CHAPTER 12

Pasts, Presents and Futures

> We should remember …that archaeology and prehistory have as their object *human action* in the past. Their object is *not* the recording and chronological calibration of patterns of soil deposition or pottery distributions. (Cumberpatch and Robbins 1995, their emphases).

In this final chapter, I briefly review the limited evidence regarding the Late Antique and early medieval transition in these landscapes. I then present a self-critique of the limitations of this thesis, and outline potentially productive future research themes, methodologies and publication policies, including many that should be incorporated within developer-funded archaeology. I summarise the broad chronological development of these field systems and settlements in different parts of the study region, and conclude with some final thoughts regarding archaeologies of the everyday, and the importance of these field systems, trackways and enclosures in framing the everyday embodied lives of the people and animals that dwelt within these landscapes during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

The afterlife of the field systems

It has long been considered that the end of Roman occupation in Britain involved the abandonment of much agricultural land and subsequent woodland regeneration, a shift to subsistence agriculture and small-scale exchange in the fifth century AD (Esmonde Cleary 1989; M.E. Jones 1996; Reece 1980), or some localised continuities in north-east England with woodland regeneration later in the sixth or seventh centuries (J. Turner 1979, 1981), though these views have been challenged (Bell 1989; Dark 1994, 2000). Recent pollen analyses indicate land abandonment in the far north of England, perhaps due to the collapse of agriculture geared to military supply (K. Dark 2000:

194-199, 2004: 286; P. Dark 1996, P. Dark 1999: 265), and there are indications of some woodland regeneration in West Yorkshire (Richardson 2001b: 248).

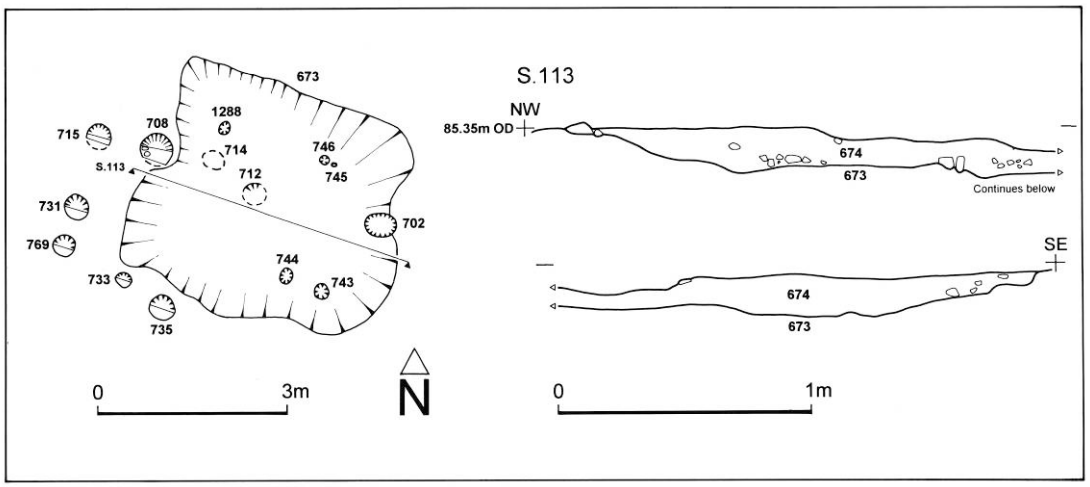

Figure 12.01. *Sunken-featured building 7010 from Parlington Hollins, one of two such features recorded at this site. (Source: Holbrey and Burgess 2001: 103).*

This overall impression is partly challenged by recent excavation evidence. At Parlington Hollins, two sunken-featured buildings and three post-Roman burials were found, whilst at Ferrybridge, three post-Roman or early medieval burials were identified (Holbrey and Burgess 2001: 101-103; Martin 2005: 121; Richardson 2005a: 70). There was a sunken-featured building and post-Roman pottery at Garforth (Garner 2000: 15-16; Owen 2000: 6-7). Recent evaluation work and full-scale excavations at Wattle Syke recovered some post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon pottery, and some of the rectangular sunken-floored buildings may have continued in use into the late fifth and sixth or seventh centuries (Chadwick pers. obv.; Signorelli 2005). Post-excavation work will have to confirm this. One silted up or backfilled sunken-floored structure had a later grave cut into it, and this contained an adult, probably male, with an iron knife at his shoulder – normally an Anglo-Saxon rite. There have been post-Roman or early medieval burials found at Dalton Parlours, Castleford and other West Yorkshire locales (e.g. Crockett and Fitzpatrick 1998: 58; Wrathmell and Nicolson 1990: 285-287; Roberts 2005a: 218).

For some people, especially those in rural communities, the end of Roman administration probably had little immediate impact on everyday life and tenure, and

smaller, subsistence-orientated settlements may have been best placed to survive major economic and social changes. Castleford and Wetherby possibly had post-Roman occupation (Abramson et al. 1999: 305; Unwin 1986: 3-6), linked to the Kingdom of Elmet (Roberts 2001: 281-283, 2005a: 218), whilst in Doncaster an Anglo-Scandinavian *burh* may have been centred on the Roman fort (Buckland and Magilton 1986; Buckland, Magilton and Hayfield 1987; S. Webster 1995), though as yet there is no definitive artefactual or stratigraphic evidence to support this notion (Chadwick, Martin and Richardson 2008).

Waterlogged wooden structures associated with a pond or water channel at Wellgate, Conisbrough produced ^{14}C and dendrochronological dates of AD 425-573 (May and O'Neill 2006: 57). Unless these were re-used timbers, this might suggesting some potential continuities of occupation. Peter Robinson of Doncaster Museum has noted that in areas around some of the Romano-British settlements on Magnesian Limestone areas of South Yorkshire such as those in Edlington Wood and Pot Ridings Wood, there have been casual and metal detecting finds made of early Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian artefacts (P. Robinson pers. comm.). This could either imply that some of the more prosperous local farmsteads were taken over by immigrants, or (and perhaps more likely) that some well-to-do local families or clans were able to remain in place and even continued to prosper despite the changes around them.

In a few cases it seems that some boundaries too persisted in the landscape. At Site R near Micklefield along the A1(M) road corridor, one ditch of a Romano-British trackway is depicted on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1842-3 and is still visible today as a linear holloway (Brennand et al. 2007: 107-109). This formed the township boundary between Ledston and Micklefield from the Norman period (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, map 15). At Back Newton Lane, Ledston, some medieval ridge and furrow cut across Iron Age or Romano-British enclosures and field boundaries (Webb 2006) (see Chapter 7, Fig. 7.25), but other later medieval ploughing actually respected some of the earlier boundaries. At Armthorpe, some co-axial field boundaries at West Moor Park East were on the same orientation as early modern fields (Gidman and Rose 2004), suggesting the latter followed the alignment of pre-existing earthworks. Some field boundaries may thus have survived as hedges and/or

banks and ditches for considerable periods, although this need not indicate direct continuity. Rather, the weathered traces of earlier occupation, the 'lines on the land', would have influenced later generations of ditch diggers and hedge layers.

Nevertheless, it is the case that over most of the study region, the medieval and the Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes of settlements and field systems have very different orientations and distributions. This indicates a major rupture or shift in both the social and physical fabric of everyday life. Most parts of the study region probably saw the widespread abandonment of trackways and field systems during the fifth century AD. In the Trent Valley, medieval churches and villages were established away from floodplains on slightly higher and drier gravel terraces, perhaps as a response to flooding and soil degradation in the later Roman period (Elliott, Jones and Howard 2004: 154, Knight and Elliott forthcoming, Knight, Howard and Leary 2004: 119). Cropmarks of ridge and furrow and early maps indicate that medieval and post-medieval field systems were usually very different in overall plan and orientation to later Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes, and apart from some of the specific exceptions outlined above, there is generally little evidence for continuity of boundaries into the post-Roman and earlier medieval periods (O'Neill 2001c; Unwin 1983), although detailed GIS analyses are needed to confirm this.

Near Adwick-le-Street the burial of an adult woman dating to the ninth century AD was discovered, with grave goods including two Viking-style oval bronze 'tortoise' brooches, a bronze bowl, an iron knife and a latch-lifter (NAA 2001; Speed and Rogers 2004) (Figs. 12.02-12.05). Her grave was cut into the backfill of a Romano-British trackway ditch containing third and fourth century pottery. This suggests that the trackway was still visible in the landscape and remained a well-used routeway, and also retained social and symbolic importance. Isotope analysis indicated that the woman spent her childhood either in north-east Scotland, or more likely, Norway. Recent developer-funded excavation work by ARCUS at Adwick-le-Street early in 2008 has uncovered around 40 graves of probable Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian individuals in a small cemetery (R. O'Neill pers. comm.). Isotope analyses of their remains should prove extremely interesting.

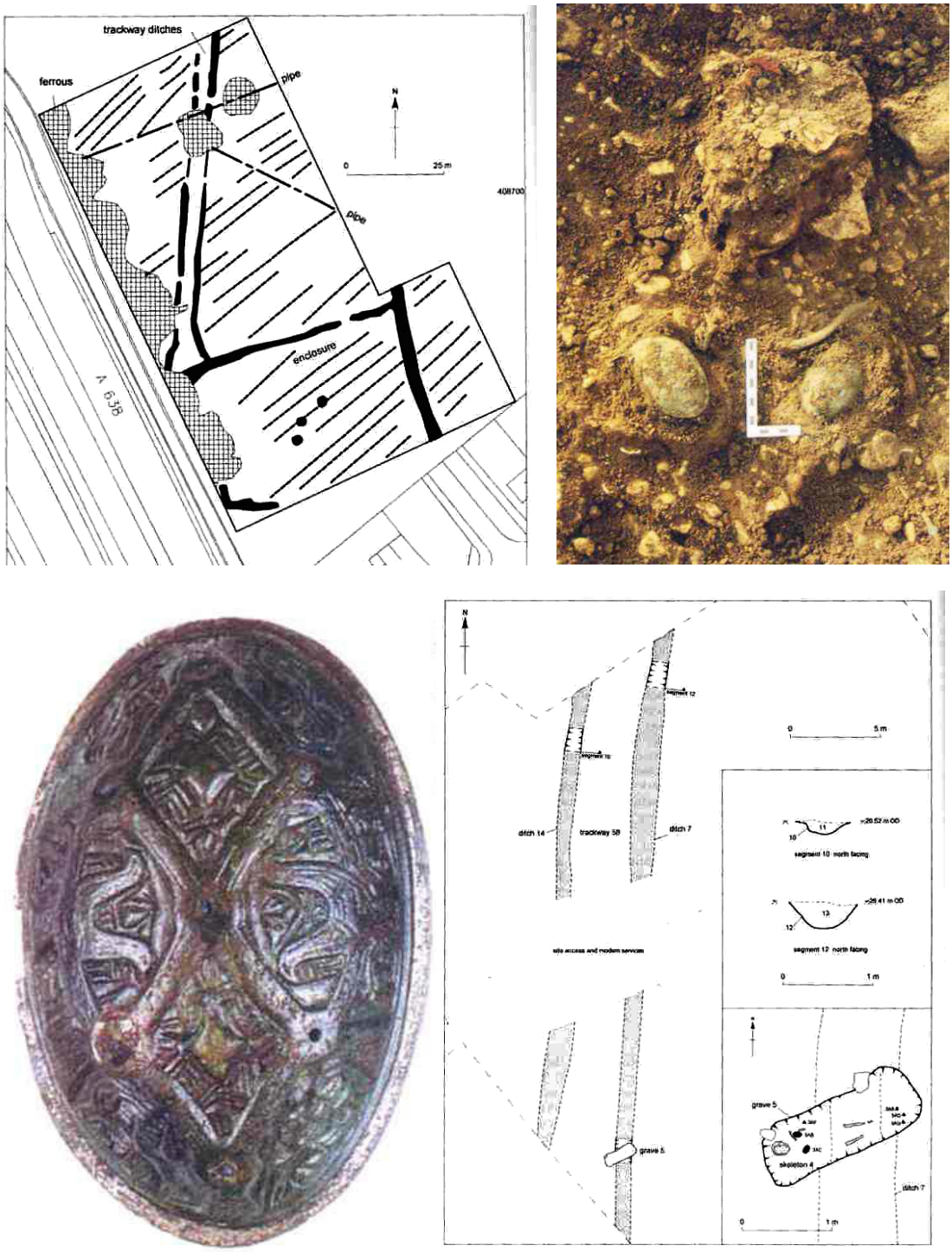

Figure 12.02. (top left). *Geophysical survey plot of Redhouse Park Sewer, Adwick-le-Street, S. Yorks., showing a field or enclosure, and the double-ditched Romano-British trackway. (Source: NAA 2001).* **Fig. 12.03. (top right).** *The excavated woman showing the poor bone preservation, but also the two copper-alloy 'tortoise' brooches on her chest. (Source: British Archaeology).* **Fig. 12.04. (bottom left).** *One of the two brooches after conservation, showing the fine Viking-style decoration. (Source: Saich and Matthews 2005: 110).* **Fig. 12.05. (bottom right).** *Detail of the trackway and grave cut, and the burial. (Source: NAA 2001: fig. 4).*

Limitations of this study

When I began this thesis, I hoped to use a GIS-based computer package and relational database to map all cropmarks liable to be Iron Age or Romano-British in date, and compare enclosure and field type and size to geology, topography, slope, soils and other environmental factors; in order to establish any patterns of inhabitation across the different areas of my study region. I also wanted to plot finds of Iron Age and Romano-British coins and metalwork in order to assess any patterning to their distribution, such as relationships to watercourses. Unfortunately, there were no readily available GIS resources at University of Wales Newport, and the software and hardware were too expensive for me as an individual. Of the three counties in my study region only Nottinghamshire has been fully mapped as part of the National Mapping Project. This data was only available in raster format, for which English Heritage wished to charge £15 per map sheet. I would then have had to re-digitise the printed plots. In retrospect I realise that mapping all aerial photo evidence would have taken far too long, and in any case would have replicated much of the rigorous work of the Magnesian Limestone Project (AS WYAS 2006; Roberts et al. 2004, 2007).

I had also hoped to study several settlements from different geological and topographic zones in more detail, through examining spatial and temporal variations in artefact distributions (q.v. Cooper 2000; Evans 1995a, 2001a; Fincham 2002a; Gwilt 1997; Meadows 1997; Robbins 1997, 2000; Willis 1997b). Regrettably, I have not been able to undertake such quantitative analysis. With the exception of Scrooby Top, this information is not included in published or archive reports, and I would have had to carry out extensive archive analysis and teach myself Iron Age and Roman fabric types. In addition, some archives are in a very disorganised or incomplete state, as with the Chainbridge Lane material. Such a study should form PhD or post-doctoral research in its own right, and I hope to pursue this further in the future. Instead, in this thesis my methods have been qualitative and evaluative, and my approach much more reflective and interpretative than it might otherwise have been. I feel that this has been an advantage though, and has led me to write a much more nuanced and engaged account, one in which my own writing, the poetry and

illustrations have all been constitutive of more subtle considerations of the everyday lives and embodied experiences of people and animals.

Figure 12.06. *Complex cropmark palimpsest on playing fields surrounded by suburban housing developments, Scawthorpe, S. Yorks. A square double-ditched enclosure with rounded corners seems to have been redefined by (or itself redefines) a slightly larger single-ditched rectangular enclosure, but also pre- or post-dates a trapezoidal single-ditched enclosure. Further ditched boundaries are also evident to the left of the image. Two possible ring ditches are visible – one within the area of the trapezoidal enclosure at the centre of the image, the other in the upper part of the grassed area. More recent marks from the lines of a football field can also be seen towards the bottom of the playing field. SE 5585 0564 (Source: © AS WYAS/NMR).*

An agenda for future research directions within the region

In this section, I present some ideas for future research on Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes, which I hope will stimulate further discussion and debate, and perhaps influence future archaeological work. I have tried to propose ideas that could be incorporated within the routine, developer-funded investigations that form the majority of the fieldwork undertaken on these field systems and settlements. Some of the research aspects of this further work should, however, receive support from English Heritage, and the Aggregates Levy and similar initiatives.

- There remains a considerable and on-going threat from agriculture, quarrying and development to cropmark features across the study region. Utilising the results of the NMP programme for Nottinghamshire, the Magnesian Limestone Project (Roberts et al. 2007) and commercial work undertaken by Alison Deegan, GIS-based mapping with an associated relational database would be an invaluable tool for the mitigation of future development within the study region, and for research. Examining past aerial photographs, and monitoring cropmarks closely in the future, should be used to assess the damage to cropmarks. It may become necessary through agricultural stewardship initiatives and agreements to halt further plough damage to particular cropmark complexes, and ROMP (Renewal of Old Planning Permissions) mineral extraction proposals must be resisted in some instances. Future GIS-based research could include statistical analyses to discern any wide-scale patterns of site location, field patterns and other factors.

Figure 12.07. *Subrectangular enclosure near Huddleston, W. Yorks., (just below centre), threatened by both ploughing and quarrying. (Source: D. Riley, SLAP 230, SE 459 320).*

- The Magnesian Limestone Project (Roberts et al. 2007) and other GIS-based analyses should be used to target particular areas and sites for further research-led investigative work, as a series of linked stages. This could include intensive geophysical survey over selected enclosure and villa complexes.

- Following non-intrusive investigations, targeted research excavations should be undertaken on particular sites, *including* Scheduled Ancient Monuments, in order to obtain better dating and palaeo-environmental evidence. Poorly understood sites where such work might be fruitful include 'hillforts' such as South Kirkby; low-lying multivallate enclosed sites such as Little Smeaton, Moorhouse Farm and Potteric Carr; enclosure and/or villa complexes such as Aslockton, Cromwell, Stancil, Scabba Wood, Wombwell Wood and Micklefield/Castle Hills; and possible ritual centres at Redhill and Bawtry.

- Finds distributions from developer-funded excavations should be routinely listed and plotted in archive and publication reports. These should record the positions of finds such as quernstones and brooches, and the quantity of pottery and burnt stone by context and sherd count and weight. This is now made simpler with digital surveying and illustration techniques. At present, few reports incorporate such information (but see Davies et al. 2000). Curatorial archaeologists must insist in their briefs that contract field units regularly incorporate this recording within excavation and post-excavation work, and the costs of this need to be passed on to developers. Developer-funded reports should also be routinely regularly placed on the Internet via the Archaeological Data Service, making the information within them accessible to many more researchers.

- Detailed statistical and contextual analysis of the spatial patterning of artefacts on sites is urgently needed (q.v. Brudenell and Cooper 2008). It may then be possible to identify statistically valid patterns of deposition for the whole study region, as well as possible intra-regional and inter-site variations. At present, poor on-site recording and data presentation hamper this.

- Thin-section petrological analyses of late prehistoric ceramics must be undertaken as a matter of routine whenever stratified groups of this material are identified, in order to identify patterns of production and distribution. Thermoluminescence dating of prehistoric ceramics should be explored (Haselgrove et. al. 2001: 6, 18). Again, curators must incorporate this in briefs and insist that costings for such work are incorporated within the project designs and tenders submitted by field units.

- There is a pressing need for volumes that collate and interpret the results from different projects within particular areas, and the costs for this must be built into projects as they progress. For example, work by several different field units at Armthorpe has investigated a large area of field systems, trackways and enclosures; but as different developers funded the various phases, it is now questionable whether these will ever be synthesised and published in one volume. Developers must not be allowed to shirk their ethical responsibilities for adequately publishing fieldwork results, and financial provision for future publication *must* be made a condition of their planning consent.

Figure 12.08. *Excavating one of the ditch terminals by the main eastern entrance into the large enclosure, Sutton Common, W. Yorks. A much greater length of these important parts of the enclosure ditch should have been sampled, in order to recover more artefacts and evidence for depositional practices. (Source: World Wide Web http://projects.ex.ac.uk./suttoncommon/).*

- When sites are stripped of topsoil prior to excavation, it is often the case (particularly on Sherwood Sandstone sands and gravels) that they need to be left for a week or more before archaeologists record and excavate them, allowing time for archaeological features to 'weather out' and become more obvious through the effects of rain and sunshine. On clayey soils though, features need to be recorded and marked as soon as possible, and subsequently areas may need to be dampened to allow the identification of further features.

- On-site sampling techniques need to be improved. Excavation staff should be encouraged to take innovative, self-critical and reflexive approaches to excavation and recording (q.v. Chadwick 2003), and they require much more information about the potential of enclosure and field entrances and/or features near these to contain placed deposits; and the potential of artefact distributions to provide valuable information about everyday practices in the past.

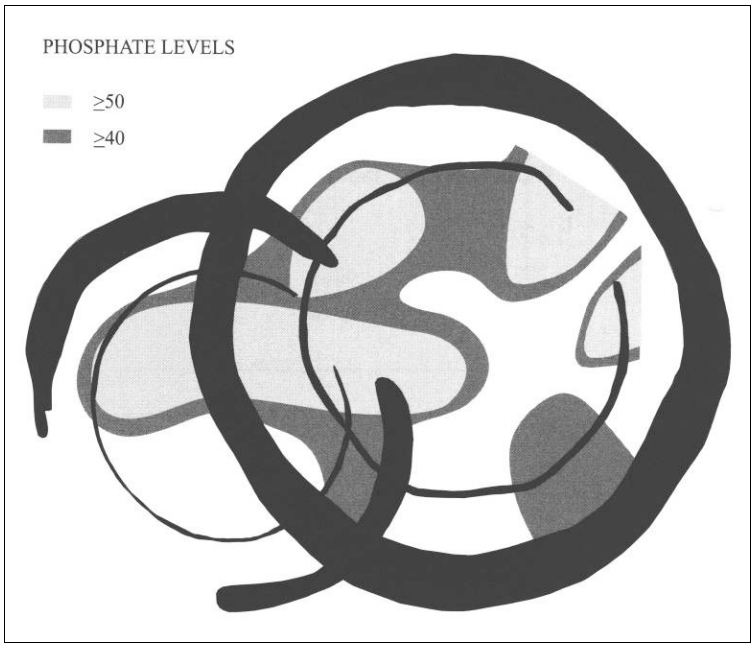

Figure 12.09. *The varying phosphate levels across Buildings 4 and 6, Haddenham V Iron Age enclosure, Cambridgeshire. Such sampling should occur as a matter of routine on prehistoric and Romano-British buildings within the study region. (Source: Evans and Hodder 2006: 146).*

- More sections through enclosure ditches are needed, and instead of limited 2-3m wide sections it is more productive near enclosure entrances and corners to employ 4-6m wide sections instead. It is promising that some curatorial

archaeologists in the region are now insisting upon at least 20-25% sampling of field and enclosure ditches and the complete excavation of roundhouse ring gullies and other structural features, rather than the much more limited 2-4% investigations which have prevailed in the past[1]. The *total* excavation of enclosure ditches in spits by machine after hand-dug sections have been excavated, in order to recover additional artefacts and animal bone, is a recent curatorial idea that is having very beneficial outcomes. Such briefs are having positive results – the concentrated dump of Romano-British pottery found at Armthorpe might not have been recorded without more intensive ditch sampling; nor might some of the evidence for depositional practices at the site of Wattle Syke, where animal burials and human neonates and infants were recovered from ditches there. The greater the length of ditches excavated, the more chance there is that such deposits will be encountered, and thus that we may be able to better understand depositional practices.

- All samples should be tested for the presence of hammerscale, and soil micromorphology, phosphate, magnetic susceptibility and other geochemical analyses need to be regularly undertaken to investigate patterns of inhabitation within enclosures and roundhouses (e.g. Evans and Hodder 2006: 106-107, 145-146, 272-273; Parker Pearson, Sharples and Symonds 2004: 72). Routine ^{14}C dating needs to take place on material from excavated sites, including *all* human and animal burials, but also suitable carbonised material from contexts such as ditches where artefactual evidence has not been forthcoming. This should also incorporate AMS dating of burnt bone and Bayesian statistical modelling techniques (q.v. Haselgrove et al. 2001: 12-13). Curatorial archaeologists must insist on these procedures, and the costs must again be passed on to developers.

- When machining across suspected ‘domestic’ enclosures, some topsoil or subsoil could be left in place and intensively sampled by hand and metal detector for artefacts that might otherwise be machined away. Possible middens and artefact spreads might be detected in this way, and if the results proved disappointing the remaining soil could always be machined down to

undisturbed natural subsoil as usual. When excavating funnel-shaped entrances, trackways on slopes or those surviving as holloways, once again some topsoil or subsoil could be left in place, perhaps in strips 5-10m wide. These strips could then be hand excavated in order to find any wheel ruts or animal hoof prints that might survive.

Figure 12.10. *Excavating Enclosure A at Ferrybridge, W. Yorks. (Source: © AS WYAS). Large-scale investigations of this sort are providing invaluable information concerning later Iron Age and Romano-British field systems and enclosures. Nevertheless, the restrictions of developer-funded archaeology, particularly for post-excavation analyses and publication, still hamper research.*

- Curatorial archaeologists in each county could select one or two Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures and field blocks for longer-term research projects undertaken in conjunction with local commercial field units *and* regional university archaeology departments. This would not only stimulate research into these landscapes, but would provide welcome opportunities for creative dialogues between 'academic' and 'unit' archaeologists.

- One or more enclosures could be selected for the total excavation of *all* identified features, including an entire enclosure ditch for example. Such work may provide valuable data regarding artefact consumption and discard

patterns, and potentially more refined palaeo-environmental information, but would also inform sampling strategies on future developer-funded projects.

- Such projects could serve as community and open access projects, allowing members of archaeology societies, school groups *and* the general public to take part in archaeological excavation and research within their areas. Educational and outreach projects such as the Romans on the Don (e.g. Bevan 2006) should be actively encouraged and supported. People within the region have been denied knowledge of these once-extensive landscapes of fields, trackways and enclosures for too long. 'Popular' publication in the form of booklets, CD-ROMs and on the Internet should also be undertaken.

Towards archaeologies of the everyday

> …how can we make adequate drama from the daily doings of shopping, eating, sleeping, and urinating?…
>
> Shall I promise to pay attention to the little, accumulating events of daily life and not treat them as nothing against the rare and grandiose moments of history? (Gould 1996: 131-132).

There has been recent critical theoretical interest in the quotidian dimensions of human life, and its everyday experiences, contingencies and rhythms, much of this stemming from earlier phenomenological explorations (e.g. Bachelard 1969; de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991a, 2002; Merleau-Ponty 1962). The everyday has been notoriously difficult to theorise, however, and there is potential irony in trying to explicitly articulate and critically examine much of what is normally implicit, unspoken, pre-reflective and pre-theoretical (Sandywell 2004: 169). Indeed, everyday life has often been regarded in terms of 'what it is not' (Lefebvre 1991b: 97). Within archaeology, this has usually meant simply what is 'left over' in considerations of societies once topics such as economy, ritual and identity have been explored. It has thus normally been characterised merely in terms of subsistence practices.

I have previously called for archaeologies that examine the 'minutiae of the mundane' (Chadwick 2004b: 9), and this thesis is an attempt to write just such an account. Everyday life is no banal nothing-ness, but rather a richly textured lifeworld through which the 'totality of the real' (Lefebvre 1991b: 97) is brought into existence by the routine interactions of plants, animals and people within a meaning-*full* landscape. This was as true in the past as it is today.

Land, life and livestock – how people and animals inhabit the world. **Figure 12.11. (top left).** *Old quarryman with terrier. (Source: Porter 2000: 187).* **Fig. 12.12. (top middle).** *Taking winter feed out to cattle by sledge through the snow, Yorkshire Dales. (Source: Porter 2000: 215).* **Fig. 12.13. (top right).** *Old lady, Switzerland. (Source: Berger and Mohr 1982: 217).* **Fig. 12.14. (centre).** *Ploughed field, Vaud, Switzerland. (Source: Berger and Mohr 1982: 225).* **Fig. 12.15. (bottom left).** *Team of draught oxen. (Source: Porter 2000: 193).* **Fig. 12.16. (bottom right).** *Taking Irish horses to Brough Hill Fair. (Source: Porter 2000: 113).*

I do not wish to suggest that the ordinary and the mundane are 'this-worldly' and restricted to commonsense knowledge and practical activities (q.v. Sandywell 2004: 162-163; Seigworth and Gardiner 2004: 147-148), or see such acts as belonging to a timeless continuum of 'peasant' practices. On the contrary, for Iron Age and Romano-British people temporality and historicity were immanent within complex interconnected flows and fluxes of materiality, identity, sociality and ideology. Their awareness of history can be seen in the physical and material links they established

with older features in the landscape such as cursus monuments, henges and round barrows at places such as Ferrybridge and Aston-upon-Trent. In their active engagements with materialities from earlier periods, previous phases of occupation and older artefacts, and the animal and human bones resulting from these, people's lives were entangled with the lives and histories of the dead who had gone before.

Conclusions – fields *for* discourse

In this section I wish to summarise the main chronological trends in land allotment and land division across the study region, and concomitant social practices. There is comparatively little archaeological evidence across the study region for Bronze Age occupation, with no extensive field systems or major linear boundary divisions such as those in south-west and southern England, or eastern Yorkshire. Some ring ditches likely to represent Bronze Age round barrows have been identified on aerial photographs, and in some areas such as Ferrybridge in West Yorkshire they have been subject to excavation, yet overall it seems that early to middle Bronze Age settlement left little by way of permanent constructions. It seems unlikely from the palaeoenvironmental evidence that most of the region was still wooded by this period. Rather, although steeper slopes and upland areas might have retained some tree cover, there were probably large expanses of open grassland and floodplain. Such areas might only have been visited on a seasonal basis, however.

Some late Bronze Age and early Iron Age occupation is now becoming apparent at 'open' settlement sites such as Swillington Common and South Elmsall in West Yorkshire, and apparently more specialised sites such as Sutton Common in South Yorkshire. With the exception of the latter site, however, these remains were largely unanticipated discoveries made during extensive excavations, and features of this date remain virtually impossible to detect on aerial photographs of cropmarks and on geophysical survey plots. To date, such finds seem exceptional, and settlement during this period may have been rather sparse. Some limited form of land allotment and boundary construction saw the development of small fields defined by irregular and intermittent lengths of shallow gullies, but these were nowhere near as extensive as

the later field systems defined by larger ditched fields and trackways. Some of the floodplain pit alignments in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire may date to this period, however, perhaps reflecting seasonal use of river valleys. The nature of inhabitation at sites such as Sutton Common and the palisaded enclosure at South Elmsall is far from clear, but these do not seem to have been permanently occupied 'domestic' foci. Instead, they may have seen seasonal communal gatherings, perhaps controlled or mediated by specific clans, families or emerging social elites. Other multi-vallate sites at Little Smeaton, Moorhouse Farm, Potteric Carr and near Finningley might also date from this period.

From the early to middle Iron Age, a few areas of the study region such as the Trent Valley do seem to have been more regularly occupied, perhaps initially on a seasonal basis, but then with relatively permanent ditched boundaries and ultimately enclosures following in areas such as Gonalston. Certain families, kinship groups or clans might have begun to claim particular areas of land as their own, and the admittedly limited evidence from the distributions of artefacts such as Scored Ware suggests that social links were maintained and expanded along river valleys. Some areas of the Magnesian Limestone also seem to have been settled more permanently, and the first ditched boundaries and enclosures were created in relatively dispersed and 'attenuated' patterns. In West Yorkshire, there may have been contacts and/or movements between communities around areas such as Ferrybridge and other groups in East Yorkshire, and/or with groups in northern England or Scotland, although faint hints of these are only just beginning to emerge through artefactual and isotope data. Some hillforts and large linear bank and ditch boundaries may have been established in this same period, mostly in the more undulating areas of West and South Yorkshire, possibly reflecting tensions over tenure and land allotment, and emerging senses of territoriality. Nevertheless, relatively few such constructions were ultimately built, and judging by the admittedly limited excavation evidence hillforts were not occupied and elaborated over lengthy periods, unlike examples in southern England and Wales. This suggests that warfare, or at least overtly martial and masculinist discourses, were not a major feature of these communities.

In South Yorkshire, during the middle Iron Age sites such as Balby Carr and Topham Farm, Sykehouse were established on the edge of the Humber Wetlands, adjacent to areas of alder carr, peat bog and floodplains that became meres during winter and spring. These were initially 'open' settlements, though during the later Iron Age and Romano-British periods they were increasingly enclosed within expanding areas of ditched meadows, paddocks, fields and trackways. Similar low-lying areas were occupied on the River Aire floodplain around Methley in West Yorkshire, and some of these settlements may again have initially have consisted of 'open' groups of roundhouses and small scattered enclosures or pens. Small penannular gullies may have been for haystacks or fodder ricks, but some examples may have formed the focus for more specific acts of deposition related to cosmological beliefs.

The gradual enclosure of these landscapes might have reflected changes in tenure from communal access to increasing claims by particular clans, families or individuals. The floodplain at East Carr, Mattersey in Nottinghamshire may have been seasonally occupied during the late Iron Age, and this saw the creation of subrectangular gullies, some again perhaps for hay or fodder, but others perhaps dug around turf-built or tented shieling-like structures. At East Carr, during the Romano-British period this floodplain was then divided up by a series of large drainage ditches into regular, rectangular blocks of land, each perhaps claimed by particular individuals or kinship groups.

On Magnesian Limestone areas, the more irregular, attenuated and nucleated field systems might have reflected environmental factors such as thinner soils and perhaps greater areas of surviving woodland, but these patterns also suggest longer and more piecemeal processes of development, potentially from the early to middle Iron Age right through to the late Roman period. In contrast, more regular co-axial field blocks such as the 'brickwork' fields may have been physical responses to flatter and probably more open landscapes, particularly those on the Sherwood Sandstones and within the Trent Valley. These areas might have facilitated greater lines of sight and simpler techniques of laying out fields (q.v. Wickstead 2002). Such regular fields, probably laid out in strips and then subsequently subdivided, may also have been a means of dividing previously unenclosed land in a relatively equitable manner, and

although undoubtedly accretive over time, nevertheless were probably created over fewer centuries – from the late Iron Age and on into the Romano-British period. In areas such as Armthorpe, blocks of fields represented accretive but probably progressive enclosure over time, and the claims by particular individuals or families over what had previously been open, possibly communally accessed land. Blocks of fields often occupied the land between the hilltops and ridgelines, and the low-lying valley bottoms. This makes functional sense, although in terms of tenure and access the higher ground and low-lying floodplains may still have been used on a communal or inter-communal basis.

Nevertheless, this enclosure did not take place at once, and was not part of some grand planned overall scheme, although it would have involved considerable physical and social effort on behalf of the families and communities that created them. Many higher areas on the Magnesian Limestone and Coal Measures areas never seem to have been enclosed at all, or at least not to the same degree. At locations such as South Kirkby and South Hiendley in West Yorkshire; and the series of sites close to one another at Wombwell Wood, Woodhead Opencast Site and Jump in South Yorkshire, there were clusters of enclosures linked to trackways, with some enclosures similar in form to 'banjo' enclosures of southern England. Many of these probably functioned as upland livestock corrals, and although few have been excavated they do not seem to exhibit the sort of evidence for sustained domestic occupation that might have reflected year-round inhabitation. A few herders or shepherds might have stayed in them overnight or for a few weeks with their animal charges, but not all year round.

Some of these enclosure 'clusters' such as South Hiendley never seem to have been enclosed to any great degree, whereas at other locales such as South Kirkby there was later enclosure, but in an apparently piecemeal fashion over time. Some of the more elevated enclosures such as Ackton in West Yorkshire and Pastures Road, Mexborough in South Yorkshire had very wide, pronounced trackways or droveways approaching them. These might have had a role in livestock movements, although such 'avenues' may also have been caught up in discourses of display and power.

Figure 12.17. (left) *and* **Fig. 12.18. (above).** *Area E, Wattle Syke, W. Yorks. Additional machine excavation of a major enclosure ditch reiterates the scale of many of these features, and the considerable physical and social effort involved in their construction. (Source: © AS WYAS).*

The lifeworlds of people and animals were intimately connected to each other and their landscapes through complex networks and routines of everyday, seasonal and annual movements, and physical engagements with fields, trackways and settlements. These mundane movements and experiences were, in the alternative sense of the word 'mundane'[2], worldly and grounded pathways of place. The inhabited, enculturated landscape was a complex mosaic of named and remembered places, paths, trackways and constructions, and pragmatically re-used or forgotten features. There were intricate geographies of interlocking or overlapping kinscapes and clanscapes of tenure, interwoven with personal and family biographies and genealogies. Individual and communal identities and ideas of historicity may have been linked to notions of land, blood and soil, boundaries and the health and well-being of animals (q.v. Bauman 1992; Gray 1999: 450; Lele 2006: 65-66), and this could be a source of personal or kinship pride, or alternatively of despair and the ridicule of others.

Aspects of people's identities such as gender, age and status were also reproduced through everyday activities, both 'practical' subsistence and more ritualised acts. Identity had to be worked at and brought into being, emerging within the same fields of discourse as these prosaic practices. Children would have grown up through the habitus of unwritten and often unspoken social conventions and habituated embodied

practical tasks. Different age and gender grades were likely to have had different but overlapping and interconnected taskscapes, so that the embodied experiences of a young girl might normally have been in contrast to those of an adult man, for example. Communal identity was maintained through larger social gatherings such as feasts, in additional to practical agricultural work such as harvests or inter-commoning on river valley pastures. Household and community identity was also reinforced through the physical work and social co-operation necessary in the creation, upkeep and tenure of fields and enclosures. The ditches, banks, hedges and fences of the field systems, trackways and enclosures both physically imposed habitual patterns and constraints on the embodied movements of people and livestock (q.v. Ingold 2000: 204; Jackson 1989: 146), but these features also emerged out of those very same movements and taskscapes. Earlier traces of occupation and older monuments within the landscape such as round barrows and henges were sometimes used as 'anchoring points' for identity work and the depositional practices, stories, songs and myths associated with this.

How were these social identities actually configured? It is likely that during much of the Iron Age at least, these were relatively unstratified communities, where differences in social status were relatively minor, or certainly not expressed through material expressions of wealth such as larger and more imposing settlements, or richer and more varied material culture. Family, kinship and clan probably mattered far more than any more widespread notion of 'tribal' identity. These were probably heterarchical rather than hierarchical societies, with a much 'flatter' social structure rather than a pyramid of power stretching up from a base of farmers to some small social elite. A few key individuals such as the man buried with a carriage at Ferry Fryston seem to have been of higher social status, but this was possibly a result of their origins in other regions of Britain and/or their achievements in life rather than their birth into stratified social elites. Some agglomerated settlements in the Trent Valley and on the Magnesian Limestone of West Yorkshire nevertheless do seem to have represented particular families or clans that had achieved economic, political and social success by the very late Iron Age.

Following the Roman conquest and occupation, the majority of the people and the rural settlements within the study region seem to have remained at a relatively undifferentiated level. In terms of many social activities therefore, particularly those to do with everyday and seasonal plant and animal husbandry and depositional practices, I believe that there *was* a marked measure of continuity in people's practices and identities across the first centuries BC and AD. Indeed, away from Roman forts, roads and towns; the rural landscapes, settlements and practices of the third century AD might have been broadly identifiable and familiar to people from the first century BC. This partly explains the time lag in the uptake of Roman pottery across much of the study region, the paucity of pottery use even in the third and fourth centuries on many sites, and also the subsequent lack of small towns, villas and other highly 'Romanised' sites in the areas to the north and west of the Rivers Don and Idle.

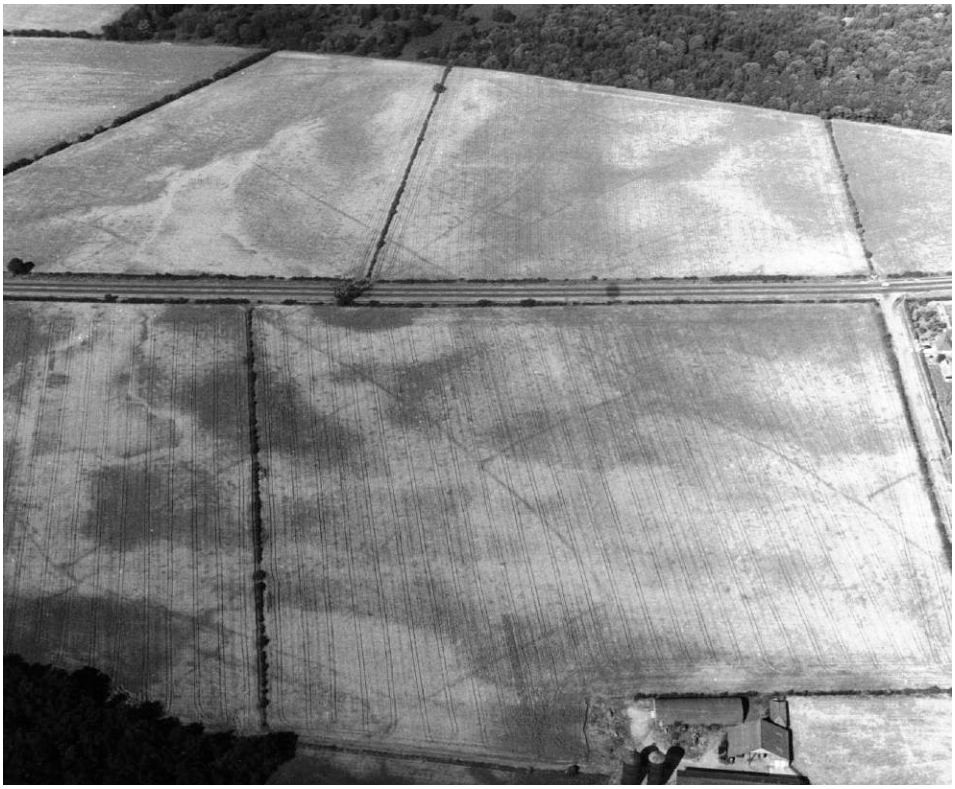

Figure 12.19. *'Brickwork' co-axial fields near Rossington, S. Yorks. Individual entrances into fields can be identified. (Source: D. Riley, SLAP 8350, SK 635 988).*

It would be a mistake, however, to portray these landscapes as timeless, and the people who dwelt within them as living in some ahistorical rural idyll, and I have tried to avoid doing so in this thesis. Romano-British lifestyles and identities were *not*

simply a 'thin veneer' pasted across traditional, indigenous or 'native' people. Particularly following the Roman invasion and occupation of the north, some people's identities were reworked to produce novel Romano-British ways of being in the world, though these were often different from more popular characterisations of Roman life with cultural clichés of heated floors, bathhouses and more 'sophisticated' practices of eating and drinking. Sometimes these changes were manifested through purposive personal agency, with some traders and farmers who prospered from the new, wider economy and with those who became merchants and the owners of some of the rare villas or other high-status sites within the region. Sometimes change took place against people's wills, such as those who may have become slaves, tied labourers, or whose smaller subsistence holdings led to agricultural failure and personal and economic disaster. Totally novel social identities also appeared and were performed and transformed within the region – Roman administrators, North African, Gaulish and Breucian auxiliaries, serving and retired legionaries, professional potters and other craftspeople.

Although many of the fields, trackways and boundaries established in the later Iron Age persisted well into the Romano-British period, the appearance of forts and a few towns and villas, particularly in the Trent Valley and other areas of Nottinghamshire, would have completely transformed the experience of some places. Native people's understandings of materiality would have changed through the appearance of new forms of pottery, metalwork and other artefacts. Some of the agglomerated settlements that represented successful late Iron Age lineages continued to prosper during the Romano-British period, whilst from the later second century some farmsteads around centres such as Doncaster, Castleford and Margidunum seem to have enjoyed larger quantities of Roman-style material culture and higher levels of consumption. Some of these still relatively small-scale settlements may have been established or taken over by retired legionaries and government officials.

There was probably extensification of agriculture during the second to fourth centuries AD, particularly pastoral production, and perhaps some intensification of arable cultivation too, although the archaeological evidence for these remains largely intangible. Some areas once only used for pasture might have been taken under

cultivation. In some areas this may have led to greater rain runoff and soil erosion. There is no evidence for any radical transformations of production processes, however, and these changes probably built on existing plant and animal husbandry practices. Changes in notions of tenure and ownership saw the intake by individuals or family groups of increasing areas of floodplain and grassland or heathland grazing previously held or accessed by communities as a whole. Such changes also enabled some localised processes of landscape reorganisation, as seen in places such as Ferrybridge, and the gradual expansion of blocks of fields seen at Armthorpe. These processes were already in place in many areas prior to the Roman invasion of AD 71, but they accelerated with the emergence of new social and economic demands, and the development of new communal and individual identities.

Despite all this, much of the region remained an essentially rural landscape. Yet these fields, enclosures and trackways were simply not a static, functional backdrop to the dull miasma of people's rustic existences, but instead held great social, historical, political and symbolic significance. Archaeologists should not simply concentrate on hillforts, villas and towns, or more spectacular 'ritual' deposits, and ignore the ordinary lives and taskscapes of the majority of people in this region. Many aspects of everyday life were undoubtedly harsh, as rural existence has been for many people across the centuries, but we must not equate a lack of material culture and 'high status' sites with a poverty of social organisation or symbolic beliefs. We also *cannot* simply relegate their beliefs and endeavours to dry, functional accounts of agricultural production. Furthermore, prehistoric and Romano-British people were not able to calculate population growth or measure climatic fluctuations. Although they would have been aware of some of the effects of these processes, given the length of time over which these changes operated the people who inhabited these landscapes were unlikely to have understood any potential problems in such terms. It is therefore unreasonable to use these alone as archaeological explanations, as this tells us nothing about the dynamics of the societies involved. Although people in the past might have been some of the causes of these major landscape changes in land allotment, land division and land use, I believe that social factors were equally if not more likely to have been crucial.

Given the problematic nature of the evidence it is difficult to investigate these landscapes and the lives of those who dwelt within them, and harder still to write about this, but we must continue to pursue our research into the quotidian, the everyday and the routine. These ordinary landscapes of fields, trackways and enclosures were the settings for a myriad of daily dramas. In this thesis, I have tried to focus on this ordinary dwelling, and 'dwell on this ordinariness'.

> …I want to dwell on this very ordinariness. I want to ask what is not considered important enough by the hidden parts of the discipline, hidden only because they are too well known in their typicality to be of any interest to anyone engaged in the retrieval of knowledge. (Spivak 1999: 238).

Notes

1. Unfortunately, these attempts at more rigorous sampling by curators and some contractual units are often undermined by archaeological consultants working for developers who try and minimise the amount of archaeological investigation and post-excavation analyses that take place in order to save time and money for their clients. Some consultants have tried to reduce the sampling of field system ditches from 20% to 10% or less (A. Burgess pers. comm.; C. Fenton-Thomas pers. comm.), whilst at a meeting one particularly notorious consultant (now deceased) once voiced the opinion that archaeologists did not need to excavate more small-scale rural Iron Age and Romano-British enclosure sites, as we already know everything there is to know about them! Such short-sighted and ethically compromised opinions, introduced by consultants as 'specialist advice', do much to undermine the efforts of other archaeologists to develop and implement more rigorous research-orientated methodologies.
2. **mundane.** 1. dull, routine. 2. of this world; worldly. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (9th edition 1990). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 779.