

**RELATIONS OF POWER:
THE NEOLITHIC OF CENTRAL
SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND.**

**VOLUME ONE (OF TWO)
TEXT**

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RELATIONS OF POWER: THE NEOLITHIC OF CENTRAL SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND.

Julian Stewart Thomas.

SUMMARY.

This thesis argues that the traditional methods of archaeological research have had the effect of forcing the British Neolithic into a mould formed by modern western values. This orthodoxy might be challenged through the use of ethnographic material concerning the structure and operation of precapitalist societies. However, it is often the case that the variability of the ethnographic record is merely used to patch up archaeological explanations of the past.

A methodology is therefore proposed in which anthropological theory is used in the construction of a model of Neolithic social relations in northwest Europe, and the archaeological evidence for the study area is used to detect contrasts with this model. It is recognised that lithic assemblages, faunal remains, mortuary practices and monuments cannot of themselves be sufficient for the development of an holistic view of a prehistoric society. Instead, each class of data can be used in much the same way as an historian might use a written text: to search for distortions and contradictions between each form of data and the general model.

Having developed methodology, general theory and the European model in the first three chapters, each subregion of the study area is discussed. Subsequent chapters concern southern Wessex, the Mendip and Cotswold Hills, the Upper Thames Valley and the Avebury region.

It is argued that a change can be discerned in Neolithic Europe from large social units articulated about kinship and the circulation of livestock and prestige items, to smaller communities whose external relations are more temporary and opportunistic in nature. Despite this, it is shown that in the study area considerable variability exists, seen in the settlement record, economic activities, mortuary practices and the building of monuments. This variability, it is argued, can be accounted for by variation in the social relations of production between different areas, and consequently in the forms of power and authority in operation.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?

"We neolithic folk had entirely different customs, and not just in regard to eating. Each of us eat separately, with his back to the horde, not shamed but silent and introverted, immersed in mastication, eyeless. But we shat together, squatting in a circle and exchanging shouts of encouragement".

- Gunther Grass, 'The Flounder'.

Introduction

This thesis is about letting the past be different from the present. Foucault, in meditating upon Borges' mythical Chinese encyclopaedia, is struck by its ability to "shatter all the familiar landmarks of my thought...breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things" (1970,xv). In a similar manner, it is my problem in writing this thesis to preserve the strangeness of the past intact. The aim is to accept that the 'Neolithic folk' did have 'entirely different customs', and that these should be seen as neither the irrational actions of primitives nor as phenomena whose explanation can only be achieved in purely adaptive or economic terms. Rather, they represent footholds into the understanding of a rationality entirely foreign to our own. Initially my answer to the problem

of 'stepping outside' of the mentality of Western Capitalism was to rely upon anthropological sources in order to understand the workings of economies whose objectives were different from our own. This in turn led me to an interest in Marxist theory, which appears to offer a framework based upon the historical transformation of the fundamental structures underlying social and economic life. As my work went on I realised that my lack of satisfaction with the theories available in the archaeological mainstream meant that I could not rely upon 'off the peg' explanations, but would have to spend a substantial part of this thesis in developing both the theory and methodology necessary to complete the study.

My goal in undertaking this research was to investigate the relationships between social and economic change in the Neolithic period in six of the southern counties of England (Avon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Somerset and Wiltshire). Yet it became increasingly clear as I progressed that these categories of human action were themselves no more than the product of an objectification process dependant upon an historically particular perception of the world. Our personal experience forms the frame through which we apprehend reality (Bourdieu 1977). Ethnocentrism is a problem which concerns archaeologists in particular, for we have no informant to talk back to us. We do not speak the language of the past: we listen to a distorted record. The ultimate outcome of this is that, to paraphrase Douglas Adams, the past becomes exactly like a foreign country,

in that they do things in exactly the same way there. In the case of the Neolithic, the problem is compounded by a further perceptual boundary formed by later, more well-documented periods of prehistory. As a result, we often feel that we know certain things about the Neolithic because we know them about the Iron Age. So, we assume that Neolithic pits are storage devices, because this is true of the Iron Age (Field, Matthews and Smith 1964), and neglect the discomfoting evidence that their contents often represent deliberate, 'irrational' deposits. We assume that causewayed enclosures are central places, and all that that implies (Renfrew 1973), neglecting the fact that they occur on the peripheries of settlement systems, on the intuitive grounds that they appear morphologically similar to hillforts. The pottery of the Neolithic of Southern England was initially characterised as 'A' (plain bowl/Windmill Hill series), 'B' (Peterborough wares) and 'C' (Grooved Ware) (Piggott 1929; Warren et. al. 1936), following systems coined for the Iron Age (Hawkes 1959), thereby implying chronological succession and baulking at the implications of their contemproneity. In all, we have succeeded in obfuscating the nature of the Neolithic by forcing it into a mould forged for the Iron Age. The Neolithic was rather like the rest of later prehistory, but less complicated, being earlier. An adequate appraisal of the period was for long precluded not only by the crude evolutionism which this implies, but also by the straitjacket of a restrictive philosophy applied to archaeological method. Hawkes (1954,161-163) constructed what has become known as the 'ladder of inference', suggesting

that as one moved from the consideration of technology to subsistence economics, social and political institutions and finally to religious institutions and spiritual life, the possibility of interpreting the past from archaeological remains decreased. However, this is merely an observation about the quality of the data which are normally to be expected from the archaeological record. In fact, if one turns to Neolithic Britain, it is quite possible to turn the 'ladder' on its head: Wainwright's (1979) excavations on the henge monuments of Wessex provide plentiful information which can be used for the investigation of ritual practices (Richards and Thomas 1984), but only a distorted record of subsistence practices; the majority of excavated sites of the period are burials, which, bearing in mind the input of effort involved in their construction and the provision of grave-goods, might be presumed to have some bearing on political matters; the productive economy, however, is much less clear, in that all that remains of the 'settlements' of the period are lithic scatters in the topsoil of our fields (whose interpretation is far from straightforward), while the vast majority of collections of faunal remains occur in conditions which suggest formal deposition in connection with ritualised behaviour - surely a major consideration in attempting to make inference about subsistence economy; and it can almost be said that we know nothing of the technology of the period, for in view of the total absence of core-reduction studies of lithic technology or of microwear analysis of tools, we know neither what they were used for nor how they were made.

Thankfully, Hawkes' views, and statements like that by Smith (1955,6) that "a code of behaviour, or the idea of chieftainship which prevailed in a particular tribe, cannot be expressed adequately by things like the layout of yam gardens, or large huts", became highly unfashionable with the development of the 'New Archaeology' in the 1960's and 1970's. It was generally recognised that in order to study past societies we must adopt an holistic approach which integrates all aspects of social activity, not ignoring those parts which remain archaeologically invisible. It was in this same period that archaeologists began to accept that knowledge is not objective, but is theory-laden. Clarke (1972,5-10;1973,7) discussed the 'controlling models' of archaeologists, and suggested that a route to 'critical self-consciousness' lay in the making explicit of the theory which was in use. For theory does not come from archaeological data; it comes from observations about the world. If we do not make those observations explicit we are doing no more than inflicting our immediate experience and our personal or societal ideology on the past.

I would not deny the worthiness of these goals of an integrated, holistic approach and of an explicit awareness of what theory is being used when, and of where it comes from. However, in some aspects my programme does deviate from what Clarke had in mind. The 'new archaeology' entailed a recognition that an inappropriate conception of history was in use in archaeology

(e.g. Trigger 1968,31). It met this challenge; but not with an appropriate conception of history. Instead it substituted an absence of history. Anonymous cybernetic processes of stability and feedback snaked their way across the pages of the texts of the seventies, aiming if possible at the reduction of all processes of change to laws and equations. In this thesis I do not intend to be concerned with what superficial similarities can be suggested between past societies; the role of an ethnographic approach will be seen here as a means to the definition of the structural elements which make them unique. This is not to advocate a retreat into a blinkered Boasian parochialism. Far from it; one of the most stimulating sources of ideas will always be the comparison of periods and areas - why did this happen here, and not there? It is with the recognition of diversity and variability that the possibility of an understanding of the broad sweep of human development begins, not with the attempt to force the past into redundant and ill-fitting generalisations.

Material culture

The problems which have to be addressed in trying to write prehistory do not begin and end with grand social theory. Archaeologists are frequently dismissive of the achievements of their own discipline, but often this masks a lack of recognition of exactly how difficult is the task which we are undertaking. To

try and understand the workings of past communities on the basis of their material remains involves epistemological difficulties far in advance of those faced by many other disciplines. In view of the immaturity of the methodology necessary in order to 'do' archaeology at all it is tempting at times simply to give up all attempts at case studies like the one presented here. However, this attitude involves a false dichotomy between theory and practice: to say that practice cannot be undertaken until theory is perfected must perforce hold that day back. Furthermore, accepting that all knowledge is provisional there is no disgrace in acknowledging that one's conclusions might not represent the ultimate truth. Indeed, I would contend that any study which purported to represent the 'last word' on anything whatsoever should be regarded with the utmost suspicion. The study which I will present here is one which is based on a methodology which I acknowledge to be provisional, but I suggest that from a personal point of view I have learnt more in asking questions of the past and trying to find ways of extracting answers than if I had simply thought about epistemology for four years.

The problem of how one gets from material culture to the essence of past societies is one which has attracted considerable attention in the past twenty years. If one has to make observations on the basis of the material it is clear that some form of theory is necessary which is of a different order to our general theory. Theoretical propositions which seek to link general theory to observations about material residues have been

termed 'Middle Range Theory' (Binford 1983). Binford suggests that the role of middle range theory is to answer questions of the form 'what was it like?' and 'what does it mean?' before we go on to the question 'why does it happen?' (Binford 1983,194). There are problems in this approach, however. For it seems likely that our choice of those elements which we select to ask our 'what is it like?' and 'what does it mean?' questions of is informed by implicit assumptions about 'why it happens'. In no other social science would anyone seriously suggest that it is necessary to devise a research project in ignorance of one's long term goals. Furthermore, such appeals to an 'objective' approach tend to facilitate and legitimate the kind of archaeology in which the more far-reaching questions are simply not asked. Fortunately, Binford's own most impressive work (e.g. 1981) has been carried out using a much more liberal interpretation of middle range theory. Starting from a general problem (Was Early Man A Great Hunter?) a methodology is built up by selecting the material which will provide answers (Bones) and the attributes which will be relevant (Patterns of Attrition and Destruction), predictions are made, and the archaeological record is interrogated. This is fair enough. But when Binford says that "archaeology in general has failed to recognise that in order to refute or support theories it requires a strong body of inferential techniques, warranted independantly of its theories about past dynamics" (1983,213) he is in far less safe territory. I cannot see that it is either possible or desirable to separate out general and middle range theory to this extent. Our general

theory, whether we like it or not, will influence what we choose to look at. The hypotheses which we intend to test on the archaeological material cannot be constructed in vacuo, but are the product of the interaction of numerous factors of which we may or may not be aware. The virtue of the hypothetico-deductive approach which Binford espouses is that it forces the explicit statement of expectations. No more than that can be claimed for it: one can predict the right outcome for the wrong reason. Prediction and explanation are not the same thing. Middle range theory can only exist as a part of a total inquiry, whose success or failure must be judged as much upon the internal consistency of its results as on the success of its predictions. Middle range theory can only be formulated to answer the problems of a specific project (as in the case of Binford's 'Bones'). To suggest that an autonomous body of middle range theory can be constructed in isolation from archaeological research is ludicrous: how could one possibly use a middle range methodology which was not consonant with one's general theory?

This problem is one which is particularly evident in some recent approaches to the symbolic nature of material culture. The work of semiologists as diverse as Jakobsen, Ardener, Barthes and Derrida has in the past been directed toward material culture. However, their interest springs from entirely different objectives from those of the archaeologist, and are largely concerned with the isolation of "certain structural universals which cannot help appearing in all fields concerned with human

beings" (Ardener 1980,303). Clearly, the degree to which we can use the methodologies created by semiologists to interrogate material culture depends entirely upon our agreement with the general postulates of structuralist and poststructuralist theory.

Recently, a great deal of interest has been shown in the proposition that all material culture is 'meaningfully constituted' (Hodder 1982a,213). It is argued that as material items are the media through which most human practices are enacted, they do not so much reflect as transform human action. If the vast bulk of human activity is standardised, and as Giddens (1981,38) puts it, consists of the movement of actors through time-space stations, the archaeological record will integrate the conceptual template by which people order their day-to-day life. The rules governing action will thus determine formation processes.

However, it is one thing to note that the social world is structured, and quite another to set about the interpretation of its material residues. It seems to me that the attempts of Hodder and his followers to create a methodology for the recovery of 'meaning' from material culture rest uneasily upon the problems of reconciling two strands of social theory: structuralism and hermeneutics. Structuralist epistemology has as its cornerstone Saussure's concept of the arbitrariness of the sign (Winner 1978,338). A sign (word, gesture or object) has no intrinsic

meaning outside of that which we attribute to it. With words the context which makes the sign interpretable is built up by 'speech acts' (Wylie 1982,40), sequences of words and intonations which produce 'meaning effects'. With material items one is concerned with entities which carry much less fixed messages, and which tend to be far more ambiguous (ibid.). The structuralist answer to this is to attempt to identify the organising principles which the assignment of 'meaning' (Giddens 1979,18; Miller 1982a), on the basis that it will only be at this level that any consistency will be found. One negative effect of this method is that it tends to lead to analyses which attempt to identify the the structures and patterns behind sign systems internally and in isolation from the outside world (Bourdieu 1979). But more importantly it returns us to Ardener's point about 'structural universals'. For structuralism posits as its central proposition that there is no such thing as meaning: all that can finally be recovered from a text is structure. The interrogation of archaeological material would thus reveal structure, but that structure need not be any different to that which would be found in any other aspect of human culture, and need not tell us very much about the past.

The idea that there is such a thing as meaning and that there are underlying truths beneath the surface of lived experience, is one that derives from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and the hermeneutics of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982,xvi-xvii). Yet if truth and meaning derive from the

transcendental ego or the lived body there is no particular reason why they should be locked in material culture in any recoverable form. To hope to be able to recover deep truths about prehistoric societies through the application of structuralist methodologies to their material residues is thus to try and play the structuralist game and the hermeneutic game at the same time. It is to want to have one's cake and eat it.

However, there are glimmers of hope in an approach which tries to go beyond the structure/meaning option. Bourdieu (1977), Baudrillard (1981), Rossi-Landi (1978) and Miller (1982a) all to a greater or lesser extent seek a fusion of semiology and Marxism, in which signs, like all other objects, cannot be subtracted from the process of being produced, exchanged and consumed. Sign systems are thus built up in interaction with the world, in the process of classifying it, rather than being imposed upon the world by a psychobiologically constant human mental structure. The missing element in both structuralism and hermeneutics is thus history, and the hope of an archaeological methodology comes to rest upon the proposition that there is no single factor in human experience which is sufficiently fixed as to serve as a universal basis for comparison. Where discontinuity comes to be stressed in the epistemology with which we address the past we can at least base our analyses upon difference. The search for 'deep meaning', hidden behind the surface of everyday existence may itself be a feature of our post-Freudian era; we cannot assume the presence of meaning in every aspect of being

simply because our culture tells us to look for it. The search for deep truth leads not to an objective reality, but to an interpretation. This may be sufficient for the study of the past if we are content to look not for the 'truth' of prehistory, but for the way it was interpreted by prehistoric people. To me, this search for an interpretation of an interpretation, to uncover the rationality which underlay the assignment of meaning to the material world is a quite sufficient goal in itself.

So, it may never be possible to look at an item of material culture and generalise the nature of the society which created it. Meanings may be suggested for items, yet alternatives may be difficult to distinguish between. What empirical method could one have for the testing of a meaning? Hodder's answer (1982a,215) is in the development of a 'contextual approach', through which symbols are traced back to structures by reference to the specific historical and social context. Once again, this raises problems of testing: how does one create a social context for prehistory if not through material culture?

An alternative approach may be derived from the writings of Paul Feyerabend and Michel Foucault. Feyerabend (1975,29-33) points out that all facts are both relative and theory-laden. Hence, while one works within the framework of an accepted theory, knowledge will tend to be self-supporting and self-reproducing. For Feyerabend the only way to 'break the circle' of this state of affairs is to set up a 'counter-world', a ghost world of

knowledge in opposition to orthodoxy. Change in the understanding of the world thus comes about not through the tacking-on of new elements onto boring old theories, but through the construction of interesting new theoretical frameworks, which may in the first instance be less amenable to testing than the old in consequence of the embedding of orthodox views in the consciousness of the scientist.

The starting point of my method in this thesis will be to set up a model of what Neolithic societies ought to 'look like' on the basis of the holistic theories provided by neo-Marxist anthropology. This model will be fleshed out using archaeological sources relating to the Neolithic of continental Europe. It will only be at the point at which I begin to be concerned with the British sequence that the direct use of Archaeological materials will be undertaken. I do not believe that if one is to look at all of the available archaeological evidence (lithics, ceramics, animal bones, field monuments and so on) rather than a single type of data that one's project can necessarily be termed 'holistic'. In preliterate societies the great bulk of intersubjective activities will be verbal in nature. The archaeologically detectable remains of these societies cannot make up for what has been lost. An holistic theory cannot be built up on the basis of the archaeology alone.

Foucault (1977a), in his 'genealogical' method, presents a radical alternative to the holistic social sciences

which, in their "attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities and their carefully protected identities....(assume) the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession" (ibid.,142). Foucault's genealogy follows Nietzsche's wirkliche historie in searching out historical discontinuities in the logic which underpins particular discourses. In the same way, I aim to use the archaeological record not to support the conclusions which I draw from the ethnographic sources, but in order to disrupt both the traditional schemes and my own presuppositions. Each of the sources which is available to me I intend to use in the same way as Foucault used his texts: I seek the disjunctures between the way in which my Neolithic 'counter-world' ought to organise its pots, flints and animal bones and the empirical evidence, and between each of these 'texts' and each other.

To undertake a genealogy of the past is to "ransack history in order to rediscover the play of anticipations or echoes, to go right back to the first seeds or to go forward to the last traces" (Foucault 1972,144). This method must be distinguished from the 'hypothetico-deductive' approach, for it avoids the conceit of having to pretend that one's initial questions are not based upon a knowledge of the objects of study.

In another sense the work is an important adjunct to any study

based upon historical materialism. "It is impossible at the present time to write history without using a whole range of concepts directly or indirectly linked with Marx's thought and situating oneself in a horizon of thought which has been defined and described by Marx" (Foucault 1980,53). Yet there are increasingly yawning gaps in the ability of Marxism to deal with either past, present or future societies (Poster 1984). In the next chapter my reservations concerning the notions of Mode of Production, Social Formation, Ideology and Structural Determination will be explicated, and it seems to me that in each case it is to the work of Foucault that one can turn for a more clear view. Hence there seems to me to be no contradiction in an autocritique of a 'Marxist' model through the use of Foucault's genealogical methodology.

Evolutionary Theory and Cultural Ecology.

If the first sections of this chapter indicate an unhappiness with the alternative theoretical schemes available in archaeology, it is as well not to confine my criticisms to more recent developments. For it seems to me that the views which above all constitute the orthodoxy of post-1960's archaeology, evolutionary theory and cultural ecology, are considerably more limited in their usefulness. 'Evolution' has become a very loaded term, and the more extreme of recent critiques (e.g. Tilley 1982; Giddens 1984) would advocate that it be abandoned,

in that it can no longer be separated from the idea of progress. Evolutionary theory thus serves to legitimate and naturalise a view of the world as an eschelle des autres with modern western man at its summit. No such meaning is intended by the dictionary definition of the word, nor by its general biological usage. In biology, the evolutionary process is taken to consist of the creation of variability at random, the transmission of that variability, and its selection by natural processes (Dunnell 1980). The fittest survive, and the criterion of success is survival. Such evolution is blind and nondirectional. However, when the evolution of humankind comes to be considered, there is a general consensus that there is a difference of kind involved. The conceptual difficulties raised by human awareness and volition are considerable, and in some cases have led writers to propose that human evolution is both purposive and progressive (e.g. Huxley 1964,283). While we might not deny Rappaport's (1979,170) assertion that "conscious reason has entered the adaptive process", one has to consider at what level it acts. It is not the species, the race or the social group that is aware, it is the individual, who is not involved in furthering the cause of evolutionary advance, but rather the achievement of more modest, personal, goals.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that human evolution is quite different from biological evolution. The difference, obviously enough, lies in the development of culture. While it can be claimed that the human organism is genetically programmed to

'learn to learn' (Cloak 1975), we must draw a rigid distinction between its biological and its cultural constitution: the latter develops quite separately from the former (Ingold 1979). Culture develops out of the growth of consciousness. This is why we should not entirely follow Tilley in rejecting all concept of evolution in archaeological debate. For humanity did not wake up in its cave one morning to find that it had changed overnight from a brute beast to a species of conscious, purposive actors. While it is well outside of the scope of the present thesis, the evolution of consciousness and its relation to biological evolution are beyond doubt legitimate objects of study. Consciousness, then, develops out of biological evolution, culture is its product, and is something which is entirely separate from the corporeal. Culture is made up of concepts of practice which can be symbolised and transmitted between individuals, and is placed between humanity and selective pressures (Ingold 1981). Culture possesses no kinetic qualities of itself; it is acted through by human intentionality in the pursuit of goals (ibid.). It is thus not humanity that comes to be selected against; it is culture that is selected - "our ideas die for us", as Popper has it (quoted in Ingold 1979). Furthermore, it is not nature that does the selecting; elements of culture are adopted or discarded by people, they choose what to use, and can change strategy without the encumbrance of physiological time lags. For this reason debates as to whether cultural evolution acts at the level of the genotype or the phenotype are pointless: the unit of selection is culture itself.

Humanity possesses a dual nature, in that it is at once a part of the natural world, with a corporeal aspect which has material needs, and a different type of entity, with a 'second nature' (sic) which is quite separate. In a sense, this contradiction is the basis of a prime dialectic of human existence (Giddens 1979,161), the opposition of man and nature which is mediated through culture. So if we are to use the term 'evolution' to describe the development of any human agency in post-pleistocene times, it can only be culture which can be said to have evolved to an appreciable extent. Human physiological evolution has been imperceptible over the period with which we are concerned, while to talk of social evolution is meaningless: culture evolves, society is transformed. Even then, the evolution of culture has little in common with that of organisms. The way in which culture changes has nothing to do with adaptation and everything to do with social reproduction.

It has been the attempt to apply the concept of adaptation to human systems which has caused most of the problems connected with the reactionary stance of evolutionism in archaeology. The continued confusion over the level at which selection takes place has led to the implicit acceptance of a model of group selection, which appears to be an anathema in both social and biological theory. While the New Archaeology focussed attention on the need for an holistic approach, under this rubric the social whole was seen as an homogenous adaptive totality. All of the old faults of

Structural Functionalism were thus incorporated into archaeology: society could be seen as an organism with its own volition, and, even worse, the idea was promulgated that the social system normally exists in homeostasis (criticised in Hodder 1982 a,b). If this is accepted change can only come about as a result of the action of agencies external to society - exchange, invasion, or environmental perturbation. Perhaps the enthusiasm with which the expansion of environmental archaeology as an independent subdiscipline has been greeted is a consequence of this perspective: the answers to questions of causality could be sought through the inquisition of the prime mover.

The tacet adoption of the society as the unit of selection (as, for example, in Gall and Saxe 1978; Johnson 1978) results in the acceptance of a consensus model of society, effectively denying the possibility of internal conflict and contradiction. That social and cultural systems possessed form was taken as evidence of their basic stability over time, subject only to external perturbation (Clarke 1978,75-77). However, recent work in the physical sciences belies the scientific basis of this postulate. Prigogine (1980) has shown how 'dissipative structures' can be formed in thermodynamic conditions far from equilibrium. If we must persist in attempting to find analogues for the behaviour of human systems in nature, we can suggest that they represent 'self-structuring structures' (in Prigogine's parlance), at conditions which are at greater distances from equilibrium with greater complexity. This bears a remarkable similarity to

certain aspects of post-structuralist thought (e.g. Bourdieu 1977). The view which will be taken in this work is that human groups are ridden with internal and external conflicts and contradictions, and that considerable effort has to be expended in order for the relations which constitute a society to be reproduced.

In biological terms, if a species is not adaptive it becomes extinct. It is thus fairly straightforward to suggest that the only real criterion by which we can judge adaptive success is persistence (Kirch 1980). However, as we have noted, human societies use culture to shield themselves from selective pressures, and even in cases of extreme hardship are rarely eliminated - note for example the stubborn survival of the Ik (Turnbull 1970). So in effect almost all human groups are adaptive, so that the term is almost meaningless in their study. There is no way in which we can say that one human group is more adaptive than another. Nonetheless, quite apart from the ills which we have already discussed, the stress which has been laid upon adaptation has led archaeologists following a cultural ecological paradigm into a fanatical (and rather comical) search for societies in danger of being wiped out, in order to assess the 'adaptive significance' of aspects of their culture. Thus prestige items are seen as commodities (in the full sense of the word) which can be exchanged for food in times of extreme adversity, while dietary prohibitions are explained as mechanisms for preserving emergency protein. This thinking is muddle-headed

on two counts. Firstly, this search for 'adaptive logic' in ecological, long-term perspective entirely misses the purpose of these institutions in day-to-day social strategies, and thus abdicates any possibility of really understanding society in favour of finding out that it will survive (which we know anyway). That dietary prohibitions will be abandoned or prestige goods surrendered for food under duress merely reflects the flexible and improvisational nature of human action. Secondly, to say that these 'adaptive' roles are the 'real' meanings of such institutions is rather like saying that God made people out of meat so that they could eat each other if times got hard: it is a fetishised argument which implies an intentionality in fortuitous circumstances. Thus an internal or external controlling agency has to be hypothesised, working 'behind the backs' of human agents. Either their genes tell them not to eat pigs, in order to save them for later, or the superorganic aspect of society 'copes' with its organic problems by predicating the actions of the individual - a ridiculous notion which Friedman (1979a) has mischievously likened to the Hegelian concept of the World-Spirit, thereby linking vulgar materialism with historical idealism!

One offshoot of evolutionary theory which does seem to have evaded the trap of group selection and adaptationism is sociobiology. Indeed, in E.O.Wilson's work we see the apotheosis of the Hobbesian 'war of all against all'. Sociobiologists see individuals as using culture in order to increase their inclusive

fitness, which at least (for them) neatly sorts out the problem of social goals. The view of culture in use is, however, a rather peculiar one, based on interactions of cultural and genetic information, and its uses are seen in a thoroughly reductionist manner. Cloak (in Ruyle et. al. 1977, 50) states that "a cultural instruction whose behaviour helps its carrier-enactor (and his/her relatives) to acquire more children thereby has more little heads to get copied into". So, again, we get bound up in a fetishised reasoning in which the consequences of action are seen as its explanation. Eventually, as with group selection, this leads to a recourse to superorganic agencies as explanations - in this case 'memes' which parasitise the minds of actors in order to secure their persistence. In its most passive sense there may be an element of truth in this, just as people who eat the sacred pigs survive through the winter, but it carries no explanatory weight.

The view expressed here is that while 'evolution' is not an incorrect term for what culture 'does', its use has lured the unwary into schemes based on ideas of adaptation which serve to obscure the real relations of domination within societies. Those views which have accepted that strategy and conflict do exist within society have tended toward a biological reductionism which fails to grasp the complexity of human orientation. For the goals which people pursue, like the means through which they pursue them, are not purely dictated by biology. The things which people consider that they want to obtain or achieve are as much a

product of the growth of consciousness as is culture. In effect, action is the result of a determinate perception of the world. This is not to accept the high structuralist notion that all actions are constrained and dictated by a cognitive structure reflecting the pattern of the human mind. While culture does possess a deep structure which only shows itself in the actions of agents, this structure is mutable, and specific to the social formation. As Giddens (1979,217) has it, structure has a recursive relationship with history. Structure is the product of history, which is the product of structure. However, the fact that there can be history at all, in the sense of change, is because people have a freedom of action, they can improvise and break rules, even if their perception is determined by the structure in which they operate.

Summary.

In this chapter I have set out the central problem to be addressed in this thesis: how to develop an understanding of the Neolithic period in the south-west of England in a manner which circumvents the preoccupations of my own society. I have suggested reasons why I am unhappy with both the methods of the New Archaeology and the prospect of employing a structuralist epistemology in the recovery of meaning from material culture. In their place I have suggested a methodology which recognises that meaning is entirely a consequence of historical circumstances. Using ethnographic and continental sources I will develop a model

of European Neolithic society. Then, using archaeological evidence from four study areas, I will undertake a genealogical critique of this model.

CHAPTER TWO

ELEMENTS OF AN HOLISTIC THEORY

Introduction.

In the last chapter I outlined a method of analysis in which a model of Neolithic society will be constructed on an abstract basis before being subjected to contact with the archaeological record. In order to proceed with this it is necessary to set out the conceptual basis on which the study will be undertaken. The analysis of precapitalist societies requires a working understanding of the relations of production and their articulation to other spheres of action; of how a social formation is constituted; of what power is and how it works; of exchange and its structuring role; and of knowledge, its creation and manipulation. It will be these questions which will be addressed in this chapter.

Relations and Mode of Production.

Balibar (Althusser and Balibar 1970,205) makes the suggestion that "if the right break is found", history can be prised apart, like the segments of an orange, and will reveal its essential structure. It is central to the approach to be followed here that the understanding of prehistoric social change will not be found in the abstracted scrutiny of the minutiae of the archaeological

record, but in its organisation into elements which allow patterns to fall into place. The problem which has to be faced is that of that constitutes 'the right break', the correct level of analysis.

Probably the best place to begin is with Karl Marx. For Marx the crucial unit of analysis was the 'mode of production', a radical formulation which shifted the focus of study away from markets, princes and nations and onto the often unexpected relationships between people and the things which they made. However, even before I begin to look more closely at the concept itself it would be as well to offer some cautionary remarks concerning its origin. Marx, as I have already pointed out, was concerned with unravelling the internal workings of one particular type of society, namely that dominated by capitalism. For this reason Baudrillard (1975,67) criticises the Marxist approach as "the projection of the class struggle and the mode of production onto all previous history". Labour, only being alienated as a commodity under capitalism, is a meaningless term in precapitalist societies, and with it Baudrillard dismisses the concept of production. However, Baudrillard gives the game away concerning his own orientation when he insists that that the key to the understanding of precapitalist societies lies with the symbolic properties of exchange. Poster (1984) points out that by contrast with nineteenth century industrial society, that of the present day is more concerned with the service industries and with the exchange of information than with material production.

Poster's term 'mode of information' appears to be no more applicable than 'mode of production', but he has effectively questioned the universal utility of the latter concept. It may be that what is needed is not the laying aside of the term 'production' but the realisation that it must be used in its broadest sense, as the production of individuals and of social life, tied inseparably to the sister concept of reproduction. This much has been recognised by the Marxist anthropologists - "labour, as an activity which is simply and solely economic does not exist in these modes of production" (Godelier 1977a,67). Part of the importance of the concept of mode of production is that it allows us to come to terms with the different status of labour in different societies. Certainly, if it is to be used at all its sense must be expanded to 'mode of reproduction of material existence'.

Another concept which is tied to capitalist reproduction and which serves to obscure precapitalist relations is that of surplus. On the one hand, it could be suggested that all economies have a surplus element, in that the conditions of reproduction of the worker are always different to those of the entire society (Hindess and Hirst 1975,26). The maintenance and reproduction of social relations over and above 'necessary labour' is essential. On the other hand, the alienation of surplus as capital is specific to capitalism. While doubtless flawed in its conception, it is clear that the mode of production is the first step in the recognition of the entirely different

ways in which the social relations governing economic activity can be structured.

A mode of production can be defined as a process of production which reproduces itself; it consists of forces of production, social relations which structure those forces, and a superstructure which enables the reproduction of that structure. It is only fully constituted when it includes the apparatus for the division of labour, the ownership of the means of production, and arrangement for the division of the product. Even within this framework there is considerable room for debate. Aspects of the Althusserian position depend upon the assertion that the essential relation within a mode of production is that between producer and non-producer. Hence there can be only one pre-state mode of production (as Hindess and Hirst propose), a single 'primitive communist' mode in which the producer/non-producer opposition is undeveloped. At the other end of the scale we have the position originally adopted by Terray in his reworking of Meillassoux's study of the Gouro, in asserting that they had a hunting, a fishing and a herding mode of production (Meillassoux 1964; Terray 1970). In an archaeological context, this view finds an echo in Van der Velde's study of Bandkeramik social structure (Van der Velde 1979a), in which the different levels of a proposed segmentary system are taken as separate modes of production. As far as I can see the concept is only workable if one takes a middle course between Althusser and Terray and suggests that what distinguishes one mode of production from another is the set of

social relations which circumscribe the way in which activities are undertaken, the way in which the product is distributed, and the way in which the circuit of production is reproduced. Contradictions may exist within the levels of organisation within a mode of production, and a variety of tasks may be undertaken within a set of relations of production. Only when we can perceive opposed principles of structuration within the relations of production are we concerned with separate modes.

Structural determination.

In 'Reading Capital' (1970), Althusser and Balibar attempted to devise a theory of modes of production which emphasised the structural aspect of the concept. Thus a theory of history was proposed which saw all change as the transformation of a single structure. They augmented the infrastructure/superstructure opposition with a view of society as composed of three levels or 'practices': economy, politics and ideology. In the last instance, they argued, the economy determined the form of social relations, following Marx's statement that "it is the economic conditions of the time that explain why here politics and there Catholicism played the chief part" (Marx 1970,216). Within a specific mode of production, Althusser and Balibar argued, either ideology, politics, or in the case of capitalism the economy itself might represent the 'structure in dominance' which underlay the relations of production, but in all cases this

dominant instance was determined by the economy. In this way they were able to explain the problem of precapitalist modes of production: that "the 'economic factor' does not occupy a constant focus throughout history and.....consequently, it assumes different forms and.....its development varies" (Godelier 1980,7). Some examples will demonstrate how non-economic factors can dominate in precapitalist societies: among the Australian aboriginals kinship (the ideological level in Althusser and Balibar's terms) acts as both infrastructure and superstructure, regulating access to resources and expressing relations between people (Godelier 1975,10). In the Inca empire, religion (also 'ideological') dominated the relations of production, the extortion of corvee labour from subject tribes being mystified by association with religious festivals and feast days (Godelier 1977b,13). Likewise, in classical Greece, slave-based relations of production were maintained through the political concept of citizenship (Godelier 1977c,18).

The structural Marxism of Althusser's school does seem to get us a little closer to an understanding of precapitalist societies. In the statement that the fetishism of commodities (that is, the fiction that goods have a value of themselves, as opposed to representing the 'congealed' labour of the workers: relations of production are thus represented as existing between people and things, rather than between people and people) in capitalism is merely a part of a more generalised phenomenon of the mystification of the structures of dominance (such as the role of

the ancestors in lineage society, or the mythology of the polity in ancient Rome) (Althusser and Balibar 1970,218), we have a real attempt to explain the fundamental differences between societies. However, the way in which Balibar conceived the mode of production could be expected to frustrate any further growth toward a fully diachronic analysis through its overt structuralism. The formulation of a determinate set of elements (producer, non-producer, means of production, connection of appropriation) and their varied forms suggest the possibility of a matrix of all conceivable modes of production. There are major complaints to be made against this reasoning, but I will leave these be for the moment in order to concentrate on one strand of the argument. The question of why certain modes of production have or have not existed, and in which order of genesis, is one of the highest importance. Since a vast number of modes could be generated by the Althusserian scheme, one must conclude that some combinations are inherently unlikely. That is to say: all modes of production bear within them contradictions and the germ of asymmetrical power relations; some contradictions can be more easily overcome than others.

However, the Althusserians still veered toward the view that the contradictions of one mode of production 'necessarily' led to the conditions of genesis of another specific mode. This, to my mind, is too close to the 'historical inevitability' of Stalin's 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' (Stalin 1951), in which a series of stages - primitive communism, the ancient society,

slavery, feudalism and capitalism led to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist state. If this were the case we might as well be talking about bands, tribes, chiefdoms and states as modes of production. Modes of production owe their analytical weight to the fact that they are not evolutionary categories. Were it so, their use as investigative devices would inevitably lead to a circularity of argument. The mode of production does not refer to the quantity of authority or degree of state control within a society so much as the conditions which circumscribe their quality. The debate concerning the 'necessary stages' of development is one to which anthropology has had much to contribute, since it has been instrumental in the 'rediscovery' of the Asiatic Mode of Production, a form banished by Stalin, but beyond doubt seen by Marx as an alternative line of development to the Western sequence. The A.M.P. was excised because it did not fit with the linear progress demanded by Stalin, a point which emphasises that like other evolutionary schemes the 'stages' model was fundamentally grounded in western experience. Indeed, it can be argued that Marx himself conceived of modes of production, with the exception of capitalism (which is almost seen as an aberration stemming from particular historical circumstances) as alternatives rather than stages (Giddens 1980,77).

As Godelier (1978,90) and Friedman (1979,18) both suggest, there is something essentially wrong with the Althusserian concept of structural dominance. To say that the economy 'selects' an

instance which will dominate the relations of production betrays an Hegelian desire to impute an intentionality to non-human forces. The economy does not, cannot, select anything. For Godelier, the dominant instance is not selected, it is that element of the whole which can constitute both infrastructure and superstructure at once, which can assume the role of a relation of production. This could be taken a step further by saying that the dominant instance is that which can become a nexus through which social and economic reproduction is structured: a structuring structure. Furthermore, it is necessary to reject the more 'structuralist' elements of Balibar's work, the view that all modes of production are variations upon a single basic structure, generated through a 'grammar' of combination. For the various elements are not merely different in form from one mode of production to another: they perform entirely different functions within society. So Christianity is not merely different in form from ancestor worship: it exists for entirely different reasons.

Once one rejects the idea of structural determination there start to be greater problems with the use of the mode of production as a classificatory framework for distinguishing between societies. While a certain element which we can call the structure in dominance may underlie the relations of production, it seems to me that the extent to which this element will likewise structure the mentality of a society is a question which is still on the agenda. There is clearly an articulation between the relations of

production and what Althusser would call the political and ideological superstructures, yet this relationship is far from being fixed. Indeed, the extent to which these 'superstructures' exist as autonomous entities at all is rather fluid: it is itself an object of study. The problem which becomes increasingly clear is this: how does one undertake a study of prehistory based upon the discontinuities between one social system and another, when even the categories which can be used for analysis cannot be maintained across spatial and temporal boundaries? Is it a sign of a weak approach to accept that the nature of inquiry is such that the terms in which we conceptualise human groups must be historically specific? I have to conclude that as base and superstructure are both active spheres of human life which possess varying degrees of mutual autonomy, the nature of one cannot be deduced from another. This, of course, means that with each society that is studied one must look to the objectification process by which the units which are available for study are constituted. The form of the questions which must be asked ceases to be 'what was the economy like?' and becomes 'was there an autonomous sphere of action which we could call the economy?' When we become aware of the units to which a particular system could be reduced (as much as possible within its own terms), the particular surfaces can be determined upon which disjunction and contradiction will develop. These will be historically specific to that system.

The sense in which the term 'mode of production' will be used in

this study can be defined as follows: a mode of production is a self-structuring system which allows a labour process (or processes) to be undertaken and reproduced. A mode of production is characterised by the form of relations of production: the elements which might be termed the 'superstructure' will be directly involved in the reproduction of these relations, yet will be autonomous from them. The relations of production are constituted in an opportunistic manner. This constitution takes place through practice: a mode of production exists because it works, its contradictions do not (yet) make it unworkable (although it is through this same process that contradictions are developed and eventually bring about further transformation). This process is rather like Levi-Strauss' bricolage: the constituent elements are whatever history has given the agents concerned to work with. That one mode of production leads to another is an accident of history and of contradictions within and between systems. In that sense I am advocating a shift from a scheme which is 'structuralist' to one which is historical and, in a sense, evolutionary. All that is historically necessary is that where contradictions exist within a mode of production they will eventually lead to its dissolution.

Contradiction and articulation.

Contradiction is the agency to which the transformation of

relations of production can be attributed. Following Friedman (1974,1975,1979) and Giddens (1979) I will suggest that contradictions are incompatibilities in the structuring principles of social systems. Such contradictions may exist within or between systems - as a result of the structure of the modern world as a global system there has been a tendency for Marxist analyses to stress internal contradiction. Obviously, the transition from one mode of production to another is not an instantaneous event; there can be no hiatus between the two. The corollary of this is that one mode of production 'germinates' within another, as capitalist reproduction began within feudalism in Europe.

The relations between different modes of production within the same social formation have been of great concern in the study of areas into which capitalism has been imposed onto a precapitalist (or, more properly, non-capitalist) mode of production. As has already been suggested, different modes of production promote different kinds of power relation and different dominant groups. In early modern Europe, 'class alliances' were formed between the elites spawned by two such systems: depopulation of the countryside by feudal lords in order to graze larger herds of sheep resulted in more wool, an influx of population to the towns and thus a drop in the wages payed out by the capitalists of the cloth trade (Bradby 1975,143-144). The articulation of modes of production is usually contradictory however. As Giddens suggests with his concept of 'time-space edges', at the interstices of

systems which manipulate the resources of time and space in different ways contradictions in the basic structuring of society will be produced, and disruption will be bound to occur (Giddens 1981,83). Pierre-Phillipe Rey (1971) considers the articulation of modes of production to be not a steady state but a process, by which one gradually destroys another. Rey sees this process as consisting of three stages, in which a traditional mode is initially reinforced by contact with the new, then acts in tandem with it, and finally is replaced (Foster-Carter 1978,56). This scheme was really developed to deal with the impact of capitalism upon traditional societies, and neglects even in these cases the interesting point that capitalism can create new relations of production at its periphery. Thus Ernesto Laclau has noted the 'second serfdom' of Latin America, where feudal relations were fostered by capitalist enterprise, while in Jamaica slave relations were both created by and articulated to capitalism (Foster-Carter 1978,50-69). At any given time a number of modes of production may be operating within a society, existing as self-reproducing cycles which are nonetheless articulated to each other at various levels.

From an archaeological point of view, the disquieting part of all this comes when one begins to consider what might be the spatial and temporal structure of a mode of production. What does a mode of production look like on the ground? The limitations of what is, after all, merely an intangible heuristic device for the study of social reproduction become clearer. Where more than

one mode of production are in articulation, it is quite possible for a single individual to be involved in more than one cycle of accumulation, as is the case in highland New Guinea, where young men may take part in traditional agriculture for traditional gains or western mine work for western goods (Gregory 1982). Thus the best that we can do is to imagine modes of production drawn onto a map as a kind of Venn diagram of overlapping entities in various combinations of presence and dominance, expanding and contracting over time. It is also clear that relations of production are not constrained within the boundaries of social formations: the cycle of reproduction may span social boundaries. So, while the mode of production remains a useful tool of analysis it is clear that a broader approach is necessary.

Social Formation.

While Marx was fairly explicit about what he meant by 'mode of production', 'social formation' appears to have escaped into the literature in a relatively ill-defined form. Hindess and Hirst (1975,13) say that "social formation is a Marxist concept which may broadly be said to correspond to the ideological notion of 'society'". But does this make the concept any less ideological? I suspect not. I think that one of the most important aspects of human groups is that they are constituted in the cognitive sphere. Our membership of and position in a society is defined at

the ideational level, yet often in ways which are articulated to the relations of production. Thus for lineage societies, membership is defined in terms of kinship, in the ancient city one's position depended upon citizenship, and in the capitalist world one's standing depends entirely upon financial success.

But what is a group? We are aware that the animals live and hunt in groups: why are human groups any different? One important point here is that a human agent may be a member of many different groups, which may overlap, and which may be constituted for a variety of purposes. The important feature to note is that under different circumstances, groups of different sizes or levels of organisation will become more important. And one such level will be the society or community, although its size may vary and the extent to which it will be autonomous from other groups will be arguable. We can find no better definition of the social formation, then, than 'that society to which people believe that they belong'. That the existence of the social formation is essentially reified does not make it any less important as an object of study: it is clear that social reproduction involves the maintenance of the entire social fabric. As Wallerstein (1976,344) points out, the effect of the ideology of 'the society' has been that history has been written as if there really was an objective standard unit of analysis. Most of the entities which we would call social formations do not constitute closed systems. If they were abstracted from their context in the global system, they would not be able to function

in the way in which they do at present. Yet, nonetheless, people do not feel themselves to be part of a global system, and will act in such a way as to deny the existence of the total system. For this reason the social formation remains a legitimate unit of analysis.

If the importance of the social formation is that it represents a basis for action, we must know more about how it is constituted. I have suggested already that human action is free yet constrained by being based upon the structures of society. Bourdieu (1977,78) discusses this paradox in terms of the 'habitus', "the durably installed generic principle of regulated improvisations, (which) produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle". It is "an immanent inner law....., laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing" (ibid.,81). By this logic, the reason why a group of people can act as a community or society is because the habitual aspects of their day to day existence are not in contradiction. The basis of action within a society is thus consensus (although not in the sense which is meant in liberal or conservative sociology): one must be agreed as to what actions are and are not legitimate, what is to be understood by words, formulas and symbols. Laws and codes are necessary for the reproduction of a social system, but are nonetheless relatively arbitrary. Furthermore, it must be those aspects of social life which are thought about least, the 'taken for granted's', which must be most

fundamentally agreed upon.

It follows that our definition of the social group or social formation must be developed to include the formulation of 'those who accept a consensus'. The overlapping, nested nature of groups which we have noted is explained by the sharing of more, less, or different aspects of consensus, thus each is the basis for different spheres of action. A further point is of importance: there will be those outside of our society who structure their existence in totally different ways from us, who do not share our consensus. There will thus be people whose relations with us will be mediated in different ways. The importance of agreeing to hold certain values in common is that these values can be tampered with: the corporate view of the world can be altered, and this is the basis of part of the theory of ideology. Where we can use strategy to manipulate other people, by giving gifts, arranging marriages, building up obligations, invoking the rules of 'honour' and 'shame', we can use what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic power' and 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1979). But where no such rules exist, our relations are no different to those which we have with the ecology or the wild beasts: we have no basis for joint action with them. It is for this reason that many peoples who are largely autonomous of the outside world refer to themselves as a tribe as 'the human beings', denying that status to those outside of the group (c.f. the Yannomamo, Chagnon 1968). Power exists in all human relations. Where these relations exist within a context of social consensus this power can be

euphemised, and manipulated by strategy, but outside or between groups, or where consensus has broken down, the only relations possible are analogous to those with nature, devoid of symbolic import. In coercive action, only naked force can be used. Nevertheless, as we shall come to discuss, part of the importance of exchanges across the boundaries of social groups is that they create a social context for action where none had previously existed.

This brings us to a slightly different perspective concerning the infrastructure/ superstructure division. For relations of power within a social formation will be exercised through, and indeed will constitute, the superstructure, while relations existing outside of the society will be mediated through the infrastructure, in the same way as with the environment. As society becomes more complex, groups become less able to reproduce themselves without recourse to the exploitation of other groups. Thus the Classical elite can only reproduce itself as a result of its relation of dominance over the slave class. The development of class society is not concerned with the formation of separate groups, but of interdependant groups within society, bound by a particular consensus. As social inequality increases and the demands of reproduction become more intense, greater effort has to be put into the maintenance of superstructure in order to portray class interests as common consensus. Again, it is the habitual and the taken for granted which must be manipulated; the very basis of people's daily

existence must be geared toward the reproduction of social inequalities.

The Reproductive Totality.

If the social formation is such an arbitrary unit, held together by the needs of people for corporate action and ideologically constituted, it is clear that a further level of analysis will be essential. I have suggested that a mode or circuit of production may extend beyond the boundaries of a social group, and this will be especially true of the circulation of goods. In some cases the structure of the local social formation may be entirely dependant upon external exchanges, as has been noted for the Kongo kingdom (Ekholm 1972) and the Cameroon grasslands in the nineteenth century (Rowlands 1979), and has been suggested in the case of Iron Age southern Germany (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978). Friedman (1976) considers that the Marxist emphasis on the productive unit is misleading, and suggests that the essential unit of analysis must be that which contains all circuits of production, distribution and consumption. Thus we must deal with a 'total system of reproduction', a system which can reproduce itself without recourse to outside agencies. Under this rubric we can include such concepts as 'peer polity interaction' (Renfrew 1982), which describes a situation in which contact between autonomous units promotes a mutually-amplified development; core and periphery systems, in which a developing centre dominates and

exploits less powerful units in its hinterland; more complex regional and global systems of articulated and cross-cutting relations of production. Clearly, relations of production need not be bounded at the level of the social formation, but must be at the level of the reproductive totality. Furthermore, this unit must be the basis of any analysis of change over time, for as Ekholm (1981,243) states, "continuity in evolution does not occur at the level of the society but only in the larger system. Development shifts from one point in space to another". What constitutes a peripheral village in one phase can become a major centre in another, and indeed the boundaries of the total system are by no means fixed: the expansion or contraction of systems of reproduction over time must constitute a major object of study.

I have defined three units of analysis: mode of production, social formation and reproductive totality. Of these, only the first is fully discussed by Marx, the second being left with an ambiguous nature, while the third is a recent innovation. What is more important, and constitutes the reason why we must use all three in our analysis, is that they represent not so much different levels of social and economic organisation as different aspects of reality. The mode of production does not 'exist' in the full sense, it is a conceptual tool which we can use to explain how the labour process is structured, and from this ascertain the demands of reproduction which go far to explain why societies are different. The social formation is real only because the agents concerned allow it to be; it is constituted

and reproduced by their acting within it. It has no genesis outside of its utility. The social formation exists because people believe that it does, while the reproductive totality exists in spite of this. If relations of production, circulation and consumption are to be reproduced, the reproductive totality will continue to exist, whether the population are aware of it or not. We must point out that the boundaries of each of these units may coincide, so that for a completely autonomous and self-sufficient society the social formation would equate with the reproductive totality, while in the modern capitalist global system economic relations extend beyond the nation-state and multiple modes of production overlap, compete, promote each other or succeed each other. It is a capitalist system in that the totality is dominated and determined by capitalism.

Power, Rank, Authority.

The influence of positivistic modes of thought in contemporary archaeology has been most evident in the description of social relations. An emphasis on the experiential nature of knowledge has resulted in a preoccupation with outward appearances at the expense of internal relationships (Giddens 1974,2). Thus the way in which in which societies have been categorised has emphasised

'ranking', within which have been conflated power, authority, office, domination, prestige and exploitation. Successive accounts (e.g. Chapman 1982,47; Phillips 1980,208-213) have implicitly seen power as an entity, of which people have more or less, and have portrayed society as a ladder on which people are arranged according to the quantity of rank which they possess. Even Hodder (1982b), while criticising the emphasis on functional relationships in social systems, fails to move away from the concept of rank as the object of analysis. The problems of this focus are considerable. Bloch (1977a,317) describes the way in which the Merina and Betsileo of Madagascar portray the relations between their demes (lineages) as a system of continuous ranks, an arrangement which serves to mystify the real division of authority between the rulers and the ruled. As Bloch suggests, a 'disconnection' exists between authority and rank. Evidently, a deeper understanding is needed of the mechanisms of power.

The notion of power is one which has received considerable attention from social theorists over the centuries. The arguments which I consider most useful in this connection are those which have recently been put forward by Foucault and Giddens. The way in which power has been conceived by western thinkers, Foucault (1979,83-89) argues, is one which is rooted in the social and political institutions of particular historical epochs. The 'politico-juridical' notion of power, as he calls it, stems from the presence of a juridical monarchy in the Age of Reason (the epoch which Foucault considers to be responsible for the

crystallisation of present-day modes of thought), presenting itself as holding a monopoly of force and justice. Really, this notion of power is an anachronism, relating to the spectacular but discontinuous displays of force by the medieval monarchy (Patton 1979,116). Such a conception tends to hide the more insidious workings of 'bio-power', the entangling system of control and discipline in which the individual is presently enmeshed 'for his own good' (Foucault 1977b). Where a 'politico-juridical' notion of power is accepted a unitary focus of force will be assumed, and inquiry will perforce be restricted to the identification of the dominating agency and the means of its legitimation (Minson 1980). Tied to this is the conception that power is an essentially negative phenomenon, a coercive and restrictive force which can only 'say no' (Foucault 1979,83). A far more useful way of looking at power is as a quality which is immanent in all social relations, which not only restricts but also enables social action, an "inherent component of the constitution of interaction" (Giddens 1981,49). "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the social body" (Foucault 1980,119).

Power is concerned with the ability to act and to influence the actions of others, and thus it describes and permeates all of our relationships with other people. Its exercise is by no means

limited to dominant groups and individuals. A power relation will have two sides, and its character is determined as much by the form of resistance as by the imposition of will. Giddens suggests that a key aspect of the development of social systems is 'storage': not in the mundane sense of the collection of subsistence items, but the reproduction of specific relations of power. It must be emphasised that power does not reside in purely material resources: to suggest this is to accept that discursive activities merely reflect on the 'real' world. But discourse is practice in itself, and thus contains a power relation (Foucault and Deleuze 1977,208).

'Bio-power' represents what Foucault calls the 'technology of power' in our epoch. In 'Discipline and punish' (1977) he suggests that a surface of discontinuity can be defined chronologically between this and the exercise of pure force by the sovereign. This discontinuity explains the shift from a penal system based upon physical punishment to one based upon discipline. Yet one should not allow the historicity of Foucault's study to suggest that only these two technologies of power can exist. 'Bio-power' is a consequence of the surveillance, categorisation and confinement of individuals, currently achieving new excesses within the 'information society' (Poster 1984); 'politico-juridical' power is linked to the absolute authority of the monarch. What about other kinds of societies? If this framework is to be extended to prehistory, one has to envisage technologies of power which are built up upon

obligations, debts and beliefs; rituals which influence the world by contagion; synchronisation of action; a social order which is fragile and which is maintained by a series of balancing tricks. Again, this is not to say that the nature of power relations is determined by the relations of production: the technology of power infests the other relationships within a society yet possesses a logic of its own. It can be either determined or determinant (Patton 1979).

When we turn from merely saying that an individual can exercise power to looking at a privileged power relation which persists over time, another concept is needed. Power relations can be seen as a game played out over time, and one outcome is what we can call 'authority', which refers to the recognition of a group or person with regard to the allocation of resources or the issuing of directives. While authority is constituted through the system of power relations, the many forms which it can take are the result of a number of other factors. Weber (1956) pointed out a general distinction between 'traditional' and 'charismatic' forms of authority, based upon the veneration of continuity and vitalism respectively. However, we would do well to see this as part of a general process of the exercise of power through various resources, such as knowledge, genealogy, gifts and deities, in a variety of social contexts. Thus, far from the quantity of rank it is the quality of authority which should concern us. For dependant upon this in turn are the types of power which the individual can wield. Different forms of

authority involve different freedoms and constraints, which must ultimately relate to the role of authority within the social whole.

Some examples may help to explain this point. Among the Nuer, two major forms of authority were recognised: prophets and earth-priests. Beidelmann (1971) dichotomises these according to the tradition/charisma division, prophets holding a diverse but highly unstable form of authority, while that of priests was narrowly defined but lifelong (ibid.,377). In the Kongo kingdom a set of authority categories was found which completely belie their comparison to western ranks. The Kongolese king, for instance, was chosen by a council, and his role was hedged about by religious duties and prescriptions which severely limited his freedom of action (Ekholm 1972,24). At the local level, a distinction was drawn between lineage chiefs, whose authority was grounded in genealogy, and elected chiefs, who had to maintain their position by the giving of gifts. This is a distinction which is common in tribal societies. In Melanesia, Allen (1984,31-2) describes the way in which the disjunction between descent and locality in matrilineal societies leads to a weakness of genealogically-defined authority. A different form of authority, grounded in the networks of power relations constituted by secret societies and public graded societies, replaces it. In the same way, the classic flaw in the authority built up by the New Guinea big men is that it is built upon their own abilities and is unrelated to the lineage structure, it

cannot be passed on or inherited. Nonetheless, the way in which one kind of authority can be converted into another can become a preoccupation in many societies, and indeed, it is to be expected that all 'traditional' authority has its origin in other forms.

In one sense, power relations are analogous to exchange relations. That is, the form of power relations will vary within and between social contexts. Where power is exercised within a social formation there is the opportunity for it to be euphemised as symbolic power (Bourdieu 1979, 83). Power relations within a society are a complex made up of consent, enablement, domination, force, exploitation and aid. Authority is thus also relative - its legitimacy has to be recognised in order for it to be used. So, again, we return to the theme that societies are constituted through the development and manipulation of consensus, and again this principle is related to that of exchange, of transactions between individuals which facilitate the development of social structure. It is also clear that all social relations are power relations: the basic structure of a society is by implication one of power. Power is built 'from the bottom up', consisting as it does of 'micro-powers' which invest the human body and mould social action (Smart 1983, 103). 'Ranking', and the associated fiction that the social relations of a community can be 'read off' from surface indications (archaeological or otherwise) are clearly inadequate, but this need not occasion despair for the task in hand. If these provide little help in the explanation of the deeper relationships within societies, the strategic nature

of social action and its historical, discontinuous context are stressed all the more.

Exchange

All that remains of prehistoric communities is their material culture. Thus the mechanisms by which particular items came to be distributed have held sustained interest for the archaeologist. There has been a trend away from the treatment of artefacts as the type fossils of cultural affinity, and thus as the indicators of migrations and invasions, towards a stress upon trade and exchange. Nonetheless, the way in which this has been operationalised is a further example of the predeliction of recent archaeology for the description of outward appearances. A variety of mathematical techniques were devised in order to attempt to distinguish between types of exchange system on the basis of spatial distribution of artefacts (Hodder 1974; Renfrew 1975, 1977). These often proved useful in providing a conceptual frame for inquiry, but equally often the fine distinctions between falloffs and regression curves relating to different exchange mechanisms could not be distinguished between using archaeological data. It is often a fair criticism that these methods match form against form without asking why particular items were exchanged in a given society. This is clearly the case in the implicit assumption that all exchanges exist in order to minimise the effort expended in the transfer of goods (Renfrew

1975,9).

But it is unfair to blame archaeologists alone for theories which present exchange as something which is not connected with the essential workings of society. Polanyi (1957) and Dalton (1977) criticised those who attempted to apply formal, classical economics to precapitalist societies. They pointed out the different rationale of the 'primitive' economy, its distinctive mechanisms and its 'embeddedness' within social relations. However, they equally failed to recognise that if exchange is 'different' in different societies it is unrewarding to typologise those societies upon the basis of exchange relations alone. To focus on exchange alone is to retreat back beyond Ricardo to a descriptive approach (Sheridan 1980,92). Exchange, and the creation of value, can only be understood as part of the total system of social reproduction (Gledhill and Larsen 1982,199).

This is not to suggest that the study of prehistoric exchange cannot tell us something about society. On the contrary, the close connection with social relations makes it a key area of research. Nonetheless, the articulation between the two is a problematic one, and one should not make the assumption that social form can be 'read off' from pot distributions. It is the role of specific forms of exchange within particular contexts which will concern me here.

I can begin this by describing Marx's ideas concerning exchange and value. In capitalist society one can buy things with money, because they have an 'exchange value' (Marx 1970,36): thus we know what they are 'worth'. This is quite separate from the 'use value', which comes from utility (ibid.,37). Exchange value purports to be a means by which an equivalence can be drawn between goods. In fact "the value of one commodity is to the value of any other as the labour-time necessary for the production of the one is to that necessary for the production of the other" (ibid,39).

This form of exchange is by no means universal. 'Commodity trade' (as it can be termed) is characterised by agents who are in a state of reciprocal independence. The transaction creates a relation between the exchange values of the commodities concerned, not between the transactors. That an equivalence can be drawn between the commodities is a consequence of their alienation, their divorce from the web of social meaning. But this is only because labour itself is alienated. Where labour cannot be valued, it cannot serve as a basis for exchange value.

Despite this, exchanges of an alienated variety do occur in precapitalist and even pre-state societies. The difference is that it is only under capitalism that a form of alienation allows the capitalist to buy and sell the labour of the worker, and thus to use money to make money. Alienation is central to capitalist reproduction. But what is the alternative to a system where the

value of a good is decided by a transaction between agents whose status remains unaffected? The obvious answer is a system in which the value of the transactors themselves is decided by an exchange of goods which are of set value. This is the basis of the very widespread institution of the gift economy. Such an economy appears totally irrational to the western eye: the exchange, not the item, is of key importance; the aim of the transfer is to maximise net outgoings; the repayment of debts is often greeted with dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, it is anything but altruism that guides such a system.

Evidently, one must consider the role of gift-giving in social relations. Mauss (1966) pointed out that as prestations gifts affirm and clarify the systems of classification inherent in kin-based societies. This leads to the recognition that kinship societies exist as networks of indebtedness and obligation (E. Leach 1983,536). Exchange is thus essential not to the maintenance of the productive forces, but of in-group relations (Ekholm and Friedman 1979,42). Indeed, very often the gifts given are not unavailable in the locality of the recipient (Servet 1981,441). If the classification of people is closely related to who gives what to whom, the system is open to a degree of manipulation. Exchange decides not the exchange order of the goods but the social order of the transactors (Gregory 1983,109). The exchange order of things depends upon separate criteria like size, shape, colour and history.

"The best way to acquire notoriety as the ruler (owner) of a an object is publicly to give possession of it to someone else. The recipient, it is true, then has the object, but you retain sovereignty over it since you make yourself the owner of a debt", says Leach (1954,142-143) of Kachin gift exchange. It is that debt and the prestige associated with it, and the power which this entails, which the individual wishes to accrue. While debts exist so do obligations, and people can be prevailed upon to do things: there is an asymmetry of power. This prompts Baudrillard's statement that the status of the gift is close to language (1975,98); it 'says' things about people. One way in which this is achieved is in who one chooses to give to, in what way. Just as much as giving gifts creates debts, it also creates social relations. To give someone a gift is to accept them as a person and to bring them into one's classification of the social world. When one simply wants something which someone else has, but does not want to instigate a social relationship with them, another mechanism is needed. This is the problem which Godelier (1977;1982) addresses with his studies of the Baruya salt trade. Within the tribe, salt is given to kin and is not bartered. Yet salt is traded with 'foriegners' for 'a whole lot of goods': it becomes a kind of commodity. These exchanges can only take place outside of one's own society. Even in these circumstances, commodity exchange is something which is considered vaguely impure. The entry of foriegn products into tribal societies is often hedged about with prohibitions and ritual (Servet 1982). Exchanges with people outside of the social group have to be kept

different, or classification collapses (Durkheim and Mauss 1963); some goods are never given to foreigners (Servet 1982,26).

Yet perhaps the division between gifts and commodities has been overdrawn; or at least there may be problems in dichotomising gift and commodity economies, as Gregory (1982) does. He effectively only considers extreme social forms: lineage and capitalist communities. If labour is objectified differently within different societies (from non-existence as a concept to alienation), its role as the source of exchange value must also vary. It follows that the source of exchange value is something which has to be traced genealogically. Furthermore, since gift exchanges exist even in our own society (Christmas cards, for instance, have no use value, yet are given at yearly intervals to reaffirm social relationships), we have to determine the 'domain of the gift' in each social system.

Where the gift form predominates, goods are not alienated. Thus like must be given for like; a pig cannot necessarily be exchanged for an axe. As a consequence one has the formation of ranked spheres of exchange, social contexts for gift-giving which cannot be crossed between. The top ranking goods are always the ones which are most rare and irreplaceable (Gregory 1980,646).

The close association between gift-giving and social form in the groups is no accident: exchange is fundamental to the structuring of social relations. As Levi-Strauss (1969) first pointed out,

marriage is the giving of women between men. The roles of kinship and exchange as classificatory devices thus feed back endlessly onto each other, reproducing social relations. Given the rule of like-for-like, bridewealth is not payment for a wife, but a symbolic substitute for a woman handed over from one lineage to another until the debt is repayed. Nonetheless, one cannot obtain access to women without bridewealth. So the social relations fostered by this system come to institute a domination of elder men over both juniors and women (Dupré and Rey 1978). The items used for bridewealth payments are fully integrated into the ideology of descent from founding ancestors, and are not commodities to be owned by any individual. "The ancestors made these goods at the beginning of time when they emerged from holes in the ground" (Salisbury 1962,66).

Several different combinations of exchange and kinship relations can be distinguished within kin societies. There are systems of restricted exchange, in which small numbers of lineages (moieties or phratries) return women-gifts relatively soon. This will be associated with a balanced exchange of gifts. Where a larger number of lineages are connected into clans by the exchange of women, gifts may not be returned for a generation, and systems of indebtedness are more complex. Similarly complex exchanges of goods are associated, which are usually incremental (Gregory 1982,69). This leads to a situation of 'alternating disequilibrium', in which different lineages rise to dominance over time (Gregory 1980,630). One such system is the New Guinea

Moka (Strathern 1972). These systems are far more open to strategic manipulation, and tend to breed 'Big Men', who make prestige for themselves in this way (Sahlins 1972,117; Allen 1984,24). This introduces a contradictory element into society, for exchange is necessary for the renewal of social relations, yet the Big Men seek power which threatens those relations.

But the form of marriage which can most commonly lead to the transformation of lineage societies is generalised exchange. When the very issue of who will marry into which lineage becomes one of strategy, certain lineages will become more highly valued. The role of bridewealth is transformed, for the return of a woman may be infinitely deferred and prestige items can be used to put a value on a woman, an alliance, and even a lineage (Friedman 1975,169). By contrast to the accumulation of prestige on a personal basis by Big Men, the generalised exchange system allows the honour accrued by a lineage in feasting, warfare or ritual to be translated directly into rank. This ranking of lineages against each other, while in constant flux, endures beyond the lifetime of the individual and is the basis of a specific form of social asymmetry. The Asiatic community represents a logical intensification of the structure of lineage society through the medium of generalised exchange (Friedman 1979b; Friedman and Rowlands 1977; Godelier 1977a,63-69; 1978). A tributary society emerges in which the role of exchange is again transformed, with greater stress being put upon the symbolic role of prestige items (Rowlands 1979; Friedburg 1977). The structure of exchange is an

elaboration of that in the generalised system: prestige goods pass from the higher ranked lineage to the lower, while women pass in the opposite direction. In time it comes to be not women but tribute which passes up to the elite. It is this shift from woman exchange to tribute which Godelier (1977a,109) considers as fundamental to the formation of class society.

If the ultimate aim of such a system is the control of subsistence production, its internal rationality lies in the control of prestige items (Ekholm 1977,119). These items become fundamental to the articulation of social relations, and a monopoly on their production must be maintained by the elite. This problem can be circumvented by control of the import of foreign exotica through external exchange. This was often the case in the 19th century African kingdoms (Ekholm 1972,101). The rise of empires like Ghana, Songhay and Mali can be attributed to these exchanges (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1978,270). Such exchange is not a universal feature of Asiatic systems however, as in the Abron kingdom of Gyaman slavery allowed the elite to become independent of the free population (Terray 1974).

This discussion has demonstrated that the function of exchange is by no means fixed. Exchange can structure or articulate society in a variety of ways, and it is clear that the role played by a particular item in society can only be ascertained with reference to its broader context in social rules and strategies.

Knowledge, truth and ideology.

To this point my account has tended to assume the Althusserian view that 'ideology' constitutes one of the semi-autonomous levels or practices within the social formation (although one whose autonomy will be varied and whose very existence is a consequence of a form of objectification). It is time to put this idea in question. This is especially the case in that the recent emphasis on the ideological (e.g. Shennan 1982; Miller and Tilley 1984) has raised problems concerning the role of ideation in the material past. Obviously this interest is a consequence of the abandonment of the homeostatic view of society, and the recognition that social reproduction depends upon the constant reconciliation of disparate forces. Discussion has thus concentrated on Marx's 'negative' conception of ideology. Ironically, in a volume entitled 'Ideology, power and prehistory' (1984), Miller and Tilley explore Foucault's approach to power, yet neglect its implications for ideology theory: the two are dealt with separately.

For Marx, ideology was the reification of the relations between agents which serve to maintain dominance. Thus "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx and Engels 1965,37). For Althusser this creation of an imaginary relation between the subject and society was involved in the production of the subject. The reproduction was seen as a fundamental condition of

production (Althusser 1971,123-127). This entails the physical reproduction of the workforce and its skills, but also "its submission to the rules of the established order" (ibid.,127). But even within Marxist opinion it is far from clear to what extent ideology serves class interests directly, as opposed to the facilitation of the reproduction of the totality. This is clearly related to the question of who realises that particular information is ideological in character. Nonetheless, one particularly important element of the Marxian analysis is that it does not accept the divorce of the ideological from the real (contra Frow 1985,193-194); material and ideological production are seen as inextricably linked, influencing and facilitating each other's development.

However, it is not the opposition of the symbolic and the real which provides the main drawback of ideology theory; it is the ideology/science couplet. For Althusser the 'ideational superstructure' includes both the false consciousness of ideology and the scientific truth of Marxist theory. Larrain (1983,170-177) suggests that it is the negative sense of the term which is of greatest importance, thus sanctioning its divorce from other forms of knowledge. One could thus postulate an ideational sphere in which myth, religion, science and art are constantly produced, but within which the ideologies of interest groups and classes are constantly at war, intertwining with 'objective' knowledge, distorting communication and struggling to define sectional views as universal. Giddens (1979,190-195)

explores the important link between knowledge and power, and states that the most important function of ideology is to reproduce relations of dominance without recourse to physical violence. This, he says, is achieved by three main strategies. Firstly, sectional interests can be presented as universal ones. Thus the existence of an elite must be seen as essential to the reproduction of a society; their control of elite goods or of knowledge must be seen as necessary. Secondly, contradictions must be denied or transmuted. In this way, social conflict is avoided by the failure of agents to recognise the realities of their existence. Thirdly, aspects of inequality or contradiction must be naturalised. That is, they must be portrayed as having "the fixed and immutable character of natural laws" (Giddens 1979,195). In this way the historical nature of human society and the inevitability of change can be denied. The strategies of dominant groups may contain any or all three of these means, in various combinations related to the form of society.

Yet Giddens still falls prey to the dichotomisation of ideology and science, thus effectively accepting Habermas' idealist conception of 'undistorted' communication. As Foucault notes, "the notion of ideology appears to be difficult to use" (1979,36). A more powerful approach may be found in the recognition that the relative 'truth' of knowledge may be less important than its role in constituting practice (Poster 1984,85). Thus Foucault considers it more important "to see historically how truth-effects are produced inside discourses

which are not themselves true or false" (1979,36). In social terms one comes to separate not 'distorted' ideology from 'pure' science, but to consider a 'regime of truth' through which social reproduction is achieved (Smart forthcoming,11). The Althusserian view, in seeing ideology as essentially concerned with the reproduction of labour, neglects that knowledge is power in itself, it produces and is produced by power. Knowledge does not have to be reduced to being a consequence of the mode of production, although the two are clearly linked. This relationship between the productive realm and the cognitive sphere (or spheres/discourses) is certainly a problem, yet it is one to be addressed rather than one to consider resolved (Sheridan 1980,210).

Many of the functions attributed to ideology are better subsumed by Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony', which relates to the way in which the reproduction of society comes to reinforce the position of a dominant group (Smart forthcoming). In this thesis I will use the term 'ideology' in the much more restricted sense of a complex of interlinked ideas which represent the interests of a particular group. So just as I have argued for a non-negative view of power it is necessary to see that knowledge is created "on the stage on which other elements struggle with each other" (Foucault 1977b,202-203), and is itself to be considered as an aspect of the network of relations between individuals. Just as power is apprehended and put to work in different ways in different historical contexts, the form which knowledge takes

will be variable. Yet as the world of knowledge is in itself one of practice, its autonomy from the material base will be greater than that of power, which exists in the relations constituted in both spheres.

Althusser (1971) considered that the regulation of social reproduction in present-day society is achieved through the 'ideological state apparatuses' - the church, education, the media, law and other aspects of 'culture'. The 'material' nature of ideology was thus purely a consequence of its functioning through practices and agencies. I would reverse this view: the state apparatus is 'ideological' in that it is bound up in the networks of power and knowledge. This becomes hegemonic through the contributions of social strategy and social reproduction. The absence of 'ideological state apparatuses' (i.e. in pre-state societies) thus does not mean that the network of power/knowledge is absent. In these circumstances, the reproduction of traditional authority forms is achieved through practices which constantly renew and redefine social relations. Such practices are generally ritual in nature.

Ritual.

'Ritual' has tended to be a term used as a 'dumper' by archaeologists for any number of disparate phenomena which defy

explanation in economic terms. The implication is that ritual, being 'irrational' behaviour, is unworthy of study and yields little information about prehistoric society. On the contrary, it can be argued that ritual is concerned with extremely formal action which may leave traces in the archaeological record. It is not a mere source of local colour in prehistory, but a phenomenon which is central to the maintenance of order in pre-urban societies.

That ritual represents sequences which possess a definite temporal and spatial structure is axiomatic; the full weight of this statement was not made explicit prior to the work of Van Gennep (1960). Van Gennep noted a distinction between 'life crisis' (concerning individuals) and 'calendrical' rituals (concerning entire social groups), and also a tripartite structuring of ritual observances. These three phases of 'rites of passage', separation, liminality and reincorporation, stress the role of ritual in redefining social reality, in creating knowledge. Rites of passage allow the statuses of things and people to be redefined (Bulmer 1967): they are concerned with the leaving of one world and the entering of another. The liminal state in ritual allows the manipulation of ambiguity (Turner 1969,81); conflicting and contradictory elements are brought together, symbolising and accepting the confusion of the real world. The final phase of reincorporation both reasserts the identity of the community and serves to deny conflict and contradiction.

This redefinition implies a close connection between ritual and classification, itself an essential element of social action (Douglas 1957,49). It might be expected that a series of interlinked classifications of people, places, things and animals (Tambiah 1969,435) would have consequences for the formation of the archaeological record, although such classification might extend beyond the explicitly 'ritual' context. Turner's description of Ndembu ritual (1969,39), in which objects are purposefully brought into a consecrated space in order to manipulate the powers and virtues which they appear to possess, emphasises that ritual is a way of giving the appearance of control in circumstances where continuity of social practice (Giddens 1982) and the partitioning of society (Foucault 1977b) are impossible to guarantee.

Certain other aspects of ritual will also dictate that it will be of more importance in some forms of society than others. Bloch (1974) emphasises the extreme formality and rigidity of the communicative element of ritual. The aim, he argues, is to impoverish language and to limit the messages that can be conveyed. Furthermore, the connection of ritual with themes like the agricultural cycle (Bourdieu 1977,134) assume a connection with particular conceptions of space and time. If ritual is connected with authority, it will be with forms which are stagnant, or rather, appear to be so. For it is the key of legitimacy in these circumstances to appear to be a part of the

eternal status quo. To adopt such a form of 'traditional' authority is to accept considerable restrictions on the use of power (Fortes 1962,60; Godelier 1978,94).

Space and Time.

Giddens (1979,210; 1980,38; 1984,110) has repeatedly criticised the way in which social studies have relegated time and space to the status of mere backdrops to social action. Throughout, he has emphasised their role as resources which constitute the relations of autonomy and dominance. This approach is crucial to any archaeology of society, since it is in time and space that the prehistorian must conceptualise past societies. The sub-discipline which Giddens cites as showing most promise in this connection is the 'time geography' developed by Hagerstrand and his colleagues in Sweden. The studies carried out within this rubric concentrate on the 'choreography of existence' which is inflicted upon the individual by the constraints of capability (one can only be in one place at one time, one can only move so fast), coupling (one must synchronise one's being in a particular place with that of others in order for certain actions to take place) and authority (some agents do, and some don't, have access to particular 'domains' at particular times) (Pred 1977,208). Since time and space constrain what people can do they are fundamental to power relations, the network of freedoms to act. The ways in which individuals in a particular productive and

reproductive system structure and synchronise their movements in time-space ('life paths', represented in three-dimensional space) are clearly of importance to any understanding of the relationship between economic activity and social structure. In more abstract terms, Torrence (1983) has successfully applied the concept of the 'time budget' of a community to archaeology in the analysis of lithic technology. Furthermore, such concerns as the 'principle of return' and the repetition of action in space are of clear importance to the study of social reproduction.

However, time geography embodies many of the flaws of the way that the 'new geography' conceived of the world. The study of space in geography (e.g. Christaller 1966; Haggett 1965; Chisholm 1968), and hence in archaeology (e.g. Clarke 1977), has been purely concerned with 'location', and thus more with appearance than with structure. As Derek Gregory (1978a,40) points out, space-preference studies can be criticised for doing no more than translating neo-classical economics into a spatial context. Von Thunen's concentric landuse zones ('the isolated state') were based upon transport costs, and thus ultimately upon Ricardo's 'economic rent'. Locational analysis is thus grounded firmly in the values and rationale of capitalism, yet it has further charges to face. In a sense its origin can be taken back to the positivist tradition of renaissance humanism, and to the belief in a rational universe constructed according to fixed mathematical ratios (Cosgrove 1984,94). The study of appearance would yield the understanding of the natural order of things. The

legacy of this philosophy was a geography which sought to typologise spatial structures and 'read off' the activities which created them. Gregory (1978a) relates this to a desire for a 'science of space' which would integrate physical and human geography under the values of natural science. However, he declares that "there are no philosophical answers to philosophical questions that arise over the nature of space - the answers lie in human practice" (Gregory 1978b,46). In other words, as I have already suggested, we have to be able to consider how a particular mode of production will 'spill out' into space rather than create abstract mathematical patterns. Location analysis puts the cart before the horse in trying to explain spatial patterns in abstraction from social context.

As with studies of space, so, unfortunately, with studies of time-space. Carlstein (1982,12-13), in trying to typologise social systems according to their efficiency in using time-space, merely repeats the mistakes of Boserup (1965) in a more sophisticated way. He assumes that the purpose of a society is to maximise material production: this is not so, the aim is social reproduction. Only under capitalism is reproduction dependant upon the generation of a surplus product. What Carlstein is doing is measuring how good pre-capitalist societies are at being capitalist. Further, his objectivist stance leads to a separation of an 'activity system' (1982,48) from the social whole. This misses the point that societies are articulated (in both senses of the word) through action. Without action there is no society.

Time geography thus sees both space and time as external to society; as environments which structure human experience. If we are to understand their social importance, however, what is needed is a 'political economy of time and space', in which we consider the way in which time and space are socially constituted. Space and time are experienced subjectively by the individual; their perception forms part of a society's cultural apparatus. Spatial and temporal rhythms contribute to the experience of the agent and feed back into the social consensus, while that particular experience is only possible within the terms of reference specific to their society.

It follows that there will be a direct relationship between the way in which space and time are conceptualised and the relations of production. In considering exchange, we can see that a stone axe is a mere thing, whose status as a gift or a commodity is a consequence of its social context. The spatial environment which we occupy has to be anchored, named and classified before it becomes social space (Tuan 1978,10; Relph 1976,17). Space, when transformed into place becomes a storer of emotion and meaning (Tuan 1977,107), and thus of power (c.f. Giddens on 'storage'). The process of converting space to place and of integrating it into society is achieved within the conceptual framework of society. Cosgrove (1984) makes a strong argument for a close link between spatial perception and mode of production. He notes that the growth of landscape painting in Europe took place alongside

that of capitalism. The 'realism' of landscape was ideological, an appropriation of landscape through perspective art rendered it the property of the artist and the viewer, those in control of the landscape rather than those belonging to it. The range of ways of thinking about the landscape must thus be at least as broad as that of ways of structuring society. One aspect of the 'time-space edges' noted by Giddens (1981) is thus a conflict between conceptual schemes: for instance, it has proved virtually impossible for westerners to appreciate the meaning of the sacred space of Ayers Rock to the Australian aboriginies. It is also quite likely that different schemes for the social appropriation of space may exist simultaneously. There is no reason to suggest that contradictions in a social system cannot arise at such a level.

Tuan (1977,131) notes certain regularities in the ways that time and space are conceptualised , and separates out three major schemes (Fig. 2.1). Firstly, 'human time' relates all events to the life span of the individual. Such time is linear and one-dimensional. In the second place there is what Tuan calls 'cosmogonic time', in which the present is anchored by reference to a distant and mythical past. While time is seen as linear, it is always placed by reference to origins and ancestors. The implication is that where this form of time reckoning is the norm there will be a considerable opposition between a mortal and mutable present and a timeless past, corresponding to the opposition between the individual and the group. Places become

affected by this scheme by gaining importance by association with the past: hence the aboriginal fixation with 'dreamtime places'. Finally, there is 'astronomic time', when the illusory nature of change is promoted by an insistence on time as a cycle. Birth and death lead to each other endlessly. Tuan suggests that this kind of time is to be associated with a complex ordering of space about cardinal points, as opposed to the loose spatial order of the 'cosmogonic' system. An example would be the organisation of the Merina capital, Ambohimanga, about the points of the compass (Kus 1983,292). Bloch (1977 284) indicates that cyclical notions of time are often found in highly formalised, ritualised and rigid social formations. In Bali he notes the coexistence of a linear and a cyclical time form, connected with profane and sacred activities respectively. It is possible for the past which is constituted in cyclical time to be questioned through the practical awareness of durational time. Contradictory time notions were also noted by Appadurai (1981,202) in the case of Indian temple society, where different 'pasts' are created by different power groups in order to support their sectional interests. Such contradictions will be most severe in their outcome where they are linked to contradictory modes of material practice.

So, attitudes to both time and space are culture-specific (Lynch 1972,29). They are conditioned by the daily and seasonal movements of agents involved in productive and reproductive activities, and are thus related to the relations of production. The meanings assigned to time will depend upon such diverse

factors as kinship structure and the importance of ritual, and principally the 'rigidity' of the social fabric, while those assigned to place will depend upon the importance of the past and the nature of property relations. Nonetheless, just as relations of production can be in articulation, so can cosmologies. The meanings assigned to places or events can be questioned, and may form a location of contradiction and conflict within a society.

Concluding Remarks.

An understanding of history (or prehistory) begins with the work of Karl Marx. It cannot be allowed to end there. The topics which I have discussed in this chapter enable the undertaking of an analysis which is Marxist only in that it follows the spirit in which I believe that Marx undertook his critique of Capitalism. The aim is not to provide a series of evolutionary stages, boxes into which we could drop particular societies and then conveniently forget them, but to indicate particular objects and relationships which may repay study. What are the social relations which enable production to be undertaken? What is the character of the power relations between individuals? How are material items exchanged? How, and to what extent are social units bounded; and how is this expressed? How is the consciousness of the individual created? How are the dimensions of time and space perceived and exploited? With these questions in mind, it is time to turn from theory to practice.

CHAPTER THREE
RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE
IN THE NEOLITHIC OF NORTH-WEST EUROPE.

Introduction.

In the first section of this thesis I have put forward the idea that social change involves the transformation of the structures which underlie and dictate the form of social relations. I have attempted to show that not merely the outward appearance, but also the operational character of the different elements of a society change over time. In the past, archaeologists have often worked with a conception of change which was inherently linear and progressive. While useful attempts were made to typologise prehistoric societies as bands, tribes, chiefdoms and states, these labels tended to be ends in themselves, rather than analytical tools which could lead to further inference. This is in part because these terms relate to the external nature of communities, and are not concerned with their internal relations and contradictions. In effect, these classes do not really distinguish between societies so much as break up a perceived continuum of social development. Societies are seen in Parsonian terms as being essentially composed of the same subsystems working in the same ways, only differentiated by the quantities of information or energy which they process. The inevitable conclusion of such a line of thought is that 'primitive'

societies are merely trying (and failing) to do the same things as modern western capitalist nations. The approach which I take here is opposed to this: in order to attempt to understand prehistoric communities it is necessary to grasp the different rationalities which can guide societies other than our own. A view based on the concept of relations of production need imply no such lineality: the transformation from one form to another is a fortuitous process guided by the specific conditions of the case in question.

Having discussed the concepts of Mode of Production and Social Formation in fairly abstract terms, I now intend to use them in order to deal with the specific case of Neolithic Europe. This chapter will serve the purpose of providing the background and context of the more detailed consideration of Southern Britain, but will have a further role. It is clear that once we accept the flexible relationship between the material record and the people who made it there are considerable difficulties in proving or falsifying our assertions about the past. Part of the reason for this study of continental Europe is thus to provide a baseline as a source for predictions about what we expect to find in the archaeology of Britain.

Lineage Mode of Production.

The analysis presented in this chapter will consist of the identification of the kind of society which we can envisage in

early Neolithic Europe, and a consideration of the transformations which would have overtaken it. It has to be emphasised that the suggestion that a particular set of relations of production prevailed purely and simply provides a model which will inform the investigation of relationships between aspects of the material record. As much as anything, it will be the ways in which the data do not fit the model which will be illuminating. Ethnography can provide indications of the possibilities of human organisation rather than blanket generalisations with which to stifle the uniqueness of the past. Nonetheless, there is some precedent for a particular interpretation: Sherratt (1984,127) describes a distinguishing element of the maturation of the European Neolithic as the formation of "large communities of several lineage groups". Renfrew (1976;1979,216-217) discusses the megalithic phenomenon in Europe in terms of the territorial markers of 'segmentary societies', groups organised around kinship and landholding. The use of terms like 'segmentary' and 'lineage' implies a fairly explicit form of social organisation; are we justified in making such claims? While it is not sufficient to indulge in 'check-list archaeology', it will be necessary to specify the characteristics of a 'Lineage Mode of Production' if we are to discern its archaeological 'signature' and use it as the basis of analysis.

The single most distinguishing element of the Lineage Mode of Production is that it exists where the relations of production are determined by and structured through kinship (Kahn 1981,62).

The essential units of production are built up on the basis of real or fictive kinship (Rey 1979,51), and no purely economic institutions exist independent of kinship. The reproduction of the conditions of production is primarily the reproduction of the lineage (Dupre and Rey 1978,192). It is essential to understand that the lineage exists not as a purely biological relationship between people, but as a social relationship between people and land (Gregory 1982,40), and thus land is restricted to members of the lineage (MacCormack 1981,161). It thus follows that there will be a strong correlation between lineage organisation and economic practices which involve land as an instrument rather than as a subject of labour, and where much of the labour is of a communal nature: simple, unintensified agriculture. However, this is not to associate the Lineage system with a particular productive technology. Rather, it is to be connected with a form of appropriation of labour which favours certain technologies. In Australian aboriginal society, relations of production which have an affinity with the lineage system exist among hunting and gathering people, but where demographic pressures have resulted in a territorial relationship between people and place (Rose 1968), and access to hunting land becomes dependent upon genealogy.

The 'segmentation' of lineage society refers to the nested hierarchy of groups of which it consists: from maximal down to minimal lineages, each charting its descent back to a specific (mythical) ancestor. In discussing the 'classic' segmentary

lineage systems of the Tiv and Nuer, Sahlins (1961) suggests that the higher level entities of this hierarchy may only become active under conditions of social stress. There does appear to be a good deal of fluidity and flux as to which level of the hierarchy will be in operation under which circumstances (Middleton and Tate 1959), a factor which may mitigate against the relative ranking of lineages after the manner of the Polynesian Ramages, which have continuous defined political functions and ranks. In lineage society different economic activities will be organised at different levels of the segmentary hierarchy: gardens may be cropped by the household lineage, staples by the village unit (which will tend to be an exogamous residential lineage), while livestock may be organised by the larger territorial unit (Bonte 1979). In the case of the Kachin, Friedman (1975,167) notes that while the household is the smallest unit of consumption and cooperation, it is the local lineage which is the fundamental unit of appropriation.

Lineage societies trace their descent back to a founding ancestor, also a territorial deity of sorts. The ancestors are closely connected with place; they cleared the forests, or laid claim to the waste. Their association with territory usually leads to certain arrangements concerning the disposal of their remains. For instance, the Luguru lineage land usually contains a grove of trees where the ancestral graves will be found (Brain 1973,127), while in South-East Asia the Wa barrows and Naga 'sitting circles' where the founder-ancestors are buried serve as

ceremonial centres (Friedman 1975,193). The ancestors have a definite place in the genealogical structure which is the basis of lineage society. The position of dominance held by the elders is a consequence of their greater proximity to the ancestors, and this relationship is embedded in the fundamental structure of the group. However, the ancestors are far more than super-elders. They have passed outside of humanity, a status which is recognised by their being referred to in a non-person noun class in the Bantu languages (Brain 1973). The ancestors, while seen as permanently present in the affairs of the living, are in the privileged position of being "in unhindered touch with the essence of things" (Abraham 1962,63). So the 'ancestor worship' which characterises lineage societies can be seen more as a form of communication with those who, while connected by kinship with the living, can exert influence in the spirit world. In this way, the ancestors are seen as directly responsible for the reproduction of the lineage.

The direct connection between economic practice and the segmentary genealogy means that the ancestors are seen as the real owners of property. Having use of an item depends on the goodwill of the ancestors, and is a kind of 'trusteeship' (Salisbury 1962,66). It is subject to obligations to help one's kinsmen (Colson 1951). However, the absence of a juridical notion of private property does not result in an equal distribution of the surplus product. To an extent the whole genealogical structure forms an ideology which hides this assymetry.

Since kinship serves to structure the relations of production in lineage society, the role of marriage is extremely important. The essential principle which articulates the lineages of a tribe is that of exogamy; marriages can be seen as the exchange of women between groups of men (Levi-Strauss 1966). I have already discussed the role of exchange in kin-based societies at some length; suffice to say that the exchange of prestige items as bridewealth facilitates the exchange of women, and that these prestige items are usually restricted to the elder males. Gifts are used as symbolic substitutes for women in delayed exchange mechanisms between lineages. Generally, men marry late (c.35) and may be polygenous as elders (C.60). In order to acquire the brideprice, males must either have access to prestige items or be the client of someone who has. While the prestige items are produced by the labour of the junior males (the clients, cadets and sons of the elders), they are controlled by the elders (Dupre and Rey 1978,189). The central role of prestige items in articulating various transactions makes them essential for social reproduction. However, they must not be allowed to build up to too great a level, so their ostentatious destruction may have to be institutionalised (Rey 1975,56).

It has been argued that lineage society is an essentially egalitarian system, in that the major distinction between exploiters and exploited is purely an age difference. Everyone will get to be an elder in time. However, as Rey (1979,52) points

out, most men never reach that age, slaves can never be elders, and neither can women. The elders collectively represent a class who are the real owners of land and appropriators of labour. While there is no class consciousness, and thus no 'classes for themselves', the elders constitute a 'class in themselves' with closed recruitment (Terray 1975,91-92; Kahn 1981,77). We can thus suggest that the Lineage Mode of Production promotes a form of pre-state society in which class interests can be defined as a major contradiction, but in which the class struggle is not explicit. The domination of men over women, in particular, will be embedded in the social structure and symbolic systems of the group. This is seen in the New Guinea Baruya, whose women are denied access to salt and steel axes, are allowed less body decoration than men. Life-crisis rituals use male/female distinctions as a major basis of classification (Godelier 1982,7-11).

The Lineage Mode of Production exists as a structure, a cycle of social reproduction the elements of which promote and support each other (see Fig. 1.1). It is reasonable to suggest that if such a system were in operation in the European Neolithic the habitual actions of individuals operating within such a framework would result in a characteristic structuring of the archaeological record. If we are to proceed on the assumption that it is this kind of society with which we are concerned, we must see some indication of the following features materially manifest:-

- 1). Tribes consist of intermarrying groups;
- 2). Women are prized for their ability to reproduce the labour force; there are few restrictions on their fecundity, but men will go to great lengths to claim their offspring;
- 3). The exchange of women and other social transactions are facilitated by the exchange of prestige items: this will affect the distribution of material culture;
- 4). Prestige items will be conspicuously destroyed or consumed;
- 5). A position of privilege may be afforded to a collectivity of elder males;
- 6). Economic activities will often be labour-intensive, collective; much of the hard, gruelling work of food production and preparation will be undertaken by women; specialists may be employed in the production of prestige items, and will be maintained by the labour of women, slaves, and junior males;
- 7). The organisation of economic activities will be at nested levels of the segmentary hierarchy;
- 8). There will be a preoccupation with the past, genealogy, and the ancestors, which legitimates the control of resources: this may lead to a considerable investment in mortuary ritual;
- 9). Religious and ritual activities will be constrained by a view of the supernatural world which mirrors the lineage organisation.

Transformations: Asiatic Mode of Production.

Before moving on to consider the archaeological evidence for the existence of the Lineage Mode of production in Neolithic Europe, I should like to turn to some of the different social forms into which the lineage system has been known to develop. In the works of Marx, Weber and Wittfogel there exists a common conception of a form of the early state which, while based upon tributary relations, differs fundamentally from either Ancient Slave-based society or Feudalism, in the absence of private ownership of land. This type of society was variously characterised as despotic, stagnant, based on emperor-worship and concerned with large communal works and irrigation. More recently, a reappraisal of the concept by anthropologists has rejected the idea of the Asiatic society as an evolutionary 'dead end', and has replaced its association with a particular technology (irrigation) with a more general view of a characteristic set of relations of production. In this form, the Asiatic Mode of Production becomes a concept useful not only in the study of the Eastern world, but also in that of the indigenous Latin American empires and the pre-Classical Aegean. In that its genesis represents a transformation of lineage social relations toward a state form it will also be of use in the prehistory of Europe north of the Alps and Carpathians.

Despite the fact that the Asiatic Mode of Production is distinct

from, and arises out of the contradictions of, the lineage system, a degree of continuity between the two is the result of their structural similarities. The Asiatic society is composed of institutions organised along the lines of the segmentary hierarchy of lineages. Furthermore, all of the relations of power in Asiatic society are expressed in terms of genealogy and social age. Just as the elders in lineage society hold authority on account of their greater proximity to the ancestors, the chiefly lineage in Asiatic society derives its authority from greater proximity to the deities (Earle 1978,10). In the Kongo kingdom, all thought of their society as a large clan, and could trace their descent back to the first king of mbanza Kongo. The relationships between the king, the principal governors and the district and village chiefs were all expressed in terms of kinship (Ekholm 1972,27). In the southern Sahara, emergent classes legitimated their position through the manipulation of genealogical lore (Stewart 1981,79).

The development of these power relations is attributable to the relative ranking of lineages against each other. In some cases this is the result of the formation of larger kin groupings, and a change from the restricted (direct) exchange of women between moieties or phratries, to delayed and thence generalised exchanges between larger numbers of lineages. With generalised exchange, it might take generations for a gift of a woman to be reciprocated via long exchange chains between lineages (lineage A gives to B, B gives to C, C gives to D.....back to A). Yet the

principles of demographic equilibrium are in the long term maintained by these preferential exogamy rules. The role of prestige items as symbolic substitutes moving in the opposite direction to women is fundamental to the development of generalised exchange. It follows that generalised exchange allows the 'pricing' of the daughters of a lineage, and this allows a value to be placed on the lineage itself (Friedman 1975,168-170). The relationships between lineages are, as a rule, competitive, and usually this competition leads to a situation of 'alternating disequilibrium', as noted by Strathern in the New Guinea Moka exchanges (Strathern 1971). However, if a lineage can continually feast its village, the ancestors who are responsible for their material success are considered to be very powerful indeed (Friedman 1979b,107). If prestige thus produced can be converted into rank via the brideprice system, a self-amplifying cycle may set in in which feast-giving leads to higher rank, leading to higher bride-price, which leads either to the accumulation of women or debt-slaves to swell production or (or and thus) the giving of more feasts. Eventually a single lineage may be able to achieve a chiefly status and a position of preferential influence with the territorial deities through this system (Friedman and Rowlands 1977,207).

The creation of authority relations between a chiefly lineage and the rest of the community thus takes place without a major change in the productive base. Economic activities will be intensified in order to feed the demands of the superstructure, and a greater

specialist element may be expected to deal with increased production of prestige items, but essentially the Asiatic Mode of Production implies the continued existence of village communities practicing collective agricultural activities (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1978,268). The absence of ownership of land continues, although all property is taken to belong to the "higher unity", the superorganic reflection of the community. This is a factor common to Asiatic chiefdoms and early states: in Assur in Mesopotamia, all of the city's land was expressed as being the property of the god Assur (Godelier 1980,7). The local lineages become embedded in a conical clan structure, headed by a chiefly lineage which practices a monopolisation of the supernatural. The clan is internally ranked on the basis of genealogical proximity to the senior line, and is not exogamous (Friedman and Rowlands 1977,211-218;Earle 1978,10-12). The role of the chiefly class is to symbolise the 'higher unity' within the community, and to intercede with the supernatural on its behalf (Ekholm 1972,23-24;Godelier 1978,221). In this way the existence of the relation of dominance between the chiefly line and the others is represented as an essential condition of social reproduction. The authority held by this group will be very much the kind which Weber would define as 'traditional', being deeply embedded in the continuity between the ancestral deities and the living, the past and the present. It follows that one of its major strategies of power will be the manipulation of ritual communication (Bloch 1974), emphasising the preferential relationship of the line with the deities and excluding others from such privilege.

Since all land belongs to the 'higher unity', the right of the individual to make use of that land depends upon his or her doing work on behalf of the greater community. So the tributary relations which develop within the Asiatic Mode of Production are rather different to those of Feudalism, lacking entirely the institution of lordship, and thus directed straight to the central organisation. This being the case, tribute tends to be organised not just as a taxation of produce, but will involve corvee labour. Large public works are thus common in Asiatic society, being achieved through the structure of the relations of production. However, this is not to say that they are necessary to such a society. The ability to mobilise large numbers of people in corvee may be manipulated in the provision of monumental works which may either act in the performance of ritual or as a display of symbolic power, or in the building of facilities aimed at the increase of surplus production on a communal basis.

There are thus a number of ways in which the Asiatic Mode of Production can develop. Where the productive base of the lineage community cannot sustain the Asiatic formation, a devolutionary process may set in, resulting either in the sort of cyclical boom-and-crash alternation of the Kachin Gumsa/Gumlao system, or the instigation of feudal relations (Friedman 1979b, 215). Where productivity does not constrain growth seriously the system of tribute and public works will create a strong bureaucratic state

mechanism. Finally, where the Asiatic community exists at the periphery of a different system, such as an ancient imperial worldsystem, or Capitalism, the chiefly line may be sustained by their monopolisation of external exchange, and a system may develop which is all the more dependent on prestige items. Lineages may become ranked through the possession of particular items (Friedburg 1977,140). However, the external dependency of such a system makes it susceptible to collapse caused by either the cutting off of external contact (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978) or from the greater involvement of the external system and the development of colonialism.

Transformations: Big Men.

The success of Friedman and Rowlands (1977) in presenting a complex model of development from the lineage community to the Asiatic state, and having it accepted by the archaeological world should not allow us to presume that it is the only sequence of change applicable to pre-state societies. The Asiatic Mode of Production is structured through the ranking of lineages against each other: not individuals. The chief, king, or emperor has a different kind of authority to that of the feudal king or lord. He exercises power on behalf of the 'higher unity', and as the representative of the chiefly lineage, which is ranked as a whole above the commoners. All of this opposes the principle of the

accumulation of wealth, prestige and power on a personal basis.

In New Guinea, Sahlins (1963;1974) describes the activities of Big Men, who galvanise their followers into the accumulation of exchangeable products (primarily pigs and sweet potatoes), with the aim of accruing prestige for the Big Man through strategic exchanges. The Big Man depends entirely upon his personal resources of charisma and oratory to mobilise his followers. Big Man systems are often considered as being an intermediate stage between 'egalitarian' and 'ranked' societies. This is really another example of the desire to place all societies on a linear scale of complexity. In reality, the case is rather different. The activities of a Big Man represent a striving after personal power in a manner which is in contradiction with the relations of production of the societies concerned. A Big Man is not the same thing as a lineage chief, who may also be engaged in competitive exchange, but for different reasons. The difference lies in whether one is operating within or against the rules of society. Where Big Men emerge within a lineage formation there will tend to be frequent alternations of power, as one Big Man's support rises and then shifts out from under him. The power of the Big Man can never be consolidated or passed on to his offspring: it is not connected to the genealogical structure. Without a transformation of the relations which order the productive base a Big Man system can never become a tributary society.

Transformations: The Germanic Mode of Production.

There is at least one further major group of pre-state agricultural societies which can be defined on the basis of distinctive relations of production. In 'Precapitalist Economic Formations', a section of the 'Grundrisse' (Marx 1964), Marx pointed out the distinguishing features of the Germanic tribes who dwelt beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire. These tribesmen, he argued, were responsible for many of the social and political aspects of Medieval Europe. "Among the Germans....single heads of families settle in the forests, separated by long distances....the community therefore exists as an association, not as a union, as an agreement, whose independent subjects are the landowners....Every independent household contains an entire family, farming as it does an independent centre of production" (Marx 1964). Where society exists not as a 'being together' but as a 'coming together' of small and independent groups (Bonte 1977,175), we can talk about a Germanic Mode of Production. Its most distinctive feature is that the units of production and reproduction are identical (MacFarlane 1978,105), the production team corresponds entirely to the family (Galeski 1971). In peasant society "the household is the basic unit of production, consumption, property holding, socialisation, sociability, moral support and mutual economic help" (Shanin 1971,31). The Germanic Mode of Production is to be distinguished from lineage society by the existence of private

property in land, held by patriarchal family heads. This need not necessarily require its alienation as a commodity (Morris 1986,5). What changes is the social unit which holds land. The role of kinship is thus drastically transformed: rather than dictate the transaction of exchanges and marriages, it is the product of such transactions. Two distinct kinship forms can result from a Germanic system, either of which will produce a settlement pattern of dispersed, self-sufficient family groups. The major difference between the two forms is between ego-focussed and ancestor-focussed groups. Where a group is ego-focussed (as with the German tribes) socialisation is achieved with reference to a single living individual, the family head or chief. In such a Kindred all wider kinship links are destroyed within a generation (Barlau 1976,100). In an ancestor-focussed Germanic group, descent is reckoned in a single male line.

Where segmentary lineage organisation is totally lacking and individuals chart their descent back in the male line to a single male ancestor we have a Crow-Omaha kinship system (Levi-Strauss 1966). If only the male line is stressed, the consequent decline in preferential exogamy rules will cause both a trend to endogamy and the disruption of the greater lineage system. This latter point is quite striking when expressed graphically (compare Fig. 2.2 and Fig. 2.3). Written sources attest the absence of the preferential exogamy rule in early Indo-European and Semitic societies (Humphreys 1978,198). So while Iron Age German kinship

is taken to have been of a Kindred form, Proto-Indo-European kinship, that of the earliest documented societies on Northern Europe, was Crow-Omaha (Barlau 1976,127). In Proto-Indo-European kin terminologies only the male line is stressed, while a restricted and inclusive set of terms is used for the wife's kin (Crossland 1957,24; Goody 1969,237). These people are thought of as "patriarchal, patrilocal families that probably lived in small houses or adjacent huts" (Friedrich 1966,29). Rowlands (1980,29-30), in using Crow-Omaha societies as a model for the later Bronze Age in Europe (i.e. Proto-Indo-European societies), predicts that the combination of a highly competitive, acquisitive society with a strong male agnatic focus will lead to the development of a warrior ethos. This is expressed in that period by the importance of weapons and armour, and the separation of male and female graves.

The relative ranking of groups in Asiatic society is structured through the the lineage framework, and this in turn is a product of the preferential marriage rule. Even where generalised reciprocity is practiced, lineage communities work on the basis that everyone can place him or herself in the genealogical structure, and as the giving of women and goods is an exchange, it is explicitly recognised that in the long term the equilibrium between the lineages will be maintained. Where intergroup ranking cannot be achieved by descent and affinity, as in the Crow-Omaha system, highly competitive intergroup relations will develop (Rowlands 1980,18). Power struggles are based not on kin

relations but on wealth and short-term alliance. The instability of alliance means that exchange can no longer support the maintenance of equilibrium between kin units (Gosden 1985,476). Since there are no rules as to who marries whom, the marriage system becomes a strategic arena in which families compete opportunisticly for advantageous alliances, which consequently exist for only one generation (Rowlands 1980). Choice of marriage partner is thus guided by the family, and largely by the patriarch. "Every family naturally tries to make the best possible alliance; at the same time it tries not to lower its own dignity by risking a refusal or accepting at once and thereby showing too great eagerness" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1971,27). In consequence, marriages tend to be homogamous (equal-ranked) or hypergamous (strategic marriages with higher-ranked families). Since the former will be more frequent, the ultimate outcome will be the formation of separate intermarrying strata, or castes, which are a phenomenon which is spatially restricted to Eurasia (Goody 1976a).

The decline of lineage organisation and the development of private landholding have far-reaching consequences for the devolution of property. Strategic marriages, and especially in-marriage and cross-cousin marriage, are directly concerned with the maintenance of the family pool of wealth, which descends in the male line. Far from all property existing as the temporary gift of the ancestors (Goody 1976b), to return to the lineage on the death of the holder, great store is set in keeping wealth

within the family. Since a male heir may not always be forthcoming, women may be eligible as 'carrier' inheritors of property, in order to avoid the splitting up of the estate (rigid primogeniture being the general rule). Where the means of production (land) is transmitted to women it will affect the marriages which they can make. In all respects women must be more closely controlled, and especially in respect to their reproductive capacity. There is thus a direct connection between the female inheritance of property and an emphasis on premarital virginity (Goody 1976a).

Goody (1976a) emphasises the statistical correlation between systems of diverging devolution (primogeniture and female inheritance) and plough agriculture, and also notes a link with societies in which status is based upon economic differentiation. There is a hint of technological determinism about the argument however: there is no reason why a particular agricultural technique should cause a change of kinship or inheritance patterns. We would do better to look at the entirety of the social relations of production. Goody notes that plough agriculture is much more productive than that carried out with hoes and digging-sticks: one man can work twenty acres in the time which it takes a whole extended family group to work eight acres with hoes. The result of this can be to divorce women from the productive process. Hoe agriculturalists rely largely on female labour, and the basis of accumulation in lineage society is that as a male gets older he acquires more wives to work on

his behalf. Lineage societies practice polygyny, which Eurasian societies usually do not, while the greater fertility of lineage communities is partly explained by the role of children in swelling the workforce (MacFarlane 1978,103). To the plough agriculturalist, another child may be just another mouth to feed, once he has sufficient heirs to ensure his being provided for in his old age. Female children will be especially unwelcome except as potential bargaining tools in marriage strategies, and are likely to be done away with at birth. Since women are less of a productive asset they are no longer 'bought' from elders with bridewealth; on the contrary, they are given dowry as a form of inheritance at marriage.

So one might suggest that the Germanic Mode of Production consists of a set of social relations which are realised through an economic intensification which allows women to be estranged from primary production, thus undermining the ambiguous form of power which they have in lineage society. This is emphasised by the case of the Nilo-Hamitic pastoralists of East Africa. These are not plough-using people, yet they do appear to have Germanic relations of production. Cattle are held by the patrilocal family group, and a random marriage system is practiced, with very little depth of kinship. Only when pastoral production has to take place in conditions of extreme population density do lineage relations develop (Bonte 1977,177-189). The independence of the extended family groups is normally maintained by 'structural mobility' (no groupings larger than the family have other than a

temporary life), while women take no direct part in the maintenance of the herds.

So far I have made various references to the peasantry of Central and Eastern Europe in discussing the Germanic Mode of Production. This needs some further explanation. Just as the edifice of the Asiatic state is constructed out of the basic structure of lineage society, it is equally easy for a tributary form to develop out of Germanic relations. The very loose and competitive relations between the families of the "free peasantry" (Godelier 1978,226) can lead to their loss of independence when one family achieves a permanent economic ascendancy. Such is the volatile nature of the system that this may never happen: asymmetries between households may come and go. Nonetheless, we have the obvious case of Medieval Europe in which a peasantry organised on these lines were subject to feudal tributary relations. Feudalism is a Mode of Production which is defined by a tributary relation between a producer and a landowner (Hindess and Hirst 1975). The nature of feudal society is dictated by the conditions of reproduction of that relation. Thus the Germanic Mode of Production represents a dominated mode under Feudalism, providing the social relations of the peasantry. Since both forms are based upon the private appropriation of landed wealth, there is a correspondence between the two which is equivalent to that between the lineage and Asiatic forms: there is a 'natural' (but by no means inevitable) line of development between the two.

The Bandkeramik.

The Bandkeramik represents the first incursion of agriculturalists into Europe north of the Alps and Carpathians, from the mid-fifth millennium bc onwards. As we shall see below, there are major objections which one can raise against considering the Linear Pottery groups as the sole founders of the European Neolithic. Despite this, it is with these people that I intend to begin the investigation of the relations of production of the period. Bandkeramik settlement in Poland, Germany, Holland, Slovakia, Austria and France is limited to very specific areas of the landscape: plateau-edge situations overlooking middling-sized watercourses within the corridors of loessic soils (Illett et. al. 1982,48-49; Bakels 1982,31; Luning 1982, 14). This implies a quite specific economic strategy being pursued over a very wide area: sites at the junction of damp lowland pasture, perhaps with open meadowland in some areas (Howell 1983a), and upland terrace arable with light, friable soils.

Until quite recently it was believed that this economy was semi-mobile and practiced slash-and-burn agriculture in the primordial forests of the mature postglacial (Soudsky and Pavlu 1972; etc.). However, this now seems unlikely: the regeneration of prehistoric clearances which appears to be evidenced in pollen spectra does not accord with those which one might expect to result from Bandwirtschaft, and in some cases they are merely the

artefacts of the method of analysis (Rowly-Conwy 1981,86-88). Furthermore, the whole rationale of shifting agriculture is that it is a means of extracting some use out of extremely marginal soils. Given Emmer wheat on rich loess soils, there would be no reason not to continuously crop fixed fields- for many years, without an appreciable drop in yields (ibid., 91). In pre-plough conditions, it seems likely that the arable component of the economy consisted of fixed-plot intensive hoe horticulture, manured by domestic waste and cattle dung (Howell 1983a; Kruk 1980). The considerable effort invested in the building of timber longhouses which might last in excess of thirty years would make little sense if the site were to be abandoned within a year or two (Startin 1978,157). The role of animals in the regime is more equivocal: faunal samples are dominated by cattle (Soudsky and Pavlu 1972,323; Dennell 1983,173), which may simply have been used for meat and manure, it being unclear whether the Bandkeramik population had developed a lactose tolerance which would enable them to drink milk. Sherratt (1981) lays much stress on this as a factor which might inhibit the development of the pastoral sector, although Bogucki (1984) notes the presence of ceramic sieves in Bandkeramik assemblages from the Ukraine to France, which might have been used for the separation of curds in cheese production. Both cheese and yoghurt are relatively free from lactose, so that a degree of secondary-product use seems likely even at this early stage. The low proportions of wild animal species found in faunal collections of Bandkeramik date point to an essential aspect of the nature of the system, that it

was an externally-introduced 'pioneer economy', not organised to integrate local resources and conditions. While fantastically efficient and long-lived, elements like the large timber houses reflect the fact that this was an economy formulated in and imposed from south-east Europe.

However, the Bandkeramik was not merely an economy: it represented a set of social relations of production which efficiently facilitated the operation of the agrarian lifestyle in temperate conditions. The fact that certain organisational characteristics of this system are replicated across vast geographical distances, and that by contrast to later Neolithic phases there are substantial traces of domestic activity, allow us to make some inferences about these social relations. At a gross spatial level the Bandkeramik sites form settlement clusters, or Siedlungskammer, separated from each other by twenty or thirty kilometers. Such clusters of sites are found between the rivers Geleen and Meuse in Dutch Limburg, around the Heeswater in Belgium, and on the Merzbach valley on The Aldenhovener Platte, for instance. Within the settlements one may find anything from one to a dozen or more houses within a given phase of occupation. However, the building up of complex models of demographic change on the basis of these sites (e.g. Soudsky 1973; Milisauskas 1978) is often flawed by the implicit assumption that the people who lived in the longhouses did so in standard western nuclear families, as opposed to, say, polygynous households. It is to be hoped that the detailed artefactual and spatial studies being

carried out within the Aisne valley and Aldenhovener Platte projects may shed more light on this problem than the application of possibly spurious ratios of floorspace to number of families.

The houses themselves often appear to have been replaced on a nearby site, thus ensuring a continuity of site structure over a long period. This continuity of settlement structure has been noted at Elsloo, Cuiry-les-Chaudardes and Bylany (Van der Velde 1979a,141; Illett et. al. 1978,57). At Elsloo it was one of the earliest houses which was rebuilt right through the sequence of settlement phases. It thus seems reasonable to suggest some degree of continuity of descent and locality in the social unit. Van der Velde's study of the associated cemetery at Elsloo (1979b) makes the suggestion that matrilocal residence was practiced, on the basis of the more 'mixed' assemblages of pottery design motifs in male graves. Clearly, this argument depends upon the pottery having been made by women. Furthermore, his analysis of the grave goods indicates the presence of four spatially distinct groups of individuals exchanging material items between each other in a linear fashion (Van der Velde 1979a,107). It might not be too far fetched to connect these with the four major house sites in the Elsloo settlement. In general, Bandkeramik grave assemblages seem to draw two major distinctions between people: young and old, and male and female. It is the older males who gain the richest goods: at Nitra, spondylus shell and chipped and polished stone artefacts are restricted to this group (Milisauskas 1978,113). This might indicate that they as a

group played a privileged role in social relations (Sherratt 1982). Having said this, there is considerable diversity within this general trend. In the French Bandkeramik the four richest burials, Frignicourt 1, Menneville 1, Cys 2 and Vert-la-Gravelle 1, are all female, suggesting that women were by no means in a position of total subservience in this society.

Bakels (1982,37) points out that within the Dutch Limburg and the Rhineland, the hamlet sites are so closely packed together as to have a 'territory' of as little as sixty hectares each. While the people in each group of houses might have needed only fifteen hectares or less for their garden plots, this leaves a very scanty area for pasturage. In the past, the pressure of population on land has been something of a deus ex machina in archaeological explanation, partly a product of the uncritical acceptance of Esther Boserup's model of agricultural intensification in tropical environments (1965). This kind of explanation will not fit the Bandkeramik material: the great expanses of loess between the settlement cells which bear no trace of habitation make it impossible that land was in short supply. One must thus conclude that the spacing of sites was a matter of social choice rather than economic necessity. In the Merzbach, settlement appears to have spread up the valley from the site Langweiller 8. This site is the largest of the group, the most long-lived, and possessed an enclosure which appears to have also been used by the inhabitants of Langweiller 2 and Niedersmertz 4. Luning (1982,23) also suggests that the highest

proportion of imported flint on the site marks it out as a distribution centre. In the Dutch group the Elsloo site seems to have a similar status, being one of the few with continuous occupation and having the only cemetery in the area. If we pull these strands together, a picture starts to emerge of a characteristic lineage society, in which garden horticulture was carried out at the level of the minor lineage (household) while the communal organisation of livestock insured mutual interdependence at the level of the maximal lineage (settlement cell). Communal labour allowed the undertaking of projects like the building of houses and enclosures, both of which would have required the labour of a number of households (Startin 1978,157). It was effectively at the level of the maximal lineage that social reproduction was secured.

Within the settlement cell, at least one site was continuously occupied over a very long period, and would have been the first settlement established in the area. Being more closely associated with the founding ancestors of the maximal lineage it would provide the site for the cemetery, and perhaps for an enclosure used for ritual observances and exchange transactions. This idea of an unbroken genealogical line, a senior lineage within a settlement cell inhabiting a site from which other groups 'budded off' to set up other hamlets, was replicated at the lower level of organisation. Here, within the hamlet, one house site would be continuously occupied. Thus at either level of organisation the ebb and flow of demographic change would be allowed for by this

continuous element. The dominant group within this society were a collectivity of elder males, who controlled access to prestige items which entered the system by kin links. However, women exerted considerable power, and there is evidence to suggest that descent was reckoned in the female line. While women were exchanged between men, residence may have been matrilocal. Matrilocality would ensure that generalised exchange would be impossible, and would thus preclude the relative ranking of lineages. It is extremely unlikely that the longhouses were inhabited by nuclear families, and far more likely that the residential unit consisted of a corporate group who reckoned their descent from a common (?female) ancestor. Agricultural labour would have been carried out by women and younger men in the garden plots, while the male association with the more extensive sphere of cattle management would ensure the male control of the circulation of prestige items. This hypothesis seems to be supported by Sherratt's (1982) study of Early Neolithic activity in the Great Hungarian Plain, where the exchange of cattle to peripheral groups resulted in the still greater aggrandisement of elder males (ibid.,22).

All of this reinforces the view of the Bandkeramik as a self-contained economic system. So limited was it in its preferences of landscape type that it is quite possible that Mesolithic hunters and gatherers continued their lifestyle relatively unaffected by the agriculturalists (Scarre 1983,325). Their exploited environments were entirely mutually exclusive

(Louwe-Kooijmans 1976,235). The acculturation of Mesolithic populations was not a major feature of the Bandkeramik. The restricted landscape preferences of the colonists have been suggested as one reason for their very rapid spread across Europe (Starling 1985,42).

At the end of the fifth millennium bc major changes start to be evident in the structure of the Bandkeramik system. The settlement sites began to become more nucleated within the settlement cells, and enclosures were being built more frequently. The settlements ceased to be hamlets and became villages, although there is no reason to suggest that the net population had increased (Starling 1985,51). Pottery decoration gives evidence of considerable regionalisation, each of the settlement cells developing distinctive forms of band infill, while there is increased overall emphasis on contrast, differentiation and bounded designs (Louwe Kooijmans 1976,239; Hodder 1982,172; Starling 1985,54). This process escalated through the phases of the Stichbandkeramik, Villeneuve-St.Germaine, Cerny, Hinkelstein, Grossgartach, Rossen and Bischheim, thus culminating in the formation of distinctive local 'cultures'. Such emphasis on increased boundary maintenance recalls Hodder's (1979) predictions concerning the relationship between material culture patterning and social stress. As ever, population pressure is commonly used as the explanation for these changes. However, only minor expansion of settlement took place, despite the large unsettled areas available. We have to look for

some form of crisis which involves internal contradictions in order to explain these developments. I shall discuss below the possibility that this period of change is an aspect of a general dialectical relationship between the group and the individual which runs through the whole of the Neolithic of north-west Europe.

Later Mesolithic Social Organisation.

Between the Bandkeramik and the hunters and gatherers of northern Europe yawns a massive conceptual gulf: between 'Early Man' and 'Later Prehistory'. The two are separated by their study under different archaeological frameworks. It is a commonplace to suggest that the former is the refuge of the scholar who wishes to avoid the complexities of social organisation. Perhaps this is why "in the literature as a whole, successful farmers have social relations with one another, while hunter-gatherers have ecological relations with hazelnuts" (Bradley 1984a,11). In spite of, and to some extent because of, anthropological studies of present-day hunter-gatherers, they are still largely considered in static terms, as 'people without history'. We should not make the mistake on this basis of denying the prehistoric hunters and gatherers of Europe the same kind of social moment and directionality as we would afford to agriculturalists. In general, our knowledge of hunter-gatherers derives from

loosely-ordered bands scattered at the fringes of the inhabited world. In their lives risk and uncertainty are the essential economic facts. Social relations are structured in order to overcome these problems by providing access to the hunting lands of neighbours in times of hardship, while the development of dominance relations is made unlikely by total absence of all forms of property and the mobility of the individual (Keenan 1981). However, this does not mean that the development of social asymmetry is unknown amongst hunters. In some cases there may be a direct relationship between the restriction of access to hunting lands and the control of access to women by the elder males, as in the Australian systems. Rose (1968) explains this as merely an efficient way of exploiting scarce resources. Nonetheless, it might be suggested that there is a direct relationship between the development of a 'closed' social environment, where opting out of the group results in the failure to obtain a mate, and that of a relation of dominance between elder and junior males.

Martin Wobst (1974) has hypothesised that by the Upper Palaeolithic in Europe the filling up of the landscape would have led to the formation of closed mating networks. The placing of limits around the breeding community has considerable implications, not least in that it would require more formal rules concerning who will marry with whom, as in the Australian case. Furthermore, Gilman (1984) has connected this same process with the development of style, social corporateness and

territoriality. That this trend became more pronounced is suggested by human skeletal remains showing increased evidence of trauma and embedded bone points and microliths as time went on. At the same time there is an increase in boundary maintenance shown in the spatial discretion and mutual exclusivity of ornaments in Europe (Newell 1984,75). Further evidence that Mesolithic communities in Northern Europe possessed a social complexity well in advance of present-day hunter-gatherers is provided by the cemetery of Oleneostrovsky Mogilnik, on Lake Onega. Here, Zvelebil and O'Shea (1984) describe a large number of inhumations, among which wealth appears to have been connected with the elder males. The graves were spatially separated into two "clusters". Elk effigies as grave goods were restricted to the northern group, and snake and human effigies to the southern. I should like to suggest that the cemetery was used by two exogamous moieties, each characterised by exclusive totems (Levi-Strauss 1969,85). Thus the effigy figurines may have served not so much as a direct display of wealth as items necessary for certain transactions at critical points in life (initiations, obtaining wives, burial, etc.). Further evidence of the use of prestige items in the later Mesolithic of Northern Europe is found in the discovery of numerous shaft-hole axes of Stichbandkeramik/Rossen/Gatersleben date in Ertebolle contexts in Denmark (Fisher 1982). Evidently, quite extensive exchange networks existed connecting the hunter-gatherers with agrarian groups to the south. All of this suggests Gregory's (1982,69) description of 'restricted marriage exchange', where the balanced

exchange of prestige items and restricted exchange of women are connected with moiety organisation and the leadership of elders.

If we follow Levi-Strauss (1966) in seeing marriage arrangements as essentially being the exchange of women between groups of men, it is obviously likely that the development of closed connubia will lead to the foundation of a gift economy. The chief characteristic of such an economy is that women are regarded as 'the supreme gift', and the transaction of exchanging women between lineages is facilitated by the giving of bridewealth. Women, in turn, are essential for the production of wealth in the labour intensive economies with which these arrangements are associated. As Gould (1966,74) says of the North-West coast Tolowa, marriage is consciously regarded as a means by which men gain access to the labour of women. In hunting, gathering, fishing and pre-plough agriculture, while men do the work which is superficially the most strenuous, the bulk of the gruelling tasks of food production and preparation are done by women. Wealth is obtained by males in order to obtain women and to use in gaining prestige through feasting and gift-giving. To sum up: the evidence suggests that in northern Europe from the Upper Palaeolithic onwards there was a general trend away from the fluid, overlapping social relationships which characterise many present-day hunter-gatherer societies, towards a closer relationship between people and territory, a restricted exchange of women between corporate descent groups, and an articulation of social transactions through the use of prestige items. Thus the

elements of a Lineage Mode of Production were imminent, if not dominant, within the social formation. For this reason a degree of similarity existed between these hunters and the agriculturalists with whom they would soon be coming into contact.

Convergence and Divergence: The Middle Neolithic.

The later prehistory of Europe is the product of the interaction of a web of cross-cutting local and regional systems which existed in fluid and shifting relationships with each other. Some of the social processes which we can detect in the archaeological record occurred in synchrony with each other, some are more localised in scope or are the effects of causal factors in other areas. In consequence, any attempt to view the broad sweep of these processes will be dogged by the incompatibility of local cultural sequences and a more general terminology: one man's early Neolithic is another's late Neolithic. I intend to use the term 'Middle Neolithic' to describe a phase of north-west european prehistory which immediately postdates the plethora of post-Bandkeramik groups (Hinkelstein, Cerny, Grossgartach, Rössen, etc.). Until the middle of the fourth millennium, the processes at work are largely a continuation of those of the later

Bandkeramik. Settlements tended to nucleate, and the gross area settled expanded a little. Material culture showed a trend to increased regionality, while as late as the Rössen burial was practiced in flat grave cemeteries (Whittle 1977,118). However, from about 3500 bc there was a major change in the material culture sequence of the whole of north-west Europe, with the start of the Michelsburg, Chasseen and Danish TRB A-C sequence. The florid designs which had up to this stage characterised Neolithic ceramics declined, and in some places disappeared entirely. "The undecorated pottery", as Louwe Kooijmans (1976,248) points out, "is very resistant to an internal division, either in a chronological or a regional sense". The pottery traditions right across the north-west seaboard of Europe effectively blend into one another. The undecorated Danish funnel-beakers, as at the Lundehøj site for instance (Liversage 1982,15), and especially the 'B' beakers, show considerable affinity with the Michelsburg tulip-beakers (Louwe Kooijmans 1976,261). Likewise, the Belgian Michelsburg grades into the Chasseo-Michelsburg and the true Chasseen (Schollar 1959,55). The Neolithique Moyen Bourguinoise forms a mixture of Chasseen, Cortaillois and Michelsburg traits (Burkill 1983), while the variation within the different groups of the Michelsburg appears to be as great as that between any of these. Likewise, traditions like the Cous and Roquefort of south-west France are essentially parts of the same phenomenon (Scarre 1983,337). In Switzerland the Cortaillois forms a further element of the horizon. This involution of Material culture similarity (see Fig. 3.5) appears

to represent a gradual process of convergence, which culminates at c.3200 bc, by when the Hazendonk 2 assemblage from Holland is in all ways indistinguishable from the Grimston and Lyle's Hill wares of north and east Britain and Ireland (Louwe Kooijmans 1976,263).

The alternation of periods in which the decoration of material culture appeared and disappeared, or in which artefacts formed widespread or localised distributions, is a characteristic of the Neolithic of all of temperate Europe. The extension of decoration beyond pottery onto houses, figurines and other ritual paraphernalia in phases like the Tisza (Whittle 1985,196) invoke the observations of Donley (1982), Braithwaite (1982) and Hodder (1979) concerning the social role of decoration. All of these studies indicate that the enhancement of decoration can be concerned with the enforcement of social boundaries. The simplistic correlation of 'stress', as Hodder rather noncommittally termed the phenomenon, and population pressure (Scarre 1983,336-341) is unwarranted. The reasons why boundaries between social groups may be created or maintained are manifold (Barth 1969). One important factor of the pattern emergent across Europe is the way in which the areas north-west and south-east of the Carpathians and Poland became 'out of step' with each other in the post-Bandkeramik era. In both areas, alternations between periods of homogeneity and heterogeneity can be recognised. In both areas the decline of the Bandkeramik heralded a period of cultural diversity. In the south-east the development from

AlfoldBandkeramik through into Tisza, Bükk and early Lengyel was one of increased decoration and regionality, but was followed by plain pottery and the disappearance of items like figurines in the late Lengyel and Tiszapolgar. These traditions stretched across the Great Hungarian Plain and into southern Poland c.3500 bc (Whittle 1985,188).

This in turn gave way to a further phase of decoration and regionalisation in Bodrogkeresztur, Lasinja, Retz and related traditions, at around 3000 bc. Another horizon of plain pottery and homogeneity, encompassing the northern Balkans, Austria, southern Germany and southern Poland followed in the Baden phase, c. 2700 bc (ibid.,204-206). These do not coincide with the north-western decorated (Cerny/Hinkelstein/Rossen etc.) and plain pottery (Chasseen/Michelsburg) phases (Fig. 3.6). The fact that analogous processes were taking place in an unsynchronised fashion in the two areas reflects an important feature of the period: north-west Europe in the era following the Bandkeramik, and particularly in the Middle Neolithic, had become a separate regional system, whose development was independent of south-east Europe. This is reflected in several aspects of the archaeology of the period. The separate social trajectories followed by the two regions are indicated by a burial record dominated by monumental tombs in the case of the north-west, and flat grave cemeteries in that of the south-east. Furthermore, in the north Balkans copper objects (shafthole adzes and axes, trinkets and ornaments) are found in graves from the Tiszapolgar phase

onwards. The delay (of a millennium and a half) in the appearance of copper in western Europe can partially be explained by the need for the development of the technology necessary for the exploitation of sulphide ores. But it seems remarkable that given exchange mechanisms which could distribute items like jadeite axes or even ceramics like vases-supports (Burkill 1983,51) over vast areas, so little Balkan metal found its way into the west. The introduction of copper only came with the Beaker phase, at which point it can be argued that the separation of the south-eastern and north-western regional systems and their associated exchange networks had broken down.

After c.3000 bc the cultural homogeneity of north-west Europe was lost in a further period of divergence of pottery styles. Once again this does not appear to be to have been the result of any external factor, as within any particular area there is evidence of continuity. In the Paris basin the Chasseen gave way to the Seine-Oise-Marne at c.2600 bc, with the development of plain flat-based jars. Plain pottery is also found in the Vlaardingen of the Dutch wetlands (Bakker 1982), but on the North European Plain the riotous decoration of Tiefstich TRB followed the beginning of regionalisation in the Virum/Fuchsburg phase of funnel beakers (Madsen and Petersen 1983,114) after 2700 bc. In south and west France, highly localised and heavily decorated traditions like the Ferrieres, Fontbuisse and Peu-Richardien developed (Scarre 1983,338). In Britain, regional forms like Abingdon, Whitehawk, Towthorpe, Mildenhall and eventually

Ebbsfleet emerged out of the plain bowl traditions. All of these feature increased decoration, and led to the formation of the Peterborough tradition (Smith 1965a;1966). To what can all of these changes be attributed?

The first factor which we could consider is the breakdown of the economic uniformity of the Bandkeramik. In some areas settlement continued to expand, and even to creep off the loess soils; in others the process of nucleation was more emphatic, and settlement actually contracted. Areas like Britain and Denmark were brought into the west european Neolithic regional system for the first time. On the North European Plain there is evidence to suggest that settlements were not long-lived. At Mosegarden in Denmark an ephemeral settlement site was found preserved below a later longbarrow. On the basis of pot breakage rates, Madsen and Jensen (1982,72) consider that the site was occupied for less than ten years. At Rustrup a similar house site was found which consisted of traces of stakeholes, postholes and a stone setting (Fischer 1976). All of this suggests a much more mobile residential pattern than that which we would associate with the longhouses of the Bandkeramik. By contrast, Howell (1983a) sees the Chasseen of the Paris Basin as a phase of large nucleated settlements, often within ditched enclosures. In Denmark, a very mixed economy was practiced, which included hunting and the use of coastal resources (Jensen 1982,109), while the broader spectrum of animals in use in France - cattle, sheep, pig and wild species (Burkill 1983,45-46) may be connected with increased

forest clearance (Sherratt 1983). The increase of the pastoral sector to include a substantial dairying component has been suggested for this period (Howell 1983a). In the Paris Basin promontory enclosures dominate expanses of lower terrace alluvial pasture. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that the arable component of the economy in the late fourth and early third millennia bc was still largely garden-plot horticulture. Isolated finds of plough marks like those at Sarnowo (c.3600 bc; Whittle 1977,210) are rare exceptions.

It is interesting to note that it is in this phase of economic diversity and ceramic homogeneity is also that in which the use of monumental tombs and barrows became established over much of Europe. Renfrew (1976) argued that the development of megalithic tombs could be connected with the curtailment of Neolithic expansion as it encountered the 'Atlantic façade': the argument is again based upon population density and a particular interpretation of the reasons for the spread of the Neolithic economy. Chapman (1982) developed this theme by interpreting the tombs as a means of legitimation of the territorial claims of corporate descent groups. However, this is only part of the answer. Hodder (1984) has pointed out the need for a more historically-specific approach to monumentality in the fourth and third millennia. Certainly, one of the more remarkable aspects of the phenomenon is the way in which particular elements are distributed over very wide areas. Megalithic tombs are known in the fourth millennium in Brittany (Hibbs 1983,285), but in some

areas may be considerably later. Among the earthen long barrows the unity of form is outstanding from the first inception of the tradition. The presence of complex sequences of pre-barrow timber structures, often destroyed by fire, is known in Poland, Denmark, Wessex and Yorkshire (Jadzewski 1973,68; Madsen 1979a,105), while the trapezoidal form, east-west orientation, parallel quarry ditches and timber façades are also noteworthy (Madsen 1979b,318). Hodder (1984) notes the many features of similarity between the long barrows and the Bandkeramik houses (to the extent that the 'village' site of Barkaer has been reinterpreted as a group of barrows; *ibid.*54). Hodder takes this to imply a ritualised elaboration of the domestic context at a stage when the stable focus of the settlement had become more fluid. In this connection we can note that the areas with an early development of sepulchral monumentality (Britain, the North European Plain, Brittany) were those in which traces of settlement are the most scanty. In contrast, the development of tombs in central Germany and the Paris Basin is rather later. Hence the Atlantic façade.

I have argued that in Bandkeramik times a Lineage Mode of Production was in operation. The lineage exists as a relationship between people and land (MacCormack 1981). The maintenance of that relationship, and thus of the dominant relations within lineage society, was achieved by the substitution of a 'house of the ancestors' for the houses of the living. Bearing in mind that sites like Bylany often had a single large house in their centre (Milisauskas 1976), the seeds of this idea may already have been

present in Bandkeramik times. Certainly, we can trace the first use of mortuary monuments in north-west Europe back as far as the later Bandkeramik with the site of Les Foullages (Kinnes 1982). What took place in the Middle Neolithic was the elaboration and dispersal of an idea which had been extant for some time. The suggestion that the rite of extended inhumation practiced within the TRB earthen long mounds is more akin to Mesolithic than Bandkeramik mortuary practices (Midgeley 1985,197) may indicate that the full development of the phenomenon of monumental burial was a process which did not solely involve colonising groups.

To begin with, the burials carried out within monumental tombs and barrows were highly varied in nature. The earthen long mounds of the North European Plain, for instance, usually contained articulated single inhumations (Midgeley 1985). However, a practice which became more widespread as time went on was the disarticulation of human remains. Numerous ethnographic studies of secondary burial (e.g. Hertz 1960, Bloch 1971, Bloch and Parry 1982) point out its role in the redefinition of the dead into the class of ancestors. Such ancestors have a dual nature: they are partly remembered for their own sake, as holders of specific genealogical positions which are of importance to the structure of society, and as a generalised category of unnamed ancestors (Brain 1973). One might suggest that the purposeful disordering of the physical remains of the deceased would be aimed at the constitution of the latter category. By means of rites of passage the dead were separated from the living and deprived of their

individual egos. This was increasingly the case with the expansion of megalithic practice through the third millennium. The custom of supplying the dead with grave goods all but ceased. In the Irish passage graves, for instance, Herity and Eogan (1977,57) note that beyond a few stone and chalk balls and other trinkets there was "a complete exclusion of all other stone implements, weapons and tools from the sacred ambience of the tomb". In the south Swedish megalithic tombs, Tilley (1984,142) notes an increasing emphasis on disarticulation and complex body treatment over time. In the Chasséen of the Paris Basin, prior to the tombs of the SOM, bodies were completely disarticulated and mixed with settlement debris (Burkill 1983,56). Later, the SOM allées couvertes and hypogées contained hundreds of disarticulated bodies mixed together (Howell 1983b). The increasing emphasis on the denial of individuality implies that a progressively greater investment of effort was being put into the presentation of society as homogeneous and undifferentiated: always the ideology of the lineage. If, as Sherratt (1984,128-129) suggests, the individuals interred in the tombs were originally the holders of critical genealogical positions, this shift of emphasis suggests a subtle change of function. If the original role of corporate tombs was to maintain solidarity within a fluid settlement system, the introduction of megaliths into new areas may be a consequence of more acute problems.

From their earliest origins the corporate mortuary monuments seem to have functioned as centres for feasting and other ritual

practices. The Kujavian barrows of the Wiorek TRB phase are associated with "traces of funeral feasts" (Jadzewski 1973,64). The escalation of these activities is also evident in pot-smashing (Tilley 1984,127), while the investment of effort increases with the shift from earthen mounds to megaliths in some areas (Madsen 1979b,315). The third millennium also saw the introduction of very large passage graves in Ireland, Scandinavia, and Brittany. If we can suggest that the building and use of corporate tombs intensified, was elaborated, and spread into new areas as their role slowly changed, we have to explain why. Bloch's (1974) observation that the investment in ritual communication tends to increase is doubtless of importance to this question, as is Tilley's suggestion that a 'legitimation crisis', in which the contradictions of society became exposed, necessitated further mystification. However, Tilley does not specify the processes which caused this crisis: it may be of importance to consider exactly what was being legitimated. The study of the monuments on their own cannot provide the whole answer, for an increase in the evidence for feasting could equally relate to the the development of a competitive ceremonial cycle directly associated with the communal ancestors. This would be the ideal medium for the growth of Asiatic conical clans, as individual lineages began to gain control over the supernatural. A greater emphasis on monumentality might thus be an aspect of the growth of a major powerbase. The development of more elaborate monumental traditions in the third millennium is contemporary with the renewal of localised pottery styles:

Tiefstich TRB, the British decorated bowl styles, Keregou, Carrowkeel, Vlaardingen, SOM etc. It follows that part of what was happening was that the basic monumental forms were being adapted to satisfy the demands of increasingly divergent local systems. Without preempting the later parts of this chapter, I will suggest that what was initially a homogeneous phenomenon became increasingly enmeshed in the complex power relations of individual areas, and was then used in a variety of different strategies according to local conditions. Generally speaking, however, it is very notable that the outward form of the monuments was slightly more stable than what went on inside (see chapters IV and VI below).

Aside from mortuary ritual, there are other indications that as the Neolithic reached its maturity and adjusted to the conditions of north-west Europe, aspects of Bandkeramik practice were elaborated and ritualised. With the development of the plain pottery styles networks of exchange and interaction increased in their scope (Burkill 1983,58). A variety of material items were in circulation, including finer pottery and most notably stone axes (Sherratt 1984,127). These items were exotic but not rare, elaborate but not spectacular. For instance, while some of the Scandinavian axes were too large for any but ceremonial use, there is no dividing line between these and the more practical examples (Jensen 1982,104). As with the tombs this represents an elaboration of the commonplace. The prestige good system which controlled the movement and affinity of people was still

effectively tied to material production. Axes in particular owed their importance to an ability to function in the spheres of subsistence, exchange and feasting (Kristiansen 1984,79), and hence their representation in passage grave art (Hodder and Lane 1982). A system was in operation which linked the movements of livestock, people and material items in cycles of production and consumption, articulated to the genealogical structure through mortuary feasting and marriage exchanges. However, in a sense all of this stress on the incorporation of the commonplace into ceremonial life reflects a recognition that the contradictions of Middle Neolithic society were located at the level of the domestic community.

Apart from mortuary monuments, the Middle Neolithic is characterised by the building of ditched enclosures, often with interrupted ditches. This can also be traced back to more modest prototypes in the Early Neolithic. These were sometimes associated with settlements, yet empty of houses, as at Hluboke-Masuvky (Hockman 1972) or Langweiller 8 (Luning 1982), and very often have 'ritual' associations like the numerous female figurines at Tesetice-Kyovice in Moravia (Podborsky 1976). In north France, Britain and the North European Plain it is definitely the Middle Neolithic that witnesses the escalation of the building of large enclosures, although for quite diverse purposes. The filling of the ditches of these sites often suggests 'irrational' activities, like the intentional backfilling at Toftum, Sarup, Urmitz and Altheim. At

Noyen-sur-Seine (Mordant and Mordant 1978), Mayen (Eckert 1971) and Inden 9 (Eckert et. al. 1971) great concentrations of finds came from the terminals of interrupted ditches, including complete pots. At Toftum, pots had been smashed on large stones in the ditch bottoms (Madsen 1977,180). At both Toftum and Sarup the ditches contained layers suggesting the burning of great fires, often with masses of animal bones present (Madsen 1982,180). Inside the enclosures were often pits with purposeful deposits, like the 98 tarsal bones of bovids from pit 55 at the Michelsberg (Luning 1968,331) and the 'foundation deposits' of pots placed inside each other in pits A212 and A258 at Sarup (Andersen 1976,40). In the enclosure at Arupgard in Jutland a pit held a clay vessel containing imported metal and amber pieces (Jensen 1982,95). As with other aspects of ritual practice in the Middle Neolithic the feasting and purposeful deposition at the enclosures is connected to the genealogical structure of society. The presence of the ancestors was emphasised by the physical incorporation of their remains into the site. At Sarup, human jaws were found in the ditch fill (Andersen 1980,98), and at the Altenburg about twenty disarticulated bodies came from similar contexts (Luning 1968,234), while three skulls came from the inner ditch at the Goldberg (Koch 1971,55).

One can hardly doubt that the construction of these sites would involve the mobilisation of larger amounts of labour than the corporate tombs. This suggests the mobilisation of a higher level of segmentstion, a point which led Renfrew to hypothesise

chiefdom organisation for this period (Renfrew 1973). However, as we shall see in discussing Britain (chapter IV below), there are major pitfalls in connecting causewayed enclosures with the functions of either the 'central place' or the 'higher unity' of the Asiatic system. Despite this, the shift in use of some of these sites from temporary to permanent occupation, with continued deposition of prestige items and feasting suggests that in some way their associations were being manipulated by nascent power groups (Andersen 1980,99).

The presentation of explanations for the use of these enclosures has tended to suffer from attempts to connect them with a particular economic function, usually cattle management. The fact that the enclosures of Northern France may have been occupied (Howell 1983a) while those of Denmark were not would argue against any single explanation. As with the tombs, the uniformity of interrupted ditch enclosures from Poland to Ireland suggests a phenomenon which transcends regional diversity by fitting into local systems in different ways. Where the chronology is sufficiently fine-grained to discriminate, the sites appear to be built in 'waves' - in Denmark all of the enclosures date to either the Fuchsberg phase, contemporary with the change from earthen to megalithic tombs (Madsen 1977,181) or the MN1b/MN2 transition, with the introduction of passage graves (Andersen 1982,33). This encourages the suggestion that they can best be explained with reference to ideology.

The distinguishing feature of the Bandkeramik had been its integration as an efficient system of social reproduction. However, it did represent the imposition of a south-east European system onto north-west Europe. Change came with the constitution of north-west Europe as a regional system in its own right. The adjustment of the Neolithic lifestyle to deal with local conditions required more mobility and more diversity. If the Bandkeramik was integrated at the level of economic practice, it now became necessary for integration to take place at the ideological level. With the Bandkeramik, the combination of residence pattern and mode of production had made the lineage a fact of life. Thus within the cemeteries status differences between elder males and the rest of the community were represented in a naturalistic manner. As the ties between people created by economic practice became looser, it became necessary to mystify the relationship between elders and juniors by an emphasis on communality in the corporate tombs.

Since the division of labour might come to be seen as other than inevitable, it had to be presented as one of the basic conditions of social reproduction. At the same time, as the continuity of the lineage through residence was being broken down, the tombs and enclosures secured a continued association between people, place, and ancestors. In the Paris Basin, the trend toward settlement nucleation was more obvious, so that corporate tombs were not immediately introduced, although others of the changes of the time did take place. What emerged was a conceptual framework

which allowed Neolithic society to reproduce itself in Atlantic conditions. Diverse elements which had been present in different parts of the continent in the Early Neolithic (the house/barrow form, enclosures, axes, etc.) were formalised and incorporated, thus becoming more widespread. The homogeneity of material culture across western Europe at c.3200 bc was a result of its being an aspect of a broader structure of ideas; its integration was conceptual. At the same time we should stress that all of these material things were very much active in the constitution of the ideology. The fact that all of this existed as a "package" of ideas about agricultural production, lineality, monumentality and corporateness allowed it to be passed on and adopted by local populations in Denmark and Britain, in contrast to the insularity of the Bandkeramik.

Hodder (1984,63) argues that the elaboration of houses into tombs can best be connected with the seclusion of women and the control of their fertility. With this I have to differ. In lineage society the control of reproduction is achieved through the prestige goods system, which gives men access to the offspring of women. Here it is labour and not land which is the critical resource, and it is not until the plough is adopted on a large scale that questions of the devolution of property become important.

The Later Third Millennium.

Where kinship is the element which structures the social relations of production, it is to be expected that the most profound form of social change is that which affects kinship itself. In this section I will suggest that the major social changes which overtook north-west Europe in the latter part of the third millennium bc were the result of the transformation from a Lineage Mode of Production to a Germanic system, enacted through a change of kinship relations. These changes have to be seen as part of a very large system of contacts and interrelationships which linked the whole of Europe and the Near East, in which the development of individual communities was bound up (Rowlands 1984,151; Shennan 1986,118). Rather than dichotomise the 'diffusion' of cultural traits from their independent spontaneous generation by entirely autonomous groups we can see the spread and adoption of elements like plough agriculture, metallurgy and animal traction as the result of their manipulation in localised power strategies: the overall importance of the use of these ideas might be lost on the individual actors concerned. The cultural efflorescence of the Early Bronze Age in Europe was built upon the developments of over a millennium.

The plain pottery phase of the Middle Neolithic was one of the great periods of cultural homogeneity across much of Europe:

another such horizon is seen at the end of the Neolithic, with the Bell Beaker phenomenon. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the Beaker period is its standardised package of funerary items: the crouched grave burial with decorated Bell Beaker, barbed and tanged arrowhead, wristguard and whetstone (Shennan 1977,52). However, just as the maintenance of a degree of regional diversity denies the possibility of a 'megalithic race' in the Middle Neolithic, this package is effectively superimposed upon local cultural systems. This led Shennan (1982) to the conclusion that it was a phenomenon of an ideological nature. The later years of the third millennium saw the formation of a system of common values across virtually the whole of Europe, allowing the formation of new linkages of interaction (Sherratt 1984,129).

The 'linking-in' of areas through the Beaker network is best seen as the culmination of a period of change, in which numerous local developments were leading to a renewed convergence. Indeed, the Beaker burial rite and ceramic tradition can be demonstrated to have developed from those of Corded Ware in the Rhineland (Lanting and Van der Waals 1976,3,46). To the Corded Ware phase can also be attributed "an ideology which sought to legitimate social differentiation, not by hiding it, but by representing it as natural and immutable through the use of prestige items and material symbols which constantly referred to it" (Shennan 1982,156). Such a shift of ideological focus obviously implies the development of a more straightforward form of domination, but we should still seek some broader explanation of why it was that

this change came about. Tilley's (1984) discussion of a legitimation crisis in the Middle Neolithic of Scandinavia has already been pointed to as a partial answer to the problem of the transformation of symbolic systems, although with the provision that some note must be taken of possible changes in the material base which might force changes in the superstructure. I think that we have to argue that it was not just the means of expression of power which changed in the third millennium, but the whole of the basis of power relations. This was the outcome of the contradictions which I have noted in the productive base and the domestic community.

Shennan (1982,159) suggests that the end of the period of 'group-orientated' ideology was marked by a phase of ideological competition, in which the individualised display of power was practiced alongside the building of corporate monuments. This observation is of crucial importance. For if it is not merely the ideology which maintains the elite, but the mode of production which constitutes the elite which changes, structurally dissimilar groups will be advantaged. Just as the capitalists exist under different conditions than did the feudal lords, the elites of the Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age had a different character to the privileged elders of the Early and Middle Neolithic. In many parts of Europe in the years between 2800 and 1800 bc corporate tombs and massive public works existed side by side with the practice of individual burial with grave goods. For instance, Corded Ware graves are contemporary with

Vlaardingen and TRB phases E to G in Holland (Bakker 1982,112; Louwe Kooijmans 1976,283), while in Denmark single graves again coincide with later TRB (Rostholm 1982,36), yet these graves and groups still using megalithic tombs appear to be spatially distinct (Ebbesen 1983,133). In central Germany also the mid-third millennium was characterised by the coexistence of corporate tombs like those at Derenburg and Niederbosa, containing dozens of individuals, and single burials (Whittle 1985,251-253). In that area material culture seems to have formed a variety of separate but overlapping assemblages: Walternienburg, Bernberg, Tiefstich TRB, Globular Amphora (ibid.,253). The implication is that a series of separate assemblages relate to different networks to which communities could be connected, and different social messages which these items could convey.

While the megalithic phenomenon was formulated as part of an ideological renaissance in the later fourth millennium bc, we have noted that a further wave of more elaborate tomb-building took place in the years 2800-2400 bc. In Ireland, Orkney and Denmark huge passage graves were erected which are effectively more complex versions of prototypes in Brittany and elsewhere. In Central Germany and North-east France megaliths were built for the first time. In the case of the Allées couvertes it was decidedly the aspect of communal burial which was emphasised, hundreds of bodies being packed into sites like La Chausée-Tirencourt (Howell 1983b,66-67). In the central German

tombs the bones had often been scorched (Whittle 1985,251), possibly indicating a desire to separate flesh from bones. As Howell suggests, these practices may be in some way related to the dramatic change in settlement practices in the mid-third millennium. However, part of the explanation must also be concerned with an intensified ritualisation of the relations of production, with traditional authority reacting to the process of resolution of the contradictions of lineage society.

I should be a little more specific about the nature of these contradictions. The lineage society reproduces itself because its inequalities are based in the productive relations. Even then, the relationship between the elder and junior males has to be maintained by constant reference to the presence of the ancestors in mortal affairs. A potential crisis would always exist if the system of corporate production were replaced by new relations of production. If this were the case, the only sanctions open to the class of elders in order to maintain their dominant position would be supernatural ones. In the discussion of Big Men I noted that for the individual to attempt to achieve personal power and prestige is extremely difficult in lineage society. To alter the distribution of surplus product requires the dissolution of a large number of obligations and rules which are embedded in the lineage structure. Such a change is what is referred to in the burial of articulated male individuals in single graves under barrows and with items of wealth. In place of a generalised community of ancestors, reference was now being made to specific

male ancestors. People do not bury themselves: the burial of the dead is an aspect of the power strategies of the living. These new burial traditions were a means by which the inheritance of land and wealth from one individual to another was made legitimate.

It is my suggestion that these burials are the product of the development of Germanic relations of production. Kristiansen (1984,83) postulates that the repeated burial of one male and one female in the same grave is a reflection of the emergence of monogamous marriage, while the massive predominance of male burials in both the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Shennan 1977,54) suggests that the male line was of greater importance in descent and inheritance. A new feature of the period was that burials were dug into older monuments, presumably in order to distort the 'message' of the older site, and thus support the claims to authority of a new social order. Hence Globular Amphora burials are frequently found cut into TRB long barrows (Midgeley 1985,190), while a dozen or more Corded Ware barrows were built on the great höhensiedlung of Halle-Dörlauer Heide (Whittle 1985,255). The grave goods themselves document a new emphasis in society: the drinking vessels, battle axes, daggers, ornaments and archer's equipment all suggest that the individual was being depicted in death as a member of a warrior elite. The implication is that personal achievement and individual power are associated with male agnition. Furthermore, these items are quite different in nature to the prestige goods of the Middle Neolithic. Rather

than goods which elaborate on domestic items, and which thus symbolise and articulate the relations within the domestic sphere, these objects are both novel and exotic. The items concerned are rarely found in settlement contexts, a trend which continued when bronze items were introduced. This change in the function of prestige items is again related to the change of the structure of kinship. Prestige items ceased to be routinely circulated as prestations, maintaining the status quo, and became more open to manipulation in strategic gift-giving and as vehicles for prestige display. Once again, however, material items had a direct and active role in social strategy, for a major factor in the disruption of lineage relations would be the opening up of new exchange links which could supply these exotica. As this disruption progressed it would become more easy for the links between prestige, wealth, and the private control of the forces of production to be consolidated. Systems of contact which mobilised material items as symbols of power, like those fostered by the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker networks, would lead to the inception of change in other areas.

The category of individuals who now achieved the more elaborate burial treatment was rather different to those who had been in the richest graves of the Bandkeramik cemeteries. In contrast to the aged men of Nitra (Milisauskas 1978), these are men in the prime of life. This again emphasises personal achievement over genealogical position. As Sherratt (1981,297) suggests, these developments are to be linked with the increased use of the

plough. Plough agriculture allows a given area of land to be worked by a smaller group of people. Purely in terms of the distance which the agriculturalist has to walk to the fields each day, this will thus promote a more dispersed settlement pattern (Fig. 3.7). But possibly more important than the role of the plough in the seeding of soil is its function in preparing grassland for cultivation. In hoe agriculture, the same fields might be cropped year-in and year-out, since allowing grassland fallow would have required the costly process of paring and burning of turf to be undertaken before a plot could be cropped again. The most radical effect of the adoption of plough agriculture might thus be the freeing of communities from a concentration on particular plots. Agriculture would be spatially unrestricted with any area cleared of primary forest. Indeed, since problems of weed infestation increase proportionately as a particular plot is recropped (Smith 1984), there is something of a stimulus to keep on the move if one is able. At the same time, as the proportion of the domestic community directly involved in productive labour, in hoeing and weeding, is diminished, more people will come to be classed as 'unproductive'. Surplus production must be defined in terms of consumption as well as net product (Fig. 3.8), so that each unproductive individual within the group reduces the ability of the unit to compete for power and prestige. The relative power of women in lineage society depends on the fact that they are indispensable to both material production and the reproduction of the workforce. If they were to be alienated from the productive process (as is the case in East

African pastoral societies, to take an extreme example: Bonte 1977), the position of women would become more subservient.

Chapman (1982,112) points out that there is a flaw in Sherratt's 'secondary products revolution' argument, in that the dating of plough agriculture to a horizon of c.2600 bc is rather doubtful. There are certainly examples of plough marks which predate this, like Sarnowo 8, at 3620 ± 60 (Whittle 1977), for instance. What is undeniable however is that Sherratt has identified a phase in which the use of the plough is greatly increased. So rather than accept that a complex of secondary products swept across Europe transforming society in its wake, we might prefer to consider that a social change was enacted through the medium of economic intensification. A parallel case can be seen in MacCormack's study of the Sherbro highlands of Sierra Leone (1978), where the introduction of tractor-based agriculture has been inhibited by the interrelationship between hoe agriculture and lineage relations. To accept a new technology would be to accept a social change. In Neolithic Europe the development of contradictions between elder and junior males led to the introduction of economic strategies which undermined the power of the gerontocracy and the lineage. Plough agriculture was connected with new forms of exchange and communication, which eventually linked in with each other, producing a social change of pan-European proportions. Prior to this the plough would have been known about, but its use would have been restricted.

This line of argument can be supported with reference to settlement patterns. Goody and Sherratt both suggest that that plough agriculture causes social change because it creates a shortage of land, making the devolution of property a preoccupation of the landed classes. In fact, Howell's work in France (1983a,b), Kruk's (1980) and Boguki's (1982) in Poland, and Sherratt's (1983) in Hungary all suggest that this phase around the middle of the third millennium was one in which settlement exploded off of the loess and into the interfluves. The adoption of the plough in fact seems to have increased the supply of land available by making a great variety of soils workable, and freeing the agriculturalist to move at will from one area to the next from one year to the next. The investment of effort in a particular plot was no longer a determinant of the settlement pattern. This indicates a situation which is the reverse of that which Gilman (1981) suggests was the prerequisite of the development of social inequality in some parts of Europe, the development of a peasantry tied to the land through investment in the Mediterranean polyculture. The traces of human activity are more widespread but more ephemeral than before (Kruk 1980), suggesting smaller and more mobile units. This aspect also emphasises the difficulties of maintaining communal social relations after c.2600 bc.

To summarise: at the end of the fourth millennium the demands of a diversified economic base caused the formulation of cultural innovations which enabled the reproduction of lineage relations.

in the distribution of surplus product gave rise to a state in which a new ideology, of personal achievement and power, competed with and overcame the corporate system. Eventually, a system of widely-accepted symbols of power was instituted across Europe, but not before the adoption of a new set of economic strategies had undermined the relations of production of the lineage system. The formation which emerged dominant was that which I have defined in the earlier part of this chapter as the Germanic Mode of Production. In consequence a new, more competitive and more unstable phase of European prehistory had begun.

The Inception of the British Neolithic.

Over the years our perception of the problem of the origins of the Neolithic in Britain has been coloured by a degree of confusion as to whether we are talking about an economic or a cultural entity. The explanations which have been put forward tend to stress either one definition or the other, and predictably have resulted in conclusions which have been diametrically opposed. Thus Case (1969), considering the Neolithic to be an essentially cultural phenomenon, created an economic model based upon the discontinuity of material culture between the Mesolithic and Neolithic, and concluded that the process was one of colonisation by continental agriculturalists. Dennell (1983), by contrast, has recently proposed that the

deterioration of optimal hunting conditions in the postglacial, combined with a rise in population, might have led hunters and gatherers in Britain to domesticate cattle and pig and develop more intensive exploitation of 'wild' crops. "The integration of sheep and cereals into prevailing patterns of resource management", says Dennell, "is unlikely to have presented any major difficulties" (1983,186-187). The development toward a Neolithic economy is thus seen as entirely indigenous, while material culture change is effectively dismissed as epiphenomenal. Clearly, there is a need for an approach which will integrate all of the data.

In order to reconcile these contradictory views we have to broaden our focus from subsistence economics to the whole integrated system through which social and economic relations are reproduced through time. Furthermore, we have to see material culture not as the passive type fossil of the ethnic group or the economic system, but as having a dynamic role in social reproduction. Our problems are compounded when we consider Richard Bradley's suggestion that quite apart from being conceptually separate, the first use of cereals in Britain evidenced in pollen spectra discussed by Edwards and Hiron (1984) and the use of pottery and monument building may be separated by a considerable span of time (Bradley 1984a,9). If this is the case we may have to redefine the term 'Neolithic' in a fairly radical way in order to understand developments in Europe north of the Alps. In this final section I intend to

approach these problems by using the view of European prehistory which has been developed in this chapter to investigate the social circumstances of the later Mesolithic inhabitants of Britain, and the by discussing the context of their coming into contact with the continental Neolithic.

In the specific case of Britain we have to remember that hunting and gathering groups were under increasing pressure. Two major ecological perturbations had resulted from the last glaciation. Firstly, over much of Britain south of Scotland the rise of the sea level was resulting in the loss of vast areas of hunting land on the continental shelf. Secondly, and possibly more importantly, the reafforestation of the landscape had profound effects on the hunting economy. While the increased biomass of the forest would have provided a technically more productive ecosystem, the nutrients involved would not have been in any form ingestable by human beings. There were thus two separate but mutually-amplifying reasons why the productive process would have to be intensified. On the one hand one has the need to cope with the decline of natural resources, and on the other, in a society in which relations between elders and juniors were ordered through ceremonial and gift exchanges it is to be expected that the reproduction of society would require an increase of surplus labour over and above the needs of subsistence. There are several ways in which this would have been achieved, of which some are visible in the archaeological record.

Firstly, the intensification of material technology is evidenced in the adoption of multi-element tools (Myers pers. comm.), and would have increased the chances of success in hunting. Secondly, the use of fire ecology, as discussed by Mellars (1976). Thirdly, as Dennell suggests, the exploitation of wild plants and animals could be intensified. Fourthly, Andrew Myers suggests that certain areas of upland in Britain appear not to have been permanently exploited in the Mesolithic, but were increasingly used by lowland groups as complementary zones. Fifthly, an increase in investment in storage could have been undertaken, a factor which need not lead to sedentism, but which will promote the stability of group size, and thus more permanent social relations (Ingold 1983b,562). Finally, the use of coastal resources is of key importance. The loss of areas of flat coastal land to eustatic rise would have produced precisely the conditions which would make aquatic resources productive. The broad, shallow bathymetry of the coastal shelf would promote reduced wave-stress and high levels of nutrient suspension (Pearlman 1980,262-263). It might be reasonable to suggest that, as in Denmark (Rowley-Conwy 1983), a shift to coastal resources might result in the formation of semi-sedentary shoreline communities. However, as a result of the continued loss of land to the sea in the south and east of England (Churchill 1965; Morrison 1976) most of the potential evidence has been lost. Nonetheless, there are definite hints that by the end of the Mesolithic both seal and fish were important resources (Jacobi 1980a;b). Were sedentary communities to be founded on this basis, one might expect a localised rise in

population, as well as more closed social arrangements to restrict access to these spatially restricted but more predictable resources. The emergence of formal cemeteries in coastal Brittany (Bender 1978) has already been linked to the sedentary use of aquatic resources, and in this connection it is interesting to note the deposition of human skeletal remains in shell middens throughout Europe (Constandse-Westermann et. al. 1979). It seems possible that, as with the later corporate tombs, this relates to the way in which lineage societies symbolise the relationship between people and place through reference to their founding ancestors. Why else should one build stinking heaps of the debris from a virtually useless food resource?

It is thus likely that by the middle of the fourth millennium bc the indigenous inhabitants of Britain were involved in a complex variety of economic activities ranging from hunting and gathering to herding and fishing. The attendant social relations of these people may have varied from loose band structures to fully formed corporate descent groups articulated around the exchange of women and prestige goods. In this connection it is interesting to note that the architypal prestige item of the Neolithic, hard stone axes, may have been in circulation by the end of the Mesolithic (Hodder and Lane 1982,214). The introduction of cereals evidenced by pollen analysis, and possibly also of ovicaprids, might be expected to do no more than increase this heterogeneity, being adopted as part of a logistic broad-spectrum economy. Certainly, if we have a Mesolithic population involved in the exploitation

of aquatic resources it is to be reasoned that they, rather than any landlocked continental farmer, would be more likely to have the boats to effect cross-channel exchange. The question is then, why, given the range of possible economic strategies at the end of the Mesolithic, is the first Neolithic of the British Isles characterised by its homogeneity? Were conditions so bad that contact with the Neolithic led everyone to drop everything and immediately take up fixed plot horticulture? Even were this so, is the acceptance of agrarian techniques enough to lead to the wholesale adoption of continental material culture?

There is a considerable difference between the incorporation of cereals or sheep into a British Mesolithic economy and a wholesale adoption of continental Neolithic culture. The former does not necessarily imply any change from the prevailing heterogeneity of economic practice, while the latter represents a system which completely restructures the relations of production around the principles of genealogy and corporateness. This is a different kind of Neolithic from the Bandkeramik: an ideology rather than an economy, which explains why the acculturation of Britain and Denmark was achieved in this phase, while the rest of the continent had been 'neolithised' by a process of colonisation. It also explains why no Bandkeramik material has been found in Britain. We have already suggested that the organisation of society along lineage lines was incipient in Britain, so that contact with the European system as it was formalised over the period 3500-3200 bc had the effect of

accelerating social trends already under way. It realised a potential already present. This would occur in two stages, firstly the small-scale of domesticates which we have just mentioned, and then the adoption of monument-building, pottery and prestige goods, not as attractive novelties ('beads for the natives') (Dennell 1984,111) but as devices essential for the reproduction of society. This is the point at which diversified hunter-gatherers become agriculturalists. It follows that despite the obvious continental inspiration behind British Neolithic material culture, no one place of origin can be defined. Its constitution is the product of the interaction of various spheres of contact and exchange with the circumstances of local communities. Thus we can define a South-West group, whose pottery bears comparison with the Chasseen and whose enclosures (Palmer 1976) have affinities with the high-lying single ditched sites of the Chasseen and Chasseo-Michelsberg (L'Etoile, Chatenay-sur-Seine, Noyen-sur-Seine, Les Cardots, etc.). Elsewhere, pot forms relate more closely to those of Michelsberg and Hazendonk, while enclosures are low-lying and multiple-ditched, as in Germany and Denmark (the Altenburg, the Hetzenburg, Urmitz, Toftum, Sarup, etc.). As pottery decoration becomes pronounced, it gives no such impression of exclusive contact zones, which enforces the point that the Middle Neolithic of North-West Europe was essentially an integrated regional system.

To conclude, the adoption of Neolithic relations of production by

the indigenous population of Britain is conceivable only when we look upon these communities as dynamic, changing societies. Their incorporation into the European regional system did not depend upon colonisation, and was only indirectly a product of economic necessity. The formulation of an ideological system of social reproduction in the parts of the continent closest to Britain resulted in a European Neolithic which was much less introverted than the Bandkeramik. That it was not purely an economy allowed its knowledge to be transferred to native populations in Britain and the North European Plain even as it was in the process of being realised. This transmission was facilitated all the more by the active role of material items in articulating the ideology. The effect of the introduction of the system to Britain was to allow the full resolution of tendencies already present in Mesolithic society.

CHAPTER FOUR

CENTRAL ISSUES IN THE NEOLITHIC OF SOUTHERN WESSEX.

Introduction.

In the next two chapters I intend to deal with the Neolithic sequence of Dorset, south Wiltshire and lowland Somerset, a subject which has provided fuel for numerous models of prehistoric social processes (c.f. Atkinson 1956, Renfrew 1973, Mackie 1977, Burgess 1980, Whittle 1981, Braithwaite 1984, Bradley 1984b, Thorpe and Richards 1984, etc.). The subject has proved attractive because of the wealth of information available for the area. However, this material is of variable quality. The settlement history of Wessex, for instance, is less easy to consider than that of some of the other areas which I will discuss in later chapters, primarily as a result of the selective and regionalised collection of lithics. The study of monuments and burials is hampered by the low quality of many early excavations. In such a potential minefield, an approach grounded in a fairly explicit body of theory is essential in order to distinguish precisely what constitute relevant 'facts'. For this reason I intend to approach the problem not by attempting some form of synthesis of what has already been said, but by following some specific themes of study which might be expected to integrate the material. In the previous chapter I have suggested that the changes in economic practice and material culture which can be detected in continental Europe through the fourth to second millennia b.c. can best be explained by locating

origins at the level of the social relations of production. In this chapter I will begin to relate developments in southern Wessex to this scheme in a thematic manner, while in the next I will turn to the detail of specific local sequences.

Mode of production: lithic distributions and landscape use.

It seems reasonable to commence the study of Neolithic Wessex by considering the productive base which constrained and enabled social development, and the social relations which structured production. This will involve the iteration of a great deal of information upon which my later hypotheses will draw. As I have already noted, it is data which relates to the commonplaces of existence which are the most lacking for this period. They consist purely of lithics collected from surface contexts, faunal remains whose domestic nature is questionable, and a minute sample of botanical remains. In this first section I will concentrate on lithics and their contribution to the understanding of settlement patterns, and on patterns of landscape preference in general. It will be noted that a further discussion of lithics will be necessary when I come to deal with what procurement techniques have to tell us about social relations.

Most of the information which can be derived from a lithic assemblage is contained in the debitage (B.A. Bradley 1975). An

assemblage can be seen as the product of a series of activities, so that each stone tool results from a sequence of reduction which may include the procurement of raw materials, core preparation and initial reduction, primary trimming, secondary trimming and flaking, use and breakage, and modification and maintenance (Collins 1975,19-25). All of these activities will result in the creation of characteristic waste products. However, the assemblages with which I have had to work were collected largely in the era before the last world war, on the basis of rather flawed sampling criteria. Arrowheads and axes are overrepresented, while representative samples of debitage are rare. This largely restricts the scope of analysis to the dating of scatters on the basis of the presence of chronologically diagnostic implement types: leaf-shaped arrowheads in the earlier/middle Neolithic, petit-tranchet derivatives in the later (Green 1981), prepared cores in the earlier Neolithic, multiplatform and discoidal cores, polished edge implements and small 'button' scrapers in the later (Bradley and Holgate 1984, 109), and, where present, a distinction between bladelike waste material with some evidence of soft-hammer working in the earlier period and broader, hard-hammer flakes in the later (Pitts and Jacobi 1979).

Even this low level of analysis presents some problems. Many of the collections were relatively undiagnostic assemblages of scrapers, cores, awls and knives. In order to gain some chronological control of these I undertook a principal components

analysis of 112 assemblages of surface and excavated lithics from the south Wessex area (Appendix 21). This technique, which will be one of the main quantitative methods used throughout this thesis, was devised as a means of combining a number of variables in order to produce a reduced list of factors which are between them responsible for the total variation in a data set. If an inverse matrix is used, and cases substituted for variables, it is possible to classify multivariate cases according to their overall similarity. By plotting the principal components it is possible to visually display the associations of cases. While the factors are ranked according to the percentage of total variability which they account for, not all factors will be relevant to a particular research objective, so that it will often pay to consider even the more minor components. The initial aim of the analysis, carried out on the interactive PRIME system at Sheffield University computer centre, was to separate out undiagnostic surface collections by bringing them into association with collections of 'known' date. As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, under most configurations of principal components there does appear to be some distinction between assemblages of different date. However, it appears that the sites are more easily separated according to activity type. Plotting the second and third principal components (Fig. 4.3), the complex assemblages associated with sites of ceremonial type run out along the horizontal axis (henges, Grooved Ware pits and long barrows). In the upper part of the plot were a group of industries which were almost all from surface collections,

dominated by retouched flakes, cores and scrapers, and perhaps largely attributable to domestic activities. In the lower left-hand quadrant, however, were a group of sites which include the largely 'industrial' assemblages from Stourpaine, Hod Hill and the flint Mines at Easton Down. On the basis of this plot it seems reasonable to isolate a group of thirteen assemblages of essentially 'industrial' character (Appendix 18). These include the material from beneath the barrow Wilsford 54, situated close by an area where 'industrial' flintwork has been collected by the Stonehenge Environs Project (Richards pers. comm.). Furthermore, a series of sites from the Dorset Ridgeway, collected by Mr. C.E. Bean (South Winterbourne Monkton, South West Winterbourne Monkton, Pigeon House Barn and North Upwey) all appear to be somewhat intermediate between the domestic and industrial assemblages. The material from Maiden Castle appears to exhibit affinities with these. It is also interesting that several of the major sites in lowland Somerset, away from the flint producing areas of the chalk (Ham Hill, Meare, South Cadbury) also appear to contain a considerable industrial component.

The method which I have employed in the analysis of landscape preferences is to relate 'sites' to subsoil type (Fig. 4.4) and distance from major water courses (Fig. 4.5). It is recognised that the sample is extremely limited and biased, so that the aim of the analysis can only be to contrast sites of different type and period. To begin with, as Gardiner (1984,17) points out, lithic scatter sites of the earlier/middle Neolithic appear to be

quite restricted in their distribution (Figs. 4.6,4.12-4.21). They are concentrated on the chalk and greensand, but are also found on the limestones, clays and gravels. In general, they tend to be within two kilometers of a permanent water source. Where survey has been more intensive, it sometimes seems that scatters cluster near ecotones, like the pronounced escarpment on the edge of the Vale of Wardour which runs south of the present-day A30. Leaf arrowheads, the major diagnostic artefact of the period, show a slightly different distribution. That many arrowheads are found on the chalk merely reflects the distribution of settlement, but the large numbers on the clay and in a concentration around Christchurch could be explained in a number of different ways. Collection bias is certainly part of the answer, but the rest depends upon whether we consider that leaf arrowheads were principally items used in hunting, warfare or display. The former might be indicated by the association with heavy (wooded?) soils in the area of Yeovil and Sherbourne, while burials with arrowheads in the skeletons at Crichel Down (S. and C.M.Piggott 1944) and Hambledon Hill (Mercer 1980) might suggest otherwise. In any case, we can tentatively propose that the distribution of leaf arrowheads is more intense at the peripheries of the main settled areas.

The location of field monuments in the earlier/middle Neolithic also shows some degree of disjunction with that of settlement as a whole. Both Gardiner (1984,21) and Holgate (1984) have noted that causewayed enclosures tend to be positioned on the edge of settlement systems, while Bradley (1978a,103) recognised their peripherality to barrow clusters. The four enclosures in southern Wessex are all found on the chalk, yet appear to be more remote

from water sources than are other traces of settlement (Figs. 4.18-4.21). Long barrows, also, do not appear to reflect the general spread of settlement (Figs. 4.8,4.12-4.21). They are on the one hand more restricted in the landscape areas in which they are found, and on the other they are more remote from water sources. While it remains likely that the barrows were connected with particular communities, these were largely restricted to the upper chalk. One might thus suggest that the barrows were found on the edges of their territories rather than central to them. Such a relationship has already been suggested for Cranborne Chase (Barrett, Bradley, Green and Lewis 1981). If, however, we separate out those long barrows which could be considered to be earlier or later in date (on criteria outlined later in this chapter) a slightly different pattern emerges. The later barrows show a move onto the lower chalk and the greensand, and even the gravels instead of only the upper chalk and clays. Furthermore, the positioning of barrows away from water sources appears to be relaxed. This might imply a gradual change in the relationship between the living and the dead, from a spatial remoteness to a closer integration with the community.

The distribution of later Neolithic sites in South Wessex shows something of a paradox: a broader range of environments appears to be in use, and sites are found further away from the watercourses than before, yet at the same time there is an increase in the emphasis on the upper chalk and in particular the clay-with-flints (Fig. 4.9). The increase in number of sites from

the middle Neolithic seems too pronounced to be an artefact purely of collection bias. What is implied, I think, is a change of emphasis in the objectives of landuse. Bradley (1978a) suggested that this period saw a change to "a more diverse economy, making use of a wider range of resources and perhaps exploiting these on a more intermittent basis". This is clearly the case, although it is worth noting that 'resources' may not refer purely to subsistence requirements. For as Gardiner (1984,26) suggests, the intensification of activity on the clay-with-flints is connected with the increased exploitation of flint. Now, there is no reason why rain-fed cereal agriculture should not have been carried out on the light loessic soils which probably still existed on the clay-with-flints (Fisher pers. comm.). However, many of the areas which were colonised in the later Neolithic are ones some distance from water sources. Standing water is of greater importance for livestock than for arable. It is thus possible that the later Neolithic was characterised by a more complex inter-community division of labour, in which some social groups might have concentrated on the production of lithics, or cereals, or livestock. Inevitably, this would necessitate rather more intense exchange relations between communities (Halstead 1981).

Gardiner (1984,28) observes that "the general feeling in Cranborne Chase is that there is probably an almost continuous spread of later Neolithic flintwork extending across the clay-with-flints and similar opinions have been voiced by current

collectors in East Sussex". In these two areas this will be largely a consequence of the exploitation of the clay-with-flints flint, but it is also a facet of a broader phenomenon. In marked contrast to the discrete scatters of earlier/middle Neolithic flintwork, the later lithics form a continuous spread across the landscape, with 'sites' represented by increases in density. This pattern has been noted by the author in North Wiltshire and Mendip, while it can also be seen in the Thames valley (Holgate pers. comm.) and in the Stonehenge area (Richards 1984). There is a substantial hint here that activities which involved greater mobility evolved as time went on.

The later Neolithic arrowheads, of petit tranchet derivative type (Clark 1935) appear to be much more restricted in their distribution than the leaf arrowheads had been. They occur in great concentrations on the chalk and gravel, notably in the Stonehenge, Dorchester and Christchurch areas (Fig. 4.10). Petit tranchet arrowheads are, strangely, more often found near water sources than are leaf shapes (Figs. 4.18-4.21). It is important that the oblique forms of PTD, which may be later in date (Green 1981) and which are more exclusively associated with the Grooved Ware complex are even more spatially restricted than the Chisel-shaped types (Fig. 4.10). Their predominance in the areas around henge monuments and in the immediate environs of Christchurch (an area of intense Grooved ware activity) may be a consequence of their circulation in highly-ranked spheres of exchange. In general, the spatial distributions suggest that

between the middle and late Neolithic arrowheads changed their function from being weapons of war to being 'weapons of exclusion' (to use Douglas' term). (Appendix 22 for details).

The identification of oblique arrowheads as high status items is paralleled by the distributions of maceheads, plano-convex knives and polished discoidal knives in much the same areas: chalks and gravels close to standing water (Fig. 4.11). This is in sharp contrast to the individual burials of the later Neolithic, which, while predominantly found on the chalk, actually increase in density away from water. Two alternative (but not mutually exclusive) explanations present themselves: either burial came to be performed in areas remote from centres of population (and particularly high-status areas) or the burial of individuals and the use of particular portable artefacts represented alternative power strategies.

To sum up: the spatial distributions of lithic artefacts in relation to field monuments present certain possibilities concerning Neolithic land-use which can be incorporated into the description of mode of production. In the earlier/middle Neolithic settlement concentrated on chalk and greensand areas with easy access to surface water, even if some evidence for activity in this period can be found in other areas. The earlier monuments appear to have been built on the edges of social territories, barrows perhaps being connected with a lower level of a segmentary hierarchy of groups than enclosures. Leaf

arrowheads suggest that hunting or warfare (or both) took place peripherally to the larger social territories. In the later Neolithic a more complex pattern emerged, in which a degree of specialisation in material production can be suggested. Residence patterns may have become more mobile, while the distribution of certain 'complex' artefacts may identify areas of high status.

Mode of Production: cereals, livestock and social relations.

What can be said about the crops which were grown in Neolithic Britain is extremely limited, as a result of the very few seed impressions and samples of charred grain which have been recovered. These themselves are subject to considerable biases (Dennell 1972). We can be sure that Emmer, Einkorn and perhaps bread wheat were in use, and also hulled and six-row barley (Hillman 1981,124). Further, on the basis of Dennell's (1976) reassessment of Helbaek's work on the Windmill Hill seed impressions, it seems likely that on the lighter chalk soils both wheat and barley were grown, but that on the clay solely wheat would be in use. As spelt had yet to be introduced, there would be no winter wheat, and hence a single yearly sowing. Jarman, Bailey and Jarman (1982,142) insist that as legumes are found in rotation with cereals in the Neolithic of Europe and the Near East they were probably also present in Britain. Such a rotation fixes and replaces nitrogen in the soil, and hence is highly suitable for fixed-plot horticulture. However, the evidence for

legumes is scant, and in the British climate they might prove prone to weevil and aphid attack (F. Green 1981).

The earliest record of the use of the ard plough in Britain is provided by the marks beneath the South Street long barrow, dated before 2810 ± 130 bc (BM-356). Although the artefactual evidence for agricultural technology prior to this is restricted to a single wooden digging stick recorded from the Baker platform in the Somerset Levels (Rees 1979) it is reasonable to suggest that as in central Europe (Kruk 1980; Sherratt 1981; Rowley-Conwy 1981; Jarman, Bailey and Jarman 1982) the bulk of horticulture was carried out on a fixed-plot basis with hoe and digging-stick. This kind of agriculture does not require long fallow periods, and loessic soils like those which at one time existed over much of Southern England (Catt 1978) seem to be very robust in the face of longterm monocropping (Jarman, Bailey and Jarman 1982,141). In the absence of the plough, the clearance of grass fallow would be a major undertaking. Grass roots resist burning, so that each time an area was brought into cultivation it would have to be deturfed, a phenomenon which may be evidenced in the buried soil beneath the bank at Windmill Hill (Bradley 1978a,16-17). An area which had been cleared of forest or of grass would thus represent a considerable investment of corporate effort. If Reynolds' (1979,58-64; 1981,108-111) figures concerning the very slow decline of soil fertility with ancient cereal crops are to be accepted, it might make little sense to clear a fresh plot each year. Spending a certain amount of effort

on weeding throughout the year might be a preferred option. A system of agriculture might thus develop which might promote stable, long-lived clearances: this might be reflected in the pollen record.

Superficially speaking, we have a far better knowledge of the livestock component of Neolithic agriculture in Britain. The main domestic animals were cattle and pig, with sheep rather less well represented (the reader should note that in what follows I will be making reference to percentage data on what are often very small assemblages: see appendix 16). Wild species are consistently found as a minor element in faunal assemblages. But aside from red deer, the contribution of these species was more as fur-bearers than as a meat source (Grigson in Smith et. al. 1981). Conventional wisdom has it that a sequence exists in which cattle dominate the economy of the earlier Neolithic, being replaced by pigs in the face of woodland regeneration in the later Neolithic; renewed clearance of the downland allowed sheep to become of greater importance in the Early Bronze Age (representing 38% of the sample at Snail Down: Tinsley and Grigson 1981,225). However, what one finds in a faunal assemblage depends upon where one gets it from (Meadow 1975), and almost all of the animal remains which I have studied from South Wessex come from ceremonial or mortuary contexts. I have suggested that the predominance of pigs on Grooved Ware sites is to be connected with their use as a feasting animal rather than with environmental conditions (Richards and Thomas 1984,206). At other sites of late Neolithic date, such as the later silts at Maiden Castle, the Peterborough ware layers in the

Dorset cursus, or the Maiden Castle long mound, cattle continue to dominate the assemblage (Fig. 4.22). Furthermore, the Grooved Ware pits in the Stonehenge area seem to exhibit a falloff in the percentage of pig with distance from Durrington Walls: 83% at Larkhill (just outside of the monument), 45% at Ratfyn, 38% at King Barrow Ridge. However, even the assemblages from the causewayed enclosures and long barrows may be misleading. The only site from South Wessex which I should personally be happy in designating 'domestic', the pit at Rowden, south Dorset (Woodward 1981), had 60% sheep (Fig. 4.22). If we are to postulate a return to woodland conditions in the later Neolithic, one would expect to find not only a high representation of pig, but also of wild species (Smith 1984). In Figure 4.26 I have plotted the ratio of sheep to pigs against the percentage representation of wild species in all of the assemblages which I have studied from south Wessex. Wild species account for less than 5% in all of the henge sites, and usually less than 2%. Those with higher percentages of wild animals (Thickthorn Down, Wor Barrow, Maiden Castle, the Dorset Cursus) are often earlier in date.

Theoretically, it should be possible to obtain considerable information about the structure of livestock resources from details of skeletal aging and sexing. However, there are problems here as well. Grant (1982) outlines a system for arranging the mandibular tooth wear of ungulates into 'mandible wear stages', based upon the state of wear of all of the teeth in the jaw. In the samples which I have studied the number of complete mandibles

available is negligible. What remain are simply loose teeth. Clearly, the margin of error which exists when one attempts to age animals on single teeth is greatly increased; nonetheless, as this is all that I have to work with it is essential to at least try to make use of the method. Both pig and cattle teeth were considered, sheep and deer being recorded in too small numbers for the results to mean very much. The plots for first, second and third molar wear stages for pigs (Figs. 4.27-4.29) appear to demonstrate that these animals were slaughtered very young; by comparison with Bull and Payne's data (1982,60-64) mostly in the first two to three years of life. This is most marked at the henge site of Durrington Walls. The pig teeth from the Southern Circle appear to show peaks of wear very early in the sequence, perhaps concentrating at about one year of age. The teeth from the outer ditch at the same site again show a predominance of younger animals, although with less of a pronounced emphasis on the very young. Here, as at the other henge sites of Woodhenge and Mount Pleasant, there are hints of multiple peaks in the plots, so spaced that they could result from a single yearly culling. This suggests that the feasting activities associated with henge monuments might be annual, or at least restricted to a particular time of the year. The assemblage from the Grooved Ware pits at Ratfyn again shows a predominance of very young pigs (less than one year?), although that from Black Patch, Pewsey contains rather older animals. Somewhat less can be said about pigs in earlier assemblages. The collection from Maiden Castle is complicated by the problems of sorting out the later Neolithic

material, so that the only causewayed enclosure from which I have obtained adequate toothwear information is Whitehawk Camp, in Sussex (material BMNH), which can hardly be taken as representative of south Wessex. Nonetheless, at this site the pigs were killed across a broader age range than at the henges, perhaps going up to four or five years.

With cattle, the practice of culling at an advanced age appears to have been very widespread. At the causewayed enclosures and at the henges of Marden and Woodhenge only very old animals seem to have been killed (Figs. 4.30-4.32). This seems to accord with Legge's (1981) suggestion that a dairy economy was in operation in some parts of Britain in later prehistory, with cows only being slaughtered when they were past milking age. The cattle teeth from the Grooved Ware pit at Ratfyn, however, suggest rather younger animals, perhaps no more than two years old on the basis of Grigson's (1982b) criteria for eruption and wear. The henges of Durrington Walls and Mount Pleasant (in the pre-Beaker silts at least) provided very large collections of cattle teeth. At both of these sites the killing of cattle seems to have been spread over a number of age classes. As with pigs, the cattle wear stages seem to show peaks which may relate to slaughter on an annual or bi-annual basis. As Grant (1982) points out, one would expect the wear stages to be unevenly distributed as the length of time represented by each stage is not uniform. However, several of the peaks and troughs in these plots extend across more than one stage.

Legge's hypothesis concerning dairying also depends upon it being purely cows which were killed in old age. My data on the breadth of bovid metacarpals (Fig. 4.33) accord with Legge's (1981,176). At Woodhenge, Mount Pleasant, Maiden Castle, Whitehawk and Stonehenge the measurements fall predominantly into the 'female' range as Legge defines it. However, the metacarpals from Durrington Walls show a more even spread between male and female.

It seems clear that the consumption of large quantities of meat was an aspect of the use of various types of monumental construction in the Neolithic. At none of these sites is there much evidence for complex bone processing, marrow-splitting and butchery marks. Both Legge (1981) and Smith (1966) point to the presence of articulated limbs of cattle in the ditch silts of causewayed enclosures. To add to this we can note that at all the henge monuments, and also at the Thickthorn Down long barrow and at Hambledon Hill (material from Sieveking's 1951 excavations, Jackson archive) relatively high ratios of bones associated with meaty parts of pig and cattle as against waste parts (as defined by Maltby: 1979,7) were recorded. This is a further indication that at these sites it was the consumption rather than the slaughter and butchery of animals which was undertaken.

Grigson (in Ashbee 1966) has noted that at certain long barrows (Fussell's Lodge, Bowl's Barrow, Amesbury 42, Knook 2, Corton, Sherrington 1 and Tilshead Lodge) the remains of bovid foot bones

(metapodia, cuboids, phallanges) have been recovered in such circumstances as to suggest the burial of ox hides, often in association with bovid skulls. This is clearly connected with the purposeful deposition of cattle skulls at the causewayed enclosures of Whitesheet Hill (Piggott 1952), Maiden Castle (Grigson in Smith et. al. 1981,199) and Hambledon Hill. 'Head and hooves' burials continue into the Beaker period, as at Hemp Knoll (Robertson-Mackay 1980) and at Beckhampton (Young 1950). However, the circulation and deposition of cattle hides as artefacts of symbolic power may be an even more widespread phenomenon. In Appendix 19 I have set out cuboids, metapodia and phallanges as a percentage of the total 'waste' or butchery material from 31 assemblages from south Wessex. As a comparison, the percentages of these elements in three phases of the domestic Iron Age site at Old Down Farm, in the Hampshire chalklands (Thomas 1982) are 25.58%, 30% and 28.57%. It is thus interesting that those Neolithic sites which have bovid foot bones as less than 40% of total waste fragments are either 'domestic' (Rowden) or late in date (Mount Pleasant Beaker layers; Maiden Castle later silts). By contrast, Grooved Ware pits (Black Patch; Ratfyn), long barrows (Fussell's Lodge; Thickthorn; Wor Barrow), causewayed enclosures (Robin Hood's Ball; Hambledon) and henge monuments (Marden; Woodhenge; Durrington southern circle and northern circle; Mount Pleasant timber circle and outer ditch) can all have extremely high percentages. In many cases, then, the bovid component of the faunal assemblage from ceremonial monuments in South Wessex may be made up entirely from meat-eating debris,

skulls and hides.

Why this particular emphasis is made on the symbolic qualities of cattle as opposed to other species in mortuary and ritual contexts is a question which has to be addressed. We can begin to consider the social role of cattle by concentrating on the evidence for feasting. Legge (1981,179) states that "the majority of cattle killed at the causewayed camps are female, and.....these animals represent the surplus available from economies based at lowland (and undiscovered) Neolithic sites". As Grigson (1982 a) points out, equal numbers of male and female must have been born, yet the young males culled soon after birth in the system presented by Legge are absent from the enclosures. This leads one to two conclusions: the causewayed enclosures must have been tied in to a broader (regional?) economy, and this economy involved the movement of cattle from one place to another. Cattle were not at the enclosures at the time of year when young males were being culled. Any interpretation of the enclosures as economically independant defended settlements has therefore to be considered critically.

Sherratt (1981) suggests that the development of dairying economies before the middle of the third millennium is unlikely, since any major human dependence upon milk consumption can only be achieved once a biological tolerance for lactose has been achieved. However, yoghurt, cheese, butter or ghee are largely free of lactose (Grigson pers. comm.). This being the case, dairy

products could provide the bulk of the protein for a prehistoric diet. This does not of itself explain the importance of cattle in the Neolithic economy. Gamble (1981) argues that the capability of an agrarian system to provide 'wealth' is constrained by the fact that the surplus product exists purely as agricultural produce. From this argument one could easily get to the point of insisting that prestige can only be obtained by using surplus product to maintain craftsmen engaged in the manufacture of prestige items. This is not the case, for agricultural produce can fuel the prestige system more directly through feasting (Friedman and Rowlands 1977). If cereals and dairy products were the staples of the diet, the meat of cattle killed at infrequent occasions might be more suited to feasting, and might thus effectively constitute a more highly ranked food, circulating under different conditions. This recalls In this context it is important to point out that in a lineage or tribal mode of production the organisation of cattle is a largely (and often exclusively) male occupation, while the digging and harvesting of the crops is seen as 'women's work' (Kuper 1982,10). It follows that the higher rank of livestock and its association with feasting and ritual serves to legitimate the domination of women by men, even though it is the women who produce the more essential staples.

I would thus reject the suggestion that an independent nomadic pastoralist system existed in Neolithic Britain (Jarman, Bailey and Jarman 1982; Barker and Webley 1978). Nomadic pastoralism is

usually an economy which arises as the consequence of the growth of state societies nearby (Gilbert 1975), and the pastoralists usually exist as an element within a more complex regional economy. Only the Masai manage to remain entirely independent of horticulturalist neighbours, and this by the rather extreme measure of drinking the blood of their animals (Goldsmitt 1979). The whole essence of the economic aspect of the European Neolithic lifestyle is that the arable and pastoral components are finely balanced: if the crops fail, you can eat the cows. The suggestions that cattle were actually circulating within the landscape, and that their slaughter took place in monuments remote from the settlement areas emphasises a complex inter-community division of labour, and one which was intimately concerned with movement in space and synchronisation in time.

In lineage societies, the dominant class of elders exert their control over the dominated through the control of the marriage system (Rey 1979,51). The role of prestige items in articulating such a system has already been noted. However, in societies in which social reproduction is perceived as being primarily concerned with the flocks and herds, it may be livestock which is the primary bridewealth medium. In such a system it will be important that women be separated from the means of appropriation of their own fertility. Thus in the New Guinea Baruya, women are not allowed access to either axes or salt (Godelier 1982,8). So the circulation of cattle would be carried out in a manner as remote as possible from the domestic domain. The women of a

lineage would be constrained to the fields, yet the movement of cattle across the downland and into the vale country would be connected with a broader sphere of contacts between lineages, only accessible to men. In Britain, calving takes place in May or thereabouts, and from then until September or October the cows will give milk. Throughout this period the raw milk would be converted into storable products like cheese, butter and ghee, which would necessitate a proximity to the home settlement, even if milking were a male preserve. Toward the end of this period the cereal harvest would have to be brought in; at this time the maximum workforce would be needed (men as well as women?). But by late autumn the cattle would have ceased milking and the demand for agricultural labour would be diminished. As the weather grew worse it might prove advantageous to take the cattle off the exposed uplands and into the river valleys, perhaps aggregating the herds of several lineages in order to reduce the proportion of the community concerned with herding. The separation of part of the community and of its herds, and their return the following spring would doubtless be marked with rites of separation and reincorporation, which would certainly take place in a location of liminal nature. It may thus be no accident that the massive causewayed enclosure complexes of Hambledon Hill and Whitesheet Hill lie at the juncture of the chalk downs and the wet clay lowlands of the Blackmoor Vale. Unlike sheep, cattle are well suited to the wet lower ground on the fringes of the uplands. As Bradley (1978a,31) points out, it is this area of North West Dorset, lowland Somerset and the vale of Gloucester which

possesses the highest present-day cattle densities in Britain.

So the apparent primacy of cattle in Neolithic Wessex may result from a complex of associated factors. They may have been more closely connected with the male community. In East Africa only males are buried in cow hides (Kuper 1982,11-12), a striking parallel with long barrow practice. Being both the property of the ancestors and the medium of marriage exchange, cattle would be an articulating agency in the relations between male and female, old and young, living and dead. Being mobile, unlike sheep or pig which would spend the entire year in the vicinity of the settlement (and would thus be lower status, female-associated creatures) cattle would be the vehicles of integration between local lineages. Finally, being connected with gender differences, with feasting, with rites of exclusion and reincorporation and with the control of marriage and kinship, cattle were central to the system of social reproduction. As I suggested in the first paragraphs of this chapter, the power relations of this society were constituted in a kinetic manner, by the cyclical process of meetings and partings, of sowings and harvests, births and killings. The control of people and of livestock was invested in the control of their movements and meetings in time and space.

Standstill or reorganisation?

The hypothesis which I have just put forward concerning the role

of cattle as an articulating agency in Neolithic society is essentially a static one. It really only applies to the earlier part of the period. As I have hinted in dealing with landscape use, and as Whittle (1978; 1980a&b) and Bradley (1978b) have suggested in more forceful terms, there is considerable evidence that economic practice was rather different in the later Neolithic. On the basis of pollen analytical evidence for woodland and scrub regeneration, Whittle and Bradley both proposed that "a population grown too large on the initial riches" (Whittle 1978,39) of clearance and cultivation fell upon a period of agricultural recession in the middle years of the third millennium. An imbalance between population and resources led to soil decline, loss of soil stability, regeneration of clearances. It would not be until the end of the millennium, with the building of the large henges and the rise of new social hierarchies associated with Beaker pottery and prestigious funerary practices that a full recovery would be effected (Whittle 1980a,334). Extending the model backwards in time, Mercer (1981) suggests that the building of causewayed enclosures in Wessex could be connected with a growth of territoriality and a pressure on land in the years between 2800 and 2500 bc.

However, I suggest that this is a model which has slipped into orthodoxy on very shaky foundations. Population dynamics models are very much a part of the baggage of the ecological archaeology of the 1970's. Where it is denied that 'cold', precapitalist societies are as riddled with class antagonisms and internal

contradictions as are modern capitalist ones, and their adaptations are considered as homologous to those of biological organisms, only the reaction to external stimuli will be considered. The idea of an agricultural 'standstill' is the consequence of not considering internal change. Just as Whittle (1978,34) rightly criticised Renfrew (1973) for assuming that the increasing investment of effort in monuments throughout the Neolithic was a consequence of a steady and unbroken growth in population, it is necessary to criticise Whittle for assuming that all populations will inevitably rise to carrying capacity, and for the Malthusian supposition that all social and technological innovations owed their genesis to the balancing of relations between population and resources.

There are other flaws in the model. Firstly, while valley alluviation doubtless extends back into the Neolithic (Bell 1982), there is little evidence for large scale periods of synchronised runoff until much later (Shotton 1978). Indeed, many of the soil changes which have been blamed upon Neolithic cultivation, like the inception of lessivage, may have a much earlier origin in postglacial canopy conditions (Fisher 1982). A further complicating factor lies in exactly what is considered to have been regenerating in the third millennium. There is still considerable confusion concerning clearance in Neolithic Europe, and particularly as to the nature of the 'elm decline'. Rowley-Conwy (1982) argues that the scale of the elm decline was such that it could hardly have been entirely anthropogenic. Only

woodland clearance on a massive scale could have had such an effect. Ten Hove (1968) shows that the elm decline also took place in areas which have no evidence of human occupation at the time, as in the case of northern Norway. If we are not clear as to how much of the vegetational disturbance of the late fourth and early third millennia can be attributed to human agency, it is difficult to argue that this activity decreased over time.

This last point introduces something of an imponderable into the argument, and emphasises the lack of clarity in inferring human activity from the pollen record. As Edwards suggests, it is "rather dangerous to talk of a general third millennium regeneration.....unless all the sites bore a relative constant and known relationship with the human community causing the inferred impact" (1979,263). We might have to consider the possibility that the apparent change in human influence on the pollen record reflects not a decrease in the degree of influence, so much as a change in the structure of that influence. For instance, under some conditions, small localised clearances may not be detected at all (Edwards 1982). At Flanders Moss in the Firth valley, Turner argued that clearances had been too small to detect (Smith et. al. 1981,173). The pollen of cereals and arable weeds are produced in less abundance and travel less far than those of grasses and plantain (Edwards 1979). So in a grassland environment like that of later Neolithic Wessex (Evans 1971), cultivation might go unnoticed in the very few pollen spectra available for the chalklands (Waton 1982). Finally, one aspect of

the vegetational record which contradicts any idea of an agrarian crisis is the evidence of very large tracts of woodland which had never been cleared (Smith et. al. 1981,206). The proposed selective pressure of scarce resources and limited land simply did not apply. Waton's (1982) pollen diagrams for Lewis and Snelsmore (Berkshire) show little evidence for clearance until the Middle Bronze Age and the Iron Age respectively.

It is an unfortunate effect of the coarse grain of the archaeological record that we have very little resolution on the artefactual chronology of the British Neolithic beyond a distinction between an earlier and later part. Within each of these two divisions, we are aware that quite different sets of material equipment and economic practice were in use. Hence it is all too easy to emphasise the discontinuity between the two, and impose some cataclysm between them. It is more difficult, but more rewarding, to consider the mechanisms involved in a transition. Whittle's evidence for the cessation of cultivation on the chalk reaches its peak in the years between 2900 and 2500 bc. How can this be reconciled with the fact that it was in this same period that sufficient labour was available for the construction of the two most gigantic edifices of British prehistory, the Dorset cursus and the Hambledon Hill complex? I am not about to suggest that agricultural decline and depopulation have not taken place in the past. Nonetheless, I suspect that this is an idea which has been projected back upon prehistory from more recent European experience. Agricultural

depopulations did take place in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries AD, but their causes had nothing to do with an imbalance between population and resources. Still less were they a consequence of the Black Death, or any other natural calamity. The late medieval period saw the birth of both agricultural capitalism and the western European mercantile world-system (Wallerstein 1974). The crisis was the result of the imbalance between the prices of cereals and wool, and the consequent shift to sheep grazing (Slichter Van Bath 1963,164-165). All of the factors involved - market forces, capitalist reproduction, enclosure, would have been absent in prehistory.

To say that population had temporarily overstretched resources, or had gone beyond the initial potential of an area, is rather like saying that the Neolithic folk were having 'a bit of a breather' before getting on with the later Neolithic. The evidence of the lithic distributions is that the nucleated scatters of the earlier Neolithic give way to more extensive and diffuse spreads (and may be interpreted as representing a changed system of landuse), while the pollen record could be read to suggest a more mobile form of agriculture. If this were connected with the use of the plough, the previous emphasis on long-lived clearances for garden plots would no longer be necessary. It is impossible to consider this phase of activity in isolation from events on the other side of the channel, and equally impossible not to note its

synchronicity with the change of residence and settlement patterns which, in the previous chapter, I have linked to a restructuring of the social relations of production. This suggests that the changes evident in Wessex in the second quarter of the third millennium and subsequently are an aspect of a much broader pattern. In continental Europe the contradictions internal to the middle Neolithic lifestyle had begun to resolve themselves in the development of a new social formation. Whether the fact that similar processes were taking place in Britain was the result of direct contact or parallel development is open to argument. Indeed, the possible combinations of independent change and contact with foreign ideological systems will form an object of later discussion.

Mortuary practice: political economy of the body.

The human body is the yardstick by which we measure space and time. For the individual both of these dimensions are experienced from the focal point of the body (Tuan 1974,223;1977,40). Space is moulded into left and right, back and front, while time is split up according to bodily rhythms and cycles. For this reason, the attitudes which people have to the body will be culture-specific, and connected with the relations of production. The body is at once an instrument of production, an agency of reproduction, and a subject of domination (Foucault 1977b,25). Since Hertz's seminal study of the collective representation of

death (1960) it has been clear that the use of the body as a symbol in mortuary practice is a key to the attitudes and values of a society. The attempts by archaeologists to 'read off' the relative rank of an individual according to the richness of grave goods or the investment of effort into mortuary ritual (Binford 1971; Saxe 1971) are thus subject to the form of representation operating within a society.

The way in which the body is considered is an aspect of a deeper structure, which Foucault (1977b, 23) connects with what he calls the 'technology of power'. In different societies, the body is 'invested' with power relations in different ways. Foucault (ibid., 137-143) details the way in which the extension of a technology of discipline and surveillance in the eighteenth century allowed a new control over the movement and freedom of the body. Institutions like prisons, schools, hospitals, asylums and factories all contributed to this control through the supervision of the individual and through an architectural organisation of space which defined times and loci for particular activities (Hirst 1985). Such 'panoptic' institutions represented a genuine transformation of the technology of power, since it was no longer possible for the individual to be aware of when he or she was not being monitored. In precapitalist societies, such an extensive system of control is not possible. Control of the body is thus ideological in nature. Where the enclosure and partitioning of a society as a whole is not possible, a microcosm of the world and its internal relationships can be manipulated

within a bounded analytic space, in ritual (Turner 1969,39). The use of the body as a symbol, then, may be of considerable importance to power strategies. But it follows that as much as the variations in body treatment and grave furnishing, the changes in the degree of preoccupation with the dead and the way in which they are represented as time progresses will also be instructive.

Van Gennep's (1960) scheme of 'rites of passage' applies most pertinently to the social recognition of the physical change of state of the body, in puberty rites, marriage and mortuary practice. Death is in some senses the most important of these, posing as it does the threat of finality and dissolution to the community. A central aim of funerary practices, then, is to give the impression that death is not random but controlled (Metcalf 1981,576). A person is not held to be fully dead until all social links with them are severed, with the funeral, which may be linked to the temporal cycle by being held at a particular time of year (Harris 1982,45; Humphreys 1981,263). The way in which this is achieved will be closely articulated to the way in which time is conceptualised, and this link provides an opportunity for the archaeologist in the interpretation of the prehistoric mentality.

The Neolithic period in south Wessex is blessed with an extensive mortuary record, although it is one of highly variable quality. Up to the middle of the third millennium the major rite was one

of burial under earthen long barrows (Fig. 4.35 for chronology). In the following five hundred years or so a diverse insular tradition of single burials beneath round barrows and in flat graves prevailed (Kinnes 1979), whose relative scarcity may be largely a function of the difficulties involved in isolating them as field monuments. Finally, from the end of the third millennium onwards, the continentally-inspired rite of burial with grave goods selected from a range of Beaker-associated items became widespread. These three components appear as quite separate entities amenable to a purely internal analysis. However, a closer investigation suggests a considerable degree of chronological overlap (Fig. 4.35), necessitating comparisons between the strategies which lay behind the different traditions of representation.

The sample of excavated long barrows in southern England (I am not limiting myself here to the study area, but am using the tradition as a whole as the basis of internal comparison) numbers over 60 sites (Appendix 1). Of these, the examples in southern Wessex whose quality of excavation and publication can be described as adequate are restricted to Thickthorn Down (Drew & Piggott 1936), Wor Barrow (Pitt-Rivers 1896), Holdenhurst (Piggott 1937), Fussell's Lodge (Ashbee 1966) and the Maiden Castle long mound (Wheeler 1942). To this can be added the sites of Woodford 2 (Vatcher 1964), Kingston Deverill 1 (Vatcher 1965) and Hambledon Hill (Mercer 1980), whose publication presently remains incomplete, and the outlying sites of Horslip,

Beckhampton Road, South Street (Ashbee, Smith & Evans 1981), Wayland's Smithy 1 (Atkinson 1965), Lambourne (Wymer 1965), Nutbane (Morgan 1959), Alfriston (Drewett 1976), Badshott (Keiller & Piggott 1939) and Julliberries Grave (Jessup 1937;1939). Recent contributions (Bradley 1984b; Thorpe 1984) have indicated that the long barrows do not constitute an homogenous entity, but that change can be recognised through time. The factors which Thorpe and Bradley emphasise are the increase in monumentality in some tombs, the restriction of burial in long barrows to adult males, the change in body state from disarticulated to articulated, the decrease in the number of individuals interred, and the divergence of monumental form. In general, I concur with the results of these analyses, but believe that there are a few further points which could be added.

From the results of all of the long barrow excavations mentioned above, a matrix of trait associations was created (Appendix 7). The aim of the analysis was to investigate whether there were recurrent associations between particular aspects of construction, body treatment and funerary furnishing. While there was a considerable overlap, five basic groups of associations resolved themselves:-

1). Disarticulated bodies/pottery with burials/'selection' of bones/burials on platforms/basal earth layers/cattle skulls/hide burials/trapezoid mounds;

2). Burnt bones/pits;

3). Flint cairns/mixed articulated and disarticulated bodies/pits/timber pre-barrow structures/hide burials;

4). Articulated burials/few burials/grave pits/arrowheads with burials/turf mounds/timber structures/U-shaped ditches;

5). Burials absent.

Groups 1 and 2 and groups 3 and 4 appeared to overlap to an appreciable extent. Group 5 is largely restricted to north Wiltshire and will not be considered here. Fussell's Lodge, with a radiocarbon date of 3230±180 bc (Ashbee 1966) falls into Group 1, while Wayland's Smithy 1 (2820±130 bc) and Wor Barrow (2490±70 bc; Pers. comm. Bradley) are in group 3. Group 4 includes Nutbane (2721±150 bc) and Alfriston (2360±110 bc), and also the Barrow Hills mound in Oxfordshire, with its date of 2550±60 bc and its burial associations of Kinnes' (1979) Stage D. These results tend to agree with the picture of a tradition of disarticulated burial being replaced by a greater emphasis on monumentality and a restriction of access to burial.

The earlier long barrow burials seem to display a degree of uniformity. A trapezoid mound, a constructional feature which dates back a considerable way on the continent (Kinnes 1982,27; Hodder 1984), was raised over a large number of disarticulated

bones, often on a chalk platform with scraps of pottery and the bones of cattle. According to Kinnes (1975,19) it is likely that many of these barrows contained simple mortuary structures of earthen banks flanking a narrow burial zone, occasionally segmented by axial pits or posts. This reconstruction is considerably less ornate than that proposed by Ashbee (1970,51), yet would still allow for a degree of selection and manipulation of bones prior to the construction of the mound. The relative homogeneity of these burials can be connected with their integration as an element of the Neolithic 'cultural package' as it was defined in the previous chapter. It is to be presumed that rules existed which defined a set of rituals which culminated in the building of the mound. Such ideological control appears to have extended as far as the mound itself, for in contrast with the later monuments, all of the earlier barrows have a length in the range 30-70 metres (Fig. 4.36).

The disarticulation of these burials, and in some cases their weathered state, makes it clear that the rite involved was one of multistage burial. The implications of such a conclusion are considerable. Where a good deal of effort has been expended in the removal of flesh from bones, for instance to the extent of burning it off (Thorpe 1984,47), it is clear that some major distinction is being made between the two. Such a distinction is very widespread ethnographically (Bloch 1982,225), although its appearance is by no means random. Generally, the division is taken to imply an opposition between an enduring, male principle,

associated with the bones and with order and the continuity of the community, and a mutable, female principle connected with flesh, sensuality and the death of the individual (Barley 1981,149-150). It is thus necessary to remove the decadent flesh from the bones before the individual can join the community of the ancestors. A corpse which is still fleshed represents a conceptual anomaly (Douglas 1966). Its condition is unstable, dangerous and polluting, and its transition to the defleshed state is represented as a set of rites of passage (Hertz 1960). But that such a distinction between the living and the ancestors is drawn at all is itself revealing. It implies that a view of time is in use in which a timeless past is contrasted with a linear present (Tuan 1977), and in which the individual is placed with reference to the past. Complex rites of passage are necessary because of the contradiction between notions of past and present.

Where bones are taken as the essence of order, containing the germ of future existence (Hertz 1960,70) their separation from the flesh and constitution as the physical aspect of the ancestors imbues them with considerable symbolic power. Hence, in China, bones were placed in prominent positions as a means of gaining a symbolic control over the environment (Watson 1982, 176), while in New Guinea bones are kept in a 'head-house', and are seen as the means of access to the spirit of an ancestor (Strathern 1982,117). Like Christian holy relics, the physical remains of the ancestors may be circulated and may be seen as the

key to their blessings and power. In this connection, it is worth noting the unusual patterning of bones pointed out by Shanks and Tilley (1982) in, amongst other sites, Fussell's Lodge. They saw the arrangement of skulls and longbones and the variation in the occurrence of ribs, vertebrae and phalanges as the result of a conscious process of selection for symbolic purposes. Such an explanation may be too complicated for its own good. By contrast, Kinnes (1975,17) suggests that the placing of bones in barrows may in some cases have been only one stage of a more complex sequence, the final deposition of remains in the barrow being by no means an inevitable conclusion. The patterning isolated by Shanks and Tilley may thus be the end product of a long sequence of additions and removals from the burial deposit while the mortuary structure was still accessible. This recalls Bloch's (1971) description of the Famidihana rituals of the Merina, of which a major element is the bringing of the living and the dead into direct contact by the actual handling of the bones.

At several sites, like Fourty Acre Plantation, King Barrow, Long Stone, Tow Barrow and White Barrow (Appendix 1), burial deposits are absent or fragmentary in the extreme. Thickthorn Down may belong to this group, or indeed may be a bayed 'cenotaph' barrow, in common with the north Wiltshire examples (Bradley and Entwistle 1986). A possible explanation for these circumstances is that the remains which had been inside at one point had been removed for other purposes prior to the construction of the mound: after having been defleshed and deposited in the mortuary

structure for a period they had taken on a new meaning as symbolic artefacts. Thorpe (1984,47) notes that different anatomical parts predominate at the causewayed enclosures than in long barrows, while Ashbee (1970,83) suggests a "reciprocal traffic" in bones between the two. Thorpe (ibid.,45) suggests that many of the pits under the long barrows may be seen as the temporary resting places of burials while their flesh decayed; the interpretation of various timber structures as exposure platforms is commonplace. At Hambledon Hill, Mercer (1980) has interpreted the central enclosure as a massive centre for the exposure of the dead. At Handley Hill, Pitt-Rivers (1898,49-50) excavated the partial remains of an adult in a pit with ox bones and a large plain bowl (Piggott 1936a,229-230). Within the pit was a hole suggestive of an upright post, which might have been a marker in order to enable the remains to be recovered. It is thus clear that a number of different types of site were involved in the circulation of human remains.

If such a circulation were in operation, attempts at population estimation (Atkinson 1968) or indeed the suggestion that burial was restricted to an aristocratic clan (Thorpe 1984,47; Kinnes 1975,26) may be inappropriate for the earlier barrows. The latter interpretation may, however, be more apt for the later monuments. Fleming (1973,173) pointed out that a continuum exists between those tombs which are most effective as containers of the dead, and those which are essentially monuments per se, whose function is to focus the attention of the individual. Bradley

(1984b,24-25) suggests that in Britain as a whole there was a shift toward the monumental end of the spectrum as time progressed, with simple mounds becoming more elaborate. In Southern Wessex the process was one of divergence between two extremes. On the one hand one has the bank barrows at Broadmayne, Long Bredy, Maiden Castle and Pentridge. On the evidence of Maiden Castle, these may have had no burials at all, if the two child burials were associated with the causewayed enclosure phase on that site (Wheeler 1943,18-24). On the other hand one has the oval barrows like Hambledon Hill (Mercer 1980) or Moody's Down South-East (Grimes 1960), where the mound structure is subsidiary to the central statement: a single articulated burial. Fleming (ibid.,187) also stressed the role of the forecourt area as a focus of attention and ritual activity. It is thus important that the provision of complex timber pre-barrow structures and façades appears to be a later development, associated with articulated or mixed burials. At Wor Barrow at least, these inhumations appear to have been sequential in nature (Pitt-Rivers 1898). While in the earlier barrows access to the burial deposit would have been fairly easy prior to the building of the mound, the more complex timbers imply a more 'hidden' and private arrangement. Furthermore, where the timber structures are multiphase, as at Woodford 2 (Vatcher 1964) and Nutbane (Morgan 1959), or have had postholes recut as at Kingston Deverill 1 (Vatcher 1965) there is evidence that the structure was 'open' for a longer period of time. This might imply that a more selective procedure was in operation in the collection of the mortuary deposit. This is

coupled with a growing emphasis on the whole body as opposed to circulated 'relics', which may indicate a survival of the individual ego after death. Conversely, given the presence of the complete but disarticulated skeletons in 'bundles' at Wor Barrow, Bloch and Parry's observation that the keeping of all of the flesh and bones within the tomb is the result of the operation of a principle of 'keeping to oneself', of endogamy (1982,20), may apply. The sites which I have designated 'Group 3' and some of 'Group 4' may thus be connected with the restriction of barrow burial to a smaller segment of society, perhaps a single clan or lineage. Such a group might have been at pains to emphasise its autonomy from the rest of the community through the adoption of a very different form of complex burial.

The building of forecourts fits into this picture. Kinnes (1981,84) and Fleming (1973) both emphasise the importance of the 'business end' of the barrow. What took place was a gradual division between 'back' and 'front' space (Giddens 1984,129), between private and public. Rather than being centred on the bones of the ancestors themselves, the rituals carried out in the pre-mound structure would be focussed on the public space of the forecourt. The details and contents of the chamber were kept private, secret and mysterious. The inevitable conclusion of such an argument is that someone would have to take on the role of intercession between the community and the ancestors, and thereby control over ritual.

Once the mound had been built there would be an inevitable distance between the dead and the living, effectively making the past unassailable. Yet were the long barrows to be left inert in the landscape their importance would have dwindled. The past is meaningless unless it is brought into the daily lives of the community (Lynch 1972,60); places can only be kept 'alive' by involving them in practice (Relph 1976,32). As Figures 4.37 and 4.38 show on the basis of distributions of faunal, ceramic and lithic material at Thickthorn Down (from Dorchester Museum material and J.W. Jackson's notes), there is a tendency for the material culture deposited to cluster in the ditch terminals flanking the forecourt area. It seems likely that continued communication with the ancestors was achieved by ritual practices including feasting in the forecourt areas for many years after the burial area had been closed off. It is interesting that the same practices extend to Peterborough and Beaker pottery: a surprising degree of continuity. Furthermore, the depositional sequence of plain bowl/Peterborough/Beaker is also found at Holdenhurst, the Maiden Castle long mound, Wor Barrow and Fussell's Lodge, while plain bowl is succeeded by Beaker at Nutbane and Hambledon (Mercer 1980). In southern Wessex, Grooved Ware is conspicuous by its absence from long mound contexts.

If the earthen long mounds of southern Britain began as a tradition whose homogeneity was owed to a unity at an ideological or conceptual level, the proliferation of rites and structural

forms with which it ended implies the breakdown of this consensus. The coexistence of vast monumental works like the bank barrows (and hence the cursus monuments?), of small oval mounds closely linked to the round barrow burials of the period, and of complex multistage barrows which made use of spatial divisions to enforce social distancing from the burial deposit, indicates the simultaneous operation of a number of contrasting ideologies. These emphasised the role of the community as a whole, of an aristocratic lineage, or of the individual.

As Burgess and Shennan (1978) indicate, the round barrow tradition in Britain possesses an antiquity which extends back to well before the Beaker era. Indeed, sites like Westbury 7, with numerous disarticulated skeletons inside a round barrow with causewayed ditch (Colt-Hoare 1810,54) could easily date back as far as the earlier long barrows. Other sites, like Mere 13d (Piggott 1931,94-95) or Launceston Down (Piggott & Piggott 1944,47-80), can be placed in the earlier part of the Neolithic on artefactual grounds. In some senses, then, the development of the round mounds is a parallel to that of the long barrows. In south Dorset, collective burials of articulated individuals are known at Winterbourne St.Martin 5c (Sydenham 1844,331), Winterbourne Came 18b (Grinsell 1959,148), Winterbourne St.Martin 34b (Sydenham 1844,332), Bere Regis 8d (Grinsell 1959,88) and Long Bredy 5 (Eogan 1980). The concentration of these sites between the bank barrows of Long Bredy and Bincombe suggests a date after the first quarter of the third millennium, while on

typological grounds these sites would fit into Kinnes' (1979) Stages B or C. The same area, the Dorset Ridgeway, also has an assortment of individual burials in round barrows, like Winterbourne St.Martin 43 and 54 (Gray & Prideaux 1905;RCHM 1970).

Pre-Beaker round barrow burials in Wessex have a wide range of associations. As Kinnes suggests (1979), the common element of these grave goods is that they are both labour-intensive and highly personalised items: jet sliders, fine arrowheads, polished knives, maceheads and axes. There appears to be an increase in the richness of the furnishing of the burials over time, from a mean of 0.6 items per individual in Stage A, 0.32 items in Stage B, to 1.0 items in both Stages C and D. Geographically, Neolithic burials of single individuals with grave goods appear to cluster in the 'core areas' of south Wessex (Fig. 4.39). However, in each case they are quite spatially distinct from the 'ritual landscapes' of Durrington, Knowlton and Mount Pleasant/Maumbury. This may simply be because many of the burials, with their Peterborough associations, predate the large henges of Grooved Ware affinity. The spatial separation of the two might then be the result of a shift of ritual focus. However, the intimate association between these burials and the areas chosen for early Beaker burials suggests otherwise.

Most perplexing of all are a series of cremation burials which appear to date from the end of the Neolithic period, Kinnes'

Stage F. One such cremation, from Aubrey hole 32 at Stonehenge, provided a date of 1848±275 bc (C602) (Smith 1974,136). The association of such cremations with henge monuments at Stonehenge (Atkinson 1956,27-29), Dorchester on Thames (Atkinson, Piggott & Sanders 1951) and Llangedai (Houlder 1968), with skewer pins and a putative Grooved Ware cup at Stonehenge (Atkinson,ibid.), with another possible Grooved Ware vessel at Winhill, Derbyshire (Kinnes 1979) and with chisel and oblique arrowheads at Duggleby Howe, Yorkshire (Kinnes et. al. 1983,98) might appear to mark these out as the remains of the henge users. I suspect that the real situation is rather more complex. The spread of cremation at the end of the third millennium is an aspect of the opening up of a number of broad networks of contact across Britain. Cremation burials with skewer pins are perhaps found earliest in the Boyne passage graves (Piggott 1954,202), while a cremation cemetery with miniature cups, bone pins and polished-edge knives was found at Ballateare on the Isle of Man (ibid.,347). In southern England the Grooved Ware affinities of cremations are far more tenuous than in Yorkshire, the Stonehenge cup being equally closely allied to those of Wessex I and oblique arrowheads being entirely absent. Atkinson (1956,28) suggests that cremations were put into the ditch at Stonehenge over a long period while it silted up. However, Evans' (1984,23) recent work shows that the entirety of this silting process took the best part of a millennium. It thus seems more likely that the cremations are not primary to the monument (which can now be dated back to the twenty-fifth century bc; Pitts 1982) but are cut through a turfline which formed after

an abandonment of the monument (Richards 1982,99). It is clear that the function of cremation cemetery is not a primary one for henge monuments; this is rather a case of later re-use, a manipulation of the associations and symbolic power of an abandoned site. The secondary nature of these cremation burials has been made clear by recent excavations at Dorchester on Thames cursus, where cremations had seeped into the voids left by burnt wooden posts (Bradley and Holgate 1984). As Kinnes' scheme implies, the cremations can be seen as an extension of a line of insular development, albeit one which incorporates certain exotic associations and a radically different form of body treatment. The adoption of cremation at this point is most intriguing, on the basis of the Stonehenge date and stratigraphy. For the transmutation of insular rites to one which implies the destruction and purification of the physical body (Hertz 1960; Bloch & Parry 1982) appears to be roughly contemporary with the first introduction of the Beaker rite of single articulated grave burial with rich material items.

By comparison to the insular grave tradition, the Beaker burials of south Wessex display a high degree of uniformity and structure in their material associations. The scheme developed by Lanting and Van Der Waals (1972) allows us a degree of chronological control over successive developments. Bearing in mind the suggestions by Burgess and Shennan (1978) and Thorpe and Richards (1984) that the 'package' of Beaker-associated items represents an assemblage of continentally-inspired status goods which were

transported to Britain through exchange links, the emulation model proposed by Miller (1982b,89-90) will be of importance here. Miller notes the way in which symbolic items enter a social hierarchy at the top, become associated with the the power of the dominant group, are copied and filter down the hierarchy to be replaced by new elements at the top. Beaker ceramics are made up of a complex interconnected series of styles and traditions (Clarke 1970), several of which may have been extant at any given time. The two schemes of Beaker classification are thus complementary and cross-cutting, that of Lanting and Van der Waals being essentially a chronology, that of Clarke relating to tradition and stylistic affinity.

The earliest Beakers in Britain were All-Over-Corded vessels of continental origin. These are sometimes found in graves, as at Hilton 2 (Grinsell 1959,164), but consistently lack the characteristic continental associations of amber beads, battle axes and Grand Pressigny flint (Harrison 1980,74). In the earliest phase, then, it can be argued that Beakers were an extremely rare and prestigious item, sometimes actually having come from the continent (Lanting & Van Der Waals 1972). In successive stages of the Lanting and Van Der Waals scheme, the standard Beaker associations of barbed and tanged arrowheads, archer's wristguards, basket earrings, flint and bronze daggers, belt rings and buttons appear. There is not only a gradual increase in the mean number of items deposited in each grave, but there is a consistent rise in the degree of differentiation

between the richest and the poorest burials (Fig. 4.43). The styles defined by Clarke may be extremely long-lived; AOC in particular may have been in use for several centuries (Case 1977,74). What is important to note is that within each of these stages, it is those styles which had been most recently introduced which are found with the richest burials in southern Wessex (Fig. 4.44). Thus in Step 2, 50% of the burials accompanied only with a single Beaker are of European Bell Beaker type, while only 37% are of Wessex/Middle Rhine type. Yet among the burials with multiple Beakers or with complex grave assemblages, 60% have W/MR. Among these is the Mere 6a burial, with tanged copper dagger, two gold button caps, a bone spatula and a stone bracer (Colt Hoare 1810,44). In Step 3, all of the burials with a single Beaker are W/MR, except for Frampton 4 (Grinsell 1959,108;Clarke 1970, corpus No.180) which has an undecorated Beaker. One of the richest burials, however, that from Farleigh Wick with two Beakers, one gold button cap, one belt ring, four barbed and tanged arrowheads and a flint blade (Clarke 1970,502) has a Northern/Middle Rhine Beaker. Finally, in Step 5, the poorer burials have a variety of Beaker types, but the two very rich burials at Winterbourne Stoke 54 (Colt Hoare 1810,118) and Amesbury 54 (ibid.,173) both have S2(W) Beakers. It is important that several of the richest burials which can be roughly assigned to Step 5 on the basis of dagger typology (Gerloff 1975) or bracer type (Atkinson in Evans 1984) lack Beakers altogether: Stonehenge (Evans 1984), Durrington (Colt Hoare 1810,172), Amesbury 85 (Newall 1936,432) and possibly

Winterbourne Stoke 47. This might suggest that by this stage, immediately prior to the Wessex I burials, Beakers were in the process of being relegated to a lower status (see Appendix 4 for details of Beaker burials).

The use of the body as a symbol is by no means absent in the Beaker phase. As Case (1977,81) notes, there is a recurrent practice of male burials being more richly furnished than female ones, which in turn were richer than child burials. The range of items selected seems to enforce certain stereotypes: weapons for men, jewelery for women. The alignment of burials within graves is also important. For while Clarke's (1970,455) listing of orientations appears to present a muddled and unstructured picture, the alignments of the burials within the 'Wessex' area as defined by Lanting and Van Der Waals (1972) exhibit a distinction between males with heads to north and females with heads to south (Fig. 4.45). The total lack of overlap suggests that a rigid distinction was being drawn between male and female social space.

In geographical terms the distribution of Beaker burials appears to mirror that of the later Neolithic single burials (Figs. 4.39, 4.40-4.42), although it is very noticeable that their concentration gradually comes to emphasise the area around Stonehenge. This pattern becomes most clear with the Step 5 burials (Fig. 4.42). Its significance will be considered in the next chapter, although it should be noted at once that this phase

councils with the arrival of the bluestones at Stonehenge.

Taken as a whole, mortuary practice in the Neolithic of south Wessex shows several broad trends. The earlier long barrows seem to represent a very standardised rite, implying considerable ideological control and emphasising the group as opposed to the individual. This links in to a social system which was articulated about the circulation of cattle, women, prestige items and human bones. The breakdown of such a system in the years after 2900 bc led to the appropriation of the long mound form to support several contradictory social strategies. Monumentality was emphasised by the bank barrows and cursus monuments; the stress on the individual with the oval barrows or the large long barrow of Winterbourne Stoke 1 with a single male burial (Thurnam 1869, 184-186); the rise of elite descent groups monopolising access to ancestors through complex barrow architecture. The same confusion and lack of structure is evident in the round barrow burials which overlap with the long mounds temporally. At the same time the later burials show a gradual increase in richness, and their associations show a growth in the spatial scale of contact: localised pot styles in Stage B, Mortlake ware, jet sliders and arrowhead types which extend from Wessex to Yorkshire in Stage D, contacts with the Boyne valley, Orkney and the Isle of Man in Stage F. The ideological heterogeneity of the period is confirmed by the continued use of the long mounds for depositional purposes. The Beaker burials continue the insular trend toward richer and more exclusive

associations, yet institute a much more standardised framework for this competition to be carried out within. However, certain insular elements carried on in parallel with the Beaker burials (as appears to be the case with the Stonehenge cremations), only to emerge as an important element at the very end of the period. This is emphasised by the extremely rich burial of two individuals at Upton Lovell 4, with 36 bone pins, three 'Seamer' axes, a grooved whetstone, boar's tusk blades, a perforated battle axe, a jet ring, jet and bone beads and a bronze awl (Piggott 1954,355). Throughout the later part of the period there was a continuous interplay in the manipulation of new symbols which emphasised exclusivity and far-off contacts as against insular elements which harked back to the mythical past. The fusion of these strategies was eventually found in the very rich burials of Wessex I (Piggott 1938).

Causewayed Enclosures.

Among the more enigmatic monuments of the British Neolithic are the causewayed enclosures. Decades of debate (Curwen 1930; Piggott 1954; Smith 1965,1966,1971; Renfrew 1973; Wilson 1975; Drewett 1977; Mercer 1980, Chapter 1) have resulted in a plurality of explanations for the function of the sites, from enclosed settlements to cattle kraals to regional fairs, exchange centres, necropoli and cult centres. Mercer (1980,65) takes the minimal view that the term causewayed enclosure cannot now be

taken to suggest more than "a constructional technique with no overall functional implication". Barker and Webley appear equally impartial when they state that the enclosures were "central places of some kind (or several kinds)" (1978,161). However, their landuse model for the earlier Neolithic is based upon transport cost and least effort principles: this neglects the fact that causewayed enclosures are in no sense central, they existed at the edges of settlement systems (Bradley 1978a,103; Gardiner 1984,21; Holgate 1984).

In the wake of Smith's (1965) publication of Keiller's excavations at Windmill Hill the interpretation which came to be accepted was that of redistribution centre. This was taken to explain the high percentages of fossil shell and oolite wares from the Bath/Frome area at Windmill Hill, Robin Hood's Ball, Whitesheet Hill and Knap Hill (Peacock 1969,145) and of Gabbroic wares from the Lizard in Cornwall and of Portlandian chert at Maiden Castle, Hambledon Hill, Robin Hood's Ball, Windmill Hill, Hembury and High Peak (Smith 1971,103). Drewett (1977,224) summed up a problem with this view: "if causewayed enclosures were simply trade centres, surely the foreign material would be exchanged there and then removed for use elsewhere. The discovery of such material in causewayed enclosures would suggest its use there". Whether fine products acquired through long distance links were redistributed from causewayed enclosures would be difficult to test using falloff curves, since, being items which would circulate in the more highly-ranked spheres of exchange, they

might change hands rapidly for some tens of years. It was the recovery of fine artefacts from the enclosures which incited Bradley (1982; 1984b,31) to suggest that they represented high status settlements.

There are problems with this interpretation also. If, for instance, Hambledon Hill were set up as the residence of an elite, it would be an elite separated by several miles from the nearest population (on the basis of results from a campaign of fieldwalking: R. Palmer and A. Saville pers. comm.), yet one which could mobilise from that population sufficient corvee to enclose 160 acres of hilltop with a double ditch and palisade (Mercer 1982,1), one whose meat was brought in from herds elsewhere and whose grain arrived at the site already threshed and cleaned (Mercer pers. comm.). Smith (1966) was originally led to the conclusion that the enclosures were not settlements by the absence of pits in their interiors, as at Offham (Drewett 1977,211). Pits are present in the central enclosure at Hambledon, yet they appear to have been concerned with the deliberate deposition of items like Gabbroic vessels (90% in pits; 10% in ditches), axes, red deer antler and quernstones (Mercer 1980,23; 1977,1). The flintwork recovered from these pits often showed a peculiar bias toward a particular tool type; scrapers or microdenticulates (ibid.), while two of the pits contained postholes. As fragments of human bones and teeth were also found in these pits, it might be suggested that as with the Handley Hill pit these represent one part of a multistage burial

process: pits from which the bones were removed when defleshed. This accords with Bradley's (1984b,24) suggestion that fine artefacts were involved in some stage of mortuary ritual. However, these items would not represent grave goods in the formal sense, so much as prestations necessary for the conclusion of rites of passage. The huge quantities of skeletal remains from the main enclosure ditch at Hambledon (Mercer 1980, *passim*) and the finds of bone from Maiden Castle (Wheeler 1943), Windmill Hill (Smith 1965), Abingdon (Leeds 1928), Staines (Robertson-Mackay 1962), Whitehawk (Curwen 1934), Offham (Drewett 1977) and Maiden Bower (Smith 1915) need not be dwelt on here. Suffice to say that the exposure or defleshing by other means was a recurrent feature of the enclosures. As Thorpe (1984) shows, the proportions of males, females and children present indicate that these classes were equally eligible.

At Maiden Castle the study of the excavated material reveals a similar pattern to that at Hambledon: flint and stone axes are concentrated in pits (7.2% and 2.7% of the assemblage respectively) as opposed to ditches (3.6% and 0.3%). One pit, T8, had a concentration of microdenticulates (Wheeler 1943,86). However, all of this neglects the fact that at Stepleton, the lesser enclosure on Hambledon Hill, a two acre site existed with a variety of internal features of 'domestic' nature. Domestic activity is also clearly present at Crickley Hill, Gloucestershire. Nonetheless, at the latter site the house platforms can be tied to the very latest phase of a complex

sequence of backfillings and recuttings of the ditches before the replacement of the causewayed camp by an enclosure bounded by a massive continuous ditch (Dixon pers. comm.). At Crickley, then, settlement appears not to have been the primary purpose for the construction of the site.

Another recurrent feature of causewayed enclosures is their coincidence with lithic sources. At Hambledon, excavations on the Hanford spur revealed a complex of shallow mines and grubbing pits which may have provided the mediocre quality flint found in the Stepleton enclosure (Mercer 1982,2). At Offham, far more primary core reduction waste was found than could have been needed to produce the sparse implements found on site, indicating that cores were made from the poor quality flint found on site and taken away (Drewett 1977,217). Similar poor quality flint sources are found at Robin Hood's Ball and Maiden Castle, and at the latter site the many unpolished roughout axes and waste pieces indicate that the processing of raw materials from elsewhere took place there (Care 1982). All of this is taken by Care as evidence for social control of lithic resources. With this I concur, but not in the sense that she intended: a review of some further aspects of the problem will provide an alternative framework.

Firstly, there is an obvious contradiction between the investment of effort in the building of the enclosures and their deliberate backfilling and recutting. At Robin Hood's Ball (Thomas 1964,11)

and Hambledon (Mercer 1980,35) the richest deposits of artefactual and faunal material actually overlay the collapse of the banks, so it is clear that at least a part of the function of the sites did not depend upon the integrity of their defenses. Perhaps the mere delineation of a separate space was of greater import. The nature of deposition is, throughout, most interesting. The material in the ditches can be of considerably greater quantity than one would expect in an Iron Age hillfort (Thomas 1964,11) while the pottery is often unweathered (Smith 1966) and animal bones may be articulated (Legge 1981,173). As we shall see in a subsequent section, the ceramic assemblages found on causewayed enclosure sites are not those which one would associate with a settlement. The lack of carinations or beaded rims to allow covering, and the predominance of cups and open bowls suggest consumption. A similar assemblage of vessel forms came from the 'ritual' pit of earlier Neolithic date outside of the Coneybury Hill henge (Cleal pers. comm.). All of the above factors indicate feasting activities.

I have already suggested that the faunal remains from causewayed enclosures indicate that they were tied in to an economy based upon the circulation of livestock and people. Piggott (1954,28) long ago pointed to the presence of hazel nuts and crab apples as evidence for the autumnal use of the sites, while the 'clean' grain from Hambledon could indicate occupation at a time after the harvest. Firm evidence of seasonal occupation could only really come from a detailed analysis of a large and well

excavated faunal sample, however. To this we can add Barker and Webley's observation (1978,173) that the soils which surrounded the enclosures were best suited to pastoral activities*. Furthermore, all of the enclosures in Sussex appear to have been built in areas freshly cleared of woodland (Thomas 1982). In Wessex, the only two sites among the large number of molluscan assemblages studied by Evans (1971,64) which did not show evidence for having been built in large clearances were causewayed enclosures, Knap Hill and Windmill Hill.

Causewayed enclosures in Wessex were clearly in some way connected to channels of long distance exchange, without necessarily being redistribution centres in the full sense. A possible rationale for their peripheral siting lies in the nature of gift economies. Gift exchange determines not exchange order but social rank (Gregory 1983,109), while the 'value' of a particular item will vary from one social system to another (Chapter II above). The introduction of foreign goods into a given exchange system requires an alienation of items from their source in a form of commodity exchange: a dangerous and potentially polluting activity. Such exchanges will often be carried out at the peripheries of social territories, within bounded areas, surrounded by multiple prohibitions and prescriptions (Servet 1982,23). A kind of rite of passage of items between communities is achieved in the liminal state of such enclosed areas, associated with feasting and a temporary inversion of social relations which emphasises the temporary

*But see Evans' comments on this article.

nature of the arrangement (Turner 1967). This logic extends as far as the gateway communities of Mesoamerica and early historic Europe (Hirth 1978; Hodges 1982), and explains the ambiguous social position of those communities which have specialised in trading, the Jews, Lombards and Gypsies for example. The suggestion that causewayed enclosures were originally socially neutral areas wherein exchanges could be concluded in isolation from their normal social meaning can be extended to other aspects of their use. It is significant that the mortuary practices associated with these sites are predominantly those of exposure and defleshing: the liminal state between the living person and the ancestor. Likewise, the extraction and processing of lithic materials is often carried out in a condition surrounded by prohibitions (Burton 1984). Finally, were cattle being moved seasonally down into the low clay vales from the chalk uplands, it would be at the enclosures of Hambleton Hill and Whitesheet Hill that the agglomeration of herds would take place, with a consequent temporary adjustment of the conditions of ownership from the minimal to the maximal group. It is not necessary to the argument that all of these activities took place on all of these sites; what is important is that they worked as a bounded space at the edge of a social territory, which marginalised and contained influences which could be perceived as harmful or polluting to the social fabric.

Now, it is clear that some of the enclosures were more complex than others. In these cases it can often be demonstrated that the

elaboration of the defensive aspect of the site, or its use for settlement, is secondary to a more modest initial construction. At Abingdon, there is evidence that the outer ditch postdates the inner (Case and Whittle 1982), while at Hambledon the complex system of outworks and cross-dykes are additions to the original enclosure (Mercer 1981,1-3). Significantly, the extremely complex sites of Hambledon and Whitesheet Hill (see Fig. 4.46, from RCHM air photos), are those sited on the ecotone between chalk upland and clay vale. Those enclosures which were most embellished and elaborated produce the richest material assemblages (Hambledon, Trundle, Whitehawk), while the less complex sites (Robin Hood's Ball, Offham) are relatively poor. The eventual emergence of some of the sites as fortified settlements, presumably connected with elite activities, is a consequence of the purposeful appropriation of the powerful associations of these places. The liminal state is dangerous, yet powerful (Turner 1967), while control of the enclosure would ensure preferential access to the ancestors and the ability to control the creation of value within the society.

That these activities are secondary in nature is demonstrated by the siting of barrows of mid-third millennium date on or near to causewayed enclosures, usually with single burials. Oval barrows exist at Hambledon (Mercer 1980,43), Abingdon (Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984), Maiden Castle and Robin Hood's Ball (J.Richards pers. comm.), while at Whitesheet Hill a round barrow with causewayed ditch and single inhumation was set on the bank

(Piggott 1952,406). In all of these cases a secondary monument is used to distort the original meaning of the site. At Hambledon, the ditch sequence of the barrow appeared to mirror that of the enclosure, integrating the meanings of the two monuments. The later use of the enclosures also involved the deposition of Peterborough and Beaker ceramics in the ditches of the more complex enclosures in particular (Hambledon, Maiden Castle). This practice recalls that at the long barrows: in both cases the power of the ancestors was continuing to be invoked, in contradistinction to the contemporary rituals associated with Grooved Ware. In southern Wessex, Grooved Ware has only been found at a causewayed enclosure at Maiden Castle, and there only as loose sherds and in pits outside of the enclosure. A certain type of power strategy was in operation which involved recourse to the past, control of value, and access to long distance exchange.

Monuments in time and space.

Throughout the Neolithic in Wessex the building of monumental constructions appears to have been of some importance. In 1973, Renfrew drew attention to this by suggesting that a gradual increase in the investment of effort in monumentality could be correlated with an increase in population and political centralisation. An interest in the monuments as such was a

welcome departure, yet Renfrew's project saw them as "the natural counterparts of other features of society" (1973,556) rather than as phenomena which needed to be explained in themselves. In a sense, the uniqueness of the tombs and ceremonial sites of prehistoric Europe was a question which was more directly addressed by an earlier generation of archaeologists (e.g. Daniel 1958). The consequence of Renfrew's generalising approach was the assumption that the relationship between monuments and people remained constant through time.

Monuments are above all a means of converting unformed space into place. They have the effect of anchoring space in time and giving it a social reality. Since it is the social definition of a place that is of importance, the nature of monumentality will vary from one society to another. It is not the structure itself which need have most effect upon people, so much as the associations with which that structure is imbued (Lynch 1972,61). No object, in any case, has an intrinsic meaning; meaning is a function of the classification of the world (Miller 1982a,19). So, just as Hodder (1982b) notes the division of Mesakin compounds according to sex roles, the use of space in monuments will relate to the fundamental concerns and the spatiotemporal rhythms of a society.

Furthermore, the 'meaning' of a monument is not fixed. Fleming (1972;1973) suggested that construction might be carried out as an improvisation upon a series of genotypes in accordance with local design requirements. Monuments are thus 'parole' rather

than 'langue'. Yet the communicative element does not end with the act of construction. As has already been suggested, the associations of a monument can be appropriated by their use for later burials or ritual observances. Similarly, the enlargement or elaboration of sites (Bradley 1983,16-17) can be seen as an attempt to distort or remake the past in order to legitimate present asymmetries. Monuments provide the opportunity for a very rigid division of space in accordance with ritual practice, a feature which may correspond to a degree of social rigidity (Tuan 1977,42). Hence there is often an investment of effort in the building of monuments when the power of a particular interest group is at its most fragile (Cherry 1978,429). For monuments, as their domination of the archaeological record implies, are permanent. In a preliterate non-urban society they represent a strand of continuity which enables the 'storage' of authoritative resources, and will be connected with the control of information and knowledge (Giddens 1981,94). In spatial terms, they structure the movements and actions of individuals. It is thus incorrect to see monuments as a luxury, to be built for display purposes when agricultural surplus allows: they may be integral to the process of social reproduction.

Yet, as Bourdieu (1979,80) points out, culture is an arena for the struggle to impose a particular definition on the social world. Monuments often imply a group ideology (Bradley 1984b,74; Shennan 1982); this may be a part of the representation of sectional interests as universal (Bourdieu 1977,22). But if this

is the case there is scope for the playing out of conflicts of interest in the building and modification of monuments. Since the organisation of space and time will be deeply connected with that of myth (Bourdieu 1977,163), changes or conflicts in the relations of production might be expected to influence monumental architecture. What is more, one might expect the specific messages incorporated into a monument to last for a shorter time than the general aura of power and achievement (Tuan 1974,240).

These points are quite instructive in the study of British Neolithic monuments. For the long barrows and causewayed enclosures represent the attempt to seclude an area of space and make it 'different' by the reference to the past and the ancestors. Outside of this, space was formless and profane. As time progressed, a quite different scheme came into operation. Both cursus monuments and henges show the same emphasis on the partitioning of space, yet the scale of control implied is vastly increased. The cursus sites elaborated one aspect of the long mound idea at the expense of the mortuary component, extending social control over large segments of the landscape. The suggestion has been made that cursus monuments may incorporate astronomical alignments into their design (Penny & Wood 1973). A similar development may have taken place at around the same time with the Irish passage graves (Bradley 1978a,110), the roofbox at Newgrange being a case in point. From points loose in space there is a move to arrangements which integrate monuments into fixed relationships with the landscape and the cosmos. This kind of

concern continued with the henges. Their architecture used vertical uprights and deep shafts (Burgess 1980,327), and also showed an increasing interest in astronomical phenomena (Cunnington 1929,9). Part of this can doubtless be attributed to the attempts of dominant groups to legitimate their position by confusing the performance of particular rituals with the occurrence of specific natural phenomena: sun, rain, spring and harvest. The reproduction of the conditions of production thus become dependant upon the activities of the elite. But the fact that this kind of logic could be used at all implies a major conceptual shift.

The emphasis on the past and the ancestors had gone, replaced by a much more inclusive system. The detailed study of deposition in henge monuments (Richards & Thomas 1984; Bradley & Thomas 1985) suggests a rigid division of space and a prescription of behaviour according to position. The ditch which surrounded the henge clearly suggests a division between the sacred and profane; yet the use of the monuments in Wessex was integrated into the landscape as a whole. At Durrington, the building of the enclosure postdated a series of timber alignments and structures (Stone, Piggott & Booth 1954), while the whole area between the site and Stonehenge has provided numerous pits with more or less formal deposits (e.g. Stone & Young 1948). In the Dorchester area, three large henge monuments are found close together; at Knowlton, four; at Marden, air photographs reveal two smaller

hengés near the large one (Fig. 4.47). The implication is clear: the rigid control evidenced in microcosm in the henges is intended to apply to the whole social landscape. To talk of a 'ritual landscape' may thus be a little misleading: the whole landscape was by implication ritualised. The removal of the dead from this scheme, its evident formality and its concern with the cosmos, the cardinal points and symmetry all point to the introduction of a completely cyclical time scheme (Tuan 1977). The great ritualisation of relations of production at the end of the third millennium in south Wessex resulted in the decline of the past/present dichotomy and the assertion that the two were linked in a continuous and unchangable cycle.

Some notes on pottery.

Bearing in mind their combination of plasticity of design and good survival in the archaeological record, ceramics have always been of great (and perhaps inflated) importance to archaeologists. According to the attributes studied and the inclinations of the archaeologist, pottery has been used to infer cultural affinity (Childe 1948,1956), exchange (Peacock 1977), or stylistic interaction (Plog 1980). In Neolithic Britain a very specific pattern has to be explained: the replacement of localised distributions of bowl vessels with simple decoration yet with a wide range of vessel forms by a variety of mutually exclusive but spatially overlapping styles in the later

Neolithic.

Bradley (1982,30) has recently emphasised the inadequacy of a purely temporal scheme in which plain bowls are replaced by decorated bowls, then the Peterborough wares, Grooved Ware, Beakers and finally Food Vessels and Collared Urns. The date of 3145+49 bc for Eaton Heath (BM-770)* (Wainwright 1973), the series for Abingdon (2510-3110 bc), and that of 3230+150 bc (BM-134) (Radiocarbon 10) for Fussell's Lodge all indicate that in some areas decorated pottery was in use from an early date. Piggott's (1931,83) division between a Neolithic A1 and A2 was based upon the stratigraphy at Windmill Hill. The use of decorative styles at that site which appear to have some affinity with those from the Thames valley, in an area which had hitherto been dominated by the Hembury style, suggests that in that one area decoration was introduced from outside. Nonetheless, the long survival of plain bowl pottery is emphasised by the date of 2122+73 bc (BM-664) for material under the bank at Mount Pleasant (Wainwright 1979,186). The origin of the Peterborough tradition can be traced back as far as 2710+150 bc at Ebbsfleet (Smith 1974), yet Ebbsfleet, Mortlake and Fengate sherds were all found together in the palisade trench at Mount Pleasant, dated to 1695+43 bc (BM-665) (Wainwright, op. cit.). Grooved Ware dates in southern England range from c.2200 bc from Bargates, Christchurch (Jarvis 1983,140) to 1690+70 bc (BM-2282) from Maumbury Rings (Bradley & Thomas 1985). If we can date Beaker ceramics back to before 2000 bc (Clarke 1970), it seems quite possible that for

*Although the context of this date may be questionable.

some hundreds of years all of these styles and their respective substyles were in use simultaneously.

The earliest pottery in this country can be divided into two main groups: an Eastern, Grimston/Lyle's Hill style with Michelsburg and Hazendonk affinities, and a South-Western, Hembury style with Chasséen affinities (Smith 1974,106). While decorated wares appear to have been an early development, early dates for decoration are usually restricted to the south-east of England (Drewett 1980,23). The development of style zones within the major distributions thus appears to have taken place within the early third millennium. A computer factor analysis of the decoration of 86 assemblages of bowl pottery from southern England, based on the percentage occurrence of 24 decorative traits and eight rim forms (Appendix 11; Figs. 4.48 and 4.49) confirms that in the main the variability of assemblages is geographical in nature. A basic division is made between east and west, with the Sussex Whitehawk and Thames Abingdon styles being closely connected. In the South-Western area, the pottery of sites in south Wiltshire, Dorset and Devon appear as detectable but overlapping traditions. Some of the pottery of the Avebury area appears to be more closely connected with the Eastern styles.

Donley (1982) and Braithwaite(1982) have both emphasised that the use of decoration on material items may have a variety of purposes. One particularly frequent use is the control of defilement. Bradley (1982,33) suggests that decorated vessels may

occur on sites with a generally finer range of lithic items. In Wessex, there appears to be no correlation between decorated vessels and enclosures (Appendix 10). In the southern part of Wessex, decoration is usually found in 'domestic' contexts, while around Avebury there appears to be a concentration of decorated vessels in barrows. It seems likely that at this stage the use of decoration on pottery was not governed by particularly strong rules.

More significant variation may be found in the form of vessels in use. Welbourne (1984,19) and Miller (1982b,92) both suggest that particular vessel forms may have specific purposes and associations. Bearing in mind that the bowl series had a much greater range of forms than the later traditions (Smith 1974,112), it seems likely that this might provide more useful information. A series of 14 vessel forms was defined, based loosely on those of Piggott (1931,75), with several additions (Fig. 4.50). Computer factor analysis of the percentages of these vessel forms in the same 86 assemblages (Fig. 4.51; Appendix 12) suggested a definite distinction on the basis of site type. The causewayed enclosures formed a tight cluster, with two exceptions (Maiden Bower and Barkhale). A graph of the number of vessels in each assemblage against the number of vessel forms (Fig. 4.52) suggests that there was a consistently more restricted range of vessel forms in use at causewayed enclosures than at barrow or settlement sites. When the percentages of different vessel forms were tabulated (Appendix 9) it was clear that great variations

occur according to site type. The causewayed enclosures in Wessex, in particular, stand out as having a very atypical assemblage. On these sites, carinated vessels (forms D,F,G,H,J) were very rare (4.2% as opposed to 24.2% on 'other sites'), while open bowls (Forms A,K,M) were extremely common (60.4% as against 39%). On the basis of this information a basic division was drawn between those vessels which would be used in consumption (open bowls and cups) and those best suited to storage (closed bowls, carinated vessels and jars). In the Wessex enclosures, vessels suited to consumption accounted for 84.2% of the assemblage, while in barrows these were 56%, and on other sites 63.3%. However, on enclosures outside Wessex the percentage of storage vessels was often higher: Coombe Hill (94%), Barkhale (100%), Trundle (79%) and Hembury (52%) (Appendix 8). This was not a result of local stylistic preferences; several of the Sussex enclosures had low percentages of storage vessels (Offham, Bury Hill, Whitehawk). The division of form between western and eastern causewayed enclosures in Britain (Palmer 1976), which has already been suggested as relating to separate sources of continental inspiration, may thus also extend to function.

While the decorated styles appear to have been localised in production and distribution it seems likely that the plain vessels may have been exchanged over long distances (Drewett 1980,26; Ellison 1981,47). Plain vessels, indeed, were often the finest in an assemblage (Peacock 1969). The pottery which originated in the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall has generally

been connected with a south-western exchange sphere, also circulating Cornish axes, Beer Head flint and Portlandian chert between the enclosure sites (Smith 1971). The perennial occurrence of Gabbroic wares on sites in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset does point to the enclosures being in some way linked to such a system. However, the percentage of Gabbroic sherds on open settlements in a given area may be higher than at the enclosures: 30% at Hazard Hill and 25% at Haldon as opposed to 10% at Hembury and 4% at High Peak; 13% at Corfe Mullen as opposed to 9% at Maiden Castle (Peacock 1969,147). It can thus hardly be argued that the enclosures were high status sites monopolising access to fine imported wares.

If the recognition of patterning in and between assemblages of Middle Neolithic bowl pottery appears rather difficult, Peterborough wares appear virtually intractable. The early origin of the Ebbsfleet style is evidenced at the type site and at Coombe Hill, Sussex (2640±110 bc). Ebbsfleet wares are dated to 2580± bc at Windmill Hill. Kinnes (1978a) indicates that the Ebbsfleet style may have originated as one of the style zones of bowl pottery, in the lower Thames area, later spreading westwards. As with the Beaker complex, it seems likely that Miller's (1982b) emulation model may apply to Peterborough wares. For Ebbsfleet was not replaced by Mortlake and then Fengate; the three eventually existed side by side, although rarely intermixed. Vessels of all three styles were found in the Mount Pleasant palisade trench, while at Pole's Wood South long cairn

in Gloucestershire a vessel was located which combines a Mortlake rim with Ebbsfleet decorative techniques and a flat bottom (usually a Fengate trait) (British Museum). At Melbourne, in Derbyshire, an Ebbsfleet bowl was found with Beaker lozenge designs (Longworth 1976,67), indicating the longevity of the style. Furthermore, the representation of particular Peterborough motifs on Collared Urns indicates that no one style can be held responsible for their decoration (Longworth 1961,267-272).

Aside from the division into these three sub-styles, Peterborough ware seems to show a remarkable uniformity across England south of Yorkshire. A factor analysis of decorative traits and rim forms (Fig. 4.53; Appendix 13) produces a configuration which indicates an essentially homogenous tradition, with only very slight hints of overlapping regional preferences for particular motifs. Nor does it appear that design elements relate greatly to the context of deposition: there is some evidence that bird bone impressions were more common in funerary and ritual contexts in Wessex, and that incision, fingertip impressions and herringbone motifs may have been more frequently used in domestic contexts. However, this patterning is not very marked. The striking patterning of Peterborough wares between the chambers of the West Kennet long barrow (Thomas and Whittle 1986) indicates that in some social circumstances the decoration of these vessels may have taken on more significance. But even this may have been a consequence of different potters being connected with the different lineages with access to the various chambers of the

tomb, rather than a ritual symbolism specific to the pots or the tomb itself.

In Wessex at least, this lack of patterning is in sharp contrast with the Grooved Ware tradition. The special nature of Grooved Ware has frequently been commented on in recent works (Bradley 1982; Richards & Thomas 1984), and it is clear that the ceramic cannot be separated from a variety of other artefacts (Wainwright & Longworth 1971,246), whose importance appears to have been largely symbolic. The division of space or the use of spiral and lozenge motifs on Grooved Ware is paralleled in Boyne passage grave art (Shee Twohig 1981), stone balls from northern Britain (Clarke et. al. 1985), the bone bead from Mount Pleasant (Wainwright 1979,177), the chalk plaques from Stonehenge Bottom (Vatcher 1969) and the antler macehead from Garboldisham (Edwardson 1965). This prompts the suggestion that it was less the material items themselves which were important, so much as the symbols and meanings which they carried. Bradley (1982,36-37) saw the Grooved Ware assemblage as a set of "weapons of exclusion", shared between elite groups in spatially separate areas. Perhaps the interpretation needs to be a little broader than this, for as Richards and Thorpe point out "in Yorkshire, it seems as though Grooved Ware did not play the same social role as it did in the rest of Britain" (1984,72). This is compounded by Cleal's (1984,138) observation that, in contrast to Wessex, "Grooved Ware tended to be mixed with other styles" in East Anglia. Yet even here certain of the characteristic associations

recur with Grooved Ware; oblique arrowheads, for example (ibid.,152). This repertoire of symbols may have been used for entirely different purposes in different areas. Bearing in mind the recurrent association of the spatially distant with the past and the supernatural (Tuan 1974,216; Helms 1979) it is interesting that the Grooved Ware assemblage appears to have been most important in Wessex, the area most distant from the points of origin of both the technique of ceramic decoration (Scotland) and the motifs involved (Ireland). This clearly indicated the incorporation of the spatial into legitimation strategies.

Richards (in Richards & Thomas 1984) suggests that a key element in Grooved Ware decoration was the contrast between bounded and unbounded space as defined by cordons, and the use of decoration within and between the cordons. Hence, a six-stage hierarchy of design structure is defined (ibid.,194). The proportions of the various stages varied strikingly within Durrington Walls and Mount Pleasant, but the suggestion was made that the classificatory scheme might extend beyond the henge monuments (ibid.,215). A factor analysis of the percentages of the six stages in 59 assemblages from England south of Yorkshire indicates no distinction whatsoever on a geographical basis, yet all of the henge monuments cluster in the upper half of the plot (Fig. 4.55). Interestingly, many of the pit sites in the Stonehenge area, which may represent formal deposits (ibid 207-208), are found in the same part of the plot. It seems likely, then, that there is a direct relationship between the

degree of sanctity or ritualisation of a particular context and the design structure appropriate.

The motifs used in Grooved Ware design are, obviously, independent of design structure. Yet if we are to argue that a process of symbolic exchange was in operation between distinct communities in the later Neolithic it is necessary to demonstrate that these symbols were distinguished between. It is thus reassuring that in more than 80 assemblages studied by the author spiral motifs were restricted to Durrington Walls, Windmill Hill, and the series of very rich pits outside of the Abingdon enclosure, at Barrow Hills. Very many of the motifs employed on Grooved Ware make use of parallel lines. Following Hodder's (1982a,176-177) treatment of Mesakin design elements, it can be suggested that the construction of these parallel line motifs was a progressive system of rotational and mirror symmetries. Three levels of such symmetry can thus be defined (Fig. 4.57), each one being more restricted in its use than the last (Appendix 15). Of the Level 3 designs, Motif (a) is only found at Durrington Walls and Lion Point, Clacton. Motif (b) is found on ten sites, but Motif (c) is only found at Durrington Walls, Bargates, beneath the barrow Amesbury 39, and in the pits outside Durrington Walls at Larkhill. It is of some consequence that this motif is restricted to the immediate area of Durrington and its immediate point of contact with the coast. The importance of the Christchurch area appears to have been considerable in the later Neolithic, and hence it is interesting that the Grooved Ware from

the area bears a high percentage of level 3 motifs (Appendix 15).

Up to this point I have treated the ceramic traditions in isolation. However, as Bradley and Gardiner (1984,2) suggest, "there is no point in studying one type of pottery if other contemporary styles are not analysed at the same time". It is evident that the most important contrasts between areas will not occur within but between traditions, a factor which relates to the contexts of use of different items. From the Vale of Pewsey southwards, all of the ceramic assemblages known to the writer were classified according to whether Bowl, Peterborough, Grooved Ware and Beaker ceramics were present, and where more than one tradition was present whether the association was close or loose*. In order to distinguish between the latter states, a scoring system was introduced in which an isolated style or a close association counted for twice the worth of a loose association (Appendix 15).

Using this system a strong pattern emerged which emphasised the isolation of Grooved Ware, and the very close association between Beaker and Peterborough wares (Fig. 4.58). Bowl pottery was more closely related to both Peterborough and Beaker wares than to Grooved Ware, a factor which argues against this pattern being the consequence of a chronological succession. Beaker and Peterborough wares were both occasionally found with Bronze Age ceramics, but Grooved Ware never was.

*Close association = in the same closed context;
Loose association = in spread of pre-barrow material, etc.

At a finer level of analysis, it is notable that there were profound regional divisions within the Wessex area (Figures 4.60 - 4.63). In Cranborne Chase, for example, Grooved Ware was quite rare: probably a result of fieldwork biased toward the Handley/Gussage/Cursus areas as opposed to near the Knowlton circles. There is one case of a close association between Peterborough and Grooved Ware, at Down Farm, yet Peterborough and Beaker wares are associated on several sites. In the Christchurch area, Grooved Ware, Beakers and Bowl are very separate, despite spatial overlap. This is partly a consequence of the lack of ritual monuments in the area. Beaker burials are also rare in the area, and not purely as a result of soil conditions: graves with Beakers would surely have been recorded as easily as the many pits in the area. So in the Christchurch/Bournemouth area, Beakers appear to have been a non-funerary phenomenon. The separation of the doubtless contemporary ceramic styles implies an emphasis on boundary maintenance which recalls the rigidity of social restriction of pot use described by Miller (1982b) in the caste society of India. The sole find of Peterborough ware in the area is from the secondary silts of the Holdenhurst long barrow, associated with Bowl and Beaker wares (Piggott 1937). The Dorchester area, while largely concerned with the construction of 'ritual landscapes' and monuments as opposed to domestic activity, conforms to the pattern of close Peterborough/Beaker association and separation of Grooved Ware. The same pattern is present in South Wiltshire.

The argument can be extended by turning to the contexts within which pottery were deposited. Aside from the great predominance of Beaker burials in Wiltshire and Cranborne Chase, the depositional practices associated with Beakers and Peterborough wares are extremely similar. Both are found in secondary positions on mortuary and ritual sites, and both are frequently found as strays. Bowl pottery has a more even spread across the categories employed in the analysis, reflecting the fact that initially it must have been used for a variety of social purposes. Grooved ware, although maintaining a significant 'domestic' element, seems to have been largely connected with ceremonial monuments and formal, deliberate deposition. It is found as a stray rather less frequently than the Beaker or Peterborough. It is never associated with funerary activities. Regionally, there are a few departures from this scheme. In Cranborne Chase Bowl ceramics are restricted to mortuary and ritual contexts, reflecting the late settlement of this area: ceremonial use preceded domestic (Barrett et.al. 1981). In the Dorchester area, Beaker wares were little used for either domestic or funerary purposes, but tend to be found in secondary contexts on ritual sites. Christchurch has little evidence for ritual or funerary activity of any sort.

The results of these analyses emphasise the message that pots do not equal people. Culture, material or otherwise, is something which people use in social strategies (Ingold 1981). Pottery

styles in Neolithic Britain cannot be equated with ethnic groups ('cultures' or 'folk'), nor do associations with particular functional contexts hold over large areas. We are left to conclude that the use of particular vessel forms or decorative styles is a part of a conceptual scheme which is integrated into the power relations prevailing within a particular local system. Hence in East Anglia, Beakers appear to have been adopted by the users of Grooved Ware (Cleal 1984,37), while in Wessex the two styles 'avoid' each other, and Beakers are more closely associated with Peterborough wares. Nonetheless, it is important that certain aspects of the Grooved Ware complex are constant over wide areas: the use in formal pit deposits, for example. If this section has begged a number of questions, it is to be hoped that some of them will be answered in the next, where pottery is put into the context of a broader range of material culture.

Exchange and exclusion.

Three recent contributions to the study of assemblage variability in later Neolithic Britain have had an important effect in countering the functionalist view of prehistoric Wessex as a homogeneous totality progressing towards bigger and better displays of surplus wealth. Bradley (1982) noted that the 'cultures', 'complexes' or assemblages of later Neolithic Britain were often mutually exclusive, but spatially overlapping. From this observation, a conclusion was reached that material items

were used by social elites as "weapons of exclusion". Braithwaite (1984) suggested that the Grooved Ware and Beaker complexes represented "competing ritual discourses", in contradiction with one another. Thorpe and Richards (1984) contrasted the "ritual authority structure" associated with Grooved Ware in Wessex with the "prestige goods hierarchy" connected with Beakers, and suggested with the European Beaker network was made by the users of Peterborough wares, the 'big men' peripheral to the central authority who were barred from greater power. All of these arguments have their strengths, but do not extend from power, authority and display into the realm of productive and reproductive relations, nor do they place the British sequence in a broader context. In this section I intend to look at the changes in the nature of exchange in Neolithic Wessex, and suggest that these can be taken with the changes which have been noted in settlement, economy and monumentality to imply a major reorganisation of the relations of production. This should be seen as a background to a more detailed discussion of local sequences in the next chapter.

Such a discussion of exchange need not only be concerned with distribution, and with the final context in which an object was deposited. In the case of lithic artefacts, the way in which material was procured may have as much to tell us about the social role of goods. If a mode of production is not a labour process but a set of social relations it is clear that these relations will structure a variety of activities: lithic

procurement as much as agriculture. Binford's (1979) 'embedded procurement' is thus a viable strategy for hunter-gatherers who are essentially mobile. In tribal societies concerned with an agricultural base, quite different forms of procurement would be expected. Rather than being a part of one's daily movements, a shift of location is involved, although one which can be integrated into the seasonal round. With the New Guinea Tungei, Burton (1984) describes a situation where no craft specialisation exists, yet the exploitation of lithic resources involves two hundred men travelling to the source for some months. The technology used is rather more complicated than would be expected in embedded procurement. Further, since the axes which the men quarry are to enter a gift economy, there is a great emphasis on the liminality of the activity; women are not allowed near to the quarries, and a complex set of rituals and prohibitions have to be observed.

Thus the rationale of procurement can only be understood as a feature of social relations. The Mynydd Rhiw quarries, for example, contrast with 'direct access' quarries (Gramly 1984), in having quite distinct areas of working (Houlder 1961). The complex spatial organisation of axe production in Neolithic Britain is emphasised in the lack of polished material from the Langdale factories (Manby 1965,3). The evidence of ritual activities associated with lithic procurement is well known from Grimes' Graves (Cleal 1984). Yet the procurement of more mundane lithic items, as evidenced in the Hambleton pits already

mentioned, seem to show much less complexity and concern (despite a frequent association with causewayed enclosures). It does seem that the lithic sources of Neolithic Britain accord with a classic gift economy, with different kinds of sites providing items which circulate in more or less highly ranked spheres of exchange.

Changes did take place, however. The role of the Grooved Ware complex in the circulation of high-quality items between distant areas appears to be confirmed by Grooved Ware activity at Church Hill, Findon, Sussex (Wainwright & Longworth 1971,287) and at Grimes' Graves. At the latter site the continuance of highly ritualised activities appears to be evidenced by the find of two bowls with complex internal decoration on a dump of chalk blocks in association with organic staining (Cleal 1984,148-149). Yet a feature of the later Neolithic is the development of traditions of working which are less concerned with intensive extraction and mining. In Brittany such a change can be seen within a single site. At Seledin, Le Roux (1971, 287) describes a shift from communal gang labour to fire extraction, and from isolation from the settlement system (as the gift economy model would imply) to being a focus for mortuary sites. At the risk of labouring the point, this implies a change in the social relations of production. The large scale use of the clay-with-flints in Cranborne Chase and Sussex in the later Neolithic (Gardiner 1984) again suggests a technique of production involving less of an investment of corporate effort than the mines.

In a gift economy, exchange order will not relate to the time invested in procurement, so much as the history of the item, its attractiveness, and its scarcity (Gregory 1983,109). Hence value varies with social and geographical circumstances. As a trend-surface diagram of the relationship between flint and stone axes in Wessex (Fig. 4.64) demonstrates,, flint axes are relatively more common on the chalk, where flint was readily available. In particular, flaked and edge-polished axes are much more common on the chalk than elsewhere. On the clays, limestone and alluvium completely polished flint axes are relatively more common. This leads one to the conclusion that on the chalklands flint axes were relatively utilitarian items, and only stone axes circulated in high ranked spheres of exchange. In areas remote from the chalk, both stone and flint axes would have been prestige items. Hence they are all smoothed or polished.

It would be a mistake to assume that all items which circulate in non-commodity economies have the same moral or tactical importance. Leach (1983,532-536) points out the difference between 'prestations', obligatory exchanges which express permanent relationships, and exchanges which cancel out debts. Similarly, MacCormack (1981,162) notes the contrast between prestations and competitive exchanges. So while prestige items might be manipulated to develop indebtedness at some times, at others they might be essential for transactions associated with life crises (Eckholm 1977,119). In still further contexts, the

importance of an item may be purely symbolic, representing the prerogative of the individual to perform certain actions or to hold a particular status. An example would be the 'slave rope' which allowed men access to the slave trade in precolonial Cameroon (Rowlands 1979,14).

In the earlier part of the Neolithic in Wessex, the evidence from Hambledon Hill, South Lodge and Handley Hill suggests that prestigious items were used in the liminal stage of mortuary practice. It is equally likely that they were necessary for bridewealth payments and initiations. The uses to which exchange items were put changed through the period, as did the circumstances in which they were found. Following the arguments put forward by Bradley¹ and Thorpe and Richards², it is possible to separate out the material assemblages of the later Neolithic. But it is also possible to recognise the character of these assemblages. On the one hand one has the items associated with Grooved Ware, and on the other the Peterborough ceramics and 'macehead complex' artefacts (Roe 1968). The two assemblages overlap to a certain degree (Fig. 4.65), but it is instructive to note which items are shared or are exclusive. The association of Grooved Ware with 'macehead complex' artefacts appears to be restricted to northern Britain, bearing in mind the comments already made concerning the Stonehenge cremations. At Gop Cave, in Wales, Peterborough ware, jet sliders and a skewer pin were found in association, while Peterborough ware and a jet slider were again associated at Handley 26 (McInnes 1968,139-144). At

1. 1984b
2. 1984

Stonehenge a macehead was found with one cremation, and skewer pins with others; a macehead was found with Fengate ware at Cam in Gloucestershire (Roe 1968,153). Skewer pins are absent from Grooved Ware sites in England, those bone pins which are found are a more simple form usually made on a pig fibula or longbone sliver (Wainwright & Longworth 1971,184).

There are obvious dangers in the comparison of different context types, but it is clear that there is a difference of emphasis between the items placed in pre-Beaker graves and Grooved Ware contexts (Fig. 4.66). The predominance of dress items and weapons in the former contrasts with that of projectile points, tools, and items of purely symbolic nature in the latter. Grooved Ware, carved chalk items and particular arrowhead forms may have served as purely symbolic exclusion items (although they are none of them items whose circulation could be effectively restricted: one must conclude that their exclusivity rested in the system of knowledge with which they were associated). This point can be illustrated by the origins of some of these items. In the passage graves of Ireland, Brittany and Orkney, decoration appears to be used "to guard the tomb and/or its contents. These motifs were often placed in important positions and in the late Neolithic sites they are generally found in the antechamber" (Shee Twohig 1981,139). In the orcadian tombs of Pierowall and Eday Manse, spiral motifs are found on lintel stones (Clarke, Cowie & Foxon 1985,53), emphasising that these symbols are primarily concerned with transition, demarcation, separation and changes of state.

Now, it is clear from the incorporation of a single large menhir into pillar 15 of Gavrinis tomb and the capstone of the Table des Marchands in Brittany (Le Roux 1985,185) that symbols could be exploited and re-used. The transfer of the motifs onto mobiliary items with Grooved Ware and its associated media simply used them as badges of rank. The items providing the fields for the symbols might have little intrinsic worth, the symbols themselves expressed the division and categorisation of society.

Such a system of symbols implies a very closely defined hierarchy of statuses, and the restriction of especially powerful positions to an elite. It recalls the 'title holding' of the early African states, while the control of ritual which Grooved Ware/henge activity implies (Richards & Thomas 1984) is also redolent of conical clans and early 'asiatic' states (Friedman & Rowlands 1977,158). Another characteristic of the asiatic system is the mobilisation of corvee for large monumental works (Godelier 1978), also clearly seen in the Wessex henges. The control of external exchange might also be expected (Frankenstein & Rowlands 1978; Coquery-Vidrovitch 1978), certain items being passed down to lower status lineages. Thus the items shared by the Grooved Ware and Peterborough assemblages are also of interest: flint axes, chisel arrowheads, axehammers and stone axes of groups I, VI and VII may have been redistributed by a centralised elite. It is thus important that axes of groups I and VI have eccentric distributions which have been interpreted to imply bulk movement (Cummins 1979).

The flaw of such an arrangement was that the monopoly of external exchange did not exist. Aside from the 'macehead complex' items and Peterborough wares, axes of groups IIa, III, IV, and XIII, and Portlandian chert artefacts are rarely or never found in Grooved Ware contexts. The consequence of the development of a plurality of power strategies in the middle of the third millennium was that by 2000 bc two overlapping exchange systems existed in Wessex. The different representations which these served expressed quite different forms and sources of power. I suggest that the process which took place in this period was one of articulation of relations of production. Across north-west Europe the tribal/lineage system was in the process of being transformed. The Grooved Ware complex in Wessex represents more than the development of a spatially separated elite: it is concerned with the resistance of change by those in power. Since the same changes in settlement pattern and economy appear to be attested in Wessex as in Europe, there is no reason to suggest that they have a separate and purely internal source. Social relations under stress often need to be supported by material culture (Hodder 1979,450), and the whole basis of the Grooved Ware phenomenon in southern England was that social relationships needed to be remade and clearly defined in ritual and in symbol. Yet, as Bloch (1974) points out, such a system of hyper-ritualised traditional authority is inevitably inflexible and overformalised. In opposition to this system, a new kind of power was being created, based upon personal wealth, power and

prestige, as seen in the pre-Beaker burials. Hence, as Thorpe and Richards suggest, contact with the European Beaker network was made by the lower status Peterborough-using groups. The reason for this was that those groups involved in local prestige accumulation would attempt to contact equivalent groups in neighbouring areas, eventually reaching the continent. Hence it is no surprise that Peterborough ware has been found at Spiennes, in Belgium (Verheylewegen 1964). The introduction of Beaker pottery accelerated a process already underway.

Provisional conclusions.

In the next chapter I will illustrate the themes which I have put forward here by a more specific treatment of particular subregions of south Wessex. A few general points can be noted at this stage. From a general homogeneity of material culture, economy and mortuary practice in southern England there appears to have been a gradual diversification through the third millennium. The variety of power strategies which developed from this time onward represents not merely a patina of options for social action, but extend into conceptions of space, time and personhood. What were in conflict were complete world views, grounded in different modes of production and reproduction. This is not to say that consciousness was determined by mode of production (or vice-versa); there is an essential union between the two. Eventually, these two schemes ossified into two opposed

structures in south Wessex, one based upon traditional authority, ritual and access to prestigious symbols and knowledge, the other more directly concerned with wealth, display and the control of production by family heads. The tension between the two was not finally resolved until the introduction of the Beaker status package finally tipped the balance in favour of the latter scheme.

CHAPTER FIVE

REGIONAL SEQUENCES IN NEOLITHIC WESSEX

Introduction

In the next four chapters I intend to produce detailed regional studies of areas within the six counties covered by the thesis. Up to this point the themes which I have considered have been somewhat static as a result of their relative isolation. The aim of the following chapters will be to integrate these ideas by dealing with the development of a number of social landscapes through time. The immediate question which must be answered is that of how one defines a region for the basis of study. A simple solution would be to rely upon purely physiographic features, but such an approach is almost certain to bias the account in favour of environmental determinism. Having defined one's units of analysis on environmental criteria, it would be all too easy to argue that developments within these units were different because they were ecologically different.

How, then, do we define social units in prehistory? Renfrew (1973, 552) delimited five 'chiefdoms' within Neolithic Wessex on the basis of the distributions of ceremonial monuments. However, this assumes a set and constant relationship between monuments and society, an hypothesis which I have already questioned (p.205). So while clusters of monuments may relate to social

units, it has to be considered that some groups may not have built monuments at all. Since I have argued that monuments were not merely a display of surplus wealth, but were actually fundamental to the reproduction of social relations in Neolithic society, such an absence would be of the first order of importance.

It seems most unlikely that the societies of the southern British Neolithic were entirely isolated from each other, considering the widespread nature of the distributions of certain items of material culture (stone axes, particular types of pottery, etc.). Nonetheless, as Barth (1969, 9) emphasises, boundaries between groups persist despite flows of material and personnel across them. The recent interest in the uses of material culture to define social boundaries (e.g. Hodder 1978b; 1982a) provides some hope of the possibility of detecting social groups from the distribution of material culture. It is with this aim in mind that De Atley and Findlow (1984, 2) suggest that "the groups with which people identify can often be characterised by a modal cluster of material culture and behavioural traits as well as with a central geographical, and often organisational focus". However, this again assumes a fixed relationship between people and material culture. Boundary maintenance through the use of material culture is not a universal, but a strategy which arises within particular historical circumstances (Hodder 1979). Moreover, the boundaries concerned may be those between

communities, but may equally well relate to age or sex related interest groups which transcend the local area (Larick 1986; Hodder 1982a, 84-86).

In the specific instance of Neolithic southern Britain, the same material items seem to have been in use across quite wide areas. Particular styles of pottery (Windmill Hill, Whitehawk, Ebbsfleet, Mildenhall, Abingdon, etc.) seem to have become increasingly localised toward the middle of the third millennium, but this one horizon of cultural difference hardly seems a sufficient basis for the division of the study area into local units. It seems more often to have been the case that material items were manipulated in within-group rather than between-group strategies. With these points in mind, it may be wise to consider that the role of material culture in making statements about social difference is best left as an object of study, rather than taken for granted. In particular cases, like that of the Upper Thames Valley, such a use of material culture may be of importance at particular points in the sequence.

Nonetheless, we are left with the problem of the definition of units of analysis. Bearing in mind the European experience of Neolithic settlements clustered into Siedlungskammer or settlement cells, the procedure adopted is the recognition of clusters of traces of settlement activity (largely lithic scatters, but also distributions of pit sites and ceramics),

which may or may not coincide with distributions of field monuments. Having said this it is recognised that this may lead to a certain circularity of argument, since areas lacking settlement evidence cannot be assumed to be unsettled; it may be that areas with impressive monuments have preferentially attracted the attentions of flint collectors. All that can be done with regard to this problem is to recognise that it will be those areas between these concentrations which should be considered for future fieldwork (but see Shennan 1985).

Problems of the evidence.

The comparison of the different areas as defined is complicated by differences in their histories of research. Since much of the interpretation which follows in Chapters V to VIII depends both on differences between areas and even on the absence of particular features in some areas, it is as well to make the reader aware of some of these variations. The first area which is to be considered, the Salisbury Plain, received considerable attention in the nineteenth century from Cunnington, Colt Hoare (1810) and Thurnam (1869) as regards barrow digging, but seems not to have been a major focus for flint collectors prior to the activities of Laidler and Young (1938). This can be contrasted with the Avebury area, which was successively 'flinted' by Kendall, Passmore, Young and the numerous individuals who sold specimens

to Keiller while he was in residence in the village. However, the two major absences of the Avebury area in the later Neolithic, Grooved Ware pits and individual burials (see p.344), cannot be put down to sample bias. The history of the digging of pipe trenches and similar excavations is at least as extensive around Avebury as near Durrington, while the area has been well served by barrow diggers (Thurnam 1860; Grinsell 1957). Similarly, the fact that no Beaker burials have been located in the Christchurch area cannot be attributed to lack of evidence, since numerous pit sites have been excavated, and the extensive researches of Calkin (1951) in the area are well known.

In the Cotswolds and Mendips, major open-area excavations have been much rarer than in Wessex, yet the collections of lithics which have been assembled give a much more thorough cover of the landscape than elsewhere. These factors must obviously be taken into account in the analysis presented. The combination of extensive gravel extraction and the presence of the extremely active Oxford University Archaeological Society between the wars can doubtless be held partly responsible for the unusually rich record of Beaker and earlier burials and of small pit sites with pottery in the Upper Thames Valley. This does not affect the fact that earlier Neolithic funerary monuments are relatively rare in the area, or that traces of earlier Neolithic activity are minimal north of Oxford, or that the later Neolithic monuments of the area are conceived on a smaller scale than those of Wessex.

So while I am aware that quite major differences exist in the ways in which archaeology has been undertaken in the various parts of my study area, I consider that the contrasts which I have drawn relate to differences between the communities which inhabited those regions in the Neolithic (however, see Appendix B for a fuller consideration of some of the problems of the evidence, particularly as regards the sequences of dating used in the following chapters).

The Stonehenge/Durrington area.

The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with the development of two of the main foci of Neolithic activity in Wessex, the Salisbury Plain and south-west Dorset. The treatment is intended as a contrast. Bearing in mind the recent publication of an article which deals with the sequence in the former of these areas (Thorpe and Richards 1984), with whose conclusions I find myself largely in sympathy, it is inevitable that some of the following will echo the arguments expressed in that essay. However, it is hoped that a slightly more detailed discussion of some of the evidence will serve to place it in the context of the present thesis, and will also reveal the specificity of Thorpe and Richards' model (a point with which they would be in agreement: *ibid.*, 80). A variety of social and cultural elements, forces, strategies, resources and symbols

were extant in southern Britain in the third millennium bc. The way in which they were combined and manipulated was a consequence of very specific local conditions, as I hope to demonstrate.

In the earlier part of the Neolithic, settlement on Salisbury Plain appears to have been concentrated on the low country to the west of the river Avon (Fig. 5.1). Earlier Neolithic activity "occurred as small, essentially nucleated scatters of worked flint" (Richards 1982,100), which could be taken as conforming with the model of spatially stable lineage groups engaged in fixed-plot horticulture. Concentrations of worked flint have been located to the west of the Great Cursus (where the emphasis on flakes and cores in the primary fill of the cursus have been suggested to indicate industrial activity: Christie 1963,372), and immediately outside of Robin Hood's Ball (Richards 1984). However, the many finds of bowl pottery from under barrows in the area (for instance Longworth 1959,273; Annable 1960,394; Ashbee 1980,17) seem to emphasise the swathe of country within a couple of kilometres of the Avon (Fig. 5.1). This distribution of settlement is rather at variance with that of the long barrows. Two groups of barrows exist in the area (Richards 1984,182), one in the settled area and the other concentrated on the Robin Hood's Ball causewayed enclosure. In the Western part of Salisbury Plain (Fig. 5.2) the two later forms of long barrow, those with single and those with sequential inhumations and complex timber arrangements, appear to have been spatially separate. Yet in the Stonehenge area the two forms exist side by

side, perhaps in evidence of a more intensive competition between groups employing distinct forms of representation. In any case, late long barrows are present in both barrow clusters. The only excavated barrow which seems to be early in date is Amesbury 14 (Thurnam 1869, 183-184), situated near Normanton Down and containing disarticulated burials. The later barrows in the southern group include the oval barrow Wilsford 30, which contained four individuals "strangely huddled together" (Colt Hoare 1810, 206) and Winterbourne Stoke 1, with its single articulated male burial (Thurnam 1869, 184-186). The barrows near Robin Hood's Ball include Figcheldean 31 (ibid., 180), containing a single articulated individual, and a newly discovered oval mound very close to the enclosure itself (Richards pers. comm.). Arguably, then, we have one cluster of barrows which grew up over a period of time, and which reflects the settlement pattern of the period, and a secondary group, remote from the settled area, whose function was to express the hegemony of a particular group over the functions of the enclosure.

The separation of the two areas was further emphasised by the building of the cursus between them, an act whose contemporaneity with the long barrows is indicated by the construction of barrow Amesbury 42 across its east terminal (Richards 1984, 182) and the fashioning of the west terminal to resemble a barrow (Christie 1963, 370). Given the present evidence for the dating of cursus monuments (Appendix 17), it is tempting to see the massive monumentality of the Stonehenge cursus as an appeal to the

communal, shutting off Robin Hood's Ball and its attendant barrows from the greater community at a time when another enclosure was being built: Stonehenge itself. While Stonehenge I bears certain similarities to the causewayed enclosures, in its causewayed ditch (Braithwaite 1984,101) and internal, timber-revetted bank (Berridge pers. comm.), its relationship to the settlement system was entirely different; it was in the middle of the inhabited area. Thus movement of the ritual focus to the heart of the community (primary dates for the Stonehenge ditch: 2460+60, BM-1583; 2440+60, BM-1617) was presumably contemporary with a the use of a pit on Coneybury Hill which had had unabraded sherds of pottery appropriate for feasting activities deliberately spread across its bottom and sides (Richards 1982,99; Cleal pers. comm.) together with a large quantity of animal bones, and also with primary pre-bank activities at Durrington Walls (dates 2625+40, Gro-901a; 2635+70, Gro-901; 2450+150, NPL-191). So by the middle of the third millennium a situation can be envisaged in which an opposition existed between individual burials (in long or oval barrows) and the control of ritual and large-scale monument building. It would be these two expressions of power strategies which would increasingly come to the fore in the next five hundred years.

It cannot have been much later than this period of activity that alignments and circles of timber uprights began to be built in the area around Stonehenge and Durrington Walls. Stonehenge itself had an early phase of timber structures, including a

central circle and an avenue leading to an entrance in the south-east entrance in the south-east of the monument (to judge from the plan: Hawley 1926,3^{*}). Both the Avenue and the north-east entrance appear to have been provided with timber facades (Atkinson 1956,66) which recall both the northern circle at Durrington and those of earlier Neolithic mortuary structures (for instance Grendon; Gibson 1985). The alignments of postholes under the north and south sectors of the bank at Durrington Walls (Stone, Piggott and Booth 1954; Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 15; 17), under the bank at Woodhenge (Cunnington 1929, 10-11), in Stonehenge Bottom (Annable 1969,123) and outside Stonehenge (Vatcher and Vatcher 1973,59) imply a form of ritual control which extended across a large area of the landscape (Chapter IV above). This escalation of control may be imagined to have taken place at around the same time as the arrival of Grooved Ware in the area. Grooved Ware sherds came from the the Stonehenge Bottom postholes and from under the banks of Woodhenge and Durrington.

A date in the twenty-second century bc may be appropriate for the second major phase of activity at Stonehenge: the slighting of the bank and its replacement as a conceptual barrier by the Aubrey holes (Berridge pers. comm.). Atkinson's reasons for stating that the Aubrey holes never contained uprights (1956,28) have never been properly documented: the question remains an open one (Pitts 1982,127). However, if the date of 2180±105 (I-2328) refers to the slighting of the bank, a large circle of upright posts set in the Aubrey holes and replacing the ditch would fit

* +Berridge pers. comm.

in very neatly with the structures erected elsewhere in the immediate vicinity at about this time. It is difficult to find another explanation for Hawley's observation that some of the cremations in the Aubrey holes had "diffused down " the spaces for uprights (1922,47; 1921,30-31), perhaps into the void left by a rotting post (Cunnington 1929,29). Very soon after the return of the bank into the ditch, a number of recuts were made, including Crater 2, from which at least one sherd of Grooved Ware was recovered (Piggott 1936b,221). Yet this phase of Grooved Ware activity at Stonehenge appears to have been short-lived, and was followed by the abandonment of the site, which may have involved the growth of shrub or even trees on the site (Evans 1984,27).

The reasons for the shift of monumental and ritual activities away from Stonehenge, and perhaps the other small henges at Coneybury (Richards 1982), Fargo (Stone 1938) and Winterbourne Stoke 44 (Green and Rollo-Smith 1984,316) can be found in the consideration of the settlement pattern as a whole. The stress which has been laid upon the contemporaneity of the Peterborough and Grooved Ware traditions and their probable association with different statuses and strategies in south Wessex is thrown strikingly into relief when one considers the distribution of later Neolithic activity in the Stonehenge area (Fig. 5.3). In the area around Wilsford, Normanton and the west end of the cursus, an area characterised by a heavy, industrial flint assemblage (Richards 1984,183), Peterborough wares predominate in finds from Wilsford Lake 36f, 37, 28 and 39 (Grimes 1964,95-115),

the Normanton long mortuary enclosure (Vatcher 1961,116), Fargo (Stone 1938) and Wilsford 51,52 and 54 (Longworth 1959,273). A scatter of 'domestic' flintwork with chisel-shaped PTD arrowheads and polished flint adzes immediately west of Stonehenge is presumably to be associated with this sphere of activity (Richards 1984,185). It is in this general area that one finds the round barrow Winterbourne Stoke 35a, with a single burial and four leaf/lozenge shaped flint points (Thurnam 1869), the causewayed-ditched round barrows on Normanton Down (Vatcher 1961,167) and Amesbury 22, an unaccompanied burial succeeded by a Beaker secondary (Colt Hoare 1810,199). In a sense, there is a strand of continuity linking these burials back to Winterbourne Stoke 1, the long barrow in the same area.

To the west of this, in the area of King Barrow Ridge and Stonehenge Bottom, is a locality rich in surface flintwork; high-quality items like arrowheads, polished discoidal knives and edge-polished axes are found together with crude extraction tools (Laidler and Young 1938). In this area one finds both Peterborough and Grooved Wares, yet the two are never found in the same features (Annable 1960,394; Richards 1984,183). Grooved Ware features on the King Barrow Ridge show some degree of formality in their depositional characteristics: a pit with only the foot bones of pigs, for instance (ibid.), or the chalk plaques with lozenge designs redolent of high-quality Grooved Ware (Vatcher 1969,310-311). Yet from the same pit as the latter came a faunal assemblage with much evidence of marrow-splitting

and bone cracking (material with Trust for Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury). It could be suggested that the degree of formality of pit deposits increases with proximity to Durrington Walls. As noted above (Chapter IV), the percentage of pig bones in the faunal assemblage 'falls off' away from Durrington, while it is the Grooved Ware from the pits near the monument which has most in common with that from the henges in terms of design (ibid.). As noted, the complex motif 3(c) is restricted to pottery from Durrington Walls, the Larkhill pits, and Amesbury 39. Marine shells are found in the pits at Woodlands, Ratfyn and Larkhill (Stone 1935; 1948; 1949; Wainwright et. al. 1971), yet not further west. The deliberate nature of these deposits is emphasised by the appearance of Woodlands pit 4 as "a basketfull of material deliberately placed upside down" (Stone 1949,123) and by the capping of pit 1 with flint cairn (Stone and Young 1948,289). The intrasite analysis of materials within Durrington Walls reveals a massive emphasis on the division of material items into conceptual categories (Richards and Thomas 1984). In a sense, this 'holy of holies' exhibits a principle of social categorisation which was extended to the landscape as a whole: that which was closer to Durrington was ranked higher, was more auspicious, than that which was further away. Crucially, all finds of later Neolithic pottery within two kilometers of Durrington Walls are Grooved Ware. A social hierarchy was expressed in spatial terms; those (lineages?) living closer to the monument had access to long distance contacts (hence sea shells), to ritual activities, to the elite symbols displayed on

Grooved Ware, and to other material items of symbolic import (chalk carvings, oblique arrowheads). Given the recovery of 'domestic' structures associated with Grooved Ware at Totterdown (Wainwright and Longworth 1971,45), it is possible to suggest that these buildings are the dwellings of the highest level of a society characterised by a complex hierarchy of statuses and ranks.

Durrington Walls appears to have become a 'henge monument' in the full sense rather late in the sequence. Dates from the primary silting of the ditch are 2015+90bc (BM-399) and 2050+90 (BM-400), while the second phase of activity at the southern timber circle is dated to 2000+90 bc (BM-396), 1950+90 bc (BM-395) and 1900+90 bc (BM-396): perhaps a hundred years later. However, the dates of the first phase of the southern circle, and of the northern circle, remain open to question, and early dates exist for pre-bank activity and for the 'midden'. Clearly, the site had been of some importance for a considerable while, possibly as a consequence of its status as a natural amphitheatre (Wainwright and Longworth 1971). As Thorpe and Richards (1984) suggest, the massive investment of labour in the construction of the bank and ditch is roughly synchronous with the arrival of Beaker pottery in the area; this may be more than a coincidence.

On the continent of Europe, I have argued (Chapter III above), lineage-based societies were in the process of devolving into small, family-based groups practicing a fluid, plough-based

agriculture. In the Stonehenge area, traces of settlement dating to the later third millennium seem to be more extensive yet less nucleated (Richards 1982; 1984), which might accord with such a change. If the material base and the kin relations of society were being undermined (as might be suggested from the greater emphasis on the individual in mortuary practice), existing forms of authority, as well, would have been increasingly open to challenge.

It is significant that the first evidence of contact with the new systems of prestige competition developing on the continent is seen in the Wilsford/Normanton area. Early (Lanting and Van der Waals steps 1-3) Beaker graves have been located at Wilsford 1 (RCHM 1979,4), Amesbury 51 (Ashbee 1978,25), Wilsford 2b and 52 (Clarke 1970,502; Longworth 1959,273) and just south of the cursus (Shortt 1946,381) (distribution see Fig. 5.4). The only burial of possible early date near Durrington is that which was excavated by Booth, with a Wessex/Middle Rhine Beaker of step 3 (Stone, Piggott and Booth 1954). Furthermore, early Beaker pottery has repeatedly been found on pre-barrow old land surfaces in the Wilsford area: at Wilsford 36f, 37 and 39 (Grimes 1964,95-115), and from the Rev. Duke's excavations at Wilsford 47,48,49,50 and 50a (Sherds of E and W/MR Beaker in the British Museum).

If the construction of the bank and ditch at Durrington Walls, enforcing the distinction between those with access to ritual

activities and those without (Braithwaite 1984,99) was the initial response to new forms of authority based upon exchange and display, a more intensive expression can be seen at Woodhenge. Thorpe and Richards (1984,79) see in the latter monument the failing power of the elite to control corvee. An equally important point is the increased emphasis upon the formality of the monument. In the alignment of the timber rings toward the axis of the midsummer sunrise (Cunnington 1929,9) is seen an attempt to extend ritual control across space from a single point, in social circumstances in which the construction of extensive timber alignments may no longer have been feasible. Both Durrington Walls and Woodhenge represent the contraction of traditional authority into a small area, yet giving the impression that control still extended from this area across the whole landscape.

As Thorpe and Richards suggest, the final eclipse of traditional authority forms must have come at about the eighteenth century bc, when Beaker sherds are first found at Durrington, and ritual activities appear to have ceased. The area used for Beaker burials appears to have expanded in this phase (step 5; Fig. 4.4), and a number of burials were interred in the vicinity of the monument itself: in the bank (Farrer 1918) and in Woodhenge circle 1 (Durrington 36; Cunnington 1929), for example. That the latter burial is relatively rich may indicate that some importance was still attached to proximity to the monument. The evidence for Beaker-associated activity within Durrington Walls

itself is relatively slight, only 71 sherds having been recovered (Wainwright and Longworth 1971,71). These do exhibit a degree of patterning: comb decorated sherds were concentrated on the platform and midden, incised sherds in the southern circle postholes. This does suggest an attempt to "take over the role of Grooved Ware" (Bradley 1984b,72) and legitimate the new hegemony of Beaker-users. However, the phenomenon which smacks most of the appeal to the authority of the past is the placing of cremations in the Aubrey holes at Stonehenge, in the ditch of the lesser cursus (Richards 1984,182), in hole C14 at Woodhenge (Cunnington 1929,29) and in contexts at the Fargo hengiform (Stone 1938,360) and Coneybury (Richards pers. comm.). These must, stratigraphically, be contemporary with the first five steps of the Beaker sequence.

This emphasises the point that although a standardised package of prestige items was available in the Beaker assemblage, the social formation which came to replace the ritualised traditional authority structure associated with henges was by no means homogeneous in its forms of representation. As my predictions from Chapter III would suggest, with the system of obligations, prestations and kinship links which characterised the earlier Neolithic dismantled, the only basis for social action was incessant competition between minimal social units. The rise and fall of petty dynasties would be accompanied by recourse to a variety of legitimation strategies, of which the exotica represented by the Beaker package represented only one. The

appeal to the past, and to insular influences (hence maceheads, fabricators, skewer pins) connected with the cremations can be seen as a competing scheme, which continued in parallel right into Wessex 1. The Aldbourne cups which are largely found with cremations in Wessex graves (Piggott 1971,371) find a close parallel in the cup associated with the cremation in Aubrey hole 29 (Piggott 1938,76). The collapse of the authority structure in central Wessex led to a period of cultural bricolage, in which symbolic elements and resources were variously employed as new social strategies emerged. The structure which finally emerged was one of central core areas characterised by the rapacious competition between unstable elites locked into a cycle which demanded the acquisition of more and more prestigious exotica (the 'Wessex culture') (Barrett 1980,84), and a periphery which had, perhaps, reverted to a lineage mode of organisation, characterised by communal productive activities and 'segmentary' cemeteries (Bradley 1980,65). Conceptually, the Deverel-Rimbury urn cemeteries may be compared with the earlier long barrows: the destruction of the individual ego is combined with a spatial expression which stresses the communality of the ancestral group.

The Stonehenge cremations may roughly coincide with the first phase of stone construction on the site. Stone Hole 97 (Pitts 1982) is cut by the Heel Stone ditch, which is in turn postdated by the Avenue bank (ibid.,93). Pottery from the stonehole of the Heel Stone is of Beaker fabric (Atkinson 1956,70); beyond this its date is uncertain. On stratigraphic grounds it is essential

to postulate a lithic phase prior to the arrival of the bluestones, using the "substantially natural boulders" (ibid.,78), the unworked sarsens of the Heel Stone, Station Stones, Portal Stones, and a presumed stone avenue of which Stone 97 was an element. Such an early lithic phase would have coincided temporally with the building of Woodhenge (Fig. 5.6). Its position in the landscape and material associations indicate a connection with the Beaker and Peterborough complexes: a rival focus of ceremonial activity to Durrington and Woodhenge. The re-use of the monument to provide legitimacy for the Beaker-using power groups continued with the rebuilding of the site as Stonehenge II. The Avenue and the bluestones must have both been erected at around the time when Durrington Walls and Woodhenge were abandoned. In a sense they celebrate the final dissolution of the old power structure. Yet at the same time the new monument referred back to the old: the alignment on the midsummer sunrise and the setting of the bluestones in arcs identical in diameter to those of the Woodhenge timbers (Cunnington 1929,18) suggests a degree of emulation. The building of Stonehenge II coincides with the currency of step 5 Beakers*, which concentrate on the Stonehenge area. Hence the two phenomena can be linked to suggest the rise of a powerful hegemony in the area.

The successive remodellings of Stonehenge, and the fact that they were sometimes unfinished, is something of an indication of the nature of the emergent social formation. The society which flourished in the Stonehenge area in the earlier second

* But see Appendix B for comments on Beaker chronology.

millennium bc is a close parallel to those of northern continental Europe. Yet if we use these developments as a baseline to gauge those of other parts of southern England, it will become increasingly clear that the similarities in material culture between areas may mask the quite different social strategies in which it was employed.

South Dorset: the Dorchester area

The problems which arise from overgeneralisation between regions only become apparent with sustained reflection on the data. Within Wessex a fairly restricted cultural repertoire appears to have been manipulated in a variety of ways; the similarity of outward appearances can mask the variability of internal social processes. This kind of problem is an inevitable one in a discipline in which we deal with the static consequences of dynamic action. However, the comparison of an area like that around Dorchester with the Stonehenge district will begin to show that if one is concerned not with the isolated elements of the archaeological record but with the relationships between these elements, contrasts will begin to emerge.

An initial problem in the comparison between these two areas lies in the quality and nature of the information available. The scale

of both amateur and professional fieldwork has been much greater in Wiltshire. Much less is known about the settlement history of south Dorset. The round barrows of the Dorset Ridgeway group have been much investigated (RCHM 1970; Grinsell 1959; 1982), yet little work has been done on the long barrows of the area. On the whole, observations must be restricted to the results of excavations on a number of major monuments. Even these, however, produce results which suggest subtle differences from the south Wiltshire sequence.

Direct evidence for occupation in the earlier Neolithic is restricted to two pit sites; Sutton Poyntz, to the south of Broadmayne (RCHM 1970, 511), and Rowden, in Winterbourne Steepleton (Woodward 1981). At the latter site, dated to 2910±80 bc, 2990±70 bc and 2780±70 bc (Woodward pers. comm.), an interesting faunal assemblage was recovered. Cattle were relatively sparsely represented by comparison with other sites of the period, yet sheep bones were numerous, implying the existence of areas of open country at a relatively early date. If these two sites can be taken as evidence of early settlement on the Ridgeway, the construction of the Maiden Castle causewayed enclosure on its isolated hilltop might have been as an outlier to this activity. However, the long barrows of the Bradford Peverell area give every outward appearance of being 'early' in the sequence, and excavations by Cunnington in 1881 on the Forty Acre Plantation barrow produced a flint cairn at the south-east end. Despite an absence of skeletal material, the structure of

the barrow tends to favour an early date (Grinsell 1959,77). These barrows, and the concentration of leaf-shaped arrowheads in the Fordington area might provide evidence for earlier Neolithic activity closer to the Frome.

Many of the other long barrows of the Dorchester area show signs of being later in date. At Allington Avenue, Dorchester, a parallel-ditched barrow was excavated which showed some structural affinity with the bank barrows, with no trace of primary burials. It had been recut at one end by a small rectangular-ditched enclosure containing cremation deposits (Davis, Stacey and Woodward 1985,104). The massive bank barrow at Maiden Castle is clearly late, overlying as it does the bank and ditch of the enclosure (Wheeler 1943). Aligned on the enclosure are the oval barrow Winterbourne Monkton I and the extremely large long barrow Winterbourne Monkton II (Grinsell 1982,30; Bradley 1983,16). The construction of oval or round mounds on or near causwayed enclosures has already been commented on, and is interestingly paralleled by the relationship between the long barrows Bradford Peverell III and IV, in Seven Barrow Plantation. As at Maiden Castle, an oval barrow is aligned on an earlier monument, in this case an earlier barrow, presumably in order to suggest a direct relationship with the past through spatial integration. The association between a bank barrow and other very large long barrows at Maiden Castle is paralleled both at Broadmayne and at Long Bredy (Fig. 5.7). At the latter site, one has not only the Martin's Down North and South barrows, 300 and

200ft in length respectively (Grinsell 1959,80), but also two small cursus monuments (Bailey 1984). The concentrations of monuments at these locations which must surely date to the earlier third millennium points to a degree of political centralisation at this time.

If the Ridgeway was indeed largely cleared and settled by the start of the third millennium, the building of these monuments can hardly be connected with colonisation. Given that one of the largest barrow cemeteries of the Bronze Age grew up between the bank barrows at Broadmayne and Long Bredy, it may be that these monuments anticipate that use, and constitute a statement about the social use and delineation of the landscape. It may even be possible to suggest that a degree of continuity exists in this use from the middle of the Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age and beyond. Later Neolithic round barrow burials can certainly be demonstrated in south Wiltshire and in Cranborne Chase (Bradley et. al. 1984). The evidence for south Dorset is less unequivocal, yet some candidates can be pointed out, especially in the light of developments which have shown the danger of assuming all unaccompanied round barrow burials to be Bronze Age in date (Christie 1967; Burgess and Shennan 1976,316).

Possibly the most convincing of these barrows are a number of sites with multiple inhumations. At Winterbourne St. Martin 5c, Sydenham (1844,331) found three skeletons "hastily deposited" in a circular grave, with two subsequent inhumations under a cairn

of flints within the barrow. These arrangements find close parallels in Neolithic Yorkshire (Kinnes 1979). At Winterbourne St. Martin 34b, close to Maiden Castle, Sydenham (ibid.,332) found three inhumations beneath a simple earth mound. Deposited in the mound above the burials was a vessel which Grinsell (1959,153) describes as "a decorated bowl, Beaker or food-vessel". The pot is in the Dorset County Museum: its lozenge decorations recall nothing so much as a crude copy of Grooved Ware. Long Bredy 5 was excavated more recently by Eogan (1980), and showed evidence of a complex history of ditch-digging, the earliest element being a causewayed ditch. The outer ditches produced a rich assemblage of Bronze Age pottery, the inner a single rather undiagnostic sherd (ibid.,49). A similarly complex sequence was found at Winterbourne Came 18b, where six primary burials with bovid bones were covered by a later mound with carved stone slabs, possibly associated with the deposition of a secondary urned cremation (Grinsell 1959,148).

Individual burials under round barrows are more difficult to find. Among the Five Marys group at Chalden Herring, two barrows excavated by the Duchess of Berry in 1866 contained crouched inhumations with stag antlers: clearly, only radiocarbon assay could indicate the date of these burials. One of the Bloxworth Down barrows excavated by Shipp in 1854 contained an urned cremation with a bone pin (RCHM 1970). This might indicate an affinity with the cremations of the Stonehenge area, but given the way in which that tradition merges into the Wessex culture,

the site is again doubtful. More convincing is Winterbourne St. Martin 43, excavated by Gray and Prideaux (1905). Here the crouched inhumation of a young man was overlain by a cairn of flints containing a scraper, flint flakes and at least one sherd of Peterborough ware (compared by the excavators with the pottery from Pitt-Rivers' Handley Hill excavations), as well as finger-tip impressed sherds in the same fabric.

So, later long barrows and Neolithic round barrows appear to have been concentrated in the area around Maiden Castle and the Ridgeway. Peterborough ware came from both Winterbourne St. Martin 43 and Maiden Castle, and chisel arrowheads appear to be concentrated in the same area (Fig. 5.8). There is thus some evidence for a zonation of the landscape in the later Neolithic, similar to that in the Stonehenge area, with a developing opposition between the henges of Mount Pleasant, Dorchester and Maumbury Rings on the one hand and the Ridgeway on the other. Such an impression of division is enhanced by the distribution of stone axes. As has already been noted (Chapter IV above), only axes of groups I, III and VII are regularly associated with Grooved Ware in the south of England. By contrast, axes found on the Ridgeway by C. E. Bean include examples of groups I, IIa, III, IV, IVa, VI, and XIII (Evens et. al. 1962, 244). This tends to confirm the suggestion that in later third millennium Wessex some items were circulating in networks which were entirely independent of the interregional contacts associated with Grooved Ware. Indeed, it seems very likely that competition for access to

long distance exchange contacts and exotica would be a strategy practiced by those seeking power independently of the central social authority. Hence there is an extra layer of meaning to be added to Hodder and Lane's comment that "the widespread axe exchange could be seen as much as a part of the construction and legitimation of social position as a provision of tools" (1982,232).

Maiden Castle itself has provided axes of groups IV, IVa, XIII, XVI and XVII, all of which are unknown from Grooved Ware contexts. Permanent occupation on the site, if such there were, may have ended with the slighting of the bank and the construction of the long mound across the ditch, but some activity seems to have continued there. Peterborough and Beaker pottery was deposited at the site, together with lithics and animal bones. This deposition appears to have been focussed on the long mound. Verna Care (1982) pointed out the important role of Maiden Castle in the exchange of lithic items. She noted that by the later Neolithic a whole cluster of sites surrounding the monument were concerned not only with the production of flint axes, but also with the preparation of blanks and cores of Portland chert. "The implication of these developments is that the Maiden Castle enclosure...had taken over the existing network based upon the distribution of Portland chert" (ibid.,282). Green (1980,65) indicated that chisel arrowheads of Portland chert are plentiful but that oblique arrowheads of the material are unknown. This, he said, was because the chert

sources had ceased to be exploited by the end of the third millennium. However, a very few oblique arrowheads of Portland chert have been found in Mendip (although none is closely provenanced), and Bronze Age triangular arrowheads of Portland chert are known (an example from near Pilsdon Pen, Dorset was shown to me by R. Gee), whilst Portland chert flakes were recovered from the Beaker-associated palisade trench at Mount Pleasant. Another explanation must thus be found.

This can best be done by returning to the concept of separate exchange spheres in the later Neolithic. In southern England, Portland chert did not circulate in those contexts to which oblique arrowheads were appropriate. Portland chert is extremely rare in association with Grooved Ware; but by contrast two finds of Peterborough ware have come from the Isle of Portland. Ebbsfleet sherds (together with sherds of plain bowl) were found at the Verne (Dorchester Museum), whilst Palmer's 1966 excavations at Portland Bill produced a sherd of Mortlake ware in the same context (intrusive into a midden site) as Beaker sherds and human skeletal remains (also Dorchester Museum). Pitts (1983,79) offers the warning that Portlandian cherts can be found in pebble beds in a number of areas of southern England. Nonetheless, faced with the tens of boxes of primary flakes and cores from the Winterbourne Monkton, Upwey and Pigeon House Barn sites in the Bean collection, one must accept that a very large scale mobilisation of a lithic resource was taking place in the later Neolithic. Furthermore, it is clear that this material,

once in a portable form as cores and arrowheads appears to have circulated in an exchange sphere separate from Grooved Ware, and associated with stone axes, Peterborough ware and Beakers. As I shall document in the next chapter, this period sees a dramatic increase in the use of Portlandian chert in the Mendip hills, associated with concentrations of high quality lithic items. These two phenomena may be unrelated, but it is tempting to suggest that the coincident increase in the extraction of a stone type in one area and in the use of that stone type in another area linked, and are a consequence of exchange links between powerful groups in the respective districts.

If the preceding discussion has demonstrated that certain material items were circulating in a network which was concentrated on Maiden Castle and the Dorset Ridgeway, it is worth examining the implications of this for the context of Beaker pottery in the area. As in south Wiltshire, it appears to have been those elements engaged in exchange networks separate from the central authority which had access to Beakers. From the time of the construction of the long mound at Maiden Castle, higher quality material items appear to have been purposefully deposited at the east end of this peculiar monument. This recalls the secondary deposits which have already been discussed in relation to the long barrows. The lithic assemblage at Maiden Castle as a whole is dominated by scrapers, yet in the ditch of the long mound they represent a smaller percentage of tools (57% as opposed to 80%). Serrated flakes, piercers and awls, cores and

arrowheads all reach higher percentages in the barrow ditches. Of ten grouped stone axes whose contexts are known, six are from the long mound ditches, three from pits, and only one from the rest of the site (which is numerically the greatest part of the lithic assemblage). All of the Portland chert from the site, with the exception of one flake from the enclosure ditch and one arrowhead from a chipping floor, comes from either the long mound ditch or from the pits inside the enclosure (which, as explained in Chapter IV, may represent formal deposits). The faunal remains from the long mound ditch are dominated by cattle, a feature which again recalls long mound practice (finds Dorchester Museum; faunal remains Natural History Museum).

Wheeler's section of the long mound ditch (1943,87: Fig.15) is only a schematic representation of an extremely complex stratigraphy. Any particular cutting may contain up to 25 layers, and each cutting was separately numbered. Hence the illustration in the report of Beaker pottery arranged by layer is misleading (Wheeler 1943,157: plate xxiv). Fig. 5.9 represents an attempt to cross-relate those sections which survive in Dorchester museum. Clarke (1970,480) suggests that the Beaker material from the site is composed of AOC, FN, FP and S2 vessels. This is interesting, as it places the material into steps 1/2 and 5/6, without the intervening steps. The stratigraphy can be read to suggest that the earliest assemblage on the site (section P3, layer 4) is purely corded Beaker, in levels also associated with Peterborough ware. The earliest Beaker presence is thus potentially very early

- perhaps c.2000 bc, and is to be connected with formal deposition and perhaps feasting at the east end of the long mound.

This result is intriguing when one comes to consider the sepulchral use of Beaker pottery in the Dorchester area. Two early Beaker burials are recorded, at Dorchester barrow 5 (Masonic hall site) (Grinsell 1959,105), and at Winterbourne St. Martin 32 (ibid.,153). Both have European Bell Beakers, and both can be assigned to step 2 of the Lanting and Van der Waals scheme. Despite the very large number of barrows which have been opened in the area, Beaker burials of steps 3 and 4 are entirely missing, and only the S2 Beaker from a flat grave near Broadmayne (Peers and Clarke 1967,105) represents the transition from step 5 to step 6. It is as if a few precocious Beaker burials were made at the very start of the second millennium, and then the practice was abandoned until Beakers returned to south Dorset as part of a fully formed Wessex grave repertoire. The cluster of step 5 burials around Stonehenge finds no parallel in Dorset, despite the similarity of the major monuments in the two areas. So, one is prompted to ask what people were doing with Beakers in south Dorset between 2000 and 1700 bc.

Rather less can be ventured about the development of the complex of large monuments constituted by Mount Pleasant, Maumbury Rings and the massive Dorchester post circle than could be suggested for the Stonehenge area. There was certainly pre-henge activity

at Mount Pleasant, evidenced by plain bowl sherds and a date of 2122+73 bc (BM-644) from beneath the bank (Wainwright 1979). Nonetheless, the landscape of timber settings and alignments seems entirely lacking in south Dorset*. Thorpe and Richards' (1984,75) suggestion that in some areas the large henges may be preceded by smaller prototypes may be relevant, given the presence of hengiform structures at Askerswell, Bridehead, Compton Vallenge, Upwey, Eggardon (a pennanular structure with a small barrow in the centre and another on the bank) and Lanceborough (near Maiden Castle) (Oliver n.d.; Piggott and Piggott 1939). However, the excavation of an earthen circle at Litton Cheney proved its occupation to be of late Bronze Age date (although the question of this being the re-use of an earlier structure was left open) (Catherall 1976). Further afield, a pit circle hengiform at Wyke Down in Cranborne Chase has produced dates of 2090+90 bc (BM-2395), 2190+90 bc (BM-2396) and 2200+50 bc (BM-2397) (Bradley pers. comm.). The question thus remains an open one.

The digging of the enclosure ditch at Mount Pleasant is dated to 2108+71 bc (BM-792) (Wainwright 1979), while the post circle of c.380m diameter beneath Dorchester town has a date of c.2110 bc (HAR-5508) (Woodward, Davies and Graham 1984,101). The presence of Grooved Ware at Poundbury (Farrar and Longworth 1965,106), Maumbury, Dorchester and Mount Pleasant, and the location of several oblique arrowheads in the Dorchester area (Fig. 5.8) suggest that as in south Wiltshire, a spatially separate element

*Excluding the Dorchester circle, which must be considered as a monument in its own right.

of society had access to Grooved Ware. The same emphasis on structure and categorisation of material deposition is found in Grooved Ware contexts at Mount Pleasant as at Durrington Walls (Richards and Thomas 1984, 214), implying again some degree of control over ritual performance by a socially pre-eminent group. However, it is necessary to offset this impression by pointing out that by the end of the third millennium Maiden Castle appears to have become a major centre for the exchange of lithic items, while the Dorset Ridgeway was already in use for dynastic sepulchral activities. What had happened was not so much the development of total social control by a ritualised elite, as the parallel rise of two separate authority forms. The quantity of material culture deposited at a site is a poor gauge of its importance, yet it is interesting to note that there is far less Grooved Ware at Mount Pleasant than at Durrington Walls, and that it was rather less ornate in its decoration. Furthermore, no stone axes at all were recovered from Grooved Ware levels at Mount Pleasant. The implication is that the control of exchange mechanisms proved to be a rather more successful strategy than that of ritual in south Dorset.

In this connection it is important that the arrival of Beaker pottery at Mount Pleasant was rather earlier than that at Durrington Walls. The Beaker arrival at Durrington seems to date to the eighteenth century bc, and was characterised by a relatively small-scale use of the site followed by an

abandonment. The evidence from Mount Pleasant is rather different. The earliest Beakers on the site are two W/MR sherds from site IV, layer 8, segment IVa (Wainwright 1979,87). This suggests a date in the nineteenth century bc. Nonetheless, even if this is the case, Beakers will have been in use for some while at Maiden Castle by this time. The arrival of Beakers at Mount Pleasant coincided with that of the other elements of the Ridgeway/Maiden Castle network: Portland chert in Ditch II, layer 5 and Ditch XXIX layer 7, stone axes and Peterborough ware in the palisade trench.

Yet this activity was not followed by an abandonment of the site. The ditch was extended at c.1780 bc. Then, the ditch and bank of the henge were superseded by the construction of a massive timber palisade, dated to 1695±43 bc (BM-665) and 1687±63 bc (BM-662), while the timber circle of site IV was replaced by a stone cove. This activity has produced the conflicting dates of 1680±60 bc (BM-668) (Wainwright 1979,50) and 1940±60 bc (CAR-5) (Dresser 1985) from the same sample. Grooved ware continued to be deposited in the ditches, alongside Beakers. Animal bones seem to suggest that feasting activities continued on the site, and the predominance of cattle in site IV and pig in the outer ditch was, if anything, enhanced in this phase (Richards and Thomas 1984, Fig.12.14). The quantity of Beaker pottery on the site far exceeds that of Grooved Ware; the deposition of over 3000 flint artefacts at site IV in the middle silts contrasts with the negligible number of implements from the primary layers

(Wainwright 1979,144). Longworth (in Wainwright 1979,88) recognised that some patterning existed in the spatial distribution of Beakers at Mount Pleasant; "incised Beaker (sherds).....have a restricted distribution confined to the secondary silts of the Northern Entrance and the Palisade". Fig. 5.10 demonstrates the major distinction, also seen in the animal bones, drawn between site IV and the outer boundaries of the monument by Beaker deposition. In the last chapter I suggested that over time particular traditions within the Beaker complex gained or lost prestige value. At Mount Pleasant these associations appear to have been manipulated as part of ritual practice, in much the same way as the design structure of Grooved Ware had been before. AOC, W/MR, E, N and plain Beakers are emphasised at site IV, S and FN in the palisade and ditch. This distinction is not merely chronological. In layer 5 of segment XIII, dated to 1680+60 bc, AOC, E, W/MR, N/MR and S4 Beakers were all found together (Wainwright 1979,76). Arguably, then, between 1900 and 1600 bc Mount Pleasant remained in use as a centre largely concerned with ritual activities.

Two alternative explanations present themselves: either the social group who had been using Grooved Ware in the later third millennium gained access to Beakers in the early second, or the control of ritual was taken over by the rival group who had controlled the exchange network based on Maiden Castle. The fact that at Maumbury Rings Grooved Ware continued to be deposited alone into the seventeenth century bc suggests that the latter

explanation is to be preferred.

At Maumbury the creation of a new henge monument, or the elaboration of an old one through the addition of deep shafts, can be dated to 1700+70 bc (BM-2281) and 1690+70 bc (BM-2282). The fillings of the shafts set into the ditch involved the separation of certain material elements: human and animal remains, flints, pottery and carved chalk (Bradley and Thomas 1984). The dates, of which the later came from the bottom of a shaft, suggest that they were filled relatively rapidly, presumably manually. In a sense the shafts imply a heightened emphasis on demarcation and division even with respect to the earlier henges. The use of the tops of the shafts was an element new to Grooved Ware associated depositional practices, and obviously one with strong symbolic power. Interestingly, human remains are also present at Mount Pleasant, in the palisade trench (Wainwright 1979,247), which was dug at a date statistically indistinguishable from that of the Maumbury shafts. Another parallel between these phases of activity lies in the use of chalk carvings: many chalk balls came from the Maumbury shafts, 30 chalk balls came from the Mount Pleasant Palisade, as opposed to two from earlier contexts (Wainwright 1979,167). Finally, the building of the stone cove at Mount Pleasant finds a parallel in the portal stone at Maumbury (Bradley 1975). These elements, the recourse to the symbolic use of human bones, to ancient practices associated with causewayed enclosures with the chalk balls, and to far-off centres of power with stone uprights,

all suggest a mutual awareness between the two sites. This gives the impression that as late as the seventeenth century bc a kind of rivalry was still going on between the users of Beakers and Grooved Ware in south Dorset, although using a repertoire which was becoming increasingly similar.

The construction of the stone cove at Mount Pleasant may be paralleled by that of a number of stone circles on the Ridgeway. At Hampton (Wainwright 1967), Kingston Russell, Pokeswell, Little Mayne (Warne 1872,116-122), the Nine Stones (RCHM 1970,53), Litton Cheney II (Piggott and Piggott 1939,146) and an outlier at Rempstone (Calkin 1960), circles exist, sometimes with associated avenues (Fig. 5.12). If we can believe the account of the recovery of two Beakers from Little Mayne (Oliver n.d.), it may be that the eventual acquisition of control over ritual performance by Beaker users seen at Mount Pleasant was extended at the same time through the construction of the Ridgeway circles.

Several of the strands of this discussion can now be drawn together to suggest the reasons why the Dorchester sequence differs from that in south Wiltshire. Firstly, those Ridgeway round barrows which are most convincingly Neolithic in date appear to contain multiple burials, as indeed did the Alington Avenue cremation enclosure. Secondly, the major centre which seems to have been connected with these burials, Maiden Castle, appears to have been a site for feasting and acts of purposeful

deposition of material items, in ways which harked back to the long barrow tradition. When the people involved in these activities gained access to Beakers, the pots were initially used to accompany single burials, but the practice was soon abandoned. Perhaps single inhumation was not appropriate to the social formation prevailing in south Dorset. Instead, Beakers were used in henges and stone circles, in much the same way as Grooved Ware had been before them. Thus the users of Peterborough ware and Beakers in this area, although in open competition with Grooved Ware users, were probably not very much unlike them in terms of social structure. In the Stonehenge area, I have suggested that the arrival of Beakers is connected with the collapse of one type of social formation and its replacement by another, yet it can be argued that in south Dorset exotic forms of material culture were adopted for use in competition between lineages within an unchanging tribal structure. So perhaps Shennan's (1982) suggestion that contact with the Beaker network brought a standardisation of social form need not apply in this case. The shift to individual burial on the Ridgeway, the dismantling and burning of the palisade trench at Mount Pleasant and the deposition of a flanged bronze axe in the ditch (Wainwright 1979,40), and the abandonment of Maiden Castle did not take place until rather later. Perhaps all of these phenomena can be linked with the rise of the Wessex culture. If continuity between later Neolithic and Beaker systems of prestige and the Wessex graves is best evidenced in the Stonehenge area, it may be that the final collapse of a tribal system in south Dorset was a consequence of

contacts with this area, rather than of links with the continent.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COTSWOLD AND MENDIP HILLS.

Lithic distributions: settlement, status and exchange.

The limestone uplands of Mendip and the Cotswolds contrast with the Wessex chalk in both the scale and the character of the archaeological research to which they have been subject. With the exceptions of Crickley Hill and Hazleton, large open-area excavations are largely absent, yet the work of flint collectors and field surveys has provided the potential for complete understanding of settlement. The Mendips in particular have provided an unparalleled series of private and museum collections of lithics. It is ironic that in these areas where a particularly detailed description of settlement is possible occupation appears to have been relatively stable throughout the Neolithic.

Considering the quality of the information available, a decision was made to separate out 'major' and 'minor' surface lithic assemblages, those sites providing more or less than twenty retouched implements respectively. It was hoped by this procedure to investigate the possibility that different landscape zones were used for different activities. However, it appears that in the sample available the number of implements present was a consequence largely of recovery technique.

The Cotswold hills form a crescent of limestone upland between the Severn/Avon plain to the north and west and the Thames Valley to the south. The crucial feature of this landform is that the northern side is a steep escarpment rising as much as 250 metres over two kilometres. The Thames dip-slope, by contrast, is considerably more gradual. The distribution of earlier Neolithic flint scatters is heavily biased toward the northern escarpment (Fig. 6.1), concentrating on the junction between the greater and lesser oolite (Fig. 6.2). Recent surface collection by Marshall (1985) has allowed greater precision in the assessment of prehistoric landuse than is possible with museum collections, although the geographical scope of his study is consequently limited to a section of the scarp. Marshall's study indicates a preference for south-facing slopes and limestone spurs throughout the period (ibid., 45; 48). While the distribution of flint cores (Fig. 6.3) indicates a continuous strip of settled land across the northernmost 10km or so of the massif, leaf arrowheads appear to form concentrations within this spread, in the areas around Bourton/Swell, Bisley/Miserden, Uley and the Bath Downs (Fig. 6.4). In Chapter IV three possible interpretations were put forward for the role of leaf arrowheads: hunting, warfare and prestige/display. Given marked concentrations of arrowheads within the settled area in the Cotswolds, some combination of the latter two is to be preferred. The same areas also have concentrations of petit tranchet derivative arrowheads. This may be partly a consequence of sample bias, for instance the intensive collection by Cannon Royce in the Swell, Stow and Bourton areas (Grinsell

1964), although one can raise the perennial objection that flint collectors are drawn to areas where they know that they will find flints. I suggest that a degree of continuity existed in the use of leaf-shaped arrowheads for display (in the broadest sense: flint is not native to the Cotswolds, but one would not suggest that arrowheads were controlled as a scarce good. It is more likely that arrowheads constituted a distinctively male item of personal equipment) and warfare. Chisel-shaped arrowheads have traditionally been interpreted as a wildfowling tool (Clark 1935), but in the forms of endemic warfare likely in the Neolithic an arrow which would produce a wide and bloody wound might be preferable to a piercer.

What we know of Neolithic landuse in the Cotswolds conforms very closely to the picture of Neolithic relations of production which was sketched out in Chapter IV. The preference for south-facing slopes indicates a concern with horticulture, while the emphasis on the northern escarpment surely takes advantage of the abrupt ecotone between the limestone upland and the lush low country of the Vale of Gloucester. The earliest long cairns in the area, those with lateral chambers, are located on the extreme southern side of this settled strip (Fig. 6.1). The significance of this spatial relation will be discussed below. Those causewayed enclosures which were built on the Cotswold massif each appear to be sited on the edge of one of the clusters of leaf-shaped arrowheads: Crickley Hill (Dixon 1979), the Peak Camp (Darvill 1981) and Rendcomb (Trow 1985) on each side of the

Bisley/Miserden group, and Icomb Hill (Saville 1978) to the south of the Swell/Bourton group (Fig. 6.23).

What is most remarkable about the lithic scatters of later Neolithic date in the Cotswolds is how little they differ in their distribution from those of the earlier Neolithic, both in terms of geology (Fig. 6.36) and geography (Fig. 6.5). If anything, there is a drop in the number of sites; a contrast with much of Southern England. The pattern of settlement along the escarpment appears to be a real one: the dip-slope is less subject to ploughing (Tyler 1976,3), but where lithic collections have been made, as at Bagendon (Clifford 1961,197-198) and Long Newton (Gracie 1942) the material recovered is purely Mesolithic. The longevity of the pattern is further emphasised by the distribution of barbed and tanged arrowheads (Fig. 6.6).

In the Mendip hills a very similar pattern of earlier Neolithic landuse can be suggested, with a concentration of scatter sites on limestone soils (compare Figs. 6.7 and 6.8) on the southern escarpment, which drops rapidly onto the Somerset levels. Similar south-facing locations were used on Callow Hill, Bleadon Hill, Banwell Hill and the hills west of Bristol, overlooking the coastal plain. As in the Cotswolds, there is little evidence for any radical shift of settlement in the later Neolithic (Fig. 6.9). Nonetheless, there is an increase in the gross number of scatter sites, and a change in the structure of collected assemblages. Two distinct areas of intensive later Neolithic

activity in Mendip can be discerned on the basis of later Neolithic scatters (Fig. 6.9), and the general distribution of cores and hammerstones (Fig. 6.10). The group of assemblages west of Cheddar, around the Gorse Bigbury henge monument are much 'richer' than those north of Wells. The former area displays an unprecedented density of finds of plano-convex and polished discoidal knives (Fig. 6.11), which is not matched in the latter despite intensive collection by Chris Hawkes. Furthermore, the flint axes which have been recovered in the Cheddar area are predominantly whole, while finds north of Wells are largely of polished flakes or broken axes (Fig 6.12). Both oblique petit tranchet and barbed and tanged arrowheads (Figs. 6.13 and 6.14) cluster in the western area, and only chisel-shaped arrowheads are concentrated north of Wells (Fig. 6.15). This accords with the suggestion made in Chapter IV that in some circumstances oblique arrowheads may have constituted a higher status item than chisel arrowheads. Of the three henge monument complexes in Mendip, the Priddy Circles, Hunter's Lodge and Gorse Bigbury, the two former appear to have been built in areas remote from settlement, while the last may have provided a focus for a high status group.

Since flint and other litic materials are not native to either Mendip or the Cotswolds the great bulk of stone tools and raw materials must have arrived there by human agency. Despite the probability of herding activities, exchange seems a more likely mechanism for this than embedded procurement (Saville 1982). It

is wholly possible that the survivability of lithic items has caused a gross overestimation of their importance to farming (as opposed to hunting communities). However, in this type of society, all exchange, particularly that between distant communities, has potentially profound consequences for the social fabric (Servet 1982). Flint must have been imported in vast quantities, but the problems inherent in provenancing flint make this observation of little help in investigating the structure of exchange.

One lithic material whose distribution is comparatively easy to study is Portlandian Chert, a substance instantly recognisable macroscopically by its dark, lustrous appearance (Palmer 1970). However, this attractive appearance and the preferential use of the material for arrowhead manufacture may indicate that it was more highly prized than much flint, and consequently that it circulated in higher-ranked spheres of exchange. Pitts (1983,79) warns that not all Portlandian chert need have originated on the Isle of Portland, as small quantities of the material can be obtained from pebble beds throughout the south of England. Nonetheless, as I described in Chapter V, the later Neolithic seems to have seen an expansion of the extraction of chert at Portland itself. Nowhere else than in south Dorset is there any comparable evidence for the working of Portlandian chert.

A very large quantity of Portlandian chert has been recovered from the Mendip Hills. The ratio of leaf to chisel arrowheads

made of Portland chert in the area suggests that the quantity of material introduced increased in the later Neolithic (Fig. 6.16). The fact that all single-period surface assemblages from Mendip which contain flakes or implements of Portland chert are later Neolithic in date (ST 511 509; ST 521 507; Charterhouse Warren Farm; Holly Tree) reinforces this conclusion. Since the production of chert in south Dorset appears to have expanded at this time, it is reasonable to suggest that this was the origin of the material located on Mendip. There are also sites located between Portland and Mendip which have produced chert. Of these, Ham Hill may have been a causewayed enclosure (a sherd with trumpet-lug characteristic of the south-western group of earlier Neolithic wares and a vast collection of lithics of both earlier and later Neolithic date are in Taunton Museum. A note in W.E.V. Young's diary indicates that Peterborough ware has also been found on the site), although the area of the hill most likely to have held the site has been lost to quarrying (I. Burrow pers. comm.).

The distribution of items of Portland chert within Mendip are instructive. In the last chapter I suggested that the material circulated in south Wessex as a part of an assemblage made up of Peterborough wares and particular types of stone axes. The development of mutually exclusive material assemblages appears not to have taken place in Mendip. It is an unwarranted assumption to suggest that long-distance exchanges will be concluded between socially-analogous individuals. If different

material items held different meanings in different but contemporary societies in Neolithic Britain this was partly because those communities were differently structured. In Mendip, flakes which probably derive from the secondary working of Portland chert cores are found in the 'low status' area north of Wells (Fig. 6.17), while chisel-shaped arrowheads of chert are found near Gorsey Bigbury (Fig. 6.16).

A final point concerning the distribution of lithic materials is raised by the spread of flint and stone axes in the Cotswold Hills (Figs. 6.19 and 6.20). While chips from polished axes are predominantly concentrated on the northern escarpment, which has been interpreted as the primary zone of settlement, many complete axes are found in the Severn, Thames and Avon valleys. Two observations may be important to the interpretation of this pattern. Firstly, those stone axes found in the Vale of Gloucester originate from rather different sources than those found on the Cotswolds, thus:

<u>Axe Group</u>	<u>Vale of Gloucester</u>	<u>Cotswolds</u>
I	5	1
Ia	2	0
III	0	1
VI	3	0
VII	1	3
VIII	1	0
IX	0	1

It may be that the river valleys were populated by communities who are archaeologically undetectable save for their axes, and who had access to different stone sources than groups on the uplands. More likely is the possibility that axes of different kinds were perceived as being of different character, and hence were used for different purposes and hence preferentially deposited in different circumstances. Significantly, axes of Group VII stone appear to have been finished or refinished on the Cotswolds, to judge from working debris found near Nailsworth (Lacaille 1955). Secondly, a significant proportion of lowland axe finds of complete axes are from the beds of rivers (Adkins and Jackson 1976), which may indicate that their deposition was intentional rather than accidental.

The Cotswold-Severn tomb tradition.

The principal class of field monuments in the limestone uplands of Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset and Oxfordshire is the Cotswold-Severn tomb. The trapezoidal form of these edifices long ago indicated their approximate contemporaneity with the earthen long barrows of Wessex. However, in order to present an analysis which ties in to the broader framework of the British Neolithic, rather more precision is necessary. Three main types of tomb morphology can be distinguished: structures with simple

box-like chambers in the terminal of a long mound, those with more complex transepted chambers in the terminal, and those with multiple chambers entered from the side of the mound (Fig. 6.27). Thurnam (1869) proposed a 'devolutionary' sequence for these forms, in which transepted chambers became less complicated, were moved to the sides of the mound, and eventually became simple cists in the body of the monument, as at Luggbury (Thurnam 1857). This sequence was generally accepted for a century, reaching a peak of refinement with Grimes' (1960) scheme of developmental steps within subregions. Given this sequence, the origin of the tradition was seen as resting with the transepted tombs of Brittany. However, various objections can now be raised to such a derivation. Firstly, while some of the Breton transepted chambers are at the 'business end' of an ovoid mound - Herbignac, Klud-er-Yer, Mane Groh and Er Ro'h, for instance (Daniel 1939; L'Helgouach 1965), transepted chambers in trapezoid mounds are peculiar to Britain (Corcoran 1969a,11). Furthermore, the radiocarbon chronology of the Breton sites does not allow them to predate the Cotswold-Severn tradition. The transepted tombs of Brittany belong to a phase of regionalised elaboration of passage grave architecture which is associated with the Chasseen (Hibbs 1984,287). Dates for these sites include a range of 2827-2453 bc for Les Mousseaux, 2660±110bc (Gif-2454) for Larcuste 2, and 2875±125 bc (Gsy-111) for the related quadrilangular chamber at Kerleven (ibid.,289)*.

Since carbon dates for Cotswold-Severn tombs date back into the

*But see Appendix B for comments on the dating of chamber tombs. 275

fourth millennium (Fig. 6.21), the traditional chronology has to be reconsidered. Hence, Darvill's (1982,57; Table 4) observation that Peterborough, Beaker and Grooved Ware are absent from passage and chamber fills of laterally-chambered tombs is of considerable importance. It appears to turn the sequence on its head, with the lateral chambers now the earliest. The radiocarbon dates now available for Cotswold-Severn tombs seem to support this. However, Darvill's further assertion that the transepted chambers are later than the simple terminal chambers seems to be based solely on the evolutionary postulate that "the monuments became more elaborate, more complex and larger through time" (ibid.,28-29). The evidence to support the case rests on a single site, West Kennet, whose atypical deposits are probably a consequence of the specific social and geographical context of the tomb (Thomas and Whittle 1986). Given, for instance, the Beaker pottery in the chamber at Tinkinswood (Ward 1916), there is no reason why one cannot suggest an equally late date for the use of tombs with simple terminal chambers.

Within the laterally-chambered tombs certain structural details may indicate further temporal developments. The provision of a megalithic 'false portal' at the terminal of the mound might be taken to anticipate a true terminal entrance, and thus be expected to be later in date. However, there is little positive evidence that tombs without false portals are earlier. Hazleton North produced pottery with heavy carinations and everted rims from the cairn body, as opposed to the heavy rolled rims and

decoration of sherds from the quarry ditches and chambers (Saville, pers. comm.). Yet primary carbon dates for Hazleton and Ascott-under-Wychwood fall into the early part of the third millennium (Gowlett et. al., 1986; Benson and Clegg 1978). Two of the unportalled tombs, Pole's Wood East and Cow Common Long, appear to have not so much orthostatic chambers as 'trench graves' running at right angles to the axis of the mound (Greenwell 1877; Rolleston 1876). Without further dating evidence it must remain an open question whether these features are chronologically early, or whether they merely represent north Cotswold regional preferences, as Saville (1984, 21) suggests. Nonetheless, it is interesting that, as a major distinction between lateral and transepted chambered tombs is the multiplication of the divisions of chamber and passage, the mean number of divisions in tombs without false portals is 3.3, and that of tombs with false portals is 4.66 (Fig. 6.22). If it were to be proved that cairns without false portals were early in date, it would indicate that the increased division of space within the mortuary area was a process which began well before the introduction of transepted chambers.

This rough chronology, which, for the sake of argument, enables us to distinguish between an earlier group of tombs with lateral chambers, and a later group with terminal chambers (simple or transepted), provides the basic categories for an analysis of Cotswold-Severn mortuary practices. While I will argue (particularly in the case of the Avebury region) that the social

role of architecturally similar tombs varied from one community to another, for the sake of thoroughness the analysis which follows employed all of the excavated tombs known to me in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Somerset and south Wales.

The distribution of lithic scatters of earlier Neolithic date in the Cotswolds and Mendips leads one to the provisional conclusion that the communities concerned were engaged in social relations organised around the same central factors as those in south Wessex. There, the circulation of people, cattle and prestige items appear to have been integrated in a structure of social reproduction. Settlement in the western uplands of southern England indicates a related economic strategy: concentration on the very edge of the limestone scarp, overlooking wet lowlands. In Wessex I have argued that the circulation of human skeletal remains was another practice caught up in the same cycle. The exposure of the dead, where it can be recognised archaeologically, appears to have been a marginalised, liminal process which preceded the return of (some) skeletal material to the community. It is against this background that the Cotswold-Severn tombs must be considered.

What is immediately striking about the distribution of laterally-chambered tombs in the Cotswolds is that a great many of them appear to have been built just beyond the settled area on the north escarpment (Fig. 6.1). Just as causewayed enclosures in

Wessex were located on the edge of social territories, these earlier tombs seem to have been 'peripheral places'. The reasons for this can be grasped through an investigation of the mortuary practices carried out inside the tombs. Just as in Wessex, the circulation of human remains was important to the earlier Neolithic population of the Cotswold-Severn area. In the laterally-chambered tombs empty chambers have frequently been encountered, as have chambers with mere scraps of bone. At Ascott-under-Wychwood one of the cists was empty (Chesterman 1977). At Belas Knap only a few skull fragments were found in Chamber E (Winterbotham 1866), while at Pipton the only bones in Chamber I were found below the floor paving (Savory 1956). Fragmentary remains came from Luckington Chamber C (Corcoran 1970) and Ty Isaf Chamber IV (Grimes 1939) while Cist B at Lugbury was entirely empty (Thurnam 1857). Possibly the most important evidence of all comes from Gwernvale, where the several builds in the blocking of the entrance to Chamber 3 revealed that despite the absence of skeletal material from the chamber it had been entered and resealed on numerous occasions (Britnell and Savory 1984,80). In contradistinction to the later tombs, part of the normal use of the laterally-chambered mounds was the removal of skeletal material from the chambers.

The circulation of human remains provides an element of similarity between the chambered tombs and the Wessex long barrows. However, it is clear that not only defleshed,

disarticulated material was interred in these tombs. A graphic illustration is provided by Winterbotham's account of the skeletons in Chamber C at Belas Knap: " in each nostril were found two phalanges of a forefinger; the top phalanx of one having been driven through the orbit into the cavity of the cranium, as if the body had been placed in a sitting posture, and the head kept erect by thrusting the fingers into the nose" (1866,278). The recent excavations at Hazleton North have added much to the knowledge of Cotswold-Severn mortuary practices. One complete and one semi-complete male skeleton were found in the entrance of the North Chamber. Taking this into account, Saville (1984,22) suggests that "the absence of intact inhumations in the passages and chambers, particularly in the sealed North Chamber, would suggest that bodies were left to decompose in the entrance and subsequently were taken through as bones to the interior". Similar processes are suggested at Lanhill, where bodies, in a skeletal state, had been pushed to the back of the North-West Chamber before the insertion of the final burial (Keiller and Piggott 1936). At Pole's Wood East, Greenwell (1877,527) records that "one skeleton was found undisturbed and surrounded by other human bones so disposed, and in such numbers, as to make it clear that the skeletons they had belonged to had been displaced to make room for it". Rolleston (1876,133) concurs that "some if not all of the bodies had been placed in the flesh, or, at all events, when the ligaments were there". Of the Eyford cairn, Rolleston (ibid.) notes that "all the skulls seem to be in the south side of the cist".

This introduces another element into the discussion of activities associated with laterally-chambered tombs. Skulls were also lined up against the passage and chamber walls at Hazleton (Saville 1984), and at Penywyrlod long bones were piled up against the side walls of Chamber II, with skulls against the north wall (Britnell and Savory 1984,19). Skulls set against walls were also noted at Cow Common Long, Pole's Wood East, Ascott, Ty Isaf and Lanhill. This careful organisation of human remains suggests more than the movement of bones out of the way of fresh interments. An alternative suggestion is that the whole of the transition from the newly dead person to the ancestral bones was carried out within a single monument, but that this did include movement in space which symbolised the stages undergone by the individual after death. The provision of internal constrictions within the tomb, in the form of septal slabs or portholes, has usually been interpreted as a means of restricting access (Corcoran 1969b,94). It seems unlikely that these arrangements would actually deter an intruder, and it is far more likely that these are portals which emphasise the divisions of space within the tomb, enabling rites of passage to be spatially expressed. In some cases, entire corpses might not have been able to have been dragged through these constrictions, and thus only clean bones could have been taken through into the inner chambers. Fig. 6.24 shows the spatial relationships between articulated and disarticulated remains within a number of tombs. At Hazleton, Ascott, Pole's Wood South, Cow Common Long, Ty Isaf and Lanhill disarticulated

remains are found further into the chambers. At Pole's Wood East and West Tump the reverse is the case, articulated bodies being innermost. Indeed, at the latter site Witts (1881,205) states that "the further we got in, the more complete the skeletons". This is understandable, for both of these sites had 'trench graves' rather than true chambers, and thus lack the complex spatial divisions which these would afford.

At both Hazleton and Penywyrlod there is clear evidence that although the outer cairn wall would have been visible throughout the functional life of the tomb, the entrances to the chambers would have been blocked with stones keyed-in to the wall. At several tombs including Pole's Wood East and West Tump the revetment walling carried on unbroken past the entrances (Corcoran 1969a,62). Thus in many cases, entry would have involved the removal of several courses of revetment walling (Britnell and Savory 1984,32). At Gwernvale, Britnell suggests that the capstones of the chambers may have been covered by cairn material (ibid.,143), while at Hazleton the passage orthostats were surrounded by corbelling suggestive of a similar arrangement (Saville, pers. comm.). Taken together, these features indicate that the cairns would have presented an exterior of unbroken stone, within which the entrances might have been quite difficult to locate. An extreme form of the same phenomenon might be represented by the 'beehive' chamber at Saltway Barn (Grimes 1960), whose cairn, for all its complexity, must have presented an appearance akin to a large heap of stones.

Darvill (1982,32) uses the rather nebulous term "information processing node" to describe the function which he ascribes to the Cotswold-Severn tombs. There is a degree of truth here, for it is evident that the tombs had a social role which extended beyond the interment of the dead. I hope to be able to demonstrate that they served as locations for a variety of activities. This is clearly seen in the animal bones recovered from a variety of tomb contexts (Fig. 6.25). In chamber contexts cattle bones are most frequently recovered, and appear to have been given similar treatment to the human bones in the same contexts - burnt where human bones are burnt, articulated where humans are articulated, disarticulated where humans are disarticulated. Complete calf skeletons came from both Notgrove* and Bown Hill (Clifford 1936). This may be explained as an expression of the relationship between the population and its herds: resources critical to the reproduction of a community are frequently represented as human, and integrated into mortuary practice (Bloch and Parry 1982). By contrast, pig bones, usually scattered, predominate in forecourt contexts. This might be a consequence of a chronological shift to pig economies, resulting in a predominance of pig in secondary contexts. However, at a time when pig bones were being deposited in forecourt and blocking contexts of laterally-chambered tombs, cattle bones were still being placed in the chambers of transepted tombs. It is more reasonable to suggest that the distinct assemblages were a consequence of different activities. For the same reasons that I

*This assertion of Clifford's is only partly supported by the bone report.

have argued that the predominance of pig on henge sites in Wessex relates to feasting, I suggest that the deposits found in the forecourts of Cotswold-Severn tombs are the products of feasts in celebration of the dead. Other features found in forecourt areas include pits at Nympsfield, Rodmarton and possibly Penywyrlod, and hearths at Nympsfield, Luckington and Hazleton. The deposits in entrances and forecourt blockings frequently include scattered human bones. It is thus highly likely that these feasts coincided with the removal of human remains from the chambers.

Feasting and the circulation of human remains seem to be closely related. This evokes parallels with such phenomena as the Hopewell 'charnal houses', where mortuary feasts were explicitly articulated to systems of exchange and redistribution (Seeman 1979). There is further evidence that the tombs were involved in spheres of circulation other than the mortuary. Stone axes have been found associated with the tombs at Uley (Crawford 1925) and Pipton (Savory 1956), while quartzite hammerstones came from both Nympsfield and Hazleton. In the latter case the hammerstone was in the hand of an articulated skeleton in the northern entrance, also associated with a large flint core (Saville 1984). Another large core came from the North Chamber at Rodmarton (Witts 1863). Concentrations of knapping debris in forecourts are frequently encountered, as at Notgrove (Clifford 1936). All of these points begin to clarify the significance of the geographical distribution of laterally-chambered tombs. The initial corruption of corpses, I have argued, seems to have been considered an

unpropitious process in earlier Neolithic society. Hence it was often marginalised at enclosures in Wessex. In the Cotswolds the whole mortuary process took place in a single structure, which as a consequence was often built at the edge of a social territory. In much the same way as the Wessex enclosures were used for a number of purposes, it seems that a variety of other activities went on at the tombs. The importance of lithic exchange to communities in the western uplands has already been discussed in this chapter; Saville (1982) computes that 1000 large flint cores must have been imported into the Cotswolds for each year of the Neolithic in order to account for the quantities of debitage recovered from fieldwalking. An exchange of this magnitude would have had to have been monitored and integrated into the social fabric, and in a society where so much material had to be assimilated it does seem likely that a line of monuments running along the southern edge of the occupied zone were involved in the process.

In this connection it is as well to consider the deposits below the cairns as well as in and around them. Saville (1984,20) recovered deposits of knapping debris from below the centre of the cairn at Hazleton, as well as in the forecourt. This central area constituted a 'midden' with broken pottery and animal bones. Pig bones on the old land surface were concentrated in this midden, while other animal bones were more evenly spread (Saville, pers. comm.). A comparable situation existed at Cow Common Long, where a spread of 'black pottery' was found below

the western side of the cairn, and a deposit of animal bones below the eastern side (Rolleston 1876). Pre-cairn material of similar type has also been recovered from Ascott-under-Wychwood and Gwernvale. In each case the material has been interpreted as evidence that the cairn was built over the remains of a settlement. In the cases of Hazleton and Cow Common at least the interpretation that a degree of continuity existed in ceremonial and feasting activities is more sustainable. All of these sites are laterally-chambered tombs, and I suggest that in each case the cairn was built in a place which had already some importance for feasting and exchange transactions. That these other activities were of importance echoes Fleming's observation that in the Cotswold-Severn tradition the provision of an impressive mound may have been more important than the 'container' for the dead (1973,181). The additional recovery of Mesolithic material from pre-cairn contexts at Hazleton, Gwernvale and Ascott may be purely coincidental, or alternatively may hint at the longevity of places deemed to have a special importance. The location of ephemeral circular structures of uncertain date beneath the bank of the causewayed enclosure at Crickley Hill (Dixon pers. comm.) suggests a similar phenomenon.

Having gained some impression of the practices which were associated with the laterally-chambered tombs, it is possible to show change through time by focussing on the terminally-chambered mounds. In all types of Cotswold-Severn tomb the representation of particular body parts may be uneven (Appendix 2). In the

laterally-chambered variety skulls or longbones are frequently underrepresented. However, in equally many cases there are too many skulls and mandibles. This is not the case in transepted tombs. At these sites, skulls or longbones may be 'missing', but are not overrepresented. One conclusion which one could come to is that while the earlier tombs were part of a system of bone circulation which might involve bones being transported from one tomb to another, in the transepted tombs only subtraction from the burial deposit took place. In the transepted tombs the interment of fleshed corpses again appears to have been the norm. Crawford writes of the "original posture" at Hetty Peggler's Tump (Uley) as having been "the sitting or rather squatting" (1925,104), while Daniel (1937,76) says that at Parc le Breos Cwm "the bodies had all originally been placed in a sitting or crouching position". It seems that the rite involved the immediate placement of the corpse in the chamber, a contrast with the multistage treatment in the earlier tombs.

In both the earlier and later tombs space seems to have been used in order to emphasise certain divisions within the community. Distinctions between male and female are sometimes found, as in the case of the predominance of females in the South Chamber and males in the North Chamber at Lanhill, or the six males in Cist 2 at Eyford. At Lugbury, no males were found in Cist A and only males were found in Cist C (Thurnam 1857), while at Notgrove an adult male was placed in a separate cist behind the transepted chambers, with female bones scattered over the surface of its

revetment (Clifford 1936). However, it seems to have been divisions between old and young which were all the more stressed, and this particularly in the case of transepted tombs. Such spatial distinctions are seen at Eyford, Belas Knap, Lanhill, Lugbury, Ty Isaf, Pipton, Rodmarton, West Kennet, Notgrove, Nympsfield, Ffostyl South, Burn Ground and Parc le Breos Cwm. Furthermore, the body treatment afforded to young people often tends to separate them out, as in the case of the cremated children in separate cists in Chamber C at Nympsfield (Clifford 1938).

Since the essence of ritual practice lies in the division and demarcation of boundaries between elements of the social world (Chapter II above), the greater division of space inherent in the design of transepted tombs (Fig. 6.27) allows for more complicated rituals. This in itself might suggest the growth of the kind of social rigidity which Bloch (1974) associates with 'traditional authority', especially as the kind of classification implied refers to the eternal and unchanging world of the dead. However, far more striking is the similarity in the patterns of deposition which are found at the transepted tombs of Burn Ground, Notgrove and West Kennet (Fig. 6.26). This suggests not only that a potential existed for the use of space in a classificatory manner, but that quite definite rules were applied to this process.

Rather less is known about arrangements within cairns with simple

terminal chambers, as a result both of the quantity and quality of excavations. One pattern which may be of importance is the emphasis upon disarticulation within these tombs (Fig. 6.28). If in the transepted tombs one is dealing with the interment of whole bodies, it may be worth considering pre-interment excarnation in the case of simple terminal chambers. The contrast between the two (presumably contemporary) tomb types has to be explained. Bloch and Parry (1982,20) suggest that "it would seem that those systems which make a distinction between kin and affines are the ones which are most likely to pick up on the common contrast between male bones and female flesh, and to be concerned to separate them at death; while the systems which allow no such distinction are much more likely to be concerned with the corpse as a whole". It might be stretching ethnographic analogy to its limits to suggest that transepted and simple terminal chambered tombs constitute the monuments of endogamous and exogamous groups respectively. However, it is quite reasonable to suggest that on the one hand the combination of articulated bodies and a high degree of ritual classification, and on the other bones in the "utmost confusion" (Vulliamy 1921) and a single spatial unit relate to differences in the organisation of society. Among the Merina, the emphasis on keeping every scrap of flesh and bone within the tomb is connected with an insistence on the maintenance of the hold of the deme on people and property (Bloch 1981,138). A similar situation is suggested by Charles' (1985) work in mid/late Archaic Illinois, where the growth of cemetery mounds is

explicitly connected with the need to avoid group fissioning. In the early third millennium in the Cotswold-Severn region it seems that mortuary ritual began to emphasise two different strategies for coping with internal stress and contradiction: the transepted tombs with their attendant feasting, ritual classification, rigid definition of social ranks and insistence on the integrity of a genealogical (elite?) line; and the simple terminal chambers, where all internal divisions were broken down by the disarticulation and intermixing of a great mass of bones.

This interpretation of the transepted tombs as being connected with a developed form of traditional authority finds some support in the details of their construction. For many years a debate has raged in megalithic studies as to whether 'extra-revetment' material, the jumbled mass of stone located beyond the outer revetment wall, represented an intentional construction or the product of cairn decay. At Hazleton, the answer to the problem was relatively clear, "this material was evidently the product of the collapse of the façade wall" (Saville 1981,2). The downward and outward gravitational thrust of the cairn body resulted in the overballancing of both the inner and outer revetment walls, the collapse of their upper courses, and the slippage of loose cairn material from above (Saville 1982b,6; Fig.3). It is difficult to assess how long this process of decay would have taken; however, it is to be assumed that the earliest tombs would have reached a state of delapidation within the span of the Neolithic. This fact is important, for at Gwernvale Britnell

suggests that the act of blocking the tomb and placing extra-revetment material against the revetment walls was a conscious act aimed at "the 'instant' production of an archaic form - a tomb which had clearly ceased to be used for formal mortuary activities" (Britnell and Savory 1984,150).

The implication of this observation is that at a time in the early- to mid-third millennium bc (suggested by the terminal date for Hazleton, the dates for pits associated with the blocking at Gwernvale, and Peterborough were from the blockings at Lanhill and Gwernvale), laterally-chambered tombs were being blocked, closed off and structurally altered in order to suggest great antiquity. An attempt was being made to create a distance between the past and the present; to constitute an ideal and unassailable past. Henceforth the skeletons within the tombs would be a remote and unchanging community of ancestors. It must have been at about the same time that the terminally-chambered tombs were being built. It is in the techniques employed in the construction of these tombs that the confusion over extra-revetment originates. At Burn Ground, Grimes (1960,76) suggested that the outer revetment wall had been built in a V-shaped trench, so as to give the impression of a wall already nearing a state of collapse. Indeed, at Hazleton a similar feature had been caused by the gradual outward pressure of the cairn (Saville, pers. comm.). But at Burn Ground no slumping was visible in the inner revetment (Grimes 1960,62; Fig. 27), indicating that the trench setting of the outer wall may indeed have been artificial. It is interesting

that the most convincing parallels which Grimes could cite for this feature were at Notgrove and Nympsfield, both also transepted terminal-chambered tombs. Darvill (1982,47) separates those cairns at which extra-revetment was a product of erosion and decay from those at which it seems to have been a deliberate construction. All of the transepted tombs considered fell into the latter category. Furthermore, the blocking in the forecourt of transepted tombs appears always to have been disturbed during Neolithic times (ibid.,59). If laterally-chambered cairns were altered in order to suggest great age, the transepted tombs were actually constructed in such a way as to indicate antiquation. As with the lateral tombs, the burials must have been considered as a group who must not be added to or subtracted from, and who were remote from the day-to-day world of the present. Yet the fact that the forecourt blocking had always been tampered with suggests that this was not the case: burials were still being inserted.

Since in the transepted tombs there appears to have been some emphasis on the maintenance of the entire body, it is significant that the last acts carried out inside the laterally-chambered tombs were often the 'reconstitution' of individuals from the scattered parts available. At Ascott-under-Wychwood, bones from different individuals were articulated together (Chesterman 1977,26), while in Chamber II at Pipton seven piles of bones had been separated out, although each might contain bones from

several individuals (Savory 1956). In Chamber I at Ty Isaf, bones had been arranged in groups consisting of skull, mandible and one or two longbones placed against the orthostats (Grimes 1939), while at Lanhill, Keiller and Piggott (1938,125) noted that each skull "was furnished with a lower jaw placed in approximately the correct position, but it was subsequently proved that one of the jaws could not have originally belonged to the skull in association with which it was found".

My interpretation of the blocking of the tombs is that this action placed the contents in an unassailable position as regards the world of the mundane, at the same time rendering unquestionable the claims to legitimacy of those most closely associated with the ancestors. This could be challenged on the grounds that the shutting off of a burial deposit could equally be a means of negating its influence upon the affairs of the living. That this is not the case is indicated by the way in which the tombs continued to be foci for activity long after they had been blocked. Secondary burials are often hard to date, and are thus not always of much consequence to the argument. Examples which clearly are of relevance are the child burial in a cist in the horn of Penywyrlod (Britnell and Savory 1984), the burials with leaf arrowheads in the mound at Sale's Lot (O'Neil 1966), and the female skull with Peterborough sherds in front of the false portal at Gatcombe Lodge (Crawford 1925,98-100; Passmore 1938,124; Clifford 1936,45). Intrusive deposits of pots occurred in the cases of the Beaker at Sale's Lot (O'Neil 1966) and a

Peterborough vessel inserted into the horn at Pole's Wood South (Rolleston 1876,165-171; Greenwell 1877,521-524). The deposition of a stone axe butt in the forecourt at Ty Isaf may or may not have postdated the blocking (Grimes 1939).

Certain assertions concerning the social role of the Cotswold-Severn tombs can now be made. The building of the tomb may originally have been a formalisation of a site already set aside for ritual and transactional purposes. From the start the tombs were concerned with the circulation of people, bones, livestock and other material items, in both a symbolic and a real sense. The shift to transepted tombs, which appear to have been located nearer to centres of population, coincided with a change in the relationship between the living and the dead. While the spatial proximity of the tomb indicates that the ancestors might have come to represent an omnipresent factor in social relations, a great deal of effort was expended in emphasising that they existed in a very different world; a very distant past. Within tombs a set of rules appears to have been followed regarding the laying out of corpses, emphasising the divisions of society. This must clearly relate to a growing rigidity within the social fabric, yet these divisions relate to sex and above all age categories. The emergent social formation was thus one not structurally different from that of the earlier Neolithic. The basic social categories available within lineage society were more strongly emphasised, implying the development of greater asymmetry within a tribal structure; we might hypothesise that

this indicates the development of conical-clan type arrangements. Clearly, this returns to the Friedman and Rowlands (1977) model of social development, which I have already discussed in detail. The unambiguous evidence of feasting associated with these mortuary practices enhances this impression.

Beakers in the Cotswolds and Mendips.

Of the areas under study in this thesis, the Cotswold and Mendip hills represent the most north-westerly, and hence the most remote from continental influence. Hence the late appearance of Beaker pottery in these regions was often put down to the delayed "permeation" of the west by 'Beaker folk' (e.g. Clifford 1937). An alternative suggestion might be that the distinctive patterns of Beaker use in particular areas are a consequence of the integration of prestigious items into different social formations. Hence it is important to note the different context types in which Beakers were deposited (Fig.6.33). Early Beaker burials are entirely absent from the central uplands of both Cotswold and Mendip. The nearest early burials to the Mendips are at Chew Park (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977) and a possible site at Brean Down (Taylor and Taylor 1949), where no body was found in the "grave pit". Both of these had European Bell Beakers (L and VDW Step 2). Brean Down Sand Cliffs have provided plentiful

evidence of a continuous Beaker presence from an early date, with Beakers of All-Over-Corded, Fingernail impressed, Finger-Pinched and Southern type (ApSimon, Donovan and Taylor 1961; Dobson 1938), although little can be said about the nature of this activity from the deposits concerned. The pattern which can be discerned is clearly one in which the initial use of Beakers for sepulchral or other purposes appears to have been remote from centres of population.

Indeed, Beaker burials are rather rare on the Mendip plateau. The one unequivocal example of a Beaker burial was at Blackdown T5, although here again the Barbed-Wire (Step 4) Beaker lacked associated skeletal material, other than some scraps of calcined bone, which have been tentatively interpreted as evidence of a cremation (ApSimon 1969). The heavily disturbed ring-cairn barrow T14 at Tynning's Farm also produced a scrap of Beaker pottery (ibid., 43). By contrast, a total of ten cave sites have produced Beaker pottery. Of these, two are of relatively early date. At Bone Hole (MCG 1976), a Beaker of apparent Wessex/Middle Rhine attributes (Step 3) was located at the bottom of a limestone slope, on which were arranged at least five human skulls, one of them that of a child. Animal bones were also present. At the recently discovered site of Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet, a Beaker of European Bell type (Step 2) was found in association with a number of "whetstones", a fine dagger and a collection of flints (Thomas forthcoming). Human skeletal material was present in the cave, but not in direct association with the Beaker, and

mixed in with a great mass of animal bone on the cave floor. It would be difficult to describe either site as a "burial" as such. Much the same can be said for the other Beaker cave sites of Mendip. Sun Hole, Cheddar, produced Beaker sherds and a hearth, and was interpreted as a habitation, although Tratman (1955,70) admitted that the cave would have been rather wet at the time concerned. At Chelm's Coombe, S2 (Step 6) sherds were scattered within a cave, another part of which had been used as a rock tomb in the earlier Neolithic (Balch 1927). Further finds of Beaker pottery came from Bridged Pot (FP), Soldier's Hole (FP) (Balch 1928), Ebbor Shelter and Rowberrow Cavern (S,Step 5) (Dobson 1931,42). Further east, at Cockles Wood Cave, S2 (Step 5) sherds were found with Grooved Ware, human remains and animal bones (Hickley and Seaby 1951).

On balance, it seems unlikely that the bulk of these sites can be explained either as habitations or as individual burials. My own visit to the Charterhouse Warren Farm site brought home the unlikelihood of the former, involving as it did the decent of an 80ft vertical shaft! The nature of the excavation of these sites (often by untrained cavers) dictates that the deposits within them are confused. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to postulate that the bulk of Beaker cave activity consisted of the purposeful deposition of pottery, animal bones, flint and fragmentary human remains. The condition of the latter, frequently consisting of isolated skulls, indicates defleshed and "circulated" material. Aside from the Charterhouse Warren and Bone Hole sites, the

majority of these caves appear to have been used in the 18th to 16th centuries bc, roughly contemporary with the Beaker activity at the Gorse Bigbury henge monument. Geographically, the cave deposits coincide with the "rich" area west of Charterhouse, from which have been removed the bulk of the plano-convex knives, polished discoid knives, petit-tranchet oblique and barbed and tanged arrowheads from Mendip (Figs. 6.11-6.15).

The evidence from Gorse Bigbury provides a final element in the interpretation of Beaker activity in the Mendip Hills. A burial cist appears to have been erected in the ditch, and an adult male and female inserted. Subsequently, a deposit of "occupation debris", consisting of Beaker pottery, animal bones, flint implements and charcoal built up in the ditch (ApSimon et. al. 1976,158). This material provided a series of radiocarbon dates ranging from 1850+74 bc (BM-1088) to 1652+71 bc (BM-1087). The animal bones included a high proportion of young pigs (ApSimon et.al. 1976,166), while the charcoal formed lenses in the ditch, suggesting slippage from the interior (ibid.,169). The c.120 vessels from the ditch consisted of a high proportion of fine Beakers with rusticated coarse wares (ibid.,174), and were largely restricted to Step 6 of the L and VDW scheme, with elements of Step 5 (ibid.,178). These points would hardly support the interpretation given in the report, that the site was a long-lived settlement. The material has much more in common with feasting activities suggested for the Wessex henges (Chapter IV above).

In the Cotswolds the impact of Beaker activity seems to have been even more restricted. The only known early Beaker burial on the Cotswold uplands was inserted into the long cairn at Sale's Lot (O'Neil 1966), an adult male with a European Bell Beaker (Step 2) and possible sheet copper earring. Beaker pottery also came from the long cairns at Eyford (E, Step 2) (Clifford 1937,161) and Notgrove (Clifford 1936). Thus the earliest Beaker pottery in the Cotswolds was deposited in traditional funerary monuments. Later, Step 4 burials were made at Barnwood (Clifford 1937,161) and Prestbury (Clifford 1938b), both on the low country north of the Cotswold escarpment. Burials at Bredon Hill (Clifford 1964,34) and Frampton-on-Severn (O'Neil 1960,114) may be of similar date. A number of stray Beaker finds have come from the area around Leckhampton (See fig. 6.29), but only two small sherds came from the enclosure at Crickley Hill (Dixon, pers. comm.). As in Mendip, the expansion of Beaker activity on the Cotswolds took place with Lanting and Van der Waal's Step 6, with burials at Charmy Down 1 (Williams 1950), Bourton-on-the-Water (Dunning 1937) and Woodchester (Clifford 1937,160). This coincides with Beaker activity at the Condicote Henge monument, dated at 1770+80 bc (HAR-3064) and 1720+100 bc (HAR-3067), (Saville 1983,46).

Some points of similarity and divergence between Mendip and the Cotswolds can thus be picked out. In both areas, pre-Beaker individual burials are completely lacking, a possible but dubious exception being a cist on Blackdown with a polished implement and

a sherd identified by Reginald Smith as "Neolithic" (Dobson 1931,41). Given the lack of precedent for individual burial (in contrast to South Wessex or the upper Thames Valley), the use of Beaker vessels in this context appears to have been slow to be adopted. In both areas, earlier Beaker burials seem to have been remote from centres of population. It was only with Step 6, that is, the era of the Wessex graves, that Beaker use was accepted in the heartlands of either area. However, the way in which this happened was rather different in each case. In Mendip, feasting activities at Gorsey Bigbury were accompanied by curious cave depositional practices, involving the circulation of human remains rather than individual burials. This being the case, and noting the spatial coincidence of Beaker finds with the "rich" industries of the later Neolithic, there is little evidence for social change in the period. In the Cotswolds, Step 6 again sees activity at a henge monument, but in association with single grave burials. Further comment can be left to the next section.

Discussion.

It remains to integrate the elements of the chapter in order to present a unified view of the social development of the regions concerned. To begin with it appears that in both the Mendip and Cotswold hills a lifestyle was adopted which conforms largely with the characteristics of that prevailing in earlier Neolithic Wessex. Settled areas were on limestone uplands, preferably on

south-facing slopes to promote garden horticulture. In each case a pronounced ecotone was chosen for settlement, giving access to wet lowland pasture. A major dependence upon cattle is thus suggested again, although faunal remains are rare in these regions. The location of tombs at the periphery of the settled zone in the Cotswolds, and the circulation of human remains and material items associated with them, suggest the same complex of ideas linking the roles of the dead, cattle, and prestige goods.

Causewayed enclosures as well as tombs were located on the edges of social territories. At Crickley Hill a series of recuttings of a basic causewayed-ditched plan indicates that some of the earlier structures on the site were much less substantial than the final phase 'fortress' (Dixon 1971,8). Indeed, some of these were probably deliberately refilled soon after cutting, recalling the Danish enclosures of Toftum and Sarup (Madsen 1977; Andersen 1979). Only in the very last phase of causewayed ditch cutting did permanent occupation, in the form of house platforms, appear on the site (Dixon pers. comm.). Interestingly, the enclosure at Crickley was preceded by a small structure redolent of an earthen long barrow (Dixon 1979,183), emphasising links in the roles of funerary monuments and causewayed enclosures in Gloucestershire. The causewayed ditch was finally filled up and replaced by two phases of timber palisade, before the entire enclosure was remodelled and surrounded by a massive ditch and stone revetted bank summounded by a fence (Dixon 1972,1). It was this final phase of enclosed settlement which was attacked and destroyed, as

evidenced by distributions of leaf arrowheads and burning (Dixon 1979). At some point after this a long mound was built over the relict defenses of the enclosure, at one end of which was a stone platform and circle.

Crickley Hill, in its many phases of activity (all of which appear to have taken place at times when Abingdon Ware was in use), fits well into the general picture of the Cotswold Neolithic. For just as the tombs suggest a form of traditional authority becoming more intensive through the elaboration of ritual, the gradual fortification of Crickley is paralleled by the construction of a 'shrine' on an unoccupied part of the hill (Dixon 1984). A site which may have begun its life as a marginal location for exchange and funerary transactions gradually became a permanent defended settlement (presumably occupied by a preeminent group), associated with structures of an overtly ritual nature. The stone platform and circle at the end of a roadway which Dixon (1984) interprets as a shrine involved subsoil holows packed with broken pottery and cattle bones: as with the tombs, feasting seems a reasonable interpretation. At the nearby Peak Camp, limited excavations have provided evidence for an equally complex sequence of recuts (Darvill 1981,55) and a series of dates in the 2800-2600 bc bracket (Appendix 17).

The later Neolithic in the Cotswolds shows few of the discontinuities with the earlier period which exist in Wessex or the Upper Thames. Single burials are absent, and corporate tombs

continued in use (although perhaps by an increasingly rarified stratum of society) until a time when Peterborough wares were common. The distributions of monuments, fine lithic items (Fig. 6.30), petit tranchet and barbed and tanged arrowheads (Figs. 6.6, 6.31 and 6.32) all indicate the formation of a number of 'core areas' within the Cotswolds. However, there is little evidence for any shift of settlement, while those monuments in use in the later period (the transepted tombs, the Crickley long mound, the Condicote henge) all appear to relate to communally-based, traditional forms of authority. Earlier Beaker burials are rare and peripheral, while the early use of Beakers was largely in traditional contexts: tombs, for instance. Only with Step 6 of the Beaker sequence did individual burials become 'acceptable' within the Cotswold heartland, near centres of population. Significantly, this corresponds with the dates of 1770+80 and 1720+100 bc (HAR-3064 and -3067) for Beaker activity at the Condicote henge. These dates are statistically indistinguishable with those for Beaker activity at Durrington Walls and Gorseley Bigbury, and the construction of the palisade at Mount Pleasant.

In the Mendip Hills a sequence can be discerned which is in many ways similar to that in the Cotswolds. However, the pronounced differences in the lithic assemblages in the Cheddar and Wells areas may indicate a greater dependence upon portable items as vehicles for the display of prestige. From lithics alone it is hard to generalise about the character of this prestige, and the

paucity of the burial record is a further complication. However, the fact that virtually all pre-Step 6 Beaker finds are from cave contexts which do not indicate individual burial suggests a parallel with the Cotswold case: Beakers initially adopted for a use which did not challenge existing structures of authority. This is also suggested by the geographical spread of these early Beaker finds, which coincides exactly with the concentrations of plano-convex and polished discoid knives, complete flint axes and oblique arrowheads. It would seem that once again it was with Step 6 that Beaker pottery changed its significance, appearing as part of substantial evidence for feasting at Gorsey Bigbury. This is of itself hardly evidence for any degree of social change, although the presence of 'Wessex' grave assemblages in the Priddy area appear to document the shift to a new regime with the onset of the Bronze Age.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE UPPER THAMES VALLEY

Introduction.

The regional variability of the British Neolithic is nowhere better exemplified than in the contrast between the Cotswold hills, which I have just discussed, and the gravels of the upper Thames, immediately to the south. In details of settlement history, mortuary practice, material culture and in the use of monuments the latter region stands out against both its immediate neighbors and against the south-west of England in general. It is the aim of this chapter to explain why this should be so.

The earlier Neolithic.

The only monument in the Upper Thames Valley which has provided radiocarbon dates in the fourth millennium bc is the Abingdon causewayed enclosure, and even in this case the earlier dates, from charcoal samples, have been queried (Avery 1982,49). It has recently been suggested that the river gravels were comparatively lightly settled until well into the third millennium (Bradley and Holgate 1984,112). Even then, it seems that most of the surface assemblages which can be assigned to the earlier part of the Neolithic are located downriver from Oxford (Fig. 7.1). The same area also contains all burials of Kinnes' (1979) stages A and B,

all ring-ditches with Abingdon ware associations, and the great bulk of the long or oval barrows and mortuary enclosures (Fig. 7.13). On the extreme northern edge of this cluster of activity lay the Abingdon causewayed enclosure. Its position with relation to the settlement pattern was thus analogous to that of the Wessex enclosures (Chapter IV). It is thus arguable that the stretch of gravel terraces between Abingdon and North Stoke represents the primary nucleus of Neolithic settlement in the Upper Thames Valley.

The Abingdon site itself appears to have been a two-phase construction, the outer ditch having been added to enlarge the area enclosed (Avery 1982,15). In the first phase the ditch and bank appear to have been relatively insubstantial structures, while the filling of the ditch consists of deliberately placed deposits of fully rotted organic material (ibid.,17). The closest parallel for this is again from Wessex, in the organic deposits carefully placed in the ditch segments at Hambledon Hill (Mercer 1980,30). If the ditch segments at Abingdon were essentially quarry pits for a simple dump rampart, it seems likely that their filling with organic layers alternating with sterile lenses is a consequence of the periodic, or cyclical, collection and burial of material which derived from activities which took place, also on a cyclical basis, within the enclosure. As with the Wessex enclosures, the ceramic assemblage at Abingdon is dominated by open bowls and cups (Case in Avery 1982,30), while the faunal assemblage contains examples of articulated skeletal elements

(Cram in Avery 1982,46).

The evidence suggests that the Abingdon enclosure began its life as a relatively minor monument used for periodic rituals by scattered agricultural communities living downriver as far as North Stoke. That this area was used for horticulture as well as pastoral farming is confirmed by impressions of barley, emmer wheat, and most importantly of spikelet fragments in the pottery from Abingdon (Murphy in Avery 1982,48), which, according to the petrological report, must have been locally produced (Williams in Avery 1982,35). However, with the digging of the more substantial outer ditch and the construction of the associated turf-revetted rampart (Case 1956,14), it is arguable that the character of the monument changed. The more reliable of the carbon dates, ranging from 2760+135 bc (BM-352) to 2500+145 bc (BM-354) are from bone and antler from the upper levels of the inner ditch, and appear to relate to this phase of activity. At the very end of the period of use of the enclosure, to judge from a date of 2550+60 (BM-2392), an oval barrow with two articulated adult burials, one with jet slider and polished flint blade, the other probably with kiteshaped arrowhead, was built nearby at Barrow Hills (Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984,2; date from inner ditch, phase 2: Bradley, pers. comm.). This is a direct parallel for mid-third millennium mounds at Hambledon Hill, Whitesheet Hill, Maiden Castle and Robin Hood's Ball. The combination of a shift to a fortified enclosure and a prestigious monumental burial seem to indicate that, as elsewhere, the enclosure had become intimately

connected with the activities of an elite group.

Of the other monuments within the long mound tradition in the Upper Thames Valley, almost all fall typologically into the later part of the sequence. Only the Sutton barrow, near Drayton (Benson and Miles 1974, 61-62) represents a 'classic' long mound with linear flanking ditches, although even this appears to have trenches enclosing the ends of the mound, perhaps indicating a late date. Several of the monuments at Dorchester on Thames (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951) can be interpreted as oval mounds, and will be discussed below. The bank barrow at North Stoke, dated to 2722±49 bc (BM-1405) appears to run between a 'mortuary enclosure' similar to that at Dorchester and a peculiar arrangement of ditches at the north end (Case and Whittle 1982). The one site which is outside the 'core area' of settlement is that at New Wintles, Eynsham (Kenward 1982), which can be interpreted as a simple mortuary structure similar to those under Wayland's Smithy I (Bradley and Holgate 1984, 116) and Nutbane (Morgan 1959). The outer ditches may indicate the presence of a small covering mound (Fig 7.7). This relatively insubstantial monument and a couple of surface scatters of flint tools represent the net evidence for earlier Neolithic activity on the Thames between Abingdon and Aston Bampton.

These long and oval structures do not form an homogeneous group, and the great variability of earlier Neolithic mortuary practice is emphasised by the presence of ring ditches with Abingdon ware

in their primary ditch fills at Corporation Farm (Bradley and Holgate 1984,120) and Thrupp Farm (Thomas and Wallis 1982,184). A ring ditch at Newnham Murren, Wallingford, with a crouched female burial is perhaps dated by a sherd of Abingdon ware in the grave fill (Moorey 1982), whilst at Barrow Hills, Radley, ring ditch 17 contained two pits, one with an unaccompanied crouched burial, the other with the disarticulated bones of a child (Williams 1948,13-14). Being an element of the linear barrow cemetery, this burial has generally been assumed to be of Bronze Age date: it may be earlier.

A further element of mortuary practice which seems to have persisted throughout the Neolithic in the Upper Thames was the deposition of human skeletal remains in pits. At Dorchester on Thames, near the south-east end of the cursus, a pit with human bones (largely cranial) was excavated, and dated to 2850±130 bc (OxA-119). Similarly, pit F at Sutton Courtnay contained the bones of a woman and two children (Leeds 1923,151-152), and pit V ten skulls, all but one of which may have been male (Leeds 1934,267). The chronological relationship of these pits to the cursus is unclear. At Tolley's pit, Cassington, a pit containing six skeletons appears to be of rather later date, as maggot-decorated sherds were found in the fill (Leeds 1940). At Barrow Hills, F4583 contained two fragmentary bodies, with transverse and barbed and tanged arrowheads in the fill (Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984,21). The analogy with pit graves in Cranborne Chase (Pitt-Rivers 1898) suggests that some of these

sites may have been involved with the process of bone circulation, rather than simple inhumation. Sutton Courtnay V and Dorchester both involve the deposition of skulls in areas which would later be the sites of cursus monuments. Skull fragments have also been reported from the inner ditch at Abingdon (and also from the enclosure at Staines, downriver; Kinnes 1979,120), in the ditch of the Barrow Hills oval mound (Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984,5), in one pit and one ditch segment at New Wintles (Kenward 1982,51), in the ditch of Dorchester Site VIII (Ashmolean Museum), with later Neolithic material in Sutton Courtnay pit Q (Leeds 1934), and with Fengate ware in pits at Astrop, Northants. (Ashmolean Museum). In addition, a human pelvis was found in the outer ditch at Abingdon (Case 1956). It seems unlikely that all of these cases can have been the result of carelessness on the part of the Neolithic population. The interpretation which is suggested here is that the deposition of parts of ancestral human bodies, and particularly the skull, in auspicious locations was regarded as a means of securing control over the landscape (Watson 1982,155).

A peculiarity of the distribution of earlier Neolithic monuments in the Upper Thames Valley is the cluster of causewayed enclosures around Lechlade: Aston Bampton (Benson and Miles 1974,39), Little Clanfield (ibid.,33), Signet Hill, Westwell (R.Hingley pers. comm.), Eastleach (Palmer 1976), Down Ampney (R.Hingley pers. comm.), Langford (Palmer 1976) and possibly Badbury Hill (F.Raymond and M.Tingle pers. comm.). Yet, as has

already been noted in Chapter VI, the area from the Thames at Lechlade up the Cotswold dip-slope is otherwise virtually an archaeological blank, particularly as far as the earlier Neolithic is concerned. This may be partly explained by the lesser degree of gravel extraction further up the Thames (Benson and Miles 1974, Fig.9), resulting in a less intense history of archaeological fieldwork. But as I pointed out in the last chapter, this does not explain the plethora of axe finds in the area (Fig. 7.9), as against the virtual absence of other lithic items. It seems as if a whole zone of the landscape, situated between the concentrations of population on the Cotswold escarpment and the Abingdon area was empty save for a number of large monuments. This recalls the study by McBride and Harrison (1981) on axe distribution in southern Australia, where non-greenstone material was concentrated on settlement areas, but where those axes which functioned as prestige items had an eccentric distribution which fell off from remote ceremonial centres. These causewayed enclosures, located at the boundary of two major settled areas, the Thames and the Cotswolds, might thus be foci for deliberate acts of deposition and destruction of prestigious items.

The communities which lived in the Thames Valley in the earlier part of the third millennium were thus little different from those elsewhere in southern England. Faunal assemblages (Fig. 7.10) confirm that cattle were central to the economy, yet it is clear that a stable horticultural base also existed. The burnt

organic deposits and animal bones at Abingdon suggest that feasting may have been central to the articulation of these groups, an impression which is strengthened by the results of the excavation of the double ring ditch at Newnham Murren. Burnt organic deposits were found in the inner but not the outer ditch (Moorey 1982,57). Cattle and sheep bones predominate in the faunal assemblage from this site (Ashmolean Museum). 61.5% of the cattle bones and 87.5% of the sheep bones are from the 'meaty' parts of the carcass. Once again a direct link is made between the ancestral dead and the solidarity of the living, expressed in feasting. As in the Cotswolds, the material remains of the dead appear to have been manipulated and circulated, but mortuary practice was less homogeneous. Pit graves, long and round barrows existed side by side. This may imply that less control was exerted over ritual activity.

Settlement shift.

It is fundamental to the theoretical basis of this thesis that a close relationship will exist between social relations, the organisation of the productive process, and the settlement system. Hence where the settlement history of two areas is as distinct as is the case with the Upper Thames and the Cotswolds it is axiomatic that the reasons for the contrast cannot be sought at a purely economic or ecological level. It is likely that differences exist in the social relations of the communities

concerned. As opposed to the static pattern on the Cotswold and Mendip hills, the later third millennium sees a great increase in the number of lithic scatters in the Upper Thames Valley (Fig. 7.11). This shift includes a move away from the concentration on the river gravels, to a greater use of the Corallian limestone and the clays (Fig. 7.4-7.6). This pattern is corroborated by the distributions of petit tranchet derivative and barbed and tanged arrowheads (figs. 7.18 and 7.19). Yet more imposing than the broader use of the landscape is the multiplication of findspots. The move away from the original settlement 'core', downriver from Abingdon, is emphasised by the distribution of later Neolithic pottery finds (Fig. 7.12) and burials (Fig. 7.13).

The pattern of expansion onto heavier soils, and of consolidation on areas of primary settlement is very akin to that on the North European Plain discussed in Chapter III. Hence it is significant that the Upper Thames Valley contains the largest grouping of Neolithic individual burials in southern England (Fig. 7.13), again in parallel with continental developments. The use of new soils may relate to the adoption of new agricultural technology, but the economy practiced was still one of mixed farming, to judge from finds of carbonised cereals in later Neolithic contexts at Barton Court Farm, Mount Farm (Jones 1980) and Blewbury (Halpin 1984).

The development of monuments.

Cursus monuments are thick on the ground in the 'core area' of earlier Neolithic settlement, yet are entirely absent from the more northerly stretch of the Thames which includes the important areas of later Neolithic activity at Eynsham, Cassington and Stanton Harcourt (Fig. 7.12). These linear monuments often incorporate earlier sites or places of importance into their plans: the Dorchester cursus ditch cuts across those of Site VIII, a rectangular 'mortuary enclosure' (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951), the North Stoke bank barrow butts onto a similar enclosure and narrowly avoids a presumably earlier ring ditch (Bradley and Holgate 1984,120), whilst the Drayton/Sutton Courtenay cursus was built over an area which may already have held two or more pit graves. This linking and incorporation of venerated places was taking place within the settled landscape at the same time as some elements of the community were breaking off to farm the land upriver. It betrays the same desire for control which is seen in the deposition of human remains, possibly indicating a degree of social instability related to changing residence patterns. The contrast between the 'parent' zone and the area of secondary settlement is one which underlies several others which develop in the later Neolithic. For instance, the stone axes which are found in the two areas are entirely mutually exclusive, suggesting that different sets of external contacts were exploited. In the area south of Abingdon, axes of types I, VI, and XVII have been found; the former two are the most widespread axe types in the country. As against this, axes of

groups VII, XVII and XX have been found in the Stanton Harcourt/Cassington area.

Bradley (in Bradley and Holgate 1984,130) emphasises the small scale of monuments in the Thames by comparison with Wessex. To this must be added the consideration of number. Cranborne Chase, for instance, has one very large cursus while the Thames has at least seven small ones. This must surely relate in some way to the abilities of the societies concerned to mobilise labour: it need not mean that there were fewer people in the Thames Valley. Furthermore, the entire population may have considered themselves a single political unit. Nonetheless, the absence of monuments on the scale of the Dorset Cursus, Hambledon Hill, Crickley Hill, Durrington Walls or Avebury indicates that the size of the unit which could be organised for a given task, or which would be 'served' (in whatever manner) by a particular monument was smaller than elsewhere. The implication of the presence of numerous small monuments clustered into a number of separate foci within the Thames Valley is that a less centralised form of social organisation existed there than in other parts of southern England. Social action was circumscribed at a lower level.

The active role of monuments in social strategies was emphasised in Chapter IV. Nowhere is this clearer than in the complex of monuments at Dorchester on Thames. Over a period of a millennium, monuments were built, demolished, rebuilt, altered and reused, with a consequent continuous shift in their roles and meanings.

Each of these alterations of form may relate to the internal power strategies of the community, as resources and relationships changed through time. The complex of monuments thus repays extended study, for it represents a microcosm of the developing power relations of the Upper Thames.

The earliest structural phase on the site represents a cemetery of oval and rectilinear monuments (Fig. 7.14). Site VIII, the long mortuary enclosure, was recognised by Atkinson (1948,66) as an early element, since its ditch had fully silted when the cursus ditch was cut across it. Bradley (in Bradley and Holgate 1984,118) points out that ditch II of Site XI, its earliest structural element, is markedly oval on plan and that together with Site II it shares the alignment of Site VIII. When the earliest ditch of Site II is isolated from the plan, it too is rather ovoid, with a long axis aligned on Site I. Atkinson claimed that Site II phase I had never been finished, and that the ditches had been purposefully backfilled before any silting had taken place (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951,23). However, this assumes that the material on the ditch bottom, a fine black organic soil, is the product of the destruction of the monument. Were this the case, one would expect that the ditches would be filled with the gravel originally extracted from them. But if the ditch segments were essentially quarry pits for a central mound, their filling need not relate to dismantling. Zeuner's findings (in Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951,121) that "the dark fillings of the pits and ditches are debris from fires mixed with

other organic refuse and varying proportions of natural soil" are illuminating. This being the case, it may be that as at Newnham Murren the material in the ditches derived from ritual activities centred on the mound, and placed in the ditches before the silting had started (that is, within the first few days of the life of the monument). Hence it could be some time after this that the circular ditch of phase II was cut.

Site I, upon which Site II is aligned, is also oval in plan. The original ditch was v-shaped in section and produced sherds of Abingdon ware. Later recuts with Peterborough ware were concentrated on the south-west side of the ditch, in a manner similar to Peterborough deposits in long mound forecourts in Wessex. Despite the distortions to the plan which are a consequence of this recutting it is possible to suggest that this side originally constituted a façade trench (Fig. 7.7). A parallel for such a monument would be Grendon, Northants. (Gibson 1985), a subrectangular enclosure with façade trench and with Grimston ware associations, dated to the earlier third millennium and later enclosed in a double ring ditch. The remains of a crouched inhumation were present on the old land surface at Site I (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951,12), indicating that a burial deposit similar to that at Barrow Hills may have originally existed there. A presumed covering oval mound may have been returned to the ditch at a later date. It may be that the D-shaped enclosure which preceded the construction of the south-east end of the cursus was contemporary with these

monuments (Bradley and Holgate 1984,121) (Fig 7.17).

A second major phase of activity at Dorchester came with the construction of a series of circular mounds (Fig. 7.15). At both sites II and XI an oval monument was 'converted' into a round one, and later enlarged. The break in the south-west ditch of the cursus to avoid the outer ditch of Site XI indicates that all of this must have taken place before the construction of the cursus (Fig. 7.16). At Site XI the greasy black soil was found on the bottom of ditch I (that is, phase II); a transverse arrowhead was found in this material (Ashmolean Museum). In the outer ditch, ditch III, Ebbsfleet sherds were found in a layer of dark soil which overlay the primary silting. Ebbsfleet sherds were also recovered from the upper fill of Site VIII. Another monument which may be a part of this phase is Site VII, another round barrow, which shares the alignment of Sites II, VIII and XI. Atkinson considered the site to be of Bronze Age date, as one of its internal pits contained a cremation with bronze tweezers and urn (ibid.,60). However, one of the other pits contained an unurned cremation, while two transverse arrowheads came from the ditch (Ashmolean Museum). It follows that the Bronze Age cremation may be a secondary. It has to be stressed that none of the sites so far discussed show any evidence for an external bank: in the whole report only the sections for Site V clearly show gravel spreads which have entered the ditch from outside (ibid.,45). The best parallels for the ring ditches at site XI are monuments like Newnham Murren and Linch Hill Corner (Grimes

1944), both of which contained single inhumations, presumably under a round mound. The causewayed ring ditches at Site II are more akin to Wessex round mounds like Westbury 7 (Hoare 1810, 54) and Handley 27 (Pitt-Rivers 1898). At this stage it is not necessary to evoke any comparisons with the henge tradition.

The evidence as it stands suggests that the Dorchester cursus may be some hundreds of years later than similar monuments in Wessex (Dorset Cursus: 2820±120 bc; OxA-626). The Ebbsfleet ware in the ditches at Sites XI and VIII finds parallels in the Mortlake sherds beneath the bank upcasts at the Drayton Cursus (J. Wallis pers. comm.), indicating that this late date may be generalised amongst the Upper Thames cursus monuments. The cutting of the cursus ditch through Site VIII and up to the ditch of Site XI (and hence the possibility that the internal cursus bank incorporated the mound of site XI) reveals once more the inclusion of smaller monuments into major structures seen at North Stoke and perhaps Drayton. One interpretation of this phenomenon is that it represents a massive reassertion of the collectivity, repudiating the significance of dissonant social trajectories and their monumental expression.

At some point in the later third millennium the ditch of Site I was recut, most extensively so on the south-west side. The large sherds of Fengate ware in these recuts, contrasting with the small scraps of pottery elsewhere on the site, indicate that this

was an act of purposeful deposition, laying claim to the ancestral influences of the site. Still later the mound must have been flattened in order to enable a circle of posts or pits to be cut, changing the alignment of the monument from NE/SW to E/W. The small sherds of pottery found in these holes may be of Beaker affinity (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars 1951,9). The square ditch which encloses the site shares the alignment of the circle of holes, so that despite the Abingdon sherds in its fill it is likely that it is of late date. Allen's mention of a round barrow within a square ditch at Limlow Hill, Cambridgeshire, indicated that the feature need not be early (Allen 1938,170). A similar circle of holes was cut at site IX, while a circle of posts inside the south-east end of the cursus has provided carbon dates of 1940+60 bc and 1890+40 bc (BM-2161 and BM-2164). However, a penannular structure nearby has a date of 2000+70 bc (BM-2168). This may also be an appropriate date for the construction of sites IV, V and VI. Site V at least appears to have had an external bank, although it is possible that Sites IV and VI may have been causewayed-ditched round barrows. As with the earlier monuments, deposits of burnt soil were found in the ditches of these sites, frequently interdigitated with layers of sterile gravel (Atkinson et. al. 1951,38).

By the start of the second millennium, then, a number of small monuments, pit or post circles, some with external banks, had been constructed in and around the Dorchester Cursus. The final phase of activity on the site consisted of the reuse of these

sites as cremation cemeteries. At the end of the cursus the secondary nature of the cremation deposits has been demonstrated by the date of 1830±50 bc (BM-2163) for material associated with the post circle. On Site IV, cremation deposits are high in the ditch sections (ibid.,38). In all, 128 cremations were excavated by Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars, with others located in more recent excavations by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. T.H. Gee's notes (Ashmolean Museum) indicate that a cremation in a pit was located ten yards south-east of Site I in 1956. The excavations of the 1940's consisted of small cuttings which barely covered the area of each monument, so that it is possible that a number of cremation deposits outside may have been lost.

Some form of spatial expression of status differences is certainly indicated at Site II, for which details of the ages and sexes of some of the cremations are available. The richest burial, Cremation 21, equipped with bone skewer pin, flint fabricator, flint flake and stone macehead, was located in the centre of the monument (Fig. 7.20). It may have entered the site through a cut in the crest of a still surviving mound. The other cremations were arranged around the southern edge of the mound in a semicircle, those to the east being predominantly young, including females and having no grave goods, those to the west being male, old and with grave goods.

The development of the Dorchester on Thames can be seen as an expression of the tension between power invested in the

individual or in the collectivity. The ebb and flow of local social arrangements resulted in shifts in the strategy of representation. Sites XI and II were 'converted' from oval into round mounds, although it is to be assumed that the rite of burial was articulated interment throughout. The construction of the cursus distorted the meaning of all previous monuments, yet another series of small monuments postdated it, and Sites I and XI were adapted to fall into line with these developments. These new sites in turn became the foci for a new rite of interment which was rather less exclusive, yet which through the use of space drew distinctions between individuals and imposed a particular interpretation upon social relations. The place of the Dorchester Big Rings henge monument in this sequence remains unclear. The pottery from Atkinson's excavation was Beaker (Clarke 1970,193), which may indicate a late date for its construction. However, at Stanton Harcourt Devil's Quoits, Gray (1973,1974) indicates that finds were very scarce, the ditches having been distorted by continual cleaning out. The date of 1640+70 bc (HAR-1888) for bone trampled into the silting agrees with dates for Beaker activity at Condicote and Gorseby Bigbury. Thus the date of 2060+129 bc (HAR-1887) may relate to the primary use of the site. It remains to be explained why so little pre-Beaker activity is evidenced at either of these large henge sites. Big Rings lies in what was earlier defined as the primary area of Neolithic settlement in the Upper Thames Valley, while the Devil's Quoit Circle is situated in the area which was only fully occupied in the later Neolithic. It has already been

implied that these two areas were to some extent separate social units in the later Neolithic. Each may have symbolised its corporate identity through the construction of a large henge monument, but the perennial presence of burnt organic material, animal bones and broken pottery at the smaller monuments indicates that ritual practice was circumscribed at a lower level of social segmentation.

Later Neolithic society.

Mortuary sites of later Neolithic date are plentiful in the Upper Thames Valley (Figs. 7.13 and 7.22). The Dorchester complex contains a great proportion of these, yet examples are also known from Barrow Hills, where three ring ditches appear to be of Neolithic date (Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984,9), from Gravelly Guy, where a penannular structure has been excavated with Ebbsfleet sherds in its ditch fill (G.Lambrick pers. comm.), and at Mount Farm, where another ring ditch with Ebbsfleet associations produced a male burial and a radiocarbon determination of 2500±100 bc (G.Lambrick pers. comm.). The presence of later Neolithic burials further to the north-west is shown by the Linch Hill Corner site, near Stanton Harcourt. There a double ring ditch contained a central grave, holding a female burial with jet slider and flint knife (Grimes 1944,34). Ring ditches with Peterborough ware associations have been excavated at Stanton Harcourt XV 3 and Cassington 1 and 3 (Case 1963).

The argument has been put forward that relatively small social units prevailed in the Upper Thames Valley in the later Neolithic. The predominance of individual burials may be related, and emphasises the parallel between the area and continental Europe. In contrast with the increasing rigidity of ritual practice which is seen in the tombs of the Cotswold area, the emphasis in the Upper Thames seems to have been upon the consumption and display of individual wealth and prestige. It is interesting to note the ways in which the Beaker and Grooved Ware complexes fitted into these social circumstances. Finds of later Neolithic pottery in the Upper Thames Valley are very numerous (Fig. 7.12). Peterborough wares are frequently found in mortuary contexts, but the great bulk of finds are from pits cut into the gravel subsoil. Grooved Ware finds are almost entirely from pits. As in Wessex, the two wares are never found in the same context, but the lack of spatial separation between them is more akin to the situation in East Anglia, where pits with Peterborough, Beaker or Grooved Ware sherds are frequently found on the same site (Healy 1984,104). Without reiterating the arguments for continuity I will suggest that in the small, competitive and unstable communities of the later Neolithic, different sub-groups (families or lineages) supported their claims to power through access to a variety of external exchange systems and contacts. On the evidence of the Dorchester on Thames sites it is undeniable that Abingdon ware was still being made and used well into the later Neolithic, and it is also clear that Peterborough and

Grooved Ware are heavily overrepresented in the archaeological record as a consequence of purposeful deposition.

This assertion can be supported by firstly discussing the Grooved Ware pits. All the Grooved Ware in the area falls into Longworth's Woodlands and Durrington Walls sub-classes (Wainwright and Longworth 1971), and largely the former. Close association between Grooved Ware and henge monuments is not found in the Thames Valley, although it may be that the depositional practices associated with Durrington Walls style pottery were rather more formal. For instance, at Abingdon Common a pit was located isolated from any other prehistoric material, lined with stones and containing very large sherds of six Durrington Walls Grooved Ware vessels (Parrington 1978,31-33). Stanton Harcourt pit A (Thomas 1955,4) contained a highly decorated Durrington vessel inverted on the floor of the pit, in a matrix of dark loam. The only other finds were six flint flakes. Nearby pits contained much smaller sherds in the Woodlands style (Case and Whittle 1982,103). Another isolated pit containing Durrington Walls sherds was excavated at Thrupp Farm (Thomas and Wallis 1982,184). Particularly in the case of pits containing Woodlands style sherds, it is possible to discern a relationship between Grooved Ware pits and standing monuments in the Upper Thames. At Barrow Hills, a number of highly ornate Woodlands sherds, and also less diagnostic sherds with spiral motifs, have been recovered from pits in the vicinity of a barrow group which has its origins in the Neolithic (finds with Oxford Archaeological

Unit). Near Cassington Mill (Case and Whittle 1982) a series of pits, some with Woodlands Grooved Ware, were excavated in an area rich in ring ditches and Beaker graves. At Lechlande (Jones 1976) pits with Woodlands sherds, burnt soil, charcoal, flints and animal bones were found at the Loders and Roughground Farm, close by two cursus monuments, a pit alignment and posthole arrangements (ibid.,2). One wonders whether the stray Grooved Ware sherds from Dorchester Site I and Abingdon causewayed enclosure can have come from similar contexts. The relationship between Grooved Ware pits and earlier monuments is particularly clear at Sutton Courtenay (Leeds 1923,1927,1934). Leeds' surveying appears to have been imperfect, for the lengths of cursus ditch on his plan do not join up (Fig. 7.21). However, it can be suggested on the basis of the plans as they stand that the richest pits are those between the cursus ditches, while a number of pits with scraps of flintwork alone were excavated outside of the ditches (material Ashmolean Museum). Two consistent elements can be detected in the filling of pits with Woodlands pottery: burnt organic soil and animal bones. At Blewbury "the animal bone had evidently been deposited as joints, as articulated shaft and knuckle bones were apparent" (Halpin 1984,1). These bones (kindly shown to me by Claire Halpin) include roughly equal proportions of pig and cattle, and are largely from the 'meaty' parts of the animals (Appendix 16). At Cassington (Jackson 1956) pig bones predominated. In many cases it was noted that the pits were filled soon after digging, as no layer of primary silting had had time to build up. This suggests that these acts of deposition

were the purpose for which the pits had been dug; it was not a case of throwing rubbish into a convenient repository (in any case, the complete Whin Sill axe from the pit at Thrupp makes it unlikely that this material was purely household waste).

The essential features of the use of these pits were the consumption (and sometimes perhaps the intentional wasting) of meat, the breaking of pottery, the burning of fires, the digging of a pit and the burial of sherds, bones, fire debris and various items of exotic material culture. It may be that activities connected with the use of Durrington Walls pottery were less concerned with the consumption of meat, and more with the deposition of complete vessels. The interpretation which I offer for these actions is that feasting and the conspicuous destruction of material exotica were carried out in places which had already accrued some significance (usually adjacent to a standing monument). The debris from the event would have been scooped up and buried in a pit, perhaps because its ritual associations made it unpropitious, but equally possibly in order to exert some supernatural influence over the place. While similar practices are associated with Grooved Ware in Yorkshire, East Anglia and Wessex, there is no reason to suggest that they were restricted to the users of that ceramic in the Upper Thames. The similarity of the pit deposits to those found in ring ditches indicates some continuity in the activities which caused their formation. Furthermore it seems that other late Neolithic wares were used for similar purposes: at Barton Court Farm six pits

were excavated which produced Grooved Ware and radiocarbon dates in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries bc. A further pit contained burnt material, bones and a complete inverted Mortlake bowl (G.Lambrick pers. comm.).

The Grooved Ware complex thus fitted into Upper Thames later Neolithic society as a part of the generalised practice of feasting and destruction of material items. Its deposition near monuments may be a further example of the concern with control over place and people. Similarly, the Beaker network was swiftly integrated into this milieu. The rite of individual inhumation with grave goods had already been practiced for some centuries, and merely escalated with the appearance of Beakers. Early Beaker graves are common throughout the Upper Thames Valley, but it is striking that a concentration of very rich Step 2 burials exists at Stanton Harcourt, within two kilometres of the Devil's Quoits. At Linch Hill Corner, for example, a male burial with wooden coffin, N/MR Beaker, bone belt ring and seven barbed and tanged arrowheads was excavated (Grimes 1944). Five of the seven Step 2 burials with more than one artefact accompanying the body are from the Stanton Harcourt area (Fig. 7.22). By contrast, no Step 1 or 2 burials have been found within two kilometres of the Dorchester complex: the carbon dates suggest that the cremation burials are contemporary. So it seems that by the nineteenth century bc two ceremonial sites in the Upper Thames, each with a major henge monument, were operating mutually exclusive mortuary rites (Fig. 7.22). At Stanton Harcourt, in the newly-colonised

zone, Beaker burials expressed the wealth of a few individuals, while at Dorchester on Thames a much greater proportion of the population was afforded burial, yet the relative distribution of grave goods and the spatial organisation of the cemeteries suggest that status differences were expressed in this rite. In general, it seems that the Beakers of the Stanton Harcourt/Cassington area were more exotic than those south of Oxford. In the former area, Step 2 Beakers of E, AOC, N/MR, and W/MR type have been found in graves, and Step 3 Beakers of W/MR, N/MR and FN. South of Oxford, Step 2 Beakers are restricted to E and AOC, while all Step 3 Beakers are W/MR. This may imply rather more standardisation or control over material culture in the latter area.

Beaker burials in the Upper Thames reach a peak with Steps 2 and 3, in contrast with more conservative areas of southern Britain (Fig. 7.24). It is interesting that the richest Step 3 burial of all, a male with tanged copper dagger, bronze knife, slate wristguard and W/MR Beaker, came from Dorchester Site XII, a small ring ditch outside the south entrance of the Big Rings henge (Clarke 1970; R.J.C. Atkinson's notes, Ashmolean Museum). It is the only Beaker burial in the entire complex. By 1700 bc fewer Beaker burials were being interred in the Upper Thames Valley, and there are no Step 5 burials in the area at all. There are only three Step 6 burials, of which two are extremely rich: Radley 203, a male with S2(W) Beaker, ten flint flakes, five barbed and tanged arrowheads, an antler spatula and a bronze awl

(Bradley, Chambers and Halpin 1984,15), and the rather remote Lambourne 31, with S2(W) Beaker, jet button, six arrowheads, scraper, strike-a-light and two knives (Clarke 1970). The great renaissance of Beaker burial in the Upper Thames Valley did not come until Step 7, with the flat grave cemeteries at Cassington and Eynsham (Case 1977,82). So, while the Upper Thames possesses one of the most complete sequences of Beaker Burials in the south of England (Bradley and Holgate 1984,128), these burials were by no means carried out at a uniform rate throughout. It cannot be claimed that privileged burial with exotic grave goods was a normal way of disposing of the dead at any stage; it seems more likely that this increased investment of effort was a form of conspicuous consumption in itself. The chronological 'waves' of Beaker burials seen in the Upper Thames and elsewhere can thus be interpreted as a response to periods of social instability or transition, in which claims to land or authority were in need of clarification. The first of these horizons, constituted by Steps 2 and 3, commenced contemporary with the floruit of indigenous burial rites at Dorchester on Thames, and ended with the interment of a spectacularly rich burial outside the Big Rings henge.

Conclusion.

There is little evidence for Neolithic activity in the Upper Thames Valley prior to the start of the third millennium bc. At

that point, small agricultural communities were established downriver from Oxford, possibly exploiting the gravels upriver for seasonal grazing. At the edge of this primary zone of settlement lay the Abingdon causewayed enclosure, mediating transactions between these communities and others more geographically remote. Around Lechlade another group of enclosures was built, whose functions appear obscure, although they may have been connected with long-distance exchanges and cattle movements between the Cotswolds, the Berkshire Downs, the Thames Valley and the Avebury area. Towards the middle of the third millennium there are hints of increased social hierachisation and stress within the core area, with the fortification of the Abingdon enclosure and the construction of the Barrow Hills oval mounds and the analogous mounds at Dorchester.

Subsequently the Abingdon enclosure appears to have been abandoned, and settlement expanded into new landscape zones, while activity in the Cassington/Stanton Harcourt area appears to have increased dramatically. Throughout the area small monuments, often containing single inhumations, seem to have become the focus of communal activities including feasting. The scale and number of these sites indicates that the active level of social cohesion was rather small - perhaps a couple of lineages. The construction of a large number of cursus monuments in the settlement core indicate that efforts were nonetheless made to institute a more rigid control over landscape and population. But

by the latter part of the third millennium there can be little doubt that smaller, highly competitive social units were the norm. In this phase, monuments were recut and reconstructed in order to claim control over their influences, while pit deposits give evidence of competitive feasting associated with contact with the Peterborough and Grooved Ware complexes. I think that it may not be unrealistic to liken these circumstances to those in a tribal society infested with Big Men, with the process of competition taking place in the context of a lineage system which nonetheless determines the nature of kinship, productive relations and residence. The cremation burials at Dorchester may express competition rather than rigid lineage relationships. Significantly, the Beaker complex seems to have taken hold in the area around Stanton Harcourt and Cassington, where both cremation burials and cursus monuments are lacking. The period between 2000 and 1800 bc may thus have been one of growing rivalry between two systems of representation. The more rigid of these, it will be noted, was concentrated in the old core area. The dominance of the Beaker system by c.1800 bc indicates something of the special character of the Upper Thames Valley: that it was in an area characterised by the fluidity of its social relations that a shift to the forms of social organisation typical of the Bronze Age in Europe was most swiftly achieved.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE AVEBURY REGION

Introduction.

The areas with which I have dealt so far - Wessex, Mendip, the Cotswolds and the Upper Thames, have swept clockwise around the axial district of the North Wiltshire Downs. There is considerable reason for leaving Avebury until last, and its position at the meeting point of my other case studies is a part of this. For Keiller's efforts at Windmill Hill and Avebury, Cunnington's at the Sanctuary, Piggott's at the West Kennet Long Barrow and Atkinson's at Silbury Hill have between them done much to create our image of what constitutes the British Neolithic. Observations made in the immediate vicinity of Avebury have been turned outward and used as the yardstick by which the Neolithic is measured. Perhaps it may be more constructive to work for once in the opposite direction, and to reflect on Avebury as a kind of cultural crucible in which overlapping monumental and artefactual traditions interacted, merged, and changed their meaning.

The Earlier Neolithic Pattern.

In Chapter III the hypothesis was put forward that the adoption of the Neolithic lifestyle in Southern England resulted in the

constitution of a relatively homogeneous social formation, which almost immediately began to fragment regionally. The available indicators suggest that this is the case in Avebury as much as with any of the other areas which have been discussed. In much the same way as on Salisbury Plain (Richards 1984), the flint scatters of Earlier Neolithic date in the Avebury area are small, and localised (observation based on fieldwalking 1983-4). As in the Cotswolds, scatters are often situated at the junction of chalk uplands and wet lowlands. This is particularly the case with the sites along the south-facing escarpment of Milk Hill/Tan Hill/Golden Ball Hill and the Bishop's Cannings Downs, overlooking the Greensand Vale of Pewsey (Fig.8.1). The pattern suggested is one of spatially discrete habitation sites clustered around the headwaters of the Kennet, located on the hillslopes of the upper and middle chalk. The massive spread of clay-with-flints around the Savernake Forest seems to have been avoided (as far as can be told from fieldwork which has been scanty in that area), yet already on the hillcountry of Hackpen and the Aldbourne Downs activity seems to have started on the interstice of the clay-with-flints and Upper Chalk. Passmore (n.d.,19) held that the "Ewin's Down, Stock Close and Stock Lane ridge of down has yielded more and better specimens of worked flints than any place I know" and that "this is one of the most extensive flint manufactuaries in England" (ibid,20). While the bulk of the material from these sites is later Neolithic, a sizeable proportion is Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic (Holgate 1984). Passmore (ibid) believed that indentations in the ground

on Hackpen and around Barbury Castle were flint workings, a suggestion which gains credence in the light of the excavation of flint "grubbing pits" at Hambledon Hill (Mercer 1982). The pits on Hackpen can still be seen in suitable lighting conditions. Moreover, fieldwalking conducted by R.Holgate and the author in 1983-4 indicated that a belt of debitage followed the contour of Hackpen precisely where the Chalk and clay-with-flints meet, and where particularly high quality flint might be expected to be located.

The faunal remains from Earlier Neolithic contexts (Fig. 8.3) confirm that, as elsewhere in Southern England, cattle were the predominant species. By comparison with the figures for Southern Wessex sheep are more heavily represented, which may indicate that intensive clearance had taken place west of the Winterbourne and Kennet (Smith 1984,103), although the usual reservations that few of these sites represent typical domestic assemblages apply. Furthermore, there is a possibility that sheep bones were selectively kept at Windmill Hill, leading to an overrepresentation in the available sample (M.Pitts, pers. comm.). The presence of open country molluscan faunas in old land surfaces at West Kennet, Horslip, Silbury Hill, Beckhampton Road and South Street enhance the impression of an extensive cleared area, perhaps with small cultivated plots within it (Evans 1971,65-66). At the peripheries, at the enclosures of Windmill Hill and Knap Hill, woodland prevailed (ibid). The extreme density of settlement throughout the Neolithic in the Avebury

area entitles us to consider it as a single political unit, and this evidence of a large expanse of open country may possibly indicate that economic activities were organised on a large scale.

From early on in the sequence a degree of cultural heterogeneity is evidenced in the area. The pottery from the pre-enclosure activity at Windmill Hill is closely related to the South-western group, as exemplified by the Maiden Castle and Hembury assemblages (Smith 1965a,28). Similar undecorated pottery with lugs and featureless rims was found in a pit on Waden Hill (Thomas 1956), beneath the barrow Avebury G55 (Smith 1965b), in the ditches of Horslip Barrow (Ashbee,Smith and Evans 1979,223), beneath the Avebury bank (Smith 1965a,224), on the West Kennet Avenue (ibid.,232) and picked up on the surface by W.E.V.Young at the foot of Avebury Down (Avebury Museum). However, pits located beneath barrows G61 and G62a on Roughridge Hill, Bishop's Cannings (Proudfoot 1965) contained vessels with heavy carinations and everted rims more akin to the Grimston tradition (M.Pitts, pers. comm.). Similar vessels were recovered from the old land surface beneath the South Street long barrow (Ashbee,Smith and Evans 1979,270). Two traditions of plain pottery were thus current in the Avebury area in the earlier third millenium b.c. It is worth recording at this point Howard's (1981,25) conclusions on the basis of a petrological study of the earlier Neolithic wares at Windmill Hill, that the local pottery was made by two social groups, probably lineages, exploiting the

clays of the Marlborough Downs and the Kennet Valley respectively. In Chapter IV it was noted that the decoration of Windmill Hill wares is much akin to that found in Eastern England, on Mildenhall and Whitehawk pottery. The presence of decorated vessels in the ditches at Windmill Hill, but not in the pre-bank pits, may indicate that the idea of pottery decoration was actually introduced from the east. Windmill Hill itself, with its widely-spaced multiple ditch rings, is more akin to the causewayed enclosures of the Thames Valley than those of Wessex (Palmer 1976). The preferential deposition of decorated sherds at mortuary sites like West Kennet (Piggott 1962) and enclosures like Windmill Hill; Knap Hill (Connah 1965,11) and Rybury (Smith 1965c) indicates that such pottery may have been of special significance in the Avebury region (Fig.8.6). This was not the case in the rest of Wessex.

One of Smith's (1965a,1966) most interesting conclusions from the Windmill Hill excavations was that the huge dumps of animal bones in the ditches, including articulated limbs and associated with unweathered sherds of pottery implied communal feasts. Deposits of waste and organic material would have been placed in the ditches and immediately covered over with raked down bank material (Smith 1971,97). The repeated recutting of the ditches implied by the stratification of Ebbsfleet sherds at the ditch bottom (ibid.,98) may thus indicate the periodic reconstruction of the monument, also seen at Crickley Hill. Spatial analyses based on the site records at Avebury museum confirm these

impressions. Dumps of cattle bones from the "meaty" parts of the animal predominate in the inner ditches (Fig.8.14), while exclusively "waste" bone dumps are found in the outer ditch. One may infer from this that the distribution of bovid remains was a fairly organised procedure. The spatial variation of activity at the causewayed enclosure is also indicated by the lithic assemblage (Fig.8.16). Outer and middle ditch segments tend to have higher proportions of scrapers relative to microdenticulates than inner ditch segments. Cutting, as opposed to scraping activities (like the apportionment of meat?) may have prevailed in the inner area. As in the other Wessex causewayed enclosures, pottery vessels suitable for consumption rather than storage predominate, being 73% of the assemblage. Interestingly, the proportions of different vessel forms in local fabrics and those with shell temper, from the Bath-Frome area, are quite different (Figures from Smith 1965a).

Shape	Flint & Sand		Shell Grit	
	No.	%	No.	%
Cups	80	15	8	5
Bowls	190	37	32	19
Carinated & cordoned	33	6	30	18
Pots	217	42	97	58

Cups and bowls are thus a greater proportion of the

locally-produced vessels, while carinated and cordoned vessels are a higher percentage of the imports. 24% of the shell-gritted vessels were decorated, as opposed to 14% of the local vessels (Smith 1965a,45); an interesting result in view of Howard's observation that decorated pots would be more suited to transport of goods than cooking or food preparation (1981,19). A possible interpretation of this pattern is that by the time decorated pottery was in use, local vessels were used at Windmill Hill almost exclusively for consumption, while pots brought from the Southern Cotswolds were used as containers for some or other good, perhaps food or drink of some kind.

Vessels with oolitic filler have also been found at Knap Hill (Connah 1965), West Kennet Long Barrow (Piggott 1962) and West Overton G6b (Smith and Simpson 1966). This scanty distribution roughly coincides with that of the long mounds that have produced oolitic rock; West Kennet, South Street, Adam's Grave, Kitchen Barrow, Shepherd's Shore and Easton Down (Smith 1965a,117). Whether earthen or chambered, these barrows are all situated south of Windmill Hill (Bradley 1978a Fig.6.1). It seems that only a proportion of the greater community living in the Avebury area were receiving material from the Bath-Frome area.

Architecturally, the long mounds situated around Avebury are a diverse group, yet this lack of homogeneity appears to embrace some spatial patterning. North and east of Windmill Hill, across the Hackpen Ridge are a group of small chambered barrows with

orthostatic façades, and often also with a peristalith (Fig.8.5). The uniformity of this group may purely be a consequence of the proximity of sources of sarsen stone on the Overton and Fyfield downs. Nonetheless, barrows with orthostatic chambers are found further south at West Woods, Adam's Grave, Kitchen Barrow, Easton Down and Beckhampton Plantation. The largest chambered barrows of all, West Kennet and (presumably) East Kennet are in the centre of both the long mound distribution and the focus of population. Nearby was the massive monument at Beckhampton Penning (Barker 1984,24), which appears to have been a peristalith 350 ft long, without a barrow inside it. This invites comparison with the linear setting of stones inside the Southern Inner Circle at Avebury (Smith 1965a,199). Purely earthen long mounds are restricted to the area west of the Kennet/Winterbourne and south of Windmill Hill. These differences are unlikely to be either the result of ignorance concerning structural techniques on the part of elements of the population or of chronology. A possibility is that within a major community united by economic and kinship links a degree of identity was maintained by individual lineages through the use of material items (Hodder 1978b). Within mortuary practice this was expressed in the use of elements taken from a repertoire which included orthostatic chambers, peristaliths, façades and oolitic rock.

The record of burials in the long mounds near Avebury is extremely scrcappy. Only the most distant of the sites, on King's Play Down (Cunnington 1909b) had a single male inhumation. The

site at West Kennet (Piggott 1962) produced an exceptional series of burials, which have been interpreted as representative of a socially preeminent group (Thomas and Whittle 1986). This accords with contemporary transepted tombs in the Cotswolds. Deposits of human and animal bones in the secondary filling of the chambers, extending well into the late Neolithic, indicate both the circulation of human remains and the spatial restriction of depositional practises over time. It is possible to extend some of the arguments used in that paper to the other burials of the region. On the whole, these do not resemble the individual burials of later long barrows of Southern Wessex. At Oldbury Hill, a male and two female adults were recovered from chalk-digging (Cunnington 1872), and at Shepherd's Shore five disarticulated burials were excavated (including three adults and one child) (Cunnington 1927). Easton Down also contained disarticulated burials, two adult males and two children (Thurnam 1860). At two sites it is likely that burials had been removed: the chamber at Temple Bottom contained only a few teeth and hand and foot bones (Lukis 1867), while that at West Woods was empty save for a deposit of "black material" (Passmore 1923). The Millbarrow chamber had been filled with secondary material like West Kennet, while that at Manton Down had been blocked (Barker 1984,28). By comparison with either southern Wessex or the Cotswolds, these numbers of interments seem rather small, or seem at least to approximate to the later barrows (Thorpe 1984,54). From this it can be suggested that burial in long mounds was a rite which was very restricted in the Avebury area. There is also

the peculiarity that the earthen long mounds at Beckhampton Road and South Street, and also possibly at Horslip (Ashbee, Smith and Evans 1979; Barker 1984,27) appear to have had no primary burials at all. The failure of generations of excavators to find a burial under Silbury Hill (Atkinson . 1970) may be related to the spatial and temporal proximity of its primary phase to the Beckhampton Road and South Street barrows (Fig. 8.11). For some reason, three mounds within four kilometres of each other were built without burials in the years 2850-2550 bc.

By the middle of the third millenium bc, a group of interrelated descent groups had firmly established themselves on the headwaters of the Kennet. Their basic repertoire of material culture was that shared by the inhabitants of the South-West of England, yet to this could be added pottery decoration inspired by eastern sources and a class of chambered tomb which is the counterpart of examples in the Cotswolds. Yet the megalithic tombs of the Avebury region are all terminally-chambered, whether simple or transepted, and thus late in the sequence, indicating that they had been introduced from the parent zone to the west. Contacts with the Cotswold and Mendip region are further emphasised by the oolitic rock and shell-tempered pottery, while the other side of the relationship is indicated by the presence of a cup with decoration identical to those at Windmill Hill found with a cave burial at Tom Tivey's Hole, in eastern Mendip (Barrett 1966). The importation of vessels containing some archaeologically invisible burden to Windmill Hill has something of the connotation of

tributary relations to it. But inevitably one is brought back to the question of the exchange of lithic items. The evidence suggests that the Marlborough and Lambourne Downs were being exploited for flint from a relatively early date, and these were clearly the nearest sources of high quality flint to the Mendips, Cotswolds and Upper Thames Valley. The complex of monuments around Avebury, and the juxtaposition of the chambered tomb at Wayland's Smithy with Dragon Hill, (Peake 1931), a little-known parallel for Silbury Hill and the Marlborough Mound may both owe their existence in part to communities able to exploit their geographical position on the extreme edge of the chalklands. The ability to extract, centralise and mobilise enormous quantities of flint of a much higher quality than could be obtained from pebble beds further west might have provided the Avebury community with ability to extract exotic goods, social knowledge (including methods of tomb building), women and corvee from their western contacts. Hence Windmill Hill, placed on the north-west edge of the district, became the premier emporium of Neolithic England. While Hambledon Hill with its outwork systems is a larger monument than Windmill Hill, at that site it is the functions connected with the circulation of cattle and the disposal of the dead which strike one as of greatest importance. At Windmill Hill the indicators of stock management are more lowly, and it is the sheer bulk of exotica with which the site was associated that seem more significant.

The later Neolithic landscape.

As much as for the profusion of monuments and artefacts, later Neolithic Avebury is remarkable for the things which are not there. Coming to the area by the circuitous route which this thesis has followed, one is struck by the sound of two particular dogs not barking. These are Grooved Ware pits and later Neolithic burials. The only find which approximates to a pre-Beaker single burial is that of a man aged 35 - 45, accompanied by a brow tine of deer antler and a tiny sherd of what may be Peterborough ware, with no sign of any mound, excavated by the Vatchers in a pipe trench on the south side of Waden Hill (Avebury Museum Records). Grooved Ware pits, so characteristic of the area surrounding Durrington Walls, are entirely absent from Avebury. Grooved Ware is known from nine sites in the Avebury area, but in almost all cases it has been found in association with other wares. The separation of Grooved Ware from Peterborough pottery is not seen in the region. In southern Wessex, Grooved Ware was the ceramic most often recorded in isolation; around Avebury it is the style least often found unassociated (Fig. 8.17). Indeed, eight sites have Grooved Ware, Peterborough ware, Beaker and earlier Neolithic pottery all in some kind of association. It might be ventured that if further excavations were undertaken at the West Kennet Water Meadow site, another pipe-line excavation which produced a single sherd of Grooved Ware, a variety of pot styles would be found there also. Some of these sites can be argued to

have been settlements, yet others are rather peculiar deposits. The material from under the barrow West Overton G.6b, close to the Sanctuary, included sherds of fifteen Windmill Hill vessels, twenty-four Grooved Ware pots, twenty Peterborough bowls and thirteen Beakers, yet the total lithic assemblage amounted to only one leaf arrowhead, one borer, four scrapers and 125 flakes (Smith and Simpson 1966,152-155). A similar assemblage of over seventy vessels came from beneath Avebury G.55, again with a relative lack of lithic material (Smith 1965b). These circumstances have led to the suggestion that these sites in some way represent formal deposits, perhaps of intentionally smashed pots, a practice for which continental parallels are not unknown (Thomas and Whittle 1986). One can also cite the pit beneath West Overton G6a, containing sherds of nine Fengate vessels, but absolutely no lithics whatsoever (Smith and Simpson 1964,82-84). Surely it can be no coincidence that the former two sites were later chosen for round barrows? It is important, however, to draw a distinction between these deposits and the Grooved Ware pits of southern Wessex and the Thames valley. In the latter case the evident care with which the material was deposited can leave little doubt that a precise set of rules were being followed in the process of deposition. With G.55 and G.6b one is confronted with something more akin to the residues of a potlatch: an area set aside for the gratuitous destruction of a particular form of material culture. By the later third millennium in North Wiltshire the gift economy which formed the backbone of earlier Neolithic society may have taken on elements of a 'gifts to god'

system (Gregory 1980).

Grooved Ware, then, represented little more than another form of exotic material suitable for the expression of prestige. Most of the Grooved Ware in North Wiltshire is of Durrington Walls type; at Windmill Hill and West Kennet, Clacton style was present. Patterning does not appear to relate to design structure (as it does in south Wessex), yet this restricted distribution of pottery of East Anglian affinity may indicate that its exotic character was of more consequence. Grooved Ware thus seems to have had an entirely different role in North Wiltshire from that which it held in southern Wessex. While it may have been only accessible to a minority, it was eventually treated in exactly the same way as other pottery. The point is further emphasised by the absence of large deposits of Grooved Ware and feasting debris from the Avebury henge (Gray 1935; Smith 1965a).

The museum collections of surface lithic material give a vivid impression of later Neolithic activity in the Avebury area: more and larger assemblages (Fig. 8.11). This is especially notable in the low-lying areas surrounding the Avebury monument itself. Fieldwalking suggests that the extent to which the locations indicated by the various flint collectors, Young, Kendall, Passmore and the rest, constitute separate 'sites' may be illusory. Rather than the small high-density scatters of the earlier Neolithic, great expanses of worked flint spread out across the fields. In the immediate vicinity of the henge these

scatters actually run up to the banks of the monument. There is thus a marked contrast with the spatial organisation of activity in south Wessex, where the main concentrations of population were remote from the larger henge monuments. Likewise, there is no hint at Avebury of cemeteries of rich burials developing in opposition to the henge monument.

The later Neolithic also seems to have seen the expansion of lithic extraction on Hackpen and the Aldbourne Downs. Polished discoidal and plano-convex knives are present in the material from Hackpen, yet the numerous arrowheads and axes from Stock Lane and Stock Close mentioned by Passmore (n.d.,19) are little in evidence, suggesting that only a proportion of the original collections has reached the various museums. Certain forms of material culture show quite restricted distributions in the later Neolithic. Petit tranchet derivative arrowheads (Fig. 8.12) are more concentrated on the Kennet/Winterbourne confluence than leaf-shapes had been (Fig. 8.4). This applies to oblique arrowheads far more than chisel forms, conforming to the observation that the oblique type had a socially-restricted distribution in Wessex and Mendip. Maceheads also appear to have been restricted, turning up in contexts like the Avebury henge stoneholes, the Kennet Avenue, the West Kennet long barrow and at Windmill Hill (Fig. 8.13). If there is some evidence that the exchange of flint expanded in the later Neolithic, the same may be true of stone axes. At Windmill Hill the great majority of axes and axe flakes deposited in the ditch are from the terminal

silts (Smith 1965a,111), although the increased rate of deposition may not be directly related to the number of axes passing through the enclosure. Where complete axes are deposited in such numbers it is assumed that this is a deliberate act, analogous to the wasting of meat evidenced by the faunal remains. As with the pottery deposits already discussed, it seems that conspicuous consumption and destruction were of great importance to the society of later Neolithic Avebury.

The distribution of stone axes is again markedly biased toward the immediate area of the Avebury monument (Fig. 8.9). This is rather in contrast with that of flint axes (Fig. 8.8). I have indicated that the tombs of the Avebury area betray the presence of a number of spatially discrete descent groups within the greater community. Hence it is interesting that a degree of spatial structure is discernable within the axe distribution, Group VI (Langdale) predominating to the east of the Kennet, and Groups I (Cornwall) and III (also Cornwall) to the west. A similar pattern is present within the Windmill Hill enclosure, where axes of Groups VIII and XI are consistently separate from Groups VI, VII and slate axes (Fig. 8.15). The numbers of artefacts concerned in each case are small, but the results do not contradict the proposed model of a society composed of a number of segments, competing amongst each other through access to and destruction of exotic items, and having distinct external contacts. Windmill Hill, if it were the gateway in and out of the greater territory for material items, might not be associated

with any particular lineage. In contrast with Hambledon, Crickley, Abingdon, Maiden Castle and Whitesheet Hill, Windmill Hill has little convincing evidence for fortification, and has no spectacular mid-to-late third millennium burial in its immediate vicinity.

A variety of monument-building strategies were followed in the Avebury district in the later third millennium. The restriction of ritual practice to a smaller number of tombs (possibly only West Kennet, but conceivably also East Kennet) and the blocking and filling of others (Thomas and Whittle 1986) may indicate that particular lineages were gaining a monopoly over intercession with the supernatural (Friedman and Rowlands 1977,211). Atkinson's suggestion that the construction of Silbury Hill was a single unbroken process (1968) sits uneasily with a radiocarbon chronology which imposes a depth of between three and twelve hundred years between the construction of the turf and soil mound of phase I and the deposition of antler picks in the ditch of Silbury IV (Fig.8.10). The proximity of the mound to the 'non-burial' long barrows at South Street and Beckhampton Road indicates another sub-regional tradition, while the time depth implied in its construction suggests the kind of continuity which might only be possible in the context of an elite genealogical line. By Silbury IV, dated to 1899 + 43 and 1802 + 50 bc (BM-842 and -841) the site had taken on quite a different appearance, with stepped concentric revetment walls of chalk blocks (Atkinson 1970,314) arguably related to passage grave architecture. Once

again, as with the tombs of Cotswold-Severn inspiration, architectural techniques were 'borrowed' from distant traditions. The impression of power may thus have been enhanced by association with far-away, semi-mythical places (Helms 1979).

On the east bank of the Kennet a quite different monumental tradition was being manipulated, in the construction of Avebury and the Sanctuary. It has generally been accepted that the stones and the earthwork enclosure at Avebury must be contemporary with each other (Smith 1965a,248). Originally, it was held that a third stone circle, matching the two inner ones, spanned the northern bank and ditch, thus predating them. This has since been proved never to have existed (ibid.). Smith (ibid.) perceptively suggested that it would have proved difficult if not impossible to erect the stones of the outer circle if the great ditch had already been cut. However, it seems that the bank of the enclosure was a two-phase structure: a turf-line within the bank can just be made out in the section from Gray's excavation (Gray 1935,130), but is far better seen in photographs from the Vatchers' Avebury School site excavation (unpublished; material Avebury Museum). Any ditch associated with this bank would have been considerably less monumental than the later one (or indeed may not have been internal), and would have left a quite sufficient space for the erection of the stones. The date and nature of this first enclosure are open to interpretation, since material listed as having been found 'under the bank' could predate either bank. However, economy of hypothesis leads one to

the conclusion that it was similar in form and chronology to Mount Pleasant or Durrington Walls.

On the south slope of Overton Hill, at the end of the Hackpen ridge, was situated the Sanctuary. Piggott's (1940) interpretation of the site as a series of timber buildings, eventually with stones inside the hut, can now be seen to be of unnecessary elaboration. Occam's razor directs that if some of the timber circle of c.2000 bc could not possibly have supported rooves (Mercer 1981b, 157), it is unlikely that any did. Late Beaker sherds came from the postholes of the Ten Foot and Bank Holiday Rings (Smith 1965a, 245), but these are consistently well up the profile (in weathering cones?), while sherds of Windmill Hill and Mortlake ware were found at the bottoms of the posts (Cunnington 1931, 322-323). Ebbsfleet and Early Beaker sherds were found in primary positions in the outer stone ring. W.E.V. Young, employed as foreman on the site, noted in his private diary that the (step 4) Beaker burial in the circle probably predated (although perhaps only by hours) the insertion of Stone 12 of the Stone and Post Ring (Young 1930). Cunnington (1931, 309) pointed out that if the lithic and timber elements were contemporary, the Stone and Post Ring would have had only a three foot wide entrance, with the rather untidy arrangement of an orthostat on one side, and a post on the other. All of the above leads to the conclusion that the Sanctuary was a two-phase structure, in which stones followed a setting of concentric timber circles. This falls into line with the sequences at Stonehenge and Mount

Pleasant Site IV.

Early references to the Sanctuary suggest that it was surrounded by a cemetery of inhumations with accompanying stone tools (Burl 1979,127). Some credence may be given to these reports by the location of human bones in the digging of fence post holes on the east side of the site in 1931 (Avebury Museum records). The earlier phase of activity at the Sanctuary can thus be interpreted as a timber circle similar to those in south Wessex, yet lacking the evidence for feasting and Grooved Ware deposition common on those sites, and possibly in some way connected with mortuary activities.

The development of the Avebury landscape in the later third millennium thus continues in a logical direction from the foundations laid in the earlier Neolithic. Some of the descent groups in the area had unquestionably come to preeminence, and each was engaged in legitimating its position by distinct means. Sheer monumentality was used in the case of Silbury Hill, mortuary feasting is implied at West Kennet (Thomas and Whittle 1986), conspicuous destruction of material exotica is seen at G.55, G.6b, Windmill Hill and was perhaps also responsible for the vast quantities of pottery packed into the secondary filling of the chambers of the West Kennet long barrow, although here a rather more structured pattern of deposition can be inferred (ibid.). Within the large social unit around Avebury, there is some indication that prestige competition was taking place

between territorially-based elite lineages.

This is very redolent of the situation which, according to Friedman and Rowlands (1977,218), immediately precedes the formation of the Asiatic system: "the earliest state formations, the size of which may not exceed an area of a twenty to thirty kilometre radius with a population in the ten thousand range". Such a social formation accords with the rough geographical expanse of the Avebury complex and the Marlborough Downs, and would have been quite able to sustain the effort necessary to construct monuments of the size of Silbury Hill and Avebury (Startin 1982,155). The mobilisation of vast quantities of corvee for communal works is one of the characteristic agencies for the reproduction of social relations within the Asiatic formation (Bailey 1981,96; Earle 1978,187). Access to resources by the individual is achieved purely in return for work done for the higher unity in such a community: there is no private landholding (Godelier 1978,221). The role of the Avebury henge in such a society is not clear: possibly its position as the focus of the settled area marks it out as an affirmation of group solidarity rather than a monument connected with a particular genealogical line. It remained 'clean' of cultural debris, while ritual activities circumscribed at the level of the descent group are evidenced at the smaller monuments.

Beakers and standing stones.

The argument which has been developed so far in this chapter indicates that the rivalry between the descent groups which made up the Neolithic political units of the Avebury area resulted in a continual quest for exotic items to be used in prestige competition. Monumental architecture, raw materials and ceramic and lithic artefacts had already been used for this purpose. It follows that the response of such a social formation to contact with the Beaker network would be quite different to that of the 'conservative' system in south Wessex. Sure enough, early Beakers are not found in individual graves remote from the large monuments so much as incorporated into the monuments themselves. All-Over-Cord Beakers are recorded from Windmill Hill (Smith 1965a,80), the West Kennet long barrow (Piggott 1962), Knap Hill (Connah 1965) and in the stone sockets at the Sanctuary (Cunnington 1931,323). Step 1 burials are unknown. Beaker ceramics appear to have been used in the first instance in much the same way as any other ceramic, as their inclusion in the deposits beneath G.55 and G.6b indicate. Nonetheless, one or two relatively early Beaker burials are present: the Step 2 flat graves at West Lockridge and Smeath Ridge, Ogbourne Down (Grinsell 1957) and the barrow Roundway 8, which contained an elderly man with W/MR Beaker, tanged copper dagger, copper raquet pin, stone wristguard and two barbed and tanged arrowheads (Annable and Simpson 1964,38). It seems that the full Beaker inhumation tradition was extant in the Avebury area. The early predominance of flat graves, as opposed to barrows, might be

taken as evidence that this was a relatively covert practice. However, it can also be pointed out that a high proportion of the burials of Steps 2 to 4 are on 'monumental' sites (Fig. 8.19). That is, they are often at the foot of one of the stones of the later monuments. These include a burial with a Step 2 European Bell Beaker beneath Stone 29a of the West Kennet Avenue, and a multiple burial with a Step 4 N2 Beaker near Stone 25b (Smith 1965a,209). In addition, stone 18b had a burial with no pot, and 22b had one with a vessel of vague Grooved Ware affinity (ibid.). Stoneholes 41 and 102 of the Avebury henge also had human bones associated with them, and the former of these had Beaker sherds: both had been disturbed by stone destruction (ibid.,204). The skeleton with a Step 4 'Barbed-Wire' Beaker from the Sanctuary has already been mentioned, and there is also a Step 3 N/MR burial from the Longstones Cove, on the Beckhampton Avenue (Clarke 1970,501). These are conceptually rather different from burials like that at Woodhenge, say, which could be seen as a means of distorting the 'message' of an established monument, or of laying claim to the past. In most of these cases the burial is arguably contemporary with the erection of the stone. Their interpretation as 'dedicatory' burials or sacrificial offerings (Burl 1979,197) is inevitable. But an alternative is possible. It is somewhat illogical to see burials with Beakers in flat graves or barrows as privileged individuals, but burials with Beakers at the foot of stones as sacrifices. The integration of Beaker burials into the grand design of the Avebury monuments is more an expression of the interdependence of individual and group power.

The Grooved Ware under the (second phase?) bank at Avebury (Smith 1965a,224) and these Step 2-4 burials, the running of the West Kennet Avenue across an 'occupation site' characterised by Grooved Ware and Fengate pottery (ibid.,233), and the Beaker and Mortlake pottery in the stoneholes at the Sanctuary all indicate that a reasonable date for all of the stone elements of Avebury, the Avenues and the Sanctuary could be postulated in the nineteenth century bc. This would roughly coincide with the completion of Silbury Hill and with the first stone phase of Stonehenge.

A further aspect of the earlier Beaker burials of Avebury which is of note is the recurrent presence of cattle bones in the graves. At the Hemp Knoll barrow, Robertson-Mackay (1980) reports a Step 3 burial of a male aged 35-45 years, with a W/MR Beaker, wristguard and bone toggle, in a wooden coffin, dated to 1795+135bc (NPC-139) and 1810+60bc (BM-1585). At the feet of the burial were the head and hooves of a cow, probably representing a hide (Grigson in Robertson-Mackay 1980,164). The Beckhampton Grange burial, excavated by Young, of a child with N2 (Step 4) Beaker, produced cattle metapodia, which when measured proved to fall well within Legge's (1981,173) size range for domestic females. The grave at the Sanctuary also produced bovid leg bones (Cunnington 1931,313). Beaker Burials with cattle bones are not unknown elsewhere in Wessex, for instance at Avebury 22 (Grinsell 1957). Yet they seem rather overrepresented in North

Wiltshire. In the context of the stonehole burials, they may also indicate a continued commitment to corporate social relations, articulated through the circulation and exchange of cattle. Cattle certainly retained their economic importance, being the predominant species in the Beaker pits beneath G55 (Fig.8.3). Smith (1984,103) notes the predominance of pig in later Neolithic contexts around Avebury, but adds that this may be less a consequence of woodland regeneration than a response to the problems of weed infestation (ibid.,110). This is not a "pig economy" then, it is a case of pigs being added to the livestock of what is essentially still a cattle economy, in order to overcome a particular problem.

By around 1800bc all of the major monuments of the Avebury area must have been complete. It is reasonable to presume that this last burst of monumental activity, in which the Avebury henge was linked into the landscape (and physically connected to the Sanctuary) by the West Kennet and Beckhampton avenues, represents a massive mobilisation of corvee in an assertion of the "higher unity" over the individual descent groups of the area. The two banks of the Kennet were spanned. Possibly this phase of activity saw the rise to dominance of a single lineage, briefly controlling a proto-state social formation. But this did not last. In Steps 5 and 6 the deposition of Beakers changed markedly in its nature. No Beaker burials were now put into the stone monuments or flat graves: all Step 5 and 6 burials are in round barrows (Fig.8.19). One of these, West Overton G6b, contained an

extremely rich burial and was placed on a location which had previously been of some significance for pottery deposition (Smith and Simpson 1966). As in the Thames Valley, S1 Beakers are absent, but the S2 Beakers from barrow burials at Bishop's Cunnings S4 and Oldbury Hill (Colt Hoare 1810,93; Annable and Simpson 1964,41) both have the everted necks characteristic of Step 5. At the same time as this increase in the number of barrow burials, Beakers are once again found in the earlier monuments of the region: at Knap Hill, Windmill Hill and the Sanctuary (Clarke 1970,500-502), Step 5 and 6 Beakers are present. The presence of an S2(W) Beaker at the West Kennet Long Barrow (ibid.) seems to have been one of the last acts before its final blocking. In the years around 1700bc the building of large monuments stopped, to be replaced by prestigious burials as elsewhere in Wessex. The deposition of Beaker material on a variety of earlier sites nonetheless indicates that all links with the past had not been broken, even if the central authority had collapsed.

Conclusion.

Avebury, standing at the junction of a number of the important regions of Neolithic Britain, developed as a result along a unique trajectory. The movement of flint westwards, of Group VI axes southwards and of Cornish axes northwards (Hodder 1974), of oolite gritted vessels into Wessex and the spread of influences on monumental architecture all took place through the region. These

flows were manipulated by the communities inhabiting the area, who appear to have been a number of descent groups linked by economic cooperation and prestige competition. Through the course of the third millennium this competition escalated in a number of spheres: the acquisition of prestigious material exotica; the construction of monuments; and the conspicuous destruction of food and material culture. Eventually, it seems that particular lineages became more highly ranked than others, with the result that in the final episode of large-scale monument-building, stone circles and avenues were constructed which appeared to confer symbolic control over the entire landscape. Yet this control was short-lived, and the onset of the Early Bronze Age proper saw the Avebury area submerged by a standardised system of prestige and display which spanned much of the country.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION: RELATIONS OF POWER

Introduction.

Each of the preceding chapters has presented an analysis of one area of Neolithic Britain. In each case I have probably pushed the arguments well beyond the inferences which can reasonably be made directly from the data alone. This is in accord with the aims of the thesis as they were set out in the first chapter: that the development of internally consistent hypotheses should always take precedence over the imperfection of observation if one is ever to challenge orthodoxy. Once one comes to accept that the history of research into a subject has generated biases in the collection of the basic information with which one has to work, it is clear that only this kind of approach can produce a radical departure from the traditional view.

In each chapter the method implicitly employed in the analysis was to treat each form of material evidence as a 'text'. That is; pottery, animal bones, flints, burials and so on are not necessarily social or cultural categories, they are categories created by the nature of the archaeological record and the necessities of its study. Each has its own forms of distortion and bias. Such 'texts' are emphatically not subsystems of prehistoric social systems. It is necessary to reject the form of

functionalism which creates monstrous concepts like 'the pottery subsystem'. To assume a particular fixed role for any facet of material culture is necessarily to limit the scope of the analysis. These 'texts' are each a product of prehistoric societies, left behind in static form. The most rewarding line of inquiry has been found in 'bouncing them off' each other, looking for agreement, disjuncture and contradiction between them. Thus the use of pots, bones and stones as categories is a means to the end of disclosing the transient cultural factors which underlie them.

Having set up my series of largely independent pictures of local developments in the British Neolithic, it remains to proceed to a final stage of the analysis. By considering the individual areas in relation to the very broad hypotheses concerning the nature of social change in prehistoric Europe which were put forward in Chapter III, I intend to search for strands which link the areas (relating to supraregional processes) and differences between them.

Neolithic relations of production.

In Chapter II I indicated the problems which arise from any attempt to pin societies down and typologise them. Social systems exist in a 'constant state of becoming', continuously changing their outward appearance. Hence it cannot be particular

attributes which serve to characterise societies, but rather the deep structures of relationships which serve to reproduce them. My discussion of cultural and economic phenomena in Neolithic Europe was based upon two contrasting archetypes of social reproduction. On the one hand were societies based upon a nested hierarchy of kinship groups, in which various activities were organised at different levels of the hierarchy ('lineage society'), and on the other were those based upon small, autonomous units, in which far fewer levels of segmentation were present and where more activities were circumscribed at a particular level of organisation. In the former, relationships between groups were more permanent and stable, although they were subject to alternations of equilibrium resulting from the marriages and exchanges which nonetheless formed the essential structuring mechanisms of society. In the latter, relationships between the autonomous extended family units were unstable, opportunistic and temporary. These archetypes were intended not as models to inflict upon the archaeology in a typological manner, but as the basis for the examination of internal relationships within the societies concerned.

Hence the discussion of the Bandkeramik came to centre on the way in which the maximal settlement units (Siedlungskammer) appeared to be composed of several levels of interdependent units, linked by kinship and economic cooperation. It was suggested that the spatial configuration of Bandkeramik settlement indicated that horticulture and cattle husbandry were organised at different

levels of a segmentary hierarchy of groups, while the continuity of settlement and house locations was linked to the notion of descent from mythical ancestors. The preeminence of elder males in this society was suggested as being related to their domination of the web of contacts between sub-groups, articulated through marriage, exchange, and the circulation of cattle.

The end of the Bandkeramik came with a nucleation of settlement and a diversification of material culture. Since large areas of loess river valley remained uncolonised, it was argued that these developments could not be put down to population pressure. Instead, it was suggested that answers had to be located within the community, and with the problems of reproducing a mode of production which had originated in south-east Europe in northern temperate conditions. These problems can partly be put down to the adaption of the Neolithic lifestyle to heterogenous local conditions in northern Europe. But another factor is what might be termed the problem of 'permissive ecology'. Archaeologists have been a little overready to generalise on the effects of environmental constraints on human activities. A case in point is Gilman's (1981) model for the development of social stratification in Europe, which depends in large measure upon the effects of environmental circumscription. In an area like south-east Spain, where productive resources are severely limited to linear zones dictated by river channels (Mathers 1984, 1179) it is clear that their manipulation by elite groups may be a key factor in social development. Yet these constraints do not apply

to such an extent on the North European Plain or in Britain.

The specific characteristics of the Neolithic in these areas are in large measure related to this factor: there was relative freedom from stress on natural resources. Prehistorians often seem to lack the ability to cope with equations in which population and natural resources are the main variables. Nonetheless, these arguments bring us to one of the main features of the period under study: the desire for control. Since the monopolisation of material resources by particular interest groups was rarely possible, the reproduction of asymmetrical social relations often demanded that the impression of control of landscape and access to resources be emphasised. This was achieved in a number of ways, chiefly through ritual and ideology, stressing the role of the ancestors in social relations. While the relations of production which prevailed in the middle Neolithic of northern Europe were essentially similar to those of the Bandkeramik, the technology of power was expanded. In the earlier Neolithic of Europe, power relations were constituted through the the exchange and circulation of people, livestock, and prestige items. In the middle Neolithic these transactions became embedded in a ritualised superstructure materially expressed in the use of tombs, enclosures and the circulation of prestige items. In each case feasting and the presence of the dead were crucial. The close relationship between people and place which has been implied from the monumental constructions of the middle and late Neolithic (Renfrew 1976, for

example) might thus be less a consequence of territorialism than of the need to avoid group fission.

Similarly, it is necessary to look at the internal relations of Neolithic society, rather than environmental conditions, in order to explain the transformations of the later third millennium. Sherratt (1981) cogently argues for a horizon of social change related to economic innovation, yet the consideration of social relations of production makes it unnecessary to accept some of the contradictory elements of his hypothesis. The spread of plough agriculture into Europe was a consequence of a change in social organisation which affected the relationship between land, labour and the product of labour. The elaboration of ritual and mortuary practice from c. 2700 bc onwards, the expansion of megalithic tombs and the emphasis on disarticulation in associated funerary rites, the development of distinct yet overlapping material assemblages, monumental and burial traditions all relate to the plurality of competing power strategies in this period. Unlike the Mediterranean situation which may arguably follow Gilman's scheme of control over agricultural production, the hierarchies of the north European Bronze Age were built not upon production but exchange. So the thousands of years of the European Neolithic can be characterised by a slow process in which social systems in which exchange was determined by kinship became social systems in which kinship was determined by exchange. With this development, the escalating investment in corporate ritual came to an end, replaced by rites

celebrating the individual. It was no longer necessary to give the impression of control of the means of production; instead, the aim of symbolic activities became the legitimation of the control of circulation. Bloch (1985) asks the question of where ideologies come from, supplying the answer that they come from the past. With the corporate tombs of the middle Neolithic a past was being created, but with the secondary burials in earlier monuments made from the time of Corded Ware and Globular Amphorae onwards, this past was being distorted. Although social circumstances had changed, it would often be the monuments of an earlier age which would provide the foci for the activities of elite groups.

It is worth returning for a moment to the contrasts between the two modes of production which I have outlined in this section, and to the ways in which they would influence patterns of mobility. By so doing it will be possible to relate them more directly to the archaeological record. In the system which I have suggested is characteristic of the earlier part of the Neolithic, the seasonal movements are tied in temporal cycles to a pattern of fixed horticultural plots. The agrarian sector is labour-intensive, using hoes and digging-sticks and repeatedly weeding the crop. The continuous expenditure of effort on the upkeep of the plots is a more realistic prospect than a single yearly expenditure of a greater effort in preparing new plots by paring and burning. But the introduction of a less labour-intensive system, with more developed technology, might

result in the decline of both the fixed plots and a fixed residential focus. Under the new regime, extended family groups might specialise on particular resources (particularly lithics), but the separation of part of the community for seasonal transhumance would cease. Mobility would no longer be cyclical and annual, and would become a random shift as and when new fields were to be cleared by plough.

Two aspects of the archaeology in Britain suggest that such a change may have taken place in some areas in the third millennium bc. Firstly, settlement evidence. The change from small nucleated scatters of lithic materials to larger and more diffuse scatters may relate to the decline of the stable residential base. Secondly, there is a major distinction to be drawn between the lithic assemblages of the earlier and later Neolithic. Pitts and Jacobi (1979) emphasised the survival of blade-dominated industries from the Mesolithic into the earlier Neolithic. Yet the assemblages of the later Neolithic are dominated by broad flakes. The advantage of a blade industry is that it provides artefacts which are at once adaptable and portable. Such a technology might be expected to be associated with highly mobile groups (Torrence 1983). The domination of assemblages by blades may be largely a feature of causewayed enclosures: hence the extremely mobile nature of a part of the population may explain the nature of the industry.

Settlement, economy and change.

Doubtless, such a broad scheme as that outlined above loses much of its meaning when one comes to consider any particular region in detail. It provides a basis for a study of regional systems, and indeed for the analysis of the scale of systems at any given point. Yet in Britain one has the complicating factor that the island was always at the periphery of any greater system, sometimes included and sometimes not, sometimes isolated behind its strip of Channel. In a way, the prehistory of Britain can be regarded as a cycle of incorporation and isolation. One phase of incorporation, following an insular later Mesolithic (Jacobi 1976), can be attributed to the emergence of the European middle Neolithic (see Chapter III).

I have suggested that the introduction of the Neolithic, as a structured set of relationships between the use of cultigens, domesticated animals, pottery, prestige items and ritual monuments rather than the isolated use of any one of these elements, provides an homogeneous baseline for the development of Neolithic societies in Britain. As was the case on the North European Plain, there are reasons to suspect that the Neolithic population of Britain was largely composed of acculturated hunter-gatherers. However, this view can only be sustained when one considers the change in the nature of the Neolithic lifestyle and its expansive process from the Bandkeramik onwards, rather

than falling back upon vague and probably inappropriate notions of economic rationality and population pressure, as Dennell's (1983) model requires. With the foundation of sedentary agricultural communities in southern Britain began almost instantly the development of localised traditions of material culture and monument-building. These 'style zones' may show a degree of continuity back into the Mesolithic (Bradley 1984b,12). It may not be unreasonable to see the clusters of monuments and settlement evidence which Renfrew (1973) saw as emerging chiefdoms as the equivalent of the continental Siedlungskammer or 'settlement cells', and even to tentatively suggest that they represent some form of maximal social unit. Were this the case, the localisation of particular cultural phenomena (chambered cairns, decorated bowl pottery and close association between Peterborough and Grooved Ware ceramics in the Avebury region; the early development of individual burial and the many small cursus monuments in the Upper Thames; U-ditched long barrows in Cranborne Chase; laterally-chambered tombs on the Cotswolds, and the eccentric distributions of stone axes which appear to be constrained by social boundaries, noted by Cummins, 1980, and Hodder, 1974) might be the consequence of separate systems of meaning and value operating in each area. Where social relations are constructed about a gift economy with ranked spheres of exchange, the meaning of any or all aspects of material culture may change as one crosses a social boundary. This principle lay behind much of my interpretation of the role of particular monuments, for it seems that in Neolithic British society a

number of symbolically potent or socially dangerous items and practices (the corpses of the recently dead, 'non-gift' exchanges, the seasonal shift of property relations concerning cattle and rites connected with the movement of cattle outside of the immediate social space of the community, and presumably other life-crisis rituals) were 'marginalised' in 'non-central' places.

The relationship between lithic scatters and settlement is very much an open question at present. It is conceivable that the closer inspection of lithic assemblages, and particularly the waste material (not possible with the museum material studied here), may make the discrimination between 'types' of scatters more feasible. Projects like that carried out in the Stonehenge environs (Richards 1984) are beyond doubt invaluable in this respect as a means of refining methodology. With these considerations in mind, it is still arguable that the somewhat rough and ready analyses presented here have provided some worthwhile insights. The marginal positioning of monuments in some circumstances is one such phenomenon: the changing relationship between monuments and settlement is an aspect of prehistory which is only now starting to be appreciated. Another widespread feature which arose from the settlement analyses was the preference for ecotonal settings (and indeed for south-facing slopes) in many areas in the earlier Neolithic. Having argued that the division of labour throughout much of the Neolithic in Europe was based upon the combination of small horticultural plots, labour-intensively cultivated and weeded, and relatively

mobile herds of cattle possibly organised at a higher level of social segmentation, it was gratifying to find widespread indications of such a regime. In west Wiltshire, the north Cotswolds, the Mendips and the Avebury area, lithic scatters of earlier Neolithic date were concentrated on limestone uplands with immediate access to well-watered lowlands. What remains unanswered is the scale and duration of the movements of cattle in these various areas. In Cranborne Chase, the scale of the enclosure at Hambleton Hill and the distances between the chalk uplands and the Blackmoor Vale might indicate very extensive arrangements indeed. The articulating role of cattle in social relations seems to be supported by the predominance of bovid hides and skulls in funerary and other ritual contexts throughout the period.

Another question raised by the distributions of lithic scatters is that of changes in land use through time. In Chapter IV I indicated reasons for doubting the veracity of a 'standstill' in clearance and monument-building in the mid-third millennium bc, suggesting that the hypothesis had been at least partly a consequence of archaeologist's preconceptions. In subsequent chapters it became clear that the shift of settlement patterns in the middle of the third millennium, although a pattern which could be related to similar changes in continental Europe, was by no means a generalised process in southern Britain. Crucially, evidence for changes in landuse patterns appeared to correspond with areas in which profound social changes had also taken place.

In the Cotswold hills, an analysis of tomb contents and architecture was taken to suggest that the development of social hierarchy was a gradual process of elaboration upon existing social forms: in this area there was little or no evidence for changes in the economic base in the later third millennium. In that area and in the Mendips individual burials of later Neolithic date are absent, while early Beaker burials are rare. Where Beakers occur prior to Step 6 they are usually in 'traditional' contexts, tombs and caves. These areas, I have argued, are characterised by group-oriented, 'traditional' forms of authority until the opening of the Bronze Age, together with continuity of settlement patterns and subsistence practices.

Yet on the Wessex chalklands, and particularly on Salisbury Plain, there is evidence for changes in the scale and structure of human activity through time, best seen in the results of surface collection in the Stonehenge environs (Richards 1984). Here, where economic change is present, so too are individual burials, early Beaker burials, and evidence of contradictory authority forms; a clash between hyper-ritualised traditional authority and new power relations based on exchange and personal prestige (Thorpe and Richards 1984). Furthermore, in the Upper Thames Valley, an area arguably colonised late in the sequence and characterised by relatively small social units arranged at intervals along the river gravels, the most profound evidence for a change to more extensive land use patterns in the later third millennium is found coincident with the largest concentration of

later Neolithic individual burials in southern England, and with a very large number of Beaker burials.

I consider that this evidence supports the view which I have expressed concerning social and economic changes in the third millennium of continental Europe, namely, that the two cannot be isolated, but must be treated as aspects of changes in the social relations of production. Furthermore, the presence of 'conservative' areas like the Cotswolds and Mendips, in which there is little evidence for economic change at all, rather contradicts the notion that the Neolithic populations of Europe sat idly around for some thousands of years, waiting for the 'secondary products revolution' to sweep in from the Steppes and transform their lifestyles. The change in settlement patterns in areas like the Upper Thames basin was not determined by economy, population or technology: it was a consequence of social fragmentation and transformation.

Life, death, and monuments.

Monumental tombs existed in the later phases of the Bandkeramik (Kinnes 1982), but seem to have become far more widespread with the horizon which I have termed the European Middle Neolithic, the Chasseen/Michelsburg/TRB. At this stage, in the mid-to-late fourth millennium, a variety of structural elements were

available which were drawn upon in different combinations (Fleming 1972; Kinnes 1975) throughout northwest Europe. The emphasis on the ancestors as a collectivity, and the destruction of the individual through disarticulation and cremation were elements which became more pronounced as time went on, rather than essential parts of the phenomenon from its inception. In discussing one particular type of monumental tomb, the passage graves, Bradley and Chapman (1984) talk of a 'convergent evolution' of mortuary practice. Accepting funerary activities to have been a part of a set of interrelated ideas which facilitated Neolithic social reproduction, it seems that particular aspects came to be stressed over time.

In Britain, multiple burials which were often disarticulated were the norm from the start of the Neolithic. In the two major monumental traditions with which I have concerned myself in this thesis, the earthen long mounds and the Cotswold/Severn tombs, the disarticulation of human remains seems to have been a consequence of a process of circulation, which may have involved a variety of types of site. The deposition of human skeletal remains in monuments and other locations was suggested as being connected with the desire to exert control over the landscape, a phenomenon which has already been mentioned in this chapter. The location of human skulls or skull fragments in Neolithic deposits was especially noteworthy in the Upper Thames Valley, an area where the instability of social and residential arrangements may have been particularly pronounced.

It is instructive to compare the ways in which these two funerary traditions developed away from the 'circulating' practice. In both cases it seems that the earlier mounds were located at some distance from the focus of settlement. In the Cotswold case the peripheral location of the lateral-chambered tombs is particularly striking. In both the Cotswold-Severn tombs and the earthen long mounds, the later monuments (terminally-chambered cairns; oval or very large barrows; barrows with complex pre-barrow structures) appear to have been located nearer to settlements, perhaps emphasising the presence of the ancestors in social life. But at the same time the arrangements inside transepted cairns became more complex, concealed and 'secret', a process paralleled by the growth of a dichotomy between mortuary house and timber façade in some earthen barrows. In both areas there was also some degree of increased variability: in the Cotswolds this was merely the contrast between simple and transepted chambers, but in Wessex (where it was argued that society was becoming more heterogeneous through the development of a variety of power strategies) there were oval barrows with single inhumations, bank barrows with no burials, large barrows with single inhumations, complex timber structures with sequential burials and so on. Considering the south-west of England as a whole, then, the process which can be distinguished at a gross level of analysis is one of regionalisation and diversification. This development was contemporary with that of style zones of decorated pottery. The pattern of diversification

was enhanced by the first individual burials in round barrows in areas like central Wiltshire and the Thames Valley, which must have been made at roughly the same time. Just as in continental Europe the universality of the middle Neolithic began to fragment as a result of local conditions and power struggles, the same was true in England.

As the period progressed, the dichotomy pointed out by Fleming (1973), between monuments as containers of ancestral bones and monuments as impressive architectural phenomena, was enhanced. If one aim of the circulation and deposition of human remains in the earlier part of the British Neolithic was in some way to confer control over land and people, a more inclusive system of control seems to be suggested by the later monuments. I have argued that the greater emphasis on disarticulation and corporate burial in Europe was a consequence of one of the social trajectories which can be discerned during the period: the intensification of traditional authority. The development of monumental traditions in Britain from which the dead were largely absent, in which astronomical phenomena appear to have been of consequence, in which the attempt seems to have been made to encompass large areas of the landscape and convert them from 'space' into 'place', and where ritual practice attempted to express and restructure the relationships of the natural and social world (Richards and Thomas 1984), are part of this same process. Tuan's observation (1977) that such highly formalised organisations of space, incorporating the cardinal points and the cosmos, are

often associated with completely cyclical time schemes suggests an interesting line of thought. For as Bloch suggests (1974; 1977b), there is a correspondence between a cyclical notion of time and the inevitable, preordained picture of the world which is promoted through ritual communication and traditional authority.

This is not, of course, to suggest any kind of equation between monument-building and any particular form of authority. Monuments of one form or another exist in most societies, and those in which they will assume the greatest importance will be those in which there is an absence of institutions which secure the reproduction of power relations. A monument is a store of the resources of authority, which shapes the social world through its presence. But as the Dorchester on Thames monuments demonstrate, monuments are not things whose meanings are fixed and immutable. Sites like Dorchester, barrows and tombs with later activities in their forecourts, burials inserted into older mounds all illustrate the 'recoverability' of the ideological resources of the past (Bloch 1985,44). A slightly different strand of thought arises from the relationship between monuments and settlement areas and their use of space. If monuments in Neolithic Britain began as points loose in space, so too did the 'gardens' or horticultural plots around which people and livestock circulated in free space. Only when the potential economic landscape was expanded with the adoption of more extensive agricultural practices was it necessary to extend ritual control over the

whole.

Final words.

In any prologed project of research is ineviabile that one will be drawn to a number of distict objectives. In writing this thesis I have been caught between the desire to explain (to my own satisfaction) a particular period of prehistory, and the recognition that the methodology necessary to achieve that end is presently far from satisfactory. I have chosen not to try to generalise from a restricted body of data, but to use my basic information as a tool to search for inconsistencies with a model constructed at another level of analysis. By working at a particular, regional level it has been possible to disclose considerable variations between local sequences. From an epistemological point of view a particularly interesting example is the use of Beaker pottery. The Beaker phenomenon in Britain has usually been represented as relating to a relatively homogeneous phase of prehistory. But the ways in which Beakers were used in different areas (first found in 'traditional' contexts in the Avebury area, the Cotswolds, and Mendip; immediately in large numbers of individual burials in the Upper Thames; with individual burials avoiding the main monumental foci in Wessex) demonstrate their adoption into societies which already possessed a history and tradition of their own. It has

been these local sequences and the reasons for their individual development which I have hoped to demonstrate.

Nonetheless, it could be argued that the method which I have followed allows a certain epistemological contradiction to exist. I may seem to be arguing at different times for both an holistic approach and its exact opposite. As against this I would argue that these two forms of inquiry, 'holistic' and 'genealogical' are complementary. Using a model of European Neolithic society I have built up a picture of several regions within southern England in the years 3400-1700 bc. But this picture (like all knowledge) is itself a provisional one. This is the essence of Feyerabend's 'anarchistic' theory of knowledge: it is only acceptable to build up complicated models when we do so with the expressed objective of smashing them to pieces at the earliest opportunity. I look forward to that opportunity.