Chapter 16
The Late Iron Age and Roman Landscape

by Alex Smith

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the Upper Thames Valley became increasingly densely occupied throughout the later Iron Age and Roman period (Fig. 16.1), although there was still significant heterogeneity in settlement form and development. Our knowledge of settlement patterns in this region has greatly increased over the past 30 years through excavations in advance of gravel extraction (see Chapter 1). All of the key sites in this volume were gravel quarry sites, and those at Claydon Pike (Chapters 2-8) and Somerford Keynes (Chapter 9) in particular remain pivotal to any overall interpretration of archaeology in the region. This chapter places these sites within their regional context in terms of the late Iron Age and early-mid Roman landscape. The later Roman landscape is discussed in Chapter 17.

It is as a consequence of the wealth of information for the Upper Thames Valley that care must be taken when specific comparisons are drawn with areas further north and south which have generally received less archaeological attention. Roman occupation of the Cotswolds in particular is still heavily biased towards villas, 'small towns' and other visually dominant remains, and even many of these were excavated many years ago and lack the detailed chronological sequences known from the Thames Valley sites. Furthermore, although the Royal Commission Monument Survey on Iron Age and Roman settlement in the Cotswolds (1976) has highlighted many possible lower status rural settlements, virtually nothing is known of their specific chronology or character. Hingley (2000, 15) has recently emphasised that even in areas of southern Britain where villas do occur, such sites make up no more than 15% of rural settlement. Yet in most cases we still do not have an adequate sample of the remaining 85% of non-villa settlements on which to base an informed understanding of the Roman province.

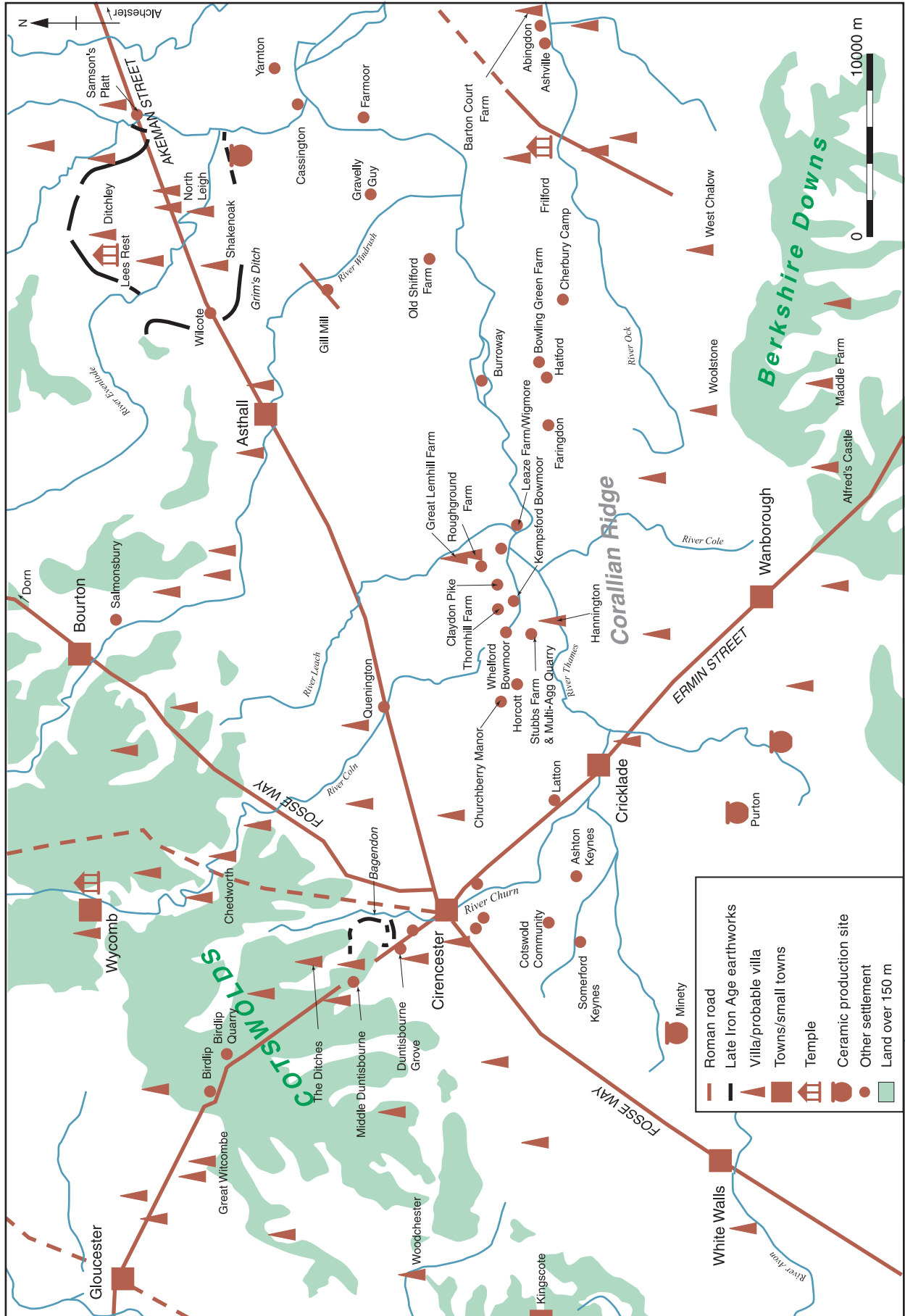## SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT (Fig. 16.1)

Late Iron Age

It has already been remarked upon (Chapter 8) that there were apparent widespread changes in the settlement pattern of the Upper Thames Valley during the late Iron Age, with a number of sites either being newly established, abandoned, or shifting in location (Lambrick 1992, 83). This is perhaps best seen further to the east in Oxfordshire, where middle Iron Age sites such as Mingies Ditch and Watkins Farm were abandoned, while at others such as Gravelly Guy new settlements were established, often adjacent to a previous middle Iron Age site (Lambrick and Allen 2004). Such settlement disruption is also a feature further west along the Thames Valley, being evident at Claydon Pike (Chapter 4) and Somerford Keynes (Chapter 9). At sites such as Latton Lands, Totterdown Lane, Horcott, Cotswold Community, Ashton Keynes and Thornhill Farm, there is more evidence of continuity, from as early as the late Bronze Age in some cases, although the intensity and nature of occupation does often appear to change during the late Iron Age. It must be stressed however that the nature of change is far from constant, and it probably occurred over a period of many generations. This suggests that there was no single determining factor that influenced such widespread disruption, but rather it was probably a consequence of matters such as population pressure, changing environmental conditions, and developments in the socio-political structure (see below).

Most of these late Iron Age sites lay upon the floodplain or lower gravel terraces of the River Thames, which appears to have remained largely open grassland, with much of the floodplain itself experiencing seasonal inundation (see Chapter 14). There is generally far less evidence for ditches and hedges than in later Roman periods, which may explain the poor drainage encountered on sites such as Claydon Pike. Many settlements seem to have operated a pastoral led economy (see below), which can clearly be seen in their physical layout. They are often characterised by a series of enclosures and droveways, seemingly used for the management and control of livestock. Such an increase in specialist activity is characteristic of the period within this region, although it is likely that many sites also had some cultivated land (see Agriculture below). Another particular characteristic of these late Iron Age Thames Valley settlements is the lack of evidence for domestic structures, a situation which continues into the Roman period with regard to low status sites. The most commonly accepted explanation for this is that such structures were using mass-walled construction techniques and

Alchester

N

Samson's Platt
Yarnton
AKEMAN STREET
Farmoor
Cassington
Gravelly Guy
Ditchley
North Leigh
Lees Rest
Shakenoak
Grim's Ditch
Wilcote
Gill Mill
River Windrush
Old Shifford Farm
Burroway
Leaze Farm/Wigmore
Bowling Green Farm
Hatford
Cherbury Camp
Frilford
Barton Court Farm
Abingdon
Ashville
West Chalow
Berkshire Downs
Woolstone
Maddle Farm

Asthall
River Evenlode
Great Lemhill Farm
Roughground Farm
Kempsford Bowmoor
Faringdon
River Ock
Alfred's Castle

Dorn
Bourton
Salmonsbury
River Leach
Quenington
River Coln
Claydon Pike
Thornhill Farm
Whelford Bowmoor
Horcott
Stubbs Farm & Multi-Agg Quarry
Hannington
Corallian Ridge
River Cole
River Thames
Wanborough
ERMIN STREET

Chedworth
Wycomb
FOSSE WAY
Bagendon
Churchberry Manor
Latton
Cricklade
Ashton Keynes
Purton

COTSWOLDS
Birdlip
Birdlip Quarry
The Ditches
Middle Duntisbourne
Duntisbourne Grove
Cirencester
River Churn
Cotswold Community
Somerford Keynes
Minety

Gloucester
Great Witcombe
Woodchester
FOSSE WAY
White Walls
Kingscote
River Avon

10000 m
0

Roman road
Late Iron Age earthworks
Villa/probable villa
Towns/small towns
Temple
Ceramic production site
Other settlement
Land over 150 m

therefore do not generally survive in the archaeological record (Allen *et al.* 1984, 94; Henig and Booth 2000, 82).

In the Cotswolds further north there is not quite the same degree of evidence for settlement disruption during the late Iron Age, although as stated in the introduction to this chapter, this may be in part due to the lack of comprehensive excavation, especially of 'non-monumental' sites. Middle and later Iron Age activity was certainly quite widespread in parts of this region, with sites at Birdlip (Parry 1998), Highgate House (Mudd and Lupton 1999), Guiting Power (Marshall 1997) and elsewhere. Furthermore, there is some evidence for changes in the Cotswold settlement pattern during the 1st century BC to 1st century AD, although it is certainly not uniform, with sites and regions adapting in different ways and at different times (Moore and Reece 2001, 22). Perhaps the most significant aspect of late Iron Age settlement development in the Cotswolds was the establishment of large high status ditched settlements, or oppida, at sites like Bagendon (Clifford 1961a), Duntisbourne (Fell 1964) and The Ditches (Trow 1988) just north of Cirencester. Bagendon is of particular importance, as it has traditionally been seen as the seat of the tribal rulers of the Dobunni (Wacher 1975, 292; Darvill and Gerrard 1994, 49). It comprised a series of discontinuous dykes defining an area of approximately 200 ha (Pl. 16.1), and although excavations have not been very comprehensive, they have uncovered evidence for coin production and high status occupation, in the form of relatively large amounts of imported pottery. Its origins are still uncertain but it is thought to have been established a few decades before the conquest, with no evidence for any earlier middle Iron Age activity. Indeed Moore and Reece (2001, 22-3) have recently pointed out that the whole area around Bagendon would have been quite forested until the late Iron Age, and so this new high status site was located in what may have previously been marginal land. All of this suggests that the social structure of society towards the end of the Iron Age was somewhat in a state of flux (see below).

The smaller 'oppidum' at Salmonsbury further north is less well known, but seems to have been first occupied in the 1st century BC, continuing into the early Roman period (Dunning 1976). Although there was not the same quantity of finds as from Bagendon, they still included imported Arretine and Lyon wares, suggesting high status occupation around the period of the conquest. Further east, other possible 'oppida' have been located at Cassington (Case 1982), Abingdon (Allen 1993; 1994) and Dorchester-on-Thames (Hingley and Miles 1984, 65-7), while the extensive North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch earthworks is also likely to have been late Iron Age (1st century AD) in date (Copeland 1989, 287). Although all quite different

Plate 16.1   Bagendon dykes

Facing page: Fig. 16.1   Late Iron Age and Roman sites in the Upper Thames Valley

in many ways, these sites could possibly be seen as élite power centres, incorporating markets, industry, agriculture and possibly ritual foci.

The Roman conquest

The Roman conquest itself and its immediate aftermath are largely invisible within the archaeological record of the region, with little noticeable disruption to the settlement pattern, as seen at sites such as Claydon Pike (Chapter 4) and Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes (Chapter 9). An exception lies in a small group of sites near Bicester in Oxfordshire, which appear to terminate around the conquest period (Henig and Booth 2000, 106). It may be significant that these probably lay outside Dobunnic territory in the neighbouring tribal area of the Catuvellauni, which hints at distinct regional variations formed perhaps on political grounds.

A military fort was established at Leaholme (Cirencester) south of Bagendon between two and twelve years after the conquest (Darvill and Gerrard 1994, 54), with the coin and ceramic evidence pointing to a date around AD 49/50. The dating and sequence of construction for the major Roman roads of Ermin Street, Fosse Way and Akeman Street have recently been discussed by Hargreaves (1998), and all are likely to have been in existence by *c* AD 50, in order to provide communication between military centres. Relatively little is known about the Leaholme fort, although a large dump of pottery dating AD 60-65 possibly relates to a change in garrison, and the final abandonment of the site was probably around AD 75 (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 66). There are no indications that the fort was used wholly to suppress a hostile native power centre, and instead its establishment may have helped to bolster the power of the local élite, while perhaps also keeping them in check (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 66). This draws parallels with the situation within the Atrebatic client kingdom at Fishbourne and Chichester in West Sussex (see Jennings *et al.* 2004), and may suggest that a short-lived client kingdom also existed in at least part of Dobunnic territory, focusing upon the Bagendon area (see below).

Aside from Leaholme and Kingsholm (Gloucester), which lay a further 30 km north-west, there is no evidence for any intensive Roman military settlement in the region, although a military origin for Wanborough has been suggested in the Neronian-Vespasianic period (Anderson *et al.* 2001, 345). Furthermore, the previous interpretation of 1st-century military activity at Claydon Pike no longer seems sustainable (see Chapters 4 and 8). However, further east at Alchester there is evidence for a substantial and very early vexillation fortress, dating to just after the conquest in AD 44 or even AD 43 (Sauer 2002, 84), and it has been suggested that it may have assumed a key function in the conquest and administration of the south-east of Britain at this time (Sauer, 2003, 95). The size and date of the fortress ensure that it must have had a

great effect upon other military dispositions in the wider region, including the early military activity postulated at Wilcote and Asthall, both positioned along Akeman Street between Corinium and Alchester (Booth 1998, 11).

It is often the case in southern Britain that civilian settlements (*vici*) grew up around early military establishments, with some such as at Alchester developing into substantial urban centres. It seem highly likely that such a *vicus* was attached to the Leaholme fort, and that this then developed into the city of Corinium upon the departure of the army in *c* AD 75 (Darvill and Gerard 1994, 57). The early development of the town is unclear, although it seems that the initial programme of public building works began in the later 1st century, and would have taken many decades to complete (Darvill and Gerard 1994, 60). There were few other settlements in the region with anything that could be termed urban characteristics, especially within the early Roman period. Nevertheless, Timby (1998, 433) has identified a number of 'small towns' or roadside settlements, most with early Roman origins of some kind, such as Dorn, Bourton, Wanborough, Cricklade Quenington and Asthall. Each of these settlements, despite varying a great deal in character and chronology, were spaced at least 8-10 km from Corinium and each other, and probably stood in their own distinct territory (Timby 1998, 429). They may have formed local market centres, and possibly had some administrative functions, although none contained any recognisable public buildings (see below). Cricklade is the only one of these 'small towns' to be sited within the Upper Thames Valley itself, although very little is known of its origins or character (Haslam 2003). Nothing in the archaeology suggests that Cricklade was of particular importance, but it is possible that it was established as a staging post at the crossing-place of the Thames by Ermin Street, at a point half way between Corinium and Wanborough (Haslam 2003).

Although many of these local centres appear to have been established in some form by the end of the 1st century AD, very few of the large numbers of villas from the region can be ascribed to this date. One example is that within The Ditches hillfort just to the north of Bagendon, an earthwork which is thought to have been part of the élite late Iron Age tribal centre (Trow 1988). The unusual location of this villa, in an elevated position away from a good water source, suggests that the occupants had personal or political associations with the pre-Roman native enclosure, and may have used this location to help maintain and bolster their own influence (Trow and James 1989, 85; see below). A further group of villas also dating to the end of the 1st century AD is located within the area of Grim's Ditch in north Oxfordshire, and include North Leigh, Ditchley and Shakenoak (Hingley 1989, 107-8; Henig and Booth 2000, 108). As with The Ditches villa, this shows a marked degree of continuity from what is presumed to be a late pre-Roman power

centre (see below). The roadside settlement of Wilcote also lay within the circuit of Grim's Ditch, and its early establishment at this location may well have been dictated by such association (Booth 1998, 10). An interesting point noted is that fragments of carrot amphorae were recovered from Wilcote as well as from the nearby villas at Shakenoak, Fawler and Ditchley, and such amphora types were not only rare, but also most commonly associated with military sites (Booth 1999, 48). This suggests that there may have been some early military presence in the area, or at least that there was some military connection apparent with certain members of the local élite (Booth 1999, 48). There would certainly have been a temporary military presence in this area, at least during the construction of Akeman Street, which cut through Grim's Ditch. Military traffic would have undoubtedly passed along this road from Corinium (Leaholm) to Alchester.

Settlement development in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD

One of the most striking aspects of settlement development within the Upper Thames Valley during the Roman period is the apparent widespread disruption and reorganisation of the landscape that occurred during the early 2nd century AD, in what appears to have been a relatively short period of time. This has recently been commented on with explicit reference to Oxfordshire sites (Lambrick 1992; Henig and Booth 2000, 106), and although there is much inter-site variation, the changes can also be seen at many sites in Gloucestershire. All of the key Cotswold Water Park sites presented in this volume were either newly established at this time, or else underwent major transformation. At Claydon Pike (Chapter 5) and Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes (Chapter 9), this transformation resulted in the construction of substantial settlement enclosures, trackways and timber framed aisled buildings. Occupation at Whelford Bowmoor (Chapter 10) and Stubbs Farm, Kempsford (Chapter 11) commenced at this time, although the physical form and nature of activity at these sites appears markedly different to that of the aisled building settlements. It is possible that Whelford Bowmoor would only have been occupied on a seasonal basis, while both sites were probably abandoned at some point in the 3rd century, possibly as result of increased flooding and/or further landscape reorganisation in this area. Analysis of the local settlement patterns around the Cotswold Water Park sites (Chapters 8 to 11) has often indicated further changes occurring in the early 2nd century AD. For example, at Totterdown Lane, Horcott, the nature of activity within the excavated area changed from a series of stock enclosures bearing some similarities to Phase 2 Claydon Pike, to fields, paddocks and enclosures which were obviously peripheral to the main settlement (Pine and Preston 2004, 92).

To the west of Claydon Pike, Thornhill Farm was abandoned during the early 2nd century and the small rural settlement of Kempsford Bowmoor was established, while to the east on the second gravel terrace the villa at Roughground Farm was constructed. This was one of very few villas from the Thames Valley itself, although another possible example lay just over 2 km to the north at Great Lemhill (SMR 311) and a villa was investigated in the late 19th century on the junction of the floodplain and first gravel terrace at Hannington Wick (Goddard 1890). Both of these villas appear to have had their origins in the 2nd century, and continued until the late Roman period. There are a number of other sites in the Thames Valley that have evidence for rectangular masonry footed structures, but for which the term villa might well be misappropriate. At Churchberry Manor near Fairford the remains of two such buildings were discovered during an archaeological evaluation (OAU 1989b). They were associated with pits, postholes and ditches, but very little domestic debris was recovered. Other masonry structures have been found at the Multi-Agg quarry site at Kempsford (see Digital section 8.4) and at Green Farm to the east of Claydon Pike (Chapter 12), although neither of these has been investigated thoroughly. These would all seem to have been quite substantial buildings, although their status and relationship to other settlements is largely unknown.

Large scale excavations and aerial photographs within the Upper Thames Valley have provided evidence for ditched trackways running through the landscape (Pl.16.2), which appeared to remain as open as in the previous late Iron Age/early Roman period, although with some small areas of woodland in places (see Chapter 14). In addition there is increased evidence for ditched and hedged boundaries defining paddocks and areas of cultivated land (see Agriculture below).

The trackways, which were features of all CWP sites in this volume (Chapters 4-6 and 9-11), seemingly connected the various field systems and settlements within and outside of the valley. Where dated, they invariably belong to the early 2nd century, often continuing in some form into the later Roman period. While many of the trackways may well have existed in some form before this time, their definition and construction still represents a considerable input of resources, the impetus for which is not certain (see below). Henig and Booth (2000, 99) noted the recurrence of a Y-shaped trackway configuration on a number of sites in the Upper Thames Valley such as Appleford and Stanton Harcourt. Similar arrangement can be seen near Lechlade, both at Butler's Field (Boyle *et al.* 1998), where one track leads to a possible enclosed settlement, and at Roughground Farm, where two trackways converge on an open area adjacent to the villa. Similar open spaces, sometimes likened to 'village greens' (Hey 1995, 172) have been found at Appleford and Standlake, and it has been suggested

Plate 16.2   Thornhill Farm trackway

that they may have functioned as livestock markets (Lambrick 1992, 103). Aside from such examples, there was much heterogeneity in the arrangement of trackways, field ditches and enclosures, which formed the outer holdings of settlements. At Yarnton in Oxfordshire for example, there were a number of droveways leading down to the lowest part of the floodplain, which would have experienced seasonal flooding and was used as pastoral land, while other parts of the floodplain and gravel terraces were used – for a time at least – for arable purposes (Hey and Timby forthcoming). Around most other Thames Valley sites where environmental evidence has been forthcoming, all of the floodplain appears to have been used for grazing purposes, with trackways at Farmoor leading down to this area and linking with another running parallel to the river, along which were a number of probable paddocks (Lambrick and Robinson 1979). Taylor (2001, 52) has recently highlighted the importance of including landscape features such as trackways and field boundaries within our studies of rural settlement in Roman Britain. Certainly the extent of the trackways within the Upper Thames Valley suggests that the inhabitants had a particular concern with defining lines of access both within and between settlement boundaries. This was probably not only concerned with the movement of agricultural produce, but may also have helped to create and maintain relationships between different settlements.

In addition to changes in the physical structure of settlements and their immediate environment, it is uncertain how far there were also changes in settlement territory and ownership in the early 2nd

century. It seems quite likely that the Claydon Pike territory at least would have expanded westwards at the expense of Thornhill Farm, suggesting that in this instance, the changes in the physical structure were matched by an increase in associated territory (see Chapters 4 and 8). It is likely that such specific changes concerning the control of land were quite piecemeal, and largely dependent upon matters of personal circumstance and power negotiation (see below).

Further north in the Cotswolds the evidence for significant settlement change in the early 2nd century AD is far less pronounced, although this may in part be due to the lack of comprehensive archaeological investigation. The early villas centred on Grim's Ditch and that at The Ditches do not appear on present evidence to have been affected in any way, and the same is true of those 'small towns' such as Asthall and Wanborough. An explanation for the apparent comparative lack of sudden change in this region may lie with the fact that it was an area associated with higher status settlement, both in the late Iron Age and Roman period. The estates of the élite may have been far more stable than the land within the Thames Valley, possibly reflecting differences in social structure between the two areas (see below).

One likely phenomenon of the early to mid 2nd century is the construction of *mansiones* within certain towns along the main road network in the region, including Wanborough (Phillips and Walters 1977) and possibly at Asthall (Booth 1997, 158). Most *mansiones* can be dated to this period, when Trajan and Hadrian made the civil service and not the local civitates responsible for maintenance of the *cursus publicus* (Black 1995).

The overall number of villas in the Cotswolds certainly increases in the 2nd century AD, although the evidence is generally insufficient to ascertain an early, mid or late date, and so this cannot readily be related to settlement developments in the Thames Valley. Nevertheless, such an increase in villas at this time is similar in some way to the situation in Sussex, where a small number of large 1st-century villas proliferated into many more modest examples in the 2nd century AD (Rudling 1998, 51). It has been suggested that the initial villas were probably constructed by members of the tribal élite during the period of the client kingdom, and as this became absorbed into the province, the number of more modest villas increased, probably representing a rise in the number of landowners who had benefited financially from integration into the Roman state (Ruddling 1998, 51). It is possible that the increase in villas in the Cotswolds – and indeed those few in the Thames Valley itself – may also have arisen partly as a result of the increased scope for social and financial ascendancy during this period, together with a desire to display this status in terms of Roman style symbols (see below).

As with the early Roman period, there is very little detailed evidence for non-villa rural sites

within the Cotswold region, and so it remains uncertain how far the pronounced settlement disruption of the Upper Thames Valley affected such settlement here. The distribution and organisation of Iron Age and Roman low status sites in the Cotswolds was examined by Hingley (1984, 78-82), in comparison with that of the Thames Valley. He concluded that the Cotswold sites were fewer, more widely spaced and more clearly defined than those in the valley, reflecting differences in the organisation of society (Hingley 1984, 78-82). There does certainly appear to have been a genuine difference between some aspects of the settlement patterns of the two regions, although the density of low status sites in certain parts of the Cotswolds is becoming increasingly apparent, with for example around 19 probable settlements being located within *c* 6 km of Corinium, including Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes (Timby 1998, 432; Chapter 9). In this instance, it is likely that the growth of the town itself is likely to have had a significant effect upon the development of these surrounding settlements, and also quite probably those further afield such as Claydon Pike (see below and Chapter 5).

The initial building programme of public works in Corinium is likely to have been completed by the early 2nd century, although further monumental works are attested, including one of the first public market halls (*macella*) in Britain, which was ascribed to the early-mid 2nd century (Holbrook 1998, 186). Also of this period is the first possible evidence for a defensive earthwork around the city, although this is still quite tentative (Holbrook 1998, 94). In the mid 2nd century the first definite defensive earthwork was constructed enclosing an area of 96 ha (Holbrook 1998), while the amphitheatre – one of the largest in civilian Roman Britain – is also likely to belong to this date (Holbrook 1994, 79). In the later 2nd century, a large enclosed courtyard – possibly a temple precinct – was constructed in insula VI, immediately south-east of the forum. It has been suggested that the city was elevated to the status of *muncipium* in the 2nd century (Frere 1984b, 68), and while there is no real evidence for this, it is clear that it was growing at a scale and pace which outstripped most other urban centres in Roman Britain. Furthermore, such growth is bound to have had a significant effect upon other settlements in the region, both in terms of economic and population demands, and – despite the assertions of Clarke (1996) – patterns of social behaviour (see below). What is unclear at present is to what extent the growth of Corinium directly contributed towards the widespread landscape changes in the early 2nd century AD.

Just as the Cotswold settlement pattern appears quite distinctive in many ways, the Roman landscape of the Berkshire Downs, to the south of the Thames Valley, is even more so. A number of settlements, including a few modest masonry villas and non-villa sites, often appeared quite closely integrated, with systems of trackways between them. The villas generally date to the 3rd and 4th century AD, with the exception of the 'cottage-style' villa at Alfred's Castle, which lay within an Iron Age hillfort (Gosden and Lock 2003). It was probably originally constructed in the late 1st or early 2nd century AD, the earliest villa type building in the area, and is seen as 'an obvious and visual statement on the Berkshire Downs' (Gosden and Lock 2003, 73). On the present dating evidence its construction cannot be directly related to the widespread changes in the Thames Valley, and it appears to have collapsed at some point in the 3rd century AD (Gosden and Lock 2003), at the point when other nearby villas such as Maddle Farm (Gaffney and Tingle 1989) were being constructed. Many of the numerous non-villa settlements on the Downs appear to have been occupied at an earlier date than the villas, with for example the village at Knighton Bushes being dated *c* AD 180-240 (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 239-40), and nearby Odstone ranging from the late 1st to 4th century AD (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 239-40). The relationship between these two sites and the nearby Maddle Farm villa is undoubtedly complex and at present is ill understood. Perhaps the most archaeologically distinctive aspect of Roman settlement on the Downs are the pronounced field-systems, which greatly expanded from the 1st to mid 3rd centuries AD, indicating significant agricultural intensification (see below).

Between the Berkshire Downs and the Thames Valley lay the Vale of the White Horse and the Corallian Ridge, which contained a few poorly understood villas and other non-villa sites (Miles 1982). Recent excavations at sites such as Hatford (Bourn 2000), Watchfield (Birbeck 2002) and Coxwell Road, Faringdon (Saunders and Weaver 1999) have started to increase our understanding of non-villa sites in this region. Occupation at all of these three settlements appears to have ceased (or shifted location) by the early 2nd century, and therefore may belong to the same widespread pattern of settlement disruption found in the Thames Valley. It is still uncertain how far this was true of the area as a whole because of a lack of detailed dating information, although it is known that a major nucleated settlement at Bowling Green Farm, Stanford in the Vale, was occupied from the 2nd century until the late Roman period (Mudd 1993). Further east, there are a number of poorly understood villas lying at the foot of the Downs, including Woolstone, West Challow and possibly Wantage, although it is debatable whether the latter site is actually a villa or a roadside settlement (Barber and Holbrook 2002, 335). It has been suggested that there was a shift in agricultural emphasis from the Downs to the Vale from the mid 3rd century onwards (Gosden and Lock 2003, 76), and these villas may be associated with this.

There were no further widespread changes noticeable in the archaeology of settlement development in the Thames Valley and Cotswolds region

until the later Roman period. The sites certainly did not remain static however, as there is evidence for substantial individual and local development, such as the apparent abandonment of domestic occupation at certain east Gloucestershire sites like Whelford Bowmoor (Chapter 10) and Stubbs Farm, Kempsford (Chapter 11) in the 3rd century AD. At a small number of sites there is evidence for some low level military activity in the later 2nd to early 3rd century AD. Military equipment of this date has already been commented upon in connection with Claydon Pike (Chapter 5) and Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes (Chapter 9) within the Thames Valley, and it also occured at Corinium (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 126), Alchester (Booth *et al.* 2001, 442-3) and Birdlip Quarry (Scott 1999, 387). Bishop (1991, 22-5) has noted the presence of late 2nd-3rd century military equipment in a number of sites across southern Britain, from large urban centres such as Silchester and Verulamium to smaller settlements like Scole and Wickford. He suggests (Bishop 1991, 26) that such equipment implies the presence within these settlements of elements of the regular army acting in some unknown capacity, and the Severan period *beneficiarius consularis* inscription from Dorchester-on-Thames (Henig and Booth, 2000, 40) would certainly support this. It is possible that the apparent increased military presence at certain places during this period was in a policing capacity to ensure the maintenance of supply networks, although it is also possible that the equipment was derived from retired soldiers as advocated by Black (1994; see Cool, Chapter 13).

SETTLEMENT STATUS AND HIERARCHY

Attempts to measure settlement status and hierarchy in the archaeological record are always fraught with difficulty. Measurable indicators of status in particular can be highly subjective and are culturally, geographically and chronologically variable. Furthermore, it is often somewhat questionable how far archaeologists may be able to identify indicators of status within the material record which are consistent enough be able to construct inter-settlement hierarchies. Nevertheless, in a Romano-British context there are a number of ways in which aspects of status within and between settlements have been measured. In this volume (Chapter 13) Booth has used the representation of fine and specialist wares in the ceramic record in order to compare the status of settlements of similar periods. Whilst care must be taken not to always directly associate such wares with 'Romanisation' (see below), their level of occurrence does seem quite valid as a general indicator of status, especially when compared with geographically and chronologically similar sites. Meadows (2001) has taken this further and examined the drinking and eating habits evident in a number of late Iron Age and early Roman sites within the Upper Thames Valley, in terms of the type of social expression

displayed. Thus at Barton Court Farm there is the suggestion that the wealth and status of the inhabitants was expressed through the giving of feasts during the late Iron Age, but that this was redirected during the early Roman period towards the construction of a house and boundary (Meadows 2001, 253).

The settlement structure itself is often used as an indicator of relative status. Hingley (1990a) has suggested that in many Iron Age and Romano-British settlements, boundaries may have been used as symbols of social exclusion and could therefore be seen as comparative indicators of status. This can clearly be seen both internally, such as in the division within the Claydon Pike Phase 3 site (see Chapter 5), and externally, with the pronounced boundaries surrounding many villa sites such as Ditchley (Radford 1936) and Barton Court Farm (Miles 1986). In a Roman context, the villa building itself is often one of the better measures of status and wealth, as these were highly visual structures with outward trappings such as tiled roofs, at least partial masonry superstructure and often painted plaster walls. Together with internal aspects such as mosaics and heated rooms, and the rich material culture that is usually associated with such complexes, this suggests that the occupants had the desire to express their social status through highly visual means. As a corollary of this, it ensures that such sites are readily identifiable as high status within the archaeological record. Yet even within settlements which have evidence for such Roman-style attributes, there are many regional variations that would not seem to be directly associated with degrees of wealth. For example, Gosden and Lock (2003, 79) have recently highlighted the difference between settlement patterns in north Atrebatic territory, characterised by modest villas and aisled buildings, and that of the Dobunnic Cotswolds where there is the highest concentration of large grandiose villas in the country. It is unlikely that the two areas were too far opposed in terms of intrinsic wealth, but just that differing social structures led to different strategies for the display of status and wealth. As with ceramic evidence, the best practise when attempting to compare the status of sites is to examine those from within the same region and period.

Despite the difficulties it is possible to identify a broad hierarchy of settlement within the Upper Thames Valley and Cotswold region, and to try and examine the relationships between them. During the latter part of the late Iron Age, there is evidence for a series of sites across the region which may have acted as élite centres of power, with associated industrial, economic and possibly religious functions (see above). Although they varied in many ways, they were broadly characterised by extensive ditched boundaries, covering hundreds of hectares in the case of Grim's Ditch and Bagendon, and often containing quantities of imported pottery. The discovery of a number of imported amphorae sherds in the late Iron Age phase at Ashton Keynes

(Coe *et al.* 1991), *c* 10 km south of Bagendon, suggests that this site was also part of a high status distribution network, and it has been suggested that it functioned as an élite centre (Moore and Reece 2001, 23), although this is quite difficult to sustain just on the presence of such material. The relationship of these sites to others around them is problematic, as very few have been comprehensively excavated, but it is fair to assume that their influence was probably quite widespread. Furthermore the establishment of such sites may have been associated in some way with the with late Iron Age settlement dislocation noted across much of the Upper Thames Valley.

As highlighted above, the conquest and its immediate aftermath appear to have made very little difference to the pattern of occupation in the region. However, within thirty years or so, some of the major aspects of Roman provincial infrastructure were in place. The town of Corinium was established at the junction of three main roads during the later 1st century AD (see above), and would have been the most important social, political and economic centre in the region, despite what appears to have been a relative lack of large-scale industry. Timby (1998, 434) has noted that the concentration of occupation around Corinium far exceeds that of the 'small towns' in the region such as Bourton and Wycomb, thus demonstrating its significant influence on the surrounding settlement pattern. This seems to follow on from the late Iron Age situation, with the Bagendon group of sites at the centre, and therefore suggests significant continuity in terms of the basic power structure (see Clark 1996 and below). The early Roman villas in the Cotswolds also appear to have been concentrated near to pre-Roman centres of power, thus exhibiting a similar level of continuity.

Further away from Corinium along the major road networks was a series of settlements at regularly spaced intervals (25-35 km), and despite considerable variation in terms of individual form and development, a clear regional settlement hierarchy seems to have emerged (Timby 1998, 435; Fig. 16.1). The regular spacing and often early Roman origins of these smaller nucleated settlements, such as Wanborough and Asthall, suggests that they may well have had official origins (Timby 1998, 430). Certainly a number of them probably contained a *mansio* for the use of the *cursus publicus* (see above), and they almost certainly would have functioned as local market centres, as demonstrated at Asthall (Booth 1997, 158). This settlement was equidistant from the large centres of Corinium and Alchester, with two smaller settlements (Sansom's Platt and Quenington) spaced (*c* 15 km) at mid points between them and Asthall. There would thus appear to have been an evenly spaced hierarchy of settlements, although, very little is known about most of these smaller centres, and so they do not necessarily all follow a simple sequence of decreasing social and economic importance.

Furthermore there are other settlements such as Wilcote, 9 km further east along Akeman Street from Asthall, where the relationships are far from certain (Booth 1997, 159). Despite the lack of any substantial structures from this site, it was established at a very early date, and may well have had specific associations with the military and the villas within Grim's Ditch (see above).

In the Thames Valley itself, there are comparatively few known substantial settlements that may have acted as local market centres. One such site lay along a road at Gill Mill (Lambrick 1996), *c* 10 km south-east of Asthall, while further west, Cricklade may also have had a local market function (see Fig. 16.1). To the east, there was also a large but poorly understood settlement at Abingdon (Henig and Booth 2000, 71-2) along with the walled town of Dorchester-on-Thames (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 117-22). There would seem to have been no substantial nucleated settlement for at least 10 km in either direction along the Valley from Claydon Pike, and it is likely that Corinium itself, at *c* 18 km distant, would have exerted the greatest influence upon the sites in this region.

As an ever growing number of Roman sites are excavated across the Upper Thames Valley, the substantial variety of settlement form, function and development becomes increasingly apparent. It is therefore simply not possible to establish any kind of simple pyramidal hierarchy based on economic or social status, as varying social-economic strategies appear to have been adopted at different times and in different places. At Barton Court Farm for example, the late Iron Age site appears to have developed into what has been termed a 'proto-villa' in the later 1st century AD, with evidence for coin use that is unusual in such a rural context (Miles 1986). A similar situation probably existed at Appleford further down the Thames, although there is no evidence for coin use at this site (Booth and Hardy 1993). The inhabitants of both sites thus appear to have consciously adopted new social strategies to adapt to the changing socio-political and economic environment of the time. In contrast at Old Shifford Farm there was very little evidence for any Roman impact at this time, in terms of structural features or material culture. Meadows (2001, 257) has suggested that this may have been a deliberate decision, which may have enhanced their reputation and status with some members of the local community. Even when the spatial organisation of some sites appears to have been relatively similar, such as at Phase 2 Claydon Pike and nearby Thornhill Farm, the associated material culture can suggest that quite different social strategies were being adopted. In this particular case, the higher levels of 'Romanised finds' (fine and specialist ware pottery) at Claydon Pike probably had some connection with the fact that this site was radically redeveloped in the early 2nd century AD, while the neighbouring site was abandoned (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Throughout much of the Upper Thames Valley, it was ultimately this distinct early 2nd century period that saw the most significant changes in settlement development and status, and this must have been paralleled by major social changes. The landscape of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD may have had its roots firmly in the earlier period, and indeed the basic pattern of power structure may not have been too dissimilar to that of the late Iron Age, but radical changes certainly occurred, with many individuals and groups negotiating new social identities in attempts to successfully operate within a region that was now a well established part of the Roman Empire.

ECONOMY

Agriculture

Throughout the late Iron Age and Roman period, agriculture remained by far the most important economic activity in the Thames Valley and Cotswolds, although many different regimes were practised, reflecting particular geographical, chronological and undoubtedly personal factors. Increasing agricultural intensification and specialism is well noted during the late Iron Age, usually explained in terms of population pressure, changing environmental conditions and develop-ments in socio-political structure (Lambrick 1992). Certainly many late Iron Age and early Roman sites on the floodplain and lower gravel terraces that have environmental evidence appear to have operated largely pastoral economies, which are well suited to the broad expanses of open grassland (see Chapter 14). It appears that much of this grassland was overgrazed, at least around some settlements, which does suggest increased pressure on land-use in the valley. What is at present unknown is whether such specialist sites were all wholly self-contained agricultural units with perhaps some arable crops grown on higher ground, or else reliant upon some kind of exchange with other settlements higher up the valley. At sites such as Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike (Chapters 4 and 5), there are certainly no indications of any arable activity in the vicinity, and so it would depend upon whether the territory used by the inhabitants expanded onto the upper gravel terraces. Gravelly Guy to the west had a clear ditched boundary dividing arable activity on first gravel terrace from pastureland on the river Windrush floodplain (Lambrick and Allen 2004). This appears to have remained the case throughout the Iron Age and early Roman period, and suggests that this settlement at least was largely self-suffi-cient. Other sites such as Yarnton, Old Shifford Farm and possibly Farmoor are likely to have been quite similar in this respect, all probably having some elements of a mixed economy. On the whole, the evidence suggests that there was a variety of agrarian regimes and landholding arrangements across the Thames Valley, reflecting differences

already seen in matters such as settlement form and social practice.

There were a number of factors introduced by the Romans that are bound to have had a profound effect upon agricultural practices in parts of the province. The introduction of tax collection would have brought much of the rural population into a monetary economy, although materials other than coins may have also been used, especially during the early post-conquest period. The influence of taxation is very difficult to discern archaeologically, although it would undoubtedly have had signifi-cant economic and social effects upon parts of society. In particular, the idea of farming for profit was a major innovation, and it came to provide the income required to invest in buildings and other trappings that could be used to maintain and increase social status within the Roman province (Branigan 1994, 14). This developing commercial economy saw the creation of nucleated market centres (see above), where arable and animal surpluses could be sent. The market hall (*macellum*) at Corinium for example had evidence for large-scale butchery in the vicinity (Holbrook 1998, 187), suggesting that animals may have been brought in on-the-hoof from surrounding rural areas (possibly including Claydon Pike) for slaughter in the town.

As with other aspects of the landscape in the Thames Valley, there is evidence that agricultural practices in some areas at least were transformed in the early 2nd century AD. Most pronounced was the shift from largely subsistence level pastoralism to an economy based partly upon the management of hay meadows in the Claydon Pike/Thornhill Farm area (see Chapter 5). This activity could have been for provisioning the urban market at Corinium, which would have been quite well devel-oped by this point. An official interest in this practice cannot be ruled out, possibly to supply the needs of the civil administration. This idea may gain more credence by the fact that, aside from possibly at Farmoor, there is no evidence for hay meadows in any other part of the Thames Valley or beyond during this period, and therefore its intro-duction is likely to have had some external stimulus. Certainly the value of hay fodder to the Roman state was well known, as a single cavalry *ala* needed 360 ha of grazing (Wacher 2000, 20). It is thought that hay was gathered in from 15-20 km around York (Wacher 2000, 20), and so the Claydon Pike/Thornhill Farm hay meadows would have been in quite a suitable location for providing for the needs of Corinium. However, aside from a possible military policing presence at some settle-ments during the late 2nd/early 3rd century (see above and Chapter 5), there is no real evidence for direct official involvement in any of the Thames Valley sites, and it is still quite possible that non-state markets alone were being catered for.

Aside from the Claydon Pike/Thornhill Farm area, which was particularly suitable for the production of hay (see Robinson, Chapter 14), it

seems that most of the low lying valley sites continued to concentrate on pastoral activity, although arable production was also a part of most settlements' economic structure. Horticultural crops such as fennel and coriander start to appear on a number of sites, and further down the Thames Valley at Mount Farm, the recovery of celery seeds has suggested the possibility of market gardening for the nearby town of Dorchester-on-Thames (Robinson 1992a, 58).

In many areas of the Upper Thames Valley field systems appear to have expanded, generally becoming more pronounced and regular. Furthermore, different zones appear to have been linked by systems of ditched trackways, suggesting that the agricultural landscape had become more defined (see above). This may indicate an increased emphasis on the control and ownership of land, although it is clear from the settlement pattern around Gravelly Guy that there were still a number of areas where communal land was probably utilised by a number of different groups (Lambrick and Allen 2004).

The picture from the Cotswolds is generally less clear than that of the Thames Valley, but it seems that mixed agricultural practices were the norm. Defined field systems are rare in this region, although this may partly be because of a lack of extensive area excavation around settlement sites. Small rectangular hedged enclosures were connected to the Ditchley villa compound and although these may not have been used for crops, the sizeable granary indicates that the estate must have incorporated large areas of arable land (Radford 1936, 52). Pastoral activity would also have been widespread, with a higher proportion of sheep grazing than in the Thames Valley due to the presence of more suitable land. From the later 1st century onwards, it is likely that the agrarian regimes in the Cotswold region became increasingly dominated by villa estates such as Ditchley, and this was especially so during the later Roman period (see Chapter 17).

The environmental evidence from Hatford indicated that this part of the Corallian ridge to the south of the Thames Valley was primarily short-turf grassland cleared of trees (Bourn 2000, 65), although most sites probably operated a mixed economy with some arable and pastoral. Further west in the Vale of the White Horse at Watchfield, the economy appears to have been largely pastoral with cattle being the dominant animal (Birbeck 2002, 288), as was the case in the Thames Valley. The extensive and pronounced field systems on the Berkshire Downs further south (mentioned above) indicate that arable land use was of major importance in this region, although 'blank' areas also indicate probable pasture land.

Overall, the evidence from different regions indicates that a great variety of agricultural regimes were in operation at any one time. The apparent increase of land turned over to arable activity in many areas during the Roman period probably reflects its increasing economic importance, as it would almost certainly have brought in greater returns than pastureland. The resulting pressure on pastureland may have led to the overgrazing seen in parts of the Thames Valley, and possibly to the introduction of hay meadows to provide animal fodder, which would have drastically reduced the amount of grazing land needed.

Industry

Prior to the Roman conquest, most industrial activity in the region would have been very local in scale, with communities providing for most of their own needs in matters such as ceramics and metal-work. Longer trade networks certainly existed (see below), but aside from possibly at Bagendon, no major pre-Roman centre of manufacture has yet been located in the region. At Bagendon there is some evidence for a variety of industrial practices, including the minting of coins which were no doubt distributed over wide areas (Darvill and Gerard 1994, 49). For some period after the conquest, it is likely that most communities continued as before, although new demands, created initially by the army and later by urban centres and civic authorities, would have ensured that the scale and variety of industrial output increased substantially. There was no major source of any metals in the region and so most of this material must have been imported, probably in raw form for use by local metalworkers. The primary raw material of the Cotswold area was Great Oolite limestone, which was used extensively for construction and other purposes. The massive developments at Corinium and Gloucester in the late 1st and 2nd centuries AD would have required huge volumes of suitable building stone, and a number of quarries have been located around the amphitheatre at Cirencester (Holbrook 1994, 84). Other types of building material such as timber, lime, sand and gravel must have been supplied from the Cotswolds and Upper Thames Valley region, and are unlikely to have travelled too far from the source of origin.

Ceramic building material production was a completely new industry that arose some time after the Roman conquest and probably reached its floruit in the 2nd century AD, when tiles were widely used as roofing material. Official brick and tile production is known within Gloucester (Heighway and Parker 1982), while at Minety – 12 km south of Corinium – there was one of the biggest civilian tile-works found in Roman Britain, with over ten kilns being located (McWhirr and Viner 1978). It is products from here that seem to have been transported via the site at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes, if this site's interpretation as a tile depot is correct (see Chapter 9).

A number of other civilian brickworks were probably located elsewhere in the region, some of which appeared to have had associated stamps such

as TPF, TCM and VLA (McWhirr 1981, 111). Non-official brick-stamps are very rare outside Gloucestershire and McWhirr (McWhirr 1981, 111) has suggested that civilian brickmakers were consciously following the municipal works in Gloucester. The volume of bricks and tile produced during the 1st and especially 2nd century AD would have ensured the need for large quantities of suitable clay, which was quite abundant in certain parts of the region. Large bands of Oxford Clay are found throughout the Upper Thames Valley (see Fig. 1.3), and they were utilised not only for brick and tile making, but also for pottery production. In Chapter 13, Booth noted that local pottery production centres were centred on north Wiltshire and probably west Oxfordshire, possibly around the Asthall/Wilcote area. It is likely that the scale of production in these areas increased substantially during the 2nd century AD as the markets became further developed, although this would also have ensured that more imported ceramics came into the region.

Aside from such comparatively large-scale industries, many small-scale enterprises also developed once Roman infrastructure had become established. Some of these crafts were no doubt rooted in traditional skills such as metalworking, although the products could be quite new. For example, a detached building outside Bath Gate in Corinium contained over 2000 hobnails and a smithing hearth, providing some evidence for industry at the town (Holbrook 1994, 84). Other skills would have been quite new to Britain, such as the mosaic-making, which in this region appears to have been centred on Corinium. The earliest mosaics here were dated to the mid 2nd century AD, although it was not until the late Roman period that the 'industry' became fully developed (McWhirr 1981, 116). Other skilled workers who would have operated within the region include painters, sculptors, carpenters, tanners, bone-workers, jewellery makers and oculists, the stamps of whom were found at Corinium and Lydney. It was ultimately the development of the market economy that enabled such specialised crafts to become established here, and many of them would probably have relied exclusively on official, high status and/or urban markets.

Communication and trade networks

The development of the market economy during the Roman period ensured that increasing amounts of surplus agricultural produce, raw materials and manufactured products needed to be transported to and from the varying market centres. Of course, trade networks across the region and beyond had already been established for a long time prior to the Roman invasion, and in the late Iron Age, high status sites such as Bagendon contained quite large quantities of imported goods (see above). However, when the region became part of the Roman province, the scale of trade would have increased

dramatically, placing greater pressure on new and existing transport networks to ensure the supply of goods was maintained. The major Roman roads through the region, although military in origin, would have been used for such a purpose, along with the increasing number of minor roads and trackways. It has already been suggested (see Sykes, Chapter 5) that livestock may have been moved on-the-hoof from sites such as Claydon Pike to markets at places like Corinium, while wheeled vehicles would almost certainly have been used to transport products and raw materials. Clear wheel ruts in some sections of Ermin Street corroborate this, as does the Roman cart linch pin found on the surface of this road (Mudd *et al.* 1999, 265). Wheel ruts were also noted in a trackway surface leading towards Ermin Street at Court Farm, Latton (Mudd *et al.* 1999, 126), and there is much evidence from within Corinium itself (Holbrook 1998). Water-borne transport may also have been of great importance in transporting materials to market centres, although there is perhaps surprisingly little evidence for this. The Thames itself would probably have been navigable to flat-bottomed river craft at least as for as Lechlade, and possibly up to Cricklade, where goods could have been transferred to carts to travel along Ermin Street, although this remains speculative at best (McWhirr 1981, 136).

In addition to the transport of local produce to and from market centres, there existed wider regional, national and Empire-wide trade networks. Booth has already commented upon the principal trading centres of pottery coming into the region, from areas such as the Severn Valley, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and south-east Dorset (Chapter 13). Much smaller quantities of pottery came from other regions such as the Nene Valley and New Forest, while imports of samian, amphorae and other ceramic products from Gaul, Spain, Italy and other areas of the Empire attest to much longer distance trade networks. The uneven distribution of products like amphorae, which are extremely scarce on lower status rural sites east of Lechlade, points to certain peculiarities in the trade networks. However, attempts to relate distribution patterns of certain ceramics to specific trade networks are very difficult, as no doubt there were a number of factors to do with chronology, status, politics and individual circumstances which may have affected supply and demand.

Other materials that were imported to the region include Millstone Grit from the Pennines around Sheffield, Kimmeridge Shale and Purbeck Marble from Dorset, Niedermendig Lava from northern Germany and Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. It is likely that iron was also brought from the latter destination, where the industry was possibly under official control (Walters 1992), while lead would probably have come from the known state-controlled mines in the Mendips. Trading routes and commodities would no doubt have fluctuated considerably over the course of the Roman period,

relating at least in part to the actual control of resources, whether it was the state, private organisations or individuals.

POWER AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES

The huge wealth of archaeological information from the Cotswolds and Upper Thames Valley does enable us to gain some small insight into the socio-political structure of the late Iron Age and Roman period in this region. The appearance of massive ditched complexes such as Bagendon, Salmonsbury and Grim's Ditch during the later part of the late Iron Age have been discussed above. They would seem to represent élite centres of power within the overall tribal area of the Dobunni, although this is certainly not to say that they were all equal in function and status. 'Dobunnic' society at this time was clearly in some state of flux, with substantial changes occurring in agricultural practices and settlement patterns, but this was in no way geographically or chronologically constant (see above). Studies of Dobunnic coins and their distribution have attempted to reconstruct aspects of the political situation of the period in terms of the various tribal leaders (van Arsdell 1994; Creighton 2000). However, it is far more difficult to trace any dynastic associations among the rulers named on this coinage compared with dynasties further south (Atrebates) and east (Catuvellauni/Trinovantes). The earliest inscribed issues were those of Bodvoc and/or Corio, perhaps ruling different parts of Dobunnic territory simultaneously in the later 1st century BC. Some coins of Bodvoc were the first to depict a bust on the obverse, and it has been suggested that this was perhaps influenced by coins of Tasciovanus, thus indicating some sort of political alignment with the north Thames kingdom (De Jersey http://athens.arch.ox.ac.uk/coins/). Other named rulers include Anted, Comux, Eisu, Catti and Inam (van Arsdell 1989, 272-83), although nothing is really known about the nature of any relationships. It is possible that one of these rulers was the Dobunnic leader was mentioned by Cassius Dio as submitting to Aulus Plautius in AD 43.

In reality it is far from certain how centralised power would have been during this period, although individuals – probably of some considerable influence – were certainly producing inscribed coins, and one of the mints at least can be placed within the oppidum at Bagendon. Furthermore, the construction of the massive earthworks at such sites would have required the effective mobilisation and control of large numbers of people. It is therefore likely that an increasingly hierarchical political structure was developing during the late Iron Age, albeit still operating within quite a heterogeneous landscape in terms of social and settlement organisation.

Archaeological indicators suggest that the conquest and its immediate aftermath had a negligible effect upon settlement organisation and material culture in the region, and therefore it is reasonable to assume that the indigenous political structure also remained largely unchanged at this time. The earliest military establishments lay along the lines of newly constructed roads such as Akeman Street and it is argued that these would have acted more as frontier bases for pushing into unfriendly territory further north and west than to suppress the native population (Darvill and Gerard 1994, 55; Henig and Booth 2000, 37). It is known that the Atrebatic territory to the south was placed under the client king Togidubnus, while the western Catuvellauni probably had a similar political set-up, at least during the early post-conquest years. It is therefore quite possible that at least the southern Dobunnic territory remained under semi-autonomous indigenous leadership for much of the early Roman period, with political power remaining in existing centres. The early Roman fort at Alchester lay on the boundary between the Dobunni and the Catuvellauni and would thus have played a key role in negotiating power structure at this time. It would thus have been possible for the Roman military to keep an eye on the western Catuvellauni, while also protecting the eastern Dobunnic region, which was presumably the area that had been previously encroached upon by their eastern neighbours.

It is also possible that there may have been some areas not under indigenous control which could even have become Imperial estates, either during this time or at a later period. This has been suggested by Henig for the area around Kingscote (Timby 1998, 187), although as Timby points out (1998, 432), it is very difficult to discern archaeologically, as the distinction is likely to be legal, not material. There is certainly no positive evidence for any of the sites within the Cotswold Water Park area being part of an imperial estate.

After the Boudiccan revolt in AD 61, Togibubnus's client kingdom supposedly underwent significant expansion, and it has been suggested that this may now have incorporated all territory south of Akeman Street (Henig and Booth 2000, 38). Whether or not this was the case, or whether there was a continuation of the possible early Dobunnic kingdom, it remains quite possible that the Upper Thames Valley and southern Cotswolds region was semi-autonomous until the end of the 1st century AD, despite traditional assertions that the *Civitas Dobunnorum* was established in the early Flavian period (Wacher 1995). This is not to say however that there would not have been great social changes occurring, especially among certain members of the native élite who may have started to re-negotiate power and status along Roman lines. The construction of villas during the later 1st century AD centred upon pre-Roman power centres is probably a fine example of such behaviour. Perring has argued that such distinct architectural and decorative arrangements were specifically designed to provide a setting for social

behaviour that followed Roman practice (2002, 212). It was also during the later 1st century – after the military presence had been withdrawn – that the main urban centre of Corinium was established. Taken together with the early villas, it does imply that significant socio-political changes were occurring at this time, at least amongst some of the élite. In a study of Romanisation in the Cotswold region, Clarke (1996) asserted that that there was very little social change among the élite around Cirencester, especially compared to area around Gloucester. It would certainly seem likely that the establishment of the Gloucester colonia and its *territorium* at the end of the 1st century AD would have had a much more disruptive effect upon the élite in this area (see Hurst 1999, 130). In addition, as expressed above, it is quite likely that the existing political structure remained largely intact in southern Dobunnic territory up until the later 1st century AD. However, the establishment of Corinium towards the end of the 1st century AD (*c* AD 75) would certainly have acted as a catalyst for significant social and political change in the region around it, and it is likely that the direct military presence would have bought about some social change before this.

Roman society was essentially urban in nature, with towns being required for effective civil administration to function (Faulkner 2000, 27). Furthermore, participation in Roman civic life depended upon the ownership of urban property, and therefore it was probably not until the late 1st and early 2nd century AD that any members of the native élite in the south Dobunnic region would have actively participated in Roman state administration. It must have been at this point that such leading local landowners (*decuriones*) would have formed the administrative council (*ordo* or *curia*) of the newly formed civitas, with responsibility for public works and tax collection. However, it must be stated that prior to the last quarter of the 2nd century, there is no evidence for particularly high status housing in Corinium (Holbrook 1998, 378), and so the primary residences for the élite may still have been rural. There is likely to have been greater scope for social and political advancement during the 2nd century, taking advantage of new economic opportunities. This is possibly reflected in the increasing number of villas and other medium to high status dwellings (eg aisled buildings at Claydon Pike and Somerford Keynes) from this period onwards – a similar phenomenon is seen in Sussex after the client kingdom became part of the province (Rudling 1998, 51).

It is certainly not the case however that the 'native élite' were a single body, all acting in the same way, to the same ends. The key to understanding the huge variety in settlement form, function and development in the region is the realisation that power was ultimately based upon social and political dialogue between individuals. There are always many different ways of gaining and losing social and political influence in complex societies, and it is generally through some level of personal discourse that such change is bought about. It has been pointed out on a number of occasions that 'Rome ruled though people' (Grahame 1998, 4), with men such as Agricola having huge resources available to establish bonds of patronage and clientage amongst large numbers of people. In such ways social change could eventually permeate all levels of society to varying degrees and in varying forms.

The considerable changes observed in settlement and landscape organisation during the early 2nd century AD undoubtedly had some kind of connection with widespread developments in social, political and economic spheres. This is clearly seen at sites such as Claydon Pike, where not only was the whole settlement re-organised but the material culture and economic infrastructure also underwent radical change (see Chapters 5 and 8). Such developments were probably not too long after the *curia* had been established in Corinium, and so may have been partly initiated by certain *decuriones*, operating from their newly built town houses and rural villas, perhaps to take advantage of the rapidly developing market economy. It has been suggested that a possible further stimulus for the comparatively rapid changes may even have been provided by specific political initiatives, or at least the side-effects of them (Henig and Booth 2000, 110). Hadrian's visit to Britain in AD 122 may be seen in light of such a suggestion, as in addition to the more obvious structural legacies, it is almost certainly the case that his presence would have had a profound social and political effect upon many aspects of life in Britain, especially among the élite classes. Although extremely tentative, it is possible to suggest that specific political initiatives associated with his visit may have created the circumstances by which the landscape in the Upper Thames Valley and elsewhere may have been more susceptible to change. Furthermore, the resources available to the emperor must have been vast, so that the network of patronage and clientage could have affected all aspects and levels of society. Black for example has interpreted the busts found at Lullingstone villa as representing ambitious local élite who may have entered imperial service upon Hadrian's visit (1994, 109).

Ultimately, the quite abrupt changes in landscape organisation and in some cases even social identity (see below) were probably due to a combination of socio-political and economic developments in the later 1st and early 2nd century AD, together possibly with specific political initiatives and the influence of networks of personal discourse associated with a direct imperial presence.

IDENTITY

The interpretation of identity within the archaeological record has been the subject of increasing academic debate over recent years, especially

within the context of Roman Britain (eg Allason-Jones, 2001; Hill 2001; Perring 2002; Carr 2001). One of the great preoccupations of Romano-British archaeology has been with aspects of 'Roman' versus 'Native' identity, and in particular the resistance to or acceptance of Rome. Such aspects of the 'Romanisation' debate have been criticised on a number of occasions (eg Barrett; 1997; Woolf 1998; Grahame 1998; Perring 2002), as it is realised that neither Roman or native identity stand as isolated concepts to be measured against each other. Instead, as discussed above, there was more likely to have been a complex pattern of power relations based upon personal discourse, with many objects having quite different meanings within different contexts. A perceived association with official state power is certainly one aspect of identity which needs to be explored, but it should be viewed alongside others such as gender, class and age (Hill 2001, 18). Furthermore aspects of material culture must not be examined as isolated indicators of identity, but viewed along with other contextual associations, including patterns of food and drink consumption and the built environment.

The first concept to make clear at this stage is that there must be some link between material culture and identity – and therefore socio-political structure – even if the meanings behind such links are far from clear or indeed constant (Grahame 1998; Greene 2002). Therefore at sites such as Claydon Pike, the substantial and quite rapid changes in material culture, economic practices and settlement organisation in the early 2nd century AD must reflect conscious changes in identity and social structure (see Chapter 5). In this instance, the aisled buildings with painted plaster and tiled roofs, uptake of hunting and fishing, changes in butchery practices, new ways of preparing drinks, adoption of different hairstyles and the wearing of Roman style footwear are all consistent with a relatively sudden increase in social. The appropriate symbols of social status and power would have been used by the inhabitants, and this must be seen within the context of a local landscape which had just become fully incorporated into the Roman political system (see above). Interestingly, intra-site analysis at Claydon Pike revealed significant differences in the material culture of the two main inhabited parts of the site, which mirrored the notable structural differences. Thus objects such as hairpins, hobnails and toilet articles, which generally only appear on site during Phase 3 (early 2nd-early 4th century AD), are concentrated in the aisled building compound, suggesting that there were different social strategies with regard to personal appearance within the settlement status (see Cool, Chapter 5).

Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes, despite also having abrupt changes to the settlement pattern at around the same time, has no evidence for any associated developments in matters such as personal appearance or patterns of food consumption (see Chapter 9). This may in part be because of a much lower intensity of occupation, but also presumably because the lower status inhabitants at this site did not actually undergo so much in the way of social change.

At other settlements in the region, especially those of perceived lower status, the nature and development of personal identity is sometimes difficult to discern, although this is often due to the comparative lack of personal objects found at such sites. Carr (2001) has examined changes in identity within certain non-élite sites in Roman Britain, in terms of body-related artefacts through time. Thus, the general increase apparent in objects such as hairpins, brooches and toilet articles may suggest that people were taking more trouble over personal appearance and grooming during the late Iron Age and early Roman period, although the social meaning of such artefacts could vary greatly both chronologically and geographically (Carr 2001, 121). In particular, it is reiterated that not all 'Roman-style' artefacts were used to create a Roman style of life, as many may have been incorporated into indigenous ways of expression (Carr 2001, 121). As ever, it is only when all contextual considerations have been taken into account, the nature of identity may be better understood. At Thornhill Farm for example, there was a comparatively large number of brooches of many different types, which contrasts with the paucity of other objects on site, especially those which may be considered high status (Jennings *et al.* 2004). It therefore seems that brooches may have been seen as particularly important at this site for matters of personal identity and social expression, and may even have served to help differentiate the inhabitants from others in the vicinity. In addition, its has been suggested (Jundi and Hill 1998, 126) that such personal items may well be associated with periods of social stress, and so their proliferation at Thornhill Farm may also be associated with the eventual abandonment of the site in the early 2nd century AD (Jennings *et al.* 2004).

Of course personal appearance is not the only way of expressing identity in a social setting. Meadows (2001) for example has suggested that the high percentage of specialist serving-type ware at the essentially low status site at Watkins Farm may indicate that the wealth, status and therefore group identity of the inhabitants could have been expressed through the giving of food to the local community.

Ultimately, the expression of personal and group identity could take many different forms and is likely to have been quite fluid, especially in times of social stress. Furthermore, such changes were undoubtedly more frequent and pronounced within the upper echelons of society, who would have had to adapt quickly to new socio-political situations if they were to maintain and increase their power.

SACRED SPACE AND RITUAL PRACTICE

Religious expression within the Iron Age appears to have been largely integrated within domestic spheres, or else set among natural features such as springs, rivers, lakes and bogs. Thus at Warrens Field, Claydon Pike there is evidence for structured deposits within roundhouse gully terminals and pits within the site (see Chapter 3), while a similar phenomenon is noted at Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004). The beliefs behind such practices remain unknown, although Hill (1995, 28) has suggested that for some sites in Wessex it may represent the remains of feasts which have been deposited in a deliberately structured way. It is probable that such traditional integration of ritual and domestic activity continued through into the late Iron Age and Roman period, as suggested for example by the double horse burial at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979, 132) and structured deposits at Gravelly Guy (Lambrick and Allen 2004) and Barton Court Farm (Miles 1986, microfiche 8:B7-B12). Such continuity of Iron Age depositional practices into the Roman period has been highlighted by Scott (1991), and suggests that underlying belief systems probably persisted to a large degree in most if not all levels of society.

The concept of specialised constructed sacred space appears only to have become fully developed in Britain during the Roman period, although there are a small number of late Iron Age shrines dispersed throughout the south of the country (Smith 2001, 67). In the Upper Thames Valley there are no convincing examples of specialised shrines prior to the Roman period, and even after this such sites appear to remain quite rare. To the east at Frilford a Romano-Celtic temple was constructed in the mid to late 2nd century AD, continuing until the late 4th/5th century. The temple appears to have been part of a large religious complex spread over 30 hectares, which included a substantial amphitheatre (Bradford and Goodchild 1939; Hingley 1985; (Lock *et al.* 2003). The complex lay near to the river Ock, a tributary of the Thames, and was on the tribal/civitas boundary between the Dobunni and Atrebates (and possibly also the Catuvellauni) – a factor which may have contributed to its initial establishment. Further north, 8 km south of Alchester, lay another large temple site at Woodeaton, also situated on a tribal boundary, between the Dobunni and Catuvellauni (Goodchild and Kirk 1954). The first temple is thought to have been constructed in the later 1st century AD, although the presence of Iron Age brooches and coins suggest earlier activity of some kind. Later modifications included a substantial masonry temenos wall built in the later 2nd century (Goodchild and Kirk 1954, 19), and it seems to operated right up until the very late Roman period and probably into the 5th century. The wealth of finds from the site have been studied extensively by Jean Bagnall-Smith (1995; 1999), and include icono-graphic representations of Mars, Venus, Cupid and Minerva, along with images of eagles and a number of miniature weapons.

There are no other known sites comparable to Frilford or Woodeaton within the Upper Thames Valley, although judging from the numbers of altars and sculptural fragments, it is highly likely that further temples and shrines of some kind must have existed. For example the roadside settlement at Gill Mill contained a relief of Mars and a figure of a *Genius Loci*, both of which are likely to have come from a shrine (Bagnall-Smith 1995, 201), while an altar depicting a *Genius* was recovered from a possible river crossing shrine at Bablock Hythe near Northmoor (Henig and Booth 2000, 42). A probable shrine has recently been excavated upon the Corallian Ridge overlooking the Thames Valley at Coxwell Road, Faringdon (Weaver and Ford 2005). The excavations revealed part of a substantial masonry footed circular structure interpreted as a shrine on the basis of form and associated artefacts, which included a small number of coins, a copper alloy bracelet and an iron spearhead (Weaver and Ford 2004).

At Claydon Pike, there is some evidence to suggest that a religious precinct may have existed within the centre of the site, probably established around the mid 2nd century AD (see Chapter 5). However, nothing is really known of the nature of the rituals practised there, and its interpretation must remain quite tentative. Evidence for a religious focus at Somerford Keynes is equally enigmatic, although the presence of abnormally large numbers of 1st- to early 2nd-century brooches and coins does suggest that a shrine existed in the vicinity, possibly at the river crossing (see Chapter 9). Furthermore, the presence of fragments of the Capitoline triad may indicate that the earlier focus was succeeded by a *capitolium*, possibly indicating some official interest either within or near the site. The presence of large quantities of coins and personal objects at Leaze Farm near Lechlade may also be indicative of a religious site (see Chapter 12). There are an increasing number of the ritual sites which are characterised by votive offerings but have minimal or no structural remains, such as at Frensham in Surrey (Grahame 2001), Lowbury Hill (see below) and the earliest phases at Harlow (France and Gobel 1985) and Wanborough (O'Connell and Bird 1994). The Leaze Farm site has never been properly investigated, and that is was a religious focus, perhaps associated with the nearby settlement at Wigmore, must remain a possibility.

To the north of the Thames Valley in the Cotswolds, large amounts of religious sculpture has been found (Henig 1993) along with a number of temple sites. Near to the source of the Thames at Hailey Wood Camp, Sapperton, is a possible temple, with a double ditched enclosure along with various structural material and small finds (Moore 2001). Further north-east, located less than 1 km from Chedworth villa, was the remains of what

appears to have been a very substantial Romano-Celtic temple overlooking the River Coln, dating early 2nd to 4th century AD (Baddeley 1930). The size of the temple, the unusual nature of the villa and the quantity of religious iconography recovered from the area has led Webster (1983) – not unreasonably – to suggest that the whole site may in fact have been a large pagan religious complex, although it seems to have contained Christian elements in the later Roman period (see Chapter 17). One of the better known temple complexes in the Cotswolds – thanks to meticulous excavations between 1977 and 1979 – was at Uley, on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment overlooking the River Severn (Woodward and Leach 1993). A large (*c* 50 x 15 m) sub-rectangular enclosure with central posthole structure appear to represent the earliest religious focus on the site, dating from the early-mid 1st century AD (Woodward and Leach 1993, 238). In the early 2nd century AD the site was levelled and a masonry temple complex constructed, at the same as the major developments at nearby Frocester Court (3 km distant) and possibly the initial construction of Woodchester villa, just 5 km away.

Other known temples in the region include those within the settlements at Wycomb (Timby 1998) and Bourton (Renfrew 1977), though neither is well understood. At Corinium itself, despite the considerable quantity of religious sculpture, including part of a Jupiter column, no actual temples have yet been located. Further east in Oxfordshire is the temple site at Lees Rest, which lies within the boundary of Grim's Ditch near to the villa at Ditchley. The site has not been properly investigated, but geophysical survey has revealed a concentric triple ditched enclosure with a probable entrance on the south-eastern side (Henig and Booth 2000, 129). Among the objects recovered from the site was a small stone head thought to be of Mercury and a number of brooches (Bagnall-Smith 1995, 200).

South of the Thames Valley on the eastern edge of the Berkshire Downs was a probable temple site at Lowbury Hill, situated within a large walled enclosure (Fulford and Rippon 1994). No actual remains of a temple or shrine have been recorded, but large quantities of finds were recovered, including almost 900 coins, large numbers of brooches, and a number of iron spearheads, some of which were clearly for ceremonial use (Bagnall-Smith 1995, 194). The main period of use for the sacred site appears to have been in the later Roman period, although there is evidence for activity of some kind from the later Iron Age.

In total the evidence for constructed sacred space in the Upper Thames Valley and much of the region immediately surrounding it is not as great as further west in parts of Gloucestershire and Somerset, even during the early-mid Roman period. The Thames Valley itself is particularly lacking in temple sites, although the quantity of iconography from the region suggests that smaller shrines may have been established in a number of places. This lack of temples reflects the comparative lack of other Roman-style structures in the Thames Valley, most notably villas (see above). Throughout Roman Britain a close geographical and chronological correlation between temples and villas has been demonstrated (Smith 2001, 144), and it is highly likely that the majority of rural temples were paid for and maintained by the local élite villa-owning class, and situated on their land. Both temple and villa would have been highly visual local landmarks and could have been used as a way of expressing social status within the context of the Roman provincial socio-political system. Furthermore, the fact that many temples were positioned on or near prominent local landmarks and were sometimes associated with older monuments, may have provided a strong link to the landscape and the past, which could have helped legitimise social positioning.

CONCLUSION

The landscape of the Upper Thames Valley underwent tremendous changes during the late Iron Age and Roman periods, although there was always considerable heterogeneity in terms of settlement form, economic regimes and social structure. The region lay on the borders of three major tribal (and later civitas) boundaries, with Dobunnic territory probably centred upon the Bagendon/Cirencester area, and the Atrebates to the south and Catuvellauni to the east. Late Iron Age society in these regions appears to have been in a state of flux, with increased political hierarchy and centralisation probably leading to the establishment of a number of élite power centres, such as at Bagendon, Salmonsbury and Grim's Ditch. Together with factors like changing environmental conditions and population pressure, such socio-political developments may account for the developments in settlement patterning in the Upper Thames Valley, with a number of sites either being newly established, abandoned, or shifting in location. An increase in agricultural specialisation at this time led to the establishment of a number of dedicated pastoral settlements on the lower gravel terraces and floodplain of the valley such as Claydon Pike.

The Roman conquest appears to have made very little immediate difference to the patterns of settlement organisation, economic regimes or social structure in much of the area. It seems possible that the southern Dobunnic region – including the Upper Thames Valley – was part of a client kingdom until the later 1st century AD, in much the same way as the Atrebates further south. Military sites were certainly established nearby (Cirencester, Alchester etc), although these are likely to have been as bases for further advances, rather than to suppress the native population. A system of major roads was also constructed, along which were a number of nucleated settlements arranged in a

distinct hierarchy that suggests official involvement of some kind. The military withdrawal, establishment of Corinium and construction of villas during the later 1st century AD hints at much greater socio-political changes at this time, at least among certain members of the élite classes. Certainly by the time that Corinium had become properly established as a major urban centre at the start of the 2nd century AD, it is likely that the leading local landowners were part of the council (*curia*) which would have been largely responsible for running affairs within the newly formed civitas. This undoubtedly led to significant changes in social practices and identity in order that individuals could successfully operate within a region that was now a well established part of the Roman Empire.

It may have been at least in part due to such developments in élite socio-political circumstances that widespread changes in land-use occurred across much of the Upper Thames Valley and some areas beyond during the early 2nd century AD, including all of the key CWP sites in this volume. Some settlements were abandoned, and many others were newly established or altered radically, while economic regimes also changed on a number of sites. A market economy would now have been quite well developed within the region, and the need for increased profits from land may have been another factor behind the early 2nd-century disruptions. Further north in the Cotswolds there is far less evidence for sudden settlement change, possibly because many of the estates in this region were directly controlled by leading members of the civitas élite.

The socio-political and economic developments could have created the underlying conditions for landscape change, but it may also have involved more direct political initiatives, especially if – as is quite possible – most of the changes occurred within a single generation. The huge variation in terms of landscape reorganisation at this time may be partly explained by the way in which power and social influence was spread via personal discourse throughout the social strata. Thus networks of clientage and patronage were established which would ensure that the fortunes of some individuals might increase while others could decline. These networks are likely to have been quite fluid over time, which may help account for the large variety in subsequent settlement development.