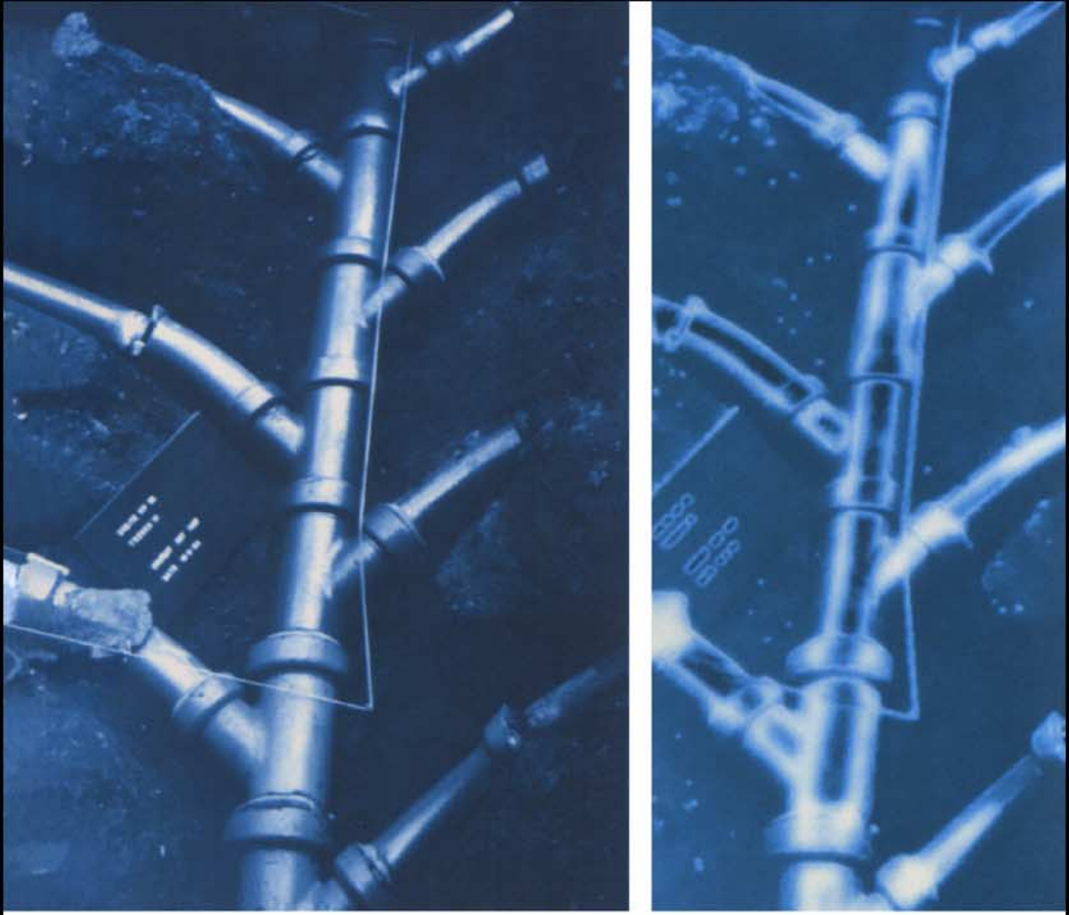

The Familiar Past?

Archaeologies of later historical Britain

Edited by Sarah Tarlow and Susie West

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THE FAMILIAR PAST?

The popular perception of archaeologists as people who dig up things from the prehistoric or classical world is being challenged. Archaeology, as the study of physical remains of the human past, includes the Victorian workhouse as well as the Bronze Age axe. This collection surveys material culture from 1500 to the present day and demonstrates how its study can bring a new understanding to what we think of as the familiar past.

The Familiar Past? draws together current interpretative work in Britain, explicitly influenced by recent methodological and theoretical developments. Fourteen case studies include discussion of issues such as the origins of modernity in urban contexts, the historical anthropology of food, the social and spatial construction of country houses, the social history of a workhouse site, changes in memorial forms and inscriptions, and the archaeological treatment of gardens.

The study of the material past can address complex social issues concerning power, identity and meaning. Using a multitude of sources – documentary, literary and material – historical archaeologists are well-equipped to examine these questions.

The Familiar Past? is essential reading for students of archaeology and social history.

Sarah Tarlow is Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Wales, Lampeter.
Susie West is completing her PhD at the University of East Anglia.

THE FAMILIAR PAST?

Archaeologies of later historical Britain

Edited by Sarah Tarlow and Susie West

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1

INTRODUCTION

Susie West

While we reject empathetic responses, the experience of engaging with the past as archaeologists is intimately bound up with the impact that sites and artefacts make through their resonances of past activities and past minds. A past populated with individuals becomes ‘alive’, and this (indirect) contact is one of the rewards and motivations of research. Arguably, it is this sense of contact with the past that has been lacking in British post-medieval archaeology. Post-medieval archaeology in Britain is conventionally held to start after 1500 or 1550, and in practice ceases by 1750 to judge by the lack of published work going beyond that date. Post-medieval archaeology does not have a flourishing image as a research area, and can be unfavourably contrasted with intellectual explorations in prehistoric archaeology. Years of data collection have not been illuminated by questions centred on people. Modern archaeology has evolved through a vigorous period of reassessments of the purpose and methods of the discipline since the 1960s, and is now aligned with other human behaviour disciplines such as anthropology and sociology. The reasons for post-medieval archaeology’s lack of involvement with the general disciplinary evolution of archaeology are not clear, but there is some evidence that one specific definition of the practice of archaeology has acquired a longer life within the community of post-medieval researchers than elsewhere. The fundamental questions that define the existence of our discipline deserve consideration in this community. Why, and how, do we do archaeology?

Archaeology, as the study of the physical remains of the human past, includes the nineteenth-century workhouse as well as the Bronze Age burial mound; the country house as well as the stone axe. If prehistoric archaeology is about making the unknown more familiar, the archaeology of historic periods is often about defamiliarizing what we think is the known past. The recent past surrounds us, observable daily through standing buildings and the cumulative alterations to the landscape. Yet we live with the results of cumulative actions, phases of creation and alteration which have their own historically specific contexts, possibly founded on quite different assumptions about society and human behaviour. Archaeology, as a discipline concerned with material culture, has a valuable contribution to make to current debates about the more recent past. These debates include, amongst others, issues of consumption and appropriation, changing social and political ideologies and the creation of modern identities.

This volume is the result of the editors' interest in taking up the challenges that American historical archaeology offers to British post-medieval archaeology, already expressed through such work as Johnson 1996. Historical archaeology in the United States has become increasingly better known in British archaeological circles, through the work of prominent authors such as James Deetz and Henry Glassie, and through urban archaeology projects which are of necessity focused on recent centuries. British practice can draw on the innovations and successes of American historical archaeology in producing theoretically informed and inclusive accounts of the recent past. There is still a lack of British published work dealing with post-medieval archaeology in the form of research-driven projects, although individual scholars are producing innovative work (e.g. Johnson 1993 and 1996; Williamson 1995). Much published post-medieval archaeology does not rise to the interpretative challenges that are posed by a social archaeology able to consider social identities and multiple meanings. It is clear that British post-medieval archaeology is in danger of trailing behind other areas of work which do have something to say about communities and ways of living. What have we most to gain from adopting American modes of producing historical archaeology? How do British traditions help us develop a new formulation of the recent past?

An examination of the production of post-medieval and historical archaeology in Britain and America can demonstrate structural questions arising from different histories of the discipline. Problems in British post-medieval archaeology can be identified and confronted by another look at the nature of the modern discipline. One of the main issues is the naming of the subject, and brings into question the now traditional periodization of post-medieval archaeology as being sometime after 1500 and possibly ceasing by 1750. These dates may no longer be relevant to an understanding of the process of becoming a modern society. Above all, the argument must be made for producing research about the recent material past that contributes to the wider archaeological project of understanding human behaviour through action in the material world.

ON BEING OVER-FAMILIAR

Our starting point is that the recent past is perhaps not as 'familiar' to us as its apparent accessibility through diaries, novels, plays, music, gardens, villages, antique shops, costume dramas or television adverts suggests. Precisely because the products of the recent past have a high survival rate around us, our own daily practices may rework and reassign new, contemporary meanings to the material culture that survives from quite different social origins (think of the appeal of the thatched country cottage for holiday homes now, compared to the grim reality of the poverty they housed). Villages and towns have modern shopfronts inserted into centuries-old buildings; post-industrial capitalism continues to have massive impact on our physical surroundings as industrial sites are abandoned and retail centres spring up in out-of-town green-field sites. Our material world is always changing: as our immediate surroundings evolve, so do our interpretations of them. Urban spaces might seem to become more threatening or more accessible; countryside dominated by agribusiness and light industry becomes more economic but less ecological; medieval churches acquire central altars and loo blocks, becoming more relevant to modern times or destroyers of tradition? This is not an argument about the meaning of 'progress', but about the presence of change in superficially immutable places.

People change too. Empathy with previous generations is encouraged through the availability of sources that offer direct voices from the past, but we are not 'just like they were'. The social construction of identities evolves over time and space, as individual people experience new factors in their relationships with their interior life, their kin, work relations, leisure time; new political opportunities emerge with the franchise; economic gains and losses are experienced. Individuals in the past, however attractive to the present observer, always retain their historically specific context, and therefore their understandings of their world will not be ours. 'Familiar' people and places in the past can instead point up the differences between now and then, and in doing so may add to our understanding of now. Arguably, historical archaeology has more to offer than the distant prehistoric past to the project of exploring what it is to be human. Its potential is manifest in the richness and diversity of sources available and through its immediacy in present experiences.

THE IDENTITY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

British archaeology has developed as a broad and varied discipline. Data retrieval and classification developed in the nineteenth century have provided the foundations and hallmark methods of the discipline. However, archaeology is not just concerned with digging up the past. At its innovative best, it has the ability to explore 'social and material practices – what people do, the way they do it, the meanings they attach to what they do' (Johnson 1996: 1–2). The assumption that material culture carries meanings beyond the obviously functional is widely established across disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, history, art and architectural history, psychology and sociology. An archaeological approach to material culture prioritizes the material results of human action in context, in order to gain information from the location and placement of artefacts, structures and features *in relation to each other*. An artefact taken from its site without any record loses most of its archaeological value.

The material evidence for social practices is derived chiefly from things people construct, own, modify and discard: their own bodies (in life through clothes, tattoos, piercing, and in death through burial practices), their animals and plants, objects (including texts), buildings and landscapes. The debate discussed here does not concern best practice in extracting data, but rather is about the identification and interpretation of the different levels of meaning which are to be discerned in material culture.

Changing attitudes to standards of explanation and interpretation within the discipline are often outlined in accounts of the development of archaeology through the identification of major theoretical schools which are concerned to use material culture to define and explain human behaviour (see for example Renfrew and Bahn 1996; Trigger 1989). In parallel with other disciplines, there has been a movement away from an empirical, narrative-based mode of research, through diversification in the 1960s, drawing on developments in computer science, the history of science and the perceived need for general explanations of human behaviour. First known as the New Archaeology, processual archaeology gained its name through its emphasis on understanding the processes involved in systems of human activities. Such systemic accounts have tended to prioritize functional, adaptive explanations of human choices. Pioneers such as Lewis Binford developed the links between archaeology and ethnography in order to research prehistoric cultures through parallel surviving cultures.

Traditional and processual archaeologies have not produced explicitly political agendas. Archaeology does encompass various explicitly political philosophies, chiefly Marxism and feminism, which themselves cover a range of formulations and aim to produce archaeologies of all social groups. A counter-movement to processual archaeology became prominent in the 1980s, known as post-processualism, reacting against processualism's attempts to produce general statements about human behaviour from functionalist analyses and the absence of imaginative ways of discussing the role of symbolism and abstract meanings in material culture. Again, post-processualism included a broad range of philosophical standpoints, and may be compared to the rise of post-modernism in literary theory.

The chapters in this volume are all influenced by the social, contextual archaeology that has evolved from debates between the schools in the 1980s. Contextual archaeology prioritizes the need to consider material evidence within a web of relationships, or contexts, that are historically specific. It defines material culture as 'active': physical surroundings are seen as imbued with symbolic meanings which shape actions (giving cues about how to behave, belonging to a social group, being welcome or in the wrong place, etc.). Furthermore, the socially constructed meanings can evolve with society, without changing their physical attributes. There is therefore a constant exchange or a 'reflexive' relationship involved in the human experience of the physical world (Shanks and Tilley 1987 and 1994).

The approaches exemplified in this volume can be contrasted with a body of work in Britain: traditionalist archaeology, seemingly untouched by any theoretical school of archaeology. This approach rejects or ignores explicit theorization, preferring to track cultural change without reference to social processes, through classification and description. Traditionalist archaeology does not recognize that material culture is active in being created by, and shaping, human action. Processual archaeology has been criticized for failing to address this possibility also, but it certainly recognizes that material culture involves human action in the form of selected choices, albeit that such choices are understood as functional and adaptive. David Clarke, pioneer of British New Archaeology, has characterized traditionalist archaeology as historical, qualitative, particularizing, literary, narrative, isolationist and authoritarian (Clarke 1972: 54). The historical philosophy of traditionalist archaeology comes from its relationship with Whig–Liberal historiography, the dominant form of historical framework perhaps as late as the 1960s in Britain. Untouched by subsequent developments in social history and cultural anthropology, traditionalist historic and prehistoric accounts attempt to create Whiggish narratives of cultural change, driven by teleological appeals to political change, i.e. prioritizing an inbuilt drive towards political outcomes.

This definition is not intended to undermine the quality of the data that traditionalists produce and work with. A glance over the relevant national period journals and local multi-period journals indicates the quantity of such research. *Norfolk Archaeology*, the journal of Norfolk archaeology and local history, celebrated 150 years of its society's existence last year (1996). In the past thirteen years it published 127 major papers and shorter notices. Of these, some twenty-seven concerned post-medieval material culture (after 1500 AD) using artefactual and site evidence, while post-medieval documentary studies (often of individuals or institutions) comprised a further nineteen. This is a very encouraging proportion of research, but the sample falls into narrow categories. Six of the twenty-seven papers concerned buildings, all except one now demolished, ruined or disused, and all with early sixteenth-century origins or earlier. Most of the twenty-seven papers focused on the seventeenth century. Developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries only appeared as brief episodes at the end of accounts of these building histories. The research questions behind the papers were predominantly concerned with establishing chronologies, ownership, occupation, function and typological significance, rather than with any explicit discussion of the relationship of the case study to wider research frameworks. The output of such a journal is a real mine of data, but such narrative case studies sit within a theoretical, and therefore interpretative, vacuum.

DEFINING ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

In order to understand why British post-medieval archaeology has been dominated by adherents of no explicit theoretical school, we can suggest that the traditionalists' definition of the discipline must be formulated in a way that is no longer shared by other communities of archaeological scholars. The foundation methods of the discipline (data collection and classification) if taken as an end in themselves can be seen to have a profound effect on the type of cultural products that are considered appropriate to study. It is equally the case that certain classes of data receive more or less attention according to the theoretical perspective of the researcher. For example, prehistoric house sites have received little attention from processual archaeologists, since the microscale of domestic activities has been considered as less important and detached from the macroscale problems of regional socio-economic organization (e.g. settlement patterns, trade and exchange) (Tringham 1991: 99). In contrast Marxist and feminist approaches can prioritize this: 'the analysis of social change at a microscale has long been recognised as an essential scale for the study of social relations of production, including gender relations, especially in non-capitalist or pre-capitalist social formations' (ibid.). Thus the analysis of house sites in the context of social change has been enabled by post-processual or contextual archaeologists. However, certain questions may not only be irrelevant to the central theoretical problems of one perspective. They may also appear to be more easily researched through other sources, usually texts, and be rejected for study on this ground alone.

To judge from the bulk of work dealing with the period after 1500, traditionalist archaeology survives in Britain particularly within the framework of post-medieval archaeology. Traditionalist questions are limited to low-level data compilation issues of how many, where, and what forms a given product takes. The cataloguing of medieval pottery is found to be appropriate for the discipline because of the lack of other sources for that information. Research into eighteenth-century factory porcelain can be rejected, because of the availability of written records and their assumed potential for answering the low-level questions (Anon. 1967: 1). Higher-level questions, concerning the *meanings* assigned to the pottery, may therefore be rejected in this formulation of the discipline as either impossible to answer with satisfactory proof or as lying within the province of social history. In other words, traditionalist archaeology implies a restrictive definition of what is correct and appropriate knowledge for archaeology. This results in the ontological problematization of archaeological knowledge within a recent historic period. Our contention is that this limited notion of archaeological research is inevitable if a conception of archaeology as concerned with collecting and classifying data within an outdated historical framework persists. In contrast, the adoption of an anthropological formulation of archaeology makes this particular search for ‘correct’ knowledge redundant.

The link between traditionalist and post-medieval archaeology is not exclusive. British archaeological research in historic periods after 1500 is being produced with social theory in mind, and has been influenced chiefly by American studies in historical archaeology. The ‘new wave’ of historical archaeologists in Britain is only just visible in the literature, but is becoming established through recent conferences (chiefly through the annual Theoretical Archaeology Group conference, the biggest research forum for British archaeology). Several new questions arise from this development: the relevance of American post-Columbian, colonial agendas, the relationship of archaeology to histories of the modern world, and the relevance of American treatments of archaeology as anthropology to British archaeology. In particular, what should British archaeology for the periods after 1500 call itself?

ARCHAEOLOGY IN HISTORIC PERIODS: THE RISE OF THE MODERN WORLD

Current American historical archaeology has its own specific historical trajectory. The excavation of colonial settlements in the USA and subsequent archaeological analysis have provoked debate since 1910 over the place of historical archaeology: as the handmaid to history (filling in textual gaps) or as anthropology (producing interpretations in its own right). Unlike in Britain, prehistoric archaeology has always been classified as deriving from anthropology. Historical archaeology, defined as a subfield of history by some early American practitioners, was initially proposed as a useful data provider, filling in gaps in the written record and locating known historical sites such as houses of prominent named settlers. Until developments in dating and designing questions of artefacts showed that American archaeologists could ask different questions from those asked by historians and get answers from material culture products it was in danger of appearing as a retrieval technique for antique collectors (Binford 1978; South 1978).

American historical archaeology is now firmly placed within the anthropological project of the exploration of the rise of the modern world. This general project itself evolved from a multi-disciplinary research expansion from the 1970s (Schuyler 1978: 252). In contrast, British archaeologists do not have a tradition of working *within* anthropology, and have preferred to treat archaeology as a separate discipline, albeit one that is closely related to anthropology. The potential place of historical archaeology in Britain is however exemplified by the place that American practice has shown can be found within an expanding discipline. Central archaeological concerns such as ethnicity, gender, kinship, the character of social relations of production or the meaning and transmission of style are all anthropological questions. They are more familiar to a British audience from research in prehistoric contexts, but are now found within historical archaeology. In the past quarter of a century, such questions have developed out of the exploration of the processes of change in human societies past and present, through material culture as the expression of ideational worlds.

THE RISE OF MODERN MATERIAL BEHAVIOUR: AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIFFERENCES

The general project of material culture studies in historic periods is to produce an ethnography of everyday life in a symbiotic relationship with documentary studies (Beaudry 1988: 1). The forms of such ethnographies in America are due to historically specific circumstances of settlement and colonization, immigration, social organization around slavery, politico-geographical divisions, contact and conflict with aboriginals. Broad social questions that arise from exploring the structure and meaning of material culture are therefore bound to address contextual circumstances. In American studies, this results in a focus on relations between, and the created identities within, ethnic groups. The chronological definition of historical archaeology is much simpler, taking the circumstances of colonization after *c.* 1500. Questions concerning the transmission of cultural attributes into colonial settlements resulted in the formulation of Deetz's influential model of the 'Georgian order'. In this, Georgian is taken to stand for a cultural shift to modernity (Deetz 1977: 39, 111–17). The different contextual circumstances of Britain and America call for consideration of the relevance of such approaches.

First, one of the strengths of some American work lies in its prioritization of social groups which are under- or unrepresented in the documentary record, for example the study of slave quarters and freed households (see Ferguson 1992; Orser 1991). Through its access to the material evidence of anonymous and illiterate groups of people whose experience is often left out of mainstream narrative histories, historical archaeology is particularly well placed to consider issues like wealth and social control in the past. This can be summarized as the drive to produce inclusive rather than exclusive history, finding a voice for 'immigrants, children, women, slaves and free African Americans in the models of social behaviour that are created through historical narratives' (Leone 1995: 251). For Britain, the same categories exist, although created for differing historical reasons, and deserve the same consideration. British history also embraced the slave trade, provided a new nation for immigrant groups and saw ethnic identities survive or vanish, but to date we lack research that addresses these groups and their relationship to material culture.

Second, the relationship between archaeology and history has to be thought out when examining the established chronological division between medieval and post-medieval archaeology in Britain (a relationship documented in Austin 1990). There is no comparable event in British history to the arrival of European colonizers with a completely alien culture. Historical archaeology has not yet become a standard term within British archaeology, and an older periodization into early medieval, medieval and post-medieval archaeology has been retained. Medieval archaeology ends with medieval history, and post-medieval starts with the historian's use of early modern, at 1500. This periodization does not seem to be in question for traditionalists, and can be presented without definition (see Crossley 1990). Industrial archaeology occasionally appears to succeed chronologically, tackling the period after 1750. This periodization is clearly very focused around medieval archaeology, and anything later is defined with reference to what it is not, i.e. *post* medieval.

The first question concerns the traditional periodization of the post-medieval. Recent work suggests that its definition in time between *c.* 1500 and *c.* 1750 is losing its appeal (not a new idea within history, Braudel 1973). Instead, the evolution of long-term structures found in the emerging modern world are located from 1400 (Johnson 1996: 17–19). The year 1750 looks equally open to question, relying on the arrival of an Industrial Revolution as a unique event. The need to closely define the rise of the modern world ignores the calls for the establishment of a sense of process and for contextualism in the production of archaeological interpretation. This problem has parallels elsewhere, for example in transitions in British prehistory. One idea might be to look at art-historical periodization, and borrow 'Renaissance archaeology' for 1400–1600, and to positively define Britain after 1600 as early modern, using an approximation of the historian's term. The question of how this would relate to the historian's use of modern for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is less clear, as 'modern archaeology' sounds very much like a statement about the contemporary nature of its practices. Both early modern and modern could be subsumed within the defintion 'later historic': is there, given our insistence on the importance of processes, any need to further divide the 'rise of modernity'? Perhaps this is too sweeping. There is an argument for considering a division in the early nineteenth century, given the substantial social and economic changes that can be traced after this time in contrast to the preceding decades. We then arrive at Renaissance, early modern and modern archaeology to take us up to the new millennium.

The need to consider the relationship between the two disciplines of archaeology and history has been raised not only by the internal history of American historical archaeology, but also by traditionalist British archaeology's adoption of an illustrative, gap-filling role. No discipline of maturity can carry this remit: where there is material culture, there can be an archaeological analysis and interpretation (see an early use of contemporary culture for teaching purposes, Gould and Schiffer (eds) 1978). The development of archaeological theory has established the value of looking to other disciplines that can contribute to understanding material culture, such as sociology, historical geography or literary theory. For Renaissance and later historical archaeology, modern history's interest in popular culture must be an essential component to finding Leone's absent people. One example would be the rise in interest in consumption studies, highlighting mass consumption and the constitution of identity (summarized in Glennie 1995).

It is notable that none of the contributors to this volume have felt it necessary to justify their studies either to archaeologists or to historians as a legitimate approach to the early modern and modern periods. In the past, relationships both with historians and with archaeologists of earlier periods have been the source of some tension, as historical archaeologists have struggled against what they have perceived as a double marginalization. We hope that the absence of this discussion from the chapters of this volume signals the development of a more mature relationship between social history and British historical archaeology. The editors and contributors to this volume do not have a combative relationship with social history as a discipline. Matthew Johnson has pointed out that as historians develop an understanding of the text as material culture, attending to the context of production and use, and as archaeologists try to 'read' archaeological material through interpretive strategies developed in the study of texts, the two disciplines are increasingly elided in any case (Johnson 1996: 14).

Reading into the output of another discipline demands familiarization with its agendas, methods and sources if we are not to make elementary misuse of what we identify as results to be imported into our own work (a familiar problem for non-scientists trying to use scientific reports in archaeology). Ideally, historical archaeologists should be willing to learn about the production of history from historians. Without an understanding of the discipline that has to a large extent set up the narrative framework for the historic periods we are concerned with here, we place ourselves in a poor position to comment upon and enhance that framework.

So far we have supported moves to bring recent centuries of British history well within archaeology's ambit, suggested refinements of the traditional periodization, and called for historical archaeologists not only to be proficient in the core skills of dealing with material culture but also to develop mature understandings of the business of writing history. For the specialist researcher, this may be an obvious qualification, but how does this apply to generalists working in field units and consultancies around Britain?

While some larger units support period-specialist managers, most fieldwork undertaken in advance of development is led by managers used to dealing with a range of site types and chronological divisions. Two problems affect the recovery and interpretation of post-medieval (literally defined as after 1500) data. The first is that archaeologists who work within the English and Welsh planning system issue briefs requiring archaeological intervention prior to the development or alteration of sites. These archaeologists, working within structures of management of the archaeological resource or heritage, are in practice curators of field archaeology. Their decisions as to the value of post-medieval archaeology can therefore make or break the successful recovery and interpretation of recent centuries of material activity. As Gould notes in this volume, valuing the recent past is not an automatic part of managing our archaeological heritage. The curators must be convinced of the potential value of collecting such data for answering wider social questions in order to provide the basis for more developed interpretations. Again, 'post-medieval' archaeologists need to become aware of the problems inherent in defining their subject too narrowly.

Once the archaeological brief is issued and taken up by an archaeological contractor, the second problem may arise with the level of interpretation that results from the fieldwork. Arguably, the low level of interpretation, usually no more than a summary description of results, required of most rescue projects is a multi-period problem, and a structural problem in British field archaeology that has not been resolved since policy statements on publication standards began. A problem that particularly affects post-medieval archaeology is the full publication of only certain phases of a multi-phase site, excluding post-1500 levels. Most of the contributions to this volume are the result of individual research projects, conceived and carried out by a single researcher. There is as yet little sense in British archaeology of a research community addressing similar questions or undertaking collaborative research. Such a community of specialist historical archaeologists should be seen to be taking a question-driven approach, and to encourage high-level interpretations in a way that current specialist research groups (such as the Neolithic Studies Group) have demonstrated to be effective in involving curatorial and contracting archaeologists. The latest layers of a site may then have a chance to be published and ultimately form part of a synthetic statement, if their place in a research agenda is understood. In the future, more open and perhaps formalized structures of communication can only benefit the social archaeology of the last 400 years.

The complaint about the lack of resources will probably sound familiar to all archaeologists, as indeed it will to those engaged in academic research in all disciplines in Britain today. But the archaeology of the familiar past poses particular problems: developers, for whom archaeology is often synonymous with prehistory, can be unable or unwilling to recognize the importance of archaeological research into later periods; some of the funding bodies responsible for resourcing larger-scale archaeological projects share this prejudice. As a result of these factors there is a noticeable paucity of large-scale and ambitious research projects into later historical periods in Britain. There are no research-driven excavation projects, for example, on a scale which corresponds to the large excavation and survey projects around prehistoric or early historic sites. Where larger projects do occur they tend to be rescue- rather than research-driven, bringing together the results of a number of different small archaeological rescue projects which were never selected to be part of a research programme, such as the Norwich Survey which operated between 1971 and 1978 (Atkin and Evans 1982: 92).

INCLUSIVE OR EXCLUSIVE?

Fieldwork is one of the most direct links professionals have with the tax-paying local and visiting public. A visitor-friendly urban excavation site can attract media and public interest, and regular visitors can see the changes archaeologists make to the site, long before the changes that previous occupiers have made are published by the archaeologists (Matthews, this volume). Such sites, just as standing buildings, have a present existence that includes, for instance, recent attrition through bomb damage in World War II or municipal car park provision and the development that succeeds the rescue excavation: these material interventions are part of the story as much as the early Saxon post-holes. We began this discussion arguing that historical archaeology had so much to offer through the range of sources available and directness of experience for the public, often because landscapes and townscapes are visible and accessible. An archaeology of the local community should incorporate the recent past in a way that elucidates the form and significance of change and survival in the physical environment. For example, Ross on Wye is a small market town in Herefordshire. In the centre of Ross on Wye is a mid-seventeenth-century market-cum-court hall, recently put to new use as a heritage centre. It contains an interactive video on the archaeology of the locality up to the Saxons, but does not discuss the changes to the building (a large and externally intact timber-framed open ground floor and single-room upper floor) and its market square. The designers of the heritage centre have ignored the context of their display. The impressive physical presence of the building is a perfect vehicle for exploring the relationship of its material form to its social history: how it survived to the present, the historical changes it has witnessed, perhaps exemplified by the rise and fall of markets, the significance of the upper room, and its role as a centre of control.

Much of this part of the discussion has dealt implicitly with the public accountability of archaeologists. Shanks and Tilley have put forward more stringent ideas about the nature of the power of our discipline to select and discard material evidence about different groups of people, and about ownership of the past (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Their call for the recognition of the inherent power relations involved in the selection of appropriate research areas should have resonance for historical archaeology, dealing as it should with marginalized groups, disempowered voices and the complexities in creating and defining communities in space and time. Let us not be shy of problematizing our own modern society and of seeking out the unfamiliar or reinventing the familiar.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS VOLUME

The fourteen chapers gathered here are grouped by related topical themes, in internal chronological order. They are supported by the Introduction, which seeks to identify how historical archaeology can and does operate within the discipline of archaeology in Britain. 'Afterwords Across the Atlantic' continues to debate the 'archaeology of history'. Sarah Tarlow explores the broad substantive themes found across the chapters and identifies further areas of work. Charles Orser comments on Old and New World intellectual positions, and looks towards global collaboration.

The first section, The Familiar Past?', introduces topics that are explicitly supra-regional in their scope. Roger Leech discusses the origins of modernity in urban contexts through a review of approaches to urban space, consumption and the relationships of excavated, above-ground and textual evidence. Drawing on historical and archaeological work, identifying the potential for a historical anthropology of food using integrated evidence, Sara Pennell presents a detailed overview of approaches to studying food. Alasdair Brooks shows how social and historical models of nationalism can influence material culture analysis.

'Familiar Spaces' takes three case studies of classes of well-known elite buildings that receive individual substantive treatments. Matthew Johnson deals with the transition from medieval to modern through the parallel changes in the reconstruction of individual identities and the reassigning of meanings to high-ranking castles. Kate Giles also explores this transition, and focuses on corporate identity and the physical changes to medieval guildhalls that facilitated their continuity of meaningful use. Susie West identifies the potential for 'de-familiarizing' the English country house as constructed in architectural historians' accounts through social questions that can be explored by spatial analysis.

'Breeding Contempt' turns from the 'polite' to architecture of the masses. Gavin Lucas traces the history of an urban site that began as a late eighteenth-century workhouse and is currently a college of further education, and uses themes of social control and group identities. Shane Gould relates the current good practice of a county archaeological unit in valuing post-medieval archaeology to specific case studies of institutions and social space. Keith Matthews discusses an excavation of a later nineteenth-century slum courtyard, and the class relations of its existence and clearance, with the public interest generated through its excavation.

In 'Familiar Spirits' Sarah Tarlow problematizes changes in memorial forms and inscriptions as a response in the modern period to the decay of the dead body, linking a greater degree of individualization in commemorative practice to attitudes towards the self and the body. Susan Buckham shows how consumerist issues can be explored through the relationship of the producer and consumer of nineteenth-century gravestones, using documentary and material evidence to identify choice and negotiation in the marketplace. Harold Mytum addresses issues of identity through the construction of a specific monument form in a Welsh context.

'Old Familiar Places' returns to the need to de-familiarize, in relation to landscape issues. John Carman proposes ways of re-evaluating the significance of battlefields, now grassy meadows but once bloody. Tom Williamson offers a review of the archaeological treatment of gardens in the wider context of reshaping the landscape for pleasure, and through historically specific issues of eighteenth-century gardens.

This volume aims to demonstrate the potential of approaches to complex social issues arising from the emergence of modernity in Britain. We hope it will be of value to researchers who, like those published here, are seeking inspiration for how historical archaeology can operate in a British context. To some extent, we offer a manifesto for later historical archaeology in Britain. By this, we do not mean to constrain future research but rather to expand and facilitate innovative and unfamiliar ways of looking at the last 500 years of British history.

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Part I

THE FAMILIAR PAST?

2

THE PROCESSIONAL CITY

Some issues for historical archaeology

Roger Leech

Bristol, 21 September 1743

The new Exchange for Bristol was opened with great pomp and ceremony on 21 September 1743. A contemporary account of the events of that day provides an insight into the nature and structure of authority and society in one of England's largest provincial cities, as seen through the eyes of the architect of the Exchange, John Wood the elder (Wood 1745).

Dawn was announced with the firing of cannon from the slopes above the city and with ships dressed in their proper colours. The authority of the corporation was heard and seen to extend over land and sea. Bells were rung and flags were hung – from some of the churches. Not all religious groups were sympathetic to the proceedings of the corporation. As the morning continued, the workmen who had been engaged in building the Exchange, the prisoners held in Newgate for debt and the almspeople of the city all in various ways enjoyed the favour of the mayor. It was important that 'all Denominations of Men' be cheered.

To the 'infinite number of people' lining the streets the main event of the day was the procession. This was led by the master and then the boys of the hospitals, governed by the Society of Merchants and by the mayor and aldermen, in that order, followed by the exchange-keeper. Next walked the city companies, their order determined by an ordinance of 1719 but somewhat altered 'by the hurry of the day'. In an ascending order of importance marched the barber-surgeons with music, the weavers and then the tailors. Behind came the city music, followed then by the city officers, walking 'according to their rank, the inferior officers first', the mayor, aldermen and one of the members of parliament coming last, then other members of the corporation. At the end of this long line were the master and members of the Merchants' Hall, a long train of carriages following.

This very lengthy procession must have commenced at the head of the quay, winding its way through the principal streets of the city to terminate some two hours later at the Exchange. Following the opening ceremonies the various parties went their separate ways, the merchants and mayor to regale themselves with bread and wine, the workmen likewise to a place appointed for them to dine, the populace retaining possession of the opening place within the Exchange, scrambling for copper coin thrown by gentlemen for 'the better opportunity of increasing their sport'.

In a mercantile city and for such an occasion, it was particularly appropriate for the procession to be led and concluded by representatives of merchant charity and authority. The order of the procession and the events of the day said much of priorities and rank in mid-eighteenth-century Bristol. Those participating, and Wood himself, were deeply conscious of their position in society.

THE CHANGING EXPERIENCE OF THE EARLY MODERN CITY

Urban society in early modern England continues to be much studied by historians. It might be questioned whether historical archaeologists, with their concern for the material world, have anything to contribute. In this short chapter, I wish to explore just two notions drawing on the material evidence, which, it will be argued, might extend historical understanding of the changing experience of the city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first is the amorphous movement of the crowds through the city streets, the populace of infinite number, mere spectators to the procession of September 1743. The second is the deeply layered structure of society, evident not simply within the procession, but also in the streets through which the procession did or did not pass.

The crowd

The movement of the populace through the streets was an essential part of life in the early modern city. We can come closer to this experience through eye-witness accounts, such as those of Pepys, Fiennes or Defoe, or through a range of documentary sources, skilfully culled to provide a generalized picture of walking the city streets (Corfield 1989). We can come closer still by grounding these experiences in their contemporary material worlds. Two examples must suffice.

One of the great crowd-pullers of seventeenth-century London was the fair held annually in the week centred on St Bartholomew's Day. Although the long lines of booths typical of a fairground were replaced by more substantial houses between 1598 and 1612, the fair continued to be held for many more years, the ground-floor shops of the houses being given over annually to the purposes of the fair. Recent research has shown how most of the houses were provided with two entrances, one to the ground-floor shop, the other to the stairs and upper chambers. Knowing that the booths of the fair had been replaced by substantial houses by 1612 provides a new context and dimension to the picture of the fair given in Ben Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair*. Although the play was first performed in 1612, no mention is made of the approximately 175 new houses, notwithstanding that this was one of the largest housing developments to have been undertaken in London since the thirteenth century (see Fig. 2.1). To Jonson, as seen through the words and actions of the characters in his play, the noise, deceits and characters of the fair were all absorbing. His eyes did not venture upwards to the new jettied facades of row upon row of three-and-a-half-storey houses. That the booths had now become the permanent ground-floor shops of storeyed dwellings was inconsequential to those for whom the fair was of all-consuming interest (Leech 1997a).

A rather different but contemporary attraction for the crowds in the city streets was on the opposite side of Bristol Bridge to the route of the procession of September 1743. Archaeological excavations undertaken in 1981 showed that downstream from the bridge were two docks, both passing out of use in the fourteenth century, one filled from its eastern and southern sides, 'mainly with organic refuse', the other subsequently filled with 'highly organic refuse' (Williams 1982: 13). The organic refuse clearly made some impression on the excavators. It can now be shown that these docks were by 1473 the site for 'a certain draught called "Avenprevey"', by 1627 known as the 'Common Privie' (Wadley 1886: 152; Livock 1966: 155; a 'draught' was a cess pit or privy). This was approached from the bridge by a narrow lane recorded by 1473 and again in 1574. By 1627 this lane passed below the great house built behind the river front and backing on to Redcliff Street. Bristol Bridge, like its larger counterpart in London, was one of the commercial centres of the city. The constant daytime procession to the common privy, sufficient over several centuries to fill two entire docks, was another experience to those walking the city streets. To alderman Robert Rogers, a soapmaker and the occupier of the great house, its presence had not been sufficient to discourage the investment which he necessarily made, to build a new house extending over several previously separate ownerships of land (Latimer 1900: 107).

These new insights into two experiences of walking the city streets remind us that what may seem normal or repellent today was not necessarily so to the inhabitants of the early modern city. Here too we are reminded that the archaeology of the recent past may be deceptively familiar: 'each new scholarly incursion into the pre-industrial past seems to remove the lives of ordinary people further from our own' (Chappell 1994: 167).

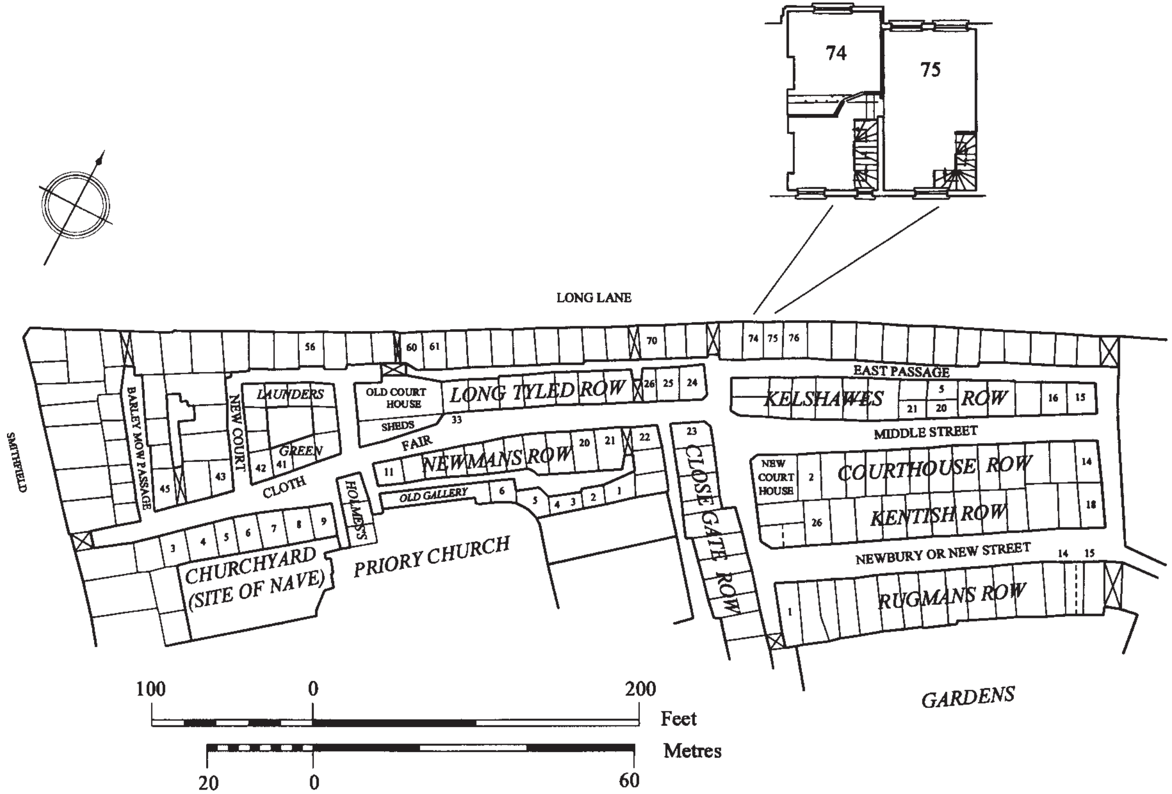
74
75
LONG LANE
SMITHFIELD
BARLEY MOW PASSAGE
NEW COURT
LAUNDERS
GREEN
CLOTH
OLD COURT HOUSE
SHEDS
FAIR
LONG TYLED ROW
NEWMANS ROW
OLD GALLERY
HOLMES'S
CHURCHYARD (SITE OF NAVE)
PRIORY CHURCH
CLOSE GATE ROW
EAST PASSAGE
KELSHAWES ROW
MIDDLE STREET
NEW COURT HOUSE
COURTHOUSE ROW
KENTISH ROW
NEWBURY OR NEW STREET
RUGMANS ROW
GARDENS
100
0
200
Feet
Metres
20
0
60

Figure 2.1 Bartholomew Fair, the new houses of 1598–1612, showing the location and details of no. 74 Long Lane, recently identified as a house of *c.* 1598, one of approximately 175 replacing the booths of the fair

The processional city

The procession of September 1743 passed through a city which was itself a 'processional landscape', a term first coined for the rural and deeply hierarchical landscapes of Virginia in the eighteenth century (Upton 1986: 213). The processional landscape of the seaport city had at its heart the houses and commercial base of the mercantile elite. Walking the streets was, like passing through the plantations of Virginia, a series of fragmented experiences, a form of architectural discourse, drawing through observation of the material world on the overt symbols and less obvious meanings of wealth, taste and authority (Herman 1995).

In North America one of the strengths of historical archaeology and vernacular architecture studies has been the interplay between the material and the documented record. The archaeological research in Charleston has depended heavily on the identification of individual ownerships, enabling the material record to be used in an already partly understood context (Zierden and Calhoun 1984 and 1986). The much-cited garden of William Paca in Annapolis could not have been explored outside its context in the documented historical record (Leone 1984). The architectural and social topography of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, has similarly drawn on both 'objects as texts', in this case houses, and their context in terms of the identity of builders, owners and occupiers (Herman 1995). A further study also drawing on Annapolis, of a Chesapeake family and its slaves, has again made extensive use of historical sources (Yentsch 1994).

This last study exemplifies also a second strength of the North American approach. The studies of urban communities in Charleston, New York and Annapolis have each been set firmly within the framework of cultural anthropology. In New York, former New Amsterdam, archaeological excavations and the study of urban anthropology constituted the background to a processualist study of the city's social and spatial organization (Rothschild 1990). Yentsch's study, conceived of as anthropological history, sets out with considerable success to portray the world of the eighteenth-century Chesapeake on its own terms (ibid.: 292–330).

Historians have devoted much print to unravelling the complexities of the changing social structure of the early modern city in England. Much effort has been expended on the utilization of data for tax distributions and occupational categories (Schwarz 1982; Corfield 1987). Occupation has been seen as 'an unavoidable social indicator for sociologists and historians' (Green 1990: 164). It is also one which presents considerable difficulties in its use. A study of working and living in early nineteenth-century Westminster concluded that 'virtually every attempt to construct meaningful occupational categories for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century populations . . . has failed to meet with general acceptance' (Phillips 1990: 184).

The approaches taken by North American scholars highlight that there is considerable potential for historical archaeologists to contribute to the debate on the changing social structure of the early modern city. Simplistically this might see life styles, interpreted through the reading of the material world, as indicators of class identities. This, though, would be a misreading. Much more might be gained by seeing the constancies and changes of life styles as shaping social and historical process (Yentsch 1994: 296; see Friedrichs 1995: 332 for a historian's perspective).

Life styles might be seen as, in large part, the product of the home or 'habitus', structured by the most fundamental oppositions of social class, 'high/low', 'rich/poor', etc. Life styles are governed by taste: 'a change in social position puts the habitus into new conditions . . . it is taste – the taste of necessity or the taste of luxury – and not high or low income which commands the practices objectively adjusted to these resources' (Bourdieu 1989: 172–5). Taste might also signify character ideals. The subjective meanings which guide consumer action might be central to understanding consumer behaviour. In the eighteenth century, and indeed earlier, the romantic ideal might have directed a significant proportion of the demand for 'expressive' goods such as pictures and musical instruments (Campbell 1993: 46–55).

Taste, it has been suggested, is also an important explanation for why towns and cities were in the forefront of adopting distinctive life styles. Lorna Weatherill was thought to be closest to providing such an answer when she wrote that people in towns 'were liable to meet others and to learn about consumption and to have the opportunity to present themselves in a variety of different situations' (Weatherill 1988: 89; discussed by Carson 1994: 609–10). This might be seen as a long-lived city-phenomenon. Even by the sixteenth century, the tightly packed life of the city had made the Italian nobility more susceptible to emulative display than previously (Burke 1993: 157).

In focusing on changes in consumption, historical studies have highlighted the period from 1650 onwards as being of particular importance, a consumer revolution, with the Industrial Revolution following in response (see especially Brewer and Porter (eds) 1993; McEndrick, Brewer and Plumb (eds) 1982; Shammas 1990). Carson's important critique of consumerism on both sides of the Atlantic has urged that, in looking at changes in consumer behaviour, we must extend our horizons back beyond the beginning of the eighteenth century, if not into the sixteenth century; for archaeologists to describe these changes as 'Georgianization' is to use 'a term as awkward as it is inaccurate' (Carson 1994: see esp. 486–95, 553–4, 607 and 683–8).

A focus on consumption is also intrinsically of wider significance. It has been argued that the considerable and almost explosive interest in consumption throughout the social sciences has placed it in the 'vanguard of history' (Miller (ed.) 1995: 1). Until recently a subject of extraordinary academic neglect, consumption and the world of goods must be of more than passing importance to historical archaeology.

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE EARLY MODERN CITY: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

In taking a world-view of consumption from *c.* 1500 to 1800, Peter Burke has highlighted a methodological problem – what are the sources? Some, notably probate inventories, are well known, but others demand much further exploration: 'we need an archaeology of early modern Europe, not only in the metaphorical sense associated with Michel Foucault but also in the literal sense' (Burke 1993: 150). In extending our understanding of social change and consumer behaviour in the early modern city, archaeologists and architectural historians, recording and interpreting the material world, the world of taste and consumers, might therefore have much to contribute. 'The lack of information about ordinary living and working conditions, in even relatively literate societies, in relatively recent times, is very striking' (Priestley and Corfield 1982: 93). A brief look at London and Bristol will reveal some of the problems and possibilities for widening our understanding of class and consumption in the deceptively familiar recent past.

One problem has been that, in England, archaeologists have not been over anxious to use the evidence from the material world, to explore further the social experiences of the early modern city. In Bristol, for instance, there have been numerous excavations of houses and tenement plots occupied in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But little use has been made of this information to probe how the inhabitants of this city engaged with the material world in relation to and with one another. Rather, the focus of most work concerned explicitly with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been the manufacture of ceramics and clay tobacco pipes.

Research into living and working conditions within the early modern city in England might be undertaken most profitably in suburbs newly created in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where tenurial boundaries are often more easily identified, and where archaeological interpretation may be facilitated by the absence of earlier deep deposits. In Bristol such areas are easily identified. Towards the centre of the city, streets of new houses were built on the site of the castle demolished in 1656. Most of those in Castle Street were two-room-deep houses for 'the middling sort', with shops at the ground floor, and an increasing number of smaller houses being built in the yards and gardens by the end of the century. Castle Green was initially a street of entirely residential houses for some of the wealthiest citizens, the first such street in the seventeenth-century city. Documents provide good information on the identities and religious affiliations of the successive inhabitants of these streets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Chalklin 1989: 105–6; Leech forthcoming). Much evidence for the material life and taste of these townspeople must be encapsulated in what is now an open city park; some could reside in the data from as yet unpublished excavations of the castle from 1967 onwards (see Ponsford 1979). A second and contrasting

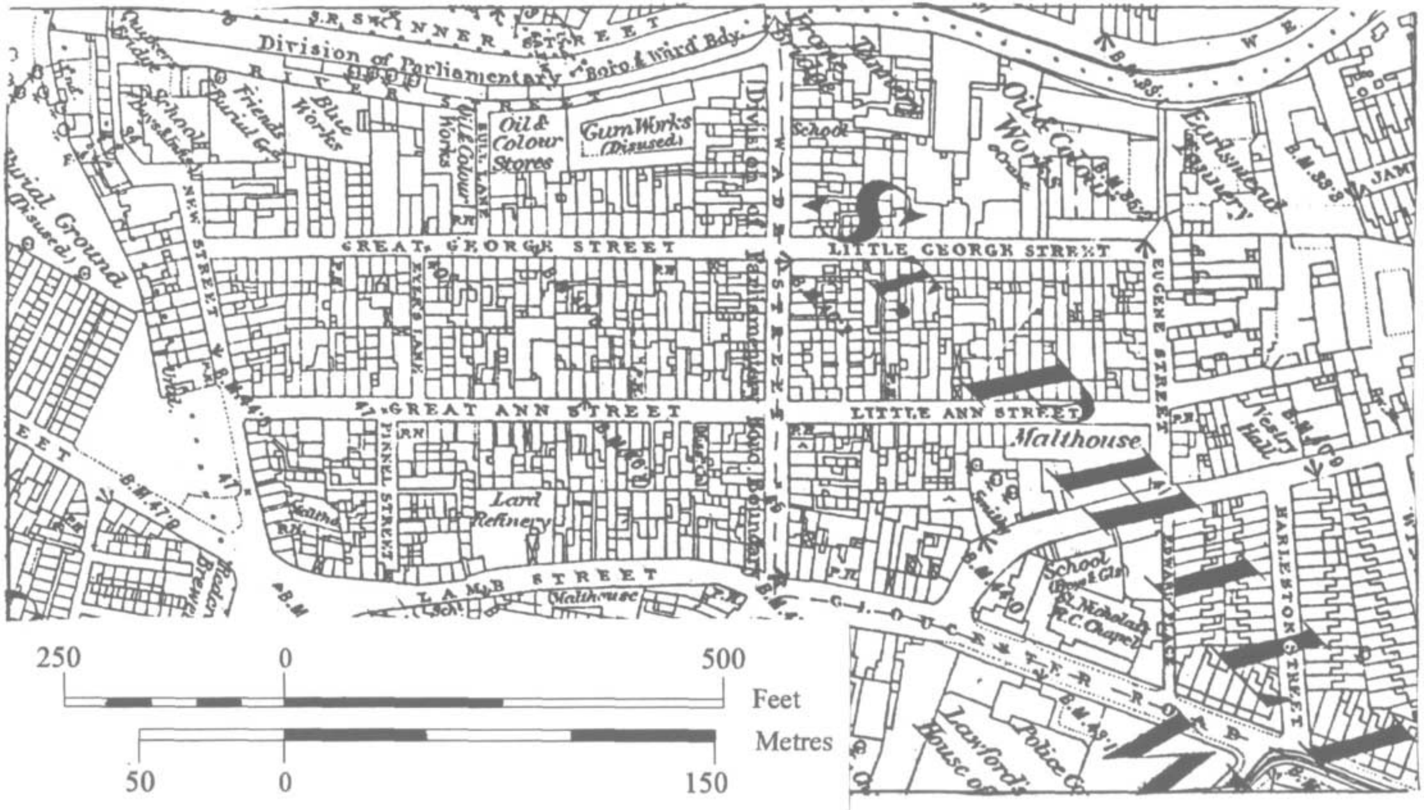
Division of Parliamentary Boro & Ward Bdy.
SKINNER STREET
Quakers Bridge
Schools (Boys & Inf.)
Friends Burial Gd.
Blue Works
Oil & Colour Works
BULL LANE
Oil & Colour Stores
Gum Works (Disused)
Division of Parliamentary Boro. Boundary
WADE STREET
Frome Bridge
Tannery
School
Oil & Colour Works
Earlsmead Tannery
Burial Ground (Disused)
NEW STREET
GREAT GEORGE STREET
LITTLE GEORGE STREET
EUGENE STREET
EYER'S LANE
GREAT ANN STREET
LITTLE ANN STREET
Malthouse
Vestry Hall
PINNEL STREET
Lard Refinery
LAMB STREET
Malthouse
Redcn Brewery
School (Boys & Girls)
St. Nicholas R.C. Chapel
EDWARD PLACE
HARLESTON STREET
Police Ct.
Lawford's House
250
0
500
Feet
Metres
50
0
150

Figure 2.2 Great and Little George Streets, Great and Little Ann Streets, and Wade Street, were the principal thoroughfares of the estate developed by Nathaniel Wade in the 1710s, initially populated mainly by craftsmen and artisans, the tenement pattern shown here as in 1884. Substantial parts of the estate are now open space between surrounding flats of the 1930s. This is an archaeological site of potentially outstanding importance

area of Bristol is one which was noted in the 1710s by Daniel Defoe (see Fig. 2.2). 'There is one remarkable part of the city where the liberties extend not at all, or but very little without the city gate. Here and nowhere else, they have an accession of new inhabitants; and abundance of new houses, nay some streets are built' (Rogers (ed.) 1971: 362). This was the estate developed by Nathaniel Wade in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, predominantly of one-room-deep houses, inhabited almost entirely by artisans and craftsmen (Leech 1981: 17). Most of the area was redeveloped following slum clearance in the 1930s, considerable areas of land being left as open space. Here, even more so than in the castle, the evidence for the material life and taste of the inhabitants of these streets must largely lie in the below-ground archaeology.

Such research is perhaps more difficult in the complex townscapes of long-lived city centres. In London, Cheapside before the Great Fire has been the subject of intense investigation by archaeologists and historians. In sketching the broad pattern of social and economic change before the fire, it was concluded that 'the archaeological evidence, unfortunately, makes only a limited contribution to our knowledge of these developments' (Keene 1990: 192). This should not be a deterrent to the investigation of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century suburbs of East London. The extensive excavation of a row of at least eight dwellings to the south of Aldgate, undertaken in 1974, provided the material evidence for the life style of a community of relatively poor residents, not accessible through the documentary sources (Thompson, Grew and Schofield 1984).

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY, THE CONTINUUM AND THE ELITE

A different problem is that, in London and Bristol, architectural historians have seen the classical architecture of the Georgian period as a distinct entity, almost divorced from the world that preceded it. The seventeenth century has come to be seen as a great divide between the medieval world and that inspired by Palladio. Before the Great Fire London was largely a medieval city, now the subject of *Medieval London Houses* (Schofield 1995). The origins of later seventeenth-century and especially Georgian London have usually been seen as residing first in Inigo Jones and the introduction of Palladian architecture into England, and second in the post-Great Fire rebuilding. These twin paradigms have continued to dominate thinking on the origins and development of the Georgian city, seeing the seventeenth century, and these events in particular, as a cultural break in the building of urban houses in the metropolis (Summerson 1969: 27–51; Downes 1979: 8–9; Cruickshank and Burton 1990: xiii–xv). Only recently has it been argued that there was far less of a divide. Newly planned streets, brick houses and a taste for amenity were all to be found in the redevelopment of St Bartholomew's

Fairground, from 1598 onwards (Leech 1997a). The town house in Bristol has been viewed from a similar perspective. There have been at least three studies of the Georgian period (Denning 1923; Ison 1952; Mowl 1991), but only latterly has research begun to examine the developments of the eighteenth century in the context of life in the seventeenth-century and earlier city (Leech forthcoming). It is by looking at the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a continuum that we are likely to understand the changing structure of society and the growth of urban consumerism.

Architectural historians concerned with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century city have also tended to focus on the life style of the elite. Schofield's study of medieval London houses spans society at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but the occupants of the smallest houses, and particularly their relationship to the wealthier groups in society, receive little attention, effectively one paragraph (Schofield 1995: 53). An important study of the London house in the later seventeenth century was very much concerned with those situated in the smarter streets of London as it extended westwards (Kelsall 1974). Studies of the Georgian house in London have focused very much on the houses of the wealthier sections of society. The population of London's East End had reached 60,000 by *c.* 1700, but, beyond Spitalfields (for which see Survey of London 1957), merits not a mention in *Life in the Georgian City* (Cruickshank and Burton 1990). In 1978 it was said, with particular reference to London's East End, that 'we know too little of the merchants and craftsmen who lived in the towns, to worry overmuch about mean streets and obscure people on the periphery' (Power 1978: 29). Looking specifically at Shadwell, the same writer concluded that 'very little direct evidence survives of the wealth and style of life of east Londoners at this period, certainly to rank different occupation groups in a pecking order' (ibid.: 113). This observation returns us to the concept that the material evidence for wealth and life style is central to understanding social change.

DISTINCT LIVES

In recent years archaeologists and historians have moved away from avowedly scientific statistically based generalizations to focusing on the lives of individuals. Archaeological investigation of carefully targeted and documented tenement plots has the potential to provide some very interesting stories of individual lives. This move towards the lives of individuals need not exclude the normative statement. The recent work on the redevelopment of St Bartholomew's Fairground has identified many of the early seventeenth-century occupants of the newly built houses. John Havers was the tenant of no. 74 Long Lane, a recently identified surviving house of *c.* 1598 (see Fig. 2.1). His house was of identical arrangement to at least 140 others, a shop on the ground floor, a cellar below, two chambers and a garret above (Leech 1997a). Here, generalizations can proceed from individual lives.

The detailed documentary research on which such identifications are necessarily based might be extended to those whose possessions were listed at probate in inventories. Much work has been undertaken by historians examining probate inventories, notably looking at consumer behaviour (Weatherill 1988; Shammas 1990), based almost entirely on samples of inventories, sometimes from broad regional or rural/urban categories. The most detailed study for any city has been that of Norwich, one of its main objectives being 'to investigate the uses to which rooms were put and their change through time', the houses being those of a range of Norwich inhabitants 'of markedly varying wealth and social standing' (Priestley and Corfield 1982). The difficulties of using inventories as a basis for statistical analysis were, though, well recognized, and, perhaps for this reason, no attempt was made to tease out more information on the structure of Norwich society from this body of evidence.

In Norwich it proved possible to link only two inventories with identified houses. Current research in Bristol has proved much more productive in this respect, enabling an approach which has focused on the lives of individuals in identified houses or locations. Used together, inventories and the material record of *habitus* reveal distinct life styles, most clearly different from one another when fundamentally opposed. Two examples can be given.

To at least the 1660s, the houses of a number of wealthy merchants included a 'hall', that is an open hall, generally unheated, still furnished with weapons, bucks' horns, pictures, tables and chairs or forms, but little else. Sir Henry Creswick's house in Small Street, the contents of its rooms listed in his inventory of 1668, was typical of these houses. His open hall was an early sixteenth-century refashioning of an aisled hall of the late twelfth century. It was one of many rooms, but it was the also the largest and occupied a central position in the house. Creswick's father, Sir Francis, had started his working life as apprentice to a Bristol hardwareman in 1598 and was admitted as a burgess in 1608. An ardent royalist, he had sheltered both Charles I and the future Charles II here in 1643, before having his estate sequestered in 1646. For his son, Sir Henry, the open hall was not a room for living in; the contents did not even include a pair of andirons for the fire. Rather it served to emphasize the family's position. Weaponry signified gentry status, whilst a hanging ship indicated the position of the Creswicks in the merchant community. Adorned with the arms of Elizabeth, it certainly served to gloss over Sir Francis's apprenticeship in hardware, begun five years before the death of the late queen. Six years after the Restoration, this medieval open hall, beatified by the presence of the martyred king, must have provided ample legitimacy to a very new-founded urban dynasty (McGrath 1968: 92–7; Latimer 1900: 183; Leech 1997b: 158–9).

Recently built or constructed in that same decade, the inhabitants of the new and substantial three-and-a-half-storey houses in Castle Street lived without 'halls', open or otherwise (see Fig. 2.2). Typical in its organization was no. 59, the house of Flower Hunt and his family. The will and inventory of Hunt, who died in 1672, used in conjunction with the records of adjacent houses, provide a very clear picture of his life style and aspirations (Leech forthcoming). On the ground floor were a shop and kitchen, the rooms above the 'forestreet' and 'back chamber', those on the second floor similarly named, but prefixed 'upper', with 'garrets' above. Behind the house, and distinguishing the Hunts from their neighbours, were the working rooms, equipped for the manufacture of clay tobacco pipes; these would be of consuming interest to the post-medieval archaeologist (no. 59 should be added to the list of kiln sites given by Peacey 1996). In his bequests to his sons, Flower Hunt viewed his family's legitimate position in society as resting sufficiently on the tools of his craft and his silverware. The latter included his two inlaid muskets, but these were kept in the kitchen along with the close stool, not in a medieval open hall adorned with the royal arms. Hunt's real concerns were perhaps for his pipe-maker's vices and tools, for these were the sole subject of a final codicil to his will. The organization of his house and his view of life were fundamentally distinct from those of Creswick.

Living in a house with an open hall at its centre, used not for everyday living but for the assertion of position and legitimacy, and living over the shop and with the tools of one's trade, were two of a number of life styles, some more precisely definable than others. Grounded in real lives, interpreted through both the material and the documentary record, these differences provide a new level of complexity to the map of the seventeenth-century city, one that will need to be examined against the claims made by historians, working almost entirely from documents, for the ways in which the social topography of Bristol changed between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries (Sacks 1991: 146–9, 356–7; Barry 1985: 79–80).

These distinctions also throw new light on some of the conclusions of the Norwich analysis: after 1655 'halls are found less often in the inventories of small houses, until, after 1705, no inventory of a house with less than 5 rooms mentions a hall, and 71 per cent of halls are found in houses of 10 rooms or more' (Priestley and Corfield 1982: 105). The identification of individual lives might show that these distinctions are not simply ones of degree related to numbers of rooms, but clear and significant differences between distinct life styles with their own separate and peculiarly urban genealogies (which would require more space for discussion than is available here) – distinction in Bourdieu's sense.

For the larger towns and cities, the sampling and statistical approaches generally adopted for the study of inventories may therefore have been most misleading.

Excessively normative statements may well have masked the material evidence for quite real differences in life style between social groups.

THE UNFULFILLED ROLE OF HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The 'processional city' offers a rich harvest to the archaeologist concerned to investigate the social experience of the early modern large urban centre. Even by the end of the medieval period, there were vast differences in wealth between the richest merchants and landless newcomers (Britnell 1993: 230). It has been said that 'the dialectic of conditions and *habitus* is the basis of an alchemy which transforms the distribution of capital, the balance-sheet of a power relation, into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties' (Bourdieu 1989: 172). Historians of the early modern city have been much concerned to tease out the beginnings of merchant capitalism. David Sacks has argued that 'Bristol's history between 1450 and 1700 created a center of early modern capitalism out of a medieval commercial town'. To a citizen of the fifteenth century, 'Bristol had appeared as a replica of the cosmos, an ordered and harmonious arrangement of parts that made a unified whole'. By the 1670s the social and religious geography of the city had been transformed, these changes reflecting the emergence of a capitalism itself born of the growth of the Atlantic economy and the new political conditions of Restoration England (Sacks 1991: 331–62). These are questions linked intimately to matters of taste. Increasingly, or perhaps for longer than we or Sacks have realized, consumers had determined, through their own individual choices and taste (be it the taste of luxury or that of necessity), where to live and how their houses might be organized and furnished. Archaeology, below and above ground, linked when appropriate to the use of documents, has a vital and as yet hardly fulfilled role in extending our understanding of the early modern city.

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3

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF FOOD IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND *c.* 1650–1750

Sara Pennell

Two quotations from different authors represent the rock and the hard place between which the student of the material culture of food might locate herself. In her novel *The Robber Bride* (1993), Margaret Atwood has Tony, a female scholar of military history, muse upon what her male colleagues in her department believe to be a more appropriate realm of study for the female historical academic: 'they thought she should be doing social history, who ate what when' (p. 22). In the real historical world few historians of either sex have considered the history of food to be a sufficiently serious object of study, except where food commodities or their absence intersect with economic and social histories of dearth and supply. Paul Shackel, the American historical archaeologist, provides the hard place in his observation that 'studies that explore the symbolic and active nature in material culture, and those studies which integrate archaeology, history and theory are even rarer' (Shackel 1993: 18). Such pessimism needs to be confounded, and the research from which the following observations are drawn is predicated on the belief that we can know more about food practices, and particularly non-elite food practices in the early modern period, than existing historical studies currently tell us, and that the material environment cannot be ignored in the re-evaluation of such practices (Pennell 1997).

While this study addresses a concrete historical 'problem' framed by Atwood's 'who ate what when' (to which must necessarily be added 'and why'), it also supplies an examination of method and theory in the practice of socio-economic history. It is twenty years since Fernand Braudel suggested that 'the mere smell of cooking can evoke a whole civilisation'; arguably historians have been resistant to Braudel's at least superficially multi-disciplinary conception of our route to past cultures, and in that resistance lies the relegation of food and food practices to the socio-economic periphery of historical investigation (Braudel 1973: 32).

The methodological questions which underpin this research are simple: how does, indeed how *can* food 'fit in' for historians, as it does so pivotally for other social sciences? Are its dimensions suited only to the 'true' social sciences, rather than to a discipline which periodically lays claim to membership of that group? Moreover, what is meant by 'food', an 'ethnographically complex and variable' term which may encompass diet, commodification, economic policy, moral engagement and social strategy, as well as the material foodstuffs and contexts of production and consumption (Charsley 1992: 4; Murcott, Mennell and van Otterloo 1992)? What is interpreted as edible and inedible is culturally, temporally and geographically variable, and the botanic cornucopias described in early modern New World prospectuses, and the gradual permeation of some of these plants into English horticulture and experimental *pharmacopoeia*, underpinned the very mutable contemporary understanding of what 'inedible' embraced (Harris 1986: 13–18; O'Hara May 1971; Sauer 1976: 824–6).

The possibilities of methodological and empirical rapprochements between the historian, ethnographer and archaeologist also demand attention. Anthropological and sociological treatments of food practices tend to result in an opposition between prioritizing economic explanations and symbolic signifiers. However, functionalist and structuralist accounts from both disciplines tend to *describe* rather than assist in explaining objects and situations. Human beings can feature as mere actors who are incidental to the inscription of meaning/function. The historian reading such accounts is also aware of their atemporality; as Rhys Isaac observes, historians are 'unable to . . . generate their own documents by looking about them, notebook in hand', creating procedural problems for the historical adoption and adaptation of such theoretical positions (Isaac 1986: 51–2). The rare synthesis which Shackel bewails is nevertheless what the historian Lynn Hunt seeks in urging practitioners to synthesize 'texts, pictures and actions' at the heart of cultural-historical analysis (Hunt 1989: 21).

Yet possibilities for multi-dimensional histories are raised on the interactions of multiple sources; the socio-cultural historian must juxtapose all the available 'ghostly images of the past', especially the artefactual past, in order to gain 'stereoscopically' enough detail to view its cultures (Wheeler Stone 1988: 71). But in this embrace of the artefactual, the documentary should not be neglected, not least because the literary remains of a culture are no less a material cultural artefact; this is especially true for the written record of early modern England, fashioned within a society which increasingly privileged the literary record over oral transmission, but in which the written forms were styled for particular ends. And even if foods, food utensils and food events are not in the foreground of such sources, their register in texts is in no way inferior to the survival of objects or residues. While Anne Yentsch has argued that it is 'archaeology and only archaeology that enables scholars to see [objects] with enough breadth to become aware of . . . how they were as necessary . . . as basil in the garden or chicken in the pot' (Yentsch 1994: 311), the potential of the textual register of material culture lies in viewing the object in use, in space and time, both prescribed and described, which cannot be derived from the archaeological record in isolation.

Material historical investigation of food is fraught by its very ephemerality, notwithstanding the increasing sophistication of techniques in archaeobotany, palynology and zooarchaeology. Yet food, especially staples, takes pre-eminent significance as a consumer good, a pre-eminence which has inexplicably been left unexamined by many historians of consumption. Food occupies the area of quotidian consumption which socio-economic historians are beginning to locate away from the over-exposed arena of emulative acquisition (Glennie 1995). Specialist food histories are indeed thriving. However, the use of conventional historical periodizations – 'Tudor', 'Georgian' – does not necessarily enhance their presentation of the nature or pace of alimentary change, and muddies the contributions made by factors like geography to dietary and associated technological shifts (C. A. Wilson 1991; Mennell 1985; Paston-Williams 1993). The success of monograph treatments also arguably rests upon their concentration upon commodities and events which are indelibly 'historical' – for example, the advent of sugar in the west – and upon extraordinary, rather than quotidian, features of particular food cultures (Mintz 1985; Charsley 1992). Ethnographic exploration of regional food cultures is central in French and North American culinary history, illuminating contours of dietary particularism, its resilience and acculturation (e.g. Benes (ed.) 1984; Flandrin and Hyman 1986). Yet for English contexts, such themes tend to be submerged either by the preoccupation with mapping subsistence crises, or with uncritical anti-quarianism (but cf. Brears 1987).

Food preparation and consumption have been subject to a degree of attention in Lorna Weatherill's and Carole Shammas's massive analyses of English and American probate inventories.[1] These are both studies which purport to be at once historical and material approaches to early modern culture through the lens of consumer conduct; indeed Weatherill insists that changing consumption patterns between 1660 and 1760 are *best* illustrated in the swelling ownership of food-related utensils such as saucepans, cutlery and pewter hollow- and flatwares, registers of 'new eating habits, new cooking techniques, new drinks' (see Table 3.1). But both scholars, while observing the caveats attendant upon using inventories as partial representations of the domestic environment, nevertheless pay negligible attention to the archaeological record. Indeed Shammas's focus upon ceramic 'semi-durable' commodities is not supported by a single reference to, or illustration of, artefactual material, despite the vast arrays of ceramic goods which, though seldom appraised in inventories in detail, proliferate archaeologically (Weatherill 1988; Shammas 1990).

The English post-medieval archaeological record is however no less partial, and arguably even less accessible, with its overwhelming concentration upon industrial processing and finishing sites, defences and urban environments; with the limited exception of the latter, the domestic environment is virtually omitted from the underdeveloped post-medieval analytic (Crossley 1990; cf. Johnson 1996: 1–3, 10–14). The greatest lacuna, however, is in the interpretation of floral and faunal deposits, and their critical integration with excavated artefactual and surviving architectural assemblages. While the North American journal *Historical Archaeology* has devoted a

Table 3.1 Percentage frequencies of selected food-related goods in English inventories, 1650–1750

Year(s)	*Sample size (N)*	*Sauce -pans*	*Pewter dishes*	*Pewter plates*	*Cutlery*	*China*	*Earthen- ware*	*Hot drinks goods*
England 1675[a]	520	2	39	9	1	0	27	0
London 1675[b]	50	32	10	4	8	4	64	2
London 1660–80	50	8	52	24	0	0	18	0
Norwich 1660–80	50	10	48	8	2	0	46	0
Westmorland 1650–70	50	0	18	0	0	0	16	2
Thames Valley 1660–80	50	2	50	36	2	0	8	0
1650/60–70/80 sample mean		*5*	*42*	*17*	*1*	*0*	*22*	*0.5*
England 1705[a]	520	11	47	34	4	4	36	2
London 1705[b]	50	76	18	18	36	48	72	48
London 1690–1710	50	70	62	60	6	6	46	4
Norwich 1690–1710	50	48	72	54	8	0	50	2
Westmorland 1690–1710	50	2	28	14	0	6	56	0
Thames Valley 1690–1710	50	10	58	48	8	0	12	0
1690–1710 sample mean		*32.5*	*55*	*44*	*5.5*	*3*	*41*	*1.5*
England 1725[a]	390	23	55	45	10	9	57	15
London 1725[b]	50	84	70	76	64	80	88	96
London 1720–40	50	96	86	88	50	40	76	58
Norwich 1720–40	50	90	88	88	26	20	80	36
Westmorland 1720–40	50	2	40	38	12	24	48	12
Thames Valley 1720–45	50	22	74	74	8	2	34	16
1720–40/45 sample mean		*52.5*	*72*	*72*	*24*	*21.5*	*59.5*	*30.5*

Sources: a: taken from Weatherill 1988: 26 (Table 2.1).
b: taken from Weatherill 1988: 27 (Table 2.2).
All other data from Pennell 1997.

special issue to analysing such remains at colonial and post-colonial American sites (*Historical Archaeology* 1993), a search of the indexes of *Post-Medieval Archaeology* since its inception in 1967 produces only two explicit references to 'food', both comments in general site reports; and one full-length article – by an American, concerning American data (Yentsch 1991a). It is surely telling that one of the authors of the former considers the 'food debris' uncovered during excavations as interesting only for 'the possibility of inferring ancient husbandry practices' (Holmes 1975: 159). This is not to reject entirely the (primarily) urban studies which strive for evidential integration, not least the reports generated under the auspices of the Norwich Survey, and the volume of medieval and post-medieval finds for Exeter (Jennings (ed.) 1981; Allen 1984; Atkin, Carter and Evans (eds) 1985). Nevertheless, the household-focused small-finds volume based on the Norwich Survey excavations is undeniably a rarity among published excavation reports (Margeson (ed.) 1993).

These general concerns are noted as preliminaries to the three areas which contribute to the construction of the cultural and cognitive resonances of food in early modern England: consumption and consumerism; domestic sufficiency and the production and consumption of food staples beyond the household; and food actions or events (daily and ritual meals, food gifts and other transactions involving food).

CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMERISM

Material consumption exerts an undeniable fascination for historians of the early modern period who wish to find in the aggregation of purchases and ownership the phenomenon of mass consumption and hence the roots of modernity (e.g. Shammas 1990: 76–118; Shackel 1993). Certainly, the substitution of labour time for 'leisure time' in the attempt to generate a monetary surplus with which to purchase marketed commodities is a phenomenon which arguably arises in the *provisioning* of the early modern household earlier than it does in the furnishing or the clothing of the household (de Vries 1993; Styles 1994). Yet the stress which has traditionally been laid upon novelty residing in an object's material, design and manufacturing must now also accommodate the ways in which domestic goods entered the non-elite household and which were not entirely novel (Styles 1993). The re-framing as necessities of goods previously construed as non-essentials or luxuries was not simply (or even) a supply-side ruse; it required the informed participation of consumers who could, and wanted to, accommodate such goods in their domestic environments. The complex interaction of these variables underlying what is all too simply labelled as merely 'consumption' may be illustrated through the example of the saucepan, the archetypal 'new' kitchen good identified by Weatherill and by specialist culinary historians (Weatherill 1988: 77; Weinstein 1989). The saucepan enters both Weatherill's and my inventory samples at the right time – that is, the close of the seventeenth century – and becomes one of the most commonly owned food-related items among urban decedents[2] by the middle of the eighteenth century (Table 3.1). But saucepans were not an eighteenth-century innovation, nor merely an urban cooking utensil. Late sixteenth-century inventory appraisals from Worcestershire, a primarily agricultural county (albeit one with connections to the developing metallurgical trades of Birmingham and the West Midlands), contain more references to saucepans than appraisals from the same county a century later (Rowlands 1975; Overton, n.d.).

With only a very few contemporaneous excavated examples to set an artefactual context to shifting forms and medium, the 'new' saucepans of inventoried decedents are tantalizing, made from every metal from silver to bell-metal, and even from earthenware, with lids and without, small and large. Non-excavated artefactual survivals support this variety, and that the saucepan was indeed an object undergoing modification – as much at the hands of its users as via manufacturing decision-making – but was not truly novel (Styles 1993). And yet there were instances in which novelty, as a *relative* value, might attach to an object like a saucepan: when what it was used for was either unfamiliar to the social groups now in possession of such an object; or when the object was being used in a novel manner other than its name suggests (Thrift and Glennie 1992; Bianchi 1996).

Upward trajectories of consumption are also complicated if the forms, nomenclature and function of goods supposedly 'new', and likewise of those supposedly approaching obsolescence, are considered. This is not helped by the confusing variety of terms employed by early modern appraisers and culinary writers, and more pointedly by modern archaeologists and museum curators. Certainly all the 'porridge/pottage' pots appraised in early eighteenth-century inventories cannot solely have been used solely for making porridge/pottage (Fig. 3.1). Indeed, their increasing numbers mirror the accompanying decline in ownership by decedents of pots denoted simply as 'brass' or 'iron' in the same period, suggesting that porridge pots were neither formally nor functionally 'new', but merely differently named (Trent 1989). While nomenclature shifts complicate chronologies of use, there were undoubtedly objects which fell out of use and new items which appeared, but not necessarily as substitutes. Cauldrons, commonly large free-standing cooking vessels which loom large in the annals of culinary history, are notably absent from the majority of appraisals by 1750. They simply do not appear in any of the London or Thames Valley documents and in negligible numbers in the Norwich sample. Only in Westmorland do they appear to have been more common (Pennell 1997). This decline may again be deceptive, given under-representation of goods, but it is a movement also exhibited in inventory data for Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Lincolnshire between 1550 and 1750. In the Worcestershire sample, cauldrons disappear almost completely from the record by 1640, while in the Lincolnshire inventories they hardly register in even the earliest decennial periods (Overton n.d.). A tentative geography of use is presented in these data, with cauldrons a feature of West Midland and north-western hearths, but a feature gradually supplanted by cooking pots in differing media and sizes, as the organization and fuelling of the cooking hearth were modified.

There is something to be said for simplification in noting cooking vessels and other culinary forms by their medium or function alone, for typological purposes; however in doing this we risk losing sight of distinctions contemporary observers and users

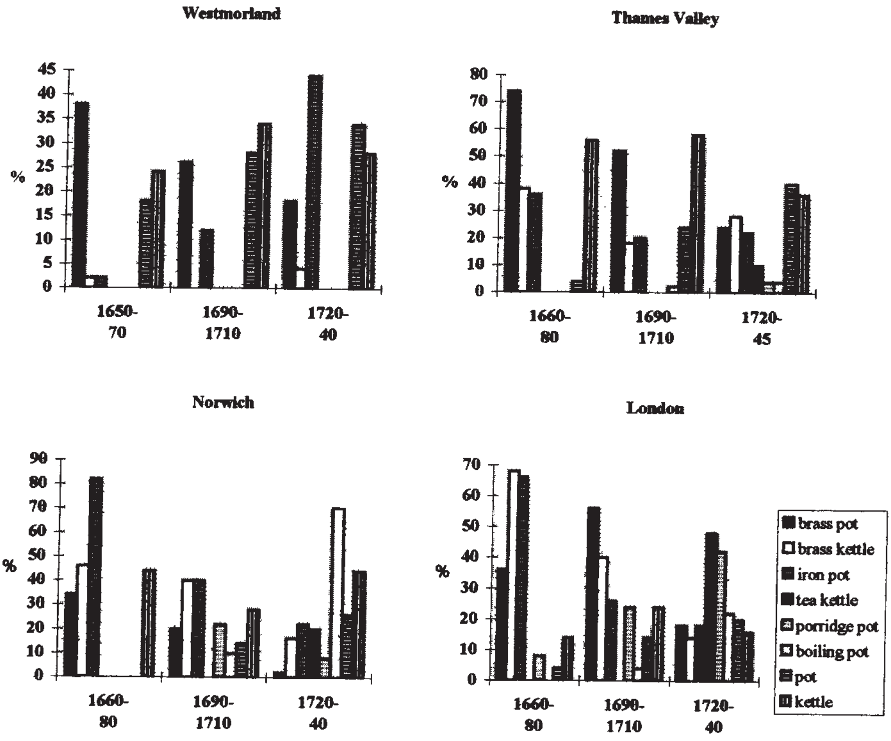

Figure 3.1 Percentage frequencies of various cooking pots in English inventories, 1650–1750

thought it important to make and to stress, distinctions which illuminate not only culinary practices and their specificity, but also the contours of cultural geographies, via lexical/dialect shifts and the strength of the values vested in an object: economic, cultural, familial, gender-related (Trent 1989). Indeed, in pursuing the consumption dynamic as a gauge of modernization and individualization, it is also too easy to devalue food goods by ignoring the plural values with which domestic goods were invested, in favour of mere economic worth. Although often monetarily negligible in purchase cost, and certainly so in re-sale value, hearth goods and culinary utensils carried moral resonances for household formation and maintenance which allowed their owners to project them as items of social capital (Bourdieu 1984 and 1990). Contrary to Anne Yentsch's presentation of these articles as 'utilitarian . . . not mysterious . . . plain', it is clear that even the smallest culinary tool might be converted from being merely an object into a possession, by the engraving of a name, a monogram or date (cf. Yentsch 1991b: 206, 212). Saucepan and skillet handles, ceramic porringers and plates were emblazoned with improving phrases, ramifying the user's duties to keep herself, her hearth and her table orderly (Fig. 3.2). Arguably it is these artefactual exhortations which framed the quotidian experience of housewifery as much as any literary prescription contained in the plethora of contemporary culinary and household advice texts (Pennell 1997). Plainness is also hardly the word to apply to the multicoloured glazes and decorations available on all but the most basic red clay-bodied earthen- and stonewares – birds, Adam and Eve representations, the monarch, even copies of wallpaper designs found their way on to ceramic surfaces of hollow- and flatwares (Lipski 1984; Gooder 1984). Such ceramics were often found by inventory appraisers in the main food preparation area of a decedent's house, along with birdcages (and their songbird inhabitants), prints, looking glasses and clocks; kitchens were thus key locations for consuming, in more than just the obvious alimentary sense (Pennell 1997).

The domestic control and influence which women – be they wives or servants – could and did derive from culinary knowledge and its material aspects is also obscured in analyses emphasizing patriarchal subordination as a factor structuring the non-functional ramifications of food and food goods (Yentsch 1991b). Household goods comprised a substantial part of decedents' estates amongst the non-elite, and while testamentary documents are commonly unforthcoming about the precise details of goods included in the 'household stuff' often bequeathed to surviving wives, daughters and other female associates, there is evidence to suggest that it was not merely clothes which a female legatee could expect (Erickson 1993: 26, 143–5). Bequests of kitchen equipment, particularly of metalwares, were a means not only of affirming 'close ties of female friendship' but also of providing some practical insurance against female economic vulnerability (ibid.: 222). Kitchen utensils were not only 'valued for trusty service, ingenuity and sometimes novelty' (Vickery 1993: 283, 292–3). They comprised the material components of a predominantly female sphere of operation, items which, in their frequent descent from female to female, were invested with personal significance as possessions rather than merely utensils, and which thus participated in the moulding of a woman's adult character.

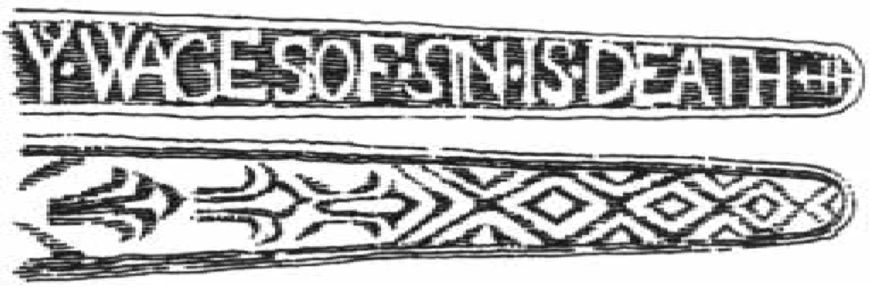

Figure 3.2 Decorated skillets, late seventeenth century, detail of handles. After Seymour Lindsey 1964: plates 117–119

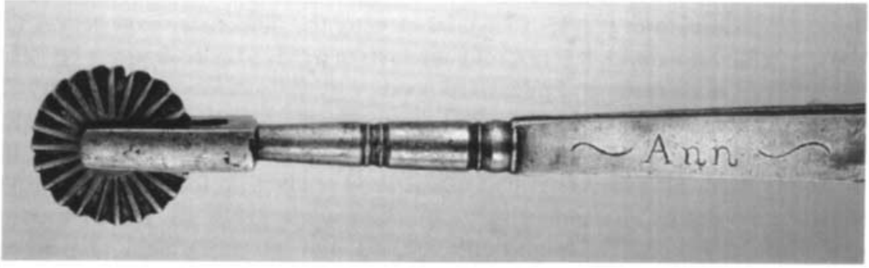

Figure 3.3 Engraved brass pastry jigger, dated 1723. After Gentle and Fedd 1994: 239

Similarly, the circulation of recipes which contributed towards the compilation of early modern manuscript recipe collections presents a relationship, predominantly between women, which moves beyond the purely functional or pedagogic. Issues of credibility and reliability were involved in these recipe transmissions. The appending of a name to a recipe is not merely a mark of donation, but also a register of witness and circulation; the recipe lives up to its title in being worthy of transmission. Thus a manuscript cookery collection is as much the product of a sociological process suffused with implications for gender identity as a culinary curiosity (Pennell 1997).

Thus, far from 'enclosing' and subordinating their users, food-processing and preparation utensils were, if not objects in which power might reside, then objects central to order and ordering. In this sense, food-related objects, however much they outwardly appeared indistinguishable and merely functional, resisted commodification as Matthew Johnson has defined it – a 'despiritualization' of goods – and were vehicles for complex meanings, writ admittedly small, but no less powerfully felt through daily usage (Johnson 1996: 87–90, 163–78, 200–1).

SUFFICIENCY

In recent work on household textile production in northern England, the historian John Styles has pinpointed the lacuna in both consumption and artefactual studies of discussions of availability and supply of staple rather than luxury domestic commodities (Styles 1994). In viewing the alimentary experiences of the non-elite household, it is not only imperative to investigate how the boundary between homemade and purchased goods – utensils *and* foodstuffs – moved over time; but also the distinctions such shifts effected between male and female domestic and market-oriented activities (Pruitt 1984). The unswerving linear trajectory from self-sufficiency in domestic food production to the 'proletarianization' proposed by Shammas simply cannot be supported by any sensitive material cultural reading (Shammas 1990: 40–6). But an archaeology of market integration is not easily achieved (although it would be a valuable supplement to Johnson's version of an 'archaeology of capitalism'). Many household tasks common to the medieval domestic economy were already located beyond the home by the mid-sixteenth century, in rural areas as in urban, but the evidence for this is not simply presented in the absence of key production implements from inventory appraisals (Hilton 1985; cf. Shammas 1990: 26–7).

The paucity of thoroughgoing floral and faunal post-medieval site analyses beyond quantitative discussions of deposits and spatial distributions, nevertheless weakens the contextual interpretation of domestic sites. Emphasis upon butchering techniques, for example, is stressed via the volume of bone deposits to determine whether such practices were pursued commercially rather than domestically (R. Wilson 1991); but inventory data suggest it is very difficult to disentangle the two in terms of the utensils used and the location of their use, except on the very largest commercial scale. Arguably closer contextual study of certain faunal deposits could help clarify the still-confusing picture of urban livestock-, pig- and poultry-ownership supplied in decedent inventories (Henn 1985; Bowen 1993). Likewise greater attention to non-elite garden plots, rather than to the archaeology of planned aristocratic and gentry gardens, might assist in further explicating and enhancing terse inventory and household account references to seeds, flowerpots and other gardening equipment.

Even if artefacts of domestic production survive, we cannot ignore the fact that much household processing and preparation utilized vessels which were unspecialized, indeed multi-functional. Certain strands of domestic production, notably compounding medicaments, simple distilling, meat-curing, malt- and mustard-milling, may simply not register in specialized utensils, such as churns and bread ovens. Meat-curing and soft-cheese-making required simple vessels, tubs and woodenwares which were appraised without further description. Wine-making and some methods of distilling did not require complex apparatus and thus are almost entirely invisible in inventories. Preparation of many medical cures and palliatives necessitated little more than earthen- or stoneware glazed pots (gallipots), pans and a pestle and mortar. It might be possible to interpret from material criteria the purposes for which vessels were *best* suited, but alternative applications cannot be discounted (Pennell 1997).

Arguably it is in smaller utensils, rather than the specialized tubs, troughs and churns for beer, bread and dairy goods production, that the character of domestic provisioning in this period is revealed. In early eighteenth-century Westmorland inventories, the growing presence of malt mills in appraisals signals an uptake of household milling, even while the brewing of the malt might be increasingly pursued on a larger scale, beyond the household. The domestic presence of these mills may also evidence the way in which improved technology in modest implements could *return* elements of processing, hitherto located in commercial or specialist spheres by their scale and cost, to the household. The vagaries of inventory analysis are never better shown, however, than in the paucity of references to relevant foodstuffs, either processed or raw, to accompany such utensils. In the case of malt mills found in Westmorland appraisals between 1720 and 1740, none of the inventories lists malt alongside them (Pennell 1997).

Absence of a good does not entail ignorance of how it is used; nor even lack of use – in another location. The domestic removal of apparatus for home production cannot be dissociated from the expansion in food staples retailing, but increasing premiums upon domestic space surely also contributed to the re-evaluation of domestic priorities. Subsequent alterations to architectural fabric, chiefly in the adaptation or removal of fixed utensils like bread ovens and brewing boilers, push scholars back to what few contemporary house plans and interior descriptions survive (e.g. Schofield (ed.) 1987). Similarly the inconsistent coverage of post-medieval urban excavations may obscure ovens in bakery and tavern locations which were accessed for communal use on payment of a fee, and where ceramic deposits might assist in illuminating the socio-economic profile of the 'clients' of such facilities.

FOOD EVENTS

Consuming events involving food and drink are now, after a century of anthropological examination, conventionally construed as 'instruments of social diplomacy' (Douglas and Isherwood 1979: 88–9). But while quotidian and lifeevent commensality and food gifts can be assessed as vehicles for social differentiation and confrontation, for this period it is perhaps most instructive to seek out status-evocative rather than merely status-confirming aspects of provisioning and eating.

The increasing materialization of life- or rite-of-passage events amongst the non-elite, especially in the commemoration of funerals, is reinforced in the multiplication and increasing stylization of the foodstuffs served forth; Naples biscuit and small cakes such as wiggs (yeasted buns) were characteristic funeral foods by the middle of the eighteenth century, an alimentary complement to the accoutrements of coffins and grave which were serving less as Renaissance *memento mori* than as material marks of the deceased's status, achieved or merely idealized (Gittings 1988; Molleson et al. 1993). Exchange and gift acts focused on food incorporate implicit and explicit prompts to effect asymmetrical relationships, by creating immediate or future 'debt' obligation; but they also comprise acknowledgements, confirmations and revisions of 'mutual estimations and regards' (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones (eds) 1992: 17–18).

Eating 'out' or away from the domestic sphere also generated experiences of food quite different from those gained domestically; and not always in a sociable context, since food payments remained a significant wage component in agricultural and construction labour (Earle 1991: 51–7; Woodward 1995: 147–59). Excavations of period tavern sites in London and Oxford have however concentrated upon the provenance and forms of ceramic assemblages, rather than analysing such finds in terms of the strategies employed by patrons to secure clientele of appropriate standing; or the range of foodstuffs and liquor on offer to customers (Hassell, Halpin and Mellor 1984; cf. Clark 1983).

Inns, taverns, communally accessed bakehouses – all were arenas for witnessing and absorbing consumption practices, as much as early modern shops and the marketplace. But if diaries like that of mid-eighteenth-century Sussex shopkeeper Thomas Turner are at all typical of the period in regard to conduct at table, some of the more elaborate socio-cultural extrapolations from archaeological deposits must be revised, if not completely abandoned (Vaisey (ed.) 1984). Shackel's mathematically precise mapping of 'segmented' and thus 'modern' table activities in the proliferation of porcelain and creamware plate discards from later eighteenth-century Annapolis (Maryland) domestic sites has to be measured against Turner's almost daily record of what he ate for dinner between 1755 and 1764, both domestically and away from home, a record in which the type, number and array of plates, let alone the linen upon which they were set and the cutlery used in their dispatch, are *never* detailed (cf. Shackel 1993).

Culinary aptitude could manifest itself in presents of food, like the veal pasty one Mrs Coates gave to Thomas Turner in April 1761. Such gifts are truly ephemeral – Turner tucked into the pasty the very next day – and we simply cannot know whether the seeds of exotic fruit often noted amongst floral finds are the discard from a simple household acquisition or came from a present, as from the basket of strawberries Turner was given in 1755 by the local parson's wife. Such fleeting transactions invoked enduring feelings, the prompt to further material and yet ephemeral responses. Turner's scrupulous notes of what he served his guests at his table and what food gifts he received constitute an artefact of his commensal practices as much as any set of plates appraised in his inventory (which does not survive) or dug up in the garden of his house (which does survive, although much altered) (Vaisey (ed.) 1984: 88–9, 220–1, 232).

CONCLUSION

Not only are food goods 'technological systems[s] of tools linked in series' for specific domestic chores (Cowan 1989: 33), but they are also implements of transformation and ordering, deployed by (usually) housewives to convert and improve fire, food, flavours (St George 1982: 168–70). These utensils linked their users to a wider world of production, technological and commercial; but also to very personalized experiences of property and possession which surpass the merely economic and reinvoke its early modern predecessor, 'œconomic'. The ethic of œconomy permeated early modern English society, right to the core of the household and the ordering of the hearth (Pennell 1997; cf. de Vries 1994: 255). Notably absent from existing readings of early modern consumption however is a sense of how individuals accommodated a proliferating material environment within what was still a profoundly ordered world, albeit a world in which prescriptions and experiences of order were multiplicitous. The significance of food and its material culture as an ordering tool and a template of a particular variety of order cannot be underplayed.

The pervasiveness of food practices as a structuring cultural component sets up the possibility of reading too much into what few sources there are available to the culinary and social historian. While we have recipes, inventories and even the survival of kitchen equipment, and testimonies of meals, preparation and the social events centred around food, the reassembling of the multiple levels of experience of food in early modern England remains an ideal. This should not however discourage us in a more rigorous and careful use of those sources. This is the sense in which the material culture of food is essayed here. Although such documentation, artefactual and literary, in isolation presents the 'shattered fragments' rather than the serendipitous 'intact Delft platter' of culinary practice and food experiences, such sources supply an understanding of food practices, not necessarily more definitive than what has gone before, but more nuanced in its account of chronologies of stasis and innovation (cf. Vickery 1993: 293); of perceptions of gender, social and spatial distinction; and of personality and locality in the phenomenon of consumption.

Notes

1 These are lists of moveable domestic goods ('chattels') and personal possessions, taken for administrative purposes after the decease of an adult individual, usually a householder. In early modern England they were required for anyone owning moveable estate worth more than £5, but were frequently made for smaller estates. The frequency with which detailed inventories were made declined after *c.* 1740. For further discussion of their uses see Garrard 1980 and Spufford 1990.

2 This term is used to denote the (dead) subjects of inventories; it is used in preference to the more usual 'testators' or will/testament makers, since not all people who had inventories made of their estates left wills, and vice versa.

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4

BUILDING JERUSALEM

Transfer-printed finewares and the creation of British identity

Alasdair Brooks

I Will not cease from Mental Fight
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant Land.

William Blake, 'Jerusalem'

Nationalism is a marketable commodity. High street Irish pubs, the bagpipe and kilt heritage industry of Scotland, and cottages representing a bucolic, hazily nostalgic rural little England, all attempt to sell to the public a version of the past that might never have existed, but which the public at large clearly wants to exist. Twentieth-century Britain hardly has a monopoly on marketing a created self-image. Since the arrival of mass marketing and mass production following the Industrial Revolution, producers have by necessity catered to current fashions of public taste as well as creating their own fashions and trends. The Staffordshire potters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were no different in this regard. It is one thing to say that industrial potters were catering to public tastes, however, but quite another to examine what forces formed and informed those tastes. Material culture does not exist in a vacuum, and those that manufacture and those that use ceramics are both influenced by wider social, historical and cultural subtexts. This chapter examines just one small current of the cultural stream, how the creation of a specifically British identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries influenced the designs of transfer-printed finewares, and what aspects of that identity those same finewares represented. By examining this meaning, as well as providing some potential site interpretations based on this analysis, this chapter hopes to demonstrate ways of expanding ceramics analysis to include a more interpretive and contextual approach.

Ceramic studies in historical archaeology have tended to be based on economic issues (e.g. Miller 1980 and 1991; Spencer-Wood and Heberling 1987) or on advancing the level of quantification in ceramic analysis (e.g. South 1977: 201–30). While pottery in historical archaeology has also been examined with a more interpretive eye – Yentsch, for example, has studied the relationship between the symbolic meaning of pottery, gender and spatial relationships (Yentsch 1991) – the study of the symbolic meaning of ceramic decorations on pottery post-dating 1750 has remained largely unexplored. The study of material culture meaning and symbolism has, of course, a long tradition in historical archaeology, dating back to the well-known work of Glassie and Deetz mentioned by West in the introduction to this volume. The early structuralist and processualist model embraced by Glassie and Deetz has since been replaced by a more interpretive paradigm (e.g. Shanks and Hodder 1995; Shanks and Tilley 1992), but the examination of the deeper symbolic meaning of artefacts remains an important focus of the discipline. Transfer-printed ceramics are particularly ripe for interpretation. The decorations are not only frequently clear and identifiable, at least in their general thematic content, but there is a wealth of documentary evidence available to the archaeologist to aid in interpreting the deeper symbolic content. This is a clear example of how, as Pajer (1990: 23) amongst others has noted, documentary evidence can increase the value of post-medieval archaeological evidence.

Ingersoll and Nickell's study of the American Tomb of the Unknown provides a particularly useful context for examining the role of deeply embedded cultural meaning in material culture. The authors note the tension in western thought between the Greek intellectual tradition of rational process and the more enigmatic, mystical and symbolic Judaeo-Christian intellectual tradition. Western symbolic thought today tends towards the concrete and rational, but symbolism is not lost, it is merely submerged, particularly in the form of material culture (Ingersoll and Nickell 1987: 202–5). Not all material culture can be quite as visible or contain quite the obvious mythic symbolism as a Tomb of the Unknown, itself amongst the most 'arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism' (Anderson 1991: 9). Nonetheless, on some level all material culture reflects similar deeply embedded symbolic themes and messages. This is as true of the obvious, such as Ulster wall murals (Jarman 1996), Welsh gravestones (Mytum 1994) or early ironclad warships (Garrison 1995) as it is of the less obvious, such as feminine hygiene products (Ginsburg 1996), Zippo lighters (Walters 1997) or the humble toothbrush (Shackel 1993). As will be seen in this chapter, deeply embedded symbolic themes and messages also undeniably exist on transfer-printed ceramics.

NATIONALISM AND BRITAIN

The rise of nationalism – and its symbols – in post-Enlightenment Europe has produced a vast literature (e.g. Anderson 1991; Colley 1996; Dietler 1994; Hobsbawm 1990; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Schama 1995). Because of the very specific topic of this chapter, English transfer-printed ceramics, Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* has been selected as the primary model – those familiar with the literature will no doubt be able to identify other influences. The topics of 'rural prosperity', 'war' and 'nationality' explored here are broadly analogous, rather than identical to, those in Colley's book. This chapter does not claim that these themes are the only relevant ones, or that they comprehensively address all of the socio-historical issues, but they do serve to highlight certain symbolic themes that occurred in the material culture of the time.

'Britain' is a relatively modern creation. James I and VI became the first king of both England and Scotland in 1603, adopting the title 'King of Great Britain, France and Ireland' in October 1604 (Mackie 1978: 188). The Act of Union between England and Scotland dates to 1707, and the United Kingdom was only created in 1801 when Ireland was (temporarily) added to the British body politic. Wales, of course, had been forcibly united to England from the much earlier date (1282 – though fully so *de jure* only from 1536), but the remoteness of the Welsh landscape and the very different language stopped Wales from being totally subsumed into England. With the arrival of the Act of Union, three very different nations suddenly found themselves forced to negotiate a new common identity within a larger political framework, and the creation of the United Kingdom added a fourth. It is the role of transfer-printed ceramics as material culture within this identity that is explored hereafter.

THE PATTERNS

The patterns discussed in this chapter are representative of the themes under discussion, rather than a comprehensive list of the relevant vessels. The patterns are not, however, intended to be representative of transfer prints as a whole; abstract floral patterns and romantic oriental scenes are but two common pattern types not discussed here. Vessels (usually plates) representative of the themes discussed in this chapter have been excavated as far afield as northern Pembrokeshire (Brooks 1992), central Virginia (Brooks 1994) and Brazoria, Texas (Earls et al. 1995). However, since the study of transfer-print symbolism is still in its infancy, identifying a large sample of excavated materials can prove problematic; therefore the primary sources for the patterns discussed here are modern pattern books, particularly the two volumes of the Coysh and Henrywood *Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery 1780–1880*, one of the standard works on the topic. Finally, it should be stressed that 'meaning' is a multi-layered concept, rather than a definable absolute; different interpretations of the same piece of material culture by different individuals are entirely possible. The symbolism ascribed to certain patterns in this chapter are not the only or final possible interpretations, they are potential meanings in a specific socio-historical context. Other valid interpretations dependent on other contexts (whether large-scale or individual) will also exist. This chapter explores the tremendous potential of transfer-print symbolism.

Rural prosperity

Any perusal of eighteenth- and particularly nineteenth-century transfer prints will reveal a striking number of patterns representing bucolic scenes of a calm and prosperous countryside. Two views of the British countryside are represented in these patterns, one a Britain of stately homes dominating the rural landscape, the other a rustic vision of peaceful, content millers and farmers. It would be impossible to do the vast catalogue of such patterns justice in a chapter of this length, but two series of patterns, 'British Scenery' by an unknown maker (Coysh and Henrywood 1982: 59–62) and the 'Titled Seats' series of the Careys, *c.* 1823 to *c.* 1842 (ibid.: 363), are examined here as representative examples of the types in question.

It was only with the Act of Union that Scottish peers joined their English and Welsh counterparts in a united House of Lords. As the century wore on, the aristocracy – the titled and landed families of Britain – became recognizably British as intermarriage between the Celtic and English nobility became increasingly common. As Colley notes, 'between 1750 and 1800, there were more than twice as many marriages between daughters of the Scottish peerage and Englishmen than there had been in the first half of the century' (Colley 1996: 170). National prejudices did not of course disappear overnight, but cooperation, competition and interaction between the English and Celtic aristocracies occurred to the point that internal divisions were less important than national unity. Yet the new British aristocracy formed by this process felt particularly vulnerable in the wake of the American war, the French Revolution and subsequent wars, occasional serious riots (such as the anti-Catholic Gordon riots), and the parliamentary reform crisis of the 1830s. Radical writers such as Thomas Paine and John Wade published scathing attacks on the privileges of the aristocracy, attempting to undermine the power of a group that comprised a tiny minority of the British population but a disproportionately large percentage of the governing class (ibid.: 162–4). This was a period where Britain frequently lurched between intermittent crises.

The atmosphere of crisis felt by the aristocracy is not reflected on the transfer prints of the period. Take, for example, patterns such as the 'Titled Seats' series prints of Alton Abbey, Inverary Castle and Castle Freke, Cork (Fig. 4.1). All of these patterns radiate calm and prosperity. This is a Britain of a prosperous ruling class secure in its own position, a Britain of, to use Langford's title, 'a polite and commercial people' (Langford 1992). It is difficult to identify to what degree, if any, the aristocracy directly influenced the choice of pattern or representation made by the original potters. Miller's work, however, has demonstrated that between 1790 and 1850 a transfer-printed refined white earthenware plate was at least

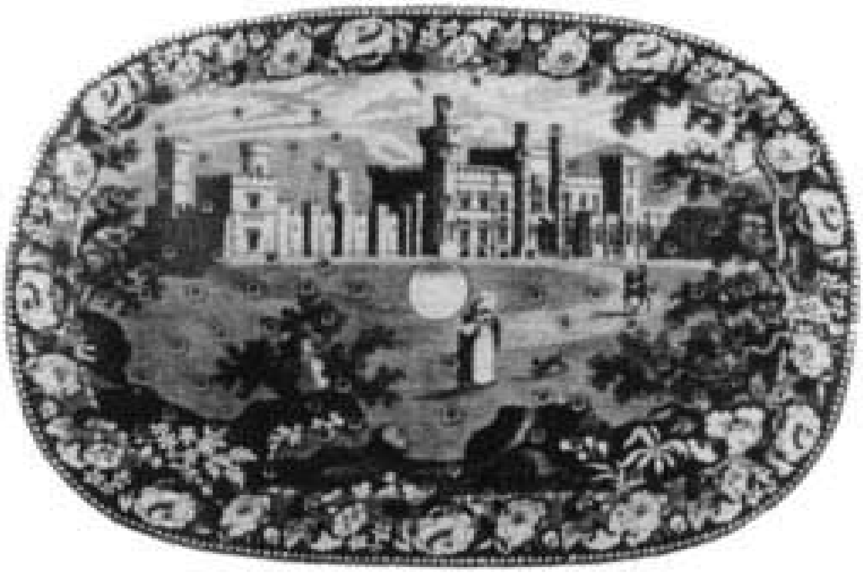

Figure 4.1 'Castle Freke, Cork' pattern (by kind permission of R. K. Henrywood)

2.11 and up to 4.33 times more expensive than its undecorated counterpart (Miller 1991: 14). These were very much the higher- status wares. Heath's analysis has shown that poor white artisans working in central Virginia (who purchased their own pottery) owned less expensive ceramics than slaves (who received cast-offs from their owners) working at the same plantation; the artisans' plates were particularly inexpensive, and not a single transfer-printed vessel occurred in the assemblage (Heath 1991: 62–70). While this is a North American example, it serves to illustrate the discrepancy of purchasing power and ceramic acquisition that could exist between the wealthy landowner and poor worker. Given that the market for these wares was therefore intended to be the wealthy, it is likely that the potters were indirectly influenced by their market, which in this case included a landed aristocracy eager to project a self-image of bucolic calm and prosperity in a time of uncertainty and therefore amenable to acquiring material culture which projected that image. In a sense, the patterns under discussion therefore become pieces of unintentional propaganda, symbolically – if perhaps subconsciously – making the implicit connection between stability, prosperity and the aristocracy. Acquisition of these patterns by the less wealthy would have served to further spread this subconscious symbolism, however unintentional the process might have been.

It should be mentioned that Britain in this period was unusually stable and prosperous, at least compared to its European contemporaries. Despite undoubted hostility and not infrequent violence towards Catholics and Dissenters, religious freedom was far more extensive than in most cases on the Continent (Langford 1992: 291–3). Where France suffered no fewer than sixteen national famines between 1700 and the Revolution, the Scottish famines of the 1690s were the last national famines on the British mainland (though not, of course, in Ireland); as Colley notes, 'Britain's fruitfulness . . . fed its war machine, as well as its complacency and its people' (Colley 1996: 38–9). This is the Britain of the 'Riverside Cottages', 'The Watermill' and 'Cottages and Castle' (Fig. 4.2) patterns of the 'British Scenery' series. Once again, the patterns convey symbols and messages of a stable and prosperous Britain. This time, however, the rural population implicitly shares in and benefits from the national prosperity. Ironically, the rather nostalgic rural Britain represented by these patterns was disappearing at this very time. To take but two examples, emigration to the

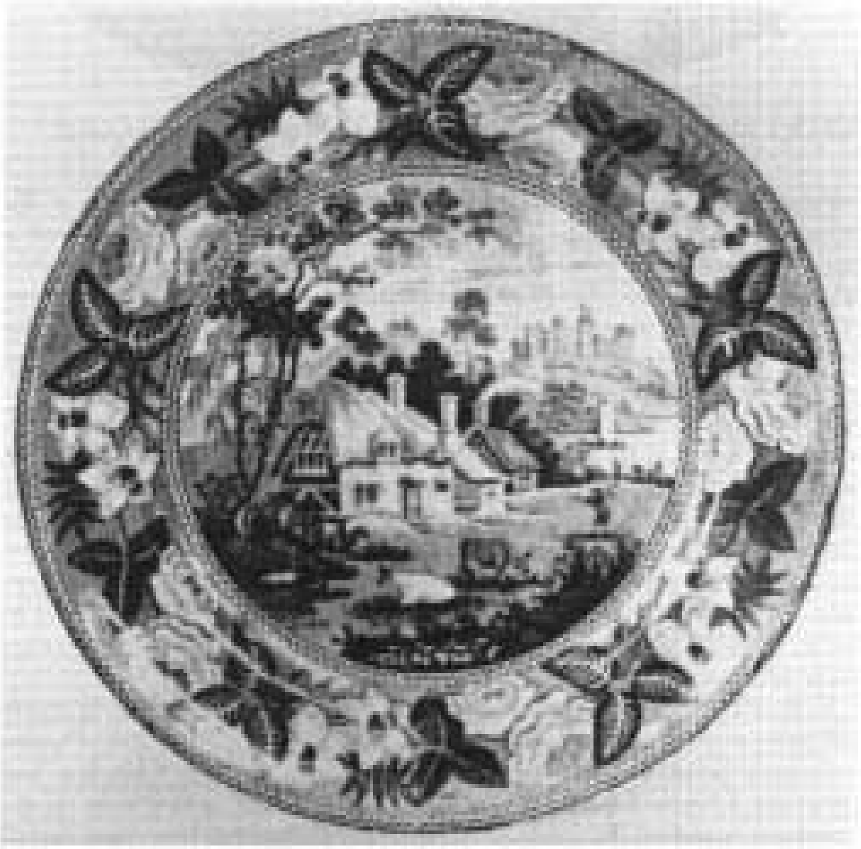

Figure 4.2 'Cottages and Castle' pattern (by kind permission of R. T. Henrywood)

industrial southern coalfields led to a seismic demographic shift away from the Welsh countryside (Davies 1993: 352–6; Williams 1985: 156–7) and the sheep clearances and Improvement movement utterly transformed the Scottish Highlands, devastating the rural population in the process (Devine 1994: 60–75; Whyte and Whyte 1991: 151–2). But as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, these patterns were not for the most part being purchased by a displaced rural poor who might well have argued with the iconography, imagery and symbolism. The patterns were far more likely to be purchased by wealthier households. A Staffordshire potter was unlikely to produce an expensive vessel which undermined or contradicted the desired national self-image. Although the focus may be slightly different, once again the plates serve to project a powerful symbolic image of a calm and prosperous rural Britain.

War

The search for a united Britain can be seen through a particularly martial glass. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Britain was a nation almost continuously at war. An incomplete catalogue includes the Jacobite rebellions, the spectacular success of the Seven Years War, the equally spectacular failure of the American War of Independence, the aftermath of the French Revolution, and the long struggle with Napoleon. Nations facing external threats, whether real or imagined (and until Trafalgar, the Napoleonic threat was very real), naturally tend to create a united identity in the face of that threat. As Colley has noted, Time and time again, war with an obviously hostile and alien foreign power had forged a semblance of unity and distracted attention from the considerable divisions and tensions within. In a very real sense, war . . . had been the making of Great Britain’ (Colley 1996: 339). Material culture in the form of transfer-printed finewares symbolically reflected and contributed to this sense of unity.

The Jones and Son ‘British History’ series of *c.* 1826–8 (Coysh and Henrywood 1982: 58) contains several martial themes: ‘Elizabeth Addressing the Troops’, ‘Battle of Waterloo’, ‘Interview of Wallace and Bruce’, ‘Hamden [sic] Mortally Wounded’, ‘Death of Nelson’ and ‘Death of Wolfe’. The deaths are particularly notable. Heroic death became an important part of the British national myth. Paintings of the deaths of Wolfe and Nelson are the most famous examples of a series of quasi-religious representations of a British warrior class that was willing to be martyred for the nation. A considerable amount of material culture was produced by this cult of heroic death. Not only ceramics, but mass-produced fabrics, woodcuts and inn signs all catered to the market for the patriotic iconography of war and martyrdom (Colley 1996: 193–5). This was also a very British iconography in its conception; Arthur Wellesley (The Duke of Wellington) was an Anglo-Irishman, and while Moore’s last words at Corunna may have been ‘I hope the people of England will be satisfied; I hope my country will do me justice’, he was nonetheless a Scot. Once again, the potters were catering to a ready-made market, but additionally, transfer prints containing these martial images of death could serve as symbolic reminders of the forces of unity by their display of the shared national imagery of the sacrifices made by the new nation's military leaders.

The 'British History' series was far from unique in its representation of martial themes. For example, 'Night Sea Battle' and 'Trafalgar', both by unknown makers (Coysh and Henrywood 1982: 334, 369) would have reminded owners of Britain's naval achievements. The celebration of military achievement could reach quite tangential extremes. In a particularly clever piece of marketing, the 'Napier' pattern (Fig. 4.3), most probably named after Admiral Sir Charles H. Napier, contains an oriental pattern with no connection whatsoever to its namesake's then famous exploits (Brooks 1994; Coysh and Henrywood 1986: 143). While the symbolic imagery of these patterns may not be quite as forceful as those of heroic death, they could still serve as tangible patriotic reminders of the external threats facing Britain, as well as the ongoing victories.

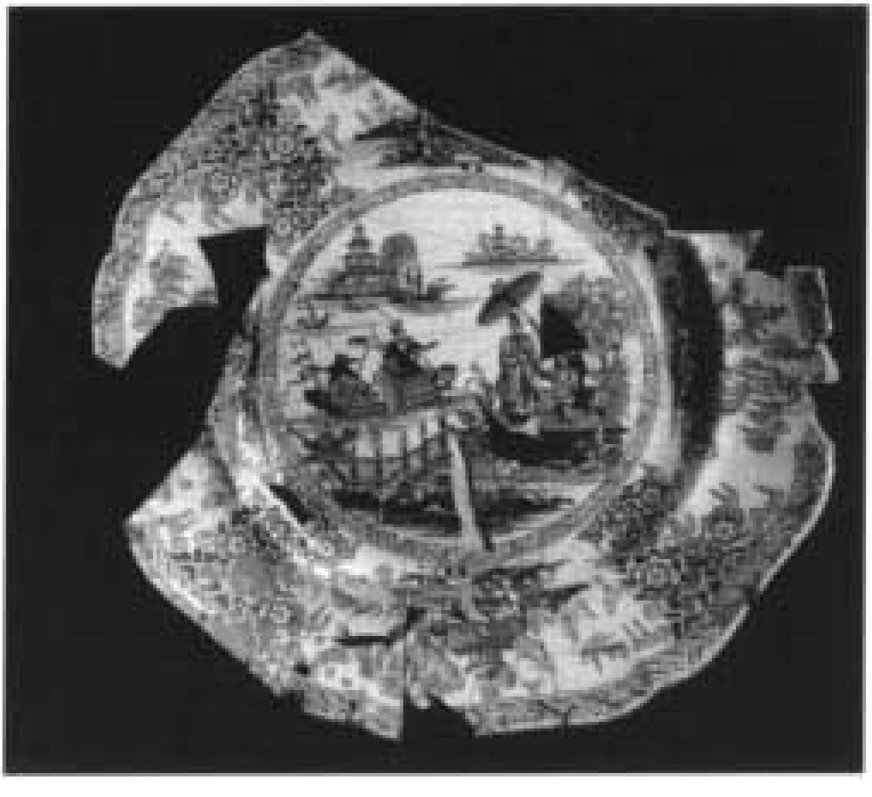

Figure 4.3 'Napier' pattern, John Ridgeway, 1830–40 (Dept of Archaeology, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest)

Nationality

The creation of a single British identity did not mean that other national identities vanished overnight. Indeed, it was entirely possible to be both British and distinctly Scots, Welsh or Irish. These separate identities could be subsumed and appropriated by the wider body politic as necessary. National identities could be expressed in two ways on transfer prints, one symbolically representing a sense of separate identity and the other a sense of merged identity.

The use of distinctly Scottish- and Welsh-themed plates grew out of the Romantic movement. The use and subtexts of Romantic-period Scottish and Welsh mythic themes have been extensively discussed elsewhere (Brooks 1997). To summarize, patterns such as the Davenport firm's 'Scott's Illustrations' series representing scenes from Sir Walter Scott's novels and the romantically Welsh Cambrian pattern (Fig. 4.4) by George Phillips represent a created version of a romanticized past. The popularity of Celtic culture following the Romantic-era revival should not be

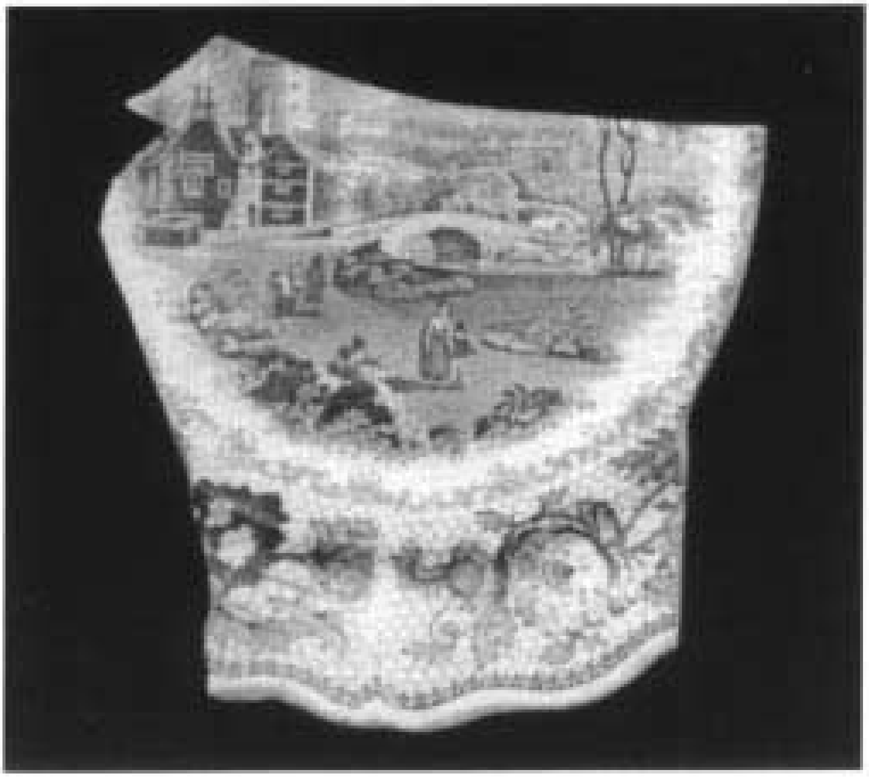

Figure 4.4 'Cambrian' pattern, George Phillips, c. 1834–48 (Dept of Archaeology, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest)

underestimated. While the poems behind the Ossian phenomenon of the 1760s were later proven to be largely forgeries (Gaskill 1991: 1–16), the unveiling of these putative masterworks of a third-century blind Gaelic bard unleashed a full-blown Celtophilia in Britain and North America. In the nineteenth century, the 'Balmoralization' (Jarvie 1989: 199) of Scottish culture led to further appropriation and absorption of the mythic Celtic past by Britain's elite. This process was further aided by the actions of the Celtic minorities themselves. Harvie notes that the Scots realized that 'prosperity, materially and intellectually, required collaboration with the English' (Harvie 1994: 81), and as a result they were able to understand and manipulate the wider national identity and ideology in a way that was unusual for national minorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With this in mind, the use of distinctly Scottish- and Welsh-themed plates by the Staffordshire potters is more understandable: they were reacting to both popular demand and national ideology. The appropriation of a Celtic imagery by English potters signals that these images were no longer considered potentially subversive in their symbolism, as they might have seemed when the Jacobite threat was still very real.

If some patterns represented a very separate picture of Britain's national identities, others emphasized how much those identities had merged, at least within the ranks of the aristocracy. Take, for example, the previously discussed Titled Seats' series. At least two of the patterns represent non-English scenes: The Duke of Argyll's seat at Inverary and Lord Carbery's house at Castle Freke, Cork. There is no means of distinguishing either of these from their English counterparts. The 'British History' series contains a representation of a scene from one of the defining eras of Scotland's history, the 'Interview between Wallace and Bruce' (Fig. 4.5). There is nothing in this transfer print to suggest anything even remotely Scottish. Indeed, Wallace and Bruce are attired in a manner more suggestive of Roman legionaries than of medieval warriors. These and similar plates mark a high tide of sorts in the material culture of British identity. The implicit symbolic ideology of these vessels suggests that the United Kingdom is no longer a land of four very different peoples, but rather a single socio-political entity. Of course, the co-existence of patterns representing both merged and separate national identities strongly suggests that the tensions between the two were never fully resolved. However, whether merged or separate, these patterns help to demonstrate that the national minorities had been successfully appropriated to the point that they were considered symbolically 'safe' rather than potentially disruptive or divisive.

INTERPRETATIONS

There are several ways to explore this type of ceramics analysis, and one potential means of interpretation, cultural affiliation, will be examined here. In order to demonstrate some of the inherent complexities of this analysis, this chapter qualifies

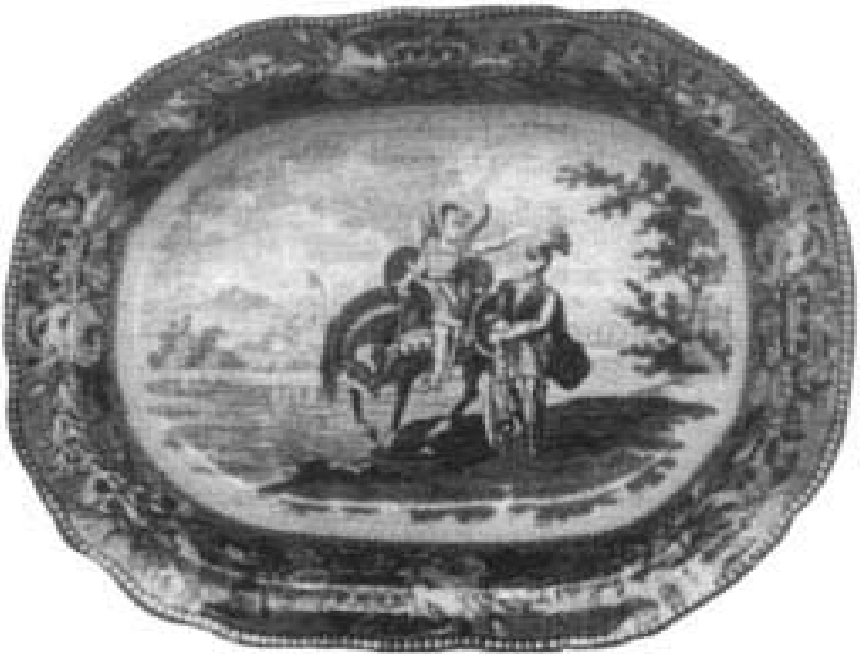

Figure 4.5 'Interview between Wallace and Brace' pattern, Jones & Son, *c.* 1826–28 (Dr R. K. Henrywood)

the interpretation of cultural affiliation by linking two further interpretative issues, those of function and of acquisition and availability. Various interpretations are by no means mutually exclusive, and indeed, are perhaps best used in combination. It should be stressed that these are not the only methods of archaeologically interpreting the symbolism of transfer prints, but they will serve to demonstrate how this type of analysis can contribute to site interpretation.

The use of transfer prints to interpret cultural affiliation requires a comparative analysis between geographical areas and is strengthened by corroborating material culture evidence. Take for example Mytum's 1994 analysis of Pembroke gravestone inscriptions. Mytum noted that Pembrokeshire was divided by both language (a geographical divide) and religion (a more class-based divide). English was (unsurprisingly) the most common language on gravestones in English-speaking southern Pembrokeshire. In Welsh-speaking northern Pembrokeshire, Welsh was disproportionately common on poor non-conformist gravestones, whereas English was more common on the gravestones of the wealthier Anglican community. This use of Welsh might well be seen as a rejection of the Anglicized elite in favour of a Welsh identity (Mytum 1994: 259–64). Following this example, the presence or absence of British-themed patterns at nearby Welsh sites could potentially signal information about the cultural affiliations of a site's occupants. Thus the potential absence of British-themed transfer prints on sites in north Pembrokeshire associated with poor farmers could serve as a further indication of a rejection of Anglicization. This type of corroborative analysis is important; material culture is not a passive reflector of cultural symbolism that always adheres to a single contextual analysis. Examined as part of the totality of a site's cultural, geographical and historical context, however, an interpretation can enhance our understanding of both the site and the artefact.

The issue of cultural affiliation cannot, however, be examined by itself; the multi-layered complexities of transfer-print symbolism demand that other issues also be considered. The acquisition and availability of goods also impact site interpretation. Praetzellis and Praetzellis have noted the pitfalls of assuming that material culture acquisition is always culturally biased; use of English and American pottery by the inhabitants of Sacramento's Chinatown did not indicate that they were becoming more American and less Chinese, but was rather a result of the local Chinese population using an American supplier and middleman who purchased the goods on their behalf (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997). The closely related topics of acquisition and availability in fact involve a wide range of complex issues, some of which are discussed in Buckham's chapter in this volume. To single out but one of these potential issues, as well as continuing with the example from the previous paragraph, poor farmers in northern Pembrokeshire might not have been purchasing all of their own ceramics. Given the complex relationships of interdependency amongst the Welsh cottagers (D. Jenkins 1971: 117; J. G. Jenkins 1976: 20–2), finewares might have been acquired as a payment for goods and services. Therefore, the finewares might have been purchased by wealthier farmers or the gentry before being handed down to the poorer members of the community. This would obviously impact the interpretation of cultural affiliation from transfer-print analysis, but it would also serve to give a more complete picture of a site's wider socio-cultural environment.

The function of the material culture, in this case the finewares, might also be considered. For example, Miller (as noted earlier) has conclusively demonstrated that transfer-printed wares were the most expensive fine earthenwares available (Miller 1980 and 1991). Given the value of these vessels, would a rural Welsh family have used them on a day-to-day basis, or were they more likely to be used for display purposes, such as on a Welsh dresser? An examination of wear marks (particularly knife marks) on the finewares in question can prove particularly useful in these circumstances. Light wear might suggest display use, whereas heavy wear marks might suggest day-to-day use. The former would be the more conclusive evidence – heavy wear merely indicates that the vessels were used on a regular basis at some point, not that they were never used for display purposes. Items displayed in the household might well hold a stronger contextual meaning than they might otherwise; these are the items that a household could choose to establish their identity, the items that could consciously and subconsciously tell visitors 'This is who I am' and 'This is what I believe in'.

To summarize the three areas of interpretation examined above, if a household controls its own fineware acquisition, if those finewares are used for display purposes, and if corroborative material culture were available, the conclusion would be clear: the fineware assemblage at a farm site in north Pembrokeshire associated with the rural poor would be demonstrably informed by wider issues of cultural identity. By focusing on different interpretative areas, or the same ones to different degrees, other researchers will be able to examine other areas relating to transfer-print symbolism. This may seem to be a considerable amount of work but the benefits are worth the effort. This type of analysis can contribute greatly to a deeper understanding of a site's socio-cultural context.

CONCLUSION

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, much valuable work has been done in the study of the economics and quantification of ceramics in historical archaeology, but comparatively little in the way of ceramic symbolism, particularly the symbolism of ceramic decoration. Given that archaeologists and material culture researchers have expended a considerable amount of effort teasing out the cultural symbolism of far less obvious items of material culture, this is somewhat surprising. This chapter has examined but three themes (rural prosperity, war and nationality) within a single topic (the creation of British identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and it has not even begun to address the totality of the vast panoply of transfer-printed vessels that British potters produced in this time period. Nonetheless, even within this relatively narrow context, it is clear that transfer-printed ceramics are laden with symbolic meaning. Perhaps part of the problem is that in the past, historical ceramicists were unsure of how to approach and interpret the symbolic meaning of their transfer-printed vessels. Given the traditional heavy focus on typology and quantification (both important fields of study in and of themselves), this would be unsurprising. Nonetheless, this chapter has explored the potential of how to apply this type of analysis to wider site interpretation, and has set an agenda for further discussion of this valuable area. Questions of cultural affiliation, acquisition and function of transfer-printed wares broaden our understanding of a site's social environment, and these are not the only areas of investigation available to the archaeologist. Continued analysis of transfer-print symbolism – and indeed of other decorative techniques – can only serve to further our understanding of these important artefacts and the sites from which they are excavated.

Acknowledgements

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Part II

FAMILIAR SPACES

5

RECONSTRUCTING CASTLES AND REFASHIONING IDENTITIES IN RENAISSANCE ENGLAND

Matthew Johnson

> New Historicists are sometimes said to be guilty of 'the principle of arbitrary connectedness'; that is, they conjoin what should by rights be kept apart, gluing together in a zany collage pieces that do not properly belong in the same place. But how do we know what is 'proper'? Who controls the categories that govern the distinction between the arbitrary and the appropriate? And what exactly are we supposed to see when we look into a mirror?
>
> (Greenblatt: 1994: 99)

This chapter has its origins in ongoing research into late medieval and Renaissance polite architecture, and a particular interest in the reuse or continuing use of old structures such as castles. Its arguments arise from a conviction that we need to explore new ways of talking about late and post-medieval architecture, ways that acknowledge and even celebrate the strangeness and otherness of the past, and that we need to move away from the easy familiarity of architectural discussions that talk of fashion, show, status, display, conspicuous consumption. (We also need to move away from similarly easy talk of ideology and misrepresentation such as that found in Johnson 1991.) Such strangeness and otherness is most clearly seen in the terms of reference we use for identity and the self.

Identity in the Renaissance, as New Historicist scholars have repeatedly stressed, is couched in terms not only superficially familar but actually unfamiliar to us. It is concerned with what they saw and we see in the mirror; what they saw and we see in the mirror is complicit with what they saw and we see around us, in dress, architecture and landscape for example. Identity is a term that embodies very different categories, all of them shifting and fluid: gender, the body, sexuality, class, ethnicity. The thrill of working on the Renaissance is that we not only need to question identities in the manner of the prehistorian, but that we can see 'modern' identities shifting into focus. Such past identities are both familar and strange. They are presented here as essentially strange, in counterpoint to the usual narratives of familiarity in which fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England is presented as essentially familiar and consequently banal.

I want to stress that identity and familiarity are clearly difficult issues that are as complex as they are wide-ranging. As such the arguments I present here are not only provisional in terms of their content; I also want to explore new ways of experiencing old buildings and places, and new ways of talking and writing about those experiences. In these terms, this chapter stands at the beginning of a long journey whose ultimate destination is a domain where very different discursive rules to those presently governing buildings archaeology and architectural history might apply. The initial stages of such a journey involve a rejection of pat divisions between medieval and post-medieval, vernacular and polite, archaeology and history.

I argue specifically that:

1. Changes in style and planning of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century architecture need to be thought about in much more subtle and penetrative ways than simply a blithe ascription to the 'vagaries of fashion' or the 'impact of the Renaissance'.
2. Architecture must be seen as one expression of changing cultural identity. In particular, architecture was one form of 'Renaissance self-fashioning' in the phrase made popular by Stephen Greenblatt (1980).
3. The mid- to late sixteenth century saw the construction (no pun intended) of elite domestic architecture as a discursive object. More precisely, this period saw the application of new discursive rules to the inscription of architectural forms on the physical and cultural landscape.
4. Having been re-constructed through new discourses in this way, old buildings such as medieval castles came to carry very different meanings. Such new meanings in turn were actively deployed in the construction of the identities of sixteenth-century elites.

My conclusion therefore is that sixteenth-century identities are constructed around *the way buildings are viewed*, rather than simply changing architectural styles (Perpendicular, Renaissance). Such a conclusion, is, of course, a starting point in its turn.

Elements of the argument outlined above fall into a familiar narrative. It is easy to demonstrate that sixteenth-century architecture is about more than 'the Renaissance' in simplistic terms, as I have done elsewhere (Johnson 1991 and 1996). The application of Renaissance rules to architectural forms can be deconstructed to the extent that 'the Renaissance' ceases to be a meaningful category; Maurice Howard's analysis of Classical ornament at Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire, does this in some detail (Howard 1990).

It is also easy to refer to some of the changes in identity experienced by the elite at this period. A potted narrative of some of the broader changes in sixteenth-century elite culture might include a shift from values of bastard feudalism, however defined, to those of early modern 'civility': the rise of literacy and with it literate culture, the break-up of communities of honour and martial valour, the associated decline of 'brutality' most notably discussed by Norbert Elias (1978). The financial crisis associated with the decline in great households, religious reformation, and the rise of the middle classes and the nation state in terms of both cultural domination and political power might then be cited (Gaimster and Stamper 1997), along with the rise in social mobility, whether real or merely perceived by contemporaries (Stone 1984).

Having gone through such a list of changes, a potted version of sixteenth-century architectural history might contrast two buildings as epitomes of their respective 'ages'. To take two more or less at random, Gainsborough Old Hall, in Lincolnshire, can be seen as a late fifteenth-century agglomeration of buildings in three ranges around a central court; it was dominated by a central hall with the usual accoutrements of a dais end with oriel window and a cross-passage; beyond each a rambling suite of rooms, large kitchens and a solar wing. The whole is inward-looking, a rambling structure. Pair Gainsborough with the late sixteenth-century Hardwick Hall: the hall is now relegated to the role of an entrance vestibule; new architectural features include a gallery running the length of the building. Overall, the plan is two rooms deep, and has an organic unity – it is formed of two interlinked Greek crosses. The whole also looks outward. The courtyard has been lost; huge glazed windows view the landscape around rather than the courtyard within. It is tempting therefore to contrast 1500 and 1600 at opposite ends of a simple, unilinear process, and draw the implication that we should contrast 'elite culture' in 1500 and 1600 at opposite ends of such a spectrum also.

Now large elements of such a picture are true at a general level, and indeed I have given this account as a frame upon which to hang a more detailed analysis of architecture and identity. Such a picture is nevertheless excessively normative, even Whiggish. I want to qualify such a narrative by stressing that:

1 Different buildings and different families of owners reveal a diversity of experience, both at individual and regional levels. There are also subtle but important distinctions to be made between between royal, aristocratic and gentry architecture and cultural identity.
2 There is also an apparent continuity in many respects. Military prowess and the concept of honour continued to be a key component in the identity at least of many elite men throughout this period, though it was framed in different

ways in different contexts.

3 Such an account does little justice to the complexity of manipulation of architectural symbols and the changing way these came to signify elite identities. Such subtlety is more than simply ‘noise’ around clear underlying principles or trends, since it is this complexity that was such an important component of how buildings could be constructed and reconstructed by the elite.

The rest of this discussion will concentrate on point 3. Specifically, I think that a model in which we line up buildings from this or that date and see them as examples or archetypes of their time conceals such complexity and subtlety, and in particular conceals one of the most interesting aspects of sixteenth-century architecture: the reuse of buildings from the past to carry very different meanings in a present whose nature was under dispute.

Let’s take a specific individual, building and historical event as an example of such complexity: one episode in the popular uprising of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. A crowd came to gates of Wressle Castle in eastern Yorkshire to demand ‘a Percy to lead the rebellion’. Meanwhile the Percy Earl of Northumberland lay tactfully ‘ill’ inside, refused to come out and played no further part in the rising (Fletcher 1973).

What is going on here? First, one could argue that the crowd sought legitimation for its actions by appealing to the traditional role of the Percy family as the leader of an independent North. (Whether the rebellion was genuinely popular or not is a vexed question.) Percy’s refusal was in part a rejection of these values, or at least could be read as such by participants; his ‘illness’ an attempt to ameliorate this rejection. The castle of Wressle was thus used as a stage setting for a complex piece of political action.

Now Wressle Castle was both an old and a new building (Fig. 5.1). Built over 100 years earlier and closely linked in terms of its form to the quadrangular castles of Bolton and Sheriff Hutton in the same county, it was of a courtyard plan still not noticeably archaic in the mid-sixteenth century; an outer court had recently been added. The castle presents a traditional face to the rebels; but there was a new park and garden round the other side and a library called Paradise in one of the rectangular towers. The identity of the castle is as complex as that of the protagonists in this episode.

It is very easy to forget that medieval buildings that survived were also sixteenth- and seventeenth-century buildings, that they may have carried very different meanings in those contexts, and that we are as much concerned with their continuing use as their construction. The fourteenth-century inner court at Wressle was a sign of the ancient character of the Percy lineage; the sixteenth-century building of an outer court ‘framed’ this old structure, placed it as the core of a great feudal palace. The meanings of that building were then referred back to in the actions of the different parties.

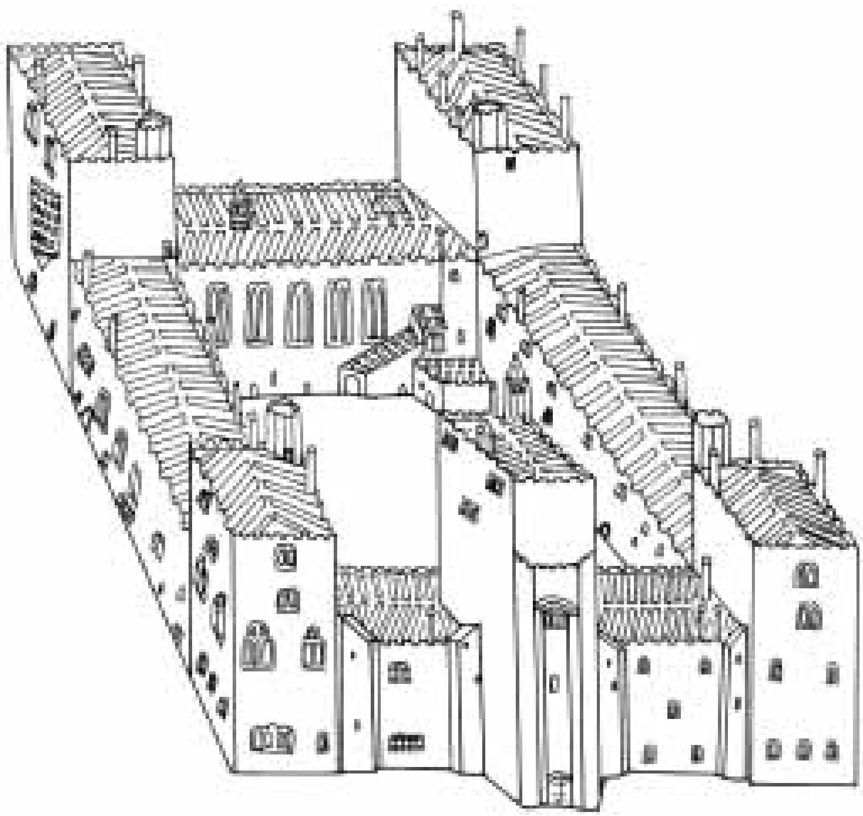

Figure 5.1 Wressle castle, Yorkshire; drawing of the castle in *c.* 1600 (after Neave 1984: 59)

I shall now make some more detailed comments about the relationship between identity and architecture in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England. I will look first at elements of late medieval architectural forms before examining the sixteenth-century manipulation of architecture to create new cultural authorities and identities in greater detail.

LATE MEDIEVAL CASTLES

Late medieval architecture, in particular that of castles, is at once loquacious and silent. It is intensely expressive of a system of values and identities; and yet that system hardly emerges into written or overt discourse. The system of values is coherent, but is rarely if ever spoken out loud.

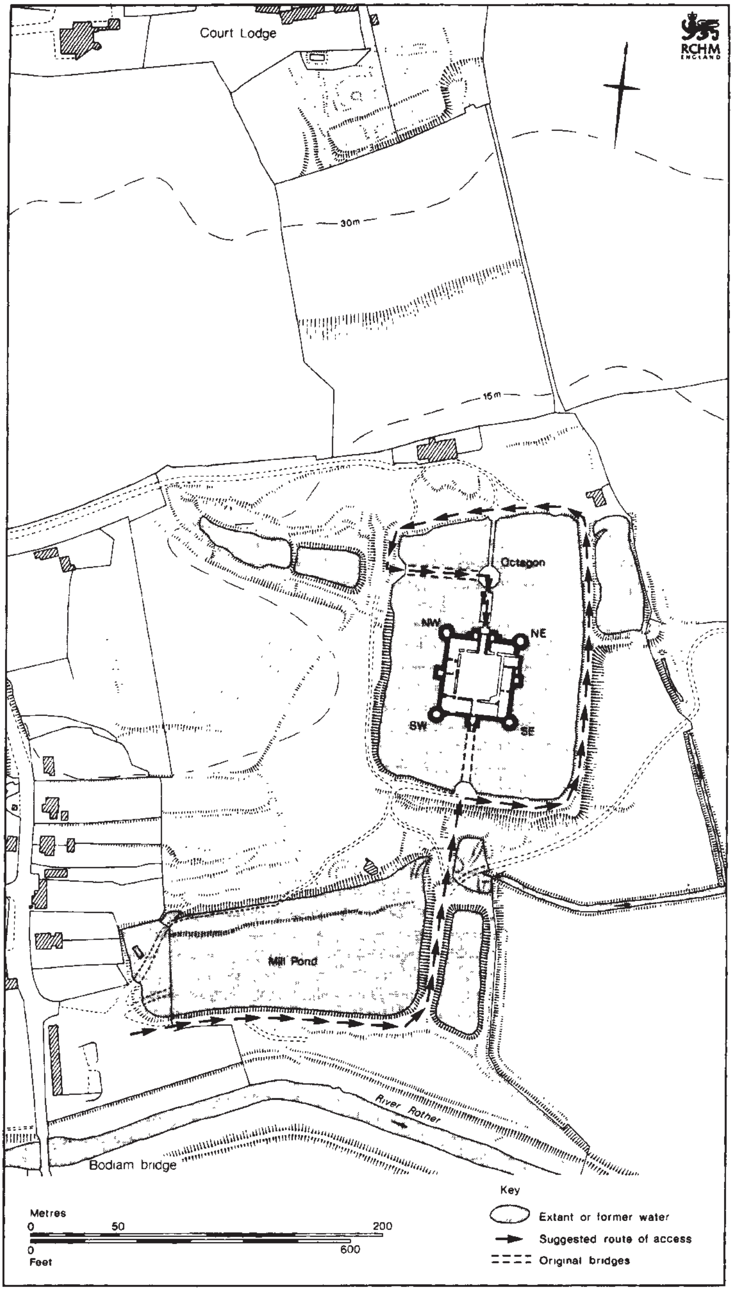
Court Lodge
RCHM ENGLAND
30m
15m
Octagon
NW
NE
SW
SE
Mill Pond
River Rother
Bodiam bridge
Metres
0
50
200
0
600
Feet
Key
Extant or former water
Suggested route of access
Original bridges

Figure 5.2 Bodiam castle, Sussex, with route to main gate marked (after Everson 1996: Fig. 1)

Bodiam and Warkworth are two of the most frequently cited structures in this regard. Bodiam, built in the later fourteenth century, is an 'old soldier's dream house', the depth and detail of its sham defences being so carefully laid out that some stubbornly traditional architectural historians refuse to venture from the shadow of the general's armchair and acknowledge it as such. The visitor to Bodiam moves along a series of carefully defined causeways through a carefully defined landscape; past ornamental ponds, along the undefended scarp holding back the moat, around and back to the main gate (Fig. 5.2). As he does so (and I suggest that the castle is constructed with a primarily male audience of fellow knights in mind), he notes all the sham accoutrements of defensive literacy that mark the identity of the old soldier whose residence this is: flanking towers that do not really flank, drawbridges and portcullis grooves that do not really work, and so on.

If Bodiam is an apparently sham castle, Warkworth consists of additions to a much earlier structure originally of motte-and-bailey form. Its most notable element is a spectacular donjon or great tower (Fig. 5.3). Much ink has been spilt over the 'origins' of these late medieval towers; whether descended directly from the great 'Norman' keeps, or an innovation in terms of layout and function, or to do with tensions between master and mercenary in 'bastard feudalism'. Again, I suggest this misses the point. Whatever the outcome of the anti-quarian's search for 'origins', by the fifteenth century the tower was in part a statement about lordship.

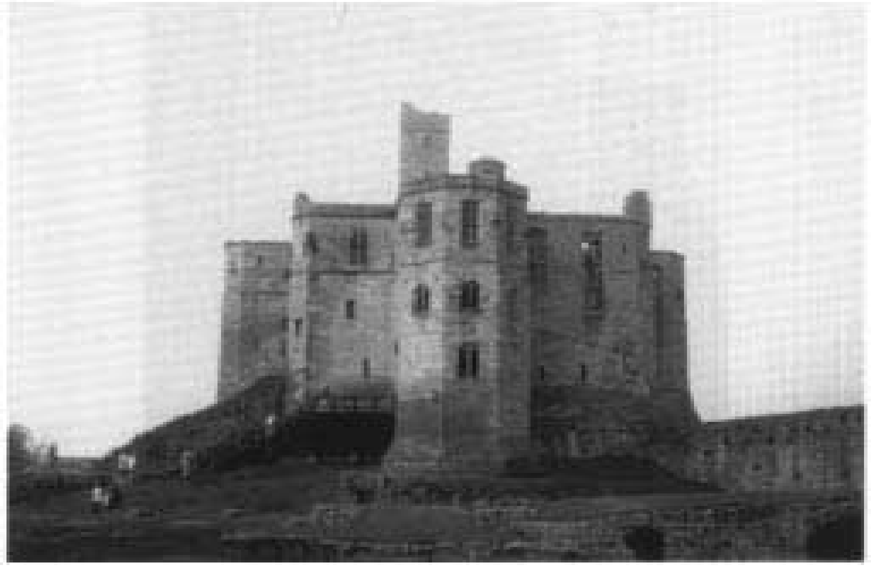

Figure 5.3 The great tower or donjon at Warkworth

The Warkworth tower is usually dated to the early to mid-fifteenth century, though there is no certain documentary evidence for this date; it is of an apparently unusual plan. But I suggest Warkworth is not as unusual as all that. Its outline of a Greek cross, it has been suggested, conceals a more traditional arrangement of hall with service at lower end and parlour at upper, with cellars below. In this view the light well in the middle of the building is simply a tiny version of the central courtyard of a quadrangular castle or palace (Fig. 5.3; Simpson 1938: 127). Pevsner asserts in a characteristic and revealing comment that 'the design of castles and bastions as a rule has nothing to do with architectural history . . . Considerations of aesthetics are as a rule completely absent. But the Warkworth Keep is a work of architecture in the sense that both its mass and its inner spaces are beautiful as well as useful' (Pevsner 1957: 315–16).

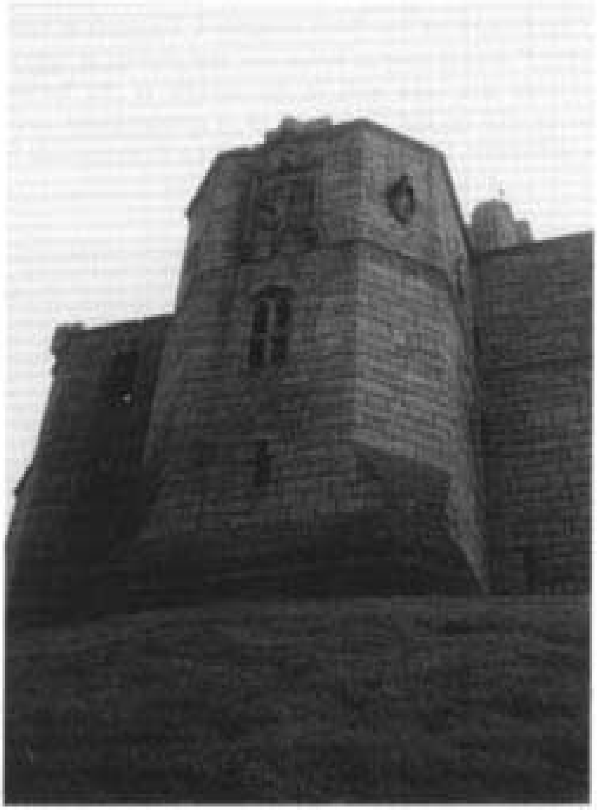

Figure 5.4 The Percy lion, north face of Warkworth keep

Warkworth is a piece of architectural symbolism as witty and as complex as anything from the Italian Renaissance. It has a tower that from the outside appears to be central; on the inside the light well seems to fill this role. In fact neither is central. The tower is placed upon the old motte of the earlier castle with all its historical associations. The whole castle is covered with the heraldic mark of the Percy lion (Fig. 5.4).

How does a Warkworth mark the identity of its owners and builders? Like Wressle, Warkworth was one of a number of castles owned by the Percy earls of Northumberland. Warkworth is an old castle of twelfth-century origins: its spatial position reflects a feudal control of space. Its orientation is axial, with the main street behind dominated by a large carved, and probably formerly painted, Percy lion on the tower. The plan of the fifteenth-century castle refers back to its origins in its retention of the motte-and-bailey form, and the rebuilt keep on top of the older motte to its fifteenth-century owners.

Such buildings, then, are best 'read' as having a series of layered meanings. They relate to the continuing use of military symbolism; to the deliberate use of archaic forms such as the great tower; and so on. Such layering of meanings is seen most clearly and overtly in the practice of heraldry. The historical antecedents of heraldry are a matter of dispute, but by the fifteenth century heraldic marks had become badges of lineage, of ancient ancestry and of right to land; heraldry can also be argued to be totemic and metonymic in its symbolic associations (the lion rampant of the Percys being an obvious example). The great tower at Tattershall, one of the largest in terms of scale but arranged internally like a much smaller manorial solar tower, is adorned insistently and repetitively with Ralph, Lord Cromwell's arms (a pair of moneybags and the motto 'The Right Is Mine'). Innumerable gatehouses of all types of ostensibly military, domestic or religious structure are covered in badges and devices of this type. This insistence and repetitiveness is worth further exploration – recent work has linked such a form of patterning with that in contemporary literary and musical forms (Evett 1990).

Overt discussions of this symbolism, though, are almost non-existent. I know of no overtly articulated discussion of Warkworth as a piece of architecture until the later sixteenth century; most famously James I's remark that 'the lion holds up this castle'. It is striking that at the same time the formal, stylistic and decorative vocabulary of late medieval secular architecture remained strikingly constant and unchanging, to the extent that architectural historians often find it difficult to date a building between the late fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries in the absence of documentary evidence.

To summarize, late medieval meanings were not the subject of overt discourse, either in terms of writing or in terms of stylistic change. If we look, for example, at the comments of the early topographical writer Leland, writing in the 1510s, most comments are confined to the scale of the building; aesthetics or symbolism are hardly mentioned beyond comments like ‘very fair and pleasant’ or even ‘one thing I liked very much was . . .’ (Chandler (ed.) 1992).

If the identities expressed by late medieval architecture were complex, the bearers of those identities remained remarkably silent about it. Identities were negotiated through movement through space, placement of actions, and visual and iconic images such as heraldry; not in the first instance through writing things down. To borrow Foucault’s terminology, the meanings of architecture were not constituted as a problem in late medieval English discourse. Thornbury was built by the Duke of Buckingham in the 1510s as a great palace, with all the accoutrements of crenellation and heraldry; it succeeded to such an extent that its owner was executed in part for building ‘too grandly’ before the palace and its associated garden were even half finished. But the phrase ‘too grandly’ is not elaborated upon; its meanings were taken by contemporaries as self-evident.

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MENTALITIES

Now the interesting thing when we come to consider sixteenth-century elites is that this silence has disappeared a century later. Elizabethan writers expressed overt anxiety, intellectual and emotional, over some of the very theoretical concerns that involve us in considering changing marks of identity. To clarify, a series of late sixteenth-century texts quite explicitly identify and discuss questions of meaning and identity. Two themes stand out in particular: concern over the self, and over the nature of signification – how symbols work.

To take the self first, I suggest that one of the anxieties of the sixteenth century was the distinction between inner and outer man: most obviously through traditions of Protestant thought, but a distinction also seen within Renaissance humanism. This *deepening* of personal identity, underneath the surface roles of allegiance and loyalty, has been noted in literature (for example, the casting of Machiavelli as a horrifying figure in Marlowe’s *Edward II*; the peculiar horror of Shakespeare’s Iago and Richard III, two characters who dissemble, are not what they seem). It carried the implication that identities were more problematic and could be negotiated in more complex ways than simply the late medieval techniques of surface appearance; the carrying of livery and other badges on the body, the taking of oaths, values of service and patronage – these were no longer enough to determine identity. Who you were was no longer a simple matter of placement on a grid of status; as Keith Wrightson has noted, the language of social division in this period shifted uneasily between different categories of status and class, evolving into a ‘language of sorts’ (Wrightson 1994).

Most of this anxiety was, of course, masculine. To be a ruler was to be male; and to be male was a cultural distinction rather than a biological one. Masculinity was intellectually conceived by many male writers as a positive mark; men who failed to actively maintain the boundaries of identity, for example by dressing in women's clothing on the stage, were in danger of lapsing back into femininity (Laqueur 1990; Levine 1994). This was a specifically elite masculinity, and liable to become more so. The deeper and more problematic the identity, the more it was agonized over and subjected to abstracted analysis by literate men, the more divorced it became from the more ordinary concerns of popular culture, tradition and the everyday. The rise of published texts – in other words, forms of discourse available only to a literate few – accentuated and reinforced this division.

If the identity of the self could be renegotiated, so could identity in another sense: that of linguistic identity, or what would be called by modern theorists the relationship between signifier and signified. We see a concern over the nature of language and literary form and the relationship of such forms to, for example, the political form of the nation state. Different forms of literature could signify different political ideologies (Helgerson 1994). One artefact of this anxiety was an increasing number of emblem books from the late sixteenth century onwards. Emblems were pictorial representations of mottoes or statements; and these could be collected together in books that were frequently derivative one from another. Bath (1994) has discussed how emblems were a problem: did their meaning reside within the picture, or was it assigned by the observer? Was this a direct or indirect relationship?

Questions of self and meaning came together in the marking of identity. Late medieval identities were placed on the body, and marked rank, role and status. Retainers wore 'livery' bearing the badge and devices of their masters (Warwick's ragged staff; Richard III's white boar). In the early sixteenth century Henry VII prohibited livery or the use of armed retainers bearing such marks of identity and allegiance, a move usually seen as that of a prudent king establishing rule over unruly barons but which I suggest has much deeper symbolic associations. By the later sixteenth century elite dress was less dependent on formal signification of role, played with identities more overtly and was more subject to 'fashion'. Male dress in particular was perceived as being more 'effeminate' (Levin 1994).

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

I am suggesting, then, that new rules of organizing architecture also organize the discourse and meanings of architecture; that is, as what you build changes, so do the rules by which you and others 'read' that building. Such organization of meaning shifts as much in relation to old buildings such as castles as it does in terms of new structures.

It is easy to fit some of the changes noted by traditional architectural historians into this context. In mid- to late sixteenth-century England, we see the emergence of named architects, the publication of Classical texts, and self-consciously 'witty' architecture. The meanings of architecture are now other

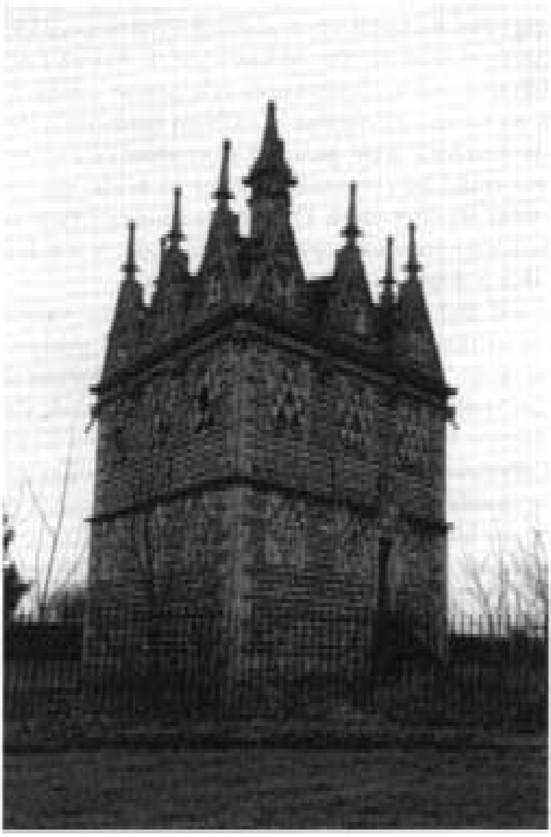

Figure 5.5 Rushton Triangular Lodge, Northamptonshire

than transparent – they need explaining to the uninitiated, they cannot necessarily be experienced directly simply by moving through space – and are more amenable to overt discussion. The classic example is Rushton Triangular Lodge, built by the Catholic Sir Thomas Tresham. The lodge refers to the symbolism of the Holy Trinity: it has three sides each with three three-lobed windows and three gables; each side is thirty-three-and-a-third feet long; Latin inscriptions appear on each side of the building (thirty-three characters to each side) and over the door (Fig. 5.5). The rabbit warren to one side of the building has recently been convincingly argued to be an allusion to Catholic conceptions of the soul (Stocker and Stocker 1996).

First, different forms of architecture were less embedded one in another. A building like Wressle could be described as a castle or a palace; it could accomodate a king or a noble. The battlements and other accountrements on late medieval religious architecture contained clear allusions to both religious and military themes (the cruciform arrowslits at Bury St Edmunds Abbey Gate, for example: Coulson 1982). By the mid-sixteenth century not only had the monasteries been dissolved, many of them had either been demolished or were now housing new secular residences. Quite apart from other changes the Dissolution of the Monasteries marked, it represented a rupture in a genealogy of architectural forms stretching back in England to the early Middle Ages.

If religious and domestic architecture were no longer embedded one in another, neither were fortified and unfortified. While late medieval castle forms are both 'military' and 'domestic' to the extent that academics can fail to agree over whether they are defensible, the same cannot be said of military and domestic elite architecture by *c.* 1600. Though often still of courtyard plan, great houses had lost their towers and curtain walls. Conversely, the introduction of forms of military architecture suitable for the systematic use of artillery had shifted the emphasis in defence from the tower to the angled bastion – low, angled, related one to another through the systematic use of lines of sight and fire, on a much larger scale, and diffused through the use of printed military manuals (Ive 1589). It is outside the scope of this chapter to consider whether the impetus behind these new forms of military architecture was purely 'technical', or whether this change too must also be seen in cultural terms. Whatever the case, an observer of any social class could tell the difference in c. 1600 between a military fort and a great house. The same was not true a century and a half earlier.

The most central element of this rupture, however, is not a change in architectural form or in its strictly material context, but a shift in how such forms were 'read', were understood by social actors. To put this another way, we see the production of new forms of discourse around old castles. For the early sixteenth-century writer Leland, so many castles were ruined or in disrepair, but were described simply as 'great'. In the latter half of the same century Camden writes of Cottingham in Yorkshire as follows:

> the ruins of an old Castle built (by King John's permission) by Robert Estotevill, descended from Robert Grundeboefe a Norman Baron, and a man of great note in those times, whose estate came by marriage to the Lords de Wake, and afterwards by a daughter of John de Wake to Edmund Earl of Kent from whom descended Joan, wife to Edward that most warlike Prince of Wales, who defeated the French in so many engagements.
>
> (Woodward 1985: 22)

Note the difference in detail, in historical specificity, the overt delineation of many different meanings.

With such detailed topographical descriptions and their ordered relation to the past went the appearance of the scale map and the plan view. The view of Wressle I have made much of in this chapter (Fig. 5.1) was actually produced in *c.* 1600. Now if views of an old building can be carefully set up for manipulation in the service of contemporary concerns, this means that architecture can change its meanings from generation to generation without physical rebuilding.

Such manipulation of different meanings of elite architecture is most overt in the genre of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century country house literature. In his early seventeenth-century poem 'To Penshurst' the poet and playwright Ben Jonson sets the medieval house of Penshurst up as 'an ancient pile', redolent with traditional values of hospitality, commensality, neighbourliness (Johnson 1996: 134–40). With the patronage of its owner in mind, Penshurst is used in the poem as a weapon to condemn the 'proud ambitious heaps' of other builders (it is difficult not to think of Hardwick Hall in this connection). There is a massive irony here, an irony that tears at the heart of elite identities of the English Renaissance: many of the values of the medieval house and household only emerge into written discourse as an artefact of their problematic nature. To put the point in a less obscure way, Jonson is seeking to make a system of values articulate and coherent precisely because that system is under threat from wider social and cultural forces. In doing so, Jonson is constructing a new form of discourse; he is doing so in a way that would be quite alien to a medieval owner.

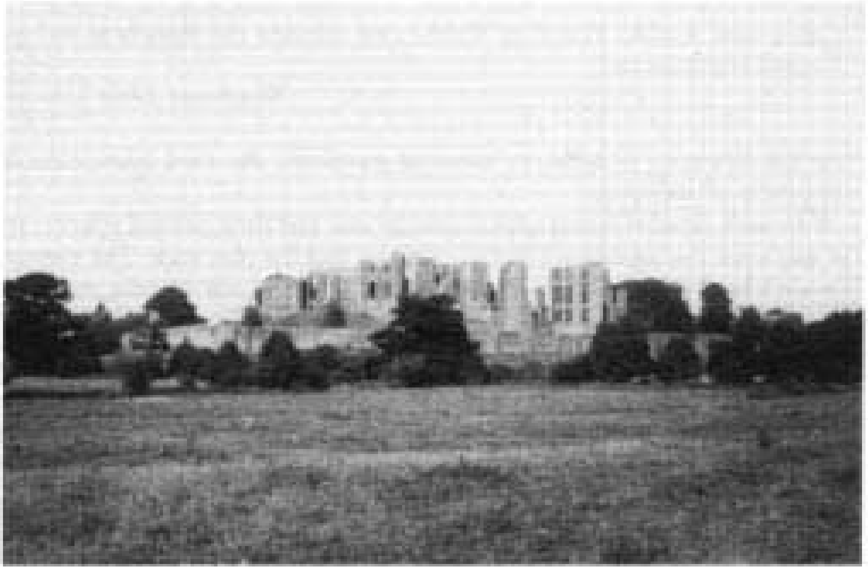

Figure 5.6 The inner courtyard of Kenilworth, Warwickshire

Kenilworth Castle bears witness to many of these complexities (Fig. 5.6). Kenilworth is an ancient pile; the ovoid line of its twelfth-century defences probably follows the line of earlier earthern ramparts. By the fifteenth century the lake had become an ornament; there was a pleasure garden with harbour beyond. The core of the castle was now arranged around a suite of late fourteenth-century buildings including a huge Great Hall.

In the later sixteenth century the castle was owned by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and favourite of Queen Elizabeth, and it is this period that I want to concentrate on. Dudley made a whole series of alterations, including a separate suite for visitors such as the queen, and a terraced garden to the north in the latest Italian style. But these alterations are much more than simply a refurbishment of an ancient structure to bring it up to modern standards. First, the Norman keep was retained, but given new windows and an entrance to the garden. The keep could now be viewed across the formal garden. The keep, interestingly named 'Caesar's Tower' at this period, was also given a blue and gilt clock; during Queen Elizabeth's visit the clock did not move, signifying that time was to stand still. Having been remodelled in this way, the ancient castle formed a backdrop for the renegotiation of royal and aristocratic identities. When Queen Elizabeth visited in 1575 she was greeted at the Brays Gate in verse before being offered the keys to the castle. As she traversed the causeway, the lady of the lake and two nymphs appeared on an island in the Mere. A poet then welcomed her at the Inner Gate (Gascoigne 1910).

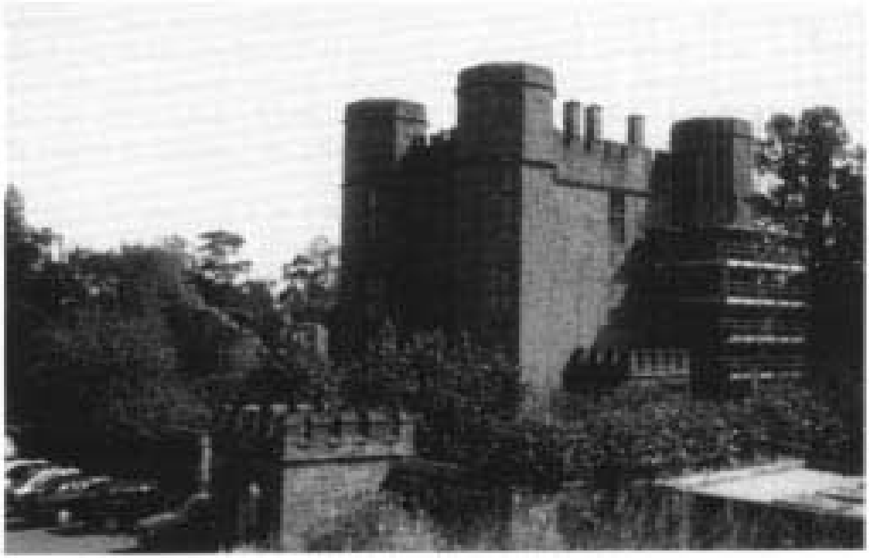

Figure 5.7 The gatehouse at Kenilworth

The most interesting alteration in many ways was the addition of a gatehouse on the north side of the castle (Fig. 5.7). Considered strictly in terms of form this was a conservative building, a continuation of a well-known late Gothic tradition. Its four turrets at each angle place the gatehouse securely in the tradition of twin-towered gatehouses, and in plan there is nothing to distinguish it from late fifteenth-century structures of this kind. (Only the windows give any clue as to its late date.) But Leicester's gatehouse can also be put in the context of a late sixteenth-century revival of the values of chivalry within the political context of the newly Protestant nation state. A revival of values in this context, using new discursive forms of poetry as well as architecture (Spenser's late sixteenth-century narrative poem *The Faerie Queen*), is just such a clever manipulation of identity. As such, Leicester's gatehouse is a modern statement in its very conscious archaism.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

The more I think about who sixteenth-century people thought they were, the more alien their identities seem to me. There is a persistent tradition among late medieval and sixteenth-century historians to treat royal and aristocratic rulers as 'just like us', with mentalities like modern Whitehall bureaucrats. When these individuals do emerge from the rational routine of estate management or diplomacy they occasionally appear to behave like naughty children, being 'excessively ambitious' or 'touchy about honour'. Such views would verge on the racist if applied to individuals from other cultures in the present; but if the dead cannot speak, they also cannot complain. I suggest that a theorized view of architecture is one way to restore their view of their world, at least in part.

A final example relating to buildings will suffice. Elizabeth I has traditionally been praised for her spendthrift nature: unlike her father, Henry VIII, and the son of her successor James, Charles I, Elizabeth never built a major palace in her life. A prudent policy of a prudent stateswoman, no doubt, particularly considering the fate of Charles, who fifty years later walked to his death from the window of one of his expensive and unpopular creations (Whitehall Palace). It has also been suggested that rebuilding in the Elizabethan period was unnecessary given the broad continuity of practices of access to the monarch and provision of other accommodation at Court (Thurley 1993), though other architectural historians have drawn attention to striking aspects of change in the way Elizabeth used these rooms; where she chose to eat, for example (Girouard 1978: 110). But this, I suggest, is only part of the story. As a female monarch in a patriarchal society, a society moreover where masculine and feminine identities were changing, Elizabeth's fashioning by herself and others was both complex and unstable (Levin 1994). One stable element derived fom the past was the memory of her father, Henry VIII, perceived by many as the saviour of the nation from Catholicism, the last great king, and prodigious builder of the palaces Elizabeth was brought up and lived in.

Elizabeth famously negotiated her own identity at a moment of supreme threat to her monarchy, the prospect of invasion by the Spanish Armada, when she remarked that though she was a weak and feeble woman she had the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too. Listeners would have understood the indirect reference to Henry. A portrait of Henry VIII hung at the centre of political power, the Privy Chamber, at Whitehall; one visitor commented that 'The King as he stood there, majestic in his splendour, was so lifelike that the spectator felt abashed, annihilated in his presence'. Elizabeth may well have explicitly identified her own physical body with that of Henry (Levin 1994: 142–3). As young Elizabethans walked through Henry's galleries and apartments that were also Elizabeth's, stood before Henry's tapestries that were also Elizabeth's, knelt before a female king in a royal setting that was Henry's and Elizabeth's, the message would have been clear.

Elizabeth's most sophisticated tactic in marking her own identity was to refrain from rebuilding and erasing the marks of her own parentage. Such absences are often difficult to analyse, but in the study of architecture and identity they are often the most subtle – and effective – marks of all.

Acknowledgements

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6

THE ‘FAMILIAR’ FRATERNITY

The appropriation and consumption of medieval guildhalls in early modern York

Kate Giles

THE ‘FAMILIAR PAST’: MEDIEVAL AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Two recent conferences – the ‘Familiar Past’ session at the Theoretical Archaeology conference (December 1996) and the ‘Age of Transition 1400–1600’ conference held by the Societies of Medieval and Post-medieval Archaeology (November 1996) – have highlighted the need for a reappraisal of the relationship between medieval and historical archaeology in Britain. Until recently we have tended to follow a historical periodization of the past into medieval and post-medieval and ‘industrial’ archaeology. This has rein-forced perceptions of archaeology’s role as the ‘handmaiden of history’, merely illustrating existing historical narratives with artefactual evidence (c.f. Rahtz 1981; Austin 1992). Historical and medieval archaeologists have therefore spent a disproportionate amount of time and energy discussing our methodological and theoretical boundaries; a debate which has polarized around the relationship between documentary ‘historical’ sources and artefactual material culture. One of the most exciting developments in this volume is that historical archaeologists appear to have moved beyond such a circular debate, crossing the medieval/post-medieval divide and choosing to engage in a critical way with artefactual and documentary sources. To ignore historical sources is to misunderstand the multiple ways in which medieval and early modern people represented themselves through texts *and* artefacts. Rather, both documents and artefacts (including buildings and space) should be seen as ‘the surviving fragments of those recursive media through which the practices of social discourse were constructed’ (Barrett 1988: 9). These developments in historical archaeology have allowed us rather to begin to develop a critique of how historical periodization tends to mask the way in which our apparently ‘familiar’ and modern past was actually structured through the appropriation and consumption of medieval material culture. This issue will be explicitly addressed through the contextual case study of three fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious fraternity halls in York. In many ways it is a response to the challenges laid down by Johnson's (1996) search to develop an archaeology of capitalism through the study of the transformation of the meanings and use of rural medieval material culture. Although there has been considerable historical work concerning the role of towns in the commercialization and transformation of medieval feudal society (c.f. Hilton 1992; Britnell 1993; Miller and Hatcher 1995; Rigby 1995), urban buildings archaeologists have seemed reluctant to engage in this debate.

The theoretical interpretation advanced here is underpinned by Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration, which emphasizes that social practice is the medium through which social structures (the generative rules and power relations built into social systems) are reproduced and transformed over time. It stresses that people are knowledgeable human agents with a practical knowledge of 'how to go on' in life, able to transform the social practices and power relations within which they are situated. The interpretation of the material construction of the social world of medieval York is influenced by Bourdieu's (1977) idea of *habitus* – the strategy-generating principle that enables people to 'go on' in the world. Both writers emphasize the temporal and spatial location of practice, which Giddens terms the *locale*. These approaches offer a theoretical basis for interpretation of the appropriation of York's medieval religious fraternity halls by craft and mercantile guilds during the late fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The physical appropriation of these buildings may be understood as part of a wider transformation of medieval *habitus* in the early modern period.

THE MEDIEVAL GUILDHALLS OF YORK

Although there has been considerable archaeological and historical work on the medieval domestic and ecclesiastical buildings of York, much less is known about public buildings like Trinity Hall, constructed by the fraternity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary *c*. 1357–69; St John the Baptist's Hall, built by the fraternity of that name *c*. 1415; and St Anthony's Hall, erected by an amalgamation of four fraternities during the mid-fifteenth century (Fig. 6.1). Two of these buildings were taken over craft and mercantile guilds during the fifteenth century: Trinity Hall by the mercers' guild and St John the Baptist's by the taylors; whilst St Anthony's was handed over to all those craft guilds without a hall of their own in 1554.

There is considerable historical debate about the nature and function of both religious fraternities and craft and mercantile guilds. Religious fraternities had both religious and social functions. They were embedded in the orthodoxy of the

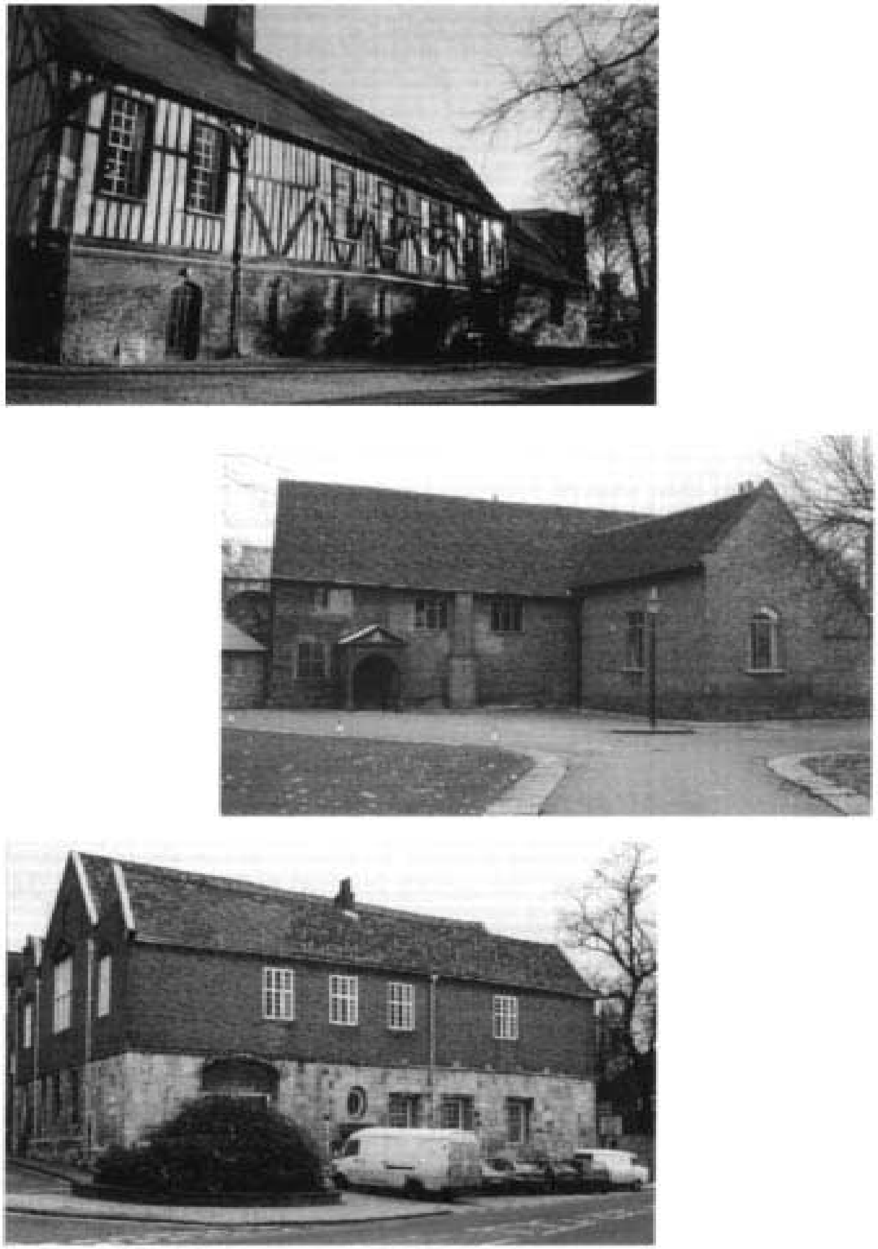

Figure 6.1 Trinity Hall (The Merchant Adventurers’ Hall) *c.* 1356–69, Fossgate, York; St John the Baptist’s Hall (The Merchant Taylors’ Hall), Aldwark, York; St Anthony’s Hall (the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research), Peaseholme Green, York

medieval church, maintaining lights and saying masses for the souls of dead members; but they were also associations through which individuals could gain access to political and social networks of power and through which individual and communal identities could be structured (Crouch 1995; Rubin 1991; Rosser 1988). Occupational guilds and crafts mysteries emerged in York during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, membership of which was compulsory in order to trade freely within the city (Swanson 1989). These were secular associations whose membership often overlapped with that of the religious fraternities in York but which remained technically separate until the Reformation. However, although ceremonies such as the fraternity feast and Corpus Christi processions and plays associated with religious and craft guilds have received detailed consideration (James 1983; Beckwith 1994; Rosser 1994), no coherent study has been made of the most important aspect of their material culture – the fraternity or guildhall. Schofield has suggested that many London livery halls were substantially unaltered courtyard townhouses (1995: 44). But the evidence from York's religious fraternity halls suggests that they were far more than adapted domestic buildings. They operated as reflexive material culture; their structures and spaces not only reflected the identity of the medieval guilds, but were actively used to negotiate and transform urban social relations and power structures. In order to understand the transformation of fraternity halls by craft and mercantile guilds it is necessary to understand the ways in which they were used by the religious fraternity. The buildings basically comprised two areas, a hall on the first floor, as at Trinity Hall and St Anthony's, or on the ground floor as at St John the Baptist's Hall. Associated with this was a hospital space and a chapel; in the ground floor undercrofts of Trinity Hall and St Anthony's, and adjacent to the hall in the case of St John the Baptist's. The poor men and women who were permanent residents of the hospitals participated in the fraternity services and ceremonies occurring in the chapels; the members of the religious fraternities met in the halls above or adjacent to them, but were also actively involved in the ceremonies in the chapels of these buildings.

The open space of the fraternity great hall symbolized a sense of community and commensality which is often cited as the most important function of the religious fraternity (Hanawalt 1984; Brigden 1984). And yet the timber framing within these halls also created complex hierarchical spaces with close parallels to the open halls of domestic buildings and the aisled nave and chancel of the medieval parish church. The low end of each hall was emphasized, as in the domestic hall, by a screens passage in all three buildings, with a buttery and pantry beyond.

*Figure 6.2*Interior of Trinity Hall (The Merchant Adventurers' Hall) published with permission of The Merchant Adventurers' Company, York; interior of St Anthony's Hall (the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research) published with permission of the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research

Mortises in the wall posts of St Anthony's and Trinity Hall suggest that there were galleries above these ceremonial entrances. The high-status end of the halls was articulated particularly by the roof trusses in the final bays and the gable ends. At Trinity Hall crown posts frame the dais, whilst at St Anthony's a ceiling was constructed underneath three bays of crown posts, creating a more enclosed space over the high table (Fig. 6.2, pages 90–1). The reading of these visual cues may not seem obvious to us, but Harris has identified a 'grammar of carpentry' which appears to have operated in medieval buildings – a set of unconscious and implicit rules about the conversion and use of timber which, amongst other things, included the division of a space into structural and symbolic units (the bay system) and the placing of the fair face of timber towards the high-status end of the hall (Harris 1989). The implication of this idea is that both craftsmen and the people using these buildings understood how to 'read' this grammar in practice. The knowledge of how to 'go on' in these spaces therefore depended on the the ability of guild members, hospital inmates and visitors to the guildhall to understand this spatial hierarchy, and to reproduce its meanings through ceremonial occasions such as the fraternity feast.

The communal fraternity feast was associated from the mid-fourteenth century onwards with the celebration of the feast Corpus Christi, and usually followed a procession through the streets and a mass said in the guild chapel or nearby church (Rosser 1994). The ritual of processions and plays associated with Corpus Christi is often interpreted as an affirmation of the wholeness of the civic 'body' (James 1983). Religious guilds too are seen as associations which reproduce ideas of communality and commensality in the language of their ordinances and their charitable social function in society. Yet the rituals of Corpus Christi and the fraternity feast, and thus the meanings of the guildhall, are much more complex than this. Rosser (1994) has suggested that although the feast was a paraliturgical ceremony, members were engaged in the very practical business of forging social and political relationships. The guildhall must therefore be understood as the locale in which these complex relationships and identities were negotiated. The voluntary membership of religious guilds and the high proportion of women members meant that it offered people often excluded from the political and social networks of the city physical and symbolic access to those involved in civic government. The fraternity hall therefore expressed openness; a sense of community and commensality which was reinforced by the language of fraternal address, the sharing of the fraternal kisses of peace, and the symbolic sharing of bread and wine. And yet the spatial hierarchy expressed in the timber framing, reinforced by the positioning of tables and the seating of members in relation to the dais end, constructed a complex hierarchy within which the social identity of the individual guild member and the guild itself were in tension.

Little work has been done on the other practices associated with the hall itself, but it is certain that it provided a space in which guild members met informally to discuss their affairs, particularly those who shared economic and political interests, kin relations and neighbourhood or parish concerns. Clearly there was a degree of flexibility in the arrangement of the non-fixed fittings and fixtures of the guildhall – the trestle tables, hangings and plate – which could be actively used to reorder the spatial and social hierarchy. But it is the somatic, bodily experience of the guildhall that we must think about in order to understand how these meanings were negotiated at particular levels of society. For the master and wardens of the guild leading the procession to the raised dais end of the hall – framed and enclosed by the roof trusses, canopies and hangings at the gable end – the spatial ordering reflected and reproduced their social status. Further religious legitimation of this social status was afforded by the symbolic parallel between the dias end and the chancel of the parish church – another space in which the wider ordering of society was reproduced. Within this there was room for flexibility through movement and access between the seated members. The order of seating was therefore crucial to those seeking access to political or economic power and to the establishment of individual reputation and status within the community.

The hospitals and chapels which were associated with York's fraternity halls constructed and reflected the corporal acts of mercy which were such an essential part of late medieval religious practice. The inmates were therefore recipients of fraternal charity but were also, through their ill health and age, in a liminal position between this world and the next. Their visual and oral participation in the masses

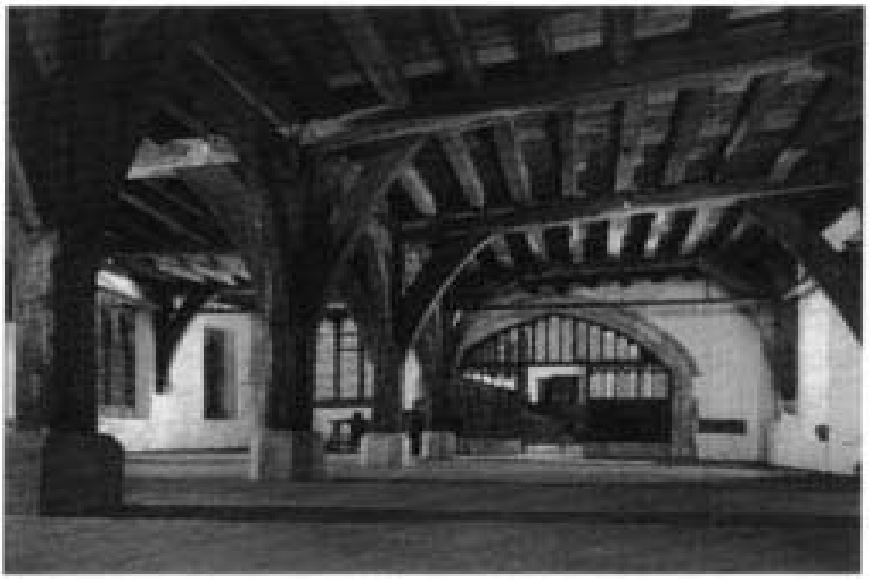

Figure 6.3 Interior, the hospital undercroft and chapel, Trinity Hall (The Merchant Adventurers' Hall), York

said in the fraternity chapel would ease the passage of members' souls through purgatory, and thus the inmates embodied a link between the fraternal communities of the living and the dead. At Trinity Hall the inmates were physically displayed in the double aisles of the undercroft to fraternal members passing through to the chapel (Fig. 6.3, page 93) whilst at St Anthony's it appears that members could choose to pass through the hospital to a staircase providing access to the screens passage end of the hall, or gain direct access to the dais end itself from a ceremonial entrance. Gilchrist (1994: 49) has suggested that the medieval leper hospital was used to control and display stigmatized bodies, whose presence ensured the salvation of the privileged donor. The fraternity hospital may be understood in a similar way, as a locale in which the inmates embodied and reproduced a continuous intercession between the communities of the living and the dead on a daily basis.

THE APPROPRIATION AND 'CONSUMPTION' OF THE MEDIEVAL FRATERNITY HALL

Recent work by Crouch (1995: 212–21) suggests that from the mid-fifteenth century the fraternity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the fraternity of St John the Baptist may have co-existed respectively with the secular mercantile and craft guilds of the mercers (from 1432) and the taylors (by 1415). This implies that the buildings must have also been shared, and yet there is no archaeological evidence for structural alterations to the fabric during this period. Such apparent continuity in the structure of the fraternity hall masks the negotiation of the use of space through social practice. The meanings of space would have been dependent upon the presence or absence of the different associations in different parts of the buildings, the time of day and season, and the nature of the ceremonial or daily activity taking place. Giddens (1985: 269–72) has described such temporal and spatial contingency as the 'regionalization' of space. The co-presence of the two associations in one building demands a rethinking of the relationship between the two associations. Traditionally mercantile and craft guilds have been understood as part of the late medieval mechanisms through which urban capitalism was constructed (Weber 1958). In York it has been suggested that the craft guilds were a mechanism of social, economic and political control through which a mercantile oligarchy controlled the 'artisan class' (Swanson 1989; Hilton 1992). This Marxist approach has recently been used to provide a complex and sophisticated interpretation of Corpus Christi as a means through which artisanal labour was symbolically structured (Beckwith 1994). But this interpretation of craft guilds ignores the very close relationship between religious fraternities and craft guilds during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which was materially structured in the guildhall itself. Further research is needed to establish what ceremonies and practices occurred in the York halls during this period, particularly this 'regionalization' of space. But the physical appropriation of locales *already* associated with the structuring of complex social relations embedded in and underpinned by orthodox religious practice contributed greatly to the construction of the new identities of craft and mercantile guilds. The use of the fraternity hall reproduced a sense of the 'familiar past' in a period when the secular activities of merchants and craftsmen still required religious legitimization. The sharing of the fraternity hall in the fifteenth century therefore reproduced a sense of continuity in the *habitus* of late medieval urban life.

However, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fundamental changes were made to the structure and spatial arrangement of the halls by the craft and mercantile guilds. These changes may be interpreted not only as a process of appropriation but also as one of 'consumption'. Consumption studies have received much critical attention in recent years, most notably in the work of Miller (1987 and 1995), and have been developed as a specific response to the emphasis placed by traditional Marxist studies of the relations of production. An interest in ways in which objects are bought, used and disposed of, and the meanings that they acquire during the early modern period underpins Johnson's work on the process of 'commodification' (1996) and recent volumes by Mukerji (1983), Shammas (1990) and Weatherill (1988). Johnson (1996: 190) relates shifts in the relationship between objects (including buildings) and their meanings to shifts in the perception of the self and others. But with this exception, the idea of consumption has not really been adequately theorized by archaeologists in terms of understanding the relationship between people and buildings. If we accept that buildings are aspects of reflexive material culture, then we might explore how far the consumption practices associated with the fixtures and fittings within them, or the clothes worn and the food eaten by those using them, may also be extended to the use of space. Urry's *Consuming Places* (1995: 2) suggests just this, that space may be consumed in four ways: it may be visually and somatically consumed through the senses; its meanings may be consumed, as what people hold to be significant about them is depleted or exhausted over time; places may become centres for the concentration of consumption practices; and finally places may become 'all consuming' in that the identity of an individual or social group is subsumed within that of place. Clearly there is a danger in eliding archaeological, sociological and geographical understandings of what consumption and consumption practices are. But the exploration of Urry's ideas in the context of the appropriation of medieval fraternity halls suggests that some interesting parallels may be drawn between the use and meanings of buildings and other aspects of material culture in the early modern period.

One of the most significant changes to the guildhalls during this period appears to be a shift of emphasis from the interior open spaces of the guild-hall itself to the exterior facades of the buildings and the way in which they were seen by York's

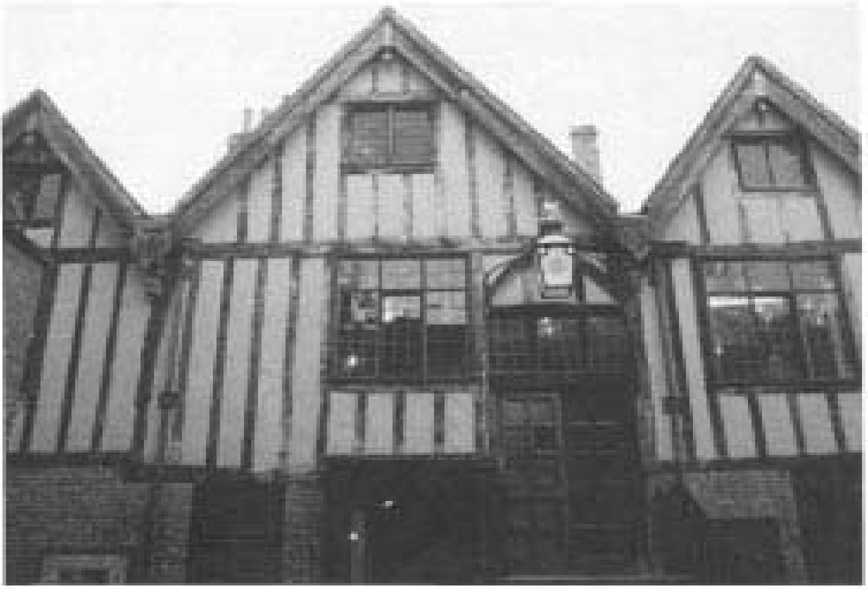

Figure 6.4 Exterior of the north-east range, Trinity Hall (the Merchant Adventurers' Hall), York

citizens. A new north-east range was added to Trinity Hall (the merchants' hall) during the early seventeenth century. Separate entrances to the undercroft and hall were provided, sweeping away any evidence of the original access routes to these spaces. Classical architectural motifs and elaborate foliate designs were incorporated into the bargeboards and doorways (Fig. 6.4). The external timber framing at St Anthony's Hall was entirely encased in brick during the seventeenth century, creating a unity of texture and surface detail with regularly spaced rectangular and circular *oeil-de-boeuf* windows under a moulded brick pediment, whilst one of the original entrances was re-faced and re-set with another *oeil de boeuf* above it (see Fig. 6.1). The brick re-facing at St John the Baptist's Hall (the taylors' hall) occurred much later, probably in the early eighteenth century, but again substantial alterations to the timber framing seem to have occurred during the early modern period. The placing of emphasis on the exterior facades of these buildings disguised the internal division of space by creating a continuous exterior textural unity, whilst emphasizing the considerable expenditure that these additions and alterations entailed.

Shifts in the ways in which buildings and space are perceived during this period have been discussed by Gregory (1994: 391) in the context of Lefebvre's ideas about the production of space and the emergence of a 'spatial code' in the mercantile commercial city-states of Renaissance Italy. Lefebvre's (1991) spatial code is bound up with the idea of the emergence of perspective and perspectival space in which emphasis is placed on the representation and visual consumption of rooms, buildings, quarters, towns and the whole context of the city within its immediate landscape. Gregory (1994: 392) suggests that emphasis was shifted from the somatic, bodily experience of space to an emphasis on the eye and the gaze. Clearly this idea requires further exploration in the specific context of York, but it is clear that this shift towards the external facades of the guildhalls is related to the emergence of much deeper shifts in the *habitus* of the guild members themselves. The cultural, ideological and political movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries constructed particular discourses about individual responsibility in which emphasis was placed on the external presentation of the inward self. The shift of emphasis to the facades of guildhalls may therefore be understood to reflect a concern with the exterior, public perception of the inner, individual and communal identities of the craft and mercantile guilds. The members of the craft and particularly mercantile guilds seem to have been heavily involved in the civic government of the city during the fifteenth century, although the extent of their control, and their decline during the later fifteenth century, are matters for considerable debate (Dobson 1977; Palliser 1979 and 1988; Kermode 1982). But it is clear that these men were heavily involved in the revivial of the city's economic and political fortunes from the later sixteenth century (Palliser 1979). Many of these could be described as members of the 'middling sort' (Wrightson 1982): men (and women) emerging from a range of status groups, concerned to legitimate and define their presence and status within the urban social structure. They were consciously using craft and mercantile guilds to forge new commercial, social and political opportunities in the city. Investment in the public perception of the guildhall therefore not only reflected the wealth and status of their occupational community within the city, but also legitimated their active role in the civic government of York.

This shift towards visual consumption of the exterior of the guildhalls was paralleled in the interior of these buildings by the transformation of the open spaces of the hall and undercroft. In many ways these changes parallel the process of 'closure' which Johnson (1993) has identified in late medieval rural domestic buildings, and which consists not only of structural changes such as the ceiling over of the open roof trusses and the insertion of first floors but fundamental changes in the ways in which space was used to structure household relations. The merchants' hall was plastered and ceiled during the later sixteenth century, obscuring the way in which the timber framing had articulated the hierarchical divisions of space. The hall itself appears to have been subdivided, with a new room constructed at the low end of the hall for the storage of cloth. St Anthony's was similarly plastered and the aisles partitioned off from the open hall. Wainscotting on which the arms of each of the craft guilds were painted was fixed to the walls associated with the spaces where each guild sat during the St Anthony's feast and other meetings, which must have created highly regionalized spaces within the hall. The taylors' hall was also substantially altered; new tie beams being added to the roof trusses which obscured the articulation of space by the arch braced collar construction, whilst the timber framing in the walls was partially bricked over. The covering over of the internal timber frame meant that traditional ways of articulating spatial hierarchy through the 'grammar of carpentry' were transformed. Instead, new hierarchies were constructed between the halls and additions to the building. A 'parlour' and 'sitting room' were added in the new north-east range to the merchants' hall; a 'counsel' or 'counting' house was added to the taylors' hall, whilst the aisles of St Anthony's were partitioned from the hall. All these alterations were accompanied by the construction of new chimneys and reglazing in the halls and in these new rooms.

The halls were clearly being used for more secular functions by the craft and mercantile guilds. This included the use of the hall to store goods and cloth (as at the merchants' hall and St Anthony's) and to hold elaborate feasts, such as the merchants' venison or goose feast or the provision of the traditional feast of St Anthony for the city corporation at St Anthony's Hall. The paraliturgical quality of the guild feasts and ceremonies had virtually disappeared. Rather the halls were becoming centres for the consumption of other aspects of material culture: rich food and wine, highly decorated furniture, hangings and wainscotting, elaborate dress and the regalia and badges of office. The open hall was a daily meeting place for the master, wardens and other members of the craft guilds, but it was also a place where the communal identity of the trade was regulated and structured. Control over standards of production and the quality of goods was maintained by the craft searchers, who had the power to enter houses or workshops and seize property which might then be stored in the hall. The guild meetings held in the hall were occasions where apprentices were enrolled and business deals negotiated, and where arbitration over disputes was encouraged before members sought recourse to the courts. Rosser (1997: 11) has recently argued that one of the most important functions of craft guilds was the way in which they allowed individual craft masters to build up their reputation and develop the complex networks of credit and trust on which so much of late medieval trade was founded. The provision of highly regionalized, separated and partitioned areas within the guildhall created a much more flexible space within which commercial and social relations were structured. Rather than the bodily expression of social hierarchy, emphasis was being shifted to the articulation of more complex interpersonal relationships by the use of moveable fittings and fixtures such as the highly decorated tables and chairs of the individual guilds in St Anthony's Hall. Moreover private rooms such as those in the north-east range of the merchants' hall, and the taylors' 'counsel house' could be used by the guild elite for their own private affairs, or for the conducting of meetings to which physical – and therefore political – access could be regulated.

This is a shift not only in the way in which objects, structures and spaces were somatically or literally consumed. The Reformation had devastating consequences

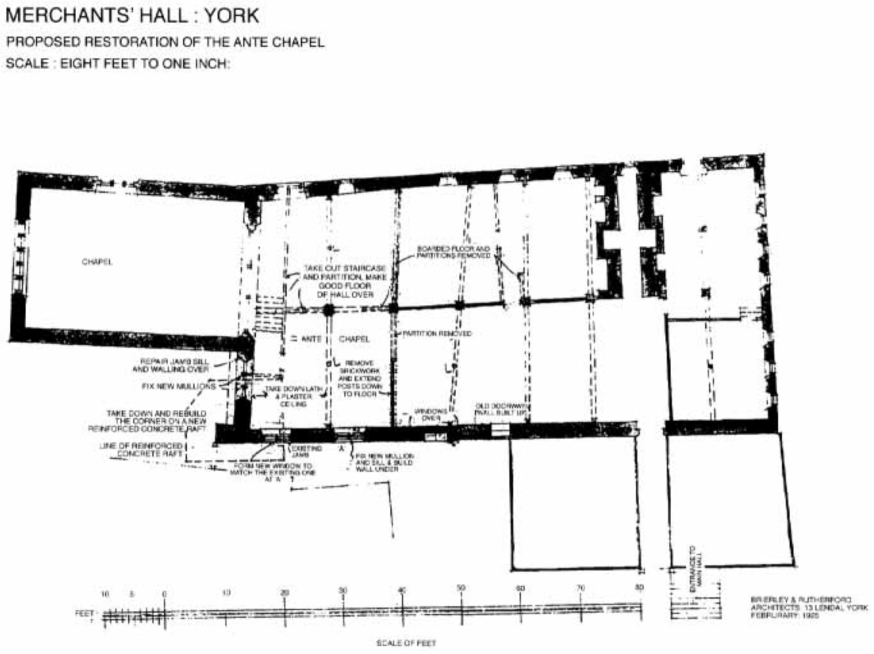
MERCHANTS' HALL : YORK
PROPOSED RESTORATION OF THE ANTE CHAPEL
SCALE : EIGHT FEET TO ONE INCH:
CHAPEL
TAKE OUT STAIRCASE AND PARTITION, MAKE GOOD FLOOR OF HALL OVER
BOARDED FLOOR AND PARTITIONS REMOVED
ANTE CHAPEL
PARTITION REMOVED
REPAIR JAMB SILL AND WALLING OVER
FIX NEW MULLIONS
TAKE DOWN LATH & PLASTER CEILING
REMOVE BRICKWORK AND EXTEND POSTS DOWN TO FLOOR
WINDOWS OVER
OLD DOORWAY WALL BUILT UP
TAKE DOWN AND REBUILD THE CORNER ON A NEW REINFORCED CONCRETE RAFT
LINE OF REINFORCED CONCRETE RAFT
EXISTING JAMB
'A'
FIX NEW MULLION AND SILL & BUILD WALL UNDER
FORM NEW WINDOW TO MATCH THE EXISTING ONE AT 'A'
ENTRANCE TO MAIN HALL
FEET
10
5
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
SCALE OF FEET
BRIERLEY & RUTHERFORD
ARCHITECTS 13 LENDAL YORK
FEBRUARY 1925

Figure 6.5 Plan of proposed restoration of undercroft by the architects Brierley and Rutherford, Atkinson-Brierley collection, published with permission of the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York for the complex intersection of ideological and social expression embodied in fraternity halls, hospitals and chapels. Initial attacks on the fraternities, particularly the Acts of 1545 and 1547 and the Surveys of 1546 and 1548, gradually eroded their economic base. But it was the 1547 Injunctions, through their attack on the doctrine of Purgatory, the value of intercession and the 'Corporal Acts of Mercy', which destroyed the fraternities' *raison d'être*. The prayers of the poor inmates were no longer needed to ensure the spiritual salvation of guild members, and thus the practical and ideological function of the hospital inmates disappeared. The hospitals themselves continued in name, but were transformed in practice. The open space of the merchants' hospital was subdivided into separate rooms for which heat was provided by the insertion of a magnificent four-fireplace complex. Documentary records suggest that the inmates had become ex-guild members, paying a lump sum on their admission into the hospital in return for a weekly dole. The visual relationship and physical access between the merchants' hospital and chapel was obliterated by the construction of timber and brick partitions across the undercroft which appear on early twentieth-century plans (Fig. 6.5). But direct access was provided from the hall to the chapel via a staircase from the dais end, which suggests that the ceremonial function of the hall was being extended into the chapel itself. This was a secular appropriation of religious space, in which salvation was indicated rather by the material, outward expressions of the inner grace of guild members than through the structured relationship between the communities of the fraternal living and the dead. The transformation of the merchants' hospital probably paralleled similar changes at the taylors', although the hospital has since been lost and was eventually replaced by a row of almshouses in the eighteenth century. There was no longer a legitimate role for the poor to play in the spiritual salvation of the souls of guild members; instead the urban poor of York were examined by the corporation, as at St Anthony's, to determine whether they were physically impotent and therefore unable to work, or whether they were able to be set on spinning and weaving to provide financial support for their maintenance. Internal partitions were constructed within the hospital at St Anthony's only for those ill or aged who were defined as legitimate recipients of the charity of the guilds.

The Reformation placed emphasis on the individual's responsibility for his or her own spiritual welfare, and this emphasis was also extended into the area of economic welfare by early modern civic authorities. The civic records of York, in particular the city 'House Books', reflect an obsession with the problem of the impotent poor, 'vacabondes and rogues'. In a society in which individuals and communities were preoccupied with their own self-fashioning and identification, the poor embodied an economic, political and moral burden on the city. The social and political discourses which emerge during this period required the identification and marginalization of those operating outside the norms and values of late medieval and early modern society, those who could not contribute to their own or the city's welfare. It is not surprising that the authorities should seek to provide a material expression of the discourses and structures of civic power through urban buildings such as the guildhall. The Reformation heralded the loss of traditional locales and rituals through which medieval social identity had been constructed. Guildhalls were some of the few buildings to survive the changes of the sixteenth century and offer a sense of continuity with the medieval past. It is no coincidence that Tittler (1991) has noted an expansion in investment in town halls during this period; civic authorities were clearly powerfully aware of how these buildings had provided a material expression of authority, status and power for well over three centuries. It makes us as historical archaeologists aware that our apparently 'familiar' modern past was, and is, actively structured through the appropriation and consumption of not so 'familiar' medieval material culture.

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7

SOCIAL SPACE AND THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE

Susie West

An archaeologist working with standing, intact, country houses may appear to be looking in the wrong place for data. The housing of the British elite has been left as the preserve of architectural historians, art historians and occasionally of social and economic historians. For the purposes of this discussion, English country houses are defined as owned by the gentry and aristocracy, used as their rural places of residence, surrounded by their private land which may extend to an estate of thousands of acres, and with a permanent household of domestic servants, distinct from any agricultural employees. They are products of a peaceful nation state, unfortified, and found from the sixteenth century onwards, although few have been built since the early twentieth century. They have the potential to be economically self-sufficient, rooted in the local economy, but they are also linked by their socio-political networks of owners and their culturally national or international built forms and contents. This latter, national, characteristic has been the focus of analyses based on art styles, to the extent that these houses in the landscape are often presented as the self-evident embodiment of English cultural history:

> finally, the great house itself comes into sight: sometimes a jumble of towers and gable, roofs and dormers, looking like a whole medieval village; sometimes a central block with giant portico and spreading wings like an Italian *palazzo* set down in the vivid green of English lawns; sometimes a towering mass of wall and window reflecting the sunlight from a thousand diamond panes, with gatehouses, garden walls and gazebos around it, like a great ship surrounded by tugs. . . .
>
> What can they have in common, these superhuman dwellings which seem not to have a standard plan like the monasteries and cathedrals which preceded them, but which look as if they have grown, organically, out of the English countryside? . . . And how

> can these battlements and statues, mullions and sashes, domes and cupolas, tell a coherent story of taste and connoisseurship, when they seem as various as their creators, and as wayward as human nature itself?
>
> (Jackson-Stops and Pipkin 1993: 13)

Country houses are a class of historic monuments and are able to receive legal protection. They are often seen as works of art, and many are widely appreciated for having a marvellous atmosphere of belonging to their setting, transcending time and therefore becoming timeless. Millions of us visit them every year for our own recreation and pleasure. Some are still inhabited by the descendants of the creators, others are given to the nation for their survival. They may be variously perceived as the last bastions of a nearly vanished old order of a better, more civilized age, or as the frivolous promotion of the redundant and oppressive values of a rejected minority. What can they be to the archaeologist?

Country house gardens and landscapes are studied by archaeologists, including garden excavations to establish the plans of formal gardens (and see Williamson this volume). However, the houses are ignored, in favour of vernacular and industrial buildings. Unwillingness to engage with these houses may be due to the longstanding interest that architectural and art historians have had in country houses, giving the impression that this class of housing is adequately explored by other disciplines (a problem for other classes of later historic material culture). Remembering the recent interest in phenomenological approaches to archaeological sites (Barrett 1994; Shanks 1992; Tilley 1994), it may be that country houses inspire less emotive reactions in archaeologically minded people than do ruined castles and stone circles. They are certainly more politically problematic, as the products of enormous social, political and economic inequalities, and may be charged with reinforcing and maintaining such disparities.

On the one hand, then, there is an understanding of country houses as repositories of culture, civilization and collections (the ‘high art’ approach), and on the other there is an avoidance of this class of building as the repositories of massive demonstrations of inequalities, with a cultural relevance to a tiny social minority. Yet these houses embody relations *between* differing groups: they housed both the elite (itself a very broad layering of social groups) and the disenfranchised employees. The owners did not move in a vacuum, the social space of the houses embraced the presence of the two increasingly differentiated classes over time. The very creation of the buildings and its contents involved the labour and talents of people with no other political or economic power. Moreover the relations between labourers, artisans, servants, owners, poor relations, patrons and friends are subject to change through time. If we move away from ‘high art’ culture to an understanding of the different *cultures* brought together in the context of an English country house, we look instead towards social history and social anthropology. We should be involved in understanding the cultural construction of these houses in their landscapes and the relationship of the houses to their inhabitants, and in adding to the ways in which our present handles these buildings through interpretation. To work towards this, anthropological concepts and analytical techniques are already available and in common usage by archaeologists wishing to understand material culture.

Those facets of country houses examined by art and architectural historians – culture, civilization and collections – are occasionally unified as social history. The landmark text is Girouard's *Life in the English Country House* (1980), 'a social and architectural history' which notes the diverse functions of country houses for their owners, servants and visitors. It is an enjoyable introduction to the breadth of the forms that English country houses take, and contains ideas that need to be followed up. It consistently links the form of the house plan to social structure. The social organization of space is a theme that is familiar to archaeologists who work with vernacular houses after 1500 in Britain and the USA (Glassie 1975; Johnson 1993; Kent (ed.) 1990a; Upton and Vlach (eds) 1986; Yentsch 1988). As a discipline that prioritizes material culture and its relationship with society, how can we resist the abundant material culture of the country house?

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE THEORY OF HOUSES

The archaeological study of houses is anthropologically based, in that it comes out of a tradition of pursuing comparative research questions and explicit production of theory about how cultures operate, in this case with respect to buildings (Parker-Pearson and Richards (eds) 1994). In this way, the study of 'what country houses are for' can work towards the creation of an ethnography of everyday life, in a symbiotic relationship with documentary studies (Beaudry 1988).

The approach offered here is a step in producing an anthropology of early modern Britain, by taking a class of housing not previously examined in detail by archaeologists, English country houses, and identifying a method of analysis (access analysis) apparently not used by architectural historians, to complement existing architectural and social histories of the period. Archaeological theories of space or housing are not reviewed here, as these areas are ably covered elsewhere (e.g. Parker-Pearson and Richards (eds) 1994; Kent 1990b), but are of value here for their potential for questions and interpretations.

Perhaps one of the most neglected areas of archaeological thought on housing is the link between inhabiting a building and inhabiting a body, and the processes of creating social meaning between these two categories. 'At some level or other, the notion that houses are people is one of the universals of architecture. If the house is an extension of the person, it is also an extension of the self. . . . the space of the house is inhabited not just in daily life but also in the imagination' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 3). Sir Roger Pratt (1620–84), gentleman architect, wrote of houses in physiological terms (St Paul's Cathedral is referred to as 'so old a body') and analysed house plans in terms of the components of a human body (Gunther 1979: 28, 46, 64, 196). Archaeologists may have wondered at their own individual responses to buildings, and the special thrill of walking through spaces previously peopled by distant generations, the sadness of watching abandoned buildings rot. Arguably, those feelings relate to the abstraction of architectural qualities as social qualities and the conversion of the house into a social persona: the interior life of the individual finds a reflection in the imagined 'interior life' of the house. This rarely appears in our work.

> Until historical archaeologists confront the fact that the historical experience consists of both the world-as-lived and the world-as-thought and find a means to analyse this dialectical process as it affects objects, they will remain imprisoned by the limitations of their data. In the physical layouts of old houses, we can see the world-as-lived only in fragmentary form; we can begin to see the world-as-thought when we conceptualise house plans as incorporating both real space and imaginary space expressing social order.
>
> (Yentsch 1988: 17)

Houses, then, provide a reflexive, cognitive model for the social world.

If a house can be inhabited in the imagination, as a container of human thoughts, it is also a container of successive human bodies. This shows up well in the English language. We use one word, 'house', to signify both the physical building and the lineage, or family, as in the House of Windsor. The link between kinship and property is in this way seen to be extremely close, and is one of the cornerstones of ethnographic research. There is plenty of evidence for the importance of the chosen building as the fountainhead of the lineage for British gentry and aristocracy (the family house is referred to as the 'seat' in genealogical publications). This is a reflexive relationship between the house as the (static) material manifestation of the (dynamic) family descent.

The social world we are attempting to describe is a gendered world, and we may expect to see this expressed in material culture. Gendered architecture may appear as a functional expression: the development of whole service wings of Victorian country houses for gender differentiated activities (washing, baking and still-room activities for women), and the attempt to create rigid separation between male and female servants quarters (Girouard 1980: 27–30). Gender may also be used explicitly as a signifier for the qualities of architecture: architects and commentators have frequently ascribed gender qualities to their work, with masculine and feminine forms of decoration and structure. Inigo

Jones compared the impact of architectural exteriors to ideal male social behaviour, ‘masculine and unaffected’, but goes on to highlight the tensions within the ideal when he discusses the temptations of an active imagination firing up under the calm exterior (Mowl and Earnshaw 1995: 82).

Using gender as a signifier is not, however, what architectural historians who ascribe gender to rooms such as the ‘feminine’ drawing room, the ‘masculine’ library and the ‘masculine’ dining room, are doing. The dominant presence of one sex occupying the room in question is used, with little analysis, to take the gender attributes ascribed to that sex as appropriate to the room. This is a conflation of function and metaphor, to produce a circular argument. Gender is necessarily contextual, remade by changing cultural expectations, and intercut by class: female servants were expected to work anywhere in the house, yet were subjected to sexual abuse in doing so. Gendered space in the country house is therefore likely to operate at several levels: functionally (housing the sexes appropriately), and symbolically, by matching contemporary environments to contemporary constructions of gender (e.g. the rise of the female boudoir), and in dealing with archaic environments (and deliberate anachronisms such as the ninteenth-century Gothic Revival style).

In answer to Jackson-Stops’s question, quoted at the start of this discussion, ‘these superhuman dwellings’ *can* be analysed as a group, and if they are ‘as wayward as human nature itself, and therefore contain the stories of individuals, they are equally an embodiment of cultural practices specific in time and space: class, gender, age, the assertion of national identity or the international transmission of elite culture.

FINDING ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMON GROUND: PLAN TYPES

Formal building analysis techniques developed by architects have been applied, amongst others, to Palladian villas (Stiny and Mitchell 1978), Scottish Iron Age settlements (Foster 1989), urban villas (Gould, this volume) and ‘between the wars’ public and private suburban housing (Brown 1990a) and can help elucidate the patterns of spatial organization present in English country houses.

The house plan has been used to construct traditional typologies of variation in form. Architectural histories identify key rooms as most subject to change, such as the transformation of the medieval great hall to stair hall, linked to the increasing separation between servant and the served. The agents of change are rarely specified beyond passing fashion. Some writers are interested in the linkage between plan form and the increasing segregation of inhabitants through time (the process known as the rise of privacy), and use this generalized cultural phenomenon to explain changes in plan typology (e.g. Bold 1993). In creating detailed narratives of change in built forms, architectural historians use methods familiar to archaeologists, concentrating on the plan form (two-dimensional) and on the description of stylistic elements and their combinations (three-dimensional). Focusing on the plan form is useful to an archaeological approach because of its centrality to questions of spatial organization and the relation to social organization, and its potential for techniques of spatial analysis. Archaeologists can study plans from within a disciplinary tradition of sampling and comparing whole classes of material, rather than treating individual houses as art objects.

ACCESS ANALYSIS AND HOUSE PLANS

House plans are presented here using access analysis (Hillier and Hanson 1984). Access maps provide a clear visual guide to the complexity of an individual plan, and a way of comparing plans for similar patterns. Where room functions are not known, the place the room takes on an access map can suggest possible roles. Where room functions are known, a sample of similar plans can provide evidence for patterning that goes beyond documentary accounts. Specific sets of spatial relationships can then be interpreted with reference to possible inherent meanings in the individual rooms and their combination/separation from other rooms.

The access maps demonstrate two different characteristics of space. First, how relatively controlled the spaces on the plan are, in terms of access routes. Rooms that act as ‘through passages’ will appear to have several lines running from them, often looping around the top of the map to find the adjacent rooms that have been mapped already in relation to a different point. These maps are said to be ‘ringy’, and the presence of rings demonstrates the greater ease of access around the plan. Maps that lack rings, or only show one ring, will appear tree-like, with many distinct branches. These maps are said to demonstrate inaccessibility, through the relative discreteness of each space. The maps therefore show relations of control of space.

The second relation is that of permeability. A long thin urban house may have four or more levels of permeability, almost as many as there are rooms. The compact country house, with perhaps up to fifteen different spaces in the plan, may still only have the same number of levels of permeability. A plan may therefore be classified as more or less shallow/deep according to the numbers of levels on its map. Intuitive insights derived from the architect’s plan can be assessed against the analytical results of the map.

Access analysis is valuable as one powerful technique for exploring the conceptual relations of space to be complemented by other approaches to built form (Brown 1990b: 94). In this spirit, the justified access graph is used here as the first step to understanding how a building may function.

A few examples here from the early modern period are from standard architectural histories, where the houses are presented either as individual works of art (Montacute), standard types (Gunnersbury) or significant breakthroughs (Coleshill). Coleshill has indeed been suggested to be a 'house of innovative subtlety that modified the historicist posturing of Renaissance forms into a gentleman's home appropriate to the times of Sir Isaac Newton and the Royal Society' (Mowl and Earnshaw 1995: 48). The present discussion may not throw any light on historicist posturing, but does emphasize the contextual importance of individuals in their homes. Access analysis provides snapshots of spatial organization which can be interpreted in the light of 'received knowledge' in architectural narratives, and can bring a dynamic sense of how the house plan operates when considered in the cultural context of the life and times of the owners. Of particular interest to an archaeological approach, the survival of old houses into new cultural contexts, their modification or destruction, can add more evidence for their original set of social conditions by highlighting change.

Montacute, Somerset

Montacute was built between *c.* 1590 and 1601 for Edward Phelips (1560–1614), a lawyer and MP with a lucrative career at court, and is thought to be by the master mason William Arnold (d. 1637), who went on to design Wadham College, Oxford. Edward Phelips inherited a house at Montacute from his father, heir to three generations of Phelips' careers as court officials, MPs and small-scale landowners. When he began to build his new house, he had already made a fortune as a lawyer and sat as an MP, married and produced two sons. His knighthood and most lucrative court posts were come to after the house was completed (Rogers 1991). The house survives in the care of the National Trust and is open to the public.

Montacute is an example of the British response to growing interest in Italian Renaissance Classicism before the style was well known or understood in Britain, in the late sixteenth century (Fig. 7.1). The sources for Classical detailing came from Flemish and Dutch pattern books, rather than directly from contact with Italian examples, at this time. The house is built in local limestone. The east and original entrance front rises from a stone terrace in the E formation typical of Elizabethan houses, for three storeys, with characteristic generous fenestration. The east front shows the greatest amount of Classical detailing, through the parapet with Italian balustrade and obelisks, the chimney shafts in the form of columns, the entablatures that separate the storeys instead of plain string-courses found on the other walls of the house. There are shell-headed niches, containing

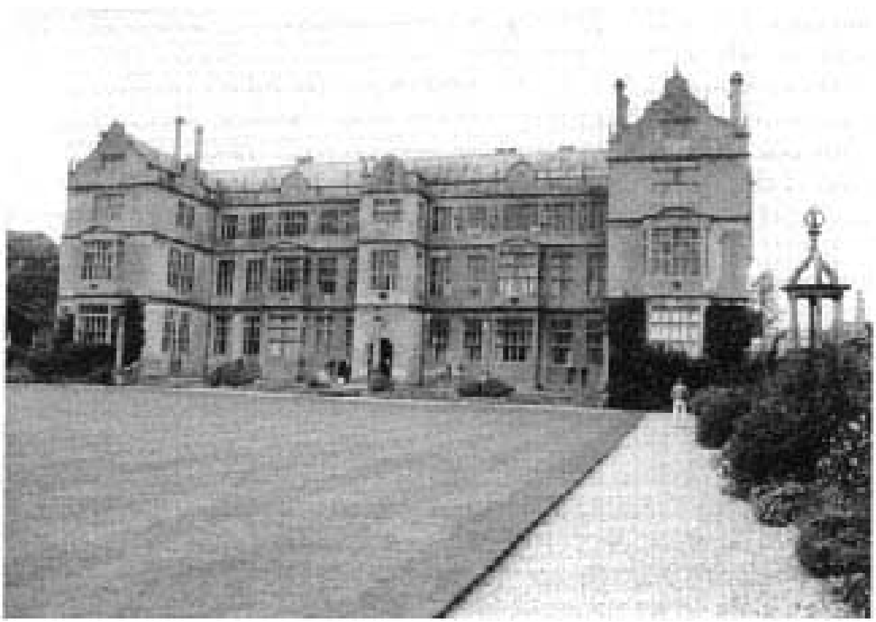

Figure 7.1 Montacute, the original entrance front, with balustraded forecourt and pavilions (copyright Trevor Ashwin)

statues of the Nine Worthies in Roman dress (heroic leaders from biblical, Classical and medieval history) and round niches that may have been intended to contain busts. The Flemish gables and the large amount of window glass are fashionable contemporary features, but hardly Classical. The plan of the house is conventional for the period, with an entrance porch leading to the screens passage, which divides the domestic offices from the Great Hall (Fig. 7.2). The Great Hall is in the medieval tradition of communal living space, where feudal classes mixed, but only the owners and their social equals would progress beyond the hall to the great stairs and the prestige sequence of the formal dining room and best bedchamber on the first floor.

In the access map for the suggested plan of the ground and first floors of the house after an inventory of 1638, the stone staircase leads up to the Great Chamber, for dining in state, and the other first-floor state rooms, including the state bedroom or best chamber (Rogers 1991: 50–1) (Fig. 7.2). The usual dining room for family meals was the parlour on the ground floor. The access map shows the centrality of the screens passage, great hall and great stairs for mediating the passage of food from the tree-like pattern of rooms controlled by the kitchen through to the family and state rooms. The secondary stairs facilitated access between the lesser chambers on the second floor and the bedchambers and long gallery on the top floor. The major public rooms are all interconnected, lacking any corridors or sense of private suites of rooms that can be seen in the later houses, discussed below.

If Montacute is a house that is tied to the medieval plan of a great house, and therefore to medieval social organization, how can such a house survive subsequent changes in social organization? Montacute appears to have been little changed, having no extensions to the original block of the house and few room subdivisions. The top-floor long gallery survives intact. The house did receive a corridor on the ground and first floors. The creation of the west corridor in 1786 changes the access map considerably, removing the long string of interconnected second-floor chambers and taking the state dining room, now a library, out of the loop (Fig. 7.3, page 114). The new form of the state room as a library therefore remains a place of display of luxury, and represents an essential contemporary expression of upper-class taste, but is no longer part of the processional sequence for guests. The refashioning of a house rooted in the medieval tradition can be identified and analysed in this way, highlighting the shifts in spatial organization. The following example, Gunnersbury, shows what a complete change in plan, two generations or seventy years later, does for the relations of space.

Gunnersbury, Middlesex

Gunnersbury House, demolished in 1801 after alterations, was designed in the 1650s. When Colen Campbell published plans and elevations of it in 1715, it was thought to have been designed by Inigo Jones (1575–1652), the British architect who brought a very direct interpretation of Italian Renaissance Classicism back to Britain after 1614. In fact it was designed by his pupil John Webb (1611–72), 'much the most experienced architect in the country' at the time (Worsley 1995: 118), and built between 1658 and 1663. This period was the end of the Commonwealth (established after the Civil War and execution of King Charles I), and the owner of Gunnersbury, Sir John Maynard (1602–90), had a successful legal career on the winning parliamentary side. He appears to have come from a modest background, making his own fortune and buying the estate at Gunnersbury in order to build his house (he was knighted in 1660). By 1658 he had five children from his first marriage. His house was one of several to be built at this time in the advanced Classical style, identified as a 'new wave' of country house building and a significant stylistic break from the preceding generation of Jacobean houses, exemplified by Montacute (Worsley 1995; Mowl and Earnshaw 1995).

Gunnersbury shows the principles of Classical proportions, rather than merely in applied details as at Montacute, in the plan and elevation, chiefly through the compact, square plan, and the regularity of the position of the windows on the facade in a grid formation (Figs 7.4 and 7.6, pages 116 and 118). The large portico (the projecting pillars which in this example support a pedimented roof) is an accurately detailed version of those found in late Renaissance Italy, typically on houses designed by Palladio

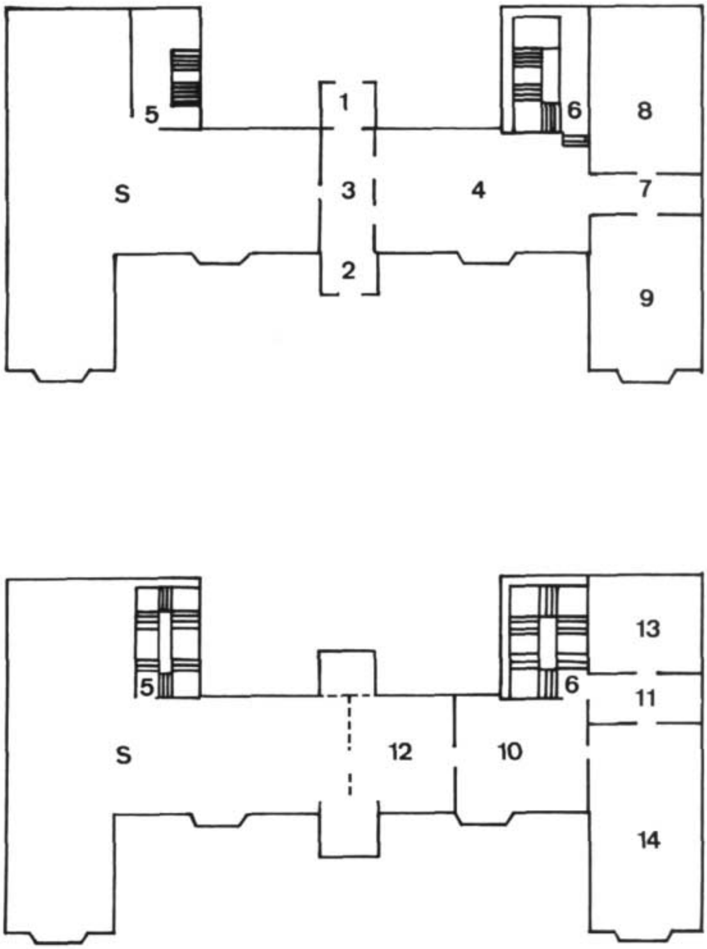

Figure 7.2 Montacute, outline plans of ground and first floors and access map before the 1786 corridor was added, rooms named from an inventory of 1638 (Rogers 1991). Ground floor: S for service rooms; 1 Rear porch; 2 Front porch; 3 Screens passage; 4 Great hall; 5 South stairs; 6 North stairs; 7 Lobby; 8 Parlour chamber; 9 Parlour. First floor: S for secondary rooms; 10 Withdrawing room; 11 Lobby; 12 Best chamber; 13 Garden chamber; 14 Dining room. Second floor: both stairs lead to 15, the Long gallery, which gives on to four chambers

(1508–80). These houses are known as villas, after the Italian revival of the Roman form of upper-class house in the country, a retreat from the pressures of urban life for the gentleman farmer (Ackerman 1990). The house 'is usually described as having been modelled on Palladio's Villa Badoer' (Mowl and Earnshaw 1995: 105), a building

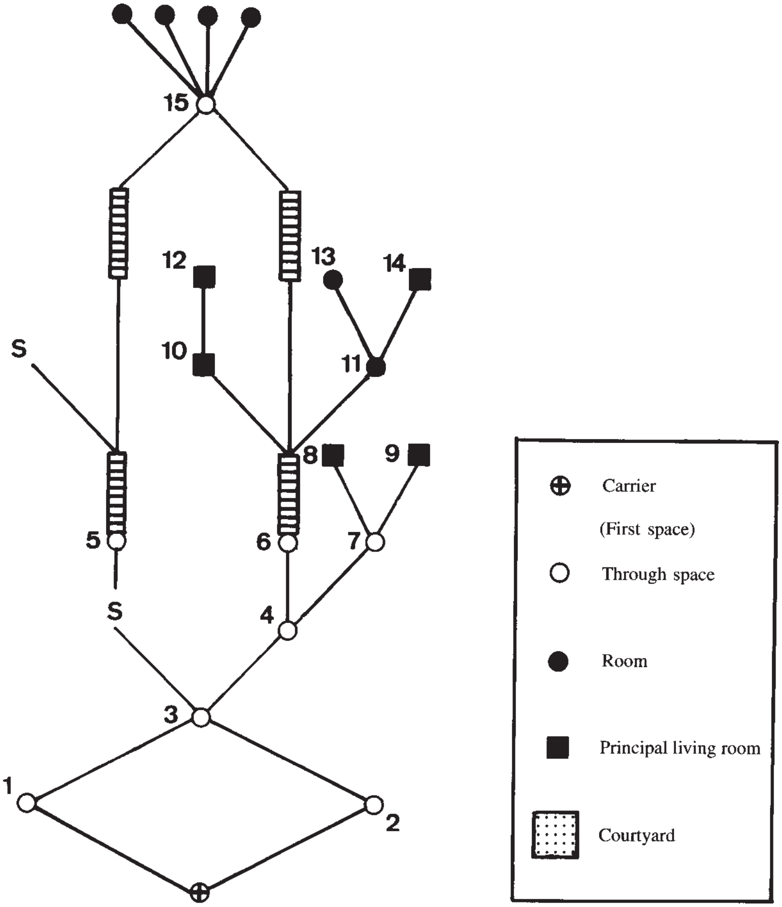

Figure 7.2 Continued

of *c.* 1556 in mainland Venetian Republic, south of Padua (Fig. 7.5, page 117). The two houses share a six-columned pedimented portico recessed into the main facade, the same grid plan of window bays, the same placing of the principle floor on a groundfloor basement, a similar central hall. The plan has changed from being only one room deep, long and thin, as at Montacute, to being at least three rooms deep.

Commentators on the plan of Gunnersbury have been critical – 'the large rooms ill lit, the grand stairs obscurely sited and a maze of small rooms' – although the exterior design is approved of as an 'advanced design and of seminal influence' (Mowl and Earnshaw 1995: 104, 105). Sir Roger Pratt, writing in 1698, noted that the dining room was lit by the windows set under the portico, too dark for English houses not needing shelter from Italian heat (Gunther 1979: 37). The architect's plan shows a

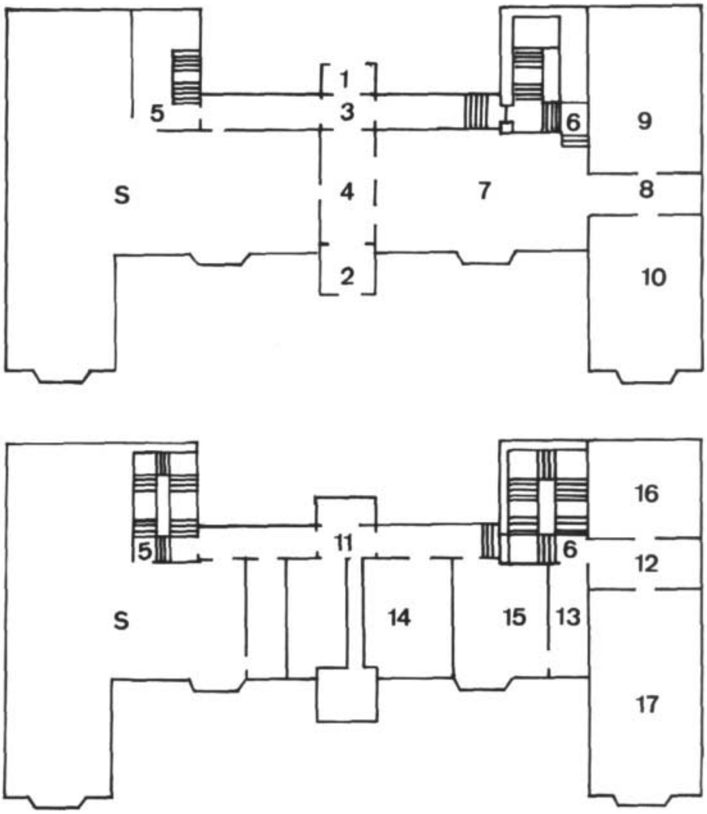

Figure 7.3 Montacute, outline plans of ground and first floors and access map with the 1786 west corridor showing rooms as decorated in 1788 (Rogers 1991). Ground floor: S for service rooms; 1 Rear porch; 2 Front porch; 3 Corridor; 4 Screens passage; 5 South stairs; 6 North stairs; 7 Great hall; 8 Lobby; 9 Drawing room; 10 Parlour. First floor: S for secondary rooms; 11 Corridor; 12 Lobby; 13 Dressing room; 14 Hall chamber bedroom; 15 Bedroom; 16 ?Bedroom; 17 Library. Second floor: 18 Long gallery as for 1638

villa plan of apartments (small suites of rooms) around a central columned hall, identical for both ground and first floor. Is this house, then, a triumph of style over practicability? Why would a successful lawyer and father of a large family accept such a new but inconvenient house?

The access map of the ground floor shows a very shallow house, very ringy, with two strings of rooms denoting the symmetrical apartments at the rear (7, 13, 15 and 8, 14, 16) (Fig. 7.6, page 118). None of the sixteen rooms is very far away, apart from the two pairs of rooms beyond the lesser stairs, 13, 15, and 14, 16. The enfilade, or parade

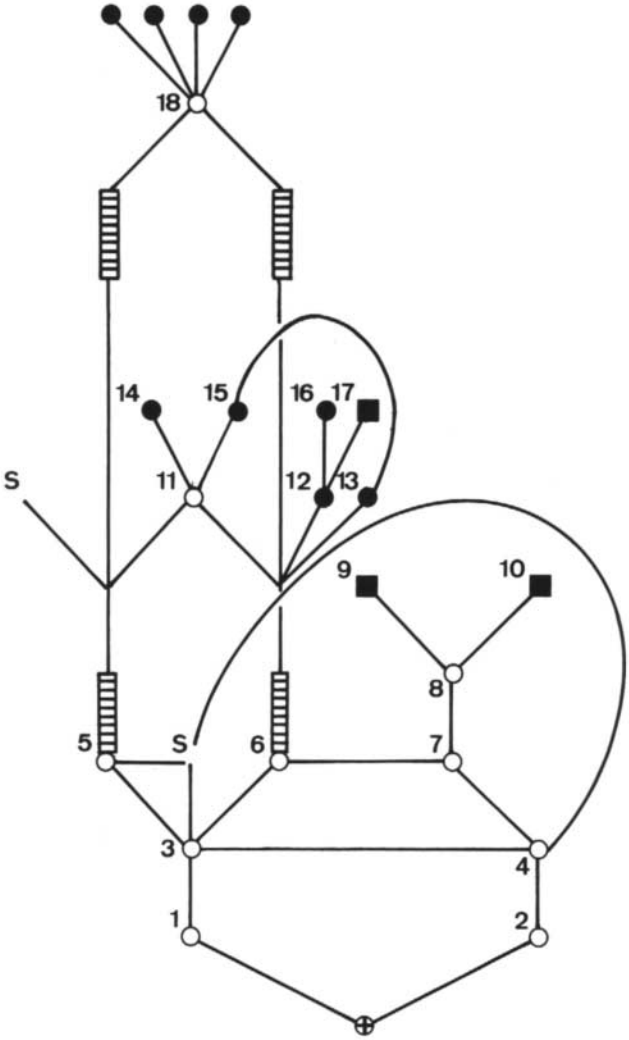

Figure 7.3 Continued

of rooms linked by in-line doors, on the notional east side is not replicated in the access relations, which shows instead the importance of the rooms 4, 5, 9 (main stairs) and 10 on rings which set up the relations of access for this floor. Rooms 4 and 5, however, are clearly not lit by windows, unless they receive light from other rooms by glazed over-doors, for instance. They must therefore function as service rooms, closets for storing surplus furniture, lighting, etc. for the main rooms (chairs and tables were

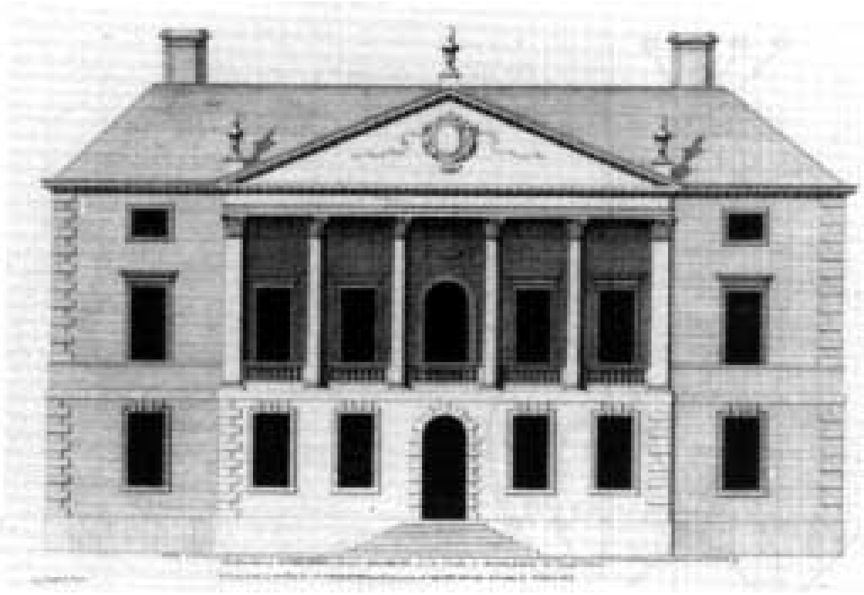

Figure 7.4 Gunnersbury, entrance front. The forecourt of the house was enclosed by curving walls in the same fashion as the Villa Badoer (Fig. 7.5) (the School of World Art Studies and Museology, University of East Anglia)

arranged as required for specific social situations, rather than left permanently in place as is customary nowadays). The two axes of planning, not quite symmetrical, are thus occupied by the most influential rooms: 9, 2, 10 and 1. The architect's plan is unlabelled, but it might be suggested from the access map that the symmetrical apartments at the rear are private bedchambers, with dressing rooms and easy access to the first floor. The most public rooms are the entrance hall (1), the columned hall (2) and the long room (10) (great parlour?). A complementary pattern on the first floor would lead from the great stairs (9) to the dining room (over 2) to a principal suite of rooms on the east front (over 10). Rooms 11 and 3 are out of the pattern of rings, and being less accessible could be considered as servants' rooms, perhaps for the steward (principal male servant).

On this analysis, the ground-floor plan works on its own logic, the position of the stairs is easily accessed and there is no 'maze' of small rooms but simple apartment sequences. These apartments are not found in an earlier house form like Montacute, and continue to be developed in a slightly later house like Coleshill as a convenient way of arranging private domestic space. Like Montacute, Gunnersbury has no corridors, and the expected sequence of rooms for this period can be identified in the logic of the plan with a processional sequence from the entrance hall. The main omission is the presence of the service rooms such as kitchen, buttery, servants' hall, which in

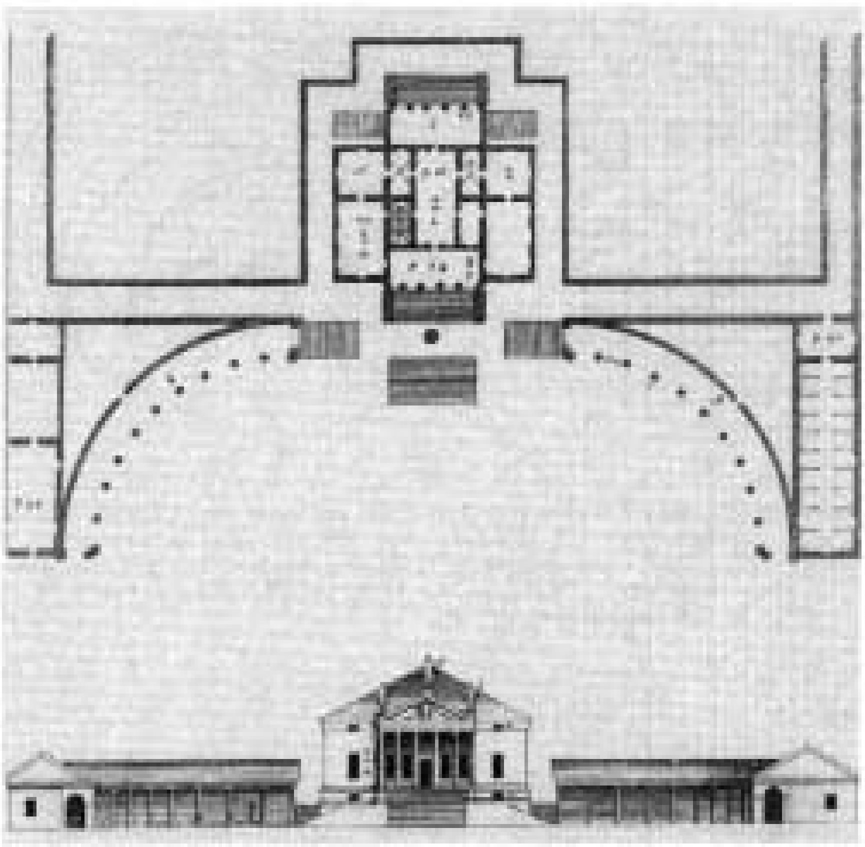

Figure 7.5 Palladio's Villa Badoer, ground-floor plan with forecourt (Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture*, 1965, Dover Publications

Montacute occupy half the ground floor. There appear to be only two ways of entering the house at this level, both principal front and rear entrances, and it must be concluded that a separate service block was adjacent to the west side. So Gunnersbury is both modern, in its Classical styling and its regular plan which permits independent access to private rooms, and linked to the previous generation through the processional route to the first-floor dining room.

Coleshill, Berkshire

Coleshill is of the same decade as Gunnersbury, *c*. 1650–62, but is much less directly linked to Italy in its plan (Figs 7.7, 7.8, pages 118 and 119). Sadly, it was destroyed by fire in 1952 and demolished. Its form has been interpreted

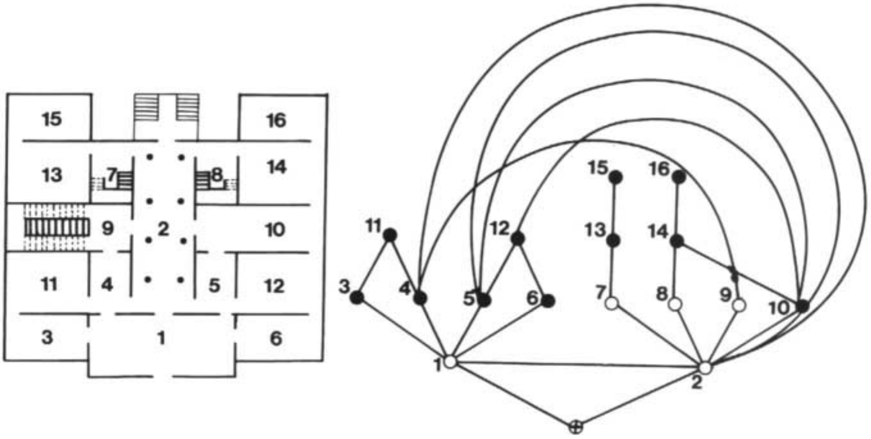
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Figure 7.6 Gunnersbury, outline ground-floor plan and access map. 1 Entrance hall; 2 columned hall; 3, 4, 11 possible closet with parlours or service rooms; 5, 6, 12 possible closet with parlour or sleeping chambers; 7, 8 Secondary stairs; 9 Great stairs; 10 ?Great parlour; 13, 15 possible bedchamber suite; 14, 16 possible bedchamber suite

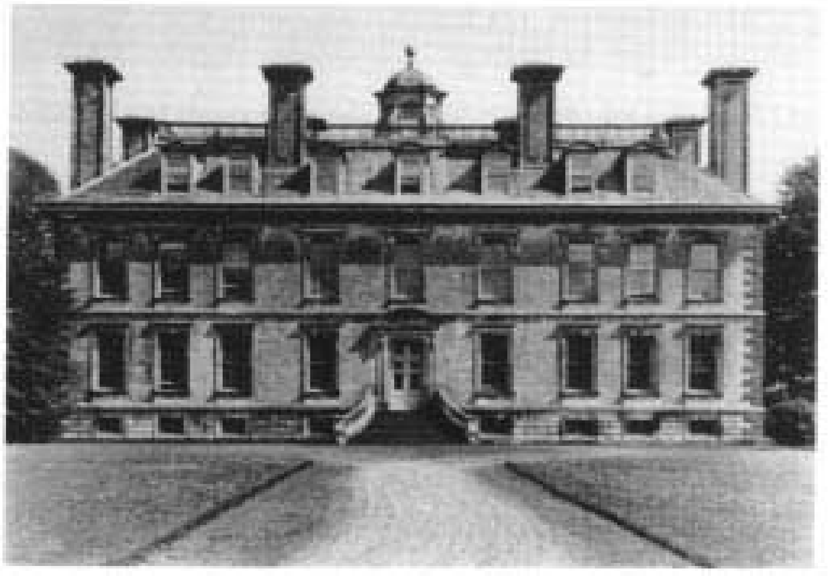

Figure 7.7 Coleshill, elevation

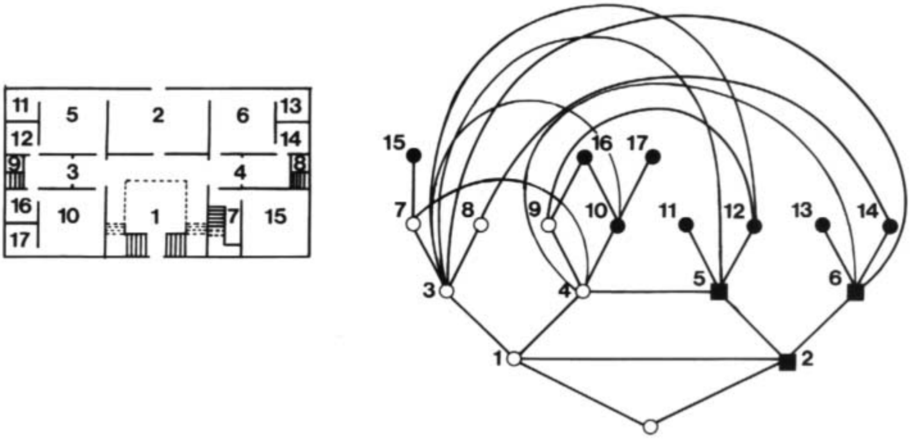

Figure 7.8 Coleshill, outline ground-floor plan and access map. Rooms identified after Girouard 1980: 123. 1 Hall and Great Stairs; 2 Great parlour; 3 South lobby; 4 North lobby; 5 Withdrawing chamber; 6 Bedchamber; 7 Basement stairs; 8 North stairs; 9 South stairs; 10 Bedchamber; 11, 12 Closets; 13, 14 Closets; 15 ?Steward's room; 16, 17 Servant's room and closet

as more specifically English, with a spine corridor. The architect is not certainly known: Inigo Jones's traditional involvement has been questioned and the young Roger Pratt cited (Gunther 1979: 5; Colvin 1995: 560), although it is also argued that the design is by Jones and Roger Pratt 'completed it faithfully after his death' (Mowl and Earnshaw 1995: 54). Whatever the attribution, the owner of the house was Sir George Pratt, a member of an established gentry family who had prospered in the City of London. His Tudor house burnt down in 1652, shortly after his father's death and his own marriage in 1647, although it appears that his father, Sir Henry Pratt, had slowly begun a new house in the grounds. Sir George was said to have lost large sums through gambling, which might have contributed to the slow progress of his new house (ibid.: 48–58).

This plan shows a central state hall (1), balanced by suites of rooms either side (10 and 5; 6 and 15, a tripartite plan), identified as similar to contemporary Dutch plans seen by gentlemen in exile during the Commonwealth, and adapted to English gentlemen's social needs (Girouard 1980: 126) (Fig. 7.8). In particular, the apartment can be a main bedchamber, with servant's room and closet (often a dressing room) neatly provided by two doors off one wall of the bedchamber, often with easy access from the servant's room to the back stairs. A practical resolution of northern European interest in Palladian villa plans, and not such a faithful copy as Gunnersbury was, this English plan displaced the old dominant hall full of servants (as at Montacute) in favour of a central great staircase hall and great parlour. The servants were allocated their own hall in the basement: 'a momentous break with tradition' (ibid.: 123).

The plan therefore emphasizes the width of the main entrance front, and the elevation reflects the tripartite division inside through the spacing of the windows (Fig. 7.7). Nine bays wide, the central three windows are more widely spaced than the outer groupings of windows, implying a central feature, such as the portico at Gunnersbury, without actually using columns or a break forward in the smooth wall of the whole facade. Coleshill has been identified as a new form of specifically rural élite house, long and relatively low, two rooms and a corridor deep (a double pile), with a restrained use of Classical forms, that can be seen to be the forerunner of what Deetz described as the Georgian Ideal continuing through the eighteenth century (Worsley 1995: 26; Deetz 1977: 39, 111–17).

The ground-floor access analysis map can be compared to Gunnersbury (Figs 7.6, 7.8). Both have a similar number of rooms (sixteen and fifteen respectively) and the same number of levels of permeability (five). Coleshill is more ringy, all the spaces on the third level of permeability (3, 4, 5, 6) controlling passage around the house: 3 and 4 being corridors, 5 and 6 being the principal rooms of two sets of apartments. There are many more groups of three rooms than Gunnersbury, creating a tree-like structure despite the rings. The rooms are therefore less accessible and more discrete, as could be expected from the repetition of the apartments (5, 6, 10). The house is less permeable, in that most rooms are found on the fourth level of permeability, whereas Gunnersbury has most rooms on the third, shallower, level. The great parlour (2) takes the same relation as the Gunnersbury columned hall, but controls access to only two sets of spaces. The identified steward's room (15) and associated staircase down to the servants in the basement (7) are relatively inaccessible, placed away from a ring, the steward's room being the deepest room in the access map. The hall (1) with the great staircase gives access to the upper-floor state rooms, chiefly the dining room over the parlour (2). The 'stand-alone' nature of the apartments reinforces an interpretation of this form of house as flexible, room use being easily adapted according to changing needs (bedchambers converted to parlours) without interrupting access to the public rooms or service areas.

CONCLUSION

This brief dip into house-plan analysis has suggested the different view of a house that an access map can produce, particularly the sense of paths that may be taken through the spaces and of rooms that become more important for their place on pathways. In this way, the house under discussion can be analysed for patterns inherent in its design, and interpretation can move on beyond subjective impression to a theoretically informed and critical look at the available evidence for the world-as-lived and its relationship to the world-as-imagined.

Archaeology can approach this class of monuments with its own list of questions, whether from a contextual approach to the country-house estate, as a specialized form of rural housing that includes a socially layered population, or as the examples here have tended to do, as an attempt to make more rigorous statements about how the house plan shapes and is shaped by social relations and expectations.

A final thought concerns the relationship of the past to the present, an established element of archaeological theorizing. If archaeologists do not embrace this category of the nation's heritage, as a discipline we miss the chance to explain our approaches to material culture to a huge visiting public (and see Matthews this volume on the public interest in the recent past). The continuing practical problems of maintaining buildings, collections and estates (Lees-Milne 1992; Strong, Binney and Harris (eds) 1974), the priorities of government, commercial and private interests (Sayer and Massingberd 1993), the heritage industry and the consumers (Hewison 1987; Jenkins and James 1995), are all fit subjects for archaeological comment. The survival of country houses through the twentieth century is a topic in itself, reflective of national and international events, leading to adaptation, demolition or museum-style curation. Archaeology is after all called upon as a common metaphor for the process of carefully stripping away layers of evidence in order to construct a new understanding. 'All things have an end – even houses that people take infinite pains to see, and are tired of before they begin to see them' (Dickens 1994: 80–1).

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Part III

BREEDING CONTEMPT

8

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE WORKHOUSE

The changing uses of the workhouse buildings at St Mary's, Southampton

Gavin Lucas

PROLOGUE: THE GEORGIAN TOWN HOUSE

At the beginning of 1996, archaeological monitoring was carried out on a site in St Mary's, Southampton prior to the erection of student accommodation for the Southampton City College.[1] While its prime objective was to assess the potential danger to Saxon and medieval deposits, in the course of clearing a late eighteenth-century basement was found in very good condition and back-filled with brick rubble. This chapter grew out of an interest in this building and its associated features; the process of tracing its history led back, ironically, to the new student accommodation being erected on top of it. Indeed it is the historical continuity between the buildings and the micro-urban landscape along a small stretch of St Mary's Street that can be said to characterize the purpose of this chapter, which begins with that late Georgian basement (Fig. 8.1)

No firm date could be established for the cellared building found on the site but we know it was bought in 1789 by a prominent local man, John Butler Harrison, a relative by marriage to Jane Austen, who undoubtedly stayed at the house during her visit to Southampton in the early years of the nineteenth century (Leonard 1989). The first reliable map is the OS 1846 survey which shows the ground plan of a semi-detached house, but earlier maps of the area dating to 1802, 1791 and 1771 all show property on what appears to be the site. This, with information from early street directories and the remains of the basement itself, suggests a likely construction date of around the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The layout of the house can be reconstructed from the ground plan given in an OS map and a later architect's survey which details it as a three-storey building with basement and attic – essentially the typical Georgian townhouse.

Unfortunately, although Harrison died in possession of the property, no probate could be located for him giving details of room use; on the other hand, given the fairly significant standardization of Georgian domestic space as exemplified in the architecture itself (e.g. Johnson 1996: 202), we can perhaps justifiably look at its spatial organization in terms of ‘typical’ use. One of the first things to notice about such houses is the distinction between the servants and the family. The servants’ rooms were at the two extremes of the house: at the bottom in the basement were the kitchen and scullery and in the attic was the bedroom/dormitory for the live-in servants. In between, on the ground and upper floors, were the rooms used by the family: the parlours, drawing and dining room and bedrooms. Of course the

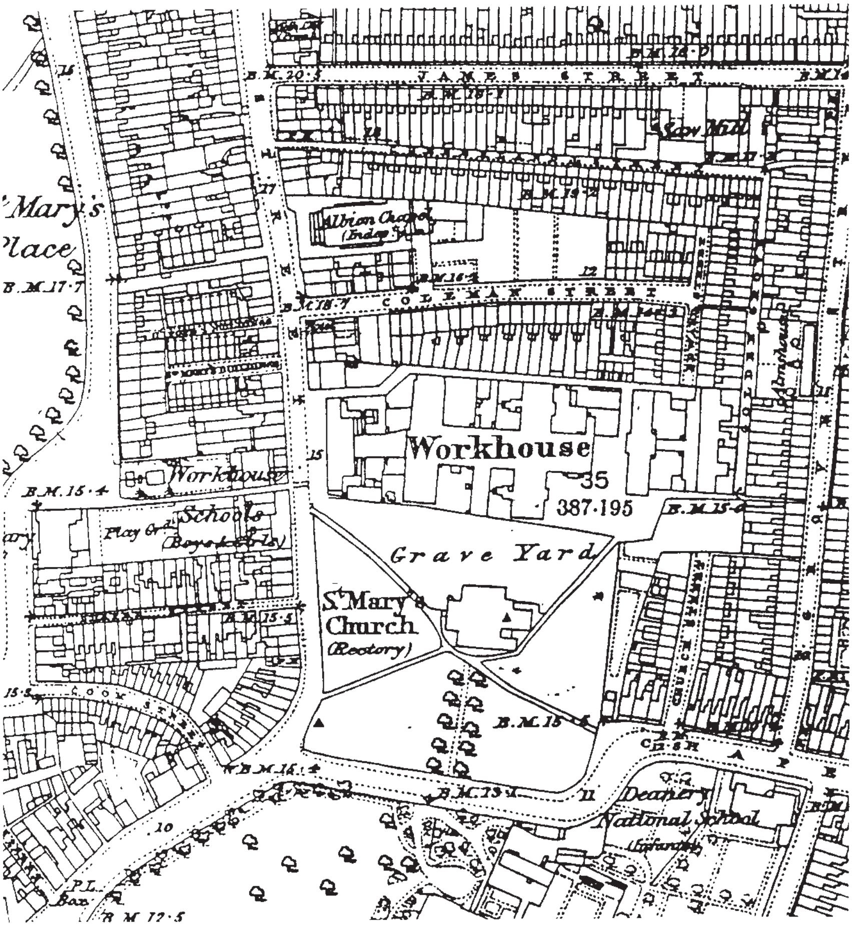

JAMES STREET
Saw Mill
Mary's Place
B.M.17·7
Albion Chapel (Endow)
COLEMAN STREET
Workhouse
Workhouse
35
387·195
Schools (Boys & Girls)
Play Gd
Grave Yard
St Mary's Church (Rectory)
B.M.15
Deanery
National School (Infants)
CHURCH STREET
P.L. Box

Figure 8.1 St Mary’s, Southampton, 1868 (from Ordnance Survey 1868 25-inch series)

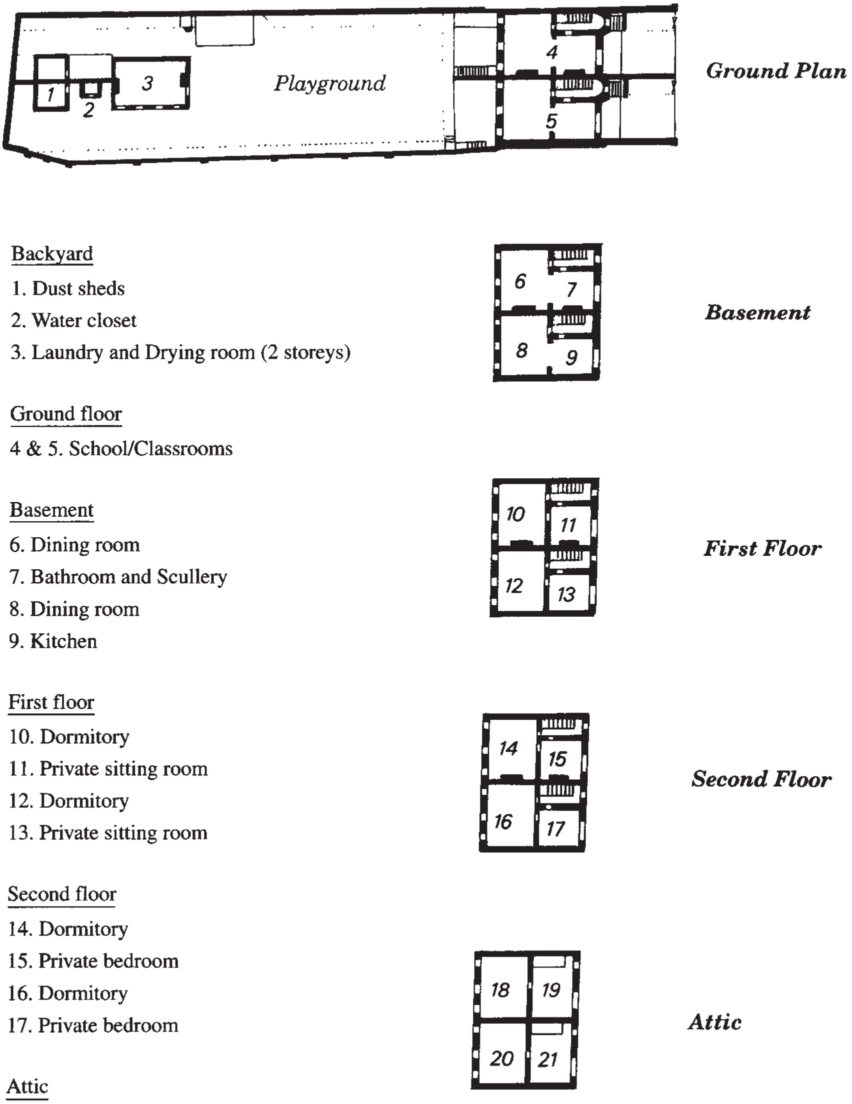
servants had access to all the rooms for their work but the sense of a classification of rooms according to a classification of the people – servants and family – was not threatened by this access, although such a threat may have increased over the nineteenth century as the divide between upstairs and downstairs sharpened (Marshall and Willox 1986: 58–61).

Over this general classification, however, another can be perceived. On the one hand both family and servants' rooms appear to show the same separation of sleeping from waking spaces with the former at the top part of the house and the latter at the lower part; but this symmetry is deceptive, for a rather more complex separation occurs which meshes with the servant–family distinction. The servants were defined by their work – for them, the house was primarily a place of labour; if they lived in, the bedroom in the attic was a place of non-work, of rest or sleep. For the family, on the other hand, the house was their home – not work, but not necessarily leisure either. It is possible that over the nineteenth century, as the distinction between work and leisure became more widespread and polarized, the house became increasingly a symbol of leisure, as it is today; this may also account for the increasing stress felt by Victorians over servants in the house and their gradual decline.

However, in the late eighteenth century the house partially defined the middle-class person in wider social terms and as such it mirrors this. Unlike the sharp separation of work and non-work for the servants, the family space on three levels shows a gradation from public to private – on the ground floor the parlours for receiving guests, where the family mediates with the outside world, an exclusively public sphere. On the first floor the drawing room and dining room, areas both for public and private use, represent the double space of the public and private within the house; while on the second floor are the bedrooms, totally private and generally non-accessible to guests.

FROM TOWNHOUSE TO WORKHOUSE

What this brief sketch of the space within the townhouse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century has shown is how the organization of space is related to the classification of people and their roles; within the domestic sphere, the servant–family distinction acted not only to separate spaces on that level but also given the specific nature and roles of those two classes, defined how that space was to be further organized. I now want to look at how the same space was reorganized when our Georgian semi was bought up by the Board of Guardians for a workhouse school for girls in 1850. Fortunately we have a detailed survey of the house for this, giving the use of each room, which we can compare to the family house sketched above (PRO MH/12/11009) (Fig. 8.2).


Ground Plan
Playground
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Basement
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First Floor
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Second Floor
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Attic
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21

Backyard
1. Dust sheds
2. Water closet
3. Laundry and Drying room (2 storeys)

Ground floor
4 & 5. School/Classrooms

Basement
6. Dining room
7. Bathroom and Scullery
8. Dining room
9. Kitchen

First floor
10. Dormitory
11. Private sitting room
12. Dormitory
13. Private sitting room

Second floor
14. Dormitory
15. Private bedroom
16. Dormitory
17. Private bedroom

Attic
18–20 Dormitories and Nurse's room

Figure 8.2 Floor plans of Workhouse Girls' School (based on Ordnance Survey 1868 10-inch series)

> The girls school consists of two old houses adjoining the boys school but separated from it by a public thoroughfare. It is placed immediately on the street, with the Workhouse on the opposite side of the way.

Communications have recently been opened between the two houses on every floor, which have materially improved them.

In the basement are the kitchen, bath, dining rooms, lavatory, larder, and a privy which is used as a lumber room. The bath is small and opens into the dining room of the older girls. The lavatory immediately behind has been made by covering in a part of the back area, and is not bad of its kind. The baths arrangement is certainly inadequate, and too many children are washed in the same water without changing it.

The school rooms are light and airy, and sufficient for the number of girls at present in the school for all purposes. The dormitories are all imperfectly ventilated, and there is only one watercloset in the whole establishment which is used by the officers only, which adjoins the back of the staircase on the second floor, and which ventilates into a dormitory containing twelve beds, and is a most objectionable arrangement.

The attics are only seven feet in height, are very imperfectly ventilated and not suitable for the number of infants and young children placed in them. At one end of them was a small room, which was, I was informed, a bedroom occupied by a deaf and dumb pauper woman, who is supposed to be in charge of the infants in the adjoining room.

There are no day rooms unless the school rooms are used for the purpose, and no water closets for the children nearer than the end of the playground, a distance of about seventy yards.

It is needless to point out how objectionable such an arrangement must be in adverse weather.

The play yard is gravelled and adjoins the public way above noticed, and over the wall communication is perfectly practicable with the outer world, an arrangement by no means adapted for the moral health of the elder girls in such a town as Southampton.

In the centre of the yard is the laundry and drying house which are probably sufficient for their purpose; and not necessarily unwholesome. The same cannot be said of their other arrangements, which are not however in my province.

There is no provision whatever for the treatment of the sick, who are sent over to the sick wards of the Workhouse.

I could not ascertain that there was any provision for physical training, which I regard as one of the most important necessities of a pauper school.

(PRO MH/12/11009; medical officer's report on the workhouse schools, 7 June 1878)

The first thing that strikes us is perhaps the similar separation of sleeping and waking activities along the vertical axis of the house and the fact that the kitchen and scullery remain in the basement. Looking closer, though, the classification is very different to that of the Georgian home – indeed it even seems as if the servants have 'over-run' the house. For what is significant is a separation between work and non-work again, which was found in the servants' space – the ground floor is used for classrooms and schoolrooms while all the upper floors are bedrooms; the playground outside and the basement below, for playing and eating respectively, constitute part of the 'working' day even though they are not work in themselves. Gone is any sense of gradation of public and private. This is a place given over to a working life: a workhouse school.

The division of work and non-work and its continuity with the servant space of the old house is however only one aspect of the house's new spatial organization – there is another which is equally interesting and indicative of a different type of power relation: discipline. Notice how on each floor previous categories have been mixed together. In the basement, kitchen and scullery are placed adjacent to the dining room whereas, in the middle-class house they were separated by a whole floor. Their juxtaposition is made even more apparent when eventually the party wall between the two halves of the semi was knocked through in the late 1870s (as it was on all floors). The separation of the schoolgirls from the kitchen staff is not made, indeed the schoolmistress probably also ate with them. On the other hand, we do know that the girls were separated by age – younger children in one dining room, older girls in another. The same separation took place in the dormitories and is undoubtedly related to the need to separate pre- and post-pubescent girls, i.e. a sexual division which was a fundamental axis in Victorian classifications. I shall return to this theme later.

Going upstairs to the dormitories on the upper floors, notice also how the schoolmistresses' or teachers' rooms occur on every floor along with the dorms, and in the attic is a nurse's room. Interestingly enough the teachers' sitting rooms are placed on the first floor and bedrooms on the second, both of which also occupy the front rooms of the house – to some extent this could be an attempt to preserve something of the idea of a home for the teachers. However, this is most clearly traversed by the fact that their space is always shared by the children and vice versa. It is a classic example of perpetual surveillance or continual supervision associated with disciplinary power (Foucault 1977); crosscutting the old division between work and non-work in the school is a dispersed power division between teacher and child which is omnipresent and less obviously visible since it is not tied in to a clear spatial separation such as that between family and servants. The outward impression is, then, of a workplace, where both teachers and children are all 'servants' together – to society and to the institution. But this mixing of classes on each floor also acts as a concealed mechanism for total surveillance, indispensable to discipline and a power which is inscribed in the body. To understand this new power and the new notion of service or work, it is now useful to cross the street and enter the main building of the workhouse.

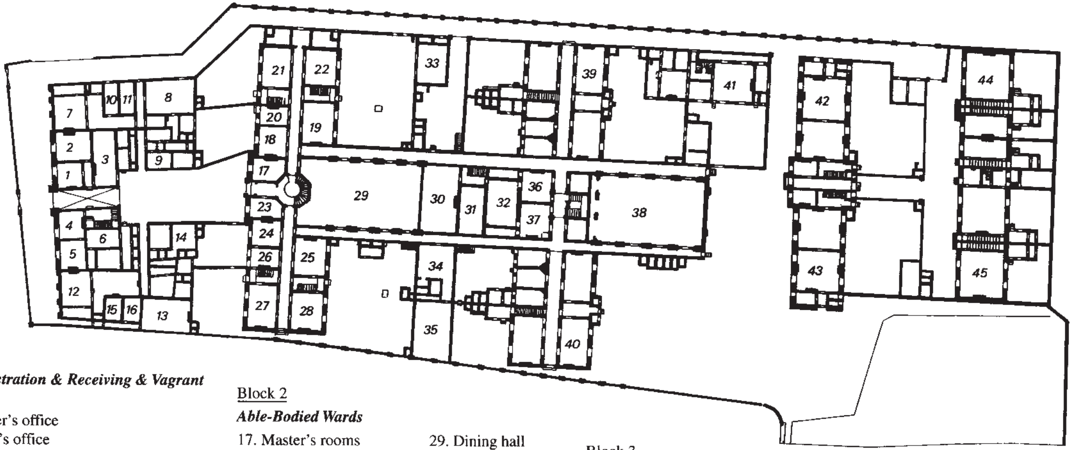
THE WORKHOUSE BUILDING

To a large extent the visible division between work and non-work reappears in the workhouse layout – on the ground floor are the offices, workrooms, dining hall, kitchen, etc., while on the upper floors are the bedrooms and dormitories for staff and inmates (Fig. 8.3). Moreover, for each level staff are dispersed around the workhouse alongside the inmates, allowing around-the-clock surveillance. However, we see here in the workhouse building a much more coherent form of surveillance than at the girls' school and this is directly to do with the fact that the building was purpose-built as a workhouse, partly embodying the principles of the panopticon.

The present building, dating to the 1860s, replaced an old collection of buildings which were once almshouses and a silk factory converted into use as a workhouse in 1773; their structure and size over the years became an increasing source of problems, especially after the establishment of the Poor Law Commission and its Act of 1834. There is a great deal of documentary correspondence about the old building, though as yet few details of room use have been found. However, the overwhelming criticism consisted of its inability to sustain any kind of classification of inmates. To quote just one example:

> Classification, whether we regard it as a moral or hygenic means, is indispensable to the well being of all public establishments and constitutes the very foundation of order – an institution where numbers are indiscriminately associated together and where the old and young – the healthy and diseased – the moral and the dissolute – the industrious and the idle – male and female are allowed promiscuous and uncontrolled interchange cannot but be destructive of those wise refrains which prudence and religion both enjoin, and the which when neglected sap all the salutory influences of example, break down all the barriers of virtue and reduce to a common level every variety of character.
>
> (PRO MH/12/10997; letter from surgeon, 24 Jan. 1844)

Such classification was a priority of the new Poor Law Commission, which stipulated seven classes to be segregated: infirm men and women, able-bodied men and women, boys and girls, and infants (a twofold classification based on sex and the ability to work). At the same time, a minimum of at least four classes had



Block 1

Administration & Receiving & Vagrant Wards

1. Master's office
2. Clerk's office
3. Book room
4. Porter's day room
5. Porter's bedroom
6. Kitchen
7. Male receiving ward
8. Male vagrants' room
9. Male refractory cells

10–11. Male clothes store & work room

12–16. Female receiving wards

14. Female refractory cells

15–16. Female clothes store & work room

Block 2

Able-Bodied Wards

17. Master's rooms

18–19. Male dormitories

20–21. Male day rooms

22. Male work rooms
23. Matron's rooms

24–25. Female dormitories

26–27. Female day rooms

28. Female work room
29. Dining hall
30. Kitchen
31. Boiler house
32. Scullery
33. Carpenter's shop
34. Ironing room
35. Laundry

Block 3

Elderly and Mentally-ill Wards

36. Bread store
37. Store
38. Chapel
39. Male elderly dayrooms & dormitories
40. Female elderly dayrooms & dormitories
41. Idiot & lunatics' ward

Block 4

Infirmary

42. Male sick
43. Female sick

Block 5

Infectious Wards

44. Male sick
45. Female sick

Figure 8.3 Ground-floor plan of main workhouse building (based on Ordnance Survey 1868 10-inch series)

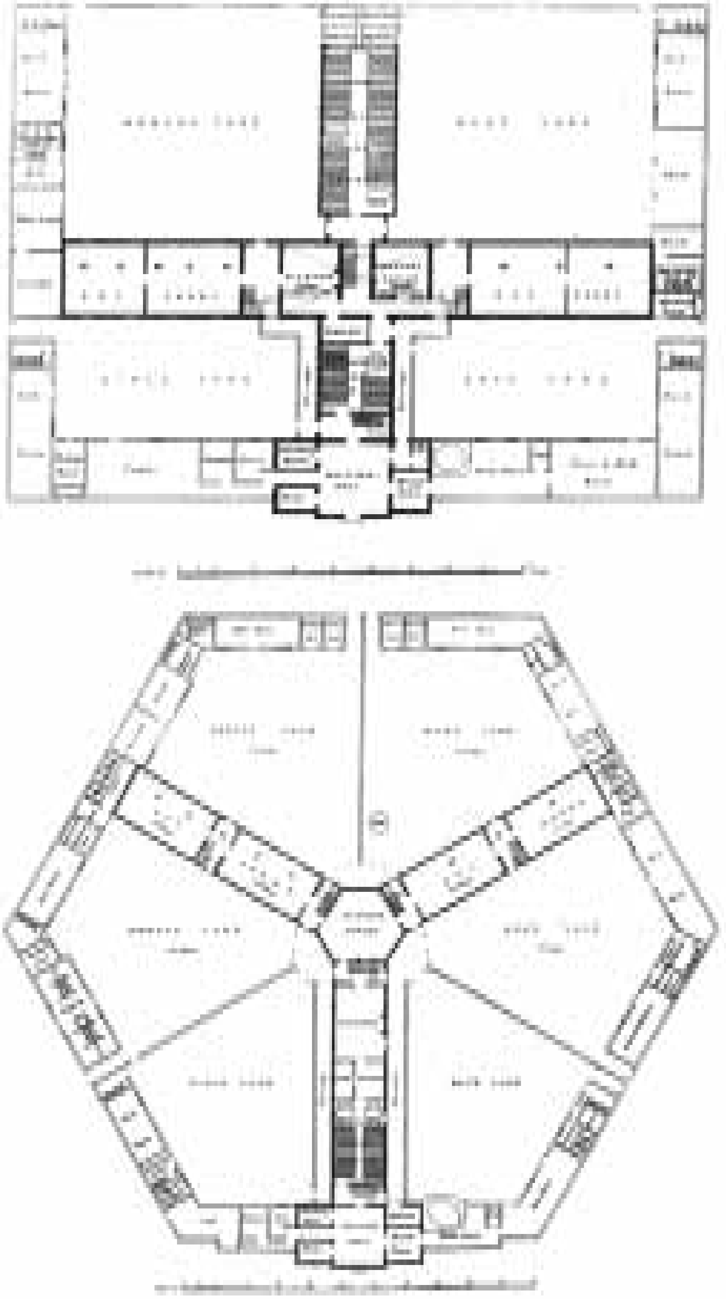


Figure 8.4 Kempthorne's ground-floor plans for model workhouses (from *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission* (1835): Appendix A)

to be distinguished: the aged and impotent, children, and able-bodied men and women.

The original ideal was that the four minimal classes should be housed in different buildings; however, due to practicalities the 'mixed' workhouse became the norm and indeed was forcefully preferred by some (Markus 1993). In the first annual report of the Poor Law Commission in 1835, the commission's architect Sampson Kempthorne published two designs for the model workhouse, a Y-shape within a hexagon and a cross-shape within a square (Fig. 8.4). Both express the panopticon principle, with the master's room occupying the central point with the various inmates' rooms radiating off, providing both segregation of inmates and maximum visibility from the centre. The advantage of such a layout is that it does away with the need to disperse staff throughout the building, for by making the whole building potentially visible from a single point, total surveillance can be maintained with minimal movement.

Comparing this model workhouse with that at Southampton, to some extent the classification of inmates is highly developed. For a start, the children are in separate buildings from the adults; only the latter occupied the new workhouse. Moreover, the boys and girls were separated, the girls as we have already seen occupying an old townhouse, while the boys moved into a purpose-built workhouse school next door. Opposite was the new workhouse building within which the two axes of classification operated; first by sex, with males to the north or on the left side on entering and females to the south or on the right, each with their own wings and corridors. Interestingly, the girls' and boys' schools reproduce the same pattern (in facing them, the girls' school is to the right and the boys' to the left); this may be coincidental, however, or due to a preference for placing girls in an old townhouse and thereby associating them with domesticity. Alternatively, placing boys in a new purpose-built school may be a reflection of their perceived greater economic value.

Within the main workhouse the second axis of classification operates, i.e. the ability to work, created by the differentiation of blocks, five in all. In the first block are the receiving and vagrant wards, in the second the able-bodied, in the third the aged and mad, in the fourth the infirm and in the fifth the infectious sick. Notice again clearly the gradation based on ability to work. In the foremost block are those who are most recently or temporarily out of work, those whose dependence on and residence at the workhouse is most tenuous. Next the able-bodied who can work but are unable to find employment; then by degrees those who are less and less able and more likely to be dependent upon the workhouse. It is almost as if the deeper you get into the building, the less your chances are of getting out alive.

This arrangement expresses a more telescopic image of classification, of linear gradation rather than the centrifugal radiation which is seen in Kempthorne's model workhouses and seems to be due to an initial narrow vision of the poor as chiefly able-bodied, not taking into account the variety of the infirm (Midwinter 1968). As a result a single surveillance point would not work: surveillance has to be graduated too. At Southampton, the first block is occupied by the porter's rooms which control the admission of inmates and 'one-nighters', i.e. the vagrants. In all the subsequent blocks, the centres of the wings are occupied by staff – in block 2 by the master and matron of the workhouse, in block 3 by attendants and in blocks 4 and 5 by nurses. From these central points they can survey the male and female transepts of each wing, reproducing Kempthorne's central panopticon for each block – a model of both graduated and yet centralized surveillance and power.

THE NON-PRODUCTIVE BODY

One can thus see how in the nineteenth century the whole classification of space in the workhouse is related to classifying people according to notions of work. But how exactly was *work* conceived? A new way of thinking about the body in relation to society emerged in the nineteenth century, a more ambivalent thinking which valorized the body primarily in terms of productivity – labour or work. The main source of this ambivalence focused on the non-productive body, for while the productive body was a valuable body, the non-productive body was rather more problematic (Gallagher 1987). While the economy, indeed society, was enhanced by the productive body, the non-productive body was a drain on society; it represented an excess within the system – an excess potentially harmful to it. There was an ambivalence, though, as to whether such bodies were parasites or victims – a problem, that is, of how to classify the non-productive poor.

The workhouse was in many ways the material expression of this problem, and through it the whole body of the pauper was inscribed. The workhouse had a double meaning – both reformatory and haven according to whether the pauper was seen as parasite or victim. However, this very ambivalence pervaded the workhouse, causing problems. On the one hand was admittance into the workhouse, which was conceived as a 'test' during workhouse reform in the 1830s. It was hoped that outdoor relief would be abolished so that everyone who really needed help would have to enter the workhouse; that way the non-productive poor could be enclosed and controlled, both reforming the parasite and saving the victim. Needless to say, such a hope never materialized and the number of paupers receiving outdoor relief changed very little (at Southampton in the 1830s only around 20 per cent of paupers were in the workhouse and by 1890 the figure had only risen to 25 per cent) (Temple Patterson 1971: 96). On the other hand, however, inside the workhouse itself the very mixing of the parasite and victim caused real problems where one could infect and morally debilitate the other. Such ambivalence was not peculiar to the workhouse but can equally be seen in prisons and the question of whether they were reformatories for delinquents or a punishment for criminals (Foucault 1977) – an ambivalence still present today in issues of both crime and poverty.

One can see an attempt to gloss over this ambivalence by means of a multifaceted classification of the body according to an ethics of productivity. This classification encompassed measures of infirmity, grading the ability of the productive body by age or health; separation according to sex in order to prevent both non-(re-)productive sex and the reproduction of the non-productive body; and separation of the unformed from the formed body, children from adults. All these aspects of the body – age, sex, health – were strictly controlled to turn a non-productive body into a productive one, aided by strict regimes, timetables and dietary tables; by disciplinary power.

EPILOGUE: THE CITY COLLEGE

Although we are still left with this legacy of the body, the Victorian workhouse has long gone; one of the reasons perhaps was the assumption that most of the non-productive poor *could* be productive – whether they wanted to or not. But because of the changing nature of society and an increasingly industrialized definition of work and productivity, the kinds of people excluded from work were also increasing. On the one hand the influx of people coming into the workhouse was fairly rapid – few stayed longer than three months and few were habitual visitors either (based on information in the admittance register). Both of these factors seem to be linked to seasonal rather than endemic unemployment (Midwinter 1968). The highest number appear to have been labourers, but interestingly the second highest class are college students (based on information in the admittance register). On the other hand, of those residing at the workhouse, very few were able-bodied, about 20 per cent – most were the elderly and mentally or physically ill, a proportion which increased over the nineteenth century so that the able-bodied by 1890 only made up 10 per cent (based on information in annual reports to the commission). This fact is remarked upon by the government inspector, who also noted the increasing breakdown of classification – not because of the huge numbers or the architecture of the building, but because of the very nature of the kind of people coming into the workhouse (SRO/AG/14/12; PRO MH/12/11025).

This is ultimately reflected in the fact that in order to accommodate these people, a whole new infirmary was built at Shirley Warren on the other side of town in 1899, causing the workhouse itself to become almost superfluous. In 1929, when the Poor Law was abolished, the workhouse was renamed the Southampton Parish Institution though it appears to have continued in use in a similar way, and during and just after the war acted as relief offices and housing for the homeless

(Anstey 1978). Finally in 1948 it was turned over for use as a technical college with classes beginning in the following year though alterations were made and it did not officially open until 1952. The two workhouse schools opposite did not survive the transition, however, and the sites were redeveloped in 1951 for commercial use. Just recently, though, these have been pulled down and the sites are now occupied by student accommodation for the college. It is a nice circularity that such an urban space has maintained a certain continuity with the past – that on a site where schools associated with the workhouse once stood, now halls of residence stand for students attending a college centred on the old workhouse whose inmates comprised partly of students.

The Southampton City College is interesting for several reasons. When it first took over the old workhouse building, many of the old classifications remained intact. An architect's plan which probably dates from *c.* 1948–52 shows the intended use for the various rooms. The old first block was pulled down (perhaps partly damaged too by bombing during the war), making the original second block now the first. This contained all the administrative and main staff rooms while other staff rooms are dispersed among the various workshops; the kitchen and dining room retained their old use and, very significantly, the same sexual division of male to the left and female to the right was maintained. Such divisions no longer exist today (indeed, the whole college has expanded with a new connecting block to the north and various other separate blocks scattered to the east and south), but I would like to focus on the original old workhouse building and its use as it stands today.

Much as the reuse of the Georgian townhouse for a Victorian workhouse school seemed to disrupt and mix up previous classifications, so the present use of rooms of the college seems to completely cut across any of the old classifications for which the structure was intentionally built. However, this is not to say there is no order here – or, indeed, no sense of continuity. Certainly any generalized sexual division has gone (except for the toilets) as well as any linearized gradation; however, the importance of the building as a working place (and a public institution at that) remains.

The front block, originally the second block (now block A), houses the reception rooms and various administrative offices, acting to mediate between the inside and outside, the public sphere of the town and the private space of the college. Unlike the workhouse, however, whose purpose was to separate, the college seems far more concerned to mediate – both externally and internally. For instance, the facade and reception in particular have undergone a major facelift which can be seen in the context of post-war developments of the workplace. This entailed a process of 'domesticating' the workplace which is seen most obviously in the importance of a reception, drawing on the old eighteenth-century ideas of the parlour and hall: you are being welcomed into a 'home' (see for example Forty 1986: 140–8). This theme is underlined in many other ways such as the front 'lawn' and path leading up to the college and the recent erection of a conservatory-like porch at the front.

Behind the facade of the building, the old architecture and organization of space remains, but it is much more broken up and 'equalized': each block and level has its mix of teacher/staff rooms and student/classrooms. This is very reminiscent, ironically, of the change one saw in the reuse of the Georgian home as a workhouse school. At one level it can be seen as a dispersed model of surveillance and yet on another as a model of accessibility between students and teachers. Indeed, the real surveillance has shifted to hidden security cameras and patrolling security guards – new techniques which are consonant with the changing use of the building as a conduit rather than a container, a place for temporary and shifting groups of people, going to and from classes, coming in and out of the building, rather than continuous occupation by inmates. And yet the primary purpose of such surveillance remains broadly the same: to classify people, to identify those who do and those who do not 'belong'; to make sure people are not doing wrong things in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Moreover, a more stationary classification of people is still in use, though based not on sex or ability to work but according to teaching subject. Thus the old third block (now block B) is given over to business studies, the old fourth block (now block C) to hair and beauty, and the old fifth block (now block D) to electronics and electrical engineering. Spaces are more repetitive and equivalent, arranged according not to a graduated classification but a modular one; different blocks and the different buildings across the campus define a classification by *subject* – not by its *subjects*, i.e. inmates. And yet perhaps this is the ultimate irony here: that the architecture classifies people by the subject they are studying. For the whole notion of the classification of knowledge by academic discipline arose at the same time as the architectural classification and discipline of bodies through prisons, hospitals, barracks, schools – and workhouses.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Janet Miller of Gifford and Partners, whose work on the site led to this chaper being written. Further thanks are also due to Paul Stevens at the Southampton Technical College Library for his help and interest, and to staff at the Southampton Record Office. Final thanks to Sarah Tarlow for inviting me to present a version of this chapter at the Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference 96.

Note

1 The work was carried out by Gifford and Partners on behalf of Barclays Homes; a copy of the archive report can be found with the former (Miller 1996).

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9

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Shane Gould

This chapter considers the management of industrial and modern archaeological remains within the recent planning framework set by the British government; the context is essentially English, separate guidance having been issued for Scotland and Wales. Having briefly described the relevant planning documentation it demonstrates how this can be used to tackle complex multi-period sites, thereby informing the decision-making process for the management of those sites that are threatened by development.

For the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, buildings and structures are often described in terms of phasing, layout and methods of motive transmission. Only rarely is it acknowledged that they contain important social information which may be reflected by the subtle use of architecture, routes of access and physical boundaries. This failure to recognize valuable historic evidence often results in its unrecorded loss. By adopting an explicit theoretical stance, this chapter will show how existing government guidance can be implemented to address these wider issues.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

Advice on the archaeological impact of development proposals in England is generally provided by county or district councils. Most local authorities employ a County Archaeologist, a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) Officer and an Archaeological Development Control Officer. The Archaeology Section is responsible for the identification, evaluation, management, conservation and display of the archaeological heritage within their area; the remains often cover a vast time-period and include everything from Paleolithic hunter-gatherer communities to medieval castles, World War II defences and industrial monuments.

Amongst other things, the Archaeology Section provides specialist advice to local planning authorities, developers and their agents on the impact of planning proposals. The location of any development (road scheme, housing, mineral extraction, etc.) is checked against the records on the SMR; this computerized database contains cartographic and textual information on all known archaeological sites within the county. SMR criteria originated at a time when industrial and post-medieval archaeology were fledgling areas, with the result that in some instances the record had a cut-off date of 1750. Fortunately this is no longer the case, and enhancement schemes have led to the addition of more recent industrial sites, military establishments and information derived from the Ordnance Survey six-inch map series of the 1880s.

Archaeological decision-making in England is based on the advice given in central government's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16): Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment [DoE] 1990). This sets out government policy on planning issues and provides guidance to local authorities and others on the operation of the planning system. Paragraph 4 gives the following definition: Today's archaeological landscape is the product of human activity over thousands of years. It ranges through settlements and remains of every period, from camps of the early hunter gatherers 400,000 years ago *to the remains of early twentieth century activities*. It includes places of worship, defence installations, burial grounds, *farms and fields, and sites of manufacture*' (my emphasis). The potential impact of any proposed development is guided by the information held on the SMR. Where important remains are likely to exist, 'it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken' (ibid.: para. 21). This type of investigation may include trial trenching, geophysical survey, building recording and/or an historical appraisal of relevant documents. Once complete an informed assessment can be made on the impact of the proposed scheme and further measures including excavation, design alterations and additional recording can be implemented; if the remains are deemed to be of national importance planning permission may be refused.

Where the significance of an archaeological site is fully understood and the remains do not merit preservation *in situ*, the planning authority may ensure that they are recorded by attaching a condition to any future planning consent. This action prohibits development until the applicant has implemented an approved scheme of investigation and should also provide for the subsequent publication of the results (ibid.: paras 25, 30).

LISTED BUILDINGS, CONSERVATION AREAS AND THE WIDER HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

A large number of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings are listed as being of special architectural and historic interest, and many others lie within designated conservation areas. Government policy on these structures in

England is outlined in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15): Planning and the Historic Environment* (Department of the Environment [DoE] and Department of National Heritage [DNH] 1994).

Many of the development constraints outlined for archaeological sites are essentially the same for historic buildings; applicants must be able to demonstrate the impact of any proposed scheme on the special character of a building or structure and 'local planning authorities should also consider in all cases of alteration or demolition, whether it would be appropriate to make it a condition of consent that applicants arrange suitable programmes of recording of features that would be destroyed in the course of works for which consent is being sought' (ibid.: para. 3.23). PPG 15 makes special reference to the important linkages between sites and their wider landscape environment; this approach being summed up in para. 2.11:

> The Secretary of State attaches particular importance to early consultation with the local planning authority on development proposals which would affect historic sites and structures, whether listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, battlefields *or the wider historic landscape*. . . . They should expect developers to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special interest of the site or structure and *provide such written information or drawings as may be required to understand the significance of a site or structure* before an application is determined, (my emphasis)

Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Factory South Site

The government research establishment at Waltham Abbey, which comprises North Site, South Site and the Lower Island Works, was closed in 1991 and its subsequent history provides a useful case study in the application of the guidance. Operating for over 300 years, Waltham Abbey produced gunpowder and, latterly, chemically based explosives and propellants. Few other sites of this quality now survive and the longevity of manufacture, the influence of state ownership and the totality of the landscape evidence place it in a unique position in the evolution of the national explosive industry.

Prior to any decision on the future disposal and reuse of North Site, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England undertook an intensive survey of the archaeological remains (RCHME 1994). The results informed English Heritage in their assessment of the site and this culminated in the scheduling of a large part of the works as an ancient monument and the listing of twenty-one buildings. Following a successful application to the National Lottery it is hoped that a suitable heritage use can be found for what English Heritage describe as the most important explosives factory in Europe.

In January 1996, proposals were submitted to Epping Forest District Council for the demolition and development of the 158-hectare South Site; the works contains *c.* 650 buildings and structures that were used for the manufacture of nitro-glycerine, guncotton, cordite, RDX and missile propellants. Given the potential national importance of the complex and its relationship with North Site, the Archaeology Section of Essex County Council advised the local planning authority to defer any decision on the planning application pending an archaeological and historic-building appraisal; this advice being based on that given in PPGs 15 and 16 (DoE 1990; DoE and DNH 1994). A 'recording brief was issued to the applicant by the Archaeology Section, outlining the recording level and report format. The brief enabled the developer to appoint an archaeological contractor who was required to undertake historical research, compile a component sheet for each building and structure, and produce a computer-generated (CAD) diagram with seven historic layers. The project will enable English Heritage to make an informed decision on statutory protection and further detailed recording will be undertaken as a condition on any future planning consent. Once complete, the results will assist in the public presentation and interpretation of Waltham Abbey North Site and a major article is to be submitted for publication in a national journal, this requirement being stipulated in the 'recording brief'.

The exercise at Waltham Abbey South Site clearly demonstrates the way in which existing government guidance can be successfully used to record the remains of the more recent past. The evolution of a complex multi-period site was explained, together with the linkages between contemporary process buildings (Chaddock 1996). Chapters in the report dealt with major phases of activity including the guncotton, cordite and nitro-glycerine factory, developments during both world wars and 1960s non-nuclear research projects. Transport methods, power arrangements and safety requirements were also examined in terms of both the historical and the surviving archaeological evidence. Much has been learnt about the technology of twentieth-century explosive manufacture and the unusual architecture of the industry. Although the site has an extensive documentary archive, the precise operation of many of the more important buildings could only be understood through detailed and careful recording. Additional information was forthcoming on the arrangement of the steam supply network, drenching mechanisms within danger buildings and the use of non-sparking brass fittings.

Waltham Abbey shows that the function and chronological development of factory buildings is worthy of serious academic study. As similar projects are completed, typologies of specific building types (maltings, coal mines, model farms) will be established and this information may complement or even challenge established historical accounts. Informed understanding is also necessary when planning applications are submitted for major works to these buildings; if the site is poorly understood, potentially important and irreplaceable information may be lost without adequate record.

SOCIAL RECORDING

When assessing the physical evidence of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, national and county organizations normally adhere to the functionalist technocentric approach outlined above. Buildings and structures are described in terms of their architecture, methods of construction, phasing and where appropriate, surviving technological fittings. The sites are effectively 'dead' and no mention is made of the social actors who performed in these arenas of power. Questions of social organization, the movement of people and control hierarchies are ignored as being beyond the scope of the archaeological data; and these issues are normally left to economic and social historians. Buildings can convey important social information if they are interrogated in the right manner, but many field archaeologists maintain that their job is to gather 'raw data' which academics can then re-examine unhindered by the time constraints of modern development. However, if a techno-functionalist agenda exists, the siting of particular structures, the relationships between routes of access and lines of visibility, and the subtle use of decoration and architecture to convey meaning are likely to be missed. Furthermore, if the building is converted to alternative uses or even demolished, this information will be lost.

The earlier discussion of Waltham Abbey South Site demonstrated how government planning guidance can be used to record recent industrial remains; a similar methodology may be utilized where important social information is likely to be under threat. The County or District Archaeology Section merely has to specify in the 'recording brief which features merit investigation and why; if the contracting archaeological unit fails to address these issues then the recording requirement on the planning application has not been fulfilled and therefore cannot be discharged. The following examples from Essex aim to show how the social dynamics within buildings can be properly addressed in normal planning situations.

Rochford Hospital

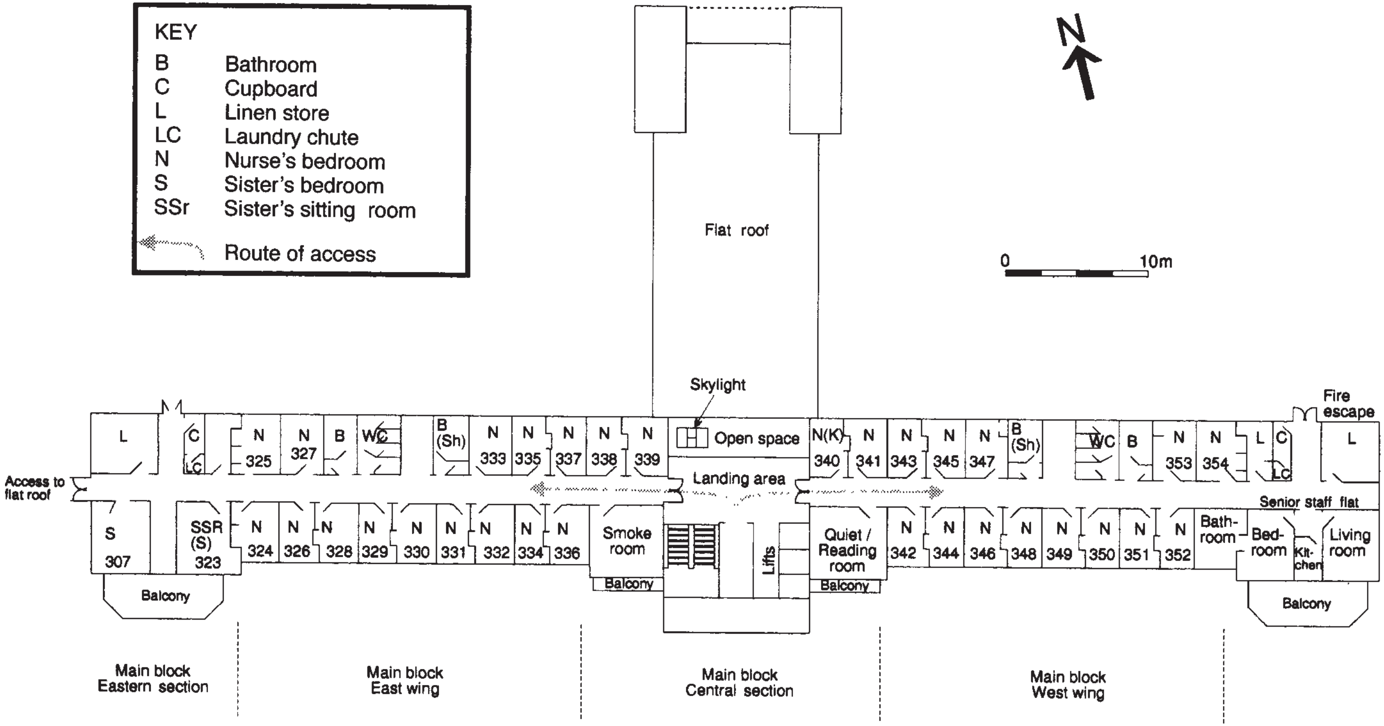
The plan form and spatial development of workhouses, asylums and hospitals have been poorly studied in the academic literature. An examination of the influence of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act on workhouse design and the way in which institutions built at this time differed from earlier and later examples may merit serious consideration. Similarly, the architectural expression of the newly created National Health Service or a study of public health provision within the confines of an English county may produce interesting results. In Essex, whenever a site of this kind is threatened by development, archaeological contractors are expected to consider symbolism, routes of access and the deliberate use of architecture to convey specific meaning.

Designed by F. W. Smith for Southend-on-Sea Municipal Hospital, the buildings of Rochford Hospital were opened between 1938 and 1941. Lying on the site of the old Union Workhouse, they show strong affinities with the International Modern Movement style. Such a level of architectural treatment is unusual in hospital buildings of this date, and this reflects both the importance and civic pride that Southend-on-Sea Corporation attached to this particular enterprise. Although never fully completed, Rochford Hospital was very much a model complex built along modern lines, with on-site nurses' accommodation, modern services and large, brightly lit wards. The buildings are highly significant in the understanding of municipal architecture and social developments during the 1930s and 1940s, their construction having been undertaken against a background of changes in public health provision that would culminate in the creation of the National Health Service in 1948.

The main complex including the central block, the Johnson isolation unit and the boiler house were listed Grade II in 1993. Following closure in 1995, proposals were submitted to demolish the unlisted structures and convert the remaining buildings into private flats and accommodation for the sick and elderly. Much of the internal spatial plan would be sacrificed in order to provide modern living facilities, resulting in the loss of many now redundant hospital features including operating theatres, the mortuary, and service, heating and hygiene arrangements.

Based on the advice given in PPG 15 (DoE and DNH 1994), a full condition was attached to the planning/listed building consent whereby the applicant was required to produce a written scheme of investigation that had to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of works. This scheme (the recording brief) was prepared by the County Archaeology Section and the contractor then had to produce floor plans of the listed buildings and the unlisted nurses' block, labelling each room by function, plus a detailed photographic record and a written report. The contractor was also expected to explain the way in which the building worked in both functional and symbolic terms; 'what image was the hospital attempting to convey and how was this being reflected within the architecture, fixtures, fittings and spatial plan?'

Many of the conclusions added an interesting dimension to the functional interpretation of the building (Cooper-Reade 1996). The unlisted nurses' block remained virtually unchanged since its opening and retained many original fixtures and fittings, thus providing a valuable insight into living accommodation at that time. There was a strict hierarchy in the nursing profession and this was reflected in the way the nurses' home was built and organized. Sisters were accommodated in the western wing; at the other end lay the senior staff flats, equipped with private bathrooms, kitchens and living rooms. When walking to their rooms from the front door, sisters and senior staff members would have to traverse the entire length of the corridor thus aiding surveillance of junior staff (Fig. 9.1). Generally each grade of nurse had separate recreational rooms and it is perhaps significant



KEY
B Bathroom
C Cupboard
L Linen store
LC Laundry chute
N Nurse's bedroom
S Sister's bedroom
SSr Sister's sitting room
Route of access
N
0
10m
Flat roof
Skylight
Open space
Landing area
Lifts
Smoke room
Quiet / Reading room
Balcony
Access to flat roof
Fire escape
Senior staff flat
Bath-room
Bed-room
Kit-chen
Living room
SSR (S) 323
S 307
N(K) 340
B (Sh)
WC
325
327
324
326
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
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347
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349
350
351
352
353
354
Main block Eastern section
Main block East wing
Main block Central section
Main block West wing

Figure 9.1 Daly's House, Rochford Hospital, third-floor plan (R. Massey-Ryan, Essex County Council)

that the probationers' sitting/common room is located beside the sisters' block. A separate matron's house overlooking the main entrance to the nurses' quarters reflected and reinforced the high status of this individual. The dwelling was not included in the original design scheme, but after studying the proposals for the nurses' home, the matron advised the Health Committee that it would be more appropriate if she were housed separately. The matron's privacy was also considered important and the windows on the front elevation of the building contain frosted glass.

The recording programme has now moved into the main hospital block, where a very grand entrance demonstrates the tremendous pride associated with this complex (Fig. 9.2). The entrance forms part of a small courtyard and the walls of the foyer are tiled with a modernist clock in a prominent position above the central lift. Such imagery would have enhanced the status of doctors, consultants and nurses, whilst at the same time informing both patients and guests that they were entering a realm of authority where they had little or no control. The building was clearly designed to impress and represents a radical departure from the austere architecture of the former Union Poor Law Institution. Having provided a prestige building with their taxpayers' money, the municipal corporation enhanced their constituency and by implication perhaps even themselves.

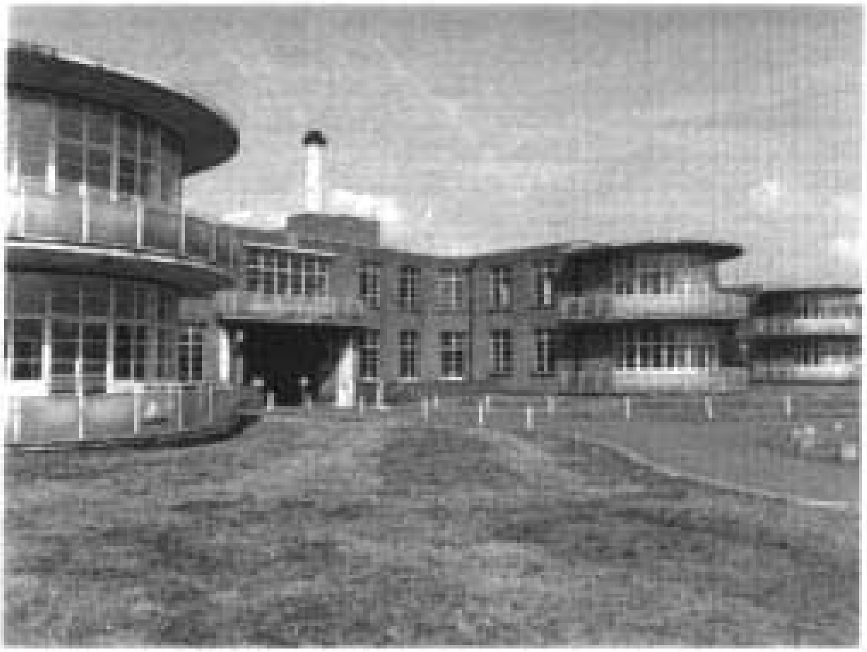


Figure 9.2 The grand entrance to Rochford Hospital

Mistley

Lying beside the River Stour, the town of Mistley was transformed at the end of the nineteenth century by the arrival of the malt industry. Eight huge multi-storey maltings were erected by the firm of Free, Rodwell and Co. and incorporate the technological innovations pioneered by Robert Free. Between 1876 and 1895, Free took out six patents for improving the manufacture of malt and the surviving buildings at Mistley demonstrate the most advanced methods of floor malting available at the end of the nineteenth century. The malthouses dominate the townscape and their frontage creates an impressive vista as one moves into the new industrial quarter. All the maltings are of red brick with stock brick pilasters and have scroll gables, sawtooth dentilling and terracotta keystones.

Full recording conditions will be attached to any proposed adaptive reuse for these structures in order to understand their form and function, but the complex becomes much more interesting when one considers the broader social landscape. At the turn of the twentieth century, Free, Rodwell and Co. created a purpose-built workers' settlement to the east of the medieval village. 'New Mistley' comprises several brick-built two-storey terraced rows which are constructed in a similar manner to the maltings. Some of the dwellings are detached, thereby representing differences of occupation, economic access and social position.

Robert Free lived in a large house, The Elms, which stands in landscaped grounds above Mistley Quay. A 'watching brief condition was attached to the planning consent to convert The Elms into two residential dwellings and for the erection of four houses within the grounds. The building had recently been used as offices and it was felt that the recording requirement could be fulfilled by a staff member from the County Archaeology Section at no cost to the applicant.

The Elms was clearly built with display in mind, and stands in a prominent position overlooking the River Stour. The north and west facades are much more ornate, having a gauge brick string course and full height bay windows. Such architectural finery would have impressed workers and visitors alike; wealth, power and status were deliberately displayed to both social groups, but this was aimed at controlling the former whilst expressing an affinity with the latter. The strict internal division between those areas used by servants and the resident family merely reinforced this social division. Although many of the internal walls have been lost, sufficient information survived to recreate the original spatial plan (Fig. 9.3). Family and guests entered the building through the northern porch (1) passing into the lobby area and central corridor (2). Living and dining rooms were positioned on the west side of the house with the large windows providing views across the garden and quay (4 and 5); the social status of these spaces is reflected by the use of foliage plaster work around the cornice and light fittings. The room on the eastern side of the porch (3) was probably Robert Free's private study with a panelled cloakroom lying to the south (6).

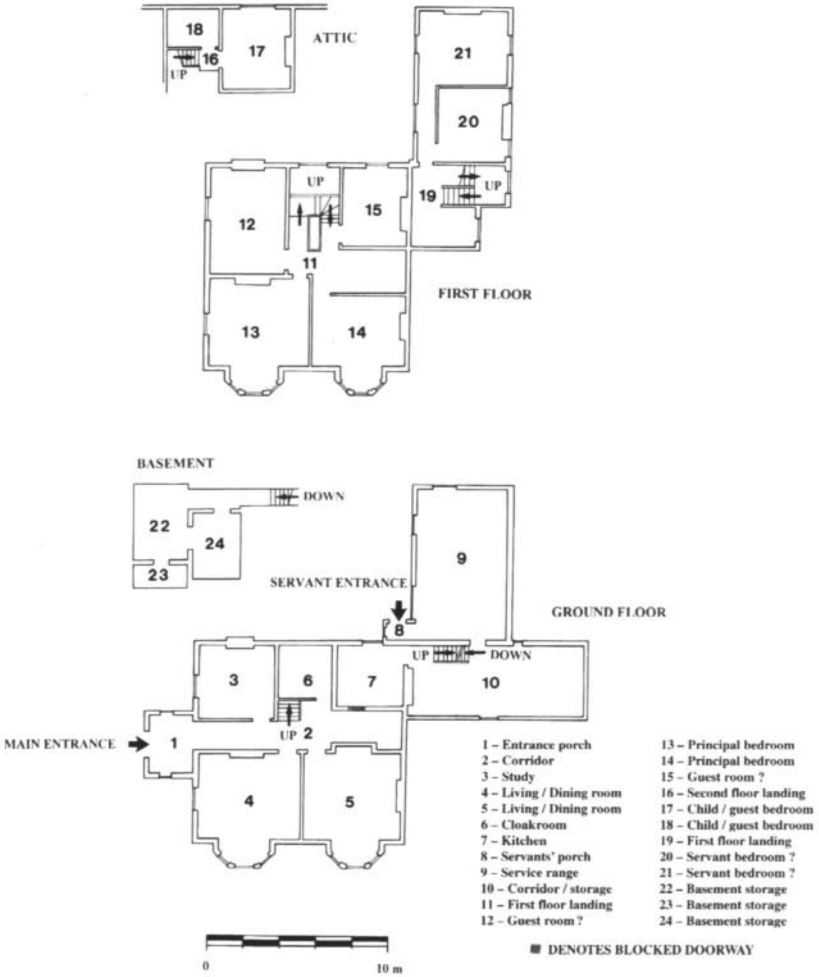

ATTIC
18
17
16
UP
21
20
19
UP
UP
12
15
11
FIRST FLOOR
13
14
BASEMENT
DOWN
22
24
23
9
SERVANT ENTRANCE
8
GROUND FLOOR
UP
DOWN
3
6
7
10
UP 2
MAIN ENTRANCE
1
4
5
1 – Entrance porch
2 – Corridor
3 – Study
4 – Living / Dining room
5 – Living / Dining room
6 – Cloakroom
7 – Kitchen
8 – Servants' porch
9 – Service range
10 – Corridor / storage
11 – First floor landing
12 – Guest room ?
13 – Principal bedroom
14 – Principal bedroom
15 – Guest room ?
16 – Second floor landing
17 – Child / guest bedroom
18 – Child / guest bedroom
19 – First floor landing
20 – Servant bedroom ?
21 – Servant bedroom ?
22 – Basement storage
23 – Basement storage
24 – Basement storage
■ DENOTES BLOCKED DOORWAY
0
10 m

Figure 9.3 The Elms, Mistley (S. Gould, Essex County Council)

Four large bedrooms probably stood on the first floor (12–15), and the attic contains two smaller bedrooms (17 and 18). Most of these contain fireplaces and would have been used for family and guests; those on the west side with bay windows being reserved for the private use of Robert Free (13 and 14).

Servants occupied the remaining areas and access into the domestic/service range was initially provided by a door (or doors) in the rear wall. The room immediately south of the cloakroom which contains a fireplace may have been the kitchen (7), and food was taken through a door (now blocked) into the family dining area. A network of small corridors enabled the servants to move around the house, but later additions and inserted doors make it difficult to identify the paths of circulation. A second east/west servants' range was added between 1897 and 1923 with a small covered porch erected on the east wall (8). Interestingly, this expansion matches the period when malt manufacture at Mistley reached its technological and productive zenith; Maltings Number One was rebuilt between 1896/7, Three and Four were erected in 1896/1900, Five and Six c. 1897 and the massive eight-storey Number Seven between 1900 and 1904. This enormous growth is matched by an increase in the number of servants residing in the newly erected service wing at The Elms. The ground-floor areas to the east and west were used for storage, eating and possibly sleeping (9 and 10). A second narrow staircase at the south end gave access to the servants' bedrooms at first-floor level (20 and 21).

The permeability diagram shows how the house was spatially split into areas for the family and servants (Fig. 9.4).[1] Both groups had separate means of access and the only link between the two was through the kitchen (7), this spatial boundary being used by the servants to gain access into the private parts of the dwelling. In reality this division may have been more flexible; servants could only access the family bedrooms from the principal staircase and contact between both groups was almost inevitable.

The Elms can be interpreted in terms of a large manor house using similar status symbols to denote power and social prestige. The workforce were deliberately channelled past the front gates of the house on their approach to the quay and children took a similar route to the school (Fig. 9.5). As with many Victorian public buildings, the school is built in the Italianate style, which again reflects the aesthetic taste of the company. Visitors were not only confronted by a massive industrial complex, but a regime where the behaviour of the workforce was deliberately controlled by the use of architecture, routes of access and boundaries. Within the garden of The Elms both family and guests could relax in a grotto while admiring the activity on the quay. The rear garden was more secluded, but the location of the school, Malting Number Seven and the workers' settlement around the perimeter was probably not by chance. The enormous eight-storey Malting Number Seven represents the technological peak of British floor malting and the climax of Robert Free's innovatory practices; built of red brick, its monumental gables tower above the garden. The location of the malthouse is curious, as it was not served by a rail siding: the movement of barley and malt would have been by horse-drawn wagons. Perhaps its position can also be explained in terms of prestige and display.

The Elms was not simply a high-status Victorian home; its position manifested the physical and social position of Robert Free within the community(Fig. 9.6). Many purpose-built workers' settlements follow a similar pattern, but for this period (the late nineteenth century) a manager of Free's wealth normally resided in an isolated country

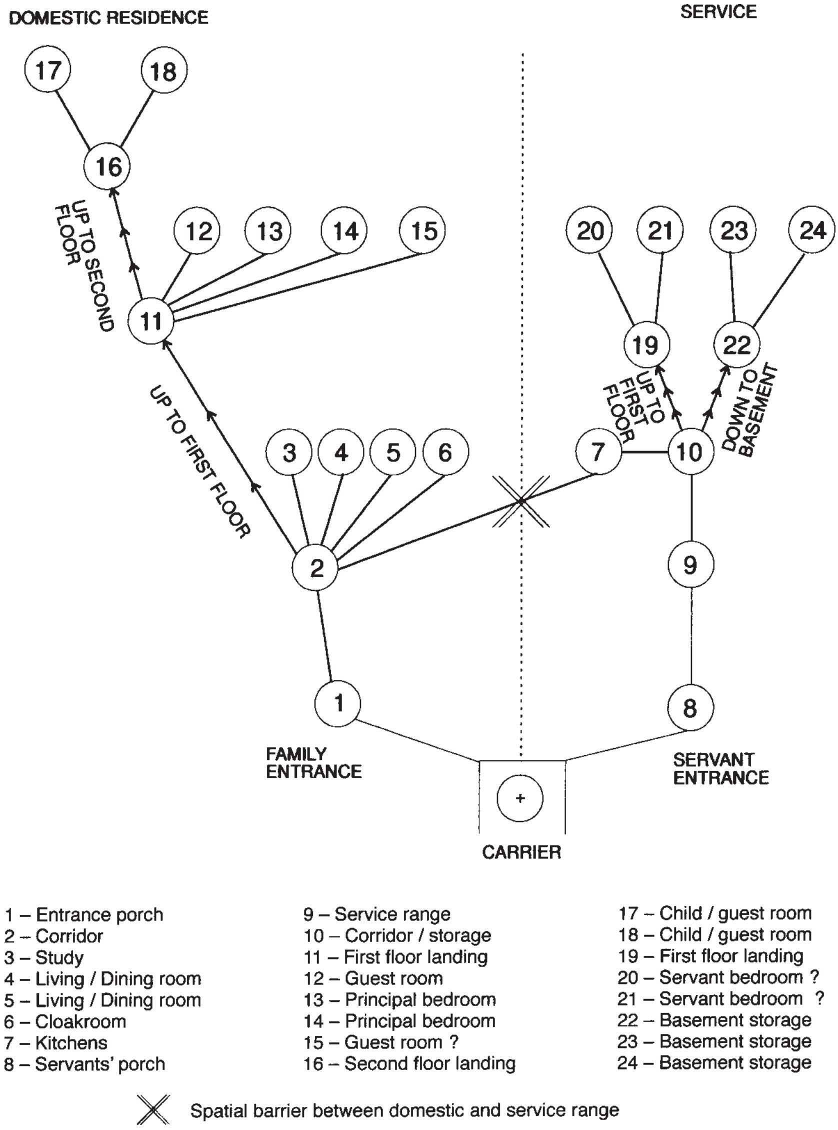
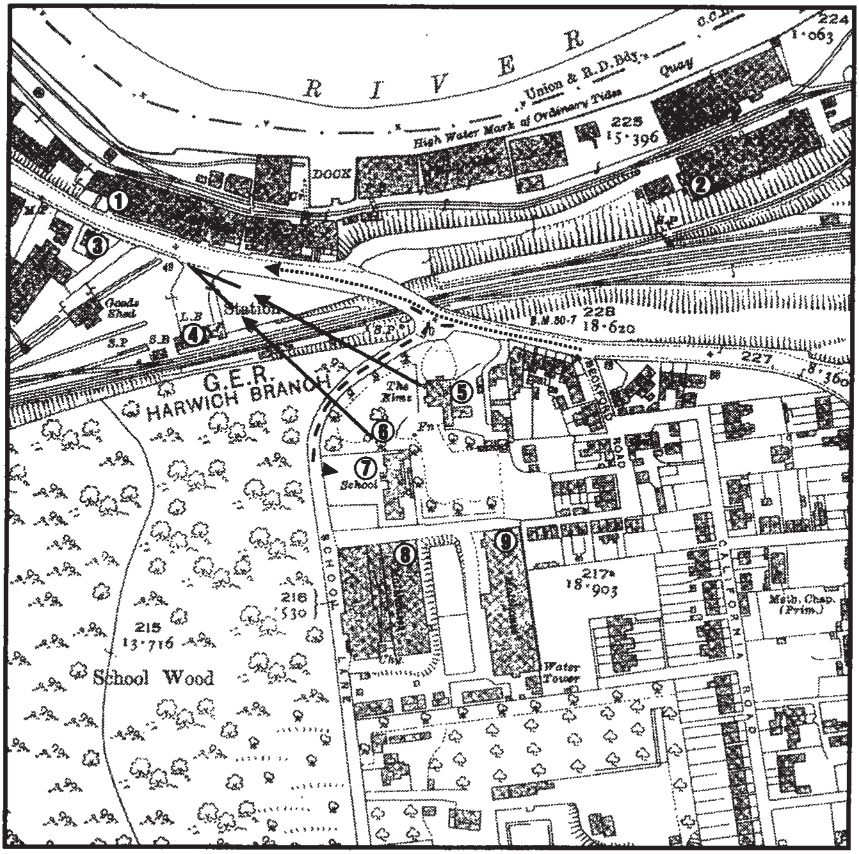

DOMESTIC RESIDENCE
SERVICE
17
18
16
UP TO SECOND FLOOR
12
13
14
15
11
UP TO FIRST FLOOR
3
4
5
6
2
1
FAMILY ENTRANCE
20
21
23
24
19
22
UP TO FIRST FLOOR
DOWN TO BASEMENT
7
10
9
8
SERVANT ENTRANCE
+
CARRIER
1 – Entrance porch
2 – Corridor
3 – Study
4 – Living / Dining room
5 – Living / Dining room
6 – Cloakroom
7 – Kitchens
8 – Servants' porch
9 – Service range
10 – Corridor / storage
11 – First floor landing
12 – Guest room
13 – Principal bedroom
14 – Principal bedroom
15 – Guest room ?
16 – Second floor landing
17 – Child / guest room
18 – Child / guest room
19 – First floor landing
20 – Servant bedroom ?
21 – Servant bedroom ?
22 – Basement storage
23 – Basement storage
24 – Basement storage
Spatial barrier between domestic and service range

Figure 9.4 The Elms, permeability diagram (R. Massey-Ryan, Essex County Council)

house. Robert Free may have preferred closer links with the community, or he may have intended The Elms to serve like a sentinel whose mere presence acted as a control mechanism and reinforced existing power relationships (Fig. 9.6).


RIVER
Union & R.D. Bdy.
Quay
High Water Mark of Ordinary Tides
224
1·063
225
15·396
DOCK
Goods Shed
Station
L.B
S.B
S.P
G.E.R.
HARWICH BRANCH
B.M. 30·7
228
18·620
227
8·360
The Elms
Fn
School
SCHOOL LANE
216
·530
215
13·716
School Wood
217a
18·903
Water Tower
Meth. Chap. (Prim.)
BEDFORD ROAD
CALIFORNIA ROAD
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

NEW MISTLEY – Based on Ordnance Survey 1923 Ed 1:25 INCH

··········▶ Worker access to quayside

- - - - - - ▸ Children access to school

——▶ Lines of visibility from The Elms

1 – Malting No. 1
2 – Malting Nos 5 & 6
3 – Offices
4 – Station
5 – The Elms
6 – Grotto
7 – School
8 – Malting Nos 3 & 4
9 – Malting No. 7

Figure 9.5 New Mistley (R. Massey-Ryan, Essex County Council)

Figure 9.6 The west facade of The Elms, Mistley. The building stands in an elevated position overlooking Mistley Quay. Note: in recent years a modern extension has been added to the south (right) of the building

CONCLUSION

Unlike most other periods of archaeological study, the investigation of the recent past still struggles to move beyond descriptive narratives. Research questions are often framed around improvements in manufacture and the evolution in the design and layout of specific building types. These issues are of interest, but they are simply one component, the technological, in a much broader socio-economic system. Since its inception in the 1960s, 'industrial archaeology' has yet to make a real contribution to the major academic questions of this period: the social transformations during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, power relationships, new systems of control and the creation of a work ethic.

If correctly interrogated, the physical evidence can contribute to this important debate. The examples cited above clearly need to be developed, but they show what can be achieved when a low-level inductive framework is abandoned. Existing government planning guidance enables the implementation of such a methodology and by targeting specific building types and settlements the subject may begin to make an impact on this major period of British history. As archaeologists we should not shy away from what may be seen as a controversial interpretation of the physical evidence. Within the realms of the ever-expanding heritage industry, working-class interpretations of the past are either ignored or glamorized to the extent that they become meaningless. The machine did not destroy a rural idyll, but equally the evolution of modern industrial society was not achieved without creating social tensions that manifest themselves in the archaeological record. If these issues continue to be neglected, we are open to the charge of ignoring the material remains of groups of people who are also incompletely represented in the documentary record.

Note

1 Detailed explanations and archaeological examples using permeability diagrams are given in Campion (1996), Fairclough (1992) and Markus (1993).

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10

FAMILIARITY AND CONTEMPT

The archaeology of the ‘modern’

Keith Matthews

Over the last twenty years or so there has been a growing recognition within field archaeology that post-medieval sites deserve as careful excavation and recording as those of more ancient date. Even so, the patience of many archaeologists seems to run out some time between 1750 and 1850. Too many are still prepared to shave off the Victorian and twentieth-century deposits from urban sites on the grounds that they are ‘overburden’ or, worse, ‘modern disturbance’. Rural sites fare no better, with interest confined largely to standing farm buildings (e.g. Brunskill 1987) and other industrial remains, including transport systems. The commonest excuse given is that this period is so fully documented and understood that we do not need to ‘supplement’ the historical record with archaeology.

This is nonsense, of course. To deny that archaeology can make a contribution towards understanding modern societies is to deny that the discipline has a role to play in understanding any society. Ultimately, it is a denial that archaeology has its own specific viewpoint (Shanks and Tilley 1987: 208). In fact, there are many roles that archaeology can play in giving meaning to the world, from providing the sole information about prehistory to documenting stylistic changes in a specific artefact category. However, one of the most important ought to be helping people in the present to engage with their own past and the pasts of others. This is what we try to achieve with popularizing accounts or with television programmes, but the results are all too often lacking in the sort of engagement which fires the public imagination.

I will show how a socially relevant archaeology can be constructed around the material remains of the recent past without recourse to either sentimentality or political radicalism. Using data from the large-scale excavation of a slum courtyard and street-frontage terraced houses at Hamilton Place in Chester during 1994, I shall illustrate the contribution archaeology can make to the social history of the Victorian and twentieth-century city. I will go on to show how the sensitive handling of the questions raised by the material remains can help to heal some of the wounds caused by twentieth-century redevelopment of the city centre and the social disruptions it created.

I would argue that the most fruitful areas of academic research in the archaeology of this period are those related to the social uses of material culture. They include the use and value of possessions in a capitalist economy, particularly those of the poorest groups; the ordering of social relations through both those value-laden objects and use of space; and the changing patterns of work and residence. Additionally, the chronology of many of the more common and utilitarian artefact types is poorly known, as are their distribution and marketing, and this is something which post-excavation analysis of the finds from well-documented sites can clarify.

There is a wider importance to this work in that the remains targeted by the Hamilton Place excavation were the homes of some of the poorest social groups in nineteenth-century Chester. Chester's reputation as a prosperous market town and tourist destination has made its urban poor invisible, both in contemporary records and in most subsequent 'bygone Chester' popular publications. The archaeology of these people can be used to engage the interest of those who would otherwise not be concerned about the material culture of the past, including those whose parents and grandparents lived in these places. There are many Cestrians still living who were brought up in courtyards, including the site at Hamilton Place.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE MODERN

A rigorous definition of archaeology as the study of human behaviour through material culture cannot exclude the present. A younger generation of archaeologists has recognized this, forging an alliance between their discipline, cultural studies and semiotics, revitalizing the interpretive aspects of the discipline. This fusion deals with contemporary material culture and the importance it holds for the structuring of society (Miller 1994; Johnson 1996: 178). Although it might be argued that ethnoarchaeology also deals with the material culture of the present, it is a specialized field. Moreover, it often treats its object of study as something exotic to be quarried as a source of comparative information for prehistoric societies and constructs its methodologies around this premise. All too frequently, it has specifically failed to understand the precise historical context of its objects of study and to place them within a continuum of change and interaction.

Although many American and, to a lesser extent, Australian archaeologists have long appreciated the value of studying the recent past, some Europeans have been dismissive of this interest. A few have even gone so far as to suggest that it developed only as a result of European Americans having no ancient sites relevant to their ancestry. While this may have been nearly true during archaeology's early days in the United States and Canada, this is no longer the case. Studies of nineteenth-century archaeology in American east-coast towns and cities, especially, have led to a more theoretically informed later historical archaeology than perhaps exists elsewhere. It is in comparing American and British archaeology that the term 'post-medieval' runs into trouble, as Susie West outlines in the Introduction to this volume. The term is probably best abandoned, like all those which are defined in terms of what they supersede ('post-impressionist', 'post-modern', 'post-processual' . . .). Even more damaging is the disagreement over the definition of the period: some would start it in 1450, others as late as 1600, while its end point can be anywhere between 1750 and the present. The term 'Renaissance' for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has much to recommend it. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also form a coherent unit, and the term 'later historical' is a reasonable compromise which avoids the evolutionist implications of the historian's 'pre-industrial'. The period from the early nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth is also a logical unit of analysis, but what should we call it? Whilst agreeing with Susie West that 'modern' has unfortunate implications, I am at a loss for a more appropriate term.

High-quality historical research has provided us with much of the social context of nineteenth-century British history (e.g. Hill 1977; Trevelyan 1978; Evans 1983). Even so, we remain quite ignorant about the daily lives of large sections of the population (and especially their material culture) outside the writings of social commentators. Much of the housing built at this time has survived – except for the slums of the poorest – and the urban landscape of many of the towns and cities of the UK is a result of new growth in the nineteenth century. Our daily environment is still largely shaped by Victorian developments, especially for those of us with homes in historic urban centres. On the other hand, our knowledge of, for instance, the details of how sewerage and watersupply were provided to individual towns and properties is almost non-existent.

I have already complained that too many archaeologists are prepared to shovel away the uppermost deposits of urban sites on the grounds that they hold no real interest. They regard the identification and recording of structures whose existence and form are known from large-scale maps and photographs as an irrelevance. Such archaeologists also often express the opinion that deposits of this period contain so much information – stratigraphic, structural and artefactual – that the results of its careful analysis do not justify the expense entailed. A further specious and related argument they employ is that while it is easy to justify the cost of excavation of, say, Roman remains to the developer who will be paying for it, there are fewer (or even no) arguments to justify excavating 'modern' stratigraphy. Another common attitude is to regard the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as periods of destruction: all too frequently sections are published which show the uppermost deposits blanked out and labelled 'modern disturbance'.

These are not helpful viewpoints and are full of contradictions. If deposits of the last two centuries are so rich in data, how can we regard them as destructive disturbance? The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have instead seen the creation of many more archaeological sites than had previously existed (Chippindale 1993: 194). Indeed, the richness of the data should present us with a challenge: parts of the social context of the past two centuries are extremely well known (with the usual proviso about marginalized groups), and there is a huge quantity of archaeological information which can be analysed in that light.

Even more important, though, is the recovery of data about those without a voice in the documentation of the recent past. These groups include such disparate populations as the urban poor, who form the main focus of this paper, most rural communities (Matthews 1994a: 78), itinerant workers (Morris 1994: 973; Glazier 1996: 53; Jeffes: 1996: 86) and so on. The analysis of the very rich archaeological data for the urban poor should help us to bring out layers of meaning which can never be observed through written sources. We should recognize that its value is of a different type from that of more ancient archaeology; we can use it to explore those interesting questions about society and material culture which are beginning to come to the forefront of the discipline (Shanks and Hodder 1995: 33).

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHESTER

In recent years, the careful recording of deposits of ‘modern’ date has led to the acquisition of large amounts of data about nineteenth-century Chester. The data have not been synthesized, and there are no plans to publish the results of most of these excavations, where the later stratigraphy has been incidental (and even irrelevant) to the main research design of the project. The large-scale excavation at 12 Hamilton Place, Chester, discussed here, is a rare example of a developer-funded project whose main research aim was the recording of Victorian and twentieth-century stratigraphy. Moreover, full publication of the data in a widely available and high-quality format (which in this context will mean a monograph) is a condition of the funding written into the planning permission.

The reasoning behind this apparently unusual approach lies both in the general research aims of Chester City Council’s Archaeological Service and in my own interest in subcultures and marginalized social groups. The site lies in the centre of the historic city, in a high-profile location, and its redevelopment was part of a long-term scheme to improve an area notable for some unsympathetic 1960s and 1970s buildings. As the new scheme was designed to minimize damage to the underlying Roman archaeology and the site had not been occupied intensively between the late fourth and late eighteenth centuries, I felt that most effort should be put into excavating the nineteenth- and twentieth-century stratigraphy. Cartographic and other historical evidence shows that this part of the historic city was occupied partly by slum courtyards housing the urban poor as well as by rather better-quality housing. This suggested that a comparison between two different social groups would be possible.

Full academic publication of sites of this period is unusual in Britain. My colleagues and I believed that the opportunity should be taken with the examination of the material from Hamilton Place to put other excavated sites from Chester into their context and to attempt a provisional and brief synthesis of the existing data-set. The publication has not yet been prepared, although the terms of the agreement with the developer means that it must appear before August 2000. In the meantime, a brief interim report has been published (Matthews 1994b), while a full-scale assessment of the stratigraphic and finds data has also been compiled (Matthews et al. 1995), although this is an unpublished internal document.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chester in context

The eighteenth century in Chester had been a period of prosperity which, curiously, saw only a relatively low population growth. However, during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, the city's population rose by almost 40 per cent from 15,052 in 1801 to 21,344 in 1831 (Phillips and Smith 1994: 134). At the same time extensive suburbs developed to the east of the city and around the port area to the west to accommodate this larger population. Formerly open spaces inside the walls – as at Hamilton Place – were also built on for the first time since the Roman period.

The nineteenth century saw other enormous changes to the fabric of the city. The process by which the elites left city centres (Mrozowski 1991: 96), followed later by the middle and working classes, neatly spans the early nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century occupation at Hamilton Place. In the middle of the eighteenth century, new houses for the rich were still being built in the city centre in such locations as Stanley Place and King Street (for the locations of these and other places mentioned in the text, see Fig. 10.1). By the end of the century, though, new suburbs of fashionable villas were growing up at Great Boughton, overlooking the River Dee. Middle-class housing developments were also built on the fringes of the historic core, while high-density, low-quality dwellings were being crowded into the few spaces behind the street frontages. As the more prosperous moved out from the city centre, they continued to keep their businesses in the core, and the modern commercial zone emerged. At the same time, many of the historic properties of the city centre were rebuilt or at least provided with new frontages in fashionable London styles.

The aristocratic Grosvenor family (Marquesses of Westminster from 1831 and Dukes after 1874) was especially influential in the Victorian rebuilding of Chester. Its connection with the city was ancient and based around systems of patronage which depended on the extensive properties it owned not just in rural Cheshire but also throughout the city. There were few years between 1679 and 1874 when at least one of the city's two members of parliament was not a member of the family. They could afford to employ nationally renowned architects, most notably John Douglas (1830–1911), and during the second half of the nineteenth century effectively created

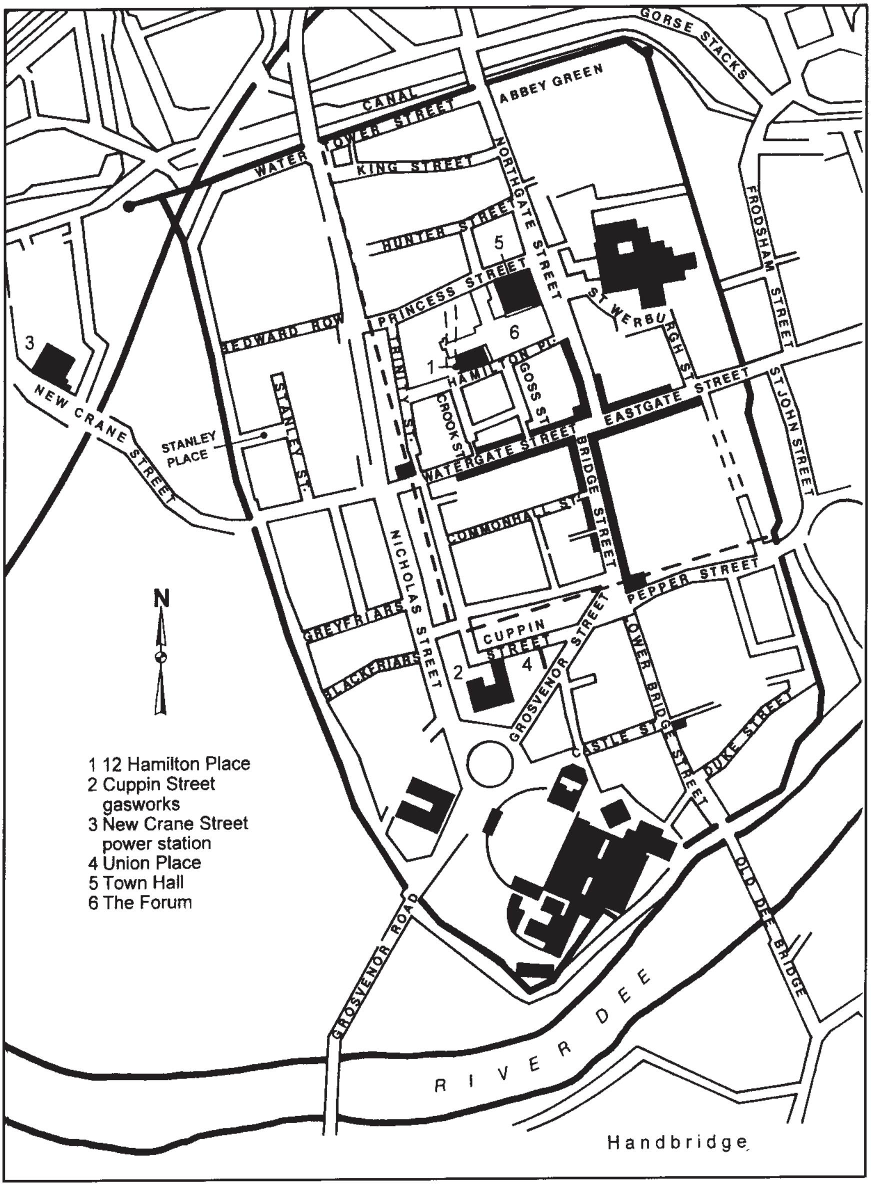
GORSE STACKS
ABBEY GREEN
CANAL
WATER TOWER STREET
KING STREET
NORTHGATE STREET
HUNTER STREET
PRINCESS STREET
FRODSHAM STREET
ST WERBURGH ST
EDWARD ROW
TRINITY ST.
HAMILTON PL.
GOSS ST
CROOK ST
STANLEY ST.
STANLEY PLACE
NEW CRANE STREET
EASTGATE STREET
ST JOHN STREET
WATERGATE STREET
BRIDGE STREET
COMMONHALL ST
NICHOLAS STREET
PEPPER STREET
GREYFRIARS
CUPPIN STREET
BLACKFRIARS
GROSVENOR STREET
LOWER BRIDGE STREET
CASTLE ST
DUKE STREET
OLD DEE BRIDGE
GROSVENOR ROAD
RIVER DEE
Handbridge
N
1
2
3
4
5
6
1 12 Hamilton Place
2 Cuppin Street gasworks
3 New Crane Street power station
4 Union Place
5 Town Hall
6 The Forum

Figure 10.1 Central Chester, showing sites mentioned in the text (drawn by Cheryl Quinn)

Chester's world famous black-and-white appearance, inspired by the timber-framed tradition of Cheshire's vernacular buildings.

Following its eighteenth-century reputation as a resort town, the Victorian period also saw the burgeoning of Chester as one of England's most important tourist destinations, attracting international visitors such as the American novelist Henry James. Its fame rested principally on the physical remains of the city's past, especially the continuous circuit of walls and the medieval rows, two-tiered galleried properties which line the main streets. In addition, rebuilding the city encouraged archaeological investigations, revealing parts of the Roman fabric. After the Municipal Corporations Act which reformed local government in 1835, there were considerable civic improvements in Chester. Streets were resurfaced, new pavings laid and improved drainage systems were introduced. Gas light was first provided in 1817, when the city's earliest gasworks were established in Cuppin Street (Fig. 10.1, no. 2). Electricity was introduced at the end of the century, after the construction of a power station at Crane Street in 1896 (Fig. 10.1, no. 3).

Despite the evident prosperity of the city, extreme poverty and appalling housing conditions were as common in Chester as in the major industrial towns of the region. However, much of it was hidden from view, with large numbers of Chester's working (and frequently unemployed) population concentrated in common lodging-houses (Glazier 1996: 55) and the so-called 'courts'. The latter consisted of terraces of poorly built and usually back-to-back housing (in other words, where the dwellings share a common rear wall) located behind the main street frontages. Most were without any running water, sewerage or any of the other improvements to civic infrastructure such as electricity. Water supply was generally by a shared stand-pipe in the courtyard (Perry 1996: 136). By 1905, there were 122 courts, containing 747 houses and a population said to be 2,500 (E. Willshaw in Carrington (ed.) 1994: 112). However, these figures imply a density of only 3.3 persons per house, which is so low as to be unrealistic. The evidence of census returns suggests a much higher density, perhaps double this figure.

Housing became a major political issue towards the end of World War I. Pressure was put on the City Council to provide 'homes fit for heroes' in line with Lloyd George's 1918 general election slogan. New estates of council housing were built in suburbs at Buddicombe Park, Heath Lane, Handbridge and Lache, principally in the late 1920s and 1930s. Many of the tenants came from courts in the Princess Street area behind the Town Hall, where over 200 slum dwellings were cleared. The courts were mostly demolished in the 1930s. Today, only one courtyard – Union Place – survives on the south side of Cuppin Street and now in use as offices and the kitchen of a restaurant. In a few decades in the middle of the twentieth century, a formerly widespread and historically specific housing type, in which up to 5000 people lived (perhaps a sixth of the city's population), was utterly destroyed.

A case study: 12 Hamilton Place, Chester

The major excavation at 12 Hamilton Place was carried out during the summer of 1994. It was designed to examine only those parts of the site that were due to be affected by a proposed redevelopment. This involved the excavation of all deposits down to the level at which a new floor slab was to be laid and of the pile foundations to bedrock. The programme of work was agreed between Chester City Council and Scottish Widows Pension Fund and Life Assurance Society, the site's owners, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

The excavation took place between 4 July and 13 September, and a watching brief on the remainder of the development took place in stages over the next eleven months. During the excavation, viewing windows and information boards were provided for members of the public. A minimum of 100 people stopped to look into the site every day, and on busy days (especially in August) this figure rose to over 500. These figures suggest that at least 20,000 members of the public saw the site. The excavation must therefore have raised public awareness of archaeology in Chester considerably. In addition, there were frequent reports in the local press and three radio interviews concerning the excavation.

Background

Excavation in 1992 had suggested that there was intense Roman activity on the site, with masonry surviving from the so-called 'Elliptical Building' to around 2 m in height (Mason forthcoming). The new development was therefore designed to cause a minimum of damage to these levels by means of construction on deep piles. Later intensive human use of the site did not begin until the late eighteenth century (Smith and Ward 1992: 2). As a result, the research design specifically intended the project to focus primarily on remains of relatively recent – nineteenth- and early twentieth-century – date and on those parts of the Roman levels where the deeper foundations were to be located.

The detailed cartographic and documentary evidence which exists from 1795 onwards shows that from the 1850s until 1939 the northern part of the site was occupied by the southern wing of a courtyard-type housing development. This was originally known as Herbert's Yard. In the early 1870s it was renamed Herbert's Court, and was rather grandiloquently renamed again – this time Cathcart Square – in the late 1920s. By the 1930s, it was believed originally to have been the courtyard of an inn. The southern part of the site was occupied by terraced cottages from the 1830s until 1939 and from 1806 to 1911 by a Baptist chapel, which was succeeded by a photographic laboratory (from 1915 to 1994). In 1956 the laboratory was extended westwards, over the site of the former terraced cottages.

The buildings of Cathcart Square were demolished in January 1939 as part of a slum clearance programme proposed by the City Engineer in 1936 (Newstead and Droop 1939: 5). Families from the Princess Street Clearance Area, as this part of Chester became known, were moved out to the newly built council houses on an estate at Lache, and the demolition area was converted to use as car parking. This area was subsequently redeveloped in the 1960s to provide extended municipal offices for Chester City Council, an underground car park, a new market hall and a theatre (Eames 1969; Petch 1971). The loss of the Victorian market hall frontage and its replacement by the brick Forum offices was controversial and unpopular. The site of the 1994 excavation remained as the photographic laboratory and its associated car park through the traumas of the 1960s redevelopment as a small isolated block within the scheme, which otherwise took in all the land between Princess Street and Hamilton Place. The remainder of the area was devastated (from an archaeological viewpoint) by the construction of the underground car parks and service areas. From 1956 until 1994 the photographic laboratory was the only structure to occupy the site, the remainder of which was a car park for its employees. The property is now covered by a discount department store.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century archaeology

The 1994 excavation showed that deposits from the 1939 demolition survived virtually undisturbed, although the area beneath the 1950s building had fared less well than that beneath the car park. Removal of these deposits revealed the expected dwellings as well as the toilet block of the courtyard, installed during the early twentieth century, a variety of external surfaces and three successive smithies (Fig. 10.2).

The houses were brick-built, evidently with slate roofs, as confirmed by twentieth-century photographs and the absence of later historic tile but large quantities of slate. The western end of the courtyard incorporated an earlier building on a different alignment, dating from the later seventeenth century. The photographs (taken in the 1930s) show that each house had a door on the north side and one window on the ground and first floors facing the courtyard, while there were no windows at all to the south. The ground floor was not subdivided by any sort of archaeologically detectable partition and presumably consisted of a single room measuring 5 m by 4 m, a type known as 'single pile' (Muthesius 1982: 106). There seems to have been a suspended wooden floor, as no evidence for flooring was found. None of the houses possessed a water supply, the only water available to the courtyard being from a single stand-pipe in the yard, shown on the 1874 Ordnance Survey 1:500 map (Fig. 10.3).

The earliest evidence for sanitary facilities in the courtyard is also on this 1874 map. It shows a group of ten small cells arranged in two rows of five along a short corridor rather to the east of the 1994 site and therefore destroyed. They must have been privies over soil-pits as no sewerage facilities were available in courtyards at this

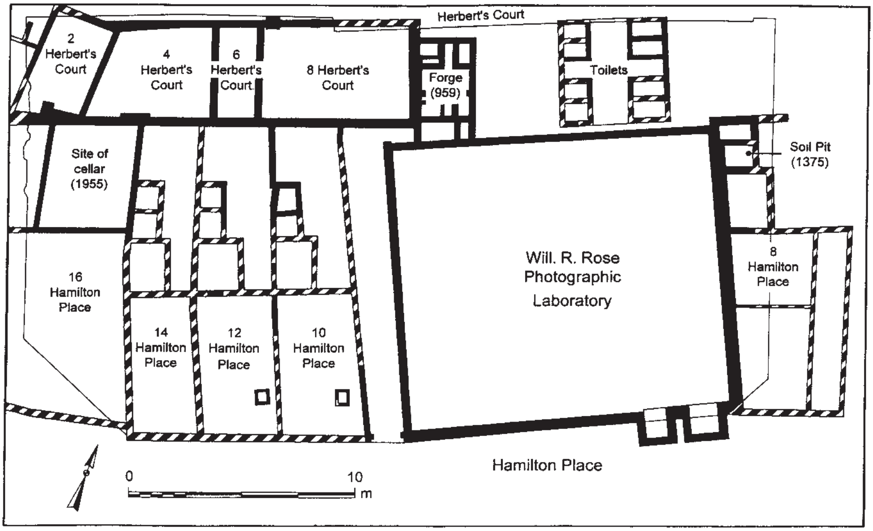
Herbert's Court
2 Herbert's Court
4 Herbert's Court
6 Herbert's Court
8 Herbert's Court
Forge (959)
Toilets
Site of cellar (1955)
Soil Pit (1375)
Will. R. Rose Photographic Laboratory
16 Hamilton Place
14 Hamilton Place
12 Hamilton Place
10 Hamilton Place
8 Hamilton Place
Hamilton Place
0
10
m

Figure 10.2 Plan of the site c. 1920, showing the location of features mentioned in the text (drawn by Keith Matthews with assistance from Cheryl Quinn)

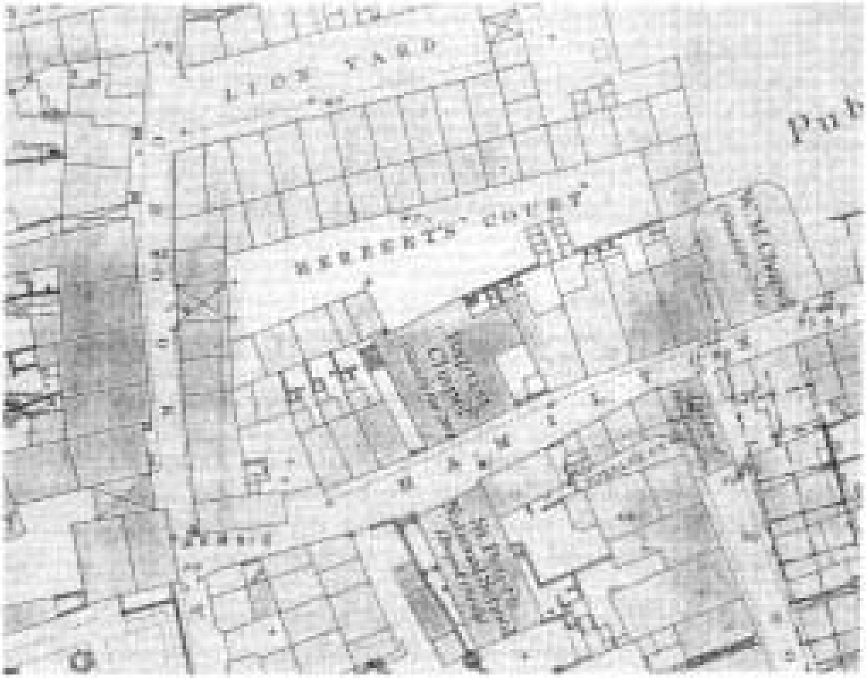
LION YARD
HERBERT'S COURT
Pub

Figure 10.3 The 1874 Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of the site (part)

date. By 1908, though, a new block had been constructed, the foundations of which were excavated. They had been built with mains sewerage already provided, so they must date from after about 1903 when work began on connecting properties behind the street frontages to sewers. As well as a direct connection to sewers, they had flushing toilets, as shown by the presence of lead water pipes in contexts which were not intrusive to the original design.

The smithies mentioned above were small, brick-built, rectangular structures with virtually no foundations. The latest of them was constructed before 1908 as a lean-to structure against the east wall of 8 Herbert's Court. It contained two hearths in a very confined space, too narrow for adults and even restricting for young teenagers (Fig. 10.4). It had been backfilled with domestic rubbish, primarily household pottery, at the time of demolition. Although the existence of the smithies had not been anticipated, in retrospect we can see that evidence of small-scale manufacturing should have been expected in a courtyard dwelling of this date. Census returns and other contemporary documents demonstrate that the inhabitants of these dwellings were the poorest elements of Chester's population during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They were frequently unskilled (unlike the inhabitants of the terraced

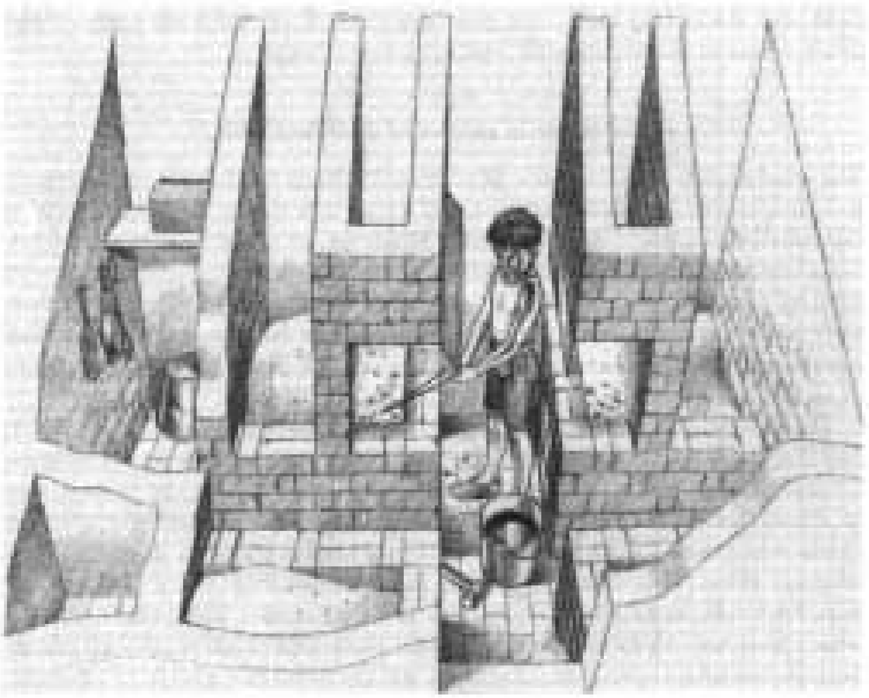

Figure 10.4 Reconstruction of forge 959, looking west (by Stephen Player)

cottages on the southern part of the site) and generally unemployed (Hargreaves 1983: 74). Domestic manufacturing was a necessary means of earning a living for those with no external sources of income. In one dwelling, slivers of animal bone had discs cut from them that would have provided the blanks for making bone buttons, several of which were also found. We should assume that numerous other types of small-scale production also took place in the home but have left no archaeological traces.

The terraced houses on the southern part of the site fronted Hamilton Place and were evidently better appointed than those in the courtyard as well as being considerably larger. The ground floors of 10–14 Hamilton Place consisted of a front parlour, rear living room, kitchen, outside toilet and coal shed; the front parlours had substantial brick hearths. Eight Hamilton Place, separated from the others by the Baptist chapel, had a front parlour, kitchen, scullery and outside toilet. In this instance the toilet had originally stood over a soilpit, and was probably connected to the mains sewerage system in the 1890s. The partially filled soil-pit had been capped and ground level made up by dumping a large quantity of domestic pottery into it, around the ceramic drain.

Nothing survived of the former Baptist Chapel: all traces had been destroyed by the construction of the basement which served as the darkroom for the Will R. Rose photographic laboratory constructed on the site in 1915. A new block was added to the west of the laboratories in 1956. Its substantial pile foundations and drains had badly disturbed the remains of the front parlours and living rooms of the nineteenth-century terraced housing.

The material culture of the households

The stratigraphic data from the later historic phases of the site are extremely rich and enable a detailed sequence of construction, use and demolition of individual structures to be established. Moreover, in many cases specific functions can be assigned to structures through their morphology and the types of deposits associated with them. This can be checked against the historical data, such as census returns and large-scale maps. The best groups of artefactual material are large and come from well-sealed and dated contexts (Matthews et al. 1995: 20).

The demolition backfills of the later forge (959), and fills of soil-pit (1375) and the backfill of cellar (1955) (see Fig. 10.2) contain notable assemblages, all appearing to derive from single depositional events. With the present state of knowledge, it is difficult to differentiate between the nineteenth-century deposits and those of the first half of the twentieth century on the basis of the artefacts alone. This is largely because the dating of most wares of the period is not yet fully understood. Distinctive transfer patterns are present, though, which may help to fix the date of groups when further work on their identification has been undertaken; clay pipes and glassware may also be of assistance in this respect. More significantly, the stratigraphic and historical data allow reasonably precise dates of deposition to be fixed.

The wares represented are principally domestic, although fragments of sugar mould and flowerpot were also found. Personal artefacts such as souvenirs, ornaments, miniature vessels and toys together with fragments of artefacts which may be related to Christian worship were also retrieved. The earliest large group of ceramics came from cellar (1955), infilled before the construction of the terraced cottages in the 1850s. It is a good assemblage of complete or nearcomplete vessels. They include a press-moulded slipware dish, two black/brown glazed bowls or pancheons, a large transfer-printed dish or platter, half a sliptrailed bowl and half an unglazed red earthenware flowerpot. Fragments of brown stonewares and finer small vessels such as plates, cups and jugs in transfer-printed wares, whitewares and porcelain-type wares are also present in the assemblage. There was some animal bone from this context, which may prove to derive from a contemporary domestic source, although we will have to address questions of residuality before we can accept this.

The soil-pit (1375) was excavated to the depth of a stone capping laid when mains sewers were installed in the 1890s. Its backfills produced a good group of mainly whole or partially whole smashed vessels. Sherd size varied from large pieces with complete vessel profiles to quite small sherds. This reflects the fine and brittle nature of the wares rather than post-depositional reworking of the soils, for which there was no evidence. The assemblage includes several very large teacups and at least two very large saucers, one of which matches one of the cups. Transfer-printed wares dominate the group, but there are also other wares, including 'porcelains' of varying quantities. The latter are not true Chinese porcelain but a variety of types imitating the ware, such as bone china.

Two transfer patterns predominated. One is a type knows as 'Asiatic Pheasants', a popular design in the second half of the nineteenth century (Coysh and Henrywood 1982: 28). At least three plates bear this design. The other is a dendritic design reminiscent of seaweed, printed in either blue or grey. This also appears to be a popular pattern of the period.

The porcelains are a mixture of plain and decorated wares, mainly cups, saucers and plates but also including a large jug and fragments of at least two miniature teapots. Several of the porcelains have similar decoration – a band of pink around the rims and fine gold lining. The vessels do not appear to be part of a set and perhaps were collected for their similarity. Of particular note amongst the porcelains is a small cylindrical coffee mug or can with the remains of an inscription and a German maker's mark. A similar vessel also appears to have been inscribed. Another inscribed piece is a mug with ' . . . P]resent from [. . . ' in gold. The remains of at least one composite-bodied china doll are also present. Other wares in the group include a complete black glazed-ware lid, an uncommon find, and a large profile sherd of a brown stoneware bowl or basin. Two further sherds of brown stoneware appear to be from a storage bowl or bottle. The deposition date lies between 1892 and 1903. Two virtually complete glass bottles were found. One is marked ‘Shrubsole Chemist Northgate Street’ (a local firm) and the other ‘Florida Water Murray and Lanman Druggists New York’. Florida Water was a popular toilet water in the United States. It should be possible to assign reasonably close dates to the bottles. There is a small amount of green bottle glass which includes the bases of about three vessels. There are also two pieces of worked bone, one of which appears to be a model of a closed parasol.

The principal backfill of the forge produced mainly domestic wares, but some may have had commercial use (e.g. stoneware ink bottles). The fragmentary nature of this material stands in contrast to the condition of that from cellar (1955) or soil-pit (1375). However, the presence of iron tools appropriate to a forge, such as a substantial hammer, may suggest that some of the objects, at least, derive from households associated with its running. There is both green bottle glass and blue, clear and tinted glass consisting of a variety of drinking, eating and storage vessels. The glass mineral water bottles from various companies operating in the north-west of Britain form an interesting parallel to the ceramic seltzer bottles. Many of the glass fragments have inscriptions which will aid dating of the vessels and perhaps also the assemblage if the companies named on the vessels can be traced. As the date of deposition of the group is known to lie between 1936 and January 1939, this information may help in characterizing the assemblage. It may have been brought in from somewhere else as fill, which might explain the presence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century material. On the other hand, if it derives from households in Cathcart Square, as seems more likely, it might show the extent of curation – and therefore also of apparent ‘residuality’ – of different classes of artefact in an early twentieth-century assemblage. This is an interesting phenomenon, and one I shall expand on (below, p. 173).

Evidence for industrial activity on the site

As well as the metalworking activity on the site suggested by the forge structures, some evidence for button-making was retrieved from a number of nineteenth-century deposits (Matthews et al. 1995: 19). These consist of twenty-two fragments of bone waste with circular cut-outs of the same size as the bone buttons also found on the site. Although it is impossible to be certain that these buttons are the finished products of the manufacturing process represented by the waste, it is nevertheless likely that the waste does derive from button-making, perhaps a small-scale home industry. Some of the fragments derived from the deposit which would have lain directly below the suspended wooden floor of 8 Herbert’s Court, suggesting that they had fallen through gaps in the floorboards.

A group of cat bones from a single nineteenth-century deposit, again beneath the floorboards at Herbert’s Court, included examples from four separate individuals. One displayed fine knife marks on a humerus. It seems inherently unlikely that cats were a source of food, and it is more probable that they were skinned for their fur (ibid.: 4). The use of cat fur in glove-making is widely attested in urban myth, and this may be archaeological confirmation of the practice.

Potential of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century assemblages

These large groups give us the opportunity to study the material culture of a documented group of inhabitants of Chester and the development of a distinct area of the city, as we originally anticipated in the research design. The three particularly good groups of ceramics and glass will also enable a chronology of wares and vessel type to be developed for the period since the dates of their deposition can be fixed more or less accurately on external grounds. The massproduced ceramics of the period are often documented at their production source. However, it is not known how the groups were distributed and marketed within the city, or how they were used by different social groups.

The ceramic assemblage from the stone-lined cellar (1955) has good potential for studying the range of wares available to a small household in the middle of the nineteenth century. Comparisons can be made with the soil pit assemblage to ascertain whether any cultural or economic differences exist between the two households, although they are separated by about half a century. It will be possible to trace most of the occupants of the houses from documentary sources, especially census returns and registers of electors, which will allow an assessment of economic status to be made. The prevalence of ceramics compared with other material classes needs to be analysed, as the preservation of metal and organic materials was good.

The material from soil-pit (1375) represents a varied collection of household and personal objects. There are objects which have associations with the Continent and the United States and perhaps even with holiday travel or foreign visitors. The group is well sealed and provides an excellent opportunity to analyse a closed assemblage from the late nineteenth century. It has been possible to trace the various occupiers of the house to which it belonged, 8 Hamilton Place, through trade directories, census returns and registers of electors.

The assemblages from the later forge (959) are large and well stratified; documentary evidence provides a good *terminus ante quem* for deposition of January 1939. Little is known about ceramic assemblages and the supply of pottery to Chester at this time, so this material has the potential to increase knowledge of the period greatly. The comparatively small number of clay tobacco pipes may indicate smoking habits; it is probably an indication of the late date of deposition of the group. Cigarette smoking is known to have grown in popularity among working-class males as a result of the greater convenience of cigarettes over pipes in the trench warfare of World War I, and clay tobacco pipes were not made in Chester after 1917, when the last factory closed. It is difficult to know whether the assemblage is from the occupation of the site or rubbish brought in from elsewhere in the city, although I argued above that an autochthonous origin is likely. The group will therefore either provide general information on the material culture of the city or, more likely, of the distinct social group which occupied the site.

These three major deposits of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century material have the potential to be useful in characterizing the material culture of different social groups in Chester during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Traditional archaeological theory assumes that differences in economic status will be reflected in material culture. The Hamilton Place excavations will allow us to test that assumption for a period when documentary sources give a very clear picture of social differentiation.

Outreach and public awareness

Some of the remains we excavated at Hamilton Place belonged to the poorest social groups in nineteenth-century Chester, people who are otherwise almost 'invisible' in the records of the age. The living conditions of their contemporaries in other places appalled such social commentators as Dickens and Marx and contrast strongly with the familiar image of Victorian Chester given by the ever-popular bright and cheerful watercolours of Louise Rayner. More revealing are the atmospheric black-and-white photographs of the early twentieth century in the City Record Office which show these gloomy and dingy courtyards and some of their inhabitants (Figs 10.5, 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8). The archaeology of this period has a relevance to people who might otherwise not be concerned about the material culture of the past, those whose parents and grandparents lived in these places. Indeed, there are still many Cestrians who were brought up in courtyards, including Cathcart Square. Comments members of the public made to us during the excavation demonstrate that it was the slum courtyard they found most interesting, despite Chester's reputation as a Roman place. When we asked why they found the recent archaeology so fascinating, most replied that it was because they understood it: they recognized the foundations of brick walls and understood the social use of teacups, for instance. By contrast, the Roman material was exotic, ancient and irrelevant. This confirms the result of a study undertaken in the early 1980s (Stone 1989) which showed how little most people understand about

*Figure 10.5*Cathcart Square, 1930 (Chester Archives CR259/1 number 1)

*Figure 10.6*Crook Street, 1930; the entrance to Cathcart Square is on the right-hand side, towards the top of the rise (Chester Archives CR259/1 number 3)

*Figure 10.7*View from the roof of the Will R. Rose Laboratory in 1930; the slate roof in the foreground belongs to 8 Cathcart Square (Chester Archives CR259/1 number 2)

*Figure 10.8*Yard running north from the east end of Cathcart Square in 1930 (Chester Archives CR259/1 number 4)

(10.5)

(10.6)

(10.7)

(10.8)

the past. It suggested that they rely largely on the memories of older people, mass media and unreliable, sensationalist books.

Some of the many visitors to the site were old enough to remember the courtyards, and a few had even been brought up in them. Those too young to remember the 1930s had learned at school about life in slums. Perhaps most important of all, the oral histories which had been handed down in families from the start of the twentieth century had created a powerful body of myth. According to this, the residents of the Lache estate in particular were the only true Cestrians, evicted from their homes and moved out from the city centre by an uncaring city council which became their landlord. A sense of resentment persisted, fifty-five years after the clearance programme.

This resentment was compounded by the loss of the Victorian market hall in the late 1960s. It was a prominent building with a baroque sandstone facade by J. M. Hay, which had occupied a site next to the town hall on the north side of Hamilton Place, fronting Northgate Street (Fig. 10.1, no. 5). Public opposition to its demolition in 1967 was loud, and there was anger that the city council appeared to be ignoring the wishes of the majority (E. Willshaw in Carrington (ed.) 1994: 117). Learning that the city was taking a belated interest in these structures – even though they were now classed as archaeological remains – gave people a sense that their past was at last being recognized. If old wrongs could not be righted, at least council officers were prepared to listen to people and were actively trying to find out more about their lives. In this respect, archaeology can help to heal.

Research questions

In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned three potential areas of academic research into the archaeology of the period: the role of possessions in a capitalist and materialist society, the use of material culture and space for the ordering of social relations and the changing patterns of work and residence in the industrial city. How do the results of the Hamilton Place excavation fit in with these topics and have they raised any new questions?

Possessions and consumption

One of the most obvious aspects of the archaeology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is the huge increase in numbers of artefacts found in all contexts, even in the poorest households (Purser 1992: 111). This stands in marked contrast to all earlier periods and is a phenomenon that deserves exploration in its own right. It may be a reflection of a greater emphasis on possessions in an increasingly secular and materialistic society. Material possessions may have been used to reinforce group identity through the display of mutually familiar cultural icons; on the other hand, they may have been a means of establishing personal identity in a society undergoing enormous population growth. What is especially interesting is the presence of 'exotic' items, such as Florida Water bottles, in working-class contexts. Whether they were acquired directly, through travel or from shops, or indirectly, such as from employers or lovers, needs to be examined critically. However they were obtained, their consumption does demonstrate a desire to express cosmopolitan tastes.

Studies of consumption have become fashionable in recent years, no doubt partly inspired by the economic boom years of the Thatcher and Reagan-Bush administrations in the UK and USA respectively. However, their roots go back to Baudrillard's (1996 [1968]: 199) definition of 'consumer society' and beyond. Some historians have identified a change in spending patterns in England between about 1675 and 1750 (Glennie 1995: 171), which has been characterized by some as a 'revolution' while to others its very existence remains controversial. It has been suggested, for instance, that this supposed rise of consumerism reflects a change in attitudes marking the boundary between 'pre-modern' and 'modern' forms of social organization. In pre-modern societies, historians have usually identified social position as being embedded in socioeconomic status.

The contribution of archaeology to this debate must focus on the increase in numbers of possessions attested on nineteenth-century sites of every economic status and how these goods differ in type from those found in earlier contexts. It cannot be doubted that this period – the transition from later historical to modern in the terms proposed above (page 157) – marks a fundamental change in the *scale* of consumption as a means of establishing personal identity. Nevertheless, anthropological and ethnoarchaeological studies of 'simple' societies (such as Strathern 1979 and Larick 1985) have demonstrated that personal identity is also constructed through the use of complex symbols and the interplay of different material culture forms. This is so close to Baudrillard's definition of consumption as to make no difference.

To suggest that consumption is a modern phenomenon is to privilege the role of socio-economic status above all others in defining personal identity in the past. This attitude derives from a traditional Marxist analysis of society and ignores the contribution archaeology can make to understanding material culture. Siân Jones's (1997: 126) demonstration that material culture is both structured and structuring, that its meanings are continually renegotiated and that it plays an active role in the generation of ethnic identity, is precisely analogous to the position I have taken with consumption: the very variability of the archaeological record is ample evidence for the variability of consumption patterns in the past and for the view that this variation derives ultimately from human choice.

It is interesting to note how the forge backfills contained a great deal of apparently 'residual' material, some almost two centuries old but nevertheless of utilitarian character. The circumstances of deposition strongly suggest that these antiques were in everyday use in Cathcart Square in the 1930s. Was the accumulation of more material possessions by the urban poor in part a result of a greater curation of obsolete and out-of-fashion objects in emulation of elite patterns of antique collecting? Indeed, were some of the objects acquired through 'junk' shops (the antiques shops of the poor) as a deliberate act of consumption? Archaeologists tend to regard residuality as a passive phenomenon, whereas antique collecting is active: we probably need a drastic reassessment of the meaning of residuality, especially in nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts.

Social relations

There are obvious correlations between the archaeology of Hamilton Place and observations which have already been made about the ordering of social relations through the use of space (Hillier and Hanson 1984: 155). The front parlours of the terraced cottages, with their brick hearths, would have been used only for special occasions, but the slum dwellings had no such facilities. There are interesting contrasts between the appearances of the slum buildings, the access to courtyards and the street frontages. It is especially ironic that some of the worst housing in late nineteenth-century Chester lay immediately behind the grandiose town hall. Here we have a clear example of hegemonic discourse in the laying out of public spaces: the large and imposing buildings which front the main streets stand in stark contrast to the reality of life behind them. The veneer of respectability which has been seen in individual behaviour in the Victorian period is mirrored in the physical appearance of the city: behind the prosperous facades lay a world which the middle classes preferred to ignore when they were not exploiting it.

If the material from the forge derives from the slum dwellings (which, admittedly, is not proven) it shows that even these extremely poor inhabitants used crockery of different qualities, presumably for different purposes. There may be an element of emulation in this differential use of crockery and it would be instructive to see how far this extends to other forms of material culture. The ubiquity of black/brown glazed wares at first sight suggests that it had no social meaning as it is found in all nineteenth-century contexts across Chester, from the richest to poorest. However, it is unlikely that the elites actually had any contact with this material: much of it was utilitarian and therefore strictly 'below stairs', to be handled only by staff, while the decorative forms are unlikely to have had any appeal to those who could afford more expensive *objets d'art*. The high culture of the rich was not emulated by the working classes, who were negotiating their own popular culture.

As well as artefacts, animal bone might also be useful in detecting social differences. Do the slums, for instance, provide evidence for the consumption of cheaper meat cuts than the other houses? Is some of the material the result of butchery waste? The use of bone for industrial purposes in the home, such as button-making, may be evidence for its wide availability or it may demonstrate scavenging on scrap-heaps, perhaps even in the bins outside the nearby market hall. Foraging on tips is a common phenomenon in the Third World, and is also found on contemporary tips in the west in places such as London or New York, where there remain large concentrations of urban poor.

Work and residence

The elites and middle classes had mostly left the city centre by the time Herbert's Yard was built, around 1850 (E. Willshaw in Carrington (ed.) 1994: 106). In moving out, though, they had left their businesses behind, creating the commercial centre familiar today. However, the homes of those who continued to live in the city centre remained centres of production. Small-scale smithing, perhaps nail-making undertaken by children, took place in Herbert's Court and at least one household engaged in making bone buttons and, perhaps, catskin gloves.

Is it legitimate to suggest that the Victorian and early twentieth-century city centre was an economically charged place, encouraging production in all properties, whether commercial or domestic? If this is the case, it will be worth exploring the possibility that the residents of the terraced cottages on Hamilton Place also worked from home, but with no archaeological trace. Census returns from the second half of the nineteenth century, for instance, list three sisters occupying a house on the opposite side of Hamilton Place, all of whom were described as seamstresses. However, the curious (and unsuspected) phenomenon of children being put to work in the unpleasant conditions of a forge as late as the 1930s in Cathcart Square comes as a shock, two generations after the introduction of compulsory full-time education. The apparent skinning of cats is also a salutary reminder that the ubiquitous cat and dog bones found in urban excavations are not necessarily indications that pets were kept or, if they were, that they were regarded as they are today.

Other issues

The results of the excavation have also thrown up further areas for research. The domestic production evident into the 1930s shows how both women and children remained economically important on the fringes of society until very recently. This is a useful corrective to 'family values' viewpoints which try to suggest that women ought not to work and did not fulfil any roles other than the raising of families before the early twentieth century, a view clearly derived from middle-class perceptions of gender roles.

As well as the issue of gender roles, the question of sexuality arises. The construction of modern attitudes to the body and sex is generally seen as a nineteenth-century phenomenon, but with the slum houses we can see how one family would have slept in a single room with no privacy whatsoever, showing that there can have been little or no prudery within the home. In fact, some of the two-room dwellings in Herbert's Court contained not just single families, but also lodgers (for instance, in 1881 number 25, on the north side of the yard, housed an unmarried mother and son – Martha and John Walthew – together with a couple of lodgers, Joseph Cawley and Emily Woodpie). There were some very large families, too: in 1881, the easternmost of the excavated courtyard properties, number 8, housed William and Isabella Aspen, their four children and the three sons of their (unmarried) daughter. It is interesting to see how the families were moved into semi-detached council houses with two or three bedrooms, provided for them by the civic authorities who no doubt viewed them as more seemly. As with accounts of gender roles and the way in which they have been portrayed by the moral hegemony, we can see that reality did not match ideology.

Besides the difference in sexual attitudes that can be inferred from these single-bedroom dwellings (whether this was chosen by the inhabitants or a constraint imposed on them), we can also trace the growing importance of hygiene in many different ways. The change from soil-pits to mains sewerage can be documented directly at Hamilton Place, and virtually all urban sites contain both foul and storm drainage of some sort. They are rarely recorded and almost never subsequently reported (except, perhaps as annoying intrusions). It is interesting to note the delay between the passing of the Public Health Act (1875), which stipulated that sewage disposal in ceramic pipes must be provided at the expense of local authorities, and the actual carrying out of the work. This is a reflection of the economic status of Herbert's Court, reinforcing the growing division between rich and poor. This phenomenon has been noted elsewhere in the city centre (Matthews et al. 1994: 69).

Other areas which are not directly attested here, but for which the cumulative evidence deserves greater examination, include the change from stand-pipes in the courtyards to individual domestic water supply and a move away from tin baths in the kitchen to dedicated bathrooms. This increasing interest in and access to hygiene does not seem to be matched by the provision of other types of services, so it cannot be linked in a simplistic way with the growth of urban infrastructure (especially mains gas and electricity). Protestant nonconformity – which was the favoured religious leaning of the inhabitants of these courtyards – laid great stress on the moral value of cleanliness; it was John Wesley, a frequent visitor to Chester during the eighteenth century, who popularized the idea of bodily cleanliness being next to godliness in his sermon 'On Dress'. Opportunities for cleanliness were obviously limited in the circumstances of Herbert's Court, but the image of the tin bath would have been a familiar one to its inhabitants. Again, the issue of prudery and attitudes to nakedness is central to the changes from Victorian slum to pre-war semi.

There is no evidence that the slum courtyard was ever provided with gas lighting or electricity, in contrast to the terraced cottages, which produced bakelite light fittings among other things. Indeed, there are no indications at all of how these houses with a single small window on each floor were actually lit, if indeed they were.

A final area of research, which has arisen indirectly, is the limited access to leisure and recreation among many of the inhabitants of the site at a time when Chester's economy was becoming dominated by tourism and other leisure pursuits. As a tourist destination, the city aimed directly at the upper and middle classes, providing them with appropriately cultural diversions, especially those which exploited its archaeology. The physical remains of the past were held up as evidence for the essential continuity of British culture despite the revolutionary social changes which occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, interest in the past probably developed as a response to the social upheaval of the period. At the same time these remains were used to demonstrate the superiority of the present – especially its technology and economy – over the past. The past became (and continues to be) a cultural icon in its own right, encouraging the preservation and fossilization of those parts of the city which match the prevailing value system: 'quaint' as opposed to 'rude', 'aesthetic' as opposed to 'vulgar', 'sacred' as opposed to 'profane'. It is in this iconization of the past that we can trace the origins of the 'black-and-white revival' of the Victorian period I noted above (page 161).

CONCLUSIONS

Many archaeologists have been guilty of the rapid shovelling away of nineteenth- and twentieth-century deposits, although the improved fieldwork techniques of recent years have led to the careful recording of much 'modern' archaeology. However, these records tend to end up unanalysed because there is not yet the will to publish sites of recent date as they are often passed over during post-excavation in favour of more ancient and 'interesting' deposits and artefacts (except in a few unusual cases, e.g. Hughes 1992). Preservation of 'modern' domestic deposits and features as intrinsically interesting does not appear ever to have been considered as a planning option, in contrast to the preservation of buildings from the recent past.

At a time when there are still a number of archaeologists in Europe who have difficulty coming to terms with post-medieval archaeology in general, it is unsurprising that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have not yet found a place in mainstream British archaeology. The day will surely come, though, when archaeologists start to bemoan the wanton destruction of 'modern' deposits by their earlier colleagues, especially once there is a greater appreciation of the unique insights their study can give us.

Acknowledgements

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Part IV

FAMILIAR SPIRITS

11

WORMIE CLAY AND BLESSED SLEEP

Death and disgust in later historic Britain

Sarah Tarlow

This chapter is about the putrefaction and decay of the human body and how modern westerners have come to find the idea of bodily decay so upsetting. Allusions to, and depictions of, the decay of the body are ubiquitous in the late medieval and early modern periods, not only in memorial monuments but in many other forms of material culture (Llewellyn 1991). Yet by the nineteenth century the dead and decaying body is almost entirely absent from the ordinary practices of death and life. In this chapter I want to examine how this transformation takes place, particularly with reference to the changing understanding of the relationship between body, self and identity.

In recent years scholars in the humanities and social sciences have shown a good deal of interest in theorizing the body (e.g. Featherstone, Hepworth and Turner 1991; Shilling 1993; Foucault 1979, 1981, 1985, 1986; Frank 1990; Porter 1991). Most of the more recent of this work rejects essentialist ideas about bodies (that, for example, what it is to be woman or to be blind means the same thing everywhere and at all times) and focuses instead on how people experience themselves and their world through their different bodies. Feminist, masculinist and queer theory have helped to move the discussion away from assumptions about pre-existing and universal bodies and towards discussions of experience and difference. People in different social and cultural contexts do not stand in the same relationship to their bodies. Bodies mean different things not only according to what kind of body you have but also according to the broader anthropological and historical understandings of the society you live in.

The work of archaeologists of the body has developed in two compatible directions. Some archaeologists have been particularly interested in the gendered, sexual body as a subject of study (e.g. Yates and Nordbladh 1990; Bailey 1994;

Meskell 1996; Gilchrist 1997; Kokkinidou and Nikolaidou 1997). Several archaeologists have also been interested in the body as *constructed*, and in the social powers and cultural forces which discipline and shape it (e.g. Thomas 1989, 1991; Yates 1993; Shanks 1995; Treherne 1995).

However, neither the general theoretical works on the body nor the specifically archaeological works concerned with embodiment have focused to a very great extent on the context of death. Only a few scholars have considered the death of the body. Zygmunt Bauman (1992) has focused on the threat to 'onto-logical security' posed by the inevitability of corporeal death. Chris Shilling, Phillip Mellor and Tony Walter have, individually and collectively, developed the work of earlier theorists, in particular Norbert Elias (1985) and Peter Berger (1967, 1969), to consider the consequences of the postulated sequestration, or setting apart, of death in the late twentieth century (Mellor 1993; Mellor and Shilling 1993; Shilling 1993; Walter 1991, 1993).

How do we understand death from our viewpoint in the late twentieth century? Tony Walter has challenged the position, expressed most clearly by Gorer (1965) and Ariès (1974, 1981), that death in the modern west is a taboo subject (Walter 1991, 1993, see also Cannadine 1981). Death cannot properly be described as 'taboo' in a society where it is constantly discussed and examined in books, films, newspapers and art. Instead the problem with death in our modern society is one for the individual, rather than the culture as a whole: 'It is a mistake, therefore, to say that "modern society cannot cope with death"; it deals with it very nicely thank-you, with its elevation of youth, education and progress. But along with this societal acceptance goes the most intense *personal* pain' (Walter 1991: 306; my italics). So the individual is isolated, not for reasons of taboo, but because the emotional content of bereavement and mortality in the modern west is highly personal and individualized.

These writings about death and the body seem to offer much to the archaeological study of death. Three ideas in particular demand further attention from archaeologists studying the modern history of death in the west:

1 That death, if not taboo, is sequestered.
2 That death, both bereavement and one's own mortality, is private and individual.
3 That death resists full incorporation into the understandings and conceptual structures of society.

All the authors discussed above see these principles as especially typical of late or high modernity in the western world. For those of us with an interest in the past this raises important questions. Sociological work on mortality and the body has not traditionally been very concerned with the historical and anthropological variability of what embodiment means and has meant to people. Frequently the modern understanding of the body in the west is described by contrasting it either with a dualistic pre-modern concept of the body or with some kind of traditional, natural understanding. Both descriptions involve the construction of a monolithic 'other' as a foil for modern practice, either in the past or in the non-western present (for critiques of these positions see Bynum 1995 and Walter 1991). One of the major problems with these schematic oppositions is that they can obscure the need for real scholarly inquiry into how and why attitudes and practices changed.

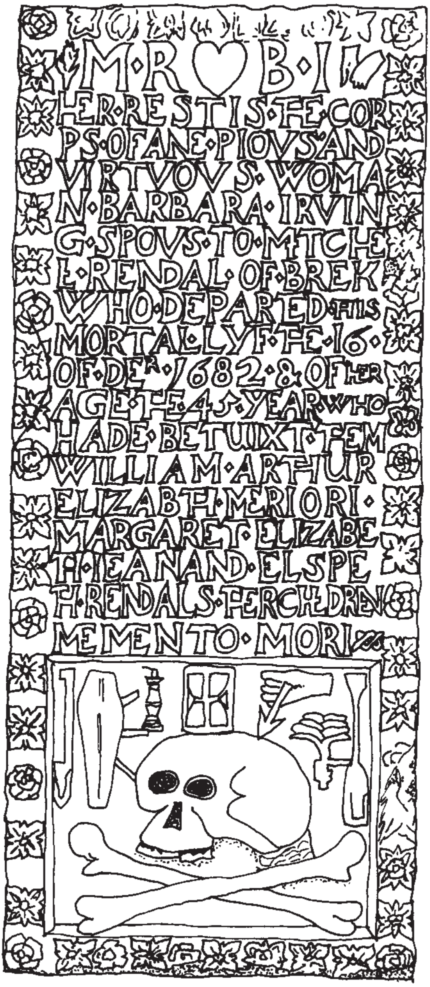
I suggest that what Giddens, Bauman and Mellor have regarded as being a particular problem of late modernity has much deeper roots. Rather than trying to find an origin for the privatization of grief, a process profoundly entangled with the development of modern individuality, I want to examine the changes in responses to death between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century in Britain, as manifested in memorial monuments and commemorative practice.

WORMS, BONES AND THE CROWN OF EVERLASTING LIFE

The study of cemeteries and memorial monuments is a growing field in the later historical archaeology of Britain (in this volume alone three out of seventeen chapters are on the subject). Memorials are attractive subject matter rich in textual and formal detail, they also exist in sufficient numbers to enable some statistical security in interpretation. Dating is easy and fieldwork is cheap and non-destructive. The memorials I am discussing in this paper are from the Orkney islands and were recorded in a number of graveyard surveys I carried out in 1992 and 1993.

The first monuments I intend to consider date from the period immediately after the Protestant Reformation in Scotland which took place around 1560. The sixteenth-century monuments from the decades around the Reformation show a preoccupation with the position of the individual commemorated, in terms of their role in local affairs and in particular of their ancestry, encapsulated in heraldic devices inscribed on their memorials. However, over the later sixteenth and through the seventeenth century, the number of stones decorated with heraldic devices declines whilst emblems of mortality become more common. Although the stones often bear macabre epitaphs and depict symbols of mortality and transience (Figs 11.1 and 11.2), they stress the contrast between the fate of the body and that of the soul. The monument often invokes a metaphor of physical movement from one place to another. It is flanked by pilasters and topped by a pediment, suggesting a doorway. The composition of motifs is frequently zoned to suggest a progress upwards, from the earthly at the bottom to the heavenly at the top (Figs 11.3 and 11.4).

Responses to death in the post-Reformation period must be seen in the light of the changing relationship between the dead and the living. In Catholic times,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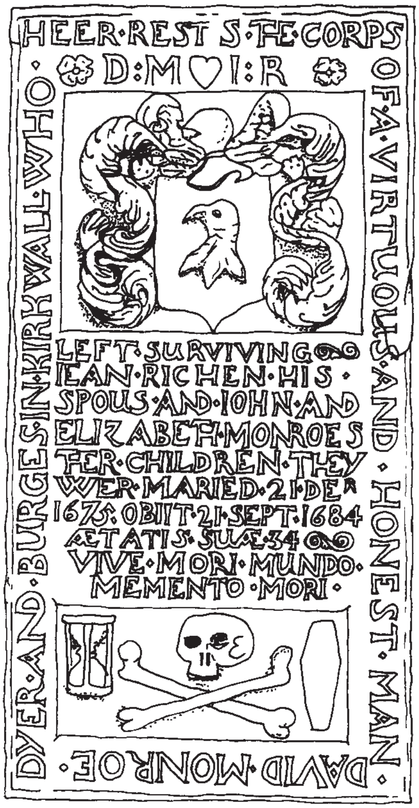
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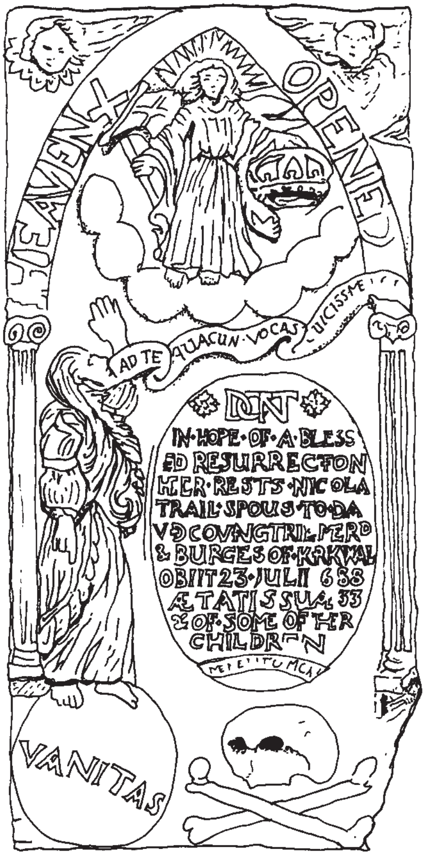
Figure 11.1 Monument dated 1682 from St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney, bearing symbols of mortality and transience

Figure 11.2 Monument dated 1684 from St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney. Symbols of mortality occupy the lower part of the stone and the upper part contains a coat of arms referring to the genealogical identity of the deceased

that relationship had been largely mediated by prayers and masses, through which the living could alter the condition of the dead and ultimately affect the fate of their soul. According to Catholic doctrine the soul of the dead individual would usually spend a period of time expurgating his or her sins in Purgatory before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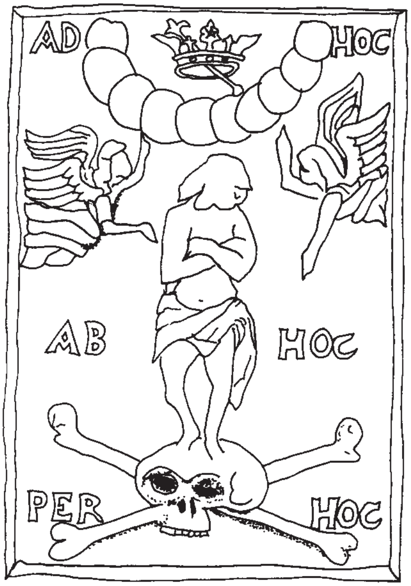
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Figure 11.3 Allegorical scene on late seventeenth-century monument zoned to show progression from the earthly at the bottom to the heavenly at the top of the stone. It also incorporates the idea of physical movement in the doorway which frames the scene

Figure 11.4 Angels point from the symbols of mortality at the bottom to the crown of life at the top of the scene on this 1679 monument

being released to heavenly glory. The length of time spent in Purgatory could be reduced by the intercession of saints to whom the survivors of the dead person could appeal. The effect of the Protestant Reformation, by removing the doctrine of Purgatory, was to render the living powerless to affect the judgment of the deceased, now standing alone before God. After the Reformation the living had access only to earthly means to promote the immortality of their dead. The erection of monuments can be seen in this light as a means of creating for the deceased the immortality of earthly fame. This is the sentiment Shakespeare expressed towards the creation of his sonnets: 'So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.'

However, in the period from the Reformation to the early eighteenth century, memorial monuments in Britain are not only concerned with the perpetuation of memory. Many of the inscriptions and representations on the stones seem to glory in the grizzly facts of physical decay and putrefaction. As well as giving the named individual a lasting memorial, the early post-Reformation stones functioned as moral improvement devices – they were there to remind people what their ultimate fate was going to be and this, it was hoped, would encourage the living to lead moral and Christian lives. The *memento mori* ('Remember death') device is one of the characteristic features of stones of this period. On the one hand the inscription immortalizes the earthly fame of a named individual, securely placed within a particular ancestral line; on the other the emblems, icons and epitaphs refer primarily to the transience of earthly life and the unpleasant fate of the body contrasted with the glorious destiny of the pure soul. Common iconic elements on the stones are skulls and crossbones, gravediggers' tools and symbols of ephemerality (Fig. 11.5). The symbols, and the verses and mottoes which

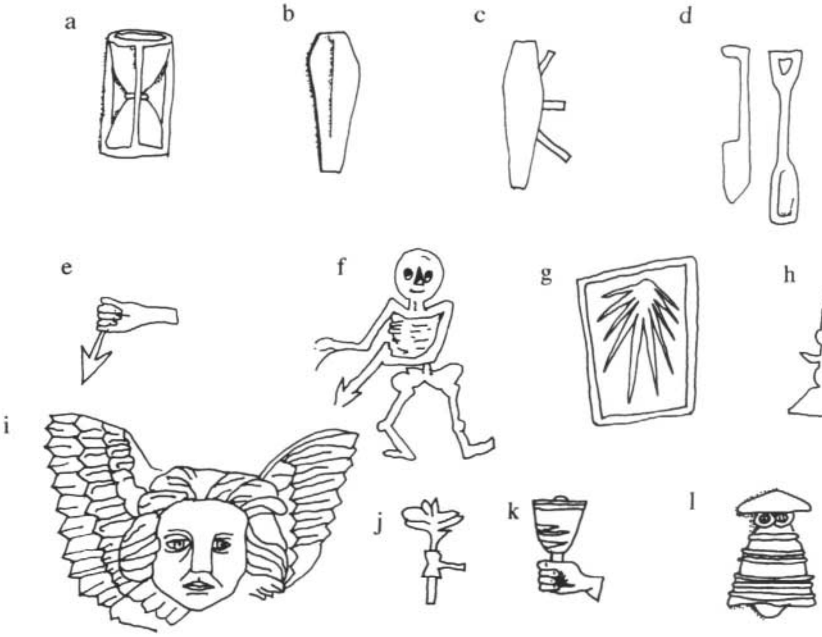

Figure 11.5 Some symbols of mortality and ephemerality which occur on seventeenth-century monuments in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney: a hourglass; b coffin; c coffin with staves; d gravedigger's tools; e death's dart; f Death; g sundial; h snuffed candle in candlestick; i winged head; j axe cutting tree; k deid bell; 1 bell

accompany them, remind the onlooker of the ultimate fate of the body and the insignificance and vanity of earthly life. These are not personal to the dead individual; the point is that they could as well apply to any of us (that they do, in fact, apply to all of us). Death is a universal and a unifying experience, and individuals are not distinguished in death, although they may be remembered for the people they were when alive.

These references to bodily decay are absolutely unthinkable on a modern memorial monument, as are exhortations to the living to remember their own forthcoming demise, which is something we would increasingly rather forget.

NOT DEAD BUT SLEEPING

The second group of stones I want to consider are the memorial stones of the period from the end of the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth. There is a remarkable change in burial and commemorative practice at the end of the eighteenth century. From this time, the number of gravestones erected each decade continues to increase much faster than the population of the islands. There is also a change in the amount and kind of information the monuments convey. The memorial stones from this period do not show the preoccupation with the social status of the deceased which was common in the memorials of the social elite in the preceding two centuries.

Inscriptions on the stones of the nineteenth and twentieth century are less about ancestry and more about emotional connections of the individual commemorated. In particular, details of the relationship of the deceased to their spouse and immediate family take greater importance, and new metaphors, especially that of sleep, are used to figure the death. The language is increasingly affectionate – ‘in loving memory’ and ‘dear husband’ gradually replace the older formulae such as ‘here lie the remains of. Inscriptions no longer refer to the dead body at all. Instead they speak of the emotional circumstances of the death, using epitaphs which stress the grief of the survivors in personal terms, such as this from 1899:

Gone dear son gone forever
Loving hearts alone can tell
What deep anguish it now gives us
To part with one we loved so well.

Death is no longer explicitly about the separation of the mortal part from the immortal, but instead the circumstances of the integrated individual are represented through various new metaphors which become popular at this time. The most

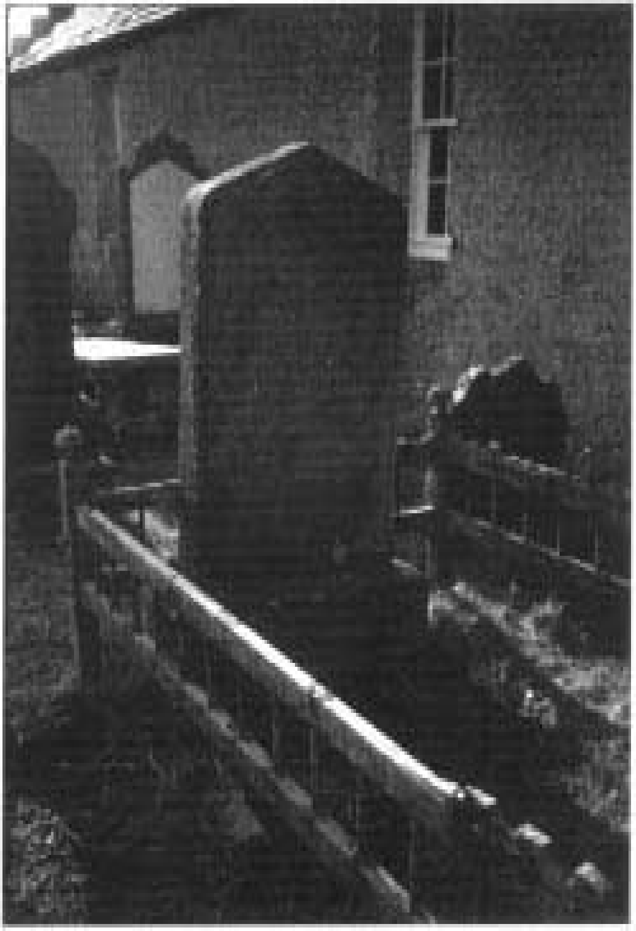

Figure 11.6 Late nineteenth-century grave plot marked out with a bedstead

common of these is the metaphor of sleep – virtually absent from funerary commemoration in the early modern period. This metaphor is articulated through the material practice of burial, bodies interred lying down with their heads on a pillow, often in nightclothes. There is at the same time a rise in the number of monuments resembling bedheads, or otherwise invoking in their form the idea of sleep (Fig. 11.6). Epitaphs about the sleeping dead are common, such as this one, widespread in the late nineteenth century:

> Dear is the spot where Christians sleep
> And sweet the strains that angels pour

Oh why should we in anguish weep
They are not lost but gone before.

There are many other metaphors in the inscriptions and in the material form of the grave – those which represent death as a sunset, implying inevitable sunrise, or as a voyage across the sea, or a harvest, or which suggest that life is a race and death the prize, or a battle in which death is the victory. The expression of sorrow is clear in many of the epitaphs. Many of the metaphors used and the epitaphs composed incorporate a suggestion that there will be a future reunion where the dead and the bereaved will meet again in Heaven. As the nineteenth century progresses the afterlife becomes an increasingly clubbable place where one expects to meet one's dead friends and relatives. In the early modern period memorials had been essentially the preserve of the wealthy and the gentry. Most people were just buried in the churchyard without any permanent memorials. Their grave plots, or 'lairs' as they are called in Scotland, were reused after a few years, so that a fairly small patch of ground sufficed to bury all the dead of a parish. This is one of the reasons that the ground levels of old churchyards are often quite a bit higher than the surrounding area. What seems to happen after the end of the eighteenth century is that people of all classes feel a right that their grave plots should belong to them and their descendants in perpetuity. To this end, grave plots are more frequently

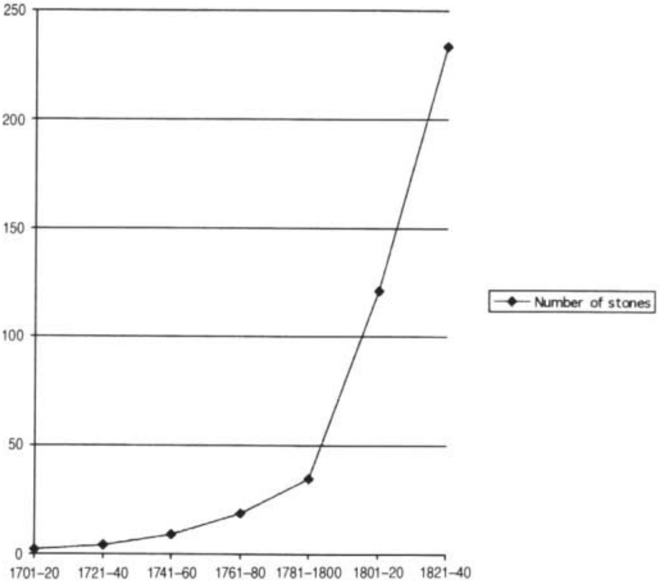

Figure 11.7 Number of monuments occurring in five graveyards in Orkney, showing chronological distribution from 1701 to 1840

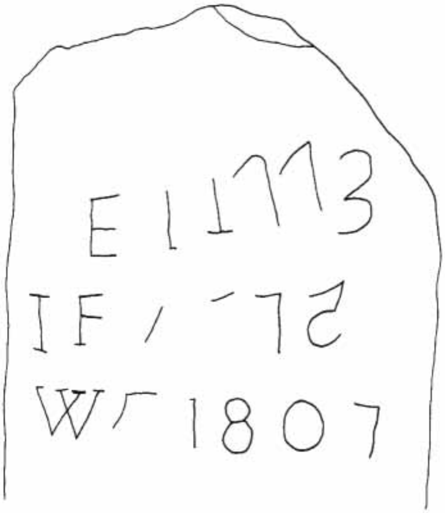

Figure 11.8 Stone in graveyard of St Andrew's, Tankerness

marked out and there is steep rise in memorial numbers from the end of the eighteenth century (Fig. 11.7). The majority of the stones, contrary to what is often written about Victorian funerary practices, were not primarily to do with status enhancement. Outside the big cities, gravestones themselves are fairly modest and do not resemble the flashy monuments positioned inside the church in the early modern period (Fig. 11.8).

Instead, it is much more appropriate to understand them in emotional terms, as commemorating not only an individual but a relationship, or group of relationships, of an affective nature. The inscriptions stress the emotional nature of family relationships: 'beloved father', 'dear sister'. And instead of the bluntness of the immediate post-Reformation period, a range of new metaphors and euphemisms are used to describe a death.

In the modern period the trend towards marking the position of burials and preserving their space inviolate in perpetuity indicates a change in the relationship between the living and the dead. In the seventeenth century that relationship was one between different groups. The living prepared to join the class of the dead. The relationship between life and death was largely the relationship between present state and future state. Communication between the two states was in the form of a journey undertaken at death. The changes which occurred in the late eighteenth century related to changes in attitudes towards this relationship. The living maintained highly individualized relationships with individual dead kin and friends, and the relationship after death corresponded to the kind of relationship in life. These were relationships characterized by the same emotions which increasingly articulated relationships between the living; that is to say, love, pity and sensibility. In contrast to the attitudes of the seventeenth century, the relationship was not between past and future states, but a synchronic relationship between a living and a dead person.

Nineteenth-century traditions of commemoration are intimately linked to the development of the modern grief response to bereavement. Because of the emotional context of eighteenth-century familial and sentimental relationships, at the death of a family member the emotions of those bereaved would generally be extremely strong. The dead individual is a unique person, distinguished from other individuals by particular personal characteristics and a specific web of relationships. The dead person inspires grief – often very deep and very painful grief – as an individual, rather than dread as a reminder of one's own mortality.

DEAD AND TURN'D TO CLAY

So to recap: from the later eighteenth century – and possibly earlier – there seems to be a different attitude towards the dead body from the prevailing late medieval and early modern view. But the representation of physical decay in the earlier period only makes sense in opposition to the elevation and purification of the holy part of the person. Seventeenth-century monuments can show the grizzly fate of the body because it is separate from the fate of the soul. A person's essence was not so closely tied to their corporeal form and therefore the dead body in the memorial context is represented only as so much waste matter, destined to end up as worm-food. Hence, of course, the vanity of lavishing care and attention on fleshly concerns – gluttony, idleness, physical narcissism, drunkenness and lust.[1] So by pointing up the ephemerality and mutability of the body, seventeenth-century monuments emphasize the constancy and importance of spiritual goodness – purity of thought and holiness of mind: fitness, in short, to pass to salvation and live in Heaven. Eternal spiritual life is opposed to the transient and ultimately doomed life of the body.

But by the nineteenth century the concepts of body and soul which characterized Reformation thought have been transformed. As individual identities become more important in general life, so the identification of the self with the individual and unique body becomes stronger. The individual is thought of as an integrated body, the centre of a web of relationships. By the nineteenth century, attitudes to the body and the self had developed into a form which we recognize and understand. But by acknowledging that these modern attitudes are neither essential nor natural, we can look anthropologically at the unfamiliar mortuary practices of 320 years ago, and at the same time defamiliarize modern attitudes towards death and the body. By the eighteenth century, the body itself was the place where the bundle of meanings and identities which make the individual were expressed and the self was defined. Johnson (1995) sees the changes of the eighteenth century as the final stages in a process of 'framing the self' with regard to the body which had been developing since the late Middle Ages.

Chris Shilling has addressed the specific issue of the response of the modern world (understood in a sociological sense to mean the industrial and post-industrial west) to the death of the body. Drawing on a long tradition of sociological writing from Elias (1982 [1939]) through Bourdieu to Featherstone (1991), he develops the idea that the modern body is commodified and a locus of social value.

> None the less . . . value is attached to the living, acting body, and old age brings with it for most social classes a decline in the symbolic value of the body. Consequently, it should not be surprising if the prospect of dying makes modern individuals particularly anxious. For the individual whose self-identity has become closely connected to their body, death is disturbing partly because it represents an end to value in a world geared towards the accumulation of value.
>
> (Shilling 1993: 186)

Shilling goes on to describe the processes by which death and decay are privatized and prevented from confronting the living. By the removal of dying and dead bodies from the space of the living (Elias 1985; Ariès 1981, [1977]), and by postponing or preventing (by cremation) their physical decay, the living are able to circumvent the horror of decomposition. These processes take the form of removal of the dying into hospitals and hospices, privatization and medicalization of the dying human. After death the body is not exposed to public view unless all traces of death have been removed. Only when embalmed, perfumed, primped and powdered, rouged, coiffed, clothed, prepared and preserved may the corpse may be presentable to the living. The eyes will be closed as if in sleep, the head resting on a pillow; the metaphor of sleep enables us to evade the facts of decay.[2]

The archaeological evidence from the eighteenth-century burials at Spitalfields in London demonstrates that the prettification of death is not a twentieth-century phenomenon. From the late seventeenth century, but particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, increasing care and attention is paid to the physical body of the deceased (Reeve and Adams 1993; Molleson and Cox 1993). In the early eighteenth century the medieval winding sheet had been largely replaced by the shroud, a garment which resembles a nightgown and was frequently manufactured specially for use in burials. The body was arranged in the coffin looking as beautiful as possible. Corpses wore false teeth, wigs, hairpieces, lace-edged gowns and caps and were buried in lined coffins. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century burials also demonstrate care in ensuring that the body retains seemliness and dignity through the viewing and burial processes. Legs were tied together to preserve a seemly appearance. Jaw cloths were used to prevent the mouth hanging open. Arms and legs were tied in to make sure that they didn't bang against the sides of the coffin during burial, and the space around the body was sometimes packed with bran to stop it sliding around.

CONCLUSION

Where Johnson (1995) and Gittings (1984) see the origins of the modernistic attitude to the body in general and the dead body in particular in the later Middle Ages, Shilling (1993), Giddens (1984), Bauman (1992) and others have attributed the modern attitude to the death of the body to the removal of the transcendent power of religion in an increasingly secular world. Yet the evidence of the memorials shows that an aversion to the physical process of decay has a longer and deeper history. By the eighteenth century, *memento mori* devices which refer specifically to corporeal putrescence are almost unknown. Claire Gittings argues that even in the early modern period the bones depicted are less horrific than the dreadful 'transi' figures of the Middle Ages (Gittings 1984). Thus we can see that popular representations of death and the dead began to change long before the mass of British society became significantly secular. The influence of Protestant individualism probably had an effect, but it is not until the eighteenth century that a fully modern aversion to bodily corruption emerges.

Why? What is going on? Why are the iconographic depictions of skulls and coffins, so popular in the seventeenth century, unthinkable in the nineteenth? Why do epitaphs of the modern period eschew any mention of the 'wormie corps' and choose instead to talk about a blessed sleep? Why have we in Britain, over the last couple of centuries, chosen to use metaphor, euphemism and circumlocution instead of talking about the physical process of decay?

The relationship between (individual) self and the body is neither universal nor essential. It is not true that the existence of the self is necessarily coterminous with and correspondent to the life of the body (contra Laing 1969, cited in Yates 1993). Instead the relationship between self and body is mutable, not only through the course of the individual's lifetime or because of their anatomical constitution, but across other, historical, anthropological and cultural differences. The body is to be understood historically and contextually.

Nothing could be more painful or horrifying to the bereaved of the nineteenth century than to imagine the physical decay of a beloved wife or child. The dead person was highly individualized – not just a general member of the class of 'the dead', but a unique person with whom a close emotional bond had been felt. The state of the dead – and the fact of death – was not used to figure a moral lesson for the living – *memento mori*, 'remember death' – but each dead individual marked the painful end of a relationship to the survivors. It was no longer appropriate to think of the dead in terms of putrefaction and physical decay, when that dead person had been your lover, parent or child. Grief replaced fear as the dominant emotion of death, and instead of the upsetting depiction of the physical realities of death, people developed new metaphors by which they could come to terms with loss: to imagine that it were as if the dead person had just fallen asleep – out of contact, but not gone forever; or as if the dead had crossed an ocean, removed themselves from everyday life, but awaited reunion in a far-off land. Blessed sleep replaced wormie clay as the body – individualized, beautiful and beloved – rested in peace.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1 This argument should not be overstated, however. Bynum (1995) objects to what she sees as the excessively simple dualism of thought attributed to medieval people. In fact medieval attitudes to the body are as varied and complex as modern ones.

2 I am not suggesting that death in the modern world is in general a taboo subject (a popular trope from Gorer (1965) on, although see Cannadine 1981; Walter 1991), but that the specifically bodily aspects of death – decline and decomposition – are sequestered from public view and have become abhorrent to the bereaved, especially when they relate to a highly individualized person with whom an emotional bond was felt.

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12

'THE MEN THAT WORKED FOR ENGLAND THEY HAVE THEIR GRAVES AT HOME'

Consumerist issues within the production and purchase of gravestones in Victorian York

Susan Buckham

The study of the modern period encompasses a myriad of interwoven issues. Individuals and groups set in motion and were themselves subject to the epic themes of our own lives: large-scale urbanization, mass production, long-distance travel, trade and transport touched the lives of the ordinary as well as the extraordinary and their stories are retold today by means of both material and documentary evidence.

Gravestones are historic artefacts, both in the sense that they can be interpreted with the aid of documentary sources and in that they possess text in the form of their inscriptions. As material culture they are also an important archaeological resource. For a large proportion of society, memorials represent the only voice available to record personal histories for posterity. Associated with named individuals, gravestones were used as social markers. They embodied the memory of the deceased as a member of a family unit which was then in turn located within a wider social structure. Thus gravestones spoke to passers-by not only about the dead but about the living themselves, communicating by means of both material and textual messages. Past research has employed these messages to illustrate religious and social ideologies (e.g. Rahtz and Watts 1983; Tarlow 1995) and to reconstruct social relations (e.g. Parker-Pearson 1982; McGuire 1988; Mytum 1994). The potential of the dynamics within the reciprocal relationship between the producer and purchaser of memorials to inform about these messages, however, is an important and overlooked aspect of cemetery studies.

The cemetery is a unique landscape for material culture studies. It is a setting where tensions are present between ideology and practice, the ritual and the mundane, the public and the private, and the individual and the group. The erection of memorials in the cemetery is a public act within a civic space that commemorates individuals by both their perceived and actual social personas. These roles include personal familiar relationships and public social titles, work occupations and civic duties. Gravestones are commonplace objects open to public view, yet they are associated with personal sentiments, religion and ritual behaviour which are an exception to mundane daily life. Unlike the household, the cemetery is a setting where entrance, and therefore, ultimately, an audience, is outside direct personal control. The tensions between these social oppositions are transmitted within the material culture, where a gulf exists between ideology (what people thought) and the material reality of actual practice. As a result the social affiliations voiced by gravestones offer multiple and conflicting messages. Thus by themselves, gravestones do not necessarily offer a direct understanding of the complex interaction between social values and relations. It is therefore important to first consider the specific historical and cultural factors which moderated gravestone production, purchase and subsequent use.

The manufacture and use of artefacts is mediated by the beliefs of individuals whose values are located within a larger web of social ideologies. Recent archaeological studies, influenced by research in the social sciences (e.g. Miller 1995), have suggested that these values are most fully articulated at the point of purchase (Cook, Yamin and McCarthy 1996). Therefore, by prioritizing the actions of the purchaser in relation to the offerings of the producer, the social values signified by particular goods can be investigated. Gravestones remain in use and on display over a considerable period of time and the social values which they signify change over time. By examining the ideologies expressed at the time of purchase in contrast to those mediated during the memorial's period of use (for example at the time of secondary commemoration such as the death of a spouse), comparisons can be drawn between changing social values. Artefacts are not simply passive indicators of ideology; gravestones were not only structured by, but also reflexively structured, the Victorian memorialization of death. Therefore the negotiation between the respective needs of the producer and the purchaser must be considered.

Most archaeological economic-based analysis of social relations has focused either upon modes of production (e.g. Paynter 1988) or rates of consumption (e.g. Spencer-Wood (ed.) 1987), rather than addressing the reciprocal dynamics between the producer and purchaser. Both the consumer choice (e.g. ibid.) and consumer behaviour approaches (e.g. Henry 1991) tend to view the market as either producer- or purchaser-led. As a result there is insufficient analysis of the range of identities of producer and purchaser (e.g. Clark 1987) and emphasis is given to the quantitative aspects of the purchase and use of goods rather than symbolic dimensions of material culture.

The majority of gravestone and cemetery studies have employed a purchaserled interpretation which has generally understood the market as created by downward emulation between social classes (e.g. Parker-Pearson 1982; Cannon 1989). But emulation is only one factor influencing the acquisition of goods. Other considerations include the need to cement family and social relations, religion and a fascination with novelty or a concern with tradition.

Consumerist theory seeks to understand how the dynamics between producer and purchaser affected the form, use and meanings ascribed to material culture. This approach reconstructs what types of goods were available within different markets at different times, and endeavours to identify those who had access to these markets. Here access is understood in social rather than economic terms. It examines the ways in which techniques such as advertising were employed by producers to sell their goods and what this reveals about market ideologies. Emphasis, however, lies not on *what* was purchased but *why* particular goods were bought. Customers may reassign meanings to goods in accordance with their own values since the purchase of goods is not a goal in itself but a means by which to fulfil objectives (McCants 1995; Stewart-Abernathy 1992) . Consumerist theory adopts a theoretical framework which acknowledges the cultural and historic particularity of the production and purchase of goods, in this case Victorian gravestones.

Gravestones are a particularly valuable type of commodity for archaeological analysis since they allow the customer to be identified in direct contact with the producer. This mediation is visible not only at the initial stages of purchase but also during secondary commemoration, where the re-cutting of the stone also required a dialogue between the customer and stonemason but with a different set of available options. Victorian gravestones can be seen as commodities, subject to fashion, which were marketed through advertisements and catalogues in a society where industrialization and mass production were becoming increasingly relied upon. Yet they also display aspects of pre-industrial craftsmanship through their use of local material and expertise and traditional regional styles. Without an intermediary as distributer, the customer could affect the end product by means of face-to-face negotiation with the producer. The case study which follows is an investigation of the ways in which the dialogue between the purchaser and producer may have been structured and considers how this affected the material culture in the cemetery. Further research which is currently being undertaken will develop these issues to address the symbolic dimension of gravestone production, distribution and use.

We have two accounts of the market forces which were responsible for the production, distribution and use of gravestones in Victorian York. One illustrates market demand, the other market supply. One is the surviving material culture, the memorials erected in the cemetery. The second is documentary evidence such as pattern books or monument catalogues, and advertisements for newspapers and trade directories produced by stonemasons. Marketing creates a distinction both between different goods and between different forms of the same type of artefact; however, the public meaning created by pattern books is not necessarily the same as private meanings ascribed by individuals. An account of the needs of one producer, the York Cemetery Company, is represented through their pattern book of memorial designs. The purchasers' needs are evident within the surviving material culture of York Cemetery. A case study comparing these two sources illustrates how negotiation could take place between one producer and purchasers of gravestones in Victorian York.

The cemetery, which was owned by the York Cemetery Company, was opened in 1837 in the first year of Queen Victoria's reign. It contains more than 15,000 memorials of which some 7,000 date to the Victorian period. Headstones predominate but larger and more extravagant memorials are also found. Victorian cemeteries possessed a civic and humanist social policy that was coupled with a capitalist business ethic offering financial returns to shareholders. York Cemetery was specifically located so as to be accessible and affordable to all levels of society (Murray 1991: 5). This policy also maximized the market for the Cemetery Company and as a result provides a rich and representative dataset for the archaeologist. The cemetery was not an immediate success. At the general meeting in 1838, eighty-seven burials were reported for the first year, of which sixty-two were in consecrated and twenty-five in unconsecrated ground. During the same period around 1,000 burials in total had taken place in York (ibid.: 12). By 1846 patronage of the cemetery had risen to around one third of all interments in the city (ibid.: 16). From 1854, when the city's parish burial grounds closed, the cemetery had a *de facto* monopoly of burials.

From the time the cemetery opened the company had a stone yard which produced memorials. This did not, however, result in a monopoly of the provision of gravestones. Memorials could be made by any mason but the Cemetery Company maintained the right to refuse the erection of any marker which was 'manifestly objectionable' (ibid.: 14). The burial regulations were rewritten by 1870 to included a fee of five shillings for externally produced memorials to cover the costs of the levelling of ground by the cemetery staff (Murray 1992: 3), thus securing an income for the Cemetery Company from all memorials.

At this time pattern books were used both by manufacturers of mass-produced goods and by craftsmen to illustrate their product range. Memorial pattern books were produced for local, regional and national distribution. The York Cemetery Company's pattern book is unusual. It was compiled by William Powell Ruddock, who was not a stonemason, but superintendent of the cemetery from 1846 to 1861 (Murray 1991: 16). This pattern book, entitled *Designs for Sepulchral Monuments*, gives details of the wide range of sources from which designs were drawn. These include designs reproduced from ones published by the Camden Society and architects based in York or further afield, such as Robertson and Law, Inverness. Ruddock also copied designs from existing memorials, travelling to burial grounds all over the British Isles, including cemeteries at Glasgow, Hull and Highgate. Other designs were taken from medieval grave slabs displayed in York Museum or found at sites such as Tintern Abbey. Ruddock also credits a number of designs to himself. A sketch book of field drawings from Ruddock's burial-ground surveys survives. Not all of the drawings which Ruddock made in the field appear in the completed pattern book and this in itself represents an early stage in the producer's marketing system.

The pattern book contains more than 200 different designs and includes both headstones and larger, more elaborate monuments. Ruddock was an able draughtsman and the majority of the pattern book's designs are hand drawn in ink. On the infrequent occasions when lithographs are included, these designs may be in colour. The pattern book is catalogued numerically and each design is identified by a number. An investigation of the organization of the pattern book reveals a number of techniques employed by the producer to market the memorials to the customer.

The pattern book follows no obvious structure or logical sequence, since designs are not ordered by monument style, type or price. A customer could not automatically locate the full range of designs for a particular monument form. To find each design of tombs, for example, customers would have to view more or less all the pattern book or be guided by the stonemason or cemetery superintendent. The sequence of different designs of particular monument forms again displays no discernible structure. The first altar tomb, for example, occurs as design number 49 and, as Fig. 12.1 shows, is very elaborately carved. A second altar tomb design, number 50 (Fig. 12.2), is found overleaf in the pattern book but in this case the tomb is plain. Nine further tomb designs, which vary in terms of elaboration, are spaced at random between design numbers 73 and 163. This is a system which benefits the producer, since it maximizes the opportunities to show the full range of monument forms and variation in design to the customer.

Most, but not all, of the monument designs are accompanied by text which gives basic information about the source of the design, whether it had been erected in the cemetery, and price. This can range in comprehensiveness from simply describing the form, such as 'headstone', to including information about the types of material it is available in, the price, where the design originated from and whether it had been commissioned previously (Figs 12.3, 12.4 and 12.5).

Occasionally when a memorial design was noted in the accompanying text as 'erected in the cemetery' the names of the deceased who were commemorated by that design are given. We are told that memorial design number 49 was erected over the Clifton family's vault (Fig. 12.3). Design number 85 lists six individuals with their address, title of respect or occupation as commemorated by this particular

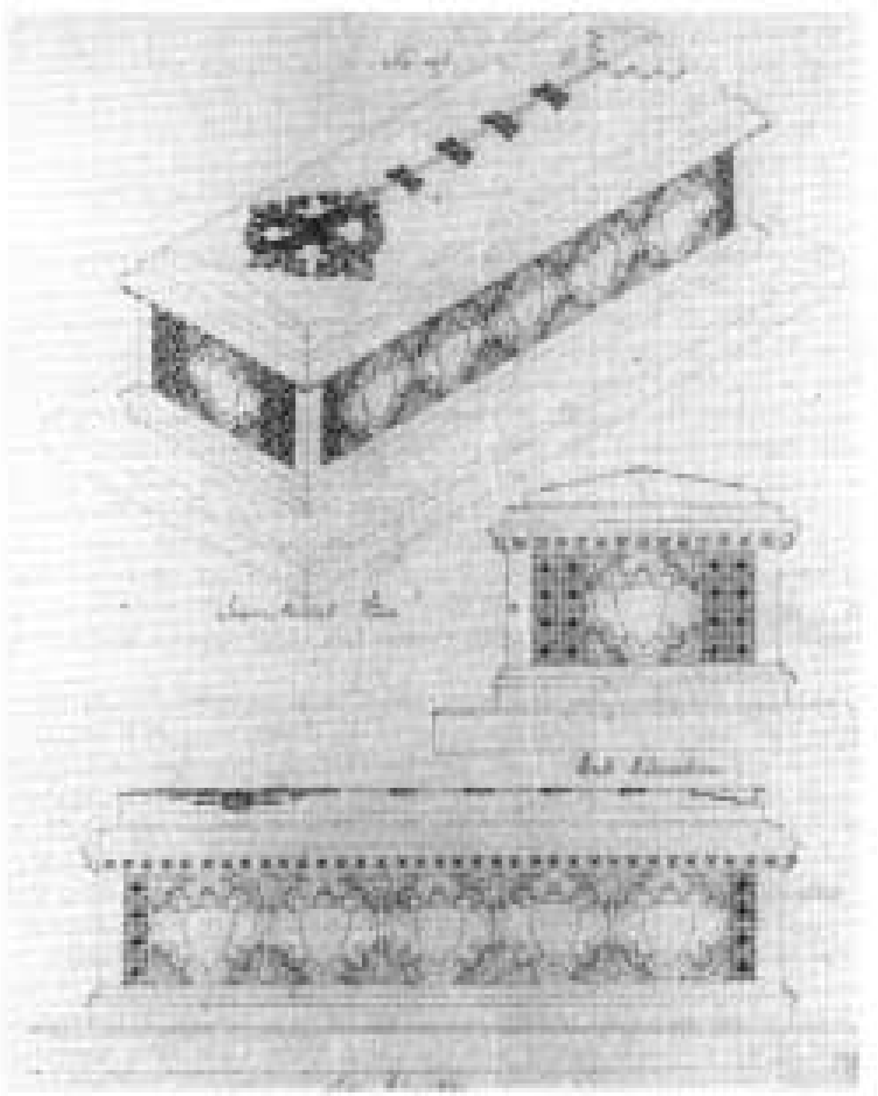


Figure 12.1 Altar tomb illustration, design number 49

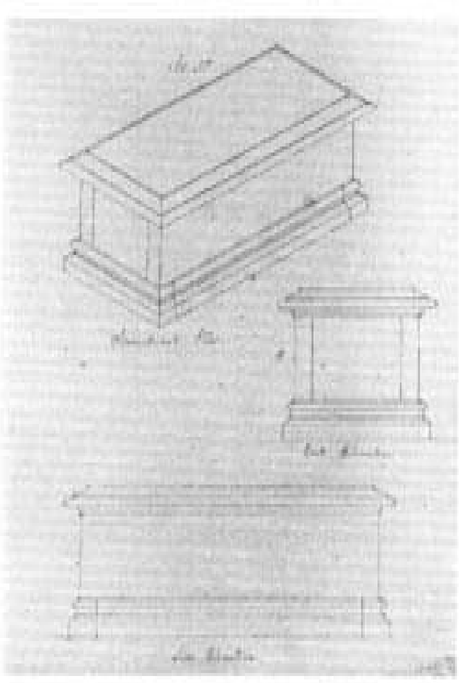
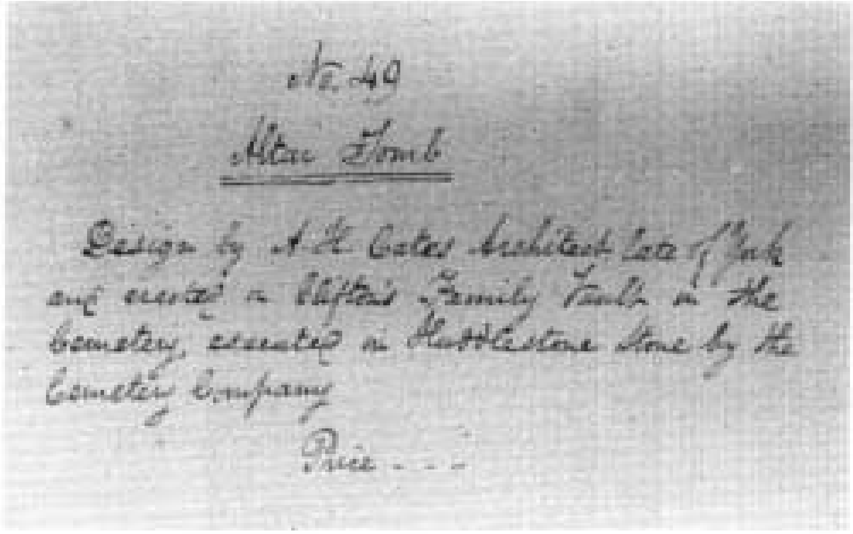


Figure 12.2 Plain tomb illustration, design number 50

style of altar tomb (Fig. 12.5). There are a number of possible interpretations for this practice. These details may be used as a testimonial to show that the company had satisfactorily carried out the work. This could be checked on the ground and the customer would be able to see the effect of the monument off the page; this would be convenient as the Cemetery Company's stone yard was located on the cemetery grounds. It may have indicated the sort of people whom the Cemetery Company felt that customers would wish to emulate.

Indication of price is not consistently given within the pattern book, and is often entirely omitted. When costs do appear they are given in an alphabetical code (Fig. 12.4). The producer presents enough information to allow the customer to consider what products are available in the market, but by with-holding the price makes it difficult for the customer to judge whether he or she can afford them. The ability and desire to meet the cost of a particular memorial becomes the final consideration for the customer, once other preferences have been expressed. If price is a deciding factor, then the choice of monument must be made via discussion with the stonemason. Here an opportunity is created for dialogue in which individual needs can be expressed and negotiated between the purchaser and producer.



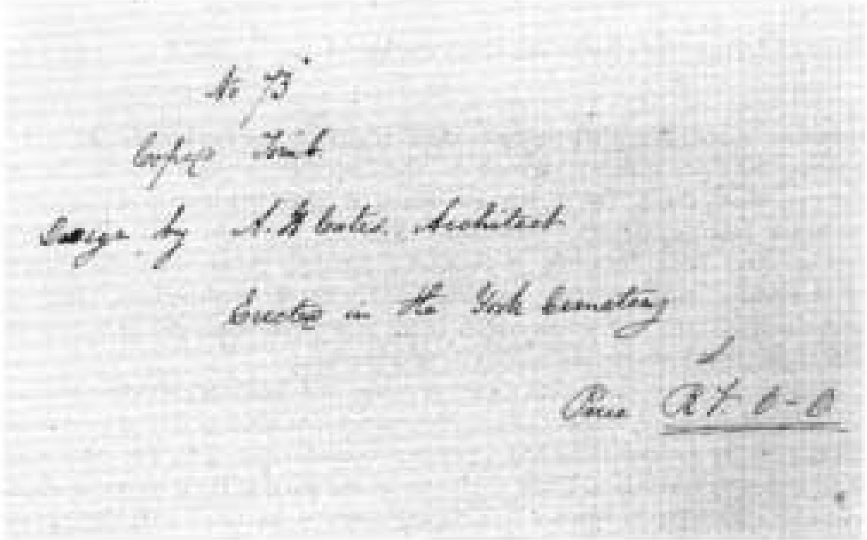
No. 49

Altar Tomb

Design by A.H. Cates Architect late of York and erected in Clifton's Family Vault in the Cemetery, executed in Huddlestone Stone by the Cemetery Company

Price . . .

Figure 12.3 Text accompanying design number 49



No 73

Coffin Tomb

Design by A.H. Cates Architect

Erected in the York Cemetery

Price £7-0-0

Figure 12.4 Text accompanying design number 73

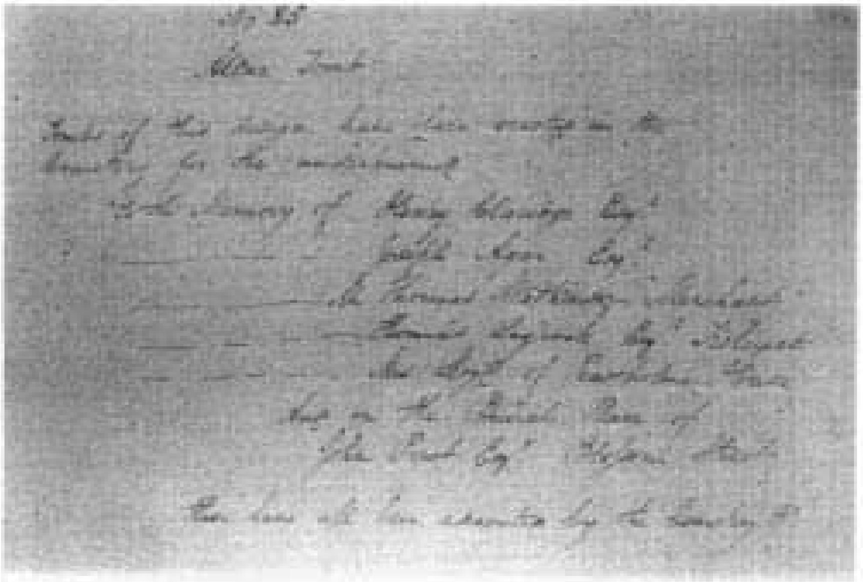


Figure 12.5 Text accompanying design number 85

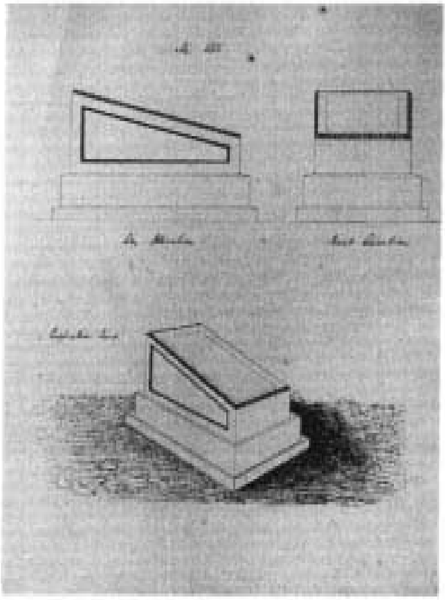


Figure 12.6 Half-sloping tomb illustration, design number 125

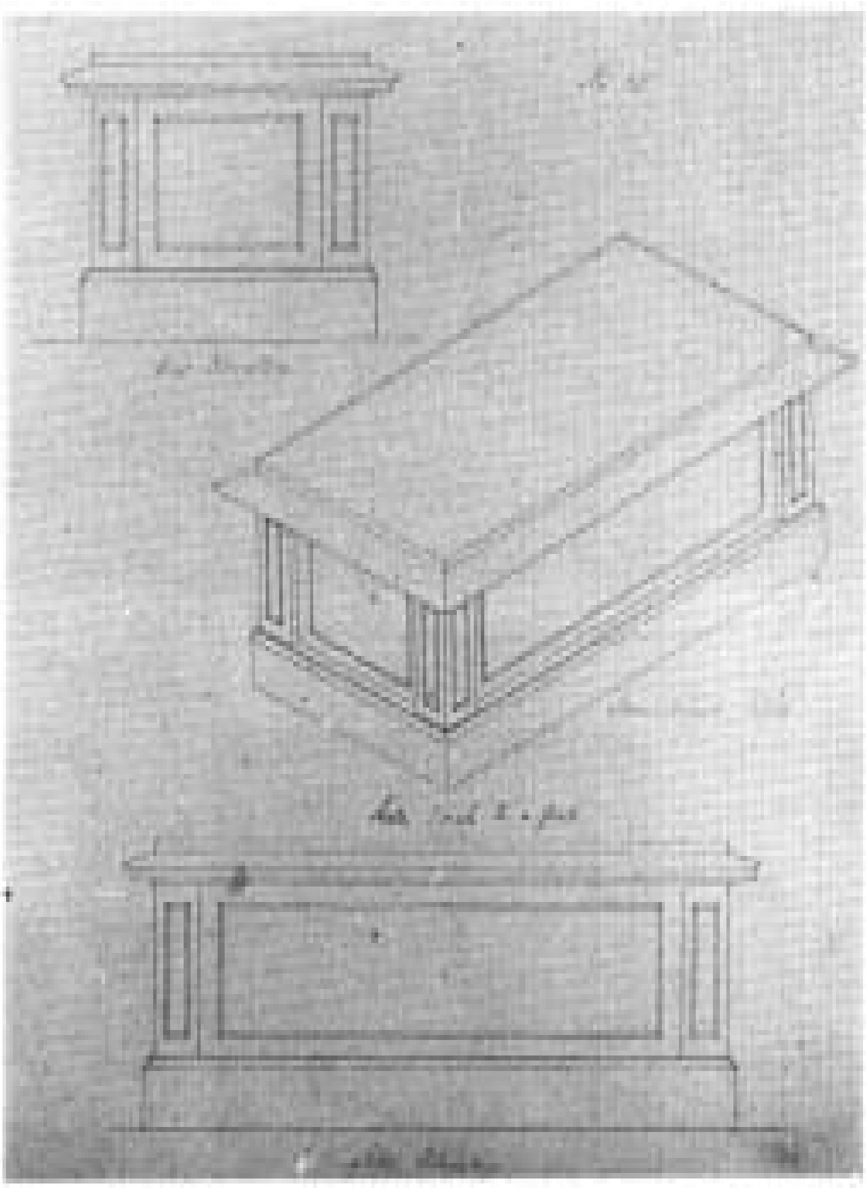


Figure 12.7 Altar tomb illustration, design number 85

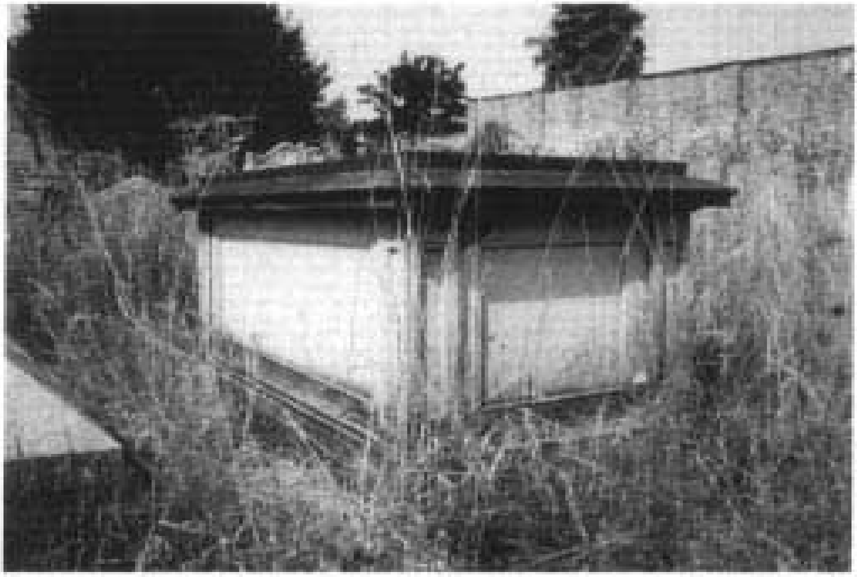


Figure 12.8 Tomb erected in York cemetery, design number 85

Information other than price, source of design and details of previous commissions rarely occurs. A number of monuments are described as able to be moved completely for funerals, which is a practical consideration if further interment is intended to take place. Only one entry in the pattern book seems to come close to a sales pitch, when a half-sloping tomb is described with the phrase 'its effect is good' (Fig. 12.6). The absence of this monument on the ground today or a record of its commission in the pattern book suggests, however, that this approach did not convince the buyer.

The above points indicate that a producer/purchaser dialogue took place over and was structured around the pattern book. This mediation of needs is further in evidence when we examine the translation of pattern-book designs into material form. Staying within the example of tombs, one small sample of the many monument forms available to study, a comparison between documentary and material contexts reveals a further dimension of purchaser and producer dynamics. A preliminary survey of York Cemetery revealed forty-three tombs that are still visible today. Whilst this figure may appear to represent only a small segment of the memorial market as a whole, altar tombs prove to be a popular choice within the selections made for large monument forms. These tombs represent the work of at least five different stonemasonry businesses, one of which is the York Cemetery Company.

The York Cemetery Company's pattern book illustrates eleven different altar tomb designs, three of which are represented on the ground today. Design number

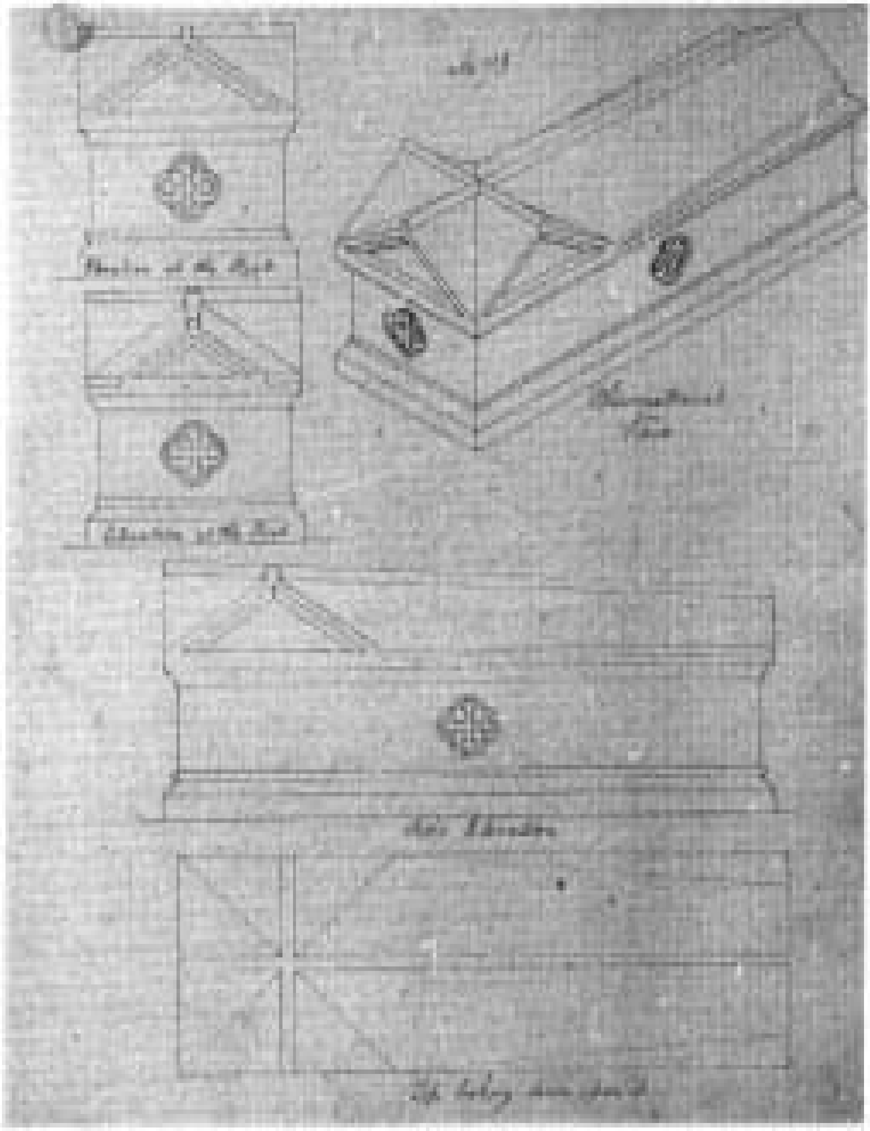

Elevation at the Head
Perspective View
Elevation of the Foot
Side Elevation

Figure 12.9 Coped tomb illustration, design number 73

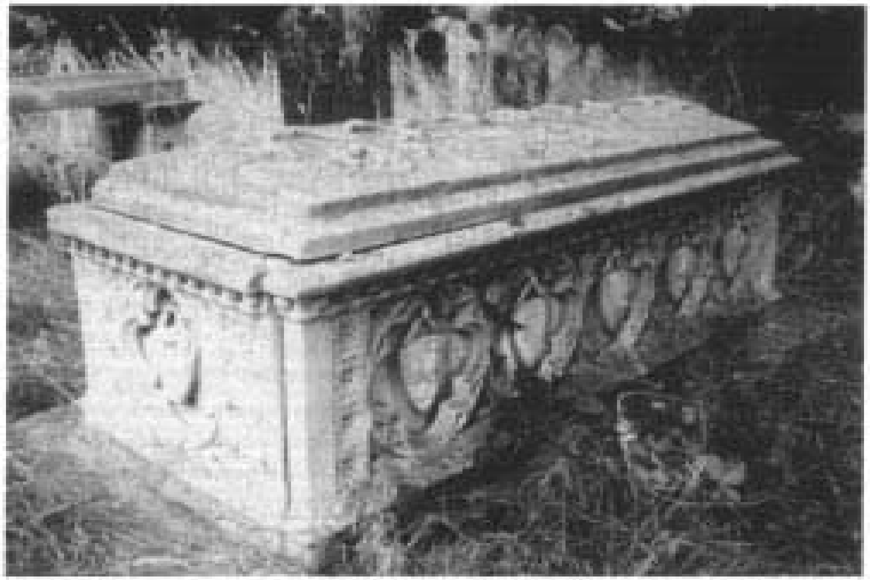


Figure 12.10 Tomb erected in York cemetery, design number 49

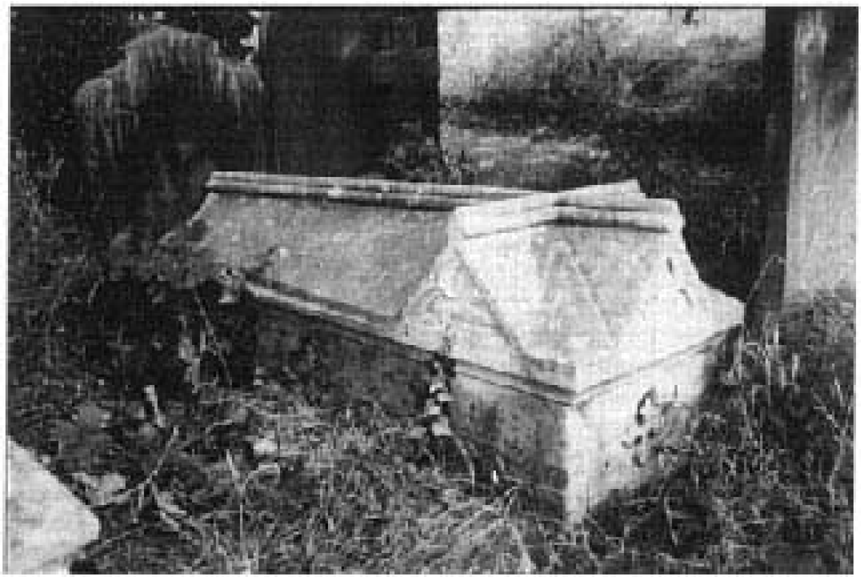


Figure 12.11 Tomb erected in York cemetery, design number 73

85, which appears on seven occasions (Fig. 12.7, page 208), is the least elaborate of the three and is reproduced on the ground exactly as it appears on the page (Fig. 12.8). The two remaining designs, numbers 49 and 73 (Figs. 12.1 and 12.9), show stylistic differences between the pattern-book illustration and the completed monument. The tomb produced from design number 49 displays three alterations in its transformation from the page to the cemetery. The cross base has been simplified, two quatrefoil-shaped carvings appear on either side of the cross shaft and a number of the shields on the tomb panels have been embellished with relief carvings (Figs 12.1 and 12.10). A number of changes have also been made to the form and decoration of tomb design number 73. The single raised cross of the tomb lid in the pattern book has doubled in size in material form. Embellishments to this cross, such as the pleat effect between the arms and decoration at the coped cross ends, which are found on the ground (Fig. 12.11) do not appear on the page (Fig. 12.9). These changes show a negotiation between the resources which the producer initially offered and the needs which the customer ultimately wished to satisfy. The modifications of designs from the pattern book into material form could serve the interests of both the producer and the purchaser but any change would have to be accepted by both parties.

The potential of pattern books to inform us about the negotiation of different needs within monument production and consumption is considerable. Further research has indicated that the memorials in York Cemetery were modified not only within one particular design but between a number of designs. Thus, in the case of altar tombs, we find the lid of one design above a base taken from an alternative design, with the end product representing a pick-and-mix of components. Many pattern books, such as the York Cemetery Company's, also illustrate the range of type face for memorial inscriptions and different stone varieties offered by the producer for the customer to choose from. The negotiation of these elements may also be investigated. Some aspects of the effect of purchaser and producer relations, however, are more difficult to discern, such as the choice of wording for inscriptions and epitaphs.

By associating the pattern book with the producer and the monuments with the purchaser we place our sources within a critical framework. This framework allows us to take into consideration those inherent biases which are the result of the nature of each account's compilation and intended audience. But to achieve this critical framework we must be clear about how we construct and apply the terms 'producer' and 'purchaser'.

York Cemetery is a setting which represents a complex set of dynamics, since a number of different producers' interests are competing to serve within a shared market. We need to examine the interaction between these different producers as well as their respective relationships with customers. This is facilitated by the large proportion of memorials which bear their makers' mark. The York Cemetery Company produced memorials for urban and rural parish graveyards in the York area as well as for other cemeteries further afield. Their monument pattern book may therefore represent marketing strategies which were devised for more than one context and a wide variety of potential customers. But who was the purchaser? Was it the deceased? Whoever made payment for the memorial? Or the head of the family? Is the purchaser acting on their own individual preference? Or as a representative of a household? Answers to questions of how we understand the 'purchaser' can be approached through careful examination of market access and acquisition patterns. This access has to be understood in social rather than economic terms. Choice is not simply based upon issues of price or overt practicality, but is modified by culturally determined bounds of acceptability which are structured by factors such as gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation. The uniformity found within memorial trends shows preferences which transcend single acts of purchase and indicate purchasers' affiliations within a wider social network. By looking to see which choices were sanctioned and which inhibited we will be closer to understanding the needs and beliefs which underlay the purchase and production of memorials in Victorian York.

Acknowledgements

Illustrations from the York Cemetery Company pattern book are reproduced with the kind permission of the York Cemetery Trust and York City Archives. Thanks also to Dr Harold Mytum, Alasdair Brooks and Victoria Thompson for their comments and suggestions.

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13

WELSH CULTURAL IDENTITY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PEMBROKESHIRE

The pedimented headstone as a graveyard monument

Harold Mytum

Gravestones are items of material culture which are particularly valuable as an analytical tool in the consideration of cultural identity. With relative chronological and geographical precision with regard to date of construction and place of erection, they provide material which can be used to examine trends through both time and space. Their association with named individuals allows some social context to be inferred, and their placement within a burial ground of particular denomination means that the active use of material culture can be compared in different ideological groups.

Extensive study of a sample of north and central Pembrokeshire, in which all burial grounds of Anglican and non-conformist denominations were recorded from twelve Anglican parishes, forms the basic database for this study. It is augmented by full burial-ground recording at other selected sites in north Pembrokeshire, and rapid survey of many other burial grounds in the region where information on pedimented headstones and other selected monument types was collected (Fig. 13.1). This is the largest regional survey of graveyard monuments in Britain, and is being placed in a wider archaeological context by field research on a number of deserted settlement types in the region where other aspects of regional material culture are being investigated (Mytum 1988). Some aspects of the research, particularly with regard to mariners' memorials (Kilminster and Mytum 1987; Mytum 1990) and language choices in the inscriptions (Mytum 1994, 1998), have already been published; and this chapter in contrast concentrates on a particular monument form which is a characteristic feature of the region.

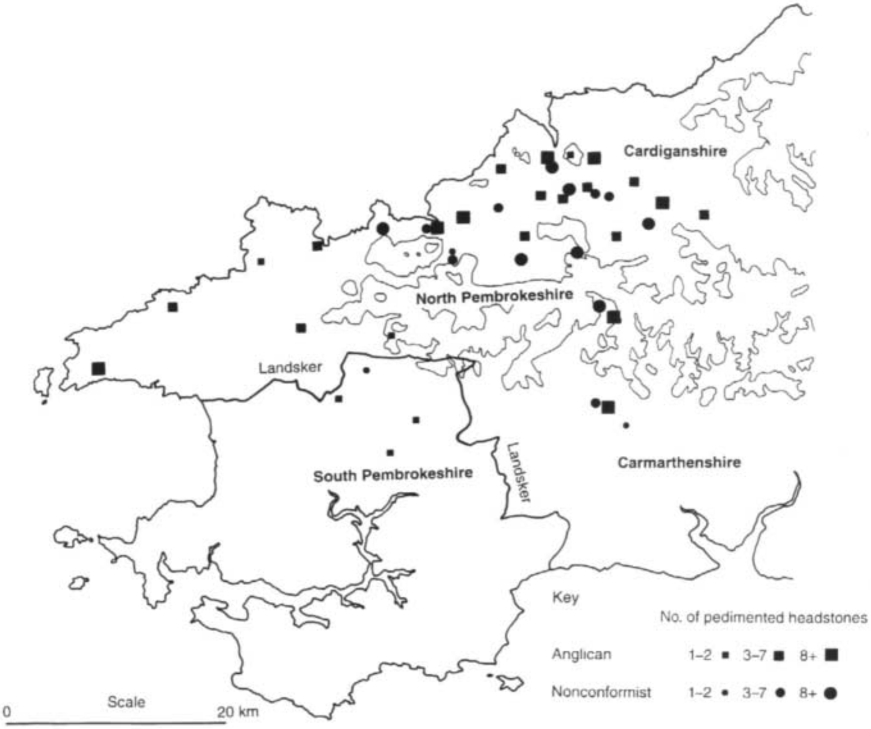
Cardiganshire
North Pembrokeshire
Landsker
Landsker
South Pembrokeshire
Carmarthenshire
Key
No. of pedimented headstones
Anglican 1–2 ■ 3–7 ■ 8+ ■
Nonconformist 1–2 ● 3–7 ● 8+ ●
0 Scale 20 km

Figure 13.1 Map showing location of Pembrokeshire, Landsker line, and area of highest concentration of pedimented monuments

PEMBROKESHIRE CONTEXT

Pembrokeshire lies in the south-western extreme of Wales, with an English-speaking population in the south and a Welsh-speaking one in the north. This cultural division can be traced back to at least the Norman settlement of the south of the county, with the Welsh retaining greater control in the north. In the early modern period the cultural division was clearly identifiable (Owen 1963), and even as many aspects of behaviour and material culture became more uniform in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, language differences were still pronounced. The line which divides the English- and Welsh-speaking areas represents one of the most longlasting and stable cultural divisions in Britain (John 1972; Pryce 1978; Williams 1935), though the use of the term 'Landsker' for this divide appears to have been an early twentieth-century phenomenon (Awbery 1991). The Landsker as a linguistic divide has been examined archaeologically through graveyard monuments, where some material culture as well as linguistic differences have been noted (Mytum 1994, 1998).

During the nineteenth century English was the official language of record, even in the Welsh-speaking area of north Pembrokeshire, and it was also widely spoken by the middle classes at least in their business dealings (Jones 1993). The gentry were English-speaking and Anglican by religious persuasion throughout the area, though some families were supportive of nonconformity and gave land for chapels and occasionally entertained visiting preachers. The Anglican tradition remained dominant in the south, but was widely challenged in the north by various nonconformist groups. Although many chapels obtained burial land either adjacent to or at a little distance from the places of worship, this was often only achieved well into the nineteenth century, and many chapels never had their own burial areas. Nonconformists therefore were buried in the Anglican churchyards and the presence of a memorial in such a location cannot always be taken to indicate an Anglican. However, only nonconformists were interred in the chapel burial grounds and so these can be more firmly associated with a particular religious persuasion.

Ethnographic evidence from the early twentieth century which relates to at least the latter period of use for pedimented memorials indicates the active social use of burial grounds and memorials (Jenkins 1971). They were used to educate the younger members of the community in family histories, partly in terms of the information they directly contained but also as triggers for memories and other associated information. The pedimented memorials were not only large and complex, but could also contain more information about the deceased and their relationships and roles than less elaborate monuments. Thus the choice of such a monument gave the opportunity to make statements about the deceased and the associated family in material and textual terms which would continue in use for decades, and would be relevant not only to the immediate grieving family but to a wider circle of residents in the community.

The pedimented headstones are the most elaborate external memorials of their time in this region, being made from many pieces of cut and carved slate. They occur only in north Pembrokeshire in large numbers, with some in the neighbouring Welsh-speaking south Cardiganshire and north-west Carmarthenshire, and with few in the English-speaking areas to the south. A variant using different materials and less complex decoration occasionally occurs in the surrounding areas, and may be seen as a related but less favoured choice. Some of the slate pedimented stones are found with white marble panels for the inscriptions, but most are made solely from mid to dark grey local slate.

This chapter will examine the stylistic elements of the pedimented head-stone, the degree of standardization and variability of such elements, and their combination into complex monuments. Reasons for the choice of the pedimented monument form, and for the great amount of minor variation, will also be explored. The area over which the study takes place is in the core of the distribution in north-east Pembrokeshire, with some reference to selected examples from more peripheral areas (Fig. 13.1). The context in which this style developed, flourished and declined during the nineteenth century will be examined, and the role of the pedimented headstones in defining and reinforcing cultural identity will be assessed.

PEDIMENTED MONUMENTS: THE DETAILS OF CONSTRUCTION

A terminology adapted from Classical architectural definitions has been applied to the numerous elements which can be considered the attributes of the pedimented monument (Fig. 13.2). Each of these elements is made of at least one piece of slate, though some such as the lower cornice and architrave were sometimes made of several separate elements placed one on top of another to produce complex moulded features. All the elements occur in more than one form; these are not discussed in detail here, but examination of the photographs in this chapter shows how the various forms of

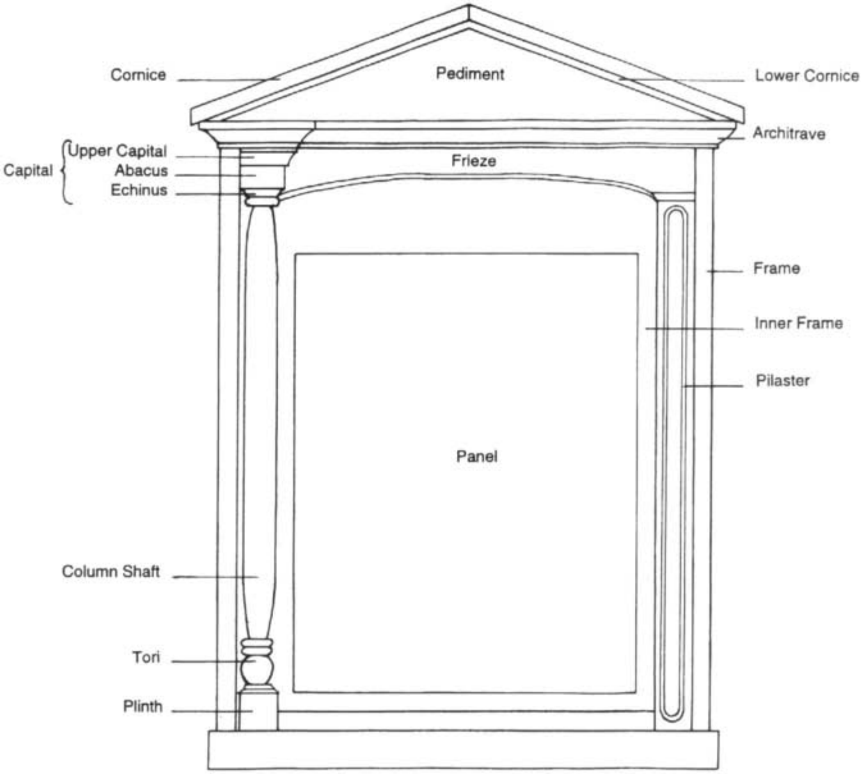
Cornice
Pediment
Lower Cornice
Architrave
Capital
Upper Capital
Abacus
Echinus
Frieze
Frame
Inner Frame
Pilaster
Panel
Column Shaft
Tori
Plinth

Figure 13.2 Pedimented gravestone with principal elements identified

column shaft or pilaster made monuments appear significantly different from each other even though they were all within the pedimented headstone tradition.

The pedimented headstone was normally made from local slate, which affected construction and design. It was in part the laminar nature of the material which meant that so many separate elements were necessary to form a pedimented headstone; in a material such as limestone, more relief carving would have been possible. Indeed, the nearest parallels to the pedimented stones found in south Pembrokeshire have very heavy solid frames and pediments in part because they are not made in slate. These sandstone and limestone examples could have been made in a slighter design, like the slate ones, but the slate headstones could not have been made bulkier.

The pedimented headstone was a form of graveyard memorial which, though unusual in the detail of its form, was perfectly normal in its function of marking a grave plot and giving details of the deceased by way of an inscription. The arrangement of the inscribed text on the panel, with introductory phrases and biblical verses at the end of the text (Mytum 1994, 1998), is as used on other monuments of the period. What is unusual is the complexity of construction and that, despite numerous variants, the appearance of the pedimented head-stone as a class is always distinct. It is in terms of both size and shape very different from all other monuments in Pembrokeshire burial grounds, and there are no headstones which reflect any merging into other forms.

Decorative motifs are placed only within the pediment (which is sometimes used instead for the first word of the inscription, or is left blank), and consisted of a single motif such as anchor, shield or IHS. Limited stylized decoration in the corners of the panel does occur in the Carmarthenshire stones; but only in the very latest examples of the Pembrokeshire examples, when also the number of elements used to make the monument had decreased, was foliage carved more extensively around the inscription on the panel. In the last decades of manufacture the rules which helped to mark out the pedimented headstone were breaking down as its value as a distinct form was being lost. Nevertheless, even at this stage the shape and size of the monument remained the clearly distinguishing features.

Today, the pedimented headstone often stands on its own, and in the majority of cases some or all elements of the headstone itself are missing. With the rotting of wooden pegs and rusting of iron pegs and clamps, the various slate elements have split or come apart. In some burial grounds all elements have been tidied away, in others they have been placed against the rectangular upright panel bearing the inscription (which always survives till last). The progressive degradation of monuments means that for various stages of analysis the sample size varies, and this should be noted with regard to Tables 13.1 and 13.2 in this chapter. Whilst discussion here focuses on the pedimented headstone, in many cases (and perhaps originally all cases) the headstone was just the most substantial part of a larger monument which included a coffin stone or a boxed coffin-shaped structure in front of the headstone. There was also a footstone, and in some cases iron railings set in a kerb marking the extent of the plot. Graves where the full package survive are now extremely rare, with that of William Morgan (died 1879) at Newport being one such well preserved case (Fig. 13.3).

THE ORIGINS OF THE STYLE

Prior to the development of the pedimented monument, external higher-status monuments were normally flat ledger stones or chest tombs. Relatively few headstones were present, and such headstones as did occur in north Pembrokeshire

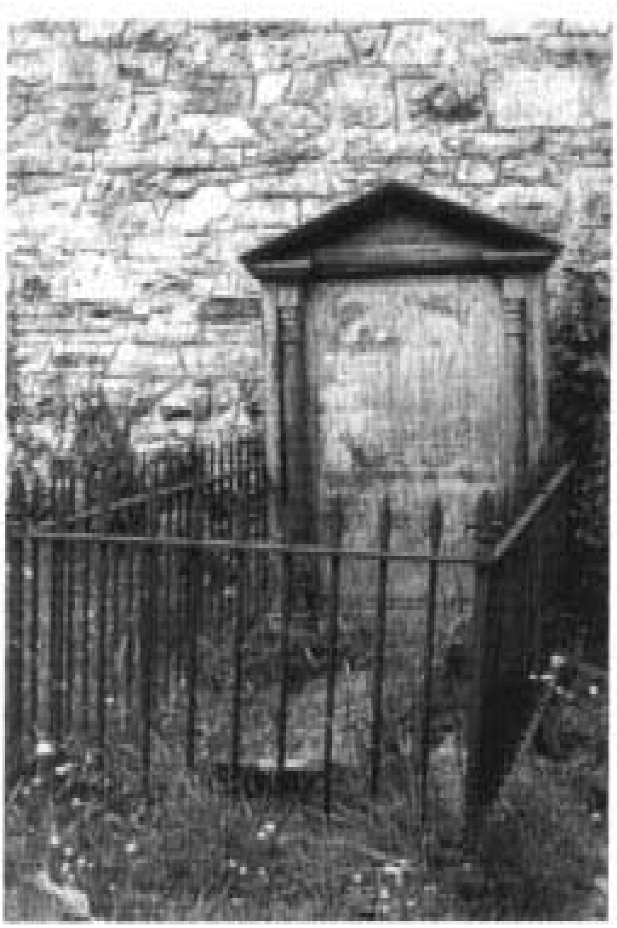

*Figure 13.3*Pedimented monument with coffin, kerb and railings, Newport

tended to be relatively small and plain with round-topped, shouldered forms predominating; some were decorated with cherubs, but not in the frequency found just to the north-east in Cardiganshire (Chater 1976, 1977). The frequency of chest tombs is now difficult to assess as some have been dismantled, with only the top slab bearing the inscriptions being retained, giving the appearance of a ledger stone. However, a fine selection of chest tombs survives at Nevern, and these can be compared with the more isolated surviving intact examples elsewhere; ledger stones also occur widely though never in great numbers. Ledgers effectively covered the bodies and marked the burial place of the family, and allowed ample room for inscriptions on the large flat surface. Chest tombs also gave scope for limited decoration on the sides, though most in this region were of simple brick or more usually stone construction with no elaboration.

At a time when most graves were unmarked in any permanent way, the identity of the family plot and the integrity of remains were emphasized by the type of memorial (which covered the grave completely) and the frequent use of such introductory phrases as ‘Underneath this stone’ and ‘Here lies buried the mortal remains’. For the more affluent and significant members of the population, ledgers and chest tombs therefore effectively fulfilled a symbolic and social role until others began to erect headstones over their graves. The need and ability to identify plots permanently with memorials would seem to have become more socially widespread during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the low-level monuments were then no longer such dominant features of the churchyard as they could be obscured by headstones. To maintain enhanced visibility, larger upright monuments were required. There were two identified responses to this: the pedimented stones on the one hand, and the obelisk or draped urn on the other. The former were much larger than any other headstone forms, but were made of slate and occasionally included white marble; the latter were very tall if slim, and made of granite in various colours. The pedimented stones largely occur in the Anglican graveyards, with the obelisks and draped urns dominant in the nonconformist burial grounds. This is in itself a phenomenon of some significance, but will be the subject of a separate study; here attention is only given to the choice of a pedimented headstone.

The earliest identified pedimented headstones in north Pembrokeshire are two which commemorate individuals who died in the 1820s, found at St David’s and St Dogmael’s; but given the overall distribution from the 1830s it is likely that Newport was a key centre from the beginning, and it is only by chance that no earlier stones survive there. It is from the 1830s that the style becomes popular (Fig. 13.4), with the concentration clearly at the small town of Newport. The graveyard serving the large rural parish of Nevern has four from this decade; the two earliest (William Williams, died 1831, and Mary Nicholas, died 1833) are both of a very simple form, with only a cornice and frame. The town of Newport has nine examples, the earliest three all commemorating deaths in 1834. Many of

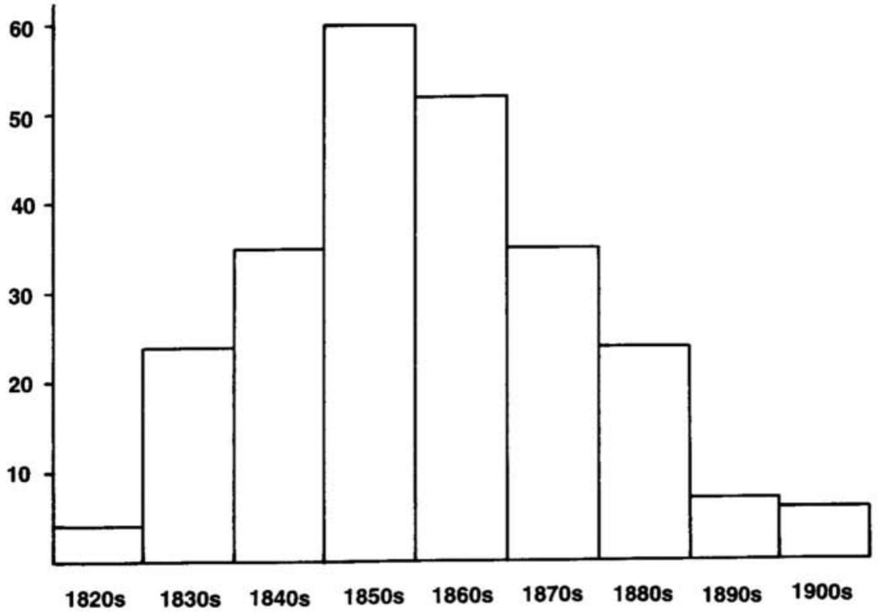

Figure 13.4 Histogram showing popularity of pedimented monuments over time

the stones from the 1830s also show similar simple forms, though an integral upper capital and abacus is present on several. Others would seem to have had a solid piece of stone shaped like a low elongated pyramid set on the architrave, or even nothing above the architrave at all. Yet others display more complex forms, but these may in fact have been commissioned and erected in the following decade when the full range of forms has appeared. Two stones commemorating deaths in the 1830s can be found in the English-speaking region of Pembrokeshire within the study area. That of Thomas Llewellyn (died 1838) at Ambleston and another at Wiston are both probably from families in the north and are the only examples at these sites for any decade.

The more complex pedimented headstones resemble doorways on some contemporary farmhouses and townhouses in centres such as Newport, and this may have been significant. However, the earlier simpler forms are less architectural and so the reasons for the origin of the style are unclear. Once developed, however, the fusion of architectural features from domestic architecture and those from funerary monuments may have been a natural one, as it is likely that the same craftsmen would have been involved in both. The symbolism of the doorway to the afterlife may have been deliberate and evocative, or it may have been used to provide a frame for the person commemorated in text, the equivalent of the person standing at the door of their house. The fact that many inscriptions for all types of

*Table 13.1*Pedimented headstones by death of first person commemorated. Selected burial grounds with at least five dated pedimented headstones only

	Anglican				*Nonconformist*					
	DV	*NP*	*NV*	*DG*	*PO*	*BL*	*NT*	*RH*	*CI*	*DN*
1820–9	1			1						
1830–9	3	9	4	2						
1840–9	4	10	2	5	2					
1850–9	9	14	1		3	3	2	1		
1860–9	2	7		2	2	1	2	2	2	7
1870–9	1	4	1		4	1		2	3	4
1880–9		3	1	1		3	2			3
1890–9	1			2					1	1
1900–9				2						2
Total	21	47	9	15	11	8	6	5	6	17

Notes: DV, St David's Cathedral; NP, St Mary's Newport; NV, St Brynach's Nevern; DG, St Dogmael's; PO, Pontglasier Baptist; BL, Blaenfos Baptist; NT, Newport Independent Ebenezer; RH, Rhydymaen Pennel Cemais Baptist; CI, Cilgerran Pennel Baptist; DN, Dinas Methodist.

headstone often state the house at which the deceased lived provides another context in which the indentification of the memorial with an architectural setting may have been relevant.

DIFFUSION OF THE STYLE

The pedimented headstone was rapidly accepted as an upper-middle-class external form of memorial in the region around Newport from the 1830s (Table 13.1). Whilst the town remained the focus of use, as nonconformist burial grounds were established the popularity of the form spread to surrounding areas, notably the Baptist burial grounds at Pontglasier and Blaenfos, and from 1860 the Methodist cemetery at Dinas. It is likely that a number of the earlier Newport stones are those of nonconformists from the region. Whilst the opening of the Newport Independent Ebenezer Chapel burial ground did not lead to a drop in the numbers of pedimented headstones being erected in the Anglican churchyard of St Mary's, numbers do tail off from the 1860s when many more nonconformist burial grounds are in use. The apparent shift from Anglican to nonconformist locations does not necessarily represent a shift in the popularity of the headstone form, but rather the widening of choice in burial location during the nineteenth century.

Whilst it is clear that denomination was not a key factor in the choice of a pedimented headstone (even though it would seem that it was so in the selection of alternatives such as granite obelisks and urns), social group would seem to have been more significant. It was not normal in this region to place the occupation of the deceased on a memorial (with the exception of master mariners), but quite a number of pedimented headstones contain such information. Prosperous businessmen, notably the numerous master mariners but also ship-builders, a druggist and shopkeeper, were the major patrons at Newport. Also represented were the professional classes such as a customs officer and a postmaster. At the inland rural parish of Nevern the social composition is unsurprisingly different, with various members of the local gentry family, the Bowens, commemorated on a series of pedimented memorials set into a wall which formed part of their extensive family plot, prosperous farmers, and one other member of the gentry (John Owen, Esquire, of Newport). Elsewhere in north Pembrokeshire the monuments display the names of farmers, master mariners and the professional classes, though in much smaller numbers which do not make viable any more detailed analysis on a site-by-site basis.

The people commemorated on pedimented headstones represent the highest levels of society resident in the region. The only significant gentry family in north Pembrokeshire was that of the Bowens of Llyngwair Manor between Newport and Nevern, who remain distinct and underline this by having a family plot set into the hillslope to the north-east of St Brynach's Church at Nevern. This complex structure incorporates a series of pedimented headstones set in a retaining wall like doorways, but the vast range of individuals recorded on them make the date of their erection difficult to ascertain. Many of those commemorated on the panels of these pedimented features have individual small freestanding grave markers within the marked plot and, for the most important, also internal wall memorials in the church. They were the most powerful and socially significant family in the region during the nineteenth century, so their use of the pedimented style at all is of some interest, even if not used by them for freestanding headstones.

In Welsh-speaking north Pembrokeshire the pedimented monument can be seen as a feature used by an emerging middle-class population of administrators, farmers, merchants and master mariners to mark their position in society. This also defined them through a strong regional style with which even the gentry were happy to be associated, albeit in a distinctive manner. Newport, with its successful maritime trade and large community of master mariners and allied trades (Kilminster and Mytum 1987), was the main centre for pedimented headstones, with up to 30 per cent of memorials commemorating those who died in the 1830s being of this type. The smaller maritime centre of Dinas also had substantial numbers, as did St Dogmael's, though relatively recent reorganization of the graveyard there has meant that most pedimented headstones have lost most of the elements apart from the inscribed panel. The region over which the style was popular was small; by the time Fishguard to the west and Cardigan to the east are reached, there are very few pedimented stones despite the size and prosperity of these ports; inland the distribution in north-west Carmarthenshire reaches to around Newcastle Emlyn.

The large and relatively prosperous rural parish of Nevern immediately to the east of Newport also had sufficient demand to have a significant number of pedimented headstones, though its socio-economic composition explains the proportionately much lower peak of 13 per cent of monuments, again in the 1830s. Most other rural parishes have few pedimented monuments because of their small populations, and small numbers of prosperous farmers. The rural concentration at Nevern may also be linked to production. Only a few memorials of any type are signed in the region during the nineteenth century, but those pedimented headstones with a maker's name or initials and place indicate Nevern as a centre of production. From the 1830s come three pedimented stones at Newport with the initials D.LL., in one case with Nevern being also mentioned. From the 1840s W.LL. takes over, again at Nevern, and a total of eight pedimented stones attributable to this mason run to the 1870s. It is likely that this represents a family business over two generations, and the father may have introduced pedimented stones to the area. Further documentary work will be necessary to trace these masons, and indeed others occasionally inscribed, such as J. Reynolds who carved three Dinas stones during the 1860s. Other masons have been noted on the Carmarthenshire stones.

CONTEXT OF STYLISTIC CHOICES IN PEDIMENTED HEADSTONES

The context of choice can be considered on two levels: the first concerns the time and space over which pedimented headstones were in use, and the second the more specific decisions regarding particular monuments in particular burial grounds (which in the absence of much supporting documentary evidence can only be effectively examined when monuments are grouped together, particularly in family plots). The overall distribution of monuments through time and space needs to be considered with two caveats in mind. The first is that there has been varying degrees of clearance and tidying up at graveyards, with the result that in some places only the most intact monuments have been left undisturbed, with others being partially dismantled so that only the panel survives; this restricts the amount of detailed information regarding the original style of many pedimented headstones. It is possible on the basis of size, proportions and the presence of peg holes and differential weathering on such stones to be certain that they were originally pedimented, but often little detail of the original appearance can be reconstructed. The second caveat is that the date of the first person commemorated may not be a good indication of the date of the monument. In some cases it may be erected several decades after the death of the deceased first mentioned on the stone.

*Table 13.2*Selected design attributes by decade at Newport and selected other sites

	Newport			*Others*		
	Columns	*Pilasters*	*Neither*	*Columns*	*Pilasters*	*Neither*
1820–9					1	
1830–9	4		4	2		4
1840–9	3	4		1	3	
1850–9		12		2	5	2
1860–9		7		4	6	
1870–9	1	4		7	5	
1880–9	2	2		4	2	
1890–9				1	1	
1900–9				2		
Total	10	29	4	23	23	6

Notes: 'Neither' indicates definite negative evidence; in many cases partial survival has not allowed attributes to be assigned.

Taking the full sample of pedimented headstones, there can be little doubt regarding the time-span over which the form was popular. There was a significant boom in the 1830s, with popularity remaining quite high to the 1880s. It should be noted that Dinas was opened in 1860, and in that first decade showed a level of popularity similiar to that at Newport, a pattern which was then continued for subsequent decades. Other nonconformist burial grounds also show narrower time ranges and there is probably less diffusion from Newport and Nevern than appears to be the case because the opening dates for many burial grounds were during the mid-nineteenth century. The north coast pattern visible on the general distribution map (Fig. 13.1) is made even more clear when the actual numbers are considered (Table 13.1). The pedimented headstones should be considered as a unified regional phenomenon developing over decades and involving several masons.

Variability within the monument class can be seen to remain remarkably consistent over both time and space (Table 13.2). From the 1830s columns and pilasters both occur, though the latter become dominant from the 1840s at Newport. Columns remain more popular elsewhere, and from the 1870s become the most frequent choice. Within both pilasters and columns there are many variations, particularly in the latter, so visual differentiation could be easily made at this level of detail and visibility in the burial ground.

The patterns over time and space outlined above gave considerable choice in pedimented headstone design at any time from the 1830s. There was a clear desire for difference within the similarity, as can be seen with the pair of headstones to William and Sarah Mendus at Dinas (Fig. 13.5). Here we see at a general level a high degree of similarity, but on closer examination there are key differences. It is likely that the sort of monument – a pedimented headstone – had been deemed a

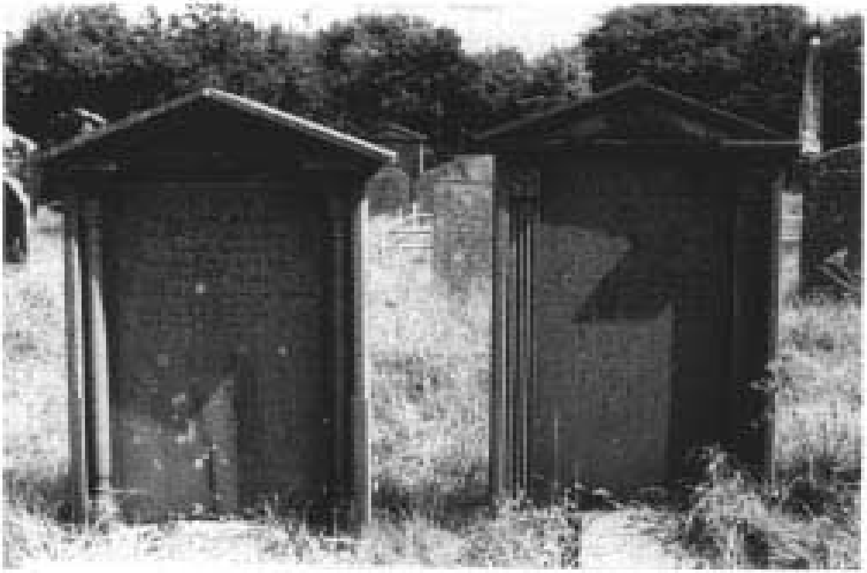

Figure 13.5 Pair of pedimented headstones to William and Sarah Mendus

suitable memorial before William's death but it is less likely that details were agreed. In the case of Sarah's monument again it is likely that she had made some arrangement to reserve the adjacent plot and to be buried there, rather than on top of her husband and so commemorated with an additional inscription on his stone (the normal arrangement). Who decided the details of this inscription is not known; the deceased may have left detailed instructions, or the surviving family may have decided. Whoever made the decision, however, the chosen form of words was both a common phrase (though not the only one), and socially defined Sarah in relation to her already dead husband and his occupation: being relict of William Mendus, master mariner.

Given that two stones were to be erected side by side, it is instructive to consider their similarities and differences. Both have pedimented headstones of very similar dimensions and overall form. However, William's headstone has columns and the text begins in the pediment; Sarah's has pilasters and a flower motif in the pediment. William's bears a verse in Welsh; Sarah's has one in English. There are elements of differencing here which may be partly due to gender (the use of flowers as a decorative motif), partly due simply to the desire to be different (pilasters as opposed to columns) and partly to convey a different cultural emphasis (English rather than Welsh). It is not likely, given the time factor, that wider changing fashions were responsible (see Table 13.2).

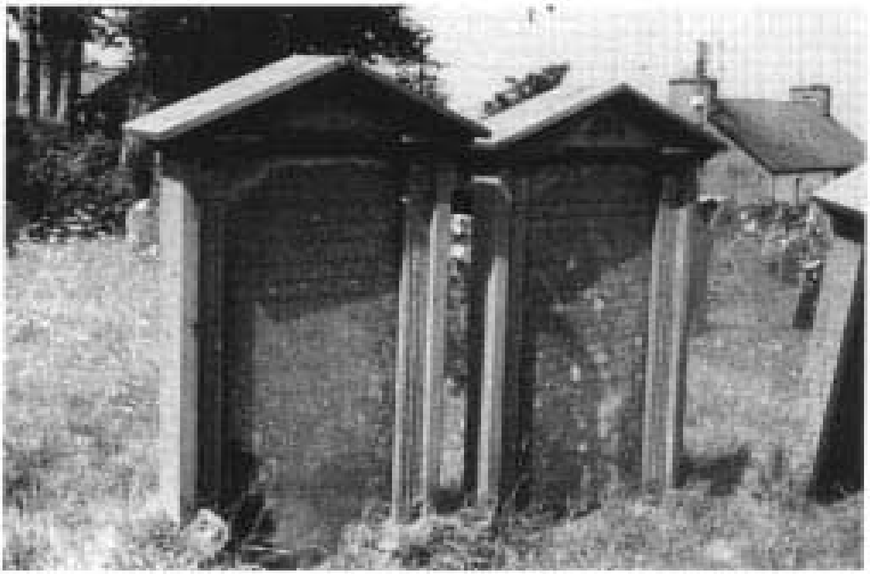

Figure 13.6 Pair of pedimented headstones to Elizabeth and John Hughes, Newport

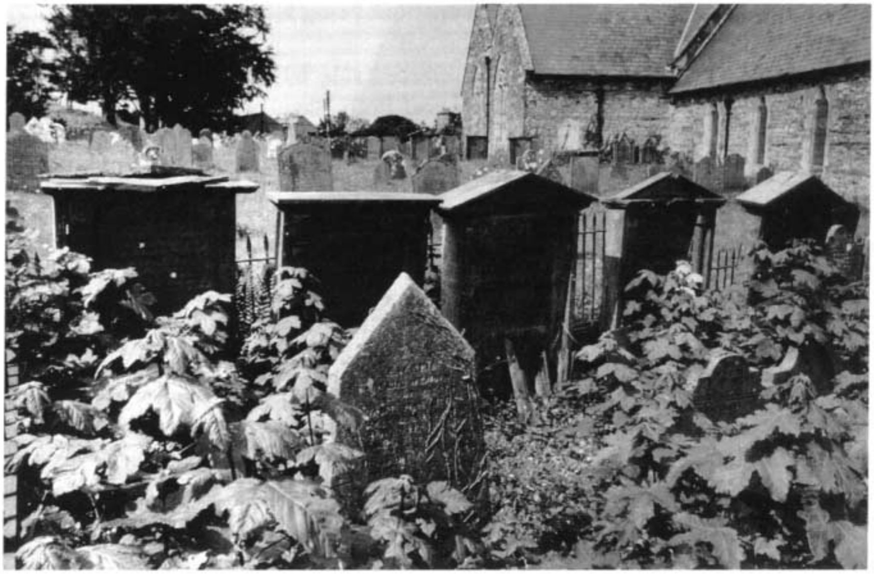

Figure 13.7 The Havard family plot, Newport

Pairs of pedimented monuments can also be shown to emphasize unity through style. An excellent example of this is provided by the adjacent monuments of Elizabeth and John Hughes in Newport, which are almost identical; it is only at a very fine level of detail on the mouldings and lettering styles that differences can be seen (Fig. 13.6). It can be assumed that these monuments were meant to look similar not only from a distance but at close range. Indeed, this degree of variability may indicate what was considered to all intents and purposes identical by both client and mason, particularly as the second monument would have been made in the workshop at a distance from the original standing in the churchyard. The unity of the couple is emphasized here, perhaps even the more so for their being commemorated on two stones: the repetition is more forceful than an inscription which merely adds the later death.

Larger family plots, such as that of the Havards at Newport, demonstrate clearly that more complex patterns of decision could be made over the course of the whole period during which pedimented stones were in fashion. While often chosen, they were not always; the desire to avoid identical stones within one walled plot meant that other forms were on occasion selected (Fig. 13.7). The relationships of those within the walled plot and the numerous other Havards scattered about the churchyard (some marked also by pedimented headstones) will be the subject of further research; family members are still resident and leading figures in the community.

CONCLUSION

The pedimented headstones of north Pembrokeshire allowed definition of social identity at a number of levels, from conveying membership of the middle class or gentry classes to separating oneself to whatever degree from other members of the family. The choices made seem to have been meaningful, and to have been based on a sophisticated awareness of variations in form of the pedimented headstone. With this variability allowing individual or group identity to be expressed at a fine level of detail, the finished product was socially active at many levels.

Further analysis of the pedimented monument is still required with regard to typology and production, commissioning and distribution. Already, however, this complex memorial type has yielded much information regarding the definition, creation and maintenance of social identities in nineteenth-century west Wales.

Acknowledgements

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Robert Evans has collected and collated much detailed information on the construction of the pedimented headstones, and Emma Goodwin has kindly helped to produce some of the line drawings. The photographs were all taken by the author. All the incumbents and congregations have been very supportive of this project, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for managing the heritage in their care.

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Part V

OLD FAMILIAR PLACES

14

BLOODY MEADOWS

The places of battle

John Carman

‘Bloody Meadow’ is not only a provocative descriptor of the subject of this chapter – which is the spillage of blood in particular places – but is also rooted in historical specifics since there are Bloody Meadows associated with the English battlefields at Towton (1461), Tewkesbury (1471) and elsewhere. These names for specific locations reflect the continuing memory of the events that took place there, and in particular the fierceness of the fighting. The familiarity of the ‘historic battlefield’ as a category invites us to investigate it further, both as the place of a specific event in the past and as a persisting memory into the present.

The subtitle of the chapter is intended to recall John Keegan’s (1976) book *The Face of Battle*, which has led to a significant change in studies of military history and has in part inspired a resurgence of interest as well as new approaches in this area in ancient history and archaeology (cf. Hanson 1983, 1989, 1991; Keeley 1996; Carman (ed.) 1997). Keegan’s book derives from his work as a lecturer in military history to young officers at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and in particular his responsibility to teach them what war is like, despite the fact that he has never had experience of combat. It is thus ‘a personal attempt to catch a glimpse of the face of battle’ (Keegan 1976: 78) and a means to communicate to professional soldiers at the beginning of their careers what it was like to be in a battle at a particular moment in history (ibid.: 18). He begins by criticizing traditional approaches to military history and in particular the standardized rhetoric of the ‘narrative tradition’ of battle writing (ibid.: 62–73), which is characterized by the reduction of an experience of complexity and confusion to only four elements: disjunctive movement (whereby significant changes of behaviour – as from retreat to advance – take place suddenly); uniformity of behaviour (whereby all of one side may be attacking and all of the other retreating); simplified characterization (whereby few if any individuals are named and none considered as complex personalities); and simplified motivation (so that troops respond, or fail to respond, only to commands) (ibid.: 65–6). Instead, Keegan examines the progress of three historic battles from the soldier's eye-view, covering such factors as what actually happens when, for instance, cavalry charge infantry (ibid.: 94–7, 153–9), or infantry are fired upon (ibid.: 93–4, 159–61, 243–6), what makes men break and flee (ibid.: 169–72) or stand (ibid.: 113–16, 179–92, 269–79) and the kinds of wounds likely to be suffered (ibid.: 112–13, 197–203, 263–9). The result is a focus that shifts away from the detached 'general's eye-view' of much military history to concentrate on the material experience of armed combat. While addressing battle as an event, Keegan does not consider the battlefield itself; except as a generalized category (ibid.: 285–95, 308–11, 320–4). The closest he gets to examining the actual landscape of a particular combat as a unique place in its own right is his description of the battlefield of Agincourt (1415), where the topography is assumed to have remained relatively unchanged into modernity (ibid.: 88).

The focus in this chapter, however, is specifically on the battlefield as a particular category of place, and, developing ideas derived from Keegan's work, as a locale representing a very particular kind of experience which can in significant ways be considered to differ with time and place. The ultimate intention is to explore the potential archaeology has to provide insights into the phenomenon of human violence and especially warfare (cf. Carman (ed.) 1997). I call the stance I take on this 'materialist' (with no apologies to others who use the identical term in a very different way, cf. Ferguson (ed.) 1984) because of its concentration on the specifically material experience of the particular form of violence we call a battle. That material is primarily and always composed of human flesh, human bone and human blood, as Keegan's work emphasizes; but also of the technologies brought to the battlefield; and of the landscape over which it is fought.

THE BATTLEFIELD AS CATEGORY

The main area of my research to date has been in the field called in Britain 'archaeological heritage (or resource) management' (elsewhere 'cultural resource management'), focusing in particular on the categories of material with which archaeologists deal, how they are conceptualized and the kinds of value schemes applied to them (Carman 1996 and forthcoming). From the perspective of categorization, the battlefield is an interesting phenomenon: it sits rather uneasily somewhere between the broader and more generally recognized archaeological categories of 'site' and 'landscape'. The site is a category with which all archaeologists are comfortable and familiar; the landscape as a focus of archaeological concern is perhaps a more recent development (Thomas 1993: 19), and we have some difficulty in incorporating it into our conceptual schemes (cf. the difficulties encountered in defining and recognizing 'relict historic landscapes' after Darvill, Gerrard and Startin 1993).

A site is generally considered to be something relatively bounded: one meaning of the term is 'the place or position occupied by some specified thing, frequently implying original or fixed position' (OED 1984). A site is usually not a site in itself but is instead the site of something else: accordingly, a battlefield site is the location where a battle was once fought. It is perhaps worth pointing out that there are in archaeology two quite distinct understandings of the concept of 'site' (Carman 1996: 122–3). First, sites may be understood as places where relatively more archaeological material is found than in the landscape surrounding them, although such material is scattered all over that landscape (cf. Foley 1981; Dunnell and Dancey 1983). Second, they may represent nodes of more concentrated past activity within a larger area over which other activities were also conducted, as in the case of a 'static' basecamp or settlement located within a 'range' from which a wide variety of resources were gathered (cf. Brück and Goodman (eds) in press). The first idea of site – as a relatively dense concentration of archaeological material – represents the site as a contemporary phenomenon that is the concern of the archaeologist in the present. The second idea – that of a specific locus of past human activity – is what we mean when we talk of a 'battlefield site'.

This notion of 'site' is of relevance in understanding the battlefield as a material phenomenon. It may be a peculiarly modern tendency – and a specifically western one at that – to mark battlefields as special places once the actual fighting is over. The major European battlefields of World Wars I and II are marked by huge memorial structures and cemeteries, and one can walk over carefully preserved stretches of World War I trench lines. The same applies to many of the battlefields of the American Civil War; even the Disney Corporation has tried (and failed) to appropriate one major theatre of operations of that bitter and violent conflict for its own purposes. One can follow by car the places where the events of the Battle of the Boyne (Ireland, 1690) took place, and from a specially constructed viewing-place look down on the bend of the river enclosing the marshy area that became the main killingground (but from which the lines of retreat of the defeated king and his French allies are conveniently invisible). Many small and large battlefields of England are marked by stone monuments and virtually all appear on commercial maps as the familiar figure of two crossed swords and an italicized date (cf. Smurthwaite 1993).

There is in addition something of a 'growth industry' in guides to battlefields in Britain, some of it consequent upon the publication of the *Register of Historic Battlefields* (English Heritage 1995; Guest and Guest 1996): visits to these locations are thus encouraged, and visitors' appreciation is assisted by the provision of information boards, car parks and specific viewpoints; to date, however, only one English battlefield can also boast a visitor centre (Bosworth, 1485). It is useful to bear in mind that battles in the modern period have often been seen as great spectacles: people took day trips from the cities of Spain to see the battles of the Peninsular War (Portugal and Spain, 1809–14), they picnicked on the heights above Balaklava (Crimea, 1854), and we could all tune in to watch Desert Storm (Kuwait and Iraq, 1991) on television. For those battles where it was not possible to provide viewing platforms, reconstructions have been staged – some as tourist attractions, like the refought battles of the medieval period and the English Civil War arranged by organizations such as English Heritage, and some as commercial entertainments in the form of war films. Like the landscape as a category, the battlefield is quintessentially a focus of the modern gaze (Olwig 1993; Thomas 1993; Walsh 1992).

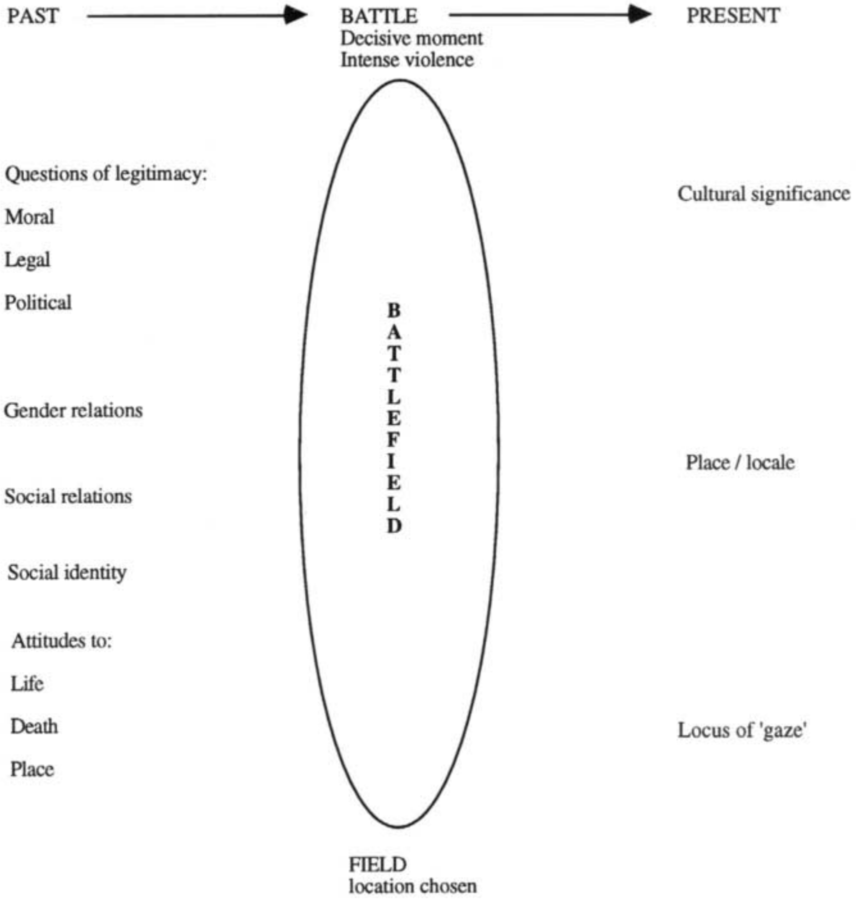
PAST
BATTLE
Decisive moment
Intense violence
PRESENT
Questions of legitimacy:
Moral
Legal
Political
Gender relations
Social relations
Social identity
Attitudes to:
Life
Death
Place
BATTLEFIELD
Cultural significance
Place / locale
Locus of 'gaze'
FIELD
location chosen

Figure 14.1 Battlefields from past to present

Once a battle has been fought at a particular place, that place becomes of importance to us. The battlefield is a particular type of place or locale which has particular associations of meanings attaching to it both at the time and afterwards. This idea invites us to envisage the battlefield as a kind of lens through which specific contemporary concerns are focused, transforming them into meaningful associations for their future and into our present (Fig. 14.1).

In the past, people came or were brought to the battlefield to settle crucial issues of political, moral or legal authority. Their contemporary status determined their right or duty to be present on the battlefield and whether or not they were eligible or required to take part in the fighting; and if so, how. The outcome would settle any disputes over their individual status ('coward' or 'hero', 'survivor' or 'martyr'), their virility (converting them from 'child' to 'man', perhaps), their group identity (as 'English', 'Scots' or 'British') and their individual identity (as 'loyalist' or 'traitor'), and would thus help to determine their subsequent fate. Events on the battlefield, the causes of the fighting and the outcome would reflect and subsequently legitimize attitudes to life and how to live it and death and how to meet it. In any culture which occasionally fights battles, battlefields are carefully chosen and necessarily reflect attitudes to the appropriateness of the use of space for particular functions. In the present, battlefields are marked as particular places of cultural significance, with a boundary drawn around them, and are si(gh)t(e)s one goes to gaze upon.

Battlefields are not quite so conveniently – or so easily – put in the category of 'site', however. They are extensive and not at all neatly bounded. The events of the Boyne extended over miles in several directions: there comes a point in tracing the places where events took place where one has to choose to follow the retreat of the French, or the different line of retreat of defeated King James, or stay with the Irish volunteers who fought on. The idea of the fixed and bounded point is inadequate in understanding the battlefield as a place: battlefields are not discrete sites, but landscapes.

THE BATTLE AS EVENT

Treating battlefields as landscapes invites us to look at them a particular way – and especially to focus on changes over time.

The style of battle common throughout much of Antiquity, through the medieval and well into the early modern period was like a formal duel, deliberately fought on flat ground with as few features as possible. Battles of early medieval England (e.g. Maldon, 1091; Assandun, 1016) appear to correspond to this type: modern descriptions of Maldon suggest the withdrawal of the English from the waterside deliberately to allow the Norsemen to form (Guest and Guest 1996: 10). The later set-piece English victories of the Hundred Years' War in France

(Crécy, 1346; Poitiers, 1356; Agincourt, 1415) broke the mould by pretending to meet expectation: in each the ground was flat and apparently featureless; the feature in fact exploited was low, wet or boggy ground in which the French mounted men-at-arms would founder and die. The nearest modern equivalent to these featureless plains is perhaps the slaughterhouse that was the World War I Western Front, but that also has peculiar characteristics of its own. The set-piece engagement on flat ground displays a very different attitude towards the kinds of places where battles were allowed to be fought than later in history.

By the end of the seventeenth century, places were actively being sought for battles that had recognizable features: high ground, wooded areas, defensible lines of stream or wall, or buildings in which to enclose troops. The shift in focus away from the search for flat ground and towards featured areas can be traced through the early post-medieval period into the seventeenth century. At Flodden (1513) the undulating ground hid advancing English troops from the Scots, but more by chance than their commanders' design. At Edgehill (1642) an attempt to use the steep slope to tactical advantage was foiled by the refusal of the parliamentarian army to advance, causing the royalist army to descend to the flat plain below to fight. At both Marston Moor (1644) and at Naseby (1645) landscape features were deliberately used as cover and concealment for musketeers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – by which time Britain had very successfully exported its warmaking to other peoples' territories – the search for featured ground came to be an important part of military practice: Wellington actively chose and marked out the places he would do battle against Napoleon's armies in the Iberian Peninsula (1809–14) as carefully as ancient commanders had sought flat ground on which to deploy. This period from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries was, as one military historian has put it, 'quintessentially the age of battles' (Weigley 1991: xi) – the period inspiring Clausewitz to write his monumental book *On War* (Clausewitz 1976), which argued the case for the decisive single clash of arms.

Day-long battle over shaped landscapes was to give way to 'the nightmare of endless grappling in the sodden trenches of . . . the American Civil War, and then the First World War' (Weigley 1991: xi). This was mechanized war by machine – mass-produced death, depersonalized and with no concern for human values or human scale, or for the space over which it was fought. The industrialized warfare of the World War I Western Front reduced everything – fields, buildings, forests, entire hillslopes – to a featureless flat mire of drowning mud. Everything in the killing-zone was systematically obliterated – landscape features and human beings. The nearest World War II equivalent was perhaps the battleground of the Hurtgen Forest (Germany, 1944–5), known to its soldiers with grim humour as 'The Death Factory' (Whiting 1990).

These changes represent more than mere technological advance or simply changes in tactics. As Hanson (1983) makes clear by drawing on his own knowledge of viticulture, the ancient Greek hoplite army fought as it did because of political, social and economic factors in which attitudes to time, to agricultural labour and to land are deeply implicated. Endemic in ancient Greece was war between city-states (Hanson 1991: 254), in which 'devastation of the farmland [was] the favoured way of bringing the war home to the enemy. . . . Soldiers would instinctively devastate cropland even where there were not important military, political or economic objectives [for doing so]' (Hanson 1983: 150–1) and despite their own knowledge that such action would not have a serious effect on the crops of the enemy (ibid.: 143). Similarly, Garlan (1975) points out that there are ritual aspects to the battles of Classical Antiquity which are vital in understanding them. There are thus echoes in the changes on battlefields of other changes in society. The shift of battlefields from flat fields to featured ground occurs at the same time as the rise of Foucault's (1977) 'disciplinary society' and of enclosure as both an agricultural phenomenon and a domestic one (Johnson 1996); the privatization of space may thus reflect the increasing concealment of troops on a battlefield, and vice versa. The subsequent industrialization of warfare takes place at the same time as the industrialization of civil society, and the reduction of the soldier to a machineminder at the same time as the spread of the scientifically ordered factory and the rise of measuring one's worth as a citizen in terms of economic productivity.

THE BATTLEFIELD AS PLACE

Battlefields are particular sorts of places. They are places where three things come together, each to some extent dependent for its definition and certainly its form upon the others. The first is a particular kind of technology, designed for killing; the second is a particular category of person called the soldier; the third is a particular kind of landscape where technology and soldier will meet. All three are amenable to archaeological understanding.

Technology

Previous studies of battlefields by archaeologists have focused intensively on its technological aspects, especially in the rather limited sense of collecting and identifying artefact types (e.g. for the artefacts scattered over the battlefields of the World War I, Laffin 1987). In their work at the site of the Battle of the Little Big Horn (USA, 1876), Scott et al. (1989) drew heavily on the analysis of the distribution of different types of arm and ammunition through the battlefield space to identify combatants and their movements across the landscape. Their intention was to construct 'a framework within which the behavioural aspects [of nineteenth-century battle] can be studied' (ibid.: 10) – 'behavioural aspects' here being understood in the limited sense of 'the events of the . . . fight as they are represented by the archaeological record' (ibid.: 8). Similarly, Newman (1981) and his colleagues used systematic fieldwork to locate and collect artefacts from the Battle of Marston Moor (1644), especially musket shot, cannonballs and soldiers' equipment, in order to understand the events of the battle (ibid.: 3), allowing them to identify the areas of heaviest fighting. Unfortunately, Newman's account – unlike Scott et al.'s (1989) – does not contain a detailed description of the fieldwork itself and its methodology, only its interpretation, and so the identification and differentiation of matchlock (the most common musket) shot from that of fusils (carbines, carried by mounted dragoons) or (newly invented) flintlocks remains problematic (Newman 1981: 75).

There is, however, more to an interest in technology than a mere listing of artefact types. Keegan discovers in two combined elements the origin of fullscale war: a technology of weaponry and battlefield movement (chariot-mounted archers); and a technology for the mass mobilization of a population (the priestKings of Assyria) (Keegan 1993: 168–77). In similar vein, the technologies of controlling an armed force – systems of logistics, of raising and leading troops, of organizing them into companies, battalions and regiments, and of positioning them at a particular place on a particular day to perform a particular set of actions – are equally crucial to making war and fighting battles. This is not a technology of mechanics or engineering, but of psychology and politics. From a reconstruction of how people move (or are moved) on a battlefield it may become possible to gain an insight into these technologies of control. These concern not things but people.

People

A concern with people in battle from an archaeological perspective invites an interest in palaeopathology. Wakely (1997) demonstrates that not only can types of injury be distinguished in terms of weapon used (e.g. sword-cuts versus depressed fractures from axe or mace), but it is also possible to distinguish between the healed wounds of violence and those of medicine. Scott et al. (1989: 244) went further: they sought not only to find the remains of the fallen at the Little Big Horn in order to determine their distribution across the battlefield space and thus the events of battle, but also the circumstances of their disposal, the degrees and types of trauma suffered by each of them (ibid.: 278–80), and such 'anthropological variables' as their place of birth, 'race', age and levels of health (ibid.: 248–51, 276–7). Work at the Crow Creek massacre site (USA *c.* 1325) identified not only the kinds of injuries and post-mortem mutilation inflicted on the dead, but also the possibility that while women of child-bearing age from that society were more likely to be taken captive in war, their males were highly susceptible to early death in combat (Zimmerman 1997: 84). In other words, both these investigations sought to understand the remains not only as corpses but also as living people in their time and place. Only certain categories of people are allowed on a battlefield. Traditionally, women are expected to be barred except as ‘camp followers’, cooks and cleaners. This expectation tends to be sustained in archaeological interpretation even in the face of the evidence of warlike injuries to women and the absence of other explanatory evidence (cf. Filer 1997: 63–5). There is some suggestion that as modernity developed, women increasingly disappeared from the battle-lines, although the presence of women in a battle at any time except as a rarity is a matter of dispute. If battlefield cemeteries can be reliably identified, the presence or absence of women among the dead – and their numbers if present – may be indicated. In recreating the events of the battle it may also be possible to identify forces which move or are used in a different manner from others, which may provide clues to the presence of different categories of person. The possibility remains, of course, that only one category of person is ever present on any battlefield, whether otherwise classed as man or woman, adult or child: that of ‘soldier’.

Landscape

Identification of battlefield cemeteries assumes the visibility of the battlefield itself to archaeologists (cf. Rodwell 1993: 142) and this chapter assumes throughout that the site of the battle is known from alternative sources. As used by Newman (1981: 4) these include written accounts of Marston Moor and contemporary and later documents, including maps; while Scott et al. (1989) knew of the Little Big Horn from written sources, markers scattered across the battlefield indicating the supposed positions of the dead (ibid.: 49–88), and the site’s designation as a National Monument.

The problems of identifying a battlefield site in earlier times are exemplified in Rodwell’s (1993) work on the Battle of Assandun (1016): place-name evidence, near-contemporary written descriptions and archaeology were all suggestive but none was conclusive. Further problems were identified in relation to the Battle of Maldon (991): the site had been identified in 1925, but the topography no longer corresponds to the written description (Petty and Petty 1993: 161). Geological reconstruction of the location at the supposed date of the battle using the evidence of varves confirmed by carbon 14 dating (ibid.: 166–7) resulted in a significantly different battlefield appearance from today’s: a rise in sea level of nearly 2 m over the past thousand years, and consequently a narrower creek with steep sides and dry and even soil rather than today’s soft ground (ibid.: 168). In reading the source description with this reconstructed landscape in mind, there is no longer any need for the sequence of events to include a withdrawal of the Saxons to allow the Norsemen to land, but the possibility that the Saxon army forced the Norse to fight at a disadvantage up a steep slope (ibid.: 168–9). Similarly, Newman carefully sought to reconstruct the processes by which Marston Moor has changed from the 'broad moorland of scrub and gorse and bog on which the battle had been fought [to] the neat arable acreage which it now comprises' (Newman 1981: 3); and Scott et al. (1989: 39–48) used the techniques of geomorphology to identify changes in the Little Big Horn landscape which may hide the location of some of the bodies unaccounted for, and thus to elucidate their fate. In understanding the shape of the landscape at the time of battle, it becomes possible to reconstruct the events of the day as a first step towards deeper understanding of the phenomenon of battle.

In the reconstruction of battles as events the focus is placed upon human movement through space. In terms of specifically military studies, the concept of 'Inherent Military Probability' (IMP), defined as 'the solution of an obscurity by an estimate of what a trained soldier would have done in the circumstances' (Keegan 1976: 34; Newman 1981: 4), is likely to be drawn upon. This approach has its merits and contributes much to modern studies of warfare, but its weakness is the assumption that a universal 'military attitude' applies in all times and places. The alternative assumption made here is that this is not the case, and that one job of the student of the past is to reveal the difference of the past from the present.

An alternative to IMP is to treat all movement through space as a form of performance, an idea that derives from some approaches in prehistoric archaeology (Barrett 1991; Thomas 1991). In this 'archaeology of ritual' all movement is to be seen as a form of objectified discourse, focusing on the physicality and thus the apparent 'objectivity' of ritual actions (Barrett 1991: 4–6). Attention is placed on physical actions as forms of ritual which guide participants through a series of specific signifiers, leading them to make the approved connections between them. In so moving, participants are invited and required to create and reaffirm socially constructed meanings (Thomas 1991: 34). The highly ritualized movements of large numbers of people across the battlefield may be seen in this way, and serve to remind us of Edmund Leach's idea that 'killing [people] is [fundamentally] a classifying operation' (1965: 175) – the creation of social meanings. These meanings need not have been those we hold today; accordingly, this approach – rather than solving 'obscurities' by the application of a universally applicable reasoning process – regards 'obscurities' as indicative of the difference of the time and place of battle from today. They thus may serve to illuminate the attitudes and expectations of those present and tell us more about them and their time.

Battlefields are fields of a particular kind of action and the study of the battlefield is thus inevitably about human activity. This in turn reflects other aspects of society including general attitudes towards one another, towards landscapes and to the construction and use of space. Ultimately a concern with battlefields is a concern with understanding how people, space and environments are categorized and how those categorizations are reflected in systems of action and of use – in the past and in the present.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined an approach that seeks to study the phenomenon of the battlefield from an archaeological perspective. In doing so, the techniques of historical archaeology are combined with some of the ideas and approaches belonging to prehistoric archaeology, especially those relating to the study of landscapes – a category with which the battlefield has close affinities – and ‘archaeologies of ritual’, which concern the movements of people through space. It is an approach that considers battlefields not only as sites of past activity but also as contemporary (modern) categories – as places containing memory – because it asks what they mean to us. It is an approach that can be called ‘materialist’ because its focus is ultimately always on the material aspects of human violence. It is not an easy approach, not least because in thus focusing on materiality it does not allow us to be squeamish and conveniently forget what warfare and battle are really about – always and everywhere, they concern nothing but terror, pain, killing and blood.

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15

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF POST-MEDIEVAL GARDENS

Practice and theory

Tom Williamson

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Garden archaeology has, over the last two decades, become a distinct subdiscipline within post-medieval archaeology, in both Britain and America (Brown (ed.) 1991; Currie and Locock 1991; Kelso 1992; Taylor 1983). But in Britain especially, the subject has, with few exceptions, been mainly concerned with the practical business of surveying and recording the physical remains of early designed landscapes, rather than with interpreting these in social terms. Archaeology in the former restricted sense has certainly made a major contribution to our understanding of early designed landscapes in Britain. Excavation has been important in a number of contexts (Currie and Locock 1991), but of particular significance has been the impact of field survey and aerial photography (Taylor 1996). It is, however, arguable that some of this work has concentrated on earthworks to the exclusion of standing structures – enclosure walls, garden buildings. Planting too has received less attention than it might have done (Phibbs 1983). Trees can be dated, within broad limits of accuracy, on the basis of their size and position (Mitchell 1971: 25); while their present growth habit can provide evidence about how they were managed in the past (whether headed, pollarded, topiaried or whatever) (Taigel and Williamson 1993: 23–9). Meticulous analysis of relict vegetation has been a feature of some of the best work on designed landscapes in England, but much of this has been carried out as part of management or restoration projects by professional consultants, and unfortunately remains unpublished.

Field archaeology's most dramatic impact has perhaps been in the study of medieval gardens, most notably with the recognition by Christopher Taylor, Paul

Everson and others that high-status sites like Bodiam in Sussex were, as early as the fourteenth century, being provided with a carefully contrived and extensive landscape setting (Taylor, Everson and Wilson-North 1990; Everson 1996). Yet the physical development of parks and gardens in subsequent periods has also been illuminated by archaeological enquiry, not least because much about their design and layout was never written down and, where it was, such material was frequently thrown away, as redundant, at a later stage. The surviving physical remains are often our only evidence. It is, nevertheless, important to note that the designed landscapes created in England in different periods have left varying physical traces, and the techniques most appropriate to the study of the gardens of one period may be less applicable to those of another. Gardens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can leave highly visible archaeological remains, for their creation often involved considerable amounts of earth-moving in order to create the terraces, basins and viewing mounds which were important features in these structured, geometric and highly artificial environments. At the largest sites, like Chatsworth in Derbyshire, contours were drastically altered simply to create the broad level areas necessary for the parterres, the formal arrangements of gravel, turf, boxwork and other planting which had, by the end of the seventeenth century, become a key feature of garden design. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century gardens also featured much ‘hard landscaping’ in the form of gravel paths, ornamental buildings and in particular walls, for most gardens were dominated by interconnecting networks of walled enclosures. These sometimes survive as upstanding features – especially where residences have been ‘downwardly mobile’, declining over time from mansion to farm – elsewhere as footings and foundations revealed as parch marks. From the end of this period, too, we get the oldest surviving aesthetic planting, especially in the form of avenues, usually composed of lime or sweet chestnut.

During the first third of the eighteenth century new forms of garden design emerged, associated in particular with Charles Bridgeman and Stephen Switzer (Willis 1977). Although still firmly in the geometric tradition, these were simpler, less cluttered designs, which featured smooth grass lawns, gravel paths and formal arrangements of trees rather than elaborate parterres. Gardens of this period can leave particularly clear archaeological traces, for their construction often involved considerable feats of earth-moving in order to create terraces and viewing mounds even more monumental in character than those of the seventeenth century. Perimeter walls declined in popularity, and views were opened up into the adjacent areas of parkland: the prospect was often improved by cutting vistas through hills or otherwise altering natural landforms. Equally striking was the growing enthusiasm for Classical buildings and features – sculptures, temples and the like. From the 1740s – under the influence, in particular, of William Kent – these were sometimes set within separate compartments with more serpentine layouts, and containing more irregular planting, than the geometric frameworks around them. At Stowe in Buckinghamshire, Holkham in Norfolk and elsewhere these carefully composed scenes echoed the scenery of the Italian *campagna*: not as it really was, but as dimly remembered by those who had witnessed such places, first hand, on the Grand Tour, or as depicted on the paintings of Lorraine or Poussin which hung on the walls of the wealthy.

This period also seems to have seen a rise in the aesthetic importance of the deer park. Parks had long been highly valued environments – reflecting the high status and symbolic significance of the venison which they produced – but the post-medieval period had seen a growing association of park and residence. Whereas in the early Middle Ages a high proportion of parks had been located in isolated situations, at some distance from elite residences, by the fifteenth century these were a small minority. The majority of parks were now located beside mansions and were considered an indispensable aspect of the landscape of gentility. Deer parks had, even in medieval times, contained banqueting houses and similar structures. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so far as the evidence goes, such features became more common and by the end of the seventeenth century many parks were extensively colonized by avenues and other aesthetic features which continued the main formal alignments within the geometric gardens. Two significant changes occurred to the landscape of the park in the 1730s, 1740s and 1750s. First, the planting tended to become simpler and more monumental, mirroring developments in the garden. In particular, complex meshes of avenues were increasingly replaced by more subtle expressions of dominance, in which extended linear vistas were framed by geometric blocks of woodland. Second, and more importantly, the park was often expanded so that the mansion house lay close to its centre, rather than near its periphery, as had often been the case in earlier periods. Thus at Nostell Priory in Yorkshire Sir Rowland Winn and Stephen Switzer diverted the Doncaster road in order, as Switzer put it, to 'place ye House in ye Middle of ye Park' (Jackson-Stops 1991: 46). As manor house and village were often in close proximity, settlement desertion or shrinkage were the frequent results. Dwellings had been removed and settlements truncated to make way for landscaping schemes in earlier periods, but in the early eighteenth century there appears to have been a marked increase in this phenomenon.

Early medieval deer parks had often been established at the expense of marginal land, peripheral areas of wood-pasture 'waste'. This was seldom the case with post-medieval parks, which – laid out around an existing mansion – usually replaced a working agricultural landscape of farms and fields. How this earlier landscape was treated by park-makers is of particular interest. At many elite residences phenomenal amounts of labour were expended on levelling the sites of settlements removed by emparking. At Holkham in Norfolk, for example, the estate accounts reveal that labourers worked for ten years in the 1750s, levelling the remains of the village to the north of the hall, in order to create the studied natural simplicity of Kent's North Lawn (Williamson 1998). Not surprisingly, no above-ground traces of the settlement now survive.

It is important to emphasize, however, that these changes in garden design (often represented as normal or typical by garden historians) were, to a large extent, restricted to the county elites of large landowners – those with estates of 10,000 acres or more, and with wide social contacts and extended political horizons. It was mainly members of this group who embraced the shift towards less enclosed and simpler geometric gardens, replete with classical references and structures, and who surrounded their homes with extensive parks containing the new styles of simplified geometric planting. The local gentry, in contrast – those with more circumscribed properties and more local interests – were less likely to possess deer parks. In addition, they usually retained their walled gardens, and maintained a traditional range of productive facilities (barns, farmyards, orchards, fish ponds and dovecotes) in close proximity to their homes.

Yet this situation changed in the decades after 1760. Under the influence of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and his less famous contemporaries like Nathaniel Richmond and Richard Woods, the grounds of local gentry and great landowners began to look more and more alike. All landowners of substance now swept away structured, geometric gardens from the vicinity of the mansion, together with walled enclosures and other domestic clutter. By the 1780s and 1790s, all houses of any social significance stood within an open 'naturalistic' landscape of scattered grass and trees (Stroud 1965). Such *landscape parks* often included an irregular, serpentine lake, and were surrounded in whole or part by a perimeter belt of woodland. It is sometimes implied that gardens disappeared entirely from the residences of the fashionable when this occurred, but this is a misunderstanding. Pleasure grounds consisting of areas of lawn and serpentine gravel paths usually remained, and sometimes even flower gardens. But these were normally tucked away out of sight of the main facades, to one side of the mansion, which had to appear to stand in open parkland. Any glimpse of garden walls, in particular, was scrupulously avoided, and kitchen gardens were now hidden away behind stable blocks and shrubbery screens, or on occasions moved to the far side of the park.

The archaeological study of landscape parks has received less attention than that of the more formal gardens which these replaced. In fact, although less reliant on hard landscaping of stone or brick, the landscape park did contain some structural elements. These included 'ha-has' or sunken fences which were used, mainly but not exclusively, to divide the pleasure grounds beside the house from the wider parkland; buildings and other ornamental structures (temples, obelisks, etc.); and gravelled drives and paths. Moreover, of equal importance are the traces of the landscapes which existed before the parks were laid out, now fossilized in earthwork form: hollow ways marking the line of closed roads; the remains of farms and cottages which had been cleared away; as well as features relating to the former division and cultivation of the agrarian landscape (field boundaries, ridge-

and-furrow, etc.). Once again what is interesting is the way in which the earlier landscape was treated by park-makers. The creation of parks involved not simply the destruction but also the utilization and adaptation of pre-park features, and thus the spatial organization of the earlier landscape often had a determining influence on the design of the park itself. Above all, most landscape parks contain a significant proportion of trees retained from the working countryside which they replaced. Earlier hedgerows were removed but the trees, often already of considerable antiquity, were retained, thus producing an instant sylvan scene. But vast amounts of new planting were also undertaken, of clumps, freestanding trees and perimeter belts.

The creation of eighteenth-century parks, like that of earlier designed landscapes, could also involve significant amounts of earth movement. Most of the larger parks were supplied with lakes. While these might in part be produced by excavation, they were mainly formed by raising a dam to pond back a watercourse which, filling the valley behind, produced an area of water of acceptable ‘serpentine’ form. These retaining dams were often massive features. The creation of the largest parks might also involve much alteration of the natural contours in order to open up appropriate views. Thus at Chatsworth the estate accounts reveal that Millican, Capability Brown’s main contractor, received vast amounts of money specifically for earth-moving, more than could possibly be accounted for by the destruction of the formal terraces to the east of the house. Yet the area of the new landscape park which was laid out in this period to the west of the river Derwent is carpeted with an unbroken relict landscape, of hollow ways, former field boundaries and ridge-and-furrow. This contains no obvious lacunae which might indicate where contours had been ‘shaved’. Closer inspection reveals the answer to the conundrum: the banks of the Derwent, formerly so steep that the river was invisible from the mansion, have been systematically graded so that it could form a major element of the main prospect from the house. Typically, vast amounts of money were expended to create an effect so ‘naturalistic’ that its artificiality is unnoticed.

In the early nineteenth century designed landscapes began to change once again, and with them the kinds of material available for their archaeological study. Under the influence of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, of Humphry Repton, and subsequently of designers like William Sawrey Gilpin and John Loudon, structured order began to return once more to the vicinity of the mansion. Gardens and pleasure grounds became more extensive and elaborate, terraces and parterres reappeared, separating the house from the open expanses of parkland. Within the park itself planting became lusher, more varied and more luxuriant; and greater attention seems to have been paid to the relationship between the park and the wider countryside, with particular care being taken over entrances. These trends intensified in mid-century with, in particular, the establishment of elaborate and extensive Italianate terraces, upon which were placed parterres which often purported to be reconstructions of the formal designs of an earlier age. In many ways the wheel of fashion had turned full circle. Archaeology can, perhaps surprisingly, often make an important contribution to the study of even these relatively modern landscapes, for many are poorly documented in written records and most have now been swept away, demolished or simplified. The formal planting patterns of this period were often – unlike earlier parterres – created with much excavation, the constituent beds being taken down a metre or more into the subsoil and backfilled with soil and manure. They are thus clearly revealed from the air (Fig. 15.1) and through excavation, as at Audley End in Essex (Crossley 1993: 69). A complex range of social, economic and political changes in the period after 1880 saw the gradual decline in these landscapes of conspicuous display. Such features now survive, if at all, in a simplified and often degraded state.

Archaeological survey can thus tell us much about the physical development of designed landscapes of all periods. Its potential is, however, greatest when combined with systematic analysis of the documentary sources – estate accounts, correspondence, diaries, maps and illustrations. The physical evidence can act as a check on the documents (enabling, for example, the researcher to distinguish

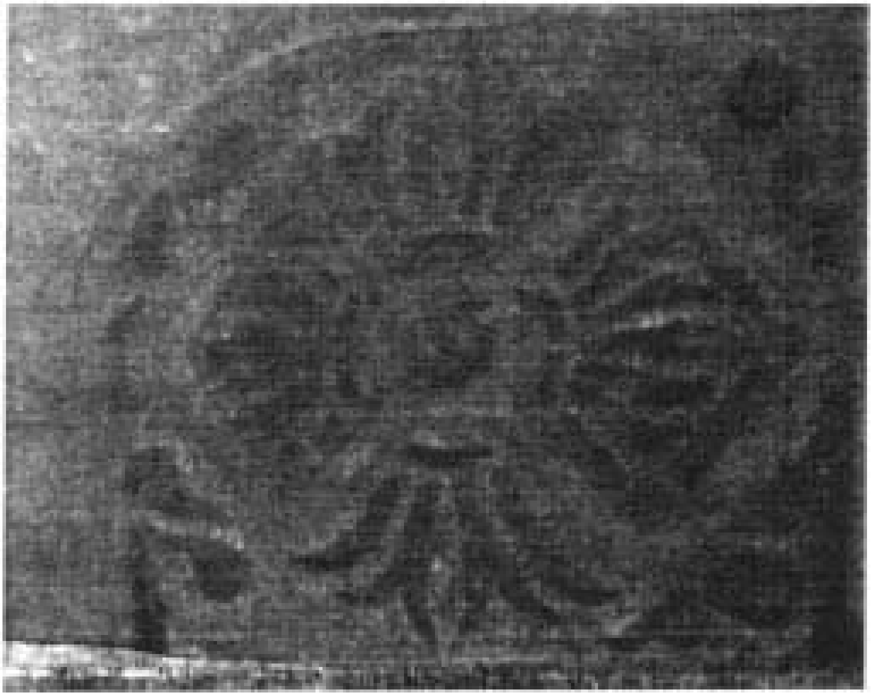

Figure 15.1 Parch marks of the nineteenth-century parterre, Houghton, Norfolk (copyright Derek A. Edwards, Norfolk Museums Service)

between unexecuted proposal and actual survey); while conversely, the documents can act as a check on the significance of the physical remains. Thus, for example, parkland planting of eighteenth-century date is overwhelmingly dominated by indigenous hardwoods – principally oaks. Yet documentary sources make it clear that these landscapes also contained large numbers of conifers – Scots pine, larch, silver fir – which not only functioned as 'nurses' for the indigenous trees within the plantations, but also featured as free-standing specimens in their own right.

GARDENS AND SOCIETY: THE CASE OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Detailed reconstruction of the often long and complex history of a park or garden should be only the start of the archaeologist's task. The social theory which archaeologists are accustomed to using in other contexts can also be profitably employed in the garden. The designed landscapes of eighteenthcentury England provide one fruitful field for analysis of this kind. In conventional art-historical terms the development of garden design in this period has usually been seen as largely autonomous from, or at best only loosely connected with, more general patterns of social and economic change. Gifted individuals – 'great artists' – imbued with the aesthetic and philosophical concerns of their age successively adopted the designs of their predecessors to create new styles. These became in turn a new fashion, copied by a host of 'inferior' practitioners (Hadfield 1960; Hussey 1967; Jacques 1983; Turner 1986). Yet in the final analysis these landscapes of eighteenth-century England were products, their owners consumers, and the 'great artists' businessmen, often highly successful ones. Styles of landscape only became fashionable if they appealed to landowners: they thus had to fit in with many other aspects of their lifestyle, and their meanings cannot reside solely within the realm of aesthetic or philosophical discourse. The way men lived, their attitudes to friends, neighbours, family, political allies and social inferiors, how they farmed and what they hunted – all these things were of considerable significance in the moulding of a gentleman's grounds. And such matters, because they were known, familiar and in some cases unconscious, cannot always be derived in any direct way from the written texts left by the owners or creators of these landscapes. They reside instead in the material traces of their world. Once we have reconstructed the layout and appearance of early landscapes, we must therefore try to recreate the ways in which they would have been perceived and experienced from various spatial standpoints, by the different social actors moving within (or excluded from) them.

Yet these social actors brought to such landscapes attitudes and memories forged outside, in the wider world. And thus the meaning of designed landscapes often depended on implied contrasts to or similarities with other landscapes and features.

These in turn might themselves have complex layers of meaning attached, which in turn referenced other times and places – and so on, in receding panoramas of increasing complexity. At the same time, the extent to which and ways in which these rafts of meaning were understood varied from individual to individual and from group to group. Yet whatever observers brought with them to the garden gate, they had to be admitted into the landscape for the design to have any effect upon or meaning to them. This, of course, is one criticism which can be made of Mark Leone's pioneering interpretation of eighteenth-century gardens in Maryland as a form of legitimation (Leone 1984), for it is by no means apparent that the relevant sections of the population either saw the landscapes in question on a regular basis or, more importantly, possessed the kinds of knowledge required to receive the messages supposedly being presented to them.

Some writers have also interpreted eighteenth-century English landscapes, and in particular landscape parks, as forms of legitimation, intended to bolster inequalities between the landed rich and landless poor by making them appear as natural as the landscape of the park itself (Bermingham 1987: 9–14). But there are a number of difficulties with such a view. First, to judge from contemporary documentary sources, especially diaries and correspondence, eighteenth-century landowners were primarily concerned with the impression that their parks and gardens might make on neighbours or visitors of similar (or more elevated) social status. The impact such displays of wealth or taste might have upon the local poor was a matter of indifference: there was little need to worry about the attitudes of a group who were almost entirely lacking in economic or political power. Second, any interpretation of the social meaning of landscape design has to take into account the fact that eighteenth-century England was a complex society, and not one composed simply of two confronting groups, the landed rich and the landless poor. One important division, already referred to, was that between the elite of great landowners and the more numerous local gentry. In addition, this increasingly capitalist society included – beside farmers and agricultural labourers – large numbers of merchants, financiers, industrialists, professionals and shopkeepers: in other words, a broad 'middle class' which was, throughout the century, increasing steadily in wealth and numbers.

The origins of the classic 'Brownian' landscape park which became the normal setting for gentry houses in the period after *c.* 1750 lay partly in the semiornamental parks of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; but partly in the serpentine, Italianate compartments created within late geometric gardens at Stow, Holkham and elsewhere. At the latter site vast amounts of labour had been expended in obliterating all traces of the earlier agricultural landscape. Within an essentially geometric framework of formal avenues and vistas, itself surrounded by a deer park, William Kent's innovative landscape was laid out across the south front of the hall (Fig. 15.2). Its meaning was only fully available, like that of the correct Palladian architecture of the house which it accompanied, to the *cognoscenti.*

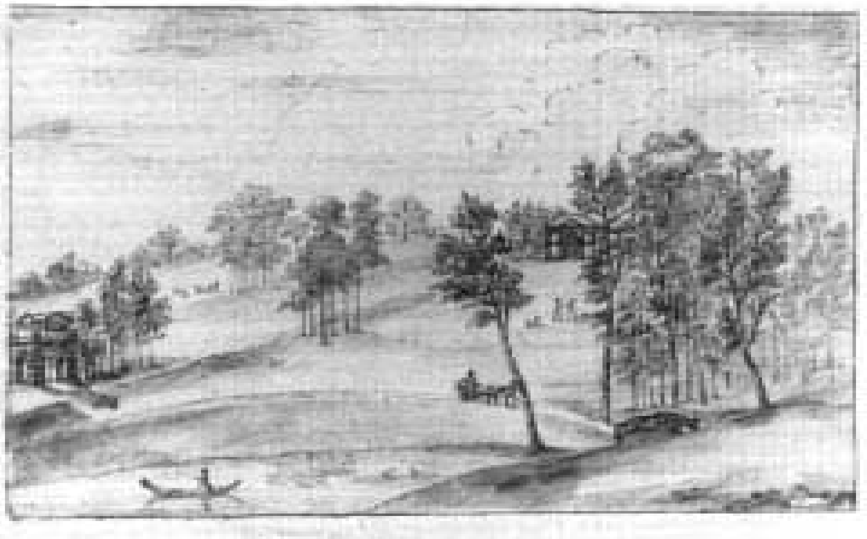

Figure 15.2 William Kent's design for the 'Seat on the Mount', Holkham *c.* 1738 (Holkham archives)

In part this was simply because Classical allusions and correct Palladian proportions could only be understood by those with the required knowledge and education. But in addition, such scenes represented an attempt to stimulate memories of a distant world which only a tiny minority had actually experienced. These were images of Italy, dimly and fondly remembered from a journey long before: for this was the period in which the Grand Tour became *de rigueur* for the sons of the wealthy. In earlier centuries, earlier millennia, artifacts of an exotic nature had been employed by elites to display their difference from the mass of the population: objects which could only be obtained through far-flung networks of exchange which they controlled, to the exclusion of others. But this was something different. A realm of both knowledge and experience, available to an elite but unfamiliar to the majority, was being mapped out on to the environment at the expense of the familiar and the local. Garden design was thus a political act, which moved landscapes into a realm of selective social experience, thereby defining a broad social elite and subtly excluding the rest.

The local community of farmers and labourers were not the intended recipients of these messages: most would have been excluded from these landscapes in any case. But the audience was not entirely restricted to the elite of large landowners. Places like Holkham or Stowe were on display to a wider public, visited by members of the gentry and professional classes. Such people would have understood a great deal of what was presented there: Italianate and Classical references were by no means unfamiliar to them, especially as many would have shared a basic education in the Classics. More importantly, while few had ever been to Italy, most had enjoyed the Italian countryside vicariously, through the prints derived from the paintings made by such fashionable artists as Lorraine and Poussin, which sold in large numbers in this period. Familiarity with such artefacts allowed members of this wider group to understand not only the landscapes, but also what it was about their creators which set them apart from society as a whole. In other words, these landscapes (and the houses they surrounded) did indeed operate as instruments of legitimation, but only in regard to those who understood some part of the language of design. Such partial knowledge was unavailable to a wider, more lowly audience, and theses messages were not directed towards them.

Yet at the same time, by maintaining – in grand and simplified form – many of the elements of the previous traditions of geometric landscaping places like Stow served to impress in another way. For all members of society could understand what was being signalled by the grandeur and scale of avenues and vistas, and by the deer parks beyond and around them. All were long-established expressions and signs of status. This was the complex web of image and allusion laid out around the residences of power in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

As already noted, geometric features were progressively removed from elite sites in the decades after 1750, and at the same time the local gentry removed walled geometric gardens and courts from around their own mansions. By the end of the century, all landowners of substance had their homes set within the informal, 'naturalistic' setting of the landscape park. In this, classical buildings and allusions to distant places were of limited significance: the park was, in essence, a transformation of the indigenous landscape, intended to bring out the essential natural beauties of a place. These were new landscapes, for new times.

The second half of the eighteenth century was indeed a period of profound social change. The gentry benefited from a period of demographic growth and sustained economic expansion, but their prosperity was not shared by their immediate neighbours. Smaller farmers often suffered because they were unable to invest in the capital-intensive improvements required to remain competitive in this age of 'agricultural revolution'. Small owner-occupiers continued to go to the wall and large estates steadily engrossed tenancies to make ever-larger farms. The fortunes of the labouring poor also declined, especially in the period after *c.* 1780 and particularly in the south and east of the country where – in the absence of large-scale industrialization – the steady growth of the rural population outstripped employment opportunities. The progressive enclosure of open fields and commons compounded the problems of these groups. This was, in short, a period of increasing polarization, in which a social gulf widened between gentry and local communities.

One way of interpreting the park is as the landscape of genteel seclusion. The creation of parks usually involved the termination or diversion of ancient rights of way and sometimes the removal of farms and cottages. The very essence of the landscape style was seclusion and privacy: belts of trees firmly marked the boundary between the polite landscape and the working countryside, and obscured any view of farms or cottages in the immediate vicinity (although the safely distanced church spire, or smoke rising from a picturesque cottage, might be permissible embellishments to the prospect). In this context it is important to note how contemporary writers on landscape design frequently talked about consulting the 'genius of the place': working with, rather than against, the character of the local topography. Careful consideration of the existing scenery meant, in effect, that an extensive ornamental landscape could be created at comparatively little cost. Numerous elements in the existing countryside, especially hedgerow trees, woods and copses, were retained and appropriated to the landscape of leisure. Lakes made with minimal alterations to the natural contours were much cheaper to construct than basins or canals on the older, geometric pattern. The maintenance of landscape parks was also relatively cheap. The wide expanses of turf could be grazed at a profit; the timber in clumps and belts was an investment which would pay good dividends in the medium term. The point is not that landscape parks were cheap (for they were not) but rather that they were comparatively so, given their size. Vast amounts of money could be expended, and often were, in the case of the largest parks. But a passable version could be created relatively cheaply. Parks were thus within reach of most landowners of substance.

We can explore how parks functioned as insulating spaces by imagining how they might have been experienced by contemporaries. For the owner and his family, or their guests, parks were viewed from within. From here the sweeping turf and casually scattered trees represented a negation of labour and productive usefulness. These were self-contained panoramas: where the prospect was not hemmed in by belts of trees, it generally took the form of fairly distant, vague horizons. When landowners took their families (as they often did) to visit neighbours, they would have boarded their coach, driven through the familiar, empty grounds, and out on to the public road. Having entered public space the open, casual irregularity of the landscape park would have been replaced by a vista of rectilinear fields: by a landscape of order, enclosure and labour. Panoramas of empty grass would be succeeded by a landscape of productive toil. Fields, farms, cottages, labourers: all would have been experienced at a safe distance, as a drama unfolding through the windows of a moving coach. And arriving at their destination, the travellers were plunged once more into safer territory, into another empty and secluded landscape of 'natural' ease, another private and insulating space.

For individuals of less exalted station the experience of the park was different. Those of middling status, admitted in certain circumstances, would have been acutely aware of the profound contrast between the landscape park and the world which they inhabited – a less private world of gardens and fields. The poor, in contrast, were for the most part excluded completely, unless their labour was required to maintain the grounds. We know little of how the poor perceived these landscapes, but there are, not surprisingly, sporadic indications of active hostility towards them, usually in the form of petty acts of vandalism, directed in particular at belts and plantations.

It is important to stress, however, that landscape parks had other, perhaps more important functions, and that changing relations between the landowners on the one hand, and tenant farmers and the poor on the other, were only one part of a wider package of social change. Of equal significance was the emergence of a new pattern of relations between the local gentry and the elite of great landowners. In the early eighteenth century, as in the seventeenth, landed society had been fairly rigidly stratified, social encounters stiff and almost ceremonial in character, with considerable stress placed upon the relative rank of the participants. During the course of the century, partly because of the changing balance of economic power within the landed classes, this gradually changed. Differences of rank were consciously played down (Langford 1992: 59–124; Girouard 1978: 188–93; Williamson 1995: 110–18; Girouard 1990: 76–8). Easy social contact between great landowners on the one hand, and local gentry and wealthier professionals on the other, was now of prime importance. All began to share a single lifestyle, and to socialize in a less formal, more affable way. The upper echelons of English society began to cohere into a single 'polite society', to use the contemporary phrase.

This group was defined by shared norms of dress and behaviour, by knowledge of manners and etiquette, and increasingly by a shared accent and vocabulary. But it was also defined by what its members consumed; and this period saw a steady expansion in consumption, as the number of shops, playhouses, assemblies and other arenas for 'undiluted socialising and personal display' (Dain 1993: 7) steadily increased. Yet this expansion of consumption did not only affect the landed rich: it was part of a wider phenomenon to which social historians have applied the label of the 'Consumer Revolution'. This was a period in which 'more men and women than ever before in human history enjoyed the experience of acquiring material possessions' (MacKendrick, Brewer and Plumb 1982: 1).

England was a highly stratified society, with massive inequalities of wealth. But it had long been a society in which there was a degree of upward mobility, and in the course of the eighteenth century an expanding and more complex economy increased the possibilities for advancement. The expansion of the service sector, in particular, led to an increase in the size of the 'middle class' – a varied group, with members ranging from small farmers and shopkeepers, through petty industrialists, to prosperous merchants and professionals. All these developments were matters of some concern to established landed families. Traditional markers of status were being eroded, as the expansion of production made a range of material goods, once restricted to the rich, more widely affordable. Elite commentators were acutely aware that appearances were increasingly deceptive, that rank could no longer be ascertained from the clothes that an individual wore (Fielding 1988: 77; Williamson 1995: 112–14). This was an age of increasing uncertainty: it was hard to see how traditional values and hierarchies could be maintained in this more fluid world. Where, within the large and diverse continuum of society, should the line between the 'polite' and the rest be drawn?

Abundant documentary and, to some extent, archaeological evidence shows that the gardens of the middle classes grew steadily in sophistication in this period (Bell 1990; Williamson 1995: 114–17). Some were still essentially geometric in layout; all were highly structured and detailed. Such individuals lacked the necessary land to lay out the more open spaces of a landscape park. Here, in all probability, we can see why the landed rich banished the formal structure of gardens from the main facades of their homes. Gentlemen, by definition, looked out across parks: gardens were bourgeois, just as farmyards and barns and the rest were the mark of the peasant. However much the landscape park might, in reality, have economic uses, the gentleman's domain should *appear* to be useless and unproductive, a landscape devoted to recreation, to riding fast across the open turf, to shooting the pheasants with which the clumps and plantations were now liberally stuffed (Munsche 1981). The landscape park thus became the undisputed sign of true gentility; for only a gentleman could have one. In an increasingly uncertain world, it helped to reaffirm aspects of traditional hierarchy, its essential style harking back – but with a veneer of fashionable planting – to the ancient, traditional landscape of the deer park. The manicured elegance of the 'politeness', and the ancient lineage of the deer park: what better symbol could there be for a new social order?

Yet there is a further level of complexity. Garden historians have, quite understandably, been so interested in the development of the landscape park that the fate of gardens in the second half of the eighteenth century has been neglected, and to some extent misunderstood. As already noted, and in spite of what is sometimes implied, the mansions of the rich did not in reality stand in the middle of empty expanses of grass, although care was taken to ensure that they *looked* as if they did. Gardens of various kinds continued to exist, away from the main facades. Many gentlemen, while adopting the dominant fashion, continued to take an interest in horticulture; many, indeed, were active gardeners. The same was true to an even greater extent of their wives, as is indicated by the evidence of diaries and estate accounts; and it is particularly noticeable how the flower gardens at great country houses were often identified by name with the wife of the owner: thus we have Lady Buckinghamshire's Garden at Blickling (Norfolk), or the Duchess's Garden at Blenheim (Oxfordshire). Towards the end of the century gardening was also increasingly viewed as an 'improving' activity, suitable for young children – as in Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education* of 1796. In a society firmly controlled by adult males, we can see here further reasons why the park, rather than the garden, should have been the prime setting for the house; and why the garden should still exist, although relegated to a subordinate position in the country-house landscape.

The arguments I have summarized briefly above have been expounded at greater length elsewhere (Williamson 1995). The essential points, however, are these. Once garden archaeologists have reconstructed the form of a designed landscape they ought, through an imaginative engagement with their evidence, to interpret it in social terms. But in relation to the complex societies of post-medieval England such interpretations must themselves be complex, and subtle. The inclusion or exclusion of individuals from a landscape might be a matter of knowledge and experience as much as one of physical admittance. And explanations which simply concentrate on the relations between 'rich' and 'poor' are almost invariably insufficient within the context of post-medieval societies.

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Part VI

AFTERWORDS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

16

STRANGELY FAMILIAR

Sarah Tarlow

Historical archaeology in Britain has a rather dubious status: a historical archaeologist is not quite a real archaeologist and so as an archaeology book this volume is unusual in several ways. First of all, the contributors have not necessarily written about things which have been dug up. Archaeology is the study of the material consequences of human action in the past and this can include architecture, landscapes and standing monuments as well as artefacts and features recovered through excavation. All of these kinds of evidence are considered in this volume. Second, this book is not about ancient civilizations or mysterious, prehistoric rituals. Instead it is about the comparatively recent past, from the medieval period to the twentieth century. It is about our past, recent and familiar.

The perceived familiarity of the recent past has bred, if not contempt, then at least indifference in the British archaeological community. The centuries which are apparently already known to us through books, stories, school lessons and television costume dramas have proved less stimulating to the imaginations of British archaeologists than the mysteries of the deeper past. The British post-medieval period is, after all, principally known to us through the works of historians, and archaeology's role is often regarded as supplementary or illustrative at best, and at worst entirely irrelevant. But archaeology, as the anthropological study of human material culture in the past, has a potential well beyond that of 'filling in gaps' left by documentary sources. It can make sophisticated and nuanced contributions to current debates and discussions in the social sciences; challenge historical orthodoxies and examine the mechanisms by which social relations in the past were produced, maintained and transformed. In addition, historical archaeology has a respected role in making visible the invisible people of the past – the poor, the illiterate and those who were socially, politically or geographically remote from the literate and empowered centres of elite culture. Finally, the very materiality of archaeological evidence has an immediacy and an emotional power which is absent from more literary sources of knowledge about the past. The actual things of the past hold a fascination which goes beyond scholarship: there is a joy in being able to touch and see objects which have been held by women and men who died maybe hundreds of years ago. In the case of historical archaeology the nostalgia allied to this romantic fetishism has great public appeal.

When we originally conceived this volume we highlighted a few areas, such as consumption and appropriation, changing social and political ideologies and the creation of modern identities, which we thought might be of interest, and we encouraged a critical consideration of the definition and role of later historical archaeology. Some of the issues we anticipated have been addressed by our contributors; other questions and research areas remain unrepresented here. Despite our expectations, the challenge of finding a name for the archaeology of this period did not form a topic of discussion either at the conference or in the chapters we have presented here; on the contrary, many of those involved in the study of later historical periods in Britain have deliberately tried to resist classification. Nevertheless the idea of the 'familiar past' has struck a chord with many of the contributors. The tensions involved in writing about a period which is at once known and not known are ones which many of us are accustomed to negotiating in our work. We are pleased that so many of the contributors chose explicitly to question familiar histories and to use the material evidence to tell different stories about the past.

CONSUMPTION AND CAPITAL

Archaeological studies of consumption are now moving beyond simplistic economic and social models to examine subtle developments of modern consumer behaviour of the kind described earlier by Buckham. We see here also an attempt to distinguish consumption, consumerism, appropriation and commodification as related but separable and finely nuanced concepts. Modern consumer behaviour has been the preserve of the sociologist, but an awareness of what is distinctive about modern consumerism arises from a social and anthropological consideration of the past. An anthropological archaeology should show that people's behaviour, responses, actions and beliefs vary and have varied enormously. We could be – can be – other than we are. By de-familiarizing the familiar past we can show that 'consumption', for example, is not everywhere and at all times the same. People's desires and aspirations are not fixed, human and universal properties. A number of the contributors to this volume have demonstrated a very sophisticated and critical approach to this issue in an early modern and modern context. Subtle and sophisticated critical work in this area is much more difficult in a prehistoric context without the breadth and depth of knowledge available for more recent historical periods. Whereas traditional post-medieval and industrial archaeology in Britain have documented assiduously the evidence of manufacture and distribution of material goods, it is only recently that scholars have begun to understand these remains in a historical context of industrialization and globalization. These are historical processes which we are able not only to map, but to understand in human terms, as arising from motivated human practice and, in turn, impacting on people's lives and minds.

Reviewing Johnson's *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (1996), Robert Schuyler criticized Johnson's broad usage of the term 'capitalism'. He complains that Johnson understands capitalism 'as a total cultural system that enables land, people and material culture to be viewed as distinct, separate entities definable as commodities' (Schuyler 1996: 929). While Johnson's definition of capitalism is perhaps particularly fluid, there is no doubt that the processes of commodification and alienation are central to an understanding of the social transformations examined in this volume. Whether or not the commodification of things and people is the single most significant process in the transformation from medieval to modern, it is certainly an important factor and one which several of the chapters develop. Commodification has been understood by the authors of this volume not only to refer to artefacts and land – in both of which cases the definition and appropriation of alienable property is important – but also to social space (e.g. West, Giles). The expansion of a narrowly defined economic view of capitalism to a socio-historical concept which embraces other concepts such as privacy, individualism and sentiment is undoubtedly enriching to archaeology. At the same time we need, in order to discuss social processes, to find ways of talking about cultural and physical transformations which allow us to distinguish between them whilst still recognizing their relatedness. My point here is that in order to retain analytical value, we must be able to pull apart the ply of historical process while recognizing that modern history twists them together.

IDENTITY AND CLASS

Archaeological studies which incorporate or even centralize social power as an explanatory dynamic have been increasingly common in European prehistory over the last twenty years (e.g. Shanks and Tilley 1982; Miller and Tilley (eds) 1984). A number of American scholars also interpret archaeological evidence of the historical period in terms of the production and negotiation of power relationships (e.g. Leone 1995; McGuire and Paynter (eds) 1991; Orser 1988). Several studies in this volume treat relationships of power, authority and resistance as of central importance in understanding this period in Britain. Nevertheless, early modern and modern power relationships present particular historical problems in terms of their operation within a capitalist ideological and economic system, and the ways in which relationships of power – particularly historical relationships of class – are produced and reproduced have been the concern of several of the contributors to this volume (e.g. Lucas, Gould). These kinds of past seem particularly to have emerged from a consideration of the social meanings of space. The influence of Foucauldian histories of discipline, control and surveillance is clear in these chapters. More specifically, the development of class identities and the formation of relationships within as well as between classes have been considered (e.g. Johnson, Williamson, Tarlow).

Social relationships are created not only through relationships of authority and dominance but also more subtly in the construction of identities. Identities of class, nation and gender are all considered in this volume. These kinds of identities are not externally imposed but internally generated and created through, amongst other things, material culture and material practices. The expression and production of non-dominant identities, such as those of women (Pennell) and members of non-hegemonic groups (Brooks, Matthews, Mytum), can be interpreted as archaeologies of resistance. 'Resistance' is not only understood as an overt, performative engagement with dominant groups but also as a more subtle rejection of the values and agendas which characterize the political and social establishment. In particular some of the chapters in this volume move towards an understanding of difference which is richer and more subtle than a simple notion of opposite sides – men and women, rich and poor, Catholic and Protestant, medieval and post-medieval – simply competing for prizes of wealth or status in some kind of giant historical football match. What the studies in our volume make clear, we hope, is that people's understandings were in the past – as they are today – complex, contradictory and ambiguous. As we know from our own moments of introspection, even as individuals people can be inconsistent and illogical in the decisions they make and the things they do. Values, beliefs and practices can vary within a society. In studying the later historical period we are fortunate in having, in the form of documentary and interpretative texts, art, architecture, music and artefacts, the richness of material which enables us to produce subtle, sophisticated and nuanced archaeologies.

Scholarship concerned with the creation of modern identities has taken a different turn in Britain to that of contemporary North American work. The archaeological study of 'identity' in North America had focused particularly on ethnic and gender identities, understood both as group identities and personal and individual conceptions of the self. Much North American work concentrates on vertical relationships within society as those with different ethnic, national, religious and gender identities interact with each other. These kinds of social relationships have to date been somewhat ignored by scholars of British social archaeology of the same period which has been more concerned with horizontal relationships of class and status, although again the production and reproduction of identity takes place at both the individual and the group level. Central to any discussion of identity is the notion that identities are socially produced and produced by, amongst other things, material practice. This makes the study of material culture, including the organization of space, important in the study of identities. The contributors to this volume have considered identity in relation to architecture (Johnson), artefacts (Brooks), landscapes (Williamson) and the human body (Tarlow). Johnson, Giles and Lucas all describe how past meanings of material culture (in these cases, architecture) can be transformed in the creation of new social identities and relationships.

SCALES OF STUDY

The pages of the journal *Post-Medieval Archaeology* are filled with fine-grained studies of local and regional craft and manufacturing traditions. Industrial archaeologists studying the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have produced similarly detailed descriptions of the material remains of our industrial heritage (see Crossley 1990 and 1994; Gaimster 1994 for reviews of this work). The potential of such studies of the material culture of later historical Britain cannot be doubted, but we must now push ourselves further to build on this kind of work with discussion of wider issues of social context (Gaimster 1994). In particular, we should aim to produce some understanding of how local developments articulate with the regional, national and global changes taking place over this period. Regional and local studies should be able to examine the kinds of choices being made by situated individuals in particular contexts. Part of the challenge of producing complex, critical historical archaeology is in the integration of these scales of explanation – from the individual to the global. Amongst others, James Deetz (1991) and Charles Orser (1996) have made the point that historical archaeology is a global endeavour. As well as merely charting the routes and rates at which goods move around the world, archaeologists in other parts of the world are increasingly aware of the social and ideological changes which accompany the new relationships and tensions generated by the movement of people and things (and, in the case of the Africa trade, people *as* things) around the world. British archaeologists working on the period discussed here have not been so willing to contextualize their work in global terms as those working in North America, Australia and elsewhere. The social importance of imported goods in Britain, for example, is an area which could benefit from further study.

There is of course a tension between the discussion of highly specific local contexts and that of wide-ranging, international and long-term processes which must always remain under-specified and partially understood. Processes will never unfold in the same manner or manifest themselves in the same way in different contexts.

BECOMING MODERN

Similar tensions to those described above surround any consideration of timescale and periodization in later historical Britain. This leads us on to a bigger problem which the context of later historical archaeology seems particularly to point up and that is how we relate different time-scales. This is one of the areas where the archaeological and the historical tradition seem to sometimes misunderstand each other. Historians have traditionally focused on a narrower field of study than archaeologists. Part of the archaeological project, inherited from our prehistorian tradition, is the elucidation of long-term trends and widespread general processes. Looking back more deeply into the past to find the origins of social, economic and political phenomena is also clearly of value to those who study the human past, but the danger of these approaches is that they can flatten out, obscure or elide differences which gain their significance from their specific context. This is more than simply the problematic relationship between structure and event, because we also need to recognize different views, practices and experiences even within a society.

To take one example, the process of 'Georgianization' is an important concept in American historical archaeology and one which has been found useful by some British scholars working in the same period, notably Matthew Johnson (1993 and 1996). According to James Deetz (1977) there is a particularly Georgian world-view which is expressed through material practice, particularly architecture and the consumption of household goods, from the middle of the eighteenth century. 'Georgian' individuals experienced a special concern with order, both the ordering of society and the presentation of themselves, with the individual and with the formation of particular social relationships. They participated in peculiarly Georgian consumer practices and expressed their concern for order in their architecture, general spatial organization and material culture. Their consumption patterns produced the 'Consumer Revolution' (McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb 1982) of the later eighteenth century. The process of Georgianization is not a tightly defined one, but a constellation of concerns and practices manifest over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

'Georgianization', as depicted by Deetz (1977), Glassie (1975) and others, has been critiqued on the grounds that what manifests itself as Georgian varies considerably in different places and the process takes place at different times – often much earlier or later than the Glassie/Deetz formulation allows. Leech (this volume) disputes the idea that Georgianization is a process of the eighteenth century and claims that we need to look back into the sixteenth century to find its origins. By contrast, Martin Hall, for example, suggests that Georgian principles do not shape the architecture of the Cape of Good Hope until the early nineteenth century (Hall 1992; see also Courtney 1996 for a critique of Deetz's concept of the 'Georgian world-view'). The limitations of the 'Georgian order' as an explanatory principle are clear: it is at once too fluid a concept, and at the same time not sufficiently deeply rooted in the preceding periods. Moreover, Deetz's formulation of the concept was intended to account for the adoption and spread of certain imported material practices in an eighteenth-century American context; its value in the understanding of the historical remains of other parts of the world is uncertain.

We may ask how, chronologically, we should understand the process of becoming modern. Leech's point that the 'Georgian' world-view in fact began to take shape at least a couple of centuries earlier than the mid-eighteenth century is well made, but does the emergence of a manifestation of a deep cultural shift from the sixteenth century mean that nothing distinctive happened in the seventeenth and particularly eighteenth centuries in the process of becoming modern?

We are challenged to produce deeper histories which can nevertheless incorporate the observation that something distinctive does indeed appear to happen in the eighteenth century as far as the quantity, distribution and nature of material culture is concerned. By recognizing that these changes might have earlier origins or antecedents we also recognize that things do change through time and that the past is not only unfamiliar to us now but has itself no special unity.

For example, Alan Macfarlane makes the point that attitudes and understandings which we frequently consider to be modern (i.e. the product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) in fact exist as far back as the middle medieval period, and that only a caricatured depiction of the medieval period allows us to construe it unproblematically as a foil for the modern (Macfarlane 1978). (Some go even further: Richard Hodges (1989) suggests that Macfarlane, in placing the origins of modern Britain in the middle medieval period, fails to take account of evidence that the most significant transformations in the formation of modern Britain took place in the seventh century!) However this kind of history seems to say that there is nothing distinctive, nothing unfamiliar about, for example, eighteenth-century understandings, about the national and international popularity of certain styles of architecture (e.g. the 'Georgian'), philosophical principles ('Improvement') and structuring ideas (cleanness, neatness). Although they or their antecedents existed before the 1700s they also represent, or experience a reformulation as, centrally important principles in the construction of people's lives, identities and experiences in the later eighteenth century. How do we look at ideas over these different time-scales – the deep historical and the specifically modern – in a way which recognizes the complexity of both?

As the chapters in this volume by Leech, Giles, Williamson and Johnson make clear, in order to understand changes in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we have to look at their longer histories which developed out of changes in world-view and social practice over the centuries or even millennia which preceded them. Many of the changes and trends which are considered characteristic of the early modern and modern periods have their roots in much earlier history – land enclosure of sorts had been happening since before the thirteenth century; romantic and sensibility cults might originate in the chivalric traditions of the earlier Middle Ages, for example. Any division into period has to be arbitrary: some developments will have longer histories than others, and different processes are evident at different times in different areas. So where one decides to place the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern depends on what spheres of the human past one focuses on and what developments one considers most significant. On the one hand is the body of thought represented by scholars such as Alan Macfarlane, discussed above, who would put the beginning of the modern age back into what we think of as the middle medieval period. On the other hand, Jacques Le Goff suggests that the Middle Ages should properly be understood as finishing even after the French Revolution (Le Goff 1988: 11).

MOVING ON

No edited volume would be complete without a few gaping lacunae. Although this volume has covered a range of period-based questions, we are aware that there are some areas of central importance to later historical archaeology which have not been addressed as well as some substantial traditions of scholarship which remain unrepresented. The first of these might be technology. In Britain 'industrial archaeology' has sometimes been a synonym for the archaeological study of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. Palmer 1990). West has discussed in the introduction to this volume why we do not feel that such an epithet is appropriate and the chapters in this volume have, perhaps deliberately, focused on material remains of these later periods which are not 'industrial' in the sense of representing the primary remains of manufacturing or production activities. We firmly believe that the archaeology of the last 200 years can illuminate more than industrial processes and practices. However, Britain has a strong tradition of industrial archaeology and in future it is to be hoped that the material remains of our industrial past will increasingly be considered in relation to wider historical and social questions. Technology is, in the words of Bruno Latour, 'society made durable' and the greater incorporation of social and ideological histories into industrial archaeology is greatly to be desired.

Several of the chapters included here consider the constructed environment at several scales – the architecture and internal space of buildings, the shapes of towns and forms and meanings of designed and selected landscapes – but this volume did not inspire a similar response from individuals studying excavated material culture. Artefacts or finds have not been discussed except by Brooks and Pennell and, in passing, by Carman and Matthews. This is unexpected, given that research on glass, ceramics, metalwork, etc. has dominated post-medieval archaeology in Britain for the last thirty years. Perhaps it is because such research has been categorized by material specialism – glass, metal, ceramic, clay pipe and so forth – rather than considered as part of a much broader historical and archaeological context, it has not been fully integrated into the interpretive archaeologies we have presented here.

A volume such as this one cannot give more than a flavour of some of the theoretical, methodological and material directions of study which are being developed in British later historical archaeology. There are still problems in the conditions and constraints under which research of the type discussed in this volume takes place. Nevertheless, the editors have been much heartened to see that even within the tight financial and time constraints of commercial archaeological assessments, the investigation of sophisticated social questions is possible. As Gould, Matthews and Lucas demonstrate, for example, the efficient fulfilment of contractual obligations need not preclude the examination of contextual interpretive questions.

Similarly, as later historical archaeology raises its profile in Britain – through conference sessions, university courses and the publication of books such as this one – we hope that in the future we might see in Britain the kind of large-scale and ambitious research projects which have given American historical archaeology its particular vigour.

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17

NEGOTIATING OUR 'FAMILIAR' PASTS

Charles E. Orser, Jr

Within the past couple of years we have entered perhaps the most exciting phase in the archaeology of the post-Columbian era. Up to now, this archaeology has been conducted largely though not exclusively by British post-medieval and American historical archaeologists. This book is emblematic, however, of the changes now sought by a growing number of forward-looking archaeologists who seek to alter the course of recent-period archaeology, and who wonder why their research has been largely unrecognized, even by their colleagues in the closely allied disciplines of anthropology and history. Though British post-medieval archaeology and American historical archaeology were developed somewhat independently, both have been almost continuously plagued by questions concerning their proper conduct as archaeologies of history. As a result, any stretching or reworking of the intellectual boundaries of post-Columbian archaeology is certain to have trans-Atlantic impact. As an American-trained archaeologist working outside the United States, I have come to appreciate the need for an extra-national effort to understand our familiar past. The issues the authors of this book confront also trouble a growing cadre of archaeologists around the world. And, like the authors of this book, my understanding derives from personal experience.

In late 1993 I began a multi-year investigation into the material conditions experienced by early nineteenth-century peasants in the Irish midlands (Orser 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b). Before developing this research, I had spent the preceding twelve years focusing on African-American slaves and tenant farmers in the American South and on runaway slaves in north-eastern Brazil. Before that, I had spent several years studying Native American cultures in the American Midwest and Plains. I had initially presumed that I could transfer my knowledge about the archaeology of the disenfranchised men and women of the New World to the archaeology of the disenfranchised men and women of the Irish countryside. In addition to sharing similar positions near the bottom of their nation's respective social ladders, displaced Native Americans, African-American slaves and Irish peasants were also contemporaneous.

I knew well that the three peoples were enormously different in history and culture, but my initial supposition was correct. Much of what I knew about the archaeology of African-Americans could be almost directly transferred to the study of Irish peasants. In addition, I discovered several intriguing historical similarities between the peoples, including how they were perceived and described by outsiders.

I was gratified by the similarities in the archaeology, but I also felt a nagging sense of uneasiness. The American research was not the problem. In North America, I am clearly and unambiguously defined as a historical archaeologist, someone with anthropological training interested in post-1492 history. Rather, my disquiet revolved around understanding where the archaeology of nineteenth-century Irish peasants fits into Old World archaeology. As an anthropological archaeologist conducting research on nineteenth-century peasants, my place in the scheme of things seemed ambiguous. An observer might well ask: am I an *archaeologist* studying modern history, a *historian* using excavation as a primary research tool, a *folklife specialist* finding research materials buried in the soil rather than in old sheds and barns, or some kind of *historical anthropologist* using archaeology to understand past cultures?

That such a question *can* be asked demonstrates that today's post-Columbian archaeology provides a multi-dimensional, transdisciplinary way to interpret our seemingly familiar past. That it *must* be asked at all demonstrates some ways in which the boundaries of British post-medieval archaeology – as an archaeology of history – might be stretched. The authors of this book have the intellectual courage to imagine that traditional modes of thinking about the archaeology of the recent past can be reformulated in exciting and rewarding ways. Such rethinking is warranted because the archaeology of history continues to be something of an enigma. Today, in the late 1990s, as in the late 1960s, one inescapable fact continues to plague this archaeology: even though the world's two professional societies dedicated to this field – the Society for Historical Archaeology in the United States, and the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology in Great Britain – celebrated their thirtieth anniversaries in 1997, we still cannot come to a universal agreement about the precise nature and scope of historical archaeology. The authors of this volume are to be applauded for seeking to redefine the limits of the archaeology of recent history. They recognize, however, as I have come to realize, that any long-lasting reconceptualization of this archaeology will not be accomplished solely in British or American contexts. Rather, the desired full-scale changes must ultimately come from some form of global collaboration. Even so, it is with American historical archaeology that I begin.

THE CHIMERA OF AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING

Archaeologists from outside North America often assume that historical archaeologists in the United States understand the true nature of their field. The sheer magnitude of research in any given year suggests that American archaeologists know their field so well that they need not spend any time thinking about its theoretical underpinnings.

This image, though perhaps comforting to some, is not accurate. The same issues challenging the authors of this book, as they attempt to reformulate ‘later’ historical archaeology in Britain, also bedevil archaeologists in America. One need look no further than the publications of the Society for American Archaeology for corroboration. Recently published papers and opinions indicate that rather than being secure and well developed, American historical archaeology is in a state of turmoil. The field is not as self-assured as it may appear.

In a 1994 issue of the Society’s *Bulletin*, Mark Leone and Parker Potter (1994) provided a brief synopsis of their previous year’s School of American Research seminar on the archaeology of capitalism. The theme of the conference was that capitalism should be historical archaeology’s main research focus, a perspective echoed by other archaeologists both before and since (Johnson 1993, 1996; Leone 1995a; Little 1994; Orser 1987, 1988, 1996a; Paynter 1988). Leone and Potter said that in the 1990s, a time of theoretical diversity in archaeological thought, what should unite historical archaeologists are the uniformities imposed on the world by the ‘operating principles of capitalist economics . . . commonalities among thousands of individual resistances to capitalism’ (Leone and Potter 1994: 15). Stated another way, archaeology has a key role to play in examining and critiquing the historical manifestations of global capitalism.

Leone and Potter intended their statement only as an overview of the seminar rather than as a polemical manifesto, but in a later issue of the *Bulletin*, Lawrence Moore (1995a) objected to the idea that capitalism should provide historical archaeology’s unifying theme. He argued instead that the critique of capitalism is really nothing more than a Marxist critique, and that the collapse of Communism made the legitimacy of this analysis extremely suspect. Moore stated that as a global pursuit, historical archaeology had ‘outgrown’ the study of capitalism. Instead, historical archaeologists should turn their attention to what he called the ‘Modern Period’ and leave the Marxist critique behind.

Writing in the next issue of the *Bulletin*, Marshall Becker (1995) and Mark Hackbarth (1995) each provided their assessment of why both Moore and Leone and Potter were wrong about historical archaeology. For Becker, the issue was simple: neither capitalism nor modernity establishes the defining characteristic of historical archaeology. What makes historical archaeology ‘historical’ is the presence of written records, pure and simple: ‘without some relationship to a written record, it simply isn’t “historical”’ (Becker 1995: 6). Hackbarth’s disagreement with both Moore and with Leone and Potter was more thoughtful. For him, Moore was mistaken to suppose that the collapse of late twentieth-century Communism had anything to do with Marx’s critique of the nineteenth century, but at the same time, Leone and Potter were incorrect to imagine that they could use a 'unifying concept' like capitalism to explain the complex cultural variability that has been expressed in the world during the past 500 years.

The debate did not end there. In the next two issues of the *Bulletin*, first Moore (1995b) and then Leone (1995b) answered their critics. Moore reaffirmed his position that historical archaeologists should study the Modern Period, a time segment analogous to any prehistoric period. Leone countered that because today's historical archaeologists have adopted a wide variety of theoretical approaches, the study of capitalism provides an umbrella under which historical archaeologists can work in concert, linking past and present in a clear and unambiguous manner. In the next *Bulletin*, Kit Wesler (1996) agreed with Becker (1995) that the presence of contemporary written records makes historical archaeology 'historical'. Studying the rise and spread of literacy is not only anthropologically sound, it also neatly links the historic and the prehistoric pasts within archaeology. Thus, rather than linking past and present, as Leone and Potter would have it, historical archaeology actually links past (historic) and past (prehistoric).

On first consideration, these letters may strike many as decidedly unimportant, as little more than personal, off-the-cuff remarks about the nature and scope of historical archaeology. A nonchalant dismissal would be much easier to countenance if it were not for the almost simultaneous publication of a paper by Kent Lightfoot in *American Antiquity*, the Society for American Archaeology's journal.

Lightfoot (1995) called into question the nature of historical archaeology in a more expanded manner than was possible in the short letters published in the *Bulletin*. He began by stating that historical archaeology is nothing more than a recently focused kind of archaeology (see also South 1977), and argued that past attempts to make it into a special kind of archaeology have not served anthropology well (e.g., Beaudry 1988; Deagan 1988). For him, the apparent segregation of prehistoric and historical archaeology into two distinct fields has significantly weakened the anthropological relevance of archaeology, particularly where contact-period studies are concerned. For Lightfoot, the true effectiveness of archaeology stems from the ability of its practitioners to examine both sides of the prehistory–history divide, the one time in human history where historical and prehistoric archaeologists should be able to join forces. In making transperiod analyses, archaeologists can provide unique insights into the nature of culture contact, a topic of perennial interest to anthropologists. Lightfoot ruefully observed that because this union has not happened, archaeology has become inconsequential for the anthropological study of culture contact. In order for archaeology to meet its rightful destiny as an important anthropological tool, Lightfoot proposed a reunion of prehistoric and historical archaeology, based on common conceptual models and comparable field techniques.

Though interesting, the opinions expressed in the above controversy are nothing new. The debate over historical archaeology's disciplinary home and intellectual roots has stymied North American archaeologists for years, beginning in the late 1960s (see, for example, Binford 1977; Cleland 1988; Cleland and Fitting 1968; Deagan 1988; Dollar 1968; Honerkamp 1988; Jelks 1968; South 1968; Walker 1967, 1970). Historical archaeologists have never completely resolved these foundational issues and the field continues to suffer from a crisis of identity (Deagan 1982: 152; Little 1994: 5–23; Orser 1996a: 1–28). Recently, one archaeologist has gone so far as to state that ‘the attitude may still be found that historical archaeology is something of a junior varsity where simple confirmation of historical “fact” is the main goal’ (Little 1994: 30). This statement reinforces a comment voiced almost thirty years earlier: ‘Perhaps when we analyze the situation, and if we are honest with ourselves, we will agree that among American archaeologists prehistoric archaeology carries more status than historic archaeology’ (Fontana 1965: 64).

The continuing debate over the nature and scope of historical archaeology implies that the ideas contained in the debates have a central importance to the field, even if many historical archaeologists refuse to admit it. The publication of this book demonstrates the significance of understanding the organizing perspectives and underlying principles of post-Columbian archaeology. It is therefore not trivial to ask: is historical archaeology simply an archaeology of history, or is it a fundamentally different practice, an archaeology made special by the examination of such powerful modern forces as capitalism? The way we choose to answer this question will determine how we negotiate our seemingly familiar past.

CONCEPTUALIZING HISTORY

Part of historical archaeology’s problem is undoubtedly definitional. In those parts of the world colonized by Europeans beginning in or around 1492, historical archaeology is generally understood as the archaeology of post-Columbian life, symbolized by the occurrence of European objects at non-European sites. A site with European material culture is within the purview of the historical archaeologist, but a site with no such material belongs to the prehistorian. In Europe and throughout much of Asia, the situation is obviously not so clearcut, because historical archaeology there is linked to sites associated with a literate tradition. Thus, the subject matter of historical archaeology in Europe can be hundreds of years older than in the colonized world.

In truth, the field now widely recognized as ‘historical archaeology’ was originally created for examining post-Columbian sites. An early announcement proclaiming the founding of the Society for Historical Archaeology made this abundantly clear by stating that the primary geographic concern of the new organization would be ‘the Western Hemisphere’ (Anon. 1967). The society would also consider ‘Oceanic, African, and Asian archaeology during the relatively late periods', but Europe would only be considered part of the organization's focus if the subject had 'a definite bearing upon problems in the non-Western world'. The clear intent of the Society for Historical Archaeology from its inception, then, was to focus on issues *of* Europe but not *European*. Historical archaeologists, trained in America as anthropologists, would examine the same exotic, ostensibly non-European places and peoples traditionally studied by cultural anthropologists. The theoretical focus of the new society was towards exploration, colonization, and acculturation in the non-European world through the study of archaeological sites and materials from Europe (Jelks 1993; Pilling 1967: 6).

Three years earlier, K. J. Barton and John Hurt had a wholly different idea when they launched the Post-Medieval Ceramic Research Group in Bristol (Barton 1968: 102). These researchers sought to develop and to exchange information about English ceramics manufactured between 1450 and 1750. Interest in the subject grew so large that in 1966 the members of the ceramic group dissolved the organization and created the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology (Anon. 1968). Significantly, the new society maintained its temporal focus on the years from 1450 to 1750 because 'there is something distinctive about the years between the impact of the Renaissance and Reformation at one end and the onset of the Industrial Revolution at the other' (Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology 1993: 93). As initially conceptualized, and as the name implies, post-medieval archaeology is the logical, more recent extension of medieval archaeology. The historical and cultural trends of the European Middle Ages are seen to blend into the post-medieval period in a relatively straightforward way, and post-medieval archaeologists are generally interested in the same sorts of questions as their colleagues in medieval archaeology (see, for example, Addyman 1989; Austin, Gerrard and Grieves 1989; Ayers 1991; Broberg 1992; Crossley 1990; Kajzer 1991; Martins 1992).

The orderly progression from medieval to post-medieval eras makes great sense in Europe, but it is not so easily imagined beyond its borders. When Europeans took their institutions outside their homelands, they and the indigenous peoples they encountered created new worlds. In some ways, these worlds were curious reflections of the Old, but in others they were unlike anything that had existed before. In an important sense, what they created represented a 'decisive break in world history' (Amin 1989: 1). The New World was not just a reinvented version of the Old; it was a unique creation, woven from diverse strands of custom and tradition.

Considered in this light, it appears that historical archaeology and post-medieval archaeology really are two distinct kinds of archaeology. Historical archaeologists investigate the creation of new ways of life that bound together diverse peoples from widely divergent places, while post-medieval archaeologists examine the continuation of lifeways that developed fairly indigenously over hundreds of years.

Viewed this way, it only stands to reason that the archaeologies of such distinct places and traditions would be different. When archaeologists study English settlers at Jamestown, Virginia, they are historical archaeologists, but when they turn their attention to seventeenth-century English inhabitants in Southampton, they are post-medieval archaeologists.

But even in light of these apparent differences, I would argue that any substantive distinction between historical archaeology and post-medieval archaeology is deceptive. The only real difference between the two archaeologies rests on location: post-medieval archaeologists practise in places with long traditions of literacy, historical archaeologists work in locales visited by expansionist, capitalistic Europeans. But yet, as the authors of this volume point out, there is a problem with this neat, and seemingly logical conclusion. After all, they are dissatisfied with the current state of post-medieval archaeology, just as many North American archaeologists are unhappy with the state of historical archaeology. Why? The answer to this troublesome question lies in recognizing that a deeper, more significant problem must encompass more than simple geography. Part of the problem is undeniably the definitional issue that has bothered historical archaeologists since the 1960s. Based on disciplinary history, however, it does not appear likely that archaeologists will find a workable way to explain historical archaeology any better than they have already done by relying on traditional perspectives and tired explanations. Comments in this book, as well as in recent publications of the Society for American Archaeology, imply that any kind of restatement rooted in tradition will not be good enough because definitional confusion is so deeply imbedded in the practice of historical archaeology. Based on the longstanding history of the debate over the precise epistemological nature of historical archaeology, it would appear that the field is destined to be contested for ever. This projection is disheartening perhaps, but not devastating.

One way to treat the archaeologists' dissatisfaction over the apparent course of both British post-medieval archaeology and American historical archaeology is to admit that another archaeology – one that is neither just historical nor post-medieval – is currently being formulated. The authors of this book presage this reconceptualization by their urge, however reluctant, to create a new term, 'later historical archaeology', to describe their work. In one sense, the term adequately expresses their collective interest in an archaeology that breaks away from the often staid complacency of post-medieval archaeology (and American historical archaeology). But their term does not go far enough because like medieval or post-medieval archaeology, it is temporally bound. The only difference between post-medieval and 'later historical' archaeologies is that the authors stretch post-medieval archaeology's termination date from 1750 to 1950. But, though they have only created another temporal period, they have made a step in the right direction simply by questioning the temporal boundaries of post-medieval archaeology. The danger, of course, is that 'later historical archaeologists' will conduct traditional-style post-medieval archaeological studies, albeit in the most recent, 'familiar' past. The authors of this volume clearly do not want to see this happen, but without a more sweeping reconceptualization, such a course of action is not only possible, but indeed likely. Instead, I believe the authors wish to argue for a new kind of historical archaeology, one that is compatible with an archaeology that I have named 'modern-world archaeology'.

TOWARDS A MODERN-WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

Modern-world archaeology, as I perceive it, has four central characteristics that cannot be used to describe either American historical archaeology or British post-medieval archaeology. Modern-world archaeology is: (1) globally focused, (2) mutualistic, (3) multiscalar, and (4) reflexive.

When writing that modern-world archaeology is globally focused, I mean that archaeologists, though they can excavate only one site at a time, should attempt to understand the place of the site in the wider world. As I explain elsewhere in detail (Orser 1996a), the need to adopt this strategy is imperative in the post-Columbian age, because a site's inhabitants could enact a wide array of contacts and connections. Many of these connections were transnational, and it is the character and expanse of this network of connections that I believe distinguishes the post-Columbian age from all other historical periods. In addition, an archaeologist's willingness to see beyond the limits of a single site or region may also be indicated by the use of cross-cultural information or anthropological perspectives devised in cultural settings far removed from the particular site under study. The key is that the investigating archaeologist understands the broad significance of any single site beyond its own, apparently obvious, physical boundaries.

Mutualism, a related idea, contends that 'the basic stuff of human life' is the social relationships people create and maintain (Carrithers 1992: 11). Mutualism assumes that during the course of their lifetimes, humans devise huge networks of social relations that when taken together form complex webs of interaction (Carrithers 1992; Lesser 1961; Wolf 1982). These network relations – encompassing individuals and groups – define humanity in a more satisfying manner than any recourse to some vague notion of 'culture' (see Wolf 1984; Orser 1998). Connections can take many forms: economic, symbolic, political, genderbased, or any complex combination, depending upon the historical context.

Archaeologists can adopt a multiscalar approach to conduct studies that are mindful of the connections between men and women, whether on local or transnational scales. A key element of adopting such an approach is to realize that the social relations men and women create extend across various slices of time and space. The connections not only extend 'horizontally' across land and sea, but also ‘vertically’ through history. Out of the infinite number of slices that may exist, men and women ‘comprehend patterns, recognize homogeneity, plan for the future, and operate in the present at specific scales’ (Marquardt 1985 and 1992: 107). An ‘effective scale’ describes the level at which an investigator may discern pattern or meaning (Crumley 1979: 166). Archaeologists also think in terms of different scales. They can choose to study only one tiny slice of time and space – one particular site – or they can choose to study entire centuries and whole continents, but neither approach is entirely satisfying. Modern-world archaeology argues for multiscalar analyses by definition because these kinds of investigations are most apt to capture the mutualist, global character of post-Columbian life (see, for example, Little and Shackel 1989).

Reflexivity, one of the key elements of modern-world archaeology, is rooted in the idea that archaeology can provide powerful knowledge for living men and women (Shanks and Tilley 1987: 66). Archaeology need not be dry, sterile, and unrelated to the present, especially when archaeologists focus on our ‘familiar’ past. Self-reflection empowers archaeologists to think about the contemporary contexts of their research and to understand that their interpretations can have an impact on today’s historical actors (Potter 1991a, 1994). In North American archaeology, self-reflection has focused most obviously on Native Americans and African-Americans (see, for example, Biolsi and Zimmerman (eds) 1997; Leone et al. 1995; Potter 1991b; Swidler et al. (eds) 1997), but there is no need to restrict self-reflection to any specific group. Self-reflection is centrally significant because of the perspective of modern-world archaeology that requires looking backward to the past rather than forward to the present. This important concept deserves further comment.

In traditional historical or post-medieval archaeology, the archaeologist usually begins with a particular site (or sometimes, complex of sites) and attempts to make sense of it. In some cases, the archaeologist will attempt to relate his or her interpretation of what happened at the site to present-day life, in an effort to prove the contemporary relevance of the often quite expensive study. The traditionalist claims to work from past to present, when in actuality he or she works from present to past to present. Without self-reflection, the archaeologist seldom recognizes the first context of the research equation, ignoring that all research must begin with today (Mackenzie and Shanks 1994: 38).

Modern-world archaeology takes an entirely different tack. In this perspective, the archaeologist starts with a subject that is pertinent today and then works backward in time to understand its historical roots. The goal is to interject a strong dose of relevance to recent-period archaeology in such a way that the significance of the research cannot be denied and the archaeology so easily shunted aside as trivial. But when conducting this kind of research, it is likely that modern-world archaeologists in Britain and in other places with long literate traditions may infringe on the intellectual ‘territories’ of post-medieval and even medieval archaeologists. The modern-world archaeologist, looking backward from the present, may not know at what time period his or her research will terminate. Such encroachment, though perhaps personally trying, is intellectually irrelevant because an important underlying principle of modern-world archaeology is that culture is explained with history, history is not explained with culture. Truly, 'every society is a battlefield between its own past and its future' (Wolf 1959: 106). Modern-world archaeology demands a place in the front lines of this intellectual battlefield.

The authors of this book come close to adopting modern-world archaeology by their explicit and unapologetic interest in consumption and appropriation. Why investigate the topics they study – the consumption of space, the relationship between consumerism and food, the creation of human identities, or cultural patrimony – if such topics are not pertinent to men and women living in today's Britain? If financial resources for archaeology continue to shrink, it is likely that an archaeologist's plea for excavation based on a knowledge-for-knowledge's-sake argument will garner decreasing levels of support. Except for a handful of specialists, who really cares if some buttons are 2 cm in diameter while others measure 3 cm, unless we can be shown that the difference matters?

I believe that we are now facing the most exciting time in world archaeology. Part of this excitement lies in the creation of a global, modern-world archaeology that examines today through the lens of the past. Archaeologists have long claimed that their discipline is important because it teaches presentday men and women about themselves as members of the human family. Unfortunately, this position, though high-minded, has become something of a platitude because as a whole, archaeologists have done little to show non-professionals how archaeology really can be relevant to their daily lives. Archaeologists examining post-Columbian history have a rare opportunity and a special responsibility to make significant contributions to understanding contemporary life by showing the material dimensions of how today's racial inequalities, consumption patterns, gender relations, intercultural connections, landscape usages, and so forth came to be as they are now. The authors of this book have clearly begun the process of discovery by examining and reevaluating our 'familiar' past. They know, as I have come to realize, that much remains to be done. But they have cracked the door to understanding, and now we must push it wide open.

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