Boundaries and Change: The Examination of the Late Iron Age–Roman Transition

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Introduction

Boundaries have been an important element of discussion in studies of both the Iron Age and Roman period; however, the transition between the two has rarely formed part of this analysis. Iron Age research has predominantly focused on the examination of settlement boundaries beyond their defensive capabilities, isolating the differences between enclosed and unenclosed settlements and their relationship to social use of space (Bowden and McComish 1987; Hingley 1984, 1990). Research in Roman Britain, however, has been more concerned with the physicality of boundaries, both of military forts and civilian towns, focusing interpretation on evidence of date, form and development (Crummy 1999; Fulford 1984; Goodman 2007). This research has shown that in many ways boundaries are more than physical constructions and that they represent the social characteristics of the communities they enclose. It is through the examination of constructed boundaries in Britain that we can attempt to understand the scale and complexity of social change during the Iron Age/Roman transition.

Boundaries are a recurring and widespread theme of archaeological study. In landscape archaeology we explore the relationship between boundaries and those who experience them as areas of perceived social space (Tilley 1994: 16–17). Constructed boundaries are unique because they explore this relationship in relation to the societies in the past who actively seek to change it. The act of establishing a boundary indicates the importance of a specific location and an active interest in change and transformation of the landscape. The construction of boundaries deliberately alters the landscape and divides space and with it the social structure of the people that experience them (Bevan 1997). While constructed boundaries provide a functional purpose they also hold a wider significance to those who build and maintain them. The social and symbolic should therefore be embraced as part of a holistic understanding of physically constructed boundaries within a landscape setting.

I will explore these issues by examining boundaries from the Late Iron Age to Roman period within a single landscape, specifically the area that surrounds modern day Chichester in West Sussex (Fig. 1). This example provides continuous occupation throughout the Iron Age/Roman transition in which we can identify and investigate different types of constructed boundaries and, by exploring their relationship to the landscape, the effect on the communities that inhabited this area. This landscape contains a series of linear earthworks thought to date to the Late Iron Age, evidence of ditches established in the post conquest period and third century Roman town walls. Three topics shall be addressed when considering boundaries for each of these three periods: construction as a social process, the impact of these boundaries on the surrounding landscape and their spatial location and visibility.
Late Iron Age

A system of large linear discontinuous earthworks, commonly known as the Chichester Entrenchments, was constructed in three phases across the West Sussex landscape in the Late Iron Age. The entrenchments consisted of a series of extensive linear ditches with accompanying banks that were orientated in an east-west and north-south direction. A series of excavations through the earthworks have indicated that the ditch measured approximately six to seven metres in width and between two and a half and three metres in depth and was V shaped in profile. Despite these excavations only a small amount of dating material has been recovered, however, they are currently broadly dated to the middle of the first century B.C. (Davenport 2003). Bradley’s detailed analysis of the entrenchments in the 1970s ascribed their
construction to three distinct phases (1971). The first phase is represented by two lines of east-west orientated earthworks, labeled EWA (i) and (ii), furthest to the north. This has subsequently increased through the addition of aerial photography and mapping of the wider area, with the earthworks, including the so-called ‘War Dyke,’ now thought to extend eastwards up to the River Arun (Magilton 2003). These earthworks have been attributed to the same phase due to their similarity in morphology and location, as they each follow the natural contours of the landscape along the base of the South Downs. The use of the natural topography and potentially the River Arun as a boundary to the east indicates a close relationship between the construction of these boundaries and the surrounding landscape. The second and third phase of the construction of the entrenchment is thought to date to early in the first century A.D., due to the similarity of these earthworks with those dated at Colchester (Bradley 1971). The second phase was defined by two lines of east-west earthworks, labeled EWB and EWD, and two lines of north-south earthworks, labeled NS2 and NS4. The third and final phase was comprised of three north-south earthworks, NS1, NS3 and NS6, and potentially a series of smaller east-west earthworks, labeled EWC, EWE, EWF and EWG (Fig. 1). Some dispute exists over the dating of the earthworks from phases 2 and 3. Magilton (2003) suggests that some or all are post-Roman in date, based on their alignment with later features such as Roman roads, however, this evidence is circumstantial at best. It is much more likely that the earthworks were built in the Late Iron Age as the establishment of the Roman town occurred so rapidly after the annexation that there would be little need for these larger earthworks. This system of earthworks represents a considerable organizational and physical undertaking and as such, many of these banks and ditches are still visible in the landscape today, albeit disturbed in places by modern development. This system is similar to Late Iron Age dyke systems found in other locations in the South East including Colchester, Silchester and St Albans, which are thought to provide the boundaries to Late Iron Age settlements defined as ‘Territorial Oppida.’ While much interest and examination of this type of settlement has been undertaken in the last twenty years, little is known about their development or role (Haselgrove and Moore 2007: 3) apart from their probable importance during this period as centres of power. This is seen in the evidence of coin manufacture and imported goods, as well as intense settlement and cemeteries that include high status burial (Hamilton 2007: 87). More recent examination has emphasized the probable multiple and divergent roles of these polyfocal settlements, as pre-existing central places, settlement related to ritual and religious practice especially in close proximity to watery contexts or simply as meeting points between different social groups (Bryant 2007: 78, Rogers 2008: 53, Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 285).

The physical construction of these earthworks can tell us much about social processes and has been addressed in this research through an estimation of labour requirements and also through phenomenological experiences of excavating the ditch. An estimation of labour was calculated by using a previously tested method first used at Overton Down in Wiltsire in the 1960s (Ashbee and Cornwall 1961) and since repeated for estimating construction time for large Neolithic enclosures on the Tavoliere Plain in Italy (Brown 1991). At Overton Down the estimation for the amount of earth that one person can excavate and remove per hour was calculated by using experimental archaeology at approximately 0.1415 cubic metres. This figure, along with the estimated volume and length of the entrenchments, was then used to estimate the person hours required to construct these earthworks (Table 1).
Table 1: Equation for Labour estimation after Brown (1991:12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$L \times \text{Section} / CV = D$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$L$ = Length of ditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section = Area of the section of the ditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV = Volume of earth (chalk) excavated by one person in one hour in cubic metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Person hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that this calculation gave a minimum person hour estimate for construction time as it did not take into consideration the construction of the bank, but only the placement of the spoil next to the ditch, and estimates the excavation rate of chalk rather than the gravel geology located in West Sussex, which is significantly more difficult to excavate. This equation estimates a figure of over one million person hours, the equivalent of four hundred people working ten-hour days for three hundred and twenty nine days.

Table 2: Estimation of person hours for construction separated into phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Person Hours</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>552,935</td>
<td>200 people working 10-hour days for 276 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>368,623</td>
<td>200 people working 10-hour days for 184 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>394,953</td>
<td>200 people working 10-hour days for 197 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the three phases of construction of the entrenchments as suggested by Bradley (1971), the person hours separate into approximately 42% for the first phase, 28% for the second and 30% for the final phase. Each phase required a large amount of person hours over a significant period of time, although phases 2 and 3 occurred shortly after one another, suggesting continual effort from one phase into the other or the use of a larger amount of workers (Table 2). Additionally each phase does require the organization of a large group of people combined with a repeated effort, representing perhaps a generational responsibility. This estimation for a large requirement of labour is supported by recent excavations through the entrenchments at Halnaker, West Sussex in 2010. These excavations were undertaken by commercial archaeologists using modern tools and, due to the large physical undertaking, required repeated rest periods and rotation of duties. Groups or gangs of people working on small sections of the earthwork could have completed this task fairly quickly and efficiently without suffering physical ailments. We can suggest that a community effort may have been involved, with different family or social groups undertaking the construction of different sections of the earthworks.
The creation of this extensive earthwork system would have irrevocably changed the meaning of the landscape in the Late Iron Age. While traditional interpretation focuses on the functionality of the entrenchments as defensive, perhaps a more important distinction would be to consider how they delimit an area to the north from the south. The majority of occupation in this period lies to the south of the entrenchments, although habitation continued to the north even after its construction (Fig. 2). Potentially this barrier formed the physical boundary between two distinct social groups, however, there is little evidence to suggest this, and control, rather than restriction, of movement may have been the ultimate goal. The discontinuous nature of the earthworks supports this theory, however, further environmental analysis is required to suggest whether these areas were open or defined by woodland or hedges during Late Iron Age. Whether this was an act of ‘domination’ by a powerful ruling class to control movement within their space, as Tilley suggests, is possible but difficult to determine (1994: 27).

The spatial location and visual impact of these earthworks may illuminate some of these concerns. The entrenchments lie at the base of the South Downs, a natural chalk ridge approximately two hundred metres in elevation to that of the surrounding area, which limits their defensive capability. This natural feature forms a barrier between the lower areas of the Coastal Plain to the south and the Wealden Greensand to the north. Therefore what is the purpose of undertaking the physical construction of a boundary here? As discussed above, this cannot be explained solely by the exclusion of one zone of occupation from another. Perhaps our focus should not be on the Downs to the north but instead the Coastal Plain to the south. A cumulative viewshed analysis of the entrenchments in ArcGIS illustrates that the majority of the Coastal Plain is visible from the location of the earthworks (Fig. 3). The importance of natural features in the prehistoric has been discussed previously by Bradley (2000) and in this instance the coastline and the River Arun provide further limits to this area of bounded space. Perhaps the primary motive for the construction of the entrenchments was to define an area of habitation rather than excluding or providing a defensive barrier against other groups. This emphasizes the importance of these boundaries for the creators rather than external forces (Bevan 1997).

The construction of the Chichester Entrenchments represents the creation of boundaries surrounding a centre of significance in the Late Iron Age. While evidence such as Late Iron Age coinage, imported goods from the continent and areas of ritual importance, verify this status, this is not yet fully understood and, as seen in other areas, is dependent on regional difference. The research of these boundaries has led to conflicting ideas of its significance. While the construction techniques have indicated community cooperation and effort was required to have undertaken this large scale earthwork system, the organization of the effort and the control of movement that it afforded indicate representations of power that are usually associated with hierarchical rule. The social organization of the Late Iron Age is not well understood, however, there is evidence of social stratification in the south east (Hill 1995), and as such the initial construction of these earthworks may indicate a period of transition or cooperation between communal and hierarchical organization. Historical sources show us that this period saw the direct introduction of Roman authority to Britain by Caesar and perhaps represents the beginnings of a client kingdom, whether directly or indirectly, which would see the construction of a pre-conquest palace at Fishbourne and the intensification of earthworks around this location.
Figure 2: Distribution of Late Iron Age occupation in comparison to the earthwork system.

Figure 3: Viewshed analysis of Chichester Entrenchments.
Post Conquest Period

The immediate post conquest period is poorly understood in West Sussex. Research in the 1960s and 70s by Alec Down concentrated on establishing the location of a military fortress as a pre-cursor to the later town, similar to examples at Colchester and Lincoln. However, evidence for military occupation at Chichester is limited to finds of equipment and rectangular wooden structures and as such this theory has more recently been abandoned (Magilton 2003). Modern interpretation concentrates on the suggestion that this area was a client kingdom to Rome, as interpreted from historical sources, and suggests that a heavy military presence in this region in the conquest period was possibly not required (Creighton 2006: 69). Additionally evidence for pre-Claudian structures at Fishbourne potentially include several timber buildings and a bath house and may indicate a high status or military presence here in the Pre Roman Late Iron Age (Creighton 2006: 59). While potentially Fishbourne was the focal point of this period, several lines of flat bottomed earthworks have been uncovered to the east, bounding the location of the early town. These ditches have only been partially uncovered, however, dating evidence broadly indicates that they were constructed in the Claudian and Flavian periods and that they were probably not constructed by the Roman military (Magilton 2003: 161). While a fortress located at Chichester is unlikely, the military evidence recovered from the town cannot be disregarded, and these boundaries may have enclosed an area of quasi-military occupation associated with the first years of Roman annexation.

The physical construction of these boundaries is somewhat difficult to define, as in part their extent has yet to be established. From what we know of their proportions, and by utilizing the same calculation of labour, as in Table 1, we can estimate the minimum person hours required to construct these boundaries. The length of the known sections of these earthworks is approximately seven hundred metres, giving an estimated construction time of approximately eighteen thousand person hours. This is the equivalent of forty people working ten hour days for forty-five days. In comparison to the Late Iron Age entrenchments, this is a relatively low amount.

\[
705 \times 3.64 / 0.1415 = 18,141 \text{ person hours}
\]

While the extent and size of these earthworks was fairly minimal in comparison to the Late Iron Age entrenchments and their precise spatial locations are undetermined they do appear to partially enclose an area where the early Roman town developed and acted as a pre-cursor to more substantial boundaries, as discussed below. This illustrates their significance and is supported by an intensification of occupation in the first century A.D. within the discrete area bounded by the earthworks (Fig. 4). However, the continued stature of the Late Iron Age entrenchments cannot be overlooked during this period and they would have still been visible as large monuments in the landscape, testified by their presence up to modern times. They were not destroyed as a defiant act of imperialism by the Roman annexation, however, they were altered. For example, Stane Street, the Roman Road that leads from Chichester to London, runs straight through the earthworks at Halnaker and required their leveling in this location. The establishment of the road system that extended beyond the defined area of the Late Iron Age settlement decreased, but did not eliminate, the significance of these outer boundaries.

Other construction within the town also affected the bounded nature of this emerging settlement. The street grid of the town was also established in this period, the location of which
has been almost completely proven by excavation (Down 1988: 47). These streets joined the larger Roman roads connecting the town to areas further afield, which served an important administrative function in the first century A.D. (Mattingly 2007: 256). The street grid itself would have created a non-physical barrier between the town and the area external to it, both for residents and visitors (Goodman 2007: 11). The absence of any large scale or substantially constructed boundaries in this period, compared to other Roman fortifications, may indicate a display of power was not the ultimate purpose, but rather defining the town’s location.

While the limitations of this evidence, in terms of extent and construction, prevent a definitive interpretation, we can infer that these boundaries represented the beginnings of new settlement that not only utilised, but also altered, the pre-existing Late Iron Age boundaries. The construction of the boundaries themselves required a much lower amount of labour than the Late Iron Age predecessors, partially due to their smaller extent, but also due to the continued existence of the previous boundaries. The organisation of labour for their construction may have come partially from military means as suggested by evidence within the town. However, they were constructed in a style similar to the entrenchments and probably represent the will of the local elite within a growing stratification of British society and the skill of the local people. Military involvement in Britain in the post conquest period was proportionate to the circumstances relating to local capitulation (Mattingly 2007: 267). While the cooperation of a client kingdom present in West Sussex required only low scale military involvement, the presence of a harbour at Fishbourne as a possible invasion point (Hind 1989), increased the necessity for a military presence here and the balance between the two possibly
explains the quasi-military occupation. As Creighton (2005: 155) suggests, the Roman annexation did not lead to British rejection of the past, as indicated by the siting of towns on pre-existing Territorial Oppida. The combination of Roman military occupation and British construction of these boundaries imply cooperation, originating from possible pre-existing associations between Britain and the continent, and resulting in the construction of a ‘hybrid’ town (Mattingly 2007: 277), marking the beginnings of Noviomagus Reginorum. This centralised an area of occupation and, in combination with public buildings and most importantly the street grid, marked out an area of growth that would be consistent for the next two thousand years.

Third century A.D.
A stone curtain wall was constructed at Noviomagus Reginorum sometime in the late third century A.D. (Magilton 2003). The walls enclosed an area of approximately three hectares and were constructed of ashlar blocks with a supporting earthen rampart, the material of which likely came from two external flanking ditches. Four gates, at the north, east, south and west, provided entrances to the town and eighteen known external bastions were constructed in the fourth century A.D., requiring the backfilling of the external ditches. While previous interpretation have suggested that walling Roman towns in the third century was a response to increased instability and external threats, there is insufficient archaeological evidence to substantiate this claim. More recent understanding concentrates on the prestige associated with wall construction rather than defensive capabilities.

There has been little research into labour and construction requirements of Roman structures in Britain; Shirley’s study of Inchtuthil Legionary fortress in Scotland being the notable exception (Shirley 2000). Shirley’s study attempted to analyse the practicalities of fortress design by deducing the quantity of materials required, the supply of these materials and the amount of labour required (Shirley 2000: 1). By using the calculations concerning the stone wall built around the fortress we can calculate the person hours required to construct the town walls at Chichester (Table 3). Shirley estimated labour requirements by using a combination of ancient sources, modern texts and experimental archaeology and divided person hours by tasks specific to Inchtuthil Legionary fortress. Several of these tasks do not apply to Chichester and have been excluded while other estimates have been altered. It is thought that the walls at Chichester were built to a standard design and of a similar height to other examples, however, as seen elsewhere, town walls were reused and reconstructed in the Medieval Period. Limited archaeological evidence of the Roman town walls survives and the exact width and height can only be estimated (Magilton 2003). These estimations assume that the way the walls for Inchtuthil and Chichester were constructed was broadly similar and included both parapets and a berm. These estimates do not take into account the quarrying and transportation of raw materials to the site and does not include the construction of the gates, of which we have very little information, or the later phase of external bastions. The person hours calculated for the curtain wall at Noviomagus Reginorum equalled approximately five hundred and twenty thousand person hours, equivalent to approximately four hundred people working ten hour days for one hundred and twenty eight days. This equates to approximately half the labour required for the entire entrenchment system.
Table 3: Labour Calculations for Construction of town walls at Chichester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Task</th>
<th>Sub-task</th>
<th>Person hours</th>
<th>Person hours</th>
<th>Person Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inchtuthil</td>
<td>Chichester (adjusted)</td>
<td>Sub-Total (Chichester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Trench</td>
<td>Excavate</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>2165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>remove spoil</td>
<td>2793</td>
<td>4999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>level and prepare</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>2165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td>8472</td>
<td>8472</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall masonry</td>
<td>blocks and core</td>
<td>133900</td>
<td>239681</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pointing and dressing</td>
<td>53365</td>
<td>53365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parapets and Merlons</td>
<td>facing blocks</td>
<td>33764</td>
<td>33764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pointing and dressing</td>
<td>10857</td>
<td>10857</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>copings, mouldings</td>
<td>20739</td>
<td>20739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walking surface</td>
<td>7060</td>
<td>12637</td>
<td>77997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel Berm</td>
<td>excavate gravel</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>load and move</td>
<td>10475</td>
<td>10475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spread, level and ram</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>13648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>402495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (Adjusted)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>513181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sub tasks adjusted by 1.79 to accommodate difference in width of walls (1.45 metres for Inchtuthil and 2.6 m for Chichester). Total adjusted by 1.275 to accommodate difference in length of walls (1865 m for Inchtuthil, 2374 m for Chichester).

The erection of the town walls created a clear physical boundary between the urban town and the rural countryside, demarking the entrance from one into another. Movement through this barrier was common for all. The affluent members of the town would have travelled between their luxurious urban lives to their rural villa estates from which their wealth was generated (Goodman 2007), and the community as a whole would probably have been similar. The town would have formed part of a largely agricultural society and many would have relied on the surrounding land to provide them with food and limited wealth. Esmonde Cleary (2005) has also suggested that processional routes may have extended from public buildings within the urban centres to ritual areas, some dating to the Late Iron Age, outside the limits of the towns. Utilising the street grid as a method of movement, processions may have extended between public arenas and areas of open space such as the forum, located within Noviomagus Reginorum, and the theatres and amphitheatres, which lay outside the walls of the town to the south-east (Down 1988). Several notable sites of ritual activity lay outside the walls of the town, including a large cremation cemetery just outside the east gate at St Pancras and a Romano-Celtic temple at Ratham Mill five kilometres to the west. Economic and ritual considerations illustrate that this boundary was not concerned with excluding the rural from the urban or external to internal. It was used to define the urban centre as a ‘distinct and privileged place’ (Goodman 2007: 12), the focus of this landscape.

The visibility of the walls was calculated using a viewshed analysis constructed in GIS and illustrated that the wall circuit was not necessarily located to be visible to, or from, a great
distance, but is generally visible in the landscape immediately surrounding the town (Fig. 5). This possibly indicates that the walls were not designed to be appreciated unless in close proximity to the town; likely by visitors or inhabitants using the surrounding road system. This is substantiated by the way the walls themselves were constructed. Magilton (2003: 164) suggests that while the irregular shape of the wall circuit may have been created to match the shape of the earlier street grid, it would have also provided two exceptional views of the walls when approaching the town via roads from the east and west.

The construction of town walls was a labour intensive process requiring specialist skills, which produced a large-scale boundary surrounding an already well-established urban centre. While public monuments had been constructed in Chichester since the first century A.D., the process of acquiring all of the ‘urban’ attributes of a Roman town was a drawn out process in Britain and town defences at *Noviomagus Reginorum* were not constructed until a much later date (Mattingly 2007: 279). While previous research has interpreted this late construction as a response to external violence, there is little evidence to suggest this was the case in West Sussex. Additionally, while some have debated that provincial towns would have required consent from the Emperor to construct a curtain wall, the initiative would have certainly come from the inhabitants, as was the requirement to maintain these boundaries (Goodman 2007: 12). We can therefore view this construction as a statement of civic pride, potentially in competition with other urban settlements (Mattingly 2007: 331), and to legitimise the power given to them by Rome (Woolf 1998: 125). For the local elite this construction had the dual function of impressing the local Governor and their subordinates classes (Woolf 1998: 125). While the functional aspects of the walled circuit must be considered, especially in term of repelling small bandit parties (Mattingly 2007: 331), the symbolic holds much more significance, as illustrated by movement across this boundary and its visibility within the wider landscape.

**Conclusions**

The analysis of these boundaries illustrates the variance across the Late Iron Age to Roman periods. The labour required to construct these boundaries was related to the size and difficulty of construction. Both in the Late Iron Age and third century A.D. these boundaries were large and technical and as such labour requirement was high, while the opposite applied for the post conquest period, probably due to the continued use of the entrenchments during this period. Defence was not the only motive that determined their construction as they all appeared, in very different ways, to demarcate or define this area as important, even if activities were to continue externally to the respective boundaries. The visibility of the Late Iron Age entrenchments suggests that they were located with concern to be seen on the Coastal Plain while the post conquest boundaries appeared to be located with little consideration for visibility. It was in the third century A.D. that the construction of the impressive town walls became a strong visible characteristic of the town, but only in its immediate landscape and not across a wider area.

What does the analysis of these boundaries inform us about society and change during these periods? The monumental construction of the Late Iron Age entrenchments altered the landscape permanently, defining the region of the Coastal Plain by controlling the movement of people and by creating a strong visual marker. These earthworks were a generational construction representing the power and status of an increasingly hierarchical society, but with a remaining element of community effort. These boundaries defined, along with natural
features, a new type of significant settlement that remains poorly understood but likely represented a centre of power that later became a client kingdom to Rome. By the Roman conquest, the presence of Rome had been felt, illustrated by recovered imported goods from the continent as well as the early construction at Fishbourne Palace. The post conquest boundaries were formed in collaboration with, and by the continued use of, the Late Iron Age entrenchments, although by this time their meaning had changed, seen through their alteration by Roman roads. While a military influence was present here, related to a landing point at Fishbourne, this was minimal and was not related to the construction of these boundaries. Along with the street grid, these earthworks represented the beginnings of Noviomagus Reginorum, defined by the locally constructed earthworks and representing a hybrid town embracing British memory and Roman structure. The developed hierarchical structure of this society was well established by this period and keen to embrace the ideals of a Roman town, demonstrated by a first century mosaic found at Fishbourne Roman palace, depicting the walls of a Roman city (Creighton 2005: 152). This next phase boundary was realised in the third century A.D., with the construction a walled circuit as a public monument, erected to show the urban nature or ‘urbanitas’ of the town (Goodman 2007: 11). The scale of this circuit revealed the power of the local authorities through their ability to organise resources, both in material and labour, to undertake the project. However, this boundary would have also been welcomed by the community as a symbol of civic pride and through an increased dedication to improving the urban standing of Noviomagus Reginorum (Goodman 2007), shown by the visual importance designed into the walled circuit itself.
This paper has illustrated the scale of change apparent in these periods, in the type of settlement created, the way it was defined and the community that inhabited it. However, certain aspects were consistent throughout. Boundaries transcended purely functional characteristics, such as defence, instead reflecting an importance to the people of that settlement, visible through the consistent amount of labour required to construct them. While the motives differed, the desire to define this space as something unique was constant throughout. By looking at this single aspect of settlement, it has allowed an examination of how this landscape changed over time and has explored the explanations behind these changes. These observations are preliminary and need further definition by incorporating an analysis of boundaries within a holistic view of all aspects of the landscape, allowing a clearer picture of the social complexity and change across this period of transition.

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Bibliography


