Roman

by Chris Going

I. Introduction

This highly compressed survey summarises recent archaeological progress and focusses attention on topics where it is felt that further advances can most readily be made. It also draws attention to areas where evidence is still weak or non-existent and the need remains for further quite fundamental work.

By the end of the Iron Age and the coming of the Romans, the British begin to enter history. Now, something of the territories of at least four of the principal tribes of the region (the Catuvellauni, the Coritani/ Corieltauvi, the Iceni and the Trinovantes) is known from numismatics and from historical sources but of smaller groupings we know next to nothing. The initial relationships between the indigenous peoples and the newly-arrived Romans ranged from the cordial to the murderous, and their cultural links with and susceptibility to Romanitas — at least as exemplified by material finds — ranges from extensive to slight.

While published works devoted to the archaeology of the region form a substantial bibliography, no attempt has been made to present a comprehensive list. References are solely to works which conveniently summarise data or are relevant to a topic under consideration. However it is worth noting the principal accounts covering parts of the region which have been published in the past quarter-century. These comprise, for Cambridgeshire, Taylor (1975) and Browne (1980); for Essex, Rodwell (1975), Drury and Rodwell (1980), Wickenden (1996), and Going (1996); for Suffolk, Moore *et al*. (1988); and Robinson and Gregory (1987) for Norfolk. Hertfordshire is covered in part in Holgate (ed.) 1995. Two of the principal tribes of the region (the Trinovantes and the Catuvellaunii) have also been the subject of monographs (Dunnett 1975; Branigan 1985), although both of these now require fairly extensive revision. The reader wishing to assemble a more detailed bibliography than is given here should start with these works.

II. Fortifications and Towns

Early military sites

The earliest garrisons no doubt reflect the political allegiances of the local tribes as much as their military strengths. However, locating the initial disposition of the military forces within the region remains a distant goal. Greater understanding of its details and tracking the later deployment of the Roman army would be a signal advance in understanding how the various local tribes were welded into the emerging province of Britannia. Parts of the earliest known Legionary sites such as the fortresses at Colchester and Longthorpe have been explored in some detail (*e.g*. Crummy 1984) but other formal fortifications remain largely unexplored. The two overlapping forts known only from air photographs at Coddenham (Suffolk), and the putative fort at Great Chesterford which divides the Iceni from its southern and south-western neighbours, remain as ill-known as they were in 1971. Temporary military establishments such as marching camps, and scatters of metalwork (often recovered by metal detector users as at Saham Toney, Norfolk) indicative of other military installations, are also little investigated. Work on those in the Icenian Canton may throw light on the garrisoning of the area both before and after the revolt of AD 60. A welcome addition to our knowledge would be the publication of the recent excavations at Pakenham (Suffolk) which revealed the traces of a fortification post-dating the Icenian rebellion.

The major towns

Within the region lie four important urban centres: Colchester, Verulamium (St Albans), Caistor St Edmund and Water Newton. Brief syntheses of the results of work on all of these were published in John Wacher's ground-breaking survey of the towns of Roman Britain (1975); the first national survey undertaken. More recent work up to the early 1990s is conveniently summarised in the second edition (Wacher 1996).

The first three of these towns were, *inter alia*, Civitas capitals and the fourth probably reached similar status. In the first half of the 20th century, Colchester and Verulamium in particular were the subject of pioneering excavations and were the forcing house of many excavation techniques in use until the 1970s.

However, in the past quarter-century Colchester, largely because it underlies its modern successor, has seen most of the Roman urban excavation effort. The results of numerous excavations mounted by the Colchester Archaeological Trust have been impressive and have contributed substantially to knowledge of the Legionary fortress and its metrology, and also to our knowledge of processes of Romanisation and urbanisation within the Province (Crummy 1988; 1992a). They have thrown light on its extra-mural settlement and cemeteries, including, almost uniquely in Britain, a cemetery with an associated church (similar evidence has been found at St Stephens, St Albans). Other excavations have illuminated its vernacular architecture, its industries, its trade and commerce. The results of the Trust's work are published in a continuing research series (Crummy 1996).

Verulamium, Caistor St Edmund and Water Newton, being undeveloped, have seen comparatively little recent excavation and consequently rather less is known of these places. However, the droughts in recent summers have resulted in some impressively detailed crop-mark displays at each site and these should be recorded as a matter of course. Plan information derived from surveys of this kind, coupled with geotechnical survey, should allow concisely and effectively focussed projects to be mounted at these urban sites. Certainly the development and fortunes of Caistor St Edmund should be explored. Little has been done here and its formal street grid and amphitheatre hint at grandiose plans but its defences show that these may never have come to pass.

Figure 6 Location of places mentioned in the text: Roman

The development in the later Roman period of even these large towns is still poorly known. At Verulamium evidence of the continuance of civic amenities into the 5th century is well known but the picture elsewhere is confused. At Colchester there are signs of stagnation and decay (Faulkner 1994). Certainly the later Roman tower granary and corn drier at Culver Street hint at a different kind of town life to that envisaged in the 1st century AD, and there is evidence that the town could not sustain its pottery industry much into the 4th century AD. Projects designed to examine aspects of the larger later Roman towns could be informative.

The 'small towns'

Our knowledge of the origins and development of small towns in the region has recently received a useful impetus. In 1990 a national survey (Burnham and Wacher) reviewed current knowledge of fifty-four of the ninety or so recognised 'small towns' of Roman Britain. The survey included seven towns from our area: Cambridge and Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire; Braintree, Kelvedon and Great Chesterford in Essex, and Braughing in Hertfordshire. The little-understood site of Brampton was the only settlement from either Norfolk or Suffolk then selected for consideration, but more comprehensive coverage is now provided by Gurney (1995) and Plouviez (1995).

This work, in press when the first draft of this document was written, underscores the fact that while useful progress has been made since the last treatment of the topic (Rodwell and Rowley 1975), settlements at communications centres require very much more work before even their morphology, let alone their history can be elucidated with any confidence.

The database for Norfolk in particular remains meagre and there is scope for more work on this topic at sites such as Scole and Brampton, and at Hacheston in Suffolk. It was generally thought by respondents that within the 'small towns' themselves large-scale excavations represented a more cost-effective means of establishing their history and development than numerous small-scale excavations, although specific research-based topics could well be settled by 'tactical' excavation.

There was agreement, too, among the responding bodies that settlements of all kinds need to be examined, not as isolated entities but in relation to their hinterlands and that future projects should consider both town and countryside in conjunction as far as possible. Such projects could most usefully be planned on the back of large-scale non-invasive surveys, for which there was felt to be a need in such regions as parts of Hertfordshire.

III. Roads

The Roman road network of East Anglia has not been greatly extended since the time of the Viatores' useful if controversial work in Hertfordshire a generation ago (for a review of it *en passant* see Simco 1984), and the 4th edition (1993) Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain shows little addition to the network in the other counties. In some areas knowledge even of trunk routes remains sketchy, and the road network in littoral parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex remains more poorly known than one might wish. Local fieldwork has produced valuable results in some areas such as south-west Suffolk (Charge 1986) and similar work should be encouraged elsewhere. On a larger scale a programme which explores the air photographic evidence would greatly augment our knowledge of the network and would also reveal additional settlement sites, some of substantial importance. It is worth noting that with the exception of Nordelph (Kenny 1933) and perhaps Stebbingford (unpublished), no Roman bridges or culverts have been found in our region. Where roads cross rivers examination of the banks and beds might reveal them.

If the arterial network is ill-known, the smaller secondary or local routes (the *diverticula*) are almost wholly unexplored. Many short lengths have been found however (*e.g.* approaching the Rivenhall Roman villa: Rodwell and Rodwell 1985, pl. xiii a–b). Studies suggesting large scale landscape continuity have tended to imply that numerous trackways and field systems survived from the Roman period until quite recently. Selective trial sections might be carried out to assess these still largely untested hypotheses.

IV. The Countryside

Rural settlement

While there have been been numerous excavations of rural sites within the region, these tend to have been concentrated on high-status settlements — the villas. Work on these was directed principally towards establishing the plan of the domestic ranges of buildings and untangling their structural history rather than exploring the economic bases of their development. Interesting though it is to have plans for comparative purposes, a more informed understanding of the agrarian basis of the countryside is unlikely to come from this approach.

As with the small towns, it is felt that more integrated surveys which set these structures in their agrarian contexts (their economies, field systems and agricultural regimens) are required and that sites which are most likely to provide this, or which are likely to produce not only well-preserved secular structures but also present the chance of recovering organic remains (for example palaeobotanical data, or well-stratified assemblages of animal bone), should merit special attention. Attention ought to be paid, therefore, to establishing the settings of rural sites in as much detail as possible, and perhaps to using geophysical and other prospection techniques in order to obtain data plots of substantial parcels of land. This would allow excavations to be sited in places where the data yield is likely to be highest.

The unexpected potential of structural remains should not be underestimated, however. Rubble spreads found on several rural sites (*e.g.* at Meonstoke, Hants, and in Northamptonshire (Frere 1991, 253)) have recently been identified as the collapsed walls of buildings. These discoveries have made it possible to restore the external appearance of some rural structures with an accuracy which would have seemed impossible only a short time ago. Similar finds have occurred in East Anglia at Great Chesterford, Essex (Brinson 1963, fig. 24), where a whitewashed clay wall topped with a stone architrave was discovered; at Feltwell, Norfolk (Gurney 1986), and more modestly in the shape of a collapsed enclosure wall at Hadstock/Linton in Cambridgeshire (Ette and Hinds 1993, fig. 5). These finds indicate that others await

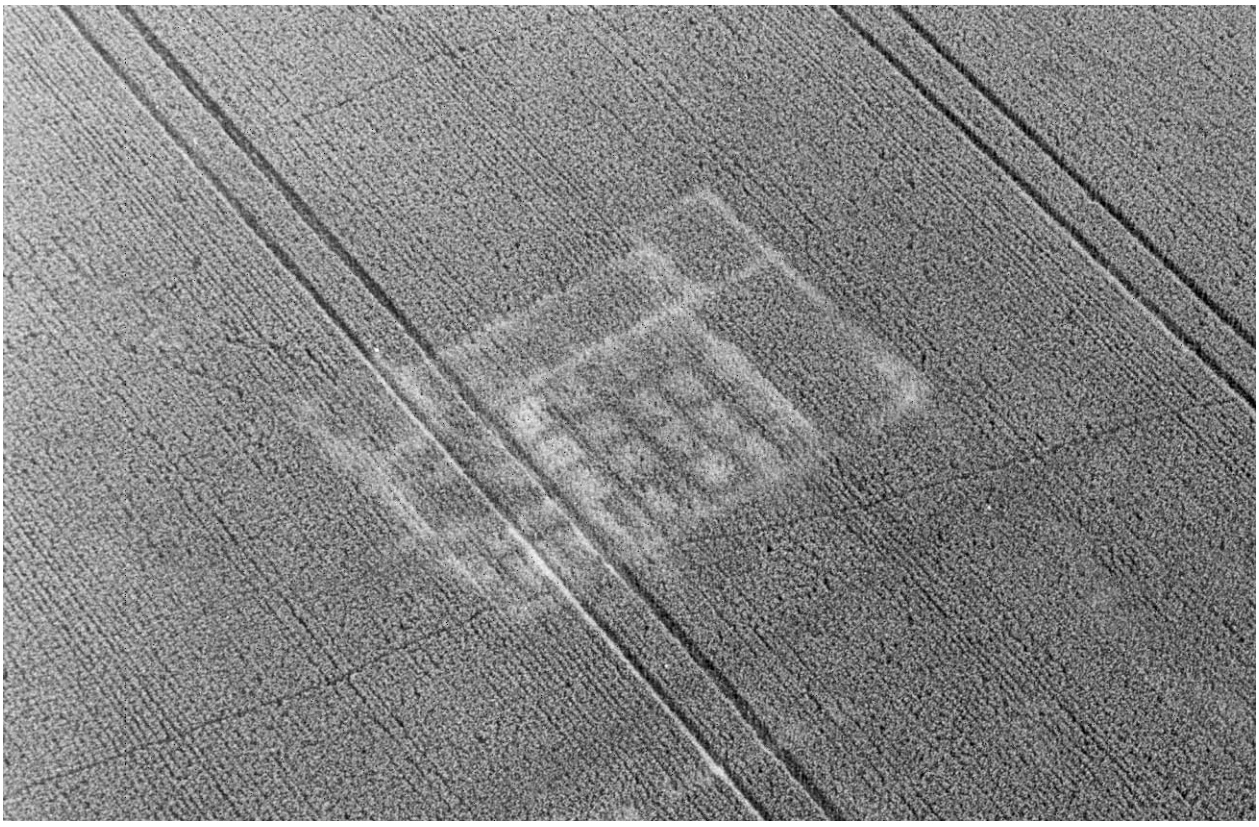

Plate V A recently discovered Roman villa in Norfolk. *Photo: D. A. Edwards,* 26 June 1996 (HKB 8)

discovery in East Anglia and that debris fields close to buildings merit careful examination — a lesson gracefully retailed in Britannia by Ling (1994).

Study of other kinds of rural settlement has not progressed as rapidly as might be desired. Little is known of villages, farmsteads, hamlets and other kinds of rural settlement in which, one imagines, the bulk of the population in the region actually lived. Indeed even a definition of settlement kinds appears to have escaped clear resolution and research into pragmatic systems of classification are clearly needed (*e.g.* Reece 1991). Study of the farm or fundus, and of isolated rural holdings in general, lags severely behind that of the villa. Numerous examples of farms certainly await investigation and it is unfortunate that one of the most extensively excavated examples in the region, that found at Mucking (Essex), remains unpublished.

The landscape

While specialists such as Murphy have published ennvironmental data which allow us to describe the environment of some rural sites in considerable detail, it is a disquieting fact that in an area where Bassett, Rodwell, Drury, and more recently Williamson have carried out landscape analysis on a major scale we cannot really describe the areas between Roman 'sites' in anything but the vaguest terms. Field surveys designed to assess more objectively the appearance of the Roman countryside and the density of settlement within it ought to be planned and implemented. East Anglia should have its equivalent of the Maddle Farm project. Such surveys, coupled with non-invasive geotechnical prospection and phosphate analysis could usefully augment our database and at last shed more light on the appearance of fields and woods of the region's Roman 'countryside'.

Palaeobotanical data has been of inestimable value in elucidating aspects of the Romano-British physical environment both on a macroscopic level, *e.g.* in outlining broad trends in woodland clearance, as well as throwing considerable light on local environments and, where the data is good enough, illuminating agrarian regimes and practices down to individual site level, as Murphy demonstrates. The continued elucidation at site level of *e.g.* field crop types, threshing techniques *etc.*, illuminate, as little else can, the appearance and development of the rural landscape while the identification of occasional imported exotica (such as the identification on sites in the region, of the Norway spruce, or of peacock bones) provide flashes of detail which are the stuff of archaeology. No opportunity should be missed to augment this important data, at whatever level, and suitable environments (such as peat beds and valley floors) should be scrutinised wherever it is feasible in order to build up generalised data on as wide a range of soil and landscape types as possible.

Likewise well-stratified faunal remains which can throw important light on animal husbandry, diet and other aspects of agricultural practice all contribute to a general picture and merit further work. The results greatly amplify the data available to those writing syntheses on the Agrarian economy (*e.g.* Wendens Ambo, Essex) and when artefactual data is woefully inadequate, as in the 5th century, charting the development of an area is often only possible with enironmental information — as the pollen data from the Chelmsford bypass so usefully demonstrates.

Figure 7 The villa at Great Holts, Boreham, Essex, as it may have appeared in the early 4th century AD. Masses of roof tiles were recovered from the bathhouse, virtually none from the area of the main building. The circular structures are haystacks. An extensive system of fields, paddocks and trackways was recovered south of the main building complex.

Burials

The recent spectacular early Roman burial finds in Essex at Stanway, Colchester (Crummy 1992b, 1993) and Stansted (Duck End) and near St Albans in Hertfordshire indicate that certain social strata in the Trinovantian/ Catuvellaunian region were fairly wealthy in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (see Whimster 1981 for their Iron Age antecendents). Philpott's recent (1991), synoptic survey sets these burial finds in their context with a useful series of Gazetteers which underscore how exceptional these burials actually are in East Anglia. Indeed his work indicates that both qualitatively and quantitatively East Anglia makes a generally meagre showing where burials are concerned, with Norfolk, for example, producing only some 200 for the entire Roman period. The identification of urban and especially rural Romano-British burials and cemeteries — particularly long-used or later Roman sites — remains therefore a task of some importance and reports of old discoveries might be reassessed. Among cemeteries of interest would be any attached to the Saxon Shore forts, for there are not yet any British equivalents to the cemetery at Oudenburg (Mertens and Van Impe 1964).

Examination of a sample of known cemeteries on a large enough scale to assemble valid sets of biometrical data on rural populations as well as allowing conclusions to be drawn on funerary ritual and behaviour would be useful here. Much also needs to be learned on matters of religious ritual associated with the disposal of the dead and large scale excavation to produce a good database must remain the best next step forwards. Later Roman burials which show evidence of heterodox ritual (such as the multiple interment with weapons found at Great Chesterford in 1854) ought to be explored whenever possible.

Religion

While excavation has shed much light on at least the material remains of Romano-British religious expression there remains much scope for future work. At the core of this will remain explorations of 'formal' or rustic religious sites in urban or 'small town' settings, *e.g.* at Godmanchester (Cambs) and Great Dunmow (Essex: Wickenden 1988). Many rural sites and shrines are brought to light by metal detector users and while excavation will remain perhaps the most informative of all modes of exploration, elucidating the history and nature of these rural sites will depend upon the analysis of surface finds gathered under controlled conditions. The results of work of this kind, notably at Walsingham/Wighton, Norfolk (Gurney 1995) attest to its value, and when coupled with the use of non-invasive geotechnical survey, can be impressively detailed. It is at shrine sites that one of the most intractable problems facing archaeologists in the region — recovering and integrating metal-detecting data into archaeological circles — remains most acute, for it is at similar sites, for the most part, that spectacular finds such as the Barkway and Thetford treasures and, perhaps, the Icklingham bronzes have been made. Recovery under archaeological supervision must remain the goal.

Religious sites which appear to span both the later pre-Roman Iron Age and the Roman period proper (such as the Harlow temple, Essex) may offer useful data on continuity of belief into the Roman era and the impact of a structured architectural enviroment on indigenous rituals. Deity couplings may throw additional light on syncretic beliefs.

Artefact deposits on these sites may throw useful light on both religious and other topics. Temples such as Harlow and Great Chesterford (Essex) and Haddenham (Cambs) have produced important bone assemblages and the slaughtered animals may provide useful insights into Romano-British animal husbandry. In this context the remarkable votive deposits discovered at the temple site at Castle Hill, Cambridge (Alexander unpub) ought to be examined as a priority. More integrated study of all find classes from temples or suspected religious sites is desirable. In the case of large numbers of objects the ritual significance may be obvious (skewed ceramic assemblages indicating feasting; large numbers of stone tools which are clearly 'ceraunia', as at Ivy Chimneys, Witham), but the 'meaning' of single finds — such as sink stones — is easily overlooked and should be sought out.

If Pagan religious practices remain largely obscure we also know remarkably little about the spread of Christianity within the region. The identification and excavation of the Christian church and cemetery at Butt Road, Colchester is a significant contribution to our knowledge (Crummy and Crossan 1993) but it remains virtually without local parallel. Sites such as Ivy Chimneys, Witham (Essex), which became a Christian centre, and the site at Icklingham (Suffolk) remain for the moment rare but further research is likely to produce other sites. Metal detecting has played as significant a part in the recovery of Christian artefacts as Pagan ones (most spectacularly at Water Newton), and steps need to be taken wherever possible to encourage the reporting of finds.

Industrial sites and potteries

Within the larger 'small towns' as well as in rural areas extractive and production industries undoubtedly operated on a substantial scale. Of these the most obvious, archaeologically speaking, are pottery production sites (for which see Swan 1984), tileries (McWhirr 1979) and Red Hills (Fawn *et al*. 1990). Ceramics production has been the subject of recent survey by Fulford and Huddleston (1991), in which the importance of certain local industries was pointed out. There is general consensus that the little-known potteries of Suffolk and Norfolk (and in particular those close to Brampton, at Wattisfield, and in the Nar valley) require attention in order to assist in dating sites within those areas while in Cambridgeshire the Horningsea complex, which supplied much of the Fen region, and the potteries in the vicinity of Water Newton, need further work. In Hertfordshire the Hadham complex and its relationship with the important pre-Roman *entrepot* and Roman 'small town' at Braughing require more study, as do the production sites in the vicinity of St Albans. Essex, while well served for publications, still merits work on some areas, notably on production sites in the south of the county (*cf.* Martin and Wallace 1996).

Ample scope exists for examining other industries, for example, salt production. Aerial reonnaissance has recently revealed substantial further 'red hill' sites in Essex and more survey work is clearly needed. Refining the chronology of these sites would be valuable, for they appear not to have been in continuous production throughout the Roman era. However their function in the later Roman period is enigmatic: evidence suggests that some were used in connection with animal husbandry

(Sealey 1995). Perhaps phosphate surveys might assist with interpretation. Other coastal industries have hardly been touched upon: while no hard evidence on the site has yet been published one such industry which ought to be thoroughly assessed is the putative salazon (fish sauce) production site on Canvey island, which if correctly identified will be the first known from Britain. Research on bivalve farming, too, might be of interest.

If our knowledge of economic activities associated with the region's coasts is nugatory other kinds of production site inland are still poorly known or understood. Chief among these is metalworking of all kinds, whether of copper alloy or, economically most important of all, of iron. Extraction sites must have existed wherever viable pan deposits were found, yet very little is known of these, or indeed of any other type of metalworking site. Better understanding of Roman iron working in the region must be a major research objective.

Other industries require attention almost as urgently. Among these is quern manufacture, a minor industry but one which must have left significant traces. Production sites are little known and outcrops of Hertfordshire puddingstone would certainly repay study. Elsewhere, for example in Chelmsford, horn cores indicative of leather working have been found and at Great Chesterford, a possible bone pin manufacturer's workshop has been excavated (unpub). Until we are capable of identifying more fugitive traces of other trades the range of activities directly attested by archaeological finds will remain pitifully small.

V. The later Roman Period

The Saxon Shore fort system

The region includes perhaps the most important stretch of the 'Saxon shore' of all, that vitally exposed length of it facing the 'German Ocean' from the mouth of the Wash to the Thames estuary. However there has been little recent excavation within the surviving forts (Walton has gone) at Brancaster, Burgh Castle, and Bradwell, although there has been some work in the fort environs of Brancaster and Bradwell (for a recent general survey of the relevant forts see Stephen Johnson's Gazetteer (1989) compiled for the Limes congress). The recent acquisition by the Norfolk Archaeological Trust of Burgh Castle may pave the way for useful work.

The dating of the earlier fortifications on the coast (for example the enclosure known from Derek Edwards' air photography at Brancaster and Caisteron Sea), and the way the mature defensive system operated certainly requires more exploration, as do the links between the forts and towns in the hinterland, a topic investigated some time ago by Barford in relation to Bradwell (unpub). Few of these East Anglian 'small towns' appear to have been equipped with defences in the later Roman period, in contrast to the towns west of the Fens, *i.e.* Ancaster, Water Newton, Great Casterton, Godmanchester (Durovigutum), Cambridge and Great Chesterford, which all appear to have been provided with walled defences in the 3rd or 4th centuries AD. When it is recalled that during the later 2nd century earthworks were erected round even quite small towns in Roman Essex the lack of 3rd–4th century AD defences at some of the more important centres in the East Anglian road net certainly merits more concerted study. In this context Great Chesterford needs further consideration as a putative nodal point of some importance. With its two walled circuits it is a most enigmatic site (Going in prep.).

The Roman-Saxon Transition

At the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th centuries AD, production of Romano-British material diminished very greatly. The money economy collapsed, and numerous other artefact types (such as glass) ceased to be traded to the British Isles. The Romano-British potteries went out of production and aceramic settlement becomes common. Without these vital chronological benchmarks, identifying continuing settlement becomes extremely difficult and dating it next to impossible.

The region as a whole differs greatly in the evidence which it offers of the immediately post-Roman centuries. In counties such as Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and parts of Essex, finds of 'Germanic' material are comparatively plentiful, and in consequence it is in these counties that most settlement and cemetery 'sites' have been discovered. Other areas such as west Essex and Hertfordshire, which produce very little Pagan 'Saxon' material (Sir Mortimer Wheeler's 'sub Roman triangle'), are characterised by an extreme paucity of material of any kind until 'chaff' tempered pottery makes its appearance across the region after the later 6th century. This lack of evidence was once considered to indicate abandonment, but in the light of more sensitive excavation and the recovery of palaeobotanical data which confirms continued anthropogenic disturbance, this lack is now being characterised as a kind of negative type fossil indicative of British survival (Rutherford Davies 1984).

While sites with 'long' stratigraphies spanning the 4th and 5th centuries are not unknown in this latter region (*e.g.* at Latimer (northern Bucks), and advocated at Rivenhall, Essex), we need to become more adept at recognising them here, and also in areas where Germanic data is more plentiful if we are to advance our understanding of the settlement history of the region. One of the ways 'long' stratigraphies might be identifiable, paradoxically, is from the treatment of certain classes of Roman artefacts. On some sites (*e.g.* West Stow, Mucking, Hinxton, and probably Heybridge, Essex) these seem to have been deliberately collected and curated. This suggests that they post-date the disappearance of ceramics use and must be later than *c*. AD 445/50. Quantification of Roman material in what are sometimes dismissed as very late Roman levels might restore post-Roman strata to some sort of archaeological visibility.

In sum the 'dark ages' remain a difficult and challenging period. It is clear that British survival was more widespread than has been assumed but lack of material finds in comparison with the later Roman period has rendered them, and no doubt many immigrant communities also, difficult to see. Many different kinds of evidence must be studied in an integrated fashion if the period is to be illumated effectively. One task which might be undertaken is on the complex allegiances of the region, work pioneered, sometimes waywardly, by the late John Morris. In this context an up-to-date synthesis of the Icknield way and the linear defensive systems which cross it is badly required.

VI. Environment and Economy

by Peter Murphy

Palynological data indicate that the process of progressive permanent woodland clearance initiated in the Bronze Age continued into the Roman period. At the Mar Dyke, sediments considered to be of Roman date produced pollen assemblages with as little as 10% tree pollen, and up to 5% cereal-type pollen (Scaife 1988, 109). A Late Iron Age/Roman well on the terrace gravels of the Blackwater at Slough House Farm gave comparable results, with tree and shrub pollen averaging only 12.5% (apart from willow, which was probably growing very close to the feature) and cereal-type consistently represented (Wiltshire and Murphy 1993).

Romano-British landscapes in many areas of Eastern England seem, above all, to have been agriculturally productive. Results from studies of charred crop remains indicate an emphasis on the production of spelt wheat. Spelt-dominated assemblages, remarkably uniform in composition, have come from sites in the fens (*e.g.* Stonea: Van der Veen 1991), Fen-edge (*e.g.* Maxey: Green 1985), the Boulder Clay Plateau (*e.g.* Duck End Farm, Stansted: Murphy 1990b), areas of light sand soils (*e.g.* Pakenham: Murphy and Wiltshire 1989) and coastal sites (*e.g.* Canvey Island: Wilkinson and Murphy 1995, 193). Other field crops from rural sites comprise six-row hulled barley and emmer, with lesser amounts of horse-bean, pea, oats, rye, and flax/linseed. Palynological results from a wood-lined pit at Scole, dated on ceramic evidence to the Roman period, have indicated the possibility of local viticulture and hemp cultivation (Wiltshire, in prep). Intensive cultivation resulted, in some areas, in increased soil erosion and alluviation: alluvium covering terrace gravels, and infilling palaeochannels, in the valleys of the Welland and Nene has been shown to be largely of Roman and post-Roman date (French and Pryor 1993; French 1983; 1988).

Roman wooden structures, including well-linings, are commonly of massive oak timbers (*e.g.* at Scole: Rogerson 1977, 111–117). High quality timber use is evinced by the turned furniture legs of walnut from Scole (Liversidge 1977). Roundwood and slatted well-linings (*e.g.* the lining of willow, hazel, oak and ash in a well at the Scole/Stuston Bypass: Murphy, in prep.) and hurdles, perhaps associated with management of sheep flocks on the Essex marshes (Wilkinson and Murphy 1995, 150 and forthcoming) have been recorded.

Roman faunal remains from Essex have been reviewed by Luff (1993), though much material elsewhere remains unpublished. The main trend is increased cattle exploitation and a decreasing importance of sheep, through the Roman period; a trend perhaps in part related to the increased intensity of arable farming, with its demand for traction power and manure. At Colchester, Luff concludes that sheep bones were not the by-products of a primarily wool-producing system, but were bred specifically to supply the city with meat. Some early military sites have produced relatively high levels of pig bones, a feature paralleled at contemporary Italian military sites (U. Albarella, pers. comm.). Other domestic stock included horses, dogs, cats and fowl. Elsewhere in the region published bone reports are few, though a Roman farmstead site at Haddon Lodge Farm on the line of the A605 has produced a good faunal assemblage (French 1994).

Plate VI Olive stones (top) and cone bract and nut of the Mediterranean stone-pine (below) from a Late Roman well at Great Holts Farm, Boreham, Essex
Scale 2:1

Although no rural estate has been fully excavated, it is possible to assemble a composite picture, largely from recent unpublished data. A burnt granary from Great Holts Farm, Boreham included spelt, barley and pulses in its post-hole fills (Murphy, in prep). Evidence for malting and malt-drying facilities, using spelt grain, has come from Stebbing Green, Boxfield Farm, (Stevenage), Solesbridge, (Chorleywood) and Scole (Murphy 1989a; 1990c, Fryer and Murphy in prep). The latter site also produced good evidence for a ploughed field with a hedge of willow/sallow, blackthorn/hawthorn, elder and bramble (Fryer and Murphy, in prep.). The basal fills of wells were sometimes natural accumulations (Greig 1988) but dumped crop processing and food wastes, such as spelt chaff and 'luxury' foods including walnut, stone-pine, olive and chestnut have been recovered, as at Great Holts (Pl. VI) and Scole (Jones 1977). The well at Great Holts also produced bones of red deer, hare and sparrowhawk, with a large number of thrush bones (the typical prey of the latter), hinting at an affluent life-style involving recreational hunting and hawking (Albarella, in prep). There is also evidence for rural gardens: an ornamental pond and other features associated with the villa estate at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester produced macrofossils of spruce, (hitherto thought to be a post-medieval introduction), box, yew, grape, beet, marigold, fig, fennel and opium poppy (Murphy, in prep.).

The Boudiccan destruction deposits at Colchester have produced extensive charred granary deposits,

comprising batches of spelt, spelt malt, emmer and bread wheat, stored as grain with very little chaff, few weed seeds and virtually no evidence for spoilage by damp or insects. 'Exotic' crops from these deposits include coriander, dates, figs and stone-pine cones (Murphy 1977; 1984; 1992c). Other specifically Mediterranean tastes are indicated by the unusual abundance of carpet-shells ('palourdes') and bones of mullets at Culver Street (Murphy 1992; Locker 1992). The most commonly-occurring fish species were eel, herring, plaice and flounder. Some oyster shell assemblages from North Shoebury are thought to have come from managed beds (Murphy 1995, 142–5). There is evidence for Roman cultivation *within* the city of Colchester, at Culver Street (Murphy 1992, 284–5) and just outside the walls, at Balkerne Lane (Crummy 1984, 138–141).

Military sites have been studied. Some dietary and parasitological data have come from first century latrine pits at Colchester (Murphy 1992), but of greater importance is the stratigraphic and air-photographic information permitting palaeogeographic reconstructions at Brancaster, Burgh Castle, Caister-on-Sea and Bradwell-on-Sea (Funnell and Pearson 1989; Godwin 1993; Murphy 1993; Murphy and Funnell 1985; Wilkinson and Murphy 1995, 195–6). Some, at least, of the Cambridgeshire Dykes are likely to be of late or immediately post-Roman date. Analysis of molluscs from buried soils and ditch fills associated with Devil's and Fleam Dyke, Brent and Bran Ditch (and also Worstead Street Roman road) points to open grassland habitats on chalk soils at the locations studied (Murphy 1993b). Micromorphological and other soil studies showed that truncated rendzinas and brownearths were represented (French, in prep.)

By about 1750BP, MHWST was at +0.4m OD at Tilbury (Devoy 1980, 145) and the Essex estuaries would have taken up roughly their present form: the palaeogeography of the Dengie peninsula is summarised by Wilkinson and Murphy (1995, 199). In the fens, extensive deposition of marine sediments (the Upper Silts or Terrington Beds) continued in some areas, though in parts of Norfolk there was a withdrawal of marine influence, and Roman settlement on these deposits. However, sediments, shown by foraminiferal analysis to be marine flood silts, between layers of metalling of the Fen Causeway at Nordelph show that this was still a hazardous environment (Godwin, in prep.). Freshwater flood events have been suggested during the 3rd century AD (Waller 1994, 78–9).

VII. Other Topics

Many could be mentioned (*cf* SPRS 1985) but doing so would unduly prolong the length of this document. The use of coinage, for example, is a matter of considerable complexity and interest. Surveys geared to providing fuller coin lists, similar to that prepared for Norfolk (Davies and Gregory 1991) might throw more light on the development of the monetised sector of the regions' economy. A survey of the coasts, devoted in particular to establishing the sites of harbour works might be extremely revealing, while work in the vicinity of fortifications like Burgh castle could provide evidence on later Roman ships and shipping. A database could be set up on possible wreck sites. There is at least one mortarium-carrying wreck in the Thames and other vessels must remain to be found.

Finally, some papers which challenged more conventional ideas about Roman Britain and the region in general, *e.g.* Reece (1980), Bartholomew (1984), Thompson (1991), have not all had an easy passage. It is now clear that data which might confirm or refute them is becoming available in greater quantities as the local database expands. Some of the questions raised by them should be kept in mind when new projects are framed.

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