

LATE ROMAN BRITAIN IN TRANSITION, AD 300 - 500

A Ceramic Perspective from East Yorkshire

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to identify archaeological evidence for 5<sup>th</sup> century east Yorkshire, with particular reference to ceramics, and to understand that evidence in terms of the dynamics responsible for the dramatic social transformation witnessed in the century AD 400 - AD 500. It takes issue with existing approaches to the understanding of the 'Romanisation' of Britain as perceived through archaeological material, tracing their origins to the intellectual and political *milieu* of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is argued that historical materialism offers a more appropriate and productive framework for study, and such an approach is applied to the specifics of the archaeology of southern Britain and east Yorkshire. Conventions of the classification of Romano-British ceramics, and the interpretation of assemblages thereof, are critiqued in similar terms. Alternative general principles of classification are proposed, and a detailed re-classification of the fabrics and forms of the (calcite-gritted) coarse-wares manufactured in the region in the 4<sup>th</sup> century presented. The results of the analysis of assemblages from two deeply-stratified sites in York recorded using this new classification, in particular the sequence at Wellington Row, are argued to indicate the manufacture of distinctive fabric variants as late as the middle decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and possibly beyond. The implications of this, and of the organisation of production for which the ceramics themselves provide evidence, are considered, and a new model for the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD in east Yorkshire, and southern Britain as a whole, presented.

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## Preface

This thesis was conceived as a response to a straightforward conviction; that the fifth century in southern Britain - the part of the island which had previously comprised the Roman province of *Britannia* - remains all but impenetrable to archaeological research. Direct, material evidence for settlement is scarce. Compared to the wealth of archaeological data deriving from the preceding three-and-a-half centuries, it is negligible. Consequently, of necessity, interpretations of early post-Roman Britain have been short on evidence and long on speculation. Whilst attempting to elevate study of the period from sketchy final chapters of books on 'Roman Britain', recent overviews have in effect resorted to one of two positions. Either everything stopped in the fifth century (cf. Esmonde-Cleary 1989) or, in essence, nothing really changed (cf. Dark 1994).

The fundamental problem is one of recognition. Notoriously, distinctive and chronologically diagnostic artefacts of the period AD 400 - 500 are few and far between in Britain. Classes of material fundamental to the construction of Romano-British artefact chronologies, notably coinage and distinctive metalwork, appear absent or, at best, scarce. Few late Roman ceramic types are acknowledged as having continued in production from the fourth even into the early fifth century, and still fewer are accepted as being uniquely diagnostic of the period AD 400 - 500. The systems of classification which have proved effective in ordering and understanding the substantial, and often highly standardised material culture of the imperial province cease to be operable in the ensuing century. Little if any progress has been made, or even systematically attempted, in adapting or refining them in an attempt to bring it into sharper focus. The absence of widely applicable artefact chronologies is compounded by the difficulties of radiometric dating in this period; complications in the C14 calibration curve, the seeming lack of late Roman timber suitable for dendrochronological determination. In consequence, assemblages of the materials which furnish so much of archaeology's potential to explore the past, notably animal bones and palaeoenvironmental evidence, can rarely be attributed to the period with any confidence. Most of the 'generic' research questions typically pursued through archaeology are compromised in this period by a simple lack of data.

This absence of evidence has come to be accepted as the *leitmotif* of the fifth century - its defining characteristic. Most recent commentaries, including at least one major work of synthesis, have seen fit to accept the paucity of material at face value, treating it as a representative picture of life as it was lived in the fifth century (Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 143). But the argument is not persuasive. The explanations offered for the apparent disappearance of the artefact types which are the stock-in-trade of Romano-British archaeology lack coherence and conviction. Furthermore, it should be noted that the fifth century seems to be materially impoverished not merely when compared with the prodigious material output (by insular standards, at least) of the first to fourth centuries AD. It compares unfavourably in this respect with the pre-Roman Iron Age, the Bronze Age, the Neolithic, and even the dispersed hunter-gatherer communities of the Mesolithic. The very completeness and synchronicity of such an apparent collapse in production ought to arouse suspicion. Its acceptance as a genuine historical phenomenon, and the explanations offered to account for it, are in fact predicated on a particular characterisation of the nature of Roman society and culture, and of why and how their material expression had been adopted and perpetuated in Britain over the preceding three-and-a-half centuries.

This thesis examines a specific body of material - assemblages of coarse, hand-made pottery - from sites in what is now eastern Yorkshire. The calcite-gritted and related wares which comprise these assemblages are known to have been in production in the second half of the fourth century, and it is currently accepted as possible that this may have continued into the first or second decade of the fifth (one researcher going so far as to extend their possible date range until "AD ?450"; Monaghan 1997). The research detailed here attempts to identify and quantify variability in form, fabric and characteristics of manufacture and decoration, and to investigate the possibility that aspects of this variability may be time-dependent. Chronological control is provided by the well-stratified, coin-bearing deposits from the site at Wellington Row, York, and the composition of coarse ceramic assemblages from such sites compared with other settlements in eastern Yorkshire. The intention is to demonstrate that sub-sets of the late Roman coarse-ware corpus in this region may be attributable to the middle and possibly later decades of the fifth century, thus providing the means for the identification of contemporary settlement.

The research was undertaken in the belief that the apparent lack of fifth century material culture reflects twentieth century archaeology, and the assumptions of its practitioners, more than it does fifth century reality. Some of these assumptions - amongst them those which have long provided the basic framework for the interpretation of Roman Britain - can be traced back to the intellectual and political conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A lack of sustained, critical historiographic study has allowed them to take firm root and determine the essential elements of an orthodoxy drawn directly from liberal political economy. This is not to say that nothing has changed. The seventy years separating Francis Haverfield's *The Romanisation of Roman Britain* from Martin Millett's *The Romanization of Britain* have witnessed not only an exponential increase in the data available to those researching the province, and of the resources devoted to retrieving it, but the gradual development of a more rigorous, systematic and critical approach to interpretative constructs and their application. Millett's *Romanization* specifically aimed to ground the archaeological study of the province in such 'new' thinking, and in the ten years since its publication a range of post-processualist critiques have called the traditional *verités* of the subject still further into question. Nevertheless, at two crucial levels - the 'meta-narrative' of Romano-British archaeology (typically rejected by post-processualist studies as a valid interpretative construct, and consequently remaining intact by default), and the 'grassroots' classification and interpretation of material culture (often dismissed as 'order-for-the-sake-of-it' but invariably, inevitably, continuing to be deployed), the assumptions of the social and intellectual context in which Romano-British archaeology was nurtured endure in contemporary interpretations. This is at least in part responsible for the shortcomings and inconsistencies of our current understanding.

The fifth century picture is further complicated, and interpretation has been profoundly influenced, by the purported ethnicity of material culture in immediately post-Roman Britain. 'Roman' and 'Anglo-Saxon' material cultures are held to be distinct, immutable entities, created and employed in direct and deliberate opposition to one another. Although this study takes as its starting point a class of object which unarguably originates in fourth century - 'late Roman' - Britain, and attempts the

identification of developments which can be attributed to the 'sub-Roman' fifth, the acceptance of an *a priori* division of material culture on ethnic grounds (however 'ethnicity' may be defined) would in effect predetermine, at least in broad terms, the conclusions reached. A more considered, materialist view of the role of material culture is required if this epistemological trap is to be avoided. The prevailing assumption that artefact chronology (in a 'sub-Roman' context) and ethnicity (in an 'Anglo-Saxon' one) represent the 'essential' realities of the period, and thus provide the archaeologist with an unproblematic, if technically difficult agenda, must be challenged. Both need to be understood within an interpretative framework which recognises that notions of typological development and ethnic representation are, in part, dependent on assumptions about the role(s) and function(s) of material culture within a given society, and that the utility and relevance of these concepts will vary with those assumptions.

Consequently, although the thesis presents empirical research on specified data, the interpretative context of the research requires setting out at some length. **Chapter One** thus comprises an overview of the historiography of the fifth century AD. As traditionally seen by Roman archaeologists the period represents the end of the 'classical' period of British history. Historians seeking the origins of medieval and modern English institutions perceive a pivotal episode of transition, in which Roman institutions survived to be adopted and adapted by their English successors, or else a *tabula rasa* on which a new, wholly Germanic society was built from scratch. Each of these perceptions has left its mark on the way the fifth century has been approached, and on the substance of the interpretations which have been offered.

This first chapter identifies the characterisation of the Roman economy as crucial to understanding both the dynamics of social change in Britain between the first and fifth centuries AD, and the processes of Romanisation which produced the material culture which constitutes the archaeological evidence. **Chapter Two** broadens its perspective accordingly, essaying a critical evaluation of the nature of the economic underpinnings of the Roman world. The legacy of Mikhail Rostovtzeff's great economic history of Rome, first published in 1926, is contrasted with the 'socially embedded economy' favoured by A.H.M Jones, Moses Finley and their successors, and

the influence of these different characterisations on the understanding of Roman Britain considered.

**Chapter Three** begins with a critique of both ‘formalist’ and ‘substantivist’ approaches to the Romano-British economy. Marxist perspectives, particularly de Ste Croix's explanation of the dynamics of Roman imperial expansion and Wickham's definition of the ‘tributary mode of production’, are argued to be essential in understanding patterns of production, distribution and exchange, and the transformation of these, in late antiquity. An alternative formulation, drawing on and developing these historical materialist studies, is argued to be a more appropriate and productive framework for research. This model of Romanisation, and the class-based social foundations of economic practice, is applied to the specific case of Roman Britain. The chronology, processes and impact of Romanised social practice between the first and later third centuries are examined, and a more detailed account of Britain in the fourth century offered as a starting point for the study of the fifth.

**Chapter Four** considers Romano-British ceramics, in the context both of their classification and recent study, and the social and physical landscapes in which they were manufactured and used. Prevailing approaches to interpretation betray the influence of economistic assumptions about Roman Britain argued in previous chapters to be inappropriate. More detailed examination of classification and terminology reveals that these same notions influence such superficially empirical issues as typology and chronology. Modified criteria for classification are proposed, which privilege manufacturing process, the situation of ceramic manufacture in wider agrarian production, and the role of the vessels themselves in the articulation, storage and consumption of surplus. These interpretative issues are expanded upon to propose a model for ceramic production and use within the Romano-British agrarian economy. The major coarse-ware industries of the early second to late fourth centuries, with extensive distributions across southern Britain from a number of different production areas, are briefly considered with reference to this model.

**Chapter Five** interprets the Roman archaeology of eastern Yorkshire in the light of the model developed in Chapter 3. It seeks to explain the specific processes and

chronology of Romanisation in the study area, and to provide an appropriate context for the ceramic research subsequently presented.

**Chapter Six** presents a summary of ceramic production in Roman east Yorkshire. An overview of evidence from the later pre-Roman Iron Age to the third century AD leads on to discussion of the major Crambeck industry of the later third and fourth centuries. The main focus of this chapter, and the starting point for researching the possible existence of recognisable fifth century ceramics, is the calcite-gritted coarse wares of eastern Yorkshire. Their pre-Roman origins, developments in vessel types and forms, extent of distribution, and volume of manufacture through the first four centuries AD are interpreted in terms of the overall model for ceramic production detailed in Chapter Four, and specifically in the light of arguments presented in that same chapter regarding the significance of major coarse-ware ‘industries’ in understanding contemporary social relations. This discussion raises important issues of classification, typology, and interpretation. The forms, fabrics and techniques of manufacture of the region’s calcite-gritted ware output, and evidence for vessel function and the organisation and location of production, are presented. Existing schemes of classification are then considered. It is argued that they pay inadequate attention to (and in fact usually ignore) potentially significant variation in the composition and characteristics of ceramic fabrics and in the morphology of vessel rims, attributes which may relate to chronologically sensitive variations in the organisation of their production. A revised system, consonant with the analytical tenets of previous chapters, is proposed, with the detailed methodology employed presented as Appendix 2.

**Chapter Seven** applies the revised classification of forms and fabrics to the calcite-gritted coarse-ware assemblage from Wellington Row, York, using the well-stratified sequence of coin-dated deposits to determine which (if any) characteristics of fabric and form vary consistently over time. This involves re-interpretation of the complex structural sequence on the site, which is set out at some length in Appendix 3. Variability in the fabrics and forms present in quantified assemblages from successive phases of activity on the site is then investigated, to see whether any can be identified as having chronological significance. The results and conclusions of this analysis are then

applied to assemblages from three other sites, one (York Minster) in York, and two (Crossgates, Seamer; Elmswell) in east Yorkshire.

Finally, **Chapter Eight** attempts to draw together the conclusions of the study in terms of the identification of a distinctively fifth century component amongst the east Yorkshire calcite-gritted wares. This is accompanied by a consideration of the changed social context of ceramic production in the fifth century, including discussion of the implications of this study for received notions of British / Anglo-Saxon ethnicity in the classification and interpretation of ceramics, and in our more general understanding of post-Roman east Yorkshire. Finally, the apparent differences between fifth century trajectories in Britain and the continental north-western provinces are considered in terms of the historical materialist model employed throughout the thesis.

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“But certainly it was fun while it lasted  
And I got my honours degree  
And was stamped as a person of intelligence and culture  
For ever wherever two or three  
Persons of intelligence and culture  
Are gathered together in talk  
Writing definitions on invisible blackboards  
In non-existent chalk...

“But in case you should think my education was wasted  
I hasten to explain  
That once having been to the University of \_\_\_\_\_  
You can never really again  
Believe anything that anyone says and that of course is an asset  
In a world like ours;  
Why bother to water a garden  
That is planted with paper flowers?”

*Autumn Journal*, Canto XIII  
Louis MacNeice, Autumn 1938.

## Declaration

This thesis is a work of original research. Some of the ideas it develops, particularly with regard to east Yorkshire, are discussed in an article published in the year the research began (Whyman, 1993). Aspects of late Roman agrarian and ceramic production developed in Chapters 3 and 4 were presented in a paper delivered to the Study Group for Roman Pottery at a meeting held in Ipswich in June 1997.

## **Chapter 1 : Approaches to the end of Roman Britain**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The fifth century marks the most decisive transformation in the history and archaeology of southern Britain in the first millennium AD. A period of one hundred years - three generations - witnessed the demise of a Roman imperial province, and the society and culture which had been created under its aegis, and the settlement of an immigrant population whose language and - it has been argued - culture, institutions and social practices were to provide the basis for a distinctively English society and identity. The chronology and scale of these changes, and the processes involved, have been the subject of discussion and debate since the late nineteenth century, when Francis Haverfield established Romano-British archaeology as a coherent academic discipline, as successive generations of researchers have accepted, extended, modified or rejected the assumptions and conclusions of their predecessors.

Many of these developments in academic opinion have resulted from new readings of classical and insular texts, and the aggregation of a body of archaeological evidence increasing both in quantity and quality. The most significant - if least acknowledged - influences, however, have been the social, economic and political circumstances of researcher and audience; the contemporary context from which no research into the past can be wholly abstracted. Equally, whilst interpretations have changed in response to both of these factors, it will be argued that the central issues around which opinion and debate have been deployed - the 'metanarrative(s)' of the subject - have proved strikingly consistent. This chapter seeks to identify these issues, and to illustrate how various descriptive accounts and explanatory schema have been applied to the fifth century, adopted, rejected, or reformulated (often, very apparently, in accordance with contemporary experience) without seriously examining or questioning the assumptions underlying the research agenda within which they assume relevance.

Until very recently, Roman Britain *per se* has been miserably served by historiographic study, and the task of assembling the material necessary for detailed critical readings of the subject has only just begun (cf. Jones 1987; Webster and Cooper 1996;

Mattingly 1997). This may in part reflect the fact that it is seen as familiar, readily understood as a direct analogue of modern society (cf. Johnson, 1997, 309); much that has been written on the subject certainly gives this impression. An example from a recent work on the period under consideration here will serve to make the point. In a book entitled *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*, Nicholas Higham's opening, historiographic chapter ('Hengest and the Historians: an Introduction'; 1992, 1- 16) makes *no reference at all* to the history of research into Roman Britain, let alone offer any critique of it. The implicit assumption seems to be that Roman Britain is unproblematic, a well-documented interlude of 'rational' economic behaviour and civilised society closely approximating our own. Little need here to consider the development of writings on the subject in the light of their contemporary circumstances.

Of course, it is precisely such attitudes which historiography, and its more aggressive post-processualist offspring *de-construction*, is supposed to challenge and uproot. In Higham's defence (although, given his title, the complete absence of *any* discussion of the development of the archaeological study of Roman Britain is hard to excuse) he would have faced severe difficulties in providing a critical resumé of the history of Romano-British archaeology. The sheer quantity of research, publication and synthesis undertaken during the twentieth century is daunting. Given the paucity of secondary sources, the would-be historiographer is confronted with a vast and unwieldy corpus of material to synthesise and contextualise. The author of an interpretative overview such as Higham's, already ambitious in scope, may perhaps be forgiven for declining such a task.

What follows is not intended as a comprehensive historiography of (what had been) the Roman province of *Britannia* in the fifth century. It cannot even pretend to be a systematic review of writings on the subject. Even a summary critique of the significance and interpretation of classical and insular *documentary* sources, sparse though these are by the standards of continental north-western Europe in the same period, would constitute a thesis in itself. Central to this thesis, however, is the notion that, whilst not irrelevant, the fractured narrative provided by contemporary chroniclers should *not* provide the starting point from which archaeological research into the fifth century proceeds.

What the chapter does attempt to do is to situate interpretations offered by those who have moulded academic opinion on the *archaeology* of sub- and post-Roman (southern) Britain, in the light of the economic circumstances and socio-political preoccupations of their contemporary world (distinct, except in the most general terms, from their immediate personal experience of it), and to consider their particular treatments of the overriding themes which have dominated the subject. It will be argued that these have largely been determined by the experience of the world's first industrial capitalist economy in the nineteenth century, and its need to legitimise its actions and impact at home and abroad. In the first instance, however, it is necessary to consider the contribution of a man writing almost a century earlier, whose vision of the Roman empire and the reasons for its demise can be recognised across two hundred years of subsequent scholarship; Edward Gibbon.

## 1.2 Edward Gibbon and *Decline and Fall*

### 1.2.1 Gibbon and the Roman empire

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) published the six volumes of his magisterial history *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (henceforth *Decline and Fall*) between 1776 and 1788 (Jordan 1977, 6). A polyglot European of the Enlightenment, at his most comfortable amidst French culture and society, Gibbon saw the European nation states of his day, united by their cultured values and civilisation, as a loosely agglomerated 'republic', a polity analogous to the 'golden age' of the Roman empire under the Antonines (AD 138 - 169) (Furet 1977, 162). He devoted little attention to the marginal province of Britain, his brief account thereof representing no more than a few brushstrokes on the canvas of a vast panorama of imperial decline. Consequently, more recent studies of the end of Roman Britain have rarely made significant reference to Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* usually receiving no more than a passing mention.

This neglect is overly sanguine. Gibbon's monumental work of scholarship effectively defined the terms in which the Roman empire was to be understood, and its fall

explained, for the better part of two centuries. The echo of Gibbon's judgements and preoccupations concerning the western Roman empire is recognisable in much subsequent Romano-British scholarship, simply because his authority established what that empire had been, how and why it had prospered, and why it ceased to do so; 'Edward Gibbon...created the most memorable of all Roman Empires: *his* Roman empire...Gibbon's thesis [explaining the causes of Rome's fall] is not to be found in the *Decline and Fall*. His thesis *is* the *Decline and Fall* itself, a self-contained artistic creation.' (Jordan 1971, 230).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in a six volume history written over a period of more than a decade, Gibbon's explanations of imperial decline are not always consistent (ibid., 214). Several themes of enduring importance to nineteenth and twentieth century interpretations may be recognised in *Decline and Fall*. The first of these is the notion of a second century 'Golden Age' under the Antonines, against which the shortcomings of later centuries should be measured; a proposition which had only a weak historical tradition supporting it in the late eighteenth century, but was consonant with a strong European *literary* tradition reaching back as far as Macchiavelli (ibid., 216). The archaeological reflex of this view has been noted by Peter Brown; '...huge classical remains...from...Tunisia to...the Lebanon seem to us nowadays to sum up a timeless ancient world. They were, in fact, the creation of only a few generations of baroque magnificence, between Hadrian (117-138) and Septimius Severus (193-211)' (Brown 1971, 17).

Gibbon's explanation for this 'Golden Age' rests on a second historical precept; the determining role of moral, decisive and strong leadership (in this, seminal, case provided by Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius), confronting corrupt institutions and a biddable, dependent population ('a race of pygmies', incapable of enjoying 'a rational freedom'), to ensure that the 'vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue & wisdom'. A strong emperor imposing social order was not enough; the late third century had seen the restoration of traditional institutions and discipline of state by Diocletian and Constantine, but the moral rot of the state had been neither seen nor understood. In such circumstances the exercise of absolute power would lead to despotism, and the breakdown of the institutions, values and allegiances which held Roman society together. The health of the empire, and, ultimately, its fate, was finally dependent on the

character of the emperor (Jordan 1971, 220). This view at once embodies the individualist strand of Enlightenment thought, of which Gibbon's scholarship is a classic example (ibid., 223), and has an obvious resonance with the Roman Imperial cult, with the emperor personified as the embodiment of the state. Themes of (elite) individual causality, and - implicitly or explicitly - the marginality of the wider population in influencing the course of events in late Roman Britain have dominated research until comparatively recently, in repeated affirmation of Gibbon's heroic view of '...the exceptional individual, able to understand his circumstances...[and]...to order his life despite historical sources working against him...men who overcome, through superior gifts or hard work, their circumstances' (ibid., 228-9).

To Gibbon, the emperor was - or should be - the personification of civilised values, lifestyle and actions, those qualities which distinguished the Roman world from its antitheses; the barbarian societies beyond its frontiers (Furet 1977, 166; Pocock 1977, 110). His beliefs regarding the foundations of civilised life will be considered in detail at the beginning of Chapter Two, closely bound up as they are with his notion of the role of commerce in creating and sustaining Roman civil society. It should be noted here, however, that they presented him with a conclusion he was anxious to avoid. The same civilising process, and its attendant provision of luxury - which he considered the fundamental achievement of Rome - could be construed as leading directly, perhaps inevitably, to a situation in which the 'corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice' (cited in Jordan 1971, 219), distracted from their duties as citizens and their allegiance to the empire, and ultimately contributing in large measure to its downfall (Pocock 1977, 105). This (for Gibbon) appalling paradox was to be avoided at all costs, and he went to some lengths to attribute the apparent 'decadence' of the later Roman centuries in the west to the malign effects of despotism, as opposed to the fruits of commerce (ibid., 112).

Roman civilisation could not be seen, however, as an automatic outcome of the combination of commercial exchange, the institutions of state, legal citizenship and a cultivated, literate elite. Something more was required; a supra-material sense of 'Roman-ness'. These pillars of a civilised society 'had to be firmly swaddled in an integument of prejudices and values' which held in check 'the enduring human propensity for...vanity,



cruelty, fanaticism' (Brown 1977, 42); the barbarian within. The most extreme manifestation of the breakdown of these 'prejudices and values' within the empire was furnished by Gibbon's *bete noire*; the monasticism of the Christian church.

The legacy of Gibbon's preoccupations in *Decline and Fall* may be seen throughout subsequent writings on the subject of Roman Britain. The most notorious of these - the role of the rise of Christianity in the disintegration of the Roman world - has for the most part been disavowed, with the Church being seen primarily as a *preserver* of Roman social order and culture. In the British context, traces of a late Roman Church have been urgently sought as a means whereby these were sustained into the fifth century and beyond (cf. Thomas 1980). In all other important respects, however, his precepts have defined the terms in which much of the debate about the nature and causes of the ending of Roman Britain has been conducted. The binary polarity of 'civilisation' and 'barbarism'; the impositions of a despotic state on a civil society founded on commerce; the image of a society, falling away from a second century 'Golden Age', enfeebled and ultimately failing through decadence and lassitude; the determining role of individual character and moral worth in historical causality; the importance of the values of and allegiance to an abstract collective identity - *Romanitas* - transcending specific institutions and material expression. These themes pervade subsequent writing on the subject. The fifth century has been, and to a great extent continues to be, conceptualised in terms originally defined by Edward Gibbon before the French revolution.

This specific reference is deliberate. Notable for its absence from *Decline and Fall* is recognition of the possible significance of internal social upheaval in explaining the breakdown of the western empire. In the course of writing his great work, Gibbon demurred from the view of his hero and model, the second century Roman author Tacitus, by minimising the significance of revolt and uprising in the Roman world. He saw such events as '...an ugly disfigurement - a stain on the social fabric or a wound on the body politic...essentially external...disagreeable but susceptible of cleansing or healing' (Bowersock 1977, 27). This attitude has proved tenacious, particularly in Britain. The final three volumes of *Decline and Fall* were published on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1788, Gibbon's fifty-first birthday (Jordan, 1977, 6). Within a year France, the cultural heartland of the author's

'republic of Europe', and his own favoured *milieu*, had erupted in violent and bloody revolution. By the time of his death, in 1794, the armies of Bonaparte's dictatorship - fighting initially in the name of *la révolution*, subsequently in that of *l'Empereur* (and observing ceremonials and protocols and bearing insignia consciously modelled on those of Rome) - threatened to conquer Europe; a more literal return to the Roman imperial past than any Gibbon had envisaged. In his writings post-1789, he became a convert to Tacitus' belief in the significance of internal conflict, seeing the French revolutionaries as 'the new barbarians' (Bowersock 1977, 34, 27). It is intriguing to consider the effects on subsequent scholarship had Gibbon begun writing *Decline and Fall* ten years later than he actually did.

Gibbon's most significant contribution to the study of the fifth century in Britain - and it is of great significance - was in providing the very notion of what the Roman empire *was*, and a suite of reasons offered in explanation for its fall. As mentioned, Britain itself figures but briefly in *Decline and Fall*, reflecting the paucity of written evidence, as well as its marginality within the Roman world, particularly as Gibbon viewed and narrated it. But his views on the province do merit consideration as the first detailed historical overview of the events of the fifth century, with narrative and causality determined by the available historical sources. More importantly, they introduce attitudes to Britain, and the Britons, which presage those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries..

### 1.2.2 Gibbon and the end of Roman Britain

Gibbon's narrative of the period between the elevation to emperor in Britain and Gaul of the usurper Constantine in AD 407, and the 'Descent of the Saxons', which he attributed to AD 449, is fragmented inasmuch as it is related as discrete episodes within the wider narrative of the western empire. It does, nevertheless, embody a coherent and consistent view of the former province. Following the 'Honorian rescript', Gibbon assumed that a devolved civil authority, Roman in inspiration and practice, was maintained until finally extinguished, following a long drawn-out struggle, by the 'warlike barbarians' (Bury 1909, vol.IV, 373). (Given the entirely documentary nature of the sources available to him, there was no reason for Gibbon to consider otherwise). He owns up, in a footnote, that 'I

owe it to myself, and to historic truth, to declare that some *circumstances* in the paragraph are founded only on conjecture and analogy.’ (Bury 1909, vol.III, 373 footnote 184).

His ‘conjecture and analogy’ is of interest in that it attributes specific characteristics to the British sundered from Rome. These very clearly project contemporary judgements regarding the political effectiveness and moral worth of different forms of society and government onto the fifth century historical tableau, and in so doing appear to sketch Gibbon’s notion of ‘Britishness’ (or, more correctly, ‘Englishness’). It is a notion which crystallises his assumptions about ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarian’ societies, and in its specifics was to be influential in subsequent interpretations of the period. Consequently, it merits brief consideration.

Gibbon saw the *de facto* independence of Britain as beginning when, in response to attacks from ‘the savages of Ireland and Caledonia’ the Britons ‘...no longer relied on the tardy and doubtful aid of a declining monarch...[but]...assembled in arms, repelled the invaders, and rejoiced in the important discovery of their own strength’ (Bury 1909, vol.III, 371). Subsequently, magistrates acting on behalf of the usurper Constantine were expelled, ‘...and a free government was established among a people who had so long been subject to the arbitrary will of a master’ (ibid., 372). These events ‘...dissolved the artificial fabric of civil and military government; and the independent country...was ruled by the authority of the clergy, the nobles and the municipal towns’. Each of the latter ‘formed a legal corporation...[with]...powers of municipal government...distributed among...magistrates, a select senate, and the assembly of the people, according to the original model of the Roman constitution. The management of a common revenue, the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction, and the habits of public counsel and command were inherent to these petty republics’ (ibid., 373). Alongside these ‘rising republics...hereditary lords of ample possessions...aspired to the rank of independent princes, and boldly exercised the rights of peace and war...[their]...villas...converted into strong castles...the produce of the land...applied to purchase arms and horses, to maintain a military force of slaves...peasants, and...licentious followers.’ (ibid., 374).

Gibbon’s use of language makes his opinion of the relative merits of these different

models of government clear, and his outlook is made explicit; ‘...the *princes* of Britain relapsed into barbarism, while the *cities* studiously preserved the laws and manners of Rome’. In this situation, ‘public strength ...was consumed in obscure and intestine quarrels, and...a successful leader...might subdue the freedom of some neighbouring cities, and to claim a rank among the *tyrants*’. Nevertheless, the episcopal councils of the insular church provided a context in which democratic deliberations between ‘the two national parties’ could take place; ‘...the episcopal synods were the only councils that could pretend to the weight and authority of a national assembly...the important affairs of the state...might be freely debated; differences reconciled, alliances formed, contributions imposed, wise resolutions often concerted, and sometimes executed...’ In referring to these councils, Gibbon proposes that ‘there is reason to believe that, in moments of extreme danger, a *Pendragon*, or dictator, was elected by the general consent of the Britons.’ (ibid., 375).

In his account of the barbarian (Saxon) assault on Britain, Gibbon praises the Britons’ courageous and stubborn defence, in marked contrast to the capitulation of other provinces; ‘While the continent of Europe...yielded, without resistance, to the Barbarians, the British island, alone and unaided, maintained a long, a vigorous, though an unsuccessful struggle.’ (Bury 1909, vol.IV, 159). He insists on the survival of a substantial British population following the Saxon conquest; ‘...neither reason nor facts can justify the unnatural supposition that the Saxons of Britain remained alone in the desert which they had subdued.’. And, rather contradicting previous statements, he attributes the Germanic character of the England which was to emerge as indicating that ‘the arts of Rome were less deeply rooted in Britain than in Gaul or Spain...the native rudeness of the country and its inhabitants was covered by a thin varnish of Italian manners.’ (ibid., 165).

This narrative constitutes a substantial filling out of the bare details provided by contemporary and near-contemporary sources. Gibbon amplifies them using his own ideas about government and society, drawing on the ideals of the Enlightenment, themselves developed from classical models, and recent British and European history. The independence initially gained by Britain represents the throwing off of illegitimate, despotic authority by a newly self-confident, independent country, governed by a coalition of interests - clergy, nobles, towns - with democratic legitimacy clearly residing with the latter. Seen from his

own perspective, such an account would not do significant damage to the history of Britain in the century prior to Gibbon's life. It also invokes classical precedents; the municipal 'petty republics' appear almost as Greek city-states. The notion of the election of a dictator ('Pendragon') by a national council in time of danger is surely drawn straight from the career of Julius Caesar<sup>1</sup>, the unspoken comment on the fate of democratic societies which resort to such measures being found in the elevation of Vortigern (ibid., 156), his subsequent invitation to the Saxons, and its consequences. This is significant. Gibbon, like other Whigs of his day, idealised the Roman Republic, viewing it as the nearest equivalent to (British) constitutional government; "a martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against the enterprise of an aspiring prince" (cited in Jordan 1971, 218). Just as Caesar's assumption of dictatorial power over the Republic had swept aside the democratic institutions of the state, paving the way for the autocratic rule of the emperors initiated by Augustus (Jordan 1971, 217-9), so the election of a dictator by the episcopally-convened council of Britain foreshadowed, as a direct consequence, the destruction of the island's democratic institutions, and with them the very basis of civilised society. In spite of the courage of its citizens in resisting the tide of barbarians, whilst the remainder of continental Europe was rapidly overwhelmed by them, civilised life and democracy were ultimately extinguished, and the Britons finally reduced to a subject peasantry under Saxon overlords (Bury 1909, 166).

Following the secession (as he saw it) of Britain from the Roman empire, Gibbon paints a picture of autonomous, nationally recognised and municipally-based civil government prevailing on the island, built on the society, culture and institutions introduced by Rome, but finally standing alone as an independent, democratic nation. The threat to this early outpost of municipal democracy was twofold; tyranny and barbarism. Tyranny was threatened by the 'hereditary lords [and] independent princes' of Britain; barbarism by the Angles and Saxons. The preservation of civilised society in the face of these threats was central to Gibbon's contemporary preoccupations; the oft-cited Chapter 38 of *Decline and Fall*, 'General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West' (Bury 1909,

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viz. the eclipse of the Roman Republic and the triumph of imperial autocracy.

vol.IV 172-81) devotes as much attention to its prospects in eighteenth century Europe as it does to explaining the demise of Roman power there.

Gibbon's account of the period AD 407 - 449 in Britain can thus be seen as a microcosm of his treatment of the entire western empire; a descent from exemplary representative democracy (on Gibbon's terms this meant representative of those with property and birthright) to barbarian overlordship, in this case within a generation. As such, it fleshes out the asides and tirades of classical and insular sources with an image of an idealised eighteenth century bourgeois democracy, built on a confederation of classically-inspired city republics, in his native Britain. It thus stands as an exemplar and precursor of that form of government and society which he identified in his eighteenth century 'republic of Europe', and more specifically the British constitutional democracy which he regarded as its most elevated manifestation. Subsequent studies of 5<sup>th</sup> century Britain have spent much more energy in asserting, criticising and defending the specific detail and nuance of historical and archaeological evidence than in questioning interpretive tenets which they owe in large part to Gibbon.

### 1.3 The nineteenth century; antiquities, nationalism and imperialism.

*Decline and Fall*, and the account of fifth century Britain which it incorporates, were the result of Gibbon's prodigious historical and literary talents applied to the range of classical narrative sources. That the Roman empire had also left physical traces of its existence, surviving in the contemporary landscape across Europe, was already a commonplace by the eighteenth century, although they figure only marginally in Gibbon's account. The beginnings of the systematic recording of these antiquities, and the incorporation of their study within a coherent intellectual framework, was to be the achievement of the nineteenth century.

#### 1.3.1 Mommsen

The foundations for the *material* study of the Roman empire were laid by the German scholar Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903). This is significant not simply because, for

the first time, it created the potential for the very existence of an archaeology of the Roman empire. The specific route whereby material remains became incorporated into (and were used to extend) historical narrative, and the social processes which these remains were assumed to indicate, were to have far-reaching consequences for subsequent method and interpretation in Roman archaeology.

Amidst a massive scholarly output spanning the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century, Mommsen's most celebrated works are the five volumes of *Römische Geschichte*, published between 1854 - 85, and several volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Freeman 1997, 29). In the fifth and final volume of the *Geschichte*, published in 1885 and translated into English as *The Provinces of the Roman Empire* (ibid., 31), Mommsen offered an account of the provinces which emphasised the similarity of each with the other due to their shared Roman institutions. In supporting his case he made significant use of the evidence furnished by Latin inscriptions (ibid.). This served both to introduce material evidence into mainstream discussion of the history of the Roman empire (ibid., 40), and to identify the Latin language (and its material manifestation - inscriptions) as a central component of a homogeneous Roman culture (ibid., 43). The evidence of inscriptions thus served to confirm the essential cultural unity of the Roman provincial world, with the adoption of the Latin language the fundamental expression of that unity.

Freeman (op.cit.) observes that Mommsen was writing in the context and climate of German unification, in the wake of the revolutions which had shaken continental European states in 1848, and that the first three volumes of the *Geschichte* had been written as a direct response to these events (ibid., 30). The notion of diverse provinces united in a shared culture was an obvious motif for the cause of combining a patchwork of central European kingdoms and principalities into a single polity. What merits further emphasis, however, is the nineteenth century concern with *language* as the defining characteristic in the identification of 'the principle of nationality', and thus of the nation state (Hobsbawm 1962, 96) - the very underpinning of the notion of a unified Germany. In the Europe of the middle nineteenth century a shared language was coming to be equated - amongst the middle class cadres who increasingly held power (or at the very least were forcing conservative regimes into 'liberal' economic and political reforms) - with a shared culture and national identity.

Thus linguistic acquisition, as evidenced by inscriptions, implied, by extension, the adoption of culture and 'values' specific to that identity. Archaeology would eventually provide the means to trace such acculturation, with 'Roman' objects and monuments standing as their direct manifestation. Mommsen's work, and the broader assumptions of the political and intellectual context within which it was conducted, thus underpinned the notion of 'Romanisation', deployed by Francis Haverfield as the central intellectual construct in the synthesis and interpretation of Roman material from Britain in the early decades of the twentieth century (Freeman 1997, 43-4). Subsequently, this same construct has all but determined understanding of the character and mechanisms of change in fifth century Britain.

### 1.3.2 England, 1800 - 1880; class conflict and Anglo-Saxon identity

It has been noted that the stimulus for much of Mommsen's scholarship, its form, assumptions and conclusions, was provided by the revolutionary year of 1848; the 'springtime of nations' in Europe. The events of that year also provoked a scholarly response in England. The following is taken from the preface to J.M. Kemble's *The Saxons in England*, dated December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1848 and first published in 1849 (Kemble 1876, v-vi);

'On every side of us thrones totter, and the deep foundations of society are convulsed. Shot and shell sweep the streets of capitals which have long been pointed out as the chosen abodes of order : cavalry and bayonets cannot control populations whose loyalty has become a proverb here, whose peace has been made a reproach to our own mis-called disquiet. Yet the exalted Lady who wields the sceptre of these realms, sits safe upon her throne...secure in the affections of a people whose institutions have given to them all the blessings of an equal law.

'Those institutions *they have inherited from a period so distant as to excite our admiration* [my italics], and have preserved



amidst all vicissitudes with an enlightened will that must command our gratitude. And with the blessing of the Almighty, they will long continue to preserve them; for our customs are founded upon right and justice, and are maintained in a subjection to His will who hath the hearts of nations as well as of kings in his rule and governance.

‘It cannot be without advantage for us to learn how a state so favoured as our own has set about the great work of constitution, and solved the problem, of uniting the completest obedience to the law with the greatest amount of individual freedom.

‘...I believe these things to be worthy of investigation, from their bearing upon the times in which we live, much more than from any antiquarian value they may be supposed to possess...for the admiration and instruction of...[England’s]...neighbours.’

Freeman describes the first three volumes of Mommsen’s *Geschichte* as ‘more...a political pamphlet than a history’(1997, 30). Kemble’s intent, in publishing the first major study of Anglo-Saxon institutions and society, could scarcely have been more explicit. His Saxons are a world away from Gibbon’s ‘rude and turbulent’ barbarians embroiled in ‘dark and bloody...intestine discord’(Bury 1909, vol.iv, 158); they are a ‘brave and united people’ whose ‘rule was fair and easy, and only rendered harsher in punishment of ...attempts at rebellion...’, respecters of property, rank and the rule of law (Kemble 1876, 20-1; ch.IV; ch.V); fitting ancestors for the contented and non-revolutionary masses alluded to in his preface.

That Kemble intended *The Saxons in England* to convey a contemporary social and political message is apparent. What merits further consideration is the appeal to Germanic, *Anglo-Saxon* institutions and traditions as the medium for this, in contrast with Mommsen’s invocation of Roman civilisation as a model in Germany itself (an example, of course, previously held up by Gibbon for Britain). The most important reasons are also the most obvious ones. The Germanic settlement of southern Britain could be identified as having

resulted, ultimately, in a self-identified nation state speaking a common, Germanic, language. Conversely, Roman Britain represented a remote province of an ultimately defeated alien power, wherein legitimate authority and private landholding had seemingly been overthrown by a less sophisticated, less civilised people. Appeal to such a precedent is unlikely to have seemed attractive to middle-class scholarship and its audience in the mid-nineteenth century. The contemporary social and political context in Britain offers further insights into the origins of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, with implications for the historiography of the fifth century.

The half century before the publication of *The Saxons in England* had been amongst the most traumatic the country had experienced. A society in the throes of industrialisation, and the attendant development of a capitalist system of production, was engaged for over twenty years (1793 - 1815) in a war with France, causing taxes to be raised and the national debt to increase fourfold (Hobsbawm 1975, 95). For much of this period Britain faced the very real prospect of foreign invasion. Dramatic post-war reduction in state demand for equipment, foodstuffs and soldiery was exacerbated by disastrous harvests in 1815-16 (*ibid.*, 97). The impact of factory production and rural enclosure on the working population was devastating. Overall, the result was a spate of localised rebellions and insurrections in the period between the end of the Napoleonic wars and the early 1830s; it has been observed that the country was probably closer to revolution in this period than at any time before or since (Thompson 1963, 889, 898). Perhaps most decisive - if inseparable from the aforementioned - was the exponential growth of industrial towns and cities, in terms of both overall numbers and individual size, a phenomenon itself inextricably linked with an exponentially rising population, from the early nineteenth century (Hobsbawm 1968). By the 1830s the first mass working class protest movement - Chartism - was articulating discontent with its condition, and demanding political and economic reform. Numerically the movement achieved its greatest extent and represented its greatest threat in the early 1840s (*idem.* 1975, 121), and almost certainly represents the 'mis-called disquiet' alluded to in Kemble's preface.

Quite apart from the events of 1848 in continental Europe, social unrest in Britain, and the potential for it to lead to violent uprising, thus exercised the minds of the ascendant

commercial and manufacturing class and a declining, but still powerful, landowning class. Understanding the reasons for the burgeoning study of 'the Anglo-Saxons' in this context requires brief consideration of two issues; the rise of national history as a 'mode of discourse', and the creation and consolidation of a working-class self-identity in Britain in the half century between 1780 and 1830.

Religious beliefs, and schism, heresy and dissent therein, have throughout history served as a medium for the expression of political claims and social beliefs and aspirations. Britain in the eighteenth century bears this out, with the various Dissenting churches and sects being obvious examples (cf. Thompson 1963, 54-8). The period after the French revolution was also, however, a period of increasing secularisation (Hobsbawm 1975, 229), which saw historical and antiquarian study develop as a means for the creation and promotion of exemplars and value-systems tailored specifically to the nation-state. The notion of an Englishman's Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and its representation as an embodiment of specified values, was by no means new (cf. Lucy 1998, 6-9), and had indeed been invoked as a (largely unsubstantiated) model for a reformed political constitution by radical organisers in the late eighteenth century (Thompson 1963, 94-5). In *The Saxons in England*, Kemble grounded his interpretation in careful, detailed and accurate research, and deployed the result as a bulwark for conservative political philosophy against the claims of radicals and the revolutionary potential of the working class. The medium provided a discourse through which specific qualities of English temper, personality and social institutions could be imputed to their inheritance from an ancient past. It also benefited (in the view of its practitioners) in that, whilst engaging with a theme - 'Englishness' - which was common currency amongst the population at large, its source materials, unlike the bible, were inaccessible to the bulk of even the literate population; 'It seems...the duty of those whose studies have given them a mastery over its details, to place them as clearly as they can before the eyes of their fellow-citizens.' (Kemble 1876, vi). Scriptural authority would perforce remain unchallenged.

Thus was the notion and characterisation of 'Englishness' appropriated to serve the status quo against those who would invoke it as a template for political and social change. The contrast between Gibbon's and Kemble's portrayal of the Saxons has already been

remarked on. Clearly, for Kemble to have invoked 'rude and turbulent barbarians' as the ancestral English would have been wholly at odds with his purpose. That Gibbon, who was fully aware of the Anglo-Saxon origins of medieval English society (Bury 1909, vol.IV, 166-7), could present the Saxons in this way reflects the changed social and political situations of the 1780s and the 1840s. In the earlier period the need for a unifying national origin was not pressing. Whether or not it was a view held by Gibbon personally, many of his class regarded the contemporary English worker as closely akin to the barbarian, even when their purpose was to evangelise them (Thompson 1963, 31)<sup>2</sup>. In this period such an attitude on the part of the middle and upper class could be held with comparative impunity, and could be justified with reference to the living conditions endured by its objects. The succeeding decades were to see working people defend their livelihoods through measures against property (and on occasion person) which Gibbon would have considered to epitomise barbarism. In the process, the working population of England 'came to feel an identity of interests as between themselves, and as against their rulers and employers'; to define themselves as a 'working class' (Thompson 1963, 11). From the 1830s the potential for this class to assert itself on a scale beyond isolated, localised insurrection, and to challenge and overthrow the established order, was very real.

By the middle of the century, moreover, it was becoming increasingly concentrated, as the growing population re-located from the countryside to sprawling industrial cities on a scale never witnessed in Britain before or since. Traditional lifestyles were rent asunder and replaced by a new, almost unimaginably different environment and way of life, wholly alien to what had gone before and frequently the harbinger of misery, hardship, sickness and death. As links to rural communities which stretched back over centuries were severed or dissolved within the span of a generation, new group identities were forged, in factories and in the densely populated urban neighbourhoods which housed their workers. In these circumstances appeals to a timeless, unalterable, localised and essentially rural order, its social hierarchy apparently legitimised by centuries of precedent, were unsustainable. The

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John Wesley noted in his *Journal* of passing through Huddersfield in 1757, 'A wilder people I never saw in England...the men, women and children filled the street as we rode along, and appeared just ready to devour us'

new conditions had been created out of the break-up of that very order.

The threat of the adoption of collectivist and revolutionary ideologies - *The Communist Manifesto* was first published in 1848 - by these densely concentrated populations loomed large. Furthermore, the new urban working class was increasingly in a position to learn about these for itself. The period from the 1870s saw massive advances in popular education, through both official education policies (the number of primary school teachers increased seven-fold) and the developing working class movements themselves (Hobsbawm 1987, 263). The information and attitudes to which this increasingly literate urban population was exposed to through the mass press (reaching circulations of a million and more by the 1890s) remained, nevertheless, in the hands of bourgeois capitalists (ibid., 238).

For the ruling class of Victorian England the situation required the propagation of an overarching identity, emphasising the shared traits and *common interest of all of the English people*, self-evident in the present and legitimised by its origin in the remote past. The sense of identity had to be carried *within the individual*, and connect individuals to one another by means of perceived shared traits identified as characterising the nation as a whole; and, consequently, an ultimate common interest. These abstract values could, in turn, be inextricably associated with contemporary state institutions, political structures and, indeed, economic practices. To invoke an ancestry of wild and uncontrollable barbarism threatening property and civilisation *a la* Gibbon was obviously asking for trouble.

The transformation of the Saxons from Gibbon's 'rude and turbulent barbarians' to Kemble's 'peaceful and united people' may thus be seen as a response to the need for a collective, national identity which sought to legitimise a new social order. Specifically, this identity was grounded on customs and values inherited from the remote past. That this 'common heritage' of Englishness was shared by the whole nation was essential to its credibility and to its purpose. Nevertheless, the role of the Classical inheritance (scholarship, architecture) for the Victorian middle- and upper-classes in distinguishing themselves from the working population indicates the preservation of attitudes Gibbon would have recognised and subscribed to. Any straightforward equation between a 'Roman' ruling class

and an 'Anglo-Saxon' population would represent an absurd oversimplification; it is unlikely that anyone thought in such literal terms. But the creation of an historical discourse in which contemporary society was mediated with reference to the remote past provided the rationale for subsequent scholarship. The conflicting dictates of an economy and society predicated on rapid change were to demand a re-orientation of that discourse later in the century, which served to crystallise 'Roman : Saxon' as an opposition fundamental to historical and archaeological research generally, and to the study of the fifth century in particular.

#### 1.4 1880 - 1914 : The advent of Romano-British archaeology

##### 1.4.1 Landscape and community: the antiquity of English society

Kemble's universalisation of an 'Anglo-Saxon' character and temperament, which manifested itself in timeless social and political institutions, was developed in the final decades of the nineteenth century in the context of the English landscape itself. Frederic Seebohm published *The English Village Community* in 1883 (Seebohm, 1926). The book argued for much greater *continuity* of tribal British and Roman social structures into Saxon and medieval England, arguing, in effect, for a social continuum in which pre-Roman British settlements, the Roman villa, and the Anglo-Saxon manor represented temporally distinct (and distinctive) manifestations of the same phenomenon (ibid., 437). Seebohm nevertheless saw the origins of *modern* society as the *displacement* of the 'communistic' institutions of village and tribe, marking a complete and irrevocable break with the past (ibid., 439); the extinction of the 'paternal government' and communism which he regarded as having retarded social progress and the freedom of the individual (ibid., viii; Austin 1990, 21).

In responding to *The English Village Community*, Paul Vinogradoff (it is noticeable how often the evangelists of 'Englishness' in this period were emigrés) argued that, in Britain, villas and their estates, which Seebohm had seen as widespread, were in fact far from ubiquitous, and that a greater inheritance in fact derived from Celtic antecedents. Specifically, '...under cover of...extensive lordships of the Emperor, of senatorial magnates, and of central cities, a crop of...communalistic practices came up which prepared the ground

for the coming in of new barbarian tides' (Vinogradoff 1911, 87).

A number of significant points may be drawn from the writings of Seebohm and Vinogradoff. The first is, of course the very notion of 'continuity', which has exercised such influence over subsequent research into, and understandings of, the 5th century AD. Secondly, Seebohm used Hitchin, *Herts* - the home counties village in which he was domiciled - as the focus of a study in which he sought to identify the survival of landscape elements and organisation from the remote past. English landscape history had been born. Less obvious, but equally significant, are three points regarding Vinogradoff's 1911 publication. Firstly, no issue is taken with Seebohm's overall assumptions regarding the distinctness of ancient and modern society; what is at issue is a scholarly debate about the remote past, shorn of its explicit social and political message which is consequently accepted by default. Discussion is seemingly (although not, of course, actually) set adrift from any specific political position, and early Britain becomes a subject for its own sake, studied by disinterested scholars in the dispassionate pursuit of factual accuracy.

There are two other significant aspects to Vinogradoff's conclusions. Firstly, he emphasises the survival of tribal 'Celtic' institutions throughout the Roman period; the 'very incomplete Romanisation of the Britons' (ibid., 119), a conclusion which echoes (and may in fact have derived from) F.J.Haverfield (below, 1.4.2), and which remains a staple of the subject to this day. Secondly, it is notable that the Anglo-Saxons have reverted to being 'barbarian tides', a marked *volte face* from Kemble's doughty, loyal yeomanry. The reasons for this are to be found in the European political circumstances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, themselves bound up with the position of Britain in an increasingly global economic system.

#### 1.4.2 F.J.Haverfield (1860 - 1919) and 'Romanisation'

In the century leading up to the publication of Mommsen's *Geschichte*, the archaeology of England was being progressively documented in the 'county histories'; more accurately, as R.G. Collingwood noted in 1936, 'collections of material for history'

(Collingwood and Myres 1936, 468). These volumes contained much accurate information about Roman antiquities, albeit that ‘...the general equipment of historical and archaeological learning in the light of which the local facts are interpreted is often defective...’ (ibid.), and were to provide the starting point from which the narrative of Roman Britain provided by classical sources would be applied to archaeological remains on (and in) the ground. Contemporary with the *Geschichte*, from the middle of the nineteenth century, they were augmented by county journals dedicated (for the most part) to archaeological discoveries (ibid., 472-3) in response to the increasing rate of archaeological discovery which resulted from the creation of the infrastructure of an industrial economy. The fragmented nature of the archaeological coverage of Britain contrasts with the contemporary overviews provided by Mommsen (notably the *Geschichte* and his *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; Freeman 1997, 30), a difficulty subsequently bemoaned by both Haverfield in 1913 (Haverfield and MacDonald 1924, 87), and by Collingwood in his preface to the publication which remedied the situation (Collingwood 1930, vi).

It would be no exaggeration to say that Francis Haverfield effectively invented the discipline of Romano-British archaeology. The 400+ entries in his bibliography - consisting almost entirely of notes and journal articles (Haverfield and MacDonald 1924, 41-57), published between 1888 and 1920, indicate the extent to which he was the ‘clearing house’ for information concerning Roman Britain in this period. His extension of the interpretation of archaeological data to objects other than inscriptions served to formalise Mommsen's model of language adoption as the more widely applied notion of cultural ‘Romanisation’. This in turn provided the conceptual framework on which a synthesis of the archaeology of Roman Britain could be established; realised in 1912 as *The Romanisation of Britain* (Haverfield 1912).

This milestone in Romano-British studies was, however, more than the result of one man's industry and obsession. It was created in the context of an economy and society which increasingly relied on, and sought to justify, the creation of a colonial empire. Prior to 1914 Britain stood unrivalled as the world's foremost imperial power. The pace of colonisation and conquest, which had been ongoing since the eighteenth century, had increased dramatically from the 1840s onwards, as an exponentially expanding manufacturing sector



sought raw materials to convert into finished goods, and new markets to sell them in (Hobsbawm 1968, 128). There was a twofold justification for this appropriation. Firstly, the spreading of religious enlightenment - i.e. Christianity - to peoples previously condemned to the darkness of their own 'primitive' beliefs and superstitions. Secondly, and closely associated with this, the nurturing of 'civilised' societies; i.e. societies which were organised in accordance with the needs of capitalist production and markets, and as a result possessed a bureaucratic infrastructure whose members - whether British or indigenous - could adopt the values, appearance and lifestyles of their middle-class counterparts in England. The superficial similarities between British colonial society, and the Roman province of *Britannia*, as comparable examples of high, civilised cultures bringing enlightenment and prosperity to benighted natives were too obvious to miss. Rome, and specifically Roman Britain, could stand as exemplar of the beneficent effects of civilised *imperium* - as practised by its nineteenth century successor. This sub-text has coloured academic views of Roman Britain ever since; the gradual incorporation into explanations of the fortunes of the Roman province of the economic imperatives which drove the nineteenth century British empire has determined the tenor and conclusions of a host of subsequent studies.

The extent to which Haverfield was a knowledgeable actor in this imperial discourse has been the subject of recent debate; was he a conscious apologist for British imperialism, or merely a conscientious academic going about his business (Hingley 1996; Freeman 1996)? This focus on individual motivation misses the essential point; Haverfield's research was carried out in a political, social and intellectual climate in which an ideology of liberal humanism, in which the individual was sacrosanct, sought to reconcile itself with an economic system based on expropriation at home and abroad. In spite of Freeman's assertion to the contrary (*ibid.*), Haverfield's statement that '...based (shall I say?) on Free Trade and Home Rule - it [the Roman empire] assimilated the provincial populations in an orderly and coherent civilization...it taught men...to live in social harmony together as citizens and as individuals' (Haverfield and MacDonald 1924, 287) is as concise a definition of the nineteenth century British establishment's justification for its imperialism as one could hope to encounter. The noticeable archness of its expression also suggests that its author *was* explicitly conscious of the parallels. His observations regarding the [Roman] empire

bringing the benefits of civilised society 'for those peoples capable of adapting to it', which he considered the ancestral British to have been (Haverfield 1912, 14), also betrays an underlying belief in innate racial characteristics. Presumably those incapable of adaptation would serve to provide the labour and raw materials on which civilised society were to be built. Contemporary British attitudes to the Irish provide an uncomfortable instance of the consequences of this line of thought.

Haverfield's expression of uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of attributing 'missions' to nations (Haverfield and MacDonald 1924, 286) is disingenuous; he clearly believed this to be the case, and, without saying so in so many words, draws close parallels between the Roman and British empires. (Moreover, MacDonald's biographical notice cites him explicitly to this effect; 1924, 36). His final peroration on Rome (*ibid.*, 288), fittingly, is a near line-by-line paraphrase of Gibbon's famous conclusion to Chapter 38 (Bury 1909, vol. IV, 178), lauding the empire as the nurturer and guarantor of fragile civilisation amidst the 'wild chaos of barbarism', standing alone in contrast to the globe-bestrident bourgeois civilisation which had inherited its mantle. As with Gibbon (*cf.* 1.2.1, above), these words would prove to be written on the very eve of events which would shatter the confident belief in the inexorable progress of civilisation on which they were founded.

Haverfield's treatment of the 5th century itself may rapidly be passed over. It adds little, historically or indeed archaeologically, to Gibbon's account. The major exception to this statement is his identification of a British 'Golden Age' in the period *c.*AD 300-350 (Haverfield and MacDonald 1924, 264); a characterisation based for the first time on the insular material, archaeological evidence, rather than the assumption of an Antonine heyday based on literary and historical convention. This era is contrasted with the abandonment and decay of towns in the 5th century (*ibid.*, 274, 278). Anglo-Saxon settlement is seen once again (following Gibbon) as the incursion of destructive barbarians (*ibid.*, 273) whom the Romano-Britons resisted heroically (*ibid.*, 268) but ultimately unsuccessfully, to the point of their near-extinction (*ibid.*, 283-4); 'Between Roman Britain and Saxon England...there is a great gulf fixed' (*ibid.*, 285), an axiom which was to echo down subsequent generations of scholarship, primarily as a result of its having been cribbed, unacknowledged, by J.N.L. Myres (Collingwood and Myres 1936, viii).

Haverfield's synthetic writings in the year prior to 1914 clearly reflect their context. An important element of this with regard to this thesis is the reversion to the view of 'barbarian' Germanic settlers as responsible for extinguishing the light of Roman civilisation in Britain. The reasons for this are not far to seek. A British ruling class, whose wealth and power relied heavily and increasingly on the imperial dimension to its economic base, found itself drawn more and more into confrontation with an emergent European power with its own aspirations to global empire; Germany (Hobsbawm 1987, 316-20). Moreover, this latent conflict was also manifest at a *cultural* level, with Britain presenting itself as the preserver of the *Pax Britannica* against Germany, the 'incarnation of flux and irresponsibility in the world' (Eksteins 1989, 168). In 1914 the convergence of economic and geo-political confrontation with this cultural antagonism was to ignite the First World War.

This outlook did not, however, comprise the whole story. In 1913 - within a year of Haverfield's *Romanisation* - E.T. Leeds published his classic *The Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, the first attempt to synthesise the archaeological evidence for the Germanic settlement of Britain. Leeds' account was largely descriptive, and comparatively ideologically 'neutral', in that it did not assay explicit value judgements regarding 'Roman' and 'Anglo-Saxon'. What is striking is the lack of any cross-referencing between these two almost exactly contemporary works, notwithstanding their common interest in the 5th century. This is even more extraordinary when it is considered that the two books were probably written, across the same period of time, within a few hundred yards of one another. Until 1907, Haverfield held a senior studentship at Christ Church College, Oxford, and from that year until his death in 1919 was a Fellow of Brasenose College and the Camden Professor of Ancient History (MacDonald 1924, 24). Leeds was appointed Assistant Keeper in the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum in 1908. Haverfield was a patron of the museum, and on his death donated his archaeological books to it. It seems inconceivable that they did not know one another, or were unaware of each other's research, and yet there are no published references to any discussion of or collaboration in research. A 'great gulf' indeed.

Overall, the 5<sup>th</sup> century can be seen as a critical nexus for an intellectual enquiry into

the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon past which began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and was conducted within the framework of prevailing social and political values. Firstly, the period saw the failure, in insular terms, of an apparently civilised, and civilising, imperial authority and its capacity to ensure peace and prosperity. Secondly, it witnessed the earliest manifestations of a Germanic (English) society from which the modern British state traced its direct descent, both in terms of its institutions, and of the supposed traits and characteristics of its population. Subsequent research has moved discussion of many specific aspects of the period forwards, but the fundamental issues around which such points are debated have remained strikingly unaltered.

### 1.5 Between the wars: the fifth century defined

The unprecedented scale of and suffering caused by the First World War shook to the foundations the certainties of the Edwardian view of ‘orderly and coherent civilisation’ which had informed Haverfield’s approach (Eksteins 1989, 260). Its effects on Haverfield personally (although a non-combatant) appear to have broken his health in the few years before his death in 1919 (MacDonald 1924, 31). The wider social trauma appears to have stymied reflection and synthesis, if not excavation (cf. Jones 1987, 87); Kendrick and Hawkes’ 1932 survey offers reports of new evidence, but little to alter or develop the picture presented by Haverfield. This was in large part due, however, to knowledge of the impending publication of a work of synthesis which would provide the benchmark for Romano-British studies for two generations.

#### 1.5.1 ‘Collingwood and Myres’

*Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Collingwood and Myres, 1936), R.G Collingwood’s account of Roman Britain in *The Oxford History of England* (with what amounts to a separate book, in the form of Myres’ chapters on the English Settlements, attached) is a work of enduring influence (Jones 1987, 87). It established the detailed integration of archaeological data into a historically-defined narrative (to a markedly greater extent than Haverfield had attempted) as the standard format for the presentation and discussion of Romano-British archaeology - perhaps its single most

influential characteristic. Its specific treatment of the 5th century contains elements inherited from earlier works, but also introduced interpretations which reflected the changed, post-war world its authors lived in.

Of these, the most apparent, and significant for this thesis, is the attention paid to the effects on Roman Britain in the later 4th and 5th centuries of rebellion and popular insurgence. Collingwood saw Saxon shore forts fortified 'against the brigandage of a revolted peasantry' (Collingwood and Myres 1936, 279), the *limitanei* a rebellious peasant militia (ibid., 285), and 'wandering bands of broken men, escaped slaves and despairing debtors' making common cause with barbarian incursions to prey on the inhabitants of rural villas (ibid., 304, 302). The towns, whilst displaying little evidence of having been sacked, became refuges for a threatened rural population. The example of the aftermath of the Russian revolution on this picture is readily apparent (particularly so since Mikhail Rostovtzeff - see below, 2.3 - was well-known to Collingwood).

By the middle of the 5th century, Collingwood saw this situation as having created a 'congeries of warring states', whose leaders were drawn 'not...from the most Romanised class...but largely from the less Romanised...[whose]...political traditions were not those of the city but those of the tribe' (ibid., 314). This is essentially the position adopted by Vinogradoff (above, 1.4.1); the triumph of tribal over civic institutions also echoes Gibbon (above, 1.2.2). More developed notions of a Romano-British economy, and the effects of its disruption on the archaeological record, particularly in the case of pottery, also emerge (ibid., 307-8). Collingwood envisaged the final 'absorption by degrees' of the sub-Roman population into English settlements, in contrast with Haverfield's view of their near extinction (above, 1.4.2).

Collingwood's grand synthesis served to define the 5th century, from the perspective of *Roman* Britain, as archaeologically problematic, in that direct archaeological evidence which could be incorporated into his narrative account was sparse. The very comprehensiveness of his treatment threw this into sharp relief for the first time. J.N.L.Myres' chapter - conceived and executed, as he indicates, quite separately from Collingwood's account - adds little to this picture, other than the

observation that poverty of material culture rather than absence of population is the most likely explanation for the inability to detect 5th century Britons archaeologically. His conclusions regarding that century as a whole emphasise its complexity and diversity (to an extent that might be described as frank bafflement), and in lieu of firm conclusions he offers a vivid panorama of 5th century Britain, reminiscent of contemporary poetry (cf. W.H. Auden's *The Dog Beneath the Skin* and Louis MacNeice's *Autumn Journal*; Mendelson 1977; MacNeice 1966, 101-3) in its evocation of uncertainty and a rather haunting sense of loss.

### 1.5.2 Roman and Anglo-Saxon artefacts

A phenomenon to which only brief attention can be given is the classification of artefacts as 'Romano-British' and 'Anglo-Saxon'. The use of these terms as the basis of systematic and comprehensive classifications really got underway after the First World War (following Leeds' *Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* in 1913 - see 1.4.2, above), particularly with regard to Romano-British material, for which Collingwood's *Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930) represented the first attempt at presenting schema for many of the major artefact types (see below, 4.1.2). The virtually hermetic nature of the study of the 'Roman' and 'Anglo-Saxon' dimensions to the 5th century (cf. 1.4.2, p.44, above) ensured that these were treated as all but exclusive categories.

It is interesting to note, however, the suggestion in the later 1930s that there might be closer connections than had previously been acknowledged between late Roman and Germanic art styles (cf. Leeds 1936, 1-18; Kendrick 1938). It may not be coincidental that these ideas were receiving increasing currency during a period when the First World War certainties of anti-Germanism were being displaced, in many quarters, by a nervous emphasis on the common ancestry and interests of Britain and Germany, as the latter re-armed in advance of what was to be the second global conflict within a quarter of a century.

## 1.6 After 1945: the post-war consensus

The experience of the second world war and its aftermath transformed British society and the nation's economy. The Labour administration of 1945-51 implemented a Keynesian economic policy - in many respects a continuation of the country's wartime economy - involving direct and extensive state intervention and nationalisation of capital goods industries and transport infrastructure, aimed at creating and sustaining full employment. The British economy was thus transformed from one of the least centralised in the industrial world in the 1930s to probably the most centralised by 1950 (Hobsbawm 1994, 264-74). In broad terms this policy was to be pursued for the next three decades. It was to have a decisive impact both on the scale of archaeological research, and the interpretation of its results.

Sheppard Frere's *Britannia* (1967) closely followed the format of empirical description linked where possible to historical narrative established by Collingwood and Myres, updating that account with the results of excavation and research carried out in the succeeding thirty years. It set out to integrate increasingly detailed and wide-ranging archaeological evidence even more closely with historical narrative. The impact of the post-war world on the interpretation of both is apparent.

That Frere's conception of Roman Britain, whilst recognisably that of Collingwood, was influenced by the events of the Second World War and its aftermath, is indicated by the details of his account. He draws a parallel between the position of Britain within the Roman Empire - reliant on an overseas power for its defence - noting this with cautious disapproval (Frere 1967, 404). 'The British', in regarding themselves as part of the Roman empire, are now discussed, unproblematically, as if a nation state (*ibid.*). Preoccupations born of two European wars figure strongly in the account of events of the early 5th century. Through Stilicho's withdrawal of troops in AD 401, Britain lost not just its military garrison, 'but many of its own young men' to serve in Europe, Egypt and the east; Gratian's usurpation of AD 407 had 'need for speed if the Channel ports were not to fall' (*ibid.*, 405-6).

Frere gave short shrift to any notion of social upheaval or insurrection amongst the British population in his account. By the time of Frere's writing the second edition of *Britannia* in 1978, Collingwood's 'marauding bands' of disaffected and oppressed peasants had been set up in government by E.A.Thompson (Thompson, 1977), having rejected the Roman empire entirely and effected a social revolution, with the appeal to Honorius coming from a beleaguered landowning class. This interpretation was based largely on a quotation from Zosimus;

'...brought the inhabitants of Britain to the point of revolting from Roman rule and living on their own , no longer obedient to Roman laws...The Britons took up arms...braving danger from their own independence freed their cities from the barbarians threatening them'

(cited in Frere 1978, 409).

Frere would have no truck with such a notion; 'such a peasant pipe-dream', he commented, 'was fleetingly successful in Brittany a few years later', but in Britain

'...they were taken by the curial classes in the interests of the towns...If an outbreak of slaves and *coloni* did take advantage of the Saxon raid of 410 it was soon suppressed and did not play a significant part in events. The truth probably is that expulsions of Roman administrators came to be associated with such outbreaks in the fifth century, and the perpetrators of this one were not sufficiently distinguished by Zosimus'

(ibid., 410).

Whether or not Frere's judgements on this matter are correct (and Thompson's conception of a social revolutionary 'party' taking over the reins of government intact is undoubtedly anachronistic), what is significant here is that no authority or detailed evidence is cited for the assertion quoted. The essential premise regarding social upheaval is 'it couldn't happen here' - itself a fervent hope (and goad to social reform; Hobsbawm 1994, 272) for the British ruling class in the decades after 1917, as it had been when Kemble wrote his *Preface* in 1848 (above, 1.3.2). Frere enumerated the



threats to the *civitates* as the outbreak of social revolution, and the seizure of power by tyrants; the former was averted, but the latter could not be long delayed. The near-total correspondence with the account of Gibbon (above, 1.2.2) may be noted.

In terms of the *archaeology* of the 5th century, *Britannia* is notable for the increasingly detailed use of material evidence in the interpretation, or at least the illustration, of the historical account. The shape of the orthodoxy which prevailed from the 1970s may be seen in the assertion of a decline in Romano-British civilisation evident from the 380s, with a marked reduction in the issue of low denomination coinage, and the atrophy of ceramic production in the early years of the 5th century (Frere 1978, 415-6). In the wake of this economic failure - and for the first time here the economy is discussed as a pivotal, independently operating entity - a 'spiritual revival' founded on the widespread adoption of Christianity (ibid., 423) accompanied the progressive decline of villa estates, the (often walled) towns serving as strong-points for the population of a countryside increasingly prey to marauding Saxons, but, in the absence of a trading economy, no longer functioning to sustain recognisable town life.

The publication of Frere's *Britannia* in 1967 coincided with a watershed in British archaeology. The *Rescue* movement, which began to gain ground in the late 1960s, was to result in a massive increase in the scale of resources, research and quantity of data available (Jones 1984, 143). Over a similar period the expansion of higher education, and the rapid growth of departments of archaeology within the new universities, both provided the personnel to carry out this work, and prompted the intensification and increasing specialisation of research into classes and categories of archaeological material

The intellectual context of archaeological research in British universities in the late 1960s was also changing. The 1968 publication of David Clarke's *Analytical Archaeology* marked the advent of an approach to archaeology wholly at odds - indeed developed in deliberate opposition to - the narrative-driven, culture historical school exemplified by Collingwood and Myres, and Frere. Originating in the United States, the 'New Archaeology' adopted the tenets of functionalist sociology and anthropology in

defining human societies as adaptive systems, which adjusted themselves to achieve equilibrium with their environment and with other, adjacent societies operating on the same basis. It sought to compare such 'systems' across time and space, and in doing so to develop universally applicable models for the understanding of social change. In adopting such a rationale the fundamentals of 'traditional' archaeology - the grouping of archaeological material into 'cultures' identified with discrete 'peoples', and the creation of a historical narrative invoking movements of those peoples to explain changes in material culture - were rejected, and sometimes derided (e.g. Clarke 1978, 20, 22).

Although the 'New Archaeology' was to make comparatively little headway in Romano-British archaeology overall (it certainly never replaced culture historical narrative, which arguably endures to this day as the central paradigm of study), it introduced to studies of Roman Britain the idea of society, and particularly the economy, as a functioning entity. As a result the new, enlarged datasets being compiled began to be investigated and interpreted along these lines (e.g. Hodder and Hassall 1971, settlement pattern; Hodder 1974, Fulford 1975, ceramics). The assumption that 'civilised' Romano-British society was the result of the facilitation of a market-driven system of production and consumption, implicit (but rarely more than briefly stated; cf. Collingwood and Myres 1936, 226) since its late-nineteenth century origins in the archaeological study of the province, thus became a fundamental structuring principle of research and interpretation. Moreover, by analogy with contemporary policy and practice, 'the economy' became identified as an autonomous entity, functioning according to its own rules and ultimately operating independently of human agency.

The nature of 'the ancient economy', and its characterisation in a specifically Romano-British context, are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Suffice to say at this stage that the models adopted relied heavily on the contemporary experience of developed capitalism in western Europe (and specifically the U.K.), and that they were adopted wholesale in subsequent syntheses, particularly regarding the explanation of the end of Roman Britain.

The perception that the fifth century, and more specifically the end of Roman

Britain, represented a distinct area of study which merited treatment in its own right was advanced by the publication in 1979 of the proceedings of a conference devoted to that subject (Casey, 1979). Both conference and publication explicitly set out to question existing assumptions and approaches, and to expose these, and the archaeological and historical sources themselves, to the more rigorous and wide-ranging philosophy and methods of the New Archaeology (Haselgrove 1979, 10-11). In truth, the majority of the published papers did little more than review and appraise the subject along existing lines of enquiry, and such revisions as were put forward were specific, substantive, and readily accommodated within the prevailing culture historical framework. The supreme irony is that the most radical, innovative, influential and (it was to prove) enduring of the contributions to the conference (eventually to be published as Reece 1980) was *refused* by the publishers, who considered it too much at odds with what they considered acceptable scholarship! (ibid., 91). Of the papers which *were* published, that by Fulford worked through the implications of the economic thesis for Roman Britain developed in his study of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century New Forest pottery industries (Fulford 1975, 108-11), and applied them to the archaeology of the 5<sup>th</sup> (idem., 1979).

The conclusions this paper reached marked the culmination of developments in artefact studies since the Second World War. Collingwood had constructed a narrative for the first half of the fifth century from classical and insular sources, which saw a recognisably Roman, if declining, province continuing until around AD 450. That archaeological correlates for this half century were not readily identifiable could be attributed to lack of fieldwork and research, a situation which seemed likely to be rectified in the future (Collingwood and Myres 1936, 308). Frere, thirty years later, considered that the production of the distinctively 'Romano-British' material culture, whose corpora had been established by half a century of research since Haverfield, ceased within the first twenty years of the fifth century (1967, 416). Moreover, he identified the cause of this beginning to take effect in the later decades of the *fourth* century, as the quantity of coinage imported and in circulation declined (ibid., 414-5). Nevertheless, he retained the view that a recognisably Roman society remained in existence until the middle of the fifth, with villas and towns probably enduring until the latter half of the century; 'organised survival' ceased around c.AD 500 (ibid., 417; 420;

422). The expansion and intensification of detailed artefact research in the later 1960s and the 1970s had seemingly confirmed the absence of a widespread, distinctively fifth century 'Romano-British' material culture. At the same time the understanding of societies as functioning 'systems' provided a framework within which comprehensive 'systemic collapse' could be countenanced - indeed anticipated. The title of Fulford's article - 'Pottery Production and Trade at the End of Roman Britain; the Case Against Continuity' - encapsulated the emerging consensus. The material and social culture of Roman Britain was an epiphenomenon of a free-functioning market economy, on which all of the institutions of the province ultimately relied for their well-being. Consequently, its collapse in the early fifth century was all but total; chronologically distinct from, and causally unrelated to, Anglo-Saxon incursion.

This characterisation was rapidly adopted in overviews and works of synthesis. Salway's *Roman Britain*, the successor to Collingwood and Myres in the *Oxford History of England*, introduced the notion of 'economic collapse' as the centrepiece of the 5th century equation (Salway 1981, 454-6), summed up as follows;

'[the] collapse of the money economy...[was]...both a symptom and a cause of the breakdown of large-scale trade in factory-made objects. It is really very difficult to imagine how a barter system could have operate to pay for mass-produced, low-priced items that depended on reasonably wide distribution in large quantities to keep their manufacturers in business'

(*ibid.*, 455).

Roman Britain was now unproblematically identified as a market economy, in which production was organised to turn profit by meeting demand with supply, and prone to growth, recession and potentially collapse on the same terms as modern capitalist economies. This was how the poverty of archaeological evidence for the 5th century was to be understood and explained.

The manner in which the effects of consumer-led demand and 'market forces' have influenced the study of Roman Britain, and Romano-British ceramics, is considered

in more detail below (2.5.2.1; 4.3). Suffice to say here that the major recent studies which have sought to synthesise a coherent account of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Arnold 1984; Esmonde-Cleary 1989; Higham 1992; Dark 1994), employing a corpus of material evidence and analytical studies which has increased dramatically over the last two decades, have all privileged ‘economic collapse’, precipitated by market failure, in their accounts of the apparent diminution of material culture in the 5<sup>th</sup> century to near vanishing point. Esmonde-Cleary and Higham argue for a near-complete cessation of production for this reason; Dark is more cautious, and argues, for example, for the continuation of the localised manufacture of ceramic products indistinguishable from their 4<sup>th</sup> century predecessors. Emphases differ, but in each case a demand-driven commercial market, penetrating to the very base of the social hierarchy, is conceived as the central dynamic of change.

The single major exception to this perspective is provided by an acutely insightful article by Paul Garwood, published in the *Scottish Archaeological Review* in 1989. Garwood’s article (cited in none of the major works of synthesis published since that date) questions the simplistic, normative oppositions of ‘Roman’, ‘Celt’ and ‘Anglo-Saxon’, and offers a damning critique of the empiricism and narrative structure of received interpretations (Garwood 1989, 91-4). His approach emphasises the hegemony of imperial ideologies and organisational structures in defining Romano-British society, but argues that ideological and material resources were also available *independent* of imperial forms to those exercising *de facto* power in the later 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (ibid., 97), noting that these are likely to have been similar in character (even if different in material culture) in both ‘Roman’ and ‘Germanic’ contexts (ibid., 102).

Garwood’s article provides the basis for a more productive approach to the 5<sup>th</sup> century than the received ‘historical / commercial’ model allows for, particularly in his assertion that

‘the questions...are not how long normative institutions or cultural forms persisted...but rather in what ways and in what sequence did the collective realisation and practical experience that the world *had* changed fundamentally

alter cultural schema, collective patterns of human action, and hence the whole field of social discourse'

(ibid., 103).

This is a view which accords with much of the content of this thesis. It has, however, a fundamental weakness, in that the ultimate forces behind social change in the 5<sup>th</sup> century are *ideological* structures; in Garwood's own words, a 'universal cultural system' giving way to 'fragmented schemes of cultural meaning' (ibid., 104). Why *this* should happen is largely left unexplained; the circumstances in which such different ideological schema might be constructed are barely touched on, and when Garwood comes close to identifying them - as the withdrawal of imperial currency and the removal of 'legitimate authority' with the abandonment of the diocese (ibid., 100) - they have an all-too-familiar ring. For all its strengths, Garwood's account lacks specific engagement with the *material* dimensions of, and contrasts between, the archaeology of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A more productive approach to the problems of the archaeology of the 5<sup>th</sup> century thus requires critical consideration both of the primacy of a demand-led market in shaping Romano-British society, and the alternative interpretative frameworks which privilege ideological factors in the definition of social form. This is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 2 : Interpreting the Roman Economy

### 2.1.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established that mechanisms of production, distribution and exchange, and the social conditions which created them (which might collectively, if anachronistically - cf. Finley 1985, 20-21 - be termed 'the economy'), are fundamental to understanding the Romanisation of southern Britain as it is recognised archaeologically. Any attempt to understand and explain the apparent disappearance of Romanised material culture in the fifth century must address these issues, and evaluate competing ideas about the economy of the Roman empire *as a whole*. These are best understood in their historiographic context, where they may be seen to be distinct, if interconnected approaches to the central area of debate, revised and developed in response and reaction to one another. The fact that the economy of Roman Britain has usually been discussed with little more than passing reference to these broader agendas makes such an overview all the more imperative.

Gibbon again provides the essential starting point (2.2). His pervasive influence may be recognised in the commercial dynamic assumed by the great economic surveys of the Roman empire by Michael Rostovtzeff and Tenney Frank in the 1920s and 1930s, works which introduced the more formal economic principles of developed capitalism to the study of the ancient world (2.3). After the Second World War, A.H.M. Jones was to emphasise the central role of the state in structuring and facilitating manufacture and trade, rather than impeding and stifling it (2.4.1). In the 1970s Moses Finley took pains to emphasise the 'embedded' nature of production and exchange in ancient society, and was adamant in his assertion that they could *only* be understood with full reference to prevailing social hierarchies (2.4.2). The writings and arguments of these scholars have provided the basis for subsequent interpretations of the *Romano-British* economy. These are discussed in the light of their intellectual debt to Gibbon and Rostovtzeff, Jones and Finley, and their implications for the understanding of Roman Britain, and its ending, considered (2.5).

## 2.2 Edward Gibbon and the 'civilised state'

Gibbon's Roman Empire was the product of an intellectual environment in which the history of civil society, and the role and place of the individual within it, provided the central problematic (Pocock 1977, 103). A triumph of commerce and individual initiative, it was brought down by the despotism of an overmighty state, leaving the civilised world a defenceless prey to barbarian rapacity. The ideologies of commerce and individualism propounded by the contemporary merchant class, and Gibbon's own inherited wealth (Jordan 1977, 2) and scholarly propensities, led him to idealise a 'civilised' state in which the labour of the many supported the leisure of the few, who were thus free to pursue their interests - material, social and intellectual - unhindered by the ties of traditional social obligation or the impositions of the state (Pocock 1977, 110).

The moral and economic underpinnings of this (for Gibbon) desirable form of society were located in the concept of *property*, which he saw as the tangible connection of self with society, and which allowed the individual to perceive that connection more clearly. It was this perception which formed the essential basis of a virtuous life; as commercial progress multiplied the quantity and form of property, social interests were themselves multiplied and refined. Civilisation ensued. The realisation of this beneficent translation of moral virtue into social and economic practice was achieved by the hand of the industrious middle classes, through the mechanisms and institutions of free commerce;

'In populous cities, which are the seats of commerce and manufactures, the middle ranks of inhabitants, who derive their subsistence from the dexterity or labour of their hands, are commonly the most prolific, the most useful, and, in that sense, the most respectable part of the community.'

(cited in Pocock 1977, 113)

'...it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in



the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures.’

(cited in Pocock 1977, 112).

‘The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent...’

(cited in Pocock 1977, 110).

His account has cast a long shadow. These precepts are not simply of interest in that they encapsulate Gibbon's conception of a virtuous and prosperous society; they could stand unaltered as an expression of the paradigm which has dominated the understanding of the economy of Roman Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century, and is held to explain the increase in material production which distinguishes the archaeology of Roman Britain from that of earlier and later centuries.

The ultimately, if implicitly, *materialist* basis of Gibbon's thinking on society is further revealed in his comments on the barbarian societies beyond the imperial frontiers. References to Goths and Franks in the western provinces as ‘shepherds’ defined their societies as pre-agricultural; agriculture, in Gibbon’s eyes, being the necessary ‘parent of manufacture’, from which base commerce, arts and letters could flourish (Pocock 1977, 117). The determining effect of the economic basis of societies even extended as far as the character and psychology of peoples (in interesting contrast to their identification as specifically *national* traits, which was to gain ascendancy in the course of the nineteenth century; cf. Renfrew 1973, 38). Gibbon derives the character and psychology of the

primitive Germans directly from their means of production. Barely agriculturalists, and in consequence proprietors of neither land nor goods, the barbarian warrior's temperament resulted from the absence of labour to occupy his body and property to occupy his mind. In these circumstances self-conscious reflection on his social existence was never a possibility (Pocock 1977, 111).

Gibbon's general view of society may thus be defined in the following terms;

'He joins a tradition...(developed by the Scottish school)...that found the key to history in the growth of means of production, stimulating...the growth of social intercourse, exchange and interdependence...the human mind and its powers of perception...and the powers of rational understanding...the growth of a commercial society was the growth of a polished society.'

(ibid., 110)

(It is worth noting that this tradition was to contribute not just to Gibbon's Whig tradition, but also, ultimately, to Marxism, and has indeed been maintained and developed within Marxist scholarship more determinedly than it has by Gibbon's successors).

A final comment on Gibbon's conception of the economy and society of the Roman empire concerns what might be termed the 'luxury paradox'. The creation and consumption of surplus, essential for a prosperous society and the cycle of sale and purchase which served to create demand and redistribute wealth, appeared at the same time to create the preconditions for excessive consumption - 'luxury', leading to the decadence and indulgence of the upper classes which Gibbon himself had identified as contributing to the collapse of the western empire (cf. Pocock 1977, 114). Recognising the damaging implications of this both for the moral justification and long term prospects of his 'polished, commercial society', he took pains to locate the causes of 'luxury', decadence and indulgence *outside* the commercial cycle. Thus evidence of excessive luxury and indulgence in the fourth century - if indeed it could be demonstrated - is ascribed not to the (in both senses) progressive fruits of commerce, but to an orgy of consumption precipitated by the uncertainty of individual property and the collective future in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD,

themselves brought about by the unsustainable impositions of the late Roman state. Decadence and atrophy are the direct result of despotism (ibid.).

Chapter One demonstrated the impact of Gibbon's overall portrayal of the Roman empire, and the specifics of his treatment of the fifth century in Britain, on later scholarship. The same may be said of his overall view of the economic and social structure of the empire.

## 2.3 Capitalism in Antiquity

### 2.3.1 Michael Rostovtzeff and *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*

The first dedicated study of the economy of the Roman world was Michael Rostovtzeff's (1870 - 1952) *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, published in 1926 (henceforth *SEHRE*; Rostovtzeff 1957, vii). A refugee from the Russian revolution of 1917, Rostovtzeff fled to England, where he appears to have briefly made the acquaintance of Haverfield before the latter's death in 1919 (MacDonald 1924, 32). His stated aim in *SEHRE* was to treat within a single monograph '...the social and economic life of the Roman Empire as a whole...tracing the main lines of its evolution' (Rostovtzeff 1957, xi)<sup>3</sup>. The resultant volume is a work of scholarship of the first rank, combining meticulously detailed research with an empire-wide scope which elucidated common themes and regional differences, all articulated within the framework of an explicit, explanatory model for the rise of Roman prosperity and civilisation and its eventual decline and demise. The model draws heavily on Rostovtzeff's personal experience in Russia and the United States (cf. Greene 1986, 12); as such, the benefits of capital accumulation and the evils of widespread insurrection and social upheaval loom large.

Central to Rostovtzeff's thesis, as it had been to Gibbon, was the identification of

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A five-volume economic survey of the Roman republic and empire - *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* - was produced by the American scholar, Tenney Frank (1876 - 1939), between 1933 and 1940. It dealt separately with different regions of the empire (Collingwood contributed the section on Britain). However, whilst adopting basically capitalist assumptions, it nowhere spelled out its credo and controlling model in the explicit manner of Rostovtzeff.

the rule of the Antonines (AD 138 - AD 180) as a 'Golden Age' of Roman society and culture. Rostovtzeff adopted Gibbon's presumption that the wealth of this period had been generated through commerce and the accumulation of capital, via the offices of an urban *bourgeoisie*. Having access to the developed theories of classical economics formulated in the century-and-a-half since the publication of *Decline and Fall* (Hobsbawm 1975, 237-9; 1962, 262, 19), he was able to articulate Gibbon's central precept within a framework which specified the mechanism whereby commercial activity had 'taken off', and capital accumulation and its attendant benefits had commenced, and integrate this within the narrative of Roman imperial power which had been established in *Decline and Fall*. *SEHRE*, apart from being deliberately selective in its area of study, thus presents a far more tautly formulated theory of economic life in the Roman world. His survey was also innovative in making considerable use of epigraphic and archaeological evidence, as well as documentary sources.

In *SEHRE*, the ground for the Antonine *floruit* had been laid in the century-and-a-half following the reign of Augustus, when an alliance between the Italian *bourgeoisie* and proletariat broke the power of the senatorial magnates of the Republic. The Flavian emperors, acting as representatives of this emergent class, implemented a policy of urbanisation across the Roman empire. In so doing they created the conditions for the emergence of an empire-wide *bourgeoisie* based in self-governing cities, for whom the Antonine emperors effectively acted as 'constitutional monarchs', guaranteeing the security of the empire as a unitary trading area (Rostovtzeff 1957, xii).

Under these conditions the cities flourished, whether commercial, 'caravan' or industrial cities near the coast or a major river, centres of extensive and fertile agriculture, provincial capitals, or smaller cities in more or less rich agricultural districts (*ibid.*, 141-2). Their evident splendour 'was almost entirely due to the munificence of the higher and wealthier classes of their population' (*ibid.*, 143), and these were '...not modest landowners...but...capitalists on the large scale who...dominated the social life of their cities...the main source of large fortunes...was commerce. Money acquired by commerce was increased by lending it out mostly on mortgage, and it was invested in land' (*ibid.*, 153). It was in these circumstances that the wealth of the Golden Age was accumulated, and

lavishly spent; in consequence, the greatest and richest of the cities were the mercantile centres (ibid., 141). (Rostovtzeff did, however, acknowledge the importance of agriculture and the rural population (ibid., 343, 345), and was to attribute a central role to them in the breakdown of this commercial system).

According to Rostovtzeff *inter-provincial* trade was the main source of this wealth, and he acknowledged the overwhelmingly important role of the state supply needs and mechanisms in creating a bulk trade in ‘articles of pure necessity’ (ibid., 145, 158). He also asserted, however, that there were other important customers apart from the state, that the growth of commerce between and within provinces indicated its progressive decentralisation, and that Italian merchants, faced with such ‘competition’, were ‘unable to prevent the growth of commerce and a commercial class in the provinces’ (ibid., 162).

Commerce and industry were not, however, of uniform importance everywhere. Their growth in southern Gaul, for example, contrasted with Spain, Africa and Britain, and the urban settlements of Britain and upper Germany were regarded by Rostovtzeff as no more than ‘towns of the Celtic population providing a market for farmers’ (with the excavated British examples of Silchester and Caerwent described as ‘large villages with some public buildings’), with most of the population of these provinces ‘strangers to the very essence of Greco-Roman civilisation’ (ibid., 229, 231). The evidence for large rural estates in *Britannia Prima* Rostovtzeff specifically attributed as being the residences of rich merchants from London (ibid.).

Unlike Gibbon, who famously said of the Roman empire that, ‘...instead of inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long.’ (Bury 1909, vol.iv, 174), Rostovtzeff was at pains to understand why this burgeoning commercial world failed to blossom into a fully-fledged commercial and industrial economy; why, indeed, large parts of it were to break down completely. He encapsulated this in the following terms;

‘Why was the city civilization of Greece and Italy unable to assimilate the masses, why did it remain a civilization of the *élite*, why was it incapable of creating

conditions which should secure for the ancient world a continuous, uninterrupted movement along the same path of urban civilization?’

(Rostovtzeff 1957, 534)

Here he saw four interconnected factors at work; lack of competition in the industrial sector (ibid., 351), which served to keep prices high, and thus beyond the reach of the purchasing power of the masses; the investment of commercial profits in land rather than its reinvestment in manufacture or commerce, thus rendering it (in Rostovtzeff’s terms) a ‘dead’ resource (ibid., xiv); the related issue of a peasantry subject to, and increasingly exploited by, these merchants-turned-*rentiers*, thus prevented from rising into the *bourgeois* class themselves and creating antagonism between town and country (ibid., xiii). Furthermore, the diminishing spending power of an increasingly hard-pressed peasantry was not, after the reign of Hadrian, offset by the acquisition of markets in newly conquered lands (ibid., 352); ‘The urban middle class alone was not strong enough to support...the world state’.

Behind each of these shortcomings Rostovtzeff ultimately saw the hand of the overmighty state, and the fact that those who reaped its rewards set themselves up on the land, thence consolidating their wealth and power by imposing servitude, and living on their vast estates ‘like small principalities’ (ibid., 530). The ultimate outcome of this was the ‘civil and social war’ of the second half of the third century, which he interpreted as the peasantry, represented by the army, taking over the state in its own interests, destroying the foundations of the economic, social and intellectual world (ibid., 531) and creating the ‘Oriental despotism’ of the fourth and fifth centuries (ibid., xiii).

The influence of contemporary political and economic circumstances on Rostovtzeff’s account, and his personal experience of them, is apparent. So too is his perspective on these matters; a civilisation built on commercial enterprise broken by proletarian revolution and authoritarian state. The role of commerce in the creation of the empire, and the specific way in which its benefits were spread, are clearly stated; it is the ‘mercantile capitalists’ of the great commercial centres, controlling and expanding inter-provincial trade, who served to generate (a more sceptical opinion might prefer *concentrate*)

wealth, and then disburse it, primarily in the cities (ibid., 143). This expenditure created the opportunity for a second 'tier' of entrepreneurs to develop the industry and commerce of the region, and their role *should* have been to broaden the base of production and demand into the countryside, expanding exchange networks (i.e. 'the market') and inaugurating a 'virtuous circle' of wealth-creation and prosperity. That this did not happen was due to the impediments of traditional social values (including the age-old imperative of investing wealth in land) and the exactions of the state.

The first part of this picture is drawn directly from the experience of American capitalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The concentration of wealth in the hands of the 'robber barons' of the 1850s and 60s (Hobsbawm 1962, 143) provided (in the view of liberal economists) the means to invest in profitable manufacturing and commerce, in turn providing employment and prosperity amongst the population at large (tens of millions of people in a single, integrated continental economy, similar in Rostovtzeff's view to the Roman empire), thus creating a self-sustaining and self-regulating mass-market in goods and services (*SEHRE* was first published in 1926, antedating the onset of the Great Depression by three years (idem. 1994, 91). That the Russian revolution formed the point of reference for the stymieing of the economy of the Roman world is obvious enough, given Rostovtzeff's personal experience of it (and the image of landed *rentiers* sybaritically enjoying the fruits of their estates, indifferent in equal measure to the needs of commerce and the condition of the peasantry, also has strong echoes of his homeland)<sup>4</sup>.

What is perhaps less self-evident, and arguably more interesting, is the message to the inter-war governments of western Europe, where Rostovtzeff was domiciled. On the one hand he blamed the Roman state for a lack of concern for the prosperity of the masses (ibid., xv), whilst on the other clearly considered any policy of intervention by that state to constitute damaging interference with freedom of trade. The underlying message would -

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In spite of the emphasis on capitalism as the central mechanism for the growth and spread of classical civilisation throughout *SEHRE*, Rostovtzeff ultimately refused to privilege an economic explanation - insisted, indeed, that it must be 'rejected completely' (1957, 537) - in understanding the fall of the Roman empire. His final summation saw it as an aspect of 'the...absorption of the educated classes by the masses...the barbarization of the ancient world' (ibid., 541).

perhaps unsurprisingly - seem to be that unrestrained commerce provides the means whereby each can reach their full potential as productive and creative human beings. In which circumstances those less favoured in these respects will benefit from the increased production and exchange of commodities in increasing their potential income, either by selling their labour or their produce as peasant smallholders (cf. the views of Gibbon; 2.2, above).

Two aspects of Rostovtzeff's argument are of particular relevance to Romano-British circumstances. Firstly, he clearly saw the accumulation and expenditure of *commercially-derived* wealth, appropriated by individuals on a vast scale, as the mainspring of Roman (as of modern) prosperity. Equally certain is that he did not see these developments as occurring throughout the empire. Where these conditions did not apply (as in his contrasting of the vibrant economy of Gaul with the alleged 'backwardness' of Spain, Africa and Britain; *ibid.*, 167), or where they were only marginally realised (as in his reference to the merchants of *Londinium*; *ibid.*, 229), Roman civilisation scarcely merited the name (*ibid.*, 231).

## 2.4 Administered and embedded economies: Jones, Finley and their successors

### 2.4.1 A.H.M. Jones: land, the state and *The Later Roman Empire*

Following the great economic surveys of Rome by Rostovtzeff and Frank, the next study of comparable scope and significance may in some respects be seen as a supplement rather than a successor. A.H.M. Jones' (1904 - 1970) *The Later Roman Empire* (henceforth *LRE*), published in 1964, dealt specifically with the period from the accession of Diocletian in AD 284 until the death of the emperor Maurice in AD 602. Its chronological scope means that it is of central relevance to this study. Although *LRE* pays little attention to Britain (and has, in consequence, frequently and unjustifiably been ignored in studies of *Britannia* in the fourth and fifth centuries), it is of enduring importance as the original and classic statement of *landholding*, and not commerce, as the fundamental source of wealth in the Roman Empire. This perspective has rarely been wholeheartedly adopted in British studies, and its implications in interpreting the demise of Roman society in fifth century Britain remain



largely unappreciated.

Jones freely acknowledged that towns and cities were fundamental to the existence of the Roman empire, as primary nodes in the network of imperial jurisdiction. Their economic and social base varied according to their location and pre-Roman antecedents (Jones emphasised the variability in social structure of the areas Rome conquered, and noted - crucially for this study - that 'in most cases...[the cities']...administrative structure reflected the stage of social and political development the local population had reached' [Jones 1964, 714]). He acknowledged the existence of the different types of towns cited by Rostovtzeff, but insisted that in the great majority of cases their economies were essentially agrarian, relying on their own, immediate rural hinterland (*ibid.*). Their officials - the *curiales*, Rostovtzeff's 'urban bourgeois' - were, first and foremost, *landowners*, who relied for their income on rents from their estates (*ibid.*, 757). The vast incomes of the equestrian and senatorial classes (and the rather more modest ones of the *curiales*) were derived from agriculture, as was the overwhelming bulk of state revenue, procured through taxation (*ibid.*, 769-70).

Regarding trade, industry and commerce, Jones turned the precepts of Rostovtzeff on their heads. True, the Roman empire comprised 'a vast common market', its provinces linked by seaways, great rivers and excellent roads, and sharing a common currency (*ibid.*, 824). But it was a market in which mass production, bulk transportation, and to a large extent the creation of demand, were all but monopolised by the state. The transportation of bulk commodities, by land or water, relied on publicly-funded infrastructure (the *cursus publicus*) or on contractors (*navicularii /caudicarii*<sup>5</sup>) directly responsible to public officials (*ibid.*, 831, 827-9). The production of commodities on a scale which permitted distribution and consumption beyond a restricted local level, such as the weaving of cloth, or the manufacture of armour and weaponry for the military, was carried out in slave-manned state factories (*ibid.*, 836). What the imperial government was not responsible for manufacturing itself, it obtained by levying tribute on the population, either in kind or in the form of corvee

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*navicularii* were - landowning - state-paid agents for the shipment of sea-going cargoes, *caudicarii* their equivalents on inland waterways.

labour. Many large landowners followed the state's example, in supplying their needs from their own estates. The one 'niche' within which private traders could effectively operate was where a landowner did not or could not produce a commodity demanded in tax; in this circumstance he had to buy. Jones noted the possibility that the role of merchants and traders may have increased from the later fourth century, when state levies in kind were progressively commuted for gold (ibid., 839-40).

For Jones, then, such inter-provincial and long-distance trade as existed in the later Roman empire did so at the behest of the state, as did large-scale manufacture. The wealth of the state itself, and the private wealth of those who controlled the state, was overwhelmingly derived from the exploitation of land. In contrasting his interpretation with that of Rostovtzeff, it may be objected that the latter saw the second and third centuries AD as the heyday of Roman commerce, and that Jones' emphasis on land in the later empire does not contradict Rostovtzeff's view of the earlier period. However, it is implicit in *LRE* that Jones did not see a fundamental *transformation* of the economic basis of the empire between the early and late third century, as Rostovtzeff did, but rather viewed the later empire as the playing out of economic circumstances which had been created with the territorial expansion of the late Republic (Jones 1964, 6). His identification of land as overwhelmingly the predominant source of wealth in the Roman world shifted the fulcrum of economic and social change in the late empire, from the exchange and circulation of commodities to agrarian production in the countryside. Jones saw this as the economic foundation of the Roman state, and consequently centred his explanation for the fall of the western empire on the land.

Jones considered the transportation of bulk commodities such as foodstuffs and raw materials to be so costly that moving it any distance at a profit was next to impossible (ibid., 841; 845), and that, as a result, it constituted a *de facto* state monopoly. He conceded that manufactured articles ought to bear the cost of transport better, being more valuable in proportion to their bulk and weight. However, he argued that in fact (and here he follows Rostovtzeff) the poverty of the market was unfavourable to such trade, and that the global demand for manufactured goods was consequently very low. The basic needs of most towns and their immediate surrounding areas were provided by 'humble urban craftsmen'. Where

cities were numerous and closely-spaced these would therefore provide the countryside with goods; where cities were fewer, and their territories large, the needs of outlying villages would be met by rural potters, smiths and other craftsmen (ibid., 847).

Peasant communities across the empire (although most of Jones' examples derive from the better-documented east, an important point to note with regard to Chapters 3, 5 and 8 of this thesis) were settled in villages. All peasants, with the possible exception of *adscriptii* ('serfs barely distinguishable from slaves'; ibid., 801) would have had to sell part of their crop to buy household necessities they did not produce themselves, and to pay money taxes and rent. Within these localised networks of production, exchange and consumption, specialised craftsmen would have been located in the larger villages, whether as freeholders or tied to great estates. Villagers would exchange products at rural fairs or markets, where they could also buy items not produced in the district from travelling merchants or pedlars. Village merchants also existed, buying local crops and taking them to town; in fact, small towns were little different from large villages (ibid., 855-6).

These were the mechanisms whereby, in Jones' view, agrarian surplus was converted into the simple means of production required to sustain and reproduce peasant communities across the empire. The extent to which this characterisation is relevant to late Roman Britain, how the state's demand for surplus was integrated into and impacted on it, and the role of land ownership in the *creation* of such forms of social organisation in the first place, are central to this thesis, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. What is abundantly clear, however, is that Jones regarded them as essentially closed and static systems, from which state and landowner appropriated surplus through a range of mechanisms and in varying quantities, rather than as dynamic networks responsive to external stimuli such as 'demand'; still less having any inherent tendency for the growth of manufacture and trade.

It was at the interface between state, landowner and peasant community that Jones located the fracture which was to lead to the western empire breaking up. As the demands of the state increased in the face of barbarian pressure on the imperial frontiers, the 'oppressed and hapless' (ibid., 809) peasantry were forced to shoulder a greater and greater share of an increasing burden of taxation, much of it passed on to them by landlords intent

on avoiding paying it themselves. The result of this was a flight of the peasants from the land, living beyond the reach of the state either as *bacaudae*, or subject to a powerful patron who could resist the demands of taxation (ibid., 812). This resulted in the widespread abandonment of land - the creation of *agri deserti* (ibid., 823) - thus increasingly depriving the state of income through taxation. In the face of increasing Germanic incursion along the frontier, this process of social fragmentation and diminished income finally caused the empire in the west to disintegrate militarily and politically.

If Rostovtzeff's interpretation of the Roman empire was heavily influenced by the growth of industrial capitalism and the Russian revolution, that of Jones bears the mark the Second World War and the post-war adoption of Keynesian economic policies by European governments (Hobsbawm 1994, 268-74). State investment in, and nationalisation of, manufacturing industry and transport systems was implemented as a means of rebuilding the shattered national economies of post-war Europe. In Britain, in particular, the collectivisation of the war economy paved the way for an unprecedented level of state intervention in peacetime. From being the least centralised economy in Europe in the early 1930s, by the 1950s the level of government involvement in manufacture and transport infrastructure was greater than in any of the continental states. By the 1960s, when *LRE* was published, a high level of state involvement in managing the economy and creating demand within it was accepted as part of the political consensus and by the public at large (ibid.).

#### 2.4.2 Moses Finley: Orders, Status and *The Ancient Economy*

In *LRE*, Jones thus re-located the role of the centralised state within the economy of the later Roman empire; from being the dead weight which squeezed the life out of commerce in the accounts of Rostovtzeff and Frank, its very need to appropriate and move resources for its own purposes became the *raison d'être* for the overwhelmingly greater part of that 'commerce'. In consequence, opportunities for private commercial initiative were, and always had been, severely limited (ibid., 841). In *The Ancient Economy*, first published in 1973, Moses Finley developed this argument a stage further. It was not merely the case that opportunities for private manufacture and trade were restricted by the state's

monopoly of a large sector of the market. The whole social structure and ethos of the ancient world, from Archaic Greece to the end of the Roman empire (the limits of Finley's study), were pitched against the notion and practice of manufacture and commerce as a means of acquiring or increasing wealth. Posing the rhetorical question

‘...how much weight was attached to what we should call economic factors in the choice [of employment], maximisation of income, for example, or market calculations?’

(Finley 1985, 43)

his response was resoundingly negative. The notion of ancient society as having been structured around the principle of profit maximisation, with the purchase and sale of goods as the nexus of the economy, was dismissed by Finley as an anachronism introduced by application of modern, individualist values (*ibid.*, 43-4). Orders and status were central to ancient society, not the epiphenomena implied by economic approaches.

Finley expressed scepticism about the scale of ‘world trade’ in the Roman empire, as understood in terms of complementary commercial transactions meeting demand with supply and adjusting productive output (both what was actually produced and in what quantity) and trade routes accordingly (*ibid.*, 33-4). He denied the significance of wine or olive oil export, since these were invariably produced locally by other urban centres, excepting inter-provincial trade in fine wines (*ibid.*, 133), and pointed out that even in large cities manufactured goods were produced entirely for the local market and not for export (*ibid.*, 135). (He is particularly scathing about the claimed archaeological evidence for large-scale commerce of this sort; *ibid.*, 33). He acknowledged, of course, that substantial volumes of material passed through major urban centres in the Roman empire, and that a substantial percentage of the populations of these cities was thus engaged, to one degree or another, in ‘commerce’. However, his central point was that, *contra* Rostovtzeff, there is no indication from any of the ancient sources that the most important inhabitants of any of these cities were anything other than landowners (*ibid.*, 59), and certainly no evidence that *any* were engaged in commerce (*ibid.*, 58). Consequently,

‘...a “city” was a political and cultural centre, where the well-born and educated could live a civilised existence...size...and the economy did not enter into consideration at all, excepting that the material goods indispensable for civilised amenities had to be available somehow.’

(ibid., 124)

For Finley, the organisation of ancient society into *orders* - collectivities which encompassed individuals of legally-defined *status* - provided the organising structure of Roman society which ultimately determined movements of wealth, goods and resources. These were, in turn, unrelated to any activity involving profit obtained through the manufacture and sale of goods. The key to understanding the social and ‘economic’<sup>6</sup> impact of these orders lay in the need for individuals *within* them to *maintain* their status. A major part of this involved conspicuous consumption and display - resulting in a ‘ravenous hunger for acquisition in the upper strata’ (ibid., 56), acquisition which was achieved through the compulsion of collective labour using physical force, or law and custom with the threat of force behind it (ibid., 66). Other, less tangible considerations also figured, however; behaviour and value-systems which served to identify status within and between orders, paramount amongst which was the attitude that land represented the only ‘proper’ source of wealth. Even here, movement of landed property was not driven by a desire or motivation to maximise its economic potential (ibid., 121), and investment in land was never a matter of a systematic, calculated policy of ‘economic rationality’ (ibid., 117). The notions of increased production and exchange of goods and quick turnover of capital, essential to expanding manufacturing and commercial economies as understood today, were absent from ancient society (ibid., 110). Rostovtzeff’s ‘bourgeoisie’ did not create or develop new forms of capital formation, and the landowners, who had the greatest capacity to accumulate wealth, had no desire to do so (ibid., 145). In short, throughout the Roman empire and the ancient world in general, a

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Finley in fact traduced the very use of the term ‘economy’ or ‘economics’ in the context of the ancient world, arguing that the concept of systemically interrelated quantifiable variables considered in isolation from their social context was wholly alien, and consequently inapplicable (1985, 21).

‘strong drive to acquire wealth was not translated into a drive to create capital...the prevailing mentality was acquisitive but not productive.’

(ibid., 144)

Finley insisted on maintaining a distinction between the ‘satisfaction of material wants’ and ‘economic policy’ and was adamant that the Roman state pursued the former but not the latter (ibid., 160-61). Whilst possessing the political power, and the financial and human resources, the citizen elite were ultimately not prepared to involve themselves in the manufacturing and commercial activities without which neither they, nor the communities over which they held sway, could maintain the standards of living to which they had become accustomed. That they were not was the consequence of their overriding values. As a result,

‘...A model of economic choices, an investment model, in antiquity would give considerable weight to this factor of status’

(ibid., 60)

This, then, represents a comprehensive rejection of the notion of a Roman empire and society driven by imperatives of profit and economic growth. Wealth was concentrated as a result of the hierarchy created by the existence of social orders, wherein the elite (senators, equestrians, *curiales*) were able to direct and control resources and labour to their own ends *via* a combination of obligations of law and custom and straightforward compulsion. These orders were not static; or, rather, Finley recognised that the social structure they represented was prone to being undermined by developments in the material world, which could necessitate a re-ordering of the reference points through which social hierarchy was identified. Thus the creation and expansion of the Roman empire saw a process whereby the autonomy of the city state across the Mediterranean and western Asia was displaced by a vast bureaucratic empire. The taxes lost by these city states were re-channelled through them by the imperial bureaucracy, in the process creating larger centres of demand for trades and internal services (ibid., 140). The resultant ‘absolute and relative increase in the parasitical classes’ (ibid.) saw a ‘structural transformation within the society as a whole’ (ibid., 86), and the eventual replacement of widespread chattel slavery (ibid., 85) by what Finley describes as a ‘more archaic’ social structure. This transformation saw the

classical division between free man and slave replaced by a broader spectrum of statuses, *within which* the crystallisation of the distinction between *honestiores* and *humiliores* saw the *citizen* population lose ground. This is described as ‘...a change in ideology.....reflecting (and contributing to) a cumulative depression in the status of the lower classes among the free citizens’ (ibid., 86-7). The limitations of Finley’s analysis, and the idealist assumptions which underlie it, will be considered in more detail below (3.2.2).

### 2.4.3 After Finley

An influential article by Keith Hopkins (1980) proposed - in stated opposition to Finley (ibid., 101) - that the distribution of monetary taxation in the first two centuries AD generated an expansion in production and trade independent of direct state involvement. He argued that the core and periphery of the empire were net consumers of tax (with various tax exemptions, state handouts to the populace, and a concentration of administration at the core with the preponderance of army units stationed at the periphery) and that, as a result, an ‘inner ring’ of provinces was forced to manufacture and export goods in order to obtain coinage to pay the taxes which sustained the two poles. This case in part reflected Hopkins’ awareness of the archaeologically attested quantities of traded items - pottery standing proxy for other goods which rarely survive - a source of evidence largely ignored, or at least minimised, by Finley and Jones. Hopkins acknowledged that the means whereby coinage was fed into the system was entirely through state expenditure - on the army and administrative personnel - but that economic ‘take-off’ resulted from the monetary taxation which this facilitated. We can see here the tendency, also recognisable in studies of later Roman Britain (cf.2.5.2.2 and 3.2.2, below), for studies of embedded economies to resolve themselves into competitive market structures involving supply and demand; in this instance a Keynesian explanation wherein state demand stimulates market forces.

Wickham (1988) partially accepts this argument, but argues that evidence for extensive inter-provincial trading was invariably related *directly* to state intervention in production and distribution; in the celebrated case of the great quantities of African Red Slip Ware (ARSW) found in the Italian peninsula, he argues persuasively that these goods were carried on the back of the grain shipments which provided the state dole to the Roman



populace. He proposes an equivalent relationship between Hopkins' 'exports' and the military supply routes connecting the northern provinces with the core. The contrast here is between state intervention, in the form of taxation, resolving into a self-sustaining market responding to demand with supply, and the movement of goods and materials *directly* by the imperial authorities. which allowed the occasional development of a form of 'mercantile capitalism', wholly dependent on the state-initiated movement of bulk commodities. It does not, therefore undermine the central premise of this thesis, aligned with the views of Jones and Finley and developed in detail below (3.2 - 3.4), that the circumstances in which these phenomena were possible were embedded within prevailing, asymmetrical social relationships.

## 2.5 The Romano-British economy

The works of the scholars discussed in sections 2.2 - 2.5 have influenced writings specifically concerned with the Romano-British economy; some gaining more currency than others. This section outlines the main positions adopted, the intellectual traditions, as presented in the previous sections, which they draw on, and their contemporary context.

### 2.5.1 Writings on the Romano-British economy, 1910 - 1970

The writings of the great Romano-British scholars of the first half of the twentieth century - Haverfield, Collingwood, and Richmond - evidently conceived of the province as a functioning market economy. As Chapter 1 has indicated, however, they did not attempt more than a *description* of that economy in terms of the major commodities which were manufactured and traded. What little analytical comment they offered was restricted to observations about the effect of prevailing social and political circumstances (revolt or barbarian incursion, for example) on the conditions desirable for trade and manufacture to flourish. In no instance was the Romano-British economy *theorised*, or granted a significant role in explanations of why the province had foundered. The reason for this may be twofold. Firstly, the essential framework for all of these accounts, and to a large degree the causality

invoked to explain the archaeological record, was constructed of narrative fragments culled from continental classical authors. Roman Britain was conceived in terms of *events*, and the explanation of these events lay in the broader narrative of Roman imperial power. The actions of great men and the events they set in train were decisive. It was largely *assumed* - with Gibbon - that a civilised society, as Rome clearly was, rested ultimately, at least in time of peace, on a marketised commercial economy. For men of Haverfield, Collingwood, and Rostovtzeff's generation and backgrounds, this was a particularly easy assumption to make.

Considered 'in the mass' the overriding characteristic of the archaeology of Roman Britain, compared to the centuries which preceded and followed it, is the *quantity* of material; the sheer scale of material production. Furthermore, much of this material was manufactured using more developed and standardised production techniques than had previously been the case. It was implicitly accepted that the mobilisation of human and material resources involved had to be accounted for in different terms to those employed in the archaeology of, for example, the pre-Roman Britons. The Greek roots of Roman culture itself were ever apparent, but the means whereby that culture was planted across peninsular Europe had to be understood in terms of the production, exchange and consumption of material wealth on a scale previously unparalleled.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship did not have to look far for an explanation. Industrial capitalism was at its height; the manifest scale of production in the Roman Empire and the existence of towns, coined money and established communications networks appeared as a precursor of contemporary economic and social infrastructure. In the developed states of western Europe, and particularly in Britain, production was led by commercially-mediated demand. From the 1840s onwards by far the greater part of that demand derived from a working population overwhelmingly dependent on waged labour; individuals and communities long separated from the means of production required to provide the necessities of life for themselves. For those *controlling* the means of production, the sale of these necessities as *commodities*, with each individual unit sold at a profit over and above the cost of its manufacture, translated into the exponential accumulation of wealth. Entrepreneurial manufacturers reinvested a substantial proportion of this wealth in further production. New markets were penetrated or created, and raw materials procured,

through an expansionist imperial policy, and the resulting profits translated into further investment in productive capacity.

So the cycle repeated itself. The financial, legal and commercial services increasingly required by the vast and seemingly inexhaustible wealth accrued by these manufacturers, and their sheer spending power, served to create an expanding, and largely urban, middle class. Techniques of mass production employed in the manufacture of 'luxury' items made what had been the preserve of the few accessible to the many. For scholars - virtually by definition middle class - studying Roman Britain in a social and economic context such as this, the obvious conclusion to be drawn was that Roman civilization was also underpinned by the accumulation of profit through manufacture and trade. Conveniently, the equation legitimised and universalised 'market forces' as 'civilised' - the bedrock of classical culture - and timeless.

These were the tenets which Haverfield (implicitly) and Rostovtzeff (more consciously) applied to the Roman world. They saw the adoption, in Britain and across the Roman empire, of a distinctive and uniform material culture. Much of continental Europe had thus become 'Romanised', the concept originating in Mommsen's survey of the adoption of the Latin language across the Roman provinces, as evidenced by inscriptions, and applied to other categories of material culture. Just as the Victorian *bourgeoisie* aspired to the culture and trappings of aristocratic élite culture, and the masses acquired factory-produced goods which mimicked bourgeois taste, so, it was assumed, inhabitants of Britain sought 'Romanised' material culture in aspiring to the status and material benefits associated with Roman culture and society.

The motor for the widespread, large-scale introduction of Roman material culture into Britain was thus seen as a desire on the part of a large proportion of the population to take advantage of Roman material comforts and opportunities for social display. Status-consciousness created a demand for the accoutrements of Roman life. Manufacture initiated in response to this demand marked the first step towards a market-based system of production and exchange. The indigenous aristocracies were initially favoured with regard to access to goods and services through their position at the top of the social hierarchy, and

consequent access to the disposable wealth necessary to create demand (performing the role of the affluent middle classes of the 1830s and 1840s in stimulating factory production of household and 'luxury' goods). They thus formed the first insular market for goods of 'Roman' manufacture. But the direct results of the Roman conquest of Britain - improved communications, enlarged centres of population, and a standing army - created conditions in which competing producers could reach substantial bodies of consumers, expanding production and lowering costs in the process. Manufactured goods became available to and affordable by a much larger proportion of the population, broadening the demand base to the point where 'the market' became, in principle, self-sustaining, and formed the fundamental institution of economy and society in Roman Britain.

Thus, to Haverfield and Collingwood, the economy of Roman Britain was so much a 'given' that it scarcely merited a mention. To see it *in itself* as a significant factor in Romano-British history was unthinkable. Unless interfered with or disrupted by precipitate human action, it just got on with its job. Such 'precipitate human action' was, of course, just what the historical evidence - for the most part documenting usurpation, revolt, barbarian incursion, and the despatch of expeditionary forces to counter these - provided evidence for.

## 2.5.2 Writings on the Romano-British economy, 1975 - 1995

### 2.5.2.1 The 'market' model

Chapter 1 has outlined how the strategies and infrastructure implemented to effect the economic reconstruction of post-war Europe both embodied and propagated a changed attitude towards the nature of economy and society. Rather than being seen as the inevitable playing out of immutable forces, both began to be treated as mechanistic systems, whose properties and trajectory could be changed to order by modifying and controlling inputs, with the state as the instrument through which these measures were effected. These ideas were not newly minted post-1945, and their immediate origins may be traced through the first half of the twentieth century and into the late nineteenth (Hobsbawm 1968, 244). For

the first time, however, they were enacted as public policy, and thus directly affected and helped to structure the lives and attitudes of millions of people (idem. 1994, 274). In Britain, within a generation of the end of the Second World War, the study of economy and society past and present was being undertaken within this framework, in universities which were themselves a product of the new level of state involvement in these spheres.

Archaeology was a comparative latecomer to the academic curriculum, and was slow in adopting approaches which already had a wide currency - or had even been adopted and discarded - in other disciplines. In Britain, the first attempt at a specifically archaeological theory employing the tenets of functionalist sociology was David Clarke's *Analytical Archaeology*, published in 1968. Reaction from much of the British archaeological establishment was hostile. Its influence on Romano-British archaeology was (and remains) negligible; practitioners held steadfastly to individualism and 'common sense' in their approach and interpretation. Elaborating and refining the historical narrative established by Collingwood remained at the heart of the agenda. But individualism and common sense drew inevitably on the life experience of Romano-British archaeologists themselves, and for the generation coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, this had been conditioned by the very thinking Clarke's book embodied. If the rising generation of Romanists were on the whole reluctant to conceive of society as a whole as an 'adaptive system' understandable in terms of inputs, feedback and metastable equilibrium, they were quite at home with the idea that 'the economy' - an entity with an existence apparently outside and above the human activity which it determined - could be understood and indeed manipulated in analogous fashion.

This leads us to the first explicit characterisation of the economy of Roman Britain, put forward by M.G. Fulford in his 1975 study of pottery production in the New Forest *Hants* (Fulford 1975). It is outlined in some detail as the classic statement of a functioning market economy in Roman Britain. Although it deals directly only with the period from the later third to the early fifth centuries AD, it represents the clearest and most detailed presentation of archaeological data within a specifically defined economic model. Underlying themes and assumptions which pervade much writing on Roman Britain since the Second World War are here presented with stark clarity. It is therefore an appropriate starting point, from which refinements and alternative market-based models proposed by other researchers

may be outlined, and the competing 'substantivist' paradigm of Romano-British archaeology considered. In the process, the relationships of these models to the economic studies of the wider Roman empire detailed in 2.2 - 2.4 are identified.

Fulford's model of the economy of later Roman Britain was originally presented as part of his interpretation of pottery manufacture in the area of the New Forest between the later third and early fifth centuries, and the pattern of distribution of vessels from this source across central southern England. He locates the emergence of this production in the context of a *Britannia* emerging from an economic recession, represented by an almost total absence of diagnostic artefacts (including coins) across the province from the middle third of the third century. This, he claimed, indicated a gross reduction in production (Fulford 1975, 108), implicitly foreshadowing the absence of artefactual evidence which is the archaeological manifestation of 'the End of Roman Britain' almost two centuries later. Fulford saw it as reflecting an underlying economic trend afflicting the western Empire as a whole in this period, rather than simply the direct result of military conflict and political upheaval (*ibid.*, 109). The late-third century 'economic recovery', invoked to prompt the rise of the New Forest and other large-scale, centralised ceramic manufactories were attributed to state expenditure, in the form of the construction projects represented by town walls and shore forts (*ibid.*), putting coinage (increasingly of low denominations; cf. Reece, 1987, 21-22) back into circulation. State investment in infrastructure was thus seen as having allowed the injection of money into the economy, creating a surplus of 'wealth' which in turn stimulated the production of goods for purchase (Fulford 1975, 111).

The empirically-led nature of his model should be emphasised. *New Forest Roman Pottery* presented a comprehensive classification of vessel forms (including decorated variants), and a catalogue of findspots which defined the then-known distributions of these vessels. This provided the basis for the distribution maps which Fulford sought to explain. It was not conceived as a critical, analytical study of the Romano-British economy, and so utilised the concepts most readily available for the interpretation of these distributions. Its assumption of an economy dependent on exchange and commerce echoes Gibbon and follows Rostovtzeff, although neither is cited. Romano-British economic *revival* was explained by direct, though unstated reference to reconstruction following the Second

World War; state-funded investment in infrastructure. The role of the Roman state here is *superficially* similar to that identified by Jones and Finley (again absent from Fulford's bibliography); yet Fulford's Keynesian rationale for such intervention is wholly at odds with any they would subscribe to, in terms of intent (economic regeneration) or outcome (economic growth).

Restricted to the date-range of New Forest wares, Fulford's model only covers the period from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. What of Roman Britain in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD? Implicit in his interpretation of the mid-third century as representing a 'recession', Fulford's view that the economic development of Roman Britain from the second century involved the spread of a monetised market economy is made clear in subsequent publications (e.g. 1989, 185), although he concedes that for the first two centuries AD 'the needs of the army probably remained paramount' (*ibid.*, 181). Overall, then, the first and second centuries witness the expansion within Britain of commercial exchange and the growth of a market economy, which foundered in the midst of an empire-wide recession in the mid-third. In Britain itself, state intervention served to revive the economy and pave the way for unprecedented growth in insular manufacturing and trade, indicated by the occurrence and distribution of New Forest pottery and other late Roman ceramics. Highly sensitised to fluctuations in demand for its products (particularly in the case of pottery, the key archaeological indicator, which allegedly relied on wafer-thin profit margins; *idem.* 1979, 128) the Romano-British economy then broke down in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries due to falling demand and the disruption of the market (*ibid.*).

Subsequent studies of Roman Britain have for the most part agreed with Fulford in emphasising the role of the state in the economy of the late third and fourth centuries. Esmonde-Cleary emphasises the importance of the need for the population at large to obtain coin to pay (increasingly heavy) taxes as the dynamo which drove up production and exchange, further enhanced by the demand created by the state as a consumer of agricultural produce and manufactured goods (Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 9; 73). In a work devoted specifically to the fourth and fifth centuries he has little to say about the extent to which this differed from the earlier period, but seems to imply that *Britannia* would have benefited from being part of an expanding imperial economy benefiting from low rates of taxation

(*ibid.*, 8). This is close to Fulford's model, albeit identifying taxation above state expenditure as the fundamental instrument of economic growth. Evans develops the same theme, arguing for a fourth century equivalence between taxation and state expenditure (he is not explicit about whether this is *in Britain*, or across the empire as a whole), creating a state-initiated cycle of taxation, production and government outlay which served as a 'multiplier' for the (much larger) sector of the economy beyond the direct reach of the state (1990, 94). The result was a 'fairly fully developed' market economy across much of lowland Britain (*ibid.*, 93). A more traditional line, akin to that of Rostovtzeff, is taken by Higham, who sees taxation and the role of the state in the economy as destructive rather than creative; compulsion replacing the 'market incentives of the earlier empire', resulting in 'economic stagnation and the suppression of enterprise' (1992, 46).

This is an appropriate point at which to consider the theory proposed by Chris Going in an article entitled 'Economic Long Waves in the Roman period' (1992). Going purports to identify long term cycles of high and low production - 'boom and slump' - across the three-and-a-half century span of Roman Britain (1992, 97, Fig. 1 ). These appear analogous to the 'long waves' identified by modern economists in developed capitalist societies as having occurred since the early nineteenth century (usually termed 'Kondratiev waves; e.g. Hobsbawm 1994, 87). Going thus daringly projects the occurrence of such waves back 1,800 years before they were thought to be operative. The thesis has interesting implications for the study of pottery at and beyond the 'end of Roman Britain', as it recognises that the dating of contexts will be 'bunched' in periods of high production. The continued production of late Roman ceramics into the fifth century would thus be comfortably accommodated within the model. It has problematic implications - classical economics expresses bafflement at these cycles, to which Going's response is '...history, to a significant degree. is a record of human responses to the non-linear behaviour of time dynamic systems' (*ibid.*, 110). Marxist analysis is less fatalistic, arguing that the 'waves' owe their existence to the tendency in *capitalist* economies for the rate of profit to fall - as during the periodic booms and slumps before the second world war - as a result of the investment of surplus value in increasing productivity and cutting the labour force thus lowering production costs at the same time as suppressing demand, resulting in a downward spiral of decreasing profitability and the consequent collapse of commercial and manufacturing operations. To



apply this scenario in the context under discussion here would presume waged labour and capitalist economic organisation on a scale beyond the wildest dreams of even the most passionate advocate of a 'free-market' Roman Britain. The problems of such analogies will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.1.

#### 2.5.2.2 'Substantivist' approaches to the Romano-British economy

An alternative model for the development of the Romano-British economy was suggested by Ian Hodder in 1979. This proposed, on the basis of the evidence of pottery and coins, that, for the first two centuries or so following the initial conquest, production and exchange in Roman Britain was 'embedded' within social relations, taking the form of tribute and obligations (Hodder 1979, 191), thus echoing Finley's comments on the Roman empire as a whole (op cit., 2.4.2; Hodder 1979, 192). It was only from the third century onwards in Britain that the economy became 'disembedded', with manufacture and sale/purchase breaking free from the social constraints of tribal economies. This process began at the interface between the Roman state and tribal society (such as in the *vici* outside Roman forts), or in the interstices between tribal societies, where social control was weakest (i.e. at the boundaries of tribal territories; *ibid.*, 193). Although cautioning, citing Finley, that the Roman economy itself may not have been particularly 'developed' (*ibid.*, 192), Hodder concluded that by the 4<sup>th</sup> century market exchange, as witnessed by extensive pottery distributions and the widespread use of low-denomination coinage, had broken free of social control (*ibid.*, 194).

Hodder's model was subsequently adopted and elaborated by Millett, utilising the same basic premise of economic development at the geographical peripheries of tribal societies (1990, 180). Whilst careful to emphasise the continuing power of traditional elites, and the dependence of trade and exchange on state administration and the social relations which were increasingly structured by it (distinct from a 'free market'; *ibid.*), Millett recognises substantial changes in the countryside in the later fourth century; an 'increased investment in rural production...and the development of rural industry', including considerable evidence for innovation and intensification in the agricultural economy (*ibid.*,

202). These he attributed primarily to a desire amongst late Romano-British aristocrats to assert their status and power through personalised display represented by the *villa*, rather than communal display in the *civitas* capital (the driving force here, again, being competition for status). This led to a measure of interest in agricultural improvement to increase and consolidate their wealth (ibid., 197, 204).

Although reluctant to concede a 'free market economy', Millett acknowledged that the later 4<sup>th</sup> century saw changes suggestive of a weakening of pre-existing social bonds. The creation of tied peasants (*coloni*), and a more rigid system of obligation between tenant and landowner, he interpreted as a transformation of such bonds into a more purely economic pattern of dependency, attempting to reinforce social links in the face of polarisation of wealth and the threat to livelihood posed by the vagaries of production for the market. The latter is seen as possibly having provided impetus for peasants to diversify production, in order to avoid the economic consequences of increased production of a particular crop without a commensurate increase in demand. Whilst concluding by expressing doubts over the breakdown of social control over production, Millett's argument and the evidence he marshals clearly lead him in the direction of a disembedded market economy (ibid., 204).

### 2.5.3 Overview

These recent works on the Romano-British economy present different trajectories for the Romano-British economy, largely as a result of the differing assumptions they embody. Fulford's market economy of the second and early third centuries founders in an empire-wide recession, to be revived by the motor of state expenditure and expanding throughout the fourth. Esmonde-Cleary and Evans concur, with differing degrees of emphasis, on the central role of state taxation and expenditure in economic growth. These interpretations draw on Rostovtzeff for their characterisation of the earlier period, broadly following Jones for the later, but with the additional element of economic growth stimulated by state expenditure derived from the aftermath of the Second World War in western Europe. Higham's interpretation follows Rostovtzeff more closely, in seeing the late Roman state as

smothering market exchange under the burden of taxation and bureaucratic control. Hodder, drawing on the substantivist economics of Karl Polanyi, introduced the concept of production and exchange being socially embedded until the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, from which point an emergent market economy broke apart these constraints (although probably not completely, recognising Finley's position), transforming social relations in the process. Millett is more cautious in acknowledging marketised exchange, preferring to see changes in the social institutions and relationships within which economic activity is embedded, but concedes that by the later fourth century these are changing *in response* to the imperatives of production for the market.

Although at least three distinct characterisations (all still current in different spheres of Romano-British archaeology) may be identified in the works discussed in this section, they have one central point in common. Whether from the outset, or from some point in the later history of the province, by the end of the fourth century production and exchange in *Britannia* are seen to have been mediated by the operation of 'market forces'. The origins of this view in the economic and social context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have been demonstrated in 2.5.1.

The insularity which Romano-British archaeology so often stands accused of is perhaps most strikingly (and depressingly) manifest in its failure to incorporate the perspectives of Jones and Finley, which conceptualise the Roman empire and its internal dynamics in ways which directly challenge the peculiarly British model of the Roman economy as it operated in the province of *Britannia*, at the heart of its research agenda. Where, infrequently, they are referred to, they are confined to an historiographic ghetto, or cited, often out of context, in support of specific points of interpretation. Meanwhile the assumptions of Rostovtzeff, and even of Gibbon, hold the field by default. The next chapter seeks to provide an alternative framework, which also addresses the weaknesses of the substantivist case advocated by Finley and Hodder, and seeks to provide a more appropriate and productive alternative employing the tenets of historical materialism.

## Chapter 3 : Historical Materialism and the Romanisation of Britain

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 traced the main lines of thought which have informed studies of the economy of the Roman empire and Roman Britain, and set them in their intellectual context. These can broadly be categorised, (e.g. Dowling 1979, 293) as ‘formalist’ (i.e. assuming that production and exchange in the ancient world functioned according to the principles of classical economics formulated in the nineteenth century) and ‘substantivist’ (arguing that they were embedded in, and inseparable from, contemporary social relations and institutions). Although substantivist approaches have recently made headway in the study of Roman Britain, it has been demonstrated that the formalist notion of a ‘market economy’ still dominates the literature, particularly synthetic overviews and artefact studies, and is still widely regarded as a ‘given’ of Roman Britain. Furthermore, the substantivist interpretations which *have* been offered are prone to resolve into a scenario of market-driven production in the later third and fourth centuries<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.2 Critiques of prevailing approaches

#### 3.2.1 Critique of ‘market’ assumptions

The exponential economic growth which characterised the development of industrial capitalism in nineteenth century Britain (cf. 2.5.1, above) resulted from the interaction of three critical elements; increasingly effective technology (particularly in relation to manufacturing and transport) which could amplify human labour mechanically, and thus increase productive output many times over; the existence of a substantial (indeed overwhelmingly large) section of the population who were not engaged in the production of their own material needs, and who thus had to sell their

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As a consequence of this, recent studies adopting the tenets of post-processualism have, in their rejection of the notion of ‘metanarrative’ and pursuit of subjective individual experience, inevitably and unwittingly incorporated the assumptions of the very agenda they seek to challenge at the heart of their interpretations.

labour in return for wages to obtain these; and a group or class (a term used generically at this stage) within society who controlled the raw materials and manufacturing capacity (i.e. machinery and, crucially, *labour power*) with which these material needs were produced, and owed their wealth and power to this control and the sale at a profit of manufactured output which it allowed.

How far can an analogous situation credibly be postulated for Roman Britain? As Chapter 2 recounts, Rostovtzeff attributed the wealth of the Roman world in its late second-century heyday to specifically *mercantile* capitalism, but argued that one of the reasons the Roman empire collapsed was a *failure* to invest the profits of commercial activity in manufacturing; and he detected little if any evidence for the existence of commercial magnates in Britain. Both Finley and Jones are adamant in their insistence that manufacture and commerce *were not* a significant factor in obtaining wealth and power in the Roman empire (Finley 1985, 59; Jones 1964, 827). For the purposes of this thesis, specific reasons for this assertion must briefly be summarised. Finley's argument rests largely on the lack of appropriate commercial and financial institutions, and an aristocratic distaste for 'vile commerce'. More fundamental reasons may, however, be identified, more directly pertinent to the assumptions routinely employed with reference to Roman Britain.

The most obvious objection might be considered to relate to the effectiveness of technology, as an 'amplifier' of human labour, in the manufacture and transportation of goods. Certainly, the Roman empire is widely regarded as having been all but barren of technological innovation, and such as did occur did not spread and become widely used beyond the areas in which they originated (de Ste Croix 1981, 38). However, the incorporation of Britain into the Roman empire did result in improvement in aspects of manufacture and, in particular, transportation. In the manufacturing sphere, the production of ceramics - crucial to archaeological study, if not (although this is an issue which will be revisited in Chapter 4) absolutely fundamental to the economy *per se* - witnessed substantial improvements in all stages of the manufacturing process, from clay preparation to vessel forming and firing (Swan 1984, 21). Set against this there are few

indications of effective technological innovation in increasing the efficiency of the fundamental area of production; agriculture (Jones 1964, 767). The capacity to *move* materials (and people), however, was significantly enhanced by the creation of an extensive network of made roads, and dramatic improvements in the capacity of river-, and in particular sea-borne transportation.

Technological innovation was not, then, absent from Roman Britain, particularly with regard to the movement of goods, although it would be difficult to argue that its impact was substantial enough or (crucially) located in the decisive areas of production to have transformed the logistics of manufacture, or its profitability. But what is usually regarded as fundamental to the creation of a market-driven economy in Roman Britain is *demand*; the desire to buy into a 'Romanised' way of life across a broad section of the community, and possession of sufficient wealth to do so. The *desire* is invariably seen as a 'given' - all seek to acquire and display status. As has been sketched in 2.5.1, however, the analogy most frequently employed in Romano-British studies is one which, in fact, relies on mechanised, usually centralised production *and a substantial percentage of the population not directly engaged in the production of their own subsistence needs*. By any interpretation the application of such a model is grossly anachronistic, and serves to obscure the fundamental fact of ancient society; the overwhelmingly subsistence-based organisation of production (e.g. Brown 1971, 12; Finley 1985, 90; Millett 1990, 186).

### 3.2.2 Critique of 'substantivist' approaches

As outlined in 2.4.2, Moses Finley rejected the application of economic principles derived from the modern world to the ancient; economic life was *determined* by the existence of status groups, rather than vice-versa. 'Orders', as employed by Finley, are thus direct representations of contemporary (i.e., in this instance, Roman) categorisations of hierarchical society, serving as loci and vehicles for the *collective* expression and assertion of *individual* aspiration for status. These were 'permeable' in that individuals may move in and out of them, both upwards and downwards. Such movement provided the motor for change, as members of each order sought to guarantee their position, increase their power, or enhance their prestige and wealth within it, if possible to the

extent that they are able to acquire sufficient status (usually measured in wealth, usually taking the form of rental income from land) to secure admission into a higher order.

In the particular case of the Roman empire, the cause of change is identified as the incorporation of formerly autonomous city-states into a larger, unitary political structure (the empire), and the transformation of the social order as a result of the new material inputs dictated by that structure. Thus actions initiated by the elite orders to maintain and enhance their power and prestige (the creation / expansion of the Roman empire) result in the 'increase of the parasitical classes', swelling the ranks of those orders and consequently putting pressure on the 'lower classes' (see below for discussion of Finley's use of this term). The consequence of this is the re-formulation of status groupings in response to the newly-defined realities.

Finley is clearly too much the realist to ignore the impact of changing material conditions on Roman society, but these are contingent on the 'drive for status' and the social conditions created by the division of society into orders. They do, however, have the capacity to 'act back' and transform those orders. Orders will only remain viable whilst they are consonant with the material realities of the production, distribution and consumption necessary to sustain them. Finley's line of argument implies the primacy of the order or 'status group' as the determinant of social reality. Yet he himself demonstrates that these can be transformed by the very material conditions they have shaped. Running the film backwards, as it were, where in this totality of material production and social order should the ultimate determinants be sought? In social categories embodying status distinctions, which structure and shape material conditions? Or in those material conditions themselves, on which, as Finley so emphatically demonstrates, all imposition, representation, and indeed existence of elite orders ultimately depends?

In adopting the 'order', or 'juridically-defined group' (ibid., 49) as a unit of analysis embodying "status", an admirably vague word with a considerable psychological element' (ibid., 51), Finley subscribes to the first of these positions. In doing so, and

consequently rejecting the tenets of Marxist analysis, Finley denies himself the means to investigate in detail the crucial relationship between social categories and their material basis. One set of categories gives way to another as a result of the material outcomes of the requirements of the élite social orders, but can only be understood in the general terms of rectifying (or rather reflecting) an imbalance between consumers and producers. Whilst we may accept, with Finley, the Marxist George Lukács' observations that 'in pre-capitalist societies status-consciousness *masks* class-consciousness', and that 'economic and legal categories are objectively and substantively so interwoven as to be inseparable' (my italics; *ibid.*, 50) this does not preclude the use of class as an analytical construct in explaining the creation and eventual disintegration of the Roman empire.

The analytical limitations of the substantivist concept of the socially-embedded economy derive from its reification of 'status' and 'prestige' in understanding social structure and the mediation and organisation of production and consumption. That legally- and socially-defined status groups existed in the ancient world, and that they were recognised and acknowledged by contemporaries, is obviously not in doubt. In substantivist analyses they are seen as the outcome of historically-specific strategies to acquire and maintain status with regard to other individuals and groups - embodying a universal motivation to this end on the part of individual human beings. They thus constitute what Max Weber termed an acknowledged 'legitimate order', which serves to differentiate statuses and, as a result, creates social hierarchy. The ultimate determinant of social change, and the dynamic which drives history, thus resides in changes to that legitimate order, and the re-ordering of status groups within it.

Organisation of material production and control over surplus are seen as being determined by these status divisions. They serve to provide elite groups and orders with the surplus necessary to maintain their social position, effected through display and conspicuous consumption. The maintenance and expression of status clearly requires a material foundation; 'high status' groups typically consume surplus, produced by their 'low status' counterparts and articulated through the social hierarchy by means of social and legal obligation. However, the primary analytical structures are contemporary



notions of status and hierarchy; fundamentally *ideological* constructs. These serve to deliver surplus to 'high status' individuals and groups, but have no specified, consistent relationship with the conditions under which that surplus is *produced*, or the manner in which it is expropriated from those actually engaged in production. Consequently, social status and hierarchy stand independent of these, and can change arbitrarily in relation to them. The organisation of production thus takes a secondary role in the creation of social structure, potentially but not necessarily responding to the changing demands of status expression; and because social hierarchy is, in the last analysis, conceived in ideological terms, as a crystallisation of the desire for status, causality ultimately lies in changing notions of status, and how these are embodied and represented.

A substantivist perspective can thus offer a perfectly adequate, if static, *description* of social organisation, and, in recognising the role of historically-specific institutions and obligations in mediating production and exchange, is more appropriate to the study of ancient society than one which assumes the universality of a demand-driven market, with production organised (and fluctuating) accordingly. However, the unsatisfactory nature of the formulation becomes apparent when major social *change* must be accounted for. In the absence of a specified relationship between social hierarchy and the organisation of production and extraction of surplus, and because of the primacy accorded to the notion of status in the creation of that hierarchy, decisive change is attributed to the ideological sphere. Major changes in the organisation and level or volume of production (of which the fifth century transition in Britain is a classic case) are seen as being driven by changing ideas about how and to whom status is ascribed, and how that status is expressed. The impact of material conditions and circumstances may initiate these reformulations of status, but the essentially static conceptual apparatus of 'status groups' offers no means to systematically integrate these into an explanation of change; they are seen, and presented, as 'things which happen', directly or indirectly disrupting the existing social order, and in extreme cases causing the re-structuring of social hierarchy along lines defined by new status categories and the means of sustaining and representing them. Alternatively, purely ideological changes in the collective mindset (which must, of necessity, originate in the *individual* consciousness) may result in social transformation;

an obvious and relevant example being the rise of Christianity in the Roman world.

Thus, in substantivist analyses, no specified relationship between social hierarchy and material production is posited - but primacy in explaining historical change is attributed to the former. In incorporating material culture into such explanations, emphasis is invariably laid on its role in the expression, assertion and negotiation of an individual's status, and thus focuses on the *exchange* and *circulation* of goods; *production* is seen as being mediated not by disembodied 'market forces', but by a different species of demand, led and shaped by the need to provide the material expression of status which allows individuals to maintain their position within a status group. Conflict and change within the legitimate order are thus often ascribed to competition to control, or expand access to, the goods or resources which are of fundamental importance in asserting or maintaining status (cf. Millett's explanation for the expansion of the Roman empire: 1990, 2; Evans' account of the 5<sup>th</sup> century demise of 'Romanised' material culture in Britain; 1990, 98).

The second of these examples, in particular, demonstrates the tendency of substantivist studies, particularly when applied to Britain, to resolve into the 'market' model. 'Market forces' - the individual's hunger for status unleashed from social constraint and limited only by spending power - are frequently interpreted by substantivist studies as breaking up pre-existing social structure by broadening access to goods which had previously been the preserve of a select few, and thus undermining the basis on which status is differentiated. As traditional modes of status representation are rendered untenable by the commoditisation of goods, new forms are sought, resulting in the re-formulation of status groupings and the hierarchical structure through which they are articulated, thus transforming (and intensifying) the pattern of demand and hence the organisation of production. Ultimately, the increased capacity for production and opportunity for sale at profit results in the disintegration of pre-ordained social structure in favour of wealth based on a cash nexus - having arisen out of the instinctive individual drive for status which had created that social structure in the first place. The ultimate similarity, and teleological nature, of the positions outlined in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are readily

apparent; the crystallisation of the individual desire for status (e.g. Finley's 'orders') broken apart by that same drive unbounded from constraints within a 'free market'.

### 3.3 Marx and Historical Materialism

The interpretations which currently hold the field employ either precepts derived from the operation of contemporary, capitalist economies, or the notion of the 'socially-embedded economy', where production and exchange are seen as intrinsic to and inseparable from an established social hierarchy. The first of these relies on the application of anachronistic economic concepts, invalid in a context lacking extensive waged labour and technology capable of amplifying production. The second avoids this deficiency, but in doing so fails to provide an adequate theorisation, or to recognise the *centrality*, of the role of production and surplus extraction in the creation and maintenance of the social hierarchy within which they are enacted. Instead, society is conceived as fundamentally an ideological phenomenon, the culturally-specific realisation of an innate human drive for status. In consequence, explanations of major social change are unsatisfactory due to their reliance on changes in the perception of status, and in the manner of its material embodiment and expression. These are seen as the assertion of a fundamental characteristic of human consciousness (manifested collectively but, of necessity, of individual origin) and remain irreducible within the analysis.

To understand and satisfactorily *explain* the apparent material impoverishment of fifth century Britain calls for an analysis in which the relationship between production and social organisation is both *appropriate* and *explicitly formulated*. Neither of the approaches considered so far satisfies both requirements. The remaining chapters, which set the context for the research which forms the core of this thesis, and present the methods employed in and the results obtained from that research, will utilise a conception of society and of the causes of social change which draws on the historical materialism of Karl Marx. Such an approach, it will be argued, transcends the limitations of those previously discussed. It is necessary at this stage to outline its essential elements.

Karl Marx (1818 - 1883) was, first and foremost, a revolutionary. His avowed aim was to change the society he lived in, and the primary purpose of his historical researches was the elucidation of a theory of society which would inform - and, more importantly, *provide a guide for action for* - the task of bringing that change about. His writings confronted head-on the assumptions of eighteenth and nineteenth century political economists, who saw in the development of nineteenth century (specifically British) industrial society (in which 'laws' of supply and demand dictated the need for production and the price of goods, with devastating consequences for a working population dependent on both) the realisation of an economic system based on individual freedom of action, unfettered by the constraints imposed by the institutionalised social hierarchies characteristic of earlier times. The free market in goods and services was, for these writers, nothing less than 'a certain propensity in human nature...to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another' (Adam Smith, cited in Callinicos 1983) finally set free. Its social consequences, however regrettable, were unavoidable, and efforts to 'interfere' with the market to remedy them tantamount to contravening a law of nature.

Marx attacked this formulation as the expression of the values of a superincumbent, minority group - a *ruling class* - which sought to justify its exploitation of the greater part of the population in procuring the material resources necessary to secure, maintain and enjoy its superior social position. He saw contemporary society (for which he coined the term 'capitalist') not as the realisation of a form of social organisation embodying an immanent 'human nature', but as a *historically specific* episode in which the relationship between an exploiting, consuming group and exploited producers took a particular form. In the case of capitalism, this was achieved by the expropriation and accumulation of surplus value (capital) by a class able to monopolise control of production through their ownership of the *means* of production; the increasingly mechanised, technologically sophisticated (and capital-intensive) machinery which had transformed the productive output of staple industries previously reliant on individual craftsmanship. Unable to compete with machine production, former craft manufacturers were forced to sell their labour, rather than the *products* of their labour, to earn their living, and as this stark economic logic swept all before it, the control of the

capitalist class over a population dependent on waged labour was extended and intensified. The purpose of Marx's historical researches was the investigation of antecedent forms, and how and why these had changed, in order to understand the origins and underlying dynamics of this contemporary world.

Marx's analysis began with the proposition that what distinguished humans from other species was not, in the first instance, the capacity for conceptual thought or individual consciousness, but the *production*, from their environment, of the means through which they sustain their existence. To achieve this end requires co-operative effort, and it is through the process of engaging with others in this way that the individual human organism develops consciousness; humans are in the first instance *social* animals, whose awareness of themselves and others as *individuals* is contingent on their social existence. Thus no form of social organisation can be regarded as embodying some ahistorical, irreducible 'human nature'; rather, individual consciousness, behaviour, beliefs etc. are dependent on the experience of the individual within the specific configurations into which production is organised, and the nature of the social interactions which these create. Being precedes consciousness, rather than consciousness being. This is not to argue that individual consciousness is wholly *determined*, forming a universal conformity with the social and material world in which it exists. Humans are capable of rational understanding and action, and can act on their social and material world to change it. In Marx's famous phrase,

'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past'

(quoted in Callinicos 1983, 81).

Identifying the organisation of production as being at the heart of social existence, which was in turn the precondition for individual consciousness, Marx classified societies accordingly. The central concept he employed in doing so was the *mode of production*;

the specific form of organisation through which societies obtain from their environment the resources essential for their existence, and in particular the manner in which *surplus* production - above and beyond that required to meet the material subsistence needs of those actually *engaged* in the processes of production - is procured, controlled and distributed. Marx envisaged the earlier stages of human societies - hunter-gatherer communities and early agriculturalists - as essentially egalitarian, lacking social hierarchy and with undeveloped productive capacity. This condition he termed 'primitive communism', wherein such surplus as was created effectively remained under the control of the community as a whole.

As productive capacity expands, however, through technological innovation and increasing scale of collective activity, developing division of labour results in greater task specialisation, creating differential access to, and control over, surplus production. This creates the potential for those controlling surplus to meet their own needs *through* that control - free from the burden of direct involvement in production. They are thus able to organise themselves, and the direct producers whose surplus they appropriate, in such a way as to guarantee access to and control over that surplus in the long term. In this manner society becomes polarised on the basis of those immediately involved in the *production* of surplus, and those able to *expropriate* and employ it to their own ends. Further development of the division of labour may lead to the creation of elaborate social hierarchy (the 'orders' and 'status groups' recognised by the proponents of the 'socially-embedded economy'), but the fundamental - and intrinsically antagonistic - relationship remains that between those producing surplus, and those appropriating it. This constitutes the material basis of social *class*.

Marx saw historical change as the outcome of *class struggle*, between classes defined in terms of (on the one hand) their role in production (the 'direct producers') and (on the other) access to and control over surplus, *and the specific mechanisms and forms of compulsion through which that surplus was expropriated*. Throughout history, these have clearly differed across time and space. In formulating the criteria to distinguish between societies in which this expropriation took different forms, Marx

identified the *forces* of production - the combined capacity of human labour and technology to act on the world and transform it to meet human needs, and the *relations* of production - the specific social mechanisms through which the forces of production were deployed and surplus articulated and expropriated. The latter is dependent on the precise nature and extent of control the expropriating class has over the *means* of production - the human labour and technology which act on and transform the material world, *and* those material resources themselves. Taken together, these comprise a *mode* of production - a distinctive form of the forces and relations of production through which surplus is expropriated to provide the material basis essential for a superincumbent ruling class to establish and maintain its position. Marx classified the examples his researches had familiarised him with as the 'Asiatic', ancient, feudal and bourgeois / capitalist modes (Callinicos 1983, 90). Although Marx was writing in a period before systematic research into pre-industrial societies had commenced (cf. Hobsbawm, 1964), these categorisations, and others developed from them (e.g. below, 3.4) are argued here to be of enduring value in the analysis of social form and social change.

Substantial social change occurs when one mode of production - and the ruling class which it sustains - is overthrown by a rising class whose power is based on a new, or different, mode of production, which enjoys objective advantages in that specific material context, and is thus capable of displacing the previously dominant mode. History is understood as the outcome of a dialectical process, in which classes whose interests are intrinsically antagonistic contest control of production and access to the surplus it generates. As a revolutionary, whose essential purpose was the explanation of the rise of capitalism in order to become the architect of its demise, Marx was particularly concerned with the historical circumstances in which the capitalist mode of production had arisen in the interstices of the preceding, feudal, mode. This introduces an important point of particular relevance to this thesis. Whilst Marx often used the terms 'mode of production' and 'social formation' interchangeably (cf. Wickham, 1984, 7), and the mode of production on which the bulk of the ruling class depends is, in any society, its determining feature, *more than one mode of production may coexist within a social formation.*

The mode of production is thus the central and defining analytical concept in Marxist study of society; it forms the *base* on which the superstructure of political institutions, social orders and status, ideology and culture are built. Each of these plays an active part in society, and gives it distinctive characteristics, but as culturally-specific responses to the material realities intrinsic to the *social formation* - the totality of interconnected *modes* into which production is organised and through which surplus is extracted - defined in the materialist terms which are basic to Marxist analysis. Such superstructural elements - cultural, ideological, or organisational - may embody and be used to assert the interests of different classes within the social formation, and may in some instances transcend the boundaries of class as defined in Marxist terms. However, they are invariably dominated by those which derive from and are imposed by the ruling class; those, that is, who are the surplus-extracting beneficiaries of the *dominant* mode of production - the primary source of the surplus on which that class relies to sustain itself. The effectiveness, sustainability and ultimate survival of particular superstructural forms is dependent on their being relevant to, and consonant with, underlying modes of production, and on the continuing viability of those modes. To understand *why* social change occurred - and ultimately, therefore, to understand why history 'happened' - requires that explanatory primacy be given to the changing relationship between material resources, the direct producers and the technology available to exercise and amplify their labour power (together, the means of production), and the expropriators of surplus and the means they employed as a class to obtain and exercise control over that surplus.

Two points need to be made to deflect accusations of excessive reductionism. Firstly, the Marxist categories outlined above are tools for analysis, the starting point and framework for the investigation of empirical phenomena, not research ends in themselves. The purpose here is not to reify a set of categories, objectively identify them in the historical (or in this case archaeological) record, and offer this as an 'explanation' of change. Terminology and classification, Marxist or otherwise, do not in themselves explain anything. What Marxist analysis does offer, however, is the *means* to understand social change in terms of real relationships between people and the material world, and their conflicting efforts to control and shape that world to their own ends. These took



place in and created specific historical circumstances, and to understand the past requires that these specific circumstances are investigated; it is here, in the study of the human actions and their outcomes which actually 'make history' that social change is ultimately to be understood.

Secondly, the attribution of explanatory primacy to the means and relations of production does not render the study of (in Marxist terms) 'superstructural' elements redundant or irrelevant. The particular form of political institutions, the nature of status groups and the hierarchies they form, and the role and content of sacral and secular ideologies all offer insights into the means whereby modes of production are implemented and legitimised. Furthermore, it is invariably the case that when these are examined in the light of the material conditions which gave rise to them, their roles, and the reasons for their creation or adoption, are brought into sharper focus, in a manner not possible if they are seen simply as an (essentially passive) expression of 'status', or as a confection of disembodied human consciousness. Marxist analysis is precisely the opposite of sterile reductionism, its conceptual apparatus providing the means to understand the entire spectrum of social and historical phenomena with a level of insight and clarity which less explicitly and rigorously formulated research cannot.

### 3.4 Romanisation - a Marxist perspective

#### 3.4.1 Imperial expansion and the slave mode of production

Marxist treatments of Roman Britain are thin on the ground. However, G.E.M. de Ste Croix (1981) and Chris Wickham (1984) have contributed important studies of the Roman empire, which have sought to explain its creation and expansion - and demise in the West - through historical materialism. Much that has been written about Roman Britain emphasises that it was 'different' from the rest of the empire. One of the aims of this study is to identify the singular characteristics of the province which set it (and explanations for the breakdown of Roman institutions and social practice there) apart from much of continental Europe. Nevertheless, the works of de Ste Croix and Wickham provide the essential starting point for understanding the dynamics of social change in

the empire, and establishing the principles which will be used in attempting to understand the specific case of Britain. The significance of their arguments may be best understood in the context of a Marxist explanation for the expansion, indeed very existence of, the Roman empire.

This is usefully approached through the work of Michael Mann, in his chapter on the subject in *The Sources of Social Power to AD 1750 (Vol.1)* (Mann, 1986). Mann's sociological study in fact denies the notion of a 'unitary society' of either complementary (Weber; e.g. Finley's 'orders' or 'status groups') or antagonistic (Marx; class) categories, and the 'social totality' which this implies. Instead, he proposes that the collective social entities we term 'societies' be conceived as 'multiple overlapping and intersecting power networks' (ibid., 2), giving collective expression to a rational, purposive, goal-seeking human nature, and provide the capacity for the organisation and control of people, materials and territories (ibid., 4; 3). The key to understanding society and social change is not the reduction of society to fundamental elements - 'ultimate primacy' - but analysis of the particular forms which power structures have taken, and the means whereby they were implemented, in specific historical situations. Thus *extensive* and *intensive*, *authoritative* and *diffused* (ibid., 7) forms of power resolve into distinctive forms of organisation; *ideological*, *economic*, *military* and *political* (ibid., 22-7). These are not mutually exclusive, but in any given situation one will predominate and thus be decisive in determining the form and distribution of power within society<sup>8</sup>.

Mann's account of the expansion of the Roman empire embodies some acute insights into the social dynamics of the late Republic, and these are incorporated in the account which follows. He sees two stages of Roman imperialism; the 'empire of dominance' or 'hegemony', whereby Rome held power by virtue of dominating the local elites of other tribes and city states (ibid., 254), and the later *territorial* empire, which involved the actual integration of territory into a centralised network of administration and taxation, and the concurrent development of a distinctly *Roman*, empire-wide, ruling

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<sup>8</sup> Mann termed his approach 'the IEMP model' (ibid., 28).

class (ibid., 250). The central institution in this process of imperial conquest and consolidation was the legion; the fundamental source of social power in the Roman empire was military, and in emphasising its significance and impact Mann coined the phrase 'the legionary economy' (ibid., 272).

Mann offers a compelling account of *how* the Roman empire expanded. His explanation of *why* this took place is less convincing. From the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, with a professional army by now in existence, the answer seems to be 'because it could'. Universal human greed for wealth and status provided the motivation. The resultant empire-wide infrastructure transformed social relations by the creation of a continental economy, in which state supply systems generated demand. With the removal of the army, these structures collapsed. We are back in the world of Fulford and Hopkins. A more appropriate explanation can be found in the structure of Roman society which Mann himself identifies, but requires the introduction of the dynamic of the *slave mode of production* as elucidated by de Ste Croix.

Writing five years before Mann, de Ste Croix argued that the requirements of the slave mode, and the problems encountered by the ruling class in meeting these, were responsible for the increase in tied tenancies and serfdom in the later empire. The implications of his argument for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries will be considered below, but, when integrated with Mann's account, they are also of the utmost significance in understanding Roman imperial *expansion*. Central to de Ste Croix's case is that, for slave-run estates to deliver the levels of surplus the landowning ruling class required to maintain its position, slaves needed to have reached physical maturity (and commensurate physical capacity) *before* their enslavement; before becoming a burden on an estate's productive capacity. Fully grown adult slaves could produce sufficient to sustain themselves *and* the surplus demanded by their owners; children and women nurturing children had to be fed from that surplus, and could not engage, or could only engage with less effect, in production. In de Ste Croix's phrase, the necessity to breed slaves reduced the '*rate of exploitation*' in comparison with that achievable when they were acquired as mature adults (1981, 231).

Presumably, Roman slaves would initially have been drawn from the non-citizen body of the population (how the distinction between 'citizen' and 'non-citizen' may have arisen in the first place must necessarily remain beyond the scope of this study). Referring back to Marx's identification of the key role of surplus extraction in sustaining elite non-producers, citizens owning land from which they were able to procure surplus without having to be involved in its production themselves would form the basis of a class able not simply to lead a more leisured existence, enjoying the pleasures of consumption and the kudos of display, but more importantly to mould and direct political circumstances and institutions to their own ends. In other words it was their access to and control over surplus production which provided them with the means to exercise power over the remainder of the population, citizen and non-citizen, engaged in meeting its subsistence needs.

The replacement of adult slaves after their death might be achieved by the enslavement of free citizens, for example by means of legal punishment or debt bondage. However, attempts to push this too far could lead to resistance, potentially threatening not only the possibility of creating more slaves, but extensive landownership *itself*, by provoking insurrection against the great landowners. When that point of resistance was reached, the slave-labour required to work agricultural estates would either have to be bred on the plantation, or obtained from elsewhere. If the former option were adopted the reduced rate of exploitation would mean that, to maintain levels of surplus, a landowner would have to bring more land into production, requiring yet more slaves to work it; implying further land-taking, further enslavement of citizens and further potential for resistance. Ultimately, new sources of adult slaves would have to be found. War and the taking of captives was the obvious solution.

Rome waged war with a citizen army. The process of slave procurement - i.e. military engagement, the defeat of opposing forces and the taking of captives, followed by the imposition of Rome's political authority - enforced the absence from their holdings of free peasant proprietors on military service. Their property became vulnerable to

expropriation by larger landowners. (Even if these landowners were themselves absent on campaign, their interests could be asserted by their retainers - themselves quite possibly slaves - whereas the smallholder would have no-one to defend his; another clear advantage of being able to lay claim to surplus). Absence might well prove permanent; military service brought with it the all too apparent possibility of being killed, in which cases the potential for expropriation became even greater (Mann 1986, 255; Phillips 1996, 74). Thus the demands of the slave mode of production, beginning with the need to replace the slave population at regular intervals, resulted in its *expansion*, as the greater landowners increased their holdings, and consequently required larger numbers of slaves to realise surplus from them. The cycle of slave-procurement generating increased landholding by the great slave-owning landowners, thus requiring, sooner or later, the procurement of slaves in still larger numbers, locked Roman society into a pattern of military conquest - or, at least, confrontation - on an increasing scale.

A further effect of this process resulted from the dispossession of peasant proprietors. Deprived of land, these citizens (as Mann points out; 1986, 255) were *proletarianised*. As expropriation by the greater landowners increased with each military campaign, more and more landless citizens (often having migrated to Rome) began to serve in the army, particularly since (by the same token) the number of land-owning citizens available for military service was decreasing. The necessary incentive for such permanent mobilisation lay in a grant of land in return for a specified length of service; given that this situation had arisen due to the loss of their ancestral holdings in the Roman heartlands, this land had to be found elsewhere.

Following Mann's model, it can be argued that this situation had arisen incrementally down to the period of the Second Punic War of 218 - 201 BC. Until then it had been possible to meet the demands of the slave mode through limited, intermittent military engagement. Its expansionist tendencies - or rather, at this stage, the need to provoke conflict - were evident, but could be met in this fashion. By the late third century BC incorporation of the polities Rome had so engaged with had created a loosely federated state of about 300,000 citizens, dominating about 100,000 square

kilometres of territory (Mann 1986, 253).

Mann saw the campaign war against Carthage in the final decades of the third century BC as decisive in transforming an 'empire of dominance', maintained through hegemony over elites, into a 'territorial empire', involving occupation and direct control, due to a Roman desire to avenge its defeats, and near conquest, by the armies of Hannibal. In enacting this revenge, the potential wealth to be realised from the taxation of conquered territories provided the impetus for a policy of systematic expansion. It can be argued, however, that the reason for this decisive transformation is directly related to the needs of the slave mode, and the critical point these needs had reached at the time Hannibal entered the Italian peninsula.

Having established its hegemony over much of southern Italy, and with the extent of slave-worked estates in the heartlands increasing each time that hegemony was extended, slave procurement became an increasing problem with each passing generation. Following the 'one-off dividend' of war captives, the political incorporation of the neighbouring states as federated allies would have largely ruled them out as a source of further slaves; for the élites of these states to remain loyal to Rome (and to provide the tribute and troops through which that loyalty was made manifest), *their* productive base, and capacity to extract surplus, had to remain intact. The incremental increase in the significance of slave-ownership to the (?emergent) Roman ruling class in the period of hegemony took place in tandem with an equivalent *decline* in opportunities to accrue the slave 'windfalls' of military engagement followed by the establishment of political supremacy. Each successive expedition thus required a greater one-off return.

The Carthaginian campaign in Italy served to accelerate the expansion of the slave mode within Italy, and inaugurate the *territorial* conquest which was eventually to extend over much of transalpine Europe. Following defeat at Cannae in 216 BC, the Roman citizen army fought a war of attrition across the length of Europe for almost 15 years, finally defeating Hannibal at Zama, in north Africa, in 202 BC. The intensity (particularly early on) and length of the conflict, and the geographical distance at which

its later stages were fought, seem likely to have accelerated the process of land expropriation in the Italian heartlands, through the long absence and increased death toll of citizens on army service. The pursuit of the Carthaginian armies to the end of Europe and beyond, and the annexation of territory it allowed, provided a seemingly longer-term solution to the never-ending labour demands of the slave mode of production. Popular antagonism towards Carthage, which Mann uses to explain the inexorable prosecution of the war, may have been invoked and incited to mobilise the citizen army (and would have been effective given that the early phase of the campaign was conducted in direct defence of its homeland), but the fundamental reason was more pragmatic. Through annexation and direct military and political control of territory, the supply of slaves to work the great estates of Italy - needed at a level greater than ever, as a result of the absence and casualties of peasant proprietors on campaign, and the consequent expansion of aristocratic landholding - could be procured at the required level. And, in theory, the supply could be maintained whilst the territory was under direct Roman control.

In theory. In practice, the social impact of the expansion of the slave mode *in the Italian peninsula* was to create further - indeed, ultimately, *endless* - need for territorial expansion. The Second Punic War had massively accelerated the proletarianisation of peasant landowners, who as a result constituted an increasing proportion of an increasingly professional army. Lacking land, their major incentive to commit themselves to an extended term of service was the promise of it, in the form of a land pension, provided by the establishment of colonies of veteran soldiers in conquered territories. The annexation of territories under Rome's direct rule also required an infrastructure of state officials and agents to guarantee political stability, backed by the capacity to exert military force and drawing taxation and tribute from the local population to sustain itself and the burgeoning bureaucracy in Rome. With an initial haemorrhaging of labour power as the enslaved were transported to Italian estates (Livy indicates that *at least* a third of a million were taken captive by Rome prior to 149 BC, and Caesar's campaigns in Gaul between 58 and 51 BC reportedly as many as one million; Phillips 1996, 74), and the local administrators and settled veterans building *their* private wealth on slave-worked landholdings, the need to replace the slave labour force recurred with each passing

generation. By moving slaves from the lands of their birth, creating an administrative hierarchy in those territories to oversee and guarantee the process, and providing the promised land pensions for veteran soldiers, the crisis of slave labour in the Italian heartlands which had begun the process of expansion was replicated in the newly acquired provinces.

This process of expansion introduced a new dynamic. As Rome's territorial control was extended, the profits of empire grew accordingly. Those strategically placed within the system of state taxation were in a position to accumulate vast wealth, far beyond their official state salaries or, initially, what they could realise through their private landholdings. The only outlet for this accumulation of wealth (and here Finley's arguments against those of Rostovtzeff really come into their own) was in land. To convert the liquid assets (i.e. coined money) acquired through taxation meant that not only did slave labour have to be obtained; so too did the land for that slave labour to work. When available land in the Italian heartlands was scarce, and the price of what was for sale consequently high, expansion and annexation once again became the only workable solution.

The cyclical demand for labour created by the slave mode of production, and the administrative and military structures which it engendered, thus provided the Roman ruling class with three mutually reinforcing reasons for territorial conquest. In securing and controlling a reliable supply of slave labour, direct control of territory provided the land required to reward a landless soldiery; the administration of these territories as provinces delivered vast wealth into the hands of those charged with the responsibility of collecting taxation, which they needed both labour *and* land to realise in material terms; as these became scarce and/or expensive within the bounds of the empire, the extension of Roman suzerainty became essential in maintaining the position of those whose wealth came from this source. The general at the head of an army whose soldiery held no stake as landed citizens in the Roman state wielded great political power, a fact which was to be formally recognised with the creation of Octavian as Augustus, the first constitutionally acknowledged *imperator*. For the moment, the interests of state



administrator, army and landowner coincided in a policy of territorial expansion. Little wonder, then, that adulation, status and political power were conferred on those who successfully executed such a policy, and, conversely, that by the time of the late Republic successful territorial conquest became prerequisite in pursuit of individual political ambition (cf. Millett 1990, 7).

This, then, was the dynamic behind Rome's extraordinary territorial conquests between the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> AD. The need to repeatedly renew a slave population ever-increasing in number was compounded by the expansionist requirements of those whose wealth and power depended on the political and military structures created and used to pursue that end. A society whose ruling class was thus dependent on territorial expansion to maintain its supremacy must, of necessity, undergo crisis and change when its capacity to do so was constrained either by external obstacles or internal structural weaknesses. Such was to prove the case.

#### 3.4.2 Imperial stasis : the state and the land

By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD - within two generations of the Claudian conquest of Britain -the Roman territorial empire had reached its effective limits. The systematic exploitation of new lands in order to sustain the slave mode ceased to be possible. De Ste Croix (1981, 239) cites Max Weber's observation (delivered in 1896 in a paper entitled 'The Social Causes of the Decay of Ancient Civilisation') that, since the slave barracks of the late Republic were not self-reproducing, the effect of the cessation of slave imports was 'the same as that of the exhaustion of coal deposits on blast furnaces', and thus marked 'the turning point in the development of ancient civilisation'. To maintain the rate of exploitation on which their position relied, an increased level of surplus had to be expropriated from the remainder of the population.

It is here that de Ste Croix's argument explaining the deterioration of the free peasantry in the late Roman western empire comes into play. He notes evidence for the settlement of slaves, in family units, on agricultural plots from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC - effectively slave tenants (1981, 237). This, in effect, amounts to resorting to the

*breeding* of slaves, with its attendant reduction in the rate of exploitation of the slave population. When this process was in train, indicating a diminishing supply of adult slaves, maintaining the same level of surplus expropriation required that more be extracted from the ostensibly free citizen. This was achieved through the increasing erosion of legal and constitutional rights and privileges from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD onwards (ibid., 454), until by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century ‘...the propertied classes...found it easier than ever before to exploit...humble free men upon whose labour they were becoming more directly dependent for their surplus, now that slavery was...less fruitful than in the last two centuries BC’ (ibid., 461). Given such a level of dominance and control, the propertied classes were now in a position to increase the rate of exploitation to meet their own requirement for surplus, and that of the state which (for the moment) served their needs and on whose support they relied. This they proceeded to do.

De Ste Croix saw this as the reason for the demise of the western empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, with intensified exploitation of the increasingly servile masses by a property-owning ruling class resulting in widespread disaffection for state and landlord amongst the population at large. As the empire, by now static and with long-established frontiers, sought the resources to maintain those frontiers against the increasingly large and organised barbarian groups beyond the *limes*, the burden of taxation on both landlord and tenant increased (ibid., 493), with the landlords taking every possible opportunity to transfer their share of it onto the peasantry. This on top of the already increased exactions of rent and services *by* the property-owning class required to maintain surplus extraction at levels comparable to those obtained from the slave-working of estates. With the exactions of state (taxation) and landlord (rent, service obligations) increasingly onerous through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, the barbarian settlement or conquest of large tracts of the western empire from the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards was met with indifference, or even relief, by the majority of the population (ibid., 474). The western empire disintegrated because the punitive exploitation of peasantry by ruling class destroyed the last vestiges of social cohesion or, in the eyes of that peasantry, any claim to legitimate authority by the ruling class, whether as representatives of the state or as (legal or *de facto*) masters.

This may well be an important reason for the ultimate fate of the empire in the west. The changing nature of what de Ste Croix termed 'direct individual exploitation' (i.e. that between master and slave, or other form of unfree labour; *ibid.*, 205) resulting from the inability to secure an endless supply of slaves, and finally leading to a majority of the population being forced to render surplus at intolerable levels (compounded by the 'indirect collective exploitation' imposed through state taxation) is likely to be at the core of any such explanation. As stated, however, it poses certain problems in Marxist terms, specifically in relation to the key concept of the *dominant mode of production*, the means of surplus expropriation on which the ruling class primarily relies, and which thus provides the basis of the overall social formation. What de Ste Croix proposes is that the *slave* mode of production was directly superseded by - and this notwithstanding his concern about the use of the term in a late Roman context (*ibid.*, 269) - the *feudal* mode. The problem is that, whilst the slave mode can with little hesitation be regarded as the dominant mode in Italy of the late Republic and early empire, this is less obviously the case - and often demonstrably *not* the case - elsewhere in the empire, and in later centuries. Similarly, whilst the late Roman colonate may be said to exemplify relations of production which can be termed 'feudal' (in that they involved tenants paying rent to a monopolistic landowning class; Wickham 1984, 6, after Hindess and Hirst), the feudal mode cannot be said to have *dominated* society in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, still less in the 4<sup>th</sup>, by which time the slave-working of estates, even in Italy, was far less significant than it had been three or four centuries earlier (*ibid.*, 5).

Given the importance of the concept of the 'dominant mode of production' in Marxist analysis, this is a serious shortcoming, as it leaves a great swathe of time, from perhaps the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, uncharacterised in these terms; there is no indication in this period of a clear-cut, direct interface between a social formation primarily dependent on slave production, and one relying on rent and labour services rendered to landlords, although both clearly paid a role. The wider historical question - 'when and how did a society built on slavery give way to one built on feudalism' (another way of saying 'when did the classical world give way to the medieval world?') - thus becomes extremely difficult to answer, and attempts to do so prone to drawing some highly implausible

conclusions (such as the slave mode being dominant into the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, or European society becoming 'feudal' from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, neither of which can convincingly be argued as an accurate representation). The resolution of this problem requires consideration of the structures of imperial government and administration which grew with the onset of imperial expansion from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC; the means whereby de Ste Croix's 'indirect collective exploitation' was imposed.

The difficulties inherent in identifying the shift from the slave mode of production to the feudal mode have been most effectively addressed by Chris Wickham, in his 1984 paper 'The Other Transition: from the Ancient World to Feudalism'. Here, Wickham sets out the problem identified in the previous paragraph, emphasising the distinction to be made between a mode or modes of production (which may co-exist), and the overall social formation, within which one mode of production will be dominant and determine the ground rules for that social formation, thus providing the framework within which the other modes operate. The dominant mode will usually be the one with the closest links to the state, and a rising mode of production will eventually co-opt the state (Wickham 1984, 8).

In the case of the Roman empire, Wickham notes that, as its territorial control expanded, the taxation and tribute which it was able to impose on conquered territories came to provide the single greatest source of surplus for the ruling class. Cities, as the (often longstanding) nodes of consumption for the produce of their rural hinterlands provided the basic structure through which that taxation and tribute was drawn off. This basic structure has been termed (by Hindess and Hirst) the 'ancient mode of production', and Wickham argues it to be a sub-type of the 'tributary mode' (Samir Amin's re-formulation of Marx's original 'Asiatic mode'), whereby surplus is primarily expropriated through (usually extensive) networks of tribute and/or taxation, the ancient mode's distinctive characteristic being the role of the city in the taxation mechanism (Wickham 1984, 36). Wickham emphasises that taxation provided the basis of the *late* Roman state (*ibid.*, 9); it could be argued that this was the case from at least the period of the late Republic and early empire. It was taxation which integrated the empire into a

single social formation, dominating the economy and providing the economic foundation for the state (ibid., 12, 13).

The identification of the ancient / tributary mode of production as basic to the late Roman social formation is of great significance in understanding the disintegration of the western empire, and Wickham himself uses it as the basis of a compelling explanation. To fully appreciate the implications of this, brief consideration of the interrelationship between the slave, ancient/tributary and feudal modes in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries is necessary.

It has been argued above that Rome's territorial expansion was initiated by a landowning ruling class as a means to obtain slave labour in order to maintain the level of surplus expropriation - the rate of exploitation - required to secure its position. In doing so, the military, administrative and political structures created to this end provided new mechanisms for procuring surplus. As the reach of these structures was extended with territorial expansion, their capacity to enrich those who controlled and oversaw them became prodigious, and by the time of the late empire high public office offered vast rewards. The same principle held true for less exalted posts, if not to the same degree. Structures which had been created in the service of the slave mode of production now themselves began to dominate and determine the social formation, a classic case of a mode of production arising out of and usurping the position of its predecessor. Establishing the precise point at which the Roman empire came to be dominated by the ancient / tributary mode, rather than the slave mode, would involve lengthy discussion and debate, but it is likely to have been well underway by the time of the Roman conquest of Britain mid-way through the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

The interrelationship between the slave and tributary modes is of considerable interest. The wealth acquired by tribute could only be realised in the long-term by landholding; for this to be meaningful the labour to work the land was required, and both, increasingly, depended on conquest and extended territorial control. The slave mode thus ultimately became incorporated *within* the social formation defined by the

tributary mode; surplus was concentrated in the hands of public officials, by whom the profits of empire were (literally) ploughed back into land by those same officials as private landowners. As has been seen, when the empire ceased to expand, and the slave mode was baulked by the difficulty in replacing slave labour, the landowning ruling class sought to extend its control over and intensify expropriation from the remainder of the free population. Land ownership remained fundamental, but the measures whereby surplus was extracted were different. The structures employed here were essentially those which were to characterise the feudal societies of medieval Europe; although they increased in significance whilst that of the slave mode declined (although both could still be found in different parts of the later empire), *both operated within a wider social formation defined by the tributary mode.*

It is here that Wickham's analysis exposes the core of late Roman society, and offers a persuasive explanation for its demise in the west. Wealth acquired by officials of the late Roman state was invested by the accumulation of land, *the* acknowledged and 'proper' source of wealth in the classical world (cf. Finley 1985, 188; Jones 1964, 769). However, as the demands of the state increased (notably the army, in maintaining the imperial frontiers against barbarian societies to the north and the states of western Asia to the east), along with the rapacious acquisitiveness of the officials themselves, increased landholdings exposed their owners to an ever increasing burden of taxation. Where such landholdings were large, the private interest of the landowner began to outweigh the benefits which acknowledgement of and participation in the Roman state could accrue. The antagonism between the two modes of production, tributary and feudal, became apparent, and in the final outcome of this 'fatal involution of the state' (Wickham 1984, 18), the structures of the feudal mode proved more enduring than those of the ancient mode (*ibid.*, 15).

For Wickham, the burgeoning and aggressive Germanic societies beyond the imperial frontiers provided the political context within which disaffected late Roman landowners could exercise their secessionist inclinations. This they did by offering alternative structures of state - breaking the 'ideological hegemony' of Rome - and by

engaging the imperial armies to the extent that, within the empire, mass tax evasion without the fear of imperial retribution became practicable (ibid., 18). The peasant masses themselves revolted against the state but rarely, and even in areas where such outbreaks seem to have been relatively frequent - i.e. the *Bacaudae* in areas of Spain and Gaul - scholarly opinion has been divided on the extent to which these represent genuine peasant uprisings (ibid.). More often, the bonds created by the patronage and clientelism endemic in the late Roman state (frequently resorted to by peasants seeking powerful protection against the demands of the tax collector) served to bind them to estate and landowner (Wickham 1984, 17) . Thus landowners over much of the western empire were able to maintain their estates and style of life under new Germanic overlords. The structures of the new 'barbarian' states imposed a far less onerous tax burden, but provided the local military capability to defend their territories when necessary (although with varying degrees of success), and, equally importantly, to ensure against peasant insurrection or abandonment of estates.

It is these conditions which Wickham sees as the context for the emergence of the feudal kingdoms of north-western Europe in the early middle ages. In the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, at varying rates in different areas of the former empire, taxation gave way to rent as the fundamental means of surplus expropriation, sustaining the both Romanised aristocracy and their barbarian successors. Crucially, the latter included the military capability which provided the ultimate sanction in guaranteeing such expropriation. Recently, reservations have been expressed regarding the assumed survival of late Roman estates in the more northerly of the former north-western provinces into and through the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Halsall 1999, 144). Nevertheless, it is beyond dispute that estate-owning Gallo-Roman aristocrats south of the Loire integrated themselves into the new kingdoms, and indeed were instrumental in the consolidation of a landowning ruling class by encouraging barbarian rulers to identify with imperial and aristocratic culture and institutions, as distinct from the social and cultural traditions of their followers (ibid., 143; Brown 1971, 127-8). Thus the continental provinces of the western empire. What of Britain?

### 3.5 Romanising Britain : the consolidation of class power

Section 3.4 presented an overview of the origins, expansion and disintegration of the western Roman empire, drawing on the writings of Mann, de Ste Croix and Wickham. Using the key Marxist notions of *class* and the *mode of production*, it sought to explain *why* these specific historical phenomena occurred, rather than simply describe the fact that they did. As a Roman province for three-and-a-half centuries, Britain was clearly caught up in these changes. However, although the form of explanation offered for the 'end of Roman Britain' will thus be modelled on the work of the authors cited above (in particular that of Wickham), it is clear that *Britannia* differed in significant ways from other parts of the western empire, including the geographically closest Gallic provinces. This is noticeably the case in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but is also apparent in the earlier centuries of Roman rule. In order to understand the *breakdown* of the Roman province, therefore, it is necessary to consider in Marxist terms the manner in which Roman rule was imposed, and how Romano-British society subsequently developed.

This requires that the outlines of some currently accepted and influential interpretations of specific aspects of the archaeology of Roman Britain are considered. The summary presented here has for the most part been drawn from Martin Millett's *The Romanization of Britain* (1990), as this provides the most comprehensive and penetrating recent synthesis of the archaeology of the province. Comparisons with other recent syntheses concerned specifically with late and post-Roman Britain (Esmonde-Cleary 1989; Higham 1992; Dark 1994) will be made, and the conclusions of all of these authors contrasted with the proposed Marxist overview and its implications.

#### 3.5.1 Later pre-Roman Iron Age societies in Britain

The characteristics of late pre-Roman Iron Age (henceforth LPRIA) societies in Britain is the obvious and necessary starting point. Millett's synthesis offers a picture of diverse regional and local groupings, differing in their degree of social hierarchy and character of settlement organisation. In broad terms the south and east of Britain show more evidence for hierarchical settlement (a range of settlement types / sizes from large focal settlements to small farmsteads) than the north and west (more evenly sized, often



defended settlements), with an 'intermediate zone' dominated by hillforts (Millett 1990, 15-16). As the basic social unit, Millett envisages small clans, inhabiting geographically restricted localities, each with its own leader and aristocratic elite, coming together to form the larger, loosely organised kinship and client networks represented by the tribes identified by the classical authors of the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC and AD. In the south and east by the later 1<sup>st</sup> century BC these tribal groupings were growing in scale and permanence, at a time when the intensity of agricultural production was increasing, these developments being particularly marked in the area of what is now Essex and Hertfordshire (ibid., 21; 10).

Within this social framework, the central places represented by hillforts and particularly *oppida* constituted foci for tribal groupings, indicating social centralisation. Millett emphasises that these sites are typically *not* locations of elite residence, which are usually elsewhere, and often all but indistinguishable, spatially and architecturally, from any other. He emphasises the *personal* nature of power in the LPRIA, and argues that the role of *oppida* was to facilitate, and to announce, a collective tribal identity (ibid., 23; 25). Only with the creation of permanent tribal units did *oppida* typically become the location of elite residence (as at Verulamium, Silchester and Camulodunum; ibid, 26). The social expression of élite status was achieved through the control of prestige goods (which provide the actual physical means for the expression of status through personal display and gift giving), imported from the continent firstly through the south-west of Britain and, from the later 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, through sites north of the Thames (ibid., 31).

In Marxist terms, the social development recognisable in the archaeology of Britain in the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC and AD may be understood in terms of developing control over surplus, and the tributary mechanisms through which it was obtained, by a burgeoning ruling class. In areas where settlement hierarchy appears to have been slight, as in the north and west, reciprocal exchange of goods within and between kin groups, with limited elite appropriation of tribute, seems likely to have prevailed. However, in Millett's 'hillfort zone', and even more so in the areas of the south and east where settlement hierarchies and *oppida* are in evidence, tribal élites seem not only to have been

able to harness collective labour on a considerable scale (as witnessed by the hillforts and *oppida* themselves), and to have drawn on systematic tribute, but to have established increasing control over the surplus which was concentrated at these foci. Thus their residence at *oppida* may be seen as the point at which a social elite began to assert its claimed right to, and to exercise control over, the surplus production articulated through re-distributive mechanisms which served to maintain social cohesion between kin-groups within a broader tribal structure. The origins of a class society can be discerned, with a superincumbent class, maintained through the tributary mode of production, developing a consciousness of its own interests as distinct from those of the remainder of the tribe, and using prestige goods on an increasing scale to define and differentiate its own identity through display and gift-giving.

It is possible that the level of social control of some of these elites was such that land had been appropriated by them as private property (as Millett suggests; *ibid.*, 96); the acquisition and use of slaves to produce surplus available only to the slaveowners is also possible. The extent of both of these is, however, likely to have been limited, and both would have been subsidiary to and incorporated within the (dominant) tributary mode of production. The fact that LPRIA societies across Britain had arrived at different levels of social complexity and hierarchy, and widely differing degrees of class formation, was to have major implications for the development of Romanised society in regions across the province.

### 3.5.2 The Roman army and the conquest of Britain

Whilst rejecting longstanding received views which attributed a determining role to the Roman army in the creation of civil society in Britain following the conquest, Millett recognises its significant impact on LPRIA societies. This is primarily conceived in terms of the *demand* it created in the areas where its installations were located (Millett 1990, 56), and the stimulus of a substantial inflow of coinage attracting traders to the *vici* at their gates. The resultant inflows of goods served to destabilise LPRIA societies by the proliferation of what had previously been prestige goods (*ibid.*, 58), with the independent wealth of the army serving to undermine the wider structures of social

control which held those societies together (ibid., 59). In essence, the arrival of coined money in quantity with the army served to stimulate market exchange, and thus to erode the basis of existing social relations.

Invoking 'market forces' unleashed by the arrival of the Roman army has long been a staple of Romano-British archaeology (see Chapter 2), but it can be argued (and will be here) that taxation and compulsion are more relevant to understanding Roman military sites, and the coinage used therein, than markets and opportunity. Reece (1987, 27) notes that the distribution of Roman coinage of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD is largely confined to towns and military sites, and sees this as indicative of its role at this date being primarily as a medium for systematic taxation. Coinage was important in this capacity in the Roman empire in that it allows the conversion of surplus into a *portable* and *convertible* form, and thus its movement from one part of the empire to another. In the context of *vici*, set in many cases amongst populations whose previous experience of coin use would have been slight or non-existent, this 'convertibility' would have been wholly contingent on the 'demand' - used here in its most literal sense - to pay taxation, a demand all too evidently backed up by military force.

The assumption that coin usage at or around Roman forts caused enthusiastic natives to flock to the gates seeking commercial advantage needs to be tempered with the knowledge that, in drawing supplies from the locality of a fort, requisitioning - of both foodstuffs and labour - would have been necessary prior to the establishment of regular taxation (Millett 1990, 57). Millett argues against over-exploitation of local populations on the grounds of minimising antagonism to avoid unnecessary resistance (ibid.1990, 56). Where, as in the LPRIA societies in the south and east of Britain, a superincumbent class was in the process of freeing itself from tribal controls or checks on its behaviour, its members would arguably have had few qualms in seeing fellow tribesmen coerced into subject labour, whether within or beyond the *vici*, when their own longer-term interests apparently coincided with those of their conquerors - particularly given the probable fluidity and impermanence of tribes which comprised aggregations of different, and widely dispersed kin-groupings. Furthermore, even in cases where the

quantitative impact of Roman military requisitioning was minimal, it would have served to establish the principle and precedent of surplus expropriation, opening the way for its progressive increase.

In the more dispersed societies of the north and west, the prospect of localised resistance seems unlikely to have been of great concern to a Roman field commander in need of supplies. Although we do not *know* the circumstances of the inhabitants of the *vici*, the assumption that they gathered at the gates in a quest for commercial opportunity arguably tells us more about the pervasive influence of the notion of ‘the market’ in Romano-British studies than it does about the realities of military sites in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD. Aside from open conflict, the Roman legions in Britain - Mann’s ‘effective unit of political consolidation’ with its ‘logistical weapons’ (Mann 1986, 258; 274) - would, as Millett suggests, have had a major impact on the local social order. But this impact was arguably effected through more direct means than the socially destabilising impact of allegedly ‘disembedded’ commercial exchange.

### 3.5.3 *Civitates* and the Romano-British town

In regions of tribal society, such as Britain, where pre-existing urban centres (*poleis*) were absent, Rome ruled through *civitates*; tribal areas larger than those of Mediterranean city states, but which could be treated as units of government in a similar fashion. Millett argues that the emergence of the largest class of Romano-British towns - that is, the *civitas* capitals - in the later first and early second centuries was neither the result of spontaneous economic development following the establishment of military installations (Millett 1990, 74), nor (unlike the *coloniae*) of a direct, deliberate policy implemented at the behest of the state (*ibid.*, 85). Since the sequence and rates at which the *civitas* capitals grew appears to correspond with the status and stage of development of areas in the LPRIA, he argues that they were the ‘accidental...result of interaction between Rome and the *civitates*’ (*ibid.*, 85)<sup>9</sup>.

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What is not at issue is the net wealth flows to and from different parts of the empire, core to periphery or vice versa. Millett’s argument against ‘systematic and conscious expansion motivated by economic gain’ acknowledges the benefits accrued by the Roman elite (*ibid.*, 3); from their point of view imperial

This interpretation rests partly on Millett's identification of the individual drive for status as the motor of the Roman empire, valid equally for the Roman imperial elite and the tribal leaders of the *civitates*. Both sought status, the one acquiring it through conquest, the other through emulating and adopting the lifestyles of their conquerors (ibid., 2; 66). One would almost inevitably lead to the other, where the level of pre-Roman social development permitted it. Yet to describe the development of Romano-British towns as 'accidental' in these terms surely serves to curtail discussion prematurely. Viewed from the perspective of class interests, it can be seen that the Roman ruling class needed conquest and the creation of new provinces to procure wealth through the tributary mode of production; taxation, by this time arguably the dominant mode.

Equally, the LPRIA elites of south-eastern Britain, in the process of consolidating themselves as a class consciously distinct from their tribal inferiors, recognised the opportunities attendant on their incorporation within Roman political structures and social *milieus*. The class interests of both groups coincided, and both grasped the opportunity, but in these terms this can scarcely be termed 'accidental'. *Civitas* capitals were also established, albeit usually later, in *civitates* where a hierarchical society was less in evidence than in the south-east. This might be seen simply as emulation, but the consistency with which these urban settlements were created (even in cases where they could hardly be said to 'thrive') suggests that the Roman state *did* have a stake in their creation and existence, rather than their being a wholly autonomous initiative on the part of LPRIA elites.

The reasons for this are again best understood in class terms. The adoption of a policy of ruling and taxing through indigenous elites required, on the one hand, that those elites were able to exercise power which was recognised as legitimate by those

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conquest and subsequent taxation therefore served its purpose (cf. de Ste Croix 1981, 360). The lack of any kind of 'cost-benefit analysis' for the empire *as a whole* simply serves to provide eloquent vindication of Finley's judgement of the irrelevance of the very notion of an 'economy' in the ancient world. On the matter of the punctuated and fitful rate of territorial acquisition, which Millett also sees as an argument against an economic motivation, the need for the territorial consolidation detailed by Mann, and the 'delay' introduced by the establishment of the slave and tributary modes in new territory, serves to explain it.

from whom they took surplus. On the other, the elites had to feel that they were a part of and owed or felt allegiance to Rome and its imperial system. Finally, the effective implementation of imperial government and taxation required *cohesion* of the elite, particularly *within* but also *between* the *civitates*; the potentially fissiparous effects of antagonisms between clans and septs within tribal societies would clearly be detrimental to the regular procurement of surplus through tribute and taxation. The *civitas* capital provided the means to achieve all three of these aims. By locating the tribal élite at a single, permanent site, in a settlement whose architectural and spatial form and legal status connected it specifically with wider Roman society, their day-to-day existence became a constant reminder of their allegiance to Rome and place within the Roman world. This would have been in marked contrast with the fluid and shifting interpersonal obligations and allegiances typical of tribal society. The distinctness of the townscape from the rest of the territory in which it was located, and the lifestyle led and material culture used within it, would have served to differentiate the élite from the tribe, and to identify the common interest and identity of the townspeople as Roman citizens, distinct from the remainder of the population. The legitimacy of the elite's authority over that population would still have rested on kinship, social obligation and the offering up of tribute on the basis - or perhaps rather on the *pretext* - of personal ties. The *form* in which that tribute was delivered may however have changed (e.g. taken as coinage), and it very probably increased in magnitude (an issue which will receive further discussion below). There would clearly have been tensions here. They may have been mitigated by the notion that the *civitas* capital embodied tribal identity, in the manner proposed by Millett for *oppida*, and the apparently increasing incidence of élite residence at these sites may in a limited way have foreshadowed the *civitas* capitals (at least in the south-east), but the increased class differentiation and level of surplus extraction can hardly have been disguised. In short, the Roman state required that the British tribal elites were consolidated as a class for the purpose of expropriating surplus over the long term, and the *civitas* capitals provided the means to achieve this. Given this, that Rome required and had a vested interest in their creation can hardly be denied, and official policy to this effect appears probable.

In addition to being crucial nodes in the Roman taxation system (i.e. in the

imposition of the tributary mode of production, or at least the intensification of existing tribute mechanisms), and the consolidation of the tribal elites as a distinct ('Romanised') class willing to and capable of ensuring the expropriation of surplus, the actual physical *construction* of the towns, and probably other elements of the imperial infrastructure, will have played an active role in the intensification of surplus extraction. Whilst it is usually assumed that the army, unaided, created the network of roads (an assumption which itself may not be valid), if, following Millett, a significant role for the army in the creation of towns is ruled out, their construction must presumably have been undertaken by civilian labour. The significance of forced labour in the creation of infrastructure, its impact in initiating native populations in the new realities of imperial control, and the hatred of the impositions by those forced to comply with them, have been emphasised in the context of colonial Africa, cited as a specific analogy for Roman Britain (Oliver 1979, 19). It may be argued that the use of *corvéé* labour in such a way simply represents a direct continuation from the LPRIA construction of hillforts and *oppida*. However, in the case of the *civitas* capitals - permanent settlements for an elite minority, as distinct from intermittently occupied gathering places for entire tribes - the labour involved in their construction was *alienated* in a manner probably unprecedented. Furthermore, the construction of monumental buildings in stone in the towns from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards (Millett 1990, 107), indicates a progressive increase in a strengthening ruling class's capacity to exact surplus in new forms, in that instance a form which LPRIA societies had little if any previous acquaintance with, and which combined the intensive application and extensive organisation of labour.

#### 3.5.4 The extension of class domination

Romano-British towns, then, were of fundamental importance in the creation and consolidation of a ruling class within the province out of the tribal élites of the LPRIA. Their construction and existence served to underline the newly won social power of the their inhabitants, and to differentiate those inhabitants in terms of both location and material culture. The construction of buildings in stone indicates the progressive intensification of control over labour and resources by the *civitas* capitals. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries see further evidence of this with an increase in the construction of villas.

Millett sees the earliest Romano-British villas as expressions of power and social position, utilising wealth acquired by the urban-based elites through the social control afforded to them as agents of the Roman state (1990, 97), and *not* in themselves a means of producing wealth. In the case of the south-eastern villas of the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries, larger on average than their successors, clustered around towns, and often sited on LPRIA settlements, he is very likely correct in seeing them as simply a Romanised mode of status display (ibid., 92). However, whilst his insistence that villas of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries reflect the Roman aspirations of their owners and not agricultural change may also stand, he arguably misses a trick here. Acknowledging an intensification of existing control over production (ibid., 98), and arguing that private property had likely existed in Britain in the LPRIA, his explanation of the increased numbers of smaller villas at greater distances from towns (ibid., 117) is simply that more wealth, spreading further down the hierarchy, allowed more people to choose to express their Romanisation through villa construction. The interpretation favoured here, in charting the means whereby the *civitas*-based ruling class consolidated its control over surplus production rather than assuming the generalised creation and accumulation of 'wealth', sees them as indicative of increasingly direct control over land and people by town-based elites.

Millett is clearly correct in his assertion that, even where villa estates existed, they cannot be identified on the ground because they were spatially discontinuous. His claim that they have no archaeologically useful function (ibid., 92) is far less secure. The very existence of villa estates implies the existence of private property, itself an institution with significant implications for the relationship between a surplus-taking class and those directly involved in production. An increasing shift from *communal* control of and access to land to its *private* ownership has been identified as being of great significance in understanding the archaeology of Roman Britain (Gregson 1987, 21-4). Control of land as private property clearly increases the capacity of the owner to intensify surplus extraction from those working it, and also to directly determine the nature and organisation of production thereon. The legal and social mechanisms employed to alienate land from communal ownership and subject it to the control of an



individual in this way would also serve to reinforce the *personal* obligation of the direct producer - as free tenant, tied tenant or slave - to the landowner. In consequence there could scarcely be a more fundamental issue in understanding the archaeology of the Roman province. Although the *geographical extent* of villa estates may not be identifiable 'on the ground', as an analytical construct the villa estate has an importance second to none.

Whether or not land was held as private property in the LPRIA, the probability that such ownership had increased exponentially by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century can hardly be denied. Exactly *when* rural villas began to be the immediate foci for the appropriation of surplus from privately-owned land is unclear. However, rather than seeing the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century increase in the number of small villas at a distance from urban centres as the result of wealth becoming available in the lower reaches of the social hierarchy, they can be more profitably understood as indicating increasing areas of land being taken into private ownership. This statement does not envisage *nouveau riche* tribesmen, previously of low status, acquiring wealth in the context of an economy galvanised into increased production by taxation and the impact of monetised exchange, and thus able to enhance their social status through the construction of small villas appropriate to their means. Rather, it sees the smaller villas as the residences of dependent agents of the urban-based aristocracy, overseeing land alienated from collective tribal ownership, and spreading out as a network across the landscape as more land is appropriated. Far from being individual, independent and spontaneous outbursts of competitive, Romanised, status display, these structures represent the imposition of a hierarchically organised network of residences from which land could be overseen, labour organised, and tribute expropriated.

The alienation of communal land in this way would, of course, have affected the social and legal circumstances of those living on it. The means by which these changes were imposed are (and are likely to remain) unclear, as is the exact nature of the types of relationships between landowner and direct producer created in these circumstances. It is at least likely, however, that they adopted the essentials of Roman precedents from

elsewhere in the empire, and were thus similar in kind to those testified in other, better documented regions, probably including slavery (although there is little evidence for it having existed on a large scale in Britain) as well as tied and free tenancies. The residents of the new villas themselves would, in this scenario, have been in some way dependent on individuals within the elite, whether through a degree of kinship, or through a more explicitly servile relationship; a dependent overseer of dependent producers working land in private ownership.

### 3.5.5 Summary

It will hopefully be apparent that this class-based account of the Romanisation of Britain between the first and third centuries proposes the beginnings of that relationship between publicly-derived and private wealth identified by Jones, Finley and Wickham; namely, that wealth acquired as a result of public office (in this case the élites in the *civitas* capitals appropriating surplus on behalf of the Roman state) was ultimately deployed in the acquisition of land in private ownership, a phenomenon which was to have crucially significant consequences in the later empire, and indeed sowed the seeds for its ultimate disintegration in the west. Having succeeded in imposing the socio-legal instruments for the alienation of land from communal ownership (although, as has been observed, we currently have no evidence for the precise nature of these in Britain), the Romano-British ruling class would have been in a position to intensify, and exercise greater control over, the production of surplus by means of (de Ste Croix's) 'direct individual' exploitation, as distinct from the 'indirect collective' exploitation previously achievable through the system of Roman taxation grafted onto the tribal, tributary relations of the LPRIA. This potential may not have been realised to any great extent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, but was to come into its own in the 4<sup>th</sup>.

There is, however, a vital distinction to be drawn between Roman Britain and the areas of the empire which were the primary concern of Jones, Finley and Wickham. In territories conquered by Rome where *poleis* existed, the private ownership of land was in the majority of cases long established, and its disposal and acquisition through sale and purchase would often have been a familiar concept and practice. Consolidation of

landholding in this fashion could, in principle, have been effected from the outset, and may indeed have been ongoing prior to the imposition of Roman territorial control. In other words, in Wickham's terms, the basic structures of the feudal mode of production - tenants paying rent to a monopolistic landowning class - or at least the potential for their creation, were already in place. In many Mediterranean regions the majority of the land is likely to have been held under private ownership. In regions where taxation and government had to be effected through the creation of *civitates* as tribal territories - of which Britain is a, if not *the*, classic example - this was not the case. Although the holding of land exclusively by individuals may not have been unknown in Britain in the LPRIA, it seems highly unlikely that it was an extensive phenomenon, and even more so that it was held on such terms, or in such a context, where it would have been bought and sold. The very notion of investing the profits of imperial office in land would, in Britain, have first required the assertion by the élite of individual rights to land as against communal ownership and access.

It has been proposed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century pattern of an increasing number of small villas recognised by Millett represents the beginning of this process. Arguing this case leads to a consideration of his observation to the effect that

'Not only is the proportion of the landscape occupied by villas small, but localized variations in density are apparently normal. Thus, the substantial tracts of countryside without known villas should be seen as a result of the normal pattern of landscape variation, the consequence of *a continuance of traditional landholding and building patterns...* [my italics]'

(1990, 120)

This statement is made in refutation of the idea that the substantial areas of Britain over which villas are absent or scarce represent imperial estates. However, it is obviously of the greatest significance in considering the extent to which private ownership was imposed. Millett's statement would suggest that this was only partial. Furthermore, the reference to localised variation in density may indicate patchy and piecemeal landholding,

with privately-owned estate land and that outside direct élite control interspersed at a very local level. This is a matter of the greatest significance for this thesis, and, it will be argued, for the particular character of the archaeology of Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The argument may be developed with reference to the work of Richard Hingley on Roman rural settlement. Hingley's survey emphasises the variability of architectural and settlement form in the Romano-British countryside, devoting considerable attention to what he (somewhat obtusely) terms 'non-villa settlements', in explicit reaction to the traditional emphasis on the study of villas. He notes the uneven, and in some areas sparse, distribution of villas. In interpreting the form of buildings and settlements primarily in terms of expressions of status, he argues that many 'non-villa' rural sites - primarily round-houses, whether in enclosed or open settlements - display architectural and artefactual evidence indicative of status differentiation, and that in some cases this seems to indicate access to as much wealth as is evident on villa sites. This is particularly the case from the 1<sup>st</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, but can also be recognised in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (Hingley 1989, 31, 159).

Hingley considers the relationship between villa and 'non-villa' settlements, acknowledging the probability of tenurial and other social relationships between the different types of settlement (*ibid.*, 100-110). However, his discussion sees status and its expression, rather than antagonistic, class-based expropriation, as the central concept to be employed in explaining these differences, with a 'market economy' serving to provide the necessary capital and material goods to sustain and effect such display (*ibid.*, 156, 158).

The conclusion drawn by Hingley is simply that there were different ways of expressing status in Roman Britain. For him, assumptions regarding the superior status of villas and other 'Romanised' structures simply reflect the value judgements of previous generations of Romano-British archaeologists. However, his observations on settlement type and form become far more interesting if considered in the specific context argued here; that the proliferation and distribution of villas is indicative of the assertion and extension of private landownership, transforming relations of production in

specific (and probably discontinuous) localities. Hingley's 'non-villa' sites could thus be seen to provide evidence for settlements which were or were not locked into production on villa estates, potentially discriminated through settlement form and artefacts, and the character of production and consumption on the site, as well as the more traditional architectural form. It is not necessary that all settlements on estate lands, whose occupants were subject to the social control associated with that situation, need have been 'villas' or other Romanised forms, but this distinction would appear to be an obvious place to begin such research.

This section has sketched the transformation of the tribal elites of Britain in the LPRIA into a consolidated provincial ruling class, with a clear identity with and vested interest in maintaining the structures of Roman imperial power. With initial military impact, and the creation of the *civitas* capitals in the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD serving to fracture existing social relations, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries saw that class enforcing indirect, collective expropriation of surplus with increasing intensity, and creating, in the form of individually controlled private landholdings, a platform from which direct individual expropriation could be imposed on the rural landscape. By the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century this was still of comparatively limited extent, but was sufficiently well established to be developed to play a much greater role in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is the subject of the next section.

### 3.6 Villas, estates and money : Roman Britain in the fourth century

The middle decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century mark a watershed in the archaeology of Roman Britain. Major classes of dateable artefact - notably coinage and pottery - are scarce between AD 192 - 259 (Reece 1973, 239), and consequently it is often difficult to identify archaeological horizons which belong unambiguously to this period. Whether this phenomenon is fundamentally one of recognition, or does actually represent a gross reduction in productive output across the western empire (as Fulford has argued; 1975, 108; this is the basis of his identification of a 'recession', discussed in Chapter 2, above) is a matter which requires more detailed research. What *is* clear is that, when the diagnostic artefacts which comprise the mainstay of archaeological chronologies

reappear, and a broad range of evidence can once again be attributed to a specific period, very substantial changes in the archaeology of the province may be recognised as having taken place between the 270s and the later 4<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.6.1 Fourth century archaeological developments

Again, Millett's *Romanization of Britain* provides a convenient summary of these changes. Dealing firstly with the major towns, he proposes a 'decline in vitality' of the major centres (1990, 133), with the workshops and accommodation of artisans giving way to stone-built townhouses, indicative of a population spending wealth on itself as distinct from *creating* it, through trade and manufacture (ibid., 134). The construction of public buildings ceases, and evidence for agricultural production ('dark earth') in open spaces between the townhouses (which themselves begin to show similarity in architectural form to rural villas) appears (ibid., 135). At the same time, the majority of the major towns are enclosed by the construction of walled circuits (ibid., 137). Millett interprets the form which the major towns take in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries as defensible strongpoints in the state's communications network, important for the collection of taxes and the control and distribution of supplies, as well as being symbolically central foci for the collective identity of the *civitates*. (ibid., 142).

The changes evident in the major towns in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century have been the subject of much discussion since Reece's seminal, minimalist contribution, in which he argued that Roman 'towns' ceased to exist, in any form which could justifiably be described as 'urban', in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. After this, he suggested, they became, in effect, little more than 'administrative villages', anticipating in some respects (in Reece's view) the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century antecedents of the medieval manor (Reece 1980, 88). A novel twist to the inheritance of Seebohm, Vinogradoff *et al!* Predictably, Romano-British scholarship chose to concentrate on rebutting Reece's more extreme empirical claims (regarding ceramic dating and the actual degree of 'emptiness' of late Roman towns) than on the necessity for re-evaluation of approaches which this brilliant piece of *agent provocateur*-ism strove for. Recent publications (e.g. Dobney *et al*, 1998) indicate that order has been restored, and that the Romano-British free market still held the field

in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, with late towns pronounced as having been every bit as 'economically viable' as their 2<sup>nd</sup> century predecessors (ibid., 418, 422-3).

Arguably the most useful post-Reece contribution to the debate about late Roman towns has been Neil Faulkner's definition of the concept of 'post-classical urbanism'. Whilst demonstrating, *contra*-Reece (who in fact supervised Faulkner's research), that the later phases of the major towns still sustained significant populations, he argues that they differed from their predecessors in important respects, and should be considered on their own terms, rather than being assumed to have been the same as, or implicitly inferior to, their predecessors. Unfortunately, his characterisation of 'post-classical urbanism', wherein a centralised military empire concentrated wealth in the hands of 'top state functionaries', rather than within a large urban-based ruling class including many minor landowners, with towns becoming, in effect, state command centres, has an all too familiar ring to it. Whilst citing A.H.M. Jones, it amounts, in effect, to an unacknowledged reiteration of the precepts of Rostovtzeff (Faulkner 1994, 115-17).

The decline of artisan manufacture within the major towns coincides with an apparently complementary increase in such activity in the settlements usually termed 'small towns' (Millett 1990, 143). The term covers a considerable range of settlements, and whilst all seem to have been comparatively densely populated, they vary greatly in size (from 1 ha to almost 20 ha; ibid., 144), morphology and range of functions. Some were enclosed, others not. The majority were either located on the sites of earlier LPRIA settlements, on the Roman road network, or on previously military sites, with the first category being concentrated in the south and east, and examples in the north and west typically belonging to the latter two categories (ibid., 145). Millett interprets these sites as having been a response to the more localised collection of taxes and requisitions in kind (*annonae*), and subsequently developing as markets. By analogy with Gaul he sees them as the power bases of minor magnates controlling *pagi* (sub-divisions of *civitates*), also acknowledging Hodder's suggestion that they were a response to administrative, economic and social needs for urban centres at the margins of the *civitates* (ibid., 150).

Developing these themes, Millett proposes that, in the interests and with the encouragement of the minor magnates - a new, rising aristocracy - they represent the growth of a manufacturing and trading economy away from the social controls imposed by the major towns, and that this resulted in a decline of those functions in the *civitas* capitals. Consequently, following the crisis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the elements of production, exchange, administration and social control which had previously been concentrated there became decentralised and re-distributed across the landscape (*ibid.*, 151).

From the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century the number of villas in the countryside increases until the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, after which the number of dated villa sites declines. (Millett, making a point which vindicates the direction of Hingley's approach to Roman rural settlement, notes that if an estimated 500 of known villa sites were occupied during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, they would comprise less than 1% of total settlement, and a similar percentage of the population). These appear to have been somewhat smaller on average than their predecessors of the 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. By the later 4<sup>th</sup> century their numbers, and average size, were both in decline, a phenomenon Millett attributes to the popularisation of the villa idea as a mode of status display, leading to its progressive devaluation and abandonment (*ibid.*, 187). Set against the decline in average size and absolute number, however, is the rise of the great 'palace villas' such as Woodchester, Bignor, Chedworth and North Leigh.

The increasing number of 'Romanised' settlements in the British countryside in the later third and fourth centuries is accompanied by the use and deposition on a far greater range of settlement sites of 'Romanised' artefacts, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in the cases of coinage and pottery. Reece (1987, 23) has emphasised the large quantities of low denomination bronze coinage evident on British sites from the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the fact that such coinage is found on a far wider range of settlement sites than is the case with earlier issues. Similarly, 'Romanised' pottery, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, begins to appear on a far less restricted range of settlement sites. The geographical pattern of the *production* of such ceramics was also transformed, from locations close to towns to peripheral, rural areas of the *civitates*.



Similar trends seem likely to have affected other forms of manufacture. Finally, there are good indications of significant developments in the practice and organisation of agricultural production. Animal husbandry saw changes in the balance of species reared, an increase in the exploitation of woodland resources, and possibly the introduction of new breeds. Arable agriculture saw the introduction of new technologies for ploughing, harvesting and crop-processing, and the advent of full crop rotation in southern Britain (Millett 1990, 202; Jones 1981, 113). Taken together, it may be agreed, with Millett (*ibid.*), that these indicate an increased investment in agrarian production and rural manufacture.

The understanding of these developments takes us to the heart of the debate about the nature of economy and society in later Roman Britain; indeed across the Roman empire as a whole. The interpretation offered by Millett will therefore be considered in the light of an alternative, historical materialist approach, and an interpretation which develops that proposed for the 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries will be presented. Before doing so, however, attention should be drawn to other characterisations of later Roman Britain, employed by the authors of works which deal specifically with the late-to post-Roman transition. These reveal the 'dual identity' of economy and society in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, resulting from the differing assumptions about the development and chronology of 'the market economy', and bear eloquent witness to the difficulties created by its uncritical adoption as the basis for interpretation.

Fulford, adhering broadly to the model he established in his 1975 study of New Forest pottery (2.5.2., above; 4.3.2, below), characterises the economic development of Roman Britain from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century as the spread of a monetised market economy (1989, 185), albeit interrupted by the 'recession' of the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century. He acknowledges, however, that for the first two centuries the needs of the army were probably paramount in stimulating such market-based exchange as took place. Subsequently, kick-started by state investment in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it forged ahead under its own steam, no longer wholly dependent on the stimulus and support of state-financed institutions. This general sequence of development is followed by Millett. He sees social control by the LPRIA

elites continuing into the Roman period, constraining and inhibiting the impact of a monetised exchange introduced with the army in the process of conquest. Although reluctant to envisage such economic activity as becoming wholly 'disembedded' from social constraint (Millett 1990, 204), and acknowledging the continuing role of state structures in distribution and exchange (ibid., 180), he nevertheless sees, in the creation of production sites and a network of local markets on the peripheries of the *civitates*, an economically driven response to declining control from the centre, whether this response was 'the spontaneous offspring of economic circumstances or [the] creation...of individual magnates who had distanced themselves from group control' (ibid., 151). The centrality of the notion of independent 'market forces' operating in later Roman Britain, and precipitating economic growth, is apparent in both cases.

Contrasting with this 'optimistic' scenario, in which the Romano-British economy of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is seen as expanding and flourishing through its own dynamic, a more 'pessimistic' view emphasises the continuing role of the state in the operation of the later Romano-British economy. This is seen either in terms of an onerous tax burden being essential to its very existence (Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 9; 138), or in that same onerous tax burden crushing the life out of the 'market-based incentives' for production and exchange which had allegedly characterised the earlier empire, resulting in '...economic stagnation and the suppression of enterprise' (Higham 1992, 46). We are thus presented with contradictory views of the economic development of Roman Britain which are a near mirror-image of one another. On the one hand the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries in Britain witness a boom in agrarian production and manufacturing, as the potential of monetisation to foster economic growth opens up new opportunities for trade and wealth creation, breaking down traditional social relations and creating (or at least facilitating) new ones. On the other, the cumbersome and unwieldy state which provides the necessary condition for the economy to function at all proceeds to render it moribund through punitive taxation, compulsion and oppressive social legislation. The fact that these differing conclusions, ostensibly drawn from the same suite of archaeological evidence, coexist without comment on their apparently conflicting nature, or even reference to one another, is indicative of both how deeply-rooted, and various,

notions of 'the market' are in Romano-British studies, and of the lack of sustained critical engagement with their intellectual assumptions.

How, if at all, can these differing pictures be reconciled with one another, and with the archaeological evidence, which seems unambiguous in indicating that the 4th century witnessed greater material production (usually characterised as 'prosperity' and 'wealth') than had previously been known in Roman Britain? To do so requires a consideration of that evidence in the light of the interpretative principles introduced in 3.3, and development of the account of the consolidation of class power presented in 3.4.1.

### 3.6.2 Social change in late Roman Britain

The prevailing view of 4th century developments in the Romano-British countryside is that, taken together, the evidence for the widespread use of coinage and Romanised artefacts throughout the settlement hierarchy, the increasing number of villas, the development of agrarian production and the marked increase in rural manufacture indicates the existence, in some form, of a 'market economy'. Whether dependent on state taxation to stimulate the production of goods and circulation of coinage (Evans 1990, 94; Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 9), controlled and administered by aristocratic élites old or new (Millett 1990, 150-51), or an autonomous, self-sustaining system operating independently of any given group or institution (Fulford 1989), it is assumed that production was geared to a demand-driven price mechanism articulated through a network of market centres. Consequently, the prosperity of the rural settlements - certainly of the 4th century *nouveau riche* seemingly implied by the increasing numbers of small villas - resulted from their ability to sell surplus in these markets at a profit. The developments recognisable in the rural economy represent their efforts to do so, with agricultural diversification and manufacturing industries responding to increasing demand, and coin use allowing the convertibility and rapid circulation of wealth which facilitated economic growth. The incentive responsible for this economic growth was the desire of individuals to participate in, and express status through, the civilised lifestyle which Roman authority had brought the inhabitants of Britain into contact with. The 4th century thus represents the playing out of the market potential and opportunities

established over the preceding two-hundred-and-fifty years, finally prompted into operation through increasing wealth and spending power throughout Roman society.

At the end of section 3.4.1, it was argued that the increasing number of 3rd century villas, rather than simply indicating Romanised status display on the part of increasingly wealthy individuals, represents the appropriation of previously communally-held land as private property, by a ruling class in the process of consolidating its control over land and labour, and thereby intensifying individual, as distinct from collective, exploitation of direct producers through the imposition of rent, personal obligation, and possibly slavery. The remainder of this section seeks to interpret the evidence for 4th century rural development outlined above in these terms.

It is a commonplace of the study of the Roman empire that reorganisation under Diocletian (*r.* AD 284 - 305) staved off its political, military and financial disintegration (e.g. Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 2). This was achieved by the creation of far more hierarchical, bureaucratic and extensive state machinery than had previously existed, providing the means to procure the economic resources the empire relied on, primarily through taxation. One result of this was the closer incorporation of previously (nominally, at least) autonomous urban-based elites directly into imperial employ (or control?) (Millett 1990, 130). The other was an ongoing, incremental increase in the burden of taxation imposed across the empire through the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, as imperial authorities sought to guarantee the resources necessary to sustain a considerably enlarged army and administration. Such an increase in taxation would have required the intensification of surplus expropriation in many regions and localities across the empire.

The indirect, collective mechanisms of surplus expropriation of the LPRIA, formalised as state taxation under Roman rule, would, it is argued, have proved unequal to the demands made by this increasing burden. More specifically, the level of surplus which the ruling class was able to secure for itself - distinct from that passed 'up the line' as taxation - would have declined as an increasing proportion was creamed off by the

state. Additionally, given that the urban élites were personally liable for any shortfall in the collection of taxes, and that such liability was likely to be enforced by state officials, they had a further incentive to intensify the level of expropriation by whatever means they could. Similarly, the imperial authorities had a vested interest in their success, to ensure the continuance of taxation at the required level. The obvious means of achieving this was to expand the amount of land held by the élite in private ownership, with the potential for increasing the rate of exploitation of direct producers which such ownership offered. In the course of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century, then, more and more land was alienated from communal ownership and appropriated as private property, a phenomenon recognised archaeologically by the increasing construction of villas and, it is fair to argue, the incorporation of land into estates. The direct producers on these estates would have owed rent and/or labour services, and potentially, as free or tied tenants, a range of personal obligations to the owner of the land they occupied. Some may have been slaves. In this way the ruling class was able to increase the rate of exploitation it was able to impose on a section of the population, and thus offset the increasing amount of surplus appropriated by the state.

In addition to a *quantitative* increase in the extraction of surplus, the increased level of control which could be exercised by the ruling class through private landownership would have enabled them to determine the *form* in which that surplus was appropriated. This would probably have been the case in general terms (i.e. in cash or in kind) since the early years of Roman rule, and the specification of particular forms of surplus by tribute-takers, institutionalised but at the same time constrained by acknowledged custom, may have originated many generations before that, in distant prehistory. However, extensive private ownership of land (and, by extension, of the *working* of that land) - by establishing direct control over the *means of production* - would have allowed the ruling class to demand surplus in the specific form they required in order to meet the demands of the state (which, in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and earlier 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, at least, would primarily have been in coin), or their own more immediate requirements. This capacity would have become increasingly important with the decline in transshipment of Romanised goods from the nearby continental provinces, itself in part a consequence

of the political and military upheavals in Gaul in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and in part of the same increasingly localised taxation structures and resultant pattern of consumption which were affecting Britain itself.

Thus, whilst the majority of the rural population, whether on estate or communally-held land, would have spent most of their labour engaged in subsistence agricultural production, the former would have been required to expend labour and to produce surplus in a form specified by the landowner. The extent to which this could have been stipulated would have depended on the legal status of the direct producer, as a landless but legally free tenant, a tenant held in personal bond to a (landowning) master, or a slave. The greater the legal degree of servitude, the more labour the direct producer would have to devote to activities determined by the landowner, and vice-versa.

The material requirements of the Romano-British ruling class would of course have been highly varied, including not merely food, clothing and shelter (often in highly specialised forms) for themselves and their (non-producing) kinsmen, households and retainers, but the infrastructure and apparatus for the storage and transportation of surplus food resources, and the display of material culture used to proclaim their official and/or private status. On top of this came the surplus expropriated in the name and for the ends of the Roman state, whose representatives in one capacity or another these same landowners frequently were. Having established direct control of the means of production in parts of the countryside, and thereby increased the rate of exploitation to offset the increasing demands made by the imperial authorities, members of the ruling class could hardly help but notice the potential for acquisition and enrichment which such land-taking offered.

In considering the impact of the private ownership and control of land on communities which retained the essentially tribal structures of the LPRIA (in which surplus taken as tribute would have been a variant of the kin-based reciprocity which accounted for most production and exchange), it is useful to refer to an important (1983) paper by Jan Slofstra. Slofstra draws on the sociologist Norbert Elias's 'theory of

communities', which seeks to understand the relationships and processes involved when traditional, autonomous agrarian communities become incorporated within more complex state systems. Elias's research utilises two key, and complementary, concepts. The first is *integration* - the manner in and extent to which traditional, tribal means of social bonding within localised communities (notably kinship) are broken down, and replaced by bonds with other people or groups within the wider state society (Slofstra 1983, 75). The second is *differentiation*. In tribal communities social differentiation is typically very low; all members of a tribe perform a wide range of social functions, with very limited division of labour. As the community becomes increasingly *integrated* into the structures of the more complex society which has incorporated it, social function becomes more *differentiated* and division of labour more marked. An important and useful aspect of this model is that it does not deal solely with 'progressive' development; communities can become 'desintegrated' from complex state structures, social function and division of labour 'de-differentiated' (ibid., 76).

Elias's analytical approach is translated by Slofstra into a process of 'detrribalisation' or 'peasantisation', terms which he regards as effectively interchangeable (ibid., 82). Drawing on a long sociological tradition of the study of peasant societies, he characterises them as being primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture, but also required to produce a surplus taken in the form of taxes or rent. They are often politically and economically subordinate to metropolitan elites, but owe *direct* dependency to landlords or their local representatives. They pursue a traditional way of life in which the family provides the basic unit of production and differentiation of social functions is generally limited (ibid.,81).

Slofstra regards rural society in the north-western provinces of the Roman empire as having been essentially a peasant society, but distinguishes between those who are tied directly into production on villa estates, and 'relatively autonomous farming communities which are still characterised by a tribal organisational structure. Because they are incorporated into a complex state system, these are also regarded as 'peasants', but 'peasantised' to a lesser degree (ibid., 88). He also emphasises the importance in social

relationships of *patronage*, patron/client relationships between villa estate landlords and the 'peasantised' - to whatever degree tied to an estate or otherwise - who worked the land (ibid., 94). These he sees as the mediation of tribal relations of dependency through the Roman patron/client model (ibid., 95).

This application of Elias's theory of communities to the north-western provinces of the empire is of the greatest value in understanding the nature of social structure and social change in Britain, the apparent breakdown of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in particular. However, it embodies two weaknesses which betray its origins in the sociological study of modern communities, which Slobin carries over into his interpretation of the Roman past. Firstly, it assumes that the impact of complex states on tribal societies necessarily involves the impact of the market economy, an assumption which he unhesitatingly adopts when discussing the Roman empire. Thus in the area of the lower Rhine used as a case study, it is assumed that by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century market-based transactions had obliterated traditional tribal patterns of exchange (ibid., 79). Secondly, social structures are assumed to exist to create social cohesion, rather than as manifestations of fundamentally antagonistic relationships structured around roles in production and control over surplus (ibid., 89). As has been set out in previous chapters, the central premise of this study is that the operation of socially disembodied market forces and price-setting mechanism did *not* determine production and exchange in the Roman empire, and that their changing patterns, and the impacts to which Slobin refers, must be understood, through class-based analysis, in terms of control over production and the surplus which it generates.

Elias's notion of the integration of localised tribal communities into complex state societies, and in particular the *differentiation* of social function (including division of labour) which this creates, have great relevance for the understanding of the archaeological indications of change in the Romano-British landscape in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It has been suggested that, in the tribal societies of the LPRIA, production would largely have been non-specialised, and exchange carried out via kin-based reciprocity and tributary obligations. This is not to say that everybody participated in all forms of labour;



certain tasks will have been restricted to specific individuals or groups within a community, and some of these may have been subject to the control of elites; the manufacture of weapons or high-quality and precious metal-working are examples. Furthermore, comparatively large-scale production may have occurred on single sites at particular times of the year as part of the extraction of surplus through tributary mechanisms, as may have occurred at LPRIA *oppida* (Millett 1990, 25-6). Nevertheless, any division of labour will generally have operated at a highly localised level for most types of production, with much being carried out in what may be described as a domestic context. In other words, following Elias, with only slight differentiation of social function.

The picture which obtains for the 4<sup>th</sup> century stands in marked contrast. There are clear indications of agricultural production becoming more specialised, in terms of the type of crops grown and the techniques (and, to an extent, the technology employed), the facilities and installations employed for the processing and storage of foodstuffs, and methods of animal husbandry. The products of new, indigenous manufacturing 'industries' appear in the 4<sup>th</sup> century archaeological record, notably pewter (Beagrie 1989, 175; fig.3, p.177; fig.4, p.184) and glass (Price and Cottam 1995, 239). Those which had existed previously, such as pottery production and iron smithing and smelting, appear transformed in the volume and range of products, the quality of output (Swan 1984, 83), and the level of centralisation and organisation of production. The specific case of ceramics will be presented in Chapter 4 as a detailed example of this. The essential point may, however, be made here; these developments represent a far greater division of labour and differentiation of social function than had previously obtained. They were not, however, a response to any abstract, notional 'market forces' latent within the Roman empire. They resulted from of the landowning ruling class having secured control of both land and direct producers, allowing it to organise production to meet its material needs, needs which encompassed both private and public roles, in addition to meeting the tax exactions of the central imperial administration.

It is important to emphasise here that what is *not* envisaged is the employment on

any significant scale is specialist producers employed on a full-time, year-round basis as waged labour. Whatever the degree of servitude or nature of obligation owed to a landowner, most direct producers are likely to have been engaged in agricultural production (i.e. the growing or rearing of food resources) for at least part of the year. The extent to which the processes involved in manufacture, from raw material extraction through preparation to artefact manufacture were themselves subject to division of labour is uncertain, but in processes involving several stages and large quantities of raw material it may itself have been considerable. The purpose of such re-organisation would have been twofold. Firstly, to ensure that what was manufactured closely corresponded to the needs and requirements of the ruling class. Secondly, to concentrate the specialised aspects of manufacture in the hands of cadres who, with aptitude developed through practice to reach a high level of accomplishment (and in some cases assisted by improved basic technologies), could produce more efficiently. Probably the most important aspect of this increase in productive efficiency *was the labour power it would have released to be engaged wholly in agrarian production, untrammelled by the demands of other types or forms of labour*. This, arguably, was the key to the whole equation; producing a sufficient surplus in foodstuffs to sustain the elite non-producers and the agents and representatives necessary to attend to their interests. This argument will be developed more fully, with reference to ceramic production, in Chapter 4.

### 3.6.3 Explaining the archaeology of fourth century Roman Britain

As a result of this increasing specialisation of production across significant tracts of landscape, nodal points for the exchange of agrarian produce and manufactured items between areas under estate production - which, whether belonging to the same or to different landowners, might often be some distance apart - were required. The 'small towns' would come into this category, as would the smaller 'roadside settlements' not generally considered to merit classification as 'towns'. These settlements would not, of course, deal solely with produce and goods from villa estates. They would undoubtedly have served as collection points for state taxation, whether in cash or in kind, and for tribute offered up to landowning aristocrats by communities beyond their domains; both issues will be returned to below. Furthermore, they are clearly loci of artisan production

largely absent from the major towns of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Millett 1990, 143).

On analogy with Gaul, Millett hypothesises elite control of the small towns, arguing that they were controlled by the minor magnates who administered the *pagi* - sub-divisions of the *civitates* - and developed the small towns as their personal power bases when the benefits of public display in the *civitas* capitals declined (ibid., 150). He notes, however, that where Romanised buildings are found in these settlements, they do not occupy architecturally dominant positions; usually a few large, private houses peripheral to the settlements, or single extra-mural villas (ibid., 145). His description of them as ‘...the residential areas of the craft workers and traders ...under the patronage of the elite living in more sumptuous accommodation just outside the core of the settlement’ may well be accurate in its essential point about aristocratic involvement. To conform to the model proposed here, however, the term ‘patronage’ would not represent the fundamental relationship between elite and artisans; the latter would be seen as having been bound in a more directly subordinate relationship to a landlord. (Although it is true that the distinction between these types of relationship may have become increasingly meaningless in practice in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century). Secondly, the elite residences ‘just outside’ the settlement are not seen as ‘independent’ magnates whose wealth derived from their control of manufacture and trade. They should, rather, be seen as landowners themselves, or - more likely - the *agents* of landowners resident elsewhere, overseeing production and the delivery of tax, tribute and rent, on behalf of masters maintaining a distance from the noisome business of manufacture (and the noisome people engaged in it) proper to Roman aristocrats.

Probably the most frequently cited and superficially persuasive evidence for the existence of a ‘market economy’ in later Roman Britain is the proliferation of low value bronze coins, which from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century occur far more frequently, and on a much wider range of settlement sites, than is the case in the earlier empire (Reece 1987, 27). The interpretation usually adopted is that, as a market in goods and produce developed on the back of taxation, state-led demand, and the status-driven urge to Romanise, increasing volume and specialisation of production in the lower echelons of society

necessitated the production of coinage in denominations commensurate with the low-value goods being exchanged. The widespread, intermittent copying of these issues in Britain, at intervals throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is similarly interpreted as being a response by the insular authorities to dearth, resulting from the periodic failure of the state to import fresh coinage into the province.

Whilst there can be little doubt that such coinage *was* widely used as a medium of exchange, the reasons for this need to be related to the increased control of the means of production by the landowning ruling class, rather than as a response to a self-generating 'market'. It is usually accepted that the state issued coinage for its own purposes, fundamentally the collection of taxation in a portable, regulated form, which made possible the movement of wealth - here, *surplus value* - which could be transported to, and was readily convertible in, any part of its territories in which it needed to pursue its interests. The role of bronze coinage in this system was to provide a mechanism whereby the state could retrieve precious metal coinage from circulation. Issuing bronze coinage of diminishing value would be concomitant with the availability for sale and purchase within a given economic system (lapsing for a moment, for simplicities sake, into processualist terminology) of goods and produce which formed only fractions of comparatively high-value coins with significant precious metal content. As landowners' control of production of the essentials of rural existence was increased and extended, and division of labour increased, specific areas of production would have become concentrated in the hands of craftspeople whose labour was under the direct control of those landowners. The capacity of communities incorporated (with the communal land they subsisted from) into villa estates to produce these needs for themselves had been removed by the expropriation from their collective ownership of skilled labour, and the material resources which that labour was applied to. Important elements of their means of subsistence had now, in effect, to be *bought back* from the landowners who had expropriated their capacity to produce for themselves. Furthermore, in some areas of production at least, this would also have affected the capacity of the communities which lay *beyond* the villa estates to produce their own needs, and they too would thus have been drawn into a monetised local economy. As a result, coined money would circulate

between feudal and tributary modes of production, serving both to mediate exchange across the two modes, and to lock traditional, tribal communities into the estate system of production, even if, legally and territorially, they were located outside it.

The outcome of the expansion of monetised exchange amongst localised rural communities was, of course, to provide increased opportunity for expropriating surplus by the landowning ruling class who controlled key elements of production. Coinage was an essential component in this, constituting as it did mobile surplus value. When coin supplies became scarce, it was thus in their interests to maintain levels of circulation, and this they did, it is argued, by producing the 'copy' coinages of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Boon 1974, 127-36). Debates about the 'legitimacy' or official 'acceptability' of these issues miss the point; they were produced by the landowning ruling class not as an act of public policy, but directly in their own immediate interests, as controllers of production and expropriators of surplus on the lands they held title to, and, increasingly, as *de facto* overlords of the communities beyond.

It is apparent from this account that, having established direct control of production through individual ownership of property, landowners were in a strong position to extend their effective control beyond their initial holdings, either by obtaining and enforcing legal title over previously communally held lands, or by consolidating and increasing tributary obligations over those communities. Their capacity to do so would be underpinned by their role as state officials, as a result both of payment in that capacity, and their ability to use that position to appropriate surplus for themselves *in the name of* the state. This, it is argued, is responsible for the increasing number of villas evident in southern Britain in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Millett 1990, 186), as they extended their landholdings. But what of the later 4<sup>th</sup> century? Millett, noting an apparently decreasing number of villas in existence after c.AD 350, and a continuing decline in their average size, argues *against* the idea that this period saw the consolidation of villa estates into larger holdings (ibid.). Whilst acknowledging the rise of a number of villas palatial in scale in the south of the diocese, he argues that, in the mass, the expected pattern would be one in which larger villas continued at the expense of the

smaller ones. Consequently, his explanation of the observed pattern is that it represents the 'popularisation' of the villa as a mode of status display to the extent that it becomes 'devalued' (ibid., 186-7). However, the pattern Millett identifies may be interpreted differently if his assumptions are stood on their head. In a situation in which one villa estate was incorporated into another, the 'central residence' of that estate - where the bulk of the surplus produced on it is consumed - *would be precisely the one which would cease to exist, or at least substantially contract, as that surplus is re-directed to another estate centre.* Thus the pattern of a small number of palace villas, and a lesser decline in the number of small villas than large, is *exactly* that which would be expected of a process of estate consolidation gathering pace in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Millett acknowledges the polarisation of wealth in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, and suggests that the status of *coloni* (documented in Britain, although its extent is unclear) represents a reinforcement of the social links which had become strained by this development. He is closer to the mark in identifying it as the development of a more rigid system of obligation between tenants and landowners (ibid., 203-4). In fact, far from being a *response* to a polarisation of wealth, the increasing enserfment of direct producers in late Roman Britain *constituted the very means through which that polarisation was achieved* by the ruling class. As an aside, it may be suggested that the decline in the number of *small* villas evident in this period indicates the forcing down of their occupants (whether estate owners themselves or the agents of other landowners) into the ranks of the direct producers.

What caused this tendency for the consolidation of estates in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century? I would argue that this represents the moment - identified by Wickham in other parts of the empire - at which the benefits of state office, which had previously provided the vehicle for the consolidation and extension of the power of the ruling class, were outweighed by the increasing burden of taxation. The ruling class looked to their immediate, direct source of wealth - their own landholdings - and sought to sustain their position through surplus expropriated from them, turning their backs on the increasingly onerous exactions which state office inflicted on them. This they could do in two ways;

by encroaching further on lands still held in common (in areas where there were any left to encroach upon), or by preying on the property of those members of the ruling class whose landholdings were smaller, and wealth and power consequently lesser, drawing *them* into relations of personal dependency which involved giving over the rights to their land.

Finally, it is necessary to return to the initial seats of consolidated class power, the *civitas* capitals. What of them in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century? Millett's interpretation, noted above, is that in their later Roman manifestation they served as defensible strongholds in the state communications network, and the focus for the group identity of the *civitates* (ibid., 142). There may be some truth in this, but it is at best part of the story, and the character of the archaeological evidence which Millett himself identifies within them suggests that it is not the most significant part. Why should a settlement which was primarily a node in the state communications network consist largely of private residences set amongst intra-mural fields (ibid., 134; 136)? Why should a settlement which formed the focus for a *civitas*-wide group identity be devoid of the public display so evident in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (ibid., 137)? A more persuasive explanation is that, by the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, these sites effectively represented clusters of villas; the 'urban' residences utilised by a provincial ruling class now based in the countryside, and directly reliant upon its control of production there in sustaining its position. 'Urban' residences were maintained for their official state functions, but represented little more than outstations of their rurally-based power, and were inhabited and sustained in the same way as any other component of the holdings of a great landowner. The town, in effect, had been absorbed by the country, the tributary mode of the Roman state by the feudal mode of the Romano-British countryside, reflecting where power now resided.

## Chapter 4 : Late Roman ceramic production in context

### 4.1 Romano-British ceramics : approaches and interpretations

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

The previous chapter propounded a historical materialist model for social change in Britain between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Fundamental to this model is the consolidation of a ruling class through the imposition of the ‘feudal mode’ of production, as represented by the creation of villa estates and increasing direct control over agrarian production and manufacturing processes, and its impact (whether direct or indirect) on communities for whom the greater part of material production had previously been mediated through reciprocal, kin-based social relations. This was contrasted with, and argued as being superior to, explanations conceived in terms of a largely voluntarist conception of ‘Romanisation’, driven by the imperative of social status and facilitated by a market-based economy. It is now necessary to *situate* the data with which this research is directly concerned - coarse pottery - within the model put forward in 3.4 and 3.5. For this to be accomplished requires consideration of prevailing assumptions regarding the production, role and actual use of ceramics in Roman Britain. This in turn needs to be prefaced by a brief consideration of the history of their study, in order to identify, and where necessary challenge, approaches and assumptions which have become intrinsic to this area of research.

#### 4.1.2 The history of Romano-British pottery studies; some legacies

The development of the archaeological study of ceramics over the past two hundred years has been outlined by Orton (*idem. et al.* 1993, 5-22), whilst Tyers has published a brief history of the study of Roman pottery from Britain (1996, 1-23). These contributions raise a number of important points regarding changing perspectives in the interpretation of ceramics, with significant implications for this thesis. These relate to the role of pottery in providing archaeological chronologies, and in the understanding of the organisation of production and exchange in ancient society. Summarised, they demonstrate the continuing influence of the tenets of pioneering studies of Romano-



British pottery on current interpretation.

Orton's study (Orton *et al.* 1993, 3-14) proposed three distinct paradigms in the archaeological study of ceramics which, whilst overlapping chronologically, may be recognised as a sequence of developing approaches. The first he termed the 'art-historical phase', during which ancient ceramics were primarily considered in terms of their merit as examples of fine art, with a consequent emphasis on pottery displaying high levels of technical quality in production and artistry in decoration. This phase of research he identified as having begun in Britain as early as the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, continuing and increasing in scope through the 18<sup>th</sup> and into the late 19<sup>th</sup> (*ibid.*, 5). As more and more material became available for study, (and as the interpretation of the remote past using archaeological evidence gained increasing significance in the context of the rise of capitalism and the emergence and consolidation of the nation state; see Chapter 1), research entered the 'typological phase', in which the increasing quantity of material began to be systematically ordered and classified (*ibid.*, 8-13). This in turn opened up the possibility of the identification of chronological change, by linking observed variability in form and fabric to sites associated with known historical events, in particular those which could be related to the documented campaigns of Roman emperors and generals. This phase commenced in Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its characteristic approaches continue to be employed and developed as a tool for determining archaeological chronologies to the present day (*ibid.*, 9-11). Finally, from the mid-1950s onwards, the potential of ceramics to shed light on a host of issues relating to ancient social and economic practice began to be realised, and research undertaken accordingly, employing a wide range of analytical and quantitative techniques (*ibid.*, 13-22). Orton described this development as the 'contextual phase' of ceramic research.

Tyers' survey deals in more detail with the specific case of Roman-period ceramics from Britain. The pattern of early discoveries and antiquarian collection, followed by increasingly formal and comprehensive systems of classification, and finally the interrogation of ceramic assemblages in the light of questions relating to social and economic organisation, corresponds closely to Orton's scheme (Tyers 1996, 1-23; 36-47). This section seeks to demonstrate how, in the conceptual and methodological framework within which Romano-British ceramics are studied, conventions of

classification and interpretation which originate in the 'art-historical' and 'typological' phases have survived unchallenged into the 'contextual' phase, and thus continue, unacknowledged, to influence the conclusions reached by contemporary studies.

The preoccupation with artistic and technical accomplishment which had defined the 'art-historical' phase was to endure in the succeeding 'typological' phase. The earliest systematic typologies of Roman ceramics were those created for the technically superior and often highly-decorated *terra sigillata*, or samian ware, notably by Dragendorff in Germany (1895) and Déchelette in France (1904). The former was applied to a limited extent in a British context by Haverfield in a publication of 1898 (Orton et al. 1993, 9; Tyers 1996, 9). There were three obvious and very good reasons for this preoccupation. Firstly, the primacy of aesthetic considerations in the collection policies of previous researchers meant that the bulk of the material available for classification at this stage derived from the finer end of the Roman ceramic spectrum. Secondly, the consistent variety of form, and the high level of decoration and use of manufacturers stamps on a significant proportion of these wares, made them eminently suitable for formal classification. Thirdly, their occurrence across much of the western empire offered the means to establish contemporaneity of assemblages, assemblages whose contexts could in some instances be linked to absolute chronologies by association with events documented by classical commentators and / or the presence of coins (ibid., 11).

The early concentration on the more sophisticated and elaborate ceramic products of the Roman world - which came to be known generically as 'fine-wares' - can thus be seen to be both logical and inevitable. In the long-term it was to have significant consequences for the interpretation of pottery assemblages. Some of these are commonly recognised, and - critically - commented on by ceramic researchers. Others, however, are less widely recognised, and their consequences and implications for current research largely unacknowledged.

In the first category comes the preoccupation with using pottery to date sites, often at the expense of other issues which the material may be used to shed light on. The close dating which some distinctive types of 'fine-wares' provided (particularly, in Britain and

the western empire, in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD) allowed it both to be incorporated within and to contribute to the (historically-led) archaeological narratives of Roman Britain which were being developed and refined in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Britain, as was noted in Chapter 1, the detailed archaeological narrative, relating monuments and artefacts to documented episodes in the history of Roman Britain, was pioneered by R.G. Collingwood (idem. and Myres, 1936). Collingwood used the narrative format to structure the results obtained from his own investigations into Roman Britain, and those of his predecessor, F.J.Haverfield. That this had become possible reflected the efforts of Collingwood, Haverfield and others over the previous forty years in the gathering and systematisation of knowledge of important classes of material deriving from Roman Britain, particularly the closely-datable categories; inscriptions, coinage and metalwork. Each of these had received a short chapter to itself in Collingwood's 1930 synthesis (Collingwood 1930, 162 - 184; 185 - 199; 243 - 274), although authoritative *corpora* were still some way off. In the same volume, Collingwood also presented a summary of the classifications of Dragendorff and Déchelette and their attendant chronologies, with particular reference to Britain (ibid., 200 - 215; 205). Importantly for this thesis, he also included a chapter on what he termed 'coarse pottery' (ibid., 216 - 242), a list of ninety-four ceramic forms with their approximate date ranges, presumably (although this is not explicitly stated) based on their recurrent associations with sites datable by historical association, inscription, coinage or (ideally) a combination of all three.

As with his pioneering archaeological narrative of Roman Britain, Collingwood's short chapter on coarse pottery was to endure as a model for future workers for four decades and more. He focused attention on vessel form 'not because it is the only thing worth studying, but because it is the only thing that can be, to some extent, learnt from books' (Collingwood 1930, 216). In the context of its time, this priority, of making available to other researchers the knowledge painstakingly accrued by Haverfield and himself, was wholly justifiable, and was clearly his primary intention (ibid., 218). It provided a means whereby the humblest site, and the efforts of the most local fieldworker, could be incorporated within the great historical sweep of Collingwood's Roman Britain. At the same time it established *form* as the primary determinant of classification (his consideration of fabrics is restricted to three pages [ibid., 239 - 42]

which cover Castor [Nene Valley] ware, New Forest ware, Rustic[ated] ware and Huntcliff ware), and the dating of these forms as the fundamental purpose of the exercise. Subsequent milestones in the collation and classification of Romano-British pottery have consisted, essentially, of more comprehensive, detailed and systematic versions of Collingwood's original essay (notably Gillam, 1957). They have thus emphasised form, and the date ranges attributable to specific forms. The implications of this for contemporary study will be further discussed below.

Collingwood's 1930 classification of Romano-British coarse wares can thus be seen to have set an influential precedent. It took the principles of classification which had been successfully employed in the case of 'fine-wares' such as *terra sigillata*, and applied them to the remainder of the corpus of ceramics then known from Roman Britain. Its essential purpose was to provide a scheme of datable types, which would allow as wide a range of sites as possible to be integrated into the narrative account of the province which Collingwood was in the process of creating, although the difficulties in attributing precise dates to these types was acknowledged (Collingwood 1930, 217). It also served to establish a classification of Romano-British ceramics in terms of 'fine-wares' and 'the rest' which endures to this day (and which, again, will receive further treatment below; 4.2).

Collingwood formalised the then-existing data in a familiar form to assist his purpose in creating an archaeological narrative of Roman Britain, and the legacy of this is still clearly recognisable. In doing so, he drew on the work of Thomas May (1864 - 1931) in relating variation in form to difference in date (Tyers 1996, 14). Collingwood did *not*, however, adopt May's proposal that the classification of pottery by ware names, such as 'Castor ware' or 'Upchurch ware' (based on known production sites or, less justifiably, sites which had simply produced large discard assemblages) be abandoned in favour of one based entirely on manufacturing techniques (*ibid.*). May advocated this approach in the second and third volumes of his catalogue of the Romano-British ceramics in the Yorkshire Museum, York (published in 1910 and 1911 respectively), and was clearly influenced in response to publications emanating from Germany at the same time. His rationale for this was that the few specified wares confidently identified at this time meant that many vessels were excluded from classification, whereas a scheme based

on manufacturing techniques was, by definition, all-inclusive (ibid., 13, 14).

Not only was May's approach to classification not adopted or developed by Collingwood or his successors, but Tyers goes so far as to dismiss it out of hand as a mistake which led nowhere (ibid., 15). Such a comment is symptomatic of the extent to which *location* of manufacture is regarded as more significant than *process*, a tendency resulting largely from the primacy of the analysis of ceramic distributions in terms of market 'reach'. In fact, as will be demonstrated below, a consistent classification based on production methods is exactly what is required to understand and interpret Romano-British ceramics in terms of the model outlined in 3.5 / 3.6.

With May's proposed method of classification abandoned as an historiographical curiosity and analytical *cul-de-sac*, Collingwood's classification was to hold the field, as an adjunct of the archaeological narrative form he established, and which was subsequently to be extended, elaborated and modified by writers such as Frere (1978) and Salway (1981). This narrative was itself to become a ready-made research agenda - or, rather, an historical pro-forma for structuring the results of archaeological inquiry - to which Romano-British ceramic research, and its results, remain to a large extent subordinate (e.g. Darling 1984, 95-7; Bidwell 1985, 77-92); often, indeed, providing the starting point for that research.

When the incorporation of archaeological evidence of Roman Britain (whatever the precise form of that evidence) into an established, 'known' history provides the *raison d'être* for research, whether this is explicitly acknowledged or not, it is inevitable that the establishment and 'refinement' of artefact-based chronologies will loom large. Within such a framework, elaborate efforts to arrive at an 'accurate' and 'secure' chronological berth for structural or other forms of evidence assume prime importance, even where these involve unwarranted assumptions regarding the degree of accuracy achievable for archaeological chronologies (in general terms of artefact and sequence), or ignore shortcomings in the quality of chronological data in specific instances. Once this has been 'achieved', the archaeological evidence in question can be understood as a facet of one or other military campaign / imperial initiative / local difficulty, substantiating or adding nuance to the effects on *Britannia* of the mainstream imperial narrative, established by

Gibbon and subsequently re-worked and transmitted by Collingwood, Frere and Salway.

#### 4.2 Production, use and typology : the classification of Romano-British ceramics

The legacy of this preoccupation with chronology may be seen in important aspects of the classification of Romano-British ceramics. At its most basic level, current classification is essentially tri-partite, in that it usually makes some kind of distinction between *fine-wares*, *grey-wares* and *coarse-wares*. The first of these exhibit many or all of the characteristics of the popular stereotype of a 'Roman' pot; that is, they are mass-produced in fine, often *refined* clays, fired to high temperatures, and frequently employ coloured slips (and occasionally glazes; Swan 1988, 17) and elaborate, sometimes classically-derived, decoration. Wares of this generic type, of which *terra sigillata* or samian ware mentioned above is a classic example, were most frequently manufactured in ranges of forms appropriate to the *consumption* of food - platters, bowls, dishes, flasks, flagons, beakers, goblets etc. They are often seen as a *leitmotif* of Roman culture, amongst the most immediate and striking indicators distinguishing, archaeologically, 'the Roman period' in Britain from what went before and what came after. The historiographic factors which resulted in ceramics of this type being the primary focus of Romano-British pottery studies, and the extent to which assumptions deriving from such an approach pervade research into less sophisticated ceramics, have been outlined in 4.1.2, above.

'Fine-wares' are thus readily distinguishable from 'grey-wares', the latter being characteristically more robust both as fabrics and individual vessels, often (although not always; cf. Crambeck grey- and parchment-wares; Evans 1989, 55) manufactured using less finely-prepared clays, and usually occurring in a more limited range of forms more appropriate to the preparation and storage of food - particularly jars and bowls. There is sometimes overlap with fine-ware forms, as, for example, in the case of flagons. 'Specialist' vessels such as mortaria - used for the processing of foodstuffs - would seem to be most comfortably bracketed with grey wares. However, they appear by convention to be regarded as a form of slightly-debased fine-ware, usually taking their place in ceramic reports and corpora between fine-wares and grey- / coarse-

wares. The reason for this probably relates to the facts that a) mortaria quite frequently bear painted, stamped or incised decoration and b), more importantly, a minority of vessels of this type from several production sites bear manufacturers stamps, thus rendering them attractive and useful to study within prevailing narrative and commercially-oriented paradigms (e.g. Tyers 1996, 113-35; Swan 1984, 99-100). As a descriptive term 'grey-ware' is self-explanatory, referring to the colour of the ceramic fabric resulting from it having been fired in a 'reducing' (oxygen-starved) atmosphere (Orton et al. 1993, 69; 135). In cases where such 'non-fine'-wares were fired in an oxidising environment, resulting in a red fabric, the term 'grey-ware' - being clearly inappropriate - is understandably replaced by 'red-ware' (e.g. Evans 1989, 55).

Whereas the terms 'fine-ware' and 'grey-ware' are by-and-large consistently employed to label the types of ceramic described above, 'coarse-ware' is less certainly defined. A working distinction which separates 'grey-wares', the usually wheel-thrown products of kilns (or kiln-establishments) which often (although not always - cf. Crambeck before the later 4<sup>th</sup> century; Evans 1989, 43) also produce fine-wares, from coarse wares, which are hand-made, possibly fired in bonfires or clamps rather than 'true' kilns, and betray their 'native' pedigree in characteristic fabric inclusions and vessel form, is sometimes acknowledged. This distinction is not always consistent, however, and in some circumstances the terms appear to be almost interchangeable (e.g. Fulford 1975; Tyers 1996, 180 *passim*). It is not clear, for example, in Swan's observation that clay used in 'coarse-wares' requires less preparation than is the case for fine-wares, whether she is referring specifically to grey-wares, to ceramics manufactured in 'native' traditions, or to both collectively (Swan 1984, 44). Similarly, in his study of the products of the Crambeck industries, grey- and red-wares are generically labelled 'coarse-wares' by Evans, coarse being the opposite of fine (1989, 43). Such use of terminology, however, cuts across the far greater distinction to be made between fine- and (wheel-thrown) grey-wares, and vessels in fabrics manufactured from untreated secondary clays, with macroscopic mineral or vegetable temper, often wholly or partly hand-made; true 'coarse wares'. These observations prompt closer examination of the precise characteristics identified as separating one category from another, and the principles which underlie these distinctions.

It should firstly be noted that 'fine' and 'grey' ware are not distinguished one from the other *primarily* on the basis of methods of production - both being kiln-fired and wheel-thrown, even though additional techniques and processes of production are involved in the manufacture of fine-wares - but on that of their forms, (inferred) differences in function, and general appearance; i.e., how the completed vessels looked and were put to use. In contrast, 'coarse-wares' - where the term is used to denote ceramics as described in the previous paragraph - constitute a separate category which *is* based on a difference in the methods of production, as summarised above. This line of argument is complicated slightly by the fact that the term 'grey-ware' must refer to vessels whose final firing took place in a reducing (i.e. oxygen- starved) atmosphere, their colour thus being a direct product of the process of manufacture (Orton et al 1993, 69; 135; Swan, 1984, 157) . Developing this theme, it should be noted that sometimes (although by no means always) grey-wares were produced using less finely prepared clays, and were fired at lower temperatures, than fine-wares, even though manufacture took place at the same production centres employing the same basic technology (ibid., 109; Fulford 1975). Nevertheless, these observations do not undermine the proposition that current schemes of classification emphasise vessel form and function over processes of production, to the extent that the components of these schemes which *are* so concerned suffer from inexact definition and are used inconsistently.

The reason for such confusion is the persistence of 'empirical', 'common-sense' terms of classification originating in the 'typological' phase of ceramic studies into a 'contextual' phase which demands (or should demand) more precise classification appropriate to the analysis which is to be pursued. A classificatory scheme emphasising methods (and potentially, by extension, context) of production would separate wheel-thrown fine-, grey- and red-wares from hand-made coarse-wares, also possibly exploiting fabric characteristics and firing temperature as a means of distinguishing vessels fired in 'true' kilns from those produced in primitive clamp kilns or bonfires. This basic division is consistent and empirically observable, the *inferred* functions of the vessels forming a second tier of classification. Whilst this simply represents a clarification of existing categories, rather than a major re-structuring, it is necessary in order that distinctions between contexts of production, and differences in the role of ceramics in use, are distinguished and can thus be employed in analysis. A more systematic division



of grey-/ red- and coarse wares would thus acknowledge the fundamental importance of distinguishing between the production of wheel-thrown vessels in 'true' kilns (Swan 1984, 29), and the production of largely hand-made types, probably employing bonfire- or simple clamp-kiln firing (ibid., 114). In the succeeding chapters, therefore, this fundamental distinction between ceramic types will be maintained, and its utility in the interpretation of Romano-British ceramics explored.

The study of broader aspects of ceramic production, distribution / circulation and use only acquires significance when demonstrably relevant to the research paradigm within which it is enacted. Detailed variation in vessel function and usage, source(s) of supply, or social status do not appear to be of great significance within imperial and provincial narratives, except insofar as they are taken to provide indications of staple themes, such as degree of Romanisation and 'settled' or 'unsettled' local conditions, which have traditionally flavoured the conclusions of archaeological reports. Much of the extra-chronological evidence which ceramics have to offer appears to be of token or, at best, marginal significance within such a self-defining political history. Frequently it may be considered totally irrelevant. A similar observation may be made in respect of the 'market model' which has augmented, and been incorporated within, this framework. This is the subject of the next section.

#### 4.3 Ceramic production and market economics

Since the mid-1970s a number of dedicated studies have investigated ceramics as evidence for patterns of production, distribution and consumption of goods in Roman Britain. These have been markedly less concerned or preoccupied with the supposed effects of events which figure large in traditional accounts, preferring, on a premise recognisably similar to the tenets of the 'New Archaeology', to see such activities as governed by more deeply rooted, behavioural characteristics of society.

Studies of this type have developed from the classificatory and anecdotal (e.g. Fulford 1975, New Forest; Young 1977, Oxfordshire), through the quantitative definition of distribution patterns (e.g. Lyne and Jefferies 1979, Alice Holt; Pomel 1984,

late Roman industries of southern England) to the use of sophisticated analytical and quantitative techniques to identify production sources, distributions and chronological fluctuations in the volume of production (e.g. Evans 1990, Crambeck; Going 1993, major Romano-British industries). Almost invariably (Pomel's study being an exception which will be returned to), these and other analyses of Romano-British ceramics adopt the suite of market-based assumptions regarding the production and exchange of goods critiqued in Chapter 2. Namely, that ceramics were manufactured primarily as saleable commodities; that pottery 'industries' (particularly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries) were established in response to the creation of consumer demand, by manufacturers or landowners sensing opportunities to profit from commerce; that the viability of these enterprises was dependent on the buoyancy of demand, whether generated by civilian consumers or the state (largely, in a British context, the army); and that, in consequence, the fortunes of Roman Britain, and indeed of the dynamic which drove the provincial economy and underpinned its wealth of material culture, can be determined by using ceramics to stand as proxy evidence for all-encompassing secular fluctuations in manufacture and trade. These analogies with contemporary experience, either in industrial capitalist economies, or in areas of the contemporary world in which the impact of such economies has imposed market-based economic relationships at the expense of pre-existing practices, lead to the assumption that descriptive and analytical models developed for the study of these systems are applicable and relevant to Roman Britain, to understanding and interpreting its ceramic distributions, and, by extension, to diagnosing the state of the province in terms of its economic 'vitality'.

In summarising this 'economistic' approach to Romano-British pottery research, and offering an alternative framework for study, the following section will first outline the 'market-based' model for the production and circulation of Romano-British ceramics. In the first instance this will consider the empirical patterns of ceramic distribution usually held to demonstrate the case of a 'market-economy', offering a brief critique in terms of its historiographic origins, the quality and appropriateness of the data often employed, and the underlying assumptions which equate such patterning with marketised exchange systems. This will be followed by an appraisal of prevailing interpretations of ceramic production sites, which conform to these same assumptions.

#### 4.3.1 Modelling mechanisms : explaining Romano-British ceramic distributions

The staple methodology for the recognition of the spatial distribution of goods (in this case ceramic vessels) by 'market forces' involves the identification of a *distance decay function* in the quantity of goods arriving at locations increasingly remote from their place of manufacture. Plotted as a graph, for example, presenting quantity of ware *W* against distance from point of manufacture, the quantity of *W* (expressed as a percentage of *all* wares directly comparable to *W* found at each location) should decrease steadily with increasing distance from source. The reasoning behind this is that the greater the distance an object has to be moved from the source of its production, the greater the cost to its purchaser, since for its producer (or the person who purchased it from its producer at source and moved it to the point of sale) to recoup their outlay on production and transportation, the price of the object must reflect that input. Hence, at locations increasingly distant from the source of production of *W*, unit cost will increase, thus rendering an object less attractive for purchase. It is assumed that, at increased distances from its point of manufacture, the distance from other centres of production (making, say, ware *X*) will correspondingly *decrease*, the unit cost of *X* will be cheaper than that of *W*, more people will purchase *X* and, at locations ever closer to the source of *X*, quantities of *X* will increase at the expense of those of *W*. Where *W* is transported over distance (and consequently at increased cost) into areas where alternative sources of supply of an alternative such as *X* do *not* exist, it is assumed that the opportunity to manufacture and sell (at a profit) cheaper, locally manufactured alternatives will rapidly be taken up; hence, for example, the development of new ceramic production sites in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g. Swan 1984, 19).

Building on this basic model, the characteristics of the composition of assemblages are interpreted as representing circumstances which 'reflect market forces' or in some cases 'modify' (or even 'interfere with') them. Where vessels from two or more different production centres occur in approximately equal quantities, this is taken as indicating 'competition' between those centres, and if, at a later date, one or other of these wares comes to dominate assemblages it will be said to have 'captured' that market. Where unexpected 'peaks' of consumption of a specific ware occur at a distance

from its production site, and at odds with an overall distance-decay trend, specific characteristics of that settlement may be invoked to explain the anomaly; if, for example, the consumer site in question happens to be a town or other major settlement, the concentration of population, and thus of demand for goods, will be held to provide sufficient incentive to move goods in quantity over distance to sell in that market (e.g. Evans 1985, 286). Where an overall distribution is markedly 'skewed' from a straightforward distance-decay function, with a strong presence in areas comparatively remote from the production site, and a weak presence in, or absence from, areas where it would be expected were such a function operating, one of two forms of explanation is usually adopted. Either parts of the terrain concerned benefit from specific advantages to the movement of goods (most frequently water-borne transport), thus enabling goods to be sold at a profit at greater distances from source than in areas where such an advantage is absent. Or a 'social' explanation is offered, in which popular custom, practice or elite social control serve to preclude the use (and therefore purchase) of certain types or variants of goods in favour of others, even if this involves obtaining these in a manner which ignores 'rational' economic decision making. Finally (and in a last resort?), when specific details of a distribution pattern do not exhibit a distance-decay function, and cannot be explained away by any of the above methods, particular characteristics of the goods (in this case pottery) concerned, or of the preferences of the inhabitants of the site in question, are invoked to explain anomalies in terms of 'consumer choice'.

When all of these 'anomalies' are taken into consideration, quantified distribution maps of later Romano-British ceramics seem, in fact, to display few indications of unadulterated distance-decay function, appearing rather as a patchwork of 'special cases'. The case for there being any significant market-based mechanism, from which all of these instances represent 'deviation', itself begins to look like special pleading. A recurring theme in the study of Romano-British pottery is that, in the north (where the army was one of the major consumers, of pottery as of many other goods and foodstuffs), something akin to a managed, or at least state-led, economy existed from the later 1<sup>st</sup> until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Swan 1984, 19; Evans 1989, 78). In the southern half of the province, however, and particularly the area of what is now south-east England which was the most 'Romanised', production and distribution (with pottery as the primary indicator of this) was mediated by, and responded to, an independently

operating, demand-led market in goods and services (cf. Pomel 1984, 72-116).

Theoretical arguments against this picture, and alternatives to it, have been rehearsed in Chapters 2 and 3. However, examination of the Romano-British ceramic distributions from southern England *themselves* in itself suggests a different story. Research by M.G.Pomel (1984), on *quantified* assemblages of seven major Romano-British ceramic types of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD from across south-eastern England, has produced a series of distribution maps (here synthesised, for purposes of easy comparison, into a single map; Fig.1) from which its author has drawn several important conclusions, namely;

- only by utilising quantified assemblages (in this instance rim percentages used as vessel equivalents), and by employing chronological control through the use of dated assemblages, does the true shape of distributions emerge; simple ‘presence / absence’ distribution maps, without quantification or recognition of the time dimension (as used by Fulford and by Young, amongst others) ‘conceal rather than reveal’ distributions (Pomel 1984, 6).
- when recorded and plotted accordingly, these distributions show some marked disjunctures and anomalies from a distance-decay function, particularly in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. Notable amongst these are;
- the sharp fall-off of Oxfordshire (colour-coated) products to the north of the kiln sites, contrasting with their presence in significant quantities to the east as far as Watling Street, where again a rapid fall-off occurs (ibid., 80, 75). Against ‘rational’ expectation (in terms of transport cost), there is no obvious difference in the rate of ‘fall-off’ between sites along the Thames (a favourite explanation for the extensive east-west distribution pattern of Oxfordshire products) and sites between the production area and London *via* an overland route (ibid., 80). Against this, the ware figures strongly in east Sussex (ibid., 77), forming a larger component of the assemblage at Pevensey than the products of kilns in Tilford, Hants (Surrey buff ware), notwithstanding that the Oxfordshire kilns are located some 175 miles to the north-west as the crow flies, compared to a distance of less than 90 miles in the



Fig. 1.1 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain : sites (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

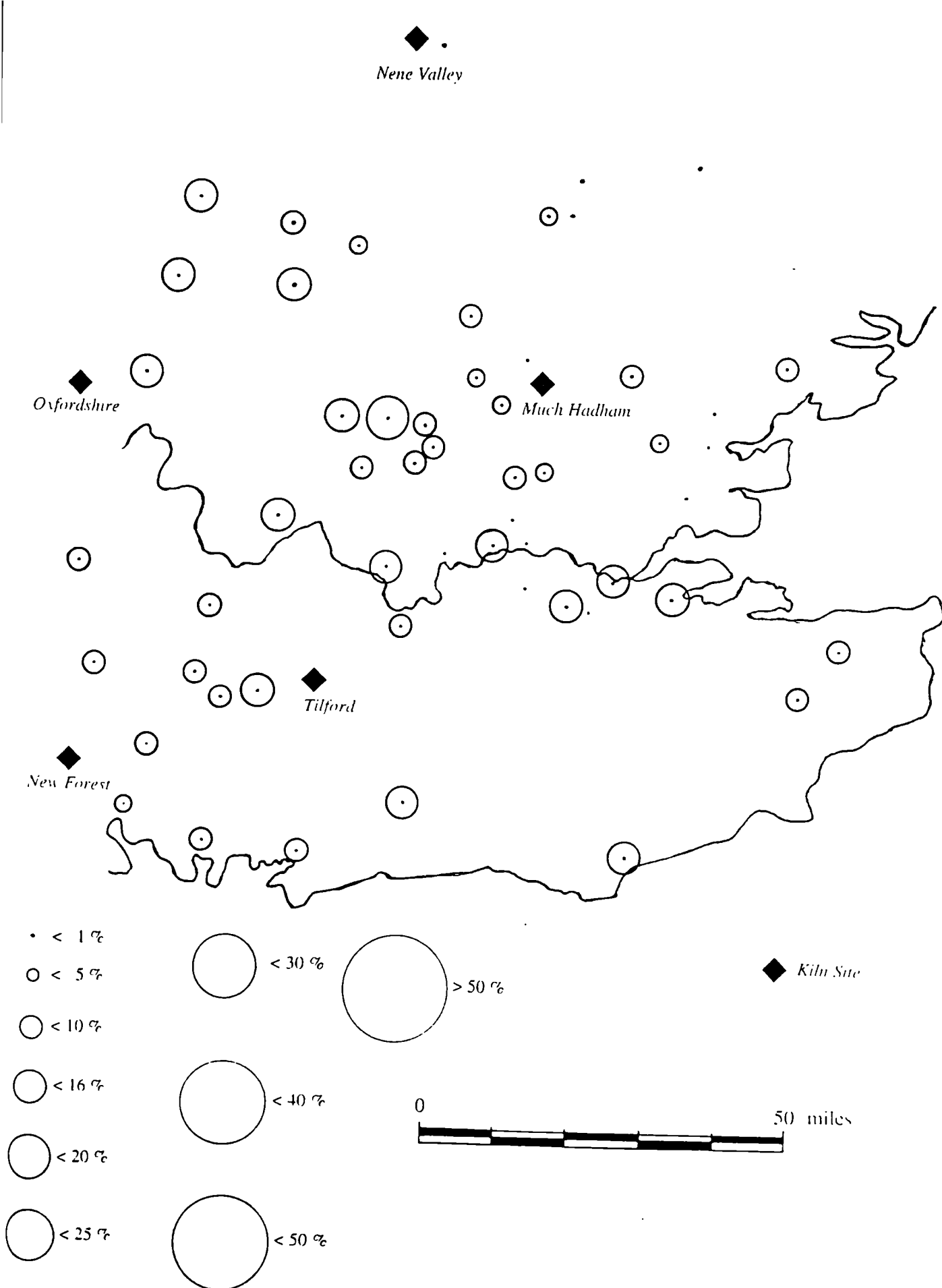


Fig. 1.2 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Oxfordshire red-wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

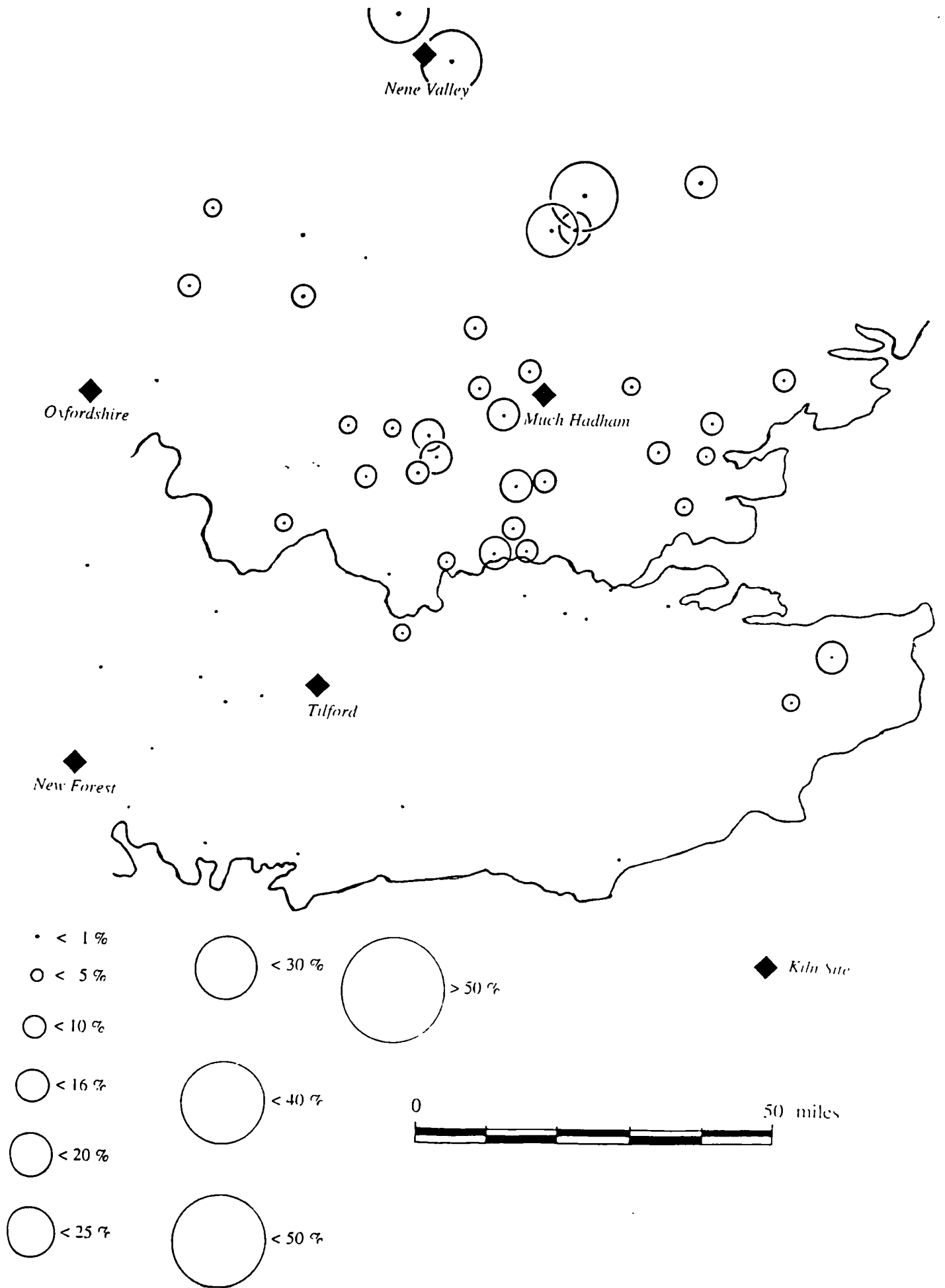


Fig. 1.3 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Nene Valley colour-coated wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)



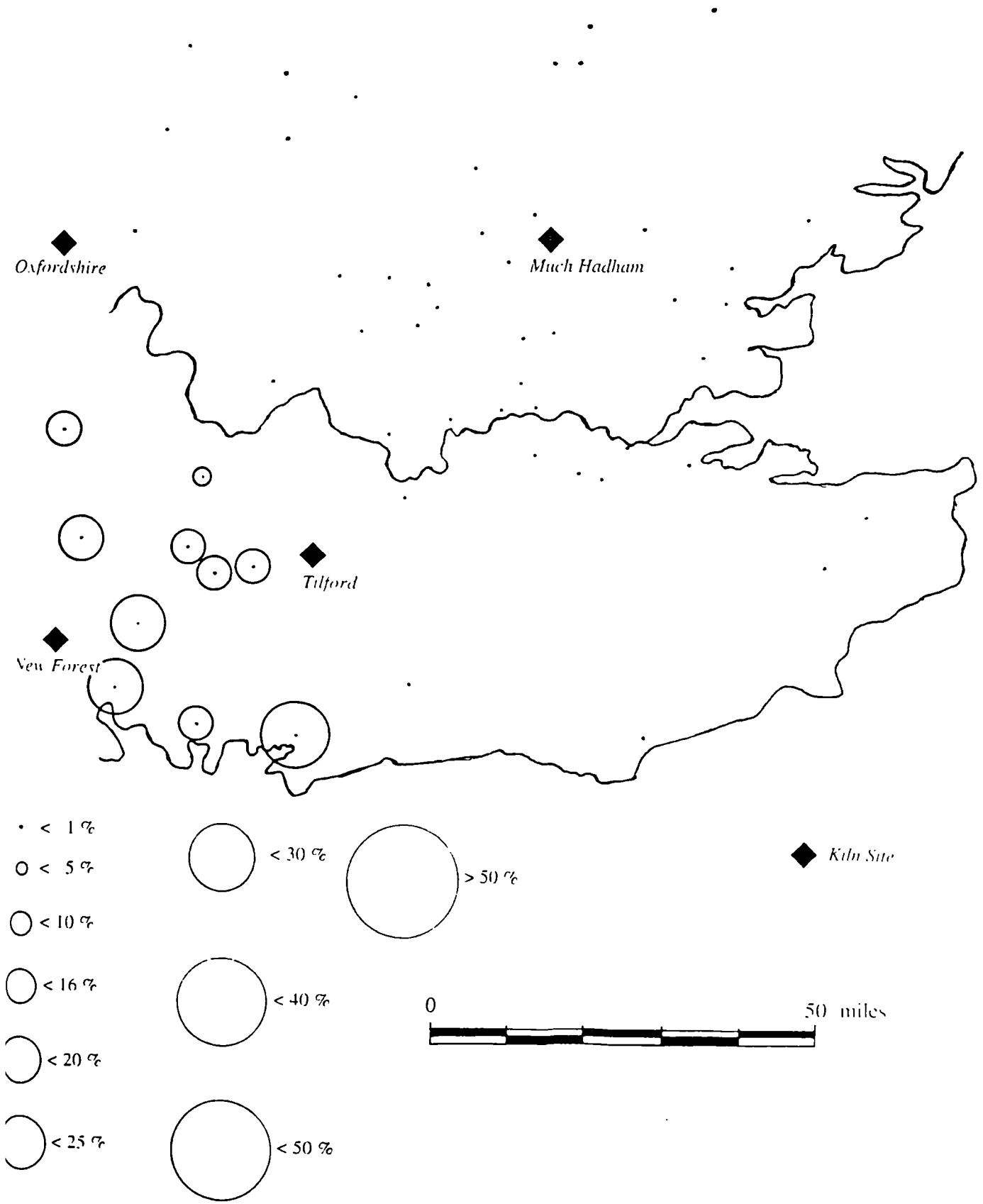


Fig. 1.4 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
New Forest colour-coated wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

◆  
*Nene Valley*

◆  
*Oxfordshire*

◆  
*Much Hadham*

◆  
*Tilford*

◆  
*New Forest*

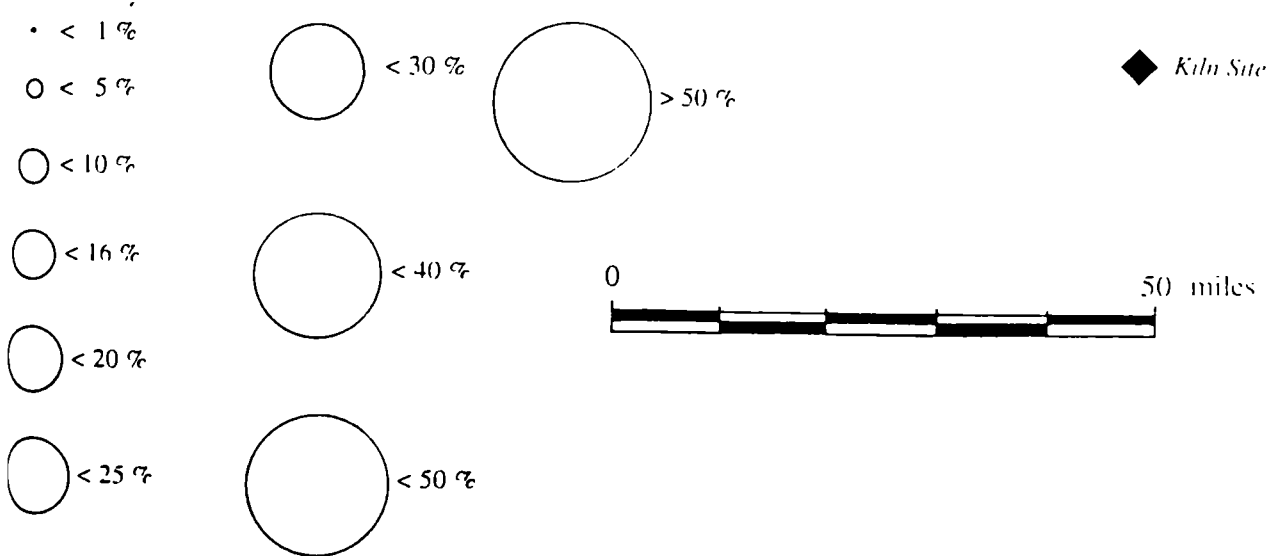


Fig. 1.5 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Much Hadham wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

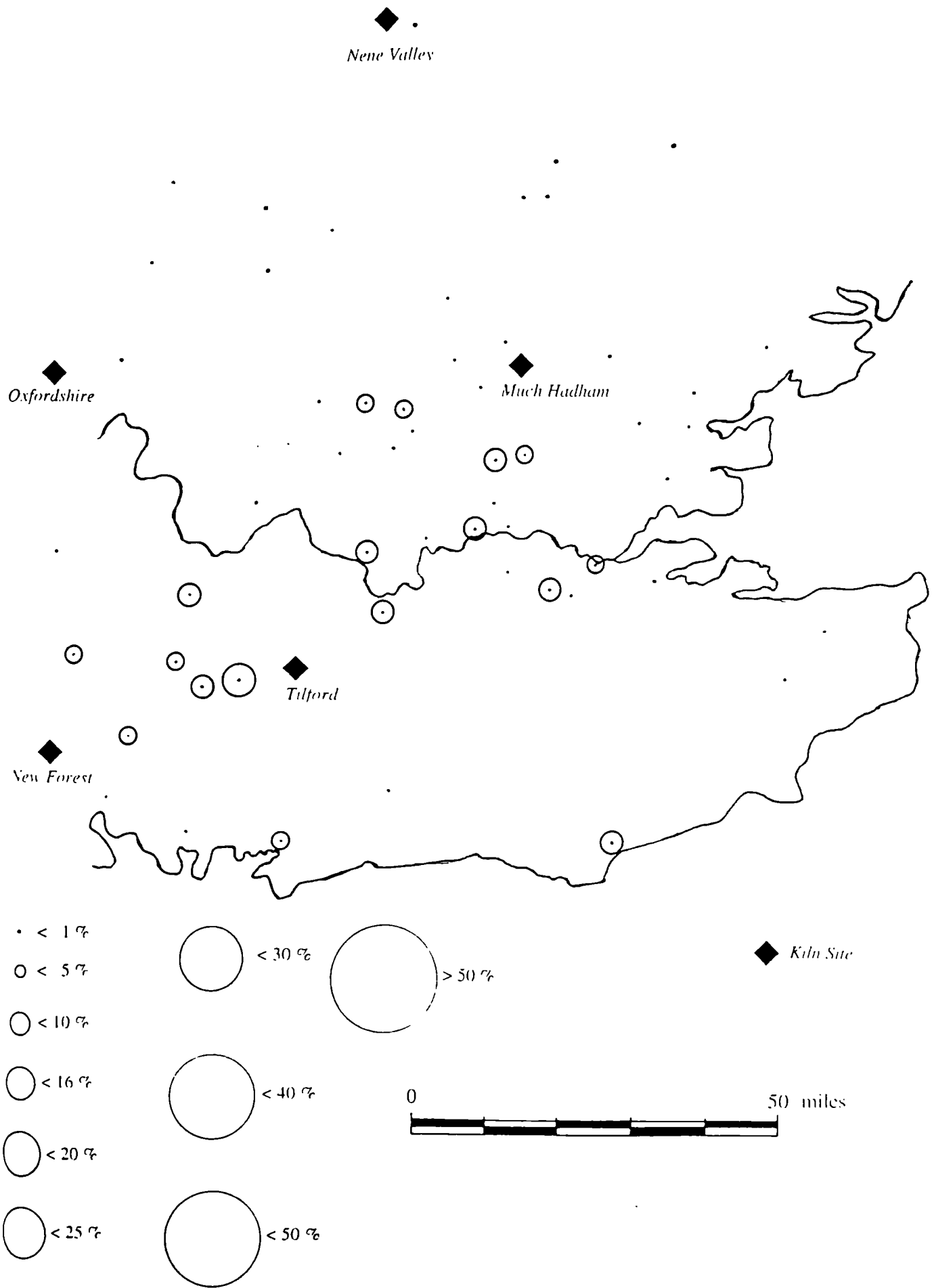


Fig. 1.6 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Tilford wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

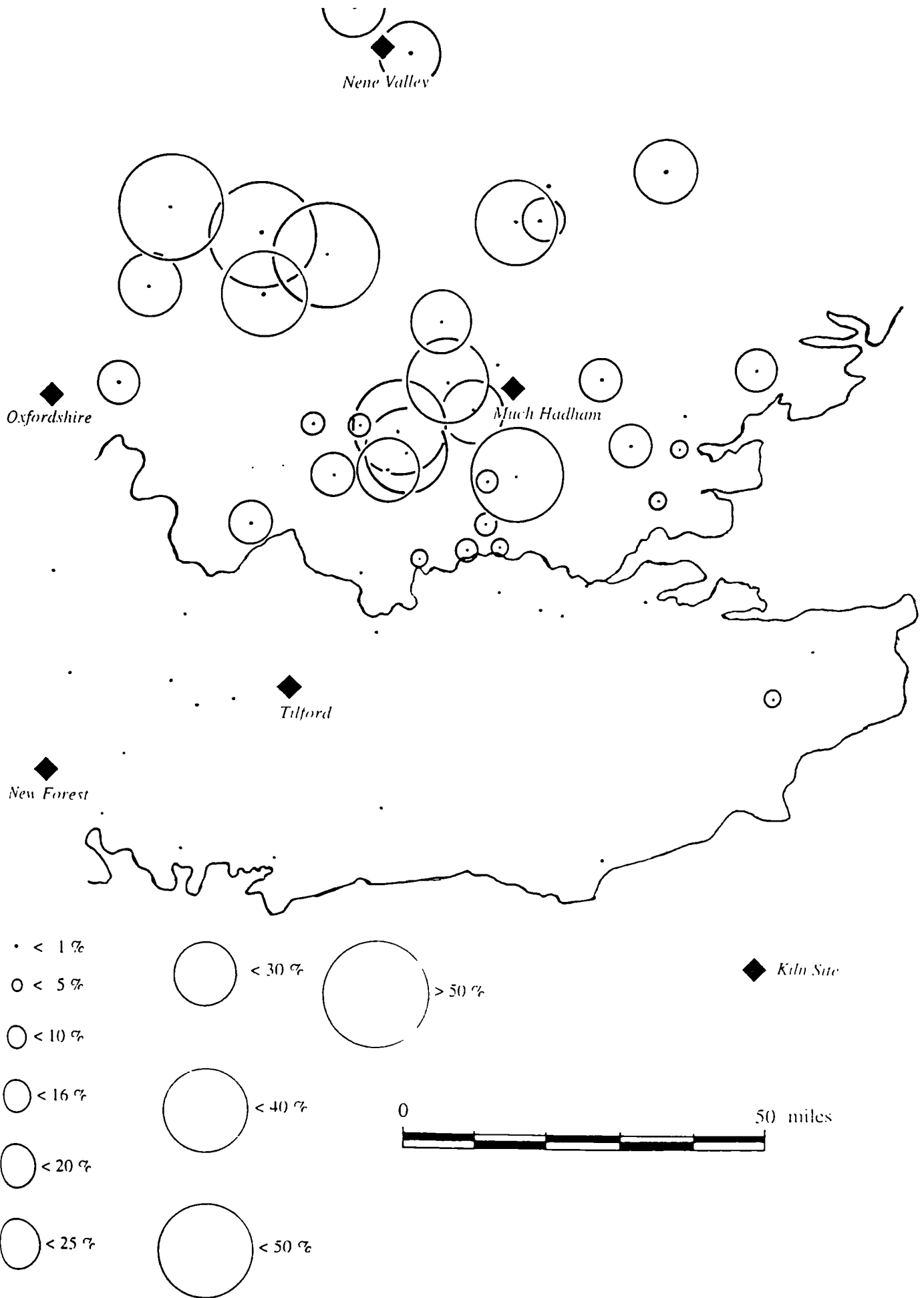


Fig. 1.7 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Late Roman shelly ware (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

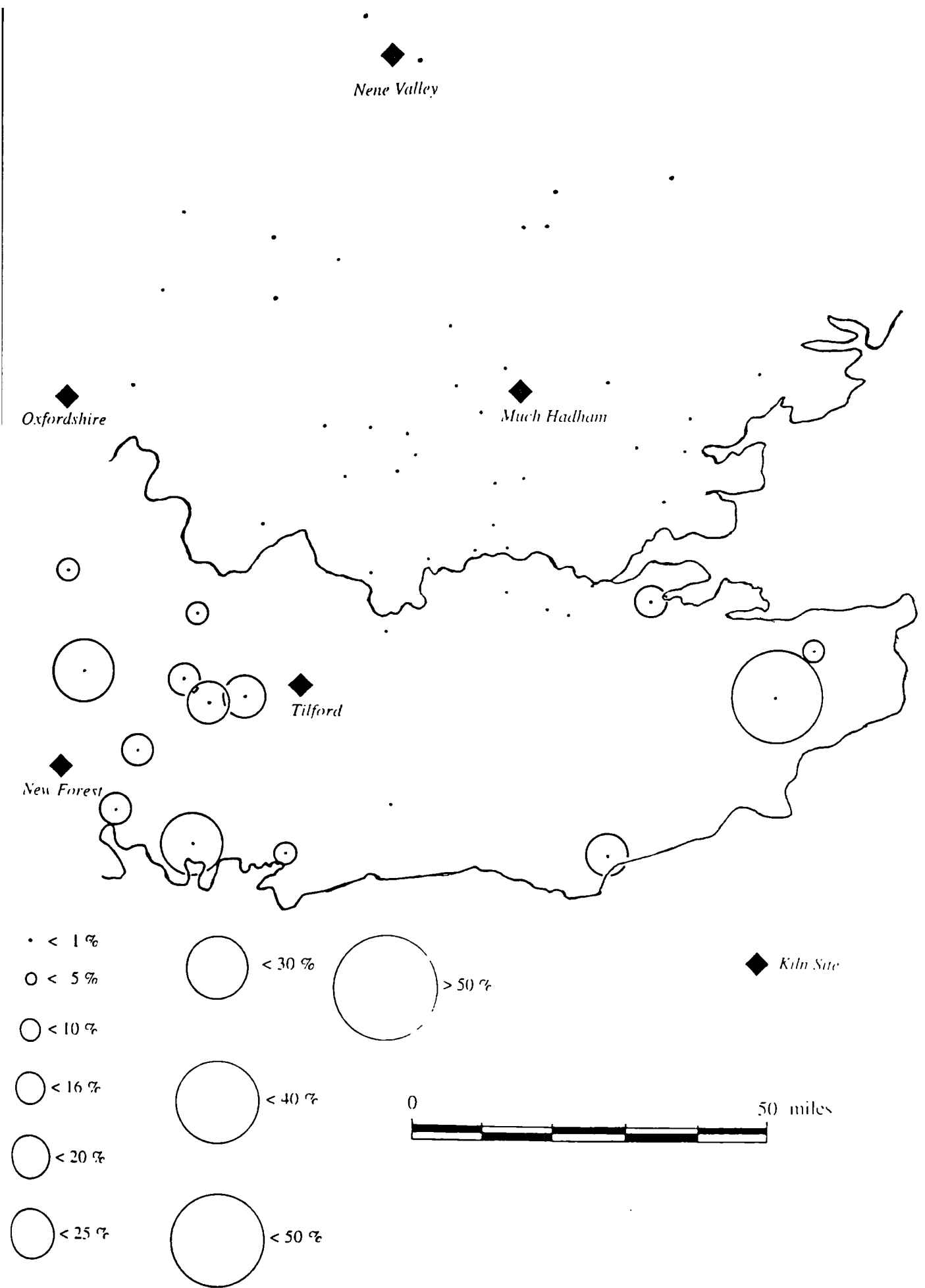


Fig. 1.8 Late fourth century ceramic supply in southern Britain :  
Late Roman grog-tempered wares (after M.G.Pomel, 1984)

same direction in the case of Tilford

- a figure of less than 5% for the products of the Much Hadham kilns, 40 miles to the north on the navigable River Lea, from assemblages in London, compared with c.14% from Oxfordshire (c.100 miles to the west on the Thames) and c.10% from the Nene Valley (c.125 miles to the north). This in spite of the fact that at two sites equidistant between London and the Much Hadham kilns, the latter's products constitute between 15% and 20% of the assemblage, as they do at Chelmsford, 32 miles to the east of Hadham, and without an obvious route for river transport.

These are just two of the most striking instances of how late Romano-British ceramic distributions in southern England 'buck the market trend' by conspicuously failing to conform with a distance-decay function. Examination of Fig.1 reveals many others. Of course, it will always be possible to invoke explanations for such anomalies in terms of aggressive pricing and 'loss-leaders' in important markets, state or aristocratic intervention in controlling distribution and access to products, transport advantages, product quality or simple consumer preference. There must come a point, however, when the fundamental applicability of the concept of a 'market economy' in interpreting ceramic distributions is called into question, rather than immunised from falsification by the repeated interpolation of auxiliary hypotheses. The examination of actual ceramic distributions against a notional distance decay model is of considerable value in identifying patterns in the movement of goods which merit consideration and specific explanation, where quantification and chronology have been defined with sufficient accuracy. However, the equation of this particular methodological approach with the assumption that production was market-driven, and exchange primarily, or even largely, market-mediated, serves ultimately to obscure the significance of these observations, leading to the facile explanation of evidence, when more careful consideration and further investigation offer opportunities for making progress in understanding the real meaning of these variations.

#### 4.3.2 Romano-British ceramic production in the fourth century; the received view

Given the pervasiveness of the notion of marketised exchange in late Roman Britain, it is unsurprising that studies of contemporary pottery manufacturing sites have assumed that production on these sites was stimulated and organised in response to market-generated demand. This issue, and its implications for the wider interpretation of ceramics (including their dating), is discussed here with reference to the work of M.G.Fulford on the New Forest industry (Fulford, 1975), supplemented by C.J.Young's study of the extensive Oxfordshire manufactories (Young, 1977). These have been chosen as large and influential studies, which serve as models for the understanding of production sites across later Roman Britain, and determine the interpretation of less thoroughly researched locales. Fulford's study is particularly significant in that it articulates one of the clearest and most explicit statements of the 'free-market' model of Romano-British ceramic production.

Fulford's wider social and economic context of his model for the growth and development of production in the New Forest has been outlined in Chapter 3.5.2 In summary, it sees a mid-3rd century economic 'recession' (represented by a dearth of datable artefacts) overcome in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century by means of state expenditure, indicated by the construction projects represented by town walls and coastal fortifications, precipitating, amongst other things, a 'boom' in the manufacture of ceramics. In his interpretation of the growth of ceramic production in this context, he also employs evidence from other late Roman ceramic industries in southern England (Fulford, 1975, 105 - 138).

That there was an enormous late-third century expansion in the scale of insular ceramic manufacture, and particularly that of fine-wares, is not in doubt. Several well-attested examples indicate such intensification, and the associated phenomenon of the concentration of production at a small number of sites (Swan, 1984, 19). Fulford himself has suggested a threefold increase in the production of fine-wares between AD 275 and AD 300 (1975, 110). Whilst insular manufacture of vessels in such fabrics, in characteristic forms with or without decoration, was restricted in the first and second centuries AD, the contrast is most marked when late third/fourth century developments

are compared with the earlier part of the third. Then, as has been noted, diagnostic types of *all* categories of artefact are few and far between .

The rise of large-scale, centralised ceramic production centres, usually rurally-based and eschewing the town/small town/*vicus* associations of their (smaller) predecessors (Swan, 1984, 19), seems to have been broadly contemporary with other major changes in the rural landscape. These have been outlined in 3.6.1, and may be briefly summarised. Increasing numbers and (in some cases) size of villas (Millett, 1990. 94 : fig.33; 190, fig.79), and the more widespread appearance of characteristically 'Roman' pottery on lower order sites (*ibid.*, 165), have been known for some time. Others, and in particular the intensification of agricultural production - suggested by environmental evidence (Jones, 1989, 132) and the expansion of field systems, and presumably cultivation or stock-rearing, into previously marginal areas (e.g. Miles. 1989, 125) - have become apparent since the publication of Fulford's New Forest research in 1975.

As far as pottery is concerned, most research has focused on the fine-ware output of the centralised production sites of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries; it is apparent, however, that the pattern of production of 'non-fine'- wares was similarly transformed<sup>10</sup>. Wheel-thrown grey-wares, for example, were produced both alongside the fine-wares (e.g. at the New Forest kilns; Fulford, 1975) and at centres, either newly established or developed from small predecessors of only local significance, where they were the only products. At Alice Holt, Surrey (Lyne & Jefferies, 1975), a kiln site devoted wholly to the production of grey wares, the quantity of waste ceramics from the period *c.*AD 270 - *c.*AD 350 was, in total, *c.*20% greater per decade than it had been for the decades between *c.* AD 220 and *c.*AD 270. Between *c.*AD 350 and *c.*AD 420 the increase was *c.*70% (*ibid.*, 13).

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In the case of fine-wares production levels clearly increased. It must be asked, however, whether grey-ware production was greater overall, or whether what is being witnessed is simply *concentration*, with roughly the same amount of pottery being produced in the region as before, but at fewer sites; does, for example, the quantity of Alice Holt wares from rural sites represent an increase over and above the combined output of the dispersed, localised manufacturing units which preceded it? This question is of some importance in determining whether shifting patterns of ceramic (and other) production in late Roman Britain reflects expansion and 'economic growth', or is more accurately characterised as indicating concentration and control.



Fulford proposes that the New Forest industry 'took off' c.AD 270 by producing Romanised fine ceramics aimed at an increasingly prosperous élite, only latterly venturing into grey-wares (ibid., 127), which allegedly provide an index of the degree of Romanisation of the majority of the population. He is adamant in asserting that no grey-/coarse-ware production occurred at the New Forest sites before c.AD 270, the probable earliest date of fine-ware production there (1975, 166). The impetus for the development of the industry has thus been seen as unconnected with existing ceramic traditions within the area (Vivien Swan has gone so far as to suggest that entrepreneurial continental craftsmen were responsible; Swan, 1984, 109). Fulford extends this 'sunrise industry' model to the whole of southern England, denying a connection between the advent of fine-ware production in the Oxfordshire kilns in the late third century, and the earlier production of coarse wares in the same locality (1975, 111). In both the New Forest and Oxfordshire, the genesis of late Roman ceramic production is explained as a response to a burgeoning demand for fine-wares. The corollary of this is that, ultimately, the marginal profits on which these enterprises were run were eroded by a collapse in demand *for fine-wares*, rendering the businesses no longer viable, causing production to cease, and signalling the death-knell of the industry (idem. 1979, 128). Customers at the top end of the market purchased vessels in glass and metal (idem. 1975, 134), whilst a fall in demand resulting in a lack of profitability and a resultant lower status for potters accounts for the poor quality of later coarse-wares (here defined as wares in a 'native' tradition), the more skilled operators having abandoned their trade in response to such ignominy (idem., 1975, 136).

The corollary of this - that the cessation of fine-ware production also witnessed the demise of grey-ware manufacture - is tacitly assumed, but unstated. The precedence of fine-wares in understanding the *raison d'être* of the production sites reflects the emphasis on their study received from the historiographic tradition outlined in 4.1, allied to the pervasive notions of consumer preference in explaining ceramic distributions which were critiqued in 4.2.

Fulford's insistence on the primacy of fine-ware manufacture in the New Forest in fact rests on decidedly shaky foundations. Local antecedents to the grey-wares produced there receive cursory treatment. He acknowledges Hawkes' observations that

the grey-ware products sit squarely within a regional tradition extending back to the LPRIA (Hawkes, 1938, 135), but does not discuss the earlier context in which vessels in that tradition were produced. Similarities between the New Forest grey- wares and their precursors are seen as having no more significance than ‘demonstrating’ that the potters catered for the tastes of local inhabitants to expand their share of the market (Fulford, 1975). The possibility that the New Forest kilns originated as one, small component of a dispersed, domestic pattern of ceramic production, or the deliberate centralisation of such a dispersed pattern on a new site, is not entertained. This represents a real possibility, and, given the problems attendant on the dating of standardised and typologically static grey-ware forms, the date at which it occurred could significantly pre-date Fulford’s baseline of *c.* AD 270. The origins of any ‘dispersed domestic’ pattern preceding centralised production is beyond the scope of this study, but almost certainly extended back into the LPRIA, and may have had even earlier origins.

His treatment of the Oxfordshire industries betrays similar shortcomings. Young's survey identifies a series of production sites which apparently pre-date the manufacture of fine-wares, which Young orders into a sequence characterised by the increasing concentration and complexity of the production process. The earliest kilns identified, at Hanborough and Cassington (henceforth H/C) were established before the end of the first century, and represent very small scale non-specialised manufacture, the products of which were probably exchanged and used at a very local level (Young 1977, 232). It is likely that such exchange would have been conducted within the framework of kin-groups and the obligations which these imposed (although this is not acknowledged by the author), over, in any single instance, a small geographical area. The overall picture would comprise many such small kiln-sites, dotted across the landscape (*ibid.*). Raw materials would rarely have been a problem; the secondary clays most frequently used to manufacture coarse-wares are available across great swathes of the country (Swan, 1984, 3).

Concentration of production beyond the domestic level can be seen in two groups of kilns in the Oxford area, at Overdale / Foxcombe Hill and Littlemore / Ashurst Clinic. These produced the same reduced wares as H/C, but at larger, more concentrated production sites, which were flourishing by the early second century, and by mid-century

were producing specialized vessels, such as mortaria and flagons, and white-wares (Young, 1977, 233). This apparently two-stage process - an initial concentration of the manufacture of existing types, followed by the production of vessel- and ware- types which would have required the introduction of more complex procedures of raw material extraction and preparation (cf. Swan, 1985, 43-44) - is significant when considering the advent of fine-ware producing sites. It contrasts starkly with Fulford's view of the New Forest industries, and his extension of that view to the late-third century production of fine-wares in the upper Thames region.

The late-third century emergence of kiln-sites in Oxfordshire which produced fine-wares (e.g. The Churchill, Nuffield, Oxford School; Young, 1977, 237-8) can thus, *contra*. Fulford, be seen as the final stage in the increasing centralisation of production evident between the first and third centuries AD, with all of the implications of increasing specialisation and concentration of labour power which that entailed. The inapplicability of the 'market model' in explaining such changes in late Roman Britain has been argued in 3.2.1, and in a specifically ceramic context in 4.2.2. The wider context within which this development occurred, namely the overall social formation and the organisation of production within that formation, as characterised in 3.4 / 3,5, is essential to its understanding.

#### 4.4 Ceramic production and the Romano-British agricultural economy

Preceding chapters have indicated that the assumption that late-Roman Britain saw the establishment of a demand-led, 'market' economy, subject to gross fluctuation even to the point of collapse, derives from the conception of a mode of production, and concomitant relations of production, analogous to nineteenth and twentieth century capitalism, in which progressive accumulation of wealth on behalf of the manufacturers (*or*, in the case of Roman Britain, their sponsors / controllers) was based on the realisation of profit through the sale of commodities. It has also been indicated that these assumptions have affected not only the *interpretation* of ceramic assemblages, but even their basic classification and chronology. Having criticised these assumptions, and presented more appropriate alternatives, this section seeks to situate the changing pattern

and organisation of ceramic manufacture in late Roman Britain within the model of class consolidation and changing relations of production put forward in 3.6.

Why, in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, *did* the production of ceramics in Britain exhibit the changes identified in 4.3.2? This section will seek to explain this development in terms of increasing surplus extraction by a ruling class, taking the form of increased expropriation of 'use value' from those directly involved in production; that is, obtaining surplus for direct consumption or use. How can the observed characteristics of late Romano-British ceramics, and the organisation of their production, be satisfactorily explained without resort to notions of rising demand stimulating increased output?

#### 4.4.1 Grey-wares and fine-wares; ceramics and estate production

Chapter 3.4.2 argued that the evidence for substantial change in the rural landscape of Roman Britain in this period was the result of increasing direct control by a ruling class over land and agrarian production, and the concomitant expropriation of surplus, via the imposition of essentially *feudal* relations of production on landed estates, where land was alienated from communal into individual ownership and exploited through networks of villas. Increasing evidence for rural industry was seen as a facet of this. It is necessary to examine ceramic production in this context in a little more detail, and to consider how and why this particular sphere of manufacturing was integrated within such networks of villa estate production.

Little emphasis has traditionally been placed on any potential connection between the establishment of villas - and the creation of estates associated with them - and the rise of substantial rural ceramic industries. Swan (1984, 19) observes that the two phenomena may have been connected, but interprets any such interrelationship in terms of the opportunity for villa-owners to realise profit from their lands by overseeing the manufacture and sale of pottery; or by leasing the land and its natural resources to a third party to do the same (*ibid.*). Peacock, in virtually the only volume which attempts to view Roman ceramic production in its social context, specifically argues *against* the estate manufacture of pottery in Roman Britain, on the grounds that there is no evidence

for the existence of the large-capacity square kilns (analogous to those used in the manufacture of tiles) which typify estate-based production in the antique world in the Mediterranean (1982, 132-3), and which are known to have existed in Britain in 1<sup>st</sup> century Colchester and Caistor-by-Norwich (Swan 1984, 83-4) . In response to this, it may be observed that increasing control of production by landowners need not manifest itself in the adoption of precisely similar technologies in different parts of the empire.

To fully understand the relationship between villa estates and ceramic production, we need to ask (and answer) the question ‘why were pots produced at all?’ in Roman Britain. As has been described, the conventional answer is that they were manufactured *for sale*; that they had a practical function (in Marxist terms a ‘use value’) is not in doubt, but the primary reason for their creation, under the ‘market model’, is as commodities, to realise a profit in response to demand. This, however, relegates functional utility to a poor second place in the interpretation of the material. If we start by seeking to understand the *actual role* of ceramic vessels in the processing, storage, transportation and consumption of foodstuffs, and abandon - or at least set to one side - the notion that they were manufactured as saleable items, the significance of pottery production, and control over it in the context of villa estates, becomes readily apparent.

Rather than seeing grey- and coarse-wares as a cheaper, plebeian versions of ‘Romanised’ pottery, denoting the cultural affiliation and status-consciousness of its owner / user / purchaser (and consequently manufactured in a more limited range of forms to suit the needs, and pockets, of humbler folk), they should be identified for what, fundamentally, they were; *the means whereby specific foodstuffs were processed, stored and transported*. Pots were not *primarily* or *of necessity* items of display, although clearly - as in the case of fine-wares - they could be. They served a critical role in agrarian societies in the storage and transportation of food resources; a means to overcome the limitations imposed by seasonal availability and local *unavailability*. In later Roman Britain, with agricultural landscapes in the process of transformation, and rising demands imposed by a non-producing sector of the population (agents and retinues of the ruling class) growing larger and larger in proportion to those from whom they extracted surplus, the need for ceramic containers for food staples would certainly have increased. Thus the jar forms which comprise a sizeable percentage of most grey-wares,

and the overwhelming majority of coarse-wares, were essential in ensuring the preservation and provision of foodstuffs, and the capacity to move them over long distances. They were integral to the articulation of surplus, an essential component of the late Roman agrarian food economy, integrated with it in terms of both *context* and *purpose* of production.

Viewed from this perspective, the assertion of control over pottery manufacture within the context of villa estates can be seen as an essential element of the re-ordering of agrarian production to meet the needs of the landowning aristocracy; control over the production of food containers was as significant as control over the food resource itself, and the people engaged in its production. There are, however, more detailed reasons which help to account for the rise of centralised, rural ceramic production in late Roman Britain, reasons which relegate to the margins the aesthetic and cultural considerations which invariably hold the field in discussions of this phenomenon.

The contrasting characteristics of wheel-thrown, kiln-fired grey-wares and traditional coarse-wares has been raised previously, and a case argued for a consistent classification and terminology rooted in basic manufacturing processes (4.2.2). These different classes of ceramic are invariably held to reflect varying degrees of 'Romanisation' on the part of their users / owners (tellingly, the two categories are usually held to be identical), the degree of technical accomplishment reflecting a response to consumer preference. That their differing characteristics derive from different manufacturing processes is obvious. What has not been argued previously - at least in the 'mainstream' study of Romano-British ceramics - is that these contrasting characteristics reflect the different *relations of production* under which they were produced. Marx famously observed that it was impossible to tell, from the taste of porridge, within which mode of production it had been created (Callinicos 1983, 85; although an environmental archaeologist, had one been available, might have been able to tell him, and pubs advertising 'home-cooked food' for sale might beg to differ!). It is argued here, however, that in the case of Romano-British ceramics his maxim does not apply.

Romano-British grey-wares differ from coarse-wares due to the different processes of manufacture involved, processes which were adopted, in the case of grey-

wares, because they improved the efficiency of pottery production. At first sight this may seem to be an erroneous statement; grey-wares arguably required *more*, not less effort to produce, an observation which would appear consistent with the view that the extra effort was taken in response to market-driven demand. However, when viewed *in the context of agrarian production overall*, the net gains in efficiency become apparent. The effort required to obtain and/or refine clay of a consistent texture with fine-grained temper would allow the ‘throwing’ of pots on a fast wheel, thus dramatically increasing the speed with which they could be produced (Arnold 1985, 208-9, 203). In conjunction with the greater degree of temperature control which the use of a ‘true’ kiln allowed, such pots could be fired at sufficient temperature without the need for copious macro-inclusions to help protect against cracking as the clay expanded through heating (ibid., 213). (This fact would, in turn, allow the vessels to be wheel-thrown in the first instance, without risk to the hands of the potter). Once constructed, ‘true’ kilns would allow repeated firings, with more reliable temperature control and fewer spoiled or part-spoiled loads. Higher temperatures could be achieved with less risk of cracking, thus allowing the possibility of the manufacture of *non-porous* ceramics (stoneware, for example, as in the New Forest; Fulford 1975, 24), potentially significant in the storage and transportation of some types of foodstuff.

Labour invested in obtaining and processing raw materials (clay, obviously, but also appropriate, even-burning fuels; Swan 1984, 7), building kilns, and the acquisition of specialist skills concomitant with an increasing division of labour, would obviously, one-for-one, outweigh that necessary for a bonfire or clamp-firing of hand-made vessels. However, when combined in a centralised kiln site, with a (seasonally) dedicated labour force, the factors outlined above would allow for a significant *increase* in output in a season, in comparison with the de-centralised production of coarse-wares such as that which prevailed in LPRIA Britain (and which, as will be seen, persisted throughout the Roman period, and flourished especially in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century); concentrating labour and avoiding the replication of productive tasks across a locality.

The phrase ‘in a season’ is deliberately chosen. In the British climate (notwithstanding climatic deterioration since the 4<sup>th</sup> century) the ‘curing’ of pots and firing of kilns is, it has been argued (Fulford 1975, 12) largely an activity confined to the

summer months. In other words, it coincided with the harvest, the period of the agricultural year when labour was at a premium for the gathering of crops in from the fields (Jones 1964, 792; Jones 1981, 113). Swan has argued that, in fact, large quantities of ceramic food containers would need to have been available *by* harvest time, and that the use of drying kilns - probably the structures usually referred to as 'corn-' or 'grain-dryers' - would have allowed pottery manufacture at other times of the year (1984, 47). If accurate, this observation serves to further emphasise the role of changing methods and organisation of ceramic production in the release of labour for work on the land.

Apart from producing, more reliably, vessels better suited to the needs of the late Roman agrarian economy *as controlled by the landowning ruling class*, the centralisation of ceramic production, along with other aspects of manufacture, served to release labour to cultivate and - crucial in this instance - *harvest* agrarian surplus from the land. Arguably, the centralisation of ceramic production took place *not* primarily for its own sake, but because it allowed more labour to be devoted to agricultural production, a greater area taken in for the cultivation of food resources, and consequently the taking of the surplus required to sustain an increasing number of non-producers. All this occurred *not* in the context of an 'expanding market', but in response to the need of the landowning ruling class to secure control of the material and human resources necessary to guarantee its position and power, and to realise surplus labour in a form appropriate to those ends.

Having considered the context of estate-based *production* of ceramics, with reference to the model of the imposition of the 'feudal mode' of production presented in 3.6, how would the *circulation* of pots have been operated in this context? 3.6 sought to understand the increasing deposition of coinage on a wide range of rural settlements from the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century not in terms of an abstract notion of 'market exchange', but situated in the context of a ruling class's increasing direct control over agrarian production. Considering ceramic production in the same terms, the picture is one of direct producers being deprived of the resources of time (at a crucial seasonal juncture) and the raw materials to provide for their own needs. Having provided for their own subsistence requirements (in terms of the productive activities over which they retained direct day-to-day control - primarily agriculture and animal husbandry), and for



the obligatory exactions of state and landowner, they would have sold whatever remaining surplus they had to sell, receiving payment in coin. (It is possible that in many cases this surplus was *also* sold directly to the landowner). Coinage obtained in this fashion would then have been exchanged for the hardware necessities of the agrarian economy - for example pottery - at the local town, small town or *vicus*, thus ultimately returning the coinage to the landowner, either directly or through middlemen acting as vendors. By these means the position of the landowner would have been consolidated, not by the sale of goods at a profit, but by increasing agricultural surplus through the direct exaction of increasingly onerous obligations on the direct producers. The labour power required to realise that surplus would have been released by the concentration and control of the production of manufactured items. This in turn would have forced the direct producers to 'buy back' the products of their obligations to meet their own material needs. All low denomination monetised exchange would have occurred on the back of this cycle; as the money circulated it would have creamed off profit for the landowner, as a result of his appropriation of productive processes and their output, and capacity to intensify tribute / labour exactions, and / or extend the area of land and number of people directly engaged in estate production.

In the example under consideration here, coinage paid out for grain by the landowner would, ultimately, have returned to the landowner in exchange for pots; the coins would have realised the surplus value extracted from the potter and others engaged in the process of production, and would be used the next time round for the 'purchase' of more grain. So the cycle repeated itself. The actual situation would, of course, have been more complicated 'on the ground', with varieties of agricultural products, raw materials and goods, and the intervention of 'middlemen' involved in selling and vending; the example is employed to make clear the underlying principle.

Three critical points about this characterisation need to be emphasized. Firstly, the crux of all exchanges is the *use value* of the products - in this case grain and pottery; the sale of commodities is *not* a significant means of wealth accumulation for the late-Romano-British ruling class. Secondly, and related to this, the moving force behind the monetisation of the economy is that class's control of production, not some kind of spontaneous 'market take-off' predicated on demand created by burgeoning

Romanisation. Pots were manufactured and bought because people had to have them, and had been deprived of the means of making their own, not manufactured as a commodity to be vended and purchased because people liked the look of them and wanted to be thought of as 'Roman', with prices going up and down as a result of fluctuations in demand caused by changes in 'fashion'. Within this type of environment, Imperial price-fixing edicts, often quoted as evidence for a market economy, are more likely to have been issued to suppress seigneurial rapaciousness than to combat inflation. Thirdly, the issuing of low-denomination coinage can be seen as a measure taken *directly* for and on behalf of the ruling elite, not as a response to a demand for small change from the populace at large (cf. Reece, 1987, 10) in an expanding market system generating wealth for all. Indeed, in this situation the continued circulation of what was in effect token money would have been its significant characteristic; lack of intrinsic value would have been irrelevant. In this context the copies and forgeries of low-denomination coinage in the third and fourth centuries, which frequently bore no resemblance to the coins they were imitating (*ibid.*, 22-3), become understandable as a necessary stop-gap measure taken by the ruling class, and the massive variability they display indicative of the highly localised level at which they were manufactured and deployed.

#### 4.4.2 Coarse-wares - ceramics and tributary social relations

Section 4.4.1 has argued that the characteristics of the 'grey-wares' produced in later 3rd and 4th century kiln complexes should be understood as a result of increased efficiency of ceramic manufacture, in the context of estate production indicative of increasing direct control of all aspects of agrarian production by a landowning ruling class. Given the distinction made between 'grey-wares' and 'coarse-wares' in 4.2.2, how should the specific character of the latter be explained in a similar context? Received explanations invariably attribute these differences to a demand for vessels more in keeping with those to which LPRIA British societies were accustomed, indicating a lesser degree of 'Romanisation' of the population, or less costly products which could be employed by poorer sections of the community to announce their 'Roman' affiliations or aspirations (e.g. Peacock's comments regarding BB1, in which he agonises over an explanation for why a poor quality coarse-ware, time-consumingly hand-made, should

‘out-sell’ the more efficiently produced, finer grey-wares; 1982, 86-7).

It hardly need be repeated that this interpretation is rejected here. Coarse-ware vessels in ‘native’ traditions, employing, for the most part, manufacturing technologies and processes which had been used since the LPRIA (outlined in 4.2.2), here embody ceramic manufacture which took place beyond the immediate control of an estate. Thus, it is argued, the actual production of such vessels was carried out within the context of tribal, kin-based social relations, without the processes and organisation of production, and the personnel involved in it, being determined by estate owners, managers or overseers. In other words, these were the products of those communities, introduced in 3.5.5, which remained *outside* the framework of villa estates.

This is not to say that such communities were unaffected by those holding estate land, or that their manufacture of ceramics was some kind of spontaneous response to, or reaction against, the taking of land into estate ownership. The existence of coarse-wares manufactured on a large scale and distributed over wide areas, throughout the Roman period but especially notably in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is usually, again, interpreted in terms of an entrepreneurial manufacturing response, in this case to ‘Romanising’ taste which nevertheless retained a residuum of ‘native’ identity (*ibid.*). (Typically, the most prominent ‘Romanised’ feature of coarse-ware vessels, particularly the ubiquitous jar forms, is an increasing emphasis on, and regularity and elaboration of, the rim. This is a subject which will be returned to.) Here, however, the preferred explanation for this phenomenon is to see it as an indication of the *exaction of tribute*, in a form (primarily the *contents* of the vessels, rather than the vessels themselves) and employing mechanisms established in the LPRIA, but on a substantially increased scale. In other words, they are direct archaeological correlates for the imposition and intensification of tribute on kin-groups and tribal communities, firstly by the Roman military and other agents of the state, and later, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, by their landowning successors, who held a far greater degree of direct control over land and production.

To investigate this further requires brief consideration of some of the major coarse-wares found in Roman Britain. The earliest of these is the hand-made, black-burnished pottery manufactured at production sites around Poole Harbour, Dorset (‘BB

I'). The LPRIA antecedents of BB I are well-attested, with a sizeable regional distribution, but early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century - most notably in its jar forms - the ware's distribution expands to include the northern frontier region. In the later 4<sup>th</sup> century it again contracts to the south-western Britain and the lower Severn valley (Williams 1977, 205).

In the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century - the same period, that is, in which the distribution of BB I expanded into the north of the province - the production of wheel-thrown vessels seemingly modelled in form, surface finishing and decoration on the Dorset products began on the north bank of the Thames estuary. This ware, termed 'BB II', was also shipped in quantity to the northern frontier, again predominantly in jar form, although apparently falling out of use there by the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. From the later 2<sup>nd</sup> century, 'classic' BB II was supplemented by finer-textured grey-wares, manufactured on the south bank of the Thames estuary, in Kent, as well as on the north bank; these wares are more significant in supplying their region than for transshipment to the north.

From the mid- 3<sup>rd</sup> century, hand-made jar forms which had been in manufacture on the southern bank of the Humber estuary from the late 2<sup>nd</sup>, begin to appear in quantity in southern Yorkshire, and in lesser but still significant densities across northern England. These are termed (singularly inappropriately; when first recognised it was thought that they were manufactured in north-western Yorkshire) 'Dales-ware'. By the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century this distribution had contracted, to be concentrated in the region closest to the production sites (Loughlin 1977, 90-91).

Typically, these wares and their distributions, in each case deriving from fabrics and vessel forms in existence in the LPRIA, are interpreted as having expanded their output in response to the profit to be gained by providing ceramics for the 'military market' as witnessed by the presence of each ware, at different times, in the northern military zone. However, by developing some of the ideas about Romano-British ceramics presented in 4.5.1, more satisfactory explanations, more in keeping with the scenario proposed in 3.4, may be arrived at.

The first step is to emphasise the role of coarse-ware vessels as *containers*, in

accordance with the observations made in the previous section. The overwhelming prominence of jar forms in these fabrics, often termed 'cooking pots', reflects not a desire amongst Romano-Britons to possess 'Romanised' variants of nevertheless recognisably 'native' vessels, but the fact that the primary reason for their manufacture was as containers for (the preservation and transportation of) foodstuffs; a claim not undermined by clear evidence that vessels of this sort *were* actually used in cooking, as they were almost certainly used for a whole range of other purposes. If this assertion is (provisionally, at least) accepted, the locations of the production sites of the wares discussed above gives strong hints as to what they may have contained. All are located at coastal or estuarine sites, a pattern usually held to reflect the significance of seaborne transport routes in lowering transport costs, providing them with an advantage which allowed them to 'compete' in remote markets. More significant, however, is that all three are situated on estuaries or (in the case of BB I) on a salt-water lagoon. There is a clear association between them and the ancient world's essential preservative; salt.

Salt production in Roman Britain is testified in the Poole Harbour area and on both banks of the Thames; there is every reason to believe that it was carried out in the vicinity of the confluence of the Trent and the Humber, where Dales-ware was manufactured. The co-location of pottery manufactories with salt-workings has occasionally been remarked upon, and the possible role of some vessels in its transportation noted (e.g. Tyers 1996, 47), but the theme has rarely been pursued or explored in more detail. Apart from the possibility that the many coarse-ware jars may only have contained salt (surely crucial as a preservative to provide, for example, year-round food supplies for a northern army garrison), the food resources in estuarine environments which may *themselves* have been salted on site and packed for transportation require consideration. Chief amongst these are the stock which may have been grazed on salt-pasture, and, perhaps more likely, the North Sea variants of the Mediterranean fish-pastes and sauces - most famously *garum* - which appear to have been a significant component of Roman diet, and which would seem to have been highly suited to preservation and transportation in jars.

In identifying coarse-wares, dominated as they are by jar forms suitable for the preservation and transportation of foodstuffs, as the material correlates of tribute

exaction by landowners *beyond* the confines of their own estate holdings, it is worth noting that these production sites are situated in exactly the sort of marginal areas in which communities *not* incorporated within estate lands might have found themselves confined. Collingwood observed the near-complete absence of villas, or any other indications of 'Romanisation' from central and southern Essex (Collingwood and Myres 1936, 279), particularly relevant with reference to the manufacture of BB II), and Hingley's discussion of his 'regions of non-villa settlement' are dominated by marginal areas such as the Fens and the Thames gravels (Hingley 1989, 124-7).

The strong presence of each of the three coarse-ware types discussed above on the northern frontier of *Britannia*, hundreds of kilometres from their production sites, certainly indicates that their production was closely bound up with military provisioning, as has frequently been pointed out (e.g. Swan 1984, 19). (Indeed, in each instance the original identification of these wares resulted from their recovery from sites on Hadrian's Wall). From the earliest, in Dorset, the location of these sites moves around the east coast, firstly to the Thames estuary (BB II) and then north to the Humber (Dales-ware). The standard interpretation of this development is that coarse ceramic industries develop in these areas, progressively closer to the main market for the product, through the realisation by local manufacturers that this provided an opportunity to undercut their competitors by exploiting the lower transport costs which resulted from decreasing distance. The pattern can be more satisfactorily, and interestingly, explained by considering it in the context of tribute-taking, initially by tribal élites acting as agents of the Roman state (cf. 3.5.3 / 4), latterly by a ruling class increasingly acting as much in its interests as private landowners as state officials (cf. 3.6.2). Fluctuations in this pattern also offer some potential insights into the effects of this change in the social formation.

As with all of the coarse-ware industries so far discussed, comparatively little is known about the organisation of the production of BB I in Dorset, despite the fact that the sites of several clamp kilns in the Poole Harbour area are known (Brown 1997, 40; Swan 1984, 54). Comparatively dispersed production is usually assumed (*ibid.*), a pattern which would fit well with the suggestion of tribute extracted from kin-based communities or tribal groupings. Agreeing with Millett's argument that 2<sup>nd</sup>-century villas in southern England were essentially a means of display, rather than essential

components in the expropriation of surplus, it is argued that the creation of the BB I 'export' industry represented the intensification and re-orientation of tribute exaction through existing, kin- and tribally-based mechanisms, and indeed the widespread occurrence of the LPRIA antecedents of BB I in the region (*ibid.*) would seem to indicate that production in such a context existed on a substantial scale prior to the conquest.

The advent of the production of wheel-thrown BB II in area of the Thames estuary in the same period that BB I began to be shipped in quantity to the northern frontier, the rapid subsequent appearance of BB II in the north, and the apparent lack of local antecedents (Tyers 1996, 187), seem to suggest the *creation* of a coarse-ware manufacturing 'industry', rather than the development and re-orientation of existing production. This is supported by the fact that, whilst BB II *fabric* is typical of coarse-wares, the vessels are unusual in being wheel-thrown. Dales-ware, the latest and most northerly of the coarse-wares, comprised a major component of frontier assemblages from c. AD 250 - 340.

The increase in or introduction of coarse-ware production to these areas, and their transportation in bulk to the northern frontier, is here taken to indicate the extraction of a particular form of surplus - salt, and / or salted foodstuffs - from these localities. In the case of the black-burnished industries, both BB I and BB II, it is proposed that the means through which this surplus was appropriated consisted of the extension and intensification of kin-based and tribal obligations. However, the use of a fast potter's wheel in the throwing of BB II vessels may be indicative of an increasing degree of direct control of production by a burgeoning landowning class. (The use of a fabric which is coarse in comparison to grey-wares [including the 'finer-textured steely-grey sandy wares' which were later products of the BB II production areas; Tyers 1996, 187], may suggest that this was restricted to control over certain aspects of the *labour* involved in the manufacture of ceramics, rather than wholesale control over the resources and processes of production). By the time Dales-ware manufacture reached significant levels in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, villa estates were arguably well-established across north Lincolnshire (Todd 1973, 89-90), and grey-ware manufacture in the region was underway on these estates (Todd, 1968). It is suggested in this instance that, rather

than the surplus represented by coarse-ware being taken through kin-based and tribal obligations across the territory, the intensification of production reflects the ability of landowners to apply pressure to the communities which remained beyond their estates, intensifying the procurement of surplus (in specified forms) to be placed at the disposal of the state (i.e., in this instance, supply of food resources to the army). Many of these landowners would themselves, of course, have acted as state officials in one capacity or another.

The development of coarse-ware production sites in coastal and estuarine locations between the early 2<sup>nd</sup> and late 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, initially along the south and then on the east coast, may thus be seen as reflecting the *intensification* of LPRIA tribute-taking in Roman Britain. Latterly this involved its assertion by a ruling class which, as it took increasingly direct control over land and the organisation of agrarian production through the creation of villa estates, was becoming decreasingly constrained by traditionally accepted quantities and forms of tribute-taking, and was able to impose new levels of surplus expropriation on communities remaining beyond its landholdings. The arrival on the northern frontier, firstly of BBI, then of BB II and Dales-ware, should be seen not as an indication of rivalry between production centres competing for market share, but as a reflection of the areas in which a ruling class exercised sufficient control over specific kinds of surplus for it to ensure its production, expropriation and transportation in large quantities for the purposes of the state. Developing this line of argument, it is likely that other, less immediately archaeologically visible food (and other) resources were obtained and transported from the same regions (as is often mentioned in passing in surveys of the material; e.g. Peacock 1982, 86; Evans 1985, 289), although probably not from *precisely* the same localities, given the varying environmental 'niches' required by different resources. It is difficult to be sure from the ceramic evidence whether the successive arrival of coarse-wares from these different regions represented a quantitative increase in the level of supply (of the contents of the pots) to the frontier zone, or its maintenance at a stable level but from different sources. What it does indicate is that it became possible for the Romano-British ruling class to expropriate surplus on a substantial scale, through tribute-exaction, for their purposes as agents of the Roman state, successively from areas of central southern England, the south-east, and the north midlands.



Explaining the distribution of these coarse-wares in such terms has interesting implications for their changing pattern in the mid-late 4<sup>th</sup> century. BB II and Dales-ware cease to figure significantly in assemblages in the frontier zone from the earlier part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but remain significant in the regions in which they were manufactured. BB I continues to be shipped to the north until the second half of the century, but by the later 4<sup>th</sup> century its distribution is restricted to the south-west and the lower Severn valley (Tyers 1996, 185; Evans 1985, 291). Market explanations based on the rise of the east Yorkshire industries (discussed in detail in Chapter 5) are usually offered. An interpretation in keeping with the central arguments of this study is that the ruling elites in these areas were in the process of consolidating their (developing) interests as landowners at the expense of their obligations to Rome; rather than rendering surplus to provide for the (military) needs of the state, surplus taken in tribute was re-oriented, deployed in their own domains and in their own immediate, direct interests. Thus sections of the landowning ruling class in Lincolnshire, Kent and Essex, and central southern England reduced their commitment to providing support for a remote element of state infrastructure (the army on the frontier), leaving that burden to fall elsewhere, and concentrated their efforts on maximising surplus expropriation for their own purposes on, and beyond, their estates.

(Detailed, regionally-based comparisons of the ‘export’ of coarse-wares from these production areas with evidence for investment in villa buildings and other modes of display in those same regions would provide a useful means of investigating the alleged role of the market in wealth creation in late Roman Britain. If this were significant, the peak of investment in display ought to coincide with the peak in export of ceramics. If, however, such exportation simply represents the re-location of surplus value *away* from its source, thus *reducing* the net ‘wealth’ available there [as opposed to circulation and sale ‘creating’ wealth], then investment in display should actually *increase* when the ‘export market’ declines, and more surplus is available to be deployed at source. In general terms, the picture of the 4<sup>th</sup> century presented by Millett (1990) would seem to support the latter case.)

By the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, then, the distributions of the three coarse-wares discussed to date had, broadly speaking, shrunk to the regions in which they were

manufactured. In this same period, a series of comparable coarse-wares, in which jar forms once again massively predominate and with distributions across southern *Britannia* which are of similar or greater magnitude, make their appearance. Three of the four most notable ones are the shell-tempered wares of the south midlands (Tyers 1996, 192-3), 'Portchester fabric D' (ibid.), and the grog-tempered wares of Kent and Sussex (ibid., 191-2) (the first two ware types are wheel-thrown). By no means all of the known production sites of these wares are at coastal sites, and the likely nature of their contents requires more detailed consideration of the potential of their locations (although salt is a recurring possibility, even at inland sites). Nevertheless, developing the argument of this section, they may be seen to represent the apogee of surplus expropriation by the late Romano-British landowning ruling class from communities beyond the direct control they exercised over their estates, with tribute-taking on a scale greater than ever before across *Maxima Caesarensis*, *Flavia Caesarensis* and the eastern half of *Britannia Prima*, the surplus thus exacted being deployed in these same areas, rather than re-located to the remote frontier zone.

This, then, is the scene in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, with a landowning ruling class holding direct control of agrarian production over large swathes of the landscape, and exacting tribute in a variety of forms from the communities inhabiting the still very substantial areas of land outside that control. The ceramic correlates of this are, respectively, the large (and, for that matter, small) rural kiln complexes manufacturing grey- and fine-wares, and the huge output and extensive distributions of coarse-wares. Understanding how and why this situation broke down is obviously crucial to this thesis, and will be returned to in Chapter 8.

This section has briefly discussed or referred to all of the major Roman coarse-ware industries bar one; the calcite-gritted wares of east Yorkshire, the corpus of material central to this thesis. The growth of calcite-gritted ware production in the region relates to both groups of coarse-ware industries discussed in this section, in that it represents the final northward shift in the supply of the northern frontier zone (succeeding north Lincolnshire, as represented by Dales-ware), whilst being contemporary with the southern coarse-wares of the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. This observation says something about the specific context of coarse-ware production in east Yorkshire in

this period; it will have had both similarities to and differences from its predecessors and its contemporary southern counterparts. To understand these, the archaeological and, more specifically, the regional ceramic background for the region in this period requires consideration, and this forms the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5 : The archaeology of eastern Yorkshire from the first to fifth centuries AD**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The geographical area with which this study is primarily concerned (Fig.2) corresponds approximately with the former East Riding of Yorkshire (an entity officially abolished in the local government re-organisation of 1974, but one which has made something of a comeback in the re-naming of that area which was formerly the northern division of the county of Humberside). Reference to the archaic 'Riding' is useful in this context (if as anachronistic in terms of the late Roman period as it is in the twentieth century), in that it the area it comprised extended from the east coast as far west as York. Other geographical districts, whether based on modern administrative boundaries, such as Humberside, or the alleged territory of an ancient tribe (i.e. that of 'the Parisi', which is usually taken as having been limited to the west by the river Derwent), exclude the city. Rather than employ the archaic and anachronistic 'Riding' usage, or 'east Yorkshire', often seen as being delimited by the Derwent, the term 'eastern Yorkshire' will be used in this thesis, thus allowing the areas to the west and north of that river (crucially important in terms of ceramic production in the region), and York itself, to be included.

York is essential to this study of the development and chronology of calcite-gritted ware in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century and into the 5<sup>th</sup>, because major excavations in the Roman fortress and *colonia* have produced well-stratified assemblages on a scale virtually unknown elsewhere. The Wellington Row site, which forms the centrepiece of the study, has the added advantages of being a deeply-stratified site excavated and recorded with the utmost stringency, using recording systems developed specifically for stratigraphically complex urban sites, and of having produced over 1,700 late Roman coins, for the majority in direct contemporary association with the calcite-gritted ware assemblage. Arguably, therefore, the site offers the best opportunity of any yet excavated for detailed examination of the chronology of the coarse-wares of late Roman east Yorkshire, and investigation of possible changes in fabric or form which may have occurred in the later 4<sup>th</sup> and into the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Although much of the material studied for this thesis was excavated in York, the key questions concerning late-Roman trajectories into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and by extension ceramic chronologies in this period, relate to the context of their production. Unquestionably, the bulk of calcite-gritted output took place within east Yorkshire east of the Derwent. Any patterns recognised in the material from York must therefore be related to contemporary circumstances in that area. The study area has thus been defined less in terms of strictly geographical limits (whether natural or social) than to incorporate both well-excavated and well-documented ceramic assemblages, and the area within which most of those ceramics are known to have been produced. There are, however, grounds for proposing a particularly close relationship between *Colonia Eboracensis* and east Yorkshire east of the Derwent, as will be demonstrated below.

The region considered by this thesis is thus bounded by the North Sea to the east, the river Humber to the south, the North York Moors to the north, and the rivers Foss (to the north of York) and Ouse (to the south) on the west. It can be seen to comprise three distinct and extensive tracts of lowland (the eastern Vale of York, the Vale of Pickering, and the lowlands on the north bank of the Humber estuary, comprising the valley of the river Hull and Holderness), separated from one another by two fairly extensive, if comparatively low altitude, areas of limestone upland (the chalk - a variant of limestone - Yorkshire Wolds and the oolitic limestone of the Howardian Hills), and bounded on the north by a third (the Tabular Hills), rising to the markedly higher sandstone outcrops of the North York Moors and Cleveland Hills. The lowland areas themselves comprise glacial till, overlain by peri-glacial sands and gravels and post-glacial alluvium.

## 5.2 Iron Age élites and the Roman impact

### 5.2.1 Social hierarchy in the later pre-Roman Iron Age

The historical narrative of the Roman occupation and subsequent fortunes of this region within the province of *Britannia* has been detailed, discussed and modified by several authors (notably Ramm 1978), and will not be recounted in detail. The recent publication of excavations in the Roman fort at Malton (traditionally, but not necessarily

*Derwentio*) bears out the comments in Chapter 4 regarding the persistence of this framework in structuring - and restricting - the scope of archaeological research and interpretation (Wenham and Heywood 1997, 36-38).

What this section *will* attempt to do is to examine aspects of the archaeology of this region between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD in the light of the model presented in Chapter 3, and to examine how the dynamic proposed there was played out in the specific context of eastern Yorkshire. This, in turn, will provide a context for the evidence of Romano-British ceramic production in the region, presented in Chapter 6.

The clearest evidence for social hierarchy in the LPRIA is provided by burials; inhumations, often within square-ditched barrows, and frequently accompanied by a range of grave-goods including the most celebrated variant, the cart or 'chariot', on the Wolds and in the eastern Vale of York (Stead 1991). These burials are often identified as the 'Arras culture'. Evans (1995, 59) takes issue with the suggestion made by Higham that the east Yorkshire elite represented by the Arras burials exercised hegemony over the northern region, the area subsequently referred to as 'Brigantia'. He argues that the absence of similar distinctive burial rites in what he considers the Brigantian heartland areas (that is the belt of magnesian limestone to the west of the Vale of York), and a lack of continental imports to the supposed 'client' areas, preclude such an interpretation. He acknowledges, however, similarities in some of the ceramic forms of east Yorkshire and the western Vale of York.

The ceramic dimension will be returned to. However, a possibility which might support Higham's case, and is of wider relevance in understanding the LPRIA élites of east Yorkshire, concerns the role of the cart and horse burials of the Arras culture. Rather than assuming the necessity of the 'transplantation' of burial rites to signify hegemony, it might be argued that the vehicles which figure so prominently in Arras burials represent a peripatetic élite which travelled *to* the surplus which it expropriated, rather than having surplus brought *to it* (albeit with the carts possibly having some role in returning particular forms of surplus to the east Yorkshire heartlands). The disappearance of this burial rite might represent the establishment of that same group as a *sedentary* elite in the heart of

Brigantia, or their usurpation/suppression by a different group. In either case, a change in the prevailing *social formation* may be posited in the generations prior to the Roman conquest of the region. Considering the LPRIA burials of east Yorkshire in these terms serves to locate them within specific, concrete strategies and practices of surplus expropriation, an issue which will be returned to in the brief discussion of LPRIA ceramics in Chapter 6 (6.1).

### 5.2.2 York, Brough and Malton in the first and second centuries AD

Roman military occupation of the region commenced with the establishment of the fortress at **York** (*Eburacum*) in AD 71, with the fort at Malton (?*Derventio*) and the probable military supply base at Brough-on-Humber (*Petuaria*) following within the next few years. The conventional model of development in east Yorkshire sees these military foci acting as urban nuclei, with towns having grown organically out of transactions carried out ‘at the fort gate’ in response to army demand. This is precisely the line adopted in the most recent published synthesis of the archaeology of Roman York. Civilian settlement was initially manifest as a *canabae*, immediately outside the Roman fortress (established in AD 71) on the north-eastern bank of the river Ouse. The south-western bank saw little settlement until the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, when at least one substantial stone building (at the Wellington Row site), and a range of timber structures (at the Tanner Row site), were established along formally laid-out streets adjacent to the river (Ottaway 1993, 72-3; 80). These are taken to be the first stirrings of a late-2<sup>nd</sup> and/or early-3<sup>rd</sup> century campaign of construction in stone south-west of the Ouse, which led Ottaway to refer to the settlement at York as ‘a late second-century boom town’ (ibid., 73), the ‘boom’, attributed to military demand stimulating local production (ibid., 81) and long-distance trade (ibid., 84), in turn providing the requisite wealth to finance extensive public and private building in the decades around AD 200. This 3<sup>rd</sup> century *floruit* will receive further consideration below (5.3.1). At this stage it is worth evaluating the evidence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> century ‘incubation’ of the supposed fledgling civilian town.

Firstly, the ‘commercial activities and crafts’ evidenced in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century on the Tanner Row site are clearly and directly linked to the sixth legion (ibid., 81). The

workshop buildings which produced this evidence were constructed of re-used timbers probably obtained from the fortress (idem. 1999, 142); production of a decidedly military character, including tents and weapons, is attested (Ottaway 1993, 81). (Similar, contemporary structures identified at 5 Rougier Street must surely have formed part of the same complex; *ibid.*, 78, fig. 40.1). The period to which the Tanner Row structures belong also witnessed the onset of a major programme of reconstruction of buildings and defences across the river, in the fortress (*ibid.*, 53). This evidence is strongly suggestive of direct, military control and overseeing of production on the south-west bank of the Ouse in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, rather than the first stirrings of a demand-stimulated market economy which facilitated progressive accumulation of wealth through manufacture and commerce, incrementally translated into a comfortable urban lifestyle. [The very substantial stone building from nearby Wellington Row, argued to be contemporary with the Tanner Row workshops, could in fact be dated to the early decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, as the relevant ceramic assemblage precludes close dating (Monaghan 1997, 1110). This would allow the Wellington Row building to be considered all of a piece with the comparable stone construction episode from Tanner Row (Ottaway 1993, 80, fig.43.2), 5 Rougier Street (*ibid.*, 78, fig.40.2), 1-9 Micklegate (*ibid.*, 87-8; fig.61a), and the terracing and building operations witnessed in the Bishophill area (*ibid.*, 89), which receive further discussion below; 5.3.1].

If York did not exist as what can meaningfully be termed a 'town' prior to c. AD 200, what of the supposedly urban settlements in east Yorkshire itself? The two relevant sites are **Brough-on-Humber**, the likely site of *Petuaria Parisiorum*, the civitas capital of the *Parisi*, and the settlement outside the gate of the Roman fort at Malton, with its so-called 'industrial suburb' across the Derwent on the site of modern Norton (Robinson 1978). As an archaeologically testified *settlement*, as distinct from the status possibly (but not necessarily; Wachter 1995, 397) indicated by the dedication inscription for a theatre, Brough-on-Humber displays a marked absence of the characteristics which typify civitas capitals elsewhere in the province. It was, indeed, its atypical characteristics - the early (first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) defensive circuit, lack of a regular street-plan and of typical urban buildings, apparently widespread metal-working, and the absence of stone-built town-houses in its later phases - which both led Wachter to discount the settlement as



a town, and Ramm to dismiss his proposed military alternative with equal conviction (Ramm 1978, 60-61). The best evidence for a civil town on the site (or nearby), in the sense usually recognised, remains the re-used inscription announcing the dedication of a theatre at the township of *Petuaria* in the canton of the *Parisi*, in the period AD140 - 144. The concomitant archaeological remains which would usually be expected are, at present, singularly absent, notwithstanding the increasing evidence for contemporary occupation beyond the walled area (Roskams 1999, 51).

If Brough-on-Humber *was* the *civitas* capital of the *Parisi*, the evidence presently available does little to suggest a thriving civil town in the sense usually understood. Even the later phases of the intramural settlement (which, apart from an area in the south-western corner appears to have been uninhabited by the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) seem to have more in common with those typical of the earlier phases of military *vici*, in terms of building types and manufacturing activities. Wachter's repeated references to the forts of the Saxon shore for (e.g. 1969, 4, 54) appear well-merited, with the fragmentary evidence currently known from Brough betraying clear similarities of layout and function with the more extensively excavated Portchester *Hants* (Cunliffe 1975)<sup>11</sup>. (For a similar site with origins in the period of conquest in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Richborough *Kent* might provide a highly relevant comparison).

If the *civitas* capital of the *Parisi* appears, in fact, to have been a virtual non-starter as a civil town, what of the settlement at **Malton**, and its adjacent 'suburb' beneath modern Norton? Here, timber buildings of the late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries have been excavated in the *vicus* outside the south gate of the fort, apparently enclosed within a rampart and ditch (Wenham and Heywood 1997, 36). Following an apparent period of abandonment of fort and *vicus*, both were re-established in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup>, with new buildings encroaching on the earlier *vicus* rampart. Structures and features such as lightly-constructed wattle and daub buildings, hearths and timber-lined drains (*ibid.*, 8, 9), and artefacts such as weaving combs

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This does not require that Millett's argument in favour of Brough as the *civitas* capital of the *Parisi* (Halkon & Millett 1999, 225) be rejected; rather, with Wachter (1969, 54), that we should acknowledge its importance as a coastal fortification and supply base ahead of its position as *vicus Petuariensis*. Millett himself acknowledges that the site never developed as a major centre of Roman-style town life (Halkon & Millett 1999, 226).

and tablets (*ibid.*, 144-5) and a quern-stone (*ibid.*, 39) provide indications of some of the manufacturing and processing activities which took place there (*ibid.*; Mitchelson 1964). Again, the earlier phases of the Malton *vicus*, up to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, may be interpreted as evidence of production carried out for military needs and under direct military control and surveillance.

In Chapter 3, the creation of urban settlements within the Romano-British landscape was argued as having been central to surplus expropriation through the structures of the Roman state, and to the fostering and consolidation of a 'Romanised' class identity on the part of indigenous elites. Economistic explanations for the major civil towns were rejected, as was the argument that they simply indicate the adoption of one form of status display at the expense of another. Their existence needs to be understood as a necessary precondition for the forging, from existing tribal elites, of a ruling class with allegiance to the Roman state, through which surplus, in the form of taxation, could be appropriated and channelled.

Urban settlement clearly did not flourish north of the Humber before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the first clear evidence for a settlement which may be unambiguously described as a town is provided by York itself in the early years of that century. The corollary of this is that the creation and/or consolidation of a Romanised ruling class in the region, identifying with and acting on behalf of the Roman state, had made little progress up to that point. This argument is supported by the evidence of the east Yorkshire countryside.

### 5.2.3 The east Yorkshire countryside in the first and second centuries AD

If there is little or no evidence for settlements which may be convincingly identified as towns in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the archaeology of rural east Yorkshire betrays a similar failure to adopt Roman culture and institutions. Military sites apart, agriculture, settlement and material culture in the region remained rooted in pre-Roman institutions and forms of expression. Whilst it is possible, for example, that some of the villas identified in east Yorkshire were established as early as the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, where such evidence exists (as at the Wharram Percy and Wharram-le-Street villas; Rahtz *et al* 1986) it is ambiguous, and in almost every case in this region convincing evidence for major episodes of construction

and occupation first appears in the 3rd century (Roskams 1999, 55-7). Equally significantly, excavations on and in the vicinity of the villa sites which have been investigated seem to indicate the persistence of land divisions and landscape organisation originating in the LPRIA, evidence of wide-scale change in this respect not being apparent until after AD 200 (*ibid.*, 57).

A similar pattern can be detected in the ceramics used in the region in this period. This will be considered in more detail below (5.6.1), but it may be noted here that Evans, developing an observation initially made by Rigby of material from the villa at Rudston (Rigby 1980, 94), notes ‘a general slowness in the area to adopt wheel-made ceramics and Romanised forms’, with a predominance of ‘native-style’ forms and fabrics which was to persist until the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Evans 1988, 329-30).

To summarise, in agricultural, settlement and ceramic terms the region remained, prior to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, little changed from the LPRIA. The military undoubtedly drew on local resources and labour, as indicated by the activities evident behind the ramparts at Brough and in the Malton *vicus*. These were probably procured through a combination of traditional obligations enacted through local élites, Roman taxation practices grafted onto these, and direct coercion of labour. There is nothing, however, to suggest the creation of recognisably urban settlements in the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

This situation has usually been attributed to a reluctance amongst the inhabitants of the region to engage in dealings with the wider world; what Evans has termed a ‘social constraint’ (1988, 331), contriving a reluctance to accept and adopt an ‘alien’ material culture. The alternative proposed here is that the initial impact of the military installations at Brough, Malton, York and elsewhere in the region (*cf.* Ramm 1978, 37, fig.13) was not consolidated through the emergence from LPRIA tribal élites of a class identifying its own interests with those of Rome, in contradistinction to those of the wider indigenous society to which they belonged. Thus towns, hot-houses of acculturation and the medium through which tribal elites became consolidated as a ruling class, never got off the ground. The exact reasons for this undoubtedly lay in the LPRIA, and their identification would require

a more detailed consideration of the archaeology of the later centuries BC than is possible here.

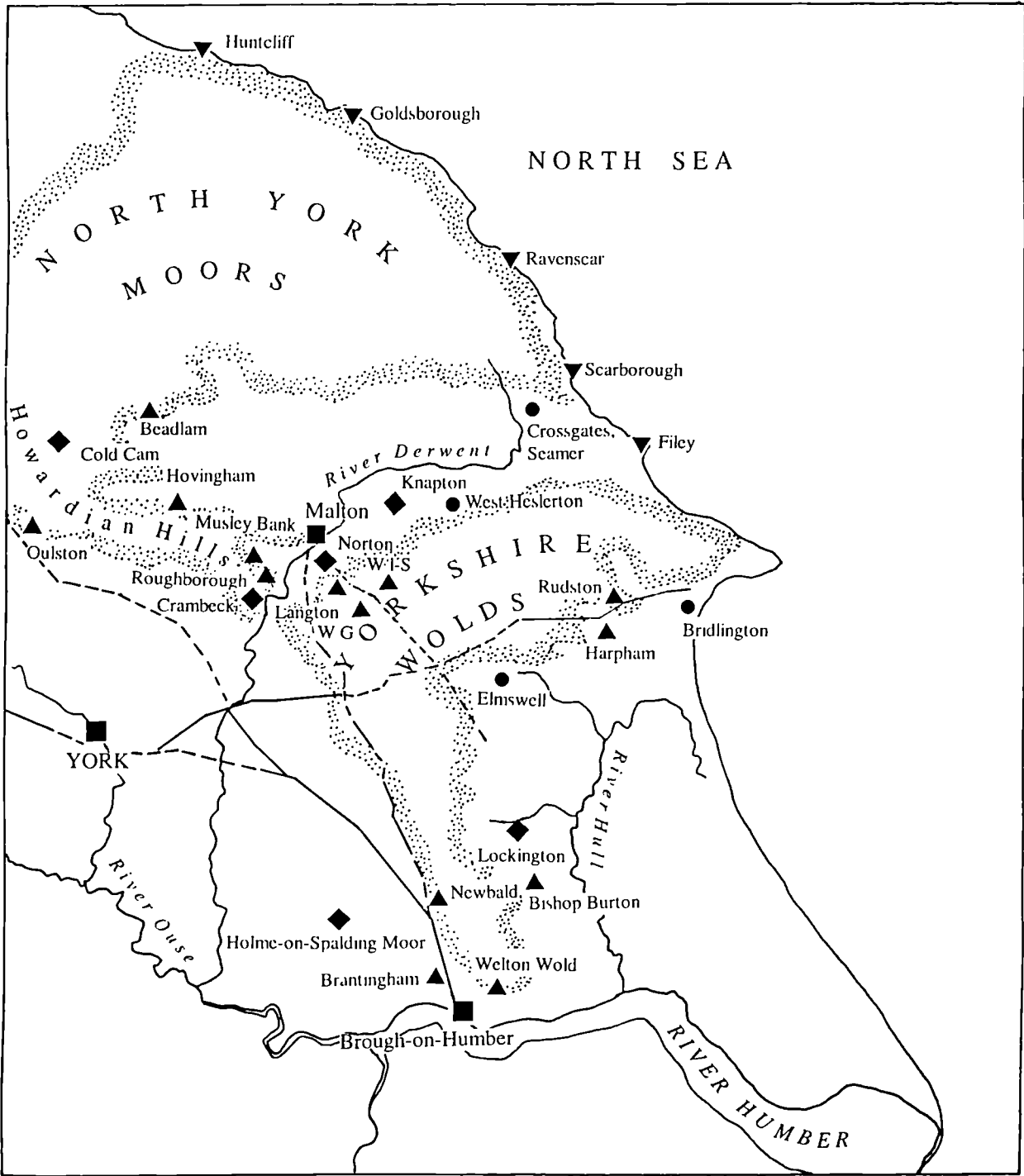
For the best part of a century-and-a-half following the military conquest of the region the Roman state was content with this state of affairs, as indeed it was in respect of the remainder of what is now northern England. During this period much of the resource required by the military in the frontier zone was obtained from the southern part of the province, with ceramics such as BB I and BB II, from Dorset and the Thames estuary respectively, arguably providing proxy evidence for a range of invisible hardware and consumables (cf. 4.4.2, above). The early 3<sup>rd</sup> century saw significant changes, striking for their apparent synchronicity. These will be discussed in the light of the model outlined in Chapter 3.4. Once again, York provides the essential starting point.

### 5.3 Third century developments

#### 5.3.1 Colonia Eboracensis

If Romano-British towns generally, and *civitas* capitals in particular, are seen as crystallisations of a cohesive ruling class identity, and both were absent from eastern Yorkshire between the Roman occupation of the region in AD 71 and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it is difficult to see why it should have arisen spontaneously out of the east Yorkshire landscape after a delay of one-hundred-and-fifty years. *Colonia Eboracensis* thus requires some explanation in these terms.

The granting of *colonia* status, which had certainly been made by AD 237 (Ottaway 1993, 64), is usually attributed to its establishment as the provincial capital of *Britannia Inferior* under Caracalla (r. AD 211-17), close on the heels of the use of the fortress as a base for campaigning in north Britain by Septimius Severus in AD 209-11 (ibid., 62-4). Archaeology testifies to a major campaign, or closely-linked campaigns, of building in stone south-west of the Ouse, which seems to be broadly contemporary with these events. Substantial stone buildings of this date are known from the Queen's Hotel site (Skeldergate), Tanner Row and (it is argued here - see 5.2.2 above, and 7.2.1, below)



- Major settlements
  - Smaller settlements
  - ▲ Villas
  - ◆ Pottery production sites
  - ▼ Coastal signal-stations
  - Roman roads
- W I-S = Wharram le-Street  
W G = Wharram Grange



Fig. 2 : Archaeological sites in eastern Yorkshire referred to in the text.

Wellington Row, and the extensive re-modelling of the river terrace overlooking the Ouse would also seem to belong to this period.

Ottaway acknowledges (although seemingly rather reluctantly), the likely imperial political context for the creation of York as a *colonia*, and recognises the significance of state policy and expenditure in the existence of Romano-British towns, and specifically, in the case of York, of the imperial presence (ibid., 66-7; 95). Two factors, it is argued, required the creation of a settlement recognisable as a town in the early 3rd century. Firstly, as an appropriate and necessary context for the imperial household and retinue. Secondly, and partly in consequence, as a centre for the taking of surplus as taxation, with the population of state bureaucrats required to impose, oversee and administer it - i.e. as the capital of the new province of *Britannia Inferior* created by Severus' successor, Caracalla (Ottaway 1993, 66). The purpose of this may be seen to be the creation of an effective and integrated taxation network for Britain between the Humber and Hadrian's Wall, primarily to support the substantial military infrastructure in the region. In the absence of the development of a regional elite into an urbanised ruling class prior to the 3rd century, York was created as a regional capital to fill the void, and its singular characteristics as a Romano-British town reflect this. (It should be noted that this characterisation of the development of the York *colonia* is directly at odds with that suggested in Millett 1999, 193-4).

It is a commonplace that York is unique amongst the four *coloniae* of Roman Britain in that, in contrast to the 1st century veteran foundations of Colchester, Lincoln and Gloucester, it was founded at a much later date, allegedly on the site of an existing settlement (Wacher 1975, 17, 104). It is also distinctive in being small for a Romano-British town; roughly half the walled area of the other *coloniae*, and amongst the smallest of the chartered towns in the province (Ottaway 1993, 95).

In the north-western provinces in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, *coloniae* were typically communities of military veterans in receipt of land pensions; these were the origins of the three pre-existing Romano-British towns which held this status. Given the circumstances in which the York settlement was created - following Severus' campaign in Caledonia, filling

the state's perceived need for a provincial capital in a town-less region - retiring soldiers following a major military expedition may well have provided many of its inhabitants. The occurrence of the distinctively north African tradition of 'head-pots' in York (again from the first decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; Swan and Monaghan 1993), and indeed of a broader range of vessels in the locally-produced Ebor ware which imitate north African forms from c.AD 200 (Monaghan 1997, 842, 872), may be indicative of the presence of former legionaries, given the apparently strong link between *Legio VI* and distinctively north African ceramic styles and forms (Swan 1994). These, it is argued, are likely to have formed the nucleus of the urban ruling class in the region which subsequently set about establishing and consolidating its control over land in the countryside. The significance of officers of the Sixth in the administration of the north in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries has been emphasised by Birley, who describes *Britannia Inferior* as 'the province of the Sixth Legion' (Birley 1971, 91). This view, it should be noted, is specifically at odds with the views of Millett, who dismisses the idea of York as a veteran colony, and minimises the role of soldiers of Mediterranean origin in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century army, although acknowledging the need to address issues of ethnicity and identity in this context through material culture (1999, 195-6).

York saw no gradual 'economic' development, leading inexorably to town life and its formal recognition as a *colonia*; it was created from scratch as the essential context for imperial presence, in a region of the empire which did not merely witness the 'organic' growth of towns in response to Roman economic impact (a dubious concept in any case), but in which - witness Brough - their deliberate creation as a means of consolidating local élites as a class sufficiently cohesive to act decisively on behalf of the Roman state had conspicuously failed. This situation was remedied in the manner described in the preceding paragraph. The impact of this policy was to be felt across the countryside; from this point on *Civitas Eboracensis* and east Yorkshire were to be closely linked.

There has been considerable, if inconclusive debate over the possible existence and extent of a *territorium* for the *colonia* at York (cf. Wachter 1995, 186-7). In the most recent contribution Roskams has reiterated the absence of villas around York itself, and, noting the *presence* of villas in the *territoria* of other major towns, argues that this requires

explanation in specifically local terms (Roskams 1999, 58). An explanation which would explain this absence, relate it directly to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century foundation of the *colonia*, and account for the apparent synchronicity of the foundation of *Colonia Eboracensis* and changes in the rural landscape of east Yorkshire would see the *territorium* of the fortress - which, unlike the earlier *coloniae* at Colchester, Gloucester and Lincoln remained an active military establishment throughout the life of the civilian settlement - occupying the Vale of York in its immediate vicinity. Land granted to the veterans of the York *colonia*, whether as individuals or as a consolidated area legally bound to the town, could entirely plausibly, in such a situation, have been located east of the river Derwent, given that the resources of the land immediately around the *colonia* were already dedicated to military provisioning.

This scenario has some intriguing implications for the study of supply to the fortress and *colonia* at York, and in the case of ceramics, the most widespread class of material currently available to shed light on this issue, there does indeed appear to be an increasingly marked division between supply to the fortress and that to sites in the area of the *colonia* from the early decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Monaghan 1997, 872). That this situation was resolved, following the apparent demise of the production of 'Ebor ware' both in the immediate environs of the fortress and from sites within a radius of 1-2 kms, with the use in both civilian *and* military settlement of regionally-manufactured grey-wares is of the greatest potential interest, notwithstanding that a positive distinction between the products of Norton and Holme-on-Spalding-Moor and those potentially manufactured closer to *Eburacum* cannot at present be made (*ibid.*, 874). Although Evans has argued that ceramics from Norton and Holme-on-Spalding-Moor were to all intents and purposes absent from York (Evans 1988, 326, 328), thus minimising contact between these localities and the *colonia*, he acknowledged the incompleteness of the evidence available to him (*ibid.*, 324). Monaghan's subsequent work on the entire assemblage from York has demonstrated the presence of grey-burnished ware in quantity from the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, although identification to specific production centres currently remains a hit-and-miss affair (Monaghan 1997, 900-01). Nevertheless, it does seem clear that the east Yorkshire wares did reach the *colonia* in significant quantities, even if they did not dominate assemblages in this period (*ibid.*, 865).



### 5.3.2 Brough-on-Humber and Malton from the third century

How was this reflected in the supposedly 'urban' centres of Brough and Malton?

Wacher concludes that, in the period from c.AD 200 to AD 270, Brough was fortified with a turf and timber rampart, and much new building took place in the interior (1969, 3). He attributes this, and the subsequent fortifications in stone in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, to military agency. Certainly, the buildings within the walled area are markedly utilitarian, with evidence for extensive manufacturing and processing activities throughout this period, and no apparent indication of the construction and habitation of well-appointed residences. Wacher's emphasis on a military over a civilian *milieu* is compelling (and on currently available evidence seems to offer a marked contrast with Malton).

At Malton, new defences, comprising a stone wall, rampart and ditch were constructed in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, enclosing a larger area than had previously been the case. The mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century saw the construction of the first substantial stone-built building (ibid., 13). This appears to have been an isolated structure within the 'recently' expanded *vicus* defences (ibid., 37). Across the river, meanwhile, substantial manufacturing activity appears to have commenced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, notably with the manufacture of ceramics (see 5.6.2, below), but also apparently including iron smelting and even a goldsmith's workshop, with evidence for numerous workshops of indeterminate function (Robinson 1978, 7-8). It is striking that the apparent *floruit* of ceramic production in the Norton suburb, namely the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Evans 1985, 234), coincides with the phase of occupation within the *vicus* for which, notwithstanding the refurbishment of its defences, the least evidence for building construction and settlement exists. Conversely, by the time substantial, well-appointed residential buildings began to be constructed within the *vicus*, in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, ceramic production at Norton was in terminal decline (ibid.). Thus, in the case of Malton / Norton, the standard assumption that commercial exchange and a resultant increase in production, stimulated by a military presence, created a prosperous town (cf. Ramm 1978, 64; Wenham and Heywood 1997, 37) is contradicted by the most basic reading of the evidence.

## 5.4 The later third and fourth centuries

### 5.4.1 The east Yorkshire landscape from the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century

The lack of evidence for the Romanisation of east Yorkshire prior to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century has been attributed to the absence of an emergent ruling class, consolidated within one or more urban enclaves, as seems to have occurred in more southerly areas of the province of *Britiannia*. The increasingly Romanised landscape of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century has been closely linked with the *de novo* foundation of *Colonia Eboracensis*, with the place of a ruling class emergent from indigenous tribal élites taken by veterans from Severus' army who, it is argued, were granted land in east Yorkshire beyond the limit of the *territorium* of the fortress, and thus formed the nucleus of a ruling class which would subsequently impact on, and incorporate elements of, native society. This would, in addition, have served the interests of the state by creating and consolidating a loyal élite, capable of and willing to participate in the administration of the new province, and the increased expropriation of surplus which that entailed.

In answer to the potential criticism that this interpretation rests too heavily on historical narrative - in particular in a study which has gone to some lengths to point out the problems and restrictions inherent in such an approach - it should be emphasised that the Marxist model proposed for the interpretation of archaeological evidence is not *led* or constrained by the narrative sources. Rather, the strength of the model is that, whilst concerned primarily with understanding archaeological data in materialist terms, it can incorporate the historical evidence without being dependent on, or limited in its scope by it. The archaeological evidence cited here can be interpreted in the light of the model put forward in Chapter 3 with nothing more than the most general reference to the known history of Roman Britain. However, the implications of the class-based model, the specific characteristics of the archaeological evidence, and the apparent synchronicity of change in the archaeology of both York and east Yorkshire, permit the suggestion that, in this instance, a causal link with historically-testified events may be proposed.

Whilst the rural archaeology of eastern Yorkshire in the 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries differs substantially from regions further south within the province, in that it appears to have been

effectively devoid of urban centres or indications of Romanisation in the countryside, in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century it bears closer comparison with areas south of the Humber. The use of coinage and wheel-thrown ceramics becomes widespread across a range of settlement types, and evidence for display and consumption in the rural landscape, notably on villa sites, becomes more apparent. A reflex of these developments can also be identified in the urban context at York, and in the rather less clear-cut 'town' at Malton. Before considering these, however, it is necessary to assess the extent of changes in the agrarian landscape in this period, with particular reference to the impact of villas and estate production.

It is clear that large areas of eastern Yorkshire had been subject to land division and boundaries for at least a millennium before the Roman conquest. Surviving earthworks and the evidence of aerial photography bear witness to these phenomena on the upland areas of the Yorkshire Wolds (Stoertz 1997, 64, fig.33), the Howardian Hills and the North York Moors, and developments in multi-spectral imaging are beginning to provide indications that lowland environments were similarly divided from an early date. In no sense, as Hayfield emphasises, did the Romans encounter primeval forest or untamed wilderness in east Yorkshire (Hayfield 1988, 102), and all aspects of the archaeological record are in agreement that, by the later centuries BC, large swathes of the region were intensively cultivated and exploited (e.g. Haselgrove 1984, 13-16).

Three questions are key for this study; to what extent, and how, was the agrarian landscape modified in the Roman period (i.e. which features and types of features recognised from aerial photography are of Romano-British rather than LPRIA date), more specifically, *when*, between the late 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries were these features introduced, and what were they introduced for? At present there is a marked shortage of data to answer these questions adequately, since only in a very few locations has sufficient excavation been carried out to offer close dating of individual components of this landscape. Exhaustive discussion of the basis of the dating of excavated sites would require a chapter to itself. This section will therefore be restricted to brief commentary on a few examples, with conclusions drawn for the broader interpretation of the landscape as a whole.

The current consensus sees the agrarian landscape of Romano-British east Yorkshire as established in all but detail by the LPRIA. This is neatly expressed in the R.C.H.M.(E)'s recent publication of aerial photographic evidence from the Yorkshire Wolds, in which enclosures, 'ladder settlements' and ditched field boundaries identified as 'Iron Age' (Stoertz 1997, 66, fig.34) serve as the base-map on which 'Roman sites' are plotted (ibid., 68, fig.35). The assumption that 'the Romans' constructed villas and other 'Romanised' settlement forms on a pre-existing agrarian pattern like houses and hotels on a Monopoly board has informed most studies of the region (e.g. Hayfield 1988, 121; 'a particularly ancient and conservative landscape'), reflecting an enduring preoccupation with a British landscape (and, by extension, society) rendered inviolable through its antiquity. The origins of this approach in the works of Seebohm and Vinogradoff, and the roots of *their* interest - that is the origins and antiquity of English social, legal and political institutions - has been sketched in Chapter 1. Throughout the R.C.H.M.(E)'s synthesis of the Wolds evidence, 'Iron Age' and 'Romano-British' are rarely systematically distinguished.

In fairness, this lack of distinction between LPRIA and Romano-British landscapes is all but inevitable; given the seeming absence of distinguishing characteristics allowing easy discrimination between features of different periods, and of reliable dating evidence (Stoertz 1997, 53), chronological organisation of this data is all but impossible. However, whilst showing favour to the notion of landscape continuity may have been an appropriate corrective to the attribution of all things rectilinear to Roman impact (cf. Dent's LPRIA dating of single, square-ditched enclosures previously considered to be the farmsteads of retired soldiers; Dent 1983, 41), the assumption of an all but unchanging LPRIA landscape enduring through the first half of the first millennium AD has arguably been taken too far. Dent, for example, has argued for a substantial shift in the emphasis of farming in the region, from stock-rearing associated with the ditched farmsteads of the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC /AD to a significant emphasis on grain production by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (ibid., 42). Recognisable landscape correlates of such changes might be expected.

Few detailed chronologies are available for individual 'ladder settlements' - linear complexes of conjoining ditched enclosures resembling, from the air, the rungs of a ladder - in eastern Yorkshire, and close dating on solely morphological grounds is currently

unattainable. It is not known at present, therefore, whether their numbers grew steadily from origins in the LPRIA, or increased rapidly over a short period (or periods) at some point(s) between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. What IS clear is that, by the late 4th century, and very likely earlier, they were widespread in east Yorkshire.

Apart from the limited number of excavated rural settlement complexes, their attribution to the Roman period in general, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries in particular, is hampered by the preconception of near-universal continuity. An example from the complex of enclosures and settlements in the Wharram parishes will suffice to make the point. Here, in close proximity to at least two villa sites on which maximum artefact deposition (to make no more assumptions than that) occurred in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Rahtz *et al*, 1986), a 'ladder settlement' at Birdsall Brow was identified from aerial photography and fieldwalked. At either end of the 'ladder', at Birdsall High Barn and Wharram Grange crossroads, high densities of surface pottery were interpreted as indicating the existence of farmsteads of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hayfield 1988, 109-11). In both cases the presence of LPRIA calcite-gritted wares was suggested as indicating early origins for these settlements, although in the former case these amounted to a few sherds, and in the latter were a little distance away from the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Between these loci, some 500 metres apart, the enclosures of the 'ladder' appeared devoid of surface pottery, but magnetometer survey suggested the existence of pits and hearths (*ibid.*, 117). Whilst acknowledging the preponderance of the dating evidence to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, and 'their general conformity with other elements of the Roman landscape', the author of this report preferred to speculate, as a primary concern, 'how early might the ladders be?', and concluded an LPRIA date, 'although with evidence of modification during the Roman period' (*ibid*, 118).

To say that an emphasis on stretching the antiquity of Romano-British landscapes often appears to have more to do with a habit of mind than a square-on view of the evidence is not to deny the probability of a significant inheritance from the LPRIA. It does, however, propose that the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD saw far greater transformation than is currently recognised, that Birdsall Brow and many other enclosures like it, on the Wolds and elsewhere, can be seen as having a *direct* and *contemporary* relationship with the villa

landscape of this period, and that the pattern identified by Hayfield, of trackways and ladder settlements in valleys and on slopes, enclosing areas of wold top which betray evidence of contemporary manuring, are the material traces of the creation of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century villa estates. The 'ladder' enclosures, with their hearths and pits, offer a probable context for the direct control and overseeing of manufacturing activity by a landowning ruling class, as proposed in 3.6.2. Whilst the actual balance of LPRIA legacy and the late Roman imposition of a 'feudal' mode of production remains an issue to be argued out with access to adequate data, the working model taken forward in this study lays heavy emphasis on the latter, and proceeds in the belief that the remarkable picture of trackways, enclosures and settlements provided by the R.C.H.M.(E) survey (Stoertz 1997, 66, fig.34) is in large part an artefact of that period.

Having made a case for the identification of an extensive villa landscape late Roman east Yorkshire, what of the villas themselves in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries? Although long-regarded as the most northerly outpost within Britain of Romanised society, the concentration of such sites within the region is usually regarded as being comparatively sparse. Whether this characterisation is strictly accurate is, however, increasingly being thrown into doubt, since the known sites prior to 1978 (the date of publication of the fourth edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain) are increasingly being augmented by new discoveries, currently almost on an annual basis (e.g. the Wharram villas, Rahtz *et al.* 1986; West Lilling, nr. Sheriff Hutton, N.F.Pearson *pers.comm.* 1999; Blansby Park, nr. Pickering, P.A.Rahtz, *pers.comm* 2000). The received view may therefore be erroneous, or at least an oversimplification.

Roskams (1999, 55) has noted that, in accordance with a pattern which recurs across the country (Millett 1990, 92), east Yorkshire villas cluster around towns, or rather around settlements which have conventionally been termed 'urban'. The exception to this, as it turns out, is York itself, which has here been argued as the only settlement within the study area which can be accurately described in this fashion. A possible reason for this has been suggested in 5.3.1. The clusters which *are* apparent concentrate around Malton, Brough-on-Humber and what is assumed to have been a substantial settlement in the vicinity of

Bridlington, suggested by the orientation of the Roman road network of Roman roads in that area as well as the villa cluster itself (Ramm 1978, 68, 101).

It is not certain whether these follow the chronological trend identified by Millett in *civitates* further south, where villa size decreases, as distance from an urban centre increases, over time. In few instances have sites seen sufficient exploration to allow accurate size estimates to be made, but it might perhaps be anticipated that, given the singular circumstances of east Yorkshire, and the apparently late advent of villas in the region, that such a model may not be applicable. Having said that, the model proposed in Chapter 3, wherein villas are seen primarily not as a means of individualised social expression, but as nodal points in a network of surplus expropriation, might in itself imply major residences close to towns (conceived here as arenas for the consolidation of class identity) with lesser establishments extending that network deeper into the hinterland, regardless of the timescale over which it was created.

The question of the *definition* of the term ‘villa’ has been a staple of Romano-British studies for many years, with issues such as contemporary meaning of the Latin word, and their roles as farms and as residences, being much discussed. Millett adopts a pragmatic archaeological usage, which sensibly marginalises the more strictly semantic elements of the debate, and places emphasis on the ‘Romanised’ qualities, in structural and artefactual terms, of villa sites (1990, 92). The model of villa development favoured here, in which villa-type settlements and buildings are seen not as individual, autonomous, market-sensitive farming units, but primarily as *networks* of sites linked through institutions of landownership, obligation and patronage, would anticipate differences in function and residential opulence as a given, considering the hierarchical nature of late Romano-British society, and not attribute this to differences in ‘prosperity’ or ‘economic success’ in the terms usually employed when discussing the late Roman rural landscape. Definition within such a model is comparatively unproblematic, since it accepts that only by comparing functions, the balance of evidence for production and consumption, and the specific *nature* of production, processing and consumption carried out at groups of sites can their true role in the landscape, individually and collectively, be understood. The term ‘villa’ is a useful and probably indispensable shorthand term which is readily understood in a generic sense,

but like many such it conceals more than it exposes in more detailed analyses, and, as a term, should certainly not become the object of study itself.

Villas in all three of the clusters referred to above have been the subject of excavation. Most are known from the vicinity of Malton; two from Langton (Corder and Kirk 1930) and two from the Wharram Parishes (Percy and le-Street; Rahtz *et al* 1986) to the south-west of the settlement, and one at Beadlam to the north-east (Neal 1996). Also to the north-east of Malton, on and in the lee of the Howardian Hills, certain or probable villa buildings were uncovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at Hovingham, Oulston, Roughborough and Musley Bank (Kitson-Clark 1935, 89; Ramm 1978, 87-8). These will be considered in the discussion of the Crambeck pottery industry.

The Brough group comprises known villa sites at Brantingham, Newbald and North Cave, all on or close to the Roman road to York; these are significant in consideration of ceramic production in the vicinity of Holme-on-Spalding Moor. Virtually due east of Brough lies the extensively excavated site on Welton Wold (Mackey, 1998), with a little known probable villa at Bishop Burton identified in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Ramm 1978, 99) some 10 kms due north of Welton, again potentially significant in discussion of late Roman pottery manufacture, in this case with reference to the kiln site at Lockington. Ten kilometres to the west of Bridlington, Rudston has been the subject of quite extensive excavations in the 1930s and 1960s (Stead 1980, 1), whilst less systematic work has been carried out on the villa site at Harpham, less than two kilometres to the south of the latter site (Mellor 1952).

Three aspects of these sites are of especial interest for the understanding of 4<sup>th</sup> century developments; evidence for the storage and processing of produce, and of manufacturing activities, within the villa complex and its environs; evidence for conspicuous consumption and display, particularly in structural terms; and, where these two characteristics intriguingly converge, indications of later-4<sup>th</sup> century adaptation of residential rooms for manufacturing and processing activities. Each of the clusters identified above will be considered in these terms (the last category being addressed in the appropriate context of the final chapter; 8.3.1).



Although the origins and earlier phases of most of the east Yorkshire villas are not well understood, largely due to the limited extent of excavations, certain common characteristics may be recognised. In the majority of known cases, villa buildings were established within pre-existing enclosures or networks of enclosures (Brantingham, Dent 1988, 98; Langton, Ramm 1978, 80; Rudston, Stead 1980, 35; Welton Wold, Mackey 1998, 26). Geophysical survey at Beadlam, where excavation was largely restricted to the latest phase of structural remains, seems to indicate a similar relationship with earlier ditched enclosures (Neal 1996, 7, fig.6). At Welton the first 'villa' building dates to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, a currently a uniquely early instance in the region. The excavator notes, however, its atypical form and subsequent structural history, its close association with extensive chalk quarrying, and its context in the consolidation of the Roman military advance in the north (Mackey 1998, 26). Rather than envisage this as a villa *per se*, in the sense of a farm-cum-elite residence, it might be better seen as the requisitioning of resources and labour for the creation of military and/or civilian infrastructure. The probable impact and role of quarrying in the imposition of new obligations and social relationships in the early decades of Roman rule have been alluded to previously (3.5.3); labour could be and was commandeered in the hinterland as in the *vicus* or, most likely in this case, in the supply base at Brough.

Elsewhere, the earlier structural phases of villa complexes appear to have been established from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries; for the reasons discussed in the previous sections, the later of these date-spans is generally favoured here. They appear to have been markedly functional, largely unelaborated, and to have probably been associated with the storage of produce or the penning or stabling of livestock (Beadlam, Neal 1996, 13; Langton, Ramm 1978, 83, fig.31; Rudston, Stead 1980, 9, 34). From the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century two related phenomena may be observed; firstly, and most obviously, the creation of residential buildings with a notable standard of opulence, typically including patterned mosaic pavements, hypocausted rooms and bath-house complexes, and painted wall plaster (Beadlam, Neal 1996, 14-16, 25-32; Bishop Burton, Ramm 1978, 99; Brantingham, Liversedge et al 1973, 87; Harpham, Mellor 1952, 118; Hovingham, Kitson Clark 1935, 89; Langton, Ramm 1978, 83; Musley Bank, Kitson Clark 1935, 111; Newbald, Roskams 1999, 57; Oulston, Roughborough, Kitson Clark 1935, 119, 89). In some instances these

involve the adaptation or re-construction of earlier, more utilitarian structures. A contemporary development, recognisable in cases where sufficiently detailed excavation has permitted, is the creation, in association with these residential complexes, of structures and 'plant' associated with a range of manufacturing and processing activities (Beadlam - two hoards of iron tools, rotary quernstones, possible milling workshop and ?threshing floor in east range, Neal 1996, 18, 42-44; Harpham - 'workshop' building, Mellor op cit.; Langton - barn, byre, threshing floor, ?pigeon-loft, corn-drying ovens [Ramm 1978, 83, fig.32], iron smelting and smithing, bronze and pewter-casting [Goodall 1972, 32-6]; Rudston - workshop with 15 ovens/hearths, four other utilitarian buildings of uncertain function, flat and beehive querns, weaving equipment and bronze-casting mould fragments, Stead 1980, 12-18, 105, 107, 121).

As in other respects, Welton Wold appears atypical in this context. According to the excavator, the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century saw a major re-organisation, during which a series of newly-defined ditched enclosures contain indicators of working areas of undefined type, crop-drying (14 crop-drying ovens attributed to this phase) with an emphasis on barley, compared to a previously heavy emphasis on wheat, two aisled barns, and sunken-featured buildings associated with 'T-flued' crop driers. He suggests that the evidence for the casual disposal of the dead indicates the employment of slave labour, and notes that, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there is a marked absence of any of the indicators of residential opulence recognisable at other villa sites in the region (Mackey 1998, 28-31; 26).

Returning to those examples indicating a level of residential opulence, and specifically to mosaic pavements, two points are worth making. Firstly, it has been proposed that mosaics from some east Yorkshire villas, and from sites south of the Humber, in Lincolnshire, are sufficiently similar in design and execution to indicate the existence of a 'Petuarian school' of mosaicists, focused, as the name suggests, on Brough-on-Humber (Smith 1969, 102-7). This proposition has been called into question by Neal (1981, 20), who would prefer itinerant craftsmen, noting in passing the highly pertinent fact that, to date, Brough itself has yielded no evidence for mosaics, and it is true that the inhabitants appear to have spent more time engaged in iron-working than enjoying a life of leisure. Ottaway has pointed out links between 4<sup>th</sup> century mosaics in east Yorkshire, at

Aldborough in the civitas of the Brigantes, and in York itself, supported by Neal's study (Ottaway 1993, 103; Neal 1981, 39-40). Given the role proposed for York (as a genuine and archaeologically-testified Roman town in contrast to *Petuaria*) in the transformation of the east Yorkshire countryside, the suggestion that York itself might be a more likely centre for a school of mosaicists is not without significance.

Secondly, and in similar vein, the charioteer on the Rudston mosaic is a motif found only rarely on Roman pavements, and it may not be coincidental in the light of the discussion above (5.3.1) that, apart from Trier (an imperial capital; Millett 1990, 130), the one parallel cited in the discussion of this mosaic is from Dougga in Tunisia, although in the report on this mosaic any potential significance of this parallel is dismissed (Smith 1980, 132).

Following the model detailed in Chapter 3, these developments are not seen as evidence of a generalised 'prosperity', resulting from the introduction of marketised exchange and increased production in response to the demand this created. That the east Yorkshire countryside *did* witness increased agrarian and manufacturing production is not in doubt, nor that exchange was mediated by the use of coinage to a markedly increased extent. The basic structures and circumstances responsible for this, however, were the increased level of direct control over agrarian production by a ruling class which, in this region, appears only to have established and consolidated its position from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This, it has been argued, is evident in the creation of a villa landscape in which production was increasingly overseen and controlled by that ruling class and its agents. The distinctive traits of this in east Yorkshire landscape include the division of the landscape into blocks defined by routeways and ladder settlements (notwithstanding that elements, at least, of these settlement patterns had their origins in the LPRIA), the control of livestock, storage of agricultural surplus and (probable) overseeing of manufacturing activities within enclosures at those settlements, and the concentration of key aspects of production and processing at villa sites themselves. By the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century the occupants of most of these villas were certainly in command of sufficient surplus to create for themselves well-appointed and thoroughly Romanised residences. That they were able to do so reflected their success in imposing and extending proprietorial rights over land and people, thus

endowing them with direct control of material resources and, crucially, labour. The creation of 'small towns' - insofar as these are identifiable in the region - and the increased use of coinage in a wider range of contexts and circumstances were the outcome, not the progenitors, of these changes.

As their direct control of the rural population and the land on which it lived increased, the late Roman aristocracy in east Yorkshire gained increasing potential to sustain itself from its own landholdings, by extracting more surplus labour and production from its estates. In the particular case of this region, however, there are reasons for arguing that direct connections and involvement with the state bureaucracy, notably the army, remained a strong and arguably predominant factor in the organisation of production until at least the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as will be presented in detail below (6.3). Nevertheless, the relationship between state institutions, local aristocracies and direct producers was markedly different to what it had been prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This is implicit in much of what has been written above, but is emphasised by consideration of the military and 'urban' sites (insofar as the latter term is applicable at all) in the region.

#### 5.4.2 Malton in the fourth century

In the Malton *vicus*, the newly constructed buildings of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century were clearly residential in character, and included a substantial 'town house' with mosaic floor and elaborately sculpted decoration<sup>12</sup>, buildings of finely-cut ashlar masonry (Mitchelson 1964, pls XII, XX), and a further building incorporating a hypocausted room (Wenham and Heywood 1997, 23). The suite of artefacts from these phases displays a marked emphasis towards items associated with bodily adornment, including a number of toilet implements (*ibid.*, 134-40). At no point, it appears, did settlement within the *vicus* defences fill the area enclosed by them; the structures all appear to have clustered along the streets which bifurcate outside the south-eastern gate of the fort (*ibid.*, 37).

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The Winged Victory relief decorating the door lintel of the 'Town House' is a highly suggestive use of a symbol with obviously military associations in the context of a 'civilian' residence; Mitchelson 1964, pl.IX, pl.XVI

It is striking to correlate these developments with those in the adjacent fort, and in the 'industrial suburb' across the Derwent, modern Norton. The limited investigations *within* the fort (as distinct from on its defences) seem to suggest that in the early-mid 4<sup>th</sup> century stone-built structures (including an apsidal building) similar to those in the *vicus* were built. A cemetery of at least one adult and 23 infants was also situated within the fort in this period (Corder 1930, 28-31). In short, what is known of the sequence of occupation and functions carried out within the fort in the 4<sup>th</sup> century corresponds closely to that within the *vicus*, to the extent that we may wish to question whether, in this period, there was any meaningful distinction between them in terms of 'fort' and 'civil settlement', 'military' and 'civilian'.

What is striking about it is how closely the structures and activities evidenced in the *vicus* (which, in turn, appear directly comparable to those in the fort itself) approximate the rural villas, with residential suite (Mitchelson 1964, 213-23), possibly a bath-house (Wenham and Heywood 1997, 23, 38) and associated workshop (Mitchelson 1964, 223-7). It is notable that the *vicus* buildings never appear to have extended across the whole of the enclosed / fortified area (and indeed seem to have been clustered around the streets leading into the fort gate; Wenham and Heywood 1997, 37). Given the indications of enclosing walls around the villa complexes at Beadlam (Neal 1996, 4, fig.4), Langton (Ramm 1978, 85, fig.32) and Rudston (Stead 1980, 25), it is pertinent to ask how the settlement at Malton actually differed from these villas in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The answer would seem to be 'little, if at all'; this is the key to the settlement's true location within the wider agrarian and social landscape.

#### 5.4.3 York in the fourth century

Comparable evidence is recognisable in York. In the civilian settlement, south-west of the Ouse, three town-houses on the terrace overlooking the river have been partially excavated, two from within the walled area (on the sites of the churches of St Mary Bishophill Junior and Senior) and one from without (Clementhorpe). Others are known from within the *colonia* through the discovery of their mosaic pavements (Ottaway 1993, 104). Dating for much of the apparently extensive building complex identified beneath Bishophill Senior and adjacent land (Ramm 1976, 40, fig.3; Carver *et al* 1978, 33, fig.16)

is uncertain due to extensive robbing and subsequent disturbance (*ibid.*, 38). It would, however, seem legitimate, on the basis of Ramm's excavation, to attribute the latest, most extensive and elaborate structures, which included a bath-house and rooms with elaborately painted wall-plaster (*ibid.*, 50, 44-6), to the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Ramm 1976, 42-44). The origin of the Clementhorpe building, interpreted by the excavator as a possible villa (Brinklow *et al* 1986, 74) appears to have been in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but with substantial modifications, including the creation of an apsidal room and the laying of mosaic pavements in the early 4<sup>th</sup> (*ibid.*, 71).

Across the river, and to the south-east of the fortress, a further probable town-house, with a 4<sup>th</sup> century mosaic floor, has been excavated (*ibid.*, 40-42). This also seems likely to have been a substantial stone building, rather than the less elaborate timber structure proposed by J.R. Magilton, the excavator (*ibid.*, 43), this misinterpretation having occurred due to the misidentification of the robbing trench for the stone wall as a later, 'clay-filled ditch' (*ibid.*, fig. 24; pl.VII). The fact that the clay fill of this 'ditch' was indistinguishable from the material which formed the rampart for the medieval city wall in fact suggests that the building, or at least its lower courses, survived as a 'shell' until robbed shortly before the construction of the rampart, presumably in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In the heart of the fortress itself, Roskams has noted that, in the earlier 4<sup>th</sup> century ('Phase Stone 3'; Phillips and Heywood 1995, 112-14), the centurion's quarter in Barrack 2 was altered 'to resemble a villa' (Roskams 1996, 269).

Put simply, what is striking about 4<sup>th</sup> century occupation at Malton and York - both settlements considered to have had a military / civilian divide - is the similarity between 'military' and 'civilian' areas at the two sites, and the similarity of *all* of these to the contemporary villas described in this section. Brough-on-Humber stands apart, in that it contrasts strikingly with all of them, in the utilitarian and apparently industrial character of its buildings; little if any change of use, it would seem, from earlier centuries. Wachter's specific comparison of the site in this phase with the contemporary Saxon Shore fort at Burgh Castle seems especially well-chosen (Wacher 1969, 4).

The trend represented by all of these instances of 4<sup>th</sup> century élite residences seems clear; the distinction between town and country, military and civilian, was becoming less

and less clear-cut. As Romanised élites exercised ever-increasing control over land and labour in the countryside, and began to obtain a significant proportion of their wealth from their private landholdings, as distinct from the salaries provided by offices of state, functional and social differences diminished as they consolidated their position as a ruling class. As commented on in a broader British context in Chapter 3, towns and military sites began more and more to take on the appearance of clusters of villas, their inhabitants - in many instances probably the same people - able to expropriate surplus in large quantities, and to determine the precise form in which it was delivered, through the level of control they were able to exercise over direct producers through landownership, their positions in the apparatus of tax-gathering, and a range of personal obligations which these fundamental instruments of power enabled them to impose and exact.

Two points must be emphasised at this juncture. Firstly, throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> century in eastern Yorkshire the tensions between private wealth, taxation and public office were maintained in equilibrium. Secondly, although there is clear evidence for the imposition of the 'feudal mode' of production across the landscape in this region in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (as rehearsed above), this is not to suggest that such extension of direct, personal control over land and labour was all-encompassing or uniformly distributed. There are, indeed, significant aspects of the archaeology of the later 4<sup>th</sup> century in the region which all but insist that this was not the case. These issues are addressed most effectively through consideration of the ceramic evidence, and thus also provide the opportunity for a more detailed consideration of the material from eastern Yorkshire which forms the heart of this thesis. Before turning to the ceramics, however, a brief review of previous approaches to the 5<sup>th</sup> century in eastern Yorkshire is necessary.

### 5.5 Interpreting the fifth century

The first synthetic overview of archaeological evidence for the 5<sup>th</sup> century in east Yorkshire was published in 1974 (Faull, 1974). Prior to this, discussion had by-and-large been restricted to the (usually ephemeral) latest phases of villa sites, the fort and *vicus* at Malton, and, perhaps above all, the signal stations of the east Yorkshire coast.

The latter sites require a brief introduction here; although they have so far been mentioned only in passing, as they have not been considered central to the issues under discussion, they *do* occupy a central place in the historiography (and, one might almost say, *mythology*) of late- and post-Roman east Yorkshire; not least, in the case of this thesis, for their key role in the identification and classification of late 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted wares, an issue which will be further discussed in Chapter 6. The sites have a particular resonance within an approach based on received historical narrative, as representing Roman Britain's final attempt to resist barbarian incursion, and by the same token the beginnings of the English settlement which would forge the society which took its place. The earliest evidence for their existence was discovered in 1774, when a dedication inscription - considered to be the latest Roman inscription known from Britain, dating perhaps to AD 395 or even later, and referring to *turrem et castrum*, a tower and fort - was discovered at Ravenscar, during the excavation of the foundations of a hotel (Ottaway 1995, 8; Goodchild 1952, 185; *RIB* 721: Collingwood & Wright 1965, 242). The signal-station on Carr Naze, Filey, was recognised, due to the effects of coastal erosion, in the early nineteenth century, and limited excavations carried out in 1857 (Ottaway 1995, 8). Archaeological (as distinct from epigraphic) evidence for a similar site was found at Huntcliff, near Saltburn in the 1860s, and excavation in 1911-12 recovered the plan of the site, as well as a large assemblage of the distinctive calcite-gritted pottery which was to take its name (Hornsby and Stanton 1912, 215). The recognition that these sites had formed part of a chain of installations along the coast of east Yorkshire led to a concerted campaign, by William Hornsby and John Laverick, to locate more sites, resulting in the discovery of Goldsborough (1918), and the recognition of a further site on Castle Hill, Scarborough (1919). Both of these sites were the subject of extensive excavations, Goldsborough in 1918, and Scarborough between 1921 and 1927 (Hornsby and Laverick 1932; Collingwood 1931).

The coin lists from all of these sites appeared to indicate occupation in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (Hornsby and Laverick 1932, 215), and as fortifications they were thus confidently ascribed to a reorganisation of military provision in the north by Count Theodosius, following the *barbarica conspiratio* of AD 367 (e.g. Collingwood 1931, 49). Each appeared to have evidence of only one phase of occupation (assumed to be comparatively short). Furthermore, Goldsborough and Huntcliff produced evidence which seemingly



testified to a dramatic and violent end. Human skulls were found in the wells at both sites (Hornsby and Laverick 1932, 218) and, within the central tower at Goldsborough, the skeletons of two men and a large dog were excavated, apparently locked together where they fell, engaged in a fatal struggle in a burning building - a cameo which the excavator's description of 'sensational' in no way overstates (ibid., 210; Ottaway 1995, 19). Its interpretation as the outcome of a Saxon attack on the Roman garrison was, of course, a formality.

The signal-stations thus set the scene for the interpretation and understanding of the archaeology of 5<sup>th</sup> century east Yorkshire for the following fifty years; excavators laid emphasis on 'late' coin lists, including issues of Theodosius (AD 388-402), Arcadius (395-408) and Honorius (395-423), as indicating continued 'prosperity' into the fifth century, and looked to the archaeology for evidence of subsequent barbarian sack of Romano-British villas and settlements, or of defensive countermeasures. The coin list from Corder's excavations at Langton (Mattingly 1932), like those from the signal-stations, extended into the final phase of copper alloy coin importation, as did, as was subsequently to be discovered, that at Beadlam (Curnow 1996; Barclay 1996, 68). A coin hoard of 44 silver *siliquae*, discovered from close by the site of the Hovingham villa, contained four issues of Arcadius and nine of Honorius (Burnett 1984). In Malton itself, however, such late coins are extremely scarce if not entirely absent (Mitchelson 1964, 261; Casey 1997, 48), a pattern apparently followed by the excavated villas to the south and east; the Rudston coin list includes no issues later than AD 378 (Curnow 1980), and it has been suggested that the occupation of the Brantingham villa ceased at the same time as the settlement at Brough-on-Humber, that is c.AD 370 (Ramm 1978, 136; Wachter 1969, 4). Whilst no published coin list is currently available from Welton Wold, the excavator argues that the intensity of occupation and activity at the site declined from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, although continuing until the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup>. (Mackey 1998, 31). The crucial point that absence of coins in no way demonstrates absence of occupation is noted, and will be returned to.

Beyond the signal-stations, evidence for barbarian attack and Romano-British defence from settlement sites in the region was restricted to the Malton *vicus*, where large rampart-and-ditched defences were originally interpreted as hastily-constructed defences associated with the events of AD 367 (Mitchelson 1964, 237), subsequently re-interpreted

as being of 5<sup>th</sup> century or later date (Wenham and Heywood 1997, 38). At nearby Langton, Corder's assertion that the villa was attacked in the course of the *barbarica conspiratio* rested more on an assumption of its probability, in the alleged historical circumstances, than on the archaeological evidence (Evans 1984, 44). Until the case for the destructive effect of Anglo-Saxon raids was recently resurrected in the context of Welton Wold (Mackey 1998, 34), the fire-and-slaughter picture originally suggested by the evidence from the signal-stations appeared markedly unsupported by evidence from the rest of the region.

It was against this background, in which a model of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries created in the decade around the First World War (a period, it is worth remembering, in which the very *site* of one of the signal-stations, Scarborough, came under direct attack from German raiders; in this case the guns of the German High Seas Fleet) appeared to have received little support from subsequent archaeological research, that Faull's 1974 overview was produced. It thus *minimised* (whilst not denying) the evidence for violent attacks on the signal-stations (Faull 1974, 20), emphasised the apparent co-location of late Roman and early Anglian settlements at sites such as Elmswell and Crossgates, Seamer (*ibid.*, 12-13, 17), and argued for at least limited use of a common material culture by ethnically distinct Romano-British and Anglian communities (*ibid.*), as well as for a 'fusion' of their building traditions at the conventionally 'Anglian' site at Wykeham (*ibid.*, 16). The context for such co-existence, and the comparatively sparse evidence for Germanic incursion into east Yorkshire in the 5th century, was presented as the acculturation of groups of *laeti* into the indigenous population in the later 4th and 5th centuries (*ibid.*, 21-2), with the defence of the region to the south and east of the Wolds entrusted to the independent authority of *foederati*, as represented by the earliest phases of the great cremation cemetery at Sancton (*ibid.*, 22). Faull's synthesis thus drew heavily on the identification of groups of barbarians settled by formal treaty, initially proposed in an archaeological context in Britain by Hawkes and Dunning (1961), and developed in Myres' 'phase of controlled migration and settlement' (Myres 1969, 62-83). These arguments, in turn, rely heavily on the application of a practice documented in continental Europe to the history of 5th century Britain as described by Gildas (Dickinson 1977, 406-7; *idem.* 1978, 332-5).

Apart from taking the heat out of 5<sup>th</sup> century east Yorkshire by arguing for a politically organised and largely peaceful Germanic settlement, Faull also ushered in two interpretative tenets which were, successively, to loom large in subsequent studies; firstly, the autonomous operation of a market-based system of production and wealth accumulation (Faull 1974, 6, 22), and secondly the role of ritual in offering an everyday, morally acceptable and indigenous explanation of practices which an earlier generation had considered the epitome of Germanic barbarism (*ibid.*, 19), in this case the presence, in large numbers, of dismembered human bodies in the wells at Goldsborough and Huntcliff.

The culture-historical essentials of Faull's approach were followed closely, if empirically expanded upon, by Eagles' two-volume survey and gazetteer of the late Roman and early Anglian archaeology of east Yorkshire and north Lincolnshire (Eagles, 1979). In the ten years following Faull's survey, however, it was to be the allegedly commercial nature of late Romano-British society which would exert the greatest influence in interpreting the archaeology of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Evans' wholehearted adoption of the market model as a baseline for the interpretation of ceramic assemblages has already been referred to, and the social and economic background to its influence traced in Chapters 1 and 2. This was largely a result of the prevailing intellectual paradigm for the study of Roman Britain, particularly from the ceramic viewpoint, but also in part reflected the seeming failure of archaeologists to add to the slender corpus of evidence widely acknowledged to be indisputably 5<sup>th</sup> century, marshalled by Faull and Eagles (*cf.* Faull 1984, 49). The indications of a sudden and dramatic collapse of production and commerce early in the 5<sup>th</sup> century seemed indisputable; explanation in terms of a crisis of demand, ultimately engendered by social and political instability, readily fitted the bill, and the period began to be written more explicitly in these terms (*e.g.* Evans, 1983).

In the 1990s, however, the validity of such forms of explanation have been called increasingly into question, largely as the result (albeit long-delayed in Romano-British studies) of developments in archaeological theory which draw on structural anthropology (*e.g.* Hodder, 1982) and post-colonial perspectives (*cf.* Webster and Cooper, 1996), which articulate a critique of market-based, economic approaches as, on the one hand, de-contextualised, and on the other as the legacy of a view of the relationship between commerce, profit and 'civilisation' closely associated with the functioning of overseas

colonies in Britain's global, imperial economy of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These critiques have arguably not gone far enough in that, in the final analysis, they still all too often resort to the assumption of a disembedded market economy, albeit in this instance as the villain of the piece, serving to marginalise, disenfranchise, and disrupt those communities incorporated, often against their will, within it. (Cooper 1996 and Matthews 1997 are of particular relevance here, in that they are directly concerned with the production and 'marketing' of Romano-British pottery). By targeting *imperialism*, a concept which is acknowledged in a modern context to be closely bound up with capitalism (cf. Webster 1996, 2-4; Freeman 1996), rather than capitalism *itself*, the critique in fact presents itself as almost a mirror image of the orthodox view of the Romano-British economy; destructive and divisive rather than progressive and creative, morally questionable rather than the basis of a model society, but still recognisably the same beast invoked by the previous generation of scholars whose assumptions the post-colonial critique has called into question.

Whatever the shortcomings and future directions of these developments in critique, what they *did* achieve was to allow the market-based orthodoxy of late-4<sup>th</sup> century society and ceramics in east Yorkshire to be subjected to scrutiny. The present writer has sought to draw attention to shortcomings, both logical and empirical, in the interpretation of the 5<sup>th</sup> century archaeological chronology in the region, to qualify definitions of 'ethnicity' and their application to the available material culture, and to emphasise the need to understand the social and material context of ceramic production before interpreting it wholesale according to a market-based controlling model in a situation where the close-dating of assemblages ceases to be practicable (Whyman 1993, 64, 67). One of these points, that relating to ethnicity, has been developed and expanded with reference to early 'Anglian' burials in the region (Lucy, 1998, 105). Recent treatments of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in east Yorkshire have, however, returned to some degree to the picture presented by Faull in 1974. The continuation in production of Crambeck and Huntcliff wares into the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, *contra* Evans, has been proposed (Loveluck 1996, 28; 1999, 230), with renewed emphasis on the late coin lists from several villa sites in the region (*ibid.*, 229), set against the arrival of migrants from the north German littoral in substantial numbers (*ibid.*, 230, 233). Significant 'economic continuity' between the two societies and cultures is posited, for example in the case of the Driffield area, where evidence for large-scale iron-

working on the site at Elmswell in the late Roman period is mirrored in the preponderance of iron artefacts in Anglian graves of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries in the district, and suggested as indicating continuing control of iron production by local élites, whatever their ethnic origin (idem. 1996, 29, 45). More generally, the capacity of the agrarian economy is regarded as continuous from the late Roman period through the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (idem. 1999, 236).

Currently, then, three distinct frameworks for the interpretation of 5<sup>th</sup> century east Yorkshire may be discerned, each exerting varying degrees of influence with different archaeological constituencies and audiences. The image of a late Romano-British society afflicted and ultimately toppled by the depredations of barbarian raiders in the later 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century is at present rarely invoked, although it still has its adherents (e.g. Mackey 1998, 34). Economistic, market-based models for a breakdown of production and consequent social fragmentation are widely adhered to, notably in artefact studies and particularly in the key area of ceramics (cf. Evans 2000, 41). The most recent syntheses, by Loveluck, present a picture of a greater degree of 'economic' continuity from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century than is entertained by either of these, whilst acknowledging the role of a substantial settlement from across the North Sea in transforming the expression of power, status and identity, in both linguistic and material terms (Loveluck 1996, 46; 1999, 235-6). The model for social change in 5<sup>th</sup> century Yorkshire favoured here incorporates elements of this synthesis, but is primarily concerned to draw out the implications of the model of class-based relations of production presented in Chapter 3, and applied to the archaeology of east Yorkshire in the 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD in the preceding sections of this one. The regional implications of this model are developed in Chapter 8. Firstly, however, the calcite-gritted ware assemblages which comprise the central dataset of this thesis must be analysed and interpreted, a task which requires critical consideration of the descriptive and classificatory conventions employed in their study. This is the subject of Chapter 6.

## Chapter 6 : Romano-British ceramic production in east Yorkshire

### 6.1 Pottery in later pre-Roman Iron Age east Yorkshire

In the most recent study of LPRIA ceramics in the region, Evans has noted the similarities in the ceramic assemblages of the 'Brigantian core' - the belt of limestone on the western side of the Vale of York - to those of east Yorkshire. This is particularly evident in the 3rd century AD with reference to lid-seated jar forms (Evans 1995, 59), but is foreshadowed in the regional jar forms of the LPRIA (ibid., figs 5.3, 5.6, 5.7, pp.51-5). The development of localised production of these forms, evident in distinct sub-regional tempering traditions, he suggests indicates a measure of shared cultural identity across the region, with subtle localised differences indicative of (ambiguously) attested historical sub-divisions (ibid., 65).

Whilst acknowledging the spread of Iron Age ceramic traditions from east Yorkshire across the region, Evans, as previously noted, is sceptical of the notion of a Parisian hegemony (above, 5.2.1). However, as has also been argued, his counter-arguments might be negated by the suggestion of a *peripatetic* élite, with its heartland in east Yorkshire, expropriating surplus across the region at comparatively low levels from any given locality; hence the small number of coarse-ware jars involved in comparison with later, Romano-British developments. The process of transmission of specific vessel forms may have involved the copying of vessels brought from east Yorkshire as part of gift-giving obligations by the élite in the context of 'asymmetrical reciprocal obligations'. Localised consumption of surplus by a peripatetic élite would thus account for the recurrence of similar ceramic types of local manufacture across a wide region, as is recognisable in north-eastern England in the later centuries BC. Such extensive hegemony would allow / involve the taking of surplus at quite a low density over a wide area, with comparatively slight impact on individual communities, and a low degree of direct élite control over agrarian production.

Whether or not the hegemony of the east Yorkshire élites *did* extend across the wider region in this period, and this explanation of the ceramic characteristics identified by

Evans is accepted, the point remains that, whatever the geographical extent of their power, these élites would largely have expropriated surplus through the taking of surplus from kin groups or clans. In the light of subsequent developments in east Yorkshire ceramics, the scenario suggested here has a resonance with the process of transformation of comparatively light personal obligations to more systematic structures of tribute and taxation, as proposed in 3.5.3, as the direct authority of town-based Romanised élites became more established. In this region it is to the early 3rd century that we must look to consider these developments.

## 6.2 Grey- and coarse-ware manufacture: Norton, Holme-on-Spalding-Moor and Lockington; Knapton

For the first one-hundred-and-fifty years of Roman rule, until the later 2<sup>nd</sup> or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the overwhelming bulk of the pottery used in east Yorkshire outside military sites was all but indistinguishable from that which had been manufactured and used since the LPRIA (Rigby 1980, 92; Evans 1995, 65). The early 3<sup>rd</sup> century saw two distinctive developments. Firstly, the appearance of a distinctive jar form with an everted, squareish rim, the 'Knapton jar' (first found in quantity at Knapton, near Rillington; Corder and Kirk 1930, 96-9), with a form derived from and in a fabric which had been one of the mainstays of the LPRIA tradition in the region (Evans 1985, 235, 241). Secondly, and apparently contemporaneously, the beginning of production of wheel-thrown grey-wares, notably at Norton (*ibid.*, 234) and in the Holme-on-Spalding-Moor area (*ibid.*, 247), but also at at least one other location - Lockington, near Beverley (*ibid.*, 219) - which seemingly figures to rather a lesser extent over the following century.

Evans notes that the products of none of these industries occurs in quantity beyond east Yorkshire, a corollary of the seeming impermeability of the region to ceramic products from elsewhere (Evans 1988, 329). He explains this phenomenon in terms of a reluctance amongst the inhabitants of east Yorkshire to engage in transactions with individuals and communities 'beyond the pale' of the river Derwent (*ibid.*, 331), confounding as it does notions of a 'market-based' distribution based on a distance decay model. In the specific case of Knapton ware, manufactured in the native tradition of the region, he goes so far as

to suggest that its restricted distribution results from its use as an indicator of tribal identity and allegiance by communities in east Yorkshire ( Evans 1985, 284).

The kilns at Norton, most of which were identified in the course of construction works in the late 1940s (Robinson 1978, 38), seem to have been clustered together some 800 metres due south-east of the gate of the Malton fort. There are suggestions that they were located within ditched enclosures (*ibid.*, 2, fig.2). Excavated kilns include long-flue examples with 'chimneys', which by allowing a combination of a large volume of fuel and a high 'draw' of air through the kiln created the highly-fired fabric characteristic of many Norton products (Evans 1985, 88).

Broadly contemporary with the beginnings of production at Norton, wheel-thrown grey-wares also began to be manufactured around Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, on the river Foulness, some 15 kms north-west of Brough-on-Humber (Millett 1999b, 226, fig.8.3; Creighton 1999, 141-157, 164). Although earlier accounts suggested that kilns at Hasholme and Bursea were located within rectangular ditched enclosures (*cf.* Evans 1985, 100-101), the final publication suggests that these - or at least those elements which fell within the excavated areas - actually pre-dated the construction and use of the kilns (Halkon and Millett 1999, 100). That some elements of the enclosures identified as cropmarks and geophysical anomalies *were* in fact contemporary with the kilns nevertheless remains a distinct possibility. The greatest volume of production is testified at Throlam, where a waster-heap 29 metres in diameter and rising to a height of 1.70 metres (locally named 'Pot Hill') covered a series of kilns (Corder, 1930b; Evans 1985, 106), although the vessels from this heap appear primarily to be of 4<sup>th</sup> century type (*ibid.*, 108).

Millett describes production on the excavated kilns, with the qualified exception of Throlam, as being 'relatively modest and on a wholly domestic scale', doubting very large-scale manufacture and noting the dispersal of the kilns throughout the landscape, rather than representing a 'large scale organised industrial complex'. He does note, however, that the products of these kilns formed a significant proportion of groups in the south of the civitas in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, spreading further north in the 4<sup>th</sup> (Millett 1999b, 226-7). Notwithstanding these caveats, the production of *ceramics* on this sort of scale and using these wheel-



throwing and kiln-firing technologies in the region is clearly a new phenomenon. The significance of the legacy of large-scale iron production testified in the Holme area in the LPRIA will receive further discussion.

In accordance with the model detailed in Chapter 3, and substantiated in the context of eastern Yorkshire (5.3 / 5.4), the developments at both Norton and around Holme-on-Spalding-Moor may be seen as indicative of the actions of a ruling class in the process of consolidating its power over labour and production. At Norton, by aggregating labour at the gates of a military outpost in a landscape which had previously seen little direct interference, control or concomitant Romanisation; in the Holme area, by enacting control within the wider landscape (with the 'possible villa sites' - Halkon and Millett 1999, fig.8.3 - as locations from which this control was exercised, perhaps on analogy with Welton). It is noteworthy that there is little evidence, at any time in the Roman period, of the importation of Romanised material into the Holme landscape (Millett 1999b, 226), such as might be anticipated if the direct producers were enacting a desire to 'Romanise' through participation in a market-based system of production.

The different approaches to the procurement of surplus production which these examples betray merits brief further consideration. The concentration of production at Malton may partly have been the result of the availability of raw materials in the immediate vicinity (Evans 1985, 82); clay is not widespread on the adjacent chalk wolds. However, it also appears to indicate a more limited degree of penetration into the pre-existing social organisation and mode of production of the indigenous communities than would seem to have been the case in the Holme area.

The key to this difference may be twofold. Firstly, prior to the rise of ceramic production the inhabitants of the Holme area had been engaged in iron production on a significant scale, utilising bog-ore drawn from this wetland environment (Halkon & Millett 1999, 94); iron-smelting and the firing of ceramics involve a high degree of transferable technology (Millett 1999b, 226). The change to ceramic production has been taken to have coincided with the exhaustion of bog-ore, forcing the local population to diversify into ceramics around the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, if for no other reason than to meet their tax

liability (ibid.). An alternative explanation is that the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century saw the *consolidation* of iron production, either in another locality along the Foulness or elsewhere, with increasing levels of production and control similar to those witnessed for pottery in the Holme area. Brough-on-Humber is the obvious centre to look towards, particularly given the high percentage of Holme manufactured wares from the site in its 3<sup>rd</sup> century phases (Evans 1985, 245; above, 5.3.2), and the apparently extensive evidence for iron-working within the walls of *Petuaria* (Biek and Wachter 1969). The probable role of Brough as a naval supply base / shore fort, over and above any possible role as a *civitas capital*, is a relevant observation in considering this hypothesis, and the second possible explanation for the differences in the location of production at Norton and Holme.

In addition to the emergence of grey-ware manufacturing at Norton and around Holme-on-Spalding Moor, a contemporary development at the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> centuries sees the crystallisation of a loosely-defined LPRIA jar form, whose production was apparently dispersed at a number of local centres, into the 'Knapton jar', a more regular vessel with a thickened, everted rim, seemingly manufactured in larger quantities at a smaller number of centres (Evans 1995, 61, 65). The form takes its name from the site of its discovery in massive quantities as surface finds on the south side of the Vale of Pickering (Corder and Kirk 1932, 96), suggestive, but not, as Evans points out, conclusive evidence of a kiln in the locality. Although Corder reported that none of the vessels within several hundredweight of pottery showed evidence of having been used (by which he presumably means 'used for cooking', as indicated by scorching and sooting?), no obvious kiln 'wasters' were found in the assemblage. A rectangular building with stone footings was identified close to the heap of pottery, which Evans suggests was probably fired in bonfire clamps rather than 'true' kilns (Evans 1985, 81).

The Knapton-type jar is of especial interest as it is the evident precursor of the later calcite-gritted forms which are the main subject of this thesis. Of notable significance are the extent of its distribution, and its contemporaneity with the beginnings of grey-ware production, particularly at Norton. Evans (1985, 283) notes that the distribution of Knapton jars falls off very sharply to the west of the river Derwent and the Howardian Hills, to the extent that it is almost wholly absent beyond east Yorkshire. Although Monaghan's work

in York has demonstrated that the type does occur there, albeit in very small quantities (1997, 907), the near-hermetic restriction of the type to east Yorkshire, where it occurs in considerable quantities, is still very marked. Clearly at odds with any explanation couched in terms of 'market forces' employing the distance-decay model, Evans favours the hypothesis that Knapton jars were the preferred choice of consumers in east Yorkshire as they were reluctant to accept vessels manufactured beyond their region; in other words, that the choice, and the distribution pattern it created, was determined by notions of tribal or community affiliation and its representation (Evans 1985, 284).

This demand-led argument is here rejected in favour of one which locates ceramic production within the model presented in Chapter 3.4/3.5, and the specific historical and archaeological context of Roman east Yorkshire, outlined in the previous section, which draws on that model. Thus, instead of seeing the increased level of ceramic production in east Yorkshire in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, as represented by the Norton, Holme-on-Spalding-Moor and Knapton 'industries', as a generalised response to increasing demand for goods in a market economy (albeit one operating under a degree of social constraint as posited by Evans for east Yorkshire, and by Millett for Britain generally), grey-ware production at Norton and around Holme, and the increased production of local calcite-gritted ware in the specific form of the Knapton jar, are seen as two distinct, if causally related, phenomena, discriminated in that they represent the material output of different *modes of production* operating concurrently in the region.

At Norton, it has been argued that direct control over ceramic production was effected by the concentration of labour - under whatever means of subjugation; slavery or the imposition of obligations of service, with the former being attested in the settlement by epigraphic evidence (Ramm 1978, 65; RIB 712, Collingwood and Wright 1965, 239) - in the environs of the fort. The increasing scale of control over manufacturing production from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century can be seen by the fact that, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century it appears to have been restricted to the defended *vicus*; by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, although evidence from within the *vicus* is sparse, such indications as there are suggest a small number of stone buildings, distinct from the wooden workshops and evidence for craft production from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. At the same time the so-called 'industrial suburb' of Norton was created. The

suggestion here is that this represents the capacity of a ruling class, consolidating its hold over direct producers in the region, to locate the productive activities over which it had obtained control (on a substantially increased scale from that which had previously taken place in the *vicus*), rather than having to confine them to a defended enclosure physically contiguous with the fort, as had been the case in the purely military context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

In the Holme district a similar level of control of production, as testified by the manufacture of wheel-thrown grey-wares in true kilns, appears to have been imposed across a wider landscape, at numerous individual production sites across an area of at least c.50 km<sup>2</sup>. It has been suggested that the reason for this contemporary difference may relate to the strong connections between production in the Holme area and Brough-on-Humber, with direct military involvement in creating the ceramic industry there, perhaps in association with a reorganisation of iron production, which had previously taken place in the district, in accordance with the needs of a supply base in which the smelting and smithing of iron is heavily represented. In this context it can be suggested that developments at the Welton Wold villa and ceramic production around Holme in the 3rd century are related phenomena, involving the extension of the military's control of production into the landscape. The observations by the excavator at Welton Wold, relating to the possible use of slave labour at the site, and the absence of evidence for consumption and display, may be significant (Mackey 1998, 26). Although Millett comments on the absence of 'villas' in the Holme area, a number of 'possible villa sites' within the area in which kilns have been found are indicated (Millett 1999b, fig.8.3), and parallels with Welton Wold might be highly relevant.

The third example of grey-ware manufacture in east Yorkshire commencing in the early 3rd century comes from Lockington, in the valley of the river Hull near Beverley (Evans 1985, 76, 219; Lloyd 1968). The single excavated kiln was discovered within a rectangular earthwork enclosure, and it has been suggested that it represents production tied to a villa estate centred on Bishop Burton, 3.5 kms to the south, where villa buildings have been identified (Evans 1985, 77-79). This interpretation accords well with the model being employed here, and it is suggested that Lockington represents the earliest manifestation yet recognised in east Yorkshire of ceramic production in the context of a *villa estate*, with all

of the implications of property and the control of labour and resources which go with it. The major caveat here concerns dating. The products of the Lockington kiln appear to commence in the early 3rd century, and although there is no secure dating evidence relating to the mosaic pavements encountered at Bishop Burton in the 18th century, evidence from other sites, as summarised above, suggests a 4th century *milieu* for villas in the region. Notwithstanding this disparity, Lockington is the earliest instance of grey-ware production *in a prime agricultural landscape* (Evans 1985, 78) in east Yorkshire (a location which distinguishes it from the Holme sites), and as such may be argued to represent the first instance of estate production, foreshadowing later developments elsewhere in the region which would come to dominate the 4th century.

Although vessels from these three production sites bear close comparison - fundamentally as wheel-thrown grey-wares - it has been suggested that their varied geographical locations and relationships to different settlement types indicate their having operated within distinct frameworks through which surplus was expropriated. Nevertheless, the similarities of their products suggest that the *degree* to which that production was controlled was very similar; the nature of labour input, and the form in which surplus was extracted could be closely determined.

In contrast to these wares, Knapton jars are coarse ceramics in the sense defined in 4.2 - their origin in the regional pottery tradition of the LPRIA and earlier is well attested (Evans 1985, 235-41), utilising as it does coarse tempering and secondary clays in the production of hand-made, bonfire- or clamp-fired vessels (*ibid.*, 81). The rationale behind the production of such vessels is usually couched in terms of 'native' or 'un-Romanised' taste resulting in a demand for vessels which reflect traditional and local manufacturing techniques, or alternatively because of the functional utility of thick-walled, heavily tempered vessels in open-fire cooking (*ibid.*). Interpreted from a perspective which gives primacy to the social context of *production*, as argued for here, it can be seen that the distinctively 'native' characteristics result from the simple fact that - unlike the cases of Norton, Holme and Lockington - the basic processes of manufacture remain fundamentally unchanged. What *does* apparently change is the *regularity* of the vessels manufactured (at least in terms of form; the data is not presently available to consider whether this is matched

by any standardisation of vessel *capacity*, a subject of the greatest potential interest), and the apparent *concentration* of production at a more restricted number of sites (Evans 1995, 65). Whether this was accompanied by an increase in overall *volume* of production is uncertain; this may be the case, or it may simply reflect the same overall productive output being drawn together to a smaller number of production sites.

Whatever the case, this pattern may be understood as the result of an emergent ruling class able, in localities and amongst communities where they did not exercise *direct* control over agrarian production and related manufacture (such as pottery and ironworking), to draw off surplus as *tribute*. Thus the vessels produced in this context retain many of their traditional characteristics, as they represent a ‘stepping up’ of existing tribute obligations on communities who remained autonomous in respect of their actual productive activity. More may have been demanded, and its manufacture (or at least delivery) may have had to be made at specified locations, but determination of the actual manufacturing processes remained in the hands of the direct producers, and as a result their labour created objects recognisable in fabric, form and technique to those which comparable communities had produced over the preceding three or four centuries. The marked restriction of their distribution to the east of the Howardian Hills and the river Derwent may thus be seen to reflect the limits of the extent of such a sub-regional tribute network, rather than a statement of a perceived common identity; the suggestion of a *territorium* for the fortress at York extending across the Vale to the Derwent is also highly relevant.

This interpretation seeks to demonstrate that the very fabric of ceramic vessels, in 3<sup>rd</sup> century east Yorkshire as elsewhere in Roman Britain, can be seen as indicative of the relations of production under which they were produced, and that consequently study of this material, and in particular the contexts in which it was manufactured, has much to tell us about the rate and processes of social change understood through a materialist definition of class. The next section considers how these were played out in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

### 6.3 Estate production in the Howardian Hills

By the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, ceramic assemblages in east Yorkshire, and indeed across northern England as a whole, would be dominated by two ware types, both manufactured in east Yorkshire; the wheel-thrown grey-wares termed ‘Crambeck’ after the site of a handful of excavated kilns at the southern end of the Howardian Hills which had manufactured some of these vessels, and the regional calcite-gritted ware, particularly in the distinctive jar form termed ‘Huntcliff-type’ ware, after the late 4<sup>th</sup> century coastal signal-station at which it had first been encountered. It is the second of these which is the main focus of this study, but since the manufacture of the two wares has commonly been seen as having been closely linked, and since the relationship between the two is crucial to the social model employed here, the history and context of production of Crambeck ware requires some consideration.

Production of ceramics in the distinctive fabric universally referred to as ‘Crambeck ware’ seems to have begun in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, judging from the appearance of Crambeck grey-wares and parchment wares on sites around Malton in this period (Evans 1989, 52). The extent of its distribution of the ware did not expand significantly until the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> (ibid., 43), but by the final third of that century Crambeck products were reaching virtually every known contemporary site north of a line between the rivers Humber and Mersey and south of Hadrian’s Wall (ibid.). Of the kilns responsible for the prodigious output, a scant few have been excavated. First recognised as a distinctive ware on excavations undertaken on the military signal-stations of the east coast in 1925 (Hull, 1932), the provenance of the material (or at least of a portion of it) was established two years later by the discovery of four kilns in the vicinity of the Crambeck, at the extreme south-eastern edge of the Howardian Hills and within a few hundred metres of the river Derwent (Corder 1989a). Two further kilns were excavated ten years later (idem., 1989b). The fact of its extensive distribution in large quantities across northern England had become apparent by the 1930s, and the close association of its production and distribution with military supply in the northern ‘frontier zone’ has been a long-standing theme of its interpretation. The authoritative study of its products and distribution is that of Evans (1985, 324-54), published in synthesis as Evans 1989.

Evans notes the eclectic nature of Crambeck products in terms of the range of possible influences on individual vessel forms, and in particular the absence of close parallels with most of the types from the Norton kilns (1985, 325-7), less than eight kilometres away, where production seemingly overlapped with that at Crambeck in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the early 4<sup>th</sup> century Crambeck grey-wares were becoming widely distributed throughout east Yorkshire, present in significant, if not overwhelming quantities, and beginning to appear in more remote locations at York, in south Yorkshire, and on the frontier itself (ibid., 329-34). It is notable that, in this early phase, 'tablewares' - vessels such as bowls, dishes and beakers rather than jars - comprised a disproportionate percentage of Crambeck output compared to other kiln sites (ibid., 329), although the kilns did not at this stage manufacture any vessels which could be classified as 'fine-wares' (ibid., 327); only with the advent of decorated (i.e. painted) parchment ware in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century (Evans 1989, 43) can Crambeck be said to have produced anything which could be described as a 'fine-ware'.

By the later 4<sup>th</sup> century Crambeck products, both grey-ware and the buff-coloured 'parchment ware' were appearing in significant quantity on practically every site in the frontier zone. These later assemblages still betray a greater emphasis on table wares than do those from other kiln sites, but this should perhaps not be overstated; in east Yorkshire, at least, Crambeck grey-ware jars formed 25-30% of assemblages on a number of sites (ibid. 1985, 347). What is *not* in doubt is that the late 4<sup>th</sup> century distribution of Crambeck products in the north in no way conforms with the distance-decay model alleged to indicate the operation of 'market forces'. This point, and its interpretation, will be returned to, but first it is necessary to consider our understanding of the actual *production* of Crambeck wares.

Attention has recently been drawn in print to the apparent disparity between the sheer volume of production of Crambeck ware, and the exceedingly small number of known kiln sites, and raises the suggestion that the known kilns may be arbitrary examples of more extensive and dispersed production (Monaghan 1997, 903). In this he disputes Evans' conclusion that the production site was restricted to the vicinity of the known kilns, based on excavated evidence and surface finds (Evans 1989, 44). The known kilns may briefly be



summarised; in 1927 Corder found four kilns in the vicinity of the Jamie's Craggs quarry, and two more, about a kilometre to the south-east, nine years later. More recently these have been augmented by discoveries at Crambe, a further kilometre to the south-east, where two pottery kilns (apparently producing 'Crambeck' ware) were excavated in 1974 (King and Moore 1989, 105). One of these seemingly involved the conversion of what had originally been an oven (*ibid.*), and the vicinity of the Crambe kilns has also produced a grain-drying oven, broadly contemporary with the kilns (Wenham 1989, 99-101). (This is of particular interest in the light of Swan's comments regarding the possible role of these structures in the 'curing' of pots prior to firing [Swan 1984, 47; above, 4.4.1]). Geophysical survey of (what remains of) the Jamie's Craggs site has produced clear evidence of a series of rectangular ditched enclosures, within which strong anomalies would seem to indicate the presence of six further kilns (Hinchcliffe and Bartlett 1989, 92, fig.2), and it is almost certain that Corder's excavated kilns, at least in this locality, were similarly enclosed. There are suggestions that the Crambe kilns were also located within ditched enclosures (King and Moore 1989, 105). All the known kilns are thus located within a restricted area on the south-eastern flank of the Howardian Hills, and all appear to belong to the latest, late-4<sup>th</sup> century phase of Crambeck production, a fact which may be of some significance in the characterisation of production earlier in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (below, 6.3).

Crambeck ware's highly distinctive fabric, with its creamy-white, fine-grained core, results from the use in its manufacture of the Oxford clay which outcrops along the oolitic limestone ridge of the Howardian Hills. This seam of clay extends at the surface over a length of some twenty kilometres, and also outcrops for three kilometres on the Tabular limestone at the southern extremity of the Hambleton Hills, immediately to the north of, and all but contiguous with, the Howardian Hills. On this outcrop an apparently isolated kiln site at Cold Cam, above Helmsley (Hayes 1988a), located within a complex of three small enclosures, and adjacent to a heap of iron slag of uncertain date (Evans 1985, 110), produced grey-ware sherds visually indistinguishable from Crambeck products (*ibid.*, 134). Cold Cam is situated at the north-western extremity of the Oxford clay outcrop, the Crambeck kilns and their outliers at the south-eastern; the sites are some 22 kms apart. It is plausible, and is suggested here, that the Crambeck and Cold Cam kilns in fact represent only two examples of a series of production sites located along the length of the Howardian

Hills, exploiting the seam of Oxford clay. Apart from the Cold Cam / Crambeck similarities, there are indications from the fabrics of 'Crambeck' vessels themselves that slight but significant differences may exist within the accepted canon of the grey-wares. Evans' work using Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) identified a cluster from the Huntcliff signal-station distinct from the 'main' body of Crambeck products (Evans 1989, \*\*\*), and the thin-sectioning of Crambeck fabrics from York has also suggested the use of visually indistinguishable clay actually having been drawn from more than one source (Monaghan 1997, 903, 1032). It is notable that the Crambeck kilns and that at Cold Cam are in closely analogous locations - on the edge of the limestone hills, close to a fast-running, deeply incised water-courses and (modern) woodland, and that such locations abound along the Howardian Hills, close to the seam of Oxford clay where it outcrops along the ridge<sup>13</sup>.

In considering the probable context of the Crambeck, Crambe and Cold Cam kilns - and any other, as yet undiscovered production sites which may exist along the Howardian Hills - reference is made to the model of the creation of privately-owned estates, and the consolidation of agrarian production on those estates, presented in Chapter 3, and to its implications for the understanding of later Romano-British ceramic manufacture outlined

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If this suggestion is considered plausible, the question as to why there are no records of kilns from the Howardian Hills *between* Crambeck and Cold Cam needs to be addressed. This raises two major considerations. Firstly, the topography of the Howardian Hills is such that the upland ridge inclines upwards, from c.70-80m. above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the south-east around Crambeck to c.160-170m.AOD in the parishes of Gilling, Oulston and Yearsley. These differences in elevation affect contemporary land-use; whilst much of the modern landscape around Crambeck is under arable cultivation, further to the north-west there is a greater emphasis on pasture, and much of the land is covered with woodland (Ordnance Survey 1:25000 sheets SE 66/76, SE 67/77 and SE 47/57). Under these conditions kiln sites are far less likely to be encountered as the result of agricultural disturbance; it should be noted, for example, that the discovery of the Cold Cam kiln resulted from machine excavation carried out by forestry workers (Hayes, 1988a).

They may, however, be identifiable as earthworks through their waster heaps; as the example of 'Pot Hill' in Throlam (above, 6.2; Evans 1985, 106), these could be substantial, and might well survive under pasture or in woodland. As yet, to the knowledge of the writer, none have been reported, but a recent survey of the Howardian Hills (McElvaney, 1993) throws up some interesting possibilities. The report, for example describes c.80 identified monuments along the ridge of the Howardian Hills, concentrated in the north-west, as 'round barrow?' (ibid., appendix G), many of them in heavily wooded areas. Although nearly a quarter of these had been excavated by Canon Greenwell in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the identification of the remainder rests on parallels in form. In these instances there seems to be room for doubt, and the possibility that some might represent (comparatively) undisturbed late Roman waster heaps, rather than Bronze Age funerary monuments, might be entertained.

in Chapter 4. The earliest Crambeck output, of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century, may thus be seen as the outcome of the taking-in of land around Malton as privately-owned estates, by a ruling class now able to extend its control over people and production beyond the confines and immediate environs of its military, urban or quasi-urban *enceintes* into the wider landscape, by means of alienating land from communal control by means of the institutions of individual private ownership. Since no kilns manufacturing diagnostically early Crambeck products have yet been identified, the exact location of production at this stage is open to question (and will receive further consideration below), but the advent of this distinctive ware indicates that areas on or close to the Oxford clay outcrop - i.e. in the Howardian Hills - were included.

Four Roman buildings identified as villas are known from the Howardian Hills and its immediate environs. Most extensively investigated is that at Hovingham, although, as with the other three, the bulk of current knowledge derives from investigations in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.. A bath complex and a mosaic pavement are known from Hovingham (Kitson-Clark 1935, 88-92) in Ryedale, at the foot of the north-eastern scarp. The pavement has been attributed to the 4<sup>th</sup> century by Neal, on the basis of its close similarity to that at Beadlam (Neal 1981, 45). A coin hoard recovered in 1980 from close to the site of the villa apparently comprised eighteen coins dated AD 337 - 423 (Hayes 1988b). Hovingham is situated on the Roman road heading north-westwards from Malton (Margary 814), which may continue towards Aldborough (*Isurium Brigantium*), but possibly terminates at the Hovingham villa itself. From Oulston, on high ground towards the northern end of the south-eastern escarpment, a mosaic pavement of the highest quality, and again of probable 4<sup>th</sup> century date (Neal 1981, 79), was recovered in 1857, and is now on display in the Yorkshire Museum (Kitson-Clark 1935, 119). Tessellated pavements are also reported from closely adjacent sites at Musley Bank and Roughborough, 2 kms north-west of Malton, the first at least of which appears to have been decorated (*ibid.*, 111).

Given the proximity of the Musley Bank and Roughborough buildings (they are described as ‘near the same place but on adjoining farm[s]’), it seems that, by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there were at least three residential villa complexes on the Howardian Hills, contemporary with ceramic production at Crambeck and Cold Cam. It may simply be an artefact of

recognition, but it is intriguing to note that these three known sites are located equidistantly (Hovingham being 10 kms north-west of Musley Bank/Roughborough, and Oulston 10 kms due west of Hovingham), and might be seen as having a notional 'catchment' of the south-eastern, central and north-western stretches of the Howardian Hills. Unlike the Wolds further to the south-east, little published aerial photographic evidence is available for landscape divisions on the Hills, and on the central and north-western stretches, at least, this is due largely to contemporary land-use, which may also reflect ancient activity. Notwithstanding the climatic change known to have occurred since the Roman period, it is entirely plausible that the central and north-western tracts of the Howardian Hills supported pasture and woodland to a greater extent than arable agriculture, and that, by analogy with the North York Moors to the north-east, these would have provided ideal resources for fuel-intensive production such as ironworking (Simmons 1995, 12) and, by extension, pottery production; the Cold Cam kiln site sits to the north, on the ridge across the valley of the Holbeck from the upland tract of the Howardian Hills.

The apparent suitability of the north-westerly stretches of the Howardian Hills for pottery production may be considered in the light of the apparently late 4<sup>th</sup> century date of all of the known kilns at their south-eastern extremity (Corder 1989b, 34). Could it be the case that the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and earlier 4<sup>th</sup> century production actually began in the north-western zone, in as yet-undiscovered kilns, and that the commencement of production in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century in the lower-lying area of the south-east was the result of, and specific to, the particular circumstances of that time, and possibly atypical of the bulk of production of the 'Crambeck' industry? This is obviously speculative, but equally, given the current shortage of fieldwork carried out on the Howardian Hills, is entirely plausible. On analogy with the example of Lockington, each of the three known villa sites may have begun the production of ceramics on their estates on a comparatively small scale, gradually and then greatly increasing in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century for reasons which will be discussed below.

Ceramic manufacture was not the only form of raw material extraction / processing and 'industrial' production carried out in the Howardian Hills. Analysis of Crambeck ceramics has suggested that, in some cases at least, it took place in close association with iron manufacture. Although the major component of Crambeck output, grey-wares,

contained noticeably little iron as a mineral trace element (a conclusion to be expected given the pure, primary, Oxford clay which they were made from) Crambeck mortaria *did* utilise fragments of iron slag for their trituration grits (Evans 1989, 55-6). The (admittedly undated) heap of iron slag adjacent to the Cold Cam kiln is worth recalling in this connection (Evans 1985, 110). Further extractive industry almost certainly took place in the form of the quarrying of oolitic limestone; stone from the distinctive beds in the vicinity of Hildenley, within a kilometre of Musley Bank / Roughborough, was used for inscriptions and building material at Malton between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and particularly in the substantial 4<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the *vicus*, although apparently not, interestingly, in the earlier military phases. It was also used in the 4<sup>th</sup> century basilica of the *principia* building in York (Senior 1990, 154-6) Considerable quantities of oolitic limestone, although not specifically the renowned Hildenley stone, seem to have been used in Roman York from the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Buckland 1984, 55) - the same date range proposed for Malton).

The archaeological evidence currently available from the Howardian Hills for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries is clearly insufficient to develop argument and speculation regarding the creation of a villa landscape much further. Enough exists, however, to suggest that the apparent intensification of production there from the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century occurred within just such a context. The alienation of land from clan or tribal community into estates under the individual ownership of members of a consolidated ruling class arguably provides a more convincing explanation for the rise of ceramic manufacture, ironworking and quarrying in the district than the notion of individual entrepreneurial manufacturers encouraged into production by the allure of new and expanding 'markets'<sup>14</sup>.

The playing out of this process, as hypothesised in this chapter, might be summarised

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Thus Evans' observation of the near total dominance by Crambeck grey-wares of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century assemblage from Huttons Ambo, just across the river Derwent from the known (late 4<sup>th</sup> century) Crambeck kilns, implicitly attributes this to minimal distance from site of production to site of consumption, low transport costs, low purchase price and consequent consumer preference. It is more likely that the site utilised Crambeck vessels to such a degree because they, and the food resources which some of them are likely to have contained, were manufactured / grown and used / eaten on the same estate. The reasons behind the presence of a small quantity of calcite-gritted ware at the site, which Evans remarks 'must have been very necessary' for them to be able to 'compete' in the face of nearby Crambeck, will be elaborated in the next section, 6.4.

as follows. In the later 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries direct control of production by the Roman state and its representatives was restricted to the Malton *vicus*, a small defended enclosure attached to the fort. By the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century its power over local communities was sufficient for that production to be located altogether beyond the fort and on a considerably increased scale, albeit that it still had to be concentrated in the same specific locality. By the late 3<sup>rd</sup>, its power was sufficiently consolidated and extensive to be able to control, and indeed to break down the structure of, communities across large swathes of landscape, and re-organise production to suit its needs as a class. This is evident in the Howardian Hills, as discussed above, and also in the occurrence of the villas of the north-eastern Wolds group - Langton and the Wharrams - to the south of Malton. This progression is significant, not least for the insight it offers into evidence for the reversal of the process in the later 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As previously noted, the apogee of the Howardian Hills potteries came in the final decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when products of these kilns seem to have reached virtually every contemporary site between the Humber/Mersey line and Hadrian's Wall and, where quantified assemblages are available, with no indication of distance-decay. To the south, however, they are effectively absent. (Evans 1989, 44, fig.1; 75-6; 74, fig.35). Evans' favoured explanation for this is the existence of a 'military contract', wherein state purchasing power and transport infrastructure provided the means for the Crambeck potters to sell in bulk, at a competitive price, in remote markets - i.e. those situated within the network of army installations - since the cost-loading created by transport over distance was paid for by the state. The presence of Crambeck wares at civilian sites within this region is explained by the close linkage of towns in the north in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century to military garrisons; that, indeed, the distinction between civilian and military sites is difficult to sustain in this period (*ibid.*, 78; above, Chapter 5.4.3).

It is assumed that such an arrangement took place in an entirely commercial context (*ibid.*), and the unstated assumption is that, as a result, the Crambeck potters had no need or wish to develop or expand into other markets, such as those to the south of the Humber; presumably they were earning enough as it was, or were already operating at full capacity, although the latter assumption is difficult to square with Evans' view of production

restricted to the vicinity of the known kilns (ibid., 44). There is little doubt that Evans is correct in attributing the 'reach' of late-4<sup>th</sup> century Crambeck wares to military / state involvement, but the understanding of this phenomenon is limited by the assumption of a market context and commercial imperative for production. The key actually lies within Evans' aside regarding the breakdown of the military / civilian dichotomy in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Following the arguments of Wickham, presented and deployed in the specific context of the archaeology of Roman Britain in Chapter 3, the development of ceramic production in the Howardian Hills, and its subsequent extensive distribution, may be understood as a classic case of the entwined, and ultimately contradictory relationship between state office and obligation and private landownership. The process of the intensification of surplus expropriation in east Yorkshire by a ruling class, and increasing direct control of production across the landscape, has been detailed above. Ceramic manufacture, as an integral part, as ancient authors consistently pointed out, of agrarian production (cf. Swan 1984, 19), was an aspect of the intensification of surplus expropriation and increasingly direct control of manufacture by an emergent ruling class. It was carried out at the behest of a landowning aristocracy, not to turn a commercial profit, but as part of the process whereby surplus was extracted from their landholdings, enacted through social institutions which were maintained by legally-imposed instruments and, ultimately, the threat of the brute force which the resources of the state were capable of delivering. It is entirely probable that the villa estates around Malton belonged to, or were in the gift of, provincial officials, many of whom either were or had been army personnel (cf. Birley 1971, 91), however many 'intermediary' owners or agents were involved. The all but indivisible relationship between late Roman public office and landholding meant that it was the resources of these estates which were mobilised to meet the obligations of their office and thus the needs of the state. (The location of the Howardian Hills on an apparent boundary between tribal territories has often been commented on as being advantageous for its 'market catchment' outside the social constraint of individual tribes and communities [Evans 1989: 43, 1985: 376]. Its situation between what has been suggested as the *territorium* of the fortress at York [in the Vale of York] and that of the *colonia* [in east Yorkshire beyond the Derwent] may be a more relevant consideration. In east Yorkshire in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century this relationship was still

very much intact, as the distribution of Crambeck wares across *Britannia Secunda* testifies.

Thus Crambeck pottery was transhipped northwards as part and parcel of a state supply system, drawing on the social power and control over manufacture and surplus which resulted from the imposition of landownership and estate production. Pottery was just one, and by no means the most important, form of surplus expropriated by the landowning ruling class for their own purposes and those of the state whose regional representatives they were, and which was still their vehicle and guarantor. But land ownership and estate production were by no means the whole story, even if they were the fulcrum on which economy and society in late Roman Britain turned. It is to areas *beyond* the villa estates, and the surplus produced and expropriated from there, that discussion now turns.

#### 6.4 Fourth century calcite-gritted ware production and the 'Huntcliff-type' jar

##### 6.4.1 Forms, fabrics and techniques of manufacture

6.2 described how the 'Knapton jar' came to be the most distinctive form of calcite-gritted ware in east Yorkshire from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and interpreted this in terms of the extension and intensification of tribute obligations beyond the bounds of their actual estate holdings by a landowning ruling class. In the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Knapton jar form, with its distinctive everted square rim, was succeeded by an apparently consecutive sequence of jars with different, if equally distinctive rim-forms. This classificatory series, and the rationale behind it, will be considered in more detail later in this chapter (6.4.3), but is briefly summarised here.

The authoritative modern study is again that by Evans (1985, 305-24; 354-70), although unlike his study of Crambeck (Evans 1989), this component of his doctoral thesis has not, to date, been published. Evans built on the form typology established by Hull and augmented by Corder, but refined the definition of 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted fabrics by proposing several distinctive variants, which he was then able to compare with each other and with other fabric types using Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA), and to consider in



terms of their chronology and distribution in assemblages from across northern England.

The Knapton jar form appears to have declined - from levels already low in comparison to those attained by later forms - from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Evans 1985, 241), from which point it seems to have been replaced by jars with a series of different and distinctive rims. These included jars with horizontally everted rims, but the most important variants were those with 'S-bend' profile rims, 'overhanging rims' (where the rim forms an overhanging curve, and termed 'proto-Huntcliff' forms by Rigby, e.g. Rigby 1980, 92; 78, fig.51, 279-80), and the full 'Huntcliff-type' rim-form, but lacking the groove on the internal surface of the rim - the 'lid-seating' - which earlier researchers had considered a diagnostic attribute of that type, and often having a less marked shoulder than the 'Huntcliff-type' proper was to display (Evans 1985, 305). The bodies of these vessel forms, like their Knapton predecessors, remained hand-made, although the more elaborate, Huntcliff-type rim-forms, at least, appear to have involved the use of a wheel in the forming of the rim; the *tournette* technique. Evans considers the fabric of Knapton-type jars to be visually distinctive (ibid., 241), and implies that these forms, found in quantity only in assemblages *other* than that from Knapton itself, were nevertheless manufactured at the same centre (ibid., 305)

On the basis of associated dating evidence from across the north of England, Evans proposed that the 'S-bend' profile jar from the first decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and that the overhanging rim or 'proto-Huntcliff' type had emerged by AD 350. The Huntcliff-type *sans* lid-seating (pretentious, *moi?!), however, appears to have been in manufacture from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century judging from its presence in a deposit apparently of that date from Beadlam. Evans acknowledges that these variants continued in use (and presumably in manufacture, although he is not explicit) in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, as is testified by their presence in north-west England, where calcite-gritted ware is virtually absent until that date (ibid., 312). This admission would appear to have implications for the use of these calcite-gritted forms as chronologically diagnostic type-fossils, although Evans' discussion often does not seem to duly acknowledge these.*

Evans identified two distinctive calcareous-gritted *fabrics* which he considers to have

originated in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The first of these, the limestone-tempered 'Fabric 281', is restricted to Brough-on-Humber and its environs. Recognised in Wachter's excavations, Evans re-dates its origin to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, revising the excavator's judgement of the late 3<sup>rd</sup>. Its forms are distinctive in that it imitates those in other fabrics, including the calcite-gritted wares, and also that there is an emphasis on table-wares not found amongst other coarse-wares in the region (*ibid.*, 313)<sup>15</sup>. The second of Evans' early 4<sup>th</sup> century fabrics, the calcite-gritted '282', is common at the Rudston villa (above, 5.4.1), but since it is present in the earlier level of the well backfill (apparently dated to that period; Rigby 1980, 73) at a level of *c.*2%, compared to figure of *c.*42% in the (much larger) assemblage from the late-4<sup>th</sup> century backfill (Evans 1985, 321), it has been considered to be a late-4<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon - a possibility which Evans (*pers. comm.*) has acknowledged - and is therefore discussed with the other late 4<sup>th</sup> century fabrics.

Although (lid-seated) 'Huntcliff-type' jars, *the* diagnostic late-4<sup>th</sup> century form of calcite-gritted vessel, appear to have been manufactured in the same fabric as their Knapton predecessors, NAA results suggest that the overwhelming bulk of production was located elsewhere (Evans 2000, 44, fig.26), with any site in the vicinity of Knapton seemingly responsible for only a small proportion of vessels of this type (*idem.*1985, 354). The bulk of calcite-gritted output in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, the distribution of which extended across the whole of the north of England, is dominated by Evans' fabric 009 (*ibid.*, 354). Where within east Yorkshire vessels in this fabric were produced is not known, although Evans has suggested a location towards the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering (Evans 2000, 40). In addition to this major fabric, however, he identified two other distinctive late-4<sup>th</sup> century variants of calcite-gritted ware; 282, a brown-grey fabric common at the Rudston villa but scarce elsewhere, and absent from sites beyond east Yorkshire (*idem.* 1985, 321-3), and the black-fired 007/168, present in assemblages from east of the Pennines with little evidence of 'fall-off' from Beadlam to Binchester, but sparse to the west (*ibid.*, 369). These fabrics were differentiated from 009 on the basis of being tempered predominantly with coarse or

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The development of such a highly localised distribution in Brough in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century is potentially of tremendous interest, given the uncertainties of its earlier role and status, and the apparently limited evidence for settlement within the defended enclosure after the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Wachter 1969, 4), but unfortunately cannot be pursued in detail here.

moderate sand, with comparatively sparse calcite (ibid., 321, 368). That the two were closely related is clear, in that they were both found in quantity in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century fill of the Rudston well, where they were grouped as a single fabric (2e) by Rigby (ibid.); the distinction seems basically to be one of surface colour, and the frequency with which incised and burnished decoration is employed on 282 (ibid., 321). In all cases jars of various forms, most frequently with Huntcliff-type rims, dominate assemblages of all three of these fabrics (ibid., 322, 370). The production sites for 282 and 007/168 were also both attributed to the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering on the basis of their high percentage presence on sites in this vicinity (ibid., 323, 369). Evans considered that each of these began in production before or around AD 350 (ibid., 321, 368).

Evans' impressive survey thus presents a picture of three major fabric types, all seemingly produced in the vicinity of the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering (although it might be possible to consider 282 and 007/168 as products of the same manufactory, given that their differences are related to firing atmosphere and decoration, although a chronological distinction between the two might be entertained), with a fourth, minor production site a successor to that which had produced Knapton ware. This picture has recently been augmented by the work of Monaghan, who, working on contemporary assemblages from York, identified two 'late handmade' sandy fabrics amongst the 'parent' calcite-gritted assemblage; 'B18', which frequently bears burnished decoration, and 'G18/19', its unburnished equivalent. He considered these to be the latest distinctive Romano-British ceramics found in York, but was cautious in ascribing a 5<sup>th</sup> century date to them (Monaghan 1997, 911-12). Evans interprets his own fabric types as representing manufacture for three distinct markets; local to east Yorkshire, particularly the eastern part (282), northern England east of the Pennines (007/168, apparently displaying signs of market-based distribution mechanisms), and the whole of *Britannia Secunda* (009), representing organised transshipment by military authorities.

#### 6.4.2 Function, organisation and location of production

Evans' research on Roman pottery in the north has consistently sought to understand patterns of manufacture and distribution in terms of commercial incentive, profit, economic competition and all the institutions and imperatives of a mercantile, market-based economy (cf. Evans 2000, 41), and his treatment of calcite-gritted wares is no exception. Arguments against the market-centric interpretation of production and exchange in the ancient world have been marshalled in Chapter 2, Romano-British pottery production interpreted in an alternative, materialist framework in Chapter 4, and the 'Crambeck industry' in east Yorkshire characterised in these terms in 6.3. In the context of understanding the archaeology of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (or the apparent lack of it), Evans' prior assumptions effectively predetermine his conclusion - without coinage a monetised market economy cannot exist, *ergo* no pottery production (ibid.; 1990, 94); end of story, literally as well as metaphorically. Before examining the effect of this position as it is held in wider studies of the archaeology of east Yorkshire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, it is necessary to consider calcite-gritted jars in a little more detail in *functional* terms, as this is crucial to their interpretation, either as commodities for sale in a price-setting market, or from an alternative perspective.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that the great bulk of calcite-gritted ware production, especially in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, consisted of jar forms. These jars are frequently referred to as 'cooking pots', a function which the scorching and sooting of the exterior, and evidence of limescale on the interior displayed by many vessels indicates that they did indeed fulfil (Evans 1985, 357). There is not necessarily, however, a straightforward correlation between the purpose for which an object is ultimately used and that of its original manufacture. This rather *ad hoc* classification has had a significant effect on the understanding of both the physical characteristics of these vessels, and the reasons for their widespread distribution. Firstly, the specific physical qualities of calcite when used as a temper in ceramics, in its capacity to resist the 'thermal shock' of rapid heating, have been invoked to suggest that it obtained its wide distribution as a result of consumer preference for a vessel uniquely well-suited to its function. This forms a component of the second, and more important effect of the term; that it was *as* cooking vessels that the pots were first manufactured, and that they were therefore produced as individual items to a

specification (robustness when heated in an open fire, 'native' fabric, 'Romanised' rims) intended to appeal to a purchasing market; in other words that they were produced as *commodities*. Thus the vast distribution of calcite-gritted jars in the late 4th-century, and their apparent 'seeing-off' of 'competition' from the production areas further to the south, which had previously dominated the 'northern market' (the use of the anachronistic language of consumer capitalism is all-pervasive in previous treatments, and thus unavoidable in discussion of them), reflects a combination of such desirable traits, added to the cheapness of transport costs in comparison with more remote production areas; at least, if we accept Evans' argument, from the point of view of the army quartermasters. Military and civilian communities in *Britannia Inferior* needed pots to cook with, and east Yorkshire and its entrepreneurial potters could satisfy that need.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have rehearsed at some length the inappropriateness of this interpretative framework, and proposed an alternative reading applicable both at empire-wide level and in the specific context of Roman Britain. The role of the mass-distributed coarse-wares of the 1st - 4th centuries - BB1, BB2, Dales-ware - in the articulation of food-surplus through tribute mechanisms has been touched on (4.4.2), and the advent of Knapton-ware production in east Yorkshire in the early 3rd century (6.2) interpreted as the result of an emergent landowning class in the region intensifying surplus expropriation from communities beyond the bounds of their estates. The increase in manufacture of calcite-gritted ware jars in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in their production and distribution across the north in massive quantities in the second half of the century, particularly as 'Huntcliff-type' jars, can be seen as further intensification of the rate of exploitation by regional landowners, acting on behalf of the state whose officers, as military and/or civilian administrators, they were.

To develop this argument in its late 4th century context, and to set the scene for the understanding of developments in the 5th, requires consideration of two issues; *where, how* and *under what conditions* were late 4th century calcite-gritted jars produced; and, if they were manufactured as *containers*, rather than as *commodities in themselves*, what were they manufactured to contain? These questions are, of course, likely to be closely interrelated.

There is little or no direct evidence currently available for the actual manufacture of 4th century calcite-gritted wares. Evans has noted the probability that the hand-made Knapton ware was fired in bonfire clamps (Evans 1985, 81), and Mackey, in discussing the huge assemblage of calcite-gritted coarse-wares from Welton Wold, refers to all of this material, including the large proportion of late forms, as 'clamp-fired' (Mackey 1998, 31). If these statements are accurate, they lend further support to the interpretation of a productive context for calcite-gritted jars outside the 'Romanised' methods and systems of production, which have been associated in this thesis with military sites and towns (from the late 1st - 3rd centuries) and, from the late 3rd century onwards, with villa estate production. The traditional materials and techniques used in the manufacture of the vessels pre-firing - hand forming and the use of coarse mineral temper - are also in accord with this picture, and consideration of the former, in particular, in a little more detail, offers some interesting insights into the possible context of their production.

Typically, the 'developed' calcite-gritted vessels of the later 4th century comprise a hand-made body, with a heavy, elaborate rim - especially in the case of the 'Huntcliff-type' jar - attached and formed with the use of a potter's wheel; the 'tournette' technique (Evans 1985, 305). Some vessels also appear to have employed a wheel in their surface finishing. This suggests a two-stage process in their pre-firing manufacture. The assumption that each vessel was wholly the creation of a single pair of hands is usually made without second thought. However, this raises the question of why the vessels were not wheel-thrown in their entirety, given that this would allowed each individual pot to have been manufactured more quickly - a consideration which, in the received 'market' interpretation, would have given a marked competitive advantage to the manufacturing centre concerned. One argument against this concerns the problem of 'throwing' vessels with abundant coarse mineral temper on a fast wheel, given their tendency to lacerate the hands of the potter! However, since a substantial proportion of 'calcite-gritted' ware output actually involved little use of calcite, relying rather on rather less damaging quartz (sand) temper (cf. Evans' fabrics 282 and 007/168), this argument does not, on its own, seem adequate. The two-stage manufacturing process - the creation of hand-made 'blanks' to which wheel-thrown rims were subsequently attached - may therefore bear an interesting and significant interpretation, one which also takes account of other characteristics of these vessels.

Although there is recognisable variation in the rim forms of the 'Huntcliff-type' jars - and Chapter 6 attempts to categorise these with a greater level of definition than is employed in received classifications - the consistency of form does not seem commensurate with what might be expected from a multiplicity of domestic production sites across east Yorkshire. This is especially the case considering the elaborate form of these rims; they are not simple, everted or 'rolled' forms, which might easily be explained away as a common regional 'tradition' (indeed, the sudden appearance of such vessels is often regarded as something of a mystery, as a marked departure from their Knapton 'ancestry'), but highly distinctive, complex forms. Furthermore, Evans' cluster analysis of his NAA results on this material suggests three or four rather than dozens of production sites (Evans 1985, 359-68). A further relevant observation concerns the *seasonality* of pottery manufacture in Britain; for pots to 'cure' sufficiently prior to firing requires consistently dry conditions. Although these might be created in 'drying sheds' (and it has been suggested that this may have been one purpose to which the 'corn driers' frequently encountered in late Roman Britain were put; Swan 1984, 47), it is often argued that ceramic production in Roman Britain (at least vessel forming / curing and firing) was largely confined to the summer months (Fulford 1975, 12.)

The picture, then, seems to be one of production concentrated at a small number of locations, at which wheel-thrown rims were attached to hand-made 'blanks', the whole manufacturing process probably taking place over a restricted, summer, season. In the social context of production proposed here, of the expropriation of surplus by a landowning class from communities beyond their estates, this bears a decided resemblance to the possible seasonal concentration of production at hillforts and *oppida* referred to in 3.5.1. Given that such centres were absent from east Yorkshire in the LPRIA, such a development (acknowledging that, as yet, the existence of comparable locations in the 4th century has been inferred from the characteristics of portable artefacts, rather than proven by excavated evidence), the impact of landownership on communities of direct producers beyond its immediate thrall becomes readily apparent.

If the production of calcite-gritted jars represents surplus expropriation, greatly increased in intensity in the later 4th century, and it was not the pots themselves which were

the object of such exactions, what *was*? It was noted in Chapter 4 that the areas of coarse-ware production involved in the supply of pottery to the north were all located in coastal or estuarine locations. Evans' conclusion, based on distributional evidence, that the likely areas of production of all of his fabric sub-divisions of calcite-gritted ware - the 'classic' variant 009, 282 and 007/168 - were close to the east coast conforms with this overall pattern. Specific locations are unknown. Evans favours the eastern reaches of the Vale of Pickering. For the major fabric type, 009, the calcite-gritted variant proper, an alternative view might consider the vicinity of the *dip* slope of the eastern Wolds, which descends gradually into the low-lying Hull valley, the river flowing into the Humber at Kingston-upon-Hull, some 30 kilometres south of the southern edge of the chalk. Here, the lower slopes of the Wolds offer a potential source of calcite, with the tills of Holderness to the east, or exposures within the Hull valley itself, providing extensive clay sources (van de Noort and Davies 1993, 11). Such a location is of great interest on two counts. Firstly, it is close to the inferred Roman settlement and port in the vicinity of Bridlington (Ramm 1978, 49). Given the extensive distribution of late-4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted ware across northern England, and the likely importance of sea transport in this, the possible association is noteworthy. Secondly, and more significantly, a production locality in the upper Hull valley would have been located close, and possibly directly adjacent to, a suite of estuarine resources closely comparable to Poole Harbour, the Thames estuary and the Trent/Humber confluence.

The geomorphology and sedimentation of the Hull valley has an extremely complex recent history (Didsbury 1988, 21), and one which has been affected to an extreme degree by a series of marine transgressions and regressions over the last seven thousand years (van de Noort and Davies 1993, 18). Didsbury has argued the case for the Hull river valley beneath the modern city of Hull as having been an inter-tidal zone in the Roman period (1988, 32), and has argued for its intensive exploitation from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards (1990, 206), particularly in the context of providing rich summer grazing of livestock on saltmarsh (1988, 32; 1990, 206), but also for a range of wetland resources (1988, 24). Settlements on the boulder clay on the fringes of the tidal silts in the city of Hull have produced indications of 4<sup>th</sup> century settlement, including Huntcliff-type jars (*ibid.*). It has also been observed that these transgressive circumstances would have created estuarine conditions further to the north in the Hull valley (van de Noort and Davies 1993, 18), i.e.



still closer to the area suggested as the possible locality of a large proportion of late 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted ware.

A further attractive aspect of a Hull valley provenance for Evans main calcite-gritted fabric '009' is that it fits well with the clustering of Evans' NAA results for this fabric. Evans' analysis appeared to discriminate sharply between 009 and the Knapton-ware fabric, and also convincingly distinguished the 'sandy calcite-gritted' variant 007/168 (Evans 1985, 367). Dr Alan Vince (*pers.comm.*, 1997) has brought to this author's attention that secondary clays obtained from within the same river catchment may often be chemically indistinguishable from one another, given the common source or sources of the mineral particles which go to make up the clay matrix, an observation which may undermine the notion of large, 'consolidated' production centres as inferred by Evans, and allow for the possibility of more dispersed production within specific localities. However, the apparently secure and consistent distinction between 009 and 007/168 would seem to insist that they derive from genuinely different localities, and the idea of production on either side of the watershed of the eastern Wolds, in the Hull valley and the Vale of Pickering, is an attractive one. Certainly, the presence of 007/168 in large quantities at the east coast signal stations from Filey northwards (Evans 1985, 369) lends support to the argument for a production area somewhere in the eastern Vale of Pickering.

Returning to the Hull valley, if it *was* in this area that much late 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted ware production took place, and the vessels themselves were manufactured primarily as containers, what were they made to contain? Here the proximity to estuarine resources was arguably crucial, and of central significance was the probable availability of *salt*. Although there is, as yet, no direct evidence for Romano-British salt production in the Hull valley, this cannot be considered a true picture given the arbitrary nature of the bulk of discoveries to date (cf. Didsbury 1988, 28). Salt may itself have formed the sole contents of many vessels. It is worth considering, for example, whether in many cases the sooting and scorching of their exteriors, and evidence of accreted salts and 'limescale' on their internal surfaces (cf. Evans 1985, 357), usually taken as indications of 'cooking' and the boiling of water, actually indicate their use in the preparation of brine for the preservation of meat foodstuffs. Equally, the estuarine resource areas would or could have sustained a

wide variety of species, both domestic and wild, which provided a food resource, ranging from cattle - utilising the summer grazing - to fowl. The flesh of any of these could have been salted or pickled in jars for transportation. One particularly appealing possibility is the possible role of these jars in the preservation, storage and transportation of small shoaling fish (*clupeidae*), either as deadstock or processed as sauce. Herring and sprat, for example, occur in large shoals off the British coast in summer, in particular abundance off the Yorkshire coast, and enter estuaries to overwinter (Jones 1988, 129). The integration of the catching of fish from either of these locations into a seasonal cycle of ceramic production can be readily envisaged. Jones has identified a large assemblage of clupeids from a late 4<sup>th</sup> century deposit from St Mary Bishophill Junior, York, as the residue of the processing of raw fish into sauce, and points to the practice in Roman continental Europe of the transportation of salted or pickled fish over long distances in amphorae (ibid.). Also from York, a coarse-ware (BB I) jar from Wellington Row was identified as containing crushed fish bones, possibly indicative of the sauce *garum* (Ottaway 1993, 77). The parallels for the use of late-4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted jars in the transportation of salt, pickled or salted fish or other animal-derived food resources are apparent. Although the case for the Hull valley as a major production locality is currently speculative, it is consistent with the available evidence, has parallels with earlier major coarse-ware production areas, and offers intriguing lines of research for both the production and distribution of east Yorkshire ceramics, and the late Roman agrarian / food economy in the area and the wider region.

Considered in this light, the specific *form* of late 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted jars may be reconsidered. Firstly, it might be noted in passing that the characteristics of these thick-walled, upright, flat-based jars are notably ill-suited to their alleged primary function of cooking in an open fire. Their thick fabrics and upright form would have been markedly inferior in this respect to traditional, bag-based, thinner walled forms, like those known from the LPRIA in the region, which would have allowed more even and rapid heating of the contents in or over an open fire. Huntcliff-type and related jars were manufactured in thick-walled, coarse fabrics to ensure that they were sufficiently robust for *transshipment* - a characteristic of these wares which can hardly be denied - and the repeated handling which that would in many cases have entailed. It is the latter which explains the highly distinctive rim-form of these vessels. Rather than being a rather baroque, stylistic, 'Romanised' feature

of their design, appealing to the aesthetic and cultural sensibilities of Romanising Britons, the deeply hooked rims, often extended necks, and pronounced, deeply-cut and squared shoulders of these jars allowed them to be gripped by the hand from above, the combination of rim, neck and shoulder allowing the fingers to be firmly hooked under the rim whilst allowing clearance for the knuckles. At the same time, the creation of a thickened shoulder within the width of the pot, which this form often entailed, added strength to the vessel at its weakest point, preventing the neck from shearing when picked up, and combining with the rim form to make it one of the most readily 'handleable' of Romano-British coarse-ware jars. The later output of other production areas also suggests a degree of preoccupation with being able to readily pick a jar up by its rim (e.g. later variants of BB I, Dales-ware), but none apparently so consistently or, it can be suggested, so effectively as east Yorkshire.

A final consideration relates to the geographical *locations* of the people who made these pots; who, it has been argued, belonged to communities beyond estate landholdings, but who were subject, both officially and *de facto*, to the ruling class who had alienated land into private ownership. Chapter 3 alluded to Richard Hingley's observation that in many areas of Britain villas are sparse or absent; it is usually the case that such areas, where extensive, would be considered 'marginal' in terms of arable cultivation (Hingley 1989, 124-7; above, 4.4.2). It has been argued that many, if not most of the 'ladder settlements' of east Yorkshire, often considered to have originated in the LPRIA, are most particularly associated with the taking of land into private ownership and consequent reorganisation of agrarian production, a phenomenon characteristic of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and more particularly the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Looking at areas on the margins of agricultural production within east Yorkshire is instructive. On the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering, aerial photography and excavation as part of the West Heselton Parish Project has revealed a ladder settlement apparently stretching for kilometres along the edge of the fen and carr land of the centre of the vale (Powlesland 1988, 141, fig.9.1). To date, surface fieldwork and excavation have been limited, and the excavator chooses to emphasise the longevity and continuity of the settlement, from its origins in the LPRIA to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and beyond (*ibid.*, 143-4). A flourishing LPRIA economy - probably involving transhumant stock-rearing with the seasonal utilisation of fen and chalk upland, and arable cultivation of the intermediate zone - is seen as likely to have been given added impetus by the creation of the fort and *vicus* at

Malton. The ditched enclosures of the ladder settlement appear to have been repeatedly re-defined, their functions alternating between stockyards and settlement areas in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (ibid., 144-5). Too little evidence is currently available to determine the chronology or extent of these variations but, whatever the extent or nature of LPRIA antecedents, the clustering of habitation areas, production sites and stockholding enclosures with such apparent intensity in a peripheral environment is wholly in accord with a picture of communities forced out of traditional practices and arenas of agrarian production, exchange and social organisation by the alienation of land into private ownership, even though not directly tied to the land or subjugated to individual landowners. Chapter 3 proposed that the creation of landed estates would have impacted on communities beyond estate boundaries, by imposing constraints on the resources on which traditional methods of production and social practices depended, and forcing such communities into *de facto* subjugate relationships with the landowners, along with involvement and participation in a monetised economy through sale and purchase as well as the rendering of taxes to the state. (Seasonal reliance on waged labour might even be contemplated, as communities - or their successors - driven *off* prime agricultural land were of necessity brought back *onto* it in the late summer to reap increased grain harvests). A similar phenomenon to that evident on the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering may be becoming apparent on the margins of the Hull valley, where hugely extensive agricultural and habitation complexes (c.50 ha) with indications of particularly intensive activity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century have been identified (Didsbury 1988, 25). It is communities in just such situations, not under direct subjugation as the slaves or tenants of the landowning ruling class, but in fact and of necessity under its sway, participating in a system of production and exchange dictated by their having been denied access to the resources on which their traditional practices depended, but retaining day-to-day autonomy of their social and productive activities, and confined in the main to agriculturally marginal areas who, it is argued, were responsible for the production of 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted coarse wares.

The portrayal of late 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted ware production in east Yorkshire presented here thus sees its manufacture as containers for foodstuffs, taken in tribute by a ruling class for its own disposal and those of the state institutions with which, at this stage, it identified its own self-interest. The direct producers of these vessels were, by-and-large,

not subject to 'direct individual exploitation', but to 'indirect collective exploitation' in the form of taxation, and the rendering of tribute in kind to state official and local aristocrat, all of which categories were, by this stage, becoming less-and-less distinguishable (cf. the collection of the *annona* in kind; Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 10). The characteristics of the vessels themselves, what went into them, and the localities in which they were produced all testify to these communities having become increasingly confined to the agricultural margins in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as the institution of private landownership, and its concomitant reorganisation of agrarian production and restriction of access to material resources, broke down traditional structures of social organisation and production.

Increasing control, direct and indirect, by the ruling class over direct producers in east Yorkshire was what *allowed* the intensification of surplus expropriation. What *caused* it, arguably, was the re-orientation of surplus in the Romano-British provinces of southern England, *from* the state and its institutions, *to* the landowners who now exercised direct control over its production and expropriation. It is in this context, rather than in any supposedly catastrophic effect on a non-existent province-wide 'market' that Evans' proposed 'tax revolt' on the part of Romano-British aristocrats may have taken effect (Evans 1990, 91; 2000, 41). Non-payment of taxes, in cash or kind, did not break 'the market sector of the economy' (ibid.), because such an all-encompassing notion is an anachronism which did not exist in Roman Britain. What it did do was shift the burden of procuring the resources to sustain the structures of the Roman state (in the north, to all intents and purposes, the army, however broadly defined) onto the shoulders of those for whom its breakdown would destroy their own source of power. Thus the decline, for example, of BB1 in the north in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, and the rise of production in east Yorkshire, should be seen not as the latter 'capturing the market', but as the Romano-British ruling class in south-central England choosing, and able, to hold on to the surplus over which it held direct control, rather than render it for the purposes of the state. To maintain the political and military infrastructure to which they owed their position, both within the context of imperial power structures and 'on the ground' in the province of *Britannia Secunda*, their counterparts in the north had to use to the full the potential, created over the preceding century, to increase the rate of exploitation on their landholdings and the 'independent' communities over which they exercised *de facto* power. These were

the circumstances which saw the apparent upsurge in the production and ‘export’ of foodstuffs (in some forms in ceramic containers) across *Britannia Secunda* from east Yorkshire; the one area in the province where class power over direct producers had been established and consolidated in the structures of social control and the organisation of material production across the landscape.

### 6.4.3 Existing schemes of classification

#### 6.4.3.1 M.R.Hull’s classification

Distinctively late Roman calcite-gritted ware was first identified in the excavation of the signal-station at Huntcliff, on the east Yorkshire coast near Saltburn, in 1911-12 (Hornsby and Stanton, 1912, 215). The site initially gave its name to the black, calcite-gritted fabric itself (Collingwood 1930, 242; Hull 1932, 221), but was subsequently to be reserved for the distinctive, hook-rimmed jar form typical of the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the full extent of late prehistoric and earlier Roman manufacture of vessels in similar fabrics became apparent. The Huntcliff excavation report described and commented on the distinctive character of the coarse, ‘British’ fabric (Hornsby and Stanton 1912, 228-30), and published for the first time profiles of the distinctive rim forms (ibid., fig.40). Where the calcareous inclusions had been leached out in acid soil environments the fabric took on a ‘pitted’ appearance, which had led to the coining of the term ‘Vesicular ware’, but this usage was rejected by all of the early commentators; as the excavators sternly observed in a footnote, ‘A technical term which is born of error and likely to cause error is worse than no technical term at all’ (Hornsby and Stanton 1912, 228; Collingwood 1930, 242; Hull 1932, 221). Would that subsequent researchers had been as scrupulous (see discussion of the term ‘cooking pot’ for calcite-gritted ware jars, 6.4.2, above).

Systematic classification of the pottery from the signal-stations was carried out by M.R.Hull in 1925 (Hull 1932, 220), with the delay in publication allowing Hull to acknowledge Corder’s 1928 discovery of the Crambeck kilns (Corder 1989a), the products of which were at that time referred to as ‘Castle Howard Ware’ (Hull 1932, 225). In his

classification of the coarse-wares (as defined in this thesis; see 4.2), Hull identified four types which he considered to be related to his Huntcliff-ware, but whose fabrics were noticeably, although not drastically, different (Types 22-25, *ibid.*, 239-42). The remaining eleven (Types 26-36, *ibid.*, 242-49) were subsumed under the heading of 'Huntcliff ware', by far the most common type being Type 26, 'The Huntcliff cooking-pot' (*ibid.*, 242-4). The extent to which this form dominated assemblages is demonstrated by Hull's table of his types; of a total of 512 vessels in 'Huntcliff-ware' recovered from excavations at *all* of the signal-stations, no less than 477 - 93% - were Type 26 jars (*ibid.*, 250). The remainder comprised bowls (Types 27, 28), dishes/platters (31, 32) and a smattering (usually single examples) of beakers, jugs and mortaria. In the case of most of these forms, the copying grey- or parchment-ware models from Crambeck were clearly recognisable (cf. Types 27, 28, 30, 31), in contrast to the Type 26 jars, of which Hull reported, 'There is little to show how or when this form developed' (*ibid.*, 243; cf. also 221). Hull's primary classifications of the 'Huntcliff-type' jar and related forms are presented as Fig.3.1 - 3.5.

Hull based his classification primarily on distinctive fabrics. At the signal-stations he identified samian, Castor Ware (these in *very* small quantities) 'Castle Howard Ware' [Crambeck] (in its grey and buff variants) and 'Huntcliff ware'. Within each of these fabric groups, types were defined by vessel form, usually comprising a range of comparable, but by no means identical, profiles (cf. Type 26, *ibid.*, fig.11, 243). A range of fabrics represented in small quantities were grouped together under 'various wares', usually comprising single examples of distinctive forms in otherwise unrepresented fabrics. The exception is Type 24, a sandy coarse-ware fabric, described as similar to Huntcliff-ware but without the calcite inclusions (*ibid.*, 240), of which almost 80 examples are listed from all of the signal-station sites.

Hull's classification of 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted wares has proved enduring. No major published study has sought to significantly revise it, largely because, as Hull noted in his original paper, the fabric itself is distinctive, the range of forms limited, and the whole corpus massively dominated by the Huntcliff-type jar form (*ibid.* 221, 242). Notwithstanding the lack of any published overview in the last half-century, however, there have been incremental modifications to Hull's scheme resulting from the work of researchers over that



**Type 24 - Jars of coarse grey to black clay :** clay sandy grey to black with a blackened surface; '...may very well be the same as Huntcliff ware...without the calcite grit'; 'The worn condition and small size of the fragments suggest that they belong to the earlier part of the occupation'. This e.g. grey-black, latticed; Diam. 5 ins. (fig.9/4, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : grey, grey surface; Diam. 5 ins. (fig.9/5, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : grey, (burnt red); Diam. unascertainable. (fig.9/6, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : grey, black surface, latticed; Diam. 5 ins. (fig.9/7, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : coarse grey, smoothed surface, latticed; Diam. 4.75 ins. (fig.9/8, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : black; Diam. 4.75 ins. (fig.9/9, p.239; descr. p.240)



*ditto* : grey; Diam. 4.50 ins. (fig.9/10, p.239; descr. p.241)



*ditto* : black; Diam. 4.75 ins. (fig.9/11, p.239; descr. p.241)

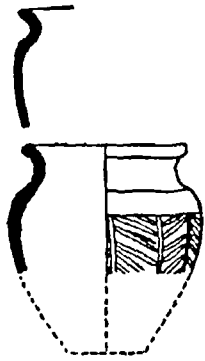


*ditto* : black, gritted ware; Diam. 3.75 ins. (fig.9/12, p.239; descr. p.241)

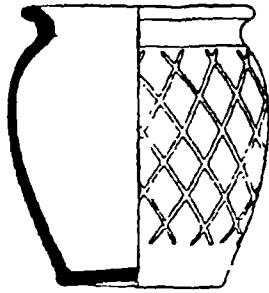
Fig. 3.1

Calcite-gritted and related wares : M.R. Hull's (1932) form series, Type 24.





*ditto* : black, gritted ware; Diam. 5 ins.  
(fig.9/12a, p.239; descr. p.241)



*ditto* : black, scored decoration; Diam. 3.5 ins.  
(fig.9/13, p.239; descr. p.241)

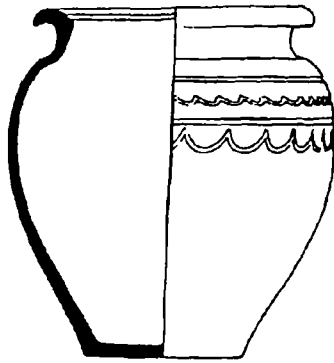
*ditto* : no description in text (pl.ii/7, facing  
p.242)



*Beaker* : grey, grey surface; Diam. 2.25 ins.  
(fig.9/14, p.239; descr. p.241).

Fig. 3.2

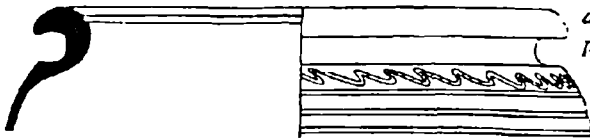
Calcite-gritted and related wares : M.R. Hull's (1932) form series, Type 24 (*cont.*).



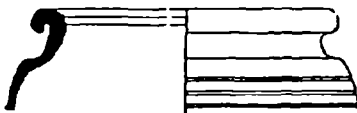
**Type 26 - Huntcliff cooking pot** : black clay, copiously charged with white calcite grit; 'shoulder turns in sharply, neck rises abruptly and terminates in a thickly-lobed and outbent rim with a clearly defined groove on the inside of the lip...exceptions...are uncommon and should be earlier in date than the majority of the type'. This e.g. no description in text (*pl.ii/3, facing p.242*)



*ditto* : no description in text (*pl.ii/6, facing p.242*)



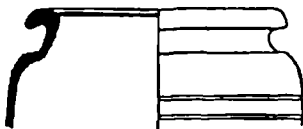
*ditto* : no description in text (*pl.ii/8, facing p.242*)



*ditto* : no description in text (*fig.11/1, p.243*)



*ditto* : no description in text (*fig.11/2, p.243*)



*ditto* : no description in text (*fig.11/3, p.243*)

**Fig. 3.3** Calcite-gritted and related wares : M.R. Hull's (1932) form series, Type 26.



Type 26 - *Huntcliff cooking pot* : no description in text (fig.11/4, p.243)



*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/5, p.243)



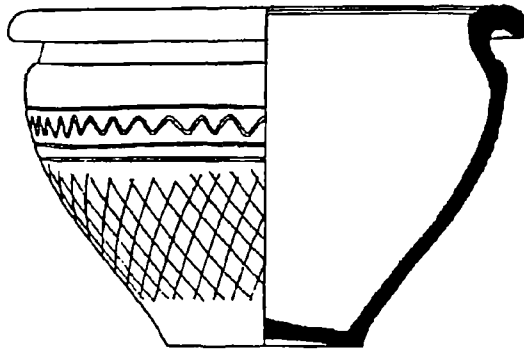
*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/6, p.243)



*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/7 p.243)

Fig. 3.4

Calcite-gritted and related wares : M.R. Hull's (1932) form series, Type 26 (*cont.*).



Type 27 - Tall, wide-mouth bowl : found at Crambeck in ware same as Type 22, and in Huntcliff ware at signal-stations. This example from Castle Howard (fig.12, p.244)



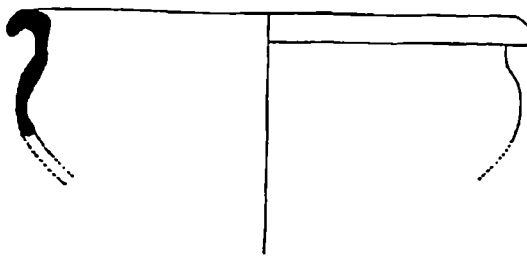
*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/8, p.243)



*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/9, p.243)



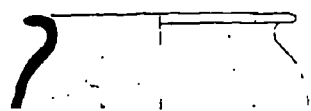
*ditto* : no description in text (fig.11/10, p.243)



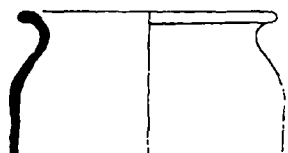
*ditto* : no description in text (pl.ii/11, facing p.242)

Fig. 3.5

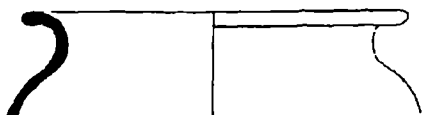
Calcite-gritted and related wares : M.R. Hull's (1932) form series, Type 27.



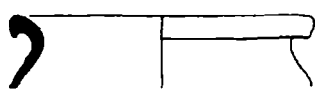
**Type JH1 - Jar with upright neck and rolled rim** : calcite-gritted K1, ceramic period 4a (late C3 - mid-C4); BST P4c (6051). (AY 16/?, fig.300.3063, p.801; descr. p.801).



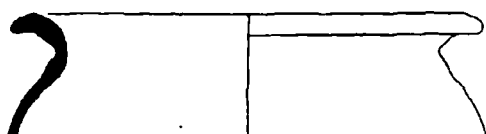
*ditto* : black fairly soft fabric, abundant cg; Skgt W (2065). (AY 16/2, fig.26.304, p.76; descr. p.77).



*ditto* : very hard grey/dark grey fabric with abundant angular quartz & cg; Skgt W (2404, 2405). (AY 16/2, fig.26.305, p.76; descr. p.77).



*ditto* : grey core w. reddish-yellow surfaces, light grey/pale brown slip, abundant small cg; BH 1/2 (10181). (AY 16/2, fig.40.552, p.98; descr. p.99).

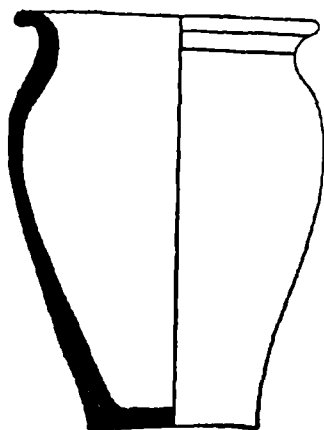


*ditto* : very hard grey fabric with grey, very pale brown & light yellowish-brown surface, with moderate, mostly rounded cg & a few angular quartz grits; BH1/2 (10096). (AY 16/2, fig.40.552, p.98; descr. p.99).



*ditto* : 'proto-Huntcliff jar in cg ware': BkS (4913). (AY 16/7, fig.300.3049, p.800; descr. p.799).

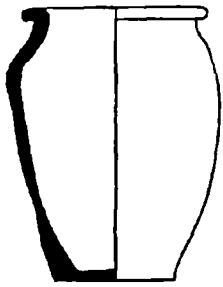
*ditto* : cg; BkS (6051), (AY 16/7, fig.300.3063, p.801; descr. p.801)



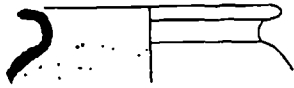
*ditto* : cg; Rwy cem. (RCHM 1, fig.69/H.76, p.90)

**Fig. 3.6**

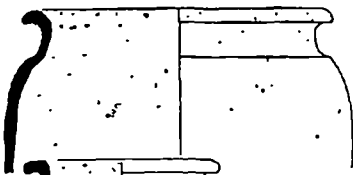
Calcite-gritted and related wares : J.Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JH.



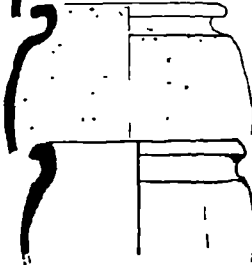
*ditto* : 'thick and coarse dark grey fabric copiously charged with calcite grit'; Vic Vaults. (RCHM 1, fig.78/H.2332, p.105, descr. p.108)



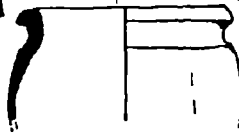
**Type JH2 - Jar with hooked rim ('proto-Huntcliff')** : calcite-gritted, ceramic period 4a-b (late C3 - late C4); QHT P5a (7162). (fig.386.3797, p.986; descr. p.985)



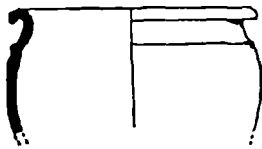
*ditto* : cg; BkS (4937). (AY 16/7, fig.301.3080, p.803; descr. p.804).



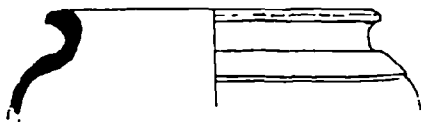
*ditto* : cg; BkS (4584). (AY 16/7, fig.302.3094, p.805; descr. p.805).



*ditto* : 'very heavy black ware; not Huntcliff'; Dvygt. (Wenham 1962, fig.13.83)



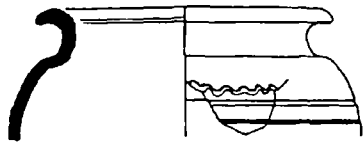
*ditto* : 'wheel-finished cooking pot in light grey fabric'; Dvygt. (Wenham 1962, fig.13.98)



*ditto* : 'calcite-gritted ware (Huntcliff) black fabric with white calcite grit'; Dvygt. (Wenham 1962, fig.18.137)

Fig. 3.7

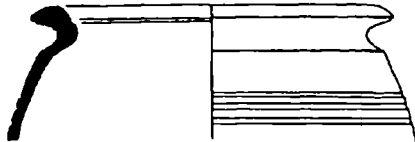
Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JH (*cont.*).



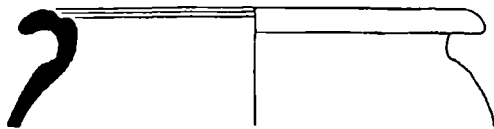
*ditto* : 'Huntcliff type', very hard grey to greyish brown fabric with sparse small calcite grits, BH1/2 (10442). (AY 16/2, fig.40.556, p.98, descr. p.101)



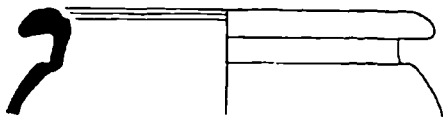
*ditto* : 'close to Huntcliff type', very hard grey to dark grey fabric with very abundant calcite grits, BH1/2 (10675). (AY 16/2, fig.40.557, p.98, descr. p.101)



*ditto* : 'Huntcliff type', hard black fabric with abundant calcite and quartz grits, BH1/2 (1081). (AY 16/2, fig.40.558, p.98, descr. p.101)



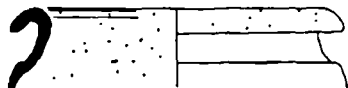
*ditto* : 'Huntcliff type', hard grey to dark grey fabric with abundant quartz grits, BH1/2 (10673). (AY 16/2, fig.40.559, p.98, descr. p.101)



*ditto* : 'Huntcliff type', hard black fabric with frequent calcite and a few small quartz inclusions, BH1/2 (2044) (AY 16/2, fig.40.560, p.98, descr. p.101)



*ditto* : 'Huntcliff type', hard black fabric with a few quartz grits, BH1/2 (10209). (AY 16/2, fig.40.561, p.98, descr. p.101)



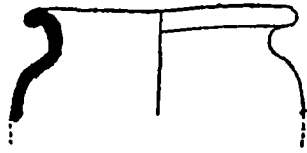
*ditto* : cg, BkS (4388). (AY 16/7, fig.301.3071, p.802, descr. p.804)



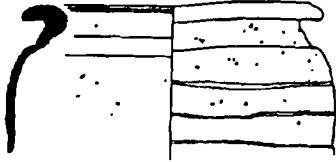
*ditto* : cg, BkS (4388). (AY 16/7, fig.301.3072, p.802, descr. p.804)

Fig. 3.8

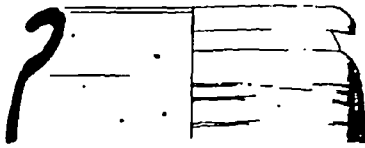
Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JH (*cont.*).



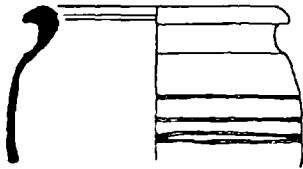
*ditto* : Dvygt. (Wenham 1962, fig.27.199)



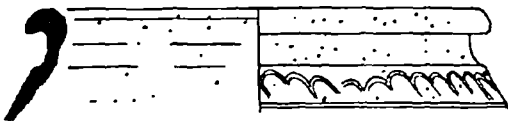
**Type JH3 - Jar with hooked rim and lid seating (Huntcliff-type)** : 'many variations in the formation of the neck and rim'; 'body may be decorated with grooves, wavy lines or crude lattices'; calcite-gritted, late h/m G18 & B18; ceramic period 4b - c (mid-C4 - C5); cg, WRW P5/1 (71852). (fig.386.3798, p.986; descr. p.985)



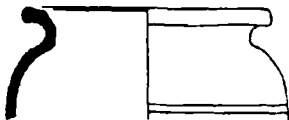
*ditto* : cg, WRW P5/1 (71508). (fig.386.3799, p.986; descr. p.985)



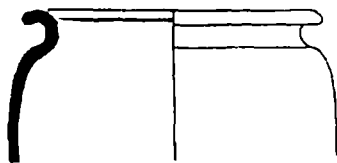
*ditto* : cg, WRW P5/1 (71852). (fig.386.3800, p.986; descr. p.985)



*ditto* : cg, ?bowl, QHT P6 (5065). (fig.386.3801, p.986; descr. p.985)



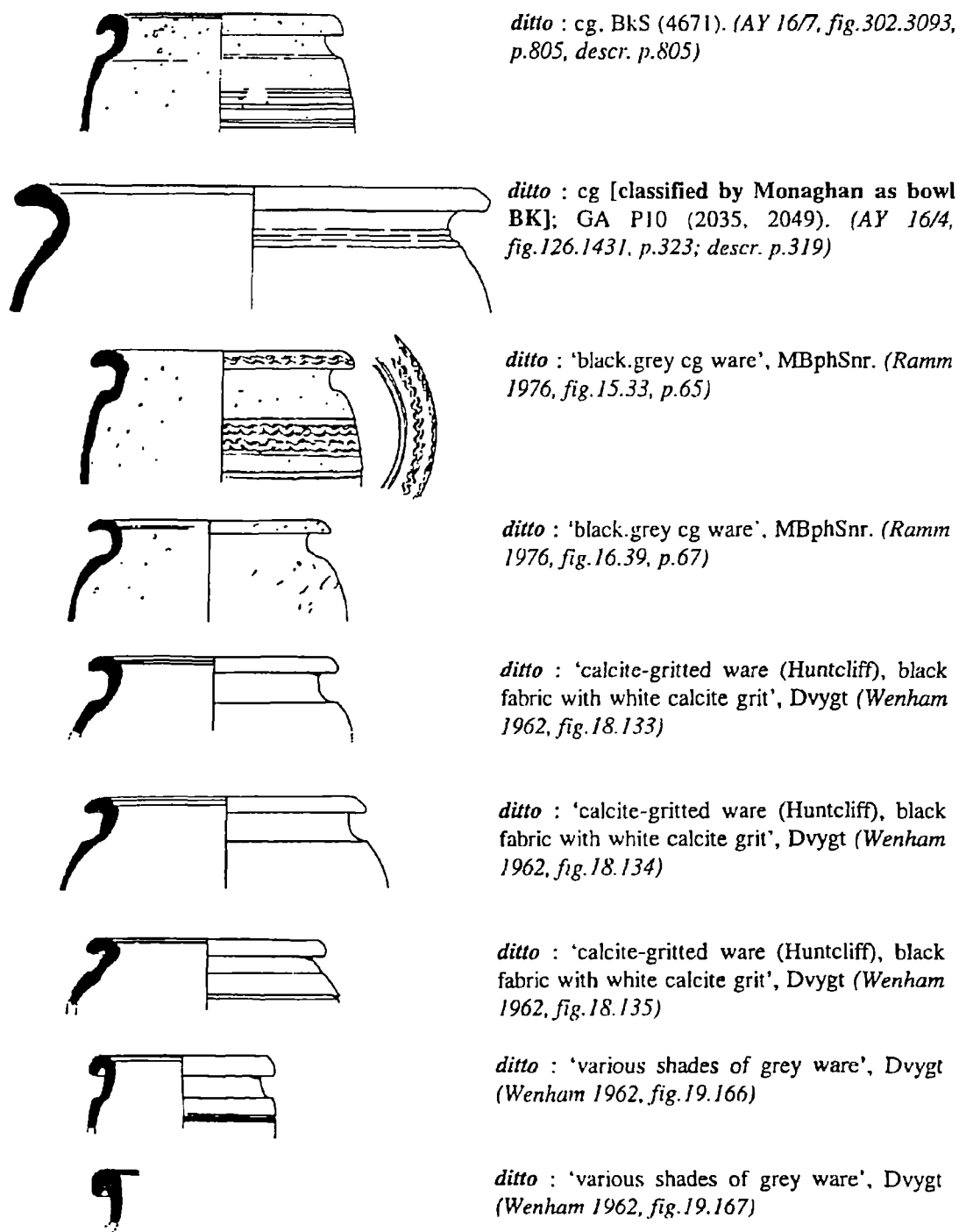
*ditto* : very hard granular black fabric with moderate small cg, BH1/2 (10524). (AY 16/2, fig.40.554, p.98, descr. p.99)



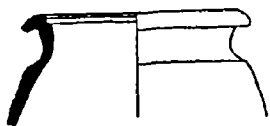
*ditto* : 'close to Huntcliff type'; grey with mostly black surface. abundant calcite and quartz grits, ?handmade body; BH1/2 (10442). (AY 16/2, fig.40.555, p.98, descr. p.101)

**Fig. 3.9** Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JH (*cont.*).





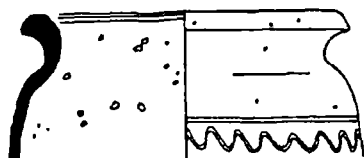
**Fig. 3.10** Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JH (*cont.*).



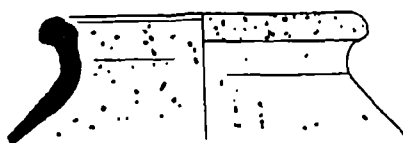
*ditto* : 'Huntcliff ware', Dvygt (Wenham 1962, fig.20.189)



*ditto* : 'Huntcliff ware', Dvygt (Wenham 1962, fig.20.190)



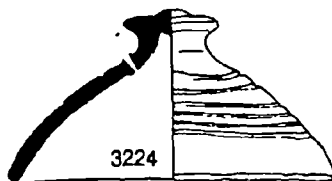
Type JH/uncl. - variations on jar type JH3 which stray wide of the norm : cg, WRW P5/1 (71667). (fig.386. 3802, p.986; descr. p.985)



*ditto* : cg, WRW P5/1 (71538, 71374). (fig.386. 3803, p.986; descr. p.985)

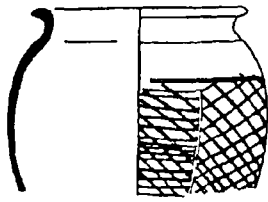


*ditto* : cg, WRW (res, 7838). (fig.386. 3804, p.986; descr. p.985)

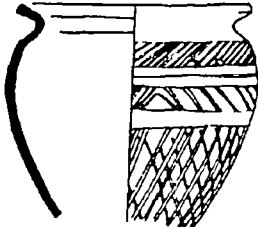


Type JL - Lid : cg, pierced, WRW P5/1 (71862). (fig.340.3224, p.910; descr. p.911)

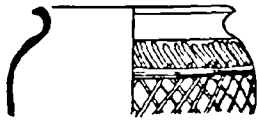
**Fig. 3.11** Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Types JH (*cont.*) and JL.



**Type JS - 'Signal-station type' jars** : 'with everted and rolled rim, may have burnished designs on upper body and shoulder, including lattices, swirls and 'ferns'. A composite between BB1 JC & Huntcliff JH styles'; calcite-gritted, late h/m B18; ceramic period 4b - c (mid-C4 - C5); late h/m B18, WRW P5/1 (72073). (fig.389.3835, p.990; descr. p.989)



*ditto* : late h/m B18, WRW P5/1 (71852, 71023). (fig.389.3836, p.990; descr. p.989)



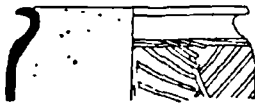
*ditto* : late h/m B18, WRW P5/1 (71729). (fig.389.3837, p.990; descr. p.989)



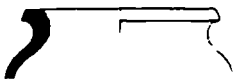
*ditto* : cg, WRW P6 (71255). (fig.389.3838, p.990; descr. p.989)



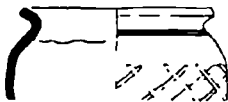
*ditto* : grey to dark grey fabric with very few grits, BH1/2 (10731) (AY 16/2, fig.36.481, p.92; descr. p.93)



*ditto* : cg, burnished decoration, BkS (6213) (AY 16/7, fig.301.3083, p.803, descr. p.804)

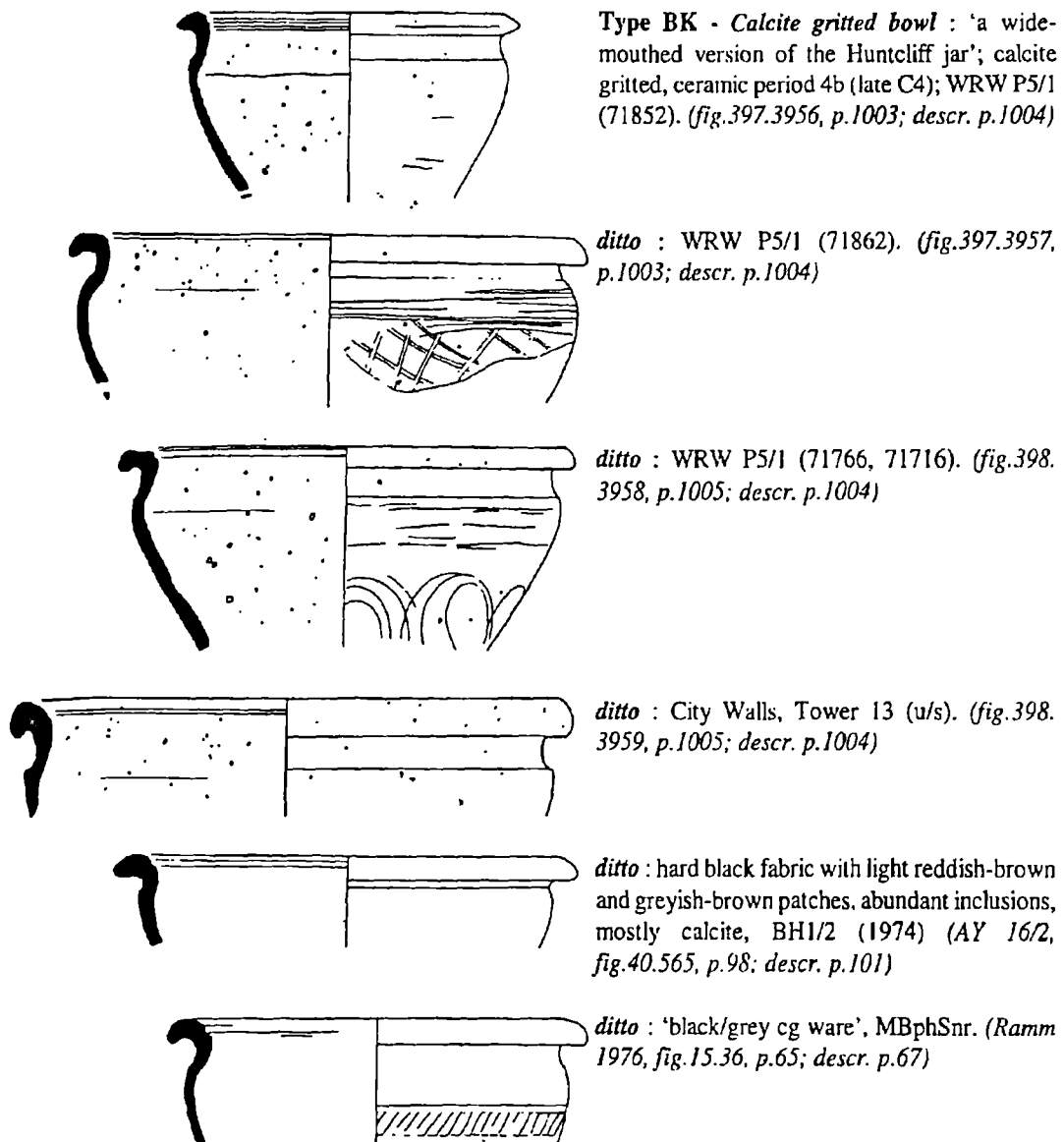


*ditto* : late h/m, BkS (4453) (AY 16/7, fig.302.3099, p.805, descr. p.805)



*ditto* : late h/m, BkS (4453) (AY 16/7, fig.302.3100, p.805, descr. p.805)

**Fig. 3.12** Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type JS.



**Fig. 3.13** Calcite-gritted and related wares : J. Monaghan's (1997) form series, Type BK.

period. These will be considered under the headings of form and fabric.

#### 6.4.3.2 Development of Hull's classification: form

The origins of the Huntcliff-type and related jars in the earlier Knapton jars, and ultimately in the regional jar forms of the LPRIA have been referred to in a previous section of this chapter (6.2), and were recognised from the 1920s (Collingwood 1930, 242; Hull 1932, 243). Post Second World War, research in both east Yorkshire and on Hadrian's Wall led to the recognition of a range of distinct types, whose discrimination was largely dependent on their particular rim forms. These were classified (although the classification has not been published) by Evans as 'S-bend profile' (e.g. Fig.3.6, 2065), 'horizontal everted rim' and 'overhanging rim' jars (Evans 1985, 305; Fig.3.7, 7162, 4937). The last of these had previously been termed 'proto-Huntcliff' by Rigby. Evans also recognised as a distinct type the Huntcliff jar form *without* a lid-seating groove around the inside of the rim (Evans 1985, 305; Fig.3.7, 4584), a variant which had been identified by Hull (1932, 243). Evans followed Hull in considering this 'near-Huntcliff' variant as a precursor to the Huntcliff-type proper. His overall chronology for these variants saw 'S-bend profile' and 'horizontal everted rim' jars as originating in the early 4th century, emerging in that sequence. The 'proto-Huntcliff / overhanging rim' type was attributed to the mid-4th century. This neat formal development was rather spoiled, however, by the apparent recognition of the 'near-Huntcliff' type in an early-4th century group from Beadlam (Evans 1985, 311-12).

Evans' classification of jar forms has recently been augmented by the publication of the corpus of Romano-British pottery from York, including the range of forms in calcite-gritted fabrics. Monaghan identifies two variants of the Knapton-type jar, one with an 'upright, often square' rim (JK 1), the second with a 'more cursive' rim (JK 2) (Monaghan 1997, 985, fig. 385, 3809-14; fig. 386, 3814). These he dates, in York, to the period *c.* AD 200-280 (Monaghan's 'Ceramic Period [CP] late 2b-3b'. Evans (*pers.comm.*, 1999) has, however, questioned whether all of the published examples should in fact be classified as Knapton-type jars. Monaghan's classification of the later, 'developed' calcite-gritted jars,

comprises vessels 'with upright neck and rolled rim' (JH 1; CP 4a, *c.*AD 280-360), 'with hooked rim [proto-Huntcliff]' (JH 2; CP 4a-b, *c.*AD 280-410), and 'Hooked rim and lid-seating [Huntcliff-type]' (JH 3; CP 4b-c, *c.*AD 360-after AD 410) (Monaghan 1997, fig.386, 3797-3804).

In an additional category of calcite-gritted, or at least related coarse-ware jars, Monaghan identifies his Type JS, described as the 'Signal station type jar', which he dates to the period *c.*AD 360-after AD 410 (CP 4b-c; Monaghan 1997, 989, fig.389, 3835-8; Fig.3.12). The term (which risks confusion, since the label 'signal-station types / jars / wares' has often been used generically for later 4th century calcite-gritted wares) is applied because the four illustrated vessels are clearly (as acknowledged by Monaghan; *ibid.*, 991) of the same type as Hull's Type 24 (Hull 1932, 239, fig.9, 4-14; Fig.3.1-2). They are grouped together as a result of vessel shape and rim form, but also because of the extensive use of linear and latticed burnished decoration across the whole jar. Three of the four illustrated examples do not, in fact, include calcite in their fabric, a point which will be returned to in the subsequent section. Monaghan's classification is presented here as Fig.3.6 - 3.13.

There is clearly by no means a 100% correspondence between the vessel form classifications employed by Evans and Monaghan. Furthermore, Monaghan acknowledges two considerations of significance to this thesis. Firstly, there are a significant number of calcite-gritted vessels which do not fit comfortably in the classification based on the received criteria (which, in Monaghan's phrase, 'stray wide of the norm'; 1997, 985). Secondly, within his JH 3 (Huntcliff-type) category, there are many recognisable variations, particularly in respect of rim-form (*ibid.*, 909). These points will be returned to in 6.4.4.

#### 6.4.3.3 Development of Hull's classification: fabrics

As originally defined, 'Huntcliff-ware' - in this instance referring to fabric rather than distinctive vessel form - was identified as containing calcite grits, and having been fired to a dirty-grey or deep black colour (Hornsby and Stanton 1912, 228; Hull 1932, 242).

Hornsby and Stanton noted that a small proportion of the sherds from Huntcliff had been fired brownish-red (*ibid.*). Their report also noted, by implication, a range of variations, from 'fine' to 'coarse', within the fabric classification. These were described as the 'extremes' to either side of a 'typical', illustrated sherd (*ibid.*; fig.41) (The descriptions are, respectively; 'light brown, smooth in surface, fairly free from grit' [*ibid.*, fig.40, 16]; 'wholly hand-made, badly baked, uneven in colour' [*ibid.*, fig.40, 30]). The former description seems to correspond closely to Evans' fabric 282).

That 4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted wares were fired to a range of colours and hardnesses, whether this was deliberate or accidental, was implicitly acknowledged by Philip Corder in his 1928 publication of the Crambeck kiln assemblage, in which each individual illustrated example was provided with a description of fabric colour, and occasionally of its texture and manufacturing characteristics (Corder 1989a, 23). Corder, *contra* Hornsby and Stanton, persisted with the term 'Vesicular Ware', although he did offer the alternative, and more strictly empirical, 'Black-Pitted Ware' (*ibid.*). Hull's authoritative study of four years later was to establish the usage 'Huntcliff Ware' for the next two generations, and in the same publication he argued that 'descriptions of the colour of Roman coarse ware [here referring to all 'non-fine' wares - MW] can be completely worthless'. This argument was presented as a result of Hull's examination of Corder's Crambeck kiln assemblage, presumably for the most part consisting of mis-firings and kiln 'wasters', which he described as 'baked from every imaginable shade of white to buff, grey and brown, with numerous red examples' (Hull 1932, 225).

Subsequent trends in the description and classification of calcite-gritted ceramic fabrics may be traced from these early origins. The variables of tempering agent, texture, hardness and colour have all frequently been employed in the *description* of pottery within this broad categorisation, but for purposes of *classification* the first of these has predominated. This presents some problems, however, in that the very term 'calcite-gritted' rather limits the potential for discrimination on this basis! The fundamental distinction usually made in this regard is between sherds in which calcite is the predominant tempering agent, and those in which it occurs in small quantities, but in which quartz (i.e., usually, fine-, medium- or coarse-grained sand) comprises the main inclusion. Thus Evans (1985, 320 -

24; 354-70) distinguishes between, on the one hand, his 'main' calcite-gritted fabric, 009, and two 'sandy' variants, 282 and 007/168, arguing that these three fabrics represent the output of at least two and probably three different production sites, a case which his NAA results on sherds in these fabrics goes some way to supporting. For the York corpus, Monaghan also makes a fundamental distinction between calcite-gritted wares (his fabric group K; 1997, 907) and broadly contemporary, related, but distinct, sand-tempered 'late hand-made' fabrics (B18 and G18; *ibid.*, 911).

At first sight this seems to be a perfectly rational and logical way of sub-dividing this coarse pottery. And indeed it is. Calcite and quartz-sand are visually, mineralogically and chemically distinct, and can be consistently discriminated accordingly. There are, inevitably, individual cases in which the precise ratio of calcite to sand makes attribution debatable, but for the most part the distinction is readily observable and can be consistently recognised. But the *interpretative implications* of such classification may not be so straightforward. Currently, these classifications operate within a framework of assumptions which posits consolidated, commercially oriented production sites, manufacturing for specific tastes and consumer preference. Thus the specifics of vessel form, colour and even the temper used are all envisaged as representing significant attributes of 'the product' which may affect the decision on the part of the consumer to buy or not to buy. Hermetic fabric classifications thus reflect distinct, competing industries.

Viewed from the perspective of the processes, organisation and context of *production*, these *verités* may not seem so self evident. It is widely acknowledged, for example, that the *quantities* of any particular variant of temper incorporated into the clay matrix prior to vessel forming may vary according to the climatic and ground conditions which affect the plasticity of the clay (Orton *et al* 1993, 115). If this is the case, is it not equally possible that calcite *or* sand might be selected *by the same potter* in response to such variables? Most of the probable or possible locations suggested for the manufacture of calcite-gritted and related coarse-wares in east Yorkshire, by previous authors and this one, are within easy reach of sources of sand *and* calcite. It seems entirely possible, indeed, that some riverine clays may incorporate sand in appropriate quantities to serve as fabric temper adequate for firing, thus rendering the addition of calcite unnecessary. Given the emphasis placed in this



study on the primary role of these coarse-ware jars as *containers* rather than *commodities*, such strategies appear entirely plausible. Rather than comparable or near-identical vessel forms appearing in these distinct fabrics representing imitation and counter-imitation by ‘competing industries’, they may simply indicate case-specific responses to the circumstances in which the particular vessels were manufactured; conceivably by the same pair(s) of hands. Such an interpretation is not negated by Evans NAA results, which clearly discriminate between his 009 (calcite) and 007/168 (sand) fabrics; given the different chemical and mineralogical environments from which these tempering agents will have come (even if geographically close), it would hardly be surprising if such analysis identifies ‘peaks’ of different minerals. Evans admits the possibility of different tempers creating different ‘signatures’ (1985, 145). The point is further emphasised by Vince’s comment, referred to above, regarding the role of river systems in dispersing mineral trace elements in sediments across entire river basins. Accepting, with Evans, a Vale of Pickering source for at least some of his sand-tempered fabrics, vessels made from clays and sand dug at either end of the Vale, some 25 kms apart but both deriving from the river Derwent, which drains the high plateau of the North York Moors, might have more in common mineralogically than those incorporating calcite from the Wold scarp, which could have been obtained less than a kilometre from either site. (On this basis, given the distinction Evans obtained between calcite-gritted Knapton-ware and the later Huntcliff fabrics, the location of the main source of production for the latter on the other side of the Wolds watershed, in the valley of the river Hull, becomes even more attractive). At a more basic level, the argument that all sand *or* calcite-tempered vessels must, of necessity, derive from the same source would seem a *prima facie* over-generalisation.

These arguments are not presented to discredit or invalidate Evans’ results and approach, but simply to demonstrate that their *interpretation* is in large part a function of the assumptions which accompany the notions of market-based production which permeate Romano-British studies. Beyond a basic division between sand- and calcite-tempered fabrics, which at best seem likely, in most circumstances, to identify localities in highly general terms, we are no nearer knowing how production was actually *organised* on the ground. At what level, between *all* calcite-gritted output being manufactured at two or three giant production sites, and a multiplicity of small localities within a broad district, was

production organised? Compositional analyses such as NAA do not, in themselves, appear to hold the answer to this question.

If temper and clay ‘signature’ based on chemical and mineralogical composition seem able to take us only so far in investigating the organisation of coarse-ware production in east Yorkshire, then other, perhaps less strictly ‘objective’ attributes require consideration. Apart from vessel form, considered in the previous section, these involve details of the surface treatment and ‘finish’ of vessels (including, but not restricted to, various forms of decoration), and the characteristics imparted by the firing of the vessel, including hardness, texture and colour.

That these attributes have figured in descriptions of calcite-gritted and related fabrics in east Yorkshire since they were first recognised has already been noted. Following the previously cited observations of M.R.Hull, however, these attributes, and particularly that of fabric colour, have been reduced to a secondary role. There is in the literature, nevertheless, an undercurrent which seems to indicate an unwillingness to completely discard such empirically observable variation in the classification and interpretation of the material, and this instinct has resulted in their employment in the subdivision of an otherwise seemingly homogeneous calcite-gritted corpus. Rigby’s comments from her report on the large assemblage from Rudston are worth quoting in full, as they encapsulate the situation and the descriptive, classificatory, and interpretative dilemma;

“no extensive programme of fabric analysis could be undertaken, [and] no comprehensive fabric series has been produced, but a limited fabric series based upon superficial examination with a hand-lens has been adopted. Sherds with the same tempering in roughly the same proportions are grouped together, *but they can vary considerably in colour, finish and appearance and therefore are not necessarily from the same source. The variability may be due to the lack of quality controls at any stage in production and perhaps indicate a number of small local or even domestic sources. Given the low firing temperature and the size and quantity of the tempering, the use to which the vessels were put [i.e. cooking in an open fire] no doubt markedly affected their superficial appearance even before the sherds were subjected to soil conditions. Despite*

*these reservations certain forms and fabrication recur consistently and are remarkably standardised; such fabrics have been given a specific sub-type.*”

Rigby 1980, 45 (italics and underlining by MW)

Rigby then proceeds to divide the ‘calcite-gritted’ assemblage from the site (which she in fact describes as ‘tempered with crushed calcium carbonate, both crystalline calcite and non-crystalline opaque white grits’) into six distinct fabrics, 2, 2a - 2e, with a further similar fabric, 3, distinguished by its incorporation of ‘crushed flint’ temper (*ibid.*, 45-6). No detailed overall classification of these sub-divisions is presented in the published report, but perusal of the catalogue seems to indicate that they rely heavily on descriptions of the core and surfaces of the vessel. Thus fabrics 2a and 2b are defined by their grey or light-grey core and buff or brown surfaces (*ibid.*, 47), whilst Evans has noted that Rigby’s fabric 2e, a sandy fabric with few calcite inclusions, which occurs in both grey/black and brown variants (*cf. ibid.*, 85), appears to correspond to his own sandy fabrics, 282 and 007/168 (Evans 1985, 320, 369). Evans’ discrimination between 282 and 007/168 essentially on the basis of their *colour* contrasts with his willingness to amalgamate without differentiation the vast calcite-gritted (Evans 009) corpus, which undoubtedly exhibits many more comparable variations in colour and surface treatment. Monaghan’s classification of a single, monolithic calcite-gritted category, with the sub-division of his ‘late hand-made’ fabrics into two variants (B18 and G18) on the basis of the presence or absence of surface decoration, exhibits a similar inconsistency.

#### 6.4.4 A revised classification

The classification employed in this thesis is intended to be consistent with the investigation of issues concerning ceramic production in its wider agrarian and social context, as outlined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and applied in an east Yorkshire context earlier in this chapter. The use of fabric inclusions as a criterion for description and classification is, of course, a commonplace (*cf. Orton et al* 1993, 132-144), although an attempt is made here (*cf. Chapter 8.1*) to *situate* ceramic manufacture within practices of wider agrarian production, an approach which ceramic classifications are not usually tailored to exploit. It is the detailed recording of fabrics by their *colour*, however, which requires greater

elaboration.

In terms of the appearance of ceramic vessels, it is important to distinguish between those characteristics which result from conscious decision - vessel form, surface treatment and decoration - and those which result from the specific combination of kiln temperature and environment, properties of clay and tempering agent, and the particular sequence and characteristics of the heating and cooling of the kiln environment during firing; the prime determinants of fabric colour. Whilst it is acknowledged that the latter are controllable, and clearly *were* controlled in the firing of Romano-British pottery (cf. the consistent production of reduced [black, grey] and oxidised [red, orange] fabrics, in oxygen-starved and oxygen-rich firing environments respectively, for many wheel-thrown fabrics), in the case of coarse-wares M.R.Hull's comments relating to the arbitrary nature of fabric coloration, cited above, are considered axiomatic. Differences in this respect are often attributed to 'randomising' factors such as the particular atmospheric, climatic and weather conditions during firing, the position of a vessel or vessels within a kiln, or even the specific part of an *individual* vessel which happens to be examined as a sherd, and are thus not considered a reliable indicator of production at a specific centre; similarities may be the fortuitous result of comparable conditions prevailing at wholly different locations.

Set against these considerations are others which *do* support the consistent use of fabric colour in the classification of coarse ceramics. Firstly, as has been argued above, classification *by inclusions alone* need not be a reliable guide to the output of individual production sites or localities. Secondly, as we have seen, fabric coloration *is* in fact used in such classifications anyway. To these may be added several further arguments. The building, loading, firing and cooling of clamps or kilns is, it may be argued, every bit as culturally specific an activity as the shaping, finishing or decoration of the pots themselves. The repeated use of the same manufacturing techniques with the same specific nuances of raw material and method are likely, much of the time, to produce comparable 'signatures' on the final ceramic product, notwithstanding unpremeditated variations which may sometimes result from local conditions at the time of firing. Where study encompasses large numbers of sherds from different sites, the repeated occurrence of fabrics which, in these terms, are directly comparable, strongly suggests that there is merit in the careful recording and

consideration of such variation, especially when, as is the case with several of the fabric types identified in this thesis, the fabric 'signature' is particularly distinctive.

A further justification for the incorporation of this information into fabric classifications is the direct result of the particular research questions developed in Chapters 1 to 5. The prime concern of this thesis is not the actual *locations* of production sites, although, as Chapter 5 has demonstrated, these are of interest and relevance to the arguments presented, but *the conditions in and under which the ceramics were produced*. Thus fabric distinctions relating to firing conditions, whether derived from colour or hardness, which indicate differences in firing temperature achieved, evenness of firing throughout a vessel, controlled or 'randomised' fluctuation in firing environment, and indications of the deliberate manipulation of any of these to achieve a specified final appearance, may offer potential to inform on the degree to which calcite-gritted ware production was integrated into one or other of the modes of production discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Having considered the role of different ceramic characteristics in previous classifications of 4<sup>th</sup> century east Yorkshire coarse-wares, and argued for greater consideration of the 'firing characteristics' of colour and hardness, alongside the more widely-employed attributes of vessel form, coarse inclusions and surface treatment / decoration, a brief description of the principles of classification of the material studied for this thesis can be presented. These, and the actual processes involved, are specified in greater detail in Appendix 2

For *fabric*, sherds were classified according to inclusions and colour(s), as determined by examination of a fresh break. Eighty-four (84) distinct variants were identified from assemblages from the four sites examined (Wellington Row, York; York Minster; Crossgates, Seamer; Elmswell). These fabric variants were subsequently amalgamated into higher order groupings ('Fabric Groups') based on two distinct criteria - inclusions and firing conditions - thus creating 'INCL' and 'FC' fabric groups. (Each of the 84 individual fabric types belonged to both an INCL and an FC grouping. These are the classifications employed in the analyses presented in Chapter 7. The groupings are listed in

Appendix 2, pp. 407 - 408.

For *vessel form*, the decision was taken to use rim-forms as the fundamental unit of classification, since this is the main criterion employed in previous classifications of calcite-gritted wares (cf. 6.4.3, above), and it was felt that greater, potentially significant variation could be identified in the elaborate 'Huntcliff-type' rim-forms than was taken account of in the existing schema. The system employed involved the identification of five attributes possessed by each of these rim-forms, and their description using a series of alphabetic and numeric codes, linked together to create a detailed, descriptive classification of the entire rim ( Fig.4). The system and classificatory terms are described in detail in Appendix 2.

	He3op	He3rap	He3ol	He3ral		He4op	He4rap	He4ol	He4ral		He5op	He5rap	He5ol	He5ral
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														

Fig. 4 Re-classification of calcite-gritted jar rim-forms

## **Chapter 7 : Calcite-gritted ware assemblages in York and east Yorkshire**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The original aim of the research which constitutes this thesis was the identification of variants of late Romano-British coarse ceramics in east Yorkshire, based on distinctive characteristics of fabric or form, which might confirm their manufacture beyond *c.* AD 400 and into the middle or later 5<sup>th</sup> century. For this to be achieved obviously requires the demonstration that such variations occur in a recognisable *sequence*, and that that sequence then be linked to an *absolute chronology*. As background research proceeded, the point was emphasised that variability in form and fabric was closely linked to organisation of production within the agrarian economy, and that coarse ceramics themselves needed to be considered, fundamentally, as components of that economy. The range of questions to which the research related could thus be seen to be considerably wider than had originally been anticipated. This offered both a caution and an opportunity in the interpretation of the results of analysis. On the one hand it served to emphasise the point that variability in ceramics, as in other artefacts, is not in itself a *direct* function of date of manufacture, even where aspects of that variability may demonstrably be linked to chronology to a significant degree. The point has been well-made that

“At any point in space and time a pottery assemblage will be the result of the social and economic structures of society and its level of technology, the location of the site and its level and function within the social and economic structure. The excavated assemblage will further be the product of the area of the site excavated (since the social, economic and functional aspects of the site may well be spatially structured), method of discard, previous activity (in the form of stratigraphically residual material), later activity (in the form of erosion, disturbance etc.) and archaeological methods and beliefs”,

and goes on to emphasise the corollary of this, that

“chronological and spatial variations in assemblages are no more than the sum of all these factors acting at each point in space / time.”



It would be difficult to come up with a more succinct statement of the message of the first five chapters of this thesis. Whilst Evans offers this quotation with approval, his interpretation of his types - notably the various rim forms which he sees as having formed a developmental sequence through the 4<sup>th</sup> century - does not always seem to acknowledge its implications, and *does*, in effect, treat them as having their particular characteristics simply because they were manufactured during a specific time-period. As a corollary of this, their presence or absence is itself seen as an indicator of date.

Breaking with this convention / assumption may introduce complexity into a seemingly straightforward picture. However, bringing contextual information to bear on the study of ceramics in the manner proposed by Millett also offers the prospect of linking ceramic variability over time to social *dynamics*; rather than just isolating specific artefact types as being diagnostic of date, their characteristics can be used to identify the actual meaning and trajectory of change. It is hoped that this will be demonstrated in this and the final chapter.

The broadening of the interpretative scope of the thesis as background research progressed did not, however, alter the primary *desiderata* for the study; a large assemblage of late-4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted ware, from a well-stratified, extended sequence, excavated and recorded to modern standards of detail and systematisation, with the ceramics preferably co-stratified with an extensive coin-list to facilitate the linkage of any observable change to an absolute chronology. The site selected, at Wellington Row, York, had the further advantage, for this researcher, of ready access to all aspects of the ceramic and stratigraphic archive. Since the analyses of stratigraphy and ceramics from this site form the central component of this thesis, the characteristics of the site, its archive, the procedures employed in its analysis and the structural phases thus identified require systematic presentation. (The *detail* of the last of these is presented as Appendix 3)

## 7.2 Wellington Row, York

### 7.2.1 The site and excavations

The site at Wellington Row, York, was excavated by York Archaeological Trust, under the field direction of Dr Patrick Ottaway, between May 1988 and October 1989, with a hiatus between February and August 1989 (Ottaway 1988b, 1989a, b). Trial excavations were carried out in autumn 1987, when the site still formed part of Leedhams Garage (idem. 1988a), but for most of its history it was colloquially known as the 'Stakis Hotel site'. Before development commenced, however, it was sold to General Accident Assurance (idem., 1989b). A final, brief archaeological investigation was carried out in late summer 1990 (idem., 1990). The building eventually constructed on the site currently serves as the regional headquarters for Norwich Union.

The site is situated on the south-west bank of the river Ouse, within the area of the *colonia*, in what was assumed, at the commencement of the excavation, to be the locality of the Roman bridgehead over the Ouse, linking the civilian settlement with the fortress (idem. 1988a, 17). This was a supposition which would be confirmed by the excavation (idem. 1989a, 13-15; 1990). In the main phase of the excavation, five areas were investigated, including three across the line of the Roman road leading to the bridge. The largest, however, measuring 20.00 m. x 15.00 m., with its long axis aligned north-west / south-east, parallel to Wellington Row, was sited immediately to the north-west of the Roman road. This area, Area 7, was excavated within a steel-shored coffer dam to a depth of up to 5.00 m below the modern ground surface, and produced a well-stratified sequence of deposits, from river silts of the pre-Roman Ouse to 19<sup>th</sup> century brick foundations. The deposits spanning the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD represent one of the largest areas of Roman townscape ever revealed in York, and certainly *the* most extensive excavation of an area of the *colonia* in modern times (cf. idem. 1993, 73). Furthermore, it was recognised in the course of excavation that an extended sequence of deposits above the latest layers of unequivocally Roman date were likely to have originated in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, offering the potential for studying this period at a level of detail and with quality of data never before possible in the city.

The site was excavated and recorded using the 'single-context planning' system, developed firstly in London and then in York specifically to tackle the deep, complex and often fragmentary stratification typical of many urban sites (Pearson and Williams 1993). This method allows the positional relationships, stratigraphic, sequential and spatial, of any one given context to all others on the site to be interrogated in the course of post-excavation analysis. When combined with detailed descriptions of the physical characteristics of those contexts, and inventories of the artefacts and ecofacts specific to each one, it allows the reconstruction of the sequence of events, actions and activities which were responsible for the creation of an excavated site with unrivalled accuracy and level of detail. Importantly for this thesis, it also creates an archive sufficiently comprehensive for subsequent researchers to be able to examine in detail the conclusions reached by the excavator / report author, and where necessary to challenge or modify those conclusions.

The earliest evidence from Wellington Row, probably dating to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, consisted of two ditches cut into the silts of the Ouse floodplain, and aligned towards the river itself; broadly contemporary was the construction of the earliest manifestation of a Roman road from the south-west (heading towards what would be, if it was not already, the Roman bridge over the Ouse, located a few metres to the north-east of the excavation), and a similar gravel street laid out at 90° to this one, parallel to the river itself. This layout was subsequently drastically altered by the construction of a large building, measuring 15.50m. x 10.50m. and occupying the north-eastern two-thirds of the excavated area (Fig.5). With its long axis also roughly parallel to the river, but some 10° askew that of Area 7 itself, the building was constructed throughout of oolitic limestone on substantial cobble-and-clay footings, themselves resting on timber piles (Ottaway 1993, 73, fig. 37/1, 75). The north-east wall of the building survived to a height of almost two metres above its foundations. A series of four substantial, equidistant bases for roof supports, comprised of stacks of large millstone-grit blocks, was arranged longitudinally along the centre line of the building. A date in the mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century was favoured by the excavator its construction, but a slightly later, early 3<sup>rd</sup> century date has been suggested by this writer, (above, 5.2.2), and is not at odds with the available dating evidence (cf. Monaghan 1997, 1110).

The subsequent Roman and immediate post-Roman history of the site largely

consists of modifications to the structure and interior of this building. The final report on the site has not yet been published, but two moderately detailed summaries are available in print (Ottaway 1993, 73-77, 112-16; Monaghan 1997, 1108-23). In brief, the original internal arrangement comprised a raised, joisted plank floor in the south-eastern third of the structure, with what was interpreted as a clay oven set halfway along the south-western wall. Reconstruction following a fire in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century involved extending the building some 2.00 m. to the north-west, indicated by a wall-trench containing massive oak-piled footings. The interior of the newly-extended building was raised with a thick layer of limestone rubble and mortar, on which, against the south-west wall, four (and probably, originally, six) large stone blocks were arranged in a line parallel to the wall (as shown on Fig.6). These are described as 'not obviously structural', and it has been suggested that they represented the bases for seats or statues (Ottaway 1993, 76). Interpretation of this modified structure has leant heavily towards its use as a temple or similar ritual focus - such as the meeting place of a guild or *collegium* - on the basis of its open-plan interior, and the burial of a number of pots, seemingly containing offerings, within the building. (The excavator notes, however, that such practices were widespread in the Roman world, and need not in themselves indicate a ritual function for the structure; *ibid.*, 77).

### 7.2.2 Structural phases 0 - 8

The construction episode described at the end of 7.2.1 was identified by the authors of the stratigraphic report as belonging to Period 4, Phases 7 - 9 (4 / 7-9). It is the deposits and structural features physically and/or stratigraphically *above* this phase which represent the use of the building into the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and beyond; 4 / 10 - 4 / 17, 5 / 1 - 5 / 2 and 'Immediate Post-Roman' ('IPR'). A coin list of *c.* two dozen coins from 4 / 10 ends with an issue of AD 346+, providing a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) for the beginning of these phases. The excavator dated the latest recognisable floor surface within the building to *c.* AD 360 (Ottaway 1993, 112).

The subsequent history of the building he interpreted in terms of the build-up of dark silty loam, containing large quantities of artefacts and ecofacts, and equated with the 'dark earth' deposits known from many Romano-British towns (*ibid.*, 113). Seemingly

interspersed with the accumulation of 'dark earth', the burial of a coin hoard, a pot and a lamb's skeleton are again explained by the excavator in terms of 'ritual'. These episodes are subsumed in the phrase 'The building was by c.400 essentially a large rectangular rubbish pit' (ibid., 114). Subsequently, a dry-stone, earth-bonded sill wall (7664 - see Fig.9) within the building represents the latest, and most exciting structural episode. The excavator offers a date for this structure of post-AD 390 on the evidence of its stratigraphic position relative to stratified coins, but is finally only prepared to offer that 'the structure at Wellington Row may belong to the last years of the fourth century, but could, strictly speaking, be any date before the tenth century' (ibid, 116). Subsequent published comments have suggested that a 5<sup>th</sup> century date may be more positively entertained (Monaghan 1997, 1118).

Detailed examination of the structural and stratigraphic evidence indicates that a much more extended and coherent structural sequence, involving major modifications to the Area 7 stone building, can be identified. A detailed account of the shortcomings of the original stratigraphic report, and of how the phasing of the site employed in this thesis was arrived at, is included as Appendix 3. The structural phases themselves are presented in this chapter as Figs 5 - 12, with brief descriptive commentaries.

The original stone building, here identified as *structural phase 0*, is illustrated as Fig.5.

The modifications to that building, 4 / 7 - 4 / 10 in the original stratigraphic report, can be seen to be far more extensive than recognised by its authors. These have been termed *structural phase 00*, and are illustrated as Fig.6. In addition to extension to the north-west, the building was also extended to the *south-east*, and the surviving 'seat- or statue-bases' can be seen to have formed part of an arrangement of *pilae* extending across the central third of the newly extended building, represented largely by the robbing cuts for the stone post-pads. This arrangement incorporated the roof support bases from the original building. An original flue, and a replacement, which would have heated the sub-floor space between the *pilae*, were also recognised. In the north-western third of the extended building further (robbed) stone post-pads, similar in scale to those from the original building, were inserted to support the superstructure. In this phase the building may have been surrounded by a

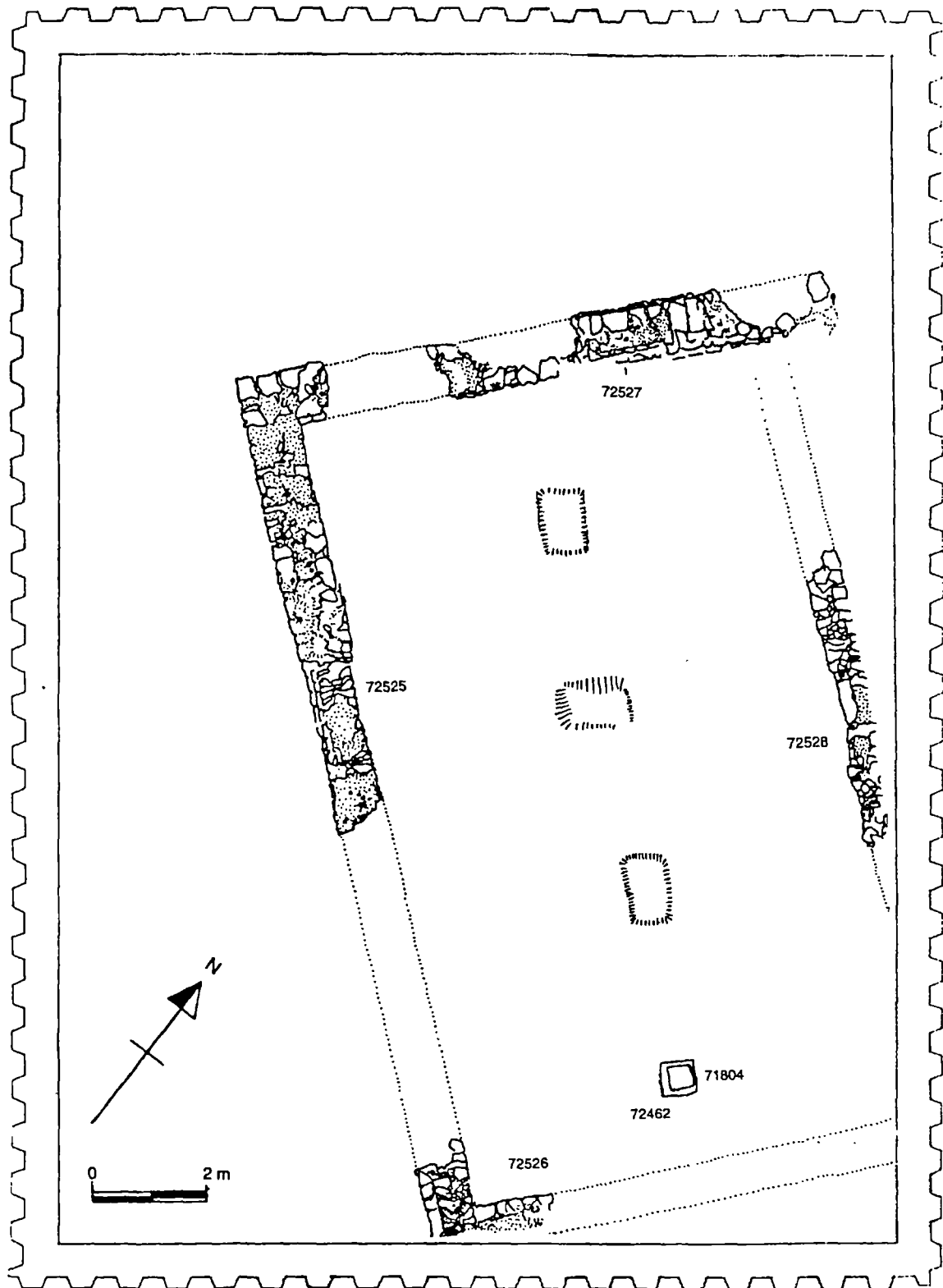


Fig. 5 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 0

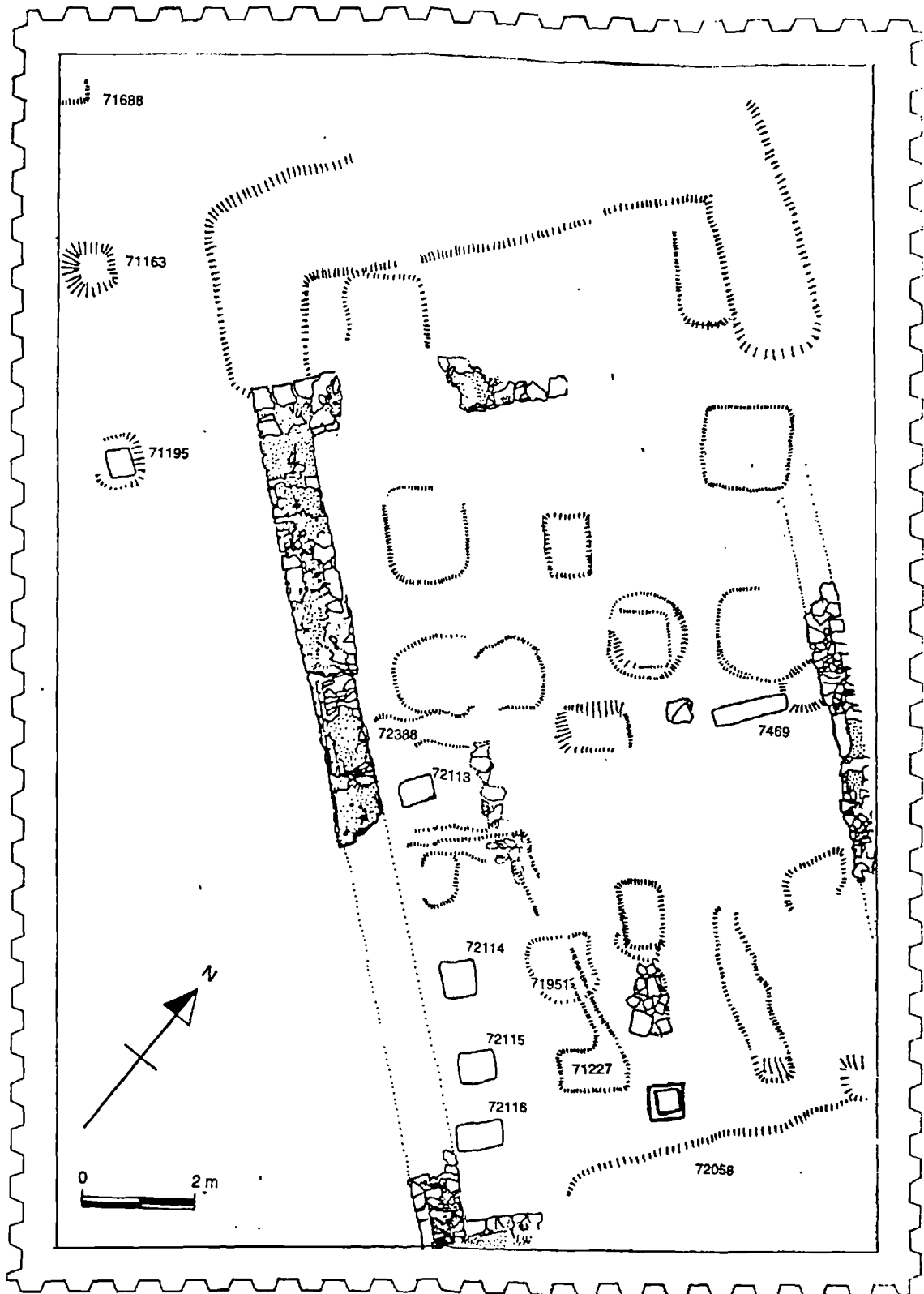


Fig.6 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 00

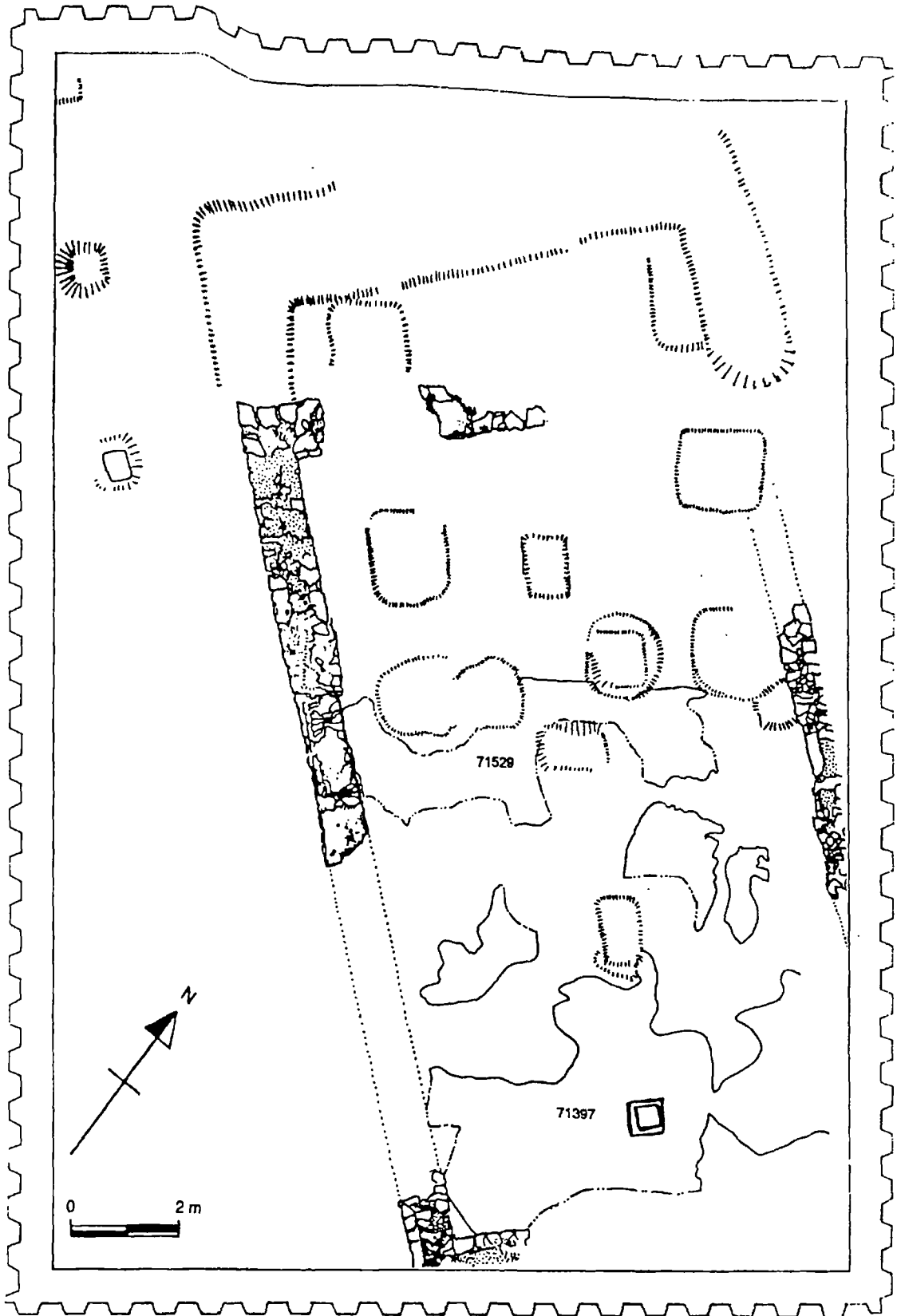


Fig.7 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phases 1 and 2



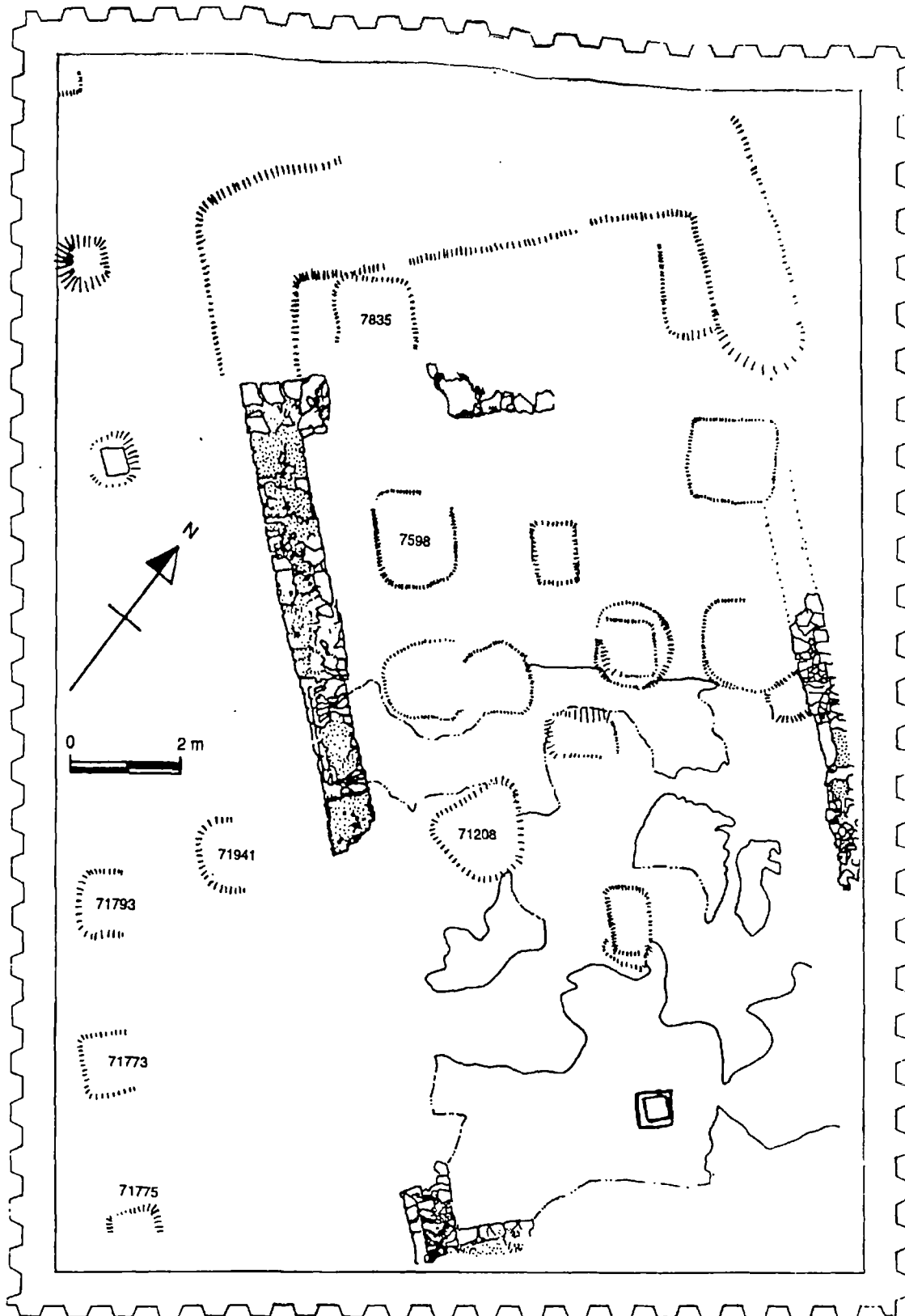


Fig. 8 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 3

colonnade, represented by substantially-founded post-pads in the northern corner of Area 7.

The first substantial calcite-gritted ware assemblage from the site came from an extensive dump deposit laid down *after* the removal of the phase 00 *pilae*, a deposit which included single coins of the periods AD 388-402 and AD 378-83, two of AD 375, *eleven* of AD 367-75 and *twelve* of AD 364-78. Taking full account of the possibility of intrusive coins, it would seem injudicious in the extreme to deny that these *structural phase 1* deposits were laid down later than AD 367, and a case could certainly be argued for a TPQ of AD 388. Fig.7 illustrates the ashes and silts of *structural phase 2* which accumulated in the area of the phase 00 hypocaust, and which seem likely to derive from some form of manufacture or processing involving intense heat. These deposits incorporated *four* coins of the of the House of Theodosius, minted between AD 388 and AD 402. (Since these issues represent the latest Roman coins habitually found on British sites, they are the only ones which will be mentioned with reference to subsequent phases).

A major modification of the south-western side of the building, involving the demolition of a six metre stretch of the original wall and the construction, again on large stone post-pads, of a 'porticus'-type structure, extending c.4.0 metres to the south-east; *structural phase 3*, illustrated as Fig.8.

A complete transformation - amounting to a total rebuild - of the phase 3 structure involved the construction of a wall, whose foundations incorporated large quantities of re-used building stone, which enclosed the footings of the original building. The post-built 'porticus' to the south-west appears to have been retained. Inside this new building, *structural phase 4* (Fig.9) the surviving dry-stone sill wall 7664 can be seen to have been one component of its internal sub-division, with others recognisable in various conditions of collapse. A south-western entrance can be identified, leading into a 'corridor' with rooms leading off to the south-east and north-west. The room to the north-west contained extensive deposits of ash, and possible traces of structures relating to whatever activity created those deposits. A ground-levelling deposit associated with this rebuilding contained another coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402).

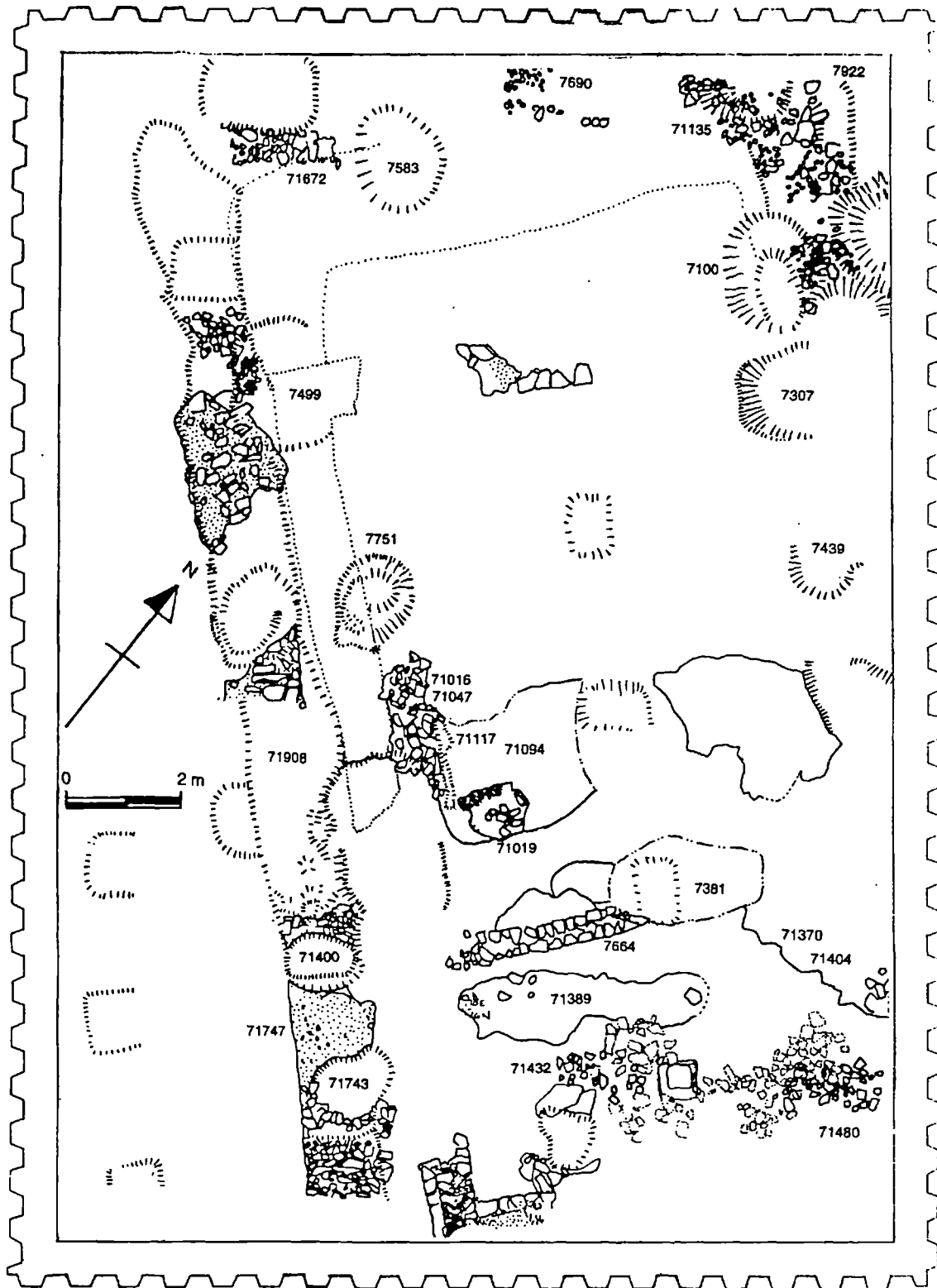


Fig. 9 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 4

This building subsequently underwent two substantial episodes of internal modification. *Structural phase 5* (Fig.10) involved the blocking of the original entrance corridor, and the creation of a new arrangement to the north-west of 7664, with clay floors and possible earth-fast structures in the south-western half of the building, and a compacted limestone and sandstone surface in the north-east. A coin of the House of Theodosius, AD 388-402, was recovered from immediately above the surface of one of the clay floors.

*Structural phase 6*, illustrated as Fig.11, saw the re-opening of the entrance 'corridor' from the south-west, allowing access as far as the doorway into the north-western half of the building, but with the corridor blocked immediately beyond that point by the construction of a new north-west / south-east aligned (robbed) wall. Immediately to the north of 7664, a stone-flagged floor (once again robbed) appears to have been laid. A make-up deposit beneath the floor of the newly re-opened 'corridor' contained two coins of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402). A changed layout of rooms appears to have been created to the north-east and south-east of the new blocking wall.

Finally, an extensive deposit of mortar and limestone fragments marks the demolition of this building, *structural phase 7*. On the platform created by this debris, a further, smaller building, seemingly of lighter construction, on the same alignment as its predecessor but apparently considerably narrower, was built, which comprises *structural phase 8* (Fig.12). Although conclusive dating evidence for this structure is unavailable, its form, stratigraphic position, and proximity to the church of All Saints, North Street (some 30 metres to the south-east), have led to the suggestion that it may form part of a building complex associated with that church; perhaps, on analogy with St Peter's, Northampton (Williams *et al.* 1985, fig.23, p.40), of 8<sup>th</sup> century date. (Middle Saxon pottery was recovered from Area 7, but it has not as yet been possible to obtain its specific provenance with reference to structural phase 8).

Amongst the contexts which comprise these structural phases, a small handful contained, between them, a very few sherds of medieval (i.e. post-11<sup>th</sup> century) pottery. The presence of these can easily be explained as having been incorporated as a result of the incomplete excavation of later features, leaving residual fills to be excavated as part of an

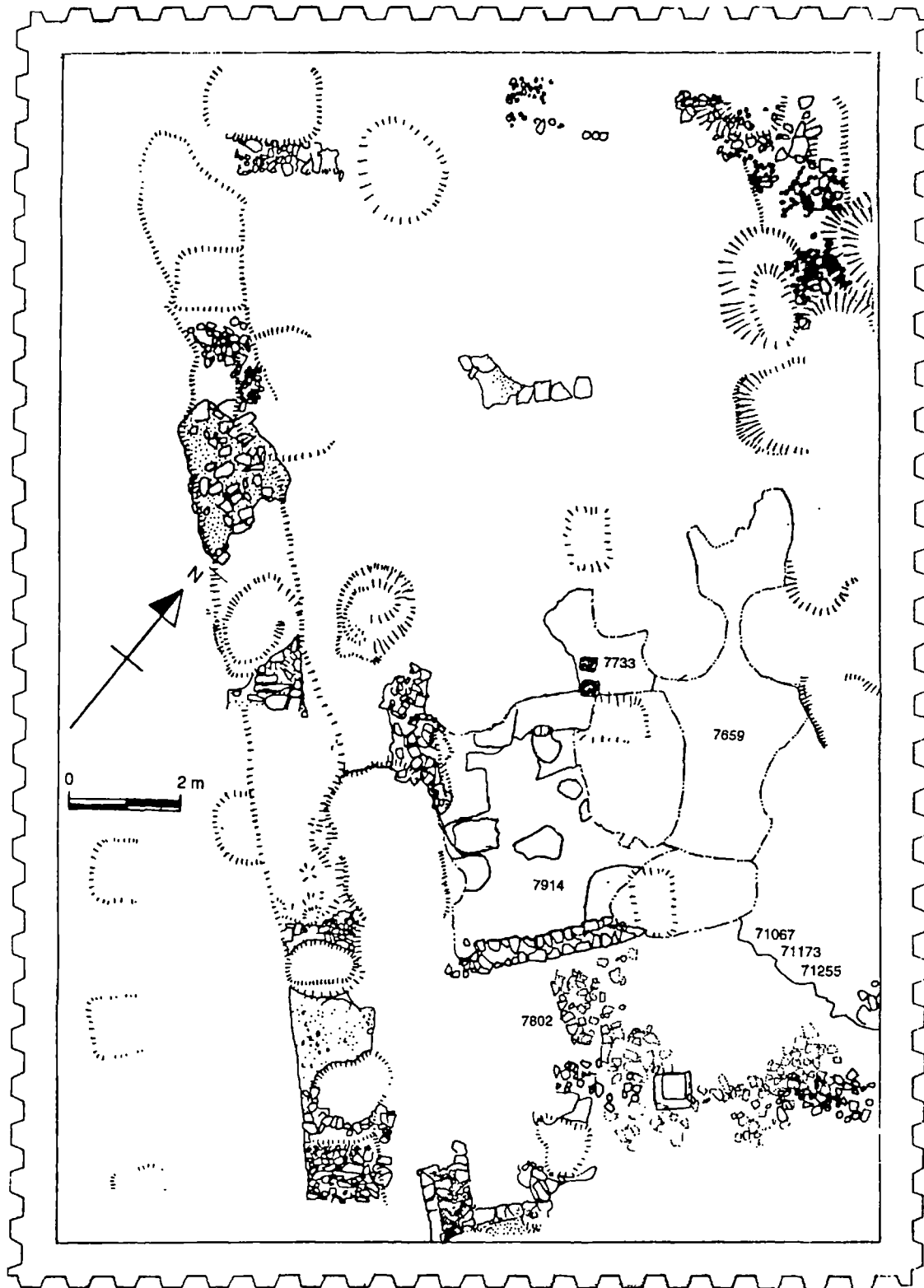


Fig. 10 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 5

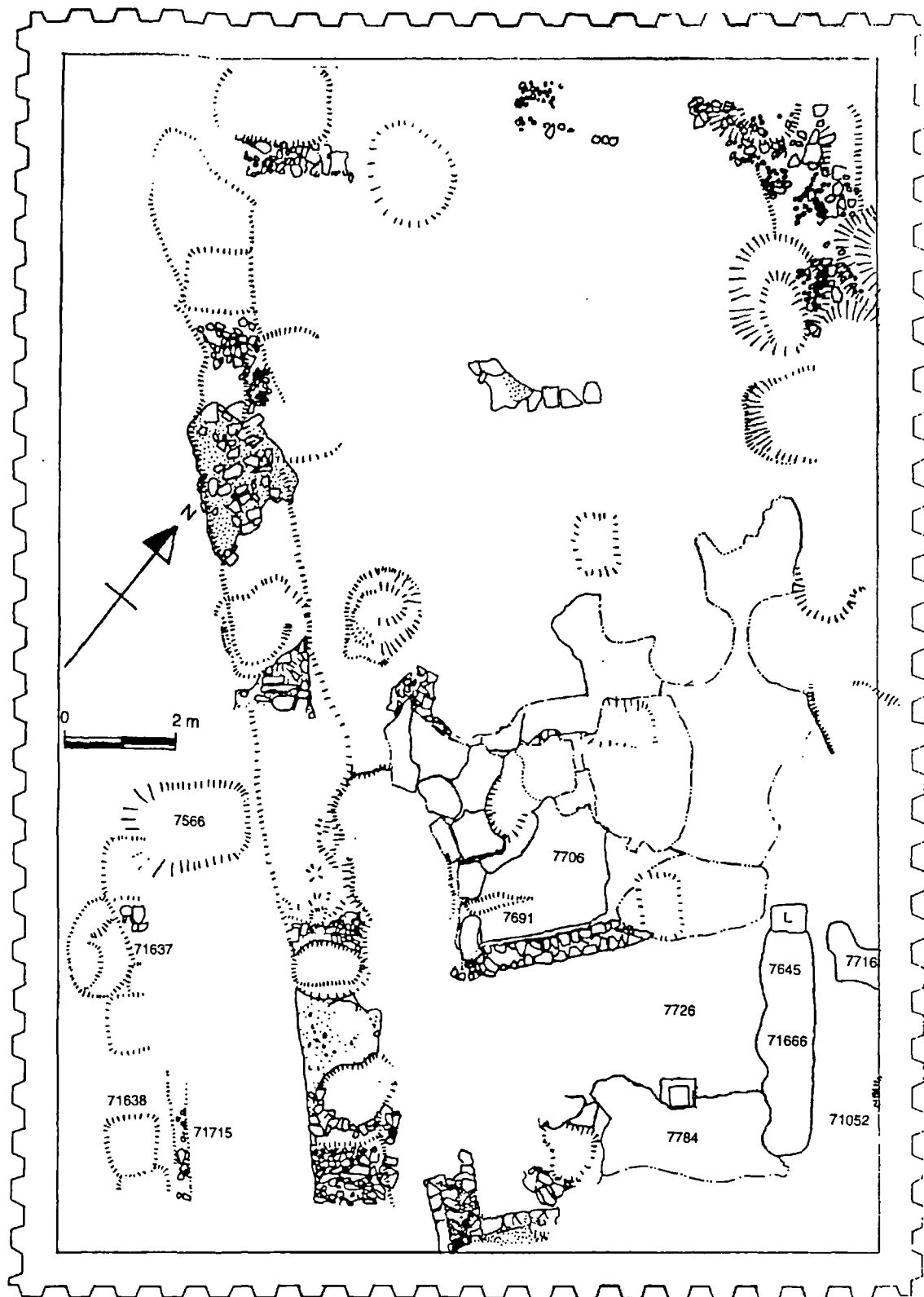


Fig. 11 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phase 6

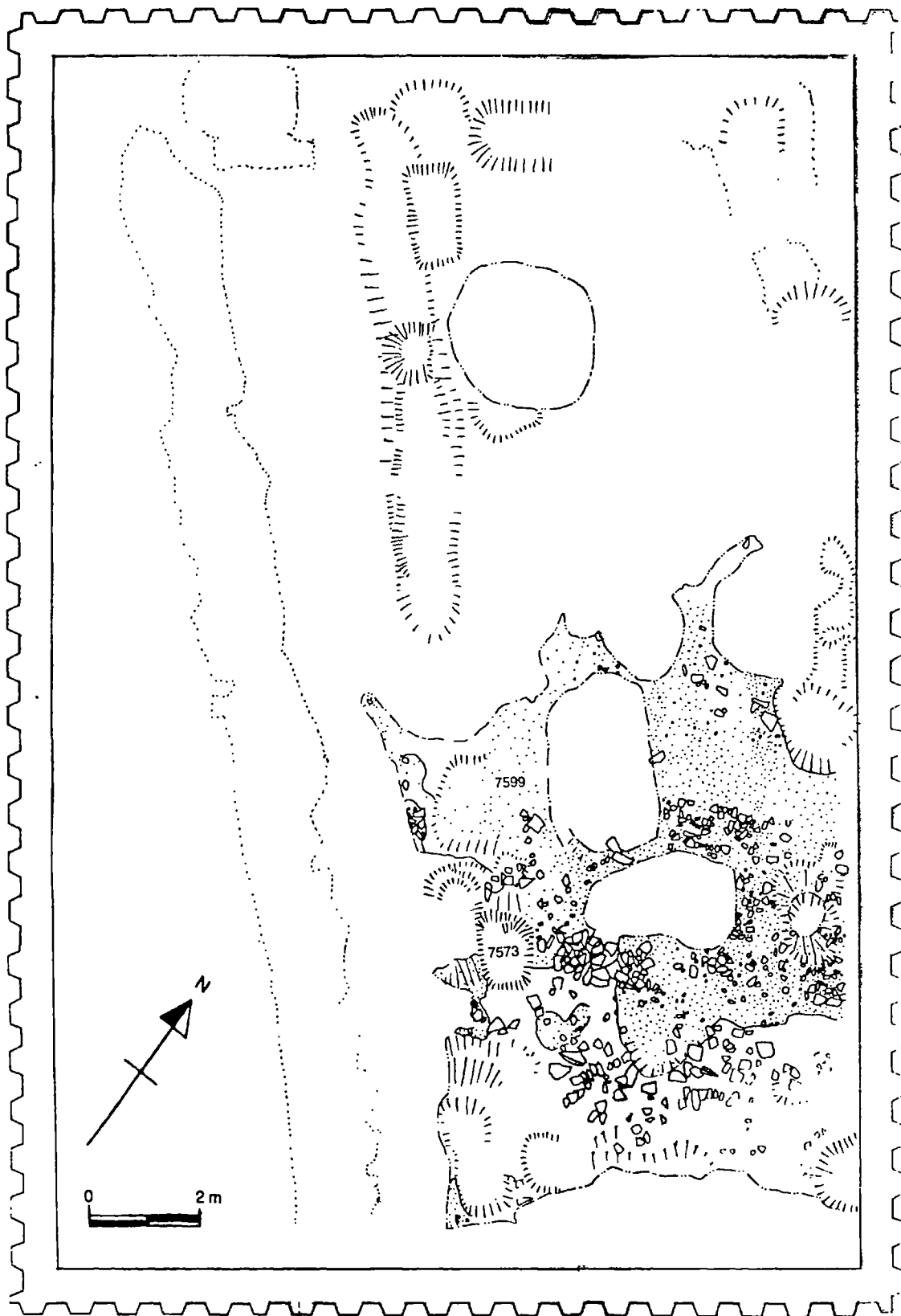


Fig. 12 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phases 7 and 8.

earlier layer. The one substantial deposit which *did* contain a large quantity of later pottery (cited in the summary in Monaghan 1997 as 'First clearly post-Roman deposits'; 1110) was in fact located *directly above* the surviving upstanding section of the south-western wall of the structural phase 0 building, and almost certainly represents the basal fill of a later feature relating to the eventual robbing of its remaining superstructure. In summary, the tiny quantity of later pottery found in contexts in this part of the sequence does not, given the nature of the stratification on the site (see Appendix 3), contradict its interpretation in a late- and immediate post-Roman chronological framework.

The late- and immediate post-Roman structural sequence from Wellington Row has thus been interpreted and presented in terms of six distinct structural phases associated with the use of calcite-gritted ceramics (Fig.13). These followed the construction of the original stone building and subsequent major modifications to that building effected *before* calcite-gritted ware began to be deposited in quantity. To investigate change in the composition of calcite-gritted assemblages throughout this sequence, and to create groups large enough for meaningful comparison, however, contexts were amalgamated into groups which, to some extent, cut *across* the structural phases. The reasoning behind this is that ceramics incorporated into the dump and make-up deposits laid down *between* structural phases - i.e. the layers which actually contain most of the pottery from this (and most other) urban site(s) - whilst being directly associated in *depositional* terms with the structures and surfaces created *above* them, will *not* contain ceramics *associated* with those structures and surfaces. The ceramics in make-up and levelling deposits will have derived from the *previous* (and other earlier) occupation episode(s).

Each *ceramic* phase from Wellington Row Area 7 thus comprises assemblages from occupation deposits *and the make-up and levelling horizons which immediately succeed them*. Thus Ceramic Period (CP) 2 combines the assemblages from the *structural* Phase 2 occupation horizons with the small number and volume of levelling deposits from Phase 3, and the rather more extensive strata of that type from Phase 4. The structural phases were divided and re-grouped in this way to create three Ceramic Phases. In terms of the structural history of the site, four such CPs could have been created; however, the third and fourth of these would have contained, individually, comparatively small ceramic assemblages. It was



Structural Phase 6	INCL 01	FC 01	AD 388	(2)
	INCL 02	FC 02		
	INCL 03	FC 04		
	INCL 04	FC 05		
	INCL 05	FC 06		
	INCL 07	FC 07		
		FC 09		
Structural Phase 5	INCL 01	FC 01	AD 388	(2)
	INCL 02	FC 02		
	INCL 03	FC 04		
	INCL 04	FC 05		
	INCL 05	FC 06		
	INCL 07	FC 07		
		FC 09		
Structural Phase 4	INCL 01	FC 01	AD 388	(2)
	INCL 02	FC 02		
	INCL 03	FC 04		
	INCL 04	FC 05		
	INCL 05	FC 07		
	INCL 07	FC 09		
Structural Phase 3	INCL 01	FC 01	-	
	INCL 02	FC 02		
	INCL 03	FC 04		
	INCL 04	FC 05		
	INCL 05	FC 06		
	INCL 07	FC 07		
		FC 09		
Structural Phase 2	INCL 01	FC 01	AD 388	(4)
	INCL 02	FC 02		
	INCL 03			
	INCL 04	FC 05		
	INCL 05	FC 06		
	INCL 07	FC 07		
		FC 09		
Structural Phase 1	INCL 01	FC 01	AD 388	(1)
	INCL 02	FC 02	AD 378	(1)
	INCL 03		AD 375	(2)
	INCL 04	FC 05	AD 367	(10)
	INCL 05	FC 06		
	INCL 07	FC 07		
		FC 09		
Structural Phase 00		-	AD 346	(Fig.5)

Fig. 13 Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : structural phases, ceramic assemblages and coins.

decided that, for purposes of quantitative comparison, CPs should contain assemblages of at least comparable, rather than wildly fluctuating, order of magnitude. The three CPs were thus defined as follows.

Ceramic Phase 1 equates with structural Phase 1 in its entirety

containing 75794 g / 2282 sherds, 67.05 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 43460 g / 1080 sherds, 30.33 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

Ceramic Phase 2 equates with Phase 2 occupation horizons  
and Phase 3 & 4 levelling deposits

containing 20764 g / 780 sherds, 19.21 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 14861 g / 511 sherds, 13.17 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

Ceramic Phase 3 equates with Phase 4 occupation horizons  
Phase 5 levelling deposits  
Phase 6 levelling deposits  
Phase 7 demolition deposits

containing 23631 g / 819 sherds, 23.58 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 19752 g / 631 sherds, 17.37 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

In addition to the *stratified* assemblages from structural Phase 4 - Phase 7, two substantial ceramic assemblages, including a large quantity of calcite-gritted ware, were retrieved from arbitrary spits of soil 7669 and 7010, excavated from immediately *above* the Phase 7 demolition debris. Since these deposits almost certainly include a significant proportion of material in use in the immediately preceding structural phases, they were incorporated in the analysis of CP 3.

### 7.3 York Minster

Extensive areas of the basilica of the *principia*, and adjacent barrack blocks, of the Roman legionary fortress were excavated beneath York Minster (to the north-east of the river Ouse) between 1967 and 1972 (Phillips and Heywood 1995, 16; fig.A). The excavations were conducted in the context of (and were, for much of the time, severely constrained by) the massive engineering programme undertaken to stabilise the foundations of the medieval cathedral (ibid., 19-22). In consequence, the archaeology was recorded in less detail than was subsequently to be the case at Wellington Row. Although successive structural phases were recognisable, particularly in the two barrack blocks (ibid., 93-135), these could not be re-examined for this thesis in the manner carried out at Wellington Row. Similarly, the precise attribution of ceramic assemblages (viz. the creation of *Ceramic Phases*; 7.2.2, above) to episodes of substantial structural modification which nevertheless left subtle archaeological traces (refer to Appendix 3 for the extent to which this was the case at Wellington Row) was impossible.

Nevertheless, it is clear that, in broad terms, the Minster sequence shares the fundamental characteristics recognisable at Wellington Row; substantial stone buildings, in this case apparently of the early 4th century, undergoing successive modifications in the later 4th, and covered by extensive deposits of 'dark earth' up to c.500 mms thick. Many of the later activities and structural modifications in evidence recall those identified at Wellington Row; moreover, the degree of *in situ* as against robbed stonework is much greater (cf., in particular, the centurion's quarter in Barrack 2; ibid., 117-27). The report acknowledges the likelihood that some of these strata and structural alterations witness activity of the 5th century, but chooses to attribute the more substantial traces either to the later 4th century, or the 8th-9th (ibid.). Nevertheless, the report recognises the probability of 5th century occupation on the site, in the specific form of extensive midden deposits and evidence for smithing in the area of the basilica, and a continuing high-status residence function for the centurion's quarters in Barrack 2 (Carver 1995, 195).

It is possible that a detailed re-examination of the York Minster report, in conjunction with the original excavation records, might allow more detailed sequences, and

possibly even chronologies, of structural modification to be teased out. However, for reasons of time and morale following exertions on the Wellington Row stratigraphic archive, the author bottled out of this particular task, choosing instead to confine research to the more limited aim of providing a sequence and ceramic assemblage comparable in broad terms with that from Wellington Row.

Analysis of the calcite-gritted ware assemblages from York Minster in terms similar to that carried out on the Wellington Row material was clearly not helped by the circumstances referred to above. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, typically, the largest assemblages derived from the phases and areas of the site where it had been possible to exert least stratigraphic control. Conversely, those areas where it had been possible to record strata in the greatest detail produced only small quantities of pottery. The bulk of the material recorded was provenanced to the *principia* basilica (Areas MT and ST; Phillips and Heywood, Fig.A), the Centurion's quarter of Barrack 2 (Areas AG, AJ, PG and PJ; *ibid*), and the north-eastern end of the *contubernia* of the same barrack (Area XB; *ibid.*). For the purpose of providing stratigraphic control in analysis, the results for York Minster presented here (cf.Figs 16, 17, 21, 22, 25, 26) are derived from assemblages which the excavators attribute with confidence to Periods 5, 6 and 6A (which comprise the latest 'Roman' structural phases on the site, and the 'dark earth' horizon above them), and in which the possibility of the intrusion of later material (e.g. as a result of necessarily rapid and summary excavation) appears slightest. The resulting figures from each period are as follows;

#### Period 5

contained 7731 g / 371 sherds, 14.46 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 2720 g / 87 sherds, 1.10 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

#### Period 6

contained 19184 g / 597 sherds, 13.59 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 10688 g / 326 sherds, 6.71 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

### Period 6A

contained 21890 g / 566 sherds, 21.06 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

- 13250 g / 377 sherds, 10.10 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

From the York Minster excavation areas included in this study *overall*, however, the figures for recorded ceramics are as follows;

124019 g / 4076 sherds, 127.93 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

64800 g / 1916 sherds, 49.15 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

Although not included in the stratigraphic analyses, these considerably more substantial figures have been of value in compiling Figs 29 and 30 and Tables 2 and 3, providing considerably larger samples than would otherwise have been the case; the recording of assemblages other than those listed previously was not, therefore, superfluous.

Recording of ceramic data from York Minster served to provide an immediate comparison for the Wellington Row assemblage, in particular in respect of confirming that the fabric classifications employed were meaningful, and in the possibility of identifying (notwithstanding the reservations expressed above) comparable change in assemblage composition through a deeply stratified sequence. Both were obviously *consumer* sites located within the same specific locality, *Eburacum / Colonia Eboracensis* (albeit in 'civilian' and 'military' contexts respectively). The two other sites examined, Crossgates Seamer (at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering, some five kilometres south of Scarborough), and Elmswell, on a tributary of the river Hull in the lee of the chalk Wolds, were selected as being more likely to represent *producer* sites, or at least sites located within the vicinities in which calcite-gritted wares were manufactured (see discussion in 6.4.2, above). Originally it had been hoped to also record and compare assemblages from villas (Langton and Beadlam) and military sites (Scarborough signal-station and Malton fort/*vicus*), and steps were taken to gain access to this material. However, the time taken to record these assemblages, and the logistics involved, precluded it.

#### 7.4 Crossgates, Seamer

The extensive settlement site at Crossgates, Seamer was first identified in the course of gravel quarrying in 1947 (Rutter and Duke 1958, 5; Mitchelson 1950), and has since suffered a death-of-a-thousand-cuts, interspersed with fragmentary and piecemeal excavation and recording, over the subsequent half-century, as the former village of Crossgates has been developed as a dormitory and retail complex for Scarborough and the other east Yorkshire coastal towns. Initial campaigns reported by Mitchelson and Rutter and Duke (op cit.) were followed by what literally amounts to a lifetime of observation and recording by the local archaeologist George Pye. (Pye receives special mention in Rutter and Duke's reporting of excavations between 1947 and 1956; his last published report of his largely solitary work dates from 1983). Subsequently, more extensive excavations have been carried out on the site by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (B.U.F.A.U.; Leach 1989), and in the late 1990s by Malton Archaeological Projects Ltd (M.A.P.).

The relevant archaeological detail of the site is recounted below (8.3), but it may be noted at this stage that it has primarily been discussed in terms of the juxtaposition of late Roman and early Anglian settlements (e.g. Faull 1974, 8). Located on sands and gravels at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering, its archaeological strata largely survived within natural-cut features. Vertical stratification was very largely confined to these features, as was the only semblance of detailed stratigraphic recording. Subsequent excavations have suggested that, over parts of the site at least, stratified deposits may survive (or have survived, prior to destruction by development) within and beneath shallow deposits of colluvium (Leach 1989, 6).

Only ceramics held in Scarborough Museum (i.e. from the earlier campaigns of excavation) were recorded. Since retention of this material had clearly been restricted to rim- and conspicuously decorated sherds, recording and quantification was concentrated on the calcite-gritted wares (which, in any case, dominated the assemblage), as it was not felt that meaningful comparisons of calcite-gritted and Crambeck wares could be obtained. The resultant figures were;

27021 g / 548 sherds, 31.08 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

25019 g / 500 sherds, 30.17 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

## 7.5 Elmswell

Situated on a low gravel terrace above a tributary of the river Hull, some few kilometres west of Driffield, Elmswell shares most of the stratigraphic, functional and artefactual characteristics of Crossgates (cf. 8.3, below), and is discussed in similar terms by Faull (1974, 13, 17). First identified in 1935 (Congreve 1937, 5), excavations on the site were carried out over a three year period by A.L. Congreve and Philip Corder (ibid.; idem., 1938; Corder, 1940). Again, the ceramics retained (in this case held in Hull Museum) largely comprised rim- and decorated sherds as follows;

34337 g / 900 sherds, 49.94 rim EVEs (all fabrics)

19236 g / 447 sherds, 21.04 rim EVEs (calcite-gritted fabrics)

## 7.6 Ceramic analyses and results

Having established the structural and stratigraphic sequence for Area 7 at Wellington Row (a sequence involving four previously unrecognised structural phases and associated deposition which occurred *after* the incorporation of four coins of the House of Theodosius, issued in the period AD 388-402), described the cross-cutting grouping of deposits employed to amalgamate ceramic groups in contemporary use, and given brief accounts of the character of the other sites included in this study, it is now possible to investigate changes in the composition of calcite-gritted ware assemblages through this sequence.

The principles of classification employed for the fabrics and forms of calcite-gritted ware have been outlined in Chapter 6.4.4, and are presented in detail in Appendix 2. The assemblages from each of the three Ceramic Phases from Wellington Row were compared on the basis of the following criteria;

- a) Proportion of calcite-gritted to non-calcite-gritted fabrics (predominantly Crambeck

wares, East Yorkshire grey wares and Nene Valley colour-coated wares, with a smattering of other fabrics)

b) Proportions of calcite-gritted fabric variants defined by inclusions

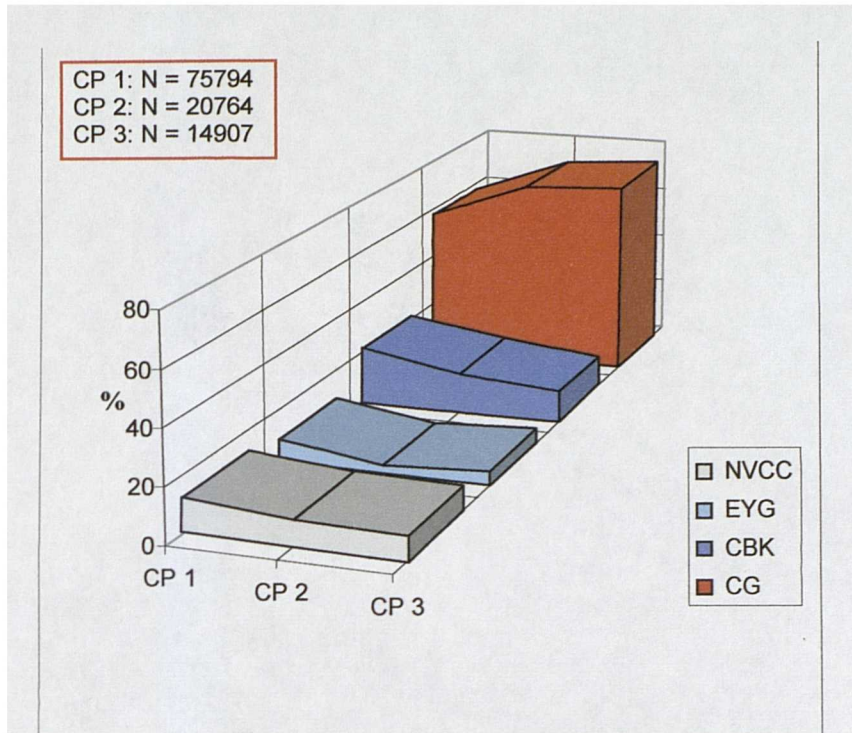
c) Proportions of calcite-gritted fabric variants defined by firing conditions

d) Proportions of calcite-gritted rim-form variants defined by neck angle (i.e. He3, He4, He5)

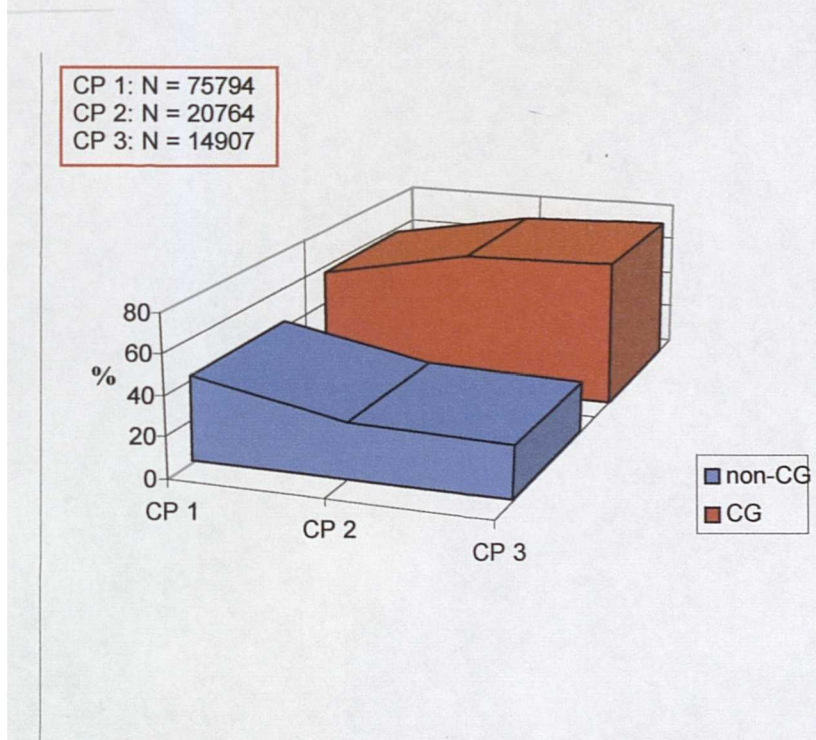
These criteria were selected primarily with reference to the agenda defined in the earlier chapters of this thesis. They thus seek to differentiate between calcite-gritted fabric in use in each of the CPs in terms linked directly to processes of manufacture, in terms of the raw materials and level of firing technology employed, which may in turn provide indications of the *social context* of production. They also seek to identify variation within the ubiquitous 'Huntcliff-type' jar form, Hull's 'Type 26', selecting neck angle as a diagnostic formal feature for this purpose. Some of these criteria may also be linked, however, to questions posed by previous researchers. In the specific context of Wellington Row, Monaghan has proposed that, in his late- or immediate post-Roman phases, vessels in calcite-gritted fabrics display greater variation in firing and in their rim-forms than is the case earlier in the sequence (Monaghan 1997, 867, 909). More generally, it has been observed by Evans that the proportion of calcite-gritted to Crambeck grey-wares in assemblages is chronologically diagnostic, the former increasing over time (1985, 388), a view also subscribed to by Monaghan (1997, 909). This comparison has thus been made in order to investigate its validity in general terms across the three Wellington Row ceramic phases, and in particular to see whether it is sustained, intensified or diminished into the mid-5th century (and possibly beyond), the period to which structural Phases 4 to 6 surely unarguably belong.

The results of these analyses are presented as Figs 14 - 35. Beginning with the ratio of calcite-gritted and Crambeck grey-wares (East Yorkshire grey-wares and Nene Valley colour-coated wares, the other most frequently recorded fabrics, were also run as part of this analysis). Fig. 14.1 indicates that in CP 1, calcite-gritted wares occur at almost three



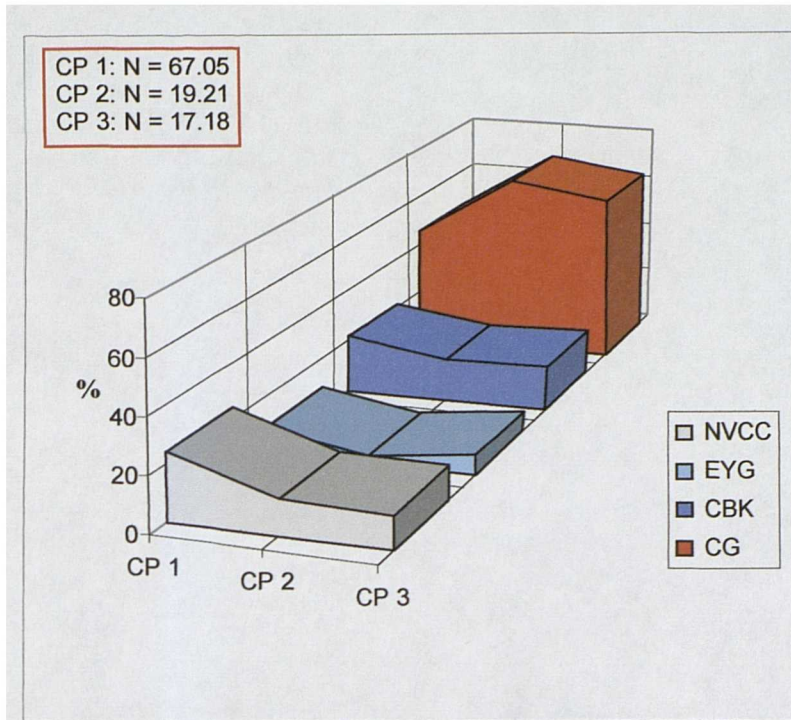


**Fig. 14.1** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : percentages of calcite-gritted, Crambeck, East Yorkshire grey- & Nene Valley colour-coated wares, weight (g).

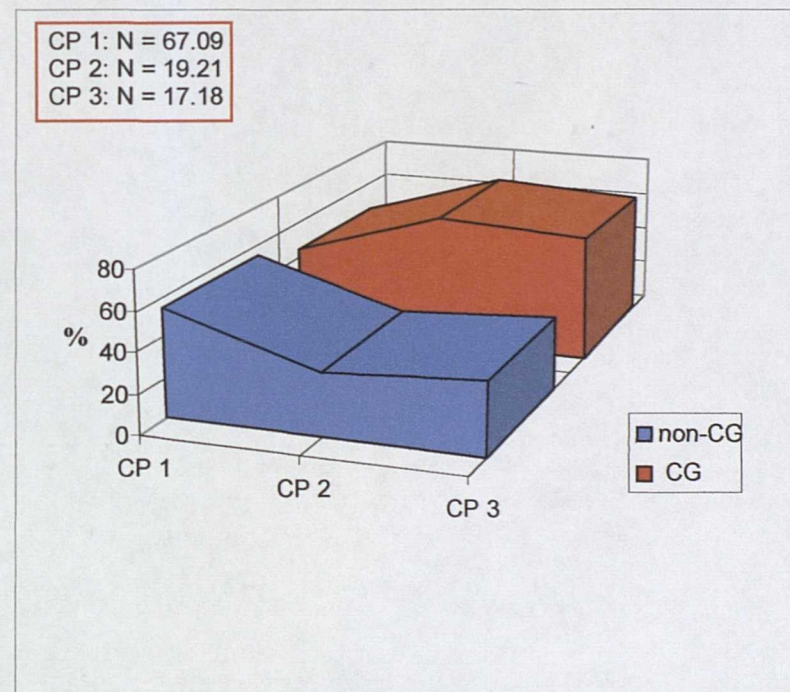


**Fig. 14.2** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : percentages of calcite-gritted and *all* non-calcite-gritted wares, weight (g).

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**Fig. 15.1** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : percentages of calcite-gritted, Crambeck, East Yorkshire grey- & Nene Valley colour-coated wares, EVEs.



**Fig. 15.2** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : percentages of calcite-gritted and *all* non-calcite-gritted wares, EVEs.

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times the level of Crambeck grey-wares, a ratio which rises to almost *seven* times by CP 3, when quantified by weight. Quantified by EVEs (Fig.15.1), the ratio is *c.2:1* in CP 1, peaking at *c.3.3:1* in CP 2, and narrowing slightly to *c.3:1* in CP 3. Compared with *all* non-calcite-gritted wares, the ratio by weight (Fig.14.2) is *c.1.5:1* in CP 1, rising to *c.3:1* by CP 3; by EVEs (Fig.15.2), *c.1:1.5* in CP 1, *c.1.5:1* in CP 2, the difference declining fractionally in CP 3.

In the case of York Minster the difference in presence levels is less exaggerated, but still clear. In Period 5 the ratio, by weight (Fig.16.1), of calcite-gritted ware to Crambeck grey-ware is *c.1.3:1*, rising to *c.2.3:1* by Period 6A. The ratio when quantified by EVEs (Fig.17.1) commences at *c.1:2* in Period 5, and is reversed, at *2:1*, by Period 6A. For calcite-gritted / *all* other wares, the ratios are *c.1:1.3 / 1:4* (weight/EVEs) in Period 5, changing to *1.5:1 / c.1:1* by Period 6A (Figs 16.2 / 17.2).

These results appear to confirm the established view that an increasing proportion of calcite-gritted to Crambeck wares has chronological significance in 4th century ceramic assemblages. They also, however, serve to indicate the discrepancies obtained through the use of different quantitative measures; furthermore, previous studies - cf. Evans 1985 - have employed minimum *vessel* counts in arriving at such results. It should be noted, however, that the EVEs figures from York Minster Period 5 are almost certainly unrepresentative, being a function of the small size of that assemblage (see below).

There are potentially interesting differences observable in the presence levels of the different non-calcite-gritted wares at Wellington Row and York Minster. These differing patterns of pottery supply may themselves have chronological significance (cf. the substantially higher percentage of east Yorkshire grey-wares, which seems in accord with the closer calcite-gritted/ Crambeck ratio), but these cannot be pursued in greater detail here.

Fig.18 presents the proportions of calcite-gritted ware variants as defined by the type and abundance of their coarse inclusions and the hardness of their fabrics, quantified by weight, for Wellington Row. As originally plotted, this graph indicated that the



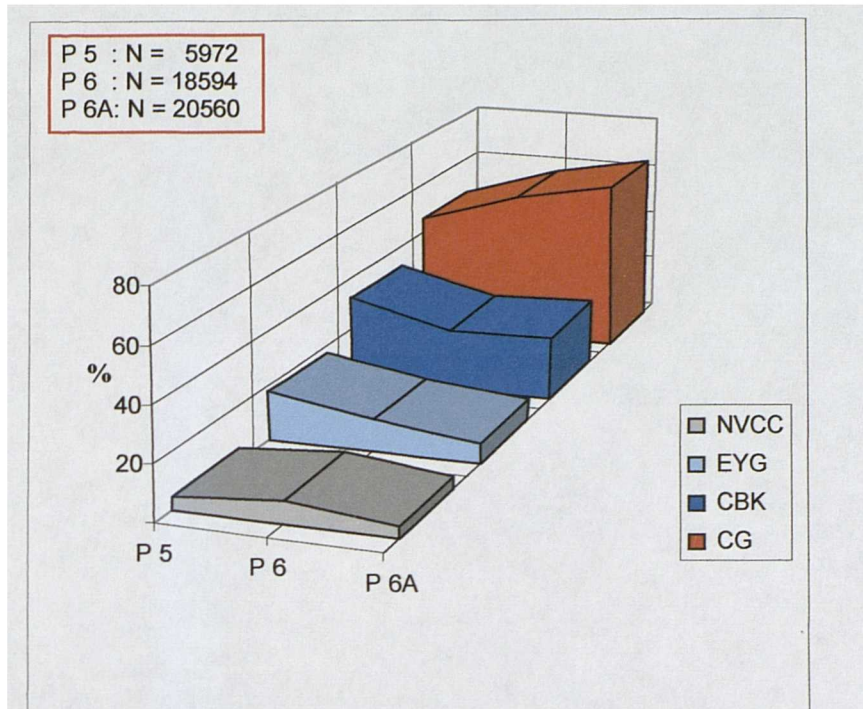


Fig. 16.1 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : percentages of calcite-gritted, Crambeck, East Yorkshire grey- and Nene Valley colour-coated wares, weight (g).

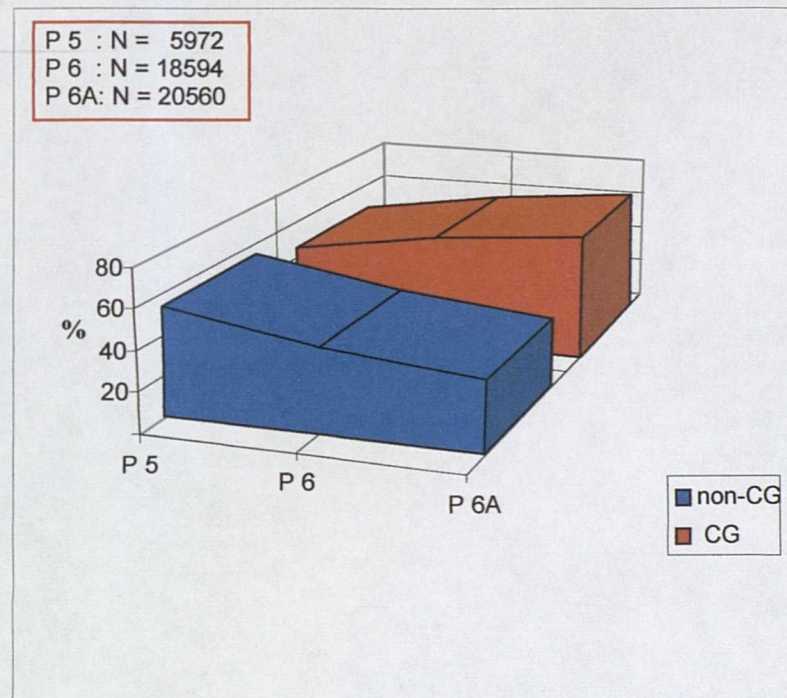


Fig. 16.2 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : percentages of calcite-gritted and all non-calcite-gritted wares, weight (g).

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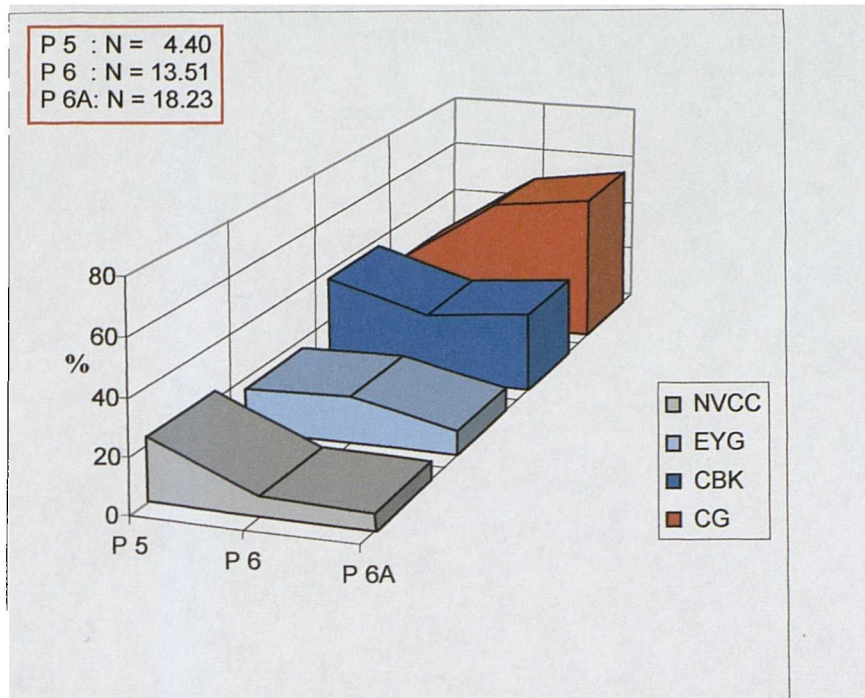


Fig. 17.1 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : percentages of calcite-gritted, Crambeck, East Yorkshire grey- and Nene Valley colour-coated wares, EVEs.

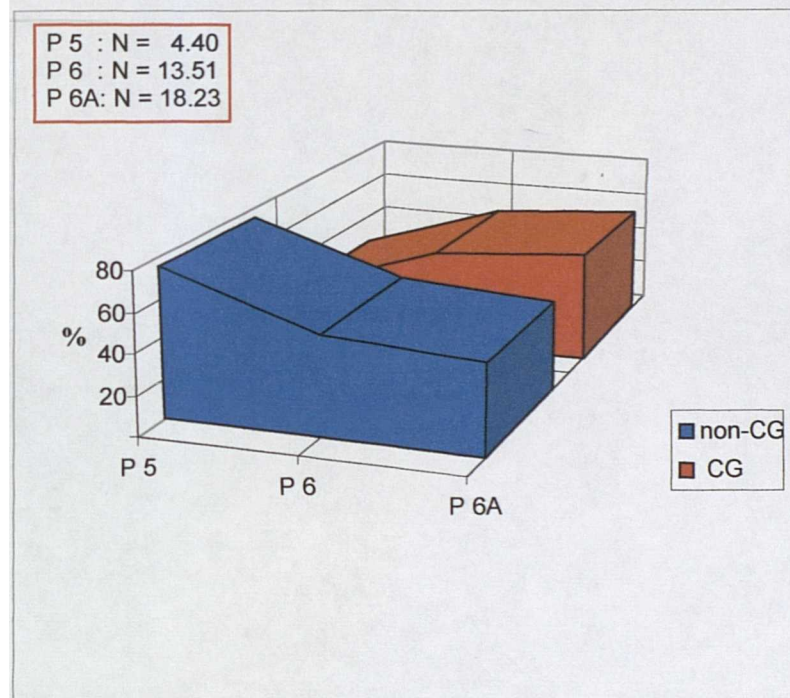


Fig. 17.2 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : percentages of calcite-gritted and all non-calcite-gritted wares, EVEs.

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percentage presence of fabric groups INCL 01 and INCL 02 - evenly-fired, hard fabrics discriminated solely on the basis of their containing 'moderate' or 'abundant' calcite respectively - was complementary in each phase. A low percentage of INCL 01 was compensated for by a high percentage of INCL 02, and vice-versa. These fabric groups were consequently amalgamated to simplify the diagram, and it is the resultant graph which is included here as Fig.18.

CP 1 is dominated by INCL 01 / 02 and INCL 07, the latter group comprising fabrics of varying firings and (often low) hardness. Together these comprise over 80% of the total assemblage. A further 9% is represented by INCL 04, the fine, sand-tempered equivalent of Monaghan's B18 and G18. The remaining *c.* 10% is made up mostly of INCL 09 (shell-tempered) and INCL 11 (grog-tempered), with three other fabric groups present in vanishingly small quantities. The coin-derived TPQ for this ceramic phase *cannot* be earlier than AD 367, a date confirmed by the presence of eleven coins of the period AD 367-75. Acceptance of a TPQ based on only two coins would push this forward to AD 375, and of a *single* coin to AD 388. The earliest TPQ cited has been adopted to acknowledge the possibility of the small number of later coins being intrusive. It should equally be recognised that the TPQ for this CP could be up to two decades later, and the *actual* date of *deposition* still later than that.

In CP 2, INCL 01/02 and INCL 07 decline markedly, to 36.5% and 25.9% respectively, whilst INCL 04 increases to 13%. The highly significant corollary of this is the appearance of two fabric groups previously unrepresented; INCL 03, tempered with sand and very small quantities of calcite, and INCL 05, tempered with chalk or limestone. The first of these appears in CP 2 at a level of 13.3%, the second at 5%. These assemblages derive from contexts stratigraphically contemporary with, or later than, occupation surfaces incorporating four coins with a TPQ of AD 388, including the substantial remodelling of the south-western exterior in structural Phase 4.

CP 3 comprises deposits laid down in the context of the use of and modifications to the completely rebuilt building of structural Phase 4, including the substantial reconfigurations of the interior represented by structural Phases 5 and 6. The presence of



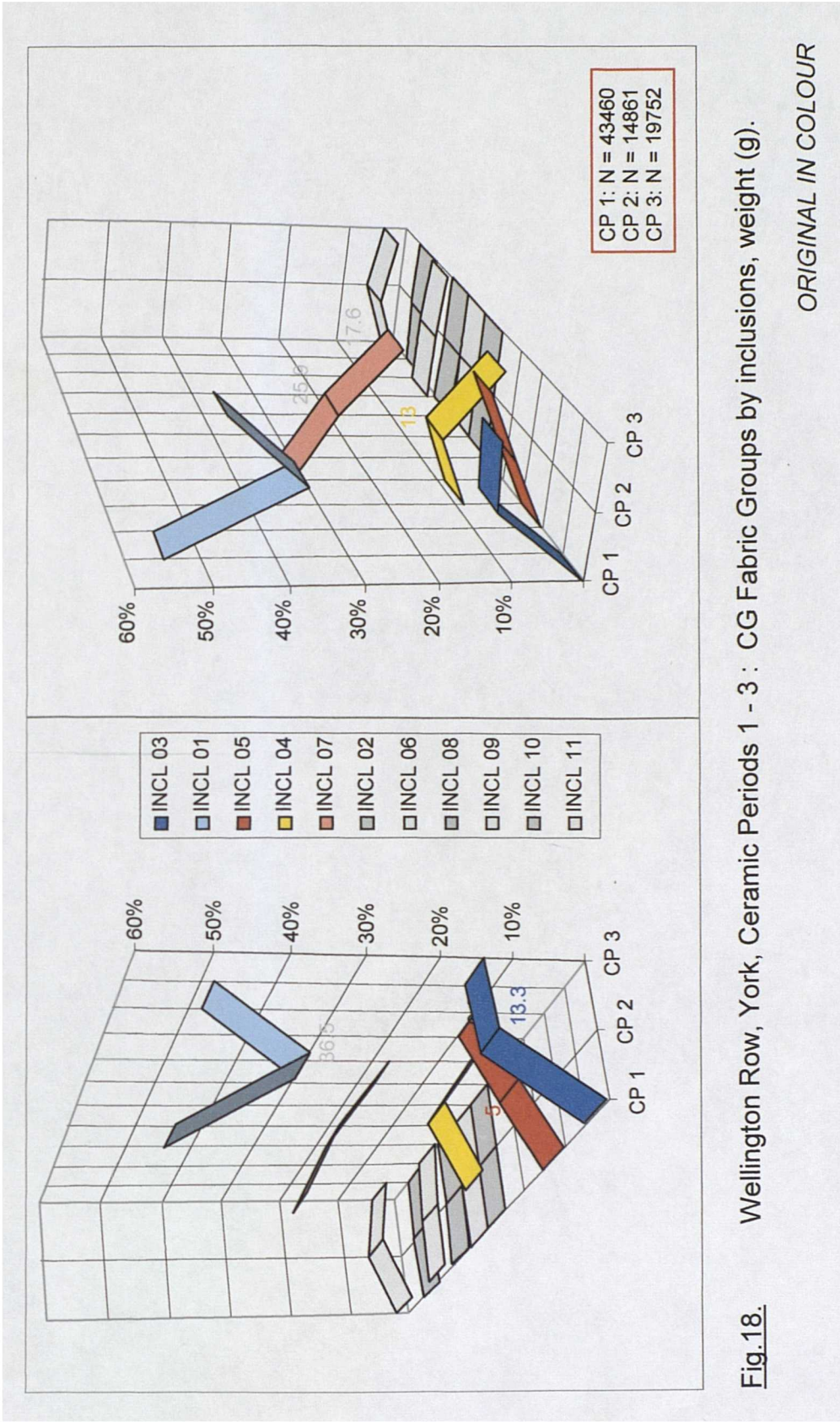


Fig.18. Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : CG Fabric Groups by inclusions, weight (g).

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INCL 07 continues its decline, to a level of 17.6%, with INCL 04 dropping to 5.3%. Of the two fabric groups making their first appearance in CP 2, INCL 03 increases marginally to 14%, whilst INCL 05 increases to roughly double its CP 2 level, at 10%.

Thus far, the pattern in CP 3 is one of marked decline in the level of the fabric groups which had dominated CP 1, and an increase in the presence of those which first appear in CP 2. This overall pattern is, however, undermined by the behaviour of INCL 01/02 which, far from continuing its marked decline between CP 1 and 2, *increases* its representation in CP 3 to 48.2%. The probable explanation for this pattern lies in the dominance of INCL 01/02 in the extremely large CP 1 assemblage, and the re-working of CP 1 material into CP 3 deposits as a result of the robbing operations which characterise structural Phase 7, and the contexts 7669 and 7010 which were incorporated into CP 3. In other words, a significant component of the later CP 3 contexts will incorporate *residual* ceramics; these will disproportionately include material from the massive CP 1 assemblage, which in turn was dominated (over 50% of the total assemblage) by INCL 01/02. Consequently, re-working of earlier deposits to any depth (as, for example, in the removal of the massive padstones of the 'extended' stone building of structural phase 00) will have introduced INCL 01/02 material from CP 1 into the (markedly smaller) CP 3 assemblage. Residuality will undoubtedly have affected the composition of ceramic assemblages throughout the sequence, but the specific character of some of the activities in CP 3, and the dominance of CP 1 by INCL 01/02, offer a persuasive explanation for the revival of that fabric group in CP 3. It can thus be seen primarily as a function of deposit formation, rather than of contemporary ceramic supply. The same argument may be applicable, to a lesser extent, to INCL 07.

Fig. 19 comprises the same data, but with Fabric Group INCL 01/02 'corrected' to take account of the probable effects of residuality described in the previous paragraph. This is effected by reducing the quantity of this Fabric Group in CP 3 by the (admittedly arbitrary) figure of 30%. This brings the pattern for INCL 01/02 as quantified by *weight* closely into line with that obtained when quantifying this group by *EVEs* (Fig. 20). In other respects the EVEs graph is very similar to that for weight, the major difference being the *decline* of INCL 03 in CP 3, compared with its slight increase from CP 2 when quantified



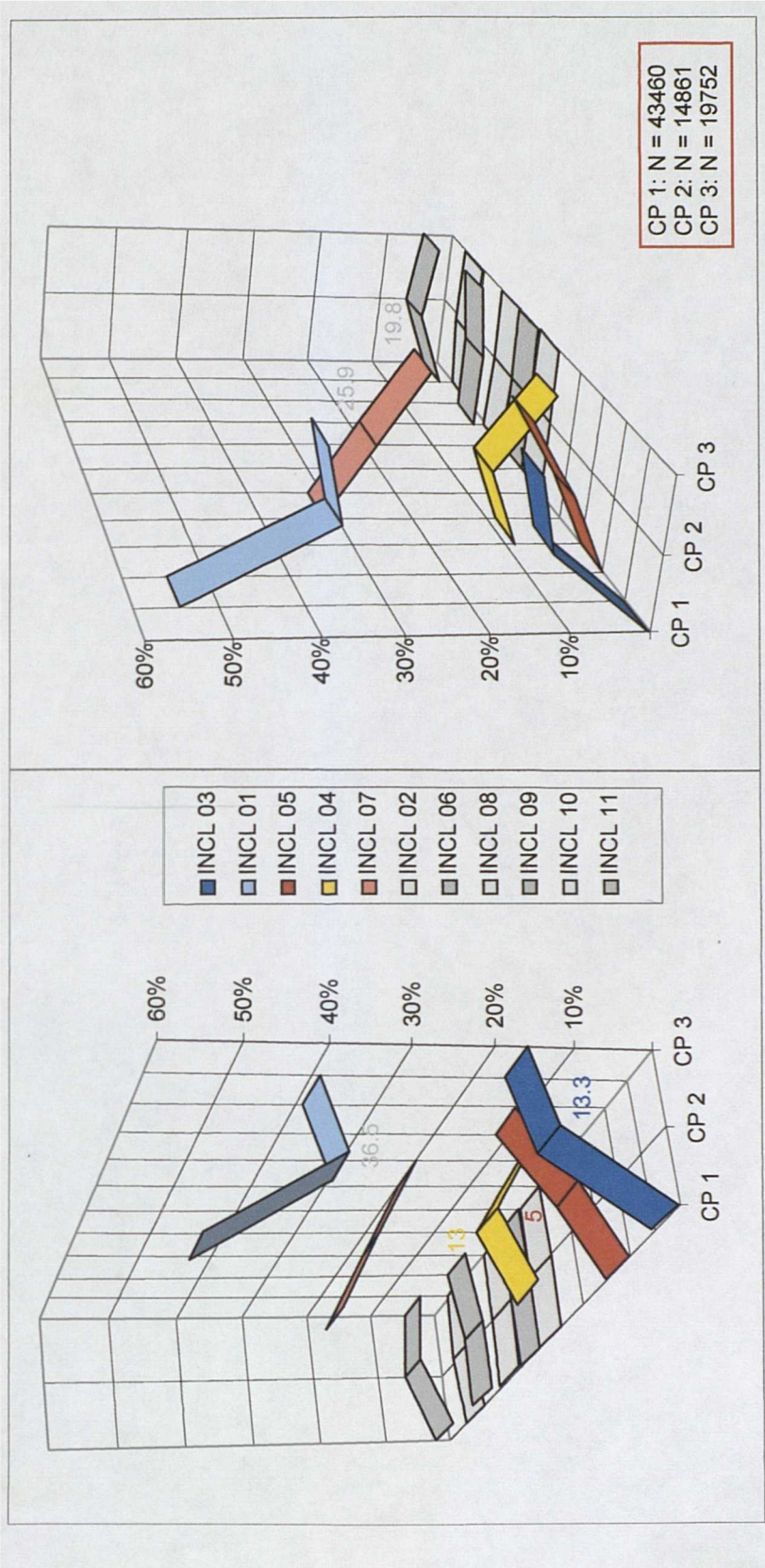
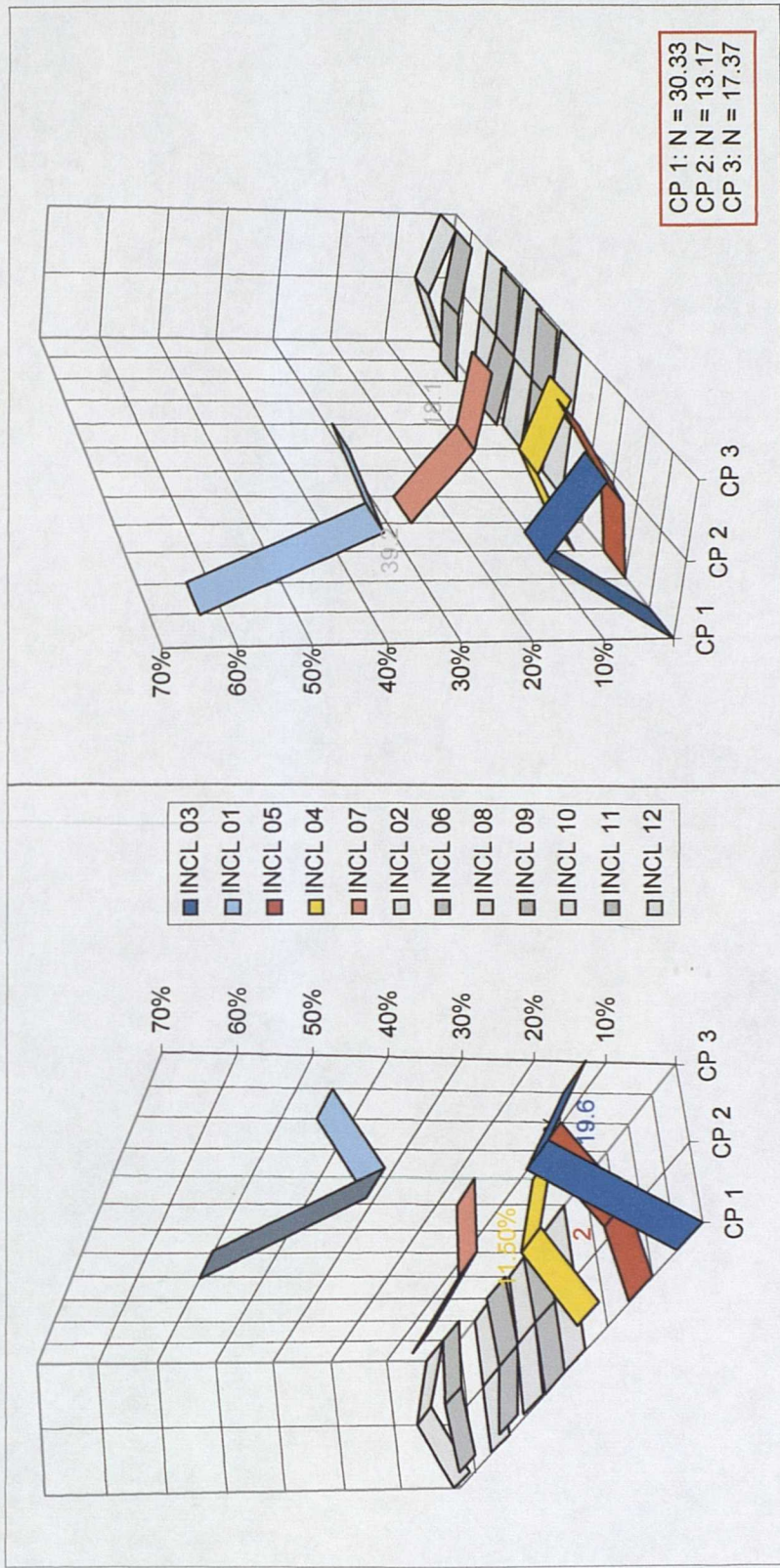


Fig. 19 Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : CG Fabric Groups by inclusions, weight (g), 'weighted' for residuality of INCL 01 / 02 in CP 3.

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**Fig.20** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : CG Fabric Groups by inclusions (EVEs).

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by weight.

At this point it is instructive to compare the results from Wellington Row Ceramic Periods 1-3 with the calcite-gritted assemblage from the excavations at York Minster.

Fig.21 shows the INCL fabric groups from York Minster, quantified by weight. The pattern across the three structural phases is strikingly similar to that from Wellington Row, the most marked difference being the much stronger presence of INCL 05 in the latest phase (the 'dark earth') at York Minster. Otherwise the percentage presences and chronological trends in the level of each of the INCL groups at each site are very closely comparable.

This comparability has important implications for the results of this study as a whole, and the principles of classification employed in it. It seems to indicate beyond reasonable doubt that this particular classification of fabrics by type/abundance of inclusion and hardness of firing *has* identified significant and consistent differences in the manufacture of calcite-gritted wares, rather than simply referring to differences resulting from randomised variations of that process. Moreover, the different manufacturing traits also exhibit consistent variation *through time*, and can thus be considered a developmental sequence (at least as far as pottery supply to *York* is concerned - a point which will be returned to) which can in turn be considered in the light of the constraints of absolute chronology provided by the coin-rich sequence from Wellington Row.

The York Minster pattern for INCL groups quantified by EVEs (Fig.22) corresponds less closely with that from Wellington Row. The explanation for this is almost certainly related to the comparatively small size of the York Minster Period 5 assemblage, with quite small *rim* percentages translating into a large percentage of the EVEs total. Importantly, however, the patterns of INCL 03 and 05 are closely comparable with those from Wellington Row. INCL 03 peaks in the second period and declines in the third on both sites, whilst INCL 05 increases from zero between the first and third phases even more dramatically than is the case at Wellington Row.



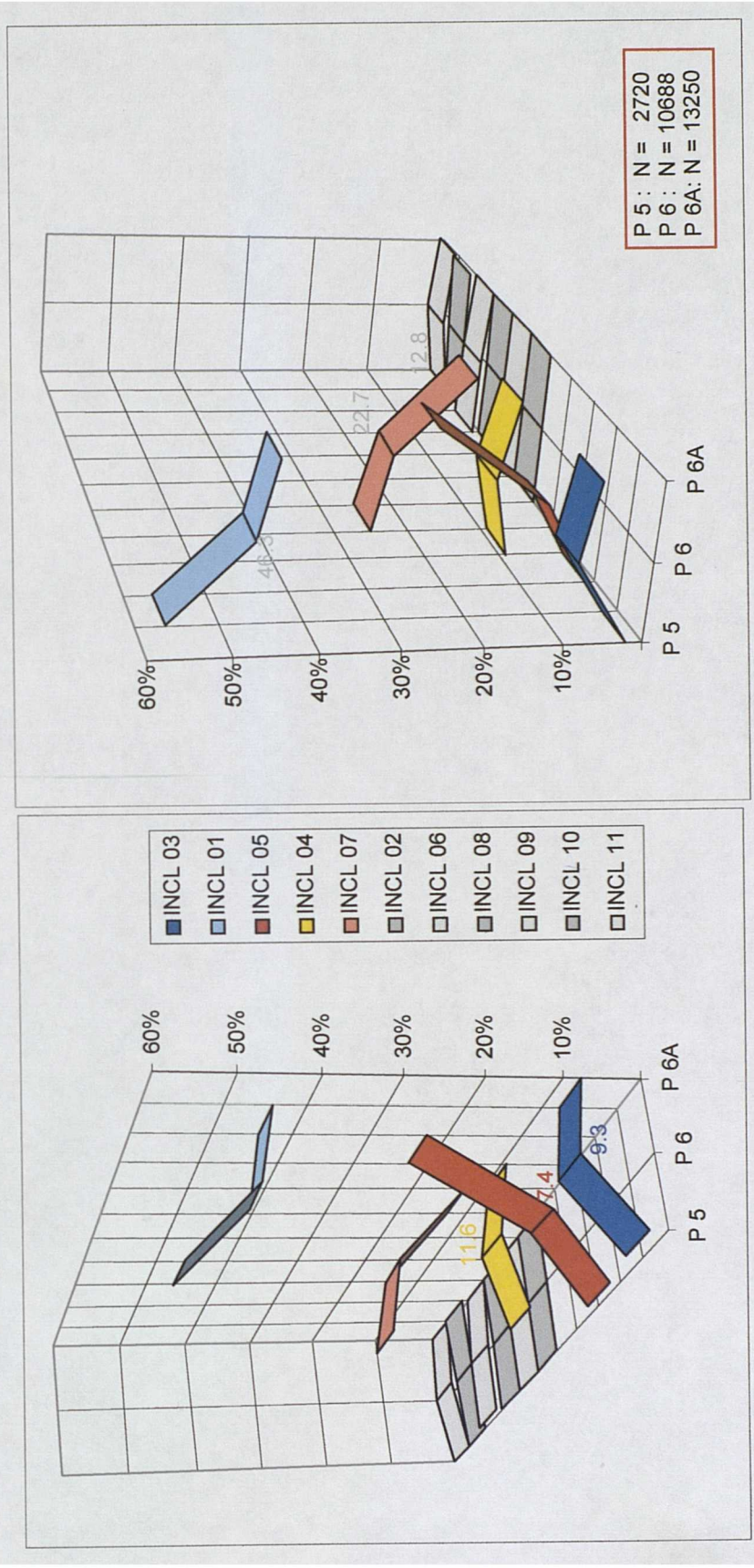


Fig.21 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : CG Fabric Groups by inclusions, weight (g).

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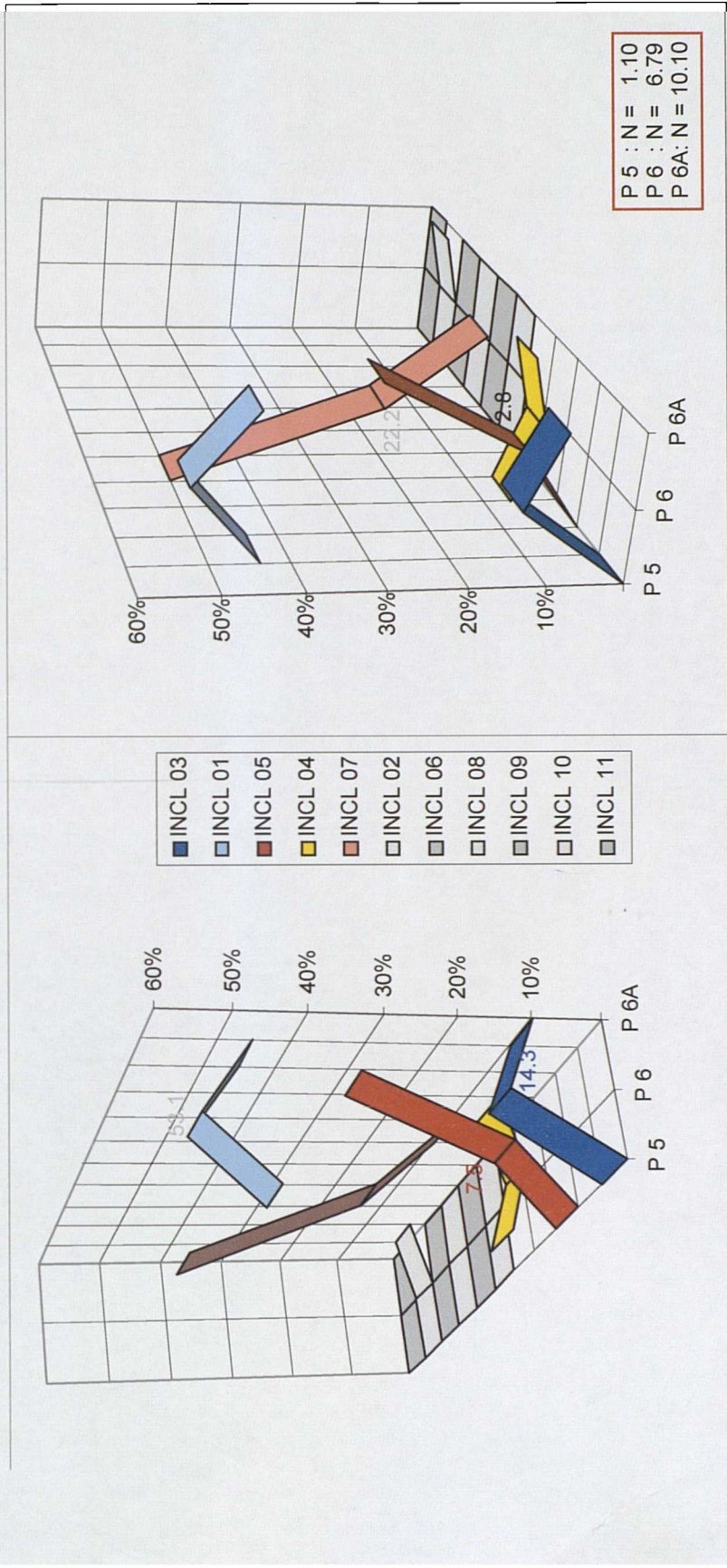


Fig.22 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : CG Fabric Groups by inclusions (EVEs)

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Data from Wellington Row and York Minster employing fabric groups created by the grouping of individual types according to their *firing* are presented on Figs 23 - 26. In this instance Fabric Groups FC 07 and FC 10 were amalgamated, as their respective characteristics ('variable reduced firings' and 'partially oxidised fabrics') were closely related in terms of appearance, suggest a similar lack of control over the firing process, and had complementary percentage presences at both Wellington Row and York Minster. The results from the two sites are less closely comparable than is the case with the INCL fabric groups, but some common patterns are identifiable, particularly in the case of quantification by weight. The first concerns the fabrics whose cores are clearly differentiated from their margins, namely FC 06, FC 09 and FC 04. At Wellington Row, FC 06 is the most frequently represented fabric of this type in CP 1, FC 09 in CP 2, and FC 04 in CP 3. They thus seem to appear in sequence across the Ceramic Periods (Fig.23). Although the individual profiles of the first two of these fabric groups from York Minster do not conform closely with their counterparts from Wellington Row, when viewed in conjunction with FC 04 (which *does* have a closely comparable profile at the two sites) a similar sequence is recognisable, with, in this case, FC 06 falling away from its level in Period 5, FC 09 increasing in roughly inverse proportion, and FC 04 increasing to become the second largest fabric group represented in Period 6A (Fig. 25). The comparatively high presence of FC 04 in Period 5 at York Minster is again probably a function of the small size overall of the assemblage from that Period. (The Period 5 FC 04 total of 378g is dominated by a single sherd weighing 258g which, given the nature of the York Minster excavations, might conceivably be intrusive).

FC 02 behaves comparably at both sites, peaking in the second period and then levelling or falling off, but is present in a greater percentage quantity at Wellington Row. Its comparatively low percentage showing at York Minster, and the decline of FC 01 in the third period, which again contrasts with Wellington Row, where this Fabric Group increases, results from the increasing presence at York Minster of FC 07/10, in contrast with Wellington Row, where the latter group declines markedly from its CP 1 peak. At both sites FC \*05 declines steeply from the first period.

The picture as represented by the FC groups quantified by EVEs differs markedly



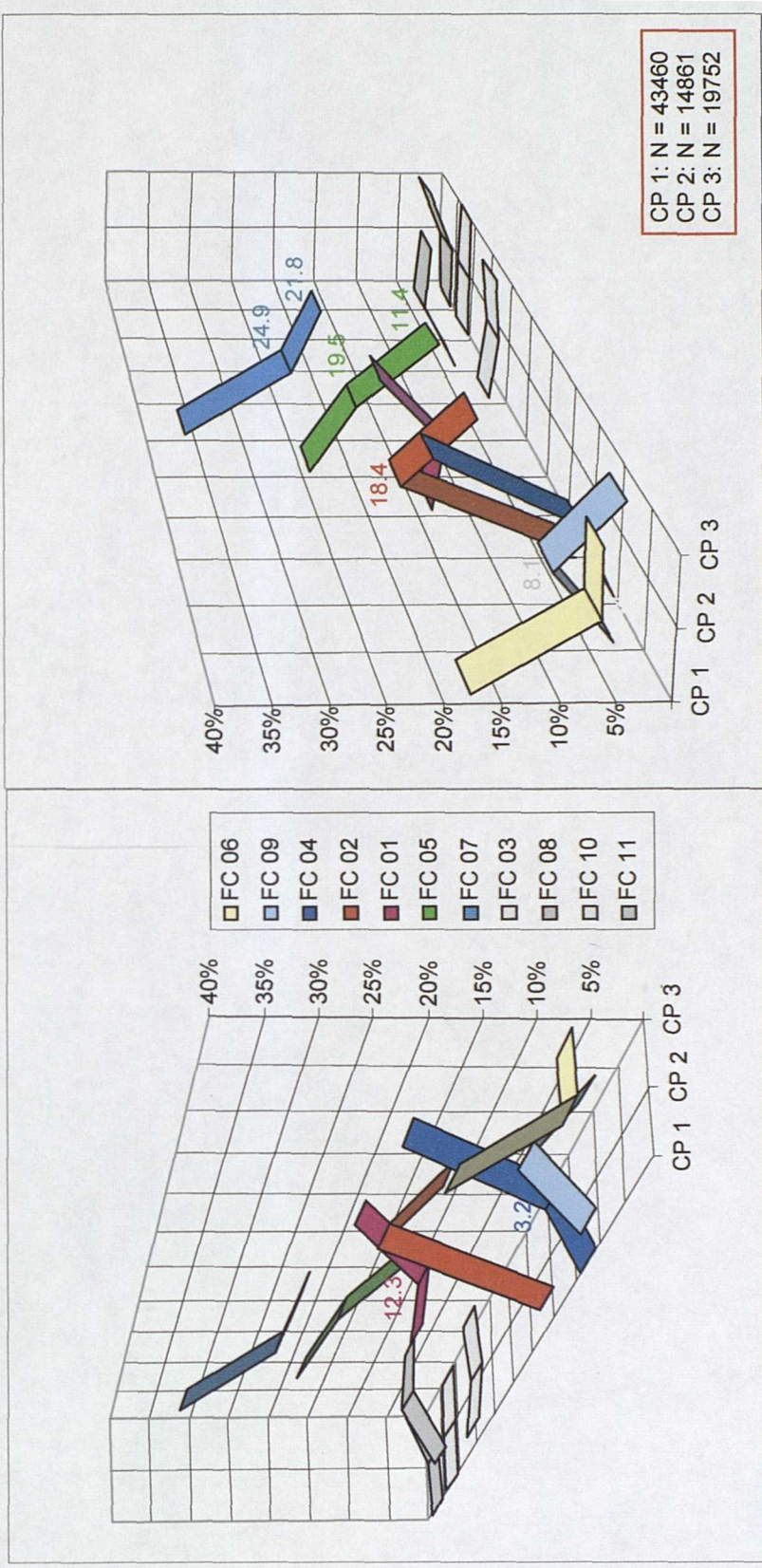


Fig.23 Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : CG Fabric Groups by firing conditions, weight (g).

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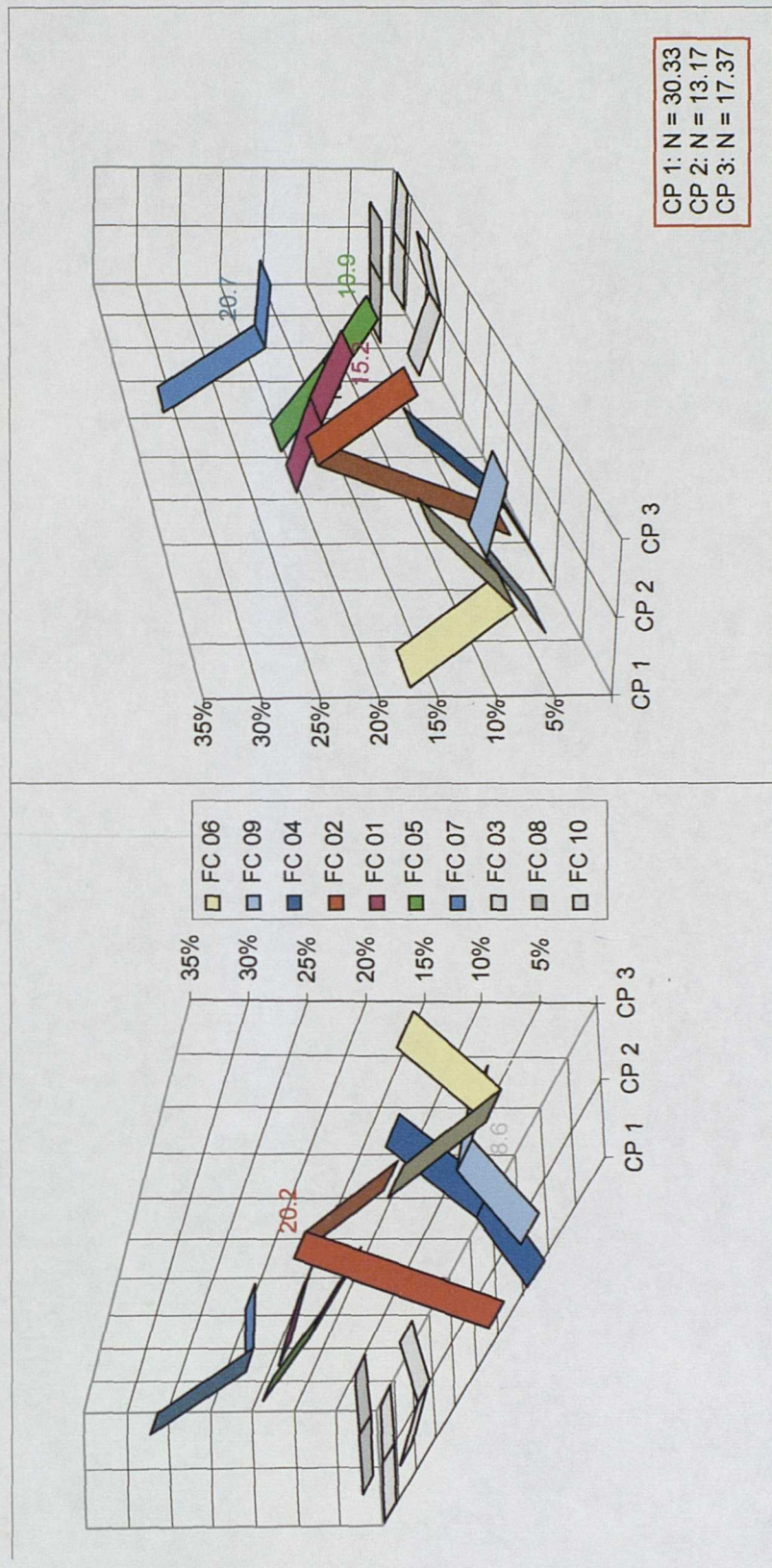


Fig.24 Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3 : CG Fabric Groups by firing condition (EVEs)

ORIGINAL IN COLOUR



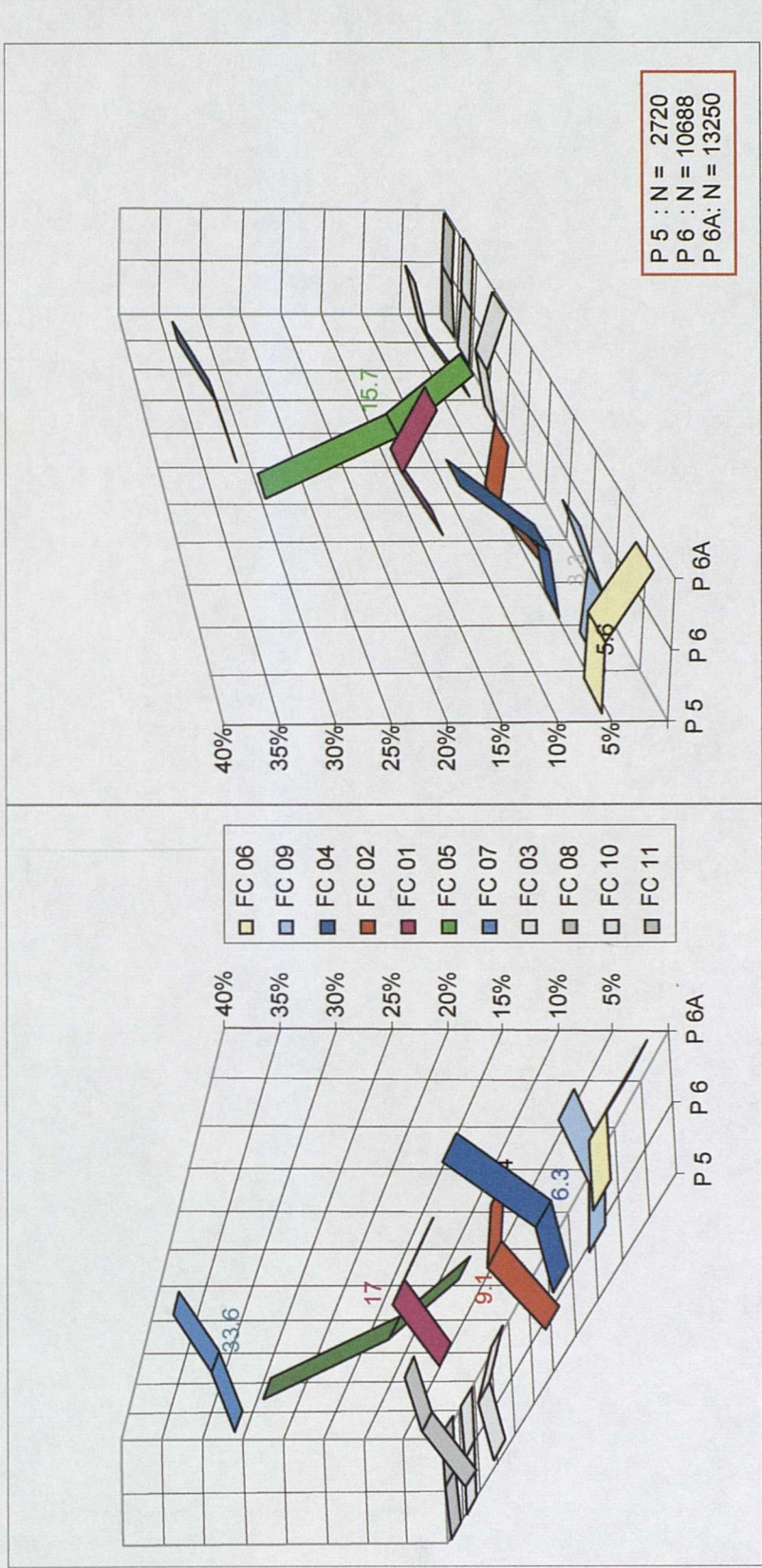
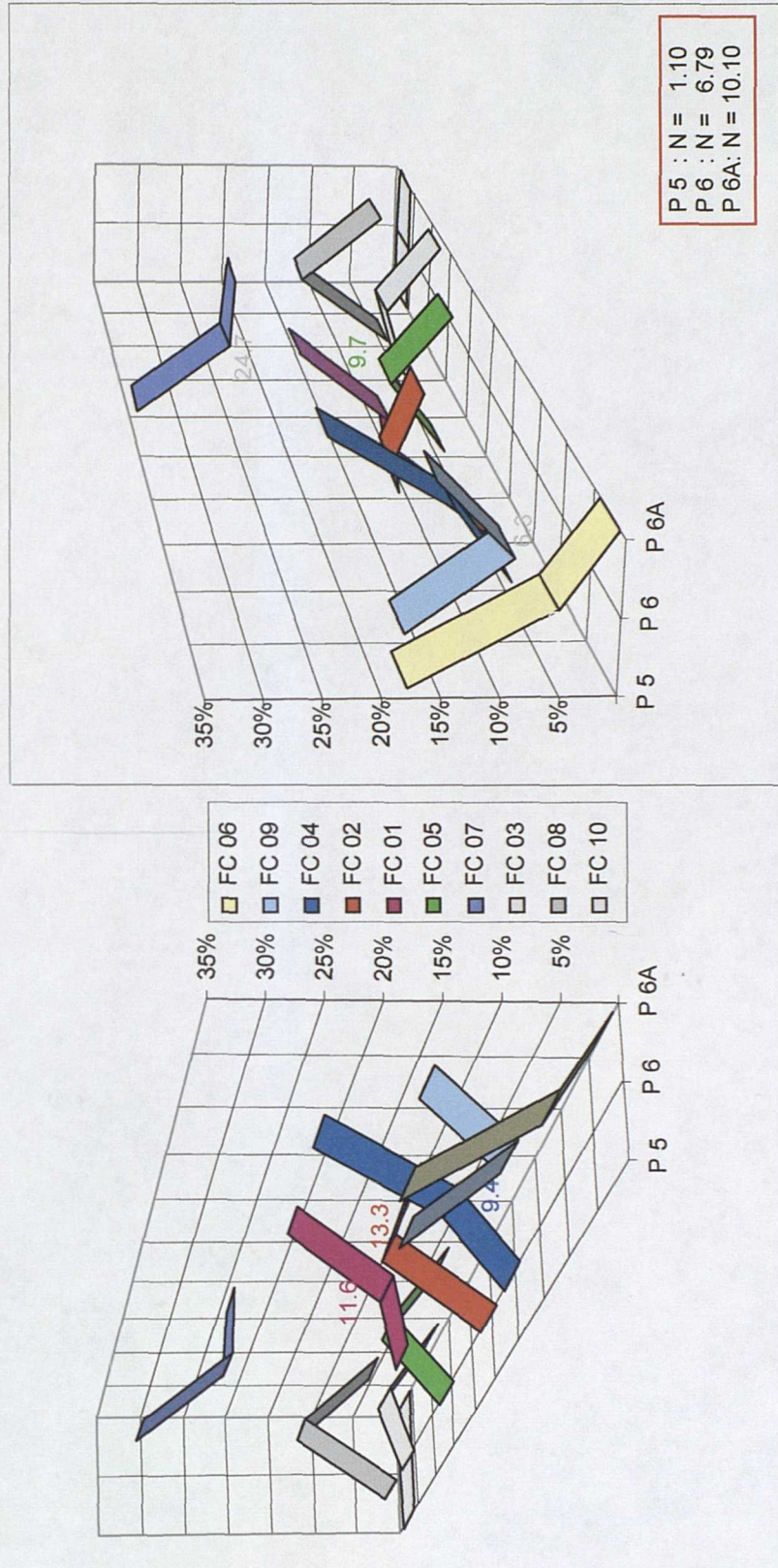


Fig.25 York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : CG Fabric Groups by firing conditions, weight (g)

ORIGINAL IN COLOUR



**Fig.26** York Minster, Periods 5 - 6A : CG Fabric Groups by firing condition (EVEs)

ORIGINAL IN COLOUR

from that obtained through quantification by weight, except insofar as FC 02, FC 04 and FC 07/10 display closely comparable patterns (Figs 24 and 26). The explanation for the considerable remaining differences between the EVEs representation at the two sites, and between the EVEs and weight quantifications *at* each site, reflects two factors. The small size of the Period 5 assemblage from York Minster has already been commented on. In the case of quantification by EVEs, even more so than by weight, the presence of a single (rim-) sherd can have a dramatic effect on the percentage presence of a particular fabric group. Thus it is Fig.26, the quantification of FC groups from York Minster by EVEs, which is most extremely divergent from Figs 23, 24 and 25. The second factor relates to the classification of fabrics with reference to differentiated core/margin of the sherd. Such differentiation is most frequently represented in the thicker parts of the vessel wall, which in the case of calcite-gritted wares includes the shoulder and rim. Thus where rim-sherds are specifically selected as a measure of quantification (as in the case of EVEs), these fabric groups are likely to be over-represented in comparison to their proportion of the assemblage by weight. This can be seen in the cases of FC 06 and FC 09 at Wellington Row, and FC 09 and FC 04 at York Minster. Such increased percentage representation will obviously have a converse effect on the other fabric groups, thus altering the profiles across the periods still further when compared to quantification by weight.

The outcome of the quantitative analysis of the INCL and FC fabric groupings from Wellington Row and York Minster thus indicates marked differences between calcite-gritted assemblages from the earliest and latest deposits on each site which contained this type of pottery. Moreover, the observable changes exhibit a considerable degree of consistency on both sites. In the case of the INCL groups, fabrics tempered with sand and small quantities of calcite (INCL 03), and those tempered with limestone or chalk (INCL 05) increase from zero or vanishingly low quantities in Wellington Row CP 1 / York Minster Period 5 to a substantial presence in Wellington Row CP 2 and 3 / York Minster Period 6 and 6A. INCL 05 is particularly strongly represented in (WR) CP 3 and (YM) P 6A. The calcite-gritted fabrics which dominate in CP 1 / Period 5 display, for the most part, a corresponding decline. A similar pattern may be observed in the fabric groups created on the basis of distinctive firing, with FC 02 and FC 04 rising from negligible levels to being two of the largest groups in CP 2 and 3 / Periods 6 and 6A. In this case FC 04 is especially strongly



represented in CP 3 / Period 6A.

(It should be re-emphasised at this point that there can be no question of the classification of the calcite-gritted assemblages having 'followed' the site phasing, consciously or unconsciously. The bulk of the ceramic recording was completed before the detailed phasing of the Wellington Row sequence had been worked out, and in the case of York Minster the published phasing was not even consulted before the pottery records had been finished. The close correspondence between the trajectories of the fabric groups [particularly evident in the INCL groups] from the two sites came as a considerable surprise to the author.)

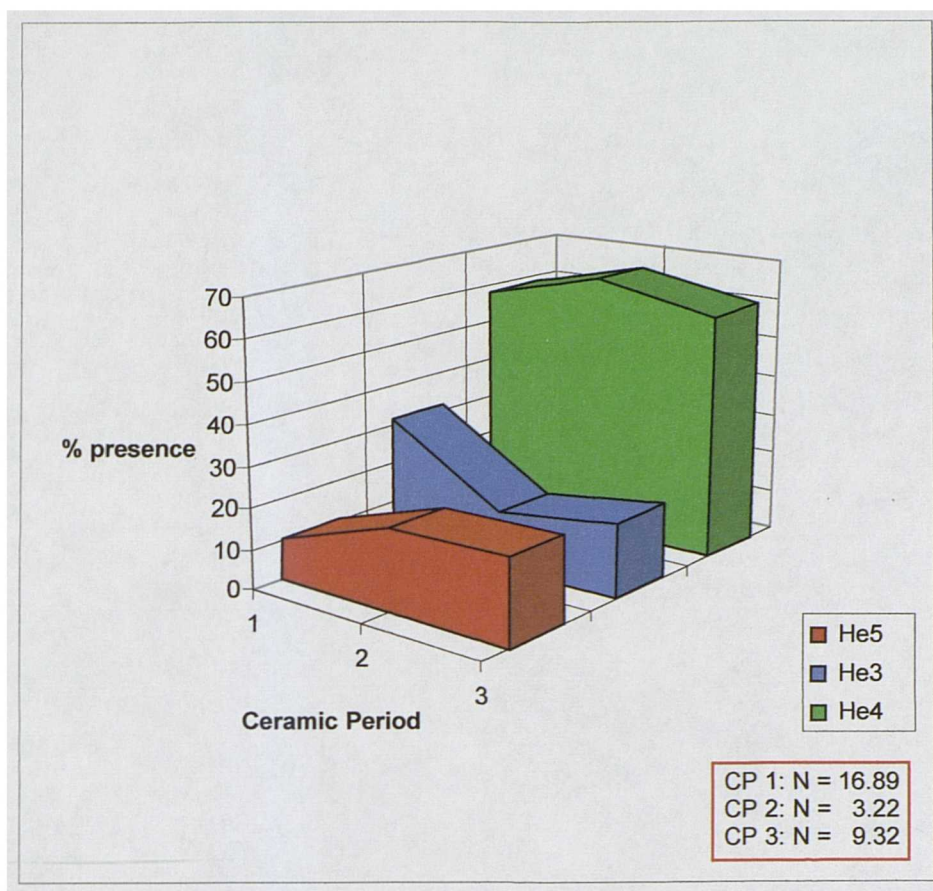
The *structural* phases which comprise CP 2 and particularly CP 3 at Wellington Row indisputably post-date the deposition of coins of AD 388-402. Since CPs 2 and 3 incorporate four major phases of substantial rebuilding and structural alteration (cf. Figs 8 - 11, above) which *succeed* the deposition of those coins, the conclusion that the variants of calcite-gritted ware INCL 03, INCL 05, FC 02 and FC 04 certainly *continued* in manufacture, and probably *began* to be manufactured, into the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century can only be denied through an unacceptable degree of special pleading. These variants represent, in York at least, distinctive, *bona fide* ceramics of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, manufactured in what is unequivocally a Romano-British idiom.

By contrast, the sand-tempered 'late hand-made' wares [B18 and G18], proposed by Monaghan as being the latest Romano-British ceramics from York (1997, 911-12) - INCL 04 as coded here - can be seen to occur in some quantity in CP 1 at Wellington Row, to peak in CP 2, and to decline substantially in CP 3. In other words, they are significantly present in a deposit which may well (although need not necessarily) be as early as c. AD 370, and decline in percentage terms in a period when INCL 03 and INCL 05 increasingly dominate the assemblage. B18 and G18 may not, therefore, be seen as the latest Romano-British ceramics from York, still less as diagnostic of the 5<sup>th</sup> century - a conclusion implicit, in fact, in the circumstances of their original identification by M.R.Hull in assemblages from the signal-stations as long ago as 1925 (Hull 1932, Type 24; Fig.3.1). Monaghan's small group of vessels in his 'G 19' - a 'catch-all' fabric description for crude vessels in coarse

sand-tempered fabrics - *may*, as he suggests, represent the final guttering of the importation of ceramics into York; but if this interpretation is upheld it must have occurred some decades later than he and other commentators have thus far been prepared to accept (Monaghan 1997, 912; Evans 2000, 41).

In addition to the analysis of fabrics from Wellington Row and York Minster, attributes of calcite-gritted jar *rim* form were investigated for chronological variability. One of the most readily observable of these attributes was *neck angle* which could be divided into three variants ('He3', 'He4' and 'He5'), and seemed likely to have been of particular significance inasmuch as at least two of these (He3 and He4) appeared to imply a difference in the form of the vessel *as a whole*. Figs 27 and 28 present the results of this analysis from Wellington Row and York Minster. A substantial difference between the two sites is readily apparent. At Wellington Row, He4 is massively dominant in all three periods, with He3 declining from just over 30% in CP 1 and for the most part being replaced by He5, which comprises a greater percentage of the assemblage in CP 2 and CP 3. At York Minster, by comparison, forms He3 and He4 are present in much closer quantities across all three periods (intriguingly their respective *trends*, regardless of actual level of presence, are almost the exact inverse of those from Wellington Row). He5 occurs in noticeably smaller quantities, and declines in the Period 6A, in contrast to CP 3 at Wellington Row. This suggests that this particular variation in form,] - at least with reference to He3 and He4 - is not directly related to changes in manufacturing practice which are chronologically uniform or consistent. There is a suggestion that He5 may, however, be more diagnostic in this respect.

To investigate this aspect of rim-form variability further, the percentages of each variant within each of the major fabric groups in the assemblages from Wellington Row and York Minster, as defined by both inclusions and firing conditions, was calculated. The results of this analysis are presented in Figs 29 and 30. In the inclusion groups (Fig. 29), it is notable that INCL 01, 02 and 07 all correspond most closely to the mean for the total assemblage from both sites, whilst INCL 04 (Monaghan's sand-tempered 'late hand-made' ware), and the 'late' fabrics INCL 03 (sand, sparse calcite) and INCL 05 (chalk/limestone) all deviate markedly from it as follows;



**Fig.27** Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Periods 1 - 3: jar rim-forms He3, He4 and He5 (EVEs)

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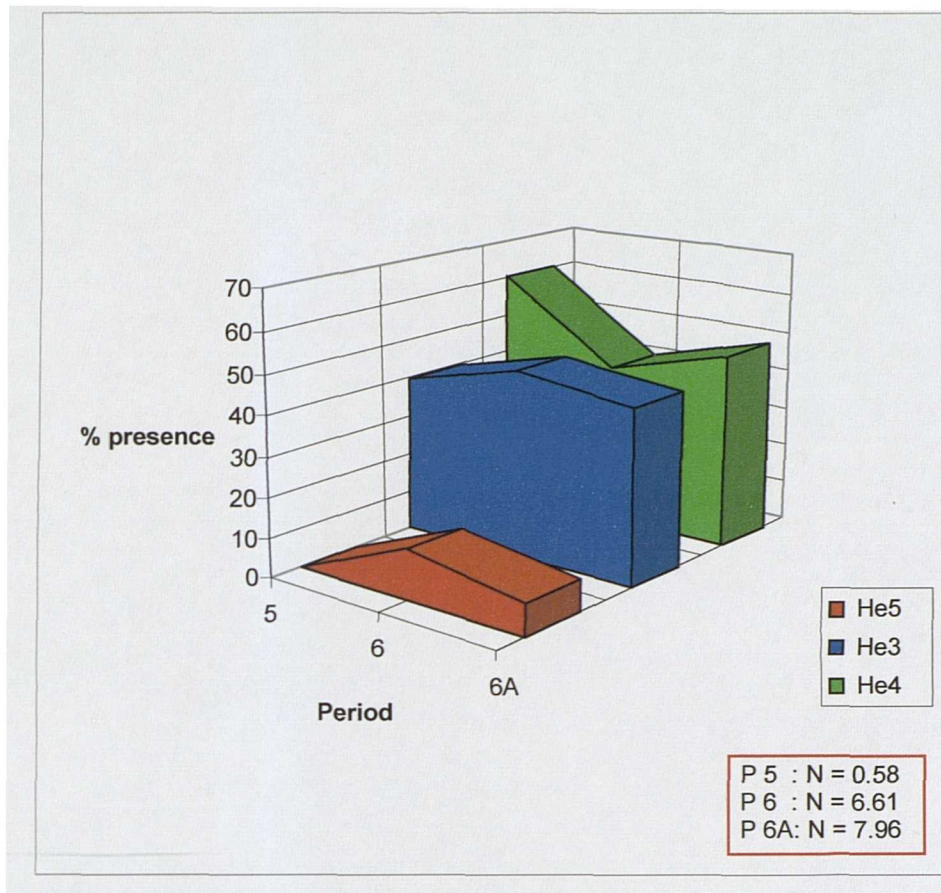
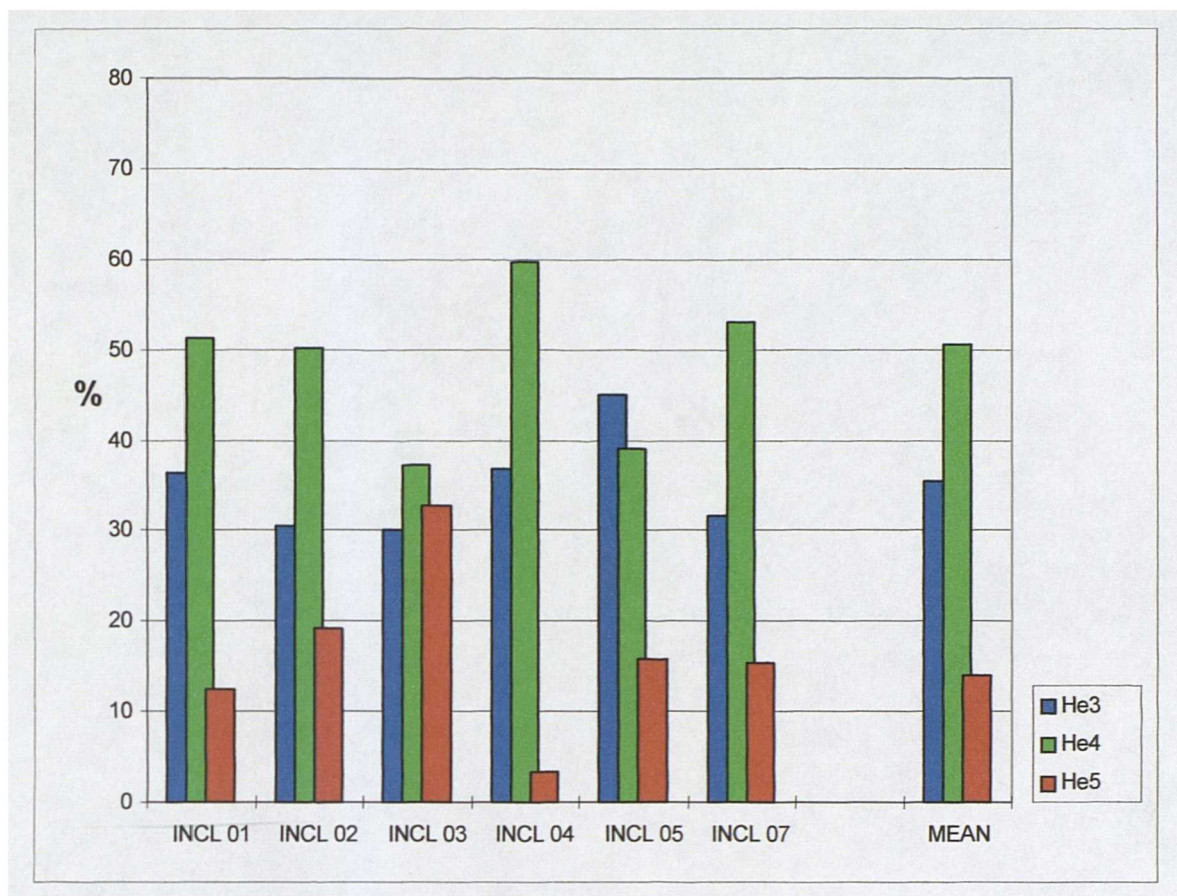


Fig.28 York Minster, Phases 5 - 6A: jar rim-forms He3, He4 and He5 (EVEs)

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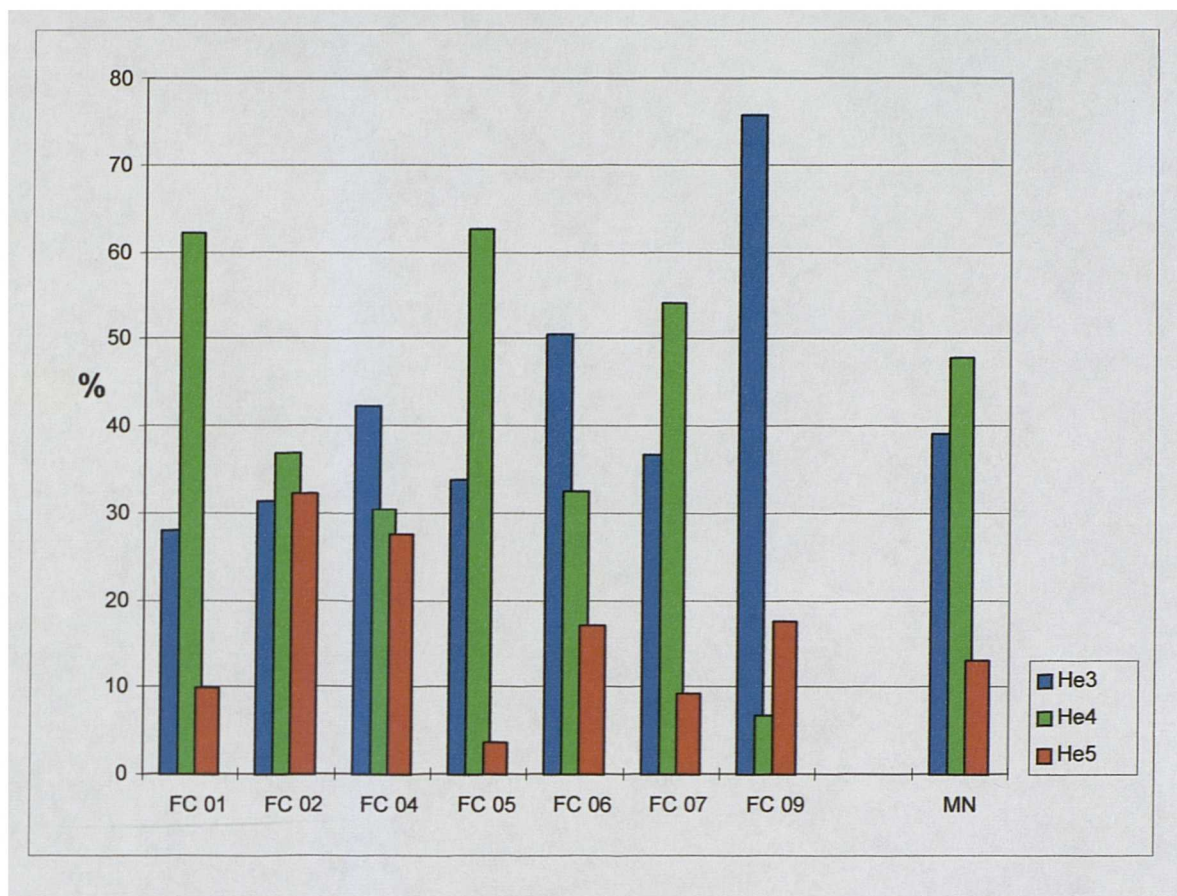


**Fig.29** Wellington Row and York Minster : rim-forms He3, He4 and He5, representation in INCL fabric groups (EVEs)

INCL 01: N = 24.66	INCL 04: N = 5.81
INCL 02: N = 3.33	INCL 05: N = 5.71
INCL 03: N = 3.03	INCL 07: N = 14.97

*ORIGINAL IN COLOUR*





**Fig.30** Wellington Row and York Minster : rim-forms He3, He4 and He5, representation in FC fabric groups (EVEs)

FC 01: N = 11.22  
 FC 02: N = 2.34  
 FC 04: N = 6.00

FC 05: N = 8.70  
 FC 06: N = 6.09  
 FC 07: N = 13.40

FC 09: N = 3.67

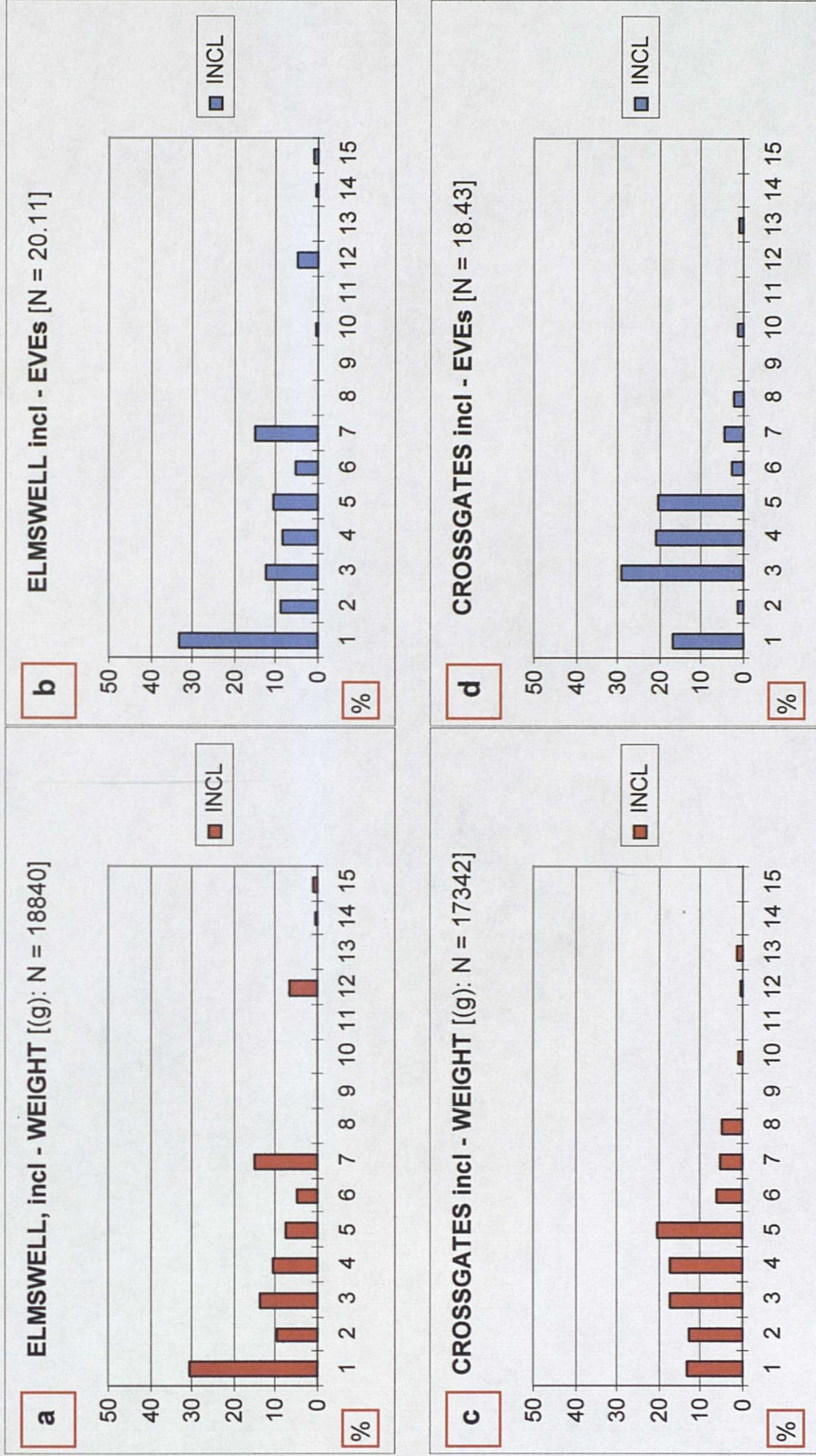
*ORIGINAL IN COLOUR*

- INCL 04 : disproportionate He4, negligible He5, He3 close to mean
- INCL 03 : disproportionate He5, He 4 substantially below mean, He3 close to mean
- INCL 05: HE3 above mean, He4 markedly below mean, He5 close to mean

It should be noted that this pattern may be influenced by the fact that the calcite-gritted assemblage as a whole is dominated by INCL 01, 02 and 07, thus making it inherently likely that these large groups will be closer to the mean than the smaller groups INCL 03, 04 and 05. However, the quantity of the latter groups across all periods of both sites is by no means negligible, and offers support to the suggestion that these are meaningful patterns and not merely statistical artefacts.

Similar discrepancies may be recognised when quantifying these rim-form variables against fabric groups defined by firing conditions (Fig.30). The spread around the mean is more marked, but again the fabrics which dominate in the earlier periods of the two sites, FC 01, 05 and 07 are closer to one another and to the overall mean than the remaining fabrics. Of these, the 'late' fabrics FC 02 and FC 04 are distinguished by their very high ratios of He5, and it seems particularly telling that the three 'banded' fabrics FC 06, 09 and 04 are all dominated by He3 forms.

Finally, assemblages from two rural sites - one from the Yorkshire Wolds (Elmswell, near Driffield) and one from the eastern Vale of Pickering (Crossgates, Seamer) were recorded in an effort see whether any of the calcite-gritted fabric variants identified at Wellington Row and York Minster were replicated on one or the other of these sites. Comparison is hindered by the fact that on neither was it possible to discriminate stratigraphically or spatially between assemblages of potentially different dates; they could only be quantified in the mass. Nevertheless, hints of an interesting pattern can be detected. Fig.31 presents the INCL groups from Elmswell and Crossgates respectively, quantified by both weight and EVEs. Attention is drawn to the peaks of INCL 01 and 07 at Elmswell, and by comparison the far stronger presence of INCL 03 and INCL 05 - the 'late' INCL groups from Wellington Row - at Crossgates. Also of note, if unsurprising, given the location of the site in the sandy Vale of Pickering, is the comparative strength of the sandy fabrics INCL



**Fig.31** Elmswell and Crossgates, Seamer : INCL fabric groups, weight (g) / EVEs ORIGINAL IN COLOUR

03 and INCL 04 at Crossgates, particularly as quantified by EVEs. Perhaps less expected is the high percentage of the chalk / limestone INCL 05 at that site. This is quite heavily represented in Fig.31 c/d. However, when those sherds from Crossgates whose inclusions were represented only by *voids* - whose rounded shape suggests chalk or limestone rather than calcite, although of course identification cannot be certain - are included, INCL 05 massively dominates the assemblage, as indicated on Fig.32 a/b.

Quantification by firing condition indicates an even more marked contrast between Elmswell and Crossgates (Fig.34). Whilst the former displays a fairly even spread of FC groups, with 01, 02, 04, 05 and 07 all represented in the assemblage at between 10% and 20%, Crossgates is massively dominated by FC 02 and FC 05, both fabric groups fired to black or dark grey. The very low presence of the 'banded' fabrics FC 06, 09 and 04 at Crossgates - less than 7% combined, compared to the figure of almost 22% total for the same fabric groups from Elmswell - is notable, as is the similar discrepancy in the presence of the light-grey fired FC 01 (16% to 5%). Put simply, the Elmswell assemblage includes a markedly greater range of firing types in significant quantities than is the case at Crossgates. This is the case, at least, with those groups which indicate close control over firing and cooling (to which the wholly oxidised fabric FC 03 might be added); FC 07 and FC 10, the 'variable reduced' and 'partially oxidised' fabrics are represented at 15% at Elmswell and 10% at Crossgates.

(It should be noted at this point that the bar charts representing quantification by weight and by EVEs for these two sites are barely distinguishable. The reason for this is that the collection strategies employed by the excavators of both sites involved the retention of rim-sherds and decorated sherds only.)

In order to identify any possible connections between the assemblages from the York sites and those from Elmswell and Crossgates, Figs 32, 33 and 35 offer a point of comparison by presenting fabric groups from the Wellington Row Ceramic Periods 1 and 3. These assemblages have been selected for this comparison because they represent the most distinct, stratigraphically-controlled and thus closely quantified assemblages of those studied in York. However, given the lack of stratigraphic and chronological control over



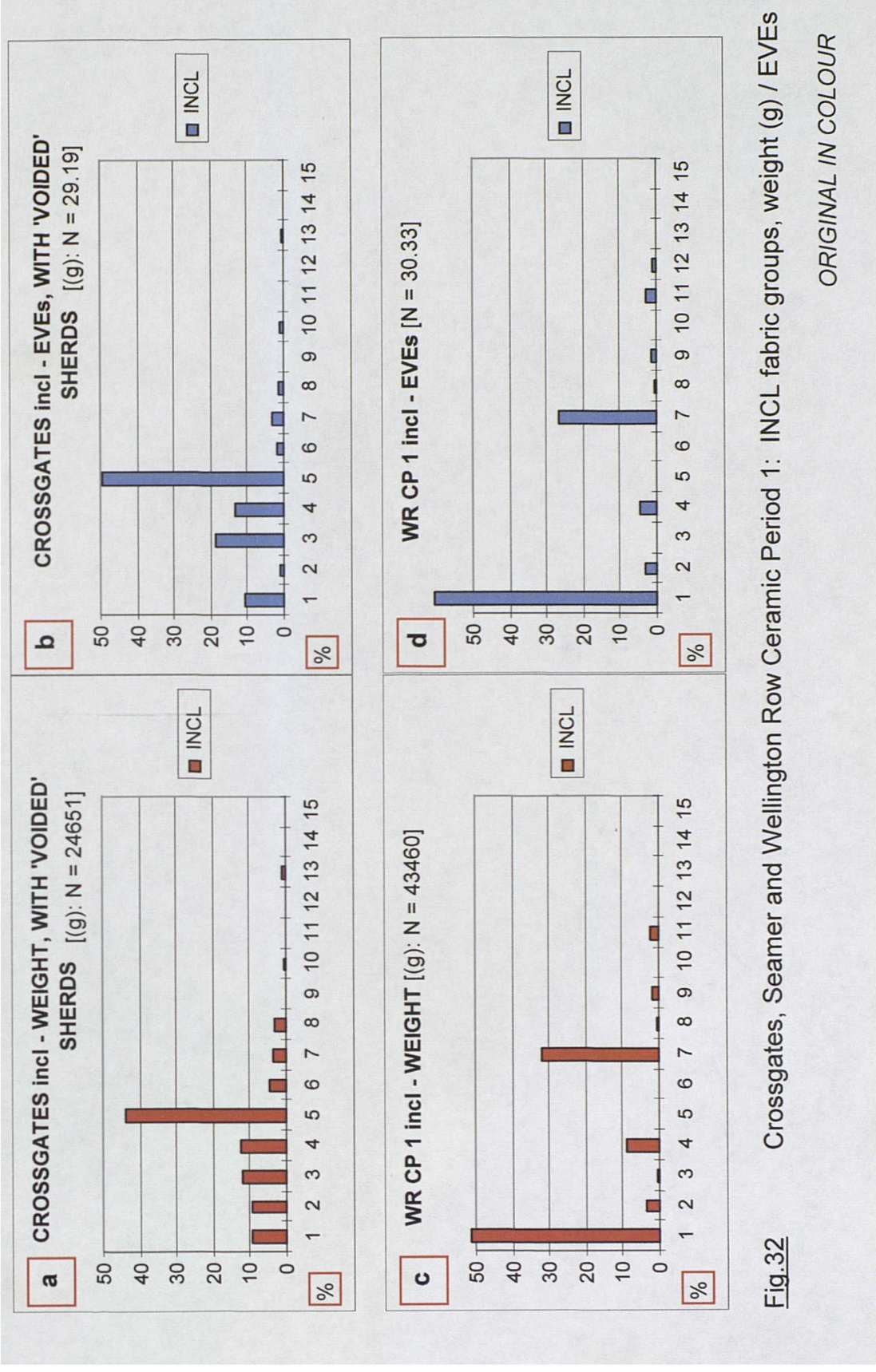


Fig.32 Crossgates, Seamer and Wellington Row Ceramic Period 1: INCL fabric groups, weight (g) / EVEs ORIGINAL IN COLOUR

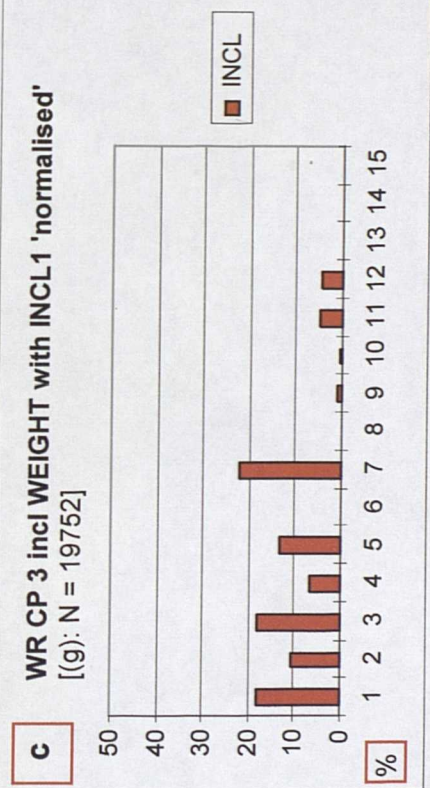
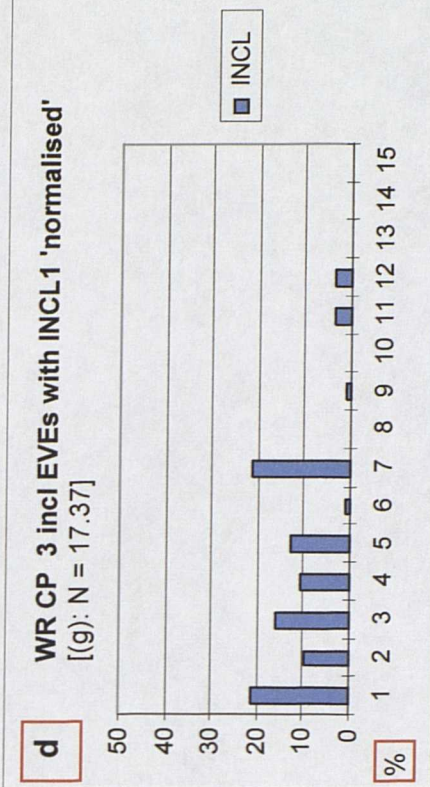
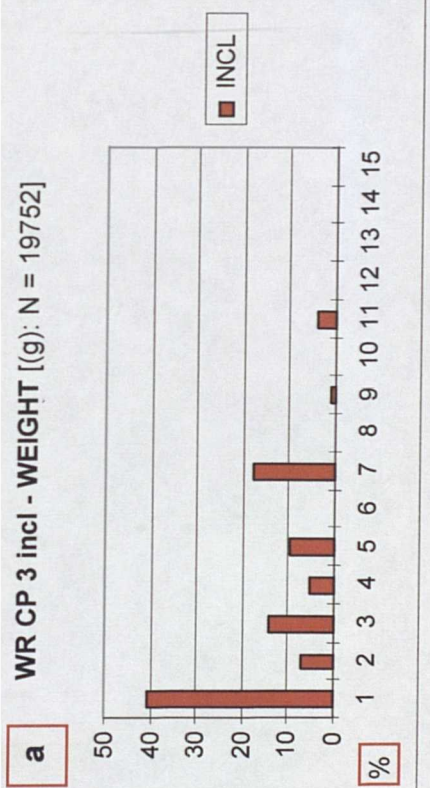
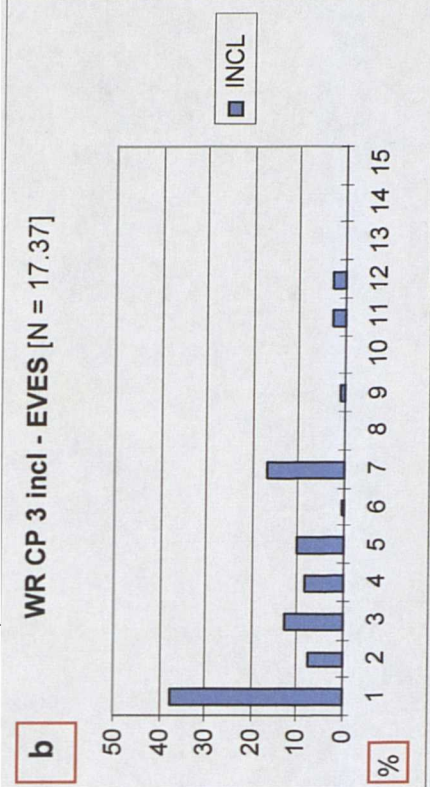


Fig.33 Wellington Row, York, Ceramic Period 3 : INCL fabric groups by weight (g) / EVES

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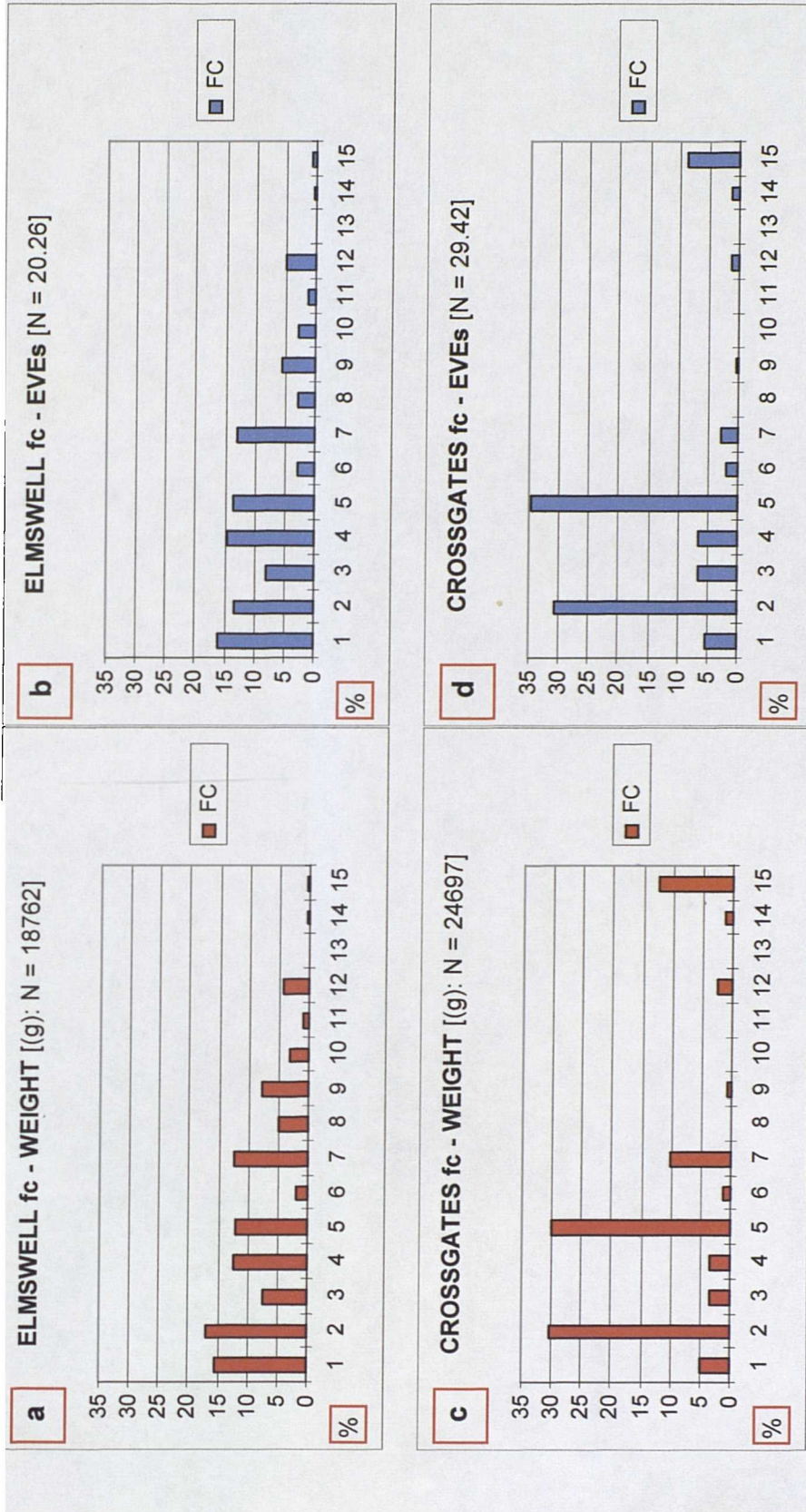


Fig.34 Elmswell and Crossgates, Seamer : FC fabric groups, weight (g) / EVEs ORIGINAL IN COLOUR



Fig.35 Wellington Row, Ceramic Periods 1 and 3 : FC fabric groups, weight (g) / EVEs

ORIGINAL IN COLOUR



assemblages at the rural sites, and the acknowledged effects of residual material in CP 3 at Wellington Row, close comparability should not, perhaps, be expected. There are nevertheless some interesting observations to be made. Firstly, the peaks in INCL 01 and 07 recognisable at Elmswell (Figs 31.a and 31.b) are similarly evident at Wellington Row CP 1 (Figs 32.c and 32.d). Wellington Row CP 3 is similarly dominated by INCL 01 (Fig.33.a/b), but as has been noted, this is in large part likely to be the result of residual material incorporated from CP 1. If, however, the CP 3 figure for INCL 01 is 'normalised' to a total (in grammes) equivalent to that from CP 2, the likely increased significance of other fabric groups becomes more apparent (Fig.33.c/d). It is still not possible to identify, in general terms, whether the CP 3 graph for Wellington Row is closer to that from Elmswell or Crossgates, but such a straightforward equation, given the constraints referred to above, is in any case unlikely. Specific points can, however, be picked up, notably the presence of INCL 03 and 05 at levels greater than those from Elmswell (Fig.31.a/b), and closer to those encountered at Crossgates (Fig.31.c/d).

Comparison of Wellington Row CP 1 and CP 3 with the two rural sites in terms of FC groups (Fig.35) is similarly lacking in obvious trends across the whole range of groups, but specific developments such as the great rise in significance of FC 02 (heavily represented at Crossgates) and FC 04 (well represented at Elmswell, far less so at Crossgates) in CP 3 may indicate hints of significant associations which might merit further investigation in other assemblages.

## 7.7 Conclusions

To summarise the conclusions of the quantification and analysis of the calcite-gritted assemblages discussed above;

It has been possible to identify variants of calcite-gritted fabrics, as defined by both inclusions and firing characteristics, which do not appear until CP 2 at Wellington Row, and which maintain or increase their representation into CP 3. CPs 2 and 3 comprise four major *structural* phases which post-date the deposition

of coins of AD 388-402. That this pottery represents calcite-gritted variants manufactured, used and deposited in the course of the first half of the fifth century cannot realistically be refuted.

The *overall* pattern of calcite-gritted ware deposited across the late- and immediate post-Roman sequence at Wellington Row is closely paralleled by that from York Minster, indicating that the system of classification and grouping has isolated genuine, consistent patterns rather than simply fortuitous variation at a single site.

Although variation in selected aspects of the *form* of calcite-gritted vessels does not appear to correlate simply with chronology, investigation of the proportions of different forms in specific fabric groups appears to indicate substantial differences which *do* co-vary with fabric groups identified as being 5<sup>th</sup>, as opposed to late-4<sup>th</sup> century at Wellington Row.

Comparison of assemblages from rural sites at Elmswell and Crossgates, Seamer with CPs 1 and 3 at Wellington Row suggests some possible links between these two sites and York, although the complexities introduced by chronology and deposit formation, and the lack of contextual or stratigraphic information from the two rural sites precludes any detailed analysis or conclusions.

The last point is not intended to suggest anything as straightforward as Crossgates and Elmswell having been the very sites which produced the analogous ceramic fabric groups recovered in York. The gist of the introductory chapters of this thesis, and the pattern of fabrics from both of these rural settlements, serve to indicate the inadequacy of such a simplistic notion. They may, however, give us some indications as to where to look for the areas and communities which *did* produce the vessels which were brought into 5<sup>th</sup> century York. A more productive approach at this stage is to outline a model for the *context* of ceramic production in 5<sup>th</sup> century eastern Yorkshire, which links the theoretical and regional perspective delineated in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 with the empirical evidence presented in this and the previous chapter, and to link these with what came after, in the later 5<sup>th</sup> and

6<sup>th</sup> centuries. These are the subjects of the next, concluding chapter.

## **Chapter 8 : The fifth century AD in York and east Yorkshire**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Chapter 7 has demonstrated that distinctive calcite-gritted fabric variants, defined by both inclusions and firing conditions, can be identified at a greater level of resolution than has been attempted by previous researchers, and that the groupings so arrived at exhibit consistent variation through the stratified sequences at Wellington Row and York Minster. Of these, variants INCL 03, FC 02, INCL 05 and FC 04 only *begin* to appear at Wellington Row in structural Phase 2 or, in the case of FC 04, structural Phase 3. Respectively, these structural phases are contemporary with, and post-date, the deposition of four coins of the House of Theodosius, minted between AD 388 and AD 402. Together, these two *structural* phases comprise *Ceramic Phase (CP) 2*. INCL 03 and FC 02 peak in CP 2, subsequently declining, whereas INCL 05 and FC 04 increase substantially as a proportion of the assemblage in CP 3 (Figs 20 and 23). CP 3 comprises complete re-building on a massive scale (Phase 4; Fig.9), with two subsequent major episodes of re-modelling of the interior of the new building and its landward facade (Phases 5 and 6; Figs 10 and 11), before its demolition in Phase 7.

### **8.2 Ceramic production into the fifth century**

It is scarcely credible that structural phases 3 - 7, which involve major and (in the case of Phase 4) massive structural alterations, and *must* post-date AD 388, can be compressed into a chronology which sees all of this activity as having taken place before *c.*AD 420. (This assertion is further reinforced if account is taken of the single Theodosian coin recorded as having come from the make-up deposit of structural Phase 1). It is infinitely more likely that the chronology of the structural sequence extends at least to *c.*AD 450, and very probably beyond. Fabric groups INCL 05 and FC 04, as variants absent from CP 1, present in small quantities in CP 2, and greatly increasing their representation in CP 3 (Figs 20 and 23), may thus be identified as having been

manufactured and used in the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The overall pattern of fabric variants, and their relative sequence and strength of representation, is confirmed by the data from York Minster (Figs 21 and 25).

If fabric groups INCL 02 and FC 03 may be identified as *continuing*, and INCL 05 and FC 04 as having *begun*, to be manufactured, brought to and used in York well into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, what information can they provide about the nature of social change in that period? The social model and its implications for ceramics presented in Chapters 3 and 4, and applied to east Yorkshire in Chapters 5 and 6, proposed that late Roman calcite-gritted ware (and other Romano-British coarse-wares) be interpreted as production by communities which retained, outside villa estates and the direct individual exploitation such estates imposed, fundamental elements of their traditional organisation, but were subject to tribute exaction by a late Roman ruling class, imposing tribute and disposing of it as both state officials landowners. The *contents* of calcite-gritted jars have been held to be an important component of that tribute, especially in relation to salt and salted foodstuffs, and their appearance on military and civilian sites across *Britannia Secunda* reflects their significance, and the capacity of the ruling class to control and articulate surplus through the tributary mode of production. By the 350s onwards, when east Yorkshire calcite-gritted ware output massively increased in quantity and range of distribution, the power base from which this control was ultimately exercised was the personal landholdings of military and civilian officials in the region, where they had implemented what was, in effect, a *feudal* mode of production.

Little if any direct evidence, other than the vessels themselves, is currently available for the production of east Yorkshire calcite-gritted wares. The current consensus, based largely on the results of Evans' NAA studies (1985, 359-368), suggests a limited number of production sites, each with a concomitantly large output. Although such NAA results may be largely determined by the chemical similarity of clay dispersed within a single river drainage basin (cf. 6.4.2, above), such a conclusion seems to accord

with the widespread similarity of the ubiquitous ‘Huntcliff-type’ jar rim-form. Chapter 6 .4.2 proposed large-scale, *seasonal* production of calcite-gritted ware in the vicinity of the river Hull, and at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering. The ‘hybrid’ nature of the manufacture of these jars, which usually involve hand-made vessel-bodies, onto which the elaborate rim-form was ‘thrown’ on a wheel, is suggestive of two-stage production process. The possibility that such seasonal manufacture involved different personnel, with ‘blank’ jar bodies produced by communities beyond villa estates, with the rims added by dedicated potters under the control of landowners, *at a single location* may be proposed. Production of calcite-gritted ware itself would thus have formed part of the tributary labour obligations of such communities, undertaken under the supervision of agents of the landowning ruling class, and closely *functionally* associated (if possibly *seasonally* distinct from) the articulation of surplus, particularly in relation to salt and salted products.

There are clear indications of considerable variation in the processes of clay preparation and firing of calcite-gritted wares; the fabrics of INCL 01, with moderate, typically small calcite inclusions and a fine-grained clay matrix contrast with INCL 07, with abundant large calcite fragments and a coarse matrix. Similarly FC 01, evenly fired to a seemingly high temperature, judging by its hardness and light grey colour, with FC 06, FC 09 and FC 04 betraying evidence, in their ‘banded’ appearance, of controlled oxidising / reducing firing environments and cooling. By comparison, the varied, inconsistently reduced fabrics (with occasional, ‘random’ oxidisation within the vessel fabric or on its surface) FC 07/10 and FC 02, with their ‘hackly’ textures, suggest less controlled firing conditions and lower firing temperatures. It might be suggested that, in the case of both INCL and FC fabric groups, that the finer variants represent production which bears similarity to that of grey wares, with the selection of finer clays and temper, and controlled firing in ‘true’ kilns, whilst the coarser variants represent a less controlled

process of production, and firing in bonfires or clamps<sup>16</sup>.

This disparity seems to suggest that certain calcite-gritted fabric groups (e.g. INCL 01, FC 01, FC 06, FC 09) display a greater degree of control over the processes of production than do others (e.g. INCL 07, FC 07/10). Within the model presented here, this would also imply a greater degree of integration of the former into estate-based production. It is suggested that these represent instances where the resources for which calcite-gritted jars were used as containers had been brought within the direct land-ownership of an estate, and the association between resource and controlled production consequently made closer. Calcite-gritted fabrics were still employed, as opposed to giving vessel production over to conventional grey-ware, because the addition of the calcite-temper (which has a rate of expansion and contraction when heated / cooled closely similar to that of clay minerals; Evans 1985,81) allowed the firing of thick-walled (and consequently robust) vessels to high temperatures with less risk of them cracking or shattering in the kiln.

How should INCL 03, INCL 05, FC 02 and FC 04, the 5<sup>th</sup> century fabric groups present at Wellington Row and York Minster, be considered in this context? Firstly, the presence of those calcite-gritted fabrics whose firing conditions appear to have been similar to those of grey-wares must be considered. Leaving FC 04 aside for the moment, the remainder of these - FC 01, FC 06 and FC 09 - when taken together, exhibit a

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It was striking, in this context, that the firing variants FC 01, FC 06 and FC 09 could all be identically paralleled in the York Archaeological Trust's reference collection for Crambeck wares (compiled by Jason Monaghan). Although the current orthodoxy, based on Evans' NAA results (*idem.* 1985, 360) is that calcite-gritted production did not take place alongside that of Crambeck (better, 'Howardian Hills'; cf. 6.3, above) wares, the fabric similarity in these cases was such that, the presence / absence of calcite aside, they could be described as identical. Furthermore, in each case the surface finish achieved, by burnishing or smoothing of the surface of the vessel, also matched closely. It might be borne in mind that Evans' conclusions regarding the lack of association between Crambeck and calcite-gritted production are based on a small number of samples (seven; *ibid.*), and that the Crambeck clay source itself may not have been chemically and petrologically homogeneous (*ibid.*, 352-4; Monaghan 1997, 903, 1032). At the very least, and regardless of location, these characteristics of FC 01, FC 06 and FC 09 would seem to indicate the use of the controlled firing environment provided by a kiln proper.

reasonable degree of consistency in the level of their presence across all three phases at both Wellington Row and York Minster, as follows;

Combined FC 01, FC 06 & FC 09 assemblages as % of total by phase

	CP 1	CP 2	CP 3
Wellington Row	33.2%	26.5%	27%
York Minster	21.7%	25.9%	21.1%
	Per 5	Per 6	Per 6A

Although, as Figs 23 and 25 show, the presence of each of the three fabric varies considerably across phases, what is significant for the moment is that all seem to represent calcite-gritted wares which underwent controlled firing. This suggests that such control was exercised over the production of a considerable amount of the pottery brought to the site in CP 2 and CP 3 at Wellington Row, and Periods 6 and 6A at York Minster. (These figures may be somewhat distorted by the effects of residuality, especially at Wellington Row - cf. 7.6, above - with ceramics re-worked from CP 1 masking a declining trend in the later CPs. The trends of FC 01 and FC 07, heavily present in CP 1 and declining dramatically in CP 2 and CP 3, suggest, however, that this cannot be the overriding explanation). Furthermore, FC 04, which appears for the first time in CP 2 / Period 6, and increases its presence substantially in CP 3 / Period 6A ( to 17% and 15% respectively; see Figs 23 and 25), also exhibits the traits of a controlled firing environment (albeit that, based on the *hardness* of the fabric, it does not on the whole seem to have been fired to similarly high temperatures as FC 01 and FC 06).

It is instructive to compare this trend with those of the 'coarser' FC groups, FC 07/10 and FC 02. These represent, respectively, unevenly fired, coarse, calcite-gritted ware, and 'hackly' dark-grey / black fabrics, both seemingly fired at comparatively low temperatures. Grouped together, the figures from the two sites are as follows;



Combined FC 07/10 & FC 02 assemblages as % of total by phase

	CP 1	CP 2	CP 3
Wellington Row	38%	43.3%	33.8%
York Minster	35%	42.7%	35.6%
	Per 5	Per 6	Per 6A

The proportions of ‘controlled’ and ‘uncontrolled’ firings of calcite-gritted wares from the two sites can be expressed as the following ratios (normalised around ‘controlled’ = 1);

	CP 1	CP 2	CP 3
Wellington Row	1 : 1.14	1 : 1.63	1 : 1.25
York Minster	1 : 1.61	1 : 1.65	1 : 1.69
	Per 5	Per 6	Per 6A

(the mean ratio for all six assemblages = 1 : 1.50)

These figures suggest a consistent ratio maintained across all three periods at York Minster, only matched at Wellington Row in CP 2. In the earlier and later CPs at the latter site, ‘controlled’ firings of calcite-gritted wares are apparently over-represented. The implication of the figures from *both* sites is that controlled firings continue to be represented in the later assemblages at a level at least comparable with, if not greater than, those earlier in the sequence. This is a conclusion which holds true even if the differences between the ratios expressed in the preceding table are not statistically significant. (At both sites the effects of any residuality should be the same with regard to both of these higher-order amalgamations of the FC fabric groups). It runs counter to the assumptions - and expectations - usually held about late calcite-gritted wares

‘degenerating’ in the final phase of their period of manufacture, and which would thus anticipate ‘uncontrolled’ firings predominating in the latest phases.

This pattern is, however, also at odds with the long-recognised observation (confirmed by this analysis; see Figs 14 and 15) that in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century the proportion of contemporary (i.e. Crambeck) grey-wares declines in comparison to calcite-gritted wares. If ‘controlled’ firings of calcite-gritted wares, which it has been argued reflect the manufacture of calcite-gritted jars within the context of estate production, why does grey-ware manufacture not hold up in similar fashion?

The pattern may reflect nothing more than an increase in calcite-gritted ware manufacture, including that proposed as having been controlled as an aspect of estate production, with grey-ware output remaining static. This in itself requires explanation, however, and this may be attempted in terms of the *functional* characteristics of grey-ware production. Evans has drawn attention to the fact that vessels associated with aspects of the *preparation* and *consumption* of food, such as bowls, dishes and beakers, form a high percentage of Crambeck output (1989, 77). Evans does underplay the real significance of jar production which form at least 20% of most Crambeck grey-ware assemblages in east Yorkshire, and in some cases up to 45% (quantified by minimum number of vessels; *ibid.*, Table 12). The argument presented in Chapter 4, that the rationale for estate-based production of grey-wares was in the first instance for the articulation of agricultural surplus, can therefore be maintained. That non-jar forms comprise a major component of Crambeck grey-ware assemblages is nevertheless apparent. Bowls, dishes and beakers are precisely the forms which, it may be argued, would increasingly, in the course of the 4th century, have been rendered in glass and metal, as the ruling class was able to intensify surplus expropriation from its estates (the pewter-mould from the Langton villa provides an example of this; above, 5.4.1). Thus the decline of Crambeck grey-wares as a percentage of assemblages may be seen as a reflection of the decline of bowl, dish and beaker manufacture as *ceramics*, and their increasing production as (re-cyclable) glass and metal (an observation

made by Fulford; 1975, 114). In other words, rather than reduced grey-ware representation indicating a *decline* in control of estate-production (a conclusion which the evidence of 'controlled' firings of calcite-gritted ware maintaining levels into the 5th century seems, in any case, to contradict), it may be seen as a further indication of the intensification of surplus expropriation from villa estates in the later 4th century.

Attention is now turned to the fabric groups INCL 03 and FC 02, which only begin to appear in quantity in Wellington Row CP 2, and INCL 05 and FC 04, which, whilst present in CP 2, really come into their own in CP 3 (Figs 19 and 20; Figs 23 and 24). These are the fabric groups which offer an opportunity to understand trajectories of east Yorkshire ceramic production into the 5th century.

The first issue to be addressed concerns the *level* of calcite-gritted ware production and supply in the 5th century. At Wellington Row, the total volume of calcite-gritted ware from both CP 2 and CP 3 is markedly lower - 14861 g / 511 sherds, 19752 g / 631 sherds respectively - than that from CP 1, 43460 g / 1080 sherds. The pattern is only intensified when account is taken of the re-working of sherds from CP 1 into CPs 2 and 3. This difference may, of course, be attributable to differences in the overall volume of soil represented by the deposits from which the assemblages were retrieved (although these appear broadly comparable between CPs), or differences in the functional use of the area excavated through time (or, perhaps more appropriately, in the activities which pertained in the areas from which the ground-levelling deposits, which contained the bulk of all ceramics, were derived).

The extent to which the assemblages may or may not be directly comparable in these terms could be investigated by further research into deposit volume, and possibly by indications of the likely origin of ceramic-bearing strata. However, a more straightforward approach utilises a comparison of the *total* percentage quantities, from both Wellington Row and York Minster, of the major fabric groups represented in CP 1 with those which appear

for the first time in CPs 2 and 3. The results of this comparison are presented as Table 1 (INCL) and Table 2 (FC).

In the case of the INCL fabric groups, the conclusions are straightforward. INCL 01 and INCL 07, the fabric groups which between them overwhelmingly dominate CP 1, account for 20.8% (weight) / 26.0% (EVEs) and 19.4% / 18.4% respectively. In comparison, the figures for INCL 03 and INCL 05 are 6.4% / 7.0% and 4.2% / 3.9% respectively. Clearly, the latter were manufactured (or at least brought to York) at a level between one-third and one-fifth that of their predecessors. This must indicate that these distinctively late variants either represent a reduced volume of production, or production sustained at broadly the same level, but for a shorter period. There is currently no way of choosing conclusively between these options, although the four major structural phases across which these types are present offers the possibility of a protracted period of use, which would support a reduced level of manufacture. (The extent to which INCL 01 may have continued in production alongside INCL 03 and INCL 05 - see Fig.20 - depends on accurate knowledge of the level of residual pottery, derived from CP 1, in CP 3 deposits, which is currently the subject of an arbitrary estimate only. This is less of an issue with INCL 07, whose presence steadily declines from CP 1 [Fig.20]).

Comparison of 'early' and 'late' FC groups (Table 2) produces a similar result. FC 01 and FC 07/10, which dominate CP 1, are represented in the total York assemblage at 20.3% (weight) / 15.7% (EVEs) and 19.4% / 18.4% respectively; the late variants FC 02 and FC 04 at 7.0% / 7.8% and 6.0% / 7.6%. Again, around one-third of the level of their predecessors, and less than FC 05 (10.3% / 11.7%), a comparatively small, if still significant, component of the CP 1 assemblage. It is interesting to compare the presence levels of FC 06 (5.4% / 8.1%), FC 09 (3.0% / 4.9%) and the 'late' variant FC 04 (6.0% / 7.6%). That these fabric groups are present at comparable, and comparably small, levels, may offer some support for the suggestion, hinted at by their sequential appearance in the Wellington Row CPs (Fig.20), that they in fact represent chronological variation in a specific firing process

	Wellington Row		York Minster		Total	
	g	EVEs	g	EVEs	g	EVEs
ALL INCL	91184	70.01	64956	49.15	156140	119.16
<u>Fabric Groups with strong presence in Wellington Row CP 1 / York Minster Period 5</u>						
INCL 01	21950	22.24	10572	8.69	32522	30.93
	24.1%	31.8%	16.3%	17.7%	20.8%	26.0%
INCL 07	19758	15.79	10498	6.13	30248	21.92
	21.7%	22.6%	16.2%	12.5%	19.4%	18.4%
<u>Fabric Groups first appearing in Wellington Row CP 2/3 / York Minster Periods 6/6A</u>						
INCL 03	5436	5.09	4488	3.47	9924	8.56
	6.0%	6.9%	6.9%	7.1%	6.4%	7.0%
INCL 05	2177	1.76	4386	2.88	6563	4.64
	2.4%	2.5%	6.8%	5.9%	4.2%	3.9%

**TABLE 1:** COMPARISON OF 'EARLY' AND 'LATE' FABRICS, BY *INCLUSIONS*, AS % OF CALCITE-GRITTED ASSEMBLAGES FROM WELLINGTON ROW AND YORK MINSTER

	Wellington Row		York Minster		Total	
	g	EVEs	g	EVEs	g	EVEs
ALL FC	91184	70.01	64956	49.15	156140	119.16

Fabric Groups with strong presence in Wellington Row CP 1 / York Minster Period 5

FC 01	21273	11.27	10358	7.47	31631	18.74
	23.3%	16.1%	15.9%	15.2%	20.3%	15.7%
FC 05	10644	9.52	5388	4.43	16032	13.95
	11.7%	13.6%	8.3%	9.0%	10.3%	11.7%
FC 07/10	19758	15.79	10498	6.13	30248	21.92
	21.7%	22.6%	16.2%	12.5%	19.4%	18.4%
FC 06	6788	7.97	1604	1.72	8392	9.69
	7.4%	11.4%	2.5%	3.5%	5.4%	8.1%

Fabric Groups first appearing in Wellington Row CP 2/3 / York Minster Periods 6/6A

FC 02	6214	5.65	4778	3.60	10992	9.25
	6.8%	8.0%	7.4%	7.3%	7.0%	7.8%
FC 09	2151	2.31	2456	3.49	4607	5.80
	2.4%	3.3%	3.8%	7.1%	3.0%	4.9%
FC 04	3426	2.70	5918	6.38	9344	9.08
	3.8%	3.9%	9.1%	13.0%	6.0%	7.6%

**TABLE 2 :** COMPARISON OF 'EARLY' AND 'LATE' FABRICS, BY *FIRING CONDITIONS*, AS % OF CALCITE-GRITTED ASSEMBLAGES FROM WELLINGTON ROW AND YORK MINSTER

(particularly in the case of FC 06 and FC 04; these fabric groups resemble each other more closely than either do FC 09, and are present at closely comparable levels, whereas FC 09's percentage presence is markedly smaller).

Overall, then, it would appear that the calcite-gritted variants present in what are taken to be 5th century deposits at Wellington Row represent a very much smaller component of the overall calcite-gritted assemblage than their precursors. This has been taken to indicate a marked decline in the *volume* of their production and/or importation to York. What can their characteristics tell us of the nature and organisation of this late production?

Firstly, the late, 'coarse' calcite-gritted variants, as defined by inclusions (INCL 03 and INCL 05), betray a marked lack of calcite. The mineral is present only in very small quantities in INCL 03, which employs (still quite small) quantities of quartz sand as temper, or (in some cases) effectively no tempering agent at all. In INCL 05, small fragments of limestone or chalk predominate, frequently employed to the total exclusion of calcite.

This variation in potting practice may be understood in terms of the wider social and agrarian system in which it was carried out. The specific forms of temper used will have been gathered in a context defined by agricultural practice, likely to have been a significant determinant in what is invariably considered by archaeologists to be an issue of disembedded 'cultural choice'. In the context of pottery of the first millennium BC in the region, Rigby *et al* have pointed out that 'sparry calcite develops along fault planes in the chalk, and hence required some degree of shallow quarrying', a collection procedure which they contrast with the use of temper derived from erratics which could be picked off the surface of the ground. Variants utilising the latter they termed 'minimum input pottery' (1998, 37).

Such an observation is, of course, equally applicable to the use of chalk or limestone as a tempering agent, in that fragments of the rock are available in profusion on, for

example, the surface of the Wolds or the Howardian Hills, especially areas under arable agriculture. In the case of calcite-tempering, it is not necessary to propose the existence of dedicated 'calcite quarries' sunk to obtain the mineral; the quarrying which formed an essential part of the digging of ditched field systems, argued above (5.4.1) as an integral component of the extension of villa estates across the east Yorkshire landscape, would have provided numerous opportunities to obtain it. It is of especial interest in this context to note Evans' observation that the *Knapton* fabrics (of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century) were very heavily leached by contrast with later calcite-gritted wares, and had probably been tempered with chalk or limestone rather than calcite (Evans 1985, 236).

One explanation for the shift from calcite to chalk tempering may thus be a reduction in the intensity of arable agriculture (cf. ditch-digging), especially in the context of estate production. Similarly, the increasing use of quartz sand, as in INCL 03 (where the generally small quantities of such temper may suggest its prior existence within the clay matrix, rather than its deliberate addition?), seems likely to reflect greater exploitation of the resources available *immediately* in the vicinity of the marginal environments of, for example, the Vale of Pickering. (Although INCL 04 is a wholly sand-tempered fabric group present at Wellington Row from CP 1, and declines markedly in CP 2 and CP 3, it contains no calcite, and occurs in its own distinct jar forms (cf. Figs 3.1, 3.12). The quantity of sand in the fabric does seem to suggest its deliberate addition as a tempering agent. INCL 03, by contrast, consistently includes calcite (and sand) in very small quantities, and is for the most part manifest in jars with the distinctive 'Huntcliff-type'/ 'He' rim-forms. Given the pattern of its appearance at Wellington Row (Fig. 19), it must represent a bona fide variant of *calcite-gritted* ware).

Both of these INCL variants thus seem to suggest continuing ceramic production in a changing agricultural environment. A similar picture obtains with the late FC groups, FC 02 and FC 04. FC 02 comprises 'uncontrolled' firings, resulting in a dark grey or black 'hackly' fabric, seemingly fired at comparatively low temperatures. FC 04 is defined by its



grey core and brick red outer margins, indicating controlled conditions of firing and cooling. In accordance with the argument outlined above, these should represent production carried out beyond and under estate control respectively (although is notable that FC 04 is appreciably less hard, and often less fine-grained, than its earlier equivalents). Examination of the *inclusions* which sherds in these two FC fabric groups seem to confirm this (Table 3).

CALCITE-TEMPERED	-	6600g (69.2%)	6.50 EVEs (69.1%)
CHALK-TEMPERED	-	1984g (20.8%)	1.99 EVEs (21.2%)
SAND-TEMPERED	-	950g (10.0%)	0.91 EVEs ( 9.7%)

**TABLE 3 : FABRIC FC 04 : BREAKDOWN OF FABRIC GROUP BY INCLUSIONS**

FC 02 inclusions are predominantly small quantities of calcite and sand, with a low percentage of shell-tempered sherds. In the case of FC 04, sand was used as temper in 10% (weight) / 9.7% (EVEs) of the sherds, and chalk in 20.8% / 21.2%, but the bulk of the material was tempered using calcite (69.2% / 69.1%). Again, on the basis of an association between the availability / acquisition of calcite, and agrarian practices locked into estate production, the context of production suggested by the firing conditions of FC 04 is supported by the use of predominantly calcite temper in the sherds in this fabric grouping.

In summary, the 'late' calcite-gritted ware variants identified at Wellington Row seem to represent a reduced volume of production continuing well into the 5th century, with indications of reduced input into the processes of ceramic manufacture, possibly in the context of a wider reduction in the intensity of agrarian production. These inferences clearly require much more detailed empirical testing and confirmation before they can be argued to be axiomatic. They have been offered here as a framework within which the *production* of ceramics, which play such a key role in the archaeological identification of cultural

groupings and the construction of chronologies, may be understood within the context of the social dynamics argued to have been operating in the 5th century. There is a further need for caution, in that the results obtained from Wellington Row and York Minster indicate ceramics *arriving in York*; it is not certain that calcite-gritted wares with the particular characteristics of INCL 03, INCL 05, FC 02 and FC 04 were not manufactured and in use elsewhere at an earlier date than that at which they begin to appear in York.

Given, however, that the York assemblages featured here are the only large, stratified assemblages yet recorded in this level of detail, what are their implications for the nature of social change in east Yorkshire in the 5th century? The data seem to suggest two contrasting patterns. On the one hand, new fabric groups characterised as indicating 'minimum input' in terms of fabric preparation, and firing in an uncontrolled environment, begin to appear at Wellington Row in CP 2. Only two variants, however, *increase* their representation in CP 3, the chalk-tempered INCL 05, and FC 04, whose appearance seems to indicate a *controlled* firing environment, which it has been consistently suggested is associated with estate production. The preponderance of calcite as an inclusion has also been argued, *specifically in a 4th century context*, as having been related to the operation of an estate-based agrarian regime. In the model employed here, the 'late' fabric variants thus seem to indicate (within the context of a considerable *overall* reduction in the level of production), a great increase in the significance of 'minimum input' fabrics and firings, *but also the survival alongside these, of calcite-gritted ceramics closely integrated into estate production*. Also, in the case of the late INCL groups, chalk-tempered ceramics increase their representation considerably in the very latest assemblages at both Wellington Row (CP 3) and York Minster (Period 6A), whilst those tempered with small quantities of sand and calcite (suggested as indicating little or no deliberate effort to add temper) peak in CP 2 / Period 6 and then manifest a marked decline (Figs 20 and 23). Similarly, fabrics displaying a controlled firing environment increase their representation in the very latest phases, whilst the 'uncontrolled' late variants appear to go into decline.

What this pattern would seem to indicate is that direct control of calcite-gritted ware

production in the context of villa estates persisted *after* a marked decline in the coarser variants, which have been identified as having been obtained as tribute from communities beyond such estates. It is tempting, given the persistence of chalk-tempered wares, to see the control exercised by the ruling class in the region as having been increasingly restricted to their estates on the arable chalk uplands. This would, however, be an oversimplification; at Crossgates, for example, on the sands of the Vale of Pickering, the major component of the coarse-ware assemblage was tempered with chalk (Figs 31.c/d, 32.a/b), and the complexities of land-ownership and tributary relations are unlikely to have been so straightforward on the ground.

As an overall model, however, a reduction in the capability of a land-owning ruling class to expropriate surplus as tribute from communities beyond its actual landholdings seems to fit the evidence provided by the late calcite-gritted ware variants. Given the apparent significance of such tribute in maintaining imperial infrastructure across *Britannia Secunda* (as witnessed by the scale of the production and distribution of calcite-gritted ware itself in the later 4th century), such a fracture would have massively compromised the effectiveness of the structures and offices of the imperial Roman state, military and civilian, in providing the material resources and the cohesion necessary to maintain a ruling class. In its absence, they would perforce have been thrown back on the resources over which they had direct control; namely their estates.

The implications of these developments, how their late-5th century end-game was played out in the context of east Yorkshire, and the application of a historical materialist model for social change in the region, and in Britain generally, are presented in the final two sections.

### 8.3 The social context of fifth century ceramic production in east Yorkshire

#### 8.3.1 Late Roman trajectories

In this study, what is conventionally termed ‘Romanisation’, in terms of changes material culture, has been interpreted as the result of the creation of a cohesive identity by a Romano-British ruling class. Such an identity was initially generated and expressed in the arenas provided by that newly created institution and locale, the town. Subsequently, this urban-based ruling class was able to extend its control over the material production on which its position relied into the countryside, and intensify surplus expropriation. This was achieved largely through the socio-legal instruments of individual land-ownership, alienating land which had previously been identified with entire communities. As this process gathered momentum, manifestations of what archaeologists consider to be ‘Romanised’ social and cultural practices became less a matter of the conscious use of material culture by a ruling class to define and delimit itself (although this was still significant), and more - and more fundamentally - the result of the imposition of changes in agrarian and social organisation designed to increase control over surplus production by members of that ruling class, in their roles as both agents of the Roman state and private landowners. Following Wickham, this development has been presented in terms of historical materialist *modes of production*, with the ‘tributary mode’, as represented by towns and the state infrastructure of tribute and taxation, creating the conditions in which the *feudal* mode, involving the direct alienation of land, and the legal tying of direct producers to both land and landowner, could be imposed.

It is widely acknowledged that the area which now comprises east Yorkshire remained largely ‘un-Romanised’ before the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In accordance with this historical materialist model, this has been interpreted in terms of the *absence* of the consolidation of a ruling class in an urban environment before what was, in effect, the *de novo* foundation of *Colonia Eboracensis* in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The archaeological evidence has been argued as being consistent with the extension of class power into the

countryside from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, with the appearance of villas (and the estates on which they depended), and the expansion and intensification of estate production in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. This also involved increased control over, and exaction of tribute from, communities which retained important elements of their traditional social and agrarian organisation.

The ceramic evidence indicates massively increased output from both estates (as witnessed by Crambeck ware) and independent communities (calcite-gritted wares) in the course of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The universal distribution of these vessels across *Britannia Secunda* is indicative of the key role east Yorkshire played in the provisioning of state infrastructure, military and civilian, in this period, ceramics being the visible component of a whole range of taxation and tributary exactions. It has been proposed that this took place in circumstances in which landowners in the provinces of southern Britain - areas which had previously been closely involved in supplying the north - were increasingly, along the lines proposed by Wickham, eschewing taxation and their roles as state officials, and choosing to withhold an increasing proportion of the surplus which they controlled for their own purposes.

Such a burden, suddenly and dramatically imposed upon east Yorkshire would have fallen heavily. Two considerations are paramount. Firstly, for many of the ruling class of *Britannia Secunda*, their roles as military or civilian officials would have been essential to their position within, indeed to the very existence of, such a class. In addition to the lateness of the development of a 'Romanised' material culture in the region, it has traditionally been accepted as an area where villas, although clearly in evidence, are comparatively sparse. It remains to be seen whether this interpretation will be empirically confirmed or refuted by future research, and the current rate of discovery may eventually demonstrate that villas and villa estates were more extensive in the region than current orthodoxy would allow. Nevertheless, the proposition that much of east Yorkshire, even in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, remained outside the control of villa estates may be offered without controversy.

Two specific considerations, one the reflex of the other, are thus vital to understanding developments in east Yorkshire in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Firstly, private landholding through villa estates, although it clearly existed, had not developed to the extent seen in more southerly parts of the province. Secondly, and the corollary of this, when the southern supply lines of the state infrastructure of *Britannia Secunda* withered, as the ruling class in that region increasingly held onto surplus for its own direct disposal, officials within the northern province could not make up the shortfall wholly from their own estates, as these were insufficiently extensive. Instead, they had to increase the level of surplus expropriation from lands and communities *beyond* their estates (witnessed from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century by the development, out of the regional ceramic tradition, of the 'Knapton' jar form). The extent to which this was the case is evident in the massive predominance of calcite-gritted wares in assemblages of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. (It is worthy of note that the only other contemporary coarse-ware jar form of comparable extent and magnitude of production, east-Midlands shell-tempered ware, is *wheel-thrown* - suggesting a greater degree of direct, estate-based control of ceramic production in this region).

The impact of this development on the regional ruling class, as state officials and landowners, and on the direct producers, would have been immense. In order to maintain their own accustomed standard of life (dependent on their retaining and disposing of a given quantity of surplus for their own purposes and consumption) in the face of a massive increase in state demands on their resources, required that the burden of surplus provision be extended and intensified beyond their own estates.

This transformation is recognisable in ceramic output from east Yorkshire after AD 300. In the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the distribution of ceramics from the Howarian Hills across the northern province was dominated by the wheel-thrown, estate-produced grey-wares from the Howardian Hills; the regional ruling class was able to dedicate this level of its own surplus production to the state and retain a sizeable proportion for its own immediate disposal, as may be seen in the villas of the early / mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. By the late 4<sup>th</sup> century this

situation had changed dramatically. The huge output and vast distribution of calcite-gritted wares from this period bears eloquent witness to the extent to the scale of the tribute exactions imposed on the communities which had remained unincorporated into estates. Moreover, in order to secure, oversee and distribute that surplus, personnel, whether identified as agents of the state, or as the retainers of individual landowners, would have been required. These in turn would have had to have been provisioned, further intensifying the surplus exactions imposed on those directly involved in agrarian production.

The analyses of ceramics from the stratified sequences at Wellington Row and York Minster have been argued to indicate the continued importation of calcite-gritted ceramics, and their contents, until at least the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and arguably beyond, albeit at a level much reduced in comparison with that which had prevailed in the later 4<sup>th</sup>. The character of the late fabrics has been taken as indicating that this dramatic reduction in overall output coincided with a lower level of *input* into ceramic manufacture (itself a component of a reduction in the intensity of agrarian production, which may be suggestive of the progressive fragmentation and failure of *estate* production), alongside the survival of an element suggesting a level of control of vessel preparation and firing consonant with its having taken place in the context of estate production. Nor is it a coincidence that the buildings within which these late ceramics were used and deposited were constructed *almost entirely from the re-used stonework of previous buildings on the site*. The significance of stone quarrying and transportation as a particularly arduous form of surplus expropriation has been emphasised previously (3.5.3). The 5<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants of the Wellington Row buildings were clearly unable to control such production on a substantial scale, if at all, and their elaborate edifices were, perforce, constructed of second-hand masonry quarried in the days when control of surplus production was secure. Overall, their capacity to determine production and expropriate surplus had declined exponentially - literally (prior to this thesis!), beyond recognition. How, and why, did this happen?

Two circumstances combined to precipitate this breakdown . The first relates to the ruling class's need to create, implement and extend the structures and personnel required to enact the surplus expropriation from beyond their estates which was so intensified in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. As previously mentioned, this would have involved the provision of the material needs of a further group of non-producers, requiring intensified surplus extraction over and above that imposed to meet the demands of the northern province as a whole. Furthermore, and even more significantly, such personnel would have found themselves in a vital strategic position. The ruling class of *Britannia Secunda* was still largely dependent on the infrastructure of the late Roman state to provide both the material basis of their position, and their cohesion as a class. Although they had begun to be able to invest resources from their own landholdings on their own behalf on a significant scale, these were not sufficiently extensive, and their direct control of agrarian production thus not great enough, to provide the increased level of surplus demanded by the state infrastructure in the northern province, nor to allow them to cast themselves free from participation in and allegiance to it. To maintain those state structures they thus *had* to expropriate from the communities which remained beyond their direct control at a new level of intensity; without such resources, provisioning of military and civilian infrastructure could not be sustained. Consequently, their whole class position was dependent on those who were in immediate control of such surplus and its disposal.

The second circumstance concerns the direct producers themselves. Over the course of two, or possibly even one generation, the rate at which surplus was expropriated from them had increased dramatically. Their willingness, or ability, to meet these demands would have been under severe pressure. In such a situation a desire to reduce this burden could well have translated into a willingness to make common cause with those immediately responsible for taking that surplus; indeed, the nature of the interactions between the hierarchy of imperial officials, local landowners (frequently the same individuals), and those collecting tribute may have meant that the latter were themselves senior (in terms of status) members of these very same communities. Whether or not this was the case, those engaged



in the collection and concentration of tribute can scarcely have failed to notice the possibility of disposing of the surplus which passed through their hands for their own ends, particularly in a situation where a) enormous quantities would have been transhipped beyond the region, making their own returns seem meagre in comparison, and b) the population from whom this surplus was being expropriated were becoming increasingly resentful, reluctant or simply unable to maintain tribute at the level demanded.

With a group of tribute-taking agents (whether identified as state officials or the representatives of individual aristocrats) finding themselves interposed between ruling class and direct producers, and with control over the disposal of huge quantities of surplus, their own position *viz-a-viz* the direct producers could be readily secured by claiming tribute for themselves, at a level *greater* than that which they would receive as representatives of state or aristocracy, *but at the same time many times less, in terms of the burden imposed on the direct producers, than that required to supply the state infrastructure across the huge area of Britannia Secunda*. The whole basis of power, in such a circumstance, would have been transformed from taxation, legal title to land and service, and the various legal forms of 'direct individual' exploitation the latter imposed, to *personal* and *communal obligations* of allegiance, tribute and service; power was enacted and negotiated between people and communities, rather than in terms of control of and rights over territory. The institutions and practices through which this power was enacted, and (crucially for archaeology) its *material representation*, became centred on the human agents themselves, as individuals and groups, rather than through the structures of an all-embracing state, or title to strictly delineated areas of land and the production carried out thereon.

Of course, once such a course of action was set in train, the ramifications were enormous. Deprived of surplus drawn from east Yorkshire on which they were reliant for important elements of their subsistence, the occupants of military establishments across the north would have needed to find alternative means to sustain themselves as communities. This would have required fresh strategies for the expropriation of surplus from their own

immediate environs, with social structures modified in accordance with the new realities, and created the need to impose and legitimise power structures relevant to, and resonant with, such circumstances. These are likely to have been similar, in many respects, to the strategies adopted by the burgeoning new class of tribute-takers in east Yorkshire. The picture outlined by Wilmott for the 5<sup>th</sup> century phases of military sites on and to the south of Hadrian's Wall, based particularly on the results from his excavations at Birdoswald, is of obvious relevance here (Wilmott 1997, 224-231).

Returning to east Yorkshire itself, the decline in the level of surplus being controlled by, for example, the inhabitants of the Wellington Row building, may be seen as a reflex of it having remained in the hands, and at the disposal of, those with direct, immediate control over it. Villa estates may still have been held, and surplus taken from them, albeit in reduced quantities - the last islands of power retained in the countryside by the landowning ruling class - but the undermining of the state infrastructure on which they had relied, by the choking off at source of the surplus drawn from *beyond* such estates, would have ensured their eventual demise.

The implications of this transformation, in social and material terms, are obviously immense. The enigmatic final stages of villa buildings which see the use of formerly residential structures (especially where hypocausted) converted through the insertion of ovens or corn-driers - of which Beadlam (Neal 1996, 17; fig. 16, p.20) is an example in east Yorkshire - may indicate, as has been suggested (Petts 1997, 103, 108), the collection of agricultural surplus *at the point of its production* by a mobile, peripatetic elite, with such agricultural processing confined within the very *buildings* of a villa; controlled at *specific points* in the landscape, in a situation where the power to control production *across* that landscape had been lost. (It is tempting in such a circumstance to see a complete reversal of roles, with villas having become the points at which surplus was taken as tribute *from landowners*, by way of 'protection', by those holding power as individuals with personal hegemony over the communities of east Yorkshire). Across the region, the final phases of

villas and towns reveal aspects of material production, which would previously have taken place in the context of the wider landscape, re-located within the previously residential *domus*, as will be detailed later in this section).

If villa estates, estate production and the surplus expropriated from it, and with them the manufacture of the greater part of the material culture conventionally considered to be 'Romanised', disintegrated in this fashion, what archaeological evidence can be adduced, given the notorious 'invisibility' of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, for the social developments hypothesised in the preceding paragraphs? The answer lies at settlement sites such as Crossgates, Seamer (on a low-lying glacial gravels on the northern edge of the Vale of Pickering, some 5 kms south of Scarborough; Rutter and Duke 1958, 1, fig.1), Elmswell (on a low gravel terrace above a small tributary of the river Hull, near Driffield; Corder 1940, 5; Loveluck, 1996, fig.3, p.30) and, most recently excavated, West Heslerton (close to the spring line *c.* half-way down the northern [scarp] slope of the Wolds, some 40m above the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering; Powlesland 1996, 11). At all of these sites, settlement complexes which were certainly occupied in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (and, it may be suggested in the light of the results from Wellington Row, into the 5<sup>th</sup>) are located in close association with features and structures characterised, on the basis of their ceramics and occasional examples of other classes of finds, as early Anglian (Rutter and Duke 1958, 21-33, 52-56; Congreve 1937, 16, fig.4; Powlesland 1996, 43-56, 67-71). (A further site which appears to follow the same pattern is known from surface finds in the parish of Boynton, near Bridlington; Eagles 1979, 424).

The full extents, layout, and character of activity at these late-4<sup>th</sup> century settlements is far from clear, since excavation on all of the sites has been partial, and, in the cases of Crossgates and Elmswell, carried out on a small scale, in largely piecemeal fashion, between the 1940s and 1960s. It would, however, be fair to characterise them, on the basis of such evidence as *is* available, as sprawling settlements, displaying few indications of deliberately planned internal settlement layout (although in each case the irregular disposition of

*individual* structures and features *does* seem to have taken place within - often large - ditched and fenced enclosures; cf. Crossgates [Pye 1981, 8, fig.3], Elmswell [Corder 1940, 10-11], West Heslerton [Powlesland 1996, 15; fig.59]) , consisting of unpretentious vernacular buildings, including round-houses and rectilinear structures, and with indications that a range of types of production took place within them. The character of late 4<sup>th</sup> century structures and production evidenced at each site needs to be briefly summarised.

At *Crossgates*, circular structures (Mitchelson 1950, 424, fig.II; Rutter and Duke 1958, 17, fig.4, 20), rectangular stone floors or hard-standings (Pye 1976, 15, figs 8, 9), 'occupation floors' (Rutter and Duke op.cit., 20) a flued oven or kiln (ibid., 18), two fragments of large rotary millstones, two whetstones, 'bowl-shaped' and 'trough-like' stone objects, 1 cwt of iron slag, 'numerous bones and teeth...fragmentary and many burnt...largely of ox [and sheep] (ibid., 18-19, 58, fig.13). (Iron knives, bone pins and clay spindle-whorls from the site have chiefly been attributed to the Anglian period - cf. Pye 1976, figs 15, 17, but since they are for the most part undecorated could equally be given a Roman provenance).

At *Elmswell* : natural-cut hearths / furnaces (Congreve 1937, 12-13; 1938, 13-15; Corder 1940, 16-24, figs 2 and 3; 29; Loveluck 1996, 29); rectilinear surfaces of rammed clay and stone, wall footings (Congreve 1938, 8-12, 18; Corder 1940, 24-8, figs 4 and 5); flued oven / kiln / furnace (Corder 1940, 12-15, fig.1); slag, possibly derived from lime burning (Congreve 1937, 26), c. half a ton of iron smelting slag (Congreve 1938, 16; Loveluck op.cit.); fragments of 15 large quernstones (Congreve 1937, 25; 1938, 35-9); 8 honestones (Congreve 1937, 25; 1938, 39-40); iron ladles, knives, shears, awl, punch (Congreve 1937, 23, fig.5; 1938, 34-5, fig.9); bone pins, bone, chalk, flint and pot spindle-whorls, sawn antler (ibid., 24, fig.6).

Both of these sites produced significant quantities of Crambeck grey- and parchment-ware, but the ceramic assemblages were dominated by calcite-gritted wares (see

Chapter 7.4 and 7.5), notably with 'Huntcliff-type' jar rim-forms. Specific parallels between the late Roman features and structures may be drawn with the flued ovens / kilns / furnaces (compare Rutter and Duke, fig.4 with Corder 1940, fig.1), the rectangular stone floors or hard-standings (compare Pye 1976, fig.8 with Corder 1940, figs 4 and 5), large rotary millstones, and the presence of quantities of iron slag. Neither site has produced any evidence of buildings or features which suggest the presence of a villa or other 'luxury' residence.

Although the limited and patchy excavation, and the selective recording / retention of finds, precludes detailed comparison between these sites, there do seem to be close similarities in terms of their locations and functions, and probably late Roman social context. This does not preclude significant differences; it is notable, for example, that the calcite-gritted wares from Crossgates are dominated by wares fired dark grey or black<sup>17</sup>, whereas those from Elmswell betray a much more even spread of distinctive firing traits (Fig.34). This may suggest that Elmswell was receiving such ceramics from a variety of sources. By contrast, the dominance of a single firing characteristic at Crossgates may indicate a source very close to, or even *on*, the 'site' itself. Conversely, in terms of *inclusions*, the great majority of the wares from Elmswell were calcite-tempered, whereas at Crossgates sand- and chalk-tempered fabrics occurred in abundance (Figs 31 and 32.a/b). This difference may (cf. 8.2) reflect a context within a more structured and intensive agrarian regime for the Elmswell fabrics, and a more eclectic - and hence less controlled? - context of production for the Crossgates material.

Anglian occupation at Elmswell is testified solely by portable artefacts, notably pottery (Congreve 1937, 15-19, fig. 4; 1938, 22-24, fig.4a). (In the first of these reports,

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This may be of considerable historiographic significance. The classic studies of Huntcliff / calcite-gritted wares emphasised the dark grey or black fabrics of the wares found at the signal-stations, which were massively dominated (73% of all vessels recorded by Hull) by the assemblage from the site at Castle Hill, Scarborough - only 5 kms north of Crossgates. This preponderance may thus be the result of the Scarborough station drawing on the resources of its immediate hinterland, rather than indicating that black-fired wares *were*, in reality, a disproportionately significant element of calcite-gritted production.

J.N.L. Myres observed that

“There is, to my mind, such a native Iron Age feel about these bits that one ought not to dismiss the possibility...[that the supposedly ‘Saxon’ sherds had in fact been used by Romano-British inhabitants.]...of the decorated pieces which are certainly Saxon, several seem indistinguishable from these dubious bits, and I have even found one or two which join on to them...you may well be on the track of a site where there was a genuine mingling of the native and Saxon traditions...’

[in Congreve 1937, 15].

This is a point which was picked up by Faull, and which will be returned to later in this section). At Crossgates, however, numerous features were identified and interpreted as being of Anglo-Saxon date. Two major classes of features were recognised. Some 39 ‘hearths’ were identified, typically measuring *c.* 1.50 - 2.00 m in diameter, *c.* 500 mms deep, and containing a lower fill of charcoal-rich soil and an upper fill of burnt / scorched / fire-cracked cobbles and/or clay (Rutter and Duke 1958, 21-31, figs 5-8; Pye 1976, 5-6). Better documented examples of closely similar features have been identified at West Heslerton, where they are referred to as ‘cooking pits’ or ‘domestic hearths’; six have been excavated (from an area of 13 ha), described as ‘located at some distance from any major structure’. They are said to ‘demonstrably derive from the Continental tradition rather than any native practice’ (Powlesland 1996, 48, fig.25).

In addition to these hearths, Crossgates has also produced 19 features termed ‘huts’ (Rutter and Duke 1958, 28, 32, fig.9; Pye 1976, 9 *passim*, figs 3-7, figs 10-12). These are typically of irregular rectilinear, oval or even triangular planform, measuring up to *c.* 5.0m across, and are rarely cut more than *c.* 500 mms into the sands and gravels (often markedly shallower), with their fills typically being of darkened soil. The bases of many of these features display clusters of fire-cracked stones and cobbles, small ‘hearths’ and other patches

of burnt clay, and sometimes concentrations of bones. They are often described as 'saucer-profiled', and usually have shallow-sloping, rather than clearly-cut, sides.

Comparing these 'huts' with excavated examples of *Grubenhäuser* from West Heslerton (e.g. Powlesland 1996, 50, fig.26; 52, fig.28), it is notable that almost all of the Crossgates examples are a) markedly shallower and b) almost invariably much less regular than the Heslerton examples. One explanation for this may be that truncation of the original ground surface has both reduced the depth of the Crossgates features, and resulted in a 'randomised' planform due to the original sides having been cut at different gradients along different edges of the features. The configuration of deposits in several of the published sections does not, however, suggest that this is likely to be the case, since deposits often survive, and limestone and clay hearth-like structures often remain standing which would have been denuded by such a process. They could simply be considered as 'working hollows'; but a more specific formation process, with important implications for this thesis, is proposed here.

The fills of these features invariably contained what the excavators describe as 'darkened soil' - although not thick, extensive deposits of charcoal - as well as containing fire-cracked cobbles and blocks or slabs of limestone, and in some instances scorching of the surface of the gravel in the base of the feature is recorded (e.g. Rutter and Duke 1958, 31). One explanation for these characteristics, and the form of the features as described above, is that the features represent the sites of surface bonfires or shallowly cut clamp kilns. The immediate objection to this proposal is that such features *should* leave extensive deposits of ash and the charred remains of fuel. However, if - as seems likely - (?nitrogen-rich) charred fuel from such shallow or surface features *was subsequently shovelled out to be spread on arable fields as part of manuring practice*, the anticipated remaining traces of a bonfire- or clamp-kiln - a shallow scouring of the surface, with some remaining traces of burning - would be very similar to the Crossgates 'huts'. (In this context the thick ash deposits reported in the ditches of the late-4<sup>th</sup> century phase of the enclosures at Sherburn,

near West Heslerton, where the internal surfaces of the enclosures themselves displayed no traces of burning (Powlesland 1988, 145) might result from store-mounds of such material washing into adjacent features.)

This suggestion obviously has significant implications for our ability to recognise bonfire- or clamp- kilns, and consequently a substantial proportion of calcite-gritted ware production. If the charred fuel remains from such firings was *itself* regarded as a significant agrarian resource to the communities engaged in such ceramic production (or by those who instigated that production and controlled it as surplus), expected traces of firing, such as ‘wasters’, might rarely, if ever, occur in association with actual production sites; such material would end up on the fields. (It is certainly the case that there is a marked absence of calcite-gritted ‘wasters’ from published excavations; none of the vessels in the supposed kiln assemblage from Knapton, for example, was identified as such; Corder and Kirk 1930, 97; Evans 1985, 81).

Against this interpretation is a sparsity of identified Romano-British calcite-gritted sherds from the Crossgates huts; by far the greater part of the sherds reported from these features are described as ‘Anglian’. However, since many of these sherds will themselves have been tempered with calcite (over 40% of the Anglian pottery from Crossgates includes calcite in its temper; Powlesland 1996, 69, fig.35), and are clearly plain body- rather than rim-sherds, such identifications may be questioned. A further comment is to wonder whether an underfired Romano-British calcite-gritted ‘waster’ sherd might not be exactly what an ‘Anglian’ sherd would be expected to look like. A final comment on this is that shallow hollows such as those suggested as having been created by this process would subsequently be obvious sites for re-use for other processing activities (such as might be responsible for the hearths and other features recorded in several of the Crossgates ‘huts’), as was demonstrably the case with several of the West Heslerton *Grubenhäuser* (Powlesland 1996, 51), or simply ‘deposit traps’ in which debris from subsequent episodes of occupation could accumulate and be preserved from subsequent damage and dispersal by ploughing.



To recap, the sites at Crossgates and Elmswell, notwithstanding the limited excavations and the shortcomings of the data available from them, both provide substantial evidence for a range of subsistence and craft production in an undeniably late-4<sup>th</sup> century, and conventionally Romano-British, context. Both have produced substantial evidence of 'Anglian' occupation, adjacent to, or interspersed amongst, Romano-British settlement. The implications of such terminology is a subject which will be returned to. Having introduced the site at West Heslerton as a point of reference for the two earlier excavations, it can now be considered as a model for the disposition of co-located late Romano-British and early Anglian - i.e., 5<sup>th</sup> century - settlement in the region.

Excavations at West Heslerton have recovered - apart from extensive evidence for a settled landscape on the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering from the late Mesolithic onwards (Powlesland et.al. 1986, 53) - the all but complete cemetery and settlement of an Anglo-Saxon community apparently founded in the later 5<sup>th</sup> century, extending over c. 13 ha, and including 130 *Grubenhäuser* and at least 90 post-built structures (idem. 1996, 1, 5). In the final season on the site, in 1995, a previously unknown, and largely unanticipated, late Roman settlement was discovered, partly sealed beneath colluvium in a dry valley at the southern end of the excavation (Fig.36). The stratified structures, deposits and features encountered, associated with abundant late 4<sup>th</sup> century ceramics and coinage, included two stone-built apsidal structures, buildings founded on post-pads, bread ovens and kilns, and extensive spreads of marine molluscs (ibid., 15). Located adjacent to, and indeed inserted into these deposits, were several *Grubenhäuser* and probably associated features which would seem to belong to the early Anglian settlement.

The artefactual, ecofactual and stratigraphic data from this site is currently unparalleled in significance and potential for the study of rural east Yorkshire in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Any final conclusions await the detailed interpretation of structures and deposits, and subsequent provenancing, characterising and sequencing of assemblages. Nevertheless, a number of significant aspects may be identified as highly relevant to the issues discussed

in this chapter. The similarities of the site to Crossgates and Elmswell, in terms of the concentration of various aspects of production, are readily apparent. The excavator attributes the bulk of these deposits and features to ‘transient activity of visitors to the complex rather than of conventional settlement’ (ibid.), and presents this in terms of a model which privileges ritual activity at a ‘shrine’. Here, it is rather suggested that indications of temporary, seasonal occupation and activity relate to precisely that pattern of seasonal labour obligation proposed in 6.4.2, with communities on the margins of the Vale of Pickering engaged in production at this site, overseen and controlled (from the ‘double-apsed’ building, in an elevated position well up the dry valley?) by agents of that landowning ruling class which held estates on the Wold top. Shelled molluscs would, indeed, provide another potential salted foodstuff for packaging and transportation in calcite-gritted jars.

The great extent of the Heslerton excavations, and geophysical survey carried out over adjacent areas not excavated, provide a picture of the landscape context of this activity only hinted at at Crossgates and Elmswell. Notwithstanding the excavator’s comments about the notional organisation and ‘functional zoning’ of the early Anglian settlement (ibid., 56), it is difficult not to be struck by the tight cluster of large ditched and fenced enclosures, seemingly of late Roman origin, along the base of and at the entrance to the dry valley, which include features such as a timber gateway for which the excavator adduces a parallel at South Cadbury (ibid., 58), and into which the bulk of the productive activities described above are crammed. Compare this with the early Anglian settlement, whose *Grubenhäuser* are scattered across, and cut through, these late Roman deposits and features, and spread away in a dispersed pattern two hundred metres and more beyond the northern limits of the Roman enclosures, and whose post-built buildings extend a further two hundred metres to the east, both occupying ground all but devoid of Roman features (and possibly, it might be suggested, given over to arable agriculture or open grazing when the late Roman complex was functioning).

We are looking here at the archaeological outcomes of different *modes of*



Fig.36 West Heslerton, North Yorkshire : Romano-British (black) and Anglian (red) settlement.(after Powlesland, 1996).

(enclosures; solid lines = excavated features, outlines = features identified by high-resolution geophysics).

*production*. On the one hand a tightly defined and controlled, probably seasonally occupied settlement at which a late Roman ruling class, exercising what may be described as feudal rights over their individual landholdings, expropriated surplus by exacting tribute in the form of labour power and surplus production from the communities beyond. (These communities had themselves, as the Heslerton and Sherburn ladder settlements arguably testify, been compelled into new social configurations, settlement locations, and patterns of production, exchange and consumption by this land seizure, and the transformation of agrarian economy and society which went with it). On the other, settlement laid out across the landscape, lacking evidence for enclosure, rigid land division, or - notwithstanding any 'functional zoning' or suggested social stratification (ibid., 57, 59) - intense, concentrated production, or rigid settlement hierarchy.

West Heslerton thus takes us back to the developmental model outlined earlier in this section. The point is not to demonise tyrannical late Roman aristocrats and mythologise egalitarian early Anglo-Saxon villagers; there is no suggestion of a 'Happy Valley' model of the 'Anglian' 5<sup>th</sup> century. But the arguments presented *are* rooted in conflicts over the control of material production and access to surplus which determine the specific forms of class society. What changed in the later 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century was the level of surplus required from east Yorkshire to sustain the infrastructure of *Britannia Secunda*. This sudden demand (a word used here in its most literal, imperative sense) exceeded the capacity of land-holding aristocrats in the region, lagging as they did some way behind their counterparts further south in the degree and extent of their direct control over agrarian production and surplus, to meet it from their own estates without drastically compromising their own style of life. The consequence was massive intensification and extension of existing tributary impositions onto the communities beyond those estates. To oversee this expropriation, the ruling class had of necessity to interpose a group of state officials or aristocratic retainers who found themselves a) in the position of having to take surplus from an increasingly hard-pressed and doubtless disaffected population, and b) exercising immediate control of the very surplus which underpinned the existing class structure. In the context of the political and military

crises of the decades after AD 400, the potential for consolidating their own power, at the expense of both state and landowners (particularly if the latter were resident elsewhere) by disposing of that surplus on their own behalf, and in the process obtaining the support of the direct producers from whom they already commanded surplus, would have become increasingly apparent. Rather than expropriate and move surplus around in great quantities, over large distances, at the risk of resistance and for somebody else's benefit, a mobile elite could move itself to the surplus, even if that surplus might be concentrated - witness Heslerton, Crossgates and Elmswell - at the same locales, demanding *less* from the direct producers, but still having *more* surplus at its own disposal.

This transformation in class relations would have had multiple, interrelated effects. Firstly, it would have reduced the burden of surplus production endured by the population at large. This, by the same token, starved military and state infrastructure of their material base, which in turn, across *Britannia Secunda*, deprived the landowning ruling class of its ability to execute its authority, and splintered and fragmented its cohesion. In these circumstances landed estates could not survive. By the same token, the breakdown of the legal and social institutions and compulsions through which control of agrarian production had been achieved, resulted in the progressive disappearance of the bulk of 'Romanised' material culture. It may have limped on for a while, at a greatly reduced level - as witnessed by the acknowledged 'late' wheel-thrown vessels from the Crambeck cist burials (Corder 1989b, 22; pl. VII, 192-3, p.21)), and the calcite-gritted wares arriving at Wellington Row in CP 3 and at York Minster in Period 6A - but, as an aspect of the technology of wide-scale surplus mobilisation, its time had gone. The calcite-gritted ware forms of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and (it may now be asserted) 5<sup>th</sup> centuries did not disappear due to a change of taste or cultural affiliation, and emphatically not because a collapse in 'demand' irreversibly compromised production organised in response to a price-setting market, but because the basic function they had been created to perform was no longer relevant; more particularly, because the *relations of production* under which they had been produced no longer prevailed.

Thus the progressive disappearance of what is conventionally accepted as the late Roman archaeology of east Yorkshire. What took its place? In searching for archaeological correlates of the rising class of tribute-takers who are argued to have played a crucial role in the 5<sup>th</sup> century transformation, two areas might be investigated; their self-representation as a groups and as an emergent class, and evidence for the locations at which, and processes whereby, they received and disposed of tribute.

The first of these is currently ill-defined in the east Yorkshire region. An obvious category of artefact which would seem relevant and appropriate to such representation is the late Roman belt furniture which has been the subject of such debate since a British corpus was first defined in a classic article by Hawkes and Dunning (1961). The twists and turns of argument regarding the appropriateness of Germanic, Roman, military or civilian attributions for these artefacts (briefly summarised, for example, in Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 54-6), and their propensity for turning up in Romano-British towns, villas, military sites and funerary contexts, as well as on Anglo-Saxon settlements and their cemeteries, ultimately testify to the inadequacy of these empirically or ideologically defined categories in arriving at a convincing understanding of 5<sup>th</sup> century social change (or, for that matter, of social relations in any period). Classifications based on prescriptive notions of ethnicity and static, unchanging settlement function will invariably lead to insoluble paradox when forced to deal with periods of all-encompassing social change. The seeming ambiguity created by their diversity of context and uncertain 'ethnicity' is in fact the very reason they offer, where the *structural position* of their wearers is made a paramount consideration of analysis, such potential insights into the social change behind the transformation of 5<sup>th</sup> century material culture.

It is therefore unfortunate that, to date, no examples of this class of artefact has been identified from an east Yorkshire context! The nearest provenances are from *Cataractonium*, the Roman town of Catterick (Hawkes and Dunning 1961, 62; fig.22; Hildyard 1957, 243), and a stray find from Stanwick, probably within the vicinity of the

LPRIA fortifications (Hawkes and Dunning 1961, 49, fig.15, *m*). Their distribution is in fact concentrated in the east Midlands and south-central England, with a further cluster in Kent, with a sparser distribution in East Anglia, and the two examples from North Yorkshire (*ibid.*, 27, fig.9). Their absence from east Yorkshire may be a real phenomenon, but could also simply reflect the fact that less fieldwork and excavation has taken place in east Yorkshire on all of the relevant classes of site than is the case further south, particularly in respect of York and Malton and their cemeteries.

In the absence of currently available direct evidence for the *representation* of an emergent class of tribute-takers, what of the evidence for their receiving and disposing of tribute? It is here that the ultimate phases of activity at Beadlam, Malton and York, usually attributed to the period around *c.*AD 400, can be brought into consideration.

In a late (if undated) phase of occupation at Beadlam, a grain-drying oven was inserted through the hypocausted mosaic floor in Room 2. In the latest phase of occupation of the Malton *vicus* (conventionally dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century; Wenham and Heywood 1997, 37), the conspicuously luxurious features of the 'town-house' and the complex of adjacent buildings were similarly forsaken, as seen, for example, by the infilling of one of the hypocausts, and decidedly utilitarian features, including a rectangular stone tank, a forge, and at least two hearths, introduced (*ibid.*, 38). Late industrial features, including a bloomery and a smithy, were also established within the fort itself (Corder 1930, 28-31).

In York, the furnaces feeding one of the hypocausted rooms of the Bishophill Senior town-house were built over, and the floor of the new structure strewn with food debris prior to its abandonment (Ramm 1976, 45). An irregularly built stone furnace flue found in the range to the north was considered by the director of the later excavation which discovered it be part of a drying-oven for an industrial purpose, post-dating the residential use of the building (Carver *et al* 1978, 39). The Bishophill Junior town-house was, late in its history

(suggested by the excavator as probably around c.AD 400), the site of extensive processing of small shoaling fish (Wenham *et al* 1987, 82; Jones 1988, 129-30).

It has been proposed (above, 5.4.3) that by the mid-late 4<sup>th</sup> century the distinctions to be made between elite settlements at villa, military site and even provincial capital were negligible; each was sustained through the surplus drawn from villa estates, and invested that surplus in very similar ways. What the final developments at all of these sites show is the location, within what had been luxurious residential contexts, of processing activities which would previously have been undertaken away out in the landscape; or at least, in the case of the farm complexes evident at villas, not in the core residential area. This does not merely represent an ideological change in ‘taste’ or what was considered ‘acceptable’. It may have involved this, but of far greater significance is the indications it provides of the secondary processing of raw materials, argued here to have been given up in tribute but, crucially, *not involving the mass of the population in such secondary processing on a huge scale*, as had previously been the case. Control of these processes of production appears to have been restricted to highly specified locales - the core complexes of villas / town-houses - and must have involved direct, personal control on a very small scale. These would have formed enclaves of controlled labour, as part of an immediate retinue, at locations with an obvious resonance with the immediate ‘Roman’ elite past, at which surplus could be processed, held, and, (as suggested more generally in a British context by Petts; 1997, 108) collected or consumed, according to the nature of the surplus production concerned. We are moving towards a characterisation which clearly has much in common with that associated with the aristocratic societies of the ‘Celtic West’ in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

At this point it is worth noting that, at Wellington Row, that it was the strata in structural Phase 4 which gave the strongest indications of production and processing activities, whilst those of structural Phases 5 and 6 were perhaps more suggestive of habitation, with clay internal surfaces, and indications of stone-flagged floors (7.2.2; Appendix 3; Figs 9, 10, 11). (It will be interesting to see whether analysis and quantification



of other categories and classes of artefacts and ecofacts can confirm and clarify such distinctions). Also, the distinctly 'late' variants of calcite-gritted wares appeared most strongly in these latest phases, which must certainly run to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and arguably beyond. Whilst there is no immediate prospect of calibrating the latest phases of other York sites with those from Wellington Row (although the calcite-gritted wares, if present in significant quantities, may now allow this), the implications of such developments across the former *colonia* are of the greatest potential interest.

Having considered the evidence for direct control of production, on a greatly diminished scale, by a new élite, what of their consumption of surplus? York is a good place to start, since the massive deposit of pig bones - the 'small pig horizon' - from the immediately post-Roman horizons of the basilica within the *principia* at York Minster has been interpreted as the result of aristocratic feasting, argued to have taken place at what had formerly been the centre of Roman power in the north, and enacted to cement cohesion amongst a dispersed and peripatetic ruling elite (Carver 1995, 190; Roskams 1996, 283-4). A similar perspective might be taken on the numerous large 'hearths' (more accurately characterised as 'cooking pits', identical as they appear to be to the features excavated and recorded in detail at West Heslerton), spread across a wide area at Crossgates (see above, this section). At least six of these features, each between 1.00 m and 2.00 m across, contained thick, extensive deposits of the bones of oxen (most frequently), horse, sheep and pig (Hearth numbers 17, 19, 23, 30, 35, 54; Rutter and Duke 1958, 21-31, figs 7 and 8), with the majority of the rest containing smaller assemblages<sup>18</sup>. What is striking, in this instance as at York Minster, is the location of this evidence *at a point in the landscape previously significant in terms of the exercise of power*; in this instance, of the direct expropriation of surplus.

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Although only six of these features are identified at West Heslerton in the 1996 report [p.48], in the heart of the 'Anglian' area of the settlement, it will be interesting to see whether others are identified, in the process of post-excavation, in and around the area of the former Roman enclosures.

### 8.3.2 Roman into Anglian?

Discussion of the Crossgates 'hearths' moves us into a milieu which is conventionally considered 'Anglian'. The transformation of the late Roman material culture of east Yorkshire to that termed 'Anglian' or 'Anglo-Saxon' has, of course, been one of the major themes of the study of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in the region, and has invariably been considered in terms of the arrival and settlement, on whatever terms and over whatever timescale, by immigrants from the North Sea littoral (cf. Faull 1974, 1984; Eagles 1979, 193-225; Loveluck 1996, 30-32, 1999, 233-4). The full range of evidence from 5<sup>th</sup> century 'early Anglian' east Yorkshire is a major subject in itself, but a few comments are offered hereby way of working through the implications of the historical materialist model presented above.

Firstly, it has been noted by Lucy (1998, 105) that the 'Anglo-Saxon' nature of many of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century burials from east Yorkshire is far from clear cut, and she has proposed that the variability exhibited in early cemeteries across the region in fact expresses identity at the level of the local *community*, rather than any broader 'ethnic' representation, and that this cannot be said to be recognisable until the 7<sup>th</sup> century. How can other aspects of 'Anglian' material culture be considered in the light of the model, leaving aside notions of either mass immigration and settlement, or even the widespread adoption of a self-identifying 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture as a conscious cultural and political choice, by a population determined to distinguish itself from 'Roman' culture and society?

Dealing primarily with ceramics, as these have been the central concern of this thesis, it should be stated at once that, in the view of this author, the ready attribution of many 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century coarse-wares to 'Germanic' origin or inspiration is inappropriate and very likely incorrect. Outside the cremation cemetery of Sancton, a small minority of vessels bear stamped and/or incised decoration, invariably and unquestioningly taken to indicate the Anglo-Saxon ethnicity of, or at least influence on, the manufacturer or user. Vessels in this category will be returned to. The majority, however, are undecorated. Differences in

manufacturing technology between 'Romano-British' and 'Anglian' coarse-wares are more readily attributable to the sorts of changes in the practices of agrarian production referred to in 8.2 than to a decision informed by conscious cultural preference. Vessel *forms* are usually considered to represent a sharp break with their Roman antecedents, primarily because they are implicitly compared with (in this region) the coarse-ware jar forms, whose particular function (and reasons for their disappearance) has been rehearsed above. Two factors should be emphasised. Firstly, it was argued in 8.2 that the reason for the apparent decline in the grey-ware component of ceramic assemblages in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century was the increasing production of vessels used for consumption - notably, in this context, bowls and beakers - in glass and metal. In other words, the 5<sup>th</sup> century prototypes for many vessel types would have been rendered in these materials rather than in pottery. (These, as a pertinent aside, are likely to have borne, variously, stamped, incised and moulded decoration). Secondly, whilst, for these reasons, resemblances between the majority of 'Anglian' and late Romano-British vessels need not have been close, there do seem to be some marked similarities with forms represented in both earlier Roman and Iron Age assemblages in the region.

Rather than offering a specific 'ethnic' attribution, it is suggested that the character of 'Anglian' vessels from sites such as Crossgates (and Myres' comments regarding the Elmswell assemblage, cited in 8.3.1 above, are also recalled) results from their manufacture and *use* under different relations of production. As an example, over one-third of all of the Anglian vessels found from Crossgates, classified as 'small neckless jars' (Type 30; Rutter and Duke, 53; fig.12), are described as 'cup-shaped' and have diameters of c. 115 mms - 170 mms (examples have also been found accompanying 'Anglian' inhumations in cemeteries at Robin Hood's Bay, Staxton and Driffield). Crossgates also produced two examples of 'small jars' (33/2 and 33/3, *ibid.*) whose overall form and decoration is distinctly reminiscent of Romano-British globular beakers, the lugs and depressions employed to decorate the vessels suggesting imitation of glass prototypes (as do, indeed, the Romano-British fine-ware examples).

The discovery of vessels of this sort, in the settlement context proposed for the Crossgates 'Anglian' site, is here argued to indicate *not* the introduction or adoption of a material culture in conscious opposition to that which was perceived as 'Roman', but quite the opposite. The creation of artefacts which deliberately *copied* aspects of the Romano-British repertoire, with a level (or lack of) technological sophistication which reflected the dominant relations of production, were employed at Crossgates in one of the collective, communal contexts essential to the maintenance of those relations by cementing group identity and social cohesion, offsetting and obscuring the asymmetrical tributary relationship at the very point at which it was enacted. Their alleged 'ethnicity' is probably illusory, and certainly epiphenomenal to these fundamental issues.

These arguments could, of course, be extended to a whole range of ceramic vessel types and other artefact classes. The appropriation of symbols, motifs and vessel forms from Roman élite table culture, and their utilisation and deployment in a communal context of use - whether domestic or funerary - and localised, low-technology production is a phenomenon with enormous potential and implications for the understanding of the archaeology of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such an analysis is clearly beyond the scope of this study. Germanic settlers may, if required, be introduced into this picture at any point and in any role - as tribute 'enforcers' on the part of the late Roman aristocracy, as a minority of influential élite settlers, as a mass of peaceful or marauding migrants - and have, indeed, been attributed variants of all of these roles. The level of their presence, and their chronology, does not, however, affect the central arguments presented here for the 5<sup>th</sup> century. There is, indeed, plenty of time subsequently for the arrival or proliferation of those defined genetically, culturally or linguistically as 'Germanic' (cf. John Hines' mooted 6<sup>th</sup> century settlement from Scandinavia; Hines 1984, 270-85), before the rise of a self-consciously 'English' and propagandist ruling class in the later 7<sup>th</sup> embedded its ethnic origin myth at the heart of the historical discourse which was to follow. To agree or disagree with Loveluck's reiteration of the case for extensive Germanic settlement (1996, 30-32; 1999, 233-4) is ultimately to participate in a numbers game which appears to have little hope of resolution and still less

analytical value.

#### 8.4 Britannia and the continental provinces in the fifth century

This rather scathing observation provides a route into the wider debate regarding social dynamics across the western empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and specifically connects with the arguments of Wickham regarding the ‘fatal involution’ (1984, 18) of an imperial state whose ruling class split it asunder when their material interests as landowners outweighed those as citizens and holders of public office (ibid., 15). As outlined in 3.4.2, Wickham’s model, which differentiated between the ‘ancient’ mode of production (a variant of the ‘tributary’ mode), in which the Roman imperial state exacted taxation through a network of cities, and the ‘feudal’ mode, wherein surplus was expropriated through the ownership of land, and legal and customary rights over those who worked it. As landownership became more and more extensive, and concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, the correspondingly increasing tax burden led these landowners to abandon their roles and obligations to the state. As a result, the empire was irreversibly weakened, and the Germanic invasions which ensued finally cracked the structures of the imperial state in the west. In many areas of Gaul, Iberia and Germania, landowning Romanised aristocracies, willingly or otherwise, were, in the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, incorporated into the new ‘barbarian’ kingdoms, within which their estates remained intact and functioning.

Wickham’s model constitutes a brilliant explanatory analysis of the social change evident in continental north-western Europe in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. It does not, however, seem to fit the historical and archaeological evidence from Britain in this period especially well. Leaving aside material conventionally regarded as ‘Anglo-Saxon’, the archaeological record over most of southern Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> century - and in particular the areas displaying the strongest indications of Romanised lifestyle in the 4<sup>th</sup> century - may fairly be described as paltry. It has been a central aim of this thesis to demonstrate that this is, in part, the result of long-standing difficulties of recognition; the notion of an effectively ‘a-material’ post-Roman interlude (cf. Esmonde-Cleary, 172, 186) is the artefact of a

multitude of preconceptions which have hindered archaeological research, rather than an accurate representation of 5<sup>th</sup> century society. Nevertheless, to claim, as some recent studies appear to (cf. Dark, 1994), that Romanised society in Britain remained largely unaltered and intact through the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, notwithstanding what can only be described as a collapse in the material production which was such a feature in the 4<sup>th</sup>, is an almost staggeringly obtuse approach to the problem. This is the archaeological equivalent - in reverse, as it were - of the search for landscape 'continuity' through the tracing of late Saxon estate boundaries back into the sub- and late-Roman period and beyond, pursuing an agenda originally defined by Maitland, Seebohm and Vinogradoff (1.4.1).

Because, as has been argued, it was the fact that these estates and the material production carried out on them had, by-and-large, and unlike large tracts of the continental provinces, ceased to function, which accounts for the particular character of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century archaeology of southern Britain. Wickham attributes the survival of a 'partly egalitarian, "Germanic"' mode of production into the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the settlement of Germanic peasants *en masse*, a situation which is far from being universally agreed, and which this thesis has specifically argued to be epiphenomenal. Why, then, *was* sub- and post-Roman Britain different?

This thesis has been primarily concerned with the specific case of east Yorkshire. Increasingly, and rightly, it is becoming axiomatic that different *regions* of Britain need to be considered and understood in their own right, rather than being subsumed into a single, homogeneous process or universal narrative transferable from one region to another (although clearly, explanations constructed at a regional level could and should interlock). Investigation of other areas of Britain in the same level of detail as east Yorkshire clearly cannot be attempted here, but some general observations may be offered as to where the roots of the differences between Britain and the continent may be sought.

The account of social developments in east Yorkshire in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century took

as its starting point one of the essential elements of Wickham's model; that by this period, in the areas of Britain within and to the south of the Thames catchment, the ruling class of late Roman Britain were drawing surplus from, and re-investing that surplus in, their own landholdings on a scale which meant that this source of wealth was more fundamental to their position as a class than that offered by state office and the obligations which went with it. This is witnessed by phenomena such as the rise of 'palace villas' such as Bignor, North Leigh and Woodchester, and the occurrence of the spectacular late Roman precious metal hoards (both of these phenomena being very largely absent from the north). The transshipment of agricultural surplus in quantity from the southern provinces to the northern frontier region is attested by the bulk movement of the coarse-wares BB I (from the Dorset coast) and BB II (from the Thames estuary), and the probable role of the dominant jar forms has been rehearsed in 4.4.2.

As a consequence of an increasing tax burden becoming more and more onerous as land-holdings increased, the aristocracies of southern Britain sought to shift the burden of provisioning the state infrastructure of the northern province, *Britannia Secunda*, to that province and those who held land and public office within it. The impact and outcomes of this have been presented in Chapter 6, and in the previous section of this chapter. What happened further south, in the Romanised heartlands of *Britannia*?

The transference of the direct burden of supply of the northern frontier region did not result in a slackening of the rate of exploitation of direct producers by the ruling class in the southern regions of *Britannia*. Rather, surplus was re-directed to the landholdings of that ruling class, witnessed by the regionalised distributions of coarse-wares such as BB I and BB II which had been in production for generations, the rise of *new* coarse-ware distributions, such as the grog-tempered vessels manufactured and distributed along the south coast from Hampshire to Kent (Tyers 1996, 191-2), and by the lavish splendour of the rural 'palace villas' and precious metal hoards. Pressure on the ruling class's ability to maintain this lifestyle would have come from increasing levels of and (with increased

landholdings) liability for taxation by the state, which was certainly being enacted until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in rising levels of surplus expropriation both on and beyond these estates.

It has been argued in the context of east Yorkshire that, on the evidence of the density of villas in that region, direct control of land within estates by the ruling class was not as extensive as was the case further south within the province. It is also true, however, that in these more southerly areas, by no means all of the landscape was held in this way. This recognition goes back as far as Haverfield, who elegantly summed up the situation in the following words;

‘...the distribution of civilian life was singularly uneven...Portions of Kent, Sussex, Essex and Somerset are set thick with ruins of country houses and similar vestiges of Romano-British life. Other portions of the same counties, southern Kent, northern Sussex, south-eastern Essex, western Somerset show few [such] traces...’

‘...Romano-British life was on a small scale. It was...normal in quality, and indeed not very dissimilar from that of many parts of Gaul. But it was defective in *quantity*’

(Haverfield 1923, 26-7; author’s italics).

Subsequent research may have dramatically increased the evidence in comparison with that which was available to Haverfield, but his axiom remains valid, and an element of the Romano-British picture whose validity and significance has been recognised by more recent commentators (Hingley, 1989; Millett 1990). Once again, therefore, a situation may be envisaged in which blocks of territory over which the feudal mode had been imposed were interspersed with areas inhabited by communities in which more traditional social relations and hierarchies prevailed, the one drawing tribute from the other; yet again, an intermediary class of tribute-takers was necessary to oversee and impose these obligations.



In this instance, the late Roman belt sets discussed in 8.3.1 clearly *are* of relevance, and the pivotal structural role proposed for their wearers in the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England may be used to explain the diverse nature of their find-spots. It is not possible here to explore the particular circumstances and mechanisms whereby tribute-taking by landowning aristocrats broke down - increasing levels of tribute taken in response to increased demand for taxation provoking resistance, or, conversely, the separation from the imperial infrastructure on the continent resulting in its fragmentation in an insular context - but the outcome placed the boot on the other foot. Rather than the structures of the feudal mode providing a power platform from which surplus could be drawn off as tribute from communities beyond direct tenurial control, these communities were able to refuse or resist tributary exaction. Using material culture usually classed as 'Anglo-Saxon', and the systems of social organisation which these embodied, their refusal to maintain tribute to the degree evident in the late-4th century initially starved the late Roman aristocracy of the resources which had sustained its wealth and power at a level beyond that supportable from landholdings alone, and would eventually overwhelm or undermine the feudal mode itself. It is worth restating that the involvement of individuals or groups originating from across the North Sea may be posited or refuted in any one of a number of capacities in this scenario, but does not affect the fundamentals of the argument presented.

As a final observation, it is striking that the areas of southern Britain where, on the evidence of the supply in quantity of late 4<sup>th</sup> century coinage, recognisably Romanised élite society seems to have lasted longest - notably Kent (Reece 1981, 53) and the region to the west of Oxford (Ryan 1988, 62, fig.4.13; Reece and Guest 1998, 253-4, fig.176) - were amongst those in which the number, scale and richness of villas suggests extensive and consolidated landholdings (for Kent; Jessop 1930, 205; Blagg 1982, 56; Detsicas 1983, 83-144; Philp 1984, 90; Hingley 1989, 191 *n.5*; for west of Oxford; Miles 1982, 56, fig.1; 57, fig.3; 60; Bird 1984, 60-69; Hingley 1988, 85). The late 4<sup>th</sup> century Oxfordshire ceramic industry is significant here on two counts. Firstly, its distribution to the east suggests a close

link to London and the Roman towns of Hertfordshire (Fig.1) - an indication of the urban contexts in which this late 4<sup>th</sup> century, rural ruling class originated? Secondly, the supposed late 4<sup>th</sup> / early 5<sup>th</sup> century terminal date for this industry seems to contradict the suggestion of a late survival of such society in this area. However, reiterating the point made in 8.2, where the apparent decline of ceramic industries is explained in terms of the disappearance of distinctive forms as they are replaced by glass and metal, thus indicating *increased* levels of expropriation from estates, the argument is clearly sustainable.

Developing and refining these arguments, and understanding the specific circumstances of 5<sup>th</sup> century change through the archaeological record, would require a detailed study of the type this thesis has attempted for east Yorkshire. In terms of understanding the period across Britain as a whole, within a framework compatible with Wickham's model, the crucial issue is the extent to which the Romano-British ruling class had - or rather had *not* - succeeded in using the *tributary* mode of production represented by taxation structures of the Roman state, in which they had situated themselves, as a vehicle to impose the *feudal* mode of production across landscape and population. Couched in terms of the extent and degree of 'Romanisation', Romano-British archaeologists since Haverfield have recognised that this occurred to a lesser extent than was the case in the other provinces of continental north-western Europe. Thus in Britain, when the structures of the Roman state disintegrated as a result of external pressure and internal fragmentation, rather than 'the structures of the feudal mode [proving] more solid than those of the ancient [tributary] mode' (Wickham 1984, 15), those very feudal structures, limited as they were in extent and penetration, fell prey to the egalitarian societies - founded on kin-based obligations to individuals and community, and structured around domestic and tributary modes of production - from which they had previously exacted tribute, but had not succeeded in breaking down and incorporating in the manner discussed in 3.6.2 with reference to the work of Elias.

The 5<sup>th</sup> century manifestations of these societies employed material culture

conventionally classed as 'Anglo-Saxon', but this term requires careful use and needs, it has been argued, to be 'deconstructed' to allow it to be employed with greater reference to its immediate material and social context. Romano-British landowners did not, as did many of their counterparts in Gaul, enjoy their accustomed Romanised lifestyle in the context of barbarian aristocratic societies willing and able to include them through the 5<sup>th</sup> and into the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Esmonde Cleary has remarked that it is '...odd that we have no evidence that they (Romano-British landowners) tried to maintain the lifestyle to which they were accustomed in the way that the Gallic aristocracy did' (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 173). The explanation is that the Romano-British aristocracy had never established their position in respect of landholding to the extent of their Gallic counterparts, and had relied to a far greater extent on tribute from communities beyond their own estates. From the late 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as that tribute began to be expropriated in diminishing quantities, the whole basis of their lifestyle was initially reduced to the isolated areas in which landholding had been most thoroughly consolidated, and ultimately, and terminally, undermined by those communities which had remained outside their control. Informed by the conceptual framework provided by historical materialism, and employing the analytical structures provided by the concepts of modes and relations of production, this model, employed in this thesis in the specific context of eastern Yorkshire, provides a means to understand and detail how Roman Britain as a whole unravelled through the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Appendix 1 : The walls of *Colonia Eboracensis*

*Colonia Eboracensis* may have been even smaller than Ottaway's estimate of 27 ha (ibid.) suggests. He argues for a three-stage development of settlement to the south-west of the Ouse; an early, 1st-century focus in the north-eastern quarter of what is now the medieval walled area, with subsequent expansion into the area south-west of the main road into the fortress in the mid/late second century (corresponding with the first structural phases of Tanner Row and Wellington Row), followed by further expansion in the early 3rd century to fill all of the area subsequently enclosed by the medieval city walls (Ottaway 1993, 73, fig.34). Firstly, it should be noted that the evidence for actual 1st century settlement in the north-western quarter is slight in the extreme (ibid., 72). It has already been argued that the earlier structural phase, with buildings in wood, actually represent manufacturing workshops under direct military control, and that succeeding buildings in stone represent a single, extensive campaign of the early 3rd century. The evidence that this extended as far as the south-western limit of the medieval walled circuit is in fact scanty, and an alternative interpretation may be proposed.

The most south-easterly Roman building known within the *colonia* is that excavated by Herman Ramm on behalf of the Royal Commission, beneath the church of St Mary Bishophill Senior (Ramm, 1976). Further to the south-east, the only evidence of Roman occupation is provided by burials, probably of the 2nd century AD, within the south-western corner of the medieval walled circuit (R.C.H.M. 1962, 107). Other indications of settlement are absent (Wacher 1995, 166, fig.73), notwithstanding that a number of archaeological evaluations have been carried out in the intramural area to the south-east of Mary Bishophill Senior since Ramm's excavation (Y.A.T. 1997). Ramm does, in fact, suggest that the extent of the walled *colonia* was less than that of the medieval circuit (Ramm 1976, 36), but does not explore the evidence in detail or develop his original suggestion.

That a walled circuit enclosed the *colonia* at York, and that it approximated the line of the later medieval circuit, is suggested by the identification, in 1839 and 1939, of a massive wall beneath the north-western rampart of the medieval defences (R.C.H.M. 1962, 49, fig.39). Its existence *elsewhere* along the circuit, however probable, is unproven. The

lack of settlement evidence to the south-west of Mary Bishophill Senior does not in itself demand that any Roman enclosing wall did not extend as far in that direction as its medieval successor; it is by no means uncommon for quite large areas enclosed by Roman town walls to remain unoccupied (cf. Silchester; Wachter 1975, 258, fig.60). There are, however, some telling hints that this may not have been the case.

The stretch of the medieval walled circuit which extends from Micklegate Bar to Baile Hill - i.e. that which is assumed to overlie the wall of the *colonia* in this area - stands atop two physically and institutionally distinct ramparts; those of the town defences and the bailey of the castle for which Baile Hill was the motte (R.C.H.M. 1972a, 10, 58, 87). From (medieval) Tower 5, c. 100 metres north-west of the southern corner of the walled circuit, a marked change in the masonry of the medieval city wall is evident (ibid., 92), emphasising the point that what now, as a result of the building campaigns of the 15th century, appears as a unitary defensive circuit had previously consisted of two physically and institutionally separate entities. The Baile Hill castle had been built in the late 1060s as an independent fortification, and remained distinct from the town defences for the succeeding three centuries; prior to its construction, and up until the integration of town and castle defences in the middle of the 14th century, there is no reason to suggest that any enclosing rampart, wall or other feature extended further south-east than the existing (modern) Victoria Bar, c.200 metres to the north-east of 'Bitchdaughter Tower', the southern corner of the medieval defensive circuit.

Between the Baile Hill castle ditch and the city wall, until the mid-14th century when town and castle defences were joined, ran a south-west / north-east aligned street named 'Lounlithgate', the line of which extends, north-eastwards, downslope to the river Ouse as 'Kirk Lane' (now Carr Lane). The existence of this street is first referred to in AD 1280 (Raine 1955, 241). It runs parallel to, and immediately to the south-east of, the the south-eastern wall of the church of St Mary Bishophill Senior. Still visible in profile in the churchyard wall on the north-western side of Carr Lane is what Ramm interprets as the revetment wall of the early-third century terracing of the Bishophill area (Ramm 1976, 38, fig.2; Carver *et al.* 1978, 30). In this section Carr Lane itself is some 3.0 metres wide, a width which bears close comparison with that of the probable wall of the *colonia* uncovered

in 1939 (R.C.H.M. 1962, 51, fig.39). It is suggested here that the revetment wall profile visible in the *churchyard* wall originally abutted, or more likely was bonded into, the town wall of the *colonia*, which ran approximately along the line of Lounlithgate and Carr Lane; that, in effect, Carr Lane represents the 'robbing trench' of part of the south-eastern wall of *Colonia Eboracensis*, transformed from a massive boundary wall to a lane (the former of which might well have formed a boundary between properties, outside individual ownership, and thus reconstituted as a thoroughfare when removed) by the acquisition of building stone. Apart from the evident lack of any trace of Roman settlement to the south-east of Carr Lane, some support for this reconstruction may be provided by the stonework of the (now demolished) St Mary Bishophill Senior, which is recorded as having been of megalithic construction in the lower courses of its south wall (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 699; that part of the building, it may be noted, closest to Carr Lane itself), and as incorporating 'many re-used Roman *saxa quadrata* of magnesian limestone' (R.C.H.M. 1972b, 30). Re-used Roman building stone could, of course, have been acquired from any number of locations in Roman York, including the extensively robbed structures subsequently identified immediately to the north-west of Ramm's excavations (Carver *et al*, 1978). The presence of megalithic masonry in that part of the building closest to the proposed line of the wall is, however, suggestive (and is also in evidence, along with re-used Roman sarcophagi, in the earliest phase of Micklegate Bar, on the probable line of the south-western wall of the *colonia*; R.C.H.M. 1972a, 100, pl.23).

If a reconstruction of the *colonia* with its south-eastern wall located along the line of 'Lounlithgate' and Carr Lane is accepted, on the basis of such evidence as is available, as rather more likely than one which sees its walled area as having been co-terminous with the medieval defences, then it was even smaller than described by Ottaway. The area 'excluded' by this reconstruction covers some 5 *ha*, reducing the size of the walled settlement to 22 *ha*, which would drop *Colonia Eboracensis* still further down Millett's rank-sizing of Romano-British walled settlements, to a position below all other chartered towns, and commensurate with many of the walled 'small towns' of later Roman Britain.

## Appendix 2 : Calcite-gritted ware classification : procedures and fabric groups

The ceramic assemblages studied for this thesis came from four sites; Wellington Row and York Minster, both from the city of York, Crossgates, Seamer, in the Vale of Pickering near Scarborough, and Elmswell on the dip slope of the Yorkshire Wolds, near Driffield. The rationale for the selection of these particular sites, and their individual histories, is presented at the beginning of Chapter 7. It is sufficient to note here that the first assemblage to be recorded was that from Wellington Row, York, selected because it yielded the largest assemblage of calcite-gritted wares, from the most deeply-stratified, recently excavated, best recorded and, not least, most accessible site (to this researcher) of the four included in the study. The description of the principles of classification and the specific methodology employed in this research will, therefore, largely be presented with reference to this site.

The Wellington Row site produced nearly 2,500 sherds of calcite-gritted ware, weighing almost 90 kgs, and distributed through the stratigraphic sequence across almost 200 contexts. The largest contexts, some of which included upwards of 10 kgs and several hundred sherds, were examined first, in no particular numerical or stratigraphic order. The exceptions to this rule were the earliest calcite-gritted bearing contexts from the site, 71862 and 71852; these were the largest and second-largest assemblages from any individual context, and were examined and recorded first as an appropriate *entrée* to the material. Subsequently the order of examination was determined primarily by size of assemblage, rather than preconceived stratigraphic considerations. The process and systems of classification and recording will firstly be presented with reference to ceramic fabric, and secondly to vessel form.

### Ceramic fabrics

At the commencement of recording the Wellington Row assemblage, it became apparent that, although all of the pottery had been washed, it was in many cases difficult to examine and compare fabrics due to residues which had adhered to the pottery in its buried

environment, concealing the characteristics of fired clay and inclusions. As a result, wherever necessary (which was the case with most sherds) a fresh break was effected with a pair of pliers on the margin of the sherd. This procedure also served to overcome the 'masking' effect of surface treatments such as burnishing or smoothing on fabric characteristics, noted by Rigby (1980, 45). Although rendering the process of recording considerably more time-consuming, this resulted in a far more accurate description of the colour, texture, hardness and inclusions of the sherd than would have been possible through more cursory examination, as well as allowing the identification of surface treatments such as smoothing or burnishing on sherds whose outer surface was obscured by sooting, scorching or mineral residues derived from the soil environment. It also indicated a far greater variety of fabric characteristics, particularly in relation to firing, than would otherwise have been recognised.

Since a key element of the original rationale for the research was the identification of distinctive ceramic types - whether defined by fabric or form - which might be recognisable at the very end of late Roman stratigraphic and ceramic sequences, and thus potentially be attributable to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, every effort was made to take account of any observable differences in the classification of fabrics. As each distinctive new fabric type was identified, it was allocated its own unique number, prefixed by the code 'WR', for Wellington Row. A new number was attributed to any sherd which displayed distinctive attributes, whether these were related to type of inclusion (e.g. calcite, sand, shell, slag, grog etc.), frequency of inclusion (abundant, sparse, moderate), texture (hard, 'hackly', friable), reduction / oxidisation (complete, partial / irregular), or indications of variable firing atmosphere ('banded' or 'sandwich' (?) fabrics). Sherds were only attributed to fabric types already allocated if they were considered to be identical or closely comparable in *all* relevant criteria; thus, for example, three sherds considered identical in terms of type and frequency of inclusion, and of texture, but distinguished in terms of complete or partial reduction / oxidisation, or distinctive traits of variation in firing atmosphere, would be allocated a new number. Thus, at this stage of basic recording, the scheme of classification sought to maximise the differentiation of potentially distinct calcite-gritted and related fabrics. A sample of each newly classified fabric type was extracted from the assemblage to create a fabric series and provide *comparanda* for the recording of subsequent assemblages.



In this way the total assemblage from Wellington Row was divided into 43 distinct fabric types. When recording moved on to the next assemblage, York Minster, sherds from that site were compared with the Wellington Row fabric series. Where they could clearly be equated with an example from Wellington Row, they were allocated the same number, but recorded with the prefix 'YM'; thus examples of fabric 'WR 01' found at York Minster were recorded as 'YM 01'. Where a distinctive 'new' fabric type was found, which could not be closely equated with any identified at Wellington Row, a new number was allocated; hence the first fabric type from York Minster not recognised at Wellington Row was classified as 'YM 44'. In either case, a sample sherd for each fabric type identified at York Minster, *whether or not that type had been previously identified at Wellington Row* was extracted from the assemblage for reference and comparison. Thus, when recording moved onto the other sites, a sherd which it was considered might be classifiable as an example of, say, 'fabric 27' could be compared with both the sample of 'WR 27' and 'YM 27'. In this way every attempt was made to maintain consistency of recording, and to avoid as far as possible 'drift' in the criteria employed in attributing sherds to fabric types. This process was repeated for the assemblages from all of the four sites included in the study. When recording was completed, examples of each fabric type which occurred at more than one site (e.g. 'WR 04', 'YM 04', 'CR 04' [Crossgates] and 'EL 04' [Elmswell] ) were compared with each other once again, the result of this comparison confirming, in 95% of cases and in *every* significant case, that classification and attribution had remained consistent throughout the recording process.

Fabric types were quantified by weight, number of sherds, and Estimated Vessel Equivalents ('EVEs') as determined by rim percentages (see Orton *et al* 1993, 173). 'Minimum Number of Vessels' (MNV) was also recorded for each fabric, again usually based on (number of different) rims, but occasionally taking into account vessel bases as well. Finally, sketches of incised, burnished or stamped decoration were made against each fabric type, with the number and weight of sherds on which each particular decorative element appeared also recorded, although this has not been employed in the analyses presented in this thesis.

These data (excepting those relating to decoration, an issue which will be returned

to below) were stored on a Paradox 7 database, allowing data to be extracted and manipulated according to site, context and fabric type, quantified by sherd weight, number of sherds, EVEs and (although this was never used in analysis) MNV. (Other columns were included for the calculation of *percentages* of each of these quantitative measures as proportions of the *total ceramic assemblage* and of the *calcite-gritted assemblage* from that context. In the event, neither analysis of assemblages at individual context level, nor of ceramics as individual fabric types, was pursued).

This recording resulted in the identification and quantification of a total of 84 distinct calcite-gritted fabric types, a number of which were present on all four sites, if representing widely different proportions of each site assemblage. Others, by contrast, were restricted to individual sites. It was clear, however, that higher level groupings of the individual fabric types were recognisable, and that the amalgamation of individual fabric types which this implied would indeed be necessary for the purposes of analysis, in order to provide groupings large enough for meaningful quantitative comparison.

As a result of the high level of discrimination and differentiation of fabric types employed in the initial recording, it was possible to create different groupings according to different sets of criteria. Two groups of variables were considered of particular significance. The first of these comprised the *type and quantity of temper* employed (e.g. moderate crystalline calcite, abundant coarse sand, etc.), together with the *texture* and *hardness* of the ceramic fabric (e.g., close-grained, hackly; hard, friable). Fabric types grouped according to these criteria were thus compared in terms of the raw material employed as temper, and the quality achieved in the firing of the fabric. These were termed 'INCL' fabric groups. The second was concerned primarily with the *colour* of the fabrics, regardless of the material used as temper, and thus aimed to identify fabrics possibly linked by common or similar clay sources and/or firing environments; 'FC' fabric groups. Fabric group descriptions, and the individual fabric *types* which comprise them, are listed at the end of this Appendix for both INCL and FC groups.

Whilst it was acknowledged from the outset that the more ubiquitous characteristics - black / dark grey reduced or partially-oxidised fabrics, for example - might represent an

amalgamation of fabrics from any number of production sites or localities, this seemed much less likely to be the case with the more distinctively fired 'banded' fabrics, of which four could be readily identified. Furthermore, such amalgamation is not necessarily a problem where the study is not concerned solely with the *location* of production, or manufacture at a common source, but with comparative degrees of control over the manufacturing process (i.e., in this instance, the firing environment) and its implications for the context of a vessel's production. In the context outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, variation recognisable at this level could be of the greatest significance.

As an example of how the INCL and FC fabric groups work, it is worth considering Fabric Group FC 04, a grouping based on firing conditions which resulted in a highly distinctive fabric with brick-red oxidised outer margins and light - dark grey core. FC 04 included nine different fabric types; 31, 48, 52, 54, 55/1, 55/2, 56, 65 and 84. Under the group classification based on *inclusions*, however, these fabric types were attributed to five *different* groups; 48, 54, 84, Fabric Group INCL 01 (hard fabrics with moderate calcite); 56, INCL 02 (hard fabrics with abundant calcite); 31, 55/2, INCL 03 (hard fabrics with sand and sparse calcite); 55/1, INCL 04 (hard fabrics with abundant fine sand); 52, 65, INCL 05 (fabrics with sparse - moderate chalk inclusions). Conversely, fabrics 04/1 (calcite-tempered), 04/2 (tempered with large fragments of calcite) and 04/3 (sand tempered) are attributed to Fabric Groups INCL 01, INCL 12 and INCL 04 respectively on the basis of their inclusions, but grouped together in FC 01 due to their firing to a distinctive light grey colour and buff-brown surface finishing (a description reminiscent, it might be noted, of some of Rigby's fabric 2a [e.g. 1980, 47] ).

#### 'Non-calcite-gritted' wares

Ceramics other than east Yorkshire coarse- (calcite-gritted and related) wares - which mostly comprised Crambeck grey-ware, east Yorkshire grey wares and Nene Valley colour-coated ware - were obviously recorded in less detail, with sherd weight, sherd number and rim EVEs being recorded. Where possible use was made of the records of previous researchers in quantifying these fabrics (for example where they had been

separately bagged for storage), and in some, although not many cases record cards or sheets were used to obtain this data, rather than weighing and counting them. Other fabrics which occurred in significant but not large quantities were Crambeck parchment- and red-wares (including painted examples in the case of the former), BB I and BB II. Very occasional examples of Rhenish ware and Oxfordshire Red Ware were also encountered. No attempt was made, within the class 'east Yorkshire grey ware', to distinguish between the products of Norton, the Holme-on-Spalding-Moor district, or other as yet unidentified grey-ware production sites in the region.

### Summary

A total of 310 kgs of ceramics, numbering over 10,000 sherds, was recorded in this fashion from the four sites, significantly more than half, by both measures, being calcite-gritted fabrics. The 84 calcite-gritted fabric types identified were amalgamated into two different sets of Fabric Groups on the basis of two criteria; the nature and abundance of coarse inclusions, and specific firing conditions, primarily utilising fabric colour. These groupings were created as a means to investigate differences in tempering inclusions, and in firing environments, which might relate to specific practices of manufacture, production centres, or both, thus connecting the dataset directly with the models for the organisation of production and surplus extraction detailed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. These in turn might vary through time, and thus offer the means to identify fabric variations distinctive to late- and sub- / post- Roman occupation episodes, or to specific sites.

### Vessel form

The 'received' classification of east Yorkshire calcite-gritted ware, as established by Hull and subsequently developed by Rigby, Evans and Monaghan, has been presented in Chapter 6.4.3, particularly with reference to the ubiquitous jar forms. It was originally anticipated that these classifications would be employed largely unaltered, but two considerations led to a change of approach. Firstly, terms such as 'Knapton jar', 'S-bend profile jar', 'proto-Huntcliff / overhanging rim jar' (see 6.4.1, above) had not been

systematically defined, at least not in a published source, and that there were indications of inconsistent usage between researchers (cf. Evans' comments regarding Monaghan's form series, 6.4.3.2, above). Related to this was the fact that distinctions made between these forms were often very subjective; their rims, *the* defining feature in the classification of calcite-gritted jars, imperceptibly merge one form into another. More serious issues, for this thesis, concerned the classification of the elaborate 'Huntcliff-type' rims of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, elements selected as primary diagnostics of date, notably the presence or absence of a 'lid-seating' groove around the interior of the rim (first suggested as a chronological indicator by Hull - 1932, 243 - and subsequently adopted by later researchers; Evans 1985, 312; Monaghan 1997, 909), seemed somewhat arbitrary and selective. Secondly, and a related point, there appeared to be considerable variability in the precise forms of 'Huntcliff-type' rims, which had been remarked upon (*ibid.*), but never developed or systematically classified, primarily due to the belief that they bore no chronological significance (*ibid.*). The suspicion that this judgement may have rested on an insufficiently rigorous approach to classification, and that, in any case, chronology is not the *only* explanation of variation of interest to archaeologists, led to a search for an approach more consonant with the overall aims of the research.

As in the case of the calcite-gritted fabrics, what was required was a system which allowed maximum discrimination of characteristic features, and allowed the grouping of vessel forms according to a range of traits. Jars would be the chief object of study, since they are massively predominant in calcite-gritted assemblages, and exhibit the greatest and most readily recognisable formal variability. The decision was made at the outset to concentrate on the form of *rims*, rather than on entire vessels. Three considerations justified this approach. Firstly, all previous classifications of the material distinguished vessel types within the calcite-gritted corpus on the basis of their rim forms. Secondly, numerous examples indicate that the rims of 'Huntcliff-type' jars were attached, through the use of a wheel, to hand-made 'blanks' (Evans 1985, 305), indicating a two-stage production process and thus allowing the rims to be seen, in effect, as separate artefacts in themselves, classifiable independently of the particular shape of the vessel they happened to be attached to. Thirdly, in most occupation site ceramic assemblages, rim-sherds are found with far greater frequency than complete or partial vessel profiles.

The principles of the scheme of classification employed were drawn from the system of 'diagnostic zones', developed in the context of the quantification of animal bone assemblages (Moreno-Garcia *et al.* 1996). Here, individual skeletal components were divided into diagnostic zones, allowing effective recording and quantification of assemblages even in (the frequent) situations where individual bones are heavily fragmented. The analytical utility of the method in this context is that conclusions regarding activities on site may be drawn from statistical analysis of the results; the over- or under-representation of specified zones can be related to specific treatment of carcasses, butchery practices, and post-mortem processing of particular skeletal parts or meat joints, and thus allow inferences to be made concerning the specific nature of the activities which led to the creation of the assemblage. By contrast, its application to calcite-gritted rim forms has only *descriptive* utility; there are no obvious behavioural correlates for the presence or absence of vessel shoulders, or any comparable significance in proportions of 'lobed' to 'parallel' rim forms (see below). Such categorisations do, however, allow vessels (at least their rims) to be more systematically described, as the purposes of this research require (and it is not inconceivable that they may have a role in compiling fragmentation indices in the context of residuality studies).

The system of classification was developed in the context of calcite-gritted rim forms by examination of the major published form series, those of Corder (1928), Hull (1932) and Monaghan (1997). From this exercise, a range of attributes, and variable properties of those attributes, were identified as a basis for recording. In the first instance, rims were divided between 'Everted' and 'Hooked' forms. In the former case, rims were further classified as 'angled' or 'curved', and 'parallel' (i.e. the contours of the surface of the vessel, in section, ran parallel to one another) or 'lobed' (the rim was slightly 'bulbous' in profile). Vessels with everted rims were thus classified into four groups, identified by letter code;

E.a.p.; E.c.p.;            E.a.l.; E.c.l.

The 'lobed' variants were, in fact, rare. This basic classification could take account of 'Knapton' jar forms (E.a.p.), and Evans' 'S-bend profile' jars (E.c.p.), but did not discriminate between these and LPRIA and pre-3<sup>rd</sup> century (AD) forms. For the purposes of this study such distinction was not an essential part of the analysis, and could in any case

usually be discriminated, if required, on the basis of fabric characteristics.

The developed, later-4<sup>th</sup> century calcite-gritted rim forms were significantly more elaborate, and consequently required a more complex system of classification (see Fig.4, Chapter 6, p.273). The characteristic 'Hooked' shape was sub-divided into 'extended' (that is, where the neck of the vessel extends upwards from the shoulder before the rim is formed) and 'rolled' (where the rim curves outwards directly from the shoulder of the vessel), giving the basic categories 'He' and 'Hr'.

Within these categories, several other variable elements could be identified. Firstly, within the 'He' variant, whether the neck, as it rose from the shoulder, rose at an angle inwards ([He]3), rose vertically ([He]4), or rose at an angle outwards ([He]5). In the case of the 'rolled' variant, the numerical suffix [Hr]1 was employed ('2' was provisionally attributed to a possible variant of the 'Hr' form, but in fact was never applied).

The next attribute described in this system of classification was the rim proper; whether it extended outwards from the neck horizontally or upwards (i.e., in the case of the He4 variant, whether the rim extended outwards at an angle of 90° or greater magnitude; with He3 and He5 the angles do not compute so readily), an 'open' rim form, or extended outwards from the neck *downwards*, a 're-entrant' form. These were thus coded [He4]o and [He4]r. In the case of 're-entrant' forms, further discrimination was made on the basis of whether the rim projected downwards at an angle from the neck, or, as was observed in rare but highly distinctive cases, 'doubled back' on itself and ran parallel to the neck; hence [He4r]a and [He4r]p.

The final variable attribute of the *neck* and *rim* was identified as the overall *profile* of the sherd; whether it had been formed in such a manner that its inner and outer surfaces ran parallel with one another, or were recognisably 'bulbous' or lobed; these were thus coded [He4ra]p or [He4ra]l.

Finally, the definition of the *shoulder* of the vessel (one of the distinctive features of the Huntcliff-type jar) was coded on a scale of one (i) to three (iii), ranging from slightly

defined to sharply defined; thus, for example, [He4rap]/ii. The presence of a 'lid-seating' groove, one of the most frequently cited discriminants of 'true' Huntcliff-type jars, but in fact present on a range of rim forms which themselves seem to offer potential for far more specific classification, was noted on the recording form with the suffix 'ls'.

The system of recording was intended to provide a description detailed enough to allow comparison and discrimination between clearly distinctive rim forms, without the need for laborious and time-consuming measurements of ratios and angles; in other words one which, once familiarity with the coding conventions had been achieved, could be easily applied to any assemblage of calcite-gritted ware which included the distinctive jar rim forms. A sketch-profile of each recorded rim-sherd was attached to the recording form next to the descriptive coding, allowing a check to be kept on the consistency of classification. For purposes of quantification, each rim was recorded as a percentage of a complete rim circumference using a rim percentage chart; since this of necessity involved the observation of the diameter of the rim, this was also recorded. Obviously, the fabric type of each rim-sherd was also included on the recording pro-forma for each context.

The order in which these attributes were recorded within the coding for each individual rim sherd was intended to prioritise the most fundamental distinctions; thus it was considered that the angle of the neck of the vessel was of greater significance in classification than whether, for example, the rim angle was 'open' or 're-entrant'. (In terms of the creation of a vessel rim, the latter detail might be all but incidental; as Tyers has noted, (Tyers 1996, 29). However, once the codes were stored on a Paradox 7 database, the comparison of assemblages on the basis of any attribute or combination of attributes became possible. The method has the further advantage of allowing even the most fragmentary rim-sherd to be recorded; it was usually possible, for example, to establish whether a sherd was 'parallel' or 'lobed', even if more extensive description was impossible. For the small minority of non-jar forms in the calcite-gritted assemblages - effectively dishes, bowls and 'neckless jars' (e.g. Hull 1932, figs 10 and 14) - simple letter codes 'D', 'B' and 'NJ' were employed, with sketch-profiles illustrating more precisely the details of the individual form, usually (in the case of dishes and bowls) restricted to a beaded or 'hooked' rim derived from Crambeck forms (ibid.).



### 'Non-calcite-gritted' wares

Rim-sherds in the grey-, red- and fine-ware fabrics, recounted above, were recorded as rim percentages and diameters, allowing quantitative comparison with the calcite-gritted component of assemblages, but were simply classified as 'jar', 'dish', 'bowl' etc., no attempt being made to identify individual Crambeck form types as classified by Corder (1989a, REF).

### Summary

A total of 2,050 separately-identified vessel rims (*represented by a greater number of rim-sherds than this, but almost certainly representing fewer vessels*, given the dispersal of fragments of individual vessels in contexts throughout a site's stratigraphic sequence), almost half (978) of which were in calcite-gritted fabrics, were examined and recorded using these protocols. They totalled over 322 *vessel equivalents* (i.e. 322 x 100% rim circumferences), of which almost 168 were in calcite-gritted fabrics.

### Quantification

The preceding sections have noted that the ceramic assemblages studied for this thesis were recorded by weight, number of sherds, and estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) as determined by rim percentages. A few comments need to be made about the use of these measures in the analysis presented here. The use of EVEs as a quantitative measure for ceramic assemblages was introduced and recommended by Clive Orton as a means of overcoming the problem of *comparability* between different types of ceramics. Quantification by sherd *number* had obvious disadvantages, in that the number of sherds into which a vessel fragmented might vary according to the robustness of the fabric it was made of, and also between one sites and another, or even one context and another, according to the processes which led to a site / deposit being formed, and pottery entering that site / deposit, which might involve wholly different degrees of fragmentation. The use of sherd *weight* as a measure was problematic in that different vessels, and the fabrics in which they

were manufactured, are self-evidently not directly comparable; consider the case of a samian bowl and a Dressel amphora, whether intact or in pieces. Minimum Number of Vessels (MNV) leaves major uncertainties regarding the true magnitude of an assemblage. Orton's argument in favour of EVEs (employing rim percentages as the most convenient and consistent measure) was that, for example in a case where an assemblage contained 0.75 of a complete vessel circumference, it did not matter whether that three-quarters of a complete rim was made up of fragments of a *single* vessel, or of *ten* vessels; as a measure it was directly comparable with those taken from any other assemblage, regardless of size or weight of vessel/fabric or degrees of fragmentation, and offered a precise, empirical measure compared to the vagaries of MNV (Orton *et al* 1993, 169)

EVEs have been widely, although not universally accepted as a measure of ceramic quantification. In this thesis they are of particular significance in allowing direct comparison of the presence of distinctive rim forms, and thus to identify possible variations in these rim forms both over time, and between distinctive ceramic fabrics. However, much use has also been made here of quantification by sherd *weight*. The justification for this is twofold. Firstly, almost all of the calcite-gritted fabrics, which are the main subject of comparison, are closely comparable in terms of their weight-per-unit-of-measurement; the rare exceptions, those fabrics typical of oversized storage jars (04/2, 15), are easily identifiable and readily excluded from analysis where necessary. Secondly, where *ratios* of calcite-gritted to non-calcite-gritted fabrics *are* being considered, the suite of fabrics is restricted and all but identical in every case, typically involving, in addition, Crambeck and east Yorkshire grey-wares. Thus any discrepancy in weight-per-vessel or weight per-unit of measurement will be consistent from site to site and assemblage to assemblage. The point is reinforced by the fact that the study is not concerned primarily with establishing the quantitative 'importance' of any given ware to a particular site or phase of a site, in terms of numbers of vessels or some other measure, in one fabric as against another, but in investigating changing ratios of these fabrics as possible indicators of changing patterns and means of surplus expropriation, which may in turn have chronological implications.

187323 g	5307 s	167.93 eve	CG	1115.5	[1.40]
				(35.3)	[1.33]
58952 g	2221 s	74.18 eve	CB	794.7	[1.00]
				(26.5)	[1.00]
33866 g	1368 s	39.01 eve	EYG	868.1	[1.09]
				(24.8)	[0.94].
19641 g	945 s	29.34 eve	NVcc	669.4	[0.84]
				(20.8)	[0.78]

**Table 4 :** Fabric weight per 0.01 EVE and per sherd for calcite-gritted ware, Crambeck grey-ware, east Yorkshire grey-ware and Nene Valley colour-coated ware, 'normalised' around values for Crambeck grey-ware.

## INCL Fabric Groups

- INCL 01 Hard, evenly-fired fabrics with moderate, hard, angular calcite inclusions.  
01, 04/1, 06/1, 07, 08, 14, 16, 20, 21, 34, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 48, 54, 79, 84. [19]
- INCL 02 Hard, evenly-fired fabrics with abundant, hard, angular calcite inclusions.  
07/2, 17/1, 25, 45, (56), 59, (?68), 47. [8]
- INCL 03 Fairly hard fabrics with sparse/moderate fine &/or coarse sand and sparse calcite, variable firings.  
26, 27, 28, 31, 44, 55/2, (?75). [7]
- INCL 04 Fairly hard, evenly fired fabrics with abundant fine sand inclusions.  
04/3, 05, 11, 17/2, 46, 54/2, 55, 60, 60/2. [9]
- INCL 05 Fabrics of varying hardness with sparse or moderate chalk/limestone inclusions.  
32, 52, 53, 58, (61), (61/2), (65), 69, 70. [9]
- INCL 06 Fabrics of varying hardness with abundant coarse sand and sparse /moderate calcite inclusions.  
50, 63, 66, 74, 77, 80. [6]
- INCL 07 Hard, variably-fired fabrics with moderate - abundant hard angular calcite inclusions.  
02, 03, 06/2, 19, 72. [5]
- INCL 08 Fabrics with slag inclusions.  
18, 23, 64, 76. [4]
- INCL 09 Hackly - soft fabrics with shell inclusions.  
(24), 30, 57. [3]
- INCL 10 'Open' fabrics (i.e. voids created on firing).  
36, 49, 67. [3]
- INCL 11 Fabrics with 'grog tempering'.  
12, 22, 35. [3]
- INCL 12 Hard fabrics with moderate large calcite-inclusions, typically from thick-bodied, large storage vessels.  
04/2, 15. [2]
- INCL 13 Hard, evenly-fired fabrics, wheel-thrown vessels  
09, 62. [2]
- INCL 14 Soft fabrics with abundant chalk/limestone inclusions.  
39, 83. [2]
- INCL 15 Hard fabrics with abundant fine sand inclusions, typically from thick-bodied vessels.  
81, 82 [2]
- INCL 16 Hard fabrics with wiggly soft calcite inclusions.  
10, 38. [2]

## FC Fabric Groups

- FC 01 Light grey reduced close-textured fabrics, some 'laminated' with buff outer margins.  
04/1, 04/2, 04/3, 11, (12), 15/2, 18, (22), (38), 41, 42, 79. [12]
- FC 02 Dark grey / black reduced fabrics, open-textured or 'hackly'.  
(24), 26, 27, 44 : 64, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 81, 82. [13]
- FC 03 Red / orange oxidised fabrics.  
05/2, 14, 15/1, 30, 39, 60/2, 61/2, 62, 67, 83. [10]
- FC 04 'Laminated' fabrics with red & reddish-brown oxidised outer margins.  
31, 48, 54, 55/1, 55/2, 56, 58, (65), 84. [9]
- FC 05 Dark grey / black reduced close-textured fabrics.  
01, 05, 25, 34, 43 (=WR X), 60, 61. [7]
- FC 06 'Laminated', close-textured fabrics with dark grey core & cream / light grey margins;+ oxidised variants  
07/1, 07/2, 08, 16, 40, (52). [5]
- FC 07 Variable reduced firings.  
02, 03, 45, 47, 53. [5]
- FC 08 Slightly-reddish-brown oxidised fabrics.  
12, 20, 21, 35, 59. [5]
- FC 09 'Laminated' fabrics with dark grey core and narrow buff / cream margins.  
17/1, 17/2, (68). [3]
- FC 10 Partially oxidised fabrics  
06/1, 06/2, 19. [3]
- FC 11 Light grey reduced open-textured fabrics.  
37, 49, 51. [3]
- FC 12 Fabrics with orange oxidised outer surface(s).  
50, 63, 80. [3]
- FC 13 'Laminated' fabrics with grey reduced core & oxidised orange outer surfaces.  
24/2, 46. [2]
- FC 14 Reduced fabrics with oxidised red outer surfaces.  
36, 66. [2]
- FC 15 Reduced fabrics with one oxidised orange outer surface.  
57, 69. [2]

### Appendix 3 : Wellington Row, York, Area 7 : descriptions of Structural Phases

The Phase 00 extension of the Phase 0 building to the north-west was identified as Period 4, Phase 7 (4 / 7) in the Y.A.T. archive report, with the crushed limestone floor and 'seat / statue bases' 4 / 9. It is the deposits and features *above* this floor which represent the use of the building into the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and beyond; Periods 4 / 10 to 4 / 17, 5 / 1 to 2, and 'IPR' or 'Immediate post-Roman' (*ibid.*, 1110). A coin list of *c.* two dozen coins from 4 / 10 ends with an issue of AD 346+, providing a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) for the beginning of these phases (a chronology markedly at odds with the ceramic dating from 4 / 10 - 4 / 15, which have TPQs of *c.* AD 175 - *c.* AD 225 (*ibid.*, 1109, 1114). The excavator dated the latest recognisable floor surface within the building to *c.* AD 360 (Ottaway 1993, 112). The subsequent history of the building is interpreted in terms of the build-up of dark silty loam, containing large quantities of artefacts and ecofacts, and equated with the 'dark earth' deposits known from many Romano-British towns (*ibid.*, 113). Seemingly interspersed with the accumulation of 'dark earth', the burial of a coin hoard, a pot and a lamb's skeleton are again explained by the excavator in terms of 'ritual'. These episodes are subsumed in the phrase 'The building was by *c.* 400 essentially a large rectangular rubbish pit' (*ibid.*, 114). Subsequently, a dry-stone, earth-bonded sill wall (7664) within the building represents the latest, and most exciting structural episode. The excavator offers a date for this structure of post-AD 390 on the evidence of its stratigraphic position relative to stratified coins, but is finally only prepared to offer that 'the structure at Wellington Row may belong to the last years of the fourth century, but could, strictly speaking, be any date before the tenth century' (*ibid.*, 116). Subsequent published comments have suggested that a 5<sup>th</sup> century date may be more positively entertained (Monaghan 1997, 1118).

Since the deposits from 4 / 10 and subsequent phases contained almost 2,500 sherds of calcite-gritted ware, weighing almost 90 kgs and representing a total of almost 70 vessel equivalents, and these were stratified in association with some 1,700 Roman coins, it was apparent that the integrity, character and chronology of the sequence would repay detailed interrogation. Consequently, a considerable amount of effort was invested in considering, critiquing and where appropriate revising the interpretation of the deposits and structures in Area 7 from 4 / 7 onwards, in order that the relative and absolute chronology of deposits,

and appropriate quantification of the ceramic assemblage, could be established.

The first stage of this process was the detailed examination of the stratigraphic archive report, and its conclusions, against the plans of each single context which had been used to create the phases and periods. The conclusions arrived at therein were clearly influenced by both the sequence and logistical constraints of the excavation itself, and by the division of labour in post-excavation report writing.

Taking the first of these first, the identification and excavation of the late- and post-Roman horizons had varied across the site, as a result of both time constraints and the engineering requirements of the coffer dam shoring. Consequently, deposits of this period in the south-eastern half of the main building were excavated and recorded with exemplary care and in great detail. To the north-west of the central girder which supported the sheet steel shoring, however, excavation was of necessity conducted at a more rapid pace, although the quality of recording remained high. Beyond the limits of the building, to the north-west and south-west, a combination of shoring requirements and the need for rapid excavation meant that greater use was made of machine excavation. Consequently, a less detailed and in parts more ambiguous stratigraphic record is available from these areas. As noted in the unpublished archive report, the use of the walls of the building as a 'boundary' between areas excavated in differing levels of detail made the correlation of phases of activity inside and outside the building exceedingly difficult (Finlayson and Clarke 1994, 9). (That said, it seems equally to have been the case more effort could have been made to try to overcome this shortcoming during post-excavation analysis).

If the interpretation of the site was, inevitably, affected by the strategies adopted in its excavation, the particular manner in which the post-excavation procedures described in 7.2.1 were applied had, if anything, an even greater impact. Firstly, the analysis and interpretation of the Area 7 deposits was divided 'vertically', between those deposits considered to be 'Roman' and 'post-Roman' respectively (*ibid.*, 320). The division appears to have been decided on the basis of the appearance of features and deposits associated with the robbing of the walls of the main building, albeit that strata apparently associated with the early stages of its decay and demolition were attributed to the earlier, 'Roman' half of the

stratigraphic sequence. The sequence broadly divides at this point between deposits and structures which were related by the authors to activity of the late and (possibly) immediate post-Roman period, and robbing features and pits of the later post-roman centuries. It seems highly likely that dating evidence, particularly that provided by ceramics, was also considered in defining the vertical 'cut-off point' on the site, and the division of the archive between the two authors.

The practical reasons for dividing a large and stratigraphically complex site between two authors in this way are readily apparent, but doing so does create the problem of an *a priori*, and in many respects arbitrary distinction between closely associated contexts at the interface. This may result in deposits, structures and features, whose associations and inter-relationships contain information vital to the understanding of the site, being interpreted out-of-context, and thus in a failure to recognise important aspects of the stratigraphic sequence, or episodes therein. These shortcomings are, obviously, particularly acute when a major aspect of the research potential of a site concerns the difficult and debated late / post-Roman 'transition'. It is perhaps noteworthy in this respect that the brief summary of academic objectives of the excavation (and, by implication, although not explicitly stated, of the post-excavation analysis) makes no mention of this issue, or the potential of the site to address it. It would be hard to find a better example of the need to rigorously define research aims in advance of both excavation and post-excavation programmes, and to tailor recording strategies and analytical methodologies accordingly. As it is, it might be suggested that the division of intellectual labour around a preconceived and (it will be argued) effectively arbitrary stratigraphic 'boundary' is equivalent to the use of a standing wall as a division between detailed and summary excavation techniques, as criticised by the authors of the report. In fact, the practice is arguably *more* damaging to the understanding of the site sequence, in that the consequent, inadvertent loss of contextual information hinders the interpretation of deposits, features and structures on *both* sides of the divide, potentially compromising understanding of the site as a whole and appreciation of the full potential of the datasets it comprises. This seems to have been what happened in the case of Wellington Row.

As presented in the archive report, and in the brief published summaries referred to



above, the sub- and post-Roman phases of the Wellington Row sequence comprise incremental episodes of dumping and demolition (sometimes subsumed under the heading 'dark earth'), interspersed with fragmentary and seemingly ephemeral structural traces, incorporating large assemblages of apparently residual artefacts, and rendered still less intelligible by the puncturing and re-working of the strata concerned by later intrusions. (This might, indeed, stand as a shorthand definition of the archaeology of the final stages of Romano-British towns *per se!*). In attempting to 'reunite' features and strata across the stratigraphic divide imposed in the course of original post-excavation analysis, it was noted that the large number of later 'pits', which were particularly frequent in the northern half of the main building, were a) for the most part square or rectilinear, with steep sides and flat bases, b) largely restricted to the area *within* the building itself, and c) spatially arranged so as to form a tolerably regular 'grid' within that structure. In short, rather than being later intrusions serving to distort and destroy evidence of the late- and sub-Roman phases of the site, *they in fact represented robbed-out elements of the sub-structure of the main building, and / or its successors, in its latest phases of occupation, and thus formed the essential framework within and around which the strata belonging to these phases should be understood.* This offered the possibility that many of the latest Roman deposits, rather than resulting from all-but random dumping and demolition, could be seen as recognisable components of a sequence of episodes of occupation and structural alteration, taking place above a floor surface dated by the excavator to *c.*AD 360.

The interpretative possibilities which this opened up led to a wholesale re-examination of the stratigraphic archive for Area 7, from the extension of the original building to the north-west (i.e. structural phase 00 in the phasing presented in this thesis). This involved the correlation of stratigraphic relationships from the matrix with context descriptions in the archive report, and, above all, with the plan record from the site, with composite plans of the entire excavated area being constructed from the original, 1:20 single context plans. These three aspects of the stratigraphic archive were employed in conjunction to create a synthesis which best accounted for observed spatial and stratigraphic associations and recorded deposit characteristics. This resulted in a re-phasing of the site radically different from that provided by the original archive report, which will be presented in the next section, and provides the analytical centrepiece of the thesis. It is first necessary,

however, to summarise the considerations on which this re-interpretation was based, and to outline the basic elements of the 'deposit model' which arose from and subsequently informed it.

Firstly, examination of the 'context groups' from Area 7 - that is, higher order groupings of individual contexts made according to closeness of direct stratigraphic association and / or deposit description, spatial complementarity, function or formation process - indicated that they were, for the most part markedly 'vertical' in their composition; that is, deposits had usually been grouped with other strata immediately below or above them, with few attempts made to identify and group layers or structural features *across* the site. Since this is one of the most important means of uniting components of originally extensive layers which had subsequently been truncated and separated by later intrusions and disturbance, the resultant 'phases' were notably localised and fragmentary.

This had two direct results. Firstly, correlation of contemporary activities across the interior of the main *building*, let alone the site as a whole, was negligible. Secondly, and in consequence, once created these context groups gave the appearance of an incoherent aggregation of highly localised events, uninterpretable in anything other than the most generalised terms, e.g. 'demolition', 'dumping' etc. Furthermore, they and their order in the site phasing began to be employed in establishing the chronology of the site, largely on the basis of coins and ceramics, and in the quantification and interpretation of the latter in particular.

Consideration of the *descriptions* of many of these contexts, in conjunction with their extents as recorded on the original 1:20 plans at *context* level, indicated that, in fact, extensive deposits with closely similar descriptions could be recognised, covering large areas of the interior of the building at closely similar levels. These could broadly be divided into 'ashy silts' and 'rubbly loams' (the latter a generic description coined by this author, and, rightly, not actually used in the original archive report) and, it is proposed, broadly correspond, respectively, with 'active' occupation surfaces, and debris and levelling derived from structural modifications and associated ground make-up. Revising the phasing as a result of this thus meant splitting up many of the original context groups, and re-ordering

their constituent contexts as components of more extensive surfaces and horizons.

Complementary to this was the recognition that *structural* elements, whether robbed or upstanding walls of the original building or the remains of later structural episodes, could be better understood and interpreted if their *spatial* configurations with respect to one another were recognised. This was particularly relevant in the case of structures and features *beyond* the main building, i.e. to the north-west and south-west, where rapid excavation had militated against the recovery of much stratigraphic detail.

Concerning the understanding of stratification in its *vertical* dimension, the procedure of overlaying single-context plans to create composites confirmed the suspicion that, in a number of cases, layers deriving from higher up the sequence had been incorporated into earlier deposits because later, intrusive features had not been completely emptied of their fills, with the basal elements remaining *in situ* and thus being recorded, excavated and phased with earlier strata. This is not a criticism of the excavation or the excavators, since a characteristic of such late Roman sequences is their often indistinct and merging context boundaries, but its effects can be minimised by careful post-excavation procedure. This can, of course, have the effect of seeming to introduce later material into earlier horizons, and thus affect chronology, quantification etc. A further effect of this 'blurring' of the edges of layers is to create uncertainty in whether a given deposit is, in fact, stratigraphically above another; marginal vertical relationships may be highly suspect. Both instances require vigilance in post-excavation and in interpretation, and in a number of instances in Area 7 the 'literal' phasing of intrusive deposits and ambiguous stratigraphic relationships combined to confuse and obfuscate the actual situation.

The other, positive side of this picture was that the rigorous and detailed recording carried out across much of the site documented phenomena which those carrying out the excavation were not aware of. Whilst these were not picked up in the original stratigraphic phasing, the fact that they are accessible in the original records provides independent testimony to the existence of structures and features untainted with the suggestion, easily levelled in such situations, that they were 'made up out of nothing'. A good example comprises a series - almost twenty - very small, discrete contexts identified and described

individually. When these were plotted, it was found that, collectively, they formed a line of overlapping deposits connecting the end of a dry-stone wall footing with a surviving component of the original building. It seems clear that what they represent are small patches of silt, rubble and re-deposited 'edge' accumulating in the base of the *robbing* cut of a dry-stone wall similar to that which still survived as footings at the northern end of this group of contexts (cf. Fig.9). The cut itself was made through 'dark earth', itself an unstable soil mass, so that after a little accumulation in the base of the cut, its edges collapsed, sealing the deposits therein. It is unimaginable that such subtle traces could have been 'invented' in the course of the excavation, particularly given that they were not in fact recognised in post-excavation analysis.

The subtlety and *fragility* of these apparently sub-Roman deposits has often been the cause for comment amongst previous researchers (e.g. Barker 1977, fig. 18, p.66-7; figs 82-4, pp.258-61), and *surviving* structural evidence need be only slightly more substantial than the robbed example discussed in the previous paragraph. At Wellington Row the key to this is provided by the dry-stone sill wall 7664 (Fig.9), surviving to a height of c.500 mms in four courses within the main building in Area 7. Dry-built, unmortared, for the most part re-using stone from earlier, more substantial buildings, the demolition of such a wall, even when not robbed, need leave no more than a spread of unstructured rubble. Such deposits occurred frequently in the latest 'Roman' horizons at Wellington Row. Fortunately, in at least some instances, their lowest courses remained sufficiently earth-fast for their position, alignment, and articulation with one another and with surviving elements of the original building to be established with some confidence.

A final point concerns the interpretation of robbed and surviving stretches of the walls of the original building. These are usually implicitly regarded as the all-but random result of opportunistic, episodic stone-robbing in the post-Roman and medieval periods. When considered in conjunction with the types of evidence summarised in the preceding paragraphs, however, patterns of robbing can be seen as crucial evidence in the reconstruction of successive phases of rebuilding and structural modifications. The extent to which late- and post-Roman rebuildings 'cannibalise' original structures, and often transform them beyond all recognition (as, it will be argued, was the case at Wellington

Row) is often overlooked, and their comforting solidity, compared to the ambiguous and seemingly chaotic stratification all around, means that they are frequently taken for granted in discussions where they should be part of the central problematic. This is a theme which will be returned to repeatedly in the discussions which follow.

These observations, made in the course of detailed scrutiny, comparison and integration of the components of the Area 7 stratigraphic archive, provided the basis for re-interpreting this important sequence. Crucial considerations were the role of detailed, accurate context descriptions and surface levels in integrating isolated, fragmentary strata into more extensive horizons; recognising the significance of spatial complementarity of structural features in establishing the form and very existence of late building episodes; acknowledging the limitations of accurate context definition in comparatively unstructured soil environments, and using the post-excavation process to compensate for these; seeking fugitive structural traces using both this knowledge of the configurations characteristic of such a soil environment *and* the evidence of contemporary building methods which the site itself directly provides; and acknowledging and taking account of the evidence for structural alteration and continuity provided by differential stone robbing. The structural and depositional episodes which this re-evaluation identified are presented as Figs 5 - 12 in Chapter 7, accompanied by brief descriptions. A more detailed account is provided here.

In its original form, the large Roman building in Area 7 is taken to have been a free-standing structure, almost if not quite completely included within the coffer dam shoring of that excavation. That this is the case has never been questioned. There are, however, reasons to doubt the assumption. Examination of the original plan of the building, made during the excavation (as distinct from the schematised, interpretative plans which accompany the published summaries), indicates that its original north-west wall, 72527, before disappearing underneath the north-eastern limit of the excavation, appears to extend north-eastwards *at least one metre beyond the line of the supposed north-eastern wall of the building, 72528*. This level of inaccuracy in laying out and construction seems unlikely in a building of such quality and regularity. The observation that 72527 might have continued further to the north-east, and that 'the building' may in fact have been a single room within a larger complex of structures, is in accord with the excavator's claim that the *south-eastern* wall

of the structure, 72526, in fact extended *south-westwards* beyond its south corner, running parallel with the Roman road immediately to the south-east (Ottaway 1993, 74). Since there is no plan evidence for this categorical assertion in the main archive, it must be assumed that the observation was made post-excavation, as part of the watching brief conducted during the development of the site. This configuration would, however, provide a context for 71857, the north-west / south-east aligned wall located hard against the steel shoring in the southern corner of the excavation. Although the excavator associates this with a later structural phase (*ibid.*, 75, fig. 37/3), the quality and characteristics of its construction seem to relate it more closely to the original build. (Detailed stratigraphic information and corroboration is, as detailed above, unavailable from this area of the excavation).

Whatever the precise details of this, the possibility that in its original manifestation 'the building' actually formed only a part of a structural complex running parallel to the Roman road makes the next stage of its development even more striking. The extension of the building to the north-west is irrefutable, given the massive, piled construction trench, extending the lines of walls 72525 and 72528, the new north-western wall running parallel to and *c.*2.00 m. beyond the original, 72527 (Structural Phase 00: Fig.6). What is not recognised in the archive report, however, is the strong indication that the *south-east* wall of the original building, 72526, was *also* removed at this stage, leaving only a small stub in its south corner upstanding. The evidence for this is a substantial robbing cut, 72058, which extends along the full length of 72526 within the excavation, its upper edge running parallel to the wall *c.*1.0 m to the north-west. At its south-western limit, the cut curves south-eastwards, and meets the upstanding stub of 72526 at *exactly* the point at which that wall is robbed right down to its lowest course of footings. That 72526 underwent a further robbing episode much later in the sequence is not in doubt - a robbing cut with its north-western edge closer to the line of the wall is clearly identifiable cut from a level *c.*1.00 m. higher - but 72058 provides good evidence that 72526 was robbed to its footings over much of its length, as was the case with its north-western equivalent 72527, *before* the deposition of the extensive layer of limestone rubble 71141 which was laid throughout the interior of the building immediately after its extension to the north-west. (Further evidence for the proposed, analogous extension of the building to the south-east is recognisable in Area 4, adjacent to the south-east, and is presented later in this section).

Following the extension of the building to north-west and south-east, a deposit of mortar and limestone rubble 71141 was deposited across the interior of the building to a depth of c.300 mms. The character of this deposit strongly suggests that it was derived directly from the demolition of 72527 and 72526. Atop this layer, adjacent to and aligned with the original south-western wall 72525, sat the four massive (c.600 mms. x 400 mms. x 200 mms), millstone grit blocks 72113 - 72116, interpreted as either statue or seat bases. The excavator notes that this line had probably originally included two more (Ottaway 1993, 76). His reasoning can be applied on a wider scale; across the south-eastern half of the building as a whole. In this area, recognised and excavated at a level close to that of the upper surfaces of 72113 - 16 (c.6.15 m. AOD), a regular arrangement of similar, if usually less massive post-pads can be identified, in some cases represented by stone blocks, but more often by the square or rectangular shallow cuts left following their subsequent removal.

Together with the central line of four roof support bases for the building in its original form (of which the three north-westernmost examples had been heavily robbed, but the south-easternmost, 71804 / 72462, remained standing to a height of c.1.20 m. above its footings), these features formed a regular grid of padstones covering the south-eastern half of the building. Moreover, they extended south-eastwards *beyond* its original limits; in Area 4, a 3.0 m. wide trench excavated across the Roman road immediately to the south-east of Area 7, a block of limestone 4094, whose flat surface stood at a height of 6.25 m. AOD, was found hard against the north-western edge of Area 4. It was positioned some 3.00 m. south-east of 72116, and exactly in line with the row of blocks 72113 - 16. This confirms the extension of the original building to the south-east, as identified earlier in this section. That there were no obvious traces of any footings of the south-eastern wall of this extended structure in Area 4 need occasion no surprise, since the 1.50 m. of road make-up would have provided an ample foundation for any subsequently robbed superstructure.

The stone bases in the south-western half of the extended structure would have supported stone 'uprights'; one of these, 71804, survived upright from the original building, whilst a second, 7469, had fallen and lay on its side. These indicate that the padstones would have carried dwarf 'pillars', c.1.0 m. high. Given their arrangement, frequency, and the

evidence of their superstructures, it seems certain that these represent structural elements, rather than the accoutrements of some vaguely-categorised 'ritual' structure. It is telling that the remaining upstanding 'stub' of 72526, the south-eastern wall of the original building, projects into the interior of the 'extended' building at a point equidistant between the post-pads 72116 and 4094, and that its upper surface is at a level, c.7.10 m., almost identical to that of the top of the surviving roof support from the original building; it served a structural purpose analogous to the post-bases and stone pillars.

It is proposed that this arrangement of stone-bases and pillars supported a raised floor in the south-eastern half of the newly extended building. The interpretation offers a persuasive explanation for a series of narrow trenches aligned obliquely to the longitudinal axis of the building, and identified at the same level as the post-bases and their robbing cuts. These may be seen as the robbed-out traces of ducts and / or baffle walls, constructed in a sub-floor cavity to ensure the circulation of warm air. It is probable that these features would have incorporated further stone bases for the support of the raised floor. Two of these, 71951 and 71227, were of almost identical form (incorporating a sharp 'dog-leg' at their north-western end) and length, with 71227 above, and later than, 71951, and located some two metres to the north of it. Both were arranged between the pillar bases, and were located close to 72525, the south-western wall of the original building. The earlier, 71951, contained what appears to have been the remains of a burnt and charred lining (interpreted in the archive report as a 'wooden box') at its south-western opening. The north-western element of 71227 itself was surrounded by burnt and charred deposits, which is what led this 'cut' feature in this vicinity (72388, in fact, the scorched and partially-vitrified aperture of the channel of 71227 itself) to be interpreted as a 'clay oven'. It seems more likely that this scorching, and the burnt deposits around the 'clay oven', actually represent a fire episode associated with this channel, and bear witness to a conflagration which originated *beneath* the raised floor proposed here (and which may of course, and in fact almost certainly *would* have, spread to the superstructure).

In short, the channels 71951 and 71227 were successive flues for the heating of a hypocaust system represented by the stone bases. The precise articulation of the arrangements for providing the heat - i.e. stoke-holes - is obscure due to the severe effects



of subsequent robbing and other disturbances, but a more detailed re-examination of the archive than was possible in this context would seem likely to resolve this issue. Evidence for the nature of the raised floor is provided by the frequent references to broken lumps and fragments of *opus signinum* in many of the contexts and horizons immediately above this level.

The function and structural arrangement of the north-western half of the extended building is less clear, due to more rapid excavation, fragmentary deposits, and the limitations of time in critically examining and considering the disposition of those strata which *did* survive intact. However, a similar arrangement of discrete, square or rectilinear foundations for stone footings is readily recognisable, but in this case on a more massive scale, akin to that of the footings for the roof supports of the original building. (These are the numerous 'pits' attributed to later post-Roman activity in the original archive report; later pottery in their fills will have derived from the robbing operations which removed their original stone bases). What this may imply about the function of the two halves of the extended building, or possibly about the weight (and consequently *height*) of their respective superstructures merits consideration, but is not critical to the arguments presented here. That they were originally constructed at the same time as their smaller counterparts further to the south-east is strongly suggested by the complementarity of the structural arrangement in the two halves of the building.

*Outside* the extended building, to the west and south-west, a row of *in situ* or robbed-out padstones (71688, 71163, 71195), closely aligned on 72525 and some 2.0 m. outside it, and identical in size and level to 72113 -16, suggest that it was originally surrounded by some form of colonnade; the absence of these to the south-east of 71195 may be accounted for by the extensive subsequent disturbance in this area of the site, and / or the use of machine excavation.

In summary, the extensions and modifications recounted above represent a wholesale transformation of the building in Area 7 not recognised in the original archive report. Its structural characteristics have important implications for the interpretation of ceramic and coin assemblages from these and subsequent phases, and consequently for the chronology

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of the sequence as a whole. These will be discussed at the end of this section, in the light of the subsequent phases of structural development and modification and deposit formation.

### Structural Phase 1 (Fig.7)

Coins from patchy deposits immediately above 71141, the thick layer of limestone and mortar derived from the extension of the original building, provide a TPQ for some of those deposits of AD 346 (Monaghan 1997, 1114). Given the structural arguments presented above, these layers are most likely to have derived from modifications and repairs to sub-floor structures, specifically, perhaps, the reconstruction and repositioning of the hypocaust flue referred to above. This being the case, the building would seem to have been functioning in this form until at least the middle decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and quite possibly beyond.

The next structural phase witnessed similarly dramatic change. What happened in the north-western half of the building is unclear, again due to a lack of detailed stratigraphic evidence, although the retention of the earlier structural arrangement seems most likely (see below). However, the stone bases of the hypocaust system, excepting 71804, the roof support from the original building (and probably also, at this stage, its counterpart three metres to the north-west) were all covered and sealed by 71862, a thick deposit of silt containing over 500 coins (probably from a disturbed hoard) and a large quantity - over 12 kgs and 800+ sherds - of calcite-gritted ware, the first major assemblage from the site. This clearly indicates the demise of any raised floor (an associated deposit of 'loose crushed red brick', 71877, may represent this process). Above 71862 a sequence of comparable deposits seem to represent deliberate dumping. It is not clear whether the restriction of these deposits to the former area of the hypocausted raised floor reflects a real phenomenon, or is a function of deposit survival and stratigraphic legibility. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a deliberate levelling operation infilled and raised the ground level of that area. The origins of the soil matrix, and the ceramic assemblage it contained, is unclear, although it is probable that the former derived from ground digging associated with structural modifications elsewhere in or around the building.

This levelling operation has been identified as Phase 1. A single coin of the House of Theodosius, of the period AD 388-402, was recovered from one of these contexts, 71716. If, given comments earlier in this section regarding the possible introduction of intrusive material into deposits, it is felt that reliance on a single coin is an unreliable criterion for dating, it may be noted that the deposits of this phase also contained a coin of Gratian (AD 378-83), one each of Valentinian I and Valens (AD 375), *ten* of Gratian (AD 367-75) and four of Valens and three of the House of Valentinian (AD 364-78). It would seem injudicious in the extreme to deny that these deposits were laid down later than AD 367, and a case could certainly be argued for a TPQ of AD 388.

### Structural Phase 2 (Fig.7)

The structural format of the building remained the same in Phase 2, which saw the accumulation of extensive, laminated deposits and lenses of ash and silt across the whole of the south-eastern area of the building previously occupied by the hypocausted raised floor. Again, this may reflect a real and remaining structural division, or may result from the exigencies of deposit survival further to the north-west. These deposits appear almost certain to relate directly to the occupation and use of the building. The *exact* nature of the activity is unclear - no direct evidence of hearths or similar structures was identified - but it is surely likely that it involved some form of manufacture or processing involving intense heat, the ash being the debris raked out of and away from hearths / kilns / ovens / furnaces. These deposits contained stratified within them *four* coins of the House of Theodosius dating to the period AD 388-402, and given the more coherent structure of these ashy / silty deposits the likelihood of all or any of them having derived from unrecognised intrusive features seems considerably reduced.

Again, a to dispute a TPQ of at least AD 388 for the deposition of these contexts would seem perverse; that the *actual* TPQ may be later than this is suggested by the evidence of wear on two of these coins. Since bronze issues of this period are the last to have been extensively imported into and used in Britain, the coins from subsequent deposits and phases are assumed to be *residual*, either depositionally or 'in circulation' (the

distinction is a highly significant one which cannot be addressed in detail here). Subsequent descriptions of phases will thus restrict comments on coinage to the presence of these latest issues.

### Structural Phase 3 (Fig.8)

Structural Phase 3 saw a substantial modification to the building, involving the demolition of a 6.0 m. long stretch of 72525, the south-west wall of the original building which had, to date, been retained unaltered in subsequent modifications. A later stage of robbing of this wall appears to have severed any direct stratigraphic relationship between this episode and the other features and deposits of Phase 3, but the identification of seemingly associated structural features *to either side of it* seems to indicate that the wall was breached in this phase. Evidence for this comes in the shape of feature 71208, an irregular, sub-triangular cut measuring almost 2.00 m. across and up to 300 mms deep. The position of this cut, immediately adjacent to 72525, extends south-eastwards the line of features of comparable dimensions, 7835, 7598 and 7702, and its location *c.* 1.00 m. south-east of 7702 is consistent with the spacing between these features. These are robbing cuts which identify the position of padstone foundations supporting the superstructure of the 'extended' building. The *stratigraphic* position of the padstone which would originally have filled 71208, and thus the fact that it was inserted later in the sequence than these, is confirmed by the fact that it would have sat on top of the Phase 1 levelling represented by 71862, and is indeed *physically* located directly above sub-floor structural elements of the hypocausted floor of the extended building. Its position also coincides *exactly* with the north-western limit of the six-metre stretch of robbing of 72525. Moreover, to the *south-west*, beyond the breached 72525, two features of comparable dimensions, 71941 and 71793, extend a line at 90° to the wall some 4.00 m. beyond it. The 'shelf' created by the robbing of 72525 probably served as another padstone support for this new, north-east / south-west aligned wall, and the trace of yet another may be detected in the base of the later wall trench 71908.

Taken together, these features indicate the demolition of a substantial stretch of

72525, and the creation of a new 'arm' to the building, extending some 4.0 m. to the south west, beyond the line of the proposed 'colonnade' of the 'extended' building, utilising the techniques of foundation construction originally employed in the construction of that building. This seems to have created an 'annexe' or 'porticus' to the main structure, the return of which, running parallel to the robbed line of 72525, was formed by three comparable, and similarly robbed, padstones, represented by the rectilinear cuts (from north-west to south-east) 71793, 71773, and 71775. Each of these measures *c.* 1.00 m.<sup>2</sup> x *c.* 0.50 m. deep. (The fact that the tops of these cuts were only recognised at a level *c.* 400 mms below that at which 71208 was identified is readily explained by the part played by machine-excavated spits in this part of Area 7). It is almost certain that the wall 71857, here argued as having formed part of the *original* structural complex, was incorporated in the facade of this new 'porticus'. The return wall on its south-eastern side must have been just beyond the limit of the excavation, but must be assumed to have run back into 72525 at the point of its surviving south-eastern 'stub'.

To the south-east of 72525, deposits and surfaces which may confidently be associated with the Phase 3 structure are absent, due to the rapid excavation methods employed. Inside the main body of the structure, however, a number of rubbly deposits which appear to have accumulated against the padstone represented by 71208 seem to indicate some raising of the internal floor surface level as part of this phase. Although it cannot, in this instance, be proven, the possibility that such deposits were sealed during their period of use by solid, flagstone floors, subsequently robbed in their entirety, needs to be constantly borne in mind.

#### Structural Phase 4 (Fig.9)

Certainly, there is little direct evidence of occupation or activity associated with Phase 3 before the major changes of Phase 4. That this phase involved substantial modifications is indicated by the fact that it commenced with the robbing of the structural foundation represented by 71208. On the basis of what has been described above, this would have involved major structural alteration, for which there is indeed ample evidence. The

removal of this pivotal structural feature would seem to have separated the main structure from that of the 'porticus' established in Phase 3. The direct physical evidence for this is provided by the construction, immediately to the south-west of and parallel to 72525, of the massive, irregular wall-foundation trench 71908. This extended obliquely across almost the complete length of the trench, continuing beyond the original north-western limit of 72525 to run parallel to the south-western element of the timber-piled foundation trench which had projected the line of that wall when the original building had been extended. Furthermore, although strata to the north-west of the timber-piled extension were much affected and obscured by shoring operations, 71672 and 7690 - deposits very similar to the rubble footings and backfill contained by 71908 - could be identified there, at a level very close to that of the base of the 71908 itself. Even more tellingly, a shallow, rectilinear cut 7922, containing a rubble deposit 71135, formed a right angle around, and partially overlapped *and sealed* the timber-piled extension. In other words, the wall construction trench and rough foundations represented by 71908 did not merely extend up the south-west side of the original building, *but enclosed it and the extension on three sides*, and most probably on all four, although the evidence to the south-east lay beyond the limits of the excavation.

The remarkable picture is of the last remaining structural vestiges of the original building being encased and enclosed by a new shell, seemingly built of re-used stone largely obtained, whether directly or indirectly, from that building. Before considering changes to the interior effected in the course of this major rebuild, the character of 71908 needs to be presented in a little more detail. The base of the construction trench itself is irregular, and comprises deeply sunk, square depressions or bases, incorporating footings of re-used rubble, and connected by sections of trench which are convex in profile, and also carry rubble footings. (The method of foundation construction bears parallel with those employed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century claustral range of St Andrew's Priory in York, the purpose seeming to be to concentrate load at specific points). Although the trench was originally dug continuously down the south-western side of the original building, there are, some two-thirds of the way along the robbed section of 72525 (reading south-eastwards) two deep voids in the construction-packing / backfill, 71400 and 71743, which suggest the former presence of two large padstones. These define an opening just over one metre wide, within which the construction packing of the trench, 71747, is markedly fin-grained and compacted. This,

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it is suggested, marks the entrance into the new structure, and probably originally supported a substantial threshold stone.

The internal elements of this structural transformation bring into play the late, crude structures which first identified Wellington Row as a site of considerable potential in the study of the archaeology of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Initially, some raising of the ground level, probably involving material from the digging of 71908, backfilled and sealed cut 71208, the hole left by the removal of the padstone. This material incorporated a coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402). It was at this stage, it is argued, that the structural feature critical to the interpretation of subsequent structural episodes in Area 7 - the dry-stone sill-wall 7664 (Ottaway 1993, 116, fig.73) - was constructed. In strictly *stratigraphic* terms it could have been constructed in Phase 3, as it only actually *seals* deposits attributed to that phase, but the structural logic for a Phase 4 attribution is utterly compelling.

7664 survived to a height of c.500 mms above the base of its earth-fast footings, over a length of c.3.50 m. It stretched from the internal edge of the (robbed) wall 72525 at its south-western extremity, and probably abutted the second most south-easterly of the roof supports of the original building, that roof support subsequently having been robbed (7381). It seemed in the course of the excavation, and in its post-excitation interpretation, to have stood in splendid near-isolation, a solitary identifiable structure amidst a chaos of undifferentiated rubble. This is not the case. There are in fact traces of four other associated stretches of wall of the same phase and construction technique which can be identified, and which lend structure and coherence to the interior arrangement of the building defined by the wall 71908 / 7922.

Some 2.40 m. to the south-east of 7664, a north-east / south-west alignment of limestone rubble, 71432, was recorded, embedded into the surface of the ashy silts of Phase 2 (71397). 71432 extended c.1.50 m. south-westwards from 71804, the surviving roof support of the original building on the site (a feature which, by this stage, stood only c.300 mms proud of the contemporary ground surface). c.1.50 m. north-east of 71804, another linear deposit of limestone rubble, 71480, also embedded into the surface of the Phase 2 silts, extended c.1.80 m. north-eastwards into the edge of the excavation. 71432 and 71480

shared a common alignment, skewed *c.* 15° to the east of that of 7664. Together, they appear to have formed the footings of a wall extending over a total length of *c.* 5.50 m., incorporating the earlier pillar base 71804, with an opening *c.* 1.40 m. wide immediately to the north-east of that feature. (Much of the superstructure of 71480 was dispersed through the levelling deposits 7717, 7693 and 7651 immediately above it, and has been represented in broken outline on Fig. 9). The south-western limit of 71432 is located some 2.20 m. due north of the north-eastern edge of the surviving, upstanding 'stub' of 72526, the south-eastern wall of the original building. Between these two points, a series of over twenty small, overlapping deposits of silts and rubble were excavated immediately above the surface of the Phase 2 ashy silts. These have been interpreted as sediments accumulating in the base of a robbing cut created by the removal of the footings and (?collapsed) superstructure of a wall which originally connected 71432 with the remnant of 72526. The edges of such a cut, made through the comparatively loose soils which comprised occupation surfaces and made-ground in these phases of occupation, would subsequently have collapsed on top of these patchy sediments, leaving little direct evidence of the feature itself. (This is the feature referred to in the discussion of site formation processes, above).

It has been mentioned that the north-eastern end of 7664, the *surviving* dry-stone sill wall, seems to have abutted one of the roof support bases of the original building, but that the latter was completely removed in a later robbing episode. This robbing feature, 7381, in fact measured over 2.0 m. x 1.0 m., with its long axis on an alignment close to that of 7664 itself (and *identical* to that of 71432 / 71480). There is evidence for an equivalent to 7664 to the north-east of 7381. Although no direct traces of superstructure or even footings survive, superimposed rubbly make-up deposits of this phase, 71404 and 71370, both terminate abruptly at their southern limit along the same, approximately east-west line. Furthermore, 71255, 71173 and 71067, similar make-up deposits in Phase 5, also terminate along the same line. This must indicate the existence of a physical barrier at this point and on this alignment, creating a stratigraphic discontinuity with deposits immediately to the south, and an equivalent wall to 7664 (albeit on a markedly different alignment) provides the obvious explanation. As with 71480, it is probable that some of the superstructure of this wall is dispersed through the overlying levelling deposits, notably 7693. At the eastern end of this 'discontinuity', a cluster of discrete, rubbly contexts suggests the former position of



a robbed pad-stone, hard up against the edge of the excavation and at a point c. 1.0 m. north-west of the wall footing 71480. This may indicate the position of an opening between the two walls immediately beyond the edge of the excavation.

Before turning to the remaining structural traces to the north-west of 7664, the overall pattern of the structures described thus far should be summarised. Starting from the south-west, the robbed post-pads 71400 and 71743 appear to have framed an opening in the massive but seemingly crudely-constructed wall represented by 71908, constructed to enclose what little, by that stage, remained of the original stone building and its north-west and south-easterly extensions. 7664 appears to have connected 71400 with the *in situ* surviving roof support base, represented by the robbing cut 7381 some 5.0 m. to the north-east (although removed at its south-western end by later robbing of the footings of 72525, the south-west wall of the original building). The size of the robbing feature 7381 suggest that, apart from the roof support base, it may also have incorporated a threshold stone (possibly represented by the massive millstone grit block 7762, located nearby, disturbed, in a later context). To the north-east of 7381, a wall equivalent to 7664, but closer to a true east-west alignment, appears to form a structural configuration in which the entrance represented by 7381 is set back, or 'recessed', between two walls aligned at an angle of approximately 135° to one another.

Facing this arrangement, to the south-east, a (robbed) wall extended c. 2.20 m. northwards from the upstanding 'stub' of 72526, the south-east wall of the original stone building. This wall then turned towards the north-east, through an angle of c. 85°, as 71432, incorporating 71804 (the surviving roof support base of the original building) in its alignment, with an entrance immediately north-eastwards of that structure, and extending to the north-eastern edge of the excavation as 71480. The north-eastern limit of 71480 is only c. 1.0 m. south of the south-east end of the 'stratigraphic discontinuity' which appears to indicate the position of a wall equivalent to 7664, and it is probable that a further entranceway existed here.

Viewed overall, this arrangement seems to indicate a kind of 'corridor' with doors leading off it into separate buildings or rooms to the north-west (this one set back or

'recessed' between two wall on a converging alignment), the north-east and the south-east. Immediately to the right of the main access through the massive external wall 71908 there seems to have been a small recess or alcove measuring c.3.0 m. x 2.0 m., with its long axis aligned north-east / south-west.

Although it was suggested above that 7664 actually extended north-eastwards from 71400, it is possible, and perhaps even more likely, that 7664 did not, in fact, extend as far south-west as the massive external wall 71908. This is suggested by a number of very rubbly contexts (notably 71016 and 71047), stacked one on top of the other, indicating the existence of a partially-collapsed dry-stone sill wall, of the same construction as 7664, running parallel and immediately adjacent to 72525, the robbed south-west wall of the original stone structure, and almost certainly, originally, meeting the south-western end of 7664.

The presence of this wall raises the question whether 71908 actually supported a *unitary*, roofed structure, sub-divided into a series of rooms, or served primarily as monumental *enclosing* wall, behind which sheltered a honeycomb of slightly-built, separately roofed cells and structures. Although the latter is a possibility, the structural evidence in fact seems to favour reconstruction as a single, roofed building, possibly with a roof ridge supported by uprights on the pillar bases of the original stone building. Evidence for this reconstruction is provided by the presence of massive robbing features, for internal pad-stones of a size comparable to those of Phase 2, adjacent to and in some cases integrated with 71908; 7751 and 7499 on the south-western side, 7439, 7307 and 7100 on the north-eastern. Along its north-western stretch, 7583 appears to have performed a similar function. Although this arrangement seems somewhat irregular, it probably represents the recognisable remnant of a more complete system, which involved uprights supported on the then-intact sub-structure of the timber-piled extension. It is noticeable, in fact, that all of these robbed post-pads are located half-on and half-off earlier wall-lines, suggesting their use to equalise weight on underlying deposits of different load-bearing capacity. It is difficult to be sure which of the Phase 2 pad-stones remained to form part of this new configuration, but it is likely that some, at least, did. Whilst 71908 may have had some load-bearing capacity, the structure seems to have been designed to concentrate load at specific points,

onto stone pads within the building and integrated into its external wall. The monumentality of 71908 itself seems to have been largely for the sake of external appearance.

Due to the level of robbing, and more rapid excavation in the north-western half of this building, it was only possible to elucidate internal divisions, and the activities carried out within them, in the south-east. Make-up levels in the north-eastern area of the building have already been referred to (71370 and 71404); their counterparts further to the south-west, *sealing* the robbed Phase 3 pad-stone 71208, included a coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402). Above these, extensive spreads of silts, ashy silts and pure ash covered much of the area to the north-west of 7664. Immediately to the north-east of the collapsed dry-stone wall 71016 / 71047, a regularly-defined rectilinear deposit of ash 71094, associated with a narrow slot (71117) hard against 71016 / 71047, and a clay 'setting' (71019) seem once again to indicate a heat-based manufacturing process of uncertain character, with similar, less pure deposits to the north-east representing material raked and spread away from this focus of activity.

South-east of 7664, 71389 appears to represent material accumulating within a depression within the corridor between 7664 and 71432 / 71480. A more probable explanation, however, is that it represents material deliberately dumped to level subsidence in the ground surface; its extent and alignment correspond closely with those of the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century ditch underlying the original stone building. 71389 incorporated a coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402) The possibility that deposits in this corridor were sealed beneath a stone-flagged floor should be borne in mind.

Finally, the fate of the Phase 3 'porticus' must be considered. Although the construction of 71908 well and truly severed this extension from the main building complex, alterations which have been attributed to subsequent phases seem to indicate that its facade, at least, was retained as an adjunct of the new configuration.

### Structural Phase 5 (Fig.10)

Internal modification to the Phase 4 building involved the construction of a dry-stone sill wall 7802, which extended south-eastwards from 7664 for a length of *c.* 1.20 m. to meet wall 71432 at its western limit, and thus served to block access through the corridor from the main entrance to the building from the south-west. To the north of 7664, in the area previously occupied by the ash deposit 71094, a make-up deposit 7992, which contained a coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-392), was covered with a layer of compact yellow and red clay, 7733 / 7914. This deliberately-laid surface extended north-eastwards as far as the centre-line of the roof supports of the original stone building; on it, patches of clay and silt would seem to indicate the position of depressions caused by wooden uprights stood on, and impressed into, the clay surface. (One of these silt deposits contained a coin of the House of Theodosius [AD 388-402] ). The regular configuration of these suggests the existence of some form of ground-fast structure within this room, or a *superstructure* specific to it. To the east of 7733 / 7914, a deposit of silty clay containing abundant fragments of limestone and sandstone (7659) extended over a minimum length of 5.0 m. and a maximum width of *c.* 2.0 m. along the long, north-west / south-east axis of the building, seemingly occupying, longitudinally, the middle third of the structure. This once again seems to suggest a corridor-like arrangement; the configuration and character of any subdivisions or activities to the north-east of this deposit is unknown, but 7659 was laid on top of extensive make-up deposits 71255, 71173 and 71067, which extended to the limit of the excavated area.

### Structural Phase 6 (Fig.11)

The pattern of access through the interior of the structure was once again substantially altered. 7802, the wall blocking access through the corridor, was levelled and sealed beneath a further make-up deposit, 7726, which was confined by the walls 7664 and 71432 (which must consequently have been retained in this phase), and contained two coins of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402). Further west, 7726 contained a massive block of millstone-grit (7762), measuring 1.20m. x 0.65m x 0.35m, which may originally have been the threshold stone for the entrance immediately to the north-east of 7664. (The

dragging of this stone out of position and its subsequent abandonment perhaps seem puzzling, but may be accounted for by an inability to move a stone of that size and weight to the place where it had been intended to re-use it). If this is the case, it may suggest that there was no longer a specifically-defined entrance at this point, an interpretation which is supported by other aspects of the evidence.

The wall to the north-east of 7381, the robbed pillar base of the original stone structure, represented by the observed 'stratigraphic discontinuity' seems to have been removed at this point. In its place a single pad-stone (marked 'L' on Fig.11) seems to have been abutted by two contemporary (robbed) walls; the first of these extended north-eastwards underneath the edge of the excavation less than 1.50 m. distant, the second south-eastwards for a length of 3.60 m., in this case as far as the late robbing cut of 72526. Both were represented by deposits of silt and rubble in linear cuts c.0.60 m. wide, i.e. of a comparable scale to 7664. The traces of the second of these (7645 / 71666) were more substantial than those of the first (7726 / 7716). The construction of 7645 / 71666 appears to have involved the destruction of the earlier wall 71480, creating the demolition debris 7193, with the possible positioning of a (robbed) pad-stone represented by cut 71052, located hard against the edge of the excavation. This seems to have created a symmetrical arrangement to either side of 7645 / 71666, with a gap of c.1.20 m. between that wall and 71052 and, to the east of 7645 / 71666, the original entrance to the side of 71804 (the still-upstanding roof support of the first stone building) remaining open. This entrance now allowed access to a room defined by the walls 7645 / 71666, 71432, the 'stub' of 72526, and the robbed-out wall which had connected the latter two. Within this space 7784, a deposit of silty sand, seems to have provided the floor, or more likely a sub-floor levelling a flagged stone surface.

To the north of 7664, the clay surfaces of Phase 5 gave way to a covering of silt; a single, quite extensive deposit 7706 in the south-east corner, which contained a coin of the House of Theodosius (AD 388-402), and to the north-west a patchwork of contiguous deposits extending as far as the robbing of 72525. It is suggested that the latter represent the positions of individual flagstones, subsequently robbed. Slight features in this surface, such as the shallow slot 7691, and the post-hole cut through the surface of 7663 (no

individual number) suggest the presence of some form of light, earth-fast structure. The curving north-west edge of 7706 may also have something to say about the configuration of this small room. To the north-east, the compacted limestone and sandstone surface 7659 was retained from Phase 5.

Moving outside the Phase 4 building to the south-west, modifications to the surviving facade of the 'porticus' have been attributed to this phase. Massive robbed padstones, represented by their robbing cuts 7566, 71637 and 71638, blocked the openings between the existing uprights resting on 71793, 71773 and 71775. This left only a narrow, c.0.80 m. wide aperture between 71773 and 71775, almost directly opposite the opening in 71908 represented by 71400 and 71403. A further result of this was, in effect, to create another corridor *outside* 71908, running north-east / south-west, an effect enhanced by the creation of a narrow screen base on this alignment, 71715, hard against the north-eastern faces of 71775 and 71638.

Overall, this reconfiguration created a single, continuous corridor, running north-westwards between 71908 and 71715, turning sharply through 90° between 71400 and 71413 to enter the building. The corridor then ran north-eastwards for c.8.0 m., at which point it was blocked by wall 7645 / 71666. Another 90° turn, left, led again north-westwards along the surface 7659. The corridor seems to have led through a network of small rooms, some of which were accessible directly from it, others of which were not, and could presumably only be accessed from other entrances or passageways.

#### Structural Phase 7 (Fig. 12)

This phase appears to have involved the destruction of all structures within the 71908 building to the north-east and south-east of wall 7664, resulting in the extensive demolition deposits 7717, 7693, 7651 and, uppermost, 7619. Even the surviving roof support from the original building, 71804, was covered by 7651 and 7619, indicating the final cessation of its use as a component of a standing building. 7664 itself, and the surfaces in the room immediately to the north-west, may have survived a little longer, as none of the

demolition deposits covered them. However, the *whole* of the interior of the 71908 building, as far as may be ascertained, *was* covered by 7599, a loose light brown / yellow mortar mixed with dark brown clay silt and containing frequent blocks and fragments of limestone. The character of this deposit, its extent, and the covering of 71804 with demolition debris strongly indicate that it represents the final, total demolition of the stone building on this site, modified beyond all recognition from its original form.

### Structural Phase 8 (Fig.12)

The demolition of the stone building was followed by the construction of a timber structure, of comparable size, in the same location, and on a broadly similar alignment. The building appears to have employed a combination of earth-fast posts, uprights standing on (robbed) stone post-pads, and continuous slots, presumably containing sill beams. The line of the south-western wall of this building ran to the north-east of 72525, its alignment skewed slightly to the north of that of the original stone building. The footings of the north-western wall straddled the boundary between the timber-piled construction trench (which had extended the original stone building) and the north-western foundation of the Phase 4 building. The north-eastern wall of this Phase 8 building partially rested on 72528, the equivalent wall of the original stone building. In Area 4 one of the robbed out post-pads of the south-eastern wall of this building, 4059, was located towards the north-western edge of what had been the Roman road.

The key structural element in the recognition of the stratigraphic position of this building was 7573, a robbed pad-stone setting, measuring c.1.0 m.<sup>2</sup>, which was positioned directly above the dry-stone sill wall 7664 (which was only c.400 mms wide, so 7573 could not represent a robbed block sat atop the wall whilst it was in use).

Details of internal floor surfaces, partitions and other structural traces have not been systematically sought in the stratigraphic archive. It is probable that some may be identified, but it seems extremely likely that the compacted upper surface of the demolition deposit 7599 formed the main floor area of the building, and some of the detail recorded on that

surface may well relate to its internal configuration. Although a systematic consideration of associated artefacts to establish the date of the building was considered beyond the scope of this thesis, it has been suggested in Chapter 7.2.2, on the grounds of its construction, planform and position in the stratigraphic sequence, that it may belong to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.



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