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MONUMENTS AS IDEAS

Monuments are not only places in which human experience was moulded in special ways. They are also the embodiment of ideas about the world. As such they can be adapted and changed from one period or area to another. This lecture considers how the stereotyped lay-out of Neolithic enclosures was adopted and modified by communities in a variety of cultural settings, from Central Europe to Scandinavia and Western France. The changing history of this type of earthwork epitomises the way in which a particular form of monument can stand for a wider view of human experience.

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When prehistoric artefacts were exchanged, they carried their past histories with them. When archaeologists begin a new project, they bear a similar burden, and whether they intend it or not, their perspectives are always coloured by their earlier research.

Consider again the archaeology of Mid Argyll. I went there to visit the monuments, but it was not very long before I found myself thinking about the ways in which they might have been involved in the movement of portable artefacts. The west coast of Scotland contains a significant number of stone axes made in the Lake District mountains where I had worked for three years, yet in Argyll we also find axes that were brought across the Irish Sea (Sheridan 1986). That is no problem from a Scottish point of view – in other periods there are obvious links between Ulster and Argyll – but in fact the Irish axes were less suitable as work tools than their Cumbrian counterparts, and less suitable again than some of those made at Killin (Bradley *et al* 1992). When we recognise that Cumbrian axes were also crossing the Irish Sea, we learn something unexpected about the character of exchange systems in prehistory.

I thought along these lines as I considered one of the main monuments on the west coast of Scotland, the remarkable complex at Temple Wood, for in one phase of its history two of the upright stones were inscribed with motifs that are normally found in Irish megalithic art (Scott 1989, 105–6; illus 36). The reference seems obvious enough, but like the distribution of stone axes, it forces us to think rather harder about the movement of ideas. The distribution of stone axes makes little 'economic' sense; it expresses a purely cultural link. The sharing of certain symbols reflects the same priorities.

Now let me add a third element to this account. At certain stages in its development Temple Wood was a freestanding enclosure, the end product of a very long history of Neolithic enclosures in Britain (illus 37). Some of the oldest examples

are strongly implicated in the dissemination of stone axes. The distribution of those sites was once confined to England, but it keeps expanding. A causewayed enclosure has been discovered in Ulster (Mallory & Hartwell 1984) and there is now one on Anglesey (Mark Edmonds & Julian Thomas pers comm). Roger Mercer has suggested a possible example in Kintyre (1981, 195), and thermoluminescence dating even raises the possibility that a vitrified fort in Grampian is of Neolithic date (Strickertsson *et al* 1988). There is a sense in which these processes – the circulation of imported artefacts, the deployment of foreign symbols and the adoption of exotic types of monument – all have features in common.

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Upright with spiral decoration in the Temple Wood stone circle, Argyll. Photograph: Historic Scotland.

They are not the result of migration or simply of 'trade': they relate to the use of material culture as a vehicle for the expression of ideas. In this lecture I shall try to explore that notion in more detail by tracing the history of one kind of monument.

I have elected to talk about monuments as ideas. But whose ideas are they to be? So far they have been those of archaeologists. I have talked about how monuments influence human conduct. They change people's experience of time and place, and in certain instances they form links between their day to day activities and the workings of nature. Although that takes us beyond monument typology, it remains very much an outsider's view, for it discounts the perspective of the participants. In this lecture, and the lecture that follows it, I would like to redress the balance, extending the argument from individual monuments to ceremonial centres. First, I shall work at a large geographical scale, tracing the history of a single class of monument in Britain and Continental Europe and the changes that took place as its distribution extended from one cultural setting to another. Then, in the following lecture, I shall sharpen the focus, discussing how individual monuments and complexes of monuments in the British Isles were adapted and changed over time.

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Archaeologists see monuments as types, but for those who built them they would have been the embodiment of ideas, in the same way as the cruciform plan of a Christian church is both architecture and theology combined. But just as beliefs

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General view of the Temple Wood stone circle, Argyll. Photograph: Historic Scotland.

can be modified and reassessed, there is nothing that is fixed about the forms of early monuments, and it is this that makes them so difficult to classify. As a visible embodiment of ideas about the world, they are rarely absent from human consciousness, and when those ideas are modified we should expect the new interpretations to be echoed in subtle ways by the changing configuration of those monuments or the changing ways in which they were used (Thomas, J 1991, ch 3). That is surely the premise of a contextual archaeology. So far the patterns I have described have not been particularly subtle ones. For example, the links between long houses and megaliths are conceived at a very broad level, as we might expect when their distributions overlap to such a limited extent. I shall consider a type of monument which is found with both settlements and tombs. To what extent does the changing character of Neolithic **enclosures** echo the broader distinctions that I outlined in my first lecture?

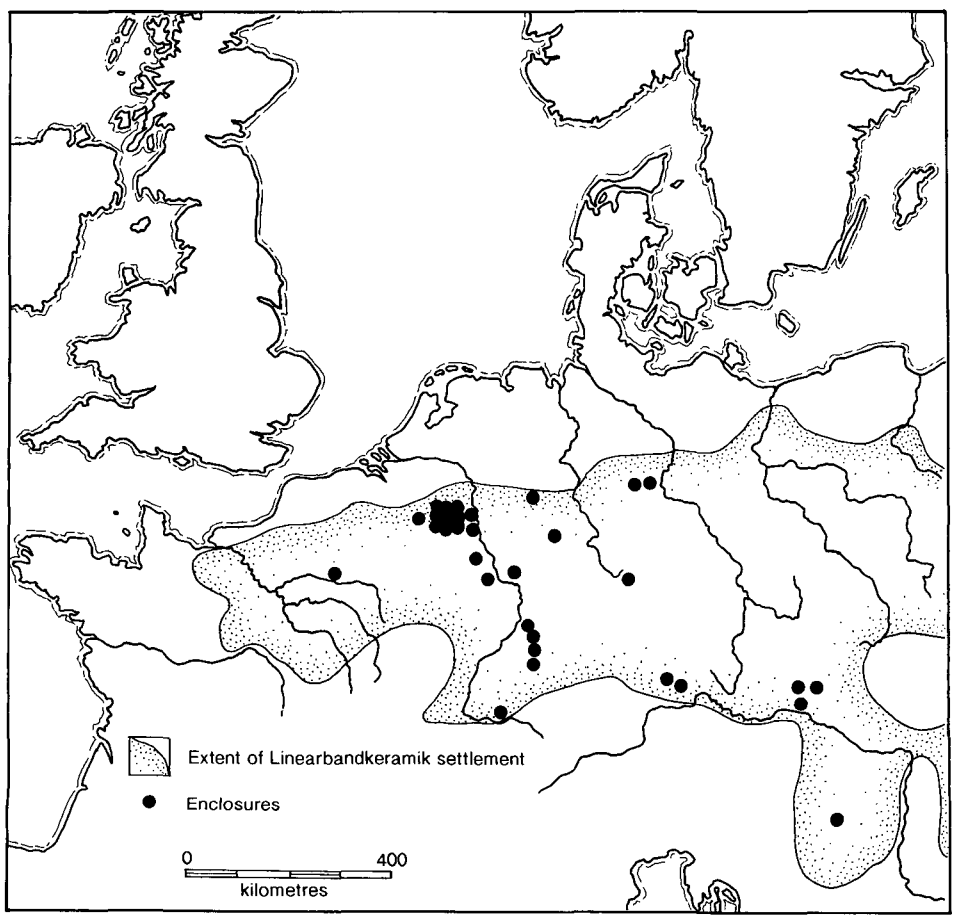
Why are enclosures so well suited to this kind of discussion? They have a wide distribution, from Central Europe to France, and from Ireland to Scandinavia. They have a long chronology, from the Linearbandkeramik to the TRB, and yet they share an unusually stereotyped ground-plan. As we shall see, many of them also contain a series of rather similar deposits. Yet at the same time, these enclosures embody a whole series of contrasts that may shed light on the changing character of Neolithic society. Before I consider in any detail how such enclosures developed, I should say something about the sheer variety that they encompass. But these are simply the broad outlines, for few sites are entirely alike.

There are several dimensions to consider, and I shall mention the most important now. First of all, we can distinguish between those enclosures found in areas with a long history of hunting and gathering and monuments found in regions in which agricultural colonisation is well-attested. If megalithic tombs were mainly a feature of the agricultural margin, enclosures first developed at its core, on the loess soils of West Central Europe (Lüning 1988; illus 38). In some areas enclosures may be closely integrated with settlements, whilst in others they are entirely separate from them. And where settlements are clearly evidenced, they may be preceded by the construction of enclosures, or the enclosures can develop at a later stage, alongside the settlement itself or even after its abandonment. At the same time, the history of causewayed enclosures extends beyond the edges of the loess into areas of Neolithic Europe in which domestic sites are less apparent. Again this may also be reflected by changes in the character of the monuments.

Secondly, the form of the enclosures could also be subject to modification. There are some examples with very formal ground-plans and others which lack this characteristic entirely. Their sizes vary considerably and so do their histories of use. Individual sites may have functioned over a very short period, whilst others were constructed with a view to careful maintenance and could have been modified and renewed for a long time. In some cases these changes involved a novel role for certain of the enclosures, so that a small number of earthworks assumed a defensive character. In certain instances the development of defended sites may have been connected with control over particular resources or even with their role in craft production.

Alternatively, individual enclosures may have been more closely integrated into ritual and ceremonial. For example, we can recognise changes in their relationship with flat cemeteries, mounds and cairns. This even extends to the discovery of human remains in both groups. At the same time, particular enclosures may also have become a focus for the deposition of cultural material, including elaborate or non-local artefacts, meat waste and the burials of domesticated animals. There are obvious contrasts in the scale and formality of such deposits from one site and one period to another, and we must ask whether similar deposits are known in other kinds of context.

Lastly, still further contrasts involve the later history of these sites. When and why did particular enclosures go out of use, and, as they did so, were the sites deserted or were they used in different ways? All these are themes that can be traced at a large geographical scale. Taken together, they illustrate the manner in which a single idea – that of enclosing a special area by an interrupted ditch – was deployed from one cultural setting to another. The process would normally be described as diffusion, but that is the kind of neutral terminology that archaeologists use to distance themselves from their subject matter. As I suggested earlier, **interpretation** is



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The distribution of Linearbandkeramik enclosures (after Lüning 1988).

a more satisfactory term for this process. People drew on the history and associations of particular forms of monuments and they changed them in accordance with their needs and the character of their own society. I shall illustrate this point by showing how one 'type' of monument, as we call it, was transformed by different human groups across space and time, and the distinctive ways in which it was assimilated to their cultural conventions. We shall follow the causewayed enclosure across **space**, from the agricultural core to its periphery, and we shall trace its history through **time** from the exploitation of the loess to the broad spectrum economies of the agricultural margin. In doing so we shall move away from a Neolithic which is defined by its subsistence economy to one which is much better characterised by monuments: a Neolithic that is more securely based on cultural practice.

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The point of origin is obscure, but it lies within the late Linearbandkeramik (Lüning 1988). A number of trends come together here. By this stage, individual settlements had been in existence for a considerable length of time but had grown to varying extents. There is little evidence for major contrasts between these sites, yet it does appear that the production and distribution of certain artefacts and raw materials may have been focused at particular locations. Sometimes one house may be associated with the richest range of material culture (Lüning 1982). It does not seem likely that each individual settlement was accompanied by a cemetery, yet the burial record provides evidence of social differentiation (Whittle 1988, 150–64). The earliest enclosures are found in association with some but not all of the settlement clusters, although they also occur in more isolated positions.

At the regional scale it is clear that these enclosures are not uniformly distributed. They tend to be found towards the edges of Linearbandkeramik expansion, close to the limits of the loess (Lüning 1988). That is certainly consistent with their chronological position which suggests that they did not develop until a late phase of that culture. In some cases the enclosures may even have developed in a border area between the regions used by agriculturalists and the territories of contemporary hunter-gatherers (Keeley 1992).

Although quite a number of enclosures have been investigated, the oldest examples are poorly understood. Most sites have several entrances, yet only a minority of the Linearbandkeramik earthworks have the system of regularly placed causeways so familiar on later sites (Boelicke *et al* 1988, 417–28). The enclosures tend to be quite small, and there have been claims that they were built to a standard plan and even to standard sizes (Van Berg 1991). Their relationship to the settlement sites is really rather volatile. In a few instances there seems to be good evidence that the enclosed area contained houses, but there are certainly others in which the settlement phase is later than the creation of the enclosure (Boelicke *et al* 1988, 424–6). Sometimes the relationship between the settlements and enclosures is far less straightforward. At Langweiler 8 the excavators offer two alternative sequences (*ibid*). In the first scenario the settlement shifted through time towards the area where the enclosure was to be constructed. In this version the earthwork was built

alongside the last of the houses. In their other version the basic configuration of the settlement remains the same, but the enclosure was not built until all these houses had gone out of use. That sequence has more in common with the evidence from Langweiler 9 where two groups of domestic buildings were identified, separated by an area of open ground (Kuper *et al* 1977). In this case the enclosure was built in the unoccupied space, but only after both house clusters had been abandoned.

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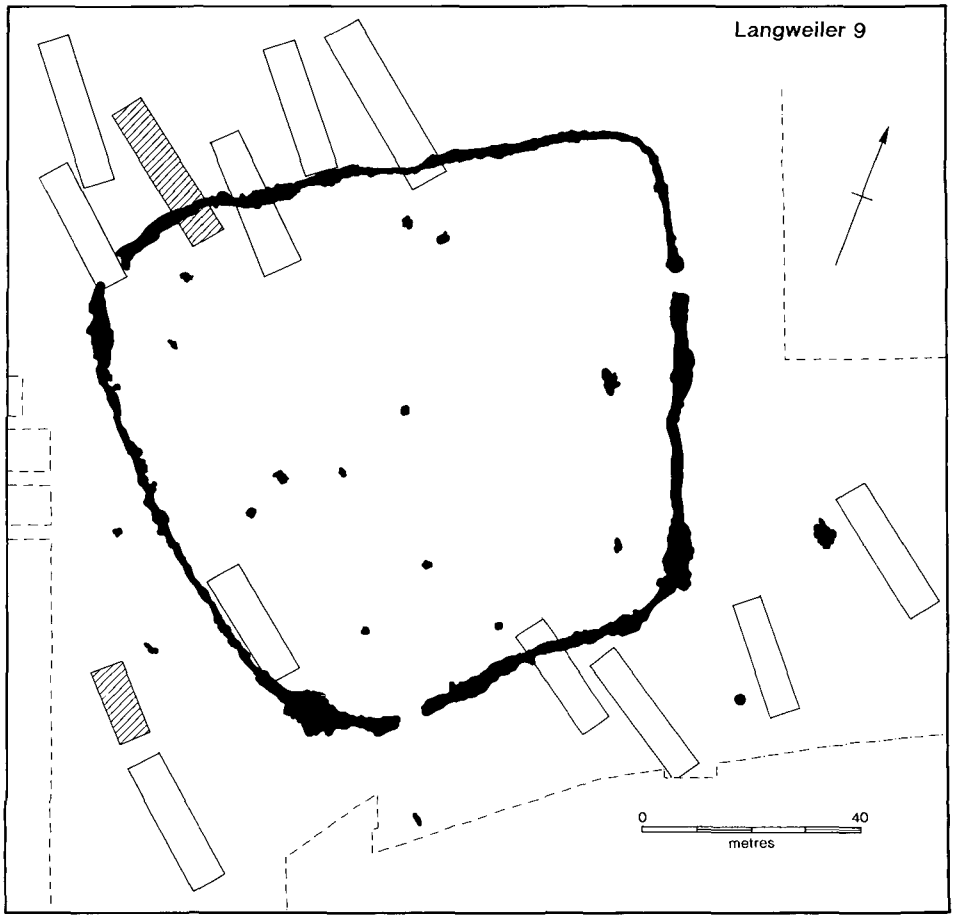
How are we to understand these relationships? Perhaps those two sites provide an important clue, for in each case the enclosure seems to have been constructed at the very end of the archaeological sequence, but in a space which had been kept clear of buildings for a long time. There may even be a relationship between the scale of the enclosures and the history of the earlier settlement. Thus Langweiler 8 was the longest lived and also the largest of the settlements of the Merzbach Valley, and Lüning (1982) suggests that it may have played an important role in the distribution of flint to sites in the surrounding area. Site 9, on the other hand, had a shorter history and was replaced by a less impressive earthwork.



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Outline plan of the earthwork enclosure and contemporary pits at Langweiler Site 9 (after Kuper *et al* 1977). The positions of earlier houses are shown in outline, and the latest of these are shaded.

In each case excavation supplies important clues. In some ways the less elaborate enclosure at Langweiler 9 is the more informative (Kuper *et al* 1977; illus 39). This earthwork cut across the ends of two earlier houses but otherwise it occupied an empty space within the settlement area. The only features inside the enclosure were pits, and there were a few more outside. The excavators have used the ceramic sequence on the site to reconstruct the pattern of movement around the settlement. This suggests that the enclosure was located in what had been the focal area in between two clusters of buildings. Its main characteristic was that it contained a concentration of the worked flint imported to the site. It may be that this was one area where communal activities took place and where tool production was concentrated.

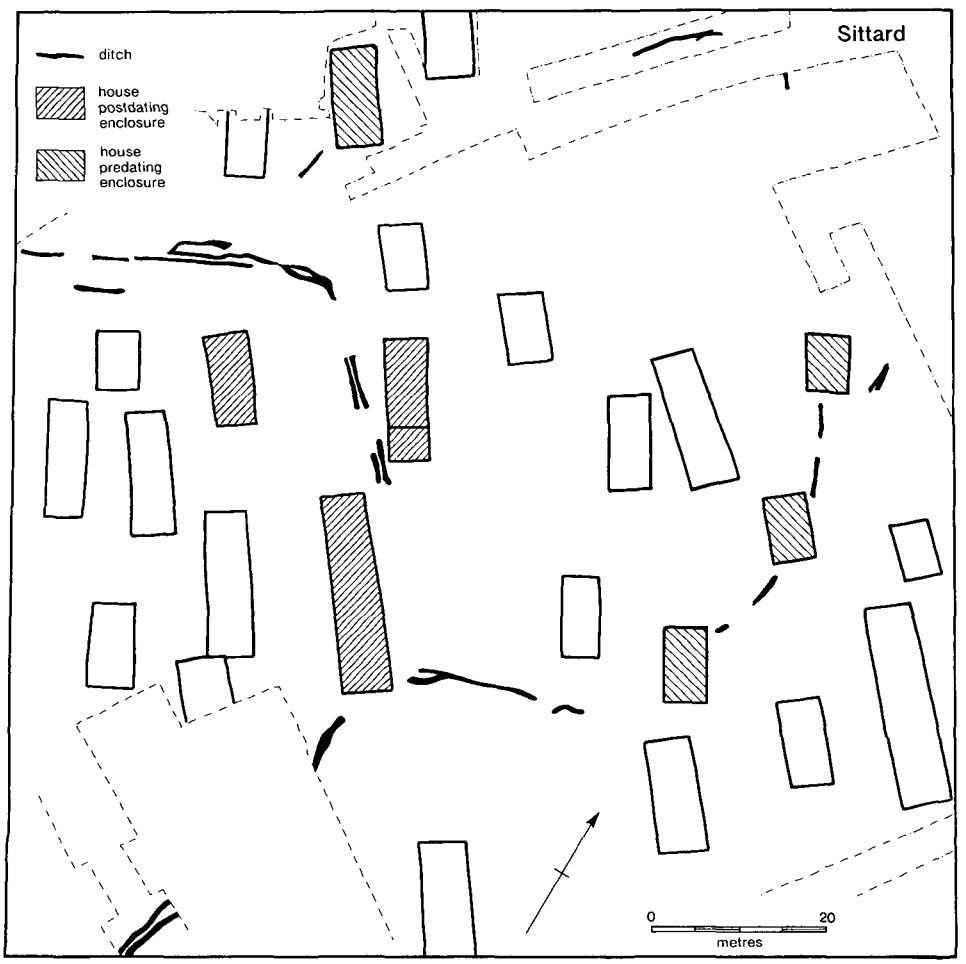
If so, that activity continued and even intensified during the enclosure phase, when more worked flint was deposited in pits in the interior. There is also evidence for the deposition of two distinct tool kits in the pits belonging to the settlement. One was apparently connected with artefact production and the other with the preparation of food. Two of the pits underlying the enclosure contained assemblages of this kind, but after the earthwork had been built we encounter a more focused distribution of activities. Six pits contemporary with the enclosure contained flint assemblages associated with food preparation. There was also a major deposit of burnt flints towards the centre of the earthwork, possibly resulting from cooking. At the same time, the enclosure contained one of the pit groups linked with tool production. There is more limited spatial patterning among the finds from the ditch. Most of the pottery was concentrated towards the entrances, where it was associated with evidence of burning, but different ceramic forms had rather different distributions around the site.

Much less is known about the development of the enclosure at Langweiler 8, although this was a more complex structure, with no fewer than three concentric earthworks (Boelicke *et al* 1988). Again it developed in an area devoid of houses alongside the outer edge of the settlement, but in fact most of the excavated material came from one of the entrances facing away from the rest of the site. This included a concentration of quern fragments, and pieces of imported flint from three distinct sources. This is particularly interesting since it seems as if the earlier settlement had controlled the distribution of raw material to the other sites in the vicinity. Perhaps the enclosure played some part in the same process during the last use of the settlement, or even after occupation had ceased.

In each case it looks as if the enclosures were carefully located in an empty space within or alongside the settlement. They may have provided a focus for some of the more specialised activities that had already been established during earlier phases of occupation. On Site 8 these may have included the distribution of imported flint, whilst there is stronger evidence from Langweiler Site 9 that the enclosure was used for food preparation after the settlement itself had been abandoned. There is also a suggestion that the earthwork at Langweiler Site 9 lent greater emphasis to a prescribed space in the heart of the occupied area where houses had never been built. Rather the same impression is provided by the evidence from some of the enclosed settlement sites, in particular the causewayed

enclosure at Darion (Keeley & Cahen 1989) and the later palisaded site at Inden (Kuper & Piepers 1966), where the houses are located towards the outer perimeter, leaving most of the interior free of buildings.

The interlocking of settlements and enclosures is also illustrated by the Linearbandkeramik site at Sittard, where the remains of two segmented enclosures were found, together with a large number of house plans (Modderman 1959). The relationships between the enclosures and these houses are difficult to work out, but suggest a complicated horizontal stratigraphy (illus 40). In this case one of the enclosures was probably the earliest feature on the site, although it may have surrounded a group of long houses. At all events the settlement area eventually extended across the limits of that enclosure and several lengths of earthwork were cut by the borrow pits associated with new buildings on the site. A second enclosure seems to have been built against the position of the first one, but in this case the sequence was reversed, and in places the perimeter earthwork respected the positions of existing houses. Still more buildings were discovered outside the



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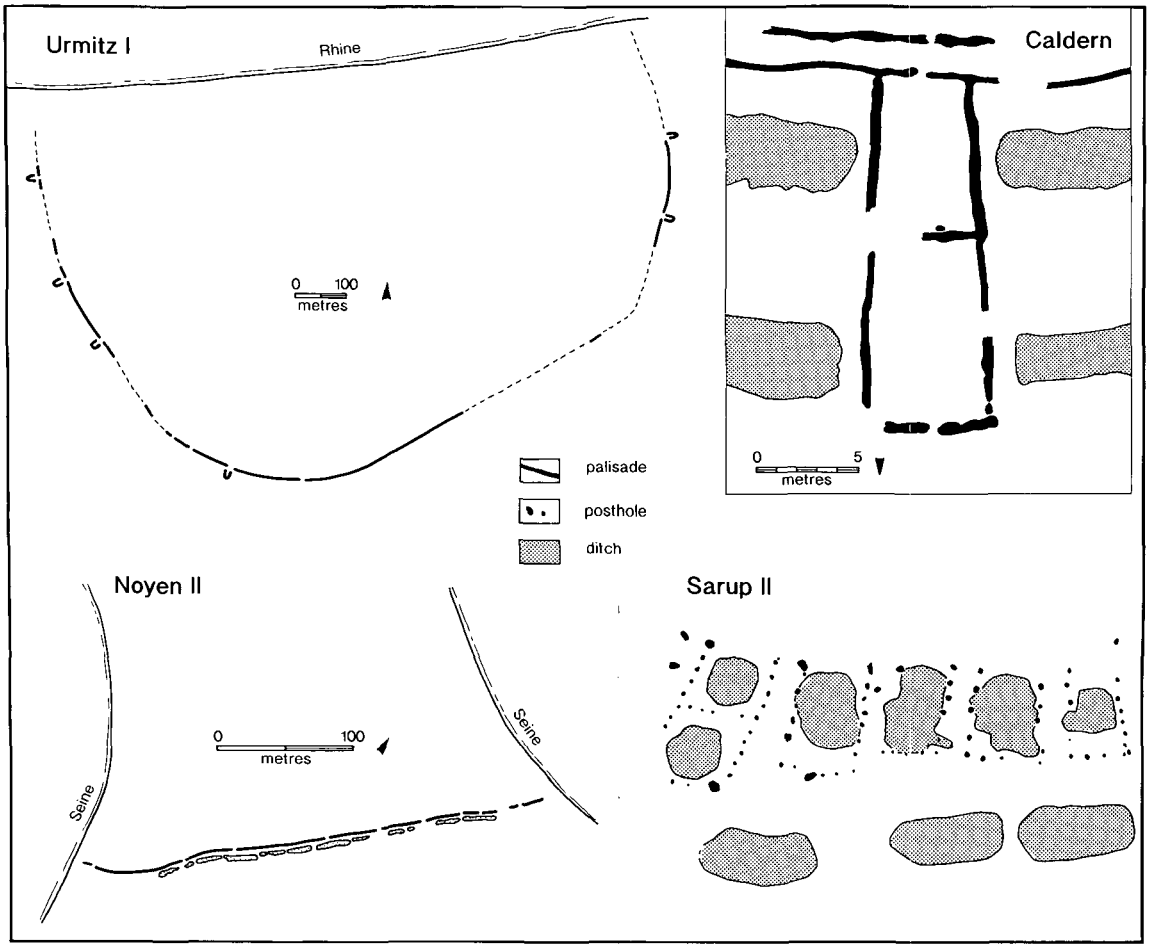
The relationship of the buildings at Sittard to the two enclosures on the site. (Data from Modderman 1958).

enclosure altogether. The pottery from the excavation belongs to at least two separate phases and its distribution emphasises some of these distinctions. One group is practically confined to the area delimited by the enclosures and the other is found outside them. Whatever the relationship between the first enclosure and the houses, it seems as if the final phase of the settlement was restricted to the area beyond these earthworks. If so, the sequence may be rather like that suggested at Langweiler 8, with the last houses of the settlement built alongside an enclosure.

The two enclosures at Sittard are very slight constructions, but by the end of the Linearbandkeramik some of the earthworks were becoming more elaborate. This is the first of our major transformations. Three developments are found more widely. The shape of the ditches often changed from a V profile to a flat-bottomed earthwork that would be easier to maintain over a long period (Whittle 1977). At the same time, more of the enclosure ditches were broken at regular intervals by causeways. This might be explained in practical terms, by the way in which earthwork construction was organised; as many people have pointed out, there is no need to



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(Left) Outline plans of the ditched and/or palisaded enclosures of Urmitz (phase 1) and Noyen-sur-Seine (phase 2). (After Boelicke 1976 and Mordant & Mordant 1977 respectively.) (Right) Details of the structures associated with the ditch terminals at Caldern and Sarup (phase 2). (After Raetzel-Fabian 1991 and Andersen 1988 respectively.)

dig a continuous ditch in order to build a continuous bank. Although this argument may apply to later sites in the British Isles, it is quite unhelpful here, for at a number of enclosures on the Continent the segmented ditch was accompanied by an interrupted palisade (illus 41). Clearly the causeways were integral to the basic design.

The third feature is not so clearly documented. This is the claim that some of the enclosures were defended settlements. This view has been championed particularly strongly for late Linearbandkeramik sites in Belgium (Keeley & Cahen 1989). Although there are signs of quite long lengths of palisade, the argument is weakened by the numerous gaps in the ditches. There is certainly evidence that a number of the houses at these sites had been destroyed by fire, but sometimes that had happened before any earthworks were built. One feature that links the Belgian sites with those on the Aldenhoven Platte is the evidence for craft production. At Darion it seems that flint blades were being made for exchange, whilst the contemporary enclosure at Oleye contained a workshop producing fine pottery (*ibid*). A better known example of the same process is found at Spiennes where a rather later enclosure, defined by continuous ditches, was built beside the famous flint mines. The ditches were filled with debitage of the same character as the material found in the mine shafts (Scollar 1959; Hubert 1971).

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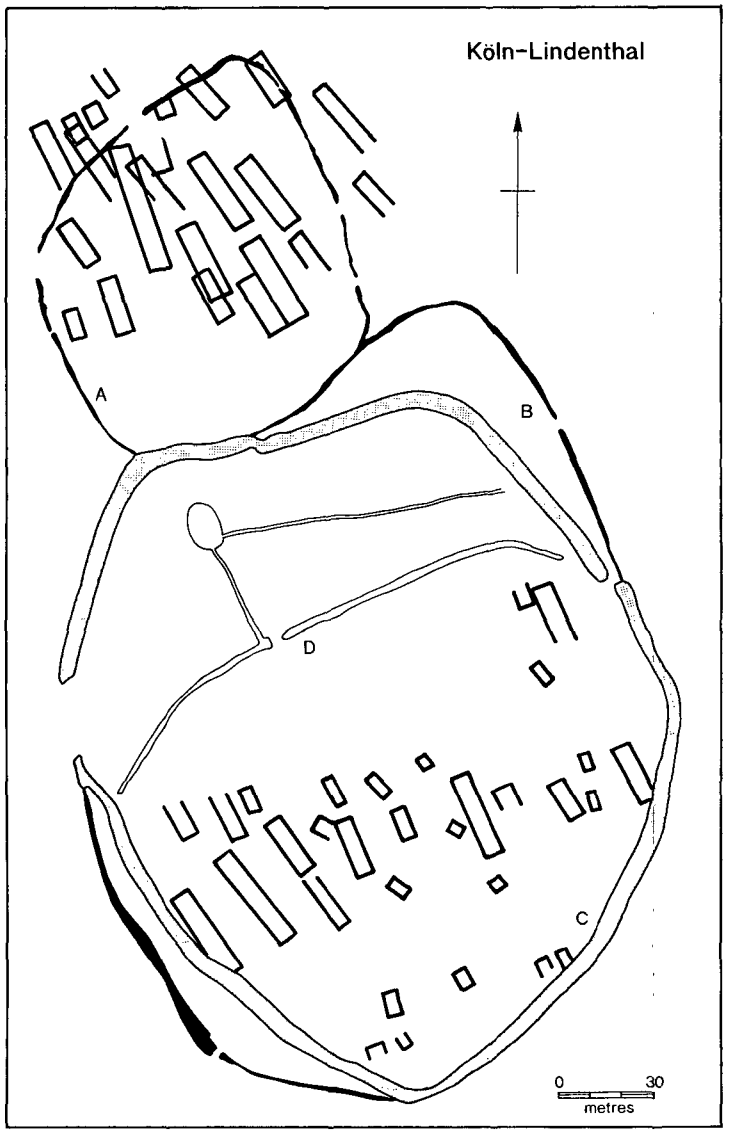
At this point we should pause. By the end of the Linearbandkeramik nearly all the characteristic features of Neolithic enclosures were in place. There was still a considerable diversity. Some enclosures had interrupted ditches and at other sites they were continuous. Certain enclosures contained settlements, but elsewhere they were found beyond the distribution of houses, or even in isolation. On some sites the enclosures were later than all the houses, whilst there were other earthworks where settlements developed after the enclosures had been built. Even so, the general pattern is clear. The enclosures were integrated into a long established agricultural landscape and sometimes formalised a pattern of activity that had already emerged during the occupation of the open settlements. Certain functions such as lithic production, the exchange of raw materials, food preparation and pottery manufacture were provided with an added significance. At the same time a small number of settlements were contained by earthworks of defensible proportions. It seems easy to suggest that this shows the growth of certain occupation sites at the expense of their neighbours, but the actual sequence is more complicated and some sites were only selected as settlements after their creation as monuments. A good example of this development is the classic site of Köln-Lindenthal (Buttler & Haberey 1936), where the excavators recognised a whole sequence of successive earthworks (illus 42). Although the area was settled on quite a large scale, the one enclosure with a segmented ditch does not seem to have been associated with any of the houses. It was succeeded by a larger earthwork which did contain a number of domestic buildings, and in this case the ditch formed a major barrier. It was deeper than its predecessors and was dug as a continuous earthwork.

How can we account for these developments? It seems almost as if particular groups may have been appropriating specialised monuments for their use and on occasion may have imposed a substantial barrier between themselves and the world outside. There are cases in which that development involved a change in the character of the earthworks, but in other instances these sites seem to have retained their segmented ground-plan. I mentioned that these developments continued after the Linearbandkeramik. This is significant in itself for it means that the characteristic enclosures went on in use into a period in which Neolithic culture became less uniform and we find a series of a smaller local groups.



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Outline plans of the houses and ditched enclosures at Köln-Lindenthal (after Buttler & Haberey 1936). The main features considered in the text are enclosures A and C.

The legacy of the Linearbandkeramik was varied and I cannot follow all the strands in one lecture. In Central Europe, for example, the enclosures were gradually transformed into a series of earthworks with an even more stereotyped ground-plan (Trnka 1991). This particularly emphasised the entrances to these sites, which were sometimes aligned on cardinal points or on astronomical events. These small enclosures were certainly not settlements, although houses have again been found outside them. The earthworks can be associated with finds of figurines and even with human remains. They represent one very special elaboration of the principle of the causewayed enclosure, but with a much greater emphasis on the depth and orientation of the various entrances. Ditches seem to be interchangeable with circuits of posts, and in their latest manifestation these sites have been compared with British henges. It would be intriguing to consider this suggestion here, but the lecture has a wide enough brief already, and I must confine myself to developments in north-west Europe.

In that area the segmented plan of the causewayed enclosure was carefully maintained. Indeed, it became so widespread that after its first appearance late in the Linearbandkeramik it became a remarkably standardised type of monument. By the Michels-

berg phase it took much the same form over an enormous area from southern Germany to northern France. There are related examples as far south as Languedoc (Vaquer 1990, 294–6). We can recognise a few of the key points in the adoption of this kind of monument, but we cannot consider their entire distribution. In Germany itself it is some time before we find evidence for significant changes. The enclosures of the succeeding phases show much the same range of variation as their predecessors and the same interplay between earthwork monuments and settlements. In this case it was only in the Michelsberg phase that radically new developments arose. As we shall see, this coincides with the break-up of the long established pattern of settlement and with the apparent disappearance of cemeteries.

In northern France there is evidence of rather similar changes. There are late Linearbandkeramik cemeteries, but none of the Rössen period. The oldest enclosure, at Menneville in the Aisne Valley, belongs to this transitional phase (Coudart & Demoule 1982). This was apparently an enclosed settlement, and like the Belgian examples I mentioned before, it had an interrupted ditch. It was transitional in other ways too. Its use as a settlement site links it with earlier developments, but the causewayed earthwork around it anticipates the form of later monuments in northern France. The complex sequence of filling and recutting in this ditch contrasts with the normal pattern on Linearbandkeramik sites, where the earthworks rarely formed a focus for complex deposits. Among the finds from Menneville were articulated animal bones, and these are another feature that was to characterise later enclosures. In the same context were two child burials, and these occupy a transitional point in the sequence in still another way. The deposition of human remains in causewayed enclosures became a very widespread practice during later phases, but these burials were covered by red ochre, a feature that connects them with the late Linearbandkeramik cemeteries in the same area.

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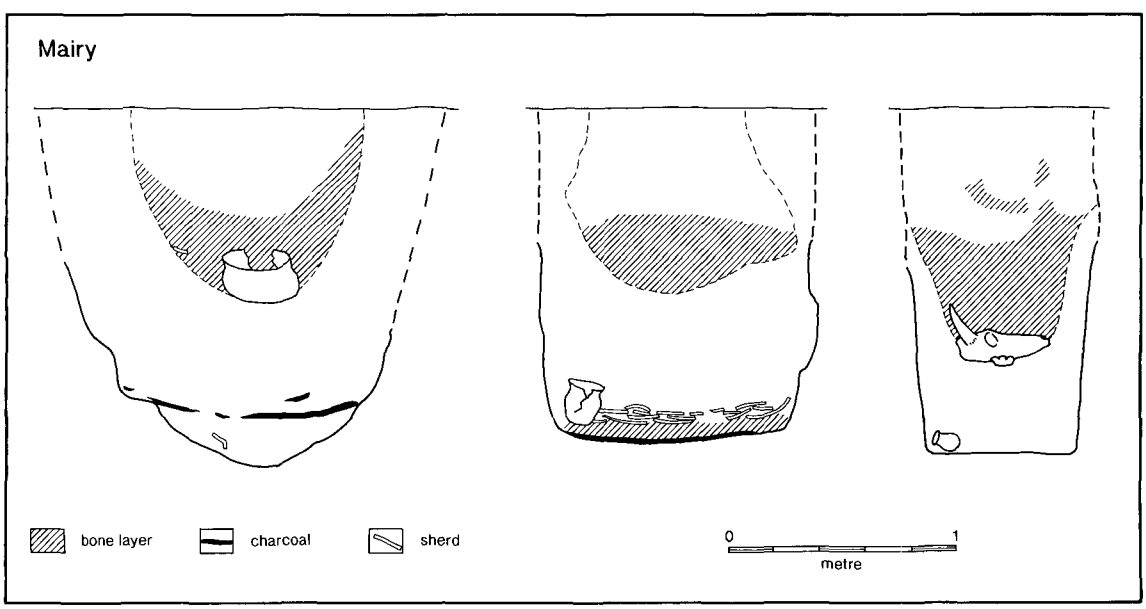
With the end of the long house settlements on the loess, there is much less evidence for a regular association between enclosures and settlements. Obvious exceptions can still be found: at the famous site of Urmitz, for example, the first houses were built in the Michelsberg phase, some time after the enclosure itself had been created, and in this case those buildings were by no means substantial (Boelicke 1976). Another transitional site is Bery au Bac in the Aisne Valley where a group of Late Rössen houses were enclosed by a continuous earthwork (Dubouloz *et al* 1982), but such sites are really the exceptions that prove the rule, for at a more general level the relationship between settlement sites and enclosures seems to have been significantly weaker. This is particularly true of the Michelsberg phase.

Even where houses have been recognised inside enclosures of that date, the sites would seem to have assumed a range of additional functions. For some time it has been recognised that with the end of formal cemeteries there were new developments in the treatment of the dead, and often human bones have been discovered

by chance in ditches and other features. Indeed, at the type-site of Michelsberg itself, a considerable earthwork seems to have enclosed a series of pits containing human remains (Lüning 1967, 113–19, 297–332). That also extends to some of the enclosed settlements. At a recently excavated site in Belgium, a ditched and palisaded enclosure dated to the early Michelsberg produced evidence of small timber houses, but these were found together with a series of pits filled with burnt deposits and a grave containing a child's skull (Veermeersch & Walter 1980). The Michelsberg enclosed settlement at Mairy in the Ardennes reveals an equally complicated situation (Marolle 1989). This contained an unusual range of large houses but at the same time the excavator also identified a series of distinctive pit deposits. These had a complex filling and included articulated animal bones, elaborate artefacts and complete pots (illus 43). There seems little doubt that this material had been deposited with considerable formality, and for that reason it is unlikely that these pits were simply for storing food.

Similar changes took place at defended sites, and here again we find an individual mixture of the sacred and profane. A number of enclosures in northern France had considerable earthworks including substantial stone-walled ramparts. Similar sites are also found in the east of the country. Some of the examples recognised in the Paris Basin had been burnt and their ramparts had been demolished. This had happened at Boury where the remains of the levelled stonework were overlain by a remarkable series of animal burials, ranged symmetrically on either side of a causeway in the ditch (Lombardo *et al* 1984). These may well have been the remains of sacrifices, and the sheer scale of this deposit outstrips any similar examples so far found in northern France. At a later date the animal burials were sealed by a level of fragmentary human remains. Although the excavation was on a limited scale, the site shows very clearly how misleading it is to distinguish between the utilitarian and ritual use of these



43 Sections of selected pits in the Michelsberg enclosure at Mairy (after Marolle 1989).

locations; the enclosure had quite possibly been attacked and destroyed, yet one of the causeways in its ditch formed the focus for a series of lavish offerings.

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Again it is worth taking stock. The evidence of these sites suggests that after the late Linearbandkeramik the idea of building enclosures was adopted widely. In Central Europe, the main emphasis was on the construction of numerous entrances, a feature that was surely inspired by prototypes among the causewayed enclosures. It was in this area that these earthworks assumed their greatest formality, and this was matched by the deposition of specialised material within these sites. These were certainly not settlements, although houses might be built near to them.

Elsewhere the sequence of change was less abrupt. Although causewayed enclosures were constructed in increasing numbers, this did not displace the alternative practice of creating continuous earthworks, and both could be associated with settlements. On the other hand, it is in those areas at the edge of the Linearbandkeramik expansion that we find the clearest evidence of new developments. To a large extent these ran in parallel with the demise of individual burial in cemeteries and with the break-up of a settlement pattern characterised by groups of long houses. Where enclosures continued to be inhabited there seems to be evidence for new kinds of practices. The earthworks can be laid out with rather more formality and their ditches seem to have been recut. Even at what were apparently defended sites those ditches provide evidence of placed deposits, including meat joints and human remains. Inside the enclosures we also find pit deposits containing elaborate artefacts. Houses can still be found on these sites, but the growing evidence for consumption and for the complex treatment of the dead suggests that these earthworks played a more significant part in ritual and ceremonial.

Michelsberg enclosures occupy the pivotal point in the sequence. They are widespread and surprisingly uniform. So many have been found as a result of air photography that a recent issue of the German magazine Archäologie in Deutschland (October–December, 1991) recently made them its principal theme. Many of the enclosures are causewayed and a significant number have more than one ditch (illus 44, 45). The earthworks are often accompanied by palisades, and the causeways are sometimes emphasised by complicated entrance structures. The contents of the ditches resemble the pit deposits of this period and generally include human remains as well as groups of animal bones. They can be found close to the causeways, although these features tend to provide the main target for modern excavation. The sites are later than any of the flat cemeteries, but they extend into the distribution of megalithic tombs, and an enclosure at Caldern which includes a deposit of human bones is located within 100 metres of one of those monuments (Raetzel-Fabian 1991).

Some of the German enclosures are still interpreted as settlements, but apart from the small group of sites that I mentioned earlier, their counterparts in France lack such

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Crop marks of the causewayed enclosure at Salzkotten-Oberntudorf, Germany. Photograph: Westfälisches Museum für Archäologie, by courtesy of Dr Klaus Günther.

associations. The enclosures in the Paris Basin are found in a period which is without either cemeteries or tombs. The main feature of these sites is the virtual ubiquity of deposits of human bone, and these tend to be found in the later levels of the enclosure ditches. Skull fragments are particularly common. We know most about the deposits inside the well-preserved enclosure at Noyen-sur-Seine (Mordant & Mordant 1977). A number of artefact types have concentrated distributions within the excavated part of this site, in particular quernstones which seem to have been deliberately broken before they had seen much use. The same applies to concentrations of pottery and to one group of axe fragments. The animal bones from this area also tend to be found in groups and can be associated with ceramic figures, both of humans and animals. Human bones, including a perforated skull, came from the interior and the ditch. Although there were areas of cobbling inside the earthwork, there was no convincing trace of domestic buildings like those found at other sites of this date, and the only other feature to be identified with any certainty was a row of hearths. Otherwise this area contained a series of tips of cultural material, which seem to have remained undisturbed after they were deposited. Further finds came from the perimeter of the site, and in this case there were placed deposits within the bedding trench for a palisade. Similar deposits were found on other sites in the area, including further figurines and Chasséen vase supports. The latter are a widely distributed ceramic type which is often found in association with mortuary monuments (Burkill 1984, 51–4).

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Section of one of the excavated ditches at Salzkotten-Oberntudorf, Germany. Photograph: Westfälisches Museum für Archäologie, by courtesy of Dr Klaus Günther.

The enclosures that I have just described extend beyond the limits of Linearbandkeramik colonisation. They were apparently created during a period when settlement was more ephemeral but possibly more extensive, and the emphasis on deposits of animal remains may echo their increasing importance in the subsistence economy. The monuments themselves exhibit a greater formality and more emphasis seems to have been placed on the provision of regular openings through the perimeter earthwork. These even extend to a palisaded enclosure at Noyen-sur-Seine which shares this characteristic layout. The separate lengths of ditch certainly provide a focus for formal deposits in a way that does not seem to have happened with Linearbandkeramik earthworks, but it is difficult to say why this very distinctive layout should have been adopted so widely, and over such a long period of time. One possibility is that it was intended to stress the openness of the enclosure to people in the surrounding landscape; another idea is that each length of the perimeter was the concern of a different group. At all events these ideas converge in suggesting that such enclosures served a wider population.

At a quite different level these earthworks represent a complete transformation of the original concept, as we find it in the Linearbandkeramik. The traditional design is maintained and even enhanced, but its significance has been reinterpreted. The first enclosures of this kind were directly associated with settlement sites. They were integrated into the intensive use of nearby areas of the landscape. They might be located directly alongside groups of houses or might even define the limits of particular settlements. Even when they were built on abandoned occupation sites, they may have been located in open spaces within the older settlement where communal activities had always taken place. That was the pattern which we saw at Aldenhoven Site 9. At the same time, some of the settlements so closely bound in with the earliest enclosures were associated with flat cemeteries. These formed a focus for specialised deposits of grave goods, but little evidence of structured deposition has been found in excavation of the enclosures.

The later enclosures, and in particular those associated with Michelsberg and Chasséen pottery, depart from this arrangement in practically every respect. The only exception is the increasingly widespread practice of defining the enclosures by interrupted ditches and palisades. There is less evidence for settlements inside these earthworks, particularly on the sites in northern France, and little sign of occupation in the vicinity. In fact some of the French enclosures adopted upland positions some way beyond the likely limits of settlement (Burkill 1984). The concentration of unusual deposits associated with the edges of these sites may have emphasised the special nature of the perimeter and could even have provided a kind of protection against the world outside. Now the enclosure was the focus for more specialised activities, which probably included feasting and the deposition of artefacts that may have been employed in rituals. These sites also witnessed animal sacrifice and the rites of passage of the dead. In contrast to the Linearbandkeramik pattern of flat cemeteries, these enclosure could have provided a specialised arena in which human relics were displayed.

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Finally, we need to consider how far these patterns were changed with the adoption of causewayed enclosures along the Atlantic and North Sea coastlines where there are suggestions of a well-established Mesolithic population. We can consider three areas here: Britain, west central France and southern Scandinavia. The case for a Mesolithic background to these developments is not uniformly strong; it is more convincing in Scandinavia than the other areas, but for the purposes of this presentation all three can be treated together.

Although the chronological sequence varies (causewayed enclosures were adopted first in Britain and only later in the other two regions), developments in all three areas show striking similarities. The source for the enclosures in each of these regions seems to have been amongst the developments that I have just described: the use of earthwork enclosures for specialised rituals in a largely dispersed pattern of settlement. But in each case the enclosures are found in areas with substantial mortuary monuments.

There are strong similarities between the ways in which these enclosures were used during their early phases. In each area they are associated with very similar deposits to those in Germany and northern France: concentrations of animal bones, fine pottery and human remains. In Britain and Scandinavia these are also found in pits inside the monuments. Certain features are strongly represented in all three groups of sites, in particular finds of non-local artefacts, especially axes. For example, on the French site of Machcoul sixty percent of the polished axes came from Plussulien over 150 kilometres away (L'Helgouac'h 1988), and one of the Danish sites may even have been associated with a hoard of copper artefacts originating in Central Europe (Madsen 1988, 309). The British case will be better known. The late levels at a number of the enclosures contained axes produced in distant parts of the country, whilst the causewayed enclosures in Wessex include pottery made in south-west England (Bradley & Edmonds in press).

In each of these areas the segmented layout of the enclosure seems to have been particularly important. At a site like Hambledon Hill, it was carefully maintained when the ditches were recut (Mercer 1988), and at many of the enclosures specific deposits were made against the causeways. These range from the human burials at Champ Durand (Joussaume 1988) to the offerings of meat in the enclosure ditch at Windmill Hill (Smith 1965, 41–2). In Denmark the importance of the segmented ditch was marked in a special way and at Sarup each separate length of earthwork was enclosed by a fence (Andersen 1988: illus 41). This unusual arrangement echoes the gate structures found on sites in the Rhineland but its closest parallel may be at the Trundle in West Sussex (Curwen 1931, pl 1, 107–9).

The deposits found in the segmented ditches of British enclosures are echoed by the finds from features within these monuments, but a similar range of artefacts also seems to have been buried in more isolated pits (Thomas, J 1991, ch 4). Some of the same categories of material extend to the forecourts and flanking ditches of contemporary mortuary mounds. The deposits associated with the Scandinavian enclosures again built upon an existing tradition of offerings, but this time it was associated mainly with bogs and other wet places. Those deposits were most numerous in the early part of the Neolithic period and are found in a series of

regional groups, each of which favours one particular kind of offering: decorated pots containing food, amber beads or stone axes. When the enclosures were created, the frequency of these finds decreased and the same kinds of material were deposited together at the newly built monuments (Bradley 1990, 57–61).

I mentioned that the enclosures in all three areas also include human remains. These are often skulls. In each area it seems likely that the practices taking place at the enclosures were closely linked with those associated with mortuary monuments, but the relationship varies from one area to another. The enclosure at Champ Durand contained a series of burials as well as more fragmentary remains and the excavator suggested that it may have taken over the role of local passage tombs (Joussaume 1988). In Denmark, on the other hand, passage tombs of similar date can be found close to these sites. Some of the enclosures in Britain show the same relationship to long barrows, but in this case the human remains from the enclosures are mainly those of young people who are under-represented at mortuary monuments (Mercer 1988).

These similarities are striking and obviously reflect a common background in the developments that I considered earlier. In all three areas there is little to suggest that the majority of the enclosures were constructed as settlements, and some of those in southern England were located in marginal areas, within woodland clearings (Thomas, K 1982). What is very striking is that both in Britain and on the Continent the enclosures exhibit a rather similar sequence in which certain of the sites assumed a domestic role at a late stage in their history.

The British evidence has come to light only recently and probably concerns only a small number of sites. In certain cases it is clear that enclosures were remodelled. After a long sequence of recutting in which the form of the causewayed ditch was carefully maintained, these features were finally removed, leaving a continuous earthwork. The ramparts could have been reconstructed and were provided with substantial gateways (eg Mercer 1988). Inside these enclosures there is convincing evidence of houses, although it is obvious that these locations were also used in rituals. There is a tendency for the sites that were remodelled to be located in defensible positions, and there is certainly a close relationship between the enclosures that underwent a reconstruction of this kind and those with traces of houses in their interior. In a few instances we find late long barrows, or possibly Neolithic round barrows, very close to the defences. In contrast to the mixture of human bones found beneath most long mounds, these contain one or two articulated burials accompanied by grave goods (Bradley in press). All this evidence seems to suggest that a limited number of specialised enclosures were appropriated as defended settlements at a late stage in their history. They might well have provided the power base of a small section of society. Several of these earthworks are associated with concentrations of arrowheads and even appear to have been attacked and burnt. After that time there is little evidence for the continuous use of these locations, although they may have contributed to later developments, including the adoption of henges and stone circles.

A very similar sequence has been identified in west central France, although it has not been traced in so much detail. Here Joussaume (1988) suggests that the

Neolithic enclosures were built in two distinct phases (cf Joussaume & Pautreau 1990, ch 6, ch 7). As we have seen, in the first phase they had causewayed ditches and were associated with deposits of non-local artefacts and with finds of human remains. Again a number of these sites were remodelled and the causewayed ditches were replaced by continuous earthworks forming a defensive scheme of some complexity. The gateways were the key points in the new design and were protected by massive outworks not unlike those found at British hillforts. The ramparts too were strengthened and were provided with massive stone walls. Unfortunately, we know all too little about the use and history of these sites, but in this case it seems as if they went out of use in the Late Neolithic after a substantial period without any obvious signs of violent destruction. Like the sites in Britain, they provide further evidence for the deposition of human remains in the later parts of the sequence.

Lastly, there is the evidence from southern Scandinavia, and this does exhibit a significant contrast with the other two areas. In this case there is no evidence that the earthworks were converted to defended sites. Instead, it is becoming clear they formed the focus for very large open settlements, which extended across the limits of the original enclosures (Madsen 1988). When that happened it appears that the ditches lost their function. Apart from the multi-period enclosure at Sarup (Andersen 1988), we know very little about their internal features, but they seem to have been larger, and quite possibly richer, than their counterparts on sites which lacked any earthworks. Even so, they present the same basic sequence as those in Britain and western France. The enclosures were created as specialised ritual centres and only assumed a domestic role at a late stage in their history. When that happened, the earthworks lost their importance entirely.

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I have been talking about these monuments as the expression of ideas, and, in particular, about the way in which a single stereotyped design, an enclosure with a causewayed ditch, was reinterpreted and changed from one cultural setting to another. It will be clear by now that there is no one interpretation of these monuments. The reductionist approach which talks about labour organisation fails to account for much of the evidence, and so do attempts to make them all into settlements, cemeteries or, for that matter, anything else. Within the rules that dictated that enclosures should follow this characteristic ground-plan there was enormous scope for local ingenuity. In no sense were the people who built these earthworks imprisoned by convention. In fact their inventiveness is responsible for a complex archaeological sequence.

I have discussed a large number of sites, of different periods and different cultural affiliations, and have considered examples as far apart as Czechoslovakia and Sweden. It would be impossible to summarise this material without repeating much of the detail. What I can do is to emphasise some of the contrasts that we have observed and some of the broader patterns that underlie the changing deployment of causewayed enclosures.

First, there have been variations in their geographical setting. We have seen how their locations changed from a close integration with settlement areas in the

Linearbandkeramik to their construction on the edge of the contemporary landscape in the British Isles. This reflects important changes in the role of these particular monuments, from a vital component of domestic life to a specialised ritual focus.

Secondly, there seem to have been changes in the scale and formality of these earthworks. Most of the earliest sites were small and only a minority were defined by interrupted ditches, yet by the latter part of the sequence the causewayed enclosure was the dominant type and could be built on an enormous scale. This is apparent at a number of widely separated locations, from Urmitz to Hambledon Hill. The growing importance of causeways is matched by the creation of elaborate entrance structures and by the presence of interrupted palisades. Most of these were associated with ditch systems but occasionally they formed enclosures in their own right.

Another striking feature of the sequence is the increasing scale of consumption in evidence at these sites. The oldest enclosures may have been used in some of the activities originally associated with Linearbandkeramik settlements but these may have been fairly informal and certainly were limited in scope. At later enclosures, on the other hand, we find concentrations of specialised artefacts like figurines or vase supports, and groups of non-local types such as axes. There is also evidence for feasting and the sacrifice of animals. It seems entirely probable that more specialised transactions took place at these locations.

We observed a parallel development by which these enclosures became involved in the treatment of the dead. It seems no coincidence that this began after flat cemeteries had gone out of use and that sometimes this happened in regions in which mortuary monuments were absent. Where the two do overlap, the emphasis seems to be on the collective deposition of human remains and on the circulation of unfleshed bone. Most probably the enclosures played some part in the rites of passage, and these could have provided a context for the other activities I have mentioned.

Lastly, the sequence turned full circle and some of the enclosures were transformed into settlement sites. Some became open settlements and others were defended, just like the settlements of the late Linearbandkeramik over a thousand years before. This development is associated with sites on the agricultural margin where megalithic tombs are also found. It shows some similarity to the sequence I described in the first lecture, and here again the creation and operation of monuments may have formed part of the process by which people who had depended on wild resources came to make a commitment to agriculture. If so, the beginning and end of my history of enclosures have another point in common, although no one involved in building these extraordinary monuments would have been able to foresee the unfolding of this complicated sequence. That is our privilege, and we must use it to good effect.

We can only do justice to the people whom we study if we allow them the same inventiveness as we allow ourselves. This interpretation of some Neolithic monuments is simply an idea for discussion. I suggest that the same can be said of the causewayed enclosure itself.