

# Roman Buckinghamshire- Draft

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## *Nature of the Evidence Base*

Most of the written record for Roman Buckinghamshire has either been published in the county journal, *Records of Buckinghamshire*, or in the *Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series*, which contains reports on the work of the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit. More recent, post-1991 PPG16-related work is summarised in *South Midlands Archaeology*, and also in *Records*. More detailed reports on the latter resides as grey literature within the County SMR, alongside a wealth of unpublished fieldwalking data and miscellaneous small-scale works undertaken by the former county unit and various local societies.

Buckinghamshire does not present itself as a logical unit of study for this period, so the absence of countywide studies of Roman archaeology is not surprising. The most readily accessible summary of the county's Roman archaeology is to be found in *The Buckinghamshire Landscape* (Reed 1979, 42-52). A number of more localised studies deal with more topographically coherent areas; The Chilterns (Branigan 1967; Branigan 1971a; Branigan 1973a; Branigan and Niblett 2003; Hepple and Doggett 1994) the Ouse valley (Green 1956; Zeepvat 1987; Dawson 2000), the Chess valley (Branigan 1967) and the Milton Keynes area (Zeepvat 1991a & 1991b; Zeepvat 1993b). The *civitas Catuvellaunorum*, the Roman administrative unit that includes the present county of Buckinghamshire, has been described by Branigan (1987).

Buckinghamshire's more readily identifiable Roman sites attracted a number of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century investigations. Several substantial Roman villas, such as Tingewick (Roundell 1862) and Yewden villa, Hambledon (Cocks 1921), were excavated during this period. During the 1830s the Duke of Buckingham examined the two large burial mounds at Thornborough (RCHM 1913, 298). The Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society was founded in 1847, and its journal has since provided the principal vehicle for the publication of archaeological discoveries in the county. More recently, the Society was instrumental in the foundation of the County Museum in the early 1900s.

During the latter half of the last century, significant contributions to our understanding of the archaeology of the county were made by local societies: the County Museum Archaeological Group, the Chess Valley society in the Chilterns, and the Wolverton and Bletchley societies in north Buckinghamshire. The distribution patterns of Roman finds in Buckinghamshire have been inevitably influenced by fieldwalking and other investigations carried out by these local societies.

In the 1960s the County Museum added to its staff a Field Archaeologist, who became the nucleus of a small rescue unit. In the north of the county, in 1971 the Milton Keynes Development Corporation appointed two archaeologists to deal with sites affected by the development of the new city, forming the nucleus of the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit. The work undertaken by the Milton Keynes Unit has provided the county with its greatest source of Roman data so far recovered through modern excavation and fieldwork techniques.

Rescue work by the County Unit in the 1970's and 1980's and subsequent PPG16 driven work has produced a small number of minor Roman sites outside Milton Keynes. More recently, large gravel quarry sites on the Middle Thames gravels have revealed more extensive Roman landscapes, as at The Lea, Denham (Coleman *et al* 2004) and All Souls Quarry, Wexham (TVAS forthcoming). Similar contributions have been made by road schemes, for example the Aston Clinton Bypass (RPS 2005), pipelines and flood relief works, notably the Eton Rowing Lake project (*cf* Allen & Welsh 1998; Allen 2005). More recently, Leicester University's Whittlewood Project, which has involved intensive fieldwalking and test pitting in several north Bucks villages, has demonstrated the close density of Roman activity in this part of the Vale (*cf* Jones 2003).

### ***Inheritance***

There is sufficient evidence in Buckinghamshire to point to general continuity of settlement from the Late Iron Age into the post-conquest period, with some realignment orientated on the new road network and small towns. In the northern part of the county the hillfort at Danesborough, believed to be the local tribal centre, was replaced by the small town of *Magiovinium*, three kilometres to the south (Zeepvat 1987, 8). In its hinterland there is a mixed picture of later 1<sup>st</sup>-century continuity, for example Westbury and Caldecote (Zeepvat

1993b, 11) relocation, as at Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al* 1996), Hartigans (Williams 1993) and Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994), and discontinuity or decline, for example Furzton (Williams 1996) and Pennyland (Williams 1993, 11). Williams (*ibid*, 215) suggests that the quality of agricultural land may be a significant factor in determining which settlements survived and prospered under Roman rule.

There is evidence for both the continuity of roundhouse forms and the adoption of rectangular wooden buildings by the native population, e.g. Latimer (Branigan 1967, 138). In the north of the county the roundhouse form survives throughout the Roman period, with the addition of a dwarf wall of stone at its base, providing a firm, dry footing. Examples vary widely in size: at Bancroft there are four, ranging from 6m to 14m in diameter. This type of structure is most common in the upper Ouse and upper Nene valleys, and has been discussed in some detail (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 207-208).

There also appears to be some continuity of agricultural systems, as indicated by the similarity of pre and post-conquest bone assemblages, as at Bierton (Allen 1986) and Bancroft. A number of sites appear to develop quickly into high status villas, for example Bierton, Hambledon (Cocks 1921) and Saunderton (Ashcroft 1940), suggesting the rapid adoption of *Romanitas* by sections of the native elite.

In the Vale of Aylesbury it is possible to point to good evidence for continuity of LPRIA settlement activity on the more favourable soils of the Portland Limestone e.g. Bierton (Allen 1986), Walton High School (Babtie 2003), Walton Court (Farley *et al* 1981) and further west at Long Crendon (Carstairs 1984). Evidence for settlement on the clays has been less forthcoming. However around Aylesbury after the conquest the clay soils appear to become less of a consideration as other factors such as communications along the newly established road network become a significant and the settlement focus shifts towards Akeman Street, with the establishment of a roadside settlement or small town at Fleet Marston. The small-scale activity recorded at Buckingham Street, Aylesbury (Allen 1982, 82 & 105) and the laying out of a planned settlement at Berryfields, Aylesbury, consisting of small rectangular plots laid out along a trackway (Dodds 2002, 31-32) also suggests a refocusing of settlement activity on the emerging road network. At the Billingfield, Quarendon, grog tempered pottery and early Roman pottery was found in features located within 75m of Akeman Street (Cox 1997 30-32).

The only convincing evidence too date for pre-conquest settlement hierarchy in the southern vale is the presence of high status pottery imports at Bierton, a site which evolved into a villa in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In the northern vale at Bourton Grounds, Thornborough, a pre-conquest trackway and ford became the focus for an adjacent Roman road and occupation/temple site(Johnson 1975). , and

On the Icknield belt and in the Saunderton gap there is again evidence for continuity. Belgic pottery was recovered from the Saunderton villa site (Ashcroft 1940), and late Iron Age and Roman pottery from the settlement at Lodge Hill (SMR0879). More tangible evidence was produced by excavations on the route of the Aston Clinton bypass, where a late Iron Age settlement trackway was crudely metalled in the Roman period, and late Iron Age boundaries were re-cut into the later 1st century (RPS 2005, xii).

Elsewhere in the Chilterns, late Iron Age pottery was noted at the possible villa site at Cobblers Hill, Great Missenden (SMR01005) and 'Belgic pottery' at Hambleton Villa (Cocks 1921). There is currently a lack of data for the Burnham plateau, which has yet to produce evidence for dense settlement. At All Soul's Quarry, Wexham, quantities of grog-tempered pottery and small amounts of calcined-flint tempered Silchester ware was recovered from an early settlement ditch suggesting that activity had begun soon after, if not before the conquest (Lyne, 2006, 2).

Although in terms of settlement hierarchy, cultural or religious focus there is no evidence for any of the Buckinghamshire hillforts playing a significant role in the Roman period, activity appears to have continued close to, if not within, earlier hillfort locations. In the north of the county, the relationship between Danesborough and *Magiovinium* has already been mentioned. At Aylesbury the focus shifts to a new roadside settlement at Fleet Marston on Akeman Street (Kidd 2004, 107-108) although Roman activity has been noted close the hillfort (e.g. Sainsbury's, Buckingham Street). Elsewhere settlement activity has been recorded close to hillfort sites, e.g. in the valley close to West Wycombe hillfort (SMR5775), adjacent to Chedington Hillfort (SMR 1269) and at Taplow Cricket ground (SMR 1561). It is worth noting that as yet only Cholesbury and possibly Danesborough hillfort have produced evidence of Late Iron Age activity.

## *Military Evidence*

On presently available evidence, there was relatively little military activity in Buckinghamshire during the Roman period. Most authorities (e.g. Webster 1980) suggest that the advance of the *Legio XIV Gemina* to the west Midlands followed the line of Watling Street, taking them through the Milton Keynes area. It has been suggested (Niblett 2001, 54-55) that this part of the Catuvellanian canton was relatively easily incorporated into Roman power structures, perhaps as a result of political agreement.

Four possible 'forts' are recorded in Buckinghamshire. Just outside *Magiovinium*, overlooking the Watling Street crossing of the Ouzel, a double ditched rectangular enclosure was sectioned, revealing a V-shaped ditch. This has been tentatively identified as an auxiliary fort, dated to the Neronian period (Woodfield 1977, 384-399). Elsewhere, an enclosure with a V-shaped ditch at Hambledon villa was identified as a potential military feature in the 1920's (Cocks 1921). Webster (1980, 118) records the roadside settlement at Fleet Marston as a possible conquest fort but there is no firm evidence for this. A reference on a map of 1878 to a fort at Holywell Mead, High Wycombe, probably relates to the nearby villa. Excavations and a comprehensive geophysical surveys undertaken on the villa complex has identified a villa, gatehouse, bath house, possible second bath house suite, outbuildings and perimeter wall but no trace of a fort (Hartley 1959, Northamptonshire Archaeology 2001a, Northamptonshire Archaeology 2001b).

At Walton Court, Aylesbury, items of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-century military metalwork were recorded, including a harness junction clip from Germany, apron or belt mounts and a spearhead (Farley *et al* 1981, 53). A model bronze scythe was also found, which has parallels with military graves in the Rhineland and may point to a shrine in the vicinity, perhaps located close to the nearby ford (Green 1981, 61-62). Branigan (1987, 37) suggests that Walton could have been the site of a fort, equidistant from another possible fort at Cow Roast, Hertfordshire, and Alchester, on the line of the later Akeman Street. Elsewhere in the county, a distinct lack of evidence for military equipment, military structures or significant quantities of early coinage associated with roads and settlements adds weight to the suggestion that some, if not all of the Catuvellaunian canton offered little resistance to the Roman advance.

A dendrochronological date of AD44 from a timber gate post at Alchester provides an important pointer to the likely early establishment of Akeman Street as a military supply route

linking Verulamium and Cirencester via Alchester. Henig and Booth has suggested that Akeman Street was established by AD47 (Henig and Booth 2000, 35). Ainslie has suggested that the road could represent an early provincial frontier or *limes*, however Booth dismisses this suggestion in his draft paper for this research framework (Ainslie 2005; Booth 2007)

### ***Transport***

At present no well established pre-conquest cross country routeway can be demonstrated from archaeological evidence. Traditionally the Icknield Way, which follows the line of the Chiltern scarp across the county, has been seen as a routeway established in prehistory. However recent excavations across its projected winter and summer line have failed to produce any evidence for either a prehistoric trackway nor later metalled Roman road (Harrison 2003; Kidd 2007). For example investigations on the route of the Aston Clinton bypass failed to identify any trace of the 'Lower Icknield Way', but did reveal a prehistoric settlement lying across its predicted route (RPS 2005). This evidence should serve as a caution not to over-interpret this route.

Bull has postulated the survival of a "bi-axial" pattern of roads and trackways surviving to the present day across the Chilterns and north Buckinghamshire which he suggested pre-dated the Roman road network (Bull, 1993). The results of the recent Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project offer some support for this theory although the date and extent of this pattern remains unclear. For example Akeman Street appears to cut surviving co-axial boundaries at Aston Clinton (Green and Kidd, 2006; Kidd 2007).

Studies of Roman roads indicate that they can be divided into major and minor categories. The major routes, such as those detailed in the *Antonine Itinerary* (reproduced in OS 1978, fig. 2), were constructed primarily to provide a network over which troops, supplies and communications could be swiftly moved. The only road in Buckinghamshire falling into this category is the section of *Watling Street* linking *Durocbrivis* (Dunstable) with *Magiovinium* and *Lactodorum* (Towcester). Little evidence for the construction of the road has been forthcoming from development in Milton Keynes, despite the excavation of several major service trenches across its route. However, excavations at *Magiovinium* (Neal 1987) have shown that Watling Street cuts across a grid of land boundaries associated with the Neronian

fort and a possible earlier route that crossed the Ouzel at Water Eaton, south of the Watling Street crossing (Waugh, Mynard & Cain 1974).

Between the major roads there was a network of lesser roads, linking the various population centres, serving mostly non-official travel and commerce. The detailed road network suggested for most of south-east England by the Viatores (1964) has been shown by more recent studies (Simco 1984; Zeepvat 1987) to be suspect. The roads in Buckinghamshire that can be identified as Roman with some certainty are: Akeman Street, from *Verulamium* to Alchester; the Alchester-Towcester road (Viatores 160), the road from Fleet Marston towards Thornborough (Viatores 162), and the Fenny Stratford to Thornborough road (Viatores 166). Excavations at *Magiovinium* revealed a road running northwards from the town, suggesting a route up the east side of the Ouzel valley to the settlement at Ashfurlong, near Olney, and thence presumably to Irchester. The Viatores incorrectly placed this road on the west side of the Ouzel valley (Viatores 174). In addition to the above, a road has also been suggested following the same general line as the present A40, across the county from Uxbridge to Stokenchurch (Morris *et al* 1970).

Available evidence suggests that the road system is mostly 1<sup>st</sup> century in origin. The road northwards from Fleet Marston has been sectioned twice at Brightmoor Farm, Thornborough (unpublished excavation, CAS1971), and in Waddesdon Parish, close to where finds and geophysics suggest a farmstead or small villa (Catheral 1984, 26-27 and figs 11-12; Bartlett 2005). The road was a simple metalled surface of flints and limestone pebbles 5.2m in width. Dating was inconclusive, although at Thornborough significant quantities of 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century material was recovered from the road surface. Akeman Street was sectioned at Billingsfield, Quarrendon, revealing a gravel surface up to 6.6m wide, with flanking ditches. The gravel surface had been constructed on a raised bank of three make-up deposits, with a buried soil possibly surviving beneath. The road seems to have been constructed at an early stage in the Roman occupation, as two cremation urns of mid 1<sup>st</sup>-century date were inserted into pits cutting the edge of the outer ditch. Pottery from the fills of the flanking ditches was 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>-century in date (Cox 1997). Related quarry pits and traces of make up layers of Akeman Street were also encountered at the Aston Clinton bypass (RPS 2005, x). At Stowe, the Alchester to Towcester road was encountered but not fully sectioned (Marshall 1996).

Two roads and a pre-conquest metalled trackway were sectioned at the river crossing at

Thornborough (Johnson 1975). The roads appeared to date from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century and continued in use to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The construction of the agger was of a single phase of limestone blocks without evidence for remetalling or wheel ruts. The site appears to have been a ford: no traces of a bridge were noted.

In addition to the above there must also have been a network of trackways linking villas and farmsteads to the road network. Examples of minor trackways have been recorded on the Aston Clinton bypass, at Berryfields, Aylesbury, and at the villa sites at Bancroft and Mantles Green, Amersham (Yeoman & Stewart 1992).

As well as roads, it is likely that some use was made of the larger rivers in the county for transport. Evidence for this is hard to find, because of changing water levels, later works connected with mills, water management and navigation, and dredging. Excavations at Thornborough revealed a possible access road to a quay on the Ouse, known here as the Twin (Johnson 1975, 175). The remains of a possible timber quay was noted downstream at Thornton, and a possible stone quay was recorded near Hill Farm, Haversham (Green 1970, 58) these point to the movement of goods along the Ouse in the Roman period. The riverside situation of sites such as Stanton Low, Emberton and Ashfurlong tend to reinforce this suggestion. Elsewhere the unusually large number of corn drying ovens at Yewden villa and the close juxtaposition of Mill End Villa, lying just to the south on the bank of the Thames, point to some kind of industrial/commercial role orientated on the Thames river corridor (Cocks 1921).

### ***Urban Settlement***

Historic Buckinghamshire only contains one small town, *Magiovinium* (Dropshort Farm, Fenny Stratford) located close to the Watling Street crossing of the Ouzel. The town itself, which appears from air photographs to be encompassed by an earth bank and ditch, covers c.7.5 hectares, straddling Watling Street. The town is a scheduled monument and little of it has been examined, though evidence of stone and timber buildings has come from ditching operations. Its extensive suburbs to the south-east along Watling Street have been excavated (Neal 1987; Collard 1988; Hunn *et al* 1995), revealing rows of timber buildings, probably shops, inns etc, fronting the road.

There are also two moderately large settlements in the county which may yet prove to be small towns., At Fleet Marston on Akeman Street, west of Aylesbury, the discovery over time of significant quantities of 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>-century pottery and tile spreads, coins, and metalwork, including a pewter hoard and a lead coffin, points to a sizable settlement and/or posting station at the junction of Akeman Street and the road leading northwards to Thornborough (Parkhouse 1997). Although Fleet Marston has yet to produce any conclusive evidence for the presence of public buildings or satellite villa settlement, its status remains an open question.

The second settlement is located in the north of the county at Ashfurlong, near Olney, in the Ouse valley. As at Fleet Marston, significant amounts of Roman pottery, building materials and coins have been recovered over time from an area covering several hectares (*cf* Anon 1969). Air photograph evidence records the presence of circular features, enclosures and rectangular stone buildings. The site is located on the line of the probable road from *Magiovinium* to Irchester, close to the point where it should cross the Ouse. Like Fleet Marston, Ashfurlong could be a settlement and/or a posting station. Alternatively, it could be a more elaborate villa-like complex like that upstream at Stanton Low (Woodfield 1989). Another large spread of Roman material has been noted close to the Roman Temple site at Thornborough, which lies close to an important road junction, this is another candidate for a nucleated Road side settlement (SMR 2046, SMR2167).

### ***Rural Settlement***

The pattern of rural settlement in Bucks is of dispersed agrarian villas and farmsteads. In the most intensively studied area around Milton Keynes, Zeepvat (1993b, 10) notes a variety of different sized units ranging from 'native' type small farmsteads, for example Wood Corner, Campbell Park, Woughton, (Mynard 1987, 52-59, 79-81, 90-96) and Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al* 1996) through to small farms with Roman-style buildings, such as Wymbush (Mynard 1987, 82-90; Zeepvat 1988) and more substantial villas like Bancroft and Stantonbury (Mynard 1987, 97-104. Aside from the major villa sites little evidence for specialisation has been noted, other than small-scale pottery production sites, for example Gerrards Cross (Stainton & Stanley 1987), Hedgerley (Oakley *et al* 1937) and Fulmer (Tarrant & Sandford 1972), and roadside shrines such as Bourton Grounds (Green 1965), Thornborough and perhaps Wavendon Gate. Evidence for nucleated 'village' settlement is absent to date.

The more productive agricultural land in the county, for example the chalk marl and Greensand of the Icknield Way corridor, the Portland ridge through Aylesbury, and to a lesser extent the Chiltern valleys, has demonstrated villa and farm concentrations orientated on arterial roads linking farms to urban markets. However, where fieldwalking has been carried out systematically to the west of Aylesbury and in the Whittlewood area, north of Buckingham, it has demonstrated a dense pattern of occupation on the vale clays. Fieldwalking for the Whittlewood Forest Study undertaken by the University of Leicester has targeted available arable fields from a group of parishes in the northern part of the vale, producing evidence for several Roman-British occupation sites at approximately 1km intervals (Jones 2002). Similar patterns were noted in the results of fieldwalking by the County Museum group in the Pitchcott, Whitchurch, and Hardwick areas.

At present there is a noticeable lack of evidence for villa settlement in the western part of the midvale ridge and northern upper Thames clay vale. A provisional hypothesis would be that the less productive clays here were populated with low/medium status farmstead and perhaps specialised sites servicing the larger settlements at Alchester and Fleet Marston, with more high status farmsteads or villas clustered along the Icknield belt to the south or to the north around Thornborough, an important road junction that linked the Ouse Valley with *Lactodorum* and *Magiovinium*.

The current data suggests that the chalk and flint dip-slope of the Chilterns was generally avoided in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, with occupation confined to the chalk and alluvial soils of the valleys. It is possible that 20<sup>th</sup>-century forest cover and pastoral farming may be partially responsible for gaps in the data: however, the fieldwalking that has been done on the dip slope has been unproductive (Farley *et al* 1988, 358). It is notable that south of the Chilterns on the Burnham plateau and along the Buckinghamshire section of the Thames valley Roman settlement evidence is sparse and villa sites appear few and far between. It is unclear whether this is related to the noted general scarcity of villa and other settlement immediately north of London and westward along the gravel terraces (Perring 2000, 156; Hodder and Millett 1980). However it should be noted that the excavation of larger gravel sites, such as All Souls, Wexham (TVAS forthcoming), The Lea, Denham (Coleman *et al* 2004; Anon 2005; Anon 2006) and flood alleviation work along the Thames,

for example Eton Rowing Lake, Dorney (*cf* Allen & Welsh 1998; Allen 2005), has begun to identify a number of dispersed farmsteads in this area.

### *Villas and Farm Estates*

Present evidence suggests that the distribution of villas in Buckinghamshire is concentrated to north around *Magiovinium* and the Ouse valley, along the Icknield Belt and the Chiltern valleys. There is a notable absence of villa sites on the clay vale away from the known road network, and also to the south on the Burnham plateau. Also, Young (1986, 60) notes that despite relatively dense settlement, parts of the Middle Thames valley are markedly lacking in villas.

In her gazetteer of Roman villas, Scott (1993) lists eighty-four villa sites in Buckinghamshire, based largely on a search of the county sites and monuments record. As its author admits, this list should be treated with some caution, as it does include many sites where the sole evidence is the presence of Roman tile and pottery, and it leaves the definition of a 'villa' to the reader. There is clearly scope for further study on this subject.

The most comprehensively examined villa site in the Ouse valley area is Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994). Excavations have also been carried out at Stantonbury (Mynard 1987, 97-104), Stanton Low (Woodfield 1989), Sherwood Drive and Holne Chase, Bletchley (Mynard 1987, 30-31 & 39-40), Tingewick (Roundell 1862) and Hill Farm, Haversham (Mudd 2006). Villa sites are also known or suspected at Foscott, Gayhurst, Lavendon, Ravenstone, Shenley Brook End, Water Stratford and Weston Underwood (Scott 1993).

In the Chilterns, the villa at Latimer (Branigan 1971b; Branigan 1973b) has been subject to extensive examination. Excavations have also taken place at Bury Farm, Amersham (CVAHS 1985), Mantles Green, Amersham (Yeoman & Stewart 1992), Hollywell Mead, High Wycombe (Hartley 1959), Kings Field, Terrick (Stone 1859) and Saunderton Mill (Ashcroft 1938, 1939, 1940; Branigan 1969). Other villas are known or suspected at Saunderton Lee, Chalfont St Peter and Pitstone (Scott 1993).

In the south of the county, the large villa at Yewden, Hambleden was excavated in 1914, (Cocks 1921). The excavation recovered small amounts of 'Belgic' pottery and the villa complex

was established in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The villa was later expanded with flanking corridor and rooms added. A significant number of Corn drying ovens (14 ovens of variety of designs) were recorded and may indicate an exceptional level of food processing at the site, this taken with the unusual number of styli found on the site has led Cocks to suggest that the Villa was under government control (Cocks, 1921). The exceptional number of neo-natal and infant burials was also notable. The villa is one of largest in its class in Thames Valley and has an interesting and usually close relationship with the adjacent Mill End Villa, which lies 600m to the south, on the bank of the Thames. The villa has not excavated but is visible on aerial photographs. The relationship is curious because it has a parallel in the adjacent parish of Medmenham where two hillforts of Middle Iron Age or earlier date share a similar relationship (Medmenham and Danesfield Camp).

Some villas, such as Bancroft, appear to have developed from existing native settlements in the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Branigan (1967, 139) notes the even spacing of villas every 2-3km along the Chiltern Valleys and suggests a formal laying-out of holdings of between 450-600 acres in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The early insertion of bath suites and underfloor heating into Latimer villa leads him to suggest that these were the country residences of *decuriones*, probably from *Verulamium* (Branigan 1967, 147). It is worth noting that a similar pattern of villa distribution has been noted in the Ouse valley (Zeepvat 1991a, 23) and in the Nene valley in Northamptonshire, also a part of the *civitas Catuvellaunorum* (Taylor 1975).

As well as variations in the distribution of villas throughout the county, there are variations in the apparent wealth of villas in different areas. Zeepvat (1991b, 57) notes that, in general, the wealth of the villas around *Magiovinium* did not match the same standards of wealth as displayed in the Chilterns, reflecting the lesser status and wealth of the town compared to *Verulamium*.

Yards, outbuildings and industrial structures related to villa or farm estates have been excavated at Bancroft, Stantonbury, Stanton Low, Mantles Green, Wexham Quarry and Three Locks Golf Course, Stoke Hammond (Ford *et al* 2000, 35-54). At Bancroft were a trackway and extensive yard, two large stone-built barns, a possible granary, a smithy, several circular stone-footed buildings, and stone-walled enclosures that were identified as vegetable and herb gardens. This phase of activity continued to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. At Stantonbury, two large stone-footed circular buildings were associated with a walled yard, containing a possible granary with a small bath suite attached, an also a smaller circular building. Excavations at

Mantles Green revealed trackways, a possible ford, evidence for boundaries, timber buildings, a large rectangular flint-footed building, a cobbled yard, a twin-flue 'corn dryer' and a possible furnace, along with smithing waste and a large assemblage of iron objects. This activity commenced in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century and continued to late 4<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, a 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century stone building probably related to the nearby villa was examined at Hill Farm, Haversham (Mudd 2006, 1-18). At Mount Wood, Chenies, buildings with flint foundations and a corn-drying oven were probably associated with the nearby villa at Valley Farm (Dunnett 1985).

To date, in-depth analysis of the changing fortunes of rural settlement in Buckinghamshire has only been attempted for sites in the Ouse valley, albeit with some reference to sites in adjoining areas (Zeepvat 1987, 8-10). In general, the pattern revealed was one of expansion in the late 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. While this continues into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on some sites, the aisled house at Bancroft appears to have been destroyed by fire in c.AD170, with little evidence for activity on the site during most of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. There seems to have been a resurgence of prosperity in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century, when a new house was built at Bancroft. This prosperity continues until the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, after which the picture becomes more difficult to interpret. Coin evidence suggests that Bancroft continued to be occupied until the end of the Roman period, as does the *vicus* at *Magiovinium*. Elsewhere, the villa at Yewden was probably abandoned in late 4<sup>th</sup> century, whilst Latimer was reduced in size by c.350, though it continued in occupation.

### ***Native Settlement***

Excavated evidence for native-type settlements of Roman date in the county is mainly confined to the Ouse and Thames valley areas. At Fenny Lock, excavations revealed penannular hut gullies, field systems and paddocks that went out of use at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Close by, a large early Roman enclosure was succeeded by later Roman penannular enclosures, ditched field boundaries and a structure later rebuilt in stone (Ford and Taylor 2001, 79-123). At Wood Corner, a timber-framed rectangular structure of mid to late 2<sup>nd</sup>-century date was superseded by circular timber structures in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In the mid to late 3<sup>rd</sup> century a rectangular structure was constructed within a substantial enclosure ditch (Mynard 1987, 52-60). At Wavendon Gate, an Iron Age settlement was superseded by an early Roman ditched enclosure containing pottery kilns, and also cremation

and inhumation burials (Williams *et al* 1996). Evidence of occupation associated with both agriculture and metalworking was found at Caldecotte, in the Ouzel valley (Zeepvat *et al* 1994).

Moving up the social scale, excavations (Mynard 1987, 82-89) and a subsequent watching brief (Zeepvat 1988) at Wymbush, 1.5km south of Bancroft, revealed a small late 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Roman farmstead, comprising a rectangular stone house with *opus signinum* floors, and at least two large barns, within a ditched enclosure estimated to be 100m square. The site appears to have a relatively short life, appearing to have ceased to be occupied by the late third century. This short period of occupation corresponds to the period of abandonment recognised at Bancroft, and it has been suggested (*ibid.*) that the history of these sites might be linked.

In contrast, excavated evidence from the vale of Aylesbury is limited. However, fieldwalking has produced evidence for the establishment of new sites in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century close to Akeman Street, for example at Waddesdon (SMR6328; Farley 1999a) and Ham Green, Grendon Underwood (SMR0572). Recent investigations have suggested the existence of another class of planned roadside settlement east of Fleet Marston at Berryfields, Aylesbury, also orientated on Akeman Street. The pottery from the evaluation indicates a broad 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>-century date for a row of ditched plots laid out along a trackway. The slight predominance of 2<sup>nd</sup>-century sherds suggested that the site was more intensively occupied at this time. The pottery was mostly local greywares, but also included imports from Hertfordshire, Essex, Oxfordshire and Gaulish wares (Dodds 2002).

On the chalk at Aston Clinton Bypass site B Late Iron Age settlement continued into the Roman period with recutting of ditches and evidence for early Roman Iron working. Later Roman features included two large square pits, probably waterholes, and two square wells. The coin profile suggested activity through to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (RPS 2005, xii).

There is presently little evidence for native-type settlement in the Buckinghamshire Chilterns. This could be explained by a lack of systematic fieldwork, difficult terrain and the existence of large areas of modern woodland. Examination of evidence from the Bedfordshire Chilterns, to the north-east, shows an apparent similar lack of sites, with the exception of the

town of *Durocobrivis* (Dunstable), on Watling Street close to the Chiltern scarp (Clark and Dawson 1995). In the Hertfordshire Chilterns, east of Tring, extensive evidence of late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and agriculture has been revealed (Morris and Wainwright 1995). Similarly, native sites revealed in a study of the Chiltern dip-slope in Hertfordshire around St Albans (Hunn 1995), may suggest that there is scope for further discoveries of this class of site in Buckinghamshire.

In the Thames valley area, early Roman native sites recorded at the Eton Rowing Lake were abandoned in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and there is less evidence for 4<sup>th</sup>-century settlement in the area (Allen 2005). At The Lea, Denham, a low to medium-status settlement dated to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century consisted of rectangular enclosures, timber buildings, an oval flint walled structure of unknown function and timber lined wells (Coleman *et al* 2004). The pottery assemblage was dominated by utilitarian greywares. At All Souls Farm, Wexham, ephemeral wooden structures, enclosure ditches, large bell-shaped pits, wells, and the presence of slag indicated some form of industrial working on the periphery of a farmstead. Activity commencing in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was suggested by the presence of grog tempered Colne Valley wares, including Highgate Wood B, dated to *c.* **AD40-60/70**. The presence of Alice Holt/Farnham ware suggests that activity continued here into the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of fineware imports was also notable (Ford 2004, 5).

### ***Landscape and Land Use***

Roman Buckinghamshire had a mixed agrarian economy, with strong pastoral as well as arable elements, operated through a variety of settlement sizes, from small farmsteads of 'native type' like Woughton and Wood Corner through to small farms and larger palatial villas like Bancroft and Yewden. These settlements, with the exception of those located on the higher ground of the Chilterns, were set within an open agricultural landscape.

Faunal evidence from a wide range of sites types and locations, such as Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 211), Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al* 1996, 206), Buckingham Street, Aylesbury (Jones 1982, 94-95) and Mantles Green (Jones 1992, 173-174) presents a similar pattern of animal husbandry. Cattle or oxen were the most common animals kept, followed by sheep and goats, pigs, horses and domestic fowl. There is evidence for slight variations to

this pattern in the Chilterns, where at Latimer pigs overtook sheep and goats in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Branigan 1971, 164).

The faunal evidence from the pre-conquest settlement at Bierton shows apparent continuity of agricultural system in the post conquest period, with cattle used as draught animals throughout, but with a small increase in cattle bones, perhaps indicating increased meat consumption and a broader mixed economy featuring sheep and pigs (Allen 1986). At Wavendon Gate, pre-conquest cattle were slaughtered at a mature age, pointing to a multi-purpose husbandry regime based around their use for traction. In the Roman period the kills were earlier suggesting breeding primarily for meat. A peak of very early kills in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries could point to limited dairying at this time (Williams *et al* 1996, 212).

Branigan notes the absence of grain storage structures at most excavated Chiltern villas and suggests that also that, taken with the higher than average proportion of pig bones from Latimer, pigs were run by herders in the wooded higher ground and not grain fed in low land farms (Branigan & Niblett 2003, 58).

In cereal cultivation spelt wheat appears to have predominated, whilst free-threshing and emmer wheats and barley were also grown as flax, for example at Wavendon Gate (Letts 1996, 244-256) and Stoke Hammond (Ford *et al* 2000, 52). Evidence for fruit and vegetable cultivation was recovered from waterlogged deposits in two 2<sup>nd</sup>-century walled garden areas at Bancroft (Pearson & Robinson 1994, 565-587). At Latimer there were some hints of vegetable and fruit growing, where a walled enclosure contained bedding trenches for vegetables, and finds included pruning saws and knives and a variety of spade irons (Branigan 1971). At Mantles Green there was evidence for a ditched enclosure, perhaps related to growing vegetables and herbs for the villa estate (Yeoman & Stewart 1992, 144).

With the possible exception of Bancroft, evidence for grain storage or processing is slight in Buckinghamshire. The presence of a possible granary has already been noted, though beetle evidence pointed to short-term rather than long-term large-scale storage (Pearson & Robinson 1994, 583). Excavations at the Ouzel valley native sites of Fenny Lock (Ford, Howell & Taylor *et al* 2001) and Caldecotte (Zeepvat *et al* 1994), the closest known native settlements to *Magiovinium*, failed to provide evidence for large-scale food production, processing or storage. Further south, Branigan (1973a) notes that with the exception of Gorhambury villa

(Hertfordshire) there is an absence of specialised grain storage facilities on Chiltern sites, and suggests that either grain must have been fed rapidly into regional markets, principally *Verulamium*.

### ***Field Systems***

Aerial photography has not tended to pick up evidence for extensive field systems in clay areas or in the Chilterns. However, where extensive excavations have been carried out fragmentary traces of long narrow rectilinear Roman fields have been encountered, as at Weedon Hill (Foundations Archaeology 2003) and on the chalky head deposits at the foot of the Chiltern scarp at Pitstone (Phillips 2005, 3-5) and Aston Clinton (RPS 2005). At Broughton, Milton Keynes, a rectilinear field pattern comprising fields of various sizes on inferior agricultural land was dated from the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It was typical of its class, with enclosures opening off a central trackway forming yards, closes, paddocks and arable fields for a nearby settlement (Petchey 1978).

At Three Locks Golf Course, Stoke Hammond, excavation recorded a small portion of a field system. The site contained evidence for field and droveway ditches, gullies, pits and a large metalled area, and produced a large pottery assemblage along with coins and metalwork. The site was occupied from the mid to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century through to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a second phase of activity in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century and a final mid 4<sup>th</sup>-century phase (Ford 2000).

There is little convincing evidence of extensive Roman field systems in the Chilterns, unless the small irregular fields at Ashridge prove to be Roman (Branigan & Niblett 2003, 56; Wainwright 1985). At West Wycombe Park, field survey recorded several paddocks measuring 45-60m, which were tentatively identified as 'Celtic' or Romano-British fields (McOmish *et al* 2001, 91-92). A cross-country pipeline through these features produced ditches, gullies, pits and a trackway with a small amount of 1<sup>st</sup>-century material (Foundations Archaeology 2003). Branigan suggests that the one-way plough marks found at Latimer and Gadebridge villas, and the ploughshare recovered from *Verulamium*, point to longer narrower fields replacing square 'Celtic' fields in the Chiltern river valleys by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Branigan & Niblett 2003, 56).

At the southern end of the county, extensive field systems might be expected to show up on the Thames gravels. However, with the exception of Hambledon and the Taplow / Dorney area, aerial photography does not appear to have revealed evidence for extensive field systems (Fenner 1990, 156 and fig 14). This could reflect the lack of a need for drainage ditches on the gravels, creating a more open landscape with small-scale enclosed farmsteads surrounded by stock enclosures and a few irregular small fields. The extent to which field systems and cropmarks in the southern part of Taplow and in Dorney relate to Roman land use have yet to be fully established (Carstairs 1986). However, the results of the excavations at Eton Rowing Lake (Allen & Welsh 1998, fig 25) correspond to a wider pattern in the mid Thames valley of more or less self-contained enclosures where lower status or individualistic pastoral farming was undertaken, with minimally restricted grazing on surrounding land (Ford 2003, 163). It has been suggested that significant settlement shift takes place on the gravels in late Roman period, although there is some evidence for the continuity of boundaries at Lake End Road West, Dorney (Allen 2002, 25) and at All Souls Quarry in Wexham an unenclosed sprawling occupation area of around 1.5ha continued in use from the 1<sup>st</sup> through to the later 4<sup>th</sup> century (Lyne 2006, 11).

### ***Woodland Management***

At both Bancroft and Wavendon Gate, possible coppice heels were observed on wood fragments cut into short, rod-like lengths that may have originated from coppiced or pollarded wood (Gale 1996, 264; Gale 1994, 587-591). The predominant species at Bancroft included willow/poplar, elder and hazel, and tool marks were particularly evident on samples of willow/poplar, hazel, elder and oak. The Bancroft environmental data indicated that the larger woodland trees, such as oak, ash, elm and maple were grown away from the valley bottom, which had been largely cleared of woodland (Gale 1994, 587-591). At Mantles Green the charcoal evidence was consistent with a picture of mixed oak/alder/beechness woodland being used as a source of firewood, and ash becoming more prevalent over time, perhaps consistent with the opening up of woodland as it is a more light-demanding species (Miles 1992, 175).

Whilst the presence in the Roman period of tree cover is suggested over the scarp and dip slope of the Chilterns, there is insufficient environmental data to be certain. There is also evidence for cleared and settled land being reforested either in the Roman period or early

Saxon period, as shown by the abandonment of an Iron Age settlement on Stoke Hammond bypass (Edgeworth 2006, 134).

### ***Ceremony, Ritual and Religion***

#### *Temples, religious buildings and artefacts*

Several possible temple/shrine sites have been identified from finds scatters and aerial photographs. However, the only excavated sites are the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century temple/mausoleum and adjacent circular stone shrine at Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994), the Romano-Celtic temple at Bourton Grounds (Green 1965) and a possible shrine at Yewden (Cocks 1921, 143). The Bancroft temple/mausoleum was located on the site of the former Iron Age farmstead on the hill above the villa, suggesting some sort of ancestral connection. While having the typical plan of a Romano-Celtic temple, it also had a central burial vault. Sufficient decorated architectural stonework survived on the site to permit a detailed reconstruction of the building. The Bourton Grounds temple was located beside a ford over the River Twin near Buckingham, close to the Thornborough Roman barrows. Its plan was similar to that at Bancroft. Built in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century it remained in use until the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. An aisled outbuilding close to the temple was also excavated: beneath its floor was a horse's head encircled with oyster shells, with a pebble placed on top (Green 1965, 360).

Possible temples have been identified at Tingewick (Roundell 1862), Pitstone Hill (unpublished, but note in *JRS* **28** (1938), 185); Manor Farm, Bourton, where the unpublished finds include a bronze bust, possibly of Cupid, another bronze head, a silver plaque and two votive axes; Yewden Villa and Hambleden Rise, from aerial photographs only, and Creslow, where votive artefacts were discovered during metal detecting. The octagonal building next to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century house at Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 189-190) has also been interpreted as a shrine. Like the circular shrine adjacent to the temple/mausoleum, it is of 4<sup>th</sup>-century date.

A collection of bronze bowls and two bronze sceptre heads found at Mantles Green, Amersham, may indicate the presence of a shrine (Farley *et al* 1988). A hoard of pewter (four plates, six cups, two bowls) found at Fleet Marston may have a religious significance (Parkhouse 1997, 155-162).

A significant ritual site is the large pit excavated at Wavendon Gate, from which was recovered a wooden solar wheel motif and a hoard of at least four bronze wheels, both strongly suggesting a relationship with the cult of the Celtic thunder god Taranis, who is equated with the Roman sky god Jupiter. A posthole was found adjacent to the pit where the wooden wheel motif was recovered, and it has been suggested that the solar wheel was affixed to a post, akin to a 'Jupiter column'. The discovery of a late Iron Age wheel-headed pin on the site may indicate that the solar cult had its beginnings in the late Iron Age rather than the Roman period (Williams *et al* 1996, 89).

A number of cult items have been recovered from Buckinghamshire sites. Some can be assigned to the worship of particular deities, while others are more enigmatic. Perhaps the most commonly represented cult is that of Mercury. A Roman well at Emberton contained a native carving of the god (Toynbee 1964, 156), and a bronze Mercury figurine was discovered in Olney (Storer 1863). A marble cockerel, probably part of a Mercury statuette, was found at Bancroft villa, and also a bronze cockerel brooch. A bronze model cockerel came from Hedsor (Bucks Museum Acc no 289.1980). Metal detecting on the Fenny Stratford bypass near *Magiovinium* recovered a bronze figure of a ram carrying moneybags, also associated with Mercury (Zeepvat 1991a, 40). A number of other deities are also represented. A bronze figurine of Isis was found during metal detecting near the Bourton Grounds temple (Green 1983). A bronze bust of Minerva was found on a furniture fitting from Rye Villa, High Wycombe (Toynbee 1964, 81, pl XVII), and a bronze finger ring of Hercules came from the Mantles Green villa (Henig 1992, 158). Evidence for Christianity is rare: the only evidence recovered to date is a silver ring with a dove motif from the mausoleum site at Bancroft.

A range of more enigmatic 'ritual' objects has been recovered from various sites. Groups of miniature spearheads were found in the circular shrine at Bancroft, and at Yewden. The latter site also produced a model axe, part of a pipeclay *Dea Nutrix* and a jade scarab (Green 1976, 196-197). A model scythe was found at Walton Court, Aylesbury (Green 1981, 61-2). Perhaps the strangest cult object is the worn limestone carving of a sphinx, found at Windmill Hill, Bletchley (MK SMR 30960400). A 1<sup>st</sup>-century bronze patera found near Olney is also unusual: it was manufactured in Campania, Italy, and may have been used for libations of wine in some form of religious practice (Petchey 1979, 35-39).

### *Use of natural places*

In the north of the county, the use of the site of the late Bronze Age and Iron Age farmsteads at Bancroft for burials throughout the Roman period, and the establishment there of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century temple/mausoleum and 4<sup>th</sup>-century shrine, is probably the most striking evidence for continued veneration of a site. Elsewhere, the use of the Chilterns scarp as a vantage point for ceremonial and burial practices is hinted at by a casket burial located at Batt Hall, Radnage (Skilbeck 1923, 242-3). There is also evidence for re-use of the Neolithic barrow at Whiteleaf, Princess Risborough, where smashed Roman pottery was placed in natural hollows in the hill (Hey 2005, 31). A copper alloy votive leaf was also recovered from the site, strengthening the case for ritual activity here. Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was also found in the backfill of the 1930s excavation by Scott, who noted a Roman rubbish pit cut into the barrow (Dennis 2004, 62). Furthermore the placing of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-century cremation within an early Iron Age penannular enclosure located on the Chiltern scarp at Wards Coombe, Ivinghoe, suggests the continued veneration of this site (Dunnett 1971, 145).

### *Burial*

The two burial mounds close to the temple and ford at Bourton Grounds, Thornborough, were excavated in 1839. The excavations were not very satisfactory, but one mound was found to contain burial group green glass jug, bronze lamp and bronze jugs. These burials within these mounds were presumably high-status, following a similar tradition to that in 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Essex, also a part of Catuvellaunian territory. Similar unexcavated mounds at Sherington and Bury Fields, Newport Pagnell, may contain similar status burials (Zeepvat 1991a).

The predominance of cremation burial spanned the late pre-Roman Iron Age and early Roman period, finally falling out of favour by the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century. One of the earliest cremation cemeteries in Buckinghamshire was adjacent to the later temple/mausoleum at Bancroft, where eighteen cremations were found with a wide range of grave goods and food offerings, with dates spanning the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 63-72). At Wavendon Gate a more dispersed cemetery containing twelve cremations was dated to the late 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries (Williams *et al* 1996, 42-49). A further five cremations were also found, scattered across the site. Several early Roman urned cremations found within a Roman enclosure at Monkston Park, Milton Keynes, are of additional interest because they may be related to a hoard of gold torcs and some Roman coins, which were found nearby (Davis & Bull 2003,

30). A group of three cremations was found during excavations at *Magiovinium* (Neal 1987). An excavation currently in progress on a Roman native site at Willen Lane, south of Newport Pagnell, has revealed a low-status cemetery containing about 30 cremations (Zeepvat pers comm).

The rest of the county has produced only a number of minor published cemeteries. A small 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century cremation cemetery was found at Bourton Grounds, where only a portion of the cremated bone was used in the burial ceremony (Johnson 1975, 3-56). Two cremations at Great Brickhill and three at Billings Field, Aylesbury, may have been part of larger cemeteries (Allen 1979; Cox 1997). Excavations along the Stoke Hammond bypass revealed a small number of urned cremations, one dated securely to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, placed in shallow pits within a Late Iron Age enclosure (Network Archaeology 2006, 94). Of particular note, a small cemetery of eight *Bustum* burials dated to no earlier than the second quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century has been excavated at the Lea, Denham (Coleman *et al* 2004).

The tradition of box or casket burials is well recorded in Buckinghamshire. At Bourton Grounds a late 1<sup>st</sup>-century urned cremation was accompanied by a samian dish and a box about 300mm square (Johnson 1975). In 1855 a cremation within an amphora dated to *c.*AD 150 was found at Weston Turville, accompanied by three glass bottles, two samian dishes, a cup, bone pin, mirror fragments and pieces of iron, apparently the bindings of a wooden box (Waugh 1975). A distinctly late cremation, dated by association to *c.*AD 135-155 was excavated at Wellwick Farm, Wendover. The cremation was probably contained within a two handled flagon, accompanied by eight ceramic vessels, two glass vessels, a lamp and an adze-hammer, the latter unusual and perhaps suggests that the deceased's profession involved woodworking. The assemblage had been placed with food offerings in a box or casket and buried in a shallow pit (Zeepvat 2003). Perhaps distinct from the above, which were all found in the vale, was a slightly wealthier burial placed on a promontory overlooking the scarp slope at Radnage. The burial was found in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was deposited within a wooden casket with iron straps and bronze rings, accompanied by a fine pillar-moulded blue-glass bowl, a flagon and nine samian dishes (Anon 1923).

Moving on to inhumations, probably the largest excavated cemetery in the county was at West Wycombe, where thirteen burials of 4<sup>th</sup> century date were recorded (Farley & Wright 1979, 81-97). Excavations at Bancroft revealed an isolated late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup>-century

inhumation in a wooden coffin, and a group of eight late 4<sup>th</sup>-century burials, all adjacent to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century shrine. The latter graves had been roughly lined with stone, including architectural fragments from the by now demolished temple/mausoleum. The floor of the burial vault in the temple/mausoleum held impressions suggesting that it had contained two coffins or sarcophagi, but no trace of the burials or their containers remained. At *Magiovinium*, several inhumations have been recorded between the town and the crossing of the Ouzel, notably at the 'Bathing Station' site (Neal 1987). More recent excavations revealed an inhumation cemetery to the east of the town (*ibid.*). At Princes Risborough Upper School, three inhumations (an infant and two neonates) had been buried in the terminus of a ditch and adjacent pit (Appleton, Armour Chelu *et al* 2004, 111-115). At Bledlow-cum-Saunderton a small inhumation and cremation cemetery was found, bounded by a ditch (Collard & Parkhouse 1993, 66-75).

In addition to the above, a number less common burial customs have been observed. At Gayhurst Quarry, a possible late Roman decapitation burial interred in a Bronze Age barrow could relate to the cult of the head (Chapman *et al* 1999, 17-30). A cist burial has been examined near Fleet Marston (Farley 1973, 329-335) and an inhumation in a lead coffin was found at the same settlement (CAS0853). Two lead coffins have also been recorded in the south of the county at Bourne End (CAS0564).

### ***Crafts, Trade and Industries***

Buckinghamshire formed part of the hinterland of number of small to large Roman towns. The evidence to date points to an unexceptional pattern of mixed agriculture and localised small-scale industry, with the possible exception of Yewden, operated from a range of small to large villas and farmsteads. The road network linked villas and farms with markets at *Magiovinium*, Alchester, *Lactodorum* and Dorchester, and perhaps at the south of the county along the Thames river corridor to *Londinium*.

Small scale brewing is evident on a few sites. Corn drying ovens found at Sarratt on the Bucks/Herts border may have been used to parch the spelt before threshing. Alternatively, they may have been used in preparing barley for beer making (Branigan & Niblett 2003, 57). An important find at Bancroft was evidence of malting from a corn drier, with the crop remains associated with an enclosure where it is possible that they were grown (Pearson &

Robinson 1994, 584). Corn driers, in a variety of shapes, have been found on a wide range of sites throughout the county, for example Windmill Hill, Bletchley (Mynard 1987, 37-38), Heelands (*ibid*, 22) and Shenley Road (*Rec. Buckinghamshire* **19.2** (1974), 414).

There appear to be no major pottery and tile production centres in Buckinghamshire, though a number of localised centres are known. Swan (1984, 134) lists thirteen, eight in the Ouse valley area and five in the south of the county, west of the Colne valley. At Caldecotte, two post-conquest updraught kilns (Zeepvat *et al* 1994, 179-182) probably produced coarse wares for the newly established market at *Magiovinium*. It is likely that two mid 1<sup>st</sup>-century updraught kilns on the nearby Wavendon Gate site (Williams *et al* 1996, 37-42) served the same market. Four pottery kilns were recorded at Abbey House Farm, Biddlesden (Woods *et al* 1981, 369-395). An important local ware was the pink grogged ware which is found in large quantities at Towcester. Quantities of the ware have been recovered from two possible kiln sites at Stowe, near the Alchester-Towcester Road, making it a strong candidate to be the source of this product (Marshall 1995; Booth 1999; Taylor 2004; Booth Pers Comm.).

Localised coarse ware production was well established in the Colne valley area by the second quarter of second century, as evident from kilns at Fulmer (Corder 1943; Tarrant & Sandford 1972), Hedgerley (Oakley *et al* 1937) and Gerrards Cross, where an updraught kiln with permanent vented floor has been dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Stainton & Stanley 1987).

Elsewhere, small-scale kilns have been suggested at Stone and perhaps Taplow, but the evidence for these is inconclusive.

Evidence for smithing has been recovered from *Magiovinium* (Neal 1987) and the villas at Bancroft and Stanton Low (Woodfield 1989). Evidence for some iron smelting and great deal of smithing was found at Mantles Green Farm, Amersham (David 1982; Yeoman 1984, Yeoman & Stewart 1992, 107-182). A large quantity of iron bloomery slag was recovered from a possible villa site at Great Missenden (Head 1964, 228-231). At Caldecotte a hearth and crucible fragments suggested the existence of a small-scale bronze-working industry, probably producing a variety of toilet instruments (Zeepvat *et al* 1994, 52-53). At Yewden villa slag and broken crucibles also suggest bronze smelting (Cocks 1921).

Woodland survey in the Chilterns is detecting increasing amounts of slag, which may in time demonstrate a more substantial industrial function in the woodlands, as suggested by the two tons of iron slag recovered from the settlement at Cow Roast, Hertfordshire (Zeepvat 1997).

At Common Wood, near Penn, late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup>-century pottery were associated with an earthwork enclosure from which quantities of iron smelting tap slag and fragments of furnace were recovered (Edwards & Wells 2006). Recent work for the National Trust Ashridge Survey and Chiltern Woodland Survey has suggested the presence of more previously unrecorded iron working sites in the Chilterns (pers comm. Gary Marshall and John Morris).

At Walton Court, Aylesbury, a number of lead weights may indicate trading activity, while a piece of iron slag with a convex base may represent on-site smelting. This site, which was located a mile from Akeman Street, may have had a specialist function (Farley *et al* 1981). Elsewhere, excavation at the Three Locks Golf Course produced a rare side-axe of likely Roman date, perhaps for specialised use (Ford *et al* 2000, 50).

### ***Pottery Imports***

A detailed study (Marney 1989) has been published of the Roman pottery recovered from sites in the Milton Keynes area, along the lines proposed by Fulford (Fulford & Huddleston 1991) for regional pottery studies. This is supplemented by the detailed pottery reports for Bancroft and Wavendon Gate. Elsewhere in the county, pottery studies are reliant on published reports for the major excavations, such as Bierton (Allen 1986) Mantles Green (Yeoman & Stewart 1992) and Latimer (Branigan 1971b).

From the above, the general pattern of pottery supply in the north of the county commences in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century with a reliance on locally made coarse wares from Harrold, supplemented by the products of kilns in the *Verulamium* region, Oxford and the Upper Nene valley (Marney 1989). Foreign imports comprise fine wares from the Rhineland, central Gaulish samian, and amphorae from Seville and Cordoba. In the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, existing sources are supplemented by wares from the Lower Nene, Mancetter/Hartshill, Hadham, and black-burnished wares from Dorset. East Gaulish samian also begins to appear among the imported wares. In the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century Hadham disappears from north Buckinghamshire sites, as does samian and the Spanish amphorae. From the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, foreign imports disappear altogether, and Hadham wares reappear, along with the products of kilns in the Alice Holt/Farnham area of Surrey.

In the middle of the county, an initial reliance on *Verulamium* wares tails off by the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and is supplemented by mixture of Nene Valley, Hadham, Oxfordshire and local wares, as at Three Locks Golf Course, Stoke Hammond (Ford *et al* 2000). At Bierton a substantial range of vessels was recovered. *Verulamium* kilns predominated, and its market is likely to have been the supply point for Black Burnished, Much Hadham and Colchester wares. Other main sources of supply were the Nene Valley, Oxfordshire and local 'south east Midlands' production centres. Local wares from the **Colne Valley** kilns at Fulmer and Hedgerley were also present. *Verulamium* was a key supplier until its products declined in c.AD200, and were replaced by a variety of wares, such as Nene Valley and Oxfordshire (Allen 1986, 66-67).

The All Souls Quarry settlement in Wexham has produced a useful picture of pottery supply patterns at the southern end of the county. The middle 1<sup>st</sup> century assemblage was dominated by Highgate Wood handmade bead-rim jars and storage vessels probably from the Colne valley area. Also small amounts of Silchester type ware and Alice Holt/Surrey sandy grey wares point to pre-Flavian trading links with the civitas of the Atrebates to the south of the Thames. By the end of the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century supply was dominated by wheel-turned greyware products from the Colne Valley kilns at Fulmer, Hedgerley and Gerrards Cross, which developed as suppliers from c.AD.60. The Colne valley kilns continued to dominate the local market, supplemented by imports from *Verulamium*, London and Gaul, until the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century when the Colne Valley share of the market was taken up by Alice Holt/Farnham and Oxfordshire industries (Lyne 2006, 11-13).

### ***Material Culture***

Current evidence suggests that, on the whole, the material culture introduced by the Romans was adopted across the social spectrum. For example, Roman fineware appears across a broad spread of settlement types in the county. Individual objects of particular note include a shale table leg from Foscott villa (Rivet 1969), an iron tumbler lock slide with an unusual bronze handle in the form of a lion from Weston Underwood (Parkhouse 1995, 28-29), and the various cult objects mentioned above. In a collection of six late Roman bronze finger rings recovered from the Amersham area, the more stylised depictions of human and animal figures illustrate changing aesthetic tastes in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Henig 1984, 129-131).

## *Coins*

Excavated sites across the county have produced significant assemblages of coins. Probably the largest comes from Bancroft, where excavations and controlled metal detecting across the villa and mausoleum sites produced an assemblage of nearly 1500 items. The assemblage ranges in date from late Iron Age Catuvellaunian and Trinovantian issues and a single Durotrigan bronze stater, to late 4<sup>th</sup>-century bronzes of Theodosius. It includes two hoards, one comprising 75 bronzes, the other of 16, both deposited in c.340-350. A single gold coin, a *solidus* of Constantine I minted in Heraclea, was also found on the site (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 269-279). Excavations at Yewden produced an assemblage of over 800 coins, ranging in date from Claudius to Arcadius, including a hoard of 294 Constantinian bronze issues (Cocks 1921, 189). At *Magiovinium*, interventions over many years including chance finds, metal detecting and excavations, have recovered probably several thousand coins. Again, these span the whole Roman period, and also include three Republican issues. At least two hoards are recorded: 251 4<sup>th</sup>-century issues, and 296 2<sup>nd</sup>-century denarii. Excavations at other sites in the county have produced more modest assemblages, for example Wavendon Gate (112) and Fenny Lock (239).

Also of particular interest from the *Magiovinium* area was the discovery by a detectorist of a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century coin manufacturing hoard, comprising three small pots containing bronze pellets and coin blanks, accompanied by a set of iron dies (Zeepvat 1994). As there were no finished coins present, the hoard was dated by ceramic evidence.

At Chalfont St Peter, a substantial collection of 6,685 late 3<sup>rd</sup>-century coins associated with a group of three pots was recovered by metal detectorists. Numismatic study of the group suggested that a selective process was followed during accumulation, perhaps relating to silver content. Three phases of deposition were suggested within a very close time span (Hunn & Farley 1995, 113-126). Other finds include a small hoard of late 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>-century silver coins from Great Horwood (Lowndes 1840), also hoards found by detectorists at Great Missenden and Prestwood (Farley 1999b). A hoard of late 4<sup>th</sup>-century coins was found near Mantles Green (Yeoman & Stewart, 1992, 181), while 30 coins of AD275-285, including die linked local imitations, came from Moneybury Hill, Pitstone, and a hoard of 30 4<sup>th</sup>-century

coins including imitations was recovered from Hambledon. The coin hoards point to the considerable private wealth of late Roman Chiltern elite.

### *Legacy*

Evidence for the end of the Roman period, and the transition to early Saxon culture in Buckinghamshire is slight. While some theories have been advanced in the past about the survival of a sub-Roman canton centred on Aylesbury there is no archaeological evidence for such a political formation. Elsewhere in the vale Reed has suggested that Brill and the Horwood parishes may represent the continuity of Roman estates based on placename evidence and the juxtaposition of Roman and much later settlement (Reed 1979, 71-76). Elsewhere in the *civitas Catuvellaunorum*, there is more plausible continuity at *Verulamium*, which became a pilgrimage centre in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and where structures of that period are recorded (Branigan and Niblett 2003, 52-53). It is, however, unclear how far the influence of this central place would have extended. Conceivably as far as Latimer where a sequence of four timber-framed buildings indicated that the estate continued to be worked into the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Branigan 1971).

Apart from the single sunken feature building recorded at Taplow Hillfort (SMR 6321) the archaeological evidence for early Saxon domestic activity comes from north of the Chilterns and points to either short lived occupation of villa sites or to the foundation of new distinct settlements, albeit in previously well settled areas. For example sunken featured buildings identified at Pitstone, Walton and Bierton may represent a return of settlement focus to the Portland limestone and chalk. Whether this indicates a reduced population choosing to settle the more favourable soils or a bias in the data is an interesting question.

At the Vicarage site Bierton the finds evidence suggests abandonment of the site in the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, but a late Roman buckle plate may hint at later activity. No structural features of definite Saxon date were noted at the Vicarage, but the quantity of Saxon material recovered suggested that the area remained a focus of activity into the Saxon period (Allen 1986, 76, 78). Elsewhere at the Church Farm Bierton two sunken featured buildings were recorded with 5<sup>th</sup> century and later pottery (SMR 1047).

At Walton, Aylesbury, the Roman era field boundaries were replaced by an apparently random and dispersed scatter of early Saxon buildings, although the earliest buildings share basic orientation on the field system, only the core of the sub Roman activity showed signs of a regular layout (Parkhouse 1995, 26). However, at Pitstone Quarry excavated Roman boundary ditches continued in use into the early Saxon period, judging by refuse deposited in the uppermost excavated fill. Land snails from the ditches suggest a cleared landscape throughout the lifetime of the ditches (Phillips *et al* 2005, 3). At Aston Clinton Bypass site B finds of 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century date were found over a wide area, although the only features dated to this period were some distance from the nearest late Roman features (RPS 2005, xiii).

In the north of Buckinghamshire the evidence for continuity is also lacking with the new early Saxon sites being founded at Pennylands and Wolverton. Possible evidence for continuity at Fenny Lock, Milton Keynes included a sunken-featured building immediately adjacent to a possible building of late Roman date (Ford & Taylor *et al* 2001, 119). At Bancroft, possible sunken-featured buildings were recorded on the villa and mausoleum sites, and there was evidence that the villa had occupied in a decayed state, as hearths had been located on the mosaics. Disarticulated human bone present in one room may indicate that the ruins were used for a form of burial (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 124-126, 205-6).

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