never have been mentioned in the sources and in a sense can be described as prehistoric or proto-historic. This is likely to be even more the case for the Roman period.

recent approaches to urbanism are useful for studying towns in the late Roman period in that they move beyond the emphasis on economics and the physical and institutional form of cities. Problems with the theory of decline have been addressed in other disciplines but within archaeology it is often seen as a term which is unproblematic and value-free. Examining the ways in which towns became a part of existing meaning-laden places, building upon and adding to the place-value, can help to move away from the emphasis on decline.

1.2.3 *Historiography in archaeology*

The socially constructed and value-laden theory of 'decline and fall' in late Roman archaeology is discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 6. Much of the data for public buildings within towns were excavated and published with preconceived notions of the nature of Roman towns and the ways in which they changed in the late Roman period. The focus upon the public buildings in this thesis demonstrates that there is still considerable uncertainty about their nature and rôle in Roman times and the way in which they were used in the late Roman period. The 1930s Verulamium excavations (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936) emphasised a vision of decay and degradation in the late Roman period, with little appreciation of the considerable amount of evidence for activity, and the resulting image of the town has been influential in late Roman studies. Most accounts of late urbanism tend to compare the excavated evidence unfavourably with that of the so-called 'Golden Age' and contrast it negatively with the 'romanisation' of the towns (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a; 2004; Liebeschuetz 2000).

By examining the context and origins of the concept of decline and fall it is possible to move away from an uncritical acceptance of this interpretation of change and transformation, in both late Roman studies, and studies of the post-conquest arrival of civilisation. This will be supported by an analysis of the data. Chapter 3 includes an examination of Edward Gibbon's (1737-1794) *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (published 1776-1788), its context, reception and its influences on archaeological thought.[8] Gibbon's use of language was particularly influential, and attention will be given to the way in which the impact of his work can be seen in later antiquarian and archaeological practice and theory. Gibbon's knowledge and description of the remains in Rome will be explored, along with his attitudes to the period he considered the 'Golden Age' and the late Roman period. He also addressed aspects of settlement in the late pre-Roman Iron Age which are examined. The historiography of late Iron Age settlement studies, especially relating to 'landscape', is also explored in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.

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[8] Reception studies has been especially important in looking at the use of classical texts (Beard and Henderson 1995), but it is also crucial for studying later works.

Chapter 6 discusses the issue of decline and fall further by examining the archaeological literature on the late Roman period. It is demonstrated that 'decline and fall' is a theory not only based on perceptions of the Classical 'Golden Age' city but also related to economic models of understanding settlement, development and change (*e.g.* Faulkner 1994; 1996). The remainder of the thesis includes further analysis and debate which explores the evidence for late Roman activity within towns in new ways.

1.2.4 *Beyond decline and fall: meaningful place in the late Roman period*

The concept of 'meaning-laden place' is useful for understanding late pre-Roman sites, and the meanings attached to them are likely to have continued into the Roman period. Towns in the late Roman period were also meaningful places, drawing on the past but also practising innovation. The archaeological evidence to redress decline-based views of late Roman urbanism in Britain, through looking at the meaning attached to these places at this time, comes predominantly from the public buildings of the towns. These categories of building allow the study of the continuity and transformation of public space.

Since this thesis covers the period of the continued life and significance of towns in the late Roman period it does not examine the post-Roman period and the eventual abandonment of sites in any detail (section 6.4). Many of the places continued to be used in various ways in the post-Roman period and the date of the ending of Roman-style urbanism will have differed between towns. Like the late pre-Roman period, the late Roman was an important phase of these places indicating the long-term use of these sites as well as the continuation of local traditions and ways of life. Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997) and Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000; Fulford *et al.* 2006) went through transformations in the late Roman and post-Roman periods, but after this they do appear to have been abandoned. This eventual abandonment does not, however, support the 'decline and fall' paradigm in the late Roman period. In the case of many towns, *e.g.* Canterbury, Lincoln and Winchester, the sites have remained important to the present day, albeit in a form different from Roman urbanism and via different pathways and spatial mores. In all cases the sites had complex biographies, often also with some form of continuation from the pre-Roman period.

All the excavated public buildings in towns were examined in order to identify patterns in the evidence for their use in the late Roman period. A number of themes were discerned, including structural changes to the buildings, timber constructions within them and industrial activity. The detailed examination of the use of public buildings complements other studies of towns that have focused on the monumentality of public buildings and the use of space in earlier periods (*e.g.* Boman 2003; Favro 1996; Revell 1999).

Christie's (2006) analysis of late Roman Italy, emphasising the concept of transformation rather than decline, is useful here: the structures of late Roman townscapes remained much more than simply skeletons to the early medieval towns that followed. The "physical parameters" of the public buildings "remained visible and even active" well into the post-Roman period even if "some components were in part robbed out or even razed" (*ibid.*: 270). The structures continued to have an impact on the experience of these places despite towns being neither static nor resistant to change. Edensor's (2005) innovative study of modern day industrial ruins also demonstrates that the structures could remain valued and important within towns beyond their original use; they also entrapped meaning from the past that survived in the present. These studies suggest that although towns change and appear to deteriorate they can still remain viable and functioning places with considerable importance and meaning.

Public buildings framed activity which allows the detailed study of continuity and change of use. On a larger scale, the town as a whole was a space that gathered people and controlled movement, interaction and experience. Public activities such as street processions, ceremonies and speeches would have taken place within the town and linked with the public buildings (Lavan 2003a: 181). These could have continued unaltered into the latest phases of the town when forms of monumental architecture had begun to decay (Lim 1999; Roueché 1999).[9] Whether such rituals took place in Romano-British towns is uncertain without documentary evidence, but the idea raises complexities that require acknowledgement. Movement of people to, from and around towns was an important element providing meaning, and representing on-going activity at sites (*cf.* Insoll 2007). In many cases in Britain this continued from the prehistoric use of the places to the late Roman period.

1.2.5 *A comparison with other parts of the Empire*

It is important not to consider Britain in isolation from other areas of the Empire, but to keep in mind the broader picture (*cf.* Swift 2000). Another aim, therefore, was to examine the way in which the methods for reconceptualising urbanism in Roman Britain might be of use for other provinces where the issue of urbanism is likely to provide interesting contrasts and comparisons. It is also important to consider whether an examination of the Continent can assist studies of towns in Britain. The data for the public buildings of a large number of towns in France and Spain were collected in order to analyse information on their late phases. Details of the location of the towns on the Continent were also investigated along with evidence for any pre-Roman activity in the location of the later towns.

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[9] The ritual of *Adventus*, for example, was the means by which powerful cities greeted incoming dignitaries; it had a strong relationship with the monuments within the town including the gates, arches, statues and colonnaded streets (Lavan 2003b: 330). Roueché (1999) has looked at inscriptions of acclamations within public spaces at Ephesos and Aphrodisias during late antiquity and demonstrated that certain places within the towns, outside the public buildings, were *foci* of public ceremony and that this continued into the later Roman period.

1.3 The chapters of the thesis

The chapters of the thesis are arranged for the purpose of achieving the above aims. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used for the data collection and analysis. An analysis of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall* forms the basis of Chapter 3, establishing the context of the theory of decline and the study of change within Roman archaeology. Chapter 4 outlines further aspects of the theoretical background of the thesis, exploring issues concerning the nature of urbanism, challenging current interpretations and looking for new understandings to provide a context for the study. Chapter 5 then draws on this theoretical approach for the first of the two case studies and explores the pre-Roman data at the sites of towns in order to analyse the significance of these places and their impact on, and transformation through, urbanisation.

The thesis then moves onto the next case study, in which the data for the public buildings of towns in the late Roman period are studied. This begins in chapter 6, which discusses previous work on towns in the late Roman period and places the research in its academic context. Chapter 7 examines interpretations of public buildings within towns, which form the basis of the data collection, and argues that our understanding of these structures is sometimes less secure than is assumed. Chapters 8 to 12 address the data collected concerning public buildings in the late Roman period and the way in which the theoretical position laid down in chapters 4 and 5 is of use for interpreting the data. The analysis explores the structural evidence for the buildings as well as alterations to individual buildings and evidence for demolition. An emphasis is placed on the way in which the structures continued to frame activity taking place within them.

Chapter 9 explores the finds evidence from public buildings in order to examine the ways in which the framed space continued to be used. It looks at the evidence for industrial activities and the way in which such deposits might be interpreted in the light of their context and associated activities. Chapter 10 explores the evidence for timber structures within public buildings, their function and their implications for the use of the rest of the building. Chapter 11 looks at other types of finds within public buildings which are often seen as representing 'squatter occupation', arguing that this is usually an over-simplistic way of interpreting the evidence, and that the finds also represent far more activity that has since been lost. The evidence for new public buildings within towns in the late Roman period is discussed in chapter 12.

Chapter 13 examines the evidence for late Roman towns and pre-Roman activity in France and Spain to broaden the perspective of the thesis and provide further discussion for interpreting the British data. Chapter 14 concludes the thesis with further analysis of the significance of the data and its implications for understanding Roman urbanism. Whilst the

chapters concentrate on data analysis and discussion, the appendix presents the data in a more detailed form. Gazetteer 1 contains the data for pre-Roman activity on the town sites (examined in chapter 5), whilst Gazetteer 2 outlines the data from each excavated public building within the towns; further gazetteers deal with themes in the evidence. Information is also displayed in a series of numbered diagrams, to be found in volume two of the thesis. Referred to throughout the text, these are designed to display relevant information in an accessible manner. The tables, graphs and pictures are included in the text and numbered consecutively, being categorised as either figures or tables.

1.4 Conclusions

This thesis explores the ways in which an analysis of the themes of 'growth' and 'decline' can be used to re-evaluate understandings of Roman towns. The reanalysis of data forms a major part of the thesis and its interpretation involves the use of a number of theoretical approaches. A particular emphasis is placed on the ways in which towns continued to be important *foci* within the landscape throughout their lives, building upon earlier uses of the sites, accumulating place-value but also initiating the new. Rather than concentrating on identifying the end of Roman Britain, the theoretical complexities in the interpretation of the data for late Roman activity are addressed. This allows a more critical analysis of towns in the late Roman period. The outcome will be a reassessment of the significance of both the late Roman and pre-Roman activity on the sites and the implications of this information for current interpretations of Roman towns.

Chapter 2: The methodological approach

2.1 Introduction

Studies of the late Roman phases of towns often differ widely in methodology from explorations of the pre-conquest use of these sites. In a recent study on landscape, M. Johnson (2007: 147-8, 198-9) has commented on the distinction that is often drawn between work on the 'irrational' landscapes of prehistory and the 'romanticism and empiricism' of studies of the medieval period. He suggested that the rewriting of prehistory has been so successful because it is a 'soft target', while studies of the medieval period are less prepared to accept that 'our' forebears were not just like us (*ibid.*: 128, 199). Despite Johnson's simplification of the complexities of prehistory, this argument is also relevant for the Roman period (a period Johnson ignores), where studies have not tended to embrace the 'unfamiliar'. This thesis will attempt to draw the different approaches together, exploring the architectural and artefactual evidence for the use of public buildings within towns in the later Roman period. Studying the use of town sites prior to the conquest also ties into the theme of symbolic space.

In a paper on the later Roman period, Lavan (2003a) argued that there should be a more theoretically driven examination of towns, but that this should always be combined with textual documents; therefore in provinces where these have not survived, "silence should reign" and no analysis should take place (*ibid.*: 187). This would seem a rather defeatist approach, since it devalues the power of archaeology to contribute to our understanding of towns and their public buildings. A text-driven approach would also make the study of late Iron Age settlement in Britain problematic (although see Creighton 2000); archaeology can reveal much more complex information than any surviving classical sources on the subject. A detailed study of the latest phases of public buildings can reveal a considerable amount about towns in the later Roman period. Likewise, a study of late Iron Age activity is extremely informative as a way of approaching the nature, significance and history of these places.

2.2 Data collection

A gazetteer (Gazetteer 1) was collected of certain classes of evidence of late pre-Roman activity in the area of each of the Romano-British towns. All the sites of 'official' or 'public' towns, the *coloniae*, *municipia* and *civitas*-capitals, were included within the analysis so as to maximise the potential of the results (figure 2.1 and table 2.1). Working within the confines of these traditional categorisations of towns in Britain may seem a little anachronistic (see below and section 4.3) but they are the examples that had the most data for the purposes of the study and the prime intention was to reconsider the late Iron Age and late Roman uses of these places. No strict date limit was placed on data collection due to the complexity of the evidence and problems in defining and using clear-cut chronologies in both periods;

consequently sometimes evidence for early Iron Age and even Bronze Age and Neolithic activity was included. Like the late Roman period, late pre-Roman Iron Age evidence is also affected by poor survival and disturbance due to later activity, the causes in this case including the processes of Roman urbanisation. The traditional focus on the Roman period buildings within excavations has also meant that on some occasions earlier layers have not been uncovered, making knowledge of this period even more partial. The evidence does, however, often reveal much about activities on the sites prior to the conquest, including structural evidence, metalworking and coin production. An integral part of this data collection was information regarding the topography of the location of each site to identify how Roman towns were placed within the landscape.

Figure 2.1: Map of Britain with the location of the main towns examined in this study (drawn by the author).

Aldborough (*Isurium*)	Diagram 1
Brough-on-Humber (*Petuaria*)	Diagram 2
Caerwent (*Venta Silurum*)	Diagram 3
Caistor-by-Norwich (*Venta Icenorum*)	Diagram 4
Canterbury (*Durovernum*)	Diagram 5
Carmarthen (*Moridunum*)	Diagram 6
Chelmsford (*Caesaromagus*)	Diagram 7
Chichester (*Noviomagus*)	Diagram 8
Cirencester (*Corinium*)	Diagram 9
Colchester (*Camulodunum*)	Diagram 10
Dorchester (*Durnovaria*)	Diagram 11
Exeter (*Isca Dumnoniorum*)	Diagram 12
Gloucester (*Glevum Colonia*)	Diagram 13
Leicester (*Ratae Coritanorum*)	Diagram 14
Lincoln (*Lindum Colonia*)	Diagram 15
London (*Londinium*)	Diagram 16
Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*)	Diagram 17
St Albans (*Verulamium*)	Diagram 18
Winchester (*Venta Belgarum*)	Diagram 19
Wroxeter (*Virconium*)	Diagram 20
York (*Eboracum*)	Diagram 21

Table 2.1: List of the main towns studied in the thesis. The diagrams are in the appendix and show the public buildings studied in each town.

The most detailed data collection and analysis within the thesis concentrates on the public buildings within these towns. All the known public buildings from each town were studied and entered into a database (Diagrams 1-21). Similar data was collected for the towns of Roman France and Spain (table 2.2; see Gazetteer 8 for references of the sites).

Province	Town	Province	Town	Province	Town	Province	Town
Gallia Belgica	Amiens		Paris		Marseille		Gerona
	Arras		Rennes		Narbonne		Gijón
	Bavay		Rouen		Nîmes		Ilici
	Beauvais		Sens		Orange		Iluro
	Brumuth		Tours		Riez		Jaca
	Grand		Troyes		Toulouse		Labitulosa
	Langres		Vannes		Vaison-la-Romaine		Lérida
	Metz		Vieux		Valence		Liria
	Reims	*Gallia Aquitania*	Auch		Vienne		Numantia
	Senlins		Bordeaux	*Baetica*	Arva		Palencia
	Soissons		Cahors		Bolonia		Pamplona
	St-Quentin		Clermont-Ferrand		Cádiz		Sagunto
	Thérouanne		Dax		Carmona		Saldania
	Tongeren		Javols		Carteia		Segobriga
	Toul		Lectoure		Córdoba		Tarragona
	Trier		Lescar		Écija		Tiermes
Gallia Lugdenensis	Alet		Limoges		Huelva		Toledo
	Angers		Périgueux		Italica		Tongobriga
	Autun		Poitiers		Málaga		Tortosa
	Auxerre		Rodez		Munigua		Uxama

	Avranches		Saint-Bertand-de-Comminges		Peñaflor		Valencia
	Bayeux		Saint-Lizier-en-Couserans		Porcuna		Valeria
	Bourges		Saintes		Seville		Zaragoza
	Carhaix	*Gallia Narbonensis*	Aix-en-Provence		Singili Barba	*Lusitania*	Beja
	Chalon-sur-Saône		Alba	*Tarraconensis*	Ampurias		Braga
	Chartres		Apt		Astorga		Caparra
	Corseul		Arles		Badalona		Conímbriga
	Dijon		Avignon		Barcelona		Évora
	Evreux		Béziers		Bilbilis		Juliobriga
	Feurs		Carcassone		Calahorra		Lisbon
	Jublains		Carpentras		Cartagena		Lugo
	Le Mans		Cavaillon		Castulo		Mérida
	Lillebonne		Chateau-Roussillon		Clunia		Mértola
	Lisieux		Die		Coimbra		Mirobriga
	Lyon		Digne		Complutum		Santarem
	Meaux		Fréjus		Denia		
	Nantes		Geneva		El Tolmo de Minateda		
	Orléans		Grenoble		Ercavica		

Table 2.2: List of towns in France and Spain examined in this thesis (further details can be found in Gazetteer 8).

A selection of 'small towns' and other types of settlement (table 2.3) was also examined to gain a better understanding of the nature of urbanism in Roman Britain. There have been fewer detailed analyses of 'small towns' (*cf.* Millett 1995a; 2001; for a recent exception see Rust 2006) although the number of excavations of these sites is increasing. Since this thesis focuses on the data from public buildings, however, 'small towns' do not form a central part of this study (see sections 4.3, 4.4 and 14.3.1).

'Small Town'	Main References	'Small Town'	Main References
Alcester	Booth 1985; Booth and Evans 2001	Hibaldstow	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Alchester	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Holditch	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Ancaster	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Horncastle	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Ashton	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Ilchester	Leach 1982
Baldock	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Irchester	Knight 1967
Bath	Cunliffe 1969; Cunliffe 2000	Kenchester	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Bourton-on-the-Water	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Little Chester	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Braintree	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Mancetter	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Brampton	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Knowles 1977	Margidunum	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Braughing	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Partridge 1978	Middlewich	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Buxton	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Mildenhall	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Caistor	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Neatham	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Cambridge	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Goodburn 1976; Pullinger 1978	Nettleton	Wedlake 1982
Camerton	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Wedlake 1958	Richborough	Bushe-Fox 1926; Bushe-Fox 1932; Millett and Wilmott 2003; Strong 1968
Carlisle	McCarthy 2003	Rochester	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Harrison 1982
Catterick	P. Wilson 2002	Sapperton	Burnham and Wacher 1990

Charterhouse-on-Mendip	Burnham and Wacher 1990; St. George Grey 1909	Springhead	Penn 1959; Penn 1960; Penn 1962
Chester	Mason 2000; Mason 2001	Staines	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Chesterton-on-Fosse	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Stonea	Jackson and Potter 1996
Corbridge	Bishop and Dore 1988	Thorpe	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Cowbridge	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Tiddington	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Dorchester-on-Thames	Burnham and Wacher 1990; Frere 1984; D. Wilson 1965	Towcester	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Dorn	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Wall	Burnham and Wacher 1990; G. Webster 1956
Droitwich	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Wanborough	Burnham and Wacher 1990; B. Phillips and Walters 1977
Frilford	Bradford and Goodchild 1939; Hingley 1985; Lock *et al.* 2002; Lock *et al.* 2003	Water Newton	Burnham and Wacher 1990; D. Wilson 1975; Fincham 2004
Godmanchester	H. Green 1975	Westhawk Farm	Booth 2001
Great Casterton	Burnham and Wacher 1990	Wilderspool	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Great Chesterford	Alexander 1975; Burnham and Wacher 1990	Worcester	Burnham and Wacher 1990
Harlow	France and Gobel 1975	Wycomb	Timby 1998
Heybridge	Atkinson and Preston 1998; Atkinson and Preston n.d.		

Table 2.3: List of the 'small towns' examined.

Public buildings, examined in chapter 7, were highly symbolic, structured and complex places. The use and experience of these buildings is an important area to consider when examining towns and will be the emphasis of this study. This provides a contrast to earlier studies which have often focused on the architectural evidence, leading to simplistic arguments for the decline of public buildings in the late Roman period (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a; B. Ward-Perkins 2005). Domestic structures are addressed briefly in order to explore how they reflect the continuing use and experience of public space. In order to carry out analysis on the data, the information from each public building in the database (Gazetteer 2) was divided by structural phase. A data quality value was given to each building in order to monitor its reliability and usefulness (see section 2.5). Since many excavations of public buildings were carried out prior to the 1960s, and did not explore the later phases in detail, a considerable quantity of data has evidently been lost and some of the surviving data is problematic. Analysis was first conducted to identify the evidence for structural changes to the buildings in the late Roman period. Then evidence for activities within them was analysed, as represented by finds assemblages, timber structural remains and other occupation débris.

Recording dating evidence was important for interpreting the data and, where possible, close attention was paid to the context of the dateable finds. Coins and pottery are conventional dating tools for Roman sites and the latest examples were sought from each building. Information was recorded even for cases in which coins were not stratified, since it can sometimes be discerned that there was disturbance of the latest Roman layers of which these

finds had formed part. Using coins and pottery for dating late layers, however, has problems because of the possibility that the reduction or cessation of production was before the end of the use of the sites. In some cases, the excavators of sites have attempted dating through late stratigraphic layering alone (*e.g.* the Caerwent temple; Brewer 1993: 59), or occasionally radiocarbon dating (*e.g.* the Wroxeter baths-*basilica*; P. Barker *et al.* 1997). Although many towns did eventually 'fall', the determination of an end date, in order to chart the 'end of Roman Britain', is bound up with many theoretical and methodological caveats and is not the purpose of this study. Instead, this thesis seeks to document the evidence for activity within, and the experiencing of, towns in the late Roman period.

Town	Resource Consulted
Aldborough	North Yorkshire Historic Environments Record
Brough-on-Humber	Humber SMR
Caerwent	Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust
Caistor-by-Norwich	Norfolk SMR
Canterbury	Canterbury Archaeological Trust
Carmarthen	Cambria Archaeology
Chichester	Chichester District SMR
Cirencester	Corinium Museum, Cirencester, and the Haverfield Archive in Oxford
Colchester	Colchester Archaeological Trust; Colchester Museums
Dorchester	Dorset County Council SMR; John Magilton: excavations of Dorchester bathhouse
Exeter	Exeter City Council Urban Archaeological Database
Gloucester	Gloucester Museums Service
Leicester	University of Leicester Archaeological Services; Leicester City Council Urban Archaeological Database
Lincoln	Lincoln City Council; Lincoln Archaeology
London	Museum of London Archaeology Service
Silchester	University of Reading
St Albans	Verulamium Museum Archive
Winchester	Winchester Museums Service
Wroxeter	Shrewsbury Museums; English Heritage West Midlands Archive; Dr. Kate Pretty: Baths-*Basilica* finds archive
York	York Archaeological Trust

Table 2.4: Details of the archives and other resources that were consulted for each town during the process of data collection.

Data collection involved the examination of both published literature and unpublished material within museum and archaeological unit archives, Sites and Monuments Record offices (SMRs) and Urban Archaeology Databases (UADs) (table 2.4 summarises the resources consulted). The published literature concerning excavated Roman public buildings in Britain (and France and Spain) is extensive but differs in usefulness depending on the survival and coverage of late phases. The extent of finds publication for sites also varies widely, with some excavation reports for sites in Britain only publishing a selection of artefacts, often with little contextual information. This meant it often proved necessary to

carry out work on archive material, the success of which was influenced by accessibility, the condition of the archive and the extent of information stored. The archives holding information from each of the main towns were assessed for their usefulness. The quantity of material they contained varied greatly, depending primarily on the amount of excavation work that had taken place within the towns and the period in which the main excavations took place. In some cases there was material relating to the excavation of public buildings, but few records of finds.

Archives were visited when they contained unpublished material relating to the use of sites prior to the conquest, the public buildings of towns and detailed finds records. Two weeks were spent examining the excavated structural and finds data in the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. There is a rich body of published data relating to the public buildings of this town (Holbrook 1998) but little relating to the finds from the buildings. In London, there have been many excavations of public buildings but sometimes these have only appeared as summaries in print form such as the *forum-basilica* (G. Milne 1992) and the late *basilica* structure at Colchester House (Sankey 1998). A two-week period was spent within the archives of the Museum of London in order to carry out an in-depth study of the excavations and correlate them with the finds records.

The important publication of the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997) also includes only summaries of the finds data, the full archive being held by one of the members of the excavation team, Dr. Kate Pretty. This archive was visited in order to study the data in a more comprehensive manner. Similar information was sought at the Lincoln Archaeological Unit relating to the recent publication of the *forum* excavations (Steane 2006). The archives were often particularly rewarding regarding pre-Roman data since, generally, less information on this period of the town sites has been published, perhaps because it often consists of small-scale excavations and chance discoveries. A few research visits did not prove so useful. At the Verulamium Museum, the records and finds data of the early excavations were not very comprehensive. At Colchester, the archives lacked detail of the early excavations and limited information is known about the town's public buildings generally.

Examination of the published literature on archaeological theory was also an important element of data collection and analysis. This included not simply work on the late Roman period but also studies from a wide range of disciplines, including geography and anthropology, exploring aspects of urbanism, landscape and perceptions of place. Other periods in archaeology, especially prehistory, and other disciplines have gone further than Roman archaeologists in trying to provide new approaches to these themes. Many of the ways in which the themes of urbanism and landscape have been understood have arisen from cultural transformations in Western society in more recent times. Recognising these changes,

and their effect on archaeology, through theoretical and historiographical analyses is important. The analysis of Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* involved a detailed examination of the text, identifying themes in his use of language, as well as an investigation into the works and cultural background that influenced his writing.

2.3 Architectural evidence and the loss of data

There are vast differences in the state of preservation of the public buildings of urban sites and the extent of the excavations that have been undertaken. In many cases, the buildings have also been subject to intervention in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries which has led to the disturbance of stratigraphy and the loss of later phases (*e.g.* Silchester, G. Fox and St. George Hope 1893, and Caerwent, Ashby *et al.* 1904). Another cause of disturbance of the archaeology is the robbing of stone walls and floors of buildings during later periods. Post-war development within modern towns gave the opportunity to uncover Roman period buildings, but often excavation took place rapidly and in difficult circumstances (*e.g.* Leicester: Cooper and Buckley 2003). It is likely that the latest Roman phases will have been particularly affected by urban disturbance, since they were often of a less substantial nature than earlier ones. This must be acknowledged in any analysis of towns in the later Roman period, but not all those studying the period agree.

Faulkner (1996), for example, has argued for the minimal loss of evidence relating to structures and activity within towns in the late Roman period in Britain and this has been the basis of his studies of the later Roman period (2000a; 2000b; 2004). He maintains that towns were very much in decline by the late-fourth century, and argues that medieval disturbance or destruction of mortared floors and masonry walls will have been minimal, although he does accept that timber structures will have been more at risk (1996: 87). His studies attach little significance to the loss of finds assemblages and to less substantial features such as late floor layers, hearths within buildings or timber structural remains which, as chapters 10 and 11 will show, were numerous within towns at this time.

Towns, such as Leicester, Canterbury, Colchester and London, are very densely occupied today and often only very small, and widely separated, areas of buildings can be exposed at any one time. This must be taken into account when attempting to document the nature and extent of activity taking place within the public buildings, as well as their structural history. In Canterbury, for example, the *forum-basilica*, has only been uncovered in very small areas (Frere and Bennett 1987). The extent of the theatre that has been uncovered is also minimal (P. Bennett 1988) and the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse, although being the subject of a number of excavations, has only had a relatively small area of the total structure uncovered (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995).

At Leicester there is a good indication that the loss of evidence of late activity across towns may have been greater than Faulkner has proposed (*e.g.* 1994; 1996). Often the walls of the Roman buildings have been heavily robbed, as was found when a small area of the *forum-basilica* was uncovered at St. Nicholas Place (Buckley 2000). Excavations at Causeway Lane revealed widespread destruction of stone metalled areas and walls as a result of later medieval ploughing and a large piece of Roman street metalling and wall was discovered in isolation after having fallen into a pit (R. Buckley pers. comm.). At Blue Boar Lane and St. Nicholas Circle there was also the rare survival of mud brick which had been used in late Roman structures (R. Buckley and N. Cooper pers. comm.) indicating the possibility that the use of this building material was much more widespread at this time.

At Verulamium, Frere (1983) demonstrated that small areas of *opus signinum* floor were, due to plough damage, all that survived of large areas of late occupation, whilst at the Lion Walk site in Colchester a fragment of Roman stratigraphy that had collapsed into a robber trench dating to the twelfth century was the only evidence surviving for late Roman occupation in that area of the site (P. Crummy 1984). The excavation of the baths-*basilica* and surrounding area in Wroxeter, revealing a complex of late timber structures (P. Barker *et al.* 1997), is a good and often-used example of what can survive in the archaeological record and what may have been missed or lost during early excavations of other sites. It is likely that timber structures will have been more prevalent than is often supposed, as has recently been argued for Verulamium as a result of analysing excavations there (Niblett *et al.* 2006: 101-3).

A further complication is that activity within a public building could well have changed in the late Roman period without this being reflected in the surviving structural evidence. One possible example is the Temple of Claudius in Colchester (Diagram 57) which seems to have had sections that remained standing into the Norman period, when a castle was constructed on the site (Drury 1984). There are indications that use of the building continued despite the relative lack of evidence for structural alterations (see section 8.4.2 for a more detailed discussion of this; P. Crummy pers. comm.).

Examining the continuing use of public buildings is a highly complex task and all evidence must be recorded and analysed so that details are not missed. This is especially important with reference to the 'dark earth' that occurs on many of the sites below the early medieval occupation. The term was devised in London during excavations in 1977, and it was around this time that its importance in considering the late Roman and post-Roman periods, which were otherwise lacking in archaeological evidence, was argued (Macphail 1981: 309; Roskams 1991: 64). Prior to this, the 'dark earth' had been interpreted as flood silts (Kenyon 1959) or as a result of market gardening (Sheldon 1978: 40). Roskams (1991: 64-5) has suggested that the 'dark earth' is largely a product of imported, dumped earth that may or may

not then have been reworked. Apart from studies such as those by Macphail (1981; 1983), constraints on time and money have often meant that 'dark earth' has not been carefully studied, and in some cases it has been removed without analysis in order to access earlier levels (Roskams 1991: 64-5).

More recent analysis of sites in London has argued convincingly that the 'dark earth' is more likely to have resulted from the truncation or reworking of late Roman occupation and stratigraphic layers, including the continuing use of the buildings together with features such as timber and clay buildings on the sites (Yule 1990: 620; see section 11.3.1). Analysis of the stratigraphy and material also indicates that the assumption that 'dark earth' formation took place only after site abandonment is probably incorrect (Yule 2005: 80). At the 15-23 Southwark Street site, for example, there had been considerable post-Roman disturbance including the removal of much of the 'dark earth'. What did survive, however, contained a number of late Roman coins and it had the appearance of reworked late Roman strata, indicating use of the building here (Cowan 1992: 59-60). Similarly, the Winchester Palace site in Southwark had 'dark earth' which contained considerable evidence for activity including coins and the débris from bone pin manufacture which may have been taking place in the building in its latest phase (Yule 2005: 78-9). If 'dark earth' can represent late activity in these structures, it clearly has implications for understanding late Roman towns. It highlights the caution needed when making assumptions about the latest phases of use of public buildings and the date of abandonment.

2.4 Studying finds assemblages

A number of qualifications are required to be made about the finds data from public buildings. Finds data were collected in order to investigate whether it was possible to analyse the use of the buildings in the late Roman period. The overall aim was to investigate how activities were organised within the buildings and whether this differed from earlier periods. Where possible, the finds from each site were entered into a database according to their context so that all find types could be viewed together rather than being separated by material, as is often the case in published reports. Where a public building had been excavated on a number of different sites, and at different times, the finds, where possible, were combined for analysis.

There has been some important work on Roman finds categorisation (*e.g.* N. Crummy 1983) which proved insightful during the process of data collection. Within the database, the finds were separated by categories of function within their contexts. These included coins, personal ornaments (*e.g.* pins, brooches, buckles, finger-rings and ear-rings), personal equipment (*e.g.* nail cleaners, scoops and mirrors), military equipment, tools, locks and keys, writing equipment, weights and measures, recreational, religious, structural and industrial finds.

Objects that might relate to specific activities rather than simply to the general presence of people within the buildings include coins, locks and keys, needles, writing *styli*, seal boxes, recreational and religious objects, spindle whorls and industrial débris. It can be difficult to interpret whether finds represent activity taking place within the building rather than items brought in from elsewhere.

The find types were analysed in terms of their quantity and also their percentage of the total number of finds from each phase, so that the different phases could be compared. The comparison between different buildings, however, was more problematic because of the widely differing scale of the excavation conducted on each site. Animal and human bones, pottery and glass were also important finds but these were much more difficult to analyse in a quantitative manner and according to their contexts and phases. Often these artefacts are published as entire assemblages rather than attention being paid to contextual information, and rarely does the data appear beyond summary form. Furthermore, the information was not often easily accessible in the archives. Where possible these finds were included in the analysis but, ideally, more specialist work is needed to make fuller use of their potential.

There are now some more challenging approaches to the use of archaeological records and finds distributions in archaeology (*cf.* Hingley and Willis eds. 2007). Useful studies have focused on the distribution of finds on Iron Age sites in an attempt to identify the ways in which space was structured, an example being J.D. Hill's (1994) work on finds from pits.[10] There is also now a greater willingness to study the ritual deposition of objects in the Roman period and the complexity of the deposits found in the archaeological record and what they can tell us about attitudes towards landscape (*e.g.* Fulford 2001; Martens 2007; Willis and Hingley 2007). Such detailed studies obviously demand the comprehensive excavation and recording of sites and it is often now difficult to carry out such analysis on previous excavations due to the inadequacies of the archives.[11]

An example of a useful approach that addresses finds from Roman period sites is Penelope Allison's work on assemblages both from Pompeian houses (2004) and the fortress of Vetera I on the Fürstenberg, near modern Xanten in Germany (Allison *et al.* 2005). Both studies involved detailed examinations of the finds from each excavated structure in an attempt to identify the use of the different rooms, aspects of the identity of the inhabitants and the way in which this information differed from the knowledge provided by textual sources. These

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[10] Other studies include Fitzpatrick's (1994) analysis of the finds distribution in the roundhouse at Dunston Park, Thatcham in Berkshire and the examination of the pottery types within the enclosure ditches of the Iron Age settlement at Wakerley in Northamptonshire (Gwilt 1997).

[11] Mudd's (*et al.* 1999: 244) excavation and careful recording of the finds distribution in a Roman period roundhouse at Birdlip Quarry, Gloucestershire, allowed him to suggest a possible left/right and front/back organisation within the building. Authors such as Hingley (1990a; 1997a) and J. Taylor (2001) have also suggested that a similar organisation may have continued within the Roman period aisled buildings that replaced many of the roundhouses. It might be that it is possible to study the distribution of finds and activities within public buildings, including the later Roman period, but the value of such an approach must also depend on the extent of excavation and the detail of the data that is recorded.

studies produced important results, but there was a lack of attention paid to the different periods of the sites and the way in which the assemblages might have changed over time. There was also little analysis of the issue of how the objects came to be found where they were.

Studies comparing assemblages of finds to determine differing uses of sites have often used one of two techniques: an analysis of the quantities of different find types or a comparison of the percentages of each find type. J. Evans (1993), for example, compared the numbers of finds within structures in the Roman fort at Caernarfon to identify the way in which the use of the buildings changed over time. Similar studies include Ellison (1987), on changes through time at Poundbury in Dorset, and Wilmott's (1991) study of activities reflected in the finds from excavations of the Middle Walbrook Valley in London. N. Cooper explored the differences of finds assemblages from excavated sites across Leicester and the difference in proportion of finds within each period of the individual sites (1999; 2000; 2007). One of the most methodologically rigorous attempts to examine site function through finds assemblages has been the study of finds from the legionary fortress in York, and its comparison with other military sites, using the multivariate technique of Correspondence Analysis (Cool and Baxter 1995; 2002; Cool *et al.* 1995).

Gardner (1999; 2001; 2007) followed another approach by looking at the pattern of the distribution of finds across sites in order to identify separate aspects. Through this analysis he was able to argue that the traditional assumption of clear-cut 'civilian' and 'military' identities within forts was far too simplistic. All these studies indicate that there is much potential in studying the artefact assemblages from public buildings within towns. Apart from the lack of contextual information, other problems from this perspective include identifying the objects from which small fragments have come. There can also be problems when interpreting the function of the objects, due to cultural biases (Allison *et al.* 2005: 3.1.2; Allason-Jones 2001).[12]

An important use of the finds assemblages, in the context of this study, is their potential to show the continuing use of the buildings even when there is some evidence for structural decay. Site disturbance and the dumping of material can, however, cause problems here. Much has been written on this subject and Allison's (1992; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2004) study of Pompeian houses has highlighted many causes of disturbance, even on a site which has traditionally been considered to be one of the perfect archaeological examples: the 'Pompeii

[12] Allison (2005: 3.1.2) showed, for example, that the horse pendant which was traditionally considered to be a piece of cavalry equipment was sometimes found within domestic contexts in Pompeii. She also showed that objects generally considered female in the Pompeian houses were sometimes ascribed other functions or ignored when found in Roman military contexts (*ibid.*). Allason-Jones's (2001) study of the finds from the turrets along Hadrian's Wall has demonstrated that finds traditionally considered female, such as needles and nail-cleaners, were present in male-only contexts.

Premise' (Binford 1981; Schiffer 1985).[13] In an attempt to deal with this problem at the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* excavations, the post-excavation analysis split up the finds into three categories according to whether they were objects from (A) floor surfaces, (B) pits and other features or (C) dumps (Pretty 1997; R. White 1997: 371). In this study, care was taken in analysing the context of the finds in an attempt to distinguish evidence for activities within buildings from débris dumped there from elsewhere within the town. In the case of the Wroxeter baths-*basilica*, the finds from floor surfaces (category A) were studied and did prove useful for analysing the function of the building.

2.5 The data quality table

Due to the problematic nature of some of the evidence available for the public buildings of towns in the late Roman period, it was felt that a data quality table should be devised in order to rate the usefulness of the evidence within Gazetteer 2 (table 2.5).[14] For this thesis, a value of one to five, relating to a quality percentage, was applied to each public building, based on a number of factors: the standard of excavation of the site, the level of information available on the late Roman phases of the sites and the standard of the finds evidence from the sites. Level 1, 80-100%, represented an excavation of a high standard with a good survival of late Roman phases (or indication that there was no later evidence), where the finds evidence included useful contextual information and there was a good source of dating. Level 5, 0-19%, was applied to public buildings that were known but had barely been excavated, if at all, and so their structural sequence, dating and use in the late Roman period is unknown.

Sixty buildings could be placed within Level 1 and forty-one within Level 5 (figure 2.2). Although there is a large number of public buildings within Levels 4 and 5 there are more buildings of Levels 1, 2 and 3, and a predominance of data. Also, Level 4 does not necessarily mean that the evidence from that building is unsuitable for use. This data quality exercise is useful in demonstrating the nature of the evidence available and the problems encountered whilst carrying out data collection; it also demonstrates that there are many sites that are useful for the study.

1	80-100%	Building excavated to a high standard with good survival of, and evidence for, late Roman phases or a good indication that there were no late Roman phases. The finds from the site can be related to their original contexts and there is good stratigraphic sequencing and dating evidence.
2	60-79%	Building excavated with evidence for late Roman phases, or indication that there were no late Roman phases, but the excavation was not to a high

[13] These disturbances included post-eruption clearance, post-eruption occupation and robbing and there have been a number of studies documenting the factors affecting what survives in the archaeological record (*e.g.* La Motta and Schiffer 1999; W. Wood and Johnson 1978).

[14] Tom Moore devised a data quality table for his recent Ph.D. thesis (2003), aimed at establishing the quality of evidence for Iron Age rural sites, and this greatly benefited the strength of his arguments on changing settlement patterns. Some of the premises of table 2.5 were drawn from his study.

		standard. The treatment of finds is sometimes problematic and it is often difficult to relate them to their original contexts. The nature of the late Roman activity is sometimes difficult to understand and there is a lack of good dating evidence for support.
3	40-59%	Building excavated but there is evidence that late Roman phases have been lost or badly damaged due to post-Roman activity on the site. Stratigraphic sequences are badly disturbed and finds research can be difficult. There is often little or no dating evidence.
4	20-39%	Building excavated but late Roman phases were missed/ignored/ damaged/destroyed during the excavation with resultant poor stratigraphic sequencing; often excavations took place in the nineteenth or early-twentieth centuries. Dating is difficult due to the lack of finds or the difficulty in relating the finds to their original contexts. There was often selective recording of the finds which makes artefact research more difficult.
5	0-19%	Building unexcavated or very small areas/remains uncovered with the result that knowledge of the late Roman phases of the building can be little advanced. The nature or purpose of the building is often unknown. There are few or no finds for dating and it is difficult to relate them to their original contexts.

Table 2.5: Data quality table used in rating the quality and usefulness of the data from each public building.

Figure 2.2: Graph showing the data quality of excavations of the public buildings in the towns of Roman Britain according to the data quality table. The largest number of sites fall within category 1 whilst the sites within categories 2, 3 and 4 are also of use. The number of sites within category 5 need not affect the significance of the data analysis. It is likely that had the buildings been excavated extensively or to modern standards they would also reveal complex information about their use in the late Roman period.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter outlined the methods and motives of data collection. Problems that may influence the results, and need to be acknowledged, were discussed. Besides these, many practical considerations, such as issues concerning the theoretical approaches taken, require to be addressed. The traditional approach to both the late Roman and late pre-Roman periods has been from a largely descriptive and narrative standpoint. This has also often been the case with the late Iron Age to Roman transition. This thesis, therefore, attempts to study the large

quantity of data collected for both periods in a new way. Analysis based upon the data collected in the gazetteers will enable patterns and meanings in the information gathered to be distinguished. The ways in which these patterns relate to the continuing significance of the sites from the pre-Roman period onwards is a major objective here.

The theoretical position of this thesis will now be explored with a discussion of what is meant by Roman urbanism (Chapter 4) and the meaning of sites in the late pre-Roman period (Chapter 5). Before this, however, there will be an evaluation of Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. As one of the most influential historians on the Roman Empire in Britain, Gibbon not only helped to outline the agenda for the 'decline' of the Empire within historical and archaeological studies but also for its 'rise' and 'growth' in order to frame and emphasise the 'Golden Age' of the Roman period.

Chapter 3: Edward Gibbon – growth, the Golden Age and decline and fall

> "D'you mean to tell me you've reached the age of twenty-four without reading Gibbon?"
>
> Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (1992 [1915]: 141)

3.1 Introduction

Edward Gibbon's six-volume work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788) is probably the most famous study, at least in Britain, of the late Roman period and of the Roman Empire as a whole. It has had an enormous impact on the way in which the later Roman period has been studied, with the image of decline and fall dominating many archaeological analyses. As a work of wider popular appeal, it has been influential in late-eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth century society. What is less often acknowledged is that the text has also contributed towards informing views of the earlier Roman period and the period that preceded the conquest in parts of the Empire such as Britain.

Analysing Gibbon's writing has been a major area of academic pursuit, with focus especially on its influence on historical study, on themes such as Christianity and barbarism, and also on the work as English literature in its eighteenth century setting (*e.g.* McKitterick and Quinault eds. 1997a; Jordan 1971; Pocock 1999a; 1999b; 2003; 2005; Womersley 1988; ed. 1997; 2002; V. Woolf 1943). Its impact within archaeology and on the study of settlement, continuity and change has not been subject to very much attention. The concept of decline and fall, and the depictions of both the pre-conquest to Roman transition and of the 'Golden Age', expressed within Gibbon's writing were in part products of his (and contemporary society's) attitudes towards Roman civilisation and the Roman élite. They have influenced the way in which periods of change have been approached in archaeology. Gibbon (figure 3.1) also influenced archaeological work more directly through his examination and descriptions of Rome and its structural remains.

In this chapter, Gibbon's attitude in *The Decline and Fall* to 'civilisation' and 'barbarism', and to change and conquest, will be considered, along with an examination of his character and upbringing. These elements contributed to the powerful images in his writing of decline and fall in the later Roman period. It is necessary, briefly, to examine the influences of the Enlightenment and the preceding civic humanist movement on Gibbon's work before moving onto his attitude to the physical remains of Rome and other towns, and his thoughts on pre-Roman settlement in the West. His use of antiquarian research will be discussed, together with the way in which his writing style emphasised both the splendour of the public buildings during the 'Golden Age' and also their decline in the later Roman period and beyond. Central to Gibbon's narrative was the city, and especially Rome, around which "Venerable City"

(Gibbon vol. III: 175)[15] the events revolved. The chapter will end with a consideration of the way in which Gibbon's use of language depicted cities as physical representations of civilisation and how this differed from his descriptions of pre-Roman settlement.

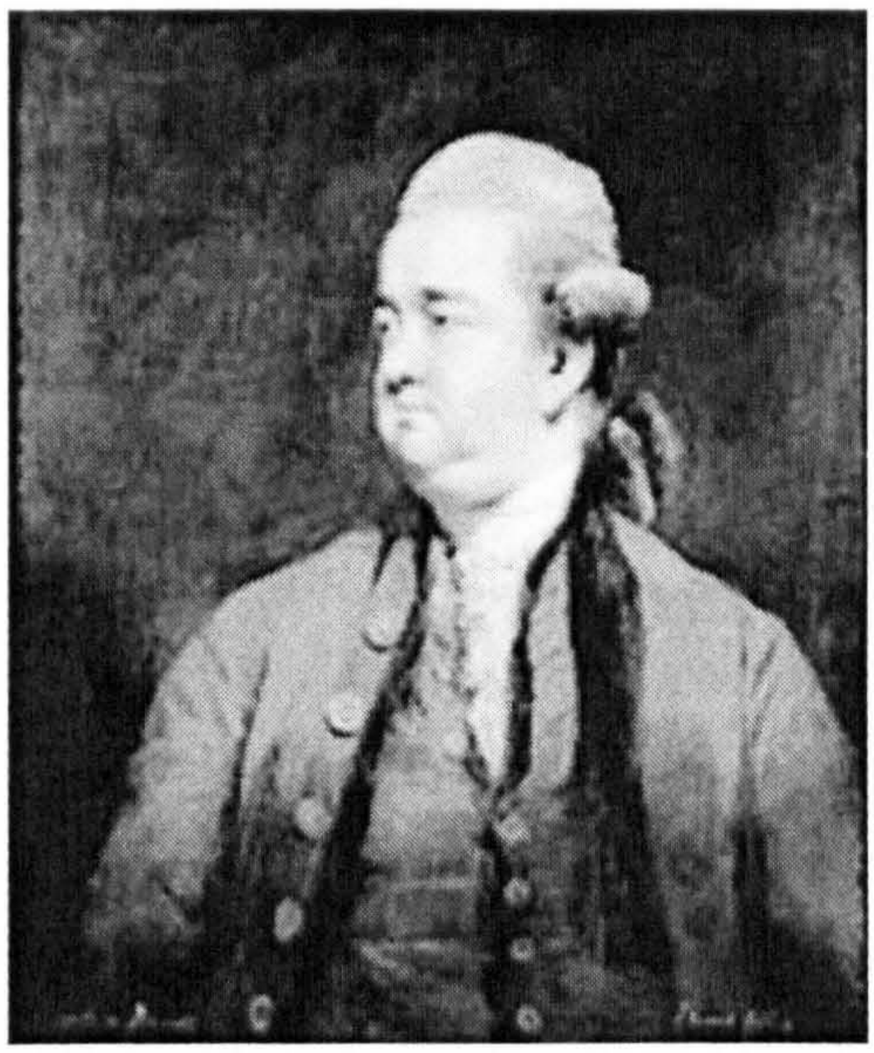

Figure 3.1: Portrait of Edward Gibbon by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1779 (from Gibbon's Memoirs of my Life *[1966] ed. Bonnard).*

3.2 Reading Gibbon

The Decline and Fall was published in six volumes with the first appearing in 1776, the next two in 1781 and the final three in 1788. The first three take the 'decline and fall' up to the end of the Western Empire, with the last three describing the Eastern Empire to the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks. The final chapter of the work, LXXXI, examines the state of Rome in the fourteenth century, whilst the earliest chapters of the first volume depict the Empire at the time between "the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus" when the "human race was most happy and prosperous"; the "golden age of Trajan and the Antonines" (Gibbon vol. I: 103-4). *The Decline and Fall* is not read so much today as an historical account of the later Roman Empire but more as a work of literature, and product of the eighteenth century, and is often studied as such (*e.g.* Craddock 1988; 1989; Pocock 1999a; 2003; Womersley 1988). The work remained particularly popular in the later nineteenth and early-twentieth century – a period of intense interest in, and preoccupation with, imperialism

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[15] The references from *The Decline and Fall* are taken from the 1994 edited version of the work by David Womersley, published by Penguin in three volumes each containing two of Gibbon's original volumes. The volume and page numbers in the text refer to the way in which Gibbon's six volumes appear in this edition.

– which was also the time at which Roman archaeology was developing into a discipline recognisable today.[16]

Here, the influence of Gibbon's work on studies of the Roman period and conceptualisations of the later Roman period will be highlighted. As Vogt remarked (1993 [1965]: 2), Gibbon's work "sounded a note whose echoes have not completely died away".[17]

At the time when Gibbon was writing, history was hugely fashionable – especially the Roman period – and considered one of the highest forms of art (Ghosh 1997: 277) with the consequence that the eighteenth century saw a vast growth in the number of historical works (Dawson 1934: 159; McKitterick 1997: 164). Upon publication, Gibbon's first volume was an immediate success and hailed a masterpiece amongst followers of literature and fashion.[18] The first printing of one thousand copies was sold out within a few weeks and led quickly to second and third editions (Jordan 1976: 6). Gibbon became known as 'the Historian of the Roman Empire' (Pocock 1999a: 292). His work remained in print throughout the nineteenth century (as it still is today). The editor of the 1896 edition, J.B. Bury, wrote that its "accuracy is amazing" (1896: xli; quoted in Ferrill 1986: 13).[19] The members of the committee of the 1894 Royal Historical Society's centenary celebrations of Gibbon's death included not only eminent historians, such as Theodor Mommsen (1864; 1996), but also public figures such as the Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, who admired Gibbon's work greatly (McKitterick and Quinault 1997b: 9).

The image of Rome played an important part in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century social consciousness (Vance 1997) but people at the time were also conscious of the fate of the Roman Empire through Gibbon and wished to avoid a similar course of events in the British Empire. Satirical works, such as the *Decline and Fall of the British Empire* by Elliott

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[16] Continuing the literary theme, the impact of Gibbon can be seen on modernist fiction satirising contemporary British aristocracy and upper middle class. Indeed, Virginia Woolf wrote an essay on Gibbon (1943) as if he had been a writer of fiction rather than a historian. Evelyn Waugh's novel *Decline and Fall* (2003 [1928]) is an obvious example whilst Cyril Connolly's *The Rock Pool* (1981 [1936]) charts the decline of an English aristocrat Naylor on his visit to a small French town. A passage from page two reads: "Naylor remembered that this place (how the words dated) had once been an artist's colony. It had been called Montparnasse-by-the-Sea. Now since the slump, since the fall of the pound and the dollar, the deserted town must resemble a buried site, a mound where an archaeologist delves for evidence of a vanished civilisation, hoping to find a culture ultramarine and superior to that of the villages of neighbours and contemporaries. Cnossus-sur-Mer! And why not stay here and be an archaeologist! What a thesis! 'American toys and crockery found in a…' 'adventures of an excavator in a…' 'came the Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Lombards, each brought to the little old hill town something of their…' – he could be modish and witty and just a little bit learned and tender about it all – like those things about the Romans leaving Britain and Mr. Baldwin's joke about the diggers of the future and our disused razor blades. A dead city of the present, that should be his theme…He would be the Goethe of a new Pompeii – and besides, this stuff about the 'twenties was a paying proposition." The book ends with Naylor's complete dissolution: he raves about wanting to "live in a Palladian house" and claims that his "baptismal name is Aegeus" (*ibid.*: 137).

[17] Clifford Ando's recent work *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (2000), for example, draws heavily on Gibbon and attempts to answer a statement made by Gibbon in his 'General Observations': "instead of inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long" (vol. III: 509; Ando 2000: 2). For Gibbon and Ando the longevity of the empire required explanation; in doing this, Ando produced a text with, in many ways, the same biases as Gibbon with an emphasis on the classical élite viewpoint and the 'Golden Age'.

[18] With the publication of Gibbon's first volume, Horace Walpole (1717-1797) proclaimed in a letter to the poet William Mason (1725-1797), "Lo, there is just appeared a truly classic work" (W. Lewis ed. vol. 28, 1955: 243). Walpole, the fourth Earl of Orford, has often been taken as a significant indicator of the tastes and fashions of his day.

[19] Although Bury believed that Gibbon's accuracy was amazing, he did acknowledge that Gibbon "allowed his temperament to colour his history" (1896: xli).

Mills (1905; from Hingley 2000: 31-2),[20] pretending to be a Japanese school textbook of the year 2005, show both the influence of the Roman Empire on contemporary thought and the rôle of Edward Gibbon in forming such views and opinions (*ibid.*; Vance 1997: 234). Another work, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (Anon 1884) was said to have been written by an author called Edwarda Gibbon and published in New Zealand in 2884 (Vance 1997: 234).[21] The Roman Empire was central to contemporary views of the greatness of the British Empire but the reasons for Rome's decline, through Gibbon's work, were often used to highlight its problems. London, the heart of the British Empire, was compared with the corruption and degradation of Rome (Shumate 2006: 51-2). Influential figures reading Gibbon at the time include Winston Churchill (Quinault 1997: 317-8), who was "immediately dominated both by the story and the style" (Churchill 1941: 125).[22] It was mainly a work for the wealthy and educated, indeed McKitterick and Quinault's (1997b: 1) statement that Gibbon's work "remains part of the mental furniture of any reasonably literate person" suggests that there is a continued élitism surrounding his work.

It is unlikely, then, that Gibbon would not have been read and drawn upon, by Roman archaeologists in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and this impact has continued into the present day. Haverfield clearly drew upon Gibbon and indeed refers to his use of ideas from the work (1912: 12). Others who drew upon Gibbon include John Collingwood Bruce, in his book *The Roman Wall* (1851), where he agrees with "Gibbon's estimate of the character of the ancient Britons" (*ibid.*: 27). His description of visiting Hadrian's Wall mirrors Gibbon's first encounter with remains in Rome (see section 3.5): "The most ardent lover of the olden times cannot but startle as he treads the deserted streets, or enters the unbarred portals of BORCIVICUS, and other cities of the Wall" (*ibid.*: 31). In modern times, Faulkner's *The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain* (2000a) is clearly written in a manner that reflects Gibbon's negative treatment of this period. Although not having read the work in its entirety, Faulkner did draw upon sections of *The Decline and Fall* in his study (N. Faulkner pers. comm.). Gibbon's work has influenced archaeological study and thought at the deepest level.

3.3 Decline and fall

The concept of decline and fall, of course, was not Gibbon's invention; it was also prominent within ancient literature, in many cases representing the same biases towards contemporary

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[20] This text was published anonymously in 1905 as *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire: a brief account of those causes which resulted in the destruction of our late ally, together with a comparison between the British and Roman Empires. Appointed for use in the National Schools of Japan. Tokio, 2005*, Oxford: Alden & Co.

[21] In this work, many of the causes of decline of the British Empire were similar to those outlined by Gibbon in his work such as the town life, demoralising luxury and physical inertia.

[22] Churchill read *The Decline and Fall* whilst he was a cavalry subaltern at Aldershot and when he was posted in Bangalore, India. His old headmaster at Harrow is purported to have said to him that "Gibbon is the greatest of historians, read him all through" and Churchill's own father, Lord Randolph, favoured Gibbon greatly and had memorised long passages when he was an undergraduate at Merton College, Oxford (Churchill 1941; Quinault 1997: 317-8).

concepts of 'civilisation'. The Greek poet Hesiod, writing around 700 B.C., describes in his *Works and Days*, four races of people each descending in quality until the fourth which was a race of iron. The concept of a 'Golden Age' as an opposite to a decline to 'iron and rust' is also represented elsewhere: Cassius Dio, at the end of his description of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, wrote that his work "now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day" (LXXII.36.4). For Gibbon, as well, the "golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron" (vol. I: 104) indicating his view that what preceded and followed this period of the Empire was inferior.

Also influential on Gibbon were the writings of Tacitus whose *Historiae* narrated the early greatness of the Empire allowing Gibbon, drawing on authors such as Cassius Dio, to begin his description of decline; he puts this at the end of the Antonine period with the death of Commodus in A.D. 192 (Garnsey and Humfress 2001: 217; Pocock 2003: 17). The first century B.C. work by Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, also explores the idea of decline and decay: "the walls of the mighty world...shall be stormed all around, and shall collapse into crumbling ruin" (II.1144-6); the decay of the state is compared with the decay of the natural world. Cicero's *De republica* (54-1 B.C.) contains similar sentiments, whilst Virgil's *Georgics* (published in 29 B.C.), drawing on Hesiod and Lucretius, describes an agricultural golden age which can then lead to decline (Johnston 1980). These written works projected a Roman élite viewpoint centred on Rome and are unlikely to represent the complexity of viewpoints across the Empire.

These ancient texts influenced the Renaissance humanist writers such as the fifteenth century Leonardo Bruni, who described the decline of Rome beginning from the moment that the Republic ended, with the loss of liberty and virtue, and Flavio Biondo who wrote of the moral decline of Rome (Pocock 2003: 166-78, 190). Machiavelli described political decline and constitutional change (Burke 1976: 140); in the *Discorsi* (*The Discourses* 1513-1517 [1970]) he analysed principles of the republic[23] and suggested that men could be virtuous only if the republic allowed free, equal and arms-bearing citizens (Womersley 1994: xxvii). For Machiavelli, Rome, from the very beginning, was set to fail and decline since it would lead to empire, the loss of freedom and disintegration; the fall of the republic was the first decline and fall (Pocock 2003: 207-10). Gibbon held these works in his library and would have read them in preparation for his writing (figure 3.2; Keynes ed. 1950).[24] Another work in his collection was *Leviathan* (1651) by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), a book on the natural condition of mankind. In times of war or insecurity "everyman is enemy to everyman"

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[23] *Il Principe* [*The Prince* 1998] published in 1513 explored monarchy.

[24] An approximate catalogue of the books in Edward Gibbon's library at Bentinck Street was constructed by Geoffrey Keynes in the 1930s through an investigation of an extensive card-catalogue of Gibbon's Lausanne library, which is held in the British Museum, research in the London auction houses and an earlier catalogue compiled in the nineteenth century (Keynes ed. 1950: 1-2).

because of the fear of violent death (1946 [1651]: 82); there is no place for culture or industry and the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (*ibid.*).[25] These views are also reminescent of Gibbon's writings on life in the Roman Empire in the later Roman period.

Figure 3.2: Bentinck Street, London. The site of Edward Gibbon's house and library, with the blue plaque, is in the centre of the row on the right hand side of the street (photograph by the author).

Gibbon's concept of decline was largely an élitist cultural creation reflecting his own attitudes and concepts of civilisation, which matched and developed those of society at the time. Gibbon, and his contemporaries, were reinventing Rome in a period of British expansion and colonialism (Hingley 2000: 29). Gibbon also owned a copy of the speeches of Aristides (Keynes ed. 1950), an orator who spoke of the wonders of the Roman Empire in the age of the Antonines (Schiavone 2000).[26] Aristides' attitudes about cities and Roman life are reflected in Gibbon's writing, as is Strabo's view of agriculture versus the barbarity of pastoralism preceding urbanism (which mirrors the British aristocratic notion of farming and land ownership):[27] "The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps" (Gibbon vol. I: 74) and "[the Romans] subdued and civilised so considerable a part of mankind" (vol. III: 200). The influence of these views and Gibbon's text can also be seen in later works such as that by Francis Haverfield, who wrote on the 'romanisation' of Britain (*e.g.* Haverfield 1912), in a work which was also highly influential later (*e.g.* Frere 1967 and Millett 1990).

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[25] Esmonde Cleary's remark that the end of Roman Britain was "nasty, brutish and short" (see section 6.2; 1989a: 161) clearly draws on Hobbes.

[26] Examples are: "cities shine with radiance and grace" (*Or.* XXVI.99) and "the whole world has been adorned like a pleasure garden" (XXVI.99) whereas previously life was "harsh, rustic, and little different from living on a mountain" (XXVI.101).

[27] Strabo writes, for example: "Formally the Allobroges kept up warfare with many myriads of men, whereas now they till the plains and the glens that are in the Alps, and all of them live in villages, except that the most notable of them, inhabitants of Vienna (formerly a village, but called, nevertheless, the "metropolis" of the tribe), have built it up into a city" (IV.1.11).

The word 'civilisation' itself originated in the eighteenth century amongst political economists and was used to describe the progress of the enlightened society which could make things 'civil' (Burrow 1985: 81; Furet 1976: 209; see also discussions in Foucault *e.g.* 1970).[28] By the 1800s it was seen as both a process and an achieved condition associated with social order, refined manners and behaviour (T. Patterson 1997: 42). The idea of civilisation played a major part in the rise of the states of modern Western Europe and was also linked with colonial expansion (*ibid.*: 27, 30). Modern society was considered superior to previous states of human existence and changes within the modern age were compared with, and projected back to, the Roman period. This, paradoxically, meant that the Roman period was being understood within the context of a society that was now greatly different. Gibbon's journey to Italy on his Grand Tour consisted, apart from his visit to Rome itself, not of travels to sites of Roman remains, but of a journey through the Renaissance and Baroque landscape and through the cities, palaces and museums of art, fashion and collections of Roman antiquities. Gibbon was "voyaging through the history of taste" (Pocock 1999a: 276-9), seeing and constructing Rome through modern eyes. His *The Decline and Fall* represented "Gibbon's Roman Empire" rather than that of the Roman period itself (Jordan 1971).

The Roman Empire described in *The Decline and Fall* was seen through Gibbon's eyes, but Gibbon did not create the social and intellectual milieu of his day single-handedly. Gibbon has been described as an historian of the Enlightenment and he was also in regular contact with a number of contemporary British historians including David Hume, William Robertson, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith (Pocock 1976: 153). The Enlightenment was rooted in the belief in reason and commerce against religion (Collingwood 1946: 76; Pocock 1999b: 371; V. Woolf 1943: 59). His "dear friend Hume" (Gibbon 1966: 156) read and commented on parts of the *Decline and Fall* and Gibbon, after reading Adam Smith's work, was increasingly aware of, and influenced by, economic and social factors; in chapter two, for example, Gibbon defends luxury from an economic standpoint (Gibbon vol. I: 80; Burke 1976: 149). This emphasis on economics has also influenced intepretations within archaeology and has had an impact on the way in which change in the later Roman period has been conceived.

3.4 Gibbon's character and upbringing

Gibbon was influenced by the writings of the Roman élite and contemporary social attitudes to civilisation, but his own character and upbringing, were also vital for the work that he undertook. His mother having died when he was aged ten, Gibbon was brought up by a father preoccupied with class and society, who was able to live the life of a country gentleman due to the wealth made by his own father (Gibbon 1966: 24). Consequently, Gibbon greatly

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[28] Much of Foucault's work (*e.g.* 1970) set out to analyse the way in which Western society has thought about and grouped things according to constructed concepts of civilisation.

valued and appreciated the British aristocratic system and believed in the importance of birth and standing (Momigliano 1966: 48; Quennell 1945: 76). At school he was able to learn Latin and Greek and remarked that such schools "deposit in the hands of a disciple the keys of two valuable chests" (Gibbon 1966: 38). Gibbon also described his interest in Roman history as a child: "I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast" (*ibid.*: 42). From an early age he believed in the importance of history and lived his life through books (Porter 1988: 44). At fifteen he was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was attracted by the "size and beauty of the public edifices" and his "vanity was flattered by the velvet Cap and silk gown which discriminate a Gentleman-Commoner from a plebeian student" (Gibbon 1966: 46). Gibbon records how he had imagined that "the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus" (*ibid.*: 47).

After having to leave Oxford for converting to Catholicism, he was sent to Lausanne in Switzerland by his father in the hope that he would revert to Anglicanism (Jordan 1976: 4). There, he was able to learn Latin and Greek with much greater proficiency; as a break from the Greek, Gibbon would withdraw "to the free and familiar conversation of Virgil and Tacitus" (Gibbon 1966: 75) and this increased an admiration for Rome which culminated in his year-long trip to Italy. In adult life Gibbon, through the wealth inherited from his father, was able to live a life of leisure and he valued external markers of class such as his membership of many of the London clubs (*ibid.*: 155; Brownley 1976: 21).

Gibbon also believed in the virtues of the British parliamentary system and became a member of parliament himself (Gibbon 1966: 155-6). He despised, and was suspicious of, the masses and feared trouble and revolution.[29] In chapter VII of *The Decline and Fall*, Gibbon attributed the peace and prosperity of Europe in 1776 to a recognition of the "superior prerogative of birth" (vol. I: 188; quoted in Bowersock 1976: 64), advocating his preference for hereditary monarchy. He compared this situation in Europe with Rome and saw the failure of the Antonine dynastic line as the beginning of the end (Pocock 2003: 451). Further comparisons include a comment to his friend Deyverdun: "la decadence de Deux Empires, le Romain et le Britannique s'avancent à pas egaux" (Norton vol. II, 1956: 218; quoted in Schiavone 2000: 18).[30] Gibbon's upbringing led him to value the British Empire and class system, and what it stood for, and thus comparisons with the Roman Empire, his other great interest, were inevitable. The term 'decline and fall', in this context, is itself imperialist (*cf.* Bowles 2006: 16) indicating further the influences of the imperialism of Gibbon's day on his writing.

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[29] This made his work different to French philosophy and history which was influenced by revolution (Jordan 1971: 73).
[30] The decline of the two empires, Roman and British, proceed at an equal pace.

3.5 Gibbon and archaeology

Gibbon had always been interested in the surviving remains of Roman structures in Rome and they were important in shaping his ideas: "I can never forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the eternal City" (Gibbon 1966: 134). "After a sleepless night [Gibbon] trod with a lofty step the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell was at once present to [his] eye" (*ibid.*). This was also the location in which Gibbon says that he first got the idea for writing his work: "it was among the ruins of the Capitol, that I first conceived the idea" (vol. VI: 1085). Gibbon took an interest in the remains themselves, not devoting himself entirely to the classical sources; indeed his first intention was not to write about the Roman Empire as a whole but simply the "decay of the City" (1966: 136). At this time there were many antiquarian and archaeological studies connected with the Roman period and there was a surge in the popularity of classical antiquities, especially amongst the British aristocracy;[31] in the words of Moatti (1989: 59), "Rome et ses vestiges sont dans tous les cœurs".[32] There was an emphasis placed on classics in education with knowledge of Latin becoming a symbol of both erudition and class distinction (Farrell 2001: 97).[33] On the Grand Tour, travellers equated themselves with the Roman élite (J. Black 1985: 235).

Stukeley's society, the *Equites Romani* (Society of the Roman Knights), was founded in 1722 and the Society of Dilettanti in 1732. Members visited sites, compared findings, discussed future projects, adopted Roman names and organised Roman style banquets (Ayres 1997: 61, 92), as if continuing the Roman lifestyle and civilisation. Gibbon also founded the Roman Club in 1765 (*ibid.*: 61) which in his memoirs he terms a "weekly convivial meeting" (G.B. Hill ed. 1900: 169) although he does not record its activities.[34] These celebrations of Rome contrasted with depictions of pre-Roman Britain, such as in de Loutherbourg's etching *The Britons* (1793) which illustrates a scythe-wheeled chariot and war gear next to a standing stone; Smiles (1994: 218-9) suggests that the words 'The Britons' in classical type cut across the image effectively imposes civilisation on these primitive peoples.

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[31] Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) advocated in his 1711 three-volume work *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* that one must travel to Rome to "inquire which are the truest Pieces of Architecture" and "the best Remains of Statues" (quoted in Thurber 2001: 63). For the politician and writer Joseph Addison (1672-1719) the tour served to "steep oneself in the glories that the English sought to recreate" (Addison 1705; quoted in Thurber 2001: 65). In the publication of his travels to Italy he wrote that there is "no place in the world where a man may travel with greater pleasure and advantage than in Italy" it "contains in it the noblest productions of statuary and architecture, both ancient and modern" (1854: 357).

[32] Rome and its remains were in everyone's heart.

[33] This is also reflected in the literature of the day such as Oliver Goldsmith's play *She Stoops to Conquer* (2001 [1773]): "who knows what a year or two of Latin would do for him [a rather unruly son]?". Goldsmith was a member of the Literary Club along with Samuel Johnson, Adam Smith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Gibbon himself (Gibbon 1966: 166). Goldsmith also wrote an immensely successful school book entitled *Roman History* (1769) which continued to be published and revised into the second half of the nineteenth century (Vance 1997: 57).

[34] An edited list of the club's members is given in George Birkbeck Hill's edition of Gibbon's *Memoirs* (1900: 169) taken from Lord Sheffield's 1827 edition: Lord Mountstuart (now Marquis of Bute), Colonel Edmonstone, William Weddal, Rev. Mr. Palgrave, Earl of Berkley, Godfrey Clarke (Member for Derbyshire), Holroyd (Lord Sheffield), Major Ridley Thomas Charles Bigge, Sir William Guize, Sir John Aubrey, the late Earl of Abingdon, Hon. Peregrine Bertie, Rev. Mr. Cleaver, Hon. John Damer, Hon. George Damer (late Earl of Dorchester), Sir Thomas Gascoyne, Sir John Hort, E. Gibbon.

3.5.1 *Gibbon and antiquarianism*

Gibbon's interest in the city of Rome and its remains can be seen in the material that he read; he records how, through this, he began to "collect the substance of my Roman decay" (1966: 146). In Lausanne in 1763, for instance, he read the fourth volume of Graevius' *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanorum* (1694-9) containing Nardini's *Roma Antica* (1666), which describes all the Roman period remains in Rome (Ghosh 1997: 281).[35] Gibbon also read the works of the English antiquarians such as Whitaker, Gale, Stukeley,[36] Camden, Dugdale and Horsley (Womersley 1994: xii) and he drew upon and commented on many of their writings. More problematic was his use of the forged work of Richard of Cirencester (1335-1401) on the history of Roman Britain by Charles Bertrum (1723-1765) which, although described by Gibbon as "feeble" (vol. II: 999, note 111), was not challenged (Sweet 2004: 178).[37] Drawing on this bogus work, Gibbon wrote of the nine colonies in Britain "of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath still remain considerable cities" (vol. I: 64).

In his study of Roman roads Gibbon refers to the itineraries of "Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy" (Gibbon vol. I: 77, note 85). For Britain under the Empire he refers to "our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley" (vol. I: 33, note 8), valuing Camden especially highly: he was "the British Strabo" and "the father of our antiquities" (vol. II: 997, note 109; vol. III: 22, note 11). Gibbon was able to use the material critically: "Dr. Stukely (*sic*) in particular has devoted a large volume to the British emperor [Carausius]. I have used his materials, and rejected most of his fanciful conjections" (vol. I: 366, note 28). Gibbon also referred to antiquarians from other countries including France, Germany and Italy (vol. III: 138, note 55; 488, note 113).

He was especially interested in antiquarian work carried out within towns, and large parts of the text are devoted to Rome which is seen as reflecting the Roman Empire as a whole. In chapters LXIX and LXXI Gibbon describes Rome in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries after its 'decline'. By the twelfth century "Rome had been already stripped of her trophies" but there remained the "venerable aspect of her ruins, and the memory of past greatness" (Gibbon vol. VI: 978-9). Gibbon refers to the remarks of Poggio Bracciolini, the Italian Rennaissance

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[35] In his journal entry for the 2nd October 1763 Gibbon writes: "J'ai lu Nardini...il est excellent" (Bonnard ed. 1945: 73) and for the 29th October he refers to "mon ami Nardini" (*ibid.*: 119). A number of entries in his journal start with "J'ai lu Cluvier *Italia Antiqua*" indicating that this too formed a major part of his knowledge of the Roman remains of Italy.

[36] It is of note that M. Johnson (2006: 127) has drawn attention to the intellectual connections between Stukeley (1687-1765) and the Romantic poet Wordsworth (1770-1850) in his discussions of the Romanticism of the British phenomenological tradition. This intellectual atmosphere will also have influenced Gibbon especially with his politically Conservative outlook which it has been suggested, impacted upon eighteenth and nineteenth century (and to the modern day) perceptions of landscape (Everett 1994).

[37] Richard of Cirencester was a historical writer and monk. For uncertain motives, in 1757 Charles Bertrum published a work entitled *Rerum Gentium Historiae Antiquae Scriptores Tres*, part of which contained the forged work of Richard of Westminster which Stukeley equated with Richard of Cirencester. The writing included additions to the itineraries of Roman Britain amongst other falsities (Sweet 2004: 175-81).

humanist (1380-1459), that the "forum of the Roman people, where they assembled to enact their laws and elect their magistrates, is now enclosed for cultivation of pot-herbs, or thrown open for the reception of swine and buffaloes" (vol. VI: 1063) and this echoes Gibbon's own comments about cattle now grazing within the amphitheatre at Lambesa in Algeria (vol. IV: 645). By describing the Empire in ruins in this way Gibbon was demonstrating its decline but also, by contrast, emphasising the greatness of the 'Golden Age' of Rome, an era he saw as comparable to his own time; one of increasing wealth and colonial exploits (Kelly 1997: 48).

Gibbon envisaged and described the decline of the Roman Empire through the physical destruction of its public buildings and monuments but he also recognised the importance of the remains in providing access to the past grandeur of the Empire; similar access to that later valued by archaeological projects of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. He stated, for example, that "the splendour of Verona can be traced in its remains" (vol. I: 75) whilst in volume III he lamented that "the ruin of the fairest structures of antiquity still displays the ravages of those Barbarians" (vol. III: 81). For Gibbon, they were "Majestic ruins" (vol. I: 70), and he was irritated that in medieval Rome "the forms of ancient architecture were disregarded by a people insensible of their use and beauty [because of their barbarism]" (vol. VI: 1072). This is linked to his understanding of and attitude to 'archaeological' investigation: "the resurrection [of statues and other remains] was fortunately delayed till a safer and more enlightened age" (vol. VI: 1082). The remains were thus interpreted through the 'enlightened' mindset with the resultant emphasis on the grandeur and monumental nature of buildings.

Apart from the work on prehistoric monuments, such as that by Stukeley and Aubrey, and interests in Celts and Druids (Morse 2005; Smiles 1994),[38] much of 'archaeology', especially for Gibbon, was concerned with the Roman period[39] and he was well aware of activities at the time: "the map, the description, the monuments of ancient Rome, have been elucidated by the diligence of the antiquarian and the student" (vol. III: 1084). Other excavations included those at Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Palace of Domitian (J. Matthews 1997: 27; Moatti 1989: 70-4; Parslow 1995: 233). These excavations will have encouraged Gibbon's views regarding the splendour and comfort of the Roman Empire and its subsequent decline.

3.5.2 *Gibbon's writing style*

Gibbon's language and unique style, such as the conversation he provides in his footnotes (Womersley 2002: 1-2), was also an important part of the work's popularity. He rewrote parts

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[38]In the mid- to later-seventeenth century Aubrey, for example, carried out much work documenting the megaliths around Britain, largely interpreting them as druid temples (Morse 2005: 36). Stukeley, in the early-eighteenth century, saw prehistoric sites like Stonehenge as Celtic monuments (*ibid.*: 70).

[39] Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818), an emminent archaeologist in Rome, defined archaeology as "the fruit of a judicious reading of the classics, of a diligent comparison of monuments, of a sure taste for the fine arts, a deep knowledge of the customs, laws, religion, and the character of the ancient peoples" (quoted in Gross 1990: 311 and Thurber 2001: 56 from papers in the Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica).

of the text numerous times in order to achieve his required effect. For Gibbon, history was a form of literature intended not only to instruct but also to entertain (Craddock 1988: 569); the art of story telling, of narrative, was important and is one major reason why the work is still being read today. Gibbon knew his audience and wrote what they wanted to read; his writing was supporting social and political attitudes of the day. Consequently, situations, events and descriptions will have been exaggerated, over-dramatic and idealised. Within *The Decline and Fall*, the language used to describe changes to the Empire and the fortunes of individuals was very much related to images of the structural decline of physical buildings that Gibbon had witnessed himself in Rome, and the words 'decay' and 'ruin' appear frequently. He speaks of the "ruin of the Pagan religion" (vol. III: 90), the "decay of taste and genius" (vol. VI: 391), the "Ruin of Abundantius" and "the destruction of Timasius", figures in the decline of the Empire (vol. III: 242), and the "Desolation of Africa" (vol. III: 284).

Gibbon's literary technique, which deliberately used language in the classical style (Ayres 1997: 60-1), required a build-up of extravagance and grandeur, the 'Golden Age', before he could contrast this with decline and fall. The end of the attributes of élite civilisation valued by Gibbon could only be portrayed by him as decline. Indeed, even the prospect of reading texts in Vulgar Latin as research for his work, as opposed to those written by his "assiduous companions" (Gibbon 1966: 132) of classical Rome, repelled him, as did Byzantine culture. This intensified the image he portrayed of decline and the "darkness of the middle ages" (*ibid.*: 147; Dawson 1934: 171; McKitterick 1997: 166). Gibbon speaks of "the declining age of learning and of mankind" and the "decline of arts and of empire", showing his attitude to this later period and, as J. Matthews (1997: 32) has suggested, this method of studying the late Roman period, and judging it by the standards of an earlier age, has very much survived to this day (*e.g.* B. Ward-Perkins 2005).

This contrasts greatly with the language used by Gibbon to describe cities and public buildings before the decline. Of the public buildings and other monuments Gibbon declares that their "greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention" but they were also important because they connected "the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful of human manners" since many were built at "private expense" for "public benefit" (vol. I: 70). Bathhouses had been constructed "with Imperial magnificence" and "elegance of design" (vol. III: 184) whilst the *Forum* of Rome was described by Gibbon as being "proud" since it was "decorated with the statues of so many gods and heroes" (vol. III: 204). For Gibbon, these "exquisite statues...displayed the triumph of the arts" (vol. III: 81). Buildings had "beauty", examples being the circus at Constantinople (vol. II: 597) and the "majestic dome of the Pantheon in Rome" (vol. III: 80). Due to the emphasis Gibbon placed upon magnitude,

grandeur and convenience, the aqueducts were seen as the "noblest monuments" (vol. I: 74) and "stupendous" (vol. III: 184).

That Gibbon considered the public buildings to be the most important features of a Roman city is also shown by the language he used to describe their later histories: the "fairest forms of architecture were rudely defaced" (vol. III: 374), the "most exquisite works of art were roughly handled" and the palaces were "rudely stripped of their splendid and costly furniture" (vol. III: 204). Cities and their public buildings were central to the Roman Empire; through the violation of the city, Roman civilisation was threatened.

3.5.3 *Gates and civilisation*

Gibbon's distaste for the "swarms of barbarians" (vol. I: 276), and what they did to the towns and public buildings in the late Roman period, is reflected in the violence that is expressed as they approached city gates and entered 'civilisation'. The gates of Carthage, for example, were described as being "thrown open" in A.D. 535 whilst the invaders "burst open the gates" of Naples in A.D. 537 (vol. IV: 631, 656). Similarly, the gates of Constantinople were "thrown open" and at a later date "three gates were burst open" (vol. VI: 683, 690). In other instances Gibbon describes the danger of barbarians pressing up against the gates of the cities: the barbarians spread "terror as far as the gates of Rome" (vol. I: 296) and in the time of Aurelian "the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome" (vol. I: 309). At a later time, the barbarian Rhodogast "marched from the northern extremities of Germany almost to the gates of Rome" (vol. III: 143). In Rome the untrustworthy masses, "an innumerable people", "pressed, with impetuous zeal, against the gates of the palace" (vol. III: 42). Gates could admit beneficial or bar harmful events: "the citizens refused to open their gates" (vol. I: 369); "the gates of the city were shut against [Maxentius]" (vol. I: 423); "[Severus] found on his arrival the gates of the city shut against him" (vol. I: 409); but "Tarsus opened its gates, and the soldiers of Florianus…delivered the empire from civil war" (vol. I: 335).

Gates were also used as geographical markers of civilisation: Theodosius had his headquarters at Thessalonica, for instance, so that "the irregular motions of the Barbarians" could be watched "from the gates of Constantinople to the shores of the Hadriatic" (vol. II: 1075). Other references include: "as far as the gates of Ctesiphon" (vol. I: 313), the "long march from Thessalonica to the gates of Constantinople" (vol. III: 136) and Alaric resolved to "conquer or die before the gates of Rome" (vol. III: 136). The city gates for Gibbon were important for controlling movement and by seeing them in this way he largely divorces towns from the rest of the landscape.

3.5.4 *Gibbon and pre-Roman settlement*

The pre-Roman significance of landscapes played little rôle in Gibbon's understanding of the Roman town except for the way in which they were transformed: "(T)he spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of the medicinal waters" (vol. I: 74-5). Here Gibbon is clearly applying his modern views of the towns to the past.

Of course, at the time in which Gibbon was writing, there was very limited knowledge in Britain of pre-Roman settlement sites such as *oppida*. Work by William Camden (1551-1623) and John Speed (1542-1629) linked names mentioned within the classical texts with those found on pre-Roman coinage, such as Ver for Verulamium and Camv for Camulodunon (Hingley 2006a: 333); Horsley's *Britannia Romana* (1974 [1732]) also demonstrates awareness of sites of pre-Roman Britain. This suggests that at this early date, pre-Roman peoples were being linked with known places and monuments in the landscape (*ibid.*) which Gibbon would have been able to draw upon for his understanding of Roman and pre-Roman Britain. These places were being identified at a period in time when the ways of understanding and interpreting landscape and urbanism were changing rapidly (see chapters 4 and 5). It is not possible to criticise Gibbon's approach to pre-Roman settlement since 'archaeology' and 'prehistory' in their modern sense had no meaning in work at this time (*cf.* Hingley 2008).

It is useful, however, to examine the way in which Gibbon described the settlement of the period. His attitude about the rôle of woodland, wetlands and other natural places to the lives of the indigenous peoples drew upon the classical texts but also the political context in which Gibbon was writing. This context had little or nothing to do with attitudes in prehistory or the Roman period. Gibbon writes for example that the "only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations" (vol. I: 245) and "(T)he sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany" (vol. I footnote 63: 245).[40] With regard to the Suebi, Gibbon draws on the writings of Tacitus in the *Germania*. "In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the Marquisate of Lusace, there existed, in ancient times, a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suebi"

[40] Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (A.D. 39-69) was a poet whose works included (his only surviving work) the ten volume *Pharsalia* (The Civil War) describing the contest between Caesar and the Senate. In Book III he describes a sacred grove in the vicinity of Marseilles: "a grove there was, untouched by men's hands from ancient times, whose interlacing boughs enclosed a space of darkness and cold shade, and banished the sunlight far above...gods were worshipped there with savage rites, the altars were heaped with hideous offerings, and every tree was sprinkled with human gore...This grove was sentenced by Caesar to fall before the stroke of the axe; for it grew near his works...But strong arms faltered; and the men (were) awed by the solemnity and terror of the place" (Luc. *Pharsalia* III, 399-432).

(vol. I: 271).[41] He also refers to the Alamanni with their "native deities of the woods and rivers" (vol. IV: 759-60).

For indigenous, *i.e.* barbarian, settlements, Gibbon drew on descriptions in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* which describes strongholds of woods and marshes: "(W)e can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion" (vol. I: 235).[42] Woods were used by Gibbon as a method of emphasising the savagery and danger of the barbarians. Attacks from barbarians came from woods, in contrast to the civilisation of walled towns: "The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, suddenly attacked the legions" (vol. I: 308-9), with other phrases being: "the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests" (vol. III: 121), "a crowd of naked savages rushed from the woods" (vol. III: 281); "the secret paths of the woods" (vol. II: 1066), "dark recesses of the woods" (vol. II: 1077) and the "thick and gloomy woods" (vol. II: 124).

The term 'woods and morasses' (bogs/marshes) occurs a number of times throughout the work emphasising the barbarity of the indigenous peoples compared with the civilisation of the Romans. Woodland clearance and the drainage of marshland by the Romans were considered to represent improvement, civilisation and rationalisation, as was the drainage of the Fenland in Gibbon's time (Darby 1973; Rogers 2007). Economic exploitation of woods and land was to be favoured as it was within the British colonies of Gibbon's day, where Western concepts of 'landscape' were implanted on other regions.[43] Commenting on more recent times, Gibbon wrote that in Germany, the "immense woods have been gradually cleared" and the "morasses have been drained" (vol. I: 232). It "is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture" that instead of "some rude villages, thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany produced a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns" (vol. III: 512). Gibbon will also have been well aware of more recent history of British activity in areas such as Ireland where the barbarity of the places, represented by features such as woods and marshland, were used as part of the excuse for political takeover (*e.g.* Andrews 1976: 455).[44] He then uses the imagery of woodland and marsh to illustrate the

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[41] On this subject Tacitus, to whom Gibbon refers in footnote eighty-one of Chapter X, wrote that "at fixed seasons all tribes of the same name and blood gather through their delegations at a certain forest and after publicly offering up a human life, they celebrated the grim initiation of their barbarous worship" (*Germ.* XXXIX).

[42] Caesar refers to the significance of woodland for the indigenous peoples: the Suebi sent "their children and all their stuff to the woods" (*B Gall.* IV.19) and the "Menapii had all hidden in their densest forests" (*ibid.*: IV.38). On Caesar's second invasion of Britain he mentions how Cassivellaunus "concealed himself in entangled positions among the woods" (*ibid.*: V.19) and that the stronghold of Cassivellaunus was "fenced by woods and marshes" (*ibid.*: V.21). Caesar goes on to write that "the Britons call it a stronghold when they have fortified a thick-set woodland with rampart and trench" (*ibid.*).

[43] In the footnotes of Gibbon's text he records that America "must preserve the manners of Europe" (vol. III: 514), such as the organisation of landscape, and on the colonisation of Australia and New Zealand he wrote that "five great voyages were undertaken for "the pure and generous love of science and of mankind". They also "introduced into the islands of the South Sea the vegetables and animals most useful to human life" (vol. III: 516).

[44] This included Henry VIII's and Cromwell's Ireland campaigns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Andrews 1976; Hayes-McCoy 1976).

"decline" of the West after Rome: "Gaul was again overspread with woods" (vol. III: 481) and in Britain "an ample space of wood and morass was resigned to the vague dominion of nature" with areas returned to their primitive state of a "savage and solitary forest" (vol. III: 502-3).

It is clear from these passages that Gibbon did think about the impact of Roman conquest on the pre-Roman indigenous settlements and natural places but he also considered these pre-Roman places to be inferior to the towns and civilisation that the Romans were introducing. Our knowledge of pre-Roman Britain now indicates that there was much woodland clearance before the conquest (Haselgrove 1999) but areas of trees and other natural places, such as watery contexts, are likely to have been special places (chapter 4). More significant, however, was Gibbon's metaphorical use of these landscape features as images of barbarity to demonstrate the benefits of civilisation. The changes to towns in the late Roman period were envisaged by Gibbon as equivalent to the decline of civilisation as he understood it, and the commencement of the fall. Gibbon's attitudes to pre- and late Roman settlement have remained influential in the interpretations of the archaeology of these periods. New approaches have been taken in Iron Age studies, but late Roman studies also need to be transformed.

3.6 Conclusions

For Gibbon, cities and their public buildings were physical representations of civilisation and, through his descriptions and use of language, *The Decline and Fall* was highly influential in forming the impressions of its readers. The "number and greatness of its (the Empire's) cities" (vol. I: 75) was clearly important to Gibbon and this resulted in descriptive language of the decline of buildings and city life in the late Roman period. Pre-conquest settlement pattern in Western Europe was also considered to be inferior – the landscape could only be improved through the draining of wetlands, the clearance of forest and the establishment of Roman towns. Gibbon's work was then drawn upon in contemporary imperialist agenda because of the historical precedent that he portrayed in Rome bringing civilisation to the people that they conquered.

In Gibbon's opinion of the late Roman period, "Rome was still adored as the queen of the earth" (vol. III: 175), but we might wonder whether this was the case with everyone across the Empire. Gibbon's attitudes were formed by his upbringing, position in society, the British imperialist background in which he was writing, knowledge of Classical authors and the writings of the Renaissance and Enlightenment.

Although there have been many studies of Gibbon's work, his knowledge of and interest in Rome's structural remains and other Roman sites in the antiquarian or archaeological sense

has not been adequately addressed. Through his writing and descriptions he influenced archaeological approaches to Roman urbanism, public buildings and late Roman towns as well as methods of understanding the pre-Roman settlement record.

Chapter 4: What was a town in Roman Britain?

4.1 Introduction

The question 'what is a town?' is often asked when discussing urbanism in the late Roman period (*e.g.* Halsall 1996: 276-7; Leone 1999: 121; R. White 2000: 107), but usually answered without sufficient discussion of the complex issue of urbanism in the late Iron Age and earlier Roman period. Towns in Roman Britain are generally considered to be one of the more straightforward and easily understood features of the Roman period, with urbanisation representing unproblematic progress from pre-existing settlement patterns. Studies of the late Roman period have often taken the nature of the town for granted before they begin their analyses of decline and change. Studies of the development of Roman urbanism also put less emphasis on the significance of the pre-Roman landscape and settlement pattern. Drawing on theories and methodologies from prehistoric (*e.g.* Bradley 2000) and Roman archaeology, it will be proposed that Roman towns were far more complex than is traditionally considered (*cf.* Willis 2007a). Other disciplines addressing landscape, place, space and settlement will also be drawn upon. As J.D. Hill laid out in an argument for rethinking the Iron Age (1989), it is necessary to address the 'unfamiliar' of the Roman period, including issues concerning urbanism.

This chapter explores the ways in which Roman towns have been studied, including the emphasis on legal definitions to understand sites, the association of towns with the concept of civilisation, and the nature of town planning. The study of Roman towns in antiquarian work and early archaeology is also examined, with an assessment of how this context of Roman urban studies influenced the ways in which towns have been approached and understood. An evaluation of Roman urban theory is then undertaken, especially to address the emphasis on economic and rational interpretations of urbanism. Then, alternative ways of understanding towns and their setting are explored. In particular, this will include an analysis of theories relating to landscape and how the landscapes will have influenced perceptions of the towns that were placed within them.

4.2 Civilisation and the early interest in Roman towns

Classical texts and perceptions of Roman élite living were influential within Roman studies in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (*cf.* Hingley 2000), impacting on archaeological work including the excavation of Roman towns. During the Renaissance, interest in both classical texts and Roman remains grew throughout Europe.[45] The early and

[45] Classical works such as *De architectura* by Vitruvius were being increasingly relied upon to create the Renaissance 'ideal city' (Carl 2000: 33). Contemporary publications were written on the subject drawing upon Vitruvius. *De re aedificatoria* (1452), for example, by Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), published in ten books, stated that the art of building consisted of locality, area,

mid-sixteenth century saw a number of 'excavations' in Rome, uncovering Roman buildings and reusing statues and architectural components such as columns (D. Moore 1996: 120-1). Monuments were of great interest to humanists and early antiquarians (Moatti 1989). This interest in the Roman period also had the effect of associating Renaissance understandings of urbanism with the Roman period (H. Carter 1972: 17; Perring 2002a: 9-10); attitudes to and understandings of the city were projected back from Renaissance present to Roman past.[46]

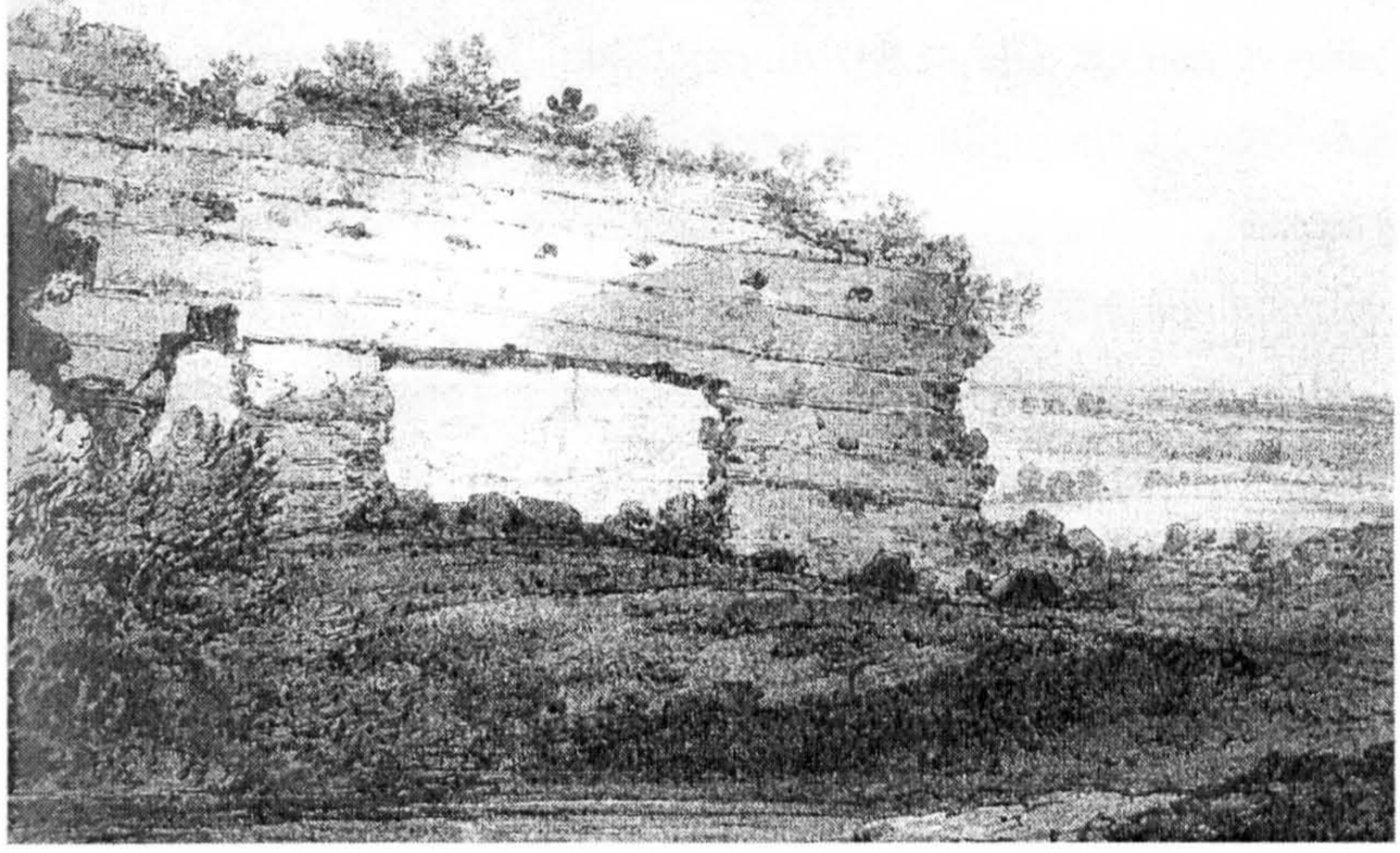

Figure 4.1: A romanticised painting of the 'Old Work' at Wroxeter by Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) taken from R. White and Barker (1998).

Studies, especially drawings, were produced of individual surviving Roman architectural elements with the intent of understanding the architecture and copying it (Campbell 2004).[47] This further increased the emphasis on monumental architecture, resulting in negative attitudes towards changes in the late Roman and post-Roman periods. Visible remains also attracted interest in Britain: the 'Jewry Wall' in Leicester, the Newport Arch in Lincoln and the 'Old Work' at Wroxeter (figure 4.1) were all studied, drawn and engraved, often being romanticised.[48] This projected contemporary views and attitudes onto the Roman remains, in much the same way as artists had done in Rome.[49] Thomas Ashby (1874-1931), director of the British School at Rome (Hodges 2000: 27), amongst others created images of Rome

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compartition, wall, roof and openings and the style of architecture advocated mirrored the classical tradition greatly (trans. Rykwert *et al.* 1999; Goalen 1995: 185).

[46] In his first book of the four volume *De Varietate Fortunae* (1447-8) Poggio Bracciolini, for example, described how he felt when he visited the remains in Rome: "here I very often take myself, dumbfounded with amazement, in imagination carrying myself back to the times when senatorial speeches were delivered there, and pretending that I am listening to Lucius Crassus, Hortensius or Cicero orating" (quoted in Muecke 2003: 207).

[47] Many of the drawings known today were collected and commissioned by Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657).

[48] An example is the 1798 watercolour of the 'Old Work' by Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), a painter who specialised in landscapes. It has a pond and shrubs added to the foreground to make it more 'idyllic' (R. White and Barker 1998: colour plate 1). The 'Old Work' was also the subject of an engraving by D. Parkes in 1812 (*ibid.*: 14).

[49] *e.g.* Giovanni Battista Piranesi 1720-1778.

through collections of Renaissance drawings and discoveries made in the city. He has been described as a 'late Grand Tourist' who put an emphasis on the romantic and the lost world of classical monumentalism (*ibid.*: 38, 96). His landscape studies around Rome (1902; 1927) influenced the way in which Roman landscapes have been understood and studied (*e.g.* H. Patterson *et al.* 2004). Earlier in his career, after being tutored by Francis Haverfield in Oxford, he led a major series of excavations at Caerwent between 1900 and 1910 (influenced by the Silchester excavations of 1898).

Studies of Roman urbanism in Britain have widely viewed towns through notions of romanisation and civilisation. Views have mainly taken the Roman perspective, seeing urbanisation in terms of introducing progressive and desirable forms of settlement into Britain, institutions that were judged to be hugely beneficial to the indigenous barbarian peoples (*e.g.* Frere 1967: 203; Haverfield 1913: 123; Owens 1991).[50] For Britain, Hingley (2000) has shown that these attitudes are partly related to the development of Roman archaeology within the context of British imperialism in which the élite of the day identified itself with Rome. Archaeology has often concentrated on the 'civilising' aspects of Roman culture such as villas and towns (Hingley 2000: 149-52). Thus Richmond (1963: 55) wrote that "the instrument of civilisation used by Rome in achieving results was the town" and for Collingwood and Richmond (1969: 95) towns were "bulwarks of loyalty". They were centres of civilised life with administration, education, trade, amusement, amenity and protection (Wacher 1975: 26). On the Continent, too, it has been demonstrated that perceptions of the Roman period have concentrated largely on the Roman élite viewpoint (King 2001; Terrenato 2001).

This emphasis on civilisation is also reflected in the classical sources, where the absence of the city is synonymous with savagery and towns are expressed as tools to civilise the natives (Esmonde Cleary 1989a: 38; Lomas 1997: 22; Perkins and Nevett 2000: 213-4). Examples include Strabo referring to mainland Europe in his *Geographia* (IV.1.5),[51] probably written around the time of Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), and Tacitus (*Agr.* XXI) referring to Britain in the late-first century B.C. and early-first century A.D.[52] These attitudes can also be seen in earlier Greek writing (Laurence 2000: 346), such as Aristotle's *Politica*,[53] and have clearly influenced studies of late Roman urbanism. Faulkner (2000b: 47), for instance, views the end of classical urbanism as marked by the cessation of the construction of monumental public

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[50] Haverfield (1913: 123), for instance, wrote that "the regularity of the (town)plan is plainly the work of civilized man When the Celts were brought to live in a Roman city, care was taken that it should be really Roman"; whilst for Frere (1967: 203) Roman "civilised life was inconceivable...without a city as its stage".

[51] Strabo wrote that "instead of carrying on war" they (the Massiliotes) "turned to civic life and farming". He goes on that "all the men of culture turn to the art of speaking and the study of philosophy", activities which are centred on "the city" (IV.1.5).

[52] Tacitus, writing at the end of the first century A.D., wrote that "In order that a population scattered and uncivilised, and proportionately ready for war, might be habituated by comfort to peace and quiet, he [Agricola] would exhort individuals, assist communities, to erect temples, market-places, houses" (*Agr.* XXI).

[53] For Aristotle, the city "exists for the good life" and those without cities are "either low in the scale of humanity or above it" (*Pol.* I.1.8-9).

buildings and 'civilised' living; for him it was irrelevant that occupation continued within towns: "there are no sites where a level of activity has been recorded for the late fourth century *sufficient to justify the case of the term 'town' to describe them*" (2004: 7; Faulkner's italics). For Faulkner, there was no town if it did not comply with the 'Golden Age' image of Roman urbanism; Liebeschuetz's analysis of the late Roman period takes a comparable view (2001: 233).[54]

For B. Ward-Perkins (1997: 162), the breakdown of the involvement of the aristocracy in civic politics and urban culture, such as their funding the construction of monumental buildings, led to the decline of the town. Recent post-colonial approaches have recognised the biases created by the uncritical use of classical texts within archaeology; Classics also had a rôle in perceptions of early-modern colonialism (*e.g.* Goff 2005; Hingley 2000; 2005a; Vasunia 2005). These developments, however, have still had fairly limited impact on studies of Roman urbanism.

The military background to Roman town foundation has often been given priority over pre-Roman influences on places – existing settlement being envisaged as inferior and less 'civilised'. Excavations of towns have often emphasised the evidence for preceding fortresses and forts (*e.g.* P. Crummy 1992), while publications such as G. Webster ed. (1988) and Wacher ed. (1966) concentrated on the transition from military sites to fully Roman and civilised towns. Early studies used classical texts (*e.g.* Strabo IV.5.2)[55] for views on pre-Roman settlement, which led to some simplistic views of pre-Roman places and the way in which they influenced Roman urbanism.

Both Millett (1990) and G. Woolf (1998) attempted to move away from the traditional emphasis on Roman involvement in the origins of towns by examining indigenous reactions to the conquest. These studies, however, continued to tie in with traditional narratives by putting an emphasis on élites (though indigenous), on romanisation and the inevitability, desirability and progressive nature of towns. Creighton's (2006) book *Britannia: the creation of a Roman province* attempted to move the argument forward. It offers useful new thoughts and analysis of evidence on the immediate pre-Roman and early-Roman phases of town sites but, like earlier studies, interprets the pre-Roman phases in relation to the Roman towns that followed. It does not consider that pre-Roman understandings of the world might have continued into the Roman period. Some studies do emphasise the need to acknowledge and examine Iron Age settlement in its own terms (*e.g.* Burnham *et al.* 2001; Haselgrove *et al.*

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[54] Liebeschuetz's view is seemingly derived from the writings of Pausanias who wrote a description of Greece between A.D. 155 and 180. Pausanias wrote, for example, that "From Chaeroneia it is twenty stades to Panopeus, a city of the Phocians, if one can give the name of city to those who possess no government offices, no gymnasium, no theatre, no market-place, no water descending to a fountain..." (X.4.1).

[55] Referring to peoples in pre-Roman Britain around the time of Caesar's invasions, Strabo wrote: "The forests are their cities; for they fence in a spacious circular enclosure with trees which they have felled, and in that enclosure make huts for themselves and also pen up their cattle – not, however with the purpose of staying a long time" (IV.5.2).

2001). But there remains the necessity to study these sites as meaningful places that encouraged activity in the pre-Roman period, influencing the way in which the location of Roman towns and the development of urbanism were perceived.

4.3 Legal definitions

According to many of the authors who have written on Roman Britain we know what towns are; for J.C. Mann (1996: 103-4), for example, they are "common sense". Mann defined a number of characteristics that distinguish a town from other settlements and for him it is these that caused towns to play such an important part in the Roman settlement of Britain (*ibid.*: 104-9). The first characteristic of a town was that it was an autonomous community, the second that it consisted of one urban centre, differing from the sometimes multi-focal settlements of the late Iron Age. Towns were larger than other settlements such as villages and the centre was surrounded by a *territorium*, itself divided into *pagi*, which together formed an inseparable unit. Both the town and *pagi* were divided into *vici*. The town had a number of functions, including the collection of taxation, jurisdiction and the provision of a station for the *cursus publicus* (*ibid.*: 104-8). Although these factors are not necessarily disputable in themselves, it will be argued that this romanocentric viewpoint for understanding the settlements puts little focus on the significance of the pre-Roman landscape in which the towns were located.

Roman urbanism in Britain has been understood through the use of legal definitions recorded in classical texts; the town (*oppidum*) is categorised as a *colonia*, *municipium* and *civitas*-capital[56] (*e.g.* Collingwood and Richmond 1969; Frere 1967; Haverfield 1912; Wacher 1975; 1995).[57] Whilst the *coloniae* and probably *municipia* are attested historically in Britain, the identification and nature of the *civitas*-capitals is more problematic (see below).[58] Faulkner, much of whose work focuses on the later Roman period, sees the town in terms of the organisation of tax collection in a state-controlled economy (1998: 137); towns were the local central places where essential official functions were based and where romanised public life and luxury consumption concentrated. There are some studies, however, that have questioned the over-reliance on legal definitions and official functions to interpret towns. Millett (1995a; 2001), for example, has emphasised the importance of other settlement types such as 'small towns' that have been neglected because of a concentration on legal status.

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[56] This reflects the divisions of *oppida* listed in the *lex Rubria* (49 B.C.) which are divided into *municipium*, *colonia* and *praefectura* (Purcell 1996a: 1069). This was a statute by which a colony was founded at Carthage-Junonia by C. Sempronius Gracchus (Crawford 1996: 852).

[57] Wacher's hugely influential work was updated and republished in 1995 but with no changes in emphasis to its organisation or discussion.

[58] Haverfield (1912; 1913; 1924) does not use the term *civitas*-capital but instead tribal or cantonal capitals and sometimes provincial towns. Collingwood and Richmond (1969) and Rivet (1958) also use the term 'cantonal capital' whilst Richmond (1963) wrote of 'tribal capitals'. Haverfield's work on the tribal organisation of Britain was hugely influential and became fossilised with the growth of the term of *civitas*-capital from the 1960s onwards (*e.g.* Frere 1967; Wacher ed. 1966; 1975).

For Laurence (2001), the highly centralised *civitas*-capital system in Britain, where towns became the centres for pre-existing tribal groups, is too simplistic. This is largely a result of the problems with the Ravenna Cosmography and the influence of Haverfield's work (1924: 191-4).[59] Although it would seem that there was some form of continuity from certain Iron Age to Roman centres, there would also have been greater complexity in the distribution of power and administration within the Roman *civitates*. Other settlement types such as 'small towns' are likely to have played a rôle; in some cases perhaps drawing on pre-Roman forms of organisation.[60] Millett (2001) and Hingley (2005b: 272-4) have argued that we need to adopt a more flexible way in which to interpret the rôles of a wide variety of settlements that occurred within the *civitates*. The complexity of identity of inhabitants is another important issue which will have had a significant impact upon perceptions of landscape and place.

Relying on images of Roman 'Golden Age' urbanism creates a static view of the town (*cf.* M. Smith 2003: 8). Less emphasis is given to pre-Roman influences on the sites and alternative viewpoints of towns. Millett (1995a), for instance, has argued that Burnham and Wacher's (1990) treatment of 'small towns' in their monumental work sets them against expectations of Roman towns and denies these settlements a true voice. It simplifies understanding by dividing the settlements into such restrictive categories as 'potential city', 'specialised religious centres' and 'specialised industrial centres'. This criticism can also be applied in the case of the large towns; it is only through a critical study of the nature of each individual town that they can begin to be understood (*cf.* Burnham *et al.* 2001).

Those studying towns in the late Roman period often define them in the manner identified by Haverfield, Frere, Wacher and others before proceeding to analyse changes. For Esmonde Cleary (2004: 418) towns were principally Roman political, administrative and cultural centres while Halsall (1996: 235), in his study of late Roman Metz, lays down five criteria that a settlement must satisfy in order to be classified as a town.[61] In White's (2000: 107) discussion of late Roman Wroxeter he assumes that a town has: a large and stable concentrated population, often with a marked social hierarchy, a diverse economy and evidence for administration which may provide, and curate, existing buildings and roads and carry out political and religious functions. These ways of characterising a Roman town are not necessarily wrong, but they do exclude additional and equally valuable interpretations of the data.

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[59] Laurence (2001: 89) highlights the problematic nature of the Ravenna Cosmography which had been compiled from many earlier lists: it lists peoples as places and there are a number of places with the same name. Haverfield (1924: 192-3) noted that Caerwent (*Venta*) was listed as *Ventasilurum* (*i.e. Venta* of the Silures).

[60] It is worth noting here that Haverfield does acknowledge that there were other forms of towns within the *civitates* but states with present knowledge it is "idle to guess who administered" them (1912: 53). He does indicate an awareness of the possible greater complexity of settlement hierarchy.

[61] Halsall (1996: 235) argues that a town must have permanent, as opposed to seasonal or periodic occupation, a larger population than other types of settlement in the contemporary landscape, an economic base founded upon factors other than subsistence, provision of more services than other contemporary types of settlement and social differentiation from other sites.

4.4 Town plans

Towns have also been classified according to their size. Reconstructions of the settlement pattern of Roman Britain have often considered sites such as 'small towns' and 'roadside settlements' (A. Brown ed. 1995; Burnham and Wacher 1995) in inferior terms to towns; smaller sites being less important than larger ones (*e.g.* Childe 1950; Hopkins 1978: 71). A brief comparison of sizes, however, (not taking into account the extra-mural areas which would add considerably more complexity; *cf.* Goodman 2007) shows that the evidence is not so clear-cut: London at 133.5ha (Diagram 16), Cirencester at 97.1ha (Diagram 9) and Verulamium at 80.9ha (Diagram 18) almost reach the size of some of the Gaulish towns such as Lyon at 127.1ha and Autun at 199.9ha (Diagram 119). Other towns in Gaul are much larger, for example Nîmes at 319.7ha (Diagram 123), whilst some in northern Gaul are far smaller including Amiens, Soissons and Senlis (see section 13.2.2.1). Canterbury, Leicester and Exeter are all around 40.5ha, Silchester 43.3ha, Lincoln in its final form was 39.3ha and Gloucester was only 16.6ha.

Although there would have been much activity taking place around these areas (Esmonde Cleary 1987; Willis 2007a), these sizes compare with other settlement types such as the 'small town' of Water Newton with an enclosed area of 18ha and considerable occupation extending beyond this (Burnham and Wacher 1990: 83). Bath had a later walled area of around 10ha but with occupation outside this, whilst Elms Farm, Heybridge, in Essex (Diagram 112) extended to a much larger area than the 12ha that has been identified (Atkinson and Preston 1998). Frilford in Oxfordshire (Diagram 111) has a spread of occupation of around 30ha (Hingley 1985) and at the 'roadside settlement' of Westhawk Farm in Kent (Diagram 113) around 6ha of a more extensive settlement has been excavated (Booth 2001). A recently excavated site in Colne Fen, Cambridgeshire, known as Camp Ground extended well beyond the densely occupied excavated area of 5.14ha (Regan *et al.* 2004).

Settlements with evidence for public buildings that do not fall within the legal definition of 'town' are often termed 'religious complexes' or 'specialist sites', such as at Bath in Somerset (Cunliffe 1969: 148-54; 2000: 110-5) and Frilford in Oxfordshire (Hingley 1985; Lock *et al.* 2002; Lock *et al.* 2003). Towns are often considered to have had more domestic occupation than other sites, but excavations at Bath have now produced considerable evidence for housing (Cunliffe 1969: 180; 2000: 118),[62] while at Frilford there are spreads of domestic occupation, as well as a large cemetery, probably indicating a fairly large number of inhabitants (Bradford and Goodchild 1939: 26; Hingley 1985: 208). The small size of towns

[62] At 30-31 Stall Street in Bath there were timber-framed buildings (Cunliffe 1969: 180), and across the town traces of masonry buildings indicate occupation, such as the Bellott's Hospital site opened in 1998-9 (Cunliffe 2000: 118).

such as Canterbury (Diagram 5) and Gloucester (Diagram 13), with their concentration of public buildings in their centres, creates the image of monumental complexes with religious *foci*. Lincoln (Diagram 15) has a small monumental and walled 'upper town' where the public buildings concentrated. This was reached in one direction by ascending steps from the 'lower town' on the slope leading down to the River Witham and Brayford Pool (M. Jones 2002). Towns were complex religious and political centres imbued with power and symbolism.

The presence of a temple has been considered a defining component of the 'small town' (P. Booth pers. comm.), also indicating that these settlements often had an important religious focus. The lower standard of 'small towns' is often assumed because "there were no defences, no administrative buildings, no military presence. There were no baths, no theatre, no statues or inscriptions, nothing resembling a *forum*, no public architecture except the temple" (Atkinson and Preston n.d.: 11). Temples and open spaces, however, indicate that 'small towns' were places for meetings, interactions and rituals, perhaps reflecting indigenous trends in settlement which the town also exploited (Hingley 1997a: 90-3). Modern attitudes towards economics, success and Roman civilisation may not always be useful for understanding settlement sites such as 'small towns'.

4.5 The economic in Roman urban studies

The rising interest in, and development of, Roman antiquarianism and archaeology in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries coincided with rapid and fundamental changes within society (Todd 2004: 456). Britain's unprecedented position in the world (Bowler 1989: 40) was justified by comparisons with ancient Rome (*ibid.*) and British engineering projects were compared with those of Rome through such studies as Ashby's (1935) work on aqueducts. Towns were linked with Rome as symbols of greatness and many new public buildings were constructed in a neo-Roman style (Borsay 1989; S. Dyson 2001; Morley 2004: 35).

The link between social changes and the popularity of Roman culture (Ayres 1997: 84-90) influenced the Roman archaeological tradition. This might explain why prehistorians have been more willing to challenge modern social attitudes in their interpretations of the past. They have criticised perceptions of life that have been considered similar to our own – 'familiar' - as a result of our modern economically-dominated world (*e.g.* J.D. Hill 1995a; J. Thomas 1991).[63]

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[63] J. Thomas (1991), in his book *Rethinking the Neolithic* argued that too often the term Neolithic has been considered as synonymous with 'mixed farming economy' with the resultant simplistic and economically-dominated approaches to studying aspects of life in that period.

4.5.1 *The consumer city*

In the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries influential writings on cities by political economists and sociologists such as Max Weber (1864-1920)[64] were encouraged by the contemporary economic situation. Although Weber's work has been important, it might be problematic in its application to the Roman period. *The City* (trans. 1958 [1921]) argued that the élite in Roman times used the rents from their agricultural estates to pay for their conspicuous consumption within towns; a situation different from the 'producer city', where urban growth was a result of economic production and enterprise (Weber trans. 1958 [1921]; Grahame 1997: 151; Parkins 1997: 93). The emphasis on economic aspects within studies of Roman urbanism, and of Roman archaeology more generally, has meant that other areas of Roman life and the way in which the town and its location were experienced have not been given sufficient attention.

Influential supporters of Weber's model in studies of the classical world were Finley, in *The Ancient Economy* (1973) and *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (1981), and A.H.M. Jones in *The Roman Economy* (1974); both had primitivist views of the economy. Wacher (1975), too, envisaged the town as the organiser and exploiter of the countryside as did Wallace-Hadrill (1991: 241) who stressed the connection between the urban élite and the countryside and the use of the city to fulfil the élite's desire for commodities. Other studies that have been influenced by the 'consumer city' debate include Hopkins (1978), Parkins (1997) and Whittaker (1995). Although Roman society may have worked in this way to some extent, this approach provides a narrow view of the town. Mattingly (2006b: 286) has also indicated that there would have been many regional differences in economic activity, with no single integrated economy.

Studies of urbanism have also compared so-called 'industrial' and 'pre-industrial' cities and in many cases have considered the pre-industrial examples of the past as inferior, being similar to the settlements of modern-day pre-industrial peoples (*e.g.* Sjoberg 1965).[65] Based on these ideas, Childe (1950) suggested ten criteria to distinguish the earliest city from other settlements, which were thought to be applicable across all time and space.[66] This encouraged statements such as "a town is a town wherever it is" (Braudel 1972: 373). Dangers of projecting modern conceptions of the town back into the Roman period can be seen especially

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[64] Weber was one of a number of sociologists in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century concerned principally with the rise of capitalism and the evolution of tribal societies to civilisation (Grahame 1997: 152; Whittaker 1995: 11).
[65] In *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present* (1965) Sjoberg makes the implicit link between so-called pre-industrial cities of today with the ancient past and suggests that they share a number of "structured characteristics" namely in areas of class, family, the economy, politics, religion and education.
[66] These included: a large size (relating to area and population), the function of the population (some did not produce their own food), primary producers who gave away their surplus, presence of monumental buildings, surplus supported non-producers, invention of systems of recording and sciences, presence of writing, presence of specialists, importation of raw materials and the possibility for craftsman to belong to the community in a political and economic sense.

in the emphasis on judging modern urbanism in economic terms which has influenced Roman studies.

4.5.2 *Roman towns and commerce*

Related to the economic emphasis in studies of Roman urbanism and the debate on the 'consumer city' is the domination of modern conceptions of commerce. There have now been a number of studies looking beyond the market economy in relation to commerce in the Roman world (*e.g.* Gerrard 2002; K. Matthews 1997) but there has been little change in the way in which this activity within towns has been conceptualised. The idea of the 'embedded economy', as opposed to the 'market economy', for past societies was first argued forcefully by Polanyi (1957). He argued that in such societies exchange was 'embedded' in social relations and the modern concepts of 'economy' and 'economic life' had no meaning. The modern notion of the economy and the science of its study was more an invention of individuals such as Adam Smith (1723-1790) and Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) (Morley 2004: 34). Polanyi's substantivist viewpoint was opposed to the formalist opinion that economic theory could be applied to all periods and all places (*ibid.*: 43). This was adopted by Hodder (1979) in his study of the use of pottery and coinage within Iron Age and Roman Britain. The idea of a market economy is also simplistic in the context of Rome, since gift giving and obligations of patronage often played a part in methods of exchange (Salway 1993: 427-9). Economic theory developed in order to comprehend the modern capitalist economy and it is questionable whether this can be fruitfully applied to non-capitalist and non-Western economies (Morley 2004: 34).

Greene (2005a; 2005b) has recently begun to examine the ways in which the Roman economy is represented in archaeology in an attempt to break down the assumptions and influences in past and current literature. Highlighting how twentieth century attitudes often influence such studies (2005a: 11-13), Greene reminds us that the ways in which production and exchange were conceptualised and undertaken in the Roman period differed from present ideas. Influences will have survived from the pre-Roman period, where production and the movement and acquisition of goods will have been considered and conducted in terms beyond those of modern economics.

One area where a re-evaluation of economic interpretations might affect our understanding of early and late Roman towns and of pre-Roman settlement also, is the interpretation of large gravelled expanses. These have been found within the centres of towns in the earliest Roman period beneath the public buildings, and in 'small towns', often associated with temples, and other settlement types including religious sanctuaries (table 4.1). They were in their own way public monuments where people met to engage in a variety of activities. In the earliest phases

of large towns there is evidence for gravelled areas perhaps fulfilling the rôle of the public building prior to construction. The main examples are Leicester (Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973: 7; Wacher 1959: 113-4) and Verulamium (Frere 1983: 73-4). These areas were probably used for some 'economic' activity but also combined with religious festivals and other meetings and events (*cf.* Frere 1983: 73-4). They may also have been drawing on the importance of the open space in sites in the late pre-Roman period, reflecting social traditions (see chapter 5). Not only do we need to rethink our understanding of the economy within Roman towns in Britain but we must also acknowledge that monumental public buildings may not have been the only significant areas of towns. This is important when considering the condition of towns in the late Roman period, when large surfaced areas in the centres of towns are found again (see section 12.3).

Settlement	Location	Date	Description	References
Chichester	Underneath the *forum-basilica*	Early post-conquest date.	Large area of thick gravel which may represent the levelling-up of the area prior to the construction of the central public buildings. Alternatively it may have been used as an open space.	Wacher 1995: 262
Cirencester	Eastern corner of *insula* II adjacent to the *forum* and under the possible *macellum*	*c.* A.D. 70 to mid-2ndC.	Metalled area formed by the extension of a gravelled area of the street.	Holbrook 1994: 62; Holbrook 1998: 178-80; Wacher 1962
Dorchester-on-Thames	Laid on the east side of the main north-south road	Constructed in the 1stC.	Wide area of thick metalling at least 37.5x33.8m.	Frere 1984: 98-100; Manning 1984; D. Wilson 1965: 210-1
Exeter	South Street next to the Roman *forum*	Uncertain but probably contemporary with the *forum-basilica* built *c.* A.D. 80.	Extensive layer of cobbling extending to at least 67x32m.	A. Fox 1952: 37; Bidwell 1979: 80
Godmanchester	Laid between two roads running parallel in the centre of the settlement	Laid in the early-3rdC. A.D.	Gravelled open space of *c.* 67x30m; there is also possible evidence for a timber arcade along three sides.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 126; H. Green 1975: 204
Harlow	Associated with the temple	Constructed *c.* A.D. 80.	Area of graded flint pebbles creating an area extending over 27.4x15.2m.	France and Gobel 1985: 32, 35
Heybridge	Associated with the temple	Originated in the early 1stC. A.D.	Extensive gravelled area in the centre of the settlement.	Atkinson and Preston 1998: 94-8
Irchester	South of the temple	Uncertain of date but probably associated with the temple.	The extent of this gravelled area is uncertain but it was possibly around 30.5m^2.	Knight 1967: 102
Leicester	Underneath the *forum* and *macellum*	Roman but predating the *forum*; pottery over the gravelling dating to A.D. 70-120.	Layer of small cobbles laid on a surface of weathered sand. The size of the expanse is uncertain. There may have been a number of gravelled areas.	Hebditch and Mellor 1973: 7
London	Underneath the *forum-basilica*	Pre-Boudican *c.* A.D. 50-60.	Layer of metalling of gravel between 0.075 and 0.125m laid on a de-turfed area. The exact extent is uncertain but it was possibly around 33m wide east-west and at least 40m long north-south with an overall area of over 1320m^2.	Marsden 1987: 17, 21, 100-1; Philp 1977: 8
Silchester	Surrounding the *forum-basilica*	Uncertain but probably the same date as the *forum-*	Layer of cobbles extending to the location of the later 'church' building.	Boon 1974: 110-1; Fulford 1993: 16

		basilica built *c.* A D. 85.		
Verulamium	Outside the north-east entrance of the *basilica*	Constructed in the late-1stC. with evidence for resurfacing into the 4thC.	Wide area of gravelling stretching back to the River Ver.	Niblett 2001: 135
	Beneath the theatre and *insula* XVI temple	Laid after the Roman conquest and predated the theatre, built *c.* A.D. 150-60 and the temple built *c.* A.D. 90.	Well-maintained gravelled area continuing in use after the temple had been built and before the construction of the theatre.	Frere 1983: 73-4.
Wroxeter	Beyond the *forum*	Uncertain but probably the same date as the *forum*.	Large gravelled area.	G. Webster 1975: 58-9
Wycomb	West of the temple	Uncertain.	Gravelled area with drains.	Timby 1998: 297-8

Table 4.1: Evidence for early gravelled areas within towns.

4.5.3 *Roman towns and industry*

Another topic that needs re-evaluation concerning economy and towns is that of industrial activity which, until recently, has not been the subject of as much consideration as other areas of Roman urban studies and has mainly been perceived through modern perspectives. The Roman metal industry has not generally been a popular theme of study compared with other areas. There are also some negative attitudes towards it in the classical sources, which may have influenced this lack of scholarship.[67] Finley's (1973) *The Ancient Economy* and A.H.M. Jones' *The Roman Economy* (1974) concentrate on agriculture, with only limited attention given to metal production. Only relatively recently have there been more attempts to look at other areas of production in a detailed way (*e.g.* Fulford and Allen 1992 and Mattingly and Salmon eds. 2000; Manning 1972 and 1976 has undertaken important work promoting the study of iron objects). Attitudes against industrial activity have now been shown to be largely idealist rather than representing reality in the Roman period, since the élite of the city seems to have made substantial use of production (R. Jones and Robinson 2004; Parkins 1997: 86-7; Wallace-Hadrill 1991: 245).

In modern Western society, technology exists in a category distinct from religion and ritual, ideology and magic. But this is a product of centuries of social change from the Middle Ages onwards including the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and modernism (Bergstøl 2002: 78). Technology is now geared towards maximum production and economic success; indeed, the words 'industry' and 'industrial' themselves have highly modern connotations and are not useful terms for the past. Modernist thinking denies the human component of

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[67] Well known passages from Cicero include views such as: "of all revenue-producing activities none is finer, more productive, more agreeable, more worthy of a free man than agriculture" (*Off.* I.150-1) whilst "vulgar are the means of livelihood of all...workmen...[and] merchants" (*ibid.*). The writers Juvenal (*Sat.* XIV.201-7) and Martial (III.59) express similar negative views towards tradesmen and craftsmen; according to Martial (*ibid.*) a craftsman is "no person at all".

technology and industry and its symbolic and social rôle within society (Barndon 2004: 21; Reid and MacLean 1995: 145), important in pre-industrial and contemporary non-Western societies. This aspect of industrial activity needs further analysis. Like open spaces, metalworking and other crafts were often a significant part of late pre-Roman Iron Age precursors to many of the town sites in Roman Britain (see sections 5.6.3 and 5.7.3). Metalworking was also a significant activity in the public buildings of towns in the late Roman period and will be addressed in detail in chapter 9.

4.5.4 *Discussion*

It is not so much the theories within the 'consumer city' model that will be re-examined here. Instead, it is argued that economic interpretations, though they are useful, have come to dominate understanding of many aspects of urban life and the interaction between towns and landscape. The emphasis on economic aspects in reconstructing the past has been influential in many areas of Roman archaeology and, by recognising this, new suggestions can be made about the way in which urbanisation and urbanism, especially in the late Roman period, can be approached. Laurence (1994: 141) has argued that concentrating on the city's economic function neglects social aspects and reduces everything to economic activity. Recognising this emphasis on economic viewpoints is useful for examining towns in the late Roman period from new angles, since arguments for decline are often based on economic perspectives.

4.6 Beyond the economic: town location and planning, landscape and water

One area where a preoccupation with the economy has been influential regarding Roman urbanism is that of town location and town planning. Some information and ideas and attitudes concerning these issues are represented in ancient texts. Vitruvius outlines the most suitable locations to build a city (*De arch.* I.4.1-12),[68] whilst Cicero describes reasons of economy, security and hygiene for the location of the town (*Rep.* II.2.3). Greek authors such as Plato and Aristotle express similar views in their writings (*e.g.* Arist. *Pol.* VII.10.1-8).[69] Authors on Roman towns have stressed the orthogonal street-grid as a symbol of order, advancement and civilisation (Castagnoli 1971: 124; Owens 1991: 6; J. Ward-Perkins 1974). Haverfield (1913: 11) was a strong instigator of the importance of Roman town planning[70] and emphasised the fact that only certain periods in time had been capable of town planning, including the Roman and the modern day. Laurence (1994; 2000) has shown that this Roman

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[68] The passage begins with "For fortified towns the following general principles are to be observed. First comes the choice of a very healthy site. Such a site will be high, neither misty nor frosty, and in a climate neither hot nor cold, but temperate" (I.4.1).
[69] Aristotle writes that "the city should so far as circumstances permit be in communication alike with the mainland, the sea and the whole of its territory. The site of the city itself we must pray that fortune may place on sloping ground" because of health, political and military considerations (*Pol.* VII.10.1).
[70] Haverfield (1913: 11) emphasised "the art of laying out towns with due care for the health and comfort of inhabitants, for industrial and commercial efficiency and for reasonable beauty of buildings".

analogy influenced desires for newly planned towns and the improvement of existing towns in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Aspects of Roman town planning, however, went beyond technical and practical considerations. Rykwert (1976: 44-60) has documented the myths and rituals mentioned in the classical texts concerning the foundation of towns, which included taking the auspices and ritually outlining the boundaries of the town with a plough. A number of studies have attempted to analyse these in the archaeological evidence, including in Britain (*e.g.* Creighton 2000: 209-13; Woodward and Woodward 2004).

The preoccupation with Roman methods of town foundation, however, has meant that there has been less consideration of how pre-Roman ideas and attitudes towards place and landscape influenced the establishment of towns. The town was not simply a physical entity, but also a space that was shaped, invented and conceptualised by social actors over time (Lefebvre 1991: 73; Rykwert 1976: 24). It was an interactive stage on which inhabitants and visitors orientated themselves through personal experience of their environment (Favro 1996: 227; Laurence 1994: 139). The significance attached to the locations in which towns were placed in the pre-Roman period, across the Empire, will have influenced in some way the nature, understanding and use of the towns and their setting.

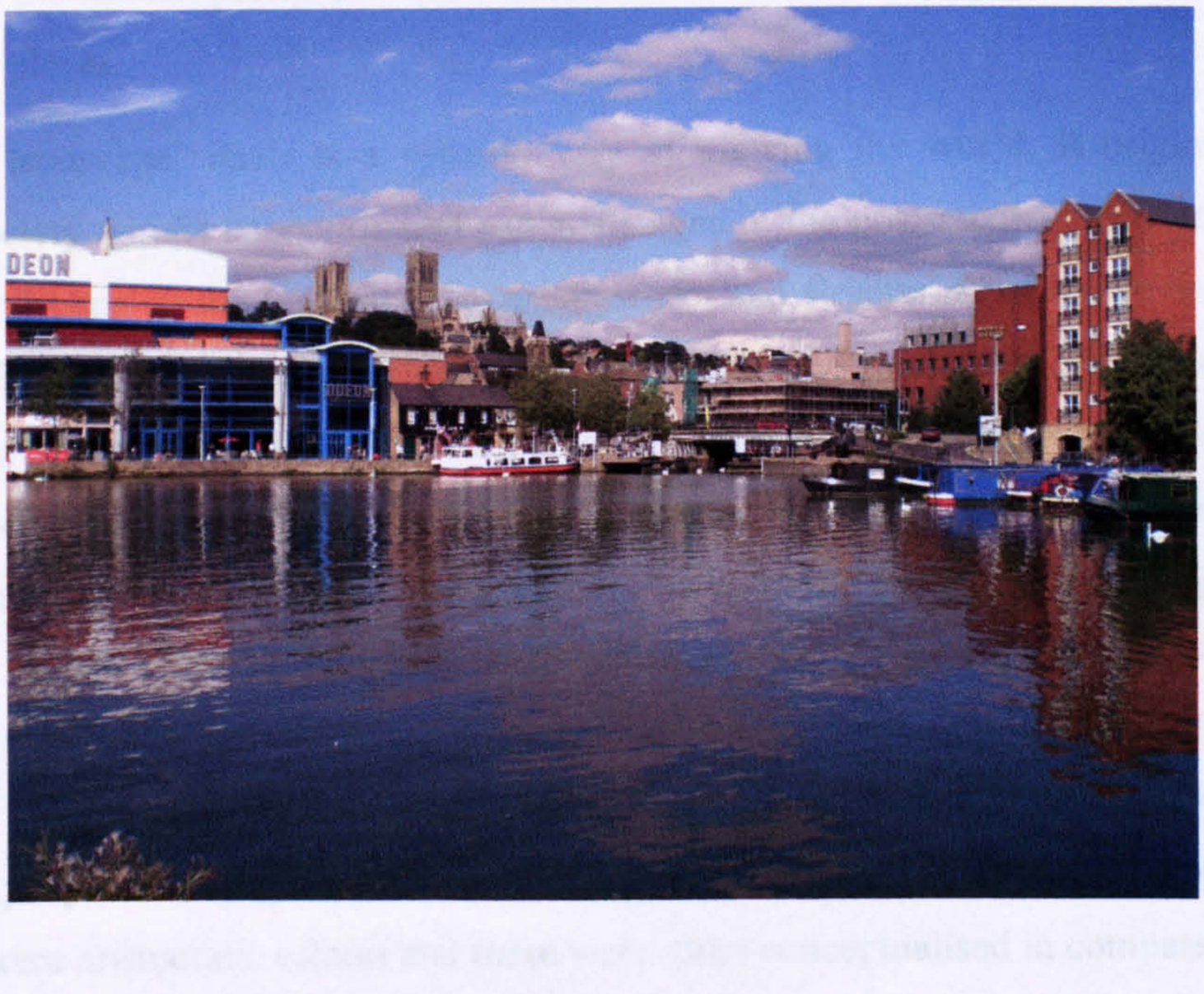

Figure 4.2: The Brayford Pool in Lincoln in its modern economic setting (photograph by the author).

Like town planning, location has mainly been studied in terms of rational and economic factors. Traditional explanations for the locations of towns have emphasised military strategy, communication and trade. In the 1960s and 1970s, Central Place Theory was a popular

analytical technique and was used to examine Roman town distribution (Hodder 1972; 1975; Hodder and Hassall 1971).[71] This approach is now regarded as having a more limited value for studying landscape and settlement patterns in prehistory, but there continues to be an emphasis on rational reconstructions of the landscape in the Roman period, seeing towns as located at sites for optimal commercial value and military considerations (*e.g.* Qualmann *et al.* 2004: 90-1; Wacher 1995). These factors were important – Fulford (2002: 55), for example, suggests that the development around Verulamium was related to its location along Watling Street, which created considerable economic power with goods flowing north – but it is unlikely that the landscape would have been understood and experienced solely in these terms. In order to approach towns, their foundation and their settings in more complex ways, a prerequisite for studying late Roman urbanism (the continuation of these places), it is necessary to address the dominance of both economic and modernist concepts of 'landscape' within studies (figure 4.2).

4.6.1 *The significance of landscape*

Roman period 'landscape' is generally assumed to have been understood, experienced and to have functioned in a similar way to that of its modern counterpart, including an emphasis on its economic exploitation. This will have influenced the way in which towns and their locations in the Roman period in Britain have been studied, including their development from pre-Roman places.

The term 'landscape' itself is a specific way of viewing the world. It originated within Western society amidst economic and social changes in the post-medieval period (Cosgrove 1984). 'Landscape' is the product of an arrangement and structuring of the environment in a very specific period of change within society (Lemaire 1997: 5). Its emergence as a concept was heavily intertwined with the growing preoccupations with the economy and consumerism within Western society from the Renaissance onwards. The word 'landscape' entered English usage in the late-sixteenth century as a painting term from the Dutch *landschap* (Cosgrove 1984: 120; Hirsch 1995: 2), an artistic tradition influenced by Cartesian perspectivalism and a product of the Renaissance viewing of space as geometric, rectilinear and abstract (Chapman 1997a: 4). Painting the land, and terms such as 'picturesque', objectified and distanced it, separating people from it (Bevan 1997: 181; Hirsch 1995: 11). Common themes of landscape paintings were aristocratic estates and these were often conceptualised in comparable terms to Roman villas.

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[71] Central Place Theory was taken from New Geography, putting an emphasis on economic and rational motives in site location, and in archaeology was used to look at Iron Age hillfort distribution (*e.g.* Clarke 1968; Cunliffe 1984; 1991; Hogg 1971; see Haselgrove 1992).

There was also an increasing perception of land as a commodity to be exploited to the full, culminating in the enclosure system, drainage operations on wetlands and new farming techniques and machinery (Darby 1973). The result was that people were distanced further from the land and there was a greater emphasis on the visual landscape (Bender 2001: 3). M. Johnson (2007: 129) notes that even words such as 'farm' and 'farming' only really took on their modern meanings in the context of this eighteenth century ideology of improvement. The rationalisation of the landscape led to its secularisation and the neglect of landscape as cosmology and mythical geography (the mingling of landscape, cosmology and mythology) with ancestors, spirits and gods and invoked through memories, myths, rituals and ceremonies (Derks 1997; 1998: 135).

Merrifield (1987: 3-4) has argued that archaeology was too often considered in scientific terms with an emphasis on measuring and quantification at the expense of other areas of human activity. Studies of landscape have been influenced greatly by the British empirical school which has been principally concerned with surveying and mapping land (J. Thomas 1993: 19). Much of this work is of great value, but there has been a tendency to isolate interpretations of the landscape and separate these from the people of the past (C. Evans 1985: 80); scientific techniques have rationalised the way in which landscape was used and understood. Mapping techniques and aerial photography are 'reflectionist, since they impose modern expectations of searching for patterns onto the past as well as emphasising the aesthetic (Chapman 1997a: 10; M. Johnson 2007: 85-95), and artificially expose everything to academic researchers or 'spectators' (J. Thomas 1993: 25). Space is conceived in terms of its 'formal essence' through mathematical spatial analysis (E. Casey 1996: 19-20).

The methodologies of processual archaeology created an artificial surface in which human action occurred (Tilley 1994: 9). Publications on landscape archaeology (*e.g.* Aston 1985; Aston and Rowley 1974) largely neglected the people themselves and the way in which they constructed and perceived the landscape in which they lived (J. Thomas 1993: 25-6). Amongst this, survey projects of Roman landscapes (*e.g.* G. Barker 1996) and the production of maps of Roman provinces have generally neglected the cultural and social significance of the landscape (Hingley 2006a). For Ingold (2000: 151), the notion of land as a surface to be occupied is a colonial viewpoint and is combined with the belief that the present takes over from the past. In actuality the 'landscape' will have been experienced in much more complex terms and with considerable references to the past.[72]

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[72] Works such as Edmonds' *Ancestral Geographies of the Neolithic* (1999) and Giles' study of linear earthworks of EarlyIron Age East Yorkshire (2007b) demonstrate how activity within and experience of the landscape often draws upon and uses earlier features, memories and myths.

General discussions of the Roman countryside have considered it predominantly in rational terms with an emphasis on economic exploitation (*e.g.* Dark and Dark 1997), or on economic ways of exploring social behaviour and relationships (*e.g.* Hingley 1989). This is especially noticeable in studies of villa landscapes (*e.g.* Applebaum 1975; Branigan 1977; Todd 1988) and discussions of the relationship between Roman towns and their hinterland. In early excavations, the villa and town mosaics that were found were sometimes placed within the house of the local estate (*e.g.* Upex 2001: 62-3), projecting modern élite understandings and experiences of landscape as well as perceptions of classical pasts into Roman times.[73] British aristocrats were associating themselves with the Roman past, perhaps in order to justify their position and power in the present (Ayers 1997: 165; Hingley 2001: 149).

Studies of 'landscape' within prehistory have begun to move beyond preoccupations with the economic by placing an emphasis on humanised and meaning-laden space and attempting to explore how individuals perceived and engaged with the landscape, and constructed their identity within it, (Bender 1993: 3; Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 9; Tilley 1994: 7-8). Bradley's (2000) study of 'natural places' has suggested that these too played an important part in social and ritual life. He has shown, for instance, that ritual deposition often played a rôle in negotiating the significance of the landscape in which people lived (*ibid.*: 5).[74] 'Man made' monuments were important (*e.g.* Bender 1992; J. Thomas 1993; Tilley 1991; 1994; 1996) but so were 'natural' features (*cf.* Insoll 2007). This is a central aspect of Hutcheson's (2004) study on the deposition of Iron Age metalwork found across Norfolk[75] and Witcher's (1998) analysis of how Roman roads impacted on existing landscapes, perhaps deliberately disrupting their power and significance.[76]

Rather than using the value-laden and economically-dominated term of 'landscape' for understanding towns and their interaction with pre-existing settlements, it might be preferable to use 'place' – an entity for seeing, knowing and understanding the world (Cresswell 2004). Places can be considered as *foci* of human feeling and thought and central to experiences of the environment; they are constructed in human movement, memory and encounter (J. Taylor 1997: 193) and they gather and have a hold on what occurs there (E. Casey 1996: 24-5). For Ingold, similarly, (2000: 149) a place is created when people inhabiting the land are drawn to

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[73] During excavations of the villa at Cotterstock in the eighteenth century the fourth earl of Cardigan placed an uncovered mosaic on the floor of a summerhouse in the garden of the house in his nearby estate (Upex 2001: 62-3) associating his concept of the estate with that of the Roman period. Other examples are the series of mosaics of Horkstow villa uncovered in the eighteenth century in the grounds of Horkstow Hall in Lincolnshire and the mosaics of Great Weldon villa in Northamptonshire (Neal and Cosh 2002: 148, 240). At Silchester, the second Duke of Wellington, who owned the site and financed the excavations, removed a mosaic that was uncovered in the town and placed it within his own house (Boon 1974).

[74] In Chapman's study of prehistoric Hungary (1997b) he has emphasised the importance of so-called flat sites, non-monumentalised settlement sites within the landscape, which accumulated place-value over time.

[75] This author's study of ritual activity in the Fenland in the Roman period also looked at the ritual deposition of objects (Rogers 2007).

[76] An example from Cisalpine Gaul, Purcell (1990) sees the Roman presence in similar terms, with the likelihood that religious and supernatural forces permeated throughout the whole landscape and would have been disrupted by the conquest.

a particular focus, with the act of movement to and from the sites also forming an important part of their meaning.[77] Meaning can also differ depending on who is experiencing it, and their world-view and beliefs (Tilley 1994: 11). Much of understanding the 'landscape', including hills, rivers and wetlands, was entwined with religious belief (Muir 2000: 147). The issue of ritual landscapes in Roman Britain, however, has only been briefly, although usefully, discussed (*e.g.* Hingley and Miles 2002; J. Taylor 1997).

The concept of the ritual landscape can be considered in relation to Roman urbanism by examining the significance and rôle of water and watery contexts within the landscape and how towns utilised and modified these resources – a topic often preoccupied with "hard practical considerations" which are, in many cases, in actual fact "modern, Western-derived assumptions" (M. Johnson 2007: 129).

4.6.2 *Roman and indigenous attitudes to water*

Within prehistory it is now generally recognised that water and watery places, including rivers, springs, lakes, bogs, islands, amongst other natural places, played an important part in the social lives and religious beliefs of the indigenous peoples of Western Europe; they had a numinous quality (*e.g.* P.J. Casey 1989: 37; Derks 1998; M. Green 1986: 166; J. Webster 1995: 449-51).[78] These places will have influenced, and been consciously modified by, Roman urban development. In J. Alcock's (1965) study of the continued veneration of water in Roman Britain from prehistory she wrote that: "it is hardly exaggeration to say that throughout [Iron Age] Britain almost every piece of water probably had some kind of spirit connected with it, whose memory may, in some cases, have lingered on in popular legend [well into the medieval period and later]" (*ibid.*: 1). Anthropological, ethnographic and archaeological research has often simplified understanding of religion by attempting to explain and comprehend it through concepts based on the so-called 'world religions', with written scripture and an identifiable god, as in Christianity and Islam (Bowie 2000: 8, 25). Religion is often considered a separate entity from everyday life and in terms of beliefs that need to be explained (Asad 1993: 40-4; Dowden 1992: 8; Graddel 2002: 6).

For Iron Age northwest Europe it has been acknowledged that religion recognised the supernatural in all areas of life, including the natural surroundings. Consequently ritual activity was often associated with 'natural' features and especially those connected with water (P.J. Casey 1989: 37; M. Green 1986: 167). The source and confluences of rivers were

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[77] Studies of 'indigenous peoples' have demonstrated how concepts, understandings and uses of landscape can be different from those of modern Western society. For the Saami of northern Scandinavia, for example, movement across the landscape is important and natural features such as rivers, water courses, mountain ranges and deep valleys form an important part of the organisation of the land (Svensson 1997: 39). Many of these natural places were their sacred places and sacrifices were dedicated to natural forces (Bradley 2000: 5-8).

[78] Records of the Second Council of Arles in A.D. 452 document the Church discussing how to prevent the worship of "arbores fontes" and "saxa" (trees, springs and rocks) (Munier 1963: 126, I.20).

important with sanctuaries and ritual deposits known, for example, at the sources of the Seine, Marne and Yonne and at the confluence of the Roer and the Meuse (Derks 1998: 138-9).

It is unlikely that the rôle played by water in religious belief and activity in the Iron Age will ever be completely understood. Water is necessary for life and seems to have taken on a special significance, being considered the focus of the life-force and having regenerative powers (Derks 1998: 141; De Villiers 2001: 50; M. Green 1986: 166; 1995: 89). Liminality may also have been a factor, water being seen as the interface between the earthly and supernatural worlds where communication with the supernatural or entry to the 'other world' could be made (Cunliffe 1988: 359; Derks 1998: 141). Excavated sites such as Flag Fen near Peterborough, Fiskerton in Lincolnshire and Llyn Cerrig Bach in Anglesey (Coombs 1992; Field and Parker Pearson 2003; C. Fox 1946; Pryor 2001) have demonstrated that they were *foci* for ritual deposition with large collections of metalwork. There are also well known individual items from rivers such as the Battersea Shield from the Thames in London and the Witham Shield from Lincoln. Across Europe, wetlands are recognised as having been significant places throughout prehistory through the discovery of unusual finds (*e.g.* Bennicke 1999; Coles 2001; Larsson 2001). Deposition into these contexts, as well as pits, will also have tied in with chthonic beliefs where, as well as the visible landscape, there was a religiously-imbued belowground where gods resided (*cf.* Cunliffe 1992; 2004).

Ritual deposition, of course, need not have been a prerequisite for the appreciation of the significance of natural places in prehistory, but it does seem that watery areas were important contexts for religious expression. Islands were also *foci* of attention perhaps because of their boundedness and close relationship with water (J. Webster 1995: 451); and it is worth thinking about the potential ritual association of such contexts. Islands are mentioned in the classical sources as religious places (Pompon. III.48; Strabo IV.4.6; Tac. *Ann.* XIV.30; *Germ.* XL).[79] Archaeological research has demonstrated the importance of islands in British prehistory, and continuing into the Roman period, with sites such as the Hayling Island temple (King and Soffe 2001) and Llyn Cerrig Bach on Anglesey (C. Fox 1946). Some Roman towns in Britain closely associated with islands were Lincoln, Winchester, Exeter and London.

Many accounts of Roman religion have tended to concentrate on the documented gods and the religious activity that took place within structurally-defined temples (*e.g.* Henig 1984; A. Woodward 1992). Watery locations, however, were important in ancient Greece and Rome:

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[79] Pomponius Mela (III.48) states that "in the Britannie Sea, opposite the coast of the Ossimi, the isle of Sena belongs to a Gallic divinity and is famous for its oracle, whose priestesses, sanctified by their perpetual virginity, are reportedly nine in number". Strabo (IV.4.6) records that in "the ocean, he (Posidonius) says, there is a small island, not very far out to sea, situated off the outlet of the Liger River; and the island is inhabited by the women of the Samnitae, and they are possessed by Dionysus and make this god propitious by appeasing him with mystic initiations as well as other sacred performances". Tacitus (*Ann.* XIV.30) records the "circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven" on Anglesey and also that a number of Germanic tribes worshipped the goddess Nerthus on an island in the sea which had a holy grove (*Germ.* XL).

"all water in antiquity was sacred" (Camp 1988: 172).[80] Gods were associated with many forms of water in Roman times, including Ocean, rivers and marshland, and in some aspects they will have invoked veneration for different reasons. The plaque dedicated to Ocean and Tethys, his divine sister-wife, found at York dating to the A.D. 80s, for example, related to the exploration of Britain's offshore islands at this time and the desire that it be conducted safely (Braund 1996: 12). Britain's location across Ocean will have meant that the land was always considered in special terms by the Romans. Rivers were possibly considered not only special as local gods but also in terms of "that far-distant boundary river which divides the living from the dead and partly the great primeval stream, the cleansing and fertilizing source of life, both here and here-after" (Toynbee 1962: 182). Wetlands were rich in resources but were also transitional zones between land and water being neither one nor the other, but a part of both, and constantly transforming – at times water, inhabited by spirits, would dominate the land (Giblett 1996: 3).

The divine presence in springs, pools and other watery locations is also represented in classical texts such as *De aquis urbis Romae* by Frontinus, written at the end of the first century A.D., which states that "esteem for springs still continues, and is observed with veneration" (I.4) whilst for Servius, who wrote a fourth century commentary on Virgil, "there is no spring that is not holy" (Servius VII.84). Such locations were consequently often incorporated into cult sites (Scheid 2003: 72) as Pliny records (*Ep.* VIII.8.5-6) when he describes the shrines connected with the tributaries of the Clitumnus (Ferguson 1970: 66-7). Rome itself was located next to the River Tiber, which was venerated (Braund 1996: 19; Creighton 2006: 95; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* II.73; Varro *Ling.* V.83).[81] Its floodplain and surrounding meadows required drainage and considerable reclamation which would not only have been considered in practical terms but also as a demonstration of power and control over nature (Purcell 1996c). This is also reflected in the meanings attached to, and uses of, this area as documented in detail by Purcell (*ibid.*), one use being the construction of monuments. Pliny the Elder states that the flooding in the City of Rome was thought of as "relating to religion rather than a threat of disaster" (*HN* III.55). Flooding was also exacerbated by the natural springs in the surrounding hills (Aldrete 2007; Ammerman 1990: 636-9; Ramage 1983: 71-2).

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[80] Camp goes on to say that "Plato will often describe sanctuaries and refer to water springs that have disappeared. Wherever there is water one can expect to find a sanctuary." In ancient Greece water was considered to be a gift from the gods, as demonstrated by the ritual deposits at the sanctuaries set up at spring sites (1988: 161); this has also been recognised for Minoan society (Peatfield 1995: 223).

[81] Varro writes that the *pontifices* are the high-priests and that "the name comes from *pons* 'bridge'; for by them the Bridge-on-Piles was made in the first place, and it was likewise repeatedly repaired by them, since in that connexion rites are performed on both sides of the Tiber with no small ceremony" (*Ling.* V.83). Likewise Dionysius of Halicamassus writes about the priests: "one of the duties they perform, namely, the repairing of the wooden bridge, are in their own language called *pontifices*" (*Ant. Rom.* II.73).

Ammerman's (1990) study of the *Forum Romanum* has indicated that the *forum* basin was liable to flood because it was low-lying; it required much reclamation and this may indicate that its location was a deliberate attempt to command nature or to draw upon an association with a religious place. The *Circus Maximus* was constructed over tributaries of the Tiber and also flooded on a number of occasions (Holland 1961: 34). Flood control and drainage would not have been a straightforward practical issue; it has been argued that the *Cloaca Maxima* (main sewer) in Rome may even have taken such a winding course through the city because the engineers feared forcing the natural river here from taking its original path (Aldrete 2007: 219; Holland 1961: 32).[82] Water, and controlling water were important features of life in ancient Rome and this is likely to have had an impact on the way in which watery locations in conquered parts of the Empire were considered.

Studies have demonstrated that the importance attached to water and natural places within prehistory continued into the Roman period in Britain and Western Europe (*e.g.* Merrifield 1987). Discussions on water in connection with Roman towns in Britain have tended to concentrate on important issues such as the technical and practical aspects of supply and drainage, including pipes and aqueducts (*e.g.* Burgers 2001; M. Jones 2003a; T. Williams 2003). Though not specifically discussing Roman Britain, only Ellis (1997) has briefly looked at the religious implications of aqueducts drawing water from sacred places. The objects of Roman date from Fiskerton (Field and Parker Pearson 2003) and Piercebridge, County Durham (P.J. Casey 1989; Fitzpatrick and Scott 1999) illustrate the continuing interest in watery locations from the Iron Age into the Roman period.[83] The large number of metalwork objects from the Walbrook stream, which ran through Roman London, can also be interpreted as ritual deposition (Merrifield 1995). Although it cannot be certain who deposited the artefacts, it can be inferred from the finds at sites such as Piercebridge and London that incomers to Britain also acknowledged the significance of these locations.

A number of studies have demonstrated the continuation of use or reuse of earlier monuments, indicating the survival of religious places (Dark 1993; Gosden and Lock 1998; Hingley 1999; Miles *et al.* 2003: 245; H. Williams 1998; A. Woodward 1992: 26; A. Woodward and Leach 1993). This can also be applied to 'natural' features such as rivers and marshlands, in relation to Roman towns in Britain, which were venerated. The use of the past helped to reproduce social relations and identities in the present; it was rituals that had the rôle of 'remembering' the past from the mythological associations invested in monuments (H. Williams 1998: 71).

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[82] Holland's (1961) study of religious belief connected with water in ancient Rome suggested that the construction of bridges and the diverting of rivers would not only have been considered in practical terms.
[83] See section 1.2.1 for more details on Fiskerton. At Piercebridge, numerous Roman artefacts have been dredged from the River Tees at the point where the Roman bridge crossed the river (P.J. Casey 1989).

Landscapes are not dead or static, but continue to be used in significant ways, with their power surviving and incorporated in different forms, the present being orientated through recognition of the past (Bradley 2002; Gosden and Lock 1998). Places have biographies which shape communal experience and create memories (S. Alcock 2002: 31). Chapman (1997b: 158) has identified such sites as 'timemarks': places where significant social action occurs over time, creating history and mythology; it becomes difficult to break away from these places. One of the strongest expressions of 'place-value' is people's choice to live in a particular area, continued use of the same location over time leading to increasing ancestral power (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007: 12). Roman towns can be considered in terms of continuing 'place-value' of sites.

4.7 The 'Golden Age' of towns

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is not intended to provide a detailed discussion of the 'Golden Age' period of Roman towns but rather an analysis of the two periods either side. In this way a more challenging understanding of Roman urbanism and its context can be achieved. It is often assumed that we are familiar with Roman towns, but this study of these two periods will indicate that there is still much to be re-examined concerning the 'Golden Age' of towns. Despite the many accounts of towns in Roman Britain that take descriptive and romanocentric approaches (*e.g.* M. Jones 2004; Wacher 1995; P. Wilson ed. 2003), this is not the case for all studies. Merrifield (1995), for example, has highlighted the pervasiveness of pre-Roman religious activity within London through a study of ritual deposition, and Fulford (2001) has argued a comparable perspective for Silchester and other towns. Studies have also explored the rôle of religious ceremony within towns (Esmonde Cleary 2005; Fulford 1999); these activities will have drawn on the past as well as introducing new rites.

Millett's (2001: 64) research agenda for examining Romano-British towns called for an examination of the distribution of ritual space within towns, but only referred to temples and not to other ways in which belief was expressed. This includes the meaning attached to the 'landscapes' in which towns were placed. The agenda Millett outlined are still largely from a romanocentric viewpoint and do not seek to explore urbanism from the types of perspective addressed in this thesis. Iron Age specialists, by contrast, have redefined their approaches (Burnham *et al.* 2001; Haselgrove *et al.* 2001) indicating the way in which the methodologies of the two periods often conflict. Ideally the perspectives of both period specialisms should be combined to gain a more comprehensive view of urbanism. The 'Golden Age' period of towns, a term rightly refuted by Mattingly (2004: 22) for its simplicity and romanocentric stance, was far from straightforward, and adds further complexity to the understanding of towns, but will not be addressed in detail here.

4.8 Conclusions

This chapter has argued that towns in the Roman period were far from the uncomplicated urban sites they are often assumed to have been using modern comparisons and classical texts. Towns were placed within, and became part of, pre-existing landscapes imbued with meaning. These landscapes influenced and were transformed by, Roman urbanism in meaningful ways, but the significance attached to the places was continually regenerated. Through their on-going importance, they continued to invoke experiences, interactions and the creation of memories (*cf.* Barrett 1991). This is important when considering the nature of towns in the late Roman period, since it allows movement away from a documentation of decay. The next chapter considers the evidence for the significance of these places in the late pre-Roman period, drawing on the theoretical issues discussed here, especially the complexity of 'landscape' and place. Exploring the sites in this way will demonstrate methodologies that can be adopted for studying the continued importance of the places in the late Roman period.

Chapter 5: Establishing the Urban Context: Pre-Roman place and Roman urbanism

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which the settings of Roman towns were conceptualised by local peoples before the conquest and how this influenced the 'growth' and development of Roman urbanism. Chapter 1 examined special places in late prehistoric and early historic periods. These sites were places of assembly, ceremony, ritual and industry. Natural features in the landscape such as watery areas and hills were important elements of these sites, which often had long sequences of activity. The processes that created urbanisation in Roman Britain occurred in the context of these pre-existing places and also became part of them; the sequence of activity continued into the late Roman and sometimes post-Roman periods.

Niblett (2005a: 105) noted that first century A.D. Verulamium developed in a context resembling a sanctuary with a theatre/temple/baths complex at its heart and a shrine site linked to this at Folly Lane (Niblett 1999). Creighton (2000: 210) suggested that there might be a Roman-inspired *templum* at Verulamium at the site of the St. Michael's enclosure.[84] Although this is still uncertain, it does raise the important issue of the religious aspects of town foundation, which needs further consideration. Religious activity will also have drawn upon the pre-Roman significance of the site, some elements of which will have remained important, evolving and transforming, throughout the use of the town.

This chapter addresses aspects of the meaning of the locations in which towns were placed, especially relating to religious factors, analysing evidence for activity and looking at the nature and interpretation of 'landscape'. "In non-Western and pre-modern cultures there is a mythical space in which places are qualitively different and meaningful referring to a sacred cosmos in which the human world is participating" (Lemaire 1997: 7; see also T. Moore 2007a: 90).

Antiquarianism, and then archaeology with its interest in the context of finds through excavation, were part of the process of modernisation and rationalisation of the land discussed in Chapter 4 (Lemaire 1997: 16; Schnapp 1996: 179-219). Brück (2007: 244) has pointed out that antiquarianism was one of a range of pursuits dominated by the aristocracy during the eighteenth century, (travelling, gardening, painting and drawing were others) which influenced and created perceptions of landscape. A good example of this was explored in chapter 3, addressing Gibbon's work, with his use of antiquarian research and his attitude to pre-Roman settlement. Space and place should ideally be studied by exploring how they were

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[84] The *templum* was a defined area, either physically or by words, from which the auspices were taken (Creighton 2000: 210). Taking the auspices involved the augur reading natural signs with a carved staff or *lituus* to answer questions such as where to place a town (*ibid.*).

structured from the perspective and way of life of the people that dwelt within them (*cf.* Hingley 1984: 75).

A number of criteria are useful for assessing the nature, significance and conceptualisation of sites in the pre-Roman period that were later used for Roman towns. These draw on discussions in chapter 4 (4.6.1 and 4.6.2) and on the analysis of 'meaning-laden place' in Chapter 1. These considerations need to be combined with the more practical aspects of Roman town foundations that have traditionally been aired, such as the strategic and economic benefits of the locations. The criteria are:

- Site location – with an emphasis on interpreting landscape and the religious and mythical significance that may have derived from 'natural' features. Watery contexts (including rivers and their floodplains, confluences, marshland, crossing points, springs and freshwater-seawater interfaces) will be used as the main example although other features such as hills, wooded areas and rocks (*cf.* J. Alcock 1965) may also have been important.
- The presence of structural remains which might indicate the special use of the sites.
- The presence of industrial activity, especially metalworking and coin production, which may have had religious and social significance (*cf.* Creighton 2000; Giles 2007a; Hingley 1997b).
- The nature of the finds assemblages.

It must be acknowledged that these criteria are devised as part of a modern agenda to study the sites, since we cannot place ourselves in the minds of pre-Roman and Roman Britons, but it will be argued that they provide an important tool to help with the understanding of the sites. Because each site is unique, certain criteria will be more significant for some sites than others. The nature and extent of excavation and publication also influence the information that is available. A further difficulty could be projecting the known importance of these sites during the Roman period back into the Iron Age.

Significant Iron Age occupation was not the only factor behind Roman urban development. Not all possible *oppida*, and similar earthwork sites became towns in the Roman period, as demonstrated by the cases of Gussage Cow Down, Dorset (Barrett *et al.* 1991), Hobditch, Warwickshire (Cracknell and Hingley 1996) and Stanwick, Yorkshire (Haselgrove *et al.* 1990). The Roman perception of the importance of these pre-existing sites may have been affected by considerations of military strategy and communications, as well as less practical factors such as their mythical significance.

To simplify discussion, the categories of '*oppida*' and 'non-*oppida*' will be used for analysing the sites, but it will be shown how these terms vastly over-simplify the available evidence.

5.2 A brief background to Iron Age settlement

The main period of hillfort building occurred in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. in southern Britain as at Danebury and Maiden Castle (Haselgrove 1999: 120-1). Traditional understanding of these sites as defensive settlements at the top of the settlement hierarchy (*e.g.* Cunliffe 1991) is now being questioned with greater frequency (*e.g.* Haselgrove 1992; J.D. Hill 1995a). They seem to have been part of a much larger and complex range of sites.

In the second and first centuries B.C. another form of earthwork site appears, mainly in southern England, termed the *oppidum*. There has been much discussion about the function and nature of *oppida* and their rôle within the wider settlement pattern (*e.g.* G. Woolf 1993). The term *oppidum*, from the Latin for 'town', was used by Julius Caesar in the *De Bello Gallico* to describe the late Iron Age sites that he saw in Gaul. By labelling these sites as *oppida* he was interpreting them through his own élite Roman mindset.[85] The continued use of the term to identify these sites within archaeology has contributed towards the notion of late Iron Age *oppida* as meaning primitive forms of urban settlement. These were then replaced, in the classical and modern mind, through an act of progression, by Roman forms of urbanism. However, our understanding of these sites is very basic and this in turn has led to a simplistic understanding of the process of urbanisation. The earthworks and dykes have traditionally been interpreted as defences (*e.g.* Boon 1974: 42; Fulford 1984: 288; Hawkes and Hull 1947: 45). The fact that they do not easily enclose areas, however, and are often extensive in length indicates their impracticability for defence and argues for more symbolic functions (Haselgrove and Moore 2007: 6). There were motives other than those of a practical nature behind the decisions made to locate activity at these places.

Oppida have been grouped into two types, 'enclosed' and 'territorial', with the 'enclosed *oppida*', including Oram's Arbour Winchester, Salmonsbury in Gloucestershire and Bigbury in Kent,[86] appearing first (Haselgrove 1999: 121). They seem to have a definite earthwork enclosure as opposed to the 'territorial *oppida*' which consist of discontinuous earthworks covering large areas of land and often apparently containing more than one focus, such as

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[85] Caesar writes about the Helvetii, for example, "Ubi iam se ad eam rem paratos esse arbitarti sunt, oppida sua omnia, numero ad duodecimo, vicos ad quadringentos, reliqua private aedificia incendunt". The word *oppida* here is always translated as town: "As soon as they considered that they were ready for the enterprise, they set fire to all their own towns (about twelve in number) and to about 400 villages, as well as all their private buildings" (*B Gall.* I.4). Caesar's categorisation of sites here also influenced the way in which they have been considered in archaeology.

[86] Hamilton (2007: 89) has doubted the inclusion of Bigbury in the category of '*oppidum*' although this may be a result of the relative simplicity of the category, which will be part of the discussion in this chapter.

Verlamion (Verulamium/St Albans) and Camulodunon (Camulodunum/Colchester);[87] it is often not clear what the earthworks were attempting to demarcate or define (Haselgrove and Moore 2007: 6). Both categories, however, and perhaps especially that of the 'territorial *oppidum*', may be over-simplistic ways of understanding the sites.

'*Oppida*' and hillforts comprised only a small proportion of the large variety of settlement types across Iron Age Britain. Many Roman towns have traces of pre-Roman activity that do not fall within the traditional *oppidum* category. Sites such as Lincoln and Caistor-by-Norwich, that have not been described as *oppida*, have some evidence for earthworks which apparently did not enclose anything. These could have had a variety of functions such as being symbols of power and used to locate, control and direct meetings, ceremony and ritual and control animals (*cf.* G. Woolf 2006). Sites without any traces of earthworks could also have represented important places in the landscape.

Other late Iron Age settlement types include a wide range of farmsteads and open settlements. A number of shrines have been recognised in the archaeological record, including at Harlow (France and Gobel 1985), Heathrow (Lewis 1966: 563) and Hayling Island (Downey *et al.* 1979). Other types of religious sites, including natural places (*cf.* Bradley 2000; Derks 1998), have been neglected, affecting our understanding of many of the places preceding Roman towns in Britain. It may be that the Romans chose to locate forts and develop towns at places which were already socially significant within indigenous society, perhaps being religious and meeting places (Creighton 2001; Hingley 2005b: 271). Even though practical considerations were important, the towns will have been influenced by the special nature attached to these places. Establishing the significance of these sites will provide some information as to how the creation of Roman urbanism was conceptualised. This will aid in understanding the long-term biography of towns.

5.3 The imposition of urbanism

Chapter 4 outlined a number of themes that should be re-examined when studying settlement in archaeology, including concepts of place, landscape and religion. These categories will have contributed to the ways in which the towns were perceived and experienced throughout the Roman period. There will also have been innovation, change and transformation after the conquest contributing further to the time-depth of the significance of these places.

Millett's *The Romanization of Britain* (1990) emphasised a largely passive adoption of Roman culture by the indigenous peoples and neglected the realities of force and violence in conquest (*cf.* Mattingly 2006a). The people of the places that became *coloniae*, including

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[87] The names Verlamion and Camulodunon are often used to distinguish the Iron Age period settlements from the Roman towns. These are reconstructed from lettering on Iron Age coinage, although the exact names and spellings are still uncertain (Potter 2002: 21) and J. Williams (2005: 33) opts for a reading of Camulodunum for CAMV in his study of some coins of Cunobelin.

Lincoln and, particularly, Colchester may well have had their lives disrupted but at the same time there would have been continuities in the long-term significance of place. There were many reasons for the choice of location for these fortresses, and other places that became Roman towns would also have been manipulated by the Roman administration.

The concept of romanisation oversimplifies the processes of urbanisation. Resistance, continuity, choice and agency would all have played a part in the conquest and would have been factors influencing the nature of place. These complexities need to be analysed before the nature of Roman urbanism, and any form of transformation in the later Roman period, can be approached.

5.4 Results

Twenty-one large towns of Roman Britain were examined for late pre-Roman Iron Age activity. Sixteen of them produced evidence for such activity either beneath the town itself or within a 1km radius (Gazetteer 1), although the nature and extent of the activity is often far from clear. In some cases the earthworks spread across a larger area, as far as 5 to 10km. Only York, Caerwent, Carmarthen, Aldborough and Wroxeter have produced no pre-Roman evidence. This need not necessarily indicate that the areas were not visited or were not important in the pre-Roman period, but this is more difficult to prove with certainty.[88] Aldborough, Caerwent and Wroxeter have produced Iron Age coins but these may have been post-conquest arrivals. Alternatively, the coins may represent some kind of occupation or activity that was largely removed by the construction of the Roman towns (see below on discussions of similar possibilities at Colchester).

Twenty of the towns were located next to rivers, floodplains or marshland areas, crossing points and sometimes islands (table 5.1). Springs were also features at a number of the sites. Only Caerwent does not entirely fulfil these conditions, with the small Nedern Brook lying around 250-300m to the south of the Roman town. The various watery contexts will have had different practical values: marshland for food and material resources and grazing, springs for sources of clean water and rivers for resources and transport (*cf.* Rippon 2006). These uses will have remained important throughout the Roman period demonstrating an aspect of the continued functioning of the sites. But they will also have been associated with other meanings adding considerable significance to their landscape setting.

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[88] Richard Brewer (2007) has noted that very little is known about early Roman Caerwent and the origins of the town let alone any pre-Roman phases. Excavations within the town have tended to go no earlier than the late-first and early-second centuries. This has also been the case with the major excavations within Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997; Ellis 2000).

Town	Location	References
Aldborough	Situated near the River Ure. There were also some springs in the vicinity of the town.	Wacher 1995: 402
Brough-on-Humber	Lay in the wetlands of the River Humber.	Wacher 1995: 398
Caerwent	Set along the main Roman road from Gloucester to Caerleon. The closest river was the Nedern Brook which lay around 250-300m to the south of the town and has now been partly canalised.	Brewer 1993: 56
Caistor-by-Norwich	Lay in the valley of the River Tas near the confluence of the Rivers Tas and Yare.	Wacher 1995: 243
Canterbury	Set in the floodplain of the River Stour.	Pratt and Sweetinburgh 2004: 12
Carmarthen	Situated in the estuary of the River Tywi.	H. James 1993: 95; Wacher 1995
Chelmsford	Situated on the edge of the floodplain of the River Can overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Can and Chelmer.	Drury 1988: 1
Chichester	Lies next to the River Lavant which was diverted in Roman times. Near by were the Chichester Harbour and Thorney and Hayling Islands.	Wacher 1995: 259
Cirencester	Located on a small gravel spine between the River Churn and the Daglingworth Brook and surrounding marshland. The lower-lying area, known as Watermoor has been liable to flood even today and would have been in the southeast part of the Roman town.	Darvill and Gerrard 1994; McWhirr 1988: 78; Reece 2003: 276-8
Colchester	Situated next to the River Colne. Sheepen was on the edge of the River Colne in its floodplain.	P. Crummy 1997; Willis 2007b
Dorchester	Situated on the edge of the River Frome in a low-lying waterlogged area.	P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 1
Exeter	Lies on the east bank of the River Exe in a marshy area and at the point at which the river contained three islets: Exe Island, Bonhay and Shilhay.	A. Fox 1952: 1; C. Henderson 1988: 92
Gloucester	Located in the curve of the River Severn at the lowest point at which the river could be bridged before the Industrial Revolution.	Hurst 1988: 48
Leicester	Located on the banks of the River Soar in an area liable to flooding.	Cooper and Buckley 2003
Lincoln	Situated next to the River Witham, its associated marshland and the Brayford Pool, which contained a number of islands. Downstream lay the timber causeway of Fiskerton.	Field and Parker Pearson 2003; M. Jones and Stocker 2003: 19
London	Set next to the River Thames and divided by the Walbrook. Other tributaries were in the locality and there were islands across the river at Southwark.	Heard *et al.* 1990; Perring 1991a: 1; Perring with Brigham 2000
Silchester	Lay close to a number of brooks including the Silchester Brook, West End Brook and Foundry Brook. There was a spring near the later amphitheatre and one near the bathhouse. There were also a large number of wells in the Roman town.	Boon 1974: 85
Verulamium	Set in the flood plain of the River Ver.	Niblett 2001; Niblett 2005b: 8-11
Winchester	Situated within the floodplain of the River Itchen; there is a small tufa island within the floodplain at this point.	Qualmann 1993; Qualmann *et al.* 2004; Zant 1993
Wroxeter	By the side of the River Severn with the Bell Brook running through the town and a ford in close proximity.	R. White and Barker 1998
York	Situated close to marshland and lay besides the River Ouse which separated the town from the fortress.	J.G. Evans 1999: 117; Ottaway 1993

Table 5.1: Table showing the relationship between the Roman town and watery context in which it was set. The location of towns can be explained by practical arguments but the rivers, floodplains and marshlands would also have had religious significance, influencing experiences of the places.

Six sites (Canterbury, Colchester, Leicester, Silchester, Verulamium and Winchester) have produced moulds that were probably used in coin production, whilst in the case of Cirencester,

and Chichester, there is evidence for coin production relatively nearby (Bagendon and Boxgrove respectively).[89]

A number of sites consisted of more than one focus of activity with different areas of importance, including earthwork enclosures, industrial activity and concentrations of religious activity. Chichester, Cirencester, Colchester, Gloucester, Lincoln, Verulamium and possibly Caistor-by-Norwich and Winchester were sites that incorporated watery areas, including rivers, pools, marshland and springs. Eight sites have earthworks: Caistor-by-Norwich, Chichester, Canterbury, Colchester, Lincoln, Silchester, Verulamium, Winchester and possibly Leicester (see section 5.7.2). Often considered to have been used as defences, and for the demarcation of territory (*e.g.* Cunliffe 2005: 148), earthworks can also be seen in terms of their rôle in focusing attention onto these places, the negotiation of landscape and religious activity. At Lincoln, for example, the triple-linear ditch earthwork to the north of the later town directs attention onto the Brayford Pool and surrounding marshland (see section 5.7.2). Aitchison's (1994: 132) analysis of Early Historic 'royal sites' in Ireland, and the Bronze Age and Iron Age enclosed sites that they used (see 1.2.1), argued that the earthworks were not defensive in character. Rather, they defined the sites as sacred enclosures containing burials, mounds and activities such as metalworking. The earthworks on the British sites may have performed comparable rôles.

There is evidence for metalworking at several of the sites that precede Roman towns and nineteen have produced pre-Roman coinage (in some cases under five coins; see gazetteer 1), although this need not necessarily indicate use of the site prior to the conquest. Some of the sites also lay outside the area of habitual coin use in the late pre-Roman Iron Age with some coin distributions probably reflecting activity in the post-conquest period rather than Iron Age (*cf.* Haselgrove 1987). Since not all sites have been studied to the same extent, statistical analyses are perhaps not the most useful way to examine this data. A more detailed study of the circumstances of each site, and a discussion of the comparisons and differences between sites, may provide more useful results.

5.5 Dating

Dating is important when considering these sites (figure 5.1). Several scholars have recently stressed that most of the '*oppida*' were late constructions – the late-first century B.C. and continuing into the early-first century A.D. – and are on sites that do not exhibit much evidence for earlier occupation (*e.g.* Creighton 2006; J.D. Hill 2007; T. Moore 2006). This need not mean, however, that the sites were not being used prior to the construction of

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[89] There has been debate (as there has with the rôle of the coinage itself) about whether these moulds or trays represent coin production or simply the working of precious metals (*e.g.* Haselgrove 1987: 28-9; Niblett 2001: 42-3; Tournaire *et al.* 1982: 429-32; Van Arsdell 1989: 46-8). Either would indicate activity of considerable importance.

earthworks. At some *oppida* in northern France, it has been suggested that the earthworks represent the monumentalisation of places with earlier significance where activities such as meetings and ceremonies took place (Haselgrove 2007: 509; Metzler *et al*. 2006). This would be difficult to identify with certainty in the archaeological record, but features such as rivers and marshland that attracted religious veneration indicate that at least some of these sites were meaningful prior to the construction of earthworks. The passage by Strabo (IV.5.2) describing pre-Roman settlement in Britain as spaces in forests made for huts and animals but not "with the purpose of staying a long time", though probably drawing on what Caesar recorded and needing caution, might be useful here. It is likely that there will have been some seasonal movements with cattle and sheep, according to the agricultural year, which were important activities in the landscape, and people will have met other communities for feasts and ceremonies at settlements or 'empty areas' (J.D. Hill 2007: 22).[90] It is possible that, over time, some places of these periodic meetings, markets and rituals became more permanent and monumentalised. Meanings attached to these places will have gradually accumulated and continued into the Roman period.

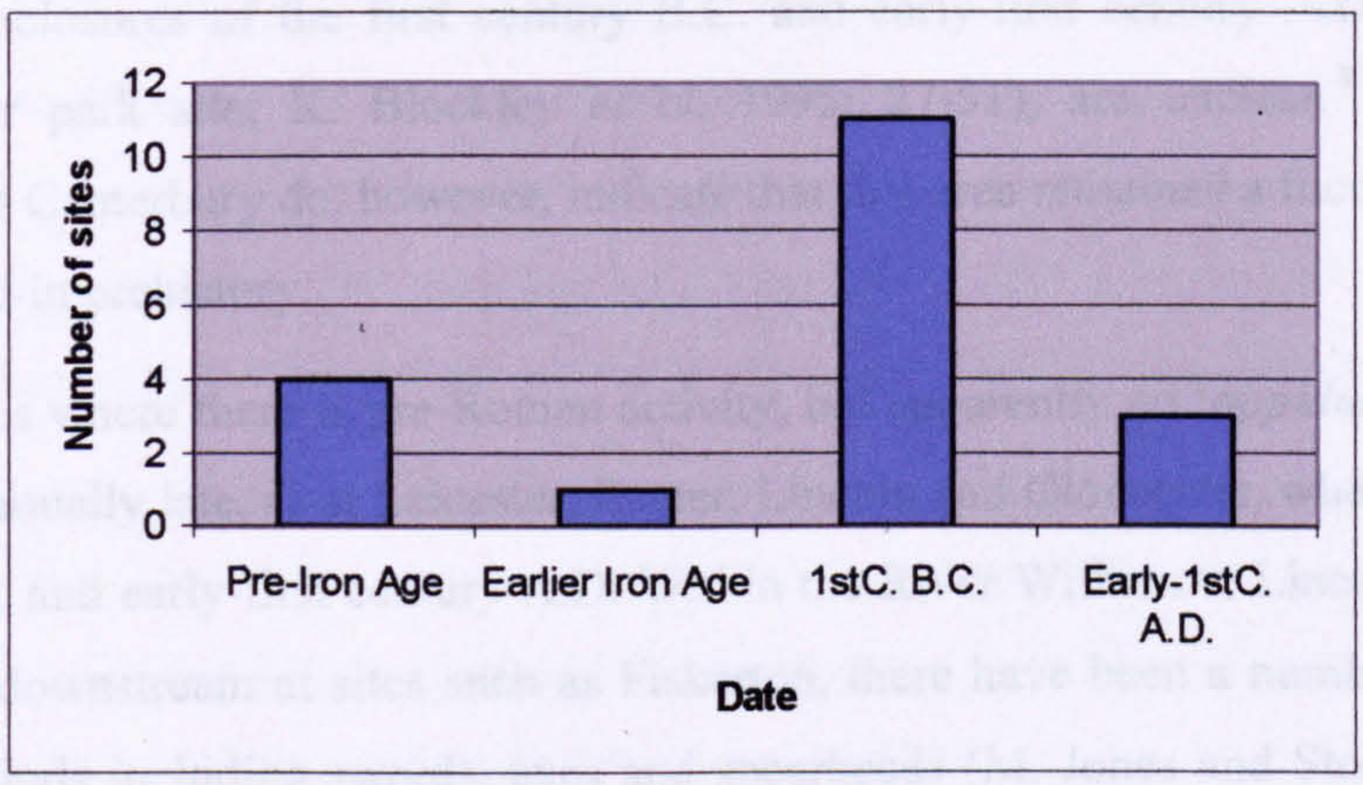

Figure 5.1: Graph showing the dates from which identifiable activity relating to the time-depth of the sites of Roman towns began (for further details see text and Gazetteer 1). Where relevant on some sites, this includes evidence for Bronze Age and Neolithic monuments.

The Bagendon earthworks near Cirencester were not established until the early-first century A.D. (Trow 1990: 111). At Verlamion, construction of the dykes did not begin until about the mid-first century B.C., with the earliest possibly at Wheathampstead, and the building of these earthworks continued into the early-first century A.D., together with the enclosures at St. Michael's and Gorhambury (Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 284; Neal *et al*. 1990; I. Thompson 2005: 27-32). The majority of the dykes at Camulodunon were of the first century B.C. or

[90] Archaeobotanical studies suggest that grain surpluses, as well as animals, were probably used for feasting and gaining status at this time (van der Veen and Jones 2007: 427).

immediately pre-conquest, although there do appear to have been two that were constructed post-conquest (Hawkes and Hull 1947: 45).[91] At Silchester, the dates of the two main earthworks remain problematic but the 'Inner Earthwork' is thought possibly to be of late-first century B.C. or very early-first century A.D. date and the 'Outer Earthwork' was later (Fulford and Timby 2000: 545). The 'Entrenchments' at Chichester were also of the first century B.C. or first century A.D. although there is some evidence for the infilling and re-digging of ditches after the Roman conquest (Bradley 1971; Magilton 2003: 156-9).

Oram's Arbour (Diagram 37) may have been the earliest of the '*oppida*' on or near the sites of Roman towns. Its construction date is still uncertain but Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery[92] from the primary fills of the earthworks could indicate a date between the end of the fourth and mid-first centuries B.C. (Qualmann *et al.* 2004: 4, 90). The pottery may fall nearer to the end of this period or relate to disturbed earlier activity on the site (early Iron Age pottery may also indicate preceding activity here). A later construction date would fit with the evidence from other earthwork sites and currently a late-second or first century B.C. date seems most likely. Traces of an earlier earthwork constructed at Canterbury (Diagram 24) around 300 B.C. (P. Blockley 1987) have been found, but its extent, and the way in which it related to enclosures of the first century B.C. and early-first century A.D. here (as at the Marlowe car park site; K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 27-51), are unclear.[93] The dykes and enclosures at Canterbury do, however, indicate that this area remained a focus of activity over a long period in prehistory.

At many sites where there is pre-Roman activity, but apparently no '*oppidum*', the excavated evidence is equally late, as at Leicester, Exeter, Lincoln and Gloucester, where it is of the first century B.C. and early-first century A.D. Within the River Witham at Lincoln (Diagram 33), and further downstream at sites such as Fiskerton, there have been a number of late Bronze Age metal finds including swords, axes and spearheads (M. Jones and Stocker 2003: 24-6). These indicate that this was a place of religious veneration of greater antiquity. At London too, (Diagram 34), it can be inferred from the finds from the Thames, such as human skulls of Bronze Age date (see section 5.7.1; Bradley and Gordon 1988), that there was religious activity over a long period of time. The significance of these places pre-dates the construction

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[91] Hawkes and Crummy (1995: 67) have suggested that the post-conquest date of the dykes were part of a Roman re-fortification of the *oppidum*. Witcher (1998: 67), however, argues that this construction activity and re-use of earlier dykes may have hada more symbolic function, disrupting the pre-existing understandings and experiences of the landscape, perhaps as a sign of domination. This suggests a Roman recognition of the significance and threat of these places and a consequent desire to alter and control them. Infilling and re-digging of some ditches after the Roman conquest may also have been identified at Chichester (Magilton 2003: 156).

[92] Saucepan pots were a tradition of pots with upright or slightly bulging sides and simple or beaded rims dating from the late-fourth/third to the first centuries B.C. Decoration on the pots can be rectilinear or curvilinear. They have a southern distribution from Somerset to Sussex and Surrey (Gibson and Woods 1997: 243).

[93] An important consideration is the extent to which these smaller sized enclosures at sites such as Canterbury were comparable with the monumental earthworks on other sites, and whether they should also be given the term earthwork.

of earthworks and other activities. The absence of an obviously continuous archaeological sequence need not indicate discontinuous importance during this time.

Moore (2006; 2007b) has demonstrated that the 'Bagendon complex', near Cirencester (Diagram 27) including the Bagendon earthworks and Ditches/North Cerney enclosure, was later in date than the surrounding settlement system. This complex represents more intense use of this area, which had not been part of earlier settlement, perhaps because it was waterlogged and flood-prone (*ibid.*). The nature of this area, however, may have been considered as liminal, making it a special place for meeting, exchange and religious activity before the construction of the earthworks. This place continued to develop when the Roman town was placed a little further downstream on a scarp between the two rivers (Reece 2003).

5.6 The '*oppida*'

5.6.1 *Water*

Features such as rivers and wetlands were meaningful parts of the *oppida* of late pre-Roman England. Water will have been a necessary resource for all of these sites but, as discussed in chapter 4, it was also part of religious belief. The pre-Roman focus at Verlamion, including the St. Michael's enclosure (a 2ha earthwork enclosure with a large boundary ditch, part of which was identified in the grounds of St. Michael's church; see Gazetteer 1), was in the valley floor. It was located by the side of the River Ver, a slow moving stream, and within its floodplain (Diagram 36). The area has been drained in later periods but would have been much more waterlogged and marshy during the late Iron Age (Niblett 2005b: 8).

A timber causeway, initially interpreted as a military installation, was constructed across the river around the A.D. 40s (Anthony 1970; Niblett 2005a: 64-5). Objects found during its excavation were probably deposited into the marshy area from the causeway; these included a gilt bronze *patera*, a late pre-Roman black ceramic bowl, coins, brooches, cavalry helmet fragments and metalworking moulds (*ibid.*). Though the river and marshland would have had some practical uses, this area was also venerated and part of the symbolic landscape. During the Roman period, the causeway remained in use, a road leading from it to the Folly Lane temple complex outside the town and then to Colchester (Anthony 1970; Creighton 2006: 124-5; Niblett 1999).

Camulodunon (Colchester) was also heavily intertwined with its river and wetland context, with much of this complex being bounded by the River Colne and the Roman River (Diagram 28). Accounts of the Roman town have predominantly placed an emphasis on practical and strategic considerations: to be in command of waterborne transport, to control river crossings into the *oppidum*, to be close to a good water supply and to be located on a promontory to overlook the rest of the *oppidum* (P. Crummy 1988: 27-8). Although these are important

considerations, they have meant that understandings of the pre-Roman *oppidum* and its setting have been influenced predominantly by Roman (and modern) conceptions.

Camulodunon was a large *oppidum* with numerous *foci* of activity which exploited particular locations. The 'industrial' site at Sheepen 0.75km northwest of the Roman town centre, for example, was located within the floodplain of the River Colne at the point at which it is joined by several tributaries (Willis 2007b: 121). The floodplain is wide here and has changed since the Iron Age, when there would have been areas of standing water. The location was also the lowest downstream point of the river which is non-tidal, suggesting that a deliberate acknowledgement was being made of the distinction between freshwater and seawater. Although this junction will have been useful for waterborne transport, Willis' study suggests that it was also a culturally meaningful boundary, perhaps because freshwater and seawater were associated with different deities or because seawater was regarded as unclean (*ibid.*: 121-2).[94] The relatively large number of Iron Age coins here also indicates an important focus of activity (Haselgrove 1987: 163). The continued significance of this area can be inferred by the presence of a large number of temples in the post-Boudican period (*ibid.*; Hawkes and Hull 1947; Hull 1958). These temples could have had a rôle in trade, manufacture and storage activities (see section 7.3.6) as well as the dedications prior to waterborne travel, but they could also have been tied into the longer-term religious meaning attached to this watery area.

It has also been argued that the fortress at Camulodunon was placed in an area of pre-Roman activity (H. Brooks 2006: 7): Iron Age coins, although small in number and from Roman contexts, and Iron Age pottery, have come from excavations within the fortress. It is likely that the construction of the fortress would have removed and destroyed evidence for earlier activity (*ibid.*), and could also explain the presence of the finds in early Roman layers. There need only be slight, if any, traces of pre-Roman activity, if the kind of sacred enclosure on the site did not involve the construction of buildings; so the Roman fortress here could have been acting as a symbol of domination over a religious site.[95] Iron Age coins have also come from the Abbey Field and the Union cemeteries (Hull 1958: 254-6), but their relationship to the Roman burials is uncertain. They may instead be disturbed evidence of earlier activity or alternatively dumped material from the construction of the fortress and *colonia*.

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[94] E. Morris (2007), for example, has highlighted the possible significance in the locations where seawater and freshwater comes together and has suggested that salt production from seawater may have involved ritual and magic, and should not be considered in modern economic terms.

[95] Roman domination over pre-existing religious sites may be a traditionally underplayed theme within the study of conquests of provinces because of an emphasis on romanisation. In the second century A.D. with the conquest of Dacia there appears to be far more evidence for the deliberate destruction of existing religious places by the Romans such as at the site of Grădiştea Muncelului. Here there is evidence that the walls of the main enclosure of the settlement site were destroyed during the conquest and then seem to have been rebuilt and extended by the Roman army reusing stone from the religious precinct (Lockyear 2004: 44). Much of this sanctuary exhibits evidence for burning and deliberate destruction in its final phase (*ibid.*: 57). Many of the pre-Roman sites show evidence for destruction in the conquest period (Diaconescu 2004: 125) perhaps suggesting a higher degree of intolerance against barbarians at this stage, as also depicted in artwork such as the column of Marcus Aurelius of Rome built at the end of the second century. It is possible that such sentiments were also developing with the conquest of Britain.

Canterbury was set within the floodplain of the River Stour which is still wide and liable to flood today (Diagram 24). Low river terraces to the north-east and south-west of the site provided an early crossing point (Lyle 2002: 15-6). Strategic and commercial advantages provide some reasons for the location of settlement here but the river and its floodplain could also have been viewed and experienced in religious terms. Movements across the river and its floodplain by crossing points would have been meaningful actions focusing attention onto this area. The south-western and western parts of the Roman town were badly flooded in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Large areas became uninhabitable, because of the floodplain location and poor drainage (Pratt and Sweetinburgh 2004). This emphasises the continued relationship of the settlement here with the river and floodplain in which it was set.[96]

The Oram's Arbour earthworks at Winchester (Diagram 37) were sited on the western side of the Itchen valley and the floodplain of the River Itchen (Qualmann *et al.* 2004: 86-7; Zant 1993: 3-4). Within the river and its floodplain there was an island of tufa, an area of slightly higher, firmer ground formed by the accumulation of large amounts of alluvial chalk tufa (Zant 1993: 3).[97] This was later used for the centre of the Roman town and was a crossing point and ford in the Iron Age. The Oram's Arbour earthworks, and the later town overlapping them, used the river and its floodplain as one boundary of the settlement. During the later Iron Age, increasing evidence for activity occurred closer to the river and nearer to where the town was placed (Biddle 1966: 320; Qualmann *et al.* 2004: 91-3).

Roman Chichester (Diagram 26) lay close to the River Lavant, which was diverted in Roman times. It was located around 6km to the northeast of Chichester Harbour which also contained Thorney and Hayling Islands, the latter with its later Iron Age and Roman temple (Downey *et al.* 1979; Wacher 1995: 259). The available evidence indicates that the '*oppidum*' embraced a large area incorporating numerous rivers. Several Iron Age coins have been found in the area between Fishbourne and the Roman town (Chichester District SMR; Haselgrove 1983: 138). The *oppidum* at Silchester lay close to the Foundry Brook and there were also a number of springs in the area, including near the amphitheatre and bathhouse (Boon 1974: 85).

It is argued here that it is important not to consider the location of these sites simply in practical, economic and strategic terms, drawing on modern viewpoints, since they would also have been interpreted and experienced in other terms, including that relating to religious belief.

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[96] A hoard of late Roman silver work from the town ditch in the south-western area of the town (Potter and Johns 1983) may even have been deposited at the time of flooding. It consisted of eleven silver spoons, a silver implement, a gold hook-and-eye fastening, a silver pin, a gold ring and two unstamped silver ingots (*ibid.*: 1983). Within the ditch of the *oppidum* at Stanwick in North Yorkshire were a sword and human skull (Wheeler 1954: 44, 53). The ditch may have been filled with water at the time of deposition (Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 244).

[97] Tufa is formed as a precipitate of calcium carbonate from ground water in a humid and marshy environment (Zant 1993: 3).

5.6.2 *Activity and 'landscape'*

This section will discuss the structural and activity evidence at *oppida* in order to develop understanding of their relationship with the surrounding landscape and the context in which Roman urbanism developed.

Unfortunately, the St. Michael's earthwork enclosure at Verlamion (Diagram 36) has only been very partially excavated. A short length of ditch was uncovered by Frere in 1956 (Frere 1983: 193-4) and by John Lunn in 1955 (I. Thompson 2005: 32-3). A number of pits associated with the enclosure were found in Lunn's excavations, containing material which included pottery and animal bones. Examining the nature of the finds and drawing on the work of authors such as J.D. Hill (1995b), Woodward and Woodward (2004) suggested that the material represented feasting activities and religious activity followed by votive deposition. Interpretations of the site have included a farmstead or a *templum* used in the process of taking the auspices during town foundation (Creighton 2000: 210; P. Woodward and Woodward 2004: 81-2). The setting of the site, in what would have been a watery location, has led others to argue against the idea that it was a farmstead, instead favouring a sacred space and meeting area (Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 284; Hingley 2005b: 273; I. Thompson 2005: 32-4).

Other areas of late Iron Age activity have been identified by coins, brooches and pottery found during excavations of the triangular and *insula* XVI temples (Diagram 36; Lowther 1937; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 114).[98] Bryant (2007: 71-2) has interpreted the monumental Beech Bottom Dyke at Verlamion, across the Ver and past Folly Lane, as a route to the ritual centre at St. Michael's. Additionally, and perhaps interrelated with ceremonial and ritual activities, the dykes may have directed cattle and other livestock to the centre.[99] Like grain surpluses, livestock, especially cattle, are likely to have been indicators of status and sources of power at this time (Albarella 2007: 395; Chadwick 1999). In all interpretations of function, the dykes reflect the way in which movement through the ritualised landscape was conducted and experienced.

A similar enclosure to St. Michael's has been identified at Gosbecks, Camulodunon, (Diagram 28) but this has not been excavated. What seem to be roundhouses within it were identified by aerial photography and the site appears central to a group of droveways (P. Crummy 1997: 16-8; Hawkes and Crummy 1995: 95). This enclosure has often been interpreted as a farmstead (*e.g.* Hawkes and Crummy 1995: 174). The droveways suggest that there may have been some kind of agricultural function here, where sheep and cattle were

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[98] Although all the Iron Age coin finds from Verlamion fall within the first century A.D. it is not impossible that there was an earlier focus here which did not produce coins (Haselgrove 1987: 177).

[99] Strabo's (IV.5.2) reference to the export of cattle and hides (along with grain, gold, silver, iron, slaves and dogs) from late Iron Age Britain suggests that cattle played an important part in the creation of wealth and power.

brought in from the surrounding areas, but this may also have tied in with other sources of meaning and power.[100] The construction of temples and a theatre here in the Roman period may indicate a continuation of religious functions (see below), which in the Iron Age had been combined with administrative and social activities at the site. A geophysical survey and limited excavation on the site of the Roman temple at Gosbecks has revealed traces of earlier activity that may provide further information on the function of the enclosure. Traces of what was considered to be an earlier temple were identified (P. Crummy *et al.* 2007: 447-50).[101] Alternatively, it was thought that the rectangular-shaped pit on the central east-west axis of the enclosure near the Roman temple may have been a burial chamber similar to that at Folly Lane at Verlamion (*ibid.*), but further excavation is required to provide a conclusive answer.[102] Either an early temple or an élite burial site would indicate that this site was more significant than a farmstead. Like Verlamion, the earthworks here, too, may have been connected with movement and ritual across this landscape.

At Silchester, there is a clearer indication of Iron Age occupation beneath the centre of the Roman town, although its extent is uncertain (Diagram 35). Excavations revealed a sequence beginning with at least three roundhouses, dating to around 15 B.C.-A.D. 25, which were then replaced by rectangular structures with metalled streets and surrounded by a timber palisade (Fulford and Timby 2000: 8, 20-4). Other activity includes early-first century A.D. pits near the later South Gate (Fulford 1984: 27-30; Fulford and Timby 2000: 547) and pits and a silver coin of the Durotriges from the temple precinct in *insula* XXX (Anon 1854: 57; Boon 1974: 156). The 'Inner Earthwork' 'enclosed' around 32ha and underlies the Roman town. The 'Outer Earthwork' is more discontinuous and later in date, perhaps of the early-first century A.D. It may have been part of further dyke systems to the northwest of the town (Fulford 1984: 79-83) implying that the site incorporated a much larger area than that indicated by the 'Inner Earthwork'.

The 'Entrenchments' at Chichester (Diagram 26) consist of at least fifteen linear earthworks. Their date is uncertain, but small-scale excavations indicate that they were not all built at once,

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[100] In early modern times, there were important centres of droveways, used for centuries, to which drovers travelled long distances with their animals. The Falkirk Tryst, for example, was held three times a year in a large open area near the town of Falkirk in Scotland (Colman 1851: 299). These markets were important places for the meeting and interaction of people and did not have many structures or physical boundaries. They will also have attracted many kinds of activities taking advantage of the presence of large numbers of people. William Cobbet describes the droving of cattle over long distances in the 1830s and refers to the importance for the fattening of cattle of reaching rich marshes (ed. G. Cole and M. Cole 1930: 879-80). This indicates that these watery settings will have had practical uses, including for animals and industry, providing a focus for gatherings of people as well as being intertwined with ritual and symbolic meanings. Rippon's (2004) study of the medieval Glastonbury Abbey in the Somerset Levels has highlighted the large number of different resources that could be exploited by being in close proximity to wetlands. Studies of the Fenland in Roman times suggest that livestock would have been an important part of the economy of this area (Fincham 2002: 47-8).

[101] I would like to thank Philip Crummy for informing me about this work and providing documents prior to publication.

[102] Both the enclosures at Verlamion and Gosbecks exhibit some similarities with 'farmstead' sites connected with 'central places' in Scandinavia. Excavations in a central area of Uppåkra in southern Sweden, for example, uncovered structures of what appears to have been a farm complex (Larsson 2002). The material culture from the site, however, including drinking cups and gold decorative objects (*ibid.*: 27-8), also suggests a cultic and/or ceremonial meaning to the complex.

but between the first century B.C. and early-first century A.D. (Bradley 1971; Magilton 2003: 156). Suggested functions have included land divisions and stock control (Magilton 2003: 156-9), but they may also have had a symbolic significance. It is possible that livestock were brought here for grazing in the saltwater marshes (*cf.* Rippon 2006); a water source would also have been useful for the slaughter process. Excavations have been limited beneath the town but there is increasing evidence to demonstrate late pre-Roman Iron Age activity, although its precise nature and extent are uncertain. Most excavations have produced Iron Age pottery, including imported late Augustan to early Tiberian finewares; some of the pottery was of an early Iron Age date indicating earlier activity (Down and Magilton 1993: 19; Chichester District SMR CD3679). Analysis of the Iron Age coin distributions also suggests a pre-Roman focus here (Haselgrove 1987: 149, 458-61).[103] Some traces of roundhouses have been found, although their dates are unknown (Chichester District SMR CD3797; CD2183). Excavations east of Fishbourne Palace in 1999 and 2002 uncovered a section of ditch containing large quantities of pre-conquest pottery and animal bones. This might indicate feasting activities (Manley and Rudkin 2005) although more work is needed before definite conclusions can be drawn.

At Canterbury (Diagram 24), analysis of the pre-Roman coin distribution, including potins[104] and bronze coinage, has indicated some kind of nucleated settlement next to the River Stour beginning around the third quarter of the first century B.C. (Haselgrove 1987: 139-45). There are traces of pre-Roman activity beneath the Roman temple precinct in the centre of the town and within the floodplain of the river. At 77-79 Castle Street (Frere 1977: 423; Wacher 1995: 194) excavations uncovered traces of buildings and Iron Age coins, which might represent evidence for a pre-Roman religious sanctuary or enclosure (*ibid.*). The location of a shrine in this floodplain area would strengthen the link between watery sites and places of religious meaning. On the site of the Marlowe Car Park, there is also excavated evidence of part of a triple-ditched enclosure containing roundhouses which were located close to the later temple precinct (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 34-6). Coin distributions indicate that there may have been a shift in occupation from the enclosure to a location nearer to the river in the early-first century A.D. (Haselgrove 1987: 141), although far too little is known to identify the full extent and pattern of activity in this area.

Excavations within and outside Oram's Arbour have revealed traces of roundhouses and other structural evidence, including ditches and gullies of middle to late Iron Age date (Diagram 37; Gazetteer 1; Qualmann *et al.* 2004). Only around one third of the area surrounded by the

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[103] Another possibility may be a mid-first century A.D. military site here bringing non-local coins to the area (Haselgrove 1987: 141).

[104] Potins were coins of bronze alloy with a relatively high tin content which first began to be produced in the second century B.C. in southeast England. They were cast in moulds joined by runners which left a section of the joining portion on the coins (de Jersey 1996: 14, 20).

Oram's Arbour earthworks appears to have been occupied, indicating an integral relationship with a 'natural' or 'empty' space which was an important part of the complex. Many of the *oppida* included more than one focus of activity, so movement between these would have been an important aspect of the experience of place.

5.6.3 *Craft production and 'industry'*

Metalworking and the manufacture of items such as weapons and tools were highly ritualised acts, as was their deposition into pits, rivers, lakes, marshland and wells (see chapters 4 and 9; Bourke 2001: 133; Giles 2007a); and indeed such deposition continued well into the post-Roman period. Metalworking influenced perceptions of the locations where it took place. Little is known about the social context of production in pre-Roman Britain; metalworking does seem to have been an important part of activity at *oppida* in the late Iron Age (Creighton 2000) but it also took place on other types of site and so its significance at *oppida* is uncertain. Minting on these sites is likely to be indicative of wider social changes and may relate to élite residences (Haselgrove 1987; 1996a: 67), implying an administrative and political function (Trow 1990: 109), though the discovery of coin moulds on a range of site types has led to the suggestion that coin production was not necessarily under central control (Tournaire *et al.* 1982).

The religious significance attached to metalworking in prehistory makes a ritual aspect to the minting of coinage unsurprising (Haselgrove and Wigg-Wolf 2005: 12). As the activity was often located in significant 'natural' locations, such as within floodplains, it can be inferred that minting was placed under the control of local gods (*ibid.*). Gosbecks and Sheepen were around 5km apart, but tied into the Camulodunon dyke system. At Verlamion, coin moulds were found over a wide area, indicating that several *foci* were involved in such activity.

All the sites discussed in this section produced some evidence for metalworking activities (table 5.2). In many cases, production may have been associated with an élite (Champion 1994: 138), perhaps because of the value of the metal and/or the significance of production as a religious activity and symbol of power (Hedeager 2002: 7). At Verlamion (Diagram 36), most of the evidence for metalworking is in the form of crucible fragments and coin moulds found in large quantities to the immediate north and west of the ditched enclosure (I. Thompson 2005: 32-4). Other sites include Bluehouse Hill (Frere 1983: 31-2), *insula* XXVII (*ibid.*: 30) and a large pit of moulds in *insula* XIX near the later bathhouse (I. Thompson 2005: 35). With this concentration of coin moulds in and around the St. Michael's enclosure, set in a marshy context and generally impracticable for domestic occupation, it could be inferred that the enclosure was not solely a farmstead as we would understand the term today; although agricultural activity could have been part of its function. A number of moulds were also found

at the 'Marsh Bank' near the 'Timber Tower' and lay beneath the later town wall. Frere interpreted this as a mint (1983: 30, 102-4) but definite evidence for this is lacking. The presence of moulds, however, indicates that they were probably deposited into the water after use, reflecting the connection between the ritual significance of metalworking and water.

Town	Location	Date	Type of Metalworking	Evidence	References
Canterbury	Under the Public baths on the Marlowe Car Park site	Late-1stC. B.C. - *c.* A.D. 70/80	Bronze-working, gold-working and coin casting	4 hearths, bronze slag and coin moulds. Associated with a group of buildings consisting of 2 roundhouses, a sunken-featured building and a stake-built structure.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 27-51
	44 Watling Street	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Bronze-working	Hearths in the floor of a structure, bronze fragments, drops of metal and crucible fragments.	Frere and Bennett 1987: 117
Chichester	Boxgrove	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Coin moulds; Boxgrove lies around 4.8km east of Chichester and may have been a pre-Roman centre.	Drewett *et al.* 1988; Wacher 1995
Cirencester	Bagendon	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Coin moulds.	Clifford 1961; Darvill and Gerrard 1994: 49
	Ditches	2ndC. or 1stC. B.C. until the mid-1stC. A.D.	Coin casting	Coin moulds.	Trow 1988
Colchester	Sheepen	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Object production and coin casting	Coin moulds and metalworking débris.	Hawkes and Crummy 1995: 70; Hawkes and Hull 1947; Niblett 1985
Leicester	Bath Lane	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting; precious metal-working	1 near complete coin tray and 3 mould fragments; crucible fragments; molten lump of silver and copper.	Clay and Mellor 1985: 18, 20, 30, 69; Kipling *et al.* 2007
Silchester	Beneath the site of the *forum-basilica*	*c.* 15 B.C. to A.D. 50-60	Bronze-, iron- and silver-working including the production of horse-harness fittings and coin casting	Iron-working slag, crucibles, horse-harness and coin moulds. These were associated with rectangular timber buildings with a possible planned layout and surrounded by a palisade.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 20-4, 418; Richards 2000: 421
Verulamium	Beneath *insula* XVII	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Coin moulds possibly associated with a timber structure, the 'metal workshop'.	Frere 1983: 30; Niblett 1993: 78
	Site of *insula* XXVII building 3	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Single fragment of a coin mould.	Frere 1983: 30
	Bluehouse Hill	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Shallow pit containing coin moulds.	Frere 1983: 31
	Timber Tower causeway	Late pre-Roman Iron	Coin casting	Large deposit of coin moulds.	Anthony 1970; Niblett 1999:

		Age			411; Niblett 2001: 61
Winchester	Cathedral Green beneath the *forum*	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Coin casting	Coin mould.	Biddle 1966: 320

Table 5.2: Table showing evidence for metalworking connected with pre-Roman activities at or near the sites of Roman towns.

At Camulodunon most of the metalworking evidence comes from Sheepen (see section 5.6.1; Diagram 28). Excavations here produced a large amount of débris from industrial activity including metalworking waste, moulds for coin production and remains from pottery production and glass-working, indicating a major industrial and trading area (Hawkes and Crummy 1995: 70; Hawkes and Hull 1947; Niblett 1985). Willis' (2007b: 121) study of the finds from this site highlighted rich material culture found here, including coins, brooches and pottery (including amphorae, samian and Gallo-Belgic wares) from which may be inferred feasting, festivals and offerings relating to religious activity contemporary with the industrial activity. He (*ibid.*) argues that the industrial activity was deliberately located in this area because religious intervention was considered crucial to the productive cycle, production and religion being heavily linked at this time.

At Canterbury (Diagram 24), the excavations at the Marlowe Theatre site uncovered evidence for gold- and bronze-working associated with the structures including metalworking hearths, débris and coin moulds (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 27-51). Other sites include 44 Watling Street (Frere and Bennett 1987: 117), whilst at Silchester there was waste from the production of bronze horse-harness gear and silver coins associated with the palisaded enclosure (Fulford and Timby 2000: 419-20; Richards 2000: 421). There were also over 9kg of iron slag representing hearth bottom material and hammer-scale, much of which had been disposed of within a pit which lay inside the enclosure (Fulford and Timby 2000: 30-1).

Less evidence has come from Winchester and Chichester, although this may reflect the extent of excavation that has taken place. Two sherds of late Iron Age crucibles (Down and Magilton 1993: 43-8) have come from St. Peter's North Street in Chichester; whilst at Winchester one fragment of an Iron Age coin mould came from the Cathedral Green, the site of the *forum-basilica*, in the 1960s (Diagram 37; Biddle 1966: 320). Other *oppida*, which did not become Roman towns, have also indicated evidence for industrial activity. At Stanwick, especially in the Tofts area, metal billets, crucibles, ceramic moulds, tuyères and copper waste have been found (Haselgrove *et al.* 1990: 4; Spratling 1981). A hoard of Late Iron Age horse-harness fittings and weaponry was discovered in 1843, 3km away at Melsonby (Fitts *et al.* 1999).

Excavations at Hobditch and Gussage Cow Down were very small-scale, so the potential still exists for similar discoveries.

5.6.4 *Other finds*

Other finds apart from metalworking remains can also be useful indicators of activity on pre-Roman sites. The presence of prestige items gives an indication of status (Trow 1990: 108-9). J.D. Hill (2007: 30) argues that the massive increase in quantity of material culture at this time including coins, pottery, and brooches, especially at *oppida*, indicates a new political situation with new leaders able to control people, production and trade. Camulodunon, Canterbury, Silchester and Verlamion have relatively similar assemblages of material culture including coins, imported pottery and brooches. At Canterbury there was also a hoard of horse-harness fittings (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995). The rich material culture at Sheepen, Camulodunon, including brooches, amphorae and Gallo-Roman pottery imports (Niblett 1985), has already been mentioned.

High status material from Silchester included Iron Age coins, copper alloy brooches and toilet instruments (Fulford and Timby 2000). Pottery included *terra nigra* and *terra rubra* wares[105] and some early samian from *c.* A.D. 30 onwards and there were also large numbers of pig bones and oyster shells (*ibid.*). There were brooches and coins from Oram's Arbour (Cunliffe 1964; Qualmann *et al.* 2004) and the pre-conquest ditch close to Fishbourne, containing a large array of material (Manley and Rudkin 2005), might also give some indication as to the status of that site.

5.6.5 *Location of the Roman public buildings*

The topographies in which the towns and public buildings were constructed were already highly ritualised. Towns appropriated these landscapes and were, in some respect, shaped by them: the plan of Roman Silchester, for instance, exhibits influences from the pre-existing earthworks on the site (Boon 1974). Further examples include river and wetland contexts where some towns diverted the courses of rivers (*e.g.* Winchester; Zant 1993), and the location of public buildings on pre-existing activity.

The siting of Roman public buildings in relation to earlier activity may provide some indication as to the function or significance of particular parts of sites in the pre-Roman period. Caution, however, is required in allowing knowledge of the Roman buildings to influence interpretations of the pre-Roman evidence in their vicinity. Rather than projecting understanding of Roman period activity back into the Iron Age, it might be more useful to use

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[105] These fine polished Gallo-Belgic wares imported into Britain in the late pre-Roman Iron Age and were also being manufactured before A.D. 43 around Colchester and Verulamium. The *Terra Nigra* vessels were grey-black in colour whilst *Terra Rubra* were orange-coated cream to buff vessels (Swan 1980: 11).

the pre-Roman evidence as a way of approaching an understanding of the rôle of public buildings as places within the landscape.

At Verlamion, the St. Michael's enclosure underlies the central area of the town with the *forum-basilica* next to the theatre, bathhouse and temple. This complex resembles certain rural religious sanctuaries (Niblett 2005a: 105) such as Sanxay in France (Aupert 1992) and Frilford in Britain (Hingley 1985; Lock *et al.* 2003) suggesting a "rôle of combined *civitas*-capital and what in France would be described as a sanctuary site or cult centre" (Niblett 2005a: 105). Possible evidence for religious activity was also identified beneath Verulamium's triangular and *insula* XVI temples (see section 5.6.2; Lowther 1937; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 114). The Roman public buildings in the area of the enclosure would have been highly visible features, perhaps becoming part of the larger complex including the Gorhambury and Prae Wood earthworks.

A similar situation is possible at Camulodunum where there was the concentration of temples at Sheepen, and in the area of the Gosbecks enclosure there was the theatre and temple complex (Dunnett 1971a; Hull 1958). There may even have been some kind of activity beneath the *colonia* itself (H. Brooks 2006). At Canterbury, a Roman temple precinct seems to have been constructed on the site of a pre-Roman shrine (Frere 1977: 423). As at Verulamium, the *forum-basilica*, St. Margaret's Street bathhouse and theatre were located near the area of the pre-Roman enclosure and roundhouses, an area that produced a large number of Iron Age coins (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995). The public buildings here continued to emphasise this area of the landscape. The evidence at Winchester is more ambiguous (Diagram 37) but possible activity beneath the site of the *forum-basilica* is indicated by the coin mould and pottery (Biddle 1966: 320). Not enough is known about the public buildings at Chichester to speculate about the location of the structures in relation to earlier activity. The increasing evidence for pre-Roman activity in the area of the town, as examined above in section 5.6.2, however, indicates that future excavations should reveal more about it. Many of these places in the pre-Roman period were constructed in relation to features in the landscape which were imbued with meaning.

5.7 'Non-*oppida*'

Concentrating on '*oppida*' (*e.g.* Creighton 2006; Collis 1984) has led to equally important pre-Roman activity at other towns in Roman Britain sometimes being neglected. The term '*oppidum*' may not be entirely helpful since it puts too much emphasis on the earthworks and their rôle in the enclosure of settlement. It omits sites that do not have obvious traces of earthworks but which do have some of the other features that have been taken to define

'*oppida*' and constitute important places.[106] The absence of monumental earthworks does not mean that the sites were not also important and could not be places of élite activity.

Sites without earthworks could also have a long sequence of use, incorporate 'natural' features and be *foci* of political and ritual activity. A number of sites that precede Roman towns appear to have been important without artificial monumentalisation as they were associated with 'natural' features. Relevant sites include Lincoln, Leicester and Cirencester where, as with Colchester, military interpretations have dominated studies of the towns and their locations. The discussion of the sites will take place using similar category headings to those for the *oppida*, to facilitate comparison. Many of the towns without preceding *oppida* have evidence for pre-Roman activity, often within significant landscape settings relevant for considering their development in the Roman period.

5.7.1 *Water*

Many of the sites with evidence for pre-Roman activity were in watery settings. The Roman town at Lincoln lay next to the River Witham and the large natural body of water known as the Brayford Pool, formed where the Rivers Till and Witham meet (Diagram 33). This pool was much larger in the late pre-Roman Iron Age than today's canalised form (Darling and Jones 1988: 1) and it contained a number of islands which are now lost (M. Jones 2002: 21-4). The rivers, Brayford Pool and surrounding marshland indicate that, on occasion, there would have been flooding and drainage problems for any settlement in the vicinity (*ibid.*). Strategic and transport benefits, as well as food resources, are often considered to have been important for the siting of the Roman town here (*ibid.*). From the finds of metalwork from the Witham, such as the Witham Shield of the third or second century B.C. and late Bronze Age swords, however, it can be inferred that the river and surrounding wetlands also had religious connotations. Downstream is the timber causeway at Fiskerton, where items were deposited into the marshland from the Bronze Age onwards (Field and Parker Pearson 2003). The well on the site of the Roman *forum* may have originated in the pre-Roman period as part of a ritual site, but there is no dating evidence for verification, as it was cleared out in the medieval period (Gilmour 2007: 231). The Roman fortress and town is unlikely to have developed in this area, however, without some knowledge of the pre-existing significance attached to this place.

The Roman town and preceding activity at Cirencester was also intertwined with a watery landscape (Diagram 27). It was located in a low-lying area between the River Churn and the Daglingworth Brook, and even today the area known as Watermoor is liable to flood. This

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[106] J.D. Hill (2007: 30-2), for example, would rather replace '*oppida*' by the term 'royal sites'. Drawing on the model from Early Historic Ireland and early medieval England (see section 1.2.1), each individual 'royal site' consisted of a number of places spread across the ritualised landscape and had important rôles as arenas for ceremonies and political, economic and agricultural activities.

was in the southeast section of the Roman town but little is known about this area and it seems not to have been heavily occupied (Darvill and Gerrard 1994). The town is also in the direct path of floodwaters as they come down the valleys and meet here, this still being a cause of flooding today (Reece 2003: 276). The original fort was located on a small gravel spine between the two rivers, but this proved small for the town which, as it expanded, spread out into the floodplains of the rivers. It was necessary to redirect the courses of both rivers and, as Reece points out (*ibid.*: 277), the maintenance required to prevent leakage and flooding will have been a constant part of life within the town. The practical value of a water supply will have intertwined with the perceptions and understanding of the place which would have had religious connotations when altering it.

Gloucester (Diagram 31) was located in a curve of the River Severn at the lowest point at which the river could be bridged before the twentieth century. This is seen as having great strategic importance for access to South Wales (Hurst 1988: 48). Pre-Roman activity has been documented here (see section 5.7.2) indicating that the area was in use before the conquest, although more work is needed on the extent of this activity. At Leicester (Diagram 32) excavations are also increasing knowledge of late pre-Roman activity, which here seems to have focused near the River Soar in the area of the Roman town after known earlier settlements in surrounding higher areas went out of use (Charles *et al.* 2000; Cooper and Buckley 2003).[107] The town at Exeter (Diagram 30), built on the site of the fortress, was located on a spot overlooking a crossing, the lowest fordable point, of the River Exe and at the point at which the river once contained a number of islands (Bidwell 1979: 3; A. Fox 1952: 1-2). The Roman town extended beyond the confines of the fortress taking the settlement even closer to the river. The floodplain of the valley was, until the construction of the Exeter Flood Defence System between 1965 and 1977, liable to extensive flooding, as demonstrated by a major flood in the city in 1960 (Johns 1969: 283).

Roman Dorchester, close to the Iron Age hillfort of Maiden Castle, was located next to the River Frome in an area that also seems to have been important from an earlier date, as discussed in the next section (Diagram 29; P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 1). Chelmsford (Diagram 25) is positioned close to the floodplain of the River Can and the site overlooks the confluence of this river with the Chelmer (Drury 1988: 1).[108] Other sites in noticeably watery locations are Caistor-by-Norwich, which lay in the valley of the River Tas at the confluence of this river and the Yare (Diagram 23; Wacher 1995: 243), and Carmarthen, on the edge of a terrace above the floodplain of the River Tywi (H. James 1993: 95). Brough lay in the vicinity

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[107] Breeze (2002) has suggested that Corieltavi might mean 'army of many rivers' or 'host of (the region of) many rivers'. If this is the case it would draw attention to the significance of the watery nature of the area and the importance of the rivers.
[108] Engineering works in the eighteenth century enabled barges to reach Chelmsford and so the river and its floodplain have now been largely transformed (Drury 1988: 1).

of the wetlands of the River Humber, while to the east was Walling Fen which was largely reclaimed from the medieval period onwards (Diagram 22; J. Fraser 2004). The town at York lay beside the River Ouse and also close to marshland. J.G. Evans (1999: 117) has argued it was significant in the Iron Age – providing "at once a natural boundary and a place of sacredness and magic", but as yet there is no evidence for late Iron Age activity. Wroxeter lay beside the River Severn where there is a ford and at the location at which the Bell Brook stream runs through the site (R. White and Barker 1998: 38-9). This was later incorporated into the town, creating irregularities in the town plan and street-grid and resulting in the enclosure of a large area in the north of the town which was not heavily used (R. White and Gaffney 2003: 231).

The site of Roman London was divided by the Walbrook stream and other tributaries (Perring 1991a: 1). There were also islands and marshy areas around the Thames at Southwark facing the Roman town (Heard *et al.* 1990) and semi-marshland existed in a broad strip along the river (Marsden 1980: 12). Pre-Roman metalwork finds have come from along the Thames (Fitzpatrick 1984; Merrifield 1983: 9),[109] albeit over a fairly long stretch, and there is the collection of human skulls from the Walbrook that seem to date from the Bronze Age and the late Iron Age/Roman period. The majority were of young males, suggesting that they were deliberately selected; the lack of mandibles points to some kind of special treatment (Bradley and Gordon 1988). With these factors, together with their context, it can be inferred that they were ritual deposits (Bradley and Gordon 1988; Marsh and West 1981; T. Moore pers. comm.). Radiocarbon dating gave Bronze Age to Roman dates for the skulls[110] indicating veneration of this area over a long period from prehistory into Roman times.[111]

Many of the sites were located at the confluence of rivers, near islands, tidal zones and fords, indicating that movement and communication were important factors in the significance of the places. The ways in which people met, negotiated and experienced these places constituted a major part of the meaning with which they were imbued.

5.7.2 *Activity and 'landscape'*

Studies of Roman towns where there was apparently no '*oppidum*' have often concentrated on military origins (see below), with less consideration of the pre-Roman activity which could give some indication as to the pre-existing significance of the sites. This section will discuss

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[109] Such finds include the Battersea Shield and the Waterloo Helmet (Merrifield 1983: 9). Fitzpatrick (1984) documents over 100 finds of La Tène metalwork from the Thames with much being found during dredging operations.

[110] Radiocarbon dating of three skulls from the Walbrook yielded dates of100 cal. B.C. – cal. A.D. 390 for one skull, between 110 cal. B.C. and cal. A.D. 130 for another and between cal. A.D. 140 and cal. A.D. 460 for the final one (Bradley and Gordon 1988: 507). This would definitely suggest deposition in the late Iron Age, continuing into the Roman period. Radiocarbon dating taken from skulls from the Thames yielded Middle and Late Bronze Age dates suggesting that some skulls were deposited at the same time as the Bronze Age metalwork (*ibid.*: 508).

[111] Anglo-Saxon objects including weapons such as spearheads from the Thames (Bradley and Gordon 1988: 508) suggest veneration in the early-medieval period as well.

the evidence for activity at these sites, demonstrating that they were also important contexts in which Roman towns developed.

At Lincoln (Diagram 33), excavations have located activity on what, before land reclamation from the medieval period onwards, would have been an island within the Brayford Pool (Darling and Jones 1988; M. Jones 2002: 21-4). The structural evidence here consisted of the curving gullies of a possible roundhouse and a series of post-holes indicative of a rectangular building or perhaps drying racks (*ibid.*: 6). Unfortunately, there were no contemporary floor levels or finds to suggest a function, although the location on the island may infer something more than a domestic farmstead.[112] The date of the structure is equally problematic, but the few sherds of late Iron Age pottery found make a late Iron Age date likely (Darling and Jones 1988: 5).

Other traces of pre-Roman occupation at Lincoln include late Iron Age pottery spreads, coins, and a pit containing burnt bone from the site of the *forum-basilica.* The bone was radiocarbon dated to the late-first century B.C. (M. Jones and Stocker 2003: 28-30). It has also been argued that the fortress, in a prominent position on the crest of the hill, was placed on the site of a pre-existing, perhaps religious, Iron Age enclosure (Gilmour 2007: 231). Apart from the well of possible pre-Roman origins (see below), as yet there is little evidence to support this but only a very small proportion of the area has been uncovered. It has also been recognised that part of the fortress was constructed over the 'Jurassic Way', an ancient route way which follows the line of the Jurassic limestone ridge through Northamptonshire to Lincolnshire (*ibid.*).

There is also an extensive but non-continuous triple linear ditch and bank system to the north of the later town. The ditch contained pottery of the second and first centuries B.C. The function of this system is uncertain although possibilities include stock movement controls (*e.g.* Cunliffe 2004; Cunliffe 2005: 421-4). Other suggestions have been the control over local agricultural production (Champion 1994: 140), an expression of territorialism (Palmer-Brown 1993) or an attempt to focus on a religious place or ceremonial site (M. Jones and Stocker 2003: 30-1) which perhaps centred on the Brayford Pool area. Activity associated with the wetlands near Lincoln, such as the Fiskerton causeway constructed across the wide floodplain of the River Witham (Field and Parker Pearson 2003), indicates that movement between these places across the watery area was a meaningful act. The Roman town would have become part of this landscape.

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[112] Island dwellings such as crannogs in Scotland are often interpreted in practical terms such as a means of defence (*e.g.* J.C. Henderson 1998). This need not mean, however, that the locations were not also imbued with other meanings including in relation to religious belief.

Similar ditch systems do occur elsewhere in the Midlands and they might sometimes indicate possible *oppidum*-type settlements such as Hobditch in Warwickshire (Cracknell and Hingley 1996).[113] Further afield there is the group of triple ditches at Gussage Hill in Wessex (Barrett *et al.* 1991) which also represents a focus of activity in this area. In some cases there are earthworks that do not seem to enclose much, if any, evidence for occupation such as the North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch earthworks (Copeland 1988; Cunliffe 2005: 192) and the Dorsey in Northern Ireland (Aitchison 1993).[114] Places defined in the landscape through the construction of substantial earthworks need not include much evidence for occupation. This has implications for understanding the importance of the landscape of places that contained Roman towns, such as Lincoln.[115]

There were a number of distinct areas of activity in the late pre-Roman Iron Age at both Cirencester and Gloucester. Reece (2003: 276), in his analysis of the location of Cirencester, has drawn attention to the fact that both Ermine Street approaching the area from the southeast and the Fosse Way from the southwest deviate from their projected courses. The roads proceed to a low-lying area near the River Churn and the Daglingworth Brook (Diagram 27), then return to their original courses once they have left the town. Reece (*ibid.*) and Creighton (2006: 148) have emphasised the late Iron Age burial mounds on a hill in Tarbarrow Field to the northeast of the later town (O'Neil and Grinsell 1960: 108). If there was some kind of focus of activity here associated with the burials,[116] this might explain why the roads moved off course.

Some traces of pre-Roman occupation have been excavated in Cirencester, including pits and ditches at Queen Elizabeth Road of probable Iron Age date, but there is little good dating evidence (Barber and Collard 2000). A stake circle was found at 17 The Avenue (Wacher and McWhirr 1982: 28), although the extent and nature of the activity this represents is uncertain. As at Lincoln, however, there need not be extensive evidence of occupation for its importance to be inferred. The site of the later town, in its wetland context, would have been an integral

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[113] Here a series of single and multi-linear ditches enclose an area of around 7km^2 although more work is needed to identify the nature of any settlement associated with the earthworks. Some excavations have taken place but it was not possible to obtain a definite date for the features (Cracknell and Hingley 1996: 48).

[114] Initially the North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch earthworks enclosed around 13km^2 and then as much as 80km^2 and dated to the late-first century B.C. (Copeland 1988; Cunliffe 2005: 192). The Dorsey is a large earthwork enclosure in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, near the Dorsy River and associated with a large area of marshland. There is very little evidence for occupation or activity within the enclosure. Traditionally seen as a military installation it may instead have functioned as some kind of sacred enclosure (Aitchison 1993). The earthworks at Stanwick in North Yorkshire were also associated with an area of wetland (Wheeler 1954) and seem to enclose it deliberately further highlighting the relationship between watery areas and possible religious sites.

[115] Another comparison for analysing the function of earthworks is at Friar's Wash near the source of the River Ver, 15km to the northwest of Verulamium (Niblett 2006: 22). Here the earthworks focus on the watery location and an early enclosure, "suggesting the presence of a religious place" (*ibid.*), which is also supported by the later siting of two Romano-Celtic temples here. The activity at this location is likely to have been linked through movement to the earthworks and activity at Verulamium itself further along the river; the whole Ver Valley is likely to have been imbued with meaning.

[116] The evidence for the date of the burial mounds is problematic and they may well have been earlier. The early excavations have meant that only through further excavation might it be possible to confirm the nature and period of the mounds.

part of the 'complex' of interrelated sites in the area including Bagendon and the Ditches (North Cerney) enclosure (Moore 2003; 2007b).

There is growing evidence for pre-conquest activity at and near Gloucester but the significance of the area at this time is still poorly understood and needs further work (Diagram 31). Analysis of the pottery from Kingsholm, 700m north of the Roman town site, has led to suggestions of an Iron Age settlement here, even an '*oppidum*', (Hurst 1999a: 119) although the finds may simply be related to settlement associated with the establishment of the fort (Timby 1999). A number of coins of the Dobunni and Durotriges have come from Kingsholm (Haselgrove 1989: 51-7; 1993: 47; see Gazetteer 1) but these may also relate to early Roman activity. Whether pre-conquest activity was a reason for the establishment of the fort here, rather than near the river crossing where the fortress and then town were later situated (Hurst 2005: 299-300), remains uncertain without further work. There is also some evidence for Iron Age settlement in the area of the Roman town at Gloucester itself which may indicate that there was more intensive use of this area than previously suspected.[117] As at Cirencester, there were areas of activity spread out across the landscape with one focus of attention being the watery area of the river and its floodplain and another being the Kingsholm area.

Another poorly understood site is Caistor-by-Norwich (Diagram 23). Aerial photography and some excavations have revealed a series of ditches which seem to predate and underlie the town (Davies 1996: 80; D. Wilson 2003: 256) and possibly form an enclosure by using the River Tas as one side. Davies (1996: 80) has suggested that these ditches may represent an *oppidum* here, but insufficient details are known about the nature of the site and it may currently be beyond our level of understanding. The Roman temple to the northeast of the Roman town has produced Iron Age coinage and pottery (Gregory 1991) which might indicate that there was also pre-Roman activity here, and perhaps a religious place, although the coins could also have reached the site after the conquest. Creighton (2006: 144) has suggested that the site of this shrine was the location of a princely tomb, but there is no evidence so far to support this. A number of enigmatic enclosures have been identified in the landscape around the later town, such as at Harford Park (Ashwin 2000; NHER records, Gazetteer 1), which point to a considerable amount of activity in this area that seems to revolve around the confluence of the Rivers Tas and Yare; this also includes Neolithic monuments and Bronze Age barrows (NHER records 6100, 9582, 9743, 9789) which appear to indicate a landscape with a significance of far greater antiquity.

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[117] Structural remains and domestic débris were found at the sites of Saintbridge (Atkin 1987; Darvill 1982; Darvill and Timby 1986), Abbeymead (Atkin 1987) and Cherry Tree Lane (Mudd *et al.* 1999: 70).

The landscape around Dorchester also has a number of prehistoric monuments (Diagram 29) including the hillforts of Maiden Castle and Poundbury and the Neolithic henge monuments of Maumbury Rings (Bradley 1975; Gale 2003) and Mount Pleasant (Wainwright 1979). Excavations at the Greyhound Yard site within the town uncovered a series of large post-pits which seemed to be of later Neolithic date and, if continuous, formed a large timber circle (P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 351). This was located within a small coombe running down to the floodplain of the River Frome. Because of the possible religious significance of this place, P. Woodward *et al.* (*ibid.*: 361) have also surmised the possibility of an Iron Age shrine in the area, providing a link between previous activity and the Roman period, but there is so far no supporting evidence. A small number of coins of the Durotriges have come from Dorchester, although these are mostly of an uncertain provenance (Allen 1960: 176, 240, 243; Haselgrove 1983: 136, 150), and Sparey Green (1986) has catalogued evidence for a number of ditches found across the town, which he argues may relate to late Iron Age activity. The dating evidence from all of these features is sparse, however, and more work is needed before any continuity for activity in the area from the Neolithic to the Roman period can be established.

There are a number of other sites where the evidence for late Iron Age activity is increasing although its nature and distribution remain uncertain. Knowledge of activity at Leicester (Diagram 32) is becoming more extensive and its distribution indicates that known areas were concentrated near to the river.[118] Various pits, gullies, ditches and coins dating to the late-first century B.C. and early-first century A.D. have been found on a number of sites in the town including St. Nicholas Street, St. Nicholas Circle (Clay and Pollard 1994: 1), Bath Lane (L. Cooper unpublished) and beneath the 'Jewry Wall' bathhouse (Jarvis 1984-5; Jarvis 1986; Kenyon 1948: 9-10, 124-35, 279). Traces of a possible roundhouse were found at Thornton Lane (Clay and Pollard 1994: 37, 44). One near-complete coin tray, a number of coin mould and crucible fragments were found in 2007 from an Iron Age ditch and surroundings at Bath Lane, whilst three coin mould fragments came from earlier excavations here (Clay and Mellor 1985: 18, 20, 30, 69; Kipling *et al.* 2007). These further indicate the likely importance of this area.[119] One large ditch was found across the Merlin Works site at Bath Lane but the dating and extent of this feature is uncertain and more work is needed before an *oppidum* or other earthwork site can be suggested (Kipling *et al.* 2007).

Like Leicester, Exeter (Diagram 30) has now produced evidence for activity, including traces of roundhouses of probable Iron Age date at Holloway Street, Trichay Street and the Southernhay East car park, and also two Iron Age coins, although these are of non-local

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[118] It has been argued that *Ratae* from the Roman name for Leicester may mean earthen rampart (Rivet and Smith 1979: 443) suggesting that there may have been some kind of earthwork here and even an '*oppidum*'.
[119] In the wider surrounding area there is also a number of known large sites such as the Elms Farm, Humberstone, aggregate site (Charles *et al.* 2000; Cooper and Buckley 2004: 51-2). These settlements seem to have gone out of use in the first century B.C. which may have led to the focus on the river valley (Cooper and Buckley 2004: 51-2).

origins (Exeter UAD 10000, 10001, 10002, 10003, 11553; Stead 2004).[120] One ditch on the Southernhay East car park site contained over one hundred sherds of late Iron Age pottery. Whether this represents a concentration of activity focused on the river is uncertain.

It is often stated that Roman London was founded for economic reasons on an unoccupied site (*e.g.* Rowsome 1998: 35) but there is evidence for arguing that the location was already important in the pre-Roman period. Holder and Jamieson's (2003) study of the prehistoric area around London has highlighted the level of truncation caused by Roman and later activity in the City and also the extreme difficulty of excavating to the great depth necessary to identify the earliest deposits. What is known so far, however, does not seem to indicate extensive pre-Roman occupation in the area (Diagram 34) although some Iron Age coins have been found (Kent 1978). The prehistoric and Roman metalwork from the Thames and Walbrook indicates that the area was frequented and of importance for religious activity which continued in the Roman period (Mattingly 2006a: 315-6; Merrifield 1995; Wardle 1998). The islands within the Thames at Southwark have more evidence for Iron Age occupation including traces of roundhouses, pottery and inhumation burials (Beard and Cowan 1988; Goodburn 1978: 453; Perring 1991a: 1-3), perhaps indicating that they were a more important focus at this time than the area of the later town (*cf.* Drummond-Murray *et al.* 2002: 5-6).

Other towns have so far not produced any evidence for pre-Roman occupation. Research on Carmarthen in the regional SMR produced no details of activity although it is possible that the location of the site itself, on a terrace above the floodplain of the River Tywi (H. James 2003: 20), had some kind of pre-existing local significance.[121] Caerwent also has little evidence, but at both of these sites traces of pre-Roman activity may have been destroyed by the establishment of the Roman settlements. Iron Age coins have come from Caerwent and although some may have been post-conquest arrivals, others seem likely to have been earlier (Haselgrove 1983: 141).[122]

5.7.3 *Craft production and 'industry'*

Metalworking and other 'industrial' activities were demonstrably important at '*oppida*' and were intertwined with religious activity and the special nature of the places. Evidence for

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[120] The two coins were an Armorican silver issue of *c.* 50 B.C. found in 1871 and a Durotrigian bronze type found in 1978, both of which, and especially the latter, may have reached the site after the Roman conquest.

[121] This has been suggested for the area around the Roman fort and settlement at Carlisle, which in the Roman period was called *Luguvalium*, meaning 'strong in the God Lug' (McCarthy 2003: 146) indicating a possible religious area. In a bend of the River Eden 3km from the site of Carlisle there is an intense complex of cropmarks which appear to include two large timber circles, ring-ditches, field systems and a possible hill fort. Some of this area may have included religious activity and it has been suggested that the religious nature of the area may have been a major factor in the location of the Roman fort here (*ibid.*).

[122] Gwilt's (2007) recent examination of Iron Age material from southeast Wales has demonstrated that the people are visible in the archaeological record and from the discovery of items such as horse-harness gear and burials with weapons it can be inferred that there were high-status warrior or religious élites; people in this area need not, however, have desired any monumental sites like '*oppida*'.

metalworking has also come from other sites but in smaller quantities and more dispersed through the surrounding area (see table 5.2). Moving beyond solely economic interpretations of metalworking, however, suggests that sites can be recognised as important even if the quantity of metalworking was not large (*cf.* Roymans 2004). The evidence includes coin mould and crucible fragments and molten metal finds from Leicester (section 5.7.2). Over one hundred coin mould pieces together with iron-smelting waste have been found at Bagendon (Diagram 27) in a floodable and often waterlogged area of the site (Clifford 1961) and coin moulds have come from the banjo enclosure at Ditches (Trow 1988).

Other evidence for metalworking at these sites is lacking but this could reflect the smaller amount of investigation rather than the extent of activities that took place. The presence of coin moulds at many of the '*oppida*' indicates that coin production was an important function of these sites, but their discovery at other sites such as Leicester and Ditches is a reminder that coin casting also took place on other types of site. This raises questions about the importance of '*oppida*' within the settlement hierarchy and the wide range of activities that occurred on a whole variety of late Iron Age sites.

5.7.4 *Other finds*

There is generally less evidence for late Iron Age material culture at these sites. J.D. Hill (2007: 30) sees the massive increase in material culture at '*oppida*', compared with earlier sites, as part of the new political situation which he terms 'kingship', where a social order with leaders is now led by rulers. Even if this is the case, it need not necessarily reflect the 'inferiority' of the 'non-*oppida*' sites which lack similar quantities of material culture. Studies of rural sites which have a relative lack of material culture in some areas of Britain in the Iron Age and Roman periods, for instance, have argued that this was more through preference and cultural values than economic poverty (*e.g.* K. Matthews 1997, on sites in northwest England).

The few finds from the structural remains at Lincoln excavated on the island in the Brayford Pool consisted of a Langton Down brooch, a clay toggle and late Iron Age shell-tempered indigenous pottery (Darling and Jones 1988). Probably also from pre-Roman layers, although less certain, was an iron spearhead and a fragment of copper alloy tweezers (*ibid.*) – the dating of the activity was problematic but analysis of the stratigraphic layers does indicate the earliest structural remains were late Iron Age (*ibid.*). The Bagendon and Ditches complex had some imported material, including glass and ceramics (Trow 1988: 108) but the sites in the area around Cirencester had little more than pottery and coins. For many sites, the finds consisted only of pottery, and sometimes coins, as at Caistor-by-Norwich, Gloucester, London and Exeter. At Dorchester, there have been no finds of Iron Age date from within the town despite an area of occupation being suspected here (Diagram 29): whether the amount

and type of finds necessarily reflects the importance of such sites is uncertain. There is also the added problem of activities that are less likely to be represented in the archaeological record such as cloth production, wood-working and crop processing. Viewing sites beyond economic terms, however, allows for other possibilities – these sites could be equally meaningful.

5.7.5 *Location of the Roman buildings*

As with the *oppida*, it appears that both practical and symbolic factors governed the location of the public buildings of the towns at these 'non-*oppida*', such as Lincoln, Cirencester and Leicester, and their relationship with the local topography. In all cases, however, they were developing in the context of these sacred landscapes. In some instances there is evidence that the public buildings developed on sites already used in the pre-Roman period, but little evidence is available. At London, for example, there is the complex of monumental buildings including temples on the island at Southwark (Cowan 1992; Durrani 2004; Yule 2005), indicating that it was an important area, where there was also late Iron Age activity.[123] At Dorchester, an amphitheatre was constructed on top of the Neolithic henge monument of Maumbury Rings, making the arena much larger than other amphitheatres in Britain, although there is as yet no positive evidence that the site was also used in the Iron Age. The construction of the town and public buildings at Cirencester, Exeter and Gloucester also represented the further monumentalisation of pre-existing places, but considerably more work is needed to understand the transition from the late Iron Age to Roman period here.

5.8 Peopling these places

Consideration must also be given to the people involved in the activity at these sites; people are evidently fundamental to the construction of the significance of place (*cf.* E. Casey 1996). Simplistic assumptions concerning the constituents of society in the late Iron Age have often influenced interpretations of sites such as *oppida,* their practical rôles as settlements and their position in the wider settlement hierarchy. Traditional views of the late Iron Age have argued that most of the towns were located within tribal centres which had been established with greater stability prior to the conquest (*e.g.* Cunliffe 2005). Lives of individuals, such as Commius, Dubnovellaunus, Verica and Cunobelin, were reconstructed through coin distributions and references within classical texts, such as Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* and the history by Cassius Dio.[124] This is despite uncertainties about their accuracy and the nature, and even existence, of tribes (as the term is understood today) that the individuals represent.

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[123] These include the monumental complex excavated at Winchester Palace (Yule 2005) and a possible *mansio* (Cowan 1992). At Tabard Square, two Romano-Celtic temples were excavated with dimensions of 11m by 11m dating to the first century A.D.
[124] Cassius Dio (*c.* A.D. 164 – after A.D. 229), a Greek senator, wrote an eighty-volume *Roman History* between the late-second and early-third centuries A.D which only partly survives today. It covered a period of over 980 years and ended around the time of his death (Rich 2003: 299-300).

Beginning with Rivet (1977a)[125] a number of authors have argued that tribal groups will have been more complex and variable than static models (*e.g.* Cunliffe 2005) of tribal divisions in pre-Roman Britain suggest (*e.g.* Laurence 2001; Mattingly 2004; T. Moore 2005; Wigley 2005). It is also likely that ethnicity, and identity more generally, was highly fluid in nature (*cf.* S. Jones 1997). Mattingly (2004: 13) argues that rather than being affiliated with particular and relatively static tribal groups, people may have considered themselves followers of a specific leader in a situation in which circumstances and allegiances would have been constantly changing. Creighton (2006) argues that at Camulodunon and Verlamion, the Roman townscapes developed to enshrine and reinforce the memory of the 'kings' and other leading individuals who ruled these areas before and immediately after the Roman conquest. These were probably new political positions, evolving due to changing relationships with Rome.

J.D. Hill (2006: 177-8; 2007: 31) emphasises the likely instability of these leaders right up to the conquest period; perhaps being dependant on Roman support they may have made up the rules as they went along. Pitts and Perring (2006) have suggested that at Camulodunum some members of the élite prior to the conquest would have had direct experience of the city of Rome itself, and this may have influenced the need to locate towns in specifically identified places of religious importance (as represented by coinage apparently depicting the curved staff, *lituus*, from the Roman augurial ceremony).

These are important views concerning the evolution of these urban sites, but there is a danger in invoking 'romanisation' too strongly. J. Williams (2005: 28-9), for example, queries a reading of the *lituus* in such simplistic terms, arguing that the image on coinage would have been adopted and interpreted in different ways and used to represent the importance of individuals rising in power at this time. These sites, often places of greater antiquity, were where power and identity were negotiated. They were places where origin myths were created and the construction of identities took place (*cf.* Gerritsen and Roymans 2006: 255). Acknowledging the complexity of social structure demonstrates the problems in identifying the importance of some sites, such as *oppida*, over others that did not possess monumental earthworks such as Lincoln. Examining the people is difficult: Ingold (2000: 151) even argues that to describe indigenous people in terms of those that were 'there first' "situates them within a history conceived as a narrative of colonial conquest and state formation"; and late Iron Age people are likely to have had a different concept of being and time.

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[125] Rivet (1977a) questioned our understanding of late Iron Age tribes in Britain leading to the pattern of Roman urbanism. He argued that there was much more military involvement in the urbanisation of Britain, with the majority of sites chosen for towns being earlier military sites. His study of the political geography of Roman Britain in his book *Town and Country in Roman Britain* (1958) was also quite critical of the construction of *civitas* boundaries through tribal groupings, especially from Ptolemy's *Geography*. His continued analysis of Ptolemy can be seen in his paper (1977b).

Even if some of the earthworks were designed to direct attention towards them and add to their visual impact, areas of these sites were not necessarily accessible to all. Studies of 'contested landscapes' indicate the variation in access to, and experience of, the landscape in the past and also the present (*e.g.* Bender 1993; 2001). A similar situation is probable in the case of Roman towns, with access to certain public buildings and perhaps parts of the towns likely to have been controlled and highly formalised. The population of these places, in terms of ethnicity, status and gender, in the late pre-Roman Iron Age will always be a difficult area to pursue, as demonstrated by the many studies of identity and ethnicity in the past (*e.g.* Díaz-Andreu 2002; 2005; S. James 1999; S. Jones 1997; Mattingly 2004) and of romanisation (*e.g.* Hingley 2005a; Mattingly ed. 1997b; 2002). The issue of agency (*cf.* Gardner 2004a; M. Johnson 2004) is also important, since different people will have experienced and understood the sites in different ways. The Roman viewpoint, traditionally dominant in most studies of Roman Britain and its people, is important but must be considered as only one of many viewpoints. In the Roman period, towns will have been inhabited by many diverse types of people from across the Empire (Mattingly 2006a: 292-5) but local people, and their concept of landscape, place and space, would have been a major part of this. To the local people in the late Iron Age, the significance of these places, many of which had longer histories of activity, will have influenced activity during the Roman period.

5.9 Conclusions

This analysis has provided a more challenging understanding of urbanisation, the 'growth' of towns and the way in which the process was influenced by pre-existing places. Themes identified include the setting of the sites, their river and wetland contexts and multi-focal nature, the use of the sites as places where people met and interacted, and evidence for activities such as metalworking and coin production. Both natural and artificial features were important parts of these landscapes. Although Roman towns brought new elements to these sites, they can also be considered to have continued the histories of the places in which they were located. They developed in the context of these locales of meaning through aspects of both transformation and continuity. Although no two sites are the same, many Roman town sites had histories which influenced the process of urbanisation in significant ways. Rather than projecting the significance of towns onto pre-Roman places, it is argued here that the meanings attached to pre-existing landscapes will have been influential on urbanism. The continuity of the use of the towns in the late Roman period as places of meeting, interaction and metalworking (amongst other functions to be addressed in the following chapters) will have built upon the 'place-value' of the sites and this is a more useful way of thinking about the towns than considering them in terms of decline.

Many of the 'non-*oppida*' sites were comparable in certain ways to the '*oppida*', indicating the need for more research to understand the immediate pre-conquest settlement pattern and the way in which it was experienced as "an arena for human action" (quoted from M. Johnson 2007: 93). The '*oppida*' and many of the 'non-*oppida*' have evidence for religious activity and metalworking. Like the '*oppida*', some of the 'non-*oppida*' have forms of earthworks; like the 'non-*oppida*', the *oppida* also interacted with 'natural' features in the landscape. The way in which 'landscape' was conceptualised and experienced, including sacred aspects such as the watery nature of sites, will have been more resistant to change than the alterations caused through constructing new buildings and changes to the buildings through time. The continued use of these sites will have added meaning to the places over time.

This continued use will now be considered in detail in the reanalysis of the theory of decline and fall concerning urbanism in late Roman archaeology and evidence connected especially with the use of the public buildings.

Chapter 6: Studying the late Roman town

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 argued that the concept of decline and fall has traditionally been a dominant theoretical framework used to explain the archaeology of towns in the late Roman period in Britain and elsewhere. The 'Golden Age' of classical urbanism is seen to be followed by decline; as Haverfield (1924: 265) stated, "no Golden Age lasts long". Tied in with this view is a preoccupation with economic interpretations of the evidence. Wickham's (2005: 594) recent analysis of cities in the late Roman and early medieval periods, for example, states that he "restricts the word 'city' to urban centres defined economically" which only provides a one-sided understanding of settlement at this time. Until relatively recently, studies of Roman Britain have not covered the late Roman period in as much detail as the 'Golden Age' (*e.g.* Frere 1967; Haverfield 1912; Wacher 1975). A few studies have proved the exception (*e.g.* P.J. Casey ed. 1979; Esmonde Cleary 1989a), but the specialism inherent in Roman urban archaeology has meant that work has remained largely uninfluenced by the advances in theory and practice in other areas of archaeology. In Iron Age archaeology, for example, methodologies are increasingly challenging culture-specific assumptions and new approaches are being attempted (*cf.* Haselgrove and Moore 2007).

Late Roman archaeology often involves narratives based on historical events that are derived from classical textual sources and later authors such as Edward Gibbon. Though texts are useful, relying on them has meant that there has been less call to critique the way in which the archaeology of the period is studied and interpreted. Some more challenging approaches include Christie (2006), Fulford *et al.* (2006), Lavan and Bowden eds. (2003), Leone (2007), Wickham (2005) and some discussions in Esmonde Cleary (1989a and 2001).[126] This chapter will explore the intellectual context of late Roman study, especially the late Roman town, before the late Romano-British urban archaeology is examined in detail in the succeeding chapters.

6.2 Thinking about civilisation and decline in towns

The study of towns, and especially the public buildings that they contain, has been central to many works on the later Roman period. Towns have been considered the "litmus test" for the impact of Roman values on its provinces (Esmonde Cleary 2004: 218). Changes to towns have usually been taken to represent the end of these values and an indication of the decline of the Empire as a whole. As a result, urbanism is a major issue in the archaeology of the later Roman period (Cameron 1993a: 152; 2003: 10); relevant studies include Liebeschuetz (2000),

[126] Esmonde Cleary (1989b: 235) has made the important point that while the 'Golden Age' and the fourth century cover similar lengths of time, there has always been a disproportionate amount of study on the former period.

B. Ward-Perkins (1984; 2005), Leone (2003; 2007) and Christie (2006). Whilst Liebeschuetz uses the town very much to highlight the fall of the Empire and the break with the Roman period, Christie, Ward-Perkins and Leone are more willing to suggest some kind of change and adaptation.[127] For Britain, works by Esmonde Cleary (1989a) and Faulkner (2000a), present more general discussions on the later Roman period but include sections examining towns – these are mostly from the point of view of decline from earlier periods. There is a need to consider the subject through the use of more overtly theoretical approaches.

The nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, when Gibbon's work was still highly influential, saw a number of excavations of Roman towns, including Caerwent (Ashby *et al.* 1910), Silchester (G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890; Joyce 1866), Wroxeter (Wright 1872) and Verulamium (Page 1914). For these excavators, alternative visions from the 'Golden Age' image of Roman urbanism were rarely sought: Fox and St. John Hope, for example, wrote of the "desirability of the complete and systematic excavation of the site of Silchester" (1890: 733) which meant identifying the plans of stone buildings and *insulae* without addressing phasing and other types of structures.[128] As a result, information concerning the late Roman period will have been lost; more recent excavations of the Silchester *basilica* have uncovered the Victorian trenches and demonstrated the extent of the damage to archaeological deposits that these caused (Fulford and Timby 2000: 80).[129]

Occasionally, discoveries considered to represent later phases of towns were made but these were usually placed within historical contexts and emphasise more negative perspectives. Excavations at Silchester in 1833, for example, located a skeleton in the baths of the *mansio* (Anon 1833); this was considered to be the result of "violence and fire" (Kempe 1838: 418) and to represent the end of civilised standards and of law and order (Boon 1974: 81-2).[130] Similarly, Thomas Wright's nineteenth century excavations at Wroxeter located twelve skeletons within the hypocaust of the baths, which were interpreted as people who had "fled from the massacrers (*sic*)", when "the town was attacked and destroyed" by Anglo-Saxon invaders (Wright 1872: 68, 143).

The Wheeler excavations at Verulamium between 1930 and 1933 (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936) were perhaps the first major excavations of a Romano-British town that recognised

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[127] B. Ward-Perkins' most recent book *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (2005) clearly advocates the concept of decline from the pinnacle of civilisation. In the book he describes how his father, John Ward-Perkins, the director of the British School at Rome between 1946 and 1974, influenced his attitudes and writing, which demonstrate the predominate perspective that was taken in studies of Rome and the Empire at this time.

[128] Of course, excavation and recording techniques have greatly changed since then, partly as a result of these early excavations, and now it is possible to identify far greater detail in the data.

[129] See also Fulford *et al.* (2002) for a discussion of the Victorian and Edwardian excavation methodologies at Silchester.

[130] This find was reported in the *Reading Mercury* on 18th February 1833 (Anon 1833) and in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in the same month (Kempe 1838). These excavations were carried out by the Rev. Mr. Coles, rector of the parish, and "aided by the exertions of another neighbouring clergyman" (Anon 1833). They do not seem to have been part of any of the programmes of excavations at the site and appear to have been a one off (Boon 1974: 24). The first major interventions at Silchester were undertaken by John Stair (1708-1782) and then by the Revd. J.G. Joyce (1819-1878) before those of the Silchester Excavation Fund between 1890 and 1909 (*ibid.*: 22-7).

chronological changes (Esmonde Cleary 2004: 418). Wheeler's interpretations, however, were based on his background as a Classicist and as a military man (Cunliffe 1999: 371).[131] Wheeler described the late town as being in a "ruinous condition": "nothing constructive belongs of this age", it resembled a "bombarded city" (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 28). For Wheeler, the "social and economic standards of the Verulamium citizens had fallen too far for more than a momentary redemption"; the "spacious residential quarter in the south part of the town decayed rapidly to slum conditions or even to desolation" (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 30). With no salvation from civilising external forces, there could only be decline. For Wheeler, the end of the perceived 'Golden Age' was inevitably followed by decline.[132]

Collingwood, drawing upon Wheeler's analysis, described mid-fourth century Verulamium in a similar fashion: "the greater part of Verulam was uninhabited, a waste of empty houses. Here and there squatters lived among the ruins" (Collingwood and Myres 1936: 206); this was considered to be typical of the period. Collingwood also refers to evidence of the "squatters' occupation at Silchester and of the deserted and ruined *forum* at Wroxeter" (*ibid.*). Frere's (1983) study of Verulamium is often considered to have presented a more optimistic view of the late Roman town based on his excavation of the long chronology of activity in *insula* XXVII in the 1950s (Faulkner 1994: 94; 2000a: 25).[133] His view of the town's continuity, however, was based mainly on large townhouses of the élite and he continued to propose that most of the population lived in harsh slum conditions (Frere 1983).

The views of Wheeler and Frere were influential throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Reece (1980), slightly differing in approach, proposed that the Roman town in Britain was effectively dead by the mid-third century, as a result of the third century crisis,[134] and had completely gone by A.D. 350: "the third century intervened and the town, a tender Mediterranean plant in foreign soil, failed" (1980: 78); what remained was an "administrative village" (*ibid.*: 89-90). The paper was controversial at the time of publication[135] perhaps not

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[131] Wheeler's degree was in Classics and his father was also a Classicist (Cunliffe 1999: 371). After Verulamium, Wheeler went on to excavate the Iron Age hillfort at Maiden Castle and vividly described what he saw as evidence for the invading Romans (1943). Wheeler (1943: 62) writes, for example, that huts were "set alight, and under the rising clouds of smoke the gates were stormed and the position carried...Men and women, young and old, were savagely cut down, before the legionaries were called to heel and the work of systematic destruction began". He also took the post of director general of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1943 (Cunliffe 1999: 373) which may well have influenced his views on the Roman conquest of Britain, the concept of invasion as a civilising force and the negative nature of the later Roman period; many parallels between British India and the Roman Empire were being drawn at this time (Hingley 2000: 61).

[132] Faulkner (1994: 94) argues that Wheeler's views are connected with the climate in which he was working, post-World War I and in the years leading up to World War II, but this was perhaps only part of the context since like Wheeler, Faulkner has rather similar views regarding Roman civilisation and the 'Golden Age' of towns.

[133] Frere's excavations in *insula* XXVII uncovered a large courtyard house built in the fourth century with a rectangular building *c.* 43m long and possibly as much as 17m wide (the end was not excavated), interpreted as a barn, built over part of it (1983: 224-5). This, together with traces of a water pipe then constructed across the site, was taken to indicate a sequence of activity into the fifth century and possibly later. Faulkner (1994: 94) has proposed that Frere was influenced by the contemporary social climate of prosperity and optimism in the 1960s.

[134] The third century crisis is a term often used for a series of events in the Roman Empire during the third century which included military collapses on frontiers, internal civil war and economic problems (Faulkner 2000a: 80-7). Diocletian's reforms at the end of the third century were an attempt to save the Empire from destruction (Mitchell 2007: 55-62).

[135] It was originally presented as a paper in a conference on 'The End of Roman Britain' in Durham in 1978 and it was intended that it would be published in the resultant volume (published by British Archaeological Reports [ed. P.J. Casey 1979]). Although

so much because of the interpretation of decline but because of Reece's assertion, following Collingwood (with Myres 1936), that towns never fully developed in Roman Britain. Reece did not put so much value on any late Roman material in the archaeological record that did not accord with his image of the classical town.

The 'administrative village' model has been influential (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a; J. Evans 1983). Esmonde Cleary does, however, argue for a greater level of continuity of town life up to the later fourth century, followed then by a decline that was "nasty, brutish and short" (1989a: 161). There was an end to public amenities, consumption and the élite lifestyle, represented by the decline in highly visible archaeological remains and artefacts. Esmonde Cleary's book gives the late Roman period an important voice but it does emphasise Roman élite-style living and highly visible archaeological remains without addressing the potential of the available evidence for identifying other forms of structures and modes of living.[136]

Faulkner (1994; 1996; 2000a; 2000b; 2004) has published a group of publications where decline – leading to fall – has remained the dominant theme. In *The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain* (2000a), a title which draws on Gibbon, Faulkner argues for what he terms the 'decline of classical urbanism' with towns becoming fortified strong points of the military government: "the booming civil towns of the golden age had been superseded by the gloomy police towns of an age of blood and iron" (*ibid.*: 130). The civic centres were replaced by areas devoted to large military piazzas and store buildings (*ibid.*: 128-9), whilst for most of the population there was a "shanty town of huts and shelters" (1996: 94; 2000a: 123-4). Faulkner attempts to support his argument through quantative analyses of the disappearance of stone structures and material culture (1998; 2000b: 27-30) but, though using available evidence, his views were coloured by an emphasis on classical élite culture, large townhouses and monumental public buildings. Faulkner's later paper (2004) continues this theme, arguing that the Late Antiquity paradigm is "theoretically weak, methodologically suspect and inadequately supported by either archaeological or historical evidence" (*ibid.*: 5). He lays down nine criteria defining the Roman period (*ibid.*: 8):

1. broadly uniform cultural assemblage across the Empire including buildings
2. long distance communications networks
3. numerous high status settlements
4. evidence for a centralised authority manifest in street-grids and roads
5. many elaborate public buildings
6. much use of mortared masonry

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it was accepted by the volume editor it was deemed unsuitable and too controversial by the publishers and so was rejected (Reece 1980: 90-91). After its eventual publication in *World Archaeology*, Reece asserts that students were even advised against reading it (*Current Archaeology* 171, 2000: 112).

[136] Esmonde Cleary concentrates much of his analysis on the structural condition of public buildings, courtyard houses and villas (*e.g.* 1989a: 64-85, 100-16).

7. mass production and distribution of artefacts
8. luxury crafts reflecting Greco-Roman Mediterranean taste and art
9. architecture that is rooted in Greco-Roman culture

These equate with the concept of 'romanisation' outlined by Haverfield (1912), an approach that has been subjected to considerable criticism because of its emphasis on the Roman élite (*e.g.* Hingley 2000; 2005a; Mattingly ed. 1997a; 2002; 2004; 2006a; J. Webster and Cooper eds. 1996). These works argue that 'romanisation' provides a simplistic way of understanding Roman Britain; but for Faulkner the end of these features equates with decline. He then outlines the features of what he terms the 'Early Dark Ages' which include vernacular architecture, small farms and "small and impoverished" finds assemblages (Faulkner 2004: 9). In Roman Britain, however, villas and monumental townhouses were in the minority compared with the number of small rural sites in the settlement record (Hingley 1989; Mattingly 2006a). Faulkner's approach has been criticised for its 'Childean' nature (Collins and Gerrard 2004: 2)[137] and the fact that it does not address complicated sites such as Wroxeter (R. White 2002). By not discussing the hugely varied nature of Roman Britain, its settlement record and social make-up, Faulkner fails to recognise and value the considerable quantity of evidence for activity in towns during the late Roman period.

International work on the later Roman period has discussed the issue of decline in a more balanced manner, including the dialogue on the subject in Lavan (2001a ed.). Here the main argument is set out by Liebeschuetz (2001) for whom, like Faulkner, decline is a value-free concept with which to record changes in the archaeology as manifest in the decay of town centres, the replacement of stone with timber, the fall in populations and the reduction in trade. B. Ward-Perkins (2001) supports Liebeschuetz, although he suggests that 'fall and decline' would be a better way to conceptualise the changes at this time. Others, however, have set themselves against this interpretation (Cameron 2001; Lavan 2001b). Cameron (1993a; 1993b; 2001) considers decline to be a subjectively-loaded term that should be avoided, and questions the assertion that such factors as timber replacing stone can be taken as obvious examples of decline. She also states that "it is not the historian's place either to sit in moral judgement on his subject or to impose inappropriate classical norms" onto the data (1993a: 198). This thesis will build upon Cameron's observations.

The 1996 volume *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Christie and Loseby eds.) attempts to avoid the term decline, but the later volume *Towns in Decline A.D. 100-1600* (Slater ed. 2000) does not provide much analysis of

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[137] Vere Gordon Childe's work has been criticised in modern archaeology for his classification systems and broad definitions of cultures which were applied to the archaeological evidence (*e.g.* Childe 1925; 1950; Trigger 1980).

the term. Slater's book covers Britain with papers by White (2000), examining late Roman Wroxeter in terms of transformation rather than decline, and Faulkner (2000b). Both volumes also simplify the debate by viewing Roman and medieval urban change in similar terms, without taking into account the differing historical contexts and the difficulties of using decline within archaeological studies.[138]

The debate concerning decline shows the complexity of the concept as a socially constructed idea. The use of decline to describe late Roman urbanism is also related to the particular ways in which Roman towns and their public buildings have traditionally been studied, including the emphasis placed on economic aspects of towns and their landscape setting. Studies of late Roman towns have concentrated on the end of the display of visible wealth, the reduction in trade and the inability of the élite to pay for the up-keep of the town centres (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a; Reece 1999: 12-4; B. Ward-Perkins 1984: 16). Although these are important topics, they project modern values and preoccupations onto the past. Moving beyond these values will allow alternative perspectives to be developed that draw upon the data without placing so much emphasis on decline.

6.3 The historical approach

For studying the later Roman period there are historical documents such as the *Codex Theodosianus*, the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the *Notitia Galliarum*. These are important sources which give insights into the rôle of Christianity, bishops and the military and into activities within towns, such as the closure of temples and the presence of government-run *fabricae*. But there are problems in their use, including corruption of the texts, the motives behind their production and the extent to which they are relevant to late Roman Britain on the periphery of the Empire (see below). Roman archaeology, however, can have a distinct rôle within broader classical conceptions, one that helps to justify the subject (Hingley 2005a: 11). The archaeological evidence can be considered as a material 'text' that contains patterns and significance and can enable a different story to be told (*ibid.*; Mattingly 1997b: 15).

6.3.1 *Historical events*

Historically dated frameworks and events into which the archaeology of late Roman Britain is often set include the revolt of Carausius and Allectus,[139] the barbarian conspiracy of A.D. 367[140] and other barbarian invasions. There are a number of studies that deal with these events

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[138] The *Towns in Decline* volume contains a variety of papers on topics such as 'Urban failures in late-antique Gaul' (Loseby 2000), 'The decline of the *Wic*?' (R. Hall 2000) and 'Archaeology and the late-medieval urban decline' (Astill 2000), but it includes no analysis of how understanding of change and perceptions of place may have varied in different times and places.

[139] Carausius, and his successor Allectus, were usurper emperors in Britain in the late-third century, making Britain and parts of northwest Gaul independent from the Empire. Allectus was suppressed in A.D. 296 and Britain restored to the Empire. Current knowledge of this episode in the history of Roman Britain is still only slight (P.J. Casey 1994).

[140] The barbarian conspiracy in A.D. 367 was an event in which a number of groups combined in an attack against Britain. They included the Anglo-Saxons and Franks from the North Sea, the Picts and Attacotti from Scotland and the Scotti from Ireland

in detail (*e.g.* P.J. Casey 1994; S. Johnson 1980; Faulkner 2000a) and Faulkner's study of Verulamium (1996) identifies a number of phases in the development of the town according to this historical framework. Esmonde Cleary (2004: 409), however, has made the point that texts referring directly to Britain are rare and contain limited information, as Britain was probably only of occasional interest to writers and also because some texts will have been lost. The significance for Britain of Empire-wide events may sometimes be given too much emphasis since it is uncertain how much they would have affected individual towns.

Studies of written texts indicate that the events they record are unlikely to be completely historically accurate on occasion (*e.g.* P.J. Casey 2002), an example being the history by Ammianus Marcellinus (*c.* A.D. 325/330-after 391), which describes the 'barbarian conspiracy' of A.D. 367 (XXVII.8). It has been argued that the nature of this account will have been influenced by the fact that Marcellinus was writing within the court of Theodosius I, whose father, Count Theodosius, had defeated the revolt (*ibid.*: 85). For some Emperors, such as Diocletian, no direct narrative exists at all and events are reconstructed through records of laws and other documents (Elton 2006: 193). Elton (*ibid.*) has also made the important point that dates recorded in documented laws are unlikely to reflect the actual dates on which they were implemented in Rome. In peripheral parts of the Empire, such as Britain, the implementation of laws may well have been much later than in Rome or, indeed, not at all (*ibid.*).

Another problem with some of the historical texts is that they were not written to provide direct factual accounts of the past: this is especially the case for later works such as Gildas' (*c.* A.D. 494/516-570) *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* and Bede's (*c.* A.D. 672-735) *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum.* They do include some information about the state of Britain at this time and, as texts, they indicate that there must have been intellectual training available for authors to write such works (I. Wood 2004: 431). What is problematic is that they are written from a Christian moral standpoint and they mix fact, fiction and legend. Although this does give insight to some extent into how, at this time, the past and the importance attached to places were conceived and written about, the content must be treated with a degree of caution concerning the accuracy of historical events.[141]

(Esmonde Cleary 1989a: 44). Valentinian I employed Theodosius to restore the situation in Britain. The event is recorded in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVI.4-5, XXVII.8 and XXVIII.3).

[141] Writing of St. Alban, Gildas typically states: "God therefore increased his pity for us; for he wishes all men to be saved, and calls sinners no less than those, who think, themselves just. As a free gift to us, in the time (as I conjecture) of this same persecution, he acted to save Britain being plunged deep in the thick darkness of black night; for he lit for us the brilliant lamps of holy martyrs" (X.1). On the same subject Bede records fact and legend together: "Saint Alban required of God to give him water, and straightaway there arose a spring of fair flowing water narrowed in his channel, whereby all might perceive that the river too before had done obedience to the martyr" (I.7). Despite this, such passages do indicate the prominence of religion in all areas of life; this will not only have been Christianity but also contemporary and earlier paganism. The water referred to in the passage about St. Alban further suggests the importance of watery places at this time, continuing from prehistory, and understanding of these places will have mixed fact, fiction and myth.

Britain would, at least to some degree, however, have been affected by changes and events on an Empire-wide level. Diocletian's reforms of the Empire, including its division into two halves, the creation of the tetrachy and the splitting of provinces into smaller areas (Mitchell 2007: 55-62), impacted upon Britain. These changes saw the division of Britain into the four provinces *Britannia Prima*, *Britannia Secunda*, *Maxima Caesariensis and Flavia Caesariensis* with Cirencester, York, London and Lincoln as their capitals (P.J. Casey 2002: 79). From the political and administrative function performed by these towns it can be inferred that they continued to be important places and focal points within the landscape. This political significance outweighs claims for the early decline of towns based on economic factors. The economic state of the Empire is also often seen to have influenced Britain. In the later Roman period, there was a reduction of inter-regional trade (Mattingly 2006b: 283) and inflation due to the ever-burgeoning cost of the army and the bureaucracy (Southern 2001: 159). As a result, there was an increase in the collection of taxes in kind, the *annona*, (P.J. Casey 2002: 79) which has caused Faulkner (2000a) to view British towns in the later Roman period as military and supply bases. While towns were probably involved in the collection of the *annona* (Esmonde Cleary 1989a: 8), it also indicates their continued rôle as important places, demanding study of other activities within them at this time.

Whilst it is necessary to undertake a study of this period with an acknowledgement of historical events and their effects on areas such as the economy, this thesis is an attempt to move away from relying on these histories by assessing what new insights archaeological data and theory can provide.

6.3.2 *Bishops and the Church*

The rise of the Church and the rôle of bishops are often seen as central to understanding towns in the later Roman period, especially after Christianity became the official religion in A.D. 312 (B. Ward-Perkins 1998: 392). As noted with the writings of Gildas and Bede, however, the history of the Church is often problematic because of Christian messages the writers presented to their audiences. The continuation of towns and the construction of new public buildings are often attributed to the work of bishops considered in a way to be new town governors (*e.g.* Liebeschutz 2000). Most writing on the subject focuses on the central parts of the Empire and the East, but it is generally assumed that Britain followed a comparable path. Liebeschutz (2000) charts what he sees to be the rise of the bishop in the later Roman period: with the conversion of Constantine, the Church was arranged into a structure with provinces and dioceses which was comparable to the organisation of the Empire (*ibid.*: 137-9). As the secular government declined, the administrative tasks gradually fell to the bishops.

Described as the new élite (Bowden 2001), bishops were powerful figures who could be involved in lawmaking whilst being exempt from laws themselves (Hunt 1998: 274), although some have argued that their influence should not be over emphasised (*e.g.* Wickham 2005). Textual evidence does give some indication of the bureaucratic impact of bishops in the Empire suggesting that they would have had some influence on the towns (Hunt 1998: 238).[142] Documents also indicate that martyrs were important in continuing religious activity and spreading Christianity within towns (*e.g.* Bede I.7; Gildas X.1-2).

Much more documentary evidence concerning bishops survives for Gaul than for Spain or Britain. The *Notitia Galliarum*, composed in the late-fourth to early-fifth century, lists the *civitas*-capitals of Gaul with bishops and there are also the *acta* of church councils which name the bishops that attended (Esmonde Cleary 1989a: 34). In Britain the evidence is far scarcer. One of the main sources of information about bishops in Britain in the late Roman period is the proceedings of the council of Arles, the *Acta Concilii Arelatensis*, held in A.D. 314 (Petts 2003: 38). This appears to mention four delegations from Britain which are usually ascribed to the four provincial capitals of the later Roman period (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a: 47). The information is very limited and appears to have been written and copied in a careless manner. The interpretation of the passages on Britain is based largely on analogy with other provinces where the records in the *acta* are clearer and where there are better contemporary records of the time (Mann 1961: 317; C. Thomas 1981: 193).[143] The *acta* lists (Munier 1963: 15, lines 54-8):

> Eborius episcopus de ciuitate Eboricensi prouincia Britania.
> Restitutus episcopus de ciuitate Londenensi prouincia qua supra.
> Adelfius episcopus de ciuitate Colonia Londenensium,
> exinde Sacerdus presbyter, Arminius diaconus.

This is taken to record a bishop Eborius from York, Restitutus from London, Adelfius from Lincoln (if *Londenensium* was a corruption of *Lindensium*) and a priest and deacon from another place (possibly Cirencester if the place was another provincial capital). Although this seems to indicate bishops in Britain, there is clearly insufficient information and considerable doubt regarding the organisation of British bishops at this time.[144] Petts has drawn attention to archaeological finds with possible references to bishops in Britain such as the Risley Park Lanx, the Shavinton salt-pan and the pewter *tazza* from the Isle of Ely, and sees them as

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[142] Documents record, for example, how bishops created a strain on the *cursus publicus* as they moved to church councils under the instruction of the Emperor (Hunt 1998: 238 from Amm. Marc. XXI.16.18).
[143] There are a few other brief mentions of bishops at councils such as Nicaea (Iznik, Turkey) in 325 and Serdica (Sofia, Bulgaria) in A.D. 343 but there are no details (C. Thomas 1981: 121).
[144] Further confusion come from spelling changes in later lines of the same *acta* such as "Ex prouncia Brittinia ciuitas Tubiricinsium Euortius episcopus" (Munier 1963: 22, lines 40-1) referring to the bishop of York. There is also the possibility that *Sacerdus* may be a corruption of *sacerdos*, a bishop, (C. Thomas 1981: 197) and a later line reads "Sacerdos episcopus et Menius diaconus" (Munier 1963: 18, 43-4) adding further doubts to the meaning and reliability of the document.

indicating a Christian church with bishops located in towns (2003: 38-9).[145] Potter and Johns (1992: 205), however, emphasised the scarcity of this evidence and argued that it has little value in assessing the religion of the people in Britain at this time. In fact, surviving pagan attitudes may be indicated by the ways in which these artefacts were deposited and destroyed. The Shavinton salt-pan was found cut into eight pieces and whilst this may have related to recycling, there is the possibility that it was deliberately cut up for religious deposition; the Ely *tazza* came from a river, again suggesting religious deposition, but possibly within a Christian context. After use, it may have been necessary to deposit the vessels in sacred places, these locations will also have been associated with pre-Christian ritual and belief (*cf.* Rogers 2007). Many of the religious watery places were probably assimilated rather than suppressed in Christian times (J. Alcock 1965: 12).

The presence within Britain of bishops and a small number of clergy need not greatly reflect general religious belief at this time. The religious practices of Christianity are likely to have been varied across the Empire, and the religion just one of a number in late Roman Britain.[146] The impact of Christianity on the lives of the majority of the people within the towns may well have been fairly limited (Hunt 1993: 143-4); there will have been a gulf between laws banning pagan ritual and what actually happened in the local setting: "laws do not a Christian make" (*ibid.*).[147]

The presence of bishops in late Roman Britain has been used to interpret evidence in Romano-British towns, the *frigidarium* of the baths at Wroxeter being seen as a church with a bishop's residence nearby (R. White and Barker 1998: 125). Scholarship has tended to emphasise the evidence for Christianity, as in the identification of the 'church' building at Silchester (G. Fox and St. John Hope 1893: 563-8), rather than any continuation of pagan activities. This desire to identify the earliest Christianity may have been linked to the wish to limit the involvement of paganism in the history of Roman Britain. The large number of clergymen taking part in antiquarianism and early archaeology, as in the early excavation of Silchester (Boon 1974: 22-7), was perhaps a factor in this search for early Christianity.

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[145] On the base of the silver Risley Park Lanx was written 'Bishop Exuperius gave this to…' together with a *chi-rho* symbol (Petts 2003: 38-9) whilst the pewter *tazza* from the Isle of Ely was inscribed with 'this belongs to/for the furnishings of the bishop and the clergy' (*ibid.*: 39). Another piece, the lead salt-pan from Shavinton (Cheshire) has 'Of Viventius, the bishop' written on it (*ibid.*).

[146] The late Roman mosaic from the villa at Hinton St. Mary has a possible Christian panel with a Christ-like image and a *chi-rho* symbol but with pagan imagery around it. There were also other mosaics in the villa with pagan imagery (Henig 1995: 156). This type of evidence may give some indication of the complexity of religious belief at this time.

[147] In Britain, for example, the shrine at Uley in Gloucestershire (A. Woodward and Leach 1993) has been interpreted as having been converted into a church in its latest phase, but even if this identification is correct, activity was evidently still drawing on the preceding religious significance of the site as indicated by the careful preservation and deposition of the head of a statue of Mercury in the building (A. Woodward and Leach 1993: 318; *cf.* Croxford 2003).

6.3.3 *The Theodosian Code*

Discussions of Christianity within towns in the later Roman period also make use of the Theodosian Code, a compilation of over 2500 edited constitutions completed in A.D. 437 under Theodosius II (Harris 1993: 1; J. Matthews 1993: 19). Although it was compiled at this late date, it contained laws from as early as A.D. 313 (J. Matthews 2000: 11) and so has been used to understand the Empire in the early-fourth century or even earlier. The laws cover aspects of political, social, economic, cultural and religious life in the late Empire, and include many rules and regulations concerning the use, reuse and protection of public buildings (*e.g.* 15.1.10 and 15.1.25).[148] These include demands for the closure of temples and the end of pagan rituals and ceremonies (*e.g.* 16.10.4 and 16.10.7),[149] but there are also demands for the protection and preservation of temples as monuments (*e.g.* 16.10.15).[150] These laws have been used by archaeologists to interpret, and to date, the end of use of temples and other public buildings in the archaeological record across the Empire, including Britain, and the spread of Christianity (*e.g.* Liebeschuetz 2000; Watts 1991; 1998).

Although the Code can give valuable insights into life and conditions in later Roman times (*e.g.* Saradi-Mendelaici 1985) there is a need for caution. These texts need not necessarily reflect activity across the whole Empire where there will have been differing reactions to the laws at different times.

6.3.4 *The military*

Along with the Church and the Theodosian Code, the military is also seen as having an important rôle in influencing the nature of towns and town life in the later Roman period.[151] Faulkner (2000a: 130), for example, describes military towns in late Roman Britain where production and organisation of space was geared towards war. One of the main texts used to support this view is the *Notitia Dignitatum* which lists the offices, military units and government installations under the control of the Masters of the Offices of the Eastern and Western Empires in the early-fifth century (S. James 1988: 257). It includes lists of state *fabricae*, workshops used to supply the army with its weapons and equipment, and has been used as one interpretation of the industrial activity within public buildings in the later Roman

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[148] 15.1.10 of the year A.D. 362 reads: "If any person of any order or high rank should obtain any public building in any manner by an obscure interpretation, he shall, without any question, be deprived of the fruits of such benefit" (Sirmond and Pharr eds. 1969: 424). 15.1.25 of A.D. 389 states that: "It is disgraceful that the ornaments of public splendour should be ruined by the attachment thereto of private buildings" (*ibid.*).

[149] 16.10.4 from A.D. 346 states that "It is Our pleasure that the temples shall be immediately closed in all places and in all cities, and access to them forbidden, so as to deny to all abandoned men the opportunity to commit sin" (Sirmond and Pharr eds. 1969: 472). 16.10.7 of the year A.D. 381 declares that "If any madman or sacrilegious person, so to speak, should immerse himself in forbidden sacrifices, by the day or by the night, as a consulter of uncertain events, and if he should suppose that he should employ, or should think that he should approach, a shrine or a temple for the commission of such a crime, he shall know that he will be subjected to proscription" (*ibid.*: 473).

[150] 16.10.5 from A.D. 399 reads: "Just as We forbid sacrifices, so it is Our will that the ornaments of public works shall be preserved" (Sirmond and Pharr eds. 1969: 474).

[151] As examined in chapters 4 and 5, the participation of the military in the foundation and development of towns in Britain is also often emphasised (*e.g.* P. Crummy 1988; Wacher 1995; *cf.* S. James 2001).

period in Britain (*e.g.* Fulford and Timby 2000: 579; see chapter 9);[152] in this case, public life had been given up for the sake of military security.

In fact, no *fabrica* mentioned in the *Notitia* has yet been identified with certainty in the archaeological record and so caution is required when interpreting the data. Britain is even more problematic since none of the provinces here are mentioned in the *Notitia* at all. James has suggested that this may have been because Britain no longer had a large army and so did not need its own arsenals (1988: 323).[153] The circumstances surrounding the text and Britain's omission are uncertain, but it is clearly not possible to rely on the *Notitia* to explain the evidence of metalworking within the public buildings of towns in late Roman Britain.

6.3.5 *The 'Celtic revival'*

The possibility that pre-Roman ways of life, organisation and religion were making a resurgence in the late Roman period was addressed by Haverfield (1912) who termed this the 'Celtic revival'. Hingley (2000: 92-3) has demonstrated that such views were fairly widely considered at the time, as reflected in writings such as that by Rice Holmes (1907), Seebohm (1883) and Vinogradoff (1905).[154] The idea was drawn upon by Collingwood in the 1930s (Collingwood and Myres 1936: 256-8). Haverfield suggested that the 'romanised' area of Britain became isolated from Rome and was affected by destructive influences from invading Saxons, the "foreign Celts" of Ireland and the "less-Romanized" areas such as Cornwall (1912: 80-3). There was also the survival of Celtic ways in the manner of artwork on pottery and brooches, especially in the north and west (1924: 237-42). Collingwood also saw this artwork as an indicator of the revival of pre-Roman ways (Collingwood and Myres 1936: 256-8). This concept was adopted to help explain evidence for an apparent late revival of pagan religious activity such as late Roman pewter hoards (Poulton and Scott 1993). Watts (1998) bases her argument for pagan activity in the late Roman period on historical events, including the revival of paganism under the Emperor Julian (A.D. 355-60) in Rome. It is uncertain, however, to what extent that Julian's reign would have had an appreciable impact on Britain. It is perhaps more likely that much of the activity in late Roman Britain was drawing on pre-Roman ways.

The concept of the 'Celtic revival' in the late Roman period puts an emphasis on romanisation in preceding periods. It does not take into account the complex reception of Roman culture

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[152] This explanation has also been used to interpret the evidence for metalworking within the amphitheatre of the 'small town' of Argentomagus in *Gallia Aquitania* (Dumasy 2000: 218-23) and the *forum-basilica* at Amiens in *Gallia Belgica* (Bayard and Massy 1983: 239, 252). Although the *Notitia* does mention these two towns, the actual location of the *fabricae* within them is not recorded (see chapter 13).

[153] James does point out that the order of the list might suggest that Britain would come at the end, the part most vulnerable to damage (1988: 259) but this cannot be used to suggest that Britain certainly did have *fabricae*.

[154] Both Seebohm (1890 [1883]) and Vinogradoff (1920 [1905]) argued that the English medieval manorial system was a continuation of the pre-Roman tribal system although there would also have been some changes due to the Roman and Germanic conquests. Rice Holmes (1907) argued that descendents of prehistoric peoples in Britain lived on in Britain and mixed with the post-Roman conquerors to form the British people.

and the many continuities and transformations that would have taken place, especially in religious activity, throughout Britain over the course of the Roman period. Activity during the late Roman period may simply be a continuation of actions that had taken place earlier in the Roman period as Fulford's (2001) examination of ritual deposition in Silchester and elsewhere suggests. This continuity in beliefs will not only have involved religious activity but also attitudes to landscape and the setting of towns. The surviving significance of places might allow some kind of revival of indigenous concepts in the late Roman period, which, it is argued below, is helpful for studying the late urban evidence.

6.3.6 *The appeal to Honorius*

The historian Zosimus in the *Historia nova*, probably written around A.D. 500, but also drawing upon a fifth century history by Olympiodorus (Mitchell 2007: 24), wrote that "the barbarians from beyond the Rhine overran everything at will and reduced the inhabitants of the British Island and some of the peoples in Gaul to the necessity of rebelling from the Roman Empire and of living by themselves, no longer obeying the Romans' laws" (VI.6). This is often taken in conjunction with the reference Zosimus made to a letter the Emperor Honorius supposedly wrote to Britain in about A.D. 410 telling the towns to look to their own defence (VI.10.2). That the validity of the reference to Britain has been questioned is well known. Some prefer the place name to be read as Bruttium in Italy, arguing that the letter had been copied wrongly and that a reference to Britain at that point in Zosimus' narrative would have been out of place (Bartholomew 1982: 262).[155] Others continue to refute this and argue for its authenticity in referring to Britain (*e.g.* E. Thompson 1982; 1983). This debate indicates the problems faced regarding the end date of Roman Britain, making it unwise to rely on any single dating source to structure the archaeological evidence. The possibility that it was not Rome that gave up Britain but vice versa has also been raised (M.E. Jones 1996: 110) indicating a more complex situation and demonstrating the value in detailed analyses of the archaeological information for alternative interpretations.[156]

6.4 The ultimate extinction of Roman towns

Section 1.2.4 in chapter 1 introduced the issue of the ultimate extinction of Roman towns in Britain and it is clear that there was a variety in the outcomes of towns and in the responses and needs of the local population. Much of the debate on continuity/discontinuity and the end

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[155] Earlier sentences in that chapter refer to the campaign undertaken by Alaric in central and northern Italy and immediately before the reference to Britain is a sentence on Alaric's subjugation of Liguria.

[156] A recent Ph.D. thesis has explored the complexity of identity in the late Roman and post-Roman periods in the Bristol Channel Region looking at post-colonial theory and the architecture and finds from three sites: Dinas Powys, Cadbury Congresbury and Cadbury Castle (Bowles 2006). It was suggested that at this time there was an effort to conceive a new identity based on more indigenous architecture and material culture. Choosing from their collective knowledge of past and present, people forged new identities in a hybrid culture. For Bowles, too, the concept of post-Roman is inadequate for writing about the fifth and sixth centuries since it implies a period in which Rome was no longer relevant to everyday people and denies collective memories and connections with the wider world.

of Roman towns in Britain focuses on the end of the 'Classical town' (*e.g.* D. Brooks 1988; Faulkner 1994). Moving beyond a sole emphasis on what happened to the classical appearance of towns in the late Roman period can allow an appreciation of the evidence for the continued use of the places at this time.

The sequence of timber constructions at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997) is well known and indicates some kind of urban behaviour and organisation into the post-Roman period, with stone structures being deliberately dismantled and new timber structures being built.[157] The site remained habitable and viable and an important point for movement across the landscape, being located on the Roman road system and at a ford across the River Severn (R. White and Barker 1998: 137). The settlement apparently came to an end in the seventh or eighth century (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 166-7), although the medieval village and church indicate some kind of continuity or reoccupation of the site (Bell 2005: 249-50).[158] White (2007: 193) has wondered whether descendants of civic élites were in charge of Christian religion here, but this can only remain speculation without further evidence.

Fulford *et al.* (2006) have discussed possible reasons why Silchester was abandoned and did not develop into a medieval and modern town as many did. One argument is that it was perceived to provide a threat, being an alternative powerbase within the new Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex; it is suggested that the deposition of the ogham stone[159] and the number of ironwork hoards at Silchester indicate deliberate, perhaps enforced, abandonment (*ibid.*: 281). This supports the idea that, until then, the site had continued to be an important place. Another possibility mentioned by Fulford *et al.* is that a monastery was founded on the site of the *forum-basilica* which encouraged the evacuation of the rest of the town; another that there was forced abandonment because Silchester had been the location of one of the martyrs' cults suppressed by the Anglo-Saxons (*ibid.*). It is not yet possible to provide a definite answer, but use of the central public buildings did eventually come to an end. The site probably became a focus for the supply of stone through stone robbing. This, and the eventual appearance of a

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[157] White (2007: 192) reminds us that the inability to maintain resources to build in masonry or manufacture clay tiles and bricks, prompting the necessity to build in timber, need not mean that the sites did not remain important.

[158] Bell's (2005) examination of the location of medieval churches and burials in relation to Roman structural remains suggests that there might have been continuity in the use of these places because of the significance they held in the local area. This approach, which moves beyond predominantly practical and rational considerations of landscape in the late Roman and post-Roman periods, may be helpful when examining changes to towns as places at this time. Supporting this, Geake's (1997) study of grave-goods of the seventh and eighth century in England has identified considerable use of Roman style objects, arguing that the Roman past was being drawn upon in order for new leaders to consolidate their power and appeal to ancestral rights. The landscape still contained evidence of the Roman, and also prehistoric, past. These remains were acknowledged as places of meaning which were central to the process of converting to Christianity in the medieval period (Bell 2005; Hoggett 2007; Rippon 2004).

[159] The ogham stone is a dwarf column discovered in well 1170 in 1893 in *insula* IX at Silchester with an inscription in the ogham script (an early medieval Irish alphabet). Recent re-excavation has demonstrated that it was placed in a functioning well in the late-fourth or fifth century with this act closing the well. The column had been part of a verandah of a house (Building 1) on the site. The inscription has been translated as '(The something) of Tebicatus, son of the tribe of N' which may refer to the ownership of the house (Fulford *et al.* 2006: 279). Placing the stone in the well has been considered to be an act of closure on the site (*ibid.*: 281).

medieval village and church here, indicates that the place retained some kind of importance despite the end of its urban nature.

Roman style urbanism did eventually come to an end at all of the town sites in Britain. The sites had varying biographies and post-Roman histories but it is important not to view evidence for the eventual abandonment of Roman style urbanism as supporting notions of decline in the late Roman period. There remained considerable activity in the late Roman towns that demands analysis and provides the focus here.

6.5 Conclusions

The culturally constructed notion of decline and fall has had a deep influence on interpretations of towns in the late Roman period but it does not help to explain all aspects of the available archaeological evidence. Although classical texts cannot be ignored, care must be taken in using them for explaining the evidence in Britain since very few texts originated here. Archaeological evidence is a much more abundant resource for this province and it can be studied from a variety of perspectives. Details from historical texts should be incorporated into analyses to assess whether they are relevant and reliable, but there is a greater need to develop methodological techniques for studying alternative points of view through the archaeological evidence.

The archaeological evidence will be examined here through a detailed case study of the public buildings within towns in the late Roman period, exploring the varied evidence for their continued use. A discussion of our current understanding of public buildings in the Roman period precedes this (chapter 7).

Chapter 7: The public building in Romano-British towns

7.1 Introduction

In chapter 4 it was argued that an understanding of late Roman urbanism that moves beyond decline requires a review of knowledge and understanding of the growth of towns, their relationship with pre-existing places and the way in which the sites were used and transformed over time. This chapter will review current knowledge and interpretations of public buildings in Romano-British towns. This is necessary before structural changes and the ways in which the buildings were used in the late Roman period can be addressed. Analysis of the British data suggests that understanding of the public buildings is often not very extensive and assumptions have sometimes been made about the nature and function of the buildings from relatively limited evidence. The function is itself a complex subject: the buildings were not usually restricted to single rôles, which adds a greater complication to the analysis of their late use. The location of the public buildings within the townscape, and their relationship with the landscape setting, are important factors to consider when examining their rôle and impact on the people using the towns.

Mackreth (1987) has defined the Roman public building as "a structure which was put up to fulfil a public function and was open to the public itself". Within this definition he includes palaces,[160] since he argues that they would have had an administrative as well as residential function, but he omits *mansiones* and excludes such monuments as aqueducts. Black's (1995) study of *mansiones* indicates that they could have a wider range of functions beyond their rôle in the *cursus publicus* (see section 7.3.4).[161] *Mansiones* will be included in this study, as will monuments such as town gates, which were important points of passage and interaction. Monumental arches were also used in the organisation of space and the manipulation of movement (MacDonald 1986: 74); although often built for a specific commemoration, they were involved in "invoking things sacred and temporal" (*ibid.*: 99).

The way in which the building and its architecture defined public space will be studied; the ways that people experienced and interacted with these buildings contributed to the creation of their significance over time. In this respect, the monumental architecture itself would have only been one element in the significance of the places (see below; Häussler 1999; G. Woolf 2006). Large open areas could be important public spaces but they have rarely been considered in the same category as the public buildings, despite the possibility of having some comparable rôles (see section 4.5.2). This aspect of the significance attached to space is

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[160] Although none have so far been identified in Britain, Lavan (2001c) has argued that the *praetoria* of the later Roman period – residences of the civil or military governor – also had a number of similar functions to public buildings including their rôle as places for ceremonies and administrative activities.

[161] The *cursus publicus* was the system by which messages and officials moved around the empire using the road network (E. Black 1995).

important to consider when examining public space and changes to public buildings in the late Roman period.

7.2 Studying public buildings

The post-colonial reaction to élitist and military themes within Roman archaeology (*e.g.* Mattingly ed. 1997a; J. Webster and Copper eds. 1996) has led to an increase in studies of indigenous settlement and landscape patterns. These works have added significant information to our knowledge of Roman Britain (*e.g.* Fincham 2002; Flitcroft 2001; Hingley 1997a; Keevil and Booth 1997; K. Matthews 1997; Mudd *et al.* 1999; J. Taylor 2001). This reaction against urban and military architecture does not mean, however, that our understanding of public buildings is complete and the reaction against them may at least partly be a result of the manner in which they have traditionally been approached and envisaged.[162]

Tilley, addressing prehistoric remains, has defined architectural space as the "deliberate attempt to create and bound space, create an inside, an outside, a way round, a channel for movement" (Tilley 1994: 17). The phenomenological approach to space, emphasising its creation through relations between people and place, has become influential within studies of monumental landscapes in prehistory as a reaction against the scientific conceptions of space of New Geography and New Archaeology (Tilley 1994: 7-8, 11). Studies have now attempted to understand how landscapes were experienced and understood, and how movement was conducted within and around them (Bender 1992; J. Thomas 1993; Tilley 1994; Witcher 1998). Both Favro (1996) and Boman (2003) have argued that the space that was enclosed by walls and roofs of Roman and Greek buildings was as important as the architecture itself. Boman (2003) has explored Greek architecture and public space through the ways in which it permitted and denied movement; this influenced the conceptualisation and use of the space that was enclosed. Laurence's (1994) analysis of Pompeii also examined the way in which the public buildings controlled movement and created identities and experiences, especially as areas of propaganda.

Roman architectural structures can be studied as highly visible and enduring enclosing spaces, often reflecting power and wealth (Trigger 1990: 128), with significant buildings designed for maximum visual effect to communicate messages; buildings were 'stamped' with Roman

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[162] In the Renaissance and post-medieval period, architects and scholars began to seek to understand Roman architecture and apply lessons derived from it to the buildings that they designed (S. Dyson 2006: 5; Thorpe 1995: 83-4). Classical writings on architecture (*e.g.* Vitr. *De arch.* and Procop. *Aed.*) became important documents and were adopted in writings about architecture (*e.g.* Alberti 1452, trans. Rykwert *et al.* 1999; J. Anderson 1997: xix; Thorpe 1995: 83-4), which described the aesthetic beauty of classical buildings (Boman 2003: 17); indeed the early seventeenth century architect and designer Inigo Jones was described by a contemporary as "the Vitruvius of his age" (Summerson 2000: 6). Sir Christopher Wren is known to have read Vitruvius (Winney 1971: 25, 49) and his designs were especially popular for the construction of both public and élite private buildings (C. Taylor 1983: 41; Turner 1999; Weiss 1995). New classical style monumental buildings were related to the 'education' and subjugation of the people as well as symbols of achievement and the control over nature (*cf.* DeLaine 1999a: 154; S. Dyson 2001).

ideology (Zanker 1989; 2000) and used to dominate and persuade (Häussler 1999). Many have studied the way in which Augustus rebuilt large parts of Rome in order to draw on the past and create a new mythology conveyed through visual imagery and architecture (*e.g.* Sear 1982: 49; Wallace-Hadrill 1993: 50; Zanker 1989: 4).[163] The public buildings within the towns of Roman Britain created new spaces at pre-existing sites, and this will have influenced the experiences of people who visited and moved through these buildings. Indigenous people will also have had their own concepts of space which will have influenced the ways that they experienced these buildings.

Studies of dedication inscriptions of public buildings in Roman Britain indicate that the way in which the public buildings were accepted and interpreted may have differed from other parts of the Empire; public munificence seems to have been low in Britain and, where it does occur, corporate rather than individual munificence seems to have been more the norm (Blagg 1990: 28). Altekamp (2001) has drawn attention to the fact that, from the surviving evidence, the public buildings in Roman Britain were less architecturally elaborate than those of other provinces; he believes that this may represent some kind of cultural reservation against them. Mattingly (2006a: 292) takes a similar stance: in his view the 'Golden Age' was far less golden than has usually been assumed. Altekamp's argument would certainly have implications for understanding public buildings in the late Roman period, where absence of embellishment has often been seen as evidence of change and decline. It must also be acknowledged, however, that the architectural embellishments may have been removed at later dates. This possibility has been raised for the Silchester *basilica* (Fulford and Timby 2000: 76) although there is insufficient evidence for any certainty.

7.3 Public buildings in Roman Britain

7.3.1 *The* forum-basilica *complex*

The *forum* and *basilica* were, according to Zanker (2000: 34), who draws heavily upon the writings of Vitruvius in *De architectura*, the symbol of the town, occupying a central location. They were key features in the urban landscape providing, from an élite Roman viewpoint, the "stage and the facilities for an urban way of life" (Häussler 1999: 5).

The *forum* was principally an open space that allowed public congregation, commercial, political, judicial, and religious events, and entertainments (Perring 1991b: 280-1; Perring 2002b; Thorpe 1995: 32). Some of the earliest were delimited in simple ways such as at Cosa, western Italy, where a small number of trees seem to have marked out its location (Gros 1996: 208), but over time, the *forum* became increasingly monumentalised, allowing movement to

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[163] Suetonius (*Aug.* XXIX.1; XXVIII.3) records how Augustus "built many public works" and had found Rome built of "brick and left it in marble".

be controlled and creating a source of power and indoctrination (Perring 1991b: 280). Entering the *forum*, perhaps through monumental arches and colonnades, would have been a meaningful act for many: "to the visitor of any Roman *forum*, there unfolds the picture of power relationships" (Häussler 1999: 6). *Fora* were not "neutral entities" but charged with power and symbolism (Revell 1999: 57). Favro's study of the Augustan Forum Romanum has demonstrated how visitors would have "experienced a carefully choreographed environment" (1996: 198).[164] Those using the structures in provinces such as Britain, where they were new phenomena, would have been encouraged to behave in a formalised manner (Revell 1999: 54). The evidence for the early phases of these buildings has perhaps contributed towards the negative view of their use in the late Roman period, but we cannot assume that physical changes to the buildings necessarily indicate changes to the activities that occurred.

The *basilica* was usually an aisled hall, often laid out to standardised measurements (Walthew 1995). Its origins have been the subject of much debate, with suggestions including influences from Hellenic royal halls (Welch 2003), from the *principia* of a fort, which had similar functions (de la Bédoyère 1991: 86),[165] or origins as a covered market (J. Anderson 1997: 252-3; Grimal 1983: 45). Vitruvius writes that the "*basilica* should be situated adjoining the *forum*, on the warmest side, so that the merchants may assemble there in winter, without being inconvenienced by the cold" (*De arch.* V.1.4). In Britain, the *basilica* was attached to one side of the *forum,* with which it had an integrated rôle. Its likely uses were for commerce, politics (including the location of the *curia* for town council meetings)[166] and religious activity: shrines and temples were important parts of the *forum-basilica* complexes (Carter 1989; Häussler 1999: 6).

Knowledge of the *forum-basilica* complexes within each town in Roman Britain varies widely, with only the *basilica* hall at Silchester having been completely uncovered using modern excavation techniques. This excavation yielded the only definite examples of shrines from a *basilica* site in Britain (Fulford and Timby 2000), although even here the surrounding rooms and *forum* are poorly known. The complexes at Wroxeter (Atkinson 1942), Caerwent (Ashby 1906; Ashby *et al.* 1909) and Caistor-by-Norwich (Frere 1971) were excavated on a large scale, although not to modern standards, and have not all been published in detail.

The *basilica* at Caerwent has since been re-excavated, although on a smaller scale and a possible *curia* has been identified through the discovery of the positions of timber benches

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[164] Favro (1996) examined the way in which the walls of the Augustan period Forum Romanum were angled, the locations at which the statues and memorials were placed and the locations of the entry points.

[165] In this thesis, evidence from the fortress *principia* at York is discussed. This *principia* may have functioned in a similar way to the *forum-basilica* of a town and no *forum-basilica* has yet been found at York, although it may have had one functioning alongside the *principia*.

[166] In Britain it is generally assumed that the *curia* was part of the *basilica* building and that it was not a separate structure within the town. Not enough is known about the *basilica* building or the town plans to be definite about this and chapter 8 discusses the possibility that the *curia* may have been in places other than the *basilica* in the later Roman period in Britain.

and a table in one of the excavated rooms of the *basilica* (unpublished report from P. Guest; Brewer 2007); this is the only example discovered in Britain. At Wroxeter, it has been suggested that the large collection of metalwork comprising locks, hinges and a fragment of military diploma from within West Room 1 of the *basilica* indicated that this room was an office or archive (Atkinson 1942: 103; Revell 1999: 56) but other interpretations of the finds are possible, including a collection of metalwork for recycling (see chapter 9). At Cirencester, Exeter, Gloucester, Leicester, Lincoln, London, Verulamium and Winchester, only small areas of the buildings have been excavated at different times and often in disconnected parts. Even less is known of the buildings at Canterbury and Dorchester and nothing is known at some towns including Colchester, Chichester and York.[167]

It has often been assumed that the *forum-basilica* is well understood and straightforward in Britain although most have only been very partially excavated, many during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In fact, care must be taken when considering its use, and this is especially the case for the late Roman period when the evidence is even more partial. If the *forum-basilica* can be studied in terms of the meaning of the space that it enclosed, its function in the late Roman period can be considered in alternative terms that do not draw upon decline.

7.3.2 *Public bath buildings*

Public baths could be monumental buildings covering large areas of the town. The largest buildings, especially the Imperial Baths, had many functions additional to bathing.[168] It has been argued that it was the Imperial Baths (*thermae*) that played an important part in making baths more popular and respected within towns since during the Republic baths were smaller, less organised and not always considered socially respectable (J. Carter 1989: 44; DeLaine 1999b: 70); they also generally only had a bathing function at this time (Nielson 1999: 35).[169] The Imperial baths, with their facilities, marble plaques, statues and paintings (Gros 1996: 397), promoted the rôle of public baths as important social places and *foci* for display and propaganda. In the large towns of the Empire, however, public baths were often outnumbered by commercial baths and it is these that are likely to have fulfilled the basic bathing needs of the population (DeLaine 1999b: 72), leaving the public baths as centres of social activity.

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[167] It is possible that in some cases identification has been based too directly on what is expected for a town, without much supporting evidence having been obtained about the character and function of the buildings. An example may be the large courtyard structure in the settlement at Corbridge (Bishop and Dore 1988: 105). This is still of uncertain function but has been interpreted as a *forum*, although the lack of evidence for a *basilica* was acknowledged (Burnham and Wacher 1990: 60). Birley and Richmond (1938: 252) suggested that the building was a storehouse and the possibility of a *macellum* has also been raised (Bishop and Dore 1988: 105).

[168] The Baths of Trajan, built during the first decade of the second century, for example, contained exercise halls and also accommodated meetings, lectures and performances (J. Anderson 1997: 275) whilst the Baths of Caracalla built in Rome in the A.D. 210s had gardens, fountains and a running track (Thorpe 1995: 59-60).

[169] In the *Epistulae* (LXXXVI), Seneca, writing in the first century A.D., contrasts the small and dark bathhouse which Scipio Africanus had in his house at Liternum in the second century B.C. with the extravagant baths of his day (Thorpe 1995: 57).

Baths in Britain have been found associated with temples and religious sanctuaries, indicating that they were part of religious ceremony. In the centre of Verulamium, there was an early complex of monumental buildings including a temple, bathhouse and theatre (Niblett 2005a: 105). Other sites include Bath (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985) and sanctuaries such as Lydney (A. Woodward 1992: 49, 77). A comparable association of baths with religion occurred in other parts of the Empire such as the sanctuary of Sanxay in France (Aupert 1992).

Public baths were important places of social interaction (DeLaine 1999c: 7-9; Yegül 1992: 1-4). Vitruvius states, for instance, that the baths should be placed directly under light so that "the bystanders do not obscure the light with their shadows" (V.10.4), clearly indicating the presence of many people who were not bathing. In some parts of the Empire there is evidence for the continued importance of bath buildings in the late Roman period and they even influenced the architecture of other types of building. The *Basilica Nova*, built in Rome in the early fourth century, for example, took the form of the *frigidarium* (the hall for the cold baths) of a bathhouse rather than drawing on the architectural tradition of *basilicae* (Thorpe 1995: 47).

Documentary evidence demonstrates that baths took on some important rôles in late Roman times: in A.D. 245 in Antioch, for example, the governor Julius Priscus held his judicial meetings within the baths of Hadrian rather than the *basilica*. Surviving written sources state that the Emperor Valerian (A.D. 253-60) used the public baths as his headquarters (*SHA Aurel.* X.3, XIII.1; Thébert 2003: 445).[170] Later there are records that the A.D. 411 council of Catholic Bishops took place within the baths of Gargilius in Carthage (*ibid.*: 445), the *Secretarium Thermarum Gargiliarum*.[171] The changing official use of baths is occasionally reflected in archaeological evidence, as when marble statues of the imperial family were transferred to the bathhouse at Thubursicum Bure in Tunisia (DeLaine 1999b: 72; Thébert 2003: 413).[172] Bath buildings often remained important places in the late Roman period, which has implications for examining the surviving evidence from bathhouses in Britain.

Within the towns of Roman Britain, bathhouses have been identified in all the towns except Cirencester, Colchester and Gloucester. It is often true, however, that the excavated area of the building was small, as at Canterbury (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995) and Verulamium (Niblett

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[170] Passages in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* include: "At this time...Ulpius Crinitus gave thanks formally to Valerian as he sat in the public baths at Byzantium saying that he had done him great honour in giving him Aurelian as deputy. And for this reason he determined to adopt Aurelian" (*Aurel.* X.3). Another is: "when Valerian Augustus had taken his seat in the public baths at Byzantium, in the presence of the army and in the presence of the officials of the Palace,....(he) spoke as follows: The commonwealth thanks you, Aurelian, for having set it free from the power of the Goths" (*Aurel.* XIII.1).

[171] The function or nature of the *secretarium* is not known, but it may have been where laws were drawn up (Leone 2007: 86) and apparently it had moved into the baths.

[172] At Thubursicum Bure, between A.D. 260-268, the baths were given the name of the Emperor and saw considerable aggrandisement. Marble statues of the imperial family were transferred to the building (Thébert 2003: 413) indicating that this was now an important location for propaganda and may have been where meetings and even administration took place. In Liternum, Campania, in 383 an inscription records how the governor moved statues "from a hidden place in the town to the thronged Severan baths" (CIL, X no. 3714) whilst at Beneventum a curator *rei publicae* of the late-third or early-fourth century (CIL, IX no. 1588) brought a statue "from a hidden place to the use and splendour of the baths" (Yegül 1992: 322).

2001: 65, 77). In other cases, the excavations were of an early date and little material survives in the archives, as at Caerwent (Nash-Williams 1930), Silchester (Boon 1957: 101), Leicester (Kenyon 1948) and Lincoln (Diagram 72; Petch unpublished). Remains of a bathhouse were uncovered in York in 1839 but details are scant (Ottaway 1993: 87). Some towns, such as Canterbury and London, have multiple bathhouses and it is unlikely that all were public buildings (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995; Frere and Stow 1983; Rowsome 1999). A number of examples of bathhouses have also been found in 'small towns', such as Godmanchester (H. Green 1975: 198-206), Braughing (Partridge 1978: 25-31) and Towcester (Burnham and Wacher 1990), but it is unclear whether these were public structures.

7.3.3 *The* macellum

The *macellum*, a market building (Sear 1982: 31), generally consisting of rows of rooms around a courtyard, would also have been a location for social interaction. There have only been a few examples of *macella* identified in Britain, although open spaces such as gravelled areas were probably also used for market activities. Buildings identified as *macella* through their structural plan of a central space with small 'shops' around the outside, have been found at Verulamium (Niblett 2001: 77; Richardson 1944),[173] Wroxeter (Ellis 2000), Cirencester (Holbrook 1998) and Gloucester (J. Rhodes 1974: 31). Positive evidence for the function of these known buildings is lacking and the identification is not always secure.

At Wroxeter, the plan of the building does suggest a *macellum*, with small rooms around three sides of a courtyard and the fourth side fronting Watling Street (Ellis 2000). There are also traces surviving that point to an upper storey, but it is not possible to discern the functions of individual rooms. What is revealing is that the building was an integral part of the bathhouse complex, which indicates some of the wide range of activities that would have taken place in this *insula*. At some towns, the evidence is much more limited, as at Cirencester, where the site of a *macellum* has been suggested only through an exposed colonnaded external portico with possible rooms to the rear (Holbrook 1998: 180).

7.3.4 Mansio *buildings*

Mansiones were the official stations in the *cursus publicus* system across the Empire although it was not always the case that a specifically built structure was used for this purpose (E. Black 1995: 9). There is no detailed description of a *mansio* in literary sources making identification difficult (*ibid.*: 17).[174] In Romano-British towns, recognised *mansiones* are in

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[173] For Verulamium, Niblett (2005a: 105) has recently suggested that a structure identified as a *macellum* may instead have functioned as a *nymphaeum* since water management seems to have been a major preoccupation throughout the life of the building. This is still uncertain but it does emphasise further the problem of assuming the function of archaeological structures with little supportive evidence.

[174] Black (1995: 17-8) uses the *mansio* at Inchtuthil as a type-site for examining evidence for *mansiones* in Britain although there is no documentary or epigraphic evidence stating that this was definitely a *mansio*. Features included barrack-like buildings for

the form of large courtyard structures, usually near the edge of the town on the road network, although it is not always possible to distinguish them from courtyard houses with complete certainty. *Mansiones* may have had a wider variety of functions than the specific rôle that they played in the *cursus publicus*, over time acquiring other functions such as providing the setting for transactions of local government (E. Black 1995: 94). Black (*ibid.*: 94) draws particular attention to the tripartite entrance hall identified in the plan of some *mansiones*, including those at Silchester and Verulamium, and discusses the likelihood that the main hall would have been used for formal functions of government. Their prominent positions within some towns where few or no other public buildings are yet known, such as Chelmsford (Drury 1988) and Godmanchester (H. Green 1975), indicates that they probably performed some similar functions to the *forum-basilica* complexes here. In some cases 'small towns', such as Brandon Camp and Leintwardine, developed around *mansiones* (E. Black 1995: 29-30).

Possible *mansiones* have also been identified at Aldborough, Canterbury and Carmarthen, although very little is known about the structures due to the small scale of the excavations (see Gazetteer 2). At Wroxeter, a possible *mansio* has been recognised through aerial photography and geophysical survey (R. White and Barker 1998: 75) whilst excavated examples come from Silchester (Boon 1974: 81), Verulamium (Diagram 95; E. Black 1995: 81-2; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 95) and two at London (Diagram 83; Bateman 1998: 56; Cowan 1992). A courtyard structure has recently been excavated at Leicester on the Vine Street site, in the northeast of the town. This building may have been a *mansio* but instead it could also have been a townhouse (Diagram 70; T. Higgins pers. comm.).

7.3.5 *Spectacle buildings*

The function of spectacle buildings in Romano-British towns is also problematic. It is unclear to what extent the theatres and amphitheatres in Britain were used for the same purposes as they were in other parts of the Empire.

Across the Empire, the archaeological record seems to indicate that theatres were not used simply for classical theatrical performances. They appear to have been associated with temples (Grimal 1983: 57),[175] including all the known examples of theatres in Romano-British towns. In Gaul they have been identified as part of rural sanctuaries as well as in urban

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accommodation, an entrance hall, a bath building, possible stabling and yards. Some rooms with under floor heating were interpreted as higher class accommodation. It lay near the fortress gate and next to the main road.

[175] In Pompeii, for example, the theatre complex, including both a large theatre and a smaller covered theatre, was surrounded by temples including the Temple of Hercules, the Temple of Zeus Meilichios and the Temple of Isis which lay directly behind it and was surrounded by high walls (Potter 1987: 187).

contexts.[176] Besides being spaces endowed with the divine presence, theatres were places of social interaction in which all members of society could view each other in one location (Gebhard 1996: 127; Häussler 1999: 8). Zanker (2000: 37-8) has considered theatres in terms of the way in which they reinforced the social order through their design, since different sections of society sat in different areas and physical contact between groups was minimised by the stipulation that "many and spacious stepped passages must be arranged between the seats" to allow multiple routes of access (Vitr. *De arch.* V.3.5). Without textual evidence, it is not possible to know whether a comparable organisation of seating existed in the theatres in Britain, but it raises possibilities about their rôle in Romano-British towns.

Amphitheatres have been considered in a similar way: Edmondson (1996), states that through encouraging different types of people to sit in close proximity, the amphitheatres represented microcosms of society. The presentations and displays within the amphitheatre were tools for ensuring social cohesion and enforcing the Roman social structure. Like theatres, amphitheatres probably had a religious rôle, being convenient centres for congregation. Bomgardner (1991: 289) has highlighted the problematic lack of excavation of the land surrounding amphitheatres in Britain since in most cases there would have been associated structures, including temples and service buildings, which would assist in understanding the use of the amphitheatres. A temple has been identified by aerial photography close to the amphitheatre at Caistor-by-Norwich (Wacher 1995: 250). Amphitheatres are sometimes found at religious sanctuaries in France and Britain, such as Frilford in Oxfordshire (Hingley 1985: 205-6; Lock *et al.* 2002: 70-3; Lock *et al.* 2003: 89).[177] This amphitheatre appears to have been deliberately constructed in a boggy part of the settlement and a large number of bronze, iron and glass objects found in this area just outside the amphitheatre may be related to ritual deposition (G. Lock pers. comm.). This evidence and the location of the building may indicate that, at least on occasion, this structure was used for religious activity.

Though there have been a number of excavations in Britain, amphitheatres have produced few finds such as large animal bones, weapons and human bone,[178] that one might expect would be present after being used for Roman entertainments. In fact at some there have been no finds indicating that they were used in ways distinct from theatres. Excavations at the

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[176] Examples include Sanxay (Aupert 1992; Horne and King 1980: 466-7) and Vendeuvre (Horne and King 1980: 486) both in Vienne, Vendeuil-Caply located at the source of the River Noye (*ibid.*: 485; Wightman 1985: 98) and Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Brunaux 1999).

[177] The exact function and nature of the Frilford structure has seen much debate and may indicate a need to move beyond categories that are too strict. The structure may have been a 'theatre-amphitheatre' as found in Gaul (L. Smith 2006) or it may have been a type of structure that so far has no parallels.

[178] Excavations in the Colosseum in Rome in the nineteenth century by the archaeologist Lanciani are purported to have found numbers of pits containing animal carcases (Thorpe 1995: 55) and classical sources, art work and depictions on decorated samian ware reveal images of gladiatorial combat. Fulford (1989: 187-9) has suggested that the high number of horse bones from the Silchester amphitheatre may reflect equestrian spectacles that took place, although he admits that it seems equally possible these may have been dumped there from outside. Another possibility might be that the horses had been used to feed large carnivores that were used in the games. It this was the case, then they could be used to indicate games taking place within the amphitheatre.

amphitheatre at London produced samian ware with scenes of gladiatorial combat (Bateman 2000), which may support the idea that some kind of spectacles took place here; the distal humerus of a brown bear from behind the arena wall may also support this (Bateman 1997: 56)[179] and possible chambers used to keep animals have been identified at London and Cirencester (Bateman 1997: 56; Holbrook 1998: 173). The recently discovered circus outside Colchester also indicates Roman entertainments (P. Crummy 2005). Gladiatorial combat and fights involving wild animals are likely to have taken place within amphitheatres in Britain, especially where there would have been many people from overseas such as in London (Bateman 2000). These events could also have been combined with religious activities of both Roman and indigenous character; in some cases taking on some of the rôles connected with the meaning-laden places of the late pre-Roman period.

In Britain, Cirencester is the only town where both an amphitheatre and the remains of a possible theatre have been identified (Holbrook 1998: 142-5). Where only one of these occurs, an amphitheatre is usually represented although at Canterbury, Verulamium and extramural Colchester only theatres are known so far. Remains interpreted as a theatre-type structure were uncovered in early-twentieth century excavations at Wroxeter, west of the temple in the southern half of the town. The remains seemed to indicate a large rectangular enclosure with double walls and rounded corners, with an alcove set in one wall and an entrance in another. It was argued that the double walls supported seating and that this structure may have been a focus for rituals and performances associated with the temple (Bushe-Fox 1916: 20-2; G. Webster 1975: 58; R. White and Barker 1998: 95). Details of this building are scant and further evaluation of the excavations is not now possible.

Most British amphitheatres are extramural, in common with many others across the Empire, which may relate to logistical considerations of access. Exceptions are the amphitheatre at London and the problematic example at Caerwent where excavations in the early-twentieth century uncovered a structure consisting of a single wall enclosing an elliptical-shaped area (Ashby *et al.* 1904: 104-5), but the definite nature of this structure is uncertain. The setting of the amphitheatre at Dorchester within the Neolithic henge monument of Maumbury Rings, an enclosure of around 2100m^2, meant that it had the largest arena in Britain. There is no evidence for the use of the henge in later prehistory, although Roman construction activity may have destroyed earlier strata.[180]

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[179] Similar high proportions of samian ware displaying gladiatorial combat were found at the amphitheatre at Chester (Mason 2001: 142-6). It was also near the amphitheatre here that a fragment of a slate relief depicting a gladiatorial scene was found in the eighteenth century (*ibid.*: 146-7) whilst excavations of a part of the structure in 2004-5 located human bones and large stone blocks possibly where animals or humans could have been chained during spectacles (Wilmott *et al.* 2006: 12).

[180] It is possible that in some way the amphitheatre at Dorchester commemorated and transformed pre-existing forms of use of the monument. The location of the amphitheatre at Chester may also be significant despite its being built on what appears to have been a new site; it was situated at the edge of the plateau overlooking the River Dee, a name which comes from Deva the goddess (Mason 2001: 106). This amphitheatre, which could have been used for religious activity as well as games and other events, may

Both types of spectacle building require further detailed study in Britain (Bomgardner 1993: 379), and this could determine whether both indigenous and Roman-inspired activities took place within them, and the extent to which they remained vital places in the late Roman period.

7.3.6 *Temples*

Temple structures are usually recognised in the archaeological record through their distinctive building plan, either being of classical design or, more usually in Britain, of Romano-Celtic design (Wilkes 1996: 1).[181] Despite this, there is still uncertainty about the identification of some buildings as temples.

Where only small areas of the buildings have been uncovered, the interpretation of the structure as a temple is often problematic. At Gloucester, for example, the remains at Westgate Street were originally interpreted as the edge of a bathhouse (Heighway and Garrod 1980) but Hurst (1999b: 155-7) suggests that a *peribolos* (court enclosed by a wall) of a temple might be more likely. At Cirencester, excavations within *insula* VI opposite the *basilica* uncovered an area of courtyard and section of the portico of a building of monumental nature which have led to suggestions that it may have been the *temenos* of a temple, although little else is known (Holbrook 1998: 139-40). In the case of small towns, temples often seem to have been the only public building and they sometimes had a central position, as at Elms Farm, Heybridge, in Essex (Atkinson and Preston 1998) and Westhawk Farm in Kent (Booth 2001). This central location and surrounding open spaces indicate that the temples were perhaps involved in market and administration activities.

Within Roman London there are a number of large monumental complexes known. Their functions remain enigmatic, but perhaps included some kind of religious rôle without the buildings being wholly temple complexes. The complex described as an 'Allectan Palace', by the side of the Thames, excavated on small sites including Peter's Hill and Sunlight Wharf, was built in the later third century.[182] It reused masonry apparently from an earlier complex on the site and baths here make a religious interpretation possible (T. Williams 1993: 26-32). Further masonry that apparently came from these buildings was found within the late riverside wall. This stonework displayed religious features, including depictions of gods that had come from religious monuments that had been part of the complex (C. Hill *et al.* 1980: 125-32). It is uncertain whether the new buildings continued any of the functions of the earlier

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have been drawing on the religious significance of the place. Indeed, the fortress as a whole would have been placed within the context of this religious place. Although the area would have had strategic importance it may also have been deliberately dominating the religious place as is also possible at Colchester and Lincoln (see chapter 5).

[181] The Romano-Celtic design of temple consisted of a square chamber (*cella*) surrounded by an ambulatory and this could also be set within a larger precinct (*temenos*) (Wilkes 1996: 1).

[182] Little is known about the complex as a whole because of the fragmentary nature of its investigation. The fact that the date of its construction in A.D. 294, dated by dendrochronology, coincides with the reign of Allectus has led to suggestions that it was a palace built by Allectus but there is no definite proof of this (T. Williams 1993: 28).

ones. Across the Thames at Southwark there was another large complex of uncertain function which included a number of large wings of rooms and a bathhouse of comparable size to that at Huggin Hill (Yule 2005: 50-72). Some sort of religious and/or military rôle is a possibility here (Diagram 85).

Relatively few sites in urban contexts have produced many obviously religious artefacts such as statuettes and regalia. This contrasts with some rural sites such as Uley (A. Woodward and Leach 1993) and Hayling Island (King and Soffe), and could be the result of post-Roman reuse and disturbance of the urban sites, or perhaps of the differing rituals that occurred in the buildings.

Temples are also useful when considering movement around, to and from towns as they would have played an important rôle in religious ceremonies and festivals (Esmonde Cleary 2005). They may well have attracted people to the towns from long distances and, as Fulford (1999) has shown for the locations of temples at Silchester, this would have influenced people's perceptions and experiences of individual towns. Some temples would also have had restrictions of access both in terms of time (of day and year) and type of person, reflecting aspects such as class (Stambaugh 1978: 574-80). This will have intensified the experience of entering the temple and worshipping within. While there would have been other aspects of the landscape imbued with meaning, including natural features, temples were an important way in which the religious landscape was created and negotiated. Roman temples in Britain were also apparently sometimes located on sites of pre-Roman religious importance (A. Woodward 1992: 17-30) seeing a longer-term continuity of activity (*ibid.*: 63).

Despite the presence of temples and shrines within towns it must also be acknowledged that there were other forms of religious expression within the urban centres (see chapter 4; *cf.* Fulford 2001). Religious activity took place at other public buildings, including theatres, amphitheatres, the *forum-basilica* and bathhouses and towns also formed part of the wider ritualised landscape. Temples and their precincts encouraged many diverse public activities including meetings, business transactions and performances (J. Anderson 1997: 243; Knipe 1988: 125; Perring 1991b: 280; Stambaugh 1978). In some cases there are traces of activity beneath the temples, as at Canterbury (Frere 1977: 423) and Verulamium (Lowther 1937), and, despite the caution required in assuming a continuation of religious activity, it is possible that these were the locations of pre-Roman shrines representing continuity in the religious landscape.

7.3.7 *Porticoes*

Porticoes and colonnades were public structures in their own right as well as being used to define the spaces of other buildings. Porticoes were used to surround many public buildings,

including *fora* and temples, but they also provided monumental walkways around *insulae* and became places to congregate, shelter and sell wares (J. Anderson 1997: 247-9); they were an influential part of daily life and invited people to meet and interact (Zanker 2000: 39; Perring 1991b: 280). They connected one public building with the other, and played a part in the movement of people around the town (MacDonald 1986: 117-8). Porticoes were classical forms of town organisation but it seems there were fewer in Romano-British towns than in the towns of other provinces.[183]

Known porticoes in Britain include those outside the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse and around the temple precinct in Canterbury (Bennett 1981; K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 98-100), in front of buildings in *insulae* XIV and XXVII at Verulamium (Frere 1983: 84, 203), around the baths complex at Wroxeter (Ellis 2000: 19-25) and the *forum* at Lincoln (M. Jones 1999: 66).[184] Their association with the classical world has meant that evidence for their decay, demolition or change of use in the towns of Roman Britain in the late Roman period is often considered to represent decline. It is likely, however, that this issue was much more complex, involving developments and changes in the organisation of space rather than decline (see chapter 10).

7.3.8 *Monumental arches*

Monumental arches also played a rôle in the organisation of space and the regulation of movement of people within the town (MacDonald 1986: 74-6). Arches were mechanisms of transition and also connected areas of the town (*ibid.*: 32, 74).[185] There were sometimes four-square arches (*quadrifrons*) positioned at armature junctions, these structures also sometimes being placed at spots where significant actions had taken place in the past (*ibid.*: 87-91).[186]

In Britain it appears that the Balkerne Gate in the town walls at Colchester was originally a monumental arch prior to the construction of the defences (P. Crummy 1984: 15, 122) whilst at Verulamium, it seems that three monumental arches marked boundaries of earlier forms of the settlement (Frere 1983: 75-9; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 76-8, 129). Another arch is known from London, represented by monumental stone reused in a fourth-century section of the town wall (Blagg 1980).

7.3.9 *Town gates and town walls*

Town gates will also have functioned as zones of passage and transition. They were on the town boundaries, which will have been defined through ceremony and ritual at the time of

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[183] They were probably also found only rarely in 'small towns'. An example in timber was possibly found surrounding a gravelled area in Godmanchester (H. Green 1975).
[184] At Lincoln known remains of the portico in front of the *forum* have been termed the 'Bailgate colonnade' and the column positions are marked out in the modern road and pavement (M. Jones 1999: 66).
[185] Evidence from Rome shows that monumental arches were often decorated with scenes and images celebrating the emperors and important military victories (J. Ward-Perkins 1981: 429-30).
[186] The only *quadrifrons* arch known in Britain is in a non-urban context at Richborough (Strong 1968: 72).

town foundation. Rykwert (1976: 136) describes the *pomoerium* at Rome, a strip of land used to define the town and build the town walls. This boundary had religious significance: the "gates were bridges over a forbidden tract of earth charged with menacing power" (*ibid.*: 137). Crossing the town boundary will have been an act imbued with meaning (Perring 1991b: 282). As Rykwert states (1976: 139): "to cross over such a bridge [the passage through the *pomoerium*] is in itself a religious act". The gates marked the only sanctioned crossing points and the town walls would have had a symbolic as well as functional importance.

For Rome we have sources referring to gods associated with the gates and boundaries of the city – Janus was the god of the gates (*ibid.*: 137-9). Whilst this probably applied to towns across the Empire, we have no definite evidence relating to Britain. Creighton's (2006) work has argued for the ritual foundation of towns in Roman Britain (see chapter 5), and evidence of religious deposits also indicates that boundaries around settlements were meaningful in prehistory (*e.g.* Gwilt 1997; J.D. Hill 1995b; Hingley 2006b). Gibbon's impression of city gates (section 3.5.3) reflects the view that they represented markers and the boundaries of civilisation with barbarity lying outside. Knowledge of town gates in Roman Britain varies greatly. Remains of gates have survived at Silchester (Fulford 1984), Lincoln (M. Jones 2002: 59-60) and Caerwent (Ashby *et al.* 1904; Manning 2003) (*e.g.* see section 9.2.6), whilst those at towns such as Leicester (Cooper and Buckley 2003) have survived poorly due to intense later occupation.

7.3.10 *Timber phases of public buildings*

In some cases timber phases of public buildings have been recognised in the early stages of towns. This includes the site of the *basilica* at Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000: 44-58) and some amphitheatres, theatres, *macella* and *mansiones* (see table 7.1). Traces of timber structures of more uncertain nature have been found beneath the *forum-basilica* complexes at London (Philp 1977: 7-16), Winchester (Biddle 1966: 320) and Lincoln (M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 66). These structures demonstrate that much remains unknown about the development of Roman towns and the biographies of public buildings. They also raise issues of how to interpret the public buildings of the late Roman period where there are traces of timber structures (as explored in detail in chapter 10). Timber structures were also often parts of these sites in the late pre-Roman Iron Age (see chapter 5). This long-term use of timber indicates that such structures need not have been considered less significant than stone buildings and could have had important uses.

Town	Public Building	Date	Reference
Caerwent	Beneath the temple were traces of a timber building around 16x10m but its function is uncertain.	The date is difficult to establish but it was possibly built in the late-1stC./early-2ndC. A.D.	Brewer 1993: 58
Canterbury	The portico excavated on the Marlowe Car Park site was built over a timber structure which seems to have been of the same alignment.	Dates to the 1stC. A.D.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 98
	A timber structure was identified under the stone 'temple' at Burgate Street. The timber structure seems to have been built on a previously unoccupied site.	Built *c.* A.D. 200	Frere and Stow 1983: 43
Chelmsford	A timber structure, possibly also a *mansio*, preceded the stone *mansio* structure.	Built *c.* A.D. 125 but was replaced in stone soon after *c.* A.D. 130-5	Drury 1988: 25
Colchester	The earliest phase of the theatre at Gosbecks was in timber.	Built *c.* A.D. 100 and replaced *c.* A.D. 150-200	Dunnett 1971a: 31-43; Hull 1958: 269
Gloucester	Beneath the masonry '*macellum*' excavated at Northgate Street were post-holes of a timber building and verandah.	Built in the 1stC. A.D.	J. Rhodes 1974: 31
	Timber building underlying the 'temple' excavated at Northgate Street; evidence consisted of a sill-beam and pebble floor.	Building in the 1stC. A.D.	Hurst 1972: 63
Leicester	Traces of a timber building were found beneath the *macella* although little is known about the structure.	Built in the 1stC. A.D.	Wacher 1959: 113-4
Lincoln	Traces of a timber building under the *forum-basilica* may represent an early timber phase of the building or possibly an early timber temple. The plan suggests that building had a corridor or verandah along its east side.	1stC.: late Flavian/ early Trajanic	M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 66
London	Traces of timber structures on the site of the later *forum*.	Built *c.* A.D. 44-60	Philp 1977: 7-16
	The amphitheatre was first built in timber. This mainly survives as post-holes, robbed-slots and waterlogged timbers.	Built *c.* A.D. 70 and replaced by the stone structure *c.* A.D. 120	Bateman 1997: 53-54, 67; Bateman 1998: 52-53; Bateman 2000: 39
	A building 19x11m with timber and brick-earth walls on gravel and mortar foundations was excavated at 5-12 Fenchurch Street close to the *forum*. The structure had two aisles divided into rooms by partitions some of which contained hearths.	Built 1stC. A.D. but demolished by the mid-2ndC.	Perring 1991a: 35-6
Silchester	A timber *forum-basilica* was found beneath the stone structure. The *basilica* comprised a hall divided into two by an entrance onto the *forum*. The hall also contained a nave flanked by aisles.	Built *c.* A.D. 85	Fulford and Timby 2000: 44-58
	A timber structure of uncertain nature lay beneath the 'church' building.	Uncertain date but possibly 3rdC.	Frere 1975: 292
	The amphitheatre was first built in timber.	Built *c.* A.D. 75 and replaced by stone in the mid-3rdC. A.D.	Fulford 1989: 13-27
Verulamium	The theatre was first built in timber.	Built *c.* A.D. 160	Kenyon 1935: 215
	Traces of timber buildings were found beneath the *macellum* but of an uncertain nature	Destroyed by the Boudican fire *c.* A.D. 60/1	Richardson 1944: 84
Winchester	Traces of timber buildings were found beneath the *forum-basilica*.	Built in the 1stC. A.D.	Biddle 1966: 320; Biddle 1969: 314

Table 7.1: Details of the known timber phases of public buildings before they were built in stone.

7.4 Discussion

Early studies of Roman public buildings, such as the Victorian work at Silchester, placed emphasis on the design and monumentality of surviving architectural evidence rather than the biography of the buildings and their use.

Through changing excavation techniques and theoretical developments, a more recent approach has been to demonstrate the significance of the buildings, and their relationship with the wider landscape. Analysis of their locations within the towns and the way in which they had an impact upon movement and visual experiences is also important. Fulford's (1999) study shows the way in which the visitor might have approached the town at Silchester and negotiated the streets. From the London road, they would first have passed two temples defining the beginnings of the urban space, and then, if heading to the *forum-basilica*, proceeded to the symbolic and ritualised centre of the town. Here there would have been shrines and business, commercial and other activities (*ibid.*: 164). Similar exercises could be carried out for other towns such as Canterbury, Colchester and Verulamium where the public buildings may have been constructed in such a way that they developed pre-existing uses of the landscape.

Esmonde Cleary's (2005) examination of movement around some towns in Roman Britain in relation to ceremony in the religious calendar, and the processions and gatherings that they might have involved, could also have explored how pre-Roman uses of the landscape influenced actions. This would include activity associated with the rivers, wetlands and springs at sites, the use or abandonment of linear earthworks, the construction of temples on sites of pre-existing religious activity and patterns of ritual deposition. The religious use of space continued to be built upon throughout the Roman period.

Movement within public buildings was often regulated through particular routes and rights of access. Different activities within the buildings in the late Roman period will have altered such organisation. A detailed study of these activities in the following chapters, however, will demonstrate the continued importance of the structures.

7.5 Conclusions

Knowledge and understanding of the public buildings of Romano-British towns is still only partial and more work is required to analyse their significance and function. They were imbued with meaning, so as well as examining the structures themselves it is useful to emphasise their rôle as places and architectural frames for activities, experiences, interactions and creation of memories. The structural changes in the late Roman period need not equate with the decline of the places that they continued to frame. The evidence for their late use and continued importance provides the focus of the following chapters.

Chapter 8: The structures of the public buildings in the later Roman period: framing place and space

8.1 Introduction

As the first stage in examining towns and their public buildings in the later Roman period, so that their use and attitudes towards them can be analysed, this chapter considers the available structural evidence for the buildings. Evidence for architectural changes to the public buildings has been described as decline leading to the fall of towns (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a; Faulkner 2000a; Liebeschuetz 2000; B. Ward-Perkins 2005). However, concentrating on the structural elements alone will only give a partial, and mainly negative, understanding of towns during the later Roman period. What needs to be considered further, is evidence for the way in which the structures continued to frame activities and maintain their importance as places. Feld (1996: 91) remarks, "as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place" – it is necessary to consider the ways in which the buildings were used and experienced.

Architecture can be considered as a stage for movement and interaction, where performances are enacted in physically and symbolically bounded space (Edensor 2000: 123). Walking within and around public buildings and using them will have contributed towards creating the meaning attached to the places (Simonsen 2003: 167-8). This also applies to late Iron Age '*oppida*' space: G. Woolf (2006), studying *oppida*, considers monuments as large-scale and visually prominent structures that are intimately related to their locations and intended to endure. They "proclaim a faith in (or aspiration towards) a remote posterity" (*ibid.*: 270). Using evidence from the twenty-one Roman towns, this structural analysis will demonstrate that many of the public buildings continued to impact on the landscape, as they had done in the earlier Roman period. In the pre-Roman period visibility and negotiation in the landscape were important aspects of sites, including the way in which earthworks, structures and natural features were used (chapter 5). The continued and transforming use of public buildings suggests a link with the past, continuing the significance of these places.

Below, it is argued that parts of many Roman public buildings survived into the late Roman and post-Roman periods. Analysis in subsequent chapters demonstrates that various activities occurred within these buildings, demonstrating the late Roman public buildings were not merely empty shells. Christie's (2006) analysis of late Roman Italy has also argued this for towns here (see section 1.2.4); the significance of the places survived. A similar claim can be made for Britain, where in many cases the significance of place also drew on the long-term use from the pre-conquest period. The public buildings remained prominent features of the landscape and the histories of the buildings continued the monumentality and symbolic nature of many of these places.

In examining the structural evidence, problems of dating the demolition/collapse of the buildings are raised. This is an important issue to address before the evidence for activities within the buildings can be analysed.

8.2 *Forum-Basilica* complexes

It is important to examine the structural nature of the *forum-basilica* complex in the late Roman period because of the official rôle it had within the town and its hinterland. Evidence for changes to the structures of these buildings in the late Roman period in Britain is usually taken to indicate their decline, with there no longer being the money, resources or will for their maintenance (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a). They are considered to represent the early decline of the urban function and of governance within the town (Liebeschuetz 2000: 34, 41; Perring 1991b). This section will demonstrate that there were many cases of continued alterations to the buildings in the fourth and fifth centuries, which suggests that in many instances they may have remained important within the towns.

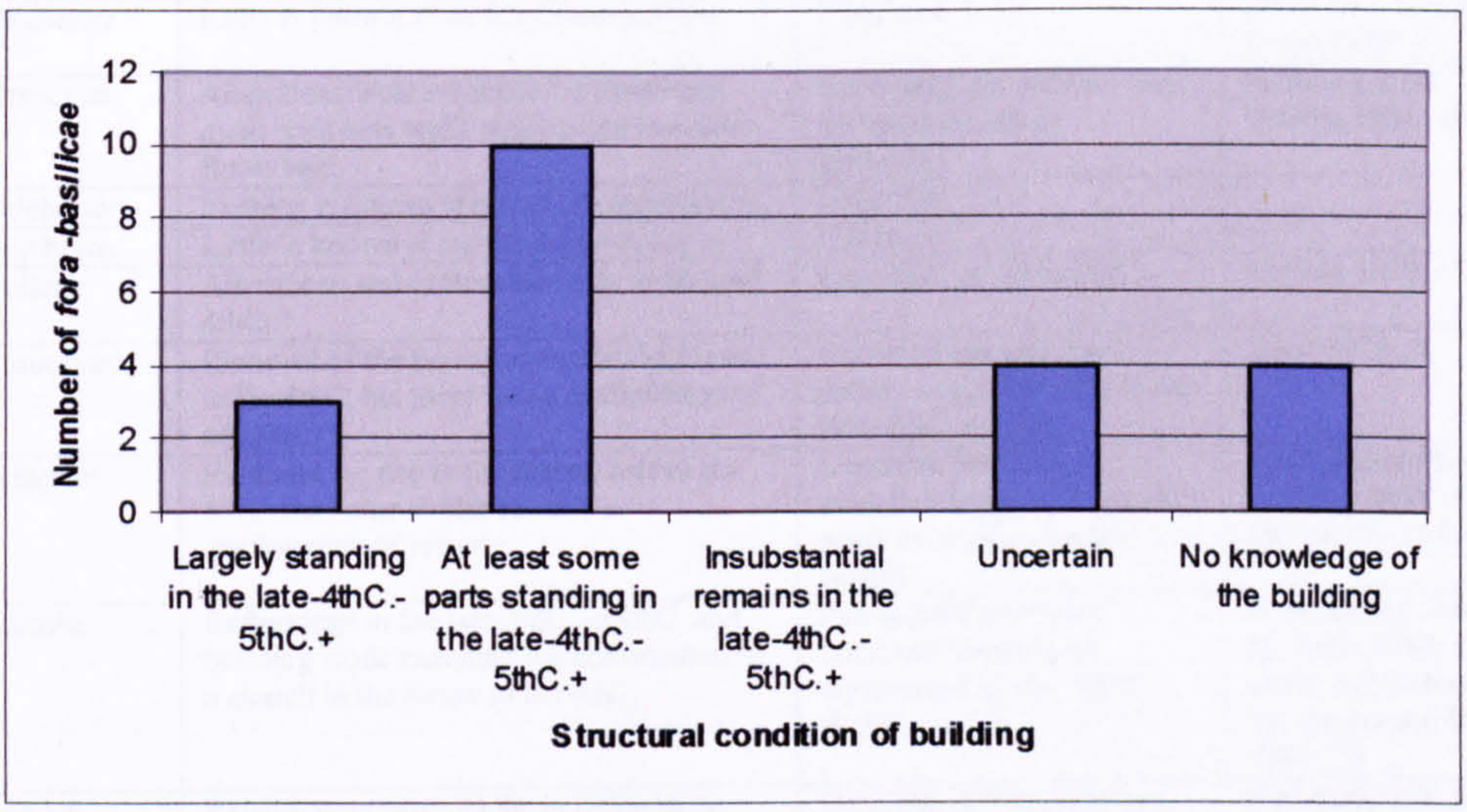

Figure 8.1: Graph showing the number of forum-basilica *complexes from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. This compares well with the results from the data quality table which indicate that little or nothing is known about nine of the buildings. Six of the buildings fall within data quality category 1 and a further six fall within categories 2-4 which, despite sometimes being problematic, can produce some useful information.*

Figure 8.1 shows that out of the seventeen towns where something is known about the *forum-basilica* complex (table 8.1), thirteen have evidence for at least part of the buildings standing into the late-fourth or early-fifth centuries and later. There is insufficient evidence from the other four to make analysis possible. In some cases there is evidence for the deliberate demolition of some parts of the complex, perhaps due to structural decay and the expense of repairs, whilst other parts remained standing and in use. They would have remained central to

the urban space and a focus in the road system. Although most eventually collapsed or were demolished by the early medieval period, the dating of this event for some is not easy to establish.

This section initially examines a number of examples in detail, followed by a general discussion of other sites where the surviving evidence makes conclusions more problematic.

Town	Alterations	Date of demolition	References
Aldborough	Little known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	Little known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Evidence for reconstructions and alterations in the late-3rdC. to early-4thC.	Very late-4thC. or early-5thC.	Brewer 1993: 63-4; Unpublished excavation report.
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. after a fire but little is known about later activity due to damage to the remains. 4thC. pottery might suggest that the building continued standing to this date.	Uncertain although there is evidence for 4thC. pottery on the site.	Frere 1971
Canterbury	Possible evidence for some rebuilding in the mid to late-4thC.	Uncertain but presence of later 4thC. pottery.	Frere and Bennett 1987: 93-8
Carmarthen	Nothing is known about a *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Chelmsford	Nothing is known about a *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Chichester	Little is known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31
Cirencester	Alterations were evidenced in excavated areas with new walls constructed and new floors laid.	Continuing use into the 5thC. but uncertain about demolition.	Holbrook 1998: 117-9; Wacher 1964: 14
Colchester	Nothing is known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	Little is known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	
Exeter	Alterations and extensions made in the mid-4thC.	Late-4thC. or early-5thC.	Bidwell 1979: 110
Gloucester	Removal of the paving stones of the *forum* in the 4thC. but there was a continuation of activity.	Uncertain but mid-4thC. pottery suggests a date of the later 4thC. or later.	Hurst 1972: 58
Leicester	Evidence for fire in the second half of the 4thC. but some evidence for the continuation of activity.	Uncertain but there is evidence for the robbing of walls in the post-Roman period.	Anon unpublished; Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973
Lincoln	Reflorings in the late-3rdC. to 4thC. and building work including the construction of a church in the *forum* in the 4thC.	Part at least may have remained standing as represented by the 'Mint Wall'.	Gilmour and Jones 1980; M. Jones 1993: 16; M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 68; Steane and Vince 1993: 72
London	Repairs were made to the building in the second half of the 3rdC.	Demolition in the late-3rdC. or early-4thC. although part of the structure may have remained standing.	Bateman 1998: 51; Brigham 1990; Perring 1991a: 113
Silchester	Few apparent changes made to the *basilica* after its construction in masonry in the mid-2ndC. In the 5thC. there is evidence for the insertion of a hypocaust into the southern ambulatory of the west range and access to the west ambulatory was blocked off.	Possible partial demolition in the 5thC. with the main shell of the building remaining standing into the 6thC. and 7thC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 78, 581
Verulamium	Little evidence for alterations due to the area of excavations being too small but there is possible evidence for the continuation of use.	Uncertain due to the area of excavation being too small. There does not appear to be any evidence for deliberate demolition in the Roman period and the building may have remained standing to a later date.	Frere 1983: 57-8; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987: 180; Niblett 2005a: 83
Winchester	Alterations in the north wing of the *forum* in the 4thC.	Uncertain due to the small area of the building uncovered by excavation. Parts may have remained standing into the post-Roman	Biddle 1964: 204; Biddle 1969: 315; Teague 1988: 6-8

		period.	
Wroxeter	The building was destroyed by fire in the late-3rdC. but it may have continued in use afterwards.	Uncertain; parts may have remained standing into the post-Roman period.	Atkinson 1942: 106; R. White and Barker 1998: 112
York	Nothing is known about the *forum-basilica*.	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 87

Table 8.1: Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the forum-basilica *complex in each town.*

8.2.1 *London*

There have been a number of small-scale excavations on the site of the *basilica* and *forum* in London with the largest area being the Leadenhall Market site across the east end of the *basilica* (Diagram 77; G. Milne 1992). The results from this excavation suggested that this area of the *basilica*, at least, was demolished in the early-fourth century and the stone cleared away. This was indicated by the fact that the surviving bases of the walls were at the same level as the early-fourth century occupation layer in the area. The final floors were then covered in silt, indicating a period of inactivity before the site was put to further use in the medieval period. Greater clarity regarding the sequence of demolition/destruction of the building is difficult because of truncation caused by later activity on the site (Brigham 1990: 77).

Excavations between 1995 and 2000 in the south-western corner of the *forum*, at 168 Fenchurch Street (Diagram 77), seem to support the evidence for demolition around the early-fourth century (Dunwoodie 2004: 34). The results from excavations on the site of the eastern portico at Whittington Avenue (MoLAS XIV88) and 20-21 Lime Street (MoLAS LIE90) indicate that the portico was probably demolished before the main building, perhaps in the late-third century.

There are indications, however, that not all parts of the *forum-basilica* were demolished at this time (Bateman 1998: 51) demonstrating a complexity in the late and post-Roman use of the structure and its survival. At the extreme eastern end of the *basilica*, the survival of walls and tiled and tessellated floors of the eastern antechamber, the apse, indicate that this part remained standing to a later date, possibly even remaining above ground into the fifteenth century when the Leadenhall was built (Brigham 1990: 77; G. Milne 1992: 29-33). Observations of the area in the early 1880s, during the construction work of the Leadenhall Market, identified surviving Roman architecture "showing the great extent of Roman building, and the thickness of walling" (Brock 1881: 90; see also Lambert 1916: 225-6), which contrasts with the evidence from the later excavations. Other areas where walls survived include parts of the south wall of the Nave and some rooms off the Nave (Brigham 1990: 77).

These indicate survival to a post-Roman date, but too little is known to comment on the extent of this survival.

It is inferred from this analysis that parts of the complex survived, including the area of the apse, and remained in use beyond the fourth century, whilst other parts were demolished. Only further excavation will reveal more details and the extent of activity here. This demonstrates the difficulties of determining destruction dates of buildings: it should not be assumed that evidence for demolition from one excavation can necessarily be applied to the whole building.

8.2.2 *Cirencester*

Excavations on the site of the *forum-basilica* at Cirencester (Diagram 52) have also revealed a complex sequence of activity. The published excavations of the site suggested that the *basilica* was demolished in the late-fourth or early-fifth century (Holbrook 1998: 111). Pits that cut into the *basilica* floor contained Oxfordshire colour-coated ware of A.D. 325-400. One pit contained a coin of Honorius (A.D. 395-402). These pits were sealed by the demolition débris of the building – consisting of masonry, mortar and roofing slates – which itself was not dated. This means that the building could well have remained standing later than the dating evidence gained from the pits. This is supported by the evidence from the *forum* (Diagram 54) where there were some major alterations to the structure in the mid- to later-fourth century, including the enclosure of the colonnade of the portico, the rendering of walls with pink plaster and the laying down of new mosaics (*ibid.*: 116).[187] Mosaics were also laid in the northwest range of the *forum*, although the dating is more problematic since the excavation did not continue to earlier layers beneath the mosaic.

It is possible that the *basilica* remained standing alongside the *forum* but if it had been demolished at an earlier date, then the *forum* would have become an independent structure. Wacher (1995: 314) has suggested that these alterations to the *forum-basilica* may have been for the creation of an administrative palace for the new province of *Britannia Prima*. This administrative change is not known to have happened until around A.D. 314 (Holbrook 1998: 116) which is too early for these changes. The unusual nature of the building also has no parallels from known palaces (Lavan 1999). More work is required on the building, but what is clear is that a large part, if not all, remained standing and in use to a late date.

8.2.3 *Silchester*

Excavations at Silchester concentrated on the site of the *basilica* and there is only very limited information for the *forum* (Diagram 89). The main *basilica* hall was uncovered in excavations

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[187] The new mosaics were placed over a make-up of stone, loam and plaster where a coin of Constantine II provides a *terminus post quem* of A.D. 335.

between 1980 and 1986 but was also investigated in the Victorian period (G. Fox and St. John Hope 1893) which destroyed much of the stratigraphy within the building (Fulford and Timby 2000: 80). From the excavated data it seems that there was an early phase of demolition in the later-fourth century, when some of the interior walls and the colonnade of the building were removed to ground level. A coin of A.D. 360-8 was found within a pit cut into the foundations of the colonnade at the north end where a stylobate block had been removed, but the foundation left. It provided a *terminus post quem* for the robbing of this wall (*ibid.*: 79-80). The main walls of the *basilica*, however, were robbed to their foundations at a later date, in the sixth or seventh century or possibly even later (*ibid.*), indicating that the main frame of the building remained standing and in use.

Apparently contemporary with the first phase of robbing, was the insertion of a hypocaust under the floor in the west range of the *basilica*. It was only partially excavated and there is little dating evidence, although it appears to have cut a layer containing fourth century pottery (*ibid.*: 75). Not only were these rooms still maintained and used in the west wing but at least one was now heated. In this area was also a sherd of engraved glass dating to the late-fourth or fifth century, though unstratified, and a piece of window glass of the seventh to ninth centuries (*ibid.*: 76-8) which might give a date to which activity continued. Late use is also indicated by a sherd of engraved glass vessel dating to the late Roman or early post-Roman periods (Price 2000: 320-1).[188] Very little of the *forum* has been excavated, although late layers, one containing a coin of Eugenius (A.D. 392-5) completely covering a statue base within the *forum* (Fulford and Timby 2000: 75), suggest that the area remained in use alongside the *basilica*. This evidence also suggests that statue(s) had been removed from the *forum* at an earlier date.

8.2.4 *Wroxeter*

Like Silchester, Wroxeter's *forum* (Diagram 100) produced layers indicating use into the late-fourth century and beyond (Atkinson 1942). Unfortunately, the complex was not excavated to what would be considered modern standards so some caution is required when examining evidence from these later layers.[189] The *basilica* hall survived poorly and was only partially excavated but the western and southern range survived better. Within these ranges, Atkinson identified some traces of late use including new walls, the alteration of rooms and the laying of new floors (*ibid.*: 108-9). There was little dating evidence although unstratified coins above

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[188] Whilst there were ninety fragments of cast matt-glossy window glass that was in use to around A.D. 300, there were also ten fragments of pale green, cylinder-blown double-glossy window glass which was in use from the beginning of the fourth century (Allen 2000: 314). There were also nine fragments of dark greyish blue-green, cylinder blown window glass likely to belong to post-Roman use of the building, which is especially well known at Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites (*ibid.*). These later fragments may represent replacements to the windows of the *basilica* indicating the hall remained in use and in a state of good repair possibly into the seventh or eighth century (Fulford and Timby 2000: 581).

[189] There is also no archive surviving for these excavations and so the evidence and interpretations in the report cannot now be checked easily. Knowledge of the site would benefit greatly from re-excavation.

one new floor included one of Victorinus (A.D. 268-70/1) and two of Tetricus I (A.D. 270/1-73/4), emperors of the Gallic Empire. Despite the limited evidence, it is possible that at least the east wing of the building remained in use.

8.2.5 *Other towns*

Further towns will be listed, in brief because there is little available material. At Exeter, only a small corner of the complex was excavated (Diagram 62) but it is evident that structural changes were being made up to around the mid-fourth century, which included the extension of the *basilica* (Bidwell 1979: 104-5). The excavated area suggests demolition in the early-fifth century, the only dating evidence, provided by burials across the southwest of the nave wall (*ibid.*: 108-10), giving a *terminus ante quem* of around A.D. 450. These burials need not indicate the demolition of the whole building, other parts of which may have remained standing. Only further excavation will determine this. The burials may even indicate a continued focus of activity here (see section 11.4 on burials).

At Verulamium, the *forum-basilica* has only received limited excavation (Diagram 91; Corder 1940; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987) but there were traces of rebuilding and alteration in the third and fourth centuries, and later fourth century pottery suggested use at least to the end of the fourth and into the fifth century (Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987). The level of accumulated material within the structure might indicate that demolition did not occur until the post-Roman period (Frere 1983: 57-8; Niblett 2005a: 83).

At Caerwent, the small area of the nave and rear-range of the *basilica* that was re-excavated in the late 1980s provided some more information on the sequence of the structure (Brewer 1990: 81; unpublished excavation report; Diagram 38). It would seem that demolition, dated by coins, took place in the late-fourth or early-fifth century. Other parts, however, would certainly appear to have been standing until a later date with some walls even being incorporated into nineteenth century farm buildings (Brewer 1993: 61). Like London this evidence indicates a complexity of use into the post-Roman period with some parts remaining standing whilst others were demolished.

Very little is known about the *forum-basilica* at Canterbury (Diagram 41) with only a very small area being uncovered through excavation, but a section of exposed wall did seem to show evidence for rebuilding in the mid- to late-fourth century (Frere and Bennett 1987: 93-8). At Lincoln, the survival of the 'Mint Wall', a section of the *basilica* wall 22.5m long and 7.25m high (Gilmour and Jones 1980; M. Jones 1993: 16), indicates that at least part of the *basilica* remained standing into the post-Roman period and beyond, whilst the excavations of the east range of the *forum* (Steane 2006) have demonstrated that this part also remained standing (Diagram 78). The small area excavated of the *forum-basilica* at Winchester (Teague

1988; Diagram 99) points to alterations in the fourth century. At Leicester (Diagram 66), whilst the site suffers from much disturbance and truncation, there is evidence for structural alterations and new floors within the building after a fire in the second half of the fourth century (Hebditch and Mellor 1973).

8.2.6 *Discussion*

At each complex where there is evidence available, it does seem to show structural continuation of at least part of the building to a late date, often into the post-Roman period. This evidence may also be representative of more evidence that has not survived in the archaeological record, perhaps including timber structural components (see chapter 10). Structural alterations to the buildings could be seen as demonstrating the decline of the building as originally constructed; but equally they indicate that the buildings continued to be *foci* of attention and centres of activities within the towns. Indeed, many of the structures may have remained prominent monuments.

8.3 Public bath buildings

Where strata survive within public bath buildings, the late Roman evidence is equally informative.[190] Bathhouses are useful since their definite function makes change of use more readily identifiable and this provides a pattern of comparison for changes of use in other public buildings. Figure 8.2 shows that in the twenty-one towns, twelve bathhouses are likely to have been at least partly standing into the later-fourth or early-fifth centuries. Two appear to have been derelict by the fourth century and it is uncertain whether any part of these remained standing to a later date. At six of the towns, no public bathhouses are so far known whilst at a further two, there is insufficient knowledge of the bath buildings for there to be information on their condition in the late Roman period (table 8.2). The end date of the use of the bathhouses as functioning baths is often difficult to identify since they may have operated in a reduced fashion.

Three of the baths, Canterbury, Dorchester and Chichester, show definite evidence for changes or additions to the structures in the fourth century, demonstrating that these buildings were still functioning in some capacity. For other bathhouses, only a *terminus post quem* for their destruction or change of use can be identified. Whilst in many cases the bath structures seem to have remained in use into at least the fourth century, the function as a bathhouse probably ceased earlier than the use of the buildings themselves, which appear to have been utilised for other activities.

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[190] This study will not consider the structures thought to have been private bath buildings.

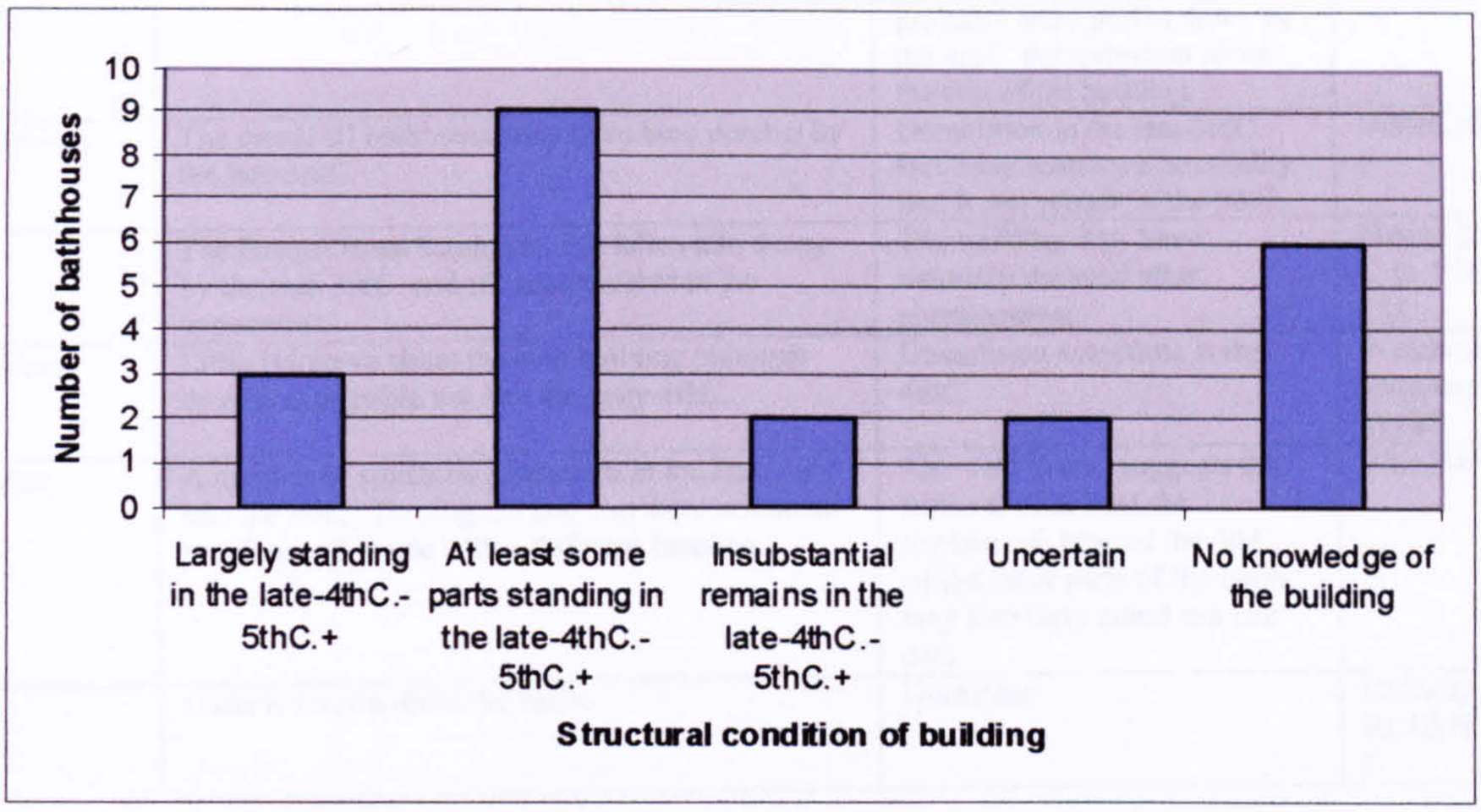

Figure 8.2: Graph showing the number of public bath buildings from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. This corresponds well with analysis from the data quality table where very little or nothing is known about the bathhouses in nine cases but thirteen cases have some useful data.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	The later-3rdC. saw the addition of a new wing to the baths and in the 4thC. a timber building was inserted into the ruins of the colonnade of the building.	Uncertain: part of the building at least may have remained standing into the 5thC.	Nash-Williams 1930
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the late-2ndC. after a fire but little is known about its later phases due to damage on the site.	Uncertain	Frere 1971
Canterbury	St. Margaret's Street: alteration in the early-4thC. with rebuilding and the construction of a *laconicum*.	Uncertain but the structure seems to have remained standing into the 5thC.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 188-91
Carmarthen	Little known about the bathhouse but the finds suggest a continuation of use into the 3rdC.	Uncertain but in use into the 3rdC.	H. James 2003: 9, 20; W. Morris 1962
Chelmsford	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Chichester	Evidence for the repair of pumping equipment into the late-4thC.	No evidence for demolition available.	Down 1988: 42
Cirencester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Colchester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	Finds suggest that the building continued in use to the end of the 4thC. or later but little else is known about it.	Uncertain of demolition date but coins and pottery into the 5thC.	Keen 1977; J. Magilton pers. comm.; Putnam 2007: 70-1
Exeter	The *natatio* and drain were filled in during the late-3rdC. but the main building may have continued in use.	Uncertain	Bidwell 1979: 122
Gloucester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Leicester	No later levels within the baths survived but in the courtyard a succession of floors suggests the continued use of the building into the 4thC.	The survival of the 'Jewry Wall' suggests that at least part of the building remained standing.	Kenyon 1948: 7
Lincoln	Repairs or rebuildings probably took place in the Antonine period but little is known beyond that date.	Uncertain but activity does not seem to have continued beyond around A.D. 350.	M. Jones 2003b: 127
London	Huggin Hill baths: after the early demolition new buildings were constructed on the site.	Careful demolition took place in the mid-2ndC. although part of the building may have remained standing into the medieval period.	Marsden 1976: 23
Silchester	Use continued into the 4thC.	Part of the south *caldarium* had	Boon 1974

		probably been pulled down by the 4thC. but uncertain about the rest of the building.	
Verulamium	The *insula* III bathhouse may have been derelict by the late-3rdC.	Demolition in the late-3rdC. But there remains a possibility that it was rebuilt in the 4thC.	Niblett 2005a: 85-6
	The Branch Road bathhouse had fallen into decay by the mid-3rdC. and silt accumulated in the hypocausts.	The building may have naturally decayed after abandonment.	Niblett 2005a: 83-5; D. Wilson 1975: 258
Winchester	Little is known about the bath building although there was possible use into the early-4thC.	Demolition sometime in the 4thC.	Winchester Museums Service SQ 88
Wroxeter	A number of structural alterations in the 3rdC. and into the 4thC. The *frigidarium* may have remained standing and in use with a different function.	The 'Old Work' suggests the survival of at least the *frigidarium* beyond the 4thC. whilst other parts of the baths may also have stood to a late date.	Ellis 2000: 55
York	Little is known about the baths.	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 87; RCHME 1962: 54-5

Table 8.2: Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the public bath buildings in each town.

8.3.1 *Leicester*

The bathhouse at Leicester (Diagram 67) was excavated in the 1940s but no later levels within the baths themselves survived, or were recognised. There was, however, a series of late layers within the courtyard containing fourth century pottery and coins (Kenyon 1948: 34) which might relate to the continued use of the building even if the function had changed. That at least a section of the baths remained standing into the late Roman period and beyond is indicated by the survival of the 'Jewry Wall' which was part of the unheated rooms of the baths. This was incorporated into a later church on the site (*ibid.*: 7) and still stands next to a church today. Although there is no direct evidence, this part of the baths may have functioned as a church or an administrative or judicial building in the late Roman period, especially since it later became the site of a medieval church. It is uncertain for how long other parts of the bathhouse remained standing with this wall and whether there were selective stages of demolition.

8.3.2 *London*

Excavations of the Huggin Hill baths in London (Diagram 79) have shown that at least the excavated areas had gone out of use by the mid-second century. This has sometimes been taken to indicate an early decline of the town despite the fact that there are likely to have been many other bathhouses (Marsden 1976: 20; Rowsome 1999: 269-70).[191] Despite the early demolition of some areas of the Huggin Hill baths, there is evidence that at least some of the walls remained standing throughout the Roman period and into the early medieval period. A

[191] One example recently found was at 172-176 The Highway, the site of the 'Babe Ruth' diner. It would have lain outside the walls of the Roman town and was in use from the second to the early-fifth century (MoLAS archive HGA02).

document of the ninth century records large standing masonry referred to as the Hwaetmundes stan in the area of the baths (T. Dyson 1978: 209). If this is connected with the baths, it would indicate that parts of the building survived to the end of the Roman period and beyond, although their function in the late Roman and post-Roman periods is unclear.[192] The excavations carried out by Marsden (1976) in the 1960s, and the later excavations in the 1980s (MoLAS DMT88), were not extensive enough to preclude the possibility of the continued existence of some walls to a late date.

8.3.3 *Wroxeter*

Like the 'Jewry Wall' in Leicester and the Hwaetmundes stan in London, the 'Old Work' at Wroxeter indicates that at least part of the public bath building remained standing and probably in use, although not necessarily for its original purpose, into the late and post-Roman period (Diagrams 101 and 104). Excavations have shown that the 'Old Work' formed part of the *frigidarium* which appears to have survived well beyond the collapse or demolition of other parts of the building (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138). Its survival, combined with its east-west orientation and evidence for a vaulted roof and late burials in the surrounding hypocausts, has led to the suggestion that it functioned as a church in the late Roman or early post-Roman periods (R. White and Barker 1998: 125). There are many other functions that the building could have performed including a meeting place of some other kind or a granary (*ibid.*). The structure would definitely appear to have been valued and in use in the fifth century and later, a theory supported by the fact that it was surrounded by numerous newly built timber structures at this time (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138-68).

8.3.4 *Other bathhouses*

At the Canterbury St. Margaret's Street bathhouse (Diagram 42) the excavation of part of the building showed clear alterations to its structure in the early part of the fourth century. The in-filling of the *piscina* with rubble was identified, along with the construction of a *laconicum* over the site, but by *c.* A.D. 350 this too was being put to another function (see section 9.2.2; K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 171, 188). The building was not demolished, raising the probability that much of it continued to have some kind of function. At Chichester (Diagram 51), dendrochronology of surviving oak timbers lining the cistern (main well) of the bathhouse indicates that it was still being used and repaired in the late-fourth century (Down 1988: 42).[193] There also appeared to be no evidence for abandonment, suggesting that the building

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[192] A land grant from Queenhithe of A.D. 889 refers to a market courtyard as an ancient stone building called Hwaetmundes stan. T. Dyson (1978: 209) has placed the area mentioned in this grant to the location of the Huggin Hill baths although there is no definite proof that the structure mentioned was that of the baths. Further excavation of the baths might be able to show that some parts remained standing beyond the demolition of others. It does, however, indicate that care must be taken in assuming that evidence for a demolished area represents the demolition of whole building.

[193] From the cistern water which would have been pumped into a tank, reaching the bathhouse through lead pipes (Down 1988: 42).

remained standing to at least the end of the Roman period (Down 1978: 152), although there had been much post-Roman robbing of the latest layers.

Late activity at the baths in Dorchester is indicated by the insertion of a hot tub in the late-fourth century but the overall size of the baths contracted (Keen 1977; J. Magilton pers. comm.).[194] Robbing of the plumbing and some structural features including tiles seems to have taken place in the early-fifth century (*ibid.*) but there is nothing to indicate that the shell of the building was not standing and in use to a later date, which is likely to be the case (Putnam 2007: 70-1). Similarly, at Exeter, although the *natatio* (open pool) and an excavated section of drain seem to have been in-filled in the late-third century, there is no evidence that the main building had gone out of use. It can be inferred that it continued into the fourth century and later (Bidwell 1979: 122; Exeter UAD record 10257).

The baths at Caerwent were not excavated to modern standards. However, coins of Constantius II (A.D. 337-61), Valens (A.D. 364-78) and Arcadius (A.D. 394-408), from the excavations, may suggest some kind of use of the structure at this time. Other baths where nothing is known about the later layers due to the nature of the excavations or the disturbance of the stratigraphy include the buildings at Lincoln (Diagram 72; Petch unpublished), Caistor-by-Norwich (Frere 1971) and Verulamium (Diagram 92; Niblett 2005a: 85-6). Without positive evidence for the demolition of the whole of these structures, however, it is likely that parts of them remained standing and in some kind of use to the end of the Roman period or beyond.

8.3.5 *Discussion*

Bathhouses are often perceived to be the public buildings that would have been the most desirable to maintain to a late date, at the expense of other buildings, because they were the most valued within the town (Liebeschuetz 2000: 39; R. White and Barker 1998: 88; Yegül 1992: 321). Evidence for early cases of demolition or abandonment, therefore, is taken as a clear marker of decline. In the Western Empire, the end of the use of bathhouses seems to have occurred earlier than in the East where some continued into the eighth century although on a reduced scale (Liebeschuetz 2000: 180; Yegül 1992: 315, 324-6). In Britain, the latest bathhouses seem to have lasted only until the early-fifth century and this fact is used to indicate an early decline of towns here. The rise of Christianity is sometimes given as a reason for the end of public baths since they were considered to be related to rituals of pagan religion with amoral connotations (Yegül 1992: 315). There is good evidence from parts of the Empire that baths, perhaps because of their compatible architecture and water-supply,

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[194] The excavations are in the process of being written-up for publication (J. Magilton pers. comm.).

were converted into churches, as in the case of the baths of Novatianus in Rome around A.D. 400 (Hansen 2003: 146; Thorpe 1995: 81).[195]

Viewing the disuse of the structures as baths as a symbol of decline may be simplistic, especially since there now appears to have been a preference across the Empire for small private bathhouses rather than public buildings (Liebeschuetz 2000: 30; Stirling 2001). It is also important to recognise that the buildings were often still valued once their bathing function had ceased, as discussed in section 7.3.2 in relation to Thébert's (2003) analysis of the late use of baths. These secondary uses must be taken into account when looking for the 'end' date of the buildings. There are some examples where parts of the bathhouses were used for different purposes whilst parts retained their original function.[196] Like the *forum-basilica*, the bathhouses were often hugely monumental structures and, as the 'Old Work' at Wroxeter indicates, in many cases, remains survived into the late Roman period and sometimes beyond.

8.4 Temples

A number of temples display structural alterations in the late Roman period indicating a change or continuation in use (table 8.3). Figure 8.3 shows that of the thirty-eight definite temples known within the towns, fifteen buildings had at least parts of the structures standing into the later-fourth and fifth centuries. A further five temples may have been standing, with there being insufficient evidence to be certain, and only three definitely appear to have been demolished by the fourth century. For a further fifteen known temples there is not enough evidence for an analysis of their structural condition in the late Roman period to be possible.

8.4.1 *Caerwent*

The temple at Caerwent, which was not built until around A.D. 330, was maintained throughout the fourth century, and into the fifth, with evidence for a number of late alterations (Diagram 40). These included the addition of a range of rooms to the inner side of the entrance hall suggesting that more space was needed for the activities taking place in the hall (Brewer 1993: 59). A coin of Valentinian (A.D. 364-75) was found beneath repair work to the foundations of one of the pilasters in the entrance hall (Brewer 1990: 79; 1993: 59). There have been various interpretations regarding the rôle of this entrance hall and rear range of rooms. Reece (pers. comm.) and Knight (1996: 36) have argued that the hall may have taken on the rôle of the *basilica*, after that had decayed, since it would have been more convenient

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[195] There is also known epigraphic evidence, although now lost, dated to A.D. 384 documenting that the bath building already had a congregation and clergy in its unmodified state (Webb 2000: 65) indicating that it was converted to a church before alterations to its structure. This might provide analogy for other bath buildings, and public buildings more generally, where textual evidence is lacking. There is also the issue of ownership in these cases where public buildings were taken over by the Church.

[196] At Leptiminus in North Africa, for example, one area of the bathhouse had a pottery kiln installed whilst the baths remained in use (Stirling 2001).

and economical to maintain.[197] The hall appears to remain in use into the fifth century although there is no definite evidence for its use and, as discussed in section 8.2.5, there are reasons to suggest that at least parts of the *forum-basilica* remained standing to a contemporary date.

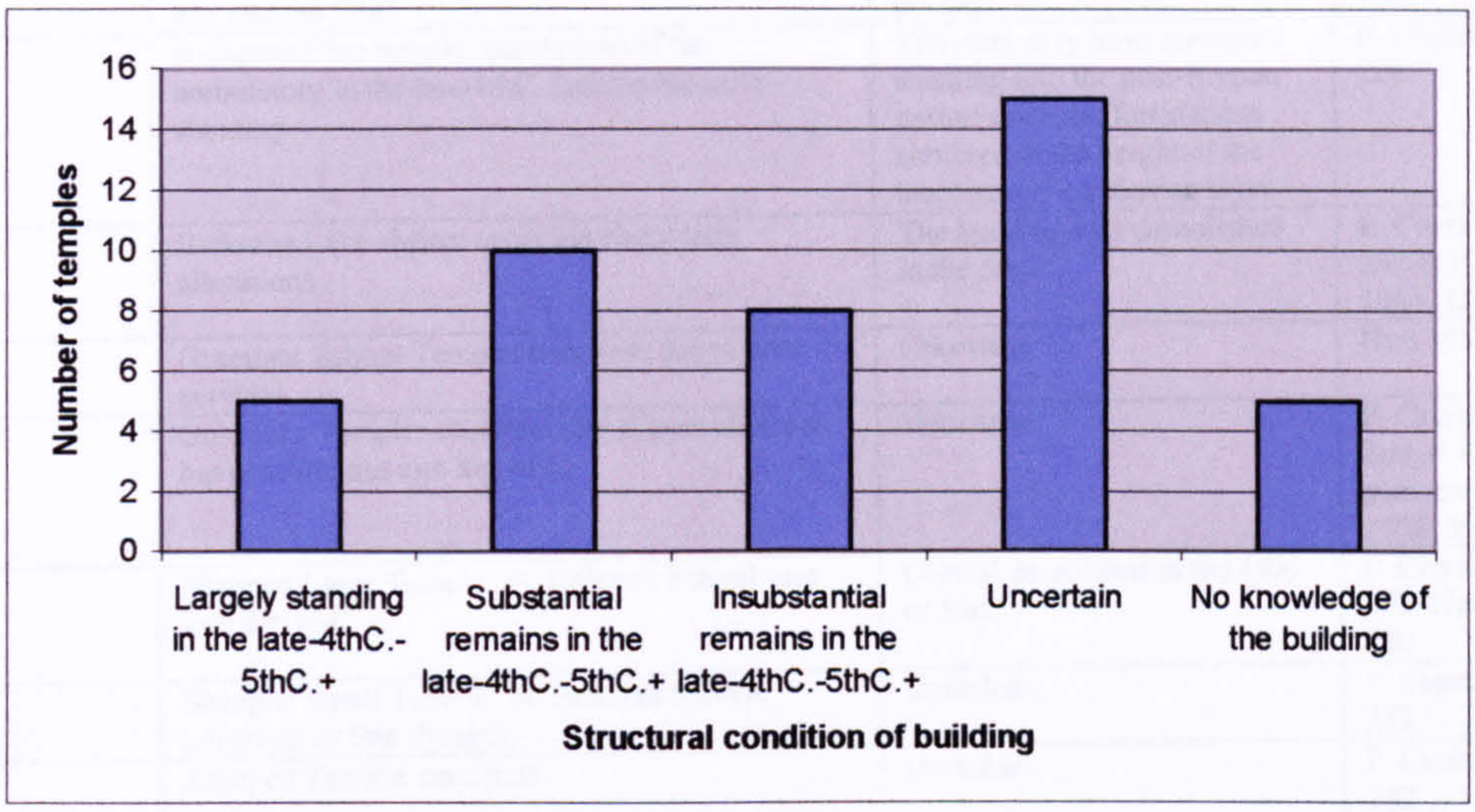

Figure 8.3: Graph showing the number of temples from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. These results correspond with thirteen temples that fall within data quality category 1, ten within category 2, three within category 3, nine within category 4 and eight within category 5.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Addition of a range of rooms to the inner side of the entrance hall of the temple and the construction of two half-domed niches in the 4thC.	Uncertain but remained standing into the 5thC.	Brewer 1990: 79; Brewer 1993: 59; Frere 1985: 260
	Possible external octagonal temple but little is known about it.	Uncertain	Hudd 1913: 447; Wacher 1995: 387
Caistor-by-Norwich	Temple A *insula* IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	Uncertain	Atkinson 1930: 99-102
	Temple B *insula* IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	Uncertain	Atkinson 1930: 99-102
	Extramural temple: no structural changes evident in the 3rdC. or 4thC. but the temple may have continued in use.	Uncertain	Gurney 1986
Canterbury	Central temple precinct: a new courtyard surface was laid in the 4thC. made out of reused stone.	Uncertain about demolition but use of the courtyard continued into the 5thC.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989; Frere 1977: 424
	Temple at St. Gabriel's chapel: construction of a timber building within a pre-temple 'townhouse'.	Demolition in the 4thC.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Driver *et al.* 1990: 89-91
	Temple at Gas Lane: uncertain due to disturbance.	Uncertain due to disturbance.	P. Bennett *et al.* 1982: 44
	Temple at Burgate Street: Built in the mid-3rdC.	Destroyed by the late-4thC.	Frere and Stow 1983: 41-9
Carmarthen	Temple built in the 1stC. but out of use by the	Demolition in the mid-2ndC.	H. James 1984: 51;

[197] Other interpretations have included priests' quarters and shops selling religious votive gifts and souvenirs (de la Bédoyère 1991; Wacher 1995: 386).

	2ndC.		H. James 2003: 150
Chelmsford	Octagonal temple built in the 4thC.	Demolition in the late-4thC. or early-5thC.	Wickendon 1992: 39-41, 141
Chichester	Very little known about the temples of Chichester.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	*Insula* VI building temple?: new floor surface in the courtyard laid in the 4thC. The corridor was paved with a tessellated floor of chequerboard pattern *c.* A.D. 330.	Use into the 5thC. but uncertain about the demolition.	Holbrook 1998: 134-5
Colchester	Temple of Claudius: structural alterations in the 4thC. now doubted but probable continuation of use into the 5thC.	The building was probably still standing into the Norman period.	Drury 1984; P. Crummy 1997: 120
	Balkerne Lane temple: demolition of the ambulatory in the late-4thC. leaving the *cella* standing.	The *cella* may have remained standing into the post-Roman period since the foundations survived to the height of the latest surviving Roman layer.	P. Crummy 1984: 125
	Balkerne Lane shrine: uncertain about later alterations.	The building was demolished in the 5thC.	P. Crummy 1980: 267-8; P. Crummy 1984: 124
	Grammar School Temple: uncertain due to poor survival.	Uncertain	Hull 1958: 236-8
	Gosbecks Temple: uncertain due to poor survival but possible use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 260; P. Crummy pers. comm.; Hull 1958: 264
	Sheepen Large Temple; St. Helena's School: use into the 4thC.	Careful demolition in the 4thC. or 5thC.	P. Crummy 1980: 252; Hull 1958: 230
	Sheepen Small Temple; St. Helena's School: uncertain or late changes.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain of later alterations; possibly out of use by the 4thC.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
Dorchester	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	Temple precinct: demolition in the 4thC. but then further construction on the site followed by a covering of metalling over the whole site.	Demolition after *c.* A.D. 370.	Heighway and Garrod 1980: 78; Heighway *et al.* 1979: 163
	Northgate Street temple: refloorings and structural alterations with some internal walls being converted to colonnades.	Date of demolition uncertain; use may have continued into the 5thC.	Hurst 1972: 65
Leicester	St. Nicholas Circle temple: little evidence for structural changes but use continued into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Wacher 1995: 359; D. Wilson 1970: 286
Lincoln	Lower town temple complex: little is known	Uncertain	Stocker 2003
London	Temple of Mithras: structural alterations in the 4thC. included the removal of the columns which had divided the nave from the aisles.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or left to decay.	Henig 1998: Shepherd 1998: 84; Perring 1991a: 115
	Riverside temple complex: possibly out of use by the 3rdC. or it may have continued in use when the remains from the first complex was used to build a new complex.	Demolition of components of the structure in the 3rdC. There is some evidence for the robbing of rebuilt parts in the late-4thC.	T. Williams 1993: 11, 27, 32
	Tabard square temples, Southwark: they may have remained standing into the 4thC. The deposition of a dedicatory plaque in the 4thC. might suggest that the temples had changed use or were demolished. Deposition here might also indicate that the religious nature of the area was still recognised.	Not completely certain but possibly in the 4thC.	Durrani 2004
Silchester	*Insula* VII temple: uncertain about late phases.	Uncertain	G. Fox and St. John Hope 1894: 206-9
	Insula XXX temple precinct: uncertain about later structural changes although probably continued in use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 155-156; G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890: 744-9
	Insula XXXV temple: uncertain.	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 153; St. John Hope 1908: 206-8
	Insula XXXVI temple: uncertain but probable	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 153

	continuation of use into the 4thC.		
Verulamium	*Insula* XVI temple: 2 wings were added in the 3rdC. and in the later 4thC. the east gate was demolished and a new gateway constructed on the west.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or decayed naturally.	Niblett 1993: 91; Kenyon 1935: 241; Lowther 1937: 33-4
	Triangular temple: repairs to floors in the 3rdC. and continuation of use into the 4thC.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or decayed naturally.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 117
	Folly Lane temple: largely fallen into decay by the 3rdC. but may have continued in use.	The absence of building material may suggest that it was deliberately demolished but uncertain of date.	Niblett 1999: 71, 417
Winchester	The use of the temple ceased in the 3rdC.	Demolition in the 3rdC.	Biddle 1975: 299
Wroxeter	Uncertain of structural changes although use may have continued into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Bushe-Fox 1914: 9
York	Wellington Row ?temple: extension in the 3rdC. and then use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 112-4; Ottaway 1999: 147; Whyman 2001

Table 8.3: Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the temples in each town.

8.4.2 *Colchester*

At the Balkerne Lane temple in Colchester (Diagram 59) there is evidence for differential robbing activities. The ambulatory of the temple was completely robbed, including its foundations, in the late Roman period (P. Crummy 1984: 125), but the foundations of the *cella* survived to the height of the latest Roman layers, indicating that it was only after abandonment of the building that these walls were demolished or had collapsed. It would appear that the *cella* stood in isolation in the fourth century, which might indicate a different function; the excavator suggested a church (*ibid.*) but its continuation as a temple or another use is also quite possible.

Little is known of the Temple of Claudius in Colchester (Diagram 57) but some of its walls are visible within the cellars of the medieval castle. Studying the known evidence and plan, mainly from excavations in the 1930s, Drury (1984) suggested that there was evidence for a 2m thick wall built across the front of the temple in the fourth century and also for the demolition of the temple façade. He suggested that this created a long and narrow space with an apse; a church being formed by the conversion of the building. The latest coins on the site were of Valentinian II (A.D. 382-93) and Theodosius I (A.D. 379-95) and pottery found dated up to A.D. 360-70. Excavations in 1996 beneath the castle in the supposed location of the wall, however, failed to support these earlier findings, arguing that this had merely been a hypothetical projection (P. Crummy 1997: 120; pers. comm.) but the building appears to have remained standing.[198]

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[198] According to Crummy (*ibid.*), however, this need not necessarily mean that the function of the building did not change in the later Roman period as suggested by a piece of pottery with a *chi-rho* symbol found in the 1996 excavations. Although one piece of pottery on its own, of course, cannot indicate the function of the building.

8.4.3 *Verulamium*

Another example of a temple where a conversion to a church has been suggested is the *insula* XVI temple in the centre of Verulamium near the theatre (Diagram 93), although the excavations of this structure took place in the 1930s. Lowther (1937: 33-4) suggested that at around A.D. 400, indicated by coins of the House of Theodosius, a new gateway to the building was constructed in the centre of the colonnade on the west side of the temple. This western gateway appeared to replace the earlier eastern entrance (*ibid.*) and therefore might indicate a change in orientation of the building. Although this need not equate with its conversion to a church, it would indicate that the building remained in some kind of use into the fifth century and possibly beyond.

8.4.4 *Canterbury*

At Canterbury, the small excavated areas of the central temple precinct (Diagram 46) indicate that demolition and robbing of the precinct portico and levelling of at least some internal buildings took place in the fourth century; the area was covered by a new courtyard surface on which were many fourth century coins (see section 12.3.1; unpublished excavations, P. Bennett pers. comm.; Frere 1977: 424). The new surface indicates that the area continued to be important within the town centre. The other temples known at Canterbury are only partially excavated and many have been badly disturbed. The temple at Gas Lane has coins dating to A.D. 330-40 in disturbed layers (P. Bennett *et al.* 1982: 44) but there is nothing to indicate that it was demolished and it may have remained standing to a later date. The Burgate Street temple (Diagram 48) has late-fourth century pottery in its demolition layer (Frere and Stow 1983: 47) but this need not necessarily indicate the date at which the building was destroyed since the act of demolition can disturb earlier layers.

8.4.5 *London*

At London, masonry of the riverside temple complex (see 7.3.6) was incorporated into later buildings on the site and elsewhere, indicating that it had been destroyed by the end of the third century (T. Williams 1993: 11, 27). The monumental nature of the structures that were then built on the site may, however, suggest a continuation rather than change in use (*ibid.*: 28-9). At the temple of Mithras there are alterations to the structure in the fourth century with the removal of the columns which had separated the nave from the aisles, apparently creating a larger open space (Diagrams 81 and 82; Shepherd 1998: 84). This appears to have coincided with the burial of many religious sculptures within the building. The definite function of the structure is uncertain[199] but it remained standing into at least the sixth century (*ibid.*: 97).

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[199] The presence of a sculpture of Bacchus led Henig (1998) to suggest that the building had now become a *bacchium*. Croxford's (2003) analysis of the material from this building, however, suggested that the large number of sculptures found in the

Internal alterations to the building in the late fourth century, creating a more open space, suggest that many people were still using it.

8.4.6 *Other towns*

Late phases of temples from the other towns in the study have not survived well. These include the temples at Caistor-by-Norwich (Atkinson 1930; Gurney 1986), Wroxeter (Diagram 108; Bushe-Fox 1914) and Leicester (Diagram 69; D. Wilson 1970: 286), although there were some late-fourth century coins from this latter site. At Winchester, the temple was demolished in the third century (Biddle 1975: 299). No temples have been identified with certainty at Cirencester, although the enigmatic monumental building in *insula* VI, of which only a small area has been excavated (Diagram 56; Holbrook 1998: 135-8) may have been one. Results from this site, including well worn coins of *c.* A.D. 400, indicate that it remained standing into at least the fifth century (*ibid.*: 135-8).

At Gloucester, there is an equally problematic building excavated at 63-71 Northgate Street (Diagram 65) which, it has been argued, functioned as a temple. The excavations indicated floor resurfacings sealing coins of the fourth century and changes to the internal walls, these seemingly being converted into arcades or colonnades in a later period (Hurst 1972: 65). This would demonstrate use well into the fourth century and perhaps beyond.[200]

8.4.7 *Discussion*

The use of temple buildings in the Roman period was variable, with many activities taking place within and around them (Stambaugh 1978). Their function in the late Roman period is likely to have been equally complex, so it is simplistic to rely on historical documents such as the Theodosian Code, banning the use of temples for pagan religion and ordering their preservation for alternative use, to date the end of use of the buildings (see section 6.3.3 for these code entries). There are well known examples in Rome where temples were converted into churches (Hansen 2003; Webb 2000)[201] but there is very limited evidence in Britain for such use of these structures. Heijmans (2006: 27-8) has recently emphasised (see chapter 13) that there are only a very few definite examples of temples in Gaul that were converted into churches and that the process was less common than is usually assumed;[202] this is likely also for Britain.

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excavations indicated that they had been collected together from other places and brought to the building. He doubts whether any of the sculptures can be used to describe a definite use of the building although clearly something was going on here.

[200] Rural temples demonstrate similar complex evidence for late use, often beyond apparent evidence for their structural decay, including such important sites as Hayling Island (Downey *et al.* 1979) and Uley (A. Woodward and Leach 1993).

[201] Examples include the temple of Fortuna Virilis which became the church of Santa Maria ad Gradellis between A.D. 872 and 880 and the church of San Nicola was constructed in the *Forum Boarium* out of the parts of three adjoining temples (Hansen 2003: 182).

[202] Where it does occur there is, of course, the issue of who owned the temples and how they became properties of the Church but this would be very difficult to determine without good documentary evidence.

The location of temples within the townscape and wider surroundings (*cf.* Esmonde Cleary 2005; Fulford 1999), often on sites that had already been used for religious activity (*e.g.* the temple precinct in Canterbury, P. Bennett 1981, and the temples at Gosbecks and Sheepen in Colchester, P. Crummy 1980), may also be an important reason why some of the sites remained in use. It is necessary, then, not to see evidence for structural decay as always indicating the end of the value of a site.

8.5 Spectacle buildings

In many cases in Britain, the amphitheatres and theatres remained standing into the late Roman period and beyond, continuing as monuments in the landscape, and there is often evidence for some kind of activity within them. Figure 8.4 and table 8.4 show that seven of the known structures were standing into the later-fourth and fifth centuries, whilst the circumstances surrounding a further seven examples are uncertain. Only one building appears to have been demolished at an earlier date. The fact that many of these structures survived as visible earthworks into the twenty-first century indicates that they will have continued to impact on people within these landscapes. They remained important structures regardless of whether they continued to be used as spectacle buildings.

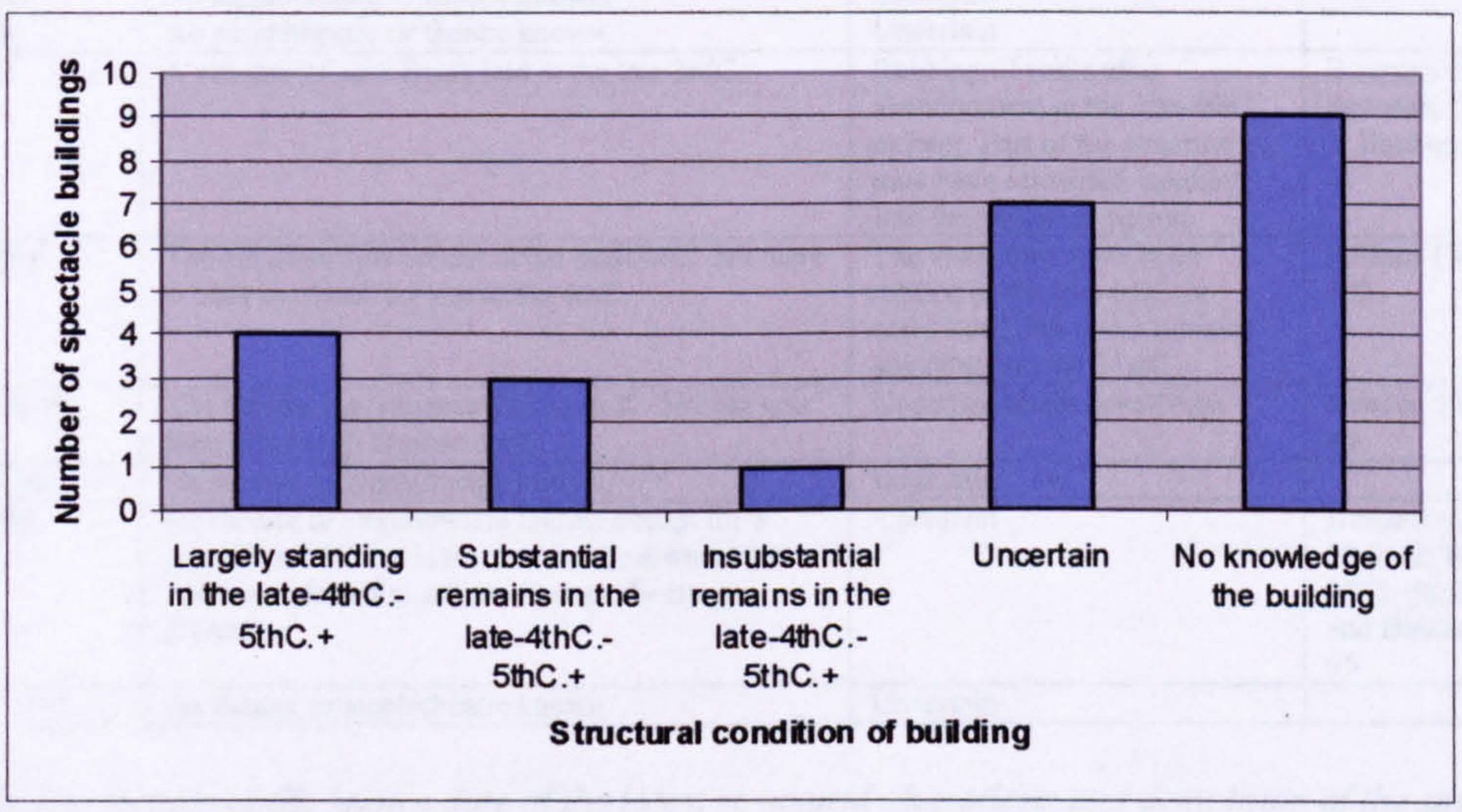

Figure 8.4: Graph showing the number of spectacle buildings from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. This corresponds well with the analysis of the data quality table where in thirteen cases little or nothing is known about the structure. Four cases fall within category 1 and five within categories 2, 3 and 4.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Possible evidence for an amphitheatre but the known traces are problematic.	Uncertain	Ashby *et al.* 1904: 104-5; Wacher

			1995: 388
Caistor-by-Norwich	Amphitheatre known through aerial photography but unexcavated.	Uncertain	Maxwell and Wilson 1987: 42
Canterbury	The theatre was rebuilt in the early-3rdC. but it is uncertain if it was still is use in the 4thC.	The structure remained standing into the medieval period but had been demolished or robbed by A.D. 1200.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Frere 1970
Carmarthen	Amphitheatre known but little has been excavated.	Uncertain	H. James 2003: 18-9; Wacher 1995: 392-3
Chelmsford	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Chichester	Very limited information known about the amphitheatre.	Uncertain but has remained a visible earthwork into the 21stC.	G. White 1936: 157-8
Cirencester	Amphitheatre: alterations to the northeast entrance and the interior during the 5thC.	Uncertain but remained standing into the 5thC. and a visble earthwork into the 21stC.	Holbrook 1998: 169-71; unpublished site record book CIR 62 N
	Theatre: very little known about the structure and its interpretation is problematic.	Uncertain	Holbrook 1998: 142-5
Colchester	Theatre in *insula* XIII but little is known about its later history.	Uncertain but no material dated to the 4thC. in the excavations.	P. Crummy 1982
	Gosbecks theatre rebuilt in stone in the mid-2ndC. but demolition in the 3rdC.	Demolition some time in the 3rdC.	Dunnett 1971a: 31-43; Hull 1958: 269
	Circus possibly built in the 2ndC. but very little known about the structure.	Uncertain but it possibly remained standing, at least in part, into the post-Roman period.	P. Crummy 2005: 275
Dorchester	Alterations to the entrance and interior during the late-3rdC. and 4thC.	Some of the superstructure may have been demolished or robbed although there remains a large earthwork into the 21stC.	Bradley 1975: 56-8, 78-9
Exeter	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Leicester	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Lincoln	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
London	A number of new floors laid in the late-3rdC.	Robbing of walls after abandonment in the late-4thC. or later. Part of the structure may have remained standing into the medieval period.	Bateman 1997: 68; Bateman 1998: 52-3; Bateman 2000: 41
Silchester	The structure was rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. but there is little evidence for use in the 4thC.	The walls may have been robbed in the late-4thC. or early-5thC. but much remains standing into the 21stC.	Fulford 1989: 58, 192
Verulamium	The theatre was reconstructed *c.* A.D. 300 but was then filled with organic earth.	Uncertain about demolition.	Kenyon 1935: 239-40
Winchester	No theatre or amphitheatre known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	No theatre or amphitheatre known except for a possible enclosure in the west of the town which may have served as a type of amphitheatre or theatre.	Uncertain	Bushe-Fox 1916: 20-2; G. Webster 1975: 58; R. White and Barker 1998: 95
York	No theatre or amphitheatre known.	Uncertain	

Table 8.4: Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the spectacle buildings in each town.

8.5.1 *Dorchester*

Excavations at the amphitheatre in Dorchester took place in the early-twentieth century but were written-up and published in the 1970s (Diagram 61; Bradley 1975). This means that some of the evidence may be problematic but the available data does indicate that there were some structural changes made to the building in the late Roman period. Bradley (*ibid.*: 78)

suggested that this took place after the structure had ceased to function as an amphitheatre but this is difficult to prove with certainty since there is little direct evidence for the use of the structure in any period (see section 7.3.5).

Analysis of the early excavations suggested structural alterations, including the erosion of the seating banks in the early-fourth century and the end of use of the east and west recesses. The wall of the south recess was knocked through to create a new entrance to the arena, which suggests that it was still in some kind of use. The northern entrance also appears to have been rebuilt, there being evidence for what are described as 'rustic pedestals', each consisting of Purbeck marble fragments (*ibid.*: 56-8). There is some evidence that accompanying these two features were post-holes and a line of timber uprights, which might indicate that they continued to form some kind of gateway. The dating evidence is limited but a sherd of New Forest Ware found within one of the post-holes, and coins of Carausius (A.D. 286-93) and Constantine I (A.D. 306-12) found in the silt cut by the timber features suggest a fourth century date (*ibid.*). The surviving evidence does not allow any interpretation of function but what can be inferred is that people continued to come to the building and perhaps to congregate here.

8.5.2 *Cirencester*

Late structural changes to the entrance of the amphitheatre have also been identified (Diagram 55). The second half of the fourth century saw the demolition of the masonry passage walls and covering vault at the northeast entrance and metalled surfaces being laid down over the remains (Holbrook 1998: 166). The southeast and northeast chambers were also demolished, but the arena wall was rebuilt. A coin of A.D. 270, which lay in the latest floor level of the southwest chamber, provides a *terminus post quem* date for the demolition of this chamber, whilst the latest coins associated with the rebuilding of the arena wall dated to the period A.D. 330-48 (*ibid.*). Probably in the early-fifth century, stone blocks narrowed the entrance passage into the arena; a coin of A.D. 383-7 was found in a layer beneath the stones (*ibid.*: 169). Without more evidence it is not possible to know whether this indicates a greater need for security, but it does demonstrate that the building was still in use at this time.

8.5.3 *Other towns*

Other amphitheatres that have been excavated relatively recently are London (Bateman 1998) and Silchester (Fulford 1989) but there is not the same evidence here for architectural changes made to the buildings in the late Roman period. The structures did, however, remain standing into the post-Roman period. The date of demolition of the London amphitheatre is not precisely known although coins in some of the robber trenches suggest a date after A.D. 367 (Bateman 1998: 52-3; 2000: 41), indicating destruction in the late-fourth century or later

(Diagram 80), as the robber trenches may only represent partial robbing in the late Roman period. Remains of the amphitheatre at Silchester survive today. Excavations indicate that in the medieval period it first appears to have contained a single-aisled hall, but by the twelfth century it was being used as a fortification (Fulford 1989: 193-5).[203]

At Canterbury, the theatre has not been excavated beyond a small number of minor trenches (Frere 1970) but it is clear that it remained a significant monument influencing the street-grid and not being robbed until after the Norman Conquest. At Colchester, the theatre at Gosbecks (Diagram 60) seems to have been demolished in the third century (Dunnett 1971a: 41) but the theatre within the town may have remained standing into the post-Roman period (P. Crummy 1982) although very little is known about it. Nothing is known about the later use of the circus outside Colchester because of limited excavations and poor dating evidence (P. Crummy 2005).

Similarly, the amphitheatre at Chichester was only very partially excavated in the 1930s (G. White 1936). Claims that it was demolished in the second or third century were based on the lack of later pottery, but as very few sherds were uncovered these conclusions are problematic. There is no evidence for the demolition of the theatre at Verulamium but structural analysis suggests that it remained a monumental feature in the town into the fifth century and later (Kenyon 1935). This building has received attention because of the late 'dark earth' material and large number of late coins from within the structure which may indicate its continued use (see chapter 11).

8.5.4 *Discussion*

As noted in chapter 7, there are particular problems in understanding the function of theatres and amphitheatres in Britain, and they may well have had a variety of uses, including religious ceremonies, throughout the Roman Period, making specifically late use difficult to show. Temples have been identified associated with theatres and amphitheatres at Caistor-by-Norwich (Maxwell and Wilson 1987: 42), Verulamium (Niblett 2005a: 102) and Gosbecks, Colchester (Hull 1958: 279).[204]

Interpretations of the late use and structural change of amphitheatres in Britain usually include suggestions they were made into defensible refuges because of threats of invasion and violence at this time (*cf.* Fulford 1989: 194; Wacher 1975: 314). There is some evidence from

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[203] Military sites do not form the focus of this study but recent excavations of the amphitheatre at Chester have produced some important results. At least two of its entrances were deliberately walled up in the latest Roman period perhaps in the early-fifth century. This might indicate some kind of defensive structure (Ainsworth and Wilmott 2005: 8). A timber structure was discovered within the arena which has been interpreted as an early post-Roman hall possibly indicating a power base here (*ibid.*: 7-8).

[204] Ainsworth and Wilmott (2005: 8) have discussed the fact that the royal church of St. John's at Chester was established in the seventh century next to the site of the amphitheatre and that this may have been linked with memories and traditions of Christian martyrs and a power base within the amphitheatre. If this was the case then there was a continuation in the religious significance of this place not only from Christian times but probably also from the earlier Roman and pre-Roman periods.

the Continent to support this idea although, there, amphitheatres were converted to strong points incorporated into town walls, which does not appear to have happened in Britain.[205] The amphitheatres at Dorchester (Bradley 1975: 78-9) and Cirencester (Holbrook 1998: 169-71) which are most often considered to have been refuges were not part of the walls. In Britain there is much less evidence surviving for activity within the amphitheatres at this time compared with on the Continent.[206]

It is thought that amphitheatres may have gone out of use because of the Christian condemnation of gladiatorial combat and the centres of paganism they represented (Bomgardner 2000: 201-2). Where there is evidence that the games continued to the sixth century, especially in Rome, Italy and the East (*ibid*: 197-220),[207] this implies there was a benefactor able to pay for them; no evidence exists for this in Britain. On the Continent there is evidence that some amphitheatres retained religious and public rôles after their use for games ceased.[208] No inscriptions survive for Britain, but from the archaeology it can be said that in many cases the amphitheatres remained standing into the late Roman period. The evidence assessed here indicates that they continued to frame spaces and activities that took place within and around them.

8.6 *Macella*

Less is known about *macella* in towns than other public buildings (figure 8.5 and table 8.5; see Section 7.3.3 for a discussion on this) but where they have been identified they do appear to have continued to a late date, which might indicate continued market functions within the town. The evidence for the function of these buildings is limited and is explored further in the following chapters. Pits containing food and craft waste have come from late phases of the *macellum* at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 55-7) and glass-working waste from the *macellum* at Leicester (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 362). There is also evidence for timber structures built within and around public buildings in the late Roman period which have produced evidence for market activity (see chapter 10), indicating market activities taking place in locations other than *macella*.[209] At Verulamium, alterations to the *macellum* in the late-third to fourth century included the addition of two central walls with piers which divided the building into three aisles (Diagram 94). There is no definite evidence for the

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[205] See sections 13.2.2.1 and 13.2.2.2 with examples including Amiens in *Gallia Belgica* (Bayard and Massy 1983: 222) and Tours in *Gallia Lugdunensis* (Knight 2001: 61).

[206] At Nîmes, *Gallia Narbonensis*, structures were built within the amphitheatre (Monteil 1999: 432-3). In Spain, too, there is evidence for buildings and other activities within some theatres and amphitheatres in the later Roman period, such as at Italica (Rodríguez Gutiérrez 2004) and Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*), where there were many market buildings (Casal and Gascó 1993: 103), though these do not seem to be related to a security issue. In Britain there is far less evidence for similar activity.

[207] Bomgardner (2000: 219) discusses evidence, for example, of chariot races in the amphitheatre at Constantinople in the sixth century and repairs and use of the Colosseum in Rome, also in the sixth century.

[208] An inscription from Tarragona (*Tarraco*), for example, indicates its repair by the Emperor Constantine (Dupré Raventós 2004: 69-72) but by the sixth century a *basilica* was built within the arena (*ibid.*) indicating religious activity – whether this was also a continuation from pagan ceremonies is uncertain.

[209] Market activities, of course, will have taken place in many locations including open areas (*e.g.* Heybridge, Essex), late pre-Roman period open places and Roman *fora*.

demolition of this building in the Roman period and there remains the possibility that it continued to stand into post-Roman times (Niblett 2005a: 105).

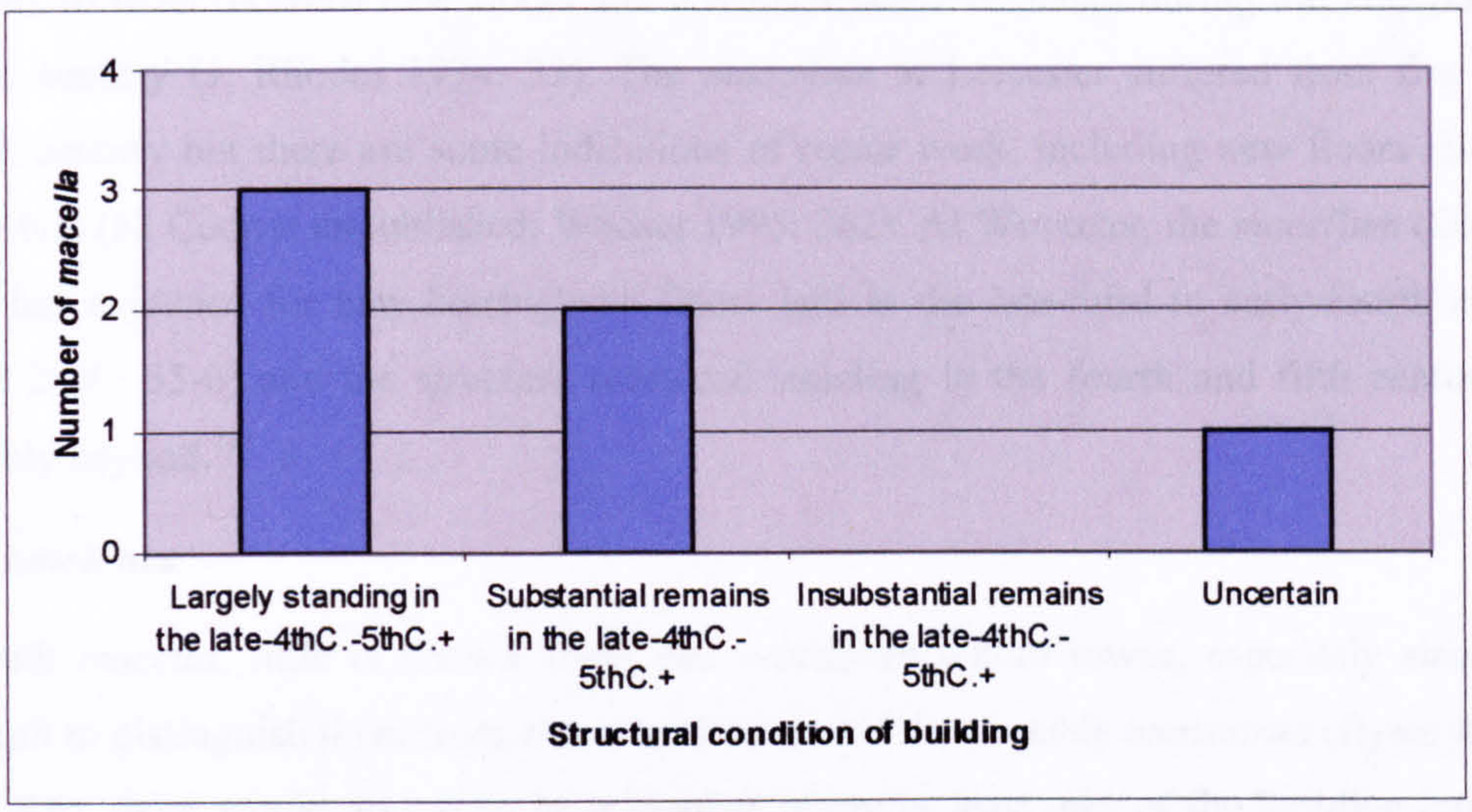

Figure 8.5: Graph showing the number of known macella *where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. Of the very few* macella *identified or suggested within towns, two fall within category 1, two within category 2, one within category 3 and one within category 5.*

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Caistor-by-Norwich	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Canterbury	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Carmarthen	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Chelmsford	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Chichester	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	Structural alterations in the 3rdC. and 4thC. and continuation of use into the 5thC.	It is uncertain whether or when the structure was demolished.	Holbrook 1998: 186
Colchester	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	New floors and reconstruction of the verandah in the 3rdC. or 4thC.	It is uncertain whether the structure was demolished.	J. Rhodes 1974: 33
Leicester	Fire destroyed some of the building in the late-4thC. but there is evidence for the continuation of activity in some parts.	Fire damaged occurred in the late-4thC. but it was not demolished.	N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 362
Lincoln	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
London	*Macellum* remains problematic.	Uncertain	
Silchester	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Verulamium	Structural alterations occurred in the late-3rdC. to 4thC. including the addition of two central walls with piers which divided the building into 3 aisles.	Demolition is uncertain; it may have remained standing into the post-Roman period.	Niblett 2005a: 105
Winchester	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	Repairs and new floors were laid in the 3rdC.	Destruction and robbing possibly took place in the 4thC.	Ellis 2000: 57-8
York	No *macellum* known.	Uncertain	

Table 8.5: Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the macella *in each town.*

At Cirencester, use of the *insula* II structure continued into the fifth century with new floors and structural changes (Holbrook 1998: 183-5). Another possible *macellum* at Gloucester appears to have received new floors and a reconstructed verandah during the late-third and fourth century (J. Rhodes 1974: 33). The *macellum* at Leicester suffered from fire in the fourth century but there are some indications of repair work, including new floors laid over the débris (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 362). At Wroxeter, the *macellum* (Diagram 104) has evidence for new herringbone floors laid in the late-third to early-fourth century (Ellis 2000: 55-6) and the structure remained standing in the fourth and fifth century and possibly beyond.[210]

8.7 *Mansiones*

As with *macella*, little is known about the *mansiones* within towns, especially since it is difficult to distinguish them from courtyard houses. Of the possible *mansiones* (figure 8.6 and table 8.6), there would appear to be a number where at least part of the building remained standing into the fifth century and beyond, including the Leicester Vine Street building (Diagram 70) and the Chelmsford, Southwark (London; Diagram 83), Silchester and Verulamium buildings (Diagram 95). There is insufficient data on the *mansiones* in Aldborough, Canterbury and Carmarthen to be certain about their late use. Parts of the *mansio* at Southwark (Diagram 83) appear to have been demolished in the early-fourth century, but other parts of the structure (mostly beyond the limits of the excavation) seem to have remained standing and in use to a much later date (Cowan 1992: 60-1).

Like temples, which often had more functions than the purely religious, (see discussion in 7.3.6), *mansiones* had a number of rôles adding complexity to understanding their use in the late Roman period. If *mansiones* did take on some formal functions of local government, as argued by Black (1995: 94; see section 7.3.4), then this rôle may have become more signficant in the late Roman period in some towns if the *basilica* was no longer used for such functions.

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[210] Regarding the fortress site at Chester, one interpretation of the monumental elliptical building is a *macellum*. This building began to be built around the A.D. 70s but was not completed until the third century after a break in construction (Mason 2000: 109-33). The structure consisted of an oval court surrounded by a portico and twelve rooms. Changes to the building indicate that it remained in use into the fifth century (*ibid.*: 146). The design of the building, however, has led to other interpretations of the function including an *imago mundi* and theatre (*ibid.*: 18-47). There is no definite evidence for the use of the building but its unique design may suggest that the market function was combined with other uses.

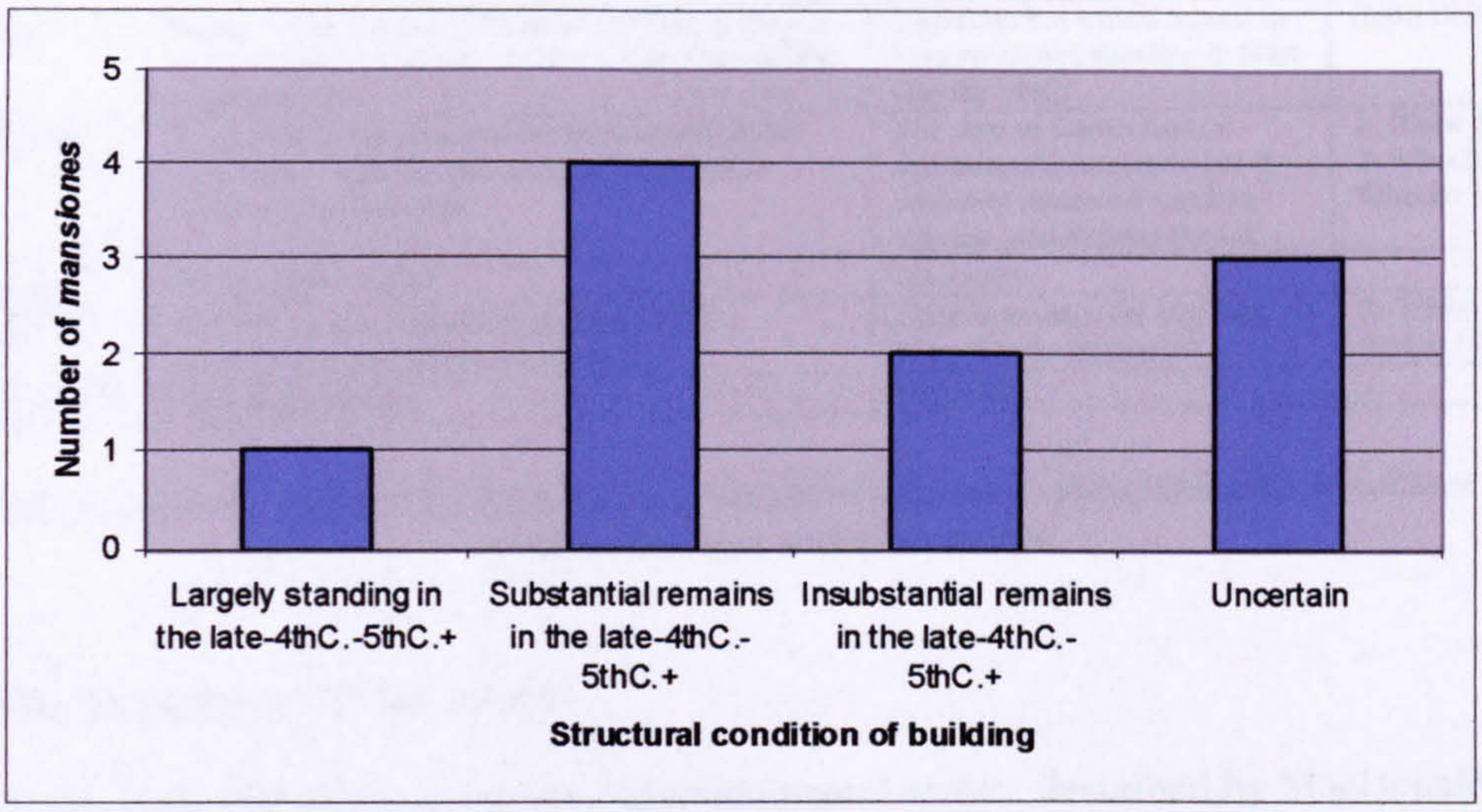

Figure 8.6: Graph showing the number of known mansiones *where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond. Of the examples where some possible trace of a* mansio *is known or has been suggested, four fall within data quality category 1, one within category 2, one within category 4 and five within category 5.*

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	Very little is known of the structure due to the small scale of the excavation in the 19thC.	Uncertain	North Yorkshire SMR number MNY 11278
Brough-on-Humber	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Caistor-by-Norwich	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Canterbury	There is a possible *mansio* on the Tannery site but very little is known about it.	Uncertain due to the very small area excavated.	P. Blockley 1987: 314
Carmarthen	Changes evident in the 3rdC.	Evidence for robbing of the walls in the early-4thC. and reuse of the site in the A.D. 350s although other parts of the site may have remained standing.	H. James 2003: 201-3
Chelmsford	There is evidence for rebuilding and repairs in the late-3rdC. and early-4thC.	Evidence for destruction and robbing but possibly not until the early-5thC.	Drury 1988: 34
Chichester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Colchester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Leicester	Possible *mansio* building at Vine Street and it appears to have structural changes well into the fourth century and possibly later.	Uncertain of date of demolition or destruction but appears to be in the post-Roman period.	T. Higgins pers. comm.
Lincoln	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
London	Old Bailey Site: possible *mansio* built on the site of an earlier building in the 3rdC.	Possibly demolished in the mid-4thC. with the latest coin on the site being A.D. 335-41.	Bateman 1998: 56; MoLAS archive VAL88
	Southwark Street: evidence for rebuilding and structural alterations in the 3rdC. and into the 4thC.	Part of the building was demolished and robbed in the earlier 4thC. but other parts appear to have remained standing much later and possibly into the post-Roman period.	Cowan 1992: 53-61

Silchester	*Mansio* within *insula* VIII although little is known about the phases of activity due to early date of the excavations.	Uncertain but would appear to have remained standing at least into the 4thC.	Boon 1974: 81
Verulamium	The structure appears to have been altered in the early-4thC. with the extension of rooms and a tripartite entrance hall.	The date of destruction or demolition is uncertain but it probably remained standing into the post-Roman period.	E. Black 1995: 81-2; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 95
Winchester	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	Possible *mansio* identified through aerial photography and geophysical survey.	Uncertain since the building has not been excavated.	R. White and Barker 1998: 75
York	No *mansio* known.	Uncertain	

Table 8.6: Details showing the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the known mansiones *within each town.*

8.8 The 'armatures' of the towns

The town walls and gates, porticoes and monumental arches, described by MacDonald (1986) as the 'armatures' of the town, were also important public monuments. They would have played an integral rôle by helping to link the public buildings and control movement around the towns. Events such as the blocking of town gates and the spread of activity into the porticoes could be construed as representing decline, as the Classical organisation of the city was no longer being followed (*cf. ibid.*: 117-8). Decline need not be the only interpretation, however, especially considering the contemporary evidence for the continued use of other public buildings within the town.

8.8.1 *Town walls and gates*

Many of the defensive circuits around Romano-British towns were constructed earlier than in other provinces (see sections 13.2.2.1 and 13.3.2.1) and began as earthworks. They were then replaced with stone walls that usually followed the same circuits rather than reducing the size of the enclosed area, as often occurred in late Roman Gaul. Mattingly (2006a: 332) has suggested that the continued importance of these large enclosed areas might indicate links with memories of a proto-urban past in Britain. Other authors have also raised the possibility that Roman town walls might invoke the past of *oppida,* with the size of the enclosed area having more to do with Iron Age notions of power and display than with the desire to be seen as Roman (*e.g.* R. White and Gaffney 2003: 231; Wigley 2005).[211] This may also relate to the need for large open gatherings and sales of produce and livestock as part of the function of these sites.

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[211] Like *oppida*, in some cases the walls enclosed watery areas, including floodplains and marshland, which might seem impracticable for occupation purposes. As mentioned in chapter 5, for example, excavations in the western and southwestern parts of Canterbury uncovered evidence that large areas were flooded and uninhabitable from the early-third century onwards (Pratt and Sweetinburgh 2004). At Cirencester, a low-lying area within the walls, known as Watermoor, is still liable to flood today and does not seem to have had much occupation in the Roman period (J. Paddock pers. comm.); a geophysical survey of Wroxeter also seems to suggest that the northeast part of the town where the Bell Brook flowed was not densely occupied (White and Gaffney 2003: 231). Like medieval towns (Schofield and Vince 1994: 187-8), both *oppida* and Roman towns are also likely to have had open spaces where crops were grown and animals were kept.

In a few cases there is evidence from the late Roman period that town gates were blocked (table 8.7); this has traditionally been explained in terms of increased insecurity and economic decline (*e.g.* Ashby *et al.* 1904: 92). The example of the Ridingate at Canterbury, however, indicates that despite the blocking of part of the gateway in the late-third century (P. Blockley 1989: 130), the use of the structure continued. At Caerwent and Silchester there is some structural evidence for blocked gates (*e.g.* Ashby 1906: 111-2; G. Fox and St. John Hope 1894: 237) as there also is at Colchester with the Balkerne Gate (P. Crummy 1984: 122-3).

Rather than being signs of the decline of order and civilisation, the alterations to gates represent changes in the organisation of space, and as such are similar to changes to monumental arches, porticoes and colonnades: certainly at all of these towns there is still considerable evidence for activity at the time of the changes in the late-third and fourth centuries.

Town	Gate	Evidence for blocking	Date	References
Caerwent	South Gate	Blocking with a well-built and mortared stone face.	Late-3rdC.	Ashby 1906: 111-2
	North Gate	Blocked when the gate was already ruinous and included reused material.	4thC. to 5thC.	Ashby *et al.* 1904: 92
Canterbury	Ridingate	South carriageway blocked and the space used for metalworking.	Late-4thC.	K. Blockley 1986; P. Blockley 1989: 130
Colchester	Balkerne Gate	Demolition of the monumental arch along with part of the northern footway and then the construction of a thick wall filling the gap.	Uncertain but probably late Roman.	P. Crummy 1984: 122-3
Silchester	South Gate	Rubble found between the in-turns of the gate.	Uncertain	Fulford 1984: 75
	South-East Gate	The rear face of the blocking within the gate has survived and indicates courses of flints and *tegulae*.	Uncertain but probably late Roman.	Fulford 1984: 76
	West Gate	Fragments of stonework were found by the West Gate especially associated with the south carriageway.	4thC. to 5thC.	G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890: 756-7; Fulford 1984: 75
Verulamium	Chester Gate	A thick layer of burnt material containing roof-tile suggesting a partial destruction of the gate.	Late-4thC.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 70
	London Gate	Extensively robbed.	4thC.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 66-7

Table 8.7: Details of the town gates known to have been blocked or demolished in the late Roman period. The state of our knowledge of the town gates for each town can be seen in Gazetteer 2.

8.8.2 *Monumental arches*

Very few monumental arches are known in Britain but the identified examples did undergo changes in the late Roman period. The remains of the arches at Verulamium are very scanty because of heavy robbing which probably took place within the late Roman period (Frere 1983: 75-9). This would indicate changes in the organisation of the town but there is also

evidence for much activity taking place in the town at a contemporary date. A monumental arch in London is known only through the stonework used in later structures (T. Williams 1993) but its demolition certainly did not indicate the decline of the town.

8.8.3 *Porticoes*

Porticoes along streets and attached to public buildings were also transformed in the late Roman period but, rather than decline, the evidence indicates vitality with a more intensified use of space. Many of the porticoes which were originally free from material, suggesting that they were kept clear in the Roman period, now have evidence for timber stalls and activity continuing into the fifth century. Such is the case at Wroxeter (Diagrams 105-7), Canterbury (Diagrams 44-5) and Leicester (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995; Ellis 2000: 58-68; N. Cooper unpublished). This activity within the porticoes will have had an impact on movement around the towns, but it also represents vibrancy and the continued importance of the town centres.

8.8.4 *Discussion*

This review of the evidence demonstrates that compared with other parts of the Empire, little is known about the 'armatures' of Romano-British towns. The fact that fewer features such as arches are known may suggest that there were fewer within the towns,[212] though probably also reflecting the poor survival of much of the evidence. Determining definite dates for changes to the structures is also difficult and not always possible (see table 8.7). What is clear from the evidence, however, is that although some aspects of the Roman-style 'armatures' and organisation of towns were being altered, there was still considerable activity within towns.

Insufficient evidence survives to show how the changes might have related to religious ceremony within the towns. The new arrangements, however, can be considered to represent equally meaningful forms of organisation for those using these towns.

8.9 Statues

Another way in which space was organised was by the placement of statues around and within public buildings and towns. Very few are known in Britain although there may originally have been many more (table 8.8). Remains of statue bases have been found within the *fora* at Silchester, Wroxeter, Verulamium, Chichester and Gloucester (Atkinson 1942: 104-6; Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31; Fulford and Timby 2000: 55-6; Frere 1983; Hurst 1999b: 158) and the *principia* at York (Roskams 1996: 269). Pieces of bronze statuary have come from public buildings in Cirencester, Gloucester and Silchester, probably indicating that they were recycled in metalworking activities (see sections 9.4.1 and 9.4.2).

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[212] H. Green (1975) raised the possibility of what he saw as evidence for a timber portico around a square in the centre of Godmanchester. Further work is needed at Godmanchester to determine more about this structure, but it does suggest that there were other such structures in Britain which have been missed due to a preoccupation with stone structures.

Their removal may represent a change to the Classical order of towns (*cf.* MacDonald 1986) but also implies new priorities and uses of the buildings at this time.

Town	Public Building	Evidence	Date	References
Chichester	*Forum-Basilica*	The base of a possible statue or column of Jupiter was found within the location of the *forum*.	Possibly 3rdC.	Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31
Cirencester	*Forum-Basilica*	A bronze eye from a statue was found in the 19thC. and may represent a statue that was cut up in the 4thC.	Uncertain	Holbrook 1998: 108-9
Gloucester	*Forum-Basilica*	On the east side of the courtyard was a substantial base (*c.* 4x3m) of finely-cut oolitic limestone blocks joined by anathyrosis. The base had been rebuilt with reused material in the late Roman period suggesting that the statue may have remained in place to a late date. Cut up fragments of a bronze statue were also found in the locality.	Early-2ndC. onwards	Hurst 1999b: 158
Lincoln	Pre-*forum-basilica* temple?	Evidence for statue bases on a paved floor.	1stC.	M. Jones 1999: 169-70
Silchester	*Forum-Basilica*	Remains of a brick foundation set on the gravelled surface in the *forum*. This may have been an altar base instead.	1stC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 55-6
	Forum-Basilica	Bronze statue fragments were found within the *basilica*.	3rdC. to 4thC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 72
Verulamium	*Forum-Basilica*	Statue base or podium.	1stC.	Frere 1983; Niblett 2005a: 82
Wroxeter	*Forum-Basilica*	Statue bases within the *forum*.	2ndC.	Atkinson 1942: 104-6
	Temple	Collection of bronze fragments including pieces of statue.	Late-4thC. to 5thC.	Bushe-Fox 1914: 2-9
York	*Principia*	Evidence of pedestals for statues.	Late-4thC.	Roskams 1996: 269

Table 8.8: Details of the known evidence for statues placed within the fora-basilicae *of the towns of Roman Britain with some additional information from other buildings.*

8.10 Discussion

Of the public buildings for which structural evidence exists, fifty-eight were at least partly standing into the late-fourth or fifth centuries (see Figure 8.7), and many survived beyond this. Only six are known certainly to have been completely demolished or destroyed at an earlier date. In the late-fourth century and beyond, towns continued to contain monumental buildings that would have formed *foci* of attention and activity.

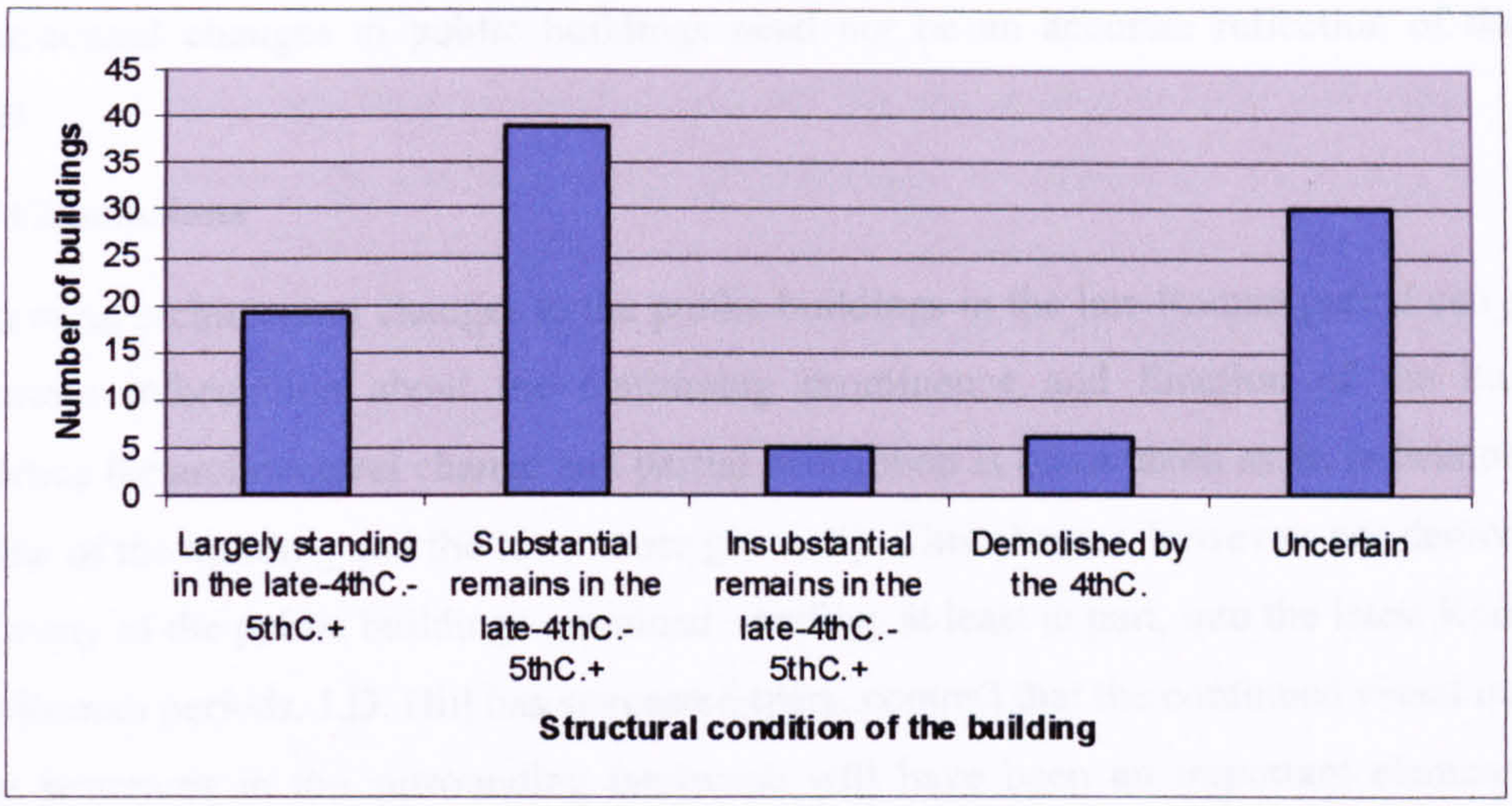

Figure 8.7: Graph showing the number of all the public building types where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

In Britain it appears that part of the function of the *basilica* was to house the *curia*. However, the *curia*, the focus of local government in the early Empire, need not necessarily have met within public buildings in the late Roman period: instead smaller structures or sometimes even open spaces (drawing on more ancient practices) are possible venues. Wickham (2005: 597) has argued that it was during the fifth and sixth centuries that the rôle of the *curia* in running towns and raising taxes across what had been the Roman Empire reduced and ended. Civic officers became less prominent and local senators and bishops took a more central rôle. During the fourth and early-fifth centuries, however, *curiae* are still considered to have been prominent entities within the town. With little documentary or epigraphic evidence from Britain it is difficult to judge whether the *curiae* were still in operation. Simply looking at the architectural evidence has led to negative conclusions (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a) but the absence of a fully-functioning *curia* need not indicate the decline of a town. At Wroxeter (R. White and Barker 1998), for example, it has been suggested that the community was led by individual leaders in the late to post-Roman periods.

The insertion of a new hypocaust into the southern ambulatory of the west wing of the *basilica* at Silchester might indicate at least one area that continued to be used as offices (Fulford and Timby 2000: 75), as might the alterations to the *forum-basilica* at Cirencester. The survival of the apse of the *basilica* in London also might indicate the continuity of official use (Brigham 1992a: 94-5) as might the survival of the 'Mint Wall' at Lincoln. There were also opportunities for other types of public building, including bathhouses, to be used as *curiae* in the late Roman period, and Reece's (pers. comm.) analysis of the temple entrance hall next to the *basilica* at Caerwent suggests that it may have taken over the rôle of *curia*. If there were continuing *curiae* into the late-fourth and possibly fifth centuries, then evidence

for structural changes to public buildings need not be an accurate reflection of declining towns.

8.11 Conclusions

Examining architectural changes to the public buildings in the late Roman period can provide important information about the continuing prominence and function of the buildings. Evidence for architectural change and partial demolition is often taken as an indication of the decline of the building and the town more generally. This chapter, however, has demonstrated that many of the public buildings remained standing, at least in part, into the latest Roman and post-Roman periods. J.D. Hill has suggested (pers. comm.) that the continued visual impact of these structures in the surrounding landscape will have been an important element of the surviving significance of these places. This would be true regardless of whether the buildings continued to be maintained or whether some parts had been demolished. The demolition of parts of the buildings may well even have been aimed at the preservation of other sections. Selected demolition can be viewed in terms of continued vitality and even as an act of regeneration in the town centres. Similarly, Revell (1999) argues that fires within public buildings were important stages in the life of the buildings - they allowed renewal and should not be viewed in terms of crisis or decay.

It is now difficult to determine the appearance of the structures by the late Roman period – in some cases it may have been quite different from the original designs. These changes, however, were meaningful stages in the biographies of the buildings: viewing buildings in static terms, in their newly built forms, misses the long sequences of alterations and additions that constituted the life of the buildings (*cf.* Revell 1999). The majority of the buildings did, of course, disappear by the early post-Roman period through structural decay, demolition and stone robbing, although some survived longer, influencing locations of churches and forms of settlement in the medieval period (Bell 2005).

The following chapters will examine the surviving evidence for the ways in which the buildings were being used to frame activities in the late Roman period. The spaces remained important beyond the structural maintenance of the buildings and reduction of economic activity within towns. This continued into the post-Roman period, with sites such as Canterbury being religious centres and meeting places without necessarily having much in the way of substantial masonry architecture or economic activity.[213]

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[213] Aspects of urban behaviour, such as political meetings, survived on some sites despite their changing appearance in the post-Roman period with less emphasis now being placed on monumental architecture. There is a passage in Bede's writing referring to the conversion of King Æthelberht in the late sixth century A.D. It describes him allowing his Christian teachers to settle in "his head city of Canterbury" (I.26). This highlights the long-term nature of Canterbury as a religious place that was then further entrenched with the presence of Christianity. The importance of open places rather than architecture in Early Medieval England is also reflected in a passage in Bede's work. This describes the conversion of King Æthelberht in Kent by Augustine. It states

In E. Casey's words (1996: 121): "there are no places without the bodies that sustain them...(and) there are no lived bodies without the places they inhabit and traverse". The analysis of evidence for activities within the buildings, conducted by the bodies, will begin with an examination of 'industrial' activity which, it will be argued cannot be taken simply to represent declining standards but was symbolic of the continued significance of the sites and even of generation and vitality.

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that the king sat "in an open place" on the Isle of Thanet, where Augustine and his entourage had landed, and bid Augustine to see him (I.25).

Chapter 9: The industrial activity within public buildings

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin to address the activity incorporated in late Roman levels within public buildings, demonstrating that they continued to act as a focus for many kinds of use. One of the major types of evidence is for industrial activity, including metalworking, glass-working and bone-working. Metalworking provides the majority of the surviving evidence for the use of late Roman buildings although other possible contemporary uses such as meetings are less likely to be represented in the archaeological record. The industrial activity has generally been considered to represent the decline of the buildings, with living standards within the town much reduced (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a). By scrutinising the evidence, especially the potential symbolic nature of the activities, a different and more dynamic understanding of the public buildings, and the towns in general, will be proposed. Analysis shows that the vast majority of buildings with evidence for metalworking had at least some parts that were still standing at this time (figure 9.1). The ritual associations of this evidence will be used here to explore ideas of generation and regeneration that contradict the emphasis on decline.

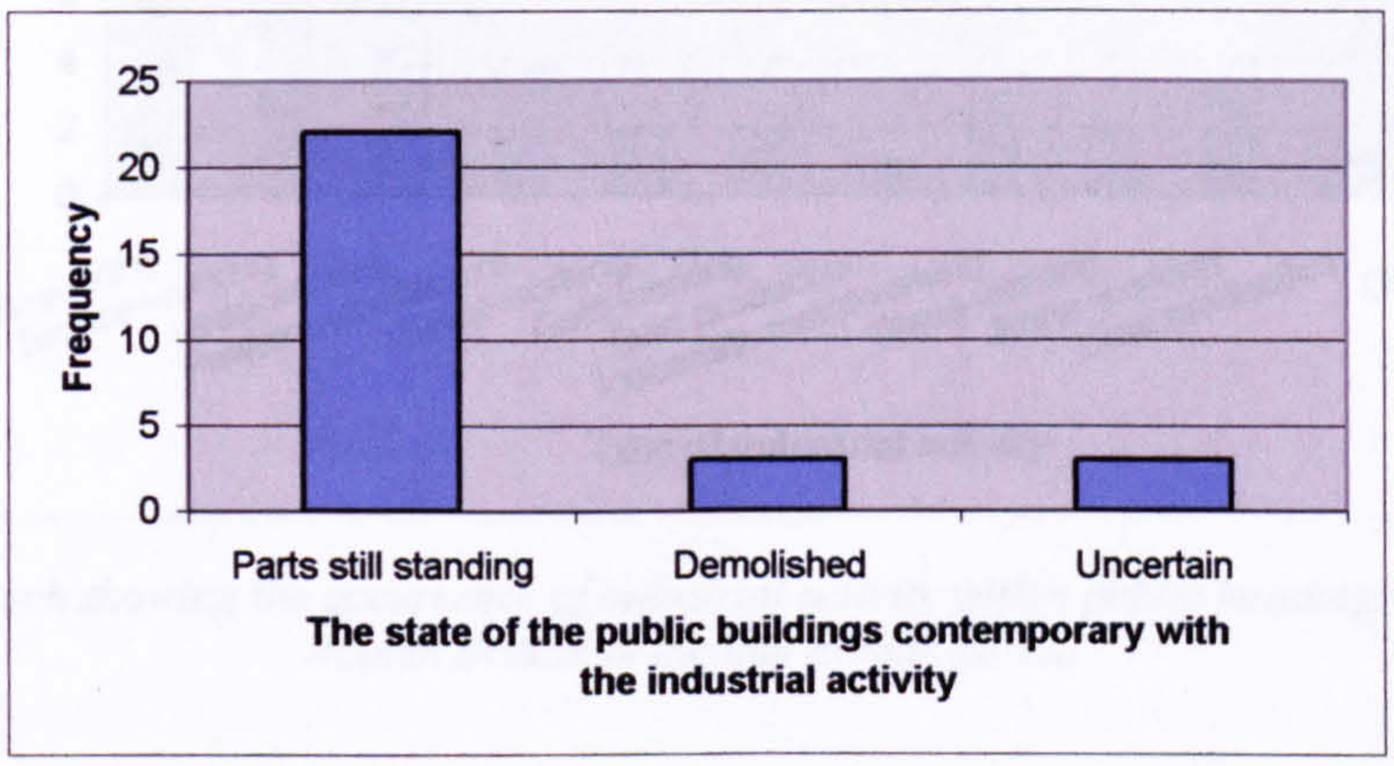

Figure 9.1: Graph showing the frequency of public buildings that were still standing, at least in part, at the time of the industrial activity, suggesting that the building may also have been in use for other activities. In other cases the activity took place on the site of demolished parts of the buildings. For details on which this graph is based see chapter 8.

Evidence for industrial activity, where it was identified in the public buildings of the towns under study (see table 2.1), is presented in Gazetteer 4. Iron-working, bronze-working, lead-working, pewter production and coin production are all present, along with glass-working and bone-working (see figure 9.2). One case of lime production, for use in mortar and plaster, was identified within the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 96) indicating continual structural regeneration. The significance of metalworking in particular is examined,

drawing on historically-based interpretations and especially the potential symbolic and ritual significance of the activity.

Within archaeology, studies have often focused on the economic and technological aspects of metalworking without considering the social and religious elements (*e.g.* Schrüfer-Kolb 2004; Sim and Ridge 2002). Although there are many practical considerations involved in industrial activity, these do not preclude ritual associations. Acknowledging the symbolic nature of metalworking in the past, as discussed in section 4.5.3, is important for studying the significance of the evidence from the public buildings in the late Roman period. It is argued that the industrial activity played a significant part in the lives of people inhabiting the late Roman towns, perhaps drawing on the importance of metalworking on sites in the late pre-Roman period. Considering the evidence for these activities in this way allows interpretations to move beyond the economic notion of decline.

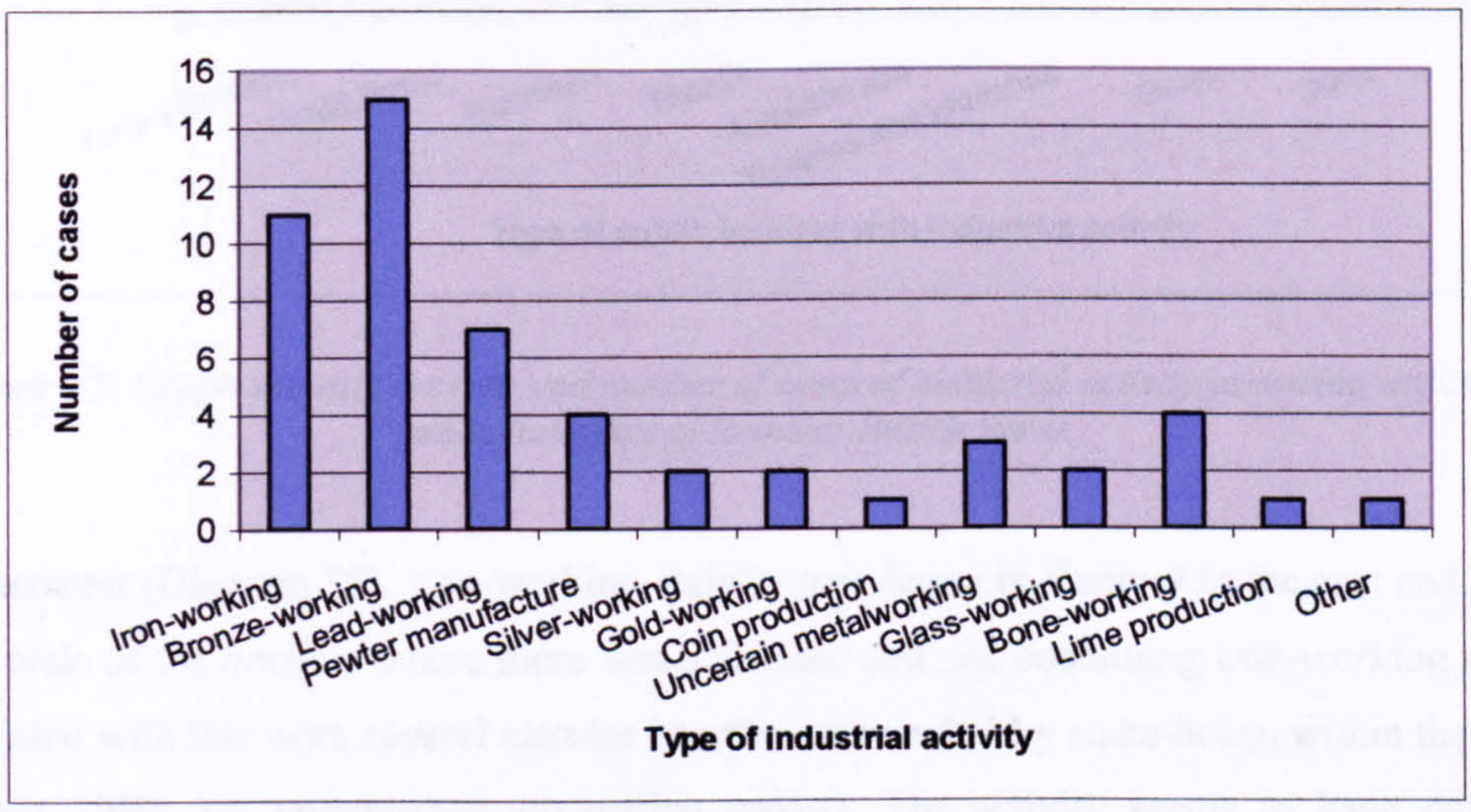

Figure 9.2: Graph showing the occurrence of industrial activity within public buildings in the towns of Roman Britain in the late Roman period.

9.2 The metalworking evidence

Iron- and bronze-working dominate the metalworking evidence but there are traces also of lead-working and pewter manufacture. There is virtually no evidence for the items produced, but there are strong indications that recycled metal played a part in production. More detailed information on the nature of the surviving evidence is included in Gazetteer 4.

9.2.1 *The* forum-basilica *complex*

In figure 9.3 the metalworking evidence is analysed in relation to building type. Nine *forum-basilica* complexes and the fortress *principia* at York have produced evidence for metalworking (figure 9.4). This means that the *forum-basilica* complexes of ten towns have

not produced evidence but at none of these, except possibly Verulamium, has the complex perhaps been excavated extensively enough to produce conclusive results.[214] Through the large number with evidence compared with other types of public buildings, it can be inferred that it was the *forum-basilica* building that was overwhelmingly used in the late Roman period as a location for metalworking.

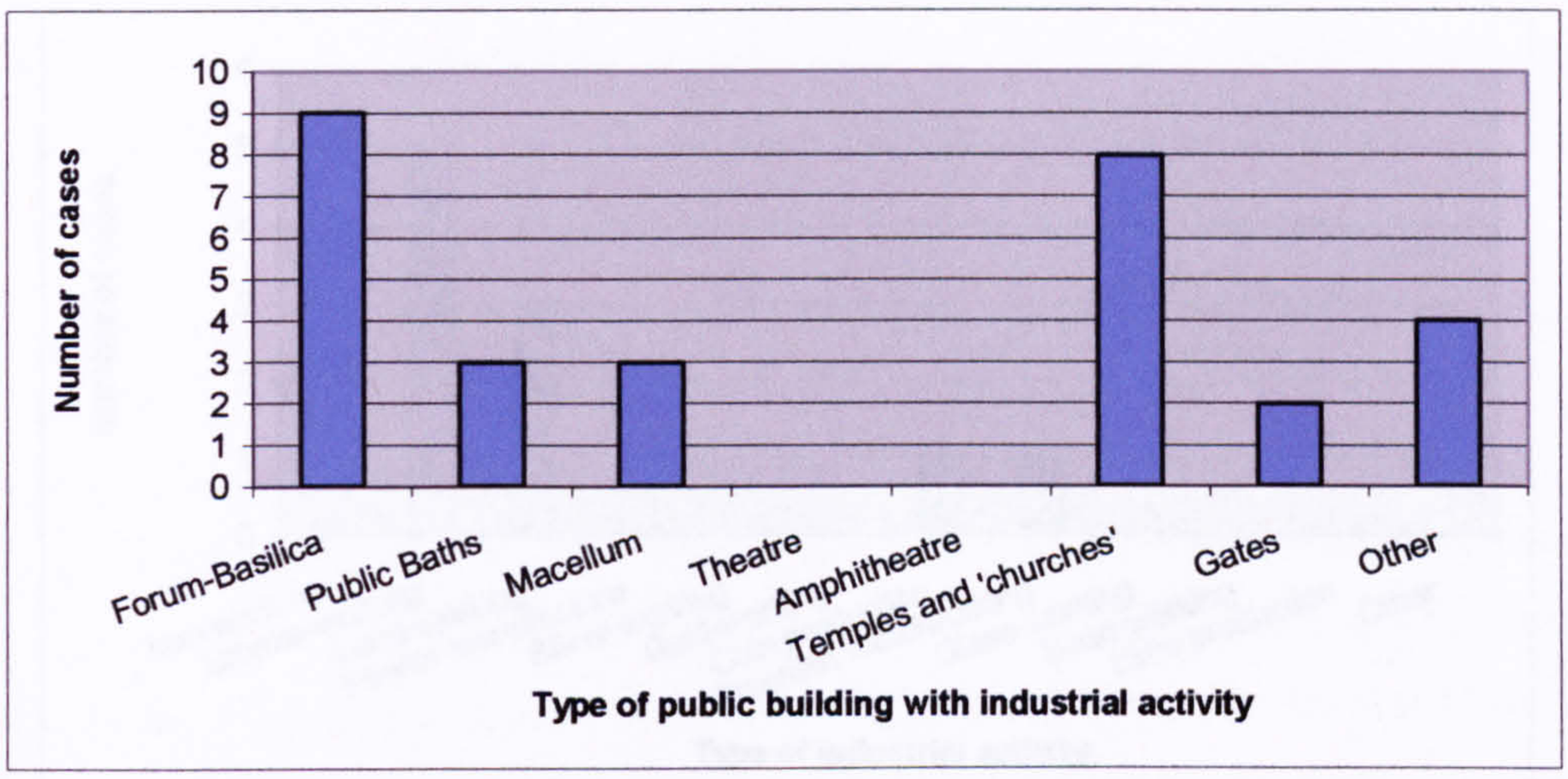

Figure 9.3: Graph showing the type and number of cases of industrial activity occurring within the public buildings of Romano-British towns.

At Caerwent (Diagram 38), iron-working activity was found in Room 9 in the east end of the north aisle of the *basilica* where there was a furnace and pits containing iron-working waste; associated with this were several circular hearths, surrounded by stake-holes, within the Nave (Brewer 1990: 82; unpublished excavation report). The activity seems to have dated to between A.D. 330 and 360 and was then followed by the demolition of at least part of the building at the very end of the fourth or start of the fifth century, as indicated by coins of A.D. 389-402.

At London (Diagram 77), excavations at Whittington Avenue revealed a section of the east portico of the *basilica* that seems to have been demolished in the mid-third century. Hearths were then constructed here which left iron slag, indicating iron-working (Brigham 1992a: 91; MoLAS archive WIV88). Contemporary with this were iron-working hearths in the east range of the *basilica* (*ibid.*). Excavations of the *forum-basilica* at Wroxeter (Diagram 100) uncovered a furnace associated with iron slag in the east of the portico, in front of East Room A of the *basilica* against the back wall of the colonnade. Coins suggested a date of the third

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[214] These towns are: Aldborough, Brough-on-Humber, Caistor-by-Norwich, Canterbury, Carmarthen, Chelmsford, Colchester, Gloucester, Verulamium and Winchester. Future excavations at these sites may provide comparable evidence for industrial activity within the *forum-basilica* complexes.

quarter of the fourth century and later (Atkinson 1942: 108-9). The large collection of metalwork from Room 1 of the west side of the *basilica* was probably for recycling and there was also a furnace on the outer wall of this room.[215] At Lincoln, a clay and tile hearth, scrap metal and slag were found in the excavations of the east range of the *forum* dating to the late-third and into the fourth century (Steane 2006: 186).

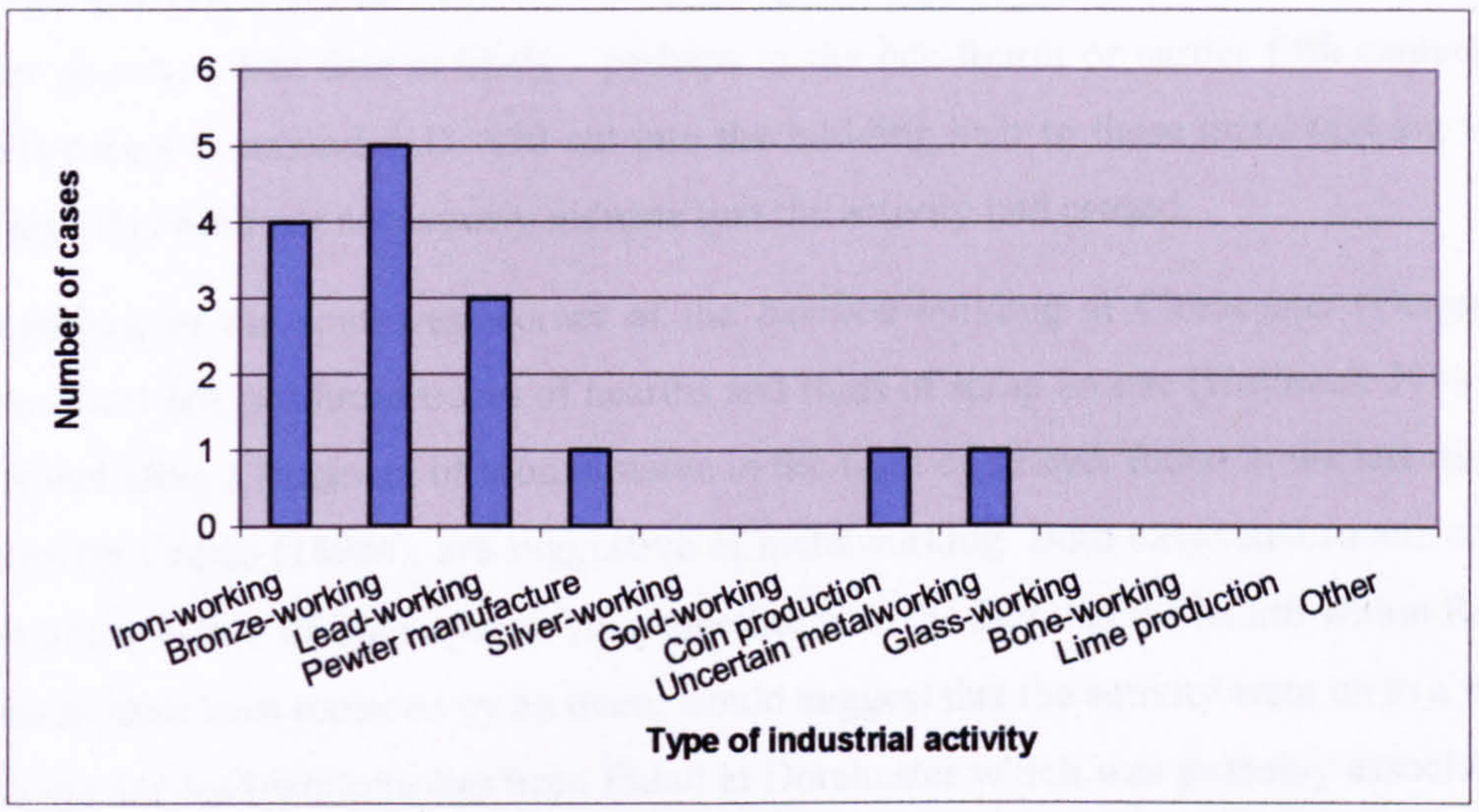

Figure 9.4: Graph showing the types of industrial activity occurring within the fora-basilicae *of Romano-British towns.*

Better known is the evidence for iron-working from the *basilica* at Silchester (Diagram 89; Fulford and Timby 2000). Victorian and Edwardian excavations had removed much of the stratigraphy within the building and the extent of lost evidence will never be known. What survives consists mainly of features cut into the *basilica* make-up which contained iron slag. Altogether, 42kg of forging slag, suggesting smithing rather than the smelting of iron, was recovered from features and these seemed to demonstrate a concentration towards both ends of the hall with less activity in the centre (Fulford and Timby 2000: 74). Twelve of the features containing iron slag have produced coins dating to the fourth century, between the A.D. 320s and 370s, with one small pit or post-hole (F58) containing a coin of Theodosius (A.D. 383-8). Pits containing scrap from bronze-working appeared to be earlier in date, perhaps in the late-third century (*ibid.*: 72).

Room 12 in the south wing of the *forum-basilica* at Leicester (Diagram 66) also contained bronze-working evidence in the form of a hearth, and bronze fragments. This was located

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[215] The collection included padlocks, lock-plates, keys, handles, staples, hinges and nails as well as a number of bronze items including a lock lever, nine studs and a fragment of a military diploma (Atkinson 1942). This collection has traditionally been considered to represent the function of the room as an office or archive (see section 7.3.1). Considering no comparable group of objects was found in other parts of the building, it might be that this was a collection of metalwork from different parts of the building for recycling.

above the robbing of an earlier floor and can be dated by coins to the late-third century (Hebditch and Mellor 1973: 18). The excavation of a small area of the *basilica* at Exeter (Diagram 62) produced evidence for a large pit, Pit 22, containing bronze-working waste dug down into the demolition débris of this part of the building (Bidwell 1979: 110-1). Broken tiles covered by a layer of burnt clay to the side of the pit appear to be the remains of a hearth and it seems likely that the pit was dug to extract clay for crucibles and furnace linings. There is no good dating evidence for the metalworking although stratigraphically, from the dating of earlier phases, a late date is likely - perhaps in the late-fourth or earlier fifth century. Later burials dating to around A.D. 450 cut into the building near to these metalworking features, although this need not necessarily indicate that the activity had ceased.

Excavations of the southwest corner of the *basilica* building at Cirencester (Diagram 53), Room 2 and 3/4, produced traces of hearths and finds of scrap bronze (Holbrook 1998: 108-9). Finds including a fragment of bronze statue in the form of an eye, found in the late-nineteenth century by Cripps (1898a), are suggestive of metalworking. Both excavated rooms contained coins of the House of Theodosius. This, together with the fact that the hearth within Room 3/4 seems to have been replaced by an oven, would suggest that the activity went on to a late date. Evidence for lead-working has been found at Dorchester which was probably associated with the *forum*. Its exact context is uncertain because little is known of the building where it was found, but a hearth was dug down into a gravelled surface and was associated with lead waste and late pottery (RCHME 1970). Other types of metalworking within the *forum-basilica* complexes include pewter manufacture with moulds found in the Silchester *basilica* and the York *principia* building (Fulford and Timby 2000: 73; Northover *et al.* 2000; D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 66-7).

At York, the fortress *principia* building (Diagram 109) has produced evidence for iron-working in the rear range with hearths, charcoal and iron-working waste. This probably dated to the late-fourth and fifth centuries, although there is little definite dating evidence (D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 66-7); in the east range there was waste from bronze-working (*ibid.*).

9.2.2 *Bathhouses*

There is less evidence for metalworking in the bath buildings with only three examples known (figures 9.3 and 9.5). This could indicate a concentration of industrial activity within the *forum-basilica* complexes, although fewer bathhouses have seen extensive excavations. In the St. Margaret's Street bath building in Canterbury both the robbed *laconicum* and the *piscina* contained evidence for iron-working dating to the second half of the fourth century, with iron-working waste and hearths (Diagrams 42 and 43; K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 185). Within the

laconicum were three phases of timber structures associated with hearths and iron slag. The dating of these structures is problematic, although a coin of A.D. 345-8 was found in silt beneath the second phase structure and two coins of the House of Theodosius over the third phase structure (*ibid.*). It is uncertain, however, whether this layer sealed the structures or represents its use.

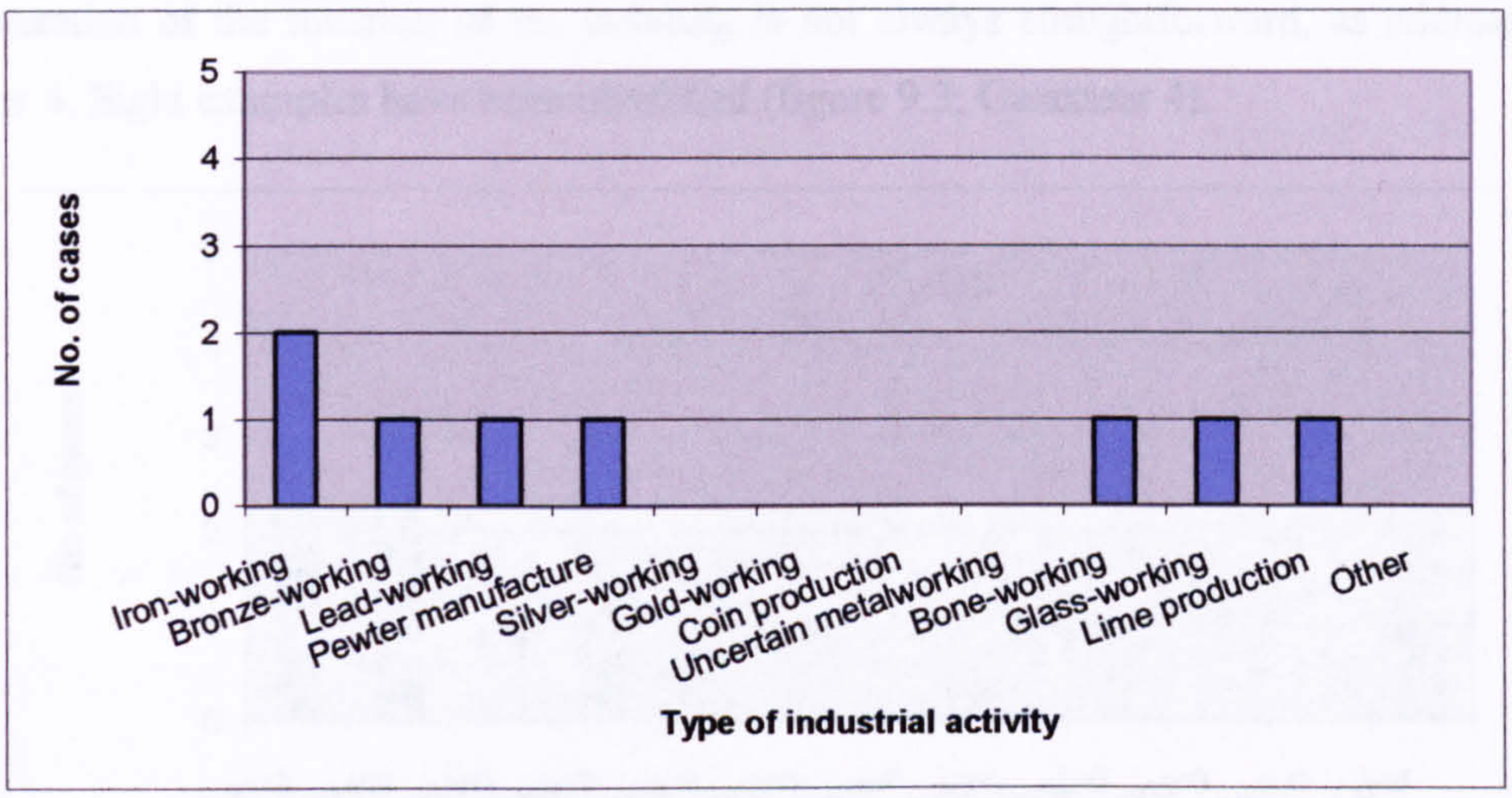

Figure 9.5: Graph showing the type of industrial activity within the public bath buildings of the towns of Roman Britain.

Iron-working was also part of the industrial activity that took place on the site of the Huggin Hill public baths in London in the late-second to third centuries (Diagram 79). This evidence was uncovered in the 1989 excavations on the site of Dominant House near Upper Thames Street (MoLAS archive DMT88) in an area close to that excavated in 1964 (Marsden 1976). Marsden recognised no industrial activity, although it is uncertain if it was missed or if there were no traces on his site. There was also a limestone mould for pewter manufacture (MoLAS archive DMT88). It is uncertain how long metalworking took place, but it may well have continued throughout the third century until some masonry buildings were constructed on the site in the fourth century (Rowsome 1997).

At Wroxeter, the *basilica* associated with the public baths has produced evidence for metalworking (Diagrams 101-3). Within the two rooms of the Annexe of the *basilica* there were at least two phases of bronze-working belonging to the late-fourth century (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 72-9). There is little direct dating evidence from the Annexe itself for this activity, but a coin of Gratian (A.D. 367) came from the layer within the Nave believed to be contemporary in date (*ibid.*). The evidence within the Annexe consisted of two phases of timber structures associated with hearths, casting pits and bronze waste. From the early-fifth

century there is evidence for activity within the baths-*basilica* itself, consisting of timber structures, hearths, bronze and lead waste, casting moulds and a lime pit which had later been adapted for lead-working (*ibid.*: 91-5).

9.2.3 *Temples*

The evidence for metalworking within temples (figure 9.6) and other possible religious buildings in the late Roman period is slightly more problematic, not least because the interpretation of the function of the building is not always straightforward, as addressed in chapter 6. Eight examples have been identified (figure 9.3; Gazetteer 4).

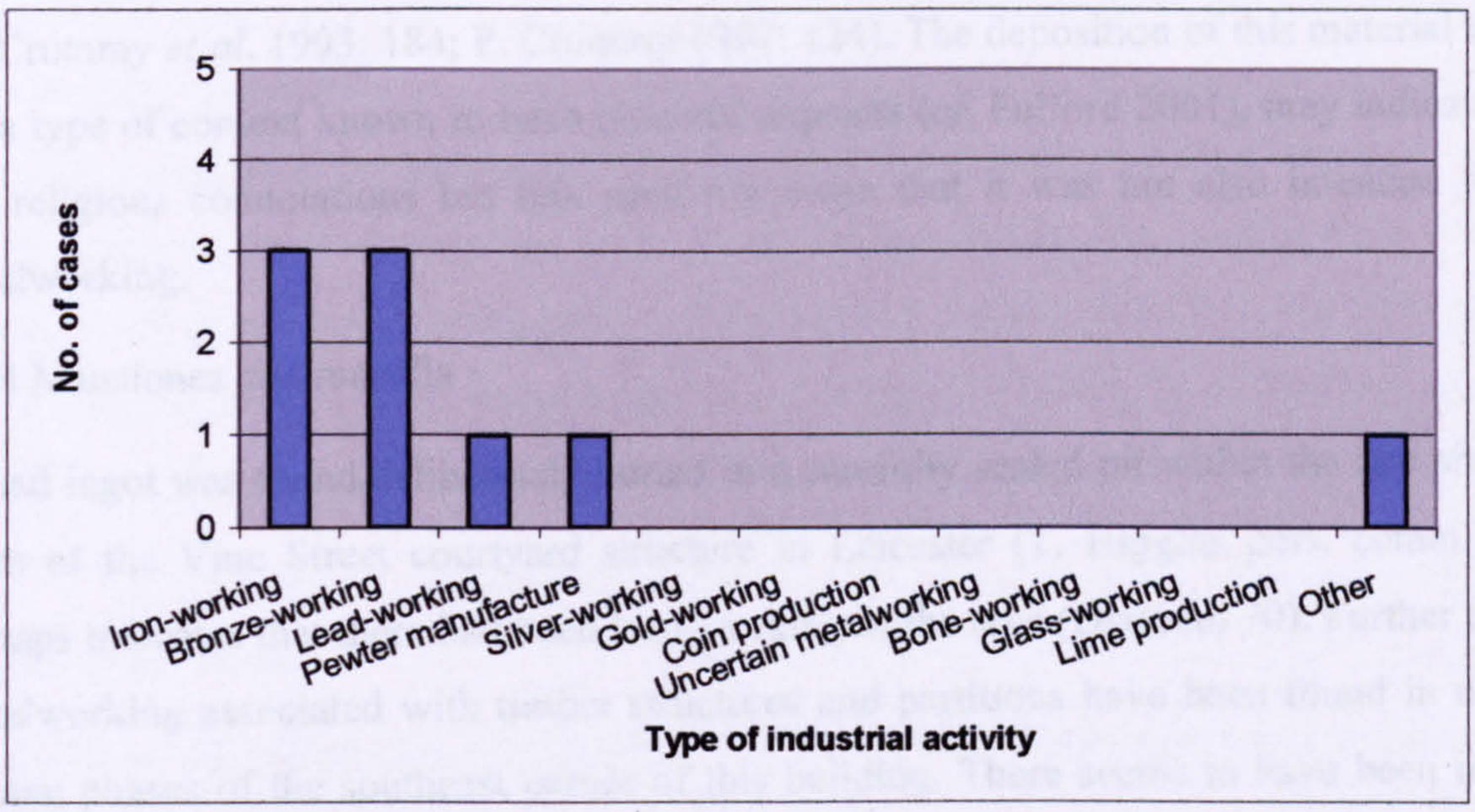

Figure 9.6: Graph showing the types of industrial activity within temples and 'churches' within the towns of Roman Britain.

Excavations at 1 Westgate Street in Gloucester (Diagram 64) were undertaken in the vicinity of what has been argued was the *peribolos* of a temple precinct (Hurst 1999b: 155-7). Beneath the demolition material of the structure were three oolitic limestone moulds for the casting of pewter and a group of iron objects suggestive of scrap metal (Heighway and Garrod 1980: 79). This demolition has been dated to the late-fourth century due to the presence of late Roman pottery including shell-tempered ware. The nature of the destruction means that there is little other evidence for the latest phases before demolition, although one hearth was uncovered, and so the extent of the industrial activity is unclear. The *insula* VI courtyard structure (Diagram 56) at Cirencester (probably a temple; see section 7.3.6) had a timber structure VI.7 built within the courtyard in the fourth century associated with slag and fragments of iron as well as copper alloy (unpublished site record book CIR 1974 K). Burnt soil and lumps of charcoal may represent the presence of hearths here.

More inferred evidence for metalworking comes from the temple at Wroxeter which was excavated in the early-twentieth century (Diagram 108). Here, a large collection of bronze and iron objects, including iron hooks, loops, clamps, rivets, around 1300 nails and fragments of bronze statuary, was found in a location that was described as being "between the north wall and the pedestal in front of the podium" (Bushe-Fox 1914: 2-9). Without evidence for metalworking waste, it is uncertain whether the activity took place here or the material was collected to be taken elsewhere, perhaps to the *forum-basilica* (see section 9.4.2). At the Butt Road structure in Colchester (Diagram 58) a piece of lead sheet, perhaps from the roof, was found, folded and placed, probably in the fifth century, within a hole made by a removed post (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 184; P. Crummy 1997: 124). The deposition of this material within a pit, a type of context known to have received deposits (*cf.* Fulford 2001), may indicate that it had religious connotations but this need not mean that it was not also intended for later metalworking.

9.2.4 Mansiones *and* macella

A lead ingot was found deliberately buried in a carefully sealed pit within the late phase of a room of the Vine Street courtyard structure in Leicester (T. Higgins pers. comm.) which perhaps indicates that there had been lead-working in the area (Diagram 70). Further traces of metalworking associated with timber structures and partitions have been found in the latest Roman phases of the southeast corner of this building. There seems to have been iron- and bronze-working here, represented by waste metal, hammerscale and a possible hearth (T. Higgins pers. comm.).

At the Leicester *macellum* (Diagram 68) there was a furnace in the external portico of the west range associated with a bloom of cupellation waste (15% copper, 55% lead and with a trace of silver) dating to the very late-fourth or early-fifth century, which Wacher has argued came from the extraction of silver from coinage (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 353). Although this is unproven, the bloom does show that some form of metalworking, perhaps recycling, was taking place here. Subsequently, glass waste indicates that the furnace was used for glass-working. Traces of gold- and silver-working were also identified within the basilican building at Flaxengate in the lower town at Lincoln, dating to the late-fourth or early-fifth century (Diagram 76; information from Lincoln Archaeological Services).

9.2.5 *Spectacle buildings*

Figure 9.3 shows that there is no evidence for industrial activity from theatres or amphitheatres. The reasons for this are uncertain, but it may be that other activities were taking place within the structures at this time or that their location outside the centre of the

towns was a factor. Industrial activity has been identified within some spectacle buildings on the Continent (see chapter 13).

9.2.6 *Gateways*

These structures are the final category to be examined for signs of metalworking. Excavations of the Ridingate in Canterbury, in the southeast of the town, (Diagram 49) revealed that in the late-third or early-fourth century the southern carriageway was blocked off, creating a room that was then used for bronze-working. Evidence consisted of ash and charcoal, a hearth base and bronze waste (K. Blockley 1986; P. Blockley 1989). Another site with metalworking débris is the South Gate at Silchester, where there are indications that the gateway may have been blocked in the fourth or fifth century (see section 8.8.1). Excavations beside the gate produced waste from the working of copper alloys and lead, including lumps of metal in fourth century deposits (Bayley 1984: 120; Fulford 1984: 75). There were also three fragments of non-ferrous hearth-bottom from lead or copper alloy working (Bayley 1984: 121). Since no hearths were found *in situ* it is uncertain whether the metalworking actually took place at the gate or whether the waste was perhaps dumped there from elsewhere (*ibid.*: 120).

9.3 Other industries

Evidence for several other industries exists but is rarer than the information for metalworking.

9.3.1 *Lime production*

Unlike some other regions of the Roman Empire in the later Roman period, such as North Africa (Leone 2003), there seems to be only limited evidence for pottery and lime production within the public buildings of Britain. One lime pit has been identified within the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter dating to the early-fifth century, and this most likely relates to the layers of slaked lime discovered within the nearby Annexe (Diagram 101; P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 96). The duration of use was short, however, as the pit was subsequently used for casting lead (see 9.2.2). The small quantities of lime represented here are perhaps more likely to relate to timber building construction, such as whitewashing, rather than building in stone.

9.3.2 *Glass-working*

At Leicester, the furnace associated with the cupellation process in the portico of the west range of the *macellum* was then used for glass-working (Diagram 68). Molten glass covered the inner tiles of the furnace and there was a large quantity of glass-making débris in the surrounding area (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 353). How long this industry continued is unclear as some walls were demolished in the late-fourth century, but the main shell of the structure continued to stand into the fifth century and probably beyond.

Glass-working was also identified, together with the metalworking, at the site of the Huggin Hill public baths in London (Diagram 79; MoLAS archive DMT88). As at Leicester, the evidence consisted of glass waste and can be dated to the late-second and possibly third century but there is no evidence of the products produced.

9.3.3 *Bone-working*

During what was possibly the latest phase of occupation within the monumental complex at the Winchester Palace site in London, bone-working is attested (Diagram 86; Yule 2005: 76, 78-9). The stratigraphy is not entirely clear but the evidence consists of rough-cut and unfinished bone pins as well as a number of complete pins. These appear to be associated with the demolition layers of the complex, indicating that production had taken place immediately prior to demolition or perhaps within the ruins of the building (*ibid.*).

Bone-working is also attested in the latest phases of the portico of the St. Margaret's Street baths in Canterbury, associated with the timber stalls and again from the area of the *palaestra* (Diagram 42; K. Blockley *et al.* 1997: 199-201). The evidence consisted of large quantities of cattle metapodials, fragments of bones and numerous unfinished pins. The fact that the material was fairly spread out, and that some became incorporated into later layers, suggests a degree of disturbance on the site and the possibility that the material represents rubbish derived from elsewhere. Alternatively, bone-working may indeed have taken place within the baths portico, with the waste then spread out into the nearby areas. Large-scale butchery was identified within the latest Roman layers of the fourth century Flaxengate basilican building at Lincoln (Diagram 76; information from Lincoln Archaeology Services).

Traces of bone-working within earlier phases of public buildings are represented mainly by single finds which were more probably brought in amongst material dumped from elsewhere. This includes the sheep radius from the floor make-up of the apse in the Silchester *basilica* dated to around A.D. 125-50 (Boon 2000: 382) and the bone off-cut from a layer in the Exeter *basilica* corridor dated to around A.D. 80 (Bidwell 1979: 239).

9.3.4 *Cloth-working*

A few needles from the late phases of the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter may indicate some kind of cloth-working. They came from floor surfaces, making it more likely that they were from activity within the building. Three needles from the nave, one from the north aisle and one from the north portico came from Phase W (late-fourth century), one came from the north aisle and two from the north portico belonging to Phase Y (early- to mid-fifth century). Three further needles came from the Phase Z (fifth or sixth century) rebuild. Needles are amongst

the finds assemblages from other sites,[216] although it is uncertain whether they represent anything more than small-scale needle-work, were unrelated to this activity or simply dumped on the site from elsewhere.

Spindle whorls have been found amongst finds assemblages in some public buildings, but mainly in earlier periods, and some were in make-up débris and other deposits. The spindle whorl from the Peter's Hill site in London associated with the late timber building (T. Williams 1993), might support a domestic function for this structure. The *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions a *gynaeceum* (cloth factory) at Venta, *procurator gynaecii* (*in Britannis*) *Ventensis*, (Seeck ed. 1876: 151) which has been interpreted as Winchester (Biddle 1975: 299) but it may well have been referring to another town, and no definite structural traces have been found.[217]

9.4 Interpreting the metalworking

Metalworking and traces of other industrial activities within public buildings have sometimes been interpreted as squatter occupation, reusing structures that had decayed into neglected ruins; an example being the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse in Canterbury (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 185). There are, however, other ways to interpret the evidence.

Most of the available evidence for industrial activity relates to metalworking, and a variety of possibilities for interpreting the data are explored. The section includes a discussion of recycling metal and of historically based interpretations such as *fabricae* (government run workshops). The largest part is given to interpretations that draw on the symbolic and ritual meaning of metalworking, which is important when addressing these activities in the past and the significance of their location. Evidence for ritual activity associated with the metalworking in the public buildings is discussed to support this. Although different interpretations are analysed, there need not be a single way of interpreting the evidence: the nature and social significance of the industrial activity within the public buildings may have had a range of complementary functions and meanings, combining the practical and the symbolic.

9.4.1 *The products*

Very little is known about the actual items produced from the metalworking activities. At Silchester, a large number of nails were associated with the iron-working evidence, although it is uncertain whether these were a product of the activity or if they were intended for recycling (Fulford and Timby 2000: 74). A large quantity of nails was also found

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[216] Buildings including the Leicester *forum-basilica* in a third century layer (Hebditch and Mellor 1973), the Winchester Palace site in the 'dark earth' (Yule 2005) and the Southwark *mansio* in a second to third context (Cowan 1992).
[217] In Winchester it has been suggested that a late Roman oblong structure containing hearths and ovens apparently built on the site of a demolished temple may have functioned as the *gynaeceum* but there is no definite proof of this (Biddle 1975: 299).

contemporary with the metalworking débris at Lincoln (Steane 2006), although again their relationship to the process is uncertain. It has been suggested that iron nails were amongst the products of the iron-working in the *basilica* at Caerwent, since there were nails in the débris here (P. Guest pers. comm.). The production of nails would clearly have been of considerable importance in the maintenance and construction of town buildings including new timber structures; these activities may have been far more prevalent in the later Roman period than is often supposed because of the loss of evidence and the general emphasis on decline (*cf.* Niblett *et al.* 2006: 101-3). The ritual connotations of nails (see section 9.4.6) may also suggest that the character of production had symbolic elements.

In a few rare instances mould fragments have been found. D. Brown (1976), however, has highlighted the lack of surviving mould débris from known bronze-casting workshops of the Roman period in general. This indicates that the small number of finds from public buildings need not reflect the extent of activity within the structures. Within the *basilica* at Silchester, though unstratified, half a mould for casting copies of the coins of Tetricus II (A.D. 273-4) was recovered (Fulford and Timby 2000: 72).[218] This coin copying could relate to the lack of low-value coinage after the Aurelian reforms (Reece 2002: 48). If it is linked to the monetary situation at the time, this need not detract from the added meaning attached to its production within the *basilica,* especially given the official rôle and symbolic significance of this built place.[219]

The oolitic limestone moulds from the temple building at Gloucester were for casting pewter vessels (Diagram 64; Heighway and Garrod 1980). Limestone moulds also came from the site of the Huggin Hill baths (MoLAS archive DMT88) and from within the *basilica* at Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000: 73) which in both cases seem to have been for the production of bronze or pewter vessels. A fragment of a pewter vessel mould was found amongst the metalworking waste in the *principia* at York (D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 66-7). It was not possible to determine the type of object made within the casting pits of the baths-*basilica* annexe at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 81-6).

The limited data available does not provide much evidence for the objects that were manufactured. However, it seems that the metalworking involved the production of items for use – iron tools, bronze objects and pewter vessels – and structural parts for repairing buildings, and that at least some of the activity involved the recycling of material for these products rather than the use of new material.

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[218] An unstruck coin blank was also found within Roman layers, dating to the second half of the fourth century, of the enigmatic rectangular structure at Frilford (Lock *et al.* 2002: 76) which might suggest that coins were copied here.

[219] London was established as the official location of the mint in Britain, but this was closed by around A.D. 330 and it seems that the copying of coinage was relatively common and did not just occur in towns (Reece 2002: 57). The significance and symbolism in the production of coinage (as in the Iron Age: *cf.* Haselgrove and Wigg-Wolf 2005), however, and the rôle of coinage in religious activity should not be overlooked since this could be an important indication of the nature of other activity taking place within the buildings.

9.4.2 *Recycling*

One aspect to consider when attempting to interpret the metalworking, and also the glass-working evidence, is the possibility of the recycling and reuse of material for the manufacture of objects. Recycling will have taken place throughout the Roman period alongside the use of new material, but this section explores the evidence for the state of raw metal production at this time and argues that the need for recycling had probably grown in the later Roman period. The collection of scrap metal also has implications regarding the rôle of towns. Recycling iron requires re-smithing at very high temperatures whereas bronze can be re-melted and reshaped at lower temperatures, making this technologically easier (Tylecote 1976: 22, 162-3). Most of the evidence for iron-working within public buildings is for smithing rather than smelting, which can be identified through waste such as slag (*e.g.* Richards 2000: 421). This may provide an indication that iron objects and structural parts were being recycled. Iron smelting has also been identified in some late contexts such as at Silchester in *insula* IX (along with smithing; section 9.5) (Tootell 2006; although not on the site of the *basilica*).[220] This may indicate either the re-smelting of old iron objects or that new material was being used.

The recycling of metal is also indicated by finds of collections of scrap metal. The objects from Room 1 of the West Range of the *basilica* at Wroxeter (see section 9.2.1) most probably represent a collection of scrap metal for recycling. This interpretation is also likely for the large collection of metal objects found in the temple near the *forum-basilica* at Wroxeter in the early-twentieth century (see section 9.2.3; Bushe-Fox 1914: 9). Some of the bronze fragments from the collection seem to have originated from statuary, since there were patterns representing hair and drapery (*ibid.*: 2-9). Certain public buildings may have been chosen as safe depositories for scrap metal, which suggests some kind of authority within the town to organise it. The material may have been taken to the central *forum-basilica* for reworking.

Other bronze statue fragments associated with metalworking evidence have been found in the *basilicae* at Cirencester (Holbrook 1998: 108-9) and Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000: 72). Where metal objects have been found within pits at temple sites they may have been related to storage and preservation[221] or to patterns of ritual deposition established in the Iron Age (*cf.* J.D. Hill 1995a), but they may also have been intended for recycling at a later date. This includes the nearly complete bronze statue from a pit on the Gosbecks temple site, with metalworking slag nearby, (P. Crummy pers. comm.; Hull 1958: 264) and the lead sheeting find from the Colchester Butt Road building (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 184).

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[220] Only one piece of bloomery-slag was found on the *basilica* site suggesting that smelting did not take place within the building (Richards 2000: 421).

[221] The deposition of statues within pits in the later Roman period may be a reaction to preserve them due to Christian activity, as the Theodosian Code might suggest (section 6.3.3), but many pieces may also have been recycled at this time, which can also have religious symbolism.

Fragments of bronze objects amongst the metalworking waste in the Leicester *forum-basilica* indicate recycling (Hebditch and Mellor 1973) and the cupellation waste in the Leicester *macellum* indicates the reuse of silver (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 353). The recycling of structural parts has been argued in relation to the metalworking in the London *basilica*: "recycling fittings from the *basilica* such as hinges, fittings, clamps, spikes and window grilles" (Brigham 1992a: 91). Although this is a useful hypothesis, and might explain the lack of these finds in the excavation, the industrial waste that has been recorded is not very informative.

The state of the metal industry in Britain at this time, and the extent to which metal ore was still being mined, provides some additional information regarding recycling activities. In Britain, the iron industry has seen the most extensive study. Iron ore is widespread in Britain, but in the Roman period there were a few main areas where iron ore was mined and smelted: the Weald of Kent and Sussex, the Forest of Dean and the Jurassic limestone belt of the east Midlands covering Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire (Cleere 1984: 3; McWhirr 1982; Schrüfer-Kolb 2004), with smaller areas including sites in east Yorkshire (Halkon and Millett 2001).

Work carried out by the Weald Iron Research Group has so far revealed around sixty iron producing sites of the Roman period. It seems that by the beginning of the third century the level of operations had already begun to drop and at the end of the third century only a few remained in operation (Cleere and Crossley 1995: 58-9). Suggested reasons for this reduction have included the over exploitation of ore, deforestation (Cleere 1974: 176-7) and security threats prompting a move to the Forest of Dean (Cleere and Crossley 1995: 84). Another suggestion is that since the *classis Britannica* disappears from records in the third century it must no longer have been involved in iron production (*ibid.*), but without further evidence this is speculation. The end of its involvement need not, however, have meant the decline of production. Since iron production also took place here in the post-Roman period, a more complex situation is likely (Fulford 2006: 607).

The iron producing sites in East Yorkshire seem to have gone out of use by the first century A.D. with the immediate pre-Roman period being the time of most activity (Halkon and Millett 1999: 48). The Jurassic Ridge area witnesses iron production into the late fourth century (Schrüfer-Kolb 2004: 60) although it is difficult to quantify the scale of production, which may have been lower than earlier periods. The Forest of Dean provides the most extensive evidence for production in the third and fourth centuries although less is known about sites here than in the Weald. Some excavations, such as at Chesters Villa in Gloucestershire near the Severn Estuary, show iron production from the mid-third century into the second half of the fourth century (Fulford and Allen 1992: 150-61), although

estimations of the scale of production, a difficult exercise, suggest lower quantities than the Weald. This, together with the fact that there are fewer known sites in the Forest of Dean area, suggests that the amount of smelted iron available in the later Roman period is unlikely to have met demand, making the time-consuming process of the recycling of iron a necessity (Manning 1976: 147). Apart for the early involvement of the *classis Britannica* in the Weald, there is very little evidence for the way in which iron production was overseen by the state in Britain, if indeed it was (Fulford 2006: 609). The situation in the later Roman period is more uncertain, making discussions of the state of production difficult.

Lead would also have been in great demand since it was used in many aspects of construction (McWhirr 1982: 12) as well as for extracting gold and silver (Salway 1993: 442). Its importance can be seen in the rapidity with which the Roman government took control of production after the conquest of Britain. The earliest stamped pigs come from the Mendips dating to A.D. 49 (*ibid.*), Flintshire in the A.D. 70s (Tylecote 1976: 61) and the Yorkshire Dales in the A.D. 80s (Clough 1962: 37). Few lead producing sites have received much attention but at one site, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, production began soon after the conquest and lasted into the fourth century. The absence of coins of the late-fourth century at this site led to suggestions of abandonment at this time (Burnham and Wacher 1990: 211) although this need not necessarily have been the case. Certainly Fulford (2004: 318) argues that lead production continued well into the fourth century with evidence for unstamped ingots and large numbers of lead artefacts at this time. One demand for lead in the later Roman period would have been for pewter production, which did not begin until around A.D. 250 (Beagrie 1989: 175; D. Brown 1976: 26). As tin was also a component of pewter this indicates the continuation of tin mining into the later Roman period. There is a stamped tin ingot from Cornwall that is probably of fourth century date, and Fulford (2004: 319) has argued that tin may be one reason why Byzantium remained interested in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.

This review of the late Roman evidence from public buildings and the general state of the metal industry at this time indicates that both recycling and the use of new metal are likely. This indicates vitality within towns in the late Roman period, with use being made of a range of available resources.

9.4.3 *Commerce*

One interpretation of the industrial evidence within the public buildings is a commercial function. Perring (1991a: 103) argues that the sites of public buildings may have remained in the ownership of the town after their disuse and that they were rented out to craft-workers in order to generate revenue. Without documentary evidence, however, it is not possible to know

whether this occurred. It is equally possible that the public buildings remained in use for public activities whilst some areas were used for metalworking. A number of cases where commercial activities might be suggested include the activity within the portico and *laconicum* of the St. Margaret's Street baths at Canterbury and the porticoes of the baths at Wroxeter. The hearths and metalworking identified within the portico of the *forum* at London also faced onto the street. The metalworking within rooms in the east range of the *forum* at Lincoln could have exploited its close proximity to the street, as might the metalworking in the Vine Street building in Leicester (Diagram 70).

Across the Empire it seems that courtyard houses could exploit their position along the streets, with the outer rooms serving as workshops and shops (*e.g.* in Pompeii, R. Jones and Robinson 2004). In Britain, the continuation of these circumstances into the later Roman period is indicated by examples such as the Hungate townhouse in Lincoln with iron-working in its latest phase (M. Jones 2003b: 134) and the iron-working within the *insula* IX structure at Silchester (Fulford *et al.* 2006). If some of the metalworking within public buildings in late Roman times can be interpreted in similar ways it would certainly indicate the vitality of the towns at this time (see sections 9.4.6 and 9.4.7).

9.4.4 *Government control and* fabricae

Some writers have argued that government control may have been an important factor in industrial activities. Mattingly (2006a: 336-7), for example, emphasises that the metalworking evidence within the *basilicae* at Silchester, Caerwent and Exeter was relatively well-ordered and indicates a regulated reuse of public space, while Fulford and Timby (2000: 579), discussing the Silchester *basilica*, also suggest that centralised control was important; they point to the possibility that the *basilica* was an imperial *fabrica* producing weaponry and recycling metal. This is the argument adopted by Faulkner (2000a: 128) in his discussion of urbanism in the later Roman period, which sees towns being central to the state's "total war mentality", with the establishment of military workshops making them "gloomy police towns of an age of blood and iron" (*ibid.*: 130).

Much of our understanding of state *fabricae* comes from late documentary sources, especially the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Seeck ed. 1876). The caveats in using this document in relation to Britain were discussed in chapter 6, the main problem being that Britain is not listed amongst the provinces recorded as having *fabricae*. The *Notitia* indicates that the *fabricae* were highly organised establishments, many being devoted to one specific area of production,[222] but there is nothing from any of the buildings in Roman Britain to indicate that production was geared towards any specific item of military equipment. The *Notitia* does record some more general

[222] *Arcuaria*, for example, referred to workshops making bows whilst *ballistaria* made artillery, *hastaria* made spears and *sagittaria* produced arrows (S. James 1988).

workshops, *fabricae armorum*, which produced a mixture of weapons and armour (S. James 1988: 261) but the available evidence does not prove the existence of these in Britain.

9.4.5 *The location of the metalworking within the public buildings*

Industrial activity could have occurred in unexcavated parts of the structures, discussed above. Where excavation has examined more of the buildings, however, in many cases the metalworking appears to have taken place within rooms or areas on the edges of the buildings or concentrating at the ends of the main rooms within them such as the *basilicae* at Caerwent, Cirencester, London and Silchester (Diagrams 38, 53, 77, 89). This implies that central parts of the buildings were still being kept for other purposes. The *laconicum* of the St. Margaret's Street baths in Canterbury lay in the furthest southeast corner of the baths and the *piscina* which lay on the western side. The metalworking appears to have been kept to the outer edge of the building near the street front. Other parts of the baths may well have remained in use. Too little of the remainder of this building has been excavated to be sure.

The location of the metalworking near the street fronts, as at the *forum* at Lincoln (Steane 2006) and the Vine Street courtyard building in Leicester, has sometimes been considered to have been to attract business from outside (Buckley 2007; T. Higgins pers. comm.). These economically-based arguments presumably draw on the evidence of better preserved sites such as the street-front workshops of domestic structures in Pompeii (*e.g.* see section 9.4.3). On prehistoric sites, smelting and smithing activities have often been identified on the edge of occupation areas and this is considered to be because of the fire-risk and noxious fumes related to the processes (*e.g.* Aldhouse-Green 2002: 15; J. Henderson 1991: 114).

Hingley's (1997b) analysis of metalworking on Iron Age sites in Britain identified that on a number of these settlements, the metalworking took place on the periphery and near entrances, often orientated to an eastern or south-eastern direction. It was suggested that this may have been related to cosmology, taking a similar line of argument to Oswald's (1997) examination of the orientation of roundhouse doorways. Hingley also related the location of the metalworking to ideas of rebirth; the metalworking processes 'giving birth' to iron at places of passage (*ibid.*: 13). The transformative processes of the metalworking itself would have added to the power of this symbolism (*ibid.*).[223] Practical factors will also have been important, such as the direction of the prevailing wind, but such motives may also have acquired a symbolic aspect (see section 9.4.6).[224] Although these interpretations based on Iron

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[223] The documented evidence for the deposition of 'currency bars' and other products of metalworking on the periphery of sites (Hingley 1990b) may have been to reinforce the meaning of these spaces as places of transition (Giles 2007a: 399; Hingley 1990b).

[224] There has been some criticism of studies of cosmology relating to roundhouses including problems with sampling in arguments of doorway orientation and the neglect of more practical considerations that may also have been important (*e.g.* Pope 2003; 2007).

Age material need not be applicable to the later Roman period, they do indicate how analysis can attempt to take into account factors that are not solely practical.

Stirling (2001: 69) has argued that public buildings provided convenient locations for metalworking because of their stone walls, high roofs and large spaces, and their proximity to roads and water. Although economic and practical reasons have some explanatory value, there are likely to have been additional motives for the deliberate and apparently organised locations chosen within the public buildings. The symbolic and cosmological considerations for the production of metalwork within the buildings may mean that its location could also have been related to notions of regeneration. The location suggests that local government may have continued within the buildings and also that the metalworking was an aspect of this continued power. Its concentration within the public buildings, especially the *forum-basilica*, may also indicate a social rôle of the metalworking, perhaps drawing on pre-Roman practices, where people gathered, interacted, carried out ceremonies and ate and drank; the metalworking forming a focus to the activities. The next sections will discuss evidence for religious activity connected with the metalworking.

9.4.6 *The symbolic significance of metalworking*

The importance of the metalworking activity within the public buildings can be considered in more complex terms by addressing its potential religious significance. Studies of Iron Age metalworking are increasingly emphasising its religious symbolism, issues that draw attention to aspects other than technology (*e.g.* Aldhouse-Green 2002; Giles 2007a; Hingley 1997b).[225] This aspect has not received so much consideration in studies of the Roman period, and especially of the late Empire, despite the significance of metalworking in late Roman urban centres. Recent work on iron deposition and the significance of iron in the Roman and late pre-Roman periods is an important exception (Haselgrove and Hingley 2006; Hingley 2006b). The evidence from Roman public buildings can be analysed in the light of reappraisals of industrial processes in the past as meaningful beyond the basic parameters of economic production. Archaeologically, this is attempted by examining the context of the metalworking evidence and its association with other finds and structural evidence within the buildings.

Ethnographic studies, especially on iron production in Africa, have long shown that non-Western peoples often attach significance to metalworking that contrasts with Western technological and economic understanding. Cline (1937), for example, studied the rôle and position of the smith within a number of African groups, along with the symbolism attached

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[225] Metalworking also played an important rôle in the activities at the 'central places' in Scandinavia, which have been considered to have been production and cultic centres (Hedeager 2002; Jørgensen 1994: 53); the metalworking symbolic of the generation and power of the sites combined with other rituals and ceremonies. Similarly the 'royal sites' of Ireland, considered significant ritual and ideological places, are associated with metalworking and other forms of production (Aitchison 1994: 152; Warner 1988: 66-7).

to metalworking processes. The study demonstrated that iron production often involved complex rituals, with smiths sometimes holding the status of religious leaders (*ibid.*: 114). More recently, Haarland's work on iron production in the Sudan (1985) and Reid and MacLean's (1995) in east Africa demonstrated links between iron production and human fertility and procreation, with smelting considered a procreative act in which furnace and bellows took the rôles of the sexual partners (*ibid.*: 149). The cognitive link between iron production, transformation and human procreation was also the major theme of Herbert's work *Iron, Gender and Power* (1993), on the smelting rituals of a number of groups in Africa. Amongst the Ekonda of Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), smelting involved both a smelter and a ritual specialist, with animal sacrifices and prayers to the ancestors, and the vicinity of the furnace was considered sacred (*ibid.*: 64).

Other ethnographic studies connected with metalworking include Barndon (2004), Collett (1993), Gansum (2004), Haaland (1985) and Schmidt (1997) but there are far fewer studies of these aspects of technology within archaeology. Hingley's (1997b) study of British Iron Age iron production drew on Herbert's (1993) work to examine possible ritual activity associated with smelting and smithing sites. He examined especially the possible symbolism of passage and rebirth in the location of the metalworking on sites (see above) but also identified evidence for ritual activity associated with it. This included the deposition of metalworking débris within grain storage pits on some sites, which may also have linked the metalworking with ideas of fertility and agricultural production (*ibid.*). In other studies moving the understanding of past metalworking beyond the solely technological, Aldhouse-Green (2002) sees links between collecting iron ore, producing iron and agricultural activity, cooking and nourishment;[226] while Giles (2007a) has examined the symbolic links between metalworking, agricultural production and procreation in the Iron Age.

The significance of iron objects amongst the peoples of pre-Roman Western Europe is also implied in classical texts. Tacitus records in the *Germania* (XL.2-5), for example, that a number of the tribes worship Nerthus, a goddess of agriculture, and they could only carry out their annual festival once all iron objects had been hidden away (Aldhouse-Green 2002: 9). Blacksmiths may have had special status in pre-industrial periods, as indicated in texts from

[226] There are also hoards of deposited metalwork, including iron sickles and cauldrons which might indicate this link to agricultural activity and cooking such as that from the Llyn Fawr lake in south Wales (Aldhouse-Green 2002: 13).

early historic Ireland;[227] while the smith god Vulcan depicted in classical mythology may well have merged with indigenous smith gods (Gillies 1981: 71).[228]

The inclusion of iron-smiths' tools within ritual hoards indicates the special significance of iron-working in the Iron Age and the continuation of these attitudes and beliefs in the Roman period. Relevant hoards include those at Llyn Cerrig Bach on Anglesey (C. Fox 1946), Waltham Abbey in Essex (Manning 1972: 231) and Fiskerton in Lincolnshire (Field and Parker Pearson 2003).[229] The tools are usually in good condition, suggesting that they were not thrown away because they were broken; nor was the act likely to relate to changes in technology. The finds did not consist of complete sets of smith's tools, but were often accompanied by other types of objects, which argues against their being deposited for safe-keeping by craftsmen (Manning 1972: 238-9).[230] The significance of iron-working and its products is also inferred by the large number of Iron Age and Roman date ironwork hoards catalogued and studied by Manning (1972) and more recently by Hingley (2006b). Hingley (*ibid.*: 213) argues that most would have been deposited deliberately for ritual and religious reasons: given the symbolism attached to iron objects through their manufacture, the number of accidental losses would have been small. Even iron nails and their deposition may have had a religious meaning. The hoard of nearly one million nails found at the Roman fortress of Inchtuthil in Scotland, for example, was argued to have been preventing "later recovery...by the natives" upon abandonment of the site (L. Pitts and St. Joseph 1985: 109-12). This has, however, been reinterpreted as a symbolic and ritually charged act, since nails were used in religious activities such as *defixio* (Dungworth 1998: 153).[231]

Iron artefacts are not the only metal items known in hoards: Poulton and Scott (1993) have documented a large number of late Roman pewter hoards across Britain often found in wells, rivers and pits. They emphasise the watery context of many of the finds as well as the religious connotations of some of the vessels included in the hoards (*ibid.*: 128), suggesting a conscious association of religiously-imbued metalwork with watery places. This includes the presence of *chi-rho* symbols on the vessels, as in the late Roman Willingham (Cambridgeshire) hoard where three plates, one bearing a *chi-rho*, were found stacked

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[227] The *Triads of Ireland* record that the blacksmith was associated with supernatural items such as the anvil of the mythical god Dagda; smiths and their powers are also mentioned in recorded legends (Comber 2004: 15); in the *Scéla Eogain*, for example, the druid-smith is recorded putting five iron protective rings around the newly born baby of the smith's daughter (B. Scott 1984: 154).

[228] As a comparison, the symbolic and ritual significance of metalworking and of the metalwork itself is also considered important for the Roman and Germanic Iron Age periods of Scandinavia (first to seventh centuries A.D.); it was a significant aspect of the power of the sites here (Bergstøl 2002; Hedeager 2002).

[229] The site of the fourth century A.D. occupation at Kilverstone in Norfolk (Lucy with Challands 2006: 167) also produced a hoard, indicating that the practice continued to the late Roman period. Here a fourth century pit was found containing blacksmith's tongs, an anvil fragment and a sledgehammer head, together with pewter plates and other vessels.

[230] Piggott (1952-3) examined three Roman period metalwork hoards in southern Scotland, making an important early case refuting the 'smiths' hoards' interpretation and arguing instead for votive deposition in the pre-Roman manner.

[231] Dungworth (1998: 153-4) draws attention to records that nails were driven into temple walls to ward off evil and that curse tablets were activated by nailing. Nails are also used ritually amongst the Bakongo of Congo where wooden statues are heavily decorated with nails (*ibid.*: 149).

together (A. Taylor 1998: 105). These hoards have often been considered to be dinner services deposited for safe keeping in a time of crisis (*e.g.* D. Brown 1973: 201-4, on a pewter hoard from Appleford, Berkshire; Lethbridge and O'Reilly 1933: 166).[232] Poulton and Scott (1993: 128) are more sceptical because the finds rarely make sense as a 'dinner service' and the pieces did not often appear used, even though this material can be easily marked or damaged. They argue that some items may even have been deliberately produced for deposition, perhaps only being used once before then having to be deposited because of their religious power (*ibid.*).[233] They also raise awareness that the significance of metalworking is likely to have had an impact on pewter production (*ibid.*), especially if many of the vessels were intended for religious purposes (see 9.2 for the pewter vessel moulds found in the public buildings).[234]

Bronze items were also deposited in religious circumstances during prehistory. Budd and Taylor's (1995) examination of bronze-working has emphasised the need to put the 'magic' back into studies of ancient metalworking and attempt to conceptualise the activities as ritual and symbolic rather than economic. They argue that the procedures of bronze-working would have been passed on through rituals and spells and that metalworking would have had a special place within prehistoric society in Europe. Creighton (2000; 2005) has suggested that the re-introduction of gold-working in late pre-Roman Iron Age Britain, through new gold coins from the Continent, will have further increased the special place of metalworking within society.

Just as other ritual activity (and aspects of the use and conceptualisation of landscape; see chapters 4 and 5) continued into the Roman period from the Iron Age, the symbolic nature of industrial activity, and rituals involved in metalworking, may have survived in the Roman period in Britain and even into the late Roman period. Reconstructing the Roman economy, including 'industrial' activity, also requires consideration of aspects of social life, including religious belief, that it will have involved (Hingley 2006b: 216; Merrifield 1987: 7). Drawing upon pre-Roman archaeology and ethnographic studies, it is proposed here that metalworking activities were bound up with ritual and belief and notions of regeneration and renewal. Their location within the public buildings, with all the symbolism attached to the metalworking, perhaps drew on pre-existing practices bringing the activities to central places and forming a focus for associated activities.

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[232] The Appleford hoard was found during gravel extraction and consisted of 24 pewter vessels apparently deposited in two piles, one of small bowls and one of plates. With the hoard was a group of iron objects, including a cauldron chain and steelyard, quern stone fragments, pottery mostly of the fourth century, animal bones and parts of human skull (D. Brown 1973). Other hoards include five pewter plates from a gravel pit at Shepperton, Surrey, which is likely to be an extinct watery context (Poulton and Scott 1993: 116) and a hoard of four pewter vessels from a well at Stanwick villa, Northamptonshire (Neal 1989: 165).

[233] Some of the vessels have evidence for defective manufacture including rims splitting and casting marks and other irregularities making it unlikely that they had been used as parts of dinner services (Poulton and Scott 1993: 128).

[234] Droplets of pewter waste were found at the fourth century A.D. site at Kilverstone, Norfolk, in the context of iron object and pewter vessel deposition in pits (Lucy with Challands 2006: 166) which may also indicate the special nature of its production.

9.4.7 *Evidence for the symbolic significance of metalworking within the public buildings*

The available evidence for religious activity associated with the metalworking will now be considered. This is with the proviso that more work clearly needs to be undertaken on the metalworking industry within Roman Britain to further address these aspects. The evidence assessed here is likely to be a fragment of what once existed.

Within the annexe of the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter, contemporary with, or directly succeeding, the bronze-working, the bodies of four foetuses or newly born babies were deposited, one of which was directly within a casting pit and another next to a post-hole of a timber structure which was associated with the metalworking (Diagram 102; P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 81-6). Metalworking continued here after the baby burials, with new hearths constructed associated with metalworking débris (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 83-4). A further burial was in the floor near the exit from the northern half of the annexe to the southern half, while the fourth was that found by Kenyon in her 1930s excavations in the northwest corner of the north room (Kenyon 1938: 188).

There are classical references to infant burial, but it is likely that in Britain these were combined with local practices and ideas. Struck (1993) has drawn attention to the fact that infant burials in Roman times appear to have been located more often within settlements than in the extramural cemeteries.[235] Few, however, have been found within towns in Britain[236] and more are known from villa sites. There are some urban examples which support the ritual aspect of infant burial, such as from the *insula* IX excavations at Silchester (Diagram 70). At Silchester the bones from a minimum of four infants were discovered placed within pits, apparently not as complete skeletons (Snelling 2006: 200-5). These were with animal bones and may represent ritual deposits; the possibility of infanticide can also not be overruled (*ibid.*).

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[235] This is based partly on classical references such as Pliny (*NH* VII.15) describing the practice in Italy of inhuming infants within settlements rather than using cremation because they did not possess a soul and so there was nothing to survive at death. There is also the well-known passage by Plutarch stating that "our people do not bring libations to those of their children who die in infancy, nor do they observe in their case any of the other rites that the living are expected to perform for the dead, as such children have no part in earth or earthly things; nor do they tarry where the burial is celebrated, at the graves, or at the laying out of the dead, and sit by the bodies. For the laws forbid us to mourn for infants, holding it impiety to mourn for those who have departed to a dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine" (*Moralia* 612a). In Britain, the small number of infant burials from extramural urban cemeteries is a well-noted phenomenon and it does seem that infants were treated differently from older children and adults, both in the Iron Age and Roman periods (Philpott 1991: 97). Other possibilities for the small number of burials include the poor survival of infants in the archaeological record and separate areas for infant burials, as may have been identified at Cirencester (Cool 2004: 289-90; McWhirr *et al.* 1982: 110, 136). That they do come from cemeteries, albeit in small numbers (*e.g.* Barber and Bowsher 2000: 212-3; McWhirr *et al.* 1982; Stead and Rigby 1989: 247), suggests that it is a complex issue perhaps involving different traditions. Certainly those excavated from the Eastern Cemetery at London do not appear to have been treated differently in burial although it was suggested that they may have been higher status (Barber and Bowsher 2000: 213).

[236] In London, for example, only one infant burial is known from within the town (Barber and Bowsher 2000: 312-3). This was found in one corner of a waterfront warehouse at Regis House and dated to around A.D. 60-70 (Barber and Bowsher 2000: 312). At Verulamium, ten infant burials were found in Wheeler's excavations beneath the floors of domestic buildings (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 138-9). Although more examples could be found through further excavation, the small number does contrast with those on rural sites such as the ninety-seven from Hambledon villa, Buckinghamshire (Cocks 1921: 150), which indicate the high infant mortality rate at this time (Philpott 1991: 101). In a late Roman urban context, a number of infant burials came from the aisled building excavated on the Greyhounds Yard site at Dorchester dating from A.D. 350 and later (P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 82).

Infant bodies are likely to have been treated in a variety of ways, including deposition in pits, and it is also possible that they were deposited into rivers (Barber and Bowsher 2000: 313). The concentration of burials within the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter, associated with the metalworking, does, then, appear to be significant. At Leicester two baby burials were found in the same location as metalworking. Although the exact chronology of events is still uncertain here (T. Higgins pers. comm.), it may support the connection between ritual and metalworking. This association may have had symbolic and ritual meanings linked with the regeneration of the building or place on a wider scale;[237] the practice drawing on pre-Roman beliefs, which Scott (1991: 119-20) saw as integral to the rural burials that she studied.

In the *basilica* at Silchester (Diagram 89) there is also some evidence that suggests religious activity associated with the metalworking. Contemporary with the phase of iron-working which concentrated at both ends of the hall, was a tiled area, laid down within the hall, now represented only by a few remaining tiles (Fulford and Timby 2000: 74-5). There were also traces of slots indicating a timber structure that may have enclosed it (*ibid.*). There was markedly less iron slag and other iron-working débris in the vicinity of this area, which would suggest that it was deliberately kept clear. There was also a large number of late-third and early-fourth century coins in this area and two oak leaves cut from sheet lead (although one was unstratified; *ibid.*: 72-5, 578). The function of this area remains uncertain, but these finds suggest that a domestic interpretation for the structure is unlikely and that the evidence may represent a shrine, in use at the same time as (and even associated with) the industrial activity. Such an interpretation might also be supported by the animal bones from the building of a contemporary date to the metalworking.

Well F127 and adjacent pit F107 in the nearby north range of the *basilica* contained a large number of bird and fish bones as well as sheep bones, the remains of two neo-natal pigs and iron slag (*ibid.*: 69-71; Grant 2000: 470). Pit F18 within the northern area of the metalworking, near the tiled area, and the general occupation layer within the building (7.13) also produced a high incidence of bird bones.[238] Fulford and Timby (2000: 577-8) argue that this may relate to feasting and sacrifices taking place within the *basilica* and is unlikely to represent solely domestic occupation. Its association with the metalworking evidence points to these religious

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[237] The possibility that some infant burials were used as ritual foundation deposits or to increase the strength of buildings has been discussed (Philpott 1991: 100). At Temple IV at Springhead, for example, four infant burials were found inserted in the corners of the temple *cella* at times of reflooring. One each of the pair had been decapitated (Penn 1960: 121-2).

[238] Serjeantson's (2000: 500) study of the bird bones from Period 7 indicates the high proportion of these bones compared with other animals and suggests this is unlikely to reflect overall food consumption patterns across the town at this time, thus indicating special activity. He has also demonstrated that there is little evidence for the consumption of laying hens and that there was a high proportion of cocks amongst the bones of mature birds, suggesting the fowls were kept for ritual purposes as well as food. Grant's (2000: 476) study of all the Period 7 bones from the *basilica* also identified the deliberate selection of male birds and also the high proportion of sheep compared with cattle bones. These may relate to the food débris from an élite group using the building or they may have been connected with ritual acts within the building. The remains of two neo-natal pigs from Well F127 also suggest ritual deposition (*ibid.*: 477) with comparisons identified in assemblages that seemed to have resulted from religious activity on other sites (*e.g.* Grant 1975).

and ritualised activities being intertwined with the industrial processes. Such an interpretation may also be supported by the evidence from the rear range of the *principia* at York, where there was a late-fourth or fifth century horizon of young pig bones contemporary with the metalworking débris (D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 64). The large assemblage of young pigs may suggest élite activities, perhaps feasting, rather than simply butchery on the site (*ibid.*). Metalworking may also have been associated with feasting and religious activities in the late pre-Roman Iron Age, such as at Camulodunum, Verulamium and Silchester (see chapter 5).

More ambiguous evidence comes from the southwest end of the *basilica* at Cirencester, contemporary with the late-fourth century metalworking evidenced within Rooms 2 and 3/4 (Diagram 53). At this time, the doorway between Rooms 1 and 2 was blocked making Room 1 a dead space, unless there was now another entrance into the room. Nineteenth-century excavations within the room by Wilfred Cripps uncovered a large number of oyster shells together with a dog skeleton (Holbrook 1998: 108). Some studies have demonstrated that dog burials are often found associated with religious activity and ritual deposits (*e.g.* K. Smith 2006), although not specifically associated with metalworking. The deposition of waste material into pits at the end of the metalworking process, as in the Exeter *basilica* (Diagram 62; Bidwell 1979: 110-1), may relate to the religious significance of the material (Bourke 2001; Giles 2007a; Hingley 1997b)[239] and tie into the broader practice of ritual pit deposits (*e.g.* Fulford 2001; J.D. Hill 1995a).[240]

Chapter 5 indicated that metalworking activity was an important aspect of the rôle of many sites in the late pre-Roman Iron Age. It is possible that the metalworking activities within the public buildings in the late Roman period can be linked in some way with this pre-conquest activity. Perhaps industrial production within the public buildings was also connected with the governing élite of the town, while other parts of the buildings were used for their original functions. If production included the manufacture of metal vessels in bronze and pewter, as indicated by the moulds found, these may have been mainly for the use of the élite due to the value that they presumably possessed. Some vessels, especially those in pewter, may indicate the presence of Christianity within the towns (*cf.* Petts 2003: 38-9; see section 6.3.2). The special nature of pewter in Britain is perhaps also indicated by the fact that its use for making vessels was almost solely confined to Britain at this time (D. Brown 1976: 26).

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[239] Metalworking débris placed into pits has also been identified on Iron Age sites such as Gussage All Saints (Spratling 1979), Danebury (Cunliffe 1993: 94) and the Iron Age coin moulds deposited at Verlamion (Frere 1983: 31).

[240] Although not in an urban context, more direct links between religion and metalworking might be indicated by the evidence for metalworking on temple sites. In the Roman period there is evidence for metalworking associated with some temples such as Uley, where there were hearths and the remains of copper alloy working (Bayley 1993: 215). In the later Roman period there is evidence for activity within the buildings themselves, as in Temple One at Springhead in Kent, dating to the late-fourth century (Penn 1959) and Brean Down in Somerset (ApSimon 1959: 129). Collections of metalwork within the temple at Wroxeter (Diagram 108; Bushe-Fox 1914: 2-9) and the Butt Road building in Colchester (Diagram 58; N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 184) suggest that metalworking took place there or nearby.

9.5 Metalworking within earlier phases of public buildings and at other locations within towns

During the collection of data, a few cases of metalworking were found in earlier periods of public buildings, but the small number of instances does not compare with the number documented for the late Roman period. From the contexts in which this evidence was found it seems more likely to have been associated with construction and maintenance activities connected with the buildings, rather than with the use to which the buildings were being put. This is in noticeable contrast to the late Roman evidence. The cases of maintenance include phases of the *basilica* at Cirencester where, perhaps in the early-third century, there is evidence for lead-working within Room 3a which was part of the later Room 3/4 (Rooms 3a, 3b and 4 combined; Diagram 53). The remains consisted of spillages of molten lead as well as lead fragments, stake-holes and a burnt floor (Holbrook 1998: 108), and it may be that this activity was connected with repairs to the building (Bayley 1998). Other examples are provided by the *forum* at Lincoln (Steane 2006) and by the *basilica* at Exeter (Bidwell 1979). Additional evidence for such activities may not have survived since it is likely to have been cleared away in later phases. There also seems to have been metalworking within early phases of the outer range of the Leicester Vine Street structure which returns in the late Roman period (Buckley 2007), possibly supporting the commercial or workshop function here.

Industrial activity will, of course, have taken place across towns throughout the Roman period, with workshops and larger production areas including metalworking, glass production and bone-working (Mattingly 2006a: 321). More research is needed on industry within townscapes, but some recent studies have improved our understanding of this activity. In Southwark in London, for example, excavations on the site of the Courage Brewery bottling plant and nearby sites have revealed workshops dating from the A.D. 70s into the late-fourth and perhaps fifth century (Hammer 2003). At Winchester, excavations at Victoria Road in the northern suburbs produced nearly 400 iron bars, strips and plates from iron-working activities (information from Winchester Museums Service). The nature of the deposit, containing other waste, suggests that it was probably dumped there, but it does indicate iron-working in or around the town in the Roman period.

Late Roman iron-working has been located within a property in the Silchester *insula* IX excavations dating to the fourth century (Fulford *et al.* 2006; Tootell 2006), although only 16.43kg of slag was found at this metalworking site compared with the 90.5kg from the *basilica,* indicating smaller scale activities here and emphasising the larger concentration within the *basilica.*[241] If the Vine Street courtyard structure in Leicester was a townhouse

[241] This is especially the case considering the amount of slag that may have been removed from the structure without record during the Victorian and Edwardian excavations.

rather than *mansio*, it would provide another indication of metalworking and other craft production within domestic structures. In Lincoln, iron slag was identified within a late Roman townhouse at Hungate in the lower town (M. Jones 2002: 140; 2003b: 92, 134). Small-scale industrial activity may have been fairly common within townhouses and workshops in the late Roman period, as it was in earlier periods (Fulford *et al.* 2006: 268; McWhirr 1986).[242]

Evidence from such locations does not, however, detract from the importance of such activity within public buildings, which until the late Roman period appear to have been kept largely clear of these processes. This remains a striking and significant aspect of the late Roman townscape, and raises the important issue of where metalworking was taking place in towns in the earlier Roman period. Metalworking seems to have been kept clear of public buildings at this time, but very little is known about where it occurred. Although the examples above show metalworking could have taken place across towns and in the suburbs, this is a topic that requires further study.

9.6 Conclusions

This chapter has discussed various interpretations of the evidence for industrial activity found within public buildings in the late Roman period and has argued that this evidence can be used to counter a previous emphasis on decline. It also shows that the siting of metalworking within the public buildings in the late Roman period, and the contemporary activity associated with it, had both a practical and symbolic purpose and played an important part in the biographies of the buildings. The vitality of the late towns is also shown by the presence of bone-working, which was probably more extensive than can be proved from the surviving evidence, and by other crafts such as wood-working and textile production, the evidence for which also rarely survives. The potential for further research has also been assessed in this chapter.

The interpretation of the evidence developed here suggests that the public buildings in the heart of the towns were real and symbolic centres of production and regeneration, and that metalworking, and the rituals associated with it, represented renewal and continuity. Former notions of decline neglected other, and sometimes complementary, interpretations of the data including government *fabricae* and the religious explanations. It is even possible that the industrial activity, and its symbolic significance, was a response to perceived changes to the towns. Although historical sources can play some rôle in understanding the activity, the archaeological evidence can provide additional insights to complement them.

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[242] Traces of small-scale iron-working have been identified at a few urban sites such as the Greyhound Yard site at Dorchester, spanning the first to fifth centuries (McDonnell 1993) and sites at Cirencester (Bayley 1998).

The industrial activity would have affected movement and experiences within the buildings, contrasting with earlier organisations of space, but this does not rule out a continued involvement of the urban élite at these places. A controlling authority, or patron, is possible and this would also suggest continued authority within the towns as a whole. The public buildings may have remained *foci* within the towns, with other activities, even including meetings of the *curia*, taking place within the buildings at the same time as the metalworking. In the late pre-Roman Iron Age, metalworking and other activities, were important at many places preceding the towns (see chapter 5), these activities also being integrated with the élite presence and religious nature of the sites (Haselgrove and Millett 1997; J.D. Hill 2007). It is possible, although difficult to document, that the late Roman use of these buildings drew upon the meaning of the earlier sites, emphasised through the significance of industrial production. The *forum-basilica* and other Roman public buildings could now have been adapted to fit local traditions where the forge or hearth was central to meetings, networking, social activity, power and ritual. The *forum-basilica* remained an important central place, which perhaps led to its being the obvious site in which to locate the metalworking when there was less emphasis on the classical nature of the townscape. The non-central location of most of the amphitheatres and theatres may explain why there has so far been no evidence for industrial activity from these buildings.

This would suggest that the Roman towns drew upon the earlier importance of their sites and that the activity within the public buildings in the late Roman period can be considered part of this continuity. Practical considerations, such as making use of tall masonry architecture as a convenient location for hearths and furnaces, are likely to have played a part in the choice of public buildings for the industrial activity, but the practical will have gone alongside the symbolic. The metalworking indicates that each town remained a place of power which was constantly being regenerated but also drew upon long-term traditions. This is further supported by other evidence for activities taking place within the buildings, as discussed in the next chapters.

Chapter 10: Timber structures within and on the site of public buildings

10.1 Introduction

Timber structures have been identified within public buildings, or occasionally on demolished areas, in the late Roman period. They were sometimes associated with the industrial activity examined in chapter 9. This chapter addresses the type of structural evidence that survives: such an analysis will assist both identification of comparable buildings in future excavations and re-examination of the literature. The finds assemblages from the excavation will be studied in order to examine the function of the timber structures. The implications that these structures have on our understanding of the use of public buildings and towns in the late Roman period will also be addressed.

This type of evidence has been interpreted as representing "slum conditions" in the centre of the town (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 30), squatters amongst the ruins (Collingwood and Myres 1936: 206) and a "degenerate" situation of "shanty towns of huts and shelters" (Faulkner 1996: 94; 2000a: 124) at a period when Roman civilisation and order seemed to have decayed and vanished. For other scholars (*e.g.* Wickham 2005: 598), these buildings have been considered as encroachments onto public space, taken either to represent a sign of vitality following the decay of zoning regulations, or of the general decline in control of municipal responsibilities. Timber structures and stalls will have been a common accompaniment to *fora* and temples (see chapter 7) – the evidence for their presence in the late Roman period would indicate continuing activity rather than decline (*cf.* Potter 1995).[243]

In some cases the structures might indicate additional uses to which the buildings were being put – and denser occupation around them (Wickham 1999: 13) – rather than an end of their importance as public spaces. Loseby's (1996) study of fourth and fifth century Arles in *Gallia Narbonensis* demonstrated that, despite the historically-attested importance of the city at this time, there was evidence of timber structures within public buildings. For Loseby, this was connected with Church influences which placed emphasis on Christian buildings while letting those associated with paganism fall into decay. Others have reminded us, however, that pagan ways will have survived despite the decay of public buildings and the presence of Christianity; the centres would have remained powerful and meaningful (B. Ward-Perkins 1984: 45). Certainly timber constructions within public buildings, such as in the theatre at Italica, *Baetica*, (Rodríguez Gutiérrez 2004) and the *forum-basilica* at Bavay, *Gallia Belgica*, do not indicate the disuse of these as public buildings (see chapter 13). It appears that timber structures formed just one part of the use the public buildings.

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[243] Potter's (1995) excavations of the *forum* at Cherchel (*Iol Caesarea*) in Algeria identified what appear to have been timber stalls constructed in the fourth century clearly indicating considerable activity still taking place here. While acknowledging this, Potter still sees them in largely negative terms as implying the end of classical organisation, even though it is possible that timber stalls had been in the *forum* in earlier periods as well.

B. Ward-Perkins (2005: 94-5) sees timber structures as representing "the disappearance of comfort" and the end of civilisation. His excavations on a small area of the *forum* at Luni in northern Italy, which uncovered traces of two timber buildings cutting into the robbed *forum* floor, became a well known type-site to support his argument for the decline of towns (1978; 1981); but Cameron (1993a: 198) sees this as applying "inappropriate classical norms" to the evidence. The excavations were also small-scale and need not reflect the whole area.[244] A detailed examination of each public building in Britain will identify not only the buildings with traces of timber structures but also those without. This also has implications for their continued use in the late Roman period, since in many cases it implies that the building spaces continued to be kept clear for some kind of use.

10.2 The structural evidence

This section discusses the nature of the surviving archaeological evidence for timber structures within the public buildings; more detailed information can be found in the appendix, especially Gazetteer 5. It groups the evidence into various types (figure 10.1) and also examines the problems with identification of structures, highlighting the difficulty in understanding the later phases of public buildings. Examining the character of the timber constructions also provides more information regarding the state of the public buildings themselves at this time. The analysis of the known examples of timber structures demonstrates that whilst the archaeological survival for these features is likely to be partial and disturbed, and any evidence probably represents more that has since been lost, such structures do not appear to have been especially common within late public building phases. This suggests that the evidence from Britain does not provide support for Ward-Perkins' (1978) model from Luni.

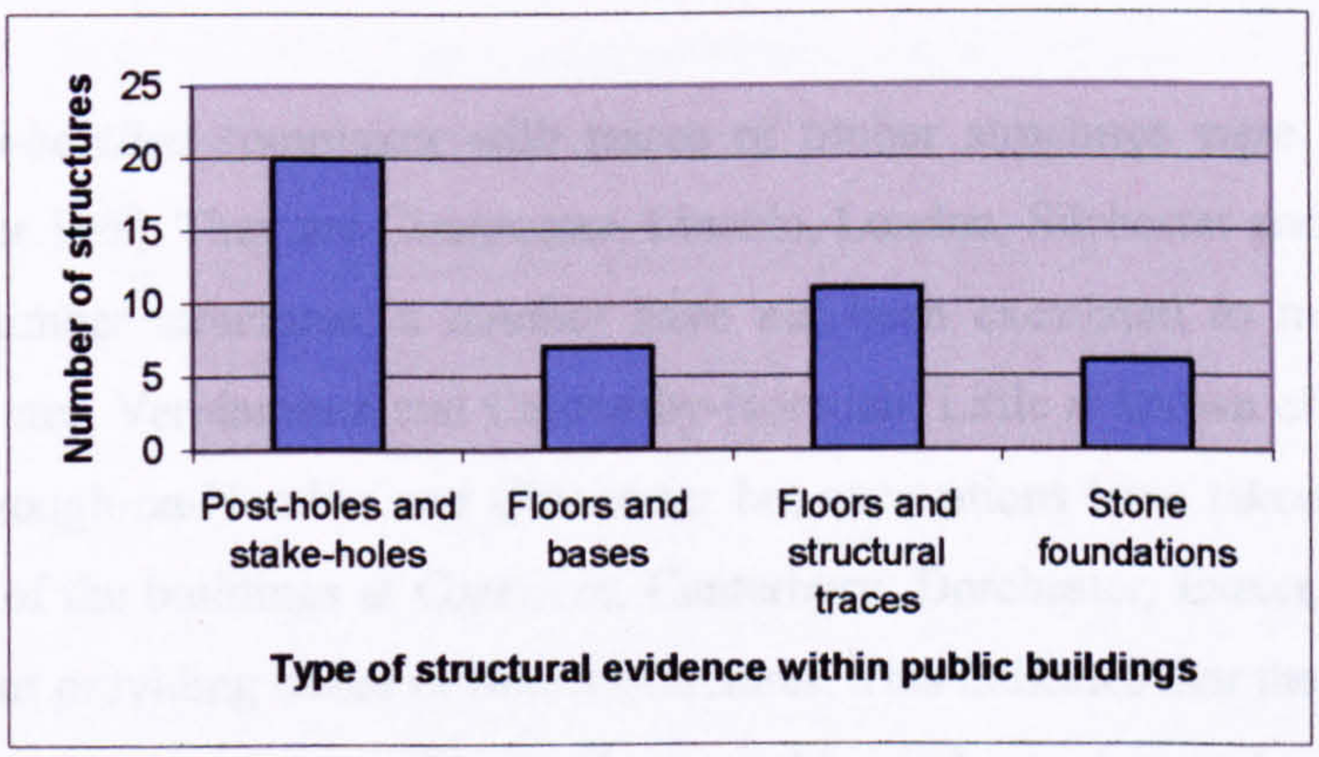

Figure 10.1: Graph showing the type of evidence of timber structures surviving and their frequency within the public buildings. Bases consisted of gravel or other surfaces on or around which the structures were built. Structural traces that sometimes survive include timber beam slots.

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[244] Lavan (2006) has also now presented a rich variety of archaeological and documentary evidence which shows that the importance of the *fora* of Mediterranean towns often continued into the sixth and seventh centuries.

Figure 10.2 shows that public buildings of each type without evidence for timber structures always exceed the number of those with evidence by at least 50%. This suggests that timber structures may not provide an especially useful indicator for the condition of public buildings and their decline in the late Roman period. Figure 10.3 looks solely at the buildings for which some excavation was conducted from 1960 onwards in order to see whether the conditions of excavation made a difference to the discovery of timber structures. The data largely supports figure 10.2, which includes all the buildings in the database. Differences from figure 10.2 are most noticeable for the *forum-basilica* complexes and bathhouses, where the gap between the number of buildings with and without traces of timber structures is smaller on sites excavated after 1960.

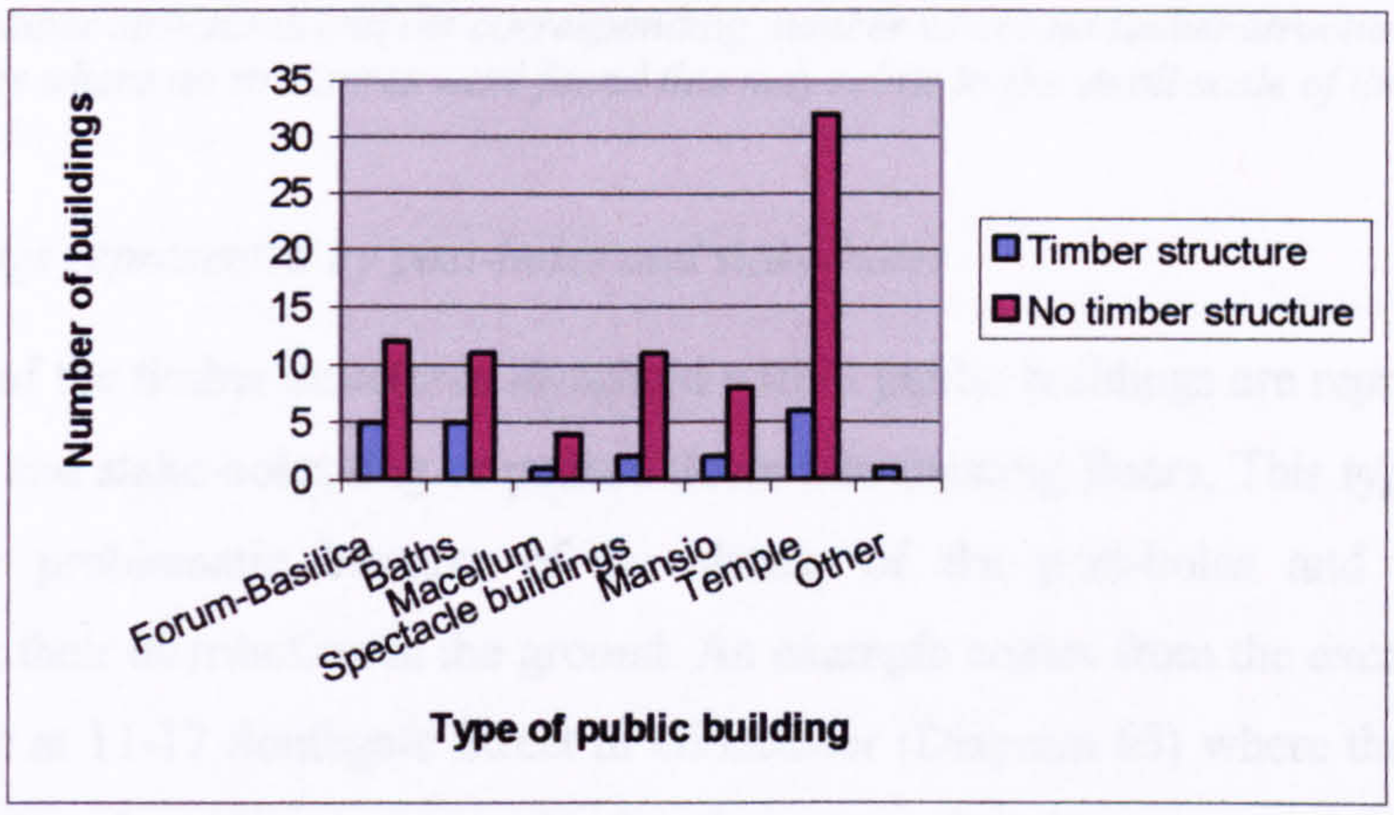

Figure 10.2: Graph showing the number of public buildings with evidence for timber structures and the corresponding number where no timber structures have been found. The results are likely to be influenced by the extent to which, and period in which, the building has been excavated. Examining the dates of the latest excavations of the buildings, 28 were excavated in the 1950s or earlier, 19 in the 1960s, 18 in the 1970s, 16 in the 1980s and 5 in the 1990s or later. It is possible that modern excavation would be able to reveal more detailed information about the latest phases of the sites.

The five *forum-basilica* complexes with traces of timber structures were excavated most recently, all after 1960. They are Cirencester, Lincoln, London, Silchester and Winchester. Of those without timber structures, a number have not been excavated to modern standards including Wroxeter, Verulamium and Caistor-by-Norwich. Little is known of the buildings at Aldborough, Brough-on-Humber and Chichester but excavations have taken place since the 1960s on parts of the buildings at Caerwent, Canterbury, Dorchester, Exeter, Gloucester and Leicester without providing traces of timber structures. This indicates that the period in which the building was excavated can influence the available evidence, but at the same time there are many buildings that did not reveal evidence for timber structures.

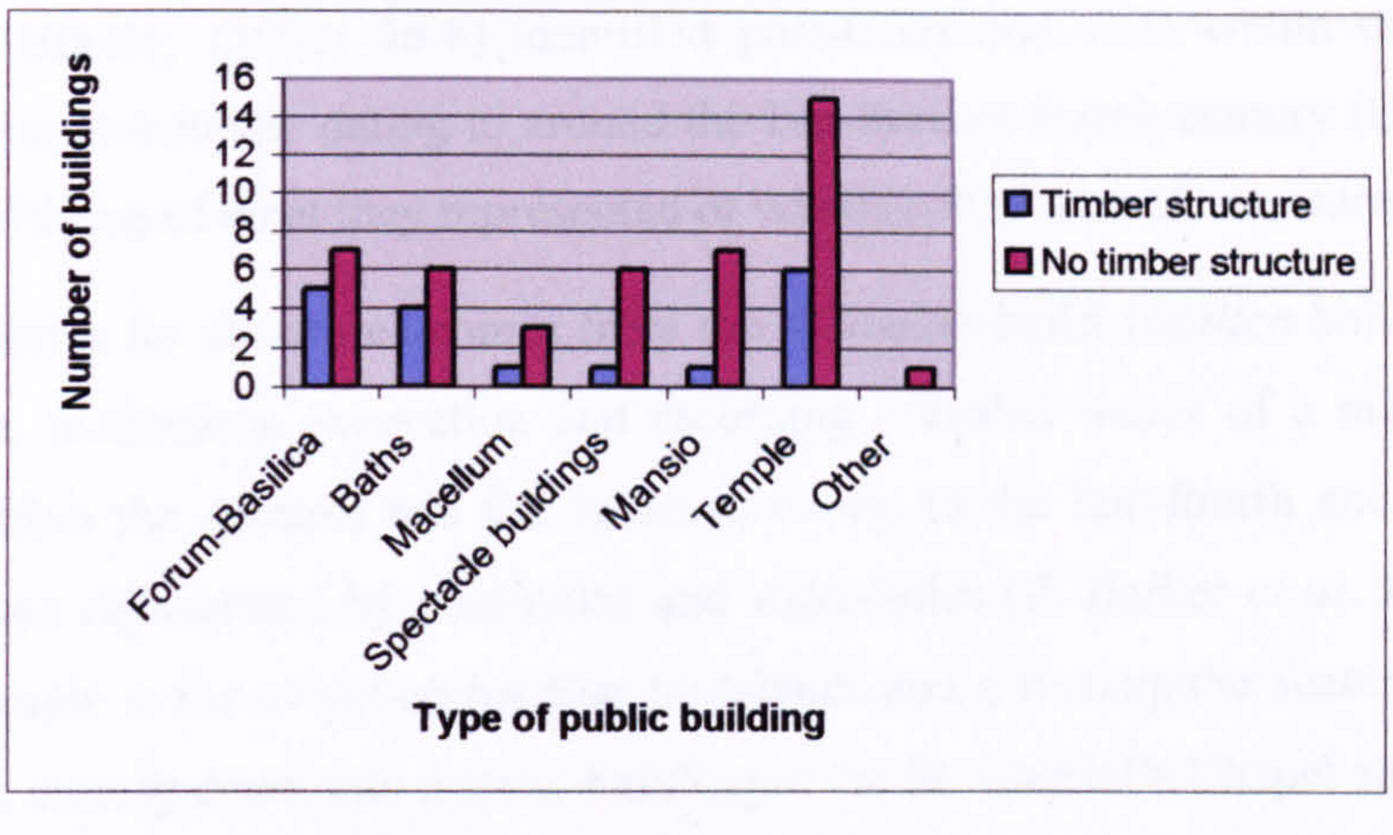

Figure 10.3: Graph showing the number of public buildings excavated from 1960 onwards with evidence for timber structures and the corresponding number where no timber structures were found. On some sites where no structures were found this may relate to the small scale of the excavation.

10.2.1 *Buildings represented by post-holes and stake-holes*

The majority of the timber structures identified within public buildings are represented solely by post-holes and stake-holes dug or pushed down into existing floors. This type of evidence can often be problematic because of the dating of the post-holes and the difficulty understanding their distribution in the ground. An example comes from the excavations of the *forum-basilica* at 11-17 Southgate Street in Gloucester (Diagram 63) where there were three square post-holes, dated by pottery to the fourth century, dug down into the *forum* courtyard after paving slabs had been removed (Hurst 1972: 53). There is insufficient evidence to interpret this structure but its existence does not mean that the rest of the building complex did not remain standing and in use at this time. Equally problematic are the four post-holes dug into the south corner of the internal colonnade of the Verulamium *mansio* (Diagram 95; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 96). These were interpreted as representing a structure of around 3.75m by 4.5m but there was no evidence to indicate its date, nature or function.

Post-holes of a structure were found in the 1960s excavations of the Cirencester amphitheatre but there is some doubt regarding its interpretation (Diagram 55). Within Trench AU1, which opened a small area within the arena, there was evidence for five post-holes in the uppermost layer (Holbrook 1998: 170-1). Post-hole I, however, was of an irregular shape and may have been a soft spot in the metalling rather than a post-hole (*ibid.*). Post-hole V contained sherds of twelfth-century green-glazed wares which might indicate that it was later in date than the other post-holes. The layer sealing all the post-holes, however, contained a coin of the House of Theodosius (A.D. 379-455) and in the layer beneath them were coins of A.D. 330-41. This might mean that the medieval sherds were the result of later disturbance and that there was a late Roman timber structure here although exactly what activity it represents within the arena

is uncertain. Bradley (1975: 56-8) identified post-holes and slots within the arena of the amphitheatre at Dorchester dating to around the late-third or fourth century (Diagram 61) but there is no evidence of what they represented or whether they formed structures.

Definite evidence for structures comes from the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* building (Diagrams 101-3). Here, meticulous excavation and recording revealed traces of a number of timber structures within the Annexe and the *basilica*, dating to the late-fourth and fifth centuries, including those represented by post-holes and stake-holes (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 81-2, 99). Another example is the evidence for four post-holes and a rectangular feature, accompanied by iron nails, cutting down into a stone building at the St. Gabriel's Chapel site in Canterbury dating to the late-third or fourth century (Diagram 47; Driver *et al.* 1990: 85). There was also a series of shallow stake-holes cutting through the northeast part of the demolished ambulatory of the octagonal temple at Chelmsford, dating to the early-fifth century (Diagram 50; Wickenden 1992: 42-3). Timber constructions, or at least partitions, have been identified within a large room in the southeast corner of the Leicester Vine Street building (Diagram 70; T. Higgins pers. comm.). The recognition of such evidence in recent excavations demonstrates the level of detail that can be retrieved through careful excavation.

Generally, little can be stated about the nature of the structures represented solely by post-holes or stake-holes, but in some cases they can be of use for assessing the structural condition of the public buildings. Most evidence seems to indicate insubstantial timber structures, often open-fronted lean-to structures, as in the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 81-2). This probably suggests that the public buildings were in adequate condition to provide wall and roof support.

10.2.2 *Buildings represented by floors and bases*

Another way in which structures have been identified is the presence of platforms and areas of surfacing around or on which they would have been constructed. Again, these surviving traces do not reveal much about the nature of the superstructures and their interpretation can be problematic. Excavations of the London *basilica* on the Leadenhall site (Diagram 77; see section 8.2.1) uncovered a number of clay post-pads, rather than post-holes, over the last *opus signinum* floor within this area of the nave which most likely supported a timber floor and dated to the early-fourth century (G. Milne 1992: 33). This either represents a structure built within the nave or reflooring of the whole area – both options indicate continuing use of the *basilica* and the importance of timber construction in the late Roman period. At the 168 Fenchurch Street excavations (Diagram 78), the base of another structure was found constructed over a section of the south and east wings of the London *forum* (Dunwoodie 2004: 34). Other examples include a series of floors found at the Peter's Hill site (Diagram 84; T.

Williams 1993: 26-32) within the 'Allectan Palace' complex in London, and rubble platforms across the courtyard of the *insula* VI building at Cirencester (Diagram 56; Holbrook 1998: 135). At the Westgate Street temple in Gloucester (Diagram 64) there were surviving traces of timber planks representing the floor of a structure (Heighway and Garrod 1980: 82) and at the Leicester *macellum* there was a layer of stone, brick and tile indicating a floor for some kind of building (Diagram 68; N. Cooper unpublished).

There is no knowledge of the superstructures of these buildings but they do suggest more substantial constructions than those represented by post-holes alone. The construction of this type of building within courtyards of public buildings may indicate that the roofed parts of the buildings remained standing and in use, demonstrating a complex use of public buildings at this time. Not only were the stone buildings themselves still in use but there was also an intensification of activity surrounding them, suggesting that they remained *foci* of activity within the towns.

10.2.3 *Buildings represented by floors and traces of structural evidence*

In some cases, slightly more in the way of traces of timber buildings have been uncovered in the form of floor surfaces or bases for timber platforms, combined with sill beams and post-holes. Examples include the sequence of timber buildings within the *forum* at Lincoln, probably dating to the fifth century and represented by timber slots, post-holes and small areas of paving (Diagrams 73-5; Steane 2006: 154-7). At Canterbury, post-holes, slots and floors of crushed *opus signinum* dating to the late-fourth to fifth centuries were found within the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 190). At Wroxeter, the floors and slots found within the porticoes of the baths building (Diagram 104-7), indicate separate floors or stalls dating to the late-third and fourth centuries (Ellis 2000: 58-9). Many of these structures appear to have been integrated into the public buildings since they relied on them for support.

10.2.4 *Buildings with stone foundations*

A small number of buildings were constructed with more substantial foundations, although little is known about their superstructures. The excavator of the bath building at Caerwent in the 1920s (Nash-Williams 1930) claimed to have uncovered a structure, dated by coins to the late-fourth century, that appeared to lie over the demolished colonnade of the baths, and used parts of the walls of the bath as its base. Watts (1998), however, argues that its identification as a new structure is questionable and the evidence is more likely to represent late alterations to the baths structure itself (Diagram 39). Another more reliable example comes from the excavations of the Huggin Hill public baths in London where third and fourth century structures reused stone from the baths in their foundations (Diagram 79; Marsden 1976;

MoLAS archive DMT88). Although they appear to have been on a demolished area of the building, other parts probably remained standing as suggested by references to the Hwaetmundes stan (see section 8.3.2).

10.2.5 *Discussion*

The evidence for structures within public buildings in the late-third to early-fifth centuries is clearly very varied and some examples are more reliable than others. Dating the structures can be problematic, with some possibly falling in the medieval period (*e.g.* the Cirencester amphitheatre). Although timber structures were probably more common than demonstrated by the surviving archaeological evidence, too much emphasis has perhaps been placed on using this type of evidence as indicators of the declining state of the public buildings. Analysis of all public buildings indicates that there is still a large number lacking evidence for timber structures, which need not relate to the period of excavation; other public buildings may have remained in use without such later alterations.[245]

10.3 The function of the timber structures and where they occur

Where timber structures have been identified, a study of the finds within them might give some indication as to their use as well as suggesting the activities that took place in other parts of the buildings at the same time. This section will focus on the finds signatures from a number of examples of timber buildings – which also requires knowledge of the site formation processes. The difficulties with using finds to identify the use of structures were discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.4). Care must be taken in assessing the context of the finds and the way in which they were deposited.

Analysis of the contexts within the buildings indicates that casual loss was a major way in which finds reached the archaeological record, although the dumping of material and site disturbance were also factors. The structured deposition on sites of single finds such as coins is difficult to identify with certainty, although some groups of finds have been defined, including coin hoards, as at the Vine Street excavations in Leicester (Diagram 70; T. Higgins pers. comm.). Wherever possible, deposits that were evidently associated with buildings because of construction disturbance or dumping were not included in the analyses.

The activities identified within structures include industrial activity and what was probably commercial, market and domestic activity. Some structures within public buildings may have been temples or shrines, as represented by religious artefacts such as statuettes (see section 10.3.4) but other activities within buildings such as metalworking are also likely to have involved religious ceremonies and rituals (see section 9.4.6). In analysing the material it will

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[245] The ownership of the buildings at this time is also an important issue, but not one that can be addressed adequately without documentary evidence; many may well have remained in public ownership as was also discussed in chapter 9 (section 9.4.3).

be argued that commercial and market activity is represented by finds such as animal bones and remains representing small-scale craft-working. Domestic activity is difficult to identify with certainty but it is possible that it might be represented by hearths, where associated industrial evidence is absent, and by other items of domestic débris.

Only in a few cases has a detailed study of the finds proved possible because of the nature of the excavation archives and the data available. Often the function of the structure has been difficult to identify. The nature of the finds information from the structures is explored here with regard to all the main public building types.

10.3.1 *The* forum-basilica

Twelve *forum-basilica* complexes have been excavated to some degree within the towns of Roman Britain, but, so far, at only five of these have traces of timber structures been identified.

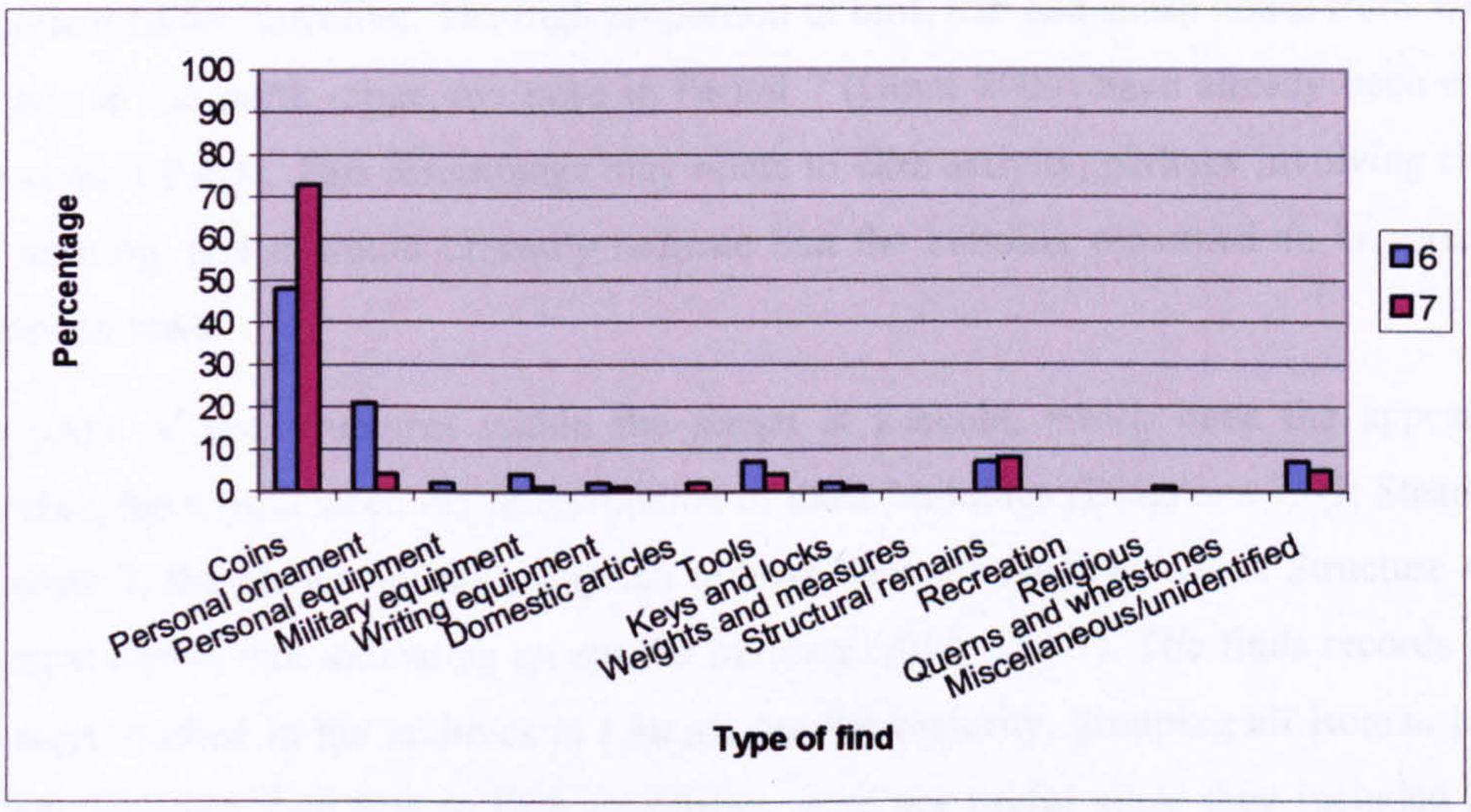

Figure 10.4: Graph showing the percentage of each type of find from periods 6 and 7 of the Silchester basilica *site prior to Period 8 post-Roman robbing. In total there were 56 finds in Phase 6 and 356 in Phase 7 but including 259 coins. Apart from the coins, the number of which rose sharply in Period 7, most percentages of find types are fairly similar. This suggests similar levels of activity within the building in these two periods. The finds from the excavation have been classified into groups by the author, drawing on seminal works of find classification such as by N. Crummy (1983).*

The finds from the Silchester *basilica* (Fulford and Timby 2000) were studied in detail and grouped into functional categories in an attempt to identify what was happening within the building at the time of the Period 7 timber structures (late-third and fourth centuries). These were most likely connected to evidence for industrial activity within the *basilica* addressed in the last chapter. It was Period 7 that saw a large increase in small finds, including 259 (73%) coins as opposed to 27 in Period 6 (second and third centuries) which was the main period of

construction and use of the *basilica* (figure 10.4) and 31 in Period 5, the timber *basilica*, of around the late-first century. It is unclear why there is so little material relating to Period 6, but it is possible that the hall was cleared and the flooring robbed before the late use of the building (*ibid.*: 76). If this is the case, then comparing the finds between periods is less meaningful. Alternatively, the use of the *basilica* in Period 6 need not have left much material, in contrast to the activities in Period 7, and the building is also likely to have been cleaned regularly in this period. This change in the way in which finds accumulated in the material record is useful for considering differences in use of the building and indicates that an analysis of the finds is worthwhile.

There was a concentration of coins around the tiled area (a possible shrine; see section 9.4.7) perhaps relating to religious activity (*ibid.*: 74). Alternatively, commercial activity within the *basilica* at the same time as the metalworking is possible. The sixteen pieces of personal ornament from Period 7 (only twelve came from Period 6) suggest that people were still using the building in spite of the industrial activity, although it is possible that some of the material was intended for recycling. The high proportion of bird, fish and sheep bones from Well F127 and pits in the north range and nave in Period 7 (Grant 2000) have already been examined (see section 9.4.7). This assemblage may relate to élite activity, perhaps involving ritual acts and feasting, and it would certainly indicate that the building remained an important place within the town.

The plans of the structures within the *forum* at Lincoln, which have the appearance of churches, have influenced the interpretation of these buildings (Diagrams 73-5; Steane 2006). Structure 3, the earlier building, appears to have been rectangular, whilst Structure 4 had an elliptical timber slot indicating an apsidal building (*ibid.*: 154-7). The finds records from the site were studied in the archives in Lincoln but the majority, grouping all Roman phases of the site together (late-first to fifth centuries), were not useful since they included 244 iron nails, 32 hobnails and 115 unidentified objects mainly consisting of small pieces of metal. Although it is possible that their use was associated with the 104 coins, 52 of which came from fourth century layers in the area, this does not provide a clear indication of a particular function. Gilmour (2007: 233) has argued that the earlier building faced north-south rather than east-west; this would make a church interpretation less likely and perhaps indicates that the building was a late Roman shrine or temple. The east-west orientation of Structure 4 is more certain, but its function less so.

The structures within the *forum-basilica* at London may have been related to the industrial evidence identified within this area of the complex (G. Milne 1992: 29-33; see section 9.2.1) although the débris did not come directly from within the area of the structures. The *forum-*

basilica at Leicester (Buckley 2000) and the *forum* courtyard at Gloucester (Hurst 1972: 58) have traces of timber structures but there is no evidence for their functions.

This analysis suggests that the *basilica* buildings remained centres of activity despite containing timber structures. Rather than decline, there was considerable activity taking place within the buildings, despite the fact that the finds seldom directly reflect the nature of the activities. Where there have been large-scale excavations with a detailed recording of the finds, as at the Silchester *basilica*, the distribution of the activities within the buildings can begin to be approached, although there will also have been activities that do not now survive in the archaeological record. Loseby (1996: 54) argued that timber buildings within *forum-basilica* complexes represent their redundancy and the redefinition of the boundaries between public and private space. The evidence presented here, however, indicates that these claims are too simplistic because the finds reflect considerable evidence for their continued use. There was a variety in the late biographies of buildings that requires analysis.

10.3.2 *Bathhouses*

Five bathhouses have evidence for timber structures, but eleven of those excavated so far have no evidence, although in some cases this could relate to the size and manner of excavation.[246] Where the timber structures do occur it would indicate that the bathing function was no longer in operation, but this need not apply to the whole building where bathing could have continued on a reduced scale. Cool's (2006) study of finds from the fortress bathhouse at Caerleon from the first to third century indicates that a working bathhouse could result in a large amount of material from activities taking place there. These included small finds, glass vessels and animal bones probably from eating there. Such results may be useful for indicating changes to the use of baths in the late Roman period.

A detailed study was carried out of the finds from the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997) where the timber structures were associated with industrial activity (Diagram 101) but where there is also evidence for activities other than metalworking taking place within the building at this time. Although the excavations covered a large area of the building, and involved the careful recording of finds and their contexts, no layers earlier than the *basilica* in its final form were excavated (Phase S). This does not make analysis of the use of the building over the longer term possible. The finds that were examined in the excavation archive were only those that are likely to have come from primary deposits (labelled Category A finds in the report, R. White 1997) and not those that were probably brought in from outside and

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[246] The eleven excavated buildings where no traces of timber structures have so far been found are the Caistor-by-Norwich bathhouse, the Canterbury St. George's Street bathhouse, the bath buildings at Carmarthen, Dorchester, Exeter, Leicester, Silchester, Winchester, York and the *insula* III and Branch Road bathhouses at Verulamium. None of these bath buildings have been excavated to any great extent and at some only very slight traces are known. Many also suffer from considerable later disturbance so traces of timber structures are less likely to survive.

dumped there (Category B and C finds; see section 2.4). The reliability of these categories is not absolute, but represent an attempt to distinguish the different ways in which the finds reached the site improves the methodology of using finds data.

Phase S of the baths-*basilica* was the earliest excavated phase within the building and produced very few finds that came from definite primary deposits, consisting of one structural fitting and some unidentified miscellaneous artefacts. Phase T produced only one coin from the Nave, two domestic objects and an unidentified object. Phase U, of the late-third to early-fourth century, also produced one coin and two objects of personal ornament. Phase V had forty-two artefacts including three coins (7% of the finds from the phase) and five objects of personal ornament (12%). Phase W (figure 10.5), which began in the late-fourth century, witnessed a substantial increase in the number of finds to 511, which included 73 coins (14%) and 225 objects of personal ornament (44%) including two gold finger-rings, nine copper alloy finger-rings and twenty-nine pins. Other objects of note included three writing *styli* and two seal box lids, which may relate to activity within the building. It was Phase X, dating to the early-fifth century, that saw the construction of the timber buildings within the *basilica* (P. Barker *et al*. 1997: 81-4) and although there was a reduction in the number of small finds to 59, the percentage of each find type remained fairly similar to that of Phase W. In Phase Y, dating to within the fifth century, there was again a large number of finds, 271, including seventy-eight coins (29%) and seventy-two objects of personal ornament (27%).

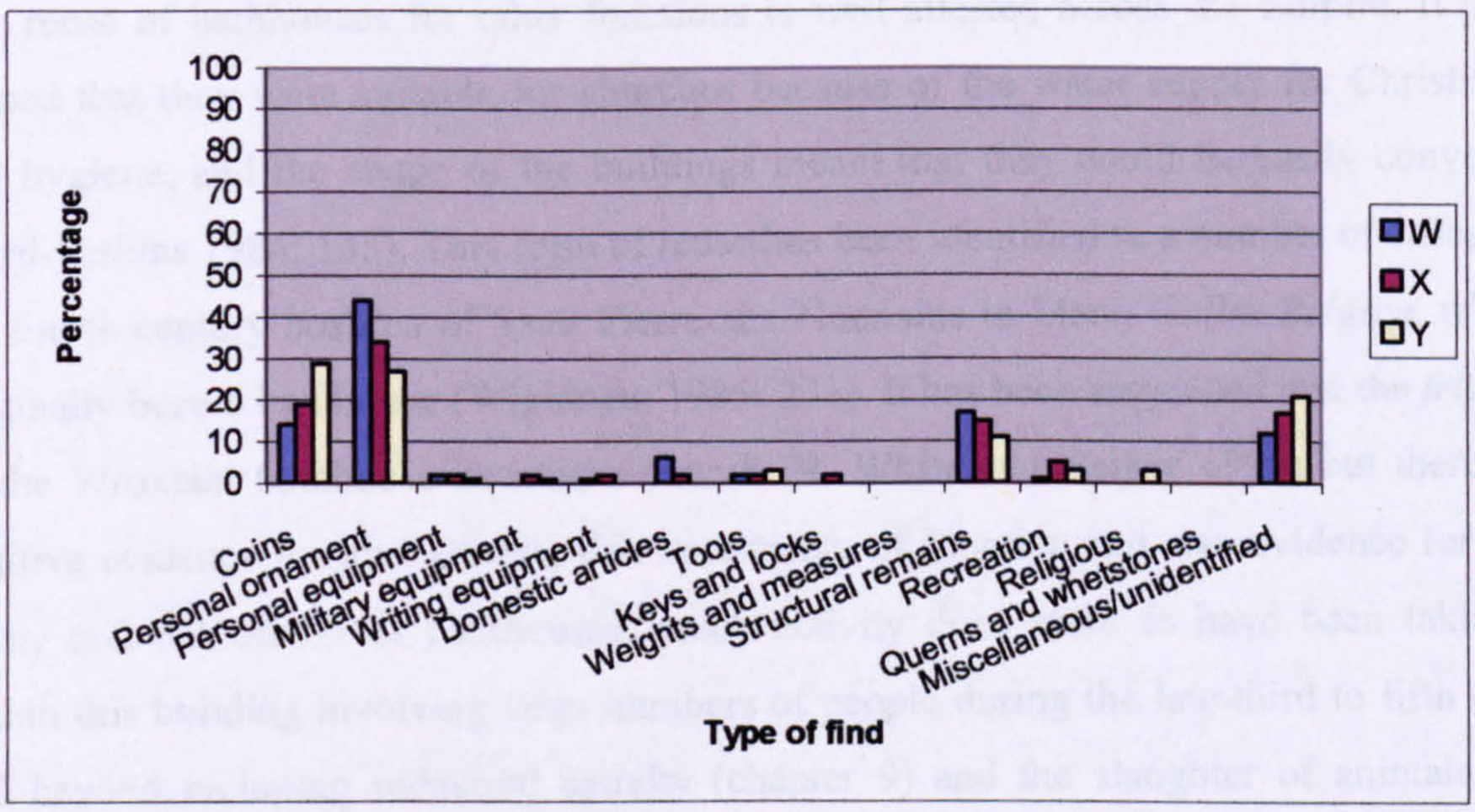

*Figure 10.5: Graph showing the percentage of each find type for Periods W, X and Y of the baths-*basilica *at Wroxeter. In total numbers there were 511 finds in Phase W, 59 in Phase X and 271 in Phase Y. The graph suggests that there are fairly similar percentages of finds for each phase, indicating that activity within the building may have been fairly stable, although the change in coin numbers may be significant. The finds have been classified by the author.*

Although it is difficult to avoid the issue of residuality in the finds assemblages, the results suggest that the *basilica* remained in use during and after the main phase of timber structures. The large number of coins and personal ornaments in Phases W and Y, of the late-fourth to fifth century, compared with earlier phases may indicate that the building was no longer being cleaned in the same thorough way or it may indicate that there were now different activities taking place within it. The small finds may demonstrate the presence of large gatherings of people with the coins perhaps indicating market activities or casual losses from the people within the building. Studies of Roman clothing and jewellery (*e.g.* Swift 2003) indicate that many people would have worn dress accessories including pins, brooches and beads which could fall off and get lost. The finds certainly indicate that the baths-*basilica* remained in general use and continued to be a valued building in the town centre.

That at least parts of many of the bathhouse structures remained standing (see chapter 8) and in some kind of use indicates the complex nature of the function of these buildings at this time. At Canterbury, the timber structure within the *laconicum* of the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse was associated with evidence for metalworking (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 190-1). This lay on the periphery of the building and it is possible that other parts of the baths yet to be excavated remained in use as a baths or had a different function.[247] At Chichester, there is evidence for part of a stone wall and some timber beams constructed over a demolished part of the baths (Down 1978: 152), but there is no evidence for its use. Again, other parts of the bathhouse may have remained standing.

The reuse of bathhouses for other functions is well attested across the Empire. It has been argued that they were suitable for churches because of the water supply for Christian ritual and hygiene, and the shape of the buildings meant that they could be easily converted (B. Ward-Perkins 1984: 135). This form of reuse has been identified in a number of cases such as the fourth century *basilica* of Saint Pierre-aux-Nonnains in Metz, *Gallia Belgica*, which had originally been a bathhouse (Wightman 1985: 231). It has been suggested that the *frigidarium* of the Wroxeter bathhouse became a church (R. White and Barker 1998) but there is little positive evidence for this. Despite this uncertainty of function and also evidence for areas of decay and demolition of bathhouses, much activity does seem to have been taking place within this building involving large numbers of people during the late-third to fifth centuries and beyond including industrial activity (chapter 9) and the slaughter of animals. This is discussed further in chapter 11 (*e.g.* section 11.2.2 on animal bones).

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[247] See chapter 8 for a possible comparison in Stirling's (2001) work on the bathhouse at Leptiminus in North Africa which has evidence for a pottery kiln constructed within the building whilst other parts remained in use as a baths building.

10.3.3 *Spectacle buildings*

A common interpretation of the evidence for the use of spectacle buildings in the late Roman period is as refuges against security threats (see section 8.5.4). The evidence from the excavated areas of the amphitheatre at Cirencester (Diagram 55; Holbrook 1998: 170-1) is too sparse and disparate to provide certain evidence about its use (for the structural changes to the building, including alterations to the entranceway, see chapter 8). The one possible building identified within the arena may be of a later date and it is uncertain whether it represents a structure or not. The absence of small finds contemporary with this structure may indicate that it was used in a way that did not result in the deposition of objects. There are similar problems concerning the amphitheatre at Dorchester, which also had some late Roman structural changes and traces of timber features (Diagram 61; Bradley 1975). As with Cirencester there were no finds that might reveal the use for these timber structures. None of the other amphitheatres or theatres associated with towns in Britain have comparable evidence: only Silchester and London have been excavated to an extent where such activity might be recognised, and both of these were disturbed by later uses. Despite this lack of evidence, the buildings could still have remained in use; indeed the scarcity of structures and finds might indicate the continuing use of the structures for their original purposes.

10.3.4 *Temples*

Of the dataset of thirty-one temples only six have traces of timber structures, some of which produced evidence of some kind of market and industrial function. The timber structure phase on the Gloucester Westgate Street temple site (Diagram 64; see section 10.2.2) was associated with fifty-five coins, four items of personal equipment, parts of a bronze steelyard, a bronze scale pan and weights (see figure 10.6). There was also a large number of animal bones indicative of cattle butchery (Maltby 1979).

Other timber structures may relate to the continuation of religious functions of the temples, as at the St. Gabriel's Chapel site in Canterbury where there were structural traces cutting down into the stone building (Driver *et al.* 1990: 85). There were few finds associated with the timber structure from this site, but they did include a model of a bull's horn, a clay statuette and a fragment of a face urn in a late-third and fourth century context, which might demonstrate that it functioned as a temple or shrine (Diagram 47; *ibid.*; P. Bennett pers. comm.). Other finds from the site mainly came from the mid-third century masonry building rather than the timber structure, although the stratigraphic relationships are hard to define, especially since the evidence for the timber building is so slight. The finds from the stone building recorded in the report (Driver *et al.* 1990) include a late-third century cross bow brooch, a broken bone hair pin, a copper alloy enamelled seal, a copper alloy needle, some

unidentifiable fragments of objects and a Barbarous radiate of around A.D. 270-90. From the robbing of this masonry building came two more Barbarous radiates of A.D. 270-90, whilst from post-Roman layers above this there was a coin of Claudius II of around A.D. 270 and a Roman bone hair pin and bone needle. The scarcity of the finds makes the religious artefacts stand out as being unusual.

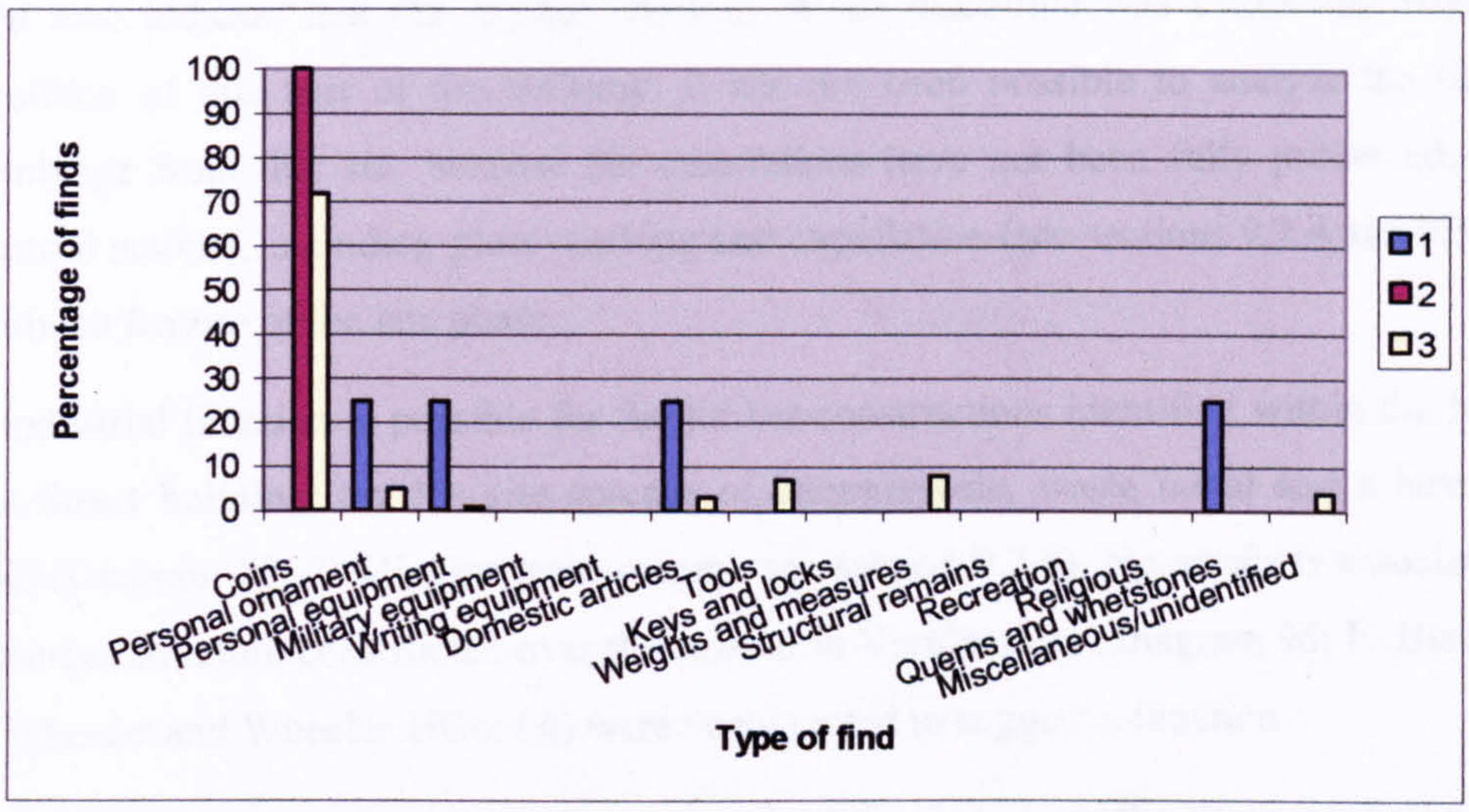

Figure 10.6: Graph showing the percentage of finds from each phase of the possible temple precinct at Gloucester. The excavated area of the site was very small and there were only four finds from Period 1, 17(all coins) from Period 2 and 56 from Period 3 and so the comparison of finds between phases here is not entirely useful in terms of what they can inform us about the changing use of the building. The finds have been classified by the author.

The recognition of the timber structure at the St. Gabriel's chapel site as a temple, represented by the religious finds here, is clearly of great importance because of the potential for other temple sites to have continued in use with the construction of timber buildings. The use of timber for building both in the late pre-Roman and early Roman periods (see chapter 5) also demonstrates that such structures need not have been considered inferior to masonry buildings. The location of the late Roman timber structures within the *forum* at Lincoln indicates that they were probably important despite uncertainty about their exact function (see section 10.3.1). With the possibility of a monumental temple preceding the complex (M. Jones pers. comm.; Gilmour 2007: 238), these timber structures could be a reflection of the continued religious significance of this centre throughout the Roman period, even from the late pre-Roman period (see section 5.7.2). Care is needed before assuming that a change from the use of stone to timber in construction projects represents decline on the sites.

10.3.5 Macella *and* mansiones

The one example of a timber structure identified within a *macellum* was at Leicester, within the corner of the western range (Diagram 68). The associated evidence would seem to indicate that the building had some kind of industrial function since there was a hearth with traces of glass-working and also the waste from cupellation (N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995). Whilst what Wacher discovered might have been a shelter for industrial activity, it might also indicate that the market function of the *macellum* was continuing beyond the demolition of this part of the building. It has not been possible to analyse the full finds assemblage from this site because the excavations have not been fully processed, but the industrial activity, including glass-working and cupellation (see sections 9.2.4 and 9.3.2), is a prominent feature of the late phase.

An industrial function is possible for the timber constructions identified within the Leicester Vine Street building: on this site spreads of hammerscale, waste metal and a hearth were found (Diagram 70; T. Higgins pers. comm.; see section 9.2.4). No artefacts associated with the timber structure constructed over the *mansio* in Verulamium (Diagram 95; E. Black 1995: 82; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 96) were documented to suggest a function.

It would have been informative to have compared the finds from the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* (10.3.2) with those of the adjacent *macellum* and bathhouse, but this proved impossible due to the incompleteness and manner of organisation of the archive (H. Bird pers. comm.; Mould 2000). A more general study of the finds, however, supports the results from the baths-*basilica* and indicates that intense use of the *macellum* and surrounding porticoes continued at least into the early-fifth century and probably later. Coins of the House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402) were found, together with numerous small finds from pits and stratified layers, indicating possible commercial activity. The baths-*basilica,* which seems to have been used for industrial and other activities, would probably also have acted as an access point to the *frigidarium* of the bathhouse.

10.3.6 *Porticoes*

The examples of timber structures within the porticoes at Canterbury and Wroxeter suggest some kind of market activity. At Canterbury, the structures within the portico of the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse contained a large number of cattle metapodials and also copper alloy fragments (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 199-201) indicating small-scale craft-working (Diagrams 44 and 45). At Wroxeter (Diagrams 105-7), Building 63 within the west portico of the baths-*basilica* contained a hearth and an oven containing a large quantity of charred grain (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 99) which suggests the manufacture of bread. It seems, therefore, that the timber structures within the porticoes were permanent booths and stalls.

10.3.7 *Discussion*

The poor survival of most late Roman layers within public buildings and the small size of the excavated areas make analysis of the data and finds distributions difficult. For this reason, initial attempts to compare finds between different types of public buildings to identify functions did not prove useful. The comparison of finds between the same public building type was also attempted but again this did not prove very meaningful because the excavations have rarely been of equal size and quality. The comparison of finds by phases within individual buildings, however, provided evidence for a wide range of activities associated with the timber structures including those of an industrial, market/commercial and religious nature. Some with domestic functions are also likely, although these are more problematic to identify with any confidence because of the lack of diagnostic material.

This chapter has argued that using timber structures to identify decline is too simplistic for many sites and that the use and significance of the public buildings will have been much more complex. Timber structures represent the continued use or development of the buildings; often they will have changed or renewed the way in which space, and movement within the individual building, was organised. The timber structures within the Silchester *basilica* and the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* will have divided up the building space in a new way, but the finds demonstrate that the buildings were still being put to considerable use. The constructions within the portico at Canterbury changed the thoroughfare to one with two rows of timber stalls and a space in between only 1m wide for walking (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 199-201). This will have altered the organisation of movement around this central area, but it also demonstrates that significant activity continued. This data can be combined with the structural evidence discussed in chapter 8 which shows that the public buildings themselves were still being altered and renewed at the same time as the construction of the timber structures. Although timber structures were built in public buildings, there is evidence that other parts of the buildings continued in use at the same time – rather than decline these structures may even indicate an intensification of use.

10.4 Conclusions

A traditional interpretation of timber structures built within public buildings in the late Roman period is of squatter occupation where people were living in deteriorating conditions (Faulkner 2000a: 124). This chapter has sought to explore the evidence in a more balanced and detailed manner. It has attempted to demonstrate that the timber structures are likely to represent many kinds of activity within the buildings and, rather than indicating decline, demonstrate additional or alternative uses of these public spaces and attitudes towards the organisation of space. Although it is likely that some of these buildings did function as

domestic dwellings, the notion of squatter occupation implies negative concepts of decay and decline. The timber structures need not have been as common within late Roman public buildings as has sometimes been inferred from discussions of 'shanty towns' and 'squalor'.

Simonsen (1997: 161) has argued that the key to urbanism, moving beyond traditional economic interpretations of understanding the city, is that it is "constituted by people practising in place". Much continued "practising in place" is indicated by the evidence relating to public buildings and timber structures in late Roman towns.

All the public buildings had complex use lives with some ending earlier than others, just as was seen with the town biographies discussed in section 6.2. Some towns were no longer nucleated urban centres by the end of the Roman or early post-Roman periods but in many cases the significance of the sites continued. Some buildings do appear to have been abandoned within the late Roman period, as in the case of the theatre at Gosbecks (Dunnett 1971a: 41) and the temple at Chelmsford (Wickendon 1992: 39-41). The abandonment of others did not occur until the early medieval period. This is a period that does need more discussion but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 11: 'Squatter occupation' or continuation of use?

"Here and there squatters lived among the ruins"
(Collingwood and Myres 1936: 206)

11.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss further evidence for activity within public buildings in the later Roman period, exploring the issue of the so-called 'squatter occupation'.[248] The presence of material such as pottery sherds, coins and animal bones and also refloorings within the latest phases of public buildings is often considered to have belonged to a period after the building had ceased to be maintained or had been abandoned; such evidence has often been viewed as representing the presence of squatters amongst the ruins of the buildings (*e.g.* Collingwood and Myres 1936: 206; Faulkner 2000a: 124; Frere 1975: 287; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 28; also see section 6.2). This interpretation of the evidence is used to support notions of decline within the town because it contradicts perceptions of order, economic vitality and 'Golden Age' images of the town.

An approach to this evidence which avoids such interpretations will be adopted in order to argue for continued activity within the public buildings. This does not mean the buildings were not eventually abandoned, but the analysis of the available evidence will be used to explore their uses in the later Roman period. Mattingly (2006a: 534) has recently drawn attention to the fact that the latest activity evidenced within villas is often labelled 'squatter occupation' by the excavators because of the poor survival of the remains and because it does not correlate with expected images of Roman civilisation. Instead of reoccupation within a ruined or derelict structure, however, he argues that the evidence is more likely to relate to final adaptations to the buildings. This positive approach to the evidence can also be taken for public buildings in towns.

The perspective here, as in chapters 9 and 10, will be to emphasise the value that artefact assemblages from excavated sites can have in indicating continued use of the buildings. The difficulties with finds analysis were addressed in chapter 2. One problem is that there often appears to be less evidence for material culture in late Roman layers, which has been a contributing factor in interpretations of the decline of towns. Fulford *et al.* (2006: 280), however, have questioned the assumption that a developed material culture is a necessary indicator of urbanism in the archaeological record, suggesting that such an approach hinders studies of late Roman towns where there was continuing vitality. Any surviving evidence is also likely to reflect more information that has not been preserved, thus analysis of this

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[248] See Gazetteer 6 for the data used in this chapter in detail.

evidence can indicate more about activities taking place before the buildings were eventually abandoned or demolished.

11.2 The 'squatter occupation'

11.2.1 *New internal floors*

One type of evidence noted within public buildings, often after their surmised destruction by fire or demolition and/or a period of assumed desertion, is refloorings within rooms and corridors (table 11.1). Within the *basilica* at Leicester, for instance, excavations indicated a fire around the A.D. 360s which led to the assumption that the building was no longer in use. Much of the site, however, had been badly disturbed by medieval activity and so late Roman layers will not have survived well (Hebditch and Mellor 1973). Within Room 2 of the north wing of the *basilica* (figure 11.1), and the northern portico, however, there was evidence for a new floor laid over the ash (*ibid.*: 17), indicating continued use and perhaps representative of much more that was not preserved. Room 5 in the west wing also had evidence of activity above the 'destruction' level (Diagram 66).

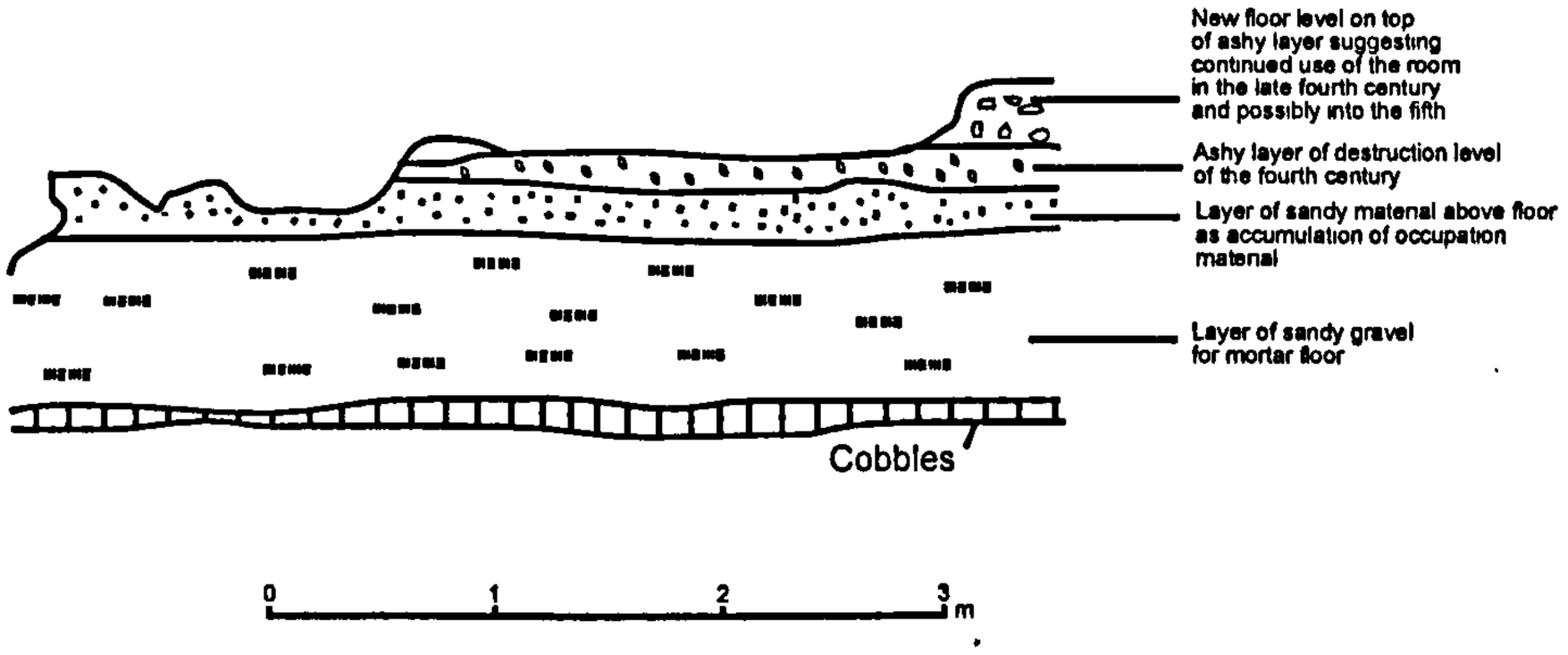

Figure 11.1: Section of Room 2 within the forum-basilica *at Leicester showing the late destruction layer and a floor level above this suggesting the continuation of use of at least this area of the building (redrawn by the author from Hebditch and Mellor 1973).*

Town	Public Building	Location	Evidence	Date	References
Leicester	*Forum-Basilica*	Room 2 in the north wing of the *basilica* and in the portico	Floors represented by mortar spreads, cobbles, sand and granite, tile and sandstone rubble after a layer of ash containing a coin of Valens.	Fourth century with a coin of Valens within a layer of ash beneath as a *t.p.q.*	Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973
	Bathhouse	Courtyard	A succession of floors within the courtyard suggest continued use.	Pottery and coins show the latest refloorings in the 4thC.	Kenyon 1948: 33-4
Lincoln	*Forum-Basilica*	East range of the *forum*	Sequences of refloorings within the rooms consisting of clay, sand, pieces of limestone and crushed tile.	The sand over the floor patchings contained late-4thC. pottery.	M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 68; Steane 2006: 148-50
London	Amphitheatre	Arena	Extensive and compact gravel	4thC. pottery	Bateman 1997:

			and sand surfaces.	associated with the latest floor and also late coins.	68; Bateman 1998: 52-3; Bateman 2000: 40; MoLAS archive GAG87
Wroxeter	*Forum-Basilica*	*Forum* courtyard, east portico and east rooms	Layers of earth, cement and blocks of sandstone over the destruction débris.	Coins suggest late-4thC.	Atkinson 1942: 108-10
York	*Principia*	Rooms around central courtyard	Floors of crushed tile and mortar. In other areas the stone paving slabs were removed and the sand beneath used as the floor.	4th to 5thC.	D. Phillips and Heywood 1995

Table 11.1: Details of the evidence for refloorings within areas of public buildings in the fourth to fifth centuries.

Excavations of the east range of the Lincoln *forum* produced similarly complex details of late floor surfaces above destruction débris (Diagram 71). In Room 2A there were traces of a sequence of floors above a layer of ash and building débris, which sealed burnt stone suggestive of a fire within this area of the building (Steane 2006: 148). The ash was sealed by a floor surface of crushed tile containing fragments of clay. This in turn was sealed by another surface of yellowish clay followed by a floor of mortar patches and stones. Later robbing caused disturbance across the site but neighbouring rooms appear to have had the same floor sequence; unfortunately only small areas of these fell inside the area of excavation. Dating is also problematic: the latest coin from the ash beneath the floors dated to A.D. 350-64, but this may have been residual because there were also post-medieval glass sherds amongst the material (*ibid.*). The pottery from the layers, however, was more consistently late-fourth to early-fifth century making it unlikely that this was residual (*ibid.*) and instead indicating use at least into the fifth century.

Another sequence of late activity was identified within the *forum-basilica* at Wroxeter (Diagram 100), although the exact nature of this is not easy to discern. There does seem to be evidence for activity post-dating the second fire which was presumed to have left the building in ruins (Atkinson 1942: 125). Layers of clay above the destruction débris in the excavated rooms probably indicate new floors, and coins associated with them were of Claudius II (A.D. 268-70), Tetricus I (A.D. 270/1-73), the Constantinian period (*c.* A.D. 330-40) and Valentinian (A.D. 364-75) (*ibid.*: 109). In other areas of the building, the laying of stone roof slates is interpreted as creating paths over the destruction layer (*ibid.*: 108-9).

Within the fortress *principia* at York there is evidence for the removal of flagstone floor surfaces and the accumulation of débris over this layer in the late-fourth century. This was taken to indicate the stripping of the building prior to the departure of the army (D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 64). The rooms remained in use, however, as indicated by the layers of crushed tile and mortar above this layer (*ibid.*: 65). Other long sequences of floors include

those within the Leicester bathhouse courtyard (Diagram 67), perhaps indicating continued use of the building where there was a much poorer survival of stratigraphy (Kenyon 1948: 33-4), and also the arena of the amphitheatre at London (Bateman 1998: 52-3).

These floors indicate that some caution is needed before the complete abandonment of the public buildings in the late Roman period is assumed. Careful excavation within the buildings and analysis of the evidence can identify complex histories of continuing uses. That all the public buildings of Roman towns in Britain were eventually abandoned in the post-Roman period (*e.g.* the *basilica* at Silchester possibly in the seventh or eighth centuries; Fulford and Timby 2000), however, indicates there were changes in priorities and needs. In many cases the structures simply collapsed through age but there are likely to have been a large variety of ways in which the buildings became disused and disappeared.

11.2.2 *Animal bones*

In a number of cases, excavations of the latest phases of public buildings have produced large assemblages of animal bones. Where it can be discerned that they were not dumped from elsewhere, they represent some form of late activity within the buildings (table 11.2). These large groups of bones were identified through a study of all the animal bone assemblages from excavations of public buildings that were available (see sections 2.2 and 2.4). Animal bones from both layers and pits can be the result of dumping material whilst layers can also be badly disturbed by later activity making interpretations of assemblages problematic. The dumping of bones can, however, provide potential information on the state of civic amenities such as waste disposal facilities at this time. But even if by the late fourth century there was no central system of waste disposal, resulting in the uncontrolled dumping of waste, the bone deposits suggest that there was still vitality within towns. The volume of meat represented by the bones, in some cases, suggests a thriving population requiring meat. Careful excavation and analysis of the contexts of the bones is, therefore, needed for interpretations to be made. The examples studied indicate the potential of such evidence and the attention that should be given to all find types.

Town	Public Building	Animal Bone Assemblage	Date	Discussion	References
Canterbury	St. Margaret's Street bathhouse	Large quantity of cattle bones, especially metapodials from the portico of the bath building.	Late-4thC. to 5thC.	It is uncertain whether butchery took place on the site or whether they were dumped from elsewhere. They are also associated with possible bone-working here.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 200-1
Colchester	Butt Road 'church'	Pits of animal bones especially sheep and pig.	4thC.	The bones may represent feasting activities associated with ceremonies at the site.	Luff 1993
Gloucester	Westgate Street temple precinct	Large late Roman assemblage dominated by	4thC.	Study of the cattle bones by Maltby (1979) suggests that	Heighway and Garrod 1980;

		cattle bones but with very few jaw, skull and limb extremity fragments.		the animals were slaughtered elsewhere and brought to this site to be cut up into joints. This might suggest market activity on the site.	Heighway *et al.* 1979: 161; Maltby 1979
London	Mithraeum	Groups of animal bones found within the building deposited in pits. There were a large number of chicken bones.	2ndC. to 4thC.	The assemblages may indicate religious activity and feasting within the building.	Macready and Sidell 1998
	Amphitheatre	A large assemblage of cattle and horse bones that appears to represent whole carcases.	4thC.	The bones may represent the butchery of cattle within the amphitheatre although they may simply have been dumped here from elsewhere.	Batema n 1998: 52-3; Bateman 2000: 40
	Winchester Palace complex	Concentration of cattle horn cores and 4 articulated dog skeletons in the latest Roman layers of the site.	Mid-3rdC. to early-5thC.	The horn cores seem to suggest bone working in the late Roman period. The significance of the dog skeletons is uncertain but ritual activity could be an interpretation.	Reilly and Locker 2005
Wroxeter	Bathhouse	Pits containing large numbers of animal bones, predominantly cattle, in the porticoes of the baths.	3rdC. to 5thC.	The bones suggest market activity.	Meddens 2000: 316
York	*Principia*	Large assemblage of young pig and sheep bones.	Late-4thC. to 5thC.	The bones may represent some kind of feasting activity within the building.	D. Phillips and Heywood 1995

Table 11.2: Details of large late Roman animal bone assemblages associated with public buildings taken from a study of all known assemblages from the structures.

At the temple precinct site at Westgate Street, Gloucester, demolition of at least some of the building appears to have taken place in the fourth century but the accumulation of débris above this demolition, and traces of a timber building indicate continuing use (Diagram 64). Associated with this use was a large quantity of animal bones, with late-fourth century pottery. Analysis has indicated that it was probably the waste from on-site animal butchery (Maltby 1979), perhaps indicating market activity, which is supported by the other late finds from the site (see section 10.3.4). Butchery and market activity might also be indicated by the large number of, predominantly, cattle bones from late levels of the Wroxeter (Meddens 2000: 316) and Canterbury (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 200-1) bathhouse porticoes, although at Canterbury they also appear to have been associated with bone-working (section 9.3.3). Public buildings, especially bathhouses, may also have been a good source of water for the processes. It is also possible that there was a social function to the butchery, as there was with the metalworking, drawing on pre-Roman ideas (chapter 9), leading to the activities being conducted in public space.

The large assemblage of young pig bones within the *principia* at York, dating to the late-fourth or early-fifth century, possibly relates to feasting and political activity taking place within the building, contemporary with metalworking (see section 9.4.7) and indicating some kind of power base here (D. Phillips and Heywood 1995: 64). These bones were not from pits

but occupation layers, indicating that they are more likely to have come from use within the building than from dumping waste.[249] A bone assemblage representing religious and élite activity from the Silchester *basilica* has also been discussed (see section 9.4.7). Animal bone assemblages in late Roman public buildings, then, certainly need not represent 'squatter occupation' and each case demands detailed analysis.

Another assemblage came from the London amphitheatre (Diagram 80) where the latest discernible Roman layer contained a large number of sheep and horse bones. This might be evidence for market activity within the building, although the context indicates that dumped waste is more likely (N. Bateman pers. comm.). In the latest layers on the site of the possible Cirencester *macellum* there were pits cut down into the building, each containing large numbers of animal bones (Holbrook 1998: 185-6), perhaps indicating the continuation of commercial activity or other functions. Bone-working along with other craft activities on sites in the late Roman period can also be considered a sign of vitality and generation at these places (see section 9.4.6).[250]

11.2.3 *Coin assemblages*

Coins are a traditional archaeological tool for dating events in the structural sequence of buildings but another important rôle that they can play is to indicate continued activity on sites. This can often take the history of these structures beyond the phase of architectural alterations and structural decay of the buildings; although it is also important to remember that the absence of coins need also not mean the end of use of the building. On some temple sites, it has been argued through coin evidence that there was continued veneration after the buildings had started to degrade. Excavations of the temple site on Hayling Island, for example, noted that the structural decay of the building had begun by the late-third or early-fourth century. Later coins on the site were suggestive of continued visits, perhaps because of the lasting sanctity of the site (Downey *et al.* 1979: 15).[251]

Sometimes coins have been used to date 'squatter occupation' within a building (*e.g.* the 'church' structure at Silchester, Diagram 90; Frere 1975: 287) but this may be over simplifying what the evidence represents. The difficulty is in identifying the exact circumstances leading to deposition of a coin (see section 2.4). In the amphitheatre at Silchester (Diagram 89; Fulford 1989: 58, 192), for example, a coin of Magnentius *c.* A.D.

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[249] Ritual feasting is also indicated by large animal assemblages on Roman temple sites such as Harrow Hill in Sussex (Holleymen 1937) where it would appear to have been an important part of the religious site. Hill and Semple have suggested an association between feasting débris and ancient monuments in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods (J.D. Hill 1995a; Semple 2007).

[250] This has also been suggested for the evidence of bone-working at the early medieval *wic* sites and 'central places', many of which went on to become towns in medieval times (*e.g.* Hårdh 2000; Hodges 1989).

[251] At Nettleton structural decay of the temple seems to have occurred around the early-fourth century but the latest coins dated to A.D. 370-90 (Wedlake 1982: 83-6). At Pagan's Hill (North Somerset) coins of Arcadius (A.D. 383-95) were found whilst the structural evidence was more uncertain and might otherwise have suggested disuse (Rahtz 1951: 117-8; Rahtz and Harris 1956-7).

350-3 was found within imported material used as part of the reflooring of the arena and this provides a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the floor. On the arena floor surface itself, however, was a coin of Constantine II *c*. A.D. 324-30 which may have been dropped by someone within the structure. Its earlier date than the coin below it might indicate that the later coin was residual and highlights one of the major problems with identifying dates by coins. That it is common for only small areas of a building to be excavated also means that the latest coin found in the excavations need not be the latest across the site.

Once the contexts of the coins have been established, the latest coins found on the sites of public buildings might help to provide a *terminus post quem* for the continuing use of the buildings. This would indicate that a large number of the *fora-basilicae* known in Britain remained in some kind of use to a late date (figure 11.2 and table 11.3), as five out of the twelve excavated *fora-basilicae* had coins dating to the mid-fourth century or start of the fifth century, whilst five more had coins dating to the earlier and mid-fourth century. Only at Caistor-by-Norwich, where there was heavy destruction of the latest layers, did the coin list end in the third century, although there was later pottery.

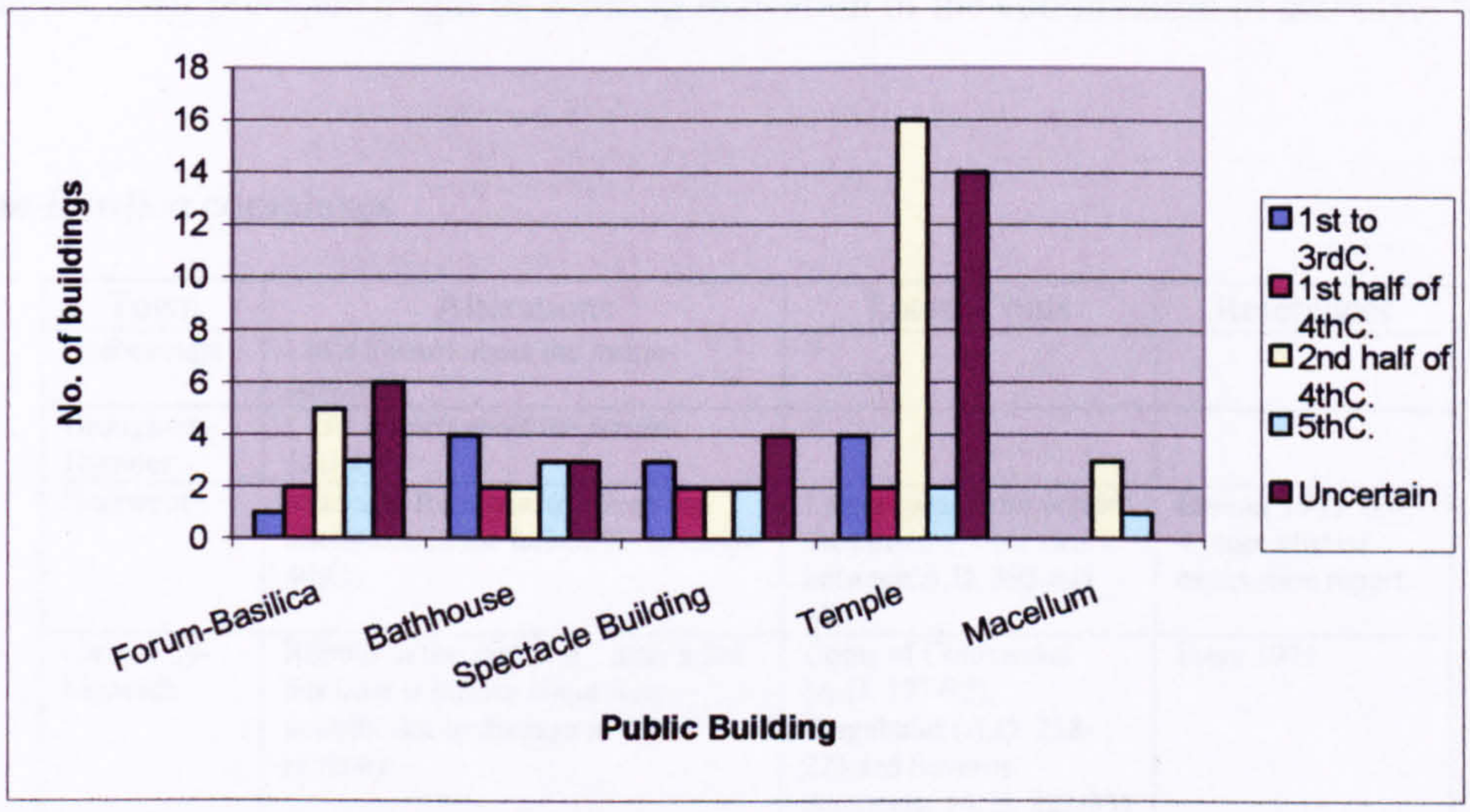

Figure 11.2: Graph showing the date of the latest coins found associated with the public buildings. The accompanying table 11.3 displays the data used for the graph.

In the bath buildings there seem to have been fewer coins of the late-fourth or early-fifth century. Five baths do have coins of this time, which may represent activity to a later date, whilst another two baths have coins of the earlier and mid-fourth century.

In the case of theatres and amphitheatres, the only structures where no late Roman coins have been found are those where limited excavations have taken place, as at Chichester and Colchester. Cirencester, Dorchester, London, Silchester and Verulamium produced coins of the late fourth century, with those at Cirencester (House of Theodosius A.D. 388-402)

possibly falling into the early-fifth century (Holbrook 1998: 169-71). At London, coins of A.D. 340-80 were found amongst débris that included the animal bones discussed above (Diagram 80; Bateman 2000: 40).[252]

The evidence from temples within towns is quite diverse, with some examples having coins of the late-fourth to early-fifth centuries, probably representing activity into at least the fifth century, and others only having coin lists that end in the third century. There are a number of sites where coins provided some of the only evidence to indicate late use of the buildings, as at the Folly Lane temple in Verulamium. Here it appears that the building had fallen into structural decay by the third century but the latest coin found within the structure was of the House of Valentinian, A.D. 364-78 (Niblett 1999: 71). The large number of fourth century coins within the Triangular Temple in Verulamium may indicate a similar late use of this building (Niblett 1993: 91). At Colchester, too, late activity at some of the Sheepen temples is supported by coins when little else has survived (P. Crummy 1980: 152). This is also the case for the temples at a number of the 'small towns', rural sanctuaries and other sites (table 11.4). Although the context of these coins is not always problem free due to the disturbance of these late layers, their presence might be a strong indication of the continuation of activity.[253]

Forum-Basilica complexes

Town	Alterations	Latest Coins	References
Aldborough	Little known about the *forum-basilica*	?	
Brough-on-Humber	Little known about the *forum-basilica*	?	
Caerwent	Evidence for reconstructions and alterations in the late-3rdC. to early-4thC.	Latest coins from within the building were struck between A.D. 395 and 402.	Brewer 1993: 63-4; unpublished excavation report.
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. after a fire but little is known about later activity due to damage to the remains.	Coins of Commodus (A.D. 177-92), Elagabalus (A.D. 218-22) and Severus Alexander (A.D. 222-35) but later layers on the site were lost due to disturbance on the site.	Frere 1971
Canterbury	Possible evidence for some rebuilding in the mid to late-4thC.	?	Frere and Bennett 1987: 93-8
Carmarthen	Nothing is known about a *forum-basilica*	?	
Chelmsford	Nothing is known about a *forum-basilica*	?	
Chichester	Little is known about the *forum-basilica*	?	Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31
Cirencester	Alterations evidenced in excavated areas with new walls constructed	House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402).	Holbrook 1998: 117-9; Wacher

[252] Activity in the amphitheatre of the 'small town' settlement at Frilford, for comparison, appears to have continued to a late date with the presence of many fourth century coins (Diagram 111; G. Lock pers. comm.).
[253] The sanctuary of Woodeaton in Oxfordshire is a good example of a site with a late coin list. It included coins of Arcadius and Honorius and a number of barbarous imitations, leading to suggestions of use of the site well into the fifth century and later (J. Milne 1931: 105-6).

	and new floors laid.		1964: 14
Colchester	Nothing is known about the *forum-basilica*	?	
Dorchester	Little is known about the *forum-basilica*	?	
Exeter	Alterations and extensions made in the mid-4thC.	Valens A.D. 365-78	Bidwell 1979: 110
Gloucester	Removal of the paving stones of the *forum* in the 4thC. but also a continuation of activity.	Coins probably of the mid-4thC.	Hurst 1972: 58
Leicester	Evidence for fire in the second half of the 4thC. but some evidence for the continuation of activity.	Valens A.D. 364-7	Anon unpublished; Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973
Lincoln	Refloorings in the late-3rdC. to 4thC. and construction work including the construction of a church in the *forum* in the 4thC.	Coin of the House of Theodosius A.D. 388-402 but the exact context is uncertain: it was recovered from a surface which was either a late *forum* surface cut by the apsidal church or the only remains of the internal flooring of the church itself.	Gilmour and Jones 1980; M. Jones 1993: 16; M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 68; Steane and Vince 1993: 72; Steane 2006: 156
London	Repairs were made to the building in the second half of the 3rdC.	Coins of A.D. 330-41 although within disturbed contexts.	Bateman 1998: 51; G. Milne 1992; Perring 1991a: 113
Silchester	There were few apparent changes made to the *basilica* after its construction in masonry in the mid-2ndC. In the 5thC. there is evidence for the insertion of a hypocaust into the southern ambulatory of the west range and access to the west ambulatory was blocked off.	Theodosius I A.D. 388-92.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 78, 581
Verulamium	Little evidence for alterations but there is possible evidence for the continuation of use.	There were few coins from the excavations and uncertain about assemblages from the 19thC. excavations.	Frere 1983: 57-8; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987: 180; Niblett 2005a: 83
Winchester	Alterations were made to the north wing of the *forum* in the 4thC.	The latest stratified coin was of A.D. 337-48 but there were also later unstratified coins in the 'dark earth' within the building.	Biddle 1964: 204; Biddle 1969: 315; Teague 1988: 6-8; unpublished Winchester archive MAS 87
Wroxeter	The building was destroyed by fire in the late-3rdC. but it may have continued in use afterwards.	3 coins of the House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402).	Atkinson 1942: 106; R. White and Barker 1998: 112
York	Nothing is known about the *forum-basilica*.	?	Ottaway 1993: 87

Bathhouses

Town	Alterations	Latest Coins	References
Aldborough	Nothing known of the bathhouses	?	
Brough-on-Humber	Nothing known of the bathhouses	?	
Caerwent	The later-3rdC. saw the addition of a new wing of the baths and in the 4thC. a timber building was inserted into the ruins of the colonnade of the building.	Arcadius (A.D. 394-408)	Nash-Williams 1930
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the late-2ndC. after a fire but little is known about its later phases due to disturbance on the site.	?	Frere 1971
Canterbury	St. Margaret's Street: alteration in the early-4thC. with rebuilding and the construction of a *laconicum*.	The latest coins were of Valens A.D. 364-78.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 188-91

	St. George's Street baths: continuation of use.	Arcadius? Late-4thC. to early-5thC.	
Carmarthen	Little known about the bathhouse but finds suggest a continuation of use into the 3rdC.	Two coins of the 3rdC.	H. James 2003: 9, 20; W. Morris 1962
Chelmsford	Nothing known of the bathhouses	?	
Chichester	Evidence for the repair of pumping equipment into the late-4thC.	Latest coin is Valens A.D. 364-78 although from a disturbed context.	Down 1988: 42
Cirencester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses	?	
Colchester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses	?	
Dorchester	Finds suggest that the building continued in use to the early-4thC. but little else is known about it.	House of Theodosius copy (A.D. 388-402); coins of the A.D. 370s were common.	Keen 1977
Exeter	The *natatio* and drain were filled in during the late-3rdC. but the main building may have continued in use.	Coin of Claudius II (A.D. 268-70) from the filling of the *natatio*.	Bidwell 1979: 122
Gloucester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses	?	
Leicester	No later levels within the baths survived but in the courtyard a succession of floors suggests the continued use of the building into the 4thC.	?	Kenyon 1948: 7
Lincoln	Little is known about the bathhouse; only a small excavation took place here.	? The site produced little dateable material extending beyond the 3rdC.	M. Jones 2003b: 90; Petch unpublished
London	Huggin Hill baths: after the early demolition new buildings were constructed on the site.	Material on the site dated into the 4thC. and possibly the 5thC.	Marsden 1976: 23; P. Rowsome pers. comm.
Silchester	Use continued into the 4thC.	Crispus A.D. 317-26?	Boon 1974
Verulamium	The *insula* III bathhouse may have been derelict by the late-3rdC.	Little dating material found.	Niblett 2005a: 85-6
	Branch Road bathhouse had fallen into decay by the mid-3rdC. and silt accumulated in the hypocausts.	End of use as a baths in the 3rdC. but the latest coin is A.D. 330-48	Niblett 2005a: 83-5; D. Wilson 1975: 258
Winchester	Little is known about the bath building although possible use into the early-4thC.	Coins of A.D. 270-90, a coin of Carausius (A.D. 287-93) and the absence of Constantinian coins might suggest the last decade of the 3rdC. or 4thC.	Winchester Museums Service SQ 88
Wroxeter	A number of structural alterations in the 3rdC. and into the 4thC. The *frigidarium* may have remained standing and in use with a different function.	Coin of A.D. 244-7 came from an occupation layer on the herringbone floor in Room 11A. Also an unstratified coin of Valens 364-78. 4thC. coins also came from the baths precinct with the latest being Gratian A.D. 375. In the portico, the latest coins are of the House of Theodosius A.D. 388-95.	Ellis 2000: 55
York	Little is known about the baths	?	Ottaway 1993: 87; RCHME 1962: 54-5

Spectacle Buildings

Town	Alterations	Latest Coins	References
Aldborough	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
Brough-on-Humber	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
Caerwent	Possible evidence for an amphitheatre but problematic.	?	Ashby *et al.* 1904: 104-5; Wacher 1995: 388
Caistor-by-Norwich	Amphitheatre known through aerial photography but unexcavated.	?	Maxwell and Wilson 1987: 42
Canterbury	Theatre rebuilt in the early-3rdC. but it is uncertain if it was still in use in the 4thC.	Latest coin found was of Constantine.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Frere 1970
Carmarthen	Amphitheatre known but little has been excavated.	?	H. James 2003: 18-19; Wacher 1995: 392-3
Chelmsford	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	?	
Chichester	Very limited information known about the amphitheatre.	Antonius Pius *c.* A.D. 159-61	G. White 1936: 157-8
Cirencester	Alterations to the northeast entrance and the interior during the 5thC.	House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402)	Holbrook 1998: 169-71; unpublished site record book CIR 62 N
Colchester	Theatre in *insula* XIII but little is known about its later history.	Coin of A.D. 141-61	P. Crummy 1982
	Gosbecks theatre rebuilt in stone in the mid-2ndC. but demolition in the 3rdC.	Coin of Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-80	Dunnett 1971a: 31-43; Hull 1958: 269
	Circus poorly preserved and little has been excavated; floors and other horizontal layers have not survived.	No coins were found in the excavations associated with the circus.	P. Crummy 2005
Dorchester	Alterations to the entrance and interior during the late-3rdC. and 4thC.	Constantinopolis A.D. 336-7	Bradley 1975: 56-8, 78-9
Exeter	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
Gloucester	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
Leicester	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
Lincoln	No amphitheatre or theatre known	?	
London	A number of new floors were laid in the late-3rdC.	Coins in the robber trenches suggest a date after A.D. 367.	Bateman 1997: 68; Bateman 1998: 52-3; Bateman 2000: 41
Silchester	The structure was rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. but there is little evidence for use in the 4thC.	A majorina coin of mid-4thC. perhaps Magnentius A.D. 350-3.	Fulford 1989: 58, 192
Verulamium	The theatre was reconstructed *c.* A.D. 300 but was then filled with organic earth.	12 4thC. coins of the House of Theodosius although problematic relationship to the building.	Kenyon 1935: 239-40
Winchester	No theatre or amphitheatre known	?	
Wroxeter	No theatre or amphitheatre known	?	
York	No theatre or amphitheatre known	?	

Temples

Town	Alterations	Latest Coins	References
Aldborough	No temples known	?	
Brough-on-Humber	No temples known	?	
Caerwent	Addition of a range of rooms to the inner side of the entrance hall of the temple and the construction of two half-domed niches in the 4thC.	Valentinian A.D. 364-75	Brewer 1990: 79; Brewer 1993: 59; Frere 1985: 260
	Possible external octagonal temple	?	Hudd 1913: 447;

	but little is known about it.		Wacher 1995: 387
Caistor-by-Norwich	Temple A *insula* IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	?	Atkinson 1930: 99-102
	Temple B *insula* IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	?	Atkinson 1930: 99-102
	Extramural temple: no structural changes evident in the 3rdC. or 4thC. but the temple may have continued in use.	House of Constantine A.D. 348-60	Gurney 1986
Canterbury	Central temple precinct: a new courtyard surface was laid in the 4thC. made out of reused stone.	Many late-4thC. coins. Coin evidence indicated that demolition of the portico may have taken place in *c.* A.D. 350-60.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989; Frere 1977: 424
	Temple at St. Gabriel's chapel: construction of a timber building within a pre-temple 'townhouse'.	Barbarous radiates *c.* A.D. 270-90	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Driver *et al.* 1990: 89-91
	Temple at Gas Lane: uncertain due to disturbance.	Coins of A.D. 330-40	P. Bennett *et al.* 1982: 44
	Temple at Burgate Street: built in the mid-3rdC.	House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402) coin in 'dark earth'.	Frere and Stow 1983: 41-9
Carmarthen	Temple built in the 1stC. but out of use by the 2ndC.	?	H. James 1984: 51; H. James 2003: 150
Chelmsford	Octagonal temple built in the 4thC.	Tetricus II (A.D. 270-73) coin stratified but also many later unstratified coins up to the House of Theodosius.	Wickendon 1992: 39-41, 141
Chichester	Very little known about the temples at Chichester	?	
Cirencester	*Insula* VI building temple?: New floor surface in the courtyard laid in the 4thC. The corridor was paved with a tessellated floor of chequerboard pattern *c.* A.D. 330.	Coin of Urbs Roma A.D. 330-5 in 'dark earth' over the courtyard.	Holbrook 1998: 134-5
Colchester	Temple of Claudius: the structural alterations in the 4thC. are now doubted but probable continuation of use into the 5thC.	Valentinian II (A.D. 382-92) and Theodosius I (A.D. 379-95).	Drury 1984; P. Crummy 1997: 120
	Balkerne Lane temple: demolition of the ambulatory in the late-4thC. leaving the *cella* standing.	Coin of A.D. 341-6 in the robber trench.	P. Crummy 1984: 125
	Balkerne Lane shrine: uncertain about later alterations.	Robber trenches contained only pottery with the latest being of the mid-3rdC.	P. Crummy 1980: 267-68; P. Crummy 1984: 124
	Grammar School Temple: uncertain due to poor survival.	?	Hull 1958: 236-38
	Gosbecks Temple: uncertain due to poor survival but possible use into the 4thC.	Illegible coin of Marcus Aurelius or Commodus; worn coin of possibly Sabina or Faustina senior.	P. Crummy 1980: 260; P. Crummy pers. comm.; Hull 1958: 264
	Sheepen Large Temple; St. Helena's School: use into the 4thC.	Late-4thC. minim?	P. Crummy 1980: 252; Hull 1958: 230
	Sheepen Small Temple; St. Helena's School: uncertain or late changes.	?	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain	?	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain of later alterations; possibly out of use by the 4thC.	?	P. Crummy 1980: 252
Dorchester	No temples known	?	
Exeter	No temples known	?	
Gloucester	Temple precinct: demolition in the 4thC. but then further construction on the site followed by a covering of metalling over the whole site.	House of Valentinian A.D. 367-82	Heighway and Garrod 1980: 78; Heighway *et al.* 1979: 163
	Northgate Street temple:	4thC. coins	Hurst 1972: 65

	reflooring and structural alterations with some internal walls being converted to colonnades.		
Leicester	St. Nicholas Circle temple: little evidence for structural changes but use continued into the 4thC.	Late-4thC. coins but with fewer after A.D. 360.	Wacher 1995: 359; D. Wilson 1970: 286
Lincoln	Lower town temple complex: little is known.	?	Stocker 2003
London	Temple of Mithras: structural alterations in the 4thC. included the removal of the columns which had divided the nave from the aisles.	Constans or Constantius II A.D. 341-6 from layer over wooden sill of entrance.	Henig 1998: Shepherd 1998: 84, 103; Perring 1991a: 115
	Riverside temple complex: possibly out of use by the 3rdC. or it may have continued in use when the débris from the first complex was used to build a new complex.	Coin of the House of Constantine A.D. 335-41.	T. Williams 1993: 11, 27, 32
	Winchester Palace complex: alterations are possible into at least the late-fourth century.	'Dark earth' deposits yielded only 9 coins later than A.D. 355 of which only 3 post-dated A.D. 365.	Yule 2005: 103
Silchester	*Insula* VII temple: uncertain about late phases.	?	G. Fox and St. John Hope 1894: 206-9
	Insula XXX temple precinct: uncertain about later structural changes although probably continued in use into the 4thC.	?	Boon 1974: 155-6; G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890: 744-9
	Insula XXXV temple: uncertain.	?	Boon 1974: 153; St. John Hope 1908: 206-8
	Insula XXXVI temple: uncertain but probable continuation of use into the 4thC.	?	Boon 1974: 153
Verulamium	*Insula* XVI temple: 2 wings were added in the 3rdC. and in the later 4thC. the east gate was demolished and a new gateway constructed on the west gate.	'Dark earth' containing 149 coins: 34 of the 3rdC. or earlier, 72 of the House of Constantine, 22 of the House of Valentinian, 11 of the House of Theodosius and 10 unidentified 4thC.	Niblett 1993: 91; Kenyon 1935: 241; Lowther 1937: 33-4
	Triangular temple: repairs to floors in the 3rdC. and continuation of use into the 4thC.	196 4thC. coins.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 117
	Folly Lane temple: largely fallen into decay by the 3rdC. but may have continued in use.	The latest coin is of the House of Valentinian (A.D. 364-78) from a silt layer.	Niblett 1999: 71, 417
Winchester	The use of the temple ceased in the 3rdC.	Coin of Arcadius A.D. 389-92?	Biddle 1975: 299
Wroxeter	Uncertain of structural changes although use may have continued into the 4thC.	The latest coins dated to between A.D. 244-93.	Bushe-Fox 1914: 9
York	Wellington Row temple?: extension in the 3rdC. and then use into the 4thC.	100+ mid-4thC. bronze coins deposited near a stone roof support.	Ottaway 1993: 112-114; Ottaway 1999: 147; Whyman 2001

Macella

Town	Alterations	Latest Coins	References
Aldborough	No *macellum* known	?	
Brough-on-Humber	No *macellum* known	?	
Caerwent	No *macellum* known	?	
Caistor-by-Norwich	No *macellum* known	?	
Canterbury	No *macellum* known	?	

Carmarthen	No *macellum* known	?	
Chelmsford	No *macellum* known	?	
Chichester	No *macellum* known	?	
Cirencester	Structural alterations in the 3rdC. and 4thC. and continuation of use into the 5thC.	8 coins of the House of Theodosius A.D. 388-402.	Holbrook 1998: 186
Colchester	No *macellum* known	?	
Dorchester	No *macellum* known	?	
Exeter	No *macellum* known	?	
Gloucester	New floors and reconstruction of the verandah in the 3rdC. or 4thC.	4thC.	J. Rhodes 1974: 33
Leicester	Fire destroyed much of the building in the late-4thC. but there is evidence for the continuation of activity in some parts.	Material including coins of the 4thC.	N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 362
Lincoln	No *macellum* known	?	
London	No *macellum* known	?	
Silchester	No *macellum* known	?	
Verulamium	Structural alterations occurred in the late-3rdC. to 4thC. including the addition of two central walls with piers which divided the building into 3 aisles.	Magnus Maximus A.D. 383-8.	Niblett 2005a: 105
Winchester	No *macellum* known	?	
Wroxeter	Repairs and new floors were laid in the 3rdC.	4 coins were found with the latest of A.D. 364-78 also a 4thC. glass fragment.	Ellis 2000: 57-8
York	No *macellum* known	?	

Table 11.3: Tables listing the latest known coins from each excavated public building.

Town	Temple	Latest Coins	References
Alchester	Temple	Uncertain as little excavation	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 102
Arthur's O'on	Temple	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 78; Steer 1958
Bath	Temple of Sulis Minerva	House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402)	Cunliffe 2000: 144; Cunliffe and Davenport 1985: 66-75; Davenport 1991: 146; Davenport 1999: 45
Benwell	Temple	1stC.	M. Lewis 1966: 72-3
Bourton Grounds	Temple	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 52
Bourton-on-the-Water	Shrine?	Little known about it.	Burham and Wacher 1990: 288-9
Bowes	Roman temple, circular	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 79
	Roman temple, rectangular	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 86-7
Brean Down	Temple	Over 100 coins over A.D. 380 including House of Theodosius	ApSimon 1959: 120
Brigstock	Temple	4thC.	D. Wilson 1971: 266
Bruton	Temple	Mid-4thC.	C. Bennett 1961.
Cadbury Congresbury	Temple	Uncertain but use to early-5thC.	Rahtz 1992: 214-23
Cambridge	Temple	3rdC. but ritual pits dated into the 4thC.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 248; Goodbum 1976: 340; Pullinger 1978: 57-60
Catterick	Temple	Early-4thC.	P. Wilson 2002: 135, 469
Chanctonbury Ring, Sussex	Square temple	4thC. coins	M. Lewis 1966: 85; Goodbum 1978: 466
Chedworth	Temple	4thC. coins	M. Lewis 1966: 53
Collyweston,	Temple	Uncertain but pottery into	M. Lewis 1966: 81

Northants		the 4thC.	
Crownthorpe, near Wymondham Norfolk	Temple	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 563; M. Taylor 1960.
Farley Heath	Temple	In use into the 5thC. when there may have been a fire.	M. Lewis 1966: 53
Flamstead, Herts.	Temple	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 563
Frilford	Temple	Late-4thC. to 5thC.	Hingley 1985: 204-5
Godmanchester	Temple	Uncertain: possibly A.D. 270 although pottery shows use into late-4thC.	H. Green 1975: 208; H. Green 1986: 33-4
	Piper's Lane temple	3rdC.	H. Green 1986: 36
Great Chesterford	Temple	Uncertain but 4thC.	Alexander 1975: 108; Burnham and Wacher 1990: 140
Great Dunmow, Essex	Temple	150 to 200 bronze coins of the late-3rd to early-5thC.	D. Wilson 1973: 304
Greenwich Park, Surrey	Temple	4thC. to 5thC.	M. Lewis 1966: 563
Harlow	Temple	Late-4thC.: coins of Allectus and Constantine.	France and Gobel 1985: 48
Hayling Island	Temple	Early-4thC.	Downey *et al.* 1979: 15
Henley Wood	Temple	Uncertain	Rahtz and Watts 1979: 194
Heybridge	Shrine complex	Late-4thC. to 5thC.	Atkinson and Preston 1998: 101-2
Hockwold	Temple	In use into the late-4thC.	D. Wilson 1963: 138
Irchester	Temple	Uncertain but use appears to be into the late-4thC.	Knight 1967: 115
Jordon Hill, Weymouth	Temple	Uncertain 5thC.	M. Lewis 1966: 53
Kelvedon, Essex	Temple	Burnt down in the late-2ndC.	D. Wilson 1972: 333
Lancing Down	Temple	Use into the 3rdC.	M. Taylor 1930: 208-10
Lydney	Temple	Coins of House of Theodosius	Rahtz and Watts 1979: 203-4; Wheeler and Wheeler 1932
Maiden Castle	Temple	5thC.	M. Lewis 1966: 53
Muntham	Temple	Uncertain	M. Lewis 1966: 83-4
Nettleton	Temple	Latest coins were A.D. 370-90	Wedlake 1982: 83-6
Pagans Hill, Chew Stoke, N. Somerset	Temple	Coin of Gratian (A.D. 367-83)	Rahtz 1951: 117; Rahtz and Harris 1956-7
Richborough	Temple 1	Uncertain but 4thC.	Bushe-Fox 1932: 35; Millett and Wilmott 2003: 191
	Temple 2	Uncertain but 4thC.	Bushe-Fox 1932: 34
Sapperton	Shrine?	Little known about the structure.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 306
Springhead	Temple 1	Coin of A.D. 335-41	Penn 1959
	Temple 2	Uncertain but mid-4thC.	Penn 1962
	Temple 3	Uncertain	Penn 1960
	Temple 4	Uncertain	Penn 1960
	Temple 5	Uncertain but mid-4thC.	Penn 1962
	Temple 6	Mid-2ndC.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 197
Stonea	Temple	3rdC.	Jackson and Potter 1996: 682
Thisleton	Temple	Late-3rdC.	M. Lewis 1965: 93-4
Titsey	Temple	Uncertain 3rdC.	M. Taylor 1936: 262-3
Uley	Temple	Large number of 4thC. and some into 5thC. coins including 32 Arcadius (A.D. 383-95), 8 Honorius A.D. 395-423) and 175	A. Woodward and Leach 1993: 318

		House of Theodosius.	
Wall	Shrine?	Little known about the structure.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 278; G. Webster 1956: 394; Frere 1977: 394
Water Newton	Temple?	Uncertain as only aerial photography.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 90
Westhawk Farm	Shrine	Only 1stC. and 2ndC. coins found although use continued to a later date.	Booth 2001: 21; P. Booth pers. comm.
Weycock Hill	Temple	Uncertain but 5thC.	M. Lewis 1966: 54
Wilderspool	Temple?	Little known about the structure.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 231
Woodeaton	Temple	Uncertain but 5thC.	J. Milne 1931.
Worcester	Temple	Number of late-3rdC. and 4thC. coins.	Burnham and Wacher 1990: 234
Worth, Kent	Temple	Use into the 4thC.?	M. Lewis 1966: 54
Wycombe	Temple	Uncertain of coins but 5thC. pottery	Timby 1998: 351

Table 11.4: Table showing, where known, the dates of the last coins from the temple sites of 'small towns' and rural sanctuaries.

In some public buildings, large late coin assemblages have been found and these are sometimes dated subsequent to the inception of the apparent structural decay of the buildings. Debate has centred around whether they represent coins discarded in rubbish dumped in the buildings, or whether they result from activity continuing within the buildings (Niblett 1999: 417). The value of these coins is also likely to have been low at this time (*e.g.* Reece 1996). Within the theatre at Verulamium there was a large number of late Roman coins, with examples dating up to Arcadius (A.D. 383-95) and Honorius (A.D. 393-5) within a thick deposit of 'dark earth', which has been interpreted as the product of dumping within the disused building (Kenyon 1935: 239-40). Although this might be the most likely interpretation for the information, the possibility of the coins representing activity within the building or surrounding buildings cannot be ruled out.

Within *basilicae*, there are a number of cases of large late coin assemblages. These consist of the 232 late-third and fourth century coins from within the *basilica* at Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000), the 72 coins from the later fourth century phase of the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* (P. Barker *et al.* 1997) and the 52 coins from the fourth century phase of the Lincoln *forum-basilica* excavations (Steane 2006; as opposed to only two from Lincoln of the second century). The majority came from occupation layers, probably resulting from the commercial, market or religious use of the buildings.

Comparable large coin assemblages have come from temples, although whether these were the result of religious activities within the buildings is uncertain. In the *insula* XVI temple at Verulamium (Lowther 1937), an assemblage including 72 coins of the House of Constantine

(A.D. 307-37), 22 of the House of Valentinian (A.D. 388-402) and 11 of the House of Theodosius (A.D. 379-95) was found amongst a layer of 'dark earth' similar to that in the theatre. This may indicate that the temple was now out of use, or the material could represent disturbed stratigraphic layers of activity. The large number of fourth century coins from the temple precinct at Canterbury (Diagram 46) might indicate the continuation of religious activity on the site, contemporary with the laying down of a new surface of reused stone over the whole complex (see section 12.3.1). Another possible interpretation for this evidence is market activity (P. Bennett pers. comm.; P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989).

11.2.4 *Late pottery sherds*

Like coins, pottery is a very useful dating tool and late Roman pottery types that have been found in public buildings include grog-tempered wares, Portchester D ware, Crambeck wares, Alice Holt grey wares, New Forest, Oxfordshire and Hadham slipped wares, Nene Valley colour-coated wares and Southeast Dorset Black Burnished ware (Tyers 1996).[254] The end dates of this pottery is not always secure; it is usually assumed to come to an end at the end of the fourth century or around A.D. 410 (Fulford 1979). Recent work on individual types, however, has started to suggest revisions to the chronology in some cases. Southeast Dorset Black Burnished ware, for example, is generally considered to have gone out of production by the late-fourth century. More recent work on sites in Dorset, however, is beginning to demonstrate that production probably continued into the early-fifth century and that the pots may have continued in use later still (J. Magilton pers. comm.).

Late Roman grey wares have proven to be especially problematic since local types and chronologies are difficult to establish through typologies. Whyman's (2001) examination of late Roman grey ware in the north of England identified chronologies that continued later than has been supposed. Subtle differences in types are also beginning to be recognised amongst late grey ware from Lincoln, indicating that production probably continued into the fifth century (J. Mann pers. comm.). In some cases, the use of the buildings will have continued beyond the production and use of pottery, as with the baths-*basilica* at Wroxeter.

The study and publication of complete pottery assemblages from sites is rarely possible because of issues of time and expense. Traditional priorities within pottery studies have also led to a concentration on the samian and other fine wares at the expense of studying and/or retaining the coarse wares in a systematic manner. On some sites the pottery was selectively

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[254] Grog-tempered wares (late-third century to the end of the Roman period) and Portchester D ware (early-fourth to the end of the fourth century) were mainly distributed in the south, especially Kent, London, Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex whilst Crambeck wares (early-fourth to the end of the Roman period) were mainly in the northeast of England. Alice Holt/Farnham ware was produced in the south from the mid-first century but a second major period of production was in the late-third to late-fourth centuries. Southeast Dorset Black Burnished ware was produced in the Wareham/Poole Harbour region from the first century but distribution spread out to the midlands, southeast and north in the third century. The slipped wares were distributed across central, southern and eastern England and are generally considered to have been produced to the end of the fourth century (Tyers 1996).

discarded by the excavators, as at the baths and *macellum* site at Wroxeter (Mould 2000: 108). An aspect of pottery use which affects its presence on the archaeological site is the curation of vessels from earlier periods; it is important to acknowledge that pottery use was not always directly functional. This can add complexity to studying late assemblages[255] and has implications for identification and dating of late layers through pottery on sites.

The potential of detailed contextual studies is demonstrated by Timby (1998: 261-2) who conducted an analysis of the forms and fabrics found within each room of Building VIII of the 'small town' of Kingscote (Gloucestershire) in an attempt to identify whether the assemblages could reflect differences in use of the rooms.[256] What might also have been possible was a study of the way in which the pottery assemblages from different contexts had changed over time within each room, thus indicating changes or continuities of use. Grigoropoulos' (2005) study of pottery from Roman period houses in Greece adopts such an approach.[257] This analysis, however, whereby each individual sherd was examined in its context in a quantitative manner, would be very difficult for all but a very few public buildings in Roman Britain because of the nature of excavation and recording on many sites.[258]

Late pottery assemblages on definite floor layers within public buildings (figure 11.3) might be able to indicate that activity continued within the buildings, often to a later date than coins. Whilst historical frameworks (such as the Theodosian Code on the closure of temples; see section 6.3.3) often indicate the abandonment of buildings, the archaeological information can provide different conclusions. In some cases pottery sherds can reflect the continued use of structures and they can perhaps be especially useful in cases where the excavations have been small scale, stratigraphic levels have been difficult to identify and there have been few other finds. Excavations of the *forum-basilica* at Verulamium (Diagram 91), for example, have been limited, and work in 1983-6 on the site of the southeast corner of the *basilica* showed that all the later Roman evidence had been destroyed by the construction of the nineteenth

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[255] At Godmanchester, for example, excavations on The Parks site found samian ware sherds that had been deliberately incorporated into fourth century grave fills perhaps for symbolic reasons (Willis 2003a: 65). On the London Road site at Godmanchester sherds of samian exhibited unusual wear, rivet holes and burning (Willis 2003b: 150) further suggesting preservation and perhaps ritual uses of the pottery.

[256] Some rooms produced negligible quantities of pottery whilst others produced large amounts. Room 5 of the building contained distinctive pots including storage jars, cooking vessels and serving dishes suggesting that the room may have been a pantry or serving area. Other rooms produced less material with no clear patterning and a mixture of domestic wares and tableware. Room 9 had a similar assemblage to Room 5 whilst rooms 8 and 15 had similar mixtures of serving, cooking and drinking vessels possibly suggesting that they had similar functions, but this is uncertain. What Timby also found was that within most of the rooms there was a mixture of broken sherds that did not appear to come from re-constructible vessels, suggesting that some of the pottery was dumped there and bore little or no relation to the function of the room in which is was found (1998: 261-2); this is a major problem with all studies of this nature.

[257] Grigoropoulos' study looked at the finds from a selection of houses in an attempt to understand how domestic life may have changed in the later Roman period. He was able to show that the deposits within the houses under study had been influenced by planned abandonment processes which must influence any study of the use of the various rooms within the buildings (2005: 178-89). Despite this he was able to suggest that the distribution of finds within the buildings could indicate uses: the concentration of specialised artefacts on the peripheral rooms of the buildings led Grigoropoulos to suggest that these may have been shops whilst the inner areas of the buildings had finds of a more domestic nature (*ibid.*: 190-204); this demonstrated that commercial activities and retail continued into the late-fifth and sixth centuries in Piraeus.

[258] The storage methods of the pottery in archives sometimes made later contextual and quantification studies difficult, as in the Colchester Archaeological Trust archives where pottery from excavations prior to 1971 was catalogued by bags rather than contexts (P. Sealey pers. comm.).

century cellar. There was, however, a small quantity of unstratified late Roman pottery perhaps reflecting evidence for activity that has been lost (Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987: 180). There is also no positive evidence for the demolition of the building in the Roman period (Niblett 2005a: 83) and so activity may have continued to a later date.

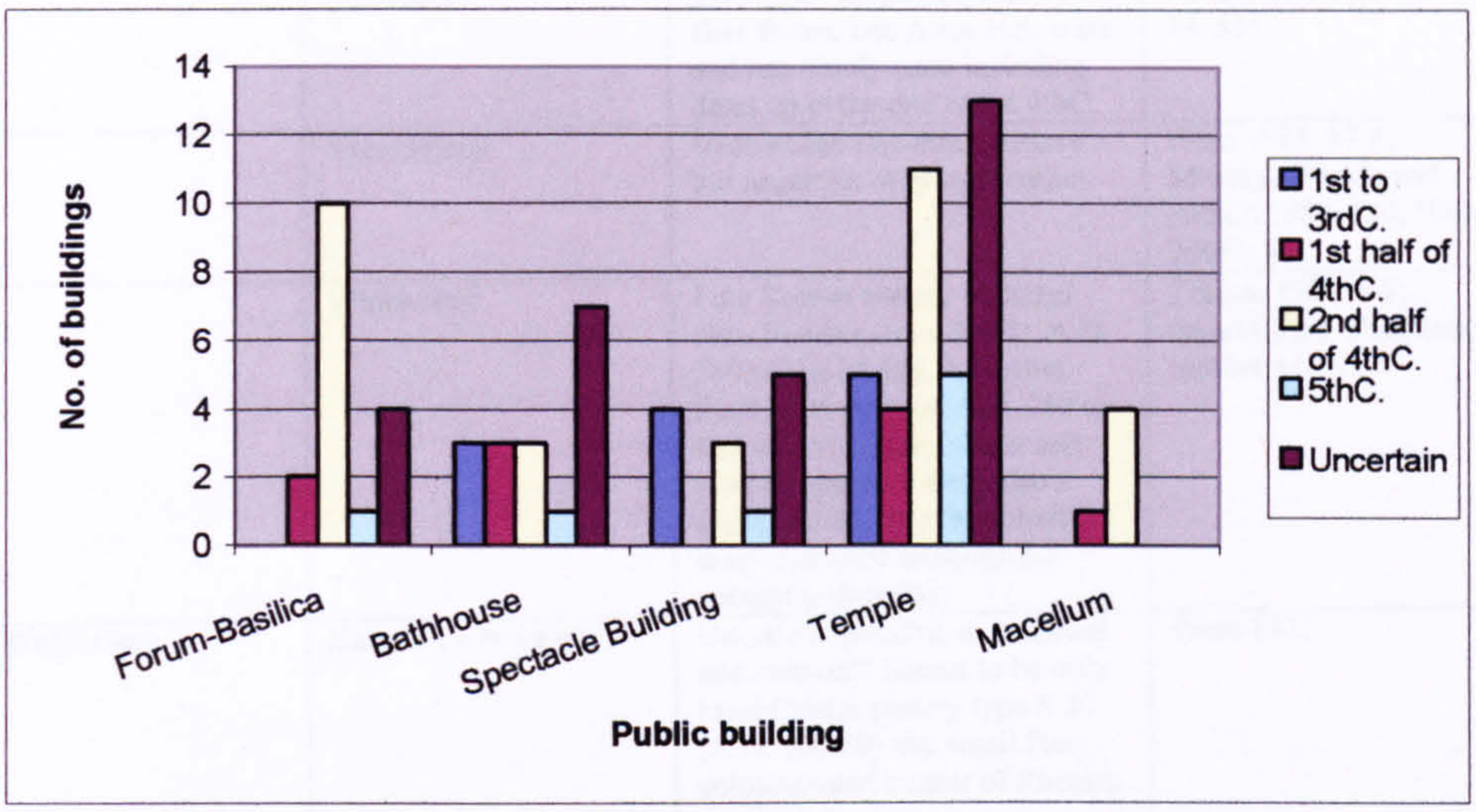

Figure 11.3: Graph showing dates of the latest sherds of Roman pottery excavated from sites of the public buildings.

Analysis of the pottery found during the excavations of the *fora-basilicae* in Britain shows that twelve out of the thirteen, where something is known of the buildings, have pottery of the late-fourth century; in some cases, as discussed above, it has been claimed that some of the pottery continued into the fifth century (table 11.5). More work is needed on late pottery to develop methods of distinguishing fourth and possible fifth century wares. In some cases, as at Verulamium, the latest pottery was unstratified and in Silchester much of the pottery came from Victorian disturbance levels. At Winchester (Diagram 99), late pottery was used to indicate continued use of the few rooms excavated into the fifth century. The pottery here included New Forest colour coat, Oxfordshire parchment ware, grey wares, grog-tempered wares and a sherd of fifth to sixth century chaff-tempered ware, although this was from an uncertain context (Teague 1988; Winchester Museums Service).

Public Building	Town	Latest Pottery Sherds	References
Forum-Basilica	Caistor-by-Norwich	Pottery of the second half of the 4thC.	Frere 1971
	Canterbury	1 sherd of a flanged bowl dating to the second half of the 4thC.	Frere and Bennett 1987: 93-8
	Leicester	Pottery types dating to the 4thC. including 1 sherd of a dark grey fabric with shell grits resembling the Huntcliff type and is post A.D. 350.	Anon unpublished; Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973
	Lincoln	The uppermost earthen floors	Steane 2006: 152, 156;

		and demolition deposits in the east range contained late-4thC. or later grey ware. Some may have been 5thC.	Steane and Vince 1993: 72
	London	Alice Holt/Farnham ware which dates from A.D. 250-400 and some later-fourth century pottery in disturbed contexts.	Bateman 1998: 51; Brigham 1990
	Silchester	Late-4thC. pottery includes late BB1 forms, late Alice Holt ware and late Shelly ware including dates up to the end of the 4thC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 78, 581
	Verulamium	Unstratified late-4thC. pottery but uncertain of quantification.	Frere 1983: 57-8; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987: 180; Niblett 2005a: 83
	Winchester	Late Roman pottery included New Forest colour coat (*c.* A.D 260 to end of 4thC.), Oxford Parchment ware (*c.* A.D. 260 to end of 4thC.), grey wares and grog-tempered wares. Also a sherd of 5thC. to 6thC. chaff-tempered ware although the context is uncertain.	Teague 1988: 6-8; unpublished Winchester archive MAS 87
Bathhouses	Caistor-by-Norwich	Uncertain: possible unstratified late material? Seems to be only local Caistor pottery type S 30 (A.D. 100-50) and small fine colour-coated beaker of Rhenish type *c.* A.D. 200.	Frere 1971
	Canterbury	4thC. and early-5thC. pottery including an Oxfordshire red colour coat vessel of *c.* A.D. 350-400+ in 'dark earth' and on the St. Margaret's Street baths site. In the portico was pottery of the late-4thC. and early-5thC. including Oxfordshire red colour-coat of *c.* A.D. 350-400+. Over the site were 54 sherds of 4thC. Oxfordshire colour coat, 292 sherds of mid-3rd to 4thC. Oxfordshire colour coat, 138 sherds of 4thC. Nene Valley Type colour coat; 163 sherds of 3rd-4thC. Nene Valley Type Colour Coat, 4 sherds of Hadham ware mid-3rdC. to 4thC., 8 New Forest fabric mid-3rdC. to late 4thC., 7 Oxford Parchment ware 3rdC.-4thC.	K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 188-91
	Chichester	Absence of late Roman colour-coated wares which are plentiful elsewhere on the site may suggest that the alterations took place before the 4thC. Pottery of 4thC. or later including New Forest red slip ware and Oxford red ware, white ware, beakers, Rhenish coarse ware of the 3rdC. to 4thC. and Pevensey ware of the 4thC.	Down 1988: 42
	Dorchester	Late Black Burnished ware which continued to be produced in a restricted range into the early 5thC. from about A.D. 370/80 onwards.	Keen 1977; J. Magilton pers. comm.
	Verulamium *insula* III bathhouse	4thC. pottery present.	Niblett 2005a: 85-6
Amphitheatres	Cirencester	Nene Valley colour coat wares late-3rdC. to 4thC.; Black Burnished ware 4thC.-5thC., Oxford parchment ware 4thC., grass-tempered ware usually	Holbrook 1998: 169-71; unpublished site record book CIR 62 N

		dated to the 5thC.	
	London	Pottery and coins suggest late-3rdC. and later for refloorings and also later pottery.	Bateman 1997: 68; Bateman 1998: 52-3
Temples	Caistor-by-Norwich extramural temple	Latest pottery includes 5 sherds of *mortaria* of *c.* A.D. 240-400. There are 4 sherds of Nene Valley colour coat, 2 sherds of Oxford colour coat and sherds of grey ware of late-3rdC. to 4thC.	Gurney 1986
	Canterbury Temple at St. Gabriel's chapel	Sherds of the 3rdC. and 4thC. included Oxford colour coat (3 sherds), Nene Valley colour coat (18 sherds), New Forest (1 sherd), Hadham (9 sherds), and pottery of an unknown source (2 sherds).	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Driver *et al.* 1990: 89-91
	Canterbury Temple at Gas Lane	Pottery dated from the 1stC. to the medieval period.	P. Bennett *et al.* 1982: 44
	Chelmsford	Late shell-tempered pottery – full quantification has not taken place.	Wickendon 1992: 39-41, 141
	Cirencester	Pottery of the late-3rdC. to late-4thC. present: Oxford colour-coated cup, large Nene Valley colour-coated beaker, ?Mancetter-Hartshill *mortarium*, S-W white-slip ware flagon.	Holbrook 1998: 134-5
	Colchester Balkerne Lane temple	The robber trenches contained only Roman pottery, the latest being the mid-3rdC. or later in date.	P. Crummy 1984: 125
	London Temple of Mithras	Presence of 'Six Bells' ware which is a late variant of the Alice Holt/Farnham industry which may be 5thC. There are 13 sherds of Alice Holt/Farnham ware of the 4thC. in the latest layer.	Henig 1998: Shepherd 1998: 84, 103; Perring 1991a: 115
	London riverside temple complex	Pottery suggests continuation into the 5thC. although it can only be placed within a broad framework of the mid-4thC. to early-5thC.	T. Williams 1993: 11, 27, 32
	London Winchester Palace complex	4thC. pottery was found in the post-Roman 'dark earth' and could indicate continued occupation on the site if not certainly use of the building until at least the third quarter of the 4thC. The pottery includes Portchester D ware (early-4thC.-late-4thC.+), Eifelkeramik (mid- to late-4thC.+) and 'calcite-gritted ware' that could be used up to *c.* A.D. 400+.	Yule 2005: 103
	York Wellington Row structure	Pottery into the 5thC.	Ottaway 1993: 112-4; Ottaway 1999: 147: Whyman 2001

Table 11.5: Table showing public buildings where the pottery evidence gave a later date for activity than the coin evidence. In some cases the latest pottery amounts to just one or a few sherds.

Similar possibilities for studying continued use exist for bath buildings, where the apparent decay or demolition of the functional aspects of the baths is often taken to indicate their desertion. Examples include the bathhouse at Dorchester where excavations produced late Black Burnished ware in the Roman layers of the site, which probably continued in use into

the early-fifth century (J. Magilton pers. comm.). Oxfordshire red colour coated pottery occurred at the St. Margaret's Street baths site in Canterbury and may indicate that it continued in use into the early-fifth century (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995). Comparable pottery was found at the bathhouse in Chichester, where only a small area of the building has been excavated (Down 1978: 152).

There are a number of examples of temple structures with late pottery, including the extramural temple at Caistor-by-Norwich (Gurney 1986), the temple at the St. Gabriel's chapel site in Canterbury (Diagram 47; Driver *et al.* 1990), the octagonal temple at Chelmsford (Diagram 50; Wickendon 1992) and the temple at Folly Lane in Verulamium (Diagram 97; Niblett 1999: 71, 417). Within the 'dark earth' over the public building complex at the Winchester Palace site in Southwark, London (Diagram 86), was Portchester D ware, Eifelkeramik and 'calcite-gritted ware',[259] suggestive of late use (Yule 2005; see section 11.3.1). The small quantities of pottery from excavations often make interpretation difficult. This is exemplified by the three sherds of grass-tempered ware from excavations of the amphitheatre at Cirencester which could, if the number of sherds was not so small, indicate activity dating to some time between the fifth and eighth centuries (Holbrook 1998: 169-70). There is considerable potential in the use of pottery sherds for identifying late activity, and this is important to bear in mind for future excavations.

11.3 Small finds

Small finds, especially in the late Roman period, are more difficult to date than coins but where site phases have been dated it may be possible to use the small finds to indicate the use and changing use of the buildings (see section 2.4). Where possible, the data of the small finds from each excavation were collected, but only in a few cases was analysis of the area of the whole building possible because most of the excavations have been small scale. Also the records have often lacked contextual information and in a number of excavations there have been too few finds for analysis. The small finds from the Silchester *basilica* and Wroxeter baths-*basilica*, which were large area excavations, were studied in chapter 10 in an attempt to discern whether it is possible to identify the function of the late Roman timber structures within the public buildings and other activities taking place around them. The small finds might also sometimes be able to indicate continuing use of the buildings when otherwise structural decay would indicate abandonment (see section 10.3.2).

Here, some case studies of public buildings in London and Cirencester will be explored. A relatively large number of excavations have been undertaken in the centre of Cirencester and

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[259] Eifelkeramik is a collective term for coarse ware produced at a number of sites in the Eifel mountain region of Germany including Trier, Speicher and Mayen from around A.D. 300 to 450. In Britain most comes from mid or late-fourth century contexts (Tyers 1996: 151-2). 'Calcite-gritted ware' is also known as South Midlands shell-tempered ware, the production of which saw a major expansion in the early-fourth century and it occurs in abundance in the late-fourth century (*ibid.*: 192-3).

a number of its public buildings are known. For London, a number of the public buildings in Southwark are examined.

11.3.1 *Example 1: London*

The excavations of the Winchester Palace complex and Southwark *mansio* are important because of the 'dark earth' in their latest Roman layers and the early post-Roman disturbance layers which have the potential of revealing late Roman use. Current understanding of 'dark earth' was discussed in section 2.3. Although more analysis is needed, here it was concluded that in many cases it is likely to have been the result of pre-existing strata reworked by biological and human action on the site (Yule 2005: 80). The presence of 'dark earth' can indicate activity – people using space – and not just decay (Christie 2006: 262).

Excavations at Winchester Palace (Diagrams 83 and 84) consisted of a number of sites across a large area. It was mainly on sites A, B and part of C that structural remains of the monumental complex, including a number of large stone buildings and a bathhouse, were uncovered; these appeared in Period 3 of the site in the second century (Yule 2005: 50-72). Periods 1 and 2 included buildings that were part of earlier phases of the complex. The end of Period 3 and then Period 4 represents activity of the fourth and fifth centuries and includes the 'dark earth' found over much of the site. There are generally very few finds across the area and seventy-five percent of the metalwork was not identifiable; only the identified finds have been included in this analysis.

In Period 1, Site A produced only one pin, two brooches, one copper alloy finger-ring and one gaming counter and Site B produced only the remains of a copper alloy *ligula*. The Period 2 buildings contained even fewer finds of known function, with only one brooch and one copper alloy *ligula* from Site A and none from Site B. Site A in Period 3 produced one bone pin and one bone needle, a bone *ligula*, a copper alloy brooch, a bone gaming counter and bone-working waste. Site B had a bone pin and copper alloy brooch and also an unfinished bone pin. Bone-working waste and bone artefacts also came from Period 4 which was largely the 'dark earth' layer. Here on Site A were four bone pins, two bone needles and waste in the form of an unfinished pin from a cattle-sized long bone. Site B produced no artefacts of use, but residual medieval layers over Site A produced a further three bone pins as well as a bone spindle whorl. Stratigraphic sequences show that at least part of the building remained standing into the post-Roman period (*ibid.*: 78), although this also need not preclude use of the areas of the demolished building.

Although there are not many finds from the site, which causes problems in interpreting the use of the complex in its earlier phases, it is clear that there does seem to have been some kind of bone-working taking place here in the late Roman period, perhaps alongside many other

activities. This would not have been recognised if the later layers, including the 'dark earth', had been removed and destroyed without detailed study. Analysis of the pottery from the 'dark earth' indicated that there was six times as much dating evidence from the third and fourth centuries than for the first and second centuries. This indicates that the deposits were reworked late Roman horizons, perhaps after the building was eventually demolished in the post-Roman period, with relatively low levels of residual early Roman pottery (*ibid.*: 81).

Another complex late sequence came from the possible *mansio* structure on the 15-23 Southwark Street site (Diagram 83). On this site, Period 3 in the A.D. 70s saw the construction of a monumental masonry structure, Buildings 4 and 5, with a courtyard 18m across (Cowan 1992: 24-31). The two earlier periods on the site consisted of small timber and clay structures. Period 4 in the second century saw the rebuilding of part of the structure, Building 6, and then Building 7 which followed in the third century and was the last rebuilding on the site (*ibid.*: 35-53). Period 5 on the site is when thirteen fourth century burials cut through the robbed remains of part of the building; Period 6 is represented by a layer of 'dark earth' (*ibid.*: 56-60). Analysis of the 'dark earth' and its context suggested that it represented the churning up of late Roman occupation layers on the site, perhaps after later demolition, rather than material that had been dumped (*ibid.*). The debate concerning the origins of 'dark earth', however, demonstrates that there is still much uncertainty about what it represents.

The finds from Period 3 included fourteen coins, three brooches, four needles, two bone dice, one bone counter and one iron knife blade. There is an increase to 206 finds in Period 4 including 33 coins, 18 pins, 4 brooches and 2 copper alloy finger-rings. There were also nine needles, a spindle whorl, writing stylus and twelve gaming counters. Two clay figures, of Venus and a pigeon, probably indicate religious activity and there were nine items of personal equipment including *ligulae*, tweezers and spatulas. The Period 5 artefacts were mostly associated with the burials cutting into a demolished area of the building. Continued use of at least part of the building might be indicated by the finds within the 'dark earth' of Period 6, where there were eight coins of the third and fourth centuries and three pins, and also by the burials that surrounded part of the building (see below). Disturbed levels above this produced a further forty-one coins, mostly dating to the third and fourth centuries, and more pins. It is likely that, as at the Winchester Palace site, these layers represent the disturbed latest Roman layers of the site. Use of the building continued beyond the demolition of part of the structure and the placing of burials over part of the site.

11.3.2 *Example 2: Cirencester*

Looking at the artefacts in detail from smaller area excavations of public buildings is also instructive for understanding the use of the buildings in the late Roman period. None of the public buildings at Cirencester have been excavated on a large scale because of occupation in the modern town. Few sites produced many finds and often the trenches did not excavate below the uppermost layers, meaning that the finds from these phases cannot be compared with earlier levels. Excavations of the *basilica* (Diagrams 52 and 53) consisted of ten small trenches over the rooms within its southwest corner, and small areas of the apse and the external portico (Holbrook 1998: 100-1). Room 1 lay in the space behind the apse and rooms 2 and 4 in a row running along the northwest side of the *basilica*.[260]

In Period 2 (later-second century), Room 3 was divided into two smaller rooms (Rooms 3a and 3b). Following this in Period 3 (second half of the fourth century), the walls between Rooms 3a, 3b and 4 were demolished to create one large room and the door through to Room 1 from Room 2 was blocked. From Period 1 there were only fifteen identifiable finds including seven coins, five items of personal equipment and one recreational item. Four coins, a finger-ring, a brooch and a gaming counter came from Room 3, whilst a coin and the tip of an iron knife came from the Apse. Period 2 had 64 finds, but this included 55% unidentified items; there were five coins and twelve items of personal equipment. One coin and three brooches came from Room 3a, whilst a coin and a pin came from Room 3b. In Room 2 there were three coins, three pins and a brooch.

Period 3 saw an increase in coin finds to forty-eight, being 34% of the 143 artefacts (50% of which were unidentified). Twenty-two of the coins came from Room 3/4 and fifteen from Room 2; another coin came from the apse. There were also five pins, two brooches and an ear-ring from Room 3/4. The deposition of these finds was contemporary with the metalworking activities within the rooms, and many of the unidentified finds were pieces of scrap copper alloy metal. Although during Period 2 there were six finds of scrap copper alloy from the area of Rooms 3b and 4 and nine pieces from the area of Room 1 and 2 there were thirty-four pieces within Room 3/4 of Period 3 and fourteen pieces from Room 2. Many of the pieces from Room 3/4 were cast fragments, some of which clearly came from chopped up statuary. The finds evidence suggests that these rooms, and possibly reflecting the rest of the building, continued in use whilst the metalworking was taking place, probably into the late fourth and early-fifth century.

This is supported by finds from excavations of the *forum* (Diagram 54; *ibid.*: 113). Here, Period 3 (later-third to early-fourth century) saw some minor changes to the structure, but it

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[260] Post-excavation analysis of the *basilica* building divided it into three periods, whereas the *forum* was divided into four periods to allow for the differences in the structural histories (Holbrook 1998).

was Period 4 (mid-fourth century onwards), that saw more radical alterations. These included the enclosure of the *forum* colonnade, the covering of the walls with pink plaster and red paint, and the laying of mosaics within the enclosed porticoes. There were very few finds from the *forum* excavations. One object came from Period 1, Period 2 produced three coins and two items of personal ornament and again in Period 3 there was only one identified object. In Period 4, however, there were twenty-one coins, a spindle whorl, a nail cleaner, a fragment of cosmetic set and two gaming counters. The date of these finds is not easy to establish from the surviving remains, but their contexts could indicate that they were the result of people using the building in this period, contemporary to the metalworking activity in the *basilica*.

The amphitheatre also had the largest number of finds from its latest Roman phase. Excavations consisted of fourteen small trenches around the north-eastern entrance, three within the arena and four on the bank, but most produced very few finds (Diagram 55). Period 6, falling into the early-fifth century, has been described as the abandonment phase of the amphitheatre (*ibid.*: 169) but it may also have been the period in which a timber structure was built. This was found in a small trench within the arena and may reflect more activity that has not been excavated. It was also this period that saw the largest number of coins, with sixty-four as opposed to the ten from Period 5, late-fourth to early-fifth century, and eleven from Period 4 around A.D. 350/60. In Period 6 there were also two adult skeletons and a child skeleton placed within the banks of the amphitheatre and a quantity of other human bone which might reflect further disturbed burials. Whether these relate to the activity within the arena at this time is uncertain.[261] They may more simply be outliers of the fourth century extramural cemetery at the Bath Gate which lay nearby (*ibid.*: 174). The evidence as a whole seems to indicate that the amphitheatre remained in use in some form into the fifth century and possibly later.

Trenches within an area of the courtyard of the *insula* VI public building (Diagram 56) produced evidence for timber building platforms constructed in the late-fourth or early-fifth century. There were very few finds from these trenches, but the many cattle bones may represent butchery while the layer of loam above the stone floor of Building VI.7 contained metalworking slag and fragments of copper alloy, lead and iron which might indicate metalworking here. The slag was discarded during the excavation (*ibid.*: 135) and so further study is not now possible. As with the other sites in Cirencester there were few finds in total from the excavations of this public building but the types of finds give some possible indications as to the activities taking place within the building in the late Roman period.

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[261] In the Mediterranean, theatres and amphitheatres were sometimes transfomed into burial areas (see section 11.4).

11.4 Burials around public buildings

Another indication of the continuing use of public buildings is where burials surrounded the structures or cut into sections of the buildings near parts that were still standing (table 11.6). During most of the Roman period, cemeteries were located outside the boundaries of the towns and were integral parts of the Roman urban landscape (Esmonde Cleary 2000: 136). The evidence for late burials within towns is often taken to indicate the presence of churches with Christian inhumations surrounding them (*e.g.* Bell 2005; with examples from other areas of the Empire including Christie 2006: 252-9 and B. Ward-Perkins 1984 on Italy; Leone 2002; 2007 on North Africa). Heard *et al.* (1990), however, have argued that the focus of burials around a building could be an indication of its continued use, and perhaps of its symbolic importance, even if it did not function as a church. Connected with this, Struck (1997: 137) has drawn attention to the fact that burials in prehistory often focused on places which had long histories of meaning.[262] The burials associated with public buildings in late Roman contexts, then, should be studied for their potential to reveal aspects of religion, ritual, change, topography and organisation within towns (*cf.* Cantino Wataghin 1999; Christie 2006: 258).

Town	Location	Evidence	Date	References
Caerwent	Near the public baths	2 bodies on a level with the top of a dismantled wall.	Uncertain of date but they may be of the 4thC. or later.	Nash-Williams 1930: 230
Caistor-by-Norwich	Small set of baths within Building IV	Presence of around 36 human skulls and other human remains. These may have come from disturbed burials in the area or they may represent other activity, perhaps of a ritual nature.	Uncertain but the stratigraphic layering suggested that they may have been burials of the late-4thC. or 5thC.	Atkinson 1931: 232; Darling 1987
Canterbury	Temple precinct	Multiple burial of an adult male and female, 2 children and a dog.	The beads and metalwork from the burial suggests an early-5thC. date.	P. Bennett 1980; P. Bennett 1981
Cirencester	Amphitheatre	2 adult burials were found at the extreme south-eastern end of the trench dug into the rear of the seating bank. A skeleton of a child was found just south of the crest of the bank seemingly contained within a wooden coffin represented by 6 iron nails.	First half of the 5thC.	Holbrook 1998: 169-71; unpublished site record book CIR 62 N
Colchester	Butt Road 'church'	2 successive cemeteries were found: the first were with grave goods and the second were facing east-west with few grave goods.	4thC.	P. Crummy 1997: 121; N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 164-99; Grew 1980: 377-8
Dorchester	Amphitheatre	2 male and 1 female burial outside the northern entrance of the amphitheatre.	Uncertain but possibly 3rdC.	Bradley 1975: 61-2
Exeter	*Forum-Basilica*	4 burials, 3 males and 1 destroyed, were arranged in a line cutting across the south-west wall of the *basilica*	Carbon-14 dating of three burials suggests a date of *c.* A.D. 450. One	Bidwell 1979: 111-3

[262] There have been a number of studies on the presence of Iron Age, Roman and Saxon period burials at prehistoric monument sites in Britain which, it has been suggested, may indicate continued ritual activity at these sites and also the memory and commemoration of them (*e.g.* Dark 1993; H. Williams 1998; 2006). Some kind of meaning attached to these places often survived and was recognised. Both Williams (2002) and Semple (2004) have considered large early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries in England in terms of 'central places' and *foci* for communal ritual, assemblies and displays of power. They were embellished with structures and standing posts and may have been where much of the ritual activities of the society took place (Semple 2004: 150). Although late Roman Britain represents a different situation, burials within towns should not be interpreted in simple terms. They could indicate a variety of motives and activities including their focus on places being used for meeting and religious purposes.

		nave. 1 female burial cut through levels of the *forum*. 1 further burial cut through the street-levels.	burial was dated to A.D. 1070 although this may have been contaminated.	
Lincoln	*Forum-Basilica*	2 north-south burials were dug over the site of the church which occupied a site in the *forum*. The skeletons were too poorly preserved to identify the sex or age. There was also a cist grave within the area of the church although this contained a hanging bowl of 7thC. date. An early medieval cemetery was located to the west of the *forum* church site.	Uncertain but probably 5thC.	M. Jones 1999: 172; M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 69-71; Steane 1991: 31-2; Steane 2006: 160-1; Steane and Vince 1993: 73
London	*Mansio* (Southwark)	13 burials were found cutting through the robbing of an area of the *mansio*. They consisted of 1 adult female, 1 young female, 5 adult males and 6 uncertain.	4thC.	Cowan 1992: 56-9
Silchester	*Mansio*	Excavations in 1833 found the body of a man within the cold plunge bath of the *mansio* baths. It was associated with a number of finds including a greyhound skull.	Uncertain but probably late-4thC. or 5thC.	Anon 1833; Boon 1974: 81-2
Verulamium	'Church'	Small inhumation cemetery 50m from the building which has been interpreted as a church but none of the burials show any specifically Christian characteristics.	3rdC.	Niblett 2001: 137
Wroxeter	*Forum-Basilica*	2 burials were found around the *forum* and various human skeletal parts have been found within the building.	Late or post-Roman	Atkinson 1942: 112-3
	Public bath building	12 burials were found in the hypocaust surrounding the *frigidarium* in the 19thC.	Late-4thC.	Ellis 2000: 55; R. White and Barker 1998: 125
	Baths-*basilica*	The burial of a young man cut into the rubble platform of Building 11 which had been built over the north aisle and north *portico* of the *basilica*.	The bones have been radiocarbon dated to *c.* A.D. 600-790.	P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138-68, 176; R. White and Barker 1998: 136

Table 11.6: The evidence for burials and human remains found within towns, and associated with extramural public buildings, in the late Roman period.

Burials surrounding basilican buildings are most often interpreted as being Christian. Examples include the Butt Road building in Colchester (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 164-99) and the cemetery at Verulam Hills Field at Verulamium (Niblett 2001: 137), but the nature of the cemeteries and function of the buildings are problematic (see section 12.2 for a more detailed discussion). Six burials with radiocarbon dates of around A.D. 450 have been found on the site of the *forum* at Exeter (Diagram 62; Bidwell 1979: 111-3). It was suggested that the row of four burials here represented some kind of planned cemetery belonging to a church, with further bodies being destroyed and lost at a later date (*ibid.*), although only further excavation could prove or dispute this. Although the excavated section of the *forum-basilica* appears to have been demolished in the fourth century, the burials may indicate that some part of this building, or another building nearby, remained standing and provided the focus for the burial activity. In the case of the *forum-basilica* at Lincoln (Diagram 75; M. Jones 1999: 172; M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 69-71), the burials found here may give some indication that at least part of the rest of the surrounding buildings remained in use. The Christian interpretation of

the use of these buildings surrounded by burials might be problematic, but the burials do indicate some kind of continuing activity at these locations.

In London, burials were found associated with the *mansio* building in Southwark (Diagram 83; Cowan 1992: 56-9). Thirteen burials cut through a robbed area of the building but it appears that other parts remained standing, since there does not seem to be evidence for robbing in the area of Rooms 9-12 of Building 4, and the remains are better preserved (*ibid.*).[263] The interpretation of this building as a *mansio* is problematic in itself and the function of the surviving part, perhaps associated with the burials, is also uncertain. If the building had originally been a temple, then the burials may indicate a continuation of religious use or perhaps a change to a Christian function, but if it was a *mansio*, the burials may indicate a new function. Although burials can rarely indicate what activity was taking place within buildings, their presence would seem to represent some kind of deliberate focus of attention in these locations. The dating of the burials is also not always straightforward, with some cases, such as on the Exeter *forum* (Bidwell 1979: 110-1), possibly dating to the post-Roman period.

There are also a number of cases where burials are associated with amphitheatres, as at Cirencester (Diagram 55; see section 11.3.2) and Dorchester (Diagram 61). For some parts of the Empire it has been argued that burials were placed within amphitheatres and theatres when the spaces were deserted, as the walls of the structures would have kept the burials isolated from the rest of the town, which was still a socially important consideration (Cantino Wataghin 2003). This might provide an appropriate interpretation where numbers of burials are large, but in Britain there are only small numbers of burials associated with the buildings and these were on the edge or around the outside of the structures. A possibility is that they represent the encroachment of suburban cemeteries, or they could relate to the use of the structures. Either way they show that spaces within the buildings could still be put to some kind of use.

In some early cases, burials associated with public buildings were interpreted in terms of the results of barbarian attacks (see section 6.2). An example is the skeleton of a man found within the cold bath of the *mansio* at Silchester in 1833 (Anon 1833). Little can now be said about this find because "the extraction was wholly impracticable, and but few bones were preserved" (Anon 1833), but a burial, associated with nearby domestic occupation might seem more likely than that the individual was a victim of violence.[264] Another case is the twelve burials discovered within the hypocaust system surrounding the *frigidarium* of the baths at Wroxeter (Diagram 104; Wright 1872: 68). Reanalysis, however, suggests that these burials

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[263] The burials appear to be divided into two groups, one aligned north-south with their heads to the north and another aligned east-west with their heads to the west (Cowan 1992: 56-9). Whether this might represent different beliefs, family groups or even funeral societies (*ibid.*) is uncertain, but it does suggest that the burials do not simply represent decline within the town.

[264] What might be significant is the discovery of the "skull of a greyhound" apparently near the skeleton (Anon 1833) perhaps suggestive of religious activity (*cf.* K. Smith 2006) associated with the burial.

were probably deliberately placed here because it would have been easier to break through the raised floor of the heated rooms of the building than to dig a grave (R. White and Barker 1998: 125). White and Barker argued that the *frigidarium* was being used as a church at this time but there is no definite evidence for this (*ibid.*; see section 8.3.3).

Burials have also been explained in terms of declining standards within towns. For example, at Wroxeter, a single skeleton of a male was found on the site of the baths-*basilica* cutting through the rubble platform of Building 11 of the 'great rebuilding' phase of the site. The skeleton was orientated north-south (Diagram 100; P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138-68, 176) and has been radiocarbon dated to cal. A.D. 600-790 providing a *terminus ante quem* of A.D. 790. The burial was taken as indicating the final decay of the town (*ibid.*: 167-8) but, instead, it might indicate that some kind of activity was still taking place in the surrounding area; certainly the burial would indicate the presence of people. The Stour Street burials in Canterbury (Diagram 46) consisted of the skeletons of an adult male and female, two children and a dog within a pit or grave at the edge of the central temple precinct of the town (P. Bennett 1980; P. Bennett 1981). Previously considered post-Roman in date, a study of the beads within the grave now indicates that the burials were very late Roman (P. Bennett pers. comm.). Rather than indicating declining standards, the location of this unusual burial within the temple precinct may mean the continuation of pagan religious activity[265] and not abandonment of the site - although it should be noted that human burials are rare on Iron Age and Roman temple sites in Britain.

No interpretation of the burials associated with the public buildings is definite and there are likely to have been a number of motives involved, but the focus of the burials on these buildings might be an indication of their importance as places of congregation, ritual and ceremony (*cf.* H. Williams 2002; Semple 2004). Those burying the dead were perhaps drawing on the history, memories and stories associated with the sites, or the towns on a wider scale, which in some cases could even have been from the late pre-Roman Iron Age. More work, perhaps only through further excavation, is needed to identify the types of activities taking place within buildings on which the burials focused.

11.5 Conclusions

This chapter has explored ways in which the continued use of public buildings can be demonstrated, drawing upon sources other than the structural remains. The use of new reflooring layers within buildings, coin, pottery and bone assemblages, small finds, burials and 'dark earth' were discussed as well as the problems with site disturbance, residuality and

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[265] Isserlin's (1997) study suggests that it would not be impossible for these burials to represent human sacrifice in Roman Britain. He (*ibid.*: 93-6) discusses possible examples such as human bones from the legionary fortress ditch at Colchester (P. Crummy 1984: 94-5).

dating. The debate concerning 'dark earth' demonstrates that the characterisation of the deposits is not simple and that there may well be more than one origin for the material. Current work on 'dark earth' (*e.g.* Yule 2005: 78-81), however, suggests that in many cases it represents late Roman activity layers disturbed at a later date, rather than being dumped material or the result of agricultural activity. A detailed study of the finds from the material also provides some indication of the date of the activity that it represents, especially the exploration of the ratio of early to late pottery and coins (*ibid.*).

The chronology of events on sites is not always easily established. This includes the date of burials, the deposits representing activity within the buildings, the robbing/demolition of the buildings and their final abandonment. What is clear from the data discussed in this chapter, and preceding chapters, is that much varied activity took place within the buildings in the late Roman period and that this often occurred beyond the date at which structural decay appears to have set in. The eventual abandonment of the sites took place later, often in the post-Roman period.

Views of decline, which focus on structural decay and notions of 'squatter' occupation (*e.g.* Faulkner's 2000a assessment of the decline of public buildings), ignore the considerable evidence for activity in the late Roman period. These traces of activity analysed here indicate the importance of the buildings to the towns and surrounding areas. Evidence for housing and other structures around and near public buildings at this time, such as at Canterbury (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995), Cirencester (McWhirr 1986), Silchester (Fulford *et al.* 2006) and Winchester (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2007), suggest that there is additional evidence for the occupation of towns. In some sense towns in the late Roman period could be described as what Van Dyke and Alcock (2003: 5) have termed 'commemorative places': "places that have been inscribed with meaning, usually as a result of some past event or attachment" and were still attracting attention and activity. But towns were also still being used in innovative and transformative ways, continuing the dynamic nature of the places.

Chapter 12: New structures within towns in the later Roman period

12.1 Introduction

Excavations within Roman towns in Britain, and also in their hinterlands, have revealed traces of new structures dating to the later Roman period that have the appearance of being public buildings.[266] The most common type is a rectangular aisled building although there are other forms, including large gravelled or paved areas. The size and location of many of these new structures suggest some kind of public function. The rectangular aisled structures have usually been interpreted either as churches or agricultural storage buildings (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a; Faulkner 2000a; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936) although there is often much uncertainty about their use.

Some of the 'church' buildings were excavated in the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century and the interpretation of their function has since been questioned (*e.g.* Silchester: G. Fox and St. John Hope 1893: 563-8; King 1983). Within late Roman archaeology in Britain, the identification of churches has been used to support historical events in the Empire, such as the conversion of Constantine (Mitchell 2007: 259-65), while documents such as the Theodosian Code, ordering the closure of temples (see section 6.3.3; Sirmond and Pharr eds. 1969), and Gibbon's narrative of the Christianisation of the Empire, will also have encouraged people to search for churches.

The identification of agricultural storage buildings within late Roman towns in Britain is also based partly upon Empire-wide events, with Diocletian reforms resulting in late Roman taxes being collected in kind, the state *annona* system (*e.g.* Faulkner 2000a: 112-4). As with the 'churches', this interpretation of the function of the buildings is not always straightforward. What these structures do indicate, however, is continuing construction activity within towns, alongside alterations to and use of existing public buildings.

This chapter will discuss the available evidence for, and interpretations of, these structures in order to assist understanding of the nature and continuing use of towns in the late Roman period. The interpretations have implications for understanding the rôle of towns as religious centres at this time. Some archaeological studies of late Roman towns have demonstrated that the first churches were often located away from the centre of towns, where the public buildings remained in use (Krautheimer 1983).[267] In the latest Roman and post-Roman periods churches gradually moved from the periphery to the town centres, making a statement of power and achievement (B. Ward-Perkins 1998: 257, 400), although in other cases Christianity remained on the periphery of towns. There is insufficient evidence from Britain

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[266] See Gazetteer 7 for a list of the buildings.

[267] The first church in Rome built by Constantine was away from the centre, perhaps to avoid causing unrest amongst the pagan population (Krautheimer 1983).

to assess this pattern for the late Roman period. At Verulamium, the *martyrium* to St. Alban has not yet been discovered. This is suspected to lie outside the Roman town, near to where the cathedral now stands, in a location subsequently developed as the medieval town (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001; Niblett 2005a: 100; see also footnote 273). This might indicate that the Roman town centre remained in use and important to a late date, as Krautheimer (1983) has argued for other parts of the Empire, but more work is needed. Equally it might mean that the Christian focus of the settlement moved, becoming fossilised by the medieval abbey and town.

The evidence for and interpretation of masonry aisled buildings will be discussed first.

12.2 Masonry aisled buildings

12.2.1 *Possible churches*

The conversion of public buildings, or parts of them, into churches during the later Roman period in Britain was discussed in chapter 8, where it was shown that the evidence was far from conclusive for any of the proposed examples. The same is also the case for new constructions interpreted as churches. Much has been written about the rise and function of the Church in the late Roman town, especially on the Continent and in Italy, Africa and the East (*e.g.* Liebeschuetz 2000; Leone 2007). No example of a church building, however, has yet been identified with certainty in a town of Roman Britain.

12.2.1.1 Colchester (Butt Road)

A strong case for a church has been made for the extramural building excavated at Butt Road in Colchester (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993). This building was about 7m by 24m with an apse at the east end and two internal rows of post-pits indicating an aisle (Diagram 58). There was no flooring; this may have originally been simply of sand and earth (*ibid.*: 163-6). Alternatively, it may have been robbed, or the removal of the floor could even represent a later change in use of the structure.

The presence of a cemetery around this building has been one of the main arguments for a church. There were two periods of burials here, the first being pagan with grave goods and only the second, with few grave goods and the burials facing east-west, possibly being Christian (Millett 1995b). The building itself faced east-west and had an apse and basilical plan, common features of early churches, which contributed to its interpretation as a church (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 163-6). The dating, however, is problematic since the early-fourth century coins, taken to indicate the construction date, had an insecure stratigraphic context (Millett 1995b). Millett has argued that the building was earlier in date and possibly functioned as a pagan funerary banqueting hall rather than a church (*ibid.*). On balance, the

earlier date would argue against the building's functioning as a church when it was first built. This need not necessarily mean, however, that it was not later used as church, especially during the fourth century when the later burials were interred.

Also problematic is the feature known as 'Hull's Pit', excavated by Hull (1958), which lay in the south aisle at the east end of the building. The pit probably dated to the fifth century, based on its stratigraphic relationship with the building (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 176)[268] and it contained a varied selection of artefacts.[269] These may simply have come from a disturbed grave (*ibid.*) but there is also a possibility that they were a ritual deposit showing continuing pagan activity on the site. Apart from the finds from this pit, there were very few objects to identify the use of the building, although a religious function cannot be ruled out (figure 12.1).[270] Coins indicate use into at least the fifth century, with five coins of A.D. 388-402, but the building may have been constructed in the third, rather than fourth, century; whether a pagan religious structure was converted into a church must, as the evidence stands, remain uncertain.

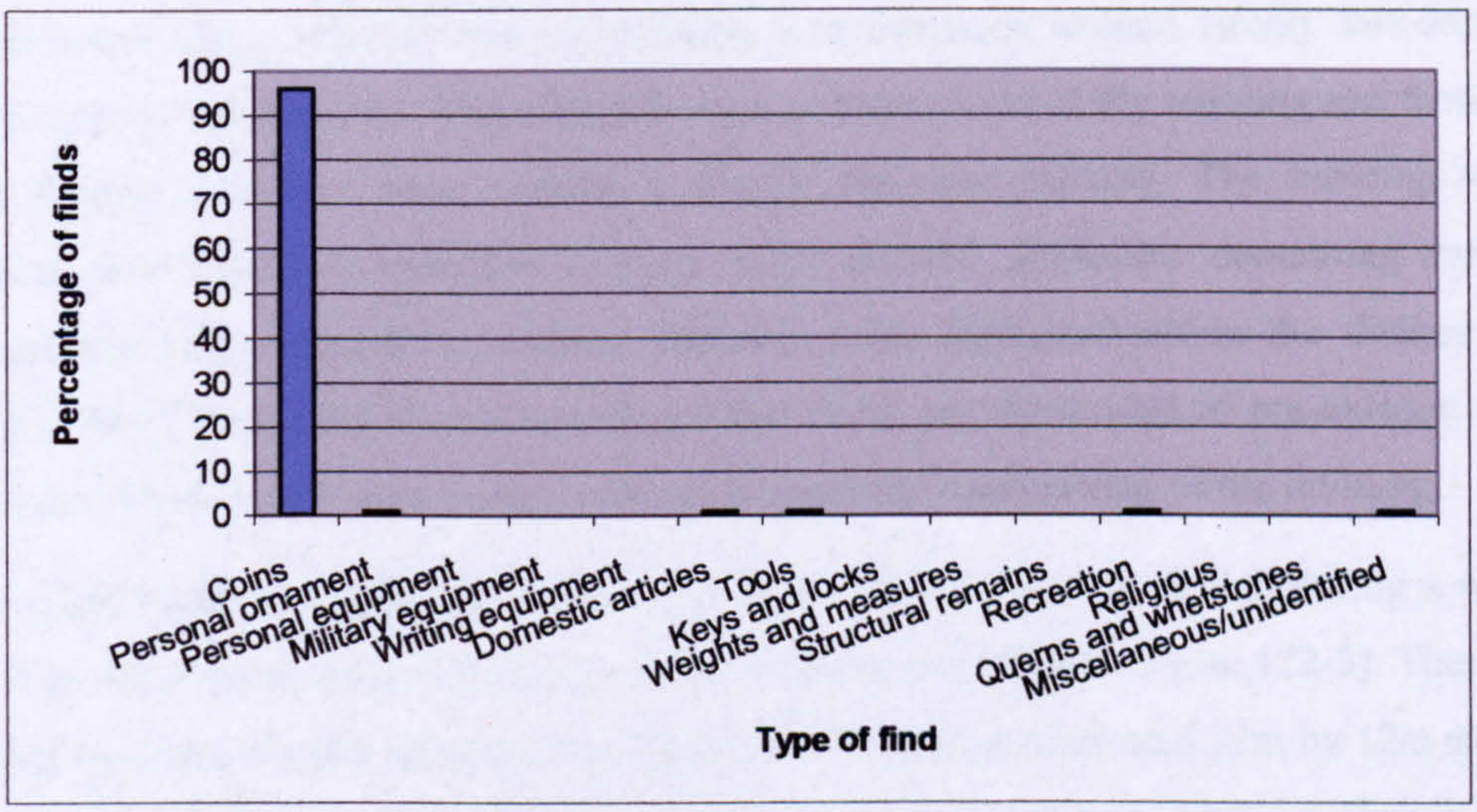

Figure 12.1: Graph showing the percentage of types of finds from the Butt Road structure showing that most of the finds were coins. The finds have been classified by the author.

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[268] There is some uncertainty about the date of the pit. Hull (1958: 245) suggested that it was of a late second century date based on five coins, despite the fact that there were far more coins of the fourth century within the pit.

[269] The artefacts included a silver amulet, silver ring, iron stylus, iron knife, a possible frying pan, parts of a large bowl, many iron nails, a number of coins, pottery, some painted wall-plaster, bird bones, a piece of marble, part of a human skull and a human thigh bone (N. Crummy *et al.* 1993: 175-6).

[270] The finds from the building consisted of five ceramic lamps, a copper alloy bracelet, a fragment of another bracelet and a copper alloy finger-ring. The remaining objects were a bolt from a barbed spring padlock, two fragments of lead sheet, an iron punch, two bone dice, a bone counter, a copper alloy hilt guard possibly from a dagger and a copper alloy four-toed foot from a piece of furniture. Further objects from modern deposits over the site were a copper alloy toilet set and pin, an iron joiner dog, two handles from pieces of furniture, a possible fragment of a copper alloy lamp hook and two copper alloy studs.

12.2.1.2 Silchester

The 'church' building near the *forum-basilica* at Silchester has also been reanalysed, with doubts raised concerning its date and function (Diagram 90). The building has both an apse and aisles but with its probable third-century construction date (Frere 1975: 291) it is likely to be too early for a church in Britain. Cosh's (2004) study of the style of the mosaic within the building, comparing it with dated mosaics of similar designs, may even indicate a late-second century date for its construction.[271] King (1983) suggests that a religious function other than that relating to the Church is probable, although as yet there is insufficient evidence to identify which religion this might have been, or whether the building had another function entirely.

12.2.1.3 Verulamium

At Verulamium, there are two equally problematic buildings (Diagram 98). Eighty metres from the London Gate at the Verulam Hills Field site there is a structure excavated in the 1960s, around 8m wide and at least 11m long, with a semi-circular apse at its northwest end (Anthony 1968; Niblett 2005a: 98-9). Due to serious erosion it was not possible to ascertain a construction date, although the surrounding area produced around twenty late-second and third century inhumations. These burials seem to have predated the building and there was no late Roman cemetery here, making a church function unlikely. The building was also constructed within a mid-first century A.D. ditched enclosure containing both early cremations and inhumations; objects had also been deposited within the ditches (Niblett 2005a: 98).[272] From this it can be inferred that there was some kind of pre-existing religious site here which might have been continued through the construction of the building.

The other building interpreted as a church at Verulamium was identified during a watching-brief by Wheeler in *insula* IX (Diagram 98; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 122-3). There was no dating evidence for this structure but it had a basilican plan of around 32m by 12m and square projections at both ends, leading to the interpretation that it represented a church. Wheeler also stated that the "character of the masonry...pointed to a late Roman date" (*ibid.*: 123), presumably because he felt that a building of the 'Golden Age' would have been constructed from monumental stone blocks. The surviving material indicated mortared flint with tiled courses which need not necessarily have been late in date. Niblett (2001: 136-7; 2005a: 99) has argued that the thickened foundations at the northeast apse indicate a tall structure or even a tower and that it may have been an aisled barn with a granary at the northwest end. This

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[271] The nave of the building has a red tessellated pavement with a square panel of mosaic of a black and white chequered scheme (G. Fox and St. John Hope 1893: 563-8; Frere 1975: 291).

[272] Finds from the ditch including a large piece of a *lorica segmentata* of the first century A.D. and a fragment of a life-sized statue, possibly of the fourth century (Niblett 2005a: 98).

seems the most likely interpretation but the lack of dates and artefactual evidence from both buildings makes interpretation difficult.[273]

12.2.1.4 Lincoln

A similarly problematic structure was found in Lincoln at the Flaxengate site in the southeast part of the lower walled town (Diagram 76). This was a large stone rectangular building, apparently without aisles. Suggestions as to function have included a church, an audience/assembly hall or a storage building, but there is no surviving evidence to allow a more definite interpretation, which only further excavation might provide (Colyer and Jones 1979: 51-4; M. Jones 1993: 16; 2003b: 129).

The sequence of timber structures within the *forum* at the St. Paul-in-the-Bail site at Lincoln has been thought to provide more definite evidence for a church (M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 69-71; Steane 1991; 2006: 154-5). Their location on the *forum* site, and association with a medieval church here, might support this view but, as examined in section 10.3.1, the plan of the first structure in the sequence is problematic and the finds do not assist with identifying the function (Gilmour 2007: 233). The dating evidence for this building is poor: a coin of the House of Theodosius (A.D. 388-402) may either have come from the floor of the first timber building or from a late floor of the *forum* which, in this case, would only provide a *terminus post quem* date of A.D. 388 for its construction. As yet, then, no late Roman church has been positively identified in Lincoln despite indications of a bishop here as early as A.D. 314, recorded in the *acta* of the Council of Arles (*ibid.*: 252; see section 6.3.2).

12.2.1.5 London

Excavations at the Colchester House site in London uncovered one section of a large rectangular stone structure with aisles that seems to have been built on a previously open site after around A.D. 350 (Diagram 88). The dating was indicated by Portchester D ware (early to late-fourth century) which was found beneath it (Sankey 1998: 78). The excavated remains consisted of a 2-3m wide exterior wall with two lines of pier or column bases in the interior, the whole being constructed on timber piles (MoLAS archive PEP88). Due to the small area uncovered, neither the width nor length of the building are known but the remains indicate a large structure, which has led to parallels being drawn with churches and cathedrals such as the Cathedral of St. Tecla in Milan (Sankey 1998: 80). Alternative suggestions have included a civil *basilica*, audience chamber, other administrative building or a state *horreum* (granary) used for the collection of taxes (MoLAS archive PEP88; Sankey 1998: 80-1). The finds from

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[273] Accounts of the martyrdom of Alban, a citizen of Verulamium, in Bede and Gildas describe the construction of a shrine on his grave. This might indicate that there was at least one church at late Roman Verulamium but no archaeological evidence for this has yet been found. Biddle has suggested that the execution and shrine may have been at the site of the later abbey rather than within the Roman town which remains a possibility (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001).

the site, consisting of only seven accessioned objects in the archives, are not very informative.[274]

12.2.2 *Possible agricultural buildings*

Some of these rectangular structures have also been interpreted as agricultural buildings. This includes the *insula* IX building at Verulamium and the Colchester House building in London discussed above.

12.2.2.1 Colchester (Culver Street)

A structure excavated within *insula* XXXV at Culver Street in Colchester, which measured at least 45m in length and 17m wide, was probably built in the late-third century (P. Crummy 1992: 112). Like the Butt Road building it possessed two rows of columns and there is no evidence for a laid floor – it may simply have been sand or one of raised timber. The building was located near a corn-drying oven with remains of free-threshing wheat, barley, rye and oats, which might support the interpretation of some kind of barn, although there were two adult burials placed under the north aisle (*ibid.*: 114). These were without coffins and were orientated north-south, which might indicate a pagan rather than Christian context (*ibid.*: 116). Whether the burials indicate a function other than that of an agricultural barn is uncertain. Their association with an agricultural context may be deliberate (*cf.* Scott (1991) on animal and infant burials in such contexts).

12.2.2.2 Verulamium

A possible agricultural building has been identified within *insula* XXVII at Verulamium. This was around 43m long and 17m wide, and constructed over a courtyard structure probably in the late-fourth or fifth century (Frere 1983: 226). Frere argues that it was a barn structure (*ibid.*: 224-5) although there is no certain evidence to support this.

12.2.2.3 Dorchester

Two late Roman aisled structures, built in the late-fourth century, have been identified in Dorchester, one at the Greyhounds Yard site and one at Colliton Park (RCHME 1970: 560). The Greyhounds Yard structure, Building 2700, was around 13m wide and 24m long (P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 80). There were few finds from the site (figure 12.2) and there is nothing to support a definite function for either building, although without good preservation it is unlikely there would be finds to indicate that they had been agricultural buildings.[275]

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[274] The small finds consisted of two fragments of vessel glass, half of a glass pin, two fragments of copper from unidentified objects and two finds of lead waste (MoLAS archive PEP88). The only other find on the site was a dispersed coin hoard of 113 coins (*ibid.*), although it is uncertain whether this might have related to the function of the building.

[275] The rôle of aisled structures is often difficult to interpret, and their dating can be problematic, as further demonstrated by the example of the enigmatic *basilica* building opposite the *forum-basilica* in London constructed in the first century A.D. This was excavated on the largely unpublished site of 5-12 Fenchurch Street in 1983 (Diagram 87) and is useful for discussion purposes demonstrating the difficulties of identifying these buildings. The hall was around 20m long, 11m wide and built on gravel and

Unfortunately no phosphate analysis of the soils has taken place which might have been able to provide some information on the use of the buildings. The plan of the Greyhounds Yard structure and its association with a courtyard building may suggest that a use for crop storage and processing is most likely (*ibid.*: 366-7).

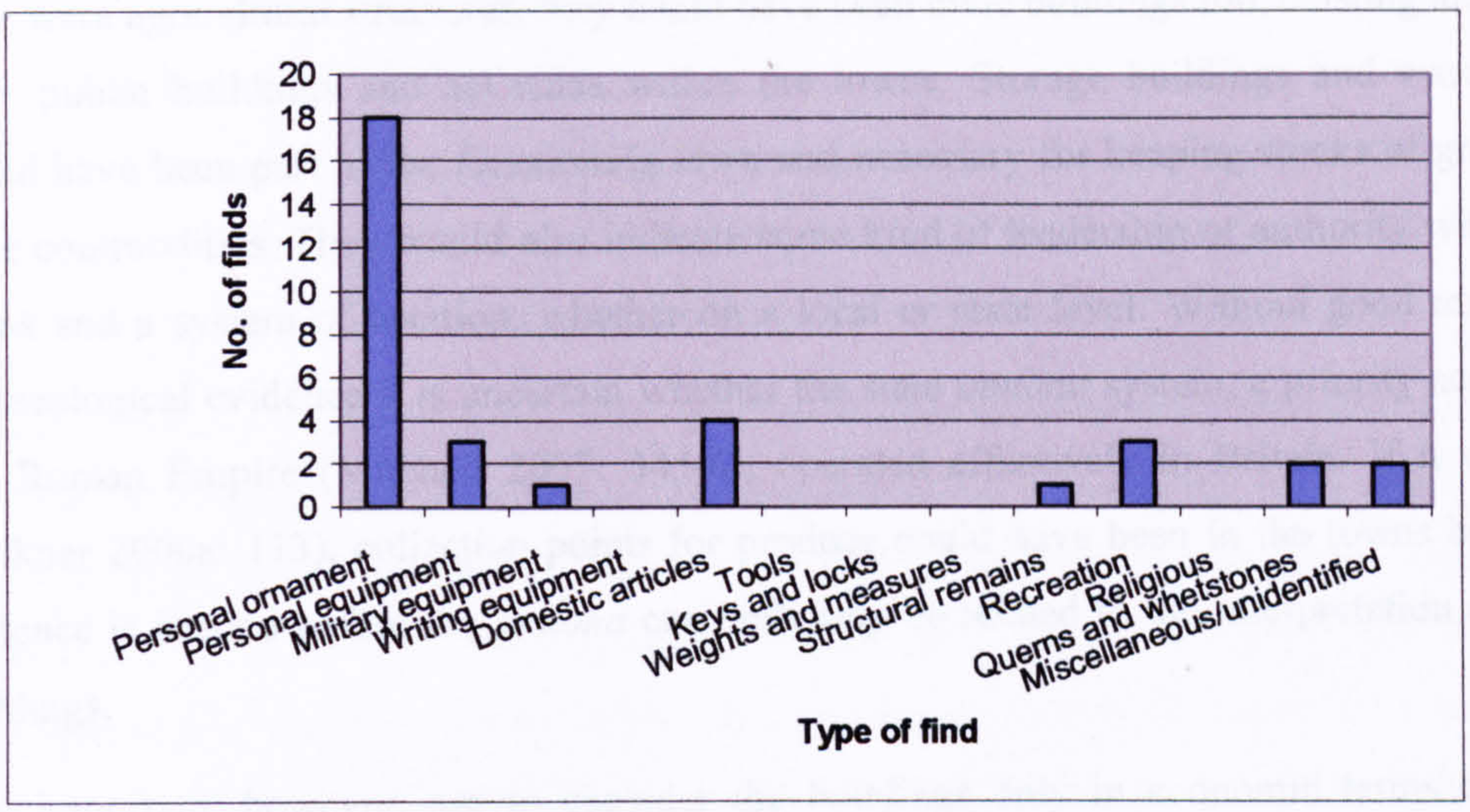

Figure 12.2: Graph showing the types of small finds recovered from Aisled Building 2700 on the Greyhounds Yard site in Dorchester. The small number of finds is not helpful in identifying the function of the building. The finds have been classified by the author.

12.2.3 *Discussion*

All these buildings represent activity within towns in the late Roman period but the function and date of many of the rectangular structures remains problematic. They are likely to have had a variety of different uses, and their function may also have varied through the year. Some of the buildings, such as those at Silchester, Verulamium, Lincoln and Colchester, were at first interpreted as churches but in no case is this now certain.[276] Another non-agricultural explanation for some of the buildings is that they were used as meeting or congregation places, which could have included religious activity. Interpreting the buildings as being for agricultural storage within the towns is largely based on Frere's long sequence of activity in

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mortar foundations with piers and buttresses as well as a protruding entrance to the west (Hammer 1987; MoLAS archive FEN83). That this building was such an early date makes a church or *horreum* function unlikely and indicates that there were probably many functions of this building type. There was a large number of animal bones on the site dating to the third century which might relate to activities within the building or they may have been dumped there from elsewhere since they were well mixed and chopped up (Hammer 1987). The central position of the building within the town might indicate its importance; animals, animal processing and other agricultural processes possibly formed a significant part of its function at least some times in the year. Other possibilities might be an audience chamber, judicial building or *collegia* (*ibid.*) and it is likely that the building involved the meeting of large groups of people in a similar way to public buildings and open spaces within towns in the later Roman period.

[276] Another problematic example of a 'church' comes from the military and 'small town' site of Richborough where excavations in 1923 in the southwest corner of the settlement uncovered a tile-built structure of around 2 by 3m in a hexagonal shape (Bushe-Fox 1926: 19). This was reanalysed by P. Brown (1971) who suggested that the construction may have been a font for a church and proposed that the church might be indicated by a number of stone blocks found during surface cleaning. The interpretation, however, is clearly problematic and there is no dating evidence.

insula XXVII at Verulamium (see section 6.2; Frere 1983: 224-5). This has led to arguments that the towns became more like 'administrative villages' or agricultural estates in the late Roman period (*e.g.* Esmonde Cleary 1989a; Faulkner 2000; Reece 1980).

Although a possible economic interpretation (see section 6.2), the 'administrative village' model implies that there was little else going on within towns at this time. However, even if there were agricultural structures, they could have been civic buildings too, existing alongside other public buildings and activities within the towns. Storage buildings and warehouses would have been part of the functioning town and necessary for keeping stocks of grain and other commodities. They would also indicate some kind of leadership or authority within the towns and a system of taxation, whether on a local or state level. Without good textual or archaeological evidence it is uncertain whether the state *annona* system, a priority across the late Roman Empire (Mitchell 2007: 345-6), operated effectively in Britain. If it did, (*cf.* Faulkner 2000a: 113), collection points for produce could have been in the towns but more evidence is needed before the *annona* can definitely be related to the interpretation of these buildings.

It is important, however, not to consider the buildings only in economic terms or in an Empire-wide context. The buildings are also likely to have had a symbolic importance, with agriculture being associated with procreation, growth and vitality in indigenous society (*cf.* Giles 2007a; E. Scott 1991); this might explain such finds as the infant burials within the aisled building on the Greyhounds Yard site at Dorchester (P. Woodward *et al.* 1993: 57-9; see section 9.4.7). The structures linked the towns with the countryside and represented the interaction between them: many of these places also possibly functioned as symbolic *foci* of agricultural and industrial activity in the late pre-Roman period (see chapter 5). Despite Roman influences, there are also likely to have been long-term cultural attitudes and practices surviving, connected with the land and how it worked.

Whatever the function of these late buildings, which will have been various and may have altered over different times of the year, they do indicate that new structures and contemporary activities within the public buildings built upon, continued and transformed the significance of the towns.

12.3 Late Roman paved areas

The continuation in use of town centres is also indicated by another form of monumental structure: in the centre of some towns there is evidence for an expansive paved or gravelled area, laid down in the late Roman period. The extent of these areas points to some kind of public building function and space connected with issues of assembly, access and movement.

12.3.1 *Canterbury*

In Canterbury there is evidence that a new courtyard surface was laid over the temple precinct in the town centre during the fourth century. This consisted of building débris including sixteen different types of marble, ornamental stone, limestone and brick (Diagram 46; P. Bennett pers. comm.; P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989). The temple structures may have been demolished at this time (*ibid.*) although as only a small area of the precinct has actually been excavated, some parts of the complex could have remained standing. The new surface continued beyond the area of the precinct, over the demolished porticoes that separated the temple from the *forum*, and seems to have joined onto the *forum* courtyard itself, creating a large expanse of paving in the centre of the town (P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989).

The large quantity of late Roman pottery and fourth century coins from the site indicates that the area was heavily used. Some kind of market activity is a possibility (Lyle 2002: 33) but the location of the courtyard surface on the site of a temple complex could indicate the continuation of religious ceremonies and large gatherings. The coins could either have been offerings, or the result of market trade. The possibility that the late-fourth or early-fifth century group burial on the edge of the temple precinct (P. Bennett 1981) was the result of religious activity was discussed in section 11.4. There is a long sequence of activity on this site, including the late pre-Roman shrine (section 5.6.2), indicating that the place-value of the site continued for many centuries.

12.3.2 *Gloucester*

At Gloucester there is comparable evidence that the large central temple precinct, excavated at numbers 1 and 30 Westgate Street, was covered by a thick layer of metalling in the late Roman period (Diagram 64; Heighway and Garrod 1980: 82-5). Some other discoveries in the area indicate that the surface extended beyond this site and up to the *forum*. In 1900, a builder uncovered a Roman road near the site which was covered in the same late gravelling (*ibid.*), so it would seem that a large central area was included in this metalling, which would have demanded considerable resources and organisation. The large number of cattle bones from the site, consisting mostly of the scapula, pelvis and femur, all showing evidence for butchery marks, suggests that animal slaughter and market activity took place here (*ibid.*). From the latter it can be inferred that large numbers of people came here and that other activities probably took place at the same time, including networking and displays. Due to the problematic nature of identifying religious activity within temple structures (as discussed in section 7.3.6) it is not impossible that there was also continued religious activity on the site.

12.3.3 *Discussion*

Although only two examples have so far been identified, Faulkner (2000a: 126-8) has interpreted such large open areas as components of late Roman military towns created in the context of a military emergency, and used for the congregation of soldiers and supplies. There are no finds to support this interpretation, but the periodic assembly of the military need not have excluded other functions for these sites. Military ceremony would also indicate occasions of social and ritual activity in the town centres.[277] The bringing of large quantities of grain and numbers of livestock to these places, from outside the town, would also have had symbolic connotations, so perhaps they had similarities to some of the sites in the late pre-Roman period which were also *foci* of agricultural production and livestock and ceremonial activities (see chapter 5).

It is significant that large surfaced areas were also identified in the earliest phases of towns, often before the construction of public buildings, and gravelled areas are also known at the 'small towns' (see section 4.5.2) including Elms Farm, Heybridge (Diagram 112; Atkinson and Preston 1998), Godmanchester (H. Green 1975), Harlow (France and Gobel 1985) and Irchester (Knight 1967). Such sites may have been places for meeting, networking and displays, having administrative, commercial, ceremonial and religious rôles (Atkinson and Preston 1998; *cf.* Frere 1983: 73-4).

That open spaces were also often part of late pre-Roman Iron Age sites makes their presence in the late Roman period significant. They may relate to the working of indigenous society, for which gatherings and assemblies were important. This may also tie into the activity of metalworking within public buildings, which was possibly a focus of public attention, ritual and ceremony, as it was in the late pre-Roman period.

Rather than being part of the decline of towns, these open areas symbolise a reshaping but continuation of the central spaces to meet new circumstances and needs. At Heybridge such an area remained in use throughout the Roman period and was associated with temples, providing further indication of the need to move beyond solely negative interpretations of what these paved areas represent.[278]

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[277] Hall (1991) has examined the textual evidence for the *platea populi* in sixth - tenth century English towns. He has discussed various possible translations including 'public square', 'market place' and 'place of assembly'. He suggests that the *platea populi* mentioned in York, in the anonomous text *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (XV), may have been the courtyard of the Roman *principia* building where there was also an early church. These open spaces of assembly appear to have been important parts of the settlements and were associated with religious and commercial activity. They raise possibilities for interpreting the rôle of the late Roman paved areas which may have been their precursors.

[278] See also the discussion of Bede's reference to the importance attached to open spaces by King Æthelberht in Kent (see section 8.11).

12.4 Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the evidence for 'church' structures and other 'late' buildings constructed within towns. The architectural and finds evidence is far from conclusive in all cases and no church building has been positively identified. The dating of most of the structures is also problematic, with few clearly constructed in the fourth century.

These structures, together with the late Roman paved areas, do, however, indicate that there was considerable activity taking place within towns in the late Roman period. The agricultural and market functions of some of the aisled buildings and open spaces, bringing grain, other produce and animals, suggest that towns remained functioning entities without necessarily having a classical form of organisation. These buildings and spaces will also have had other uses involving gatherings of people.

The activities, combined with the continued use of many of the public buildings already described, indicate that towns were continually being renewed, restructured and redefined. The organisation of the towns changed, but this need not indicate their decline. By the late Roman period Christianity was probably present in towns in some form, but is likely to have existed amongst other religious beliefs and customs continuing from earlier times (see section 6.3.2). What is significant is that these sites remained viable places, in many cases from the late pre-Roman period to late Roman times.

Chapter 13: Beyond Britain: an examination of France and Spain

13.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the evidence for late Roman and pre-conquest activity on the sites of towns in Roman France and Spain,[279] allowing the Romano-British data to be placed within a wider context. The evidence from France and Spain has been treated in similar ways to that from Britain and demands similar re-examination. The *Gallia Belgica* and *Gallia Lugdunensis* provinces of Gaul are more directly comparable with Britain, being on the periphery of the Empire, while *Gallia Narbonensis*, *Gallia Aquitania* and the provinces of Roman Spain provide an indication of the way in which areas in a Mediterranean context might be approached. A database of the public buildings of the towns of France and Spain was created, including pre-Roman activity, although the vast extent of these areas has meant that inevitably some evidence will not have been included (see Gazetteer 8 for a list of the sites examined).

Late Roman studies in France and Spain have tended to rely on historical frameworks and accounts in classical texts, of, for example, barbarian invasions, for understanding the late phases of towns. The evidence can, however, be problematic. Kulikowski's (2004) reanalysis of some of the urban excavations in Spain, for example, has shown how unconvincing some of the dating used by the excavators has been because of their attempt to fit the evidence with historical events. The situation is changing in Spain and France but there is still much to be done to raise awareness of the difficulties of interpreting the evidence. The pre-Roman evidence associated with town sites is often interpreted in terms of what followed in the Roman period, frequently being viewed as inferior. Most accounts of Roman urbanism in these areas do not address pre-Roman occupation in any detail (*e.g.* Bedon ed. 1996; Bedon *et al.* 1988; Maurine ed. 1992; Keay 1988). As well as reanalysing the data, this chapter provides an examination of how future work in these areas could improve our understanding of late Roman towns and the nature of urbanism.

13.2 France

Four Roman provinces correspond roughly with modern France – *Gallia Belgica*, *Gallia Lugdunensis*, *Gallia Aquitania* and *Gallia Narbonensis* – with *Gallia Belgica* also extending into Belgium and further north. In the late Roman period the provinces were divided into smaller areas indicating growing centralised control and bureaucracy (Mitchell 2007: 55-62).[280] Although there were a large number of Roman towns in France, few of these have

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[279] I am particularly grateful to, and would like to thank, Professor Colin Haselgrove for his comments on this chapter.
[280] *Gallia Aquitania* was split into three provinces: *Aquitania Prima*, *Aquitania Secunda* and *Aquitania Novempopulana*. *Gallia Lugdunensis* was split into *Gallia Lugdunensis* I-IV and *Gallia Narbonensis* became *Gallia Narbonensis* I and II. *Gallia Belgica* had already lost areas to *Germania Superior* and *Germania Inferior* and became *Gallia Belgica* I and *Gallia Belgica* II.

received large-scale excavations and in some cases the public buildings are relatively unknown. The high density of modern occupation within the town centres often makes examination of the pre-Roman evidence difficult and so these phases are poorly known.

13.2.1 *Pre-Roman settlement and the landscape of towns*

The majority of the *civitas*-capitals and colonies of Roman France have some kind of evidence for late pre-Roman activity on or nearby the sites. Many of these places had already acquired importance in prehistory and they did not necessarily require earthworks or other forms of monumentality; natural features will also have been meaningful (figures 13.1 and 13.2). As in Britain (chapter 5), there was a large variety of pre-Roman settlement sites in France but these have mostly been considered in terms of a hierarchy with *oppida* at the top (*e.g.* Fichtl 2005). The *oppida* have predominantly been interpreted in defensive terms, as refuges and storage places, and in economic terms as centres of production and exchange (*e.g.* Roymans 1990).[281] Fichtl (2005) devotes the largest sections of *La ville celtique* to the defences of *oppida* and the evidence for craft activities within them. Collis' (1975) *Defended Sites of the Late La Tène*, as its title indicates, puts an emphasis on the defensive nature of sites.

Fichtl's (2005) book considers *oppida* largely in terms of urban sites which were further improved by romanisation either through direct continuity or the relocation to new sites; Woolf's (1998) important work takes a broadly similar premise.[282] As with Britain, however, this emphasis on urban forms of settlement has influenced our understanding of the function of these pre-Roman sites and the meaning attached to their location. In section 5.2 it was argued that the earthworks of many of the *oppida* may have been too impracticable to have had a purely defensive function; instead they were perhaps also to impress visitors and enclose areas for gatherings, trading, livestock and religious purposes (Haselgrove 2007: 511). They would also have been involved in the affirmation of local identity as well as influencing movement, visibility and experience within the landscape. Some work on the Continental *oppida* has begun to look at the evidence in more complex ways by examining the significance of public spaces, including sanctuaries and open areas, and the rôle of these in, and their relationship with, the process of Roman urbanisation (*e.g.* Fichtl *et al.* 2000; Kaenel 2006).[283] Roymans' work has also begun to shift from a predominant concern with defensive

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[281] Roymans (1990: 202), for example, writes that "the size of the entire settlement corresponds primarily to its defensive function, while the size of its permanently inhabited area corresponds to its economic one".

[282] In Woolf's (1998) *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul* it is stated that Roman cities grew up in Gaul because "the richest and most influential citizens of Gallic communities learnt to associate civic life with civilisation" (*ibid.*: 125). This link between civilisation and urbanisation emphasised by Woolf, however, concentrates on the Roman viewpoint and does not attach so much importance to the way in which the places in the late pre-Roman period were considered or experienced.

[283] At the Titelberg, for example, there seems to be evidence for organised zones of different activity and a sanctuary site in the centre, including a palisaded structure, where much animal sacrifice and other religious and political activity appears to have taken place (Metzler *et al.* 2006). Other examples include Martberg, Wallendorf and Mont Beuvray – concepts of organisation and behaviour on these sites may well have transferred to Roman towns (*ibid.*).

and economic interpretations of *oppida,* and to look at the landscapes in which they were set in sacred terms (*e.g.* 2004; see below section 13.2.1.1). These studies provide a new emphasis, moving away from the economic function and concerns with the 'urban' nature of the sites.

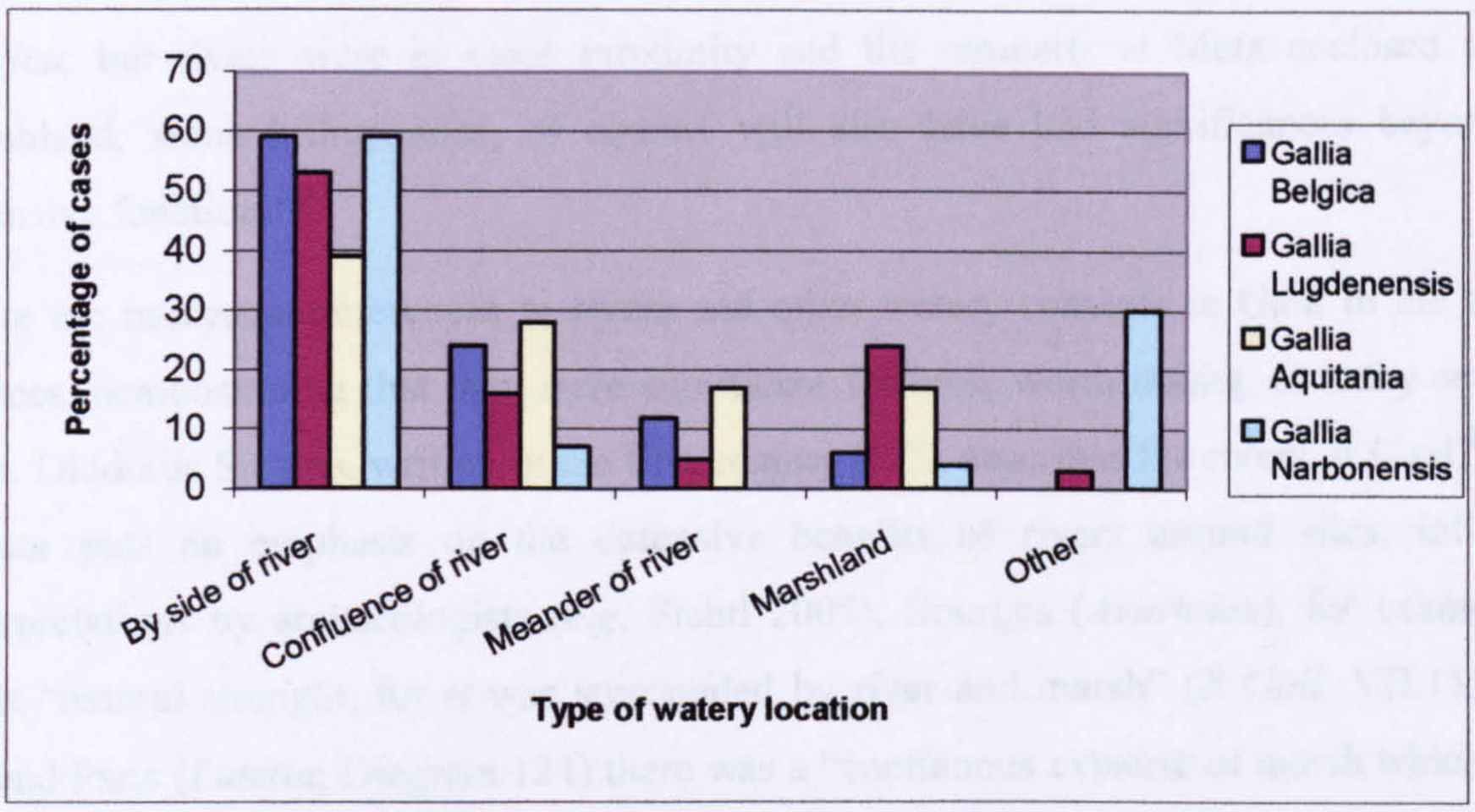

Figure 13.1: Graph showing the percentage of types of watery contexts associated with town sites in the four provinces.

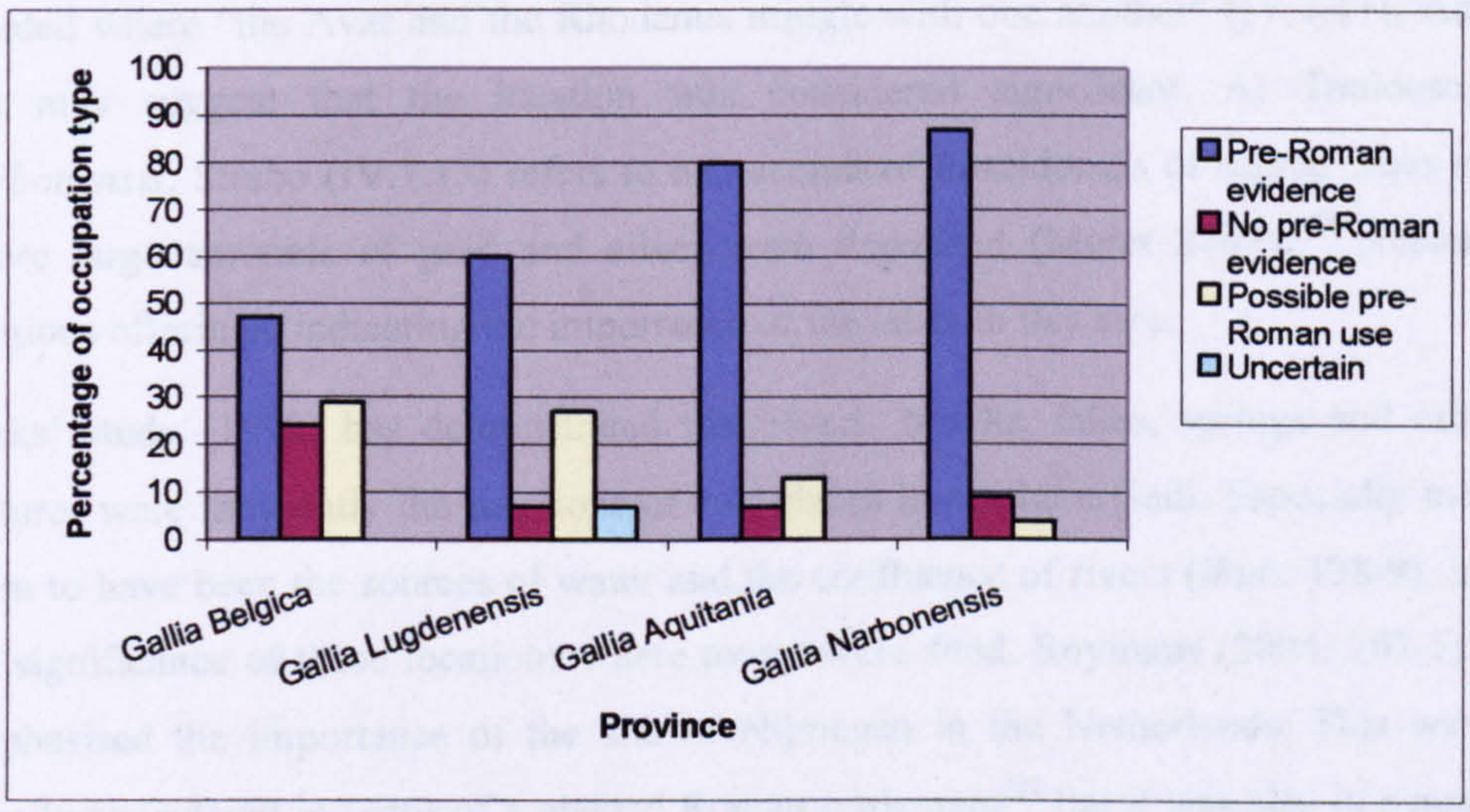

Figure 13.2: Graph showing the percentage of town sites with known pre-Roman occupation in the four provinces.

13.2.1.1 Settlement and landscape

Many of the Roman towns were situated in environments with water. As argued for Britain (chapters 4 and 5), this water was a necessary factor for settlement but such 'natural' features will also have been associated with additional meanings (*cf.* Bradley 2000) contributing to the

'place-value' of the sites. Eleven towns in *Gallia Belgica*, thirteen in *Gallia Lugdunensis* and ten in *Gallia Aquitania* were located at the confluence of rivers. Some were within the meanders of rivers, such as Cahors, Périgueux, Soissons and Besançon (Diagrams 116 and 121), and some in marshy locations including Dax, Sens and Amiens (Diagram 117). There were also elevated sites that became *civitas*-capitals such as Langres and Metz in *Gallia Belgica,* but rivers were in close proximity and the ramparts at Metz enclosed areas of marshland; some hilltop sites, of course, will also have had significances beyond their defensive function.[284]

There are numerous references to rivers and other watery contexts in Gaul in the classical sources, demonstrating that they were significant features, worth noting, at many settlement sites. Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century B.C., describes the rivers of Gaul[285] whilst Caesar puts an emphasis on the defensive benefits of rivers around sites, influencing interpretations by archaeologists (*e.g.* Fichtl 2005). Bourges (*Avaricum*), for example, had great "natural strength, for it was surrounded by river and marsh" (*B Gall.* VII.15), whilst around Paris (*Lutetia*; Diagram 124) there was a "continuous expanse of marsh which flowed into the Seine and formed a significant obstruction over the whole area" (VII.57). At Besançon (*Vesontio*; Diagrams 116 and 121; Walter and Barçon 2004) the "river Doubs practically surrounds the entire town" (I.38). Strabo describes that Lyon (*Lugdunum*) was situated where "the Avar and the Rhodanus mingle with one another" (IV.1.11); mentioning this may suggest that the location was considered significant. At Toulouse, *Gallia Narbonensis*, Strabo (IV.1.13) refers to an account of Poseidonius of sacred lakes at *Tolosa* where large amounts of gold and silver were deposited (Moret 2001),[286] presumably as religious offerings, indicating the importance of the lakes in this area.

Derks' study (1998) has demonstrated that rivers, brooks, lakes, springs and other water features were frequently the locations of cult places in northern Gaul. Especially meaningful seem to have been the sources of water and the confluence of rivers (*ibid.*: 138-9), indicating the significance of these locations where towns were sited. Roymans (2004: 202-5) has also emphasised the importance of the site of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. This was a town usually considered in terms of a planted Roman settlement[287] but it was also in a marshy area

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[284] As a useful comparison, the Roman Iron Age Scandinavian 'central place' of Gudme was surrounded by three hills 1.5 to 2.5km to the north, west and south of the site which appear to have had religious associations (Hedeager 2002: 5). *Gudbjerg* to the west means 'the hill of the god/gods", *Albjerg* to the south means 'the hill of the shrine' and *Galbjerg* to the north may mean 'the hill of sacrifice' (*ibid.*).

[285] "Very many large rivers flow through Gaul, and their streams cut this way and that through the level plain, some of them flowing from bottomless lakes and others having their sources and affluents in the mountains, and some of them empty into the ocean and others into the sea" (Diod. Sic. *Bibliothēkē* V.25.3-4).

[286] Strabo wrote that Poseidonius "says that the treasure that was found in *Tolosa* amounted to about fifteen thousand talents (part of it stored away in sacred enclosures, part of it in sacred lakes), unwrought, that is, merely gold and silver bullion" (IV.1.13). He goes on to say that "at all the events, the Romans, after they mastered the regions, sold the lakes for the public treasury, and many buyers found in them hammered mill-stones of silver" (*ibid.*).

[287] The nearby site of Kassel/Lith (named after the two villages there), located where the Meuse and Waal rivers almost meet (*ibid.*: 104), was the point at which a large number of metal objects, mainly of late La Tène date, were deposited perhaps from a

next to the River Waal. He argues that the significance of such places is often neglected because of a preoccupation with rating the importance of sites in predominantly economic terms.

13.2.1.2 '*Oppida*'

This section will discuss a number of examples of *oppida,* highlighting the complexity of the ways in which Roman urban centres developed from pre-existing places. At a number of towns there is evidence for a pre-Roman *oppidum* in the same location or close to the Roman period settlement but their categorisation, nature and function remain problematic. Like the British sites, we still have a very partial understanding of *oppida* in France.

13.2.1.2.1 Probable *oppida*

The town of Amiens (*Samarobriva*) in *Gallia Belgica* was a Roman foundation but it was located in a marshy area and at a crossing point and confluence of the Rivers Somme and Selle (Diagram 117).[288] Caesar mentions that there was an *oppidum* here (*B Gall.* V.24; V.47; V.53) but so far there have been no discoveries of earthworks conforming to the group of sites labelled *oppida* by archaeologists. Caesar's use of the term may have been part of his attempt to understand the site and describe it to his readership. Significantly, Caesar mentioned that the "council of the Gauls was held at *Samarobriva*" (V.24) indicating that this was a special meeting place, involving movement and congregation in the landscape, in this low-lying marshland. The site was a meaningful and important place despite apparently not having any monumental earthworks. It seems likely that there were a number of *foci* spread out across this area including this marshland and perhaps the nearest *oppidum* at Chausée-Tirancourt (*cf.* Haselgrove 2007: 511).

Another example of the difficulties of understanding *oppida* is Paris (*Lutetia Parisiorum*) where it has been argued that an *oppidum* lay on the Île de la Cité (Diagram 124) within the River Seine (Busson 1996). The density of later occupation has made the identification of definite remains difficult (Fichtl 1994: 113; Velay 1992). An *oppidum* is mentioned in the classical sources[289] and finds include coins and traces of roundhouses at the Rue de Lutèce on the Île de la Cité (Velay 1992). There is also what seems to have been an élite burial with

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timber causeway (*ibid.*: 134) indicating the importance attached to this watery area. Finds that came from the water in this area include swords and scabbards, spearheads, helmets, shield fittings, belt hooks, *fibulae*, cauldrons, socketed axes, boar-tooth pendants, corals, mounts, knifes, bracelets and pre-Roman and Roman coins (Roymans 2004). The contents of the assemblage would seem to suggest a martial theme. Monumental masonry found at the site suggests that a Roman period temple was constructed here continuing the religious significance of the site although not necessarily interpreting it in the same way. Roymans (*ibid.*; 2007: 482-4) sees this as a central place, perhaps like the '*oppida*' and other sites proceeding towns in Britain which also have significant 'landscape' and watery elements.

[288] It has been suggested that *Samarobriva* means 'the ford by the river Somme' (Knight 2001: 89) whilst Wightman has suggested along similar lines that it meant crossing point of the Somme (1985: 75). *Nemetocenna* (Arras) can be translated as 'the forest' (*ibid.*) and may be further indication of the significance of 'natural' places for meeting and religious sites.

[289] Strabo wrote that the "Parisii live round about the Sequana river, having an island in the river and a city called Lucotocia" (IV.3.5) and Caesar also mentioned an *oppidum* on an island in the Seine as well as a large expanse of marshland surrounding the area (*B Gall.* VIII.57).

indications of feasting dating to the earlier part of the first century B.C. (Poux 1999; 2004).[290] The pre-Roman level of the island was 6m below the present surface, meaning that flooding is likely to have been a problem, especially since the river is now under careful control (Velay 1992: 12-3). From the religious significance associated with water and islands (see 4.6.2), it can be inferred that the meanings attached to the site are unlikely to have related purely to practical considerations of security, trade and transport. Although as yet no deposited objects have been recognised from this area of the river, objects such as food, wool and clothing, if given as offerings, will not have survived (J. Alcock 1965: 8-9).[291]

13.2.1.2.2 *Oppida* and the enclosure of land

A highly monumental *oppidum* predates the Roman town of Reims in *Gallia Belgica*. This was *Durocortorum*, one of the largest *oppida* in France, with two ramparts, the inner one enclosing 90ha and the outer enclosing 550ha (Neiss 1984). It was situated between the River Vesle and two streams that have now disappeared. Whilst some structures and streets have been identified inside the *oppidum*, the whole area was not occupied (*ibid.*), suggesting a large area was deliberately enclosed for other reasons. This would indicate that the enclosures did not have an entirely defensive function and that the landscape was sufficiently meaningful in economic, political and religious terms to prompt such constructions. There is still some discrepancy regarding the date of the two enclosures, with the earlier of the two currently being given an Augustan date although it may have been earlier (Bedon 1999: 128).

Gallia Narbonensis also has a number of sites termed *oppida* that were located on hilly areas, very different from the *oppida* in Britain, and this led to their purpose being seen as mainly defensive (*e.g.* Collis 1975; Fichtl 2005). They could be interpreted differently, however. For example, the *oppidum* traditionally considered to have preceded the town of Aix-en-Provence is Entremont, located on the lip of the south escarpment of the Chaîne d'Esguilles. There appears to have been an earlier inner enclosure here, with a larger outer enclosure that does not seem to have been very intensively occupied (Bedon *et al.* 1988: 47). The small size of the site and its steep location, moreover, might indicate a hilltop sanctuary rather than a military stronghold. Indeed, a strict division between religious sanctuary sites and settlement/defensive sites need not be appropriate for understanding these places (*cf.* Richert 2005; see below).

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[290] The find of a pit burial included a human skeleton, a bronze belt buckle and a large quantity of amphorae sherds (Poux 1999; 2004).

[291] Gregory of Tours (A.D. *c.* 538-594) records in the sixth century A.D. that at a lake in south central France (possibly the lake of Saint-Andéol) local people threw in clothes, pelts of wool, cheese, wax, bread and other items as offerings at certain times of the year. They also came from all around and conducted animal sacrifices and feasted there for three-day periods (*In Gloria Confessorum* II). This passage suggests that the deposition of objects into watery contexts was probably far more prevalent than what is represented by the types of artefacts that now survive in the archaeological record.

13.2.1.2.3 *Oppida* and the multi-focal nature of sites

The town at Soissons in *Gallia Belgica* was preceded by the *oppidum* of Pommiers, a large promontory cut off by a massive bank and ditch enclosing around 40ha, a few kilometres to the northeast of the Roman town. This in turn followed the *oppidum* at Villeneuve-St.-Germain: a low-lying site to the east of the town that was enclosed by a meander of the River Aisne and associated with floodable areas (Brun *et al.* 2000; Fichtl 2005: 39; Haselgrove 1996b: 149).[292] Haselgrove (1990: 64; 1996b: 151) emphasises the short length of occupation of these sites and argues that periodic concentration of occupation relates to indigenous warring and political instability rather than Roman influences. All three locations, however, appear to have been important places in the landscape and need not have lost their significance after the move to other locations; indeed it has been argued that they may have been used as periodic meeting places, perhaps even with sanctuaries, before the decision was taken to move there permanently (Haselgrove 2007: 509). It is possible that they were also used for other activities such as keeping livestock, as suggested by the passage by Strabo (IV.5.2; see section 5.2). There is certainly evidence through coins, brooches and other material that the chronologies of Pommiers and Villeneuve-St.-Germain did overlap, indicating that both sites, at least periodically, were being used at the same time (*ibid.*). There is also evidence, including coins and other material, that Pommiers was used in some way during the Roman period (Knight 2001: 77-8).

In *Gallia Aquitania*, at Clermont-Ferrand (Sauget and Pin 1992) there is evidence for a comparable sequence of sites to Soissons in the Aisne Valley. This begins with an elevated *oppidum* at Corent in the second century B.C., then the low-lying riverside site of Gondole from 75/65 to 50/40 B.C. and the hilltop site of Gergovie from 60/50 to 10 B.C./A.D. 1 (Fichtl 2005: 39). These sites suggest a group of places of symbolic significance on both hilltops and lower-lying areas, and the dating evidence demonstrates that some were occupied simultaneously. The wetlands will also have had practical importance for their resources and pasture (*cf.* Rippon 2004). Movement between the various sites was probably important as it was for complexes in Britain like Camulodunon (section 5.6.2). Roman urbanisation occurred in the context of long-term and complex settlement development. This can be seen further with the 'non-*oppida*' sites below. Considerably more work is needed to determine the ways in which these pre-existing patterns influenced the development and perception of Roman towns.

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[292] Previously it had been argued that the sequence of sites was Pommiers, Villeneuve-St.-Germain and Soissons but Haselgrove (1996b: 149) has demonstrated that Villeneuve-St.-Germain was in fact earlier than Pommiers as indicated by the large number of uninscribed potin coins from Villeneuve-St.-Germain which are earlier in date than the struck bronze coins that make up 86% of the total number of coins at Pommiers. The brooches too consist of an earlier assemblage at Villeneuve-St.-Germain than at Pommiers.

Autun (*Augustodunum*) in *Gallia Lugdunensis* (Diagram 119) is another example of a complex articulation between settlement and wider landscape. The Roman town is located 27km from the pre-Roman hilltop *oppidum* of Bibracte (Mont Beuvray). This is situated on the promontory of the Autonois hills overlooking the floodplain of the Arroux river where there was waterlogged ground and a high probability of flooding (Bromwich 2003: 214-5). Whilst this situation would have had some advantages, such as for grazing animals and enhancing soil fertility, flooding would also have been problematic (*cf.* Rippon 2006: 11-3). On the floodplain near to Autun and the Arroux river there was a sanctuary complex surrounded by an enclosure ditch. This included the famous 'Temple of Janus', a smaller temple and a theatre identified by aerial photography (Frezouls 1997: 158; Rebourg 1998: 158-60), suggesting that the area also had a religious significance.

Bibracte (Diagram 115) appears to have continued to have been used after the foundation of Autun, with the construction of a sanctuary during the Roman period (Rebourg 1998: 196). Both G. Woolf (1998) and Hurst (2005) have noted similarities between the plans of Autun and Bibracte, whilst Meylan (2000) has compared the organisation of space of the two settlements. Woolf (2006) has suggested that the ramparts of Autun can be considered in terms of a further elaboration of those at Bibracte, continuing the pattern of repeated and ritualised monumentalisation and extension of sites that took place in prehistory.

13.2.1.2.4 *Oppida* and metalworking

As in the case of the *oppida* in Britain, metalworking including coin production has been identified on a number of sites (Fichtl 2005) such as Villeneuve-St.-Germain and Condé-sur-Suippe (Debord 1982; Haselgrove 1990). Besides having a practical function, this too will have played a part in the symbolic meaning of the places and needs further study from this perspective (see chapters 5 and 9).

13.2.1.3 'Non-*oppida*'

As with Britain, the '*oppida*' were not the only type of sites that preceded Roman towns in France; there were towns with evidence for pre-Roman activity that do not fall within this traditional categorisation. Collis *et al.* (2000) have emphasised that there is a need to acknowledge non-defended sites as a significant part of the pre-Roman settlement pattern which will then have influenced Roman urbanism. 'Mont César', the nearest identified '*oppidum*' to Beauvais, for example, lay at Bailleul-sur-Thérain, 13km to the southeast (Fichtl 2005; Wheeler and Richardson 1957: 128). This was associated with marshland to the west, the Thérain river to the south and the Tiré stream to the east. The Roman town, however, was also set within a watery location at the point at which the Thérain became navigable down to

the Oise and the Paris basin, and where there were further rivers and streams to the north and south.

The location of Sens in *Gallia Lugdunensis* was a low-lying marshy area next to the River Yonne and just north of the confluence of the Yonne and Vanne. The nature and extent of the pre-Roman activity is uncertain, although traces of structures and the remains of a workshop producing bronze coins and potins have been found (Perrugot 1996: 263-4). The marshy location was an integral element of the settlement and activity here. Lyon (*Lugdunum*) is another example with some pre-Roman evidence, but emphasis has more often been put on its Roman origins as a colony (Bromwich 2003: 387-8). The pre-Roman evidence has come mainly from excavations at 65 Rue du Souvenir in the suburbs of the modern city, which produced structures dating to around the first and second centuries B.C. (Bedon 1999: 133). It is now difficult to know whether there was occupation beneath the *colonia* itself, due to the density of current occupation and level of disturbance. The pre-Roman name for the area was *Lug* which may relate to a God, indicating that the area bore some religious significance (*ibid.*: 141); its position at the confluence of the Rivers Saône and Rhône supports this. There are also traces of late pre-Roman activity on the sites of the colonies of Nyon (*Equestris*) and Augst (*Raurica*) although the nature of occupation is not certain (Bedon *et al.* 1988: 68, 187). As in Britain, these traces suggest that the colonies would have been influenced by the histories of pre-existing places.

Other towns in *Gallia Lugdunensis* with poorly understood pre-Roman occupation include Rennes, Troyes, Vannes, Vieux and Tours (see Gazetteer 8), indicating that there is still much to be done to explore settlement patterns prior to the conquest. The relationship between Roman towns and the pre-Roman settlement patterns in *Gallia Aquitania* and *Gallia Narbonensis* also requires further study. At Limoges, for example, an *oppidum* has not been identified but on the right bank of the Vienne there is some evidence of pre-Roman activity, consisting of occupation débris such as pottery (Desbordes and Loustaud 1992).[293] More work is required to identify activities such as metalworking and other crafts at these sites. As in Britain, these types of activity are unlikely to have been restricted to *oppida*, but at present little is known about them at non-*oppida* sites.

In some cases the Roman towns seem to have been founded on apparently unoccupied sites but with pre-Roman sanctuaries nearby. At Bayeux, for example, the town was of Augustan date but excavations have uncovered traces of a pre-Roman religious sanctuary on the site of

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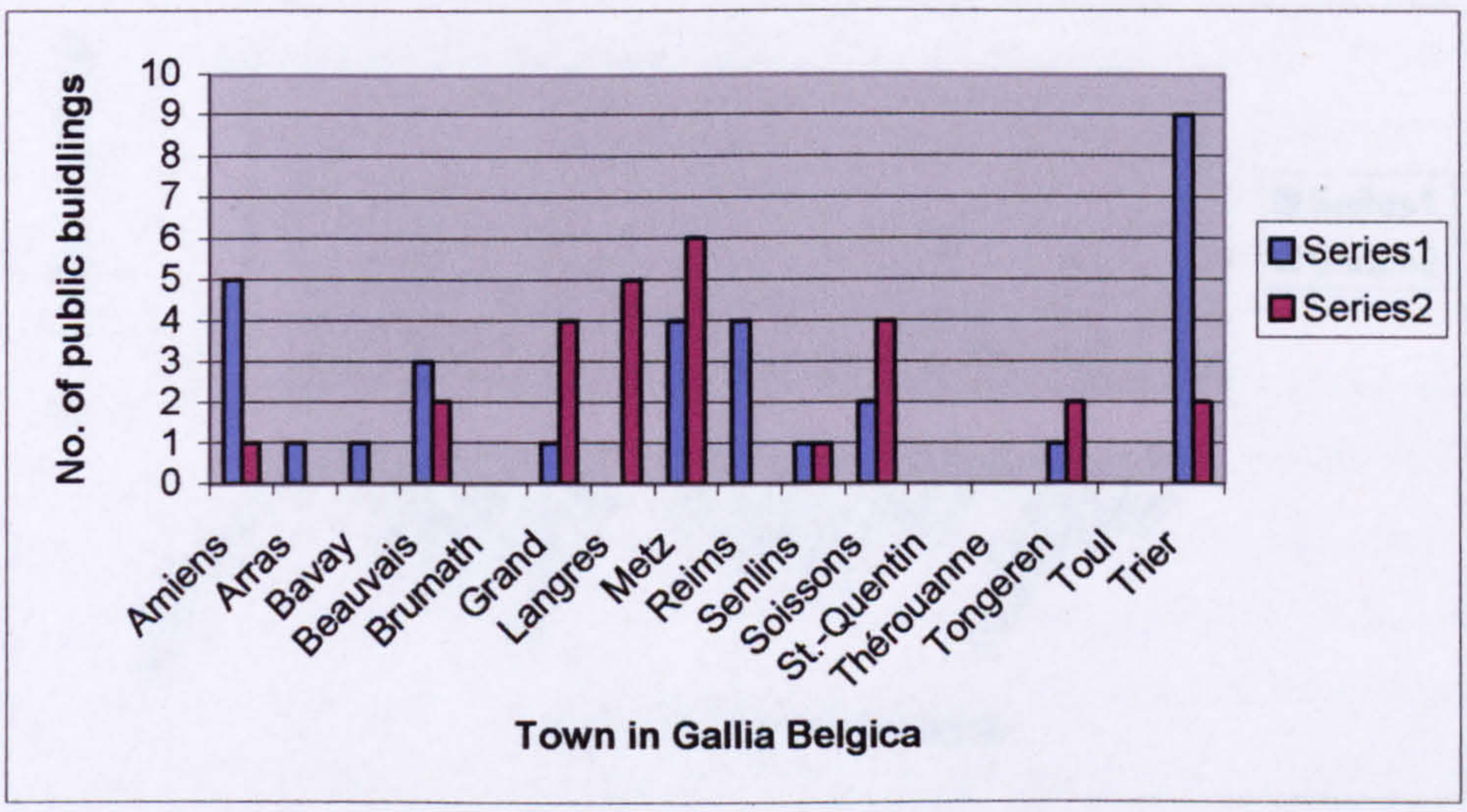
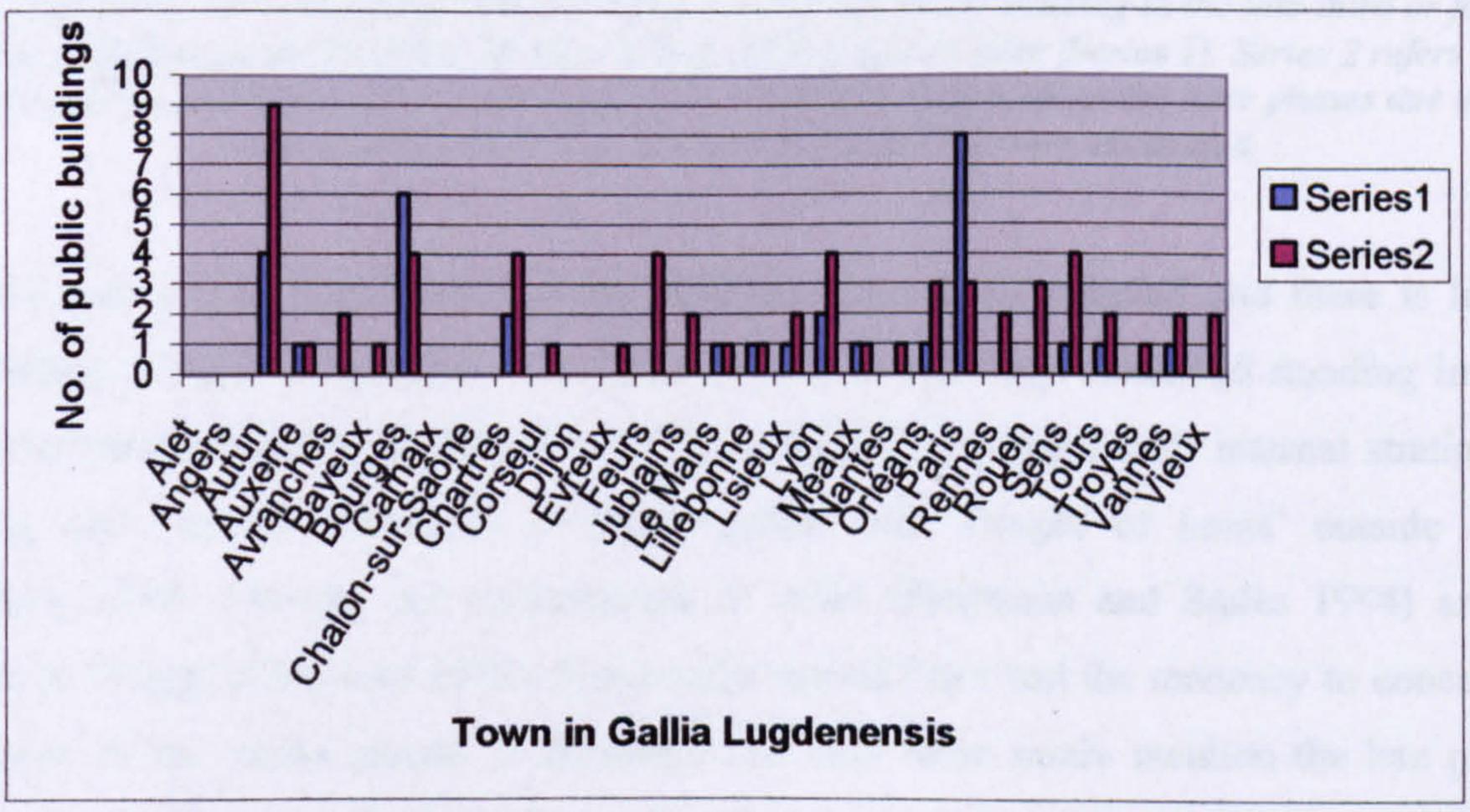
[293] It has been suggested that the *oppidum* of Villejoubert 25km to the northeast of Limoges was the settlement that preceded the Roman town (*ibid.*) but this is probably placing too much emphasis on *oppida* and neglecting the importance of other types of site.

the Saint-Vigor hill to the east of the town dating to the first or second century B.C. (Bedon 1999: 178).

13.2.2 *The towns of France in the later Roman period*

Many of the town sites were used in the pre-Roman period, which suggests that the process of urbanisation will to some extent have been influenced by past histories. The evidence for activity in towns in the later Roman period indicates their continued development and transformation. A review was undertaken of the data available for towns and the identifiable late phases of public buildings (figure 13.3). The number of public buildings with good late Roman data is restricted since many were uncovered in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, when recording was not always detailed and interests were different.





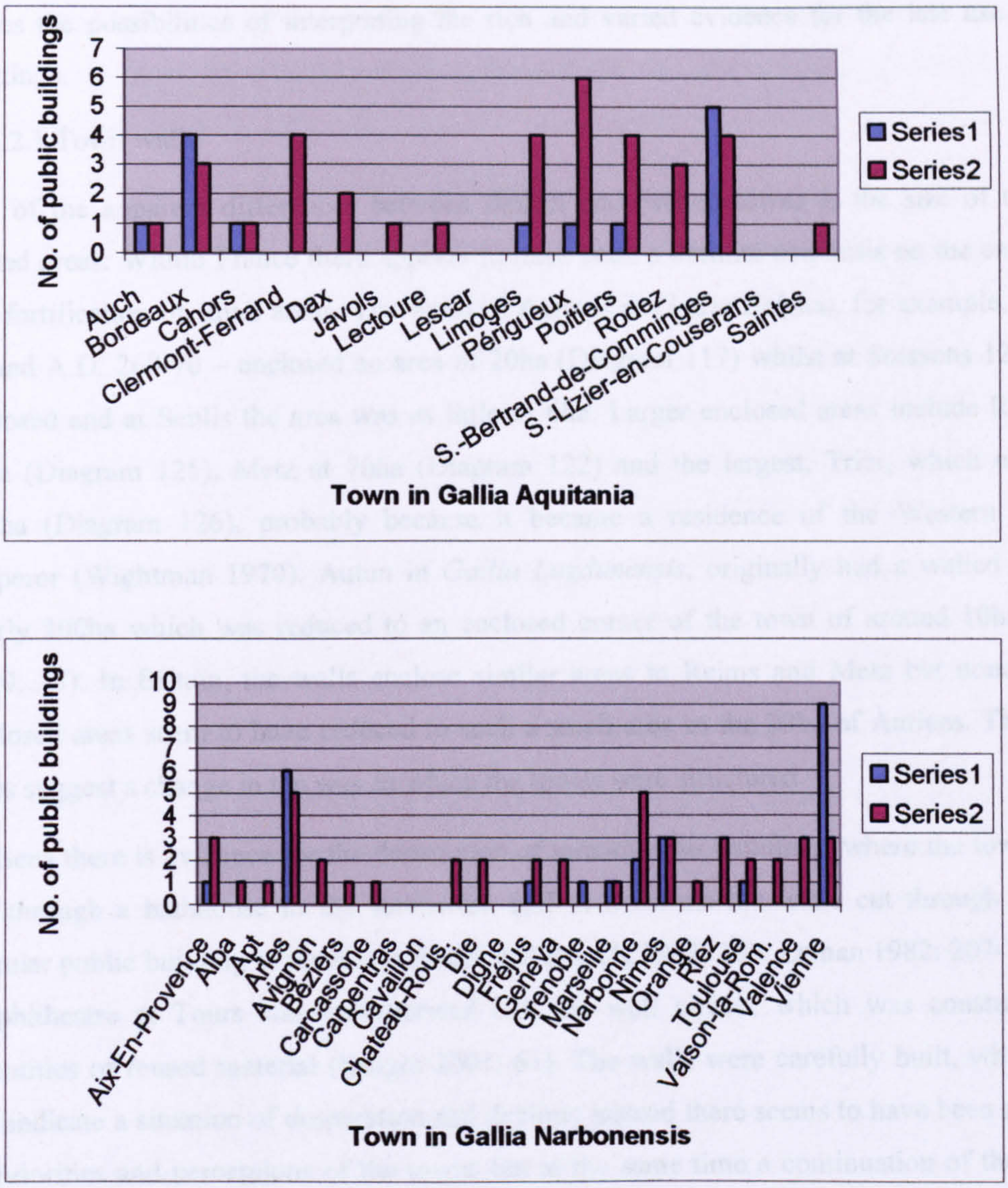


Figure 13.3: Graphs showing the number of public buildings known within the towns of the four provinces where there is some indication of the state or use of the building in the late-third or fourth century, including possible church structures built at this time or later (Series 1). Series 2 refers to the identified public buildings within each town where nothing is known about the later phases due to poor survival or the early date at which the buildings were excavated.

In many cases only small areas of the buildings have been sampled and there is limited information of later occupation. A number of Roman buildings remained standing into the medieval period and later, which in some cases will have affected their internal stratigraphy as they were reused. Examples of these include the 'Temple of Janus' outside Autun (Rebourg 1998: 158-60), the amphitheatre at Arles (Heijmans and Sintès 1994) and the theatre at Orange (Heijmans 2006). Excavation reports have had the tendency to concentrate primarily on the earlier phases of buildings and only more rarely mention the late phases, usually to fit into historical narratives (*e.g.* Monteil 1999 on Nîmes; diagram 123). This

denies the possibilities of interpreting the rich and varied evidence for the late use of the buildings.

13.2.2.1 Town walls

One of the apparent differences between British and French towns is the size of the late walled areas. Within France there appears to have been a definite emphasis on the enclosure and fortification of small areas. The walls of Amiens in *Gallia Belgica*, for example, – built around A.D. 260-70 – enclosed an area of 20ha (Diagram 117) whilst at Soissons 12ha was enclosed and at Senlis the area was as little as 6ha. Larger enclosed areas include Reims at 60ha (Diagram 125), Metz at 70ha (Diagram 122) and the largest, Trier, which enclosed 285ha (Diagram 126), probably because it became a residence of the Western Roman Emperor (Wightman 1970). Autun in *Gallia Lugdunensis*, originally had a walled area of nearly 200ha which was reduced to an enclosed corner of the town of around 10ha (King 1990: 73). In Britain, the walls enclose similar areas to Reims and Metz but none of the enclosed areas seem to have reduced to such a small area as the 20ha of Amiens. The small sizes suggest a change in the way in which the towns were structured.

At Sens there is evidence for the destruction of monumental buildings, where the town walls cut through a bathhouse in the southwest, and at Beauvais the walls cut through a semi-circular public building of uncertain function (Frezouls 1982: 166; Leman 1982: 207-10). The amphitheatre at Tours was incorporated into the wall circuit, which was constructed of quantities of reused material (Knight 2001: 61). The walls were carefully built, which does not indicate a situation of desperation and decline; instead there seems to have been a change in priorities and perceptions of the towns but at the same time a continuation of their long-term place-value. Indeed, many public buildings continued to be used during the late Roman period, suggesting a continuation of the function of the places (see below).

13.2.2.2 Public buildings

As in Britain, there is evidence of rebuilding and alterations to public buildings as well as cases of demolition in the late Roman period. Changes to public buildings in France are usually taken to indicate decay, often linked to historical events (*e.g.* Beaujard 2006). Although late Roman phases of buildings are increasingly being documented (Heijmans 2006), such as at Amiens (Bayard and Massy 1983), Paris (Guyard 2003) and Arles (Heijmans 2004), there is seldom very much debate regarding the length or importance of use of the buildings in the late Roman period. A rare example concerns the bathhouse of the rue du Languedoc in Toulouse, where examination of pottery from the site led Baccrebère (2001) to argue that use of the building continued into the fifth and possibly sixth century, whilst Bouet (2003a: 307) argued for the more conventional complete abandonment in the fourth

century. This section will discuss a selection of informative examples, based on the limited surviving evidence, to demonstrate the complexity of the late use of public buildings and activity within towns.

13.2.2.2.1 Structural changes to public buildings

Of the public buildings excavated at Amiens, part of the public baths (les thermes de la rue de Beauvais) was demolished around A.D. 275 but the rest remained standing and in use (Frezouls 1982: 90). The amphitheatre was incorporated into the defences of the town and its external entrances blocked, although it remained usable (Bayard and Massy 1983: 222). The *forum-basilica* at Bavay was enclosed as a *castrum* in the late-third or fourth century (Diagram 120) using monumental stonework brought from elsewhere in the town (Hanoune and Muller 1994: 47-8; Thollard 1994: 34) indicating changing attitudes to the town. At the Paris *forum-basilica* (Diagram 124) there is evidence for new walling and a monumental entrance constructed in the late-third or fourth century (Busson 1998), indicating a possible defensive element but also the continued importance of the building within the town.

At Autun, the late Roman period saw the restoration of its public buildings under Constantine including a bathhouse and theatre (Frezouls 1997: 158-9). Modern investigations of the theatre, however, have demonstrated that little evidence for the late Roman use of the structure survives. This is due to disturbance caused by medieval and later use of the site and by early excavations which were not aimed at identifying these levels, although excavations in the 1930s did produce coins of the fifth century here (Rebourg 1998: 221-2; Frezouls 1997: 156-9). The public buildings that continued to stand, such as the spectacle buildings and the 'Temple of Janus' at Autun, will have been visible features in the landscape.

13.2.2.2.2 Timber structures within public buildings

As in Britain, there is evidence, where excavation has been thorough, for timber structures built within the public buildings, such as those within the *forum* and adjacent portico at Arles in the fifth century (Diagram 118; Sintès 1994). These were built incorporating a mass of *spolia* from the destruction of the *forum* colonnade (Loseby 1996: 54) and there were also timber structures around the circus, utilising its external wall (Heijmans 2004: 328-32; Sintès 1994: 185-9). These timber structures indicate a change in the way in which space and movement was organised in the town. Sintès (1994: 190-2) argues that the evidence at Arles may be the result of an increase in population when the town became an important administrative and political centre during the late-fourth/early-fifth century.

Structures were also built within the arena of the theatre at Aix-en-Provence in *Gallia Narbonensis* and remained in use until the mid-fourteenth century (Nin 2006). Other towns with structures within the theatres include Orange, Arles and Apt, also all in *Gallia*

Narbonensis (Heijmans 2006: 38-9). At Metz (Diagram 122), the structure identified within the arena of the amphitheatre in the late-third century has been identified as a church (Frezouls 1982: 327); this use of the space for congregation and religious activity also formed part of the rôle of spectacle buildings in earlier periods (see section 7.3.5).

13.2.2.2.3 Industrial activity and 'squatter occupation'

There are fewer cases of metalworking known in the public buildings here than in Britain. One reason for this may relate to priorities in excavation but the situation may also reflect cultural factors with the classical influences and the organisation of towns lasting to a later date in France. At Amiens, part of the *forum* was levelled, probably in the second half of the fourth century, and then used for metalworking (Bayard and Massy 1983: 239, 252; Bayard and Piton 1979: 162). Parts of the building lying outside the excavation could also have been in some kind of use at this time, although further excavation would be required to provide this information (Diagram 127). The *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions a shield and sword factory at Amiens (Bayard and Massy 1983: 239, 252), but its location is uncertain and it was not necessarily located in the *forum*. The continued use of the *forum* also suggests that the metalworking was only one part of its function.

The 'small town' of Argentomagus (Saint-Marcel, Indre, *Gallia Aquitania*) has evidence for metalworking in the theatre (Diagram 128) consisting of hearths and débris with most of the evidence concentrated within corridors 4 and 6 (Dumasy 2000: 218-23). The evidence has also been interpreted as representing the presence of a military workshop for the production of armour and weaponry but this is even more uncertain than the Amiens *forum*. It was suggested by the excavator that the hearths had been placed within the corridors because of the smoke (*ibid.*). This would indicate that the arena was still being used for other purposes at the same time and represent an intensification of use.

There are other cases where traces of activity have been found within the public buildings after these have been considered to have gone out of use. This often takes the form of occupation débris including late fourth century pottery and coins, sometimes over destruction deposits, as in the public baths at Metz (Thermes du Musée et du Carmel), where there were coins of the late-fourth century amongst other débris (Frezouls 1982: 334; Vigneron 1986: 271). There was also débris in the *cryptoporticus* of the *basilica* at Reims (Diagram 125; Bromwich 2003: 317). Hearths, pits and rubbish heaps, described as representing 'squatter occupation' from the late-third to sixth centuries, were identified within a monumental building of uncertain function at Fréjus (Beraud *et al.* 1991), whilst excavations in the amphitheatre at Chartes uncovered traces of what was described as domestic occupation and hearths dating to the early fifth century (Dufour 1993; Piton 1993: 79).

As with Britain, such traces are important indications of the use of the public buildings and probably represent much more that has not survived. They may be supported by some surviving documentary evidence,[294] but detailed archaeological analysis of the buildings can add considerable additional knowledge. Burials have also been identified within public buildings, such as the evidence from Paris for a small fifth century cemetery within the amphitheatre (Busson 1998: 119-33) and within the baths of Cluny (Diagram 124; *ibid.*: 141-62). Burials can be a useful indication of the continued importance of the buildings they surround, but little is known about the function of these buildings at this time.

There is potentially much evidence for activity connected with public buildings in towns in the late Roman period in Gaul, which through careful excavation, recording and analysis, could provide much useful information about the late towns and their continuing significance. The evidence already documented indicates that many buildings remained in use. This is important for understanding the nature of towns in the late Roman period.

13.2.2.3 Christianity

There is more evidence for Christianity within towns in late Roman Gaul than Britain. Documentary evidence for a Christian presence and for bishops in France is also more abundant than for Britain, and certainly by the later-fifth and sixth century there is archaeological evidence for bishoprics in towns (*e.g.* Guyon 2006). There are also a number of examples of possible late Roman churches in France including new structures, as within the amphitheatre at Metz (Frezouls 1982: 327), and the conversion of public buildings. Excavations within the cathedral, on the site of the baths at Reims, for example, revealed what may have been a church and baptistery dating to the early-fifth century (Diagram 125; Bromwich 2003: 315). At Tongeren (by this time in *Germania Inferior*), a large apsidal building beneath the later cathedral may have been a church (Wightman 1985: 231) and at Trier there was a double cathedral connected with the Constantian baths (Loseby 1996: 58). At Limoges there is a possible church constructed on the site of a bathhouse (Knight 2001: 122).

It is often supposed that temples were converted into churches in the late Roman period, but Heijmans (2006: 27-9) has demonstrated that this was probably not very common, with there being few definite examples comparable with the Temple of Augustus and Livia in Vienne, *Gallia Narbonensis*, which became Notre-Dame-de-la-Vie (*ibid.*).[295] At Toulouse,

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[294] The continued use of the *forum* to a late date at Arles, despite structural changes, is indicated by documentary evidence where the bishop of Arles, Caesarius (A.D. 502-42), complains of the congregation leaving church during his service to attend to legal or business matters in a *forum* (although, of course, this need not have been the original *forum*) which clearly remains a focus of civic life (*V. Caesarii* I.31, II.30, II.39 quoted in Loseby 1996: 55).

[295] There may have been more cases where the *forum-basilica* became the site of church complexes in the early medieval period, such as at Aix-en-Provence, Apt, Carpentras, Cavaillon, Fréjus and Toulouse (Heijmans 2006) although excavation is needed at all these sites to identify whether there was a Christian presence in the late Roman period as well.

excavations of the *forum* temple suggested that much of it was deliberately demolished in the late-fourth or early-fifth century but the main shell of the building remained standing and in use, perhaps even as a temple (Arramond and Boudartchouk 2001: 443). The extent of Christianisation within the towns of late Roman France is uncertain, but it would be useful to consider the evidence for Christianity as part of the continuation of the religious importance of these places. From this perspective, the public buildings could retain important functions and the towns could continue to draw on longer-term histories of place.

13.3 Spain

There were three provinces in the earlier Roman period in Spain: *Baetica*, *Tarraconensis* and *Lusitania*, with over eighty 'large' towns. Under Diocletian, *Tarraconensis* was divided into *Gallaecia*, *Carthaginiensis* and *Tarraconensis* (Kulikowski 2005). At only a few of these places have detailed excavations of the public buildings proved possible. The priority in studies has often been given to Roman phases of sites and this has perhaps led to some simplification in the understanding of pre-Roman settlement patterns. The large size of Spain makes it impossible to cover the huge complexities of the area in detail but, as Keay (2006: 223) emphasises, there is a greater need to study the smaller-scale in Spain and think in terms of micro-histories with individual reactions to Rome by different communities.

13.3.1 *Pre-Roman settlement*

The provinces of Roman Spain had pre-Roman settlements including castros, *oppida* and many other forms of rural settlement (de Alarcão 1993: 209). The relationship between existing settlements and Roman urbanism, however, was not simply one of disuse and replacement by Roman forms. A complex pattern of Roman and pre-Roman 'urban' style settlements arose in the Roman period.

13.3.1.1 Settlement and landscape

Practical and economic factors have been seen as the main influences on the location of settlements in Roman Spain. For example, the location of the colony of *Valentia* (*Tarraconensis*) has been explained in relation to its position on the road network, its proximity to the sea and its relationship to the towns of *Tarraco* and *Carthago Nova* (Ribera i Lacomba 2006: 79). It was, however, founded at a ford in the Río Túria and close to extensive wetlands – these would have been far nearer the town than they are today due to modern drainage activities (*ibid.*). The town of *Numantia* (*Tarraconensis*) was surrounded by two rivers and extensive marshland, not drained until the nineteenth century (Jimeno 2006: 173-4). The pre-conquest site of Ullastret (*Tarraconensis*) was also situated in a low-lying area surrounded by wetland (Keay 1988: 16).

Watery contexts of rivers and marshlands in association with towns were less common in Spain than France and Britain due to the natural conditions (figure 13.4). This explains why Spain needed monumental aqueducts to bring water to the towns, such as at Mérida (*Augusta Emerita*) in *Lusitania* (Mateos Cruz 2004). Richert's (2005) study of northwest Iberia, however, demonstrates that there is evidence for religious activity in the landscape connected with the natural environment, including water sources and hilltops such as the rock sanctuary of Panóias in northern Portugal (*ibid.*: 15).[296]

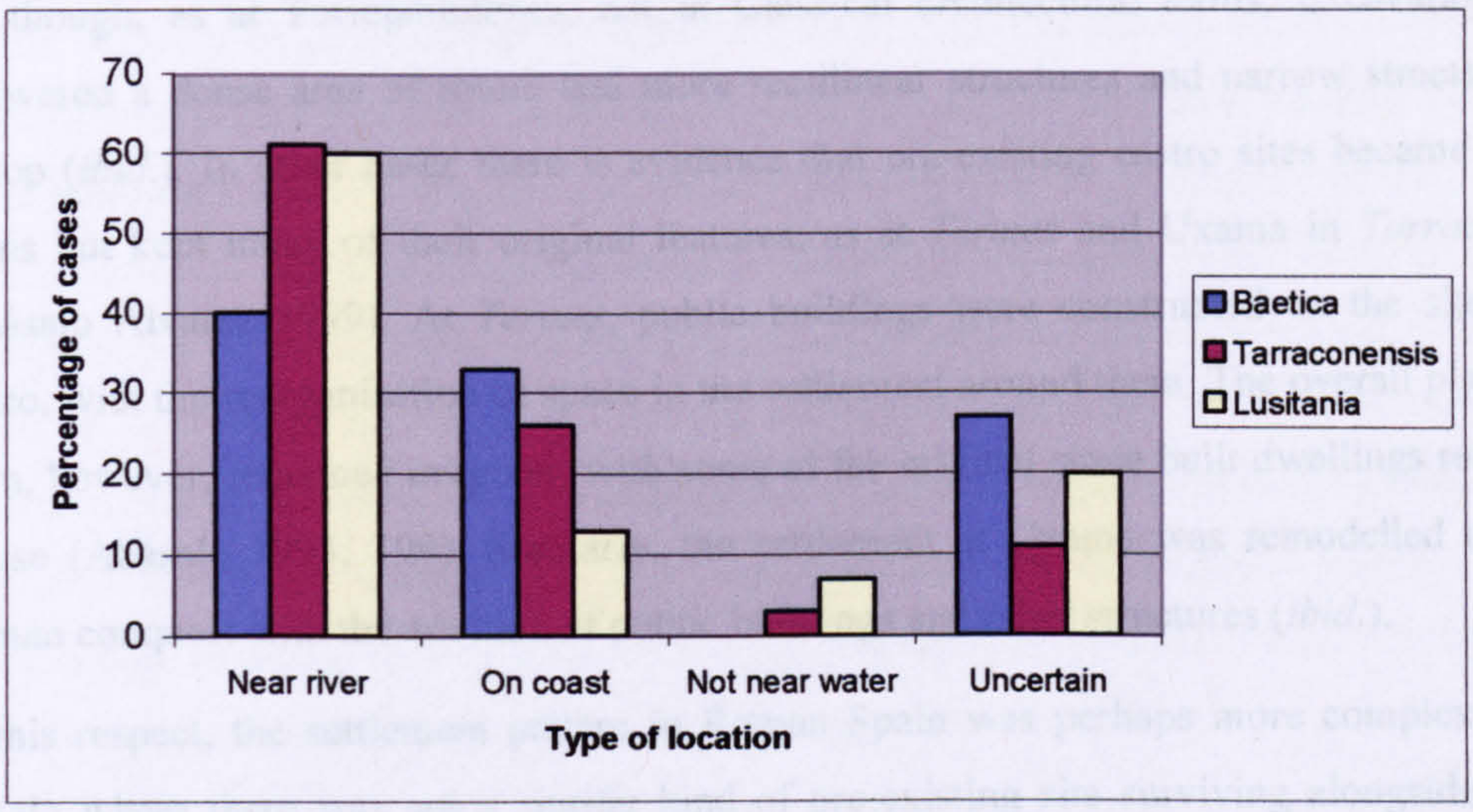

Figure 13.4: Graph showing the percentage of types of watery contexts associated with town sites in the three provinces.

13.3.1.2 Enclosed sites

A number of pre-Roman types of nucleated site continued in the Roman period (Abad Casal *et al.* 2006a: 12). It is often assumed that many of the castros in the northwest went out of use at the time of, or immediately after, the Roman conquest and certainly by the second century A.D. (Queiroga 2003: 32). Castros were settlements with stone built roundhouses and public spaces, usually in hilly locations surrounded by drystone walls. They date from the late Bronze Age onwards. At some there were alterations to their plans in the Augustan and Claudian periods, perhaps showing some influence from the Roman conquest (*ibid.*: 22). Describing these settlements as urban in the Roman sense would be inappropriate, but to the local people they appear to have been important. Some continued in use up to the second century as an alternative, and not necessarily inferior, form of 'urban' settlement

[296] This site consisted of three rock outcrops into which steps were cut. There were also rectangular hollows cut into the tops of the large rocks (Richert 2005: 15). It was used in prehistory and in the Roman period.

contemporary to the Roman town. But it is now also being recognised that some continued in use for a longer period, alongside Roman forms of settlement.

An example is the hilltop site of Torreparedones in the Campiña de Córdoba. This had activity from the sixth century B.C. into the medieval period, including the use of a pre-existing shrine in the Roman period (Cunliffe and Fernández Castro 1999). At Chao Samartín (Grandas de Salime, Asturias) there were coins as late as Trajan (A.D. 98-117), Hadrian (A.D. 117-38) and Faustina II (coin of *c.* A.D. 161-76), as well as six unidentified coins of the first to second centuries (Gil Sendino and Villa Valdés 2005). This evidence indicates continued use though, as at Torreparedones, not in Classical architectural terms. Excavations here uncovered a dense area of round and more rectilinear structures and narrow streets on the hilltop (*ibid.*). In other cases there is evidence that pre-existing castro sites became Roman towns but kept many of their original features, as at *Termes* and Uxama in *Tarraconensis* (Abásalo Álvarez 1999). At *Termes*, public buildings were constructed on the site of the castro, with the reorganisation of space in the settlement around them. The overall plan of the town, however, remained irregular, with some of the original stone built dwellings remaining in use (Abásalo 1993: 199). Similarly, the settlement at Uxama was remodelled after the Roman conquest with the addition of public buildings and other structures (*ibid.*).

In this respect, the settlement pattern in Roman Spain was perhaps more complex than in Britain where there was not a similar kind of pre-existing site surviving alongside Roman towns.[297] Recent studies (*e.g.* Abad Casal *et al.* eds. 2006b; Keay 2006) have begun to emphasise aspects of native involvement in the urbanisation of Spain: rather than simply experiencing the Roman imposition of a new urban system, many of the areas discussed above established some kind of legal relationship with Rome prior to the conquest (Keay 2006: 223). Despite this, studies (except in the northwest) have concentrated on the Roman towns that the sites became, rather than examining the significance of the pre-Roman phases (see the recent volume on early Roman urbanism in Spain produced by Abad Casal *et al.* eds. 2006b).

Castros have traditionally been analysed in terms of their military function as fortified places (*e.g.* Keay 1988; Queiroga 2003) but the divisions between defensive, domestic and religious functions need not have been as clear-cut as they appear today. Modern scholarship makes the distinction between hilltop sanctuary sites and castros, but people need not have thought in this way during the Iron Age. In eastern and southern Spain there were *oppida* settlements often at the summits of rocky plateaux, which have been considered mainly in terms of their urban qualities and the way in which they were 'romanised' after the conquest (*e.g.* Abad

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[297] Although 'small towns' in Britain do appear to have been inspired in part by an indigenous organisation of settlement, and some did originate in the pre-Roman period (see section 14.3.1).

Casal 2006). There were also Greek and Phoenician sites studied from economic and strategic perspectives through their rôle in colonisation and trade (Fernández Castro 1995: 262; 324-38; Keay 1988: 17-9). Few of the indigenous sites, however, appear to have been influenced greatly in plan by the Greek presence and instead continued to display their own styles of organisation creating a varied settlement pattern. An example is Puig de Sant Andreu in Ullastret (Gerona; Fernández Castro 1995: 324-38).[298]

13.3.1.3 Unenclosed sites

Pre-Roman occupation that does not appear to have been part of monumental *oppida* or castros has also been identified underneath a number of the Roman towns in Spain. The interaction between Roman towns and this existing activity can be seen in some of the Roman town plans such as at Munigua, in *Baetica*, where the public buildings, including shrines, were constructed not in a Roman street-grid pattern, but along the contours of the hillside, continuing the layout of the pre-Roman settlement (Alonso and Olivia 1993: 48; Edmondson 1990). At Bolonia (*Baelo Claudia, Baetica*), the centre of the town took on an unusual and predominantly religious character with three temples and a theatre next to the *forum* (Alonso and Oliva 1993: 47; Keay 1998: 73). This concentration of religious activity may be explained by its being based on a pre-existing geography of religious place, although more work on the pre-Roman phases of the site would be needed to verify this.

Sites that do not seem to have been *oppida* but provide evidence for pre-Roman activity include Mérida (*Augusta Emerita, Lusitania*), the town's Roman name reflecting its origins as a colony for Augustus' soldiers. There are traces of pre-Roman activity (Curchin 1991: 105),[299] but the focus placed on the foundation of the Roman town, as in Britain with sites such as Lincoln, Gloucester and Leicester, has meant that little attention has been focused on the character of any pre-existing settlement. Pre-Roman occupation is also evident in Santiponce (*Italica*) and Córdoba (*Corduba*) and further work at these places would improve understanding of the nature of the pre-Roman settlement pattern and its relationship with *oppida* sites.

Existing landscapes were built upon, used and transformed throughout the Roman period. The continuation of activity at these places into the late Roman period can be considered in terms of the continuing vitality of the sites.

13.3.2 *The later Roman period in the towns of Spain*

As with late Roman France and Britain, Spanish towns show a comparable variety of use which needs to be considered. In a number of cases there is evidence for the changing use of

[298] This was a hilltop site containing winding streets and small rectangular stone and mud brick buildings (Keay 1988: 15).
[299] This includes artefacts of a religious nature such as a bronze cult-wagon, a deer's head jar, a stone lion and bone objects (Curchin 1991: 105).

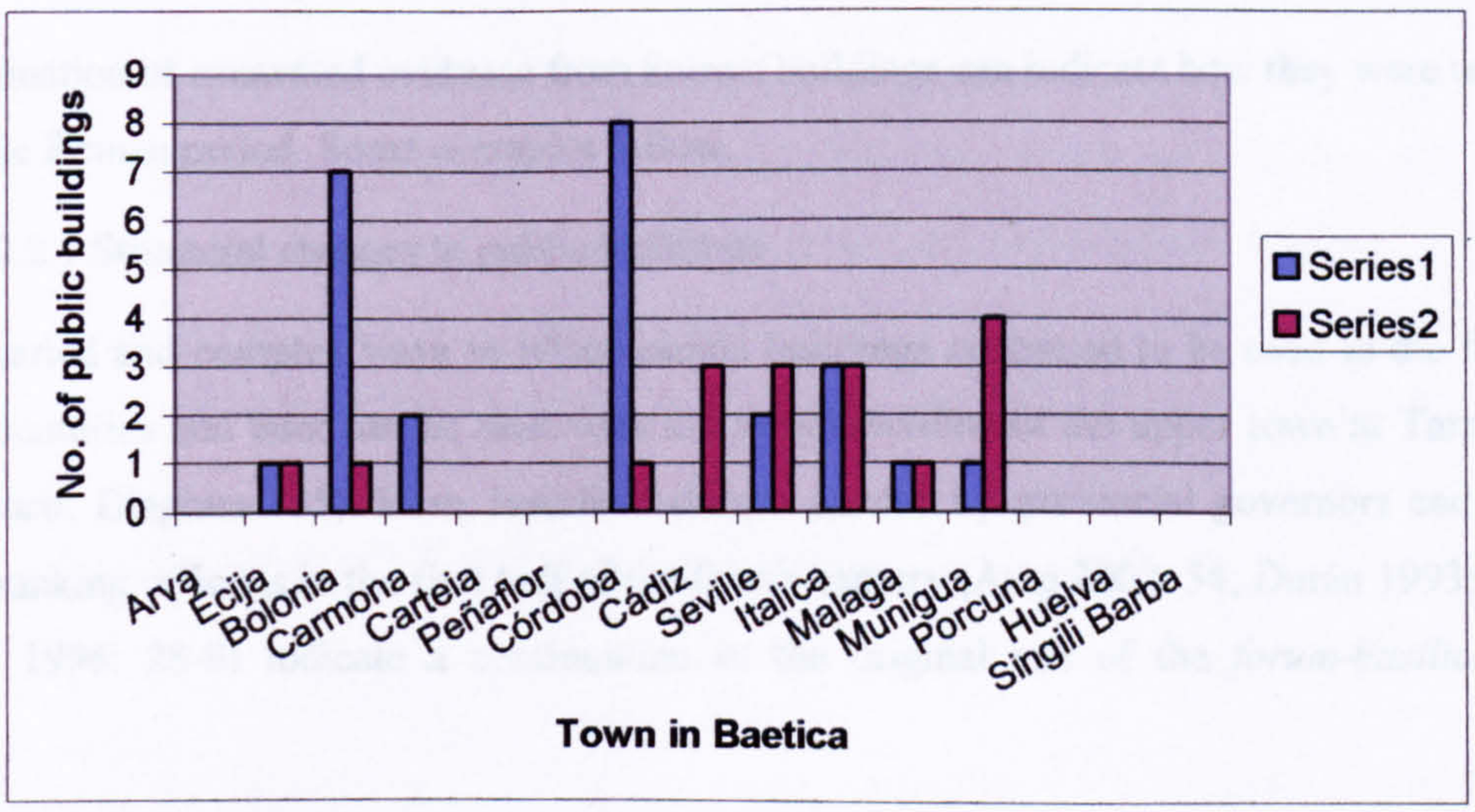
public buildings, although this need not indicate a decline in their importance; the towns remained vibrant places.

13.3.2.1 Town walls

Unlike Gaul, but more like Britain, there are only a few examples of Roman towns which appear to have reduced the size of the area enclosed by their walls in the late Roman period. In many cases the late walls seem to follow the line of earlier ones, and these circuits were then used for the medieval walls. In some cases there was a reduction in the enclosed area, such as at *Italica* where the late walls excluded the main bathhouse, the amphitheatre and many of the excavated houses (Rodríguez Hidalgo and Keay 1995). In other cases a large enclosed area was only partially occupied, as at Valencia (*Valentia*) and Gijón where here only around 7ha of the 16ha enclosed space appears to have been inhabited (Ochoa 1993: 241). There may, of course, have been further areas of occupation which, especially if the buildings were of timber, would not be so easily recognisable. In the majority of cases the town walls appear to have been carefully constructed. At Mérida, for example, the late walls were well planned with large granite blocks placed in front of the Augustan walls, doubling their width (Mateos Cruz 2004).

13.3.2.2 Public buildings

As in France, the evidence for some public buildings is limited because they remained extant into medieval and modern times and have consequently undergone much internal disturbance and major alterations; this survival may indicate that the buildings remained in some kind of use in the late Roman and post-Roman periods (figure 13.5). At some towns, such as Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*; Diagram 131), very little is known about the public buildings due to intense later occupation.



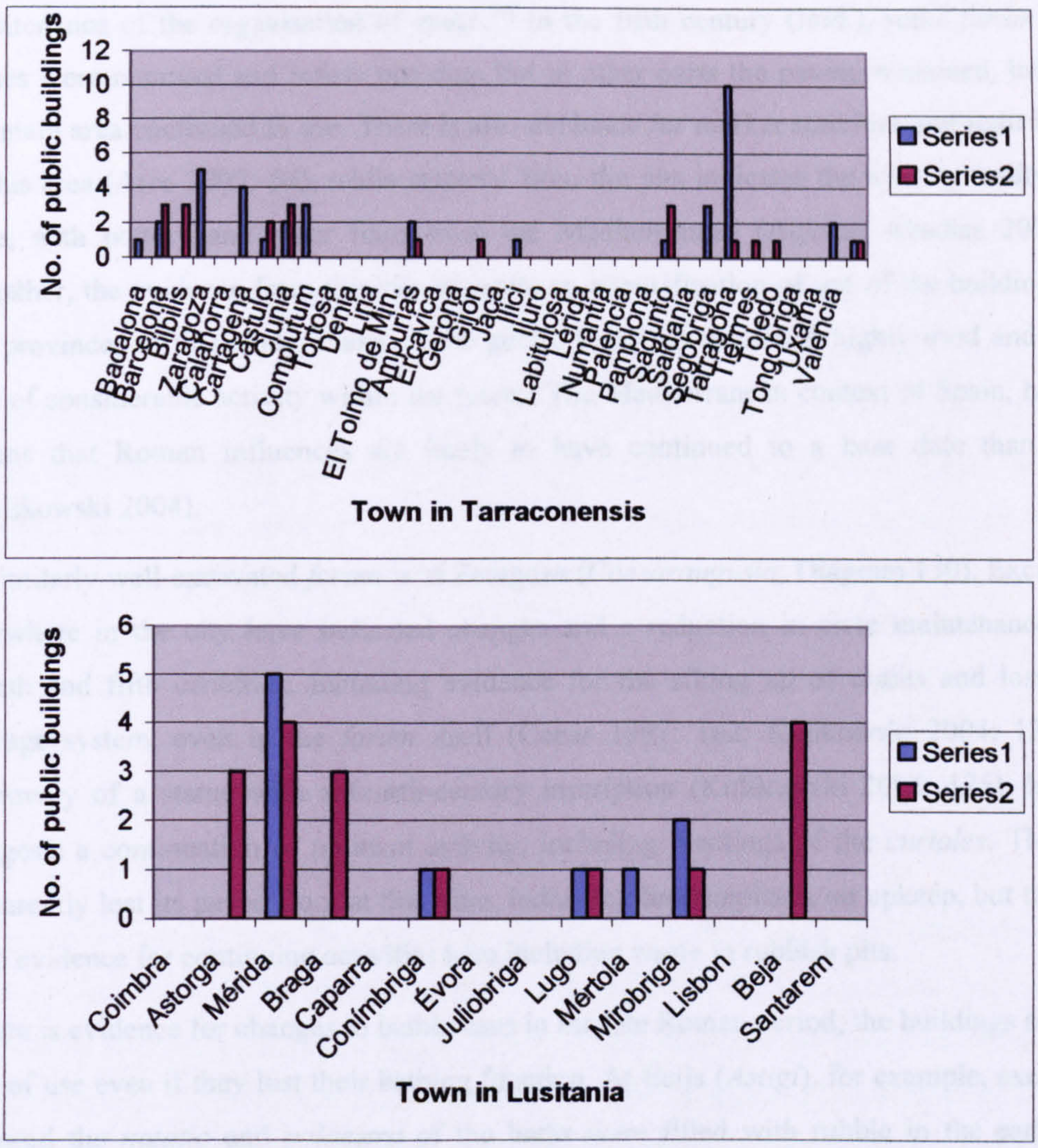


Figure 13.5: Graphs showing the number of public buildings known within the towns of the three provinces where there is some indication of the state or use of the building in the late-third, fourth or fifth century (Series 1). This includes possible church structures built at this time or later. Series 2 refers to the identified public buildings within each town where nothing is known about the later phases due to poor survival or the early date at which the buildings were excavated.

Examination of excavated evidence from known buildings can indicate how they were used in the late Roman period. Some examples follow.

13.3.2.2.1 Structural changes to public buildings

The varied and complex ways in which public buildings continued to be used in the fourth, fifth centuries and later can be seen with the *forum-basilica* of the upper town at Tarragona (*Tarraco*; Diagram 135). Here, inscribed statues erected by provincial governors and other high ranking officials in the first half of the fourth century (Arce 2002: 54; Durán 1993: 77-8; Keay 1996: 28-9) indicate a continuation in the original use of the *forum-basilica* and

maintenance of the organisation of space.[300] In the fifth century (*ibid.*), some *forum* paving stones were removed and refuse pits dug, but in other parts the paving remained, indicating the main area continued in use. There is also evidence for market activities and light industry in this area (Arce 2002: 54), while material from the pits indicates the town's vitality at this time, with pottery and other finds from the Mediterranean (Aquilué Abadías 2004: 53). Together, the evidence from this site suggests an intensification of use of the building. In all the provinces of this study, many of the public buildings remained highly used and formed *foci* of considerable activity within the towns. The Mediterranean context of Spain, however, means that Roman influences are likely to have continued to a later date than Britain (Kulikowski 2004).

A similarly well-excavated *forum* is at Zaragoza (*Caesaraugusta*; Diagram 130). Excavations elsewhere in the city have indicated changes and a reduction in civic maintenance in the fourth and fifth centuries, including evidence for the silting up of drains and loss of the sewage system, even in the *forum* itself (Cepas 1997: 162; Kulikowski 2004: 125). The discovery of a statue with a fourth-century inscription (Kulikowski 2004: 125), however, suggests a continuation of political activity, including meetings of the *curiales*. The *forum* apparently lost its paved floor at this time, indicating less emphasis on upkeep, but there was also evidence for continuing activities here including waste in rubbish pits.

There is evidence for changes to bathhouses in the late Roman period, the buildings not going out of use even if they lost their bathing function. At Écija (*Astigi*), for example, excavations showed the *natatio* and *palaestra* of the baths were filled with rubble in the early-fourth century, but there is evidence that the building remained standing and that these rooms and others remained in use for some other function (Keay 2003: 202). The bathhouse at Zaragoza also appears to have been no longer functioning as such by the fourth century (Diagram 130; Kulikowski 2004: 227) but more work is needed to identify whether the building was still in use at this time for other activities. At *Tarraco* there is a fourth-century inscription (RIT 155) recording restoration of the *thermarum montanarum* bathhouse by the provincial governor, M. Aurelius Vincentius (Arce 1982: 101; Arce 2002). The actual building has not yet been identified, preventing further study, and indicating how much information is missing about the late use of bathhouses and other public buildings. From evidence available it would seem that many bathhouses ceased to retain their original function at an earlier date than the *forum-basilica* complexes. With little textual evidence, however, information needs to be gained from detailed studies of the archaeological deposits.

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[300] An inscription dating to A.D. 472 to Anthemius and Leo, found at an early date in the town, may also have come from the *forum* although this cannot be proven with certainty (Aquilué Abadías 2004: 53).

At Zaragoza, both the amphitheatre and theatre remained in use to a late date (Diagram 130) with late layers being recognised within the arena of the theatre and late repair work identified at the amphitheatre (Arce 2002: 54; Cepas 1997: 162). At Mérida, inscriptions show the amphitheatre was restored in the A.D. 330s or 340s and the theatre later in the fourth century (Durán Cabello 2004: 58-61; Mateos Cruz 2004: 38). As with the bathhouse at *Tarraco*, this suggests many of the buildings were maintained at a late date which need not necessarily be recognisable in the archaeological record.

Temples were subject to changes in the late Roman period. At *Corduba* (Diagram 132) structures, perhaps with a domestic function, were built over the large plaza and temple complex within the town in the fourth century A.D., indicating a reorganisation or reallocation of space. The veneration of temple sites may also have continued after maintenance ceased or the main temple building was destroyed. A number of the temples exhibit evidence for their continued use in the fifth century and beyond, such as at *Baelo Claudia*, *Baetica*, (Cepas 1997: 210-1),[301] which raises issues about the rôle of Christianity within towns and how this affected the way in which towns were viewed and experienced.

13.3.2.2.2 Timber structures within public buildings

Detailed excavations have demonstrated that timber structures were built within the imperial *forum* at Mérida in the fourth century (Álvarez Martinez 1993) but this need not indicate the end of the building's original function: it may simply represent additional activities or more permanent structures relating to pre-existing activities (Diagram 134). Further examples are discussed below in the consideration of 'squatter occupation'.

13.3.2.2.3 Industrial activity and 'squatter occupation'

The *forum-basilica* at Tarraco produced evidence for light industry in the fifth century (see above; Arce 2002: 54). At Badadona (*Baetulo*) there are traces of metalworking within the baths in the fourth century (Durán 1993). There is also evidence for structural changes to the building, indicating a probable change from its original function, but continuation of some kind of use in the fourth and into the fifth centuries (Durán 1976: 74). In some areas, the baths were badly preserved, making analysis of the changes problematic but there do appear to have been alterations to the floors and layout of some rooms (*ibid.*).

Excavations within the theatre at Italica (Diagrams 133 and 137) indicate partial robbing in the fourth century but its continued use for many activities. Evidence includes an oven, a series of hearths and an olive mill (Rodríguez Gutiérrez 2004). In the *porticus post scaenam* there were a number of timber structures (*ibid.*: 393-5), but no definite evidence for their

[301] At Baelo Claudia there were four central temples all of which show evidence for use into the sixth and possibly seventh centuries A.D. although of uncertain function (Cepas 1997: 210-1).

function. In the area of the north *parascaenium*, unworked and worked bone objects probably relate to a workshop (*ibid.*). In the later-fourth century there is evidence that the floor was used as a cemetery, which may indicate a religious focus, including a church. The theatre clearly remained a focus of activity within the town, indicating vitality and innovation. Again, like France, there is less evidence for industrial activity in the public buildings of late Roman Spain than in Britain, suggesting that there may have been a cultural difference in Britain and strengthening the arguments for local influences made in chapter 9.

13.3.2.3 Christianity

Compared with Britain, there is a relatively large amount of documentary evidence relating to Christianity within towns and to the rôle of bishops. There are records, for example, that church councils were held in Tarragona in A.D. 310 and 419 (Kulikowski 2004: 223). At Tarragona a fifth century Christian cemetery to the east of the town contained a basilican building which was possibly a church, whilst in the upper town a large building with parallel halls was constructed in the late-fifth century, also interpreted as a church (*ibid.*: 221-3). In the Visigothic period of the sixth century, a church was constructed within the amphitheatre from reused Roman stonework (Dupré Raventós 2004: 69-72; Keay 1996: 38).

A possible early church dating to the fifth century was discovered in excavations beneath the cathedral of Santa Eulalia in Barcelona (Diagram 129; Arce 1982: 94; Cepas 1997: 10). The building was on the edge of the Roman town when the major focus of the settlement was still in the area of the Roman public buildings. Only in the medieval period did the focus move to the area where the cathedral was later built (Granados 1995). This is similar to *Complutum*, where the fourth century Christian complex became the settlement focus during the medieval period (Kulikowski 2004: 229), whilst in the late Roman period the public buildings of the Roman town remained central. These towns provide comparable evidence to that from Verulamium in Britain where the medieval town focused on the Christian establishment but the Roman town remained important in the late Roman period (see section 12.1).

Cemeteries within towns may indicate some kind of religious focus, such as at *Clunia* (Coruña del Conde) where there is evidence for a group of burials within the *forum* dating to the Constantinian or Theodosian periods (Abásalo 1993: 198). The rise of Christianity in the late Roman period will have led to changes in urban organisation but the public buildings also remained in use in the towns.

13.4 Conclusions

Like Britain, both France and Spain had complex settlement patterns in the pre-Roman period, and the interpretation of these sites has often been influenced by knowledge of towns that developed during Roman times. As in Britain, it is important to acknowledge, however, that

pre-Roman understandings of landscape are likely to have continued into the Roman period and influenced the construction and form of settlement. There are also examples where pre-Roman forms of urban-like settlements continued well into the Roman period. Excavations in France and Spain also provide much evidence for activities surviving within the public buildings in the late Roman period, despite the reduced emphasis on maintenance of the structures. The evidence from the buildings demonstrates that the importance of town centres continued and evolved.

As with Britain, there is much potential in future excavations that incorporate plans to document the later layers of sites in detail. The survival of the significance of the sites is an important factor in understanding the nature of towns in the later Roman period. There is more documentary evidence surviving for France and Spain than for Britain, and differences in the histories of these various provinces would have had an impact on the nature of towns. It is also necessary to examine the long-term history and meaning of the sites through archaeological research, which will aid understanding of towns in the later Roman period. Differences identified in the three countries indicate that there was also variation including the presence of metalworking within public buildings and the size of the enclosed towns in the later Roman period. This is likely to have been a result of local influences, attitudes and responses but they also probably related to the level of continued Roman influences.

In more general examinations of the later Roman Empire, Britain is often subsumed within the Continental evidence and only given limited consideration (*e.g.* Cameron 1993b; Mitchell 2007). This is partly because there are few documents referring to Britain. Archaeological analysis, however, is also very important, and theoretical approaches used in studying the British evidence can be fundamental for interpreting the Continental material.

For some authors such as Kulikowski (2004), the study of towns in the later Roman period on the Continent is comparatively unproblematic: "the bureaucratic classes carried the institutional life of the Empire into the post-imperial period. The centres in which they congregated – the great imperial cities of the fourth century – remained central to the life of the fifth and sixth centuries" (*ibid.*: 84). It is possible that the reduction in size of the provinces increased the importance of some of the towns within them in the later Roman period. Although this interpretation might explain some differences between the Continent and Britain, it puts an emphasis on the viewpoint of the Roman élite. It is argued here that the greater complexity of the situation can be better examined by looking at towns in terms of their long-term histories.

Southern Gaul and Spain have sometimes been distinguished from northern Gaul and Britain in terms of the extent of decline in the late Roman period because of the quantities of textual

sources and evidence of the Church that survive, as well as connections with the Mediterranean (*e.g.* Mitchell 2007: 355; Wickham 2005: 656-68). This chapter has argued, however, that the late Romano-British and northern Gaulish evidence is equally as important. Methods for analysing the archaeology in Britain can be of use for reconceptualising the evidence from Gaul and Spain, and evidence from the Continent can inform analysis of Britain, from pre-Roman to post-Roman times.

Chapter 14: Conclusions – Senses of place: rethinking urbanism in Roman Britain

14.1 Summary of results

This thesis set out to explore some new ways to study urbanism in Roman Britain through a methodologically comprehensive analysis of the data and rigorous use of theoretical approaches. It represents an attempt to move away from unquestioning and familiar perceptions of towns in the Roman period through two main case studies: exploring activity at town sites in the immediate pre-Roman period, and how this influenced Roman urbanism; and exploring towns, concentrating on the use of public buildings, in the later Roman period. It considered the 'Golden Age' period of towns to be, in many ways, an artificial construct, which has affected the way that late pre-Roman/early-Roman and late Roman periods of the sites have been perceived. It is through examining early and late periods in detail that new ways of studying urbanism in the Roman period have been explored.

The methodologies used for studying the late pre-Roman and the late Roman periods in Britain have often differed considerably. Study of the late pre-Roman period has been influenced by traditions within prehistoric archaeology, whilst study of the later Roman period has drawn on perspectives from classical archaeology and ancient history. In this thesis, both methodologies were brought together to provide a co-ordinated study.

An analysis of activity on the sites of towns in the late pre-Roman Iron Age explored approaches which worked beyond ideas derived from the classical texts and from other types of rational interpretations of landscape. Roman towns developed within the context of these numinous landscapes, continuing, but also transforming, aspects of the way in which certain places were experienced, a tradition that continued into the late Roman period. Rather than representing a decline in standards in late Roman towns, this perspective indicates that activity continued the use of these places in meaningful ways. They need to be considered both in terms of what occurred on these sites previously and in terms of the continued use of these places as creative and vibrant localities.

Historiographical analysis within archaeology is important, as the study of Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* has demonstrated. One of the most influential texts on the Roman Empire in the English language, it was especially important in Britain for interpreting the later Roman period. Analysing his writing has illustrated the way in which the growth of towns was viewed in the context of the supposedly inferior pre-existing settlement, while late Roman urbanism was thought to show decline. This perspective, however, derives from the social context in which Gibbon's work was written, and the evidence from both periods can be interpreted in less negative ways.

Archaeological evidence indicates that there was still considerable activity taking place within the public buildings of towns in the late Roman period and that the structures remained architectural frames around the activity. Moreover, this surviving evidence is likely to be representative of much more that has since been lost, did not leave any archaeological trace or has not been recorded because of the focus of much previous work. The surviving evidence includes structural changes to public buildings (sometimes with the demolition of elements of a structure representing the preservation of the rest) and timber structures built within or on the sites of public buildings. One of the major types of evidence within buildings was that of industrial activity, which has so far been identified in all types of public buildings except spectacle buildings, although there seemed to be a prevalence in *forum-basilica* complexes. The activity included iron-working, bronze-working and, in some cases, lead-working and the casting of pewter vessels.

Although historical documents such as the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the Theodosian Code can be drawn upon for understanding towns in the later Roman period (see sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4), the archaeological evidence is also extremely complex requiring analysis that pursues a number of perspectives. Rather than indicating 'squatter occupation' and the decline of buildings, evidence for industrial activity and other finds such as bone, pottery and coin spreads representing activity, can be considered in the context of the continued vitality of towns. In many cases, metalworking took place within buildings that were still in use for other purposes including, in all likelihood, their original function. The evidence for industrial activity, and in some cases animal butchery, in these central buildings, and perhaps part of their public function, were also important at many of these places in the late pre-Roman period. In the late Iron Age, these were places of assembly, power and ritual. 'Industry', agriculture and keeping animals will have made use of the rivers, marshlands and other water sources, but they were also tied in with the symbolic and ritualised nature of the 'natural settings'. Metalworking and other activities in the late Roman period, perhaps becoming central again to the significance of the sites, demonstrates that the towns not only retained their symbolic importance but remained viable and functional places, retaining their 'place-value', and did not decline to a state of ruin and degradation. They continued as symbolic and practical places of assembly, networking, trade and exchange and ritual, drawing on the past, despite the Classical appearance of the towns now being greatly altered.

14.2 Place: beyond growth and decline

Towns were part of a process of recurring and simultaneous continuity and change from the pre-Roman to the late Roman, with the dynamic equilibrium of the places being maintained. This cannot be explained through emphasising the inferiority of these two periods compared

with the 'Golden Age'.[302] A concentration on the scientifics of space has neglected the importance of place, which can help in understanding towns and change over time (E. Casey 1996: 14). Places can be considered as entities that gather people, experiences, histories and thoughts and keep them to influence later action and feeling; they are bodies of collection and recollection. Ingold (2000: 149) sees places as being comprised of the vitality that animates their inhabitants. Linear time may also not be so useful for understanding all aspects of places: the present in places gathers the past and future into itself and is not segregated from them (Ingold 1993: 159). Places are generative and regenerative in their own right and do not age according to any pre-established schedule of growth and decline (*ibid.*: 24-6), such as the historical events of the later Roman period.

Roman towns gathered people in deeply acculturated ways. But in Roman Britain they were also located on sites with longer histories, which will have had influences on urbanisation. Religious place is especially rooted in the past and collects memories to impact upon activities in the present (Lock *et al.* 2005: 151). Roman towns were highly ritualised places and in the late Roman period would have continued to draw on the significance of the places from earlier periods. The rôle of memories and myths that places contained is an important area to study for reconsidering the decline of towns in the late Roman period.

Memory is "something vital to our understanding of the ancient world" (S. Alcock 2002: 1; also Eckardt 2004); it is the central medium through which identities are constituted – we are shaped by the past (Olick and Robbins 1998: 112). The issue of memory in Roman archaeology is not a topic that has generally received much attention. This is probably, at least partly, because of the difficulties of its identification in the archaeological record. Memory is usually either neglected or it is approached through using documentary evidence (S. Alcock 2002: 2), which can be biased towards particular viewpoints and has limitations in geographic areas in which few texts exist. Agency is also important, since individuals and groups would have had different memories and different motives in the creation of these memories (*cf.* Gardner ed. 2004b).

Analysis of the rôle of memory within society over time suggests that social memory – shared remembrance – would have played an important part in the construction of identity in the Roman period, providing both an image of the past and direction for the future (S. Alcock 2002: 1; J. Fentress and Wickham 1992: 8; Le Goff 1992). Today, memory is related more to the personal than the social and there has been a general devaluation of memory as a source of knowledge (J. Fentress and Wickham 1992: 8). Social memory is articulated through speech,

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[302] B. Ward-Perkins' (2005: 117-21) study suggests that late Roman Britain is comparable to a period even less advanced than the late Iron Age – the Bronze Age – and in so doing makes many cultural assumptions about a period that was vastly different, greatly simplifying understanding by viewing both the Bronze Age and late Roman period through a Roman lens.

performances and ceremonies (Connerton 1989: 4; J. Fentress and Wickham 1992: 47; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 4). Rituals also created and reinforced memories within society and passed information on, as in the processes of metalworking (Budd and Taylor 1995; A. Jones 2003). Memories are generated along the paths of movement that each person lays down in the course of his or her life (Ingold 2000: 139, 147) – this is intimately connected to the way in which the 'land' is lived and contributes to the long-term place-value of sites.

Place, including the built environment and 'natural' places (*cf.* Insoll 2007), is an important arena in which memories are created and in which the society is structured and reproduced. Giddens' theory of structuration (1984) argued that routinely performed activities created the knowledge and memory of how to go on; it reproduced the society through time. The individual becomes socialised within the culture of the group whilst at the same time the group and its cultural values are reproduced (*ibid.*). For Tilley (2004: 12) it is also the individual that carries time into the experience of places.[303] Barrett (1988) sought to apply structuration theory to archaeological evidence and it has been useful in studies of architecture and the organisation and layout of buildings in many periods of archaeology (*e.g.* Graves 1989; 2000; M. Johnson 2002).[304] Graves (2000), sees social space as created out of social practice within physical space.[305] For the Roman period, Favro (1996) has explored the *Forum Romanum* of Augustan Rome and the ways in which the architecture and use of space was carefully choreographed, movement controlled and experience manipulated, creating the meaning of the site. Buildings act as "curtains around space" (Boman 2003: 207), framing the spaces and directing the action. The involvement of people is also necessary and adds to the significance of the places; "bodies build places" (E. Casey 1993: 116).

The architectural framing of place applies as much to 'ruins' as it does to well-maintained structures, as Edensor's (2005) study of industrial ruins indicates. His argument is that the importance of 'ruins' has generally been ignored because of the predominant capitalist notion within society of the economic value of space; "ruins and other forms of wasteland are tarnished by their association with economic decline" (*ibid.*: 7, 166). Ruined space is often seen as somewhere where nothing happens, but Edensor highlights the many varied uses of the buildings and the ways in which the space was comprehended. In his terms, ruins are "haunted by a horde of absent presences, a series of signs of the past that cannot be

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[303] Tilley's (1994) study of prehistoric monuments argued that the experience of walking along the Dorset Cursus monument was an essential ingredient of its meaning.

[304] Johnson's (2002) study of medieval and renaissance castles in England considered them in terms of "active and complex pieces of landscape and material culture"; they were stage settings and highly manipulated structures and this included their wider landscape setting, which often involved the control and rationalisation of water. In this study, Johnson puts an emphasis on how understanding the architecture, decoration and landscape setting could reflect the lived experience, the way in which people interacted with each other and how people constructed their identities.

[305] Graves (2000) studied the architectural plans, fabric and fittings of medieval churches to show how movement within the buildings was increasingly manipulated by secular individuals and groups who wished to increase their influence and power over society.

categorised but intuitively grasped" (*ibid.*: 152). The data chapters in this thesis have shown that there was much activity within the public buildings in the late Roman period. These actions were not simply taking advantage of deserted buildings but were placed and organised within them in meaningful ways, as in the case of the metalworking in the *basilica* at Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000: 72).

The 'Celtic revival' concept (*e.g.* Haverfield 1912; Poulton and Scott 1993; see section 6.3.5) raises possibilities about the way in which folk memories and stories, beliefs and surviving understandings of place may have affected what went on in later times. Group memories and stories, looking back to the pre-Roman period, are almost certain to have existed amongst Roman urban communities, but are impossible to identify in the archaeological record. Material remains may sometimes help the archaeologist to address the idea of the survival of traditions. An informative example is Fulford's (2001) study of ritual behaviour at towns, continuing the tradition of ritual deposition from prehistory.

The late metalworking in Silchester's *basilica* may even have been linked through memories with metalworking on the site in the late Iron Age (see section 5.6.3; Fulford and Timby 2000: 30-1, 419-20), although how these memories could have been conveyed is unclear. The *forum-basilica*, constructed in the area of a pre-existing central enclosed space, could have represented for some at least the continued monumentalisation of the site. There is also the possibility of a pre-existing religious precinct beneath the temples in *insula* XXX represented by some Iron Age material (Anon 1854: 57; Boon 1974: 156), although modern work is needed here for confirmation. The late Roman metalworking found in the more recent *insula* IX excavations (Fulford *et al.* 2006) can also be considered in terms of the continued long-term functioning importance of the place. Public buildings will have transformed concepts of what came before, but at the same time there would have been 'memories' of their context of development within pre-Roman place, encouraging their continued interpretation in ways that were not entirely mundane.

Beyond the public buildings, the towns as a whole were places where memory, movement, encounter and assembly were significant factors in the creation of meaning. Towns were still places with sizeable populations in the late Roman period, which drew people from outside; constructing in timber was an aspect of the continuing vitality of towns. Some of the public buildings may have retained official functions, despite the fact that they also held other activities, and that some parts of the building were already demolished. There were changes in the organisation of towns, in some cases moving away from the classical-style, but these need not be translated as decline, as 'small towns' and pre-Roman settlement sites indicate.

14.3 Broadening perspectives: 'small towns' and villas

14.3.1 *'Small towns'*

'Small towns' (see table 2.2 for the sites examined in this study) appear to have become more prominent in the late Roman period (Millett 1990: 143-56) and are useful for examining late Roman urbanism. As chapter 4 discussed (section 4.3), 'small towns' can be considered in terms of indigenous interpretations of Roman urbanism (Hingley 1997a; Millett 2001). The vibrancy and form of organisation of these settlements is useful for assessing 'large towns' in the late Roman period when there was less emphasis placed on their Classical appearance.

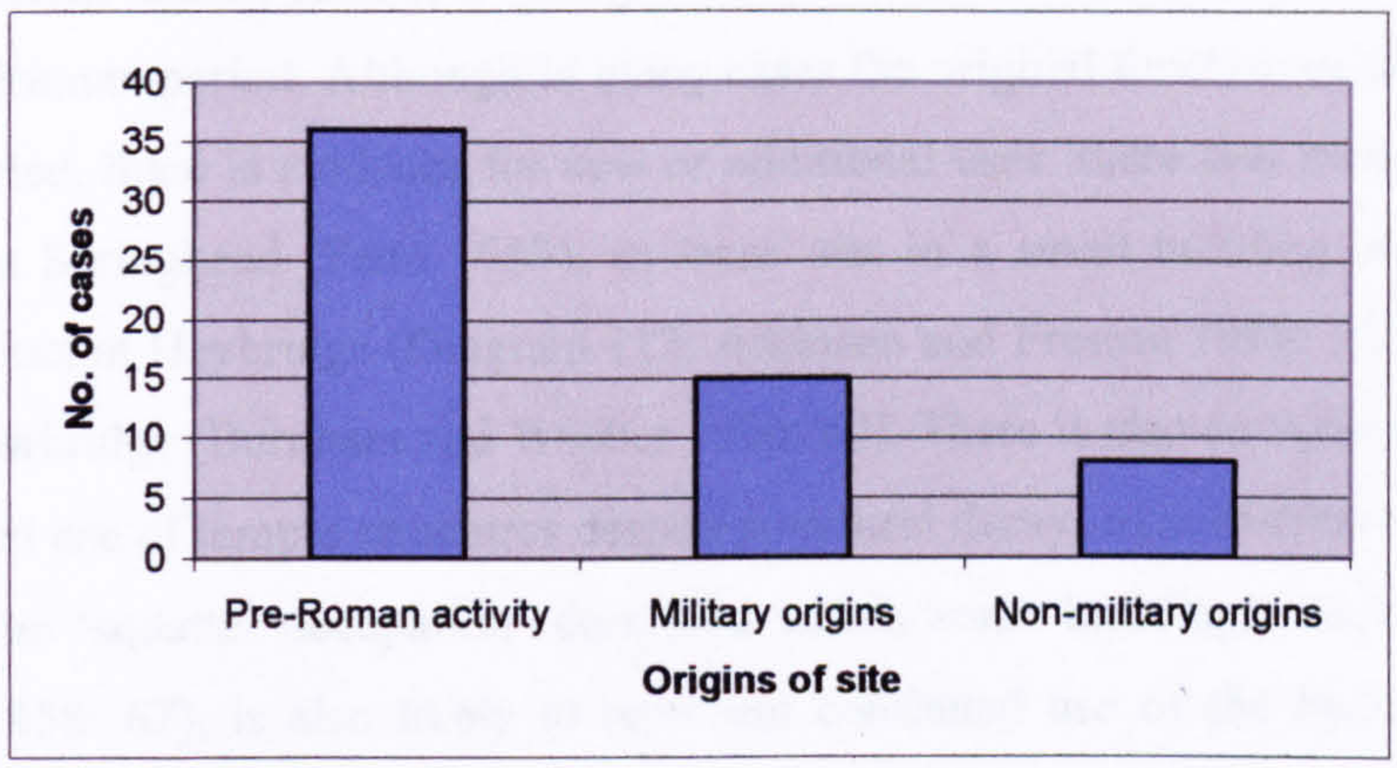

Figure 14.1: Graph showing the possible nature of the origins of each 'small town' studied.

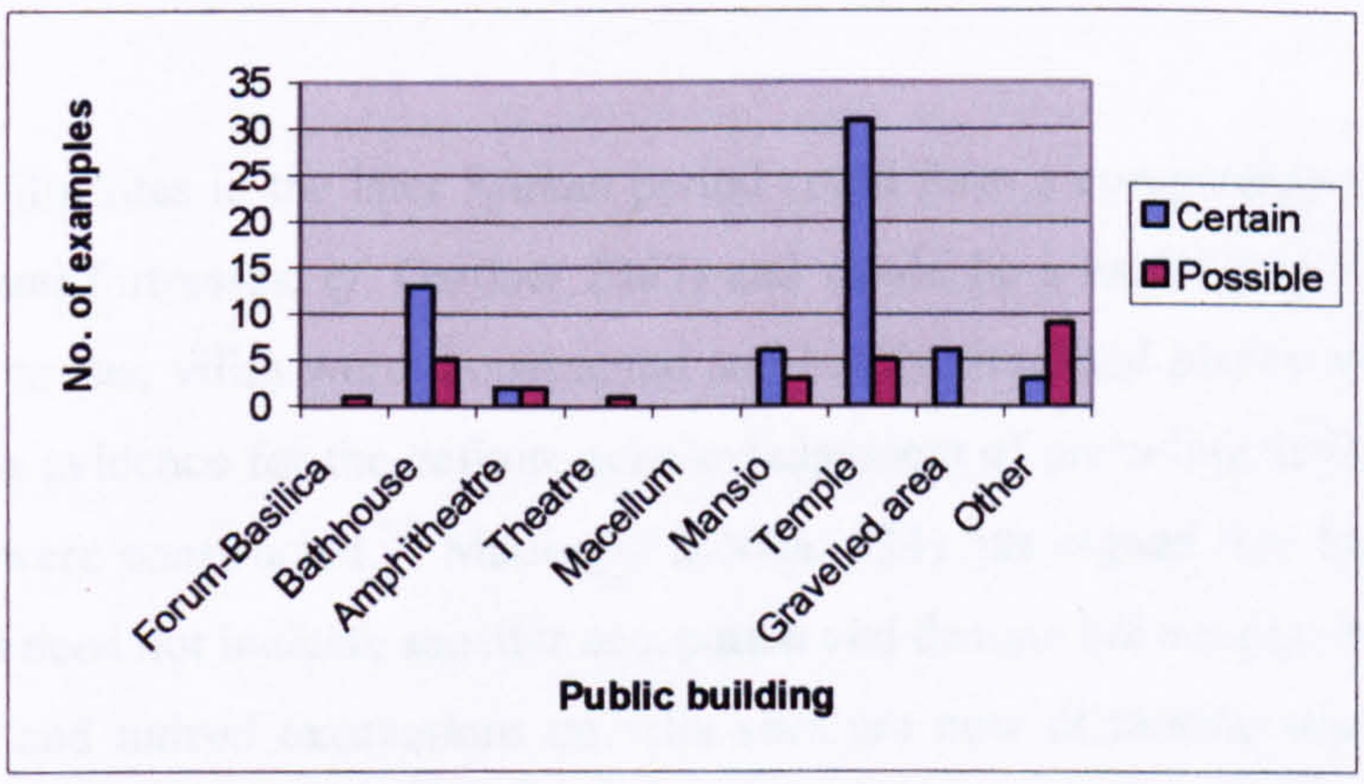

Figure 14.2: Graph showing the types of public buildings known within the 'small towns' examined in this study.

Many of the 'small towns' show evidence for pre-Roman activity, but others began after the conquest, being associated with forts or road networks (figure 14.1). Though 'small towns' mostly consisted of timber structures, figure 14.2 shows that at least thirty-two of the 'small towns' have evidence for at least one public building, the vast majority of these being temple structures. Bathhouses have been identified, such as at Godmanchester (Diagram 114; H.

Green 1975: 198) and Catterick (P. Wilson 2002: 83), but these may not necessarily have been public buildings, some instead being private ventures; others may have been attached to *mansiones*, a number of which are known within 'small towns'. Large gravelled areas within 'small towns' have already been discussed; these areas are comparable with those found in both the early phases of large towns beneath public buildings and in the latest phases of the centres of some large towns (see sections 4.5.2 and 12.3.3).

Out of the seventy-four public buildings within 'small towns' examined in this thesis, forty-two had no evidence of a late phase, either through a lack of excavation or later disturbance. As with the large towns, there is a variety of ways in which these public buildings were used in the later Roman period. Although in many cases the original function of the buildings may have continued, there is evidence for new or additional uses: there was metalworking within Temple 1 at Springhead (Penn 1959), as there was in a small building constructed in the temple precinct at Heybridge (Diagram 112; Atkinson and Preston 1998: 101-2) and within a temple at Corbridge (Burnham and Wacher 1990: 62). There is also considerable evidence for the continued use of temple structures despite structural decay, as at Nettleton (Wedlake 1982: 79-86).[306] The 'squatter occupation' described within some buildings, such as at Camerton (Wedlake 1958: 67), is also likely to represent continued use of the buildings rather than decay. 'Small towns' demonstrate the significance and value of places that did not possess an emphasis on monumental public buildings and classical layouts.

14.3.2 *Villas*

The use of villa sites in the later Roman period could form a comparable study to towns (as could forts and fortresses; *cf.* Gardner 2007) and would be a useful project to pursue in the future. Like towns, villas were monumental and highly ritualised places and in a number of cases there is evidence for the definite acknowledgement of preceding activity at the sites on which they were constructed.[307] Mattingly (2006a: 534) has argued that late Roman activity on villa sites need not indicate squatter occupation and decline but simply the latest alterations to the sites, and indeed excavations on villa sites are now disclosing traces of late Roman activity, including industrial activity. Recent excavations at Yarford villa near Winchester, for example, revealed changes to the decoration of some rooms during the late-fourth century in addition to débris from craft activities, consisting of a burnt layer with small pieces of shale and burnt antler, over the floor (King 2004); coins of the late-fourth century and pottery came from this layer. There were also post-holes from timber posts cut into the floor that may have

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[306] Here there appeared to be a rearrangement of pillars in the latest Roman phase and a wall constructed out of reused stone blocking off the western sector. Votive offerings also continued, and then there appears to have been a timber building constructed on the site (Wedlake 1982: 79-86).

[307] At Barcombe in Sussex, for example, the villa was constructed around a Bronze Age burial mound which seems to have remained a prominent feature of the site throughout the use of the villa (Gammon *et al.* 2006). This locality may have been meaningful in the Iron Age and the use of the site certainly remained important into the post-Roman period.

supported part of the villa roof in the late-fourth or early-fifth century when more substantial structural repairs were not possible due to a lack of materials and funds (*ibid.*).

Bell's (2005) work has explored the reuse of Roman villa sites in medieval Britain as locations for churches, suggesting that many of these sites remained important places that attracted attention. Work in Italy and Spain has examined the continuation and transformation of villas in the late Roman and medieval periods, with some becoming places for political and religious activity (*e.g.* Chavarría Arnau 2004; Sfameni 2004; the Villa dei Gordiani Project in Rome, A. Leone pers. comm.). Like public buildings within towns, the villa structures remained *foci* of activity within the landscape, often well into the medieval period. Activity within villas in Britain, and other parts of the Empire, in the later Roman period is a further topic that requires further study and would be a useful complementary study to this thesis.

14.4 Points for the future

The processes of research, data collection and analysis for this thesis raised a number of issues that would greatly assist studies of Roman urbanism and especially of towns in the later Roman period.

1. Excavation and recording methodologies have developed in ways beneficial to late Roman studies. The past emphasis of study was searching for images of the Roman 'Golden Age' through monumental buildings, villas and forts. Only relatively recently have post-imperialist approaches (Mattingly 1997b; Hingley 2005b), plus advances in excavation techniques, led to the recognition of the importance of other sites such as 'non-villa' settlements. In the same way, excavations of towns concentrated on the monumental earlier Roman periods and did not place emphasis on recognising or recording later phases of public buildings including timber structures, new floors and activities such as metalworking. Likewise, there have sometimes been difficulties in excavating the pre-Roman phases of sites due to the depth of the deposits, disturbance caused by later layers or the preference to preserve the Roman structural layers, as in the case of the Wroxeter baths-*basilica* (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 49).

Research agenda should focus on the need to record all stratigraphic layers on the sites in similar detail. Excavation projects that would have a huge potential in uncovering well-preserved late Roman material include within the area of the Roman town at York, Colchester and Canterbury. Broadening studies to other site types, including forts and villas, would also add considerably to our understanding of the later Roman period. More information is also needed on the late pre-Roman phases of sites with Canterbury, Silchester, Leicester, Gloucester and Caistor-by-Norwich perhaps especially having potential for the future.

2. When late phases of towns were encountered in early excavations it was often common to draw upon classical viewpoints and historical frameworks for interpretation. Whilst these

sources can be useful, the theoretical and historical constraints often led to interpretations of decline. In excavations today, this can still sometimes be problematic and careful analysis of the latest Roman layers is needed to interpret their content and determine if there are signs of activity. In some cases the available evidence probably represents what was once considerable activity, as on the Winchester Palace site in London (Yule 2005).

3. The issue of finds recovery, dating and processing is another important aspect that requires further attention. In order to retrieve the most information from the latest layers of the sites, a holistic approach is necessary, whereby the structural evidence is combined with the finds data in an attempt to discern what might have been taking place on the sites in the latest Roman period. The researching of these issues in this thesis has sometimes proved difficult because of the way in which the finds on many sites had been excavated, recorded, published and studied (*e.g.* Mould 2000). Problems encountered included the partial recovery of artefacts, especially pottery and the failure to record adequate contextual information for each find. The way in which the finds were stored also sometimes made restudy difficult (see section 2.2). Only through the careful recording of each find and its context, can studies exploring the continuing and changing use of buildings over time be attempted.

An aspect related to this is the dating of finds: pottery and stratigraphic layering can sometimes indicate later dates for activity within buildings than the dates suggested by coins. Debate concerning the date of the latest Roman pottery on sites, such as the late grey wares from the Lincoln *forum* excavations (J. Mann pers. comm.; see section 11.2.4), indicates the potential for work in the future. This possibility was not recognised at the time of excavation in Lincoln, which meant the contexts of the pottery were not carefully recorded and the pottery not fully studied. Careful recovery and recording of all finds from sites will allow comparisons of uses of buildings through quantification studies and is likely to increase the number of cases where late activity is recognised.

4. Another point is the use of theoretical approaches within the study of Roman urbanism. As M. Johnson (2006: 132) has put it, the rôle and importance of theory within archaeology is "beyond debate". Studies of Roman towns, however, have not traditionally embraced developments in theory from archaeology and other disciplines which can bring new angles to the subject. Roman urbanism, despite appearing familiar, with references in classical texts and comparisons to modern towns, was far from straightforward and is not adequately understood. The settlement pattern and nature of sites prior to the conquest also remains only partially known. Many aspects of the understanding of settlement, landscape, place and space in prehistory, geography, anthropology and other disciplines can usefully be applied to the Roman and late Roman period. Archaeological theory is often perceived as a separate body of knowledge, but in actual fact it cannot be separated from the theories of other disciplines. The

traditional divide between methodologies of the late Roman and early medieval periods is equally problematic to the divide between late Iron Age and Roman periods. Through acknowledging these debates, issues such as the nature of towns and the ways in which they were experienced in the later Roman period become considerably more interesting, requiring further detailed data analysis.

5. Historiographical analyses need more emphasis within archaeological studies since no study can take place outside, and fail to be influenced by, the context of previous scholarship. Ideas and approaches are inherited from earlier generations as with the theory of decline and fall addressed here. Examining the context of study allows the discipline to take additional directions, introducing new ways of interpreting the data.

14.5 Conclusion

Studies of urbanism in Roman Britain have largely concentrated on what is perceived to be the 'familiar'. Work on the later Roman period has been preoccupied with the length of the period of continuity and the date of the final end of Roman Britain; it has been dominated by documented events and the search for historically-attestable characteristics. These studies are important, but they have not always taken advantage of the huge potential of the data and the wide range of theories which bring different viewpoints together. This thesis has deliberately attempted to avoid the traditional classical élite viewpoint which has formed the basis of many studies and instead looks at the transformations to, and continuities of, the significance of place from the pre-Roman period onwards. Rather than viewing urbanism in terms of greatness and decline, the Roman towns, as they changed over time, were successive expressions of the enduring importance of the sites in their landscapes.

The continued use of these places, building upon and transforming their meaning, will have contributed towards their 'place-value', making activity at these sites in the later Roman period just as significant to those occurring in earlier periods and in need of analysis. The lack of maintenance of the public buildings need not indicate their decline, since there is considerable evidence for continued and additional uses of the spaces that they framed. Activities such as metalworking were brought into the buildings for the first time and they demonstrate aspects of the long-term continued functioning of the towns, possibly also drawing on the workings of sites in the late Iron Age. In the pre-Roman period, space was used in highly significant ways without there necessarily being an emphasis on monumental architecture; natural features were meaningful constituents of these sites. Roman towns would have been built upon and added to the meanings attached to these places as well as, in many ways, continuing the functions of these places.

This thesis has emphasised the complexity of urbanism in the Roman period. Examining the late pre-Roman activity at the town sites provided a way of analysing the significance of these places from a largely non-Roman viewpoint and interpreting the way in which Roman towns were influenced by what came before. Towns in the late Roman period were continuing to develop the significance and function of these places.

There is still considerable work to be done on the issue of Roman urbanism, especially on aspects of the 'Golden Age' period of towns. When approaching this, however, it is important to acknowledge that studies of urbanism and issues that frequently receive considerable attention, such as the economic 'development' and subsequent 'decline and fall' of towns, have been influenced by modern attitudes, assumptions and prejudices. As this thesis has shown, a detailed study of the archaeological record from a variety of theoretical stances can begin to provide new understanding of towns in both the earlier and later Roman periods, based on a set of different attitudes.

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