Title	Irish and Roman relations: A comparative analysis of the evidence for exchange, acculturation and clientship from Southeast Ireland
Author(s)	Daffy, Sean
Publication Date	2013-12-20
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/4450

Irish and Roman relations:
A comparative analysis of the evidence for exchange,
acculturation and clientship from Southeast Ireland

by

Seán Daffy

Ph.D. Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Archaeology

School of Geography and Archaeology

National University of Ireland, Galway

Head of Department: Professor Elizabeth Fitzpatrick

Supervisor: Mr. Conor Newman

Advisor: Professor William Hanson

National University of Ireland, Galway

December 2013

Ph. D. Thesis Summary:

My research presents a study of Roman finds from the Southeast of Ireland, with specific emphasis placed on the use and meaning of these artefacts in their local Irish contexts. These objects must be understood not just as 'things' to be used for particular tasks or purposes, but as the material media actively involved in the creation and shaping of broader social relationships and cultural values. Furthermore, the forms of inter-regional interaction involved in the introduction and circulation of these objects in Southeast Ireland can only be fully grasped from this perspective. These artefacts do not simply form a body of evidence for contact between Ireland and the Roman Empire – they would have informed and embodied that contact itself.

The ultimate aim of this thesis is to reassess the evidence for Roman and Irish interaction in Southeast Ireland, with a view to understanding the influences that this interaction would have had on Irish social formations and cultural practices at this time. It is hoped that this study may contribute, not only to a deeper and broader view of social and cultural change in Late Iron Age Ireland, but also to wider debates concerning the nature and extent of Roman imperialism. As Ireland remained unconquered and officially outside Roman territory, this region provides an interesting opportunity to examine and interrogate the reach of Roman imperialism, as well as further our understanding of the active role of material culture in the constitution, expansion, and maintenance of Roman Imperial power and cultural dominance.

Contents

Declaration concerning the work:

I Seán Daffy hereby declare that:

- This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text and bibliography.

- My dissertation, or any significant part of my dissertation, is not substantially the same as any that has submitted, or that is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification in this University or elsewhere.

The title of my dissertation is:

Irish and Roman relations:

A comparative analysis of the evidence for exchange,

acculturation and clientship from Southeast Ireland.

Acknowledgements

The level of encouragement and support I received during the researching, writing and production of this thesis was truly astonishing. I would like to thank my supervisor Conor Newman for his patience and guidance – and more patience – and all of the staff and students at the Department of Archaeology N.U.I. Galway for providing a stimulating and friendly environment that has made the work all the more worthwhile. Particular thanks must go to Elizabeth O'Donoghue, Margaret Murphy, Vincent Hanley, Dr. Rosanne Schot, Maggie Roynane and Fiona Gavin for their help and friendship. Dr. Patrick O'Connor was also a constant source of philosophical and personal inspiration.

I was assisted in my research by Dr. Patrick Wallace, Ned Kelly, Raghnall Ó Floinn and Mary Cahill at the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. Dr. Catherine Johns, Dr. Ralph Jackson, and the staff at the British Museum in London also made both the collections under their supervision and their own expertise openly available to me. The fieldwork could not have been completed without the assistance of landowners and others who provided access to their lands and local knowledge. Many other scholars were also generous with their time: Dr. Edel Bhreathneach and Dr. Cathy Swift provided encouragement and support, and Dr. Jacqueline Cahill-Wilson, Dr. Ger Dowling, and Rob Shaw at the Discovery Programme LIARI Project were also very helpful.

I would also like to offer special thanks to my extended families – Daffy, Murphy, and Dunne – for all their love and kindness, especially Mary Murphy in whose home much of this work was written. I simply cannot express my gratitude to my wife Jacqueline in words, so I shall have to find another way to do so.

This work is dedicated to my mother, Sinead Daffy, who is my well of healing.

Chapter 1

Mysterious Things:
The meaning of Roman material culture

'A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.'

Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1

'We humans are too simpleminded. We all like to think each person, place, or thing is only itself. […] But that's not true at all. Everything is stuffed to the brim with ideas and love and hope and magic and dreams.'

Sherman Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*

Introduction

This thesis presents a study of Roman material from the southeast of Ireland. The main purpose of this study is to assess the significance of these artefacts in a very literal sense: that is to consider what the exchange and use of these items would have signified to those who witnessed or participated in such practices, and also to contemplate the meaning they may have had for those who resisted or were excluded from these activities. These objects must be understood not just as 'things' to be used for particular tasks or purposes, but as the material media actively involved in the creation and shaping of broader social relationships and cultural values. Furthermore, the forms of inter-regional interaction involved in the introduction and circulation of these objects in southeast Ireland can only be fully grasped from this perspective. These artefacts do not simply form a body of evidence for contact between Ireland and the Roman Empire – they would have informed and embodied that contact itself.

1

This approach to material culture relies on a number of interpretive procedures that rest in turn on a more fundamental proposition regarding the significance of archaeological context. It is proposed that by establishing the archaeological contexts of these artefacts, we will be able to ascertain the different ways in which the objects were used, and occasionally to elaborate upon the cultural practices and social institutions implicated in their use. Although the objects themselves form the axis around which this investigation revolves, it is clear that such analysis will also involve the consideration of more than the archaeological evidence alone: other sources of information including Roman and Irish historical texts, placenames, etymology, mythology, historical linguistics, oral traditions and folklore, will be needed to both contextualise and interpret the finds and their contexts.

The ultimate aim of this thesis is to reassess the evidence for Roman and Irish interaction in southeast Ireland, with a view to understanding the influences that this interaction would have had on Irish social formations and cultural practices at this time. It is hoped that this study may contribute, not only to a deeper and broader view of social and cultural change in Late Iron Age Ireland, but also to wider debates concerning the nature and extent of Roman imperialism. As Ireland remained unconquered and officially outside Roman territory, this region provides an interesting opportunity to examine and interrogate the reach of Roman imperialism, as well as further our understanding of the active role played by material culture in the constitution, expansion, and maintenance of Roman Imperial power and cultural dominance.

Roman finds from Ireland: In the wrong place at the wrong time?

The process of establishing and interpreting the archaeological context of an artefact is far from straight-forward, and can often be highly problematic. The archaeological artefact is an object which has been continuously re-contextualised and re-conceptualised in the very processes of its discovery and investigation: through excavation, recording, categorisation, interpretation, display, and so on. Moreover, Roman artefacts discovered in Ireland are generally regarded as being 'out of context' in a much more fundamental way, as they are thought to belong to a completely alien geographic and cultural milieu with a distinct and discrete chronological framework. In fact, the history and culture of Ireland is often defined by the very absence of Roman influence. Ireland is thought to be 'A world without the Romans' (Raftery 1995c), representing a kind of photographic negative of Europe and Britain, where the lack of a Roman conquest '… is certainly the most important non-event in Irish history' (MacEoin 1988, 595).

This emphasis on a non-Roman past is inextricably linked to the idea of Ireland as a Celtic enclave in an otherwise conquered continent – a bastion of barbarian culture and a repository of ancient wisdom and lore. The crucial fact that Ireland was not subject to Roman rule is thought to ensure that it '...retained its largely undiluted Celtic ethos well into the medieval period' (Raftery 1994, 13; see also Tierney 1998). This conception of a continuous Celtic 'ethos' or 'heritage' has been subjected to a rigorous critique in recent years and is frequently ridiculed and dismissed, particularly in its more Quixotic 'New-Age' or crudely commoditised manifestations (Chapman 1992, 228-238; James 1999, 20-21). Nonetheless, it has played a formative and persistent role in the development of modern Irish cultural and political identities (Waddell 2005), and it is in this context that the singular emphasis placed upon the non-Roman 'Celtic' heritage of Ireland is to be understood. Any re-assessment of the significance of Roman finds from Ireland must come to terms with the persistent intellectual legacies of such a politicised past.

There are also more subtle and perhaps even more recalcitrant modes of thought that have promoted the widespread perception that the Celtic Irish and Imperial Roman pasts are mutually exclusive, if not incompatible. The academic division between Ancient History and Prehistoric Archaeology has ensured that these pasts are constructed within very different intellectual frameworks – each

being produced behind the imposing edifice of a self-contained discipline (Sauer 2004a). As a result, written evidence is seen as something completely 'other' to material culture, and societies that produce literary texts are subject to an altogether different range of investigative tools and procedures; leading to '...the implementation of different research agendas and strategies whose results are not comparable in prehistoric and historic contexts' (Papadopoulos 1999, 383; see also Wells 2000).

In the particular case of the European past, this division has been compounded into a sub-disciplinary dichotomy separating Celtic and Classical archaeology. These two academic traditions, often differing in methodology as well as subject matter, have created two conceptual worlds – the 'Celtic World' and the 'Classical World' – that are presented as being culturally opposed and geographically distinct (Henig 2004). The incommensurability of these worlds is also expressed as a fundamental chronological fissure. The course of European history, and indeed the entire conception of a 'Western Civilisation', is often seen as a continuous and progressive linear history, with the Roman conquests forming a pivotal step in its development (Hingley 1999; 2000). From this perspective, the Roman conquests also herald the dawn of a new age, the beginning of 'History' proper so to speak, which not only marks the passing of an older order among the conquered but also consigns those beyond its borders to a primeval position that is somehow outside 'History' altogether.

This 'denial of coevalness' is a recurring feature of historical and anthropological narratives (Fabian 2002), and is in fact produced by a teleological conception of historical progress which not only erects differing time-frames, but also '…defines by negation the proper forms and formations of civilized society' (Lloyd 1999, 1). Such temporal and social displacement is all too easy to discern among the many contentions that Ireland 'remained Celtic' into the Medieval period and beyond (Raftery 1994, 13; see also Tierney 1998), and is also apparent in the choice of parallels and textual sources which are used to interpret the Iron Age archaeological record. In a chronologically incongruous manner, archaeological features that are contemporary with provincial Roman sites in the Western Empire are compared to much earlier pre-Roman features in Britain and on the continent, and are also interpreted with reference to much later Early Medieval Irish texts (see for example Ross 1967, 61-126). This has led to a

stretched and static view of Irish history as inhabiting an unchanging, essentially timeless, 'Celtic World' (Fitzpatrick 1991).

The disciplinary divide between History and Prehistory has also produced a methodological rupture among scholars dealing with Roman and Irish relations. The vast majority of work in this field approaches the topic from Classical and Early Medieval perspectives (drawing primarily on Early Medieval and Classical textual sources) and tends to emphasise the importance of 'indirect' Roman influences with regard to later economic and cultural developments (Laing 1985, 271-275; de Paor 1993, 35; Mytum 1992; Charles-Edwards 2000; Freeman 2001). The impressive achievements of this scholarship have encouraged most commentators to recognise the importance of late Roman or 'sub-Roman' influences in relation to Early Medieval culture and society in Ireland. Yet these accounts generally present the most cursory descriptions of the Iron Age archaeological evidence and there is a notable lack of engagement between archaeologists and historians dealing with this period (Moore 2002, 41).

In this light it is perhaps unsurprising that the study of Roman and Irish interaction is frequently described as neglected and underdeveloped (Bateson 1973, 22; Freeman 2001, xiii-xv; Charles-Edwards 2000, 145). Caught between disciplinary boundaries, cultural 'Worlds' and chronological periods, Roman material found in Ireland inhabits a contextual (Celtic)twilight zone where reference points and associations appear occluded and remote. As a result, there is a marked tendency among commentators to divorce Roman objects from their Irish archaeological contexts, and to treat these artefacts as if they belong to a completely different plane of existence to other contemporary types of material culture.[1] Roman finds discovered in Ireland have been persistently treated with the highest levels of suspicion (Bateson 1973, 24-5; Raftery 1994, 214-15). They are seen as dislocated and isolated phenomena, unrelated to archaeological features, and excluded from any wider corpus of Irish Iron Age artefacts (see for example: Raftery 1983; Becker et. al. 2008). These are artefacts that appear to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

---

[1] It is interesting to note that a similar attitude also existed in relation to Roman material in Scotland, described in the past as 'Roman drift' (Robertson 1970). This has changed, however, due to a growth in appreciation of the importance of local contexts in relation to such finds (see for example Macinnes 1989; Hunter 1996; 2001).

Yet these objects did not drop from the sky, and it is clear that the full potential of this material as a source of evidence has not been realised to date (Edwards 1990, 4; Charles-Edwards 2000, 145). In fact, the dominant opinion shared by the majority of Irish archaeologists contends that Roman material in Ireland is insignificant, consisting of 'odd bits and pieces' that are 'scattered' and 'sparse', and can provide little if any information regarding Iron Age society in Ireland at this time (Laing 1985, 270; Tierney 1998, 196; Raftery 1994, 214). However, the Late Iron Age period in Ireland (from around the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD)[2] is widely noted for the apparent 'deficiencies' that exist in the archaeological record, and has even been referred to as a 'dark age' or 'black hole' (Weir 1993; Raftery 1994, 112; Newman 1995; Edwards 1990, 1). As we shall see, against this chronological and geographical background Roman finds from southeast Ireland are neither as scarce nor scattered as is often stated, and form a not insignificant component within the wider corpus of Late Iron Age material culture in this region.

If the significance of this material is to be fully realised it is clear that the assumptions that have influenced the interpretation of this material in Ireland must be critically reassessed. The objects themselves must be considered in their local Irish contexts, with a fuller appreciation of their potential as a valuable source of evidence relating to the wider social and cultural transformations occurring during this period. Indeed, these objects may provide us with an important opportunity to illuminate at least some of the substantial historical changes that must have occurred at this time. These changes are implicit in the manifest differences

---

[2] Periodisation in historiography and archaeology is often contentious and almost always arbitrary; but as Fredric Jameson insists 'we cannot not periodize' (2002, 30). Conventionally the Irish Iron Age is defined as a thousand-year period between 600 BC and 400 AD, with the appearance of La Tène material providing a later 'La Tène Horizon' dating from c. 300 BC onwards (a period often traditionally referred to as the 'Celtic Iron Age'; Waddell 1998, 4; 289-90). More recently Becker *et al*. (2008, 16-17) have proposed a three-fold periodisation of the Iron Age, consisting of an 'Early Iron Age (700 BC – 400 BC)', a 'Developed Iron Age (400 BC – 0 BC/AD)' [*sic*], and a 'Late Iron Age (0 BC/AD – 400 AD)' [*sic*]. This last division is acknowledged to be 'completely artificial'. For our present purposes the idea of an Irish Late Iron Age is useful, as we can envisage a period broadly contemporary with the extension, consolidation, and collapse of Roman power in Britain: from Julius Caesar's first forays across the channel in 55/54 BC to the withdrawal of the Legions in the early 5th century AD. Of course this amounts to little more than transposing what is clearly a timeline of British historical events onto the prehistoric Irish past, and as such may be considered by many to be much more flawed than any other 'artificial' division. However, for the specific subject matter under consideration here – Roman material in Ireland – this periodisation is clearly appropriate.

between the Iron Age and Early Medieval archaeological records, yet they appear almost imperceptible to us as dynamic historical processes.

Fortunately, there have been many encouraging developments in the relevant disciplines that may facilitate and guide such an approach. In recent years, the historic/prehistoric dichotomy has been the subject of much criticism, as archaeologists, anthropologists and historians are striving to create new, integrated approaches to prehistoric and historic pasts (see Lightfoot 1995; Small 1999). This is occurring both in practice through dialogue and information-sharing (Sauer 2004a; Rankov 2004) and in theory, where text is treated more cautiously as a form of material culture (Papadopoulos 1999; Gardner 2001) and methods of textual analysis are integrated and applied within the study of material culture (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Hodder and Hutson 2003). The Classical/Celtic divide has also been diminished as a growing body of scholarship has sought to break down the conceptual and methodological boundaries that have maintained the discrete and homogenous conceptions of Roman and Celtic 'Worlds' (Woolf 1997; Barrett 1997).

A veritable cohort of writers has emerged, too numerous to list, all contributing to new and varied approaches in Roman and Iron Age studies. These commentators have highlighted the heterogeneous and dynamic social and cultural environments that existed at this time, and have emphasised the recurrent and extensive nature of interaction between different groups both within and beyond the Roman provinces (Whittaker 1994; Gwilt and Haselgrove (eds.) 1997; Mattingly (ed.) 1997). Attention has been drawn to the syncretic nature of provincial Roman culture which not only drew upon and transformed native cultural practices, but was itself created in the process (Woolf 1998; Derks 1998). There have also been a number of important studies in regions peripheral to the Western Roman Empire which have demonstrated the important role that Roman material culture may play in societies that were not under direct Roman rule (Hunter 1996; 2001; Hanson 2004; Wells 1999a; Ilkjær 2000; Grane (ed.) 2007).

Scholars working in Ireland have also begun to re-examine existing ideas concerning Roman and Irish interaction, gently probing and questioning the evidence and assumptions which form the basis of the traditional conception of 'Celtic Ireland'. However dominant views concerning Ireland's untainted Celticity may be, they have not remained unchallenged and it has been argued that

the level of continuity from Late Iron Age to Early Christian Ireland has been greatly exaggerated (McCone 1990; Charles-Edwards 2001, 145-158). Archaeologists have also begun to regard Roman material as a phenomenon that needs to be assessed and interpreted in its Irish context rather than simply being dismissed as curious exotica (Warner 1995; Newman 1995; 2002; Ó Floinn 2000; 2001; Kelly 2002a). It is in this exciting new context, where received wisdom is being examined with a much more critical eye, both in Ireland and internationally, that we may begin to entertain the idea of real and substantial interaction between Pagan Celtic Ireland and Classical Roman Europe.

Material Culture, Meaning and Practice.

The approach to Roman material culture adopted in this study may therefore be expressed as a kind of paradox: although it strives to demystify the presence of Roman artefacts in Ireland by challenging the dominant view that these objects somehow 'don't belong here', at the same time it attempts to show how these objects really are mysterious things in an altogether different sense. The mysterious qualities in question are those properties that appear to reside in objects which are inanimate, yet may be considered powerful in the way that they are perceived to embody and express meaning and value. Material culture is not only created by humans, but is also imbued by its makers with creative life-like qualities. To use Terry Eagleton's evocative phrase: the human species is haunted by its own products (2012, 171). Objects can have lives, careers, ceremonial roles, social status, political associations and cultural affiliations, and as such often have actual agency in the creation and shaping of social, cultural, and political identities and relationships (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986).

Perhaps the most explicit examples of the human belief that material culture is packed with potent levels of meaning and significance can be found in religious thought and ritual practices. The materials that are used to constitute and demarcate the categories of the sacred and the profane, as well as the intermittent historical episodes of religious and political iconoclasm, all bear witness to the human propensity to attribute compelling mystical properties to inanimate objects. It is conceivably for this reason that so many of the seminal modern accounts of the complex human relationship with objects, from Marx to Freud, are infused with the quasi-religious language of 'fetishes' and 'idols'. These authors, among

others, have pioneered the insights that this propensity is not confined to ritual or religion, but may also be discerned in the more intimate realms of personal desire and the wider spheres of social relations.

More recent conceptualisations of material culture as active and meaningfully constituted have been widely deployed in anthropology since the late 1960's and 70's, most notable within those approaches that are designated as 'symbolic' or 'interpretive' anthropologies (e.g.: Geertz 1973; Turner 1967). In archaeology, the most explicit and sustained example of this approach has been developed by Ian Hodder (1982a, 1982b, 1986), and projected as a specific archaeological approach known as 'contextual archaeology' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 156-205). The central insight of this approach is that material culture can be seen to be an active constitutive element of society, rather than merely an indirect reflection of human activity. In other words: material culture purveys and creates meaning for those who produce and use it (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 2-3; 6; 101-105). Although this idea may initially appear to be obvious and straightforward, it raises important issues and problems that are central to any archaeological endeavour, and a more detailed engagement with Hodder's thought will be necessary here.[3]

Of course, meaning and agency do not intrinsically reside in objects, but are continually reattributed and reproduced by people in changing situations (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 157). The value and role of material culture can be transformed in different historical and social contexts, and it is through such changes that objects have become available for our contemporary investigations of them as 'archaeological artefacts' (see Hides 1997). Artefacts, like all material cultures and texts, are never experienced as things-in-themselves which inherently carry an imminent and essential meaning or intention. The objects appear to us through multiple layers of social and historical meanings and interpretations, and even newly discovered finds or sites are experienced through pre-existing traditions of conceptualisation and categorisation (Jameson 1981, ix-x). These sedimented layers of meaning form the productive preconditions for any act of interpretation

---

[3] Hodder has published widely on an impressive range of topics and periods, and his views and positions have inevitably developed and changed over time. For the sake of clarity and brevity, the following engagement with Hodder's work will be limited to just two publications: the 3rd Edition of *Reading the Past* (Hodder and Hutson 2003) and *The Domestication of Europe* (Hodder 1990). The former presents the most recent comprehensive explication of his theoretical positions, and the latter contains the most detailed interpretive cases which are continuously presented as exemplary illustrations of his approach.

(Gadamer 1975, 264-5: cited in Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 429), yet the question still remains as to how we may uncover some of the different meanings and roles that these objects may have had in earlier social and historical situations.

According to Ian Hodder the answer lies in the 'context' of the material, which is defined as:

> '...*the totality of the relevant environment*, where 'relevant' refers to a significant relationship to the object – that is a relationship necessary for discerning the object's meaning.'
>
> (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 188: original emphasis)

Inevitably, what is to be considered to be '*relevant*' or 'a significant relationship' may differ from one interpreter to the next. Indeed, it can be argued that all interpretation must necessarily be 'contextual', and therefore '[t]he main task is to specify which contextual relations are central to our understanding' (Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 428). In Hodder's case, it can be seen that primary relevance is attributed to the relationships between artefacts and cultural ideas and values: '…material culture and society mutually constitute each other within historically and culturally specific sets of ideas, beliefs and meanings'; and furthermore, '[t]he cultural relationships are not caused by anything outside themselves. They just are' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 3-4).

However, this conception of the 'irreducibility' of culture is more than simply the rejection of environmental or economic determinism, as it also involves the severing of any mutually constitutive relationships between ideas and beliefs and other forms of social activity. According to this view:

> '…culture is what culture is. In inferring cultural meanings in the past there is no necessary relationship between social and material organisation of resources on the one hand and cultural ideas and values on the other.'
>
> (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 21)

This notion of cultural ideas as self-constituent – existing outside of any other social relationships or frames of reference – is inherently undermined by the recognition that 'meaning is relational' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 157). Therefore, if '…meaning is continually produced through the working sets of relationships we establish' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 157), there must be a

necessary relationship between cultural meanings and the working sets of relationships established through the social organisation of material resources. Similarly, if material culture is directly active in creating – rather than just 'reflecting' or 'expressing' – cultural meaning, then there must also be a necessary relationship between cultural ideas and the organisation of resources involved in the production, distribution, and use of material culture.

It is clear that Hodder's definition of the 'relevant environment' is inherently idealist (Barrett 1987b; Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 432), even though such a dichotomy between 'mental and physical' is criticised in the same text (specifically when it is perceived that a commentator 'sides with the latter': Hodder and Hutson 2003, 164). The most obvious problem here is that certain contextual relationships are considered *a priori* to be both more relevant and self-constituting than others. According to this prescription no archaeological phenomenon can be interpreted without recourse to cultural attitudes and values as a context (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 9), but these phenomena themselves are not, and cannot be, contextualised in relation to other social and economic relationships (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 137). Indeed, the neat separation of 'economic' and 'cultural' relationships will undoubtedly prove to be anachronistic when applied universally to all prehistoric or historic contexts, as the idea of 'an economy' which can be distinguished and set apart from 'culture' or 'politics' is a distinctly modern innovation, and it is unlikely that this division can be sustained across all historical and geographic situations (see Polányi 2001 [1944]).

The first point to be made here is that the range of contextual relationships to be considered significant cannot be circumscribed in advance: the 'relevant' context must be explicitly established in relation to the material at hand in each specific case. A more fundamental difficulty that follows from the idealist orientation of Hodder's approach is that the recommended interpretive procedures are also inherently limiting and problematic. The kinds of questions that follow from Hodder's 'conversational model' of interpretation: 'why should anyone want to erect a building like that?' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 196), or 'what is the view of womanhood represented by the link between female skeletons and fibula in graves?'(Hodder and Hutson 2003, 165), not only limit the nature and scale of the

relationships that can be investigated,[4] but also insinuate an essential meaning that can be identified with a particular authorial intention (Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 425). Hodder argues that this interpretive procedure does not constitute a 'pure subjectivism' as '[i]n understanding we do not adopt the subject's point of view. Instead we relate the other's opinions and views to our own opinions and views' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 161).

Slippage seems inevitable here, and in practice as Hodder's hermeneutic circle narrows (becoming a 'spiral') we do occasionally see a more direct identification with specific authorial (and authoritative) intentions. For example: 'How can I maintain stable relations of production and exchange while at the same time emphasising competitive warring?' (Hodder 1990, 299). In this case it becomes unclear as to who is asking the question, it is evidently not the interpreter but some putative Neolithic chief homo-economicus.[5] Despite his sustained critique of positivist empiricism (Hodder 1982a; 1992; Hodder and Hutson 2003 199-205), Hodder's conception of 'understanding' nonetheless retains a classic positivist form of objectivism in which the interpreter '…seeks to understand for the sake of understanding and […] tends to assign this hermeneutic intention to the agents' practice and proceed as if they were asking themselves the question he asks himself about them' (Bourdieu 1990, 31; see also Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 432). 'Making sense' according to this approach is still primarily an isolated mental process, as opposed to the socially and historically situated practice of doing things with language, symbols and objects.

Hodder presents this conversational model as a method drawn from Gadamer's critical hermeneutics, whereby the interpreter moves between the past and the present in a dialectical manner through the continuous process of question and answer (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 195-205). Yet Gadamer explicitly framed his hermeneutics as ontological investigations, which '…are not of the nature of a "procedure" or a method' (1975, 263: cited in Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 429). As Johnsen and Olsen argue '…this dialectical relation should not be confused with a simplistic notion of question and answer, where intentionality or any other

---

[4] As Johnsen and Olsen note: 'One would hardly ask questions such as "why would anyone want to construct a social system such as this?"' (1992, 425).

[5] This kind of ethnocentric economism (see Bourdieu 1990, 112-121) reappears on a number of occasions in Hodder's account of the Neolithic; e.g.: 'In order to protect the individuals investment, the wider social whole provides a durable set of social relations and authorities in which the individual can have confidence' (Hodder 1990, 38).

"determining structures" (Wylie 1989) can be used to discover a final meaning' (1992, 433: original parenthesis). As we have seen, Hodder's 'conversational model' does assume intentionality, and it will be argued that his continued use of the procedure of structuralist homology also necessitates a return to the seemingly secure ground of determining structures.

This problem is most clearly elucidated with reference to one of the more controversial aspects of Hodder's approach: the idea that materials and phenomena as varied and distinct as archaeological artefacts, daily life, human settlements, the body, and even 'the past' itself, can all be viewed as 'texts' (however metaphorical) which are to be 'read' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 167-70; 203-5). Specific difficulties inevitably arise when non-literary materials are to be treated as 'texts', as can be seen with the particular 'troubles with text' that result from the expansion of this category to include other types of material culture (see Barrett 1987b; Buchli 1995; Bloch 1995). However, as Fredric Jameson argues, a more fundamental kind of problem arises when all of these different 'texts' are to be 'read' together, and are thus subsumed '...into a single, relatively unified discourse' (1991, 187).

The method employed by Hodder to 'read' these diverse materials together is homology. Derived from structuralist anthropology, this procedure involves positing an indirect relationship between the structured ordering of features thought to be inherent within each specific phenomenon or 'text':

> 'As distinct as they are from each other, these various local and concrete "texts" can nonetheless be read as homologous with each other insofar as we disengage an abstract structure which seems to be at work in all of them, according to their own specific internal dynamics. In principle, the "theory" of structure, which justifies the practice of homology itself, then allows one to avoid the establishment of ontological priorities. […] But in order to secure that indifference or non-hierarchy of the various sub-systems, an external category is required, that of "structure" itself.'
>
> (Jameson 1991, 187)

In his Contextual Archaeology, Hodder continues to use the method of homology, and avoids positing any direct hierarchical or causal relationships between the various 'texts', yet he does so whilst simultaneously attempting to critique the

very theory of 'structure' which justifies and vindicates the use of this procedure in the first place.

Thus Hodder argues that: 'Archaeologists need to make abstractions from the symbolic functions of the objects they excavate in order to identify the meaning content behind them' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 165; 70). This 'meaning content' is then shown to be homologous with that of other material culture types. For example, Hodder claims that 'the same' abstract conceptual structure lies behind the building of both Neolithic houses and Megalithic tombs, and that 'Megalithic tombs 'mean' houses' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 95). This is not the result of '… a direct copying or diffusion of the house idea', but '…a continuity in the principles by which both the houses and tombs were constructed'; furthermore '…the principles themselves are linked to a deeper ethic concerning the domestication of nature and society' (Hodder 1990, 153-4).

Hodder is aware of the many problems associated with the concept of an external and abstract 'structure', and attempts to avoid the charge of structural determinacy whereby '…the agent is now determined by structures and/or universals of the human mind' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 61). To do this he argues that '…rather than talking about these deeper structures underlying the historical and adaptive processes, it is more appropriate to talk of how each of these elements contributes to an integrated view of society that is always in the process of becoming' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 215; see also Hodder 1990, 299). Nevertheless, the question remains as to how 'the same' homologous meaning content is to be found in all of these materials without seeing them as expressions of 'the same' underlying objective structure? Or, as Jameson puts it: '…can one invent a way of doing homologies without being sucked back into the ideology of "structure" itself and finding oneself establishing priorities and hierarchies against one's own will?' (1991, 198).[6]

In fact, Hodder's use of homology undermines his every theoretical attempt to avoid structural determinacy in advance. There is a methodological need to posit

---

[6] Jameson's critique is specifically aimed at 'the New Historicism', and it is interesting to note that there are a number of striking similarities between Hodder's Contextual Archaeology and this contemporaneous development within literary and historical analysis. Apart from the continued use of the procedure of homology, the most obvious parallels are the shared intellectual debt to Interpretive or Symbolic anthropology, an indiscriminate and expansive concept of 'textuality', and a mutual call for 'a return to History'. Hodder does briefly refer to 'new history' in his own texts, however for him this label appears to be entirely and solely synonymous with Foucault (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 167).

the existence of abstract structures, which '...can only be understood in their own terms, related to practice but not reducible to it' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 137). Meaning is therefore not created and reproduced through practice but '…often *resides* in structures of the long term' (Hodder and Hutson 2003, 127: my emphasis). Accordingly structures must have a 'logic' of their own and 'tendencies' which are 'followed' (Hodder 1990, 98-99; 277-8). Hodder argues that '…structural tendency is not the same as structural determinacy, there is an opening left for action and contingency' (1990, 277-8). Yet for 'logic' or 'tendencies' to exist within an abstract structure, they must somehow be programmed into the structure in advance, reducing any action or practice to the passive acting-out or realisation of some always-already existing potentialities contained within a structure. As a result 'structures' and 'cultural values' become reified, treated '…as realities endowed with a social efficacy, capable as acting as agents responsible for historical actions' (Bourdieu 1977, 27).

In this way Hodder's 'sets of ideas, beliefs and meanings' ultimately occupy a position that is somehow outside of actual everyday social interaction and cultural production. Through his 'conversational model' of understanding, an inflated notion of 'textuality', and the methodological use of structuralist homology, Hodder's approach resembles, not subjectivism, but on the contrary a form of objectivism as described by Pierre Bourdieu:

> 'Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle offered to an observer who takes up a 'point of view' on the action and who, putting into the object the principles of his relation to the object, proceeds as if it were intended solely for knowledge and as if all the interactions within it were purely symbolic exchanges. This position is one taken from high positions in the social structure, from which the social world is seen as a representation (as the word is used in idealist philosophy, but also as in painting) or a performance (in the theatrical or musical sense), and practices are seen as no more than the acting-out of roles, the playing of scores or the implementation of plans.'
>
> (Bourdieu 1990, 52)

In contrast to Hodder's 'logic of structure', Bourdieu maintains that it is the 'logic of practice' which produces and constitutes meaning, value and symbolic systems. Like Marcel Mauss's Gods, who are not just 'persuaded by gifts' but are in effect created and sustained through the practices of prayer and sacrifice (2003),

15

symbolic systems or structures must be created and maintained through social practices. It is the practice of exchange that actually creates the value of an object (Appadurai 1986) – not the inherent properties of an object, or 'the idea of an object' (Hodder 1990, 281) – and it is social practice which creates cultural values and symbolic meanings.

Practice in this sense is not simply human action (praxis) construed in opposition to thinking or theory. Rather:

> '…a "Practice" (praktik) is a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the forms of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.'
>
> (Reckwitz 2002, 249)

Here all of the different objects, behaviours, and phenomena which provide the raw materials for Hodder's textual homologies may indeed be seen to be related to one another. However, it is through their active association and incorporation within specific practices that the contours of these relationships may be traced, not though their apparent manifestation of 'the same' shared abstract structure or 'meaning content'. Just as '…the meaning of a word is its use in Language' (Wittgenstein 1967, §43), the meaning of material culture cannot be found lying 'behind' or 'within' an artefact, but is actively created through its use within specific social practices and historical situations.

In this way practice both generates and mediates meaning, and as such practices constitute the most fundamental expressions of social life itself. Focusing on the use of symbols, objects, materials, buildings and landscapes, allows us to examine the development, diffusion, and transformation of particular practices in specific historical, social and geographical contexts. From such a perspective '…the context of a tomb then becomes, not its place within a text, but its active role within particular social practices' (Barrett 1987, 472). The context of an artefact according to this approach is synonymous with its use in specific social practices, and social practices in turn must form the basis of any analysis. This conception of practice also emphasises the central role of material culture, place and physical space in social life, and as a result culture can be construed as

meaningfully constituted while nonetheless being inherently bound-up within material existence (*pace* Hodder and Hutson 2003, 4).

Such an approach is clearly suited to archaeological investigation, and a number of archaeologists have made interesting use of Bourdieu's concept of practice (Barrett 1991; Bender 1998; Grahame 1998). In relation to the study at hand, this approach may also be particularly fruitful when considering Roman material in Ireland due to the emphasis it places on looking closely at material in its local context. It is due to these contextual considerations that the extent of this investigation goes beyond simply looking at the Roman artefacts and specifically emphasises the importance of the findspots of the material, taking into account other artefacts, sites and features, both natural and artificial: in short the local social and geographic context. However, we must remember that this local situation does not constitute the context of an object in its entirety, as much of this material would have been brought into Ireland as a result of wider networks and practices of exchange that existed right across the Roman Empire. Therefore the scope of this study must also be extended to include other possibly related objects, contexts and practices in provincial Roman and Iron Age Europe.

Defining Terms: Roman objects and Romanised subjects

Before we can embark on any investigation regarding the use of Roman material or the development of associated practices in Ireland, it is necessary to examine and elucidate the categories and concepts which form the indispensable basis for any study of this kind. What exactly do we mean when we refer to an object or a practice as 'Roman' or 'provincial Roman'? And by association what are we talking about when we use the terms 'Romanised' or 'Romanisation'? It is here that the theoretical concerns of the preceding section will prove to be of the most practical significance and import, helping us to identify some of the problematic aspects of these terms, as well as allowing us to recover some of their potential value in the face of more trenchant contemporary critiques.

From their origins in the 18th century, Iron Age and Roman archaeologies in Europe have been traditionally based on culture-historical conceptions and categories of material culture (Jones 1997, 29-34; Collis 2003, 9; 150-154). The culture-historical approach saw material culture as a passive reflection of human activity – 'the product of culture rather than culture itself' (Trigger 1989, 277) –

primarily indicative of the presence of specific peoples, races, or ethnic groups (see for example Hawkes 1931; Childe 1940). This view continued to be adhered to by a number of commentators who view the distribution of Iron Age or 'Celtic' material as evidence for large-scale migrations of population groups (e.g.: Warner 1991, 48; Kruda *et al.* 1991). In the same way, the term Roman has traditionally been perceived as a racial or ethnic description, and Roman material culture was often seen primarily as an ethnic marker (Jones 1997, 29-39).

This last interpretation may possibly have some validity in the historically and geographically constricted context of an Early Iron Age ethnic group who called themselves 'Roman' and gained domination over other local groups in Italy. By the Late Republic however, the idea that the term 'Roman' referred to a single ethnic group and that the use of Roman material culture automatically indicated the expression of this Roman ethnic identity is simply unsustainable (Jones 1997, 129-134). As Peter Wells has stated:

> 'It is clear now that most of the architecture and everyday material culture that is classified as "Roman" in temperate Europe was not made by individuals from Rome nor even by Roman citizens resident in the provinces, but rather by indigenous parties, who after the conquest, found themselves living under the Roman political structure and amidst the persuasive influence of Roman fashion'.
>
> (Wells, P. 1999b, 94)

Furthermore, archaeologists have begun to notice that the level of variation within provincial Roman material culture is far greater than had been thought in the past (Willis 1994; Jones 1997, 132-135; Hingley 1999). This diversity points to more than the native adoption of Roman material culture, but rather the adaptation and creation of new types of material culture which would eventually become known as 'Gallo-Roman', 'Romano-British' and so forth.

As a result the traditional concept of 'Romanisation' as a unidirectional process, whereby native groups adopted Roman social and culture forms wholesale (e.g.: Haverfield 1912), has become increasingly problematic. 'Romanisation' in this sense implies a standard process, yet '…the reality is that in all contact situations, the character of interactions and of borrowing and adoption are different in different places and at different times' (Wells 1999b, 127). The idea of Romanisation as a process where people come to see and think

of themselves as 'Roman' (e.g.: Harris 1971, 147), is also no longer accepted, as '...it is, of course, a moot question, whether they considered themselves "Romans" or "indigenous peoples." Most likely they did not think in these categories at all' (Wells 1999b, 128; see also Hingley 1999, 142).

Indeed, traditional notions of Romanisation are undeniably problematic. This term has been used in connection with specific events, such as the conquest of territory by the Roman army, but it is most often used to refer to an extremely diverse range of cultural and social changes which may both precede and follow actual colonial conquest. Throughout its history it can be seen to be a politically loaded expression, value-laden and synonymous with 19th and 20th century European concepts of the 'civilizing process' (Millett 1990, xv). Romanisation was conceptualised as a form of moral and social progress, the underlying assumption being that it was inevitable that 'Natives' would become 'Roman' due to the inherent superiority of Roman culture and civilisation itself. Therefore native culture was seen to be inferior and weak, an attitude which was conveniently in keeping with contemporary European attitudes to colonised peoples in their own Empires (Hingley 1996, 35-9).

Even after the popularity and acceptance of Eurocentric notions of the civilising mission had receded – a retreat which occurred broadly in concert with that of actual European colonial rule across the globe – many of these underlying assumptions were still tacitly accepted and continued to dominate studies of Roman imperialism throughout the last century. Statements such as: 'Rome passed on to them [Natives] imperious tastes: bread, wine, oil, marble, and gold' (Duby 1974), implicitly rely on the imperialist attitudes that formed the basis of the 'civilizing' conception of Romanisation. All emphasis is placed on the role of the colonizers: Natives would inevitably become Roman by abandoning their own culture and passively assuming that of Rome. It is also clear that this idea of Romanisation relies on strict divisions or categories that divide material culture, and people, into simplistic homogenous and opposing groups.

More recent approaches in Roman studies have sought to revise and remedy some of the problems inherent in this view. Commentators influenced by World Systems Theory and Acculturation Theory have attempted to highlight the role of native elites as active participants in the dissemination and adoption of Roman material culture and practices (Haselgrove 1984; 1987; Macinnes 1989; Millett

1990; Hanson 1994). Romanisation, according to these perspectives, was not a one-way civilising process, but was alternatively a form of competitive local development or a form of 'acculturation' which inexorably led to the incorporation of native groups within the wider cultural Roman World. It is argued that native societies adopted new ideas and practices within their own social formations, using them for their own local reasons. In this way, elite groups in native societies embraced Roman cultural forms to reinforce their existing social positions through association with exotic goods and powerful neighbours. These new ideas and materials then percolated down the social ladder in a competitive process of emulation (Millett 1990, 38).

Although there has been considerable debate concerning the role and extent of direct Roman 'policy' in this process, these revisionist perspectives can be seen to share a number of assumptions that still rely upon culture-historical categories and more traditional views of Romanisation. The new acculturation-orientated conceptions of Romanisation, while not envisioned as moral progress, continue nonetheless to rely on a teleological view of progression and an objectified notion of Romanisation (Gosden 2004, 105). Despite the fact that this approach allows for an active native role in the process of Romanisation, it remains a top-down directional theory of social change which still has a ring of inevitability to it.

In a similar vein, World Systems approaches emphasise macro-economic, large-scale processes as the explanation for social and cultural change (e.g. Brandt and Slofstra (eds.) 1983; Blagg and Millett (eds.) 1990). As J.D. Hill has observed:

> 'Changes in culture and everyday life still seem to be considered as a product – perhaps even as froth on top – of largescale, impersonal, social and economic transformations […] Only rarely are people, let alone those of different genders, actually referred to, or given an active role in these processes, as opposed to merely acting out roles authored by grand cultural and economic forces.'
>
> (Hill 1997, 97)

As a result both Romanisation and acculturation turn out to be reified determining structures. They are seen as explanations in their own right, and like traditional conceptions of Romanisation they remain essentially self-fulfilling processes (Hingley 1999, 142).

These perspectives also preserve some of the implicit culture-historical assumptions concerning homogenous culture-groups and the direct, essentially passive, relationship between material culture and ethnicity (Jones 1997, 33-39). The processes of Romanisation and acculturation are still regarded as the straight-forward adoption of one group's culture by another (Woolf 1997, 340-1). Although the native elite may use Roman artefacts and cultural forms for their own specific reasons, the process is still envisioned as the adoption of a pre-existing Roman way of making statements about personal power and social identity (Hingley 1996, 42). As well as tacitly endorsing a simplistic correlation between material culture and ethnic identity, these approaches also fail to account for the levels of variation and innovation evident in provincial Roman material cultures.

Problems such as these have led some commentators, influenced largely by Postcolonial Theory, to discard the categories of 'Roman' material culture and the concept of 'Romanisation' altogether. It is suggested that these terms are inappropriate, and should be replaced with categories and concepts that stress the heterogeneity and incommensurability of various local material cultures (Freeman 1993; Webster 1996a; Cooper 1996, 86). According to this view:

> 'There was no unified Roman material culture package and the concept 'Roman' is not
> a secure category upon which to base analysis of change'
>
> > (Hingley 1996, 42).

Of course, if the term 'Roman' can no longer be applied to material culture, then the associated concept of 'Romanisation' must also be rejected:

> 'In effect we have abandoned any notion of a meta-process of 'Romanisation' as a
> simplistic construct: the reality functioned at a much smaller scale, and was highly
> varied in character. It is this local variation that we must pursue.'
>
> > (Fincham 2002, 6)

These commentators argue that postcolonial concepts such as 'hybridity', 'de-centering', and 'discrepant experience' should be used in order to encourage a more heterogeneous and disintegrated view of the Roman Empire (Webster 1996a; Hingley 1996; Fincham 2002; Gosden 2004).

This development is arguably one of the greatest shifts in the conceptualisation of Roman Imperialism in the last century, and one that can been seen to raise interesting issues yet also create some additional problems of its own. On the one hand, recent postcolonial analyses have shown that we must foreground the colonial context in which many foundational and influential historical and archaeological studies of the Roman Empire were undertaken and produced, and be aware of the related values and assumptions which have underpinned and shaped the discipline as a whole (Freeman 1996; Mattingly 1996; Hingley 1999; 2000). Similar caution must be shown when using ancient Roman historical texts as sources of information concerning other ancient ethnic groups or the nature of Roman imperialism, as they too constituted their own contemporary forms of colonial discourse (Webster 1996b; Alston 1996; de Souza 1996). It has also been suggested that the indiscriminate use of homogenous categories such as 'Roman' and 'Native' may stifle any in-depth analysis of cultural interaction and social change, and a more reflective and nuanced approach is needed in these situations (Jones 1997; Wells 1999a; Gosden 2004).

On the other hand, it has been argued that writers influenced by postcolonial theory deal with local contexts in an isolationist manner without sufficient regard for related developments in other regions of the Roman Empire (Sauer 2004b, 115-116; Gosden 2004, 20). Indeed, it may be contended that postcolonial approaches actually result in a radical de-contextualisation of local situations, which are analysed in a wholly singular fashion – unrelated to other locations, materials, practices and events (see Halward 2001, 24-26). Initially this may appear to be an outlandish claim, as postcolonial texts tend to be rife with relational language and terminology: the 'hybrid', the 'migrant', the 'interstitial', the 'in-between', the 'contingent', etc. However these concepts tend to be praised and used solely as methods of disconnection, whereby '…any carefully delineated border of periphery and metropole, colony and empire, becomes blurred, *de-territorialised*, and *unbounded*' (Moharan and Rajan 1996, 8: my emphasis). Whilst trying to prevent local contexts being subsumed into crude binary oppositions of 'native' *vs.* 'colonizer', or being viewed as the inevitable result of

larger 'meta-processes', the use of postcolonial concepts actually isolate these contexts from any constitutive relationships whatsoever.[7]

---

[7] For example, Homi Bhabha uses terms such as 'hybridity' and 'enunciation' so that there '…emerges a more instantaneous and subaltern voice of the people, minority voices that speak *betwixt and between times and places*' (1994, 158: my emphasis). The same tendency may be seen with Gayatri Spivak's conception of the 'subaltern', a figure so heterogeneous and shifting that '...we strictly, *historically, geographically, cannot imagine*.' (1993, 139: my emphasis). Similar critiques may be advanced in relation to Edward Said's concept of the 'counterpoint' and James Clifford's notion of 'the poetics of displacement' among other key postcolonial concepts (see Hallward 2001, 58-60; 23-24).

What we find is that:

> '…several of the most distinctive and certainly the most widely read contributions to postcolonial theory are all more or less enthusiastically committed to an explicitly *deterritorialising* discourse […] a discourse so fragmented, so hybrid, as to deny its constituent elements any sustainable specificity at all.'
>
> (Hallward 2001, 22)

These problems have not gone unnoticed within postcolonial circles and, while not framed in quite the same terms, calls for more 'locally rooted' accounts of colonial encounters which '"place" a person or text in context' have become *de rigueur* in postcolonial texts (Boehemer 1995, 244; King 1996, 21). Yet the disdain of generalizations and oppositional positions remains, ensuring that any such alternatives amount to nothing other than a narrow particularism or parochialism (Hallward 2001, 35-40; see also Ahmad 1995, 289). These issues have particularly significant implications for any archaeological approach that seeks to foreground the importance of context in relation to interpretation. As Peter Hallward observes: 'Emphasis on pure contingency, incommensurability, or fragmentation does not lend itself to anything but an ad hoc contextualisation' (2001, 21).

Ironically, a similar insistence on essential differences and the total incommensurability of local contexts '...is itself a familiar cry of colonial representation: the unintelligible, indescribable, inscrutable and unknown character of other places and peoples' (Thomas 1994, 52).[8] Commentators in search of perspectives with which they may productively theorise colonial and imperial relations can find in postcolonial theory only '...the fantasy of a powerless *utopia* of difference' (Hall 1996, 249), or '…such finalist ideas of cultural difference that each culture is said to be so discrete and self referential, so autonomous in its own authority, as to be unavailable for cognition or criticism from a space outside itself' (Ahmad 1995, 289). These seemingly divergent positions can both be seen to have sprung from the same source: the inherent contradiction of trying to formulate non-totalising, fragmented conceptions of colonialisms that were openly and explicitly

---

[8] Indeed, it has been cogently argued that Postcolonial Theory itself coincides and is complicit with the ideology of global capitalism and neo-colonialism (Dirlik 1997; Ahmad 1992; Lazarus 1991; Halward 2004).

totalising in their ambition and scope (Dirlik 1994, 77; Lazarus *et al.* 1995, 85; Hallward 2001, 176-187).

From an archaeological perspective, the exclusive emphasis being placed on 'situated' local contexts comes to resemble in practice little more than a disavowed return to the culture-historical conception of a bounded self-contained culture group – as can be seen in Nicholas Cooper's rejection of the category of 'Roman material culture':

> 'This material culture may have been similar in many ways to geographically adjacent areas which came under similar influences, but it was uniquely British (if that is the specific unit of area being considered), and underwent its own process of adaptation and development…'
>
> (Cooper 1996, 86)

As Greg Woolf argues: 'Roman imperial culture was not uniform. But it is only culture historical approaches like acculturation theory that need to isolate a common defining core of a culture, in relation to which local variants can be assessed as very, more, less, or hardly Romanised' (1998, 341).

Another problematic aspect of Postcolonial, World-Systems, and Acculturation theories is a tendency to ignore or dismiss the implications of such widespread and sweeping changes in material culture and social practices for existing social relations and cultural identities. We are told that the emergence of new materials and practices right across Western Europe did not have any real collective or combined significance regarding social relations or cultural transformations. These developments represented nothing more that a superficial '…veneer of Classical civilisation' which '…concealed the basic continuity of the ruling elite' (Clarke 1996, 83; see also Millett 1990; Cooper 1996). Such a view reduces material culture and social practice to roles so removed from social life that both are seen – not even as 'passive reflections' of human activity – but as entirely irrelevant and unrelated to other forms of social interaction and organisation. As Mark Grahame has argued: 'The dramatic changes to the material conditions of existence that we observe in the archaeological record must indicate a substantial social realignment in the post-conquest period' (1998, 4).

In fact, one of the most powerful critiques of Postcolonial Theory maintains that by focusing on 'colonial discourse' commentators have tended to disregard

the actual material conditions and social relations of colonial rule while emphasising and isolating the literary representations and cultural productions of colonialism (JanMohamed 1985; Parry 1987). It is argued that the use of postcolonial concepts such as 'hybridity' (Bhabha 1994) and 'créolité' (Bernabé *et al.* 1993), which were themselves conceived in opposition to the opposing categories of colonialist/colonised, often result in an impression of '…a more serene spectacle of syncretic transformation and hybrid intermingling' (Hallward 2001, xiv). In this way the violent aspects of colonial rule are downplayed, and it is redefined as 'cultural contact' as opposed to conquest involving the creation and imposition of new relations of domination and submission (Césaire 1972; Parry 1987; 1994; Ahmad 1995).

Of course the emphasis one places on the cultural, economic, or military factors relevant to a particular situation should depend entirely on the nature and scope of the specific investigation at hand. Nonetheless, it appears especially incongruous to hear archaeologists insisting upon the formative colonial dimension of Roman literature and historical texts, whilst simultaneously maintaining that the unprecedented transformations in material culture and practices associated with the expansion of Roman imperial power must somehow be viewed as an entirely local affair, and not directly related to Roman Imperialism as a whole.[9] From this perspective, it appears that colonialism is a 'conquest by text' (Alston 1996, 99), primarily constituted by 'discourses'; and it is '…the *discourse*s which enable colonialism' (Webster 1996a, 9; original emphasis). On the contrary, as Ajax Ahmad reminds us, it is the latter which provides the 'enabling conditions' for any colonial discourse itself (1992, 164).

Roman imperialism was more than a discourse or a policy: it was a practice involving the creation and maintenance of new types of social relations between conqueror and conquered (Grahame 1998), as well as the transformation of existing social relations between widely differentiated groups both within and across these categories (Woolf 1997; 1998). Nor did Romanisation involve the direct substitution of the culture of one ethnic or regional group for that of

---

[9] This double-think which undoubtedly views Roman colonialism as a constitutive aspect of these local situations (why would Postcolonial Theory be relevant otherwise?) whilst simultaneously refusing to describe the changes in material culture as 'Roman' or 'Romanised', can also be seen in the emphasis placed on showing 'resistance' while refusing to acknowledge the existence of the actual phenomenon that was supposed to be resisted: namely Romanisation itself.

another, but rather constituted the creation of a new Imperial culture and the transformation of both Roman and native material cultures and social practices. These changes involved the production and development of new materials and practices that were not simply the result of other social, economic, and cultural processes, but were themselves actively used to create and define these new social relationships and identities. In this context, to paraphrase Kevin Whelan (1996, 5), style was substance and the medium was the message.

Therefore, although the traditional conceptions and definitions of 'Roman' material culture and 'Romanisation' are undoubtedly troublesome, their abandonment may prove to be even more so. The terms 'Roman' and 'provincial Roman' are retained and used here to categorise and identify the new material cultures, practices, and social relationships that were created through Roman imperialism; while the term 'Romanisation' is used to describe the collective development and diffusion of these phenomena. However, it is clear that we cannot simply assume that the presence of Roman artefacts – or new material types possibly related to Roman material culture – are indicative of Romanisation. Nor can we refer to any or all social or cultural changes brought about in the course of Roman colonial expansion as Romanisation. We must examine the ways in which this material was being used in specific contexts, and see if those using it were actively participating in practices which were associated with, and related to, the forms of cultural activity and social identity that were created through, and in turn constituted, Roman imperial rule.

The Natives are Nameless (and Restless)

This discussion brings us inevitably to the obverse categorical dilemma: how does one refer to the materials, practices, and peoples that existed in southeast Ireland throughout the Late Iron Age period? The name traditionally employed by archaeologists is 'Celtic', yet this label has also run into difficulties in recent times. As a modern linguistic category – used to denote the broader linguistic family to which the Irish language belongs – this term does have undeniable relevance as it includes the language spoken by most, if not all of the people living in Ireland during this period. However, the term 'Celtic' has never really been restricted to linguistics and its use has always inferred a wider range of historical, archaeological and cultural relationships. In archaeology for example,

the name 'Celtic' became synonymous with the archaeological term 'La Tène', which is used to categorise a specific European Iron Age art-style which is found across much, but not all, of Ireland.

There is intensive debate as to what extent the various peoples who spoke Celtic languages across Europe in Late Prehistory may have shared social institutions, cultural and religious practices, and even ethnic identities. The earliest attested appearance of the word '*Keltoi*' (Κελτά) is found in Ancient Greek texts as a rather loose ethnic label for a variety of groups in Iron Age Europe, and from the Roman period onwards (Latin '*Celtae*') it continued to be used in this manner to describe a plethora of cultures and peoples both past and present – from Prehistoric Anatolia to Medieval Ireland and present-day Brittany (see Chapman 1992). The indiscriminate use of the word 'Celtic' to describe so many different peoples over such extensive geographic and chronological terrain has undoubtedly stretched and weakened its meaning in the process, and may have stripped this term of any specific or substantive value as an archaeological or historical category. Furthermore, the Greeks and Romans never used this word to describe the inhabitants of Britain or Ireland directly, and there is no evidence that any of the inhabitants of these islands used this or related terms to describe themselves (Collis 2003, 223-231).

The term more generally used by Classical writers and historians to describe the peoples of temperate Europe was 'Barbarian'. However, this term is also unsuitable for our present purposes. Not only is it a loaded term, associated with European colonial values and related notions of 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' cultures, it is also much too general, meaning more or less 'non-Roman', or indeed originally 'non-Greek speaking'. More specific references to Ireland can be found in the work of Greek and Roman geographers and writers, who refer to Ireland variously as *Iernē* (Ἰέρνη), *Iwernia* (Ἰουερνία), *Iris* (Ἶρις), *Mikra Brettania* (Μικρά Βρεττανία), *insula sacra* ('Sacred Island'), *Iuevrnia*, *Iuverna*, *Hibernia*, *Hiverne*, *Hivernione*, and *Scotia*. The inhabitants are usually described very briefly as ignorant savages and cannibals, and are referred to as *Hierni*, *Hiberni*, *Scoti*, and *Atacotti* (see Freeman 2001, 131-134).

Iernē is the best candidate for the earliest historically attested name for Ireland, and it is likely that *Iwernia*, *Iuevrnia*, *Iuverna*, *Hibernia*, *Hiverne*, and *Hivernione* all derive from it, while both *insula sacra* and *Iris* may represent the substitution

of familiar Greek words that appeared to ancient writers to sound similar to *Iernē*.[10] This name appears in the form of the group name *Hierni* in the *Ora maritima* of Rudius Festus Avienus (4th century AD), in a section that may possibly be derived from a lost Greek work known as the *Massaliote Periplus* (c. 4th–6th century BC; see Freeman 2001, 28-33). *Iernē* is also related to *Ériu* (gen. *Érenn*), the most common name for Ireland used in Early Irish historical sources, which is derived from the Proto-Celtic *Īwerjū ('the Fertile Land') and the Indo-European *pi∂werjo∂n ('The Fat/Rich/Fertile One') (Koch 1991, 21).

The group name *Érainn*, from the Celtic *Īvernī ('People of the Fertile Earth'), also survives in Early Irish historical texts; however, in these sources it is restricted to a small number of subordinate tribes located in the northern and southwestern parts of the country and is not found in the southeast (Koch 1991, 21). The names *Scotia*, *Scotti* and *Atacotti* appear to be of relatively later vintage, and are not attested before their use in Roman and Latin sources of the 4th century AD (Charles-Edwards 2001, 159; Rance 2001, 150). *Scotia* and *Scotti* do not appear to be cognate with any known native names for Ireland or Irish tribes, and it has been argued that the appearance of these names may reflect the late formation of tribal confederations comparable to contemporary groupings in other regions peripheral to the Roman Empire, such as the *Picti* in Northern Britain, and the *Franci* and *Alamanni* in Europe (Charles-Edwards 2001, 159-160).

Charles-Edwards has suggested that *Scotti* and *Atacotti* represent the respective Roman names for Irish tribal federations formed by the *Laigin* in the southeast and the *Uliad* in the Northeast (2001, 159-60), yet there is no direct evidence to associate these Irish and Latin names with each other. Alternatively, Rance has suggested that the name *Atacotti* is related to the Early Irish term *aithechthútha*, a word which translates literally as 'base-client people'. On this basis Rance argues for an identification with the tribal grouping known in the Early Irish sources as the *Déisi*, meaning 'vassals' or 'rent payers', who are traditionally associated with the southwest, specifically east Munster (Rance 2001, 249-253). It should be remembered, however, that the term *aithechthútha* refers to the social status of a particular group relative to others (see Charles-Edwards 2001, 530-534), and as

---

[10] It has been suggested that Insula Sacra is a Latin translation of the Greek hiera nēsos (ἱερὰ νήσος), which may be derived from the similar sounding Ierū (’Ιέρνη – ιερ[ά]νή[σος]). It is also possible that the name of the goddess Iris (’Ιρις) was used as a similar phonetic substitution for Iernē (see Freeman 2001, 29-30 and 35-5 respectively).

such is a description of the general economic situation or social position of a group rather than a specific ethnic or tribal name itself.

The names of tribal groups said to be located in the southeast can be found in Ptolemy's *Geography*, which was compiled in the 2nd century AD but is likely to have drawn on sources written at least a century earlier (Tierney 1976). Altogether, the names of fifteen Irish tribes are provided, as well as their relative locations along the coast (Fig. 1.1). There are five tribes listed in the area that roughly corresponds with the southeast region: the *Brigantes* (Βρίγαντες) on the south coast, and the *Koriondoi* (Κοριονδοί), *Manapioi* (Μαναπία), *Kaukoi* (Καύκοί) and *Eblanioi* (Εβλάνιοι) along the east coast (moving from south to north).

The *Brigantes* are situated to the north of the mouth of the River *Birgu* (Βίργου), which corresponds to be the mouth of River Barrow (Irish: An Bhearú) at Waterford Harbour (Duffy 2000; Freeman 2001; Darcy and Flynn 2008), placing them in the Kilkenny/South Tipperary region. The *Koriondoi*) that must surely be Carnsore Point (Duffy 2000; Freeman 2001; Darcy and Flynn 2008), which would put them in Co. Wexford. The *Manapioi* appear to be located somewhere in the Wexford or Wicklow region, to the west of the River *Modunna* (Μοδόννου) which cannot be confidently identified with any contemporary waterway (see Freeman 2001, 78-80).[11] The *Kaukoi* are situated in the vicinity of the River *Oboka* (Οβόκα), which matches the location (if not the name) of the River Liffey.[12] The *Eblanioi* are located in the area between River *Oboka* the River *Buwinda* (Βουουίνδα) which can be identified as the River Boyne (Irish: 'Boend'; Duffy 2000, Freeman 2001, Darcy and Flynn 2008).

---

[11] It has been suggested that the River *Modunna* may represent either the River Slaney (de Bernado Stempel 2000; Darcy and Flynn 2008) or the River Avoca (Duffy 2000; Bursche and Warner 2000).

[12] Although the name of the Avoca River would appear to match Ptolemy's *Oboka* (Οβόκα), the location given for the *Oboka* closely corresponds to that of the River Liffey (Duffy 2000, Freeman 2001, Darcy and Flynn 2008). It may be worth noting that the River Liffey was previously known as 'An Ruirthech' in Irish – the name Liffey appears to have been derived from the name of the plain (Irish 'Liphe') through which the river runs (Byrne 1973, 150) – and the Avoca River was previously known as 'An Abhainn Mhór' in Irish.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 1.1: Map of Ireland composed from the coordinates in Ptolemy's *Geography*.

(After Freeman 2001)

The locations of two eponymous 'cities' (the term used is πόλις '*polis*') of the *Eblanioi* and *Manapioi* are also given. *Eblana* (Εβλανα) appears to be located on the coast between the *Oboka* and the *Buwinda*, while *Manapia* (Μαναπία) is located further south along the coast near the mouth of the *Modunna*. Two more inland 'cities' called *Labēros* (Λάβηρος) and *Dunon* (Δούνον) are located to the north and south of the River *Oboka* respectively. It is difficult to gauge the meaning of the term '*polis*' in this context. The locations referred to may be ports, settlements, assembly sites, fortifications, or a mixture of all of these, and it is impossible to identify any of the south-eastern locations with specific sites.[13] Three islands situated off the southeast coast are also difficult to positively identify.[14]

What is perhaps most intriguing about Ptolemy's description of Ireland is the general lack of correspondences between his tribal names and those found on ogham inscriptions or in Early Irish historical sources (Fig. 1.2; see Charles-Edwards 2001, 152; Russell 2005, 410). Despite the extensive efforts of numerous commentators only three of Ptolemy's Irish tribes appear to have direct Irish counterparts, none of whom are located in the southeast.[15] The *Woluntioi* (Οὐολούντιοι), located in the Northeast, appear to be related to the *Ulaid* (from the root *u[o]lu[n]ti) of the epic '*Táin Bó Cúailnge*' who gave their name to the Province of Ulster (Charles-Edwards 2001, 152). The *Auteinoi* (Αὐτίνοι) on the West coast, east of the River *Sēnu* (Σήνου), can also be linked to the Early Irish

---

[13] Although antiquarian tradition has tended to associate *Eblana* with Dublin, there is no real evidence to support this connection (Freeman 2001, 197). The discovery of Roman material at Drumanagh has prompted the suggestion that *Eblana* may refer to the promontory fort itself (Warner 1995), while Brendan Matthews has recently proposed that the name *Eblana* may be related to the name of the River Delvin (Irish 'Albhain) – a suggestion that would place *Eblana* at the mouth of the Delvin River near Gomanstown. Suggested locations for *Manapia* include Wexford Town (Darcy and Flynn 2008) and Bray, Co. Wicklow (Bursche and Warner 2000); while *Laēros* has been linked with Tara, Co. Meath (Darcy and Flynn 2008) and Portlaoise, Co. Laois (de Bernado Stempel 2000). *Dunon* has been associated with Knockaulin, Co. Kildare (Duffy 2000), and Dinn Riogh, Co. Carlow (Darcy and Flynn 2008). For a comprehensive list of the wide range of locations that have been associated with Ptolemy's placenames see Darcy and Flynn 2008: table 2.

[14] The islands listed are *Mona* (Μόνα), *Ardu* (Αδρου) and *Lemnu* (Λίμνοου); the last two islands are described as 'desolate' (ἐρημος). *Mona* is likely to represent Anglesey, *Ardu* may refer to the peninsula of Howth (Irish: *Étar*) and *Lemnu* may be Lambay Island (Warner 1995; Freeman 2001, 125: note 142). There are clear problems with these suggestions: most notably Howth is not an island, and Lambay is located to the north (not to the south) of Howth.

[15] Attempts to link the Kaukoi with the Uí Cruich or the Cuachraige (Pokorny 1917; O Brian 1925); the Koriondoi with the Corcu Cuirnd, Cuirenrige, Coraind or Dal Cuirind (Mac Neill 1911); and the Brigantes with the Uí Bairrche (O'Rahilly 1946), are based on superficial and unconvincing similarities (see Freeman 2001, 70; Charles-Edwards 2001, 152: n. 36).

Úaithni (from the Celtic root *Autēniī), a group that occupied the area along the eastern bank of the River Shannon in Co. Limerick (Mac Neill 1911, 102). The *Iwernoi* (Ἰούερνοι) and the '*polis*' of *Iwernis* (Ἰουερνις) in the Southwest are almost certainly related to *Iwernia* (Ἰουερνία), the name that Ptolemy uses for Ireland, and also to the Greek *Iernē* (Ἰέρνη). These are derived from the same Celtic root (*Īwerjū) as the Early Irish tribal name *Érainn*: a group who are specifically associated with the Southwest region in the Early Irish sources (Koch 1991, 21).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 1.2: Early Medieval peoples and kingdoms in southeast Ireland.

(After Charles-Edwards 2000)

Some of the tribal names located in the southeast do appear to be related to other Celtic group names that are known from Britain and Gaul. The *Brigantes* (Βρίγαντες) have the same name as the well-known confederation of Northern British tribes in Britain, and the name *Manapioi* (Μαναπία) is often assumed to be related to the *Menapii* tribe in Gaul (Raftery 1994, 206). Although the name *Kaukoi* (Καύκοί) also appears to be similar to that of the *Cauci* tribe in Germany (Pokorny 1917; Raftery 1994, 206), the relationship appears to be superficial (Freeman 2001, 80). It has often been assumed that these similarities attest to the invasion or migration of British or continental groups into Ireland at some stage in the Iron Age, however there are regular correspondences between group names and placenames right across Celtic speaking Europe, as is to be expected in different regions inhabited by peoples speaking related languages (Freeman 2001, 77).[16]

The range and diversity of group names provided by both Classical and Early Irish sources should alert us to the very real possibility that the social and political conditions in Late Prehistoric Ireland were far more dynamic and shifting than has often been presumed (Charles-Edwards 2001, 152). It is clear that none of these attested group names can be used with confidence to describe the peoples or groups living in southeast Ireland at this time, and to adopt one or more of them would undoubtedly give the mistaken impression of a more solid and intimate knowledge of the prevailing circumstances than can be accurately claimed.

The archaeological category 'La Tène' can be used to describe objects that display the relevant typological characteristics. However, this category cannot be extended to include all Irish Iron Age material culture and should not be interpreted as an ethnic category or description. For these reasons, and in the absence of a better term, the phrase 'native Irish' will be used hereafter to refer to the peoples and the cultures that existed in the southeast of Ireland during the last few centuries B.C. and the first four centuries A.D. It should be stressed that 'Irish' is not intended here as an ethnic or cultural description, but as an admittedly modern geographic designation.

---

[16] For example: the Celtic root '*brigā*' (hill/elevated place) gives us the tribal name *Brigantes*, the placenames *Brigantio* and *Brigantium* in the Alps, an eponymous goddess *Brigantia* in Yorkshire, an identical placename *Brigantia* (now *La Coruña*) in Spain, a cognate deity *Brigando* in Gaul, and the related Irish mythological figure of *Brigit*. Dozens of names, of places, deities, tribes, and individuals, derive from this root (see Koch *et al*. 2007, 152: § 289; for *Bigantia*, *Brigando*, and *Brigit*, see MacKillop 2005, 90).

Methodology

The methodological and interpretive procedures used to present and analyse the material under examination in this study have been specifically chosen in order to foreground the theoretical issues discussed above, especially those concerned with the interpretation of artefacts in the context of their role and use in specific social and cultural practices. In Chapter 2 we shall focus on the guiding assumptions and procedures which have characterised the investigation of Roman artefacts in Ireland to date. We will show how Roman finds from Ireland have been consistently approached and analysed in ways that diverge radically from those applied to other contemporary forms of Iron Age material culture: an approach which has served only to isolate these finds from their contemporary archaeological, historical and geographical contexts, and effectively exclude them from the Irish archaeological record in the process. As a result, the forms of categorisation and analysis that have been used to define and asses the corpus of Roman material from Ireland will be critically reassessed, as will the broader archaeological theories and historical narratives that have been used to explain and interpret these finds.

A preliminary analysis of the quantity, chronology, and distribution of Roman material in the southeast will be undertaken in order to highlight difficulties and limitations inherent in existing approaches, and also to give a broad overview of the corpus of Roman material in this region as a whole. However, unlike previous analyses which have universally presented Roman material as a phenomenon to be considered *apart from* the broader Iron Age archaeological record, the finds are presented here *as part of* the Late Iron Age archaeology of this region. In this context, it is the congruity of Roman material in relation to the amount, distribution and recovery contexts of other Iron Age finds – and not its supposed incongruity – that becomes most apparent. This analysis will demonstrate that, far from being 'paltry', 'scattered' or 'isolated', Roman finds in southeast Ireland represent a considerable proportion of the Late Iron Age artefactual corpus from this region, and can also be seen to occupy important positions in the late prehistoric landscape, specifically in relation to significant monuments, locations and routeways.

The following Chapters (3–8) present more detailed analyses of specific artefacts and their findspots. Once again the significance of context is emphasised

and these chapters are organised and structured 'thematically' in relation to the contextual associations of the material, as opposed to other categorical distinctions that could be made within or across the artefactual corpus itself; i.e.: material composition (pottery, glass, metalwork etc.), typological forms (brooches, vessels, coins etc.) or chronological divisions (Early and Late etc.). These Chapters proceed by looking closely at specific find-contexts including Drumanagh (Chapter 3) and Ráith na Senad (Chapter 4), and groups of related find-contexts including megalithic tombs (Chapter 5), hillforts (Chapter 6), prehistoric 'royal' sites (Chapter 7) and wells and sources (Chapter 8).

As with any other methodological means of ordering the evidence, these contextual categories are in no way self-contained or mutually exclusive and there are numerous instances of overlap and intersection in each case. For example, Roman artefacts are found in close proximity to prehistoric burial mounds at a number of these different site-types: at megalithic tombs, hillforts, sources, and prehistoric 'royal' sites. It is also clear that Ráith na Senad could (and should) be included in the latter category as part of the prehistoric 'royal' ritual complex on the Hill of Tara.[17] However, although these chapters are clearly structured and ordered in terms of monument or site typology, the 'contextual associations' explored in each case encompass more than just the 'archaeological' contexts of the artefacts (in the strict sense of stratification or direct association with features, structures and monuments) but also extend to the broader situation of the findspots within the local landscape and their proximity and relationship to:

- Surrounding monuments
- Other finds of Roman and Iron Age material
- Local topography
- Natural features (rivers, passes, bogs, etc.)
- Boundaries and borders
- Routeways
- Local placenames and folklore
- Historical sources and mythological references

---

[17] The quantity of material and the interpretive problems presented by the excavation report of Ráith na Senad required a detailed level of analysis which necessitated, for reasons of space and clarity, a stand-alone chapter for this site.

In each case we shall explore both the use of these objects at these specific locations and the possible relationships between the material at hand and any wider matrixes of contextual association.

The use of Roman artefacts at these sites is also assessed within the context of the broader Iron Age archaeological record in Ireland, specifically in relation to the evidence for related practices involving similar artefact-types, monuments or features. The scope of the investigation is then extended to include the evidence for analogous activity and contextual associations in other regions both within and beyond the territory of the Western Roman Empire, with a view to establishing the possible relationship – if any – between the use and meaning of Roman artefacts in Irish Iron Age contexts and its role in social practices in other provincial Roman and Iron Age societies.

The final chapters (9-10) attempt to view the use of this material in the wider context of the social, cultural and economic transformations occurring in both Iron Age Ireland and Roman Europe at this time. Roman attitudes to interaction with groups outside official Roman territory will be explored, along with the evidence for the practices and institutions that were involved in this kind of interaction. What is of particular interest here is the evidence for the social relationships and cultural practices that would have been involved in the exchange and use of Roman material in southeast Ireland, and the nature of the relationship between the activities associated with Roman material and other broader social and cultural transformations occurring at this time.

It should be noted that radiocarbon dates in the text are provided in calibrated calendar years BC/AD. A number of dates have been given as calculated by the authors cited; however most have been calculated using the Oxcal Calibration Program (at two sigma).

The Study Area: Southeast Ireland

The study area has been chosen due to the amount and quality of the available evidence in the southeast region. The area defined as 'Southeast' here is not based on any specific current or historically attested political or territorial divisions; however county boundaries are used as a convenient means of demarcation. In

this way the Southeast[18] may be defined as the Munster counties of Tipperary and Waterford and all of the Leinster counties excluding Longford. Overall, this region may be envisioned as the area enclosed within a hypothetical semi-circle running from Youghal to Dundalk, with the River Shannon providing the westward limit of the study area (Fig. 1.3). This study area comprises a significant portion of Ireland as a whole, encompassing just under one third of the total area of the island. Over one half of the total number of findspots of Roman material from Ireland are to be found within these bounds, and there is also far more information available relating to the contexts of these finds as the vast majority of archaeologically excavated contexts are also located in the Southeast (there are twice as many excavated sites which have produced Roman finds in this area than there are in the rest of the country combined).

The material-types and recovery contexts in the Southeast also display considerably more variation than those in other areas, and despite the conspicuous absence of large silver hoards similar to those found in counties Derry, Armagh and Limerick,[19] the findspots in the study area provide us with a range of evidence that is considerably richer in both detail and variety. This study area therefore presents us with a sample of evidence that is in one sense broadly representative, due to the fact that most of the finds and find-contexts located elsewhere can be closely paralleled within the Southeast, and in another sense utterly exceptional due to the very density of available evidence. Although the more detailed examinations of findspots will be confined to locations within the Southeast, the broader contextual and comparative analyses will necessarily include specific parallels with assemblages and sites at other locations across the rest of the island; however we must remain cautious when coming to any broader conclusions concerning the use and role of Roman material culture across all such contexts.

---

[18] When capitalised, 'Southeast' refers specifically to the study area designated for this study.

[19] The lack of similar hoards in the Southeast will undoubtedly influence the scope and nature of this investigation, yet these finds have clearly attracted their own fair share of attention and occupy a uniquely prominent position in much of the relevant literature. Indeed the absence of such hoards may even provide us with an opportunity to shine a light on other finds and contexts that have been traditionally overshadowed by these spectacular discoveries.
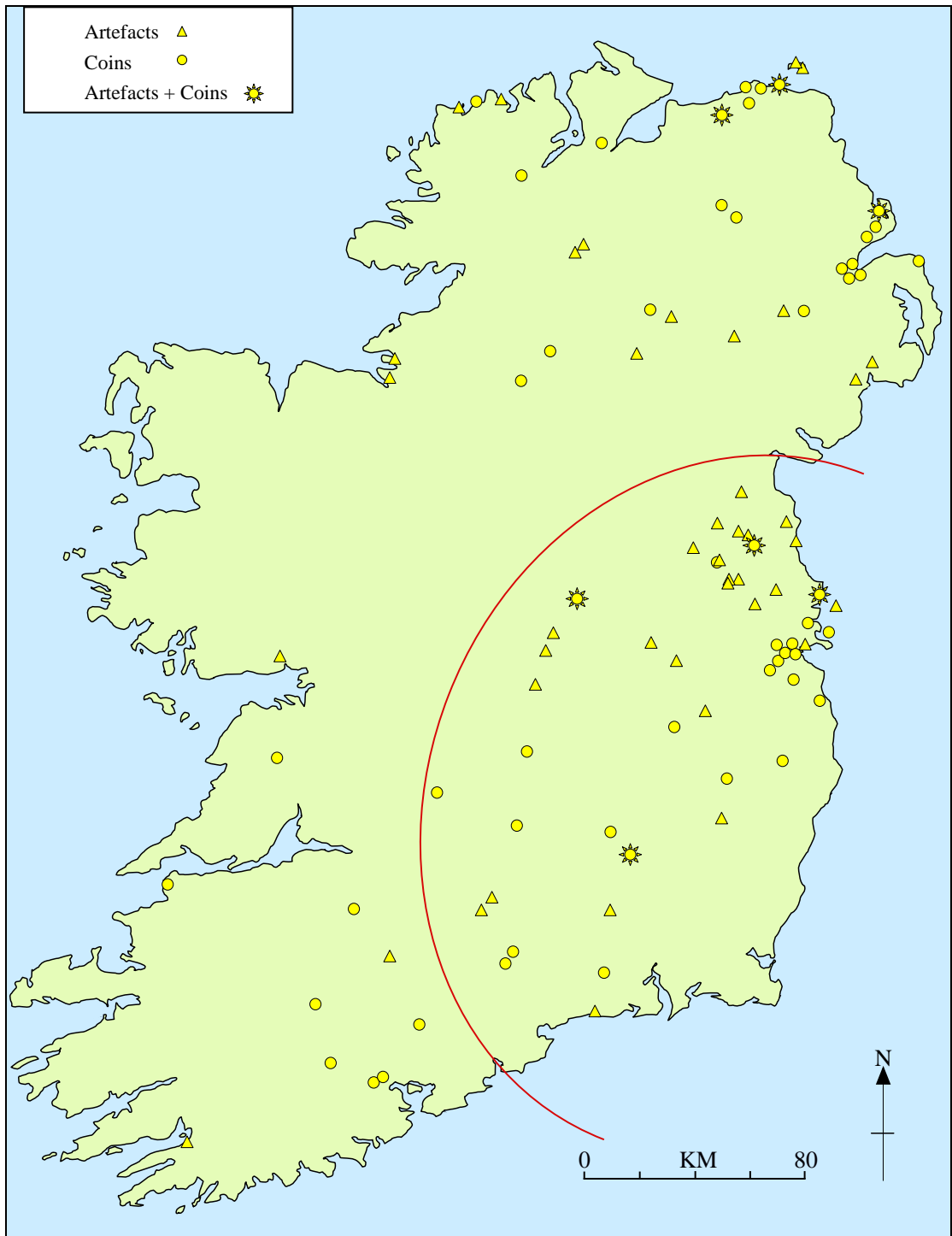
Fig. 1.3: The findspots of Roman Material in Ireland.

The Study Area 'Southeast Ireland' may be envisioned as the area enclosed within a hypothetical semi-circle running from Youghal to Dundalk.

Aims and Research objectives

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how Roman material was used in southeast Ireland during the Iron Age, and to examine the possible relationships between the use of these objects in Irish contexts and the broader development of Roman Imperial social formations and cultural practices in Western Europe. It is hoped that this investigation will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Roman and native interaction in Ireland, and a more wide-ranging view of the nature and extent of Roman influence on Irish society at this time. Existing theories of interaction concerning invasions, adventurers, missionaries, raiders, traders, and refugees (Bateson 1973, 30; Raftery 1994, 200-219; Waddell 1998, 377; Warner 1995) are not only problematic in their own right, but they also fail to examine or interpret the use and meaning of this material in its Irish contexts. Furthermore, the social significance and historical consequences of such contacts have rarely been seriously considered in relation to the wider effect they may have had on Late Iron Age Irish society.

It may appear foolhardy to attempt such a broad investigation of social interaction where there appears to be a relatively limited corpus of material culture and a singularly sparse archaeological record. On the other hand, it can be argued that it is even more imprudent not to attempt any broader interpretations. The archaeological record for this period must be 'inadequate' for a reason. The evidence that is there, or that is absent, may be the result of the prevailing social conditions, or the types of behaviour and forms of deposition that were practiced in Iron Age Ireland. Indeed, the perceived lack of archaeological evidence may also have been exacerbated by the way the material has been approached and analysed by archaeologists: much of the 'enigma of the Irish Iron Age' may turn out to be a mystery of our own making.

This is certainly not a problem that can be tackled here, but it should suffice to say that it is the belief of this writer that the rigour of any analysis may be measured by the interpretive procedures that are applied to the available evidence, and not simply by the amount or density of the evidence that is subjected to analysis. Indeed, the need for new interpretations is often more acute than the need for additional evidence. There will never be an ideal stage at which this process can begin: we must start with what we have, however inadequate we perceive it to be, and do the best we can.

The practice of archaeology always relies upon existing assumptions, implicitly or explicitly, which are integral to the recording, categorisation, description, and interpretation of evidence. There is therefore, no totally separate or objective archaeological record which can be used in an instrumental manner – analogous to the scientific method – to 'prove' or 'disprove' a broader interpretation. A Chinese proverb invoked by Fredric Jameson may provide a more appropriate parallel for this aspect of the archaeological process: 'you use one axe handle to hew another' (1981 xiii). As interpretation is always-already involved in the marshalling of evidence to construct, support, or critique an interpretation, another interpretation must be used to replace any preceding one. Indeed, it is only through the practice of interpretation that the archaeological record, and the past itself, can become known to us in a meaningful way.

Chapter 2

Strangers in a Strange Land:
Romans Artefacts in Celtic Ireland

'I cannot be persuaded that this Island [Ireland] was conquered by the Romans. Without question it would have been well for it, if it had; as it would have been a means to civilize the Nation. For wherever the Romans were Conquerors, they introduced humanity among the conquer'd-, and, except where they rul'd there was no such thing as humanity, learning or politeness in any part of Europe. Their neglect of this island may be charg'd upon them, as very inconsiderate.'

William Camden, *Britannia* 1722 [1586]

'The Romans never found the time to invade Ireland, which is certainly the most important non-event in Irish History.'

Gearóid Mac Eoin, *The Decline of the Celtic languages* 1988

Introduction

The study of the Irish Iron Age has been dominated throughout its development by various forms of Celticism – a discipline that has proven to be every bit as fascinating and mystifying as its own subject matter. The prevalent notion of an imaginative and creative 'Celtic spirit' is itself a highly imaginative creation, popularised by writers who were often entirely ignorant of both the Celtic languages and the lives of those who spoke them.[20] This conception of 'Celticity' played a prominent role in British colonial discourse, and was subsequently appropriated by Irish cultural nationalism as the founding tenet of modern Irish historical and cultural thought (while reproducing nonetheless many of the dubious stereotypes initially intended to justify Irish subjugation to British rule: see Lloyd 1987, 69-76; Kiberd 1995, 101-129). Much has been written and remains to be written about the convoluted history of Celticism, yet the very range of the materials and movements to which the name 'Celtic' has been allied reveals above all the remarkably adaptable and protean character of the concept itself.

---

[20]Matthew Arnold is the quintessential Celticist in this regard (see Kiberd 1995, 29-32).

For a phenomenon that has usually been viewed as marginalised and bounded, 'Celtic culture' has been surprisingly expansive and all-encompassing in the materials that it has gathered to itself, from Neolithic megaliths ('Druids Altars') to Medieval art ('Celtic High Crosses'). Yet if Celticism has been protean in some ways, it has also been procrustean in others. It has stretched all shapes and sizes of material over its bed, whilst simultaneously sawing away and discarding that which could not lie comfortably within it. The ahistorical manner in which Early Irish texts have been pulled back into the prehistoric past and envisaged as a 'window on the Iron Age' (Jackson 1964) has been well-documented and critiqued (see Aitchison 1987; McCone 1991; Mallory 1992; Koch 1994); however the converse tendency to project and push other material out of the Iron Age period has been largely overlooked. As we shall see, Roman finds from Ireland have fallen victim to both of these tendencies: many objects have remained concealed within the overly-expansive category of 'Celtic' material culture, while others have been excluded from analysis and in some cases effectively exorcised from the archaeological record altogether.

This leaves us with the seemingly contradictory task of both reclaiming items from, and reincorporating objects into, the corpus of Irish Iron Age artefacts as it is currently constituted. The first step here must be to re-examine the catalogues of Roman and Iron Age finds from Ireland, and critically assess the explicit and implicit criteria used to create, define, and analyse these bodies of material. It is also necessary to reassess the historical narratives that have been used to interpret the presence of Roman material in Ireland, as these framing discourses have proven highly influential – not only in relation to the explication the archaeological record but in the actual formation and ordering of that record in the first place. These theories rely almost exclusively upon Classical texts and Irish historical sources, and it is largely through such documentary evidence that the late Iron Age period has been retrospectively viewed and interpreted. Therefore, although the Late Iron Age period preceded and undoubtedly shaped the world of the texts, historiographically speaking the textual evidence has often preceded and shaped the world of the Late Iron Age as we perceive it. This process now needs to be revised and reversed: the narratives and theories drawn from the historical sources must be examined in the light of the available archaeological evidence.

Different Strokes for Different Folks: Cataloguing Celts and Romans

43

The historian Roy Foster has noted that '[m]uch of Irish history as usually conceived concerns what did not happen…' (1988, ix). This is an observation that certainly holds for much of Irish prehistory as well. The claim that 'the Romans never came to Ireland' is universally presented as the ultimate historical explanation for the cultural and social differences between Ireland and Britain. The absence of Roman rule is considered to be responsible for the survival of Ireland's 'Celtic heritage'; an inheritance that was thought to have been denied to the rest of Europe due to Roman domination (MacEoin 1988; Raftery 1994, 13). In this way, the perceived significance of a non-Roman past is elevated to a position of singular importance, providing ancient roots and historical validation for modern Irish political and cultural identities. From the Tudor re-conquest to the 20th century, the lack of Roman influence in Ireland has been viewed by commentators of all nationalities and political persuasions as the historical basis and cultural core of Irishness itself, and as such has been persistently invoked in order to emphasize the ancient and venerable pedigree of (or alternatively the primeval and barbarous nature of) Irish cultural forms and social institutions.[21]

As a consequence the discovery of Roman artefacts in Ireland has been continuously met with suspicion and incredulity, with the material being treated as an anomaly which inherently goes against the grain of well-established Irish historical and cultural narratives. Expressions of surprise and disbelief are omnipresent in the accounts of such finds, and commentators clearly find it difficult to explain the occurrence of artefacts that are thought to be inherently alien to Ireland; objects that evoke the unnerving presence of '…strangers in a strange land' (Pinkerton 1857, 36; Drummond 1841, 185). Numerous discoveries are dismissed due to the purportedly dishonest motives of the finders (Woodmartin 1887-8, 103-4), or are chalked up to trickery on the part of others who sought to deceive them (Dolley 1968). One find was even attributed a Medieval fraudster: the 'cunning leech' who was thought to have used a Roman oculist's stamp from Golden, Co. Tipperary, as part of his Medieval medical act (Way 1850, 355).

---

[21] For the perceived importance of Ireland's non-Roman past, and persistent references to this trope in politics, historiography, and literature, see Canny 1973; 2001, 121-124; Leerson 1986; O'Halloran 2004, 62; Cullingford 1996.

Nonetheless, some writers did hazard the opinion that the apparent rarity of Roman finds may possibly be related to other contemporary concerns. George Petrie argued that '…sufficient attention had not been paid to the ancient coins found in this country, simply because they were not Irish' (1850-53, 199), and Francis Haverfield suggested that the scarcity of finds '…is in part due to neglect. Modern Ireland cares little for ancient Rome' (1913, 11). Despite these warnings the scepticism surrounding Roman artefacts remained, and it would become standard practice for archaeologists to offer cautionary disclaimers when dealing with these finds, marking them out as particularly 'difficult to assess' and 'not easy to interpret' (Raftery 1994, 214; Edwards 1990, 1; see also Waddell 1998, 374).

The innate suspicions of earlier commentators appeared to be confirmed in Donal Bateson's influential study of Roman material from Ireland, the stated aim of which was '…to see if the material did in fact reach Ireland during the Roman period' (1973, 21). Scepticism appears to operate as the main organising principle of this work and is manifest in the very structure of the catalogue, which divides the Roman material into three categories – 'Accepted', 'Questionable', and 'Rejected' – according to Bateson's appraisal of their authenticity.[22] The artefacts considered to be most suspicious by Bateson are the coins, and he concludes that 80% of Roman coin-finds from Ireland are recent imports; a claim that is continually and uncritically reiterated by other commentators (Edwards 1990, 1; Raftery 1994, 214; Waddell 1998, 374).[23] A healthy scepticism when dealing with objects that have become so popular as collectables or souvenirs is certainly warranted; and coins do represent the majority of Roman finds with problematic associations or modern contexts. There is also good reason to believe that certain coins were in the possession of antiquarians or collectors, while others appear to

---

[22] It is notable that no other catalogue of archaeological finds from Ireland has used similar categories as an ordering framework.

[23] When repeated by Waddell this claim is mistakenly inflated to include '…most Roman coins found in Ireland (some 80%)' (1998, 374; original parenthesis), as opposed to *finds* of Roman coins. However, this slip is indicative of the general impression given by Bateson's study. The actual number of coins in his Accepted category is approximately 2515, found at 13 locations on 18 different occasions altogether. There are 36 coins from 34 locations in the Questionable list, and around 120 coins from 37 locations among the Rejected finds. If the Questionable and Rejected categories are conflated (as is the case in the 80% figure), the actual proportion of Roman coins in these two categories represents less than 6% of the total number of coins in the catalogue. Hence over 90% of Roman coins from Ireland appear to be genuine finds.

have had a restricted eastern circulation in antiquity and are therefore likely to represent modern souvenirs.[24]

Given these instances, it may seem reasonable to be sceptical towards all accounts of Roman coin-finds from Ireland. Yet it should be remembered that coins are the most common artefacts recovered in Romano-British contexts – most notably at ritual sites – and Roman coins also outnumber coins from all other periods at excavated sites in Britain (Reece 2002, 90). There are for example over 52,000 Roman coins reported from findspots in Wales alone, just a day's sailing across the Irish Sea (Guest and Wells 2007). It should not, therefore, tax one's credulity too much to entertain the possibility that some Roman coins could have made their way to Ireland during the Roman period, and there are far more coins with good provenances and recovery records than there are examples with suspicious or modern associations.[25]

In fact, more often than not, Bateson's attempts to distinguish between modern and ancient deposits are without any evidential basis, and appear instead to rest upon an inherently sceptical received wisdom. There are a number of instances where finds have been vaguely recorded as 'Roman coins' and these should be treated with caution as misidentification is a distinct possibility.[26] However there are other finds that appear to be lacking only in more detailed information relating to the circumstances of recovery, and it is unclear why Bateson chose to place them in his 'Rejected' or 'Questionable' categories. There is of course a sliding scale in relation to the confidence one may place in different finds; however the criterion for such a scale should be clearly defined and consistent, and the case for dismissal should have to be made in each specific case.

Two examples that highlight this problem are those concerning coins found in Co. Tipperary in the 19th century. One 'Questionable' entry includes two coins, one of Antoninus Pius and an issue of 'one of the Gordians', recorded in the Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition in Dublin as having been found in

---

[24] Coins with modern contexts: Bateson 1973 appendix B: nos. 53, 62, 65, 66, 67, 81; problematic associations: nos. 20, 47, 54, 57, 79, 72, 86; from collectors: nos. 48, 59, 60 (see also Bateson 1976, 175-6); and with restricted distribution: nos. 51, 55, 69, 70, 74, 83, 84, 85 (see also Bateson 1976, 178: note 16). Some early Imperial copper and bronze issues, which are rare in Britain, may also be recent imports: nos. 31, 53, 57, 58, 63, 66, addendum no. 8 (it is notable that many of these early Imperial issues are also those with problematic provenances).

[25] See footnote 4 above.

[26] Bateson 1973 appendix B: nos. 25, 35, 39, 40, 49, 61; and addendum no 4; misidentified coin: no. 47.

'Lisbeen [*sic*], Co. Tipperary' in 1851 (Bateson 1973 appendix B: no. 43; Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition Dublin 4th Edition, 152). In the 'Rejected' category there is another find of two coins, one of Antoninus Pius and another of Gordian III, found in Templemore in 1851 and mentioned by four different writers (Bateson 1973, appendix B: no. 82). In both cases the coin issues and date of discovery match, and in an earlier edition of the Great Exhibition Catalogue the entry reads '…found at Lisheen, near Templemore, Co. Tipperary' (Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition Dublin 3rd Edition, 161). It is clear that these two separate entries relate to a single discovery, and that the presence of the coins at the exhibition would appear to confirm the accounts of their recovery. This also begs the question as to why one entry is categorised as 'Questionable' and the other as 'Rejected', even though there is more information available for the 'Rejected' finds?

Evaluating the significance of single coin-finds can be difficult, not least because the categorical distinction made between 'hoards' and 'single finds' is inherently problematic (Fitzpatrick 1984, 178– 9; Barrett 1985, 95). As Aitchison has argued, the difference between a coin hoard and a single coin find '...is a purely a quantitative distinction, with no unequivocal implications for the mechanisms or motives behind deposition' (Aitchison 1988, 271). Therefore a single coin deposit may represent related behaviour and possess the same archaeological significance as a hoard – in fact if the coin is gold it should perhaps be seen as the equivalent of a large hoard of silver or bronze coins in terms of value (Reece 2002, 80). The findspots of Roman gold coins from Ireland would certainly support the idea that these valuable coins represent ritual offerings at sites such as Newgrange, Co. Meath, the Giant's Ring, Belfast, and the ancient riverbed of the Dodder at Templeogue, Co. Dublin (Carson and O'Kelly, 1977; Bateson 1976, 173; Swift 1997, 19).[27]

To these examples we may add the silver coin of Tiberius from Killavilla, Co. Offaly (Bateson 1973, appendix B: no. 24). This coin was said to have been '…found beneath the surface of what appears to be a flat barrow in a field called the Coarse Moor' in the early decades of the last century (cited in Ó Ríordáin 1947, 75; this monument is marked on the O.S. 6" map as a 'cillín'). The

---

[27] It is also notable that the gold coin from in Ballintoy, Co. Antrim, is reputed to have been found with a torc (Bateson 1973, appendix C: no. 33).

deposition of coins and other votive offerings at barrows and burial mounds is a well-documented Roman practice in Britain (Woodward 1992, 26; Williams 1998), and it is entirely possible that the deposition of this coin represents related ritual activity. Intriguingly, in the adjoining field to this barrow, at a spot just over 100m to the west, a carved stone head was found underneath a boulder a number of years later (Fig. 2.1). The carving, like all such stone 'idols', cannot be dated with confidence, however many commentators believe the head to be of late prehistoric date, and the distinctive pointed tip of the crown has been compared by Ross and Rynne to Gallo-Roman and Romano-British representations of the Genii Cucullati (Ross 1967, 88-9 and pl. 32b; Rynne 1972).

In other cases it may be more difficult to differentiate between deliberate deposition and casual loss, as what may have represented an important feature at the time of deposition may be indistinguishable in the modern landscape. The presence of uncovered structures, the limits of tribal territory, the boundaries between cultivated and uncultivated land, between forestry and pastureland, may be undetectable to us today. In the west of France, for example, there is a notable prevalence of isolated single finds of Roman gold coins dating to the immediate post-conquest period (Reece 2002, 80). A similar pattern has also been noted in relation to early Gallo-Belgic coins found in Britain. According to Creighton: 'Most of the gold found was not from settlement sites at all, but as individual or multiple finds in isolated locations. This suggests that much of the gold ended up in the ground through deliberate votive acts' (Creighton 2000, 30). Furthermore, this activity may not have been limited to gold coins or hoards, which are likely to represent exceptional and relatively rare events, as deposits of lower value coins often constitute the most common form of votive offerings at Romano-British cult loci such as Bath and Coventina's Well (Aitchison 1988, 274–5).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 2.1: Stone Head, Killavilla, Co.Offaly.
(After Ross 1967)

Lower value coins also represent more than half of the coins recovered from Newgrange, and there are a number of 'Accepted' 1st–2nd century lower value coins from Drumanagh and Brayhead. Therefore, the notion that the low value of a coin is somehow indicative of modern importation is clearly problematic (e.g. Dolley 1976, 182). More generally, it is difficult to see why finds of Roman coins in counties Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Westmeath, and Wicklow (and other counties in Ulster and Munster), should automatically be considered suspect when numerous finds of Roman material have been recovered from excavated contexts in these counties. The dismissal of so many Roman coin finds from Ireland without any positive evidence for later importation can only be based on a broader sceptical attitude, and cannot be sustained in the face of the growing archaeological evidence for the presence of Roman material in Ireland from the 1st century AD onwards. This does not mean that all of these coin finds are indeed genuine, but to dismiss all of them out of hand may discourage or circumscribe the possibility of any future study which could provide new evidence through archival research or archaeological fieldwork.

A different kind of scepticism surrounds the analyses of other Roman objects which are often interpreted as residual or secondary post-Roman finds (as opposed to representing activity contemporary with the date of the material itself). It would appear that the well-documented use of Samian ware in medieval contexts elsewhere has encouraged commentators to postulate a late date for Roman pottery sherds and artefacts found at or near Irish sites with later occupation levels (Liversage 1968, 167; Warner 1976, 285–288; Bradley 1981; Edwards 1990, 1–2; O'Sullivan 1998). However, to date Roman pottery has been found in just one secure medieval context in Ireland (Bateson 1973, addendum no. 1), while a large number of excavated examples appear to be associated with contemporary Iron Age activity at sites such as the Rath of the Synods, Tara, and Knowth, Co. Meath (Evans 2008; Eogan 2012, 444).

The discovery of pottery sherds with smooth edges or pierced holes at sites such as Lagore crannog, Dalkey Island midden, and Dundrum Sandhills, has been interpreted as positive evidence for this kind of secondary use in later post-Roman periods (Liversage 1967, 167; Warner 1976, 285). However, the reuse of pottery sherds also occurred during the Roman period, and similar pieces have been found in Roman contexts in Britain and other provinces, where they have been interpreted as gaming pieces or a form of local currency (Macinnes 1989, 110; Brandt 1983, 138–142). In this light it is interesting to note that a piece of re-used Nene Valley colour-coated ware from Ballinderry Lough, Co. Westmeath (Bateson 1976, 175 'Castorware'), has a cluster of four holes drilled in it (Fig. 2.2), with each hole surrounded by a carved concentric circle in a manner which recalls the dot-and-circle clusters on the bone dice found with Late Iron Age and Roman material at Newgrange and Knowth (Fig. 2.4). A piece of Severn Valley ware which had been re-used as a spindle-whorl (and may have been imported as such) was also found amongst the Roman material at the Rath of the Synods at Tara (Evans 2008, 124-5; Grogan 2008, 69: pl. 2).
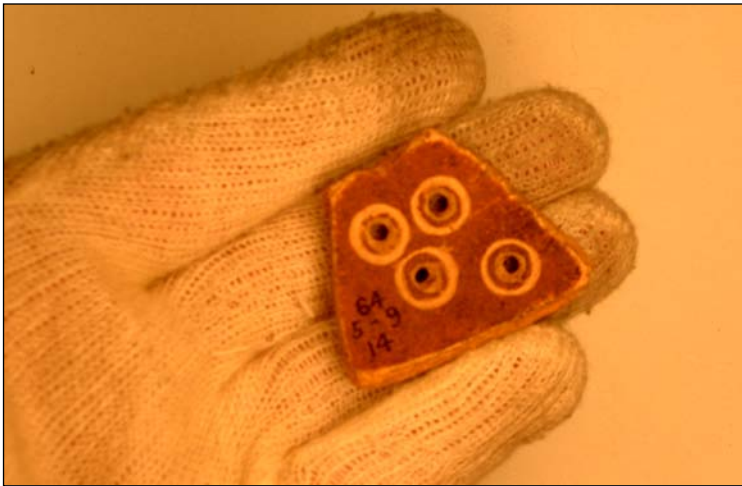
Fig. 2.2: Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Ballinderry Lough, Co. Westmeath.

It is significant that almost all of this 'secondary' Samian ware has been recovered from middens, sandhills, and crannogs, as a variety of other Roman finds have been found in these contexts in Ireland and also in Scotland (see Hunter 1996). The midden at Dalkey Island produced Roman glass dating from the late 3rd to 4th century AD as well as 2nd century Samian ware, and a Roman brooch and coins were found near a midden at Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal. Finds from sandhills include Roman brooches, coins, and toilet implements; while crannogs such as Lagore, Ballinderry II, Lough Faughan, Strokestown, and Island McHugh, have produced a variety of Roman pottery types and artefacts, including beads, glass, toilet implements, personal items, and a coin.[28] The Roman ladle from Bohermeen may also have been associated with a crannog, as it '…was discovered by turf-cutters in the bog of Bohermeen, Co. Meath, in close proximity to a large number of pointed stakes and other remains of timber' (Wood-Martin 1886, 82).[29]

This is arguably too much material to be considered the result of 'residual' reuse in later contexts, and many of these finds also have firm dates in the early centuries AD. The stratigraphic contexts of the sandhill and midden finds cannot be firmly established (Bateson 1973, 38), and many of the crannogs appear to

[28] Middens: Bateson 1973 appendix B: no. 3; appendix C: nos. 6, 14. Sandhills: 1973 appendix B: no. 12; appendix C: nos. 3, 7, 41b. Crannogs: 1973 appendix B: no. 45; appendix C: nos. 9, 11, 17, 41a, 41c, 41d.

[29] There is also a reference to '…a beautiful bronze pin found with it' (Wood-Martin 1886, 82).

have had multiple occupation layers including late prehistoric phases which were not initially recognised (Lynn 1985; see also Newman 1997). A number of other Iron Age artefacts have also been found at crannog sites (including Lagore and Ballinderry II), yet these items are never considered to be 'residual' or 'secondary' (Raftery 1983: nos. 247, 360, 437; see also Fredengren 2002, 190–2). Again, where there is no direct evidence to suggest that artefacts were imported or used in subsequent periods, we should not assume that they represent post-Roman activity, as such assumptions are not based on firm stratigraphic relationships or any wider patterns of association.

Bateson acknowledges that one of the most difficult factors involved in the identification of Roman finds from Ireland is the slippery nature of the category 'Roman' itself (Bateson 1973, 26). As a result a wide range of finds are dismissed by Bateson because they may be '…native (Irish) copies of Roman types' (Bateson 1973, 62; original parenthesis).[30] A piece of Roman pottery with pelta-motif decoration is rejected as '…the design has acquired a Celtic rhythm which prevents it from being included in a list of purely Roman finds' (Bateson 1973, 84). Other items rejected for this reason include a finger ring, three separate finds of cauldrons that have close Romano-British parallels, and several finds of paterae, ladles or skillets. Seven finds of toilet articles are also treated in this manner, including one example from Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny, decorated with a triskele that '…proclaims it to be of non-Roman workmanship' (Bateson 1973, 86). From such a perspective 'Roman' and 'Irish' appear to be entirely mutually-exclusive categories, and any object made in Ireland cannot be considered to be 'Roman' by definition.

Yet as we have seen, the notion of a 'purely Roman' material culture relies upon a simplistic and unsustainable conception of Romanisation as the wholesale transfer of a pre-existing comprehensive 'Roman' material culture package to the provinces, as opposed to the adaptation and creation of new types and forms of material culture which would eventually become known to us as 'Gallo-Roman' and 'Romano-British'. From the latter perspective, the categories 'Roman' and 'Irish' are no more mutually-exclusive than 'Roman' and 'British' or 'Roman' and 'Gaulish', and as such 'Irish copies of Roman types' are no less 'Roman' than

---

[30] Bateson 1973 appendix C: nos. 41a, 41b, 41c, 41d, 46, 48, 52, 41, 22d.

Romano-British or Gallo-Roman objects. These artefacts should be viewed in this wider context, as part of the broader phenomenon that was the creation of provincial Roman material culture: they are not simply 'Roman' or 'Irish' but are Hiberno-Roman.

It is also generally assumed that these 'copies' are post- or 'sub-Roman'. The triskele design on the Stoneyford implement is said by Laing to demonstrate that '…some were undoubtedly produced in early Christian Ireland' (Laing 1985, 266). While Roman-style objects were certainly manufactured in the post-Roman era (and this may be the case for some of the ladles/skillets listed by Bateson), the type of triskele design referred to by both Bateson and Laing is not so chronologically diagnostic in itself. Indeed the La Tène triskele is a common motif in Iron Age art, and such 'Celtic' elements can be found on numerous Romano-British artefacts, such as disc-brooches, which date to the early centuries AD. On the basis of this feature Laing dates the toilet implements from Freestone Hill to the 6th–7th century AD despite the presence at that site of a 4th century Roman coin (1985, 266). This date has since been shown to be much too late, and Ó Floinn has pointed to very close Roman parallels for these items that match the date of the coin, bringing the date of the Stoneyford and Freestone Hill implements '…closer to the date of their Late Roman models' (Ó Floinn 2000, 23–4).

In this way the dismissal of 'native copies' of Roman artefacts has resulted, not only in Irish-made Roman artefacts being rejected by Bateson, but in the misclassification of provincial Roman artefacts as 'Insular Celtic' or 'Early Christian'. Indeed a significant corpus of high-status dress fasteners that have been traditionally classified as 'Insular Celtic' and dated to the 6th and 7th centuries AD (Laing 1985, 262-263; see also Youngs 1989) can be seen to have very close parallels with objects found in earlier Romano-British contexts. For example, a handpin with a decorated projecting head from Castletown, Co. Meath, that had previously been categorised as 'Irish, probably 6th century' (M. Ryan, in Youngs 1989), is identical to a Romano-British pin from a coin hoard in Oldcroft, Gloustershire, dated to the mid-4th century AD (Newman 1995, 24; Ó Floinn 2001, 5; Johns 1974). The discovery of handpin moulds in a metalworking dump of the 3rd to 5th centuries AD at Loch na Briegh in Scotland also provides

firm evidence for the manufacture of these objects during the Roman period (Heald 2001, 690).

Ó Floinn has drawn further attention to the fact that the vast majority of early penannular brooches and zoomorphic pins come from Roman contexts in Britain, and argues that these items cannot be assumed to represent residual post-Roman activity, and should not be categorised as 'Celtic':

'…it cannot be possible that all of these brooches and pins represent post-Roman residual occupation at these sites as is commonly supposed and some at least must date to the period when these sites were occupied, during the fourth and early fifth centuries. The presence of 'Celtic' dress-fasteners at these and other sites must not be seen as evidence for British 'mercenaries' or 'traders' at these Roman sites but rather reflect the Romano-British character of such objects'

(Ó Floinn 2001, 2).

Gavin and Newman have also argued that the decorative motifs on Irish hand-pins and related objects such as disc-headed pins, not only predate the Insular 'Ultimate La Tène' horizon to which they are traditionally assigned, but also display close parallels with late provincial Roman 'military style' objects (Gavin and Newman 2007). The revised dating and classification of these artefacts would indicate that a whole stratum of provincial-Roman material from Ireland has remained unrecognised until relatively recently, and the fact that many of these objects were previously thought to represent quintessential examples of 'insular Celtic' workmanship serves to highlight the problematic and over-expansive nature of the category 'Celtic' itself.

With this in mind as we turn to Barry Raftery's *Catalogue of Iron Age Antiquities* (1983) and the companion commentary *La Tène in Ireland* (1984), it is evident that a number of finds categorised as La Tène by Raftery have much closer parallels with provincial Roman and Romano-British material than they do with pre-Roman La Tène artefacts in Britain or in Europe. A clear example of this is a strap-end with an openwork triskele (Fig. 2.3), recovered during the excavations at Rathgall Hillfort, Co. Wicklow, that is classified in both Raftery's catalogue and his commentary as a La Tène object (1984, 206; 1983: no. 536). The strap-end is a unique find in Ireland, and the closest parallels are to be found among provincial Roman regalia that were attached to belts or horse harnesses.

These parallels are used to date the Rathgall strap-end to the 1st or 2nd century AD, and although Raftery acknowledges that the object '…clearly reflects provincial Roman influence', he argues that the triskele is '…of unmistakeable sub-La Tène type', and therefore the object '…is of wholly insular (probably Irish) manufacture' (Raftery 1970, 209; 1984, 207). As argued above, the possibility that an artefact was made in Ireland should not preclude it from being considered 'Roman'. Furthermore, there is nothing so unusual about this strap-end or its decoration that would make it seem out of place in a Romano-British or provincial Roman context, and Richard Warner certainly considers it to be Roman (Warner 1991).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 2.3: Strap-end, Rathgall, Co. Wicklow.
(After Raftery 1984: not to Scale, for scale drawing see Chapter 6 below)

The presence of dice and gaming pieces at sites that have also produced Roman material is the first indication that these objects may have Roman associations. In Ireland dice, pegged gaming pieces, and water-rolled pebbles were found at Knowth in a double inhumation burial dating from the late-1st century BC to the early-2nd century AD, and another undated inhumation also contained two cone-shaped stone gaming pieces (Riddler, in Eogan 2012, 420; Raftery 1983, nos. 616, 619, 620). Bone dice were found '...in an area which produced exclusively Roman and sub-Roman material' at Newgrange (Fig. 2.4; Carson and O'Kelly 1977, 51; Raftery 1983, no. 613), and water-rolled pebbles and a stone cone were discovered amongst the Roman finds at the Rath of the Synods, Tara (Allason-Jones 2008, 112; Raftery 1983, no. 617). Similar stone cones were also found at Freestone Hill, Co.

Kilkenny (Raftery 1983, no. 615), and in an enclosure at Millockstown, Co. Louth, which also produced a Roman toilet implement and water-rolled pebbles (Manning 1986). Water-rolled pebbles were also found at Uisneach, where a Roman coin and padlock key were recovered (Macalister and Praeger, 1928-9). There does not appear to be an existing Irish tradition involving the manufacture or use of these objects before the Roman period (Raftery 1984, 247-248), and in Britain the appearance of dice and gaming pieces would appear to be a late pre-conquest phenomenon '…introduced through contact with the Roman world' (Hall and Forsyth 2011, 1325).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 2.4: Bone dice, Newgrange,
Co. Meath.
(Scale 1:1. After Raftery 1993)

Other objects with provincial Roman parallels include decorated horns (Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 820, 821) which are found in Romano-British and Gallo-Roman contexts associated with bull cults (Waddell 1998, 314; Read, Henig and Cram 1986), and carved stone heads (Raftery 1984, 308-311). Stone heads similar to the famous triple-faced Corleck head are well-attested in pre-Roman Iron Age contexts in Europe, prior to what Miranda Green has called '…the burgeoning of Celtic religious art during the Romano-Celtic Period' (1992, 173-4). In her famous account of the Celtic 'Cult of the Head' Anne Ross considered the human head to be '…the most typical Celtic religious symbol' (Ross 1967, 61), although she did acknowledge '[t]he paucity of iconographic evidence for the cult of the head in pre-Roman Britain'; which is for some unspecified reason '…to be expected' (Ross 1967, 71). Yet, the established contexts for British heads would appear to be exclusively post-conquest in date, and the few carvings assigned to the pre-Roman Iron Age are without firm archaeological contexts: their dating

rests entirely upon tentative stylistic grounds such as '…the archaic, almost Neolithic style of many of the heads', and the assertion that they '…lack artistic skill' (Ross 1967, 70-1).[31]

In Ireland there is also a conspicuous absence of representations of the human head in Iron Age art (the only certain Iron Age example appears to be a Gaulish import: Jope 2000, 99; see also Waddell 2009), and Etienne Rynne has suggested that '…it is unlikely that any of the Irish carvings antedate Romano-British influence' (1972, 79). Unfortunately, not one Irish stone head has been found in a datable context or with firm associations, and the difficulties involved in dating these objects stylistically are highlighted by the possibility that a number of the Irish heads may have been carved in the 19th century (Waddell 1998, 362). Without firm dating evidence it cannot be established whether the Irish heads represent a pre-existing Iron Age tradition or if they were introduced during the post-conquest burgeoning of Romano-Celtic religious art (as appears to be the case in Britain). These objects underscore the cultural complexity and syncretic nature of provincial Roman material cultures, and illustrate the difficulties involved in the exclusive pan-European categorisation of material as 'Celtic', 'native' or 'Roman'.

It is possible that objects and practices with demonstrably pre-Roman continental origins may have developed contemporaneously in Britain and Ireland, or they may have been introduced into Ireland prior to the Roman invasion of Britain. However, we must also remain open to the possibility that such phenomena reached Ireland through the spread of provincial-Roman or 'Romano-Celtic' influence. In the absence of adequate dating evidence it is impossible to establish the most likely scenario involved, and even then the categorisation of material as 'Iron Age', 'Celtic', or 'Roman' could be a very subjective exercise. However, the analysis attempted here requires some form of

---

[31] Of the 49 heads listed by Ross more than half have been found in Romano-British contexts, including forts, towns, temples, shrines, mausoleums and burial monuments. Ross identifies just 5 provenanced British heads that may date to the pre-Roman Iron Age (none of which have datable contexts), and 3 others which have '…if not a pre-Roman origin, at least one very early in the Roman period' (1967, 71-2). Of these last 3 examples, the only head with a datable context is from the Roman supply depot at Corbridge (1967, 79). Ross's method of stylistic dating is undermined by the fact that other heads described as '…completely Celtic in concept' (1967, 79), or '…belonging to a very barbaric school of iconography' (1967, 84), with '…features typical to Celtic cult heads' (1967, 87) were actually found in Romano-British contexts. Ross proceeds to suggests that many of the Romano-British heads also display aspects of this 'native tradition' (1967, 86, 87, 88), even though evidence for such a 'native tradition' is non-existent.

classification, and therefore we must proceed in full knowledge that this exercise involves the imposition of categories onto the material that may well have had no real currency in the past (Wells 1999b, 128; see also Hingley 1999). For present purposes, objects that appear to have well-established provincial Roman origins (the strap-end, toilet implements, dice and gaming pieces, early penannular brooches (Class1), pins, and other related dress-fasteners) will be categorised as Roman, provincial Roman or Hiberno-Roman; while material with possible pre-Roman origins (cauldrons, stone heads, and decorated horns) are not considered to be 'Roman' here.

More generally it is interesting to examine the contrasting way in which La Tène and other Iron Age finds are treated by Raftery in comparison to Bateson's approach to Roman material. Raftery's *Catalogue of Irish Iron Age Antiquities* does not intentionally include Roman material even though most of the Roman finds meet the chronological criteria (1983, 1) – the implication being that the only artefact types that fit the description of 'Irish Iron Age antiquities' are Hallstatt and La Tène objects (even though it can be argued that the origins of these material types are just as foreign as those of provincial Roman finds).[32] While Bateson is concerned with establishing whether the finds were imported in antiquity, Raftery is primarily interested in developing typological sequences according to the forms of the artefacts. These differing perspectives are of course related to the varying levels of scholarship available for the materials at hand (sophisticated typologies of Roman material were well-established long before Bateson's research); however it is significant that similar concerns relating to the authenticity of the artefacts and their find-records are largely absent in Raftery's catalogue.

Indeed Raftery's approach in such instances appears to be diametrically opposed to Bateson's. Seven La Tène finds included in Raftery's catalogue are given the provenance of Edenderry, Co. Offaly, even though they are from the collection of the antiquarian Thomas Murray (who lived in Edenderry), and are actually unprovanenced artefacts with no known records of their discovery.[33]

---

[32] It is also notable that, in contrast to Roman material, local variation and native workmanship is not thought to preclude the categorisation of Irish artefacts as either 'La Tène' or 'Celtic'.
[33] The Murray collection comprised a wide range of objects from different periods, including objects from other counties in Ireland. The objects from this collection that are provenanced as

Other provenanced examples are clearly from modern contexts, such as the sword from 'Cashel, Co. Sligo', which was found '…in the thatch of a derelict cottage' (1983: cat. no. 251 see also no. 838), or have problematic associations (1983: cat. nos. 28, 114). In the entries concerning these last finds, it is notable that Raftery regards the accounts of the associations to be 'doubtful' rather than the authenticity of the finds themselves. Some finds may not in fact be Iron Age at all (1983. nos. 562; 830; 831; see also Ó Floinn 2009), while others may also have been imported in modern times (Raftery 1984, 108; 1983 nos. 388; 364). It can be seen, therefore, that Raftery's corpus of Iron Age material is subject to the very same range of difficulties and concerns as Bateson's Roman material, yet it is only in the case of the latter that these problems are fore-grounded and are used as the primary means of evaluation and categorisation.

In this way, contemporaneous Roman and Iron Age materials were not just treated in isolation from one another, but were also subject to totally different research agendas, forms of analysis, and categorical criteria. These differing approaches have given the misleading impression that La Tène artefacts from Ireland have firm and well-documented contexts, while those of Roman finds are precarious and insecure. However, when one considers that almost all of the artefacts categorised by Bateson as 'Questionable' tend to be finds without detailed accounts of their discovery, it is instructive to apply the same criterion to Raftery's corpus of La Tène material. If we take unprovenanced finds alone, we find that 194 out of 876 Irish entries in Raftery's catalogue have no accompanying information whatsoever in relation to their discovery. Another 33 objects have County-only or even more vague provenances, while others have provenances that are more accurately described as 'questionable' than most of the Roman finds categorised as such by Bateson.[34]

In fact, it has been observed that the majority of the high-status metalwork that is generally considered to be characteristic of the Irish Iron Age period actually consists of unprovenanced artefacts. For example, of the harness fittings that constitute largest single category of Iron Age finds, 55% of the Y-shaped

---

'Edenderry' in Raftery's catalogue '…may have come from the general area of Co. Offaly, but even this must be regarded as uncertain' (Raftery 1983, 286-7).

[34] For example: Raftery 1983: cat. no. 826 'Possibly Co. Westmeath'; no. 829: 'Ireland?'; no. 417: 'Probably from Co. Derry'. For other unreliable provenances see Ireland 1992, 123-146.

'pendants' and 60% of the horsebits have absolutely no information relating to their discovery. According to Ó Floinn:

> 'The high proportion of unprovenanced finds is in part due to the fact that a greater proportion of finds of Iron Age date were found in the nineteenth century, when there was less opportunity to record (and less interest in) the provenance and find circumstances of archaeological objects.'
>
> (Ó Floinn 2009, 199)

It appears therefore, that the historical circumstances and record of recovery for the majority of Roman artefacts dismissed by Bateson are much the same as those involved in the recovery of other Iron Age finds. Indeed, relatively few La Tène finds from Ireland have the kind of recovery record that Bateson would appear to consider sufficient or adequate enough to be included in his 'Accepted' category.

To automatically dismiss all such artefacts as modern losses or inauthentic finds may indeed remove '…a mass of potentially very misleading evidence' (Dolley, 1976, 183); however it may also exclude some potentially valuable information, effectively compounding the problems associated with poorly documented finds rather than confronting them. Recent archival work by staff at the National Museum of Ireland has demonstrated how many formerly unprovenanced Iron Age finds may be re-identified and re-provenanced through the careful examination of antiquarian records and associated documentation (Cahill 2006; Ó Floinn 2009). A similar approach should be adopted in relation to Roman material from Ireland: unless there are specific reasons to doubt the authenticity of a particular find it should be treated as genuine, and the various possibilities and problems which may result should be investigated. More generally, it can be argued that an inherently sceptical approach towards Roman material has contributed to a self-fulfilling circular argument: it is considered unlikely that Roman finds are ancient imports because there was little or no Roman contact, and there was little or no Roman contact because so few finds are considered to be genuine Roman imports.

Narrative Conventions: Myth, History, and Roman artefacts in Ireland.

With so many Roman finds dismissed and unrecognised, it is not surprising to find a broad consensus that Roman finds from Ireland are largely insignificant,

consisting of 'odd bits and pieces' that are 'scattered', 'sparse', and 'without archaeological association' (Tierney 1998, 196; Raftery 1994, 214; Warner 1991, 49). The remaining Roman material is invariably divided into two distinct chronological periods – Early (1st–3rd centuries AD) and Late (4th–5th centuries AD) – which are thought to be distinguished by visibly contrasting levels and modes of interaction with the Roman Empire (Ó Ríordáin 1947, 39; Bateson 1973, 28; Warner 1976, 260; 1991; Laing 1985). The later material is usually thought to be indicative of a sudden upsurge in cross-channel contact; while interpretations of the 'Early' material have varied considerably, ranging from viewing these finds as trivial and unimportant to seeing them as evidence for an actual Roman invasion of Ireland.

This last interpretation has unfailingly proved to be controversial, generating a substantial amount of publicity and commentary each time it is revived and renewed. The most remarkable recent flare-up of this debate was ignited by articles that appeared in the *Sunday Times* in January 1996, claiming that the promontory fort at Drumanagh, Co. Dublin, was '...a significant Roman beachhead, built to support military campaigns in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD'. Pronouncing '[t]he bull that is Erin, the grandeur that was Rome', the authors and their editors are clearly aware of the political and cultural significance attributed to Ireland's non-Roman 'Celtic' past. They suggest that the purported invasion '…destroys a myth close to Celtic hearts', and predict that it '…will rewrite serious Roman history and even Asterix and Celtic nationalism'[35]

Of course the proclamation of this new historical narrative also harboured its own none-too-subtle political subtext (Cooney 1996), and moreover much of the evidence presented in support of this 'discovery' was far from new. The finding of Roman material at Drumanagh had been recounted in numerous publications from the 1960s onwards, and many of these finds had been included in Bateson's catalogue and featured prominently in the penultimate chapter of Barry Raftery's celebrated synthesis *Pagan Celtic Ireland* (1994). The decisive interpretation of

---

[35] The pieces in the London Times included a front-page article by John Maas and Ciaran Byrne with the headline 'Legacy of the Legions destroys myth close to Celtic hearts' (Sunday 21st January 1996). An extended version of the same piece appeared in the Irish edition under the headline 'Fort discovery proves Romans invaded Ireland'. The topic was revisited in an editorial entitled 'Ultima Hibernia' (Tuesday 23rd of January), and in another article by John Maas headed 'Roman invasion sparks conflict' (Sunday 28th January). The quotations cited above are taken from the editorial and the initial article. Accounts of the ensuing controversy can be found in Raftery 1996, and Di Martino 2003, 28-32.

the promontory fort as a 'Roman beachhead' was undoubtedly drawn from a paper by Richard Warner published in *Emania* the year before (Warner 1995), in which Warner developed ideas that he had previously advanced in two earlier pieces (1976; 1991). Warner's paper and the London Times articles also cite references to Ireland in the works of the Roman authors Tacitus[36] and Juvenal[37] – the very same passages that had inspired similar Roman invasion theories for well over a century.

These earlier theories were almost exclusively concerned with speculation surrounding the statements attributed to Agricola concerning the ease and desirability of a future invasion of Ireland, and Juvenal's claim that '…we have advanced arms beyond the shores of *Iuverna*'. Some commentators also argued that Tacitus's phrase 'tribes unknown' may refer to Irish rather than British groups (Pfitzner 1893; Gudeman 1898; 1900). The subsequent debates tended to focus on the 'reliability' of Tacitus and Juvenal as historical sources, and the relative merits of different readings of these passages (Haverfield 1899, 1900; Gudeman 1900). Archaeological evidence is rarely mentioned in these exchanges, and when it does feature Roman finds are either collectively pressed into service as direct evidence for a Roman invasion (Wright 1866; 1867; McElderry 1922), or are conversely presented as so paltry that their negligible numbers must testify to the total absence of a Roman presence in Ireland (Brash 1867; Haverfield 1899, 1913).

The novel aspect of Warner's approach was his use of Medieval and Early Modern Irish texts alongside Classical sources to interpret the Roman finds recovered from specific sites such as Drumanagh, Tara, and Knockaulin. Warner's hypothesis focuses primarily on the Irish legend of Túathal Techmar

---

[36] Tacitus, *Agricola* 24: 'In the fifth year of the war, Agricola, crossing in the lead ship conquered tribes unknown until that time in frequent and successful engagements. That part of Britain which faces *Hibernia* he garrisoned with troops, more out of hope that out of fear. For *Hibernia*, lying between Britain and Hispania, and placed strategically in the Gallic sea, would unite the most robust parts of the empire to the great advantage of both. […] The approaches and harbors are [better] known due to trade and merchants. Agricola had taken one of their tribal kings driven out by an internal discord and was keeping him under the pretense of friendship for the right opportunity. I often heard him say that *Hibernia* could be conquered and occupied by one legion and a moderate number of auxiliaries. Moreover, it would be useful against Britain as well if Roman arms were everywhere raised high and liberty, so to speak, vanished from sight' (trans. Freeman 2001, 56-62).
[37] Juvenal, *Satire 2*, 159-161: 'Indeed, we have advanced arms beyond the shores of *Ivernia* and the recently captured Orkneys and the mighty Britons with their short nights' (trans. Freeman 2001, 62-63).

which is essentially a saga of 'exile and return' (a very common motif in Medieval Irish narratives such as *Orgain Denda Ríg*).[38] Túathal's father is ousted from power, but our hero escapes *in utero* and returns years later with British aid. He lands at *Inber Domnann* (Malahide Bay)[39], lays siege to *Dún Ailinne* (Knockaulin) and then holds a feast at *Teamhair* (Tara) where he reclaims his rightful throne. Warner singles out the legend of Túathal to be interpreted as evidence for a Roman incursion due to the dates attributed to Túathal's life in the *Annals of the Four Masters* (compiled in the 17th century); according to this source the date of Túathal's return was 76 AD and his death is dated to 106 AD (1995, 24-25).[40]

Noting the closeness between these dates and Agricola's campaigns in Britain (and also Tacitus's reference to an exiled Irish prince in Agricola's company) Warner suggests that the story of Túathal recalls a Roman-assisted invasion of Ireland that took place in the late 1st century AD. It is proposed that this legend actually recounts real historical events, and that the character of Túathal Techtmar '…personifies the invasive event which […] can be demonstrated and which might well have covered several decades and occurred piecemeal' (1995, 29). The Roman material from Drumanagh, Lambay, Knockaulin, and Tara, is then interpreted as evidence for this invasion due to Túathal's association with these sites or their generally locality (both Drumanagh and Lambay are in the vicinity of Malahide Bay). So too are the Roman finds from Uisneach, Lyles Hill, and Clogher; although it should be noted that Túathal's associations with these last sites are often far more tenuous.[41]

---

[38] The earliest version of Túathal's story appears in a poem dated to the 9th century, and the latest accounts are found in the *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* and the *Annals of the Four Masters* (both compiled in the 17th century). The latter text also recounts the occurrence of an almost identical series of events involving Feradach Finnfechtach a number of generations earlier, while in the *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* elements of both accounts are integrated into a single narrative.

[39] In some versions of the tale Túathal returns to Rinn Rámann/Rúamann: a placename that has not been associated with any known location.

[40] The earliest text which actually provides dates for Túathal's life is the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (compiled in the 11th century), which gives a later date for Túathal's return in the reign of Hadrian (122-138AD).

[41] For example: O'Rahilly argues that the association of Túathal with Uisneach was a late addition inserted in the 17th century (1946, 169). The association with Clogher is also questionable: *The Annals of the Four Masters* tells us that *Ráth Mór* at *Mag Lemna* (Moylinny Co. Antrim) was built by the goddess Baine who was reputed to be the mother of Túathal's son Fedelmid Rechtaid. According to Warner: 'This of course implies simply that *Ráth Mór*, which is the earthwork at Clogher, Tyrone, was constructed by Túathal himself' (1995, 28). Of course it 'implies simply' nothing of the sort.

In many ways the seemingly novel and original aspects of Warner's interpretation rely upon very traditional culture-historical approaches to the archaeological record. Warner's assertion that Medieval Irish legends can be read as records of (pre)historic events not only flies in the face of contemporary historiographic and textual analysis, but also reproduces the very kind of 'historically attested' invasion hypothesis that has proven to be singularly unsuccessful in the interpretation of Irish prehistory. Indeed, the history of Irish archaeology is littered with defunct invasion theories derived from myths and legends, all of which rely upon similar dubious associations between certain types of material culture and pseudo-historical 'peoples' such as the Tuatha Dé Danann or the Milesians (see Waddell 2005).[42] The fact that Warner adheres to this kind of culture-historical thought is also apparent in his general analysis of the Irish Iron Age which is replete with references to 'La Tène warrior intruders', 'quern people', and 'older races', along with the requisite arrows drawn on maps to show 'intrusive routes' (Warner 1991; 1995: fig 6).

More specifically, Warner's insistence that Roman finds are indicative of Roman 'intruders', continues to posit a direct relationship between material culture and population movement which simply cannot be assumed. He then proceeds with an interpretation that flattens and narrows a whole range of geographic, chronological and typological factors into one single over-arching 'event' (albeit one that '…might well have covered decades'). Accordingly, a host of distinct artefact types spanning whole centuries in date, from a variety of site-types in completely different geographic locations and settings, are all subsumed under the single rubric of 'intrusion'. As a result, Warner's analysis does not so much explain the presence of Roman material in Ireland as explain it away, effectively operating as a kind of *deus ex machina* which plucks all of these finds out of their local contexts and places them directly alongside one another to form a single dramatic narrative.

---

[42] O'Rahilly had previously suggested that Túathal Techtmar's return represented an invasion of Q-Celtic speakers who introduced the Irish language into Ireland in the last two centuries BC (1946, 161-170). Indeed, in his 1991 paper Warner had argued that the legendary Irish Ur-ancestor Míl Espáine (of the Milesians) represented a Roman-assisted intrusion (as the name Míl is derived from the Latin *miles* 'soldier'). However, Míl Espáine (*Miles Hispaniae*) '…is a fiction based on the first Christian world history, the *Historiae adversum paganos*, by the theologian Orosius, written in the early fifth century and on the contemporary geographic knowledge and inventive etymological speculations of Isidore of Seville who, for instance, derived Hibernia (Ireland) from Hiberia (Spain) in his *Etymologiae*' (Waddell 2005, 21).

Warner's interpretation of specific find-spots will be examined in more detail in subsequent chapters, for our present purposes it must suffice to conclude that the association of Túathal Techtmar with Tara, Knockaulin, and other 'royal' sites is quite unremarkable in itself, as aristocratic personages and deities in Irish myths and legends are universally associated with these places (in fact it would be highly unusual for an important figure not to be linked to such centres of power). Therefore the argument that Túathal's tale represents a Roman incursion appears to rely solely on the (conflicting) dates for his 'life' provided by the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, the *Foras Feasa ar Érinn*, and the *Annals of the Four Masters*: works that explicitly sought to retroactively synchronise and incorporate Irish myths and legends into Biblical and Classical chronologies, and in the process '…it would seem older Irish mythology was reworked almost out of all recognition' (Waddell 2005, 20).[43] These texts must be read in their own historical contexts, where the obsessive curation and reworking of myths and legends involving invasion and colonisation can clearly be seen to be related to the contemporary concerns of their authors and compilers (O'Halloran 2004, 14).

The ubiquity of the motif of 'exile and return' in Medieval Irish literature – especially when it involves the dramatic trope of an unborn child escaping in his mother's womb – should also remind us that these texts are the product of literary imaginations working within established narrative conventions. The equally ubiquitous use of such narratives to support a *mélange* of redundant invasion theories also provides countless cautionary tales for those who may be tempted to forget this. Rather than a historical figure, Túathal Techtmar may well represent a mythological deity as his name appears to be cognate with the well-documented continental god Teutates/Toutatis/Totatis (from *Teuto-valus* 'Ruler of the People': Ross 1967, 171), and according to Ó hÓgáin, the narratives associated with Túathal '...are definitely the result of propaganda created by the Connachta who came to power at Tara in the 4th and 5th century AD' (1991, 409). Similarly, a Roman invasion of Ireland cannot be inferred from two brief and ambiguous references to Ireland in Classical sources (Freeman 2001, 56-63).[44]

---

[43] Thus the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* maintains that the aboriginal inhabitants of Ireland were the descendants of Noah's son Japheth, and the first entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters* begins forty days before Noah's Flood.

[44] In fact the statements attributed to Agricola are not ambiguous at all: they clearly refer to a hypothetical scenario as opposed to an invasion that has occurred or is actually being planned.

To read poetic compositions such as Juvenal's satires or Túathal's saga as 'reliable' accounts of historical events, not only confuses and conflates completely different genres of writing, but also anachronistically imposes modern concepts and standards of historiography onto Medieval and Classical authors. These writers were working within established literary traditions, in very different social and historical situations, with specific political agendas. For example, the allusion to *Ivernia* in Juvenal appears in a passage that overtly seeks to emphasise the reach of Roman power and Ireland is clearly being cited in this context as a location that embodies extreme remoteness. The symbolic use of Ireland as a kind of *ultima Thule* or 'end of the earth' is attested in other Classical sources such as the *Historia Augusta* (Freeman 2001, 123: note 104), and it is possible that Juvenal may have used *Ivernia* as a poetic substitute for *Thule* as his three-fold reference to Britain, the Orkneys and *Ivernia*, appears to parallel a three-fold references to Britain, the Orkneys and *Thule* in Tacitus's *Agricola*.[45] Indeed, significant parts of Tacitus's account of Ireland may also have borrowed from earlier sources in turn. Comparable elements and phrases appear in descriptions of Britain prior to the Claudian conquest, most notably an almost identical reference to Britain being potentially subdued with a single legion and auxiliaries.[46]

Although Warner's invasion hypothesis has been widely rejected by archaeologists and historians, many of the alternative theories concerning the importation of Roman material rely on similar attempts to synchronise the archaeological evidence with specific events and population movements referred to in historical sources. Ó Ríordáin (1947, 39), Bateson (1973, 30) and Rynne (1976, 242), associate the earlier Roman finds with the uprisings and rebellions documented by Roman authors during the conquest of Britain – particularly the revolt of the Brigantes under Venutius – and argue that this material reached Ireland as a result of refugees fleeing before the Roman advance. However, the vast majority of commentators tend to discount the earlier finds altogether, and focus instead on the later material and historical references to Irish raiding and settlements in Britain during the 4th and 5th centuries AD.

---

[45] Tacitus *Agricola* 10. Ireland is also associated with the same tropes of northern remoteness, desolation and barbarity which are generally considered to be characteristic of places like Thule in other Greek and Roman geographies (see Killeen 1976).

[46] Strabo's *Geography* 4.5.3. For other similarities see Freeman 2001, 122: notes 95, 100. For Tacitus's use of older texts in his works see Black 2001.

This later material is generally thought to be indicative of a substantial change in the nature and extent of Irish interaction with Britain, representing a new and important phase of close cultural contact in the immediate post-Roman era (Laing 1985, 269-70; Mytum 1992; de Paor 1993). According to this chronology the relationship between Britain and Ireland during the Roman period was largely insignificant, and extensive contact did not take place before the collapse of Roman power in Britain. Roman influence in this later period is frequently thought to be synonymous with St. Patrick and the spread of Christianity (Charles-Edwards 2001, 161), and '…historians on both these islands tend to link Patrick's mission to a sudden upsurge in contacts with Ireland towards the end of the fourth century' (Swift 1997, 1). Indeed – as if fulfilling Maurice Goldring's prescription of Ireland as a country '…where history is autobiographical and autobiography historical' (1982, 8) – many commentators have assumed that the life of St. Patrick is broadly representative of this process as a whole, encapsulating the origins and development of cross-channel contacts during this period.[47]

This theory of post-Roman Romanisation sees the collapse of Roman authority in Britain, rather than its establishment, as the pivotal event in Ireland's relationship with the Roman Empire. Accordingly, it was the upheaval that resulted from the disintegration of the Western Empire that encouraged Irish raiders to sail to Britain and then transfer the seeds of Roman Christianity back to Ireland in the 5th and 6th centuries AD (Edwards 1990, 5; de Paor 1993). Liam de Paor's *St. Patrick's World* provides the most succinct summary of this narrative:

> 'The tribal chiefs brought much from Rome besides mere loot. They may originally have chopped up ornate Roman dinner services merely for the silver of which they were made, indifferent to the répoussé Cupids, Bacchae, vines and peacocks with which they were adorned; but soon, in their own way, they learned to emulate Roman fashions. They took over the gap-ring bronze pins with which the Romans (or German soldiers of the Roman armies) of the military provinces fastened their cloaks, and their craftsmen transformed these into the penannular brooches which the Irish upper orders began to wear. They adapted, similarly without exact copying, the glittering heavy belt buckles, the straps and harness, the polychrome of semi-Roman, semi-Barbarian, fashion. Craftsmen as well as scholars appear to have made their way to Ireland by the

---

[47] For example, Dolley views the chronology and distribution of Roman coins in Ireland primarily as evidence for the date of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland (1976).

end of the fifth century, fleeing from the many disasters afflicting northern Gaul, and the ruling groups in Ireland were already beginning to develop a style and a confidence to which the Christian bishops and clerics contributed, besides their spiritual message (which possibly had its greatest appeal for the learned classes of pagan Ireland, who were – some of them – seeking truth), the intellectual order of a high civilisation.'

<div align="right">(de Paor 1993, 35)</div>

Other commentators tend to place more emphasis on the role of post-Roman Irish settlements in Britain, arguing that the continuing links between Irish settlers and their relatives back in Ireland encouraged conversion to Christianity throughout the island (Laing 1985; Mytum 1992; Thomas 1994). Conversion, in turn, brought about sweeping social changes, specifically in relation to the role of the individual in society, which completely altered the nature of Irish social structures and forms of production (Mytum 1992). Thus the agricultural expansion witnessed in the pollen record is seen as a consequence of higher productivity encouraged by a better appreciation of the role and status of the individual in society (Mytum 1992, 45-48). The existing privileged position of kinship links in the social structure were also undermined by this new focus on the individual, leading ultimately to a change in the laws relating to kinship organization and land ownership in the 7th century (Mytum 1992, 268-271).

Although such raids and migrations undoubtedly constituted major transformations in cross-channel contact, there are a number of problems with the arguments provided by both of these theories, particularly in relation to the role of Christianity and the proposed sequence of events. These interpretations clearly rely on a conception of Christian conversion and cultural change that is both reified and teleological, and therefore may be subjected to the very same criticisms levelled at traditional views of Romanisation (see Chapter 1 above). In these accounts Christianisation is presented as a self-fulfilling process in a manner that is entirely analogous to the colonial view of a 'civilizing mission' involving the diffusion of inherently superior cultural values and social forms. De Paor's picture of elites 'seeking truth' and 'the intellectual order of a high civilisation' (all the while conveniently remaining 'indifferent' to pagan Roman influence), essentially combines the top-down objectification of acculturation theory with a more traditional view of 'civilisation' as moral progress.

The emphasis placed on the role of progressive elites also contradicts many of the historical sources, including the writings of St. Patrick, which appear to indicate that it was among the more marginal groups in Ireland and Britain – women, slaves, and military subalterns – that the early Christian Church gained most of its followers (Charles-Edwards 2001, 188; Dark 1994, 30-39). Countless ethnographic and historical studies have also demonstrated that Christianisation was often a far more contentious affair than de Paor's noble search for truth; indeed colonial powers, both ancient and modern, regularly used conversion as a tool of domination and subjugation (MacMullen 1984, 86-101; James 1989, 6-11). Therefore the assumption that the introduction of Christianity into Ireland is entirely a post-Roman phenomenon is equally suspect. It has been noted that '...Christianity itself was an instrument of Romanisation and Roman diplomacy, and one frequently combined with investiture of barbarian rulers' (Rance 2001, 258); while references to pre-Patrician monasteries in Ireland suggest that Christianity may well have reached Ireland while Britain was still a Roman province (Ó Cróinín 1991; Ó Riain-Raedel 1998; Ó Floinn 2001, 7).

Similarly Mytum's hypothesis concerning Christianity, the role of the individual, and the growth of agricultural productivity in Ireland, is clearly influenced by modern neo-liberal economic theory (Tierney 1998, 196). It has been shown on numerous occasions that the recognition of such notions of individuality in pre-modern societies often involves a projection of contemporary social categories onto historical contexts where this particular conception of personhood may not have been recognised (Strathern 1988; Gosden 2004, 33-35). This tendency is particularly acute in the historiography of Rome, which often promotes an ideological and ahistorical vision of the Roman Empire as a direct precursor of European modernity and the ultimate source of liberal values (Hill 1997, 103; Hingley 1996). More specifically, the agricultural expansion that apparently resulted from Christian conversion in Ireland appears to have been was well underway by the 4th century (Charles-Edwards 2001, 162), and may have begun as early as AD 200 (Weir 1993; Waddell, 1998, 337). That is over two hundred years before the assumed widespread conversion and, according to Eusebius, when Christianity had just reached Britain (de Paor 1993, 9).

Like Warner's invasion hypothesis, these interpretations tend to compress a wide range of historical and archaeological evidence into a simple unified

narrative: the collapse of Roman power in Britain encouraged Irish raiding activity, which evolved into permanent cross-channel settlements, leading to Christianisation and the synchronous transformation of Irish cultural and social formations. Yet there is considerable evidence to suggest that these transformations do not represent such an integrated and rapid process, in fact it would appear that these developments involved a broad range of factors which had older and deeper roots in Late Iron Age Ireland itself.

The nature of the Irish raiding activity – its impetus and relationship to the settlements in Wales and Scotland – is far from clear in the historical sources. Ammianus Marcellinus states that in 364 AD '...at the same time the Alamanni were plundering Gaul and Raetia, and the Sarmatians and Quadi likewise Pannonia, the Picts and Saxons and Scotts and Attacotti harassed the Britons with continuous hardships' (*Res Gestae* 26.4.5: cited in Rance 2001, 244). It is widely accepted that the *Scotti* represent groups of Irish origin and that the *Attacotti,* once thought to be northern British, also appear to have had Irish connections (Charles-Edwards 2001, 159; Rance 2001, 248-241). The names *Scotti* and *Attacotti* do not appear in Roman records before the 4th century and it may be, as Rance suggests, that the Romans had gained a better knowledge of Irish social and political divisions and the earlier all-purpose name *Hiberni* was abandoned in favour of a new more specific nomenclature (2001, 250).

However, it has also been noted that in the Late Roman period the appearance of new names for barbarian groups was not restricted to Ireland. From the late-3rd to the mid-4th centuries AD, a host of new tribal confederations beyond the borders of the empire began to be recognised by the Romans. According to Charles-Edwards:

> 'The principal source of unity at the level of confederation as a whole appears to have been provided by the need to deal with the Roman authorities. Thus the Frankish confederation was opposite the province of *Germania Inferior*, the Alaman confederation opposite the province of *Germania Superior*, while the Picts formed in the third century beyond the Antonine Wall.'
>
> (Charles-Edwards 2001, 158)

It is possible therefore, that the synchronous appearance of new names for Irish groups may be the result of a similar development of confederacies, formed in

order to facilitate more effective interaction with Roman Imperial authorities (Charles-Edwards 2001, 158-159). This would certainly have involved considerable Roman and Irish interaction well before the break-up of Roman control in Britain, as there would hardly have been sufficient incentive to form a confederation in order to interact with a system that was already disintegrating. The earliest accounts of raiding by Ammianus in 360 AD relate how '...inroads of the savage tribes of the Scots and Picts, breaking the established truce, devastated the regions near the frontiers' (*Res Gestae* 20.1.1: cited in Rance 2001, 244). The reference to a treaty clearly confirms the suggestion that these groups were in direct contact with the Roman authorities and had diplomatic relations with them for some time before the raiding began.

It must also be remembered that the 'barbarian conspiracy' was a multifaceted crisis involving numerous factors '…including barbarian attack, treachery on the frontier defences, army desertions, and usurpation by the political exile Valentinus' (Rance 2001, 244). While the province of Britain had been threatened, it was actually the areas officially beyond Roman control that came under direct attack (Charles-Edwards 2001, 157). In this light the claim that the Romans had been betrayed is interesting, as the charge of treachery would hardly be levelled at unknown barbarians but at allies, 'client' kings or, as they were known officially, *Rex sociusque et amicus* (Braund 1984, 23 note 1). It is worth noting that the list of *gentes saevissimae* compiled in 364 AD also includes the Quadi – a group that had become vassal states under Rome as early as the 1st century AD (Hedeager 1987, 126). It can therefore be seen that the barbarian conspiracy was not simply a matter of unknown hordes suddenly spilling over the Roman frontier, but rather constituted a realignment of existing political and social relationships within the frontier zone itself, involving groups that had previously made treaties with the Roman authorities, as well as Roman 'client' kingdoms.

While the *Scotti* continue to be mentioned as a threat to Roman Britain, the *Attacotti* do not appear in the lists of *gentes saevissimae* again. Interestingly, where this name does appear is in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which records the presence of *Attacotti* units (probably formed in the late-4th and early-5th centuries) among the auxiliary Roman forces in Gaul, Italy and Illyricum (Rance 2001, 243; 247-248). According to Rance: 'That the only subsequent appearance of the

Attacotti is as army units in the *Notitia Digitatum* is an indication that at least some had abandoned hostility in order to take advantage of opportunities within the Empire'. A comprehensive argument taking into account the state of the Late Roman garrison in Britain is put forward by Rance, proposing that the Irish settlement of Wales actually constituted an official tribal protectorate supported by the Romans and involving Irish *Attecotti* auxiliary groups similar to those recorded on the continent (Rance 2001, 258-266). Indeed a number of commentators have suggested, contrary to popular assumptions, that the Welsh settlements were not founded by the raiders but were established to defend against them (Alcock 1971, 123-4; Dark 1994, 80-81; see also Thomas 1994, 45).

The settlements in Scotland, and the success of the Irish in the '...infiltration and eventual takeover of a pre-existing system', would also appear to have involved the consolidation of pre-existing links between Irish and Scottish groups in these areas (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 8-9). Furthermore, as Charles-Edwards points out, the fact that Irish groups raided and settled in parts of Scotland which, unlike Wales, were never under Roman control, suggests that the motivation for these activities cannot have been provided by the collapse of Roman authority alone (2001, 161). Therefore, the raiding and settlement in northern Britain cannot be explained solely in relation to the withdrawal of Roman legions and the subsequent establishment of protectorates or federates – these developments must also be related to the changing social, economic, and political conditions within Irish society at this time (Tierney 1998, 196).

These theories of post-Roman Romanisation also draw liberally on a highly diverse and differentiated range of archaeological material, and weave different strands of evidence into one seemingly complete tapestry. Roman coin deposits, brooches, pottery, and other finds from ritual sites such as Newgrange and Tara, are presented alongside the hack-silver hoards from Ballinrees and Balline as evidence for raiding and plunder (Ó Ríordáin 1947, 39-40; Bateson 1973, 30-31; de Paor 1993, 35); while the chronological separation of 4th and 5th century material tends to disregard evidence for the continuous use of Roman artefacts at many of these sites from as early as the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The erroneous late dating of many of the brooches, pins, and toilet implements discussed in the previous section may also owe much to the prevalent notion that cross-channel

interaction was largely inconsequential prior to the collapse of Roman power in Britain.

These Late Roman finds are often grouped together with different types of post-Roman material culture, such as ogham stones, and are presented together as interrelated evidence for post-Roman influences associated with the Irish settlements in Wales and the spread of Christianity (Edwards 1990, 4-5; Warner 1991, 50-51; de Paor 1993, 35). The origins of the ogham script have been the subject of much debate; however there does appear to be a general consensus that the origin of the script can be located chronologically (if not geographically) in the early 5th or possibly the late 4th century AD (McManus 1991, 4; 41; Charles-Edwards 2001, 165). The distribution of ogham stones is certainly suggestive of a direct association with the Irish settlements in Wales; not only due to the presence of ogham stones in Dyfed, but also because of the proliferation of inscriptions in southern Munster, an area that is specifically associated with groups said to have settled in Wales in 8th and 9th century Irish historical sources (Charles-Edwards 2001, 173).

A close connection between ogham and Christianity is also a distinct possibility. Some commentators have argued that ogham stones originated as an Irish version of pagan Roman commemoration stones (Charles-Edwards 2001, 175), and that ogham was '…no more tied to any one religion than the Morse code' (Thomas 1994, 32). Others have suggested that the formulation of the inscriptions, and their association with early ecclesiastical sites, indicate that the development of ogham was largely influenced by contemporary Christian practices on the continent and as such was intimately related to the adoption of Christianity in Ireland (Swift 1997, 90-96; 126-128). Whatever the case, as Charles-Edwards has observed: 'If it is accepted that the ogham stones stem from the influence of Rome upon the Irish, the inscriptions show that that influence already extended to the far south-west of the island in the fifth and sixth centuries' (2001, 173).

Indeed, one the most intriguing aspects of the ogham script is this south-westerly distribution. In stark contrast to the concurrence of ogham with the homelands of Irish groups said to have settled in Wales, the general distribution of ogham in Ireland is at variance with, and indeed often seems mutually exclusive with, the distribution of Roman material (Charles-Edwards 2001, 175;

Ó Floinn 2001, 6-7). The notion that ogham stones and Roman material are mutually exclusive may have been overstated however, as Newman (2005) has observed that a number of identifiably early ogham inscriptions are found in Co. Meath[48] – an area which has produced a considerable amount of Roman material – and Ó Floinn (2000) has also drawn attention to the significant cluster of ogham stones in the Kilkenny region surrounding Freestone Hill. Yet there is a notable absence of Roman material in the areas where the majority of ogham stones are concentrated. These discrepancies would indicate that cross-channel contact and the flow of cultural influences between Ireland and Britain in the early first millennium AD did not constitute a single cumulative post-Roman process but was a far more disparate affair, comprising varied forms of exchange and interaction involving different groups, in different places, at different times.

In relation to the Roman material, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the early 'Class 1' zoomorphic brooches, and related pins and dress-fasteners, represent an earlier distinct phase of interaction that does not appear to be directly related to the raids on northern Britain, or the Welsh settlements. Ó Floinn has noted that the majority of Irish pins and brooches are enamelled, and therefore their introduction to Ireland is most likely to have resulted from contacts with southern Britain as enamelled pins are absent in northern Britain (2001, 2-3). The distribution of these artefacts in Ireland is mainly confined to Leinster (and can be seen to be similar to that of earlier Roman material), while there are just four enamelled brooches from Britain and they are all found in the area around the Lower Severn Valley in Roman contexts such as Bath and Calne. The fact that the distribution of these dress-fasteners does not overlap with that of ogham in either Britain or Ireland suggests that the interaction which resulted in the spread of these artefacts in Ireland '...must clearly be independent of the Irish settlement of Western Britain' (Ó Floinn 2001, 6-7). As we have seen, the revised dating of these artefacts would also indicate '...the existence of an early Romanised, cultural horizon', representing '…a contemporary Romanisation, and an important one, that occurred during at least the later period of Roman Britain' (Newman 2002, 4).

---

[48] Newman has argued that these inscriptions were associated with the formation of new Kingdoms and territories in this region in the 4th and 5th centuries AD, and that the origins of the ogham script may lie here, in the Romanized milieu of Southeast Ireland, and not across the Irish Sea in Wales (Newman 2005, 380-382).

Roman Artefacts from Southeast Ireland: Quantity, Chronology and Distribution

The theories of post-Roman Romanisation discussed above have been widely accepted, and until relatively recently were rarely critiqued or held up to close scrutiny. As we have seen, many commentators have since questioned various elements of these theories, encouraging a broader and more complex analysis of the range of factors involved, yet significant problems remain nonetheless. For example, Charles-Edwards presents a far more nuanced view of Christian conversion involving a variety of groups with conflicting interests (2001, 190-202); however he does acknowledge the teleological nature of this analysis where '…in the main we have to rely on what we know of the end-result of the process' (2001, 187). While important advances in the recognition, dating, and interpretation of late Roman material have also been achieved, there has been relatively little reassessment of the evidence for earlier interaction (with the noted exception of Warner's invasion hypothesis), and it is still tacitly accepted that significant Roman and Irish interaction was limited to the Late Roman period and after (Charles-Edwards 2001, 157-8; Freeman 2001, 10-12; Rance 2001, 267).

In this regard, the central tenet of the theory of post-Roman Romanisation has remained largely intact, with the corpus of earlier Roman material considered to be too meagre and scattered to be indicative of significant Roman influence. Indeed few commentators have argued with Laing's conclusion that:

> '…the Roman objects of the early period arrived in a random fashion, and were not the outcome of regular or extensive contact with Britain or the continent. Such haphazard contact would be extremely unlikely to result in a Romanisation of Ireland and the possibility may be dismissed.'
>
> (Laing I985, 270)

However, the general notion that this material is insignificant and scattered (Tierney 1998, 196; Raftery 1994, 214), can be seen to rely on preconceived ideas concerning the amount and type of Roman material one should expect to find in areas under Roman influence. There is always an implicit comparison between Ireland and other countries or regions in such statements; a comparison that Warner makes explicit when he notes that '...a certain amount of 'Roman'

material has been found in Ireland but nothing like the quantity that one would expect in a country neighbouring the Empire'(1991, 49).

While it is important to examine the Irish experience in the wider context of the Roman Empire as a whole, and to observe the fortunes of other peripheral regions, surely one must also keep in mind the distinct set of circumstances unique to each geographic location and social situation that would have formed the backdrop to any interaction (Rance 2001, 267). To assume that any two areas that came into contact with the Roman Empire should automatically produce the same levels and types of material culture is undoubtedly a flawed supposition; based, it would appear, on the traditional notion that the proactive role in any interaction was taken by the Romans, while the natives played an essentially passive role as the receivers of goods, or indeed 'civilisation' itself. If we are to gain a more relevant and comprehensive picture of the extent and significance of Roman contact with Ireland, we should first compare the nature of the Roman evidence with other contemporary Iron Age material.

Focusing on the Southeast region of Ireland, we may begin to compare the quantity and distribution of Roman finds with La Tène and other Late Iron Age material. A list of the artefacts assumed to be genuine Roman finds here can be found in Appendix A. This list is mainly composed of finds from Bateson's 'Accepted' and 'Questionable' categories, along with a small number of his 'Rejected' finds.[49] Any of the finds from the last two categories included here have been reconsidered on the basis of the arguments laid out above. Thus the finds in Appendix A represent:

- Those in Bateson's catalogue for which no prejudicial evidence is present.
- Any finds that have been published since Bateson's Catalogue for which no prejudicial evidence is present.
- The artefacts in both Bateson's and Raftery's Catalogues that have been identified as Roman, provincial Roman, or Hiberno-Roman above.
- Any unpublished finds of Roman material encountered during the research programme undertaken for this study.

---

[49] These Appendices aim to provide an aid for the reader in order to make it easier to identify the finds used in the analysis and those dismissed. They are not intended as comprehensive catalogues. Only the main publications relating to a find are cited, rather than each and every reference. As the finds from Drumanagh have not been fully published, and are not available for examination, only the objects referred to in published accounts of the site could be included here.

Appendix B lists the finds that have been rejected as spurious, and states the main reason(s) for their dismissal. Appendix C includes all La Tène and Late Iron Age artefacts (c.300BC–500AD) from the Southeast that have been published to date, including imported material that is not identifiably 'Roman'.

Attempting to quantify archaeological finds is always a hazardous undertaking. Apart from the problems of classification discussed above, there are a number of other difficulties involved in appraising the actual volume of material involved. For instance, to consider the 1,506 silver coins from the Ballinrees hoard as individual pieces would certainly distort any attempt to quantify Roman material in Ireland, as there are more coins in this hoard than there are artefacts in Raftery's Catalogue of Iron Age material. However, there may be alternative ways to analyse the relative levels and significance of material types in the archaeological record. The first of these is to establish the number of findspots of Roman and Late Iron Age material from the Southeast (Fig.2.5).
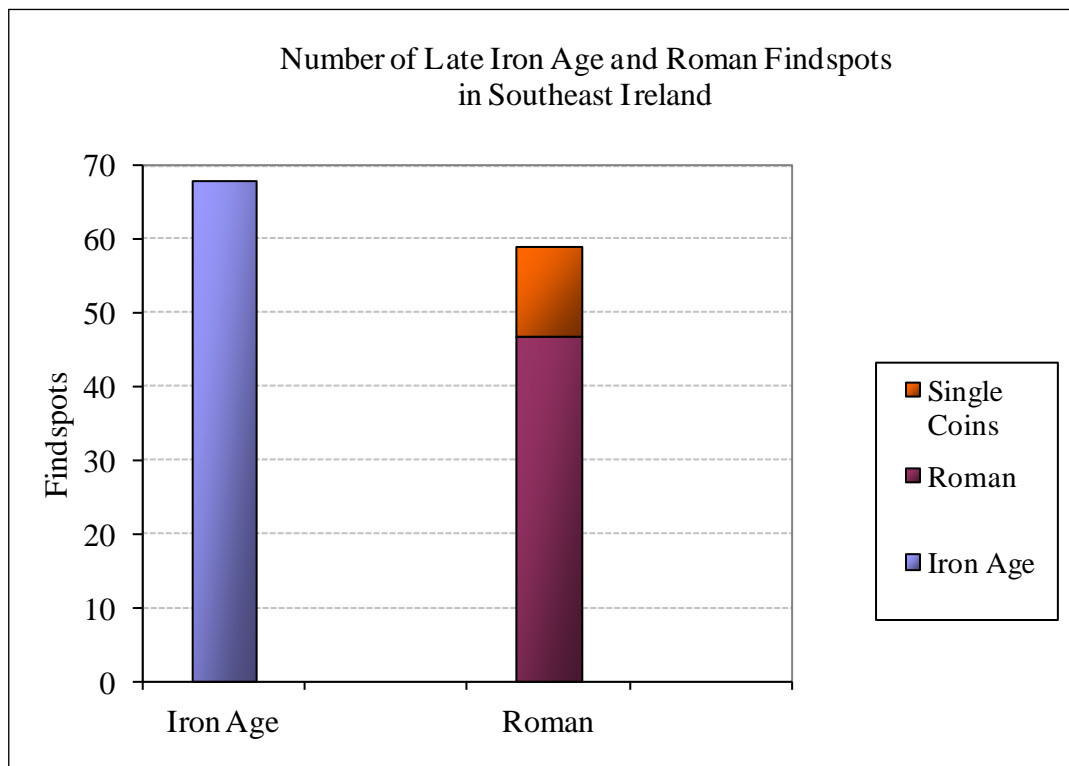

Fig. 2.5: Number of Late Iron Age and Roman findspots in Southeast Ireland.

If we look at the Roman material dating from the 1st to the 5th century AD we find that there are fifty-nine provenanced findspots, not including two finds with county-only provenances. The number of findspots of La Tène and other Late Iron Age material in the study area is sixty-eight, excluding six finds with a county-only provenance. It is quite clear that, when compared to the number of findspots of other Late Iron Age material, the number of findspots of Roman material is not so meagre. However this analysis does include twelve isolated single coin-finds (including a suspicious cluster of four early coins in the Dublin area).[50] When these are excluded, there are forty-six remaining Roman findspots: just over 66% or two thirds of the number of findspots of La Tène and Late Iron Age material.

Of course this kind of analysis does not reflect the actual amount of material recovered from each findspot. Another method of evaluating the relative level of Roman material is to compare some broadly similar categories of artefact types. For example, if we take the high-status metalwork that is often considered to be the hallmark of the Irish Iron Age – harness-fittings and mounts, weapons and scabbards, belt-fittings and fasteners, personal items such as brooches, pins, torcs, armlets, bracelets, finger-rings, and vessels such as cauldrons and bowls – we find approximately one hundred and fourteen such objects from the study area. When compared to similar types of Roman metalwork – brooches, pins, rings, bracelets, toilet implements, fittings, ladles and strainers – we find that there are fifty such objects; and if the sixteen gold and silver coins from the study area are included this number rises to sixty-six (Fig. 2.6).

When one realises that a considerable amount of this Late Iron Age material may date to the last three centuries BC, the relative level of Roman metalwork recovered becomes apparent. The dating of this Iron Age material is far from certain, but a preliminary survey would indicate that at least one third of the Iron Age artefacts may predate the Roman finds. Therefore, the higher level of Late Iron Age finds may be partially interpreted as indicative of the wider chronological range of the material: it is possible that there may well have been almost as much Roman and Hiberno-Roman high-status metalwork circulating in the Southeast during the first five centuries AD as there were other types of

---

[50] These isolated single coin-finds do not include the coin from the river Dodder at Templeogue or the find from the mound at Killavilla discussed above.

contemporary Iron Age material. Even without taking these chronological factors into account, the fact that over 40% of the Late Iron Age high-status metalwork from the study area is Roman or Hiberno-Roman, would suggest a very different scenario that that which sees Roman material as negligible. The popular picture of a dominant La Tène material culture that included an insignificant amount of Roman exotica is at odds with the available evidence, and it would appear that there was far more diversity in the material culture of this period than has previously been suggested.
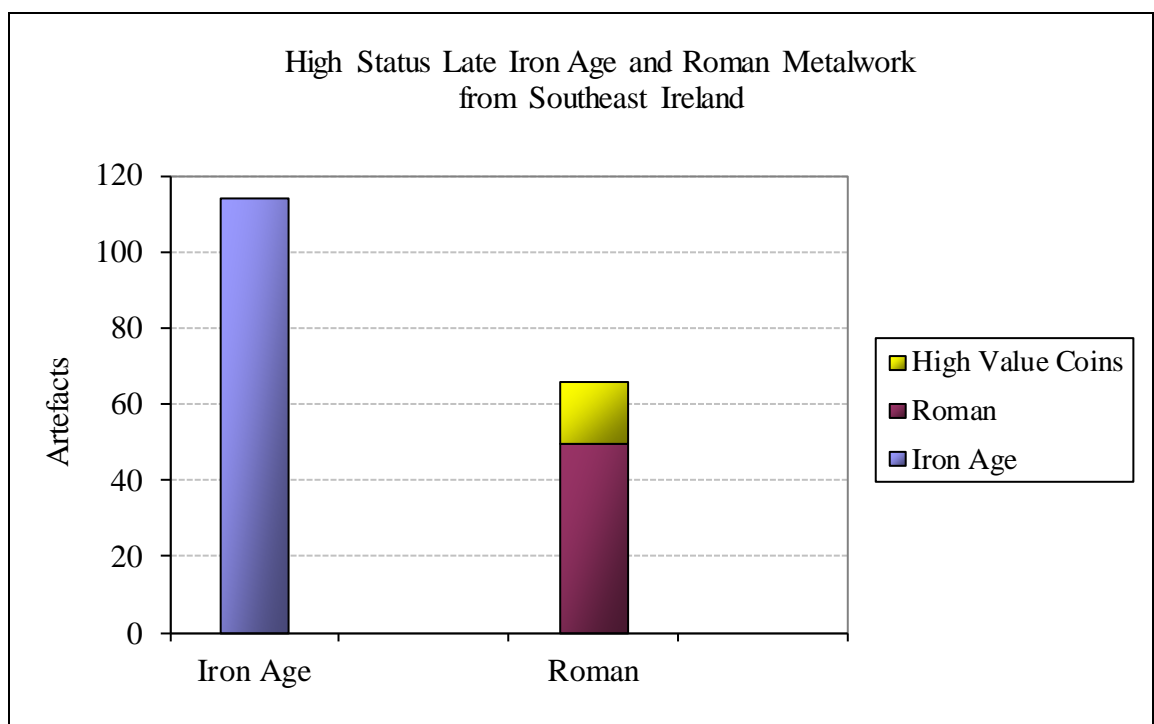
Fig. 2.6: High status Late Iron Age and Roman Metalwork from Southeast Ireland.

It may also be argued that much of the Roman and Hiberno-Roman material is late in date, and therefore a considerable amount of this material could be associated with an increase in British and Irish contacts in the Late Roman and post-Roman period. While much of the Roman material cannot be dated closely, and more work is needed to refine the current dating of Roman finds in Ireland, preliminary analysis of the dating evidence that is available provides some

interesting food for thought (Fig: 2.7).[51] The date-ranges of the Roman artefactual assemblages (excluding coins) from findspots in the Southeast show that eighteen findspots have produced material dating from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD, while fifteen findspots have produced artefacts dating from the 4th to the 5th centuries AD. Four of the sites that have produced later material have also produced earlier finds (this increases to five sites if one includes the early coin finds from Newgrange).

There are also more findspots that have produced early coin finds in the Southeast (Fig. 2.8), with fourteen findspots of coins dating to the first three centuries AD (including six isolated single coin-finds), and eight dating to the 4th century AD (including four isolated single coin finds).[52] Two of these findspots have also produced both early and late coins. However, the amount of 4th century coinage is much greater than that of the previous three centuries, with more coins (and many more gold coins) from the 4th century than there are from the first three centuries AD combined. There are also notably less 3rd century coins than there are from either the preceding or following centuries. This 3rd century gap, and the subsequent rise in 4th century coinage, is generally thought to be broadly representative of the fluctuations in Irish contacts with Roman Britain, and it is largely due to this numismatic dating evidence that commentators tend to divide the whole corpus of Roman material into Early and Late chronological groupings (Ó Ríordáin 1947, 41; Bateson 1973, 28; Freeman 2001, 1-12).

While this may appear at first glance to be a reasonable interpretation, there is a fatal flaw in the assumption that the chronology and fluctuation of coinage can be extended to all other material culture types and considered to be representative of cross-channel interaction as a whole. It must be remembered that coinage is inherently related to a wider monetary system, and as such is subject to its own specific circulatory dynamics including inflation, debasement and the monetary policy of the issuing authority. From this perspective what is most striking about the fluctuation of coinage in Southeast Ireland is its general concurrence with

[51] The dates used here have all been provided by other commentators. A number of sherds of Phocaean Red Slipware and Bii ware from Irish sites have recently been identified by Amanda Kelly (2010). These finds are not included here as they date from the late 5th to 6th century AD, and as such fall outside the chronological limits of this study.

[52] The possible 'hoax' hoard of 15 coins from Tara is included here as a single entry. Although it should be noted that this hoard is likely to be genuine (Grogan 2008, 199–120), the persistent claims that the coins were planted as a hoax (Bateson 1973; Dolley 1968) undermine any further analysis and have to a certain extent eviscerated the archaeological importance of this find.

similar fluctuations in the Western Empire and Roman Britain in particular. The 3rd century AD is notable for the paucity of coin finds in the Western Empire, due mainly to the succession of the 'Gallo-Roman Empire' under the usurper Postumus (Croft and Van der Vin 2003), and the 4th century also constituted the high point of coin use (or coin loss) in Roman Britain (Reece, 2002, 57).

Dates of Roman Assemblages from Southeast Ireland (excluding coins)

Dunbell
Castletown
Freestone Hill
Carbury Hill
Crumlin
Millockstown
Ballintore
River Brosna
Tilhilly
R. Greese
Newgrange
Bramblestown
Dalkey Island
Dalkey Island
Rathgall
Clara
Lagore
Blundelstown
Cashel
Drummanagh
Randalstown
Lambay
River Boyne
Stoneyford
Stoneyford
Knockaulin
Clontarf
Knowth
Tara
Kishawanny
Ballinderry

Date: 1 - 500 AD

0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350   400   450   500

Fig. 2.7: The date ranges of Roman artefactual assemblages in Southeast Ireland.

81
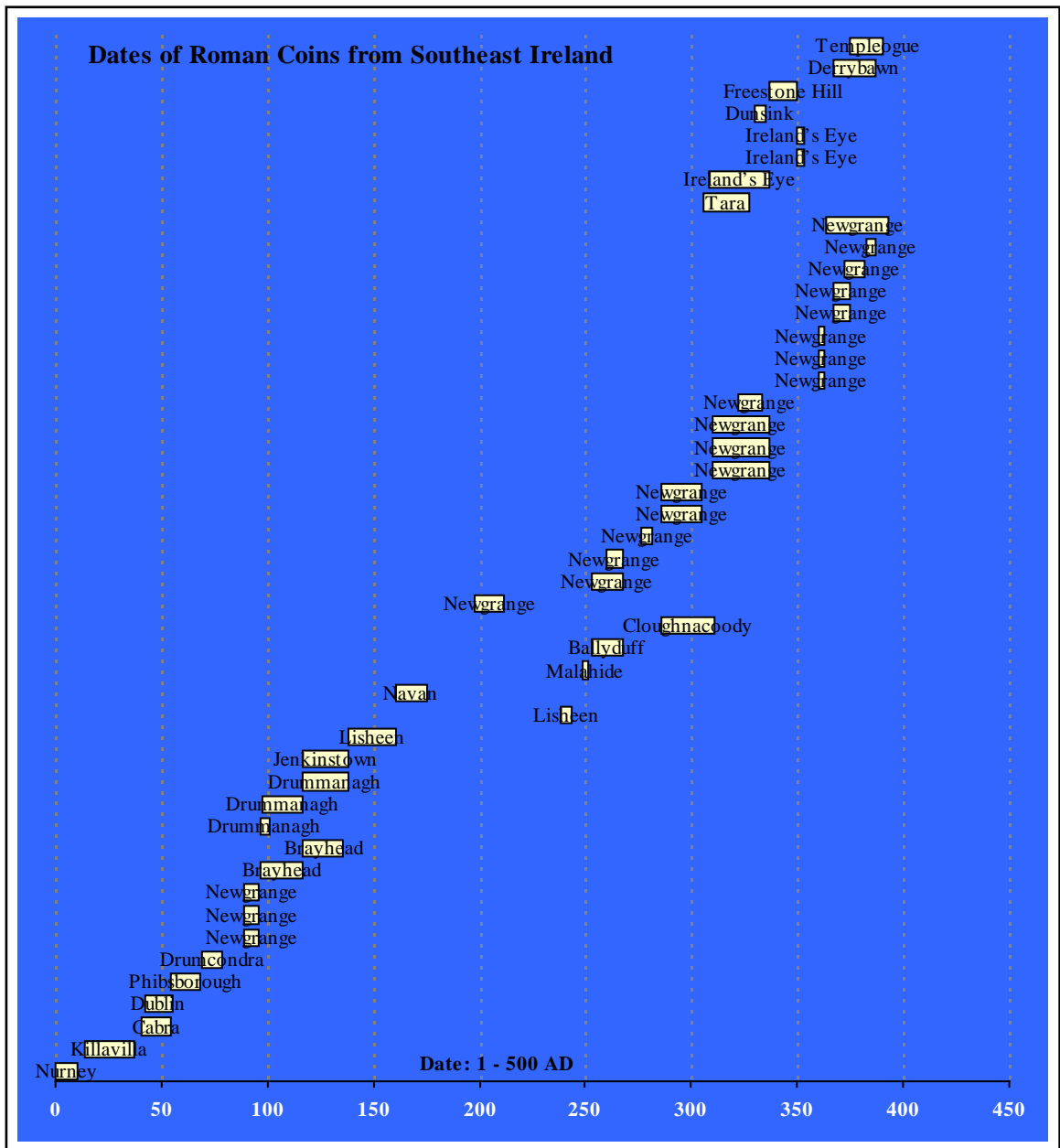
Fig. 2.8: The dates of Roman coins from Southeast Ireland

It would appear, therefore, that the varying levels of coinage in Southeast Ireland may be related to broader fluctuations in the monetary system of the Western Empire, and the availability of coinage in general, rather than any wider decrease or increase in cross-channel interaction. The 3rd century hiatus and 4th century increase in coin finds is not so readily apparent in other datable material types. For example there are almost twice as many Roman pottery vessels dating from the early centuries AD as there are from the 4th century, and the number of

Roman brooches and pins from each period is just about equal (there are 12 brooches dating from the 1st to 2nd centuries AD, with 11 brooches and 3 pins dating from the 3rd to the 5th centuries). In fact, when all the currently dated finds are taken into account, there is little evidence for any general 4th century increase or 3rd century hiatus, with the spread of material split evenly between the 'Early' and 'Late' periods.

It is also significant that the higher level of 4th century coinage in this region is largely due to the recovery of multiple single finds from Newgrange. These coins clearly represent a continual sequence of deposition, as opposed to a single hoard (Aitchison 1988, 275), and half of the coins from this site date to the first three centuries AD. This continuous activity does not lend itself easily to an interpretation which envisions a sudden upsurge in late fourth century interaction due to cross-channel raiding. Indeed the apparent cessation of coin deposits at Newgrange in the late 4th century AD may be contrasted with the appearance of the Ballinrees hack-silver hoard in the early 5th century AD. In this light, the Irish raids on Britain may well be associated with the decline, as opposed to the increase, of coin deposition at Newgrange.

The distribution of the Roman material is also revealing. If we look at the distribution of Roman finds in the Southeast (Fig. 2.9), we find that the inclusion of the material discussed in the preceding sections does produce a slightly different picture to that provided by Bateson's 'Accepted' material only (Bateson 1973, 33: map 2). One notable feature of the updated and revised distribution map is a cluster of single coin-finds in and around the Dublin area (a pattern that is also apparent around Belfast in Ulster). There is a distinct possibility that many of these finds are modern imports, and that this distributional bias is a result of the more inclusive approach used here when considering the authenticity of Roman material, especially coins. It could alternatively be argued that the higher level of construction and excavation carried out in urban areas would result in a recovery bias, or that the importation of material at accessible harbours in both these areas would have resulted in such a pattern. However, these clusters appear to have a distinctly modern distribution.[53] There are coins in the areas of Dublin

---

[53] It is notable that similar Dublin and Belfast clusters can be seen in the distribution of beehive querns (Waddell 1998, 322: fig. 156, map 1), a pattern that is undoubtedly due to activity of antiquarian collectors.

(Templeogue) and Belfast (Giant's Ring) that would appear to have authentic contexts, and to dismiss all the other coins may be too indiscriminate. The best approach may be to issue a health warning in relation to the reliability of these particular clusters, and keep this in mind when interpreting the possible significance of the overall distribution pattern.

The findspots included here are also spread over a wider area in general, with more located in inland areas. The inland finds have always been problematic in relation to the interpretation of Roman material as simply representing the activity of seafaring merchants and pirates (Bateson 1973, 37; Freeman 2001, 11; Raftery 1994, 214). One would expect there to be a marked coastal element in the distribution of any imported material in prehistory, and Bateson has suggested that most of the Irish material is confined to coastal areas, with material only reaching inland areas in the 4th and 5th centuries. Dividing the material into three main groups – a 'north coast region', an 'east coast region' and a 'southern inland' area – Bateson argues that the coastal groups are evident from the first two centuries AD, while the southern inland group only appears in the later period (Bateson 1973, 36-7; see also Freeman 2001, 3: fig. 1).
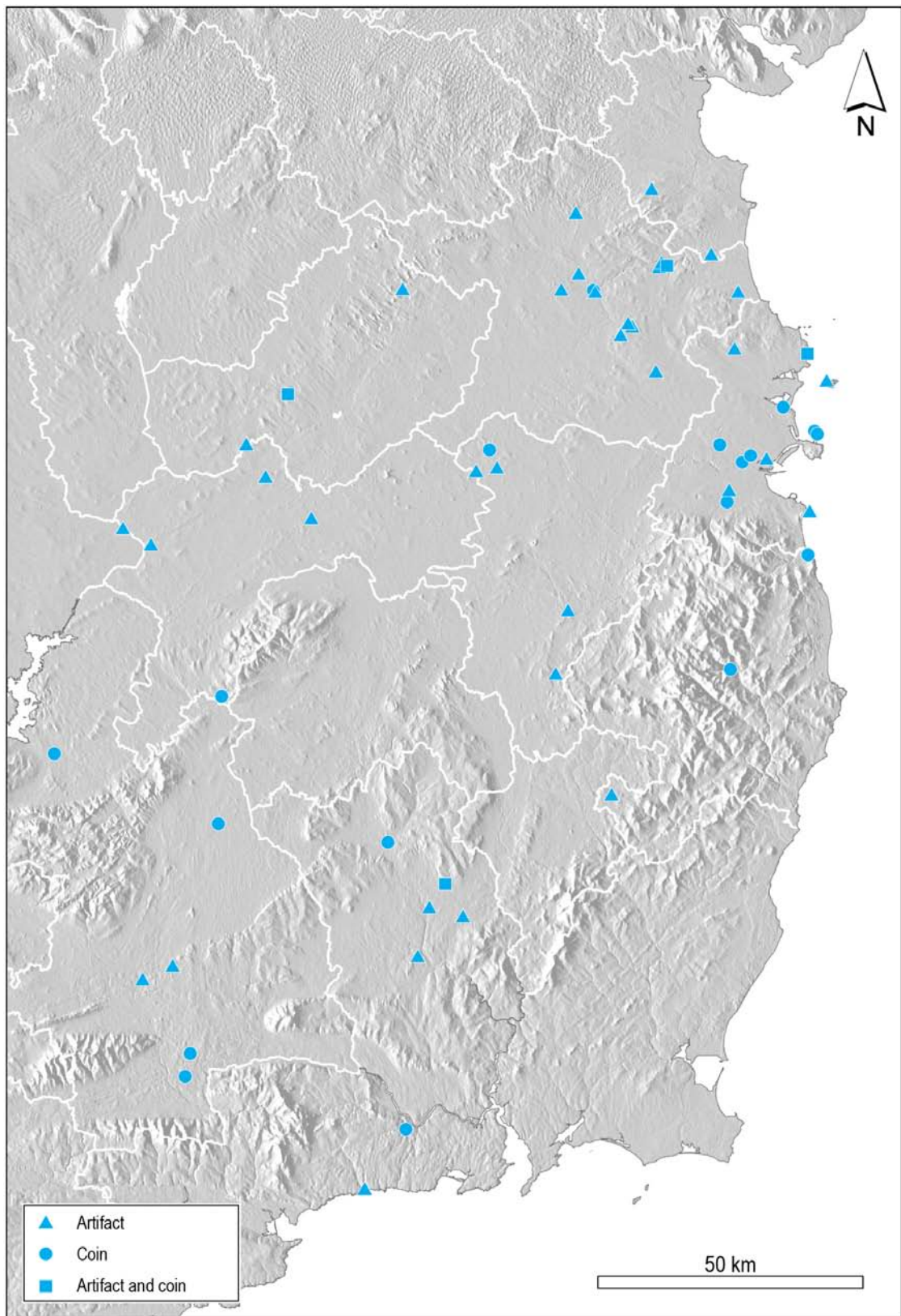
Fig.2.9: The distribution of Roman Material in Southeast Ireland.

The distribution pattern presented here does differ to that offered by Bateson due to the addition of new finds and the reassessment of others; however, his regional classification of groups is questionable even in terms of his 'Accepted' finds alone (1973, 33: map 2). In the first place, the categorisation of all northern and eastern finds as belonging to 'coastal groups' is much too broad and general. This blanket use of the term 'coastal' gives the impression that the distribution of Roman material is restricted to coastal areas in the early centuries AD, and is therefore marginal and superficial (1973, 37). Yet northern and eastern sites such as Clogher Co. Tyrone, and Uisneach, Co. Westmeath, simply cannot be described as 'coastal' locations. Many of the early finds in the northern and eastern groups actually come from inland sites, and there are also a number of significant southern finds dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Bateson 1973, 34-36: maps 2-4). In fact there are as many inland findspots that have produced early material as there are inland findspots of later material. Although Bateson's use of the term 'coastal' cannot be sustained, when this adjective is dropped his identification of three main groups of Irish material – northern, eastern and southern – is justifiable. Within the Southeast region there is a discernible southern/eastern divide, with two main spreads of material separated by a zone with no finds stretching through counties Wexford, Carlow, Laois and southern Offaly. The eastern finds are spread across counties Louth, Meath, Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Westmeath and Offaly, with no marked inland/coastal divide apparent. The southern group consists of finds from counties Tipperary and Kilkenny, with just two finds from coastal locations in the Waterford area. Again, there is no obvious intimation of a wider 'coastal zone', or a particular coastal bias in relation to these locations.

On the contrary, it would appear that coastal finds in the Southeast are restricted to a relatively small area between the mouths of the Boyne and Liffey rivers on the East coast, with just two finds on the South coast in Waterford, both west of the River Suir. The absence of finds along the coastline from Brayhead, on the Dublin Wicklow border, to the mouth of the Suir, in Waterford, is rather puzzling as one would expect there to be at least some Roman material along this circuitous coastline (Bateson 1973, 31). Indeed, the absence of finds along the Southeast coastline is in marked contrast to the northern coast, where we find Roman material at almost every conceivable harbour and refuge, from Dundrum,

Co. Down, to Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal, with numerous finds from sandhill sites suggesting the use of these sites as landing or beaching spots (Waddell 1998, 374-375). This pattern cannot be explained due to any lack of suitable harbours of landing sites in the Southeast, as the southern Irish Sea would have been much more sheltered than the northern coast along counties Donegal, Derry, Antrim, and Down. Nor can this discrepancy be explained in relation to the general frequency of finds, as there are considerably more findspots of Roman material in the Southeast than there are in Ulster.

It would appear, therefore, that the distribution of Roman material in the Southeast is far more focused and complex that the general picture of an early coastal scatter and later inland drift proposed by Bateson. The main cluster of coastal finds in the Southeast is concentrated in the small stretch of coastline that is closest to the important ritual sites and political centres at Tara, Knockaulin, and the Boyne Valley, and Roman material was also reaching other important inland sites such as Cashel, Co. Tipperary, Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny, and Ballinderry, Co. Offaly, during the first two centuries AD. This distribution pattern is far from 'random' or 'haphazard', and when the routes of the 'great roads' recorded in Early Irish historical sources are laid over the map of findspots from the Southeast, a high degree of correlation between these roads and the distribution of Roman material is also apparent (Fig. 2.10).[54]

---

[54] Using a number of early historical texts including the *Táin* and various Saints' lives, Ó Lochlainn concluded that '...in the minds of the storytellers and chroniclers, from the 6th to the 10th century, the idea of a great road system existed quite clearly' (1940, 470). He identified five main routeways, the 'Great Road' (An tSlí Mhór), the Road of *Dàla*, the Road of *Assal*, the Road of *Mid-luachar*, and the Road of *Cuala*, as well as an associated network of connecting roads. The relevance of these sources to our period is debatable, and it is also possible that aspects of Ó Lochlainn's reconstruction were influenced by more recent road systems (Stout and Stout 1992, 15). However, Warner's (1976) mapping of these routeways clearly shows that many of these routes are associated with important natural features such as harbours, coastal refuges, and rivers; while the 'Great Road' itself ran along a natural system of esker ridges (an Eiscir Riada) through the bogs of the midlands. It is quite likely, therefore, that these roads would have formed important routeways in prehistoric times also, and a number of these roads are explicitly described in the early sources with reference to important Iron Age centres: for example, the Road of Mid-luachar is described as connecting the two major prehistoric centres of Tara and Navan Fort.
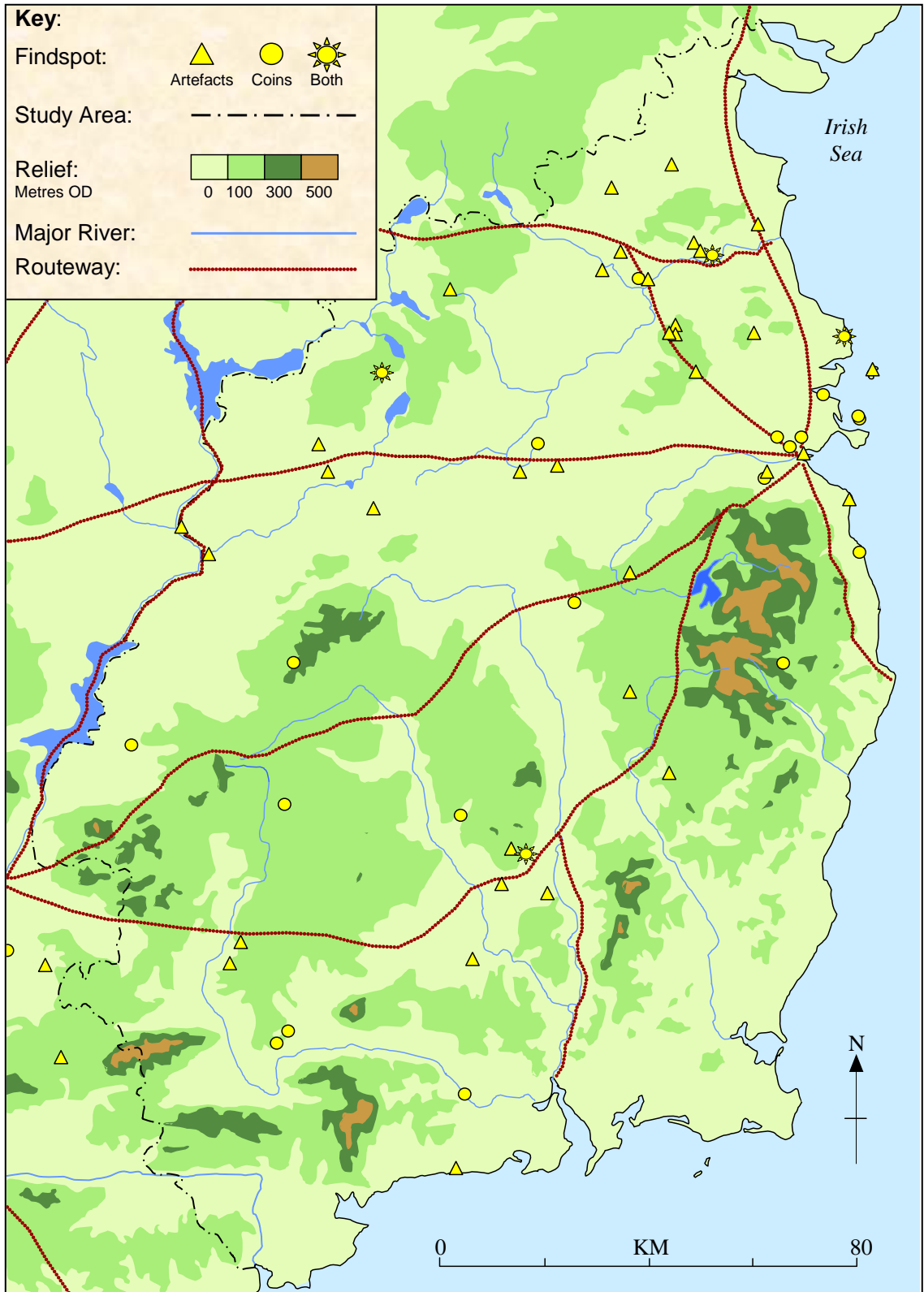
Fig. 2.10: Findspots of Roman material in relation to Early Historic Routeways.

The presence of multiple findspots along and around the main routeways running from this small stretch of coast in the East to the South and West would indicate that it was the internal road network – and not the coastline – that constituted the main conduit for the circulation and exchange of Roman material. It would also appear that Roman finds were being transported along these routeways, well into the interior of the country, from as early as the 1st century AD. Indeed, apart from the concentrated cluster between the Boyne and the Liffey, the distribution of Roman material in the Southeast is no more 'coastal' or 'scattered' that that of other Late Iron Age material. When the findspots of Roman material are compared to those of La Tène and other Late Iron Age material the two patterns are roughly complementary (Fig. 2.11). There is the same scarcity of finds in counties Waterford, Wexford, Laois and Carlow, and the areas where there are numerous Roman finds are those where other Iron Age material is plentiful. Fourteen findspot have also produced both Roman and Late Iron Age material.
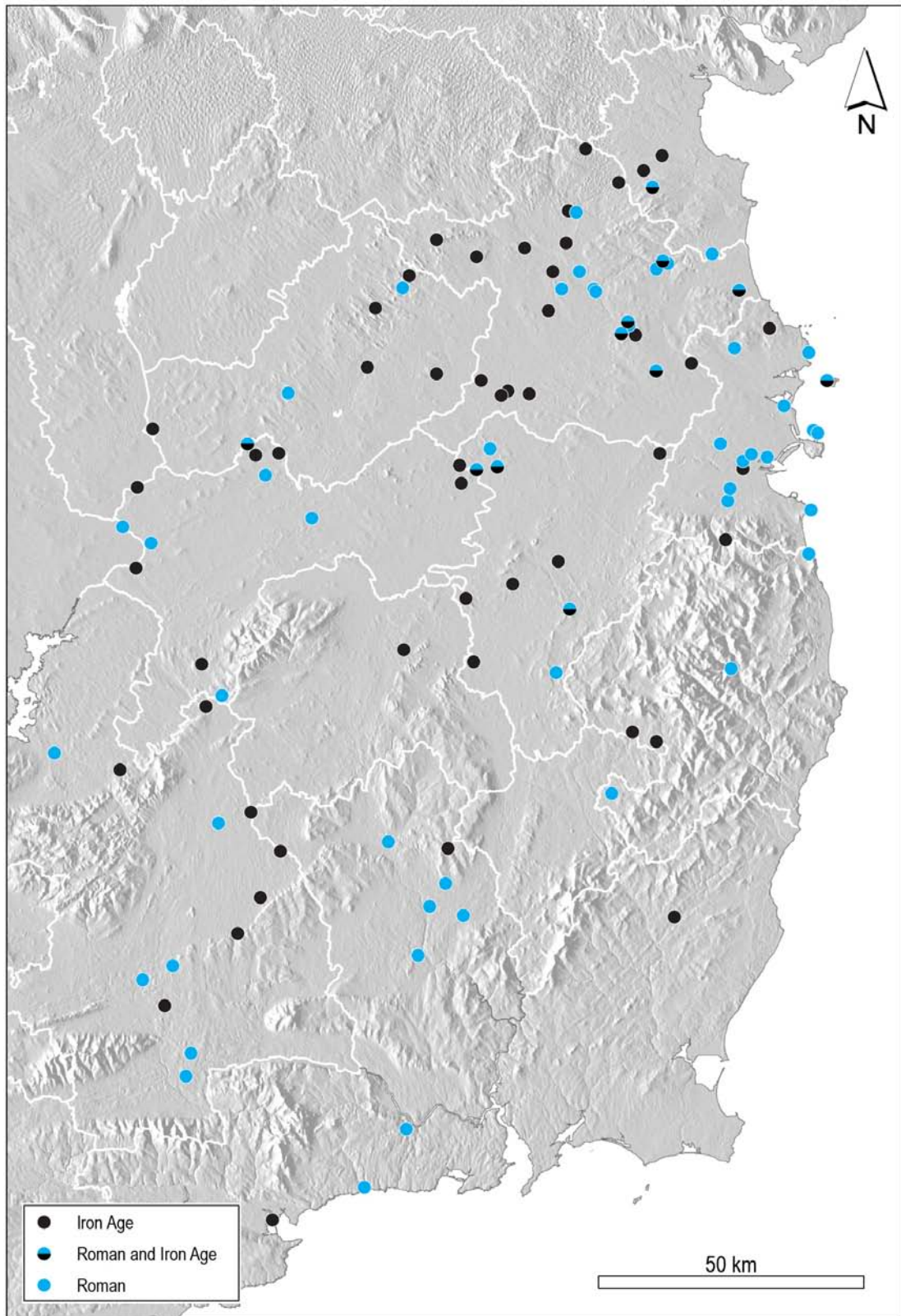
Fig. 2.11: The distribution of Roman and Late Iron Age material in Southeast
Ireland.

The recognisable contexts of Roman artefacts also compare well with those of other contemporary finds. Far from being 'without archaeological association' (Raftery 1994, 214), the majority of Roman finds are found in similar contexts to those of other Late Iron Age material (Fig. 2.12). Both groups of material include a high proportion of isolated 'stray' single finds, and for the most part the types of context that have produced La Tène and Late Iron Age finds are those where Roman artefacts have been found. Wetland sites and cemeteries/burial monuments are the most common contexts, with prehistoric 'royal' sites, promontory forts, crannogs, hillforts, and megalithic tombs also producing both Roman and Iron Age material. It would appear therefore, that Roman finds tend to be no more isolated or stray than other contemporary material types.
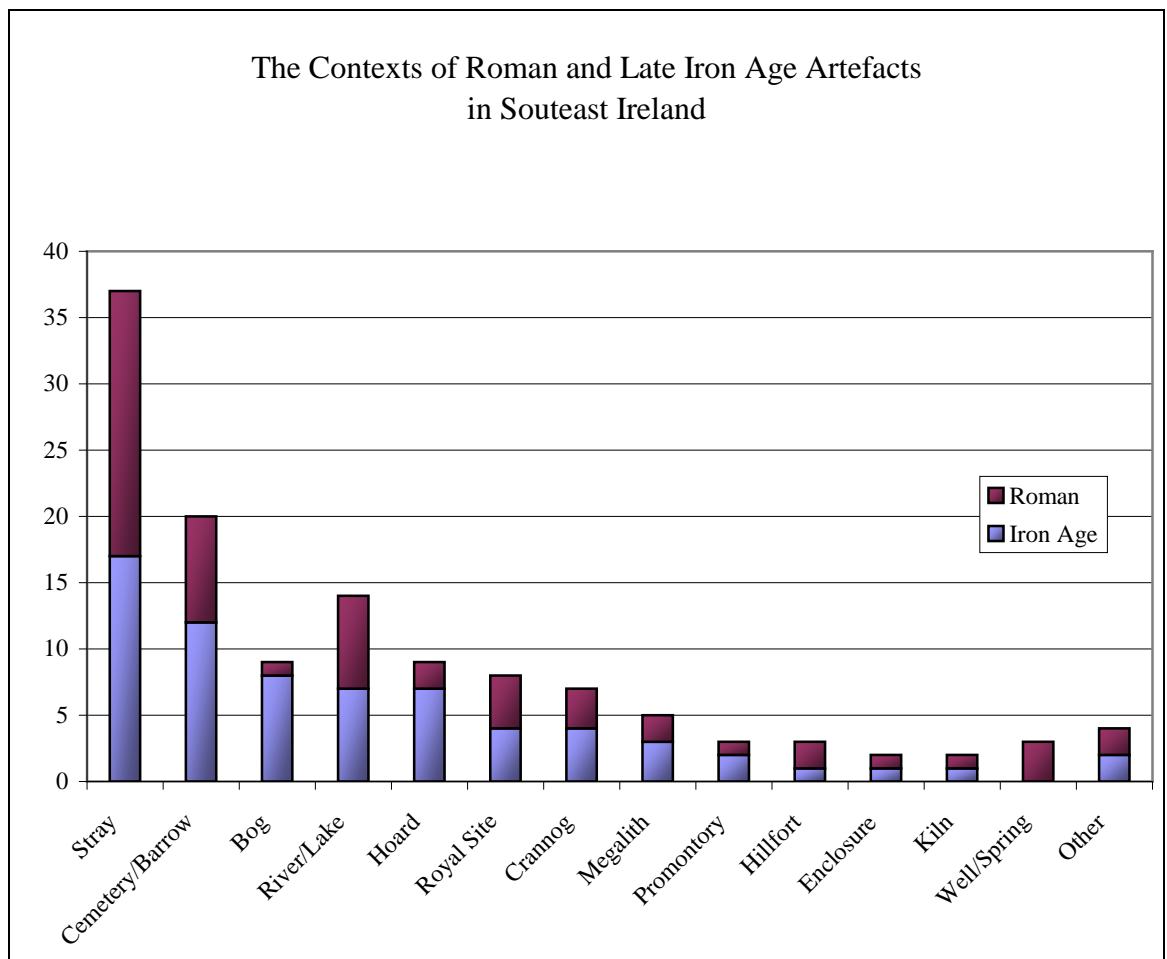
Fig. 2.12: The Contexts of Late Iron Age and Roman finds in Southeast Ireland.

Conclusion

The archaeological evidence as it currently stands would certainly appear to undermine existing theories concerning Roman and Irish relations. As one begins to pull at the different threads of evidence, tracing their course over space and time, it becomes clear that the existing theories of post-Roman Romanisation cannot incorporate or explain much of the archaeological material. The traditional narratives of invaders, raiders, seafarers, cross-channel settlers, returning mercenaries, and missionaries, simply fail to contain the corpus of Roman artefacts, which constantly spill out of their historical and geographical frames. Indeed, it is likely that the historically attested post-Roman contacts have over-shadowed, and to a certain extent disguised, earlier undocumented interaction between Roman Britain and Ireland. As we have seen, when compared with contemporary Iron Age material, Roman finds in the Southeast are neither as scarce nor scattered as is generally believed. There is also little evidence to suggest a substantial increase in cross-channel contact during the 4th and 5th centuries, or to support the view that earlier finds are especially rare or restricted to coastal areas.

It should not, perhaps, be considered so surprising that interaction between Ireland and Britain would have been just as stable and intense when Roman rule in Britain was secure as during the period when the Western Empire was collapsing. Certainly Irish raiders and settlers would have taken advantage of this collapse, and in the process cross-channel contacts – and much more besides – would have been transformed. But to say that these developments constituted a transformation in existing relations and forms of interaction is explicitly not to say that these changes marked the birth of cross-channel contact itself *sui generis*. As we have seen, there is evidence to suggest that significant interaction between Ireland and Roman Britain did occur during the early centuries AD, and it is clear that the opportunities for trade, exchange, diplomatic ties, and other social relationships presented (and probably demanded) by the *Pax Romana* have been greatly underestimated. While there are brief glimpses and hints of these earlier forms of interaction contained within the historical texts, the nature and extent of this interaction can only be assessed through the careful examination of the archaeological finds in their local contexts.

Chapter 3

Drumanagh Promontory Fort, Co. Dublin: Contact Site

Introduction

The promontory fort at Drumanagh, Co. Dublin, has proven to be a rich source of Roman material since the 1950's when ploughing revealed sherds of Roman pottery (now lost: Bateson 1973, 70) and is one of the areas of focus of the Discovery Programme's LIARI Project. In the 1970s 1st century Gallo-Roman Samian ware was uncovered by deep-ploughing, and Roman coins and other finds have since been discovered by visitors and unauthorised treasurer hunters using metal detectors (Raftery 1996). Although it has been regularly confirmed that native Iron Age material was also discovered here (Warner 1995; Raftery 1996), the site has not been systematically excavated and most of the artefacts found there remain unpublished and inaccessible. In many ways Drumanagh provides us with a particularly 'hard case', where almost all of the problems and issues facing the study of Roman material in Ireland are manifest in one single site: the finds have been recovered by accident and illicitly, they remain unpublished, systematic excavation has not been conducted, and the site itself represents a monument type about which evidence and understanding is acutely lacking.

This situation is clearly not conducive to comprehensive or in-depth analysis of the archaeological evidence and the vacuum created by the lack of properly published information has encouraged a great deal of speculation concerning the nature of the site. These concerns notwithstanding, such is the enormous potential of Drumanagh it would be hard to justify omitting it from consideration altogether and a limited review of the available evidence may prove useful, if only as a corrective to the more sensationalist interpretations that have been widely publicised in recent years (Warner 1995; 1996; Di Martino 2003). Furthermore, although the material itself, and its immediate archaeological context within the site, is unavailable for examination, the wider geographic context of the site in relation to the late prehistoric landscape of this area is something that can be investigated, and such a line of enquiry is also vital for any broader understanding

of the social, cultural, and economic role that this location may have played in Late Iron Age Ireland.

The meaning of the placename 'Drumanagh' (*'Druim Annagh'?'Druim Monach'?*) is difficult to determine and has also been subject to some evocative interpretations. The common prefix 'drum' is almost certainly an Anglicisation of the Irish *druim* meaning 'a ridge' (the origin of the English word 'drumlin': Joyce 1995 [1910]), and this description would be compatible with the cliff-faced promontory. However, the etymology of the second part of the name is less clear. The placename element 'annagh' from the Irish *eanach* means 'watery place', being derived from the word *ean* ('water'). While this may seem appropriate at first glance, 'annagh' appears to be used almost exclusively to describe boggy or marshy areas rather than coastal locations where elements derived from *mara* ('sea') are used. It has also been noted that where placenames end in a postfix derived from *eanach* they are usually anglicised as 'anna' or 'anny' (Joyce 1995 [1910]).

Many commentators have suggested a connection between the names 'Drumanagh' and '*Menapii*' – the name given to a tribe in Belgic Gaul by Roman geographers – and it has been proposed that Drumanagh is the *polis* (πόλις) listed as *Manapia* (Μαναπία) in Ptolemy's description of the east coast of Ireland (Raftery 1994, 208; Warner 1995, 26). However, maps drawn from the coordinates in Ptolemy clearly show that *Manapia* lies to the south of what appears to be Dublin Bay, and if any location in Ptolemy matches that of Drumanagh it is the *polis* of *Eblana* (Warner 1995, 26; Bursche and Warner 2000). In the Ulster Cycle legend *Tochmarc Emire* ('The wooing of Eimhear') Cúchulainn's future father-in-law Forgall Monach (a name that has also been linked with the tribal name Menapii: Ó hÓgáin 1991, 131) is said to have resided at a fort at *Luglochta Logo* ('The Gardens of Lugh') south of the river Boyne (Kinsella 1970, 26; Ó hÓgáin 1991, 134). This would place *Forgall's* fort somewhere in the vicinity of Drumanagh, and it is possible that the name is an Anglicisation of *Druim Monach* 'the ridge of Manach' (Warner 1995, 26). It is also interesting that in one episode in *Tochmarc Emire*, Forgall Monach is said to have gone to *Emain Macha* (Navan Fort, Co. Armagh) '…dressed in Gaulish clothes […] with tribute of gold and Gaulish wine and other valuables.' (trans. Kinsella 1970, 28).

94

The Material Culture

The site itself is a large sub-rectangular promontory, over 16 hectares in area, bounded by cliffs on the three seaward sides and cut-off from the surrounding land by a series of closely-set earthen ramparts that run for over 370m across the neck of the promontory (Fig. 3.1). Three parallel sets of ditches and banks constitute the main section of the earthworks, however the banks are irregular, broken in places, and vary in number over different stretches. When the much smaller outer bank is included, there are as many as five consecutive banks at the southern end of the ramparts, with just two banks at the extreme northern end. The ditches are situated 'outside' the intervening banks, facing the landward side of the promontory. There is no clearly defined entrance as such, although corresponding gaps in the three main banks towards the northern end of the earthworks would appear to form an opening, hindered only by the diminutive outermost bank. A small stream flowing from the west forms a break across the southern section of the ramparts, where a curving stretch of bank runs alongside the stream as it turns south and flows between the two inner banks over the side of the promontory. The cliff-faces on the southern and northern sides of the promontory diminish in height as they join the coast at the landward side, receding into sandy beaches which continue along the coast forming bays on either side of the site and a sheltered harbour to the north.

Although the material from Drumanagh is unavailable for examination, some general information is. The first recorded finds from the site comprise separate discoveries of 1st and 2nd century Gallo-Roman Samian ware (Bateson 1973; Raftery 1994, 208). These fine wares were often manufactured in the form and style of high status metal tableware and were remarkably consistent in their designs, with the result that highly accurate dating evidence can be obtained from different types. While not as valuable as the metal tableware that they imitate, ceramic goblets, bowls and plates were prized possessions both within and beyond Roman territory, and the social importance of such items would have been significant (Hunter 1996, 122). The ploughing that revealed the Gallo-Roman pottery in the 1970's is also reported to have exposed a series of 'hut sites' inside the promontory fort (Raftery 1996, 156). Without excavation little

can be said about the date or function of these structures, although they do at least provide some evidence for settlement on the promontory.

Fig. 3.1: Drumanagh promontory fort, Co. Dublin (image Google Earth).

Later finds (now held at the National Museum of Ireland) made by unauthorised treasure hunters are said to have included high-status metalwork such as 'ornate jewellery' and 'bronze ornaments', as well as 'copper ingots' (Herity 1996; Raftery 1996). It is possible that the site produced four Irish La Tène horse bits (Raftery's Type E) and three Iron Age bowls (Raftery 2000, 6; note 16). Roman coins found at the site are reported to include issues of Titus (79-81 AD), Trajan (98-117 AD) and Hadrian (117-138 AD), as well as two coins of 1st century date from a field nearby (Raftery 1994, 208). Roman coins issued during the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD remained in circulation over extraordinarily long periods of time, as Imperial coinage was very stable from the late 1st to the mid 3rd centuries (*c*. 70-260 AD) and older coins appear to have been continuously reused during this period (Reece 2002, 42-46: bronze coins of Vespasian (69-79AD) were available for hoarding well into the second-half of the 3rd century AD). However, if a site produces coins of Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian exclusively, the absence of later examples (which are common in Roman Britain) does suggest that the activity associated with the coins occurred sometime before 150 AD (Reece 2002, 43-44). Therefore if the coin finds from Drumanagh are limited to these issues, it is possible that the activity associated with the Roman coins at the site can be dated to the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD.

The large copper ingots that are said have been recovered at Drumanagh are also unpublished and little can be said about them here (Herity 1996; Kelly 2002a, 132). However, a large bun-shaped copper ingot was found at Damastown, just 13km inland from Drumanagh. The bun-shape of this ingot is notably different from other Irish Iron Age examples, such as the rod-shaped ingot and the flat copper cake from the hoard at Somerset, Co. Galway (objects that also have close parallels in pre-Roman British contexts at Gussage All Saints and Ringstead in Britain: Raftery 1984, 243-4). The shape of the Damastown ingot is very similar to Romano-British specimens from copper-rich areas in Wales, and it has often been assumed that the Damastown ingot was imported from Roman Britain (Raftery 1994, 208; 1996; Kelly 2002a, 132). However, when the wider patterns of imperial trade are taken into account, it seems unlikely that copper would be exported to Ireland when it was actually being imported on the continent from provincial regions such as Roman Britain (Fitzpatrick 1989, 41; Cunliffe 2001, 403; 2004). Moreover, considering the archaeological evidence for the

widespread exploitation of copper in prehistoric Ireland (see O'Brien 1994; 2004), it is also unlikely that the Irish would have sought to import copper as a raw material. The proximity of the Drumanagh and Damastown finds to numerous 'Copper Mines' and 'Ancient Copper Mines' that are marked on the 6" O.S. maps in the area around Loughshinny would also support the suggestion that this item could have been manufactured locally.

Fortunately, there is one find from Drumanagh that can be examined in more detail. This is the lid of a seal-box, which was found by Mr. Paddy Boyle in soil that had been disturbed by motor-bikers in September 2004. The lid is lozenge-shaped, measuring 4cm long, 2.5cm wide and 0.5cm thick, and is made from copper-alloy with blue and green enamel inlayed in a grid pattern between slightly raised grid-lines (Fig. 3.2). Seal-boxes are categorised by form (Bateson 1981, 49), and the lozenge-shaped example from Drumanagh belongs to Bateson's Group 3. These items are difficult to date as they are often found in unstratified contexts. In Roman Britain seal boxes have been found in association with material dating from the mid-1st to the 4th century AD (Bateson 1981, 50); however they are most common in 2nd century contexts and are rarely found at 3rd or 4th century sites (Cool and Philo 1998, 99). Date-ranges of 1st–2nd century, and 2nd – 3rd century AD have been suggested for this type of seal-box, however these are debated and a date-range of 1st to 3rd century AD is probably the narrowest that may be claimed with confidence for this object (Ralph Jackson pers. comm.). A particularly close parallel for the Drumanagh find was uncovered during excavations at Roman Castleford in a 2nd century context (Cool and Philo 1998, 99-101, no. 498), a date which would fit well with the coinage and pottery from the Irish site.

It is the function of this artefact which is most intriguing. Seal-boxes would have been attached to objects with pieces of cord that was passed through lateral holes pierced through the body of the box. The cord would then be tied and the knot covered with a wax seal, the hinged lid would then close over the seal to protect it. This was essentially a security measure, used to protect contents from unauthorised meddling or interference. Until recently it had been assumed that seal-boxes were used to protect documents, yet official documents (treaties, deeds of marriage etc.) required the presence of at least seven witness seals and were therefore sealed using a *triptychon*: a book of three tablets, with the third tablet

being used to protect the seals enclosing the first two tablets (Derks 1998). Due to these considerations seal-boxes have been primarily interpreted as devices for securing personal communications and private letters (Bateson 1981; Cool and Philo 1998), and they were therefore thought to be associated with the spread of Latin literacy across the Empire (Derks and Roymans 2002). However, recent research has shown that the design features of seal-boxes are singularly unsuitable for attaching them to documents or writing tablets, and it appears much more likely that they were used for sealing bags of coinage (Andrews 2012).

Fig. 3.2: Seal-box lid, Drumanagh, Co. Dublin.

The distribution and contexts of seal-boxes in Northern Gaul have been plotted by Derks (1998: fig. 5.3), and two distinctive clusters are discernable: a western cluster mainly associated with ritual sites, and an eastern cluster largely associated with military sites in the vicinity of the *limes*. In this context, the discovery of a seal-box at Drumanagh not only provides us with substantial evidence for the direct, and also possibly official, importation of Roman coinage in Ireland, but may also offer a pertinent reminder that the east coast of Ireland was not 'beyond' the Roman *limes* as such, but would have constituted part of the *limes* itself.

The Wider Archaeological Landscape

Located to the south of the village of Loughshinny, 20km north of Dublin city, Drumanagh is almost exactly equidistant from the mouths of the rivers Liffey and Boyne, natural harbours at Dublin and Drogheda respectively, and looks out over one of the primary sea routes across the Irish Sea and the principal seaway between southern Ireland and Britain (Raftery 1994; 208; see also Bowen 1970). The coastline from Drogheda to Dublin is '…generous in its provision of flat sandy beaches, tidal estuaries, protective coves and inlets, […] eminently suitable for maritime trade and has been exploited as such from early times' (Newman 2005, 366). The Drumanagh promontory would clearly have stood-out as a marker to seafarers travelling from Britain or along the coast, and its close proximity to a sheltered harbour would have made it a prime landing spot (Raftery 1994, 208). The use of the headland as a strategic maritime position in the more recent past is also demonstrated by the presence of a Martello Tower on the eastern edge of the promontory, built in the early 19th century as part of a network of coastal defences established to counter the threat of a Napoleonic invasion. The importance of this location in later prehistory is emphasised by the recent discovery of a complex of ring-ditch funerary monuments on the high ground overlooking the fort (Ger Dowling, Discovery Programme, pers. comm.), while just over 6km to the southeast of Drumanagh lies Lambay Island, where at least two crouched inhumations dating to the late 1st century AD were uncovered in 1927. The burial rite of crouched inhumation, and the presence of Roman brooches and Iron Age objects that have very close parallels in Wales and Northern England, would indicate that these individuals had strong links with communities in post-conquest Britain and are very likely to have come originally from Britain themselves (Rynne 1976; O'Brien 1990).

Much has been made of the fact that one of these inhumations was a 'warrior burial', so-identified because he was equipped with a shield and sword: some commentators have cited the Lambay burials as evidence for a Roman invasion of Ireland (Warner 1995; Di Martino 2003). However, the remains are clearly not those of Roman legionaries, and this kind of 'warrior burial' and the rite of crouched inhumation are both typical of native Late Iron Age burial traditions that were common in Britain during the last few centuries BC, especially in the Yorkshire area (Cunliffe 1991, 557-8; O'Brien 1999, 1-5). Furthermore, the grave

goods from one of the Lambay burials also included a mirror, finger rings and jewellery – objects that are typical of elite female burials but that are often associated with male warrior burials in Britain (Cunliffe 1991, 558). Some commentators have therefore suggested that these burials may represent native British groups who had fled before the Roman advance through Northern England after the Brigantine rebellion (Rynne 1976; Raftery 1994, 200-1), and it is notable that the Brigantes were located in Yorkshire where the majority of British warrior burials are found.

However, although warrior burials are not as common outside Yorkshire, it may also be significant that a considerable proportion of the warrior burials that are found elsewhere come from coastal locations and islands off the coast of mainland Britain; with notable examples from Mill Hill, Deal, Kent, St. Laurence on the Isle of Wight, on Byrher in the Scilly Isles (Cunliffe 1991, 557-8), and at King's Road on Guernsey, where a large cemetery of warrior burials and elite female graves have been interpreted as evidence for a flourishing cross-channel trading hub on Guernsey in the Late Iron Age period (de Jersey 2010). It is therefore possible that the burials on Lambay Island may belong to the wealthy members of a similar trading community that was settled just off the east coast of Ireland during the Late Iron Age (Waddell, 1998, 375-7).

Drumanagh may also have been situated in close proximity to important inland route ways: the Early Christian route way known as Slighe Midlúachra, is said to have connected the major Iron Age centres of Tara and Navan Fort – running northwards through Drogheda and the Moyry Pass near Dundalk; while the Slighe Cualann ran southwards, crossing the River Liffey somewhere in the Dublin area (Ó Lochlainn 1940). The landscape directly surrounding the promontory is low-lying prime agricultural land. To the south the fertile coastal plain continues to the Liffey Estuary; while to the west gently sloping hills begin to rise 5-6km inland at Knockbrack, Fourknocks and Garristown. The area surrounding Drumanagh is considered by Newman to be part of a tangible late-prehistoric archaeological landscape centring on the monumental complex on the Hill of Tara, Co. Meath, with the Tara-Skreen ridges forming the western limit, and possibly the focal point of the plain (Newman 2005, 365- 373: fig. 5).

Indeed, Newman has observed that the landscape between Drumanagh and Tara is dominated by later prehistoric monuments that may be seen as 'signposts'

marking the way (Newman 2005, 279). The most direct route – following the low-lying land that skirts around the Knockbrack and Garristown Hills, and proceeding along the valley of the Hurley River towards Tara – is distinguished by a number of prominent and conspicuous monuments. A large earthen enclosure at Knockbrack surrounds a group of burial mounds that look out over Drumanagh, and a circular univallate hill-top enclosure on Garristown Hill surveys the coastal plain from the Liffey estuary to the Hurly River. A bivallate inland promontory fort at Edoxtown near Rathfeigh, is situated at the point on the Hurley river from which Tara is almost exactly due West, and the final approach from the East through the Skreen Valley is dominated by yet another inland fort, situated on a bluff overlooking the Gabhra Valley, known as Rath Lugh.

This same route-way also encompasses a number of interesting findspots. The copper ingot discussed above was found at Damastown, just over 3km to the southwest of the Knockbrack enclosure at the foot of the Knockbrack Hills, and an unusual high-status burial with two spiral toe-rings dating from the 1st century BC – 1st century AD was found in a ring-ditch at Rath, just 4km to the southwest of the Garristown Hill enclosure on the Dublin/Meath border (Schweitzer 2005). A La Tène horse-bit and Y-shaped 'pendant' dated by Raftery to the early centuries AD were found in the Tara-Skeen Valley in the 19th century (Raftery 1983, cat. Nos. 79, 207), and the fort at Rat Lugh overlooks the sites of Lismullen, where a 2nd century Roman melon bead was recovered (O'Connell 2009), and Blundlestown, where 2nd century Samian ware was found (Danaher 2009).

The multivallate enclosure known as the Ráith na Senad on the Hill of Tara (see Chapter 4 below) has also produced an impressive assemblage of Roman material, including 1st – 2nd century Samian ware and a lead seal similar to the wax examples that the Drumanagh seal-box was designed to protect. The correspondence between the assemblages at the Ráith na Senad and Drumanagh, as well as the architectural similarities between these monuments, would indicate that these two sites were closely connected to one another through a set of wider socio-economic relationships involving the importation and distribution of high-status Roman goods. The late prehistoric monuments which mark the physical pathways that connect these locations not only provide important visual reference points for those travelling between Drumanagh and Tara, but also gaze back at the

viewer and allow for close surveillance and control over movement in from the coastline.

Comparative Archaeology

According to Barry Raftery: '…coastal promontory forts remain the most enigmatic and mysterious of all the fortified enclosure types in Ireland' (1994, 48). There are about 250 coastal promontory forts recorded in Ireland, and most are found along the jagged northern and western coastlines (Raftery 1994, 46). The practice of cutting-off natural promontories with banks and walls, was common throughout European prehistory for both defensive and ritual purposes (Cunliffe 2001, 362-363), and Irish promontory forts show a wide range of variation in dating, morphology, construction, size and even siting. A promontory 'fort' may be defined by a simple ditch, an earthen bank, a substantial stone wall, or by any combination of these features. Many sites have a single defining feature while others have multiple sets of ramparts, either closely or widely spaced, contemporary or multi-phased. The areas enclosed can range in size from around 16m^2 at Stake on Clare Island, to over 16 hectares at Drumanagh. The promontories themselves may be situated in remote, almost inaccessible mountainous locations, or they may be located in lowland areas near important harbours, routes or settlement sites.

Taking these variations into account, the identification of promontory forts that may be contemporary with Drumanagh is highly problematic. Finally, at the risk of being overly pedantic, it should be remembered that even though most of the material from Drumanagh dates to the first few centuries AD, the closely-set multivallations that constitute the promontory fort itself remain undated. In fact coastal promontory forts are often assumed to be Iron Age in date, yet only Drumanagh has produced extensive evidence for Iron Age activity. Promontory forts at Dalkey Island, Co. Dublin, Larrybane Co. Antrim, and Dunbeg, Co. Kerry, have provided excavated evidence for construction and occupation during the Early Medieval period, and there are indications that some unexcavated promontory forts such as Dunseverick and Dunluce in Co. Antrim may also have been important Early Medieval sites (Edwards 1990, 41-3).

Unfortunately, direct evidence for the prehistoric construction and occupation of coastal promontory forts is notably lacking. This is because the enclosing

earthworks are so rarely directly dated. Charcoal from a single ditch that cut off part of the promontory at Dunbeg, Co. Kerry, provided a date-range of 800-520 BC (Barry 1981), whereas the promontory on Dalkey Island also produced Beaker pottery, Late Bronze Age metalworking moulds and Roman pottery (Liversage 1967-8). In the latter case, the prehistoric and Roman material appears to predate the construction of the promontory fort itself, signalling that the promontory itself was occupied in prehistoric times and that the location had previously played an important role in cross-channel contact associated with the trade and manufacture of metalwork.[55] A potential prehistoric date may be tentatively suggested for a number of coastal promontory forts that appear to be closely associated with other late prehistoric monuments. For example, at Dundoilroe, Co. Clare, three barrows appear to form an extended boundary zone across the landward side of two earthen promontory forts (Mitchell and Ryan 1997, 269: col. 37), and recent geophysical survey on Lambay Island has revealed the presence of a promontory fort (consisting of an earthen bank and ditch) with two ring-barrows located immediately outside the ramparts. Traces of numerous circular huts in the interior also suggest that this site may have been a significant settlement (Cooney 2009). Another much smaller promontory fort a short distance to the east consists of three sets of banks and ditches that are closely-spaced like the defences at Drumanagh.

Comparisons have also been drawn between promontory forts and late prehistoric hilltop enclosures (Grogan 2005, 29). However, while there may well be similarities between the defences at univallate promontory forts and these hilltop enclosures, the externally ditched closely-spaced multivallate ramparts at Drumanagh would appear to constitute a new departure in prehistoric Irish architecture. Indeed, this architectural form itself is often considered to be indicative of an Iron Age date, as well as evidence for broader European influences in Ireland at this time. Closely-spaced multivallation was widely, and impressively, deployed as a form of defensive architecture at Iron Age hillforts in

---

[55] The distribution of coastal promontory forts in the Southeast may also be significant in this regard, as they are relatively few and far between in this region with the notable exception of a dense cluster of forts along a stretch of the Waterford coastline known as the 'Copper Coast' due to the rich natural deposits of copper ore in this area. Half of a copper ingot similar to the Damastown example was found in this area at Bunmahon, not far from the promontory fort of Knockmahon where two ogham stones were recovered in the 1980's and 90's.

Britain, and is also a notable feature of Iron Age 'cliff castle' promontory forts in western Britain and northwestern France (Cunliffe 2002, 350).

Historical evidence for the use of promontory forts in Iron Age France can be found in Julius Caesar's description of the 'strongholds' of the Veneti (a seafaring tribe in Brittany) which were: '…situated on the ends of spits or headlands' (*De Bello Gallico*, iii 12). Indeed, this observation has been cited in the past to suggest that closely-spaced multivallation was developed by the Veneti (Hawkes 1931; Wheeler 1943), and that some of the Irish sites that display this form of architecture were actually built by the Gaulish tribe (O'Kelly 1952). Although the specific associations with the Veneti have fallen out of favour in more recent times, the discovery of Roman material at Drumanagh and Rath na Senad – sites which both have closely-spaced multivallate ramparts – does support the general proposal that the introduction of this form of architecture may have been related to wider cross-channel interaction in the Late Iron Age (Raftery 1994, 48; Newman 1997a, 205; Dowling 2011). There are also clear similarities between a number of Irish promontory forts, such as the small multivallate example on Lambay Island, and Iron Age 'cliff castles' in Britain and France.

On the other hand, there are important differences between such sites and the promontory fort at Drumanagh. The most notable of these is the scale of the monuments: the area of land enclosed by the vast majority of cliff castles is a tiny fraction of that contained within Drumanagh, and while it is possible that the former sites could have been used as temporary refuges on occasion, it is highly unlikely that they could have functioned as defended settlements (Cunliffe 2001, 350; Cooney (2009) makes the same argument for the smaller promontory fort on Lambay Island). The apparent similarities in relation to siting may also be superficial, as almost all 'cliff castles' are located along extended cliff faces on rugged stretches of coastline, at locations that are '…remote and inhospitable, exposed to extremes of weather and distant from productive land' (Cunliffe 2001, 362). The 16 hectare enclosed area at Drumanagh, located on a fertile plain of highly productive agricultural land at the epicentre of the main land and sea routes on the East coast appears to represent a very different monument in this context.

Closer comparanda for the site at Drumanagh may be found among monuments known as inland promontory forts which, despite their name, often cluster around coastal areas in counties Antrim, Donegal, Clare and Kerry

(Raftery 1994, 48; Grogan et. al. 1996). Although these sites, like other promontory forts, vary considerably in size, morphology and siting, there are a number of examples that have produced evidence for use in the Iron Age. An inland promontory fort at Plantin, Co. Meath, just under 3km north of Drogheda, produced a crouched child burial which provided a radiocarbon determination of 92–339AD (Conway 2003), and a cremation burial placed in an imported British bowl from an inland promontory fort at Fore, Co. Westmeath, provide a date-range of 350 – 30BC (McGarry 2008, 218). This last site is situated on a promontory overlooking Lough Lene, where a Roman-style carvel-built boat dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD was recovered (Bindley and Langton 1990; 1991). As mentioned earlier, inland promontory forts in the vicinity of Drumanagh at Edoxtown and Rath Lug overlook important stretches of the routeway between Drumanagh and Tara, and Newman has suggested that some of these monuments may have been associated with the late-prehistoric militarization of the Tara landscape (2005).

All of the above sites are much smaller than Drumanagh, however, and not all of them display closely-spaced multivallation. Two inland promontory forts in Co. Antrim provide much closer parallels for Drumanagh in relation to these features. At Knockdhu three closely-spaced sets of earthen banks and ditches, approx. 360m in length, cut-off a large basalt plateau of around 8 hectares in area. Recent archaeological survey and excavation has identified at least 18 round-houses within the fort, and has also produced extensive evidence for occupation during the Middle Bronze Age period (MacDonald 2008). At Lurigethan, multiple closely-set banks and ditches, ranging in number from three to six, run for a total length of 300m across the neck of another basalt promontory measuring 13 hectares in area (Raftery 1994, 45, 48). Both of these sites are also close to the coast, overlooking the Antrim coastal plain and dominating two of the glens that lead inland. It may be relevant that there is a modest concentration of Roman finds from along the Antrim coastline.

Comparative Contexts

Richard Warner has argued that the discovery of Roman finds at Drumanagh, along with the defensive nature of the site, can be interpreted as evidence for a Roman assisted invasion of Ireland in the late 1st century AD. Furthermore, he

suggests that the promontory fort at Drumanagh can be compared to '…the first shore base of the invading Roman army in Britain forty years earlier, the bivallate promontory fort of *Rutupiae* (Richborough, Kent)' (Warner 1995, 26; see also Di Martino 2003, 28-32).[56] However, if we take a closer look at these sites it would appear that the similarities are superficial at best. While the Claudian defenses at Richborough do include a parallel set of closely-spaced curving ditches (Fig. 3.4), there is no intervening bank, and the site itself was not a 'promontory fort' cut off from the land by linear ramparts, but rather appears to have constituted a crescent-shaped beachhead which would have enclosed a 700m stretch of shoreline – including extensive stretches of beach and marshland that would have provided suitable landing sites for boats and ships. The ramparts at Drumanagh consist of linear sets of intervening banks and ditches, varying in number and size, that cut-off a natural cliff-faced promontory that could not possibly have functioned as a beachhead intended to protect a landing site or ships, as all of the potential beaching points around Drumanagh are actually located outside of the enclosed area. Simply put, Richborough was not a 'promontory fort' and Drumanagh could not have served as a Roman 'shore base' or beachhead, the presence of Roman material notwithstanding.

---

[56] Di Martino has also drawn comparisons between Drumanagh and the hillfort at Hod Hill in Dorset (2003, 32). Although the more irregular ramparts of the Iron Age fort do bear some resemblance to those at Drumanagh in plan, the banks at ditches at the English site are far more substantial, not to mention the difference in siting or location: Drumanagh is not a hillfort. Di Martino cites the apparent similarities in plan between Drumanagh and Hod Hill as further evidence for the interpretation of Drumanagh as a Roman fort. However, it appears that he has mistaken the larger pre-Roman Iron Age fort for the much smaller Roman fort that was built within the northwest corner of the older monument (2003, 32-3).
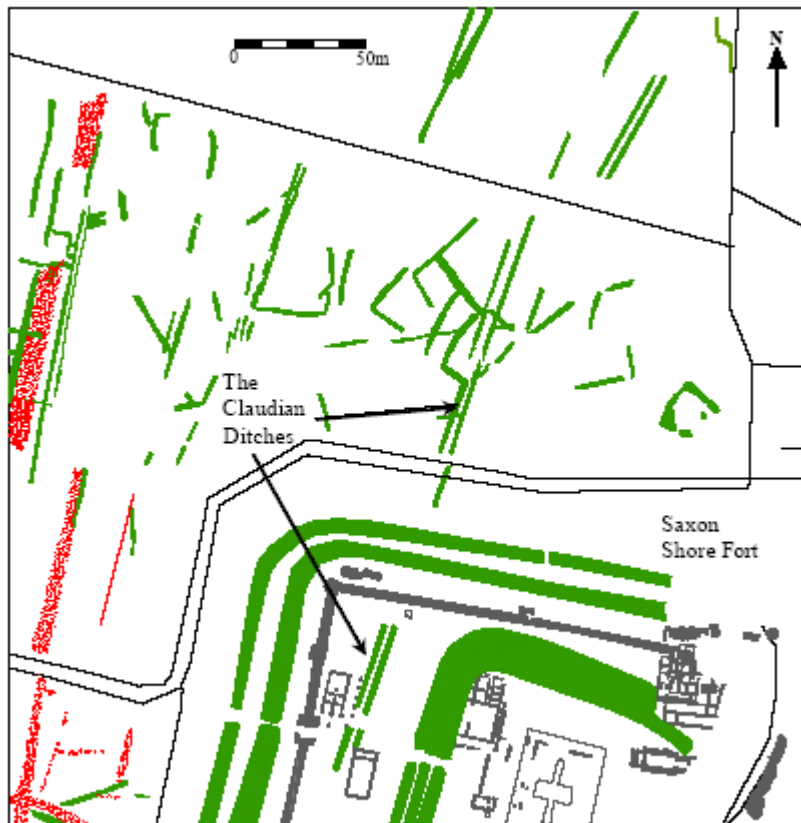
Fig. 3.4: The Claudian ditches of the Roman beachhead at Richborough.
(After Small 2002)

More recently Ger Dowling has suggested that the closest contextual parallels for the Roman finds at Drumanagh may be found at the coastal trading centres at sites such as Hengistbury Head, in Britain, and Lundeburg in Denmark (2011, 228-9). Hengistbury Head bears particular resemblance to the site at Drumanagh, with a two sets of earthen ramparts running for over 500m across the neck of a massive promontory on the Dorset coast (Fig. 3.5). Like Drumanagh, Hengistbury is superbly situated as a port-of-trade:

> 'It is a prominent headland readily recognisable from some distance out at sea, protecting a large sheltered harbour (now Christchurch harbour) into which flow two major rivers, the Stour and the Avon, allowing easy access into the heart of densely populated Wessex.'
>
> (Cunliffe 2001, 403)

Excavations at Hengistbury have also produced extensive evidence for the importation of Roman goods that appear to have reached Hengistbury using Guernsey as 'a port-of-call en route' (Cunliffe 2001, 402).

The Roman goods at the site include a variety of high-status materials such as wine, figs, pottery, bronze tableware, and ingots of purple and yellow glass. It is likely that local products such as salt, iron ore, shale, wool, chalk, and corn were traded in return, and there is also evidence for trade links with other areas in southwest Britain which provided supplies of lead, copper, silver, and tin (Cunliffe 2001, 403). The amount of Roman material found at Hengistbury, along with analysis of the distribution of Dressel IA amphorae in Britain, suggests that this site dominated cross-channel trade between Britain and Roman Gaul in the first century BC (Cunliffe 2004, 3-5). It is also significant is that this trade appears to have been tightly controlled by the local elites (whose opulent burials contain much of this imported material), and it is most probable that such exchange was also bound-up in wider social and political relationships in the form of trade agreements and treaties similar to those referred to by Caesar and Strabo in relation to British tribes (Cunliffe 2001, 406; 2004, 4).

At Lundeburg, on the Danish island of Fyn, a large coastal settlement that extended for some 900m across the shore of the Store Baelt has produced evidence for the importation of Roman goods including coins, Samian ware, and glass dating mainly from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Wells 1999a, 224). There were also traces of manufacturing, with evidence for the working of gold, silver, bronze, antler, glass and leather. The site at Lundeburg was not surrounded by ramparts and appears to have been a seasonal rather than a permanent settlement. However, there is a clear connection between the activity at Lundeburg and the high-status settlement of Gudme located just 5km inland, where the largest Iron Age building in northern Europe (known as the 'kings hall') has been discovered. The finds from this last site include large quantities of Samian ware and Roman coins, along with silver fibulae, tableware, and jewellery (Wells 1999a, 251-2).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig.3.5: Hengistbury Head in the Late Iron Age (After Cunliffe 2001)

To these sites we might add the Iron Age promontory fort at Carew Castle on the Pembrokeshire coast of Wales, which is situated on an inlet of the Milford Haven waterway – a drowned valley which is one of the deepest and most sheltered natural harbours in the world and remains a busy shipping channel to this day. Archaeological excavations have revealed a series of three to five closely-spaced ramparts which have been dated to the early centuries AD, and have also recovered considerable quantities of Roman pottery (Austin 1992; 1993). The large promontory fort at Burghead in Scotland, which consists of three closely-spaced ramparts enclosing an area of approx. 3 hectares, also provides a possible parallel for Drumanagh (Armit 1998, 135: fig. 78). Although the present fort appears to have been constructed in the 4th century AD, there is evidence for Iron Age activity at the site, and a small number of Roman finds have also been recovered.

Raiders or Traders?

Overall there is little or no evidence that can be said to be indicative of the presence of a military force, Roman or otherwise, at Drumanagh. Although seal-boxes are often found at military sites, they are not military objects *per se*, and their use in these contexts appears to have been primarily associated with the personal communications of soldiers and officials stationed in and around the frontier zone. The interpretation of the site as a military installation would appear to rest solely on the use of closely-spaced multivallation at the promontory fort, and the perceived military purpose of the ramparts. Although there is little to recommend Warner's comparison of Drumanagh with the Roman fort at Richborough, there are clear architectural parallels between the ramparts at Drumanagh and those at other promontory forts and 'cliff castles' in Ireland, Britain and Northwestern France, even if these parallels would appear to point towards a pre-Roman, Late Iron Age date and origin.

As we have seen there are also major differences in size, siting and location, between the 'cliff castles' and Drumanagh. Indeed, these factors are so integral, in terms of basic access and the possible utility of these monuments, that they must be indicative of fundamental differences in their use, function and social significance. Drumanagh is centrally located and easily accessible, beside a harbour at the hub of major seaways and important inland routeways, and is large

enough to enclose a whole village; while the majority of cliff castles are so small, remote, and inaccessible, that they could simply not have been used in the same way, and may only have functioned as temporary refuges (a use that fits well with Caesar's account of the 'strongholds' of the Veneti).

It is entirely possible therefore that the ramparts at Drumanagh may also have served a different purpose to those found at cliff castles. The irregular composition of the ditches and banks themselves may also indicate that defence was not the main priority in their construction. The lines of the banks and ditches are discontinuous, stopping and starting at different points, and the numbers of ramparts also vary for section to section. The defensive capabilities of the southern section of the earthworks are also completely undermined by a stream which runs across all but the innermost bank, and while the ramparts diminish in size, number, and integrity towards the edges of the promontory, they are most impressive – visibly bulging out – in the area around the entrance (Fig. 3.6). These features suggest that the desire to make an impression on visitors was a considerable factor in the design and construction of these ramparts.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 3.6: The ramparts at Drumanagh, Co. Dublin (After Raftery 1994).

The use of multivallation at hillfort sites in Britain – once thought to have been a defensive feature related to sling warfare – has also been interpreted by numerous commentators as a demonstration of power and a form of social display rather that a new form of tactical defence (Hill 1995; Fitzpatrick 1997). Dowling (2011) and Newman (1997) have drawn attention to the fact that many of the late prehistoric enclosures that display closely-spaced multivallation appear to be closely associated with ritual monuments and important historic assembly sites, and the direct association of closely-spaced multivallation at ringforts with social

standing and royal status is explicit in a number of Early Irish historical sources (Kelly 1998, 9-10).

In this light, the ramparts at Drumanagh may not have been built as defensive or military features, but could have been constructed as statement of authority and power in order to emphasise the social and political importance of this site. A direct association with prehistoric 'royal' sites and politico-religious power can also be seen in the presence of high status Roman finds at both Tara and Drumanagh. There can be little doubt that the promontory at Drumanagh was a focal point for the importation of high-status luxury Roman material, and the reports of copper ingots may provide a valuable clue as to local contribution involved in this exchange. It is therefore likely that at least some of the Roman material at Tara would have reached the prehistoric royal site *via* Drumanagh, and that the Iron Age activity at Drumanagh would have been carried out under the political, as well as the visual, purview of those who controlled the Hill of Tara and the surrounding landscape in later prehistory.

It can also be seen that a number of Late Iron Age trading centres on the edge of the western Roman Empire display striking similarities to Drumanagh; not only in relation to the types of material recovered, but also in their siting, location and their relationships to local centres of power. It is clearly with these sites that the most tangible parallels for the site of Drumanagh are to be found, and not amongst Iron Age cliff castles or Roman fortifications. It is significant that the massive trading port at Hengistbury Head was also defined by multivallate ramparts, and the suggestion that promontories may have been seen as liminal spaces is also interesting in this regard. For example, Hengistbury may have been located on the borderland between the territories of the Durotriges and the Atrebates (Cunliffe 2004, 4), and locations associated with boundaries and liminal spaces in Britain and Gaul were often became important market centres in Roman times (Woodward 1992, 20). As Dowling has argued, '…the use of closely-spaced multivallation exaggerates the physicality of the boundary zone – the space between the worlds of the interior and exterior – making monuments significantly more conspicuous in the landscape' (2011, 223). This may well have been the purpose of the Drumanagh ramparts, built in order to emphasise the importance and liminal status of the site as a location where the Irish and Roman worlds, and the elements themselves, collide.

Chapter 4

Ráith na Senad and Provincial Roman Ritual

The multivallate enclosure known as Ráith na Senad has produced the widest range of Roman material from any Irish site excavated to date. This monument also provides us with a truly remarkable context: located on the Hill of Tara at the centre of the most celebrated prehistoric ritual complex in Ireland. The site was chosen for excavation in the 1950's, having already suffered considerable damage from 1899-1901 during a controversial expedition by the British Israelites in search of the Ark of the Covenant (Carew 2003). The excavations were carried out under the direction of Professor Seán P. Ó Ríordáin and lasted two years from 1950-52. Although much of the central area had been disturbed by the British Israelite digging, a complex sequence of prehistoric monuments and structures was revealed. Ó Ríordáin returned to Tara in 1955 and conducted two more seasons of excavation at the nearby passage tomb known as Duma na nGíall before his untimely death in 1957. Unfortunately his work remained unpublished for half a century, until the recent completion of two separate volumes on Duma na nGíall and Ráith na Senad (O'Sullivan 2005; Grogan 2008 respectively). The record loss and delay in post-excavation work following the death of Ó Ríordáin posed numerous problems for those eventually tasked with the completion of the final report – by which time no one who had actually worked on the excavation was available to assist with the inevitable quandaries associated with missing objects, ambiguous labels, and working sketches and notes. This has resulted in a report which is by its very nature and circumstances a 'second-hand' account of the excavations, where the interpretation of features and sequences remains far more open-ended than is often the case.

Like many aspects of Irish prehistory, research on Tara had traditionally focused on early historic references to the site (Bhreathnach 2005, ix). Although there has been a significant move away from this paradigm in recent years – with extensive archaeological investigations highlighting the prehistoric activity on the hill (Newman 1997a; Fenwick and Newman 2002; Roche 2002) – the rich literary tradition associated with Tara has left an indelible mark on the study of this site.

This historical legacy is most apparent in the names that are used to describe the monuments on the hill, which are taken from the *Dindshenchas Érenn* ('place lore of Ireland') dating from the 12th century AD. According to the *Dindshenchas* the name *Ráith na Senad* (the 'Rath of the Synods') refers to a series of ecclesiastical synods that were supposedly held at Tara by St Patrick, St Ruadhán and St Adamnán; while the name *Temair* (Tara) itself is said to derive from the compound *Tea – Múr*: meaning 'the wall/rampart of *Tea*', the Egyptian wife of the mythical king Éremón.

Much of the information contained in the *Dindshenchas* is unverifiable, yet the very fact that Tara and its monuments feature so prominently in these texts indicates that the place was considered to be an important and prestigious location of great antiquity.[57] Another interpretation of the name *Temair* given in the *Dindshenchas* states that it is a common word simply meaning 'a height or an eminent place'; however Mac Giolla Easpaig has shown that *Temair* was not a common word and its use in this sense was metaphorical (2005, 423-431). This metaphorical association of Tara with prestige and pre-eminence can be seen in the broader use of the word *temair* in early Irish texts: in one legal gloss the oak tree is referred to as *ind temair feda* ('the Tara of the forest'), which is translated as 'the eminent one of the wood' (Kelly 1997, 382); while in the tale *Tochmarc Emire* ('The Wooing of Emer'), Emer describes herself as *Temair ban* meaning she is 'a very Tara amongst women, a paragon'(Dinneen 1908-14, *s.v. teamhair*: cited in Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 430).

The metaphorical use of a placename in the wider lexicon of a language is not uncommon, yet it characteristically occurs when the original meaning of the name is unknown and therefore generally involves placenames that are not native to the spoken language or those whose meanings are archaic and obscure (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 426-430). Modern etymological research indicates that *Temair* derives from the Indo-European *tem-r-i-s: the root *tem 'cut' with -r- suffix. Having a similar origin and meaning to the Greek *temenos* and the Latin *templum*, the name signifies '… an area that had been cut off, undoubtedly one that had been demarked for sacred purposes' (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 448). There are a

---

[57] The Hill of Tara is the subject of four different poems and many more prose passages in the *Dindshenchas* alone (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 423; see Bhreathnach 1995 for an extensive list of other historical references to Tara).

number of instances of the placename *Temair* surviving in other areas in Ireland (for a comprehensive list see Ó Muraíle 2005, 449-477), and it has been noted that many of these sites share a number of features such as hilltop locations, prehistoric monuments, and mythological associations with Otherworldly figures (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 431-440).

The structural sequence

Ráith na Senad as it stands today is a multivallate circular enclosure, consisting of three sets of banks and ditches with traces of a fourth external bank visible on the northern side (Fig. 4.1). The central area of the enclosure measures about 26m in diameter and the ramparts have an overall diameter of around 91m N-S (Newman 1997a, 97). The north-eastern quadrant is overlain by a walled churchyard, the present church replacing a 15th or 16th century church and the churchyard wall itself was preceded by an earlier embankment (Newman 1997a, 38-43). It seems likely that there was an even earlier ecclesiastical building in this location as the first reference to a church at Tara dates to the late 12th century (Hickey 1994, 162). A stone wall, which previously marked the townland boundary between Castletown Tara and Castleboy, ran from the south-western corner of the churchyard across the southern portion of Ráith na Senad. This wall has been removed but its path is still discernible as the monumental remains to the south of the wall have been severely reduced by cultivation. There are two standing stones in the churchyard, one of which may be prehistoric in date, and therefore would have been part of the wider monumental complex on the hill; however it seems unlikely that either of these stones have remained in their original positions (Newman 1997a, 98-101; 150).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.1: Map of Ráith na Senad, showing excavation cuttings (After Grogan 2008)

The multivallate enclosure was preceded by series of monuments, structures and phases of activity. It has been shown that the construction, siting and use of successive monuments on the Hill of Tara was often overtly influenced by, and also explicitly emphasised, the presence of pre-existing monuments on the hill; with generations of monument builders intentionally drawing upon and contributing to the cumulative composition of the ritual complex (see Newman 1997a). Such impulses can also be clearly discerned in the siting and construction of Ráith na Senad, and a broader understanding of the long-term development of this site is essential for any interpretation of the multivallate enclosure itself. The site is complex, and the sequence of activity proposed in the published excavation report has been contradicted by radiocarbon dating evidence (a development which also undermines the general interpretation of the site in the report). It will be necessary, therefore, to re-examine the sequence of activity at Ráith na Senad in its entirety, including the phases that appear to predate the activity associated with Roman material at the site.

The earliest discernable features at the site of Ráith na Senad are an oval ditched enclosure and a barrow. The primary ditch enclosure (F260) was uncovered in the central area; it measures 26.5m (N-S) by 23m (E-W) and is surrounded by a flat-bottomed rock-cut ditch over 4m wide (Fig. 4.2). Although some stony deposits in the ditch-fill were tentatively interpreted as slip from a possible bank, no traces of either a bank or an entrance gap were found. The only finds associated with this feature were small amounts of charcoal and unidentified cremated bone from the ditch-fill (Grogan 2008, 17-19). No artefacts or formal burials were directly associated with the Ráith na Senad ditched enclosure and its function remains unknown, however it would not be unreasonable to assume some kind of ceremonial or funerary purpose considering the surrounding monumental complex (Newman 1997a, 96), and it is possible that this enclosure is a ring-ditch: a form of funerary monument that was in use throughout Irish prehistory, from the Neolithic to the Early Medieval period (see Corlett 2005, 69).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.2: The pre-earthwork phases at Ráith na Senad (After Grogan 2008)

Grogan has suggested that ring ditches and related monuments with little or no artefactual or burial remains could have been associated with a burial tradition similar to that known from the Deveral-Rimbury complex in Britain, and may therefore date to the Middle Bronze Age. The stratigraphic position of the ditched enclosure clearly precedes the later Iron Age palisade enclosures (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 141), and therefore the balance of probability would appear to favour a Bronze Age date for the ditched enclosure (Newman 1997a, 162). Cremated bone from a ring ditch uncovered during the excavations at Duma na nGíall nearby also provided radiocarbon samples dating to the Late Bronze Age (O'Sullivan 2005, 233). The ditched enclosure at Ráith na Senad was eventually incorporated into the multivallate enclosure, with the central area of the later monument corresponding with that of the ditched enclosure (Fig. 4.4). The inner rampart of the quadrivallate enclosure follows the line of the earlier ditch so closely that '…it must have been clearly visible at the time' (Grogan 2008, 83).

A barrow, located 15m to the north-west of the ditched enclosure, originally consisted of a mound 85cm high and over 16m in diameter with a v-shaped enclosing fosse 3m wide (Grogan 2008, 37-38). Five primary cremations were uncovered under or within the mound (burials L, M, R, S, and T), and another was found on the inner edge of the ditch (burial Q). A 'large number of bones' were discovered around the barrow, unfortunately they were not systematically identified except to note that dog bones were found within the mound and the skull of an ox was found in the ditch (Grogan 2008, 37-38). A sample of charcoal recorded from beneath the primary stone core of the barrow provided a determination of 3366-3104 BC. This would be an extremely early date-range for such a monument, and it is possible that this sample pre-dates the barrow and may have been associated with the Neolithic activity focused on the nearby passage tomb of Duma na nGiall (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 144). Both the ring ditch and the barrow pre-date the quadrivallate enclosure, yet there is no discernable stratigraphic relationship between these two features making it impossible to establish the sequence of construction archaeologically.

The barrow appears to have undergone at least three distinct phases of reuse. At some stage the mound was flattened, and the material removed was used to cover the sides of the mound and the surrounding fosse, constructing a lower but larger mound up to 19m in diameter. The redeposited material also formed a

small bank on the outer side of the fosse, a feature that may originally have surrounded the entire monument giving it the form and shape of a ring barrow (Newman 1997a, 96; 164). The flattened mound was covered by a 20cm thick natural sod layer, indicating that the altered barrow remained undisturbed for a considerable period of time (Grogan 2008, 38-39). A number of secondary burials were subsequently placed in the barrow.[58] An unprotected cremation (burial O) was placed directly over the ditch and another cremation (burial N) was placed in a pit that cut into the crest of the mound. At some stage a cremation (burial P) and a crouched inhumation (burial U) were inserted into the stone core of the barrow, with the latter disturbing one of the primary cremations (burial R). A scattering of cremated bone was also found on the western side of the mound, while two skull fragments and two teeth were found in the disturbed material to the east of the barrow. The remains in three of the burials (L, T, and U) were identified as adults, but no grave goods were found and there is no direct dating evidence for any of the burials.

A process of deliberate incorporation into the multivallate enclosure of Ráith na Senad, similar to that seen at the primary ditched enclosure, constitutes the last phase of re-modelling at the barrow. The barrow was enveloped in the ramparts of the multivallate enclosure, where it is still discernable as a low flat-topped mound in the north-western quadrant (Fig. 4.3). The path of the enclosure ramparts swerve carefully and conspicuously around the mound, preserving its integrity and drawing attention to its presence. The third set of ramparts veers outwards to the north and west of the mound, following the line of the barrow fosse and enclosing the mound within its circuit. The rampart ditch was cut alongside the barrow fosse, and the inner bank was constructed directly over the fosse. On the

---

[58] In the absence of a published excavation report a variety of conflicting accounts regarding the number and sequence of burials in the barrow circulated. Most of the discrepancies in these accounts can now be seen as errors resulting from the lack of available information (e.g.: O'Brien 1990, 38; Raftery 1994, 194-195; Waddell 1998, 330). On the other hand, Newman's (1997, 95) observation that three of the primary cremations (L, M and Q) were placed on the old ground surface – and may therefore pre-date the mound entirely – constitutes a valid alternative interpretation. It should be noted, however, that each of these deposits was placed along the inner edge of the enclosing ditch at separate locations – a correspondence that does suggest a direct association between these cremations and the construction of the barrow.

eastern side of the mound the second set of ramparts and the barrow are essentially conjoined, with the rampart ditch cutting through the south eastern quadrant of the barrow fosse.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.3: The barrow incorporated into the ramparts of Ráith na Senad is visible as a low mound in the foreground. (After Newman 1997)

Barrows are a late prehistoric monument-type that show considerable variation in both form and size. The barrow at Ráith na Senad is an interesting case in point as the site underwent a number of phases of remodelling that appear to have transformed the monument from one type of barrow into another. The first phase – consisting of a large mound with a surrounding fosse – takes the form of a bowl barrow. Excavated evidence from sites such as Carrowjames, Co. Mayo, and Carrowbeg North, Co. Galway, indicates a Middle Bronze Age date for this monument type (Raftery 1939a; 1940-41; Willmot 1939). A bowl barrow at Cush, Co. Limerick, contained a Late Iron Age cremation with a decorated bone (Raftery 1984, 248-250), however the form of the Cush barrow (Tumulus II) also appears to differ from other bowl barrows in shape and height (Newman 1997a, 168). In the later phases of remodelling – when the mound had been lowered and a surrounding bank had been constructed – the monument resembles a ring

barrow, the majority of which appear to be Iron Age in date (Newman 1997a, 163-165; Waddell 1998, 365-369).

The changing morphology of the site points to the possibility that the monument was first constructed as a bowl barrow in the Bronze Age and reconstituted as a ring barrow in the Iron Age period. The burials at the site may also help elucidate the chronological sequence. The cremations inserted in the old ground surface (burials L, M, and Q), if they do pre-date the mound (see note 2 above), may have formed a small flat cremation cemetery similar to a number of well-documented Early Bronze Age sites (see Waddell 1998, 156-158). The primary cremations in the mound (burials R and P) would certainly fit the Middle Bronze Age date proposed by Newman, as most excavated bowl barrows have produced similar cremation deposits (1997, 166). The rite of crouched inhumation appears to have been introduced into Ireland from Britain around the 1st century BC; therefore the secondary crouched inhumation would also support an Iron Age date for this reuse of the site.

The primary ditched enclosure appears to have silted up considerably prior to its incorporation into Ráith na Senad, and a series of circular wooden structures had also been erected in this area before the construction of the multivallate enclosure. Traces of two closely-set concentric palisade trenches (complex A-B), between 25m and 30m in overall projected diameter,[59] were uncovered in the central area of the ditched enclosure (Fig. 4.2). Although they are concentric, these palisades do not appear to be contemporary as the western sections of the trench A were visible beneath trench B. Trench B also has a south facing 1m-wide gap between two substantial postholes, forming an entrance that may have been elaborated by a series of postholes and pits immediately outside the enclosure

---

[59] The opposing poles of this projected range are proposed by Newman (1997, 96) and Grogan (2008, 19) respectively. Although the difference does not appear to be substantial, it does reflect two possible problems with Grogan's interpretation of this and other features at the site. The first is his suggestion that trench F239 is the northern extension of trench A (Grogan 2008, 29). This feature (F239) appears to be concentric with another trench (F238) almost 10m due north, which continues to the east (F237), following a path that cannot be incorporated into the circuit of the A/B complex. Trench F239 mirrors the line of F238 closely (Grogan 2008, 26), and is therefore more likely to be associated with this feature. This suggests the presence of another significant concentric complex to the north, rather than a few outlying features peripheral to the A/B complex. The second problem is the perceptible skewing of the projected diameter of enclosure A to the north, especially visible when contrasted with that of enclosure B, which results from Grogan's attempt to include F239 within its circuit. This 'northern skew' is also visible in relation to the projected plans of enclosures D and E, leading to a more significant inflation in the calculation of their diameters (see below).

(F2i/F2ii, F99, and F3i/F3ii) – features that are absent in trench A. The base and the sides of the latter trench were considerably fire-reddened, and the presence of carbonised timbers would also suggest that, unlike trench B, trench A was burned *in situ* (Newman 1997a, 96).

Immediately south of the A-B complex there was a smaller section of trench (C) curving in the opposite direction towards two more sections of trench (C1 and C2) on the southern side of the British Israelite's disturbances. Collectively these features appear to form a single circular enclosure measuring 16.5m in diameter (enclosure C). The fill was heavily burned with large quantities of charcoal and burnt bone, including fragments of human bone found under large stones in the northern end of trench C. Trench C2 was dug into the fill of the primary ditched enclosure (F260), and therefore post-dates the latter feature. Samples from these trenches and related pits and post-holes, have provided radiocarbon determinations ranging from the 4th century BC to the 1st century AD (including a cluster of three dates centring on 350-200BC), but it should be noted that many of these sample came from oak heartwood and may therefore be subject to the 'old wood effect' leading to unreliable calibrated dates.

Traces of two more concentric trenches have been interpreted as representing a further sequence of palisade enclosures that pre-date Ráith na Senad (enclosures D and E: Fig. 4.4). However there are a number of significant problems with this interpretation, particularly with the projected diameters of these enclosures. Grogan estimates the projected diameters of enclosures D and E to be approximately 40m and 42m respectively, stating that both may have surrounded complex A/B entirely with no physical overlap (2008, 29). However, it is difficult to see how the diameter of enclosure D can be so much greater than that of the primary ditched enclosure when the entire 15m excavated stretch of trench D runs along the inner edge of the enclosure ditch (F260). Moreover, although Grogan notes that trench K is '…likely to be a continuation of enclosure D' (2008, 25), his projected plan for enclosure D runs over 10m to the east of trench K. Similarly, trench E runs alongside the ditch of the primary enclosure for all of its excavated 20 metres – and is entirely contained within the central area of the multivallate enclosure – yet its projected diameter (42m) is over 50% greater than the external diameter of the ditched enclosure (27.4m).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.4: Trenches D and E in the central area of Ráith na Senad
(After Grogan 2008)

Furthermore, radiocarbon samples from these features have provided date-ranges of the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 148). These dates would indicate that there was a direct relationship between these trenches and the inner ramparts of the quadrivallate enclosure, and it is possible that these trenches represent palisades and/or revetments erected during the construction of the multivallate enclosure – features that are also present in all of the outer ramparts. Interestingly, one of Ó Ríordáin's original sketches shows that he also believed that trench E was associated with the multivallate enclosure (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 147). This would indicate that 'enclosures' D and E did not exist independently as such, but were structural features associated with the construction of the Ráith na Senad ramparts (Daffy in prep).

The features representing the earlier enclosure complexes A/B and C were covered by a layer of sterile yellow clay. A cluster of five inhumations (burials B, C, E, H, and I) and two cremations (burials V and W) were thought to constitute a flat cemetery roughly 6m by 4m in the northern half of the central area, and a number of 'outlying' burials were also found to the north, south and east. The burials in the flat cemetery post-date the layer of yellow clay that seals the palisade enclosure trenches and it was initially thought that they represented a distinct phase of funerary activity at the site predating the construction of the multivallate enclosure (Grogan 2008, 42-53: 'Phase 3'). However, recent radiocarbon dating has shown that the inhumation burials actually post-date the multivallate enclosure. Samples of bone from the extended inhumation H provided determinations of 898-1024AD, and bone from crouched inhumation E was dated to 721-890AD. A piece of oak thought to be associated with the crouched inhumation of a child in burial B was dated to 259-413AD.[60] This last sample is problematic as there are some doubts concerning its context,[61] and it

---

[60] The calibrated dates provided for these burials differ from those given in the excavation report (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008) as they have been re-calibrated in the Mapping Death Database using Oxcal 4.1 (www.mappingdeathdb.ie).

[61] Grogan and O'Sullivan state that it was labeled 'From pit under bridge [*sic*] sq. 43-47, around burial I', but conclude that it must come from burial B as '…squares 43 and 47 are not adjacent to each other, so we take this to be an error and the record should read 42 and 37' (2008, 146). However, the samples register reads 'From pit (F158) under baulk, around burial I', and places the sample in squares 42 and 43 (appendix M, 171). Pit F158 is in the same area of square 42 as burial I and abuts the baulk between squares 42 and 43, whereas there is no baulk between squares 42 and 37. This supports the original label's claim that the sample came from around burial I, yet its context in pit F158 does cast doubt on any direct association with the burial.

also came from oak heartwood (O'Donnell 2008, 137) and therefore may also be subject to the 'old wood effect'.

Cremation burials are however extremely rare – but not completely unknown – in the Medieval Period, and it is unlikely that the cremation burials (the majority of which occur outside flat cemetery) are contemporary with the later inhumations.[62] In response to the dating evidence, Grogan and O'Sullivan have suggested that the cremation burials were associated with the 'Phase 1' circular wooden enclosures (trenches A,B,C ,etc.), or that they possibly represent an intermediate phase preceding the multivallate enclosure, while the inhumation burials post-date the multivallate enclosure entirely (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 148). However, although the radiocarbon dates have undermined previous convictions that the flat cemetery pre-dates the multivallate enclosure, the stratigraphic record still shows that the burials in this area post-date the earlier palisade trenches as '[a]ll of the earlier features […] were sealed by a sterile layer of yellow clay by the time the cemetery came into use' (Grogan 2008, 19; 42). It is possible therefore that the cremation burials, which are numerous and were found in both the central area and in the ramparts of Ráith na Senad, are contemporary with the multivallate enclosure itself.

Unfortunately there is much less information available regarding the cremation burials as the human remains have since been lost. Burial V was a cremation placed on and around a boulder at a depth of around 50cm, and burial W was a cremation placed in an oval pit (F6). The top of this pit was sealed by four small flagstones, and a thick concentration of charcoal at the bottom of the pit may represent the remains of a vertical post (Grogan 2008, 48). Cremation deposit S199 included burnt bone and tooth, and was found with fragments of unidentified amber or glass while deposit S142 consisted of burnt bone, an iron stem, a water-rolled pebble, and part of a belt buckle. Burial A was an unprotected cremation 7m to the east of the flat cemetery and placed on top of the ancient sod just inside Ditch 1 of the multivallate enclosure. This deposit appears to have been covered by dark shal-clay similar to the fill of Ditch 1 (material which is thought to have subsided from Bank 1: Grogan 2008, 66; fig. 4.4: section

---

[62] There are just two examples of cremation burials that are contemporary with the inhumation burials H and E in the Mapping Death Database, both from Ask, Co. Wexford (www.mappingdeathdb.ie).

E^1-E^2). The remains were identified as 'an adult female under middle age' (Grogan 2008, 49). Burial G was a cremation found on southern side of the central enclosure, just outside bank 1, but no further information is available regarding the context of the burial. Approximately 8m to the south of burial G, cremation burial F was located in the second set of ramparts '…possibly under the bank of rampart 2' (Grogan 2008 appendix L, 165).[63]

There is therefore a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that at least some of the cremation burials were associated with the multivallate enclosure. Burials A and F both appear to have been placed on top of the ancient sod and then covered by material from the rampart banks, while burials A and G were placed just inside the edge of ditch 1 at two different locations. The four flagstones sealing the top of pit F6 (containing burial W)[64] were located immediately to the east of other cobbling and flagstone clusters (F11-15) that '…were in part embedded in and part underlying the main habitation layer (F8) in this area' (Grogan 2008, 59). These clusters appear to form a paved floor approx. 6m by 2.5m associated with the multivallate enclosure (Grogan 2008, 59). The gaps between these clusters are in some cases larger than the distance between the F6 flagstones and the nearest cluster F12 (approx. 50cm), and it is likely that these stones constitute a continuation of the enclosure flooring.

The few finds that came from the cremations can also be seen to support an association with the multivallate enclosure. The buckle pivot from cremation S142 is one of just two examples from Ireland: the other was found with a 1st century AD Nauheim-derivative fibulae in a cremation burial at Loughey, Co. Down (Allason-Jones 2008, 110). The iron stem and water-rolled pebble also provide a direct connection with the multivallate enclosure, as a considerable number of these items were found at different locations within the enclosure and

---

[63] Two small deposits of cremated human bone found in the National Museum of Ireland, labelled S168 and S185, are recorded as coming from Square 2 of the excavation. This would place these deposits on the southern side of the British Israelite disturbance near the northern end of trench C1. A diagram in the excavation report (Grogan 2008, 26: fig. 2.9) shows a burial in this location labeled 'Approximate location of phase 2 burial V', while in the burial register the location of burial V is recorded as Square '37 or 2' (Appendix L, 165). Apart from these two references, all of the other diagrams and descriptions place burial V in Square 37 on the southern edge of the flat cemetery: it would therefore appear likely that the burial located in Square 2 is S168 or S185 or both.

[64] This pit (F6) also appears to cut through trench J (F138), a feature that is at the same level as, and may be associated with, enclosure B (Grogan 2008, 24). This would indicate that burial W post-dates the A/B complex. Another pit (F159) which cuts through trench J also appears to be associated with the later quadrivallate enclosure (Grogan 2008, 24).

among the ramparts (i.e. E615:205; E615:213b; E615:046). Water-rolled pebbles were also found in burial 8/9 at Knowth (40 BC – AD 121), and they occur in a number of Late Iron Age and Roman burials in Britain where their association with gaming sets suggests that they were used as gaming pieces (Philpott, 1991, 185-6). Cremated bone was also found in a number of contexts directly associated with the multivallate enclosure. Samples were recovered from a 'hearth' (F187) on the southern side of the central area and 'among large stones' in the primary silt at the bottom of ditch 1. Of course it can be argued that this bone was redeposited, however charcoal from this last sample (S111) provided a radiocarbon determination of 77-216 AD, coinciding with the first phase of rampart construction (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 147).

The idea that the multivallate enclosure constitutes a chronological and spatial hiatus in the extensive and enduring funerary activity at this site appears to have been influenced by the interpretation of the site as a domestic habitation site (see below), and is difficult to sustain in light of the fact that the enclosure itself incorporates a possible ring-ditch and a barrow into its earthworks. The idea that the enclosure must post-date the cremation burials may also have been influenced by the proposal that the quadrivallate enclosure was constructed in the late 2nd century AD (Grogan 2008, 95-7); however the dating evidence from radiocarbon samples indicates that the multivallate enclosure may have been constructed over a century earlier.

The ramparts of the multivallate enclosure appear to have been erected in a single phase of construction, and a series of radiocarbon samples (including samples from trenches D2 and E) indicate that this occurred c. 50-150AD (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 147-8). There is no evidence for an entranceway, although there is evidence of a causeway over ditch 3 to the southwest, and a number of gaps in each of the banks that may be original. The inner rampart consisted of an internal bank (which appears to have been largely destroyed by the British-Israelite excavations) and a large ditch, 5.5m wide and 2.2m deep, separated from the second set of ramparts by a narrow berm measuring 4.7m wide. The two outer ramparts have large banks, originally around 3m wide, and ditches measuring 2m wide and 1.5m deep, and are separated by a 3.5m berm.

A small outer bank, just 0.2m high and 1.5m wide, is visible on the northern and southeastern sides of the enclosure and was also noted in the pre-excavation

survey of the site. There are no signs of this outer rampart on the southern side of the monument where the third rampart runs close to the bank of Ráith na Ríg. In the excavation report the presence of corresponding features are noted in a number of the northern cuttings, however according to Grogan '[i]t is not certain that this is a bank', and the feature is labelled as a 'counterscarp bank' in the published drawings (Grogan 2008, 75; 64-5; fig. 4.7: sections M-M[1], N-N[1]; fig 4.8: section R-R[1]). However, there is strong evidence to suggest that this and related features do constitute an outer rampart. At 6.5m wide and 1m high in sections, the 'counterscarp bank' is larger than banks 1 and 2 in places, and there is also evidence for a palisade trench (F251) under the slip of the bank, running along the on the inner edge of the bank. There are corresponding trenches on the inner edges of banks 2 and 3 (and also bank 1 in the form of trench D2) which have been interpreted as supporting revetment palisades for those ramparts. An outer fosse, dug to the same depth as ditch 3, is also clearly visible in the plan and section of cutting 5 (Grogan 2008, 38-9: figs. 3.2 and 3.3 section A-A[1]; see also Newman 1997a, 92).

The classification of this feature is of considerable significance, as this clearly affects the identification of the site as a 'quadrivallate' (Newman 1997, 91-4) or 'trivallate' enclosure (Grogan 2008, 57). The size of the outer bank, and its association with both a palisade trench and an outer ditch, would certainly indicate that it constitutes an outer rampart identical in construction and form to the inner examples. The apparent absence of this feature along the southern and eastern sections of outer circuit can be explained by both the damage caused by ploughing and the presence of the massive enclosure of Ráith na Ríg. The ceasing, merging, and joining of enclosing features as they come within close proximity to earlier monuments is a notable characteristic of many of the monuments on the Hill of Tara, as can be seen in the case of the Forrad and Tech Cormaic within Ráith na Ríg itself (Newman 1997, 77-83).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.5: Central area of Ráith na Senad. (After Grogan 2008)

The central area, although considerably disturbed, provided evidence of intensive activity including paving, cobbling, post-holes, pits, and burning (Fig. 4.5). In northern half of the central area, traces of a wooden structure (F20) are intimated by a series of post-holes forming a sub-rectangular plan, measuring 3.9m (N-S) by 3.5m (E-W) internally (Fig. 4.6). These post holes averaged 0.15m in diameter and 0.12m –0.25m deep. There are a small number of postholes that appear to run alongside the southern end of this structure, and it is possible that these and some other posts-holes surrounding the structure formed an outer 'wall' or 'skin' (Grogan 2008, 58). Two larger internal stake-holes appear to be placed along the N-S axis of the structure, and a fire-reddened area was visible inside the southern line of post-holes. A post-hole (F28) and a short trench (F27) opposite

an outer post-hole (F31) give the impression of a possible entrance-way feature at the northern end of the western side of the structure. However, there are also gaps on the northern and eastern side of the structure that could also have formed entrance ways. A sample of charcoal from one of the central post-holes provided a radiocarbon determination of 259-412 AD (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 148).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.6: The southern area of the central enclosure of Ráith na Senad.
(After Grogan 2008)

To the east of this structure there were more clusters of post-holes, pits, and fire-reddened areas. The presence of a slot-trench containing five post-holes (F78) prompted Grogan to suggest that this cluster of features may have formed part of a possible rectangular structure. While the presence of some kind of structure appears likely, it would appear that not all of the features in this 'post- and stake-hole complex' (F66) are contemporary. A number of these features lie underneath the 'main habitation layer' (F8) associated with the multivallate enclosure while others appear to lie outside it, and two such post-holes (F68-69) appear to have been dug into burial H – disturbing the inhumation that has been dated to 898-1024AD (Grogan 2008, 48).

A short distance to the south there are clusters of paving and cobbling that may have formed a single extensive flooring area (Grogan 2008, 59). A good deal of activity appears to have been focused on this area, as a considerable amount of finds were recovered here. A pit (F5) in this area containing a Roman nail also provided two radiocarbon samples that have produced a date range of c. 250-400AD (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 8). A small cluster of post-holes were located to the south of the paving area. Again, some features in this general area that were thought to belong to this phase of activity may not be contemporary with the multivallate enclosure: a pit (either 162 or 163)[65] at the eastern end of the cobbled area provided a sample dated to 359-176BC (Grogan and O'Sullivan 2008, 144). While this sample is from oak, this range is identical to the determinations provided by other samples associated with the earlier enclosure C complex.

In the southern area of the enclosure there was a scattering of pits, stake-holes and burning, although no distinct patterning is apparent. There were also fewer finds from this area and it appears to have seen less activity that the northern half of the enclosure (Grogan 2008, 57). A subsidiary ditch was dug on the outside of ditch 1 at some stage, and secondary ditch was subsequently cut into the fill of ditch 1. A number of palisade trenches also appear to be associated with these ditches (Grogan 2008, 56: fig. 4.1). Finds from these features include a fragment of a Roman glass bowl and a Roman fibula spring.

---

[65] The context given for this sample (E15:103) is recorded as F162 in Appendix J of the report and F163 in Appendix M.

The Material Culture

The pottery from the site included twenty-four surviving sherds from a minimum of nine vessels, all Roman and dating mainly from the mid-2nd century to the 4th century AD (with one possible late 1st century sherd that is unstratified). Half of the sherds were found in the habitation layer (F16) at the rectangular post-structure (sq. 53). These were mainly Central Gaulish Samian ware, including a number of sherds from the same Déch. 72 drinking vessel (mid-late 2nd century: Fig. 4.7).[66] A sherd from an Oxfordshire colour coated ware indented beaker, dating to the late 3rd to 4th century AD, was also found among these pieces. The adjacent square (52) produced a spindle whorl made from a sherd of Severn Valley ware, and an abraded fragment of Samian ware that was found with an iron stem. A sherd of a possible Wilderspool ware beaker was found a short distance to the west of the rectangular post-structure (sq. 47). Three similar Wilderspool sherds (possibly from the same vessel) and a sherd from a closed form Severn Valley drinking vessel were found in Ditch 1.[67] The only sherd from the northern part of the central enclosure was a sherd from a Romano-British mortarium (now lost), possibly dating from the 3rd-4th century AD, that was found in the sod at the southwestern edge of the inner enclosure (sq. 6).

The specialist report notes a number of interesting aspects concerning this assemblage, the first being that all of the sherds (with the exception of the motarium) are Samian or colour coated wares, and there is not a single sherd of the more common Romano-British greywares or Black Burnished ware. There are no cooking pots, and there is a notable prevalence of drinking vessels which constitute six of the identifiable vessels. The types of drinking vessel present are also untypical: common Samian ware cup types are absent and the presence of the 'much less common' Déch. 72 is notable (Evans 2008, 123). This would indicate the specific selection of large-volume drinking vessels such as flagons and beakers for use at the site, a suggestion that is supported by the fact that the glass vessels at the site were also predominantly beakers and bowls that were used as drinking vessels (Evans 2008, 123).

---

[66] Three more unstratified sherds of this type were also recovered.
[67] Another possible sherd of Severn Valley ware was found unstratified around bank 3.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.7: Central Gaulish Déch. 72 drinking vessel, Ráith na Senad (after Grogan 2008)

The condition of the slip suggests that this vessel has been subjected to burning.

Nine fragments of a 4th century conical beaker of Isings form 106d were found next to the rectangular post-structure (sq. 52), and an unclassified bowl fragment of clear glass was found 8m directly west of the rectangular post-structure (in the baulk between squares 55 and 56 where a penannular brooch was also found). Another unclassified bowl fragment was found beside the cobbled/paved area in sq. 42, and the sherd of mould-blown Roman drinking bowl dating from c.150-250 AD was 'retrieved from a pit containing animal bone, teeth, a deer horn and lumps of charcoal' (Bourke 2008, 115), located to southeast of the cobbled/paved area (sq. 38).[68] A possible bowl fragment was also recovered from the fill of the secondary ditch. The presence of multiple pottery and glass sherds from the same vessels scattered along the ground in the occupation layer prompted Evans to suggest '…that the assemblage may largely represent the remains of funerary meals/toasts, with the vessels

---

[68] The feature number for this pit is not given in the specialist report or the finds register (appendix K), and no corresponding feature is visible in square 48 in the published drawings.

discarded on the surface' (Evans 2008, 124). This interpretation is supported by evidence from Romano-British cemeteries where evidence for similar practices have been found at Brougham cemetery (Evans 2004). It is also notable that the slip on all three sherds from a single Dech. 72 vessel were 'burnt brown' (Evans 2008, 124; Catalogue E615:1, 17, and 124), indicating that this vessel had also been subjected to burning (Fig. 4.7).[69]

The very limited selection of glass and pottery vessel forms is also closely paralleled in funerary and ritual contexts in Britain. According to Philpott: 'There is evidence that the combination of flagon and beaker […] was deliberately selected in some graves' and '…the regular occurrence of this combination of forms or of the beaker or flagon separately suggests that there was a belief current that liquid containers or drinking vessels were required in the burial from the later-second to the fourth century AD' (Phillpot 1991, 119). There is evidence to suggest a specific shift to conical beakers in the 4th century AD at Lankhills cemetery, and a set of five or six beakers were found deliberately smashed in a grave at Welford-upon-Avon (Phillpot 1991, 119). Interestingly, at a 4th century Romano-British burial at Bray, Berkshire, two mortaria were also found broken and scattered over the grave (Phillpot 1991, 109).

Most of the other finds associated with the multivallate enclosure display a similar distribution pattern to that of the pottery and glass ware, with artefacts clustered around the northern section of the enclosure, particularly in the vicinity of the rectangular post-structure and the cobbled/paved area, and a significant number of finds also coming from ditch 1. Three glass beads, two quartz pebbles, and an iron blade were recovered in the vicinity of the rectangular post-structure, along with an awl, a chisel, a number of iron nails and other iron fragments (sq. 54, 53, and 52). A glass bead and a zoomorphic penannular brooch (3rd to 4th century AD) were found to the west of the rectangular post-structure where a bowl fragment was also found (sq. 55 and 56). The pin from another penannular brooch, three glass beads, a small penannular ring, an iron blade, a silver fragment 'with an inscription or design', and a piece of a copper-ally mirror were found around the

---

[69] This observation was brought to the attention of the author by Prof. William Hanson.

cobbled/paved area (sq. 38, 42, 43, and 44). A striated ring was recovered to the south of the cobbled/paved area (sq. 36/37) near the binding strip of a chape '…more suggestive of a narrow bladed hunting knife that an army *pugio* (Allason-Jones 2008, 108). The pin of a possible projecting-headed pin was recovered in a trench to the east (F174) which contained an iron rod and '…a considerable amount of animal bone' (Grogan 2008, 61).

Some other notable finds from this area include a Roman padlock of type 1a (late 2nd to 4th century AD) from sq. 37, to the south of the cobbled/paved area (Fig. 4.6). As Velzian-Donaghy observes: 'Padlocks basically represent ownership, control and exclusion of property and sometimes lives, and the Tara padlock must have been a powerful symbol of prestige and control' (2008, 114). A concern with ownership, control and exclusion are also notable in the presence of a lead seal found in the habitation layer at sq. 42 with a fragment from a glass vessel (Fig. 4.7). The seal carries the impression of a bird holding something (possibly a rolled document) in its beak, and according to Allason-Jones: 'The style of this example suggests that the device belonged to an individual rather than a military unit' (2008, 109). As noted earlier, the sealing of documents was a basic security measure; however it also played a significant role in the confirmation and formalization of vows and contacts – effectively and literally 'sealing the deal' (Derks 1998, 227-231).

Finds from the southern half of the central enclosure were notable by their absence, with just five artefacts (including a struck flint flake) found in this area. These included parts of an iron nail and a stem, a copper-alloy strip and a fragment of copper-alloy waste from a charcoal- and slag-rich area at the edge of the enclosure (sq. 10). Much more material was retrieved from ditch 1, and the assemblage from the ditch was broadly similar to that from the southern area of the enclosure. Five sherds of pottery (see above), part of a clay crucible, three copper-alloy rings, a grooved bracelet, a glass bead, and iron blades, nails, and stem fragments, were recovered with a considerable amount of animal bone and some antler tines. Indeed, according to Ó Ríordáin's notes the vast majority of animal bone from the site came from the fill of ditch 1. These included ox, deer, pig, dog and horse bones, as well as a smaller number of unidentified bird bones. Sheep bones were notably absent (only three

fragments). Some of the bones were burnt and fragmented, while others appeared to be large and intact, and '…a remarkable feature was a concentration of ox jaw bones in the upper fill of the ditch' (Ó Ríordáin 2008, 121).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.8 (above): Illustration showing use of Lead seal from Ráith na Senad. (After Grogan 2008)

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.9 (left): The barrel padlock from Ráith na Senad. (After Grogan 2008)

The secondary ditch also produced some significant finds including the spring from a Roman bow brooch (a unique find in Ireland), a glass bowl fragment (see above), a pair of Roman dividers, and some complete or largely complete antlers. The subsidiary ditch produced two pieces of worked antler, as well as a considerable amount of animal bone. In contrast the outer ramparts produced a fraction of the animal bone found in the inner ditches (about 5% according to Ó Ríordáin's notes) and very few finds. Just two iron chisels were found at Rampart 2, and at Rampart 3 there was evidence for some limited iron working in the form of charcoal and iron slag, as well as some unworked antler and an iron disc. Some interesting unstratified finds from the site include a fragment of glass bracelet, a

glass inset, a silver ringed-pin, and a roof slate. A cache of 65 water-rolled pebbles and a conical stone have also been interpreted as gaming pieces.

The Wider Landscape

As we shall see below, Ráith na Senad is just one monument within a much larger archaeological complex, and any interpretation of the site must also take into account its position within this context and its relationship to the many other monuments on the hill. The Hill of Tara itself consists of a low limestone ridge 155m above sea level, running for 2km along a north-south axis and commanding virtually unobstructed views of the surrounding countryside in all directions. There are over thirty monuments visible at Tara – including a megalithic tomb, barrows, ring ditches, standing stones, linear earthworks, and numerous enclosures – and extensive geophysical survey has literally doubled the number of monuments identified on the hill (Newman 1997a; Fenwick and Newman 2002).

In relation to the broader setting of Tara, Newman (2005, 374-376) has described much of the surrounding area as a discrete prehistoric landscape showing a remarkable concordance between archaeological and topographical landmarks. The nature and orientation of the monuments in the surrounding landscape would appear to change significantly in later prehistory, as a previously consistent North-South axis of burial and ritual sites is followed by a remarkable increase in defensive monuments being constructed to the north and west. To the west a linear earthwork approximately 1.5km long was erected in the townland of Riverstown. The construction of this feature, as well as other surrounding fortified sites such as Rath Lugh, Rath Miles, Ringlestown Rath, and Ráith Lóegaire, suggests that there was some form of boundary or border zone located to the north and north-west of Tara. According to Newman: 'The relatively large number of defensive earthworks around Tara is as one might have expected and reminds us of the continued importance of Tara into the first few centuries AD and, more significantly, of the desire to protect it' (2005, 379).

Comparative Archaeology

The scale and continuous nature of the activity at Tara indicate that this site was a significant focal point for ritual activity from 3500 BC to the Medieval Period. The ritual complex at Tara also shares a significant set of

archaeological and topographical motifs with a number of other ritual sites in Ireland, most notably Navan Fort, Knockaulin, and Rathcroghan (Lynn 1991; Newman 1998; Waddell 1998, 325-354). Some of these parallels are very specific, involving similar structures and related behaviour, however more general comparisons can also be made in relation to the long-term development of these sites where there is a conspicuous and recurrent focus on earlier prehistoric monuments through their reuse and reshaping, as well as the construction of new monuments that seek to establish overt relationships with existing ones and draw on their significance within the landscape (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 187-189).

Ráith na Senad may be seen as a prime example of this tendency: the central area corresponds with an earlier ditched enclosure while the ramparts incorporate a barrow mound within its earthworks, all the while respectfully avoiding the nearby ramparts of Ráith na Ríg. The construction of the quadrivallate enclosure must have involved extensive preparation and skillful execution, and clearly articulates the desired intention of the builders to create an explicit association with these ritual sites (Newman 1997a, 230). All of these considerations would suggest that Ráith na Senad was conceived as ceremonial or religious structure, creating continuity with the ritual activity immediately preceding its construction and the wider complex of monuments on the Hill of Tara. Yet the site is most often identified as a 'ringfort' and has been predominantly viewed as a 'domestic settlement' or 'residential enclosure' (Edwards 1990, 17; Cooney and Grogan 1994, 201; Grogan 2008, 83). The rectangular post-structure in the central area is often referred to as a 'hut' or 'house' (Raftery 1994, 113; Waddell 1998, 330; Grogan 2008, 85), and the material from the enclosure is generally interpreted as 'habitation' debris representing '…a settled limited income domestic group' (Allason-Jones 2008 107; see also Raftery 1994, 67-68; Roche 2002, 71-76).

As a multivallate earthen enclosure Ráith na Senad does bear some resemblance to a ringfort, however the berms between the ramparts are features that are not usually found at ringfort sites. It has been argued that this site belongs to a small yet strikingly coherent group of monuments that may be ancestral to – but must be distinguished from – the Early Medieval ringfort (Newman 1997a, 178-179; Dowling 2011). Quadrivallate enclosures would certainly appear to be extremely uncommon, and there is just one other quadrivallate monument in Co. Meath, at Tlaghta on the Hill of Ward, where the ramparts were constructed beside a standing stone and incorporate a small mound to the south of the central enclosure.[70] Another example at Rathra, Co. Roscommon, encloses two mounds with a larger tumulus located nearby on the crest of the hill. All three of these

---

[70] In a random sample of 3563 ringforts, Newman (1997, 178) found that 26 were trivallate, only two were quadrivallate (Ráith na Senad and Tlachtga, Co. Meath), and a single site had five enclosing banks (Raheen Co. Donegal). Newman has since argued that Ráith Airthir, Co. Meath, may also be included in this small group of monuments, even though the site is not quadrivallate (2005, 379).

sites are much larger than ringforts, with diameters ranging from 90m at Ráith na Senad to 145m at Tlaghta and Rathra, and all are located in prominent positions on hillsides but not on the hilltops. According to Newman:

> 'The consistent failure of these enclosures to exploit the strategically superior higher ground suggests that, despite being multivallate, their construction was not motivated solely by defense. On the contrary, the fact that all three incorporate mounds or barrows suggests that they may have been primarily ritual monuments.'
>
> (Newman 1997a, 179)

It is also noteworthy that Tlaghta is mentioned in the early historical records in contexts indicating that the location was an important assembly site in Early Medieval times (Charles-Edwards 2000, 477-478).

It would appear that these monuments constitute a distinct class with significant ritual associations, and may therefore be ceremonial in nature. The only dating evidence is that from Ráith na Senad, which also militates against the identification of the site as a ringfort. The excavated evidence from ringforts supports the general categorisation of these sites as Early Medieval monuments, with the majority dated to between the 7th and 10th centuries AD (Stout 1997). A small number of ringforts have produced some Late Iron Age artefacts. However, in the few instances where stratigraphic relationships have been established this material would appear to pre-date the construction of the earthworks (Lynn 1983). The date of Ráith na Senad confers upon this site the dubious distinction of 'the earliest datable ringfort' (Edwards 1990, 17), a title which may undermine the initial classification of the site as a ringfort rather than support the argument for the existence of Iron Age ringforts.

Of course the interpretation of Ráith na Senad as a Late Prehistoric ritual monument also calls into question then the classification of the wooden post-structure as a 'hut' or a 'house' and the interpretation of the artefactual assemblage as domestic. Archaeological evidence for Iron Age houses in Ireland was virtually non-existent until very recently, and for years the 'hut' at Ráith na Senad was see as '…the only example that archaeologists can point to with confidence' (Raftery 1994, 113; see also Waddell 1998, 319-20). Indeed, the willingness of commentators to see the Rath of the Synods as a domestic habitation site, despite its overt ritual context, may owe much to a perceived need

to identify such a settlement. Lynn has argued that the apparent dearth of Iron Age settlement sites has encouraged commentators to push back the origins of Early Medieval monument-types in order to fill the void (1983), and the interpretation of Ráith na Senad as a ringfort may also owe something this tendency.

This situation has since improved (although not as much as is often claimed), and now there are a small number of sites that may represent Iron Age domestic structures. While the evidence is undoubtedly problematic in many cases, what is clear is that all of the potential Iron Age settlement structures are roundhouses (see Ó Drisceoil and Devine 2012). In fact, the only other Iron Age rectangular structure known in Ireland to date is a large three-side enclosure (approx.16m by 14m) at Kilmainham, Co Meath, situated beside two inhumation burials near a large Iron Age boundary ditch. Radiocarbon samples from the rectangular structure have provided determinations of 143-343AD and 433-606 AD, and a sample from one of the inhumations was dated to 434-598AD. This would indicate that the burials and activity at the structure were contemporary, and the site has recently been interpreted a sanctuary enclosure similar to Roman-Celtic examples in Britain and Gaul (Walsh 2012).

The rectangular post-structure at Tara is much smaller than that at Kilmainham. In fact, the Ráith na Senad structure is so small that its size was considered to be too diminutive to represent a '…principle domestic building', and the theoretical existence of a 'main house' in the area disturbed by the British-Israelites is proposed in order to circumvent the interpretive problems presented by the limited size of the rectangular post-structure. It is also suggested that the post-holes, pits and burning activity on the southern site of the enclosure '…probably represent other, possibly substantial buildings' (Grogan 2008, 87). Apart from the obvious observation that there is no evidence for any 'main house' or 'substantial buildings', this suggestion also ignores the fact that the activity in the central enclosure was clearly focused on the rectangular post-structure and the cobbled/paved area beside it, while there is a distinct lack of finds in the southern half of the enclosure.

Comparative Contexts

Of course, in order to establish the function and use of any structure or monument, consideration must also be given to the artefactual and ecofactual assemblages present, and the way in which this material was used. The hearths, sherds of pottery, and faunal remains found at Ráith na Senad have generally been seen as evidence for domestic activity at the site, and according to Allason-Jones: 'The objects that can be positively identified are mostly of a domestic nature. None of the items can be categorised as booty or status gifts […] They are merely items that people would have used about their homes' (2008, 107). However, it can be argued that no object is strictly 'of a domestic nature' in the sense that it somehow proscribes its own use in a ritual or symbolic performance, and of course Tara is no ordinary place and Ireland was not a Roman province. There are countless examples of seemingly 'everyday' artefacts that can be '…transformed so that they may assume new and important social and cultural functions' even though '…the form of the object remains essentially un-changed' (Basalla 1982, 183).

We have already seen that the types of pottery and glassware selected for use at the site, and their fragmented state in the habitation layer, have very close parallels with ritual activity at cemeteries and religious sites in Roman Britain. There is also nothing inherently 'non-ritual'[71] about the other artefacts in the assemblage from the site: hearths, jewellery, and animal remains all play important roles in innumerable religious practices – from ritual feasting to animal sacrifice and burial rites. Even the most mundane and utilitarian objects can be transformed in this manner. For example, in the Roman practice of *clavus annalis* ordinary nails were hammered into the walls of temples in order to ward off floods, plagues and other disasters; while in the rite of *defixiones* they were put to a more unsavoury use in order to pierce, and thereby activate, curse tablets (Dungworth 1998). The presence of boot-nails at the Romano-British shrine at Uley has also been interpreted as possible evidence for the use of boots and shoes as votive offerings to Mercury, the messenger god who protected travellers (Henig 1993, 184).

---

[71] This problematic phrase is used by Roche to describe Ráith na Senad (2002, 73). Difficulties arise due to her failure to elaborate on the criteria that may be used in the construction of such a category and, perhaps more detrimentally, from the guiding premise that a ritual/non-ritual dichotomy can be sustained in such a context (see Orme 1981, 219).

Coins and other everyday personal items are by far the most common finds at Romano-British cult loci (Smith 2001, 155), and the majority of jewellery in Roman Britain has also been found in religious contexts such as burials and temples (Puttock 2002, 1). Seals, seal-boxes and intaglios are most often found at bathhouses and military sites, however they have also been found in burials (Philpott 1991, 163; Puttock 2002, 90-1), and the growing numbers of seals, seal-boxes, and related items reported from Gallo-Roman and Romano-British religious sites is a phenomenon that has been noted by a number of commentators in recent years (Derks 1998; Bagnall-Smith 1999; Smith 2001). The use of seals and seal-boxes at Roman shrines and temples has been interpreted by Derks as representing the primary stage of the Roman *votum* – the ritual of the vow. The *votum* was essentially '…a temporary contract between man and deity, the beginning and end of which are characterized by a series of ritual acts.' (1998, 218).

The best-documented examples of this rite are the *vota* carried out by the *fratres Arvales*, a college of priests at Rome whose rituals were mainly concerned with ensuring the well-being of the emperor. The initial stage of the *votum*, the *nuncupatio*, involved the formulation of the terms of the vow: what was requested and what would be offered in return. Sometimes the *nuncupatio* was declared publicly on altars, statues, or plaques, however most were written as private documents and sealed by the petitioner. The document was then left in the sanctuary for the duration stipulated in the vow, at which time the decision whether to redeem the vow was made. If the deity was considered to have fulfilled his or her role the vow was honoured and the final stage of the ritual, the *solutio*, enacted. This stage usually involved the sacrifice of an animal, after which any further offerings that were due would be made. Large numbers of seal-boxes and intaglios have been discovered at Romano-British shrines such as Great Walsingham, Norfolk, where they have also been interpreted as votive objects associated with the *votum* ritual (Bagnall Smith 1999, 48-50).

Gaming counters form another group of artefacts that are commonly found in ritual contexts in Roman Britain. Numerous examples have been found in burials, including gaming pieces and a board from the 3rd to 4th century Romano-British temple mausoleum at Lullingstone villa (Philpott 1991, 185), and a considerable quantity have also been found at shrines and sanctuaries. A large number of

counters were uncovered at the Henley Wood cult site in Somerset, where they were deposited in the northern enclosure ditch along with jewellery and other personal items (Smith 2001, 93). Several examples were also found at the Uley shrine in Gloucestershire, including a clay-baked conical piece similar in size and shape to the Tara counter (Woodward and Leech 1993, 177). The persistent occurrence of these items in burials and shrines would indicate that they must have held some kind of religious significance, and it has been argued that they may have represented a kind of token offering associated with personal fortune. Considering the obvious links with gaming, it certainly seems likely that these items would have been associated with good luck or providence (Smith 2001, 93).

As mentioned above, jewellery in Roman Britain is most often found in ritual contexts at cemeteries and sanctuaries. Puttock has argued that the prevalence of glass bracelets and bangles in Romano-British burials, particularly child burials, suggests that glass may have been thought to have '…some protective duty in the next world' (2002, 100). The complete circle or oval of bracelets and rings may also have represented a union (as wedding rings still do today), and the common occurrence of these objects at sanctuaries could relate to their use as a symbol of a perceived union with a god (Puttock 2002, 108). Similarly, the prevalence of brooches in votive deposits at Romano-British shrines has led some commentators to suggest that these items may have had specific ritual associations. According to Webster (1986, 60), items of jewellery may have seen as embodying a kind of 'contact magic' related to the individual owner, and brooches in particular may have represented bonding; thus evidence for the deliberate breaking or 'killing' of these items may symbolise the destruction of a union. Penannular brooches similar to those from Ráith na Senad have been found in large numbers at Romano-British shrines at Lydney (Wheeler and Wheeler 1942) and Uley (Woodward and Leech 1993).

In fact, the entire assemblage found at Ráith na Senad can be paralleled at Romano-British sanctuaries and shrines. At Uley, penannular brooches, bracelets, pins, a seal box, keys, a padlock, gaming pieces, nails, and animal bones were among the items recovered from the shrine; while dinking bowls and conical beakers also formed the largest group of vessels from the site (Woodward and Leach 1993, 212). Similar ranges of artefacts were found at Lamyatt Beacon, Somerset, including glass bangles, Samian ware, a ring with an intaglio seal,

penannular and bow brooches, pins, lock bolts, nails, animal bones and antlers (Leech 1986). It is notable that there are no special 'votive items' from Tara, such as the inscribed plaques, figurines, or miniature items that are found at Roman cult loci (Allason-Jones 2008, 107); however these items are also relatively rare finds at Romano-British and Gallo-Roman shrines. Derks has suggested that the paucity of specifically votive items at Gallo-Roman shrines may be due to the fact that these objects would only have been deposited during special religious festivals at certain times of the year, and that animal sacrifice would have constituted the most common form of ritual offering at religious sites (1998, 221; See also Smith 2001, 155).

There is ample evidence for this too at Ráith na Senad (Dowling 2006). The whole antlers from ditch 1 are reminiscent of the 'antler burials' at Romano-British shrines such as Lamyatt Beacon, Hole Ground at Wookey, and Lydney – a phenomenon that has prompted one commentator to suggest that '…antlers may be justifiably be regarded as cult objects' (Leech 1986, 272; see also Fitzpatrick 1997, 82). The association of dogs and horses with the provincial Roman gods Epona (horses), Apollo Cunomaglus (dogs), and Nodens (dogs), is well attested, as is the prevalence of remains and representations of these animals at shrines (Woodward 1992; Bhreathnach 2002). Ox bones were specifically offered to Mars and pigs were used for feasting (Cahill-Wilson 2012). It should also be noted that the presence of a wide variety of species does not necessarily signify a domestic component in the assemblage. Indeed such a mix is the norm at the vast majority of Romano-British cult loci, although these sites also display an unusually high level of horse and dog bones (Smith 2001, 156-161).

In an intriguing examination of Early Irish historical sources Edel Bhreathnach has noted specific connections between these animals and the supernatural (2002). Dogs – associated with the deities Nuadu and Nechtan and water cults – evoke protection from otherworldly forces; while horses – linked to the goddess Macha – are connected with kingship rites, warfare, and hunting. Horse and dog burials at British Iron Age sites such as Danebury are often interpreted as indicating ritual activity (Cunliffe 1983, 158; Fitzpatrick 1997), and large concentrations of horse and dog bones have been found at Iron Age sanctuaries such as Ribemont-sur-Ancre in France (Cadoux 1984) and Muntham Court in Britain (Smith 2001, 177). Although the remains at Tara do not form discreet animal pit-burials similar to

those at Danebury and Lamyatt Beacon, it must be remembered that boundary ditches at Iron Age sanctuaries often served as the primary focus for ritual activity at cult loci, with both human and animal remains found together in the enclosure ditches of sites such as Gussage All Saints and Gournay-sur-Arronde (Webster 1995, 458-460; Fitzpatrick 1997, 82; Brunaux et. al. 1985).

There are also some striking parallels between the structural evidence at Tara and features uncovered at Gallo-Roman and Romano-British shrines. The presence of pits and burnt material at Lamyatt Beacon and Orton's Pasture has been interpreted as evidence for structured deposition and ritual burning within the sanctuaries (Ferris et. al. 2000, 79; Leech 1986, 267-8). At Orton's Pasture this activity was focused around a simple rectangular building measuring c. 8m by 4m, which the excavators identified as a shrine (Ferris et. al. 2000, 80). Similar structures, categorised as 'rectangular religious buildings', have been recorded at numerous Gallo-Roman sanctuaries (Derks 1998, 150-153), and a smaller number of Romano-British sites (Drury 1980, 61-62; Smith 2001, 67-8; 151-154). The rectangular structure at Tara, measuring c. 3.9m by 3.5m, fits comfortably into this category, being similar in size and shape to those at shrines such as Springhead in Kent (4m by 5m), Bowes, Co. Durham (c. 3m by 5m), and South Cadbury (3.4m by 4.6m). The evidence for cobbling and paving at Tara is also significant, as cobbled and surfaced areas have been uncovered within the sanctuaries at Harlow, Henley Wood, Uley and Lamyatt Beacon (Smith 2001, 153; Leech 1986).

It was previously thought that these simple rectangular shrines were an indigenous monument type that may have been directly ancestral to the Romano-Celtic temple (Lewis 1996, 9; Horne 1986, 23). However, more comprehensive recent research has shown that these structures constitute a relatively late and rare phenomenon, and that Romano-Celtic temples are undoubtedly a post-conquest provincial Roman monument type (Smith 2001, 8-11; see also Derks 1998 176-178). The earliest constructed shrines in Britain range in date from the mid 1st century BC to the late 1st century AD, and nearly all of these sites '…had their main period of votive activity during the Roman transition period, from about AD 40 – 70' (Smith 2001, 67).

Imported Roman goods have been found at most of these sites, and it seems likely that their construction and use in this period owes much to the increasing

Gallo-Roman influences in Britain (Cunliffe 1988, 140-4). Furthermore, the almost total absence of shrine buildings in specific regions would suggest that '…the concept of constructed sacred space as a whole did generally not find expression outside of those areas more influenced by Romanised ideology and social structure' (Cunliffe 1988 1; 75; 162). While there is ample evidence for Iron Age constructed sacred space at sites such as Navan Fort and Knockaulin, there are no structures at these sites that can be compared to the rectangular post-structure at Ráith na Senad. In fact the rectangular form appears to represent a significant departure in architectural terms. The presence of Roman nails and dividers provides direct evidence for Roman influences in the construction of the site.

Another important feature of Gallo-Roman and Romano-British shrines is the presence of an outer enclosure, usually in the form of a ditch and bank, which demarcates the limits of the sacred *temenos* area (Derks 1998, 176; Smith 2001, 24-25). Many sanctuaries such as Elms Farm, Thetford, and Hayling Island had multiple enclosures that defined a number of different zones; in the case of the latter site there were four successive boundaries leading to the central shrine. Although the enclosures at most of these sites tend to be rectilinear there is considerable variation in form and construction and circular ditched enclosures have been uncovered at Colchester 5 (Essex), Lancing Down (West Sussex), and at Chactonbury, where the circular ramparts of a pre-existing hillfort had been reconstructed and '…undoubtedly acted as the temenos boundary' (Smith 2001, 126). Although the earthworks at Ráith na Senad are quite unlike the *temenos* boundaries at Romano-British shrines, this may be seen as part of a wider pattern of local variation within the general structuring principles of a constructed central focus enclosed by peripheral boundary at provincial Roman cult loci (Smith 2001, 153).

Indeed the use of closely-spaced multivallation at Ráith na Senad may have been intended to demarcate concentric zones of increasingly sacred space (Dowling 2011). The architectural organisation of space may also serve as a schematic representation of religious or cultural cosmologies (Bourdieu 1990, 271-284). The use of space may also be influenced by the structures of social relations and associated ideologies (Fairclough 1992; Leone 1984), and it has been argued that the evidence for structural restrictions at Romano-British

147

sanctuaries may indicate that admission to the innermost areas was limited to religious initiates and members of the elite (Smith 2001, 153). Bolts and lock mechanisms similar to the barrel padlock from Ráith na Senad are also commonly found at Romano-British shrines and temples such as Orton's Pasture and Uley, and it is likely that these would also have been used to control access to areas or materials kept at the site.

Of course maintaining boundaries often involves a variety of behavioural responses as well as the construction of physical barriers – especially with regard to the delineation of sacred space. Religious practices such as purification rites and ritual deposition are often performed at liminal points in order to mark the important spiritual transition between the sacred and the profane. The excavators at Orton's Pasture noted that the temenos ditch had been continually re-cut and redefined in what was described as a 'significant repetitive action' that served to continually emphasise the importance of the boundary (Ferris et. al. 2000, 79-80). Similar activity can be detected at Ráith na Senad, where the innermost fosse was re-cut and a large amount of animal remains, including jaw and limb bones and antlers, were arranged in '…a formal, possibly ritual deposition' (Newman 1997a, 97-98).

Dowling has argued convincingly that the depositional activity at the ditch of Ráith na Ríg represents just such a form of sacral boundary demarcation, and furthermore that the activity at Ráith na Senad was also associated with these ritual practices (Dowling 2006; 2011). Indeed, the proximity and relationship between Ráith na Senad and Ráith na Ríg, and the entire ritual complex on the Hill of Tara, provides the most compelling evidence for the interpretation of the former site as a ritual monument, and a brief account of some of the sites in the immediate vicinity will be necessary in order to emphasise the truly extraordinary nature of this location.

One of the most impressive monuments in the Hill of Tara is one that had been completely unknown until it was discovered through geophysical survey. This is a massive enclosure, 210m N-S by 175m E-W, surrounding Ráith na Senad and sharing the same central point (Fig. 4.10). This 'ditched-pit circle' consists of two rows of regularly-spaced pits on either side of a fosse. On comparative grounds this monument appears to be some form of henge, and may be tentatively dated to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age period (Fenwick and Newman

2002, 11-14). The presence of the ditched-pit circle may have been an important factor with regard to the choice of location for Ráith na Senad, and the primary ditched enclosure that forms the central area of the quadrivallate enclosure may even have been directly related to the ditched-pit circle (Fenwick and Newman 2002, 15). While an Early Iron Age date cannot be ruled out, it is intersected by Ráith na Ríg and therefore must pre-date the larger Iron Age enclosure.

Ráith na Ríg (the fort of the kings) is a massive oval monument to the immediate south of Ráith na Senad, enclosing an total area of 70,000m^2 (c. 5.9 hectares) within a circuit of internally-ditched ramparts measuring 310m N-S by 210m E-W. There are two possible entrances visible, to the northwest and east, and a third to the south has been identified through geophysical survey (Newman 1997a, 58-67). With a bank 10m wide and almost 1m high outside a rock-cut ditch 3m deep and 7m wide, this structure would have been one of the most imposing monuments on the hill. A section of the rampart at Ráith na Ríg was excavated in the 1950's, and was reopened for further investigation in 1997 (Roche 2002). The earthwork was constructed sometime during the last two centuries BC.

Human remains, including those of a child and two adults, were found at the base level of the ditch along with other fragmented remains. Some of the bones appear to have been secondary deposits taken from elsewhere, while the more formal burials could be contemporary with the flat cemetery at Ráith na Senad and may even be part of the same cemetery (Roche 2002, 59). Radiocarbon samples from these layers gave determinations ranging from 193 BC to 406 AD, indicating that some of the fill would have been contemporary with the quadrivallate phase at Ráith na Senad. Other finds from the ditch included a section of a glass bangle, a fragment of a bronze fibula, and a bronze door-knobbed spear-butt. The first two items are difficult to date, however the spearbutt is of a type (once thought to date from as early as the 1st century BC: Raftery 1984, 111) that can be dated from the 3rd to 5th centuries AD (Heald 2001).

149

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.10: Geophysical survey of the area surrounding Ráith na Senad

(After Fenwick and Newman 2002)

A palisade trench was dug inside the ditch sometime after the earthwork itself was constructed, and an opaque red glass bangle, some animal bone, and a lump of iron slag were found in the fill – although this appears to be a secondary context. A sample of cattle bone from the trench provided a radiocarbon date of 95 BC-15 AD (Roche 2002, 68-69). Geophysical survey revealed a circular feature within the enclosure running parallel to the palisade trench and showing a similar geophysical signature. This would suggest that the two features may be contemporary and that the internal area of the enclosure was demarcated by yet another concentric palisade trench (Fenwick and Newman 2002, 15-16).

At the northern end of Ráith na Ríg the ramparts veer outward to enclose the megalithic tomb know as Duma na nGíall ('the mound of the hostages'), which was excavated by Ó Ríordáin and his successor Ruaidhrí de Valéra from 1955-59. A decorated glass bead that may be of Iron Age date was found in the side of the mound and it has been suggested that this bead and some of the unaccompanied secondary burials may also date to Iron Age period (Raftery 1994, 195); however, recent radiocarbon samples from 14 of these burials gave determinations ranging from 2000 – 1600 BC (O'Sullivan 2005, 238-232). In the area surrounding the mound three different sections of palisade trench were uncovered, one of which is a portion of the Iron Age palisade that runs inside the ramparts of Ráith na Ríg. A Late Bronze Age ring ditch to the southeast of the mound contained cremated bone dating to c. 830-765 BC, and a further scattering of cremated bone from the internal area was dated to 385-211 BC.

At the centre of Ráith na Ríg there are two conjoined earthworks that occupy a dominant position on the crest of the ridge. The western earthwork, known as the Forrad ('the royal seat'), is a bivallate ring-barrow with a granite standing stone the Lia Fáil ('the stone of destiny') on its summit. This stone had been moved from the area surrounding Duma na nGíall in 1824 to commemorate those who died at the Battle of Tara during the 1798 rebellion. The outer bank is noticeably smaller, and may have been added at a later date in order to incorporate the Forrad into Tech Cormaic ('Cormac's House') to the east. Tech Cormaic is a bivallate enclosure with two surrounding banks, an intervening ditch, and a raised central area. The enclosure has an overall diameter of 73m and a small sub-rectangular mound in the central area.

In a manner strikingly similar to the development of the Rath of the Synods, the Forrad incorporates three small pre-existing burial mounds into the fabric of its earthworks and was in turn conjoined with Tech Cormaic (Newman 1997a, 86). The inner bank at Tech Cormaic suggests a defensive element in the design and morphologically the site resembles a bivallate ringfort. However, it is clear that this is no ordinary ringfort in the conventional sense of an enclosed Early Medieval settlement, as the earthworks intentionally surround the earlier monument '…suggesting a desire on the part of the builders of Tech Cormaic to associate with the ancient burial mound' (Newman 1997a, 180). There are similarly conjoined earthworks at Carnfree, near the ritual complex of Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon, and it would appear that this form of monument is specifically associated with 'royal' ritual complexes (Waddell 1998, 330).

Ráith Lóegaire ('Laoghair's Fort') is the southernmost enclosure on the hill, and its ramparts coincide with the end of the ridge where the level ground abruptly descends into a steep fall on the eastern, southern and western sides of the monument. Much of the enclosing circuit of ramparts has been ploughed-out and is no longer visible; however geophysical survey has located traces of the enclosure fosse which indicate a overall diameter of 129m N-S by 120m E-W (enclosing a total area of approx. 9300m^2). The eastern section of fosse also appears to include an entrance gap, about 2.4m wide, facing due east (Newman 1997a, 47-52). There are three similar monuments – Ringlestown Rath, Rath Lugh, and Rathmiles – strategically sited at a number of prominent locations in the surrounding landscape. The dating of these sites is uncertain, however the presence of closely-set multivallations at many of the monuments link them with Drumanagh and Ráith na Senad, suggesting a comparative date-range within the first-half of the first millennium AD (Newman 2005, 378-379).

To the southeast of Ráith Lóegaire, at the foot of the incline, there is a spring which is identified in early historical sources as *Nennach* (according to legend this was the site of the first water-powered mill in Ireland). The area around the spring has been dug out to make a broad hollow, and to the east there is another oval marshy hollow that appears to be artificial (Newman 1997a, 47). Recent high-resolution LiDAR survey has shown that Nemnach was also the original source of the River Nith, a tributary of the Gabhra, which has since been diverted by the drainage channels in the field boundaries (Corns et. al. 2008, 36; fig.4).

There are a number of other wells and springs in the vicinity of Tara; one on the western side of the hill in a field known as the Hanging Field, and another on the eastern side near Ráith na Ríg. It is possible that these two springs are those named *Lóeg* and *Liaig* respectively in the historical sources (Newman 1997a, 28; 47; 89), while two other historically attested wells – *Adlaic* and *Diadlaic* – have yet to be identified with existing physical features. There is no direct evidence that can be used to date the initial use of the wells as ritual monuments; however references to the wells in the text *Dindgnai Temrach* ('The landmarks of Tara')[72] would indicate that these were already sites of considerable repute by the end of the first millennium AD.

Small annular ritual monuments such as barrows, mounds, and ring ditches, are recurring features in every part of the Tara complex, and constitute the vast majority of monuments on the hill. They are often found in clusters within and around the ramparts of the larger enclosures; specifically to the north of Ráith Lóegaire, to the west of the ditched pit circle, and within the western quadrant of Ráith na Ríg. The largest clusters of these monuments, however, are found along the north-western end of the ridge. At the very edge of the ridge the surrounding ramparts of two of the largest ring barrows, known as the Northern and Southern Clóenfherta ('the Sloping Trenches'), continue down the slope, giving the visually arresting impression that the monuments had been draped over the ridge itself. Six mounds are aligned across the edge of the ridge to the south of the Clóenfherta, with two mounds and two possible ring-ditches continuing along the same axis to the north. Three more mounds, aligned on a perpendicular east-west axis, are located in-between the Northern and Southern Clóenfherta (Newman 1997a, 115-123).

To the east of the Clóenfherta, Ráith Gráinne ('Gráinne's Rath') is the first and largest in cluster of five barrows and three ring ditches that extends to the north and northeast in an alignment that runs roughly parallel with the north-western edge of the ridge and the monuments sited across it. Many of these features appear to overlap, and geophysical survey has shown that the larger ring barrows also have complex developmental sequences involving the incorporation of earlier mounds and ditches. To the northeast of Ráith Gráinne, there are two more extant

---

[72] This text has been dated to c. 1000AD; an early version is contained in the Book of Leinster which was compiled in or around 1160AD (Bhreathnach 1995).

barrows which overly yet another cluster of circular enclosures and possible ring ditches revealed though geophysical prospection (Newman 1997a, 111-127). It is most likely that the majority of these monuments pre-date the later phases at Ráith na Senad, however it is possible that at least some may be Iron Age in date and therefore broadly contemporary with the latter site (Newman 1997a, 168-170).

Immediately east of this last cluster, and about 70m to the north of the Ráith na Senad, a pair of parallel earthen banks known as *Tech Midchúarta* ('the Banqueting Hall') run down the slope of the ridge, from south to north, enclosing a dug-out central area 30m wide (Fig. 4.11). There are five to six gaps in each of the banks, which terminate at an area of wet ground known as 'the marsh of Tara'. It has been suggested that this is a cursus monument, if so it would probably date to the Neolithic period (Condit 1995; Newman 1997a, 150-52). However, Tech Midchúarta is aligned suggestively towards Ráith na Ríg, and there is a distinct possibility that the linear earthwork may have been built after the enclosure, therefore a date in the Late Iron Age or the Early Medieval Period should also be considered (Newman 2005, 387). There are two low mounds named *Dorcha* ('Dark') and *Duma na mBan-Amhus* ('the mound of the women mercenaries') flanking the southern ends of the banks, where there also appears to be traces of closing banks. The southern end of Tech Midchúarta faces Ráith na Senad and also lines up with Ráith na Ríg, Duma na nGíall, the Forradh and Teach Cormaic, and Ráith Lóegaire; forming an alignment of monuments running on a north-south axis across the hill running parallel to the alignment of monuments sited along the north western ridge.

The spatial configuration on the Hill of Tara may indicate the organisation of human movement through the ritual complex, constituting a formal ceremonial route (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 193). Newman has argued that the gaps in the banks of Tech Midchúarta were designed to focus the view onto different features on the hill, emphasising the religious significance and integrity of the complex (2007). Ceremonial parades are an important constitutive feature of religious practice, and there are countless examples of the spatial ordering of these processions within ritual complexes (Barrie 1996, 40). In Roman religious practice, for example, all of the significant public rituals started with ritual cleansing in pools at the foot of the sanctuary hill, then proceeded upwards to the

other end of the sanctuary where the sacrifice was made at the altar in front of the temple (Derks 1998, 211-212). An analogous route may have been used at Tara, starting at the marsh and following the Tech Midchúarta towards Ráith na Ríg on the crest of the hill. Alternatively, the procession may have been reversed, starting at the Nemnach spring and ending with the deposition of votive objects in the marshy area at the northern end of Tech Midchúarta.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 4.11:

Tech Midchúarta from the north, aligned with Ráith na Senad, Ráith na Ríg, Duma na nGíall, An Forrad and Tech Cormaic and Ráith Lóegaire,

(After Newman 1997a)

How Ráith na Senad may have figured in such processions is uncertain, as there is no readily identifiable entranceway due to the apparent lack of concordance between the various breaks in the banks. Newman (1997, 92) makes the salient point that there is no reason to assume a direct path to the central area, and suggests that the entrance may originally have been staggered. In his analysis of religious architecture, Barrie draws attention to the spatial organisation of entranceways:

'Following the entry, there is typically a sequence of defined spaces, places or events along a path that grows increasingly more sacred; there are points to pause, change direction, or turn back. Commonly, the path sequence symbolically, spatially, and temporally expresses the mythology and religion for which it was built. The "symbolic story" serves to underline the difficulty and heighten the anticipation of the attainment of the sacred space to be afforded at the journey's end. Often, as we have observed, there is a manipulation of scale, distance, and time along the path, which creates the impression that the journey is longer and thereby more eventful than it actually is.'

(Barrie 1996, 252)

In this light, the possibility of a more complex staggered entranceway at Ráith na Senad may be seen as an important architectural feature of the monument. The berms inside the ramparts would allow for movement between different openings in each set of ramparts, and such an arrangement may have constituted an important ceremonial routeway in itself.

The siting of Ráith na Senad at the centre of the ditched-pit circle, along the main N-S alignment of monuments on the Tara ridge itself – encompassing Ráith Lóegaire, Ráith na Ríg, Tech Cormaic, An Forrad, Duma na nGíall, and Tech Midchúarta (Fig. 4.11) – strongly suggests that Ráith na Senad was conceived and constructed as a monument intrinsically allied to the other ritual monuments on the hill. In this way the quadrivallate enclosure was incorporated into the wider ritual complex, just as its own ramparts had incorporated the primary ditched enclosure and the ring-barrow into their very fabric. In addition to the overt ritual setting of the site, there are a myriad of significant similarities between Ráith na Senad and Romano-British religious sites. These include artefactual, structural, contextual and behavioural evidence that, when considered collectively, provides more than just stimulating comparisons indicating that the activity at Ráith na

Senad was ritual in nature, but also raise the distinct possibility that the site itself may be closely related to Romano-British shrines.

Indeed, one is tempted to speculate that if this monument and the associated artefactual and structural evidence had been discovered at the centre of a prehistoric ritual complex in England, the interpretation of the site as a Romano-British cult loci would hardly be controversial. Of course in this hypothetical scenario the specific nature of the cult associated with the site would remain uncertain. Studies of provincial Roman religious sites have shown that, although there are broad similarities between structures and practices at cult loci, many of the cults involved were quite localised and site-specific. While the actual location of this site on the Hill of Tara may initially make the very same interpretation appear more contentious in Ireland, the wealth of references to Tara in the Early Irish historical sources provide us with an embarrassment of riches as far as the precise ritual status and cultic associations of this site are concerned. The very name of Tara and the mythological figures associated with this location in the Early Historic sources identify this hill as sacred place that is 'cut-off', occupying a liminal position between this and the Otherworld.

The Hill of Tara is most of all famous for its reputation as the seat of the 'High Kings' of Ireland, and the conception of the kingship of Tara as an extra-ordinary position of 'world king' is reflected in numerous sources (Bhreathnach 2005a). Breathnach has suggested that the large drinking vessels from Ráith na Senad may be related to the royal inauguration ceremony known as the *Feis Temro*, noting '…the long lasting association of the kingship of Tara with the drinking of an ale of kingship, dispensed by either the goddess of sovereignty or the god Lug' (2011,128). Indeed there is also an interesting connection between Lug and the gaming pieces discovered at the site. A passage in the *Cath Maige Tuired* tells of how '…[Lug] said that the fidchel boards of Tara should be brought to him; and he defeated them' (cited in Carey 2005). This reference to the god Lug winning games of fidchel, an early Irish board game similar to checkers or chess, at Tara is intriguing and it is notable that Lug was also said to have invented this game (Carey 2005, 43-44).

It is difficult to know how much emphasis should be placed on these connections as such concurrences can easily be dismissed as superficial coincidences or selective interpretation. Moreover, the role of mythical figures in

relation to Tara in the early literature is far from straight-forward, and there does not seem to have been any 'presiding god' as such (Carey 2005, 48). What is far more certain is that Tara is consistently represented as the ancient centre of a royal dynasty in the early historical sources. In this light it may be suggested that the activity at Ráith na Senad was primarily concerned with kingship itself and the associated ancestral cult of the ruling dynasty, and not necessarily dedicated to a specific deity. The interpretation of the shattered Roman pottery vessels as evidence for funerary toasts is especially significant in this light, as is the close correspondence between the limited range of vessel-types recovered from Ráith na Senad and those becoming predominant in Romano-British funerary practices during the same period.

There are, in fact, a number of provincial Roman shrines in Britain located at pre-Roman burial monuments that would also appear to be linked to the ancestral or dynastic cults of regional rulers. The sanctuary at Hayling Island, Hampshire, which was also focused around a small rectangular wooden building, has been interpreted as cult centre devoted to the ruling Commian Dynasty (Creighton 2000, 192-197), while the sanctuary at Thetford, Norfolk, has been associated with the Icenian royal house (Green 2004, 199-200). Indeed, according to Miranda Green:

> '…in identifying cult-centres in early Roman Britain, we should not expect that all were dedicated to gods and goddesses, in the conventional sense, but acknowledge that, to Britons in crisis, the cults of the ancestral ruling dynasties were perhaps considered more powerful'
> Green 2004, 199-200

This suggestion is even more apposite in the case of Tara, where extensive archaeological and historical evidence all points to the use of this location for ritual ceremonies associated with a form of sacral kingship in late prehistory (see Chapter 7 below).Yet at the same time, this interpretation alludes to a range of broader social and historical transformations that were implicated in this activity. Implicit in Green's statement is the suggestion that ancestral cults would have played a significant role in the re-ordering and re-structuring of social relations in Britain around the time of the Roman conquest. In a similar vein, Smith (2001, 75) has argued that the appearance of provincial Roman shrines in Southern

Britain was inextricably linked to the marked increase in pre-conquest Gallo-Roman influences in this region. The fact that a similar structure, associated with related practices, should be erected at Tara sometime in the early centuries AD raises the distinct possibility that similar social and cultural processes may also have been occurring in Ireland at this time.

Chapter 5

Brú na Bóinne and Megalithic Tombs

Introduction

Situated on the northern bank of the River Boyne, at a long looping bend in the river between Slane and Drogheda, the Neolithic passage tomb cemetery at Brú na Bóinne in Co. Meath is one of the most famous archaeological complexes in the world (Fig. 5.1). The necropolis consists of three great passage tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, which are the largest of their kind in Ireland, and a 'cemetery' of smaller tombs and later prehistoric monuments. The name Brú na Bóinne, from the Old Irish *Brug na Bóinne*, can be translated as 'inhabited or cultivated land of the Boyne' (Swift 2003, 53).[73] The Boyne region features heavily in early Irish historical records, with two major traditions linked to this area. The first is the association of Brú na Bóinne with mythical figures of the *Tuatha Dè Danann* ('the People of the goddess Danu') in early texts dating to the late 8th or early 9th century. The second is the assertion that Brú na Boinne was the traditional burial grounds of the kings of Tara. The earliest reference to this role is found in a 10th century poem attributed to Cináed Ua hArtacáin, which appears to be dedicated to Congalach mac Máelmithig the king of *Cnogba* ('Knowth').

Due to its prominent role in early myths and folklore, the complex was well-known even centuries ago, and the tombs were subject to sporadic and invasive investigation from at least the 17th century onwards. The great mound at Dowth was excavated from 1847-8, although the results were never fully published (see Harbison 2007), and excavation of the mounds at Newgrange and Knowth began in the 1960's. There have also been a number of surveys and excavations in the surrounding landscape that have greatly enhanced our knowledge of the development and use of this area in both the prehistoric and historic past. Most interest in the area has focused on either the historical references to the sites or the

---

[73] The use of this name to describe the megalithic cemetery has been criticized as it tends to give a misleading timeless 'Celtic' aura to the Neolithic monuments (Roynane 2001, 155-157). Its use in this context may be justified however; as it will be argued that the associated mythological tradition may be related to the reuse of these monuments in the Later Iron Age period.

Neolithic monuments, and the significant evidence for Iron Age activity in the area has received relatively little attention to date. However, the first recorded find from this area was a Roman gold coin found at Newgrange in 1699: an auspicious beginning as Newgrange would produce more gold artefacts of Iron Age date than any other site in Ireland – the majority being Roman coins and jewellery.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.1: The Boyne Valley megalithic necropolis (After Stout 2002).

Newgrange

The passage tomb at Newgrange is situated on the highest point of a low ridge in the centre of the river-bend. Overlooking the Boyne at a height of 61m above sea level, the mound itself is 11m high and 85m in overall diameter. The cremated remains of four or five individuals along with Neolithic grave goods were found in a cruciform chamber 24m inside the mound. Radiocarbon samples taken from burnt soil used to caulk the roof joints of the tomb have provided dates ranging between 3316-2922 BC and 3304-2922 BC. The mound consists of a stone cairn surrounded by a continuous line of 97 kerbstones, with an outer band of 12 standing stones that are generally assumed to have been part of a larger stone circle. Much of the cairn material had collapsed leaving an accumulation of rubble spread 8-10m beyond the kerbstones. O'Kelly has argued that some of this material appears to have collected around the outer standing stones, indicating that these were in place prior to the subsidence (1982).

More recent excavations suggest that the outer stone circle post-dates a series of concentric post-holes and pits uncovered to the south-east of the mound which date to the later 3rd millennium BC.[74] The arcs of posts and pits appear to have formed a large oval enclosure up to 100m in overall diameter which would have enclosed the small destroyed satellite tomb Site Z (Sweetman 1985). The later stone circle does appear to form a circle around most of the mound, however this is not concentric with the mound nor does it surround it completely. The sockets of a number of 'missing' stones were uncovered, and it is uncertain whether the stones were removed or the circle not completed. It is also possible that the collapse of the mound was a deliberate act related to this activity (Waddell 1998, 62).

Most of the Roman material found at the site was concentrated around the entrance to the tomb and centred on the three extant standing stones directly outside the entrance (Fig 5.2: GC1, GC-1, GC-3). The distribution of these finds, and the earlier recovery of Roman objects in the vicinity of the entrance, would seem to suggest that the entrance was visible at the time of deposition (*pace* O'Kelly 1977, 45). A spread of artefacts to the west appears to follow the lines of the standing stones and the kerbstones, with finds located directly beside two

---

[74] A series of 16 samples have produced determinations ranging from 2859-2486 BC to 2567-2145 BC (Sweetman 1985, 218), and from 2834-2300 BC to 2578-2043 BC (Eogan 1991, 130).

extant standing stones (GC3, GC5) and directly in front of the kerbstones. There is a concentration of finds around the westernmost standing stone (GC9), located on the left hand side of the mound as you face the entrance. To the east of the entrance, more finds appear to follow the line of the socket-holes although there are no extant standing stones in this area. The cairn material from the collapsed mound had spread as far as the standing stone sockets at the time of excavation and a number of finds appear to follow the line of the spread in between the sockets, therefore it is possible that these finds had been originally placed along the extended perimeter of the mound.

A possible cursus monument is visible 100m to the east of Newgrange, and three smaller satellite tombs surround the great mound to the west (sites K and L) and to the east (site Z). All three of the tombs were excavated and a number of Roman artefacts were found at site Z, the chamber of which had been completely destroyed with just the stump of a single structural stone remaining. The socket-holes showed that this site was a small passage tomb with an unusual recess opening off the eastern side of the passageway immediately before the chamber. A group of later pits surrounded the site, enclosing the monument in a similar manner to those found around the great mound. The Roman material from site Z, although consisting of just four finds, was distributed in a pattern strikingly similar to that at the larger site: two of the finds were located at the entrance and another two were found beside three extant kerbstones to the northwest, on the left-hand side of the tomb as you face the entrance (Fig.5.2)

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.2: Distribution of Roman Material around the Great Mound and Site Z, Newgrange (After Raftery 1994).

The Material Culture

The first recorded finds from Newgrange were coins uncovered in 1699 among stones '…near the top of the mount' (*sic*. Llhwyd 1726, 185-186). These were two gold *solidi* of Valentinian I (364-375 AD) and Theodosius (375-379 AD), both of which were minted at Trier (Bateson 1973, 46). Almost 150 years later a hoard consisting of a gold chain, two gold bracelets, and two gold finger rings were found '...within a few yards of the entrance […] at a depth of two feet' (Conyngham 1844, 137). The findspot was subsequently searched and three coins, including a silver *denarius* of Geta (209-212) and two unidentified small 'brass' coins (most likely to be bronze issues) were recovered (O'Kelly 1977, 36). The ornaments have since been dated to between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD, a range supported by the presence of the early 3rd century coins (Topp 1956, 53-62). In 1862 another gold object was found at the entrance of the tomb, and it is possible that this item was originally part of the hoard found over twenty years earlier (O'Kelly 1977, 43). It is a gold band 3.5 cm long and is decorated with incised crosses and dots within diamond-shaped grids. Another coin, an *Antoninianus* of Gallienus (253-268), was found in 1867. It was said to be in '…very perfect condition' yet there was no mention of where the coin was found (*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 1886-1869, 50).

The rest of the Roman material from the site was uncovered during the 1962-75 excavations, including 18 more coins dating from the late-1st to the late-4th centuries AD (O'Kelly 1977). There were three coins of Domitian (81-96 AD); one debased silver *Antoniniani* of Postumus (260-268 AD) and another of Probus (276-282 AD); two gold coins of Maximian (286-305 AD); four issues of

Constantine I (308-337 AD) including a gold uniface pendant; another gold uniface pendant and a gold *solidus* of Constantine II (317-340 AD); three bronze *marorinas* of Magentius (350-353 AD); gold *solidi* of Valintinian I (364-375 AD), Gratian (375-383 AD) and Arcadius (395-408 AD); and a clipped silver *siliqua* of Valentinian or Thoedosius (379-395 AD). Eight of the coins, including four gold issues, were found in the area surrounding the three surviving standing stones outside the entrance to the tomb, the silver *denarius* was found near the entrance, and the two bronze coins of Constantine I were discovered 8m to the west. Three more coins, including the gold *solidus* of Constantine II, were found near the western standing stone GC9, and a gold uniface pendant was uncovered at the foot of another standing stone GC3.[75] One of the 1st century coins was found on the western side of site Z, and a 3rd century coin was situated at the entrance to site Z.

The other Iron Age artefacts that were recovered display similar distribution patterns, and it is likely that their deposition was directly related to the deposition of the coins at the site. A disc brooch, the ring of a penannular brooch, a bronze strap-loop, a silver spiral finger-ring, a fragment from a bronze La Tène horse-bit, and a bronze pin, were all found scattered around the western standing stone GC9. A similar disc brooch and another horse-bit fragment were found elsewhere at the site, and it appears likely that both of the horse-bit pieces were deliberately cut-up (O'Kelly 1977, 52). A particularly interesting find from the western area has been described as a gold foil 'packet'. This unusual item consisted of a sheet of gold tightly folded with a circular shape visible on the bottom surface, possibly indicating that it had once covered a coin (O'Kelly 1977, 46). Inside this folded sheet there was a piece of gold foil with a number of parallel lines scratched onto it. Another fragment of bronze sheet also had incised lines scratched into it, and these were thought by O'Kelly to represent 'ogham symbols' (O'Kelly 1977, 63). A gold finger ring was found near the standing stone GC1 at the entrance. A number of other rings were also found at various locations throughout the site: these included two copper-alloy rings covered with gold foil, one lead ring, one made from bronze wire, and a silver spiral ring similar to that found near GC9. Other metal finds include ten coils of silver wire, a piece of gold wire, some

---

[75] None of the Roman or other Iron Age finds were deposited at the sockets of the removed standing stones, indicating that these stones had been removed prior to the Late Iron Age activity.

copper wire, two lead discs, a bronze bracelet, an iron awl, and a bronze chape with a fragment of bone scabbard attached.

The twenty-six small glass beads found scattered around the site also share a similar distribution pattern to the coins. These 'pinheads' are made from dark-blue glass with a white inlay in a spiral or swirling design. Ranging in size from 4 mm to 16 mm in diameter; most of the beads have a small perforation extending about halfway into their centre. Two of the beads held iron shanks, and the stub of a pin is still visible in one example. Most of these were found around the three extant standing stones outside the entrance (GC1, GC-1, GC-2), with four from the western area around GC9, and two others from site Z. Similar beads have been found at the Rath of the Synods at Tara, at Cairn H in the Loughcrew megalithic complex, Co. Westmeath, at the Sandhills at Maghera, Co. Donegal (O'Kelly 1977, 47) and at Raffin Fort, Co. Meath in a 3rd to early 5th century AD context (Newman pers comm.). It is significant that Roman material has been found at all but the last of these locations, however no direct parallels for these beads are known from Romano-British contexts. A melon bead similar to a number of Romano-British examples was also found at the site (see Guido 1978).

Two oblong rectilinear bone objects have been identified as dice. One of the pieces has a different number of markers engraved along its sides, each consisting of three concentric circles and a central dot. The total number of markers originally represented on the piece cannot be determined as one of the ends is badly damaged. The second bone piece is the same shape as the last only larger, but has no recognisable marks. Carson and O'Kelly (1977, 51) refer to this piece as a 'rough-out', and it would appear likely that this is an unfinished dice comparable to the former piece, or that the markers on the latter piece were not inscribed and have since worn away. Other bone artefacts from the site include four beads and ring, although these finds cannot be directly dated to the Iron Age (see Flanagan 1960, 61-62).

One of the most intriguing finds from the site is a gold torc-end, found at the foot of the standing stone GC5, with the enigmatic inscription 'SCBONS.MB' in pontillé Roman lettering across its side (Fig. 5.3). It has been suggested that this piece was cut from an Irish Middle Bronze Age torc, a fascinating possibility that presents us with a strong candidate for the first known written inscription made in Ireland (Raftery 1994, 210). No exact parallel has been found for the inscription;

however there is a Scottish artefact, found in Dumfries in the 18th century, which shows a number of significant similarities. This is a gold rod with upturned conical ends that appears to be a small straightened-out torc (Pococke 1773, 41). One of the ends is stamped with the letters HELINVS.F, and on the other end are the letters M B inscribed in pontillé Roman lettering. *Helinvs* is likely to be a name, and F is commonly used as an abbreviation for *filius* or 'son of' in Roman inscriptions. It is possible that *SCBONS* also represents an abbreviated name such as the common Roman name 'Scibona'.[76]

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.3: Inscribed gold torc-end from Newgrange (After Raftery 1994).

---

[76] This candidate for the inscription was suggested by Dr. Jacqueline Cahill-Wilson (pers. comm.).

Raftery has interpreted the inscription as being the result of '...a literate Roman stamping his owners mark on what for him was a gold ingot' (1994, 210). However, the parallels between the Dumfries and Newgrange items – the presence of M.B. in both inscriptions, the identical execution of these letters, and the similarity in the forms of the objects – suggests that the inscriptions may have had a more specialised ritual purpose than simple marks of ownership. There is also evidence to suggest that the torc-end itself may have been chosen specifically for ritual deposition. At Annesborough, Co. Armagh, a group of objects were found together 23cm under the soil by a farmer sinking a hole for a gatepost in 1913 (Coffee and Armstrong, 1914). The hoard consisted of a gold Bronze Age torc, a Bronze Age palstave axe, two bronze bracelets, and a Roman fibula dating to the 1st century AD (Fig. 5.4).

The association of Bronze Age artefacts and a Roman brooch puzzled Coffee and Armstrong (1914, 173) though nowadays we might consider it an instance of the ritual reuse of archaic prehistoric artefacts documented at a number of provincial Roman ritual sites (Adkins and Adkins 1985; Smith 2001, 28; 156). It is significant that the ends had been cut off the torc before it was deposited suggesting that torcs were being deliberately chosen for ritual deposition and, more specifically, this ritual involved the deliberate cutting-off of the ends. Thus we might suggest that rather than a mere mark of ownership, the inscription in the Newgrange specimen is religious in nature. While it is tempting to suggest that the capitals 'M.B.' may represent a dedication to a specific deity this would be extremely speculative.

Similar associations may be noted in relation to the La Tène material found at Newgrange. Horse-bits and scabbard chapes are both artefact types that are consistently found in hoards and contexts suggestive of ritual deposition, most notably in lakes, bogs, and rivers (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 196-199). Indeed the proximity of the Boyne River may also constitute an important watery connection in relation to the deposition of these objects at Newgrange. The cutting-up of the horse-bits may also be associated with the practices involved in the cutting of the torcs at Annesborough and Newgrange. Raftery suggests that the horse-bit fragments may have been no more than metalworking scrap intended for melting and reuse (1983, 41-42; 1994, 151), however the presence of mutilated metalwork is a noted feature of Iron Age and Roman hoards in Britain, where it has been

interpreted as an expression of religious beliefs concerning the life-cycle of the objects and their associations with death and regeneration (Hingley 1997, 13-15).
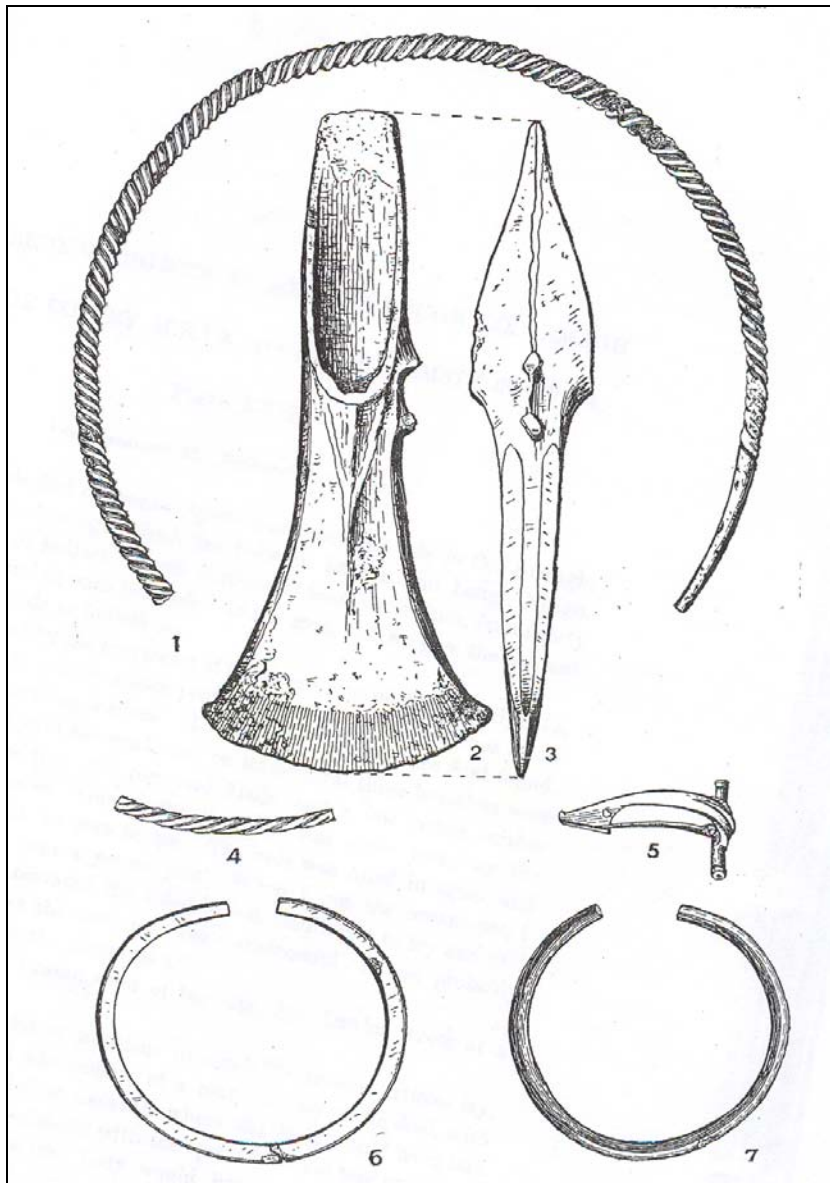
Fig. 5.4: Hoard from Annesborough, Co Armagh (After Coffee and Armstrong 1914).
1: Bronze Age Torc with ends cut away; 2-3: Bronze Age Palstave; 4: Piece of cut Torc;
5: Roman Dolphin Brooch; 6-7: Bronze Rings/Bracelets.

Overall the corpus of material consists mainly of coins, personal ornaments, and beads, with small numbers of other items such as dice, horse-bits, a scabbard chape and an awl (Fig. 5.5). The most notable feature of the corpus is the amount of gold material, the highest number of gold artefacts from any site in Iron Age Ireland. In fact, there are almost twice as many gold finds from Newgrange (19 altogether) than there are in Raftery's entire catalogue of Iron Age material (just 11 finds).[77] Carson noted the quantity of valuable issues among the Newgrange coins, contrasting the high level of precious metals with the dominance of lower issues in Romano-British contexts, making the perceptive observation that such numbers of high-value coins recall the late pre-conquest finds of Iron Age gold coins at ritual sites such as Harlow (1977, 41-42). Therefore it is not only the exotic nature of the material but also its relative value that underlines the importance of the Newgrange corpus.

Finds	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Copper	Glass	Bone	Iron	Lead	Total
Coins	10	6	7	2					25
Personal Ornament	7	2	9	2		1		1	22
Beads					27	4			31
Dice						2			2
Horse Gear			2						2
Discs								2	2
Weapons			1						1
Tools							1		1
Other	2		1						3
Total	19	8	20	4	27	6	1	3	

Fig 5.5: The composition of the Iron Age Corpus from Newgrange

---

[77] It should be noted that Raftery includes just three gold ribbon-torcs in his *Catalogue*. There is growing evidence to suggest that a significant number of the 65 known Irish ribbon-torcs, which were previously thought to be Bronze Age objects (Eogan 1994), may be at least Early Iron Age in date (Warner 2004). If this is the case our understanding of Iron Age gold work would be greatly altered. However, the a lack of gold objects in the Study Area is still notable, with just one object from Raftery's *Catalogue* (the imported gold band from Lambay) and three provenanced ribbon torcs found in the Southeast (Eogan 1994, 130-132; see also Cahill 2006).

Another notable characteristic of the Newgrange finds is the recurring circular or disc motif in the form of the artefacts: coins, rings, discs, beads, disc brooches, penannular brooches, necklaces, bracelets, and chains all display this quality (Fig. 5.6). There are so many features of this assemblage that are highly suggestive: the high-status finds, the spatial distribution, and the forms of the artefacts, factors that all intimate a sense of their being items specifically chosen and carefully placed indicating special significance.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.6: Disc brooches from Newgrange (After Kelly 2002).

The coins provide the most reliable dating evidence for the Iron Age activity at Newgrange: there are three 1st century AD issues, seven dating to the 3rd century, and fifteen of 4th century date. The picture provided by this small sample suggests a short-lived phase of late 1st/early 2nd century activity followed by a renewed and increasing level of deposition in the 3rd and 4th centuries, with activity ceasing sometime in the early 5th century AD. Much of the non-numismatic material cannot be accurately dated beyond a general 1st to 4th century range; however an increase in 4th century activity is indicated by a small number of chronologically diagnostic artefacts. The disc brooches from Newgrange are of a distinct type – most popular in Britain but also known on the continent – the earliest of which would appear to date to the late 3rd century, with the majority of examples coming from 4th century contexts (Butcher 1993, 155-6). Similarly, the penannular brooch belongs to a type that can be dated to the 3rd or 4th century AD (Ó Floinn 2001, 7). Therefore, although the number of coins is far too small to provide a detailed chronological scheme of the phases of activity at the site, the main period of deposition does appear to have occurred during the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

This date-range is also supported by a single radiocarbon sample of humic acid from the upper sod-layer of the mound, which provided a determination of 259-536 AD (Smith *et al*. 1971, 452). It is possible that the three 1st century coins could have been deposited as late as the 3rd century AD, as issues from the time of Vespasian (69-79 AD) onwards have been found in British hoards dating to as late as the 260's (Reece 2002, 42-43). However such coins are usually in poor condition, which is not the case here. It should also be remembered that many of the other finds could well be contemporary with the 1st century coins and that 1st and 2nd century Roman finds have been uncovered at the nearby passage tomb of Knowth. The hiatus in relation to late 2nd century/early 3rd century coins at the site can also be seen as part of a wider chronological pattern relating to coinage in the 'Western Roman Empire', and there is no evidence to suggest that this hiatus can be extended to other material types in these regions (see Chapter 2 above).

Knowth

The necropolis at Knowth is located just over 1 km to the northwest of Newgrange, at the western end of the bend in the Boyne. The great mound is similar to Newgrange, measuring around 85m in diameter and 9.9m high and surrounded by a continuous line of 127 kerbstones. There are two passage tombs situated back to back within the mound with entrances facing east and west. Excavations under the direction of George Eogan began in 1962, and revealed a complex of 18 smaller satellite tombs surrounding the large mound and another two possible tomb sites to the northeast (Eogan and Roche 1997). Despite the fact that the burial chambers within the mound had been previously disturbed, a number of cremation deposits and Neolithic grave goods were found. Radiocarbon samples believed to be from the construction phases have provided determinations of 3358-2932 BC and 3292-2922 BC. About 10m from the entrance of the eastern tomb an oval post-hole enclosure about 8m in diameter was uncovered. Deposits containing grooved ware pottery and flint scrapers were found in the post-holes, which also provided radiocarbon samples dating to the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.[78]

---

[78] Radiocarbon determinations from charred material on the inner sides of the grooved ware: 2873-2581 BC; 2617-2351 BC.

The Iron Age activity at the site may have been even more extensive than that at Newgrange, with over thirty unprotected inhumation burials inserted around the mound (Fig. 5.7). Four Early Medieval cist burials are located further to the west of the tomb, and it would appear that at least some of the unprotected burials may also be of Early Historic date. Thirteen of the unprotected burials were crouched, six were extended (heads S-W) and twelve had been disturbed. Radiocarbon determinations of 86 – 253 AD; 2 – 206 AD; 40 –121 AD; 175 – 50 BC; and 3 BC – 219 AD were procured from the crouched burials 4; 7; 8/9; 10; and 21 respectively (Eogan 2012). Later dates were procured from burials 11 (645-885 AD), 14 (668-800 AD), and 24 (784-994 AD).

These later burials may be associated with the subsequent remodelling of the mound in the Early Historic period when two ditches, 6m wide and 3m deep, were dug around the passage tomb. It has been suggested that this represents the fortification of the site '…turning Knowth virtually into a hillfort' (Stout 2002, 50). However, it is clear from the profile that no attempts were made to construct any banks, while the two ditches cut into the mound are also reminiscent of the forms of enclosure used at multivallate ring-ditch or barrows, although these monuments are much smaller and it is clear that Knowth is not a barrow-type monument. The construction of ditched enclosures around Neolithic tombs is not unknown in Ireland and sites such as Newgrange Site K, Fourknocks Site II, and the passage tomb at Kiltierney were all surrounded by later penannular ditches (Corlett 2005, 68-69). Considering the ritual nature of the previous activity at the site, and the presence of an Early Historic burial in the outer ditch itself (burial 14), it is possible that this building was not concerned with defensive fortification but rather constituted a ritual remodelling of the site.

The central enclosed area within the inner ditch measured 40m in diameter, unfortunately any evidence for associated activity in this area appears to have been disturbed by the extensive building undertaken in later periods. The ditch-building is difficult to date with accuracy; however the burial from the base of the outer ditch (burial 14) has provided a radiocarbon date of 668-800 AD. A sherd of E-ware pottery found at the base of one of the ditches also suggests a date sometime between the 5th and 8th centuries AD. Ogham inscriptions in the western passage include 16 personal names carved in vernacular style and 5 scholastic inscriptions which may date to 8th century AD, when the site underwent further

transition eventually becoming the seat of the medieval kings of Northern Brega and an undefended settlement of nine houses occupied until the 11th century AD (Eogan 2012; see also Byrne et. al. 2008).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.7: Iron Age Burials at Knowth, Co. Meath (After Raftery 1994).

The Material Culture

A number of the inhumation burials contained grave goods suggesting a Romano-British influence in the burial rites practiced at the site, with gaming pieces, dice, and rings all found directly associated with human remains. The unusual double burial Inhumation 8/9 is unique in Ireland, consisting of two decapitated adult males lying head to toe in a single pit (Fig. 5.8). Sacrificial burials are not uncommon in Ireland – with bog bodies in particular providing convincing evidence for ritual murder in the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods – and the possibility of a ritual killing cannot be ruled out. Numerous skulls have been found in lakes and other watery contexts such as the ritual pool at the King's Stables at Navan Fort, yet these appear to be Bronze Age in date (Fredengren 2002, 191-192; McGarry 2010, 177). Possible skull burials from a confirmed Iron Age context have been found at Ráith na Rig at Tara, where a pocket of skull and facial bones were uncovered at the bottom of the enclosure ditch (Roche 2002, 22-24), and Raffin Fort, Co. Meath, where a fragment of a human skull was placed in a pit under a standing stone within the enclosure . At this last site the skull provided a radiocarbon determination of 100 BC – 130AD, while the burning in the pit was dated from the 2nd to the 4th centuries AD. This would suggest that the skull was at least a century old before it was placed in the pit, and was therefore a 'curated object' (Dillon *et al.* 2008, 78).

These burials have been interpreted as an Irish example of the 'Celtic cult of the head', a phenomenon that is well documented in Iron Age Europe (Newman 1993; Dillon *et al.* 2008). The Knowth burial could conceivably be interpreted in a similar manner, yet this burial does appear to be rather distinct. The skulls had been replaced in the correct anatomical position suggesting, contrary to practices associated with 'the cult of the head', that the skulls themselves were not used for any specific ritual purposes. In fact the closest parallels for this behaviour are found in Romano-British contexts where at least 76 decapitated burials have been recorded (Philpott 1991, 77-89; fig. 23, 440). At the Bath Gate cemetery in Cirencester, two pairs of decapitated males were found buried together in an identical manner to those at Knowth. At the latter site a number of coins dating to the 3rd century AD were placed in one of the burials, and another decapitated male was buried in the same cemetery, which was located close to the amphitheatre (McWhirr *et. al.* 1982, 109).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.8: The double inhumation burial 8/9 at Knowth, Co. Meath (After Raftery 1994).

It has been suggested that the Bath Gate bodies may be the remains of fallen gladiators. However, amphitheatres also served as the location for judicial executions, and decapitation was a common method of execution employed by the Roman authorities (Philpott 1991, 78). The grave goods in the double inhumation at Knowth consisted of three bone dice, 2 bronze rings, 13 pegged bone gaming pieces, and 21 small smooth pebbles that may also have been used as gaming pieces. Gaming sets are often found among the grave goods deposited in late pre-conquest and Roman burials in Britain (Clarke 1979, 252-254). A set of 24 counters, six glass sticks, and a board was found in a cremation at Welwyn dating to around 10 BC, and more than ten full sets have been found in Romano-British burials, including an inhumation in Grave 51 at Lankhills cemetery (dated 310-370/90 AD), which contained 26 counters as well as an ivory die (Philpott 1991, 185). Conical gaming pieces and the decorated tip of a horn were found in

Inhumation 1 at Knowth, a grave which contained the crouched burial of a six-year-old child.

Inhumation 21 at Knowth was the crouched burial of an adult female and child associated with a necklace of 285 tiny blue glass beads, five bronze rings, and five bone beads. The rings are penannular, two are plain and three of them are finely ribbed. The bone beads are similar to those found at Newgrange and six more were found in Inhumation 3, the burial of a crouched adult. In Inhumation 12, 43 blue glass beads were found near the right arm of a disturbed adult skeleton, and in Inhumation 13, two clusters of 56 and 165 similar beads were found beside the right and left arms of a crouched female burial. Yet another glass bead was found near the neck of a crouched adult female in Inhumation 20. The use of the rite of couched inhumation is highly suggestive of British influences in relation to these burials, as this practice was introduced into Ireland from Britain sometime around the last two centuries BC, and the Knowth burials represent '…the first clearly formal crouched inhumation burials to appear in Ireland since the second millennium BC' (McGarry 2008, 222). A direct British influence may also be indicated by strontium analysis of the burials, which indicates that the individuals in burial 8/9 may have come from northern Britain or northern Ireland. However not all of the crouched burials are 'foreign', as the individual in burial 10 would appear to have grown up in the local area (Cahill-Wilson in Eogan 2012).

Two penannular brooches, dating to the 4th and Early 5th centuries were found in disturbed context in the fill of the outer ditch, and a later 6th century penannular brooch was also found at the site (Youngs in Eogan 2012). Three Roman toilet implements – a *lagula*, a possible *lagula* or dental mirror, and an ear scoop – were also found close to the eastern passage tomb entrance (Mulvin in Eogan 2012; see also Ó Floinn in Eogan 2012). A Romano-British spiral ring from the site has a tapering outer terminal '…which might suggest that this is stylised serpent ring' (Mulvin in Eogan 2012, 360). Other Roman finds from the site include two fragments of Central Gaulish Samian ware (2nd century AD), one of which is from a form Drag. 37 bowl.

Blue glass beads from the site have been compared to examples from the Iron Age ring-ditch at Ballydavis (Keeley 1999), but according to Barry Raftery the similarities are '…by no means compelling' and it is '…possible that these

Knowth beads are imports' (Raftery in Eogan 2012, 234). The beads in the crouched inhumations also '…seem clearly to come from outside of Ireland' (Raftery in Eogan 2012, 234).). Two bone combs were also recovered, however their context is uncertain and they may belong to the later phases of activity. It is worth noting that similar combs were found with the Iron Age bone slips at Cairn H in the Loughcrew megalithic cemetery (Raftery 1984, 210). Large numbers of animal bones were recovered from the fill of the two ditches that were subsequently dug around the mound. Cattle bones predominated with pig and sheep being less popular, in a breakdown similar to other late-prehistoric sites such as Knockaulin (Eogan 1991). It has been suggested that these remains represents ritual feasting similar to that thought to have occurred at Knockaulin (Stout 2002, 69).

The Surrounding Landscape

The area surround the megalithic tombs in the Boyne Valley constitutes one of the largest prehistoric ritual landscapes in Western Europe. Less than 2 km to the east of Newgrange lies Dowth, the third great mound of the Boyne Valley complex. Badly damaged during the 19th century excavations, Dowth is similar in size to Knowth and Newgrange with two passage tombs opening onto the western side of the monument. A later souterrain was added to the northernmost tomb and an enclosing ditch may also have been dug into the mound. There are two smaller mounds located to the east (Sites I and J), one of which is known to contain a passage tomb (Stout 2002). Another small mound at Townleyhall, about 2km north of Dowth, was excavated in1960's and shown to contain a passage tomb (Eogan 1963). It appears likely that a number of similar mounds scattered across the Boyne Valley landscape are also passage tombs or burial mounds of some sort (see Stout 2002, 22-6: fig. 11 and table 1).

Other ritual monuments in the surrounding area include two massive embanked enclosures, which have produced evidence for Bronze Age activity, standing stones, Bronze Age cist burials, ring-ditches, an artificial water-filled enclosure, and an Early Medieval graveyard.[79] An impressive promontory fort

---

[79] It is also interesting to note that the Bronze Age 'fulactha fiadh' or burnt mounds that are omnipresent in the prehistoric Irish landscape are conspicuously absent in the area surrounding

overlooking the Boyne on the slopes below Knowth is similar to a number of other inland promontory forts in northeast Co. Meath. This concentration of promontory forts may have formed a late prehistoric network of fortifications, specifically in the area to the north of the Hill of Tara (Newman 2005). These sites have not been excavated and therefore no direct dating evidence is available, however their morphology has led to speculation that they date to the Late Iron Age. An unusual small square enclosure is also located a short distance from the Knowth promontory across a small but precipitous gorge (Newman 2005, 390). Another promontory at Carrickdexter overlooks the Boyne and faces an enclosure known as Rossnaree on the other side of the river. At this last site a female inhumation burial, buried with a foetus underneath a small mound, provided a radiocarbon determination of 257-553AD. This burial also contained a 'Roman-type silver plated tin ring' (Cahill and Sikora 2012).

It is possible that the Knowth and Carrickdexter fortifications on the northern side of the river marked the southern limit of a neighbouring territory – mirroring the line of promontory forts to the north of Tara at Rath Lug, Edoxtown, and Platin (Newman 2005, 379-80). However, Newman has noted that these forts and are heavily defended on their northern landward sides and thus occupy a rather ambiguous position in the landscape; the promontories themselves overlook the river yet the ramparts face in the opposite direction. It could be argued that this is the case with any promontory fort – the natural promontory provides a strategic position overlooking the landscape while the man-made defences serve to protect this vantage point at its vulnerable intersection with the landward side – yet is also significant that these forts overlook the stretch of the Boyne that is most accessible from the southern side of the river, and therefore may have been just as concerned with controlling or ensuring access than maintaining a defensive boundary.

In some early historical records Brú na Bóinne is represented as the ancestral burial grounds of the kings of Tara, a link that may hint at a more direct association between the two ritual complexes. It is difficult to assess how much emphasis can be placed on the traditional association of the Boyne Valley complex with Tara, as this 'tradition' may well have been produced by the early

Brú na Bóinne, with just three examples excavated at a single location in Sheephouse townland (Campbell 1995).

historical writers for their own contemporary political purposes. According to Swift it is '… likely that the tenth century claims concerning the Role of Brú na Bóinne as a high-status burial site derives primarily from its medieval associations with the Uí Néill dynasty' (2003, 54). This may be the case, yet the thorny issue remains as to whether these sites were attributed such status due to their more recent historical associations, or whether the associations themselves were cultivated due to the pre-existing status of the prehistoric monuments. The archaeological evidence would certainly suggest that it is highly unlikely that the great passage tomb cemetery had suddenly attained such status in the medieval period.

The presence of burials, gold coins, jewellery and Roman pottery at Newgrange and Knowth clearly indicates that Brú na Bóinne was both used as a burial site and recognised as a location of extraordinary importance in the late Iron Age period. The concentration of inland promontory forts in the surrounding landscape may also hint at the perceived social and political importance of the Boyne Valley in Late prehistory. As Newman has argued:

> 'In their desire to advance their political and territorial ambitions, early kings of Tara would have grasped any opportunity of claiming the huge Neolithic mound with its long history of utilisation, up to and including the deposition there of Roman objects. While they might have attempted to secure it from the south side of the river by establishing a royal residence of Rossnaree, the possibility that the forts at Knowth and Carrickdexter were also controlled from the south side of the river should not be ruled out.'
>
> (Newman 2005, 380)

An early historic routeway known as Slige Assail (the 'Assal Road') extended from the estuary of the river through the Boyne Valley and on to Rathcroghan and the west coast. Some traditions also place the fording place of the great northern road, the Slige Midlúachra, at Brú na Bóinne (Newman 2005, 370-1). Of course the river itself would also have served as an important routeway in the past, a fact confirmed by the appearance of the waterway in Ptolemy's 2nd century geography as *Βουουίνδα ἐκβολαί* 'the Buwinda River'. It appears likely that Ptolemy gathered at least some of his information from seafaring merchants who had visited Ireland (Freeman 2001, 66-7), and the recovery of sherds of Gaulish Samian ware and Romano-British Severn Valley ware during dredging operations

near Drogheda attest to use of the river for the importation of provincial Roman goods (Kelly 2002).

The archaic form of the river name given in Ptolemy 'Buwinda' is derived from the early Irish 'bóa-vinda', possibly meaning 'cow-white' or 'illuminated cow' (O'Rahilly 1946, 3). Like the mythical references to the kingship of Tara in the early historical sources, this imagery finds interesting parallels in ancient Indian Sanskrit literature where sacred rivers were represented as the milk flowing from a white cow (Ó hÓgáin 1991, 49). This serves as a reminder that rivers were also sites of worship in ancient times, and the discovery of a number of Iron Age artefacts in the Boyne may be attributed to ritual deposition. A Y-shaped pendant was found in the river at Moyfin and an armlet was recovered at Ballymahon, both in Co. Meath, while a Roman cult statuette in the National Museum is said to have come from 'the river Boyne near Navan' (see Chapter 7 below).[80]

Comparative Archaeology

A number of other megalithic monuments across Ireland have revealed evidence of Late Iron Age activity, and many of these sites have also produced Roman material. The most well-known of these sites is the Loughcrew passage tomb cemetery; an extensive megalithic complex of at least twenty-five tombs spread over 3 km along the four peaks of the Slieve na Caillighe mountains in Co. Meath (Fig. 5.9). One of the tombs (Cairn H) was excavated in 1865 and 1868, revealing a small cruciform chamber with a number of decorated stones. The site was reopened in 1943 and along with some Neolithic artefacts a large number of Iron Age objects were recovered (McMann 1993). Many of these items are similar to those discovered at Brú na Bóinne including a small blue glass 'pinhead' bead, a bone pin, and bronze and iron rings.

---

[80] This object was rediscovered, and brought it to the attention of the writer, by Ger Dowling and Conor Newman.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.9: Loughcrew megalithic cemetery, Co. Meath (After Jones 2007).

The vast majority of the material consisted of over 5000 fragments of worked and polished bone, used to make combs and small plaques, representing around 600 individual pieces altogether (Fig 5.10). Some of these objects are decorated with fine-line curvilinear compass-drawn designs in an Irish version of the La Tène art style known as the 'Loughcrew-Somerset Style'. An iron object discovered at the site has been described as a 'compass leg', however the artefact is now missing and this classification cannot be confirmed. An illustration from 1873 shows an item c. 4cm long with one pointed end and a disc-like attachment at the opposite end. This could be a compass of some sort, a suggestion strengthened by the presence of so many bone slips with compass-drawn decoration. These plaques in particular are unusual objects and no close parallels have been found at any other site in Ireland – the only possible exception being a box of 21 flakes among the Cairn H material with a label indicating that they came from the larger Cairn L passage tomb nearby (Raftery 1983, 235).

Only 138 of the plaque fragments are decorated and 11 have small round perforations in one end. The decoration is almost exclusively non-figurative and curvilinear, with straight lines used only to frame the curvilinear designs that are incised or scratched onto the surface of the polished pieces. A number of interpretations concerning the function and use of these objects have been proposed; one of the first suggestions being was that these are 'trial' pieces or 'display' plaques used by craftworkers to practice or exhibit their artistic repertoire (one commentator even suggested that Cairn H itself was a workshop: Megaw 1970, 152). However, there is no evidence of slag or related debris and the presence of so many highly polished undecorated pieces leaves this theory

with little to recommend it; while the current consensus appears to favour some kind of ritual use (Raftery 1994, 173; Waddell 1998, 369).

John Waddell has suggested that these objects may have been divining pieces used for a 'casting of bones' type ritual similar to that attributed to the Germans by Tacitus in his *Germania* (Waddell 2011, 203). Catherine Swift has put forward the suggestion that these bone pieces may represent a native Irish version of the Roman practice of votive deposition involving leaf or feather-shaped metal plaques (1997, 20). Recent radiocarbon dating indicates that the plaques themselves pre-date the Romano-British votive objects by at least a century[81] however, if we look at the collection of bone pieces from Loughcrew there does appear to be a connection between at least one of the plaques and a specific deposit in Roman Britain.

One of the more unusual plaques from Loughcrew is decorated with a simplistic carving clearly representing a stag (Fig. 5.11). This very figural carving stands out in comparison to the stylistic, curvilinear compass designs on so many of the other plaques. This may not be significant in itself, yet the discovery of a bronze plaque from a shrine in Colchester (Breeze 2004), inscribed with the name *Silvanus Callirius* and deposited in a pit along with a small bronze figurine of a stag, provides a tangible link between the bone plaques of Loughcrew and Romano-British ritual practices involving bronze plaques. Furthermore, Romano-British votive plaques were not made exclusively from bronze or other metals: a bone plaque with an inscribed representation of a human figure was recovered from a pit near the 4th century Romano-Celtic temple at the religious complex at Chelmsford, Essex (Wickenden 1986), and an undecorated rectangular segment of polished rib bone was discovered at the 1st-2nd century Romano-British shrine at Orton's Pasture in Staffordshire. This last item is identical to a group of artefacts categorised as 'polished bone strips', found both in Britain and on the continent, that are generally dated to the 1st century AD (Ferris *et al.* 2000, 55). All have a loop or an oval perforation, suggesting that they may have been suspend or attached to something, a feature that also appears on some of the Irish pieces. The fact that they tend to be made from cattle ribs provides yet another link to the Loughcrew plaques, one of which was also rectangular in shape.

---

[81] The actual determinations for these samples have not been published, but they would appear to centre on the 2nd century BC (Ned Kelly pers. comm.).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.10(Left): Decorated bone flake, Loughcrew.

(After Kelly 2002)

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.11(Above): Engraving of a stag on bone plaque, Loughcrew (After Raftery 1984).

Less than 20km to the north of Loughcrew, on the summit of Corleck Hill in Co. Cavan, a circular earthen embankment measuring approximately 65m in diameter surrounded a stone circle and a large mound that may have been a passage tomb. These features were dismantled between 1832 and 1900, and around this time the famous triple-faced figure, or tricephalous, known as the Corleck head was discovered (Fig. 5.12). Triple-faced carvings are known from pre-Roman contexts in Europe, particularly in northern and Belgic Gaul, and become more numerous in post-conquest contexts during what Miranda Green calls 'the burgeoning of Celtic religious art during the Romano-Celtic Period' (1992, 173-4). Almost all of the contexted British examples have been found in Roman contexts, and although '…it is unlikely that any of the Irish carvings antedate Romano-British influence' (Rynne 1972, 79), not one of the Irish stone heads can be firmly dated archaeologically (see Chapter 2 above).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.12: Stone triple-face head, Corleck, Co. Cavan (After Kelly 2002).

However, the stone head from Killavilla, Co. Offaly, may possibly be Late Iron Age in date, as it was discovered underneath a boulder just 100m to the west of a large mound where a silver coin of Tiberius was found in the early decades of the last century (Ó Ríordáin 1947, 75). The distinctive pointed tip of the crown has also been compared by Ross and Rynne to Gallo-Roman and Romano-British representations of the Genii Cucullati (Ross 1967, 88-9 and pl. 32b; Rynne 1972). Another Roman coin, a gold issue of Valentinian II (379-392AD), was found on one of the tracks leading into the Giants Ring near Belfast, Co. Down, in 1925

(Bateson 1976, 173). The Giants Ring is a massive embanked enclosure, similar to the two examples in the Boyne Valley, with a small passage tomb mound located in the centre.

The Carrowmore megalithic cemetery in Co. Sligo has also provided a significant amount of evidence for Iron Age reuse. Lying in the shadow of Knocknarea and Miosgán Meabha ('Mebdh's lump or heap': a massive passage tomb that crowns the hill), this complex once consisted of up to sixty monuments but only thirty remain extant today. The majority of the surviving monuments consist of boulder circles ranging in size from 10 to 17m in diameter, most of which enclose a central megalithic structure. Many of the tombs were altered in late prehistoric times: large boulders were pulled back to form entrances in the surrounding kerbs, and in one case a penannular ditch was dug inside the circle with a causeway aligned to the newly formed entrance and eight pits inserted in the interior (Grave 26).

This recalls the secondary ditches in the great mound at Knowth, and there is substantial evidence to suggest that these two events were roughly contemporaneous as charcoal from Grave 26 has provided a radiocarbon-date of BC100-410AD. Furthermore, Grave 4 contained burnt animal bones that have been dated to 230-520AD, and a sample from the chamber of Grave 27 was dated to 130-440AD. This last tomb was also used for Iron Age burials, with 168 teeth from at least 23 individuals found in a secondary deposit in the chamber (Burenhult 1984). Grave 7 at Carrowmore may also have been re-used at this time: some of the kerbstones are in a secondary position and may have been pulled back to form an entrance similar to those at the other tombs (Burenhult 1984, 19). There were also numerous secondary deposits of animal bone and shellfish that may be Iron Age in date.

An interesting find from this last site is a small statuette (42mm in height), possibly of alabaster, which was found at the entrance of the tomb near some shellfish deposits (Figs. 5.13; 5.14).[82] This find was considered to be modern by the excavator who thought, mistakenly, that it was porcelain (Burenhult 1984, 32). However the closest parallels for this artefact are not modern but come from Roman contexts. The naked female figure is almost identical to those of Roman

---

[82] This object was brought to my attention by Dr. Stefan Berg.

cult statuettes and pipe clay figurines depicting Venus; and it is interesting to note that numerous small fragments of pipe clay were found at the site and were also considered to be modern by the excavator. The head and the legs of this statuette are broken, and it is possible that this damage was sustained in antiquity as two Venus figurines discovered in a ritual deposit in London were both missing their heads and feet, and a 'mutilated' clay-pipe Venus was also found at Silchester (Fulford 2001).[83]
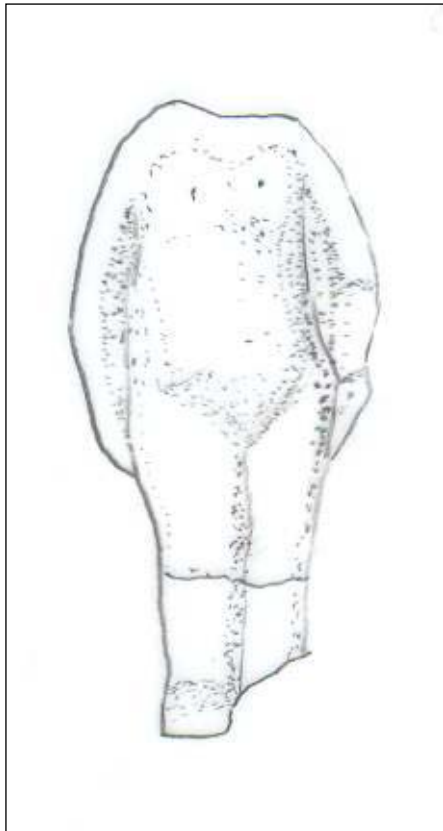
Fig. 5.13: Venus statuette Carrowmore 7.
(the coin is a one euro piece)

Fig. 514: Drawing of Carrowmore Venus.

At Kiltierney, Co. Fermanagh, a ditch was dug around the mound of a passage tomb and 19 small mounds (approximately 1m high and 3m in diameter) were built on the outside of the ditch forming a discontinuous bank and giving the monument a barrow-like appearance (Hamlin and Lynn 1988). The original mound was enlarged, and a number of cremation burials were placed in the augmented mound and in the smaller surrounding mounds. Two deposits of grave goods were found: one of the smaller satellite mounds contained fragments of enamelled bronze wire that may have been part of a decorated mirror handle, and a bronze leaf-bow fibula was found with four glass beads in the large central

---

[83] This last site has also produced the only authenticated ogham stone found in England to date.

mound. The beads included a dumbbell bead similar to those found at Knowth and Cairn H at Loughcrew, and a herring-bone bead with close parallels among Roman beads from South Shields (Raftery 1984, 202-4). A date-range from the later 1st century BC to the 1st century AD appears likely for the finds and the associated activity, which appears to have constituted a single continuous phase of reuse (Raftery 1994, 192-3).

This Iron Age activity is not confined to the reuse of passage tombs, and a number of other megalithic monument types also show evidence for similar reuse. A copper alloy wire ring that may be Iron Age was found at a stone cairn at Loughash, Co Tyrone (Johnston and Wailes 2007, 107), and evidence for iron working was also uncovered at Aghnaskeagh Portal tomb, Co. Louth, and Largantea Wedge tomb, Co. Derry (Scott 1990. 222-3). At a wedge tomb in Altar, Co. Cork, four shellfish deposits and one charcoal deposit from the tomb entrance provided a cluster of five dates that all overlap between 120 – 230AD after calibration, with one other charcoal sample giving a determination of BC 355 – 73 AD (Brindley and Lanting 1991/92, 19-20; O'Brien 1999, 133-138). At another wedge tomb in Kilmashogue, Co. Dublin, the main chamber was filled with stone fragments resulting from the partial destruction of the tomb. Charcoal from the surrounding fill indicates a date-range of BC 180 – 230 AD for this activity (Brindley and Lanting 1991/92, 24).

The chambers and entrances of many tombs appear to have been the focus for Iron Age activity at many megalithic sites. Charcoal samples from the chambers of court tombs in Shanballyedmund, Co. Tipperary, and Annaghmare, Co. Armagh, provided dates of BC 390 – AD 240 and 340 – 560 AD respectively (O'Kelly 1958; Waterman 1965), and a deposit of charcoal in the entrance of a monument of early passage tomb-type at Ballycarty in Tralee, Co. Kerry, provided a radiocarbon date of BC 96 – AD 75 (Connolly 1999). Two stone circle sites have also shown evidence for Iron Age burning in their surrounding enclosure ditches: excavations at Lissyviggeen stone circle near Killarney, Co. Kerry, produced charcoal from the surrounding ditch which has been dated to 22 – 121 AD (O'Brien 1999a), and a determination of 256-416AD has been procured from the ditch surrounding Reenascreena South stone circle, Co. Cork (O'Brien 1992). Finally, a series of burnt pits, one of which contained cremated animal bone, were also uncovered in the vicinity of the 'Brehon's Chair' portal tomb at

Taylorsgrange, Co. Dublin. Charcoal samples from two of these pits have provided radiocarbon determinations of BC 160 – 58 AD and 238-392 AD (Lynch 1999).

Comparative contexts: Megaliths, Mythology, and Romano-Celtic Deities

There are very close parallels for the Iron Age activity at Irish prehistoric monuments in a wide number of Romano-British and Gallo-Roman contexts. In his examination of Romano-British religious sites, Smith observes no fewer than 20 examples that had been built on or near prehistoric monuments (2001, 151), while Williams has identified 13 Neolithic sites in Britain where Roman artefacts have been deposited (1998, 73-75; appendix 1). At Mutlow Hill, Cambridgeshire, 79 coins, a stylus, 3 fibulae, and two bronze amulets were found at a 3rd-4th century Romano-Celtic temple located beside a Neolithic tumulus (Wait 1985, 414).

A more direct comparison with Newgrange can be drawn in relation to the Neolithic long barrow at West Kennet in Wiltshire, where the mound itself was the focus of ritual deposition (Piggot 1962). There six coins were placed along the façade of the monument at Stone I and around Stone-Hole 39, in a pattern strikingly similar to that at Newgrange (Ó Floinn 2000). The broader spatial patterning of the ritual deposition at Newgrange may also be related to the rites practiced at Romano-British shrines. An apparent left/right distinction has been distinguished at some sites with a notable preference for the left-hand side of the shrine at sites such as Uley and Hayling Island (Smith 2001, 68; 154). It has been argued that the distribution of deposits at ritual sites provides important evidence regarding the spatial organisation of religious ceremonies (Pollard 1995, 136-7), and it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the deposition of Roman artefacts at the entrances and on the left-hand sides of both the great mound and Site Z at Newgrange may have involved organised ceremonies similar to those occurring at Romano-British shrines.

There is also widespread evidence for the reuse of prehistoric monuments as cemeteries in Roman Britain, with 79 monuments having Romano-British burials in close proximity (Williams 1998, 75-76; appendix 2). This phenomenon appears to have occurred throughout the Roman period: Early Roman inhumations were found at Julliberrie's Grave long barrow in Kent, while over 46 Late Roman

inhumations were uncovered at Neolithic barrows on White Horse Hill, Oxfordshire (Jessup 1939; Miles and Palmer 1996). A close parallel for the re-modelling of the mound at Knowth may be seen at Wayland's Smithy, Berkshire, where a ditch was dug across the façade of a megalithic tomb and then filled with human and animal bone (Atkinson 1965). Roman burials have also been recorded at megalithic tombs in at sites such as Trésse in Northern Gaul, and there also appears to be an explicit association between representations of Venus and megalithic tombs in this region. According to Bradley:

> 'Burials are recorded from the mounds at a number of these monuments, while pipe clay figurines are sometimes found near to the entrances of the tombs. Here they occur together with Roman pottery. The main emphasis appears to have been on human fertility, and the figurines usually depict Venus and the Matures.'
>
> (Bradley 2002, 118-119.)

Similar representations are also known from a number of Roman shrines in Britain. At Woodeaton, representations of Mars and Minerva were accompanied by depictions of Venus, and a direct association between Venus figurines and Neolithic monuments can also be seen at one particularly intriguing site in Britain: At Crickley Hill, Glouscestershire, a small female figurine was found buried within a miniature 'model' long barrow dating to the Roman period, not far from a Neolithic mound where coins and a Roman brooch were also uncovered (Selkirk 1993, 502-3).

Venus was a female territorial and fertility goddess in much of Roman Europe, and she was invoked for protection during pregnancy and childbirth. The presence of such representations at megalithic tombs in Roman Gaul and Britain are associated with cults dedicated to Venus and Romano-Celtic mother goddesses known variously as the *Matres* or *Deae Matronae*. These figures would appear to be associated with territory and sovereignty, and their cults are concerned with fertility and fecundity (Green 1992, 156). Otherworldly themes are also present in various aspects of this cult. The presence of pipe-clay Venus figurines in graves would also suggest that she was thought to offer protection after death, and pipe clay representations of the Matures show three female figures: on either side there are two youthful women, one holding an infant and another holding a cornucopia,

and in the centre is an older women holding a piece of scroll that has been interpreted as 'the book of life' (Green 1992, 39).

In some cases the associations with death and the Underworld are more explicit: in a representation from Nuits St George the figure holding the infant also holds the beam of balance, and over either shoulder of the central figure there is a globe and a boat symbolizing the journey to the Underworld. Thevenot has argued that this cult was concerned more generally with the passage between life and death as well as fertility and fecundity, and Green has interpreted the presence of Venus figurines in burials as representing '...the goddesses continued guardianship in the hazardous journey to the unknown' (cited in Green 1992, 39).

The female figurine from Carrowmore can be seen to be of major significance in this light, becoming an expression of a specific provincial Roman cult rather than an oddity from the west coast of Ireland. The close proximity of mussel and oyster shells at Carrowmore No. 7 may also be of importance here, as the shrines at Woodeaton and Henley Wood also contained deposits of shellfish (Smith 2001, 199; 210). Indeed, it would not be unusual for shellfish to be associated with the cult of Venus as the classical representation of the birth of the goddess is her emergence from the sea in an oyster shell. The archaeological evidence for activity relating to this cult at Carrowmore is also supported by the mythological associations of this location in the early Irish sources. The passage tomb cemetery at Carrowmore is overlooked by the hilly outcrop of Knocknarea, which is crowned by another large prehistoric cairn known as Miosgán Méadba 'Medb's heap/lump'(Fig. 5.15).

The Medb in question is undoubtedly the mythological Queen of Connacht, the protagonist of *An Táin Bó Cuailnge* who gives her name to a number of locations in Sligo and neighboring Roscommon. In these sources Medb represents the forces of territory, fertility and sovereignty, and other aspects of her persona have also been compared to Gaulish mother goddesses (MacKillop 2005, 85-6). The discovery of the female statuette at Carrowmore, in the shadow of the most famous monument that bears Medb's name, would suggest that the provincial Roman cult of Venus and the Matres had become associated with the native goddess Medb in Ireland.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.15: Megalithic tomb at Carrowmore with 'Medb's heap' on Knocknarea visible in the background (After Jones 2007).

The material assemblages from some of the other Irish sites also display distinctive components that may link them to specific religious cults in Roman Britain and Gaul. As noted above, the coins, rings, bracelets and discs from Newgrange all display a circular motif, an assemblage that is strikingly similar to those found at shrines dedicated to Mercury in Roman Britain (Woodward 1992). Cult loci dedicated to Mercury are among the most common religious sites in northern Gaul, where numerous inscriptions associate the Roman god with different local deities (Derks 1998, 115-18). In his account of Gaulish religion in *De Bello Gallico*, Julius Caesar asserts that: 'The god they reverence most is Mercury. They have very many images of him, and regard him as the inventor of all arts – the god who directs men upon their journeys and their most powerful helper in trading and money' (vi.17). It has been noted that the traits Caesar attributes to the Gaulish 'Mercury' correspond closely with those associated with the mythological figure of Lug in the early Irish historical records (ÓhOgáin 1991, 272-273; Raftery 1994, 178). Lug appears in the epic *Cath Maige Tuired* (The Battle of Moytirra) as the *samildánach* or 'master of all arts', and he is said to be the inventor of horse racing as well as the concept of assembly (Gray 1983, 40-1; 126).

In the Irish sources Lug is also closely associated with Brú na Bóinne. In the tale *Tochmarc Étaíne* his mother Ethne is synonymous with Boand, the eponymous goddess of the river Boyne, while his father Cían is generally thought to personify the Cíanachta, a medieval dynasty who ruled the surrounding areas in

east Meath and Louth (Swift 2003, 57). The 9th century saga *Compert Con Culainn* tells of how the famous hero Cú Chulainn was conceived at Brú na Bóinne during an encounter between Lug and Deichtire (Van Hamel 1968, 5). Considering the nature of the assemblage at Newgrange and the historical association of Brú na Bóinne with Lug it is not unreasonable suggest that the Iron Age ritual activity at Newgrange was associated with the provincial Roman cult of Mercury/Lug.

It is also well-documented that tricephalous carvings are directly related to the cult of Mercury in Romano-Celtic religious art. A relief found in Paris shows a triple-faced figure with a number of features that are characteristic of the Classical Mercury: the figure holds a Ram's head in one hand and Mecury's purse in the other, and is surrounded by Mercury's emblems of the goat and the tortoise. A stone from Rheims depicts Classical Mercury on one surface and a tricephalous on another and a carving from Malmaison depicting Mercury and his Gaulish consort Rosmerta is also surmounted by a triple-faced image. Miranda Green remains cautious in relation to the total identification of the tricephalous figure as Mercury as these figures often appear on their own, and even when they are shown together they are depicted separately. According to Green:

'What we appear to have is an acknowledgement that in some instances there were links between two deities, that the three-faced form sometimes merged with and took on the functions of the Celtic Mercury and on other occasions was simply an associated divine form.

(Green 1992, 173-5.)

It is therefore likely that the tricephalous carving from Corleck represents cult activity related to that witnessed at Newgrange and Gallo-Roman sites associated with Lug/Mercury, a suggestion strengthened by the fact that Corleck Hill is a noted Lughnasa assembly site (Kelly 2002).

The connection between the cult of Mercury and megalithic tombs may not be overtly obvious at first; however an important aspect of Mercury's persona was his rôle in guiding the souls of the dead to the underworld as the Roman equivalent of the Greek *Hermes Psychopompos*. This facet of Mercury is well documented in Roman literature – in the works of Horace and Virgil, Mercury is an infernal deity who not only conducts the dead but also polices the boundaries

between the living world and the Underworld – but it is often neglected in Roman archaeology (Forcey 1998, 90-2). Curse tablets dedicated to Mercury and Hermes that condemn victims to the Underworld are found throughout the Roman Empire, particularly at locations that were considered to be entrances to the Underworld (Forcey 1998). In Irish mythology and folklore prehistoric mounds are known as *síd*, the 'abode/seats' of the divinities, and their status as passages to the Otherworld is well documented in the early literature (Sims-Williams 1990).

In some early Irish sources one of the mounds at Brú na Bóinne is known as Sídh Óengus: the abode of Óengus Mac In Óc. Óengus is the son of the Dagdae or 'Good God' and the goddess Bóand, and acquires the sídh by tricking Elcmar (a pseudonym for Nuadu). In some texts Brú na Bóinne is actually known by his name as *Brug meic Ind Óc* (Swift, 2003, 56). Óengus's sobriquet (as 'son of the youth') is grammatically incorrect, and it has been suggested that originally it may have been *maccan* meaning 'youth' or 'boy-god' and would therefore be cognate with the p-Celtic Mabon in Wales and the Romano-British deity Maponus (O'Rahilly 1946, 516-7). Maponus has a dizzying array of attributes that would appear to link him with Classical Apollo: he is a healer, a hunter-god, a youth and a patron of the arts and music (MacKillop 2005, 35). A dedication to him was discovered at the healing shrine of Chamalières in the Auvergne, and he is known from a number of inscriptions around Hadrian's Wall where he is sometimes twinned with Apollo (Green 2004, 211).[84] The similarities between Óengus and Maponus also extend beyond his sobriquet as Óengus appears as a god of youth and poetry in the Irish literature (MacKillop 2005, 14; 35).[85]

It has been suggested above that the Iron Age artefacts at Newgrange are indicative of the cult of Mercury/Lug, not Maponus. However, there is a notable distinction between the types of Roman material deposited at Newgrange and Knowth and the ritual activity undertaken at each site – in fact some aspects of the

---

[84] Miranda Green has argued that Maponus is essentially a British deity and that the Chamalières inscription '…may reflect the cult of a Briton abroad' (2004, 211). However, Swift (2003, 56-7) also notes inscriptions at Rouen, Savigny, and Bourbonne le Bains, and contends that Maponus must belong to a wider Western European pantheon of Celtic gods. Alternatively, it is possible that Maponus was a Gallo-Roman deity and that his cult was introduced into Britain by Gallo-Roman legionaries stationed in and around Hadrian's Wall.
[85] There may even be some direct links between Óengus and Apollo. In the Fenian Cycle of Early Irish literature Óengus protects himself and a number of heroes with a cloak of invisibility (MacKillop 2005, 138). This recalls the rôle of Apollo in the Iliad, who makes himself invisible during Patrolocus's attack (Book VI), and defends the wounded Hector with a protective cape known as the *aegis* (Book XV).

assemblages appear to be almost mutually exclusive. The majority of finds from Newgrange were coins, yet no coins were recovered at Knowth; pottery was found at Knowth, yet not a single sherd was found among all of the Roman artefacts from Newgrange. It is also clear that Knowth functioned as a major cemetery at this time, while no Iron Age burials have been discovered at Newgrange. This would strongly suggest that the ritual activity at these two sites represents distinctive behaviour associated with at least two different cults.

The toilet implements from Knowth are of particular interest in this regard, as these objects are directly associated with hygiene and health, and are found in significant numbers at Romano-British religious sites dedicated to healing and fecundity such as Woodeaton and Harlow, and at a shrine dedicated to Apollo at Nettleton (Woodward and Leach 1993, 332-34). As we have seen, the cult of Maponus is associated with healing springs in Gaul, and in Britain he is twinned with Apollo – the Graeco-Roman god of healing. It is therefore possible that the ritual activity at Knowth represents a healing cult similar to those in Britain and Gaul that are associated with Apollo/Maponus, and that the shrine itself was dedicated to Óengus Mac In Óc.

The connection between the stag engraved on the plaque at Loughcrew and the stag figure deposited with the plaque dedicated to Silvanus Callirius at Colchester may possibly provide some clues as to the nature of the activity at the former site. Silvanus is a Roman deity associated with woodlands, agriculture and the harvest, known in ancient literature as 'ruler of the groves', he was invoked as a protector of flocks and herds, wild animals and hunters. In Gaul he is twinned with a number of local deities such as Vintonus, Sucellus and Sinquas, and in Britain with Cocidius, all of whom appear to be associated with woodlands and hunting (Dorcey 1992, 81). In the case of Callirius (who is known only from the single inscription at Colchester), similar associations may be perceived from the etymology of his name, meaning 'lord of the woods', which derives from *Kalli 'woods' and is cognate with the modern Welsh celli 'grove' (Breeze 2004).

Dirks has drawn attention to the location of shrines dedicated to Silvanus in the mountainous regions of Northern Gaul, and has also noted the association between the woodland god and mountain forests in Gallo-Roman religion (1998, 136-7). In the Vosges, Silvanus is twinned with the native mountain god Vosegus and three stone reliefs depicting Silvanus were found on the summit of the

Donon, the highest peak of the northern Vosges. In the Hunsrük Mountains a cult statue of Silvanus was also discovered at the sanctuary of Fell, which is sited on a steep mountain ridge (Dirks 1998, 165). The animal most associated with Silvanus was the stag; an animal that would appear to have a matrix of associations in Romano-Celtic religion relating to fertility and hunting (Green 1992, 143-9).

Numerous different deities are linked with the stag in both Celtic iconography and mythology: from the famous figure on the Gundestrup cauldron thought to be 'Cernunnos' to the Irish war-goddess Mórrígan and the god of the dead Donn (MacKillop 2005, 18-20). It would be unwise, therefore, to assume a direct association between Silvanus and the Loughcrew stag, yet there are a number of aspects of the Gallo-Roman cult of Silvanus that provide interesting parallels for the mythological and folkloric traditions associated with Loughcrew and Slieve na Caillighe. Slieve na Caillighe 'the Hag's Mountain' is named after the mythological figure An Cailleach Bhéirre 'the Hag of Beare', a character who displays some striking similarities to Silvanus in Irish and Scots Gaelic folklore. In Ireland she is identified with the ancient goddess Bui/Baei, who appears in early narratives as a goddess of the harvest, and an expert at sowing and reaping who would kill any challenger with her scythe (Byrne 2001, 166-167). As an Cailleach Bhéirre she is synonymous with upland areas such as the Beare peninsula, Co. Cork, and Ceann na Cailleach ('Hags Head') the southernmost tip of the Cliffs of Moher in Co. Clare. At some sites she is also directly associated with megalithic tombs, for example the great tomb at Labbacallee, Co. Cork, derives it name *leaba na Caillighe* ('the bed of the hag') from An Cailleach (Waddell 2005, 12).

This association with uplands is also evident at the Loughrew passage-tomb cemetery, and although Slieve na Caillighe cannot be compared with the great European mountain ranges in terms of scale, it is in fact the highest peak in Co. Meath. It is also significant that An Cailleach Bhéirre has a number of Otherworldly associations, particularly in the form of the goddess Bui who appears as a death goddess associated with cliffs. An Cailleach Bhéirre is said to have created the cairns at Loughcrew by dropping stones from her apron as she sped over the mountain. One stone in the complex is known locally as 'the Hag's Chair', which she is said to have made so that she could survey the landscape.

196

Similar narratives are associated with her Scottish counterpart, the Cailleach Bheur, who is said to have created mountains by dropping stones at Benn na Cailleach on the Isle of Sky. In Argyll and Bute she is known as Cailleach na Cruaghan – after Benn Cruaghan the tallest mountain in this region. She is consistently associated with deer in Scottish folklore, where she appears as a herder and a spirit of the wilderness who is a protector of wild animals.

It is clear that An Cailleach Bhéirre cannot be directly identified with Silvanus, yet the themes surrounding this figure – the harvest, herding, woodland, mountaintops and deer – do bear a close resemblance to the Gallo-Roman cult of Silvanus. The female figure most often associated with Silvanus is Diana, and in many provincial Roman cults similar native goddesses are incorporated into the cult of Silvanus as his consort. An example of this kind of syncretism may be seen in the case of Arduenna, the eponymous goddess of the Ardennes who is known from inscriptions at Amberloup and Gey. Arduenna is a woodland deity whose name means 'Goddess of the Heights' (cognate with the Irish *árd* 'height') who is often identified with Diana. However, it also difficult to posit a direct connection between Diana and An Cailleach Bhéirre, not least because Diana is universally youthful and chaste, while An Cailleach Bhéirre is an ancient crone who claims to have had over fifty children![86]

It may simply be that the stag on the Loughcrew plaque represents a fertility or hunting cult, the likes of which are known from earliest Prehistory throughout Europe and beyond. Representations of stags can be found in many different geographical and chronological contexts, from the Palaeolithic cave paintings at sites such as Lascaux to Native American religious art. It is also notable that deer are not always associated with particular figures in Irish mythology and folklore, but also appear as transformed beings and as enticers of mortals to the Otherworld, and any of these associations could also apply to the Loughcrew plaque. However, there are also more tangible and direct links between the Iron Age activity at Loughcrew and the mythological associations with Slieve na Caillighe. Among the bone pieces at Cairn H the fragments of a number of bone combs were also found (Fig. 5.16), and the most ubiquitous representation of An

---

[86] A more likely Irish counterpart for Diana in Irish mythology can be found in the figure of Flidais, a goddess of the wilderness and mistress of stags, yet Flidais is associated with locations in Connaght, not in Meath or Leinster.

Cailleach and related figures in Irish folklore is that of an elderly woman combing her hair who appears as a death messenger to family members of the deceased (Ó Crualaoich 2003, 53-4; 225).[87] Another aspect of the plaques can also be seen to directly associate them with herding and agriculture: they are all made from cattle bones.

It is clear that the Iron Age activity at Loughcrew and many other megalithic sites pre-dates the earliest Roman finds from Ireland, however it would also appear that Romano-British rites and practices were being incorporated into this cultic activity from as early as the first two centuries AD. It has long been recognized that many of the Mythological figures in Early Irish literature represent pre-Christian Celtic gods that were subsequently mortalised by Christian scribes. However, with the notable exception of the rites associated with Medb and kinships at Tara, little archaeological evidence has been found to aid in the identification and interpretation their specific cult sites or practices. It may seem rather paradoxical that this evidence should present itself in the guise of Roman material culture and ritual practices, but this has also been the case for much of prehistoric Europe. Indeed, the native deities of Gaul and Britain are known to us solely through provincial Roman inscriptions, and the nature of their cults have been reconstructed mainly through their syncretism with Roman counterparts and the much maligned *interpretatio Romana*.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 5.16: Bone combs from Loughcrew, Co. Meath (After Raftery 1983).

---

[87] This motif is famously associated with the Banshee (*Bean Sí*: 'Fairy Woman'), a figure who is clearly associated with An Cailleach Bhéirre (Lysaght 1996).

Of course studies of provincial Roman religious sites have also shown that while there are broad similarities between structures and practices at cult loci, many of the cults involved were quite localised and site-specific. In Britain a number of gods and goddesses are known from inscriptions that have been found at just one location, such as *Setlocenia* at Maryport in Cumberland, and *Antenociticus* at Benwell on Hadrian's Wall (Green 2004, 215-216). It is also possible that the activity at some sites may constitute a specific response to particular historical events or circumstances. For example, the eighteen infant burials uncovered at Springhead were interred at approximately the same time and would therefore appear to indicate the occurrence of some form of disaster, such as plague, rather than represent an ongoing component of ritual practice at the site (Smith 2001, 105-6). Yet, this localised aspect of provincial Roman religion is most often recognised through the syncretism and the 'twinning' of a Classical Roman god and a local native deity. Furthermore, it has been shown that this phenomenon involved more than the simple association of existing native gods and Roman figures, but rather constituted a complex process involving strict sets of rules and conventions as well as the interweaving and invention of new mythologies (Derks 1998, 95-118). The available evidence would suggest that similar processes were also occurring in Ireland in the early centuries AD.

Chapter 6

Rathgall and Roman finds from Hillforts

Introduction

Rathgall hillfort is one of the most extensively excavated prehistoric sites in Ireland. As it stands, the monument consists of four roughly concentric stone ramparts covering an overall area of 7.3 hectares (Fig. 6.1). It is also one of the most unusual hillforts having a total of four enclosing fortifications. However, the innermost rampart appears to be a late addition: its dry-stone wall construction, irregular 45m circumference, and stratigraphic position all indicate a later (possible medieval) date. Located 27-53m outside this wall, the second and third ramparts appear to be contemporary: they stand just 10-12m apart '…and clearly constitute a single defensive concept' (Raftery 1976, 339-41). The outermost rampart is much larger, with a diameter of 310m, and is concentric with the two middle ramparts with the exception of an outward bulge in the southwestern quadrant of its circuit. A large portion of the outermost rampart to the northeast has been destroyed. The site was excavated by Prof. Barry Raftery from 1969-72, and the entire surface of the central enclosure was investigated along with adjacent areas to the east of the central enclosure and further sections on the south-eastern slope of the hill outside the external wall (Raftery 1976).

The Structural Sequence

In the central area of the hillfort a large enclosure ditch with an internal diameter of 35m was uncovered. The ditch was V-shaped, ranging in depth from 0.5m to 1.5m, and was continuous without any gaps or entrance causeway visible. Inside the ditch, and roughly concentric with it, a foundation trench with stone packing and post-holes was uncovered, indicating the presence of a large circular post-structure around 15m in diameter, with an elaborate east-facing entrance. To the north of the post-structure's centre-point there was an oval pit (1.75m by 1.25m) containing a token cremation deposit and a Late Bronze Age gold hair-ring. These were covered by a large boulder and carefully sealed with sandy soil.

This was thought to represent a foundation deposit associated with the wooden structure which was interpreted as a house.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 6.1: Rathgall Hillfort, Co. Wicklow (After Raftery 1994).

A number of other pits were uncovered and their contents, comprised of coarse pottery and animal bones, were interpreted as domestic refuse (Raftery 1976, 341-2). However, apart from a small scattering of fire-reddened material in the north-eastern quadrant no traces of a hearth were found. A number of sunken hearths were uncovered outside the structure in the northern section of the ditched enclosure. These hearths were associated with surrounding post-holes indicating the presence of some small structures or shelters. The excavator noted that one of the sunken hearths in the central ditched enclosure was cut by the foundation trench of the wooden post-structure, and therefore must predate it (Raftery 1976, 343-4). Bones and potsherds were recovered from a number of the hearths and one produced clay moulds. There were several other postholes and pits in the area immediately surrounding the central structure. Most of the pits contained similar material to those inside the building but one – containing a wicker basket that was replaced at least once – was interpreted as a storage pit (Raftery 1976).

The entire central area was covered by a dark brown humus layer which contained thousands of artefacts and ecofacts, ranging in date from the Late Bronze Age to the medieval period with no clear stratigraphic relationships defined. Nonetheless, over 5000 sherds of Late Bronze Age coarse-ware were recovered, along with saddle querns, stone rubbers and a bronze bar-toggle of northern European type, indicating a Dowris Phase date for most of the material (c.900-500 BC). It is also notable that the cremation deposit is to the north of the centre-point of the wooden structure, but is located in the exact centre of the ditched enclosure. This may suggest that the cremation is not a foundation deposit for the building, but was associated with the enclosure ditch – forming a typical ring-ditch with central cremation burial – and that the wooden structure was subsequently built over it. However, a series of radio carbon dates from the foundation trenches provided determinations ranging from 900-410 BC, which show that the building was broadly contemporary with the gold hair-ring found with the cremation (Waddell 1998, 270: note 47).

The fill of the ditched enclosure was particularly rich in finds in the eastern sections, and it would appear that most of this material was associated with an extensive metalworking area located outside the enclosure to the east. The dark layer was thicker there (up to 35cm in depth), and dense clusters of post-holes indicate the presence of associated structures which were rebuilt or replaced

during a continuous phase of activity. It would appear that at least one large timber building of uncertain plan had stood immediately outside the ditched enclosure – and the hundreds of clay mould fragments found in this area indicate that this feature was a bronze workshop producing artefacts on an intensive scale (Raftery 1976, 345-6). The majority of these items were weapons such as swords, spearheads, and axes; although the presence of lignite bracelets, a gold hair-ring, and beads of gold, amber, and glass, suggest that a range of high-status ornaments were manufactured here as well. A number of bronze rivets similar to those found on Late Bronze Age cauldrons were also recovered.

Immediately south of the workshop, on the north-eastern side of the ditched enclosure, an annular ditch with a south-facing entrance gap was uncovered. The ditch was 19m in overall diameter and enclosed three separated cremation pits and a hoard of bronzes comprising a sword, spearhead, and various other implements. The central cremation pit, containing the remains of a young adult, was dug into a fire-reddened layer surrounded by a dense U-shaped arrangement of over 1500 stake-holes. This layer contained fragments of cremated human bone and it appears likely that the U-shaped post-arrangements represented some form of pyre or related funerary structure (Raftery 1981, 176). The cremated remains of a child were placed in a small pit at the open end of U-shaped arrangement, and another pit contained the remains of an adult and a child placed in a bucket-shaped pot. The pottery and the metalwork recovered are contemporary with those from metalworking area and the central enclosure, and identify the site as a rare example of a Late Bronze Age funerary monument.

On the southern slope of the hill, outside the hillfort ramparts, further structural remains were uncovered. There were two small annular ditched enclosures, a small D-shaped building, and clusters of pits and stake-holes. Traces of cremated bone were found in one of the ditched enclosures, and it would appear likely that these were ritual or funerary monuments (Raftery 1976, 348-50). A lump of waste bronze and pottery sherds similar to those from the central enclosure were found in the surrounding area. The stratigraphic relationship between the outer ramparts and the excavated structures could not be established, and no datable artefacts were associated with the ramparts; yet the level of activity would suggest that the three outer ramparts were contemporary with the Late Bronze Age structures in the central areas and those outside the ramparts (Raftery 1994, 58).

A number of radiocarbon samples from the fill of the central ditched enclosure provided determinations of 150 BC-560 AD and 30-410 AD, indicating that the monument was reused in the Late Iron Age (Warner *et al.* 1990, 50). However, the only structural feature that can be firmly dated to the Iron Age is a small bowl furnace dug into the fill of the central enclosure ditch (Fig. 6.2). When the pit was dug the ditch had filled-up considerably with deposited material and silt, and a sample of charcoal from the furnace provided a radiocarbon determination of 180-540 AD. The furnace was a small oval pit, measuring 50cm by 40cm and 25cm deep, located just inside the outer edge of the ditch in the south-western quadrant. The pit was originally lined with clay and it would also have been covered with a clay dome or a simple layer of sod. The above-ground features of furnaces do not usually survive (Hingley 1997, 11), and even in modern contexts anthropologist have noted how the clay superstructures of bowl furnaces disintegrate leaving only the pits behind (Herbert 1993, 34-5).

The Material Culture

A large quantity of iron slag weighing between 30-40lbs was found in the area surrounding the furnace pit, indicating that the furnace had been used for ironworking. Charcoal would have been placed in the pit and heated to a temperature of 1100-1250ºC by using a bellows. The washed and pounded iron ore was placed in the fire, and at 1100º the larger pieces of slag would sink to the bottom of the pit, leaving the bloom (a loaf of spongy iron particles) on top. The raw bloom was then reheated to around 1200º and hammered until the iron particles welded together and any remaining slag or impurities were separated. Iron Age furnaces are rare in Ireland, and it is difficult to reconstruct the wider ironworking process on the basis of such limited evidence (Scott 1990). Archaeological evidence from British sites indicates that this initial stage of the smithing process (from raw bloom to billett) generally occurred at the smelting site, while the final smithing – the manufacture of iron implements – was carried out elsewhere at the site or at other locations (Crew 1990 150-2).

Fig. 6.2: The central ditched enclosure at Rathgall, Co. Wicklow (After Waddell 1998).
The iron smelting pit is visible in the ditch fill to the north-west.

Apart from the slag associated with the bowl furnace, the only other find that can be confidently associated with the Iron Age activity at Rathgall is a Roman strap-end found in a layer of dark brown humus, 30-40cm thick, which had formed over the Late Bronze Age occupation layer. The strap-end is of cast bronze and is heavily tinned all over; some of the edges are damaged and it is corroded in places (Fig. 6.3). The object consisted of a binding plate section, decorated on one side, which has an open v-shaped slot into which a strap would be placed. There is a small hole in each of the top corners that would have held tiny rivets to secure the strap. The bottom half of the artefact consists of an openwork disc attached to the narrow end of the binding plate. The decoration on the binding plate is an openwork triskele, while the openwork disc consists of three circles connected by overlapping incised lines. The find has been dated, through Roman parallels, to the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Raftery 1970, 205-9).

Fig. 6.3: The strap-end from Rathgall.

The Surrounding Landscape

Rathgall is located in southwest Wicklow, not far from the town of Tullow in Co. Carlow. At a height of 137m above sea level, the hillfort overlooks the Wicklow/Carlow border from the western end of a prominent ridge that runs from east to west. The ridge slopes gently downhill towards the north and northwest of the monument, but falls steeply away from the rest of the ramparts. The surrounding land is low-lying and marshy – particularly at the foot of the western slope where there is an area of wetland that may have been a lake in prehistoric times – and there is a small pond located just inside the eastern section of the outermost rampart (Raftery 1976, 339). The multivallate hillfort is not the only prehistoric monuments on the ridge: a short distance to the east there is a stone circle, and there is a smaller univallate hillfort approximately 200m due north on the lower slopes of the hill just above the 120m contour. The two hillforts overlook the Derreen river, a tributary of the River Slaney which curves around the bottom of the ridge just 1-2km to the west and south. This stretch of the river constitutes a significant section of the Wicklow/Carlow County border in this area, where the north-eastern tip of Co. Carlow juts into county Co. Wicklow like a jigsaw piece; forming a 'peninsula' of Carlow territory approximately 8km wide and 12km long.

This section of the border appears to have been an important focal point for activity in prehistoric times. To the north, on the western side of the river, there are four standing stones located 2-3km apart along the high ground overlooking the Derreen valley, and on the facing eastern bank there is a megalithic tomb and a burial mound. The mound is located near the point where the boundary-line leaves the Derreen river and follows a smaller tributary flowing from the east. The river that forms this section of the boundary is overlooked by another standing stone near Kilabeg and a barrow on top of Seskin Hill, 6km due east of Rathgall. To the south of Rathgall, the Aghowie hills dominate the Wicklow side of the County boundary. Agowie Upper is crowned by a stone cairn, and there is barrow on the lower slopes to north. There is also a megalithic tomb on the crest

206

of a western spur, which surveys the boundary line just over 1km to the west. On the Carlow side of the border there are two mounds and a cairn, all situated on the eastern slopes of higher ground facing the Agowie hills.

To the west, where the Derreen River joins the River Slaney, there is a significant cluster of monuments. There are four mounds, two cairns, a megalithic tomb, a barrow, fulachtaí fia, and standing stones at five different locations: all concentrated around an 8km stretch of river from Tullow to Ballintemple. Further upstream, the River Slaney forms a section of the county boundary on the northern side of the Carlow 'peninsula', before passing between the extraordinary hillfort complexes surrounding Baltinglass Hill in Co. Wicklow. This northern section of border diverges from the Slaney and continues eastwards along a small tributary which is bridged after about 2km at Englishtown. Englishtown is the findspot of the largest reported coin hoard in the Study Area. In the late 19th century a hoard of 40-50 Roman coins was uncovered by two elderly ladies named Gafney and Kelly at a spot called 'The Old Street' (Drury 1905, 358). Unfortunately, no other details regarding the type or date of the coins are available: they were sold for a few pounds and have not been located since (Bateson 1976, 176).

To the east of Englishtown the county boundary continues along the River Douglas, rejoining the Derreen river at Rathnafushoge and skirting the southern end of Ballykillmurry bog. The bogs in this area have produced the only provenanced La Tène finds from Co. Wicklow[88]: an unusual full-sized wooden model of a sword from Ballykillmurry Bog, and a wooden bog-butter cask from Kiltegan. The sword is made from yew, with a large rounded triangular pommel and a carved representation of a type 2 hilt-guard which may indicate a date in the early centuries AD (Raftery 1983, no. 253; Waddell 1998, 302). On Carlow side of the border, about 7km south-west of Ballykilmurry Bog, the River Douglas joins the Derreen river at Coolmanagh. A Bronze Age flange-twisted gold torc and a gold ribbon torc were found at Coolmanagh when a field was being harrowed in 1978. There is growing evidence to suggest that ribbon torcs may be dated to the Iron Age, and while the apparent association of the Coolmanagh example with a flange-twisted torc would appear to support George Eogan's

---

[88] A typically Irish three-link horse-bit in the British Museum, reported to be from 'Co. Wicklow', is the only other recorded La Tène find from this County (Raftery 1983, no. 109).

suggestion that ribbon torcs belong to the Bishopsland Phase of Bronze Age metalworking (1983), it is far from certain whether these objects were found in direct association (Waddell 1998, 196).[89] Whatever the case, the general paucity of Late Prehistoric finds in Co. Carlow serves to highlight the importance of this border area in relation to the surrounding landscape.

It is noteworthy that with from exception of the two bog finds mentioned above, all of the other Iron Age finds from Co. Wicklow are imported Roman objects: apart from the strap-end at Rathgall and the coin hoard from Englishtown, the other finds include the coins of Trajan (97-117 AD) and Hadrian (117-138 AD) found with inhumation burials at Bray Head and a small copper coin of Gratian (367-383 AD) that was found at Derrybawn (Bateson 1973, 45 and 51). As well as showing a notable Roman influence, these finds also appear to be clustered around the natural features that constitute the current county boundaries. Rathgall, Englishtown and Ballykilmurry Bog are all located in close proximity to the Wicklow/Carlow border; Bray is situated on the Wicklow/Dublin border; and the only provenanced La Tène find from Co. Dublin in Raftery's Catalogue is a horn 'weaving comb' from a bog at Glassamucky Brakes, which also forms the Dublin/Wicklow border (Raftery 1983, no. 598).

There is always a danger of placing too much significance on the distribution pattern of such a small number of finds; however the concentrations of prehistoric monuments along the rivers, bogs and natural features that now form the Carlow/Wicklow county border – particularly the standing stones, barrows, and hillfort complexes – would appear to indicate that this borderline constituted a significant boundary from Late Prehistoric times. The number of finds may be meagre, yet their patterning and deposition is far from random and does suggest the continuing (or possibly renewed) importance of this activity in the Late Iron Age. A number of ogham stones in this area may also indicate the presence of similar Early Historic territorial divisions following the course of the River Slaney. There is one at Rathglass, just over 4km to the southwest of Rathgall, where the Derreen River diverges from the Slaney and begins to form the county boundary, and two more further upstream overlooking the Slaney from the higher ground along the eastern riverbank at Tuckamine and Patrickswell. As the Slaney

---

[89] If it is Iron Age the Coolmanagh ribbon torc would be the only Iron Age find recorded from this county.

winds around the Wicklow Mountains towards its source in the Glen of Imail, it passes three more ogham stones, two at Balinglass and one at Knickeen.[90]

In relation to the ironworking at Rathgall, it is not perhaps so surprising that a smelting furnace was discovered in this area as Wicklow County is one of the major sources of iron ore in Ireland, with pyrites, haematites, siderites and other ores present in uniquely abundant quantities (Scott 1990). Situated between the Wicklow Mountains and the River Slaney, it would also appear that Rathgall was located on one of the most important ancient route-ways in Ireland. The early historic road known as Slige Cuala (the 'Road of Cuala') ran along the eastern bank of the River Slaney between Baltinglass and Tullow, and would have passed through the Englishtown area, crossing the Slaney somewhere around Tullow. The crossing point was therefore approximately 5km due west of Rathgall, and may well have been visible from the hillfort ramparts. The Slige Cuala begins at the northern tip of the Wicklow Mountains, where it leaves the Slige Dhála and skirts around the western foothills until it meets the River Slaney. Past Tullow, the road loops in a south-westerly direction crossing the river Barrow at Belach Gabrán (the 'Pass of Gowran), which is overlooked by another hillfort at Freestone Hill, Co. Kilkenny (Ó Floinn 2000, 27).

Comparative archaeology

The term 'hillfort' is generally used to describe a multitude of prehistoric monuments in Europe, many of them differing greatly in size, form, construction, complexity, siting, and date (Cunliffe 2001, 337). This is also the case in Ireland where a host of different defensive sites, with occupational evidence ranging from the Neolithic to the Medieval periods, are subsumed under the heading of 'hillfort'. However, in stark contrast to both Britain and the Continent, where defended hilltop enclosures became the largest settlement sites in the Iron Age period, hillforts in Ireland have provided meagre evidence for Iron Age occupation. Indeed, the picture emerging from Rathgall and other more recently excavated sites such as Haughey's Fort (Mallory 1995), Mooghaun (Grogan 2005) and Clashanimud, Co. Cork, (O'Brien 2004) indicates that Irish hillforts are

---

[90] Similar correspondences between natural features, county boundaries, monuments and the deposition of metalwork can also be discerned along further stretches of the Wicklow/Kildare county border, and also along significant sections of the Kildare/Laois border (see Chapter 7 below).

a Bronze Age phenomenon, and are not chronologically or culturally related to the British or European Iron Age hillforts (Raftery 1994, 58-60).

The complete absence of La Tène material from hillfort sites has elicited much comment and discussion, particularly in relation to the apparent contrasts in the distribution of hillforts and La Tène metalwork in Ireland (Raftery 1994, 156-7; Warner 1998, 28-29). The significance of this disparity is difficult to gauge, especially in light of the relatively nascent state of hillfort scholarship in Ireland and the problematic nature of the category 'hillfort' itself. It is possible that these distribution patterns may be related to other well-documented Late Prehistoric North/South regional divisions (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 202-205); however the absence of La Tène material assumes a rather different significance when contrasted with the presence of Roman material at hillforts in both northern and southern locations.

At Freestone Hill in Co. Kilkenny, a single set of ramparts enclosing an area of about 2 hectares and a small inner enclosure were constructed around an Early Bronze Age cemetery mound (Bersu 1951; Raftery 1969). A dark habitation layer in the inner enclosure contained glass beads, coarse pottery, worked animal bone, spindle whorls and whetstones, and similar objects were found among the hillfort ramparts. A Late Bronze Age date for this material is confirmed by a charcoal sample from the habitation layer which provided a radiocarbon date of 810-550 BC (Raftery 1995, 151). No structures were detected but a number of hearths were unearthed, one of which reused a stone cist in the centre of the denuded cemetery mound. A small number of Iron Age artefacts were also recovered from the central area.

These included iron slag, a blue glass bead, a glass bracelet, a copper coin of Constantine I (337-340 AD), two bronze 4th century Romano-British bracelets, two Roman toilet implements, and a cone-shaped gaming piece. Fragments of Romano-British pottery from the site have also recently been identified as fragments from two separate 4th century drinking vessels, one of Severn Valley Ware and the other of Nene Valley colour-coated ware (Cahill-Wilson 2012, 26-7). In contrast to the Late Bronze Age material, the distribution of these finds was centred on the cemetery mound, and it is possible that two crouched inhumations (I2 and I3) in the central area of the cairn could be Late Iron Age insertions into the already denuded cairn (Ó Floinn 2000, 23-5). It has also been noted that

animal bone deposits, including dog, horse, and ox bones, were also focused in this area (Cahill-Wilson 2012, 26-7).

At Castle Hill in Clogher, Co. Tyrone, a bank and ditch enclosed a prehistoric mound and ring-barrow within a sub-rectangular area of 2 hectares (Fig. 6.4). The construction of the enclosing ramparts has not been directly dated, and although the enclosure may have been refurbished or extended at a later stage it is difficult to distinguish the different phases of this activity and a range of contrasting sequences and chronologies have been provided by the excavator in different reports and publications (Warner 1971; 1972; 1973; 1974a; 1974b; 1995; 2012). However, large pits within the enclosure were found to contain Bronze Age coarse-ware pottery, and radiocarbon samples from occupation layers provided determinations of 900-774 BC and 902-788 BC (Warner 1988).

An 'enclosure' or 'ring-ditch' uncovered in the central area produced seven charcoal samples: one has been radiocarbon dated to 390-110 BC, while all of the others provided dates ranging from 60-560 AD (Warner *et al.* 1990). Further evidence for Iron Age activity at the site includes a gilded Roman brooch of Langton Down type (1st century AD) and fragments of glazed Roman pottery possibly dating to the late 1st century AD, all found in the central area of the hillfort (Warner 2012, 512). A two-pronged toilet implement similar to one of the toilet implements from Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny, was also recovered from the site (Bateson 1973, 80). Two bowl furnaces were uncovered in the rampart ditch, and a charcoal sample from one of the bowl furnaces has been radiocarbon dated to 390-620 AD, showing it to be broadly contemporary with the furnace at Rathgall (Waddell 1998, 316: n.11).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 6.4: Clogher Hillfort, Co. Tyrone (After Warner 2012).

At Lyles Hill in Co. Antrim a stone-revetted earthen embankment, enclosing an area of over 6 hectares, surrounds a Bronze Age cemetery mound and an earlier Neolithic settlement (Evans 1953). There is no trace of a ditch outside of the bank, and it is questionable as to whether this enclosure is defensive or if it can be classified as a hillfort as such (Warner 1995, 28). The bank was initially thought to be contemporary with the settlement, but re-excavation has since shown that it post-dates the Neolithic activity (Gibson and Simpson 1987). The embankment was modified at a later stage, with postholes set into the top of the bank providing radiocarbon dates of 360 BC-350 AD and 80-380 AD: indicating that a wooden palisade was erected on top of the embankment sometime during the early centuries AD: (Warner *et al.*, 1990, 47). The only artefactual evidence for Iron Age activity consists of a small cache of ornaments recovered from the cemetery mound and a single stray find. The objects from the mound include a jet bracelet, amber beads, and a glass bead. The glass bead is similar to Guido's Class 9 (Guido 1978, 77), and '…is best paralleled from Romano-British contexts, being particularly associated with Roman military sites of the late-first and second centuries, such as Newstead in Scotland' (Warner 1995, 28). The stray find is a small bell that may have been part of a Roman harness fitting (Warner 1995, 28).

There is only one hillfort site in Ireland that has produced evidence for Iron Age activity that does not include Roman material. At Haughey's Fort, Co. Armagh, two pits yielded the only evidence for Iron Age activity at the site: one contained a blue glass bead, and the second contained similar beads and two iron fragments from a 'possible strap-handle'. It is evident that the Iron Age activity at all of these sites was much reduced in comparison to the period following their initial construction, and the perceptible hiatus in the dating evidence would suggest that the activity associated with Roman material at these sites represents a phase of limited reuse rather than uninterrupted continuity from the Late Bronze Age (*pace* Mallory 1991, 26; and Waddell 1998, 357).

Comparative Contexts: Inventing Tradition

The presence of Roman material at hillforts has been interpreted by Richard Warner as evidence for a Roman military intrusion. In this light the strap-end from Rathgall, the sub-rectangular plan of the hillfort at Clogher, and the construction of

the palisade at Lyles Hill are all seen as evidence for military activity (Warner 1995; 2012). There are a number of problems with each of these assertions. Strap-ends and belt fittings in general are often interpreted as symbols of military rank, and there are a number of Roman gravestones in Germany which clearly depict strap-ends hanging from the belts of legionary uniforms. There are also Roman burials in Britain with belt-fittings and contexts that support a military interpretation: a 2nd century grave containing belt-fittings at Derby Racecourse is thought to contain the remains of an auxiliary officer due to military parallels for the decoration on the belt-fittings and the proximity of a Roman fort nearby (Wheeler 1985, 269-273: grave 220).

It is also not uncommon for strap-ends and other belt-fittings – particularly the late 'chip-carved' examples – to be seen as indicators of ethnic origin (Simpson 1976), and a number of graves containing these objects at Lankhills cemetery and other locations do appear to be those of immigrants from the Germanic territories around the Danube frontier (Clarke 1979: graves 13; 23; 81; 106; 234; 322; 366; 426). However, general assumptions concerning the social and ethnic significance of strap-ends and related fittings have been subject to increasing critical examination. It has been argued that although such fittings are common in the graves of Germanic immigrants, there are also found in other graves and cannot be seen as direct indicators of ethnicity (Clarke 1979, 264-291).

The presence of belt-fittings in female graves has also undermined the exclusively military interpretation of these items, and it has been argued that belt-fittings may also have been worn as symbols of office by civilians (Clarke 1979, 452; Ager 1987, 28-29). The belt-fittings in a 2nd century grave at St. Pancras were interpreted as the official regalia of a scribe (Down and Rule 1971, 81:grave 251); and a number of the burials containing fittings at Lankhills may also have been those of administrative or financial officials (Clarke 1979, 452). It is also possible that some strap-ends may have been used as decorative harness fittings, a suggestion originally proposed by Engelhardt in 1863 that appears to have been rejected by successive commentators (Raftery 1970, 202-3). The discovery of strap-ends associated with saddlery and harnesses in the Illerup Ådal hoard in eastern Jutland should remind us that these items may indeed have been worn by horses as well as humans (Ilkjær 2000, 110-112).

It would appear therefore that such fittings were symbols of status and rank, encompassing both military rank and civilian offices (Philpott 1991, 187-9). It may also be worth bearing in mind the ritual aspects of Roman civic and military offices and the associated religious significance imbued in symbols of office. This may have been a factor in the selection of belt-fittings for deposition in burials, with the majority of strap-ends in Europe having been found in funerary contexts,[91] and by the 4th century AD belt-fittings are among the most common items in Romano-British grave assemblages (Philpott 1991, 187-9). Strap-ends have also been found at shrines and other religious sanctuaries such as Ehl and Vermand in France, and Lydney Park in Britain (Simpson 1976: cat. nos. 34; 40; 41; 66; 71; 72; 73), and also in votive hoards such as the famous 3rd century bog finds at Illerup Ådal and Thorsberg in Jutland (Ilkjær 2000; Engelhardt 1863).

The sub-rectangular plan of the enclosure at Clogher may be unusual compared to other Irish hillforts, yet it is clear that the defences are far more irregular than Roman fortifications, and that the shape of the enclosure has been determined by the natural shape of the hilltop rather than any deliberate design on the part of the builders. It is also notable that the banks of the ramparts veer around the barrow in a most conspicuous, almost exaggerated manner that is reminiscent of the incorporation of mounds within ritual enclosures on the Hill of Tara. The erection of the palisade at Lyles Hill is interpreted by Warner as a 'refortification'; yet as we have seen the embankment itself does not appear to have been defensive in nature. Indeed it is debatable as to whether any hillfort ramparts ever served as effective defences: it has been noted that although the walls and banks at some sites may look impressive, they may have been practically impossible to defend (Raftery 1994, 57; Waddell 1998, 357). Whatever the original functions that the Bronze Age builders of these sites intended for them, there is even less evidence to suggest that they were used as defended settlements in the Iron Age period.

An alternative interpretation of the Roman finds from Freestone Hill has been proposed by Raghnall Ó Floinn. In a comprehensive examination of the finds and the surrounding landscape, Ó Floinn has concluded that '…the Later Iron Age activity inside the central enclosure on the summit of Freestone Hill represents

---

[91] Of the 337 strap-ends in Simpson's 1976 catalogue, almost 60% (196) have been found in graves.

cult activity within the boundary of a sacred space or 'temenos' of a type well-known in south-western Britain in the late Roman period' (2000, 29). Although his analysis does not extend to other hillfort sites in Ireland, it is clear that the deposition of Roman material at Lyles Hill, Clogher, and Rathgall may also be interpreted in this way. Ó Floinn notes that a number of temenos sites in Britain are located within hillforts (2000, 25); indeed according to Miranda Aldhouse-Green: '…the practice of placing Romano-British shrines inside earlier hillforts is well known throughout southern Britain' (2004, 208).

As mentioned earlier, hillforts in Iron Age Britain and Europe were important settlement sites; indeed some of the settlements at hillforts appear to have reached the status of towns during the Late Iron Age (Raftery 1994, 48). Clearly comparisons cannot be made between the Late Bronze Age Irish hillforts and the Iron Age British or European hillforts, as they are essentially different monument types: functionally, chronologically, and morphologically. However, regarding the deposition of Roman material at such sites, there are some very close parallels between the use of Roman artefacts at hillforts in Ireland and the reuse of hillforts as Roman ritual loci in Britain. These sites range in size and complexity from large temples and religious complexes at Lydney Park and Chanctonbury Ring, to small shrines at South Cadbury and Maiden Castle (Woodward 1992, 22-6; Williams 1998). The earliest examples, such as the two latter sites, date to the Iron Age-Roman transition period, and according to Smith '…by the time of their construction the character of these hillforts had changed considerably, and it is uncertain whether there would have been much contemporary domestic habitation within them' (2001, 67).[92]

The early shrines usually took the form of small rectangular or circular buildings; however in a number of cases there is no evidence for any kind of structure, and at sites such as Blaise Castle and Bow Hill the location of a shrine is indicated by the ritual deposition of artefacts (Woodward 1992, 22). Ritual activity also focused on prehistoric burial monuments situated within the hillfort

---

[92] Four rectangular structures at Danebury, which were broadly contemporary with the inhabitation of the hillfort, have been interpreted as pre-Roman shrines (Cunliffe 1984, 84-6). However, this ritual interpretation is based solely on the shape of the structures and the absence of evidence for domestic, agricultural or manufacturing activity. However, the absence of an artefactual assemblage is not in itself evidence for ritual activity and, as Smith has argued, '…to imply a religious nature for the want of any more positive indications is an unsatisfactory situation' (2001, 63).

ramparts. At Croft Ambrey the presence of Roman pottery and animal bones at a Bronze Age barrow have been interpreted as evidence for an open-air ceremonial site, and at Maiden Castle the Romano-British temple was built at the eastern end of a Neolithic barrow (Woodward 1992, 22-23). At Henley Wood a Roman temple was built 140m to the north of Cadbury Congresbury hillfort, where some 4th century Roman material was also found. A possible late/post-Roman shrine in the centre of the hillfort was focused on a number of Iron Age skull burials, and it has been suggested that there may have been ongoing religious activity at the hillfort throughout the Roman period (Smith 2001, 91).

The material deposited at these sites ranges from specifically votive items to pottery, coins, personal items and martial equipment. Ó Floinn has compared the assemblage from Freestone Hill to those at sites such as Cadbury Congresbury and Lydney, and has argued that the bracelets, brooches and toilet implements at the Irish site are indicative of the well-documented cults of healing and fecundity at these Romano-British shrines (2000). Toilet implements similar to those found at Freestone Hill and Clogher have been discovered in large numbers at other Romano-British shrines dedicated to healing cults: a total of 29 toilet implements were found at Woodeaton, with 19 from Harlow and 19 from Henley Wood (see Woodward and Leach 1993, 332: table 20). Strap-ends have also been found at Lydney (Simpson 1976: cat. nos. 34; 40; 41; 66; 71; 72; 73), and a hoard of horse-gear and chariot-fittings were found close to the shrine at Maiden Castle. The finds at Freestone Hill were concentrated on the Bronze Age cairn and the bracelet and beads at Lyles Hill were placed in the cemetery mound; contexts that support the interpretation of these finds as votive deposits. Similar behaviour can be seen at the other two Irish hillfort sites that have produced Roman material: at Rathgall the bowl furnace was dug into the ditch of the Bronze Age central ditched enclosure, and at Clogher there was recurring burning around the ring-ditch.

While prehistoric mounds or shrines formed the focus of the religious activity at the Romano-British sites, it appears that the ramparts of the hillforts themselves were re-used as temenos boundaries demarcating the sacred space of the sanctuary precinct. This was certainly the case at sites where the hillfort ramparts were refurbished and reinforced in the Roman period. At Chanctonbury Ring the temenos wall was actually built on top of the hillfort rampart in the 1st or 2nd

216

century AD (Smith 2001), a development which recalls the construction of the palisade on top of the bank at Lyles Hill, and serves as a reminder that the 'refortification' of ramparts at hillforts or other sites should not automatically be construed as military activity. The ramparts at Lydney were also reinforced in the Roman period, and according to Smith '…the Lydney Rampart may have been deliberately re-built at this time for its archaic value' (2001, 135). This last site, situated on a sub-rectangular natural promontory, also bears a closer resemblance to the hillfort at Clogher than any Roman fortification.

The recurring associations with older prehistoric monuments also suggest that it was the archaic aura of these locations that was the most significant factor in their selection as use as religious loci (Smith 2001, 150-151). Irish hillforts would have served as ideal locations in this regard: being considerably more ancient and having numerous burial mounds and barrows located within their ramparts. The location and siting of Rathgall, Freestone Hill, Lyles Hill and Clogher within the broader landscape also displays strong parallels with the siting of Romano-British temples and shrines. It has been shown that the majority of rural religious sites in Roman Britain share a matrix of locational criteria: they occupy prominent elevated positions in the landscape; they were located within 2-3km of important route-ways; they are often close to major rivers, particularly around their sources and major confluences; they were situated on or near tribal or civitas boundaries; and they were rarely associated with contemporary domestic habitation (Smith 2001, 150-152; 162-3).

The Irish hillforts clearly constitute prominent elevated locations, and the siting of Rathgall – its proximity to the Slige Cuala routeway, the Derreen and River Slaney rivers, and its position within a wider concentration of monuments surrounding the Wicklow/Carlow border – have been discussed in detail above. Ó Floinn has also drawn our attention to the location of Freestone Hill: overlooking Belach Gowráin (the 'Pass of Gowran'), a low-lying plain between the rivers Nore and Barrow which served as the major route-way between the Early Historic Kingdoms of Laigen (Leinster) and Osraige (Ossory). A linear earthwork known as the Rathduff Dyke runs from the river Barrow across the in a north-eastern side of the pass for a distance of 11km, and may once have marked the boundary between Laigen and Osraige, while a cluster of ten ogham stones in the barony of

Gowran also attest to the presence of important boundaries in and around this area in the Early Historic period (Ó Floinn 2000, 27-29).

The enclosure at Lyles Hill overlooks the valley of the Six Mile Water River, which appears to have constituted a defined territorial unit known as Magh Line in Early Historic times (Charles-Edwards 2000, 54-6; map 7). It has been suggested that the hilltop enclosure at Donegore Hill, 8km to the north, forms a counterpoint to Lyles Hill, with each enclosure marking the extent of the territory as it reaches the upland areas to the north and south respectively (Mallory and MacNeill 1991). The hillfort at Clogher overlooks an ancient crossing point on the river Blackwater which rises in the Clogher Valley and forms the county boundary between Co. Tyrone and Counties Monaghan and Armagh, and became the royal seat of the Síl nDaimíni branch of the Uí Chremthainn dynasty in the Early Historic period.

These locational criteria have also been noted in relation to the siting of Gallo-Roman shrines (Smith 2001, 159), and it has been suggested that their location near route-ways and on tribal boundaries may be connected with the well-documented role of Gallo-Roman shrines in the administration and regulation of economic and social interaction (Woodward 1992, 20). In Britain there is also widespread evidence for intensive trade and exchange at a number of excavated religious complexes, and it is possible that these sites may have played a central role in the phenomenon of peripheral market growth that was taking place in Britain at this time (Woodward 1992, 20). It would appear that metalworking was an important part of this activity, and evidence for bronze-smithing and iron smelting around the periphery of sanctuaries has been found at sites such as Harlow, Uley, and Chanctonbury (Smith 2001, 158).

Of course these activities may also have had a profound religious significance. Smith notes the presence of animal burials and a probable ritual structure in the metal-working area at South Cadbury, and suggests that '…it is quite possible that such specialised transformational activities may have had pronounced religious associations' (2001, 70; 50; 31). In this light it is interesting to note that the smelting of iron has ritual associations in many societies (Herbert 1993), and this may also have been the case in Iron Age societies. Hingley has argued that ironworking in Iron Age Britain and Ireland may have been related to agricultural

rituals associated with regeneration, and that '...the magical and impressive nature of the acts of ironworking needs to be stressed' (1997, 15).

This is supported by the contexts of furnaces and ironworking debris at other Irish sites. Evidence for iron smithing has been found beneath the massive ritual enclosure of Ráith na Ríg and among the ramparts of Ráith na Senad at the Tara necropolis (Roche 2002), and a smelting furnace was also found at the Iron Age ring-ditch cemetery at Ballydavis in Co. Laois (Keeley 1999, 29). Late Iron Age Iron working at was also evident at Aghnaskeagh portal tomb, Co. Louth; and Largantea Wedge tomb, Co. Derry (Scott 1990. 222-3). Early Historical Irish sources also attribute a powerful mystical status to the figure of the smith, and in relation to the evidence for ironworking at hillfort sites it may also be of interest to note a particularly archaic passage from the *Lebor Gaballa*:

> *Who names the waterfalls?*
> *Who brings his cattle from the house of Terthra?*
> *What person, what god,*
> *Forms weapons in a fort?*

> (*Lebor Gaballa*, cited in Ross 1982, 207)

It appears likely therefore that the ironworking at Rathgall, Clogher, and Freestone Hill, would have had significant ritual associations for those involved, and moreover that this activity was itself being carried out within a broader ritual context.

The location of these hillfort sites in close proximity to ancient route-ways and territorial boundaries would also suggest that the distribution of imported Roman goods utilised indigenous networks of communication and exchange, and was closely bound-up in local political and territorial interests. It has been convincingly argued that the re-use of older monuments is a highly significant social and political act. According to Bradley: '...monuments were altered to conform with changing circumstances. In this way they provide a subtle index of deeper currents in society' (1993, 93). Thus the re-use and repossession of older monuments often reflects wider changes in society, whereby new social orders seek to legitimise their existence by imbuing new practices with pseudo-traditional components (Bradley 1993, 199; 2002, 122-123; Barrett 1999). In this

manner '...tradition can be invented and the past can assume the status of a myth, while new developments are most secure when invested with the authority of the past' (O'Brien 2001, 5). Newman (1997, 237-242) and Bradley (2002, 141-146) have both argued that a similar process had taken place with the re-use and incorporation of older monuments into late prehistoric structures on the Hill of Tara.

The ritual reuse of ancient monuments and the religious dimensions of metalworking are of course in evidence throughout Irish prehistory; however the archaeological evidence would suggest that the specific reuse of hillforts for the kind of votive activity outlined above was a Late Iron Age development, and one that was inherently related to the introduction of Roman material. The artefacts used, the depositional behaviours involved, the location of these sites, and the evidence for ironworking, provide tangible links with Romano-British ritual practices. It is also likely that the true extent of these new practices was not limited to a choice of location or material, but would have encompassed a whole range of activities including the organisation of ritual practice within a site, and the very motivations and cosmologies that underpin these acts. The evidence for ironworking also raises the distinct possibility that the indigenous production of metalwork had become intertwined in, and transformed by, the dissemination of Roman material and provincial Roman religious practices.

Chapter 7

Knockaulin and Prehistoric 'royal' Sites

Introduction

The massive hilltop enclosure at Knockaulin has been identified as the site of *Dún Ailinne*, the historical seat of the ancient kings of Leinster in early Irish literature, as well as one of the most important late prehistoric archaeological sites in Ireland. Today, the site consists of an oval earthwork with a large bank and internal ditch enclosing a hilltop area of almost 13 hectares (Fig. 7.1). The enclosure is immense: averaging 410m in diameter with an outer bank over 4m high in sections. The few features still visible within the enclosure include a small curvilinear earthwork and a low mound on the summit of the hill, a holy well known as St. John's Well near the northern section of ramparts, and a simple entrance located to the east of the enclosure which appears to be original (Wailes 1990, 16). The site was excavated between 1968 and 1975 under the direction of Professor Bernard Wailes, who published a series of interim reports, and the final excavation report was published posthumously in 2007 (Johnston and Wailes 2007). Apart from a number of test trenches in the northern part of the enclosure and some smaller sections placed across the ramparts and around the entrance, the excavations were concentrated on the summit area where a number of significant Iron Age structures were uncovered. Finally, a new phase of investigations involving large-scale geophysical survey began in 2008 as a collaborative project between the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and the Department of Archaeology at NUI Galway.

References to *Ailinne* or *Alenn* appear in a variety of early texts that consistently associate the site with the kingship of Leinster (Graboski 1990). In the annalistic sources the site is identified as a battleground where the kingship was contested between two brothers, and also as the location of a '*congressio*' or encounter between the kings of Leinster and the neighbouring kings of Uisneach. The genealogical texts echo this depiction of *Ailinne/Alenn* as an important battle site, and directly associate the site with *Teamhair* and *Cruachan,* indicating that

Dún Ailinne was the Leinster equivalent of these provincial royal seats. These texts also attribute the construction of the ramparts at *Dún Ailinne* to different historical figures, however in a puzzling concurrence the contrasting claims end with an almost identical Latin phrase: '…although it was a royal *ciuitas*'.[93] It is uncertain as to what this caveat may have meant, however it is clear that the royal status of the site is being emphasised. Another reference describes the site as a boundary point delimiting the territory of the Uí Diarmata Sept within Leinster, an attribute which may account for the use of this location as a battleground and meeting point (Graboski 1990, 33).

Although other royal sites in Leinster are noted in the historical sources, *Dún Ailinne* is the only site identified with the kingship of Leinster itself. In a literary tradition that continued long after its actual decline as a centre of power, including 8th/9th century religious poems and the 12th century Dindsenchas, *Dún Ailinne* is consistently associated with historical figures belonging to the ruling Leinster dynasties. These later sources also continue to group *Dún Ailinne* with the other royal provincial centres, and it is noteworthy that religious texts such as the Félire nÓengusso and the 'Hail Brigit' poem contrast the decline of *Alenn* and the other pagan sites with the growing power of Christian centres, specifically the monastery at Kildare (Hughes 1972, 206-7).

---

[93] '*Licit anna ciuitas regalis fuit', ,or'...licet ciuitas regalis fuit'*. See Grabowski 1990, 33; note 29, for a brief discussion regarding this phrase.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.1: Knockaulin, Co. Kildare (After Wailes 1990).

The Structural Sequence

The earliest detectable activity at the site consisted of an irregular circular ditch about 20m in diameter (Fig. 7.2: F281) containing a leaf-shaped flint arrowhead and a hollow scraper, and a pit containing sherds of a decorated Neolithic pot located 20m to the east of the ditch (F293). Hundreds of pottery fragments and pieces of flint and chert were found scattered around the site, most of which appear to be Neolithic in date. The only Bronze Age finds were sherds from a 'Bowl tradition' vessel found in a pit 10m to the north-west of the earlier ditch (F2790). The most intensive and continuous period of activity on the hill occurred during the Iron Age, with three main phases of building discernable. These are known as the White, Rose and Mauve phases (early to late respectively). Other occupation surfaces were also identified: the layer 'Harry' was contemporary with the 'Mauve' phase of building, and above 'Harry' lay 'Lower Emerald', 'Crimson', 'Upper Emerald', 'Dun' and 'Flame'. The White phase consisted of a simple circular trench, approximately 22m in diameter, which supported close-set timber uprights forming a palisade or fence (F512). A small gap that may have served as an entrance is visible in the north-eastern quadrant of the trench. This phase produced no artefacts or radiocarbon samples, and therefore cannot be dated directly. However, the White phase posts were removed prior to the construction of the next Rose phase of building, indicating that the White phase had been constructed immediately before, and dismantled during, the Rose phase activity (Wailes 1990, 12).

The next phase of building was far more extensive with three concentric trenches dug about 1m apart, all enclosing an area 28.5m in internal diameter (F60; F513; F514). The entrance to this enclosure was monumental, with a funnel-shaped avenue of fences and posts extending over 20m to the northeast (F278; F314; F2231; F2232). A series of trenches forming a small circular enclosure (13m internal diameter) were attached to the southern side of the larger enclosure with a narrow entrance gap of about 1m joining the two structures in a figure-of-eight-shaped plan (F519: F512). No features appear to have been constructed within either of these circular enclosures. The three concentric trenches of the larger enclosure are too small to form passageways and are likely to have supported some kind of superstructure, although the size of the enclosure and the absence of any internal supports would appear to rule out the possibility

of a roof (Wailes 1990, 13).[94] Posts inserted in the trenches were graded in thickness with the largest inserted in the outer trench and the smallest in the inner trench, and the excavator suggested that '[t]his would be consistent with a two-tier standing (or seating) arrangement for persons viewing or participating in events of displays conducted in the open interior spaces' (Wailes 1990, 13; original parenthesis).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.2: Late prehistoric structures on the summit of Knockaulin, Co. Kildare.
(After Johnston and Wailes 2007)

---

[94] Lynn (1991) has argued that the concentric trenches may not be directly contemporary, but represent a sequence of careful wall replacement involving the construction of a new palisade prior to the removal of the existing one. This suggestion was based on detailed comparisons with similar structures uncovered at Navan Fort and highlighted some of the more problematic assumptions involved in the interpretation of the Knockaulin structures. However, more recent excavations at Navan Fort have produced substantial evidence to support the original interpretation of the Knockaulin Rose phase as a massive figure-of-eight structure with three contemporary concentric walls (Lynn 2003, 98-100).

Alternatively, the building of the triple-palisade and the graded size of the posts may have had a ritual, rather than a directly functional, significance. Similar triple palisades at Navan Fort all displayed a remarkably repetitive construction sequence, in the order of middle-outer-inner, and it has been suggested that this may indicate some form of 'ritual impulse' in their construction (Waddell 1998, 338-9). Such highly prescriptive construction techniques may constitute a form of symbolic boundary demarcation, analogous to that found at other ritual sites such as multivallate ring-barrows (Corlett 2005, 64-65), and is possible that the number of the palisades at Knockaulin may be related to the well documented Early Irish conception of 'triplism' (see Dowling 2011, 224-5). Whatever the case it certainly would appear that the central space and its impressive entranceway would have been suitable for large assemblies or ceremonial displays of some kind (Raftery 1994, 71-4; Waddell 1998, 344).

The Mauve phase buildings were constructed after the Rose structure was dismantled and a number of posts were burnt *in situ*. Two concentric timber circles (F515-516) were erected to enclose an area 42m in diameter with an elaborate entrance facing east-northeast and flanked by two annex-like chambers opening onto the central area. Within this large enclosure there was a concentric circle of freestanding posts, each with an estimated average diameter of around 0.5m, forming an inner area approximately 25m in diameter (F1-30). In the centre of the post circle there was a trench over 6m in diameter surrounded by a number of pits (F42). The fill of these pits was so disturbed that their contents could not be determined. A series of post-holes, each about 25cm in diameter, were discernable within the 6m trench; however there was no visible entranceway and the structure has been interpreted as a 'tower'. The post-holes would have held very sturdy uprights, and the surrounding pits have been tentatively interpreted as foundation slots for buttresses supporting the post tower (Wailes 1990, 14).

While it was evident that the outer timber enclosure and the inner circle of free-standing posts were built at the same time, the exact stratigraphic relationship between the inner tower feature and these outer structures could not be established. As all of the features are post-Rose phase and share the same geometric centre it does appear likely that they constituted separate parts of a single overall design, even if they were constructed at different stages. It is doubtful that this design involved the construction of a roof, as the distance

between the outer circles and the freestanding posts and between the posts and the central 'tower' is at least 9m in each case (Wailes 1990, 14). It was suggested by the excavator that this phase of construction consisted of a central tower surrounded by freestanding posts and an outer seating arrangement similar to that proposed for the preceding Rose phase. An iron sword was found lying parallel to the line of the outer trench (F516), and appears to have been in the primary fill of the trench (Wailes 1990, 17). This sword may represent a foundation offering, a possibility that supports the interpretation of the site as ritual sanctuary or assembly site.

The Mauve features were also dismantled, although not simultaneously. The outer palisades (F515, F516) were removed yet, despite evidence for some burning around post F30, the freestanding posts appear to have been left standing. These were later destroyed and covered by the 'Dun' layer of glacial till, which filled the empty sockets. A paved area of rough quarried stone was then laid across much of the area. Over the Dun layer lay the 'Flame' layer, consisting of animal bone, burnt stone and ash, which also covered the central 'tower' (F42), demonstrating that this had also been dismantled by this time. 'Flame', like 'Dun', is undoubtedly artificial although the accumulation appears to have been more periodic, as thin lenses of humus interrupt a number of similar deposits which have been interpreted as seasonal activity at the site. The entire sequence through White, Rose, Mauve, Dun, and Flame appears to have been relatively short lived. Not one post was found to have decayed *in situ*, and the packing in a number of post-holes were disturbed, possibly due to the rocking back-and-forth of timbers at the time of extraction. Direct continuity in use is also indicated by the absence of intervening layers of humus between the different phases of building activity (Wailes 1990).

The smaller trenches placed across the outer ramparts and the entrance failed to produce any significant finds and the excavator was unable to establish the stratigraphic relationship between the entrance and the inner roadway that leads directly towards the entrances of the Rose and Mauve phase structures. Radiocarbon dates from humus found beneath the outer ramparts suggest that the hilltop enclosure was constructed sometime after 700 BC, while samples from the internal structures provided determinations ranging from 390 BC to AD 520. A single sample from the Rose phase palisade (Wailes 1976 'phase 2') provided a

date of 390 BC to 110 BC, while three samples from the Mauve structures (Wailes 1976 'phases 3 and 4') provided dates of: 100 BC – 350 AD; 50 AD – 320 AD; and 70 AD – 540 AD (Fig. 7.3). As we shall see, the early date for the Rose phase is consistent with the remarkably similar Phase 3ii structures at Navan Fort (see below), while the dates from the Mauve structure collectively indicate a date in the early centuries AD for this phase of activity (Wailes 1976, 338; 1990; see also Raftery 1984, 70).

Atmospheric data from Stuiver et al. (1998); OxCal v3.8 Bronk Ramsey (2002); cub r:4 sd:12 prob usp[chron]

Knockaulin Rose Phase palisade 2200±50BP
Knockaulin Mauve Phase palisade 1935±85BP
Knockaulin Mauve Phase palisade 1900±85BP
Knockaulin Mauve Phase palisade 1755±90BP

2000CalBC   1000CalBC   CalBC/CalAD   1000CalAD
Calibrated date
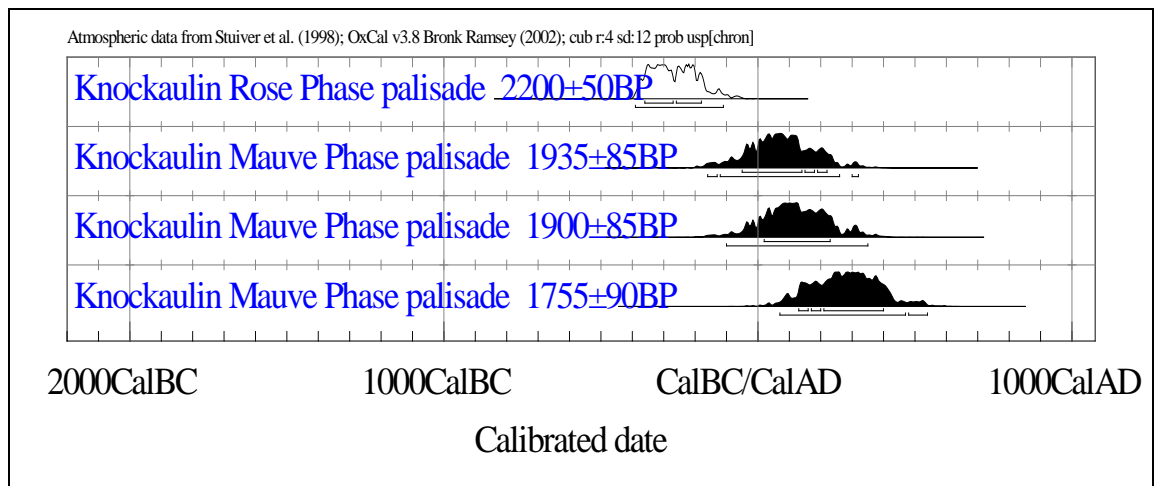
Fig. 7.3: Radiocarbon dates from Knockaulin Rose and Mauve Phases.

The relationship between the earthen hilltop enclosure and the internal wooden structures is uncertain, as no firm stratigraphic link or precise dating evidence could be established. Wailes suggested that the outer ramparts were constructed shortly after the erection of the Rose phase structures, and that the enclosure entrance and the inner roadway were purposely positioned to correspond to the funnel-shaped entrance of the figure-of-eight buildings, forming an elaborate 'processional way' leading to the buildings (1990, 19). This suggestion, which would date the construction of the hilltop enclosure to the last two centuries BC, has proven to be a remarkably astute example of interpretive reasoning on the part of the excavator. Evidence from Tara and Navan Fort has shown that the similar hilltop enclosures at these royal sites were both constructed within this date-range (Roche 2002; Lynn 2003) and recent geophysical survey has revealed traces of a massive palisade enclosure, 390m in maximum diameter, encircling the central structures. This feature also appears to have had an avenue-like entrance aligned

with both the Rose and Mauve phase entrances, and the hilltop enclosure entrance (Johnston, Campana and Crabtree 2009).

The Material Culture

The continuous Iron Age building activity at Knockaulin resulted in an almost complete lack of finds with firm contexts, as the disturbance from each phase of construction makes it virtually impossible to distinguish between primary and secondary deposition. Unfortunately, the few finds of chronological import that were recovered all came from heavily disturbed contexts, while the finds from the only sealed layer (the final 'Flame' layer) cannot be accurately dated. In the majority of cases the finds were so badly corroded that they could not even be identified and were ambiguously classified as 'fragment of rod' or 'fragment of blade' (Johnston and Wailes 2007).

One of the only recognisable finds from the sealed Flame layer is a small iron spearhead, measuring just over 16cm long and 4.2cm wide, with a very pronounced mid-rib running the entire length of the blade. The object is badly corroded and the original shape of the blade-section is difficult to determine: towards the bottom of the blade the mid-rib appears rounded yet nearer the tip it is more pointed, producing a diamond-shaped section. Iron Age spearheads are rare in Ireland, a scarcity that may be due to the difficulties involved in dating such basic forms rather than their overall absence in the archaeological record. A lack of firm provenances and recorded contexts compounds this problem, with only a handful of examples identified to date (Raftery 1984, 108-9; Scott 1990, 78-9; Bourke 2001, 71-84), none of which provide a convincing parallel for the Knockaulin object. Although the Knockaulin spearhead does differ from other known Irish examples, it is clear that the few spears that have been tentatively dated to the Iron Age represent a small and highly diverse sample in the first place.[95]

The only find with a direct structural association is the iron sword from the Mauve trench, and therefore it may be useful to look at this item more closely (Fig. 7.4). The sword is also an unusual example as the hilt guard appears to be

---

[95] It is also worth noting that the Knockaulin spearhead is very different to Romano-British spearheads, which tend to be much smaller (ranging in size from 45mm to 100mm) and do not have pronounced mid-ribs (Manning 1985, 160-70).

made of iron, in contrast to the separate pieces of cast bronze or the curved organic guards found on Raftery's Type 1 and Type 2 swords respectively (Raftery 1984, 65-66). Iron hilt guards are common in Britain and the continent, yet the Knockaulin sword is otherwise typical of short Irish swords with a blade length of just 39cm. Tentative dating for the Irish swords has been proposed by Raftery, although these artefacts have been dated on typological grounds alone as the Knockaulin sword is the only example that has been found in a firm context. The diagnostic feature that forms the basis of this typology is the hilt guard but, as we have seen, the hilt guard from the Knockaulin sword is unusual when compared to other Irish examples.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.4: Type 1 Swords (from left): 1,2: Edenderry; 3: Lisnacrougher; 4: Ballinderry;
5: Cashel (Co. Sligo); 6: Knockaulin. Type 2 Sword: 7: No Provenance.
(After Raftery 1984)

Raftery places this sword in his Type 1 category, consisting of swords with bronze hilt guards: these are usually oval or almond-shaped and have a bell-shaped 'campanulate' profile. Raftery relates this form to the Early-to-Mid La Tène style swords in continental Europe and he notes that they occur with less frequency in Late La Tène contexts. Type 1 swords are sub-divided into two separate groups: an Ulster group and a Southern Irish group. The Ulster group are considered to be the most similar to the continental campanulate swords and are therefore thought to be earlier, dating to the later centuries BC, while the Southern group (to which the Knockaulin sword is assigned) are thought to date to the early centuries AD (Raftery 1984, 66-69). However, it is uncertain as to the extent that campanulate form can be taken as a chronological indicator as there are also obvious regional factors at play in these categories. Unlike the deep bell-shaped profile of the Ulster types and even the shallower curved Southern examples, the Knockaulin hilt-guard is more angular and v-shaped. A similarly shaped hilt guard is found on another Type 1 sword from Ballinderry II Co. Offaly, and the closest parallels for this last sword are found in Late La Tène/Early Roman contexts on the continent (Raftery 1984, 67-68).

The blade of the Knockaulin sword is also quite different to most other type 1 swords, as the sections of these swords tend to be either diamond shaped, or have a pronounced angular mid-rib. The closest parallel to both the shape and section of the Knockaulin blade is found on a Type 2 unprovenanced sword (Fig. 7.4: no. 7). Both of these swords have similar blade lengths with sides that slope gently inwards and end in a pronounced point, also the sections of both swords are curved and oval rather than angular or diamond shaped. Type 2 swords have been dated by numerous different commentators to the early centuries AD (Raftery 1939; Hencken 1950; Rynne 1982; Raftery 1983; 1984), and it has also been suggested that these swords have a Romano-Celtic background as they display some similarities with Roman types (Raftery 1984, 72-73).

Two copper alloy brooches were also found at the site, both of which are Romano-British 'Nauheim derivatives'.[96] The first is a tapered bow brooch with a missing pin and a slightly crumpled bow with fine-line chevron decoration (Fig. 7.5). The second is a strip bow brooch that shows signs of repair: a replacement

---

[96] Neither of these objects came from firm sealed contexts. It is possible that the second brooch came from Feature 108, but this is not certain (Johnston 2007, 104).

pin is soldered to the bow where the original pin-hinge was attached, and a strip riveted to the underside of the brooch to reinforce the bow. According to Hawkes (1982, 65), these brooches are very similar to the British-made Camulodunum types VIA and VIB respectively, and can be firmly dated to the late 1st century AD. In Britain, Nauheim derivatives are generally found in Romano-British contexts dating to the 1st century AD, and are particularly common in southern England. A number of examples have been found in the parts of northern Britain that were reached by the Romans in the Flavian period, at sites such as Newstead and Alborough. There are no obvious or exclusive contextual associations in their deposition, with examples found at Roman forts, religious sites, and also native settlement sites such as Glastonbury Lake Village, Meare East and Gussage All Saints (Haselgrove 1997, 58-67; Butcher 1993, 149). On the continent Nauheim derivatives appear to have been particularly popular among the military, although there is no evidence for such a trend in Britain (Haselgrove 1997, 65).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.5: Romano-British brooches from Knockaulin, Co. Kildare.
(After Johnston and Wailes 2007)

A small ring found at Knockaulin appears to have a stylised zoomorphic head and is similar to British 'button and loop fasteners' and continental *ringgürtelhalken* of Late La Tène date. It has been suggested that this item may have come from a belt or a baldric and could be associated with sword wearing (Fisher, cited in Wailes 1990, 18). Other bronze objects include two pin fragments and a portion of a cast bracelet with narrow, evenly spaced ribs. There are 'no exact Irish parallels' for these objects, and those cited in the specialist report include examples from Hengistbury Head and Sutton Walls, Hereford, where they were found in contexts dating from the mid-1st to the 4th century AD. Nine spiral rings were also uncovered and, although they are relatively indistinct, a date-range of 1st century BC to 1st century AD has been tentatively proposed (Fisher in Johnston and Wailes 2007). Another identifiable group of finds consisted of a number of large needles and fragments of needles, indicating that some sewing was done at the site (Wailes 1990, 17). There was also some evidence for metalworking in the form of two small metal bars that may have been ingots, two casting jets, a tracer, and two cone-shaped fragments that may be casting debris. With the exception of one of the casting jets, all of these objects came from the Iron Age levels.

Forty-eight pieces of glass were recovered, including 23 perforated beads, 3 ring beads, 8 dumbbells or toggles, 10 fragments of bracelet or armlet, 1 thin rod of glass and 3 waste pieces. The bracelets are slender with D-shaped sections, and translucent: ranging in colour from clear, pink-purple, honey, light green, and blue. The purple bracelet has very close parallels from the burial at Loughey, Co. Down, and Hengistbury Head, while the blue glass bracelet is similar to examples found at Freestone Hill, Tara, and Knowth (Johnston and Wailes 2007, 120). The excavator cites parallels from contexts dating to the 1st century BC on the continent for the ring-beads, while 4 of the 'chevron' beads are compared to continental examples dating to the Early-Middle La Tène transition (Hughes in Wailes 1990, 18-19). Although an Iron Age date for these items is to be expected, the more precise dates provided by the excavator may be more restrictive than the evidence can reasonably allow (Raftery 1984, 198-200; 1994, 74).[97]

---

[97] This point is perhaps acknowledged by the excavator in his proviso: 'If my highly compressed synopsis has oversimplified complex issues, the fault is of course mine […] this is not the place to

The dumb-bell beads are also difficult to date as they may have continued in use well into the early Medieval Period (Raftery 1983, 186; 1984 202-3). A number of examples have been found at Iron Age sites in Ireland, one from an inhumation burial at Knowth, Co. Meath, and two from Cairn H at Loughcrew, Co. Meath. One of the Knockaulin dumbbells is an unusual 'sealing wax' red colour and it likely that this glass was imported for enamelling or inlay-work, possibly from the eastern Mediterranean (Johnston and Wailes 2007). Three waste pieces could represent the remains of a small-scale glass-working operation at the site, although this evidence does not necessarily prove that glass production was carried out at the site (Wailes 1990, 19: note 10).

The collection of 18,500 animal bones and fragments from Knockaulin constitutes the largest animal bone assemblage from any Irish Iron Age site (Crabtree 1990). The animals represented are almost all large domestic species: cattle (54%), pig (36%), sheep/goat (7.51%) and horse (2.5%). There were also 3 red deer fragments and 3 dog bones. Biological evidence indicates that the majority of the animals were young, with a particularly large amount of young calf bones, which would suggest that they were slaughtered in April or May. There were also a significant number of cattle killed at the age of six months, indicating that there was a second period of slaughtering in September or October. According to Crabtree, this assemblage '...provides a portrait of a series of Iron Age feasts involving the consumption of large quantities of beef and pork and small amounts of horse-flesh and mutton'; a suggestion supported by the stratigraphic evidence for periodic activity uncovered in the Flame layer (1990, 23). These periods of feasting coincided with seasonal agricultural surpluses, and are also likely to have had a strong ritual and ceremonial aspect.

The problems with dating the material assemblage and the lack of find contexts allows for limited analysis concerning the possible structural associations of the material recovered. Much of the glass material has been dated to the last two centuries BC, which would indicate a possible association with the Rose phase figure-of-eight structures. The two Romano-British brooches can be firmly dated to the immediate post-conquest period in the mid-to-late 1st century AD, and would therefore have been roughly contemporary with the Mauve and Flame

---

debate the involved arguments over the dating and associations of insular Iron Age and Roman period glass' (Wailes 1990, 18).

phase activity at the site and the iron sword deposited in the foundation trench. The iron spear appears to have come from the Flame layer, along with a large amount of burnt animal bone, and would thus appear to be associated with the seasonal feasting that followed the destruction of the Mauve phase structures. The dumbbell beads may belong to the later phases of activity as these items are likely to date to the early centuries AD (Raftery 1984, 202-3). The vast majority of the Iron Age material was focused on the central area of the enclosure around the wooden enclosures and the subsequent mound (Fig. 7.6).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.6: Distribution of Iron Age artefacts at Knockaulin.
(After Johnston and Wailes 2007)

The Surrounding landscape

Knockaulin is located 2km to the southwest of Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, and is situated on a rounded hill which rises to about 180m above sea level and offers commanding views over the surrounding countryside. To the northwest, the Curragh plain extends from just beyond the foot of Knockaulin to the outskirts of Kildare town, covering almost 2000 hectares in area. The Curragh can certainly be described as a ritual landscape as numerous barrows, mounds, and linear earthworks traverse the plain (Clancy 2006). The presence of so many burial monuments as well as two linear earthworks known as 'the race of the black pig' and 'the Black Ditch' has prompted comparisons between the Curragh and the ritual complexes surrounding Tara, Navan Fort, and Rathcroghan, where similar earthworks are often the most imposing monuments in the landscape. The association with a 'black pig' is also a recurring motif, and the construction of the Mucklaghs at Rathcroghan (from the Irish múc 'pig') and the Black Pigs Dyke to the south of Navan Fort are traditionally attributed to the rooting of a magical boar (Williams 1987).

Sample of oak from the Black Pigs Dyke at Aghareagh West, Co Armagh, provided dates of 390-70BC, and there is increasing archaeological evidence to suggest that similar linear earthworks are Iron Age in date (Waddell 1998, 58-60). It would also appear likely that they mark territorial boundaries. In Kilkenny, near Freestone Hill, a linear earthwork called the Rathduff dyke (known locally as 'the Gripe of the Pig') runs along the border of Counties Kilkenny and Carlow, and may have delineated the border between the Early Historic kingdoms of Laigen and Osraige (Ó Floinn 2000, 27). The Cliadh Dubh ('Black 'Dyke'), in Counties Limerick and Cork, runs intermittently for 24km along County and Townland boundaries in the area. It also appears likely that these linear monuments are associated with prehistoric hilltop enclosures and ritual complexes (Waddell 1998, 358).

A number of the barrows and related monuments on the Curragh were partially excavated in the first half of the last century (Ó Ríordáin 1950). Three were ring-banks with diameters of around 30-45m (sites 1, 4, and 5), none of which produced any dateable finds. An adult female inhumation burial uncovered at site 4, previously thought to be late Iron Age in date (Raftery 1981, 187; O'Brien

1990, 39), has been recently radiocarbon dated to 436-639AD.[98] Intriguingly, the position of the skeleton was interpreted as indicating that the woman had been buried alive (Ó Ríordáin 1950).[99] An unstratified find from this last site was a bronze spiral finger-ring similar to those found at Knockaulin, Loughcrew, Newgrange, and Freestone Hill (Raftery 1983, no. 478).

A possible multivallate ring-barrow (site 6) revealed another adult inhumation. This burial may be Iron Age in date, however there were also secondary insertions that were thought by the excavator to be medieval (Ó Ríordáin 1950, 259). A more secure Iron Age date has been established for a different type of burial in this area: a bog body found in Clongownagh Bog at Barronstown West, 6km to the north of the Curragh. A radiocarbon determination of 240-400 AD was provided by the remains which were found in close proximity to the barony boundary (O Floinn 1995; Kelly 2006). The concentration of so many ritual monuments, particularly barrows and burial monuments, in such close proximity to Knockaulin raises the distinct possibility that the Curragh may in fact constitute a 'royal' ritual complex similar to those surrounding Tara, Navan Fort, and Rathcroghan (Aitchison 1994, Waddell 1998, 346), and in an Old Irish poem about Áed Dub (a 7th century bishop of Kildare) the Curragh plain itself is associated with the Kingship of Leinster (Charles-Edwards 2000, 95).

Knockaulin also overlooks the Early Christian routeway known as the Slige Dhála (the Road of Dála), the second of the great roads that traverse Ireland from east to west. Described in the early literature as running from west Munster to Tara (Ó Lochlainn 1940), this road would have continued past Knockaulin in a westerly direction towards Nurney (where a bronze coin of Augustus was 'dug up' in the late 19th century) crossing the River Barrow somewhere between Athy and Monasterevin. It would appear that this section of the Barrow was an important focus for ritual deposition in Late Prehistory as 30 pieces of prehistoric metalwork – including swords, spearheads, axeheads, daggers, dirks, rapiers and knives – have been recovered along this stretch of river (Bourke 2001, 68-70).[100] The deposition of prehistoric weapons in rivers has been interpreted by a number of commentators as a form of territorial delineation and boundary demarcation

---

[98] Dates provided by Mapping Death database (www.mappingdeathdb.ie).
[99] It is also interesting to note that the bodies of three women buried together at Folly Lane in Britain have been interpreted by Miranda Aldhouse-Green as sacrificial burials (2004, 196).
[100] A total of just 6 items have been recovered from 4 other locations along the Barrow River.

(Bradley 1990, Bourke 2001), and it is significant that the portion of the existing border between Counties Kildare and Laois that is marked by the Barrow River coincides with the section where this deposition was focused.

At Monasterevin, where five spearheads (including one possible Iron Age example) were recovered, the Barrow and its tributary Black River diverge and the latter continues to form a section of the Kildare/Laois border, flowing though the Townland of Oldgrange where a more unusual piece of metalwork was found 'in a river' (Lucas 1960, 33, fig. 23). This is an iron slave-shackle, the only one of its kind from Ireland, thought to be of probable Late Roman or sub-Roman date (Thompson 1993). Another find with a Roman date and background was recovered from the River Greese, which forms a significant stretch of the Kildare/Wickow County boundary running from just outside Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow (approximately 8km to the south-east of Knockaulin) towards Ballitore. This artefact, a Class 1 penannular brooch dating from the 3rd-4th centuries AD, may also represent a ritual deposit as over 50% of the provenanced Class 1 penannulars from Ireland have been found in watery contexts such as rivers and bogs (Ó Floinn 2001, 2).

This stretch of the River Grease is overlooked by a number of mounds, standing stones, and a remarkable cluster of six hillforts straddling the Slaney River near Baltinglass in the Wicklow hills to the east. On the Kildare side of the border another early penannular brooch was found at Ballitore, which is overshadowed by a barrow and standing stone on the top of Mullaghmast Hill to the west. A decorated stone found in the fabric of a castle wall on Mullaghmast hill has been dated to the Late Iron Age/Early Christian transition period and is therefore likely to be broadly contemporary with the Class 1 penannular brooches. However, unlike the latter artefacts the stone does not have a provincial Roman background but appears to represent a late example of insular La Tène art (Raftery 1984, 297-300; Waddell 1998, 364).

One notable feature of these seemingly diffuse artefacts and monuments is a conspicuous concern with the establishment and maintenance of boundaries. The construction of linear earthworks (Waddell 1998, 358-60); the erection of standing stones (Newman 2005, 367); the deposition of metalwork in rivers (Bourke 2001, 125-7); and the burial of bodies in bogs (Kelly 2006), have all been shown to be associated with marking territorial boundaries. The fact that

many of these features also coincide with barony and county boundaries would indicate that this is also the case here. While it is clear that much of this activity would have occurred in the Bronze Age, there is also a significant late prehistoric stratum that includes notable Roman elements. As we shall see, this concern with boundary maintenance is also particularly visible in the areas surrounding other Iron Age ritual centres and would appear to be directly related to the intensive Late Iron Age activity at these sites.

Comparative Archaeology

As noted earlier, the references to Knockaulin/Dún Ailinne in the early historic sources identify this site as an important royal centre and directly associate it with a number of other ancient 'royal capitals'. The most eminent of these – Teamhair, Crúachain, Emain Macha, and Caisel – have been identified as Tara (Co. Meath), Rathcroghan (Co. Roscommon), Navan Fort (Co. Armagh), and Cashel (Co. Tipperary), respectively. In the historical records each of these sites represents the political centre of one of Ireland's five provinces: Knockaulin in Leinster, Cashel in Munster, Rathcroghan in Connacht, and Navan Fort in Ulster (A. and B. Rees 1961). According to this tradition Tara was the capital of Meath, the middle (Irish *Mide*) province, and appears to have held a position of pre-eminence among the royal capitals (Bhreathnach 1996). Another site that may be described as a type of 'royal' centre is the Hill of Uisneach (Co. Westmeath), the meeting place of the provinces identified in the early sources as the *umbiblicus* or navel of Ireland (A. and B. Rees 1961, 118-172; Newman 1998, 127; Schot 2011).

Of course the relevance of Early Medieval historical evidence to Iron Age archaeology is fiercely debated, and it would certainly be imprudent not to differentiate between the early literature concerning these sites and their actual use in prehistoric times. The title 'royal' is particularly problematic here, as these sites acquired this nominal status in the historic period and it is clear that the associated literary tradition was primarily concerned with contemporary social and political affairs (McCone 1991, 233-255; Bhreathnach 1993; 2005b). Yet the natural settings of Tara, Knockaulin, Navan Fort, Rathcroghan, Uisneach, and the Rock of Cashel, and the concentration of late prehisotic monuments in and around these locations, clearly mark these sites out as places apart: they are simply spectacular. There is, in fact, increasing evidence to suggest that these sites do

constitute a closely-related group of ritual complexes that once occupied an extraordinary position in the prehistoric landscape of Ireland. It is not surprising that these are the very places that are attributed special status in the historical documents, and while we cannot treat the references in these sources as contemporary accounts, we should not let our skepticism concerning the value of historical sources to prehistoric archaeology blind us to the one argument most clearly supported by the archaeological record: these sites were *the* centres of power in late prehistoric Ireland.

The internally-ditched hilltop enclosure at Knockaulin is one architectural feature that is almost exclusively associated with royal sites, and these enclosures are often seen as the 'hallmark' of prehistoric royal complexes (Warner 1988a; Newman 1997a, 170-7). Only four other large enclosures of this kind have been identified in Ireland: Navan Fort, Ráith na Rig at Tara, Knockbrack (Co. Dublin), and Carrowmalby (Co. Sligo).[101] Three out of five of these monuments are recorded as ancient royal centres in the Early Historical sources. The unusual internal-ditch/outer-bank arrangement of these enclosures is generally interpreted as means of demarcating sacred space, as it is clearly not defensive and is a persistent feature of earlier prehistoric ritual monuments such as ring barrows and henges (Newman 1997a, 170-177; Dowling 2011). Indeed, it was previously suggested that the enclosure at Navan Fort may be a henge (Simpson 1989); however recent excavations at Navan Fort and Tara have shown both enclosures to be Iron Age in date.

In 1998 a trench extending across a water-logged section of the Navan Fort ditch was excavated and a number of well-preserved wooden artefacts and a small amount of animal bone were recovered (Mallory 2000). Perhaps the most interesting find was a fragment of charred oak beam discovered at the very bottom of the ditch that provided a dendrochronological date in the mid-90's BC. The position of the beam indicates that it had been placed in the ditch immediately after it had been dug and therefore presents a reliable date for the construction of the enclosure itself. As mentioned earlier, Ó Ríordáin's cuttings across the Rath na Ríg ramparts at Tara were reopened in 1997 and animal bones from the lower levels of the ditch provided radiocarbon determinations of 153-41

[101]There is some uncertainty as to whether the enclosure at this last site is actually prehistoric (Raftery 1994, 79-80).

BC and 193-95 BC: indicating a date in the last two centuries BC for the construction of the enclosure. A palisade trench was dug inside the ditch sometime after the earthwork itself was constructed and a sample of cattle bone from the trench provided a radiocarbon date-range of 95 BC-15 AD (Roche 2002, 68-69). The close correspondence between the dendrochronology at Navan Fort and the radiocarbon dates at Tara would suggest that these enclosures were broadly contemporary, both having been constructed in the Late 2nd to Early 1st centuries BC.

The hilltop enclosures at Knockaulin and Navan Fort are the only examples that have been extensively excavated and the remains uncovered in the central areas have shown remarkable similarities, both in the form and the sequence of the late prehistoric structures. At Navan a Late Bronze Age circular ditched enclosure (Phase 3i), with a cobbled causeway forming an entrance to the east, was replaced by three successive structures (A/B/C) each consisting of three concentric trenches ranging in size from 10-13.5m in diameter (Phase 3ii). All of the structures had east-facing entrances, and there were also gaps in the trenches to the north where traces of even larger enclosures were uncovered (F-H, J-L, S-W). The northern enclosures consisted of circular trenches 20-25m in diameter coinciding with the southern buildings to form a large figure-of-eight shaped plan (Fig. 7.7). There were large gaps in the enclosures to the east, with substantial parallel palisades forming an avenue-like entranceway (X/Z; Y/Z).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.7: Figure-of-eight shaped enclosures at Navan Fort and Knockaulin.
(After Waddell 1998)

In Phase 3iii yet another triple-slot enclosure (E1, E2, E3) was built over the last Phase 3ii enclosure. This structure was 13.5m in overall diameter, and was positioned between the southern and northern ring-slots, overlapping both and marking a change in the pattern of siting and orientation that had been retained by all of the Phase 3ii buildings. Finds from the Phase 3 occupation layers included several hundred sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery, a fragment of a scabbard chape, part of a bronze sickle, a tiny socketed axe, a bronze pin, a ringheaded pin, shale armlets and glass beads. Some fragments of clay moulds (for a blade and a pin) were the only evidence for metalworking at the site. An unusual find was the skull of a Barbary ape from the outer trench of the latest Phase 3ii southern enclosure (Feature C2). A sample of collagen from the skull provided a radiocarbon determination of 390-20 BC, a range almost identical to that established for the figure-of-eight Rose Phase at Knockaulin.

Initially it had been assumed that the southern (ABC) enclosures were roofed, and the presence of hearths and a thick occupation layer were interpreted as domestic debris. The larger northern enclosures were thought to be open-air working areas or stockyards attached to the houses (Lynn 1997). However, the size of the similar Rose Phase enclosures and the absence of any discernable occupation layer indicated that the larger Knockaulin structures were ceremonial buildings, and served to highlight the distinct possibility that Phase 3ii buildings at Navan Fort also had a ritual aspect. In 1993 a geophysical survey identified a new enclosure, approximately 30m in diameter, to the east of the phase 3ii buildings. This new feature was excavated by Chris Lynn from 1999-2002, and a triple-walled enclosure was discovered. The excavations also showed that this enclosure was joined to yet another triple-walled enclosure, 20m in diameter, creating '…one and the same feature, a giant figure-of-eight structure 50m long' (Lynn 2003, 99).

This last structure is similar in scale to the Knockaulin buildings, being just slightly bigger than the Rose Phase structures. The entrances also share the same orientation, and there is evidence for two palisades running eastwards downhill forming an avenue-like entrance. This structure is unlikely to have constituted a roofed settlement, and Lynn has also noted that there is no evidence for any functional difference between the large northern and smaller southern enclosures. The significant quantity of burnt animal bone recovered showed a similar

breakdown in species as those from the Phase 3ii levels under the mound. According to Lynn, the amount of burnt bone is such that '…we have to consider seriously that it may represent the remains of a ceremony involving the cremation of animal bones' (2003, 99). Indeed, the nature of the animal bone assemblage from the Phase 3ii buildings also suggests a possible ritual interpretation. In contrast to other late prehistoric sites, pig remains (60.2%) were far more common than cattle (30.4%), a factor that cannot be explained in terms of environmental conditions (McCormick 1997, 118). Preliminary dating evidence from this new site points to a date in the last two centuries BC.

A massive 'forty-metre structure' (Phase 4) was erected inside, and was concentric with, the Phase 3i ditch. This building consisted of 280 timber posts arranged in 5 concentric rings surrounding a large central post measuring 50cm in diameter and up to 13m in height (Fig. 7.8). The outer wall of the building was 37.3m in diameter, with 34 large pits spaced 3.5m apart. Each of these pits originally contained single posts that were connected by trenches holding horizontal timber planks. It appears that secondary posts were inserted to reinforce the original posts, some of which had been pushed up to 15cm deeper into the subsoil, possibly due to the presence of some kind of superstructure or roof (Lynn 2003, 30). The internal post rings were interrupted by four parallel rows of posts, forming three aisles leading from the entrance in the west to the enormous central post. A number of the post-butts had been preserved in the waterlogged subsoil: they were all of oak, and dendrochronological analysis has shown that the central post last grew in 95BC and was felled in that year or in early 94BC (Baillie 1988).

The Phase 4 structure had a relatively short-lived existence – whilst still standing the entire internal area was filled with limestone blocks forming a cairn up to 2.8m high. Within the cairn a series of radial divisions were created using different sizes of stones and varying admixtures of soil and stone. Following this the external timber wall was burned in a seemingly deliberate act. Bunches of charred brushwood and twigs that appear to have been used as kindling were uncovered at the base of the wall. Finally, layers of turf and soil were placed over the stones forming an earthen mound 2.5m deep on top of the cairn. The soils used were of varied compositions and much of this material must have been brought to the site from a number of different locations.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.8: The '40 meter structure' at Navan Fort.
(After Lynn 2003)

This seemingly bizarre sequence of events appears to represent one continuous process (Phase 5) that may well have been planned in advance, prior to the construction of the Phase 4 structure, and there can be little doubt that these acts were ritually motivated (Lynn 2003, 18-25). As at Knockaulin, finds from the Iron Age levels were scarce: a La Téne ring-headed pin, a bone weaving comb, and a bone dice were the only identifiable objects recovered. However, at least four La Téne brooches were found at the site prior to the excavations (one of which may have been found in an inhumation burial: see Ó Floinn 2009), and a Class 1 penannular brooch was also found 'near Navan' (Fig. 7.9).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.9: Penannular brooch from 'near Navan Fort' (After Lynn 2003).

The similarities between Navan Fort and Knockaulin can be seen both in the sequence of the phases and in the architecture and orientation of the buildings. At both sites early circular enclosures with east-facing entrances were replaced by triple-walled figure-of-eight structures comprised of small southern buildings attached to larger northern enclosures with avenue-like entranceways extending to the east. These were in turn replaced by even larger circular enclosures with internal post-circles and large central features. The elaborate entrances of the later structures are also similar, with the aisles leading into the Navan Fort enclosure and the annex-like features at Knockaulin both indicating a threefold division of the path from the entrance to the central feature (Lynn 1991). The similar

architectural phases also have a comparable chronological sequence, with dating evidence indicating that the notable shift in structural form at both sites – from figure-of-eight to large circular enclosures – occurred at the turn of the 1st century BC.

There are, of course, differences between the sites. It would appear that the activity at Navan Fort was more intensive with four figure-of-eight enclosures being constructed (although three of them were much smaller in scale than at Knockaulin), and a smaller circular enclosure also preceding the Phase 4 'forty-metre structure'. The elaborate activity involved in the destruction of the Phase 4 building at Navan is not recorded at Knockaulin, however the Mauve phase structures at the latter site were deliberately dismantled in an ordered sequence and there was some evidence of burning.[102] Soil was also redeposited over the demolished Mauve structures creating a low mound on the summit of the hill, and stones were used to pave some of the central area. Overall, it is evident that the activity occurring at both sites involved contemporary and closely related forms of ritual behaviour; indeed the parallels are such that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Knockaulin and Navan Fort were both locations where a very specific, and very special, religious rite took place.

---

[102] Warner associates the destruction of the Mauve phase at Knockaulin with the invasion of Tuathal Tectmar, noting that in one account of the saga Tuathal was said to have '…destroyed the *wooden* fortress of the Laign King Bresal, possibly but not explicitly Ailenn' (Warner 1995, 27; original emphasis). However, considering the similarity between the sequences and the destruction of the Navan Fort 'Forty Meter Structure', it is far more likely that the burning and dismantling at both sites was ritually motivated.

Comparative contexts: Ritual, Royalty and Roman material

The relatively small amount of finds recovered at Knockaulin is conspicuous in light of the extensive evidence for building activity on such a monumental scale. This apparent imbalance has understandably led to a concentration on the structural remains, with the analysis and interpretation of the artefacts restricted to establishing dates and examining the potential evidence for manufacturing or production (Wailes 1990, 16-19; Waddell 1998, 347). In a form of 'arguing from absence' what is often considered to be most important feature of the assemblage is this scarcity itself – which is assumed to offer evidence for ritual rather than domestic activity (Raftery 1994, 74). While the paucity of finds clearly constrains the extent of analysis that can be undertaken, to overlook the possible uses of these artefacts and the roles they may have played in the activity at the site is to ultimately divest them of any meaningfully constituted social or symbolic dimensions. The interpretation of a site must surely extend to a broader interpretation of the artefactual assemblage itself, regardless of how meagre we perceive it to be.

From this perspective, there are a number of notable associations concerning both the composition of the assemblage and related finds in other contexts. The first of these is the close correspondence between the Knockaulin finds and the material recovered from Iron Age sanctuaries in southern Britain and northern France. Swords and spearheads are the most common finds at Iron Age cult centres in northern France and, along with umbos (shield bosses), chapes and related military gear, such martial items comprise up to 70% of the metalwork at sites such as Gournay-sur-Aronde and Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Brunaux *et al*. 1985, 71). After these, personal ornaments are the most frequently recovered artefacts, with bracelets, rings and fibulae in particular found at nearly every cult site in the region (Roymans 1990, 77-82). The assemblages at pre-Roman cult centres in southern Britain have almost identical compositions. At sites such as Hayling Island and South Cadbury, spearheads, swords, and scabbard and shield bindings make up the majority of finds, with brooches, bracelets, rings and pins, accounting for the rest (Smith 2001, 68-9) Animal bones were also recovered at more that half of the French centres and at the majority of the British sites (Smith 2001, 75).

Of course, the sheer volume of material recovered from these French and British sites makes any comparisons with the assemblage from Knockaulin seem rather feeble. In an Irish context however, what is remarkable about these finds is that they represent the *only* Iron Age weapons from *any* excavated dry land context – all of the others have been found deposited in rivers, lakes and bogs, with one example from the sea. The lack of Iron Age artefacts from prehistoric royal assembly sites also makes the discovery of Roman material at Knockaulin appear all the more significant. Indeed all of the excavated royal sites in Ireland have produced Roman finds. The dice and brooch from Navan Fort have been mention above, and the material from Tara has been discussed previously. A Roman dolphin brooch, dating to Late 1st/Early 2nd century AD was found on the Rock of Cashel in the 19th century (Cahill 1982), and a 4th century Roman coin and a Roman padlock key were found at Uisneach (Donaghy and Grogan 1997).

Roman finds have also been recovered from a number of significant sites that would eventually become Royal centres in the Early Medieval Period. As noted earlier, the megalithic tomb at Knowth (*Cnogba*) became the Royal capital of the kingdom of Northern Brega in the second half of the first millennium AD (Byrne et al. 2008). The enclosure at Clogher was the seat and inauguration site of the Uí Chremthainn, the dominant branch of the Airgialla from the 5th to the 9th centuries (Warner 1988; see also Gleeson 2012). The crannog at Lagore (*Loch Gabair*), Co. Meath, which was the royal residence of Kings of Southern Brega from the 7th to the 10th centuries AD, produced fragments of Roman Samian ware (1st century AD), glass, and two toilet implements (Hencken 1950; Bateson 1973).

Early Medieval royal inauguration ceremonies are known to have taken place on mounds at these and other similar sites across Ireland (see Fitzpatrick 2004; Newman 1997a; Gleeson 2012), and the location of the mounds at Navan Fort and Knockaulin, along with the distribution of the finds, would indicated that the mounds at these sites were also the main focus of ritual activity (see Lynn 2003, 18-25). In the early literature the mythical associations with Navan Fort and Tara indicate that these sanctuaries were seen as a gate to the Otherworld, and it is noteworthy that mounds are commonly portrayed as both entrances to the

Otherworld and as royal inauguration sites in Irish folklore (Warner 2000, 40-1; Ó hÓgáin 1991, 185-190).[103]

This connection is also evident in the etymology of the Irish word *síd*, meaning Otherwordly folk or fairies, which originally meant 'mound' and derives from the Indo-European root *sedos* ('seat') used to describe a centre of power or a 'royal seat' (Doherty 2005, 16). The word *forad*, the name of the mound at the centre of Ráith na Ríg at Tara, actually derives from *sedos** (Doherty 2005, 16), and the link between kingship and otherworldly forces becomes explicit in the literature associated with Tara. According to John Carey: 'Tara appears in our sources not as a sanctuary of the old gods but rather as a bastion of human kingship, to be defended against the aggression of the supernatural realm – and this despite the fact that it was from that realm that such kingship derived its legitimacy' (2005, 48).

The unusual and elaborate sequence of activity used to create the mound at Navan Fort has been subject to a number of interpretations ranging from sun-worship associated with an Apollo-type deity (Warner 1996), to a sacrificial rite similar to the burning of the 'wickerman' described by Julius Caesar (Lynn 1992, 47-8). The most compelling connections, however, are those relating to ancient Indo-European kingship rites. Lynn has argued that the three main stages of construction of the mound represent a cosmological schema similar to the 'tripartite ideology' identified by the comparative mythologist Georges Dumézil (Lynn 1992; 1994). According to this theory, the conception of social order reflected in ancient Indo-European myths (including Indian, Iranian, Slavic, Latin, Germanic, and Celtic sources) involved a threefold division of society into hierarchical classes or 'functions': at the top the priests and lawmakers (F1), in the middle warriors (F2), and at the base the cultivators and herders (F3). It is also thought that this ideological configuration involved a binary dualism which cut across each of the three functions: magico-religious chaos *vs.* sovereignty and the rule of law (F1), coarse and brutal aggressors *vs.* noble and chivalric defenders

---

[103] There are also otherworldly associations with Crúachain in the historical sources: one of the more unusual archaeological features in this complex is a cave known as the *Oweynagat* ('the Cave of the Cats'), which is described in the early tale *Echtra Nera* as a gateway to the Otherworld (Ó hUiginn 1988, 21).

(F2), and rapacious consumers *vs.* productive providers (F3) (see Mallory 1989, 130-14, and Lincoln 2000, 124-130).

An example of the mythical expression of this order is thought to be encapsulated in the widespread Indo-European creation myth concerning giant primeval twin brothers who become the first priest and the first king. The priest 'Man' (Indic *Manu*, German *Mannus*, from the Indo-European **Manu*) sacrificed the king 'Twin' (Indic *Yama*, Avestan *Yima*, Norse *Ymir*, from the Indo-European **Yem-ono*) and made the world out of his dismembered body – the rocks from his bones, the earth from his flesh, the forests from his hair, the wind from his breath, and so on. In some versions, such as the 'Song of Purusa' from the Indic *Rig Veda*, different body parts are also used to create the constituent elements of human society: his mouth became the priest, his arms the warrior, his thighs the farmer, and his feet the servant.[104] According to a trifunctional interpretation the basic tripartite features can all be discerned here: the three principal social classes and the dualistic nature of power – the priest officiating over the magico-religious act of sacrifice/creation and the king literally embodying social order and law (Lynn 1994, 14; Lincoln 1975).

In relation to Navan Fort, Lynn has suggested that the three structural elements – the timber building, the stone cairn, and the earthen mound – constitute an inverted reconstruction of the first king 'Twin' and at the same time symbolize the three social functions (1994). Within this framework the mound would symbolise kingship and sovereignty as it is both a representation of the first king and the synthesis of all three social orders. It can also be seen that Carey's analysis of the literature associated with Tara involves a similar dualism to that encompassed in Dumézil's first function (magico-religious chaos *vs.* sovereignty and law).[105] Dumézil had also proposed a tripartite interpretation of the legends associated with the Irish mythological figure Macha, the eponymous goddess of Navan Fort (*Emain Macha*), arguing that she is a 'tri-functional goddess' concerned with sovereignty, warfare, and fertility (1954; see also Clark 1991).

These suggestions are both stimulating and provocative, yet there are a number of problems with the quasi-structuralist nature of Dumézil's notion of a 'tripartite

---

[104] Jan Puhvel has argued that the Roman foundation myth also owes its origins to this Indo-European creation myth. Romulus kills his brother Ramous (early Italic *iemus* from the Proto-Indo-European **yemos*?), and was in turn dismembered by the senators (Puhvel 1987).

[105] It should be noted that this connection is not explicitly developed or claimed by Carey himself.

ideology'. It has been argued that Dumézil and his supporters project their own conceptions of tripartite division onto source material in a selective manner, highlighting evidence that appears to fit their thesis and ignoring that which does not (Gonda 1974). These procedures in turn serve as the pretence for increasingly abstract and intangible interpretations that can give the self-fulfilling impression that the 'tripartite ideology' is a wide-ranging and well-attested phenomenon, accumulating to form an ostensibly enduring edifice onto which ever more speculative interpretations are projected. The scope for such projection is demonstrated by García-Quintela in his purposefully absurd interpretation of the 2001 September 11th attacks as a 'tri-functional crime'(2007): the Pennsylvanian plane targeting the legal/political capital of Washington (F1), the pentagon plane targeting the military headquarters (F2), and the New York planes targeting the economic centre symbolized by the 'Twin Towers' (F3).[106] This is not to say that mythological motifs, archaeological artefacts, or indeed terrorist attacks are devoid of any discernable ideological or cosmological import, but rather to highlight the ease with which such a basic interpretive framework may be imposed indiscriminately and ahistorically.

In the context of Roman archaeology, Momigliano (1984) has shown how the constant imposition of tripartite analyses generates a static and uniform model of social relations that simply cannot accommodate the extensive evidence for economic and cultural transformations, thereby verging on the ahistorical. There is also the more controversial accusation that Dumézil's theory may owe more to fascist notions of 'traditional' social order and Aryan/Indo-European supremacy current in 19th and 20th century Europe than to any actual historical ideological formation (Lincoln 2000, 124-137). Of course, even if the tripartite ideology did exist in the past, the mythological sources cannot establish whether any social groups were actually organised according to these principles or whether this threefold division was simply an idealised conception of a religious cosmological order.

It is in relation to this last point that Lynn's interpretation of the Navan Fort mound is particularly significant, as it constitutes one of the few attempts to examine the tripartite theory with reference to archaeological evidence. There is

---

[106] García-Quentella is actually a supporter of trifunctional analysis in Indo-European mythological.

indeed '…ample room for the archaeological 'testing' of the tripartite model' (Mallory 1989, 133), moreover this is necessary in order to establish whether the theoretical tripartite divisions had any kind of material or social manifestations. There can be little doubt that the use and construction of physical structures may be influenced by social relations and associated ideologies, and that ideological cosmologies, social hierarchies and religious architecture are interconnected and socially mediated (see Bourdieu 1990).

A specific connection between the Indo-European creation myth and Navan Fort/Emain Macha can be seen the etymological origin of the first placename element *Emain*, from the Old Irish *emon* meaning 'twin' which is cognate with the Indo-European **Yem-ono* (Mallory 1989, 140).[107] In the tale *Ces Ulad* Macha is said to have given birth to twins while racing the king's horses – a story that displays clear parallels with other Indo-European 'horse-twin' myths such as those involving the Indic *Asvins* (horsemen) in the *Rig Veda*. These divine horse-twins are often associated with fertility and sustenance, and are thought to characterise the dualism contained within the third function of Dumézil's tripartite system (Mallory 1989, 132-3).[108] Newman has suggested that there may also be a connection between the placename Emain Macha ('the Twins of Macha') and the figure-of-eight form of the structures uncovered at Navan Fort: the basic nature of the form – consisting of two conjoined circles – representing 'twins' or duality (1998, 139).

In the case of Navan Fort, the highly-structured composition of the mound must have been considered to be of great significance for those involved in its construction and use. Support for the idea that the different substances used in the construction of a building may represent specific concepts can also be found in the earliest sections of a selection of Irish grammatical texts known as *Auraicept na nÉces* ('The Primer of the Poets'),[109] in which the building materials of the tower of Babel are thought to symbolise linguistic categories: 'Others affirm that in the tower there were only nine materials and that these were clay and water,

---

[107] Although there is no explicit creation myth present in Early Irish Mythology, Lincoln has noted a number of motifs in the Irish sources that would appear to have been derived from the Indo-European creation myth (1991, 181-182).

[108] Other examples of 'horse twins' include the Greek Gemini twins (again from **Yem-ono*) and the ancestral Saxon figures Hengist and Horsa (both meaning 'stallion').

[109] The 'Auraicept' survives in a 14th century century manuscript; however the earliest Old Irish sections have been dated to the 7th century century AD (Ahlqvist 1983).

wool and blood, wood and lime, pitch, linen, and bitumen.[…] These represent noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition, interjection' (cited in Eco 1999, 36-7). This text may be seen to support the general thrust of Lynn's theory, however it also demonstrates the multiple symbolic meanings that can be attributed to material culture depending on the motivation and ideological position of the commentators.

The massive central oak post at Navan has also been interpreted as a physical realisation of the *axis mundi*, the conceptual centre of the cosmic order from which the king reigns, often represented as a tree in Indo-European myths (Lynn 1994; Doherty 2005, 15). This interpretation is strengthened by the radial forms of the oak-post structure and the stone cairn which undoubtedly resemble a wheel, prompting more direct comparisons with the ancient Indian institution of the *cakravartin* (from *cakra* meaning 'wheel'): the 'world-king' '…who like the sun is the centre, lord and sustainer of the world, its eye and life-giver; coinciding with the axis mundi..' (Gonda 1966, 126-7: cited in Doherty 2005, 15-16). The aisles leading to the central post of the '40 meter structure' at Navan Fort may have facilitated a ceremony similar to a fertility rite performed by the *cakravartin* involving the circumambulation of a 'tree' erected especially for the occasion, while the piling of earth upon the Navan mound recalls the inauguration rite '… in which bags of salty earth are thrown upon the king' (Doherty 2005, 16). The Navan mound itself may be analogous with the Indian *prasada*, a sacred structure or monument considered to be both the seat of kings and the home of the gods, and the word Prassad itself is also cognate with the Irish *forad* (Doherty 2005, 16).

An even more remarkable Irish connection with ancient Indian kinship concerns an elaborate kingship ceremony involving the sacrifice of a horse. In ancient India this ceremony was known as the *aśvamedha* and involved a highly ordered series of events whereby, after roaming free for a year, a stallion is captured to pull the kings chariot and is then sacrificed. The horse is smothered and the kings favourite wife 'co-habits' with the dead stallion under covers before it is dismembered and offered to the gods. During the ceremony the king is bathed and afterwards he is acclaimed by the people as the *cakravartin* or 'world-king' (Gonda 1966, 91-115; Mallory 1989, 135-7).

This extraordinary account bears a strong resemblance to the well-known description of an inauguration ceremony attributed to the Tyrconnell kings by the 12th century Norman chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis. In his account Giraldus claims that a white mare is brought before an assembled crowd and is 'embraced' by the future king. The animal is then killed, dismembered, and boiled in water. The royal candidate bathes in the same water, drinking the broth and eating the horsemeat, and is subsequently declared to be king by the assembly. The reliability of this source has to be critically assessed as it is clear that Giraldus actively sought to portray the Irish as barbarous heathens in order to justify the Anglo-Norman colonisation of the country (Lennon 2004, 39-44). As Doherty has noted, it is interesting that Giraldus locates this ceremony in a remote part of the county that he had never visited and – considering his knowledge of some of the material contained in the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* – it appears likely that he took this account from some older Irish source and then attributed it to the contemporary Irish (2005, 17-19). On the other hand, there are simply too many similarities between the descriptions of these ceremonies to dismiss the Irish version as entirely without foundation.

The suggestion that the Giraldus Cambrensis account was based on Medieval Irish ideas of ancient kingship rites is supported by the fact that a number of known Medieval Royal sites such as Lagore (*Loch Da Gabor*), Co. Meath, and Lisnaskea (*Sciath Gabra*), Co. Fermanagh, have placenames derived from the Irish word *gabor* which is '…primarily a poetic word for a white horse and a mare' (Breathnach 2002, 120). Echoes of these rituals can also be identified in an episode from the Middle Irish text *Geinemain Moling acus a Betha*, which tells of how St. Moling miraculously turns a cauldron of horsemeat into mutton and then blesses the household '…so that from them thenceforward is the lordship of Leinster' (cited in Doherty 2005, 19). It is significant that the early Christian authorities introduced a particularly harsh penalty for the consumption of horseflesh (four years penance on bread and water) a move that appears to be specifically aimed at suppressing pagan religious practices (Bhreathnach 2002, 120-1; Doherty 2005, 22). Therefore it would appear that Giraldus's description did draw on existing Irish accounts of pagan inauguration ceremonies, and that a form of *aśvamedha* ceremony was held in Ireland at some stage in the pre-Christian past.

There is also important linguistic and historical evidence to link this rite directly to Irish prehistoric royal sites. The word *aśvamedha* derives from the Proto-Indo-European **eḱwo-meydho* meaning 'horse-drunk', and is cognate with the personal name Epomeduos ('horse-mead') known from inscriptions in ancient Gaul. The element **meydho/medha/medu* provides the root for a range of Indo-European ritual alcoholic drinks: English *mead*, Old Church Slavonic *medu,* Lithuanian *medus* Greek *methyl*, Sanskrit *madhu*, and Old Irish *mid* (Mallory 1989, 136). Of particular interest here is the fact that the name of the mythical figure Medb, which can be roughly translated as 'the intoxicating one', also derives from this root. In the literature Medb Lethderg is portrayed as the consort of the kings of Tara, and the general consensus that she represents a euhemerised goddess who personifies the kingship of Tara is supported by a wide range of evidence, not least the explicit statement in the Book of Leinster that '…she used not allow any king in Tara unless she herself was his wife' (Connon 2005, 234-237).

Early Medieval documents such as king-lists, legal tracts and mythological tales, also provide us with valuable information concerning the ceremony associated with the kingship of Tara and contemporary ideas about the nature of the kingship itself (Bhreathnach 2005a, x). In the late 7th/ early 8th century text *Baile Chuinn Chétchathaig* there are references to the belief that the king had to imbibe a drink of sovereignty to legitimise his position. This belief persisted in the Irish literary tradition, with an allegorical figure called *Flaithius* 'Sovereignty' appearing in tales such as *Baile in Scáil* ('The Phantom's Frenzy') as an Otherworldly woman offering a symbolic drink to the man who would be king (Clark 1991, 137-45).[110] The clear correspondence between the *Flaithius* figure and Medb Lethderg, who is the daughter of Chonain Cualann or 'Conan of Cuala', is confirmed in a poem from *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin* which states that '…he will not be a king over Ireland, whom the ale of Cuala does not reach'.[111]

Doherty has also shown that the concept of 'world king' is present in the earliest Irish poetry associated with Leinster, and is specifically associated with

---

[110] The text of *Baile in Scáil* survives as an 11th century century redaction of a 9th century century narrative. The etymological connection between the words *flaith* 'sovereign' and *laith* 'beer' had been noted from as early as the medieval period (Bowen 1975, 21).
[111] The motif of Medb as a cup-bearer is also perceptible in the more destructive aspects of her character: when she wishes to weaken and divide her enemies she offers their leader a poisoned drink (Carey 2005, 47).

Ailinne (Doherty 2005, 20). Furthermore, similar motifs to those associated with the Indian *aśvamedha* can also be seen in the accounts of the kingship ceremony known as the *feis temro* ('the feast of Tara') at Tara, particularly in the central role attributed to the kings chariot (Doherty 2005; see also Bhreathnach 2005, ix-x). The chariot race is also the pivotal event in the legend of Macha at *Emain Macha* (Navan Fort), and the foundation myth of *Emain Macha* can also be seen to provide a direct link between Macha and a specific Iron Age and Roman artefact-type that has been found at all of these sites: the brooch.

According to this narrative, Macha marks out the area of *Emain Macha* using the pin of her brooch, creating the massive enclosure ditch in the process (see Dumézil 1954), and the Old Irish law tract Senchus Mór also contains a much quoted passage which explicitly associates the wearing of the brooch with nobility and kingship (Nieke 1993). In this light, the deposition of brooches at prehistoric 'royal' enclosures may be reasonably interpreted as offerings specifically associated with the rites of kingship that appear to have occurred at these sites. Indeed, the use of penannular brooches as ritual deposits in the rivers surrounding Knockaulin may possibly represent an attempt to inscribe the territory of the ruling king in a rite which figuratively re-enacts Macha's foundational gesture.

There is compelling archaeological and historical evidence to suggest that the ritual activity at prehistoric 'royal' centres was directly associated with the demarcation of territorial boundaries (Newman 1998, 131). Oak timbers from a section of earthworks known as 'the Dorsey' (from the Irish *dóirse* 'the doors/gates'), located 17km to the south of Navan Fort on the Armargh/Louth border, have provided dendrochronological samples showing that the timbers were cut around 100-90BC (Baillie 1988): this indicates that the construction of this section of the ramparts occurred no more that five years before or after the felling of the oak post at Navan Fort. A connection between the Dorsey and Navan Fort is supported further by a reference in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* to a place called *doirsiu Emna* (the 'gates of *Emain*') in 1224 AD (Lynn 2003, 55-58).

As noted above, the votive deposition of prehistoric metalwork in bogs and rivers has been interpreted as ritual activity concerned with the maintenance of territorial boundaries (Bradley 1990, Bourke 2001), and it has been suggested that the majority of provincial Roman penannular brooches found in Ireland were also

used in this manner (Ó Floinn 2001). Indeed, there is another Roman find from southeast Ireland which would appear to confirm this interpretation. A small Roman cult statuette was recently rediscovered in the National Museum by Conor Newman and Ger Dowling (Fig. 7.10). There was a tag attached which noted that came from 'the river Boyne near Navan'. This little figure is a *Lar* – and in Roman religion the *Lares* were the deities of an area of land or a territory said to bring protection and plenty to the community that lived on that land. They were also associated with the cult of the Emperor and were often placed at shrines found at crossroads and boundaries (Schneid 2003, 162-3).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 7.10: Lar statuette from River Boyne 'near Navan', Co. Meath
(Photograph Conor Newman)

Chapter 8

Wells, Springs and Sources

Introduction: Golden, Co Tipperary.

In 1842, Sergeant Bane of the Clonmel police discovered a small stone artefact '...in a dyke on the rising ground above the green of the village of Golden Bridge, and in a plot of land four acres in extent, known by the name of the Spittle Fields or Lands' (Way 1850, 335). The object, now housed in the British Museum, is a rectangular fine-grained slate tablet with an incised Latin inscription in mirror writing along one edge that reads: MIVVENTVTIANI/C DIAMYSVSADVECIC (Fig. 8.1). This can be expanded to: MARCI JUVENTII TUTIANI COLLYRIUM DIAMYSUS AD VETERES CICATRICES (Way 1850, 356), and translated as: 'For the son of Marcus Tutianus the salve diamysus for his old cicatrices ['corneal scars']'. The stone was promptly identified as a Roman *collyrium* stamp, an artefact type that was subject to intensive antiquarian interest from as early as the 17th century as one of the few archaeological objects that could be directly associated with Roman medical practice.

The corpus of these artefacts has continued to grow ever since, and almost three hundred stamps similar to the Golden example have been recorded to date. They are found almost exclusively in the northwest provinces of the Roman Empire, with the majority dating to the 2nd or 3rd century A.D (Boon 1983; Künzl 1985; 1986a). Twenty-eight provenanced examples are recorded from Britain[112]; their distribution is concentrated in the southern half of the island, with notable clusters around London and Colchester in the southeast, and in the areas surrounding the Severn Valley in the southwest (Jackson 1990a: fig. 4). These stamps were used to impress the name and nature of various concoctions onto small sticks, or *collyria*, made from assorted vegetable and mineral extracts; the ingredients were mixed and rolled like pastry into short lengths which were stamped and left to dry. The form of the stamps and the formula of the inscriptions are extraordinarily uniform. The stamps are almost all small

---

[112] Jackson notes four unprovenanced stamps in the British Museum which may also have been found in Britain (1990a, 275: note 48).

rectangular stones, and the inscriptions display three pieces of information: the name of the slave, the condition the salve is used to treat, and the name of a person associated with the cure.

Fig. 8.1: Occulist's stamp, Golden, Co. Tipperary.

Nearly one hundred different salves for treating more than thirty conditions have been recorded from stamp inscriptions, the vast majority relating to diseases of the eye. The salve diamisus (or diamysus as it is inscribed on the Golden stamp) was made from antimony sulphide and is one of the most common salves recorded on stamps. Three diamisus stamps have been found in Britain at London, York and Bedfordshire (Jackson 1990: nos. 21; 29; 15). Diamisus is noted by Pliny (*Historia Naturalis* XXXIV, 12; trans. Rackman *et al.*), and also by Marcellus (*de Medicamentis Empiricis, Physicis ac Rationabilibus*), as a medicine used by physicians to treat *aspritudines* (trachoma) and *cicatrices* (corneal scars). These two conditions, along with *lippitudines* (eye inflammation), are the most common inflictions referred to in the stamp inscriptions (Jackson 1988, 82-5).

The status of the names on the stamps remains uncertain: they may have belonged to the practitioner who used the stamp, the apothecary who made the *collyria*, or to the person responsible for the salve recipe. There are problems with

each of these possibilities, and no single explanation is likely to present itself. Boon has drawn attention to the fact that the names associated with famous salve recipes in Greek and Roman medical texts are conspicuously absent from the stamps (1983, 7-8). It is also not unknown for *collyria* made from several different recipes to be found with a stamp that names yet another recipe associated with a different individual (Jackson 1988, 83). Furthermore, there can be little doubt that as the stamps circulated between individuals – over time and increasing distance – the relationship between the use of the stamps and the names inscribed on them would have become more diffuse in every case (Boon 1983, 7-8;). Unfortunately none of the British stamps displays the name Marcus Juventus Tutanius.

The repeated associations with eye-conditions would suggest that these stamps were generally (although not exclusively) used by eye-specialists: the *medici occularii* ('occulists') known from inscriptions on tombstones throughout the empire. It is also possible that in some cases the stamps may simply be the best-preserved elements of more extensive medical kits used by eye-surgeons. An assemblage of this kind was recovered from a 2nd century Gallo-Roman burial at Rheims which contained a complete set of occulist's instruments in a large wooden box. This extraordinary find included surgical tools (scalpels, forceps, hooks and probes), pharmacy equipment (scales, flasks and bowls), a set of handled needles (believed to have been used for the surgical removal of cataracts), and a *collyrium* stamp with desiccated fragments of *collyria* sticks (Jackson 1988, 83; 1990, 8).

Eye disease appears to have been one of the few areas of specialisation within Graeco-Roman medicine, and there are specific records of *medici occularii* being employed by the Roman army: one example being Axius, who is described by Galen as an *ophthalmikos* ('eye doctor') of the British Fleet (xii.786). There can be little doubt that eye-disease was a major cause of disability in the ancient world (as it still is in many parts of the world today), and one of the famous writing tablets from Vindolanda Fort on Hadrian's Wall bears testament to this fact. The strength report of the First Cohort of Tungarians divides those unfit for duty into three categories: *aegri* ('sick'), *volnerati* ('wounded'), and *lippientes* (those suffering from 'eye-inflammation'), with the last category accounting for 10 of the 31 soldiers unable to serve (see Bowman 1994, 16).

Of course, the organisation of medical care in the army was exceptional, and the provision of medical treatment for the majority of people in the provinces would have been much different (Jackson 1988, 82-3). It is highly unlikely that the specialist skills of practitioners such as Axius would have been available to all but the richest of citizens in the largest and wealthiest cities of the Empire, yet the vast majority of *collyrium* stamps are found in civilian contexts, in towns and throughout the countryside (Boon 1983, 5-6: only two dozen stamps out of almost 300 have been found in military contexts). It has been argued that these stamps were not the possessions of specialist eye-surgeons, but would have been used by *circuitores* (travelling doctors) who were general practitioners with specific competences (Nutton 1972). According to Jackson:

> The concentration of *collyrium* stamps at particular towns may represent regional medical centres, from which panels of these *circuitores*, eye specialists or not, embarked on regular and set routes through the surrounding countryside, stopping at towns, villages, markets, healing shrines and other meeting places to heal the sick.
>
> (Jackson 1988, 85).

Evidence for this kind of medical practice can be found at sites such as Aventicum (Avenches in Switzerland), where a stone inscription commemorates a *collegium* of doctors and refers to a *medici* called Postumius Hermes, whose name also appears on a *collyrium* stamp found fifty kilometres away at Vidy (Jackson 1988, 85). It has also been noted that a large number of *collyrium* stamps have been found at cult loci, especially those associated with wells and springs (Thevenot 1950; Boon 1983, 5).

The most puzzling aspect of these stamps is their limited western distribution. It is evident that eye-diseases were common throughout the Roman Empire; in fact historical evidence would suggest that eye disease was endemic in the southern and eastern provinces (Boon 1983, 4-8). It is also clear that Roman doctors and *medici occularii* were active in these provinces and that many of the salve ingredients, such as *lyceum*, were even more widely available in these regions. This begs the question as to why the *collyrium* stamps are almost exclusively found in the north-west provinces of the Empire. It is possible that the ready supply of herbs and other salve ingredients in the East led to different forms of supply and packaging: with fresh ingredients available in bottles or jars, while

the export of ingredients to the west would have required drying and preservation (Boon 1983, 9-10).

This and other regional differences in medical practices may explain the absence of stamps in the Southern and Eastern provinces; however these factors cannot account for the lack of stamps in other more northerly provinces such as *Raetia*, *Noricum* and *Pannonia*. An alternative explanation may be that the stamping of *collyria* in the west was due to official requirements relating to customs duties or export taxes. Künzl has shown that the distribution of continental stamps coincides with the Roman tax region of the Four Gauls (Feugère *et al.* 1985, 476-7: figs. 18-19), while the uniform character of the stamps themselves also indicates organized and standardized production that may have been subject to official regulation.

The surrounding landscape

The Golden stamp is considered to be an unusual and important find, yet one without any recognisable archaeological context (Raftery 1994, 218). However, detailed investigation of the find spot has brought to light new information which greatly alters the interpretation of this find.[113] The dyke in which the stamp was found runs roughly from north-east to south-west through the field marked as 'Spital Lands' on the 1906 SMR map, and this section of the dyke forms the boundary between the Spital Lands and the adjoining Townland Hoops-Lot (Fig. 8.2). It is a natural channel, flowing from a small body of water on raised ground to the north to the River Suir a short distance to the southwest. Information provided by the former landowner Mr Dennis Molumby made it possible to establish the location of a well, backfilled a number of years ago, the presence of which appears to have been unknown to any previous writers dealing with the *collyrium* stamp.

---

[113] This fieldwork was undertaken with the kind permission of the landowner Mr Dennis Luby.
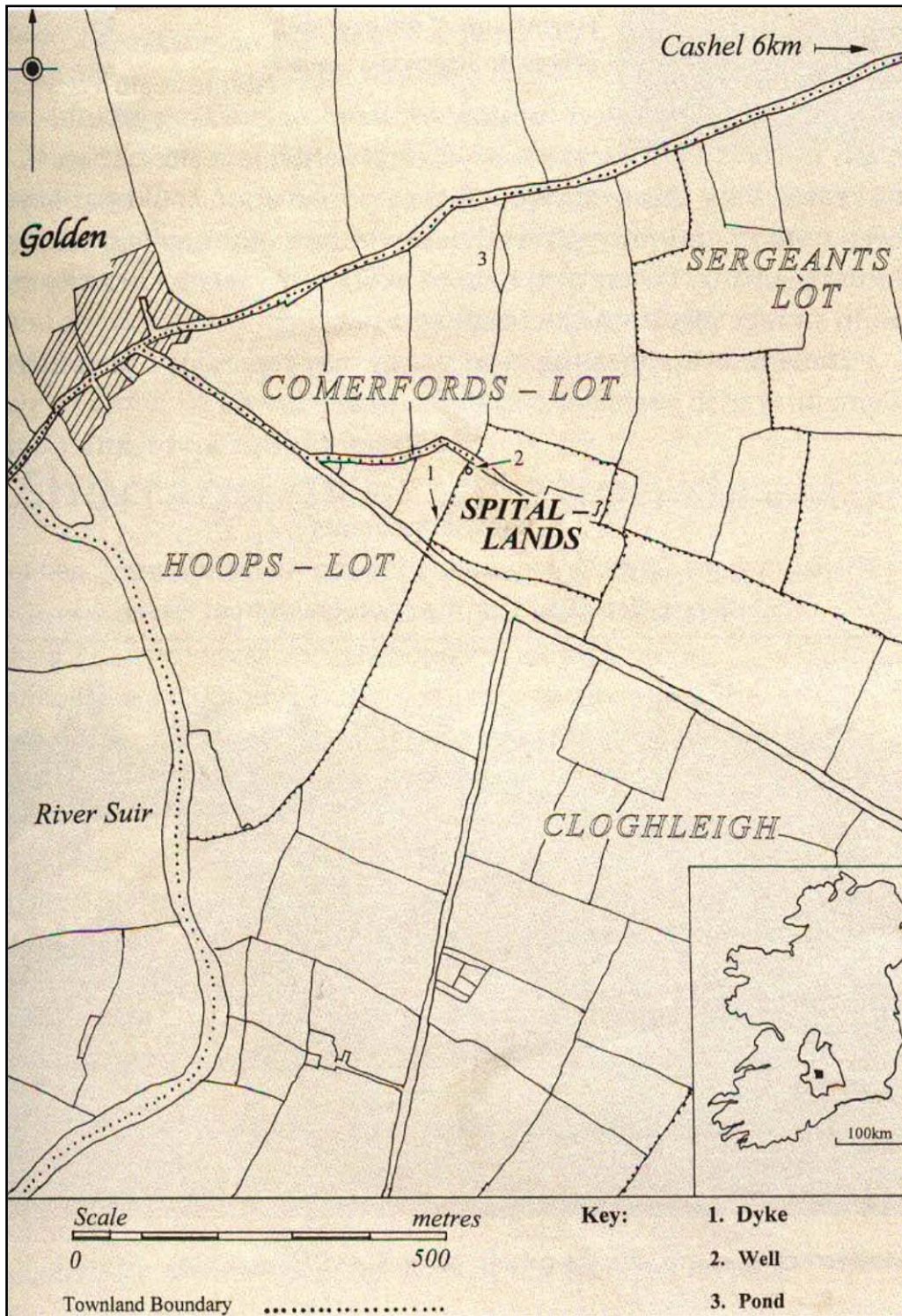
Fig. 8.2: Location of well at Spitallands, Golden, Co. Tipperary.

The well is located about 1m to the east of the dyke and 7.3m from the disused entrance way (clearly shown on the 6" O.S. map), which provided access to premises on the Spital Lands that are no longer extant. These premises appear to have been in use around the time the stamp was found, and were the subject of two transactions recorded in the registry of deeds in 1881 and 1884. If, as is most probable, Sergeant Bane was walking along the entrance-way when he spotted the stamp, it could have lain no more than 7 or 8 meters from the well. As noted above, the most common context for the recovery of these items in Roman Britain and Gaul is at shrines of healing cults located at springs and wells.

In his account of the stamps discovery Way also reports that '[i]n the dyke where the tablet was found a quantity of human bones have been brought to light' (1850, 355). Unfortunately no further information concerning these remains is available, yet local folklore does maintain a tradition concerning burials in the field which has inspired elaborate tales of ghosts and haunting associated with the Spital Lands. Other folklore concerning the site attributes special properties to the water from the well. It is reputed to be "the coldest water in Ireland" and can cure toothaches by numbing the gums.[114] The placename 'spital' is an abbreviated form of 'hospital', indicating that the site was indeed associated with healing in the past. This and related elements such as 'spiddal' and 'spittle' are often found on the outskirts of medieval towns where hospitals, particularly leper hospitals, were located (Lee 1996).

It is interesting to note that a number of Roman cemeteries have been discovered at sites in Britain with similar placename elements, such as Little Spittle, Somerset, and Spittlefields in London (Thomas 1999). Collyrium stamps have also been found in provincial Roman burials such as that at Rheims (Künzl 1982, 61-7), and at Sandy, Bedfordshire, in Britain (Johnston 1975, 228). The discovery of human bone (identity albeit unconfirmed) in the dyke at Golden may also recall the deposition of human remains in ditches at other Iron Age sites, while the deposition of Roman medical instruments in ditches is also well-attested and has been interpreted as important evidence for the ritual and cermimonial aspects of Roman medical practices (Baker 2000).

---

[114] This information was enthusiastically related to the writer by Mr. Bennett who lives in the adjacent lot.

The dyke itself forms the northern boundary of the Spital Lands Townland, an extraordinarily small and discreet territorial division compared to the surrounding Townlands. The dyke continues to form the boundary between the adjacent Cloghleigh and Hoops-Lot Townlands before joining the River Suir about 500m to the southeast of the Spital Lands. The upper reaches of the River Suir in this part of Tipperary also formed the boundary between the Early Historic Kingdoms of Osraige and Eóganacht Chaisil (Ó Floinn 2001: fig. 1.6). The bridge at Golden is the principle crossing point of the Suir to the west of Cashel, and the presence of a ruined castle on a small hill overlooking the bridge on the western bank indicates the strategic importance of this crossing point in the past. The remains of a large medieval road running parallel to the Cashel-Golden road can also be seen 4km to the east of the Spital Lands, in the fields beside the existing road.

As noted in the previous chapter, Romano-British shrines were often located near important routeways and rivers, and became important meeting places and markets during the Roman period in Britain (Woodward 1992, 20). It has also been suggested that medicine in Roman times would have been practiced at these locations: at shrines, markets, fairs or wherever crowds gathered (Jackson 1988, 85). The possibility that Golden may have been a traditional meeting place also receives some support in the historical records. In 1690 King William, so pleased by the welcome his supporters and their wounded received at Cashel after the attack on Limerick, decided to renew the city charter of Cashel. The letter ordering this decree was signed on the bridge at Golden (Finn [1929] 1998, 28). The choice of Golden is intriguing, as Cashel is only 6 km away. Why was the ceremony not held at Cashel itself? The answer may be that Golden, as an important crossing point on the Suir, was a traditional gathering point for people who lived in Cashel and the surrounding area.

There is, in fact, an important archaeological connection between the find at Golden and the Rock of Cashel. In 1877 a gild Roman Dolphin brooch was presented to the Royal Irish Academy as part of a collection of artefacts that had been found on the Rock of Cashel (Cahill 1982). This brooch is of similar type to three fibulae from the crouched inhumation burials at Lambay Island, which can be dated from the post-conquest period in Britain to the mid-2nd century AD (Rynne 1976, 240-1). It is therefore likely that the Cashel brooch and the Golden collyrium stamp are roughly contemporary. The brooch from Cashel was found

'...in the open ground between St. Cormaic's Chapel and the Cathedral' (Deane cited in Cahill 1982, 100), and in this small enclosed area there is a circular feature cut 0.9m into the bedrock into which visitors throw coins.

The area surrounding this feature was excavated in 1992 and 1993, along with two other areas in and around Cormac's Chapel, and a number of possible Roman and Late Roman finds were recovered. These included two fragments of Late Roman Bii ware (late 5th-6th century), and a parallelepiped antler die similar to those found at Newgrange (Hodkinson 1994, 171). Although the circular pit-feature was clearly earlier than the medieval Cathedral, the excavator was unable to establish a more direct stratigraphic relationship between the pit and other features due to modern disturbance. It was argued that the feature was too shallow to be a well, yet no other function could be established as the pit had been emptied at the turn of the last century and no associated finds were recovered during the recent excavation (Hodkinson 1994, 169). As a result the date of this feature could not be established, nonetheless the discovery of the brooch near a stone-cut pit does raise the distinct possibility that this activity may be related to the practice of ritual deposition at wells and pits.

Another interesting Roman connection with the Rock of Cashel may be found in the name Cashel itself: the Irish '*Caisel*' is in fact a borrowing from Latin originally derived from the Roman word for a fortress: '*castellum*' (Warner 1991, 51). According to Koch: 'The change from the Latin *st* to Irish *s* marks out Cashel as an early loan (c. 500 AD or earlier)' (in Koch (ed) 2005, 327). Cashel is famous in the early literary tradition as the seat of the kings of Munster, and is known in the 9th century Annals of Ulster as 'Cashel of the Kings' (Charles-Edwards 2001, 481). Mac Neil has also noted that a lease dated to 1666 suggests that Cashel was the location of a traditional Lughnasa assembly at that time (1962, 303). However, origin myths such as *Conall Corc and the Corco Luigde* and *The Story of the Finding of Cashel* display a number of early Christian motifs, and many of the more archaic otherworldly themes associated with the other great prehistoric 'royal' sites are noticeably absent. This conforms to a broader literary tradition indicating that Cashel was a late prehistoric foundation, being much younger than Tara, Knockaulin, Rathcroghan or Navan Fort (Mac Neil 1962, 146).

Comparative Archaeology

There are a number of findspots in the Southeast that show a close relationship between wells, springs, sources and Roman material, as well as some broader associations with 'royal' sites and traditional assembly sites. St. Anne's Well in Randalstown Co. Meath was excavated in 1976, and although the well itself had been dug into and cleared out in the early 20th century, a number of artefacts were recovered in the immediate vicinity of the well (Kelly 1978). Most of the finds were miscellaneous modern items (including a religious medal and a bead from a rosary chain); however a number of archaeologically significant items were recovered. These included flint flakes and an arrowhead fragment, as well as a Roman brooch and a sherd of southern Gaulish Samian ware (Fig. 8.3), both of which have been dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Kelly 2002a, 26).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.3: Samian ware and Brooch from St. Annes Well, Randalstown, Co. Meath.

(After Kelly 2002a)

The Samian sherd is lacking its slip, and is also unusually smooth and symmetrical and may well have been purposely cut or rubbed in order to achieve this regular form. The well itself is located beside a medieval church and the remains of an Early Christian settlement which has provided evidence for occupation as early as the 6th century AD (Kelly 2002a, 26). Located beside the Yellow River, close to its confluence with the River Blackwater, the well is a short distance from the historic royal assembly site of *Tailtiu* (Teltown).

Four kilometres to the west of St. Anne's Holy Well, and just over 1km from Teltown, there is another Holy Well at Phoenixtown. An enamelled spiral bracelet in the National Museum (NMI 1980:29) was found 'within a few feet' of this well

(Kelly 2002a, 27). The bracelet is decorated with pairs of incised lines on its inner and outer surfaces, and the ends are terminated with a stud of red enamel set in a stylised zoomorphic bird's head moulding (Fig. 8.4). This is one of just three spiral bracelets that have been found in Ireland: one was discovered among the Roman material at Newgrange, and another was found in the river Boyne, at the confluence of the Boyne and Deel rivers at Ballymahon, Co. Meath. It has been suggested that the spiral form may be related to Roman-British coiled snake bracelets dating to the early centuries AD (Raftery 1984, 195-6). Kelly dates the Phoenixtown bracelet to the 2nd century AD, although the terminals are strikingly similar to some early zoomorphic penannular brooches and a later date from the 3rd to 5th centuries is perhaps more probable.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.4: Spiral bracelet with zoomorphic terminals from Phoenixtown Well.
(After Kelly 2002a)

Approximately 4km to the west of Teltown, at Kilmainham, Co. Meath, an unusual rectangular structure (16x14m) was uncovered next to two inhumation burials and eleven cereal drying kilns. Radiocarbon samples from this structure provided determinations of 143-343AD and 433-606AD. The first of these dates appears to be contemporary with the kilns at the site, three of which provided dates ranges from the 1st to the 4th century AD, and the second date-range is very close to that provided by one of the inhumation burials which has been dated to 434-598 AD. A short distance to the northeast, there was a large linear boundary ditch which has been dated to 203-51BC, and the line of this ditch runs through a small pond located at the point where the ditch is closest to the rectangular structure. The few finds recovered from this site include a spindle whorl and an ammonite bead from the structure, and a similar bead from one of the inhumation burials. Due to the form and the structure and the presence of the burials, this site

has been interpreted as a sanctuary structure similar to those at Romano-Celtic cult sites in Britain and Gaul (Walsh 2012).

There are also a number of spring and wells at Teltown itself, where a complex of linear earthworks and artificial ponds are overlooked by a large ritual enclosure known as Rath Airthir (Mallery 2011). This last site displays closely-spaced multivallate ramparts similar to those at Ráith na Senad at Tara (Dowling 2011). One of these springs, called 'Lagan an Aonigh' ('the Hollow of the Fair'), is known locally as 'the marriage well' and is associated with a 'temporary marriage rite' that occurred during the annual harvest festival of Lughnasa (Mac Neill 1962, 311-38; Mallery 2011). In Early Historic sources dated to the 7th and 8th centuries *Tailtiu* is represented as the assembly site of the Kings of Tara, and the location of an annual *óenach* or 'fair' for their client kingdoms (Charles-Edwards 2000, 17-20; 476-80).

It is significant that many of these traditional Lughnasa gatherings occurred at Holy Wells such as Mám Ean in Galway, St. Ciaran's Well near Kells in Co. Meath, and at Wells associated with St. Brigid at Brideswell, Co. Roscommon, and Liscannor, Co. Clare (Mac Neill 1962 243-286; see also Logan 1980, 43-45). Another Lughnasa assembly site was located at Corleck Hill in Co. Cavan where the triple-faced Corleck Head was found. A well that is considered to have special properties is also located on this hill (Kelly 2002a, 28). It is possible that a number of stray Roman coin finds from Ireland may also have been associated with holy wells or springs that hosted traditional Lughnasa assemblies. A bronze coin of Trajan (97-117AD) was discovered 'outside Belcoo' in Co. Fermanagh in the early 1900's (Bateson 1973, 48-9). A holy well at Belcoo, now known as St. Patrick's Holy Well, and a nearby hill are both noted by Mac Neill as traditional Lughnasa assembly sites (1962, 181, 605). A brass coin of Hadrian (117-138) was unearthed in Jenkinstown demesne, Co. Kilkenny, in the mid-19th century (Bateson 1973, 59). As at Belcoo, a holy well in the same demesne was also associated with Lughnasa assemblies (Mac Neil 1962, 643). There is little or no information available regarding the circumstances of these finds however, and these tentative associations must necessarily remain speculative and uncertain.

A more secure archaeological context can be posited for the coins of Trajan (97-117AD) and Hadrian (117-138) that were discovered at Brayhead in Co. Wicklow. These coins were reported to have been found on or near the breast of

human remains in a number of inhumation burials uncovered during work at the entrance to Putland's demesne in 1835 (Drummond 1841). In his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* Lewis gives an account of this discovery and notes that 'There are medicinal springs in the grounds of Kilruddery and Old Court' in the same demesne (1837, 223). While numerous imaginative explanations, often involving shipwrecks and disasters, have been offered to explain the presence of Roman burials at this site, the presence of Roman burials at springs and wells is a well documented phenomenon at Romano-British sites such as Springhead in Kent, Wells in Somerset, and Bloxham in Oxfordshire (Forcey 1998; Rodwell 2001; Knight 1938).

Another Irish site where inhumation burials and Roman material have been found close to an important spring occurs at Carbury Hill in Co. Kildare. At the foot of this hill the River Boyne rises from a spring now known as Trinity Holy Well, which is the focus of annual pilgrimages on Trinity Sunday (Logan 1980, 39-48). The hill is crowned by three prehistoric burial monuments which were excavated in the first half of the last century (Willmot 1938). A mound on the summit of the hill (Site C) contained a cremation deposit placed in the central area, but no grave goods or artefacts were found. A ring-bank to the south (Site A), contained two cremation deposits, one in the centre of the monument and another in the ditch on the northern side. An exceptionally large ring-bank to the west (Site B) contained four cremations and fifteen graves, some of which contained multiple inhumations.

The cremations were all child-burials located in the southeastern half of the central area and the inhumations occurred mainly in the northwestern half, with a cluster of three inhumations disturbing two of the earlier cremations. The inhumations included 12 adult and 5 child burials, most of which were extended but at least one was crouched (Skeleton 15; adult male). Radiocarbon samples from the inhumation burials have provided date ranges of 171-401AD (Sk.4: male), 264-431AD (Sk.10: female), 432-594AD (Sk.6: female) and 471-643AD (Sk.1: male).[115]

The artefacts from Site A include a fused fragment of blue glass from the central cremation deposit, a tanged iron file from the barrow ditch, and the tip of a

---

[115] Dates provided by the Mapping Death Database (mappingdeathdb.ie).

horn or antler that is without a recorded context. The most unusual find is a unique polished jet spoon, the only one of its kind to have been discovered in Ireland to date.[116] The spoon has an oval bowl with a rounded tip, and although the handle is broken enough remains to intimate an elegant loop projecting from the right-hand side of the bowl and rejoining the spoon in a tapering point on the opposite side (Fig. 8.5). The closest parallels for this object are to be found among the large *cigni* or 'birds-head' spoons of Roman Britain, which are of similar size and have identical looping handles (Raftery 1984, 242). Dating to the 4th and 5th centuries AD, these spoons are most often gilded or silver and large sets have been found together in the Thetford and Hoxne hoards. Other examples are known to be made from a wide variety of materials including bone, bronze, silver, glass and precious minerals.

At site B iron shears was found under the left femur of an adult male (Skeleton 1: Fig. 8.6). Like the jet spoon, the shears are an unusual find with only one set reported from a possible prehistoric context in Ireland. This last set was found with two bronze pins at Seskin, Co. Kilkenny, in a mound similar to that at Carbury Site C (Macalister 1928, 203; Raftery 1981, 185-186). Unfortunately the Seskin shears are now lost, and there are no surviving illustrations for us to compare with the Carbury pair. In Britain shears appear to have been introduced in the late La Tène III period (c. 50BC – 43AD), becoming common in the 1st century AD (Hill 1997, 98-99). They appear in burials throughout the Romano-British period, from the early Claudian cremations at Alton, Winchester, to the late 3rd/ 4th century inhumations at Smith's Pitt II, Cassington (Phillpott 1991, 186). In an arrangement remarkably similar to that at Carbury, the shears at this last site were placed next to the left hand of a young adult male.

---

[116] Six Iron Age bronze spoons have been found in Ireland, and although the shapes of the bowls are similar to Carbury spoon the handles are very different. The bronze spoons also appear to come in pairs, one with a hole to the right of the bowl and the other with an incised cross in the middle of the bowl. None are provenanced, and they have been dated by their decoration to the early centuries AD (Raftery 1984, 264-267). This date-range may be much too late however, as similar spoons in Britain and France have been found in burials that have been firmly dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC (Pope and Ralston 2011, 408; note 26). When these early dates are combined with the radiocarbon dating of the Loughcrew plaques (see Chapter 4 above), there is compelling evidence to suggest that the wider chronology of the Irish Iron Age corpus – and particularly objects that display the 'Loughcrew-Somerset' art style – needs to be radically revised.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.5: Jet spoon from Carbury Hill
(After Raftery 1983)

Although they are often assumed to be agricultural tools, shears from funerary context are usually associated with toilet implements and related personal items (Hill 1997, 98). At King Harry Lane the shears were found with tweezers, a nail cleaner and a possible ear-scoop; the Hertford cremation contained a 'possible tweezer-like iron object' (Hill 1997, 105); and at Alton three of the other cremations contained cosmetic sets (Millett 1987, 68). A bronze set of shears in a wooden box and a 'pestle and mortar' for mixing cosmetics were also found among the Iron Age and Roman objects deposited at Flag Fen, Peterborough (Coombs 1992, 512-515). Raftery notes that the Carbury shears are relatively small (with a total length of 17.6cm), and '…were probably for personal use' (1984, 241). In this light it is interesting to note that spoons have also been found in some of the King Harry Lane cremations containing toilet implements, and that a late 3rd/4th century inhumation in Butt Road, Colchester, contained a spoon and a nail-cleaner that were looped together as a set (Crummy 1983, 475).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.6: Artefacts from Carbury Hill, Co. Kildare.
(After Raftery 1983)

It should be emphasized that the Carbury monuments themselves have not been dated, and it is not unlikely that their construction and the initial cremation burials pre-date this Late Iron Age/Early Medieval activity. Indeed, these monument types together with the cremation burial rite constitute one of the most continuous and long-lived burial traditions in prehistoric Ireland. However, the inhumation burials and objects such as the shears and spoon also indicate a distinct late Iron Age/Early Medieval horizon of activity at these monuments that can be seen to have specific Romano-British parallels. It is also significant that the reuse of older mounds, barrows, and related monuments (for both burial and deposition) was itself a notable aspect of Romano-British ritual practice. Roman inhumation burials have been discovered in Bronze Age barrows at King's Stanely, Gloucestershire, and Mill Hill, Kent, and similar monuments also formed the focus for ritual deposition at sites such as Slonk Hill, Sussex (Williams 1998, 75).

In the early historical records the spring at the foot of Carbury Hill is known as *Linn Segais*, and the small complex of burial monuments is known as *Síd Nechtain*: 'the abode/mound of Nechtan' (MacKillop 1998, 303; Ó Floinn 2001, 7). Neachtan is a pseudonym for Nuadu, the consort of Boand (the personification of the Boyne River), and was the guardian of the spring *Linn Segais*. When Boand disobeys various protocols in a visit to the well, the waters rise up becoming the river Boyne which drowns and mutilates Boand – who loses a foot, a hand, and an eye – and washes her body out to sea (MacKillop 2005, 14). Carbury Hill itself shares its name with the surrounding barony of Carbury, located on the southernmost border or the ancient Kingdom of *Brega* on the northern edge of the Bog of Allen (see Bhreathnach 2005b, 410-15). This barony is said to be named after the Uí Néill leader Coirpre, son of Niall Noígiallach (Niall of the Nine Hostages), who is listed as a King of Tara in the *Baile Chuinn Chétchathaig* and is said to have held the *Óenach Tailtenn* (the Fair of Tailtiu) in the chronicles of Tírechán (Devane 2005, 188). In the Middle Irish tale *Bóruma Laigen*, Corpre's brother Lóegaire is said to have been killed at *Síd Nechtain* while attempting to collect the *Bóruma* or 'cattle tribute' paid to the kings of Leinster.

As the references in the historical sources would suggest, Carbury Hill appears to have been a place of considerable strategic and social significance in the past. From its vantage point above the low-lying plain, Carbury Hill would have overlooked the Early Christian routeway *An Slighe Mhór* the 'Great Road' that

follows the *Eascir Riada* – an esker ridge that traverses the midlands and provides a natural causeway through the swath of raised bogs in the central lowlands. This routeway formed the major east-west road across the country and, as its title suggests, was one of the most important axes of communication from the earliest times. As one of the highest points overlooking the *Slighe Mhór* in this region, Carbury Hill dominates the landscape and provides a visual focal point for those moving through it. Situated on the crest of the western slope of the hill, the monuments at Carbury survey the main crossing points of the Boyne and the meeting point of counties Meath, Kildare and Offaly at the confluence of the Boyne and the Yellow River.

In addition to the wells and springs discussed above, we may also note the presence of Holy Wells in the vicinity of other large prehistoric 'royal' sites. St. Patrick's well at Tara is located to the east of Ráith na Ríg, while two other springs, possibly those referred to in the historical sources as *Lóeg* and *Nemnach*, are located to the west of Ráith na Ríg and to the south of Ráith Lóegaire respectively (Newman 1997, 28-29). At Knockaulin there is a holy well, known as St. John's well, located at the northern end of the hilltop enclosure (Wailes 1990; fig: 1). Holy wells are a very common type of medieval and modern ritual site in Ireland that are usually associated with Christian Saints; however it has often been noted that the rituals performed at holy wells constitute '…a strange mixture of Christianity and paganism' (Cordener 1946, 29). Annual pilgrimages to holy wells were often timed to coincide with the pre-Christian festivals of *Lughnasa* and *Imbolc* (Logan 1980; MacNeil 1962), and in the 19th century it was not uncommon for members of the Catholic clergy to condemn the ritual practices taking place at holy wells as idolatrous and pagan (Bourke 2001, 132).

Indeed there are much earlier records of Christian clerics preaching against these practices. One such account is found in Tíreachán's untitled narrative, written in the late 7th century, which sought to document the foundations that were said to have been associated with St. Patrick:

> 'And he [Patrick] came to the well of *Findmag* which is called *Slán*, because he had been told that the druids honoured the well and offered gifts to it as a god. The well was of square shape and the mouth of the well was covered with a square stone (and water flew over the stone, that is through ducts closed with cement) like a regal trail [?], and the infidels said that some wise man had made for himself a shrine in the water

276

under the stone to bleach his bones perpetually because he feared the burning by fire; and they worshipped the well as a god. And Patrick was told the reason for its worship and he had the zeal of God for the living God, and said: 'It is not true what you said that it was the King of the waters (for this was the name they gave the well: 'king of the waters'). And the Druids and the pagans of that region and a very large crowd gathered together at the well and Patrick said to them: "Lift the stone; let us see what is under it, whether bones or not, for I am telling you: under it there are not the bones of a man, but – so I believe – some gold and silver from your wicked sacrifices leaks through the cementing of the stones"; and they were unable to lift the stone.'

<div align="right">(cited in Aitchison 1996, 68).</div>

The relevance of Tíreachán's medieval account may be considered questionable in this context, however, it can be seen to be of direct significance to the present discussion as it is a very early account and it does seem to describe pre-Christian ritual practices at wells. The account of the well at *Slán* is an incidental detail inserted by Tíreachán, in the tradition of Irish topographical lore, and a number of scholars have commented on the prevalence of such local lore in Tíreachán's work and have suggested that much of this material may have been collected from local sources (Aitchison 1996, 79). According to Bieler the '…detailed, if clumsy, description of the well of *Findmag* is best explained on the assumption that he had visited the place in person' (1979, 36).

The name of the well '*Slán*' is the same as the Irish word *slán* meaning 'healthy' (Connellan 1869, 456), and similar names occur at a large number of holy wells throughout Ireland. In different contexts the word *slán* may also mean 'protected' or 'safe' in the physical sense; 'exempt' or 'non-liable' in a legal sense; and 'saved' in a spiritual sense (Aitchison 1996, 70). The religious connotation of the name is also important considering Tíreachán's statement that the people worshiped the well as a god, as the worship of water deities was also an important activity at Roman curative cults (Yegül 1992, 125; Woodward 1992, 76-77). The suggested presence of human remains can also be seen to fit into the description of pagan Roman practices at similar shrines in Britain (Woodward 1992; Aitchison 1996), and according to Tíreachán the well appears to have been used as an assembly point for people from the surrounding area. Aitchison attempts to connect Tíreachán's account with Iron Age watery deposition in Britain and Ireland, however the closest archaeological examples he can find

come from Romano-British contexts, such as Coventina's Well, Carrawburgh, Northumberland (1996, 71-72).

It is significant that in Ireland too, the closest prehistoric analogies for this kind of behaviour all come from sites that show overt and direct associations with provincial Roman material culture and ritual practices. What is perhaps even more surprising is the complete dearth of La Tène finds from wells and springs in Ireland: not one of the finds from Raftery's catalogue was recovered from a well or a spring, and to this writers knowledge no La Tène objects have been recovered from these contexts since.[117] This stands in complete contrast to the levels of material recovered from other watery contexts such as lakes, bogs, and rivers; contexts which have provided the overwhelming majority of La Tène and Iron Age finds from Ireland. The evidence as it stands would indicate that the practice of ritual deposition at wells and sources was introduced into Ireland in the first few centuries AD (Kelly 2002a, 28; Daffy 2002). Although the quantity of existing evidence is relatively small, and the absence of evidence for earlier activity cannot be considered to be conclusive, the evidence that is available is strikingly similar to that provided by much more extensive archaeological evidence in Iron Age France and Britain.

---

[117] A comprehensive search of the NRA excavations database for excavations at wells in the Southeast failed to provide any evidence for Iron Age deposition at wells (www.archaeology.nra.ie). The only evidence for prehistoric activity at these wells was procured from radiocarbon samples, and of the nine wells that provided these samples seven were Bronze Age sites that were associated with 'fulactha fiadh'.

Comparative Contexts 1: The Imaginary Rite

Ritual deposition in wells and deep shafts[118] is generally seen as a widespread European prehistoric phenomenon, and has been persistently interpreted as a 'pan-Celtic' religious practice (Ross 1968, 255-85; Wait 1985, 51-82). This ritual tradition is thought to display extraordinary geographic homogeneity and chronological continuity: encompassing such diverse phenomena as an Early Bronze Age well in the vicinity of Stonehenge (Ross 1962, 20-33), the deep shafts found within or beneath the banks of *Viereckschanzen* enclosures in Iron Age Germany (Green 1986, 20), and the magical properties attributed to wells and sources in Medieval Irish literature (Ross 1968, 104-113). The conception of such a broad 'ritual tradition' has also led to the assumption that the well-documented practices of deposition at wells and shafts in provincial Roman contexts must bear witness to pre-existing ancestral Iron Age practices (eg: Clarke 1997, 80-1; Fulford 2001, 213-4). The specifically 'Celtic' character of this activity is also thought to be represented in the thematic association of human heads with wells and sources in Medieval Irish historical sources. These literary tropes are interpreted as an expression of the 'Celtic cult of the head' which is so famously documented at Roquepertuse and Entrement and other Iron Age sites in southern France (Ross 1968, 61-126).

Of course, all of the above phenomena may represent a rather varied and diffuse set of practices, and a direct relationship between such heterogeneous phenomena spread so widely across chronological, geographic and cultural contexts is difficult to sustain. Indeed, Webster (1997) has demonstrated the problematic nature of many of these links, and has argued that the archaeological

---

[118]Ross (1968) and Wait (1985, 54-5) have both suggested that there is little or no significant difference between dry shafts and wells in this context – an argument that may be difficult to sustain when one considers the suitability of these features as foci for healing cults associated with the purifying waters of natural springs. Nonetheless, the fluctuation of water-tables makes any kind of classificatory system seeking to distinguish between wells and shafts exceedingly difficult and increasingly arbitrary. Similarly, distinguishing between wells, shafts and storage pits can be just as difficult in most cases. Wait (1985) has also argued that the fill of pits with a depth of less than 2.5m differs noticeably from that of deeper shafts and wells, and uses this minimum depth as the single defining characteristic that distinguishes between the categories of 'pits' and deeper 'shafts'. This would also appear to be a rather arbitrary division, yet it is one that may be useful in the context of broad comparative analyses involving large numbers of sites. This has proven to be the case in Webster's analysis of wells and shafts in Iron Age and Roman Britain and Gaul, where the arbitrary nature of this definition is openly acknowledged (1997, 134). In the context of the present study, these issues may of less relevance as there is a notable absence of deep shafts with Iron Age fills in Ireland, and the only comparable features that have produced evidence for Iron Age deposition can be clearly identified as wells and sources.

evidence does not support the interpretation of ritual deposition at wells and shafts as a Pan-Celtic Iron Age rite, but rather indicates the emergence of distinct provincial Roman ritual practices. As Webster shows, the evidence for such widespread Iron Age deposition at shafts and wells is very limited indeed.

The most convincing evidence for pre-Roman Iron Age deposition in wells and shafts comes from the so-called *Viereckschanzen* enclosures in southern Germany. These monuments represent a rather variegated group of rectangular monuments, dated mainly to the last two centuries BC, which appear to have been the focus of a variety of activities: ranging from ceremonial rituals to metalworking, spinning, and grain storage. While some examples such as Riedlingin on the upper Danube took the form of nucleated rural settlements, other sites such as Holzhausen in Bavaria enclosed a single post-built structure located in one corner and contained three shafts measuring up to 36m in depth. These shafts produced wooden stakes, evidence of burning, and flesh-hooks, leading the excavator to suggest that they were used for depositing sacrificial remains (Schwarz 1975). More explicit evidence for ritual activity has been uncovered in another *Viereckschanzen* enclosure at Fellbach-Schmiden, near Stuttgart. This monument enclosed a shaft containing oak carvings of deer and rams/goats which have provided a dendrochronological felling date of 123 BC (Planck 1985).

The diversity in form and function visible at different enclosures has provoked much debate regarding the nature and status of the *Viereckschanzen* (Brunaux 1989; Venclova 1993). Some commentators have cast doubt on the interpretation of the shafts as ritual structures, arguing that they were functioning wells (Brunaux 1989, 13). However, these attributes are not mutually exclusive and most commentators would appear to agree that there was an important ritual dimension involved in the general use of such enclosures. Indeed, a convincing case has been made to suggest that the more basic Holzhausen type of *Viereckschanzen* constituted an important ancestral influence in the architectural development of the Gallo-Roman temple (Schwarz 1975; Trunk 1991). Nonetheless, the presence of wells/shafts in the *Viereckschanzen* are not at all as widespread as the enclosure-form itself, and it would appear that these particular features are geographically confined to sites in southern Germany such as Holzhausen, Tomerdingen, and Schonfeld (Webster 1997, 138).

There is in fact extremely limited evidence for a comparable pre-Roman practice involving deposition at shafts and wells in either Iron Age France or Britain. In France the majority of Iron Age shafts are found within the Roman *provincia* at sites such as Veille-Toulouse, and few can be securely dated to the pre-conquest period. A small number of shafts with pre-conquest fill do occur at a number of locations within the *provincia*, such as those at Nimes, but these do not appear to have been used for ritual deposition. Further north the datable shafts with Iron Age fills all post-date the Augustan period, with examples such as those at Indre (*Argentomagus*) and Chartres dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Webster 1995, 452). The case for Iron Age ritual activity at wells and springs is even less impressive. According to Webster: '...archaeological evidence for springs as pre-conquest cult foci is virtually non-existent' (1995, 449; see also Brunaux 1988, 41; Green 1989, 155).

In Britain, the evidence for pre-conquest deposition at wells and shafts is '…meagre in the extreme' (Webster 1997, 137). Of the less than twenty examples that have been categorised as pre-Roman by various commentators, Webster notes that only four have produced securely datable pre-conquest material and no fewer than nine of the wells or shafts that have been previously categorised as 'Iron Age' – while containing no securely datable pre-Roman material – actually produced Romano-British pottery and objects dating to the early centuries AD (Webster 1997, 137).[119] The paucity of datable pre-Roman sites lies in stark contrast to the number of wells and shafts that have produced Romano-British material. Over 60 sites, some of which contain multiple wells and shafts, have been dated to the post-conquest period. Many of these sites were also clearly the focus for religious devotion, with well documented examples of votive objects and religious buildings at numerous sites.

The distribution of wells and shafts in southern Britain is also significant, as it '...coincides so strikingly with the distribution of Romano-Celtic temples and that of villa's' (Ross 1968, 297: cited in Webster 1997, 137). To the north they are confined to Roman military sites in and around Hadrian's Wall, with just two examples north of the wall – at Newstead Roman fort and near Bar Hill fort on

---

[119] Webster also notes that almost all of the examples which have previously been categorised as 'Iron Age' were excavated prior to 1950 and are poorly documented, while all of the more recently excavated examples have been shown to date to the post-conquest period.

the Antonine Wall. A growth in the popularity of ritual activity involving shafts and wells throughout the Roman occupation can also be seen, with elaborate temple complexes being constructed around wells and shafts at sites such as Bath and Lydney and a marked increase in well deposition at villa sites in the 4th century AD.

The lack of clear evidence for the ritual use of wells and shafts in Iron Age Britain has been somewhat occluded by the assumption that the Romano-British sites represent a continuity of native 'Celtic' religious traditions. Thus, as with Aitchison's interpretation of the passage in Tíreachán, almost all of the illustrative examples of these 'Celtic' practices are actually drawn from post-conquest Romano-British contexts. In other cases, as Webster adroitly points out, the German *Viereckschanzen* shafts are cited '...not as parallels for British sites, but as substitutes for them' (Webster 1997, 137). Further evidence for the 'Celtic' origins of these practices has also been sought in Irish Medieval literature, which is conspicuously silent on the use of ritual shafts, but frequently provides narratives and poems concerned with the magical qualities of sources and wells, and descriptions of various mystical figures associated with them (Ross 1967, 118-126)

In the Early Irish literature, the specific association of human heads with wells has been interpreted by Ross as evidence for interplay between the 'Celtic' motifs of 'Heads and Sacred Waters' (1967, 118-126). There are numerous accounts in texts such as the *Metrical Dindshenchas* (14th-15th centuries AD) of severed heads being flung in to wells, which are compared to the Iron Age 'têtes coupe' of southern France and interpreted as expressions of the 'Celtic cult of the head'. However, as with the evidence for wells and shafts themselves, the archaeological evidence cited in support of this association is drawn entirely from Romano-British contexts.[120] The examples given include the seven small bronze heads and a human skull from Coventina's Well beside Procolitia Fort on Hadrian's Wall, and skulls from the post-conquest wells at Heywood, Wiltshire, and Pool at the Romano-British ritual complex at Wookey Hole. To these sites we can add six other post-conquest wells in Britain which have produced human skulls, as well

---

[120] And so, it would appear, is the evidence for the representations of the human head in 'Celtic' British art (see Chapter 2 above).

as the occurrence of preserved skulls at large Romano-British shrines such as Wroxeter.

In Ireland human skulls are found in watery contexts such as lakes, bogs, and rivers. However, in all of the cases where dating or contextual evidence is available a Bronze Age date appears most likely. The most memorable example is the facial portion of a skull, which seems to have been deliberately removed in antiquity, that was found on the sandstone floor of the Late Bronze Age artificial ritual pool known as the King's Stables in the Navan ritual complex (Lynn 2003, 51-53: fig 32). The presence of skulls in Bronze Age layers at crannog sites such as Ballinderry 2 and Moynagh Lough (Newman 1997b, 99), along with the discovery of skulls at various other Bronze Age crannog sites, has been interpreted variously as a distinct Bronze Age burial tradition (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 146) or as evidence for the use of crannogs as focal points for Bronze Age ritual deposition (Fredengren 2002, 190-192).

Fredengren has also noted that the location of skull deposits in the lakes and rivers around the wider Lough Gara region in Co. Sligo correspond with those of Bronze Age metalwork deposits (2002, 191). The only scientifically dated example from Ireland, a skull from the bottom of Cloonfinlough Co. Roscommon, has provided a radiocarbon determination of 1130-830 BC (Delaney and Woodman 2004, 10). Similar dates have also been procured from skulls found in rivers in Britain, with four of the six skulls from the River Thames dated to the Late Bronze Age (Bradley 1990, 108-9). It has also been suggested that the deposition of skulls in *fulachta fiadh* at Cragbrien, Co. Clare, and Inchagreenoge, Co. Limerick, were deposited in the Late Bronze Age (Lynch and O'Donnell 2007, 110). If the deposition of skulls did form part of Bronze Age rituals associated with watery contexts, then it is likely that this practice continued into the Iron Age – along with the deposition of weapons and other objects – but as of yet there is no firm archaeological evidence for this kind of continuity. More specifically, unlike the numerous examples from Romano-British contexts, there is no archaeological evidence for the direct association of heads and wells in Iron Age Ireland.

Webster argues that the use of Medieval Irish texts in the interpretation of these ritual practices as a 'Celtic' phenomenon has created a misleading 'text-expectation' which (allied to the notion of 'timeless Celticity') has effectively

'…allowed us to incorporate wells and shafts into the Iron Age ritual corpus in spite of the fact that archaeological evidence for this is almost non-existent' (Webster 1997, 140). While acknowledging that '...this literature undoubtedly contains archaisms that may reflect Iron Age practices and beliefs…', Webster cautions against the interpretive use of this literature, especially when it is deployed in support of dubious ethnic or ahistorical conceptions of a 'Celtic Identity' (Webster 1997, 140). Yet what is perhaps most interesting about the use of Irish literature in this instance, is the consistent implicit use of provincial Roman contexts in the explication of the texts.

The simultaneous reliance upon, and disavowal of, the central position occupied by provincial Roman religion within this interpretive matrix produces a kind of geographic and chronological short-circuit: one that finds valuable insights and associations through Roman parallels, yet seeks to project them back in time and over great distances, whilst leaving that initial interpretive procedure unacknowledged in its wake. A more productive and consistent approach may be to read the Irish historical sources *through* the provincial Roman evidence in an altogether different sense; that is to explore the possible archaeological and literary associations in a more direct manner that may allow us to trace the historical and cultural contours of these practices as they are represented in both the archaeological records and literary traditions of these islands.

Comparative Contexts 2: Wells, Sources and the (Romano)Celticisation of Ireland

The social and religious importance of baths and bathing in Roman society can be seen to be directly related to the medicinal properties that were attributed to springs and wells (Yegül 1992, 92-127). This is witnessed in the construction of numerous bath and temple complexes on or near natural mineral springs, both hot and cold, at sites such as Bath in Britain and Badenweiler in Germany (Yegül 1992, 117-119). Roman medicine involved a fascinating mixture of medicinal and ritual practice, specifically in relation to bathing and votive deposition, and at a number of sites we can see evidence for both the ritual and medicinal activities.

Toilet implements and surgical implements have been found at springs and baths, and it has been suggested that some sites may have been used for surgical operations, as well as regular hydrotherapy (Künzl 1986; Yegül 1992, 355).

284

Occulists' stamps similar to the one found at Golden have been discovered at sites such as Bath, Lydney and Wroxeter in Britain, and it appears likely that these objects would also have been the equipment of specialist healers. According to Boon:

> 'The collyria so marked were most certainly not intended for the general public to apply to the eyes themselves: the highly technical language of their brief inscriptions; the abbreviations; the ligatures; in a word their esoteric 'professional' character must lead to a very different conclusion. We have to remember that the treatment was considerably more extensive than merely smearing the eye with some more or less efficacious composition: theory governed medicine in default of a knowledge of the workings of the internal organs, and a regime of humoralistic diet, clystering, bleeding and the baths […] went with the application of the collyria.'
>
> (Boon 1983, 7).

As well as the use of baths in the course of medical treatment, ritual deposition was also a significant part of the healing process. Any individual seeking a cure was required to pay homage to nymphs and other water deities and to undertake appropriate acts of worship (Yegül 1992, 125; Woodward 1992, 76-77). Offerings made for this purpose can sometimes be specifically identified, as they are often objects directly related to the healing process such as medical equipment or representations of the bodily parts that were to be treated. The importance of the spring at Wroxeter in relation to the curing of eye complaints is clearly witnessed by the presence of 35 eyes carved from plaster and two made from gold, along with two collyrium-stamps (Barker 1981). Human remains and fragments of persevered human skulls were also found at Wroxeter, indicating that these sites were also used for burials (Barker 1981, see also Ross 1967; Wait 1986). Similar deposits of collyrium stamps and related items have been found at Bath and Lydney (Boon 1983, 5).

It is significant that both shears and spoons are also found with Roman medical implements, and appear to constitute important medical instruments in their own right. Shears almost identical in shape and size to the Carbury set were part of an extensive collection of medical instruments discovered in the tomb of a Roman doctor at Nea Paphos in Cyprus dating from the 2nd-mid 3rd century AD (Jackson 1990). There is also considerable evidence that the cutting and shaving of hair

often occurred at Roman baths (Jackson 1988, 48). Spoons, particularly specialized forms unlike the common *cochlearia* spoon used for eating, were used to measure, mix and apply medicines and cosmetics. They have been found in medical kits such as a near-complete *instrumentaria* from Italy dating to the 1st or 2nd centuries AD (Jackson 1988). Spoons also form a significant part of the votive assemblages at Romano-British shrines dedicated to healing cults: at Uley 14 spoons were found, 30 were recovered from Nettleton Shrub, and more than 40 were discovered at Lydney (Woodward and Leach 1993, 332: table 20).

More often than not, however, the offerings left at wells consist of personal items such as coins, toilet implements, brooches, rings and other jewellery. In fact a number of commentators have noted close correspondences between the offerings that are left at modern Irish holy wells and the assemblages at Romano-British well shrines (Boon 1983, 11; Kelly 2002; Woodward 1992). The range of modern objects found at a holy well in Templecrone, Co. Donegal – including bottles, coins, household items, religious medals and souvenirs, hair ornaments, personal ornaments, pieces of clothing, written tracts, marine shells and pebbles – are so similar to those recorded at Romano-British shrines that it has been suggested that it may be possible to draw relevant parallels between the archaeologically visible behaviour at Romano-British temple sites such as Cadbury Congresbury, and recent historical accounts of the rituals preformed at Irish holy wells (Rahtz *et al.* 1992).[121]

Another interesting parallel between Irish holy wells and Romano-British shrines is their association with curses. In Ireland, there are numerous folk tales that warn against the removal of offerings or property from holy wells. An individual who takes a coin from a well would be stricken with disease, while a cripple who retrieves his crutches would become lame again (Bourke 2001, 132-133). Similar sanctions have been recorded in relation to holy wells in Scotland. According to Mackinlay:

> 'No one would have been foolhardy enough to have even touched what had been left,
> far less to have carried it off. A child, or one who did not know, was most carefully

---

[121] An association with skulls is also noted at Irish wells. At a well near Faughart in Co. Louth '...there was formerly a skull from which visitors drank water from the spring' (Woodmartin 1902, Vol. 2, 99).

instructed why such things were left in and around the well, and a strict charge was laid
not to touch them or carry them off.'

<div align="right">(MacKinlay 1893, 202-3).</div>

At Bath and Uley a large number of rolled up lead sheets have been found with inscriptions requesting that a curse be placed on a particular individual. They are often related to the theft of loss of property – a typical example from Bath being:

'May he who stole my cloak, whether he be man or woman, boy or girl, freedman or slave, become impotent and die. It may have been ...'

<div align="right">(Cunliffe 1985, 14).</div>

A list of suspects would then be provided. These inscriptions were usually written in pseudo-legal language, as if to provide them with respectability and authority (Woodward 1992, 71). There are clear similarities between this folklore and the Roman inscriptions from shrines. Both involve curses associated with illness and infirmity, and both are generally concerned with the theft of property, in the form of offerings or personal belongings.

A more direct connection between Irish folklore and mythology associated with wells and Romano-British shrines can be found in the name of the presiding deity at Lydney – Nodens or Nodons – who is known from multiple inscriptions dedicated to NODENTI, NODONTI and NVDENTE. At this shrine Nodens is twinned with both the Roman Mars and Silvanus.[122] The finds assemblage, as well as the iconography apparent in objects and mosaics, indicates that the cult of Nodens was associated with healing, dogs and the sea (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, 39-43; Aldhouse-Green 2004, 208-210). Aquatic imagery is dominant at Lydney, as it is at many therapeutic shrines in both Roman Britain and Gaul, and the location of the shrine at iron-rich springs overlooking the tidal estuary of the great River Severn amplifies these themes (Aldhouse-Green 2004, 209).

As noted above, in the Early Irish literary tradition Nuada is directly associated with the mounds at Carbury Hill and the well of *Linn Segais* in the guise of his

---

[122] Only two other inscriptions that may be dedicated to Nodens have been found elsewhere: At Cockersand Moss, Lancashire, a silver statuette was dedicated to DEO MARTI NODONTI (RIB 617), and in Mainz, Germany (once part of Roman Gaul) an inscription to Noadatus Mars was recorded. We should perhaps also note a number of Ogham inscriptions in Muster that contain the name NUADAT (Carey 1984, 4).

pseudonym Neachtan. *Linn Segais* is the source of the Boyne River and the eponymous goddess Boand is also Nuada's consort. Nuada is cognate with both Nodens and the Welsh mythological figure Nudd, and both Nuada and Nudd share the same sobriquet 'silver arm' (Carey 1984). The figure of Nechtan/Nuadu/Nudd is also related to an Indo-European deity known to modern scholars as the 'Descendant of the Waters', who is depicted as a fiery god who resides in water and who must be venerated to ensure the provision of purified and purifying water (Forston 2010, 26-27). In the *Rig Veda* this figure appears as Apǎm Nápāt who dwells in the water emanating brilliance: '…he is the essence of the waters who illuminates those who honor him', and is '…the custodian of the force that essence represents' (Ford 1978, 68). In the Iranian Avestas he is known as Appạn Napā, who captures Xˇvarnah (translated by Dumézil as *Gloire Lumineuse* 'luminous glory') and challenges men to come and attain Xˇvarr and the qualities of kingship that will be bestowed as a result.

A number of commentators have shown that the themes associated with this figure in the Rig Veda and the Avestas display striking similarities to those associated with Nechtan/Nuadu in the *Dindseanchas* and other Irish texts (see Ford 1974). All of these texts are essentially concerned with the proper rituals that are to be observed at the water source where the deity presides, and with the powerful attributes of the water that that may be attained as a result. Nechtan is the guardian of the source *Linn Segais*, and the name Nechtan also derives from the same Indo-European root as Nápāt, Napā and indeed the Latin Neptūnus – the Roman god of the seas and fresh water springs.[123] Nuadu's great-grandson Finn, whose name means 'white' or 'brightness' (and who is cognate with the Welsh mythological figure Gwyn, the great-grandson of Nudd), appears to personify certain facets of Nuadu's character and it is likely that both Nuadu and Finn represent different aspects of the same figure (Carey 1984, 20-21). The epithets associated with figures named Nuadu in the Irish literary tradition also consistently involve the concept of whiteness or brightness (Carey 1984, 7).

---

[123] The precise etymology of these names is a subject of debate. Dumézil (1963) has argued that they derive from the Indo-European root *nept meaning grandson/nephew/descendant, while it has alternatively been proposed that *nebh, meaning moist/damp (giving the Latin *nebula*: fog/mist/cloud), is the relevant Indo-European root (Petersmann 2002, 226-235). This last suggestion is supported by the fact that the Irish etymology of Nuadu also points to a root meaning of moist/cloud, and that the Welsh word *nudd* means 'mist' or 'haze'.

In the *Dindseanchas*, the story of Boand illustrates both the importance of showing the proper ritual reverence towards the well and the immense power of the water source. *Linn Segais* is said to be surrounded by nine hazel trees, the nuts of which fall into the well to nourish and inspire the famous 'Salmon of Knowledge'. He who obtains the salmon will acquire the gifts of the seer and the poet, which are described in similar terms as being 'radiant', 'brilliant', 'shining', and 'illuminating' (Ford 1974, 73-4). In some versions of the tale the seer who intends to eat the salmon, Finn Éces ('White Poet'), is given the full name Nuadu Finnéiceas (Ó hOgáin 1991, 326). These comparisons can in fact be extended to include many notable features of the healing cult at Lydney and related provincial Roman shrines. Indeed it is here that we find associations that go beyond those apparent in the Indo-European texts, and provide compelling parallels between the mythological motifs surrounding *Síd Nechtain* and *Linn Segais* and the provincial Roman ritual practices occurring at cult loci devoted to healing.

To begin with, a specific association with the salmon can be seen at Lydney, where among the marine iconography there is a representation of a fisherman spearing a salmon (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, 42). This connection is also present in the Welsh tale of Culwch and Olwen where the ancient Salmon of the River Severn must be consulted for his wisdom as one of the oldest living creatures.[124] In order to find the salmon, an ancient eagle that once nearly caught the Salmon of the Severn must be consulted. A bone plaque from Lydney is also engraved with the image of an eagle (Fig. 8.7), and one terminal on the famous Bath brooch displays an eagle and a salmon (Fig. 8.8).[125] Ó Floinn has drawn attention to a poem in the *Dindseanchas* which compares the River Boyne directly with the River Severn, and also points out the similarity between the names *Linn Segais* and *Fontes Sequana*, the Gallo-Roman healing shrine at the source of the Seine near Dijon (2001, 7). It is also possible that the motif of the 'Salmon of Knowledge' is represented on a Gallo-Roman altar which shows a salmon that appears to be talking into the ear of a human head (Fig. 8.9; Ross 1967, 350-1).

---

[124] Hair-cutting is also a recurring theme in the tale of Culwch and Olwen (MacKillop 2005, 267-70).

[125] It is notable that the salmon on the Bath brooch has two dots of red enamel in its belly, and it is possible that these may have represented the nuts from the hazel tree at the well of knowledge.

Fig. 8.7: Eagle engraving on bone plaque, Lydney. (After Ross 1968)

Fig. 8.8: Terminal of the bath brooch showing eagle and salmon
(Photograph by Fiona Gavin)
Does the salmon have the hazel nuts from the well of knowledge in its belly?

Fig. 8.9: Salmon talking and human head from Gallo-Roman altar.
(After Ross 1968)

The figure of the dog is especially prominent in the iconography at Lydney: numerous votive figurines of dogs have been found, along with stone carvings that feature canine images (one of which has a human face). Indeed, it is possible that some of the votive deposits may have been dog collars similar to that shown on the famous statuette of a young deer hound (Fig. 8.10) from the shrine (Aldhouse-Green 2004, 208). The association of dogs with healing cults is well documented in the Classical world, most notably with the Greek and Roman cult

of Asklepios (see Jackson 1988, 143-8). This relationship is also present at the Romano-British healing shrine at Nettleton Shrub which was dedicated to the god Apollo Cunomaglus ('Hound Lord'). Again remarkable parallels can be found in the Irish literary tradition: Nuadu's son is named Cú Oiss ('Stag Hound'), while his grandson Finn commands a pack of preternatural hounds and is able to heal wounds with water cupped in his hands (Carey 1984, 20-1).

Further associations may be seen in relation to the depiction of Nuada, Finn, and the attributes of the water as shining, illuminating and radiant. Aldhouse-Green is keen to emphasise the solar imagery that is present on a 'diadem' from Lydney (which features a charioteer with beams radiating from his head: Fig. 8.11) and also on the deerhound statuette which displays rayed motifs on its shoulders and haunches (2004, 209-10). She notes that such imagery is prominent at the shrines of the Gaulish Apollo, and that this is especially apparent at the shrines dedicated to Apollo Belenus (meaning 'Bright One' or 'Shining One') at Sainte-Sabine, and Apollo Vindonnus ('Clear/White Light') at Essarois where the temple pediment once bore the image of a radiate god. John Carey has also suggested that the figure of Finn may be related to the representation of the radiant charioteer from Lydney (1984, 21).

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.10: Deer hound statuette from Lydney, with solar motif on haunches.
(After Aldhouse-Green 2004)

Many of the votive deposits from Lydney indicate that the special healing qualities of the iron-rich springs were known to those who worshipped there, as can be seen from the small bronze model of an arm which displays the spoon-shaped deformed fingernails that are characteristic of sufferers from iron deficiencies. The natural source of these qualities was also known, as is demonstrated by a miniature votive iron pick-axe discovered at the shrine, and the 'solar' diadem which also shows a half-human/half-seabeast holding a pick-axe in each hand. These offerings were clearly from a devotee '…who was aware of the mineral-rich land on which Nodens sanctuary was built and who acknowledged the contribution of iron to the spiritual *essence* of the place' (Aldhouse-Green 2004, 209; my emphasis). The ritual impulses that motivate these sacrificial practices, and the underlying matrix of religious associations, are in fact one and the same as those described in the Irish texts. Votive objects such as the diadem and pick-axe embody a wish to propitiate the god of the source by honouring the extraordinary qualities that the water provided will bestow. The solar motifs, the dog statuettes, the aquatic imagery and the salmon all provide compelling parallels for the literary motifs associated with Nuadu/Nechtain and *Linn Segais* in the Early Irish sources: they are in effect, a material expression of these themes.

This figure could not be included in the electronic version of this thesis as permission for publishing this copyright content online was not obtained.

Fig. 8.11: 'Diadem' from Lydney with 'radiant charioteer' and 'sea monster' with picks.
(After Ross 1968)

Of course the presence of similar themes in the Indo-Iranian sources may give rise to the impression that these beliefs are extremely ancient and may pre-date and prefigure the Provincial Roman activity at these locations. As we have seen, however, the archaeological evidence for such ritual practices at wells and sources in both Britain and Ireland does not pre-date the Roman period. Indeed, the historical sources also provide evidence to suggest that the figure of Nuadu was a late introduction into the Irish pantheon of mythological figures. John Carey notes that in stark contrast to the other figures in the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Nuadu is not provided with a lengthy genealogical background, and more generally '…was conceived as being somehow apart from the other Irish gods' (1984, 11). Another more direct Roman connection to Nuada is present in his sobriquet *Airgetlám* ('silver arm'). The Old Irish word for silver '*airgid'* is actually derived from the Latin '*argentum'*, and it is clear that the first silver objects to appear in Ireland are Roman silver coins and pins (Ryan 1982, 47; Newman 1995, 24; Aitchison 1996, 73).[126]

Just as ritual deposition at wells and springs was considered to be a quintessential 'Celtic' practice, it has universally been assumed that Irish myths and legends associated with wells and sources represent an ancient Irish pagan Celtic tradition. However, the archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the matrix of practices *and* literary motifs associated with wells and springs in both Britain and Ireland developed in these islands as part of the creation and diffusion of new provincial Roman religious rites. This is not to suggest that all aspects of these practices and beliefs were introduced into Ireland *tout court*. As Webster argues in relation to Britain:

> 'Their presence should rather be seen to reflect the development of new practices in post-conquest Britain. They attest to the growth of new, idiosyncratic rites – which should properly be considered as Romano-British rather than as either Roman or Celtic'.
>
> (Webster 1997, 140)

---

[126] It also appears that the Welsh Nudd is derived from the figure of Nodens (MacKillop 1998, 349).

Thus in Ireland these practices should be seen as 'Hiberno-Roman', and furthermore it should be recognised that at least some aspects of Irelands famous 'Celtic heritage' may well constitute a 'Romano-Celtic heritage'.

Chapter 9

The Gifts of Empire

'Afterward, happy in the tawny pelt,

His nurse, the she-wolf, wears, young Romulus,

Will take the leadership, build walls of Mars,

And call by his own name his people Romans.

For these I set no limits, world or time,

But make the gift of empire without end.'

Virgil, *Aneid*, I.370-75.

'…as for the Germans, they do not know what orders of obedience mean. They invariably act as fancy takes them. Money and gifts are the only means of seducing them, and these are available in greater quantity on the Roman side'

Tacitus *Histories*, VI.76.

Introduction

In the Latin words *provincia* and *limes* we find the origins of the English 'province' and 'limit' respectively. Despite the visual and phonetic resemblance to their Latin forbearers, these words have acquired rather different meanings through the processes of translation and time. The definition of 'limit' as: '**1** a point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass'; and of 'province' as: '**1** a principal administrative division of a country or empire' (O.E.D. 2013); while showing certain general affinities with the original Latin terms, also show significant deviation. Modern studies of Roman provinces and frontiers have suffered from a tendency to project these modern English meanings back onto their Latin counterparts, thus infusing these words with new properties relating to more recent social and political contexts.

Thus the Roman frontier has become allied with European nationalist and imperialist notions of state borders and strict racial divisions, while the Roman province takes on new emphasis in relation to the modern state and contemporary cultural geography.[127] Such tendencies have also been promoted by the 'drawing lines and arrows on maps' approach of culture-historical thought. Lines drawn across maps to denote the geographical extent of Roman territory are not only contentious in relation to the criteria used in order to define what was or was not Roman territory, but also contributed to the idea that '[f]rontiers were simply the dividing line between the civilised and the barbarian' (Whittaker 1994, 2).

This inevitably led to a gross oversimplification of the social formations and political processes at play in such areas; however, by the 1980's new approaches to frontier studies had begun to appreciate the more complex nature of frontiers and the systems in which they operated. It was recognised that '[a] frontier is not a line, it is a zone, an area of interaction between two cultures' (Prescott 1978, 31-33). Within a frontier there may have been a boundary marker delineating the limit of the territory officially administered by the Roman authorities, however this should not be seen as the 'frontier' itself, but just as part of it (Hanson 1989, 55). Any investigation concerning the importation, circulation, and use of Roman artefacts in Ireland must also realise the wider implications of this insight, and Ireland must be viewed in this context as part of the Roman frontier itself, and not as 'beyond the empire' (Raftery 1994). However, in order to gain a better understanding of Roman frontiers and provinces we must first attempt to understand the way the Romans and their contemporaries viewed the *provincia* and *limes* of their world, not the 'provinces' and 'limits' of ours.

Dealing with the Barbarians on Roman Terms

---

[127] The idea that the extent of the ancient Roman provinces also coincided those of contemporaneous 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' nations is clearly present in William Camden's writing on Ireland: 'For, from this quarter, Britain was spoiled and infested with most cruel enemies; which seems to have been foreseen by Augustus, when he neglected Britain for fear of the dangers that threatened from the adjacent countries.' (*Britannia* 1722 edtn., 1315). Conversely, the English phrase 'beyond the Pale' – which originally referred to those parts of Ireland outside of the English controlled 'Pale' region – is often employed in the literature of Roman studies, as can be seen in the title of Pearson's 1984 paper: 'Beyond the Pale: Barbarian Social Dynamics in Western Europe'.

In stark contrast to the English 'province', the Latin *provincia* appears to have originally had no geographic connotations; rather it referred to a task assigned to a Roman official (Richardson 1994, 564). A *provincia* was one's 'area' or 'field', but in the professional rather than territorial sense of the word. According to Richardson: '…when at the beginning of each consular year the senate assigned *provinciae* to the various magistrates and promagistrates, what they were doing was more like allocating a portfolio than putting people in charge of geographical areas' (1994, 565). Thus, for example, the treasury was the *provincia* of the *quaestor*. Indeed, the word *provincia* may well have had a broader definition in certain contexts, and the use of the term in the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and also in Cicero, would appear to refer to a wider concern or sphere of influence (Richardson 1994, 565).

This ambiguity in meaning is also notable in the administrative records relating to the provinces, where the criteria traditionally applied by scholars in order to define the provincial status of an area – the presence of the army, the payment of taxes and legal authority – can prove quite problematic. There are early records of the proconsul M. Acilius Glabrio making legal decisions about matters in Delphi when it was certainly not regarded as being part of the empire and, in relation to taxes, it has been noted that monies could be collected from areas that were not even provinces – that is where there was no official Roman military or magisterial presence (Richardson 1994, 569-70). The two examples above show, in turn, that Roman military presence itself, '…which we use as one of the criteria for determining whether a *provincia* is or is not a 'province' apparently makes no difference' (Richardson 1994, 70).

The Roman official, and in the frontier regions this would almost certainly have been a general, was given a *provincia* – a job to do, not a geographical area – and by using the *imperium* granted to him in the name of the people of Rome he was, it would seem, permitted to do whatever he saw fit to get the job done (Richardson 1994, 577). Of course, this varied from place to place, and a widely different range of measures were used in order to gain control over the heterogeneous regions and groups with whom the official came into contact; and if this could be achieved satisfactorily without the expense of military intervention, there was no need to go to the inconvenience of sending them. In this context the drawing of lines across maps of the frontier zones becomes a rather

futile exercise, and really provides little information as to the extent of *de facto* Roman control. The different policies used by the officials, along with the diverse responses of the population groups involved, led to the formation of a range of states with differing status. There were states with a treaty, free states, and states paying the *stipendium*. What is more '…all these variations of status existed both within and outside the permanent *provincae* […] and belong not to a system of provincial administration, but of diplomatic relations between states' (Richardson 1994, 592).

The cases mentioned above are admittedly early examples, and while the meaning of the word *provincia* did change over the centuries of Roman control and expansion, no doubt acquiring territorial significance in certain contexts, it is necessary to recognise the importance of the origins of the term and the effect thereof. As Richardson states:

> 'A *provincia* was a commission by the senate to a magistrate or promagistrate for the fulfilment of a particular task, and in this early period the task was in the case of overseas areas, largely military. It was from such origins that the province of the later Republic and Empire developed and […] many of the particular characteristics of the later system derive from the circumstances of these origins.'
>
> (Richardson 1994, 571)

Indeed it has also been argued that the continuity from Republican through Early Imperial into late Imperial practice is far more significant than is often imagined (Braund 1989, 14; see also Braund 1984).

The Latin word *limes* is usually translated as 'frontier'. Like *provincia* this term changed and evolved in meaning as the Roman attitude towards the empire, and indeed Rome itself, changed from the late Republic right up to the collapse of the empire. Its earlier meaning in a military context was '…a pathway, especially the strip of land along which a column of troops advanced into enemy territory' (Hanson 1989, 55). This is most appropriate, as the expansionist nature of Roman ideology and practice in the Late Republic and Early Empire was totally at odds with the idea that the Romans should be set boundaries or limits – as Virgil explicitly states in the *Aneid* (I.370-75).

For much of the last century the study of Roman expansion was deeply divided over the nature and motivations of Roman Imperialism. Proponents of 'defensive

imperialism' argued that the Romans gained new territory in a piecemeal fashion, reacting to external events and conquering new land only in order to ensure the stability of what was already conquered (Mann, 1974, 1979; Sherwin-White, 1984; Dyson, 1985).[128] Other commentators argued that throughout the Imperial period, right up to the last days of the Western Empire, Roman expansion and Roman social institutions in general were shaped by overtly expansionist ideals and social practices (Luttwak 1976; North 1981; Harris 1984; Beard and Crawford 1985). Those who support the latter position draw attention to the aggressively expansionist thrust of Roman cultural thought, as well as the overt dependence of Roman social institutions and public life on colonial conquest – from the first steps of young men along the *cursus honorum* in the army, to the crowning glory of a Roman public career in the Triumph.

The apparent lack of a single coherent 'policy' towards peoples outside the empire was central to the arguments supporting 'defensive imperialism', yet the quasi-autonomous authority granted to Roman officials *via* the *imperium*, and exercised by them for different reasons in different times and places, may be seen as a practical response to new and varying situations encountered by the Roman authorities as the empire expanded as opposed to a lack of expansionist aims on the part of the Roman authorities. Having said this it is important to note that the Romans did have conflicting attitudes to frontiers (Whittaker 1989, 64). Many emperors do appear to have been juggling the need to maintain and consolidate the empire as they inherited it, with the wish to continue the celebrated tradition of conquest (Millar 1982; Whittaker 1989).

The events of the Teutoberg forest in 9 AD, along with the revolts in Germany and Illyricum, forced Augustus and others around him to realise that Rome's legions were not invincible (Wells 1992, 78). When Augustus advised his successor Tiberius '...to keep the Empire within its present frontiers' (Tacitus *Annals* I.2), he was not necessarily ordering a halt to Roman expansion altogether, but rather recommending a certain course of action in repose to a specific set of events which also included the inventible insecurity surrounding a dynastic transfer of power. It has been pointed out that that although Augustus had

---

[128] 'Defensive imperialism' had fallen out of favour by the last decade of the 20th century (Fitzpatrick, 1989, 31), and although some may discern its return in contemporary discourses on American foreign policy, it is nowadays more likely to be seen as an oxymoron that a coherent theory of Roman Imperialism.

forbidden his generals to cross the Elbe, this was meant only as a temporary restriction and when Ahenobarbus succeeded in crossing the river he was rewarded with a triumph (Hanson 1989, 56-57). It is evident from this example that an Emperor's order to cease advancing cannot be interpreted as a permanent change in imperialist 'policy', or as the lack of any desire to expand Roman territory.

There is no denying that the loss of Varus's three legions in the German frontier had a massive effect on the Roman psyche and body politic, particularly in relation to their feelings of inherent military superiority. However, the changes in practice that resulted appear to have been concerned more with the most effective means of imperial control and expansion rather than a repudiation of imperialist goals altogether. According to Fulford:

> '…while there is no doubt that the loss of three legions in Germany in A.D. 9 delivered a severe blow to Augustus and his expansionist plans in Europe, there is no evidence that the loss itself, other than the lessons drawn from it, had a lasting influence on Imperial expansion'
>
> (Fulford 1992, 295).

Hedeager has also argued that defeat of Varus, followed by the continued failure of Germanicus to achieve any significant military victories on the German front, contributed to a situation where '...in AD 16 Roman policy towards free Germany changed from one of military force to one of political intervention' (1987, 125). What we see here is not a complete about-turn regarding expansionist attitudes, but rather a reassessment of the methods considered effective in order to achieve successful colonial control over more territory. Rome's military supremacy had been called into question and as a result other approaches would now come to the fore in the quest to gain control over further regions and peoples.

Tacitus's description of the Roman Empire as being '...hedged about by the sea of Oceanus and remote rivers' (*Annals* I, 9) has also led commentators such as Millar to suggest that the empire had by then become a coherent and limited geographic entity that was delineated by the rivers Rhine, Danube and Euphrates (1982, 19).[129] However, as Whittaker has noted, Tacitus's statement:

---

[129] There are some basic flaws in Tacitus's definition of the extent of the empire, as he would have been well aware that Britain lies beyond Oceanus (Whittaker 1989, 65).

'…is no more informative strategically or politically than the claim by Cato and others in the second century BC that the Alps were the *finem*, and protecting wall of Italy. At the time the Alps were in no sense a frontier controlled by Rome and I doubt if Tacitus was any more precise'

(Whittaker 1989, 64)

Indeed whether Millar is correct or not, it is clear that this debate '...tells us very little about how frontiers themselves were conceived' (Whittaker 1989, 64).

The idea that the *limes* were not considered as the permanent limit of the empire in practice, as well as ideologically, is supported by both historical and archaeological evidence in the frontier zones themselves. The rather ambiguous attitude of the Romans towards boundaries may be seen in the religious rite of *souvetaurilia,* which began at the civilian boundary of a city or state but proceeded to a military zone where a sacrifice to Mars, the God of War, took place with the prayer:

> "…and grant that the Roman people's estate may grow more prosperous and greater."
>
> (cited in Whittaker 1994, 23)

The expansionist attitude involved in this ceremony manifests itself archaeologically in an illustration on a slab with pictorial relief set into the Antonine Wall at Bridgeness in Scotland. One half of the illustration shows the *souvetaurilia* being celebrated by the legion, while the other shows the Roman cavalry trampling barbarians. According to George MacDonald, this relief is '…pregnant with meaning' as it shows the celebration of *souvetaurilia* by the soldiers '…*before* embarking on a Caledonian campaign' (1921, 13; my emphasis).

The outward orientation of the *limes* is also witnessed in the deployment of troops in the frontier. According to Hanson:

> 'What is clear is that Augustus' Rhine bases were located in relation to lines of eastward penetration, the concentration of troops facilitating the ready assembly of a

campaign force. Here, then, we see a direct archaeological manifestation of Rome's expansionist policy'

<div align="right">(Hanson 1989, 56.)</div>

Over time the deployment of troops did spread out along the boundaries and the garrisons and towers were placed within closer range of each other. However this was not solely due to defensive considerations, but was also concerned with ensuring closer control on movement and trade. Interestingly this is also when the term *limes* begins to take on a new meaning in terms of a lateral frontier line rather than a line of penetration (Hanson 1989, 57).

The next phase in frontier development in the 2nd century AD saw the construction of linear barriers, such as the German palisade between the rivers Rhine and Danube, and Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall in northern Britain. Until relatively recently the study of Roman Frontiers has been noticeably preoccupied with artificial linear obstacles such as Hadrian's Wall in Scotland and the German Palisade, despite the fact that these features constitute a very tiny portion of the total Imperial Frontier. As noted above, there must be awareness that a frontier is not a line or a readily identifiable isolated feature; however, linear barriers do feature prominently in the archaeology of *Limesforschung* as they often constitute the only readily identifiable feature within frontier zones. In fact, one of the biggest departures in the study of Roman frontiers has been the realisation that these barriers may not have been constructed with defensive capabilities as their sole priority.

Detailed study of these features shows that the requirements of military defence were not the primary criteria applied in determining their location. Hanson and Maxwell (1983) report that the Antonine wall does not exploit aspects the local terrain for defensive advantage, and the same observation had previously been made of the *Fossitum Africae* by Birley (1956). In his extensive study of the eastern frontier Isaac concluded that '...it simply did not matter to the Romans where the boundary ran, since they did not see the borders in terms of military defence' (1990). The clearest example of this is the German palisade, which runs for about 81km between Miltenburg and Lorch. The entire length of the palisade follows a straight line without any concern for local topography or defensive advantage. According to Whittaker: '...no one in his right mind would build a

strategic or tactical frontier from Miltenburg to Lorch, a distance of over 80km, in a dead straight line' (1989, 65). Indeed it seems likely that this feature, linking the Rhine and Danube bases, was intended to facilitate control and communication rather than to define the limits of Roman territory (Wells 1999b, 87).

The transient nature of these barriers is also very clear when one looks at the way in which they were moved back and forth; and not just as a result of military or strategic needs (Whittaker 1989, 57). The lack of permanency in these linear barrier 'frontiers' proves problematic for those attempting to identify the precise line that would apparently signify the limit of Roman control and influence. According to Whittaker:

'Despite an early recognition of the Danube as some sort of geographical dividing line, the development of the Hungarian Transylvanian plain east of the Danube in the first century AD makes it look as if it was not so much the Danube as the River Tiza which was regarded as the limit of Roman rule'

.   (Whittaker 1989, 65)

Indeed, as we have seen, after Augustus' campaigns it was quite common for writers to refer to the empire as reaching as far as the Elbe, despite the fact that the actual *limes* were drawn back at the Rhine and Danube. Such claims were certainly propagandist and poetic in nature but it may well have been that while the Provinces of *Germania* did not extend to these areas they were nonetheless considered to be under direct Roman control. As Whittaker notes: '…in the fourth century the emperor Valentinian died of apoplexy when the kings of the Quadi behaved as though they were independent'(1994, 48).

Similar confusion is also experienced in relation to the presence of Roman camps and garrisons in areas well beyond the frontier lines, such as those in Armenia and the Bosphorus under Claudius and in Armenia under Marcus Aurelius. In Britain, an 8th century text, known as the *Ravenna Cosmography*, lists a variety of Roman placenames of Britain, including a number of locations referred to as '*loca*' well beyond Hadrian's Wall. It has been suggested that these places represent either Roman outposts or tribal meeting places where assemblies were allowed to take place under Roman control (Hanson 2004, 140; Mann 1992).

Of course, despite their defensive shortcomings, *limites* such as Hadrian's Wall were first and foremost military installations, and the presence of the Roman army

in these locations would have had an enormous impact on the surrounding locality. The material needs of the Roman imperial machine were immense, especially in the large garrisons around the frontier zones. The most recent estimates for the Antonine occupation of northern Britain indicate that the Roman presence of 22,000–25,000 troops would have required an annual supply of 8,000–10,000 tons of wheat, 8350–8,900 tons of barley, 2,800 cattle, 4,800 pigs, and somewhere between 4,800–14,000 sheep; and this was just for food rations (Hanson 2004, 150). Other requirements may have necessitated 10,000 horses, 4,000 mules, 12,000 calves per annum for the replacement of leather tents, as well as 2,000 animals a year for sacrifice (Whittaker 1994, 104).

The proportion of these supplies that could have been sourced from the immediate locality would have depended on the quality of the land and the state of local agriculture. In the case of upland Wales for example, Davies has observed:

> 'The impact on the agricultural regime must […] have been considerable, almost certainly bringing new land under cultivation, together with new crops such as bread wheat whose presence was unknown before the conquest.'
>
> (Davies 2004, 109-9)

The involvement of native groups from areas further away from the garrisons in the production and supply of crops, livestock and goods is uncertain. There are historical accounts of tribes well beyond Roman territory fulfilling annual contracts with Roman provinces: Tacitus tells us that the Frisii supplied ox hides, while another document known as *Hunt's Pridianum* records Roman soldiers, going '...across the Danube on an expedition to defend the *annona* (grain supply)' in AD 105 (Whittaker 1994, 113). Some tribes were also given official importation rights, for example a Norican king was given special permission to export horses from Italy (Braund 1989, 19).

Another example of how the military presence may have directly influenced societies beyond official Roman territory was the recruiting of men from 'barbarian' groups for service in auxiliary units of the Roman Army. This of course would have had major social and economic ramifications. The recruitment and relocation of significant numbers of the adult male population would have necessitated a fundamental reorganisation of the local economy in these regions (Wells 1999a, 136). Studies undertaken in the Netherlands have suggested that

such military activity was instrumental in affecting a transition from live-stock based pastoral economy to a mixed economy where agriculture played a much larger role (Willems 1986).

There can also be no doubt that structures such as Hadrian's Wall would have constituted significant barriers that restricted both population movement and trade across the frontier (Crow 2004, 130-2), and archaeological evidence would suggest that there were notable difference between the material cultures of groups living inside and around the Wall and those beyond the Wall itself (Hanson 2004, 151-4). Indeed, the Roman military may have played a central role in the control and protection of exchange networks and trade, as well as the defence of imperial territory. As Hanson has noted:

> 'The provision of regular garrisons every few miles, augmented by watchtowers, allowed for a close watch on all forms of traffic. Walls in particular helped to deter minor raiding.'
>
> (Hanson 1989, 59.)

There is archaeological evidence, in the form of inscriptions that support the suggestion that an important function of these military bases was to protect against thieves and brigands (Hanson 1989, 59). It also appears likely that the army would have has a supervisory role in relation to mining and processing natural resources, as well as providing the necessary infrastructure to support these activities (Davies 2004, 108).

The role of the military in controlling movement and trade is important and should not to be underestimated or dismissed as a secondary task, undertaken to pass the time between aggressive military campaigns. As Fulford (1989, 81) has noted, '…the development of frontier systems has been very much the preoccupation of military historians and archaeologists working within an historical framework' (see also Wells 1999a, 95). This has led to an over emphasis on the purely military nature of the frontiers at the expense of a more general appreciation of the importance of economic and diplomatic interaction, and the use thereof in relation to frontier control. Indeed, there is historical evidence to suggest that economic interests and trade relations would often have been giver a higher priority than military concerns.

In relation to pre-conquest Roman trade with Britain, a passage from Strabo's *Geography* (written c.19 AD) records how:

'… some of the chief forces there, after procuring the friendship of Caesar Augustus by sending embassies and by paying court to him, have not only dedicated offerings in the Capitolium, but have also managed to make the whole of their island virtually Roman property. Furthermore, they submit so easily to heavy duties on the exports from there to Celtica and on the imports from Celtica … that there is no need of garrisoning the island; for one legion at least, and some cavalry would be required to collect tribute from them, and the expense of the army would offset the tributary money; in fact the duties must necessarily be lessened if tribute is imposed, and at the same time, dangers be encountered if force is applied'

(Strabo *Geography* IV.5.3)

There are a number of interesting points to note here.[130] The first is Strabo's assertion that this economic relationship has made '...the whole of their island virtually Roman property', which provides an interesting insight into how the Roman authorities envisioned their relationship to groups 'beyond' official Roman territory. The second is the fact that the tariffs resulting from Roman economic control appear to have been considered even more important and valuable than maintaining the annual tribute that had been levied on the British tribes by Julius Caesar over half a century earlier.[131]

Another significant aspect of the above statement is the apparent reluctance of Roman authorities to go to the considerable expense of military occupation to impose control when an alternative, diplomatic option is available. The use of military force was just one method employed by the Roman authorities in overcoming opposition, another, used especially in frontier zones, was political negotiation and the payment of 'subsidies'. This is not to be seen as a compromise on the part of the Romans, or to suggest that, as in present times, military action was seen as a final resort following political negotiation These two approaches were directly related and '…it was often the threat of the former which facilitated the latter' (Hanson 1989, 56).

Roman approaches to interaction with groups outside official Roman territory in northwest Europe were also inherently bound-up in broader existing attitudes relating to 'Barbarian' peoples. Most often referred to as animals or beasts, barbarians were seen as unpredictable and incapable of any form of reason. Beast training was a popular metaphor for political government throughout the classical world; one of the most influential sources being Plato's republic where the statesman is describe as a beast-trainer who must control the masses using emotional and material methods, rather than appealing to their sense of reason (*Republic*, book vi). According to David Braund:

---

[130] The parallels between this passage and Tacitus's account of Ireland are noteworthy. Like Augustus, Agricola befriends native elites and states that a legion and auxiliaries would be needed to subjugate the island – a project which is not undertaken in each case. It has been shown that Tacitus often purposefully draws on other sources in order to invite comparisons between different characters and situations (for example the death of Aulus Atticus in *Agricola* 37.6 is portrayed in the same poignant terms as that of Catiline in Sallust Cat. 61 9: see Hoffmann 2004). It is therefore possible that this passage in Tacitus's account of Ireland is more concerned with drawing an implicit comparison between his father in law and Augustus than in providing any real information about Ireland.

[131] Although one must be at least a little sceptical of Strabo's description of the natives' enthusiasm in paying these tariffs to Rome.

'Beast taming was still a metaphor for political government in Tacitus' day; his contemporary Statius, compares a tyrannical emperor to a cruel beast trainer: again the trainer controls the beast by material means, in particular its food'

(Braund 1989, 16).

Thus, if the Roman authorities saw the Barbarians as wild animals, and they believed that wild animals were to be controlled by material means, it is to be expected that these views would have shaped wider practices concerning Roman and native interaction in frontier zones (Braund 1989, 17). An explicit expression of this attitude may be seen in Tacitus's account of the Batavian revolt in 70 AD, where he asserts that the Germans can be only controlled through 'money and gifts' (see Roymans 2004, 266-7). It this way economic control and manipulation was seen to constitute an important means for the control and domination of native groups in peripheral regions (Braund 1989, 20).

It is also clear that Roman authorities were very concerned about limiting and controlling any such interaction and exchange. Two of the main reasons for this, as recorded in historical documents, are:

'1: the wish not to strengthen enemies by supplying their deficiencies.
2: the fear that trade might allow espionage.'

(Braund 1989, 19)

Both of these worries apply to those who may be hostile to Rome, the implication being that those who do trade with Rome must be known to be 'friendly' elements (Braund 1989, 19). For these reasons it is likely that diplomatic contact and associated social and political relationships would have been considered to be vital undertakings in their own right (Fitzpatrick 1989). High-level political interaction may have not only been necessary to ensure healthy trade relations, but also to determine whether any contact was to be established in the first place (Braund 1984, 43). As Hanson notes:

'It was Roman practice to make frequent use of diplomacy when attempting conquest of an area, playing one tribal group off against the other. The giving of gifts or payment of financial subsidies as part of an agreement between Rome and peoples along the

frontier of her Empire was a common practice and proved an efficient method of frontier control.'

<div align="right">(Hanson 2004, 140)</div>

The leaders of these native groups were known as 'friendly Kings' (*Rex sociusque et amicus*) and it would appear that Roman elites extended a form of patronage to some of these individuals, in much the same way as they offered patronage to their official 'clients' (*Clientelae*) in Roman public life. Indeed, the patron-client relationship was *the* central social institution in Roman public life, involving an extensive web of social, legal, and economic relationships and obligations between all levels of Roman society, even slaves (see Rich (ed) 1990). It is not surprising therefore that it would have been considered 'natural' to extend at least some aspects of this relationship to groups that were brought into contact with Rome through both conquest and imperial expansion in general (see Braund 1984; Creighton 2005). In the case of native states beyond imperial territory, this kind of 'clientship' clearly involved more than just trade agreements or even the payment of subsidies: Augustus proposed dynastic marriages, arranges relationships between states and even appoints a guardian when a king is too young to rule in his own right. In the words of Suetonius: '...he never failed to treat them with consideration as integral parts of the empire' (*Augustus* 48: cited in Hanson 1989, 56).

Gifts, 'Clientship' and Resistance in Late Iron Age Ireland

One of the most popular interpretations concerning the importation of Roman material into Ireland is the suggestion that these objects were introduced as the result of 'trade' (Bateson 1973; Warner 1976; Raftery 1994). It is clear from the historical records that traders from Roman Britain (and probably also Gaul) were operating on the Irish Sea, and did have knowledge of Irish geography – not just in relation to rivers and ports but also concerning important inland locations and centres of power (Raftery 1994, 204-206; Cunliffe 2001, 416; Freeman 2001). Yet as we have seen, Roman authorities were heavily involved in the control and manipulation of trade relations in frontier regions, and the exchange of goods was also intimately intertwined with other forms of diplomatic contact and broader social and political interaction.

It is also highly likely that the circulation of these goods in Ireland, and economic activity more generally in Late Iron Age society, was 'embedded' within a wider range of social institutions and cultural practices; unlike monetary market economies which may facilitate the practice of exchange outside of this social sphere (Sahlins 1974; Hodder 1979; Aitchison 1988). As such, economic activity and exchange would have primarily been organised through the formation and maintenance of other social relationships such as dynastic transfers, tribute payments, bridewealth and marriage; all of which would no doubt have taken place within a ceremonial and ritual context.

The presence of Roman coinage in Ireland is especially significant in this light, as the amount and type of coins circulating simply could not have constituted or sustained a broader monetary system. Furthermore, coins tend to loose monetary value in areas outside the direct administrative control of the issuing authority (Aitchison 1998, 270; Reece 2002, 1), and although gold and silver coins may have been intrinsically valuable, the lower issues may have been almost worthless as a medium of exchange. It is therefore unlikely that Roman traders would have used coinage as the actual means of exchange when trading with groups outside the empire, as the value of most coins would have been higher within imperial territory. The presence of lower value coins would therefore indicate that it was more than the monetary value of the coin that was important, and as an unusual and exotic artefact type that signified high status contacts coins may have been highly valued in a different way altogether.

Indeed, by their very existence and in their use of representation coins are clearly symbols of political power and social prestige. From this point of view, coins may represent more that a monetary system but also the ability of the issuing authority to control the production and distribution of valuable resources. The minting of Roman coinage was an essential process, not just in relation to the running of the Roman economic system, bit also in the very constitution and projection of imperial power. As Creighton has observed: '…emperors who only lasted a few days or weeks nonetheless managed to mint and distribute coin as one of their first priorities, giving it out as donatives to obtain loyalty from their military supporters'(2000, 167). In this sense the production of coinage was a direct means of securing power through the creation of all important patron–client relationships, whilst simultaneously being a vehicle for political propaganda.

It also appears that pre-Roman Celtic coins in Britain and Gaul were restricted to exchange between elite groups, as they were only minted in gold or silver. The absence of lower issues would certainly make these coins unsuitable for wider commercial transactions, and it would seem likely that they were used as a form of social gift-exchange rather than a form of currency (Hodder 1979, 190-192; Reece 1979, 214-215). Haselgrove (1984) has suggested that the use of coinage may have supplanted existing mechanisms of social interaction and economic exchange in relation to rents, tribute, mercenary payments, bridewealth etc., and interprets the appearance of Gallo-Belgic coins in southeast Britain in the late centuries BC as important signifiers for more extensive cross-channel social relationships. According to Cunliffe:

> 'It is better to see them as items of wealth circulating within patterns of gift exchange, rather than money used for commercial transactions, and their appearance in Britain must reflect social relationships between tribes on both sides of the Channel.'
>
> (Cunliffe 2001, 405)

It has also been noted that the early Roman coinage in France and Britain is dominated by gold and silver issues and they are often found associated with Celtic coins in ritual contexts. It would appear likely therefore, that at least in these early periods, Roman coins fulfilled the same social function as the pre-Roman Celtic coins, being used in the context of diplomatic gift-exchange and subsidy payments (Aitchison 1988; Creighton 2000).

In light of this information it is clear that the presence of Roman coinage in Ireland may be more significant than has previously been suggested, and there may also be more direct evidence to indicate that the use of Roman coins in Ireland had a wider social and ritual function in relation to gift-giving and establishing broader political and social relationships. As with the early coins from Britain and Gaul, the Roman coins from Southeast Ireland are dominated by gold and silver issues, with a ratio of almost 1:1 between gold/silver and other issues (Fig. 9.1). If this analysis is extended to cover the whole of Ireland, the quantity of silver coins from hoards such as Ballinrees and Feigh Mountain (over 2,000 combined) would reduce the relative levels of lower issues to an infinitesimal fraction.
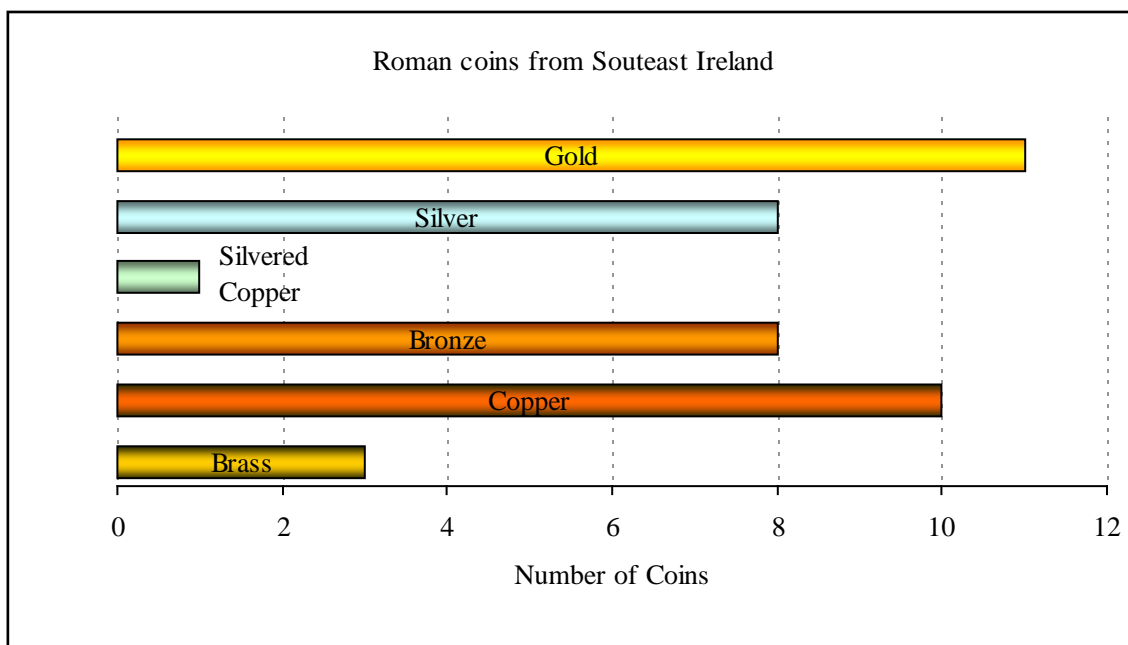
Fig. 9.1: The composition of Roman coins from Southeast Ireland.

The deposition of coins at important ritual centres such as Brú na Bóinne, clearly demonstrates that coins were being integrated into wider ritual practices and social institutions, and can also be seen to provide a direct link between coins and gift exchange: ritual deposition is, after all, the offering of gifts to the gods (Aitchison 1988, 278; Gregory 1980). Such offerings are often directly related to wider gift-exchange between groups within society, and anthropologists regularly interpret the practice of ritual deposition as a mechanism to stabilise social gift exchange through the removal of selected gift material from circulation (Gregory 1980; Barrett 1985). The use of Roman coins for overt social display is also indicated by the presence of the gold uniface medallions of Constantine I (330-337 AD) and Constantine II (320-330 AD) at Newgrange, as these objects were clearly used as pendants or necklaces.

It is suggested, therefore, that rather than being just booty, soldiers wages, or the results of casual exchange, Roman coin finds in Ireland are indicative of close diplomatic and political relationships between Irish and Roman elites. The gift of a coin would have conferred status on the bearer within society, but the acceptance of the gift would also have signified the acceptance of external

obligations, necessitating some form of reciprocal activity (Aitchison 1988, 278; see also Mauss 2002[1954]). It is likely that this was also the case in Ireland, and it is clear that Roman coins offer some of the most compelling evidence for the existence of patron-client relationships between Ireland and Roman Britain.

The locations where Roman material has been recovered may provide additional evidence to suggest that Roman artefacts were also associated with the creation of Irish social relationships and marriage ceremonies that involved the exchange of bridewealth. As noted in the previous chapter, the Middle Irish tale *Bóruma Laigen* Lóegaire is said to have been killed at *Síd Nechtain* (the mound on Carbury Hill) while attempting to collect the *Bóruma* or 'cattle tribute' paid to the kings of Leinster. Assembly sites such as wells are also represented as venues for marriage ceremonies in Irish historical sources and folklore. The wedding rite associated with the 'marriage well' at Tailtiu also explicitly involved the exchange of bridewealth (Mallery 2011, 177).

Although much of the evidence would suggest that Roman material in Ireland was being integrated into pre-existing forms of status display, social relationships, and religious activity (Armit 2007), there is also some evidence to suggest that this material would have been used in the creation of new types of status expression, social formations, and ritual practices. Roman coins themselves were a totally new type of object in Ireland, and the use of these objects in religious rituals must also have constituted a significant shift in attitudes surrounding the nature and type of material that was considered to be an appropriate offering – a gift fit for a god. Woodward has observed that offerings at Romano-British ritual sites indicate a notable transformation in relation to the types of objects that had been used for ritual deposition in the Late Iron Age period, with a move away from full-sized weapons[132] and the introduction of new forms of ritual objects such as statuettes and inscribed objects such as curse tablets (1992, 66-72). The coins and inscribed torc-end from Newgrange and the statuettes from Carrowmore and the River Boyne may represent similar changes in Ireland although clearly on a much more limited scale.

There is also a perceptible change in the objects and practices used to symbolise and construct personal appearances and social identity. The appearance

---

[132] Woodward also notes that the change from full-size to miniature weapons as offerings must have been related to Roman laws prohibiting the carrying of weapons by civilians (1992, 67).

of new types of toilet implements at sites such as Knowth, Freestone Hill, and Stoneyford, are clearly related to contacts with Roman-Britain,[133] and Hingley has argued that the introduction of these kinds of objects in Britain would have heralded significant transformations in social attitudes and practices concerned with personal hygiene, body care, and the projection of social identity (1997, 100-103). Other possible new forms of personal adornment include spiral finger rings and chain necklaces. In an Irish context the necklace must have represented an important change in fashion, as native Irish forms of neck ornament in the Iron Age appear to have been confined to torcs: objects that would also have had important religious and social roles (Raftery 1983, 167-172; Waddell 1998, 290-6).

The possible significance of Roman dress fasteners in native societies has been the subject of some debate. Hedeager's study of Roman material in Germanic regions outside the empire led her to the conclusion that brooches were not prestige exchange goods in their own right, but rather are the everyday possessions of brokers conducting Roman-Native exchange involving more important prestige items (1978, 204-208; 1987, 126-127). The contrasting distribution of brooches and other prestige items in Denmark would certainly appear to support this conclusion. However, it must be remembered that while this may have been the case in Germany, in other contexts, such as Ireland, things may have been quite different. In a detailed analysis of Roman dress fasteners from Scotland, Hunter has reached a very different conclusion concerning the importance of these artefacts:

> 'The very idea of wearing a brooch was somewhat alien to native societies, which show
> a strong preference for pins in the pre-Roman Iron Age with only a scatter of early
> penannulars and a marked scarcity of imported La Tène bow brooches. By contrast,
> Roman brooches clearly enjoyed considerable popularity. This in itself suggests they
> had a role beyond that of Hedeager's 'everyday necessities' (1978, 208); while perhaps
> not carrying the social cachet of a Samian bowl or a patera, their apparent popularity
> suggests they found a social niche as status symbols or identifiers.'

> (Hunter 1996, 122-123).

---

[133] In fact, with just one exception (an unaccompanied mirror found in a bog at Ballymoney, Co. Antrim) all of the Iron Age toilet implements listed in Raftery's catalogue are from sites that have also produced Roman or British finds (1983, nos 537-554).

314

A similar pattern may be seen in relation to Southeast Ireland (Fig. 9.2). Iron Age dress fasteners in the region are predominantly pins (twelve objects), with only seven brooches found. We see a complete reversal of this trend in the imported Roman material, consisting of twenty-two brooches and only four pins. It would appear that, as in Scotland, Roman brooches were associated with changing tastes and had acquired an important new role as status symbols in native society. This suggestion becomes even more compelling when one takes into account the presence of brooches at all of the most important prehistoric 'royal' sites and the historically attested importance of the brooch in Early Medieval Ireland (Newman 1995, 19). Indeed the particular class of brooch that was to become *the* paramount social signifier in Medieval Ireland, the zoomorphic penannular brooch, seems to have been derived from a Romano-British form. It has also been noted that changes in dress fastener types may also be indicative of wider cultural changes that are not visible archaeologically, and both Newman (1995, 17) and Ó Floinn (2001, 7) have suggested that the adaptation and creation of new types of pins and brooches would have been accompanied by an associated change in fabric and dress.
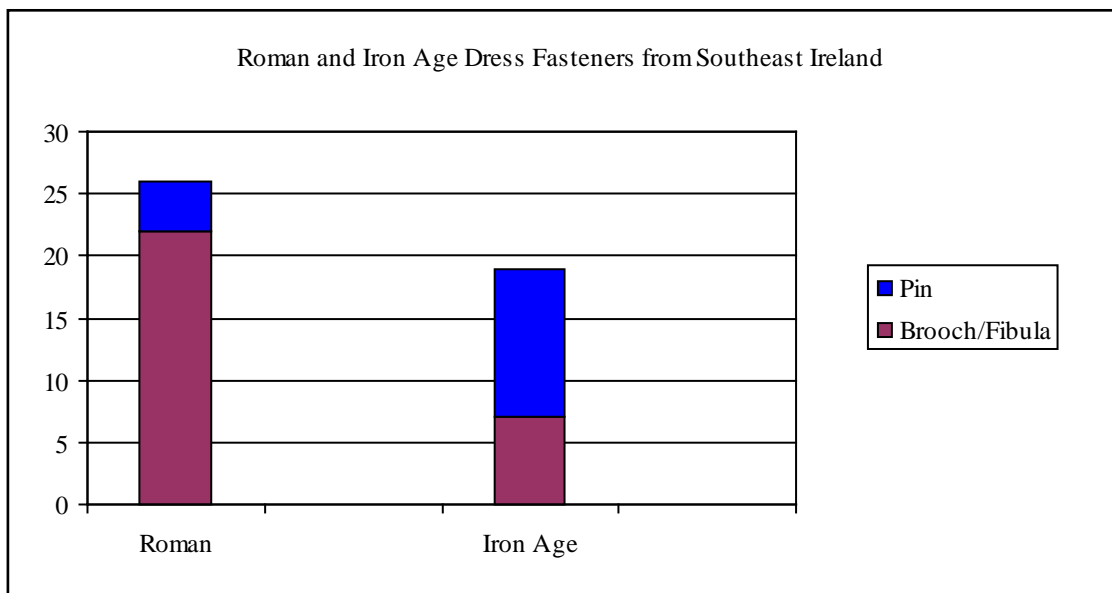
Fig. 9.2: Roman and Iron Age dress-fasteners from Southeast Ireland.

Another novel form of artefact that appears to have been introduced due interaction with Roman Britain is the gaming piece. The appearance of these objects must have been associated with new social activities and pass-times

315

among the wealthy and elite. Board games such as chess and *fidchell* are almost universally associated with nobility and rulers through the symbolic designation of the names of the pieces, and in the very form of play which involves commanding the movement of pieces across the board. John Carey has suggested that the reference to Lug making the *cró Logo* ('enclosure of Lug') in the *Cath Maige Tuired* refers to the winning *fidchell* manoeuvre of encircling an opponents pieces, and similar phrases such as *cró Bodba* ('the enclosure of the war goddess') were also used to describe battle formations (Carey 2005, 43). Although dice and other forms of gaming were also popular among the less well-to-do, particularly Roman soldiers, they also clearly evoked ideas of divine favour and military strategy; as can be seen in the famous words of Caesar as he crossed the Rubicon: '*alea iacta est*' ('the die is cast').[134]

Indeed, the characteristics and forms of display that are directly aligned with kingship and nobility in the Early Irish historical records may all be seen to be associated with the Roman artefacts and practices that appear in Ireland in the Late Iron Age. As noted earlier the penannular brooch in early Irish law was specifically associated with kingship, and closely-spaced multivallation became the legally defined architectural form for a royal abode. In the text called *Scél na Fír Flatha* ('The tale of the Ordeals') a lengthy description is given of the kings wonderful apparel (écosc) and he is described as being 'handsome, fair, without blemish, without defect' (*cruthach cáem cen ainim cen athais*: cited in McCone 1990, 121). In fact, it would appear that it was considered a legal requirement for the king to be 'without blemish', and it is not difficult to envisage prospective candidates using Roman toilet implements and cosmetics to enhance their prospects of ascendancy. The king also had to be 'generous' (*eslabar*) and 'beneficent' (*lessach*), a trait that would no doubt have been demonstrated through gift-giving.

The use of Roman material in the creation of social identity may also indicate the creation of new social relationships themselves. The presence of Roman finds at sites that display an overt architectural concern with boundary demarcation and exclusion suggests that these objects may also have been used to emphasise and exacerbated social distinctions and divisions. As noted in Chapter 2, the

---

[134] Although this phase is almost always quoted in Latin it appears that Caesar spoke it in Greek.

appearance of new names for Irish groups in Roman historical sources may well have been linked to the formation of new larger tribal confederacies – a process that is well documented in other regions on the borders of the Roman Empire (see Chapter 2 above). As these developments appear to have been directly related to interaction with Roman authorities is very likely that Roman material was also directly involved in the constitution and expression of the new relationships that would have been created in the process.

The pollen records for the Late Iron Age period also bear witness to significant transformations in land use and agricultural practices. After a major 'Late Iron Age lull' in agriculture, which extended throughout the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christ, pollen samples show a sudden extended period of agricultural expansion from around 250AD. This is, as has been argued earlier, far too early to be associated with the introduction of Christianity or later post-Roman developments. Increases in *Platago Lanceleolata* and cereal pollen indicate an intensive growth in both pastoral farming and grain cultivation, with cereal pollen levels at Loughnashade in Armagh '…probably the highest recorded from any period or any site in the British Isles' (Weir 1993, 25-26). Pollen cores from thirteen locations right across the country, from north to south, all show similar changes (Barry 2000, 87-88).

Archaeologically this development is manifest in the appearance of large numbers corn-drying kilns at excavated sites. A direct Roman connection with this activity may also be indicated by the discovery of Roman pottery in the fill of a kiln at Blundelstown (Danaher 2009), the presence of a Roman melon bead in the vicinity of kilns at Lismullen I (O'Connell 2009), and the clustering of kilns around the rectangular structure interpreted as a form of Romano-Celtic sanctuary at Kilmainham (Walsh 2012). All of the sites are in County Meath, and the first two are located in the vicinity of the Hill of Tara. It is tempting to associate these developments with the massive increases in demand for livestock and grain initiated by the Roman military occupation of Britain; however this agricultural expansion actually coincides with the decline of the Roman military presence in the 3rd century AD (see Davies 2004, 109).

On the other hand, as in the Netherlands, the recruitment of adult males for military service in Roman auxiliary units could be directly related to these changes; so too could demographic shifts brought about by an increase in the

317

slave trade to Britain. Indeed, the Irish slave raids that followed the collapse of Roman authority in Britain may well have been a case of colonial chickens coming home to roost, as an expansion in the Irish slaving economy precipitated by Roman demand was then extended to Roman Britain itself. All of these developments would have involved considerable changes in social organisation and generated significant transformations in the relations as well as the means of production.

The creation of new religious practices and rites such as those involving ritual deposition of objects at wells and hillforts would no doubt have extended to broader changes in religious beliefs and cosmologies as well. It is significant that this ritual behaviour often involved medicinal practices, and it is possible that the adaptation of new rites associated with health and fecundity represent at least one example of the process of acculturation, so unpopular with postcolonial commentators, where provincial Roman cultural practices were perceived by some to be inherently desirable or beneficial. Conversely, Tíreachán's account of Patrick's actions at the well of *Slán* also indicates how different forms of ritual practice can often be the subject of conflict and dispute. Not only does this account suggest that the Romanisation of Irish religious practices was not a single homogenous process confined to Christianisation, but it also stands as a reminded that the introduction of new religious ideas implicitly undermines pre-existing ones, and may therefore threaten the positions of those who viewed the latter as an important source of social, cultural, and personal values.

It is therefore extremely likely that at least some, particularly those who felt they had most to loose in relation to social prestige (and indeed in terms of their very livelihood), would have challenged and resisted any such changes. Unfortunately, identifying resistance in the archaeological record can be an extremely difficult and uncertain undertaking, but it is one that we should not shy away from.[135] A good example of the possible hazards involved may also be drawn from the example of ritual deposition at wells. Scott has argued that the increase in well deposition at Romano-British villas in the 4th century AD can be interpreted as a calculated return to native 'Celtic' practices in the face of the

---

[135] *Pace* Sauer who argues that 'discontent' in the Roman provinces should not be viewed a signs of resistance but should rather be seen as a reaction to other factors such as 'break-downs of security' (2004, 117). Of course if there was no resistance to the Roman presence one wonders why such 'security' was so necessary in the first place?

growth of Christianity (1991; see Webster 1997, 139). Yet as we have seen deposition at wells was not a native 'Celtic' practice, and the context of this increased activity – in the heart of Romano-British villa country – should surely be interpreted as a growth in the popularity of provincial Roman religious rites.

Similar difficulties may also be encountered in any attempt to interpret the conspicuous absence of evidence for the importation and drinking of wine in Late Iron Age Ireland. In stark contrast to pre-conquest Britain and Gaul, where wine appears to have been one of the most important goods imported by native groups, not one wine amphora that dates to before the 5th century AD has been found on Irish soil. Stabo's account of the Dacian King Burbista's attempts to ban Roman wine imports provides an interesting historical clue that may shed light on the Irish situation (Strabo, vii.3.1). It is possible that the role played by the mead associated with the goddess Medb in religious kinship ceremonies was perceived to be so central to native Irish religious and political institutions that the drinking of wine would have been considered not just undesirable, but inherently sacrilegious. However, the proscription of wine would surely have involved diplomatic negotiations with Roman traders and authorities, and the presence of large Roman drinking vessels at Tara, a site specifically associated with this sacred mead, suggests that even if Roman wine was banned Roman vessels were being used to drink this mead itself: hardly an indication of outright native resistance to Romanisation.[136]

Other possible evidence for the resistance to the introduction of Roman artefacts and ideas may be tentatively discerned in absence of Roman material in regions outside of the Southeast. Of course arguing from absence is always problematic, and the much debated biases in the distribution of La Tène material clearly show that regional divisions in forms of material culture predate the introduction of Roman material. However, it is notable that the distribution patterns of certain La Tène and Roman artefact types are almost totally mutually exclusive. This is particularly notable in relation to La Tène fibula brooches, which as we have seen were never popular in the Southeast where the pin form was predominant (Raftery 1984, 345: map 12). The absence of Roman brooch

---

[136] The presence of other Roman drinking paraphernalia such as the Bohermeen ladle would also suggest that, apart from the wine itself, other Roman imports associated with drinking were not shunned.

types in these areas, particularly in west of the River Shannon is also striking, and the association of these artefact types with kingship may possibly suggest the existence of some kind of divisions relating to political and social identities and affiliations.

It is also extremely likely that the social relationships designated and created through the circulation and exchange of Roman material did not extend beyond the areas where this material is found, and the prominence of provincial Roman material in the Southeast may be indicative of some kind of special relationship between the elites in this region and the authorities in Roman Britain. This suggestion may be supported by the fact that the hack-silver hoards that appear to be associated with later Irish raiding in Roman Britain are absent in the Southeast, although there are large coin hoards in these regions that may also be interpreted as Roman subsidies paid to client kings. Yet if there is one region of Ireland which may be presented as the location of a putative Roman client kingdom it is surely the Southeast.

Chapter 10

Rome and the Transformation of Iron Age Ireland

'Now in earlier times the world's history had consisted, so to speak, of a series of unrelated episodes, the origins and results of each being as widely separated as their localities, but from this point onwards history becomes an organic whole: the affairs of Italy and Africa are connected with those of Asia and Greece, and all events bear a relationship and contribute to a single end.'

Polybius *Histories* I.3.3-4

Introduction: the significance of Roman finds in Irish contexts

This thesis has argued that Roman finds from Southeast Ireland represent a far more significant component of Late Iron Age material culture than has been realised to date. This is certainly true numerically: findspots of Roman material constitute more than two-thirds of the findspots of La Tène and other Late Iron Age material in the region, while Roman artefacts represent almost 40% of the high-status metalwork from this area (see Chapter 2 above). However, the significance of these artefacts is not confined to the relative quantity of material involved but is also apparent in the presence of Roman artefacts at important sites and in notable archaeological contexts. In fact the recovery contexts of Roman artefacts also compare well with other types of Late Iron Age material, with Roman finds recovered from a similar range of contexts to those that have produced La Tène and other Late Iron Age finds. These contexts include prehistoric 'royal' sites, megalithic tombs, mounds and burial monuments, hoards, bogs, rivers, wells, crannogs, hillforts and a promontory fort. All of this evidence stands in stark contrast to the dominant view of Roman artefacts as dislocated and isolated phenomena 'without archaeological association'. Indeed, the range and density of evidence that has been revealed through the reincorporation of Roman material into the Iron Age archaeological record and the late prehistoric landscape of Ireland radically alters our perception and interpretation of these finds and their contexts. Roman material from Southeast Ireland does not represent a random or disparate miscellany of objects, but rather constitutes a specialised body of artefacts that were carefully chosen for use at specific sites.

321

This can clearly be seen at a number of important sites in the Southeast and in related contexts in other parts of Ireland. At Ráith na Senad, on the Hill of Tara, an extremely selective range of large Roman fine-ware and glass drinking vessels were found burnt and in fragments along with a variety of other Roman objects including brooches, gaming pieces and a lock; while Roman brooches, a coin and a key were also recovered from the other prehistoric 'royal' sites of Knockaulin, Cashel, Uishneach and Navan Fort. Roman coins, fine-ware pottery, jewellery, gaming pieces, toilet implements and a statuette of Venus were found placed around the entrances and the facades of megalithic tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Carrowmore. Iron Age inhumation burials surrounding the great mound at Knowth also produced gaming pieces, and inhumation burials at Lambay, Brayhead, Carbury Hill and Rossnaree, have produced Roman coins, brooches, jewellery and a shears; while a cremation burial from Stoneyford included toilet implements and glass vessels.

Roman fine-ware pottery, toilet implements, gaming pieces, brooches, jewellery and a coin have also been found at hillforts such as Rathgall, Freestone Hill, Clogher and Lyles Hill, where they are often deposited at prehistoric mounds and burial monuments enclosed within the hillfort ramparts; while a Roman coin and a spoon were also found at similar funerary monuments at Killavilla and Carbury Hill. Wetland sites including crannogs, rivers, lakes and bogs have produced a comparable range of Roman objects, including pottery, brooches, jewellery, toilet implements, coins, glass vessels and a cult statuette of a Lar, while a Roman occulist stamp, pottery, brooches and jewellery have been recovered from wells at Golden, Randalstown and Phoenix Town.

The range of Roman objects recovered from these locations all display a remarkable level of consistency, indicating that the artefacts selected for use in these contexts must have held a special significance for those involved. In fact the very same artefacts can be seen to have notable ritual associations in provincial Roman religious practices: coins, brooches and jewellery are the most common votive offerings recovered from Romano-British religious sites, and gaming pieces are also often found in Romano-British burials, shrines and temples. Toilet implements, spoons and occulist stamps have been recovered in great numbers from cult loci and sanctuaries specifically associated with healing and fecundity; while pottery and glassware have also been recovered from wide range of

religious contexts. Indeed, the vessel forms from Ráith na Senad are of a type which appear to have been especially selected for use in funerary toasts in Roman Britain. This would indicate that the activity at this last site was ritual rather than exclusively domestic in nature – a suggestion that is supported by the overt ritual context and unusual quadrivallate form of the site itself. Prehistoric 'royal' assembly sites, megalithic tombs, mounds, burial monuments, wells and watery contexts such as rivers, bogs and lakes, all have potent ritual associations; thus both the nature of these contexts and the composition of the Roman assemblages recovered from them indicate that these artefacts were being used in ritual practices at these locations.

In this way, the study of Roman material not only adds a new dimension to our understanding of the Irish Late Iron Age archaeological record, but also changes the very dimensions of that archaeological record itself. Close parallels for the use of these artefacts in similar contexts can also be found in Roman Britain and Gaul and when examined in this light the Irish finds become, not out-of-place exotica far removed from their own geographical and temporal milieu, but convincing evidence for ritual activity directly related to specific forms of contemporary provincial Roman religious practice. The deposition of Roman coins, jewellery and other votive objects at megalithic monuments is well-attested in Roman Britain and Gaul at sites such as West Kennet and Trésse, and Roman burials have also been found at Trésse and other megalithic sites in Northern Gaul as well as around Neolithic tumuli such as Juliberrie's Grave and White Horse Hill in Britain. Romano-British shrines and religious sites are also located at hillforts such as Maiden Castle and Croft Ambrey, and ritual activity at a number of these sites was also focused on barrows and burial monuments within the hillfort ramparts. The ritual use of wells and sources for cults associated with health and healing is also well documented in provincial Roman contexts, and occulist stamps, jewellery and pottery have been found deposited in wells at dozens of religious sites in Roman Britain and Gaul.

Furthermore the mythological motifs associated with the Irish sites often display strong links with specific aspects of these Romano-British and Gallo-Roman cults. The presence of depictions of Venus and the Matures at megalithic tombs in Britain and Gaul have been interpreted as votive offering associated with cults of fertility, and also more generally with the passage between life and death

and the journey to the Otherworld. A similar array of motifs may be found in the mythological themes that surround megalithic tombs in Ireland, which are also portrayed as entrances to the Otherworld and are associated with a dizzying array of Otherworldly figures including an Cailleach and Medb, both of whom represent mother goddess figures strikingly similar to the provincial Roman Venus and the Matures. A direct link between these figures can also be seen in the presence of the Venus statuette in a megalithic tomb at Carrowmore, lying in the shadow of the great mound known as 'Medb's Heap' on Knocknarea. The mythological themes associated with of Nechtain/Nuada and the well of Linn Segais also display a variety of motifs that can be closely paralleled at Romano-British and Gallo-Roman shrines associated with wells and healing, specifically at Lydney where the presiding Romano-British deity Nodens is cognate with Nechtain/Nuada.

The persistent use of Roman material in ritual practices suggests that the exchange and distribution of these objects was much more deeply embedded in Irish social and religious life that the traditional conception of 'trade' will allow, and also further undermines the already problematic interpretation of Roman finds from hillforts and other sites as evidence for a hypothetical Roman invasion of Ireland. All of this evidence underlines the significance that was attributed to these objects in Irish Iron Age society, and also points to a much broader level of Roman influence in Late Iron Age Ireland than has been countenanced in the past. In this light it can no longer be sufficient to simply state that 'Ireland was in no way isolated from the mainstream of Roman developments abroad during the early centuries of the Christian era' (Raftery 1994, 210), as it is quickly becoming clear that Irish society and culture was being transformed by these very developments.

The idea that Ireland's close encounter with the Roman Empire had a profound and transformative effect on the social and cultural life of this island is not new, nor is it even controversial. However, the extent of this Roman influence is thought to be confined exclusively to the Early Medieval Period and tends to be viewed solely within the context of the collapse of Roman power in Britain and the subsequent spread of Christianity.[137] The evidence for Roman influence in

---

[137] Bateson 1973; Warner 1976; Laing 1985; Edwards 1990, Mytum 1992; de Paor 1993, Freeman 2001; Rance 2001; Charles-Edwards 2001; see also Chapter 2 above.

Early Medieval Ireland is extensive, both in range and importance. In fact, one could argue that the most distinctive features of the archaeological record in this period clearly owe their origins to interaction with the Roman World: from the quintessential dress-fastener form of the zoomorphic penannular brooch and the dominant burial rite of extended inhumation, to the development of the ogham script and the introduction of literacy itself. Indeed it has been observed that '...most of the range of artefacts from Irish sites of the pre-Viking age can be paralleled in Roman Britain' (Laing 1985, 262).

In turn, the introduction of silver (Ryan 1982, 47-8), blue and yellow champlevé enamel (Henry 1956), the carburisation of Iron (Scott, 1977), and developments in agricultural technology (Weir 1993) and glass working (Guido 1978, 40) have all been attributed to contact with the Roman world. The presence of early Latin loanwords in Old Irish also bear witness to significant linguistic and cultural influence at this time (Swift 1997, 8-9, McManus 1983), and the extent of this borrowing is underlined by the presence of personal names among the numerous loanwords (Koch 1995, 44). In fact, the level and range of Roman influence in Early Medieval Ireland is so pervasive that one commentator has even referred to these developments as the 'Romanization of Ireland in the 5th century AD' (Laing 1985).

The use of the term 'Romanisation' is clearly problematic in this context; however there are other more fundamental problems which undermine this entire conception of the post-Roman origins and nature of Roman influence in Ireland. First, the amount of Roman material of Late Iron Age date has been greatly underappreciated, with many of the finds being completely overlooked or dismissed out of hand. Second, the date-range of the corpus of Roman material from Southeast Ireland does not support the idea that Irish interaction with Roman Britain experienced a sudden upsurge during the late 4th and early 5th centuries AD. Conversely, many of the finds that had once been thought to represent the rise of post- or 'sub-Roman' influence in Medieval Ireland, have now been re-dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

In fact, much of the evidence for Roman influences in Early Medieval Ireland can be traced back to earlier developments in the Late Iron Age period. The zoomorphic penannular brooches that became increasingly common in the Early Medieval period were actually introduced into Ireland at a much earlier stage in

the 3rd and 4th centuries AD when Britain was still a Roman province. Furthermore these brooches are just one of the latest forms of provincial Roman dress-fasteners to appear in Ireland: earlier fibula and bow type brooches dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD have also been recovered from important sites such as Tara, Knockaulin and Cashel. Earlier transformations in Irish burial practices can also be seen through the introduction of the British rite of crouched inhumation in the last century BC/early centuries AD, and it is significant that many of these burials have also produced early Roman finds. Indeed, very little attention has been given to the revolutionary changes in material culture constituted by the introduction of new Roman artefact types themselves: the re-induction of pottery for the first time in over half a millennium, the appearance of the first glass vessels in Irish history, the introduction of silver working and indeed silver itself just to name a few.

Many of the Latin loanwords also appear to have been introduced prior to the breakdown of Roman control in Roman Britain and before the introduction of Christianity. Damian McManus has suggested that the traditional division of Latin loanwords in Irish into two discrete chronological periods cannot be sustained, and that there is '...one series of Latin loanwords in Early Irish, the borrowing of which was non-intermittent and continued over an extensive period of time' (1983, 41). It is interesting to note that many of these early loans may also be seen to be related to the kinds of Roman objects that appear in Ireland in the Late Iron Age, including ór 'gold' < *aurum*, monad 'money' < *monēta*, dírna/dinnra 'weight' < *dēnarius*, síbal < *fibula*, muide 'a vessel for holding liquids' < *modius*, creithir 'container' < *cretterra/crētera*, crann 'vessel' < *panna*.[138] In his examination of early poems from Leinster, Carney also noted a number of Latin loanwords that '...show a non-Christian Ireland, having very close contacts with and knowledge of the Roman Empire' (1971, 70). These loanwords include military and official terms such as arm < *armo*, legion < *legio*, míl/cathmílid 'soldier' < *miles*, trebun < *tribunus*, as well as explicitly pagan words such as Mercúir < *deis Mercurii* and Saturn < *deis Saturni*.

All of this evidence suggests that the origins of Roman influence in Ireland pre-date developments that followed the collapse of the Western Roman Empire,

---

[138] It is also significant that one of the earliest Latin loanwords in Irish is caille 'veil' < *pallium*, from which the Irish name Cailleach 'Veiled One' is derived (see Ní Dhonnchadha 1994-5).

and that extensive interaction and exchange between Ireland and the Roman World was ongoing during the period of Roman control in Britain. This evidence cannot be interpreted within the existing historical narratives of returning raiders, Christian missionaries, or post-Roman Irish settlements in Britain, and these narratives simply cannot provide us with a sufficient account of the nature and origins of Roman influences in Ireland. New interpretations and theories of interaction are now needed, and Roman artefacts from Ireland clearly provide us with the most direct and tangible evidence for this interaction. These objects, for too long neglected and dismissed, must be placed firmly at the centre of our investigations of the social and cultural transformations occurring in Ireland during the first millennium AD.

Re-centring Roman material in Ireland

The broad similarities between the distribution of Roman finds and other Late Iron Age material in Southeast Ireland completely contradicts the idea that these finds represent a marginalised coastal scatter of objects. Roman finds were no more scattered or confined to coastal locations than other contemporary types of material culture, and the distribution of Roman finds in the Southeast also suggests that the importation and circulation of this material was far more focused and complex than the traditional conception of early coastal occurrences and gradual inland drift suggests. The coastal finds in the Southeast region can be seen to be almost entirely confined to the small section of coastline that is closest to the major political and ritual centres at Tara, the Boyne Valley, and Knockaulin. It is significant that the seaways that link this area with Britain are those which lead to the major Roman military installations and *civitates* at Bowness (Maia), Carlisle (Luguvalium), Ribchester (Bremetennacum), Manchester (Mamucium), Chester (Deva), Caernarvon (Segontium), Carmarthen (Moridunum), Gloucester (Glevum) and Cirencester (Corinium). This would indicate that these networks of cross-channel interaction were tightly controlled by local elites in Ireland and by the Roman authorities in Britain (Fig10.1).

Fig. 10.1: Seaways of the Irish Sea (After Bowen 1970 and Cunliffe 2001).

The coastal promontory fort at Drumanagh undoubtedly played a prominent role in this interaction. The continuous discovery of Roman pottery and coins dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD in and around the fort clearly indicate that this site constituted a central focal point within these networks of exchange. A specific relationship between Drumanagh and Tara is not only suggested by their proximity, but is also manifest in the assemblages and architectural forms present at both sites as well as the conspicuous presence of late prehistoric monuments that mark the routeway between them. It is possible therefore, that Drumanagh constituted an 'official' contact site, where exchange could be both facilitated and mediated by those in control of the hill of Tara and the surrounding coastal plain. While the coastal location of Drumanagh and its proximity to an important high-status settlement can be seen to be similar to that of trading entrepots in other peripheral regions such as Lundeburg in Denmark, the ramparts constructed at the Irish site suggest that this was more than just a seasonal trading camp. The discovery of a seal-box used to seal bags of coinage at the site may indicate that the exchange occurring at the promontory was also officially sanctioned by the Roman authorities.

There is also a clear correlation between the distribution of Roman material in the Southeast and the routeways of the 'great road system' of Ireland as it is represented in Early Irish historical sources (Ó Lochlainn 1940; see also Chapter 2 above: Fig. 2.10). This suggests that these finds were being redistributed through inland routeways, and were therefore circulating through local networks of communication and exchange. The fact that finds of 1st and 2nd century date have been discovered at inland sites such as Cashel, Lagore, and Ballinderry II, attests to the fact that Roman material was reaching important inland sites from the first two centuries AD onwards. It is notable that all three of the sites mentioned above are identified as Royal sites in the Early Irish historical sources and it is evident that, far from being 'isolated', Roman material was located at the very centre of the Late Iron Age Irish political and religious landscape.

Roman objects have, in fact, been recovered from all of the major 'royal' prehistoric ritual sites in the Southeast, at Tara, Knockaulin, Cashel and Uishneach, as well as the prestigious passage tombs of Newgrange and Knowth at the Brú na Bóinne megalithic complex. These passage tombs are also directly associated with Royal dynasties in the Early Irish historical records: Brú na

329

Bóinne is reputed to be the burial grounds of the ancient Kings of Tara and Knowth itself would become the Royal seat of the Kings of Brega in medieval times. Other high-status sites that have produced Roman finds include the hillforts at Freestone Hill and Rathgall, the burial mounds at Killavilla and Carbury Hill, and the crannogs of Lagore and Ballinderry II. Again, both of these crannogs are identified as Royal residences in the Early Irish sources, while the mounds at Carbury Hill are also associated with the collection of Royal tribute in the historical records. It is also notable that the hillforts of Rathgall and Freestone Hill are located at prominent positions in the landscape that overlook important routeways, river-crossings and territorial boundaries, and the significance of these locations in late prehistory is emphasised by the concentrations of monumental markers and depositional activity in the surrounding landscape.

Many of these locations also feature heavily in Early Irish mythology and folklore, where they have very evocative associations as the seat/abode of Otherworldly figures or as entrances to the Otherworld itself. It is significant that the institution of sacral kingship was also closely associated with such Otherworldly motifs. The relationship between all of these themes may be perceived in the vicissitudes of the term 'síd'; which can mean 'fairies' or Otherworldly folk in modern usage; was ascribed to 'mounds' such as Knowth, Newgrange, and Carbury Hill in the Early Irish sources; and was derived from the Indo-European root *sedos* which denotes a centre of power or Royal seat. All of these potent and powerful associations can be seen to surround the locations where Roman finds have been recovered and the consistent and continuous relationship between Roman material and sites with specific Royal associations in the Early Irish historical sources are especially striking and emphatic.

The deposition of Roman material at prehistoric 'royal' sites and in rivers and bogs associated with territorial boundaries is especially significant in light of the interpretation of broader Irish Iron Age ritual practices associated with these locations. The prehistoric 'royal' ritual complexes are widely seen as locations where inauguration rites of sacral kingship were conducted, and acts of Iron Age votive deposition in rivers and the ritual killing of high-status individuals in bogs are also thought to have been related to the institution of sacral kingship. According to Kelly:

'…the range of Iron Age material uncovered on boundaries suggests that we are dealing primarily with sovereignty rituals associated with sacral kingship and kingly inauguration. During medieval times, following the inauguration of a king, the king's horse and harness, his weapons and his attire (which were worn by him only on the inauguration day) were shared out among certain of his major lords, his chief poet and the church. In the pagan era, as part of his sacred marriage to the territorial earth goddess, it would appear that objects associated with kingly inauguration were buried on tribal boundaries as a statement and definition of the king's sovereignty.'

(Kelly 2005)

The use of Roman material in these same contexts indicates that Roman material was being integrated into these Iron Age ritual practices, and also suggests that these finds were being circulated and redistributed within the institution of sacral kingship itself.

The wider implications of Roman and Irish interaction

The discovery of Roman material at almost every historic Royal centre in the Southeast provides compelling evidence to support the suggestion that these finds were being primarily circulated among the native Irish elite in this region. The deposition of Roman material at prehistoric 'royal' inauguration sites, megalithic tombs, burial mounds, hillforts, wells, sources and rivers, also indicates that these objects were being specifically chosen for use in ritual and political ceremonies, and were therefore being incorporated into the practices that presented the paramount opportunities for status display and social reproduction in Irish society at this time. The use of Roman material in such contexts clearly shows that these objects were thought to represent appropriate 'gifts' in ritual offerings and sacrifices, and this may well be how they would have circulated more generally in Irish society: as gifts exchanged between kings and their clients and retainers. Indeed this is also how many of these objects may have been procured and imported in the first place.

The corpus of Roman material from Ireland (fine-ware pottery, glass vessels, high-value coins, brooches and jewellery, gaming pieces and toilet implements) indicates that the importation of Roman goods was almost completely limited to artefacts directly associated with cultivating social prestige and political status. The nature of these items, in the context of an embedded economy, does not lend

itself readily to the idea of casual trade or exchange. High-status jewellery to be worn at important gatherings or ceremonies and expensive dinnerware to be used for social occasions such as feasting would have had a limited 'market', one that was more likely to be reached through diplomatic gift exchange than casual trade or barter. The use of coins in this context is well-documented, and it is significant that two of the large hoards of silver coins from Ulster date to the 2nd century AD. According to Freeman:

> 'Such hoards might be expected in later Roman times, when the literature speaks of Irish raids on Britain and possible Irish mercenaries in service to the empire, but the documentary evidence is silent on the mystery of these second-century caches.'
>
> (Freeman 2001, 9).

Identical hoards elsewhere have been interpreted as Roman subsidies paid to 'client' kings in order to protect Roman interests and ensure compliance with the Roman authorities, and while the later hack-silver hoards may represent booty from Irish raiding, it is also possible that these later hoards – with their carefully weighted-out silver ingots – were also received as subsidy payments intended to prevent or mitigate the raiding activity itself.

Although these Roman subsidies and gifts may have been primarily concerned with ensuring political and military compliance, it would not be unexpected for gift giving to be reciprocated in kind, as well as politically and economically. Interestingly, there is one historical reference that may refer to just such a gift from Ireland. A letter of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus written in AD 393 (Ep. 2.77) records that a gift of seven Irish dogs [*septem Scotticorum canum*] 'so astonished Rome that it was thought they had been carried in iron cages' (cited in Freeman 2001, 102-103). It is clear that these dogs were being used for public display, which may indicate that they constituted some form of gift or embassy on the part of an Irish client king rather than the fruits of casual trade. The discovery of the remains of a large dog and the skull of a Barbary ape at the 'royal' site of Navan Fort also provides evidence for the exchange and display of impressive exotic animals in during the Iron Age.

These gift-giving relationships would also often have involved a much more extensive trading relationship. It has been noted that the presence of relatively

small amounts of Roman fine ware is often indicative with the exchange of other goods: the export of metal ores from mines in the Massif Central was associated with the growing popularity of Southern Gaulish Samian ware, and the importation of grain and oils from Africa was associated with the spread of African red slipware in later centuries (Greene 1992, 58-59). It is therefore possible that the fine wares from Ireland had reached this country through similar 'piggy-back' trade, where small amounts of high-status goods were exchanged in order to encourage and secure a much broad trading relationship. Indeed there is considerable evidence to suggest that the level of cross-channel trading activity intensified during the period of Roman rule in Britain.

It has been shown that the axis of the main trade routes in western Europe had changed dramatically after the Roman conquest of Gaul in the 1st century BC, with a shift away from the existing north-south Atlantic axis to a northwest-southeast 'Rhine-Thames' axis (Cunliffe 2001, 398-399). It is very likely, considering this shift in regional traffic, that the Irish Sea would have grown in importance in this context as the seaways here would have constituted a direct continuation of the new Rhine-Thames axis. There is historical evidence to support this suggestion: writing at the beginning of the 1st century AD, Strabo declares that he has nothing much to say about Ireland apart from a few references to the usual tales of cannibalism and incest associated with unfamiliar regions and peoples. By the end of the same century, however, Tacitus is able to report: 'As for soil, climate, and the character and lifestyle of its people, it differs little from Britain. The approaches and harbours are better known due to trade and merchants' (translation in Freeman 2001, 56-57). According to Cunliffe: 'The implication to be drawn from these two contrasting texts is that, following the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43, a lively trade had sprung up with Ireland' (2001, 416).

Historically attested Roman imports from other regions in northern and western Europe generally consist of raw materials such as timber, hides, metals, resin, pitch, wax, honey and cheese, and exports from Roman Britain included corn, cattle, gold, silver, hides, slaves, dogs, tin and lead. Similar resources may also have been involved in Roman and Irish trading relationships and timber, cattle and cheese would certainly have been in ready supply. Indeed the Damastown copper ingot, with its particularly Roman form, may have been

produced specifically for export to Roman markets, and the slave fetter from Oldgrange may also have been associated with the insatiable Roman slave trade. The considerable increase in cultivation and the appearance of corn drying kilns from the 3rd century onwards may also indicate the production and drying of substantial grain surpluses specifically for export.

In this light, the traditional conception of 'trade' used to interpret the presence of Roman material in Ireland not only fails to appreciate the extent to which this exchange was inextricably bound up in other kinds of social relationships, but also underestimates the intensity and scope of interaction that may actually have been involved. The impact of such trading relationships on Irish agriculture, mining, timber production and slaving would have had a transformative effect on social formations, population levels and on the landscape itself: the evidence for forest clearance and the rise in cereal cultivation provided by the pollen record may only represent be the tip of the iceberg in this regard. From this perspective too, the Irish raiding and settlements in Britain can be perceived not only in the context of the breakdown of Roman rule, but also as a result of a boom in Irish population growth and economic activity. As noted earlier, the first raids on Britain appear to have been confined to areas that were not under direct Roman rule, and thus the impetus for these raids may have been associated with internal Irish social and political developments. The formation of larger tribal confederations in order to interact with the Roman authorities and the associated centralisation of political and military power may have played a pivotal role in these events; while the subsequent incorporation of Irish settlers into the British political establishment may also be seen as an extension of the close cross-channel relationships that had been established and encouraged under Roman rule.

New Horizons: Romanisation revisited

The reintegration of Roman material into the Iron Age archaeological record not only radically alters our perception of the significance of these finds in an Irish context, but also opens up whole new horizons of evidence that dramatically extend the range of parallels and interpretive procedures available to us. The deposition of Roman artefacts at megalithic tombs can therefore be seen, not just as evidence for the use of Roman finds at prestigious Irish locations, but also as

activity that is directly related to wider provincial Roman practices at megalithic monuments in Roman Britain and Gaul. Furthermore, the Otherworldly figures and themes associated with these sites in the Irish literary tradition also find close parallels in these Romano-British and Gallo-Roman contexts. This kind of syncretism suggests more than just the use of Roman objects in existing Irish practices, as the incorporation of specific aspects of provincial Roman ritual into these activities would have transformed native Irish ritual practice itself.

Indeed, there is compelling evidence to suggest that some specific provincial Roman ritual practices may actually have been introduced into Ireland during the Late Iron Age. The use of hillforts as religious shrines and the votive deposition of jewellery, toilet implements and other personal items at these sites, is not evidenced in Ireland prior to the appearance of Roman material at these locations; yet it is a well attested phenomenon at British hillforts during the Roman period. Similarly the construction of the small rectangular structure within Ráith na Senad on the Hill of Tara and associated use of large Roman pottery and glass vessels for funerary toasts represent entirely new forms of ritual activity in Ireland, but both are closely paralleled at a host of different Romano-British ritual sites. Indeed, the phenomenon of votive deposition at wells and sources, once thought to be a quintessential 'Celtic' Iron Age practice, can now be seen to have been introduced as a provincial Roman rite in the early centuries AD. Furthermore, the Irish literary and mythological traditions associated with wells – including the famous 'Celtic' tale of the Salmon of Knowledge – find all of their closest archaeological associations and manifestations in the provincial Roman practices associated with wells and sources.

The kinds of Roman objects that were used in these contexts are also indicative of wider changes in personal appearance and other forms of social display. The use of Roman pottery and glass vessels for funerary toasts at Tara may also represent a wider change in feasting and drinking activity, with Roman vessels and ladles replacing native wooden and metal vessels on important social occasions where novel activities and pastimes such as gaming and dice would also have been enjoyed. Roman dress-fasteners, clothing, and jewellery would have adorned the bodies of the Irish elite, and these bodies themselves would have been subject to new regimes of healthcare, personal hygiene and grooming through the use of Roman toilet implements. The introduction and adaptation of these new

types of objects and practices indicate that certain elite groups in Irish society were overtly seeking to express affiliation with the social and cultural formations that were emerging in post-conquest Britain and Gaul at this time. In this context access to Roman material and 'know how' would have been paramount, not only for the expression of these new social and cultural identities, but also for creating them in the first place.

The precise permutations of these developments were no doubt specific to their Irish contexts; however they do have a broader significance when viewed in the wider context of provincial Roman Europe. It is notable that the closest parallels for the activity associated with Roman material in Ireland are to be found in Roman Britain and Gaul – and not in other peripheral frontier zones such as Denmark, Scandinavia, or Germany – and it would therefore appear that the transformations occurring in Ireland at this time were intimately related to the new modes of cultural practice and social identity that were being created in the provinces under Roman rule. In this light these transformations may be productively viewed as a form of 'Romanisation', but one that was clearly contemporary with, and inherently related to, the Romanisation of Britain and Gaul.

Conclusion: Ireland in a Roman World

For much of the last century the Iron Age in Ireland was viewed as a time of sweeping cultural change and social transformation. The appearance of La Tène material was seen to represent an influx of new population groups, bringing with them new languages, artefacts, religious beliefs and social institutions. This represented the 'Celticisation' of Ireland, and the new 'Celtic heritage', 'undiluted' by later Roman influences, would live on 'well into the Early Medieval period'. Subsequent archaeological research has, however, been particularly unkind to this invasion hypothesis. La Tène material does make a dramatic appearance in the 3rd century BC, however when it does so it manifests itself in a peculiarly local forms that suggest local manufacture (Waddell 1991; 1998, 288-90). While the La Tène art-style would appear to have discernible religious connotations, the use of this material cannot be shown to represent any notable departure in ritual practices. Indeed the ritual use of La Tène artefacts appears to be confined to deposition in rivers, lakes, and bogs: activity that

displays a direct continuity with much earlier Bronze Age behaviour (Cooney and Grogan 1994, 202-4). Similarly, the burial rites and monuments used throughout this period are distinctly insular, and show remarkable continuity in both form and siting for over a millennium (McGarry 2008).

The final nail the coffin of La Tène Celticisation was linguistic evidence which indicated that an ancestral Celtic language was spoken in Ireland long before the La Tène cultural horizon (Koch 1991). The 'Late iron Age lull' in the pollen record does appear to show a significant downturn in agricultural activity, which would no doubt have greatly affected social stability and indeed the population level itself; however the relationship between this development and the appearance of La Tène material is far from certain as the 'lull' occurs at least a century after the initial appearance of the art-style, and the agricultural economy appears to have remained largely pastoral throughout the period. In fact it has been argued that this lull was the result of natural climatic events (Baillie and Brown 2009), and more generally the decline in agricultural activity may also be seen as part of a much longer process of social and economic decline beginning at the end of the Late Bronze Age. (Waddell 1998, 288-90; Cooney and Grogan 1994, 202-4).

In complete contrast to this picture, the growing evidence for changes in material culture, religious practices, agricultural production and language from the 1st century BC onward is utterly astounding. The burial rite of inhumation appears, as do new artefact types, architectural forms, ritual practices, a mixed farming economy, and early Latin loanwords – all of which appear to be related to the growth of Roman Imperial power and the introduction of Roman material into Ireland. These influences had a dramatic and lasting effect on Irish economic, social and cultural life: the artefactual and architectural forms associated with the introduction of Roman material would go on to become the dominant modes of status expression in Early Medieval Ireland in the form of the zoomorphic penannular brooch and closely-spaced multivallation, while rituals associated with wells and healing continue to be practiced in Ireland to this day.

All of this evidence suggests that interaction with the Roman Empire during the Late Iron Age was not confined to trade or the exchange of high-status goods, but also involved much more extensive forms of social interaction. The networks of exchange involved in the importation and circulation of Roman material would

have been inextricably intertwined in a host of social relationships were both inter-personal and inter-regional. The use of Roman material at 'royal' sites, prestigious burial monuments, ritual sites and territorial boundaries throughout Southeast Ireland provides ample evidence to suggest that these objects were used to create and shape broader social relationships and cultural practices in Ireland, and it is likely that the introduction of these objects into Ireland also involved wider cross-channel social and cultural links. These relationships may well have extended to clientship, intermarriage, dynastic consolidation, fosterage and induction into religious fraternities, all of which were encouraged and used by Roman authorities in provinces and neighbouring regions right across the empire (see Braund 1984; Crieghton 2005).

As we reincorporate Roman finds into the Late Iron Age archaeological record, we are therefore at one and the same time reincorporating the Irish Late Iron Age into the wider Roman World. The potential for expanding this approach to Roman material from the rest of Ireland is clearly indicated by the noted presence of Roman artefacts at prehistoric 'royal' sites, megalithic tombs, hillforts, crannogs and rivers in other regions, most notably Ulster. However, the implications of this study also extend beyond the study of Roman finds alone and call for a new approach to the study of Late Iron Age Ireland in its entirety. As we have seen, this period of Ireland's history was not one of splendid isolation or the unbroken continuity of an undiluted 'Celtic' heritage, indeed many aspects this 'Celtic' heritage itself are likely to have been introduced into Ireland at this time due to the spread of provincial Roman influence. The profound and seminal transformations in Irish cultural and social formations occurring at this time can only be understood if we realise that Ireland was not 'beyond' the Roman World but was part of the Roman World itself.

Appendix A: Roman and Hiberno-Roman Material from Southeast Ireland.

Study Area:
(Counties Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow)

No.	Findspot	County	Artefact(s)	Material	Context	Date	Publication(s)
1	Clontarf	Dublin	Thistle Brooch (type-W, Continental)	Copper-Alloy	Unrecorded	Early-to-Mid 1st Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted).
2	Crumlin	Dublin	Zoomorphic Pin	Copper-Alloy	Unrecorded	4th – 5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2001; Kilbride-Jones 1980
3	Dalkey Island	Dublin	Samian Ware: Dr. 30 (Central Gaul)	Pottery	Found in midden	2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Liversage 1967-68.
3	Dalkey Island	Dublin	Samian Ware: Dr. 37 (Gaul)	Pottery	Found in midden	2nd Century AD (160-190)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Liversage 1967-68.
3	Dalkey Island	Dublin	Foot ring of vessel	Glass	Found in midden	Late 3rd to 4th Centuries AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Liversage 1967-68.
4	Damastown	Dublin	Bun-shaped ingot	Copper	Unrecorded	Undated Possibly 2nd Century	Raftery 1994
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Samian Ware (Gaul)	Pottery	Promontory fort	1st Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Kelly 2002.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Coins	Unpublished	Promontory fort	79-81 AD (Titus)	Raftery 1994; 1996.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Coins	Unpublished	Promontory fort	98-117 AD (Trajan)	Raftery 1994; 1996.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Coins	Unpublished	Promontory fort	117-38 AD (Hadrian)	Raftery 1994; 1996.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Bun-shaped ingots	Copper	Promontory fort	Undated	Raftery 1994; 1996.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	'Jewellery'	Unpublished	Promontory fort	Undated	Raftery 1994; 1996.
5	Drumanagh	Dublin	Seal-box lid	Copper-Alloy and Enamel	Promontory fort	1st-3rd Century AD	Unpublished.
6	Drumcondra	Dublin	Coin	Copper *As*	Found in a Garden	69-79 AD (Vespasian)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected).
7	Dunsink	Dublin	Coin	Copper	Unrecorded	330-335 AD (Constantine II)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable).
8	Ireland's Eye	Dublin	Coins	Copper	Ploughed up in south-	350-353 AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted).

					east corner of island	(Magnentius)	
			(Amiens, Gaul)				
9	Ireland's Eye	Dublin	Coin (London)	Copper	Unrecorded	308-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted).
10	Lambay	Dublin	3 Dolphin Brooches (type H)	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	c. 50-150 AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Rynne 1976; O'Brien 1990.
10	Lambay	Dublin	Langton Down Brooch (type K)	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	1st Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Rynne 1976; O'Brien 1990.
10	Lambay	Dublin	Thistle brooch (type W – continental)	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	2nd half of 1st Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Rynne 1976; O'Brien 1990.
11	Malahide	Dublin	Coin	Silver-washed Copper	Unknown	249-251 AD (Herennia Etruscilla)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable).
12	Phibsborough	Dublin	Coin	Copper *As*	Unknown	54-68 AD (Nero)	Bateson 1973, Addendum (no category).
13	Templeogue	Dublin	Coin: *solidus* (Trierl)	Gold	River	375-390 AD (Valens)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted).
14	Carbury Hill	Kildare	*Signi* Spoon	Jet	Barrow (Site A)	Late 3rd – 4th Century AD	Raftery 1981; 1983; 1994.
15	Kishawanny	Kildare	Bell	Copper-Alloy	Hoard	Early Centuries AD	Raftery 1983; 1994.
16	Knockaulin	Kildare	Tapered bow-brooch (Hawkes Camulodunum type vii)	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Late 1st Century AD	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.

16	Knockaulin	Kildare	Strip bow-brooch (Hawkes Camulodunum type vib)	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Late 1st Century AD	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
17	Nurney	Kildare	Coin (Nimes)	Copper	Dug up	10BC-10AD (Augustus)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable).
18	River Greese	Kildare	Penannular Brooch (Class 1)	Copper-Alloy	From River Greese	4th to 5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2001; Kilbride-Jones 1980.
19	Bramblestown	Kilkenny	Finger ring	Copper-Alloy	Found in Ploughsoil	3rd Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000.
20	Dunbell	Kilkenny	Finger ring	Copper-Alloy	From destroyed Ringfort - Bronze Age burials also uncovered.	4th – 5th Century	Jones 1999; Comber 2001.
20	Dunbell	Kilkenny	Pin of Penannular Brooch	Copper-Alloy	From destroyed Ringfort - Bronze Age burials also uncovered.	4th – 5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000.
20	Dunbell	Kilkenny	Cone-shaped Gaming piece	Stone	From destroyed Ringfort/Barrow	Undated	Raftery 1993; O Floinn 2001.
21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Coin (Trier, Gaul)	Copper	Hillfort (shrine)	337-340 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); O Floinn 2001.
21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	2 Toilet implements (scoops)	Bronze	Hillfort (shrine)	4th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); O Floinn 2001.
21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	2 Bracelets	Bronze	Hillfort (shrine)	4th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); O Floinn 2001.
21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Blue glass bracelet	Glass	Hillfort (Shrine)	Undated	Raftery 1983; Ó Floinn 2000.

21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Sherds of small drinking vessel (Nene Valley colour-coated ware)	Pottery	Hillfort (shrine)	4th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000; Cahill-Wilson 2012.
21	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Sherds of small drinking vessel (Severn Valley ware)	Pottery	Hillfort (shrine)	4th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000; Cahill-Wilson 2012.
22	Jenkinstown	Kilkenny	Coin	Brass	'Dug up'	117-138 AD (Hadrian)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected).
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Lachrymatory (Isings Type 28A)	Glass	Cremation Burial in 'rath'	Late 1st to early 2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Bourke 1989.
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Mirror	Copper-Alloy	Cremation Burial in 'rath'	Late 1st to early 2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Bourke 1989.
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Urn (Isings Type 67A)	Glass	Cremation Burial in 'rath'	Late 1st to early 2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Bourke 1989.
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Toilet Implement (hooked article)	Copper-Alloy	Found 'not far from burial'	4th-5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Toilet Implement (nail cleaner)	Copper-Alloy	Found 'not far from burial'	4th-5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000
23	Stoneyford	Kilkenny	Finger Ring with millefiore inlay	Copper-Alloy And glass	Found 'not far from burial'	4th-5th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2000
24	Drogheda	Louth	Samian Ware (Eastern Gaul)	Pottery	River Boyne	1st - 2nd Century AD.	Kelly 2001.
24	Drogheda	Louth	Severn Valley Ware	Pottery	River Boyne	1st – 4th Century AD	Kelly 2001.
25	Millockstown	Louth	Toilet Implement	Bronze	Enclosure (excavation)	4th Century AD	Manning 1986; Ó Floinn 2000.
25	Millockstown	Louth	Gaming piece	Stone	Enclosure (excavation)	Undated	Manning 1986; Ó Floinn 2000.
25	Millockstown	Louth	Water-rolled pebbles	Stone	Enclosure (excavation)	Undated	Manning 1986; Ó Floinn 2000.
26	Blundelstown 1	Meath	Samian Ware	Pottery	In fill of cereal drying	2nd Century AD	Danaher 2009

					kiln (excavation)		
27	Bohermeen	Meath	Ladle	Bronze	Found during turf-cutting in Bog. Near possible crannog.	1st – 3rd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Wood-Martin 1886.
28	Castletown Kilpatrick	Meath	Pin	Silver	Hoard	4th Century AD	Newman 1995; Ó Floinn 2001.
28	Castletown Kilpatrick	Meath	Pin	Silver and Copper-Alloy	Hoard	4th century AD	Newman 1995; Ó Floinn 2001.
29	Claristown II	Meath	2 pieces of possible Roman Glass	Glass	Circular post-built hut (excavation)	Undated	Russell *et al.* 2002
30	Knowth (See No. 25	Meath	Samian rim sherd Form Dr. 37 (Central Gaul)	Pottery	Passage Tomb (excavation)	2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973(Accepted); Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Samian decorated body sherd	Pottery	Passage Tomb (excavation)	2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Toilet Implement (Ligula)	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	2nd – 3rd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Possible stylus/ toilet implement (Ligula or dental mirror)	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	1st – 3rd Century AD	Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Toilet Implement (ear-scoop)	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	1st – 3rd Century AD	Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Pennanular Brooch	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	4th Century AD	Eogan 2012; O Floinn 2001.

30	Knowth	Meath	Pennanular Brooch	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	Early 5th Century AD	Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Pennanular Brooch	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	5th -6th Century AD	Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Spiral Ring (possible serpent ring)	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb (excavation)	1st – 4th Century AD	Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	13 Bone gaming pieces	Bone	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 619. Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	21 smooth pebbles or counters	Stone	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 620. Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	2 rings	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 490. Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	3 Bone dice	Bone	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 612. Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	Decorated antler-tip	Antler	Passage Tomb: Burial 24	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 883. Eogan 2012.
30	Knowth	Meath	2 Cone-shaped Gaming Pieces	Stone	Passage Tomb: Burial 24	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 616.
31	Lagore	Meath	4 fragments of Samian Ware (Central Gaulish)	Pottery	Crannog (excavation)	Mid 2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Hencken 1950.
31	Lagore	Meath	Blue glass fragment (bead or ring)	Glass	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Hencken 1950.
31	Lagore	Meath	Toilet Implement (tweezers)	Copper-Alloy	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Questionable); Hencken 1950.
31	Lagore	Meath	Toilet Implement (tweezers)	Copper-Alloy	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Bateson1973(Questionable) Hencken 1950.
32	Lismullen I	Meath	Roman Melon Bead	Fiaence	From topsoil at Iron Age ritual post enclosure	Mid-2nd Century AD	O'Connel 2009
33	Navan	Meath	Coin	Unrecorded	Unrecorded	161-175 AD (Younger Faustina)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable); Petrie 1852.

34	'Near Navan'	Meath	Statuette (Lar)	Copper-Alloy	River Boyne	Undated (possibly 1st-2nd Century AD)	Unpublished
35	Newgrange (See No. 30	Meath	2 Coins (Rome)	Bronze *As*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	81-96 AD (Domitian)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Rome)	Silver **Denarius**	Passage Tomb (shrine)	81-96 AD (Domitian)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin	Silver **Denarius**	Passage Tomb (shrine)	198-212 AD (Geta)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin	Debased Silver *antoninianus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	253-268 AD (Gallienus)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Cologne)	Debased Silver *antoninianus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	260-268 AD (Postumus)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Rome)	Debased Silver *antoninianus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	276-282 AD (Probus)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Coins (Trier)	Gold *aureus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	286-305 AD (Maximian)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Uniface pendant (Trier?)	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	330-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Coins (London)	Bronze *Follies*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	310-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Trier)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	310-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Trier)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	322-333 AD (Constantine II)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Uniface pendant (Trier?)	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	320-330 AD (Constantine II)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	3 Coins	Bronze	Passage Tomb (shrine)	360-363 AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted);

			(Amiens; Trier)	*maiorina*		(Magnentius)	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Trier)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	367-375 AD (Valentinian I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Trier)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	367-375 AD (Gratian)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Trier)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	373-383 AD (Theodosius I)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Coin (Milan)	Gold *solidus*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	383-387 AD (Arcadius)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Clipped Coin	Silver *siliqua*	Passage Tomb (shrine)	364-395 AD (Valentinian or Theodosius)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Coins	Brass	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Unrecorded	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Chain necklace	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Late 3rd to 4th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Conyngham 1844.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Bracelets	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Late 3rd to 4th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Conyngham 1844.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Finger rings	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	4th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Conyngham 1844.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Fragment of Torc with inscription	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Finger ring	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Undated	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Finger ring	Copper with Gold foil wrapping	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Undated	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Hiberno-Roman Dice	Bone	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Undated	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Foil 'Packet'	Gold	Passage Tomb (shrine)	Undated	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
36	Newgrange	Meath	Penannular Brooch (Fowlers E type)	Bronze	Passage Tomb (shrine)	4th Century AD	Carson and O'Kelly 1977; O Floinn 2002, 7.
36	Newgrange	Meath	2 Disc Brooches	Bronze	Passage Tomb (shrine)	4th Century AD	Carson and O'Kelly 1977.
37	Phoenixtown	Meath	Coiled zoomorphic	Copper-alloy	Found near Holy Well	2nd-4th century AD	Kelly 2002

346

			bracelet				
38	Randalstown	Meath	Samian ware (southern Gaul)	Pottery	Well	1st or 2nd Century AD	Kelly 2001.
38	Randalstown	Meath	Fibula	Copper-alloy	Well	1st Century AD	Kelly 2001.
39	Rossnaree	Meath	Silver plated ring	Silver plated	Burial (mound)	257-533 AD (C[14])	Cahill and Sikora 2012
40	Tara (See No. 32	Meath	Seal showing bird in profile	Lead	Ráith na Senad	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Accepted). Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	5 samian ware sherds (central Gaul) from min. two Déchelette form 72 vessels vessels	Pottery	Ráith na Senad	2nd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted). Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	5 sherds from min. two Wilderspool ware beaker vessels	Pottery	Ráith na Senad	2nd Century AD	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	2 sherds of closed-form Severn Valley ware	Pottery	Raith na Senad	1st-4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Sherd of samian ware (southern Gaul) from form Dr. 18/31	Pottery	Raith na Senad	Late 1st -2nd Century AD	Grogan 2008

40	Tara	Meath	10 miscellaneous sherds of samian ware; 3 are central Gaulish; and 6 are from closed-form vessels	Pottery	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Spindle-whorl made from Severn-Valley ware sherd	Pottery	Raith na Senad	1st-4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware from indented beaker	Pottery	Raith na Senad	Late 3rd-4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Mortarium sherd	Pottery	Raith na Senad	3rd-4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Ceramic waster	Ceramic	Raith na Senad	4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Barrel Padlock and bolt (type 1a)	Iron	Raith na Senad	Late 2nd – 4th Century AD	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Fragment of possible Bow brooch	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	1st-2nd Century AD	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Ring-headed pin	Silver	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Pair of dividers	Bronze	Raith na Senad	1st-2nd Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	2 Beads Guido group 7iii	Glass	Raith na Senad	1st Century BC-1st Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Cylinder Bead	Glass	Raith na Senad	3rd-4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Bead Guido group 6vii	Glass	Raith na Senad	1st-2nd Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Green glass bead Possibly recycled Roman bottle/window glass	Glass	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Layered glass inset for ring or brooch	Glass	Raith na Senad	2nd-3rd Century AD	Grogan 2008

40	Tara	Meath	Fragment from mould-blown bowl	Glass	Raith na Senad	2nd-3rd Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	2 joining fragments from Cone beaker Isings form 106	Glass	Raith na Senad	4th Century AD	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	3 miscellaneous fragments of glass, probably from bowls	Glass	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
40	Tara	Meath	Penannular Brooch (Class 1)	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Late 3rd -4th century AD	Kilbride-Jones 1980; O Floinn 2001; Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Decorated bracelet	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Nails	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Various water-rolled stone counter/gaming pieces	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Hoard of 65 water-rolled pebble counters/gaming pieces	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	Cone-shaped Gaming piece	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Raftery 1983. cat. no. 617; Grogan 2008.
40	Tara	Meath	15 Coins (hoard)	Copper	Raith na Senad	306-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Grogan 2008, appendix E.
41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Tweezers	Bronze	'Procured from the Ballinderry crannog'	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Questionable); Wilde 1857.

41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Arratine Ware	Pottery	Found under timber floor of Crannog (excavation)	1st half of 1st Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Hencken 1942.
41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Glass fragment	Glass	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Hencken 1942.
41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Melon bead	Glass	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Hencken 1942.
41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Finger ring	Bronze	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Comber 2001.
41	Ballinderry No. 2	Offaly	Sherds of Roman-British pot	Pottery	Crannog (excavation)	Undated	Comber 2001.
42	Clara	Offaly	Dolphin Brooch (Type H)	Bronze	Unrecorded	c. 50-150 AD	Bateson 1976 (Accepted).
43	Killavilla	Offaly	Coin	Silver	Beneath the surface of a Mound	14-37 AD (Tiberius)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable).
44	Moystown	Offaly	Penannular brooch	Copper-alloy	From River Brosna	4th Century AD	Newman 1995; Ó Floinn 2001; Kilbride-Jones 1980.
45	Tilhilly	Offaly	Penannular Brooch (Graham-Campbell's Class 1)	Copper-alloy	Unrecorded	4th Century AD	Ó Floinn 2001; Kilbride-Jones 1980.
46	Ballyhimikin	Tipperary	Coin	Copper *As*	Found in Garden	140-141 AD (Antoninus Pius)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected).
47	Cashel	Tipperary	Brooch (Dolphin type-H)	Copper-Alloy	Rock of Cashel	c. 50-150 AD	Cahill 1982.
48	Cloghanacody	Tipperary	Coin	Unrecorded	Dug up 'near ringfort'	286-310 AD (Maximianus)	Unpublished, in N.M.I.
49	Golden	Tipperary	Occulist's Stamp	Sandstone	Well	2nd – 3rd Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Accepted); Raftery 1994.
50	Lisheen/ Templemore	Tipperary	Coins	Bronze	Unrecorded	138-161 AD 238-244 AD	Bateson 1973 (Questionable and Rejected).
51	Ballyduff East	Waterford	Coin	Copper	Found among roots of	253-268 AD	Kenny 2009

					tree in orchard	(Gallenius)	
52	Bonmahon	Waterford	Roman Bun-shaped ingot	Copper	Found near site of Church	Undated	
53	Ballinderry Lough	Westmeath	Castor Ware	Pottery	Unrecorded	Undated	Bateson 1976 (no category).
54	Bishops Island	Westmeath	Strainer	Bronze	River Shannon	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Rejected: 'Irish copy of Roman type')
55	Lough Lene	Westmeath	Carvel-built boat	Yew wood	Lake	1st -2nd Century AD	Bindley and Langton 1990; 1991; Raftery 1994.
56	Uisneach	Westmeath	Padlock key	Iron	Assembly site (Excavation)	Undated	Raftery 1994.
56	Uisneach	Westmeath	Coin	Bronze	Assembly site (Excavation)	Early 4th Century	Raftery 1994.
57	Bray Head	Wicklow	Coins	Copper (*Sesterii)*	Burials (Extended inhumation)	97-117 AD (Trajan)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted) Davies???
57	Bray Head	Wicklow	Coins	Copper (*Sesterii)*	Burials (Extended inhumation)	117-138 AD (Hadrian)	Bateson 1973 (Accepted) Davies???
58	Derrybawn	Wicklow	Coin	Copper	Unrecorded	367-383 AD (Gratian)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable).
59	Rathgall	Wicklow	Strapend	Bronze	Hillfort	2nd Century	Raftery 1970; 1994; Warner 1995.

Roman material from Study Area with County provenance only.

Findspot No.	Findspot	County	Artefact(s)	Material	Context	Date	Publication(s)
60	Co. Kildare	Kildare	Coin	Silver	Unrecorded	287-293 AD (Carausius)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable); Day 1898).
61	Co. Meath	Meath	Toilet Article (Combined tweezers, tooth and ear-pick)	Bronze	"Crannog"	Undated	Bateson 1973 (Questionable); O Riordain 1947.

Appendix B: Problematic 'Roman' Finds from Southeast Ireland

(Counties Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow)

Findspot No.	Findspot	County	Artefact(s)	Material	Context	Date	Publication(s)
1	Arran Quay Dublin	Dublin	Roman coin (one of twelve offered for sale)	Unknown	Found during building of house	Unknown	Bateson 1973 (Rejected). Insufficient Record and Identification
2	Churchtown	Dublin	Coin	Bronze	Found among roots of ornamental tree	41-54 AD (Claudius)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Price 1950: Modern context, also very rare in Britain
3	Clondalkin	Dublin	Coin	Copper *dupondius*	Found in Garden but may have been dropped by children.	138-161 (Antonius Pius)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Frazer 1887: Modern context.
4	Dublin	Dublin	Bodkin (Previously described as a Roman ear-pick this has since been dated to the 17th Century)	Bronze	Found during drainage works	17th Century AD	Bateson 1973 (Rejected); O Riordain 1947:
5	'Dublin Area'	Dublin	Coin	Copper *As*	Unrecorded	41-54 AD (Claudius)	Bateson 1973 (Questionable). Very rare in Britain.
6	Dublin 2	Dublin	Coin	Copper *as*	Found in fireplace	138-161 AD (Antonius Pius)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected): Modern Context.
7	Feltrim	Dublin	Coin	Bronze *follis*	Found in quarry	c. 290 (Diocletian)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected): Restricted circulation.
8	High Street	Dublin	Marne Ware	Pottery	Found during excavations of High St.	4th Century	Bateson 1973 Addendum (Rejected): Medieval context - Found in secure 12th – 13th Century layer.

8	High Street	Dublin	Coin (Cologne)	Debased silver *antoninianus*	Found during excavations of High St.	286 AD (Posthumus)	Bateson 1973 Addendum (Rejected): Post-Roman context - Found in secure 9th Century layer.
8	High Street	Dublin	Coin (Trier)	Bronze *follis*	Found during excavations at High St.	324-5 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 Addendum (Rejected): Medieval context - Found in secure 11th – 12th Century layer.
9	Lambay Island	Dublin	Coin	Unrecorded	Unrecorded	Unrecorded	Bateson 1973 (Questionable): Entry based on brief remark with no other information.
10	Rathfarnum	Dublin	5 Coins	Various	Dug up on grounds of old house.	3rd century BC	Bateson 1973 (rejected): Restricted circulation.
11	Three Rock Mountain	Dublin	Coins (Number unknown)	Unrecorded	Unrecorded	Unrecorded	Bateson 1973 (Questionable): insufficient record.
12	St. Werburgs Church, Dublin	Dublin	5 'medals'	Unknown	Found in the Church yard	1-200 AD	Bateson 1976 (questionable). Possibility of modern context , insufficient record.
13	Longford	Longford	12 Coins	Copper	Found in Bog with later coin	From: 23 BC-24 AD (Augustus) To: 284 –305 AD (Diocletian)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected): Found with medieval piece.
14	Tara	Meath	15 Coins	Copper	Found in excavation	306-337 AD (Constantine I)	Bateson 1973 (Rejected): Find was planted as a hoax.
15	Derrygrath	Tipperary	2 Coins Alexandrian tetradrachm	Bronze	'Picked-up at entrance to a foxhole in Predergasts Glen'	Maximian (AD 286-305)	Bateson 1976: note 16. (Rejected): Restricted circulation.
16	Grange	Tipperary	Coin	Bronze	Unrecorded	306-312 AD	Bateson 1976: note 16.

						(Maxentius)	(Rejected): Restricted circulation.
			(Follis)_				
17	Co. Wicklow	Wicklow	Coin	Unrecorded	Dug up in Garden	3rd Century BC	Bateson 1973 (Rejected): Restricted circulation.
18	Englishtown	Wicklow	Coin hoard 'forty to fifty in number'	Unrecorded	Found in 'the old street'	Unrecorded	Bateson 1976 (Questionable). Insufficient Record and Identification.

Appendix C: La Tène and Late Iron Age Material from Southeast Ireland

(Counties Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow)

Findspot No.	Findspot	County	Artefact type	Material	Context	Date	Publications
1	Drumannagh	Dublin	Horsebits	Copper-Alloy	Promontory Fort	Undated	Raftery 1994; 1996.
2	'Dublin'	Dublin	Horse-bit (type B)	Copper-Alloy	Unknown	1st /2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 18
3	Glassamucky Breaks	Dublin	Weaving comb	Horn	Found in bog 1.4m below surface	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 598
4	Glebe South	Dublin	Fibula (Navan Type?)	Copper-alloy	Found with cremation in Ring-ditch 1	AD 232-531 (C^{14})	Carroll et al. 2008.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Sword	Iron	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 259. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	3 scabbard mounts	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 276, 277, 278. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Shield Boss	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 280. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Beaded Torc	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 455. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Jet Armlet/Anklet	Jet	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 467. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Bracelet	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 471. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	3 Rings	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 538. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Circular Disc	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 794. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	Sheet Bronze fragments	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 798. Rynne 1976.

5	Lambay	Dublin	Triangular Plaque	Copper-Alloy	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 797. Rynne 1976.
5	Lambay	Dublin	3 Stone Rings	Stone	Burial (crouched)	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 855, 857. Rynne 1976.
6	Rath Site 27	Dublin	La Tène Fibula	Copper-Alloy	Inhumation Burial in ring-ditch	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Schweitzer 2005
6	Rath Site 27	Dublin	Swans neck pin	Copper-Alloy	Inhumation Burial in ring-ditch	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Schweitzer 2005
6	Rath Site 27	Dublin	2 Spiral Toe rings	Copper-Alloy	Inhumation Burial in ring-ditch	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Schweitzer 2005
6	Rath Site 27	Dublin	1 decorated toe ring	Copper-Alloy	Inhumation Burial in ring-ditch	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Schweitzer 2005
6	Rath Site 27	Dublin	4 wooden vessels	Wood	Ringditch	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Schweitzer 2005
7	Carbury Hill	Kildare	Pin?	Iron	Found at site B in cremation II	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 440
7	Carbury Hill	Kildare	2 rings	Iron	Found at site B in cremation II	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 859,
7	Carbury Hill	Kildare	File	Iron	Found at site A, 9" under soil at ditch on north side	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 589
7	Carbury Hill	Kildare	Shears	Iron	Found at site B under left femur of skeleton I	AD 471-643 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 590
7	Carbury Hill	Kildare	Pin?	Copper-Alloy	Site B found in central area – 1 foot 2 inches deep	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 441
8	Castlereban North	Kildare	Axe head	Iron	Found in field	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 582

9	Hawk Hill	Kildare	Bead – Late La Tene Type	Glass	Found near 12 (possibly later) inhumation burials in Sandhills	Late La Tene	Raftery 1984, 203; O'Brien 1990, 38.
10	Kishawanny	Kildare	Pendant (Type 1b) bent out of shape	Copper-Alloy	Hoard	Early Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 169
10	Kishawanny	Kildare	Hook	Copper-Alloy	Hoard	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 592
10	Kishawanny	Kildare	2 rings	Copper-Alloy	Hoard	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 861, 862
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Sword (Type 1)	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	2nd century BC to 1st century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 245; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Spearhead	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Knife blade	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Blade Fragment	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	5 Needles	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	13 rings	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	19 nails	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	3 Binding strips	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Disc	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	13 rings (1 finger ring)	Iron	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.

11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Ring	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Late La Tene (1st Century BC-)	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	2 small metal bars (possibly ingots)	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	2 possible casting jets	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Possible tracer	Copper-alloy	'Royal' site enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Bracelet	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Late La Tene 1st Century BC –	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	13 Rings (3 spiral ring; 1 penannular ring; 1 milled ring)	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Fastener	Copper-alloy	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Late la Tene 1st Century BC –	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	3 pinheads	Glass	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990; Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	3 ring-beads	Glass	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	1st Century BC –	Wailes 1990. Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	Cable beads	Glass	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	3rd –2nd century BC.	Wailes 1990. Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	8 dumbell beads/ toggles	Glass	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	Undated	Wailes 1990. Johnson 2007.
11	Knockaulin	Kildare	7 bracelets (Haevernick's Group 3a)	Glass	Prehistoric 'royal' Enclosure	1st century BC –	Wailes 1990. Johnson 2007.
12	Monasterevin	Kildare	2 discs	Copper-Alloy	Unknown	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 786, 787; Waddell 1998, 316
13	Rosbury	Kildare	Bog-butter cask Type k1	Wood	Bog find	Iron Age	Earwood 1997.
14	Bruckana	Kilkenny	Bog-butter cask	Wood	Bog finds	Iron Age	Earwood 1997.

				Type K1			
15	Coolgreany	Kilkenny	Pendant (Type 2b)	Copper-Alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 216.
16	Dunbell	Kilkenny	Ringheaded pin (uncertain type)	Iron	From destroyed Ringfort/Barrow	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 434.
16	Dunbell	Kilkenny	Swan's-Neck pin	Iron	From destroyed Ringfort/Barrow	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 436.
17	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Needles	Iron	Hillfort	Undated	Raftery 1969; O Floinn 2000.
17	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Rim of Vessel	Iron	Hillfort	Undated	Raftery 1969; O Floinn 2000.
17	Freestone Hill	Kilkenny	Cone-shaped Gaming piece	Stone	Hillfort	Undated	Raftery 1983: O Floinn 2001.
18	Urlingford	Kilkenny	Sheet Bronze Cauldron (Possibly Roman)	Copper Alloy	Found in Bog of Allen; 7 feet deep	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 559. Bateson 1973 (Rejected); Described by Mahr and O Riordain as Roman, but according to Jope it is o 'native manufacture'.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Box with iron mount on lid and enamel decoration.	Copper-Alloy and enamel	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 1)	1st century AD	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Wire ring	Copper-alloy	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 1)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	80 Beads	Glass, stone	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 1)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	2 thin blades	Iron	Ditch of Ring ditch (site 1)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Bracelet fragment	Copper-Alloy	Ditch of Ring ditch (site 1)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.

19	Ballydavis	Laois	Fragment	Copper-Alloy	Ditch of Ring ditch (site 2)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Buckle	Iron	Ditch of Ring ditch (site 2)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Nail fragments	Iron	Ditch of Ring ditch (site 2)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	2 Fibulae	Copper-Alloy	Shallow pit in Ring ditch (site 2)	Early centuries AD	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	4 Beads	Glass	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 3)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Decorated pieces of Bone	Bone	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 3)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
19	Ballydavis	Laois	Possible bone sword/dagger hit	Bone	Cremation in Ring ditch (site 3)	Undated	Keeley 1996; 1999.
20	Ardee	Louth	Pendant (Type 1a)	Copper-Alloy	Found with bronze spearhead but 'association doubtful'	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 114.
21	Rootstown	Louth	Leaf-shaped Spearhead	Iron	Found in spoil from trench dug beside river Dee	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 285.
22	Ardanew	Meath	Bog-butter cask Type K2	Wood	Bog find	Iron Age	Earwood 1997.
23	Ballyhoe	Meath	Swans-neck pin	Copper-Alloy	Possibly from crannog site	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 437.
24	Ballymahon	Meath	Armlet	Copper-Alloy	Boyne River	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 473.
25	Clarristown II	Meath	Ring	Iron	Pit near post-built hut structure	Undated	Russell 2012
26	Clondalee	Meath	Spearbutt (tubular type b)	Copper-Alloy	Unknown	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 337.
27	Clongill	Meath	Horse-bit (type D)	Copper-Alloy	Ploughed field	1st-4th century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 78.
27	Clongill	Meath	Pendant (Type 2b)	Copper-Alloy	Ploughed field	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 217.

28	Cookstown	Meath	Glass Bracelet	Glass	Ring-ditch	360-50 BC (C^{14})	Clutterbuck 2012
28	Cookstown	Meath	Penannular ring	Copper-Alloy	Ring-ditch	360-50 BC (C^{14})	
29	Crossakeel	Meath	Tanged Spearbutt	Iron	Unknown	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 362
30	Derlangan	Meath	Pendant (Type 2b)	Copper-Alloy	Ploughed field at depth of 8 feet	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 218.
31	Kells	Meath	Leaf-bow fibula	Copper-Alloy	unknown	Late Centuries B.C.	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 382.
32	Kilmainham	Meath	Spindle-whorl	Stone	Rectangular Structure (excavation)	AD 143 – 343 (C^{14}) AD 433 – 606 (C^{14})	Walsh 2012
32	Kilmainham	Meath	2 ammonite beads	Ammonite (Fossil stone)	Rectangular Structure (excavation)	AD 434 – 598 (C^{14})	Walsh 2012
33	Knowth	Meath	221 Glass beads	Glass	Passage Tomb: Burial 3	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 520; Eogan 2012.
33	Knowth	Meath	43 blue glass beads	Glass	Passage Tomb: Burial 4	AD 86-253 (C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 519. Eogan 2012.
33	Knowth	Meath	2 rings	Copper-alloy	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121(C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 490. Eogan 2012.
33	Knowth	Meath	3 Bone dice	Bone	Passage Tomb: Burial 8/9	40 BC – AD 121(C^{14})	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 612. Eogan 2012.
33	Knowth	Meath	Decorated antler-tip	Antler	Passage Tomb: Burial 24	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 883. Eogan 2012.
33	Knowth	Meath	Green barrel-shaped bead/toggle	Glass	Passage Tomb: Burial 17	Late 1st Century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 521. Eogan 2012.
34	Lagore	Meath	Spearbutt (Doorknob type)	Bronze	May have been from crannog spoil heap	3rd – 5th century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 316; Heald 2001.
34	Lagore	Meath	Tanged Spearbutt	Iron	Unstratified in crannog	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 360.

34	Lagore	Meath	2 Meare spiral beads	Glass	Unstratified in crannog	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1984, 198-204; Guido 1978, 188.
34	Lagore	Meath	Dumb-bell beads	Glass	Unstratified in crannog	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1984, 198-204; Guido 1978.
34	Lagore	Meath	Herringbone Beads	Glass	Unstratified in crannog	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1984, 198-204; Guido 1978, 101.
35	Lismullen	Meath	Ringheaded Pin	Copper-Alloy	In kiln at Iron Age enclosure	Undated	O'Connel 2009???
36	Loughcrew	Meath	Pin	Bone	Passage tomb R-2	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 448.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Pin/toggle?	Bone	Cairn H	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 449.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Spiral Finger Ring	Copper-Alloy	Cairn H	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 449.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Dumbell-beads	Glass	Cairn H	Early centuries AD?	Raftery 1984, 202.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Votive Plaques	Bone	Passage Tomb (Cairn H)	3rd-2nd Centuries BC	Raftery 1983; Swift 1997; O Floinn 2001.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Gaming piece	Bone	Passage Tomb (Cairn H)	3rd-2nd Centuries BC	Raftery 1983; Swift 1997; O Floinn 2001.
37	Loughcrew	Meath	Decorated Combs	Bone	Passage Tomb (Cairn H)	3rd-2nd Centuries BC	Raftery 1984; Kelly 2002.
38	Mentrim Lough	Meath	Votive Plaque	Bone	'Surface' find from Crannnog???	1st Century BC – 1st Century AD	Raftery 1984; 1994.
39	Moyfin	Meath	Pendant (Type 1a) stem bent	Copper-Alloy	River Boyne	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 147.
40	'near Navan'	Meath	Horse-bit (type B)	Copper-Alloy	Unknown	1st /2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 25
41	Newgrange	Meath	Horse-bit (type E) mutilated fragment	Copper-Alloy	Excavation at passage tomb	1st-4th century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 107.
41	Newgrange	Meath	Adaze head	Iron	Excavation at passage tomb	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 579.
41	Newgrange	Meath	Strap-loop	Copper-Alloy	Excavation at passage tomb	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 819.

41	Newgrange	Meath	Ring	Bone	Excavation at passage tomb	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 495.
41	Newgrange	Meath	Beads	Bone	Excavation at passage tomb (burial???)	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 532.
42	Raffin Fort	Meath	Fibula	Copper-Alloy	Excavation of Hilltop Enclosure	2nd century AD	Newman 1993; 1998.
42	Raffin Fort	Meath	2 Beads	Glass	Excavation at Hilltop Enclosure	Centuries AD	Newman 1993; 1998.
43	Tara (Appendix A???)	Meath	Tanged Spearbutt	Bronze	Found at Tara	Early centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 361.
43	Tara	Meath	2 Blade fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Blade	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	2 ring fragments	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Pointed chipped bone	Bone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Rim fragment of dressed sandstone bowl	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Shale ring fragment	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Bone point	Bone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Stem fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	3 Penannular rings	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Sandstone disc Whetstone?	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Iron bar	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Cast pin fragment	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.

43	Tara	Meath	Stem fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Rod fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Binding strip	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Fragments of dagger-chape binding	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Staple fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Iron plate fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Iron loop with double spike	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Stud with incomplete trefoil head	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Sandstone grinding stone	Stone	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Fragments of strip-ring	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Fragment of strip-collar	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Tanged chisel	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Tapering shank with fanned head	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Fragments of copper-alloy sheets	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Pin or needle shank	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.

43	Tara	Meath	Pin of possible ring-headed pin	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	3 Beads Guido group 7iv	Glass	Raith na Senad	1st Century BC –	Grogan 2008
43	Tara	Meath	Cylinder bead of blue glass	Glass	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
43	Tara	Meath	Annular bead of blue glass Guido group 6iv b	Glass	Raith na Senad	Iron Age to Early Medieval	Grogan 2008
43	Tara	Meath	Tiny blue glass pinhead	Glass	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008
43	Tara	Meath	Fragment of cobalt-blue glass waste	Glass	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Button and loop fastener	Copper-alloy	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Crucible	Clay	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Worked antler tines	Antler	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
43	Tara	Meath	Nail fragments	Iron	Raith na Senad	Undated	Grogan 2008.
44	Tara	Meath	Socketed Axehead	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Nails	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Possible awl	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Knife blade fragments	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Joiners dog	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Rod fragments	Iron	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Crucible fragments	Clay	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Knobbed spear-butt	Copper-alloy	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Fibula pin and coil fragment	Copper-alloy	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Nail	Copper-alloy	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002

44	Tara	Meath	Bangle Fragment Red	Glass	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Bangle Fragment Violet	Glass	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
44	Tara	Meath	Blue glass splinters	Glass	Rath na Rig	Undated	Roche 2002
45	Tara-Skreen	Meath	Horse-bit (type D)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 79.
45	Tara-skreen	Meath	Pendant (Type 2a)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 207.
46	Ballinderry (No. 2)	Offaly	Sword (type 1)	Copper-alloy	Bog find: relationship to crannog uncertain	3rd century BC- 1st century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 247. O'Sullivan 1998.
47	Ballynaminton	Offaly	Horse-bit (type D)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 80.
48	Banagher	Offaly	Sword (Type 2b)	Copper-alloy	River Shannon	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 254.
48	Banagher	Offaly	Spearbutt (tubular type a)	Copper-alloy	River Shannon	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 331.
48	Banagher	Offaly	Spearbutt (conical type)	Copper-alloy	River Shannon	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 352.
48	Banagher	Offaly	Spearbutt (conical type)	Copper-alloy	River Shannon	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 353.
49	Cappydonnell Big	Offaly	Glass Beads	Glass	Cremation burial in bronze age ring ditch	122 BC – AD 70 96 BC – AD 75(C^{14})	Coughlan 2010
50	Clonmacnoise	Offaly	Beehive Quern (decorated)	Stone	Unknown	Early centuries AD	Caulfield 1977; Raftery 1984, 244-245.
51	Kinefad Bridge	Offaly	Horse-bit (type B)	Copper-alloy	River Boyne	1st /2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 26.
52	Leap	Offaly	Horse-bit (type B)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	1st /2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 27.
53	Ballinatogher	Tipperary	Ribbon Torc	Gold	Unknown	Late Centuries BC	Eogan 1994
54	Clonloura	Tipperary	Shield	Leather and wood	Littleton Bog	Early Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 278.
55	Marhill	Tipperary	7 annular blue glass beads	Glass	Ring-ditch	40 BC-AD 130 (C^{14})	McQuade and Molloy 2010
55	Marhill	Tipperary	Lignite bracelet fragment	Stone	Ring-ditch	40 BC-AD 130 (C^{14})	McQuade and Molloy 2010
55	Marhill	Tipperary	Nail fragments	Iron	Ring-ditch	40 BC-AD 130 (C^{14})	McQuade and Molloy 2010
56	Roscrea	Tipperary	Scabbard chape	Copper-alloy	Unknown	1st/2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 274.

57	Toomyvara	Tipperary	Horse-bit (type B)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	1st /2nd century BC	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 28.
58	Dungarven	Waterford	Sword (Type 2a)	Copper-alloy	Colligan River	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 252.
59	Athlone	Westmeath	Ringheaded pin (Type 2)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 409.
60	Athlone	Westmeath	Waste pieces	Copper-alloy	Found in 'box' in River Shannon (below)	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 603.
60	Athlone	Westmeath	2 mounts	Copper-alloy	River Shannon	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 811, 812.
61	Fore	Westmeath	Bowl	Copper-alloy	Found with cremation in pit within Promontory Fort.	1st/2nd century AD	Kelly 1993; Raftery 1994.
62	Kilbeg	Westmeath	Pendant (Type 1b) bent out of shape	Copper-alloy	3 feet deep in clayish soil	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 170.
62	Kilbeg	Westmeath	Pendant (Unknown Type)	Iron	3 feet deep in clayish soil	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 232.
62	Kilbeg	Westmeath	3 shafthole axe-heads	Copper-alloy	3 feet deep in clayish soil	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 584 (a,b,c).
63	Killucan	Westmeath	Horse-bit (type D)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 82.
64	Mullingar	Westmeath	Pendant (Type 1a)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 151.
64	Mullingar	Westmeath	Pendant (Type 2a) stem bent (original)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 210.
65	Mullingar	Westmeath	Ribbon Torc	Gold	Unknown	Late Centuries BC	Eogan 1994
66	Streamstown	Westmeath	2 Horse-bits (type D)	Bronze	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. nos. 83, 8
67	Ballykilmurry Bog	Wicklow	Wooden replica of Sword (Type 2a)	Yew-wood	Found five feet deep in Bog	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 253.
68	Kiltegan	Wicklow	Bog-butter cask Type K1	Wood	Bog finds	Iron Age	Earwood 1997.

Iron Age Material from Study Area with County provenance only.

Findspot No.	Findspot	County	Artefact type	Material	Context	Date	Publications
69	Co. Dublin	Dublin	Horse-bit (type D)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	1st-4th century AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 76
70	Co. Kilkenny	Kilkenny	Spearbutt (Doorknob type)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	3rd to 5th centuries AD.	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 314; Heald 2001.
71	Co. Waterford	Waterford	Ringheaded pin (Type 2)	Copper-alloy	Unknown	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 429.
72	Co. Waterford possible	Waterford	Ribbon torc	Gold	Unknown	Late Centuries BC	Cahill 2006
73	Co. Westmeath	Westmeath	Bowl	Bronze	Unknown	Undated	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 569.
74	Co. Wicklow	Wicklow	Horse-bit (type E)	Bronze	Unknown	Centuries AD	Raftery 1983, cat. no. 109.

Bibliography

Adkins, L. and Adkins, R.A. 1985. Neolithic Axes from Roman Sites in Britain, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **4**, 1, 69-75.

Ahmad, A. 1992. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* London: Verso.

Ahmad, A. 1995. *The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality.* In P. Mongia (ed.) *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, 276-293. London: Arnold.

Aitchison, N.B. 1987. The Ulster Cycle: heroic image and historical reality, *Journal of medieval History* **13**(2), 87-116.

Aitchison, N.B. 1988. Roman Wealth, Native Ritual: Coin Hoards within and Beyond Roman Britain, *World Archaeology* **20**(2), 270-284.

Aitchison, N.B. 1993. The Dorsey: a Reinterpretation of an Iron Age enclosure in South Armagh, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **59**, 285-301.

Aitchison, N.B. 1994. *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland*. Woodbridge.

Aitchison, N.B. 1996. Votive Deposition in Iron Age Ireland: An Early Medieval Account, *Emania* **15**, 68-75.

Aldhouse-Green, M.J. 2004. Gallo-British Deities and their Shrines. In M. Todd (ed.) *A Companion to Roman Britain*, 193-219. London: Blackwell.

Allason-Jones, L. 2008. Appendix A: The Small Finds. In E. Grogan, *The Rath of the Synods, Tara, Co. Meath: excavations by Seán P.Ó Ríordáin*, 107-112. Dublin: Wordwell..

Alcock, L. 1971. *Arthur's Britain – History and Archaeology A.D. 367-634.* London: Allen Lane.

Alexie, S. 2003. *Ten Little Indians*. New York: Grove Press.

Allason-Jones, L. 2008. Appendix A: The Small Finds. In E. Grogan, *The Rath of the Synods, Tara, Co.Meath: excavations by Seán P.Ó Ríordáin*, 107-112. Dublin.

Alston, R. 1996. Conquest by text: Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt, in J. Webster and N.Cooper (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 99-110. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Andrews, C. 2012. *Roman Seal-Boxes in Britain.* BAR **567**.

Appadurai, A. 1986. Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In A. Appadurai (ed.) *The social life of things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Armit, I. 1998. *Scotland's Hidden History.* Stroud: Tempus.

Armit, I. 2007. Social Landscapes and Identities in the Irish Iron Age. *In C. Haselgrove and T. Moore (eds.) The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxbow.

Atkinson, D. 1942. *Report on the excavations at Wroxeter, 1923-27.* London.

Austin, D. (ed.) 1993. *Carew Castle Archaeological Project: Season Interim Report 1992*, Lampeter: Department of Archaeology, University of Wales.

Austin, D. (ed.) 1995. *Carew Castle Archaeological Project: Season Interim Report 1993,* Lampeter: Department of Archaeology, University of Wales.

Bagnall-Smith, J. 1999. Votive objects and objects of votive significance from Great Walsingham. *Britannia* **30**, 21-56.

Baillie, M.G.L. 1988. The dating of the Timbers from Navan Fort and the Dorsey, Co. Armagh, *Emania* **4**, 37-40.

Baillie, M.G.L. 1993. Dark Ages and Dendrochronology, *Emania* **11**, 5-12.

Baillie, M. and **Brown, D.** 2009. A chronological glimpse in to the later first millennium BC. In G. Cooney, K. Becker, J. Coles, M. Ryan, and S .Sievers, (eds) *Relics of Old Decency*, 17-24. Dublin: Wordwell.

Baker, P. 2000. Curing all ills: the History and Archaeology of Roman Medicine, paper presented at the Theoretical Archaeological Group Annual Conference 2000, University of Oxford.

Barker, P. 1981. *Wroxeter Roman City: Excavations 1966-1980.* London.

Barrett, J.C. 1985. Hoards and Related Metalwork, in Clarke D.V., Cowie T.V., and Foxon A. (eds.) *Symbols of Power at the Time of Stonehenge*, 95–106. Edinburgh: National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

Barrett, J.C. 1987a. Fields of Discourse: Reconstituting a Social Archaeology, *Critique of Anthropology* **7**, 5-16.

Barrett, J.C. 1987b. Contextual Archaeology, *Antiquity* **61**, 468-473.

Barrett, J.C. 1991. The Archaeology of Social reproduction. In J.C. Barrett, R. Bradley and M. Green, (eds.) *Landscape, Monuments and Society: The Prehistory of Cranborne Chase,* 6-8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barrett, J.C. 1997. Romanization: a critical comment. In J. D. Mattingly (ed.) *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism*, 51-66. *Journal of Roman Archaeology* Supplementary Series **23**.

Barrett, J.C. 1999. The mythical landscapes of the British Iron Age. In W. Ashmore and B. Knapp (eds.) *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, 253-264. Malden.

Barrie, T. 1996. *'Spiritual Path, Sacred Space'. Myth, Ritual and Meaning in Architecture.* London: Shambala.

Barry, T. 2000, *History of Settlement in Ireland*. London: Routeledge.

Basalla, G. 1982. Transformed Utilitarian Objects, *Winterthur Portfolio*, **17**(4), 183-201.

Bateson, J.D. 1973. Roman Material from Ireland: A Reconsideration. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **73C**, 21-97.

Bateson, J.D. 1976. Further Roman Material from Ireland. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, **76C**, 171-179.

Bateson, J.D. 1981. *Enamel working in Iron Age, Roman, and sub-Roman Britain: the products and techniques*. BAR British Series **93**.

Beard, M. and **Crawford, M.H.** 1985. *Rome in the Late Republic: problems of interpretation*. London.

Becker, K., **Ó Néill, J.**, and **O'Flynn, L.** 2008. *Iron Age Ireland: Finding an Invisible People*. Project Report to the Heritage Council 2008. Archaeological Grant Scheme Project.
http: www.ucd.ie/archaeology/research/researcha-z/ironageireland/

Bender, B. 1998. *Stonehenge: Making Space*. Oxford: Berg.

Bernabé, J. Chamoiseau, P. and **Confiant, R.** *1993.* Eloge de la Créolité *(edtn. bilingue). Paris: Gallimard.*

Bersu, G. 1951. Freestone Hill, A Preliminary Report on the Excavations. Old Kilkenny Review *IV, 5-10.*

Bhabha, H. 1994. The Location of Culture. *London: Routledge.*

Bhreathnach, E. 1995. Tara: a select bibliography. *Discovery Programme Monographs 1.*

Bhreathnach, E. 1996. Temoria: caput Scotorum? Éiru *47, 67-88.*

Bhreathnach, E. 2000. Kings, the kingship of Leinster and the regnal poems of laídshenchas Laigen: a reflection of dynastic politics in Leinster, 650-1150. In A.P. Smyth (ed.). Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne. *Dublin, 299-312.*

Bhreathnach, E. 2002. Appendix 3: Observations on the occurrence of dog and horse bones at Tara. In H. Roche Excavations at Ráith na Ríg, Tara, Co. Meath, 1997*, 117-122. Dublin: Discovery Programme Reports 6.*

Bhreathnach, E. 2005a. Introduction. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ix-xiv. Dublin: Four Courts Press.*

Bhreathnach, E. 2005b. Níell cáich úa Néill nasctar géill: the Political Context of Baile Chuinn Chétchathaig. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 49-68. Dublin: Four Courts Press.*

Bieler, L. (ed. and trans.). 1979. The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*. Dublin.*

Birley, E. 1956. Hadrianic Frontier Policy. In E. Swoboda (ed) Carnuntina, Vorträge beim internationalen Kongress Altertumsforsher Carnumtum 1955*, 25-33. Cologne.*

Black, E.W. 2001. The First Century Historians of Roman Britain, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **20** (4), 415-428.

Blagg, T. and **Millett, M.** (eds.) 1990. *The Early Roman Empire in the West*. Oxford: Oxbow.

Bloch, M. 1995. Questions not to ask of Malagasy carvings. In I. Hodder, M. Shanks, A. Alexandri, V. Buchli, J. Carman, J. Last and G. Lucas (eds.) *Interpreting Archaeology: Finding Meaning in the Past.* London: Routledge.

Boehmer, E. 1995. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boon, G.C. 1983. Potters, Oculists and Eye-Troubles, *Britannia* **14**, 1-12.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourke, L. 2001. *Crossing the Rubicon: Bronze Age Metalwork from Irish Rivers*. Galway: Department of Archaeology, NUI Galway.

Bowen, E.G. 1973. *Britain and the Western Seaways*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Bowman, A. K. 1994. *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and its people*. London: British Museum Press.

Bradley, J. 1981. Medieval Samian ware – a medicinal suggestion, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* **44–5**, 196–7.

Bradley, R. 1990. *The Passage of Arms. An archaeological analysis of prehistoric hoards and votive deposits*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bradley, R. 1993. *Altering the Earth.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bradley, R. 2002. *The Past in Prehistoric Societies*. London.

Brandt, R.W. 1983. A Brief Encounter along the Northern Frontier. In R. W. Brandt and J. Slofstra (eds.) *Roman and Native in the Low Countries*, 71–104. BAR International Series **148**.

Brandt, R.W. and **Slofstra, J.** (eds.). 1983. *Roman and Native in the Low Countries* BAR: International Series **184**.

Brash, R.R. 1867. On the Alleged occupation of Ireland by the Romans, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* **XIII**, 83-101.

Braund, D.C. 1984. *Rome and the Friendly King: the character of client kingship*. London.

Braund, D.C. 1989. Ideology, subsidies and trade: the King on the northern frontier revisited. In J.C. Barrett, A.P. Fitzpatrick and L. Macinnes (eds) *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe from the later Republic to late Antiquity*. BAR International Series **471**, 14-26.

Breeze, A. 2004. The God Silvanus Callirius and RIB 194 from Colchester, *Britannia* **35**, 228-29.

Brindley, A.L. and **Lanting, J.N.** 1990. A Roman boat in Ireland, *Archaeology Ireland* **4**(3), 10-11.

Brindley, A.L. and **Lanting, J.N.** 1991/92. Radiocarbon Dates from Wedge Tombs, *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* **VI**, 19-26.

Brunaux, J.L. 1988. *The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries*. London: Seaby.

Brunaux, J.L. 1989. Les Encientes Carrées sont elles des lieux de culte?, in O. Buchenshutz (ed.) *Les viereckschanzen et les Encietes quadrilaterales en Europe Celtique,* 11-14. Paris, Errance.

Brunaux, J.L., **Meniel, P**. and **Poplin, F.** 1985. *Gournay I: les fouilles sur le sanctuaire et l'oppidum (1975-1984).* Paris.

Buchli, V.A. 1995. Interpreting material culture – the trouble with text. In I. Hodder, M. Shanks, A. Alexandri, V. Buchli, J. Carman, J. Last and G. Lucas (eds.) *Interpreting Archaeology: Finding Meaning in the Past*, 181-193. London: Routledge.

Burenhult, G. 1984. *The Archaeology of Carrowmore*. Stockholm.

Bursche, A. and **Warner, R.** 2000. Map 2 Hibernia-Scandinavia. In R.J.A. Talbert (ed.) *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, 17-31. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Butcher, S. 1993. Personal objects: jewellery and equipment. In A. Wood and P. Leach *The Uley Shrines*, 149-178. London: English Heritage.

Byrne, F.J. 2001 [1973]. *Irish Kings and High Kings*. Dublin: Four Courts.

Byrne, F.J., Jenkins, W., Kenny, G. and **Swift, C.** 2008. *Historical Knowth and its Hinterland*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

Cahill, M. 1982. 'A Roman-type fibula from the Rock of Cashel'. *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* **XXIV**, 99-101.

Cahill, M. 2006. John Windels's golden legacy – prehistoric and later gold ornaments from Co. Cork and Co. Waterford, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **106C**, 219-337.

Cahill, M. and **Sikora, M.** *Breaking ground, finding graves – reports on the excavations of burials by the National Museum of Ireland, 1927-2006* (2 Vols.). Dublin: Wordwell.

Cahill-Wilson, J. 2012. Lost in transcription: rethinking our approach to the Irish Iron Age. In C. Corlett and M. Potterton, *Life and Death in Iron Age Ireland in the light of recent archaeological investigations,* 15-34. Dublin: Wordwell.

Canny, N. 1973. The Ideology of English Colonialization: From Ireland to America, *The William and Mary Quarterly* **30**(4), 575-598.

Canny, N. 2002. *Making Ireland British: 1580-1650.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carew, M. 2003. *Tara and the Ark of the Covenant*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

Carey, J. 1984. Nodens in Britain and Ireland, *Zietschriff für Celtishe Philologie* **40**, 1-22.

Carey, J. 2005. Tara and the Supernatural. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 32-48. Dublin: Four Courts.

Carney, J. 1971. Three Old Irish Accentual Poems, *Éiru* **22**, 23-80.

Carson, R.A.G. and **O'Kelly, C**. 1977. A Catalogue of the Roman coins from Newgrange, Co. Meath, and notes on the coins and related finds, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **77C**, 35-55.

Chapman, M. 1992. *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth*. Basingstoke: MacMillan.

Charles-Edwards, T.M. 2001. *Early Christian Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Childe, V.G. 1940. *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles*. London: Chambers.

Clancy, P. 2006. The Curragh: a prehistoric landscape. In W. Nolan and T McGrath (eds.) *Kildare History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications.

Clark, R. 1991. *The Great Queens: Irish Goddesses from the Morrígan to Cathleen ní Houlihan.* Buckinghamshire.

Clarke, G. 1979. *Winchester Studies 3: Pre-Roman and Roman Winchester Part II – The Roman Cemetery at Lankhills*. Oxford: Oxbow.

Clarke, S. 1996. Acculturation and Continuity: re-assessing the significance of Romanization in the hinterlands of Gloucester and Cirencester. In N. Cooper and J. Webster (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 71-98. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Clarke, S. 1997. 'Abandonment, rubbish disposal, and "special" deposits', in K. Meadows, C. Lemke, and J. Heron (eds.), TRAC '96. *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference Sheffield 1996*, 73-81. Oxford: Oxbow.

Coffey, G. and **Armstrong, R.** 1913-16. Find of Bronze Objects at Annesborough, Co. Antrim. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **XXXII**, 171-175.

Collis, J. 2003. *The Celts. Origins, Myths and Inventions.* Gloucestershire.

Comber, M. 2001. Trade and communications networks in Early Historic Ireland, *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* **X**, 73-92.

Condit, T. 1995. Hillfort discoveries near Killaloe Co. Clare, *Archaeology Ireland* **9**(1), 34-37.

Connellan, O. 1869. On the rivers of Ireland, with the derivation of their names, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **10**, 443-458.

Connolly, M. 1999. *Discovering the Neolithic in County Kerry: a Passage Tomb at Ballycarty*. Dublin.

Connon, A. 2005. A prosopography of the Early Queens of Tara. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 225-360. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Conway, M. 2003. Plantin Fort, Platin. In I. Bennett (ed.) *Excavations 2001*, 316-17. Bray: Wordwell.

Conyngham, A. 1844. Description of some gold ornaments recently found in Ireland. *Archaeologia* **XXX**, 137.

Cool, H.E.M., and **Philo, C.** (eds). *Roman Castleford Excavations 1974-85*. Vol. I: the small finds. Yorkshire Archaeology **4**.

Coombs, D. 1992. Flag Fen platform and Fengate Power Station post-alignment – the metalwork, *Antiquity* **86**, 504-517.

Cooney, G. 1996. Ireland, the Romans and all that, *Archaeology Ireland* **35**, 3.

Cooney, G. The Prehistory of Lambay: a long view. In C. Baker (ed.) *Axes, Warriors, and Windmills: Recent archaeological discoveries in North Fingal*, 9-22. Fingal County Council.

Cooney, G. and **Grogan, E.** 1994. *Irish Prehistory: A Social Perspective*. Dublin: Wordwell.

Cooper, N. 1996. 'Searching for the blank generation: consumer choice in Roman and post-Roman Britain', in N. Cooper and J. Webster (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 85-98. Leicester. School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Cordner, W.S. 1946. The Cult of the Holy Well, *Ulster |Journal of Archaeology* **9**, 24-46.

Corlett, C. 2005. Ring-barrows – a circular argument with a ring of truth? In T. Condit and C. Corlett (eds.) *Above and Beyond: Essays in memory of Leo Swan,* 383-392. Bray: Wordwell.

Corns, A., **Fenwick**, J. and **Shaw, R.** 2008. More than meets the eye, *Archaeology Ireland* **22**(3).

Crabtree, P. 1990. Subsistence and Ritual: the faunal remains from Dún Ailinne, Co. Kildare, Ireland, *Emania* **7**, 22-25.

Creighton, J. 2000. *Coins and Power in Late Iron Age Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Creighton, J. 2005. *Britannia: the creation of a Roman province.* London: Taylor and Francis.

Crew, P. 1990. Late Iron Age and Roman Iron production in north-west Wales. In B. Burnham and J. Davies (eds.) *Conquest, co-existence and change: Recent work in Roman Wales*, *Trivium* **25**, 150-161. Lampeter: University of Wales Press.

Crow, J. 2004. The Northern Frontier of Britain from Trajan to Antoninus Pius: Roman Builders and Native Britons. In M. Todd (ed.) A Companion to Roman Britain, 114-135. London: Blackwell.

Crummy, N. 1983. *The Roman Small finds from Excavations in Colchester 1971-1979. Colchester Archaeological Report 2.* Colchester.

Cullingford, B.B. 1996. British Romans and Irish Carthaginians: Anticolonial Metaphor in Heany, Friel, and McGuiness, *PMLA* Vol. **III**, No. 2, 222-239.

Cunliffe, B. 1985. *The Roman Baths and Museum.* Bath.

Cunliffe, B. 1988. *Greeks, Roman, and Barbarians: Spheres of interaction.* London.: Methuen.

Cunliffe, B. 1991. *Iron Age Communities in Britain (3rd edtn).* London: Routeledge.

Cunliffe, B. 2001. *Facing the Ocean.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cunliffe, B. 2004. 'Britain and the Continent: Networks of Interaction'. In M. Todd (ed.) *A Companion to Roman Britain*, 1-11. London: Blackwell.

Daffy, S. 2002. A site for sore eyes: a Hiberno-Roman curative cult at Golden, Co. Tipperary, *Archaeology Ireland* **16**(2), 8-9.

Daffy, S. In Prep. Ráith na Senad, Tara. A reinterpretation.

Davies, J. 2004. Soldier and Civilian in Wales. In M. Todd (ed.) A Companion to Roman Britain, 91-113. London: Blackwell.

Danaher, E. 2009. Report on the excavations at Blundelstown 1, Co. Meath. www.m3motorway.ie/Archaeology/Blundelstown1/file,16730,en.pdf

Darcy, R. and **Flynn, W.** 2008. Ptolemy's map of Ireland: a modern decoding, *Irish Geography* **41**(8), 49-69.

Dark, K.R. 1994. *Civitas to Kingdom: British Political Continuity 300-800.* Leicester : Leicester University Press.

de Bernardo Stempel, P. 2000. Ptolemy's Celtic Italy and Ireland: a linguistic analysis. In D.N. Parsons and P. Simms-Williams (eds.) *Ptolemy: Towards a linguistic atlas of the earliest Celtic Placenames of Europe*, 83-112. Aberystwyth: CMCS Publications.

de Jersey, P. 2011. L'habitat et la nécropole de King's Road Guernsey, et l'âge du Fer dans les îles anglo-normandes. In P. Barral (ed.) Actes du 33e colloque international de l'AFEAF, 287-300. Besançon.

Delaney, M. and Woodman, P.C. 2004. Searching the Irish Mesolithic for the humans behind the hatchets. In H. Roche, E. Grogan, J. Bradley, J. Coles and B. Raftery (eds.), *From Megaliths to Metals: essays in honor of George Eogan*, 6-11. Oxford. Oxbow.

de Paor, L. 1993. *St. Patrick's World*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

de Souza, P. 1996. 'They are the enemies of all mankind': justifying Roman imperialism in the Late Republic, in J. Webster and N.Cooper (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 125-134. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Derks, T. 1998. *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices. The transformation of religious ideas and values in Roman Gaul.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Derks, T. and **Roymans, N.** 2002. *Ethnic constructs in Antiquity: the role of power and tradition.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Devane, C. 2005. Carbury, Co. Kildate: topographical and onomastic hypotheses. In T. Condit and C. Corlett (eds.) *Above and Beyond: Essays in memory of Leo Swan,* 187-212. Bray: Wordwell.

Dillon, M., **Newman, C.**, **MMolloy, K.**,and **O'Connell, M.** 2008. Environment and Ritual in a Late Iron Age context: an example from Raffin Fort, Co. Meath, Ireland. In G. Fiorentino and G. Magri (eds.) *Charcoals from the Past: Cultural and Palaeoenvironmental implications.* BAR International Series 1807, 75-92.

di Martino, V. 2003. *Roman Ireland.* Dublin: Collins Press.

Dirlik, A. 1994. *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism.* Hanover: Weslyan University Press.

Dirlik, A. 1997. The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Dolley, M. 1968. Two numismatic notes, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, **XCII** 57-65.

Dolley, M. 1976. Roman coins from Ireland and the date of St. Patrick, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* **73 C**, 181-190.

Donaghy, C. and Grogan, E. 1997. Navel-gazing at Uisnach, Co. Westmeath, *Archaeology Ireland* **11**(4), 24-26

Down, A. and **Rule, M.** 1971. *Chichester Excavations Vol. I.* Chichester.

Dorcey, P. F. 1992. *The Cult of Silvanus: A Study in Roman Folk Religion*. New York.

Dowling, G. 2006. The liminal boundary: an analysis of the sacral potency of the ditch at Ráith na Ríg, Tara, Co Meath, *Journal of Irish Archaeology* **15**, 15-37.

Dowling. G. 2011. The Architecture of Power. In R. Schot, C. Newman, and E. Bhreathnach (eds.) *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship*, 213-31. Dublin: Four Courts.

Drummond, W. H. 1840-1844. On Roman Coins found in Ireland, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **II**, 185-190.

Drury, C. 1905. County Wicklow archaeological notes around Kiltegan, *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society* **4**, 352-358.

Drury, P.J. 1980. Non-Classical religious buildings in Iron Age and Roman Britain. In W. Rodwell (ed.), **Temples, Churches, and Religion in Roman Britain**, 45-78 BAR British Series **77**(i).

Dublin Exhibition. 1853. *Catalogue of the Great Dublin Exhibition 1853* (3rd Edition). Dublin.

Dublin Exhibition. 1924. *Catalogue of the Great Dublin Exhibition 1853* (4th Edition). Dublin.

Duby, G. 1974. *The Early Growth of the European Economy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Duffy, S. 2000. Atlas of Irish History (2nd edtn). Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Dumézil, G. 1954. *Le trio de Macha.* Paris: Press univeritaires de France.

Dungworth, D. 1998. Mystifying Roman Nails: *clavus annalis, defixiones,* and *minkisi*. In S. Cottam, D. Dungworth, S. Scott and J. Taylor (eds.) *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, 148-59. Oxford: Oxbow.

Dyson, S.L. 1985. *The creation of the Roman frontier.* Princeton.

Eagleton, T. 2012. *The Event of Literature*. Yale: Yale University Press.

Eco, U. 1999. *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy.* London: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Edwards, N. 1990. *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*. London: Routeledge.

Engelhardt, C. 1863. *Thorsbjerg Mosefund.* Copenhagen.

Eogan, G. 1963. A Neolithic habitation-site and megalithic tomb in Townleyhall townland, Co. Louth. *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* **92**, 37-81.

Eogan, G. 1991. Prehistoric and early historic culture change at Brugh na Bóinne, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **91C**, 2-112.

Eogan, G. 1994. *The Accomplished Art: gold and gold-working in Britain and Ireland during the Bronze Age.* Oxford: Oxbow.

Eogan, G. 2012. *Excavations at Knowth 5*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

Eogan, G. and **Roche, C.** 1997. *Excavations at Knowth 2*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy

Evans, E.E. 1953. *Lyles Hill. A Late Neolithic Site in Co. Antrim.* Belfast.

Evans, J. 2004. The pottery vessels. In H.E.M. Cool, *The Roman Cemetery at Brougham, Cumbria*, 333-62. Britannia Monograph Series No. **21**.

Evans, J. 2008. The Roman Pottery from the Rath of the Synods. In Grogan, E. *The Rath of the Synods Tara, Co. Meath*: *excavations by Seán P.Ó Ríordáin*, 123–126. Dublin: Wordwell.

Fabian, J. 2002 [1983]. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fenwick, J. and **Newman, C.** 2002. Geomagnetic Survey on the Hill of Tara, Co. Meath, *Discovery Programme Reports* **6**, 1-17.

Ferris, I.M., **Bevan, L**., and **Cuttler, R.** 2000. *The Excavation of a Romano-British Shrine at Orton's Pasture, Rocester, Staffordshire*. BAR British Series **314**.

Feugère, M. **Künzl, E.** and **Weisser, U.** 1985. Die Starnadeln von Montbellet (Saône-et-Loire). Ein Beitrag zur antiken und islamishen Augenheilkunde, *Jarbuch des Römish-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* **32,** 436-508.

Fincham, G. 2002. *Landscapes of Imperialism: Roman and native interaction in the East Anglian Fenland*. BAR British Series **338**.

Finn, A. [1928], 1998. *Royal and Saintly Cashel.* Dublin.

Fitzpatrick, A.P. 1989. The uses of imperialism by the Celtic Barbarians in the Later Republic. In J.C. Barrett, A.P. Fitzpatrick, and L. Macinnes (eds.), *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe from the later Republic to late Antiquity*, BAR International Series 471, 27-54.

Fitzpatrick, A.P. 1991. 'Celtic (Iron Age) Religion' – Tradition and Timeless? *Scottish Archaeological Review* **8**, 123-29.

Fitzpatrick, A.P. 1997. Everyday life in Iron Age Wessex. In A. Gwilt and C. Haselgrove (eds.), *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 73-86. Oxford: Oxbow.

Fitzpatrick, L. 2004. Royal inauguration mounds in Medieval Ireland: antique landscape and tradition. In A. Pantos and S. Semple (eds.) *Assembly places and practices in Medieval Europe*, 44-72. Dublin: Four Courts.

Flanagan, L.N.W. 1960. Bone beads and ring from Newgrange, Co. Meath, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* **23**, 61-2.

Forcey, C. 1998. Whatever Happened to the Heroes? Ancestral cults and the enigma of Romano-Celtic temples, in C. Forcey, J. Hawthorne, and R. Witcher (eds.), *TRAC 97 Proceedings of the 7th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference Nottingham 1997, 87-98.* Oxford: Oxbow.

Ford, P.K. 1974. The Well of Nechtan and 'La Gloire Lumineuse', in *Myth in Indo-European Antiquity,* 67-74. California.

Foster, R.F. 1988. *Modern Ireland 1600-1972.* London: Allen Lane.

Forston, B.W. 2010. Indo-*European Language and Culture* (2nd edtn). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fowler, C. 2004. *The archaeology of personhood: an anthropological approach.* London: Routeledge.

Fredengren, C. 2002. *Crannógs.* Bray: Wordwell.

Freeman, P. 1996. British Imperialism and the Roman Empire. In J. Webster and N. Cooper (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 19-34. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Freeman, P. 2001. *Ireland and the Classical World.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Freeman, P. 1993. 'Romanisation' and Roman material culture, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* **6**, 438-445.

Fulford, M. 1992. Territorial Expansion and the Roman Empire, *World Archaeology* **23**(2), 294-305.

Fulford. M. 2001. 'Links with the Past: Pervasive 'Ritual' Behaviour in Roman Britain', *Britannia* **32**, 199-218.

Gadamer, H.G. 1975. *Truth and Method.* London: Sheed and Ward.

García-Quintela, M.V. 2007. Review of R.D. Woodward Indo-European Sacred Space. Vedic and Roman Cult, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2007 02.36.

Gardner, A. 2001. 'Identities in the Late Roman Army: material and textual perspectives.' In G. Davies, A. Gardner, and K. Lockyear (eds.) *TRAC 2000*: *Proceedings of the 10th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference 2000.* Oxford: Oxbow.

Gavin, F. and **Newman, C.** 2007. Notes on Insular silver in the 'Military Style', *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* **XVI**, 1–10.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic.

Gibson, A.M. and **Simpson, D.D.A.** 1987. Lyles Hill, Co. Antrim, *Archaeology Ireland* **1**(2), 72-75.

Gleeson, P. 2012. Constructing Kingship in Early Medieval Ireland: Power, Place and Ideology, *Medieval Archaeology* **56**, 1-33.

Goldring, M. 1982. *Faith of our Fathers: the formation of Irish nationalist ideology, 1890-1920.* Dublin: Repsol.

Gonda, J. 1966. *Ancient Indian Kingship from the religious point of view.* Leiden.

Gonda, J. 1974. Dumezil's tripartite ideology: some critical observations, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34(1), 139-149.

Gosden, C. 2004. *Archaeology and Colonialism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabowski, K. 1990. The Historical Overview of Dún Ailinne, *Emania* **7**, 32-36.

Grahame, M. 1998. Redefining Romanization: material culture and the question of social continuity in Roman Britain. In C. Forcey, J. Hawthorne, and R. Witcher (eds.), *TRAC 97 Proceedings of the 7th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference Nottingham 1997,* 1-10. Oxford: Oxbow.

Grane, T. (ed.) 2007. *Beyond the Frontier: Roman influences in the Northern Barbaricum.* Rome: Quasar.

Gray, E. 1983. *Cath Maige Tuired.* London.

Green, M. 1986**.** *The Gods of the Celts.* Gloucester: Alan Sutton.

Green, M. 1992. *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art.* London: Routeledge.

Gregory, C.A. 1980. Gifts to men and gifts to god: gift exchange and capital accumulation in contemporary Papua, *Man* **15**, 626-652.

Grogan, E. 2005. *The North Muster Project Vol. 1: The later prehistoric landscape of south-east Clare*. Discovery Programme Monographs **6**.

Grogan, E. 2008. *The Rath of the Synods Tara, Co. Meath*: excavations by Seán P.Ó Ríordáin. Dublin: Wordwell.

Grogan, E. and **O'Sullivan, M.** 2008. 'Radiocarbon dates from the Rath of the Synods', Appendix J in E. Grogan, *The Rath of the Synods, Tara, Co. Meath: excavations by Seán P. Ó Ríordáin*, 141-148. Dublin: Wordwell.

Grogan, E., Condit, T., O' Carrol, F., O'Sullivan, A. and **Daly, A.** 1996. Tracing the later prehistoric landscape in North Munster, *Discovery Programme Reports* **4**, 26-46.

Gudeman, A. 1898. Agricola's invasion of Ireland, *Proceedings of the American Philological Association* **29**, 36-9.

Gudeman, A. 1900. Agricola's invasion of Ireland once more, *Classical Review* **14** (1), 51-3.

Guest, P. and **Wells, N.** 2007. *Iron Age and Roman Coins from Wales.* Moneta.

Guido, N. 1978. *The Glass Beads of the Prehistoric and Roman Periods in Britain and Ireland*. London.

Gwilt, A. and **Haselgrove, C**. 1997. Approaching the Iron Age, in A. Gwilt and C. Haselgrove (eds.), *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 1-8. Oxford: Oxbow.

Hall, M.A. and **Forsyth, K.** 2011. Roman Rules? The introduction of board games to Britain and Ireland, *Antiquity* **85**, 1325-1338.

Hall, S. 1996. 'When was the post-colonial? Thinking at the limits. In I. Chambers and L. Curti (eds.) *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons.* London: Routledge.

Hallward, P. 2001. Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing between the singular and the specific. *Manchester: Angelaki.*

Hamlin, A. and Lynn, C. 1988. Pieces of the Past. Archaeological Investigations by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland 1970-1986. *Belfast.*

Hanson, W.S. 1989. The nature and function of Roman frontiers. In J.C Barrett, A.P Fitzpatrick, and L. Macinnes (eds) *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe from the later Republic to late Antiquity*, 55–63. BAR International Series **471**.

Hanson, W.S. 1994. 'Dealing with barbarians: the Romanisation of Britain'. In B. Vyner (ed.) *Building on the Past: Papers celebrating 150 years of the Royal Archaeological Institute*, 149-63. London: Royal Archaeological Institute.

Hanson, W.S. 2004. 'Scotland and the Northern Frontier: Second to Fourth Centuries AD'. In M. Todd (ed.) A Companion to Roman Britain, 136-161. London: Blackwell.

Hanson W.S. and **Maxwell, G.S.** 1983. *Rome's North-West Frontier: the Antonine Wall*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Harbison, P. 2007. In Retrospect. The Royal Irish Academy's only archaeological excavation: Dowth in the Boyne Valley, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **107C**, 205-13.

Harris, V.W. 1971. *Rome in Etruria and Umbria.* Oxford: OUP.

Harris, W.V. 1984. Current directions in the study of Roman Imperialism. In W.V. Harris (ed.) *The Imperialism of Mid-Republic Rome*. Rome.

Haselgrove, C. 1984. 'Romanization before the Conquest: Gaulish precedents and British consequences, in T.F.C. Blagg and A.C. King (eds.), *Military and Civilian in Roman Britain: Cultural relationships in a Frontier Province,* BAR British Series **136**, 5-63

Haselgrove, C. 1987. Cultural process on the Periphery: Belgic Gaul and Rome during the late Republic and early Empire, in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World,* M. Rowlands, M. Larsen, and K. Kristiansen (eds.), 104-124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haselgrove, C. 1997. Iron Age brooch deposition and chronology. In A. Gwilt and C. Haselgrove (eds.) *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 51-72. Oxford: Oxbow.

Haverfield, F. 1899. Did Agricola Invade Ireland? *Classical Review* **XIII**, 302-303.

Haverfield, F. 1913. Ancient Rome and Ireland, *English Historical Review* **XXVIII**, 1913, 1-12.

Haverfield, F. Agricola's invasion of Ireland once more, *Classical Review* **14** (1), 53.

Haverfirld, F. 1912. *The Romanisation of Britain* (2nd edtn.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawkes, C.F.C. 1932. 'Hillforts', *Antiquity* **5**, 60-97.

Hawkes, C.F.C. 1982. The wearing of the brooch: early Iron Age dress among the Irish. In B.G. Scott (ed*.), Studies on Early Ireland. Essays in honour of M.V. Duignan*, 51-73. Belfast.

Heald, A. 2001. Knobbed spearbutts of the British and Irish Iron Age: new example and new thoughts, *Antiquity* **75**, 290, 689-696.

Hedeager, L. 1987. Empire, Frontier and Barbarian Hinterland: Rome and Northern Europe from A.D. 1-400, in *Centre and Periphery in the ancient World,* M. Rowlands, M. Larsen, and K. Kristiansen (eds.), 125-140. Cambridge.

Hedeager, L. 1987. Empire, Frontier and Barbarian Hinterland: Rome and Northern Europe from A.D. 1- 400. In M. Rowlands, M. Larsen, and K. Kristiansen (eds.) *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, 125-140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hencken, H. 1943. Ballinderry Crannog No. 2, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **XLVII**, 1-76.

Hencken, H. 1950. Lagore Crannog, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **LIII,** 1-248.

Henig, M. 1993. Votive objects, images and inscriptions. In A. Woodward, A. and P. Leach, *The Uley shrines. Excavations of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977–9*, 90-112. London: English Heritage.

Henig, M. 2004. A house divided: the study of Roman art and the art of Roman Britain, in E.W. Sauer (ed.) *Archaeology and Ancient History*, 134-150. London: Routeledge.

Herbert, E.W. 1993. *Iron, gender and power: rituals of transformation in African societies*. New York: Bloomington.

Hickey, E. 1994. *Skreen and the early Normans.* Dublin.

Hides, S. 1997. The genealogy of material culture and cultural identity. In S. Pearce (ed.), *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World,* 13-35. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Hill, J.D. 1995. How should we understand Iron Age society and hillforts? A contextual study from southern Britain. In J.D. Hill and G.C. Cumberpatch (eds.) *Different Iron Ages: studies on the Iron Age in temperate Europe*, 45-66. Sheffield: J.R. Collis.

Hill, J.D. 1997. The end of one kind of body and the beginning of another kind of body? Toilet instruments and 'Romanisation'. In A. Gwilt and C. Haselhrove (eds.) *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 96-107. Oxford: Oxbow.

Hingley, R. 1996. The legacy of Rome: the rise, decline and fall of the theory of Romanisation. In N. Cooper and J. Webster (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 35-48. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Hingley, R. 1997. Iron, ironworking and regeneration: a study of the symbolic meaning of metalworking in Iron Age Britain. In A. Gwilt and C. Haselgrove (eds.) *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 9-18. Oxford: Oxbow.

Hingley, R. 1999. The imperial context of Romano-British studies and proposals for a new understanding of social change, in P. P. A. Funari, M. Hall and S. Jones (eds.), *Historical Archaeology: Back from the edge,* 137-150. London: Routledge.

Hingley, R. 2000. Eurocentrism and the Role of Rome in imperial discourse, *Paper presented at the Theoretical Archaeological Group Annual Conference 2000,* Oxford University.

Hodder, I.R. 1979. Pre-Roman and Romano-British Tribal economies. In B.C. Burnham and H.B. Johnson (eds.) *Invasion and Response: the case of Roman Britain.* BAR British Series **73**, 189-196.

Hodder, I.R. 1982a. *The Present Past: An Introduction to Anthropology for Archaeologists.* London: Batsford.

Hodder, I.R. 1982b. *Symbols in Action.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodder, I.R. 1986. *Reading the Past: current approaches to interpretation in archaeology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodder, I. R. 1990. *The Domestication of Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hodder, I.R. 1992. 'Towards Radical Doubt: A Dialogue' in Ian Hodder (ed.) *Theory and Practice in Archaeology*, 155-9. London: Routeledge.

Hodder, I.R., and **Hutson, S.** 2003. *Reading the Past* (3rd edtn)*.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodkinson, R. 1994. *Excavations at Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, 1992 and 1993: a preliminary statement*. Dublin.

Hughes, K. 1972. *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources.* London.

Hunter, F. 1996. 'Recent Roman Iron Age metalwork finds from Fife and Tayside', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* **2**, 113-125..

Hunter, F. 2001. 'Roman and native in Scotland: new approaches'. *Journal of Roman Archaeology* **14**, 289-309.

Ilkjær, J. 2000. *Illerup Ådal – archaeology as a magic mirror*. Højbjerg: Moesgård.

Issac, B. 1990. *The limits of empire: The Roman army in the East.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, K. H. 1964. *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age*. Cambridge: CUP.

James, C.L.R. 1989 [1963]. *The Black Jacobins* (2ⁿᵈ edtn.). New York: Vintage.

Jackson, R. 1988. *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire.* Bath.

Jackson, R. 1990. Roman Doctors and their instruments: recent research into ancient practice, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* **3**, 5-27.

James. S. 1999. *The Atlantic Celts.* London: British Museum Press.

Jameson, F. 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act.* Ithica: Cornell University Press.

Jameson, F. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* London: Verso.

Jameson, F. 2002. *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the ontology of the present.* London: Verso.

JanMohamed, A. R. 1985. The Economy of the Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature. *Critical Inquiry* **12**, 59-87.

Jessup, R.F. 1939. Further Excavations at Julliberrie's Grave, Chilham, *Antiquaries Journal* **19**, 260-281.

Johns, C. 1974. A Roman silver pin from Oldcroft, Gloucestershire, *Antiquities Journal* **54**, 275.

Johnston, D.E. 1975. 'Sandy', in W. Rodwell and T. Rowley, *The 'small towns' of Roman Britain*, BAR **15**, 225-231.

Johnsen, H. and **Olsen, B**. 1992. Hermeneutics and Archaeology: on the Philosophy of Contextual Archaeology, *American Antiquity* **57**(3), 419-436.

Johnston, S, and **Wailes, B.** 2007. *Dún Ailinne: Excavations at an Iroah Royal Site, 1968-1975. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.*

Johnston. S., **Campana, D.V.** and **Crabtree, P.** 2009. A Geophysical Survey of Dún Ailinne, Co. Kildare Ireland, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 3**4**(4), 385-402.

Jones, C. 2007. *Temples of Stone*. Cork: The Collins Press.

Jones, S. 1997. The Archaeology of Ethnicity. London: Routeledge.

Jope, E. M. 2000. *Early Celtic Art in the British Isles.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joyce. P.W. 1910. *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* (3 vols.). Dublin: Gill and Son.

Keeley, V.J. 1999. Iron Age discoveries at Ballydavis. In P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds.) *Laois: history and society*, 25-34. Dublin.

Kelly, A. 2010. The discovery of Phocaean Red Slip Ware (PRSW) Form 3 and Bii ware (LR1 amphorae) on sites in Ireland – an analysis within a broader framework, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **110C**, 35-88.

Kelly, E.P. 1978. Randalstown, in T.G. Delaney (ed.), *Excavations 1975-76: Summary Accounts of Archaeological Work in Ireland*, 17. Belfast.

Kelly, E.P. 2002a. Antiquities from Irish holy wells and their wider context, *Archaeology Ireland* **16**(2), 24-8.

Kelly, E.P. 2002b. The Iron Age: 500 BC – 450 AD. In P.F. Wallace and R. Ó nFloinn (eds.), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland: Irish Antiquities*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Kelly, E.P. 2006. Kingship and sacrifice: Iron Age bog bodies and Boundaries, *Archaeology Ireland* Herritage Guide No. **35**.

Kelly, F. 1998. *A Guide to Early Irish Law.* Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Kiberd, D. 1995. *Inventing Ireland.* London: Jonathan Cape.

Killeen, J. 1976. Ireland in the Greek and Roman writers, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **76C**, 207-215.

King, B. 1996. 'Introduction'. In B. King (ed.) *New National and Postcolonial Literatures.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kinsella, T. 1970. *The Táin.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knight, W.F.J. 1938. A Romano-British Site at Bloxham, Oxon. *Oxoniensia* III, 41-56.

Koch, J.T. 1991. Ériu, Alba, and Letha: When was a Language ancestral to Gaelic first spoken in Ireland? *Emania* **9**, 17-27.

Koch, J.T. 1994. Windows on the Iron Age: 1964-1994. In J.P. Mallory and G. Stockman (eds.), *Ulidia*: *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, 229-242. Belfast: December Publications.

Koch, J.T. 1995. The Conversion and the transition from Primitive to Old Irish c. 367 – c.637AD, *Emania* 13, 39-50.

Koch, J.T. (ed.). 2005. Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopedia Vol. 1. London: ABC-CLIO.

Koch, J.T. 2007. *An Atlas for Celtic Studies*. Oxford: Oxbow.

Kopytoff, I. 1986. The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In A. Appadurai (ed.) *The social life of things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kropft, A. and **Van der Vin, J.P.A.** 2003. Coins and Continuity in the Dutch River Area and the end of the third century AD, *European Journal of Archaeology* **6**(1), 55-87.

Kruta, V., **Frey, O. H.**, **Raftery, B.** and **Szabo, M.** (eds.). 1991. *The Celts.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Künzl, E. 1982. Medizinishe Instrumente aus Sepulkralfunden der römishen Kaiserzeit, *Bonner Jahrbücher* **182**, 1-137.

Künzl, E. 1986. Operationsraume in römmishen Thermen, *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinishen Landesmuseums in Bonn*, **CLXXXVI**, 491-509.

Künzl, E. 1986a. Zum Verbreitungsgebeit der Okulistenstempel, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* **65**, 200-2.

Laing, L. 1985. The Romanization of Ireland in the Fifth Century, *Peritia* **4**, 261–278.

Lazarus, N., **Evans, S.**, **Arnove, A**., and **Menke, A.** 1995. The Necessity of Universalism. *Differences* **7**(1), 75-145.

Lee, G. 1996. *Leper Hospitals in Medieval Ireland*. Dublin.

Leech, R. 1986. The Excavation of a Romano-Celtic Temple and a Later Cemetery on Lamyatt Beacon, Somerset, *Britannia* **17**, 259-328.

Leerson, J. 1986. 'On the Edge of Europe: Ireland in Search of Oriental Roots, 1650-1850, *Comparative Criticism* **8**, 98-112.

Leerson, J. 1996a. *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, its Development and Literary Expression prior to the Nineteenth Century* (2nd Edtn). Cork: Cork University Press.

Leerson, J. 1996b. *Remembrance and imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century.* Cork: Cork University Press.

Lennon, J. 2004. *Irish Orientalism: A literary and intellectual history*. Syracuse.

Lewis, S. 1837. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*. London.

Lightfoot, K. 1995. Culture Contact Studies: Redefining the relationship between Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology. *American Antiquity* **60***: 2*, 119-217.

Lincoln, B. 1975. The Indo-European Myth of Creation, *History of Religions* **15**(2), 121-145.

Lincoln, B. 1991. *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lincoln, B. 2000. *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship*. London.

Liversage, G.D. 1967–68. Excavations at Dalkey Island Co. Dublin, 1956–1959, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **LXVI**, 53–243.

Llhwyd, E. 1726. Extract from G. Boate, *A Natural History of Ireland*. Dublin.

Lloyd, D. 1987. *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarance Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism.* Berkeley: California University Press.

Lloyd, D. 1999. *Ireland after History.* Cork: Cork University Press.

Luttwak, E.N. 1976. *The grand strategy of the Roman Empire: from the first century AD to the third.* London.

Lynch, L. and O'Donnell, L. 2007. Cremation in the Bronze Age: practice, process and belief. In E. Grogan, L. O'Donnell, and P. Johnston (eds.), *The Bronze Age Landscapes of the pipeline to the west*, 105-14. Bray. Wordwell.

Lynch, R. 1999. The Brehons Chair, Taylorsgrange. In I. Bennett (ed.) *Excavations 1998*. Bray: Wordwell.

Lynn, C.J. 1983. Some Early Ringforts and Crannogs, *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* **1**, 47-58.

Lynn, C.J. 1985-86. Lagore, Co. Meath, and Ballinderry No. 1, Co. Westmeath, crannogs: some possible structural reinterpretations, *Journal of Irish Archaeology* **3**, 69-73.

Lynn, C.J. 1989. An Interpretation of 'The Dorsey', *Emania* **6**, 5-10.

Lynn, C.J. 1991. Knockaulin (Dún Ailline) and Navan: some architectural comparisons, *Emania* **8**, 51-56.

Lynn, C.J. 1992. The Iron Age Mound in Navan Fort: A Physical Realisation of Celtic Religious Beliefs?, *Emania* **6**, 33-57.

Lynn, C.J. 1993. Navan Fort – home of gods and goddesses?, *Archaeology Ireland* **7**(1), 17-21.

Lynn, C.J. 1994. Hostels, Heroes and Tales: Further Thoughts on the Navan Mound, *Emania* **12**, 5-20.

Lynn C.J. (ed.) 1997. *Excavations at Navan Fort by D.M. Waterman.* Belfast.

Lynn, C.J. 2003. *Navan Fort: Archaeology and Myth.* Bray: Wordwell.

Lysaght, P. *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death Messenger.* Dublin: O'Brien Press.

Macalister, R.A.S. 1928. *The Archaeology of Ireland.* London.

MacDonald, G. 1921. The building of the Antonine Wall: a fresh study of the inscriptions, *Journal of the Royal Society* **11**, 1-24.

MacDonald, P. 2010. Knock Dhu, Ballyhacket, Co. Antrim. Promontory Fort: summary excavation report in Monuments and Building s Record Northern Ireland.

Mac Eoin, G. 1988. The decline of the Celtic Languages. In G.W. Mac Lennan, (ed.), *Proceedings of the 1ˢᵗ North American Congress of Celtic Studies,* 598-602. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Macinnes, L. 1989. Baubles, Bangles and Beads: Trade and exchange in Roman Scotland. In J.C Barrett, A.P Fitzpatrick, and L. Macinnes (eds) *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe from the later Republic to late Antiquity*, 108–116. BAR International Series **471**.

Mac Giolla Easpaig, D. 2005. The significance and Etymology of the Placename *Temair*. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 423-48. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

MacKillop, J. 1998. *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacKillop, J. 2005. *Myths and Legends of the Celts.* London: Penguin.

MacKinlay, J.M. [1893] 1993. *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs.* Wales.

MacMullen, R. 1984. *Christianizing the Roman Empire: AD 100-400.* Yale: Yale University Press.

Mac Neill, E. 1911. Early Irish Population Groups: Their Nomenclature, Classification and Chronology. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 29 C, 59-114.

Mac Niell, M. 1962. *The Festival of Lughnasa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mallery, S. J. 2011. The marriage well at Teltown: holy well ritual at Royal cult sites and the rite of temporary marriage, *European Review of History* **18**(2), 175-197.

Mallory, J.P. 1989. *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*. London.

Mallory, J.P. 1991. Excavations at Haughey's Fort: 1989-90, *Emania* **8**, 10-26.

Mallory, J.P. 1992. The World of Cú Chulainn: The archaeology of Táin Bó Cúailnge. In J.P. Mallory (ed.), *Aspects of the Táin*, 103-153. Belfast: December Publications.

Mallory, J.P. 1995. Haughey's Fort and the Navan Complex in the Late Bronze Age. In J. Waddell and E. S. Twohig (eds.) *Ireland in the Bronze Age. Proceeding of the Dublin Conference April 1995*, 34-38. Dublin.

Mallory, J.P. 2000. Excavations of the Navan Ditch, *Emania* **18**, 21-36.

Mallory, J.P., and **MacNeill, T.E.** 1991. *The Archaeology of Ulster from Colonization to Plantation*. Belfast.

Mann, J.C. 1974. Frontiers of the Principate. In H. Temporini (ed) *Aufstieg und Neidergang der römischen Welt II*, 508-533. Berlin.

Mann, J.C. 1979. Power, force and the frontiers of the Empire, *Journal of Roman Studies* **69**, 175-183.

Manning, C. 1986. Archaeological Excavation of a succession of enclosures at Millockstown, Co. Louth, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **86C**, 135-181.

Marx, K. 1971 [1887]. *Capital: Vol. I. A Critical analysis of capitalist production.* London: Progress Press

Mattingly, J.D. 1996. 'From one colonialism to another: Imperialism and the Maghreb', in N. Cooper and J. Webster (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 49-70. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Mattingly J. D. (ed.). 1997. *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism. Journal of Roman Archaeology* Supplementary Series **23**.

Mauss, M. 2002 [1954]. The Gift. London: Routelege.

Mauss, M. 2003 [1909]. *On Prayer*. (Trans. S. Leslie). Oxford: Berghahn.

McCone, K. 1990. *Pagan past and Christian present in Early Irish Literature*. Maynooth: An Sagart.

McCormick, F. 1997. The Animal Bones from Site B. In C.J. Lynn (ed.) *Excavations at Navan Fort*. Belfast.

McElderry, R.K. 1922. Juvenal in Ireland, *The Classical Quarterly* **XVI**, 151-162.

McGarry, T. 2008. Some exotic evidence amidst Irish late prehistoric burials. In O.P. Davis, N.M. Sharples and K. Waddington (eds.) *Changing perspectives on the first millennium BC*, 215-34. Oxford: Oxbow.

McGarry, T. 2010. Late pagan and Early Cristian burials in Ireland: some issues and potential explainations. In C. Corlett and M. Potterton (eds.) *Death and burial in Early Medieval Ireland in the light of recent archaeological investigations*. Dublin: Wordwell.

McMann J. 1993. *Loughcrew: The Cairns. A Guide to an Ancient Irish Landscape*. Oldcastle.

McManus, D. 1983. A Chronology of the Latin Loan-Words in Early Irish, *Éiru* **34**, 21-71.

McManus, D. 1991. *A Guide to Ogham.* Maynooth: An Sagart.

McWhirr, A. Viner, L. and **Wells, C**. 1982. *Romano-British Cemeteries at Cirencester: Cirencester Excavations II*. Cirencester.

Megaw, R. and **Megaw, V.** 2001. *Celtic Art: From its beginnings to the book of Kells* (2nd edtn.). London: Thames and Hudson.

Megaw, V. 1970. *Art of the European Iron Age*. Bath.

Miles, D. and **Palmer, S**. 1996. White Horse Hill, *Current Archaeology* **12**(10), 372-378.

Millar, F. 1982. Emperors Frontiers and Foreign Relations 31 BC – AD 378, *Britannia* **13**, 1-23.

Millett, M. 1987. An Early Roman burial tradition in Central Southern England, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **6**, 63-68.

Millett, M. 1990. *The Romanization of Britain. An essay in archaeological interpretation.* Cambridge.

Mitchell, F. and **Ryan, M.** 1997. *Reading the Irish Landscape.* Dublin: Town House.

Moharan, R. and **Rajan, G.** (eds.). 1996. *English Postcoloniality: Literature from Around the World*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Momigliano, A. 1984. George Dumézil and the trifunctional approach to Roman Civilization, *History and Theory* **23**(3), 312-330.

Moore, F. 2002. In the footsteps of Macalister (book review of E. Okasha and K. Forysth, *Early Christian Inscriptions of Munster: a corpus of inscribed ston*es) *Archaeology Ireland* **16**(2).

Mytum, H. 1992. *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland.* London: Routeledge.

Mytum, H. 1995. Across the Irish Sea: Romano-British and Irish Settlements in Wales, *Emania* **13**, 15-22.

Newman, C. 1993. Sleeping in Elysium, *Archaeology Ireland* **7**(.3), 20-23.

Newman, C. 1995. The Iron Age to Early Christian transition: The evidence from dress fasteners. In C. Bourke (ed.) *From the Isles of the North: Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain*, 17–25. Belfast: H.M.S.O.

Newman, C. 1997a. *Tara, an archaeological survey*. Dublin: .Discovery Programme Monographs **2**.

Newman, C. 1997b. Ballinderry Crannog No. 2, Co. Offaly, the Later Bronze Age, *Journal of Irish Archaeology* **VIII**, 91-100.

Newman, C. 1998. Reflections on the making of a 'royal site' in early Ireland, *World Archaeology* **30**(1), 127-141.

Newman, C. 2002. The Romanisation of Irish Art. Paper presented at the 37th International conference on Medieval Studies 2002, The Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University.

Newman, C. 2005. Re-composing the archaeological landscape of Tara. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 361-409. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Newman, C. 2007. Procession and symbolism at Tara: an analysis of Tech Midchúarta (The Banqueting Hall) in the context of the sacred campus, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **26**(4), 415-38

Nieke, M.R. 1993. Penannular and related brooches: secular ornament or symbol in action? In M. Spearman and J. Higgit (eds.) The Age of Migrating Ideas, 135-43. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Nieke, M.R. and **Duncan, H.B.** 1988. Dalriada: the establishment and maintenance of an Early Historic Kingdom in northern Britain. In S.T. Driscoll and M.R. Nieke (eds.) *Power and Politics in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland*, 6-21. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ní Dhonnchadha, M. 1994-5. Caillech and other terms for veiled women in medieval Irish texts, *ÉISGE* **28**, 71-96.

North, J.A. 1981. The development of Roman Imperialism. *Journal of Roman Studies* **71**, 1-9.

Nutton, V. 1972. Roman Occulists, *Epigraphica* **34**, 16-29.

Ó Brian, M. 1925. Studien zu Irishen Völkernamen I. Die Stammesnamen auf "-rige", *Zeitschrift für Celtishe Philologie* **15**, 222-237.

O'Brien, E. 1990. Iron Age Burial Practices in Leinster: Continuity and Change. *Emania 7*, 37-42.

O'Brien, W. 1992. Boulder Burials: A Later Bronze Age megalith tradition in south-west Ireland. *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* **97**, 11-35.

O'Brien, W. 1999. *Sacred Ground: Megalithic Tombs in Coastal Southwest Ireland.* Galway: Department of Archaeology, N.U.I. Galway.

O'Brien, W. 1999a. Lissyviggeen Stone Circle, in E. Bennett (ed.), *Excavations 1998*. Bray: Wordwell.

O'Brien, W. 2001. Megaliths in a Mythologised landscape: South-west Ireland in the Iron Age. In Scarre, C. (ed.) *Monuments and Landscape in Atlantic Europe*, 152-176. London.

O'Brien, W. 2004. *Ross Island: Mining, Metal and Society in Early Ireland.* Galway: Department of Archaeology, N.U.I. Galway.

O'Connell, A. 2009. Report on the archaeological excavations of Lismullen 1, Co. Westmeath. www.nra.ie/Archaeology/NationalMonumentatLimullen/.

Ó Cróinín, D. 1991. Early Irish Christians, in M. Ryan (ed.) *The illustrated archaeology of Ireland.* Dublin.

Ó Crualaoich, G. *The Book of the Cailleach.* Cork: Cork University Press.

Ó Drisceoil, C. and **Devine, E.** 2012. Invisible people or invisible archaeology? Carrikmines Great, Co. Dublin and the problem Irish Iron Age settlement. In C. Corlett and M. Potterton, *Life and Death in Iron Age Ireland in the light of recent archaeological investigations,* 249-67. Dublin: Wordwell.

Ó Floinn, R. 1995. Gazetteer of Bog Bodies in the British Isles 2: Ireland. In R.C. Turner and R.G. Scaife (eds.) Bog bodies: new discoveries and perspectives, 137-45. London.

Ó Floinn, R. 2000. Freestone Hill, Co. Kilkenny: a reassessment. In A.P. Smyth (ed.) *Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, 12–29. Dublin: Four Courts.

Ó Floinn, R. 2001. Patrons and Politics: Art, Artefact and Methodology, in M. Rednap and N. Edwards (eds.) *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art*, 1–14. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ó Floinn, R. 2009. Notes on some Iron Age finds from Ireland. In G. Cooney, K. Becker, J. Coles, M. Ryan, and S .Sievers, (eds) *Relics of Old Decency*, 199–210. Dublin: Wordwell.

Ó hOgáin, D. 1991. *Myth, Legend and Romance*. New York: Prentice Hall Press.

O'Kelly, M.J. 1952. Three promontory Forts in Co. Cork, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **55C**, 25-59.

O'Kelly, M.J. 1958. A Horned Cairn at Shanballyedmond, Co. Tipperary, *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* **63**, 37-72.

O'Kelly, M.J. 1982. *Newgrange: Archaeology, Art, and Legend.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Ó Lochlainn, C. 1940. Roadways in Ancient Ireland. In J. Ryan (ed.) *Féilsgribhin Eóin Mhic Néill.* Dublin.

Ó Riain-Raedel, D. 1998. The Question of the 'Pre-Patrician' Saints of Munster, in M. A. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds.) *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, history and society*, 17-22. Cork: Cork University Press.

O'Halloran, C. 2004. *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, c. 1750-1800*. Cork. Cork University Press.

Ó Muraíle. N. 2005. Temair/Tara and Other Places of the Name. In E. Bhreathnach (ed.) *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, 449-78. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

O'Rahilly, T.E. 1946. *Early Irish History and Mythology.* Dublin.

Ó Ríordáin, S.P. 1947. Roman Material in Ireland, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **LI**, 35–82.

Ó Ríordáin, S.P. 1950. Excavation of some earthworks on the Curragh, Co. Kildare, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **53C**, 249-277.

Orme, B. 1981. *Anthropology for Archaeologists.* London: Duckworth.

O'Sullivan, A. 1998. *The archaeology of lake settlement in Ireland.* Dublin: Discovery Programme Monographs **4**.

O'Sullivan, M. 2005. *Dumna na nGaiall Tara: The Mound of the Hostages.* Dublin: Wordwell.

Papadopoulos, J.K. 1999. Archaeology, Myth-History and the tyranny of the text: Chaldike, Torone and Thucydides. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **18**(4), 337-395.

*Parry, B. 1987. Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse. Oxford Literary Review **9**, 27-58.*

Parry, B. *1994. Resistance Theory/Theorising Resistance, or 'Two Cheers for Nativism', in F. Barker, P. Hulme and M. Iversen (eds.),* Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory, *179-193. Manchester: Manchester University Press.*

Petrie, G. 1850-53. Note*, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **V**, 199-200.

Pfitzner, W. 1893. *Ist Irland jemals von einem römischen Heere betreten worden? Eine historisch-philogische Untersuchung über Tacitus Agricola Kap. 24.* Neustrelitz.

Piggott, S. 1962. *The West Kennet Long Barrow: Excavations 1955-56.* London.

Pike, A., and **Standish, C.** 2012. Isotope Geochemistry: Applications to Archaeology. Paper presented at *Ireland in A Roman World* Conference, Trinity College Dublin, October 2012.

Pinkerton, W. 1857. Ancient Roman Intercourse with Ireland, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* **V**, 32-36.

Philpott, R. 1991. *Burial Practices in Roman Britain: A survey of grave treatments and furnishings AD 43-410.* BAR British Series **219.**

Planck, D. 1985. 'Die Viereckschanze von Fellbach-Schmiden' in D. Planck (ed.), *Der Keltenfurst von Hochdorf: Methoden und Ergenbnisse der Landesarchäeologie*, 340-375. Stuttgart, Konrad Theiss.

Popcocke, R. 1773. An account of some Antiquities found in Ireland, *Archaeologia* **2**, 32-41.

Pokorny, J. 1917. 'Spuren von Germanin im altern Irland vor der Wikingerziet'. *Zeitschrift für Celtishe Philologie* **11**, 169-188.

Polányi, K. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: the political and economic origins of our time* (2nd edtn.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Pollard, J. 1995. Inscribing Space: Formal deposition at the later Neolithic monument of Woodhenge, Wiltshire. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **61**, 137-156.

Prescott, J.R.V. 1978. *Boundaries and Frontiers.* London.

Puhvel, J. 1987. *Comparative Mythology.* London

Puttock, S. 2002. *Ritual Significance of Personal Ornament in Roman Britain.* BAR British Series **327**.

Raftery, B. 1969. Freestone Hill, Co. Kilkenny, an Iron Age Hillfort and Bronze Age Cairn, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **68C**, 56-60.

Raftery, B. 1970. A decorated Strap-end from Rathgall, Co. Wicklow, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, **100C**, 200-211.#

Raftery, B. 1976. Rathgall and the Irish Hillfort problem. In D.W. Harding (ed.) *Hillforts: Later prehistoric earthworks in Britain and Ireland*, 339-357. London.

Raftery, B. 1981. The Iron Age Burials of Ireland. In D. Ó Corráin (ed.) Irish Antiquities: Essays and Studies presented to Professor M.J. O'Kelly, 173-204. Cork: Cork University Press.

Raftery, B. 1983. *A Catalogue of Irish Iron Age Antiquities.* Marburg.

Raftery, B. 1984. *La Tène in Ireland: Problems of Origin and Chronology.* Marburg.

Raftery, B. 1994. *Pagan Celtic Ireland.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Raftery, B. 1995. The Conundrum of Irish Iron Age Pottery. In B. Raftery, V. Megaw and V. Rigby (eds.) *Sites and Sights of the Iron Age of the Iron Age: Essays on Fieldwork and Museum Research presented to Ian Matheson Stead,* 149-156. Oxford.

Raftery, B. 1995c. 'Ireland: a world without the Romans.' In M. Green (ed.), *The Celtic World*, 636-653. London. Routledge.

Raftery, B. 1996. Drumanagh and Roman Ireland, *Archaeology Ireland* **35**, 17-19.

Raftery, B. 1996. A bit too far: Ireland's Transylvanian link in the Later Iron Age. In A.P. Smyth (ed.) *Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, 1–11. Dublin: Four Courts.

Raftery, J. 1939. An Early Iron Age Sword from Lough Gur, Co. Limerick, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* **69**, 170-172.

Rahtz, P. *et al.* 1992. *Cadbury-Congresbury 1968-72.* BAR British Series **223.**

Rance, P. 2001. Attacotti, Déisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain, *Britannia* **32**, 243-270.

Rankov, B. 2004. Breaking down boundaries: the experience of the multidisciplinary *Olympias* project, in E.W. Sauer (ed.) *Archaeology and Ancient History*, 49-61. London: Routeledge.

Read, S., Henig, M., and **Cram, L.** 1986. Three Horned Bull, *Britannia* **17**, 346-347.

Reckwitz, A. 2002. 'Towards a Theory of Social Practices: a development in culturalist theorizing'. *European Journal of Social Theory* **5**(2), 243-63.

Reece, R. 2002. *The Coinage of Roman Britain.* Stroud: Tempus.

Rees, A. and **Rees, B**.. 1961. *Celtic Heritage.* New York.

Rich, J. (ed.). 1990. *Patronage in Ancient Society*. London Routeledge.

Richardson, J. 1994. The Administration of the Empire. In J.A. Crook, A. Linott and E. Rawson (eds.) *The Cambridge Ancient History Second Edition Volume IX: The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146-43 B.C.*, 564-598. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riddler, I. 2012. The Gaming Pieces, in Eogan G, *Excavations at Knowth* **5**, 419-426. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

Robertson, A.S. 1970. Roman finds from non-Roman sites in Scotland, *Britannia* **1**, 198-226.

Roche, H. 2002. Excavations at Ráith na Ríg, Tara, Co. Meath, 1997, *Discovery Programme Reports* **6,** 19-127.

Rodwell, W. 2001. *The Archaeology of Wells Cathedral: Excavations and Structural Studies*. 2 Vols. English Herritage.

Ross, A. 1967. *Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition*. London: Routeledge.

Ross, A. 1982. Material Culture, Myth and Folk Memory. In R. O'Driscoll (ed.), *The Celtic Consciousness, 197-*216. Dublin.

Roymans, N. 1990. *Tribal Societies in Norther Gaul. An Anthropological Perspective*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Roymans, N. 2004. *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power: the Batavians in the Early Roman Empire*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Roynane, M. 2001. The Political Economy of Landscape: Conflict and Value in a Prehistoric Landscape in the Republic of Ireland – Ways of Telling. In B. Bender and M. Winer (eds.), *Contested Landscapes: movement, exile and place*, 149-164. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Russell, P. 2005. 'What was the best of every language': the early history of the Irish language. In Ó D. Ó Cróinín (ed.) *A New History of Ireland. Vol. 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland,* 405-450. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ryan, M. 1982. Some Archaeological comments on the occurrence and use of silver in Pre-Viking Ireland. *In B.G. Scott (ed.), Studies on Early Ireland. Essays in honour of M.V. Duignan*, 93-97. Belfast.

Rynne, E. 1972. Celtic Stone Idols in Ireland, in C. Thomas, (ed.) *The Iron Age in the Irish Sea Province*, 79–93. London: Council for British Archaeology Research Report **9**.

Rynne, E. 1976. La Tène and Roman Finds from Lambay, Co. Dublin: A reassessment, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **76C**, 231-244.

Rynne, E. 1982. *A Classification of Pre-Viking Irish Iron Swords. In B.G. Scott (ed.) Studies on Early Ireland. Essays in honour of M.V. Duignan*, 93-97. Belfast.

Sahlins, M. 1974. *Stone Age Economies*. London.

Sauer, E.W. 2004a. The Disunited Subject: Human histories split into 'history' and 'archaeology'. In E.W. Sauer (ed.) *Archaeology and Ancient History*, 17-45. London: Routledge.

Sauer, E.W. 2004b. A matter of personal preference? The relevance of different territories and types of evidence for Roman history. In E.W. Sauer (ed.) *Archaeology and Ancient History*, 17-45. London: Routeledge.

Sauer, E.W. 2004b. A Matter of Personal Preference? The relevance of different territories and types of evidence for Roman history, in E.W. Sauer (ed.) *Archaeology and Ancient History*, 114-133. London: Routeledge.

Schwarz, K. 1975. 'Die Geschichte eines keltischen Temenos im nördlichen Alpenvorland', *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland. Gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft*, 1950-1975. Vol. 1, 324-58. Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum.

Scheid, J. 1996. Mercurius, in S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edtn.), 962. Oxford: Ocford University Press.

Scheid, J. 2003. *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (trans. J. Lloyd). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Schot, R. 2011. From cult centre to royal centre, monuments, myths and other revelations at Uisneach. In R. Schot, C. Newman, and E. Bhreathnach (eds.) *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship*, 87-113. Dublin: Four Courts.

Scott, B.G. 1990. *Early Irish Ironworking*. Belfast.

Selkirk, A. 1993. Crickley Hill, *Current Archaeology* **11**(12), 502-503.

Shanks, M. and **Tilley, C.** 1987. *Reconstructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sherwin-White, A.N. 1984. *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168 BC to AD 1*. London.

Simpson, C.J. 1976. Belt-Buckles and Strap-Ends of the Later Roman Empire: A Preliminary Survey of Several New Groups, *Britannia* **7**, 192-223.

Simpson, D.D.A. 1989. Neolithic Navan? *Emania* **6**, 31-33.

Sims-Williams, P. 1990. Some Celtic Otherworldly Terms. In A.T.E. Matonis and Daniel F Melia (eds.) *Celtic Language, Celtic Literature: A Festschrift for Eric P. Hamp*, 57-81. Van Nuys.

Small, D.B. 1999. The tyranny of the text: lost social strategies in current historical period archaeology in the classical Mediterranean, in P. P. A. Funari, M. Hall and S. Jones (eds.), *Historical Archaeology: Back from the edge*, 122-136. London: Routeledge.

Small, F. 2002. Richborough Environs Project, Kent: Report on the Aerial Photographic Transcription and Analysis. English Heritage Aerial Survey Report (PDF Version 2012).

Smith, A. 2001. *The Differential Use of Constructed Sacred Space in Southern Britain, from the Late Iron Age to the 4ᵗʰ Century AD,* **BAR** British Series **318**.

Smith, A.G., Pearson, G.W. and **Pilcher, J.R.** 1971. Belfast radiocarbon dates IV. *Radiocarbon* **13**(2), 450-467.

Spivak, G. C. 1993. Outside the Teaching Machine. *London: Routeledge.*

Stout, G. 2002. Newgrange and the Bend in the Boyne. Cork: Cork University Press.

Stout, G. and **Stout, M.** 1992. Patterns in the Past: Co. Dublin 5000BC – 1000AD. In F.H.A. Aalen and K. Whelan (eds.) *Dublin, city and County: from prehistory to present*, 5-25. Dublin: Geography Publications.

Stout, M. 1997. *The Irish Ring Fort*. Dublin: Four Courts.

Strathern, M. 1988. *The gender of the gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia. Berkeley*: University of California Press.

Sweetman, P.D. 1985. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Pit Circle at Newgrange, Co. Meath, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **85C**, 195-221.

Swift, C. 1997. *Ogham Stones and the Earliest Irish Christians*. Maynooth: An Sagart.

Swift, C. 2003. The gods of Newgrange in Irish literature and Romano-Celtic tradition, in G. Burenhult, and S. Westergaard (eds.) *Stones and Bones: Proceedings of the Archaeological Conference in Honour of the Late Professor Michael J. O'Kelly*, 53–63. BAR International Series **1201**.

Thevenot, É. 1950. La pendaison Sanglante des victimes offertes á Esus-Mars C…romain: le traitement des affections de la vue, *Latomus* **IX**, 415-26.

Thomas, A. C. 1994. *And shall these mute stones speak?* University of Wales Press.

Thomas, C. 1999. Laid to rest on pillow of bay leaves, *British Archaeology* **50**, 4-7.

Thomas, N. 1994. *Colonialisms Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Cambridge: Polity.

Thompson, H. 1993. Iron Age and Roman Slave-Shackles, *Archaeological Journal* **150**, 57-186.

Tierney, M. 1998. Theory and Politics in Early Medieval Irish Archaeology, in M. A. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds.) *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, history and society,* 190-9. Cork: Cork University Press.

Topp, C. 1956. The Gold Ornaments reputedly found near the entrance of Newgrange in 1842. *University of London, Institute of Archaeology, 12ᵗʰ Annual Report*, 53-62.

Trigger, B. 1989. *A History of Archaeological thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trunk, M. 1991. *Römische Temple in den Rhein- und westlichen Donauprovinzen*. Augst: Forschungen in Augst.

Turner, V.W. 1967. *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.

Van Hamel, A.G. 1968. *Compert Con Culainn and other stories*. Dublin.

Venclova, N. 1993. Celtic Shrines in Europe: a sceptical approach, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* **12**, 55-65.

Waddell, J. 1991. The question of the Celticization of Ireland, *Emania* **9**, 5-16.

Waddell, J. 1998. *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland.* Bray: Wordwell.

Waddell, J. 2005. *Foundation Myths*. Dublin: Wordwell.

Waddell, J. 2009. The elusive image. In G. Cooney, K. Becker, J. Coles, M. Ryan, and S .Sievers, (eds) *Relics of Old Decency*, 341–350. Dublin: Wordwell.

Waddell, J. 2011. Continuity, Cult and Contest. In R. Schot, C. Newman, and E. Bhreathnach (eds.) *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship*, 192-212. Dublin: Four Courts.

Wainwright, G.T. 1967. *Coygan Camp. A Prehistoric, Romano-British, and Dark Age Settlement in Carmarthenshire*. Cardiff: Cambrian Archaeological Association.

Wailes, B. 1976. Dún Ailinne: an interim report. In Harding, D.W. (ed.) *Hillforts: Later Prehistoric Earthworks in Britain and Ireland,* 319-338. London.

Wailes, B. 1982. The Irish Royal site in History and Archaeology, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* **3**, 1-29.

Wailes, B. 1990. Dún Ailinne: a summary excavation report, *Emania* **7**, 10-21.

Wait, G. 1985. *Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain* (2 Vols.) BAR British Series **149**.

Walsh, F. 2012. Iron Age sanctuary enclosure, boundary ditch and kilns at Kilmainham, Co. Meath. In C. Corlett and M. Potterton, *Life and Death in Iron Age Ireland in the light of recent archaeological investigations*, 303-12. Dublin: Wordwell.

Warner, R.B. 1971. Clogher Demense. In T.G. Delaney (ed.), *Excavations 1971*, 23-24. Belfast.

Warner, R.B. 1972. Clogher Demense. In T.G. Delaney (ed.), *Excavations 1972*, 27-28. Belfast.

Warner, R.B. 1973. The Excavations at Clogher and their Context, *Clogher Record* **8**, 5-12.

Warner, R.B. 1974a. Clogher Demense. In T.G. Delaney (ed.), Excavations 1973, 25. Belfast.

Warner, R.B. 1974b. Clogher Demense. In T.G. Delaney (ed.), Excavations 1974, 27. Belfast.

Warner, R.B. 1976. Some observations on the context and importation of exotic material in Ireland, from the first century BC to the second century AD, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* **76C**, 267-292.

Warner, R.B. 1988. Clogher Demense, in *Excavations Bulletin* 1977-1979, 78.

Warner, R.B. 1988a. The Archaeology of Early Historic Irish Kingship. In S.T. Driscoll and M.R. Nieke, (eds.) *Power and Politics in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland*, 47-68. Edinburgh.

Warner, R.B. 1991. Cultural intrusions in the Early Iron Age: some notes, *Emania* **9**, 44–52.

Warner, R.B. 1995. Tuathual Techtmhar: A myth or literary evidence for a Roman invasion? *Emania* **13**, 22-32.

Warner, R. 1996. Navan and Apollo, *Emania* **14**, 75-75.

Warner, R.B. 1998. Is there an Iron Age in Munster? *Emania* **17**, 25-30.

Warner, R.B. 2000. Keeping out the Other World: the internal ditch at Navan and some other Iron Age 'hengiform' enclosures, *Emania* **18**, 39-44.

Warner, R.B. 2004. Irish gold artefacts observations from Hartmann's analytical data. In H. Roche (ed.) *From megaliths to metals: Essays in Honor of George Eogan*. Oxford: Oxbow.

Warner, R.B. 2012. Clogher in Late Prehistory. In G. Cooney, K. Becker, J. Coles, M. Ryan, and S .Sievers, (eds) *Relics of Old Decency*, 507-18. Dublin: Wordwell.

Warner, R.B., **Mallory, J.P**., and **Ballie, M.G.L.** 1990. Early Iron Age Sites: A Provisional map of absolutely dated sites, *Emania* **7**, 46-50.

Waterman, D.M. 1965. The court cairn at Annaghmare, Co. Armagh, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* **28**, 3-46.

Watts, L. and **Leach, P.** 1996. *Henly Wood, Temples and cemetery excavations 1962-69.* York.

Way, A. 1850. Notice of a stamp used by a Roman Oculist or Empiric in Ireland, *Archaeological Journal* **VII**, 354-360.

Webster, G. 1986. *The British Celts and their Gods under Rome*. London.

Webster, J. 1995. Sanctuaries and Sacred places. In M. Green (ed.) The Celtic World, 445-464. London.

Webster, J. 1996a. Roman imperialism and the 'post imperial age', in J. Webster and N.Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 1-18. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Webster, J. 1996b. Ethnographic Barbarity: colonial discourse and 'Celtic warrior societies. In J. Webster and N. Cooper (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, 111-124. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University.

Webster, J. and **Cooper, N.** 1996. *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives.* Leicester: Leicester University.

Webster, J. 1997. Text expectations: the archaeology of 'Celtic' ritual wells and shafts, in A. Gwilt and C. Haselgrove (eds.), *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies*, 1-8. Oxford: Oxbow.

Weir, D.A. 1993. Dark Ages and the Pollen Record, *Emania* **11**, 21-30.

Wells, C. 1992. *The Roman Empire* (2nd edtn.). London.

Wells, P. 1999a. *The Barbarian speaks*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wells, P. 1999b. Production Within and Beyond Imperial Boundaries: Goods, Exchange, and Power in Roman Europe. In P.N. Kardulias (ed.) *World-Systems Theory in Practice: Leadership, Production and Exchange,* 85-102. New York: Roman and Littlefield.

Wells, P. 2000. Archaeology, Text, and Inter-Cultural Representation. Paper presented at the Theoretical Archaeological Group Annual Conference 2000, University of Oxford.

Wheeler, H. 1985. The Racecourse Cemetery. In Dool *et al.* Roman Derby: Excavations 1968-1983, *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* **105**.

Wheeler, R.E.M. 1943. *Maiden Castle, Dorset.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Whelan, K. 1996. *The Tree of Liberty.* Cork: Cork University Press.

Wheeler, R.E.M. and **Wheeler, T.V.** 1932. *Report on the Excavation of the prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman site in Lydney Park Gloucestershire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Whittaker, C.R. 1983. Trade and Frontiers of the Roman Empire, in P.D.A. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker (eds.) *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*, 110-127. Cambridge.

Whittaker, C.R. 1989. Supplying the system: Frontiers and Beyond. In J.C. Barrett, A.P. Fitzpatrick and L. Macinnes (eds.) *Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe from the later Republic to late Antiquity*. BAR International Series 471, 108-116.

Whittaker, C.R. 1994. *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a social and economic study*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Wickenden, N.P. 1986. A Copper-Alloy Votive Bar and a Carved Bone Plaque from Chelmsford, Essex, *Britannia* **17**, 348-351.

Willems, W.J.H. 1986. *Romans and Batavians: A regional study in the Dutch Eastern River area*. Amsterdam.

Williams, F. 1987. The Black Pig and Linear Earthworks, *Emania* **3**, 12-19.

Williams, H.M.R. 1998. The Ancient Monument in Romano-British Ritual Practices. In C. Forcey, J. Hawthorne, and R. Witcher, (eds.) *TRAC 97 Proceedings of the 7th Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference Nottingham 1997*, 71–86. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Willis, S. 1994. Roman imports into late Iron Age British societies: towards a critique of existing models. In S. Cottam, D. Dungworth, S. Scott and J. Taylor (eds.) *TRAC 94*: *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, 141-50. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Willmot, G.F. 1938. Three Burial Sites at Carbury, Co. Kildare, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* **68**, 130-142.

Wittgenstein, L. 1967 [1953]. *Philosophical Investigations* (3rd Edtn. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Wood-Martin, W.G. 1886. *The Lake Dwellings of Ireland*. Dublin.

Wood-Martin, W.G. 1887-1888. Note, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* **XVIII**, 103-104.

Woodward, A. 1992. *Shrines and Sacrifice*. London: English Heritage.

Woodward, A. and **Leach, P.** 1993. *The Uley shrines. Excavations of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977–9.* London: English Heritage.

Woolf, G. 1997. Beyond Romans and Natives, *World Archaeology* **28** (3), 339-350.

Woolf, G. 1998. *Becoming Roman.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, T. 1866. On the Intercourse of the Romans with Ireland, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* **XII**, 296-303.

Wright, T. 1867. Roman Intercourse with Ireland, *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* **V**, 168-173.

Wylie, A. 1989. Archaeological Cables and Tacking: The implications of Practice for Bernstein's "Options Beyond Objectivism and Relativism", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* **19**, 1-18.

Yegül, F. 1992. *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*. London.

Youngs, S. (ed.). 1989. *'The work of Angels': Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th–9th Centuries AD*. London: British Museum Publications.