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CHAPTER 8

The Samnites[1]

Edward Bispham

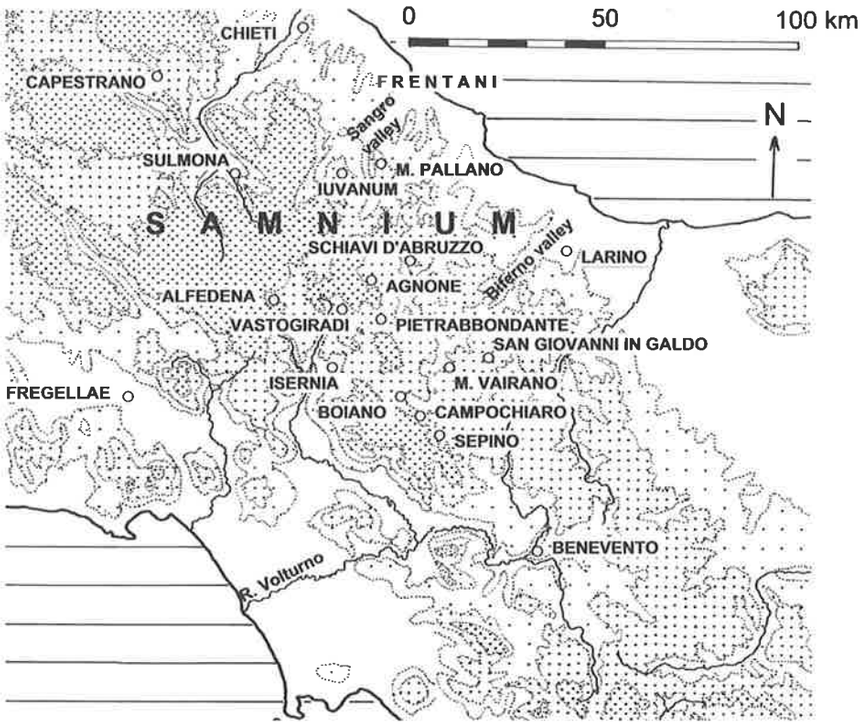
(for Susan Kane)

Introduction

From the fourth century BC Greeks began to write of a people whom they called Saunitai; they were followed by the Romans, who called them Samnites; the respective names for their territory are Saunia and Samnium (Figure 33). What they called themselves is not known; a case can be made for ***safin** (only oblique cases of the word are preserved—the asterisk indicates a nominative form hypothesized by philologists). Whether all the peoples whom we today call Samnites called themselves ***safin** throughout their history is disputed; the geographical application of the Greek and Latin ethnics varies over time, becoming progressively narrower (Musti 1984; Tagliamonte 1996, 4–6, 8). We understand the roughly one hundred and thirty inscribed texts in their language (Rix 2002, 79–93), but we do not know what that language was called; scholars use the Latin-derived name, Oscan.

From the fifth century onwards we can speak properly of Samnites. Used of any earlier period 'Samnite' is simply shorthand for 'the Iron Age inhabitants of the area later called Samnium' (in terms of modern regions: Molise, southern Abruzzo and eastern Campania). Graeco-Roman sources also mention Samnite 'tribes': the Pentri, Hirpini, Caricini and Caudini, and the only coastal group, the Frentani. The latter are referred to as a 'Samnitic people' by Strabo (5.4.2), but were politically autonomous (Rutter 2001, 74, no. 620, for their coinage).

1 Emma Dench first aroused my interest in Samnium. Michael Crawford and Emmanuele Curti first took me there; over the last dozen years I have accrued further debts in working in Molise and Abruzzo: the chief of these are to Oliver Gilkes and Will Bowden, with whom I first turned over Samnite turf; to the late John Lloyd; to Gary Lock, Neil Christie and Andrew Wilson, with whom I began work in the Sangro Valley; to the past and current members of the Sangro Valley Project, some of whose work I have drawn on in this chapter, and who discussed aspects of it with me (especially Bradley Sekedat, Elan Love, China Shelton and Keith Swift), and especially to Susan Kane, who has taught me far more than I think she suspects; to Guy Bradley and Oliva Menozzi. My thanks are also owed to collaborators in the Soprintendenza Archeologica dell'Abruzzo, whose support and open-handedness made everything possible, and continue to make it enjoyable: Sabatino Letta, Sandra Lapenna, Vincenzo D'Ercole, Silvano Agostini and especially Amalia Faustoferri; and to the people of Tornareccio.



33 Map of Samnium (drawn by Howard Mason with additions by Guy Bradley)

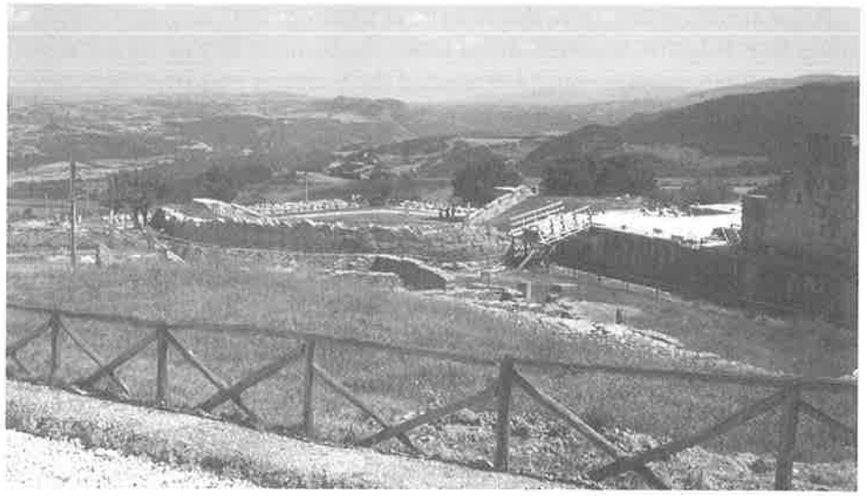
The Pentri, Hirpini and Frentani are the tribes of most historical importance (Oakley 1995, 7–8). There were almost certainly other 'sub-tribes' that attained ephemeral political autonomy within Samnium, but barely scratched the surface of the historical record.

This historical record, or its literary, as opposed to epigraphic, component, is entirely Graeco-Roman. There may have been an indigenous Oscan literature, but effectively we know nothing about it. The Romans, their enemy in the 'Samnite Wars' that decided the hegemony of Italy in the later fourth and early third centuries BC (Cornell 1989; 2004), could not be expected to give impartial accounts. They did not: Roman writers variously present the Samnites as austere mountain-dwelling pastoralists, worthy foes, exotic barbarian magicians or as the last bastion of traditional Italian virtues. Such categories, however, refused to remain stable, and it seems that the Samnites, like other Italian peoples, engaged knowingly in the strategies others used to construct them, rather than allowing exogenous roles to be simply forced on them (Dench 1995; Curti et al. 1996, 181–88).

A few ancient writers were able to write of Samnites as a living, contemporary group (e.g. Polybius, who informs us about the Samnite levy of 225 BC, as well as later military engagements); but most of the literature postdates their eclipse as a distinct ethnic and cultural group. The earliest source to give an extended narrative of Romano-Samnite relations is Diodorus Siculus, writing *c.*30 BC; Appian's *Samnite Wars* were written in the mid-second century AD. These later accounts certainly contain much older material, but nothing contemporary with the Samnite Wars. The cultural stereotypes, including the role of the Samnites as the 'other', were already entrenched by the time Romans began to write history. In terms of ideological outlook, the surviving sources could not help but see the Samnites refracted through the lenses of contemporary discourse, or culturally specific ways of making sense of the world. Thus the early imperial geographer Strabo (Musti 1984, 71–73) uses the Greek idea of the *apoikia* (colony) to make sense of the relationships between Sabines, Samnites and Lucanians (5.3.1).

Another important matrix for expressing such relationships does, however, have a claim to be indigenous in origin: the myth of the *ver sacrum* or sacred spring. This tells of common beginnings: the common origins of the Italic peoples (including the Samnites) in Sabine territory in central Italy, whence a series of migrations, made in fulfilment of vows to the gods, spread them across central and southern Italy (Strabo 5.4.2, 5.4.10–12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.49; Pliny, *HN* 3.110; Tagliamonte 1996, 5, 17–21). Now, the Italic languages spoken from the fifth century onwards are clearly closely related. Three sixth-century texts from Penna Sant'Andrea in northern Abruzzo, in what is probably a common ancestor language (South Picene), use '***safin***' as an ethnic (La Regina 1975, 272; Prosdocimi 1978, 396; Rix 2002, 68–69, SpTE5; SpTE6; SpTE7). Many (but not all) of the Italic peoples also belonged to a cultural *koiné* ('Central Adriatic' culture) during the Iron Age. Shared language and material culture have led scholars to take the Sacred Spring myth seriously—perhaps too seriously. There are, after all, other versions of Samnite ethnogenesis, such as Greek origins (Cato, *Orig.* fr. 2.22 Ch; Dionysius of Halicarnasus 2.49.4–5). Furthermore, myth in the ancient world is not primarily a vehicle for historical record, but for making sense of the present with selective help from the past. We ought to approach these stories with caution. Emma Dench (1995, 192–212) notes that the Sacred Spring myths can be understood as underlining 'how we came to be different' as much as 'how we are related'. In any case, their creation must postdate the emergence of separate historical state-entities (Pentri, Hirpini etc.), and thus cannot be coeval with supposed prehistoric migrations.

The evidence of literary sources, inscriptions and coins is supplemented annually by archaeological evidence. In his seminal *Samnium and the Samnites*, Salmon could write 'investigation of Samnite sites has not been extensive' (1967, 12). Three major sites had been excavated at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the cemetery at Alfedena, the nearby hilltop settlement at Curino (La Regina 1976, 219–23) and the sacred complex at Pietrabbondante



34 Pietrabbondante (photograph: Edward Bispham)

(Figure 34) (ongoing when Salmon wrote in 1967, see pl. 6 for the situation then; contrast Tagliamonte 1996, pls XXIII–XXV. 1; and Figure 34). Since then excavation has radically changed our picture of Samnite society (La Regina 1989).

Much Samnite material culture has a 'homespun quality and a smallness of scale' (Lloyd 1991, 184; cf. Morel 1991), compared with that of contemporary Tyrrhenian Italy. Yet it also reveals a society more dynamic, sophisticated and open to outside influences than previously thought. Salmon, who, ironically, was well aware of the importance of archaeological evidence, had bought profoundly into the pictures of the Samnites propagated by Graeco-Roman sources: his Samnites were one-dimensional, austere highland warriors. A more sensitive examination of the agendas of the sources, and the ethnographic tropes and historical contingencies behind their accounts, has been provided by Dench (1995). We now understand much better how Samnites were perceived, and how they perceived others.

In one particular respect, archaeology has drastically changed our understanding of Samnium: this is through intensive and extensive field survey (Dench 2004 for the contextualization of this work). This form of investigation, concentrating on the broader settlement pattern across the whole ancient landscape, has redressed in part a bias in previous research towards the ornamental (Iron Age grave goods) and the monumental (Samnite sanctuaries, Roman towns). The vast majority of the inhabitants of the ancient world lived and worked in the countryside; in Samnium this settlement pattern was especially marked, and persisted for longer. Ancient writers on the central Italian peoples comment on

their settlement 'in villages'; this description, although ideologically motivated and far from innocent, seems nevertheless consistent with the archaeological evidence, underlining the value of inquiry into rural settlement. Field surveys have been conducted right across the territory of ancient Samnium, both locally and along whole river valley systems. The outstanding example is still the Biferno Valley Survey run by Graeme Barker and John Lloyd in the 1970s and 1980s (Barker 1995a; 1995b), but surface survey today proliferates throughout the region.

Field survey has its limitations, however: we do not yet understand the dynamics that transform buried archaeological deposits into scatters of debris on the surface. The 'sites' found in field survey are *indicative* of real sites of past occupation; the chronology of the pottery is a *guide* to their dating and development over time. Yet the nice, chronologically differentiated maps of dots that illustrate survey results are not maps of ancient settlement and its history: they are proxy indicators, whose level of accuracy is open to debate (Barker 1995a, 48–51: 'moving' sites; cf. Lloyd et al. 1997, 24–39; Francovich and Patterson 2000). There are other caveats about material evidence, but to illustrate them it will be necessary to turn to the story of Samnium itself.

The Iron Age (*c.*1000–500 BC)

The Iron Age is variously subdivided. Roughly speaking, the following divisions will be observed in this chapter (though all periodizations are disputed by scholars, including the terminal date of the central Italian Iron Age itself): 1000–750 BC: Early Iron Age; 750–600: Orientalizing period; 600–500: Archaic period.

Settlement

The region with which this chapter is concerned passed, like the rest of Italy, through profound transformations at the Bronze/Iron Age transition. These changes manifested themselves in increased socio-economic complexity. They were catalysed, but not caused, by interaction both with other Italians (notably, but not exclusively, the Etruscans) who were undergoing similar changes, and with Greek settlers, who from the mid-eighth century BC had a profound impact on southern and western Italy (Barker 1995a, 159–60, 177). Nevertheless, the outcomes of these processes differed both between and within regions of Italy, as a function of differential permeability to outside influences, and uneven natural resources. Thus Etruria went on to become a land of cities, with an aristocracy whose world was essentially urban; Samnium, by contrast, remained a land of dispersed settlement, with a correspondingly different society.

As elsewhere in Italy, we see a dramatic rise in the number of settlement sites compared with the Bronze Age; for example the Biferno Valley Survey found a fifty per cent increase in sites between the Bronze and Iron Ages (Barker and Suano 1995, 160). A few surface artefact scatters with a 'footprint' of approximately five hundred square metres in the ploughsoil suggested the existence of larger settlements: S. Margherita, Colle Masilli and in the area of what later became Larinum (Larino); we may add Arcora (known from excavation) and possibly Monte Vairano. These village settlements are generally located on ridges or low-lying terraces, and form part of a network with dependent smaller sites (farms and hamlets) similar to those characteristic of the Bronze Age (Barker and Suano 1995, 162–63; cf. 176). Excavations at Arcora suggest that these villages probably consisted of two to three dozen habitations.

This growth in settlement numbers implies not only a filling-out of the countryside, with more land being cleared for cultivation, but also a growth (albeit unquantifiable) in population. This in turn will have entailed socio-economic change, and intensification of agricultural regimes. Storage and redistribution, as well as consumption, were probably centred on the villages (where quernstones and amphorae have been found); and craft specialization, especially metalworking, became established. From the development of a clear settlement hierarchy we may infer societal stratification, and the control of smaller by larger settlements. This last marks a major development from the Bronze Age, and is reflected in contemporary changes elsewhere in Italy (Barker and Suano 1995, 176).

These developments sowed the seeds of the landscape of classical Samnium (500 BC onwards), where we find suggestive levels of continuity from the Iron Age (e.g. around the later urban centres of Larinum and Fagifulae: Barker and Suano 1995, 159–63). There is also evidence for the frequentation of hilltops across Samnium, as at Monte Vairano (and indeed throughout central Apennine Italy). Although the nature, intensity and duration of such occupation are unclear (opportunist, seasonal or permanent? by shepherds or family groups?), there is little doubt that the origins of the Samnite hill-fort are to be sought here (Gualtieri 1987; Barker and Suano 1995, 167–68; Lloyd 1995a, 185–87; Oakley 1995; see further below).

Economy

The economy of this area was until recently seen as fundamentally pastoral (Salmon 1967, 67–68), manifesting itself most clearly in long-distance 'horizontal' transhumance, which moved large flocks of sheep from summer pastures high in the Apennines to overwinter in the warmer Apulian lowlands, closer to major wool-working centres such as Taras (Taranto) (Gabba and Pasquinucci 1979; Barker 1995a, 34–37). Certainly, such huge movements of livestock were a major

feature of the later economy, and had a direct impact on the landscape, in the shape of the Roman drove-roads (Latin *calles*, Italian *tratturi*) that criss-cross the Apennines. Their wide, straight imprints can still be seen in a few places through later field systems, and their routes have been traced over long distances. Many remained in use, most famously under the Dogana of the Kingdom of Naples in the early modern period, and in some cases even into the last century.

Large-scale, long-distance transhumance was evidently a highly profitable exercise in historical times, but not without social costs. At the business end it was in the hands of slave shepherds not afraid to use force in the execution of their masters' orders. This caused friction both with other slave bands (Cicero, *Clu.* 161, illustrates this type of violence) and with local populations, as a famous inscription from Saepinum (Sepino) records (*CIL* 9.2438; Corbier 1983). Yet there has been intense debate as to whether this long-distance transhumance (as opposed to short-distance, high-frequency, 'vertical' transhumance within the boundaries of a community) existed before the Roman period (Gabba and Pasquinucci 1979, 87–91; Barker 1989b; for limited intra-Pentrian transhumance in this period see: Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 203–4; slightly more optimistic: Lloyd et al. 1997, 49). It has been argued that the lack of a strong central authority comparable to that of Rome would have made transhumance across the territories of different tribal groups too prone to disruption. Yet comparative evidence from the Middle Ages suggests that transhumance could indeed function over long distances in contexts of geopolitical fragmentation (Menozzi 2002), and Roman control of Italy hardly eliminated violence, as we have seen. Long-distance transhumance at an early period should be taken seriously.

It is also now recognized that pastoralism and agriculture, despite a deep-rooted ideological prejudice in favour of the latter in both ancient and modern societies, need each other to function (Horden and Purcell 2000, 82–87, 197–200). Our Iron Age farmers cannot then be driven, willy-nilly, into the pen of the primitive mountain pastoralist; the wealth that material evidence clearly shows for the region must be derived in part from agricultural surplus. The roots of increasing agricultural specialization are probably to be sought in the Bronze Age (Barker et al. in Barker and Suano 1995, 168–71, for the Biferno). Deposits from sites excavated since the 1970s have been subjected to flotation to separate out organic remains (bones in the case of fauna, carbonized seeds and pips for flora). Arcora produced evidence for the growing and processing of emmer wheat (ubiquitous in Iron Age Italy) and barley as main cereal crops; peas and beans were also grown. Fruit and nuts may have been gathered wild; the vine may possibly have been cultivated, although the evidence is slender (Di Niro 1984); crop rotation, with fields left fallow, also seems likely. Similar conclusions can be drawn for the site of Santa Margherita, also in the Biferno. Acquachiara, on the slopes of Monte Pallano in northern Samnium, has produced evidence of legumes, cereals (again, emmer wheat and barley) and weeds, as well as fragments of grape seeds; the palaeobotanical data recovered

may represent processing debris (given the presence of wheat chaff), rather than a broad assemblage of food refuse. Unlike the practice in the Biferno, lentils seem to have been cultivated in preference to broad beans, and, unusually, bitter vetch was also abundant, whether as animal fodder or for human consumption (Shelton 2006).

The possibility that the vine was being cultivated perhaps draws support from the nature of some of the ceramic finewares recovered: these are matt-painted wares generically known as Daunian and Etrusco-Corinthian. The presence of drinking cups would fit a context of ritualized feasting (a version of the Greek *sumposion*), a social institution by which Italian elites sought at this period to distinguish themselves from the lower orders, adopting forms of behaviour that re-inforced their special status, and served as an appropriate context for interaction at and beyond community level (Barker and Suano 1995, 176; Barker 1988 for Etruria and Magna Graecia; Barker et al. in Barker and Suano 1995, 169–70). Another agricultural product associated with this type of social behaviour is olive oil: olives require investment and forward planning to cultivate, and thus presuppose a level of agricultural complexity. While there is no evidence of olive cultivation at this period in the Biferno, Adriatic pollen cores have indicated olive growth for this period (Barker et al. in Barker and Suano 1995, 170; Barker and Suano 1995, 176); further north, on the edge of what was later Samnium, the Bronze Age village at Fonte Tasca, near Archi on Monte Pallano, shows evidence of olive cultivation (so too the Picene site of Tortoreto: Di Fraia 1995; Coubray 1999, for a summary of Abruzzese evidence).

Animal husbandry can also be reconstructed with some confidence, using the assemblages of faunal skeletal remains. At Arcora (Di Niro 1984) and S. Margherita in the Biferno we find ovicaprids (sheep and goats), cattle and pigs, as well as wild boar and even an equid. Some ovicaprid and cattle bones are those of adults, suggesting that they were kept alive for secondary products (wool—note spindle whorls and loom weights from Arcora—milk and cheese), rather than being simply killed for meat and hides when juveniles (Barker et al. in Barker and Suano 1995, 170–71, Barker and Suano 1995, 176). Preliminary work on newly recovered bone assemblages from Acquachiara (Monte Pallano) seems to suggest a dominance of ovicaprids, with significant amounts of cattle and pig, and horse and dog also represented (E. Love, personal comment).

The crops farmed, the animals raised, and their mortality patterns as deduced from the ecofactual evidence, all suggest continuity with Late Bronze Age practices. The main change, as far as the evidence from larger centres suggests, is in *intensification* of production (intensification and abatement in agricultural regimes: Horden and Purcell 2000), especially in wine and wool. Such changes in resource management are paralleled elsewhere in Italy at this period, but have been best studied in Etruria. There, however, the rise of the city-state was the critical context: concentrations of population much larger than those previously known (and their sacrificial obligations) needed to be serviced, and new elite

lifestyles and ideologies created further demands; intensified production also meant a surplus for trade (Barker 1988). As noted, in Samnium the dynamics of settlement remained different, and changes in farming are thus less marked, although as in Etruria they do reflect increasing social complexity (Di Niro and Petrone 1993).

Religion

Apart from the aspects of death ritual (see below), we know little about Iron Age religion. Warrior princes (see below) probably played a major role in mediating between the community and the gods. There are no monumental structures securely associated with religious activity—other than tombs. The one form of religious expression to survive in the archaeological record in volume consists in small bronze Hercules figurines, found from the sixth century BC onwards. They occur mainly in mountainous zones, their distribution reflecting in part the *tratturo*-network (van Wonterghem 1973; Colonna 1970). Hercules originally came into Italy, according to myth, in search of a stray calf originally taken among the cattle of Geryon as one of his twelve labours; from this calf (*oitulos* in Greek, Oscan: **vítelliú**) it was said that 'Italy' took its name. He is thus an apposite god for a society in which transhumance was so important. He also has a military aspect, bringing order where there had been disorder; this is clearly relevant to the security needed for transhumance, but it may also have legitimized a monopoly on legal violence among Iron Age warrior elites. The cult remained very popular, not just in Samnium, but among the Italic peoples; it was probably indigenous, but subjected to influences from Magna Graecia brought by traders or returning mercenaries (Di Niro 1977; van Wonterghem 1992; Barker and Suano 1995, 174; Bradley 2006).

Cemeteries

Excavation of rural habitation has been very limited for the Iron Age, with Arcora the only major site explored. The sites themselves are often fragile, and survive mainly as floor surfaces or negative features (pits, hut foundations), with few upstanding remains. They are easy to overlook, or if found, hard to dig and interpret. Cemeteries, on the other hand, once located, are easy, if time consuming, to excavate; the grave goods are more impressive than wattle-and-daub walls or post-holes. In short, Samnite mortuary archaeology is sexy; it shares the cachet of the long pedigree of the study of cemeteries in Etrusco-Italic archaeology. As such, burials often get prioritized for rescue work (they are attractive to tomb robbers, or *clandestini*, for obvious reasons), and scrub up well for museum exhibition and catalogues. The many cemeteries excavated and

published from Samnium constitute the main source of data for the Iron Age. With due care and attention they can act as proxies by which we may try to learn something of those communities like Caudium, of which we know next to nothing of the settlement but a great deal about their dead (Gualtieri 2004, 44).

Cemetery archaeology comes with health warnings (Morris 1992). Early excavations were concerned with recovering bronze objets d'art (bowls, weapons, armour) from the tombs, in the tradition of the study of Etruscan cemeteries; not with learning how Iron Age populations buried their dead, and the inferences about society that could be drawn from such practices. Dating depended largely on these same objets d'art, but was often done more on the basis of the principles of art-historical connoisseurship than on the principles of stratigraphic excavation (themselves barely elaborated in the nineteenth century; Romito 1995: technical and metallurgical—as well as stylistic—aspects of Iron Age metalwork; for an exemplary publication of an Italic Iron Age cemetery, Fossa, in northern Abruzzo, see Cosentino et al. 2001). Furthermore, some objects buried with the dead were certainly heirlooms, and their manufacture was thus not at all contemporary with the burial (their 'cultural biographies' need more thought). Finally, there is the problem of archaeological visibility: certain groups were often disposed of after death in fashions that have left no trace in the archaeological record. Children, especially, tend to be under-represented (and their skeletal remains are less robust than those of adults).

So we must not be tempted to equate the 'mortuary populations' of cemeteries with the real populations of Iron Age societies: the mortuary population is that part of the total population which the family or community in question was disposed to bury in a way that is now archaeologically visible. Moreover, burial and death ritual often involve an idealizing portrait of the deceased, reflecting the latter's wishes, or those of heirs or descendants, or even the wider community. Burial with weapons and armour, for example, does not necessarily indicate that the deceased was a warrior, as the case of weapons buried with children clearly shows.

Iron Age cemeteries range in scale, from the burial grounds of a few dozen individuals, to monsters like that at Alfedena, estimated to contain some twelve thousand burials, of which fewer than two thousand have been excavated. As with other central Italic peoples inhumation is the preferred rite, with the body laid supine. Deposition occured in a wide variety of ways. Commonly a trench was cut in the soil or the bedrock (the technique known as *a fossa*); this might be monumentalized as a stone-lined cist (*a cassone*), given suitable materials (as at Alfedena and Val Fondillo in the upper Sangro Valley); wooden coffins, held together by iron rivets that have survived, are also attested, for example from the Frentane area (I am grateful to Dott.ssa Amalia Faustoferri for drawing this material to my attention). Often the body was wrapped in a shroud, whose presence is attested through the fibulae used to fasten it; exceptionally traces of fabric remain (Faustoferri 2003).

In some cemeteries the graves appear to be clustered rather loosely into groups (the Porticone cemetery near Larino, Pozzili in the upper Volturno Valley: Capini 1980b); elsewhere they are organized around a central space (Alfedena) or in concentric rings (Opi, Val Fondillo). Such spatial arrangements probably reflect gentilicial descent groups; the relative importance of the deceased, and thus the emergence of social stratification, is expressed by the different grave goods. Often a large vase or *olla*, for food or liquid offerings, was placed over or by the burial; it seems to have been designed to stand proud of the ground, and was thus possibly meant to be accessible (Parise-Badoni and Ruggeri Giove 1980, xxi; Morelli et al. 1995, 10–13). Excavations in the upper Sangro Valley have identified the residue of what were very probably funerary meals in the bronze basins often deposited in Iron Age graves: four different wheat species and a legume have been identified; they were used to make a polenta-like food that formed an important part of the funerary ritual (Morelli et al. 1995; Morelli 2000).

In the regions north of Samnium important burials had large earth tumuli, ringed by stones raised over them, to which other inhumations might be added (as at Fossa). This practice is not *yet* known in eastern and central Samnium. Tumulus burials are, however, known from western Samnium, among the Hirpini, for example at Beneventum (Benevento) (Giampaola 2000, 37–38: Rocca dei Rettori) and at Casalbore (Johannowsky 1990) —the former cover single inhumations, the latter multiple depositions. These tumuli date from the mid-sixth to the mid-fourth century BC. This regionalized distribution may reflect different funerary rituals and ideologies. The tumulus is a marker, but it also delimits the worlds of the living and the dead; it is the site of the often sumptuous, but permanent, leave-taking. On the other hand, the *olla* by the burial as found in eastern and central Samnium, if it allows for the repeated offering of food, implies continued contact with the dead.

Early Iron Age high-status male burials contained a variety of metalwork. Most striking are the bronze weapons. There are also razors, a sign of elite concern for the cultivation of the body at leisure; and bronze bowls probably associated with a funerary meal (above); females were deposited with jewellery. Sporadic finds of Iron Age metalwork, a major feature of private collections formed between the eighteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, are often from funerary contexts (Barker and Suano 1995, fig. 70, 1–6, all seventh century or earlier). Archaic burials extended the male repertoire to defensive armour, like *kardiophylakes* (bronze discs protecting the chest). These items represent not only a conspicuous deposition of family wealth, but also an idealizing construction of rulers and elites, seen most clearly in 'warrior' burials. Let us turn to the social dynamics on which these epiphenomena rest.

The evolution of cemeteries over time illustrates the growing social stratification that we have already noted (Barker and Suano 1995, 171–76). The emergence of permanent elites is 'the most striking feature of social change

in the Italian Iron Age' (Barker and Suano 1995, 176). Again, the wider Italian phenomenon is best understood in Etruria, but cemeteries across central and southern Italy too allow its character (and regional differences) to be grasped clearly (*Principi etruschi*; Cianfarani 1969; Bottini and Guzzo 1986a; 1986b; Bietti-Sestieri 1992). Elites distinguish themselves, and validate their standing in society, through military success or through control of resources and patronage. Proof that both the material resources and the character traits of the dead leader had been transmitted to his heirs was provided in part by the funerary ritual. The gentilicial organization already encountered in some Iron Age cemeteries is assumed to be one of patrilocal family groups; the bias towards adult males in the mortuary populations supports this. Elite female graves serve to display the wealth of the male line—as in the case of the 'princess' of Loreto Aprutino, in northern Abruzzo (Barker and Suano 1995, 176–77 and fig. 71; some skeletal remains bear out this hypothesis: Bondioli et al. 1986). Similarly infants buried with valuable, sometimes imported, ornaments, clearly represent an attempt to advertise the stability of descent groups, and the ideal, if not the fact, of transmission of status and power by heredity. An example is Tomb 48 at Val Fondillo (late-sixth/early-fifth-century), where a male of about 11 years was buried with the adult markers of spearhead and dagger, and *kardiophylax*, as well as impasto pottery (local hand-made wares) and jewellery—although this tomb, and the attribution of gendered grave goods to a child, are both exceptional at Val Fondillo (Morelli 2000, 33, 37–40).

Striking examples of how central Italian Iron Age elites saw themselves, and wished to be seen, can be found among the neighbours of the Iron Age populations of Samnium. As well as elaborate and wealthy *corredi*, a few very high-status graves of the later Iron Age in the Marche and Abruzzo were further distinguished by anthropomorphic grave markers. The most famous example is the mid-sixth-century 'warrior' from Capestrano (and his much-mutilated 'queen'). The 'warrior'—in another display of conspicuous consumption, this time of the cultural capital represented by writing—carries an inscription that may claim that he was a king. It is tempting to see in the figures represented in these statues the *nerf* or 'princes' referred to in one of the Penna Sant'Andrea texts (see above). Carefully carved, the Capestrano 'warrior' is heavily armed (axe, sword and spear), and carries the characteristic *kardiophylax* (Colonna 1992; Barker and Suano 1995, 177, cf. fig. 71).

The construction of the ideal power structures of the living community and the reflection of its dominant ideologies, via funerary ritual, were adopted more widely than the burials of these paramount chiefs. We have noted above the frequency of Iron Age elite males buried with weapons. Skeletal remains also suggest a life in which physical injury and death in war were likely eventualities: many adult burials show traumatic lesions on skulls and post-cranial bones probably caused by weapons (Macchiarelli et al. 1981, Barker and Suano 1995, 179; but contrast the osteological picture from the sample of a Samnite cemetery excavated at the

New Abbey at S. Vincenzo al Volturno, where the main illnesses seem to have been dental caries and osteoporosis: Bowden et al. 2006, esp. 54–80).

Parallels for this type of mortuary archaeology from Greece and Etruria suggest a 'quasi-Homeric world of competitive and aggrandizing elites' (Barker and Suano 1995, 177; cf. Frederiksen 1979, 293). Similar behaviour manifests itself across Samnium, but at different intensities. Thus, in northern Samnium, fragments (the 'Atessa' torso and a lower leg) of Archaic funerary statues have been found at Colle Archiano and Acquachiara on the slopes of Monte Pallano in the Sangro valley (D'Ercole 1993). These are the southernmost attestations of the Capestrano-type princely memorial. Further south, however, in the Biferno Valley, there is less wealth on display, suggesting that these social transformations were happening in a less thorough-going fashion, perhaps with smaller warrior bands organized around a less differentiated or less stable hierarchical structure (Suano 1991, noting the lack of child burials).

Variations in social complexity are also reflected in the nature and intensity of contacts with Greeks. These had the most profound impact in Etruria. Elsewhere the distribution of Greek artefacts (especially drinking sets, amphorae, vessels for unguents and perfumes, and metalwork) in cemeteries suggests a primary trade radiating fifty to sixty kilmetres from the Greek colonies of the south Italian coasts (Whitehouse and Wilkins 1985; 1989). Beyond this zone of intense commercial exchange objects became transvalued as they moved by gift exchange into the hands of the elites of central Italy. Gift exchange, and access to prestigious obects fuelled struggles for wealth and status between individuals and families (gift exchange: Herring 1991); and this competition in turn further stimulated the emergence of local elites. Within Samnium, the elites of the Biferno Valley seem to have been the most distant from external influences (Barker and Suano 1995, 179–80). Some scholars have argued that a lack of raw materials or key trade routes, control of which local elites could exploit, hindered the kind of centralization and nucleation we witness in Etruria (Whitehouse and Wilkins 1985, 1989).

A Time of Transition (500–350 BC)

Having spent half a millennium establishing themselves, the competitive warrior societies of Samnium seem to have undergone a series of profound changes in the two centuries that followed the close of the Iron Age (*c.*500 BC). The area of the 'Central Adriatic cultures' of the Iron Age was now split along unprecedentedly divergent trajectories, after increasing regional differentiation throughout the sixth century. One function of this change was the emergence of new, broader state identities to replace smaller gentilicial groups (the former may also have coexisted with a broader shared identity—***safin**—stretching from Picene to Samnite territory in the fifth century, Dench 1995, 204–10). These are

the tribes who populate the historical record: Marsi, Vestini, Picentes and so on, each probably referring to itself as a **touto** or people (Salmon 1967, 77–101; La Regina 1989, 304–62; Rix 2000). It thus makes sense, from this point, to talk of Samnites or Saunitai.

As well as the rise of smaller polities, such as the Pentri and Hirpini, larger federated entities also emerged, linking them together. The Lucani are first recorded as acting as a corporate unit in the second half of the fifth century, and the Samnites, although not mentioned in the historical record until 354 BC (Livy 7.19.4, first contact with the Romans), may be a fifth-century formation as well (Purcell 1994, 385–91; we have already noted the broad application given to the name Saunitai by earlier Greek writers). This period also sees the emergence of the central Apennine dialects and the earliest Oscan texts. Rome must be the catalyst for some of the fourth-century developments (Dench 1995, 203); but for the fifth to third centuries the nature of increased contacts with the cities of Magna Graecia, the influence of Punic Sicily, and the presence of Greek *condottieri* in the south, all contributed to the melting pot from which radical change emerged.

Funerary evidence reflects the new developments, just as it illustrated earlier changes. These seem to have taken place over several generations, in some cases lasting into the Hellenistic period, and are not unambiguous. Beside continuity (seen in the increasing popularity of cist tombs) must be set increasing local variation in construction (D'Ercole et al. 1998, 22). Further south an interesting development is the adoption in some contexts of cremation (see below), and, perhaps reflecting an increasingly Hellenic conception of the afterlife, the placing of coins in the mouth of the deceased (Gildone, fourth century; cf. Tagliamonte 1996, 209). Fifth- and fourth-century male grave goods still display the idealization of martial prowess predominant earlier. Nevertheless, the modes of expression change. Emphasis is now placed not only on offensive weaponry, but also on helmets (hitherto rare; Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 354) and other defensive armour. The distribution of the latter seems regionally patterned. The 'Samnite' cuirass, three discs, joined over the shoulders and at the sides, famously depicted on the statuette known as the 'Louvre Mars' (below), has been found in northern Samnium: Alfedena (Tomb 169), Bagnoli del Trigno in northern Molise, and so on (Agostini et al. 1992, 36, fig. 44). In southern Samnium, by contrast, we find the short 'anatomical' cuirass, cut off at navel height, reproducing the physiology of the male chest, at Allifae (on the edge of Campania) and Campobasso (Biferno Valley). This formation of the 'new warrior' is associated with the increasing deposition of a classic element of Samnite male grave goods, the *cinturone* (a broad bronze belt, originally sewn onto a leather backing, and fastened with elaborate clasps). This may be a marker of the transition through puberty to warrior status (Rebuffat Emmanuel 1966).

Female *corredi* do not show novel or specifically local features in this period. One interesting feature exclusive to the Frentane area is a fibula decorated with a bronze ram's head (D'Ercole et al. 1998, 26–28, *schede* nos. 9–12, 22a, plus a sporadic find from Monte Pallano, cf. Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 357–59, 359 n. 31, 376). The attractive suggestion had been made that the ram was originally the totemic animal of the Frentani, recalling their Sacred Spring (a myth, as argued above, belonging precisely to this period of state formation). The fibulae would then show the transvaluation of the totem to a secondary use in the female sphere. More widespread are amber pendents in the form of a female face, especially in the coastal areas of southern Abruzzo (for example at Frentane Villalfonsina), perhaps reflecting a preponderance of seaborne cabotage in the distribution of these objects (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 359).

What is most striking, however, reviewing Samnite cemeteries over this century and a half, is their decline. The fifth century is the last in which we see great numbers of rich 'warrior' burials; in the fourth it is their rarity, not their wealth, that stands out. This phenomenon recurs elsewhere in fifth-century central Italy (and at roughly the same time we witness a similar collapse in the phenomenon of the richly equipped burials of the paramount chieftains of temperate Europe, at the Hallstatt/La Tène transition). At Alfedena, and more noticeably at Val Fondillo (and at Porticone: Di Niro 1991e), we see a marked decline in terms of frequency and the wealth of the burials by the end of the fifth century. By the end of the fourth century, the life of the cemeteries at Gildone in the Biferno, Campochiaro below Monte Matese in Pentrian territory, and the cemeteries at Rocca dei Rettori and Palazzo de Simone at Benevento, is effectively over. Where cemeteries survive into the Hellenistic period, they are poorer and smaller.

Is this a social and demographic crisis being played out over five or six generations, leaving an impoverished and empty Samnium? This cannot be the case, as other indices (like rural settlement revealed by survey, or sanctuary building) show both health and wealth; and from the late fourth century the Samnites fielded large armies against Rome for more than two generations. Polybius tells us that they sent seventy thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry to face the Gallic invasion of 225 BC (2.24.20, cf. 2.24.12; on Samnite levies, see Brunt 1971, 443–44; Lloyd 1995a, 182). Two principal explanations can be explored. One has already been discussed: archaeological visibility. Just as we cannot accept that the Iron Age mortuary population implies a population predominantly made up of adult elite males (no population could have such a structure), we need not think that fewer classical graves necessarily mean fewer classical people (although some scholars have claimed precisely this). From the late fifth century even wealthy Samnites began to be buried in less ostentatious and monumental ways: in smaller groups, and often in new locations. This suggests new social attitudes to death, and to the disposal of wealth; the abandonment of some burial grounds may also imply that there were now fewer, though better defined, centres of population (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 341 n. 10).

State formation is strongly implicated in both answers. It must be that the growing strength of the *touto* is linked to the decline of gentilician structures. As at an earlier period in Greece, as the emerging polities grew in confidence, they asserted their authority over the clans. This effectively restricted the clans' opportunities for the kinds of display that had underlined their leaders' status, and harnessed their energies and wealth for the community. The descendants of the Iron Age *nerf* remained in power, in most cases (especially those who adapted to the new situations more willingly, or even led the changes), but as the elected magistrates of the villages and polities (Oscan: **meddíss**) and the **touto** (the **meddíss túvtiks**; among other third-/second-century magistrates note the **kenszur**, corresponding to the Latin censor: Vetter 1953, no. 168 = Rix 2002, 79 no. Fr1). These magisterial dynasties of the Hellenistic era included familes such as the Pentrian Staii/Statii, Decitii, Papii, Pomponii and Egnatii, a stable elite who maintained power dynastically across the generations (La Regina 1989, Lloyd 1995a, 207–8). They provided the leaders in the wars with Rome and others, and, we must assume, paid for some of the expenditure on monumental sanctuaries that began, not coincidentally, to appear in the fourth century, and for which they must have filled the priesthoods. So the ideologies of military success and conspicuous expenditure remain, but transformed. Purcell aptly writes of 'a competitive, hierarchical, image-conscious, aggressive, militaristic elite' (1994, 396).

Hellenistic Samnium, *c.*350–50 BC

Hellenistic is the name customarily given to Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander the Great (323 BC) and the suppression of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt in 30 BC, as well as to the cultural *koiné* that characterized that period. Nevertheless, in Italian contexts the chronological boundaries of the Hellenistic, its cultural content and its relation to the Roman conquest of the fourth and third centuries are often obscure. Copersino and D'Ercole (2003, 335), for example, divide the period into 'Italo-Hellenistic' (*c.*350–275 BC) and 'Hellenistico-Roman' (*c.*275–100 BC).

We noted above the Iron Age roots of settlement and society in Samnium. Yet the situation in the Hellenistic period—increasing filling-out of the countryside in a fully hierarchical settlement pattern (below); growing complexity of social and political structures; and ever more sophisticated responses to increased exposure to Greek cultural models—is also markedly different from the Iron Age. Indeed it has much less in common with the period of transition just considered, than that period in turn has with the Iron Age (Lloyd 1995a, 208).

Settlement

The few literary sources that discuss Samnite (or indeed central Italic) settlement portray a landscape articulated by villages. We have noted the cultural prejudices behind such views. Nevertheless, the literary depictions are not worthless: inscriptions from the (third-century, largely Latin-speaking) central Apennine areas commonly refer both to villages (*vici*) and to wider districts, within which the villages were grouped (*pagi*). Drawing on this evidence, as well as the state of archaeological knowledge in the 1970s, scholars, led by Adriano La Regina, elaborated the 'pagano-vicanic' model for Italic settlement in the Hellenistic period (La Regina 1970; 1970–71; 1981; Tagliamonte 1996, 156–202). This model predicted a village-based settlement pattern, integrated into a wider, hierarchically ordered, tripartite organization of the landscape based on hill-forts, sanctuaries and villages. Sanctuaries, and the magistrates who administered them and their finances, played an important role as foci for the wider entities formed by the *pagus* districts. The model has held up well (see now Rainini 2000; Gualtieri 2004), and the results of field survey, to which we now turn, have borne out its main findings. For example, from *c.*350 BC through into the second century we see a remarkable intensification of settlement in Pentrian territory in the upper Biferno Valley, creating a highly structured landscape, articulated into major and minor hill-forts; rural sanctuaries; and villas and farmsteads (Lloyd 1995a, 188 and fig. 72). This development is also seen in other areas of Samnium (Lloyd et al. 1997, 47 for the Sangro Valley). Furthermore, recent work on southern Italy in this period shows the distinctiveness of Samnite settlement patterns, which seem more aligned with developments in the central Apennine area. We do not see across Samnium the systematic destruction or abandonment of settlements that is so prominent in the south of Italy in the late fourth and early third century (Purcell 1994, 402; Curti et al. 1996, 178–81).

Countryside

Surface survey relies for dating upon the inexact diagnostic properties of finewares, datable, at best, to within a century. The principal fineware from this period, black gloss ware, appears from about 400 BC, and lasts almost until the end of the Hellenistic period. Since it is rarely possible, and not desirable, to distinguish earlier fourth-century black gloss from Hellenistic productions, we will, in dealing with the results of survey, take the years 400–50 BC, i.e. the black gloss period, as the unit of study (but note that the Biferno survey found that most datable black gloss pieces were from the third or second centuries (Lloyd 1995a, 183–84).

Biferno sites (i.e. spreads of archaeological debris in the ploughsoil) for this period were classified into three categories, the biggest with a surface area greater

than 7,500m², the smallest below 1,500m², and the third for intermediate sizes (Lloyd 1995a, 184–85). Here we witness the persistence of the village-dominated settlement pattern of the Iron Age, with ninety per cent of Iron Age sites also producing black gloss sherds (but some impasto wares, although classed as diagnostic of the Iron Age, might be coeval with earlier black gloss production). The upper valley produced fewer sites than the lower valley, a distribution perhaps explicable through a preference for nucleated settlement in the former; continuity is also harder to establish there (Lloyd 1995a, 185–87). Villages remain poorly understood, as in the preceding period (Salmon 1967, 79–80; La Regina 1980, 37; Patterson 1988, 115–16; Lloyd 1995a, 190–91). Probable village sites in the Biferno include: San Martino, Saepinum, Colle Sparanise; Fagifulae; San Martino, San Giacomo, Santa Maria Casalpiano and Olivoli. All of these are large sites (at San Giacomo, a scatter of some sixteen hectares of debris produced material dating as early as the fourth century), and were inhabited into the late Roman period. Some of them produced traces of substantial Samnite/Roman Republican buildings, and Santa Maria Casalpiano and Saepinum even boast late republic mosaic pavements. Yet the identification of these sites as either villas, or as parts of larger village units, remains controversial (Ceglia, in Alborella et al. 1993, 157–62; De Benedittis et al. 1993, 19; Lloyd 1995a, 191, 197–201, fig. 76, 87). Important new light has recently been shed on the evolution of the Samnite *vicus* by the excavations at the sixth- to first-century BC site of Fonte Romito near Agnone, between the Sangro and Trigno valleys (Rainini 1996).

Better known are farmsteads and villas, which archaeology shows to have been an important element of the settlement pattern (Patterson 1985; 1987; Di Niro 1991b; Lloyd 1991, 180–93; Di Niro and Petrone 1993, 7–31). Of these, the twenty certain, twenty-five probable, and nine possible sites recovered in the upper Biferno Valley must be a bare minimum (a cluster of site-scatters near Colle Sparanise was interpreted as a single nucleated site). Most parts of the countryside in this area were probably exploited in some way, although farm sites tend to concentrate near major centres (Lloyd 1995a, 192–94). Few sites were found on the Sepino or Boiano plains, suggesting, as today, expoitation from communities on their edges; sporadic finds were, however, common, possibly derived from manuring. Geomorphological evidence suggests that post-classical alluviation in these basins was not a major factor distorting the survey evidence. Major centres like Bovianum (Boiano) and Monte Vairano have been interpreted as 'agro-settlements', with most putative farm sites not very distant from them; elsewhere in the upper valley isolated farmsteads were fairly common, especially on the low hills north of the Boiano basin, where soil and hydrology were suited to cereaculture. Similarly, the few sites in the area round Fagifulae (where again geomorphological distortion is not suspected) were some distance from it. These dispersed farmsteads were probably farmed all year round (Lloyd 1995a, 194).

In the lower Biferno Valley too, the later fourth and third centuries saw a crucial change in the exploitation of the landscape, where agricultural activity seems to have been more intense than in the upper valley. A more significant difference is the precocious emergence of Larinum as a leading centre. Its rise seems to have been coterminous with the decline of some probable village sites that had been prominent in the Iron Age (Di Niro 1991d; 1991e). The territory of Larinum was not, however, devoid of village sites, which were necessary for the articulation of its increasingly densely settled rural territory (Lloyd 1995a, 197, fig. 76). In the lower valley eighty-three certain villa or farm sites were found, with almost a hundred more probable or possible candidates; many of these seem to be quite substantial, and showed signs of continuity from the Iron Age and into the Roman period.

Evidence exacavated at some of these upper valley sites (Barker 1995b, ch. 3) suggests domestic occupation and agricultural activities beginning in the third or second centuries. Besides fine- and coarsewares, there were lamps, storage jars, coins, loom weight and quern fragments; and animal bones and carbonized vegetal matter. One site preserved, despite plough damage, traces of a beaten-earth floor, daub with wattle impressions and a shallow mortar-lined tank, and perhaps a treading floor (for evidence of agricultural activity in the upper Sangro Valley: Lloyd et al. 1997, 48). Some of these sites may have qualified as modest *villae rusticae* (Lloyd 1995a, 194; for contemporary Italian comparanda: Rossiter 1978; Gadd in Ward-Perkins et al. 1986, 109–18; Volpe 1990; Arthur 1991b). The appearance and organization of a Samnite farmstead may best be surmised from the Biferno sites of Cercemaggiore and Matrice, and from the site of Fonte Romito near Capracotta; Matrice perhaps represents the greatest pretensions to luxury, with its terracotta gutterspout in the form of a male head (Lloyd 1995a, 194–96).

In the lower valley Santa Maria Casalpiano (classed as a villa by the excavators) yielded four mosaics from the putative *pars urbana* (De Benedittis et al. 1993). As for the *pars rustica* of a Samnite villa, the most striking examples are from the Trigno Valley; here a number of villas have been identified in the valley bottom, notably the partly excavated example adjacent to the church of S. Maria di Canneto (Di Niro 1982; 1991c; Lloyd 1995a, fig. 88). The villa, whose active life continued into the Roman period, was engaged in the production of wine and oil, and—uniquely for Adriatic Samnium—can rival some of the Campanian villas in terms of the scale of production. In general Samnite villas seem to be located some way from large centres, with smaller and medium-sized scatters (probable farms) occupying the immediate and middle hinterland of such sites, especially round Larinum (Lloyd 1995a, 200–1).

Little is known of structures at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy, in which the poorest peasants would have lived, or of outbuildings and stalls, which might have been thatched structures with mud-brick walls (for early modern Italian comparanda: Sardella and Sardella 1989; Barker 1995a, fig. 60).

Such structures would leave a very weak archaeological signature, lacking tile roofs (Barker et al. 1986; Perkins and Attolini 1992; Lloyd 1995a, 196 for black gloss sherds from the Neolithic rock shelter at Ponte Reggio).

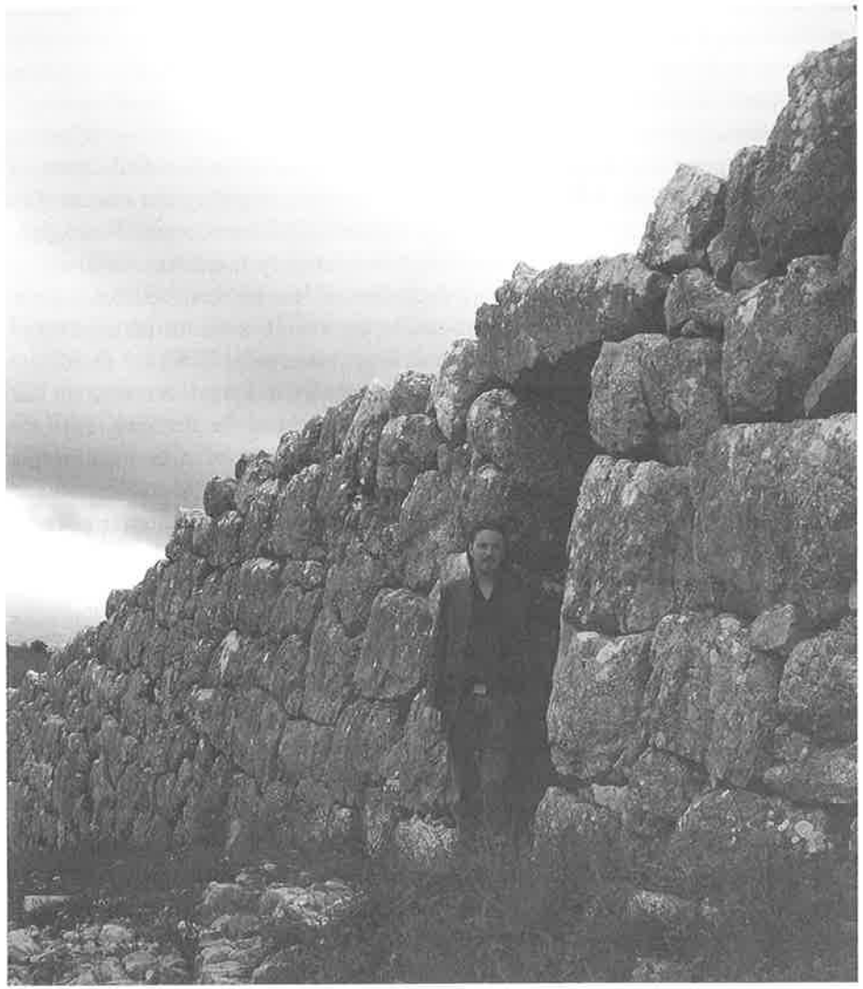
Hill-Forts

More than one hundred hill-forts (variously called *urbes*, *oppida* or *castella* in ancient and modern sources) have been identified across Samnium (and more throughout the central Apennines), and others still await discovery on remote and thickly-wooded peaks (Oakley 1995). More than a dozen are in the upper Biferno Valley, perhaps reflecting its central position within Pentrian territory; the larger sites ring the Boiano and Sepino plains, to which they clearly have a strategic relationship (Lloyd 1995a, 188; coordinated territorial defence: La Regina 1975; De Benedittis 1977; Conta Haller 1978; La Regina 1980, 37–38; Di Niro 1991b). By contrast, fewer hill-forts are known from Frentane territory (La Regina 1984, 300; De Benedittis et al. 1993; Lloyd 1995a, 199), perhaps unsurprising in view of its more rolling, heavily eroded topography. Samnite hill-forts were in naturally defensible locations on or near the summits of hills or mountains. These natural locations are encircled (or simply reinforced where the natural defences were inadequate, as at Monte Pallano, Figure 35) by polygonal fortifications of greater or lesser sophistication, enclosing areas of widely varying sizes. Major hillforts might have clusters of satellite fortifications, as at Monte Vairano in the Biferno Valley (Lloyd 1995a, 189); or we may find a group of adjacent hills and ridges forming an interlinked series of fortifications, as at Montenerodomo—Colle della Guardia—Monte di Maio, above Iuvanum.

Many of the hill-forts explored in the Biferno produced surface finds of pottery and tile and other finds (the same is true of the Iuvanum hill-fort network). This raises a hotly disputed question: what were hill-forts used for? There is no single answer. Sometimes, as at Monte Vairano and Monte Pallano, a very large area was enclosed by the defences, some—but not all—of which was terraced and used to build kilns, houses or temples (De Benedittis 1988; Oakley 1995). Large centres like these surely had stable populations. Other, smaller, 'hill-forts' will have been little more than refuges for people and flocks in times of crisis (large open areas within major hill-forts may also have served a similar function). Between these two extremes minor sites are often thought to have been occupied only seasonally, in connection with transhumance (Frederiksen 1968; De Benedittis 1977; Salmon 1982, 14) or to watch and control communication routes (La Regina 1975; 1984, 208–9; Di Niro 1991b; Christie in Lloyd et al. 1997); they have also been seen as marking tribal boundaries (Faustoferri 1998, 14). Yet very few have been studied through large-scale excavation, and generalizations on such limited evidence are dangerous. Work by the University of Chieti on Monte Pidocchio near Iuvanum has revealed a small number of hut platforms

on the small, unfortified summit, with evidence for metalworking, as well as pottery for the storage and cooking of food (O. Menozzi, personal comment).

The dating of hill-forts is also debated; we have seen that some fortified sites showed evidence of frequentation from the sixth century, and many scholars have argued from the 'primitive' aspect of their polygonal fortifications for an Archaic date. Yet the (very limited) stratigraphic data available suggest a later date (chronological arguments based on apparently distinct 'styles' of wall-building are baseless). Evidence from the Biferno Valley, at the sites of Monte



35 Monte Pallano walls (photograph by permission of Keith Swift)

Vairano and La Rocca di Oratino, suggests that the fortifications belong to the late fourth century (De Benedettis 1980, 326ff.); at Terravecchia, above the later town of Saepinum, the late fourth century is a *terminus ante quem*. Much remains to be done (Lloyd 1995a, 190; a cautious overview at Lloyd et al. 1997, 4–5, 28). As for the longevity of such sites, Monte Vairano seems to be occupied between the third and first centuries BC, and Monte Pallano from the third BC to the second AD, but perhaps not continuously; at Monte Pidocchio the latest occupation may be as late as the second century BC.

The larger hill-forts were home to rich, powerful individuals, as the 'house of LN' testifies for Monte Vairano (De Benedittis 1988), as well as being centres of consumption and redistribution (note the one hundred-plus Rhodian amphora handles from Monte Vairano: Lloyd 1995a, 206). They probably also operated as *pagus* centres for the surrounding territory, with monumental buildings (Curino, above Alfedena: La Regina 1976, 210–23, with pl. 1 and 2—the captions ought to be reversed), elite housing (Monte Vairano) and religious buildings (Curino; Monte Pallano: Kane 2006). The early Hellenistic Lucanian fortified centre of Roccagloriosa has been suggested as a model for understanding the relationship between *oppidum* and territory at Monte Pallano (Oakley 1995, 16; Faustoferri and Lloyd 1998; for Roccagloriosa itself see Gualtieri 1987; Gualtieri and Fracchia 1990; Fracchia 2004; Gualtieri 2004). A similar, if less marked, relationship, in terms of density and hierarchy of settlement, between the territorial centre and farms and villages exploiting the surrounding countryside is found at Monte Vairano. The major Samnite centres, whether *oppida* (and *pagus* centres), or, like Larinum, a city, were the bases of those elites upon whom the Romans relied for control after the conquest from the third century BC onwards (see for example La Regina 1980, 41; Lloyd et al. 1997, 47–48).

The emergence of *oppida*, if essentially a fourth-century phenomenon, may be related not only to the appearance in southern Italy of both Greek *condottieri* and Roman armies, but also to a growing sense of self-definition among the different *pagus* polities and the various **touto**, which together made the Samnite tribes; in a word, to state formation (cf. Lloyd et al. 1997, 4–5). Subsequent developments may reflect the continuing accommodation of Rome with Samnite aristocracies.

The Urban Problem

Strabo, a principal source for central Italic 'village' settlement patterns, also tells us that the Samnites once had great cities, but that they had dwindled into villages (5.4.11). The question of whether the Samnites were urbanized or not has excited some debate (Lloyd 1995a, 208–9, drawing on Arthur 1991a). The laudable desire to rehabilitate the Samnites, to rescue them from the ideological and historical prison into which Graeco-Roman writers had cast them, and

for which modern scholars like Salmon had all but thrown away the key, may have led to an exaggerated tendency to 'de-vicanize' them, and to insist on their rightful place within the urban trajectory common to the more 'civilized' areas of Italy. Yet the 'urban variable' (Horden and Purcell 2000, ch. 4, 553–61) is a modernist fetishization. Our society is as fundamentally urban as the ancient world never was, a difference obscured by our adoption of the ancient equation of civilization with urban living; we, by and large, live in cities, and thus associate cities with high culture, an orientation for which we have co-opted ancient views (Morley 1996, ch. 1). Our obsession with defining 'the ancient city' is in part of our obsession with our own way of living; the same, conversely, is true of adopting the presence or absence of cities as a benchmark for the attainment of civilization. To debate whether Samnium ever became urban, or proto-urban, or pre-urban, and if so when and where, is, I think, to ask the wrong questions. As Guy Bradley has persuasively reminded us (2000, ch. 2), to concentrate on urbanization may be to ignore other more important processes, such as state formation. This process finds reflection in Samnium in the rise of hill-forts and sanctuaries, which imply polities of various sizes; urbanization is a red herring for much of Samnium.

The Hellenistic period saw further elaboration of political and social systems after the major changes reviewed above, as well as the imposition of new exogenous forms of social and spatial organization in the shape of Latin colonies (although we should not overestimate the uniqueness of these interventions at the expense of the wider south Italian context—Purcell 1994, 402–3). Besides the Latin colonies of Aesernia, Beneventum and Saticula, we see the emergence of a recognizable urban centre at Larinum, and of places that show some of the characteristics of urban form, for example at Bovianum (the Pentrian 'capital' according to Livy 9.31.4) and Saepinum. We are woefully ill-informed about other centres that should have developed in similar ways from an early date, especially Caudium; on the other hand, the emergence of Hellenistic urban centres at central Apennine sites like Teate (Chieti) and Sulmo (Sulmona) offers us comparative material with which to approach the situation in Samnium (Lloyd et al. 1997, 6).

Larinum, positioned at the hub of communications routes in the lower Biferno Valley, emerged clearly as a leading centre in the fourth century. It quickly took on urban characteristics to the point that by the later third century we can speak of it as a city; later, after the Social War, it became one of the few Roman *municipia* (autonomous towns) in this area. It lay at the heart of a well-defined territory; much of its wealth came from the increasing exploitation of agricultural surplus from this landscape. Its rise is reflected in the issue of coinage in the third century, which must be coeval with the attainment of autonomy from the rest of the Frentani. We noted above the inhibiting effect that its growth had on some of the larger rural sites in its orbit; the small number of known hill-forts in its environs may also be a function of its growing importance.

The same explanation may perhaps apply to the relative paucity of rural sanctuaries in the Larinate hinterland: the sole known example (as of 1995), near the later Roman villa at Arcora, dates to the third and second centuries (La Regina 1984, 307); even the distribution of Hercules statuettes is limited compared with that encountered in the uplands (Di Niro 1977). There are hints, based on the distribution of archaic terracotta statues, that places of worship may have been more widely dispersed across the countryside in earlier times (Stelluti 1988, fig. 222; Lloyd 1995a, fig. 77; Barker 1995b, ch. 4). It seems probable that the centralizing force of the growing city had religious as well as political and agricultural implications (Lloyd 1995a, 199–200, 209–10). Many religious functions will have been subsumed by the urban centre, whose elites will have provided the priests, and who will have been anxious to reduce the proliferation of alternative loci of authority. The situation elsewhere in Samnium, including Frentane territory is, as we shall see, strikingly different (Campanelli and Faustoferri 1998, pl. I: distribution of Frentane rural sanctuaries; add now Monte Pallano).

That Larinum, near the coast, and long open to external influences, became a city, is not surprising. What of the leading Pentrian settlements? The key sites, whose development is potentially closer to the city-state model than others', are Bovianum, Monte Vairano and Saepinum. These fulfilled the role of 'central places', and certainly had significant stable populations and monumental public buildings. Saepinum and Monte Vairano certainly had important economic roles, and surely Bovianum too. At Saepinum and Monte Vairano we also clearly have elite private houses: for example the 'House of the Boar Hunt' at Saepinum (Gaggiotti 1991), and the 'House of LN' at Monte Vairano.

Yet it is stretching a point to argue, on the basis of the evidence available, that such hierarchies could manifest themselves only in nucleated physical contexts; or that had some Pentrian elites not lived at Monte Vairano they would never have imported Rhodian wine, and consumed it in their own version of Hellenistic luxury dining. Of course such patterns of behaviour had a particular resonance in aggregate in a fixed nucleated environment; evidence for import and consumption of Greek prestige wines at, for example, Samnite villa sites, is so far non-existent. It was not the elites alone who lived at these centres: some houses were less grand than others, and some of the artisans and traders whose activites we shall trace below may have lived in these central places; at Monte Vairano, a hinterland for which the settlement would have acted as a market centre, may be hypothesized. For other centres urban form, or proto-urban form, has been claimed: for example Monte Pallano (Faustoferri and Riccitelli 2005), on the model of Roccagloriosa. Yet it seems to me that, apart from the misdirection of inquiry, the parallels have been overplayed, and that in the Hellenistic period we are dealing with a variety of central places that acquired different, overlapping sets of features which we might elsewhere call urban. A more nuanced approach to the realities of occupation, and to the relationship

with the surrounding countryside, needs to be adopted. *Pagus* centres might have public and religious monumental buildings, host fairs, act as political centres, or all of these, without a stable population living on site. Not all, perhaps not very much, of the vast plateau of Pallano, was occupied permanently, or indeed at all. This, and the Curino acropolis at Alfedena (Mariani 1901; 1902; La Regina 1976, 219–23; 1984, 260–67), need to be understood as particular types of *pagus* centre, not as towns (despite Lloyd 1995a, 209).

In fact, political activity of a high order, with complex structures active over a wide area, is hard to trace in the Pentrian settlements other than Bovianum (but note a 'censor' in a probably pan-Pentrian context at Pietrabbondante: Vetter 1953, no. 149 = Rix 2002, Sa4). Much of the weight of administration and organization must have been carried by the magistrates of the various shrines and *pagi*, dispersed settlements with a diffusion of power structures. Pentrian communities like Monte Vairano and Saepinum were too small to need the kind of complex tiered administration we find at 'Samnite' Pompeii in the same period, and the caution of Lloyd was in the final analysis characteristically shrewd (1995a, 209: 'arguably a more homespun process'; Lloyd, however, argued for a greater role for urbanization, or something very like it, than I do here: 1995a, 212). Larinum had more in common with Pompeii than with Monte Vairano; but Monte Vairano is more typical of the top end of Samnite nucleated settlement.

Nevertheless, we might see hill-forts and cities as two points on a spectrum, rather than antitheses. Purcell has linked the growth of both cities and fortified *enceintes* in southern Italy in the fourth century to the influence of Hellenic political, social and cultural models (1994, 395–97). We have noted that in some parts of Samnium, not coincidentally those closer to the more deeply Hellenized parts of Italy, the city did appear; Larinum and Caudium we have mentioned, but Beneventum in the last generation before the Latin colony merits notice in two very important respects. One is the creation of an extra-urban artisan quarter at Cellarulo (red-figure finewares were possibly produced here; see further below). The second is the discovery at two sites within the later urban area (Rocca dei Rettori, Palazzo di Simone) of a complex series of substantial terracing interventions. These overlay, and thus terminated, a sequence of burials at both sites, which had run from the eighth to the late fourth centuries. This landscaping seems to be designed to create artificial terraces to compensate for the uneven slope of the hillside. Both sites give the impression of careful planning to create a monumental effect, and that at Rocca dei Rettori was associated with an earthen rampart and a stone wall-circuit (Giampaola 2000, 38, figs 14, 16). These developments (specialized craft production, the monumentalization of space and the ending of burial within an area now dedicated to the living community, implying in turn greater communal control over descent lines) belong on many classic 'checklists' for urbanization. It is hard to resist the idea that, catalysed by Caudium, and by the highly urban Campania, Beneventum in the late fourth

and early third centuries was undergoing major social and cultural changes, and stood on the verge of becoming an urban settlement comparable with Larinum, when Roman history overtook it.

Sanctuaries and Religion

The Hellenistic age is the age of sanctuaries in Samnium. They were, in a sense, its cities. They performed aggregative functions across Samnite territories, serving as economic, religious and political meeting points; they were crucibles in which the identity of both polities and elites was forged. They were the arenas for the euergetic monumentality of Samnite elites (La Regina 1976, 229; cf. Torelli 1983, 246, drawing a contrast with contemporary Tyrrhenian Italy, Lloyd 1995a, 209). Stamped roof tiles from Campochiaro suggest that the communities also took a role in paying for and maintaining the sanctuaries (Lloyd 1995a, 191–92); we have little information on priests, but we do have evidence for boards of officials (*magistri* in Latin) who were responsible for running the sanctuaries (Buonocore 2002), in conjunction with the officials of the villages and the *pagi*.

The sanctuaries form a hierarchy, ranging in size from small shrines (or even natural features at which deposition of statuettes—like those of Hercules—or terracotta figurines took place) to the mother of all Italic sanctuaries at Pietrabbondante in the Trigno Valley, probably rightly seen as a pan-Pentrian central place (Vetter 1953, no. 149; La Regina 1976; Lloyd 1995a, 191). Major sanctuaries (like Vastogiradi, Pietrabbondante, Campochiaro; perhaps also Monte Pallano: Bell et al. 2002 on its communications) are often situated close to *tratturi* or communications routes, indeed often at nodal points in the communications network, although in some cases apparently distant from important settlements: Schiavi d'Abruzzo; I Casali (upper Sangro Valley); San Giovanni in Galdo and Vastogiradi (Lloyd et al. 1997, 32). Smaller sanctuaries, like that at Colle Sparanise, tend to be found in association with villages. In their proximity to *tratturi* some sanctuaries (e.g. Schiavi, Pietrabbondante) recall Iron Age cemeteries. Most sanctuaries are thus integrated into the various reflexes of Samnite mobility.

A hierarchy of sanctuaries can be seen in sacrificial waste deposits too. At Pietrabbondante a sacrificial refuse midden between temples A and B produced sheep and goat bones, domestic and wild fowl, fish and shellfish. In some respects the assemblage is similar to those at Campochiaro and Colle Sparanise; what seems unique to this site is the frequency with which male cattle in the prime of life can be identified. Given the value of cattle, their high maintenance as working animals (see below) and the tendency to let them live to the end of their working lives, the killing of prime stock (which might otherwise be used for breeding), represents a significant turning over of resources to the divine sphere; in other words, the top end of investment in sacrifice. It underlines the prime position of Pietrabbondante within the sacral economy, and the sacred hierarchy in Samnium. It also reveals how the elites of Hellenistic Samnium used sanctuaries and ritual to underpin their place in the social hierarchy (Barker 1989a).

The evidence from all the sanctuaries considered suggests that the animals sacrificed were tailored to the ritual regime as well as the prestige of the sanctuary. Thus male pigs predominate at Campochiaro, where Hercules Ranus was worshipped (pigs represent seventy-two per cent of indentifiable fragments, against twenty-eight per cent for ovicaprids); all were prime animals. Colle Sparanise, a small village sanctuary, is different again: the sacrifice of hare and roe deer here seems to be unique to this sanctuary and its ritual economy; the pig profile recalls that of Campochiaro, but the ovicaprids were older animals, and may thus represent a less prestigious form of sacrifice, drawing on the local stock resources as they neared the end of their natural productive lives (Barker 1995b, ch. 7; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 203). The more ordinary the stock sacrificed, the smaller the drain on the farming resources, the lower the prestige of the sanctuary. This evidence not only illuminates a sacred landscape of some complexity, but also gives texture and density to Samnite interaction with that landscape (Lloyd 1995a, 192).

There is some evidence of activity at Pietrabbondante in the late Iron Age, but it is not easy to interpret; other than this, as we have seen, there is little evidence for any monumental aspects to pre-Hellenistic cult. In the eighteenth century a near life-size fifth-century terracotta statue of Athena, probably of Greek origin, was found at Roccaspramonte in Molise, in what seems to be a sanctuary (on the basis of mainly Hellenistic evidence). It might be a commission from a Greek craftsman, implying Samnite receptiveness to Greek conceptions and plastic expressions of deities; but it might equally be a piece of plunder from Magna Graecia (Mirone 1924; Lloyd 1995a, 185–87; Torelli 1999, 95–97 and pl. 28; for the context: Vetter 1953, no. 158 = Rix 2002, Sa27; Cianfarani et al. 1978, 305–6; Paribeni 1984; De Benedittis 1988). The great age of monumental sanctuary building, however, began in the fourth century BC, and grew through the third (see Torelli 1983, 241 for a similar pattern across Italy). It reached a climax in the late second century, as the full force of the Samnite elites' engagement with, and appropriation of, the cultural dynamics of the Hellenistic east was seconded by a growing self-confidence and the profits that had accrued from exploiting the empire that they had helped Rome to win (Salmon 1967, 143–81; La Regina 1976; Morel 1976).

Apart from Hercules, both Jupiter and Mars seem to have been popular Samnite deities, as well as Kerres (Ceres), the water goddess Mefitis (in Hirpinia), and Vibia (an underworld goddess) (see generally Campanile 1991); but we do not know to whom many sanctuaries were dedicated. Indigenous religious ideas, as we have seen with Hercules, were permeated by Greek influences, which were recast for Samnite consumption (note also the case of the Dioscuri: Tagliamonte

2004); but how far Greek ideas changed native religion remains unclear. The most interesting evidence for Samnite ritual practice is the Agnone tablet, found near Capracotta between the Sangro and Trigno valleys, and perhaps dating to the third century (for an exhaustive review of the interpretation of this, the longest Samnite text—Vetter 1953, no. 147 = Rix 2002, Sar—see now Del Tutto Palma 1996; it seems to detail the administration of a garden sacred to Ceres).

Economy, Trade and Commerce

In the middle of the first century BC Cicero's speech *pro Cluentio*, for a Larinate defendant and concerned mainly with Larinum and its hinterland, evokes an agrarian economy, where a wealthy elite own large estates and have substantial interests in stock-raising (*Clu.* 98). It is unlikely that this represents a very recent development, and we may project Cicero's picture back at least into the second century BC (note Polybius 3.101, 107, on the productivity of the territory of Larinum; Lloyd 1995a, 208). Certainly two scatter sites found by the Biferno survey in the territory of Larinum, and identified as medium-sized farms (sites A 129 and 270), produced only black gloss finewares; these cannot be the only medium-to-large farms with probable early Hellenistic phases. That we can generalize from favoured environments like that of Larinum to the whole of Samnium is, however, debatable; some scholars (e.g. Morel 1991) have argued that we should make a distinction between lowland and upland economonic spheres within Samnium.

Mixed farming seems, as in the Iron Age, to be the norm across much of Samnium. For Samnite animal husbandry we can draw on faunal assemblages from across the settlement hierarchy. We have noted above the sacrifical waste deposits from the sanctuaries, and to these we can add a farm assemblage from Matrice, and domestic waste from Monte Vairano. It should be noted that some of these are rather small samples: fewer than three thousand identifiable fragments were available for consideration by the Biferno specialists (many more fragments were unattributable, adding another layer of uncertainty to all the figures: Lloyd 1995a, fig. 79; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 201–2); from the Samnite layers at Monte Pallano there are perhaps a dozen identifiable fragments—as against over one thousand for the Roman period (Love 2005); caution is requisite (Barker 1995b, ch. 7).

All these samples are dominated by the three main domesticated species (cattle, pig and ovicaprids); there is also some horse and dog. Matrice provides the best evidence for domestic consumption, and this allows some indirect insights into husbandry regimes: ovicaprids accounted for just over half the identified fragments, with pig coming in at over a third, and cattle at twelve per cent. This compares to a ratio of roughly 1:1:1 for the 'big three' each at Monte Vairano (where, however, different collection methodologies may have

distorted the picture). At Monte Pallano the main context producing Samnite zooarchaeological data (Love 2005) suggested pig remains to constitue over a third of the sample, cattle fractionally under a third and ovicaprids at just under a quarter—but again here there was no sieving during collection. Occasionally we find more exotic refuse, extraneous to the productive regimes of the farm (e.g. oyster shells from Monte Vairano: De Benedittis 1988). At Matrice butchery of the main species on site can be shown. The skeletal characteristics of the cattle thus butchered were consistent with a life spent drawing carts and ploughing. This is not surprising: cattle are uneconomical as a means of producing protein via meat, since they require large amounts of fodder, and antiquity lacked decent fodder crops; *a fortiori* they are expensive draught animals (White 1970, 282–83; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 202–3).

Samnite animal husbandry seems to show, all in all, little advance from the Iron Age situation; the main development is that the stock-raising regime also now built in the idea of a surplus for sacrifice at the sanctuaries (above). Another stimulus to the production of surplus—although we lack evidence for its importance in Samnium—may have been integration into wider Italian and Mediterranean economies, facilitated by the Roman conquest. The growth of Rome and other urban centres, both those in Tyrrhenian Italy and the Latin colonies such as Beneventum and Aesernia, offered one type of market for meat and other secondary products. Rome's large armies, which needed large amounts of textiles and leather, formed another, in which Samnite entrepreneurs could have competed for contracts (Lloyd 1995a, 207, in contrast to the sceptical position of Morel 1991).

Intensification of wool production, noted for the later Iron Age in the lower Biferno Valley seems to be maintained, with loom weights a common find from survey (as in the Sangro Valley) and excavation (Stelluti 1988, fig. 234; De Benedittis 1988; Barker 1995b, ch. 4; Lloyd 1995a, fig. 78). It is at present very hard to say whether these should be seen in terms of a largely domestic production, or as part a wider productive system that aimed to market surplus, but the latter cannot be ruled out (Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 204, noting loom weights impressed with the head of Athena, or with a radiate star; both motifs are found on Larinate coinage and may imply state control). Larinum's longstanding cultural and economic connections with Apulia make large-scale Larinate wool trade in that direction more plausible (note also later evidence for stock raising: Cicero, *Clu.* 98; Barker et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 204; Lloyd 1995a, 206: stylistic links between Larinate and Apulian terracottas; Lloyd 1995a, fig. 78; Barker 1995b, ch. 4, Larinate and Lucerian loom weights). Besides wool, sheep and goats (and cattle) were exploited for secondary products (De Benedittis 1991b, possible cheese production at Monte Vairano.

In constructing an ideologically charged picture of the region, literary sources focused on Samnite pastoralism (Salmon 1967, 67–68; 1982, 13). We have also seen that farms and villas, not always of modest dimensions, are found in lowland

and upland Samnium. One burning question affecting Italy as a whole in the second and first centuries concerns the introduction of large slave-run estates, and the possible contribution of the 'slave mode of production' to the agrarian and recruitment crisis depicted in Italy by literary sources in the latter part of the second century BC (classic expositions: Toynbee 1965; Hopkins 1978; evidence for slave-run estates and their impact, mainly in Tyrrhenian Italy: Rathbone 1983; Attolini et al. 1991; Arthur 1991b). What part did the broader changes that affected Italy play in Samnite agriculture?

Among the many Italic traders attested during the second century BC in the inscriptions of the Aegean trading hub of Delos, and thus very probably the slave trade, we find Staii. These are almost certainly members of one of the leading Pentrian familes (and perhaps exploiting their loyalty to Rome in the Hannibalic War to gain privileged access to lucrative eastern markets: La Regina 1976, 229–30; 1989, 335; Lloyd 1995a, 206). The emergence of Samnite villas cannot be independent of broader Italian trends, and the suitability of Samnite upland ecosystems for pastoral economies probably encouraged large-scale ranching on the model familiar from other parts of Italy in Roman literary sources. The villas were, as noted, smaller than their Tyrrhenian counterparts, but, as we shall see, this does not rule out production of surplus for market. This difference in size does not exclude (nor does it make more likely) some impact on smallholders similar to that hypothesized for areas where medium-to-large villa estates were present.

Nevertheless, the evidence for slavery in Samnium is thin. In the 'industrial' sector we can cite a charming piece of evidence from Pietrabbondante: a tile signed by two women, Delftri and Amica, both slaves of a man called Herreneis Sattius, who scratched messages in the wet clay (and accompanied them with two sets of dainty hobnail-boot prints, and, one hopes, much giggling) 'while we were laying out the tiles to dry'. Herreneis is a Samnite (as his name shows), and evidently the proprietor of a commercial tile-factory; it has been thought, on the basis of Cato the Elder's reference (*Agr.* 135) to tiles made at Venafrum (Venafro), that this example might have been made there too (Macchiarola 1991, 156–57, Tav. 3d). Venafrum lay in the Volturno Valley, and had been annexed by Rome after the Samnite Wars of the early third century BC, with an influx of Roman settlers. Amica is a Latin name, and her graffito is in Latin, whereas Delftri's is in Oscan — clearly this interesting document must have originated in a bilingual area. If there were slaves in the commercial sector, then there must have been slaves working the land too; but this does not amount to large slave-run estates, or the presence of the 'slave mode of production' in Samnium. Such slaves might be identified with the very poorest or lowest status individuals visible in the archaeological record (in the Biferno: Di Niro 1991a; Petrone in Di Niro and Petrone 1993; Lloyd 1995a, 210–11), but these might just as plausibly be the free poor. In the final analysis there is no good evidence for a heavily slave-oriented economy in Samnium before the Roman period outside the areas of Roman or Latin settlement.

The evidence for the Samnite agricultural economy is consistent with dependence on the labour of the free poor. What were they growing? Again, Matrice in the Biferno Valley provides some of the best evidence. Flotation indicates an agricultural regime based on cereals and legumes; evidence for the wheat consumption was also found at Monte Vairano (De Benedittis 1988), and slight evidence of viticulture from elsewhere in the Biferno. Sadly, beside a carbonized grape pip and abundant charcoal, no plant remains were recovered from sacrificial refuse. The lowland areas of Samnium (and, as today, some upland plateaux such as the Altipiano di Rochetta above the source of the Volturno) must have been largely turned over to grain growing; the area around Larinum was especially productive.

From analysis of the limited pollen samples available, we may add the vine and the olive to the repertoire, despite the limited ecofactual evidence for their cultivation (Bottema 1974). The cultivation of olives should have been concentrated in the lower valleys, since more inland areas were mainly too high for their extensive cultivation; the same problem does not affect viticulture, and there is evidence of possible treading floors for wine production in the upper Biferno (see above). As with wool working, large-scale liquid production, aimed at an exportable surplus, is hard to demonstrate anywhere: no local amphora-production sites are known, and the odds must be against any substantial production for export. On the contrary, Hellenistic amphorae from Monte Vairano, Campochiaro and Larinum show that imports were supplementing local production, probably for elite consumption; as well as the Rhodian amphorae found at Monte Vairano, small numbers of Knidian, Black Sea, Punic and south Italian examples are also known from the Biferno. Other evidence for the operation of a mixed agricultural regime comes in the form of tools and millstones, as for example at Monte Vairano (De Benedittis 1991a; 1991b; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 204–5). The evidence from elsewhere in Samnium is variable: we have already noted the relative abundance of villas in the Trigno Valley, at least one engaged in wine-production beyond domestic requirements (Canneto); in the Sangro Valley, however, survey found little evidence for villas, or indeed for major surplus production, leading to speculation that stock raising may have been relatively more important here (Lloyd et al. 1997, 48).

There is a marked lack of interest in literary sources in trade and commerce in antiquity, a situation accentuated for Samnium by the primitivist discourse surrounding the Samnites (Salmon 1967, 65–77). By contrast, archaeology reveals considerable variety and scale in Samnite manufacture. We have already noted (above) the artisan area at Cellarulo at Bevenentum, active from the second half of the fourth century BC into the Roman imperial era, despite the implantation of a Latin colony in 263 BC, and the urban restructuring of that quarter of the city. In addition to possible red-figure production, coarsewares, black gloss vessels,

kiln-furniture and wasters were also found (Cipriano and De Fabrizio 1996). Three kilns have been found at Monte Vairano, providing important evidence about local black gloss production (De Benedittis 1980; 1988; De Benedittis and Lucarelli 1990). Pre-Roman production is also known from Bovianum and Saepinum (Matteini Chiari 1982, 25), from Larinum from the early Hellenistic period, imitating 'Gnathian' wares among others (Di Niro 1980b, discussing also local terracotta production), and from a site near Termoli (Di Niro 1981, 11–13). Finally, wasters and kiln-furniture from surveys of the Biferno and Sangro valleys, and perhaps Iuvanum, may be relevant to this period (Barker 1995b, ch. 4; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995a, 205). As noted above, local amphora-production has proved more elusive, although sherds of amphorae in Adriatic fabrics are abundant. Much tile was produced locally: a bilingually stamped tile from Monte Vairano seems to indicate interaction between Greek and Oscan craftsmen in a workshop context (De Benedittis 1988, 47–48). Activities as diverse as metal-working (not yet in bronze, however), fulling, sculpture and other artisan activity are attested from various contexts, urban, village and religious (from Saepinum, Larinum, Colle Sparanise, Monte Vairano), although who made the weapons that the Samnites took to war with, and then for, the Romans, remains unknown. If manufacturing was widespread in the Biferno Valley (there is less evidence from other regions), its scale, and importance within the local economy, is still hard to assess.

Broad trading networks, encompassing a lively trans-Apennine trade, can be shown for pottery and metal objects from the Iron Age, and may be assumed for other objects in later periods. The *catillus* from a large grain mill at Monte Vairano is made from a leucitic lava similar to that from Pompeian examples (D'Agostino 1980; Lloyd 1995a, 206), and it is probable that many other quernstones found in excavated contexts and in survey came from this area, or from further north on the Tyrrhenian coast, from south Italy or Sicily (Barker 1995b, ch. 6; Lloyd et al. in Lloyd 1995b, 243); the same goes for coarsewares, amphorae and even *dolia*, whose petrology betrays the volcanic inclusions of the west coast (Capini 1982, 11; Barker 1995b, ch. 4). Contacts with the eastern Mediterranean may often be indirect rather than direct (the coasts of Molise and Abruzzo north of Termoli were notoriously short of good ports), although imported amphorae do point to long-distance trade. This interpretation, while not the only one (Crawford 1985, 178–79), is supported by the distribution of fourth- to first-century BC coins across Samnium, which show wide connections: we find represented the mints of Rome (increasingly predominant during the second century) and Campania; Apulia, Lucania, the eastern Adriatic, Thasos and Balearic Ebusus (Mariani 1901; Catalli 1980a; 1980b; Capini 1984; Crawford 1985; Cantilena 1991; Menozzi 2002, 157–75). In view of the evidence for production and trade that we have been reviewing, it seems more likely that we are dealing with the international side of a 'complex monetary economy' that extended even to rural sites such as Matrice, and which sought to turn agricultural surpluses into monetary purchasing

power (Lloyd 1995a, 207; Di Niro 1980c for a Larinate hoard; cf. Howgego 1992) than with a random assemblage composed of losses and discards by returnees from overseas (Crawford 1985, 178). We have noted the probable involvement of Samnite elites in the economic opportunities opened up by the Roman Empire; these will not have been limited to the slave trade (Gabba 1976, 76; Crawford 1985, 178–79; Lloyd 1991a, 210–11).

Indeed, the striking euergetic activity represented by the sanctuaries of Hellenistic Samnium must be taken as a proxy indicator of extensive wealth that Samnite elites were able to deploy in the third and second centuries. The upsurge in building activities in the decades before the Social War suggests both growing assertiveness and competition within the elite (as in the same period at Rome), and enhanced resources with which to compete (La Regina 1976, 229–30; Lloyd 1995a, 210; Aquilano 1998, 17). Sanctaries were, in turn, used for the display of wealth and power by the elites; we have already noted the case of animal sacrifice, and will discuss military ideologies below. The elites themselves may have been on display at their sanctuaries—this is one interpretation of the marvellous third-century bronze statue head showing a young male, found in a stream-bed at San Giovanni Lipioni in the Trigno Valley. It has long been wondered whether this might be a portrait of a Samnite aristocrat (Cianfarani et al. 1978, 552–53; Lloyd 1995a, 209–10; Strazzulla 1998); now an ingenious review of the evidence by Faustoferri suggests that its original location was in a rural sanctuary at Mandrile (Faustoferri 1998). Other interpretations are possible, for instance that it was war booty: Jean-Louis Ferrary points out to me the markedly Hellenic character of the piece, and how different it is from the contemporary 'Capitoline Brutus' from Rome.

Lower down the social scale, Samnium was a major recruitment reservoir for Roman armies down to the Social War (see below). That this demand for troops was met, apparently without difficulty, and despite indications of substantial emigration (for example, to Fregellae early in the second century BC: Livy 41.8.6–12, 9.9–12), suggests a healthy demographic situation in Samnium, and a degree of prosperity for the small farmers who will have formed the backbone of the Samnite levy (something the settlement pattern, as revealed by survey, implies in any case). Those on whom the costs of war fell most heavily—the elites—may have found in its demands an indirect stimulus to further agricultural diversification.

For all the dynamism of Samnite elites in acquiring and expending their wealth, it remains unclear whether we can speak, with Aquilano (1998, 17) of a 'new economic aristocracy' with its wealth partly based in transhumance. It would, however, seem foolish to insist that all economic opportunities remained in the hands of the traditional landed elites. Overall, we cannot class Samnium as a commercial hub, either within Italy (of the great consular roads only the Appia, as extended from Capua to Brundisium, traversed it, and only through the territory of the Hirpini) or the Mediterranean. Traditional emphasis on

the Tyrrhenian is not misplaced, although indifference to Samnite trade and commerce is.

War

For students of Roman history, the Samnites are the quintessence of resistance to Rome in the course of its conquest of Italy, a role given heroic status by Salmon (1967; re-assessment of Salmon's attitude: Frederiksen 1968; Dench 2004). Samnite hostilities with Rome began, in obscure circumstances, in 343 BC, and continued with little intermission to the final defeat of Pyrrhus at the battle of Beneventum in 275; the Hirpini joined Hannibal in the Second Punic War, and all the Samnite tribes rebelled from Rome in the Social War. For all of them seccession seems to have been a more important goal than the citizenship, the concession of which seems to have made little difference to them in the short term (Pobjoy 2000).

The fourth- and third-century conflicts are usually referred to collectively as the Samnite Wars, although Cornell has recently made a cogent argument for not seeing these conflicts as part of a coherent long-term struggle, except in so far as they relate to the Roman conquest (Cornell 2004). The narrative of these conflicts can be traced in Diodorus and Livy, and has received exhaustive comment (Salmon 1967; Oakley 1998–2005 on the Livian material). For our purposes it is important to note that Rome consistently fights 'the Samnites' as a unified entity (note the separate treaty with the Frentani in 304 BC), the duration of the conflict(s), and the high levels of manpower committed on both sides over that period.

The scale and duration of the hostilities contributed to one Roman construction of the Samnites, that of their courage and pugnacity (the pressure of Italic populations on the colonies of Magna Graecia will have led to similar Greek depictions). We noted the self-representation of Iron Age elites as warriors in the mortuary archaeology; this same self-representation, broadly speaking, can still be traced in fourth-century graves, but must be followed subsequently in other contexts. Chief among these are sanctuaries (see above), in which war booty was displayed, offered to the gods in recognition of their support. The goddess Victory appears in a dedication at Pietrabbondante (Rix 2002, Sa24), where very large quantities of weapons were uncovered by Bourbon excavators in the nineteenth century. Many of these were probably won in the conflicts with Taras and the Greek *condottieri* whom she summoned (Purcell 1994, 398, cf. 401). Not all of them need derive from wars fought on behalf of the Pentrian **touto** or the Samnite federation; mercenary activity is also a key element in the military portfolio of the Samnites (Tagliamonte 1994). Despite the mountainous territory of Samnium, its Hellenistic elites seem to have pictured themselves, among other things, as a cavalry elite (De Benedittis and Di Niro 1998, 20: equestrian statuary in the Trigno valley; Purcell 1994, 398; Tagliamonte 2004: Campanian tomb paintings of cavalrymen).

Other images of Samnite warriors, both leaders and foot soldiers, appear in the material record. From a Roman perspective we have the third-century frescos from a tomb on the Esquiline (currently in the Montemartini Museum in Rome), probably from a tomb of the patrician Fabii, depicting the negotiation of a truce by a Fabius and a Samnite respresentative. The latter is characterized by his extravagantly plumed helmet, an item that recurs in tomb paintings from 'Samnite' Nola in Campania from the late fourth century BC, and on the cheek piece of a fourth-century helmet dedicated at Pietrabbondante. These feathered helmets might be the prerogative of leaders (very few known Samnite helmets could be fitted with plumes). Alternatively they may denote individuals of any rank rewarded for valour (Salmon 1967, 113, 130 and pl. IIa for the Louvre Mars; and note a fifth-century(?) bronze statuette from Roccaspinalveti in north Samnium, which seems to represent an ordinary soldier, wearing a helmet with holes in it, presumably for attaching model plumes: see D'Ercole et al. 1998, 22, 25, *scheda* 1, cf. *scheda* 2).

Death and Burial

What was the mortuary situation after the decline of the great Iron Age cemeteries? It must be admitted that our information is thin, and systematic research, and even an agreed methodology for Hellenistic mortuary studies, are largely lacking (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 335, 375, 376 n. 50; this section draws heavily on their account: 2003, 335–78). Regional variation is marked. Among the Caricini the preference is apparently for cist tombs, lined and covered with stone slabs; among the Frentani the dominant custom is one of simple trench burials (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 355–56, 359). Although inhumation remains the dominant rite, some elite groups in the area of Termoli and Larinum practised cremation, and in the female burials of these groups the ashes were deposited, unusually, in bronze *stamnoi*. The influence of south Italian/Greek practices here is clear (D'Ercole et al. 1998, 21; Di Niro forthcoming).

Of the cemeteries that do survive into this period (e.g. Lama dei Peligni in Caricinian territory: Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 355), some have burials displaying valuable grave goods. Elements of the military ideology of the earlier periods also survive, with *cinturoni* persisting into the third century BC. In northern Samnium they seem by and large to be accompanied only by spear points—the iron knives also found in male burials may have a ritual and not a military significance (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 355–59); further south, at least at the start of this period, helmets are still found in Pentrian graves. Vases forming part of the *corredo* seem to come from an ever-more-standardized repertoire; they include the black gloss skyphos, as well as *lekythoi* and *oinochoai*;

and commonly an *olla* (jar) in impasto, with a miniature dipping vessel, often an *olpē*, also of impasto, inside the *olla*; occasionally Apulian or south Italian imported vessels are found (Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 355–60). Female ornament among the Frentani is, apart from the odd gold item, principally represented by fibulae, although some cemeteries are much richer, with more varied female *corredi*. Villalfonsina is a case in point, yielding iron spits; and unique so far is the funerary bed, remains of which were recovered from the cemetery of Coste di Serre at Atessa (Tagliamonte 1996, 212; Copersino and D'Ercole 2003, 356–59). Very striking also is the complete absence of Samnite funerary inscriptions.

The End of the Samnites

When did Samnium cease to be Samnite? Change in Samnium was a constant, but it operated alongside important strands of continuity, as we have seen. It is thus hard to pick a decisive moment from which we must speak of Samnium as Roman. The extension of Roman citizenship to the whole of Samnium following the Social War (91–87 BC) replaced local legal and political structures with Roman ones, but this initiated a gradual process lasting at least a generation; gradual too was the final eclipse of Oscan (note distinctive Larinate marriage rites in 66 BC: Cicero, *Clu* 166; Moreau 1983). The late republic and early empire saw the demise of many of the major hill-forts and rural sanctuaries (De Benedittis 1988; 1991b, 1991b; Fabbricotti 1998); but there is clear evidence of cult continuity at Campochiaro (Herculis Rani: Capini 1980a; 1982; Cappelletti 1991); and at San Giovanni in Galdo and Vastogirardi (Di Niro 1980b; Morel 1976; 1984). This period also witnessed the rise of the first real towns in most of Samnium (Matteini Chiari 1982; Patterson 1987; Di Niro 1991c; Gaggiotti 1991; Gabba 1994; Lloyd 1995b, 249–50), as well as the growth of bigger estates at the expense of small farms, centred on villas owned by the new urban elites (Lloyd 1995b, 224, 232; Patterson 2004). Roman veteran soldiers were settled at various locations across Samnium in this period (Keppie 1983), but there is evidence of continuity of settlement too: the *pagus* system and the villages survive in some cases. At this time, too, the Samnites were being immortalized and travestied in the pages of Livy. Paradoxically, they lived on in the consciousness of the Roman *plebs* as well as of elite readers: 'Samnite' was the name given under the Roman Empire to a kind of gladiator. In this sense, at least, the Iron Age warriors fought on.

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