
12 Conclusion

In drawing together the excavation and post-excavation results from Dryburn Bridge, several previously unknown discoveries and themes have come to light since the publication of the interim report in 1982. Principal amongst these have been the proposal of a revised settlement development, based upon the observed stratigraphic, dating and spatial evidence; the identification of planned layouts based upon frontage alignments, and changes to those alignments over time; and the presence of Roman material culture. These have allowed interim statements as to the nature of the site to be reassessed. The outcome is a more detailed picture of the development of one Iron Age settlement in East Lothian. As with any individual site, there are considerable lacunae in the evidence, and it is only through the continued excavation of such sites that a more nuanced impression of the regional development of Iron Age society and settlement will be developed. It is hoped that the results from Dryburn Bridge will contribute to the developing research framework for this region. As noted by Armit, the agenda for south-east Scotland has not really moved on since the late 1970s/early 1980s (Armit 1999a, 73), and is some way behind that of other regions, although recent initiatives such as the Traprain Law Environs Project (*Discovery Excav Scot* 2002, 43; *Discovery Excav Scot* 2003, 60–1; *Discovery Excav Scot* 2004, 46–7) and the Traprain Law Summit Project (Armit *et al* 2002) are beginning to redress this. Given

these developments, and to avoid repeating many of the issues presented in recent regional reviews (eg Armit 1999a; Haselgrove & McCullagh 2000, 186–9), there is no attempt in this report to work up a ‘grand narrative’ based upon the revised results (although this risks attracting the opprobrium of Armit 1999a, 72–3).

The final word is reserved for the fate of the settlement. Hill has identified a substantial discontinuity in the settlement record of south-east Scotland which appears to coincide broadly with the successive Roman occupations of southern Scotland in the early centuries AD (Hill 1982b, 10). This pattern occurs repeatedly at excavated settlement sites in the south-east, such as St Germain's (Alexander & Watkins 1998), Broxmouth (Hill 1982a), Port Seton (Haselgrove & McCullagh 2000) and Dryburn Bridge, although occupation of other high status sites such as Traprain Law (Jobey 1976) and Castle Rock, Edinburgh (Driscoll & Yeoman 1997) appears to have persisted beyond this. That a severe settlement dislocation occurred seems beyond doubt, and is perhaps mirrored by the apparent disappearance of souterrains in Angus (Armit 1999b). What the precise causes of this disruption were, whether economic, political or social, have been the subject of considerable debate and will continue to stimulate discussion. What were the effects of the abandonments of these sites? What happened to the last