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## CHAPTER 10

# The finds

### 10.1 Materials and materiality

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#### 10.1.1 Introduction

Broxmouth boasts one of the largest assemblages of Iron Age material culture in south-east Scotland, second only in quantity to the exceptional assemblage from Traprain Law (Armit et al in prep). It consists of more than 1,000 objects of worked bone and antler, pottery, stone, metal (iron and copper alloy) and other materials. It includes the largest assemblage of saddle and rotary querns in the region, whilst the remarkable worked bone and antler assemblage rivals those of southern England (eg Maiden Castle, Dorset and Danebury, Hampshire; Sharples 1991; Cunliffe 1995) and Atlantic Scotland (eg Hall 1994). Important comparisons with other sites will be highlighted in this review, but particular reference should be made to the report on the material culture recovered as part of the Traprain Law Environs Project (TLEP), which sets out the local and regional context within which the Broxmouth material must be viewed (Hunter 2009: 140–56).

The Iron Age material culture from southern Scotland was, until recently, generally thought to have been undiagnostic and mundane, and has suffered neglect as a consequence. The TLEP report attempted to overcome this, considering trends in object use and in the craft activities represented in the various excavated site assemblages. However, since these comparisons are based on generally poorly radiocarbon dated sequences from sites with discontinuous occupation, this approach risks conflating developments over time. Furthermore, such broad scale analysis is hampered by a lack of contextual analysis; for instance, the presence of certain categories of decorative metalwork and exotica (amber, coral and La Tène brooches) (Hunter 2009: 145, 148) may be a reflection of the

varying depositional practices at different sites and the phenomenon of hoarding, rather than a reliable indicator of the relative presence of these materials (ibid). Presence and absence analyses, therefore, tend to reinforce the accepted view of emerging hierarchies in the Late Iron Age from previously flatter forms of social organisation (eg Armit 1990: 68–9; Hunter 2007a: 15; 2007b: 289; Sharples 2003) and the dominance of Traprain Law (Jobey 1976; Hill 1987; Armit 1999; Hunter 2009: 140–56). The re-analysis of Broxmouth's material culture, accompanied by detailed phasing and absolute chronology, are important in allowing us to examine trends in craft activity, use and depositional practices over some 800 years. This allows us to review our understanding of social relations in the Early and Middle Iron Age, leading us to reconsider the scale and impact of changes in the Late Iron Age, and the degree of dominance of sites like Traprain Law.

The following review first examines how the excavation strategy and preservation conditions at Broxmouth affected what was recovered; it then examines chronological patterns in material culture, before shifting focus to the biographies of materials and their role in identity construction. The final part summarises the materiality of Broxmouth, and beyond, and proposes a heterarchical social system for the Iron Age of south-east Scotland.

#### 10.1.2 Preservation and recovery

Due to its siting on an alkaline limestone outcrop, Broxmouth has a remarkably well-preserved worked bone and antler assemblage. Only six other sites in East Lothian have produced worked bone, and only Ghegan Rock has an assemblage of any size (>20 objects; Richardson 1907). The fact that many items of personal adornment at Broxmouth are made from bone or antler suggests that the apparent absence of decorated personal objects at other sites in the Early and Middle Iron Age may be misleading. Whilst the acidity

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of soils has affected the preservation of bone and antler and other organics on most sites in East Lothian, it does not seem to have affected the preservation of later prehistoric pottery; the assemblage from Broxmouth (c 420 sherds from 109 vessels) is comparable to other Iron Age sites in East Lothian, such as Phantassie (349 sherds; MacSween 2007: 150) and St Germain's (379 sherds; Alexander and Watkins 1998: 224–33).

Despite the unusual preservation of bone and antler, the surviving material from Broxmouth remains only a fragment of the range of material which would have been in use. Metal objects (of iron and non-ferrous metals) are under represented, despite the preservation conditions. Nonetheless, there is indirect evidence for the presence of other organic materials such as hides, textiles and basketry. Copper alloy fittings were probably attached to wooden containers or leather straps, and many of the worked bone and antler mounts and handles were originally part of composite objects, the other parts of which were not preserved. We can imagine the range of different textured, warm and cold materials which made up the everyday environment of the Broxmouth inhabitants.

### 10.1.3 Phasing and chronology

The Bayesian model (chapter 9), which supports broadly continuous activity from around the seventh or sixth centuries BC to the second or early third centuries

AD, provides the first opportunity to understand in detail the development of material culture throughout the Iron Age of southern Scotland, in one location. As has been stressed in the preceding chapters, however, it is no easy task to unpick the complex stratigraphy. Earlier phases within the settlement interior were truncated by later phases of occupation. Deep stratigraphy was preserved only in the Inner Ditch and South-west Entrance areas. Upper deposits in the former are complicated by the redeposition and movement around site of accumulated middens (chapter 6) and redeposited material, perhaps around 200 years old, infilled the remains of House 4 and other Phase 6 structures. Residuality, increasing in prominence as time progressed, is an issue in the interpretation of the finds assemblages: for example, it is estimated that around 20% of the radiocarbon dates from Phase 6 are residual (chapter 12). This should be borne in mind when looking for example at illus 10.1, which shows the recovery of the major finds categories by phase at Broxmouth, and when considering the chronological significance of find types appearing or persisting in later phases, since they may in fact derive from redeposited material.

In fact, the quantity and spread of materials recovered from each phase (illus 10.1) reflects, to some degree, the types and quantities of deposits excavated, rather than necessarily providing any deeper insight

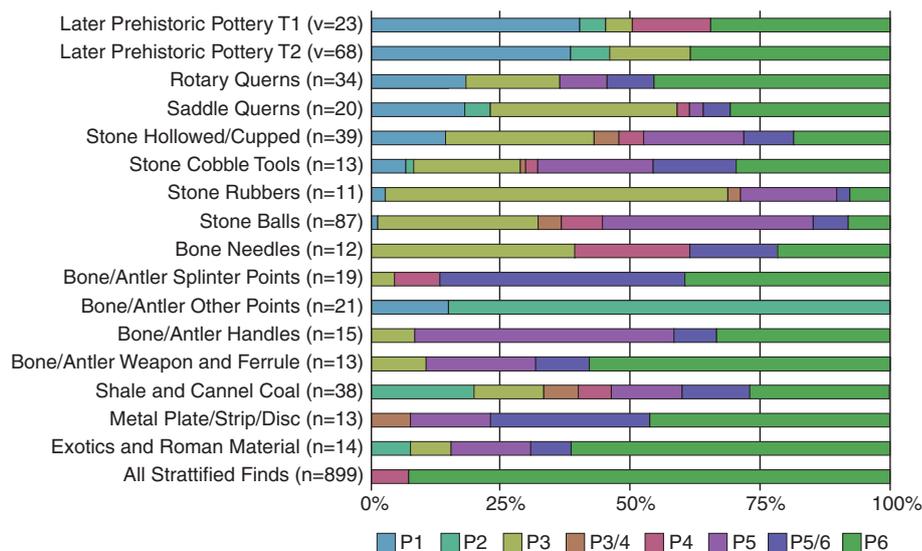
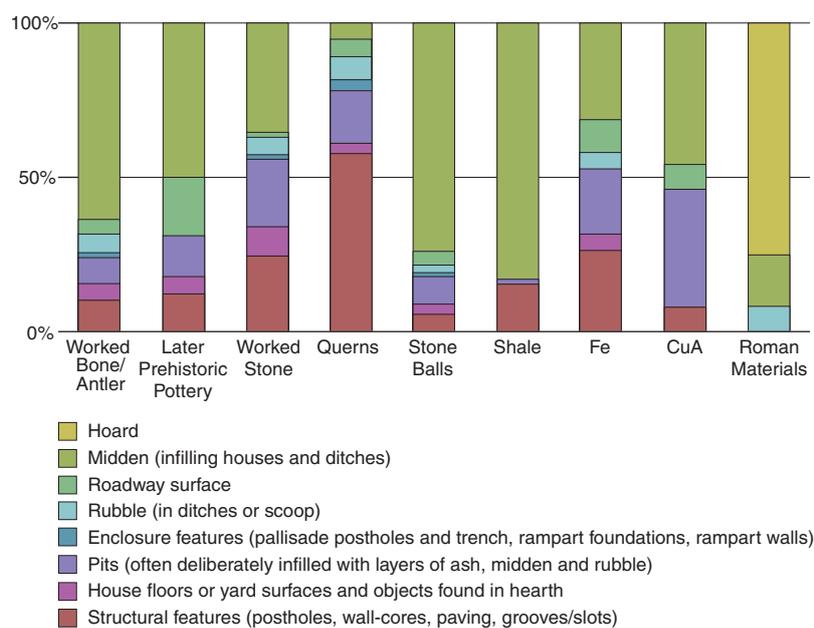


Illustration 10.1

Representation of finds categories by phase; only those categories represented by more than 10 objects are included.



*Illustration 10.2*

Summary of contexts from which major finds categories were recovered. Objects deposited in pits may also be considered as 'hoarding' (eg the structured deposition of objects), although the function of pits is not well understood.

into the intensity of human activity at the time. Illus 10.2 shows the percentages of each material category found in the major context types. Few artefacts were found in situ, and the working areas and floors of most buildings were kept clean, except for the occasional loss of small artefacts. Indeed, a broken bone point (SF263) from Grave 3 in Phase 5 represents the only definite grave good (not shown in illus 10.2) and one of the very few unambiguously in situ objects found at Broxmouth. Most of the querns (saddle and rotary) were found re-used in paving, walls and rubble infilling the houses, so we cannot say whether they were originally used in those houses or elsewhere on site. The range of materials and artefact types, and particularly the large size of the quern assemblage, owes its recovery largely to deliberately infilled negative features and well-preserved areas of stone construction, particularly the paving and stone walls of Phase 6 (illus 10.2). Shale was found in only three types of context, predominantly in midden, suggesting a restricted repertoire of depositional practice deemed suitable for this material.

Close examination of the contexts in which finds occur highlights numerous acts of structured deposition. Materials found in such contexts can only be used with caution to build reliable chronologies.

For example, three of the finest copper alloy objects (the horse harness (SF518) and two needles (SF516 and SF531), one of which was broken prior to deposition) were found in a pit (JCW) outside House 6, along with a rotary quern fragment (SF967), an iron tang (SF585), and a worked bone point and peg (SF262, SF257). Nearby pits contained another broken copper alloy needle (SF519), another rotary quern fragment (SF955), this example bearing pecked decoration which enhanced natural limpet-scars, worked bone and antler (including a long-handled comb, SF184), iron objects, and fragments of later prehistoric pottery (see table 7.1 for complete list).

Similarly, large refitting pottery sherds in deposits associated with Phase 3 could be interpreted as deliberately smashed feasting debris. These sherds were found, along with worked bone and antler, in various midden deposits infilling ditch terminals at the South-west Entrance, apparently in relatively quick succession towards the end of Phase 3 (chapter 4). In these deposits were also large quantities of articulated animal bones and smashed cattle skulls (chapter 12). Previously Cool (1982), on examining the pottery from Broxmouth and other local assemblages, defined a typology for later prehistoric pottery which was hoped could be applied regionally. With the addition

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of more dated contexts and changes to the original Broxmouth phasing, the chronological significance of Type 1 and Type 2 pottery has necessarily required re-examination (section 10.2; illus 10.6–10.9; tables 10.1–10.3). It is now clear that the thinner-walled and finer Type 2 pottery is present from at least Phase 3, and persists to the end of the occupation: it is not in itself a strong chronological indicator. Type 1, by contrast, appears to dominate the earlier phases but is very limited in Phase 6, by which point the small quantity of sherds could be entirely accounted for by residuality. We need to be careful in interpreting this shift, however, since the predominance of Type 1 sherds into Phase 3 ditch fills appears to be the product of unusual (perhaps structured) depositional practices (chapter 4) which distort the figures. Part of the differential occurrence of Type 1 and Type 2 pottery may thus be due to different contexts of use and deposition, rather than chronology.

Despite these caveats, some important patterns in the general development of material culture can be unpicked (see illus 10.1 which breaks down the assemblage by finds type). Notably, rotary querns did not appear until Phase 5/6 (but in secondary contexts, so were probably in use from the beginning of Phase 5/6 if not earlier), whereas saddle querns were present from Phase 1. The relatively small numbers of saddle querns in Phase 6 are also from secondary contexts and we cannot, therefore, be sure whether they continued in use alongside rotary querns. Stone balls, shale/cannel coal, punch-marked cattle bone (indicative of leather working), pig fibula points and yoke-shafted pins are all found predominantly in Phases 3 and 5; again, the few occurrences in Phase 6 may simply be the result of residuality. The two objects of horse bone are restricted to Phases 5 and 6. As one might expect, there is an increase in the deposition of iron and copper alloy objects in Phases 5 and 6, indicating the greater availability of these materials at this time.

Various items of personal ornament are found throughout the Broxmouth sequence. In accordance with the conventional typologies of indigenous Scottish Iron Age pins (Dunning 1934, Coles 1959), the earliest pin type at Broxmouth was the copper alloy swan's-neck variety (SF514) from Phase 2b. Bone yoke-shafted pins occur only later, in Phases 3 to 5, and include a decorated ring-headed example from Phase 4 (SF148; illus 10.14). The combination of these features (made of bone with decorated ring-head and yoke-shaft) in one pin is notable. Decorated ring-headed pins are a Middle Iron Age form (Foster

1990: 150–1). The yoke-shaft form in bone is more unusual; the closest parallels are made of copper alloy wire from Woodeaton, Oxfordshire, and are thought to be derivatives of the swan's-neck pin. One of these is decorated with incised parallel lines, very similar to the Phase 4 Broxmouth bone pin SF148 (Harding 1972: 170, plate 73, illustrations M to S). Flat-topped bone pins found at Broxmouth are restricted to Phases 5 and 6. As discussed below, bone- and antler-working debris may indicate the on-site manufacture of these objects, particularly the unusual yoke-shafted pins. It seems, then, that locally made artefacts were chronologically sensitive: rotary querns, certain types of pins, stone balls (some of which are made of locally distinct carboniferous limestone; section 10.4.3), and the working of shale/cannel coal.

### 10.1.4 *Biographies of materials*

#### CROPS, CONSUMPTION AND CRAFT AT BROXMOUTh AND BEYOND

Agricultural and craft activities were at the centre of everyday life in the Iron Age. The cooking, serving and preparation of food was obviously an important daily need and is represented by the large (for the region) pottery and quern assemblages: the black, encrusted residues on various pottery sherds indicate that they were used for cooking. The unusual bone scoops (SF286, SF287, SF288, SF289, SF438; illus 10.18) from Phases 4 to 6 are perhaps indicative of table manners and the performance of dining. As already mentioned, there is evidence to suggest that the preparation and consumption of food, and the smashing of pots, may have been an integral part of communal feasting at the end of Phase 3c (section 4.7.2).

Bone-, antler- and shale/cannel coal-working, potting, quern manufacture, and the preparation of hides and textiles were all practised by the community at Broxmouth. Hide-working is indicated by staining on some of the worked stone tools (section 10.4.5) and the presence of awls, whilst many of the splinters of bone are likely to have been used as rubbers. Textile-working is represented by the needles and long-handled combs (illus 10.17). Possible basketry tools were also found in the worked bone and antler assemblages. These crafts principally made use of locally available materials: the animals reared by the community, local clays and stones, rock and shale outcrops, while cast antler (discussed below) was gathered from the local landscape. Limpet-scarring on many of the worked Old Red Sandstone blocks and rotary querns reference

the local coastline, only 600m walk from the site (illus 10.3) where they can be found naturally; nodules of hematite and cobbles, suitable for use as tools, were also gathered from the shore by the author on a recent visit, whilst seams of clay and shale/cannel coal can also be seen eroding out of the cliffs. In some cases, the limpet-scars on rotary querns were deliberately enhanced by pecking (SF955, illus 10.34; and possibly SF944 and SF950, which are too weathered to be sure). The East Lothian plain is punctuated by volcanic outcrops, the most dramatic of which are the basaltic plugs of Traprain Law and North Berwick Law. These were the likely source of abrasive coarse grained stone for making querns and rubbing stones and for the iron ore hematite. The iron bars and slags analysed by McDonnell also suggest that local bog iron ores may have been used for smelting (section 10.7.4).

Broxmouth is especially significant for its early evidence of skilled ironworking from Phase 1. Only two other sites in south-east Scotland have produced evidence for smelting: Fishers Road East, where smelting took place from approximately the first to second centuries AD (Haselgrove and McCullagh 2000: 140) and Dryburn Bridge, where a small quantity of slag produced from smelting was recovered from secondary contexts dating to around 800–400 cal BC (Heald 2007: 81–2). A fragment of carbon steel from a Phase 2 context at Broxmouth (SF618) shows that the people at Broxmouth had access to proficiently worked metal, since making carbon-steel requires a controlled and efficient metallurgical process (section 10.7.4). It is possible that Broxmouth was a specialist centre for iron production, and therefore a key player in creating the new social relationships and networks that defined the Early Iron Age in south-east Scotland. Crucible and mould fragments and casting debris from Phases 1, 2 and 4 indicate non-ferrous metalworking, including gold-working (SF1133, Phase 2b; SF1094, Phase 4). There is similar evidence for non-ferrous metalworking at Fishers Road East (Lowther 2000a: 138–40), Traprain Law (Cruden 1939: 54) and Phantassie (Lelong 2007: 170), though in each case the evidence is poorly dated. Non-ferrous metallurgy does not, however, appear to have been widely practised in the region at this time.

#### RE-USE AND RECYCLING

Given the local availability of resources for most crafts, it is perhaps surprising that many objects at Broxmouth appear to have had long biographies. The majority of antler and worked stone objects



*Illustration 10.3*

Limpet-scarred sandstone slabs at Whitesands Beach, close to Broxmouth (photograph: Mhairi Maxwell).

(including cobble tools, whorls and discs) show layered episodes of different types of wear (abrasion, heating, punching, sharpening, cut/chop marks, smoothing, polish and scratching; illus 10.12, 10.13). In many cases breakage would have taken objects out of everyday use, but some fractures were subsequently rounded and worn indicating that they were broken some time before deposition and suggesting that they were kept in circulation. In some instances even broken objects, particularly those made from antler beams and tines, were re-used to make handles and fittings (eg SF292, SF197, SF456, SF204; illus 10.23, 10.25). A bone point SF270 (illus 10.19) and needle (SF170; illus 10.18) illustrate the resourceful use of materials; both were made of old, discoloured bone and the latter has traces of as many as four perforation attempts on its shank. Of the other object types, a few were even repaired and refashioned, including one mount which had an extra perforation added (SF281; illus 10.25) and a toggle (SF285; illus 10.25) which was adapted by replacing a longitudinal perforation with a transverse one. Additionally, the decorated drum/bead with ring-and-dot motif (SF278; illus 10.27) was originally part of a handle, whilst the stem-like tail of a long-handled comb (SF185; illus 10.17) was repaired, and the blunting of one of the teeth after breakage indicates its continued use after this event. Furthermore, the fragmentary nature of the metal assemblage and the deliberately cut iron staple (SF586), are perhaps indicative of recycling.

Querns from Broxmouth were often efficiently re-used. The handle socket on one upper rotary stone

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(SF937; illus 10.33) was damaged preventing its use as an upper stone, whilst the concavity of its grinding face suggests that it was re-used as a lower stone (McLaren, section 10.4). Another upper rotary quern stone (SF938; illus 10.33) was also re-used as a lower stone with a non-matching, smaller upper stone. Probable sharpening grooves (for metal, bone and antler artefacts) occur on four upper rotary quern fragments (SF934, SF958, SF933, SF960a) (section 10.7) and on a lower rotary quern (SF950; illus 10.36), which was incorporated into the stage 4 (JEL) paving of House 4 with the three linear grooves on the grinding face of this stone facing upwards. There are also longitudinal grooves on the grinding face of SF960b (illus 10.34) found in secondary paving in House 3, suggesting re-use as a sharpener. These sharpening grooves are not present, however, on its refitting partner SF960a, which was placed over the post-pipe of a substantial posthole (JFQ) in the same house.

There are three instances where refitting fragments from the same quern occur in the same contexts. Two fragments of saddle quern SF904 (a, b) were found in positions which demonstrate that they were fragmented before deposition, since one was placed on top of the other in a posthole (5) in House A (Phase 1). Two fragments of saddle quern SF913 were recovered from a shallow depression (OFE) in the same building. The most striking example, however, is formed by the two refitting fragments of lower rotary quern stone (SF943) which had quite separate biographies; one has clear evidence of exposure to heat or burning on its grinding surface and had been exposed and damaged before finally being deposited in a pit (DDX) in House 2 (Phase 6) with its refitting partner. These practices of structured deposition and deliberately extended object use-lives suggest that materials appropriated from local networks of engagement were highly valued.

Indeed, it has often been argued that the agricultural-cycle was central to Iron Age cosmology and mirrored the human cycle of life/death (Bradley and Yates 2007; Hingley 1997: 23–6; Lelong 2008: 239–68). At Broxmouth, the deposition of the majority of broken artefacts in the middens which infilled the hillfort ditches and roundhouses might be understood as a means to mark transitional stages in the biography of a community/household whilst ensuring its continuity and productivity. One interpretation of the residual material occurring in the terminal deposits of the Phase 6 roundhouses is that middens were used to infill them prior to their

refurbishment or abandonment. The deposition of midden, which could have been used as an effective fertiliser on the fields, may have harnessed the powers of materials (particularly pottery, querns and bone artefacts) associated with or made from products of the agricultural-cycle. Additionally, sharpening metal agricultural tools on rotary quern fragments (primarily used to grind a staple food – grain) was perhaps not only pragmatic, but may also have been regarded as encouraging the success, growth and renewal of the community via crops and metallurgy.

Materials found at Broxmouth embody the agricultural- and life-cycle of animals, and potentially beliefs of life and death, fertility and renewal. Animal bone would have been available from butchered carcasses on site (section 10.3); for instance, a perforated cattle tibia point (SF303; illus 10.27) shows evidence of marrow extraction. The antler used at Broxmouth was not from hunted stags but was naturally cast and gathered from the local landscape (probably the nearby uplands of the Lammermuirs). The rutting season for red deer stags occurs in autumn (illus 10.4); the time when spelt wheat, one of the most common Iron Age crops, was sown (Van der Veen and Jones 2006: 224). Red deer then cast their antlers in the following spring, as dictated by their fertility cycle (Price and Allen 2004: 810). The agricultural-cycle and the sexuality of stags were, therefore, intimately linked. Experimental work suggests that antler was soaked before working at Broxmouth, and this process excretes a bright, blood-red substance (illus 10.5; Maxwell 2012). Red appears to have had an important symbolic currency linked to warfare, violence and life/death in the Iron Age and was incorporated in many items of Celtic Art (Giles 2008). Furthermore, red is the most important colour change in ironworking, telling the smith that the correct temperature has been reached in order to hammer, bend or twist the metal (Rehder 2000: 12).

It has been argued that ironworking in the British Iron Age was integral to the ‘forging’ and ‘tempering’ of social roles and relationships throughout the life course, linked to successful agricultural productivity and cosmologies of creativity and renewal (Giles 2007). Non-industrial ironworking is frequently described in recent ethnography in explicitly violent and sexual terms. For example, among the Toro of western Uganda, Africa, it was said that if you slept with your wife or girlfriend during the smelt ‘the ore would die’ (Childs 2000: 220). Menstruating women were banned from the smelt, while the blood of a

sheep was sprinkled around the furnace and those who were permitted to take part in the smelt. Two sets of bellows were used: one of which was female (with breasts) and the other male (with a phallus; *ibid* 216). Throughout Iron Age Britain, antlers and iron were used in construction and as agricultural tools, and iron adzes often appear to have been deliberately deposited in structural contexts (Hingley 1997: 13–14). However, very few agricultural tools survive in the south-east Scottish archaeological record, probably because they were kept in use and ultimately recycled (Hunter 2009: 144) which in turn may reflect their value in society and local expressions of beliefs linked to the fertility and renewal of materials and people.

Such beliefs were perhaps enacted in the potential use of Samian for making pigments (a native use for Samian which has been suggested by Hunter 2007a: 37) and their inclusion in closing deposits. A Samian base sherd, which had parts of its foot-ring trimmed down prior to deposition (SF142; *illus* 10.10), was recovered from the terminal infill deposit of House 7; this deposit also contained a human left radius midshaft with a peri-mortem fracture (fragment 1; chapter 11; table 11.7). Grinding down ferrous-rich Samian would have produced a red pigment similar in smell, colour and substance to blood, the significance of which was likely linked to violence and to beliefs of fertility also

expressed in antler and ironworking. Inter-personal violence was evidently a part of Iron Age life; weapons are found in all phases of activity at Broxmouth including bone spears and ferrules, some of which are broken and worn. The 22 disarticulated fragments of human bone, 13 of which were elements of the cranium or mandible (table 11.7), may have derived from the victims of this violence. They were recovered from a variety of midden, occupation and ditch-terminal deposits, and display a high proportion of peri-mortem fracture (table 11.7). Interestingly, one human cranial fragment (fragment 11; *illus* 11.7) displays deliberate modification in the form of a straight edge, cut after death and decomposition of the individual. One of the three Samian fragments (SF144; *illus* 10.10) from the Phase 6 hoard in House 1 was deliberately chipped and ground down. The Romano-British glass bangle fragments from the same hoard appear to have been worn by at least two individuals, probably adolescents (section 10.10). The bringing together of these bangles may have been part of a social restructuring event, with the deposition of the hoard perhaps marking a period of transition associated with the ‘coming of age’ and fertility of females. A piece of Roman bottle glass was also present in the hoard, the deposition of which represents one of the latest events in the Phase 6 settlement, and indeed of Iron Age activity more generally at Broxmouth.

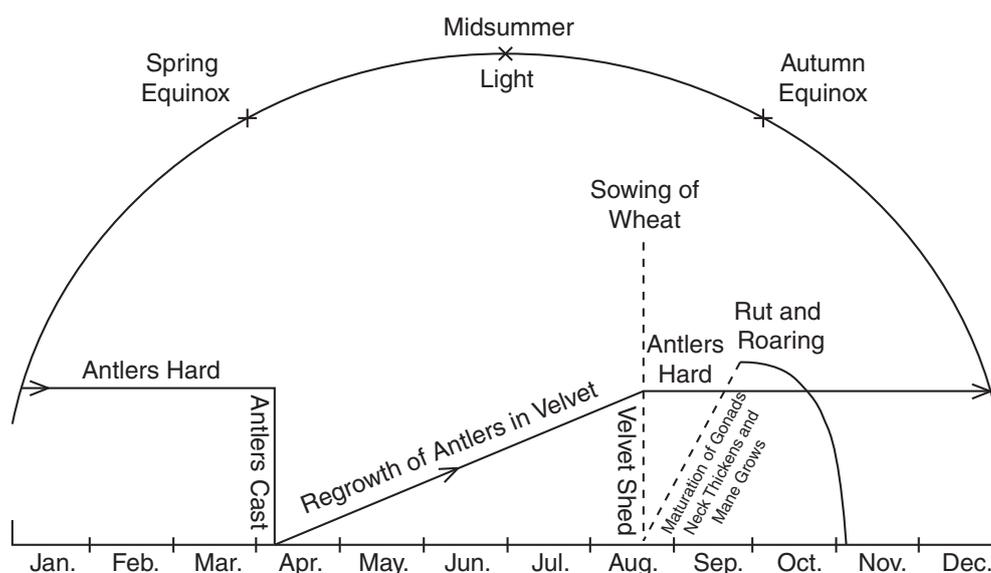


Illustration 10.4

A seasonal diagram showing the cycle of red deer antler growth and shedding, and the sowing of wheat – one of the most common Iron Age crops (updated from Darling 2008: 161, fig 12).

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### IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND BROXMOUTh

Debris and roughouts for objects of worked bone and antler (illus 10.11) suggest the manufacture of objects for everyday use (needles, points, handles for tools, antler picks and hafts, pedicle smoothers and punched surfaces for leather-working) and those for adornment (mounts, pendants, beads, and yoke-shafted pins), the latter possibly being exchanged with other communities. The bangles, beads and pendants made from shale/cannel coal in Phases 3 and 5, and a bone bead roughout (SF284; illus 10.16) from Phase 6, indicate that personal ornaments were also made from these materials at Broxmouth. People appear to have been concerned with their personal appearance, as is indicated by the perforated 'moustache' comb (SF187; illus 10.16) and the possible copper alloy tweezer fragment (SF533; illus 10.33), both probably used for personal grooming. Items of jewellery were well used, as indicated by the worn perforations of a possible bone bead (SF278; illus 10.27), the smooth inner surface of decorated bone cylinder or ring (SF277; illus 10.16), and the surface scratches and wear on the tips of many of the pins. A bone point broken at its tip (SF263) was found on the chest of the female interned in Grave 3, showing that she was wrapped in a textile shroud. More unusual objects include a perforated pig incisor pendant (SF280, now lost; illus 10.16; Phase 5/6), a bracelet made from three, twisted strands of copper alloy (SF520; illus 10.55; Phase 3/4), a pink-orange coral bead (SF691; illus 10.72; Phase 4), a scapula pendant (SF283; illus 10.16; Phase 5), and a possible bone nose-plug (SF279; illus 10.16; Phase 6). No other parallels for yoke-shafted pins are found in Scotland, but there are comparable examples from Woodeaton, Oxfordshire, and sites in Wessex (section 10.3) indicating the presence of social relationships and social interaction far beyond the immediate locale of Broxmouth.

The decoration and colours of objects were outward expressions of identity. A cupped stone with yellow staining (SF981, Phase 3) and a red-brown stain on a possible palate (SF1033, Phase 4) may be evidence for the mixing and preparation of pigments. Personal objects were occasionally enhanced with decoration, and when worn in social arenas they will have been experienced up close and thus played roles in establishing inter-personal relationships. A penannular brooch fragment (SF517, now lost; illus 10.55), deposited in a Phase 6 pit (OAC), had



*Illustration 10.5*  
When soaked to improve workability, antler bleeds bright red  
(photograph: Mhairi Maxwell).

components (body and pin) of different copper alloy compositions (gunmetal and bronze respectively; table 10.31), perhaps for their different colour properties. The earliest decorated objects are from Phase 4, and include an antler ring-headed pin (SF148; illus 10.14), which is a skeuomorph of metal examples such as those from Traprain Law (Burley 1956: 171) and Rhodes Links, East Lothian; the latter bears globular/parallel line decoration around its head, very similar to the Broxmouth example (Richardson 1907: 429–30). Another interesting example perhaps indicative of relationships farther afield from this phase is the antler drum/bead remade from a handle with eight ring-and-dot motifs, enhanced with black pigment, around its circumference (SF278; illus 10.27). This bead may represent a skeuomorph of glass beads from north-east Scotland, which also bear rings and dots of contrasting colour around their circumferences. These beads are themselves thought to be influenced by beads of continental origin or influence (Class 2 and 4), and others (Class 10) which have a clustered distribution around Meare Lake Village, Glastonbury (Guido 1978: 48, 51, 79, 85). The ring-and-dot motif bead from Broxmouth may likewise attest to the existence of far flung social relationships in Phase 4. Laser scanning microscopy suggests that more than one compass tool may have been used to incise the ring-and-dot motifs on the antler bead, which may in turn suggest that more than one individual was involved in its decoration (Evans et al 2012). It is difficult to comment on whether a compass was a specialist tool,

since there is only one surviving Iron Age example in Britain, from Fairy Knowe, Stirlingshire (Hunter 1998a: 366). The evidence from Broxmouth suggests a more widespread use of this tool in the intricate decoration of bone (as on a comb from Ghegan Rock, East Lothian; Laidlaw 1870: 375) and metal objects bearing Celtic art motifs. Indeed, the skeuomorphs indicate that antler, glass and metal (iron and copper alloy) were considered by Iron Age people to have shared material properties and qualities.

Despite actively taking part in wider Iron Age fashions, the expression of local identity was important to the people at Broxmouth. As already mentioned, limpet-scarring on many of the worked Old Red Sandstone blocks and rotary querns makes reference to the local coastline. In some cases, the limpet-scars on rotary querns were deliberately pecked to make them more obvious (SF955; illus 10.34; and possibly SF950, which is too weathered to be sure), and can therefore be recognised as a distinctly local decorative motif. In House 7, an upper rotary quern (SF936) was incorporated into the stage 3 paving (HBV) with its limpet-scars facing upwards. Similarly, an upper rotary quern fragment from Knowes (SF104) was deliberately placed in paving with its limpet-scars and pecked hollows showing (Haselgrove et al 2009: 71, fig 5.5). Type 1 and Type 2 pottery, distinguished by the coarseness of their fabric and the thickness of their walls, is also found across East Lothian and thus appears to be indicative of a regional tradition. Re-analysis of pottery assemblages from across the region has, however, indicated a certain degree of local variation in fabric (section 10.2). Additionally, analysis of visible residues encrusted onto the surfaces of both types of pottery from three sites (Broxmouth, Newmains and Traprain Law) suggests that culinary practices were not necessarily regional, but were potentially site-specific; since markedly different combinations of plant, terrestrial meat, and other lipids were obtained from the samples from each site (section 10.2.6). This suggests that fabric and form was not primarily a functional consideration, but that the differences between Type 1 and Type 2 could be the result of individual, household or community potting preferences, or differing access to clay and temper resources which were perhaps ancestrally and/or territorially controlled.

The Phase 6 inhabitants of Broxmouth had access to Roman materials, and a particular concentration (Samian, SF144; glass bangle fragments, SF624–628); Roman bottle glass, SF1244; illus 10.71) was found

in the hoard associated with House 1. In addition, the Phase 4 coral bead (ultimately of Mediterranean origin) came into the possession of the inhabitants of Broxmouth via a long-distance network of engagement. Other objects indicative of participation in wider networks of engagement include the open-cast copper alloy La Tène style horse harness (SF518; illus 10.55) deposited in a Phase 6 pit (JCW) just outside the entrance to House 6, the penannular brooch deposited in another pit (OAC) in the west of the Phase 6 settlement (SF517; illus 10.55), and a Romano-British copper alloy zigzag bracelet (SF521; illus 10.55) recovered from a sieved sample from the terminal infill of House 2. Roman material has been recovered from more than 40% of the excavated sites in East Lothian, but it was often reworked in distinctively native ways (Hunter 2009: 141). Samian sherds were, for example, remade into whorls or counters at Traprain Law and were often abraded, chipped or ground down, perhaps for use as pigment (Robertson 1970: 208; Hunter 2000: 301). Although the Broxmouth community and its neighbours were plugged into wide networks of engagement, and new materials brought with them new affordances, people did not simply adopt Roman ways of being. These materials were physically reworked in ways particularly appropriate for indigenous Iron Age cosmologies and identities.

#### **10.1.5 The materiality of Broxmouth**

Curation, recycling and acts of structured deposition illustrate the important role of materials in creating and maintaining social relations. Agricultural activities were at the centre of Iron Age life, providing a ready source of materials, and it is perhaps not surprising that the materials used to make artefacts often ended up recycled in middens or in the construction of houses. Cyclical ideas of fertility, renewal and productivity were thus central to the individuals, households and communities of the south-east Scottish Iron Age, as has often been argued for the British Iron Age more generally (eg Hingley 1997; Parker Pearson 1999; Giles 2007). An appreciation of the biographies of materials at Broxmouth has built up a picture of an adaptable community which took an active part in wider Iron Age networks. This leads us to re-examine the accepted development from flat egalitarian social relationships to emerging hierarchies in the Late Iron Age.

Similar food preparation and consumption practices, domestic activities, and manufacture

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processes were represented across all 92 sites included in Hunter's (2009: 140–56) summary of Iron Age artefact assemblages in lowland Scotland. Evidence for ironworking at only a minority of sites (eg nine of 32 excavated in East Lothian), and apparently limited access to certain categories of decorative metalwork and exotica (eg amber, coral and La Tène brooches; *ibid* 145, 148), hinted at status differentiation, at least in the Late Iron Age. Traprain Law exceeds all other excavated Scottish Iron Age sites in the quantity and range of exotica present, and is therefore envisioned as the dominant player in the Late Iron Age social system (*ibid* 156). The visibility of these categories, however, may have much to do with the varying use-lives of objects, as the site-specific results from residue analysis of pottery from Broxmouth, Newmains and Traprain Law demonstrate (section 10.2.6), and depositional practices including the phenomenon of hoarding which became common at this time (*ibid*); the latter is represented at Broxmouth by the hoard of Roman material associated with House 1 (Phase 6).

By examining the biographies of objects from Broxmouth, it has become evident that social relations were not stable. There is evidence for violence, the exploitation of different resources in different phases (illus 10.1), and changing networks of engagement in craft and consumption, while objects were recycled, re-used and even redesigned. The presence of personal decorative and skeuomorphic items of bone throughout all phases at Broxmouth certainly calls into question the supposed increase in individual expression and the emergence of new hierarchical power structures in reaction to Roman contact (Armit 1990: 69; Sharples 2003; Hunter 2007a: 15; 2007b: 289). Rather than a flat society in the Early and Middle Iron Ages, an adaptable, heterarchical society seems more applicable, where social relationships based on power and knowledge were contested and flexible. Importantly, heterarchy can only be interpreted and understood when relationships are examined over time, and this is why a biographical approach to examination of the materiality of the south-east Scottish Iron Age is important; the interpretation of hierarchy is not only atemporal, but is dependent upon the analysis of a singular network of social relationships. For instance, if we were to focus on ironworking as an indicator of status, Traprain Law would not figure (there is no clear evidence for ironworking there), whereas the earliest phases at Broxmouth and a few other sites would emerge as dominant. Rather, in reality, there

*Table 10.1*  
Fabric classifications for reassessment of the  
Broxmouth pottery.

<b>Fabric</b>
<b>Clay</b>
1 sandy clay
2 fine sandy clay
3 fine clay
4 coarse sand
<b>Temper</b>
A up to 10% rock frags
B up to 30% rock frags
C up to 50% rock frags
D up to 70% rock frags
E more than 70% rock frags
F organics
G organics + rock frags
H shell
J shell + rock frags

is space for more than one set of relationships, which may be hierarchical in nature, to operate at the same time.

The implications from this reappraisal of the Broxmouth assemblage need to be tested at other sites using detailed radiocarbon dating strategies which target the potentially chronologically sensitive material categories outlined above, and the primary contexts of their manufacture and use. At the same time we must also consider materiality: the way in which people appropriated, used and valued materials and how this material world influenced creativity, cosmology and social relations.

## 10.2 Pottery

### 10.2.1 Later prehistoric pottery

ANN MACSWEEN (incorporating an original catalogue by H E M COOL)

#### INTRODUCTION

An assemblage of around 420 sherds, representing an estimated 109 vessels, was recovered from phased contexts at Broxmouth. Many of the vessels are represented by small single sherds, but there are some groups of sherds which give an indication of the vessel profile. With a few exceptions, the pottery includes only undecorated sherds from large bucket-