Preface and preamble

There were many reasons behind me embarking on a PhD, closely woven into my own personal biography. I wish to outline some of these here in order that my approach to the region can be better understood. As my engagement with archaeology is unashamedly personal and emotional, I believe it has relevance.

During my undergraduate degree, I am embarrassed to admit that I had little time for archaeological theory. I thought excavation alone was enough to investigate the past, and it was only later that I realised this needed to be placed within an intellectual interpretative framework. As an undergraduate, however, all I wanted was to dig sites well, and one day be allowed to direct my own projects. When I graduated from Sheffield University's Department of Archaeology and Prehistory in 1990, I was fortunate to get a job with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit. Its then Project Officer Bob Sydes had excavated part of a late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement site at Pickburn Leys (Sydes 1993; Sydes and Symonds 1985), which produced the first Iron Age pottery recovered from a modern excavation in South Yorkshire, a handful of worn sherds. Bob became a good friend and mentor and introduced me to the archaeology of the area.

Although I was to work for many different contract field units around England during 1990-1996, I spent the majority of that time working for the South Yorkshire Unit. It was there that I gained my supervisory experience, and where I subsequently ended up running my own field projects. During this time, I also worked on several South Yorkshire sites that were part of enclosure or field system complexes. These included projects at Rossington (Atkinson 1998; Chadwick 1992; Sydes 1991), Barnburgh (Sydes and Holbrey 1991), Schole's Coppice (Atkinson, Latham and Sydes 1992) and Edenthorpe (Atkinson 1994a; Chadwick 1995a, 1995b). I was fortunate during this time to meet Derrick Riley, the aerial photographer who had done so much of the initial research into the later prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology of the region. He, Bob Sydes and Colin Merrony were all convinced that the origins of the brickwork field systems and the other cropmark complexes within South Yorkshire

lay in the Iron Age. John Collis at Sheffield University shared this view, although Professor Keith Branigan supported a Roman origin (Branigan 1989).

In the South Yorkshire field unit we viewed these debates with interest, but felt that they missed some key points. We were more concerned with trying to establish *why* they were constructed, and how they were understood and used by Iron Age and Romano-British people. In John Barrett's terms, it was the material and political conditions of these past people's lives that we were trying to comprehend (q.v. Barrett 1994, 1999), not increasingly circular arguments about the date of inception of these field systems and a chronology that often seemed equivocal at best. On site, we re-excavated ditches dug two thousand years previously, and thus in some ways we were performing physicalities and engaging with materialities of ditch and spoil in similar ways to these long dead people. We too stood in ditches in the driving rain, tried to shovel or mattock frost-hardened gravel, or sweated in the summer sun and heat. For me at least, this was an almost tangible sense of connection with the past, no matter how imaginative. Yet although our embodied acts of excavation were similar to acts performed in the past, this was not a stripping back of time, a form of 'ghostly repetition' (q.v. Lucas 2001: 42). We were highly conscious that we were *creating* these archaeologies.

Many sites we investigated were located on Sherwood Sandstone sand and gravel deposits, where finding the edges of cut features and trying to distinguish between layers was often extremely difficult. We evolved a method of working involving wide sections across ditches, and excavating as many sections as possible, trying to tease out details of the base and sides of ditches and spot recuts. None of these techniques were themselves innovative, but we took much greater time and care when digging ditches because we knew this detail was often missed or ignored in other regions. This was very different from how Iron Age or Romano-British people would have engaged with digging, yet we were conscious that whatever these field systems were for, they must have been an important part of people's everyday lives. The extensive scale of the ditches, and the complexity of cuts and recuts that we often found, seemed to imply a quite different relationship to the land and the landscape from our own.

Along with colleagues, I became very frustrated at the way in which the archaeology of the region was marginalised in the literature. As Chris Cumberpatch and Graham Robbins have noted, the Iron Age of South Yorkshire effectively did not exist, simply because it was not mentioned in general or national publications (Cumberpatch and Robbins n.d.; Robbins 1999). Most sites remained as unpublished client or archive reports, or at best short articles in local journals. We felt excluded from wider archaeological debates. To us, the challenging nature of the archaeology had resonances for discussions of Iron Age and Romano-British regionality and processes of Romanisation for example, but no one outside the region seemed to recognise this.

Despite supervising sites, I grew disenchanted with contract archaeology. Competitive tendering was noticeably reducing the amount of time and money available for projects (q.v. Chadwick 1998, 2000a, 2000b), and I was not gaining much satisfaction from writing the very dry, factual accounts that are the accepted format for client and archive reports. I realised that without a theoretically informed basis, developer-funded archaeology was in danger of becoming a sterile exercise in description and tabulation (Chadwick 1998). I was fortunate that in Sheffield, the field unit and the archaeology department maintained close contacts. Friends recommended books and articles, and I began to attend conferences such as TAG (the annual meeting of the Theoretical Archaeology Group) on a regular basis. I remember the excitement I felt on first reading John Barrett's *Fragments from Antiquity* (1994) and Chris Tilley's *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994). These books were stimulating and encouraged me to think in new ways, despite my reservations about some of the ideas contained within the latter. I realised that I wished to undertake archaeologies where theory and practice were inextricably interlinked.

Just before the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit closed due to financial mismanagement and council indifference, I moved away from Sheffield. In 1996 I was working in London and Beirut, and despite the interesting sites and good friends and colleagues, I was not enjoying field archaeology much anymore. Mark Edmonds then offered me a place on his Landscape Archaeology Masters course at Sheffield along with a departmental bursary; without this I would not have been able to complete my course. Those two and a half years were amongst the happiest of my life.

I read voraciously, went on field trips all around Britain, and was part of a group of people with very exciting ideas. I was able to pursue my study of the region's Iron Age and Romano-British archaeology in a series of project reports, and I recognised that a theoretically informed 'landscape' approach was a very productive way of engaging with this archaeology.

When I finished my Masters in 1999, I returned to contract archaeology to earn some much-needed money. I was a Project Officer for Wessex Archaeology, and would have carried on in the field had not the unique joint post come up at the University of Wales, Newport; and subsequently the offer of a PhD bursary. What could be a subject for my PhD? For me there was no other choice – I felt that only PhD research could do justice to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods of the region. I believe that archaeologists have an ethical commitment to write the histories of people in the past, and that if I undertook this groundwork it would also enable others to write their own archaeologies. These people had been denied a history for far too long.

I knew the subject matter and the nature of my evidence would be problematic. My good friend and former colleague Graham Robbins began a PhD at Sheffield University on the 'brickwork' field systems, and wished to write a social archaeology of one area of South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire; as Melanie Giles was then doing for Iron Age East Yorkshire (Giles 2000). I had always assumed that after my few very general papers on the evidence (Chadwick 1997, 1999), Graham would pursue it further. Graham abandoned his PhD however, partly for personal reasons, but also because he had pushed the evidence from that one area as far as it would go. Graham is a highly intuitive archaeologist in terms of his field practice and theoretical insights, so if I was to consider the region myself I knew that I had to take a different approach. I have therefore tried to avoid some of the potential problems by broadening my study region to encompass the whole of South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and most of Nottinghamshire. The later prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology of these counties share many features, and is relatively unknown outside the region. I also wished to compare and contrast a series of sites and assemblages across the region.

The desire to do this PhD was my own, and influenced by my own biography, but also happenstance and the work and lives of others. Such interwoven aspects of the lifeworld are themselves part of the focus of this thesis.

The project outline

The main focus of my research is on the structure and practices of daily life in the enclosures and field systems. I have done this through studying aerial photographs of the study region taken by Derrick Riley, and by a literature search of published and unpublished survey and excavation reports. I have then used contextual approaches to examine this evidence, and write a thematic interpretation of it. This thesis also aims to engage with the Roman occupation, and explores ideas derived from post-colonial theory to discuss changes in identity, production and consumption practices amongst these small-scale rural communities. I discuss the ways in which changing patterns of fields and enclosures affected movement through the landscape, and traditions of tenure, land use and animal husbandry. This thesis explores the materiality of land divisions and settlements and the social practices involved in their construction and their possible symbolic connotations; through theoretical approaches to identity and relational agency informed by ethnographic analogies and a poetics of landscape.

I have also included poems in between each major chapter of this thesis. These have been called 'movements', partly as a musical allusion, but also as a reference to the importance of daily and seasonal movements of people and animals in the inhabitation of these landscapes. These poems are not simply some attempt at post-modern 'artiness' for its own sake, but have been carefully selected to explore other narratives and meanings of landscape beyond the obvious restrictions of the text. They are counterpoints to the archaeological evidence. Poetry can help archaeologists to understand the world of emotions and metaphorical relations (Giles 2004: 118), and to bear witness to that which is normally excluded from conventional discourse (Berger 1984: 121). Poetries of place can help us to investigate the nature of identity, community and the relationship between people and the land (Burnside n.d.), issues

which are very much a central concern of this thesis. I aim to show how inhabited places are always replete with meanings, good and bad, and how landscape features such as enclosures and trackways, dilapidated fences or silted-up ditches are (and were) inevitably caught up in the human and animal experiences and memories of the events that happened around and about them.

I have chosen to embed images within the text wherever possible, and in addition to conventional archaeological plans, maps and photographs I have included many ethnographic images from contemporary or historically-recorded small-scale communities from around the world, some grouped as photomontage. This is not merely an uncritical 'scatter-gun' approach to ethnographic analogy. Instead, I am trying to 'evoke a coherence out of the assembled moments' (Giles 2004: 118); to add texture to my archaeological narrative and further explore how embodied social practices contributed to people's identities. These landscapes were always more than collections of two-dimensional archaeological drawings, and through the ethnographic photographs I have tried to restore some sense of how individual tasks and mundane daily details would have been at the centre of people's lifeworlds. These images also provide an alternative visual narrative to be compared and contrasted to the text.

There has not been one overall interpretative synthesis of the evidence from the three counties in my study region. Much information remains as unpublished client or archive reports, and is rarely known about beyond the individual county level. For example, although some of the curatorial, research and commercial unit archaeologists working in West and South Yorkshire are familiar with the unpublished evidence from those two counties, they are less well informed about the Nottinghamshire evidence. Similarly, archaeologists working in Nottinghamshire and the Trent Valley are less aware of the evidence from West and South Yorkshire.

This has caused difficulties in writing this thesis, as in addition to my interpretative synthesis I have had to summarise a large amount of unpublished material, and make it more accessible for other archaeologists. Although I have presented some of this information in tables, my contextual approach demands more discursive discussions

to draw out the various landscape and material associations. The majority of the detailed evidence has therefore had to be incorporated into accompanying appendices or within the gazetteer. A more integrated approach would have been preferable, whereby I presented the bulk of my evidence within the main text and tacked back and forth between theoretical discussions, interpretations and the contextual evidence. This was simply not possible within the limitations of the PhD thesis format, although I am aware that this is a potential weakness.

I wish to stress that this thesis is an *interpretation*. Whilst I have tried to write an archaeology based upon the regional evidence and a series of plausible inferences (q.v. Adams 1991), I acknowledge that there might be competing or even conflicting interpretations of this evidence. One of the principal aims of my work has been to encourage further discussion and debate.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 outlines the limits of the study region, its physical characteristics, and a brief history of previous archaeological research. Each subsequent chapter of my thesis examines key theoretical concepts and themes which I have selected in order to interrogate and structure the evidence more effectively.

In Chapter 2, I summarise conventional culture-history approaches to Iron Age and Romano-British communities, and then present an alternative historiography of the region informed by more critical post-colonial approaches to the past. In Chapter 3, I explore theoretical studies of landscape, the body and Self-identity, and use these to develop my own theory of relational agency in order to understand the complex interconnections between places, people, plants, animals and things. In Chapter 4, I discuss the national and regional palaeo-environmental and archaeological evidence for plant husbandry during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, and in Chapters 5 and 6, I consider the national and regional palaeo-environmental and archaeological evidence for animal husbandry. Chapter 7 explores concepts of land tenure, land

division and land use, and examines the field patterns recorded in the study region, assessing how these might inform understandings of the function and social importance of the field systems to people in the past. In Chapter 8, I take a short voyage into the river systems of the study region, and explore the practical and symbolic importance of water to Iron Age and Romano-British communities.

In Chapter 9, I return to the land-based evidence, and consider dwellings and settlements within the study region and how they might have been inhabited, understood and experienced during the Iron Age and Roman period. In Chapter 10, I look at the artefactual evidence, particularly metalwork and ceramics, and using critical contextual approaches I examine changes in production and consumption practices across the region and over the study period. Chapter 11 considers theoretical approaches to ritual behaviour, including death and burial; and proposes an integrated notion of ritualisation and depositional practice that unites previously disparate concepts of prosaic discard and structured deposition. Finally, in Chapter 12 I briefly summarise the evidence for the immediate post-Roman inhabitation of the study region, and then suggest a series of practical methodological measures and further archaeological investigations through which future research within the region can be taken forward. The varied chronological developmental trajectories of the field systems and enclosures across different parts of the study region is also summarised, and archaeologies of the everyday are discussed.

Appendix A presents the palaeo-environmental and archaeological data for plant husbandry and cultivation within the study region, both direct and detailed forms of evidence such as pollen analyses and carbonised seed remains, and more indirect forms of evidence such as the presence of quernstones, T-shaped corn driers and other features associated with the cultivation or processing of cereals. Appendix B outlines the archaeological and historical evidence for animal husbandry practices, and also considers relevant ethnographic data concerning human-animal relationships, seasonal movements of livestock, and animal health issues. It also considers the likely behaviours of different animal species and breeds, and how these would have affected human interactions with them. The detailed archaeozoological data from bone assemblages recovered from Iron Age and Romano-British sites excavated in the

study region is presented in Appendix C. Appendix D outlines many examples of the archaeological features associated with animal husbandry within the study region, including trackways or droveways, funnels and races, and pens and corrals. In Appendix E I examine some of the detailed data concerning features associated with dwelling and enclosures, listing examples of roundhouses, rectangular buildings, four-post structures, ovens and evidence for 'industrial' practices such as metal-working. Appendix E also presents the data from my analysis of roundhouse, rectangular building and enclosure entrance orientations, and my detailed discussion of the results. Appendix F outlines the data for 'ritual' practices within the study region during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Appendix G is the gazetteer of Iron Age and Romano-British sites in my study region. This is not a complete listing of every known archaeological investigation, but instead provides brief descriptions and interpretations of the results of the most significant excavation and survey projects to date, as well as some of the more interesting cropmarks or earthworks that have yet to be investigated further. In order to make this thesis a more manageable document, this appendix has not been printed out, but rather is presented on a CD included in the back of the third printed and bound volume.