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The Lands of Ancient Lothian

Interpreting the Archaeology of the A1

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Chapter 9

Changes in dwelling, people and place, *c.* 3500–1000 BC

GAVIN MacGREGOR

Introduction

Different strands of evidence show that during the later fourth millennium BC to the end of the second millennium BC, there were some fundamental shifts in how people engaged with each other and with the landscapes they inhabited. These strands include the development of pit alignments as a means of landscape division; the use of rock art to mark places; the development and use of different pottery forms; the increasing range and use of prestige artefacts; changes in the treatment of human remains; and changing forms of settlement. This chapter considers the evidence from Knowes (Chapter 3), Overhailes (Chapter 4), Eweford West (Chapters 4 and 5) and Pencraig Wood (Chapters 4 and 5), as well as other sites in the wider region (Figure 9.1). Several of the strands are treated together under the theme of dwelling and division, as they relate to how people defined, modified and used space, while others are considered in terms of how people created and maintained social identities. While these changes were taking place, certain long-held concerns continued to affect social life – among them, the uses of different parts of the landscape and beliefs about relationships between the living and the dead.

Dwelling and division

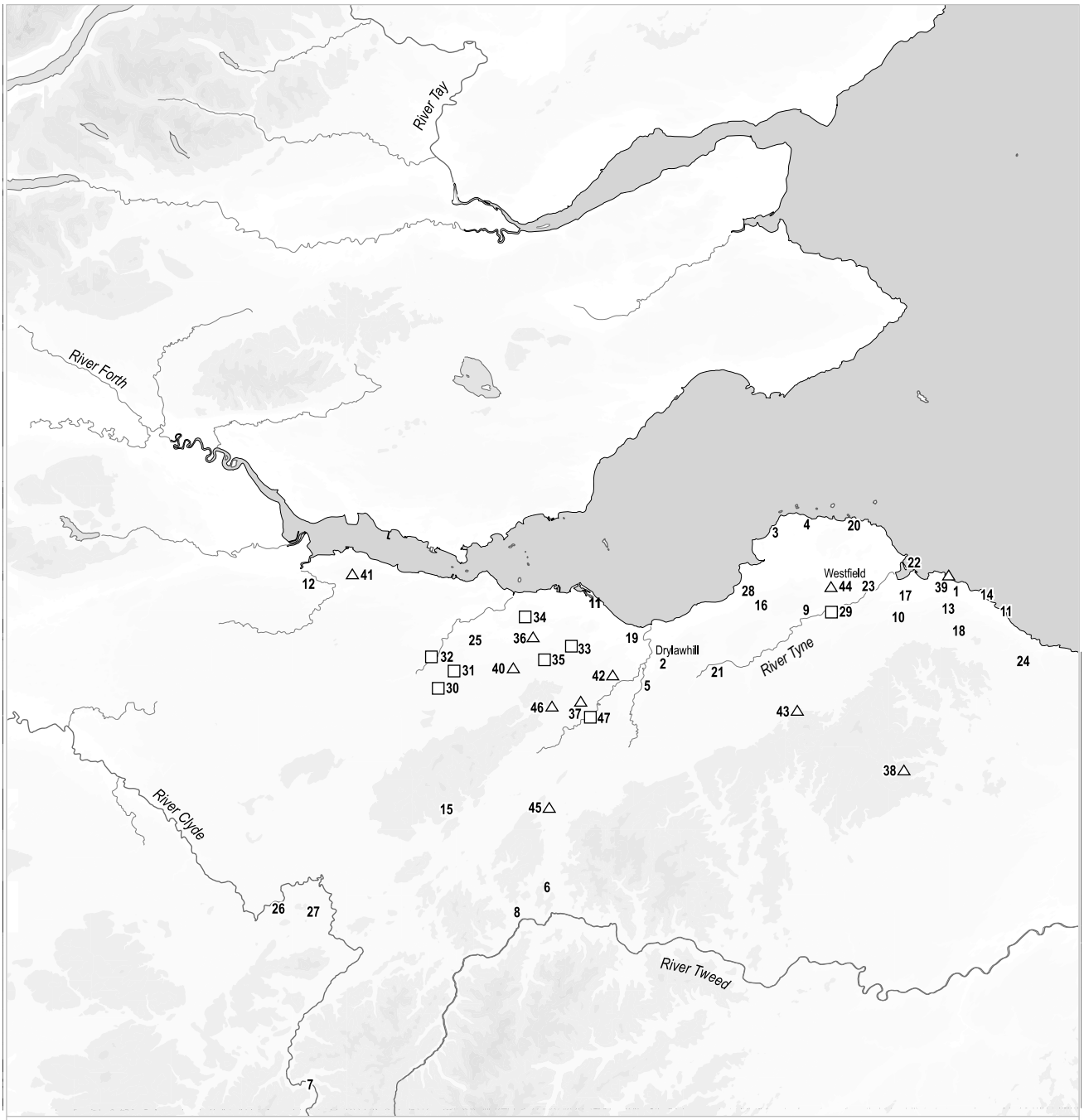
Different types of evidence suggest that, from the late fourth to the late second millennia BC, communities were engaging in new ways with their surroundings. The evidence for land divisions and the production and circulation of rock art during the late fourth and third millennia indicate an increasing concern with defining and moving between upland and lowland places. When this is considered along with the decreasing size and robustness of dwellings, it seems to indicate increasing reliance on a pastoral economy. By contrast, in the second millennium BC the character of settlement evidence changes, suggesting a shift to permanent settlement in upland and lowland areas, based on a mixed agricultural system.

Shrinking houses – growing landscape

We have argued in Chapter 8 that, during the early and mid fourth millennium BC, people were building different types and sizes of structure for dwelling on different scales. The hierarchy of dwelling structures ranged from substantial timber halls to smaller rectangular structures to even smaller, ephemeral buildings, for various social groups from households to wider communities. By the late fourth millennium BC, it appears that large, rectangular halls were no longer being built. Evidence from the Lothians and central Scotland suggests that from this period onward, smaller, lighter structures were being built as dwellings, such as Structure 1 at Overhailes (Chapter 4) and the oval structures at Cowie (Atkinson 2002) (Figure 9.2).

At Overhailes, there was evidence for a flimsy, stake-built, sub-circular structure, up to 6m across, that stood towards the end of the fourth millennium BC (Chapter 4). It may have been associated with a yard, which was perhaps where a group sometimes gathered for social purposes, or which held livestock. Inside the putative yard were two pits filled with stone tools, hearth waste and pot sherds, including portions of Fengate Ware vessels. Other pits containing sherds of Impressed Ware pottery at Broxmouth (Hill 1982b) and Thornybank (Rees 2002, 317) may belong to the same tradition of social practice.

The limited evidence for other structures from the Lothians suggests that households continued to live in relatively small and insubstantial structures during the third millennium BC. A scatter of pits, post- and stake-holes, dating to 2880–2500 BC, at Lamb's Nursery (Figure 9.2) may have represented a small structure; its occupation involved the use and deposition of Grooved Ware pottery (Cook 2000a). Another small structure, represented by seven post-holes at East Barns, also involved the use of Grooved Ware (Gooder 2001). In light of this evidence, the group of features associated



Key

1 Broxmouth	8 Meldon Bridge	15 West Water Reservoir	22 Hedderwick	29 Traprain Law	36 Saughtonhall	43 Leaston House
2 Thorny Bank	9 Abbey Millfarm	16 Grainfoot	23 Preston Mains Farm	30 Kaimes Hill	37 Glencorse	44 East Linton
3 Archerfield	10 Ruchlaw Mains	17 Bowerhouse	24 Hoprig	31 Dalmahoy Hill	38 Crosswood	45 Lamancha
4 Tusculum	11 Skateraw	18 Thurston Mains	25 Ratho	32 Tormain Hill	39 Easter Broom House	46 Castle Law
5 Lambs Nursery	12 Linlithgow	19 Belfield	26 Cloburn Quarry	33 Blackford Hill	40 Gowanhill	47 Hawthornden
6 Greenknowe	13 West Pinkerton Farm	20 West Golf Course	27 Blackshouse Burn	34 Corstorphine Hill	41 Bonnytoun	□ rock art in-situ
7 Lintshie Gutter	14 Dryburn Bridge	21 Duncra Hill Farm	28 Longniddry	35 Braid Hills	42 Parkburn Quarry	△ portable rock art

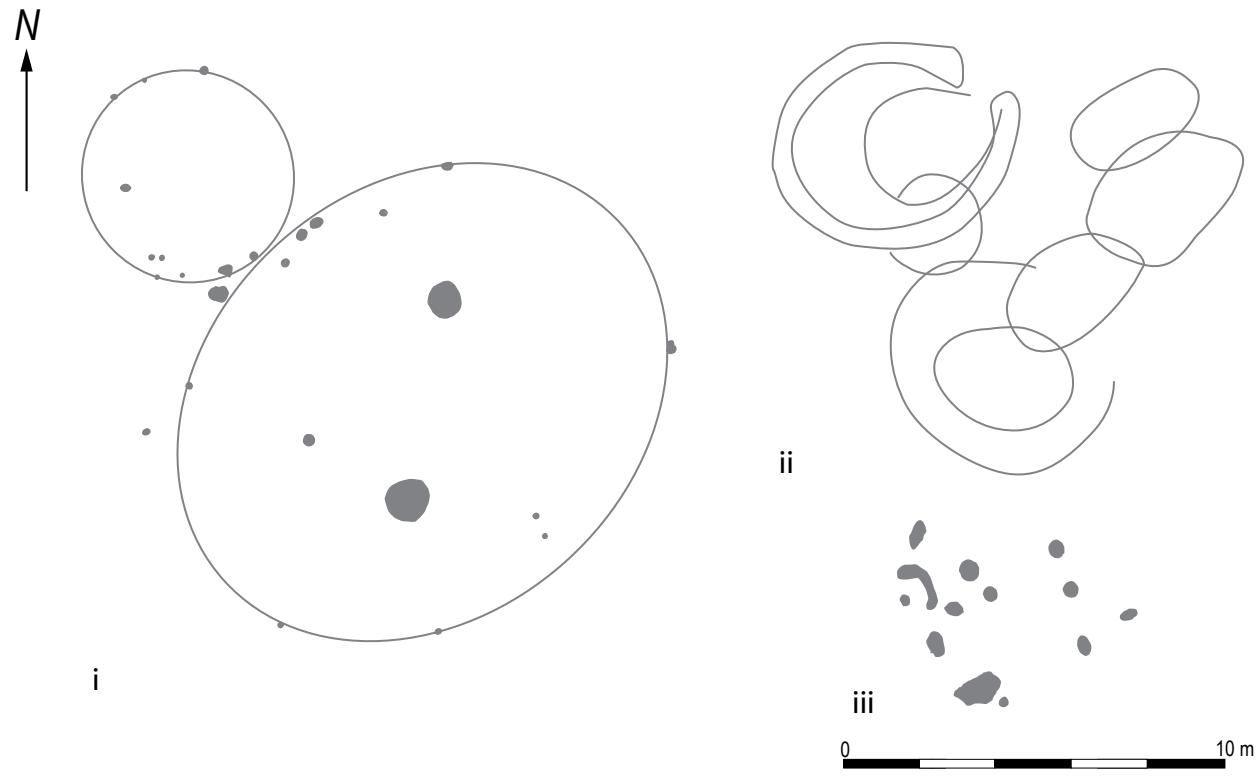
9.1 Map showing the locations of sites referred to in the chapter.

with Grooved Ware at Eweford East may also be best interpreted as a small dwelling (see Chapter 3) dating to the third millennium BC. Such light dwellings could have been rapidly erected and may not have been occupied for as long as more substantial structures. This may in turn indicate that communities at the time required a greater degree of mobility, perhaps because they relied largely on the grazing of stock for subsistence.

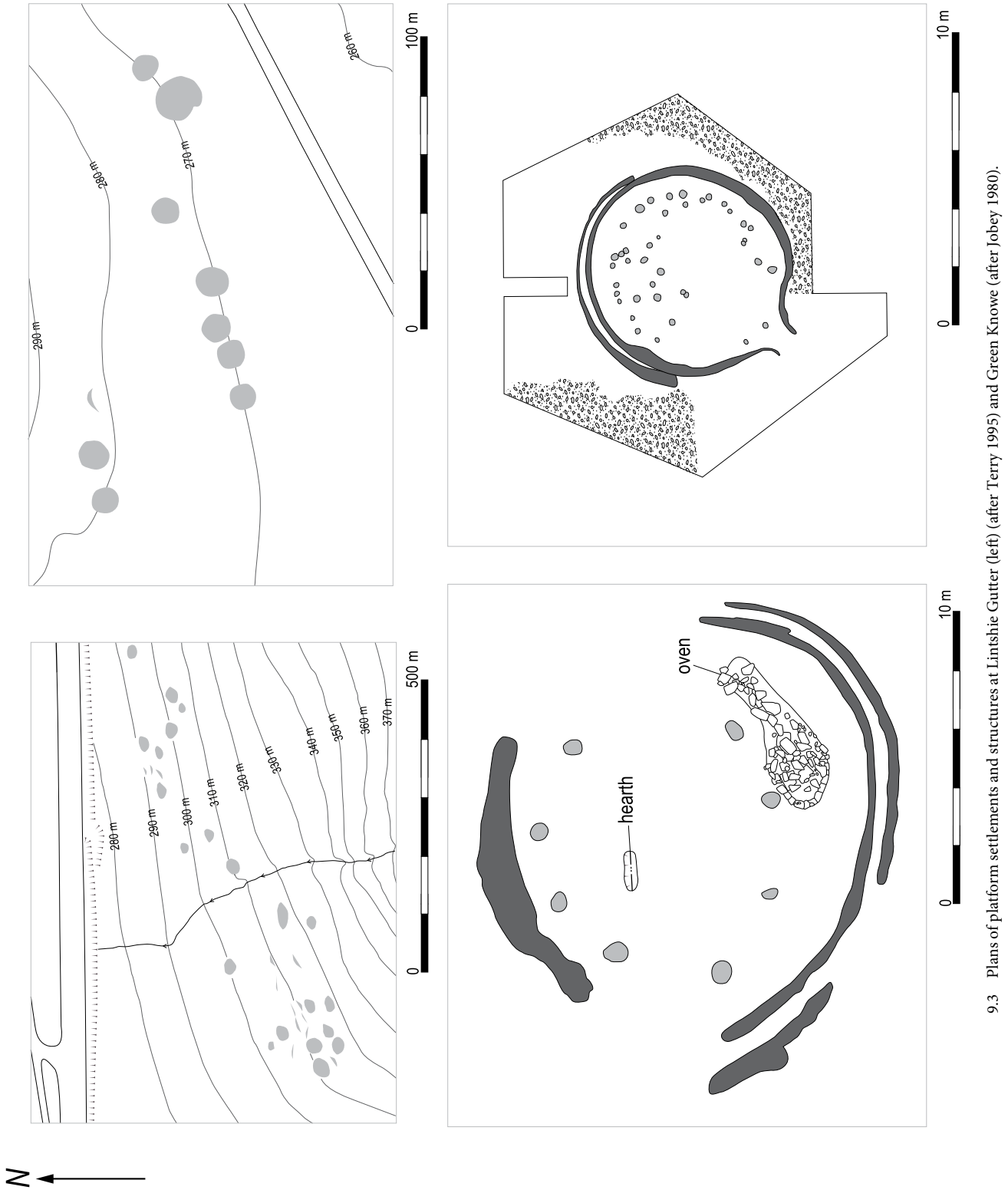
The impression that contemporary dwellings were light is also supported by evidence from coastal sand dune sites, where Grooved Ware (Cowie and MacSween 1999; MacSween 2001, 77) and Beaker pottery (Gibson 1982) form a component of middens. At Archerfield one midden mound, probably dating to the third millennium BC, comprised layers of shells, loam and sand which indicated distinct activity areas (Curle 1908). People had scattered marine shells (including whelks, limpets, oysters and mussels), crab claws and animal bones in two parts of the mound as they processed food, and left behind sherds of pottery that may have been used to store or cook it. Flint tools, pieces of red deer antler, a bone pin and chisels and an axe-polishing stone show that they were also working raw materials there. Most of the pottery consisted of rusticated Beaker or Grooved Ware (with up to 14 vessels of the latter, most of it from this mound), with some sherds of fine Beaker (Curle 1908, 319; Gibson 1982, 98). Another mound close by contained similar remains but fewer shells, associated with fine Beaker pottery (Curle 1908, 312–17).

Similar evidence for dwelling, dating to the second half of the third millennium BC, was found in two middens associated with Beaker pottery at Tusculum (Cree 1908). Those who fished, gathered and hunted food around the site left a thick deposit of sea shells, crab claws and fish bones, along with split and burnt domesticated and wild animal bones, extending approximately 45m by 13m, with the remains of a hearth on top. Numerous sherds of pottery, struck stone tools, coarse stone tools and worked deer antler again indicate craft activity and food storage or cooking.

These midden sites illuminate the character of dwelling in this coastal context. Despite the investigation of extensive areas, there was no evidence for associated structures, so if any existed they may have been tents or light structures that left no archaeologically visible traces. The evidence of Structure 2 at Overhailes, which dated to



9.2 Plans of Overhailes structure A (i), structures at Cowie (ii) (after Atkinson 2002) and Lamb's Nursery (iii) (after Cook 2000).



9.3 Plans of platform settlements and structures at Lintshie Gutter (left) (after Terry 1995) and Green Knowe (after Jobey 1980).

the late third millennium BC (see Chapter 4,) also points to a continued tradition of understated structures through the third millennium BC.

This contrasts with more substantial architectural forms that were emerging by the early second millennium BC, accompanied by changes in the character of settlement. For example, a ring-slot timber round house, measuring 12m in diameter, stood at Lambs' Nursery during the middle of the second millennium BC (Cook 2000a). Further evidence for dwellings in the Lothians during this period is scarce, but examples from further afield suggest its probable character. The best understood contemporary settlement is in the Southern Uplands, in the unenclosed platform settlements that date from the early second millennium BC onward.

For example, the settlement at Green Knowe comprised a group of nine platforms, set among field banks (Jobey 1980a) (Figure 9.3). On one platform, a small, circular ring-slot house up to 7.7m diameter stood in the mid second millennium BC. A path led from the south-facing entrance into the house. A stone-lined hearth pit sat off centre to the east of the entrance, and its location suggests internal spatial divisions, with one area dedicated to preparing food. Numerous stone artefacts, including rubbers, pounders and broken saddle querns, had been tossed along the platform's southern edge. Another platform held three successive, circular, ring-slot houses, up to 10m in diameter, built during the late second millennium BC. A bank of stone, probably cleared from fields, fringed the down slope edge of each platform, with a paved gap leading into each building. To the left (as one exited the house) of one doorway, midden material lay inter-leaved with the clearance bank, suggesting that rubbish, including pottery, charcoal and burnt bone, was thrown out of the doorway to that side. Many of the houses had been burnt down, perhaps deliberately destroyed at the end of their useful lives. Other artefacts from the settlement, including cup-marked stones, chert tools, fragments of a lignite pendant and ring and an amber bead, show the kinds of implements, ornaments and portable art that the inhabitants used.

Excavation at Lintshie Gutter (at *c.* 300m above OD) showed that the tradition of unenclosed platform settlements may have commenced in the early third millennium BC but was certainly established by the first half of the second millennium BC (Terry 1995). Excavation of four of the 31 platforms revealed traces of ring-groove round houses associated with flat-rimmed pottery, but also established that at least one of the platforms was used as a stock enclosure (Figure 9.3). One structure may have served as a barn, mill and bakery: it had two opposed entrances, contained an oven and produced the only two quern stones from the site, one of which lay in the rake-out from the oven, and a cup-marked stone. The opposed entrances may have allowed a breeze through to winnow cereal, with the querns used for grinding the grain and the oven for baking bread.

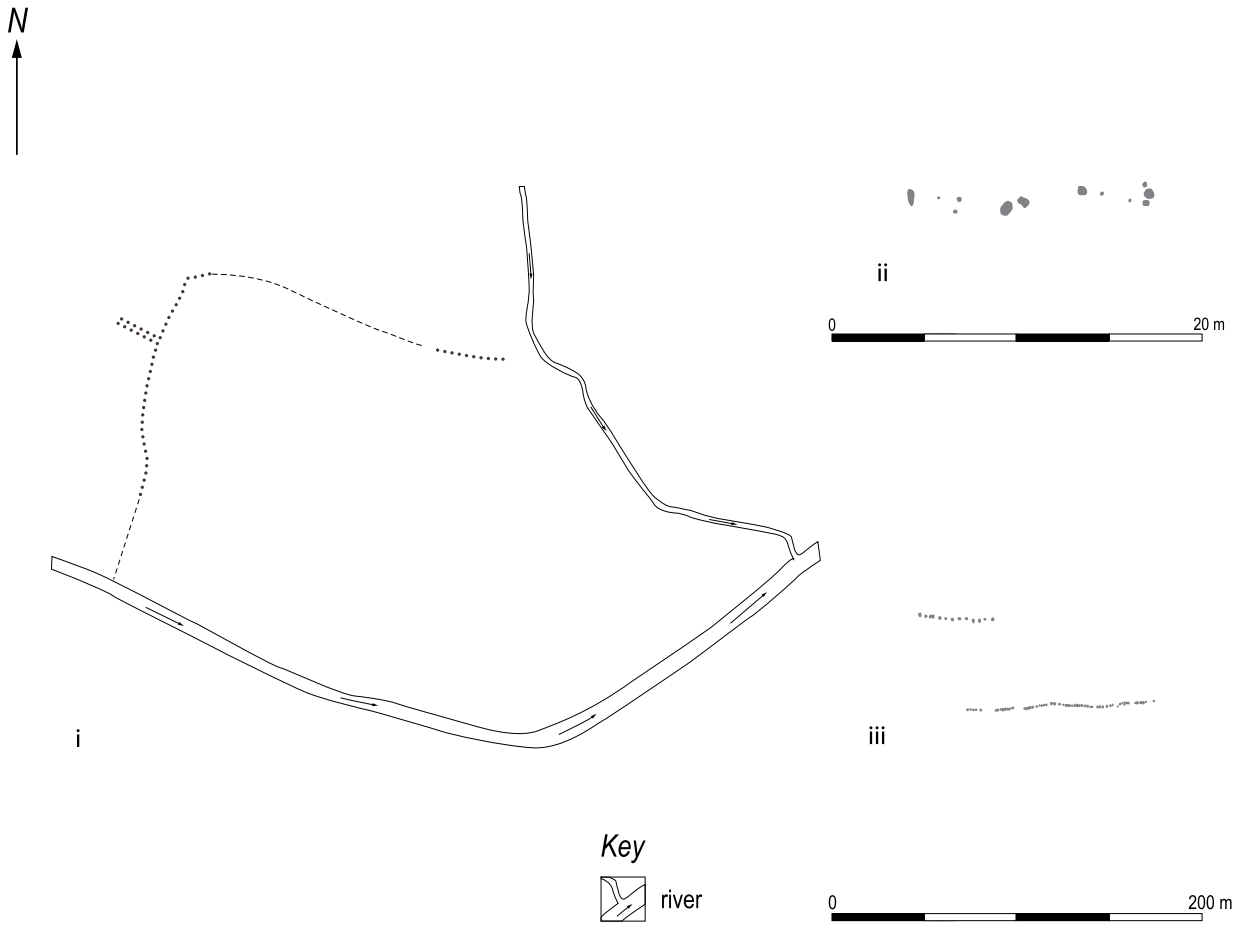
We can suggest several reasons for the apparent shift to building smaller, lighter dwellings from the late fourth millennium BC onward. The abandonment of larger, rectangular structures may indicate the collapse of the highly conventionalised social systems that prevailed during most of that millennium. These spacious buildings, with their ability to accommodate large numbers, were no longer socially necessary. Instead, smaller social groups were the norm, and these called for smaller buildings. The construction of smaller, less substantial structures during the third millennium BC may also point to lower investment in establishing homes, as they were not designed to be occupied for long. The light structure and putative yard at Overhailes, for example, may have been occupied for a few months at most. The coastal middens indicate the long-term use of particular places for hunting, fishing, gathering and eating (as evidenced by Grooved Ware, Impressed Ware and Beaker pottery), yet the absence of evidence for associated structures indicates that the middens built up over several intermittent episodes of activity.

Lower investment of time and effort in building dwellings may correlate to a greater degree of mobility in Lothian society. Clearly people were spending time in the coastal zone, but pig bone at Overhailes and roe and red deer bone from the coastal middens show that they were also exploiting animals further inland, in woodland or upland contexts. These movements may have related to the tending of cattle and other livestock, which were brought to the uplands for summer grazing. If communities were relying increasingly on livestock, and therefore moving around the landscape on a seasonal basis, they may have lived in smaller social groups and occupied more ephemeral houses.

By the second millennium BC, however, larger ring-slot houses were being built in both the lowlands and uplands, with those in the uplands forming small hamlets that may have been occupied year-round. The quern stones at both Lintshie Gutter and Green Knowe indicate an arable component to the economy, perhaps with field systems nearby. Platform settlements may have been positioned on slopes in order to maximise the arable ground on the valley floors and to keep dwellings close to grazing livestock. Within hamlets like Lintshie Gutter, certain buildings were given over to processing the arable crop and others to containing stock.

Dividing the land

Around the same time that communities in Lothian were becoming more mobile, they also began establishing



9.4 Plans of the pit alignments at Meldon Bridge (i) (after Speak and Burgess 1999), Knowes (ii) and Eweford East (iii).

distinct boundaries across the landscape, evident archaeologically as pit alignments. The evidence from Knowes, of a short length of aligned pits, may relate to the beginnings of this tradition in the late fourth millennium BC (Chapter 3). The pits appear to have been left open for a time, except for three that held sherds of Impressed Ware and waste from fires.

There is increasing evidence that pit alignments had a long currency of use, but two broad forms can be distinguished. The first are those that formed part of ceremonial sites dating to the third and second millennia BC, frequently comprising upright timbers in circular pits; the second are those dating to the late first millennium BC, with sub-rectangular pits associated with banks (Waddington 1997). Both forms are known in the Lothians, with an example of the first at Eweford East (Chapter 3) and of the second at Eskbank (Barber 1985). However, the presence of a cup-marked stone in a pit alignment at Thornybank (Rees 2002) suggests that this form, too, may have originated much earlier than the later first millennium BC date usually accepted; in fact, it could date to the third millennium BC.

Numerous pit alignments are known as crop marks in the Lothians, but most of these are not dated and it is difficult to know how they relate to each other or to contemporary settlement. Some appear to form regular systems of landscape division, and these may relate to landscape organisation in the first millennium BC (see Chapter 10).

The tradition of using lines of pits to create boundaries clearly emerged earlier, however. At Eweford East, two parallel pit alignments were created during the mid third millennium BC; these may have supported linear boundaries comprising timber uprights linked by wicker panels (Chapter 3). As at Knowes, people put objects (pot sherds, stone tools and a cup-marked stone) into the pits, and eventually the boundaries were burnt down. Radiocarbon dates indicate that at least parts of both

alignments stood at the same time, forming a pit-defined linear enclosure and inscribing a double line across the landscape. The segmented nature of the southern pit alignment, in particular, suggests that groups gathered intermittently to create it over an extended period of time, perhaps several seasons or years. Subsequent generations built a circular timber enclosure and the parallel northern pit alignment.

The creation of boundaries was a potent act that defined different categories of space: it differentiated inside from outside or this side from that side. These spatial divisions must have been both physical and conceptual, associated with other meanings or values. The pit alignments at both Eweford East and Knowes (Figure 9.4) ran broadly east to west and along lower-lying ground, below slopes that ran up to the foothills of the Lammermuir Hills. These boundaries may have distinguished different areas of the landscape and also prevented stock from moving between different farmsteads or territories. The enclosure at Eweford East may have been used as a stock pen, perhaps to wean young animals or to gather herds from several local farmsteads before moving them to the uplands for summer grazing.

A similar pit-defined monument was discovered at Meldon Bridge, about 25km to the south-west (Figure 9.4). Here, following earlier phases of activity at the site, a community constructed a large enclosure during the first half of the third millennium BC, and it remained a focus of some kind until the mid second millennium BC (Speak and Burgess 1999). The enclosure was defined by posts that were faced with planks and extended between the Lyne Water and Meldon Burn, enclosing an area of up to eight hectares (*ibid*, 105–6). The enclosure is similar to several other sites, found across Britain, that the authors consider were political centres for distinct territorial units (*ibid*, 111–14).

About 25km to the west of Meldon Bridge is another large enclosure dating to the third millennium BC, at Blackshouse Burn (Lelong and Pollard 1998a). A circular area, 300m in diameter, was enclosed with two concentric rows of posts, between which ran a substantial bank (Figure 9.5). The monument was established in a boggy area to enclose the headwaters of two burns. This choice of location probably reflected the importance of water in these uplands to the communities who built the enclosure; if they practiced transhumance, they may have gathered

9.5 Plan of the enclosure at Blackshouse Burn (after Lelong and Pollard 1998a).

at the place during visits to the summer grazings (*ibid*, 48–9). Meldon Bridge may have been positioned with reference to water courses for similar reasons. Such sites played important roles in the uplands during the seasonal gathering of different communities. Herds may have been temporarily penned in the enclosures for exchange, marking or blood letting. These gatherings would have also provided opportunities for the exchange of objects, kin and news.

Moving mountains

While communities in Lothian were beginning to create boundaries to mark distinct areas in the landscape, they also gave meaning to certain places by creating and moving rock art. There is evidence to suggest that rock art was being produced as early as the fourth millennium BC, in the form of a cup-marked stone incorporated in a mortuary structure at Dalladies (Piggott 1972). It is likely that by this time people had also begun to adorn outcrops or boulders with similar simple motifs. The chronology of rock art is difficult to establish, but there seem to have been two distinct developments: curvilinear or geometric motifs were mainly created at monuments such as chambered tombs, while simpler cups and cup-and-rings were more usually created on outcrops and boulders (Bradley 1997). In general, geometric and curvilinear motifs are more frequently found in the west and north of Scotland, reflecting the distribution of monuments, while simple cup marks were incorporated in monuments dating to the second millennium BC in the south and east of Scotland (Morris 1989; Bradley 2000).

In the Lothians region, cup-marked stones have been found on several hills, including Traprain Law (Edwards 1935), Kaimes Hill (Simpson *et al* 2004), Dalmahoy Hill (Naddair 1989), Tormain Hill (Morris 1981, 139–40), Blackford Hill (Morris 1981, 139), Corstorphine Hill (NMRS: NT27SW 190) and the Braid Hills (Morris 1981, 143–5), with another set of rock carvings on the cliff face beside the River Esk at Hawthornden (Morris 1981, 147–8). All of these pieces of rock art may have been produced during the fourth or third millennium BC. It is particularly striking that, apart from Traprain Law, all of these sites cluster around the Pentland Hills and present-day Edinburgh (Figure 9.1).

In contrast, several other cup-marked stones have been found in secondary contexts, including one from a dyke at Saughtonhall (*PSAS* 1896), another from old Glencorse churchyard (Morris 1981, 147) and a third from Crosswood (NMRS: NT05NE 12). It is unclear whether these were quarried from their primary contexts or whether they were produced on individual stones. Their locations do, however, mirror the broad distribution of primary sites, so they may well have been quarried from boulders or rock faces nearby. Cup-marked stones were incorporated in the cairn at Eweford West during its remodelling (Chapter 4) and in the southern pit alignment at Eweford East during the third millennium BC (Chapter 3). The cup-marked stone put into a pit forming part of an alignment at Thornybank (Rees 2002) may date to the same period. At Eweford Cottages, a cup-marked stone played a part in burial rites at the end of the third millennium BC (Chapter 5; Nisbet 1975), and the standing stone with three cup marks on its western face at Easter Broomhouse (RCAHMS 1924), about a kilometre to the east, may date to the same time.

The tradition of moving and reworking rock art in secondary contexts continued into the second millennium BC, with decorated slabs used to build stone cists. In many cases in the Lothians, these slabs appear to have been quarried from outcrops that were decorated generations before – for example, at Gowanhill (NMRS: NT16NE 47), Bonnytoun (Morris 1981, 143), Caerlowrie (Morris 1981, 145), Craigie Hill (*ibid*) and Parkburn Quarry (*ibid*, 156). A sandstone slab with cup-and-ring markings at East Linton (NMS 1996) was aligned with the eastern end of the Drylawhill cursus monument (see Chapter 8). Other decorated slabs have been discovered at Leaston House, close to the foot of the Lammermuirs (Morris 1981, 152), and at Lamancha, close to the foot of the Moorfoot Hills (*ibid*, 40). Smaller, portable cup-marked stones were also used during the second millennium BC, for example at the settlements of Lintshie Gutter (in a building associated with grain processing and the arable cycle) (Terry 1995) and Green Knowe (Jobey 1980a).

The production of rock art on living rock marked certain places in the landscape, visibly and audibly. It also transformed them into places that were distinctly cultural. The distribution of *in situ* rock art in the region indicates a distinct focus around the area of Edinburgh and the Pentland Hills. Rock art, the social context of its production and its subsequent meanings were intimately associated with the uplands. In contrast, the distribution of portable rock art in the late third and second millennia BC focused on the lower-lying ground, and much of it seems to have been quarried from more upland outcrops, while other pieces adorned smaller boulders or stones that were easy to transport. In some cases, then, people seem to have deliberately moved fragments of places, as slabs, from uplands to lowlands. In other cases, simple cup-marked stones may have been created in the lowlands, but with reference to a tradition that originated in the uplands. These decorated stones were used at places that continued to have significance as ceremonial monuments, including pit alignments and burial sites. By the second millennium BC, we also see evidence for more substantial structures in upland contexts, at which portable cup-marked stones

were deposited.

The movement of rock art was both physical and metaphorical. It involved the physical movement of a place that had already been marked as significant, and it also necessarily involved the movement of people, often between the uplands and lowlands. As we argue above, the changing nature of dwellings and land division suggests that households were increasingly practicing a more pastoral economy. The movement of rock art may have expressed physical connections between areas of upland grazings and low-lying arable areas of the landscape during the third millennium BC. These rock fragments were also imbued with the original meanings of the markings, with claims to place, with the significance of the motifs and with those who had changed the landscape.

While the act of creating rock art may have been most meaningful for marking places in the fourth and third millennia BC, cup marks clearly continued to have potency through their re-use in secondary contexts during the late third and second millennia BC. By the mid second millennium BC, rock art was less commonly put in burials, but it was clearly being incorporated into dwellings in the uplands (for example, Jobey 1980a; Terry 1995). Even in this upland context, there may have been a marked spatial division between the higher ground of settlements and grazing and the arable ground on the valley floors. Here, stones may have been used to evoke ancestral activities or link upland pastoral and lowland arable land on a smaller scale. These roots continued to run through subsequent traditions into the first millennium BC or later, as evident from the cup-marked stone built into the wall of a souterrain at Castle Law, Glencorse, in the Pentland Hills (Childe 1933).

Society, identity and social structure

From the late fourth to the late second millennia BC, there were important changes in the ways that people treated and deposited human remains and also certain artefacts. Among the latter, there were particular developments in the forms and uses of pottery, in the adoption of metalworking technology and the circulation and deposition of metal objects.

Making, using and breaking pots

Clay can be worked and fired to produce pots in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, and they be easily decorated in numerous ways. In spite of this potential for variation, pottery styles during the fourth, third and second millennia BC in Britain were generally conservative. That is, while the form and size of vessels varied during particular phases, there were also a series of clear traditions of potting, each lasting for several hundred years. Thus, while pottery can be a highly innovative medium, during this period social factors militated against freedom of expression by potters. Potting was not simply an exercise of production, but a socially determined form of practice (for example, Hill 2002).

The potential for producing pots of various shapes means that deliberate choices lay behind the prevailing forms. Bowls may have been considered better for serving and eating food and larger, barrel-shaped vessels better for storage (Parker Pearson 2003, 12). The choice of a pot's fabric may also have related to function; for example, a coarse, highly tempered fabric would have had better thermal properties for cooking, while a finer fabric would have been better for storing liquids (*cf* Morris 2002). Analysis of the composition of pottery assemblages can illuminate how pottery was used and establish correlations between form, fabric and function of vessels (for example, Petersen 2003; Jones 2005), which can then be considered in relation to decoration or surface treatment. Few large assemblages of pottery in the Lothians have been studied in these terms, but there still appear to have been significant changes in the ways that pots were produced and used, changes that were related to shifts in social practices and the formation of identities.

Pottery production emerged at the beginning of the fourth millennium BC with a range of carinated and plain bowl forms (Herne 1988; Cowie 1993) (see text box 8.2). By the mid to late fourth millennium BC, a different tradition of potting had emerged. Potters began making flat-based bowls and vase-shaped vessels in many parts of Britain, probably beginning with the Impressed Ware tradition (MacSween 1999b). By the late fourth millennium BC, another pottery tradition had emerged, possibly in Orkney, with Grooved Ware that comprised flat-based bowls and bucket- and barrel-shaped pots (MacSween 1999a), often decorated in complex and varied ways. These potting traditions continued into the late third millennium BC, with the continued currency of Impressed and Grooved Ware traditions.

Parker Pearson (2003, 12) argues that the earliest bowl-shaped vessels were designed for sharing boiled food, in contrast to the Grooved Ware pots, which were designed for storing food. Liquids could easily have been drunk from the simple open bowls of the early fourth millennium BC; it would have been more difficult to share liquids from the Impressed Ware bowls with their T-shaped rims (for example, Speak and Burgess 1999), but their open forms would still have facilitated sharing the pots' contents.

The shift to flat bases with less open rims may have corresponded to changes in how food or drink was shared. A round-based Carinated Bowl could have been set into the ground or into a hole through a plank, but in general

the bowl would have been passed like a quaich from one person to another to prevent the contents from spilling, evoking a communal approach to eating and drinking. In contrast, the flat bases of Grooved Ware and Impressed Ware pots could be more easily set down, without the imperative to pass them on, and this implies a more individual approach to mealtimes. Perhaps certain people possessed certain pots, and individual identity was linked to particular vessels through the decoration of pots in the late fourth millennium BC. Other views about what pots it was appropriate or necessary to make would also have constrained production and decoration. For example, the Grooved Ware tradition, with its larger storage vessels, suggests that there was a perceived need to accumulate and store food for later consumption. In contrast, the earlier tradition suggests a perceived need to contain food for immediate use.

Another tradition of potting developed in the mid third millennium BC with the adoption of Beakers, both fine wares and rusticated wares. The fine wares appeared in a distinct series of forms and with similarities in fabric, firing and decoration that distinguished them from earlier traditions (Clarke 1970; Boast 1995, 71). The rusticated wares were more similar to some of the earlier traditions (Gibson 1982), such as Impressed Wares, but were also part of a single tradition (Case 1995, 56). In the Lothians, fine wares are more commonly found associated with inhumation burials in cists, a context in which rusticated wares are never found. Rusticated wares are usually found in occupation contexts, such as the coastal sand dune sites discussed above. Both rusticated and fine wares are found in pits, such as the pit at Eweford (see Chapter 4), and sometimes together, as at Elginhaugh (MacGregor forthcoming). The fine Beaker pottery may have had a special role related to the consumption of alcohol (Burgess and Shennan 1976; Dickson 1978; Case 1995). This role not only influenced how the vessels were used and broken in contexts relating to dwelling; it also led to their being deposited, complete or broken, into other symbolically charged contexts. The rusticated vessels were often much larger and, like Grooved Ware, suggest the continued need to store food and drink during the later third millennium BC.

The different traditions of pottery discussed above have been identified through similarities of form, fabric, firing and decoration. Such similarities were of course clearly apparent to people in the past, and they were produced intentionally, to signify something meaningful to others. These different pottery traditions may have related to communities who identified themselves as distinct from other groups. Perhaps those who adopted one tradition traced genealogical roots to indigenous ancestors, while another claimed lineage from those who had arrived on boats hundreds of years before. The point is that pottery played a role in social practices that was not simply functional, serving as containers, cooking pots or drinking cups; it may have also helped to create the identities of those who used the vessels (*cf* Hill 2002).

These distinctions in identity would have related to various spheres, from places where pots were made to areas where food was prepared and eaten to the spots where the sherds from broken pots were deposited. The meanings associated with different forms of pottery would have been carried from one sphere to another and perhaps transformed in transit. They became linked to those who were variously involved in making the pottery, preparing the food and collecting the rubbish to take to the midden. While some of the broken pots undoubtedly ended life on the midden, others were taken elsewhere and deposited in particular places, such as in the pits at Knowes, or as packing for posts at Meldon Bridge, or in pits with human remains at Pencraig Wood. Pots also frequently accompanied human remains, as we discuss below, and there seems to have been considerable overlap between what could be used in a house and what could be used with the dead. For example, during the second millennium BC, barrel- and bucket-shaped vessels were used to hold human remains (see Speak and Burgess 1999, 75, illus 42 and 43) and were also being used in houses (for example, Terry 1995; Jobey 1980a).

Changes in the treatment of human remains

This section reviews the changing and complex ways in which human remains were treated in the Lothians during the third and second millennia BC. The ways that people treated their dead can point to the belief systems that also influenced how they conducted themselves in life (see text box 9.1). The practice of burying individuals along with what are considered prestigious artefacts during the late third and second millennia BC has been interpreted as evidence for the development of social hierarchies based on individual identities (Clarke *et al* 1985; Shennan 1982). However, this interpretation is difficult to sustain; there is no necessary correlation between how the dead are treated and their status in life, as it is the living who choose how to treat the dead and which artefacts to place with them (Barrett 1994).

Archaeologists still often interpret deliberate deposits of human remains as burials and groups of such deposits as cemeteries (see Chapter 5). Implicit in these terms is a view of burial as the social response to the death of a loved, valued or significant individual, and a means of preparing the dead for the afterlife. Yet the treatment of the dead in third and second millennia BC Britain was not so simple; certainly not all individuals were treated the

same way after death. Only a small proportion had their remains formally deposited, and even those selected for deposition were treated in different ways. Instead, there was a remarkably wide range of different treatments, involving both inhumation and cremation. Furthermore, research has shown that the remains of individuals of all ages and both sexes were deposited in different ways, in spite of attempts to find correlations between particular forms of burial practice and particular social groups (for example, Shepherd 1989; Waddell 1995). It appears, therefore, that the patterns of human remains deposition during this period did not directly reflect the structure of society. The evidence suggests there were more complex reasons for these practices.

There was a marked trend toward placing bodies in cists during the late third millennium BC. At the same time, there are also examples of single and multiple articulated inhumed individuals, cremated individuals, and mixed cremated and inhumed remains from the region during this period. The traditions of inhumation and cremation continued throughout the second millennium BC, with multiple individuals frequently combined, sometimes as token deposits. The use of such token deposits, frequently of children's remains, is evident at other ceremonial sites such as Pencraig Wood, Eweford West and Meldon Bridge during the third and second millennium BC. These may have related to the creation and recreation of ritual foci to which people referred when they gathered at

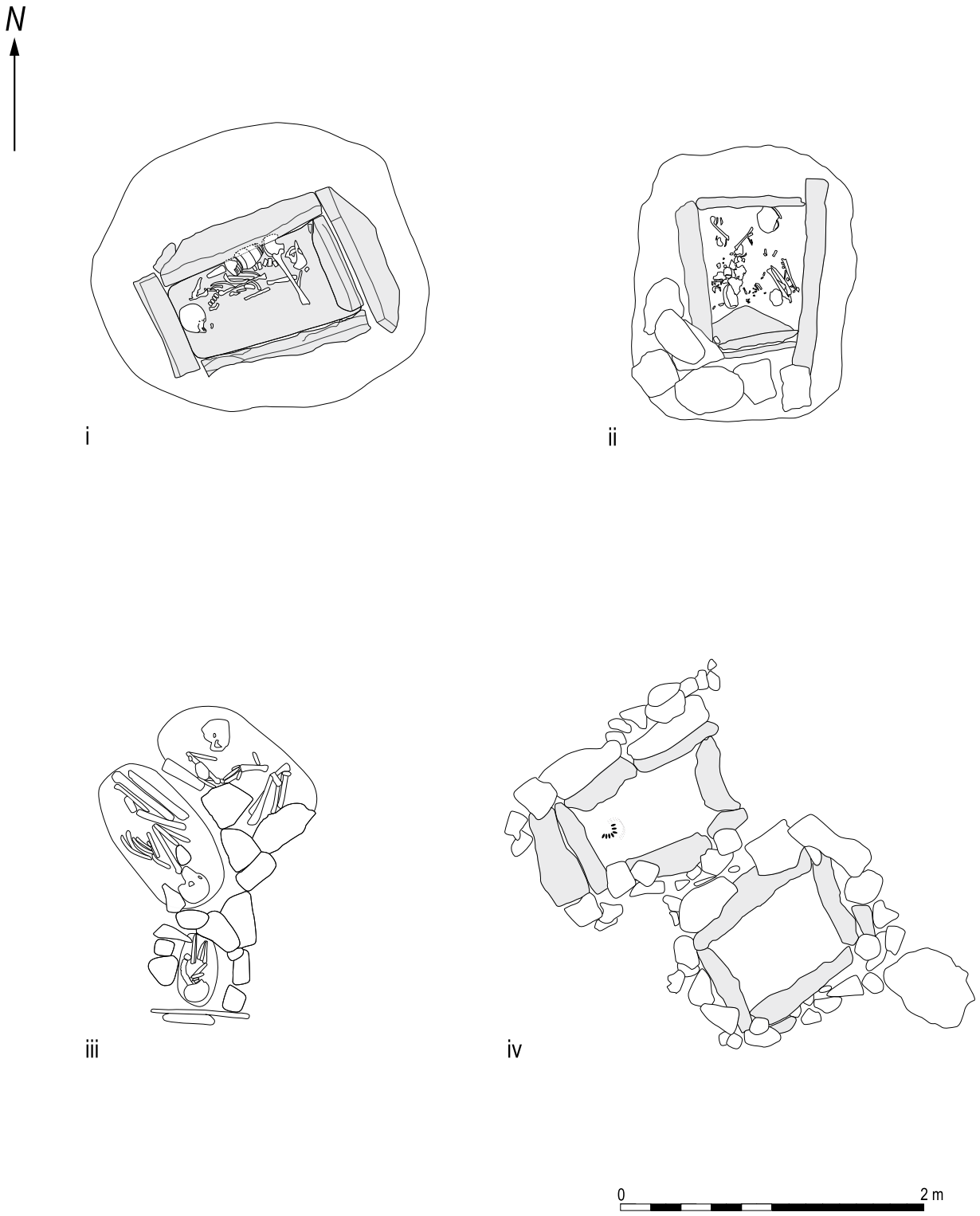
9.1

Death and mourning

For the living, the death of a person is not simply the ceasing of biological life. The living deal with the dead in ways that reflect concerns with their own health and hygiene, with emotional closure and with the well-being of the deceased. Most cultures or religions view the moment of death as a point of transition from one state of being to another. Death can be seen as marking the soul's migration to an afterlife or to another plane of existence. These times of transition can draw into focus the relationship between the living and the dead, and so people may refer especially at such times to their ancestors. The events and rites surrounding such transitions are usually highly social, involving immediate kin and often members of a wider community.

In this sense, death is social, and social death can extend over a considerable period of time. It may involve the dead person's separation from the wider community. In some cases, those close to him or her may be considered impure or contaminated and are avoided; in others, the time approaching death may require people to draw together. While the social response to death varies greatly from culture to culture, it is most evident archaeologically in how the body is treated after death. Mortuary rites can transform the state of the body; they can range from the exposure of bodies for defleshing (excarnation) to dismemberment to the cremation of bodies (or body parts) on pyres, as with the remains excavated at Eweford West, Pencraig Wood and Pencraig Hill. Rites like these are usually followed by funerary rites that involve formally depositing the body, or its fragmented parts. In some cases, a person's remains may be put in places that are not usually archaeologically visible (such as in the sea or rivers), while in others bodies may be deposited in archaeologically visible ways (such as in stone cists). We can catch glimpses of such rites in archaeological traces, like the carefully assembled combinations of cremated bone, urns, battle axhead and knife-dagger in the Bronze Age pits at Eweford West.

Responses to death may involve other rites to mark or aid the deceased's transition from one world to another, such as acts of celebration, feasting or mourning, which often involve public display. The emotions, beliefs and rites that surround a person's death can vary greatly from culture to culture, but in all cases there is a socially sanctioned response which often relates the living community to the dead.



9.6 Plan of burials at Abbey Mill Farm (i) (after Lawson *et al* 2002), Linlithgow (ii) (after Cook 2000), Longniddry (iii) (after Baker 2003) and West Water Reservoir (iv) (after Hunter 2000).

these sites. These examples highlight that the deposition of human remains in contexts other than discrete burials was a socially sanctioned practice, the meaning of which would have been understood with reference to other contexts of social expression.

During the later third millennium BC, communities in the Lothians and elsewhere in Britain began to place individual bodies in a crouched position inside stone cists or graves. Many of these were accompanied by certain artefacts, with intact Beaker pots among the earliest. For example, a female body dating to 2570–2300 BC was placed, crouched on her side, in a cist, accompanied by a domesticated pig scapula and a Beaker at Abbey Mill Farm (Lawson *et al* 2002) (Figure 9.6), while an adult male was put crouched in a cist at about the same time at Ruchlaw Mains (Ashmore *et al* 1982). Two other burials in cists at Skateraw indicate more complex mortuary rites. In one, a young male may have had his arms placed on the wrong side of his body, so he had partly decomposed or his arms had been severed before burial (Ritchie 1958). In another cist, a body's femur was replaced with one from another individual (Close-Brooks 1979). In both these cases, the bodies were transformed from their natural states, with particular emphasis on the limbs; this suggests that inhumed bodies were not simply understood as representing individuals.

While there was a clear trend in the region toward the inhumation of single individuals, the treatment of the dead was often more complex. In some cases people's remains were deposited collectively; in others, it was socially acceptable to revisit cists and disturb or move earlier deposits to add fresh human remains. For example, at the end of the third millennium BC, the partial, disarticulated and mixed, unburnt and burnt bones of at least one adult, four children aged about nine years and one child aged about five years were put into a cist at Linlithgow (Cook 2000b) (Figure 9.6). The excavator suggested that the cist had been constructed in a manner that allowed re-opening and, indeed, there are other examples of the possible re-use of cists to add more human remains, for example at West Pinkerton Farm (Stevenson 1939), Dryburn Bridge (Dunwell 2003) and West Water Reservoir (Hunter 2000, 127–9). The tradition of placing crouched and multiple inhumations into cists continued into the mid second millennium BC. This is evident from three inhumations in separate cists at Longniddry (Baker 2003), dated to 1690–1440 BC (OxA–10034) and 1520–1310 BC (OxA–10088) (Figure 9.6). Multiple inhumations are evident from the two adults deposited with pig bones at Grainfoot, Longniddry demonstrate; bone from the cist dated to 1310–970 BC (GU-2762) (Dalland 1991a).

There were also variations in what was considered appropriate to place with the body. Pots varied in style from Beaker-Food Vessel hybrids (for example, at Skateraw; Stevenson 1940) to Beakers (for example, at Bowerhouse; Seton 1831) to Food Vessels (for example, at Belfield (Turner 1918), West Golf Course, North Berwick (Cree and Richardson 1907), West Water Reservoir (Figure 9.6; Hunter 2000) and Duncra Hill Farm, (Anderson 1900). Placing intact Beakers with inhumed bodies seems to have been reserved for certain parts of the landscape, with a notable concentration in the vicinity of Skateraw (for example, Stevenson 1940; Ritchie 1958; Henshall 1968; Close-Brooks 1979; Triscott 1996). Around the same time, people were leaving sherds of Beaker in other ceremonial contexts (see Chapter 4) and using them in settlements (see above). At times, objects like flint knives were also added (for example, at Thurston Mains; Stevenson 1940). In other cases, bodies were put into cists with no accompanying artefacts (at least, none that did not decay away); this was the case at Eweford Cottages in the late third millennium BC (Chapter 4), and also at Dryburn Bridge (Triscott 1982; Dunwell 2003, 158), Hedderwick (Callander 1929), Preston Mains Farm (NMRS no: NT57NE 85) and Hoprig (Taylor 1929).

While the remains of a few were chosen to be put more or less whole into cists during this period, the remains of others were treated in ways that recalled the earlier mortuary practices of the fourth millennium BC. At two places in particular in the third millennium BC – Pencraig Hill and Eweford West (see Chapters 2 and 8) – human remains were fragmented, cremated, circulated and deposited in various ways that harked back to earlier traditions. This concern with cremated bone continued though the late third millennium BC, and arguably increased during the first half of the second millennium BC. For example, at Harehope cairn, pieces of Beaker were deposited with cremated remains in a pit (Jobey 1980a, 100–1), and a little cremated human bone placed with a crouched inhumation, dating to 2200–1800 BC (AA-29066), along with a Beaker, flint tool and bronze awl at Doonside, Berwickshire (Clarke and Hamilton 1999).

Cremated remains were distributed and used in certain ways at other ceremonial sites in the wider region. For example, at Meldon Bridge (Speak and Burgess 1999, 26), a large pit dated to 2900–2100 BC and surrounded by six stakes had held successive posts, a stake and an upright stone; the partial cremated remains of an eight-year-old child had been scattered in it. In another case, cremated human bone was put into a pit that was set in a circle of 11 stakes. Perhaps the remains were part of more extensive ritual acts carried out at a monument where social groups from the wider region gathered seasonally.

Cremated human remains continued to be deposited in various ways throughout the second millennium BC, as

the numerous deposits at Eweford West demonstrate (see Chapter 5). They were usually put into pits, frequently inside or accompanied by pots of various forms, and occasionally with other artefacts; sometimes these had been burnt. In some instances, what appear to have been token deposits of cremated human bone were deposited, perhaps as foundation deposits. This was the case in several pits that formed two parallel rows of posts at Meldon Bridge, built between 1700 and 1050 BC (GU-1050; GU-1051) (Speak and Burgess 1999, 33–5). The excavator noted that the two lines of pits appeared to form pairs of similar size, paralleling the phase of activity at Pencraig Wood where paired pits were a focus for deposition of human remains (see Chapter 5). In still other cases, cremated human bone was brought into the dwellings of the living – for example, in a mid second millennium BC roundhouse at Lamb's Nursery (Cook 2000b, 110).

If not all deposits of human remains were simply burial in the conventional, modern sense, what were they for? Two changes in perspective may help us to interpret them. The first is to accept that not all deposits of human remains were intended to achieve the same emotional, social or metaphysical outcomes so, although they all involved the dead, they cannot be directly compared. The second is that, as people lived by belief systems which extended into all areas of their lives, we can only interpret what these acts meant by considering them in the context of other practices. What was deemed a socially appropriate way of treating human remains caught its meaning from other contexts and beliefs. For example, a complete body may have been placed inside a stone cist to bind or seal the individual's spirit, soul or ghost and prevent it from attacking the living community. A year of famine may have required that the cremated bones of kin were offered to earlier ancestors, through deposition in pits at ancestral sites, rather than passing to other worlds through the usual forms of deposition, such as sky or water burial. The gathering together of human remains and artefacts would have meant different things at various times, and each time the ways in which they were deposited may have been with very different intent, designed to achieve different social outcomes.

Other arenas of display

The examples reviewed above include many in which human remains were combined with artefacts that have traditionally been seen as indicating the higher status of the accompanying dead, because of the perceived rarity or prestige of the objects. In some cases this may have been true, if artefacts or the raw materials from which they were made came from considerable distances away. For example, some jet objects may have derived from sources near Whitby in Yorkshire (Sheridan and Davis 2002), while the amber forming beads could have come from the Baltic (Beck and Shennan 1991). Other objects, such as those made of copper, bronze and gold, may have been prestigious not only because the sources of ore were limited but also because those who had the knowledge, skills or authority to produce them were unusual and rare (for example, Clarke *et al* 1985; Budd and Taylor 1995). Modern judgements of artefacts' relative value or prestige contain implicit assumptions about their relative availability or visibility in other social arenas. However, as Hunter (2000, 173) notes, the assumed prestige of many artefacts may often be overstated, with the possibility of unpreserved, equally elaborate 'organic finery' overlooked as well as the fact that these objects were used and worn, not necessarily specifically made or acquired as new for deposition. They may well have been readily available for use and display in other social arenas, in special ceremonies or even as part of daily life in the field or forest. The varied relationships between different forms of practices and types of artefacts can be demonstrated by considering two further examples of practices during the third and second millennia BC.

In southern Scotland, there are several examples where jet or jet-like jewellery was deposited with human remains. At West Water Reservoir, the inhumed remains of a child aged 3–5, with a string of cannel coal and another of lead beads around his neck, were placed in a cist (Hunter 2000, 124–5). Analysis has shown that, at least in the case of the cannel coal string, the necklace had been used for some time before deposition, while the string of lead beads is unique (*ibid*, 136–41). In contrast, at Cloburn Quarry people built up deposits, containing cremated bone and Beaker and Food Vessel sherds, on a pre-existing monument. Among the deposits was a group of 20 jet disc beads that had not been strung together and had been made specifically for deposition shortly beforehand (Lelong and Pollard 1998b, 118; Shepherd 1998, 130).

The biography of each object illuminates the wider availability of such materials. West Water Reservoir demonstrates that such artefacts may have been in circulation for some time, perhaps as heirlooms, with different histories associated with individual beads (Woodward 2002); in other cases, as at Cloburn, communities were able to acquire or produce beads specifically for depositing at a ceremonial site. This suggests that such artefacts may have been more readily available than is generally thought, if they were both in circulation and could be produced at short notice. The apparent prestige of such artefacts stems from a general lack of archaeological visibility rather than necessarily from limited social availability.

The practices through which these objects were

deposited are also distinctly different. The acts at West Water Reservoir clearly related to the deliberate deposition of human remains. Those at Cloburn differed, in that certain artefacts were chosen for deposition at a ceremonial site. This finds close parallels with practices at Eweford West during the late third millennium BC (Chapter 4). Here, deposition of the halberd signified the incorporation of a new form of material, metalwork, into other depositional arenas besides those involving human remains (see text box 9.2, Figure 9.7). Pieces of metalwork were also deposited along with human remains during the late third and second millennia BC, such as the dagger, with a gold pommel mount, placed with a body in a cist under a cairn at Skateraw (Henshall 1968; Gerloff 1975) and a socketed axe and three bronze razors deposited in the large cairn at nearby Bowerhouse (Anderson 1886). Metalwork was also deposited in other ritualised ways elsewhere in the landscape, often in upland contexts, most notably upon Traprain Law (Jobey 1976). Other examples of this include the bronze axeheads which Cowie (2004, 252) has suggested may relate to territorial or symbolic boundaries, or the objects which Hunter (2000, 176) argues marked out the Pentland Hills as an important ritual landscape during the second millennium BC.

Dwelling with objects in the landscape

We have considered the changing nature of Lothian life during the third and second millennia BC. By the third millennium BC, dwellings had decreased in scale to reflect changing social structure, as communities may have become smaller, more mobile and dependant upon pastoralism, moving between uplands and lowlands on a seasonal basis. At the time, people were also inscribing new meanings in the landscape that referred to this mobility, creating rock art in the uplands and later using portable pieces of rock art in a lowland context. Landscape was also being redefined through the construction of linear features, which created new categories of space. The short or segmented nature of the pit alignments suggests they were built by members of a community, perhaps deriving from different farmsteads or built over a period of time in sections. In contrast, large upland enclosures may have

9.2

The Eweford West halberd

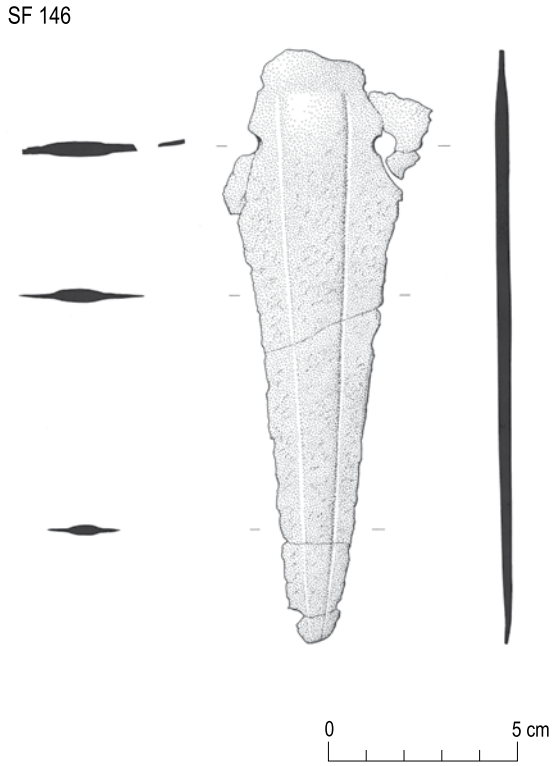
A halberd is a tool shaped something like a pick, with an asymmetrical blade hafted to a long handle and curving downwards. Halberds are among the earliest metal artefacts used and made in Britain, dating from about 2350 to 2000 BC, and to make them probably would have required more technical skill and metal than many other simple objects being made at this time (Needham 2004, 231–4). They were frequently made of arsenical copper, as opposed to bronze.

Due to their unusual form, halberds are often thought to have been mainly for display, perhaps expressing the prestige or status of those who possessed them. If this was the case, these moments of display may have been particularly important social events, such as the ceremonies performed after a person's death. The wider community would have seen halberds only occasionally, and few would ever have had the right to handle them.

Specialist analysis by Trevor Cowie of the Eweford halberd (Figure 9.7) indicates that rivet holes may have been pierced for a second time through the metal, which suggests that it was re-hafted. This observation supports the idea that halberds were treasured objects that were kept as heirlooms for long periods; the Eweford halberd seems to have been used for long enough that its handle had to be replaced. Such objects may have been exchanged or given as presents many times and circulated over considerable distances in time and space.

Recent experimental evidence suggests that, while halberds may have been used for display, they would have functioned perfectly well as weapons, perhaps in some kind of martial combat (O'Flaherty 2004).

GAVIN MacGREGOR



9.7 The halberd from Eweford West.

been foci for summer gatherings of stock and larger social groups from a wider region.

Ceremonial centres such as Eweford East may have derived their significance partly from the movements of people and animals. The building of structures and tying them into the ground through ritual deposits (as at Overhailes) may have bound smaller communities to their locales, places which had been significant to previous generations. At large enclosures, such as Meldon Bridge and Blackshouse Burn (Speak and Burgess 1999; Lelong and Pollard 1998a), such acts may have metaphorically tied the dwellings of wider communities together.

During the late fourth and early third millennia BC, human remains were being cremated, fragmented, and deposited at places like Meldon Bridge and Pencraig Wood. Challenges emerged, however, to how people viewed their relationships with the dead and with the world they inhabited. This was expressed through the practice of putting bodies into cists, at broadly the same time as communities were adopting new forms of pottery and new technologies, such as metallurgy, during the later third millennium BC (Ashmore 1996; Parker Pearson 1993). Perhaps strangers brought such traditions to the region, challenging those who lived there, or perhaps members of the communities who had already lived there for generations beforehand adopted them. Certain individuals, certain communities had access to the transformative powers of metallurgy, which depended on the fire which had long been used to transform clay into pottery or raw food into cooked.

We have pointed out flaws in the traditional model that increasing deposition of prestigious artefacts with burials indicates the emergence of elites in society. The artefacts associated with deposits of human remains were often fairly typical and widely available; it was not necessarily the status of the object or individual(s) that was being expressed through such deposits (Barrett 1994). Instead, they were intended to achieve specific

9.8 Reconstruction of the third-millennium phase of activity at Eweford West.

social, political or metaphysical effects in different social arenas.

During the same period, people may have become conscious of their ability to transform things physically in others ways – for example, through remodelling the cairn at Eweford West, and similar phases of remodelling at other ceremonial sites in the region, such as Cairnpapple (Piggott 1950; Barclay 1999), Cloburn (Lelong and Pollard 1998b) and Harehope (Jobey 1980a). People were also using Beaker pottery in a variety of contexts – in and around dwellings, in deposits at ceremonial sites and along with human remains. For example, at Eweford West, Beaker pottery was scattered around the cairn along with thousands of cereal grains, metaphorically re-sowing the site with a different crop (Chapter 4) (see Figure 9.8). The placing of intact Beakers with inhumed individuals seems to have been reserved for other areas of the landscape, with a concentration further to the east in the vicinity of Skateraw (for example, Stevenson 1940; Ritchie 1958; Henshall 1968; Close-Brooks 1979; Triscott 1996). We can speculate on the reasons. Perhaps the practice of binding individuals in stone boxes was reserved for particular places, and applied to those who had been affected by the powers which transformed stones into metal objects? Whatever its initial meaning, a tradition of crouched inhumation continued, albeit with variations, for the next millennium.

By the second millennium BC, communities had established more permanent forms of settlement in the uplands, but they retained links with communities on the lowland coastal plain. The communities living in these different parts of the landscape may have practiced different proportions of arable and pastoral farming.

Tradition ran strong, and cremation resurged as a mortuary rite during the early second millennium BC (Ashmore 2001, 2). As with previous generations, people deemed it appropriate at times to combine several individuals or their fragments together, but now the addition of complete artefacts gave new potency to these rites. Again, the close relationship between the living and the dead was re-emphasised in other rites. Token handfuls of cremated human bone were sometimes placed beneath rows of posts or in paired pits, and human remains may also have been put in pits inside houses. Increasingly, the link between pottery used in dwellings and pottery associated with the dead was restored.

The period covered in this chapter, which spans perhaps 80 generations, means that the approach we have taken has at times been broad-brush. While such an approach can oversimplify the complex changes that took place, it does highlight the different ways in which people engaged with their social and physical surroundings. Despite these marked variations, there are clues that these many generations retained a concern with the active and potent role of certain objects, including human remains. They seem to have main-tained beliefs that these objects of material culture could be used in ways that affected outcomes in the social and physical world. Such beliefs would have grown from the legacies of previous generations and been anchored to places which were remembered, revisited and reworked.