Chapter 8: The cemetery in the context of late Roman Winchester and beyond

The broad sequence of development of Roman Winchester was summarised in Chapter 1. This discussion attempts to relate the Lankhills cemetery more specifically to the late Roman town and to changing perceptions of late Roman urbanism in a wider sense (see below) in the hope that the relationship between town and cemetery may be clarified, and perhaps that understanding of both may be enhanced by considering them in a more integrated way. The cemetery was not just the resting place of a random collection of dead people. It was a significant part of the urban topography of Winchester, albeit only one of a number of such sites. More importantly, it presents us with a cross section of at least some of the communities of late Roman Winchester. Broader consideration of what these people were like and of how they were buried may provide some insights into the character of the town, while a summary of the latter may in turn help understanding of the burial population. Discussion of these aspects in other places has tended to concentrate on the issue of Christianity. While this is an important question it is not one that is capable of resolution on the basis of present evidence (see above), and other aspects receive more attention here.

The character of Roman Winchester in the 4th century

Developments in late-Roman Winchester have been succinctly summarised by Wacher (1995, 299) 'In the fourth century, Winchester seems to have been more densely occupied than before, although there are signs of decline beginning in the mid fourth century'. Inevitably both parts of this characterisation are problematic, the first because of the paucity of evidence, particularly for the early Roman period, which makes comparative assessment of the early and later towns very difficult (this is hardly Wacher's fault!). The second issue relates to the inevitably negative concept of decline. Decline can, of course, be measured in relation to the traditional markers of Romano-British urban character, particularly streets and stone buildings, but what does deterioration in the physical condition of these 'assets' represent? In particular, does it necessarily equate to decline in population, or in the level of economic or other activity? Both of these may indeed have been reduced, but this cannot be assumed to follow straightforwardly from, for example, the apparent evidence for disuse of a particular building. For these reasons the latest survey of the transition from late Roman to Anglo-Saxon Winchester by the Biddles offers a preferable summary (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2007, 189). In this view Winchester 'underwent a profound change shortly after the middle of the 4th century. Some, or parts of some, of its public buildings already had been or were now demolished, town houses of the greater sort were levelled, large areas inside the walls were apparently laid out to compounds, the water-supply re-organised…. Whatever the physical changes to the fabric of the city, they were not, apparently, accompanied by a decrease in population.' The present discussion will argue that 'profound change' is not just a euphemism for 'decline', and that it better represents what may have happened in Winchester in the 4th century and perhaps beyond. The question of 'how far beyond?' is of course one of the critical ones, and the metaphor of decline based specifically on the cemetery evidence has been retained by the same authors in the context of Lankhills, the thinning out of the graves at the eastern end of Clarke's excavation being described as 'one of the most vivid and poignant images of the end of Roman Britain' (ibid., 189). Equally, in summarising the later phases of the Victoria Road cemetery, closer to the northern walls of Winchester, evidence for decrease in grave depths was interpreted simply in terms of slipping standards (Kjolbye-Biddle 1992, 416, 418).

Winchester has tended to be seen as a fairly typical late Romano-British town. As already indicated there is really insufficient evidence to allow such a judgement to be made with confidence. In terms of the 'public' character of the town, however, Winchester may have been reasonably typical in the continuing development of its defences, here represented by the possible provision of towers attached to the ?3rd-century town wall. This is a feature of many (but not all) of the major towns, as well as of a more restricted number of minor towns (Wacher 1995, 78; Burnham and Wacher 1990, 316; Millett 1990, 152-3, table 6.4). The Winchester evidence is in fact relatively slender, and consists of a single tower located just east of the south gate, examined in 1971. Unfortunately this example shares a characteristic with towers from a

number of other Romano-British towns, in being poorly dated. It was assigned to the second half of the 4th century by the excavator (Biddle 1975a, 115-6), but on stratigraphic criteria alone, although it was thought possible that the tower was contemporary with a road surface which sealed coins of which the latest was dated 367-378 (ibid., 116). A similar problem besets the dating of the towers at Chichester, for example, where Magilton (2003, 165-6) rightly dismisses the traditional date of after AD 367 as based on 'dubious historical grounds', even if the archaeological evidence does suggest that towers at a number of other sites do appear to be broadly of this date. At Silchester (Fulford 1984, 66) and at Dorchester such towers are lacking altogether. Apart from Chichester the nearest major urban defensive circuits with towers are therefore Cirencester, where they are probably to be dated within the period AD 350-364 (Holbrook 1998, 93-4), and London, where a likely date range of AD 341-375 has been preferred (Maloney 1983, 108). Neither of these sites necessarily informs us about the date of the Winchester example.

Turning to 'small towns', at Mildenhall, where the wall and towers were contemporary (Corney 1997, 343) the evidence 'strongly points to a construction date after c. 360' (ibid., 344), while at Alcester (Warwicks) the late wall has a possible *terminus post quem* of AD 364-7 and a likely gap of seven years before the addition of a tower (Cracknell 1996, 39-40). Corney (1997, 349) suggests a link between the construction of the late walls at Mildenhall, Alcester and also Kenchester as part of a programme of provision of defences for key small towns within the province of Britannia Prima. Whether the enhancement of the defences of Winchester, probably (but not certainly) in the province of Maxima Caesariensis, was part of a comparable programme is unknown.

As for civic buildings within the walls, Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle (2007, 189 n 2) give a concise summary of masonry elements which must have derived from substantial (public) buildings and were reused in later Roman structures; by definition, therefore, the parent buildings were out of use (at least in their original form) well before the end of the Roman period. Of the major public buildings of Winchester, however, there is only direct evidence for the probable forum complex, and this is relatively limited (eg Biddle and Quirk 1962, 153-5). A structure interpreted as an addition to the south side of the forum is thought to have gone out of use at the end of the 3rd century, with no indication of further use of the site (Biddle 1969, 315; 1970, 312). A street immediately to the south continued to be resurfaced through the second half of the 4th century, however (Biddle 1970, 312). To the north, the early 2nd-century Romano-Celtic temple in Lower Brook Street was demolished at about the end of the 3rd century and a rectangular building of simple plan, interpreted as having initially been a workshop, but subsequently of partly domestic character, was then constructed just to the south and remained in use for much of the 4th century (Biddle 1975b, 300-301). Just west of here the 1987-8 excavations in The Brooks have shown fairly intensive activity in the area for much of the 4th century with the construction of new, substantial stone-founded buildings in Insula VIII and Insula XXIII, blocks respectively immediately north and then north again of the forum (Zant 1993, 85-127; for numbering of the insulae see ibid., 6, fig. 6, but note that the most recent mapping (eg Fig 1.4) of the town suggests an increased number of north-south streets in the western part of the town, reflecting the topography). Evidence of continued activity in these buildings after the middle of the 4th century, however, indicates changes in their character, and potential disuse and in some cases demolition before the end of the century (ibid., 131-147). Further substantial buildings are known in the south-east corner of the walled town at Wolvesey Palace, where domestic activity was maintained through much of the 4th century in a house partly examined in Insula XII and in parts of three or four buildings to the east in Insula XXVIII (Biddle 1975b, 322-324). In the north-west quadrant of the walled town recent excavation in Insula XXXIII has produced evidence for intensification of activity in the 4th century, when a number of new structures were built. These included a stone-founded building, perhaps a town house, with painted walls set back from the street frontages, and a timber building, apparently of aisled form, set at right angles to the line of the main north-south street (Biddulph forthcoming). The degree of disturbance from later features, however, makes it impossible to determine which if any of the structures were related to one another, or whether they all formed independent properties.

The extent of 4th-century extramural settlement, or at least non-funerary-related activity, is not very clear, but the impression that this was most intensive on the north side of the walled town, with less occupation to the east and the west, may be largely a function of the location of excavation (see eg Rees *et al*. 2008, 11, fig. 3). Collis (1978, 12-15), for example, records 'plentiful' late Roman pottery from a site 100 m south of the south gate). Successive concise overviews have been presented by Collis (1978, 6-8), Esmonde Cleary (1987, 150-156) and Rees *et al*. (2008, 10-13, 15-17); full publication is awaited (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). To the west there seems to have been no late Roman occupation of the western part of the Oram's Arbour enclosure (Qualmann *et al*. 2004, 95) and there is little other evidence for use of this area except for burials. A broadly similar situation is recorded east of the town, with traces of possible structures close to the east gate recorded in small interventions in St John's Street, but the bulk of evidence comes from the area relating to burials (Rees *et al*. 2008, 17; Browne *et al*. forthcoming). Fourth-century structures were present in the more extensively-excavated northern suburbs, particu-

larly at Hyde Abbey and Victoria Road in the V-shaped area between the roads to Cirencester and Silchester and also on the east side of the latter road. Even in this area, however, most of the identified structures were of timber and many are characterised as ephemeral (Rees *et al*. 2008, 13). What may be of most interest here is the dynamic interrelation of funerary and (presumably) domestic activity. Thus in the Victoria Road site from the mid-late 2nd century, buildings on the east side of the Cirencester road encroached on an area previously used for burial, and non-funerary activity then continued here through to the later 4th century (ibid.). The expansion of areas used for burial, however, tended to be both northwards (for example at Hyde Street, an expansion also represented by the Lankhills cemetery) and westwards (Victoria Road trenches I-VI, west of the Cirencester road), though this development does not seem to have been at the expense of other well-defined activities.

Ultimately both burial and 'occupation' at Victoria Road, respectively west and east of the road to Cirencester, probably continued into the 5th century (ibid.). As in other Roman towns, however, the date of the latest use of the structures identified within the walls is uncertain, although the finds certainly indicate some activity of very late-Roman date, a pattern seen widely across the town even in cases where the structural sequence does not obviously extend right to the end of the 4th century. At Wolvesey Palace, however, the principal Insula XXXIII building was partly overlain by a two-phase, two-roomed building with rammed chalk foundations which 'must belong to the latest Roman period and a post-Roman date cannot be excluded on the present evidence.' (Biddle 1975b, 325). The latest deposits on many of the other sites within the walled town, where they have survived truncation by later activity, often comprise 'dark earths'. These are typically associated with coinage of the House of Theodosius, which is relatively common in Winchester (eg Reece 1991, 20; Davies 2008, 134; Booth forthcoming). The subject of intense debate over the years, a consensus seems to be emerging that 'dark earth' deposits do indeed usually represent processes of human and biological reworking of exposed external deposits (eg Yule 2005, 80), though a single explanation will not necessarily serve for all such deposits. It is also becoming clear that 'dark earth' does not have to be chronologically restricted to the latest phases of Roman activity (ibid.). Analysis of dark earth deposits from Northgate House in the north-west corner of the town (Macphail and Crowther in Biddulph *et al*. forthcoming) showed that they were biologically worked, forming naturally through the growth and decay of vegetation and the action of worms and other creatures, and also contained ash, dung and domestic waste consistent with middening and the accumulation of occupation debris, rather than formation through manuring and cultivation (Biddulph forthcoming).

Uncertainty about the definition of late Roman urban character in Britain is compounded by geographical and quantitative variations in the available evidence, and by contradictory interpretations of that evidence arising from a wide range of interpretative frameworks within which the evidence can be placed (for a concise summary of the principal positions, see Faulkner 2002, 59-61). Leaving aside the question of what happened to towns at/after the very end of the 4th century, views of what was happening within towns during the 4th century may be characterised crudely as ranging from 'towns as administrative villages with low population levels' on the one hand to 'towns sort of as they were but not like in the good old days' on the other. The former view originated with a controversial paper by Richard Reece (1980) and has been developed since, particularly by Faulkner, who has produced quantified assessments of the value of construction work in Romano-British towns and of the number of rooms occupied in urban houses, both expressed in terms of quarter-century units of time (eg Faulkner 2000, 29-31). For the later 4th century there will always be issues related to the character of older excavations and, most particularly, the nature of dating evidence. The limitations of the latter will inevitably tend to support the view of 'decline' from the middle of the 4th century, and indeed radical decline in the last quarter of the century, presented by Faulkner. If the fall in the number of occupied houses/rooms in the later 4th century is genuine, then it is not unreasonable to interpret this in terms of a substantial reduction in the size of the urban population. Opposing views rest largely on a limited number of cases where the material component of the site sequence, upon which the chronology has to be based, has been carefully contextualised. Fulford, for example, has recently argued explicitly for the continuation of activity in Insula IX at Silchester into the 5th if not the 6th century (2006, 280-2). Even if all the detail does not convince, this interpretation is of interest for several reasons. It contrasts with the best known 'sub-Roman' urban sequence in Britain, that at Wroxeter (Barker *et al*. 1997), in broadly maintaining the character of the earlier 4th-century activity at Silchester, rather than representing a significant change in the nature of occupation. It is also of some relevance to Winchester given the relative proximity of the two sites, and it might suggest the potential of what could have existed at Winchester had the site sequences there not been disturbed by Saxon and (particularly) later features (cf eg Brooks 1986, 89; see also Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2007, 194), though it can perhaps be argued that the Silchester sequence is atypical, rather than the reverse.

The chronology of 'Anglo-Saxon' activity in Winchester, and its scale and character, are still unresolved problems, reviewed recently by Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle (2007, 195-198, 203-4). These may be relevant to questions about the 'end' of the Roman town, although many commentators on the

wider picture would see the collapse of Romano-British urbanism as predating any significant Anglo-Saxon settlement (eg Liebeschuetz 2001, 103), a view that clearly runs counter to that of Fulford, just discussed. If correct, however, there is unlikely to have been any causal relationship between the demise of urban characteristics and the arrival of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlers in the region, whatever the details of their chronology, although Ward-Perkins, for example, is more prepared than many recent writers to see the problems of 5th-century Britain as a consequence of (inter alia) barbarian pressure (Ward-Perkins 2005, 130). Reverting to Winchester, the evidence of the Lankhills isotopes indicates that the population of that cemetery, at least, derived from many different areas, but it does not support Clarke's claim (see above) for the presence of a specifically Germanic group there at the end of the 4th century (or later). Equally, the Lower Brook Street pottery which 'provides indisputable evidence for the presence of Germanic arrivals…by the middle of the 5th century' (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2007, 203) is only a small proportion of the known Anglo-Saxon ceramic material from Winchester, much of which cannot be dated more closely than 5th-7th century. Its significance in terms of the 'end' of the Roman town is therefore uncertain.

The question of the transformation of Winchester from the middle of the 4th century can be set in a wider context of late Roman urban change, British perspectives on which have already been mentioned. Evidence for change of use and indeed disuse of public buildings such as fora comes not only from sites in Britain but also from further afield. In North Africa, for example, many fora were probably out of use as public open spaces by the end of the 4th century (Potter 1995, 73), even though it was here that 'the Roman version of the classical ideal remained intact longest' (Liebeschuetz 2001, 74). In some of the Danubian provinces fundamental changes in urban character are evident from quite early in the 4th century (Poulter 1992), while in northern Gaul urban forms changed significantly with the construction of typically small defensive circuits through the 4th century (eg Johnson 1983b, 81-101) and the loss of function of many public buildings (Ferdière 2005, 347). Other aspects of urban transformation can be seen in terms of recent wide ranging debate about the nature of social change in late antiquity, providing a framework for interpretation of some of the fundamental changes observed in the physical record, both in relation to structures and to material culture (eg Lewit 2003; Bowes and Gutteridge 2005). This framework allows those changes to be seen as occurring within a network of surviving towns, albeit of significantly altered character. In the specific case of Britain, however, there are two particular difficulties. The first relates to the possibility of survival of an urban structure in the face of the evidence for the collapse of a meaningful political/military framework (except at a local level) and the consequent disappearance of related economic structures; the second relates to the potentially fundamental role of the church in supporting a largely reconfigured society (Bowes and Gutteridge 2005, 412-3).

On the first point there is widespread consensus that the situation in Britain was different from and more extreme than that seen elsewhere in the western provinces (Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 159-161; Ward Perkins 2005, 117-121; Wickham 2005, 306-308). On the second point there is much less clarity about the extent and character of survival of Christianity in south-eastern Britain, though it can be argued that the disappearance of towns in any meaningful sense meant the loss of an associated ecclesiastical structure. As Peter Brown has said in the context of 5th-century Gaul, 'Walls and bishops went together' (Brown 2003, 107). It is hard to see that the situation in Britain would have been very different, the issue being not the physical disappearance of walls but the absence of means for a political structure to support their maintenance and, if necessary, active defence. The corollary of this in the rather different circumstances prevailing in Britain is that the demise of an urban structure had significant consequences for the church. David Petts has argued that in Britain the focus of Christian activity was, unusually, in the countryside rather than in the major towns (eg Petts 2003, 170), while at the same time conceding that 'Even the most optimistic advocate of the success of Christianity in Roman Britain would not deny that the majority of the population remained pagan.' (ibid., 168). Petts concludes that the church developed 'a semi-rural rather than semi-urban infrastructure' (ibid., 171) which ensured its survival, at least in the west, in the post-Roman period. Peter Brown (2003, 128) argues, perhaps more persuasively, that the nature of post-Roman British Christianity by the 6th century was one in which 'the monks and bishops were critics of their society. They did not claim, as in Gaul, to be its leaders.' Brown retrojects this characteristic on late Roman Britain, with the inference that their influence was not substantial at that time.

In summary, the evidence from Britain, seen both in its own terms and alongside that from the continent, suggests that urban structures had ceased to exist 'by 450 at the latest' (Mattingly 2006, 349). Where longer occupation sequences can be postulated, as at Silchester and Wroxeter, they seem likely to represent either survivals of an exceptional nature, as perhaps in both these cases, or continued activity of non-urban character within the former urban shell. There is nothing at Winchester to contradict the more general view, which forms the background to subsequent discussion of Lankhills. However, Winchester has one potentially unique characteristic in the 4th century which would have had a bearing on its population at least at that time, and therefore merits consideration.

The *Gynaeceum?*

Winchester has been identified as the most probable location of the only *gynaeceum* listed by the Notitia Dignitatum for the Diocese of the Britains. This issue has been discussed in general terms by Wild (1967) and was reviewed again by him in 1976. Although Clarke referred to this association several times (eg 1979, 369, 389) the intention here is to consider its possible implications in more detail. It is emphasised that the Venta mentioned in the text of the Notitia Dignitatum cannot certainly be identified with Winchester; the case has been well-made by Wild (1967), although doubts have been raised, for example by Walton Rogers (2007a, 231-232) on the basis of a wider pattern of textile evidence itself. Nevertheless it is worth considering, if the association is accepted, what the implications might have been for the character of late Roman Winchester. Wild is realistic, if therefore unfortunately unspecific, about what we might expect *gynaecea* to have looked like. He views them (1976, 52) principally as weaving shops, this activity being undertaken probably by men (ibid.; but see Wild 2002, 29), although Birley (2005, 404) translates '*procurator gynaecii in Britanniis Ventensis*' as 'procurator of the women's (weaving factory)…', deriving this from the primary meaning of the word *gynaeceum* as 'women's quarters'. Jones (1964, 836) says that *gynaecea* were manned by state slaves, but that 'by the middle of the fourth century the workers in the state factories had become hereditary groups'. A combination of free and unfree workers is suggested by the Codex Theodosianus (Hurst 1995, 94). Either way it is clear that women, seen by Wild as carrying out supporting roles, were present in *gynaecea*, as also were prisoners (Wild 1976, 53). Whether family units were involved, with the potential for the presence of children as well, is unclear. Wild does not 'postulate[…] the existence of special premises for the *gynaecea*' but does argue for the use of weaving sheds and other rooms, perhaps in 'converted domestic buildings requisitioned by the state' (ibid.). Such use would be very difficult to identify from archaeological evidence. One example, however, has been claimed in Carthage on the basis of a combination of structural and artefactual evidence supported by the documentary record indicating the presence of such an establishment in the city (Hurst 1995, 64-70, 92-98), although the site is thought to have been associated with textile production from a period well before the possible date of establishment of the *gynaeceum* (eg ibid., 96-7). It is clear from Hurst's discussion that this combination of factors is in effect fortuitous and that no one or even two strands of evidence would necessarily have sufficed to support the interpretation. It is uncertain if the excavated buildings at Carthage, on the north side of the circular harbour, were considered to represent the totality of the *gynaeceum* installation or only a part of it. Their general character, however, was consistent with that of other structures in Carthage and emphasises, even if the identification of the *gynaeceum* is accepted, that there was no set structural type to be associated with such an installation.

The Carthage evidence, therefore, does not provide a clear model for the arrangements at Winchester (although it suggests the juxtaposition of dye-making, dyeing, spinning, weaving and fulling activities (ibid., 94-7)). One possibility which might be considered is reuse of part of the forum-basilica complex. It is unfortunate that this building is hardly known at Winchester (see above), but recent work has provided clear evidence for the later Roman use of the basilica at Silchester, in particular, for metalworking (Fulford and Timby 2000, 72-7, 578-80). The evidence for such late Roman reuse in other Romano-British forum-basilica complexes, and in other types of public buildings, has been discussed by Rogers, who emphasises the potential significance of such developments as representing symbolic acts of regeneration (2005, 32-34). This interpretation, while interesting, is not seen as of primary importance here. There seems, however, little doubt that the reorientation of a fundamental part of the civic infrastructure of some Roman towns must have been officially sanctioned in some way – and it is therefore likely, though not demonstrable, that the products were intended for official consumption. Fulford and Timby (2000, 579-80) raise the possibility that the ironworking in the Silchester basilica was related to arms production. It is not inconceivable that textile manufacture for state purposes could have been accommodated in a similar fashion. Equally, however, we may speculate whether weaving activities would necessarily have been concentrated in a single building or complex, or whether they might have been more widely dispersed within the town. Unsurprisingly, direct archaeological evidence for weaving in late Roman Winchester is sparse, although it does include a small group of bone weaving tablets from a building recently excavated in the north-west corner of the town (Biddulph forthcoming; see also above). It is clear, however, that the occurrence of spindle whorls within a number of graves at Lankhills (cf Clarke 1979, 369) is part of a wider phenomenon (see Cool above) and is unlikely to be relevant to the issue of the *gynaeceum*.

Additional questions inevitably follow, although they cannot be easily answered at present. The most important relates to the number of people who might have been employed in a *gynaeceum* – presumably the inclusion of such establishments in the Notitia Dignitatum implies a certain minimum size. Based on eastern evidence Jones argues that 'These factories were like the *fabricae* quite considerable establishments' (Jones 1964, 836). In the context of fabrica sizes James (1988, 276) refers to 'greater numbers, perhaps four hundred to five hundred men' as 'highly speculative'. The length of time over which the *gynaeceum* was maintained is also uncertain, although if it was established as early as the

reign of Diocletian (cf. Jones 1964, 834, 836; James 1988, 265-6 for the Diocletianic date of many fabricae) it could have been in existence for much of the 4th century. A further question relates to the origin of the workers, in turn connected to the issue of their status, already mentioned. Were they drawn from the citizenry of Winchester itself, or were they all, as slaves, at least initially drafted in from elsewhere en masse? These issues could have significant implications for the population of Winchester. In combination they require us to consider the extent to which the likely presence of the *gynaeceum* establishment determined the character of the late Roman town, both in physical terms and in relation to its population. The former issue cannot be resolved on present evidence. In terms of the number of late Roman inhabitants of the town all estimates are guesses. Application of recent formulae for Romano-British urban population density (eg Millett 1990, 183; Swain and Williams 2008, 39; cf. Liebeschuetz 2001, 84-5 for continental estimates; Bowman and Wilson 2009, 55-60 for a recent review) might suggest a peak population for Winchester in a range from 8500-10,000 (based on the area contained within the walls, but omitting the extramural population to compensate for those intramural areas which appear to have had very low levels of occupation), although this figure seems rather high. The extent to which the 4th-century population may have declined from a postulated late 2nd-century peak is uncertain (interestingly Swain and Williams (2008) do not attempt a comparable calculation for London). In any case, with a population by this period probably in the low thousands, at best (eg Esmonde Cleary 1989, 80), a group of a couple of hundred people, whatever their status, would have been a significant element in that population.

Did these people form a coherent group in terms of identity, the location of their working and living quarters and, more importantly in the context of Lankhills, their place of burial? None of these questions can be answered with any degree of certainty. What is clear on the basis of the isotope evidence, however, supported to an extent by aspects of the artefactual record, is that the people buried at Lankhills were very diverse in terms of origin. With isotope studies still relatively in their infancy it is unfortunately too early to say how representative such diversity may prove to be for urban populations in late Roman Britain, although there are indications that the Lankhills situation may not be completely atypical. A sample population from Gloucester (of more wide-ranging date within the Roman period) also included a significant proportion of non-local individuals (Chenery 2008, 153), and the same has been demonstrated at York, always a place likely to produce evidence for a population of varied origins (Leach *et al*. 2009). Even in the rural cemetery at Wasperton, Warwickshire, however, three individuals out of a late Roman sample of 15 people had oxygen isotope ratios 'which appear to be inconsistent with known modern isotope values for England and north-west Europe' (Montgomery *et al*. 2009, 48). This suggests a surprisingly mixed population, but the question of how representative such figures might be remains to be clarified by future work on other populations.

At Lankhills, nevertheless, the provisional impression is that the number of people of non-local origin is rather higher than might have been expected. Whether this variety reflects the circumstances of a specific group such as the workforce associated with the *gynaeceum* can be no more than speculation, though it might be supported by the quite exceptional evidence, in the form of crossbow brooches, for the presence of official/military personnel at a level which has no parallel in other urban cemeteries in lowland Britain, and indeed Clarke suggested an association in terms of official personnel drafted in to secure the oversight of the *gynaeceum* in the aftermath of the rebellion of Magnentius (Clarke 1979, 389). That such people were buried in relatively close proximity at Lankhills may just be fortuitous, but there is perhaps enough evidence from other late Roman cemeteries in Winchester to suggest that the association was not accidental. There is evidence for a degree of community segregation in some late Roman cemeteries in Britain, the differently aligned and furnished groups at Poundbury being one example and the contrast between the apparently contemporary 'managed' and 'backlot' cemetery groups at Ashton and Ilchester being another, although the significance of these distinctions remains controversial. At Lankhills the possible suggestion of group segregation raised by the Sr and O isotope evidence is potentially important in this regard but the distinctions are quite subtle and would never have been postulated without the isotope data. In general terms it is likely that such cemeteries were used by diverse communities 'but with similar practices surrounding death' (Williams 1999, 101). The ways in which burials of these groups were distinguished or segregated, if this was done at all, could easily have left no archaeological trace whatsoever.

While individual burial plots may have been the specific property of family groups or burial clubs, in Britain it is therefore difficult to identify evidence for the exclusive use of particular cemeteries by distinct communities, whatever the basis of their particular identity. The nearest we may come to recognising such a situation is probably at sites such as Brougham, which is suggested to have been the cemetery associated with a particular military unit, perhaps originating in the Danube region (Cool 2004, 464-6). Those burials, presumably comprising those of soldiers as well as their wives and children, may also have included other members of the wider military community of 3rd-century Brougham, and over the space of a century or so this community will have evolved and most likely incorporated

individuals from a variety of places of origin. In this respect it may parallel the situation at Lankhills, although at Lankhills we cannot know if the origins of the group of people burying its dead were as tightly defined (albeit not ethnically linked) as may have been the case at Brougham, but such a scenario is possible and might possibly account for the *de novo* appearance of the cemetery at about the beginning of the 4th century. If this was the case, however, the isotope evidence already mentioned would suggest that there were distinct smaller social units within the ostensibly homogenous larger group, as would indeed be expected (see eg Haynes 1999, 10 in the context of the Roman army).

The burial context

Regional burial tradition

The dominant generalised burial tradition in the Winchester region at the beginning of the Roman period was cremation, although inhumation burials are known (see below), but the cremation tradition included a variety of different practices, among which a group of high status burials, characterised inter alia by the presence of multiple pottery vessels, has been identified and discussed by Martin Millett (1986; 1987). This was seen by Millett as a rural tradition, although he included within it the well-known Grange Road burials (Biddle 1967) and examples from Milland and Highcliffe (Collis 1978, 93-105), both very close to Winchester. The relationship of these burials to the town can be debated, and in the case of Grange Road, albeit some 2 km south of the town, it is likely that proximity to the Roman road, arguably an urban burial characteristic, was important.

Relatively little is known of the development of cremation practice in the properly urban cemeteries of the region. At present the St Pancras cemetery at Chichester (Down and Rule 1971, 53-126) remains the best known such cemetery, with evidence for a variety of practices within the period from approximately AD 70 into the early 3rd century. For Winchester much the best evidence comes from Victoria Road East (Hyde Street), with some 104 cremation burials, similarly dated to those from Chichester, and with the advantage of more detailed consideration of the human remains (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). Just over half of these burials were urned, and one burial was placed in an amphora and three in wooden boxes. Just under half of all the burials were intentionally furnished (pyre goods were relatively rare), the grave goods comprising principally pottery vessels (rarely more than two, but with occasional exceptional assemblages), followed by jewellery including beads, brooches, bracelets, pins and rings. Less common items were mirrors, of which there were four including two from a grave which also contained two glass unguent jars and a small bronze wheel. Pig skulls occurred in two graves, but otherwise there were few animal remains (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). A more unusual characteristic of this cemetery was the contemporary occurrence of inhumation burials, particularly of large numbers of neonates and infants (see further below). A later phase of burial saw low-level use of the site for both cremation and inhumation burials in the 3rd century, whereas at St Pancras only occasional inhumation burials were dated later than the early 3rd century and there was no clear evidence for any significant late Roman use of that site. Conversely, once Victoria Road East finally ceased to be used for burial the area was taken over for later activity of a different character. Meanwhile, in Chichester late Roman inhumation cemeteries may have been established on new sites, such as that outside the west gate (Magilton 1993).

Away from the urban context, aspects of burial practice in Hampshire have been reviewed by John Pearce (1999). This review shows a fairly standard pattern of changes in practice, with inhumation burial becoming the dominant tradition 'in the late third or early fourth centuries' (ibid., 152). By contrast, in neighbouring Wiltshire, the dominant pre-conquest tradition of inhumation burial continued, with modifications, throughout the Roman period, although cremation burials also occurred throughout the period (Foster 2001, 165, 171; see further below). In late Roman inhumations in Hampshire the provision of nailed footwear and pottery vessels is seen as characteristic, and Pearce makes the interesting observation that "the proportion of furnished burials and the furnishing of the 'average' burial was equal to or higher than that from Winchester's cemeteries… although the proportion of furnished burials in the rural sample is exaggerated by the dependency on grave goods for dating." (Pearce 1999, 153). Clearly the latter point may tend to cancel out the possible significance of the former, but what does seem to emerge is that a reasonable level of grave furnishing was not unusual in late Roman inhumations in rural contexts in this region. Directly comparable data are scarce, but for the upper Thames Valley, for example, the evidence suggests a relatively low level of provision of grave goods; a general scarcity of pottery vessels, in particular, does seem to be a reliably documented characteristic here (Booth 2001, 26-7).

Pearce's review suggests a broad degree of uniformity of late Roman inhumation practice in both rural and urban contexts in the Winchester region (there are obvious areas in which contemporary rural and urban practice may differ, such as the significance of burial location in relation to settlement boundaries and grouping by sex (eg Pearce 1999, 158)). It is not so certain, however, if this extends to the less common cremation tradition, but occasional late Roman cremation burials are known at Owslebury (Collis 1977, 34) (St James' Lane, Winchester, with a coin of Magnentius (Alcock 1980, 76) may best be considered urban). A more substantial 4th-century cemetery at Winterbourne Down,

Wilts, roughly 30 km west of Winchester, contained 14 inhumations and 36 cremation burials (Anon 1961-3, 470; Philpott 1991, 50). Details of this site are scarce, but it has been noted that the majority of the cremations were associated with beakers or jars, many of them burnt (Foster 2001, 173). This site appears exceptional, however, and while occasional cremation burials do occur in other late Roman cemeteries in that area the majority of such sites, as for example at Boscombe Down, Amesbury, are dominated by inhumation burials (Wessex Archaeology 2008).

Inhumation burial in Winchester

In the same way that late Roman cremation burials are observed both in the surrounding countryside and within the cemeteries of Winchester it is clear, particularly from the evidence of Victoria Road East, that inhumation burials could form a component of the early Roman cemeteries of the town. The Victoria Road examples, some 16 in all leaving aside the neonate and infant burials, dating to the later 1st-early 2nd century, were generally unremarkable, but they did include three prone burials, two of them of females, the third (unsexed) with an infant burial over the torso. The association of prone adult burials and some 76 neonates/infants might suggest that this area was favoured for burials of the socially marginal, but the evidence of the contemporary cremation burials contradicts this, nor is there any clear indication of spatial or chronological separation of the different types of burial during the 1st- to 2nd-century use of the site.

Inhumation burials elsewhere in Winchester are either demonstrably of late Roman date or are presumed to be so, the identification being helped by the fact that few if any of the known cemetery sites seem to have been used throughout the Roman period. As with Lankhills, the other late Roman cemeteries seem to have been established *de novo*, usually on previously unoccupied sites. Even at Victoria Road West, for example, the late Roman burials were not only mostly later in date than a sequence of structures set against the Cirencester road, but they lay west of a ditch which seems to have defined the western side of a roadside zone within which the structures lay. The ditch effectively segregated the two areas, with very little evidence of pre-cemetery use of the space west of it. The only burials located east of this ditch all lay close to it and were of three neonates/infants. These may have been put in place while the adjacent buildings were still in use, but this juxtaposition is characteristic of infant burials and does not invalidate the point that the main body of the cemetery was clearly segregated from the area of domestic activity, whether or not that still continued as the development of the cemetery got underway. Similarly, at Andover Road the only possible pre-cemetery feature was a north-south ditch of late Roman date which may in any case have been dug as part of the process of defining an area to be used for burial, rather than as a separate activity. At Chester Road the site seems to have been used as a quarry prior to the establishment of the eastern cemetery there. The circumstances of use of the Oram's Arbour ditch in the western part of the town are different, but appear to indicate nothing more than reuse, albeit locally intensive, of a convenient feature; there is no suggestion that ongoing burial was closely accompanied, either chronologically or spatially, by activity of other kinds.

In view of the lack of correlation with occupation sequences, therefore, the precise chronology of the early phases of the late inhumation cemeteries is not always well-defined, and estimates of the date of their inception range from *c* AD 270 to the early 4th century. In any case, there is no reason to suppose that these cemeteries were all established at the same time. Coin-dated graves from any phases of use of these cemeteries tend to be scarce. Unusually, a helpful date for one of the earlier phases of burial at Chester Road, in the eastern cemetery, is provided by one of the two cremation graves from this cemetery. This contained five coins, the latest of which were two fresh issues of Probus, dated AD 276-282 (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). If the phasing of this site is secure, inhumation burial here could have started as early as the mid 3rd century. At Colchester, for example, the changeover in rite from cremation to inhumation is dated either *c* AD 250-275 or over a longer period up to this time (Crummy 1993, 264), but in contrast to Winchester, late (ie 4th century) cremation burials appear to be completely absent.

At Chester Road the majority of the burials assigned to the earliest phases were aligned north-south (and south-north), but while a generally west-east alignment prevailed thereafter, it did not dominate completely until the final phase of use of the cemetery, conservatively dated to after AD 350 (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). Elsewhere, broadly west-east alignments predominated, although it is clear that, as at Lankhills, aspects of local topography and boundary layout were significant factors in determining layout. So, for example, the majority of the earliest graves at Victoria Road West were aligned between NW-SE and NNW-SSE, roughly parallel to a ditch which in turn reflected the line of the Cirencester road a little to the east. This phase of burial is dated approximately AD 270-320, and there is then thought to have been a break in the sequence of burial before it resumed on a perpendicular axis (generally *c* WSW-ENE) towards the middle of the 4th century. A final phase saw both the perpetuation of this alignment and some departures from it, including occasional north-south burials.

Further south, at Andover Road (the Eagle Hotel) a more consistent west-east alignment was observed, with the notable exception of a single south-north aligned burial in a lead-lined coffin. Both alignments may have been conditioned by the north-south ditch located at the western margin of

the site, but insufficient of this was examined for it to be possible to tell how close the correspondence of alignments really was. At Hyde Street, also within the northern cemetery, the general west-east alignment was again in evidence, but was not followed consistently, and a fairly distinct group of burials on a WSW-ENE alignment was amongst the variation recognised. At this site there was no indication of the presence of boundary features which might have influenced some of the alignments, although the existence of these in the vicinity may be suspected.

At Chester Road an east-west aligned boundary may have had some bearing on the alignment of burials in the later phases of use of the site, and perhaps earlier, but in the final phase this boundary was suppressed and a north-south trackway was established (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). The latest burials in this part of the eastern cemetery, still aligned broadly west-east, seem to have been laid out with regard to this feature.

In most of the late Roman cemeteries there is little or no evidence for the presence of significant non-grave features, other than the ditches which might have determined some alignments, although in some cases this may simply reflect the relatively limited nature of excavation. The main exception, apart from the small ditched enclosures at Lankhills, seems to be at St Martin's Close, Winnall, where a walled structure surrounding two graves, one of which was *c* 2.8 m deep and contained a lead-lined coffin, was either a small enclosure or a mausoleum (Browne *et al*. forthcoming; Morris 1986). Within the backfill of the grave were two cists built of tiles and stone roofing material; the smaller of these, *c* 1 m above the base of the grave, may have surrounded a wooden box, while the larger one contained a block of mortared tiles with painted plaster on two sides, apparently redeposited, possibly from the original burial monument (Morris 1986, 345). Some other pieces of painted plaster from the grave may have been deliberately selected for redeposition (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). The only approximately comparable structure recorded in modern excavation is a probable mausoleum, 3.8 x 3.4 m, at Victoria Road East, but this structure was probably associated with an un-urned cremation burial. It was not closely dated but is most likely to have been built in the later 2nd century. It is possible that Winnall was a focus for higher status burial in the late Roman period, as four lead-lined coffins are known from there (including the example from the structure discussed above). Only one such burial has been recorded in the other cemetery areas, this being the single south-north burial at Andover Road.

Apart from the question of general alignment already mentioned the cemeteries show variation in the details of their layout, although again in many cases the excavated areas are insufficiently large for patterns in the evidence, if present at all, to emerge clearly. Interpretation of groups of burials as being laid out in rows or lines can be quite subjective. To the present writers, evidence of layout in rows is seen fairly clearly in the second main phase of burial at Victoria Road East, and at Andover Road. Hints of localised arrangements of rows elsewhere, at Hyde Street, 45 Romsey Road and in the later phases at Chester Road, are identified more tentatively. There are no convincing examples of burials in lines except in limited parts of the Lankhills cemetery (see above), although the NNW-SSE first phase burials at Victoria Road West and the early (?later 3rd-century) north-south burials at Chester Road tend more that way. Other groupings of graves, for example as related clusters, may be even less easily identified, but some do occur. The predominantly west-east burials of the second (mid 4th-century) phase at Victoria Road East clearly fall into an eastern and a western group with a north-south strip *c* 5 m wide between them. The underlying reason for this separation is not known, but there are differences in the composition of the two burial groups, though both are arranged essentially in rows. The 21 burials in the eastern group consisted entirely of adults, while the western group, probably containing as many as 38 graves, included 19 of children and infants (Browne *et al*. forthcoming). Burials of the latter were concentrated towards the south-western corner of the excavated area, but their arrangement was broadly compatible with the scheme of three rows of burials within this group more clearly defined just to the north. A further distinct group of eight or nine burials was identified at Andover Road, concentrated in the south-east part of the site. These were defined not only by their relative proximity but particularly by the fact that the grave pits were deep (over 1 m) and well-cut, and were marked out in these respects from most of the other graves in this site (ibid.).

The cemeteries exhibit quite variable evidence for intercutting of graves. At some, such as Hyde Street and 45 Romsey Road, there was either no intercutting or the relationships were marginal and would not have involved disturbance of earlier graves. At Andover Road there was evidence for two forms of intercutting. Several west-east graves cut the backfill of the single early south-north grave, but it is not clear if this was a consequence of the passage of time and therefore a lack of knowledge of the earlier grave, or resulted from a wish to be associated with it. It is possible, however, that later burials were deliberately sited in relation to the grave, particularly in view of its potentially above-average status. A similar desire to be closely associated with a high status burial group, which is of course suggested for some of the Lankhills burials (eg feature F. 6 in the earlier excavation, Clarke 1979, 97-99), may account for the only certain instance of intercutting at St Martin's Close, Winnall, where a grave intersected with the ?mausoleum wall and one of the burials within it, but unfortunately the presence of other features made it impossible to establish the relative

sequence here. Returning to Andover Road, most of the other examples of intercutting there involved the direct placement of burials within earlier ones. There appear to be four examples of this, and the relative lack of evidence for other apparently more 'accidental' relationships between grave cuts suggests that in these instances the relationship was deliberate, for whatever reason.

Elsewhere the evidence for intercutting is more complex. At Victoria Road West, burial in the third main cemetery phase was confined to the area occupied by the eastern group in the second phase (see above), with minimal incursion into the north-south zone which had separated the two burial areas in that phase. The layout of graves in this last phase was more haphazard than previously, though not entirely so. There were several instances in which phase 2 graves were cut by later ones both on the same alignment and at an angle to the earlier features. There were, however, at least six cases in which earlier graves were directly recut by later ones, in a manner very similar to that seen at Andover Road and at Lankhills. The correspondences are so exact as to make it very unlikely that these associations were fortuitous. In at least these cases, therefore, it is likely either that the earlier graves were clearly marked, thus allowing precise re-identification, or that the lapse of time between the primary and the secondary burials was relatively short, thus allowing the appropriate spot to be identified from living memory, or possibly both. In contrast, at Chester Road many of the instances of intercutting concerned graves on significantly different alignments (roughly west-east and north-south). Overall there seems to have been more accidental recutting of graves in this site than in most of the others for which we have evidence in Winchester (Browne *et al*. forthcoming).

The location of the cemetery

As is well known, Lankhills lies at the northern extremity of the northern cemetery of Winchester. The recent work has emphasised this through the location of an east-west boundary ditch, north of which there were no burials. It has tended to be assumed that the location of the cemetery was a consequence of the logical progression of burial grounds northwards with the passage of time as plots closer to the town walls became full (eg Clarke 1979, 11). While this may have been the case, other interpretations are possible. One of the underlying assumptions relating to the standard view is that burial north of the town was confined to the area between the Silchester and Cirencester roads and did not extend west of the latter until late in the 4th century, perhaps 'the result of overcrowding' (ibid.). It now seems clear that use of this area for burial was underway at least in the earlier 4th century, both at Andover Road and Victoria Road West, and that this development was consistent and broadly contemporary with the establishment of other late inhumation cemeteries around Winchester. It is not certain if these two sites represented distinct burial areas or formed part of the same cemetery (but the latter is likely as the sites were barely 20 m apart). In either case there were areas north and west of the excavated graves at Victoria Road West which were not utilised for burial. There may have been constraints on the use of these areas, but it is not obvious what these were; the issue of land ownership, archaeologically undetectable, might have been one, but does not seem likely in view of the absence of clear evidence for delimiting boundaries in Victoria Road West. Topographical factors might have been more significant here, the valley of the Fulflood just to the north possibly limiting the extent of burials in this direction, but this would not have precluded use of the whole of the Victoria Road West area.

On this basis the location of the Lankhills cemetery 500 m north of the north gate may indicate a deliberate choice of site rather than reflecting the dictates of necessity. One problem with understanding the logic of the choice, however, relates to the lack of evidence for the southern limit of the cemetery. It was clearly defined by boundaries to the north and to the east, even if the latter was eventually superseded, so it seems reasonable to assume that there may have been a southern boundary as well, the western edge presumably being defined by the road to Cirencester or related features. Unfortunately the location of the putative southern boundary is quite unknown. Were the graves noted to the south at the Cattle Market site part of this particular burial ground, or did they lie within another plot? The issue of the extent of municipal involvement in the establishment of late Roman 'managed' cemeteries (Philpott 1991, 227 and see also Chapter 7 above) is relevant to this question. If such involvement is seen as being intensive, then decisions about the location of cemeteries and the nature of their demarcation may have been out of the hands of the communities burying their dead within those cemeteries. On the other hand, if those communities were able to make their own decisions about these matters (within the existing legal framework) they might have been able to select sites for particular characteristics which suited their purposes. The logic behind the selection of Lankhills cannot be reconstructed, but relevant factors might have included a wish to be segregated (or at least seen as distinct) from the occupants of other nearby cemeteries. Alternatively, a prominent location elevated above the town may have been considered desirable, whether for reasons of display or other unknown factors. At Brougham it was suggested that such a location was deliberately selected by the community burying its dead there (Cool 2004, 25), perhaps to be seen as both a clearly identifiable landmark and a well-defined terminal point for funeral processions. It has to be admitted that, given the topographical setting of Winchester, many cemetery locations would perforce have

overlooked the town. The possibility that Lankhills lay in a skyline location as viewed from the north gate of the Roman town (suggested by the contours, but not tested by detailed analysis), however, might suggest deliberate selection of the site with this intervisibility in mind.

Seen against the other late Roman cemetery evidence from Winchester, Lankhills appears reasonably comparable in terms of general characteristics of layout and physical features, although the small sample size of some of the Winchester sites makes it difficult to be certain how carefully laid out they really were. Overall, however, there does seem to have been an emphasis on a reasonable degree of organisation, albeit constrained in part by topographical factors, the Oram's Arbour burials being the most extreme example of this. The principles which determined the details of individual cemetery plans are not always clear and indeed may have varied subtly from site to site, both within Winchester and beyond. These broad characteristics are therefore shared with major urban cemeteries such as Poundbury, Butt Road (Colchester) and East London, all of which can be considered broadly to belong to the category of 'managed' cemeteries (Thomas 1981; 232; Philpott 1991, 226-8). It is less certain how far the Bath Gate cemetery, Cirencester, can be seen as of this type. In this instance, however, one might question whether the apparent lack of coherence of areas of the cemetery plan results in part from the fact that the published plans show skeletons rather than graves, a consequence of the difficulty of recognising grave cuts at this site (Viner and Leech 1982, 70).

Material aspects

The major late Romano-British urban cemeteries do therefore share many general characteristics of layout, although they are far from completely homogeneous in character. There are, however, more readily discernible differences in the provision of coffins, grave goods and other equipment, such as footwear, and the extent of such provision may also be relevant to whether or not sites are included within the 'managed' cemetery category, although hitherto the term has been used here in relation to cemetery layout, rather than adopting a strict definition which encompasses an absence of finds. Selected aspects of late Roman cemetery finds associations are tabulated below (Tables 8.1 and 8.2) for the purposes of general comparison.

Many of the differences between Lankhills and other Winchester cemeteries have already been referred to above. In emphasising the distinctive character of Lankhills with regard to artefacts coins have been chosen here as a potentially informative aspect of the cemetery assemblage (Table 8.1). It is unfortunate that none of the other Winchester cemetery samples is of closely comparable size to Lankhills, and it is therefore possible that some of the figures for incidence of coinage (and other material categories) from these sites are skewed as a result, but overall it can be seen that the other

Table 8.1: Numbers of later Roman inhumation graves in Winchester cemeteries with deliberately deposited coins, by latest issue period (irregular coins assigned to period of regular issue)

		Northern cemetery			*Western cemetery*		*Eastern cemetery*	
Latest issue date	*Lankhills (Clarke and OA)*	*Hyde Street*	*Victoria Road W*	*Andover Road*	*Orams Arbour (New Road, Carfax, 22-34 Romsey Road)*	*45 Romsey Road*	*Chester Road*	*St Martin's Close*
pre 324	6			1 (316-7)			1 (270-84)	
324-330	3							
330-341	13		1					
341-350	1							
350-364	9							
364-378	17		1	1				
378-388	1			1				
388-402	12	1					1	
4C	5							
TOTAL	67	1	2	3	-	-	2	-
Total excavated graves	751	26 (54)	120	38 (49)	79	24	109	34 (52)
% graves with coins	8.8	3.8	1.7	7.9	-	-	1.8	-

Note: numbers exclude non-grave features and graves only dated by coins ?incidentally included in backfill.
Grave totals in brackets include graves observed but not fully excavated

northern cemetery sites have fewer graves with coins than Lankhills (Andover Road has a closely similar percentage from a small sample) but overall are still closer to Lankhills in coin representation than are the known western or eastern cemetery sites. Some of the other differences between Lankhills and the other Winchester northern cemetery sites are even more pronounced, however, figures relating to footwear being particularly striking (see further below). The only artefact category in which the other northern cemeteries match Lankhills is combs, with which they are collectively unusually well-endowed in relation to the other late Roman urban cemeteries for which data are gathered in Table 8.2.

The purpose of Table 8.2 is not to serve as a basis for exhaustive comparative analysis, but to provide yardsticks with which to assess the extent to which the Lankhills cemetery assemblage, both in selected significant components and in the totality of provision of grave goods, may be regarded as typical of or divergent from wider late Romano-British practice (a similar aim to that of Quensel-von-Kalben 2000). The figures presented in Table 8.2 are as accurate as possible, but should be regarded as approximate, because the necessary data are often subject to qualifications which can result in different readings (cf eg Keegan 2002, 109, table 69). The Lankhills figures are based on the combined totals from Clarke's excavations and OA's excavations presented against a grave total (751) which includes some partly excavated graves and others which were almost totally destroyed by later features. On this basis the percentage occurrences for the various attributes listed should be regarded as minima. Amongst the comparative sites, the figures for East London are somewhat problematic because the dating scheme employed in that report does not make it easy to determine the number of inhumation burials assigned to individual periods of the use of the cemetery, especially as different total numbers of inhumation burials are presented (eg Barber and Bowsher 2000, 12 table 4 gives a figure of 513, while a figure of 654 (which presumably included the West Tenter Street burials) is implied on p 117). The figures presented here are based on Barber and Bowsher's table 8 (ibid., 427-432), but are modified to exclude dubious items (ibid., 12), those from West Tenter Street (ibid., 1; Whytehead 1986) and those from graves which in that table are given a terminal date of AD 250 or earlier. Doubtless some of the graves with items included in the totals given here also dated earlier than *c* AD 250, but this cannot be established from the published evidence. Despite these difficulties it is hoped that the resulting figures give a fair reflection of the character of the late Roman phases of the East London cemetery. Selection of sites has generally been restricted to those with large total numbers of burials and resulting robust datasets. The small pre-Period 2 group from Butt Road, Colchester has been included, however, because of the complete contrast in character that it represents when compared with the succeeding cemetery.

Table 8.2: Approximate comparative occurrence of finds categories in inhumation burials from selected late Roman cemeteries

	Lankhills (Clarke & OA)	*Other Winchester northern cemetery*	*Poundbury main late Roman cemetery*	*Poundbury other late Roman burials*	*Cirencester Bath Gate*	*Butt Road Period 1 phase 2/3*	*Butt Road Period 2*	*East London (see text)*
No. excavated graves	751	184	1028 (1114)	*c* 252 (265)	450	44	669	*c* 362
Coffins	78.3%	38.0%	90.0%	63.5%	?*c* 25%	100%	90.9%	?*c* 65%
Footwear	36.1%	6.5%	0.1%	17.9%	1.1%	25.0%	1.0%	6.1%
Vessels	17.0%	2.2%	-	2.4%	0.7%	36.4%	2.2%	13.3%
Coins	8.8%	3.3%	1.9%	0.8%	0.7%	-	0.1%	4.7%
Brooches	2.0%	-	-	1.2%	-	-	0.1%	0.8%
Belt sets	2.7%	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%	0.3%
Other jewellery	7.5%	2.2%	1.4%	3.6%	0.9%	11.4%	3.3%	7.7%
Combs	3.5%	3.3%	0.7%	-	0.2%	-	1.0%	0.3%
Other	7.5%	4.9%	1.0%	6.3%	-	4.5%	0.6%	5.0%
Total graves with goods excluding footwear	245 (32.6%)	25 (13.6%)	4.2%	33 (13.1%)	11 (2.4%)	18 (40.9%)	44 (6.6%)	100 (27.6%)
		Hyde St, Victoria Rd, Andover Rd		percentages are minima				

stone linings etc not counted

There are notable differences between sites in the level of provision of coffins. In most cases approximately two thirds or more of burials are contained within coffins, with particularly high levels of provision at Butt Road and in the main cemetery at Poundbury. A distinctly lower, albeit slightly uncertain, figure (perhaps as high as 25%, on an optimistic reading of the data for coffin nails) is recorded at Cirencester (Viner and Leech 1982, 86-88). This would appear completely anomalous were it not for the figure from the Winchester northern cemetery sites other than Lankhills, which is also substantially lower than those seen for the other major cemeteries. Cirencester Bath Gate also has the lowest overall representation of finds associated with the burials, as well as the lowest representation of coffins. This presumably reflects the general character of a large part of that cemetery population, although the occurrence of five burials in stone coffins precludes a simplistic characterisation of the group as being uniformly of low status. The other major cemeteries with low levels of provision of grave goods are the main Poundbury cemetery and Butt Road Period 2, but although provision at these sites was low in absolute terms, grave goods were two and a half times as common at Butt Road as at Cirencester, for example. Such differences may be significant, particularly when considered alongside the stark contrasts between Cirencester and Butt Road and Poundbury in terms of cemetery layout and coffin provision.

These three sites are consistent, however, in containing uniformly small numbers of burials with nailed footwear. The evidence for this across the sites presented in Table 8.2 suggests three groupings, the first already mentioned, the second consisting of East London and the 'other' Winchester northern cemetery sites, both with footwear in just over 6% of graves, and the third comprising sites with significantly higher incidences, the peripheral late Roman cemeteries at Poundbury, pre-Period 2 Butt Road, and Lankhills. Even amongst these sites there is considerable variation, with nailed footwear twice as common at Lankhills as in the Poundbury assemblage, for example. Lankhills remains particularly distinctive in this characteristic, and further comparative figures (Philpott 1991, 168) show Lankhills to have one of the highest representations of footwear amongst both urban and rural cemeteries in Britain, particularly when sites with small and therefore statistically unreliable numbers of burials are excluded. The significance of footwear provision and variations in its occurrence remain open to debate (ibid., 171-3). While the contrast in provision between the two phases of burial at Butt Road can perhaps be explained in chronological terms it is less clear that this argument would apply at Poundbury, and certain that it cannot in the Winchester northern cemetery, in which Lankhills and the other contemporary sites show clear differences. Other, potentially more complex factors must therefore be invoked to explain these.

Inevitably the contrasting levels of occurrence of different artefact categories across the principal late Roman cemeteries produce a complex pattern of variation, rather than a straightforward one. In overall terms Lankhills contains a higher proportion of graves with grave goods (excluding footwear) than any of these cemeteries except the small late Period 1 group from Butt Road, which has a number of points of comparison with Lankhills (including the most nearly comparable incidence of nailed footwear). A particularly marked characteristic of that group was the very high percentage of graves containing pottery and/or glass vessels; most of the graves with goods in this phase at Butt Road contained vessels, whereas only half of the Lankhills graves with goods contained vessels, of whatever material (including the occasional metal examples from Clarke's excavations). Vessels were usually found in only a very small percentage of graves elsewhere (and in the main Poundbury cemetery were absent altogether), the only other exception being the East London cemetery, in which an estimated 13.3% of graves contained vessels. This figure is closest to that for Lankhills, and the same is true for the two sites in respect of the occurrence of coins, even though these were nearly twice as common at Lankhills as at London. Elsewhere the occurrence of coins in the larger late Roman cemeteries seems to be at a consistently lower level, but the representation of coins in smaller cemeteries, including rural ones, can sometimes be higher and occasionally exceptional, as for example in the case of Roden Downs (Berks), where coins occurred in seven of the ten graves (Hood and Walton 1948, 42-3; see Booth 2001, 33 for regional context).

The unusual nature of the Lankhills assemblage is particularly evident in the occurrence of brooches and belt sets, even though brooches only occurred in 2% of the graves, and components of belt sets in 2.7%. The closest comparisons are perhaps to be seen in the East London cemetery, although here, as in the Butt Road Period 2 cemetery, there was only a single occurrence of belt equipment. Moreover, one of the three brooches in the late Roman East London graves was clearly residual. A similar issue affects all three of the graves with brooches from the outlying Poundbury cemeteries. All were certainly old, if not very old, when buried, but there is no particular reason why they should not still have been in use, given that they were still complete with pins (Farwell and Molleson 1993, 88, fig. 63). The distinction to be drawn here between Poundbury and Lankhills is that at the latter site the brooches were relatively closely contemporary with the graves in which they were deposited, and while there was evidence of wear and repair, particularly on some of the crossbow brooches, they were not yet antiques in the way that the Poundbury ones were. It may be that at Poundbury new brooches were not available or were not considered appropriate for funerary deposition by the burying

population. Lankhills remains quite exceptional amongst the larger cemetery assemblages in its provision of crossbow brooches for a part of the community. The incidence of burials with combs is also high there, although it was almost matched elsewhere in the Winchester northern cemeteries, at a level significantly above that seen in any of the other cemeteries considered here, as noted above.

This rapid sketch suggests points of similarity and difference between aspects of the Lankhills assemblages and those from other key late Roman cemeteries. On the whole, however, the differences seem to outweigh the similarities. Assessment of the significance of these differences is very difficult and can only be attempted in outline here. Identification of individuals with particularly distinctive grave goods, especially the crossbow brooches and belt sets (with the likelihood that these may represent individuals with some official capacity), is straightforward at one level, but because the relationships between these individuals and those buried around them are mostly unknown the presence of these potentially 'special' individuals does not allow us to generalise with confidence about the character of the rest of the cemetery population. It is worth setting out some of the possible questions which arise from this, even if they cannot be answered clearly or (in some cases) at all:

- Did the individuals marked out by the presence of unusual objects (particularly crossbow brooches) form a coherent group?
- Did the presence of belt equipment without crossbow brooches distinguish further members of this putative 'group', or a subset of it, or was it not significant in this respect at all?
- If the 'crossbow brooch set' was a coherent group of people, what proportion of the rest of the cemetery population was made up of their associates and dependants, or were they self-contained and intrusive within the generalised cemetery population?
- Can the generally high level of grave good provision be used to argue a special character for all of the cemetery population, or only for an (unknown) proportion of it?
- Is it appropriate to view the cemetery population as a single community, or does it represent components of many communities within the urban population?

Ultimately these questions all relate to aspects of identity, some of which have been discussed in Chapter 7 above. This is an area which has received a great deal of attention since the time of Clarke's work, generating a huge literature in the social sciences and thence in archaeological writing. Much of this work has been directed specifically at issues relating to definitions of ethnicity (eg Jones 1997), questions of particular interest for Lankhills in view of the interpretations placed by Clarke on the intrusive groups. It is now widely accepted that 'reading off' of ethnic identities from grave group assemblages is at best problematic, and can be highly misleading. Individuals will have multiple identities depending on age, status and social context, amongst other factors. Identities can be manipulated and constructed by individuals and larger groups, a situation which can arise particularly in the context of burial. Ethnicity, which is just one aspect of identity, is potentially subject to the same forces (for a useful summary of the issues in the context of the late Roman west, see Halsall 2007, 35-45; for more detailed discussion in a Romano-British context see eg Gardner 2007, particularly 197-217).

A significant aspect of recent work has been the emphasis on the role of material culture in constructions of aspects of identity, whether ethnicity or other characteristics. With regard to Roman Britain such work has tended to concentrate on the early period, being concerned with transformations relating to the incorporation of Britain into the Roman empire (eg Eckardt and Crummy 2008), but the issues are relevant to all times. The later Roman military/official identity is clearly a good example of this. While not necessarily straightforward, the crossbow brooch is widely agreed to be a symbol of such an identity (Gardner 2007, 214-5 provides some nuances), and this view is accepted here. The significance of belt sets in this regard is more equivocal (eg Philpott 1991, 188-9), but the Lankhills evidence indicates a considerable degree of overlap in the occurrence of these and crossbow brooches. Only one burial (no. 373 in Clarke's excavations) with a crossbow brooch did not contain elements of a belt or belts (see Table 8.3), that is to say that this combination was seen in 13 graves. While a further nine graves contained belt components without associated crossbow brooches the close correlation of belt sets with crossbow brooches is clear and must be significant. Nevertheless, the fact that one of these burials with elements of a belt set (in Grave 1760) was of a child emphasises the uncertainty in making straightforward assumptions about the nature of these items. In all other identifiable cases, however, the associated human remains were of adult males or probable males.

In relation to the question of coherence of the groups of people suggested by the occurrence of particular artefact types, it may be noted that the distribution of burials containing crossbow brooches (Fig. 7.12) falls into three broad groups (with an outlier in the 2005 watching brief area). While not tightly clustered, these groups appear reasonably discrete, being located in the northern part of the site north of the concentrations of pits, in the south-central part of the site between the small ditched enclosures F.2 and F.6, and adjacent to and both sides of the north-south boundary 450/F.12 along the southern two-thirds of its length. In all cases, burials containing belt sets without associated brooches occurred within or in close proximity

to these groups. This may support the suggestion that not only were the two types of burial related, in whatever way, but that there was a sense in which it was desirable for members of the brooch/belt-wearing and belt-wearing communities to be associated in their place of burial. Familial relationships might be implied, but other ones are possible. At the north end of the group associated with the north-south boundary two graves with crossbow brooches and belt sets (Clarke grave 234 and OA Grave 1075) lay immediately adjacent to each other while a further grave with a belt set and knife, coin-dated after AD 388, lay only *c* 2.5 m to the north. This particularly close grouping is unlikely to have been accidental, and other close spatial links can be observed elsewhere amongst these three broad clusters.

Lankhills in a national context

Thirty years on from the publication of Giles Clarke's excavations Lankhills remains a cemetery of exceptional interest. In a number of respects it can be seen within the framework of late Roman

Table 8.3: Summary of graves with crossbow brooches and/or elements of belt sets

Grave	*Crossbow brooch location*	*Belt fittings*	*Other goods*	*Comment*	*Burial date*
Clarke					
13	on right shoulder, foot up	buckle	coins		350-70
23	centrally on chest, foot down	buckles and strap end	pot		350-80
81	near right shoulder, foot down	buckle, strap end, mount	knife, glass beaker, coins		350-70
106	left of skull, foot down	buckles, strap end, toilet implement/ strap end	knife, pot	brooch repaired	350-70/90
234	area of right shoulder, foot up	buckles	pot, bird	cu alloy fragments poss related to the second, smaller buckle	350-90
322	left of skull, foot down	strap end	glass flask, coin	other finds in backfill	370-90
373	?above right shoulder, foot up	-	pot, coins		390-400
426	on chest, foot up	buckle and strap end	pot		350-90
37	-	buckle and strap end	knife		350-70
283	-	buckle/plate and buckle loop		knife, stone and bone objects, 2 coins	390-410
366	-	buckle and strap end	pot		370-410
376	-	buckle/plate, buckle, strap end, terminal fitting, stiffener and studs	?coin		390-410
443	-	buckle/plate	knife and associated suspension rings		350-70
OA					
745	left of left knee	strap ends, ring, Fe buckle	pot	brooch incomplete	
895	unknown	-		cremation burial	
1075	?left of skull, foot up	strap end	-	brooch pin replaced	
1846	area of right shoulder, foot up	buckle and strap end	spurs	brooch repaired	370+?
1925	on chest, foot up	buckle	-	brooch repaired	
3030	uncertain	buckle/plate and ring	knife	no human remains survive	
1175	-	buckle/plate	knife, coin		
1180	-	buckle/plate and another ?plate	vessel as unburnt grave good	cremation burial; buckle(s) are pyre good	
1760	-	buckle (Fe)	knife, Fe ring, glass and pottery vessels, coin, shoes	child	
1921	-	buckle/plate (x2)	knife		
WA					
1032	Y	2 buckles	pot		
1083	Y	-	-		
1110	Y	-	coins, pot		
1114	-	buckle	pottery and glass vessels		

burial practice in Britain, characterised, particularly in an urban setting, by cemeteries with fairly organised layouts and typically, although by no means universally, west-east aligned inhumation graves. In terms of aspects such as the variety of grave forms and the provision of coffins the range of evidence is not exceptional. The impression that some of the graves were unusually deep when compared with other cemeteries is of uncertain significance. As noted above, it was probably easier (in terms of avoiding collapse of the pit) to dig deep graves in the chalk than in the subsoils encountered in some of the comparative cemeteries (Cirencester and Trentholme Drive are perhaps extreme examples), but the question of why this would have been thought desirable remains. The effort involved in excavating a grave through chalk to a depth of over 1 m would have been considerable. Apparently extravagant provision was occasionally seen in other aspects of Lankhills burials, particularly evident in relation to the size of some coffin nails, but in only one case (Grave 870, in which the nails had an average length of almost 250 mm) was this completely exceptional.

The most obviously remarkable characteristics of the cemetery relate to aspects of the provision of grave goods, summarised in Table 8.3. The proportion of graves with grave goods (here excluding footwear, itself unusually common in comparison with most other contemporary urban cemeteries) is exceptionally high for a late Roman urban cemetery in Britain. This was noted in the 1979 publication and remains the case. The most distinctive feature of the cemetery, however, is still the incidence of markers of official/military status, the crossbow brooches and belt sets, the numbers of which, and the proportion of the cemetery population with which they are associated, make Lankhills stand out from any other urban cemetery in Roman Britain and, with the possible exception of Scorton, from any other Romano-British cemetery known at present. It cannot be certain, of course, how far this very distinctive character is relevant beyond the individuals who were thus equipped in their graves. While there is some local clustering, however, their relatively widespread distribution across the cemetery does not suggest that this was a very closely-defined and exclusive group, at least in death. It might therefore be inferred that at least some of the other burials in the cemetery were of relatives and dependants of these individuals. It is not possible to go beyond this and suggest that this community was the dominant element amongst the Lankhills cemetery population, although this just might have been the case if these people were to be seen as, for example, successive generations of workers and officials associated with the Venta *gynaeceum*. Although the sample of late Roman urban cemeteries from Britain is still insufficiently large for it to be certain that this particular cemetery population is unique, it certainly appears sufficiently unusual to suggest that it reflects a characteristic of the Winchester community shared by few if any other towns, and the presence of a *gynaeceum* might be such a characteristic. On balance, however, it may be safer to assume that the cemetery contained burials of some of the people involved with the *gynaeceum* (assuming that it really was located at Winchester) rather than representing a single (albeit diverse) community group associated with it.

Evidence from the near continent provides a slightly different picture. There the major cemeteries in which crossbow brooches occur in the greatest numbers are all closely associated with military sites, as Ellen Swift has shown (eg 2000a, 24), the principal examples being at Krefeld-Gellep (Pirling and Siepen 2006, 334-339), Nijmegen (for a recent summary of the late Roman cemeteries see Willems and van Enckevort 2009) and Oudenburg (Mertens and van Impe 1971). Complementary British evidence, albeit mainly not from cemeteries, comes from the military sites of Richborough (Bayley and Butcher 2004, 106-120) and Caister on Sea (Butcher 1993, 73-75) and from London, where the presence of official/military personnel is undoubted, and exemplified by the individual in grave 538 of the East London cemetery (Barber and Bowsher 2000, 206-208). While crossbow brooches are widely distributed across northern Gaul, they are not numerous in cemetery contexts except at the sites mentioned above and at Chartres, a civitas capital but a site of uncertain significance in the 4th century. This pattern may reflect accidents of discovery, but there does seem to be a broad similarity between Britain and northern Gaul, in the sense that cemetery populations with significant numbers of burials associated with badges of military/official status do not appear, on present evidence, to be typical of the larger towns, The current project does not give scope for further consideration of these aspects, but for the present, at least, the conclusion that the Lankhills cemetery is highly unusual and important in a British and arguably wider north-western Roman provincial context is sustained.