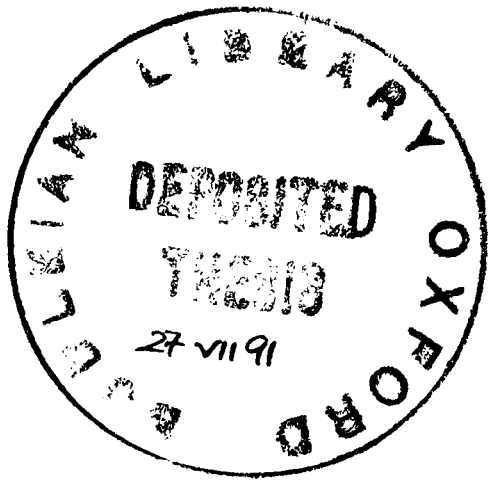
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THE CONCEPTUAL AND MATERIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE *VILLA* IN *AQUITANICA PRIMA* FROM THE THIRD TO SEVENTH CENTURIES A.D.



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THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the reasons behind the apparent lack of physical remains of early mediaeval villas, given the repeated references to *'villae'* in contemporary sources. The late Roman province of *Aquitanica I*, with its ample early mediaeval documentation and strong Gallo-Roman traditions, will be used to test three explanations for this non-concordance of material and literary data; either the problem lies with modern expectations concerning the appearance of early mediaeval *'villae'*, or with past and present archaeological methodology, or, alternatively, most early mediaeval villas are inacessible to modern excavation because, unlike Roman villas, they evolved into nucleated communities (villages). Whilst none of these theories are mutually exclusive, a strongly critical re-examination of the *'villa*-to-village' model forms the core of this study because of the ramifications of its widespread acceptance by modern historians.

After a brief survey of the changing definitions of *Aquitanica I* itself, the conceptual evolution of the *'villa'* will be examined; and since a reliance upon toponymy to locate late Roman and early Merovingian estates is central to the debate surrounding their nature and composition, a detailed analysis of its limitations will follow. In the process, several common generalisations about this period will be tested for eastern Aquitaine: the extent of depopulation, land abandonment, Germanic settlements, and the change from a pattern of dispersed to nucleated settlements, from Roman farmsteads to mediaeval

agricultural villages. Finally, a brief summary of the 'archaeology' of the late Roman villa in eastern Aquitaine will be compared with that of its Merovingian counterpart; and the overwhelming conclusion reached, that the problem is due to past shortcomings in archaeological retrieval rather than the transformation of the *villa* into *village*, which is probably a late rather than early Merovingian process, and which certainly cannot be demonstrated for late Roman central Gaul.

PREFACE

I am grateful for the kindness and support provided, since 1984, by all three of my doctoral supervisors: Profs. S.S. Frere and R. M. Harrison, but especially to Dr. J. F. Matthews, who for the last two years has patiently coaxed this thesis towards completion.

I would also like to thank Keble College, the University Board of Graduate studies and the Craven Committee for providing grants which enabled me to visit innumerable villa-sites and 23 museums in as many days in July 1986, aided by an unreliable Renault, unceasing French hospitality and access provided by museums in the Berry, Limousin, Auvergne, Quercy, Rouergue, Gévaudan and Velay regions of central France. Stimulating advice, bibliographical help and extreme generosity was provided in particular by M. P. Bailly of the Musée de la Ville de Bourges, and by Dr. A. Ferdière, Director of the Dépt. des Antiquités, Orléans, who is also a leading exponent of all that is advanced in French archaeology: open-strip excavation, systematic fieldwalking and responsible, plentiful and thoughtful publication. If this thesis is to be superseded by new archaeological research in central France - and it is sincerely hoped that this will be so - then it will first happen in the Berry and along the northern curve of the Loire.

The germ of this thesis first took root at the University of Sydney's Dept. of History, and what little proficiency I have in excavation, pottery analysis and reading between the lines of site reports is due to its Dept. of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology. Writing a thesis is of course a lonely business; writing history,

according to Sidonius, 'begins in spite, proceeds in weariness, and ends in ill-repute' (*Ep.*IV.22.v). Fortunately, considerable encouragement and support have been provided by S. Fischler, S. J. Allen and S. Loseby, all members of the Oxford Society for the Promotion of Merovingian Studies.

Finally, a very special thanks is owed to my mother for all her support - financial and otherwise - when my Commonwealth Scholarship ran out at the end of 1987.

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INTRODUCTION

At the heart of this thesis lies a significant gap in the data for both historians and archaeologists of the early Middle Ages in France: that is, the apparent absence for *Aquitanica Prima* - a late Gallo-Roman province only slightly smaller than England - of retrievable, identifiable, isolated rural dwellings (that is, villas or farmsteads) constructed or inhabited in the Merovingian period, and the almost complete lack of early mediaeval occupation levels in rural villas built earlier, in the Roman period.

Yet the late sixth century historical narratives of Gregory of Tours, the *carmina* of Venantius Fortunatus, and the seventh century annals compiled by Fredegar and his successors all record historical actions within rural sites south-west of the Loire which are consistently called '*villae*', whilst more than a score of early Merovingian legal *chartae* itemise in formulated but precise detail *villae* and *portiones* of *villae*, many of which are located within central Aquitaine.'

Now, at least three, mutually inclusive explanations have been postulated for this apparent archaeological gap. The first possibility is that the majority of country dwellings from the later fifth to seventh centuries may have been constructed primarily from non-durable materials which have remained invisible to modern eyes, given the lack until very recent times of careful excavation techniques in the appropriate soil conditions within France. Such post-hole constructions, however, fall outside the modern archaeological category of 'villas', as

do the nucleated settlements of Merovingian sunken-huts which have been identified north of the Loire, although few have as yet been located in central France, the area whose core formed the Roman province under examination here.[2] If it were really true either that Merovingian villas were not, for the most part, stone- or brick-constructions, or that in fact the isolated farmstead disappeared from the early mediaeval countryside in central Gaul, with the predominant form of rural settlement becoming instead an agglomeration of sunken-huts, then the problem would be fundamentally a taxonomic one: our literary and archaeological identification of a 'villa' as an essentially Romanised, wealthy farmstead would have obscured our understanding of the changing concept of the *villa* as recorded in early mediaeval literature. These preconceptions concerning the label '*villa*' in turn beg a further question: namely, what could have constituted a '*villa*' in the minds of the inhabitants of early *Francia*?

A second explanation of this non-correlation of literary and archaeological testimony concerning early mediaeval *villae* is that the problem is basically one of archaeological method; that is, that the difficulty lies with the identification and dating of Merovingian artefacts, which renders early mediaeval levels 'invisible', even where they may have occurred in Gallo-Roman masonry architecture which is itself easily identifiable. The following summary of our current knowledge of early mediaeval rural occupation-sites in the Massif Central - as opposed to cemeteries and church foundations - clearly demonstrates this point. In the region once covered by *Aquitanica I*, for example, only one Roman villa appears to have yielded an architectural feature added as early as the late Merovingian period. This is La

Pétonnière in the northwestern dépt. of Indre [**Site N° 69** in the **Site Catalogue** appended to this thesis], which was dug in exemplary manner a mere nine years ago. Its occupation material spans the period from the first to early fourth centuries (with no coins present on site); however, a three-layered floor was subsequently laid in one room, within whose stone levels was found a single seventh century sherd. No occupation debris was found above this floor to confirm or deny the published Merovingian date for its construction; it could in fact have been built in the Carolingian or even a later mediaeval period.[3]

Of the remaining ninety-three villa-sites recorded for *Aquitanica Prima* which have material from the third to seventh centuries, a mere five have yielded identifiably post-Roman artefacts: four of these are surface-finds discovered in the late seventies and early eighties [**Sites N°s 17, 24, 25** and **32**]. The remaining villa-site was excavated before 1875, and unfortunately its unpublished Merovingian sherds have no recorded, far less stratified provenance [**Site N° 51**]. It is worthwhile at this point to note that urban sites in this province are even less well represented by demonstrably Merovingian levels than are rural sites, despite literary and even the occasional epigraphic reference to a continued albeit diminished existence throughout the entire Merovingian period.[4] This in itself supports a suspicion that the empty distribution-map of archaeologically-identified villas drawn for the Merovingian countryside may be more apparent than real; and it should also be remembered that archaeologists searching for Carolingian occupation levels are only marginally better off, in terms of an increased volume of durable and datable artefacts, as a glance through any volume of *Archéologie médiévale* will show.[5]

These two explanations for the opacity of Dark Age rural occupation in central France are both well-acknowledged - at least by archaeologists - and, in the case of the latter difficulties in dating Merovingian artefacts (especially pottery), easily demonstrable.[6] For the Massif Central, the identification of small rural sites is further disadvantaged by the mountainous and forested character of much of its landscape. Nor are these dating problems unique to what had been the Gallic provinces, as the research on the difficulty of locating very late Roman and early mediaeval sites in the field-surveys of Southern Etruria clearly shows.[7] But if the historical implications of this 'non-appearance' of early Frankish *villae* were to lead no further than to an exploration of the economic and cultural reasons as to why typologies for sixth and seventh century pottery are so problematical, this particular thesis would never have been commenced.

However, another possible hypothesis to explain the archaeological absence of early Frankish *villae* has been increasingly repeated in modern studies, and it is one which has immense ramifications for any models for the very late Gallo-Roman or early mediaeval countryside of central France. Put simply, it suggests that we are simply not looking in the 'right' places for Merovingian rural sites. Unlike the first two explanations just proposed, this is an argument which can only pertain to rural archaeology, and applies best to isolated, rather than nucleated settlements (that is, to farms and villas rather than to larger villages). More importantly, it seems at once to explain an archaeological phenomenon by incorporating an historical model: it claims that those Gallo-Roman villas which are

retrievable today are so precisely because they 'failed' to remain occupied sites. They were abandoned, their influence on subsequent patterns of land divisions and settlements being negligible - the ultimate failure, one might say, of the impact of what was for Gaul nearly half a millennium of Roman rule - and so they lie in modern fields, away from hamlets and later mediaeval farmsteads, accessible to the trowel and visible to the aerial camera.

So entrenched has this explanation become in modern **historical** research, that yet another hypothesis which naturally follows on from this has been fossilised by repetition into established 'fact': namely, that where a Gallo-Roman villa **did** continue to be occupied into the Middle Ages, it survived by transforming itself into the nucleus of a settlement agglomeration. This transformation could have occurred through abandonment of use as a farm, for a variety of reasons, then by the attraction of the deserted site as a suitable place for a cemetery and/or a chapel with subsequent secular or monastic settlement, or else by a process most neatly - and commonly, in the modern literature - summed up in Frontinus' phrase, '*vici circa villam*'.[8] Unlike the process of abandonment and cemetery-usage, the latter course of transformation has yet to be demonstrated for the western provinces, even though the etymological shift from *villa* to *village* is seen to reflect an actual process of nucleation and agglomeration, and is almost always associated by modern scholars with the assumed fortification of late Roman villas in Gaul as much as in Northern Africa. The earliest of mediaeval villas - often blithely called 'châteaux' without any independently supportive evidence - are assumed to have fallen victim *en masse* to the same fate. Even Latouche, who in contrast to de

Coulanges argued for dynamic change in the nature of *villae* between the fourth and ninth centuries, still assumed that *vici* were drawn into late Gallo-Roman estates, contributing to the idea of settlement agglomeration around a *villa*.[9]

It is also widely upheld that the socio-economic nature of the *villa* fundamentally shifted between the early and late Empire, and that, once recentred, it remained an essentially seigneurial institution until well after Charlemagne. This view has its most recent advocate in Percival, but at least tacit acceptance of it has percolated through to economic history (Whittaker) and into archaeological surveys (Chevallier). Both the assumption of the 'mediaeval' nature of the late Roman *villa* and the process of *villa*-to-*village* are usually implicitly interrelated by modern historians and archaeologists alike.[10]

Now, it is not the intention here either to deny that the increase in the legitimised authority of late Roman landowners was a factor of critical importance to subsequent social and power structures in the mediaeval West, or to suggest that any attempts to trace its effects on the populated landscape are bound to fail, given the disparate and incomplete nature of the evidence. However, two ramifications of the arguments outlined immediately above must give cause for concern.

The first is that, although the *villa*-to-*village* hypothesis appears to be an attractive, albeit self-supporting, model,[11] its internal logic has flaws which demand further - and rather complicated - explanations which too few contemporary historians or archaeologists have acknowledged, far less begun to explore. For example, if the reason that no Merovingian stone-built rural farmsteads

can be identified is really due to an overwhelming proportion of them lying beneath surviving hamlets, villages and towns, this would be a unique, and startling, historical/archaeological phenomenon, for the author is unaware of any period in either western Europe or the Eastern Mediterranean where an analogous phenomenon can be shown to have occurred.[12] In any case, while it could be accepted that isolated Merovingian *villa*-houses might habitually be near-impossible to identify under modern hamlets in the course of salvage excavation (itself more common in larger urban centres than in tiny country villages), the parallel dearth of Merovingian occupational levels in the seven *civitates* of central Aquitaine known historically to have existed in the sixth and seventh centuries must, as was suggested above, give pause for thought concerning the methods used to retrieve this data.

And why **should** the overwhelming proportion of specifically early mediaeval *villae* have spawned nucleated settlements which swallowed them up? Chateaux of the late ninth and tenth centuries preceded subsequent village agglomeration, yet enough of those can be identified from archaeological remains. In fact, a significant number of late Roman *castella* and early mediaeval hilltop or cave retreats **have** been located archaeologically in central France[13]: why should the pattern of their survival and retrievability be different from contemporary farmsteads?

Furthermore, if the *villa* was undergoing a transformation into the centre of an agricultural village from the late Roman period onwards, can the clear and persistent distinction between the coexisting terms '*villa*' and '*vicus*' - which lasted well beyond the latter's administrative function under the Empire, and, indeed, well beyond the Carolingian period - be adequately explained as the distinction between

an owned and an independent village?

If, as is commonly accepted, late Roman *villae* reflected the proto-feudal authority of their resident-owners by the erection of towers and defensive walls - as is claimed for central Gaul as much as for north Africa or the Rhenish frontiers - why did not they, too, disappear in large numbers under later settlements? It is true that in northern Gaul, where aerial photography has yielded a large sample of early Imperial villa-plans in the fields of Picardy, this hypothesis may explain the small number of late Roman rural sites[14]; but in contrast, two-thirds of the villa-sites recorded for the province of *Aquitanica Prima*, immediately south and west of the Loire, did contain fourth and early fifth century occupational material. If it is argued in response to this that these late Imperial villas are retrievable because they are the unfortified ones, the late Roman 'proto-châteaux' still remain unidentified, unlocated and hypothetical. There is, moreover, no archaeological evidence for the process of nucleation in the late Roman period itself, not even of the kind which, in the Merovingian period, involves the re-use of a wholly-abandoned villa as the foundation for a chapel or as the location for a necropolis. Since we do not have any identifiable and excavated Merovingian villas to demonstrate their presumed ubiquitously fortified nature, and since the literary attestations of both late Roman and Merovingian *villae* are extremely malleable in their physical interpretation, this is a hypothesis on which the burden of proof remains with its advocates, and should not merely be assumed.

An argument as circular as that required by the 'villa-to-village' hypothesis is not unknown in historiography, nor indeed uncommon to

archaeological interpretation; and so long as it does not have internal inconsistencies or create more confusion than it solves, it may even be usefully acceptable - just as a version of Aristotle's epicycles adequately modelled celestial motions to European navigators for more than a thousand years. But this particular historical model, although based on valuable and innovative research on the transformation of the countryside in late Antiquity, is far too easily becoming embedded within assumptions and broadened into generalisations which, if followed through all their implications, cannot mutually coexist. How, for example, can we try to prove that the late Roman villa was, throughout the late Empire, developing into a master's residence with surrounding village - thus expanding the classical meaning of the Roman '*villa*' into that of a nucleated community - by attempting to show from archaeological remains that a late Gallo-Roman villa-site housed its dependent labour in a nearby, contemporary *vicus*, when it is patently clear that the very fact that they are archaeologically and geographically distinct means that these supposedly 'dependent' *vici*-villages never do surround, far less engulf, a contemporary villa-house. Such an attempt to merge the two, contemporary phenomena of *villa* and *vicus* also makes nonsense of the distinction in both Roman and mediaeval legal and narrative documents between the two phenomena. Yet Percival has done precisely this, following directions already taken by C. E. Stevens in England and Grenier in France.[15]

Alongside the difficulty of reconciling all these historical ramifications is a second impetus for a critical reappraisal of the villa-to-village model at this point in time. This urgency is due to a rapidly accelerating level of destruction of rural sites in France as a

result of deep ploughing in open fields and modern constructions in rural centres. At the same time as the sophistication of digging and surveying techniques and of Merovingian ceramic typologies among French archaeologists[16] improve their ability to locate mediaeval farmsteads, the opportunities to retrieve them are fast disappearing. If, then, we continue to make a priori assumptions that these **must** be either fortified or villages, or both, is it not possible that we may fail to make the most of the archaeological data of the coming decades, by not recognising the full implications of what may be found? If stone-built Merovingian residences of an obviously 'Roman villa' nature do turn up, then historical opinion will of course take notice and revise; but if these do not appear, the finite, maximum amount of archaeological remains to emerge in the ensuing decades runs the large risk of being interpreted by an historical model using a taxonomy - villa, village, *vicus* or stronghold - itself structured and interpreted according to those very gaps in the archaeological record which are being filled.

To this author, whose undergraduate training has been as much in archaeology as history, the most satisfying, simplest, and indeed, oldest explanation for the lack of early mediaeval villas still appears to be fundamentally one caused by shortcomings in archaeological retrieval and method. If there is no **need** in the first place to develop the 'villa-to-village' model with so many implications demanding their own explanations, it therefore behoves me to examine whether or not the villa-to-village model consistently stands up on other merits.

As one whose background is also based as much in mediaeval as in late Roman history, there is also the need to point out three notes of general but subsidiary methodological caution. One is that it is high

time that the discussion in late Roman economic studies of the 'proto-feudalism' of late Imperial villas began to take notice of the sophisticated and revisionist interpretations made in the last decade by mediaeval historians such as Magnou-Nortier and Bange concerning the nature of late Merovingian and Carolingian seigneurial *villae*, periods which benefit from a much larger statistical sample of *chartae* than for the early Merovingian period.[17] Secondly, mediaeval French historians are themselves deeply immersed in the Annalist approach to history - based upon geographical history and centred upon the *longues durées* of rural change - and although this might at first glance seem the appropriate mode for studying the transformation of the rural *villa* from late Antiquity onwards, what are normally Annalist strengths in this particular period prove to be weaknesses. For Annalist historiography works best at either end of the scale: either restricted to a very intensive, regional case study based on documentary, but not necessarily literary, evidence, or treating the broad sweep of the entire mediaeval period, in which the inertia of social, economic or technological undercurrents may be treated - with varying justification - as generalisations. For the student of the transition from the late Roman to mediaeval period, however, the localised effects of the end of Roman rule make wider generalisations, such as those to be found in Roupnel's massive study of the French landscape,[18] unhelpful; on the other hand, the scarcity of archaeological as well as the limited nature of the historical evidence in any given region make it equally difficult to interpret the available data without the guidelines of preconceived assumptions about their wider political, economic and social contexts.

Thirdly, the imbalance of a considerable amount of late Roman

archaeological material with next to no early mediaeval data, and the incomparability between Roman forms of literary evidence for *villae* and mediaeval *diplomata, beneficiae* and *chartae*, form a situation which historians such as Percival have tried to turn to advantage by attempting to use the legal description of a mediaeval *villa*-bequest, as formulated under Charlemagne, to flesh out the physical remains of a late Roman estate. The methodological shortcomings of such an attempt are too obvious to need elucidation, and amply demonstrate yet another way by which archaeological data is relegated to the position of a 'skenographic' form of historiography: setting the scene, as it were, for historical actions and for those literary forms of cultural expression with which historians understandably tend to be most comfortable.

There are, then, two central aims of this thesis. The first is to examine the ways in which the evolution of the villa - as recognised from archaeological remains - and the *villa* - as conceptualised in documentary evidence - have been meshed together to support models for the nature of the late Gallo-Roman and early mediaeval countryside. The second and necessarily briefer exercise is to demonstrate the basic premise that the archaeological blank is more apparent than real, by showing the limitations of various categories of archaeological retrieval and of the methodological shortcomings as dating tools of late Roman and early mediaeval coins, pottery, small finds, the stylistic analysis of architectural decoration or a typology of villa-plans. To this end, a Site Catalogue has been compiled of possible villas noted archaeologically within the confines of ancient *Aquitanica Prima*. It is neither complete nor evidence of consistently high levels of

archaeology in the region. Indeed, this is its very point, for what at first glance appears as a 'factual' collation of the best archaeological data for late Roman and early Merovingian villa-sites in this province instead demonstrates what can and cannot be deduced about late Roman and early mediaeval rural occupation in central Aquitaine. Given recent improvements in archaeological technique and publication, this Catalogue has an consciously inbuilt obsolescence, for it is sincerely hoped that the next few years will expand our archaeological knowledge of rural Merovingian sites even more rapidly than during this last decade.

The chronological framework for this study is broadly the period from ca. A.D. 200 to 700, although it has been necessary to use documents dating beyond both the lower and upper limits, and despite the fact that the archaeological survey which forms the last section of the thesis is deliberately restricted to a province - *Aquitanica I* - which was carved from the larger *Aquitania* only in the later third century. Yet this slightly anachronistic date-range is useful, partly because the political death of the Western empire divides it roughly in two - which might have had considerable ramifications if the pattern of *villae* survival or non-survival completely ignored it - but mainly because of the imprecise nature of archaeological dating for late Roman villas when based on pottery or other stylistic typologies. There is little point in starting a regional archaeological survey with a precise, politically-derived date when the fine wares, for example, can only be roughly dated within a quarter-century at the beginning of the third century A.D., a half-century in the fourth and fifth centuries and to a century in the Merovingian period.

The choice of A.D. 700 as the end of this study obviously and

deliberately ignores the major dates of late Frankish political history: the rise of a quasi-independent duchy of Aquitaine, the emergence of the Carolingian dynasty, with its subsequent reorganisation and implantation of a new aristocracy upon the land. But at least a conveniently round figure of five hundred years, with the end of Roman rule at its approximate centre, emphasises the differences in the sheer amounts of archaeological data between the late Roman and early Merovingian periods. It also covers a period of a presumed demographic decline, as well as the bubonic plague which reached central France in the 570s. It may even help to prevent a perception of the Merovingian *villa* as some static, intermediate form of the 'classic' Carolingian *villa* as visualised in the *Capitularia de villis*, rather than as it perhaps should be, an actively evolving concept and entity, neither the same in sum as the range of late Imperial nor of Carolingian *villae*.

The geographical restriction of this study to the late Roman province of *Aquitanica I* is also fluid, in that general literary works and legal documents which are applicable to eastern Aquitaine have been used as well as those sources specific to the region. It is, of course, a privileged area for this type of study. On a broad level, it was to become a significant area within the Frankish kingdoms whose particular form of feudalism is precisely that which late Roman historians use as to define 'proto-feudal' characteristics within the Empire, and so any problems with identifying or defining the seigneurial or feudal aspects of late Roman or early mediaeval *villae* in eastern Aquitaine, cannot be blamed upon geographical variations or differing traditions of land-use. *Aquitanica I* itself encompassed geomorphologically diverse areas, with concomitantly varying densities of Gallo-Roman population; it was also

an intensely 'Romanised' region, with pastoralism as well as agricultural wealth, an acknowledged 'rich' province in the soft underbelly of the *Tres Galliae*; and its subsequent transformation into a frontier zone by the Visigoths and prized land to all those who aspired to Frankish power, adds to its interest. The province also of course included within its borders the residence of Sidonius Apollinaris and the birthplace of Gregory of Tours, with the result that its landscapes have the best contemporary descriptions in the late Roman and early Frankish West. Its diverse geomorphology and thirteen modern departements also produce a representative cross-section of French archaeology at its best as well as worst.

Discussion of the conceptual and material transformation of the *villa* from third to seventh centuries will, then, begin in **Chapter One** with a summary of the changing definition and perception of *Aquitanica I*, since no provincial study of a rural phenomenon can be made without an understanding of the nature and transformation of that region. Of course, the label '*Aquitanica Prima*' itself changes - from a late Roman administrative *provincia* to a mediaeval ecclesiastical diocese - whilst the perception of the size and nature of the larger region known as *Aquitania* also evolved under Frankish rule. When we think of Rome, we think of an essentially Mediterranean world: when we think of *Francia*, we tend to picture northern Europe; *Aquitanica I* was wedged squarely within the overlap of these two zones. How are we to think of it?

Chapter Two will outline the changing literary perception of the '*villa*', by examining the compositions of rural estates in a variety of sources, from Ausonius to Venantius Fortunatus, and including Roman agronomists, early Frankish hagiographies and annals, Roman and

Germanic *leges*, and Merovingian *diplomata* and *chartae*. Distinction must be made between the increasingly formulised notation of a mediaeval *villa*'s economic sub-units on paper and their physical groupings, as well as the means by which estates could agglomerate and divide (including the possible role of Germanic *hospitalitas*).

Having established the limitations of extrapolating a definition of the '*villa*' from these sources, **Chapter Three** then turns towards a category of evidence which itself straddles the boundary between the material landscape and its documentary description, namely, that of place-names. The use, or rather, over-reliance upon toponymy to identify late Roman and early Merovingian estates on the ground is a central factor in the debate surrounding their location, extent and, ultimately, their nature. An analysis of its applications and limitations forms the substantial core of this thesis. In the process, several of the commonest generalisations made by historians about this period in Gaul will be tested for central Aquitaine: the extent of depopulation and land abandonment, seen by some as the 'flight from the towns to country', by others from country to château; the possible effects of Germanic settlement on land divisions and ownership; and the change from a pattern of dispersed to nucleated settlements, from Roman farmsteads to mediaeval agricultural villages.

Chapter Four will then review the arguments used to support the model of villa-to-village, which are partly based upon an unwary use of toponymic evidence, partly on a highly selective interpretation of archaeological sites but mostly upon a collation of literary material either inappropriate to Roman Gaul (the *lex Manciana* inscriptions) with mostly anecdotal evidence which can sustain alternative interpretation.

The fifth and final Chapter deals with the 'archaeology' of the late Roman villa: its definition in the soil and its geographical distribution. Based primarily upon the data collected in the **Appendix (Site Catalogue of Villas from the third to seventh centuries A.D.)**, it will conclude with an analysis of the methods of dating villas from the third to seventh centuries, and of the lack of statistical validity for any conclusions drawn from apparent patterns of survival or change; the available archaeological evidence for Merovingian villa-occupation will be also discussed in detail. Whatever results do emerge can, therefore, only be provisional in the extreme.

In the end, those conclusions which have been postulated for various aspects of the nature of the late Roman and early Merovingian *villa* in central Aquitaine will be brought together and reviewed in the light of the limited picture which archaeology can provide. As the point of this entire exercise has been to analyse the various segments of evidence commonly used to support the 'villa-to-village' hypothesis and see if convincing, alternative explanations exist for them, no claim needs to be made here to replace this hypothesis with one as historically wide-ranging in its implications. Perhaps all that will be left is a greater recognition of what Anderson called the 'opacity' of Dark Age economic history. Yet if this can in any way question the validity of current assumptions made about land-ownership and management in this most intriguing of periods, and show up the villa-to-village hypothesis for what it is - something akin to the grin of the Cheshire Cat, receding into thin air the harder it is stared at - we may perhaps at least be able to begin to rethink and redefine the historical and archaeological data which we already possess.

Chapter One: The Geographical and Historical Definition of *Aquitanica Prima*

The geographical extent of this study is that of the province of
Fig 1 *Aquitanica Prima*, that is, the late Roman administrative region whose borders encompassed eight of the Celtic tribal areas of central Gaul: the *Bituriges Cubi*, *Lemovici*, *Arverni*, *Ruteni liberi*, *Ruteni provinciales* (the Albigeois), *Cadurci*, *Gabalitani* and the *Vellavi*.[19] Today, the Berry
Fig 2 encompasses the modern départments of Cher, Indre and the northern strip of Allier; the Limousin, the départments of Creuse, Corrèze and Haute-Vienne; the Auvergne, most of Allier, Puy-de-Dôme, Cantal and the western strip of Haute-Loire; the Rouergue, the dépt. of Aveyron; Albigeois, most of Tarn; the Quercy, the eastern extension of Tarn-et-Garonne, and all of Lot; the Gévaudan, the dépt. of Lozère; and the Velay, most of Haute-Loire.

This region contains strikingly different areas of geomorphology. Although its core is the Massif Central, with its extinct volcanic plugs - today mostly wooded hills, but with evidence of some Celtic and Roman occupation along the accessible river valleys - the northern lands of *Aquitanica Prima* spanned the gently rolling, open plains of the Berry, parts of which were more heavily wooded in the Roman period; to the west, the hillier but still agriculturally-exploited Limousin rises eastwards into the densely wooded mountains which, further east again, sink to the plain of the Limagne in western Auvergne; and in the south, the densely vegetated ravines and gorges of the uppermost reaches of the Dordogne, Lot and Truyère rivers. In the south, considerable Celtic

and Roman population followed the the Aveyron, Tarn and Cérou river valleys.[20] If one travels today from the shallow, verdant valleys of the upper Loire and Allier rivers in the southeastern corner of the old province, **west**wards towards the Gévaudan, one is struck by the spectacular changes to the severe climate of the high, dry Causses and then the heavily wooded mountains around Mende. Migration since mid last century has made Lozère in the Gévaudan the least populated dépt. in France, yet even before the 1850s, much of it was domanial forest only lightly inhabited, differing little from Sidonius' late fifth century description of its 'scattered individuals in a sparsely populated country'[21]. Only slightly more populous today is the high plateau around St. Flour in the Cantal, wedged between the Massif, the Velay and the Gévaudan, which since later mediaeval times at least has been used for cattle pasturage. Little evidence of permanent Gallo-Roman occupation has ever been found in this open but rather dry landscape. In all local surveys, whether using archaeological chance finds, fieldwalking or toponymic data, Gallo-Roman occupation clusters along accessible river valleys, regardless of additional population spreads across open neighbouring areas (as in the Berry, and parts of the Rouergue) or lack of it, as along the upper Lot.

Not surprisingly, major Roman routes largely avoided the Massif Central, although there was a fairly direct link between Limoges in the north-west and Clermont-Ferrand in the east, crossing the Limagne plain, and from the Auvergne further eastwards again, to Lyon and the traffic of the Rhône. Limoges on the Vienne, Bourges on the Cher and Clermont on the Allier all had navigable river access to the Loire, and the three southern cities of Cahors, Albi and Rodez were all linked as

much by routes connecting their parallel rivers - respectively, the Lot, Tarn and Aveyron, all running westwards into the Garonne - as by direct roads. The major north-south routes skirted west of the Massif itself (Bourges-Limoges-Cahors and then to Toulouse or Bordeaux), or east (the Via Régordane, from Nîmes to Clermont via the Gévaudan, and the *Via Agrippa*, from Bordeaux to Lyons via the Velay). These two routes met at the Allier, at *Condate* (Condres or Chapeauroux). They were maintained even in the later Empire, although only the third century Alemanni appear to have been interested in using the *Via Agrippa*, possibly because their main destination was via the Rhône; the major fifth century invaders appear to have avoided the more direct route across the Loire towards the southwest corner of Gaul, swinging instead west along the middle Loire, above northern *Aquitanica Prima* and down into the more open territory of *Aquitanica Secunda*.[22]

The preservation of the form of the late Imperial *provincia* as an early Mediaeval episcopal diocese, coupled with the fortuitous concentration of fifth and sixth century literary sources within it, provide complementary reasons for restricting the archaeological survey to this province. In order to avoid anachronisms when discussing this region, it seem wisest to begin with both a definition and brief history of *Aquitanica Prima*, not only to provide a better understanding of the survival of this regional identity, but also to clarify to what extent '*mors, dolor, excidium*' followed in the wake of military incursions in both the first wave of invasions and throughout Frankish rule.

By the time of Caesar, the *Aquitani* were a Gallo-Celtic tribe

settled between the Garonne river and the Pyrénées; the Augustan province, however, extended the name eastwards and inland to include most of the area bounded on the west by the Atlantic seaboard, on the north and east by the arc of the Loire River, on the south by *Gallia Narbonensis* and in the extreme south-west, by the natural barrier of the Pyrénées.[23] In the wake of the initial barbarian incursions in the West, and a temporary loss of control to Gallic usurpers and possibly to the Bagaudae as well between A.D. 259 and 279, Diocletian's civil and military reorganisations split the Gallic Praefecture into two dioceses, the division following the basic axis of the Loire: to the north and east, *Dioecesis Galliarum*, including the Lugdunese, Belgic, German and some Alpine provinces; to the south and west, *Dioecesis Viennensis* which incorporated the Aquitanian basin and most of Gaul's Mediterranean coastline. These groupings first appear in the *Verona List* - dated ca. 312 by attribution of its major reforms to Diocletian, with Constantinian emendations - which outlined all twelve Imperial dioceses and their provincial subdivisions. Within the southern diocese are listed seven provinces: *Viennensis* itself, *Narbonensis I* and *II* (all three largely cut from the earlier, single Narbonese province), *Aquitanica I* and *II*, *Novempopulani* and the *Alpes Maritimae*.[24] It must be presumed that *Aquitanica I* formed the same eastern and *Aquitanica II* the same western seaboard halves of Augustan Aquitaine which the *Notitia Galliarum* was to describe in more detail a century later.

The Diocletianic multiplication of smaller provinces, however, was less definitive that it might at first appear. Certain new eastern provinces were reamalgamated under Constantine,[25] and similar fourth century adjustments may have been made for Gaul. Both an inscription of

A.D. 364 and a law of 399 referred to the southern Gallic diocese as '*Quinque provinciae*', whilst another of 396 calls it '*Septem provinciae*', which is the number of provinces which reappear in the *Notitia Galliarum* (ca. 400). Bury explained this inconsistency by proposing a stepped evolution. Prior to the Verona List, the region south-west of the Loire had been divided into a total of five provinces by carving *Novempopulana* from Aquitaine and the *Alpes Maritimae* and *Viennensis* from *Narbonensis*; then, by 312 both Aquitaine and Narbonese Gaul were each split into a further two parts[26]; any fourth century appearance of the title of *Quinque provinciae* for this diocese can then be explained simply as an outdated label.

This may explain the changing name for the diocese (also called *Aquitania* in the *Breviarum* of Festus), but does not wholly cover all the fourth century variations of provincial nomenclature. The ca. 369 list of Festus alludes to two Aquitaines, but only one Narbonese Gaul (a total of six provinces within the diocese); and yet in the 340s Saturninus Salutius Secundus was, according to his own inscription, '*praese provinciae Aquitanicae*', and before 364, '*vicarius quinque provinciae*'.[27] Eadie's suggestion that Aquitaine and Narbonese Gaul were each reunified between 312 and the mid-century, and subsequently redivided (between 358-369 for the former, between 370-381 for the latter)[28] would explain how Ammianus Marcellinus could know a different provincial list again for the period ca. 355-357, showing knowledge in northern and eastern Gaul of Diocletianic provinces, but with a southern diocese called *Aquitanica*, containing a single Aquitaine (plus '*Novempopulus*'), and one Narbonese province, but with a separate *Viennensis*. Yet his placement of *Avaricum* (Bourges) within *Lugdunensis*

I - a province, moreover, in a completely different diocese - is unlikely ever to have existed outside his or his source's imagination;[29] Bourges had not only been an Aquitanian city in the first century A.D. - as it was also by A.D. 400 when it was the provincial metropolis of *Aquitanica I* - but it even appeared within the fourth century as the first city on a route '*De Aquitania in Gallias*' (Bourges to Autun section) in the *Antonine Itinerary*.[30] Narbonese provinces also suffer from Ammianus' reallocation of cities.

If we were to suppose that at least some of these fourth century inconsistencies were evidence of the flexibility of Roman authorities to adapt or recreate administrative units according to the needs of the moment, as Bury suggested for Salutius' governorship of a united Aquitaine, it would nevertheless be difficult to correlate such presumed changes for *Aquitanica Prima* with other attested historical events, for this was a century in which Aquitaine was singularly absent from the historical record, despite military campaigns elsewhere in Gaul.

The alternative is to explain the remaining variations as partly due to anachronisms, partly due to simple mistaken data. Yet the presence of human error in these lists and descriptions is, to steal a phrase, rarely pure and never simple, and underlying almost all of them is a division between its administrative identities as two halves and the popular, conservative visualisation of a single Aquitaine. The more copious literary evidence of the fifth century brings this point into focus.

Although the administrative lists of both the *Notitiae Galliarum* and *Dignitatum* recognise two Aquitaines - as does the derivative *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius in A.D. 448[31] - the remainder of the

fifth century sources demonstrate how little these administrative divisions had percolated into either academic or common usage. Orosius' scholarly description of the geographical limitations of a single *Aquitania* is, for example, quite clearly derived from pre-Diocletianic sources.[32] If his knowledge was restricted by distance and lack of access to contemporary data, Hydatius' mis-allocation of Narbonese Toulouse to Aquitaine (where it had never been) in his entry for 418 was probably due not to anachronism but to contemporary events, for the Visigoths had at this time taken Toulouse, and had newly overrun western *Aquitanica*, which Hydatius seems to have equated with all of south-west Gaul, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Rhône, from the Mediterranean to the lower Loire. It is not surprising, then, that he assumed that the one lay within the other.[33] Perhaps the author of the later *Chronica Galliarum* made a similar assumption when it bluntly ascribed to the year 413: '*Aquitania Gothis tradita*', when simply *Aquitanica II* is meant, as Prosper was able to specify in his *Chronica* for 419 in which he noted that the Visigoths were ceded *Aquitanica II*, plus some peripheral city-territories.[34] Of course, these 'official' applications of regional labels coexisted still with their original meanings; and as might be expected of one seeking to identify an audience with his message, when Salvian addresses the tribulations of the *Aquitani* and the *Novem populi*, he appears to describe not provinces but peoples, a point which means that his testimony concerning brigandage and *Bacaudae* directly applies only to western Aquitaine, not necessarily to the Massif Central.[35]

According to the very early fifth century list retained in the *Notitia Galliarum*, eight cities lay within *Aquitanica Prima*: the

metropolis Bourges, the northernmost city in the region (*Avaricum, civitas Biturigi*), Clermont-Ferrand (*Augustonemetum, c. Arvernorum*), Rodez (*Segodunum, c. Rutenorum*), Albi (*Albiga*), Cahors (*Divona, c. Cadurcorum*), Limoges (*Augustoritum, c. Lemovici*), Javols (*Anderitum, c. Gabalitani*) and Saint Paulien (*Ruessio, c. Vellavorum*). A *municipium* or *castrum Arisido* is added to the end of the list, whether at the same time or after the original list was compiled, when it was awarded a bishopric; it, too, was located in the Velay.[36]

From at least the third century onwards, both literary and epigraphic texts increasingly use a city's ethnic, tribal title rather than its early Imperial toponym - for example,' *civitas Vellavorum*' for '*Ruessio*' on third century milestones; '*Biturigum*' for '*Avaricum*' in narrative works (including Ammianus), even '*Arvernum*' for the already half Celtic toponym '*Augustonemetum*', and so on - which, in five of these eight cases evolved without substantial change into their present city toponyms. The oldest exception was Albi, which like *Segodunum* (Rodez) technically counted as a *civitas Rutenorum*, and so, understandably, was never known at any time by its tribal name, although the toponym '*Albiga*' itself may be Celtic. That 'l'absence des monuments [romains] y est complète' as noted by Rouche in 1979, is no longer strictly accurate, as shown by *Gallia* (ii) reports from 1981 onwards; but it was perhaps never a significant Roman urban centre, always overshadowed in size and ostentation by its neighbours Rodez to the north and Cahors to the west, in which case its status changed little in the early Middle Ages.[37] Indeed, from the (possibly deceptively) uneven and limited evidence provided by salvage excavation,

the least populous cities of *Aquitanica Prima* - and thus ones more vulnerable to economic and military upheavals - were the southern cities of Albi, S. Paulien and Javols. Although these last two cities may have been small in the early Roman period, they were not without grandiose display; the surviving scuptural and architectural decoration from S. Paulien, for example, is as rich if not richer than that of the provincial capital, Bourges, even though the Roman material of both cities were equally exposed to considerable reuse over the centuries. The lack of cultic or administrative rural centres in the fertile river valleys of the Velay is, however, in stark contrast to the many *vici* in the north - the Limousin, Berry and Auvergne - whose number and upkeep in the Berry in particular may have attracted private patronage away from the city. The wealthy early Roman population of the Velay river valleys, on the other hand, could only display their wealth in their *civitas* and on their own rural estates, many of which are, like Espaly [**Site N° 51**], extremely opulent.

The two remaining cities whose names changed radically were the *urbs 'Arverna'* - known as such in the late sixth century (*HF* VIII.18), but which by the eighth century had come to be identified by its fortified *cité* as *'Clarus Mons'* (Clermont), a reflection upon the repeated military assaults suffered in the seventh and eighth centuries which may well have contributed to demographic and economic hardship in the region - and the *'civitas Vellavorum'* (*Ruessio*, modern S. Paulien). The decline of this latter city and the later mediaeval rise to the episcopacy of the former *'locus Anicium'* (Le Puy) - which had held neither Roman civic status nor any known early mediaeval bishop - contributed to the loss of the former's Latin name altogether.

By the 10th century, *Ruessio* was known simply as '*Civitate Vetula*', before the parish dedication to S. Paulianus was added to its title.[38]

A comparable but probably more rapid eclipse of a Roman *civitas* by a Merovingian town some 40 km. to the south can be seen in the Gévaudan, whose principal city by the early mediaeval period was *Mimas* (Mende) not Roman Javols itself. Religious considerations probably played a major part in this transfer: Mende - a pilgrim-site due to the third century martyrdom of S. Privatus, bishop of Javols - was a river-valley site which may not have seen much early Roman occupation, and was in fact no more defensible from barbarian attack than unwalled Javols in its open terrain; even the steeply spectacular mountain which overshadows Mende and in whose caves Privatus took refuge certainly failed to protect that bishop. At any rate, like the region itself, Javols' own surviving toponym still derives from the *Gabalitani* rather than the earlier Gallo-Roman name of *Anderitum*.[39]

In all cases excepting Albi, then, the tribal name developed directly into their regional toponyms: le Berry, l'Auvergne, le Rouergue, le Quercy, le Limousin, le Gévaudan and le Velay. These can scarcely be seen as manifestations of any 'Celtic revival', of course, since their early Imperial toponyms had included latinised versions of Celtic identities, anyway, from the wholly Celtic sacred-springs cult of 'Divona' (Cahors) to the 'fortress' suffix of '-*dunum*' in Segodunum (Rodez) or the 'sacred place' expressed by the '-*nemetum*' of Augustonemetum (Clermont, originally called *Nemessos*).

Little can be said with conviction about the effects within the province of the very earliest barbarian movements through Gaul to Spain

(A.D. 256-259) other than the generalisation that this probably precipitated the erection for the first time of city defensive walls throughout this previously unprotected heartland of Gaul. However, it must be remembered that the only *civitas* within the eastern half of Aquitaine (the future *Aquitanica Prima*) with fortifications dated with any certainty to the latter half of the third century is Bourges,[40] nearest to the Loire and perhaps to the military activities of the governor of *Aquitania*, Tetricus. Both the series of Gallic usurpers and the movements of *Bacaudae* - army deserters, Germanic tribesmen, native peasants or mixtures of them all - manifest a type of localised self-help writ large, that is, a persistent regionalisation of identity which was now being reinforced by defensive needs. Although there is no reason to assume that the region was exempt from the dissatisfaction which fed rural lawlessness, neither brigandage nor military activity is attested by surviving sources for the Massif Central, with the exception of the emplacement for the first time of troops within the area - in this case, a contingent of Sueve *laeti* on the road which ran through the Velay and Auvergne - which must reflect late third century Imperial recognition of these internal Gallo-Roman troubles.[41] The raising of civic defences lay within this same context.

From the first wave of invasions in the third century until the fifth century, it is difficult to locate the exact whereabouts of Gallic uprisings or Germanic tribes within *Aquitanica Prima* itself. What follows is intended merely to summarise the presence and activities of Gallo-Romans and barbarians alike.

In 256, the Alamanni reached Arles via not the Rhône valley but

down the Auvergne and the Velay (*HF*, I.32-34), possibly using the very recently refurbished *Via Bolena*.[42] The scant surviving literary references to Tetricus I, who had been governor of *Aquitanica* at the time of his attempted usurpation of Gaul, suggest that his major campaigns took place outside Aquitaine itself (certainly his defeat by Aurelian did), although very little is known about his exact movements; Ausonius mentions that his grandfather and great-grandfather had fled from the **Lyonnaise** district to Dax in south-west Aquitaine so as to evade proscription 'at the time of Victorinus and the Tetrici', without making clear precisely from whom his forefathers were fleeing.[43]

Of fourth century *Aquitanica Prima* virtually nothing is known, except that Aquitaine in general seems to have been the principal if temporary supplier of grain for Julian's army on the Rhine.[44] The routes of the usurper Maximus from Britain, and Gratian's flight to Lyons, would have by-passed the land-locked Massif Central which formed *Aquitanica I*. If the Gallic Bagaudae who first appeared in the 280s were also active in eastern Aquitaine at the same time, there is no clearcut evidence for them; the *Querolus*' famous reference to the natural law of brigands '*ad Ligeram*' is not of much help here, and it has already been observed that Salvian's near contemporary reference to their presence in early fifth century Aquitaine does not specifically concern *Aquitanica Prima*. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that such a widespread problem did not also affect central and eastern Aquitaine.[45]

From 407-409, the Alans and Vandals pushed southwards from the Loire, through *Aquitanica II* towards Spain, with a presumably brief detour along part of the main east-west route through southern

Aquitanica Prima as far as Cahors and Albi.[46] Of greater effect upon the province was the Visigothic takeover of Narbonne, Toulouse and finally Bordeaux by the end of 413.[47] Cahors itself was annexed to the Toulouse kingdom in the A.D. 418 foederate treaty with Rome.[48] When the Visigothic forces were coaxed back into southern Aquitaine from Spain - whence they had ventured in 415 - by the *magister militum* Fl. Constantius, the resulting area still under at least nominal Roman control formed a funnel-shaped territory, stretching north-south through *Aquitanica I*, with some of the upper Loire and lower Rhône valleys to the east still free of Burgundian control. To the north was Aegidius and a patchy Roman military presence; to the south, parts of the coast vacillated in Imperial hands, Narbonne falling in 437 to Theodoric I and - taking advantage of Roman preoccupations with the assassination of Majorian in late 461 - to Theodoric II. Narbonese Gaul would of course later form the basis of Gothic *Septimania* after their defeat by the Franks in 507.[49]

Only after Euric's accession to power did the Visigoths sweep north-eastwards through central Aquitaine, and perhaps it was the sheer scope of his conquests - legally acknowledged by Julian Nepos in 475 - that allowed the partial survival of the civil provincial system here, albeit on a small scale, possibly including the comital level. Bourges had already been occupied by Armoricans (voluntarily or otherwise) when in 469 Euric invaded the city from north-eastern *Aquitanica II*. If the Armoricans had been in Bourges as early as 437 this might explain the rather circuitous route taken by Litorius from Armorica via the Auvergne to aid the besieged city of Narbonne). Euric's subsequent advance further northwards was partly checked at

least by a force under the Roman Paulus which included Franks under their own leader, Childeric; but whether Bourges was temporarily returned to Roman, or at least to internal civilian control, is not known (*HF*, II.18-19).

Aquitanica Prima as a single entity appears in the writings of Sidonius only in its adopted function as the provincial structure of the Catholic church. The episcopal *provincia* headed by the metropolitan bishop of Bourges encompassed the Imperial one, at least on paper, for as has been said, the Quercy had fallen under Visigothic control much earlier than the centre and north of the province. No contemporary allusion to Cahors or its bishopric was made by Sidonius, and the same goes for Albi and S. Paulien in the Velay, which may have fallen under Gothic control at the same time as the Quercy. But this silence is not necessarily linked with Arian repression, since in fact the only reference in Sidonius to the other bishoprics of *Aquitanica Prima* - Limoges, Rodez and Javols/Mende - alludes to their empty sees due to Euric's alleged Arian persecution; even so, Visigothic occupation of Bourges did not prevent the election of a new Catholic bishop there ca. 470,[50] and Visigothic Albi was able to receive the exiled former Catholic bishop of Carthage, at some time between 489 and 505 (*HF*, II.3). The last area to fall to Euric's 'infamous peace' was, of course, the Auvergne in 475, and considering Sidonius' beseiged position in what ended as merely a regional pocket of resistance to barbarian rule, his constant identification with local areas and identities is scarcely surprising. That he looked eastwards to the Burgundian-occupied Lyonnaise for support may reflect both the traditional link from Aquitaine towards the Rhône, despite

geomorphological barriers between the two neighbouring regions, and more strongly his knowledge of the power structures of his own native province.[51]

Because of the nature of our sources for this period, more is known of the survival of episcopal than civil administration within the province; despite the growing devolution of responsibilities for civic defence and representation at higher levels by the local late Roman bishop, it would be simplistic to interpret from this a complete disappearance of most secular offices under early Visigothic rule. Certainly, little is known about the presence and function of *comites* in Visigothic Aquitaine; we never hear of any count for Cahors, the one city of *Aquitanica Prima* which underwent prolonged Visigothic control, although the very extent of Gothic conquest allowed the retention of some provincial administration: Ostrogothic Theoderic, for example, appointed a Gallic prefect and *vicarius* for those south-eastern Gallic coastlands acquired by him ca. 510. The only count mentioned for Visigothic Aquitania was Victorius, whom his contemporary Sidonius knew as a *comes*. If this was a city-based position, it was presumably of the *civitas Arvernorum*, since Gregory later described him as '*dux...super septem civitates*'; *Aquitanica I* had eight cities, so, if this is not a scribal error, it may be reasonably assumed that Victorius was appointed as military *dux* before basing himself as count of Clermont - the last, beseiged eighth city of the province to fall into Visigothic hands. Such a combination of ranks is rare for that time.[52]

By the last quarter of the fifth century, then, *Aquitanica Prima* had undergone a profound and long-lasting change, from a landlocked

province of the heart of Gaul to a frontier region; firstly bordering on the south-west between Roman and Visigothic territories, then its eastern limits defining Burgundian from Visigothic kingdoms, and its northern edges separating Frankish from Gothic lands; finally, after Clovis' decisive victory at Vouillé in 507, its southern edges formed the approximate border between *Francia* and *Gothia*.

Problems with the dating of Clovis' conversion aside, it appears from Gregory of Tours' account that by the end of the fifth century many native Aquitanians preferred the Gothic devil they had now known for a generation to the Frank they did not; the shared Catholicism of the Gallo-Romans and the newly baptised Franks did not inspire universal enthusiasm for yet another barbarian invasion to deliver them from the Arians (*HF*, II.36). Both the resident Goths and other citizens of Rodez caused their bishop Quintianus to flee to the Auvergne once his pro-Frankish sympathies were suspected;[53] similar fates befell two Touraine bishops and Aprunculus, the bishop of Burgundian Langres, during the decade prior to Vouillé (*HF*, II.23). Nevertheless, if Sidonius' son Apollinaris fought with fellow Arvernians on the Visigothic side at that battle, as is usually assumed from his friendship with the Gothic-appointed *dux*, Victorius, he was nevertheless allowed to take up the bishopric of Clermont in 515 by Clovis' son, Theuderic, although that king also made a point of naming the aforementioned Quintianus as his immediate successor (*HF*, II.36-37, X.31).

The regional fragmentation of Merovingian royal control not only divided the province politically until the eighth century, but also encouraged both a mobility of the élite and, indirectly, a

diversification of their landholdings. When Sidonius' grandson Arcadius failed to deliver Clermont from king Theuderic to his half-brother Childebert I, he escaped the former's wrath simply by removing himself to Bourges, which the latter king possessed (*HF*, III.11-12). Early Merovingian dukes did not hold a duchy per se, since as military commanders they had to travel widely - from a base - to protect the disputed and scattered possessions of their respective kings; in turn, they, too, kept to a principle of never leaving their own eggs in the one politically-aligned basket. Chilperic's *dux* Desiderius, for example, defended the Limousin from king Guntram's *dux* Mummolus, attacked Guntram's territories in neighbouring *Aquitanica II* and then Childebert's city, Bourges; he also took Sigibert-held Albi, joined forces with Mummolus in Burgundy, promoted an usurper back in the Limousin, and found time to marry the former wife of the count of Clermont, move his goods to Albi, and when it changed hands yet again, withdrew to Toulouse.[54]

Merovingian kings themselves played interminable, interdynastic tugs-of-war across the Aquitanian landscape, in which Franks and Gallo-Romans alike participated for their own risky profit. Merovingian appointments could introduce new families to a region, rewarding them with the opportunity to establish a permanent landed power-base, as *dux* Sigivald did in the Auvergne; whilst formerly powerful, established families, such as that of the Arvernian Apollinari, could lose property and influence as punishment for badly-calculated disloyalty; on the other hand, already powerful landowners could secure their local authority, as did the family of Desiderius in early seventh century southern *Aquitanica I* under the patronage and training provided by

Chlothar.[55] For patronage to be most effective, it has to be mutually beneficial; but for Aquitanians after the first few decades of Frankish rule, perhaps the possibility of four antagonistic royal benefactors, coupled with the very distance of Aquitaine as a whole from the four seats of early Merovingian royal power gave the kings a slightly greater reason to be interested in rewards and patronage, as well as intimidation, than there was among the landowning families of a region to feel obliged to any given ruler.

If the appearance of regional political allegiances in Gregory of Tours' works is mainly recorded in the actions of the local élite, who had a certain stake in the dynastic patronage of both episcopal and comital appointments, it is possible to see a further level of political groupings of regions in the association of neighbouring areas when troops were being levied for military campaigns. The grouping under king Guntram of Berry, for example, with the Poitevin and Orléanais city-territories of the Loire valley, rather than with either the northern Limousin or Auvergne in central Aquitaine, is not wholly explainable in terms of regions under ducal control or by geomorphology, for the rolling plains of southern Berry are neither cut off from the Limagne (that is, the western plains of the Auvergne) nor from the open landscape around and to the north of Limoges. To the south, the former *comes* of Clermont, Nicetius, was given ducal, that is, military power over the Auvergne, Rouergue and Uzés, an odd combination if the intervening regions of the Velay and Gévaudan were excluded; nevertheless, they are strung out along a shared, strategic south-eastern axis (*HF*, VIII.18).

As Dill observed at the beginning of this century, all the major

revolts against royal control were south-west of the Loire, centred upon the Limousin-Auvergne strip of *Aquitanica Prima*; But Dill's view of them as evidence of sixth century anti-Frankish sentiment in the area, however, can scarcely be valid,[56] since if successful the uprisings of Arcadius, Chramn and then Gundovald would merely have replaced one Frankish overlord with another. They probably reflect instead a dislike among the inhabitants of this fertile, mineral-rich and, in areas, quite populous region of the demands of royal taxation and the unashamedly aggressive plunderings of royal representatives. In the words of A. Meynier, the Limagne '...was wont to inspire a feeling that one could only compare with that which good game inspires in huntsmen.'[57]

The southernmost regions of *Aquitanica I* were less rebellious, perhaps, but no less riddled with intrigue. Gundovald's Limousin-based conspiracy expanded not directly south but south-west, that is, into the cities of *Aquitanica II*; yet Cahors, the south-westernmost city of central Aquitaine, is yet again associated with these south-western lands through the support for the 'pretender' of both its bishop and local abbot (*HF*, VIII.20 and .30). Nevertheless, southern *Aquitanica I* remained tied, in its see-sawing political affiliations, to the Massif Central. The following summary of royal inheritance during the first two centuries of Merovingian rule will suffice to illustrate these affiliations.

The Frankish kingdom which had been briefly united under Chlothar I was split upon his death in A.D.561 among the brothers Charibert, Sigibert, Guntram and Chilperic. At his death in 575, the

Austrasian Sigibert held all of central and southern *Aquitanica I*, excluding Bourges to the north and possibly Cahors to the south-west. After 575, the Berry rejoined the Auvergne among the territories of the Neustrian king, Guntram (*HF*, VIII.30). The Limousin, which had fallen to Chilperic, was then given along with the Quercy and also Bordeaux to his queen Galswinth as her *morgengabe*, thus separating under one authority the entire western side of the province. Upon Chilperic's death in 584, Limoges was first regained by Sigibert's son Childebert II, and then held by Guntram ca.587 under the Andelot Treaty, by which Sigibert's widow, Brunhild, in turn received Cahors; after Guntram's demise in 595 both the Limousin and, it seems, the Auvergne, reverted to Childebert II. By his subsequent death in 597, Childebert and his mother Brunhild together possessed most of Sigibert's former domains in *Aquitanica I*: the Albigeois, Gévaudan, Rouergue, Auvergne, Limousin, Berry and the Quercy[58] [The Velay is seldom mentioned in sixth or indeed seventh century sources, but since it had even as a pre-Roman tribe been little more than a southern extension of the Auvergne, its fate probably followed that region's.] The first four areas continued in the seventh century under Austrasian Theuderic II's rule, while the last three went to the Neustrian line of Chilperic, under Chlothar II.[59] But the combination of the natural boundary on two sides of the Loire and the rise of the political base of Gascony gave rise eventually to a single political unit of Aquitaine after Charibert II's seventh century kingdom - centred on the former *Aquitanica II*, not I - formed the basis of the quasi-independent state of the future *princeps Aquitanorum*. Bourges nevertheless remained both ecclesiastical and secular '*caput*

Aquitaniae', not least because it was through here that Pepin and Charles Martel after him had to manoeuvre so as to regain the rest of seventh and eighth century Aquitaine.[60]

This double-faced aspect of *Aquitanica I*, as a lucrative administrative and geographical unit but with each internal region orientated towards external neighbouring areas and intermittently divided by externally-based political forces, contributed to its separation from the rest of *Francia* in the later Merovingian period, and although it extends beyond the chronological scope of this study, leads into the question of the relationship of Gascony (the *Wascones*) to Aquitaine as a whole.

According to Fredegar, Charibert's kingdom in A.D. 629 encompassed the area between the Loire and the Pyrénées, and from the list of cities included it is clear that this comprised the former *Aquitanica II* plus Cahors and Toulouse, which became for the first time a Frankish capital, all of which Fredegar perceives as only '*partem provinciae Aquitaniae*'; Charibert then took over Gascony.[61]

The eighth century Continuators of Fredegar's *Chronicles* described the flight of Ebroin and his associates from the Franks in 673 as:

...Ligere transgressi, usque Vasconos transfugerunt,...'[62]

which has been interpreted to mean that Gascony extended to the Loire itself, even though the text here may be describing Ebroin's movements in two steps, which does not not mean that Ebroin reached Gascony simply **by** crossing the Loire. Moreover, the Gascons of the eighth century are specified as being centred south of the Garonne, that is,

in the former region of the original *Aquitani* of Caesarian times and the *Novempopulani* of the Diocletianic period, and now controlled by Eudes, the rebellious *dux* of an Aquitaine which, if the range of his military campaigns in the 720s and 730s against Chilperic and then Charles Martel accurately reflects his territory, would have encompassed seabord western Aquitaine, but not the area of the former *Aquitanica Prima*.[63] It is only in 742, when a southern Gascon revolt against Eudes' son and successor Chunoald provided the opportunity for the Frankish forces to cross the Loire into Aquitaine - stopping first to take by force the city of Bourges - that Chunoald is recorded as having advanced into the Berry countryside;[64] the sources do not as yet mention Gascons among Chunoald's forces here, and the defenders of Bourges against the Frankish army are called '*Romani*', who most likely were the native inhabitants, supported perhaps by Chunoald.[65] By 762, however, *Wascones* are present among the rebel defenders of both Clermont (now for the first time known by the name for its citadel, *Clarus mons*) and Bourges. Eudes' grandson, *dux Waiofarius*, clearly held an *Aquitania provincia* of Augustan proportions, that is, the entire landlocked region south-west of the Loire, as well as temporary gains along the Mediterranean coast.[66]

This combination in Carolingian annals of the seventh and eighth century Aquitanian duchy and Gascony has led to modern speculation as to the extent of possible Gascon settlement within **all** of Aquitaine, both seaboard and central. James' interpretation of these attestations of Gascons in the Berry and Auvergne as evidence primarily of their presence as soldiers in the service of Aquitanian dukes, and not as settlers, is eminently sensible, for there is no doubt that they

constituted a military presence among Aquitanian troops.[67] He also pointed out but did not elaborate upon the contemporary but half-mistaken correlation of terms in the *Ravenna Cosmographer*, which correctly claimed that Gascony was '*ab antiquis Aquitania dicebatur...*', but which incorrectly included a list of major cities not belonging to Caesarian Aquitaine alone but to the combined *Aquitanicae* of the Augustan province.[68] As a distinguishable subset, then, all Gascons could - using an anachronistic title - be called 'Aquitanians', but not all contemporary Aquitanians were therefore 'Gascons'. When added to the formation of geographically-defined duchies during this period, this means that if Gascony was within the dominion of the Duke of Aquitaine, it necessarily followed that it was part of the late Merovingian duchy of *Aquitania* which could be perceived as a region analogous to an ancient province. Small wonder that contemporary but non-Aquitanian annalists[69] could have made a classicising correlation between the two identities.

Using the Loire as a border for *Aquitania*-cum-Wasconia could have provided a further cause for confusion, the more so since both Roman and early mediaeval sources tend to ignore the fact that the river's course runs in a great right-angle, not as a straight line; this is not surprising when one remembers that ancient maps such as the *Peutinger Table* functioned schematically - more like a London Underground plan than an *AA* roadmap. At the time of duke Eudes, then, the lower courses of the Loire would have formed merely the **northern** limit of his territory, and only under *dux* Waiofar would its upper courses along the **eastern** edge of *Aquitanica Prima* also have bounded the eighth century duchy, as it had the earlier, Augustan province.[70]

The survival of interest in ancient titles was not simply a matter of antiquarian curiosity, of course, if only because of the ecclesiastical usage of Roman administrative units. Yet however classicising the language, the framework of reference is centred firmly in the north; thus, the late Merovingian or Carolingian *Life* of Desiderius of Cahors describes his birthplace as a *civitas* which,

> *...in extremis pene Galliarum finibus sita, regionibus primae Aquitaniarum extrema, habet a meridie provintiam Narbonensem...*[71]

How great an effect Visigothic and subsequent Frankish conquests really had upon the demography and economy of this province is difficult to estimate, considering how little is certain concerning the demographic extent of barbarian settlement south of the Loire. In the absence of more than scrappy Merovingian occupational material, reliance upon mortuary practices can be overstretched, for the limits of archaeological evidence in providing reliable indications of ethnic identity through gravegoods or burial customs are well known and, in the case of Merovingian period cemeteries, exacerbated by a decline in the practice of inhumation with goods at all; moreover, recent and competent ethno-skeletal analyses of Merovingian burials are simply lacking for the Massif Central.[72] A glance at the differing linguistic traditions north and south of the Loire demonstrates a sizeable contemporary difference between the impact of resident Franks in northern and central Gaul. It is at any rate accepted by this study that both Visigothic and Frankish settlement was probably initially minimal in proportion to the rural population as a whole, and that

their greatest impact, in terms of both immigration and landownership, is likely to have been confined to those areas with the greatest Gallo-Roman population, the accessible, agricultural and wine-growing regions within the province - the Berry plains, the more open hills of the Limousin, and the Rouergue and Quercy - rather than the backwaters of the central highlands or the mountains in the south-east, where transhumance cattle-herding prevailed, and where even after centuries of Roman control, Celtic cultural traditions persisted most strongly, and towns implanted under Imperial rule were rare.[73]

Even the effects of fifth century *hospitalitas* upon the agrarian economy and landowning classes in eastern Aquitaine are ethereal to the grasp; we can neither describe satisfactorily the process of Gothic settlement in southern Gaul in the early fifth century nor even prove that land divisions systematically occurred for the entire region under Euric's and his successor's control from 475 until 507,[74] a period which would have extended over an entire generation of Visigoths in central Gaul. And however subsequent Frankish control came to shape the social bonds of landownership and tenancies, we have no direct evidence that it affected the pattern of early Merovingian landholdings per se. As a result, it would be a gross overstatement to claim as Bloch did that the main waves of Germanic invasions throughout all Gaul destroyed the isolated farmstead (from the poorest farm to the grandest, classically-defined '*villa*'), whose type supposedly only reappeared within the French landscape in the Carolingian or later 'era of land reclamation'; this **might perhaps** apply to northern France, and slightly more convincingly for parts of Italy, but not for

central Gaul.[75]

Political and military incursions were, of course, not the only troubles besetting eastern Aquitaine throughout the Merovingian period. The bubonic plague struck the province from its most southern to most northern reaches from 571 (*HF*.IV, 31); another recorded major bout, again originating from Mediterranean seaports, which affected southern *Aquitanica Prima* - particularly the Rouergue and Quercy - in the early seventh century, temporarily halted all trade with the more northern areas.[76] The small-scale but long-term, repetitive violent onslaughts upon the resources and estate-capital of Merovingian rural farmers, whether independent or rent-tenants, must also surely have had an invidious affect upon farm and field maintenance, their yields, and ultimately, the economy. Surprisingly, however, statisticians of historical demography have pointed out that short-term famines and even chronic malnutrition - providing that the latter is not itself fatal - have surprisingly little affect on population decline, even in times of disease.[77] Indeed, the vexing issue of declining populations in the later Empire in the West and in the early Middle Ages can be summarised for the Midi as thus: one might expect the most remote areas of the Massif Central, with their ancient pattern of scattered land exploitation and pastoralism, to be least affected by either a lessening market demand for their produce or by the fire and sword, whereas the marginal areas of more populated, fertile regions would have been harder hit in the market place by their proximity to lands better able to continue agricultural production. There is, for example, no indication that grain-production in the Berry and Limagne declined in the early Middle Ages, whether or not the rural population fell,

although there is some evidence that partially-cleared areas marginal to these - such as the Sologne in eastern Berry, may have been abandoned during or by the very late Roman period.[78] One can overestimate the demise of many fifth century road- or quay-side *vici*, the chipping-away at a surplus-market economy - leaving predominant the equally ancient practice by which most rural produce could be exchanged privately within a corpus of geographically separate *villae* sharing a single proprietor rather than sold in rural or urban markets - for it is clear that at least the largest or more durable Gallo-Roman *vici*, such as Lezoux or Néris-les-Bains, continued to exist in the early Middle Ages; even if *vicus*/spa-centres such as the latter persisted because of their (Christianised) religious function and popularity, the survival of their resident population would have provided the basis as well as focus for a regional market. Nor need the civitas-capitals have been fed and clothed overwhelmingly through the patronage of the aristocracy and the Church. Agricultural markets survived, and they are attested for towns and cities rather than estates until the late Merovingian period.[79]

What is known about the early mediaeval economy of the regions within Aquitanica Prima is almost purely literary in its basis; mixed farming, pig- and sheep-herding, cereal crops and hemp-growing in the Berry, cereals in the Velay and Arvernian Limagne; sheep and cattle in the Auvergnat mountains, with some transhumance; specialised wine-production from the Quercy, Albigeois, Rouergue and central Limousin, the latter alone perhaps being a post-invasion innovation.[80] Aquitanian grain under the Empire did not in all probability supply markets outside the province except in exceptional circumstances, as

noted above, and this remained unchanged under Germanic rule. The specialised production of *saies bituriges* (woollen cloaks) attested for the third century probably grew out of an indigenous Romano-Celtic tradition of spinning and weaving, but we know nothing of its export in any other period; certainly, the Berrichône weaving industry does not appear to have been organised on the scale of that in *Gallia Belgica*.[81] Only wine is known to have travelled outside its immediate region in the Merovingian period: by trade to Visigothic Septimania from the Rouergue, Quercy and Albigeois districts by the seventh century, and also by gift and internal exchange from the monasteries of eighth century Limousin.[82]

Eastern Aquitanian resources were not all agrarian or pastoral. Although the massive production of early Imperial terra sigillata in the Auvergne (Lezoux, Martres-de-Veyre), Rouergue (La Graufesenque, Millau) and Gévaudan (Bannassac), and the second-third century exports of Arvernian t. sig. *claire*, incised and metallescent black wares declined, *paléochrétienne* pottery appears to have been manufactured still in the Auvergne (one workshop at Lezoux was active in the last quarter of the fourth century, another produced plain wares in the sixth century), albeit for local, regional consumption only. By the fourth century, eastern Aquitaine had turned from a major ceramic exporter to an importer of fine wares, with some Argonne ware in the Berry as well as a concentration of late fourth and fifth century *paléochrétienne* pottery from workshop in southern Languedoc.[83] Merovingian stamped grey wares are generally supposed to be derived from the eastern Gallo-Roman tradition, but the possibility that some Merovingian fine wares as well as coarse wares were produced in the

Auvergne and Rouergue should not at this stage be wholly ruled out.

The easily accessible but small-scale iron loads of the Berry had been exploited in the La Tène period as well as by Gallo-Roman gallery-mining, and were still active and far from exhausted in the early fifth century; although there is neither documentary nor direct archaeological proof, it is unlikely that such a highly valuable commodity would cease to be mined in the early mediaeval period, given its perennial market and the basic technology required for its retrieval.[84] Tin-mining in the southern Limousin was likewise a Celtic and Gallo-Roman activity, but unlike Berrichône iron is known only through archaeology. It certainly continued under the early Merovingians, mined by the inhabitants of *vici* such as Les Blonds (Merovingian *Blotomagus*, a Celtic toponym).[85] If the fame of Berricône iron - from Strabo to Rutilius Namatianus[86] - reflects its export throughout Roman Gaul, we can only guess at the extent of tin exports in either the Roman or Merovingian periods, and the same must be said for the silver mines of the Rouergue and Gévaudan. At least some of these had been Imperial property, sub-leased to contractors;[87] if these were inherited by the Gothic and Frankish monarchy as part of the Imperial estates, their continued exploitation can only be assumed for the very early mediaeval period.[88] Given the importance of gold in tax payments, and its position as the only metal coined within the Merovingian realms, it is even more unlikely for Limousin gold mines to have abandoned production in the fifth century, and the early seventh century presence of a famous goldsmith such S. Eligius in this region was more than fortuitous.[89]

Metals, like the timber supplies of the woodlands in the Massif

Central, may have been of profit primarily to their Frankish royal owners and their aristocratic or ecclesiastic lessees rather than sources of trade per se. Beyond these, however, there is not the slightest shred of literary or epigraphical evidence for an agricultural early or late Imperial *saltus* - as opposed to the valuable woodland in central and southern *Aquitanica I* - within the province.[90] Extrapolation of Imperial lands from Merovingian fiscal *praedia* (transmitted through Visigothic appropriation) is extremely dicey, given that confiscations of private, and appropriations of Church estates appear to have been commonplace under Frankish rule.

Within *Aquitanica Prima*, of course, systems of land use and ownership evolved within both the later Roman period and throughout the eary Middle Ages. Since literary and legal descriptions of Merovingian estates, their goods and markets have provided the basis for extrapolating their physical appearance, it seems best to deal with a brief summary of the definition of the concept of the *villa* from the third century until the late Merovingian period, before turning to the numerous hypotheses concerning abandonment and settlement in the early Middle Ages.

Chapter Two: Definitions of the Late Roman and Early Merovingian *Villa*

Before any discussion of the toponymic and archaeological evidence for the survival or transformation of the late Roman villa in Merovingian central Aquitaine, it is first necessary to define both the denotations and connotations of the term '*villa*' in the literary evidence. For if the material form and content of the *villa* did change at some point during the later Empire (as Beaudouin, Grenier, Salin *et al.* maintained), it must surely have involved a conceptual change which should be reflected in the sources - and if not, a further explanation would be required, beyond that of the mediaeval use of '*villa*' as a 'classicising' description. Only then can we turn to the hypothesis that fourth century and ninth century landed estates are closely comparable, and the related issue of their proto-seigneurial rôles.

Although the literary evidence for the definition of the *villa* falls roughly into four categories - agronomical works, legal documents (whether laws, diplomata or bequests), poems and anecdotal narrative - it would be difficult to claim that there was little overlap in each genre's treatment of the concept of '*villa*'. Yet it is necessary at the outset to distinguish between the use of the term as a **location-setter** and as a **proprietorial unit** in any document, for the failure to acknowledge these two aspects of the '*villa*' when interpreting early mediaeval material lies at the core of much of the confusion concerning, not merely the comparability of the late Roman and Carolingian estate, but the nature of each in the first place.

For the early Empire, the definition itself is scarcely problematical. It had become a word reserved exclusively for **rural** establishments, at about the same time as Gaul fell to Roman control.[91] As Columella described the 'type', it was comprised of a house-complex on a *fundus*, including the *pars urbana* - the household's living quarters, pleasure areas such as baths and gardens, and domestic work areas - the *pars rustica*, containing the outhouses, stables and agricultural work area, and *frumentaria*, containing the stores.[92] Although the terms '*villa urbana*' and '*villa rustica*' are used today by archaeologists and historians to distinguish between elaborately- and simply-structured villa-houses, ancient sources did not use these terms; however subtly they may have graded the occupants, rural isolated dwellings were either huts (*tugurìa*, *casae*) or *villae*. Modern scholars also find in the *villa* connotations of something inherently Roman, not just to archaeologists who identify this trait through the use of durable building materials, but equally to the Romans themselves, who appear to have been loathe to apply the word to the light constructions of Gallic dwellings (*aedificia*), even those which must have been on a respectable scale.[93] There is no evidence to suggest that this distinction took any further account of differing agricultural systems, social structures or basic ethnic identity. But one thing which was also uniquely Roman in the western Empire was, of course, the urban lifestyle(s); and, to amend a comment by Percival, the **literary** *villa* was essentially the country seen through townsmen's eyes - the eyes, that is, of their owners.[94] Indeed, in the legal terms of the early third century (as transmitted through the *Digest*), buildings were technically urban estates even if *in villa*, because their legal status as *urbana*

praedia depended on the nature of the structures involved. Hence, these included *stabula*, *meritoria* or indeed gardens, whether *in villis et in vicis* or in *praetoria*. The distinction between villa and pleasure palace is noteworthy: villas were, by comparison, practical possessions.[95]

Roman law dealt primarily with the *fundus* or rural *praedia* rather than with villas, as might be expected if the latter were merely the master's or his bailiff's house-complex on an estate. But this categorisation of rural property suggests both that a divergence of common from legal usage had begun in the early Empire, and that the villa was seen as a complex of buildings. The *Digest* is precise enough on this matter:

> *"'Fundi" appellatione omne aedificium et omnis ager continetur. Sed in usu urbana aedificia "aedes", rustica "villae" dicuntur. Locus vero sine aedificio in urbe "area" rure autem "ager" appellatur. Idemque ager cum aedificio "fundus" dicitur.* [96].

A *fundus* was composed of land; an *ager* was a subtype of *fundus* which, by definition, was a place *sine villa*; to make up a *fundus*, it needed aedificia, and in common (as opposed to legal?) parlance, a country building was called a villa.

In non-legal texts, however, a metonymic process was rendering *ager, fundus, praedium* (in rural contexts) and *villa* virtually synonymous. This is not the same as a rather vague use of the phrase *'in villa'* to mean 'in the country', as Percival believes to have been commonplace by the late Republic[97]; if there is any ambiguity when that phrase appears in late Gallo-Roman texts, it is in its modern interpretation, for the context of the reference to a *villa* always

indicates that either a specific location or a particular type of rural site is meant, however much or little it may be coloured by a regard for the country as the antithesis of aristocratic Roman public obligations.

Hence, by the later fourth century, Ausonius' *praedium* of *'Lucaniacum'* was also his *'Lucanus fundus'* and equally his *'villa Lucani-...aco'*.[98] A villa could still also be connotative of an impressive and comfortable dwelling, as in the comparison of the *villa Pauliacum* with a 'hut of rushes', or in the antithesis expressed by Namatianus when he wrote of rebuilding mere shepherds' *casae* on *fundi* destroyed by war. More commonly, however, Ausonius' country residences were seen simply as being in *agri* - again, not meant in the general sense of 'in the country' but within specific properties.[99] When Sulpicius Severus referred to Saint Martin visiting an *agrum Lupicini*, with a resident household, slaves and a master's *domus* with vestibule, he was describing what to a jurist constituted a *fundus* and what to a modern historian constitutes a *villa*, although he never called it that. He did, however, use *'agellum'* synonymously with *'villula'*.[100]

Throughout the fifth century, both uses of the term *villa* persisted, on the one hand as an architectural complex and on the other, as an estate. The degree to which a villa near road, riverport or harbour also functioned as an occasional hostelry is unclear, if only because references to visitors are overwhelmingly to family guests, not to paying temporary lodgers. Even so, in his journey from Rome to Narbonese Gaul ca. 417, Rutilius Namatianus used an Italian *villa* as a rented lodging-place, although it possessed a resident owner, as well

as woods and ponds for hire in the pursuit of hunting and fishing. It is, however, possible that Namatianus lodged not in the main residence - in which case it functioned at least in part as an inn - but camped outside. By Namatianus' account, the place seemed to be more of a commercial venture than simply a house which offered hospitality as all villas did to some extent towards travellers of a certain class or authority; but as the episode was used to provide an opportunity for a diatribe against Jews in general and his temporary landlord in particular, the situation remains unclear.[101] A little more than fifty years later, Sidonius also mentioned camping out, despite being near a friend's country house *(domus)*, but this was because it was undergoing renovation work. Although his country estate, *Avitacum*, had its own guest-rooms, these appear to have been for invited guests only.[102]

Elsewhere in Sidonius' letters, *villae* continually recur as more than residences, for they denote agricultural activity, the production of revenue; within a villa's margins lay the whole of the active, peopled and domiciled part of an estate such as *Avitacum: his prædium* but also, in sum, his *villa*.[103] The closest Sidonius comes to describing a village within the boundaries of a villa-estate is when he praises a friend's *praedium* near Volvic, which consisted of a vineyard and also - perhaps geographically separate - a farming-estate with *'plurifaria frugum mansionumque'*. But these could have been the habitations of tenant-farmers, whether free or unfree *coloni*, scattered across a large estate, as convincingly as they could refer to a community within the *fundus* limits; or indeed the allusion could have been merely to buildings within the *pars urbana* itself, for Palladius (I, IX.5) refers to the villa's summer quarters as *'mansiones'*.[104]

Portiones and *Sortes*:

Roman *villa*-estates have often implicitly been assumed to have been typically the property of a single owner: the resident *paterfamilias* or, under male management, a female. Yet it should always be remembered that Roman estates could and did have joint owners, although one cannot determine the proportion under the Empire of individually- to jointly-owned rural properties, far less determine regional preferences for one form over another. This said, it is nevertheless reasonable to assume from the predominance of references to single owners and to the legal discussions on buying out joint-heirs - the most common way to become a *socius* - that this last was the most prevalent and desirable long-term method of owning land.[105] Reasons why a single ownership was preferred can be deduced from anecdotal evidence from the late Roman West.[106]

Fifth century estates could, then, be divided into separately-owned portions, neither always as a temporary measure resulting from inheritance, nor as a direct result of barbarian incursions, although the latter would certainly have helped to turn fifth century Aquitaine into a veritable carpetbagger's paradise. This may perhaps have been the situation surrounding the moiety of an Arvernian '*prædium Eborolacum*', half of which had been inherited by a certain Donidius who wished to regain possession of the rest from a patrician family who had controlled it before the Visigothic invasions.[107]

It is above all in the sixth century, however, when one begins to encounter a plethora of *portiones* of *villa*-estates in the literary documents. This fractionalisation could be manifested in three ways. A

single estate could be divided up quite literally, as in the earlier example given just above; it could exist as the one property on the ground, but with its revenue and privileges shared between owners - a common source of litigation - or it could have a single owner and possibly even a single name, but be dispersed in segments here and there across the landscape. None of these possibilities were mutually exclusive; all of them appear to have multiplied in *Aquitanica Prima* after the transition from Roman/Visigothic to Frankish control. There are, however, problems in identifying which type of fractionalisation was occurring in which documents.

Portiones and *sortes* appear as physical rather than fiscal entities in the Justinianic, Burgundian and Visigothic lawcodes, along with the term *villa*, out of which their economic value arose, and there is no reason to see this conceptualisation of property-divisions changing under the Merovingian Franks, although references to land-portions in Germanic codes directly relate to barbarian settlement in the early and mid-fifth century[108]. Indeed, Rouche sees the sharing of the same toponym among *villae*, *colonicae* and *portiones*, for example, as 'indices d'une fragmentation des grandes domaines' which he places in the fifth century.'[109] The debate concerning *hospitalitas* in this deserves some discussion in this context.

Some extremely complicated mechanisms have been suggested for early fifth century barbarian allotments in the southern Gallic provinces. The standard, and with some reservations, most prudent view is to accept that initial allocations of two-thirds of most but possibly not all privately-owned Roman estates within a given region were made

to the Germanic invaders.[110] The obvious objection that this specific phenomenon appears to have raised surprisingly little published dismay among either Italian or Gallo-Roman landowners is not itself uncontentious. Even if *hospitalitas* was instigated by Roman hands rather than as a capitulation to barbarian demands, official praise at its imposition in Italy does not necessarily reflect any true popularity.[111] Silence on the issue may even indicate that *hospitalitas* was an acceptable compromise, and if the Visigoths in Gaul were really given two-thirds of the land, Italian landowners (who appear to have lost only one-third, and that not in all regions) may have felt comparatively spared.[112] Given the indeterminacy of the size of Visigothic population in southern Gaul, we cannot be certain how extensive or how localised barbarian allotments would have been in that region, either.

Nevertheless, the presumed peaceful expropriation and reallocation of large areas of privately-owned land by the Roman imperial administration in southern Gaul to individual Goths strains credibility, not least of all in the practical difficulties of property-division. If it were assumed that the same process of division occurred in Gaul as in Ostrogothic Italy, *sortes hospitium* would have been in standardised units, yet Gothic portions would obviously have varied drastically in size if Gallo-Roman estates were individually divided into thirds and then allotted.[113] Rouche's version of events is to suppose that **all** southern Gallo-Roman properties were grouped on paper into uniformly sized units, two-thirds of which were then set aside for a set number of Goths. This method of land allocation is also used to explain why the problematical *Lex Vis.(Euric).*CCLXXVI.3-4 should

have allowed Goths to enter Roman properties to inspect land boundaries, it being assumed by Rouche that the borders in question were those of previously separate estates now grouped together for *hospitalitas*.[114] The law's opening explanation as to why Goths should need to enter '*in loco hospitium*' does not survive in the text, although Rouche accepts the tentative restoration drawn from the later Lex Vis.(Revisus).X.3.5, which deals with ways of determining the authenticity of pre-invasion land-alienations from Roman estates, without specifying the rights of Goths to inspect Roman boundaries from within the Roman property.[115]

Both Rouche and Goffart accept the restored text of CCLXXVI, but the latter in particular can find no explanation of the Visigothic inspection of boundaries within Roman estates for purely proprietorial reasons.[116] Yet an obvious explanation has in one form or another occurred to other scholars, namely, that a Roman landowner could have claimed that he had lost property since his last official *professiones* - upon which the measurement of the barbarian *sors* would have been made - due to sale, appropriation or inheritance.[117] If this claim were fraudulent, however, the Gothic 'third' would have been allotted less than his legal due. Hence the interest of barbarian 'guests' in cases where the validity of changes in estate sizes made before the invasions was called into question through lack of documentation. At any rate, if Rouche's model for *hospitalitas* were accepted, the disruption to land ownership would have been total and inconceivable. For one thing, how would the remaining third of agglomerated estates ever have been satisfactorily re-apportioned among Roman landowners? This was not Vandalic Africa, where deserted territory and public lands could have

helped the dispossessed landlords to be resettled.[118] Corrupt and iniquitous practices may have been endemic in the later Empire, but the opportunities which such a 'system' would have provided for the wealthy would have been on a scale unprecedented even in the days of post-Caesarian settlement of conquered Aquitaine.

Equally convoluted are the implications of Goffart's belief that Goths in both Italy and southern Gaul were allocated a portion not of land but of the land-tax, and so would not have disrupted landholdings except perhaps through gradual encroachment and appropriation beyond the form taken by *hospitalitas* itself. Gaul fits uneasily into Goffart's interpretation of *hospitalitas*, as he readily admits.[119] Unlike Ostrogothic Italy, not only are all the legal documents much later than the period of initial settlement, but also Visigothic aggrandisement only swallowed up piecemeal the various parts of Aquitanian and Narbonese Gaul. There is, then, little reason for Goffart to find it 'astonishing' that Sidonius' famous remark on Seronatus - who had 'filled the villas with guests, the woods with fugitives' - might in fact have been directly alluding to barbarian land-allotments, since this post-dated by more than fifty years the initial Gothic settlements in southwest Aquitaine, and (according to Goffart) must have referred to lands outside Gothic control.[120] Yet Sidonius makes it clear that the Auvergne had been the subject of Gothic incursions for years (*Ep.* III.1.4).

More importantly, for Goffart's version of *hospitalitas* to have worked, two prerequisites must be accepted. One is that the Roman population within the boundaries of the fifth century Visigothic kingdom, either before or after 475, were still liable for an imperial

illatio, two-thirds of which went to a Gothic populace, the remainder eventually to the Gothic fisc.[121] The other - and much more contentious - is that it was somehow practicable to assign to each Goth 'an appropriate fragment of *professio* [the tax declaration of a landholder]...leaving it to him to collect the tax at its source', thus putting the *professiones* 'out of state records and into the hands of a state employee'.[122] Did each Goth, armed with his proto-polyptych, take someone with him who was both literate and Latin-speaking?

Now, the individual tax liability of each Roman landowner was measured in artificial tax-units whose monetary value varied according to the estimated fiscal needs of the Emperor; for the Goths to collect their share of the tax-revenue at source, the tax-units which each landowner and each territory owed to the state would have to have been at a fixed rate. This is not impossible. More importantly, however, each Gothic 'guest' would have been, according to Goffart's own hypothesis, entitled to a standard and set fraction of the apportioned two-thirds of the total land-tax (L), this fraction being L/N, where N was the number of those eligible as '*hospes*'. But the chances of the monetary value of L/N - say, five solidi a year - exactly matching enough individual land-tax assessments to have allowed each Gothic 'guest' to collect the total due to him from only one landowner, are minimal. Anything more complex than this would have been an even greater nightmare than that which late Roman tax collection undoubtedly was. Can one really imagine Goths, travelling across the countryside to collect one part of their due from one landlord, the rest from another, or queueing up peacefully to receive their calculated fractions from those who owed large amounts to the fisc?

Nor would this system have prevented Roman tax collectors from having to continue their own function - of retrieving the remaining 'third' owed to the state.[123] So, apart from the extreme methodology used by Goffart to manipulate every piece of evidence concerning *hospitalitas* in Gaul, no evidence suggests that the collection of their share of land-tax by Goths would have eased the burden of official tax-collectors. If Goths had been allocated land, as an overwhelming corpus of disparate material attests, the ensuing loss of rents and produce may have been a greater financial strain to a Roman than the payment of a pre-existing tax, but it could have been no more irksome than the rapacity with which taxes were habitually collected.

Perhaps the reality was closer to a compromise between Goffart's extreme view - which, if true, would remove all our references to the presence of barbarians in the countryside in this period - and the more widely-held belief in the official appropriation of perhaps initially only one-third, then subsequently two-thirds of Roman-owned estates in the province, which is to say, two-thirds of rural property. Neither proposition is easy to comprehend as it stands. The hypothetically large-scale losses of lands by the landowning classes of the fifth century, right across the scale from small to great proprietors, would have affected the former more severely, if their lands were involved;[124] on the other hand, a concession by the Roman government of tax-revenues to the Visigothic and Burgundian armies would have involved the continued payment of taxes in territories which (for the Goths at least) by the very same agreements were de facto outside Roman control, regardless of any lipservice paid to the supreme authority of Roman *imperium*.

If taxation is removed from the picture altogether, the only remaining alternative to allotments of real estate is analogous to the process of joint inheritance; as with Roman inheritances, a Gothic 'guest' could as joint possessor of an estate choose to receive revenue as an absent 'silent partner', or to work and reside within it; as joint proprietor, he could sell his portion, or buy out the remainder of the *praedium*, or 'realise' it through the physical division of his estimated proportion of the *fundus* on the ground, thus creating a legally as well as materially-defined separate villa-estate. But this still fails to explain how such allotments to individual barbarians could be made to be roughly equal. It still would have been a somewhat messy affair, and like the allocation of *proprietas* as envisaged in the classical view of *hospitalitas*, a process equally open to corruption and favouritism.

No pretence can be made here of any final understanding of the status of either Visigothic or (for the very eastern edge of *Aquitanica Prima*) Burgundian *hospitalitas* in the fifth century, beyond the suggestion that land allocations may neither have been as ubiquitous nor as organised a disruption to land-tenureship as the presence of *sortes* and *portiones* in the barbarian lawcodes suggests. This is not to underestimate the additional activity of Visigoths - and indeed, the Franks - as ad hoc expropriators, nor the process of legalised Visigothic and Frankish confiscations and land allotments, seized and dispensed by kings and royal appointees under the guise of punishments or rewards. But the actual extent and nature of what can only be accepted as **land** rather than purely fiscal allotments to the Visigoths can only be a matter for speculation.

At any rate, if Seronatus' activities which allegedly put *hospes* in *villae* were due to his presence in *Aquitanica I* as governor rather than as *vicarius septem provinciae* or as Gallic Prefect,[125] the possible effects of compulsory land allotments to Visigoths may perhaps have reached as far as eastern Aquitaine in the third quarter of the fifth century. The effects of the Frankish conquest of this region in 507 upon private land ownership clearly did not involve Frankish settlements along any of the lines mooted for *hospitalitas*, nor is it known if the Franks took any interest in revoking land titles of resident Goths in eastern Aquitaine, whether attained by legally or illegally enforced settlement, or sale. Given an unsympathetic Church with Frankish royal patronage, a partial but by no means complete exodus of the Gothic population may have taken place, but at least the southern Aquitanian areas of the Rouergue, Quercy and Albigeois may have retained longest whatever changes had taken place in estate size and divisions at the end of Roman rule. As far as either archaeology or historical analysis can show, significant Frankish settlement anywhere in eastern Aquitaine was neither immediate nor intensive. At the upper end of the proprietorial scale, the survival of several 'great' senatorial families in the region suggests that enough of their large groups of dispersed villa-estates survived for their pre-eminence to continue; of possibly greater contemporary significance to the pattern of landholdings was the aggrandisement of church properties which - equally spread across the landscape, from city-suburb to mountain clearings - could at once join together neighbouring but individually titled estates, and incorporate scattered

fundi whose ancient shared ownership may be deduced from a common toponym.[126]

Just as a *fundus* could be jointly possessed in late Roman times, so too could villas under Frankish rule. This may explain the rather intriguing passage in which Gregory describes a feud involving a presumably freeborn Frank called Sichar, who through his wife had a house in Poitiers and also resided in a Touraine *'villa'*; his enemies went *'ad domum'*, to his *villa*, stole everything, killed some slaves, and burnt down Sichar's house, as well as those belonging to the others, *'qui participes huius villae erant'*. They then carried off anything that was not nailed down, including the livestock (*HF*, VII.47). If all the inhabitants were tenant-farmers, it is suprising to find no mention of a *dominus* or *domina*, given the obvious need for some sort of protection; but it must be admitted that if Sichar was the single owner, it is slightly odd not to find the others described as his inferiors. Nevertheless, Sichar, despite his youth, behaves very much as his own man, and appears to own his own property; and the repeated statement that he had been under Queen Brunhild's protection and patronage (*HF*, IX.19) further reinforces this; there is no suggestion by Gregory that the queen was outraged at Sichar's subsequent death because he worked on a royal estate. If taken to refer to a free community of independent farms, however, this would stand alone as the only unequivocal early Merovingian reference to a *'villa'* taking the physical form of a village-community.

Whether or not joint ownership played its part in the institution of *hospitalitas* - and this is extremely hypothetical - it

has already been seen how the tendency among Gallo-Roman landowners when in the position of *socii* was to attempt to gain single proprietorship, either by buying the heir or partner out (consolidation) or through the realisation of concrete sub-divisions. Of primary concern here, however, are the problems of distinguishing between portions of estates which were physically defined, and those which were merely fiscal entities, for the very simple reason that their early Merovingian descriptions are predominately deeds of donations, which, in the vested interests of various Church bodies, were increasingly forged throughout the Carolingian and later periods, in turn further exacerbating the methodological difficulties.

This, fortunately, is not the case with the testament of Aredius (A.D.591), which, in the absence of any internal indications to the contrary, can be accepted as the authentic last will of the Limousin saint Yrieux rather than a later hagiographical piece of fiction. Within it, numerous sub-units of *villae*-estates are mentioned. The *domus Juliacum*, for example, is named as the '*portio*' belonging to Aredius within the Limousin *fundus Rosiacum* to be donated to the church of S. Martin of Tours.[127] Similarly bequeathed is his portion of the *ager Siscíacensis* (also called *fundus Siscíacensis*), comprising a *domus* with oratory, buildings, fields, woods, meadows, pastures and small open spaces, plus the estate's *mancipia* and the services of three ploughmen. Other *portiones* mentioned in the document specify five-acre units of vineyards and the separate services of vine-dressers in another four acres in *Scauriniacum*; and there are *portiones* which are expressed purely in terms of the dues from servile *colonaria* (*mancipia*), as well as *liberi*; the former generally

owed rent (*tributaria*) to Aredius, half of which was henceforth to go the church, the other half to a monastery; and there were specialist coloni who owed corvée labour, that is, usually upon four acres of vines for their master(s).[128]

At first glance, this emphasis on enumerating the obligations and status of these estates' occupants and workers, particularly of their rent/tribute, might suggest that any **physical** descriptions were merely intended to clarify sources of revenue, in which case these fractions of named estates could have in reality been dispersed across the Limousin, and only existed as units sharing the one title on paper, rendering it impossible even to begin to infer their physical appearance. Yet the will of S. Aredius also functions as a material description of a transfer of ownership which happened to include specified revenues; and the only way of identifying those untitled, individual vineyards or fields within a named estate such as *Scauriniacum* was by describing their possessors (in this case, tenants enjoying usufruct but of course not outright ownership). Hence, the only apparently complete estate bequeathed by Aredius, *Genuliacum*, has no internal listing of farm units, but rather a standard list of valuable or taxable property: houses, fields, woods, meadows.[129]

It seems likely, then, that the portions ennumerated in this testament were in fact discrete parts of larger, geographically unified *villa*-estates, each with a given legal title, but which may be presumed to have been held in multiple ownership. The only logical alternative to this is that the reference to a named *villa*-estate, such as the *fundus Rosiacum*, was not as a rural property but merely as an administrative location-marker, like the more common opening allusions

to *civitas/territorium* and *pagus/vicus*. If such were the case, one would have to think of each portion itself as a legally discretely-owned area of land - in practical terms, an estate. But the fact that these do not have their own toponyms (unlike, for example, *colonicae*), the difference in the detail of description between portions and whole *villa*-estate property in this legacy, and impossibility of using a *fundus* in an administrative sense, makes all this very unlikely.

Now, Aredius ought to have held allodial title to all the property in his bequest, whether donating this complete proprietorial title or just the rents and labour services. Unlike aristocratic legacies, especially from the eighth century onwards, there was no need for a monk such as Aredius to retain his allodial ownership whilst donating *usufruct*, for he appears to have had no heirs who might wish to retain legal rights to the properties. Since in some cases, however, only the revenue and services are mentioned, it follows that, in these properties, Aredius held joint ownership with other unnamed individuals, and that his listings of those *portiones* within these estates in fact set out those specific farms and vineyards allocated to him in order to provide his share of that estate's total income, rather than the entire estate-revenue being collected on masse and then apportioned out to the joint-owners.

Clear distinction must be made here between elements within a *villa*-estate, and estates within the corpus of an indiviual's landholdings. That the latter were often scattered throughout and beyond a province is well-documented for both the late Roman and early mediaeval periods; but whether the sub-units of '*villa X*' - which may be either financial (the value of corvée labour) or physical

entiities (the land upon which labour was due) - were scattered or grouped within estate, is wholly beyond the evidence of bequests.

Very rarely in the sixth century, however, *portiones* are listed with one or more *domus* within them, as with Aredius' lands within the *Ager Sisciacum*.[130] In other words, they could even comprise that section of an estate containing the main domanial dwelling; but this has nothing to do with *desmesne*, in the classical mediaeval sense; it simply implies that this section of the estate contained a proprietor's residence, whether past or present. Whether large landowners would have preferred their country seats in an estate under their sole or familial legal control is unclear, especially given the mobility of the politically active landowning classes in Merovingian Aquitaine. More commonly, however, these portions appear only to contain colonate and/or slave-worked-farms.

As Rouche has observed, *portiones* of domaines are probably unrelated to the appearance of those proprietorial units called '*colonicae*'.[131] That these were separate from *villae* - that is, single rent-farms as opposed to a corpus of them (a *villa*) - is supported by the rarity of allusions to them within, as opposed to alongside, *villae* in bequests, at least until the very late seventh century, when they appear as sub-categories of *villae* in the rent-lists of S. Martin of Tours. If correct, this further suggests that *villa*-estates were geographically cohesive collections of tenant-farms and lands, for otherwise there would be no point in distinguishing between an isolated, and usually named *colonica* and an unnamed colonate tenancy within a *villa*. This still, however, does not mean that the tenant-residences on an estate were necessarily nucleated.

In other words, such *villae* and fractions of *villae* are only geographically described where this adds precision to the exact inventory of all revenue-producing properties. The legal use of the terms *villa*, *colonica*, *fundus*, and so forth, therefore straddles the physical and the fiscal. They are not wholly divorced from reality, as Goffart believes, if only because of the perennial need to elucidate exactly what is due to whom from what particular property; but they are not always clearly descriptive in the material sense. The problem is that these colonate or servile farms, fields, meadows, vineyards, woods, ponds and streams collected under the heading of a *villa* could be in reality as dispersed across a region as was the total estate of an individual, brought together only on paper in a legacy.

In reality, indirect evidence suggests that, in the Merovingian period at least, an estate whose revenue was divided among several recipients could have been fairly unified on the ground. In the comprehensive early seventh century testament of Bertrand of Le Mans, halves of named estates are bequeathed to a church, other halves given to individuals for their *usufructum* in their lifetimes, but whose ownership in perpetuity was to go to the same church. Again, portions of *fundi* and *villae* abound; the emphasis appears to be upon consolidating the previously divided revenue from estates: for example, both the portion which had belonged to Nunciana in the *villa Taurîniacum* (which in turn subsequently came to Bertrand, probably through the royal fisc) and the other portion inherited by Bertrand in the same estate were to go to the church of Le Mans.[1] The inference is that these *villae* would have been geographically discrete units. Similarly, the small vineyards in the *villa Iccîrcum* whose revenue

already benefitted the church were to be supplemented by the gift of the whole *villa*; half of the vineyards from *Locellum Fontanido*, which Bertrand owned in total, were to provide the usufruct for a single family until the parents' death, whereupon the whole also went to the church.[133] Some portions comprised dwellings and *mancipia*, some - as in Aredius' will - specified only the type of agricultural activity to provide revenue. Occasionally, reference seems to be made to portions culled from more than one estate (for instance, Bertrand's *portio 'in fundo Methense et Voligione'*, although this could have been two merged estates, or a jointly-held *fundus* which kept its original owners' names). Certainly, income from more than one *villa* could be treated as a single entity: Bertrand received a third of the revenue from a corpus of Burgundian lands, as a gift from the king and major-domo.[134]

The detail of Bertrand's will makes the nature of these fractions of *villae* more clearly than the commonest forms of surviving *diplomata*, which usually confirm aspects of private inheritances or bestow tax-immunities for massive donations to churches and monasteries. For example, the Rouergue *villae* inherited from their mother by two brothers, Beppolenus and Ursinus, between 629 and 639, are described in the fashion derived from standard Roman census description; but we have no idea how these estates were regrouped into the brothers' respective '*porciones*',[135] since this was merely a royal confirmation of allodial inheritance, unconcerned with the actual process of inheritance.

Certainly, villa-estates were clearly being physically divided and donated in the sixth and seventh centuries as they had during the Empire. One example was the donation to a new monastic settlement of

woodland at Vensat, in the Auvergne:

'Multa terrarum spatio..Erat enim saltus

ex domo Vindiciacensis'. (*VP* XII.3)

Such plots of land could be properly alienated from the estate and given to a monastic cell. In this case, the arable land of this villa was not divided into new, smaller estates; here, the *saltus* was merely separated from the main, arable and inhabited area of this domain.

By contrast, a document of A.D.626 records the physical measurement and partition of a legacy of land - **not** revenue - in the Limousin.[136] It may be reasonably assumed that one, or possibly two original estates were involved in this bequest by a single, original owner, which was to be divided among two parties. Nowhere in the document are any pieces of land called *fundi* or *prædia*; and perhaps more importantly for this study, none of the bequeathed areas are termed *villae*. The non-use of the label for the lands being allocated to the various heirs gains significance if only because a '*villa Fornulus*' does appear as a landmark for the boundaries, but was not included within any of the allotments. Nor is there any hint as to what the 'villa' constituted. Where translated by commentators, this *villa Fornulus* is often interpreted as a *village Fornulus*, but just because it does not appear as the possession of the bequest-donor, it does not of course automatically follow that it was an independent settlement, rather than an owned property inhabited and run as an estate by someone else. In any case, perhaps the lands which **were** up for division and inheritance were not deemed suitable properties for the title of *villa* or *fundus* because of the lack of master-residences and in some cases because of the non-agricultural nature of the lands

involved; the only buildings mentioned within these properties were otherwise unspecified *mansiones*, and two *facti*, each of which belonged to a slave.[137] It should be added that the region is today densely wooded and extremely hilly, with only the occasional small, interspersed cultivated clearing, and there is no evidence to suggest that it radically differed in the late Roman or mediaeval periods.

That this *diploma* is not a legacy, but the documentation of land-division, does not adequately explain the non-use of titles for the properties undergoing division; but the fact that the land is not treated in terms of any kind of revenue may be related to the fact that these sub-divided lands are not called *portiones*, either. Nevetheless, it is clear that all legacies were primarily concerned with revenue, some of which could amount to the buying-price of several smaller estates; in the early sixth century, for example, the Rouergue *villa Rotovollo* yielded five hundred solidi, to pay for the lighting of the church of S. Stephen at Metz; roughly contemporary are the figures of estate prices paid by Bertrand throughout central *Francia*, ranging from thirty to one hundred and forty solidi.[138] Under Childebert III, one '*porcio*'^(sic) of the Abbot Chainon was valued at the equivalent of six hundred solidi, but whether the exchange of this property in lieu of a debt for this amount reflected market prices or the revenue-value of the estate is not known.[139]

Less reliable than the category of original early Merovingian bequests for central France - or of 'accurate' copies of them - are those Carolingian or later documents which are presumed, on the basis of internal inconsistencies in nomenclature, to have incorporated earlier material in their compilation. One example is the Carolingian

Vita s. Desiderii whose author may have drawn upon original documents for its long lists of early seventh century donations by that bishop of Cahors. It, too, names *portiones* from named estates, although not labelled *villae*; however, far more frequent was the donations of what the author called '*multa terrarum compendia, multa villarum prædia*'.[140] Despite its immense *villa*-listings, it is virtually impossible to determine if this terminology derived from contemporary, or original but now lost Merovingian texts (such as Desiderius' own will), mainly because descriptions of the internal compositions of *villa* are lacking. Indisputably Carolingian villa-lists can usually be identified by their increasingly formulised, internal lists of estate-**contents**.

Now, there has been a great deal of very recent research on the nature of the Carolingian *villa* which, traditionally, had been seen to reflect 'feudal' social structures: a central lord's desmesne or *curtis* contained a manorial residence and some fields which were worked both by slave and corvée labour from *coloni* bound to their surrounding strip-fields, and who inhabited surrounding, dependent *mansi*. As Bloch put it, a *villa* was 'an area of land so organised that the greater part of the profits drawn from it occurs directly or indirectly to a single master'; and it was this layout which Percival meant when he called the late Roman villa 'in all but name a desmesne'.[141]

However, it is becoming increasingly clear that such an institution never widely existed, except in theory; even a *villa* or a manse of the ninth and tenth centuries was typically 'owned' by more than one noble at a time, for they too were divided into *portiones* of halves, thirds, sixteenths and expressed in terms of *mansi*, **which were donated and then re-donated over generations** to various churches or

monasteries. These repeated donations of the same lands suggested both to French scholars Bange and Magnou-Nortier - who have both done most extensive and recent work on this - that they were donations not of legal ownership (*proprietas*) but of possession, that is, *usufruct*.'[142] Hence the need for renewed donation. In practice, the bequest in perpetuity of the rent-profits from an estate, or part of one, gave the Church virtual proprietorship, and when combined with the gifts of allodial lands to the Church, gave added impetus to the latter to seek tax exemptions for their properties.

The legal description of Carolingian '*villae amasatae*' was intended, like those of Merovingian texts, as an inventory of all revenue-producing property; in reality, these later estates could take the form of a village or of smaller, geographically distinct units, usually a number of *mansi*. For example, in 962 the vice-count Arcambaldus donated *mansi* to the Limousin abbey S. Martin-de-Tulle:

> '*...in pago Lemovico, in vicaria Navense,*
>
> *in villa quae dicitur Serre unum...*'[143]

Because *mansi* were not allodial properties, but only lands within estates tilled by *coloni* or *servi*, they were identified in early mediaeval texts not by place-name (they had none) but by farmer, in which sense they were real farming-units or vineyards. Since what is being donated is their profit, however, this - like *villae* themselves - could be expressed in fractions, such as the '*medietatem de manso meo de Felinis*', donated in the same bequest by Arcambaldus.

In the Limousin, Auvergne and Rouergue of the ninth and tenth centuries, *villa*-estates did sometimes also appear in documents as geographically defined entities, '*in valle sive villa*', but only because

of the landscape of cleared valleys amongst wooded hills; such natural units do not appear in texts concerning open plains, such as the Causses of the Cévennes, or the Berry.[144] How then does the Carolingian *villa* as perceived here compare with the Merovingian *villa* of sixth and seventh century legacies?

As far as fiscal fractionalisation is concerned, the similarities are strong, although the use of *mansi* to express a fiscal portion is rare for the early Merovingian period in Aquitaine, and may have been introduced from the north when it became commonplace in the ninth and tenth centuries.[145] The standard description of an early Merovingian *villa*, using Roman precedents, does develop into the Carolingian period. In 542, a small estate of Caesarius of Arles in southern Gaul without a *villa*-house was described:

...et omnibus sibi pertinentibus, pascuis,

paludibus, cum omni jure et termino suo..

The more standardised description listed each *villa* with:

...adjecencias earum tam in terris,

domebus, edificiis, mancipiis, silvis,

pratis, pascuis, peculiis,...[146]

Fuller descriptions, such as those in Nizezius' and Irmitrude' bequest to Moissac in the Quercy of Toulosain *villae* in 680, approach the often lengthier formulae of *villae* in Carolingian polyptychs:

...hoc est terris, domibus, mancipiis,

acolabus, viniis, silvis, pratis, pascuis,

aquis aquarumve decursibus, peculis,

presidiis, movile et immovile...[147]

Apart from minor linguistic changes, new terms begin to appear from

the late seventh century onwards: increasing numbers of *curtes*, the use of '*casa*' for '*domus*'; the economic value of *villae* '*cum farinariis*' or '*molendibus*' starts to be listed, despite the existence (albeit not in large numbers) of water mills in both late Roman and early mediaeval rural *Aquitanica I.*'[48]

But as far as the physical differences between the layout of the various parts of a Carolingian *villa* and its predecessors are concerned, this is as far as we can go. In the eighth and particularly the ninth centuries, '*vicaria*' overshadows the '*vicus*' as a villa's administrative location-setter, and, more importantly for this thesis, '*ecclesiae*' replace '*oratoria*' within rural estates. As the following chapters shall show, it is this last which may demonstrate a change in the physical layout and appearance of late Merovingian and Carolingian *villae* from those in the early mediaeval period in central Gaul, a change towards the creation of village-communities of tenant-farmers.

In sum, it appears that the typical early mediaeval landowner who could afford to donate lands to the Church was one who gained rents from a larger number of separate *villa*-estates under multiple ownership - whether these *villae* were all clustered together or scattered through a region - rather than of wholly-owned *fundi*; nor . . his or her principal rural residence always have been located within an estate under sole proprietorship. The overall trend can be seen in both the amassments of Merovingian villa-portions and of Carolingian *mansi* within *villae.* No clear evidence indicates that the ubiquity of Merovingian *portiones* differed in practice from the *sortes* of joint-owners under the Empire; the hypothesis that *hospitalitas* helped to fractionalise either the physical appearance of

fifth century *villae* or their estate-profits is **extremely** tentative.

Still unclear from the literary evidence, however, is whether the internal components of either a late Roman or early mediaeval rural estate were 'typically' amassed together or dispersed. Although some mountain-pastures, woods, marshes and vineyards might be physically separated from the estate whose legal title they shared, it would make sense for the arable areas of a single estate, with a single name, to be contiguous; but the land-divisions of 626 in the mountains of eastern Limousin demonstrate the way in which inheritance could easily disperse arable and pastoral areas of the one estate. It is not the intention of this study to examine in any depth the labour relationships within *villae*, beyond noting that, as a collection of lands, the early Merovingian *villa* in Aquitaine was probably worked mostly by rent-*coloni* in their own fields; they as well as their landlords may have used skilled slave labour, especially in viticulture, and perhaps some rural artisanal activities, as well as seasonal hired day-labour. Corvée labour could be interpreted as prima facie evidence of a 'desmesne' in the classical sense of the *dominus' or domini*'s lands, although these did not necessary immediately suround a main residence; but corvées were, apart from the Will of Aredius, both extremely uncommon in Merovingian Aquitaine, and confined to specialised work. If the creation of a formulaic description of early mediaeval *villae* on paper both hides its physical layout and blurs its physical transformation during the early post-Roman period, it remains for us to turn to another source of evidence for both late Roman and mediaeval 'villae,' that of toponymy.

Chapter Three: Toponymic Evidence and the Transformation of the Late Roman *Villa* in *Aquitanica Prima*

In any investigation of the nature and evolution of late Roman to Merovingian rural estates, the analysis of place-names plays a major part. The methodological problems of using both modern toponyms and contemporary Roman and Frankish documented examples of *villa*-names will be dealt with as each case arises; but they can be summarised as being essentially anachronistic. On the one hand, this category of evidence is numerically balanced heavily in favour of the mediaeval over the Gallo-Roman period. Yet cartularies and annals can include either later mediaeval fabrications of supposedly earlier material, or incorporate anachronistic descriptions of the status and name of a rural site as well as *villa*-lists which may well derive unchanged from an 'authentic' but now lost source. In combination, this can make difficult the task of identifying Merovingian or even late Roman elements from Carolingian or later sources. On the other hand, implicitly anachronistic modern assumptions are often made concerning the implications of toponymic continuity, whether of a drifting or stable population focus or of the static nature of its geographical limits.

The study of place-names lies rather uneasily between history and archaeology. It has been used by researchers in both fields for three main purposes: as an indication of continuity or discontinuity of site identity, and thus - with some methodological reservations - of site settlement; to provide a coarse distribution map of Celtic,

Gallo-Roman or Germanic presence, through both the characteristics of linguistic usage and of personal (landowners') names within a *lieu-nom*; and as a means of ascertaining ancient estate-size. To attempt either of the last two aims presumes the success of the first, since neither villa-boundaries nor ethnic presences can be pinpointed by a modern place-name unless it is assumed that its antiquity can be traced in the first place.

Villae form a central core of toponymic interest, and, broadly stated, focus upon the three aims just mentioned. The derivation of modern French place-names ending in *-ac/ec/as/at/et* from Latin *-acum/iacum* and Celtic *-ioalo* estate-names, which have survived in particular proliferation south and west of the Loire,[149] provides a basic thread of site-continuity from estate to modern field, hamlet or town, upon which the historical implications of social and economic stability remain to be spun out. The geographical pattern of Germanic toponymic elements (for instance, the suffix *-ingas*, no longer seen as specifically Gothic), can be used to demonstrate one type of discontinuity, both of site owner and site-name,[150] just as the comparatively greater survival of *-acum* names in southern Gaul than in the north provides a rough guide to the historically attested strength of Gallo-Roman landowners in Aquitaine and Provence.[151] Finally, the nature of the early mediaeval landscape, no less, has been explored by the relationship between ancient *villa* remains, relics of Latin estate-names, and contemporary local boundaries, the assumption being that if they correspond at all today, their mediaeval collocation would have been even greater, and therefore the disruption of Germanic conquests upon earlier land organisation would have been

correspondingly slight. Yet how effective have these studies in fact been for our knowledge of the fate of Gallo-Roman estates within the early Middle Ages?

Site Abandonment:

At first glance, the answer has to be that such studies have contributed very little to the debate surrounding late Roman/early mediaeval site abandonment, beyond the generalisations made above. Categories of surviving place-names which directly concern this question fall roughly into three groups, in ascending order of usefulness: those explicitly indicative of ruination or abandonment; those explicitly referring to a new foundation or refoundation; and those which could only have been named in the early Middle Ages, that is, using either Visigothic or early Frankish formations or components, as well as sites whose names can be shown historically to have changed during this period.

More useful to the archaeologist than to the historian are modern place-names which directly indicate the presence of masonry remains, by nature overwhelmingly Gallo-Roman. A selection from the commonest in the Massif Central, for example, includes the modern 'Les Murs/Murettes', 'Champ des Pierres', 'Les Terres Rouges' or 'Les Mazières' or 'La Mazère' [**Site N°s 25, 41, 61**], the last two names appearing in this form only in the later Middle Ages and deriving from *macería*, an enclosure wall.[152] A less obvious example is Bussière-Etable [**Site N° 56**], the first element of which indicates the presence of boxwood, which flourishes around any type of ruins of any date; indeed, in the Limousin, where cremation remained a favoured form of burial throughout

the Roman period, these place-names coincide with the discovery of ossuaries. An early example of a '*villa Busxerias*' appears for northern Berry in A.D.697.[153]

There are, however, no means of determining how many occupation sites called, for example, Mazeirat or Mazeirac had been so-named long before they first appeared in any number in records of the twelfth century (although place-names which use the definite article, such as 'Les Mazières', are apparently no earlier than the tenth century)[154]. Audin's comment that, for the Val de Loire, this last place-name often accompanies 3rd-4th century remains, might at first glance suggest that this began as a late Roman/early Mediaeval name-type, if it were not for the fact that most 'abandoned' Gallo-Roman sites appear from datable material to date from this period (rather than from the 2nd-3rd centuries) anyway. Given the problems of dating these types of place-names - suggestive of a clear disruption of site-function and/or occupation - one ought perhaps to concentrate upon their appearance in Frankish documents, where they are noticeably infrequent; they remain rare throughout the entire early Middle Ages. To this author's knowledge, the earliest undisputed Merovingian allusion to a *villa* '*Macerias*' is in the *Testamentum* of Bertrand, bishop of Le Mans, dated ca.616 and located outside southern Francia; another, not specified as a *villa*, appears in a *Life* of Abbot Furseius, probably written in 731, but not in any case before the abbot's death in the 650s'[155]. The only other early example is both central Aquitanian and dates from the Carolingian *Life* of Desiderius of Cahors, which records the donation of a '*villa Maciriacum*' (from *maceria* plus *-acum*) by Desiderius to the *monasterium Cadurcae*. If it can be assumed that the saint's biographer drew upon

available and authentic lists of *villae* donations, this attestation may be almost as early as that of Bertrand's.[156] It remains, if genuine, the only pre-tenth century central Gallic site whose name acknowledges some earlier ruination. As there is no reason to suppose that the surviving *villa*-lists are less than representative of the range of contemporary place-names, the lack of such names cannot be explained through the paucity of Merovingian as opposed to later documentation, for, whatever else is lacking from Merovingian historical sources, the bias of church estate records renders villa-lists prolific. That the overwhelming majority of place-names suggestive of ruined abandonment probably date only from late mediaeval and early modern times is further supported by the fact that a vast amount of Gallo-Roman ruins remained highly visible in the countryside right up until the rural building boom of the later seventeenth century.[157]

Two more obvious and useful categories of place-names may reflect the disruption of either land occupation or ownership: these are '*Novo*-' toponyms, and those which are based upon Germanic radicals. Here again, it is perhaps more profitable to look at their earliest attestations than to their modern distribution, partly because those using Germanic roots or construction were created as late as the tenth and eleventh centuries (for example, place-names ending in '-*ville*'), and partly so as to be more certain that a site was in fact a *villa* in the Roman, and not later mediaeval sense of the word.

Of Frankish-based rural toponyms, the most that can be safely said about them is that they are scarce in Gregory of Tours - and rarest of all in central Aquitaine - compared with Gallo-Roman names,

as might be expected after only a century of barbarian control; nevertheless, they increase in popularity throughout the seventh century until, of some thirty *villae* mentioned for the Berry region in a document of A.D.697, roughly a third incorporate Germanic personal names.[158] This high proportion of patently 'early mediaeval' names does not, however, necessarily indicate ownership by Franks rather than Gallo-Romans, if only because by this period personal names are no longer a reliable indication of ethnic origins.

It is, of course, impossible even to guess at the rates by which estates had changed names during the *pax Romana*, or indeed to determine the proportion of old to new names (including new estates as well as renamed ones) at **any** given time in antiquity, far less to correlate these with changes of ownership. There is, then, for the early Frankish period no point in attempting to find an accurate proportion of Germanic to Gallo-Roman place-names, since there is no such thing as a 'normal', or indeed an earlier, curve of name-changes for comparisons. Nevertheless, given the massive shift towards Germanic personal names in the entire Merovingian population - whether classified as Frank or Roman 'by birth' - which appears to have occurred by the end of the sixth century, this rise in villas with Germanic names such as *Macho* (A.D.574), the Gothic *Etorfollingus-villa* (680), or *Bragogilus* (697)[159] might perhaps have represented no more than the 'usual' turnover of place-names, derived from the normal land division through inheritance (without primogeniture), sale, aggrandisement and confiscation. Evidence for the last two processes appears in the narrative sources, not from toponymy; and if Gothic settlements under the rubric of *hospitalitas* had ever made any great impact in the ownership or division of

property in the Gallo-Roman landscape, it clearly does not survive in either modern place-names or even in the toponymic evidence provided by contemporary early mediaeval sources, in which Frankish or (for southern Aquitaine) Visigothic place-names blossom only from the seventh century onwards, and not earlier.

This is not to deny that barbarians settled in central Aquitaine: the historical evidence is indisputable, from the Suevian garrison attested by the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the Auvergne to the presence of a Gothic resident landowner (and not merely political control) attested by Gregory of Tours as far north as the valley of the Indre by the end of the fifth century (*VP*, XVIII) as well as in the Rouergue both before and for some time after Clovis' victory at Vouillé.[160] What is debatable is the extent and type of barbarian communities within *Aquitanica Prima*. Excluding place-names derived from a Frankish ethnic root, only toponyms which declare another Germanic tribal identity provide a category of place-names which, for historical reasons, almost certainly date from the initial barbarian settlements in *Aquitanica Prima*, regardless of the 'late' date of their documentation. Two examples of these exist for our province, both called a '*villa Gotorum*', both dating from A.D.844 and located in northern Berry; the likelihood is that these would only have been founded or named anew between ca. A.D.476 and 507.[161] Whether these Carolingian *villae* - by the ninth century this word was also applied to communities larger and substantially more nucleated than an estate with villa-house - were **originally** villa-estates, communal villages, hamlets or garrisons, is impossible to say. The same holds for the very few modern toponyms based on non-Frankish tribal names present in northern Aquitaine: using Rouche's

lists, only four of these survive, less than a third of the total for the province as a whole (the remaining two-thirds appear in areas under intermittent Visigothic control). Indeed, their very rarity supports one modern interpretation of them as evidence, not of a Roman type of estate, but of garrisons-settlements.[162]

In the extreme south of the province, however, Gothic and occasional Taifalic toponyms could have been established over a much greater time-span. Hence, the early seventh century *villa* in southern Rouergue called '*Theufales*' in the *Life* of Desiderius could have been either founded or simply renamed at any time during the previous two hundred years;[163] its greatest historical value is perhaps that, whether derived in name from Taifalic owners or from its inhabitants (not always one and the same), it nevertheless had fallen into the hands of a wealthy and self-proclaimedly Gallo-Roman family by the early seventh century. However their origins may be interpreted, the fact remains that place-names derived from any sort of Germanic element which can be identified as pre-Romance are very rare in *Aquitanica Prima* when compared with the Visigothic south, Frankish Burgundy to the east or northern Francia itself.

Land Clearance in the Early Middle Ages:

Before turning to the second category of estate-names which explicitly indicate 'new' foundations, it may be useful to summarise the debate concerning the level of early mediaeval land clearance in Gaul. Modern opinion falls, broadly speaking, into three camps concerning this issue. The first maximises land abandonment from the third century onwards, and minimises the success of imperial and subsequent regal

efforts to reverse the trend until the end of the Merovingian dynasty and in particular the 'programme' during the reign of Charlemagne, thus relegating the fifth and sixth centuries to a period of agricultural stagnation, as well as declining population. In this view, both Roman and Merovingian legal measures which favoured the reclamation of *agri deserti* are assumed to have been formulated and repeated not because they were successful, but because of their failure.

Conversely, a high level of deliberate early Merovingian assarting has been hypothesised, most extensively by Rouche in his monumental work on Visigothic and Merovingian Aquitaine: clearance, that is, of the *saltus*, but more particularly of public and private estates deserted through gradual economic oppression, depopulation, the movement of *rustici* from their own farms to the protective embrace of local potentates, and the fifth century incursions. In this view, the barbarian conquests served initially to accelerate a previously existing trend of estate abandonment; and as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church in particular was already responding with deliberate efforts at land clearance. The third view downplays - without excluding - this cycle of abandonment/reclamation, emphasising instead a moderate amount of early Frankish and Visigothic land clearance of previously 'marginal' zones: marshes, forests and mountains. Either of the last two views are the more popular of recent interpretations made by historians.[164]

Archaeological evidence plays no direct part in the question of land abandonment, if only for the obvious reason that an isolated example of a deserted Gallo-Roman *villa*-house does not of itself mean that its surrounding lands were also disused or even deserted. There

is, however, anecdotal literary evidence for early mediaeval land clearance in Gaul, as well as scattered references in Roman and Merovingian legal *diplomata* and church *concilia*; the latter, for instance, forbade all forms of agricultural activity on Sundays, including assarting, which is next to last in priority on the list.[165] That land abandonment did occur throughout the late Roman period in central Aquitaine, as elsewhere in Gaul, is undisputed, as the scattered presence of early to mid Gallo-Roman sites in the forests of the Sologne in Berry and Forez between the Allier and Loire rivers clearly shows. What is questionable - and probably unanswerable - is the scale and type of subsequent clearance which took place. For the two areas just mentioned, for example, renewed encroachment upon the forests did not recommence until the later Middle Ages, whilst the dense Gallo-Roman settlement of the Bourbonnaise forest of Tronçais was never recleared at all.[166]

A certain amount of unwarranted manipulation of the evidence was required by Rouche so that he could find in these particular forms of evidence 'un véritable programme de défrichement ... à partir de terres incultes' undertaken by the Gallic Church from the very end of Roman rule, if not before. Two examples of supposed assartings - one lay, one ecclesiastical - which Rouche drew from the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris illustrate this clearly.[167]

One is the case of a *praedium* called Eborolacum (modern Ebreuil, on the banks of the Sioule in the Auvergne), which certainly involved an abandoned segment of a rural estate which had fallen under the control of a patrician family prior to the Visigothic invasions. For Rouche, this is evidence of tenants fleeing before the Visigothic advance, and land

reclamation by local patrician landowners. As Sidonius describes the case, however, a different story emerges, and it is one all too familiar to any student of Roman - especially late Imperial - litigation. The entire estate had originally belonged to the family of one Donidius who inherited and retained one half from his father, whilst the other half can be reasonably assumed to have remained with either his mother or a sister, since it was administered (not very capably, as it had been left to waste) by Donidius' step-father until the latter's death; now Donidius wants to regain this remaining, alienated half.[168] It is not at all certain that the other wealthy but unnamed family had claimed this land in the hope of gaining title to it under the laws of land reclamation, or whether they had in fact bought it, or had even inherited it, since Sidonius is most unspecific as to how exactly Donidius had lost *dominium* over half the family property; his legal, proprietorial rights to this land are not raised at all. In fact, Sidonius is careful to reiterate that the only motivation behind Donidius' claim was family sentiment, although this rather ingenuous statement is probably an attempt to avoid giving the impression that Donidius' interest in the lands was only roused after someone else had invested time and money into their reclamation.

The second reference concerns an Arvernian refugee who, out of desperation, has tilled some land belonging to the church of Auxerre on a temporary and individual basis, and for whom Sidonius seeks exemption from the rent due to this church so that the man and his family could use the amount saved to finance their return to Clermont-Ferrand. But one can scarcely claim that this episode demonstrates the Church's interest in land reclamation on anything other than a charitable and decidedly ad hoc basis; moreover, it is perfectly possible that this desperate refugee had

attempted to appropriate part of a meadow, or wood, or even vacant lots within the citywalls of Auxerre as much as any truly **deserted** agricultural land (just as in 616 Bertram of Le Mans claimed, 'Vineolas ... de deserto recuperavi' between a town street and its *oppidum* walls).'[169]

What does emerge from both cases is a high level of opportunistic land exploitation or appropriation and some emphatically transient agricultural abandonment in the face of invasion. The first is a phenomenon which could and did occur under more peaceful circumstances, as Symmachus for example outlines in *Relationes*, XXVIII, for late fourth century Italy, where the outrageous legal wranglings of the heirs of joint *consortes* in a large *massa fundorum* involved the abduction of witnesses, and necessitated the checking of tax records to prove ownership. One of the seven letters dubiously attributed to Sulpicius Severus, but possibly of the same general date, is addressed to one Salvius, who appears to have appropriated a '*fundus Volusianus*' after the death of its owner, Dionysius, and may have been attempting to alienate and sell off twenty *iugera* to invest in shipping. The need for renewed agricultural exploitation could be simply engendered by bad or incapable management in any period, as Paulinus of Pella shows by his take-over of his wife's property in *Aquitanica II*, which had run to seed through the neglect of an elderly grandfather, prior to barbarian invasion.'[170]

Rouche's belief that the early Frankish church practised land clearance of deserted lands on a large scale rests, however, on two grander strands of evidence. The first lies with the legal reaffirmations by Merovingian kings of the presumed content of the earlier *Theodosian Code* V, 15, which encouraged reclamation by squatters of imperial **fiscal** land. Yet the Frankish decrees laid a slightly different emphasis; they

did not explicitly confine themselves to fiscal lands, although they did spell out that anyone - 'church, cleric or provincial citizen' - could claim land if he could prove possession (that is, occupation and thus utilisation) of it for at least thirty years; and they obviously thought it important enough to confirm the practice at least twice.'[71] The problem is, of course, that for this to be valid evidence for land reclamation throughout the early Merovingian period, one must take the paradoxical view that there was a contemporary and continuing process of abandonment: otherwise the repeated legislation loses its relevance. So, just as worsening climatic conditions have been unconvincingly trundled forth to 'explain' late Roman land abandonment, so too Rouche attempts to demonstrate the poor climatic conditions of the sixth century, and much improved harvests for the seventh century, all of which stems from a particularly naive interpretation of Gregory of Tours' litany of (usually very localised) bad harvests and crop failures in the sixth century, and the miraculously high yields of a single Rouergue estate belonging to the holy saint Desiderius in the seventh century, as recorded in that saint's *Vita*![72]

The second, more ingenious strand of evidence equates the rise of the colonate and the complexities of late Roman taxation with a programme of land reclamation, from which Rouche concludes that any estate carrying the obligation of *canones, agraria, illatio* or *pascuaria* was, ipso facto, a *praedium* carved from deserted lands. If this were true, then most church-owned rural properties would have been reclaimed, and that same *colonus* upon the Rouergue estate *Rusticiacum* in the early seventh century who boasted of his lands' fecundity under the blessing of Desiderius' bishopric, and who owed the Cathedral of Cahors an *illatio* therefore - to

Rouche - 'must' have been working newly cleared lands. Similarly, he rewords a letter of Desiderius, dated ca.647, in which that bishop requests that:

> '*Et de condiciunculas domni Stephani [of Metz],*
>
> *undecumque fuerint exortas, adhibete solicitudinem...*'[173]

so that '*exartas*' is substituted for '*exortas*', although the latter is plausible (if awkward in its context), and thus manufactures an explicit reference to assarts undertaken by a northern Frankish church in Desiderius' diocese.

In fact, a wealth of anecdotal evidence shows that the primary means of the Church's acquisition of Aquitanian land under the Merovingians was through the donation of **working** estates, and **not**, as Rouche asserted, through the reclamation of deserted royal properties inherited from the Roman fisc, nor of private abandoned lands. Only one case exists out of many for the Merovingian period as a whole of a donation to a monastic community of unworked, non-agricultural land in Aquitaine, this being woodland at Vensat - itself a valuable commodity - which was subsequently partially cleared by the monks (*VP*, XIII.3). Other examples of woodland clearance exist, of course, but virtually nothing is known of the nature of their pre-monastic ownership: these will be discussed in detail below. Furthermore, one cannot interpret repeated sixth century royal Frankish complaints that 'our wealth has passed to the Church'[174] as a contemporary acknowledgement of the large-scale clearance of fiscal lands by the Church, as Rouche does, for such an interpretation would surely ignore a basic fact of fiscal finance, namely, that kings would scarcely have lost out if their own *agri desrti* were restored to agricultural productivity per se, since neither tax or

rent could be collected from abandoned properties in the first place. Is there any need to see royal donations of estates, which are overwhelmingly described as established, working agricultural *villae*, as anything other than equivalent to donations by other pious individuals who gave properties on an equally lavish scale, at least on paper? Chilperic's lament was surely against the moral and ecclesiastical pressure laid upon him to grant immunities for Church properties from most (but not all) financial obligations to the treasury; in time these became virtually automatic for lands donated by royalty, but were also increasingly sought for Church lands previously in private hands; hence the complaint of a very real transfer of revenue provided by active estates from the fisc to the Church.

Toponymic evidence plays a part in this debate, although names which testify to assarts or to denuded lands, including ones such as 'Les Grandes Pièces' [**Site N° 22**], can only be shown to date from the great, later mediaeval clearances.[175] In the Brivadois area, an isolated woodland clearing with Gallo-Roman remains and 'early' place-name, such as Champagnac (Allier), appears to have served only as the base for much later and more numerous clearings - with Romance toponyms - from the early tenth century.[176] Even on a microtoponymic scale, these later assarts show up far more strongly than any Gallo-Roman or Merovingian clearances, as P. Maureille has shown for the canton of Neuvic in Corrèze, itself a mediaeval '*Novus vicus*'. For instance, fields known as 'le Pradou/Pradel' (from *pratum*, indicating cattle-meadows) are geographically related to the latest mediaeval clearances, whereas only the category of 'Tauve' or 'les Tauves' (from 'altus vallis', high meadows which are too small to graze plough animals or cattle but suitable for stocking young animals) were

prominent in areas with the most concentrated Gallo-Roman remains and (surprisingly, in the case of Neuvic itself) comparatively little mediaeval deforestation. Maureille postulated that these 'tauves' reflected a typical Gallo-Roman pattern of diversity in small landholdings and ownership,'[177] but the isolation of this hilly, wooded region and the likelihood that the Gallo-Roman population were using meadows which had been already been cleared by Neolithic cattle-grazing, suggest rather that 'les tauves' stemmed merely from the affirmation in Latin of pre-Roman patterns of agrarian - but not necessarily proprietorial - land divisions.

Another category of toponyms used to show the extent of early mediaeval assarts are those derived from the presence of hermits or the *cellae* of recluses, such as 'L'herm' or 'La Celle', for this can testify to an often small-scale clearance of wilderness which subsequently attracted monastic and/or lay settlement. Hagiography shows the greater proportion of early Frankish hermits seeking refuge literally '*in vastae solitudinis*': in forest or wooded mountain, which probably explains why two-thirds of known 'hermit'-based toponyms for France are concentrated in the Massif Central, especially the Velay, the Quercy and the hilly upper reaches of the Dordogne.[178] One must be careful **not** to ascribe all such place-names to early monastic activity, however, since these toponyms are created throughout the mediaeval and modern periods; of three known for the Corrèze, for instance, at least one can be shown to have dated from the establishment of a seventeenth century hermitage.[179] Although '*Eremos*' place-names do not appear in sixth century documents, names such as '*Cella Eusitii*' are not uncommon in the works of Gregory of Tours. The uncertainties of deriving site histories from such place-names is well displayed in an example uncritically cited by Rouche: Saint-Germain l'Herm,

in the Auvergne. Still known in the eleventh century as '*vicus Tuniacum*' with a church dedicated to S. Germanus (a saint popular for church dedications of the seventh-eighth centuries), an early twelfth century inscription within the church dedicates its present construction '*in villa quae vulgo dicitur Hermet*'.[180] Rouche presumes from this that *Tuniacum* was an abandoned Gallo-Roman *vicus*, reoccupied by a Merovingian recluse who founded its church and presumably instigated the site's repopulation and reuse. In the complete absence of any archaeological or epigraphic information concerning its Gallo-Roman occupation, this is perfectly plausible; but it is not the only possible reconstruction of its history. *Tuniacum* could equally have been a Merovingian foundation, contemporary with the church dedication, and its history purely mediaeval; and the late date of the terminology cannot clarify whether it had ever been a *villa* which developed into a town, or a village which became part of an estate. Finally, a hermit's undated presence in a *vicus* does **not**, contrary to popular belief, necessitate prior abandonment (all the more so since Rouche accepts that *Tuniacum*'s 'Gallo-Roman' name was still known as late as the eleventh century). It is precisely this last correlation of hermit/monk with early land clearance which deserves some further comment here.

In the first place, of course, the earliest western sources for monastic or eremitic foundations in Gaul neither explicitly emphasise land-clearing activities, nor - perhaps more significantly - do they show a predisposition for any single type of location which would suggest a predominant interest in either land clearance or reclamation. This may be a deceptive image, for although there are roughly as many monastic

foundations established within or adjacent to Gallo-Roman cities as there are those explicitly cleared from the 'solitary wilderness' of mountain and forest, the former may still have built upon disused urban or semi-urban lands, or were reliant upon rural *villae* whose state of repair when donated is unknown. Nevertheless, the earliest Merovingian evidence suggests that monasteries in general took what they were given, preferably by donation and located in populated or at least cultivated areas; those established in wilder areas were attracted by the particular and individual prestige of hermits who had deliberately avoided the very type of monastic community which resolutely swelled around them: of course, anecdotal evidence for this last category of monastic foundation may therefore also be deceptive, in that they tend to concentrate upon the initial establishment of a hermit-refuge rather than any subsequent monastic clearance.

Secondly, a closer look at eleven **rural** hermitages and monasteries of the sixth century about which contemporary or near-contemporary details of landscape are known, emphasises fresh land clearance on an initially limited scale rather than the reclamation of disused estates. One, the monastery of saint Aredius in the Limousin, is established on a working rural property (*HF*, X.29); six are founded in woodland, whereas only four are based in ruins which may possibly have had agricultural lands attached to them. Among those who cleared forest were Romanus and Lupici nus, operating between Burgundia and Alemannia; that they declined to work and inhabit estates offered to them - that is, to 'possess' them in the mediaeval legal sense - preferring *proprietas* and the collection of rent in kind from them (*VP*, I.1 and 5), could perhaps be taken as an indication of their interest in clearing non-agricultural land rather than

receiving working estates, but probably rather reflects a desire for the 'humility of poverty' reiterated in other anecdotes about these men, and which - unusually for monastic foundations even in this early period - aimed to restrict the acquisition of property to that which was absolutely necessary for their sustenance.

The remaining five certain cases of hermits engaged in woodland clearance are mostly located in the most mountainous and forested part of northern Auvergne and eastern Limousin, simply because this is the only real wilderness which our source, Gregory of Tours, would have known well: these are Patroclus, Martius (*VP*, XIV), Aemilianus '*intra seveta silvarum Ponticiacensium*' (*VP*, XII.1-3), and Caluppa at Méallet, inhabiting a mountain crag previously used for temporary refuge only (*HF*, V.9; *VP*, XI.1). In addition, the Limousin recluse Marianus was, according to the *Acta Sanctorum*, 19 Aug. a hermit '*in silvis*' before eventually dying under an apple tree in '*vicus Evaunensim*' (Evaux in Creuse, which had been a prosperous Gallo-Roman town), although Gregory says rather differently that he dwelt in the monastery of Princiacum before moving to '*vicus Spinolaium*' (*GC*, 80).

Clear examples of monastic land clearance other than of *saltus* (for central Aquitaine, this usually means forested hills) are extremely scarce, and not always simple to identify; it is difficult to ascertain, for example, whether the Breton island of Vindunitta, upon which Friardus built his monastic cells, had previously been inhabited (*VP*, X), or whether the riverbank monastery which S. Ursus from Cahors founded during Visigothic rule on the Indre near the contemporary *castrum* of Loches was based on occupied or unoccupied agricultural lands, although it was clearly a farming monastery. The neighbouring estate at Loches was also

under cultivation, but the fact that its owner was a recently-arrived Goth yet again is no proof that **he** had claimed abandoned land, for it could have been confiscated after Euric's conquests, through a process which may or may not have approached that of '*hospitalitas*', or indeed he could have bought it. The building for the first time here of a water-mill by the monks - itself something of a technical rarity but not unknown in Roman Aquitaine - also cannot be taken as an indication that the previous owners had neglected the site, for animal- and especially hand-driven millstones were by far the most commonplace form of milling throughout the Roman as well as early Merovingian period (*VP*, XVIII.2).

Patroclus' cell in the wooded hills south-east of Néris-les-Bains, which are little populated even today, straddles both categories of forest and ruins. A marked *tegula* found in his self-built oratory must testify to a Roman structure here, although it by no means follows that it had once been a farm (*VP*, IX.2). A late 'Life' of the late fifth century saint Junianus claims that he put back into cultivation a Limousin estate which had belonged to bishop Ruricius of Limoges, despite no mention being made of this by Gregory of Tours when discussing Junianus' activities. Although both Vieillard-Troiekouroff and Rouche accepted this episode without query, it is not impossible that this story was part of an attempt to lay subsequent ecclesiastical claim over the piece of land on which a church was eventually built to house Junianus' tomb; this would be on a par with the Carolingian '*Lives*' of S. Calais and Avitus in the Chartres region, whose monasteries were to become the subject of considerable wrangling between their respective abbots and the church of Le Mans.[81]

Of the four cases of sixth century hermitages established on 'abandoned' ruins, a closer look reveals scarce evidence for land

reclamation. Vulfoliac establishes his church and cell - the nucleus of a small monastery - amongst the ruins of a pagan rural sanctuary, **not** a settlement, in the Trier region. Gregory's first-hand experience of the area testifies to a lively rural population and the presence of neighbouring working estates ('*villae*'); nor would Vulfoliac's stylite existence have been conducive to farming (*HF*, VIII.15), so there is little here to suggest monastic land reclamation or even clearance, at least for the sixth century. Lupicinus appropriates an abandoned house in the '*vicus Berberensis, qui nunc dicitur Lipidiacum*', but this Touraine village is nevertheless inhabited by rustics who quarrel over the right to bury him (*VP*, XIII.1-3); nor does his reclusive existence allow him to engage in any cultivation. It could be argued that the name-change itself indicates new ownership/protection/refoundation, and thus might reflect new attempts to farm the area; if this were the case, it would still require several leaping assumptions to relate this to the presence of Lupicinus.

Now, Senoch may well have actually reconstructed and utilised at least part of a wholly abandoned Touraine village, but the surrounding countryside was nevertheless still being farmed by peasants (*VP, XV*.1-3), and again this is hardly solid evidence of the reclamation of agricultural lands. The fourth case is that of a '*Malliacensim monasterium*' built within a ruined hilltop-fortification (*GC*, 21), whose date may be Iron Age, and whose connection with *agri deserti* is thus hypothetical in the extreme. As for seventh century Aquitanian hermits, where detailed their locations are again in woodland, although yet again, subsequent hagiographical claims and counter-claims create uncertainties. For instance, Meneleus' fictional *Vita* claims that he established himself as hermit '*in Vaveris silva*' on the banks of the Sioule river near Menat,

yet the *Vita Vincentiani Confessoris Avolcensis* mentions a donation of a *curtis* to Meneleus towards the end of the seventh century by Barontus, duke of Aquitaine; whether this gift was the woodland mentioned in the life, or an additional area, cannot be ascertained,[182] but is a point which makes a considerable difference in the interpretation of the way in which this hermitage was established.[183] Monastic communities, of course, were given *villae* as were episcopal cathedrals, not only for provisions through rent-in-kind but for land and buildings for the community's immediate use.[184]

The contentious point here is not whether or not land abandonment, reclamation and clearance all occurred in the first three centuries of barbarian rule - for there is no doubt that they did - but rather that there is no reason to suppose that either the episcopal or monastic arms of the late Roman or early Merovingian Church set about large-scale rescues of abandoned lands or that they consistently pioneered the uncleared areas of their world - which, in the Massif Central, was overwhelmingly not marsh or scrubland but woodland, in itself of course both valuable and protected not only for domestic and industrial fuel but also for hunting and the foraging of swine. It is no surprise, for example, that the major Gallo-Roman potteries in the Auvergne (such as Lezoux) were located near a good supply of fuel timber as well as claypits and water; in the thirteenth century, about 2ha. of woodland supplied the fuel for only one single kiln of 4-5 kilograms of pots. For Berry in the late seventh century, 660ha of woodland could support 800 pigs.[185]

Nor can it be assumed that lay or royal *villa*-donations were merely attempts to offload unworked estates into the arms of an aggrandising church which was better able than they to restore

profitability; the Carolingian trend favouring precarial donations, often interpreted as evidence for land-clearance in that period, implicitly relies on the efforts of donors rather than the eventual ecclesiastical recipients. Apart from the dubious case of Junianus mentioned above, the late Roman and early Merovingian evidence for central Aquitaine shows most clearly the successive short-term abandonments and reoccupations caused by intermittent invasion, and of tentative small-scale mountain-forest clearance.

One means of creating a 'new' estate (and often a new place-name) without necessarily involving any addition of land under cultivation or pasturage, was of course through the subdivision of estates, and in both a Gallo-Roman and Frankish society without the notion of primogeniture this was not uncommon, even if (for Romans at least) properties were often kept intact by making a sibling's 'share' of the inheritance a proportion of the revenue of an undivided estate. Distinguishing between 'newly' created villa-estates and 'newly' cleared lands is, however, often difficult, whether using historical or toponymic material.

Unambiguous examples of 'new' foundations of contemporary *villae* in early mediaeval documents for all parts of Francia are, unsurprisingly, extremely rare, although we know that they were established. Gregory of Tours (*HF*, VI.20), mentions Chrodinus, a barbarian *dux* living north of *Aquitanica Prima* in the mid-late sixth century who created new working estates - *villae* with houses, fields, vineyards, stock and workers - so as to donate them to deserving bishops.

The last will of Caesarius of Arles (A.D. 542) deals with lands to the south of *Aquitanica I*, and it is noteworthy that none of the rural

properties which he bequeaths to his church or to an impoverished monastery are called either *fundi* or *villae*; they are instead either *agri* or *agelli*, composed of cultivated fields, agricultural lands with attached marshes, or pasture, and most appear to have been on the small side. Of at least eight properties so-described, one alone is singled out as having been planted by Caesarius - that is, brought into cultivation or re-use by him - and this encompasses scarcely '*triginta arpentia*', or approximately 10ha.[186] A similar pattern of small-scale restoration - of fields, rather than estates - is also evoked in the later and extremely detailed testament of Bertrand of Le Mans in 616, mentioned in the previous chapter. Four rural properties are described as having been built by that bishop, only two of which are also said to have been newly stocked by him (and this alone clearly suggests increased agricultural activity); it may be mere coincidence that these two, '*colonica Villadolus*' and '*locellus Fontanido*' were both units smaller than a *villa*, but not always necessarily sub-units geographically located within a *villa*.[187] At any rate, whether these estates - whose locations are completely unknown - were really constructed anew on vacant land, or reorganised from various established properties, or reconstructed on abandoned land or houses (as with the restoration of the house and baths at the private episcopal estate of *Bissonum* in the Bordelais in the same period) are matters for speculation.[188] Moreover, not only are the real divisions and subdivisions of estates into portions and sub-leases with differing names demonstrably commonplace from legacies and polyptychs, but are cited by Gregory of Tours as one reason behind the iniquity of out-of-date tax assessments for church-estate tenants in the Auvergne (*HF*, X.7), an explanation directly contradictory to the alternative view that such

composite estates were the results of an agglomeration of adjacent farms and properties which kept their old names.

Nevertheless, not only was the process of constructing new estates alive in the early mediaeval period, but there also existed a fashion for naming locations in recognition of their recent foundation or renewal in the late sixth century just as it had at the onset of Roman administration in Gaul. Gregory's list of the *vici* created under various bishops of Tours shows this clearly; of four towns which were newly constructed in the Touraine from the very end of the fifth to the middle of the sixth centuries, half were named, in time-honoured Gallo-Roman tradition, '*vicus Novilliacus*' (from *novilia*, 'newly cleared lands', rather than, as C. E. Stevens suggests, the personal name '*Novillius*'[189]). A further *Novivicensis* is known (from '*novus vicus*'), while Merovingian mints known from coin legends attest to yet another *Novus vicus* each in the Limousin and the Corrèze.[190]

This is not a large number of safely attested early Merovingian cases for central Francia; but they must have been frequent enough for their recorded presence to have survived, and '*Novilliacum*' at least suggests, if not always clearance from wood or scrubland, at the very least a settlement with no immediate predecessor. Could it therefore merely be chance that *villa*-names indicating a 'new' foundation by contrast do not appear in **any** fifth or sixth century documents for Aquitaine, or indeed, Gaul?

Of course, both new and reconstructed villas could have been, and probably were, often named anew after their present owner, or a local natural feature, or have kept their old name - without which habit, toponymic studies would scarcely exist. If one were to suggest further

that '*novo*' names were an acceptable Merovingian fashion for naming villages, but not for estates, this would have added to the silence of contemporary sources on the subject; but since this would also imply that early mediaeval *vici* were founded as **settlements** rather than primarily as **properties** (which tended to take their proprietor's name) - a proposition which runs aground on the obscurity surrounding the degree to which Gallic and early Gallo-Roman *vici* owed their occasional '*-acum*' names to a patron and/or owner - it would be safer not to conjecture too much on this point. It is nevertheless worth noting, in this context, that genuine Merovingian legacies **never** include donations of '*vici*' or parts thereof.

However, if one accepts, for the moment, that the earliest Merovingian *villae* were still essentially inhabited *fundi* rather than nucleated communities, the late appearance of the place-name *Novavilla* attains an historical significance. It is throughout the seventh and eighth centuries that one finds, for estates, an increasingly popular trend towards the inclusion within the vocable itself of the description '*villa*', the diminutive '*villare*', '*mansio*' or '*curtis*', etc., a habit which for the Gallo-Roman period seems to have been very rare, although not unknown - *Tribus Villae*, for example, was probably located in the Gothic-occupied area northeast of Narbonne and inhabited by at least two families related to Sidonius Apollinaris.[191]

It is within the context of this trend that '*Novavilla*' first appears. Its earliest authentic attestation for Francia dates to bishop Bertrand's will, where a *colonica* is called '*Villanova*', whilst another *locus* is known as '*Novavilla*'; *villae* '*Novientum*' and '*Novionum*' are also attested at the same period in the Anjou and Poitevin regions, although it must be added that '*Novientum*' is said to derive from the Celtic, not

Latin adjective 'new'; a *'Villadolus, et quod meo opere construxi et meo ingenio ad me provenit,'* that is, built and stocked by Bertrand, might also have been a newly-created and named small estate. At roughly the same period, '*Villaris Venestria*' and '*Vilariacus locus*' are known for the Quercy in the *Vita S. Desiderii.*[192]

In central Aquitaine, the earliest reference to a '*villa Noviolum*' (in the Berry region) dates to 685, whilst in the Toulosain, another '*Villa Novolio*' is listed in A.D.680.[193] By the eighth century, places called '*Nova Villa*' are not uncommon in hagiography and legacies alike; for instance, a woman '*de loco Novavilla*' visits nearby Bourges to be cured by the miraculous powers of the late sixth/early seventh century bishop Austregisilus, as recorded in his eighth (?) century *Vita.*[194]

However, it is precisely at the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries that '*villa*' can be demonstrated as coming to embrace the meaning of a *village* - one, that is, whose collective revenue could be sold or bequeathed in fractions, even where listed as a unit of buildings, livestock, individuals and services, but which was nonetheless emphatically acknowledged as being a community as well as real estate. Hence the increasing attestations, also dating from the end of the seventh century, of churches rather than mere oratories on villa-estates, and the subsequent use of the word '*villa*' to describe what had been attested Gallo-Roman *vici.* In 480, for example, the Arvernian '*vicus Licaniacensis*' gained its first church. By the tenth century, it had become '*villa* Lizianacus' with three churches - and thus still a population centre - owned by the bishop of Clermont.[195] However, we cannot go beyond this: as Gallo-Roman and Merovingian *vici* not uncommonly took '*-acum*' place-names, the toponym itself cannot prove that it had ever been

a Roman villa-estate 'Licaniacum', (although Leday suggests precisely this for the Carolingian '*vicus Lucaniacum Sancti Carterii*', modern Vic-sur-S.-Chartier, Indre, on the basis of toponym alone'[196]).

'*Nova Villa Vintoris*', one of thirty Berry and Loire valley *villae* donated by Childebert to S. Germain des Prés in 697, has been identified by Leday as Villeneuve-sur-Cher; in the light of what has just been discussed, it is worth noting the speculations which he draws from this identification. On the one hand, he suggests that '*Vintoris*' was the Celtic toponym for the Gallo-Roman *vicus* whose river/road settlement at Les Sables was, on the evidence of field surveys, occupied up to the fourth century, and in part utilised perhaps sporadically up to the seventh; on the other hand, all subsequent mediaeval and modern settlement is on a different site, that is, the present Villeneuve; the complete removal of any toponymic or even folk memory of the Roman *vicus* suggests to Leday a displacement of population from the Gallo-Roman *vicus* to a Gallo-Roman estate which was still called a '*villa*' as late as the seventh century, and whose *villa*-house is automatically assumed to be lying beneath the present village.'[197]

Now, the identification of the Gallo-Roman settlement-ruins as a *vicus*, possibly called *Vintoris*, is relatively uncomplicated; but the number of assumptions needed to locate a postulated Gallo-Roman estate-house in the same place as its Merovingian successor, especially one called '*Nova Villa*', and then to suppose that a post-invasion village evolved directly upon its post-Roman house, is rather large. Not all of these assumptions may be incorrect; but they do not all follow from each other. Either the late seventh century toponym represents a Merovingian ***villa*-village** - in which case the existence of a Gallo-Roman ***villa*-house**

under Villeneuve remains to be proven by archaeological means alone - or it represents a Merovingian estate with master's *domus*, which may or may not be a late phase of a Roman house-complex. If not, *Villa Nova Vintoris* may have comprised a *praedium* with a residence made of non-durable material which has simply not shown up in aerial photography, rather than lying beneath the modern town.

Villa toponyms in Merovingian documents are, in fact, our only major source of information for this conceptual shift of villa to village. Now, as this change occurred only in the later Merovingian period, it is therefore possible that the concurrent appearance of *villae* with 'new' names alludes to recently established **settlements**, rather than new estates per se, even if these communities belonged within estates; the distinction is necessary, since an estate can be tilled and pastured, or left in parts uncultivated and forested, and can thus can antedate any nucleated community within it. Conversely, pre-existing and independent villages could be subsumed under the authority and into the new or existing estate of a local, powerful landowner.

In sum, then, it is possible to explain the 'new' establishment of rural estates in early mediaeval central Aquitaine by their creation within the *saltus* of pre-existing estates, or as subdivisions of the same, or (less commonly, perhaps), as **re**foundations in the sense of reorganised properties, rather than primarily reclaimed land or an expansion of agrarian activity on previously marginal zones. New monastic foundations benefitted from agricultural revenue provided by the donation of previously existing properties, and appear to have embarked only upon necessarily small-scale clearances of woodlands which were either appropriated from or donated by benefactors.

Toponyms and Continuity:

If the antiquity and subsequent survival of many *-acum* place-names testifies to a degree of stability of the population in central Aquitaine during the initial invasions and semi-authorised brigandage of early Frankish rulership, there are nevertheless methodological difficulties in correlating Gallic or Latin place-names with Gallo-Roman archaeological material retrieved within a commune or parish, usually in haphazard or at least limited form, and in presuming that the latter anchors the former. Most toponymic studies for central Gaul in the past which used Merovingian records were interested not in continuity per se but in locating villa-names on modern maps so as to infer 'original' estate sizes, as Higounet did for the bequest of Nizezius and Irmitrude just beyond the southwest Rouergue borders of *Aquitanica Prima*, towards Toulouse.[198]

Typical examples of the value and limitations of such toponymic work can be found in recent studies by M. Villoutreix on place-names in the *dépt.* of Creuse, in which archaeological material is noted for examples of each form of place-name. For instance, Massenon is derived, in a manner similar to *-acum* estate names, from the latin cognomen *Macianus*, but has yielded only 1st - 2nd century dependencies; the longevity of its name contrasts sharply with a discontinuity of the geography of settlement focus as well as of function only if the possibility that *Macianus* was an early mediaeval name is excluded. Gallo-Roman buildings lie beneath Lamant - said to derive from the Germanic personal name *Alamanus* - indicating a change of ownership radical enough to change the place-name, but unable to be dated with any certainty.

Within the category of toponyms derived from *-acum* estate-names,

Villoutreix notes that the modern village and commune of Champagnat was a '*villa Campaniacum cum ecclesia*' in the seventh century, that Campanus was a late Roman and early mediaeval personal name, and that a *fanum* existed in the present town-site from the 1st - 3rd centuries A.D.[199] The only source for this early place-name is a bequest by Dagobert I of Limousin and Berrichône *villae* preserved in the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés, which dates itself to A.D.636. At first glance, it is tempting to infer from this presentation of archaeological and toponymic evidence that a late Roman estate with pagan shrine continued, with a probable displacement of population-focus from villa-complex to Christianised religious site, throughout the Merovingian period. On internal evidence including the subscriptions, however, this diploma of Dagobert I is almost certainly a forgery;[200] and the reference to an *ecclesia* belonging to a *villa* (in this sense, a community) further betrays its later date. What is left, apart from the pitfalls of authenticating Merovingian documents, is still the unilluminating gap between a mid-Roman *fanum* and a mediaeval village.

A far more careful blend of toponymic identification with ancient remains had been made by Leday for the *villa*-site of S. Martin-le-Noir (Cher), where a Merovingian chapel with surrounding cemetery overlies a large room in the south-east corner of the main domestic yard of a *villa* whose very recent field survey has so far yielded only early Roman material. In the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the chapel was known as Bertigniaco/Brétigny, and neighbouring farms share the same name; it has been identified with certainty as the same Berrichône '*villa Britinniacus*' in (this time) a genuine donation of 697, the same one that mentions '*Nova Villa Vintoris*'. Comprehensive aerial photography of this

area has shown the villa-site of S. Martin-le-Noir is the closest one to those modern place-names which are derived from Britinniacum (two hamlets called Le Petit and Le Grand Brétigny, for there is no village with the name of Brétigny, under which a Merovingian estate with this name might still lurk unidentified). It is therefore possible that this villa-complex was once the centre of the Roman estate of 'Britinniacum'.[201] Unfortunately, this again does not lead far, since there is a clear discontinuity of site-use from a rather grand villa-house occupied in the 1st - 2nd centuries to a chapel and burials no earlier than the sixth century; modern fields cut through the site, and as this was not even a parish church, thankfully no-one has attempted to extrapolate 'original' estate-size from parish or communal boundaries. The most useful fact to emerge is that there is a palpable gap in the archaeological evidence which **should** be filled somewhere in the vicinity, namely, that farm and/or small community who in the late seventh century built and were buried in the chapel, and to be donated first to Limeuil, then to S. Germain des Prés.

If the alliance of the architectural foci of Gallo-Roman remains with toponymic evidence is limited in validity, what then of estate-boundaries and place-names? Parish and communal '*villa*-toponyms' are undoubtedly useful indicators for determining the original existence of those *villa*-estates; but at least four arguments can be made against the belief that parishes with a 'Gallo-Roman' name can profitably be used to deduce a late Roman estate's boundaries, and therefore its size.

Firstly, although the existence of Merovingian *parochiae* are known from the *concilia* as well as narrative sources (for example, '*Paternacensis parochia*' in *VP*, VIII and *VJ*, 50) their nature is not really well understood - whether they had well-defined territorial limits and

were contiguous within a diocese, for example, or what sort of population density or scatter merited a parish priest. What is clear, however, is that not only in the Visigothic-held 506 Council of Agde were priests serving in parishes delineated from those in oratories '*in agro*'(c.XXI), but the Council of 535 at Clermont-Ferrand, attended by all bishops from the Frankish areas of *Aquitanica Prima*, clearly stipulated that:

> *'Siqui presbyter adque diaconus, neque in civitate neque in parrochiis canonecus esse dinoscitur, sed in villolis habitans, in oraturiis officio sancto deserviens celebrat divina mysteria...'* (c.XV)[202]

Whatever else they included, early Merovingian *parochiae* **excluded** *villae*; and even Carolingian parishes, which possessed clearly defined borders, could and did contain a number of properties not belonging to the parish church within them.[203] Any attempt to compare a map of 'fourth-fifth century parishes' (sic) with those showing the densities of 'Gallo-Roman' toponyms and archaeological finds, as was published recently for the *dépt.* of Maine, is sadly methodologically doomed from the outset.[204]

Secondly, parishes as we know them were organised in the Carolingian period, so if these were to reflect anything, it would be the state of Carolingian, not Merovingian *pagus*-boundaries, each centred upon a village which may or may not have included contemporary working *fundi*, whose debt in turn to late Roman or early mediaeval estates still has to be demonstrated. Even if a large-scale Carolingian estate did parallel in size a parish, it can be shown that some estates described in Carolingian documents actually crossed parish divisions, as G. Fournier notes.[205] Hincmar of Rheims' early ninth century list of questions for parish inventories includes one asking what properties other than the priest's

lie within the parish boundaries: even in the tenth century, the Church still distinguished between *vici* and *villae*.[206] In the Maçonnais area, Bange has shown how some parishes were created from a post-eleventh century regrouping of several *villae*.[207]

Of course, the creation and organisation of parishes may have varied from region to region. One recent study by Aubrun of parishes in the Limousin has been used extensively by local archaeologists, attempting to trace the history of surveyed rural chapels. Aubrun proposes three possible origins for rural parishes: those based on settlement churches, whether *vici*, *castra* or *castella*; those centred upon rural estate chapels and those which derived from rural churches founded by later mediaeval abbeys. Identification of the 'earliest' of these parishes (which Aubrun prudently does not attempt to date any more precisely) is based, in turn, on three acceptable premises: that a known repertoire of the earliest, most popular church vocables can identify Merovingian foundations; secondly, that strong administrative reasons make subsequent parish divisions very rare, which, thirdly, means that in areas of similar geomorphology the largest parishes tend to be the oldest.[208] Yet while acknowledging the evidence of both Visigothic and Frankish *concilia* that rural villa-oratories were deprived of the rights of parish churches, Aubrun tries to distinguish Merovingian *vicus*-based Limousin parishes from *villa*-based ones. His criterion that any sort of evidence for an early baptistery ipso facto indicates a *villa*-parish is, unfortunately, completely untenable, since it is only with Carolingian reforms that the rights of baptism are extended to *villae*. This makes his conclusion - that the Limousin contained roughly equal proportions of parishes created from estates and those based on all forms of nucleated

settlements - equally suspect.[209]

It is, however, slightly easier to identify a parish church as being sited within what had been a Merovingian *vicus* than it is to demonstrate the existence of a Merovingian *villa*-church, since the occasional Merovingian mint legend or literary attestation can identify a *vicus* as contemporary with Merovingian dedication of that place's church (inferred from the church vocable). Moreover, if a place is only mentioned as a *vicus* in the post-Merovingian period, it at least does not suffer from the fundamental confusion which the later conceptual expansion of the word '*villa*' adds to any attempt to see in a late Merovingian or Carolingian *villa* the existence of an earlier rural estate. For example, Aubrun can justifiably ascribe early Frankish origins to the parish church of Le Grand-Bourg (Haute-Vienne), since it shares the diocesan cathedral's 'early' vocable, S. Etienne, and since it can be reliably identified with an eighth century *villa* of Salagnac which Pepin III donated to that same cathedral. Yet, by correlating its eighth century title with the presence of unspecified Gallo-Roman remains, it counts as one of Aubrun's total of some thirty 'early' villa-based parishes, despite the facts that its sixth or seventh century status (as *villa* or *vicus*) is not known, and the very act of donation to Limoges cathedral may have been the reason for the church's dedication to the proto-martyr Stephen! But if his methods of distinguishing rural- from town-based parishes are of necessity less than perfect, at least Aubrun never claims that modern parish borders preserve ancient estate boundaries or indeed anything other than, at best, an 'ancient' parish; by contrast, the assumption that villas habitually gave rise to parishes by virtue of their village populations actually led one commentator for the less inhabited Velay to suggest that an individual

villa-estate there was too sparsely inhabited to produce a parish.[210]

Thirdly, while it is true that roughly two out of every three churches in Aquitaine, Provence and Burgundy are built on ancient ruins, rural Gallo-Roman *villae* are only one possibility among six - villas, rural sanctuaries, public cemeteries, private cemeteries (usually rural), public buildings or artisanal buildings [211] - or of five, if one makes the not wholly untenable assumption that late Roman or Merovingian rural cemeteries also often signify the existence of a country estate. As de Laugardière has observed, villa-oratories could sometimes evolve into parish churches, whose original identity has provided their parish name, such as L'Oradoux/Lourouer/Louroux.[212] All this establishes, however, is the Christian centre, not the limits, of a late Roman or Merovingian *villa*, which could outlive the rest of its architecture and functions, without moving from the one location. Mediaeval oratories could also of course derive from rural cemeteries, not all of which have topographically close links with *villae*; the excavated site of Louroux (Saint-Priest-d'Evaux, Creuse) has a sizeable necropolis dating to the end of the second century, with no evidence of domestic structures nearby.[213]

Fourthly, parishes, like the communes, estates and fields within them, are often delineated not only by natural features but also by ancient roads or paths - for example, 70% of known early mediaeval parcelles in the Macon region have at least one path as a border[214] - which easily fossilise within the landscape long after their original functions change. Whilst parishes and communes may of course share with ancient estates the same edge(s) - just as the early Roman *villa*-estate of Quincy (Cher) and the commune of Launay share the same road as a boundary[215] - it does not necessarily follow that **all** the

borders of the one parish (or commune) should be the same as those of a single estate. Just as importantly, whilst long-standing animal tracks or other minor routes often **bordered** fields, they **crisscrossed** estates, so at most such artificial boundaries as paths, roads or hedges may indeed date the shape of Gallo-Roman, and sometimes pre-Roman field patterns; recent work on dating hedgerows in England by the number and type of species present may prove the most useful and independent means for attributing the enclosure of fields to varying periods yet known,[216] but not, however, for most of the Massif Central, where the survival of hedges is uncommon, except in the lowlands of the Auvergne, Velay and Gévaudan. Even so, one can only date at best the creation of field boundaries, not their subsequent history. Only with centuriation can one be fairly certain of the date of the creation of Gallo-Roman property-borders.

The circular argument that those Gallo-Roman *villae* which are on the edge or which straddle field, communal or parish boundaries do so precisely because they fail to survive the Roman period[217] as part of a proprietorial unit has no place here, not merely because some villa-houses were not always in the centre of their immediate enclosed properties, but also because it is usually accepted that their place-names could and did shift across but within the confines of the area taking that name. But if boundaries are generally more stable than centres, why then is the villa-house of S. Martin-le-Noir in the modern commune of Preuilly (presumably derived from '*Premuliacum*'), but les Grand and Petit Brétigny are in the neighbouring commune of Ste Thorette?[218]

Fournier's valuable work on central Auvergne in the early Middle Ages uses modern administrative boundaries as a tentative, hypothetical method only, as three cases will show in different ways. Firstly, he

locates the unnamed *praedium* of Sidonius' friend Maurusius '*in pago Vialoscensi*', formerly called *Martialis*, in the area of Martres-des-Veyre (Puy-de-Dôme) rather than its older identification with either Volvic or neighbouring Marsat, relying equally on the arguments that Sidonius and Maurusius were neighbours - Martres-de-Veyre is in the same valley as Lake Aydat and the hamlet of the same name, which supposedly derive from *Avitacum* - and that its parish church was dedicated to S. Martial; the last part of the modern toponym is presumably derived from the Gallo-Roman name. It is at least not necessary for him to assume also that the actual estate-house of either Maurusius or *Avitacum* were beneath either present villages.[219] Yet, regardless whether or not the Roman administrative unit of this *pagus* was transmitted into the mediaeval period as a parish, why should it be accepted, for the purpose of approximating its size by dividing up the area between the two estates, that Maurusius' *praedium* was equal to the *pagus* itself? It is not necessary, in fact, to make one equal the other as Fournier does, in order to accept the location of this estate in the general area, rather than at Volvic which today scarcely fits Sidonius' description of fifth century *Vialoscensis* as a populous area, growing both vines and crops, as it is perched overlooking the plain, and backed by woods and its famous springs. It does mean, however, that we now have a possible name for the *vicus* at Martres-de-Veyre, which is best known for its *terra sigillata* production.

Volvic itself is called a *villa* in the late seventh century, surrounded by woodland; Fournier suggests its limits were that of the modern commune, which extends over some 3000ha including much forest, but nothing is known of Gallo-Roman occupation here. Finally, Sigivald's

sixth century '*Domus Vindiacensis*' is fairly securely identified with Vensat, also in the north-west Auvergne. The modern village is subjected to a cadastral line-drawing from which Fournier identifies the possible enclosures of two 'villas' owned by Sigivald.[220] That *dux* certainly appropriated more than one Arvernian estate during his life, but Gregory of Tours - who is our only source on this - mentions nothing about whether they were immediately adjacent to each other. Yet even if the boundaries extrapolated by Fournier did in fact each enclose a Merovingian *villa* (and they each approximate 22ha, which is comparable to the combined *pars rustica and urbana* of a very large Roman villa-estate, such as Champ des Pois in the Berry), the significant point remains that at least one unmeasured area which belonged to the '*Domus Vindiacensis*' and which was referred to under its title was to be found in the woods of Pionsat some 40km away.

Of course, this kind of dispersion of property-holdings renders ancient boundary-hunting irrelevant to questions surrounding the total economic value of any given Roman or Merovingian patrimony; yet it might still be argued that such studies can at least establish minimum sizes of those individual properties, as well as providing some idea as to the size of estate-units which yielded rent to more than one owner who are often but not always related to one another. This, however, is a very tricky proposition. For example, *Floriacum* (modern Floirac, in western *Aquitanica ID* is sited by the *Testamentum S. Bertranni* '*inter duo maria*', that is, in the Bordelais between the Garonne and Dordogne, an area which Rouche follows Higounet's calculations as covering 953ha, although immediately after this Rouche suggests that a '*fundus Floriacum*' would have reached 3087ha, that is, three and a half communes (including Bouliac, Tresses and

Tenon) and extending over more than a single parish;[221] the proportion of arable to wooded lands remains unknown.

Having created on paper this mythical *fundus* - it is simply a '*Villam Floriaco*' in the document - Rouche then proceeds to note that Bouliac, whose modern commune has been included in his calculations, was known to Gregory of Tours as a '*vicus Vodollacensi*' (*GC*, 46), '...ce qui prouve que le *vicus* a été accaparé par la famille de Bertrand' and thus that the early seventh century estate would have included not only a master's house but also dispersed churches (*ecclesiae*) and centres of exploitation, that is, villages of both free and semi-free farmers and labourers.[222] Now, there is no proof that seventh century *Bouliac* had any connections with an estate called *Floriacum*. But even if, just for the sake of argument, Rouche's single, large geomorphological unit did in fact cover the one, unified early seventh century estate, what Rouche fails to mention is the nature of the donation: possession of the property had been lost, after his mother died, to one Childegernus '*malo ordine*', but Bertrand had presumably regained title to it in toto, so that he was able to donate '*villae medietatem*' to the son of the man who had usurped *Floriacum* from Bertrand's mother; an uncommonly charitable act, it is true, but there is nothing unusual about estate partition by bequest. At the same time, Bertrand stipulated that the *villa* (as a whole?) should be put under the control of his church.

Was this particular division a real one, involving the creation of new boundaries, or was it merely a question of divided revenue (the villa-half included slaves, houses, vines, wood and all parts of the estate) from the one *villa*, as happens with many other legacies,

particularly with legacies to individual churches? This leads straight into the heart of another question: if a single family or owner could possess a multiplicity of properties, and if a single property contributed to the income of a multiplicity of families, what point is there in this method of identification at all? *Avitacum*, for example, might be limited by the hills around it, as Sidonius says, but the woods and pastures which formed its economic basis would have extended beyond this (*Ep.* II, ii.3). When Higounet discussed the fifteen late seventh century *villae* donated in 680 by Nizezius and Irmitrude to the abbey of Moissac (in the Quercy), which were located in three geographically-clustered groups between the Tarn and Garonne rivers, he was careful to point out that the description of their general, grouped location - which used natural features such as forest, marshlands or the rivers themselves - did **not** necessarily mean that the boundaries of each estate was contiguous with the next mentioned in the list; his postulation that the maximum possible extent of each was about 1000-1500ha[223] has, however, gone the way of most statistics used for the early mediaeval period; that is, they have been repeated neither as the maximum nor as merely possible estate-sizes, but as fact. So just how reliable is Rouche's statement that late Roman aristocratic estate-units never fell under 1000ha (3700 *iugera*) in size, as opposed to Boissonade's assertion, for instance, that the 'average' Gallo-Roman estate was 900ha whereas Merovingian estates were habitually larger (1800-2000ha);[224] and what effects do assumptions about estate sizes have upon the question of changing agricultural production and the nature of its workforce?

Villa-Estate Sizes, Subordinate Villas and *Vici*:

The two most famous extrapolations of estate-size of excavated *villae* are the sites of Chiragan and Montmaurin in what had been part of *Gallia Narbonensis*, although parish or commune boundaries play only a minor role in determining their original extent. As their postulated sizes are so often repeated as certain facts by which other estates are compared, and since their relationship with neighbouring villas and settlements has been interpreted from the assumption of their geographical extent, it is worth reviewing their case studies here, even though they both lie outside the province of *Aquitanica Prima*.

In his final publication of the villa at Montmaurin (Haute-Garonne), Fouet suggests that the later mediaeval 'Pays de Nébouzan' - a largely naturally defined area of connected river valleys encompassing eight parishes - derived from the Gallo-Roman estate of Nepos/Nepotius, centred upon the villa-complex excavated at Montmaurin itself. The postulation of the Latin personal name excluded a post-Merovingian date for its creation, and Fouet rejected the possibility that the *pays* could have been a survival of the Merovingian *comté*, since the latter, according to him, never reached the size of eight parishes, which in this case approximated 7000ha in total, two-thirds of which is assumed, taking Ausonius' '*herediolum*' as typical, to have been wooded *saltus*. Thus, the presence of other, smaller villas excavated within this postulated '*Nepotianum*'/Pays de Nébouzan could then be interpreted as tenanted, rent-paying subsidiary estates whose individual properties were

extrapolated from a combination of natural borders, such as the river Save, and the assumption of contiguous boundaries between them. Hence Ville-Rouge/Mansan, on the left bank, 'controlled' some 250ha, and Es Cabiros on the opposite bank, around 100ha.[225] He and Percival after him takes this a step further: putting the devastation caused by the early third century flood at Montmaurin together with the construction ex nihilo of at least three of these regional villas in the same century, they see an expansion of estate-territory and a consequent decentralisation of agricultural production-centres from Montmaurin, which becomes 'une maison de plaisance',[226] to subordinate farm-estates 'each with its own demesne working as a fiscus'.[227]

All this is fascinating hypothesis, and benefits from both a consistency of internal logic and a recognition of the significance of geomorphological limits; but some major cautionary points remain. First and foremost is the argument that 'Nébouzan' could not have been a Merovingian creation. Whether or not this was a likely size for a region administered by a Merovingian *comes*, as Fouet suggested, is made wholly irrelevant by the fact that, in the early Frankish period at least, a count controlled an area based in a city or large town and **not** - as was added in the Carolingian period - a *vicaria* or other rurally-based area of control. More importantly, none of this in any case excludes the possibility that '*Nepotianum*' could have been a Merovingian name for a large Merovingian estate, which if true would in turn render the Gallo-Roman archaeological evidence irrelevant to the history of the toponym.

If we do accept, for the sake of argument, that '*Nepotianum*'

was Gallo-Roman in origin, its very survival as regional toponym may point to another possibility again: '*Nébouzan*' persisted as the châtellenie of S. Plancard, which at the very least had been a Roman cultic site, with subsequent Merovingian cemetery;[228] so perhaps a Gallo-Roman and/or Merovingian *vicus* existed here (or at La Hillère), after which the *pagus* would have customarily taken its name, without any direct connections to a private estate of any period based at Montmaurin at all. In a topic full of hypotheses, this is one which no-one has yet even mooted.

This being said, the postulated relationship between master and subordinate *villae* does not need a presupposed Gallo-Roman *Nepotianum*, although the territorial cohesion of a 'Pays Nébouzan' supports it. The dependent economic link rests instead upon archaeological dating: the coincidence, that is, of the appearance and/or refurbishment of smaller villas along the Save river basin with the reconstruction of Montmaurin's major establishment, whose *pars rustica* outhouses were permanently abandoned at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century when the site was flooded. But while the transformations of Montmaurin and its neighbours must in all likelihood have been connected, they could not have been in a single stage. Es Cabiros' *villa*, for instance, was founded much later, in the early fourth century.[229] The demise of Montmaurin's agricultural wing and the late third/early fourth century major embellishments of that luxurious complex were not contemporary, as Percival describes them, but were in fact separated by a very modest rebuilding phase, in turn destroyed by fire towards the end of the third century.[230] That all the villas within this

ecosystem shared similar fortunes is unsurprising, given that they would all have suffered to an extent from the same natural disaster (the flood); furthermore, if in any way surplus-producing farmsteads, they would have been subject to the same local market conditions.

So it does not necessarily follow that the villas at S. Loup de Comminges, Ville-Rouge and Es Cabiros must have been rent-farms of Montmaurin, as Rivet has recently cautioned.[231] Moreover, if we were to assume the **reverse** of Percival's hypothesis (as the original excavators did), that is, that *Nepotianum* was an early rather than late Roman *fundus* controlled from Montmaurin, it could just as plausibly be assumed that some lands were sold off after the flood, thus providing cash to help finance Montmaurin's third century reconstructions, and explaining the gradual implantation and improvements of the other villas. The undisputed absence of an agricultural section of the estate-complex certainly implies that Montmaurin's grander house of the later third and fourth centuries was probably supplied by other dependent estates belonging to the owner, but of course, unless one accepts a priori the existence of *Nepotianum*, there is nothing to prevent those other estates from being rather more dispersed than either Fouet or Percival acknowledged. The existence, then, at Montmaurin of a luxury *villa* surrounded by dependent *fundi* remains, by the nature of the evidence, an interesting but undemonstrable hypothesis.

The opposite phenomenon, centralisation, is even less convincingly proposed for that other famous Toulosain villa at Chiragan. Communal boundaries are used here to identify the tentative size of twelve *villae* (four certain, four possible

archaeological sites, and four toponyms) around Chiragan's main house-complex.[232] Grenier used this *villa*'s outbuildings to determine its maximum grain storage, and then, by dividing this figure by admittedly modern yield averages per hectare, he calculated the maximimum arable land for which such a storage-capacity was intended. Grenier himself well realised the hypothetical nature of these figures, and extreme reservations have been held by all who have discussed it since.[233] The resulting approximate cultivated area for Chiragan is ca. 1000ha; but of course, if one assumes as Percival does that the immediate area of Martres-Tolosanes is again a collection of tenant-estates under a single owner at Chiragan, the possible contribution of rent-produce as a fraction of a field's total yield would throw a hefty spanner into any such calculations.

Percival's awareness of the dubious nature of such arithmetic, however, makes him concentrate on the issue of where the workforce **lived**, rather than on measuring the size of the *praedium* as a whole, although he does accept Grenier's averages for the numbers of persons needed to work a given acreage. Consequently, he draws two major conclusions from the site. One is that *villae* in the surrounding river plain were yet again all inhabited tenant-estates, perserving toponym and identity whilst under the one proprietor; this proprietorial unity is again based on their shared geographical environs and the fact that they all share a roughly contemporary rise in prosperity. Secondly, he sees in the elaborate plans and materials of the smaller villas an exclusion of agrarian activity centred upon their main houses. From this, Percival assumes that the neighbouring *vici* were at least partial, and in certain cases, major

dormitory settlements for dependent farm-labourers, an assumption which creates a relationship of villa-house to village which, to him, has distinctly 'medieval parallels'.[234] For example, the *villa* at Sana was 'too luxurious' to have housed the 70-80 people needed to work its presumed 200-250ha of ancient arable land within the larger modern commune of the same name (pasturage does not seem to enter into anyone's calculations here); the labourers would 'thus' have been supplied from the archaeologically-known *vicus* at S. Cizy.[235] Yet this is demonstrably falsely based on the archaeological reports: Sana is quite clearly incompletely planned and excavated (Joulin himself believed that the undug area of ruins north of the known wing of the *domus* may have been the *pars rustica*),[236] so that the 'absence' of any agricultural yard with its storage, artisanal and occupational huts is quite unequivocally more apparent than real. The same points also apply to the villa at Coulieu.

Perhaps it is within the historian's brief to make the imaginative leap of postulating social and economic relationships between late Roman estates and those nucleated settlements which modern scholars term *vici*, that is, villages. It is certainly beyond the archaeologist's, **unless** there is a minimum of archaeological evidence for them or - failing this - at least the historical background for dependent farming villages in the Western provinces (the East is a different matter)[237] by which more circumstantial archaeological data can be interpreted. At present, there are yet again three possible stances to take on this issue, but as these lead directly into the heart of the changing definition of *villa* to *village*, they will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: *Villa* to *Village*:

Models for Early Mediaeval Settlements

One possible conclusion to make concerning the relationship between late Roman *villae* and **contemporary** *vici* is that which Grenier enshrined in his massive treatise on Gallo-Roman archaeology, namely, that no evidence for the primarily agricultural function of *vici* can be demonstrated anywhere for Roman Gaul, a statement which still holds for the archaeological discoveries of the last forty years. Neither Grenier nor any other who would follow this view would, of course, reject the possibility that any type of nucleated rural settlement could have housed agricultural day-labourers or seasonal workers, whose presence archaeologists could scarcely be expected to be able to prove. The living quarters, storage and work areas of the Roman *villa*'s servile and semi-servile labour force were to be found in the lines of small buildings strictly ranged along the long axis of the *pars rustica*, clearly distinguished in plan from the domestic wings and yards of the villa-complex. Grenier's conclusion that a villa's workforce lived in close proximity to the 'master's house' within the villa-enclosures was based upon two examples of the wealthiest and largest class of excavated Gallo-Roman villas - Chiragan and Anthée in *Gallia Belgica* - whose *partes urbana* and *rustica* are clearly delineated in plan, but similar divisions are observable in nearly every complete or near-complete *villa* plan for Gaul. [That this was the typical spatial structuring for the early and late Gallo-Roman *villa* will be seen in the next chapter, which will deal with the archaeological evidence in detail.] It is, of course, impossible to ascertain from the

archaeological remains whether those housed here were primarily domestic staff or agricultural and pastoral as well - the only indicative small finds at Chiragan relate to goods-weighing and textile-weaving - but it is reasonable of Grenier to suppose that at least the villa's *mancipia* lived here.[238]

The second viewpoint on this argument ex silentio concerning agricultural villages springs from Percival's objection that agrarian activity was by its nature more difficult to establish than the material remains left by the religious, mercantile and/or artisanal functions of those usually roadside settlements which modern archaeologists call *vici*.[239] Yet this is only partly true. Although there were nucleated settlements with a clearly specialised, although not necessarily exclusive function: bronzeworking, local pottery production and weaving at the *vicus* of Les Sables (Cher),[240] tin mining at Le Blond (Haute-Vienne),[241] emporium at the riverside quay of Lazenay (Cher)[242]; or *fanum* (Ron de Gleiso, Lozère)[243] or larger *conciliabulum* (?) as at La Touratte (Indre) - which was originally thought to be a 2nd-4th century *villa* until it became clear that it contained no buildings to which any domestic, agricultural or industrial role could be attributed[244] - Percival nevertheless rightly cautions that the presence of any of these activities does not preclude an agrarian role for a *vicus*, since *villae*, too, often had forges, workshops and *fana* (for example, Champ des Pois, Cher [**Site N° 17**], (pl.7). The *pars rustica* of any *villa* is comparatively easy to identify because the walling-off from the domestic area and the layout of the *pars rustica* yards clearly suggest storage or other utilitarian functions for those buildings within them; moreover, certain building types such as the open 'basilical' plan with

internal pier-supports are assumed to have been granaries; and because both artisanal and agricultural implements are occasionally found within these areas, [**Site N°s 8, 45, 53** and **71**], including millstones, which of course only indicate secondary treatment of crops, not their production [**Site N°s 8, 10, 17, 19, 22, 40, 42, 45, 53, 54, 56, 69** and **71**]. That these tools are not found on nucleated Gallo-Roman settlements does not of course mean that dependent farm labourers did not live in these communities, since it perfectly possible that such tools would have been supplied by the estate for whom they worked; and even if they were found in *vici*, could they not be interpreted as being the implements of small, independent market gardeners?

Similarly inconclusive is the occasional presence of putative basilical 'granaries' in *vici*. The spatial relationship of *villa* to *vicus*, which was the springboard for this discussion, can establish at best an economic link (a shared range of artefacts, common growth patterns), for it is not unreasonable to assume that the presence of a number of local *villae* could encourage the growth of roadside *vici* by providing both produce and a market for goods not made on the estate, as well as storage facilities for foodstuffs[245]; but these links do not automatically have to have been proprietorial as well, in either the Roman or mediaeval periods. To establish unequivocally the agrarian nature of a *vicus* through archaeology, one would need to find either a stored cache of plough shares and similar equipment, unrelated to iron foundries or scrap collections, or a concentration of stock animal bones whose age-ranges and butchering methods did **not** indicate merely a market/abbatoir but long-term stock-enclosures. Since none of this has been investigated even for the *villae* of Aquitaine, it is hardly

surprising not to find any such research for *vici*. In short, while it is prudent for Grenier or Wightman to restrict their analysis of *vici* to their administrative, cultic or economic roles, the negative archaeological data for agricultural activity based within them in itself proves nothing either way.

However, Percival's interpretation that at least some late Gallo-Roman villages housed dependent agricultural labourers in them, fails to address the question as to where any small, independent farmers would have lived. The converse view, espoused by Latouche, Pounds and, more recently, Rouche, maintains that any reference to a Late Roman or early Merovingian *vicus* was, ipso facto, evidence for the presence of free small-scale farmers.[246] This at least is consistent with the consensus of current archaeological opinion concerning the independent nature of the late Roman *vicus*; as Corbier defined it in her summary of the findings of the 1976 colloquium at Tours on the Gallo-Roman *vicus*, it was a village whose inhabitants lived upon and were immediately surrounded by their own lands; its curial magistrates and religious functions were merely other aspects of its independent nature.[247] Consensus, of course, can be self-supporting; but the very fact of its administrative role lends weight to the concept of the Gallo-Roman *vicus*, at least, being free from the direct ownership of local potentates, however much it was threatened with their growing dominance.

The main problem, however, is that all the issues discussed above concerning the contemporary relationships between *vici* and *villae* grow even murkier when applied to the **evolution** of either phenomenon. Both the view of a dependent and free late Roman village limit the

interpretation of archaeological data according to their preconceived, particular historical models by which the role of *vici* with rural estates can be established. In all three perceptions of the village-villa relationship, a 'continuity' is extended across the *villa* of both the Late Roman **and** Merovingian periods: even Grenier wanted to see a parallel between the housing in the grandest of the late Gallo-Roman villas of a dependent labour force with mediaeval domanial settlements, although the available evidence for mediaeval châteaux and their dependent villages bears not the slightest physical resemblance to the *pars rustica* of any Gallo-Roman villa-plan.

Grenier's mediaeval analogy was derived from the the extremely influential opinions of Fustel de Coulanges, who saw the Roman villa evolving into both the village and château of the Middle Ages. Using two of the largest known Roman villa-sites in Gaul to have been excavated before the Second World War - that of Anthée in Gallia Belgica and of Chiragan in southern Aquitaine, whose layout has been discussed above - the process of villa-to-village was described by the drawing of two parallels, one with the vast and contemporary third and fourth century estates in Africa, which on literary evidence already incorporated dependent, virtually dormitory-villages, the other with "*le village médiéval autour du château-fort*".[248] In this model, linking Gallo-Roman plan with both Roman African description and mediaeval type, the as yet unproven physical similarities between Roman and Carolingian estates are used to lend substance to yet another presumed social parallel of *"la grande propriété féodale"*.[249]

The African material consists, of course, of the well-known Imperial inscriptions at Henchir Mettich (CIL.VIII:25902) and two others

from the Bagradas valley, concerning the organisation and workings of the imperial *saltus*, and include a reference to the Trajanic *Lex Manciana*, which was still operative in the fifth century.[250] These large African estates were rented out to *conductores* who in turn sub-leased to small-scale, colonate tenant-farmers. As such, they are important for the study of the rise of the colonate.

But surely three points about them render them inappropriate to a discussion of land tenure in the Gallic provinces. Foremost is the caveat that there is no independent evidence to show that the same conditions existed on private estates as the imperial, fiscal lands in North Africa, or indeed that these were necessarily prevalent on all State-owned lands in any province. Secondly, Africa had its own traditions of land management and exploitation, whose similarity with Celtic Gaul's has to be proven, not merely assumed (particularly in regard to how the population was grouped in the landscape). One might, of course, presuppose that the administration of great estates in North Africa was superimposed upon them from Rome, using Roman models which might also have been used in Gaul, but this is a long way from saying that the economic organisation of lessors and lessees produced a typical Roman organisation of housing and of field-systems, even on estates owned by the Imperial fisc. Yet even if some rigid bureaucratic structure had been imposed on the African landscape, it had little to do with Aquitanica Prima, which has no records of imperial estates within its borders at any time, beyond the existance of state-owned mines, such as the silver-lead-zinc mine of la Deverse in the Rouergue.[251]

What is suggestive, however, is the very fact that these

inscriptions, as well as legal commentaries on these so-called "proto-seigneurial" estates, are concentrated in the East and the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Even allowing for the bias of a better survival rate for lawcodes concerned with the East than for the West, there is surely here an indication that Africa was considered an extraordinary place, requiring special imperial attention. If nothing to do with indigenous traditions, this concern with administration and the wealth of landowners here was surely due to the extraordinary size of the African *saltus*, the immensity of which could quite plausibly have incorporated whole villages, even if they stood miles away from the actual villa. Frontinus' comment deserves to be quoted in full:

> '*Habent autem in saltibus privati non exiguum populum plebeium, et vici circa villam in modum municipiorum.*'[252]

The emphasis here is on the extent of population, not on a concentration of cottages huddled around a fortified manor. In land-surveying terms, a *saltus* was, after all, a property covering at least 5000 iugera; Ausonius' "little inheritance" was, by this scale, small indeed (1100-1200 iugera, which is roughly 300ha).[253] As Latouche pointed out, the creation of huge estates in fourth century **Gaul** by private magnates did not automatically require any nucleation or other rearrangement of dwellings and land-plots.[254]

Africa was famed for its massive *latifundia*; Gaul was famed rather for its fertility, especially of Aquitaine (Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, VII, 2,8). The evidence of Ausonius for western *Aquitanica* in the late fourth century, and Sidonius Apollinaris in the eastern province during the fifth, strongly suggests that the great

landowning senatorial families of southern Gaul each held a large number of dispersed estates, rather than a few huge ones.[255] Sidonius, for example, owned an estate just outside the Arvernian *civitas* of Clermont-Ferrand, another in the Auvergne at *Avitacum*, and further property inherited from his mother-in-law, presumably as well as Avitacum (*Ep.* VIII.ix.2); related by marriage were the families of Magnus of Narbonne, which owned land in southern Gaul, and of course the Aviti themselves, at least one of whom also owned an estate in Narbonese Gaul (*Carm.* XXIV.75 ff). We are, therefore, no closer to deriving a model for the creation of villages which are supposed to have eventually swallowed up their central focus, the Gallo-Roman *villa*.

If, then, one accepts M. Bloch's judgement that the African epigraphic material can be no more than 'documents of comparative history', and in no way represents part of a 'general continuity' of seigneurial evolution,[256] what then is left?

As we have already seen, Gallo-Roman villa-houses did not possess a closely-surrounding village in which rent-farmers of any description may be shown to have lived. At Chiragan in the Toulosan, Joulin noted neighbouring, but not clustering, *vici*, although the only demonstrably dependent lodgings for estate workers lay within the villa-walls. Many *vici* have been located by aerial photography, particularly in northern *Aquitanica Prima*, and are usually located on roads or river fords. Even if these villages were in fact *intra terminum villae* - and it is by no means justifiable to assume that *vici* which are today located within the same modern parish boundary as a *villa* were ipso facto within the ancient *fundus villae* - those which have been excavated, such as the staging-post of *Ernodurum*

(Saint-Ambroix-sur-Arnon, Cher) or Les Sables (Cher), yielded material and architecture which emphasises their functions as emporia and/or artisanal workshops, and not as dormitory villages for agricultural labour.[257]

The major work on early mediaeval settlements in central Aquitaine remains the pioneer study of the Basse-Auvergne completed more than twenty-five years ago by G. Fournier. Here in the Limagne, almost all the identifiable settlements go back to establishments as *vici*, *castra* or *monasteria* in Merovingian sources, or occasionally as *villae* in the later Carolingian period, as was, for instance, the settlement in the Auvergne at Moissat.[258] Although such sites may yield some Gallo-Roman material, in the absence of plans, such remains should not and cannot be automatically interpreted as *villae* - late Roman *castra*, *vici* and cult-places are equally possible.

Gallo-Roman villas similar in plan to Chiragan probably did, of course, provide a prototype for the internal layout of those early mediaeval estates which needed an enclosed organisation of dormitories, storehouses and other auxiliary buildings. Monasteries are an obvious case for this, and we know that in the Limousin, for example, sixth century villa-estates were converted to monastic use: S. Aredius of Yrieux

> '*...ut monasterii cellulam. ubi prospere aspiceret,*
>
> *in villis amoenis aedificaret.*' [259]

Yet even where religious communities provided a focal point for secular settlements, these first grew outside the walls, not within.

Now, in theory there is no reason why any Gallo-Roman villa which hypothetically continued to be occupied uninterrupted into the Middle Ages might not also have also provided a focus for future settlements. But if this type of Gallo-Roman site is supposed to have encouraged the growth of mediaeval villages **principally because** of its structure of dependent housing, the argument falls down. In fact, the only other example of an organised mediaeval layout derivative of the Roman rural estate is, at best, the villa-structure as it is described in the Carolingian *Capitulariis de villis* - and this is a villa-ideal which is demonstrably artificial. Even the sophisticated layout of a monastery such as S. Gall has no demonstrable roots in the tradition of Gallo-Roman rural architecture, whilst those literally built upon Gallo-Roman remains, such as at Ligugé, have not yielded enough early archaeological remains to know exactly how closely they followed the plans of the original domestic architecture.[260] There is, then, no demonstrable link between the regularised agricultural yards of these Gallo-Roman villas and later, secular settlements.

Direct and formal analogy with mediaeval institutions is even more clearly seen in Percival's attempt to make a virtue of gaps in the archaeological record. On the one hand, we have the archaeological remains of Late Roman villas, but not their estate-accounts; on the other, we possess the documentary records of Carolingian estates but no early mediaeval villas on the ground. If it were possible to describe the Gallo-Roman villa in the soil by using the terminology of a Carolingian polyptych, then a Carolingian villa may have looked like a Roman one. Q.E.D.

With or without the social inferences involved in this, the loser, as always, is the Merovingian period, seen as a passive, if impoverished, medium through which Roman institutions were somewhat tatteredly transmitted to Carolingian Francia. More to the point, the very analogy of late Roman estates incorporating villages of labourers is with a Carolingian *villa*-model which can, as far as concerns the location and domination of a labour force by a local *villa*, be shown from documentary evidence to have been highly unlikely for Merovingian *Francia*. Not only do authenticated Merovingian bequests and *diplomata* uniformly fail to include the sale or transfer of *vici*, but even the eighth century working estate records of the Church of Tours list the payments of rents in kind by over 900 peasants only under the categories of *villae* and *colonicae*.[261] If Merovingian dependent agricultural villages existed in the Massif Central, then, they were not called *vici*. It follows from this that nucleated settlements which have been identified by contemporary literary, epigraphic or archaeological material cannot be included as evidence that either late Roman or early mediaeval villa-estates incorporated villages. However, since this is a persistent habit among modern authorities on the subject, it is necessary to emphasise the point by attempting a necessarily brief summary of the possible evolution of the literary concept of the *vicus* in the early Middle Ages.

***Vici* and *Villae*:**

Twin strands of literary evidence illustrate the gradual expansion of the common perception of the Merovingian *villa* as much as a communal settlement (with proprietor) as an agricultural estate with central building complex.

Firstly, as late as the sixth century, the word '*vicus*' meant a settlement which, whatever its contemporary administrative status, still clearly differed from a *villa* in both its secular and ecclesiastical aspects, as all forms of early Merovingian literary documentation attest, from the non-existence of *vici* as property capable of donation or sale - in stark contrast to *villae* - in pre-Carolingian *formulae*, *chartae* or royal confirmation of ecclesiastical tax exemptions, to the narrative use of *vici* in genuine Merovingian documents purely as locational pinpointers for villa-estates.[262] As late as the end of the eighth century, Bishop Ambrosius of Cahors died '*in villa Seriacus in vicus Ernodurum*', that is, in the territory of that *vicus*.[263] Even in the eighth or possibly ninth century, when it may be safely asserted that '*villa*' **had** come to encompass communal settlements, the *Formulae Arvernensis* - created as a copybook of standard legal documents, derived from original papers whose particulars have been removed - provide this legal formula of the period:

> 1a)'...*hoc est manso nostro in pago Arvernico,*
> *in vico illo, in villa illa, que de alode*
> *velde atracto, ibidem vissi sumus habere,*
> *cum casis, tictis* [*tectis*], *edificiis,*
> *adjacentiis, campis, pratis, vineis, silvis,*
> *aquis, aquarum vie decursibus, omnia et omnibus..*.[264]

At the same time, a fairly common subgroup of *vici* (and *castri*) appear with *-iacum* toponyms based on personal names: from *Victuriacus castrum* (Vitry-le-Brûlé or Brioude, Puy-de-Dome), to sixth century *vici* mentioned by Gregory of Tours, called *Musciacas*, *Orbaniacus*, *Laudiacum*,

Becciacum, and so forth.[265] Although it would be difficult to find as many *vici* toponyms ending in *-iacum* attested for Roman *Aquitania* as there are in Gregory of Tours' works, the vagaries of the survival of Gallo-Roman inscriptions and the lack of any comparable regional annals for that period of course makes this an unfair comparison.[266] More to the point, however, is the impossibility of determining on internal evidence whether or not this sub-category of Merovingian Latin-based *vici*-toponyms necessarily dates back to a Gallo-Roman origin; toponymists are happy to point out that such names could date from the early Frankish period. It is possible, but by no means provable, that these '*-iacum*' settlements took the name of the Merovingian landowner in whose domain they lay, both literally and perhaps legally. Two other alternative explanations exist, however: they could have been villages settled on a former (that is, defunct) Gallo-Roman estate, or they had taken the name of their Roman or Merovingian patron-founder - a possibility which unsatisfactorily begs the entire the question of village-ownership in both the Roman and post-Roman West.[267]

Scattered examples of estates and nearby *vici* which share the same name. For example, a cleric who appears firstly in '*vico Sexciacensi*', then constructing a church '*in rure domus Sexciacensi*' (*GC*, 48-49) might seem at first glance to support the idea of Merovingian *vici* existing within estates, but the transfer of title from one location to a neighbourhood does not have to correspond with shared ownership, and the objection remains that if *vici* were owned, then they would have been donated, divided bought and sold, for none of which any evidence exists until the late seventh/eighth centuries.

It may be significant, however, that those Gallo-Roman *vici* which

survived as Merovingian communities in *Aquitanica Prima* were cultic centres/spa towns or market towns. Even Lezoux, which drastically shrank in area during the fourth century, continued to produce local wares, possibly as late as the sixth century, when its mint declared it still '*Ledoso vico*'.[268] Of course, agriculture may have been been another function of the Gallo-Roman *vicus* which is less archaeologically retrievable occupation than religious centres, iron-working or trade emporia, especially considering the market-gardens of quite urban centres, but the oft-noted preponderance of roadside communities identified in modern studies as '*vici*' suggests that farming was not their principal raison d'être.

Although circumstantial in the extreme, these fragments of literary evidence may point towards the appearance of a phenomenon not traceable in the Gallo-Roman countryside: that is, the agricultural village which, whatever its artisanal or mercantile activities, was first and foremost shelter for agricultural labourers and tenant-farmers. The gradual overshadowing by the more popular term '*villa*' in the Carolingian period although '*vicus*' remained in the archaising legal latin of the later Middle Ages - may simply reflect the disappearance of that Gallo-Roman category of small rural centre which was, at core, artisanal, mercantile or cultic. In this case, the later Merovingian '*villa*' usurped not the definition of the *vicus* as village per se, but rather supplanted it by evolving within its boundaries a new and more common form of mediaeval village or hamlet.

Secondly - and reinforcing the earlier distinction between villas and villages/towns - there is the uncontestably **late** Merovingian appearance of *ecclesiae* rather than *oratoria* within *villa* boundaries. Now,

the villa-estate had acquired a Christian connotation as early as the fourth century; the household prayed together, albeit not necessarily in a purpose-built oratory. By the following century, most of those wealthy country houses familiar to Sidonius would have possessed *oratoria*.[269] From the start, however, this posed a possible threat to the episcopal control of congregations and of the rural priesthood. Ausonius had felt obliged to attend Easter in the city; as has been seen, through the late fifth and sixth centuries, episcopal councils increasingly reiterated that the most important events of the Christian calendar could **only** be celebrated in proper *ecclesiae*, that is, under full Church authority - in practice, under episcopal control. As already noted, rural *vici* and *castella* were permitted to contain baptisteries as early as 402, and by 529 parish priests were allowed to preach in them. By contrast, the *concilia* of 511, 517 and again in 535 (all of which were attended by the bishops of the diocese of Aquitanica Prima), firmly countered any threat of losing control of congregations, by forbidding the placement of relics or celebration of Easter or Christmas *in oratoriis villarebus/domini prædiorum*; only parish clergy (explicitly non-*villa* priests) held that authority. The seats of lay power were not to gain prestige through religious veneration, too.

In accordance with the nomenclature of contemporary episcopal *concilia*, Gregory of Tours normally refers to numerous chapels belonging to rural estates as '*oratoria*', although of course, not all oratories were ipso facto in *fundi*. As only three authentically sixth century exceptions to this rule survive, they deserve some examination here. All are anecdotal references from Gregory's writings, two appearing in immediate succession in the one work. All are associated, in one way or another,

with the deposition of relics. In the *Miracles* of S. Julian, '*...in villae suae territorio basilicam construxerat*', for which martyr's relics are specially conveyed. Now, at first glance this unequivocally refers to a church on a private rural estate; but whether this *basilica*, once constructed, remained part of the domain or was given as a property to the Church is not discussed by Gregory. Bearing the edicts of contemporary *concilia* in mind, however, it seems unlikely that Gregory - a stickler for episcopal authority - would have condoned the institution of relics in a private chapel, that is, in a church which did not, financially speaking, belong to the Church.

In the *Gloria Confessorum*, Gregory's allusion to a '*vicus Sexciacensi*' (mentioned above), of which a certain miraculous Severus is presbyter, is the prelude to a discussion of Severus' construction of two churches, one '*in rure domus Sexciacensis*', the other in another *villa* twenty miles away. This '*domus Sexciacensis*' can be interpreted with equal plausibiliy as a rural *villa*, or as a property within the *vicus* whose name it shared (titled *domi* appear in sixth and seventh century records as both rural and urban estates), so that the *ecclesia* built in its fields may in fact have been intended for the benefit of the town; in either case, it may not have belonged to a *villa* as a private church. The clerical background of the saint adds to the ambiguity; it is not known whether he was also the estates' landowner, or if either properties were in lay, royal, or even ecclesiastical hands. The 'other church' in the story is referred to as '*templum Dei*', which becomes a place of especial veneration after saint Severus' burial within it. It may be, then, that the unusual significance accorded to the terminology in this episode reflects that very phenomenon which the urban-based church hierarchy was

attempting to stamp out. Gregory, as bishop, could scarcely have meant the reader to see Severus' constructions as private oratories or baptisteries whilst praising the piety of the man who would, by his subsequent actions, have gone against church policy. On the rare occasion when Gregory does discuss a rural '*oratorium*' - as opposed to rural church - with relics, we can only assume that it was under the jurisdiction of a parish priest, as was proper; the episode concerning relics of S. Saturninus - by chance deposited in the rural *tugurium* of a Brivadois peasant, which was as a consequence pulled down and replaced by a new oratory - provides no details on this (*GM*, 47).

The second anecdote, while again possibly being literally accurate, can also be seen equally as an exaggeration of status necessary to the moral of the tale. In '*Reontio villa*' (mod. Rion, Gironde), Gregory describes a Catholic '*ecclesia*' (in the sense of a building, not just the congregation) side by side with an Arian population and priesthood (*GC*,46). The Arians baptise their children inside the Catholic **church**; in retaliation, the Catholic priest christens his brethren inside an Arian **house**: those baptised in the Faith flourish, those into heresy, die. Just as Gregory ensures that the Arians are not seen to have a sanctified place of worship, so too their use of the Catholic building gains in sacrilegious outrage when emphasised as a church, not merely a personal chapel. The privilege of performing baptisms was not, strictly speaking, one extended to a mere *villa* priest, however pious. Nevertheless, there is clearly a population on this estate, although it does not have to have been particularly large for each sect to possess its own priest, considering the obvious zeal with which both held their faith.

This incipient visualisation of a *villa* as a community under a

priesthood, rather than as an estate with household and dependents, thus affects the common definition of a *villa* by adding the presence of an *ecclesia* no earlier than the late seventh century, after which it becomes extremely commonplace. It is worth adding that, whilst the function of rural chapels has often been noted in their role as the nuclei for subsequent mediaeval settlements, the contribution of church administration to the **conceptual** transformation of the *villa* has for too long been overlooked in the search for the origins of parishes, modern towns or the overall hierarchical structure of the Frankish church.

In sum, the only certainties which can be drawn from these documents is that the term *villa* could be a rural location-setter in the Merovingian period as in the Roman (events took place *in villa monasterii*, for instance)[270]; that rustici 'belonged' to it as an estate; and that in legal documents it provided the heading for an exact physical inventory of a variety of revenue-producing lands, in which sense the term '*villa*' presaged its Carolingian usage, clarifying the tranferral of *usufruct*, not of *proprietas*. Furthermore, the legal texts clearly and persistently distinguished between various urban and rural locations. As with the rulings of the sixth century episcopal councils mentioned earlier, the Visigothic lawcodes, for example, quite explicitly and repeatedly differentiated between *civitas, castellum, vicus* and *villa/villulam*. Although sixth century examples merely contrast urban and rural locations - adulterous slaves, for example, fleeing from the *civitas 'ad villa'*, or beekeeping either '*in civitate aut in villa*' - Visigothic *novellae* in the seventh century deal with *mancipia* in a *villa, civitas, castellum, vicus* or *diversorium*. It would be splitting a good many hairs

to be able to define a *vicus* as some type of small settlement which was **legally** distinguishable from that of a villa, yet physically identical in the form of a village.[271]

It further follows from this that the only proveable similarity between Merovingian and Carolingian *villae* is of their conceptualisation on paper; for when an estate under the heading of 'Villa' contains, as with Aredius' properties, long lists of tenant-farmers, there is no way of knowing how they were settled, either in small villages or dispersed rent-farms. Obviously, *coloni* lived somewhere. But it has long been noticed by those Annalist scholars concerned with seigneurial landholdings that in the Limousin and Auvergne, the Rouergue, Velay and indeed all of the Massif Central, the commonest **later** mediaeval rural settlements were of hamlets and farmsteads, and not the agricultural towns which appeared in parts of Italy or in northern Francia.[272]

The *Villa* as Stronghold:

Yet a belief in the attraction of late Roman *villae* in Gaul as places of refuge and fortification, and thus as catalysts for subsequent settlement, persists with us. We know that, in a literal sense, this did not happen in Italy, where the process of early mediaeval *incastellemento* transferred populations to hilltop sites, more easily defensible than *villa* house-complexes located in open fields or hill slopes,[273] but what is not clear is if the range of terms that would have been used to describe these early mediaeval hilltop locations would have included '*villa*' amongst them. In other words, we still do not know if early mediaeval (but not late Roman) *villae* incorporated places of refuge which could subsequently accrue permanent settlement. Blanchet, following

Fustel de Coulanges, makes so much of Palladius' labelling of the main dwelling on an estate as '*praetorium*' - wh ich can be construed as a 'headquarters' as much as anything, strictly speaking, fortified - that he suggests those sites which Gregory of Tours called *castra* or *castella* were merely rich dwellings;[274] Beaudouin emphasised this when he conceived in mediaeval terms of a typical cluster of late Roman *casae* around a fortified 'château du mâitre'.[275] Even so, his own chosen examples - the depictions of walled and towered luxury-houses on fourth century mosaics from Tabarka and the Villa of Julius (now in Carthage) - do not portray any such phenomena, nor does their Gallo-Roman parallel, the famous fresco of a towered and rather grand villa at Trier.[276]

From their foundations in the early Empire onwards, even the humblest villas in Gaul - as in Africa - possessed walled yards, one of which usually contained the main house, which was thus divided from the outdoor activities (and their labourers). A standard version of the "gallery-façade" house-plan did, moreover, display towers at either front corner. But neither of these traits necessarily were of themselves defensive measures, beyond the everyday hazards of rustlers, petty pilferers and would-be runaways.

There is, of course, a series of smaller, well-fortified farmsteads in Cyrenaïca, which in plan are nearly indistinguishable from late Roman military *castella*. Yet these existed as entities physically independent of villas in the African landscape and do not appear to have attracted settlements around them.[277] In Gaul, examples of late Roman villas being strengthened for defence (as at Newel, where a portico was walled up), or the creation of square-planned

rural dwellings, with real fortificatory towers at each corner, as at fourth century Pfalzel, were responses largely within a militarised zone, near a threatened frontier, in *Gallia Belgica*.[278] Whilst there is a handful of late Roman and/or Merovingian defensive sites within central Aquitaine, they are clearly either military in function or else show no evidence, archaeological or otherwise, or of agricultural activity within a permanent, **non**-nucleated settlement: in short, they neither looked like villas, nor indeed were all of them intended for year-round habitation. The *castrum* of Chastel-Marlhac, for example, did house a year-round agricultural community with priest and *ecclesia*, but there is no mention of a *dominus* under whose protection they were living, even though the circumstances of Gregory of Tours' anecdote lends itself to providing such information; and, furthermore, this community could have derived from a Gallo-Roman military fort or independent village more conceivably than from a private estate. The **non**-military '*locus cui nomen Theopolis est*' of the early fifth century Sisteron inscription - which may or may not have also qualified in contemporary language as a *castellum* - appears to have been constructed by the family of the Gallic Prefect, Dardanus, with local landowning interests, to provide protection for a rural community, without reference to an estate-centre.[279] It could be argued that the silence of early Merovingian texts on the presence of communities living within the protection of a fortified *villa* is insufficient evidence to suggest that such things were not commonplace in central Gaul, where most of the anecdotal evidence is located. Nonetheless, there is another type of negative evidence which is harder to dismiss: that is, that at no time during Roman occupation did any rural sites

in any part of Aquitaine so much as approach in appearance the early Imperial 'fortified villas' of the Alentejo region in southern Portugal whose plans, like those of Tripolitania, were until recently interpreted as small forts rather than civilian or semi-civilian farmsteads; no-one of course knows exactly from what threats these particular farmsteads needed protection, which makes comparison with even Bagaudae-plagued central and southern Gaul difficult.[280] Attempts to find even post-Roman 'villae fortifiées' have been unsuccessful, although contemporary hilltop sites are known; in south-eastern Limousin, for example, mediaeval forts of any period are either located on Celtic oppida (with or without Roman occupation as well), or on Roman camps.[281]

There is, then no evidence to demonstrate that late Roman or early Merovingian *villae* in the Massif Central took the form of *castra/castella*. But could villas in central Aquitaine have been abandoned, in their traditional form, and have been **replaced** in functions by small late Roman *castella*? This would be difficult to prove from material remains alone. It would also be odd, if this were the case, that there is no evidence from any of the hundreds of Gallo-Roman villa-plans (including undated ones) which have been identified in part or whole for *Aquitanica Prima* to show any architectural conversions for defensive reasons, beyond the expansion of some to include a front gallery-porch with corner towers. Even this is a plan which appears in the earliest as well as later villas. Nevertheless, there are cases of the establishment of late Roman *castella* in the vicinity of earlier villas. For example, Larçay on an escarpment overlooking the Cher in the southern Touraine is the site

of what is clearly a military trapezoidal *castellum*, which can only be dated by its contruction technique to the late Roman period. Some 40m. downslope is a large villa, occupied only in the first two centuries A.D., which - along with another as yet unlocated building - provided construction material for the third or fourth century fortress.[282] Whatever the validity of Audin's postulation that the former was the '*villa* du riche Laricius' (*Laricíacum* producing Larçay), the occupation of both sites clearly did not overlap. There is also not the slightest shred of evidence to suggest that the eight-towered fortress was anything other than a military outpost, slightly modified and re-used in the later Middle Ages.[283]

Nevertheless, modern historians see the increasing reliance upon local magnates for physical protection as being both characteristic of the later Empire, in both the East and West, and a significant trait of mediaeval life; but if the social and psychological pressure to seek refuge with a lord ever did in fact create a clutter of casae around a lordly late Gallo-Roman villa, rather than around a Carolingian or Ottonian fortified dwelling, we shall have to look elsewhere for the proof.

The 'Literary Evidence':

Perhaps it lies with the three most famous literary references to fortified rural establishments, each conveniently spaced at almost exactly a hundred years' interval: those of the later fourth century *Mosella* by Ausonius, the *Burgus Pontii Leontii* (*Carm.* XXII) of Sidonius Apollinaris in the second half of the fifth century, and the carmina of

Venantius Fortunatus on the stately homes of Bishop Nicetius around A.D.565, especially *Carm.* III.[284] As with Anthée and Chiragan, the earliest and latest works are located north-east of our province, on the Moselle in *Gallia Belgica*, whilst Sidonius' poem is located just beyond the south-west corner of our province, between the Tarn and Garonne rivers.

In interpreting Ausonius' *Mosella*, we could assume that the houses so idyllically described as villas along the river's banks -

> *Talia despectant longo per caerula tractu*
> *pendentes saxis instanti culmine villae,*
> *quas medius dirimit sinuosis flexibus errans*
> *amnis, et alternas comunt praetoria ripas.*
>
> (*ll.* 283-286)

are the same buildings as those *praesidia* and *castra* which, by the end of the poem, have been converted to grainstores through the benefits of imperial peace; but it is equally valid to interpret these as some other, distinct form of rural architecture, particularly as the author describes these *praesidia* as having been built specifically for for uncertain times:

> *...addam praesidiis dubiarum condita rerum,*
> *sed modo securis non castra, sed horrea Belgis;*
>
> (*ll.* 456-457)

Carmen III.xii of Venantius Fortunatus, however, describes a *castellum* on the same river almost exactly two centuries later which is clearly intended by its eulogiser to appear both as a strong fortification and well-appointed house; although it is perhaps deliberately not called a *villa* (a label which only appears in the

surviving titles, not texts, of some of his poems, excluding this particular one). But one cannot go beyond acknowledging the defensive capabilities of such an establishment; no hint is given of anything approaching a dependent, proto-mediaeval settlement around it, and indeed one would not expect a poem dressed in late classical terms and adressed to its owner to do anything other than describe the master's house.[285]

Such classicising may make interpretation difficult, but it is yet nothing to the extravagant overkill of Sidonius' poem on the house of Pontius Leontius, established on a hill between the fork of two rivers, and with an enclosure-wall described by Sidonius as being impregnable to military attack.[286] The weaving-room is described as the architectural rival of the Temple of Pallas Athena. Both the walls and the *textrinum* may be accepted as having existed; but their description, like everything else in the poem, is pure and often opaque hyperbole. If one accepts the description of a defensive wall at face value, a closer look at the context reveals the main aggressor - the river, which in high winds it nevertheless failed to keep from flooding the bathhouse. Similarly, repeated references to 'lofty roofs' and towers within the complex, are no more than, for the former, a hack phrase in the description of villas, while for the latter, the only tower described is no more than an elevated dining-room.[287]

It is nevertheless called a 'burgus', the first grand house to be so named. A '*burgus*', wrote Vegetius in the previous century, was a '*castellum parvum*' and it may well have been its naturally defended position which struck a *castellum*-like chord in Sidonius' mind (who, incidentally, never called Leontius' house a *villa*, although he

was content to use the word on at least ten other occasions in his writings). *Castella* are explicitly mentioned in three other non-military contexts, all of them in prose letters where the emphasis is upon their defensive capabilities through elevated locations, without further comment on the size or nature of the settlement beyond this. There are hints, of course; he made a conscious contrast, using a characteristically superficial antithesis, of *'terrena villis saxosa castellis'*[288] in his famous praise of the Arvernian landscape. But was Sidonius similarly **grouping** both *villae* and *castella* as walled structures, differentiated only by location (villas on lowlands equalling castella on highground), or was he **distinguishing** between two quite different-looking types of rural dwellings, not necessarily even owned in the same way as each other?

Other *castella* are attested, always in the Auvergne, which lends itself to high defensive sites. In *Ep.* V.xiv.1, one is described as *munitiones*, that is, fortified as well as being located high in the mountains, but it is unfortunately impossible to infer anything else from the simple comment that one of Sidonius' acquaintances has a choice of these in which he could stay.[289] Another *castellum* is also nestled among the mountain crags, replete with a new baptistery built by one Elaphius. Of all Sidonius' *castella*, this is the nearest he comes to a true village, not just a temporary fortified retreat, such as that of Grèzes in the Gevaudan, used from the mid-fourth century onwards. The foundation of the baptistery clearly implies that this *castellum* was patronised by a neighbouring landowner-cum-benefactor; but although it may have formed part of a family property, this is slightly less likely, given that private estates of the period tended

to possess oratories rather than *baptisteria*, and Sidonius, as bishop, might be expected to use the appropriate nomenclature in this instance.[290]

Yet even if a community of dwellings in the fifth century could have been perceived by Sidonius as a '*castellum*', it still does not necessarily follow that it was synonymous with a '*villa*', owned by a *dominus* or *domina*, and run as either an agricultural and/or pastoral concern, or as a rural domicile; the attraction of either a Roman castellum or *villa* for subsequent village-formation **in central Gaul** is still far from being either clear or documented.

One further, supposed reference to a direct villa-to-village transformation can be found in the discussion of late Roman rural trade by Whittaker. His claim that '...in the West many rural estates...were like medieval châteaux, incorporating whole communities and resembling towns...' ends with a Latin tag taken from the '*de Reditu suo*' of the Narbonese Rutilius Namatianus, who remarked upon several villas along the Italian coast ca. 417.[291] One was the villa Albini with its saltpans; another 'is called' a *villa* - it is, in fact, a promontory with a grand house situated upon it - almost as though the poet had his doubts about the suitability of the label; one was virtually a boarding-lodge. But the most quotable and problematical use of the word lies in a passing comment on the state of the Tuscan coastline:

Nunc villae grandes, oppida parva prius.[292]

Here, Rutilius may have been contrasting the appearance of shabby, semi-derelict and small towns with the shiny new mega-buildings of the rich, in which case he perhaps was using the term *villa* in its

traditional sense of a house-complex, rather than as a metonym for an estate. Alternatively, he could have been contrasting the former, small centres of population with the present-day large but comparatively empty estates ('*villa*' in its wider sense). Alternatively, these *oppida parva* could in fact have been of great antiquity - genuine ruins - in which case any arguments about early fifth century aggrandisements by potentates in Etruria goes out the window. The general context in the poem supports this idea of physical decay, of crumbling defensive walls and abandoned ports. In any event, it is not at all safe to infer from this that these villas were **replacing** the old towns in fact, as opposed simply to dominating their landscape, far less to use this terse line as evidence of agglomeration around a villa-house. After all, the *oppida* supposedly gave way to the *villae*, not the other way around. Yet again, this provides no solid evidence for late Roman villas creating very late Roman or early mediaeval villages immediately around them.

It should be clear by now that the evidence for the 'mediaevalisation', as it were, of the late Roman villa in central Aquitaine must still be judged as open to debate. The absence of archaeological data should not allow this assumption to continue to solidify into accepted belief. What can be said with some certainty may be summarised thus: it **is** likely that villa-estates varied in composition and appearances on the ground in both the Roman and Merovingian periods. The earliest indirect indication of the presence of village-communities within the boundaries of villa-estates, or forming one discrete unit of a collection of estates which together

made up a *villa*, appears in documents from the late seventh century onwards (*ecclesiae* commonly on estates, circumstantial toponymic evidence). Villages could well exist in Carolingian *villa*-estates, although the term '*villa*' could still refer to property units without even a *curtis*, far less *mansi* organised as a community, for the ways in which rural labourers settled - as scattered farms or agricultural villages - probably varied from region to region, particularly in heavily forested areas. *Vici* which are obviously not independent villages only appear very rarely as saleable items in the Carolingian period, but by the eleventh century, the word is virtually interchangeable with *villa*/village. Furthermore, Frankish châteaux-forts with surrounding, irregular villages were a creation of the ninth and tenth centuries, and no earlier; even Fournier, when attempting to find early mediaeval examples of fortified manors, could only produce rather tenuous examples: a Burgundian period villa apparently fortified by a fosse, and eighth century laws concerning rural houses 'fortified' with a hedge.[293]

Yet when Gregory of Tours mentions hedges on country properties, they are recognisably functioning as property barriers, protection against maurauders of all varieties, but not in the sense of fortification of a dwelling (*HF*, IX.19, *VP*, XV.3).

It is **not** likely, then, that even in the very early Middle Ages an eastern Aquitanian *villa* constituted, on paper or in plan, a village. A strong continuity of rural occupation must have persisted in central and southern Gaul into the early mediaeval period, but the belief that this late Roman inheritance included fortified *villa*-strongholds has no solid foundation. Certainly, *Aquitanica Prima* was subjected to almost

continuous invasions, of varying dimensions, from the fifth century onwards: but the resultant communal refuges appear only to have been temporary, mostly in naturally defensive positions (hill- or mountain-tops in the Limousin, Auvergne, Velay and Gévaudan,caves in the less accessible areas of the Rouergue or Quercy; central and western Berry may have reutilised more Roman military *castella*, but Merovingian populations continued to farm in the open plains). It therefore remains for us to investigate the archaeological evidence for late Roman and early Merovingian villas, in order to provide an alternative explanation for the non-appearance of the latter.

Chapter Five: The Archaeology of the Late Roman and Early Merovingian *Villa*

The soil, as Salin noted with a truism, was **the** common factor among invaders and invaded alike.[294] In a sense, so much did it underpin Celtic, Gallo-Roman and Germanic occupation that the very decline of the Imperial civic system - in both its administrative and material maintenance - tends to evoke images of (Celtic) undercurrents rising again to the fore, when it may rather be a case of life's rural basis merely becoming more noticeable to the historian. Commonly provincial in authorship, the secular Latin literature of the Later Empire in the West pictured the landscape as a thing to be owned, visited, tilled, hunted, enjoyed and profitted from; it continued to concern itself with the pleasures, duties and occasional conflicts within a combined urban-rural existence. Sidonius Apollinaris saw the world in urban terms as firmly as Pliny the Younger had done. *Villae* in their comforts still had to aspire to urban standards. And as the focus of the world was still, conceptually, Rome, so too the focus of a region and of civilised life remained the *civitas*.

With the demise of secular poetry and letter-writing, however, the historian must turn to the barbarian law-codes and to historical/annalist works for glimpses of rural life in literature. That Gregory of Tours - as bishop of a reasonably sizeable city of his time - gives, for example, much more evidence of secular rural than of urban lifestyles must certainly reflect a real change in the centre of the top levels of political power: the movement of the Merovingian kings and lords through the countryside, the challenge of holy men to

the sovereignty of the urban-based bishop. But such changes in the type of historical evidence from the early Middle Ages, or even this fundamental disappearance of the city as centre of government in Merovingian Gaul, do not automatically reflect changes in actual country lifestyles from what they had been under Roman rule.

To investigate the latter, therefore, one must turn to archaeological evidence and, as always, the problems begin with the label 'villa' itself. These methodological concerns - both in definition and justification of the use of the word in archaeology at all, and on the more practical level of identification - shall first be outlined before turning to the evidence itself, and the conclusions concerning the appearance of villas: their locations, external and internal structures, organisation and materials.

Archaeological Definitions:

To modern French archaeologists, a 'villa' is firstly a phenomenon of the Gallo-Roman countryside (urban or suburban 'villas' clearly being perceived in a different category). Secondly, they are built of durable material - stone or brick and mortar - and in rectilinear plan; if more than one building is involved, then organised as one unit, with a dominant structure appearing to imply a social hierarchy. Fourthly, 'villas' contain artefacts of Roman date, and lastly, are not demonstrably intended for religious or defensive uses.[295]

Of course, rural buildings lacking the remaining four criteria - two involving Romanness/wealth, two concerned with ownership and function - are automatically 'invisible' for the Roman

period. But some of these criteria weigh more heavily than others.

In the eastern Aquitanian countryside, for example, no wooden, wattle-and-daub construction or sunken hut yielding artefacts of post-Conquest date has occurred clearly independently of sites built in durable material. The only possible published exception to this is the aerially surveyed site of Les Bonnes (Cher) [**Site N° 12**], classified by A. Leday as a 'native farm'; since, however, neither building plans nor their construction material are as yet clear within a ditched enclosure, it would be unwise to take this as an example of a Celtic tradition in the Gallo-Roman period.[296]

Of course, post-hole constructions existed both in late Roman urban sites (for example, a wooden building burnt down in the fourth century at Rodez, *civitas Rutenorum* (Aveyron), or a possible granary at the riverside *vicus* of Saint-Ambroix-sur-Arnon (Cher), ancient *Ernodurum*) as well as subsidiary buildings on rural sites; one example of the latter is the aisled wooden basilical structure outside a villa courtyard at La Viaronnerie (Cher).[297] Likewise, third-fourth century sunken huts ('fonds de cabanes') are attested at Champ des Pierres (Cher), probably a small settlement around a second-fourth century cultic building; but whether these are true sunken huts, that is both living and artisanal quarters, or merely buildings with cellars, is impossible to tell from the report, which does not even specify that their superstructures were made from non-durable materials.[298]

Another example is that of the second-fourth century site of Villedieu-sur-Indre [**Site N° 66**], which included two masonry-built cellars beneath wattle-and-daub structures, at least one of which was roofed with the ubiquitous Roman *tegulae*.[299] Excavation reports

carefully refrained from interpreting them as parts of a 'villa', for of course they may have belonged within a *vicus*, or to a posting-station, or to the secondary structures of an unidentified farmstead. Since this was a salvage operation in a modern small town, the lack of any further cellars, sunken huts or small dwellings which might have indicated the presence of a *vicus* makes any argument from silence inconclusive. Yet whether or not this was in fact once a rural site, fragments of windowpanes and marble architectural decoration in the cellar-**fill** strongly suggest a more expensive construction nearby - although it is of course impossible to prove that all were contemporary.

So, if Gallo-Roman farmsteads completely built of non-durable material ever existed in eastern Aquitaine, they have yet to be found for either the early or late Empire. If this is a reflection of previous shortcomings in archaeological aims and techniques rather than of historical reality, then the gap may possibly be filled in the future by more intensive aerial surveys, perhaps also the type of selective test trenching across fields which is being pursued to great effect in the Oxfordshire region. The small number of pre-Conquest wooden or wattle-and-daub farmsteads as yet excavated in Aquitaine - such as la Touratte (Indre), near Levroux - supports the view that the scarcity of Roman examples of this rural dwelling-type is principally a matter of retrieval.[300] The point, however, is that even if isolated, rectilinear thatched, wattle-and-daub structures were identified as belonging to the Roman period, no excavator would label them as 'villas', because to do so would entail a presupposition that such huts were high enough up the social scale to warrant a Latin

description, regardless of the ethnic origins of the inhabitants.

Indeed, even the presence of masonry or *tegulae* on a rural site is not enough for the tag of 'villa' to be applied. The two-roomed house within an enclosure measuring more than 1000m² at Champ Laurent (Cher), or the unclear plan of Les Bonnes (Cher) [**Site N° 13**] with surface finds of the fourth century, are not called 'villas' but rather, examples of late Roman 'indigenous farms',[301] because their very simple plans and ditched enclosures, are seen to reflect indigenous rather than imported traditions; yet this widely-accepted term is also rather misleading, for the modern distinction is primarily based upon the socio-economic, rather than ethnic status of the villa-occupants.

Conceptually, then, what seems to count for an archaeologist is the demonstrable degree of a rural site's *Romanitas*. It was precisely on this basis that Harmand criticised the archaeological use of the word 'villa' thirty-six years ago, because it imposed potentially misleading preconceptions upon excavators regarding a site's ownership, occupation and economic life. Suggesting the complete removal of the term, he preferred less culturally-laden words: residence, farm, rural exploitation. To a degree, Harmand's points were valid. On one hand, there can be a deceptive attraction in thinking that once one has identified a site as a *villa*, one has thereby at least partly described its functions in the rural landscape, and he justly noted the short step needed to go from characterising, for instance, the famous Boscoreale site as a *villa*, to using that same site as a 'typical villa' of Campania, by which other sites are then compared.[302] On the other hand, isolated, rural multi-roomed buildings in what the French call 'le petit appareil' are persistently labelled 'villas', provided that

they are clearly neither *fana* nor *vici*, and even if their function is clearly industrial. What, Harmand asked, was meant when one classified an ironworking forge or potters' workshop part of a 'villa' or a 'villa dependency'? Is an 'industrial villa' a complete contradiction? In central Gaul, no archaeological or literary evidence can show specialised and intensive processing of either local resources (such as mining or quarrying) or of pastoral or agricultural produce, although these activities are not always possible to perceive on partially dug sites. This region was not amenable to olive-production, whose presses are easy to identify; resin-processing in the Cévennes took place in specifically-built sites which the French call simply 'stations' across the Causse, but their description does not suggest that they could in any way fall within anyone's classification of a villa, and so are beyond the scope of this study.

The difficulty with such criticisms is, of course, that all labels contain *a priori* assumptions, including 'farm', or even 'residence'. In practice, it is the degree of deceptiveness of these terms which counts. We have the word 'villa'; and if in the past classical archaeologists may have erred on the side of using archaeology merely to illustrate what was known or guessed from ancient texts, it is surely equally shortsighted to discard a classical term through fear of its very cultural significance. In short, it should be a question of when to use the word, not whether it should be used at all.

In this thesis, therefore, a clear distinction has been intended between the use of the word 'villa' in archaeological contexts, and the '*villa*' in late Roman and mediaeval textual contexts. Thus the scope of

this thesis covers 'villas' in their modern archaeological sense, using the five criteria outlined above and including, as a sub-category, what Leday or Agache would call 'native farms'; after all, one can at most only hope to approximate the entire range of what might have once been called *villae* in antiquity, even if this means risking the inclusion of some which would never have been so categorised. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the **archaeological** definition of a villa is only of the primary building complex; a villa's **estate** is not and should not be confused with the extent of these nucleated archaeological remains. As suggested in the previous chapter, we simply cannot determine, from the extent of archaeological remains, whether or not neighbouring cultic sites and cemeteries - which are rightly defined on the ground as sites independent of adjacent villas - had ever been sited within an estate's boundaries. Their precise relationships cannot be defined a priori by archaeology.

If the conceptual methodology behind the use of the term 'villa' is therefore acceptable, problems nevertheless remain with the methods used in the retrieval and recording of data from these sites, and this, of course, decides how a site is defined according to the existing taxonomy. Now, of 94 possible villa-sites from late Roman *Aquitanica Prima* , merely 10% are both extensively excavated and planned; at the other end of the scale, 22% have neither been dug nor have any form of published plan. Between these extremes, the majority (39%) possess only incomplete excavation reports with no available plans - some never planned at all - whilst another 16% have been only partially dug, with fragmentary plans. The remaining 13% have been

systematically surveyed by air and on the ground, but have not yet been excavated.

For purposes of comparison, the result is highly uneven. Aerial photography in eastern Aquitaine has been systematically carried out by Jean Holmgren since 1973 (intensively since 1979), but only for the two departments of Cher and Indre, that is, for the open cultivated plains of the Berry Champagne in the northern third of the Roman province.[303] Although admirably tied in with surface surveys and collation of earlier documentary evidence for each site, the natural emphasis in such work is upon identifying Gallo-Roman villas by architectural **plan**. If a site is clearly non-nucleated, rectilinear, constructed in durable material, and is neither organised in one of the stock Gallo-Roman *fanum* plans of a square within a square, then it is identified as a rural villa, regardless of whether it possessed or lacked mosaics, baths, hypocausts or wall-paintings.[304]

The advantages in such data include the consistency of its retrieval, enabling the identification of regional variations when compared with, for example, the similarly obtained plans of Romano-Belgic villas from the Somme valley. As well, the sheer volume of sites produced by aerial photgraphy, particularly in dry seasons such as that of 1976, can completely transform the known face of the Gallo-Roman landscape, as the example of the Berry region perfectly shows. On the data available before 1976, Percival was justified in presuming that here '...there is little evidence, either of archaeology or of place-names, for any sigificant Roman settlement.'[305] Within five years, over 300 villa-sites were identified for Indre and Cher, where before there were but a handful.[306] Furthermore, the completeness of

the plans commonly permits the identification of a site's agricultural yards and auxiliary buildings - something which the majority of excavations has even today failed to achieve.

The disadvantages lie of course with the inability to date sites not fieldwalked; even where ground-surveyed, surface finds provide only approximate occupation dates; a fragment of a Merovingian spindle whorl from Les Grandes Pièces [**Site N° 22**], for example, is the only artefact indicating site-use beyond the third century, but may simply represent a pastoral presence on site rather than any real occupation.

It is this chronological difficulty which at present renders a typology for villa-plans useless as a general dating-tool itself, or as a means of determining whether or not a plan's individual complexity is a result of rebuilding through time or an initial, synchronic variation of a simpler 'type', such as the 'gallery-façade house-plan'.[307] It also makes difficult the use of these sites in diachronic studies - for example, determining the proportion of sites destroyed or abandoned in consecutive centuries, or comparing them with plans from regions which have not had the benefit of aerial photography. In eastern Aquitaine, this applies to the mountainous areas of the Limousin (Corrèze), the Quercy (Lot), Gévaudan (Lozère), Velay and parts of the Auvergne (Haute-Loire, Puy-de-Dôme and Allier depts.).

Fieldwalking without aerial surveys has not, to the author's knowledge, yet been systematically undertaken within *Aquitanica Prima*, beyond a little following the creation of autoroutes in the Berry/Limousin; some illuminating work has also been done just to the

north of the area encompassed by the Roman province, along the middle Loire at Lion-en-Beauce (Loiret).[308]

Now, systematic surveys can identify villas by the mutually supportive criteria of size of ground scatter and types of finds (mosaic tesserae, hypocaust bricks, painted plaster fragments or marble, all indicating yet again a measure of expressed wealth), as in southern Etruria; Apulian surveys, however, appear to have used densities of finds alone to distinguish between 'small sites' (<1000m²), 'villas' (1000-5000m²) and 'vici' (>5000m²), figures which are soundly based on the averages for villas and vici which have been thoroughly identified in the region.[309] For Aquitaine, however, the inconsistencies and haphazard retrieval of surface finds from the majority of Roman sites makes distinction by marble or mosaic, or other signs of wealth too unreliable to use, whilst the size of sites which have been well-identified as complete, enclosed 'villas' by aerial survey, varies dramatically (from ≃20000m² to 160000m²).[310] Moreover, the overwhelming proportion of notifications of Gallo-Roman sites record only 'des tegulae, des substructions et des tessons de poteries gallo-romains,' rather than specifying precise areas surveyed. For the *CAGR* volume on Corrèze, for example, just over 10% of the 238 possible archaeological sites noted may have been *villae*, and only a third of these in turn may be dated at all. With *CAGR* reports, one is fortunate indeed if the pottery or coins are sufficiently described to infer at least some idea of a date-range for site-use.

An additional, if minor, local difficulty in the identification of villas by surface finds alone is that of the preference in second and third century Corrèze for fields of urn-cremations, whose burial-pits

are commonly lined with tegulae. Subsequent ploughing can yield scatters of tiles and pottery which might suggest occupation rather than burial to a surveyor.

Even excavation cannot always identify a villa from any other type of rural establishment. The oft-lamented tendency towards partial excavation - almost always of the domestic or thermal areas of the *pars urbana*, which provide the mosaics, marble and artefacts for the local museum - not only restricts the type of information about a villa-site, but can occasionally cause confusion as to the nature of the buildings concerned. The complex of baths and rooms around a galleried courtyard at La Tourette (Indre), in use from the second to late fourth centuries and located in rich agricultural land, was originally thought to be a villa, albeit with an adjacent *fanum*; subsequent study revealed the lack of identifiable domestic or agricultural artefacts and this, coupled with the large number of cultic statues, strongly suggests that this in fact was a *conciliabulum*.[311] At le Souquet (Lot) [**Site № 75**], however, the original identification of the site as a villa on a rather grand scale, with a small bath-complex, an external staircase leading partway down a terraced slope towards the river bank, and a plan entirely comparable in scale and type with other, known late Roman villas in Aquitaine [**Pl. 13e**], remains perfectly plausible despite its recent but unjustifiable label as a 'religious site'.[312]

Furthermore, where in the past excavations have tended to be incomplete because of a preoccupation with locating and retrieving the luxurious domestic or religious buildings within a villa, modern archaeology, usually benefitting from much more advanced techniques

and research designs, is overwhelmingly salvage work, which often means that plans and publication habitually remain fragmentary. When there is a choice of trenches to lay, the *pars rustica* still stays the second choice, if only because the domestic areas is more likely to yield datable ceramics or other artefacts, which any on-site phasing or seriation of finds needs to render them historically comprehensible.

Up until the mid-century, the distribution map of Roman *Aquitanica I* has been dictated as much by the degree of local antiquarian enthusiasm as the accessibility of the landscape; only Aveyron, Corrèze and Haute-Vienne appeared in the now superseded *CAGR* series, (Aveyron also benefitted from Abbé Cérès' extensive study and excavations last century). Cher and Indre have been intensively published, the latter activity being sorely lacking for the isolated excellent digs in Allier, Creuse, Lozère, Tarn and, urban sites aside, Puy-de-Dôme. Little interest has been taken in Lot's Roman material, even less in Cantal. Sporadic recent digs in Haute-Loire have added little to Rouchon's 1930s corpus of sites. Northern Roman occupation maps are in large part determined by highway-construction, and are threatened by the introduction in the last two decades of maize crops, which require deep ploughing; this also threatens the Rouergue. As Ferdière has observed, stratified excavation under such circumstances is extremely difficult,[313] albeit not impossible; the identification of late Roman, Merovingian and Carolingian occupation makes the villa-site of Pissevieille (Cher) [**Site N° 30**] almost unique for rural central Aquitaine and even more remarkable, considering that only 20cm of foundations survived modern farming practices.[314] What, then, can be gleaned from the archaeological sample of Aquitanian villa-sites?

Locations of Late Roman Villas:

Villas in the early Roman period had been implanted at virtually every altitude, and on most soils, although all regional studies seem to agree with the Roman agronomists that lighter, workable soils were preferable to the heavier loams, whatever the crops or livestock being raised; this was probably a consequence of technological limitations, and there is as yet no evidence to suggest that this was in any way changed by the development of the *vallus* or the use of the heavy plough north of the Loire in the late Roman period.[315]

Little can be said, with any firm statistical basis, about the impact of topography on the survival of late Roman villas. Nevertheless, of the 80 villa-sites in *Aquitanica I* with either direct or indirect evidence for occupation at the start of the third century - when this study begins - over two-thirds of these were certainly founded as 'romanised' constructions in the first centuries B.C./A.D; the remainder of these villas were probably almost evenly divided between slightly more than half having been established upon new sites in the second century, and rather less than half within the following century. Hence those sites which appear to have best survived the crises of the third century were overwhelmingly those which had already lasted longest.[316]

But why? Obviously, new villa-implantations in the Julio-Claudian period - whether inhabited by Celts adopting a new architectural form, or foreign settlers - had the choice of prime locations, that is, of good soil, availability of water, transport and probably also the maximum local variety of environments (woods, meadows, marsh and rivers). Indeed, even in the mountainous and wooded

region of the Corrèze, Celtic occupation had already 'picked out the eyes' of the hillslopes and basalt escarpments, with Roman patterns of occupation simply overlying this and extending further into marginal areas.[317] It is therefore possible that the villa-sites which may have been established after A.D. 200 (and it must be emphasised that only two of them are **certain** third century foundations)[318] were positioned in less than ideal locations.

Within each region of central Aquitaine, of course, there were varying densities of dispersed settlement throughout the Roman period. In the Basse-Auvergne, as one would expect, the Limagne was more densely populated than the great, wooded volcanic *puys* which rise from the Limagne plain and the alluvial river-banks of the Allier, Sioule and Loire. Yet even on the mountainous slope of the Puy de Montaudou, near Ceyrat and immediately south-west of *civitas Augustonemetum*, an undated villa was implanted as high as 800m. above sea-level.[319] Overall, the Limagne follows the example of the Corrèze, where the river terraces which have yielded the greatest evidence of earlier, Celtic settlement were still the most intensely occupied zones by the third century A.D. At this point in time, populations appear to have spread furthest onto the limestone soils in the west. The eastern strip of the Corrèze, heavily forested then as now on acidic soils, was cleared only in the twelfth century.[320]

Less is known about the degree of Gallo-Roman occupation in the spectacular volcanic mountains of the Cantal, in the centre of ancient *Aquitanica I*; but here, too, one finds early Imperial villas established as high up as 1000m above sea level, at the edge of what is today an open, cattle-grazing plateau below Saint Flour.[321] If pastoralism had

been the main economic activity here in antiquity, as it was in the Carolingian period[322] too, it would help to explain the relative scarcity of Roman farmsteads, either early or late, as yet found in the area.

A similar pattern emerges for the eastern side of the province. In the Upper Loire region, the high and fairly dry, rolling plateau which stretches southwards from Brioude (*vicus Brivate*), and from which one drops dramatically into the more densely-vegetated upper valleys of the Allier and Alagnon rivers, stands at more than 1000m. above sea-level, yet was heavily populated with isolated Gallo-Roman rural sites of unspecified date. Unlike the plains of the Berry, nucleated settlements appear to have been scarce in this region. Similar circumstances apply to the alluvial plain which broadened eastwards from the right bank of the Allier towards the Loire and S. Paulien (*civitas Ruessio*). As has already been suggested in Chapter One, the lack of alternative, smaller centres of civic investment and displays (such as *vici*) may well have contributed to the apparent concentration of wealth in that tiny *civitas*-capital for the Roman period, despite its obvious decline at the end of Roman rule.

To the north of this plain and of Saint-Pourçain, the Sioule river runs into the Allier above Varennes-sur-Allier (*Vorocium*); but although these alluvial river valleys are well-watered, they cross into the much less fertile, granitic soils of the Bourbonnaise, which failed to be well-exploited until the establishment of vineyards during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[323] Indeed, of the 25 or so villas which have been located within the modern dept. of Allier as a whole, most have yielded only early Imperial material, and only one (undated)

villa was established on these relatively less productive granitic regions. It is scarcely surprising, then, to find that the urban centres at Varennes-sur-Allier and at Gannat appear to have survived no further than to the middle of the third century; only spa-towns such as Vichy (*Aquae Calidae*), or, in more fertile areas, Bourbon-l'Archambault (*Aquae Bormonis*), Néris-les-Bains (*Aquae Neri / vicus Nereensis*) and Chantelle-la-Vieille (*Cantilia*) continued into the Merovingian period. Despite - or perhaps even aided by - the arrival of Christianity in the third century, the survival of these towns must have relied more upon their religious and social functions than any significance as local agricultural markets; but of course this does not mean that their functions as market-centres did not also continue, particularly when they lay upon a main route leading from the Rhone, through the Auvergne and up to the northern Loire.[324]

The isolation from major roads or rivers which often accompanied the mountainous location of early Roman villas did not automatically affect adversely their survival into the late Roman period. Obviously, the third century, which seems to have proven a decisive period for economic survival or decline in provinces north of Aquitaine and the Lyonnaise, was one in which military incursions, levies and civil unrest all played inhibitive roles. Aquitaine does not appear to have suffered the loss of a major market for their agricultural goods in the later Empire, as probably happened in *Gallia Belgica* when it ceased to be the breadbasket of the Imperial army by the end of the second century; indeed, it has already been suggested that the plains of the Berry temporarily shared in the profits of supplying the Army in the later fourth century, when British grains

could not get through to Julian's Rhineland forces. In eastern Aquitaine, unlike parts (but not all) of *Belgica*, there is no sudden increase in the rates of rural site 'failures' at any time. For example, an isolated early Roman villa at Bains (Creuse) was built on a small, fertile plateau on a hillside, not far from a Roman road, yet it was abandoned, apparently without violence, by the later second century. Nevertheless, proximity to the major routes along which third century rebels and Alemannic barbarians alike could march would not have been an unalloyed advantage in the care and marketing of crops and herds. Hence, the remoteness of the villa at Saint-Pierre-d'Estripiers (Lozère) [**Site N° 82**] on the Causse Méjeau at 900m. altitude - just east of the river Tarn's unnavigable gorges, and nowhere near a known ancient road - may have helped its survival into the fourth century at least.[325]

The majority of all Roman villas in central Aquitaine have been identified in the rolling, open agricultural fields of the Berry region. Because of differences in methods of data-retrieval, it is of course difficult to argue for a real rather than merely an apparent greater density of Gallo-Roman population in the Berrichône countryside than in the smaller but comparably open lands in the Rouergue further south, which are today given over to similar intensive cultivation of sunflowers and cereal crops; and the same applies for any demographic comparison of the Berry in antiquity with the great plain of the Limagne whose agricultural exploitation was admired by both Sidonius and Gregory of Tours.[326] However, for the Berry region there is enough tentative evidence to suggest that the third century saw the greatest

expansion of settlement, contracting to an undefinable degree from marginal or recently cleared areas during the fourth century, where occupation retracted from the north-west and south to the open countryside of the south-west. A similar contraction seems to have occurred in the Limagne. Furthermore, within each major *territorium* similar rates of apparent villa-demise appear to have been at work during the last two centuries of Roman rule,
of their respective early Roman settlement.

If the rolling plains of south-west Berry had in fact been more widely exploited by late Roman landholders than other comparable regions of the province, the explanation may lie with the original centuriation of the territory of the *civitas Biturigi*, that is, the large-scale redistribution of lands to settlers after Caesar's subjugation of Gaul, and in particular, of this powerful tribe. (The Auvergne - centre of Gallic resistance - has as yet yielded no trace of centuriation, even though some attempts have been made to find it.)

Recent studies have identified at least two different cadastrations applied upon the Berry landscape: one to the south and west of Bourges, and another to the north, with possible further centuriation to the east. Exempt were the river valleys and, for an unexplained reason, the zone around Levet just to the south of the provincial capital.[327] There may have been ancient woodland in the Levet area, as indicated near the villa at Chaume aux Couards [**Site N° 16**], so possibly this area was simply cleared at a later date than elsewhere. The estate-enclosures around Levet, such as those of Champ des Pois (16 ha) [**Site N° 15**], and Pissevieille (ca. 2ha) [**Site N° 30**], are not only consistently larger than elsewhere but were only firmly

established as late as the end of the first or mid-second centuries A.D., both of which points towards this hypothesis.

At any rate, it is notable that of the twenty-four datable late Roman villas within the Berry, those which seem to have continued into the fifth century and beyond were all located outside centuriated zones. Possibly this overall survival rate may have been related to landowners through time expanding onto neighbouring properties. Hence the immediate enclosures of the villa of Les Boubards extended over 2.7ha (that is, ≈10 *iugera*), yet were oriented WSW in alignment with the cadastration; this site was probably occupied at least into the fourth century. Moreover, illustrations from the *Gromatici veteres* demonstrated how *fundi* were inserted as large and separate entities, oriented within the centuriated system - in turn, structured by a road system - but not owing their outline to it.[328]

In *Aquitanica Prima*, however, the significance of navigable rivers seems narrowly to outweigh the presence of nearby Imperial road systems in the location and survival of villa-sites of all periods. Nevertheless, two important riders must be added to this observation.

Firstly, without a proper and thorough field survey, the correlations of villas with road networks are methodologically far too haphazard and too few for any definitive pattern to emerge. We have a fair knowledge of the primary and secondary Roman roads which passed through the Limousin; slightly less well-published are those of the Berry and part of the Velay, although only the Berry has as yet benefitted from an emphasis upon rural rather than urban archaeological research.[329] In the Quercy and Rouergue, earlier

twentieth century attempts to identify Roman routes between bridges, fords and towns often did so by first locating either *-acum* names or Roman ruins (termed *villae*) and presupposing, without prior or subsequent justification - **and** against Columella's advice on the subject of *villa* implantation - that these sites must have bordered a road.[330] The dangers of a circular argument using this type of evidence are obvious enough.

Yet even where the major road network can be traced, such as in the relatively cleared, allotted and well-cultivated lands of the western Berry, it must be remembered that the major roads would only have formed an external frame for a much larger network of minor arterial routes and paths, less easily identifiable than Imperial highways, but no less important to the economic life of a villa. One such path, bordered with ditches, has been identified by aerial photographs as probably linking a Gallo-Roman site at Champ des Criots with the villa at Champ des Pois (Cher).[331] With this in mind, the absence of any clearly identified clustering of villa-sites towards or along the Imperial road system may reflect at once the problems of data retrieval and the piece-meal additions of paths and tracks onto a communications-system primarily designed for public, not private use.

Rivers, of course, played an obvious and significant role in the transportation of most goods within and beyond Aquitaine, as they did throughout antiquity. For Ausonius, the river alongside his *villulam*, *'...naviger hic refluus me vehit ac revehit*'[332]; when his estate of *Lucaniacum* in *Aquitanica Secunda* suffered grain shortages, relief was to be provided by river transport. The advantage of cheap water transport is recalled in Sidonius' praise for the Bishop of Lyons,

whose provision of grain relief in the early 470s, was said to have been prompted

> *...non te communio provinciae, non proximitas civitatis, non opportunitas fluvii, non oblatio pretii...*[333]

Indeed, Jullian went so far as to argue (more than fifty years ago) that the Gallic section of that late Roman road map which is known as the Peutinger Table is geographically distorted as a result of the Roman roads having been superimposed upon a much earlier Celtic system of trade-routes which followed the major Gallic rivers, particularly the Rhône, Saône, and Loire.[334] One can in fact trace something of the importance of rivers - combined with major roads leading beyond the province's borders - through the movement of *Aquitanica I*'s most famous export: that of the South Gallic terra sigillata of Millau, la Graufesenque and Bannassac, and of Central Gallic terra sigillata from Lezoux. With this product, too, one can see the closely-tied survival of *emporia*, implanted especially frequently at the nodules of roads and river-fords or quays, and rarely does one find such *vici* surviving the demise of the export ceramic industry into the fourth century, as at the quayside site of Lazenay (Cher).[335]

Yet the interaction of road and river upon the implanation, far less survival, of villas still remains too complex to be unravelled satisfactorily, since one not only lacks a reasonably complete or at least demonstrably comprehensive knowledge of an area's communications network, but also the vital variables are missing: namely, the primary economic activities of the villas concerned. For the Somme basin of *Gallia Belgica*, Agache suggested that Roman villas were implanted on plateaux, where the soils were right for wheat-growing, as opposed to

the greater proportion of La Tène III farms, which had been sited along river valley heights and on lighter soils. Furthermore, he has made a convincing, albeit circumstantial, link between the demise of the vast majority of these villas during the second century and the shift of the Imperial army's grain supply in the West from this region to that of Britain.[336] Now, the nearest comparable geomorphology to this within central Aquitaine would have been south-west Berry where, in the Champagne region, the clearest factor seems to have been the presence of the same, richer soils which would have supported cereal-crops. Leday saw this last concern as overriding the accepted wisdom of the ancient agronomists, although he probably overstates his case: that the distribution of Berry villas was not restricted by the dictums laid down by the agronomists does not mean that the latter were ignored; and if the Belgic villas seem to followed more of Columella's recommendations it is probably because the landscape suited his ideals better. At any rate, fewer villas are located on the clayey soils than on the lighter and more varied soils of the Berry's river valleys, and this accords perfectly with the notion that grain-producing estates would have tended to be larger - and therefore more sparsely dispersed - than those practising mixed agriculture or self-sufficiency. Pastoralism, of course, could also require large estates, but the presence, on estates such as Champ des Pois, of large structures which would have suited grain-storage rather than livestock reaffirms the likelihood of wheat-growing on the clayey plateaux of the Berry Champagne.[337]

All villas, whatever their economic basis, needed a perennial water supply. The Massif Central abounds in natural springs, and so the overwhelming majority of villa-sites have an identifiable spring in their vicinity, whether located on a dry Causse, or within a kilometre or so of a river or stream. This last category includes more than a quarter of late Roman villas, whilst over a fifth were directly sited upon a river-bank. A luxurious establishment such as Argentelle (Aveyron) [**Site N° 2**] lay on the low bank of the small, shallow stream of the upper Aveyron and close to its ford, using lead-sheathed terracotta pipes to conduct water to and from the river.[338] In the dryer pockets of the Berry Champagne, a large villa such as Champ des Pois was presumed by its excavator to have augmented its water supply from the nearby Beugnon stream by using a small aqueduct, and remains of rural water conduits which have no clear association with *vici* or towns support this suggestion.[339]

Columella - and Palladius after him - disapproved of locations immediately adjacent to water because of the resultant river-mist and dampness, and they similarly disapproved of marshlands.[340] In the north-west of our province, however, builders at la Pétonnière (Indre) [**Site N° 69**] apparently found something strongly attractive about precisely such a location, for they built a bath-complex and (presumably) domestic wing in the mid-1st century A.D., in what was even then a swampy site, as is indicated by plant remains such as willow-herb, water-parsnip and water-mint. (Since there is no artefact from la Pétonnière which can be in any way described as 'cultic', there is as yet no reason to suppose that this site had any ritualistic function.)

The first attempt at constructing hypocausted baths here required the unusual addition of wooden planks in clay layers at the bases of the walls, as a type of damp coursing. This proved unsuccessful, and the rooms were reconstructed, without hypocausts but with a more determined effort to control dampness by incorporating a floor based with oak and pine planks under a pebble/rubble layer, in turn beneath large, square-faced masonry; covered drains led to wooden water-pipes and, presumably, towards the precursor to the present stream which today partly overruns the site. This phase lasted uninterrupted into the fourth century, when it is presumed to have been abandoned for unknown reasons, and occupation was again attempted for a brief time in the later Merovingian period.[341]

River locations could be susceptible to flooding. Of only two fourth century villa-sites which show clear signs of abandonment through destruction, one was caused by severe flooding on the Loire (Le Peseau, (Cher) [**Site N° 31**]). There can be little other explanation for the appearance of a layer of river mud, 40-50cm thick, over a large area of the site, with subsequent abandonment. It has been suggested elsewhere that such flooding could have been the cumulative result of deforestation further up the river. Certainly, the forest of the Sancerre area to the west of the Loire must have been at least partially cleared in Roman times, since Gallo-Roman remains have been located within what has been forest since the early Middle Ages, and which was only partly cleared again after the Carolingian period. Although Le Peseau is the only clear case of a villa which underwent flooding and subsequent abandonment, it should be noted that not only La Pétonnière but also the villas of Le Crot Rouge [**Site N° 20**] and La

Ferolles [**Site N° 21**] are today partly flooded.[342]

When located near river-banks, villa-plans virtually universally faced **away** from them, which in practice provided the rear rooms with a 'view'. One can presume from this, then, that the visitor's expected route of access for most of our identified villas was from a road: a factor which suggests that whichever way produce entered or left the estate, its human orientation looked towards the link with town and city. Interestingly, this phenomenon pertains to grand and modest villas alike, on small or large rivers. It should also be added, however, that it is along the gentler, smaller rivers, such as the upper Cher, upper Aveyron or upper Loire - all of which are comparable at best to the Oxfordshire Thames in scale - that the majority of villa-sites within *Aquitanica Prima* has been located. One explanation for this is that the big rivers to the south - the Tarn, Dordogne, Truyère and Lot - are today all bordered with either dense bush or cliffs (or both, as in the case of the upper Truyère), even though many of these river-gorges are known to have been navigable, at least in the Middle Ages; consequently, not only past villa-construction but also modern archaeological surveys would be difficult to undertake. The same applies to reaches of the Vienne in the north-west of the province; the scarcity of sites on the broad, upper Allier towards its junction with the Loire has already been explained above through soil poverty.[343]

Now, it is an oft-repeated axiom in modern literature on the subject, that the most preferred orientation throughout Gaul for villas was towards the south-east, or east-south-east, so as to receive the maximum winter sunshine, as decreed by Columella and upheld by

Palladius; and certainly, well over three-quarters of those sites in central Aquitaine whose plan-orientations are known are directed either to the south-east or less commonly to the south-west or the south.[344] Leday noted that whereas in Picardy **all** villas open onto a yard facing eastwards, the milder climate of the Berry allowed villas a wider range of orientations.[345] Furthermore, the importance of sunlight and natural heating upon plan-directions cannot really be determined unless one knows the location of the principal domestic wing within what was often a very large complex. It is comparatively easy to see the advantage of an overall orientation to the south-east or east in the simplest type of rectangular, corridored house, such as at Le Champ Pillault (Indre) [**Site N° 66**], **pl.12b**, or Le Crot Rouge (Cher) [**Site N° 20**], pl.11c. One can only assume, however, that the main living-quarters at Pontbordat were in the SSW section of the principal structure, because of its complex phasing. Here, the southern wing appears to have been added onto an original, smaller house (which faced north-west, but conceivably would have had windows in the rear, looking south-east). Similarly, the 'main' house at La Mazère (Haute-Vienne) [**Site N° 63**], pl.10b appears to have faced north-west, although it could have been lit from the south-east; its bath-wing faces SSW, whilst the opposite wing has two parallel sets of rooms, one looking north-east, the other south-west.

Only the complex at le Souquet was so organised that it both faced the stream downslope and also possessed an external stairway leading towards it; a fact, however, which is so atypical for a Gallo-Roman villa that it may tell against its identification as such.[346] Of the 17 other late Roman sites immediately adjacent to a

river, only the *partes urbana et rustica* of Pontbordat (Indre) [**Site N° 68**] fail to be directed **away** from the water; here, the entrances run parallel to a stream which now encroaches upon the site. This villa is also unusual in that its overall plan was oriented towards the north-west.

Nature and Development of Late Roman Villa-Plans:

Any study of architectural plans and their composite elements must have as its ultimate aim the interpretation of function, through which one can hope to trace at least a reflection of the economic and social microsystems which it served. Recent attempts to analyse villa-plans in this way will therefore be outlined first, before looking at a selection of central Aquitanian sites in detail; from this may emerge, on the one hand, major characteristics of the Late Roman villa - in typology, functions and comparative 'wealth' - across time and landscape, and on the other, some generalisations concerning their economic significance. So deeply are interpretation and description intertwined, however, that the discussion of specific sites will overlap somewhat with their broader analyses.

Given that more dated architectural units have been planned than villa-complexes as a whole, it is not surprising that it remains difficult to trace fully the development of late Roman rural architecture, either with regard to overall layout or its components. Just over a third of the villas listed in the **Site Catalogue** have any type of published plan, and while the majority of these show whole buildings - most of which are presumably villa-houses - only a

minority show as much as the *pars urbana*. Nevertheless, certain points emerge.

Firstly, an accepted and working modern typology of overall villa-plans is of course well-known for Gaul, as elsewhere, despite variations in nomenclature and in the number of meaningful subdivisions proposed by practising archaeologists. From small to large (and simple to complex), they roughly fall into three broad groupings: small farms, ranging from the one-, two- or three-roomed 'cottage-house' to a simple 'corridor villa'. Sometimes they possess irregularly aligned outbuildings ('*Streubaugehöfte*'); usually they are found within rectilinear or trapezoidal ditched or walled enclosures. Next, there are complexes which materially divide agricultural from domestic areas, the *pars urbana* being walled off from the *pars agraria*, with a single covered entrance leading from one enclosed zone to another. The *p. urbana* is, in these cases, given its own internal typology which it shares with the third grouping, that of the carefully sprawling 'pleasure palaces' with no known agricultural or industrial sections belonging to them.

Within these last two groupings, various house-types have been distinguished.[347] Again, they range from the simplest corridor villa ('*Portikusvilla*'), to the same plan with additional squared rooms projecting at either end of the front porticus ('*galerie-façade*'), or a *galerie-façade* house with full wings (also called a '*U-porticus*'); if fully enclosed by a wall or another gallery on the fourth side, this in turn becomes a 'courtyard villa'; if a courtyard is fully enclosed within a complex of rooms and wings it becomes a 'peristyled villa' - a rather loose classification, since not all such courtyards

are, strictly speaking, peristyled. The 'atrium' or 'atrium-peristyled villa' of late Republican/early Imperial Roman Italy has not been found in central or northern rural Gaul, nor has the basilical house-type which occurs in Britain; basilical structures exist in both central and north Gaul only as storage units.[348]

As far as can be determined, there is no chronological significance to the presence or absence of any of these house-plans, apart from the obvious point that the most complex villas, such as Argentelle **[Site N° 2]**, pl.1a, were the result of centuries of expansion and refurbishment. Even where a villa appears to have been planned as a single entity, such as at Mas-Marcou **[Site N° 8]**, pl.1b, for example, it may in fact have undergone architectural phases which went unrecorded by its excavators in 1870; at least, it is unlikely that this villa was not refurbished during a lifetime spanning the first or early second centuries until late fourth century, with possible fifth/sixth century use. The majority of the most basic houseplans date from the early Roman period, obviously enough, and they tend to stand free from their enclosure walls; and not all were subsequently expanded. Les Bonnes **[Site N° 15]**, pl.8a, for example, was either established in the later Empire, or else constructed in the early Imperial period and occupied until at least the fourth century, as was a similar farmstead at Chateaufort **[Site N° 67]**, pl.8b). But the most common house-plan, and one which underwent the greatest rebuilding, was the simple gallery-façade (for instance, Les Cachons **[Site N° 16]**, pl.11a); one can trace subsequent additions at Pouplin **[Site N° 34]**, pl.9a, Les Bois-Boudou **[Site N° 38]**, pl.14c, and Brignes **[Site N° 79]**, pl.12a. At Ardilliers **[Site N° 14]**, pl.2a and La

Garenne **[Site N° 22]**, pl.6, this houseplan was incorporated within a courtyard complex.

Some attempts have been made to identify the social grops within a villa-complex, beyond that of differentiating the *pars urbana* from the small servile huts of the *pars rustica*. Now, there are late Roman villas whose luxurious baths and residential area clearly suggest the classic *domus domini*, intended for occupation by the owner for at least several months in the year; in *Aquitanica I*, these include Argentelle, Mas-Marcou, probably Espaly **[Site N° 51]**, pl.13b, Brachaud **[Site N° 55]**, pl.15a (given the latter's extensive baths) and possibly Champ des Pois **[Site N° 17]**, pl.7. But an advocate of more sophisticated spatial analysis for Romano-British villas has been J. Smith, who has noted both the replication of architectural units within the layout of many of the 'poorer' house-complexes (that is, those with no mosaics or rich wallpaintings, or hypocausting) and an asymmetry of layout which is unrelated to the axially-divided plans of the Roman villa. The use of corridors and side entrances rather than central porches - all apparently unlike the situation in *Gallia Belgica* - suggested to him that many British villas incorporated social structures of late la Tène farmsteads: that is, more than one family unit within a kinship group worked and lived upon the property.[349] By his standards, for instance, La Mazère (Haute-Vienne), pl.10b, would not rank as a villa inhabited by more than one family-group.

Several comments must be made concerning this . late Roman *Aquitanica I*. The first is that a repeated architectural unit, such as the gallery-façade unit, per se could perform different

functions in different areas, as could tripartite units; an example of the former is the largest building with corridor and porch at Ardilliers (pl.2), with a smaller one in the west of the yard; of the latter, note the central building in Champ des Pois (pl.7), with a further example in the top north-eastern corner and more in the *pars rustica*. The repetition of these units in Gallo-Roman villas does not of themselves tell us anything of social divisions on the farmstead.

The second point is that, with the exceptions of the simplest villas, such as at Les Grandes Pièces (Cher), (pl.11b) and Le Crot Rouge (pl.11a), surviving villa-plans show the latest architectural phase, not the earliest, so that if one attempts to find a two- or three-family houseplan in a late Roman villa, it will have no immediate connection with the transition from Celtic farmstead to Gallo-Roman villa.[350] Thirdly, not only do we usually possess only the latest phase of a villa-plan, but those inferences drawn from complete floor-plans may be misleading if an upper floor existed. Not all villas were two-storeyed, of course, and there is considerable debate over how many or what types were, or even if all versions of similar floor-plan necessarily had the same number of storeys.[351] For *Aquitanica I*, only la Brachaud in the Limousin **[Site N° 55]**, pl.15a, clearly had a northern domestic wing with an upper storey, for the mortar imprints of three wooden treads survive; Girmou in the Rouergue **[Site N° 5]** has a set of masonry stairs to the west of one room, but it is unclear from the published reports if these were internal or external, and consequently led up or down, but it is safest to assume the latter.

Now, the concept of an extended family group managing a

Romano-Celtic villa, whether British or Gallic, is neither implausible nor unreasonable for either the early or later Empire. Continuity of rural life after the Conquest was very strong, at least for areas unlike the plains of Berry, where some centuriation was implanted upon the landscape; the province of *Aquitanica I* is, after all, that in which the last clear evidence for spoken Celtic is attested in Gaul.[352] But Smith's manipulation of stratigraphic or architectural phasing is at times so forced as to cast doubt on the validity of what is essentially useful speculation; for instance, the evidence of stratified coins and pottery from the villa at Marshfield (Ironmonger's Piece) strongly suggests that the corridored, or gallery-façade house was subsequently extended; Smith rejects all this in favour of two attached farms, and bases this upon the appearance of a single undressed block from the end of the 'extension' into the wall of the original house.[353] Theoretically, Smith is correct in assuming that presumably later walls should not intrude into earlier ones; but this is only one stone, which by the plan is less than half a metre long, and while puzzling is not indisputable evidence for both constructions to have been contemporary, particularly given the stratified occupation levels.

In *Aquitanica I*, sites such as Les Grandes Pièces **[Site N° 24]**, pl.11b or le Crot Rouge **[Site N° 20]**, pl.11c, are comparable to the status of Smith's Romano-British villas; the open central room from the front gallery is comparatively uncommon in central Gaul, more numerous in the north and west of Gaul, particularly in the dèpt. of Maine[354], but this would be precisely the type of simple farmstead which would be most likely to reflect ancient social groups.

Unfortunately, none of this type in eastern Aquitaine has been excavated, so how either of the flanking 'rooms' (each 7 to 8m²) were utilised or even sub-divided is not known, nor is their contemporaneity with equally-sized rectangular structures in the same compound, as at Les Grandes Pièces. Rather grander are the two galleried or corridored buildings at right angles to each other at the Berrichône site of Ardilliers, which has already been mentioned above (pl.2). The main domestic yard appears to have had constructions along at least three sides, but the plan is very fragmented, and the location of the *pars rustica* - accepting that such Latin terminology is permissable - is unclear, as is the date and relationship of another sizeable building, possibly a modified gallery-façade structure with small rear apse, whose orientation is totally at odds with the main compound. The presence of two equally sized buildings at right angles has been interpreted on other sites by Smith as evidence of two resident families; here, the lack of proper excavation means that inferences can only be made from the plans themselves, and it strikes this observer that the northernmost gallery-façade unit is facing into its own private yard, with what may be porch-retaining walls protruding from its front corridor or gallery in a very symmetrical fashion, even if its adjoining buildings are not as evenly placed. By comparison, the western gallery-façade unit, which is very incomplete, looks less importantly placed; and given that we do not know the function of this building, the assuption that it was co-equal with the northern structure is highly dubious.

This leads into a further issue, for if some secondary

architectural units do not appear to have been part of a multiple-family property - and without strongly supportive stratified and contextual evidence, nothing can be said one way or the other for our region - an alternative and more traditional explanation for their presence and function exists: namely, that they were the residences of *vilici*. Whilst something of an old chestnut, this interpretation does have one point in its favour; namely, that at least we know of their existence, in both the Roman and mediaeval periods. However, there is no reason why some farms could not have had resident and related farming families co-existing on the same estate, whilst others of the same period were administered by a *vilicus* for his normally or seasonally absent landowner(s). If the correlation of Roman with wealth, Celt with comparative poverty, were correct, it might be comparatively easy to distinguish between the two; and Agache's location of the bailiff's house in the *pars rustica* of 'wealthier' (that is, more ornate) villas, and in the *pars urbana* of 'poorer' ones would then have to be strongly modified.[355] In reality, for *Aquitanica I* as probably in other Western provinces, this distinction is blurred. 'Simple' gallery-façade houses may have mosaics or wall-paintings, or both.[356] Courtyard villas existed whose estate-centres are huge and highly structured, but whose presumed main residence is both modest in size and without wall-paintings, marble or mosaics, although part at least may have been hypocausted (Champ des Pois **[Site N° 17]**, pl.7). What is more important for identifying 'main' from 'secondary' unit when there appears to be more than two house-plans: location, or size? At Champ des Pois, Leday somewhat ingeniously explained the 'secondary' complex in the corner

of the main yard as a separate extension of the main residence, because he identifies the bailiff's house as the largest structure in the agricultural yard;[357] but again, given the lack of excavation of all three areas, it is unclear if the second group of rooms in the *pars urbana* was contemporary with the central, freestanding house or not: conjectures concerning its functions are almost infinite.

Having said all this, the tendency by many Gallo-Roman archaeologists to see repeated architectural units as bailiff-houses, even when on a similar scale to the 'main' house, is difficult to accept, not least because *vilici* in the early Empire at least were habitually either slaves or retained freedmen. The image of the owner of a modest farm **needing** an estate-manager is, moreover, less plausible than that of a shared farm; and if the owner(s) possessed more than one estate, or had other occupations and thus used an estate-manager, would a residence be needed on every property, as well as the bailiff's? The idea of a resident landowner, once he had become wealthy, moving his employee into a house almost as large as his own - which Leday postulates for Les Coudraits,[358] for example - further presumes considerable generosity on the owner's part.

It is fairly obvious from this brief glance at a few aspects of spatial analysis in Gallo-Roman villas, that much more work needs to be done in sorting out the ramifications of interpreting a villa's social structure from its plans alone. Central Gaul, unlike Britain, has had too few villas thoroughly excavated to be able to pinpoint doorways, for instance, which can reflect social hierarchies.[359] Detailed analysis for this type of study needs to be repeated on a large scale before any generalisations can be made with certainty.

At least we do possess plans for late Gallo-Roman villas, which is more than can be said for early Merovingian farmsteads. The reasons why we cannot even begin to compare the physical remains of late Roman and early Merovingian Roman villas will now, therefore, be summarised.

Archaeological Evidence and the Non-Appearance of *Villae*:

A basic premise of this study has been that a combination of methodological problems in the archaeological retrieval and identification of late fifth, sixth and sixth century villas is a satisfactory explanation for their apparent absence in the soil, and it was precisely for this purpose that the Site Catalogue of central Aquitanian villas which is appended to this thesis has been collated. Shortcomings in the retrieval of the material from these rural sites (known from museum collections as well as published reports) determine the limitations inherent in their subsequent analysis. In all archaeology, of course, dating-tools for a relative chronology outnumber absolute dates, whether for construction, occupation or abandonment/destruction; for late Roman *Aquitanica I*, there are no helpful inscriptions associated with non-nucleated rural sites to date precisely the construction or reconstruction of secular buildings, whilst the association of rural hoards, abandonments and destructions of rural *villae* with the activities of Gallic tyrants who, as has been noted in Chapter One, cannot historically be shown to have been militarily active here,[360] or with the third century Alemannic invasions through the eastern half of the province, have far too often been made without any sound basis, as shall be seen below. Since all the main

categories of finds: numismatic, ceramic, organic, metal and glass, decorative and architectural are to some extent mutually dependent upon each other as a dating tool, and since coins provide the nearest thing to a precise (but still not absolute) chronological anchor for phasing, we shall now examine each of these groups of material in the light of our search for the elusive Merovingian *villa*, beginning with the complications inherent in interpreting the evidence of coins on rural sites.

Numismatic Evidence for the Late Roman and Merovingian *Villa*:

Apart from the obvious comparative unevenness of coin retrieval on villa-sites which have variously been field-walked, excavated or, as with several nineteenth century sites, what can only be described as 'rummaged', the level of analysis made by excavators of their own sites has, until the '70s, generally been extremely naive. The extremely valuable study of D. Tardy on the gallery-façade villa-house associated with the religious sanctuary of Les Cars (Corrèze) **[Site № 39]** demonstrates this well.[361] First excavated in 1936, coins were only retrieved as isolated finds (not as a hoard) within the villa, yet the occupation of house and its nearby sanctuary was originally presumed to be contemporaneous. Moreover, both were assumed to have been 'destroyed' twice, once after A.D. 244 (due, it was topically suggested in 1943, to the barbarian invasions), and again, by fire, in the military troubles around 270. The first destruction was based purely on the gap in the site's limited coin series between 244 and the **two** coins (dated ca. 270 and 273/4) found in the occupational level of one room along with fine wares dated stylistically to the

early third century at the latest. The second destruction was based on the significance of the date alone (originally both coins were attributed to 270 and the Gallic tyrants). An earlier architectural phase of the villa could be determined stratigraphically, and although the coins up to 244 are neither described nor numbered, it can only be assumed that they, along with pottery, provided the original estimate for the date of construction (mid-2nd century).[362]

Now, Tardy has shown that the sanctuary was never completed, far less destroyed - granite flagstones were still piled outside, ready to go into place, nothing was found that belonged to any section above the architrave, no cult objects were found, nor any signs of wear on the floors. In addition, there is good stratigraphic evidence for leadworking in the villa after its abandonment, that is, for a concentrated period at some time after 273/4; Tardy has linked this with the construction of the unfinished temple.[363] The lack of complete pots in the villa's latest occupational phases, or any evidence of fire, make a late third century 'destruction' very unlikely. As for the earlier 'destruction', the absence of sherds datable to the second half of the third century did not prevent the original excavators from assuming reoccupation prior to a second 'fire'; more importantly, there are coarseware bowl sherds in the same level as the two late coins, which cannot be stylistically or typologically dated by comparison with the appearance of other coarseware of the same series at other sites: one might as well then begin with a tentative dating for them to the late third century, on the very basis of those same coins.[364]

Fire-destructions in villas did occur, of course. A clear-cut example of this is at Rougnat in Creuse **[Site N° 49]**, constructed

ca.100, rebuilt roughly a century later and then destroyed by fire, with subsequent partial razing by hand but with no reoccupation, at some time after 270/274. Slightly less clear-cut, however, is the *t.p.q.* provided by two imitation coins of Tetricus within the destruction level, since all the other coins from the site (of unspecified number and exact provenance) are also local imitations of Tetricus, which continued to be produced until around 280; and, yet again, the datable fine wares extend only as far as the early third century. The closeness of the date of the fire to the ostensible mint-date is therefore called into question, and the implicit causal link between the Tetrici and the fire is called into doubt. This is all the more so since the only parts of this villa ever to be excavated were the hypocausted baths - which, if a villa is to have an accidental fire, is a likely starting place for it, a point which the nineteenth century excavator of the elaborate villa of Espaly (Haute-Loire) **[Site N° 51]** failed to notice when he suggested that it too had been destroyed by fire, simply on the evidence of a pile of cinders and carbon found outside the exterior walls of the hypocausted *pars urbana*![366]

This is not to suggest that all villa fires can be explained away without tentative reference to the troubles of the third century. The **Site Catalogue** lists nineteen possible or probable villas destroyed by fire, two of which date to the mid-second century, fourteen to the third century, and only four to the fourth or early fifth centuries (one being the second major fire on the one site **[Site N° 37]**).[366] Numerically, these villas constitute a third of those to have benefitted from at least some excavation. Whilst obviously a significant proportion, the breakdown of these numbers reveals a less

clearcut pattern: only eight of these fire-destructions can be said to have a *t.p.q* in the second half of the third century;[367] three others have been dated by their excavators to the early third century, and three to the third century in general.[368] As with Rougnat, the site of La Mazère (Haute-Vienne) **[Site N° 63]** also has as its latest phase a fire with subsequent and final abandoment, and the only coins recorded on site are third century up to Tetricus: the range of mint-dates makes it more likely that the **end** of the series is close to the date of the fire. The pottery types for this site are not published nor preserved - a not untypical aspect of excavation reports of the 1890's - so coins are all that we have to go on. The remaining late third century fires also depend on coins of the Gallic tyrants for their dating.

It must be remembered, however, that coins alone can only provide the earliest date for their deposition. The reliability of the mint-date associated with a destruction level is only reinforced if the stratigraphy seems to follow an uncomplicated chronology, which is seldom the case. In any event, even where pottery and coins coexist in site reports, there is a surprising lack of concordance between their date-range. Les Pradettes (Corrèze) **[Site N° 45]**, for example, has a partially excavated building whose terracotta pavement should have been constructed after 268, if the coin of Postumus in its base-fill is not intrusive; the two coins from the fill above the floor are earlier (second and early third centuries), whilst the fine wares in this same, upper fill are all Gallic terra sigillata and consequently no later than the second century. The problem here is not the date of the fire which left its clear mark on the pavement - not, for once,

related to hypocausting - since, whether or not the Postumus coin can be dismissed as intrusive (and there is in fact no good independent reason to do so), the date is still likely to be mid-third century at the earliest; but rather the absence on site of any datable third century finewares at all, despite the existence of an accessible and regional industry of Gévaudan's late metallescent black wares, gouged Lezoux wares and the plain t. sigillata *claire* series, all of which started in the second century but continued to be produced during the following century.[369] Similarly, the fire destruction of the north-eastern complex at Souils (Haute-Loire) **[Site N° 52]** is attributed to the late third century on the basis of the coins found stratified in the destruction (up to Victorinus); yet the large numbers of pottery spanned only from the first century A.D. to the second century, including perhaps the commonwares which in this particular case were dated to the early Empire.[370]

This ultimate reliance upon the coins present on a rural site has two unjustifable ramifications for that site's occupation. Firstly, it makes the untenable assumption that the presence of coins on a rural site is more representative of 'normal' occupation than the acquisition and use of both storage and tablewares. Secondly, and derivative of this, it becomes very tempting to perceive the range of excavated coins as being a 'complete' framework for that site's occupation. For example, it has just been noted that eight - or at the very most, eleven - villa-sites were destroyed by a late third century fire (which reduces the proportion of excavated sites possibly destroyed due to the third century Gallic revolts to one in six of the total surveyed). However, the appearance of coins, more than any other

category of small finds, depends upon a monetary circulation based not upon demand, or the needs of a villa-owner or bailiff, but upon imperial or would-be imperial policies and military exigencies.[371] In central Gaul, this meant that the coin supply expanded wildly under the Tetrici who, if their battles took place outside *Aquitanica I*, nevertheless certainly flooded the Aquitanian interior with their currency. Although the province had returned to the Imperial fold by 280, it is a remarkable but indisputable fact that only one coin minted in the twenty or so years between then and Constantius Chlorus' march into southern Gaul found its way onto any rural villa-site in *Aquitanica I*.[372] Coins of the Tetrarchy in any archaeological context, rural or urban, are extremely rare for this province, and the reason for this has nothing to do with site abandonment, nor in all likelihood with the impoverishment of an entire generation of late Gallo-Roman estate-owners. Rather, it may be linked with a **lack** of military activity in *Aquitanica I* and a flooded supply of imitation and now illegal silver and bronze coinage in circulation.

With the arrival of the Constantinian dynasty, the money supply seems to have swollen, and consequently we have more coins appearing on villa-sites. But the number of later fourth century coins on rural sites rapidly diminishes, and next to no fifth century mint issues appear. For archaeologists, this has an obvious knock-on effect, for not only does its disappearance signify the loss of a major stratigraphic dating tool in itself, but it also affects the preciseness of the dating for ceramic typologies.

The demise of low denominations and the Frankish preference for minting only gold coinage may both have contributed to the

non-appearance of early mediaeval villa-sites in further ways; the former, because these coins may have continued to be circulated long after they ceased to enter central Gallic circulation; and the latter, because chance losses (and therefore chance finds) of gold coins on rural sites may reasonably be assumed to be less likely than that of small change; one wonders about the possible function of gold coinage within early Merovingian state-boundaries, anyway, given that its major rôle may have been primarily fiscal. Hoards, of course, are a different issue altogether. Merovingian gold coins do, of course, inevitably turn up on rural sites, but to date none have appeared, as chance finds or otherwise, upon **villa**-sites previously occupied in the late Roman period, [372] including those sites with some Merovingian pottery.

The use of coinage to produce useful graphs of comparative site continuity - or even prosperity - does not, then, work for eastern Aquitaine, even though the sample of villa-sites with coins is statistically viable (64); this is partly due to reasons for coin deposition, as listed above, and partly, too, becasue the publication of sites all too often fails to provide adequate description of the coins found, as for example at Grand-Puy-Connieux (Haute-Vienne) [**Site N° 60**], or even how they were found; at Mas Marcou, for example, the majority of over 150 coins on the site dated to the late 3rd/early 4th centuries, but despite the number and closeness of date, there is absolutely no means of determining if this was a hoard which had subsequently been spread across an area of the site by ploughing, as happened at Puissalicon, south-west of our province.[373]

Ceramic Evidence:

Again, the apparently plentiful number of villa-sites in the Catalogue does not provide adequate material for an accurate sample of pottery distribution throughout the province. Apart from perennial under-publication and illustration of pottery in reports, particularly since most reports are really notices of excavation rather than preliminary or even interim reports, there is the disadvantage of using material excavated before the basic late Roman and Merovingian typologies were themselves published; 37 out of the 94 sites in the Site Catalogue were dug before Rigoir's research on *paléochrétienne* wares appeared in print; a further 22 were done before Randoin's publication of the Merovingian levels at Tours. In other words, just over a third of those collected in the Catalogue were published with the benefit of these studies; and considering that a number of these are in fact surface surveys, it is no surprise at all to find that Merovingian levels are so rare in rural Aquitaine.

Take, for example, Argentelle [**Site N° 2**], an elaborately planned residential villa with windowpanes, marble statuary, a hypocausted thermal wing, and four mosaics of both marble and glass. The original reports, though acceptable for their time give no indication that the pottery is late Roman, except that Albenque's summary of Cérès' report notes some red matte fineware which is neither Lezoux nor La Graufesenque terra sigillata;[374] fortunately, the pottery was deposited largely in the museum at Rodez which the excavator helped to set up, and the material clearly includes *t. sigillata claire* (probably late) as well as coarse wares contemporaneous with the latest coins (Gratian, 367-383). Similarly, another southern Aquitanian villa-site at Borie

des Pères (Aveyron), [**Site N° 3**], appears to have been built in the first century and occupied into the fourth, possibly into the fifth century. The author has been able to see the material in Villefranche-de-Rouergue, and a single ledge-rim of *t. sigillata claire B* type fabric, with decoration closely comparable to the palmette stamps of Rigoir, F1; another, black-slipped ware with pinkish fabric ocre also had a related but more rounded palmette stamp below an upright rounded rim, close to Rigoir F6a or F15.[375]

By contrast, the detail provided in the recent reports of Rabastens (Tarn) [**Site N° 92**] not only identifies and dates occupational levels by pottery analysis, but again demonstrates the comparative value of well-dated sherds over coin evidence; the latest coin on site is Magnentius (350-353), yet the pottery from the upper occupational level, above the last architectural phase of the house (including a fourth century mosaic), contains pottery which may be as late as the fifth century; this was the demolition-level of the house, so it is also clear evidence for the non-survival of this particular villa-site beyond the early fifth century. Of course, pottery analysis has its own limitations, particularly when still undergoing refinements, as late Gallo-Roman still is. It must be remembered that the actual process of fine-tuning *paléochrétienne* and Merovingian wares may be done principally through the association of particular types with coins; that Rabastens has late fourth or early fifth century types with only mid-fourth century coins could be used to down-date the pottery to its lowest acceptable limits.

Still, the lee-way of date-ranges for late Roman wares is infinitely preferable to that of Merovingian pottery until very

recently. 'Paléochrétienne' wares (which can be red or grey fabrics), strictly speaking begin in the late Roman period; 'Merovingian' pottery (which is grey or black) develops from fourth century Argonne ware, but the evolution of rouletted and stamped patterns is not always clear. Only six villa-sites out of the total of 94 recorded in the Site Catalogue have any identified Merovingian artefacts associated with them. Three are surface finds: at Champ des Pois [**Site N° 17**] and Les Grandes Pièces [**Site N° 24**] only a Merovingian spindle whorl has appeared, and this of course does not necessarily imply occupation; although Champ des Pois was partially excavated, the area concerned was out of use in the latest Roman as well as the early mediaeval phases of the villa. At La Gravelle [**Site N° 25**], early mediaeval sherds are attested, but no dates or descriptions have been provided beyond that for the early Roman pottery.

The fourth case is the large villa-site of Pissevieille [**Site N° 32**], where even the late Roman wares appear only as rubbish survival in Carolingian contexts; although the presence of a Carolingian farm with post-hole constructions (but not sunken huts) with quantities of Merovingian pottery strongly suggests that a Merovingian farmstead succeeded a late Roman one, no architectural feature survives from it. Thus, we have no idea if the Merovingian occupants still utilised the Roman house, or were the immediate precursors of the later farm whose layout and orientation shows clear abandonment of the earlier villa-plan, implying complete proprietorial and occupational discontinuity.

At La Pétonnière [**Site N° 69**], also in the Berry, the single seventh century sherd from this site - the only material to post-date the Argonne ware from the fill of a 'pool' in the courtyard - was also

rubbish survival, in that it came from floor-packing. The excavators have dated the latest occupational phase to the seventh or eighth century, which is encouraging for those who do not believe that all rural villas went the way of demolition, abandonment or sunken huts communities during the fifth century; but it must be admitted that, in the absence of any other mediaeval sherds, this floor could date from any time in the subsequent Middle Ages, from the Carolingian onwards.

The sixth site, Espaly [**Site N° 51**] in the Velay, has grey sherds which appear to be Merovingian: ledge-rimmed plates with stamped squares, or pilastered arcades along the rims, and carinated cups with segmented circles, are present on the site as well as the possibly earlier *paléochrétienne* arcaded bowls.[376] The only problem is that context was not recorded. The residential villa - which underwent at least one major architectual embellishment - has, despite vast quantities of pottery and evidence of considerable wealth (porphyry, imported polychrome marbles, wall-paintings and marble wall-claddings) yielded only four coins which are quite unrepresentative of the occupation range as shown by the corpus of pottery, that is, from the early first century until the sixth or even seventh centuries. The excavator's account of destruction by fire is highly improbable, and there is nothing else to suggest a violent end to occupation.

This being said, there is always the possibility of 'squatter occupation' in the mode of Montmaurin.[377] It is certainly clear from the surviving museum collections of villa material that the fine glass wares of both late Roman and Merovingian Köln did **not** find their way onto rural settlements or villas in *Aquitanica Prima*, which might indicate a certain poverty among the Merovingian inhabitants of

central *Francia*, but which just as easily could suggest a lack of trade connections with north-eastern Gaul. Cultural preferences may have had something to do with it, as well, but this is difficult even to begin to unravel; the primarily Germanic taste for beakers probably affected the decline in the number of glass forms from this former major Roman glass production-centre, but some older shapes persisted.

Villa Mosaics:

The reports of Espaly can tell us nothing about the nature of Merovingian occupation here; but the relatively recent reassessment of mosaics outside the province of *Aquitanica Prima* but within central *Francia* strongly suggest that Merovingian villa-occupation was not as materially impoverished as is usually believed.

A redating of the mosaics at Mienne-Marboué (Eure-et-Loir), Chatigny (Indre-et-Loire) and S. Rémy-la-Varenne (Maine-et-Loire) to the sixth or seventh centuries on the basis of stylistic analysis is one of the most encouraging features of modern research into the early Middle Ages; as Leveau summarised it, this at last indicates not only the occupation of rural villas in the Merovingian period but the continued prosperity and cultural traditions of the landowning classes.[378] It is also as yet very tentative.

For example, the apsidal mosaic from the villa at Mienne-Marboué was originally dated by its excavators in 1834-35 to the early Imperial period. An inscription, however, indicates a repair or a reconstruction '*ex oficina Ferroni Felix uti Steleco*', and this name (Stilicho) certainly suggests that this mosaic was created no

earlier than in the fourth century. The subdivision of the design into compartments, and the central geometric panel suggested to Blânchard-Lemée that it was stylistically later, rather than simply a 'provincial' version of a fourth century mosaic pattern. Now, it must be stressed that Blânchard-Lemée has no independent proof to support this belief; the fact that this mosaic is in a polygonal apse does no more than suggest a date from the late fourth century onwards - only if the surviving mosaic replaced one built into the apse would there be any strong evidence for a post-Roman date - and the fact that the late fifth century S. Aventinus stopped at Mienne (thereby suggesting that the villa was still in operation at this time) does not have any bearing upon the date of the **creation** of the villa's mosaic.[379] Nevertheless, Blânchard-Lemée's analysis of the 'mediaeval' characteristics of this mosaic are unobjectionable in itself. It is hoped that the revision of more villa mosaics in central Gaul, may in future demonstrate that they were, in fact, located in southern *Francia*.

By a small majority, where it can be known, most late Roman villas in *Aquitanica Prima* possessed mosaics. On the traditional stylistic dating, they were still being placed in villas in the fourth century (for example, Bellefond (Lot), [**Site N° 73**]), as they had in the third (Ayen [**Site N° 46**], where the *t.p.q.* is thoughtfully provided by the reuse of late second century t. sigillata sherds as tesserae). They reflect not so much an increase in wealth as a continued general prosperity, despite partial invasion and local insecurities (for instance, Rabastens [**Site N° 92**]). Some, however, involved considerable rearrangements: at Pouplin [**Site N° 34**], a fourth century mosaic

appears to have been laid in the southern end of the agricultural yard; but until this major villa can be excavated, no reasons for this unusual feature can be proposed.

Excavators of the previous century had little trouble in finding these mosaics, or marble pavements; that they often went through unrecognised beaten earth floors to reach them, however, must be accepted, given that modern surveys in the Berry indicate that dirt floors were the most common type present throughout the Roman period, regardless of the scale of villa-buildings, or of other indications of their wealth (such as marble, or wall-paintings).[380]

Hypocausting and bath-complexes, too, appear to have survived as long as the villa-houses did. At Brignes [**Site N° 79**], in an isolated but not inhospitable region of the Lozère, a villa of simple plan but with wall-paintings and hypocausted rooms rebuilt its heating system after a destruction by fire in the second half of the third century. Whilst the late third or early fourth century reconstruction reused architectural fragments from the building's earlier phase, there is no need to see this reuse as anything other than utilitarian; it was, however, burnt down again in either the fourth or fifth centuries, and subsequently abandoned. The restoration of private *thermae* in villas is, of course, attested for western Aquitaine in the late sixth/early seventh century.[381]

Architectural Features:

The yard enclosures of these villas have mostly been identified from aerial photography; from the arrangements of the architectural

plans within them, almost all appear contemporary with the initial stages of villa-implantation. Even at Pissevieille (pl.3), where the surviving plan is slightly out of alignment with the earliest and simplest phase of the freestanding villa-house, it is likely that the organisation of yards, with interconnecting covered entrance and axial drive, dates from an early Roman expansion of the site, after the La Tène III farmstead was transformed into a masonry villa in the mid-1st century A.D. Two exceptions are the Berrichône villas of Ardilliers [**Site N° 14**], pl.2, which has been discussed above, and Lunery [**Site N° 26**], pl.5, where a large gallery-façade house with front-projecting rooms at either end appears to be outside and unaligned to at least two large (and mostly empty) enclosures. The main house does not appear to have undergone any modifications, unless they involved internal room subdivisions; the site itself was occupied from at least the first to early fourth centuries, and whether the gallery-façade house preceded or, as Leday suggests, superseded the enclosed yards to its south and west, no dwelling lies 'protected' within these yards.[382]

None of these predominantly early Roman enclosures may be construed as evidence of villa-protection. They relate, of course, to the more mundane tasks of separating owners and occasionally managers from agricultural work, workers, storerooms, stables and sheds. As at Champ des Pois (pl.7), the long *pars agraria* would have serviced not merely agricultural needs, but those of draught animals and possibly some herds as well.

Indeed, none of the surviving villa-remains in *Aquitanica Prima* displays attempts at fortification, be it in the third century or the

fifth. Only the secondary wall built against the external northern face of the northern gallery at Chez Roger in the Limousin [**Site N° 57**], pl.14f, could possibly be deemed 'fortificatory'. Two sides of the *pars urbana* survive, a north-south gallery which turns west to a domestic wing with corridors running along both sides. The slope to the east was so steep that the excavators believed that the eastern, external wall of the north-south corridor/gallery probably stood beneath the level of the northern domestic wing. Its herringbone technique dates this secondary wall to the fourth century; but it probably simply served to buttress the earlier, finer wall of *petit appareil*. The eastern, downslope side was never strengthened, probably because its original construction in larger, undressed masonry meant that it never needed subsequent buttressing.

Villas with projecting corner-rooms (which may be towers/stairwells) likewise appear in both early and later phases; at Chaume aux Couards (pl.4), they seem to have been halved by a subdivision of the façade at some stage between the first and fourth or fifth centuries, so at least in this case, their very function as two-storeyed 'towers' is called into question. One must be careful to distinguish this type from that of a gallery-façade with subdivided front corridor or with lateral extensions, such as that of Pouplin (pl.9a); both Limousin villas of Laroche (pl.13d) and Les Couvents (pl.13f), for instance, may have had corner and/or lateral rooms in their later phases, but only in combination with winged complexes which make any possible protective function very improbable. In fact, of the five late Roman villa-plans within a larger list compiled by Leday of this category, only Lunery (whose house may be late Roman)

and Chaume aux Couards in its earliest phase really qualify as this type at all. Whilst not rare in central Gaul, this type of villa-plan is neither common nor a longer-lived type than the sprawling, open plans of Mas-Marcou or Argentelle (pls.1a-b).

In sum, the villas of *Aquitanica Prima* ranged from the modest to the opulent, with little clear evidence of a major disruption in the third century. Although the late third and early fourth century appear to have seen a concentration of fire destructions, these may have been spread out rather less dramatically than their excavators supposed.
Fig 4 Graphs of the survival rates for this sample of 94 villas cannot be made, given that it would be a misuse of incomparable retrieval rates of archaeological data; and enough inappropriate use of statistics exists in the field of ancient economies (micro- or macro-) as it is. Whilst a statistical analysis of a series of regional field-surveys would be perfectly acceptable, in the case of our province the datable sample is as yet far too small to be of any use at all, particularly when the possibility of regional variations within the provicne are taken into account.

Comparisons with neighbouring regions to the west and east show some significant variations from that tentatively seen for eastern Aquitaine. For Brittany, the pattern seems to be one of destruction in the late second century, with considerable recuperation in the third but subsequent decline in the fourth centuries;[383] in the central Rhône valley, the most comprehensive abandonment and destruction of villas appears to have occurred again in the late second or early third centuries.[384] In eastern Aquitaine, the most concentrated period of

destructions may be in the very late third or even early fourth centuries, but considerable rebuildings - and **not** usually on a reduced scale - take place within the fourth century; for instance, Le Boin (Corrèze) [**Site N° 37**], was a winged villa of the second century, destroyed by fire after 270/273, and subsequently rebuilt on an even larger scale, this time with wallpaintings and an expanded thermal wing; another 'destruction' in the early fifth century was also partially repaired, but the area occupied until the end of that century may have shrunk. The state of many villas in the fifth century is, as has been indicated above, difficult to identify, but the traces that we have strongly suggest that the investment in refurbishment of rural estates of the fourth century persevered, albeit perhaps on a reduced scale, in the fifth century.

It comes as no surprise to find that the archaeological evidence as it stands tells us nothing about early mediaeval villas, and next to nothing about the mediaeval occupation of late Roman villas. What it does show, is that enough methodological problems surround the retrieval of post-Roman material in this province to suggest that the answer to problem lies in refined techniques of retrieval as well as analysis. It only remains to sum up the arguments for and against the idea of the early mediaeval *villa* lying beneath its own begotten *village*, with this clearly in mind.

CONCLUSIONS

Across the diverse landscape of Merovingian eastern Aquitaine, *villae* were inhabited by dependent *coloni*, slaves,[385] managers and their resident or absent owners; that much is certain. *Villa*-estates could yield revenues from more than one source - from vineyards as well as crops, from forests, pasturage, marshes and waters, and from skilled workers - but although these various components may have been collected in the one area under the one estate name, and treated as one unit for taxation purposes, there is no sure means of demonstrating that they were geographically unified within the one set of boundaries; at least the uncultivated parts of an estate may have been distanced from the rest.

As far as we know, in terms of the spatial structure of its economic components, the range of early mediaeval estates may not have differed greatly from its late Roman counterparts. In terms of internal layout and architectural appearance, however, there is a great deal to decide. If Merovingian villas had been habitually built in masonry on sites where no previous Gallo-Roman structure could confuse the stratigraphy, there would be no difficulty in finding them at all, althought there might still be problems in dating them precisely. Yet this is clearly not the case. Instead, we have steadily declining numbers of identifiable and occupied late Roman villas up to the fifth century, and fragmented archaeological evidence for their continued use afterwards. Alongside this, there are undoubted examples of Roman villas - usually appearing to have been long-abandoned - which were reused in

the sixth and seventh centuries as cemeteries and chapels.

The explanation for this decline appears at first glance obvious: either we accept that early mediaeval '*villae*' were Gallo-Roman villas in continued occupation as villa-houses, but are difficult to identify for the reasons outlined in the previous chapter; or else we must interpret the use of the Merovingian term '*villa*' to describe something other than an estate-house constructed in masonry. The royal Merovingian '*villa*' at Annapes perfectly exemplifies this little conundrum:[386] either we believe that the Merovingian and Carolingian nucleated settlement here constituted the fundamental core of an early mediaeval '*villa*' - and therefore also accept that the term applied to a dependent village - or we must go looking elsewhere for an estate centre. The early Imperial villa-house is nearly half a kilometre away. No physical transformation from villa into village, fits here; but there is no direct site-continuity through villa-house occupation, either.

Throughout this thesis, one sub-theme has been that the reality of the early Merovingian *villa* was less neat than the established 'explanations' of it, and also more difficult to grasp. A twin-stranded solution is on offer here: firstly, that more late Roman villas probably survived into the fifth century and beyond than the material evidence has been capable of demonstrating, and that a large share of the blame for this goes to the failure to recognise that the drastic reduction in supplies of newly-minted coins throughout, and particularly at the end of the fourth century does not parallel a drastic reduction in the numbers of occupied and economically-active villas. This has been a serious methodological problem which is being rectified in the northern

areas of eastern Aquitaine, at least. If the reader feels that the problems of retrieval and analysis here have been overstated, given that at least 94 possible villa-sites were able to be collated for the province, it should be remembered that *Aquitanica Prima* was a large province; and a simple glance through *Gallia* (ii) vols. will show how many hundreds if not thousands of Roman villas of all periods dotted its landscape, in comparison with less than a hundred for nearly three centuries of Roman control. Venantius Fortunatus attests to the survival and refurbishment of older *villae* in the early seventh century; there is no reason why many villas, great and small, could not have continued to be occupied in their traditional forms, for centuries after the end of Empire.

Secondly, there is also no reason why a Merovingian *villa* could not also have been wooden or wattle-and-daub, just as rural and urban churches in even the least Germanised areas of *Francia* were constructed in timber.[387] Now, present and future careful excavation will either prove or disprove this particular hypothesis, but it cannot alone tell us if a Merovingian *villa* could have taken the form of a community of sunken-huts - given that such settlements had their own social hierarchy - without a 'lord's house' necessarily being identifiable amongst them. The possibility that an early Frankish *'villa'* signified a community of sunken-huts cannot be rejected out of hand: but the model of transformation used to explain how a Roman masonry construction containing the one land-owning kin group could disappear within an early mediaeval community of slaves and rent-farmers is both inconsistent with the vision of rural control and ownership in the works of Gregory of Tours **and** quite as undemonstrable as any alternative explanation.

Of course, no-one can **dis**prove the possibility that some late Roman villas - for which we have no physical evidence - evolved into villages due to the increasing powers which devolved upon estate landowners, those patrons of rural life. Yet when Gallo-Roman rural villa-plans are able to be located beneath later settlements, their presence is evidence of abandonment, not of continuity; and if these can be found, as at S. Martin-le-Noir, surely at least one or two elusive late Roman villa-villages could also appear - if they existed. Neither hypothetical late Imperial villa-fortification, nor any form of seigneurial control, can be connected to these phenomena; only the possible donation of *praedium cum domibus* to church or abbey by a wealthy and pious late Roman or early mediaeval benefactor indirectly links him or her to subsequent settlements; and only the attraction of surviving masonry, its decoration or floor-plan (particularly apsidal rooms) connect the material appearance of a late Gallo-Roman villa to its transformation into a cemetery or chapel.

The non-appearance of early Visigothic or Merovingian *villa*-houses in the archaeological record of central Aquitaine cannot, then, be simply explained by the translation of the early mediaeval term '*villa*' as a dependent village-community, nor can the late Gallo-Roman '*villa*' be presumed to anticipate this meaning.

If the circular argument of 'villas beneath villages' fails to explain convincingly the lack of Merovingian farms in our archaeological data, must other ramifications of the villa-to-village hypothesis then be accepted? Some stand or fall on their own merits: the growing *patrocinium vicinorum* of the larger estate-owners, a declining rural population, and the evolution of the colonate class. None of these **need**

involve the villa-to-village hypothesis at all, although discussion of them can become extremely convoluted when they do. Certainly, the concept of villa-strongholds for Aquitaine lacks credibility if the contemporary distinctions between *villa* and *castellum* are explored, and if the need to express one's social power is not seen as concomitant with the need to protect one's own home. Of course, one characteristic of the late Roman and early mediaeval period across Europe is the re-use of ancient places of retreat and protection; but these were communal settlements, even if under the control of a local or official patron. And if these cannot be connected with contemporary villa-sites, then one cannot even begin to talk of the creation of a protected village around a domanial stronghold, however it was labelled by contemporaries.

Obviously, '*villa*' did eventually come to denote a '*village*', along with a proprietorial definition with all its fiduciary connotations. The point is that this cannot be demonstrated for central *Francia*, as for the rest of the kingdom, until the late seventh century at the earliest. If so, this affects our vision of the central *Francia* fought over by the last of the Merovingians, and inherited by the Charlemagne. Whether *villa* as 'community' and as 'estate' commonly overlapped in the minds of their late Merovingian population, or existed as separate meanings, applied in different contexts (one generally, the other in legal or tax documents), is difficult to infer because of the very nature of the documents. Whether the early mediaeval populations who lived within the legally-defined extent of a *villa* were even confined within a single set of fields and estate-markers is unclear, as the A.D. 626 land divisions in the Limousin demonstrate; but it is likely that in most of the arable lands of *Aquitanica Prima* discrete, whole estates were not uncommon. In

our province, the development of the agricultural village was both late and not extensive; it did not form part of this province's legacy of *Romanitas*. The villas of eastern Aquitaine, then, may have remained the proprietorial and architectural focal points of their diverse estates for at least two centuries after Euric's conquests.

Equally obvious is the point that the construction of 'new' villa-estates in the Merovingian period within this wealthy region could not have matched in numbers or in solidity anything resembling the majority of those constructed under Roman rule. A continuity of occupation in many older villas, and a decline of the use of traditional architectural techniques and media would seem, then, to have gone hand in hand, cutting an even greater division between those whose ancestral homes were still retained in the first two centuries of post-Roman rule, and those who joined the landholding classes.

It is time, then, to lay to rest the vision of a central Gaul fortified with private châteaux in the late Roman period as in the early Middle Ages. *Aquitanica Prima* was a conservative province, as it was a predominately rural one; and although Visigothic and Frankish conquests must have caused land-appropriation and 'new' ownership of *fundi*, as well as increased land divisions through fifth century *hospitalitas*, their scale is unknown. That rural Germans lived habitually in communities even within the late Empire is testified by a preponderance of sunken-hut settlements in what is now northern France and Germany, as well as later in Britain; but we simply do not know enough about barbarian settlements in central and southern Gaul - outside perhaps the category of specifically military installations - to be able to trace

the 'Romanising' impact of *hospitalitas* upon those fifth century Visigoths and sixth century Franks who did migrate into *Aquitanica Prima*. Did it exacerbate a gap between the grandest and/or most profitable *villae* which continued to be owned or occupied by a landowning class whose membership fluctuated considerably in the fifth century, and those new villas whose construction techniques and medium may have changed? The answer, at present, is that we do not have an answer for Aquitaine; and the nearest comparable situation to that of the central Gallic countryside in the later Empire and first centuries of Germanic rule is not that of north Africa, or indeed of *Gallia Belgica*, but of the south and of Italy, whose archaeological contribution to the whole problem is roughly at the same stage as for *Aquitanica I* itself.

It should be clear by now that we should not seek continuity of proto-mediaeval land organisation and workforce controls in a *villa-to-village* model of rural life which, for central Gaul, simply did not exist. Of course, the disruptions to life and livelihood of civil and military problems for the region, should not be underestimated, particularly from the mid-fifth century onwards, but the lack of any direct or convincing indirect evidence for the material manifestation of aristocratic power in their own Aquitanian residences is witness to something other than the rise of a proto-mediaeval form of lordship. It is, perhaps, rather a testimony of a supreme confidence of the landowning classes, from the senatorial to the more humble, in themselves as part and parcel of a superior culture and political power; or else, of a belief that they could successfully manipulate their *hospes* for their own protection. Paulinus of Pella certainly believed in their efficacy in *Aquitanica Secunda*. The expression of *patrocinium vicinorum*

in this region, too, might also have been more subtle than is often supposed: rather than a simple model showing the impoverished late Roman rural workers huddling around the protection of the rurally-based rich, we should perhaps contrast the late Roman creation and preparation of naturally-defended sites - be they caves in the Quercy or ancient hillforts in the Auvergne, and whether under seigneurial patronage or local communal initiatives - with the undefended and essentially defiantly unchanging lifestyle of the wealthiest classes in the province; that this lifestyle had to change, in view of a changing economy and trade-links; in this sense, immaterial. Note also that the rural population took shelter not around the *domus* of a *villa*, but in places of refuge or 'official' protection, a contrast which further underscores Sidonius' '*terrena villis, saxosa castellis*'.

In conclusion, it has not been the intention of this thesis to be overly pessimistic about our state of knowledge concerning the early mediaeval *villa* in eastern Aquitaine. There are positive pointers towards improved archaeological techniques for retrieving Merovingian material from the countryside of *Aquitanica Prima*; and with a little patience, the archaeologist may yet provide both more and better quality data. But since this data is always analysed within a preconceived set of expectations, it is just as important for historians to be aware of assuming too much from too little, and then imposing inept models of historical changes upon new evidence as it emerges. The final word must not be that we know too little about the nature of the early mediaeval *villa* in Gaul, but that in the past we have repeated too many of the same assumptions, much too frequently.

Abbreviations

Arch.Med.	*Archéologie Mediévale*
BAR	*British Archaeological Reports*
BGHAB	*Bulletin du groupe d'histoire et d'archéologie de Buzançais [=Indre et son passé, 1981 ff.]*
BSAHL	*Bulletin de la Société des antiquités historiques du Limousin*
BSLSAC	*Bulletin de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de Corrèze*
BSNAF	*Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France*
BSSHAC	*Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze*
CA	*Cahiers archéologiques*
CAHB	*Cahiers archéologie et d'histoire du Berry*
CAGR	*Carte archéologique de la Gaule romaine*
CAL	*Cahiers archéologique de la Loire*
CEH	*Cambridge Economic History of Europe*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptorum Latinorum*
CJ	*Codex Justinianus* [=Digest of Justinian]
CTh	*Codex Theodosianus*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DHA	*Les Dossiers d'histoire et archéologie*
GC	*Liber in Gloria Confessorum* (Gregory of Tours)
GM	*Liber in Gloria Martyrum* (Gregory of Tours)
HF	*Historia Francorum* (Gregory of Tours)
JIH	*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
MAC	*Mémoires de l'Academie de Clermont-Ferrand*

MGH	*AA*	*Monumenta Germanica Historiae, Auctores Antiquissimi*
	EMK	*Epistolae Merovingici et Karolingi*
	LL	*Legum Sectio*
	SSRM	*Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*
MSAC		*Mémoires de la Société archéologique du Cher*
MSHC		*Mémoires de la Société historique du Cher*
MSHLSC		*Mémoires de la Société historique, littéraire et scientifique du Cher*
MSLSAA		*Mémoires de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*
MSSNAC		*Mémoires de la Société scientifique, naturelle et archéologique de la Creuse*
ND		*Notitia Dignitatum*
PBSR		*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PL		*Patrologia Latinae, Paris*
PVSLSAA		*Procés-Verbaux des séances de la société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*
RA		*Revue archéologique*
RAC		*Revue archéologique du Centre*
RAL		*Revue archéologique du Loiret*
RAN		*Revue d'archéologie Narbonnaise*
RAS		*Revue archéologique : les Sites*
RDA		*Revue d'Auvergne*
RHDFE		*Revue historique de droit français et étranger*
Trav.Arch.Lim.		*Travaux d'archéologie du Limousin*
VJ		*De Virtutibus S. Juliani* (Gregory of Tours)
VP		*Vita Patrum* (Gregory of Tours)
VSD		*Vita Sancti Desiderii*

FOOTNOTES

Notes for pages 1-3

INTRODUCTION:

1. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, vols. I-II, ed. and transl. W. B. Anderson, Loeb, 1980 and 1965. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH AA*, IV, 2, Hannover, 1885. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SSRM*, I, part 1, Hannover, 1884, (henceforth *HF*). Fredegar, *Chronica* [with *Continuators*], ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SSRM*, II, Hannover, 1888, pp1-194; transl. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, London, 1960.

2. J. Chapelot, 'La fond de cabane dans l'habitat rural Ouest-Européen: Etat des questions', *Arch. Med.*, X (1980), pp9. 19-21 on French sites, all located in the north. Also A. Ferdière, 'Le probléme des fonds de cabane au Bas-Empire', *RAL*, 7 (1981), p73, fig.27; more recently, G. Coulon, D. Joly, 'Le Centre', in J. Lasfarges, (ed.), *Architectures de terre et de bois (Documents d'arch. française, 2)*, 1985, p93.

3. G. Coulon, and J.-L. Girault, 'Le site gallo-romain de la Petonnière à Paulnay', *BGHAB*, 12 (1980), p47.

4. E.g., P.-F. Fournier, 'Clermont-Ferrand au VI[ème] siécle: recherches sur la topographie de la ville', *Bib. Ecole des Chartes*, 128 (1970), pp271-342.

5. Not just for the Massif Central, of course: see, for example, the 'early mediaeval' wooden building at Brennilis (Finistére), whose

only pottery is datable only by comparison with the 'Dark Age, grass-marked and tempered wares of southwest Southern England') [*Arch. Med.*, XIV (1984), p288]; or even Tourzel-Ronziéres, which after 6 dig seasons provided no dates apart from 'early mediaeval' [*Arch. Med.*, II (1972), p389]; even the more comprehensive reports in *Gallia* (ii), 25 (1967), pp311-314, and 29 (1971), p332, proposed no hard dates for the published ceramics.

6. M.-H. and J. Santrot, *Céramiques communes gallo-romaines d'Aquitaine*, Paris, 1979. J. Rigoir's 'Les sigillées paléochrètiennes grises et orangées', *Gallia* (i), 26 (1968), esp. pp177-189; B. Randoin, 'Essai de classification chronologique de la céramique de Tours du IVème au XIème siècle', *Recherches sur Tours*, I (1981), pp103-114.

7. See, for example, only one archaeologically-defined early mediaeval site in southern Etruria: C. J. Wickham, 'Historical and Topographical Notes on early Mediaeval South Etruria: Part I', *PBSR*, XLVI, (1978), p149.

8. '*De controversiis agrorum*,' attributed by Fustel de Coulanges, Beaudouin and Grenier to Frontinus, in the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*, ed. C. Thulin, Teubner, 1971, p45, although the ms. attributes it *Agenni Urbicus*; the quotation is used in this way first by N. Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France, t.4: L'Alleu et le domaine rural*, Paris, 1922 [1st ed., ca.1890], p89; also E. Beaudouin, *Les grandes domaines dans l'empire romain*, Paris, 1899, p.23, and more recently by J. Percival,

The Roman Villa: An Historical Introduction, Berkeley, 1976, p.177, to support the view of the villa beginning as 'something like a "farm"...ending as something like "village".'

9. R. Latouche, *The Birth of the Western Economy*, transl. E. M. Wilkinson, London, 1961, pp67-69.

10. See Percival, *op.cit.*, especially pp129, 176-177. The concept reappears in C. R. Whittaker, '*Agri Deserti*,' in M. I. Finley, (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property*, Cambridge, 1976, esp. pp164-165. French archaeologists imbibed the idea from R. Agache's massive survey of Picardie, particularly *La Somme pré-romaine et romaine*, Amiens, 1978; see, for example, R. Chevallier, 'La villa romaine et la romanisation de campagnes,' *DHA*, 58 (1981), p8, or A. Audin, 'La réutilisation des sites antiques par les églises,' *Caesarodunum*, XIX, 1984, pp63-107.

For a different and probably more prudent view, see R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, London, 1982, pp131-141, and J. Chapelot, R. Fossier, *The Village and House in the Middle Ages*, transl. H. Cleere, London, 1985.

11. Beaudouin, *op.cit.*, pp23-27; A. Dumas, 'Quelques observations sur la grande et la petite propriété à l'époque carolingienne', *RHDFE*, 5 (1926), p622.

12. A **recent** example of a well-dated late Roman and early mediaeval area in Bourges is in Gallia (ii), 42 (1984), pp274-5: a timber construction with 7th century occupational material on the site of a late 4th/early 5th century small, ashlar masonry building whose foundation trench yielded two late 4th century solidi. The

lifespan of uninterrupted occupation of this building between the 5th and 7th centuries is, of course, unknown.

13. On fortification, see for examples, A. Grenier, *Manuel d'archéologie gallo-romaine, VI.ii*, Paris, 1931, p.734; G. Fournier, *Le peuplement rural en Basse-Auvergne durant le haut moyen âge*, Paris, 1962, pp232-233, 353 (for the Carolingian period), and *Le château dans la France médiévale*, Paris, 1978, p5. Also see Chapelot and Fossier, *op.cit.*, pp129-133; the creation of fortified sites in response to power-struggles and increased threats can be traced back to the 9th century, but the moated castle is a phenomenon of the 10th and 11th centuries. The authors rely on Fournier's work on the reuse of Roman or Merovingian '*curtes*', thus indicating a certain continuity of site-occupation, but this is not the same as claiming any continuity of site-function or of site-type.

14. Discussed by Agache, *op.cit.*, p380, and E. M. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, London, 1985, p260.

15. Percival, 'Roman Agricultural Organisation in Western Europe with Special Reference to the *Tres Galliae*', (Oxford D. Phil. Thesis, June 1967), p.iv, where the two great Roman villas of Chiragan and Montmaurin are 'basically Carolingian in their structure and method of administration'.

16. As Chapelot, *Arch. Med.*, X (1980), p19, pointed out, French archaeology is at the same stage in using open-stripping techniques as England was before 1958. See also for pottery, Randoin, *op.cit.*, passim.

17. E. Magnou-Nortier, 'A propos de la villa et du manse dans les sources méridionales du haut moyen âge', *Annales du Midi*, 96 N°165 (1984), pp85-91; also 'La terre, la rente et le pouvoir dans les pays de Languedoc pendant le haut moyen âge: I-II', *Francia*, 9 (1981), pp79-115, and 10 (1982), pp21-66. F. Bange, 'L'ager et la *villa*: structures du paysage et du peuplement dans la region maconnaise à la fin du Haut Moyen Age (IX°-XI° siècles)', *Annales*, 39 N°3 (1984), pp529-569.

18. G. Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, Plon, 1974 [first published in 1932], whose only modern value is its impact upon subsequent Annalist approaches (see afterword by Le Roy Ladurie).

CHAPTER ONE:

19. Strabo, *Geog.* IV.2.1-2; also Pliny, *NH*, IV.xix, who neither distinguishes the two groups of *Rutenî* nor mentions the *Vellavî* (acknowledged by Strabo as a subordinate group of the *Arvernî*). The Albigeois tribe are accepted in this thesis as the tribe known to Caesar as the *Rutenî provinciales*, as opposed to the *R. liberî* (of the Rouergue).

20. R. Gounot, *Mobilier archéologique gallo-romain trouvé en Haute-Loire*, Le-Puy-en-Velay, 1967, p17. F. Couderc, R. de Saboulin Boullena and Abbé Peyre, *1000 ans de vie en Gévaudan*, Mende, 1984, pp4-5.

21. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* V.13.2.

22. Strabo, *op.cit.*, IV.2.1, *l.*14; Couderc *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p23; for a milestone of Postumus in the Gabalitani region, see p.29. For the Velay in the third century alone, work was carried out under Philip the Arab and road restoration under Etruscilla; see U. Rouchon, *Le Velay gallo-romain et sa capitale Ruessio (S. Paulien)*, Le Puy, 1922, pp41 and 81, and M. Balmelle, *Répertoire arch. du dépt. de la Lozère: période gallo-romaine*, Montpellier, 1937, p.viii.

23. As known to Caesar; see J. Bury, 'The Provincial List of Verona', *JRS*, XIII (1923), p139.

24. *Ibid.*, pp128, 137-138.

25. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, I, Blackwell, 1986, p43.

26. Bury, *op.cit.*, p138; Jones, 'The Date and Value of the Verona List', *JRS*, XLIV (1954), p22.

27. *The **Breviarum** of Festus*, ed. J. Eadie, London, 1967, p50. Bury, *op.cit.*, p140.

28. Eadie, *op.cit.*, pp164-166.

29. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestum*, XV.11.13: *'In Aquitanica quae Pyrenaeos montes et eam partem spectat oceani quae pertinet ad Hispanos, prima provincia est Aquitanica, amplitudine civitatum admodum culta omissis aliis multis, Burdigala et Arverni excellunt, et Santones et Pictavi.'* The introductory XV.11.1-6 relies strongly upon Caesar, but Ammianus seems to have been aware in this section of changes made since that time. (*Rerum Gestum Libri XXXI*, vol. I, transl. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb, 1971.)

30. Antonine Itinerary, in E. Desjardins, *Géographie historique et administrative de la Gaule romaine*, vol.IV, Paris, 1893, p36.

31. Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus*, II.2, ed. Th. Mommsen, *MGH AA*, IX, 2, Berlin, 1892.

32. Orosius, *Hist. ad. paganos*, I.2.67-68, 70; ed. C. Zangemeister, Pisiae, 1889.

33. Hydatius, 'Chronica', 69 [A.D.418], the Goths possess '*...a mare Terrenum et Fluvio Rodano per Ligeram fluvium usque Oceanum...*' in *MGH AA*, XI, Hannover, 1893, pp13-36.

34. *Chronica Gallica*, 73 (A.D.413): '*Aquitania Gothis tradita.*' Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ch.1271 (A.D.419): '*Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data ei ad inhabitandum secunda Aquitanica et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum.*' Both ed. Th. Mommsen, *MGH AA*, IX, 1, Berlin, 1892, p343; pp631-666.

35. Eg., Salvian, 'De Gubernatione Dei', bk VII.ii.8, XII, ed. C. Halm, *MGH AA*, I, 1, Berlin, 1877, pp1-108.

36. Bury, *op.cit.*, pp139-140. J. Harries, 'Church and State in the *Notitia Galliarum*', *JRS*, LXVII (1978), p26, n.3.

37. Rouchon, *op. cit.*, p41 (Philip the Arab) and p81 (Etruscilla); also M. Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des wisigoths aux arabes*, Paris, 1979, p291 on Albi.

38. Rouchon, *op.cit.*, pp11-12 for 10th century *vicaria* '*Civitate Vetula*'. The *Peutinger Table* still refers to '*Reuessione*' (sic) (Desjardins, *op.cit.*, p11).

39. Gounot, *op.cit.*, p42. For the scant Roman remains at Mende

itself, see Balmelle, *op.cit.*, pp33-35.

40. R. Butler, 'Late Roman Town Walls in Gaul', *Arch. Journal*, 116 (1959), pp40, 42 and 49 dates the Bourges wall ca.286-306, certainly after 260. More recent dating from the filling-in of the portico upon which the wall was partly built confirms this; see J. Adam, Cl. Bourgeois, 'Ensemble monumental à Bourges', *Gallia*, i, 35 (1977), pp138-140 and *Gallia*, ii, 38 (1980), pp312-3.

41. *Notitia Dignitatum (Occid. LXII*, 44): '*Praefectus laetorum gentilium Suevorum, Arumbernos* [scil. *Arvenos*] *Aquitanicae primae*', ed. H. Seeck, p217.

42. Rouchon, *op.cit.*, pp39-40 and p122 on restoration of Via Bolena under Maximinus and Maximus (*C.I.L.* XIII, N°s 8869, 8875).

43. Ausonius, *Parentalia*, IV, 8-12, in *Works*, I, transl. H. Evelyn-White, Loeb, 1951.

44. Ammianus, *op.cit.*, XII.8.1 and XIV.10.2, in two separate years, crucial grain supplies for Julian's armies are specified as being from Aquitaine (perhaps from the Berry plains?).

45. Salvian, *op.cit.*, .V.22-24. *Querolus* (Act I, sc.ii), ed. and transl. L. Havet, Paris, 1880, pp217-218.

46. Jerome, *Ep.* CXXIII.15, in *CSEL*, LVI, part III, ed. I. Hilberg, Lipsiae, 1918. Also *Chron. Gallica*, I.6.

47. Orosius, *Hist. ad. paganos*, VII.43; Hydatius, *Chron.*, 69 [418].

48. See note 34.

49. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* VII, *ll.*246-250 on the Scythian (i.e., Hunnish) force in the Auvergne, 475-480 for the siege of

Narbonne by Theodoric I in 437, and by Theodoric II in 461 (*Carm.* XXIII, *11.*70-75).

50. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* VII.6, 7 lists the empty sees of both Aquitaines; for Bourges' episcopal elections, see *Ep.* VII.5,1; VII.8,2; and VII.9, *passim.*

51. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* VI.12; before 507, the Church of Lyons owned property in the Auvergne (*HF*, II.36).

52. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* VII.17.1; Gregory of Tours, *HF*, II.20. The errors in this last passage are interesting: Gregory provides 4 pieces of chronological data, the last being his sum of the first three: *(1)* Victorius' appointment as *dux* in Euric's 14th year, *(2)* a stay of 9 years at Clermont, then *(3)* his death 4 years before Euric's, gives Euric *(4)* a 27 year reign. But Euric lasted only 18 years (466-484), and so the first 3 data cannot all be sequentially true, nor can all be individually correct. If the first two items are accepted, Victorius took control in 480 (the 14th regnal year) and lasted 9 years, in which case he would have outlived Euric by 4-5 years, not the reverse, as Gregory claims. Yet the allocation of a Visigothic military and civil commander to *Aquitanica I* only as late as 480 is not very likely, unless one assumes that he had an unknown predecessor for t province (excluding the Auvergne).

The second and third data cannot both be correct, since if V. died in 480, 4 years before Euric, he would have had to have been *comes* of Clermont in 472, prior to its Visigothic conquest! I see, however, little problem in rejecting Gregory's implicit inference

that Victorius was made *dux* at the same time as gaining control of the Auvergne (as *comes*, as Sidonius tells us). More satisfactory is the amendment of Gregory's initial statement to the 4th, not 14th regnal year, and a rejection of the 4 year gap between deaths, for which Gregory provides no narrative support. It makes a certain sense for Victorius to be made *dux* over the 'seven' cities immediately after Bourges' conquest, that is, in late 469 or 470, with his countship of Clermont (the eighth city) only occurring upon its fall in 474/5. It would also fit if Victorius' expulsion (ostensibly for private grievances) from the city was therefore 9 years later, in 484, at the vulnerable time of his patron Euric's death. Alternatively, if the 9 years is made the duration of V.'s ducal not comital appointment, the sequence becomes: ducal appointment in 469/470, countship in 474/475 and expulsion in 479; allowing for his travel to and time spent in Rome, this would just about allow 4 years between his and his king's death, but it does not give much time for V.'s attested building activities in the Auvergne.

James' sums in his commentary on this passage, in Gregory of Tours' *Lives of the Fathers*, Liverpool Univ. Press, 1987, p138, n.4 are as incorrect as Gregory's own: he gives the 14th year of Euric's reign as '470' instead of 480, therefore using Victorius' 9 year stint at Clermont to show that abbot Abraham's death would have been prior to 479, which may well be correct, but for the wrong reasons (see the last hypothesis, above).

53. Gregory of Tours, *HF*, 11.36: '*Post dies autem paucos, orto inter eum et cives scandalum, Gothos, qui in hac urbe morabantur, suspitio attigit, exprobrantibus civibus, quod velit se Francorum ditionibus subjugare,...*'

54. *HF*, V.13: VI.12: VI.31: VII.9: VIII.45.

55. *Vita S. Desiderii*, chs.2-3, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SSRM*, IV, Hannover, 1902, pp547-548 (henceforth *VSD*).

56. S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Merovingian Age*, London, 1966, p318.

57. A. Meynier, 'Pérennité et diversité de l'Auvergne', *Eventail de l'histoire vivante - hommage à L. Febvre*, I, Paris, 1953, p139 (my transl.)

58. *HF*, V.28: VI.12: VII.12: for the Andelot Treaty, IX.20.

59. Excepting the Gévaudan, see also F. Lot, *Recherches sur la population et la superficie des cités remontant à la période gallo-romaine*, II, Paris, 1950, respectively pp152, 118, 87 (n.10), 243, and 190.

60. *Cont. Fred.*, ch.46 [A.D. 762]: '*Videns praedictus Waiofarius, princeps Aquitanorum, quod castro Claromonte rex bellando ceperat et Bytoricus, caput Aquitaniae, munitissimam urbem...capesserat...*'

61. Fredegar, *Chron.*, III.57: '*partibus Wasconia seu et montis Parenei* [sic], *pagus et civitates; pagum Tholosanum, Cathorcinum* [Cahors], *Ageninsem, Petrocorecum et Saintonecum...*' (*MGH SSRM*, II, p141).

62. *Cont. Fred.*, ch.2 [A.D. 673]; the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed.

and transl. B. Bachrach, Coronado Press, 1983, ch.45 merely states the fact of Ebroin's flight into exile, but does not describe it.

63. *Cont. Fred.*, ch.10, on Gascons in army, but more specifically, ch.13, on the route by which the Arab allies of Eudes travel up *Aquitanica Secunda*, not diagonally across into *Aquitanica Prima*; also Charles Martel's campaign upon Eudes' death is through the seaboard half of Aquitaine.

64. *Ibid.*, ch.25 [A.D. 742]: '*Beturigas urbem*'.

65. *Ibid.*, ch.25.

66. *Ibid.*, ch.41: Pippin's invasion of Aquitaine crosses diagonally southwestwards, '*per pago Bitorio usque Arvernico*' which comprises the '*maximam partem Aquitanie*'. Waiofar's cities are listed as those of western Aquitaine, plus Limoges, Bourges and Clermont-Ferrand, as well as minor but unnamed places, which probably included Cahors, Rodez and Albi.

67. Certainly by A.D. 761 in Clermont-Ferrand (*ibid.*, ch.46).

68. E. James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South West Gaul*, *BAR*,25 (i), vol.I, Oxford, 1977, p13.

69. *Ibid.*, pp12, 14. See also Ph. Wolff, 'L'Aquitaine et ses marges', in H. Beumann, (ed.), *Karl der Grösse...*, I, Düsseldorf, 1967, p283.

70. J. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West*, London, 1979, p77.

71. *VSD*, ch.1.

M. Broëns, 'L'Albigeois de S. Didier et la *civitas [...]obrege*', *Annales du Midi*, LXII (1969), pp388-9, argues unconvincingly that

Desiderius' birthplace could not have been Albi because it was too well-known to have needed such explicit locationing. Albi was not a major city, even in Roman times, notwithstanding the fact that it was an episcopal see by the 5th century.

72. For comparison, see G. Cordier, 'Les merovingiens de Sublains (Indre-et-Loire): complément à l'étude anthropologique', *RAC*, 24 (1985), pp247-255.

73. J.-M. Desbordes, 'Les origines de la vie urbaine en Bas-Limousin', *BSLSAC*, LXXXI, (1978), pp41-53.

74. See discussion, Chapter Two, pp53-60.

75. But see Whickham, *op.cit.*, part II, p77.

76. Gregory of Tours, *HF*,V.34, with recurrences, eg., in 582, VI.14; Gallus of Clermont, *ad Desiderium*, *Ep.* II.20, on banning all mercantile activity between Cahors and its neighbouring cities, including Rodez and all southern Gaul.

77. S. C. Watkins, E. Van de Walle, 'Nutrition, Mortality and Population Size: Malthus' Court of Last Resort,' *JIH*, XIV (2), (1983), pp205-226, and A. Carmichael, 'Infection, Hidden Hunger and History', *ibid.*, p251.

78. *Carte arch. du Cher*, p87.

79. Toll-taxes were collected wherever there were markets (under Charlemagne, these were *telonea*); under Theoderic III, tolls were collected in cities, *cas tella*, *vici*, *portus pontes publici*; see Levillain, 'Etudes sur l'Abbaye de S. Denis...', *Bib. Ecole des Chartes*,

91 (1930), p269.

80. Fred.Cont., ch.47.

81. Ferdière, *R.A.C.*, 23 N°2 (1984), pp233-235.

82. *Vita S. Amantii*, ch.; Fred.Cont., ch.47.

83. Rigoir, *op.cit.*, pp181-2, 185, 187.

84. L. Daubrée, 'Aperçu historique sur l'exploitation des mines metalliques dans la Gaule: Notice supplémentaire', *RA*, 41 (1881), pp201-221, esp. pp203 ff. For iron-mining in the Berry at Allogny, see *CAHB*, 38 (1974), p24.

For an excellent summary of the material, see Rouche. op.cit, pp193-194.

85. J.-M. Desbordes, R. Lacotte, 'Du *vicus* gallo-romain au village médiéval: l'exemple de Blotomagus/Blond (Haute-Vienne), *Caesarodunum*, XXII (1987), pp291-296.

86. Strabo, op.cit, 4.ii.2 (the linen of Quercy is not mentioned after Strabo, so we know nothing of its subsequent history). Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo*, *l*.353.

87. As occasional surviving inscriptions attest, eg., *CIL*, XIII N° 1550 (of Tiberian date).

88. Mining tools (attestedly Roman) are in the Mende museum (unpublished) from the silver/lead mines of Cubières (Lozère).

89. See Rouche's comments on this, op.cit, pp195-196.

90. Later refs. specify '*villae publicae*' (*Fred. Cont.*47), in Aquitanian Limousin.

CHAPTER TWO:

91. Agache, *op.cit.*, p279, after Jubainville (1890).

92. Columella, *De re rustica*, I.iv.6 ff., transl. H. Ash, Loeb, 1977.

93. Agache, *op.cit.*, p.279, using the ideas of S. Agache.

94. Percival, *op.cit.*, p.14.

95. *CJ.* VIII.4, and L.16.198 (from Ulpian, *Institutes*.2, and *All Seats of Judgement, Bk.2*), in *The Digest of Justinian*, vols. 1 and 4 respectively, ed. Th. Mommson and P. Krueger, transl. A. Watson, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

96. *CJ.* L.16.211.

See also *CJ.* L.16.60 on the difference between *fundi* and *loci*, in which the distinction made in *CJ. L.16.27 ("'Ager" est locus, qui sine villa est.')* is repeated in the general definition of a *locus:* it is not a *fundus*, but can make up part of an estate, and is generally something '*sine villa*'.

An excellent analysis of *villa* definitions in Roman law is provided by R. Buck, *Agriculture and Agricultural Practice in Roman Law*, (*Historia* monograph N° 45), Wiesbaden, 1983.

97. Percival, *op.cit.*, p.14 refers to a more general Late Republican use.

98. Ausonius, *Ep.* XXVI.94; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* XXXI.256 and Ausonius, *Ep.* XVI.36, respectively.

99. Ausonius, *Ep.* IV.3 and *Ep.* VI.17 both refer to *agri* in which the author resided, near Saintes in *Aquitanica Secunda.*

100. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita S. Martini*, viii. 8, 1, ed. and transl. J. Fontaine, *Sources chrétiennes, N° 133*, Paris, 1965-1969. *Dialogus*, II, 12.2 and 6, ed. C. Halm, *CSEL*, I, Vindobonae, 1866.

101. Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo*, 1.377, ed. C. H. Keene, transl. C. F. Savage-Armstrong, London, 1907.

102. Sidonius, *Ep.* IV.viii.2 ; for Avitacum, see *Ep.* II.ii.13.

103. Sidonius, *Ep.* II.ii.3.

Avitacum is the '*nomen hoc praedio*' whose buildings form the actual *villa*; but after outlining the entire estate - lake, woodlands, meadows and house-complex - Sidonius declares that his readers:

> *...non paginam, quae spatia describit, sed villam,*
>
> *quae spatiosa describitur, grandem pronuntiabunt.* (.20)

104. Sidonius, *Ep. II.xiv.* Palladius, I.ix,5, ed. and transl. R. Martin, *Traité d'agriculture,* I-II, Paris, 1976.

105. Cf. J. Crook, 'Classical Roman Law and the Sale of Land,' in M. I. Finley, (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property,* Cambridge, 1976, pp81-82.

106. Such as the Italian case in Symmachus' *Relationes*, 28, transl. by R. H. Barrows, *Prefect and Emperor, the Relationes of Symmachus A.D.384*, Oxford, 1973.

107. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.*III.5.

108. E.g., *CJ. VIII.6*, concerning the transmission of '*partem fundi*' by a *socius*; similarly, *L.Vis. X.1.7* dealt with vineyards owned by *consortes* '*in alieni fundi*'. References to portions of properties in the barbarian codes of course directly allude to Germanic settlements (cf. *L.Burg.* LIV.3-4, LV.2, LXVII); *C.Euric* CCLXXVII.1-3 and the similar - if not derivative - *L.Vis.* X.3.5; and *sortes* and *portiones* in *L.Vis.(Cod.Rev).* X.1.8), ed. K. Zeumer, *MGH LL*, I, 1, Hannover, 1902, and for the *L. Burg.*, ed. L. R. de Salis, *MGH LL*, II, 1, pp89-91, 95.

109. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p210.

110. A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, I, London, 1986, pp249-253.

111. *Ibid.*, pp250-251; W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, Princeton, 1980, pp58-61.

112. Jones, *op.cit.*, p250.

113. Goffart, *op.cit.*, pp80 ff.

114. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp23-24, 164-165.

115. C.Euric CCLXXVI.: '[opening lines missing]...*habent Romani fuerint, tunc Gothi [in]grediantur in loco hospitum et ducan[t, ubi] terminum fuerat ostensus. Tunc iu[dex], quos certiores agnoverit, faciat eos s[a]cramenta praebere, quod terminum [sine] ulla fraude monstraverint. Nullus n[ovum terminum sine consorte part]is alterius aut sine <in>spectore constituat..*[rest of text omitted]' ed. K. Zeumer, *MGH, LL*, I, 1, Hannover, 1902, pp3-4.

116. Goffart, *op.cit.*, p239, where his belief that Gothic interest **must**

be purely fiscal gives them a stake in 'all clarifications of Roman property boundaries except those affecting the one-third of assessed properties reserved for the king', a statement which has little relevance to the legal text either as it stands or as amended.

117. *Ibid.*, pp237-238.

118. Jones, *op.cit.*, p249.

119. Goffart, *op.cit.*, pp103-104.

120. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* II.1.3: '*silvas fugientibus villas hospitibus*'.

121. Goffart, *op.cit.*, pp117-118.

122. *Ibid.*, pp53-54.

123. *Ibid.*, pp54, and again, 126.

124. *Ibid.*, p107, n.9, citing Marius of Avenches' *Chronica* entry for 456, on the partition of senatorial lands with the invading Burgundians.

125. W. B. Anderson, *Sidonius: Poems and Letters*, vol.I, Loeb, 1980, pp412-413, n.1.

126. For example, in the *Testamentum Bertranni, Ep. Cenomanensis*, ed. J. Pardessus, *Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae, Leges*, I, Paris, 1843, N° CCXXX (A.D.615/616), pp206 and 210: *villa Blacciacum* in the Limousin, and *locellum Blaciacum* (uncertain location).

127. *The Testament of S. Aredius*, ed. J.-P. Migne, *PL*, LXXI, Paris, 1849, col.1145, [ch.1311].

128. *Ibid.*, cols.1144, 1145 [ch.1310].

129. *Ibid.*, '*Similiter et dono Genuliacum cum aedificiis, pratis, silvis, et pascuis, vel omne jure suo.*'

130. Aredius, *op.cit.*, col.1144 [1309].

131. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp210-211. This also explains the appearance of toponyms such as *Villa Colonica* (*Testamentum Bertranni*, pp198, 210).

132. *Testamentum Bertranni, p210.*

133. *Ibid.*, p202.

134. *Ibid.*, p201.; p211.

135. '*...villas illas, quod in Rotenaco* [Rouergue] *de alode materna per pactionis tetulam et eodem nuscuntur pervenisse, hoc est cum terris, aedificiis, mancipiis, viniis, silviis, pratis, pascuis, aquis aquarumve ipsa pertenentibus,...in suprascripta loca porciones alequas visus est comparasse,...* in N°554 [Paris, Archives Nat., **K 1, 9**], eds. A. Bruckner, R. Marichal, in *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores: Facsimile Edition of the Latin Charters prior to the Ninth Century*, Parts XIII-XIV (France 1-2), Zurich, 1981.

136. See Z. Toumieux, 'Etude sur la topographie d'un diplôme de l'an 626,' *BSAHL*, 39 (1890), pp431-440 with text, translation and suggested identification of place-names in the Limousin.

137. *Ibid.*, p.432:

> *...Et proeo quod tabula iam dicto Maurino versus termino Vallarense longior fuisset, ubi Recisolena factus fuerat et sogas octo reciperat, refuderunt a parte suprascriptae matronae Teudilane iuxta villa Fornulus factus ille ubi Bitus servus iam dictorum mansisse visus est.*'

138. Desiderius, *Ep.* II.13, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH EE*, III, Berlin, 1892, p210.

139. N°578 [Paris, Archives Nat., **K 3, 9**], eds. A. Bruckner, R. Marichal, *op.cit.*, p20. Discussed in E. Levillain, 'Etudes sur l'Abbaye de S. Denis à l'époque mérovingienne,', *Bib.Ec.Chartes*, 91 (1930), p292.

140. *VSD*, cols.219-247: for example, .XVII:, '*In territorio Cadurcino dedit villas...*', but also '*...basilicae S. Remidii, dedit portionem Vilantreco, Carrecia, Semelingas et Criscentio...*' Desiderius also acquired for the church 'many groups of lands, many estates of villas' (.XVI).

141. Latouche, *op.cit.*, p83 quotes Bloch on this. Percival, 'Roman Agricultural Organisation...', p16.

142. Bange, *op.cit.*, pp.529-569. Magnou-Nortier, *Annales du Midi*, 96 N° 165 (1984), pp85-91.

Goffart, 'Reflections on Two Recent Publications', *Francia*, (1979), pp57-70 overestimates the lack of a physical basis for either tax units or the description of the sources of private revenue.

143. 'Cartulaire de l'Abbaye benedictine de S. Martin de Tulle en Limousin', *BSSHAC*, X (1888), p317, N°90, [A.D.962].

144. Magnou-Nortier, *op.cit.*, pp81, 85-87.

145. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp81, 85-87.

146. *Testamentum S. Caesarii*, ed. J. Pardessus, *Diplomata...*, N° CXXXIX (A.D.542), p106.

147. 'Donation to the Abbey of Moissac, A.D.680,' eds. Cl. De Vic, J. Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, II, Toulouse, 1875, cols.43-45. It is due to the difficulties of extracting the Merovingian

status of estates mentioned in later forgeries that the false diploma of S. Pierre-le-Vif will not be discussed. Its phraseology includes the donation of a '*vicus*', '*indominicam villam*', estates with '*molendibus*' and also '*mundiscapis*', none of which appear in authenticated early Merovingian texts. Rouche's study of its pattern of landholdings in the Cantal (southern Massif), *op.cit.*, esp. pp241 ff, can only be taken to represent its 8th or 9th century extent. (See the full text, LXIV-LXV, ed. Pardessus, *Diplomata...*, pp34-40.)

148. For the Berrichône mill, see *VP*, XVIII.

A 2nd century water-driven mill has been found at Martres-de-Veyre (Auvergne), similar to a later example at Barbegal; see A. Romeuf, 'Un moulin à l'eau gallo-romain aux Martres-de-Veyres (Puy-de-Dome)', *Rev.d'Auvergne*, 92 N°2 (1978), pp23-38.

CHAPTER THREE:

149. Names ending in *-ac* etc, are more common derivatives of *-acum* place-names in the Massif Central than the *-y* endings (such as Crécy) north and east of the Loire.

L. Musset, *The Germanic Invasions*, transl. C. and E. James, London, 1975, pp117-118, summarises the accepted toponymic views.

150. For a critique of toponymy à la Négre and Broëns, see Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp142-145.

151. *Ibid.*, pp138-139.

152. P. Audin, 'Toponymie et habitat gallo-romain en Val de Loire,' *DHA*, 58 (1981), pp36-39; also 'La découverte des villas par la toponymie: l'exemple de la Touraine,' *Caesarodunum*, XVII (1982), pp11-40.

Of many toponymic studies for France in general, the major ones are A. Longnon, *Les noms de lieux de la France*, Paris, 1920-1929 and A. Dauzat, *La toponymie française*, Paris, 1939. For the Massif Central in particular: E. Nègre, 'Toponymie albigeoise d'après la *Vie* de saint Didier,' *Annales du Midi*, LXXII (1960), pp369-381; M. Villoutreix, 'Toponymie et archéologie: noms de lieux de la Creuse (I-IIème parties),' in *Trav.d'Arch.Lim.*, 6 (1985), pp21-38, and 7 (1986), pp29-61. *CAGR* reports also have toponymic appendices.

153. Audin, *op.cit.*, p20.

A '*villa* Busxerias' appears for northern Berry in A.D.697: see *Polyptyque de l'Abbaye de Saint Germain des Prés*, ed. A. Longnon, Paris, 1895, pp191, 198.

154. Villoutreix, 'Toponymie et archéologie... (Ière partie),' p.30; (IIème partie), pp31-32.

155. Audin, 'Toponymie...', *DHA*, p36. Bertrand, *op.cit.*, p210, '*...in territorio Dunense,...villam Macerias*'.

Vita Furseii Abbatis Latiniacensis, ch.6: '*...in possessionem suam noncupantem Macerias*'; ch.15: '*...in locum vocabulo Macerias*'. This site was in the Somme. Bede dated a *Life* of Furseius to 731; see preface in *MGH SSRM, IV*, ed. B. Krusch, Hannover, 1905, pp425 ff.

156. Cf. the manuscript readings of *Vita Sancti Desiderii* in J.-P. Migne, (ed.), *PL*, LXXXVII, Paris, 1863, ch.XVII, and those of the amended edition of Krusch, *MGH SSRM, IV*, Hannover, 1905, pp587-588 (ch.30). This villa has been identified with Mazerat (Lot).

157. J. Harmand, *Les origines des recherches francaises sur l'habitat rural gallo-romain*, Bruxelles, 1961, p18.

158. A.D.697. See Longnon, *op.cit.*, pp191-198.

159. For '*Macho villam*', see Gregory of Tours, *HF* IV, 44; *Etorfollingus* in the 'Donation to the Abbey of Moissac, A.D.680,' in De Vic and Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, II, col.43. For *Bragogilus*, see Longnon, *op.cit.*, p191. A 'Barbarione Villa' appears in the same 697 bequest, listed in Longnon.

On Germanic personal names, M.-T, Morlet, *Les noms de personne sur le territoire de l'ancienne Gaule du VIème au XIIème siècles*, I, Paris, 1971, esp. pp7-8.

160. For Goths, see James's commentary in *Gregory of Tours: Lives of the Fathers*, Liverpool University Press, 1986, pp139, 140.

161. *Le Cartulaire de Vierzon*, ed. G. Devailly, Paris, 1963; see Charta N°4 (A.D.844), '*...in villa Gotorum...*' and possibly a different Berrichône '*villa Gothorum*' in N°12, dated with the same year but probably a later pastiche of Carolingian material.

162. But note the '*villa Suedas*' in the seventh century *Vita S. Radegundis*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SSRM*, II, Hannover, 1888, ch.15.

Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp534-537, *passim*, lists 13 Frankish, Alan, Alamannic, Vandal and Sarmatian toponyms for *Aquitanica Prima*, although not included are those mentioned in Frankish documents (see n.161, above, which Rouche cites elsewhere, and n.163, below).

163. '*Theufales villa*' (mod. Touffades, Tarn-et-Garonne?), in *VSD*, p587.

164. Strongly favouring the second view, P. Boissonade, *Life and Work in Medieval Europe (Fifth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, transl. E. Power, London, 1949, pp62-70; and Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp229-239. For the third view on the early Middle Ages, see Latouche, *op.cit.*, pp63-70 *passim*; A. Dopsch, 'Agrarian Institutions of the Germanic Kingdoms from the fifth to the ninth century,' *CEH*, 1, 1971, p201, downplays clearance altogether.

165. *Concilium Aurelianense*, (A.D. 538), ed. F. Maassen, *MGH LL*, III, 1, Hannover, 1883, and cited by Rouche, p239, n.347bis.

166. A. and M. Piboule, 'Le culte des sources rurales en Bourbonnais', *RAC*, 22 (1983), pp112-113 note more than 50 Gallo-Roman sites for that part of the forest of Tronçais through which the Roman road passed.

167. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p231.

168. Sidonius, *Ep.* III. v. (cf. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p228!).

169. Sidonius, *Ep.* VI. x. Cf. the plight and activity of war refugees in the East, clearly set out in Libanius' *Oration* 23, 5; in *Libanius*, II, transl. A. F. Norman, Loeb, 1977, pp246-247.

170. Symmachus, *Prefect and Emperor*, transl. R. H. Barrow, Oxford, 1973, N°28, p153ff. Dubious Letter attributed to Sulpicius Severus, *Ep.*VI (*Ad Salvicum*), concerns the bullying tactics of Salvicus concerning the

author's own '*ruricolas meos*', S.'s claim '*Volusiani fundi...fuisse dominum,*' and '*viginti iugerum noris angustias ne ab uno quidem cultore posse tractari...*' Despite stylistic oddities, see C. Halm *CSEL*, I, Vindob., 1866, introduction, ppxi-xii and p251, n.*.

Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus,* ll.181-186, (in Ausonius, vol.II, transl. H. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb, 1985, pp318-320.

171. Discussed by Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp230-231.

172. *Ibid.*, p229.

173. *VSD*, ch.XIII; and Desiderius of Cahors, *Ep.* I, 9, ed. E. Dummler, *MGH EE*, III, Berolini, 1892, pp191-214. [Rouche, *op.cit.*, p231 and '*quascumque fuerint exartas*', n.374, p595].

174. Gregory of Tours, *HF*, IV, 16 and VI, 33; cited by Rouche, *op.cit.*, p231; also V, 28 on taxes in 529. But Childeric, for one, attempted to appropriate a church *villa* (*GC*, 70); also *HF*, X, 7 (on remittance of arrears in the Auvergne).

175. Audin, 'La découverte des villas par la toponymie...,' *Caesarodunum*, p22. A representative range of names from the Corrèze is given by Villoutreix, *op.cit.*, (IIéme partie), pp36-41.

176. P. Maureille, 'Histoire agricole, toponymie et cadastre. L'exemple de la commune de Neuvic en Corrèze,' *Etudes rurales*, 32 (1968), pp72-93.

177. Fournier, 'Notes sur l'histoire du Brivadois', *Almanach de Brioude*, 44 (1964), p195.

178. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp236-239.

179. Villoutreix, *op.cit.*, (II[ème] partie), p28.

180. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p238.

181. Although Rouche, *op.cit.*, p591 n.334, cites Gregory's *Gloria Confessorum* for this, the reference to an estate in fact only appears in the unattributed *Vita* mentioned in the footnote to *GC*, ch.100 (on Junianus' miracles) in *MGH*. The same goes for Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux de la Gaule d'après les ouevres de Grégoire de Tours*, Paris, 1976, p247. Ruricius' own silence on the subject is not informative one way or the other.

For Carolingian and later fabrications of claims of authority by a church over monastic lands, see W. Goffart, *The Le Mans Forgeries*, Harvard University Press, 1966.

182. See Rouche, *op.cit.*, p236: for Amandus, and Meneleus. Cf. the latter in the *Vita Vincentiani Confessoris Avolcensis*, and his fictional *Vita*, respectively in *MGH, SSRM*, III, ed. B. Krusch, Hannover, 1896, pp118-120, and *MGH, SSRM*, IV, Hannover, 1910, pp129-157.

183. See, for example, M. Pénicault, 'S. Pardoux, abbé fondateur et patron de Guéret', in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à M. Henri Hemmer*, Guéret, 1979, pp184-186; the count of Limoges builds a monastery ca.720 for S. Pardoux (fl. late sixth-early seventh centuries) at his property called '*Waractum*' near Guéret, northern Limoges, but it is not called a *villa* nor are there indications of previous occupation.

184. For example, that of Aredius (*HF*, X.29).

185. A. Leday, *La campagne à l'époque romaine dans le Centre de la Gaule*, I-II (*BAR Int. Series*, 73[i]), 1980, p199.

186. Caesarius of Arles, *op.cit.*, p106: '*...centum modiatas de terra, quas ego plantavi, habeat vix triginta aripennos.*'

187. *Testamentum Bertranni*, pp197-215. The 4 are *Bructiacum*, *Comanicum* (a family estate!), *Locus Fontanello* and *Villa Dolus*; more common is the reference to restoration of urban properties, his *domi* in Bordeaux and Paris, buildings in Diablentes, Ponteleugam and Le Mans itself.

188. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen*, I.18.

189. C. E. Stevens, 'Agriculture and Rural Life in the Later Roman Empire,' in *CEH*, vol.1, 1971, p119.

190. Gregory of Tours, *HF*, X.7. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp221-223.

191. Sidonius, *Carmen* XXIV, *l.84*.

192. *Testamentum Bertranni*, pp202, 205; 200. *Villae Novientum* and *Noviomum* are cited by Rouche, *op.cit.*, p595, n.368, in the Poitevin and Anjou ('Gesta Dagoberti', *MGH SSRM*, II, ed. B. Krusch, Hannover, 1888, pp412-413). *VSD*, pp575, 585. Also Villoutreix, *op.cit.*, (Iere partie), p25.

193. Longnon, *op.cit.*, pp189-190, for '*villa Novisolium/Noviolum*' in charta of A.D.685; Document of Nizezius and Irmitrude, in Devic and Vaissette, *op.cit.*, col.44: '*Villa-Novolio*'.

194. *Vita Sancti Austregisili: Miracula*, 14, in *MGH SSRM*, IV, ed. B. Krusch, Hannover, 1902, p207.

195. Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *op.cit.*, p256; Gregory of Tours, *HF*, II, 20.

196. Leday, *op.cit.*, p287: 'suggests a *villa* rather than a *vicus*'.

197. *Ibid.*, pp313-315. Leday suggests that there is a *villa* beneath Villeneuve, just as at Baugy; but, p313, the very existence of **that**

Gallo-Roman villa is extrapolated purely from the toponym.

198. Ch. Higounet, 'L'occupation du sol du pays entre Tarn et Garonne du Moyen Age,' *Annales du Midi*, LXV (1953), pp301-330. For the document, see the 'Donation to the Abbey of Moissac, A.D. 680', in De Vic and Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, II.

199. Villoutreix, *op.cit.*, p34.

200. *Diploma* N°CCLXXVI, in Pardessus, *op.cit.*, vol.I, p55 (comm.) and vol.II, pp41-42.

201. Leday, *BAR*, (73), 1980, p176; also J. Holmgren, 'Quelques établissements gallo-romains de la région de Saint-Florent-sur-Cher,' *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), pp36-37; *Gallia* (ii), 42 (1985), pp286-287. The extant 12th c. chapel is slightly out of alignment with the Gallo-Roman walls, and closer to a straight east-west orientation.

202. *Concilium Agathense (A.D.506)*, ed. D. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis: Opera Varia*, vol.II, Maretioli, 1942, p46. Concilium Arvernense (A.D.535), ed. F. Maassen, *MGH LL*, III, 1, Hannover, 1883, p69.

203. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, Oxford, 1983, pp286-287, who says that the distinction between *vicus* and *villa* churches remains even in the tenth century.

204. C. Lambert, J. Rioufreyt, 'Habitats indigènes, villas gallo-romaines et structures agraires antiques dans le Maine,' *Caesarodunum*, XVII

(1982), pp158-9 (fig.10!).

205. Fournier, *Le peuplement rural en Basse-Auvergne*, p333.

206. Cited in Wallace-Hadrill, *op.cit.*, p188; see also pp286-287.

207. Bange, *op.cit.*, pp535-536.

208. M. Aubrun, *L'ancien diocése de Limoges des origines au milieu du XIème siècle*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1981, pp223, 225. The division of overlarge parishes for administrative ease was sporadically practised by the start of the ninth century, and Church reforms quickly followed in 818-819 (see Wallace-Hadrill, *op.cit.*, p188).

209. *Ibid.*, pp235-301.

210. R. Gounod, 'Introduction', *Mobilier arch. gallo-romain trouvé en Haute-Loire*, Le Puy-en-Velay, 1967, p13.

211. Audin, 'Le réutilisation des sites antiques par les églises', *Caesarodunum*, XIX (1984), pp63-107.

212. H. de Laugardière, *L'Eglise de Bourges avant Charlemagne*, Paris, 1951, p72. Also Longnon, *op.cit.*, p14.

213. D. Dussot, 'Louroux (Saint-Priest-d'Evaux)', *Trav.d'arch.Lim*, 8 (1987), p158; Villoutreix, *op.cit.*, (IIème partie), p57.

214. Bange, *op.cit.*, p538: [illegible]. Also, J. Chapelot, R. Fossier, *Le Village et la maison au moyen âge*, Hachette, 1980, pp43-44.

215. Leday, *op.cit.*, p198.Also G. Chouquer and F. Favory, *Contribution à la recherche des cadastres antiques (C.N.R.S. vol. 31)*, Paris, 1979, p41: the late Roman/early mediaeval fieldsystem of this Northern Gallic

site influenced subsequent land divisions long after the site itself was abandoned.

216. R. Reece, 'Continuity in the Cotswolds: Some Problems of Ownership, Settlement and Hedge Survey between Roman Britain and the Middle Ages', *Landscape History*, 5 (1983), pp11-19.

217. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, p260.

218. Leday, *op.cit.*, p199.

219. Fournier, *op.cit.*, pp204-205

220. *Ibid.*, pp205-207 (not 300 ha, as Rouche, *op.cit.*, p214 notes).

221. *Testamentum S. Bertranni*, p206; Rouche, *op.cit.*, p215.

222. *Ibid.*, p583, n.243.

223. Higounet, *op.cit.*, p311.

224. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p220; Boissonade, *op.cit.*, p83.

225. G. Fouet, *La villa gallo-romaine de Montmaurin (Haute-Garonne)*, Paris, 1969, pp289-296.

226. *Ibid.*, p309. Percival, 'Roman Agricultural Organisation...', pp219-227.

227. *Ibid.*, pp292, 304.

228. *Ibid.*, p45. La Hillère contained possible cultic *thermae*, built early 4th century and subsequently 'Christianised'; see *Gallia* (ii), 20 (1964), pp440-442.

229. *Ibid.*, p291. Also, Percival, *The Roman Villa*, p130.

230. Fouet, *op.cit.*, pp55-59.

231. A. Rivet, *Gallia Narbonensis*, London, 1988, p123.

232. Percival, *op.cit.*, pp129-130.

233. Grenier, *op.cit.*, p853.

234. Percival, 'Roman Agricultural Organisation...', pp216, 218.

235. Percival, *op.cit.*, p214.

236. L. Joulin, *Les établissements gallo-romains de la plaine de Martres-Tolosanes*, Paris, 1901, pp164-166. The same observations hold for the villa at Coulieu (see plan 24, p170). This point has been noted in passing by Rivet, *op.cit.*, p123.

237. There is absolutely no reason to believe that the circumstances of Libanius' *Oration* XLVII.4 and .11 (which concern Syria) have any bearing upon settlements in the West.

CHAPTER FOUR:

238. Grenier, *op.cit.*, pp733-734.

239. Wightman, *op.cit.*, pp93-96 gives the best summary of possible *vicus* roles.

240. At Villeneuve-sur-Cher: a roadside settlement with quay on river Cher, and two small *fana*; see Leday, *op.cit.*, p305, 313-315; Holmgren, *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), p54; *Gallia* (ii), 42 (1985), pp290-291.

241. *Gallia* (ii), 35 (1977), p439. Also J.-M. Desbordes, R. Lacotte, 'Du *vicus* gallo-romain au village médiéval: l'exemple de Blotomagus/Blond', *Caesarodunum*, XXII (1987), pp291-296.

242. A. Ferdière, 'Compte rendu de fouilles préliminaires à Bourges-Lazenay', *CAHB*, 40 (1975), pp11-32.

243. *Gallia* (ii), 26 (1969), pp413-414.

244. Leday, *op.cit.*, pp400, 402-403.

245. Chouquer and Favory, *op.cit.*, pp58-64: they see a causal link

between the existence of *villae* and the creation of *vici*; but one can only generalise that the two might have had a snowball effect upon each other, whichever came first in an area.

246. Rouche, *op.cit.*, pp220-224.

247. M. Corbier, 'Grande proprietà fondiara e piccole aziende: la Gallia settentrionale in epoca romana', in A. Giardina, (ed.), *Società romana e Impero tardo antico, III: gli merci insedimenta*, laterza, 1986, p690.

248. Grenier, *op.cit.*, p842.

249. Attacked by Latouche, *op.cit.*, pp60-65. Cf. also Bange, *op.cit.*, p535.

250. *C.I.L.* VIII. 25902:

> i, 20. *Qui (i)n f(undo) Villae Magnae sive Mappalia*
>
> *Siga villas haben(t), dominicis eius f(undi) aut*
>
> *conductoribus vilicisv(e) eorum in assem partes*
>
> *fructum et vineam ex consuetudine Manciane, cuiusque*
>
> *generis habet prestare debebunt:...*

Discussed by E. Beadouin, *Les grandes domaines dans l'empire romain*, Paris, 1899, pp23-27 and R. Clausing, *The Roman Colonate*, Rome, 1965, pp163-172.

251. *C.I.L.* XIII. 1550 refers to a silver/lead/zinc mine worked by slaves of Tiberius, at La Deverse in the Rouergue (inscription is now in the Villefranche-de-Rouergue Musem).

252. Frontinus/Agennus Urbicus, in *Corpus agrimensorum romanorum*, ed. C. Thulin, Teubner, 1971, p45. Cited by Beaudouin, *op.cit.*, p.23.

253. Ausonius, *De Herediolo*, *ll*.21-24. For the definition of a *saltus*, cf. *Gromatici Veteres*, p158, l.20: '*Qui, cum viginti et quinque centurias*

includant, saltus appellantur.'

254. Latouche, *op.cit.*, pp67-69.

255. Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. C. Halm, *MGH AA*, t.I, 1, Berlin, 1877, pp.1-108.

256. M. Bloch, 'The Rise of Dependent Cultivation and Seigneurial Institutions,' *CEH*, I, 1971, p237.

257. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (i), pp308-310; for Les Sables, *ibid.*, pp305, 313· Gallia (ii), (1985), pp290-291, and Holmgren, *Saint-Florent-Culture*, p54.

258. Fournier, *Le peuplement rural...*, pp530-532.

259. *Vita Aridii Abbatis Lemovicini*,8, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SSRM*, t.III, 1896, p.582. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *HF*,X.29.

260. Latouche, *op.cit.*, p62 on Carolingian villas. J. Coquet, *L'intérêt des fouilles de Ligugé*, Ligugé, 1979, pp6-8, 11-13.

261. Gasnault, *op.cit.*, pp1-18.

262. For example, of all the legacies in the Cartulary of Vierzon, only two donate *vici*, both in the Berry: No4 [A.D.844], the '*vicum S. Georgius*' (with mills. lands and 6 *mansi*), and No9 [993], 4 acres of vines '*in vico Mariaco*'; ed. G. Devailly, *op.cit.*, pp24-25; p97, n.15 quotes G. Tessier on the rarity of 9th c. *vici* donations, a point also noted by Bange, *op.cit*, p533 for the Macon region.

263. De Laugardière, *op.cit.*, pp200-201 for Ambrosius of Cahors.

264. *Formulae Arvernenses*, chs.1a,6, ed. K. Zeumer, *MGH, LL*, V, Hannover, 1886-7. On its dating, see Fournier, *op.cit.*, p52.

265. Gregory of Tours, *GC*.39; *GM*.89; *HF*, II.1; *GM*.89.

266. See Leday, *op.cit.*, pp203-322.

267. *Ibid.*,, p291. Wightman, 'Le vicus dans la contexte de l'administration et de la société gallo-romaine: quelques reflexions', *Caesarodunum*, 11 (1976), p63.

268. J.-L. Chalut, 'Lezoux gallo-romaine...', *RAC*, 10 (1971), pp54-58.

269. Although he does not mention any outright: eg., the buiding with Old Testament murals, *Carm.XXII*, 11200-201.

270. Gregory of Tours, *GM*,47.

271. Late sixth century examples include *L.Vis.(Cod.Rev.)*,III.4.17, concerning adulterous slaves from the *civitas 'ad villa'*; likewise, *L.Vis.(Cod.Rev.),VIII.6.2*, on beekeeping either *'in civitate aut in villa'*. For the following century, see *L.Vis.(Novella)* on *mancipia* in a *villa*, *civitas*, *castellum*, *vicus* or *diversorium*.

272. Le Roy Ladurie, 'Postface', to G. Roupnel, *Histoire de la campagne française*, Plon, 1974, pp349-352, 354.

273. Wickham, *op.cit.* (Part I), pp76-77.

274. E. Blanchet, *Les trésors de monnaies romaines et les invasions germaniques en Gaule*, Paris, 1900, pp97-98.

275. Beaudouin, *op.cit.*, p23: 'La villa comprend le château du mâitre, et tous les bâtiments nécessaires à l'exploitation de domaine. Les vici sont les groupes formées par les habitations des colons.'.

276. K. D. White, *Roman Farming*, London, 1970, pls.1-2, 49.

277. McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World*, London, 1977, pp233-237, citing Goodchild's study of fortified farms in Cyrenaïca.

278. Wightman, *op.cit.*, p238.

279. *CIL*, XII, p186, N°1524.

280. J. de Alarcão, *Roman Portugal*, London, 1987, p5 .

281. R. Calinaud, 'Aux origines de la féodalité en pays creusois: les fortifications', *Mélanges d'arch. et d'hist. offets à M. Henri Hemmer*, Guéret, 1979, pp47-51.

282. J. Wood, *RAC*, 24 (1985), pp110-111.

283. Audin, 'Luynes, Langeais et Ingrandes: trois villages gallo-romaines du Val de Loire tourangeau', *Caesarodunum*, 11 (1976), p197. Less certain is his e.g. of a late Roman *castellum* on the fortified hilltop on which *Malliacensim monasterium* was founded. The late Roman *castellum* is a mere postulation; only a rectangular building of unspecified Gallo-Roman date, 100m. east of the hilltop has been found here (p196), and this **a**) is just as likely to have belonged to a rural sanctuary as to the house-complex of a *praedium Malliacum*, and **b**) cannot be shown to predate any fortifications on the hilltop, far less to have been replaced by them.

284. Ausonius, *Mosella*, in *Works*, I, transl. H. Evelyn White, Loeb, 1951; Sidonius, *Carmen XXII*, in *Poems and Letters*, I, transl. W. B. Anderson, Loeb, 1980; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* III.xii, in *Carmina*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH AA*, t.IV, 2, Hannover, 1885.

285. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* III.xii is subtitled *Item de castello eiusdem super Mosella*:

> *...aula tamen nituit constructa cacumine rupis, 25*
> *et monti inposito mons erit ipsa domus.*

conplacuit latum muro concludere campum,

et prope castellum haec casa sola facit.

ardua marmoreis suspenditur aula columnis,

que super aestivas cernit in amne rates. 30

286. Sidonius, *Carmen XXII*, ll.121-125 (*illos muros*), 128 (*propugnacula*); ll.192-193 for the *textrina*.

287. *Ibid.*, cf. with *culmina villarum* (1.20), *culmine villae* (1.284), or *celsas villas*, (1.320) in Ausonius' *Mosella*.

288. Vegetius, IV.10: *'Castellum parvum quod burgum vocant...'*

Salin, I, *op.cit.*, 1950, pp.414-416, discussed Sidonius, Vegetius and Fortunatus in the development of the 'château-fort'.

For the earliest demonstrable use of *burgus* to mean a settlement agglomeration only began in the eighth century; see A. Lombard-Jourdan, 'Oppidum et banlieue: sur d'origine et dimensions du territoire urbaine,' *Annales*, 27 (1972), pp374-375.

289. Sidonius, *Ep.IV.xxi.5*; *Ep.V.xiv*:

1. Calentes nunc te Baiae...? an fortasse montana sedes circum castella et in eligenda sede perfugii quandam pateris ex munitionum frequentia difficultatem? quicquid illud est, quod vel otio vel negotio vacas,...

290. *Ep.IV.xv.*:

1...nam baptisterium, quod olim fabricabamini, scribitis posse iam consecrari...3. de cetero, quamquam et extremus autumnus iam diem breviat et viatorum sollicitas aures foliis toto nemore labentibus repulso fragore circumstrepit inque castellum, ad quo invitas, utpote

Alpinis rupibus cinctum, sub vicinitate brumali difficilius escenditur,...

291. Whittaker, 'Late Roman Trade and Traders', in P. Garnsey, K. Hopkins, C. R. Whittaker, (eds.), Trade in the Ancient Economy, London, 1983, p176.

292. Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo*, 1.224, ed. C. H. Keene, transl. C. F. Savage-Armstrong, London, 1907.

293. G. Fournier, *Le château dans la France mediévale*, Paris, 1978, pp5 and 27. His examples are rather tenuous: a Burgundian period villa apparently fortified by a fosse, and eighth century laws concerning the houses 'fortified' with a hedge [N.B. Gregory of Tours only mentioned hedges on country properties, too, but they are never in the context of anything which he implied was grand. *(HF,IX.19, VP.XV.3)*]

CHAPTER FIVE

294. Salin, *op.cit.*, p31.

295. Cf., for example, G. Cobolet, 'Le Sançerrois à l'époque gallo-romaine,' *CAHB*, 58 (1979), p19. Also R. Agache, *La Somme pré-romaine et romaine*, p279.

296. Leday, *op.cit.*, pp150, 171 and 428 (pl.IV); his type IA (native farm).

297. For Rodez, see *Gallia* (ii), 38 (1980), pp470-71; for Saint-Ambroix-sur-Arnon and La Viaronnerie, see Leday, *op.cit.*, p.309 and p194, pl.XXX, respectively.

298. *Gallia* (ii), 21 (1963), p313, with general plan. For a lengthy discussion of the differences between Celtic and Gallo-Roman sunken huts, see J. Chapelot, 'Le fond de cabane dans l'habitat rural Ouest-

Européen,' *Archéologie Mediévale*, X, (1980), esp. pp13-15. Cf. the archaeological material outlined in A. Ferdière, 'Le probléme des fonds de cabane au Bas-Empire,' *RAL*, 7 (1981), pp71-75 (N.B. the distribution map, fig.27 for these rare and often dubious sites is blank for central Aquitaine, except for a potter's workshop which may or may not be a true sunken hut [site 18]).

299. G. Coulon, 'Présentation des deux caves gallo-romaines, commune de Villedieu-sur-Indre,' *CAHB*, 69 (1982), pp5-13; for the marble and window glass, see p11.

300. A. Ferdière, 'Voyages à travers les campagnes de la Gaule romaine, II: Actualité de l'archéologie: Fermes indigènes,' *RAC*, 24 (1985), p127. Unlike Leday and Holmgren, Ferdière defines 'native farms' as only those constructed in light material, nevertheless observing that their occupation is pre-Roman and that they suggestively tend to end just at the period when rural dwellings in masonry spread across the landscape.

301. Champ Laurent, in Leday, *op.cit.*, pp155 and 188 (pl.II); his assertion that the 2-roomed central building, as yet not fieldwalked(?), possessed a wooden verandah appears to be based purely on the assumption that it is transitional, a 'later evolution of a native type', but not Romanised enough to have a stone-built corridor.

See also Les Crots Blonds (Cher), 'a villa of native type', with a quite different, perfectly square plan within an incompletely defined enclosure (p180, pl.III).

302. J. Harmand, 'Sur la valeur archéologique du mot "villa",' *RA*, XXXVIII (1951), pp155-158.

303. These surveys have been published for the dept. of Indre by J. Holmgren, as 'Quelques habitats ruraux gallo-romains de l'Ouest du dépt. de l'Indre,' *BGHAB*, 13 (1981), pp33-78; 'Quelques établissements gallo-romains de l'Est du dépt. de l'Indre,' *BGHAB*, 15 (1983), pp21-70; and 'Quelques établissements gallo-romains de la région de S.-Florent-s/Cher,' *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), pp31-88. For the Cher dept., Holmgren and A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, I-III,' *CAHB*, vols. 60 (1980), pp5-20; 66 (1981), pp29-44; 69 (1982), pp.45-62.

304. Partly, of course, because not all sites have or can been thoroughly fieldwalked, far less excavated, and therefore these traits cannot be retrieved.

For a criticism of Leday's inclusion of type IA 'native farms' as 'villas', cf. J. Andreau's review of *BAR*, 73[i] in 'Comptes rendus,' *Annales*, 37 N°2 (1982), pp360-62.

305. Percival, *The Roman Villa*, p75.

306. *Carte archéologique du Cher: pour une banque de données des sites archéologiques de la France*, Paris, 1979, p77 (over 200 rural Roman habitations for Cher alone). N.B.: of the 51 early mediaeval sites recorded for Cher, none are rural dwellings, but are either urban, church or cemetery. See also Holmgren, *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), p33 and the author's own catalogue from *BGHAB* and *Gallia* reports for Indre.

307. A random example of this is the interpretation of Champ des Pois, in Leday, *BAR*, p167.

308. Y. Rialland, 'Opérations archéologiques de l'autoroute A.71 Bourges - sud du Cher', *RAC*, 24 (1985), pp116-118, although the results are not as yet fully published. A. Ferdière, 'Apport de la prospection systématique à l'étude de l'habitat rural gallo-romain: l'exemple de Lion-en-Beauce', in *Villes et Campagnes dans l'Empire romain (Actes du Colloque d'Aix-en-Provence 1980)*, Aix-en-Provence, 1982, pp43-55.

309. Potter, *op.cit.*, pp121-123, cites the Ager Faliscus survey, for example, where 'modest but fairly comfortable farmhouses' (1000-1400m²) with mosaic and some marble is up the scale from small tile and sherd scatter, but downscale from sites averaging 3500m² with hypocausts, porticoes, glass tesserae, etc, all of which are correlated with *casae*, *tuguria* and villae respectively.

310. 1.98 ha at Chateaufort (Indre) [Site N° 64] and +2 ha at the more highly structured site of Pissevieille (Cher) [Site N° 30], up to a massive 16 ha at Champ des Pois [Site N° 15].

311. Leday, *op.cit.*, pp400-403 and pl.LXVIII.

312. *Gallia* (11), 20 (1962), p590; 22 (1964), pp458-461; 24 (1966), pp440-441, now interpreted as sanctuary; 26 (1968), pp546-547.

313. Ferdière, *RAC*, 24 (1985), p123: '...ces exploitations rurales sont situées en terrain labouré, où - sauf exception - ne subsistent ni élévation ni stratigraphie... «Coupes stratigraphiques», «sondages»,...sont des notions qui n'ont pas cours ici...'

314. Holmgren and Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p.30.

315. The ideal location, of course, was a site '*...quod neque depressus hieme pruinis torpet aut torret aestate vaporibus neque elatus in summa montium perexiguis ventorum motibus aut pluviis omni tempore anni saevit. Haec igitur est medii collis optima positio...*' (Columella, *de re rustica*, I.iv.9).

For a summary of the discussion of the impact of technology on land-use, see Percival, *op.cit.*, pp106-117; see also the excellent regional study produced by M. S. Spurr, *Arable Cultivation in Roman Italy c.200 B.C.-c.A.D.100*, London, 1986, esp. pp1-78.

316. These are **Sites N°s 2-12, 14-55, 57-60, 62-71, 75-80, 85-94.**

317. R. Joudoux, 'Regards sur l'histoire de Corréze', *Lemouzi*, 8 (1963), p34; see also H. Boudrie, 'L'actualité archéologique', *Lemouzi*, 1 (1961), p31.

318. The two most likely 3rd c. foundations are **Site N°s 19 and 33.**

319. *Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p425.

320. Fournier, *op.cit.*, p86.

321. *Gallia*, ii, 39 (1981), p451 'Puech de Fraissinet'.

322. Rouche, *op.cit.*, p241.

323. For S.-Pourçain, see R. Dion, *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France*, Paris, 1959, pp152 and 265.

324. For Allier, see J. Corrocher, 'Dix ans de recherches arch. dans l'arrondissement de Vichy', *RDA*, 94 N°3 (1980), pp277-278, 281-282.

325. For Bains, see D. Dussot, 'Un habitat gallo-romain au village des Bains (Creuse)', *RAS*, 23 (1984), pp13-16.

325. M. Balmelle, *Répert. arch. Lozère: g-r*, Montpellier, 1937, p49: coins up to Constantine I.

326. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* IV.21, and Gregory of Tours, *HF*, V.33.

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332. Ausonius, *De Herediolum*, *l.*26.

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334. P. Barrière, 'Lignes de terre et lignes d'eau', *REA*, 1943 (45), pp104-105 develops this theme, derived from Jullian's study.

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340. Columella, *De Re Rustica*, I.ii.4.

341. See the reports by G. Coulon, J.-L. Girault, in *BGHAB*, 12 (1980), pp37-54, and *BGHAB*, 13 (1981), pp17-32.

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350. As G. Webster, L. Smith, pointed out in 'Reply to J. T. Smith's Suggested Re-interpretation of Barnsley Park Villa', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 6 (1), (1987), pp69-72.

351. The argument in favour of upper stories usually relies on the thickness of external walls, e.g., Leday, op.cit, p183.

352. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* III.iii.2.

353. Smith, 'The Social Structure of a Roman Villa: Marshfield-Ironmongers Piece', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 6 (1), (1987), pp243-255.

354. Lambert and Rioufreyt, *op.cit.*, pp141-163.

355. Agache, cited by Leday, *op.cit.*, pp182-183. Note that Agache himself acknowledged the possibility of two families of the same social class, rather than bailiff and master, in *La Somme...*, p303.

356. Eg, Martizay [**Site N° 68**], or Brignes [**Site N° 79**]

357. Leday, *op.cit.*, p183.

358. *Ibid.*, p182.

359. Only Les Cars has evidence of doorways, a significant feature in determining social hierarchies from plans. See Lintz, 'Les Cars', *BSLSAC*, LXXXIII (1980), pp17-37 [final excavation report of villa].

360. This is not to say that the activities of bands of outlaws could not have had the same devastating effect upon villas, merely that these are even less precisely located than the battles of the Gallic tyrants.

361. D. Tardy, 'Le sanctuaire des Cars: étude architecturale', *BSLSAC*, LXXXII (1979), pp5-22.

362. *Gallia* (i), I (1943), pp198-199; L. Prieur, F. Delage, 'Fouilles effectuées au "Château des Cars"', *Gallia* (i), 5 (1947), p73, followed by G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, p31. N.B. that the preliminary, brief note in *Gallia* (i), I (1943), p199, dated the 'thermal wing' (ie, villa) of the cult site to the 1st century A.D.

363. Tardy, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

364. Lintz, 'Les Cars', *BSLSAC*, pp17-37.

365. A. Aymard, *Les origines de la ville du Puy*, Le-Puy-en-Velay, 1875, p47.

366. (3rd century): **Sites Nos 5, 17, 19, 23, 36, 37, 39, 45, 49, 52, 62, 63, 78, 79.**

(4th/5th centuries): **Sites Nos 4, 8, 37, 51.**

367. Sites Nos **5, 36, 37, 45, 49, 52, 63, 79.**

368. **Sites Nos 17, 19, 23, 39, 62, 78.**

369. J.-P. Bacou, 'La villa gallo-romaine de Condoumine à Puissalicon,' *RAN*, IV (1971), p127.

370. L. and A. Simonnet, 'L'habitat gallo-romain d'altitude des Souils d'Arlempdes', *Archéologie protohistorique et gallo-romaine en Haute-Loire, [Centre d'études foréziennes]*, 5 (1978), pp193-243.

371. Whittaker, 'Inflation and the Economy in the Fourth Century A.D.', in C. King, (ed.), *Imperial Revenue, Expenditure and Monetary Policy in the Fourth Century A.D., (B.A.R. Int. Series 76)*, Oxford, 1980, pp1-22.

372. Hostes (Tarn), on the outskirts of the ceramic centre (*vicus*) of Millau, yielded a poss. hoard, from Gordian III to Diocletian. See B. Buckley, 'The Aeduan Area in the 3rd century A.D.', *BAR* (109), (ii), 1981, p287, on the continued use of Tetrican coins until the end of the century.

Late Roman areas of Rodez, which has had over 40 different digs in the city, overwhelmingly yield coins of Claudius Gothicus, Tetricus, Constantius Chlorus and Constantine, with others of the Constantinian dynasty; only 5 coins of Maximinus Dacia are recorded in

L. Balsan, L. Dausse, 'Suite de l'inventaire de l'archéologie gallo-romaine de Rodez (1947-1979)', *PVSLSAA* 44 (1980), p66; cf. with'Terrain Tourzey' and 'Passage des Maçons' in Rodez, in *PVSLSAA* 43 (1979), pp154 and 166 respectively. The same applies in such diverse sites as the *vicus* of Evaux (A. Fillioux, 'Les thermes d'Evaux', *MSSNAC*, 4 (1863-1880), p206; the *fanum* at Les Pièces Grandes (Margerides, Corrèze) is unusual in having coins from Gallienus through to Probus, then Diocletian and Constantine [*Gallia* (ii), 25 (1967), p300].

373. Bacou, *op.cit.*, pp93-132.

374. Albenque, *op.cit.*,, pp92-93.

375. Cf. Rigoir, *op.cit.*, pl.LXV.21.

376. Espaly, Museum Pottery Cat. N°s 23.44-57, 24.37-39.

377. Fouet, *op.cit.*, p93. The substitution of cheaper materials for originally more expensive ones in the final Roman phases of the villa are not echoed in the villas noted in *Aquitanica I*, p91).

378. P. Leveau, 'Annales', *RAC*, 22 (1983), p126.

379. M. Blânchard-Lemée, 'La villa et les mosaiques de Mienne-Marboué', *BSNAF*, 1978-1979, pp239-241. The cataloguing of all Aquitanian mosaics has been commenced, although not all of the region has yet been published: see C. Balmelle, *Receuil général des mosaiques de la Gaule, IV.1: Aquitaine (X^e supplément à Gallia)*, Paris, 1980. Also see the general discussion of the types of decoration of villas in F. Braemer, 'L'ornementation des établissements ruraux de l'Aquitaine méridionale pendant le Haut-Empire et la basse Antiquité,' in

L'Aquitaine: Etudes archéologiques..., Paris, 1982, pp103-146. The mosaic of Argentelle and the 'early' Roman one at Condat (Haute-Vienne), deserve to be reassessed in the light of this new work. See Cérès, 'Argentelle' *Congrès arch.*, XXX (Rodez 1863), Paris 1864, pl. *inter* pp58-59; and P. Morel, 'Mosaïque gallo-romaine de Condat-sur-Vienne', *BSAHL*, LXXXIV (1953), pp163-168.

380. Cobolet, *CAHB*, 58 (1979), p62.

381. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, I. 18, *ll*.15-16.

382. Leday, *op.cit.*, p158.

383. P. Gaillou, 'Western Gaul in the Third Century', *BAR* (109), (ii), 1981, pp262 and 273.

384. S. Walker, 'The Third Century in the Lyons Region', *BAR* (109), (ii), 1981, p317.

385. The extent of early mediaeval slavery after a supposed decline in the later Empire, is not discussed in this thesis, because although central to an analysis of the villa-economy, it is both peripheral to an understanding of the villa-definition and extremely difficult to assess. The supposed creation of villages around a late Roman master's *domus*, populated by servile *coloni*, did not occur in late Imperial Gaul, nor has it any precedent in the *p. rustica* of a villa-plan, whose occupants are presumed to be *mancipia*; and in fact we do not know exactly who lived where, far less in what comparative numbers. It is the author's belief that there is no need to see in the rise of the *colonate* system an impetus from a shortage of slave

labour, nor a decline in the agricultural use of slaves in the 6th or 7th centuries. For a summary of the debate, see P. Bonnassie, 'Survie et extinction...', *Cahiers du civilisation medievale*, XXVIII (1985), pp301-343 (although his assessment of Dockès is rather harsh).

386. Chapelot and Fossier, *op.cit.*, p47.

387. One example out of several in Gregory of Tours' works is in *GM*, 51.

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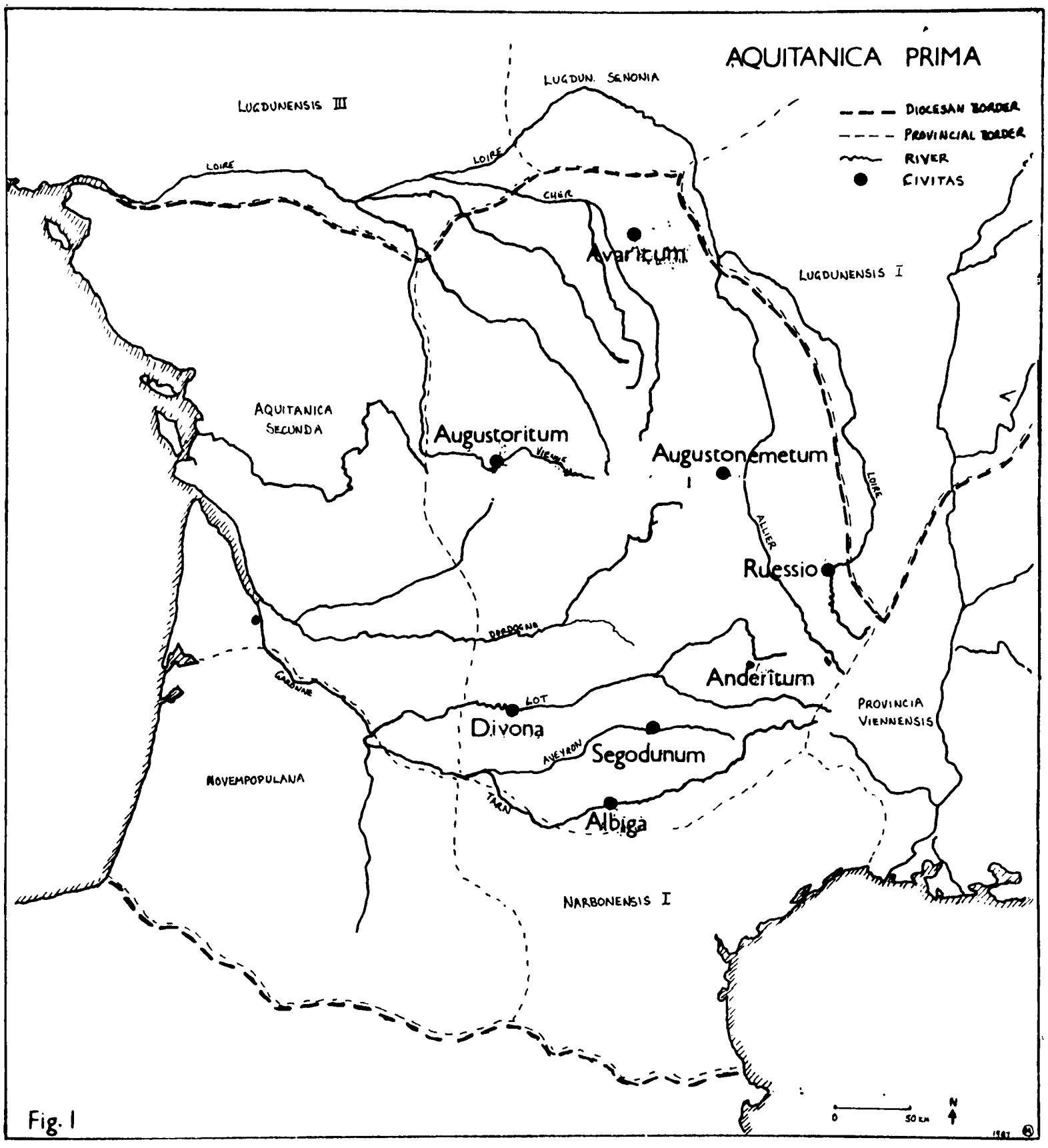

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VIENNE
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DORDOGNE
GARONNE
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Fig. 1

APPENDIX

Catalogue of Rural Villa-Sites in *Aquitanica Prima*

3rd to 7th centuries A.D.

The following appendix is not intended as a full register of all Late Roman villas in central Aquitaine; rather, it only lists sites that can be dated by traditional methods using ceramics, coins or stylistic analysis of mosaics. Although all pottery studies are, of course, comparative, the use of a comparative typology for villa-plans does not appear to be sufficiently precise to be attempted.

It is this catalogue which has been used to compile the figures, pls.1-16. Sites have been included whose identification as *villae* is uncertain but possible, whilst those with concentrated sherd scatter but no retrievable architectural remains, and sites in clearly fortificatory positions or within the likely circuit of a citywall have been excluded.

Sites are listed alphabetically within each 'département', also listed in alphabetical order. **Site N°s** (called [SN] on the list of plates) are those used for identification in the main text, maps and graphs (**Catalogue N°s** refer to the larger, unpublished catalogue of sites compiled during research, and have only been inserted for the author's own concordance.) **Plate N°s** refer to those at the end of the thesis. **Description** summarises available material only, hence **References** only include viewed reports - for full bibliography, the reader is advised to go to either the *Gallia* or *CAGR* entries.

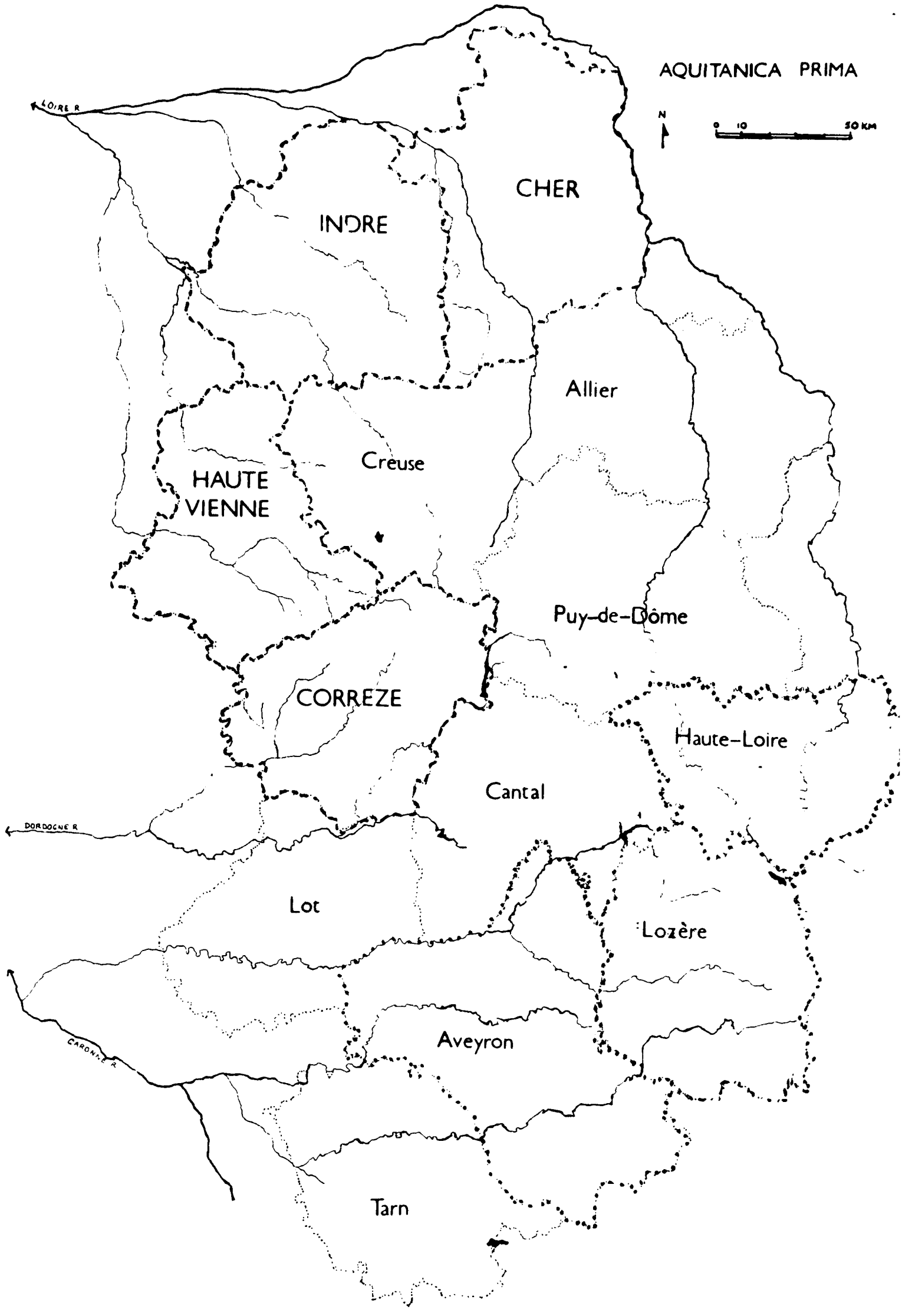


Fig.2 Modern dépts.: – – DEPT denotes CAGR or recent publication

•••• Dépt denotes older inventories

Site N°: 1 **Cat. N°:** 265

Name: Le Caussour (Allier)

Description: Partially excavated; unplanned.

Hypocausted villa; presumed occupation mid-fourth century A.D.

Finds: Two small bronze coins of Constantius II.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 33 (1975), p.479.

Site N°: 2 **Cat. N°:** 400

Name: Argentelle (Aveyron) **Plate N°:** 1a

Description: Located 50 m. south of river Aveyron, near natural ford, oriented NE. 1857-1859 excavations; incomplete plan of large *pars urbana* only.

Area +1 ha. 60 rooms include 33 m. long atrium, double and single apsidal rooms with marble statuary, hypocausted thermal wing, 4 mosaic floors, leadpipe aqueducts. Constructed in masonry, with plastered brick colonnade, sandstone and marble column-drums, stuccoed capitals; baths in *opus signinum*. Terracotta antefices on tiled roof. Marble and glass mosaics; windowpanes.

Finds: Boar, deer and oyster remains. Domestic occupation - fibulae, spoons, hairpins - and weaving (loomweights). Bronze fittings; iron knifeblade. Pottery: 1st to 4th century, from la Graufesenque t. sigillata to metallic black slipped fine ware, *t. sigillata claire*, grey ware and yellow slipped commonware. 30+ coins, 1st to late 4th century (latest is Gratian, 367-383). No evidence of destruction.

Finds now in Rodez Museum.

References: -Abbé Cérès, 'Villa d'Argentelle', *Congrès archéologique: XXXème Session, Rodez, (1863)*, Paris, 1864, pp53-62 [with plan].

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Site N°: 3 **Cat. N°:** 402

Name: La Borie des Pères (Aveyron)

Description: Located 100 m. from N. bank of Aveyron river, oriented N/S. Discovered 1932, 1938-41 partial excavation of gallery-façade house with wings. No plan available.

Area +0.08 ha. 10+ rooms, no hypocaust, no mosaics found. Constructed in masonry; columns; concrete, serpentine and coloured marble pavements. Wallpaintings. Occupation from 1st to 4th/5th centuries. No evidence of destruction.

Finds: Unspecified animal bones. Domestic occupation - fibulae, spoons, belt-buckles, jewellery. Pottery: 1st to 4th century, from stamped la Graufesenque ware and volute-nozzled lamps, to black slipped stamped ware, poss. 4th c., and rouletted *t. sig. claire B* (one unpublished rim only in museum collection), probably late 4th or 5th century, dated after Rigoir.

2 coins, of Victorinus and Constantine (Albenque cited both as Constantine).

Finds in Villefranche-de-Rouergue Museum.

Reference: -A. Albenque, *Invent. Aveyron*, Rodez, 1947, p159.

Site N°: 4 **Cat. N°:** 410-15

Name: La Couvertoirade/ Puech/ Larzac (Aveyron)

Description: Located near Roman road crossing high, dry Causse du Larzac. 3 separate reports of probably the one site. No plan available.

Multiple buildings. Roofed with tegulae. Wallplaster.

Finds: Much carbonised wheat and barley; wood and cinders. Bronze phalera, vase, ring; iron knives, axe, points, borers, nails, hooks and key; lead scales-weight. Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata, white slipped ware (both largely 1st century). Coins from 1st century B.C. through to 3rd century (Postumus, 268) and up to Maximinus (309-313). One report suggests possible destruction by fire.

Reference: -A. Blanchet, 'Aveyron', *CAGR*, IX, Paris, 1944, p4 [2 reports, probably of the one site but with varying coin lists.]

-*Gallia* (ii), 24 (1966), p415.

Site N°: 5 **Cat. N°:**

Name: Girmou (Aveyron)

Description: 1983-? salvage excavation. No plan available.

At least one wall of villa identified, oriented NW-SE, opening onto masonry stairs on W; 4 frags. of columns, 2 complete with Tuscan capitals, along wall: tiled hearth within room. Occupation levels within room from early 1st to 3rd centuries, the latest containing *t. sig. claire B* sherds, below a thick layer of collapsed tegulae (fire destruction).

Finds: Pottery: la Graufesenque t. sigillata (1st half of 1st century A.D.); much t. sigillata *claire B*. Stamped tegulae (*SEX(TI) IUL(I)*

ASPR(I). No coins found.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p478.

-*Gallia* (ii), 44 (1986), pp309-310.

Site N°: 6

Name: Labastide-Pradines (Aveyron)

Description: Located at foot of Larzac plateau, on slopes overlooking river Cernon, near spring. 1973-74 survey, no plan available.

Surface finds over 200m². Constructed in masonry; roofed with *tegulae*. Occupation probably from mid-1st to 4th/5th centuries.

Finds: Pottery: la Graufesenque t. sigillata, Italian amphorae (1st century); much commonware; grey *paléochrétienne* rouletted and stamped ware (4th or 5th centuries).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 34 (1976), p463.

Site N°: 7 **Cat. N°:** 415

Name: Marcillac (Aveyron)

Description: No plan available, architecture unknown.

Finds: Iron ore, glass scoria. Glass vessel fragments, tesserae; bronze and iron domestic artefacts (key, hairpins, pins, nails). Pottery: predominately Gallic t. sigillata. Coin of 1st century A.D. and 4 × late Roman (latest is Constantine). Albenque suggested an iron foundry here, but it could as easily have been a glassworks from the evidence cited.

Reference: -A. Albenque, *Invent. Aveyron*, Rodez, 1947, p80.

Site N°: 8 **Cat. N°:** 416

Name: Mas-Marcou (Aveyron) **Plate N°:** 1b

Description: Located on Roman road, oriented SE. 1870 excavation of *pars urbana* and at least part of adjacent *pars rustica*. Partly planned.

Site estimated by excavator to have extended 1.35 ha. 50 rooms cover 0.7 ha. Elaborate gallery-façade house with kitchen and hypocausted bath-complex wings. Constructed in masonry, with sandstone columns and statuary; aqueducts, square terracotta hypocausting pipes. Coloured marble pavements and wall facings; white marble portrait bust; 4 glass mosaics; wall-paintings in at least 2 rooms; windowpanes.

Excavator reported destruction by fire at end of 4th century with no reoccupation.

Finds: Concreted basins in kitchen area yielded oyster, scallop and snail shells; adjacent room contained 15 large knives with many cattle, boar, deer and fowl bones, and in yard 'I' a large pit contained more refuse - knives, cattle, boar, deer and goat horns with bones; pit in yard 'F' yielded oak bucket, pine nuts, peach, cherry and plum pips.

Sheep/goat bells, piercers, scissors, awls and loomweights concentrated in nearby room, scythe blade from one pit, and concentrated finds of millstones in another room off yards F/G/I suggest both pastoral and agrarian activity. Domestic occupation in wing nearest baths. +7 large iron keys.

Pottery: La Graufesenque t. sigillata; large undated black slipped biconical jug, which may by shape date as late as 5th/6th centuries, but this is extremely tentative).

+150 site coins from 1st to late 4th century; most are late 3rd-4th

(latest is Valens, 364-368).

Finds in Rodez Museum.

Reference: -A. Albenque, *Invent. Aveyron*, Rodez, 1947, pp61-65 [with plan].

Site N°: 9

Name: Paulhac (Aveyron)

Description: Surveyed only, no plan available.

Roofed with *tegulae*, imbrices; hypocausted. Surface sherds indicate occupation possibly from 1st, certainly from 2nd - 3rd centuries

Finds: Pottery: la Graufesenque (late t. sigillata); sigillata *claire B* (type 2). No coins mentioned.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), pp479-480.

Site N°: 10 **Cat. N°:** 420

Name: Puech de Briounas (Aveyron)

Description: Uncontrolled site survey, followed by 19th century archaeological survey. Unplanned.

Finds: Tegulae, fibulae, millstones. Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata, amphorae (1st century A.D.).

1 coin of Didius Julianus (193) and 3 x Constantine I (early 4th century), so possible occupation into 4th century.

Reference: -A. Albenque, *Invent. Aveyron*, Rodez, 1947, p59.

Site N°: 11 **Cat. N°:** 424

Name: Saint-Jean-d'Aigrement (Aveyron)

Description: Located on north bank of river Aveyron. In the vicinity, reused Gallo-Roman bricks in church walls, with more tegulae and pottery under church cemetery. No plan available: unexcavated?

Finds: Pottery: la Graufesenque ware (1st century). 2 coins of Constantine (early 4th century).

Reference: -A. Blanchet, 'Aveyron', *CAGR*, IX, Paris, 1944, p32.

Site N°: 12 **Cat. N°:** 404

Name: La Tioulière, formerly Campagnac (Aveyron)

Description: Located 500m. north of hamlet of S. Urbain. Partial excavation only, architecture not described, unplanned.

No stratigraphy beyond a Merovingian tomb above Gallo-Roman remains; report mentions cemetery, but cites only one slab-lined grave.

Finds: Oculist's equipment. Pottery: Gallic and Banassac t. sigillata (1st century); barbotine on metallic black slipped ware, Lezoux gouged ware (2nd-3rd century).

3 coins from 2nd to early 4th century (latest is Crispus, 321-324).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 32 (1974), pp454-455.

Site N°: 13 **Cat N°:** 383

Name: Les Verrines (Cantal)

Description: Excavated prior to 1907. No plan available.

Wall identified.

Finds: Pottery: coarseware, black lustrous; late 4th/5th century 'paléochrétienne' ware, local workshop.

References: -J. Rigoir, 'Les sigillées paléochrétiennes grises et orangées', *Gallia* (i), 26 (1968), p240.

Site N°: 14 **Cat. N°:** 60

Name: Ardilliers/Lardillère (Cher) **Plate N°:** 2

Description: Located 1.75km E. of river Cher, on open plateau. Probably oriented SE. 1866-1867 partial excavation with plan; 1979-83 aerial survey and fieldwalking, with more extensive plan of *pars urbana* and part of non-aligned structures to SE. Neither plan concords with other.

Total 0.4 ha. At least 2 buildings, both modified versions of gallery-façade house-plan, flanking yard; 2 more yards to N. and E. Constructed in small ashlar masonry; hypocausted with square brick pilettes. Roofed with tegulae. Terracotta tiled pavements.

To SE, 3rd gallery-façade building with apsidal room, oriented SW. Possibly not contemporary? Roofed with tegulae; bricks used in part of construction.

Finds: Pottery: commonwares (dated by surveyers 1st through to early 2nd centuries) and finewares (dated early 1st through to late 3rd centuries).

2 coins, both Gallienus (263).

References: -de Méloise, *MSAC*, I (1867), pp83-85 [with plan].

-A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p139.

-J. Holmgren, 'Quelques établissements gallo-romains de la région de Saint-Florent-sur-Cher', *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), pp49-51 [with plan, pl.11].

-M. la Ferte, 'Le champ des Ardilliers, Villeneuve-sur-Cher: Prospection de surface 1983', *Saint-Florent-Culture*, 1 (1983), pp101-123 [with finds illust.]

Site N°: 15 **Cat. N°**: 11

Name: Les Bonnes (Cher) **Plate N°**: 8a

Description: Located plateau, limestone soils. Oriented ENE (?). Aerially surveyed with fieldwalking prior to 1979. Unclear plan.

Building debris within double enclosure, long yard apparently oriented in front. Surveyer classifies as 'native farm' type, although constructed in masonry. Occupation at least within 4th century.

Finds: Surface sherds only (unspecified, but dated 4th century).

Reference: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp150, 171, 428 [with plan, pl.IV].

Site N°: 16 **Cat. N°**: 11

Name: Les Cachons (Cher) **Plate N°**: 11a

Description: Located on limestone soils, dry valley. Oriented NE. 1979 aerial survey; 1984 fieldwalking. 0.22ha incompletely planned.

Gallery-façade house-plan, modified and subdivided into at least 19 rooms, including 2 small room/towers projecting either end of façade. At least 2 rooms paved.

Finds: Surface finds unspecified, but dated 1st through to 5th centuries.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p171 [with plan, pl.XIV].

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p283.

Site N°: 17 **Cat. N°:** 23

Name: Champ des Pois / Clérandy (Cher) **Plate N°:** 7

Description: Located on side of valley, on clay soils. Oriented NE. Partial excavation of S. corner of *pars urbana* prior to 1891; 1968 salvage dig in SE. of same area; 1975 aerial survey with fieldwalking. Complete plan of *partes urbana* and *rustica*, total extent 16ha.

Freestanding building in central yard which is galleried along at least 3 sides. Monumental porticoed entrance to main, multiroomed wing attached to rear of central yard. Small entrance porch through to forecourt dividing pars urbana from very long (380m.) *pars rustica* yard, which is flanked by 2 rows of small buildings aligned down long axis.

3 other yards behind *p. urbana*: S. colonnaded yard contains cellar and rooms with concrete floors; W yard has large basilical building attached with surveyers interpret typologically as granary; NW yard interpreted as kitchen gardens/orchards.

Excavated buildings constructed of regular dressed masonry in local limestone, probably originally with attached wall-facings. Roofed with tegulae. Cellar built of small ashlar masonry with pink mortar, and 2 ventilator shafts. Access by ramp/stairs. Room above floored in wooden planks to form cellar-ceiling. Used as rubbish pit from 2nd into early 3rd centuries, with upper destruction level of collapsed masonry, whole tegulae etc. Surface survey, however, suggested site use, however limited, into the 5th century, and perhaps the 7th.

Finds: Cow horns, unspecified animal remains. Wood. Handmill. Bronze and bone pins. Pottery: from cellar, some 1st century sherds, mostly Gallic t. sigillata and *t sigillata claire B* (mid-2nd to early 3rd

centuries). Surface finds include 'paléochrétienne' wares and Merovingian spindle whorls. Coin hoard found in early excavation, the latest specified being Tetricus (if local, 270-280).

References: -A. Buhot de Kersers, *Histoire et statistique monumentale du Cher*, V, 1891, pp64-65, figs.11-12 [with plan, pl.XIII].

-A. Leday, 'Fouilles de sauvetage de la villa de Chatelier', *RAC*, XI N°s43-44 (1972), pp207-221 [with plan, pl.1]

-_____, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp160-164, 171 [plan, pls.XXVI-XXVII].

-*CAHB*, 32 (1973), p.119 [for coins]

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p38 [plan, pl.2]

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p284. [site survey]

Site N°: 18 **Cat. N°:** 30

Name: La Chaume aux Couards (Cher) **Plate N°:** 4

Description: Located on plateau, clay soils, heavily wooded in modern times. Oriented SSE. 1979-1980 aerial survey and fieldwalking. *Partes urbana and rustica* planned. Total area ≈1.6ha.

600m² gallery-façade house at rear of central yard, possibly multiphased; 2nd yard behind house. Large structures lining central yard walls. Multiroomed 'entrance-porch' through to *pars rustica* yard, with more large structures attached to either yard wall, including building with projecting small rooms/ wide, open entrance.

Finds: Surface sherds only. Pottery: t. sigillata; Argonne ware (4th century) and 'paléochrétienne' wares.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp170-171 [with plan, pl.XV].

-J. Holmgren A, Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p33 [plan, pl.1.2].

Site N°: 19 **Cat. N°:** 40

Name: La Croix-du-Ban (Cher) **Plate N°:** 15b

Description: Located at 207m. altitude, on clay soils, 500m. upslope from river Craon. Oriented SW? Partial excavation, planned. +0.19ha.

N. corner of galleried yard, possibly a gallery-façade house with corridor continuing around fore-court, and with bath-complex at rear. Constructed of ashlar masonry in local stone; 1 room plastered in main structure; no occupation levels found. Multiphased *thermae* to NE, with square brick pilettes; white marble plaque; 2 rooms with wall-paintings; monochrome mosaic using black schist; yellow cement floor with octagonal outlines in schist tesserae; stone pavements; brick pavements. Further NE, fragments of aligned structures, walls extant 2.1m, with cellar.

Disarticulated human remains found on outer NW yard wall, and also in sondage trench cut across the N. area of site; in different, lowest level in same trench, a fire-destruction level was identified, with artefacts, much pottery but containing no architectural debris beyond carbonised wood. Blanchet assumed fire and hoard to be related.

Finds: Boar tusk, stag horn and skull; oyster shells. Sandstone millstone. Iron utensils; nails; key. Bone pin and 'amulet'. Thick glassware. Pottery: unspecified.

11 coins from site, 9 from excavation outside hypocausted room. Blanchet saw this as a hoard. All range mid-3rd to early 4th centuries

(latest is Constantine I).

References: -Grandjean, 'Rapport sur les fouilles exécutées à Bengy-sur-Craon (Cher)', *MSAC*, XXI (1895/6), pp21-31 [plan]

-A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp140, 147, 172, 176 [with abbrev.plan, pl.XXXIV].

Site N°: 20 **Cat. N°:**

Name: Le Crot Rouge (Cher) **Plate N°:** 11c

Description: Located in gentle valley, on clay soils, 1km N. of Roman road from Bourges to Argenton-sur-Creuse; 100m. from iron mines and near Gallo-Roman remains at la Moulière, now disappeared. Oriented E.

19th century uncontrolled find of massive coinhoard somewhere on site; from 1979, aerial survey. Partially planned.

≃140m² freestanding gallery-façade building with tripartite division and central room open to front corridor. Possibly cellar in N. room. Large buildings attached to yard's N. wall (other enclosure walls invisible - modern stream runs across S. side of site).

Finds: Hoard of 400 coins, 138 identified: all 3rd century, from 203 to 257 (latest are Valerian and Gallienus).

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp148, 173 [with plan, pl.XLIX].

-M. Christol, A. Cothenot, 'Le trésor de Morthomiers', *CAHB*, 41 (1975), pp59-76 [coin hoard].

-J.-L. Roche, 'Le trésor de Morthomiers', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), pp57-59.

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p285 [coin hoard again].

Site N°: 21 **Cat. N°**: 115

Name: La Ferolles (Cher)

Description: Located on low bank of river Cher (a very small stream here). Rich alluvial cereal-growing area. Partial excavation of bath-complex, destroyed in part by river erosion. No plan available.

Roofed with tegulae; wall-paintings. Excavators interpreted site as having both a residence and artisanal area (structures contained iron scoria).

Finds: Few artefacts retrieved. No pottery mentioned. Coin of Gallienus (259-268).

Wall-painting, tegulae with imprints of dog-paw and of sandals in Saint-Amand-Montrond Museum.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), pp285-286.

Site N°: 22 **Cat. N°**: 51

Name: La Garenne (Cher) **Plate N°**: 6

Description: Oriented ENE? 1979-1980 aerial survey and fieldwalking. Planned.

Possibly gallery-façade building attached to yard enclosure, with structures around all 4 sides of central yard. Constructed in small ashlar masonry, up to 1m thick. Roofed with tegulae. 2nd yard to W. Long *pars rustica* to E., with buildings attached down at least one side of yard. Long parallel walls leading SW built in drystone masonry.

Survey suggested occupation from 1st to 4th centuries, noting virtual 'deposits' of tegulae.

Finds: Sandstone millstone. Pottery: t. sigillata (unspecified); commonwares (dated 1st - 4th centuries); handmade dark orange mortaria, now in Saint-Amand-Montrond Museum, labelled as 'excavated' in 1970.

Reference: -J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, III - la région de Saint-Loup-des-Chaumes', *CAHB*, 69 (1982), pp54, 56 [with plan, pl.2].

Site N°: 23 **Cat. N°:** 52

Name: Goutte du Jeune (Cher)

Description: 1972 partial excavation and surface survey. No plan available.

Constructions in masonry, roofed with tegulae. No earlier structures beneath. Excavators dated roof collapse onto thick cindrous level to 3rd century by surface finds only.

Finds: Surface sherds only. Pottery: central Gallic t. sigillata, grey tripod cooking-pots (dated 2nd-3rd centuries).

Reference: -J. Gourvest, 'Le site romain de la Goutte du Jeune à Chateaumeillant', *CAHB*, 32 (1973), pp123-124.

Site N°: 24 **Cat. N°:** 57

Name: Les Grandes Pièces (Cher) **Plate N°:** 11b

Description: Oriented E. 1979-1980 aerial survey and fieldwalking. Partial plan.

2 freestanding buildings in enclosure; largest (105m²) with gallery-façade, tripartite divisions and central room open to corridor. Constructed in masonry.

Site occupied from la Tène III into 3rd century at least.

Finds: Surface sherds only. Pottery: Celtic; t. sigillata (2nd and 3rd centuries); Merovingian spindle whorl fragment.

Reference: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p169.

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p35 [with plan, pl.3.1].

Site N°: 25 **Cat. N°:**

Name: La Gravelle (Cher)

Description: 1979-80 aerial survey and fieldwalking. No plan available.

Unclear plan, probably associated with circular enclosures. Surface finds suggest 1st-3rd centuries and 'early mediaeval' site-use.

Finds: Surface sherds only: unspecified, dated 1st-3rd centuries and 'early mediaeval'.

References: -J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p36.

Site N°: 26 **Cat. N°:** 62

Name: Lunery (Cher) **Plate N°:** 5

Description: Located plateau, on clay soils. Main structure oriented E. 19th century uncontrolled excavations in area, including beneath local church (no plans). 1979-1980 aerial survey and fieldwalking, partially planned.

+2ha total area. Main gallery-façade building, 9 rooms behind corridor with small rooms projecting forward at either end, and possibly a central raised porch/steps to corridor. Freestanding, outside and completely unaligned with at least 2 yards, bordered on 1 side with

structures. Presumed to be multiphased site. Occupation from 1st century through to early 4th centuries.

Finds: Surface sherds only. Pottery: t. sigillata; Lezoux ware, E. Gallic t. sigillata (late 2nd centuries), and unspecified wares dated late 3rd / early 4th centuries.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp140, 150.

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p36 [with plan, pl.3.2].

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p289.

Site N°: 27 **Cat. N°:** 69

Name: Mazières (Cher) **Plate N°:** 10a

Description: Located edge of plateau, on calcareous clay soils; oriented SSE. 1875 partial excavation; 1979-80 aerial survey. *Pars urbana* planned only.

Winged house around peristyled courtyard with gallery around at least 3 sides; central colonnade down axis. Constructed in masonry; hypocausted; marble and breccia slabs; painted wallplaster.

Finds: Coins from late 3rd (Claudius Gothicus) to 4th centuries (latest is Constantine I).

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp172, 176, 179 [with plan, pl.XXXIII].

Site N°: 28 **Cat. N°:** 70

Name: Menetou-Ratel (Cher)

Description: Located on plateau. 1890 incomplete excavation, no plan available.

Total area 2 ha. Large building (188m²), constructed in *petit appareil*; hypocausts with stone pilettes. Roofed with tegulae; pilasters on 2 external walls; grey marble architectural fragments; mosaic floor.

Finds: Iron hooks, nails, arrowhead; bronze fragments; glassware. Pottery: dolia, amphorae (1st century); commomwares, t.sigillata and 'late' wares (unspecified).

Coins, from 3rd to mid-4th centuries (latest mentioned are Constantinian dynasty).

Reference: -G. Cobolet, *CAHB*, 58 (1979), pp22, 27, 33, 60 and 62.

Site N°: 29 **Cat. N°:** 73

Name: Morogues (Cher)

Description: 19th century survey, unplanned.

Structures with hypocausts; aqueduct; tiled pavement.

Finds: Hoard: 88 coins, from 1st to predominately 3rd century (latest is A.D. 253).

Reference: -G. Cobolet, *CAHB*, 58 (1979), pp23, 32-33.

Site N°: 30 **Cat. N°:** 74

Name: La Motte (Cher)

Description: Oriented S. 1890s excavation and 1972 salvage excavation of part of *pars urbana*. No plans available.

≈3-roomed building with large central room; brick hypocausts. 1st century construction in small regular masonry, including limestone; roofed with tegulae. Painted wallplaster. Wings either side, E. and W., of central courtyard. '*Impluvium*' added to yard; excavators identified 3rd century reconstructions, reusing marble fragments and stones; occupation presumed into 4th century.

Finds: Pottery: amphorae, t. sigillata; Argonne t. sigillata (Chenet form 320).

Reference: -G. Cobolet, *CAHB*, 58 (1979), pp20-21, 32-33, 60-61.

Site N°: 31 **Cat. N°:** 82

Name: Le Peseau (Cher)

Description: Located on bank of Loire. Unclear if surveyed or excavated. No plan available.

0.4 ha *pars urbana*. Multiroomed building, linked to 7-roomed bath-complex, by gallery/corridor; 3 rooms, oriented N-S; gallery, with passages along yards. No central yard. Constructed in small regular masonry. Mosaic in baths.

Site occupied from 1st to at least early 4th century. Since a layer of river mud, 40-50cm thick, covered much of site, report tentatively suggested abandonment after serious flooding in the 4th century A.D.

Finds: Pottery: only sherd specified is Argonne ware (Chenet 323, early 4th century). Coin of mid-3rd century (Philip the Arab).

Reference: -G. Cobolet, *CAHB*, 58 (1979), pp21-22, 27, 60.

Site N°: 32 **Cat. N°:** 84

Name: Pissevieille / Noir à Beurat (Cher) **Plate N°:** 3

Description: Located plateau, on clay soils. Oriented WSW. 1979-80 aerial survey, 1980 salvage excavation. +2 ha *partes urbana* and *rustica* planned. Site levelled by agriculture: walls to 20cm. ht, no occupation levels.

Freestanding gallery-façade house, probably multiphased, roofed with tegulae, in yard with entrance-porch through to long agricultural yard to W.; buildings attached along long enclosure-walls, with more lining track along central axis of *pars rustica*.

La Tène III post-hole structures replaced mid-1st century A.D. with villa constructed in masonry; then no datable architectural phases; some little late 1st century material (including infant burial) and 2nd-3rd century remains, with 4th century finds only appearing as rubbish survival in Carolingian contexts, and 'Merovingian' sherds as surface finds only. Complete reconstruction, on different plan, of farmstead from 9th to 13th centuries, yet 2 of 3 excavation reports described site as having 'uninterrupted occupation' from Celtic to 13th centuries, despite complete abandonment of site-plan between the Late Roman and Merovingian periods.

Finds: Surface finds of 2nd century t. sigillata; commonware; 'Merovingian' pottery, ie 5th-7th centuries. Other dated material unspecified.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p147 [with partial plan of SE quarter of *p. rustica*, pl.LVII].

-*Gallia* (ii), 38 (1980), p313.

-'Noir à Beurat', *Arch. Médiéval*, XI (1981), p260.

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p30 [with complete plan, pl.1.1].

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p279 [clearest report of phases].

Site N°: 33 **Cat. N°:** 85

Name: Le Plaix (Cher) **Plate N°:** 14a

Description: Located plateau, on clay soils. Oriented N/S. 1867 excavation of house only. Planned.

Multiroomed 176m² building, modified gallery-façade with corner rooms; walls 57cm thick. At least 1 cellar with niches.

Finds: Coins, mid-3rd to early 4th centuries (Gallienus, Constantine I).

Reference: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp139-140, 148, 169 [with plan, pl.LXXIV].

Site N°: 34 **Cat. N°:** 89

Name: Pouplin (Cher) **Plate N°:** 9a

Description: Located plateau, on clay soils. Oriented SSE. 1979-1980 aerial survey and fieldwalking; planned.

+2.75 ha total area of *partes urbana* and *rustica*. Gallery-façade house with apsidal room, attached at rear of yard; wings to NW and SE behind gallery running along all 4 sides of courtyard. 'Entrance-porch'

through gallery to *pars rustica*. *Piscina*/well in enclosure behind main house?

P. rustica contained some post-hole constructions, possibly including covered walkway.

Surface finds suggest occupation early 1st through to late 3rd century; but glass mosaic fragments at far S. end of agricultural yard 'indicates a later occupation in this area (4th century?)'

Finds: Unspecified.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, pp149, 160, 170-171 [with plan, pl.XVIII].

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, III - la région de Saint-Loup-des-Chaumes', *CAHB*, 69 (1982), p35 [fuller report, clearer plan, pl.1]

Site N°: 35 **Cat. N°:** 107

Name: La Vallée (Cher)

Description: 1985 report cited villa with yard, occupied 1st to 4th century, and located between another, undated villa at Soulangy and La Vallée, where a square enclosure was aerially surveyed in 1979-1980. The identification of the latter with this latest, dated site is possible, but unclear. Surveyed only. No plan available.

Also at la Vallée itself, N. of the Roman road, a hoard of 12 coins dating up to late 3rd century was found prior to this century.

Finds: Pottery: S. and C. Gallic t. sigillata; Argonne ware (4th century).

References: -A. Blanchet, *Les trésors de monnaies romaines et les invasions germaniques en Gaule*, Paris, 1900, p236 [hoard n°548].

-A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p148.

-J. Holmgren, A. Leday, 'Prospections aériennes en Berry, II - la région de Levet', *CAHB*, 66 (1981), p33 [site 126-12].

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p284.

Site N°: 36 **Cat. N°:** 111

Name: Vauvert (Cher) **Plate N°:** 13a

Description: Located in modern suburb of Bourges (not in the old *cité*). Partially excavated at some time between 1923-1940. Planned.

W. area of small galleried and colonnaded courtyard, with bath-complex along W. side. Probable round or octagonal *piscina* (shape varies on 2 versions of plan). Roofed with tegulae. Wall-paintings; concreted floors; stone pavements. Terracotta piping.

Excavator claimed destruction by fire in the 3rd century, without indicating evidence for either fire or date (see below).

Finds: Pottery: 'noirâtre' ware - **possibly** 2nd/3rd century black metallescent wares, but description is unhelpful. Hoard of 20 coins, 1st - early 4th centuries (latest is Constantine I).

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 21 (1963), pp381-382 [with plan, fig.8].

-*CAHB*, 24-25 (1971), pp120-121 [for coin list].

-A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (ii), Oxford, 1980, p140 [with plan from *Gallia*, pl.LXXV].

Site N°: 37 **Cat. N°:** 351

Name: Le Boin (Corrèze)

Description: Located on plateau, sloping to stream, oriented SE?. No plan available, *pars urbana* excavated +1 ha.

Winged villa, around 3 sides of yard. Constructed of *opus incertum* with corners reinforced with ashlar blocks of local gneiss, above 1st century level. 2 hypocausted rooms and *piscina* built, along with main phase of villa, in the 2nd century; fire-destruction of the late 3rd century is followed by reconstruction on larger plan, with wall-paintings, huge hypocaust furnaces, and mortared tiled floors. Presumed second 'destruction' in early 5th century, with partial repairs to NE wing and reoccupation until the end of the century.

Finds: Pig, sheep and bovine remains; marine oysters and fishbones. Peach in 3rd century contexts. Neither pottery nor dating evidence described in reports, beyond the presence of 1st century coins in level beneath yard; one coin of the Tetrici (270-273) upon floor level and two of the same within 'fire destruction level' above this floor. Dating for 4th century reconstruction and subsequent destruction must therefore be presumed very approximate, based on the *t.p.q.* provided by these coins.

References:

-*Gallia* (ii), 39 (1981), p458.

-R. Joudoux, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 2 (1981), p.149 [fullest report]

-G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp31, 35.

-R. Joudoux, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 5 (1984), pp122-123.

Site N°: 38 **Cat. N°:** 352

Name: Le Bois-Boudou (Corrèze) **Plate N°:** 14c

Description: Partly excavated 1966-1968. One wing of *pars urbana* fully cleared, extending +0.113 ha. Planned.

2nd century +12-roomed complex built over razed earlier stone structure; wing later refurbished. Constructed in masonry, with columns; 5 rooms hypocausted (using both tubuli and bricks); wooden waterpipes. Dolomite statue fragment, poss. from lion fountain; terracotta antefices on tiled roof. No mosaics found.

Occupied until 4th century. No evidence of subsequent destruction.

Finds: Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata ('late', i.e., probably 2nd century) and undated commonwares.

12 coins, mid-3rd to early 4th centuries (latest is Constantine I).

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 25 (1967), p300.

-*Gallia* (ii), 27 (1969), p318, 321 [incorrectly dated mid-3rd century, but with plan].

-G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp107-108

Site N°: 39 **Cat. N°:** 354

Name: Les Cars (Corrèze) **Plate N°:** 13c

Description: Located on high plateau, near stream, oriented SW. Excavated 1936-1959, re-examined and surveyed 1975.

Gallery-façade house with courtyard and extensions, covering ≈0.16 ha; associated on site with pagan sanctuary (temple/mausoleum).

Constructed of granite: large rubble wall foundations, with *opus spicatum* floor in 1st phase, *opus incertum* in 2nd phase of construction,

with added hypocausted baths. Mortar on rubble-based floors. Coarse wall-plaster, no mosaics or wall-paintings. Original excavators believed in two destructions for entire site: one inferred simply from coin gap between A.D. 244 and 270, the second presumed by end of coin series with Aurelian (originally dated to 270, now identified as 273/274). All coins were found in villa, not sanctuary. Recent survey suggests villa abandonment rather than destruction - tegulae collapsed mainly outside walls, rather than roof collapsing inwards - in the late 3rd century.

Finds: Occupation level in rooms contained 3rd century coins, pottery: late Dragendorff 37, light grey wares, barbotine and coarse wares (dated late 2nd to early 3rd centuries). Double-sided iron linen/hemp comb found; hemp fields were common in area up to this century. Above abandonment level in villa, intensive leadworking activity now associated with construction of never-completed sanctuary some time after the late 3rd century A.D.

References: -*Gallia* (i), 1 (1943), pp198-199.

-L. Prieur, and F. Delage, 'Fouilles effectuées au "Château des Cars"', *Gallia*, (i), 5 (1947), pp47-79. [Original excavation report]

-M. Vazeilles, 'Vestiges de constructions gallo-romains en haute et moyenne Corrèze', *BSLSAC*, LXII (1959), pp138-140.

-H. Boudrie, 'L'actualité archéologique', *Lemouzi*, 1 (1961), p30.

-D. Tardy, 'Le sanctuaire des Cars: étude architecturale', *BSLSAC*, LXXXII (1979), pp5-22.

-G. Lintz, *BSLSAC*, LXXXIII (1980), pp17-37 [with villa-plan].

-_____, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp31, 35.

Site N°: 40 **Cat. N°:** 355

Name: Cros des Serves (Corrèze) **Plate N°:** 14b

Description: Located near Roman road, oriented S. Uncontrolled excavations prior to 1947. House only planned, with neighbouring masonry noted.

2-3 roomed house, 81 m². Constructed of masonry on protruding (sic) foundations on rubble coursing, with single elevated porch-entrance; concrete floor and 2 large brick pavements. Built before the late 3rd century. Rubbish survival *suspensura* and cinderous level below floors suggest an earlier, hypocausted building, either below or nearby present ruins. No occupation levels.

Finds: Fragments of basalt handmills; bronze vase fragments and simple arc-fibula; nails from tegulae. Pottery: Lezoux ware, black matte ware (probably both 2nd century) and much red, grey and yellowish commonware.

A coin of Maximinus (235-238) was retrieved from general debris/fill, and one of Constantine I was found outside the west wall, possibly from urn-cremation.

References: -M. Vazeilles, *BSSHAC*, 69 (1947), pp81-84 [with plan].

-_____, 'Vestiges de constructions gallo-romains en haute et moyenne Corrèze', *BSLSAC*, LXII (1959), pp142-144.

-*Gallia* (ii), 9 (1952), p110.

-G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp111.

Site N°: 41 **Cat N°:**

Name: Grand-Champ (Corrèze)

Description: Surface finds only. Unplanned.

Constructions, roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Coin of Crispinus.

Reference: -G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, p84.

Site N°: 42 **Cat. N°:** 358

Name: Laroche (Corrèze) **Plate N°:** 13d

Description: Oriented SE. 1833 partial excavation of *pars urbana*, planned.

+0.44 ha area, including yard open to the SE. Buildings on at least 2 sides of yard. Constructed of masonry, with square-brick hypocausted room in NW wing and hypocausted bath complex to NE; white limestone pavements and wall-facings in bath-house; limestone statuary; concrete foors and painted wallplaster in domestic wing. Unplanned cellar present. Excavators' claim to have found human remains in this cellar is, at best, an ambiguous indicator of any destruction.

Finds: Basalt millstone. Domestic occupation (fibulae, jewellery). Pottery: la Graufesenque t. sigillata.

13 coins, 1st through to late 4th centuries (latest is Julian).

Reference: -G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp64-66 [with plan].

Site N°: 43 **Cat N°:**

Name: Les Mazières (Corrèze)

Description: 1934-1935 uncontrolled excavation; partial excavation 1966-1967. No plan available.

+0.39 ha. Rooms constructed in masonry; hypocausts with square brick pilettes and furnace; columns; marble, limestone, red/grey sandstone architectural fragments. Wall-paintings; windowpanes. Built early 1st century A.D., rebuilt late 1st and again in 2nd or early 3rd century. 'Mediaeval' occupation with semicircular wall of large rough masonry.

300m. to E., brick-vaulted kiln for firing tegulae and imbrices (wasters found), used in 2nd century. 200m. W. of kiln, Gallo-Roman 8m. diam. circular structure in large masonry, possibly funerary.

Finds: Leadpipes. Iron 'hoe', keys. Bronze pin; glassware. *Terre-blanche* Allier statuette. Pottery: t. sigillata (dated Claudian/Neronian to 2nd/early 3rd century). Coins (unspecified).

References: -G. Lintz, 'La céramique sigillée trouvée sur le site des Mazières', *RAC*, X (1971), pp21-27 [on pottery only].

-_____, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp93-94.

Site N°: 44 **Cat. N°:** 361

Name: Montceix (Corrèze)

Description: Located on naturally elevated mountain flank supplied with springwater, now densely vegetated; formerly a large terraced Iron Age *oppidum*.

First surveyed and partly excavated prior to 1874; further excavation of cemetery and mediaeval dwellings in 1961-2. Only available

plans are of the area of excavation, not of individual structures (plans for these possibly never made), with extremely confused reports of finds and architecture.

Large building with rooms 14-15m. long, constructed of large undressed masonry in earth mortar; walls 0.8m. thick. Roofed with tegulae. Unexcavated 11th century priory chapel covers plan. 1961 excavations identified further, unspecified Gallo-Roman and Merovingian remains below mediaeval houses near present village. Area is surrounded by extensive 2nd century cemetery of urn-cremations. Original excavators called it 'une grande villa sans doute', but the latest report suggested that this was a *castrum* destroyed by mid-4th century Alamannic invasions. The latest dated object is a coin of Constantine I which, however, may not have come from this site at all [see below]. No evidence cited for destruction, and little stratigraphy noted.

Finds: From 'large building', bronze ornaments, sword; iron vessel and keys; glassware. No evidence of economic activity. Pottery: much Lezoux t. sigillata (1st - 2nd centuries). +11 coins, from mid-1st through to early 4th centuries, but original excavators confused finds from another nearby site, Mont Gargan, being excavated concurrently with this; more coins from recently excavated urn-cremations are all 2nd century A.D.

References: -L. Guibert, 'Rapport sur les fouilles exécutées au Mont Gargan et au Montceix', *BSAHL*, XXIII (1874), pp325-338.

-H. Boudrie, 'L'actualité archéologique', *Lemouzi*, 1 (1961), pp27-29.

-_____, 'L'actualité archéologique', *Lemouzi*, 4 (1962), pp42-48.

Site N°: 45 **Cat. N°:** 364

Name: Les Pradettes (Corrèze)

Description: Partial excavation from 1965-8 of one room of building almost destroyed by modern cultivation. No plan available.

39m² room constructed of masonry, partly floored with terracotta tiles some time after the middle of the 3rd century, and subsequently blackened by fire and covered with cinders. No evidence of hypocausting.

Finds: Fill included bronze vessel handle and socle fragment; iron tools, slag and several millstones, so domestic and/or artisanal function. *Terre-blanche* Allier statuettes (2nd century); Gallic t. sigillata.

Coin of Postumus (259-268) beneath tiled floor, 2 coins above: one 2nd century, the other 3rd (Gallienus).

Reference: -G. Lintz, 'Corrèze', *CAGR*, XVI, Paris, 1981, pp33, 108.

Site N°: 46 **Cat. N°:** 180

Name: Ahun/Petit Ayen (Creuse)

Description: Located on S. edge of large plateau, close to the outskirts of *Acetodunum* (listed in Peutinger Table between Limoges and *Praetorium*) and near cemetery which ends late 3rd century (dating criteria for this uncertain from site reports).

Architectural remains extend +150 m, unplanned and unable to be excavated due to modern buildings. Roofed with tegulae. White marble pavement. Hypocausting below polychrome 3rd century mosaic floor, using white limestone, green schist/grey serpentine (identification varies from report to report), and Central Gallic t. sigillata sherds (1st-later 2nd centuries). Wall plaster over incised tiles; wall-paintings in some rooms.

Finds: Surface finds only. Large granite statue-socle in situ near mosaic, but all locations are vague. Pottery: fine ware and commonware, both poss. 3rd century, thus contemporary with mosaic construction.

Coin of Tetricus (ca. 270-280). It is not impossible that this in fact may have been a public building or religious site, but the lack of any cult items, such as Allier statuettes (often very numerous on religious sites in the Massif Central), allows the tentative identification as 'villa' to remain, despite its proximity to a *vicus*.

Pottery now in Guèret Museum.

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 35 (1977), p431.

-R.-P. Bordier, 'Petit Ayen', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 6 (1985), p135.

-D. Dussot, 'Importante découverte à Ayen (Ahun, Creuse)', *RAS*, 26 (1985), pp11-12.

-G. Lintz, 'Tesselles en céramique sigillée ornée provenant de la découverte à Ayen', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 7 (1986), p133.

Site N°: **47** **Cat. N°:** 183

Name: Courcelles (Creuse)

Description: Located less than 1km. from major route (pre-Roman in origin). 1984/5 partial excavation of *pars urbana* wing. No plan available.

Constructed in masonry before the late 2nd century, with sandstone edging in chalk-mortar; roofed in tegulae. Stone hypocausts added in late 2nd century. Wall-paintings, stucco Corinthian pilasters. Dated 1st-3rd centuries.

Finds: Snail shells; dog skeleton. Pottery and coins unspecified.

Reference: -D. Dussot, 'Courcelles', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 6 (1985), p136.

-_____, 'Courcelles', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 7 (1986), pp149-150.

Site N°: 48 **Cat. N°:**

Name: La Cubeyne (Creuse)

Description: 1984 partial salvage excavation of *pars rustica*(?). No plan available.

3 architectural groups: sq. room with central hearth, occup. at least into late 2nd century; second group to NE, row of rooms in *petit appareil* along NE axis, rebuilt at least once. Wallpainting in 1 room.

30m. N of this, 9m. long, 1-rm. hypocausted building in herringbone masonry, walls covered with clay tiles.

Site occupied, later 1st century until mid-3rd century; excavator suggests amount of sherds indicates commonwares production on site.

Finds: Wooden canalisation. Metallic frags., including shoe-nails; glassware. Pottery: t. sigillata, commonwares. At least 1 coin, late 2nd c.

Reference: -'Gioux (la Cubeyne)', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 6 (1985), p136.

-'Gioux (la Cubeyne)', *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 7 (1986), p148.

Site N°: 49 **Cat. N°:** 182

Name: Rougnat (Creuse)

Description: Located near river Cher. 1975-76 excavations, no plan available.

Constructed of masonry, with hypocausts, in late 1st/early 2nd century; extensive rebuilding with new hypocausts in late 2nd/early 3rd century. Wall-paintings (unpublished); windowpanes. Destroyed by fire and partial dismantlement after 270-274, with no apparent subsequent occupation.

Finds: Leadpipes. Small cylindrical loomweights (unpublished).

Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata, dated by excavators as predominately late 2nd/early 3rd century; some are earlier. Coins of unspecified number, all local imitations of Tetricus; 2 were within fire level.

Finds now in Tulle Cathedral Museum.

References:

-*Gallia* (ii), 33 (1975), p447.

-*Gallia* (ii), 35 (1977), p434.

Site N°: 50 **Cat. N°:** 334

Name: Argentières (Haute-Loire)

Description: Located in dry, ravinous area, 1.8 km from Gallo-Roman silver and lead mine in the Ravin de la Gousse. No plan available. Probably merely surveyed, not excavated, some time before 1947. Further Gallo-Roman foundations and sherds noted between 'villa' site and mine.

Finds: Iron keys. Pottery; about 100 sherds, including t. sigillata, and fine black ware (possibly 2nd-3rd centuries), plus grey/black and yellowish commonwares. No coins.

Reference: -U. Rouchon, *Le Velay gallo-romain et sa capitale Ruessio (Saint-Paulien)*, Le Puy-en-Velay, 1947, p123.

Site N°: 51 **Cat. N°:** 324

Name: Espaly (Haute-Loire) **Plate N°:** 13b

Description: Located on alluvial bank of river Loire, oriented E/W. Finds collected from 1822 to 1911; excavations and plan of multiroomed building in *pars urbana* published in 1875 (with highly dubious conjectures about its completed form as a classic Mediterranean peristyled villa).

Excavated building extends 0.135 ha., attached by northern wall to further buildings or enclosed yards on the east and west.

Original gallery-façade house constructed of small ashlar volcanic masonry; subsequent internal additions to create bath-complex with brick hypocausted room, and square, peristyled piscina. Corinthian and composite column capitals. Roofed with tegulae. White marble cornices and wall-facings; wall-paintings. Black-and-white stone mosaic; coloured marbles, green porphyry. Terracotta tiled and basalt-slab pavements.

Excavator recorded destruction by fire purely because of a large heap of cinder and carbon found **outside** excavated rooms, but this can be equally if not better explained by the presence of hypocausts! Site appears to have been occupied continuously from early 1st to at least the 4th and possibly the 5th century A.D.

Finds: Oyster shells, caprine horn. Iron utensils, unspecified; lead weight-measures. Domestic toiletries - silver spoon, bowl lids, bronze belt-buckles, fibulae, bone pins, jewellery. Glass tableware from 1st century (mould-blown bowl) to Antonine (thinwalled beakers) and 3rd/4th (trail-decorated vessels). 3 *terre-blanche* Allier statuettes. Much pottery: 1 Arretine ware sherd, painted fineware, la Graufesenque ware and amphorae (all 1st century); barbotine ware (2nd century) and rouletted-incised black sherds, dated in museum as 1st or 2nd century,but elsewhere found in 2nd and 3rd century contexts; 3rd century black 'gouged' ware from Lezoux; rouletted and stamped grey and orange 'paléochrétienne' bowls, some 4th or 5th century, 2 possibly 5th-7th centuries. Also commonware, including a mortarium.

Only 4 coins, from A.D.268 to early 4th century (Constantine I).

Finds now in Le Musée Crozatier, Le Puy.

References: -A. Aymard, *Les origines de la ville du Puy*, Le-Puy-en-Velay, 1875, 472-480.

-U. Rouchon, *Le Velay gallo-romain et sa capitale Ruessio (Saint-Paulien)*, Le Puy-en-Velay, 1947, pp183-186, 258-259 [with plan, pl.XXXVII]

Site N°: 52 **Cat. N°:** 332

Name: Souils (Haute-Loire) **Plate N°:** 16b

Description: Located on volcanic soils, sloping N., near upper Loire valley (ravinous area). 1930-1932 partial excavations; 1973 sondages. Also identified by aerial survey prior to 1983. Partially planned.

2 groups of buildings, not quite aligned; both oriented N/S. Constructed late 1st century B.C. in small undressed masonry. Roofed with tegulae. NE multiphased group with 2 hearths, one of terracotta tiles, the other of brick coursing, built mid-2nd century or later. Columns; volcanic pavements noted in 1st sondage.

Stratified fire-destruction level in NE group, late 3rd century.

Finds: Basalt weight. Spindle whorl. Architectural material - iron nails, lead piping. Domestic occupation - bronze cup fragment, pins, mirror fragment; bone pins, game pieces; intaglio. *Terre-blanche* Allier statuettes. Glassware. Pottery: 6% t. sigillata (1st - 2nd centuries), metallescent black ware; central Gallic painted ware. Mortaria, amphorae (1st - early 2nd centuries). Commonware, mostly 2nd century.

20 coins in toto, from late 1st century B.C. - early 3rd century (latest is Severus Alexander, 226); 1973 excavators also noted a 'marque Victorin'. (1930s coin lists from Souils includes Constantine I (330), but it is unclear if these were from excavations or general locality.)

1930-1932 finds stored in Le Puy Museum.

References: -U. Rouchon, 'La station gallo-romaine des Souils (Haute-Loire)', *BAC*, 1932-1933, p160.

-L. and A. Simonnet, 'L'habitat gallo-romain d'altitude des Souils d'Arlempdes', *Archéologie protohistorique et gallo-romaine en Haute-Loire, [Centre d'études Foréziennes]*, 5 (1978), pp193-243 [with plan].

-*Gallia* (ii), 39 (1981), p451.

-*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p424.

-R. Gounot, *Mobilier archéologique* ***gallo-romain*** *trouvé en Haute-Loire*, Le-Puy-en-Velay, 1967, p85 [museum guide].

Site N°: 53 **Cat. N°:** 333

Name: Veyrunes (Haute-Loire)

Description: Located immediately S. of Roman road leading to upper Loire valley. 1930-1932 partial excavation of one room. No plan available.

Room 37 m², constructed of masonry; columns, sculptural fragments found on site. Pavement of red concrete; corridor leading to brick furnace (of hypocaust?). Internal red-painted wallplaster.

Finds: Domestic occupation: sandstone millstone, 2 × stone weights - an inscribed river pebble, and a re-used column-drum fragment. Bronze pan fragment; iron axe, blade, key. Pottery: amphorae, dolia and t. sigillata (1st century), commonware (undated). Coins from 1st century B.C. through to 2nd century A.D., then gap and latest coin ca.330 (Constantine I).

Reference: -U. Rouchon, *Le Velay gallo-romain et sa capitale Ruessio (Saint-Paulien)*, Le Puy-en-Velay, 1947, pp214-215.

Site N°: 54 **Cat. N°:** 191

Name: Artimache (Haute-Vienne)

Description: 1880 partial excavation of villa *pars urbana*. No plan available.

Part of domestic and bath-complex, with *caldarium*, identified. Constructed of regular small masonry; columns; marble decorations; wall-paintings; terracotta tiled pavements. No hypocausts found. A small cellar/'sepulchral vault' located.

Finds: Terracotta loomweights; lava millstone fragments. Pottery: dolia and t. sigillata; rouletted, incised wares, which by description could be anything from 2nd to early 4th centuries.

2 undated inhumations in cellar.

Reference: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p90.

Site N°: 55 **Cat. N°:** 194

Name: Brachaud (Haute-Vienne) **Plate N°:** 15a

Description: Located outside Limoges (*civitas Lemovicum*). Possibly oriented S. 1973-1987 partial excavation of 2 wings, north and east, in *pars urbana*. Planned up to 1980; subsequent excavation of western rooms in N. wing, and N. end of eastern wing.

+58m long E. wing bath-complex constructed 1st century A.D., material unspecified. Late Flavian additions of apsidal room, large circular piscina, hypocausts and 1.66m wide corridor; N. (domestic) wing razed and reconstructed. Bath-complex then refloored in white polished limestone; new wall-paintings replace old. Early 2nd century collapse of hypocaust beneath large piscina, and area is walled up and abandoned. No

tegulae from baths, presumed by excavators due to robbing out after abandonment.

North wing continues occupation. Evidence here of 2nd storey: mortar imprints of 3 wooden treads from steep stairs. Roofed with tegulae. Granite threshholds off N. portico; serpentine sculptural fragments; tiled and *terrazzo* floors. Adjacent 3rd century yard S17 has covered portico in *petit appareil* with brick columns and drainage for roof run-off. Donkey burial in gallery here (?) suggests this part of *villa* also eventually abandoned.

Excavators report continued occupation at least until 2nd quarter of the 4th century.

Finds: Donkey bones. No dating criteria specified in reports other than pottery (A.D 80-90) under additions to E. wing.

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 39 (1981), p470.

-J.-P. Loustard, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 2 (1981), pp162-164 [with plan].

-*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p442.

-J.-P. Loustard, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 6 (1985), p140.

-J.-P. Loustard, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 7 (1986), p158.

-J.-P. Loustard, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 8 (1987), p162.

Site N°: 56 **Cat. N°:** 195

Name: La Briderié (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Located near Roman road. Surveyed only? No plan available. Hypocausted buildings; marble fragments; mosaics; wall-paintings.

Finds: Volcanic millstone in Limoges Museum. 2 Constantinian coins found on site.

References: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p41.

-*Guide du musée municipal: collection arch.*, Limoges, 1980, p25.

Site N°: 57 **Cat. N°:** 213

Name: Chez-Roger (Haute-Vienne) **Plate N°:** 14f

Description: Located on W. bank of Vienne, strongly sloping E. towards river; oriented SSW. Partial excavation of house and 1 wing of *pars urbana* in 1946-1951, 1961-1968. Planned.

Remains extend +0.16 ha. 2nd century construction of gallery-façade house, facing SSW, with bath-complex at W. end (incompletely dug) and E. wing downslope. House and baths constructed with foundations of undressed masonry and walls of small *petit appareil*; hypocausts have square brick pilettes. Roofed with tegulae. W. area has brick columns; small granite pavers; wall-paintings; windowpanes. Enclosed gallery around courtyard, with limestone Doric colonnade; gallery continues around E. wing, with stucco architectural decoration; limestone pavements; wall-paintings.

External corridor runs outside N. house and E. wing. Easternmost wall is of undressed masonry, suggesting this area was **below** inhabited rooms on same level as N. house. To N., outer wall built of small dressed masonry, with 2nd, buttressing wall of herringbone stonework, constructed parallel with and against it some time in the early 4th century.

Kiln (unknown function) found to S. of *pars urbana*, with 2nd century material. Excavators note no wasters. Possibly related to villa construction (roof-tiles?)

Finds: Cattle, boar/pig, deer, dog remains; oysters and snail shells in W. area. Wooden pipes. Iron axe-head, knife, point, small burin; wall-clamps. Lead weight. Bronze toiletries; bone pins. Glassware, including millefiori - which should be 1st/2nd century at very latest - from baths. Pottery: Central Gallic t. sigillata (mostly 2nd, with some early 3rd century); commonwares, including combed ware consistently found on site in levels with late 3rd century coins. 47 coins found, 5 from early-mid 2nd, the remainder from late 3rd and early 4th centuries (latest is Magnentius, 351-353).

References: -J. Perrier, 'Les établissements gallo-romains de Chez-Roger', *BSAHL*, LXXXIV (1952), pp35-42.

-'Le site gallo-romain de "Chez-Roger", commune de Saint-Priest-sous-Aixe', *BSAHL*, XCVI (1969), pp42-57.

-J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, pp86-87.

Site N°: 58 **Cat. N°:** 196

Name: La Bussière-Etable (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Located hilly region. 1961 uncontrolled excavations, probably unplanned.

'Importante villa', with wall-paintings; bronze and terracotta statuary. Nearby, more masonry, and small building with limestone-paved floor.

Finds: Domestic occupation - pins, buttons, bone gaming piece; iron utensils, keys; lead fragments; terracotta weight. Glassware. Pottery: much Gallic t. sigillata (1st to early 2nd century by potters' marks), barbotine ware, rouletted metallescent black slipped ware (2nd or 3rd century); incised commonwares, beige mortaria.

24 coins, not all specified, from early 2nd through to late 3rd century (latest mentioned is Victorinus, 268-279).

Reference: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, pp106-107.

Site N°: 59 **Cat. N°**: 203

Name: Les Couvents (Haute-Vienne) **Plate N°**: 13f

Description: Located altitude 350m, on gentle slope facing S and E. 1969-81 partial excavation of NE corner of *pars urbana* courtyard or winged villa in +3ha of ruins. Walls roughly oriented to cardinal points.

1st century A.D. post-hole constructions, kilns and foundry (with some animal husbandry) on previous Celtic occupation. 2nd century drainage problems, so area filled in; courtyard built with rooms in *petit appareil* masonry, concrete floors. Late 2nd/early 3rd century phase with galleries added; wall-paintings in gallery, hypocausted baths along E. wing; function of N. wing unknown. Limestone door-sill; oak planking used in thermal wing. Occupied into 4th/5th centuries; poss. deliberately abandoned (few finds), gradual roof collapse. Small-scale reoccupation (tiled hearth), undated.

Finds: 2nd century phase: sheep, pig, bird, dog remains. Oakwood. Limestone; imported granite. Pottery: t. sigillata; later commonware only (no imported finewares): 4 jar rims, typologically dated 4th/5th centuries.

No post-Conquest coins.

References: -G. Belligaud, *Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 2 (1981), p161.

-_____, 'Les Couvents', *RAC*, 21 (1981), pp171-191 [with plans].

-*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p441.

Site N°: 60 **Cat. N°:** 206

Name: Grand-Puy-Connieux (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Located at altitude 496 m. Surveyed only, unplanned. Buildings, roofed with tegulae, constructed at least in part of brick.

Finds: Unspecified pottery. +20 coins, 2 identified as 3rd century (latest is Claudius Gothicus, 268-270).

Reference: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p90.

Site N°: 61 **Cat. N°:** 207

Name: La Grillère (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Surveyed only, unplanned.

Buildings, water-conduit inside wall.

Finds: Coin of Constantine I.

Reference: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p91.

Site N°: 62 **Cat. N°:** 208

Name: Liégeaud (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Located steep hillslope, probably oriented S. 1913 survey; 1961 uncontrolled excavation of 8 rooms; controlled excavation 1978-1980 of 2 wings in *pars urbana* only. No plan available.

Probably winged gallery-façade villa; only N. residence and W. wing known. Late 1st century A.D. rectangular, multiroomed house constructed in herringbone brick coursing on deep foundations (because of terrain). Limestone and stucco architectural fragments from general site; 4 monolithic (sic) floors. W. wing subsequently added, 1 room hypocausted, and gallery run around courtyard.

Mid-2nd century enlargement plus additions of bath-complex E. of gallery - presumably as part of unexcavated E. wing - with hypocausts on both square and cylindrical pilettes. Inscribed, figurative wall-paintings also added. Excavators report destruction by fire in early 3rd century, with no subsequent reoccupation.

Finds: Bronze ring; iron nails, keys,; leadpipe aqueducts. Pottery: t. sigillata. Only dating criterion reported is stylistic analysis of wall-paintings, placed ca. A.D.150.

References: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p.36.

-*Trav.Arch.Lim.*, 2 (1981), p161 [anon].

Site N°: 63 **Cat. N°**: 211

Name: La Mazère (Haute-Vienne) **Plate N°**: 10b

Description: Located near stream, 800 m. from cemetery of urn-cremations, dated up to 3rd century. 1898-1901 excavation of *pars urbana* and possibly one building from *pars rustica* yard. Surveyed 1957. Incomplete plan from 1898.

Probably oriented NW. Excavated *pars urbana* extends +1.21 ha; total surveyed site covers 8 ha. Winged villa with galleries on 2 sides of yard. +26 rooms, construction material unspecified but including brick columns. Roofed with tegulae. Brick hypocausts; 3 concrete floors; stone pavement. Limestone statuary (Espérandieu, IX, N°7018).

Excavator reported destruction by fire, after which 2 inhumations were placed under stone pavement in the villa; recent survey describes these as beneath tombstones. Occupation into late 3rd century.

Finds: Iron door fittings. No pottery mentioned. 'Many' 3rd century coins, particularly Tetricus (which are the latest).

References: -J. Perrier, 'Notes d'archéologie gallo-romain', *BSAHL*, LXXXVI (1957), pp391-393.

-_____, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p118 [with plan, fig.8]

Site N°: 64 **Cat. N°:** 217

Name: Saint-Bonnet-de-Bellac (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Surveyed only, unplanned. Architectural remains noted.

Finds: 6 coins, 2nd - early 3rd century (up to Maximinus, 235-238).

Reference: -J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p110.

Site N°: 65 **Cat. N°:** 221

Name: Souffas (Haute-Vienne)

Description: Excavated 1928-1936. No plan available.

Constructed in masonry, roofed with tegulae and terracotta antefices. Square pavers. Probably occupied from 2nd into 3rd centuries.

Finds: Sandstone 'weight'. Bronze bracelet; iron nails. *Terre blanche* Allier statuette (early 2nd century); 2nd or 3rd century glassware.

Pottery: undated fine white slipped cup; fine metallescent slipped ware; some unspecified Lezoux sherds; hatched grey slipped ware (2nd-3rd centuries?) and tripod cooking-pots (possibly 3rd century). Undated commonwares - yellow, black, grey and brownish fabrics. No coins.

References: -'Melanges: les ruines de Souffas', *BSAHL*, XIV (2nd series) (1932-1933), pp261-264 [anon.].

-J. Perrier, 'Haute-Vienne', *CAGR*, XIV, Paris, 1964, p39.

Site N°: 66 **Cat. N°:** 171

Name: Le Champ Pillault (Indre) **Plate N°:** 12b

Description: Located on limestone soils, 100m. N. of spring; oriented SW. 1979-1983 aerial survey and fieldwalking. Fields and present road are perfectly aligned with house and yard. Planned, unexcavated.

Pars urbana visible only, +0.43 ha. 40m long simple gallery-façade house, with small 2-roomed building along western yard wall and porch-entrance through yard wall, opposite main house. Remainder of enclosure wall demolished or robbed out. Constructed of masonry, roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Surface sherds dated 1st - 3rd centuries. 1 coin (1st century B.C.).

Reference: -J. Holmgren, 'Quelques établissements gallo-romaine de l'Est du département de l'Indre', *BGHAB*, 15 (1983), p27 and pl.6.

Site N°: 67 **Cat N°:**

Name: Chateaufort (Indre) **Plate N°:** 8a

Description: 1978 aerial survey and fieldwalking, oriented WNW. Planned.

1.98 ha. ditched enclosure with smaller yard attached. Within large enclosure, 3 buildings with stone foundations, aligned along main axis; a 3-roomed structure, 1 with corridor and 1 indeterminate plan.

Interpreted as 'indigenous farm', in process of becoming 'romanised'.

Finds: Surface finds only. Bronze bracelet. Pottery: t. sigillata, metallescent black slipped ware; commonwares. Coin of Celtic period; but N.B. 2 more coins from area: 2nd century and 4th century (Constantine I).

Reference: -J. Holmgren, 'Quelques habitats ruraux gallo-romains de l'Ouest du dépt de l'Indre', *BGHAB*, 13 (1981), pp48-49 [with plan, pl.VIII.2].

Site N°: 68 **Cat. N°:** 159

Name: Martizay (Indre)

Description: Located near river. 2 excavations. No plan available.

1960-61 excavation of small-roomed building, constructed late 2nd/early 3rd century on Celtic site; another Gallo-Roman building identified to the East. 1969-70 report interpreted the latter as a 'villa' built late 1st century B.C. and rebuilt several times; contained wall-paintings. Part of this building reused as Merovingian cemetery (23 sarcophagi). In same general area but closer to river, room built in *petit appareil*, on square hypocausting also found, but undated.

Finds: Pottery: grey and black ware (unspecified).

1 coin, possibly of Commodus, presumably 'dates' the small-roomed building. Relationship between buildings is highly ambiguous.

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 21 (1963), pp445-6.

-*Gallia* (ii), 28 (1970), p265.

Site N°: 69 **Cat N°:** 170

Name: La Pétonnière (Indre) **Plate N°:** 14e

Description: Located on marshy ground (now partly flooded by stream). 1979-1981 excavation of thermal wing, orient. E.? Partially planned.

+500m² extant area. +3 roomed bath-complex constructed mid-1st century A.D. in small regular dressed masonry; hypocausts with square brick pilettes; apsidal basin in wall. Floor/wall base of wooden planks in

clay layers as damp protection. Abandoned, then reconstructed with N. extension in 2nd century; external walls-stubs reused, internal built with reused limestone blocks; constructed on oak and pine planks below pebbles, under large square-faced masonry. Hypocausts removed; 2 drains with limestone slab covers lead to wooden pipe and river. Pink mortar on thick concrete floor. Windowpanes.

W. wing, possibly galleried, and curved enclosure wall in large irregular masonry (including reused column drum) added. Site occupation continued 3rd-4th centuries (inferred from fill in 'pool' within yard). 7th or 8th century reuse of walls in Room 2 with construction of 3-layered floor, from whose floor-packing came one 7th century sherd. Subsequent demolition and abandonment.

Finds: From late 2nd to late 3rd/early 4th century levels: sheep/goat, pig, bird and bovine remains. Elder tree, alder tree walnut, plum and peach remains; willow-herb, water-parsnip and water-mint; oak and pine wood (latter used as hypocaust fuel). Local sandstone millstone. *Terre-blanche* Allier statuette. Pottery: t. sigillata, metallescent black slipped ware (2nd century, dating N. extensions); Argonne ware (late 3rd/4th century, dating pool fill); 'paléochrétienne' sherd (7th century).

No coins found.

References: -G. Coulon, J.-L. Girault, 'Resultats de la campaigne de fouilles de juillet 1980 (le site gallo-romain de la Pétonnière à Paulnay', *BGHAB*, 12 (1980), pp37-54.

-_____, 'Le site gallo-romain de la Pétonnière à Paulnay (Indre). Résultats de la campaigne de fouilles d'Aout 1981', *BGHAB*, 13 (1981), pp17-32 [final plan].

-G. Coulon, J.-L. Girault, J.-Y. Bourin, P. Marinval, 'Les bains

et l'environnement de la villa gallo-romaine de la Pétonnière à Paulnay (Indre)', *RAC* 24 (1985), pp191-214.

Site N°: 70 **Cat. N°:** 164

Name: Pontbordat (Indre) **Plate N°:** 9b

Description: Located in calcareous clays, N. bank of stream; oriented SSW. 1979 aerial survey; 1983 fieldwalking. Partial plan of *partes urbana* and *rustica* (E. sector under canal), extending +3ha.

House freestanding from enclosure wall, with buildings scattered across yard, suggesting additions. Possibly hypocausted. Roofed with tegulae. Stone pavements. Entrance-porch through to long agricultural yard in front of *pars urbana*. Outer enclosure wall of *pars rustica* not visible, but 1- or 2-roomed structures roughly aligned down long axis of yard, including large, piered building with open, wide entrance.

Occupation into 5th century at least.

Finds: Surface finds only. Iron knifeblade. Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata, commonwares; 2 sherds of *paléochrétienne* ware.

Reputed find of 1 or 2 Late Imperial coins.

References: -A. Leday, *BAR*, 73 (i), Oxford, 1980, p147.

-J. Holmgren, 'Quelques établissements gallo-romains de L'Est du département de l'Indre', *BGHAB*, 15 (1983), p24 [with plan, pl.3].

-*Gallia* (ii), 42 (1984), p310.

-G. Coulon, J.-L. Girault, J.-Y. Bourin, P. Marinval, 'Les bains et l'environnement de la villa gallo-romaine de la Pétonnière à Paulnay (Indre)', *RAC* 24 (1985), p205 [n.4].

Site N°: 71 **Cat N°:** 169

Name: Villedieu-sur-Indre (Indre) **Plate N°:** 16a

Description: Oriented NNE-SSW. 1976 salvage excavation (in modern bourg), partial plan of *pars rustica* only (?).

2 cellars (8.85m² and 10.44m²); cellar 1 constructed by mid-2nd century in small herringbone masonry with wattle-and-daub structure immediately above, roofed with tegulae. Stairs (with beaten earth steps, and treads of stone slabs and tiles). Cellar subsequently extended with roughly coursed limestone masonry. White marble architectural decoration; windowpanes (both in rubble fill).

Presumed use from mid-2nd to late 3rd century, after which upper room collapsed in fire. At base of wash/abandonment level above destruction is a coin of 388/392, considered 'intrusive', but above this is a level sealing the deposit, containing 58 (excavator counted 55) coins up to late 4th century.

Cellar 2 built in small regular masonry with iron joints, with post-hole construction above. Room void of any architectural material or occupational debris, so excavators presumed roof initially thatched, and cellar emptied before deliberate backfilling mid-4th century.

Finds: Animal bones (unspecified), stag horn; fish (tench). Scythe; chain, horse-bit; slag and stone possibly from forge. Millstones. Iron blades, fish-hook, hooks; iron and bronze keys, stylus and bronze blade. Domestic toiletries and jewellery: bronze tweezers, bracelet, fibulae; bone pins etc, all typologically 3rd - 5th centuries (at latest).

Pottery: t. sigillata; metallescent black slipped wares (including barbotine and guilloche decorations); Argonne ware and late ware

'à l'éponge'. Few amphorae; commonwares, tripod cooking pots, mortaria.

154 coins, 143 stratified, forming the principal dating material. In cellar 1: from floor occupation level '6' (Celtic and early 2nd century) up to topmost coin-holding level '2' (58 coins, from 235/6 to late 4th century minim, although latest **identified** coin here is Constantius II). Cellar 2 , from 2nd to predominately early-mid 4th century. 66 coins of the Tetrici present. Latest coin on site is Theodosius, 388/392.

References: -G. Coulon, I. Fauduet, J.-L. Roche, 'Deux caves gallo-romaines, commune de Villedieu-sur-Indre', *CAHB*, 69 (1982), pp5-43.

Site N°: 72 **Cat. N°:** 510

Name: Le Bastit (Lot)

Description: 1970 survey(?). No plan available.

Constructed in masonry, roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Unspecified pottery. Coin of Constantine I (330-333).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 28 (1970), p423.

Site N°: 73 **Cat. N°:** 511

Name: Bellefont/Bellefond (Lot)

Description: Located near springs. 1962 partial excavation, 1 room only. No plan available.

Partly rock-cut, partly constructed aqueduct. +30m² room, roofed with tegulae; polychrome mosaic floor, stylistically dated by excavator to 4th century.

Finds: None reported.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 20 (1962), p592.

-*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), p548 [with mosaic illust., fig.35].

Site N°: 74 **Cat. N°:** 512

Name: La Bourdigue (Lot)

Description: 1968 report, no plan available.

Apsidal room, 2m diam., constructed in masonry; with drains; pink concrete floor on base of tiles and dressed stone.

Finds: Late Roman coin (Constantine I?), from nearby cindrous area.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), p545.

Site N°: 75 **Cat. N°:** 513

Name: Brengues (Lot)

Description: Located on R. bank of Célé river. 1970 report, no plan available.

Structures roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Pottery: commonwares (undated). Many coins, only 3rd century specified (latest is Numerian, 283-284). On opposite bank of river, more tegulae, pottery and a loomweight were noted, and nearby another 'habitat romain' identified at Ayrissac, with stamped tegulae ('*ASINA*').

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 28 (1970), p423.

-*Gallia* (ii), 34 (1976), pp490-491 [for Ayrissac].

Site N°: 76 **Cat. N°:** 514

Name: Château de Roland (Lot)

Description: 1968 surface survey only, no plan available.

Structure roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Coin of Gallienus (259/60-268).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), p549.

Site N°: 77 **Cat. N°:** 520

Name: Fontorte (Lot) Plate N°: 14d

Description: Located on Causse, near springs. 1969 partial excavation of bath-complex in *pars urbana*. Planned.

7-roomed NE wing, +150m². 4 rooms constructed 1st century; early 2nd century addition of hypocausts with square pilettes, another romm and corridors linking to SW area (unexcavated). Subsequent rebuilding and demolition of some hypocausting. Rest of domestic wing not yet located.

Finds: Pottery: S. Gallic t. sigillata (1st century); *t. sigillata claire* (dated by excavators as 2nd century); stamped 4th century '*paléochrétienne*' wares. No other finds.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 28 (1970), p423 [with plan, fig.32].

Site N°: 78 **Cat N°:** 518

Name: Le Souquet (Lot) **Plate N°:** 13e

Description: Located on steep N. bank of river Barguelonne, oriented SSW. Identified 1962; 1964-67/8 excavations of *pars urbana*; latest reports interpreted site as religious sanctuary with baths, but plan, scale and objects can be equally interpreted as luxury dwelling.

+0.4 ha, with main buildings on platform (460m²) overlooking extensions down slope. Constructed in square ashlar masonry, with porticoed façade and colonnaded stairs (in local sandstone) on W. side. Baths and *piscina* subsequently enlarged; wall and floor mosaics, wall-paintings and marble added.

Site rebuilt after 2 fires. Occupation predominately 1st - 2nd centuries, possibly into early 3rd century.

Finds: Pottery: la Graufesenque t. sigillata, Montans and Lezoux ware (1st - 2nd century); 2 lamps: 1st and 2nd/3rd centuries. 3 coins, all 1st century A.D.

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 20 (1962), p590.

-*Gallia* (ii), 22 (1964), pp458-461.

-*Gallia* (ii), 24 (1966), pp440-441 [plan interpreted as sanctuary].

-*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), pp546-547 [new plan].

-A. Audin, 'La réutilisation des sites antiques par les églises', *Caesarodunum*, XIX (1984), p96 [citing *Gallia* '62].

Site N°: 79 **Cat. N°:** 466

Name: Brignes (Lozère) **Plate N°:** 12a

Description: Located limestone soils, gentle slope near springs; oriented S. NE of possible cemetery - only 1 tomb as yet found. Under current excavation and survey. Planned, not yet published.

480m². gallery-façade house, 8-roomed, constructed in 2nd half of 1st century A.D. Roofed with tegulae. Brick hypocausts; masonry aqueducts. Concrete floors, limestone pavements. Wall-paintings. Subsequently enlarged, with new hypocausts.

As yet unexcavated: 2 large rectangular structures 20m. S. of house, possibly flanking yard. Small square building is tentatively identified as *fanum* 150m SE, but may rather belong to *pars rustica.*

Destruction by fire in 2nd half of 3rd century, with rebuilding; column capital reused in new hypocausting. Final destruction by fire in 4th or 5th century, with no subsequent occupation.

Finds: Dating criteria not described in unpublished notice.

Only wall-paintings and reused column capital on view.

Reference: Précis and plan displayed in Marvejols Museum, dept. Lozère.

Site N°: 80 **Cat. N°:** 452

Name: Chastel-Nouvel (Lozère)

Description: Located on Causse. 1933 partial excavation. No plan available.

Building(s); small brick kiln/furnace; striated bricks, for either hypocaust or mortared walls. Occupied at least 2nd - late 3rd centuries.

Finds: Copper and bone pins. *Terre-blanche* Allier statuette (2nd century). Pottery: Central and South Gallic t. sigillata (1st-2nd centuries); gouged Lezoux ware (2nd-3rd centuries); fine grey ware and 'local' black ware.

7 coins, all 268-274 (latest are Tetricus).

Reference: -M. Balmelle, *Répert. arch. Lozère; g.-r.*, Montpellier, 1937, p12.

Site N°: 81 **Cat. N°:** 461

Name: Croix du Siffleur (Lozère)

Description: Surface survey, unplanned.

Building roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Pottery: Banassac t. sigillata (undated); grey 'paléochrétienne' ware (possibly 4th century).

Reference: -J. Rigoir, 'Les sigillées paléochrétiennes grises et orangées', *Gallia* (i), 26 (1968), p238.

Site N°: 82 **Cat. N°:** 457

Name: Marijoulet (Lozére)

Description: Located on river Lot, at junction of Causses. Excavated 1868; no plan available.

Constructed in masonry, with column(s); marble plaque; statuary; wall-paintings.

Finds: Unspecified pottery. Coins - only one described (Arcadius, 395-408).

Reference: -M. Balmelle, *Répert. arch. Lozère; g.-r.*, Montpellier, 1937, pp11-12.

Site N°: 83 **Cat. N°:** 458

Name: Ribennes (Lozère)

Description: Located 500m. W. of château. Surveyed, unplanned.

Structures roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Coin of Constantine I found.

Reference: -M. Balmelle, *Répert. arch. Lozère; g.-r.*, Montpellier, 1937, p39.

Site N°: 84 **Cat. N°:** 459

Name: Saint-Pierre-d'Estripiers (Lozère)

Description: 1905 partial excavation, no plan available.

Building foundations located.

Finds: Pins and fibulae found. No pottery reported. 3 coins (latest are both Constantine I).

Reference: -M. Balmelle, *Répert. arch. Lozère; g.-r.*, Montpellier, 1937, p49.

Site N°: 85 **Cat N°:**

Name: Champ des Serves (Puy-de-Dôme)

Description: Located on alluvial terrace near former bed of river Allier. Uncontrolled partial excavation (tree-removal).

Structure roofed with tegulae; semi-circular tiles present (for hypocaust piltettes?). Pottery found 300m. to W. of architectural remains.

Finds: Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata (Drag. 37); mortaria; Argonne rouletted ware (4th century).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 21 (1963), p498.

Site N°: 86

Name: Andignac (Tarn)

Description: Survey only, unplanned. Located in same commune as small Gallo-Roman *vicus* with Merovingian chapel and cemetery.

Structure(s) roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Pottery: unspecified Gallo-Roman sherds. 2 coins, Gallienus (A.D.266), Constantine I (minted at Lyons).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 44 (1986), p331.

Site Nº: 87 **Cat. Nº:** 447

Name: Butte Saint-Pierre (Tarn)

Description: 1967 sondage. Unplanned.

Occupation level identified, architecture undescribed.

Finds: Glassware. Pottery: t. sigillata (unspecified); *t. sigillata claire* (2nd-3rd centuries).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), p554.

Site Nº: 88

Name: La Gazelle (Tarn)

Description: Surface survey during land clearance only; unplanned.

Structure(s) roofed with tegulae.

Finds: Iron fragments. Unspecified pottery. +6 coins, from mid-1st century (Claudius), through 2nd (4 coins) up to third century (Gallienus).

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 44 (1986), p331.

Site Nº: 89

Name: Gourjade (Tarn)

Description: Located between modern road and R. bank of river Agout. Known since 17th century. 1977-80 salvage excavation of section of *pars urbana* and possibly of *pars rustica*. No plan available.

2 buildings identified: 220m² rectilinear building with 7 rooms, with 4 pairs of column bases. Constructed of variety of materials:

sandstone, limestone masonry with river stones and tegulae. Excavators suggest either grange or artisanal function, noting large quantities of iron scoria on site. Other, almost square structure, ca. 14.5m² with apses added to all 4 walls: central room/yard is paved with river stones, with central basin whose fill (sherds) dates abandoment to early 4th century. Excavators date construction of apsidal building as 'late' by comparison with very similar structure at villa of Rabastens [**Site N°**92, below], identified as nymphaeum. roofed with tegulae; marble from Pyrénées and Montagne Noire.

Water canalisation leads to river.

Subsequent, briefer report dates occupation from 1st through 2nd centuries, 'destroyed' in early 3rd century, but large numbers of the sigillata *claire* sherds suggest that this would be too early.

Finds: Iron scoria. Lamps (1st - 2nd centuries). Pottery: Campanian and Italian t. sigillata (1st century B.C.); Gallic t. sigillata (Montans and la Graufesenque tableware), 1st-2nd centuries; sigillata *claire A* and *B*; commonwares. No coins mentioned.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 38 (1980), p499.

-*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p499.

Site N°: 90 **Cat. N°:** 449

Name: Larroque (Tarn)

Description: 1965-1967 partial excavation of *pars urbana*, no plan available.

4 rooms of bath-complex, constructed early 1st century. Roofed with tegulae (stamped). Hypocausts; leadpiped aqueduct extending +400m. Mosaics; wall-paintings.

Excavators dated occupation to end of 3rd century (criteria unspecified). Corner of largest room possibly used/reused as carpenter's workshop; urn-cremation located in same room, undated. Site also used for late 6th century inhumations.

Finds: Carpenter's iron tools: chisels, burins, etc; iron nails. Bronze and bone artefacts; glassware. Weights. Lamp fragments. Pottery: much Montans wares (1st century); painted wares.

2 coins, 1st and 2nd centuries (latest is Lucilla).

Inhumations contained gold fibula and 'visigothic' belt-buckle.

Iron tools now in Albi Museum.

References: -*Gallia* (ii), 24 (1966), p446 [with belt-buckle illust., fig.38].

-*Gallia* (ii), 26 (1968), p553.

Site N°: 91

Name: Montgey (Tarn)

Description: Located on SW slope of butte of modern village. 1978 partial excavation of large *pars urbana*; modern hedged road cuts across site. *Pars rustica* unidentified; no plan available, but aerially photographed in 1981.

Central complex and one flanking wing identified; multiphased, more than 20 rooms. Plan suggests originally gallery-façade with projecting towers at front. Constructed in masonry, with wall-facings of white or polychrome marble (from Pyrénées and Montagne Noire); black and white mosaics in several rooms; polychrome wallpaintings.

Occupied probably from early 1st through to 4th centuries.

Finds: Oyster shells. Glass (1st century). Pottery: Campanian ware, amphora (1st century B.C. - A.D.); Montans t. sigillata, and Albi/Montans white painted wares (1st - 2nd centuries); fine 2nd -3rd century wares; one 4th century *paléochrétienne* bowl (Rigoir 35). Despite 'luxurious' nature of villa, only 2 coins found, both Augustan.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 36 (1978), pp424-425.

-*Gallia* (ii), 41 (1983), p499 [with aerial photograph, p501, fig.30].

Site N°: 92

Name: Les Peyras/Rabastens (Tarn)

Description: Located near river Tarn. 1972 sondage, and 1978-79 excavation of *pars urbana*; 1973-75 excavations of wells in *pars rustica*. No plan available.

Ruins cover several ha. Site used in late la Téne III (known only from rubbish survival); Augustan construction of villa, roofed with stamped tegulae. Destroyed by fire (?) in mid-2nd century and deliberately razed before reconstruction (early 1st century A.D.to mid-2nd century architectural and occupational debris with cinders occur in two wells and rectangular *piscina*, probably all located in *p. rustica*). Stratigraphy mainly known from these wells, both with tufa-masonry walls; one contemporary with Augustan villa-construction, reused when dry as 2nd century funerary pit, then as refuse pit for early demolition debris; other built at same time as late 2nd or even early 3rd century reconstruction of villa, also eventually filled in, using earth mixed with early debris. Also used for inhumation with food offerings, dated by coin to later 3rd century; subsequently levelled in 4th century.

Reconstructed villa has wall(s) constructed with Tarn river stones; architecture not described. 3 more wells with tufa-walls were built in central villa yard in early 3rd century, functioning until site is again demolished in early 5th century. 1972 sondage identified upper occupation level of 4th century villa-house, with contemporary polychrome mosaic. Stone pavers; column bases and +12 capitals and green and violet Pyrénéan marble drum frags. Marble male bust.

Isolated from main late phase villa is rectangular, masonry building oriented N/S, ca.44m², with apses at either end, constructed on demolition spread, so clearly post-2nd century; excavators call this a nymphaeum or sanctuary, and suggest an even later date for construction (contemporary with latest villa-phase?)

Last phase of villa in 5th century is deliberately demolished (broken marble, pavers thrown in wells; fill is sealed with roof collapse, and skeletons of domestic cats and dogs.

Finds: Domestic animal remains. Bone worked objects; fibulae; glass; lamps, stamped tegulae (*CARPI, NIGRI, RUFINI*, and *DAMA* on imbrices, last two stamps common in region), all 1st - 2nd centuries.

Pottery: 1st century Arretine wares, amphorae; Montans t. sigillata and painted wares (up to mid-2nd century); metallescent wares (late 2nd century?), all from wells and *piscina*; late sigillata (4th century), *paléolchrétienne* red and grey wares (possibly 5th century) in upper occupation level.

General area yielded coin of Domitian and *follis* of Constantine I (A.D.317). Coin of M. Aurelius in *piscina* (A.D.171), contemporary with latest sherds. Level above 2nd well in *pars rustica* contains late 3rd century (Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus) and mid-fourth century coins (Constantius II). Coin of

Constantine I and of Magnentius (350-353) in upper villa level.

Reference: -*Gallia* (ii), 32 (1974), pp494-495.

-*Gallia* (ii), 34 (1976), pp496-499.

-*Gallia* (ii), 36 (1978), p425 [on mosaic only]

-*Gallia* (ii), 38 (1980), pp501-502 [most complete report].

Site N°: 93 **Cat. N°:** 441

Name: Rivières (Tarn)

Description: Located N. bank of river Tarn. 1846 uncontrolled excavation of room with mosaic; 1860 partial excavation of S. extension of *pars urbana*. No plan available. 150m. SE of Gallo-Roman and Merovingian cemetery.

+15 ha total area of remains. Room constructed of masonry, roofed with tegulae, floor mosaic of multicoloured stone tesserae. Walls to S. of this destroyed by modern road; S. of this, +268m² building of 3 rooms with square brick hypocausts; 2 apsidal *piscina*, at least one constructed in *opus signinum*. Roofed with tegulae; 2 sandstone columns; brick columns; mortared walls. Red-and-white marble pavement; stone tesserae mosaic.

1964 report on cemetery interprets site as a small house on site of former temple, said by tradition to have been the hermitage of Saint Estève. Evidence for cult use of site not given.

Finds: Wood. Oyster shells. Iron nails. Sandstone 'cooking-pots'; glass unguentaria and vases. Pottery: Gallic t. sigillata, including Montans wares (1st century) and green-glazed (possibly Imperial Glazed ware, 1st century B.C/A.D.?); barbotine ware, metallescent black wares (2nd-3rd centuries); grey tripod cooking-pots.

28 coins from both areas excavated; 2 × 1st century, remainder late 3rd to mid-4th centuries (latest is Constans, 337-350).

References: -*Congrès archéologique, XXXème session à Albi*, 1863, p.308, 351-366 [anon, with illust. of mosaic, p352].

-*Gallia* (ii), 22 (1964), p434.

Site №: 94 **Cat. №:** 446

Name: Roumagnac (Tarn)

Description: Located in valley of river Cérou. Surveyed only? Unplanned.

'Villa' identified, along with '*taurobolium*'. Cinders/carbon may indicate hypocausting.

Finds: Unspecified, apart from gold coin of Alexander Severus (222-235).

Reference: -*Congrès archéologique, XXXème session à Albi*, 1863, p.308 [anon].

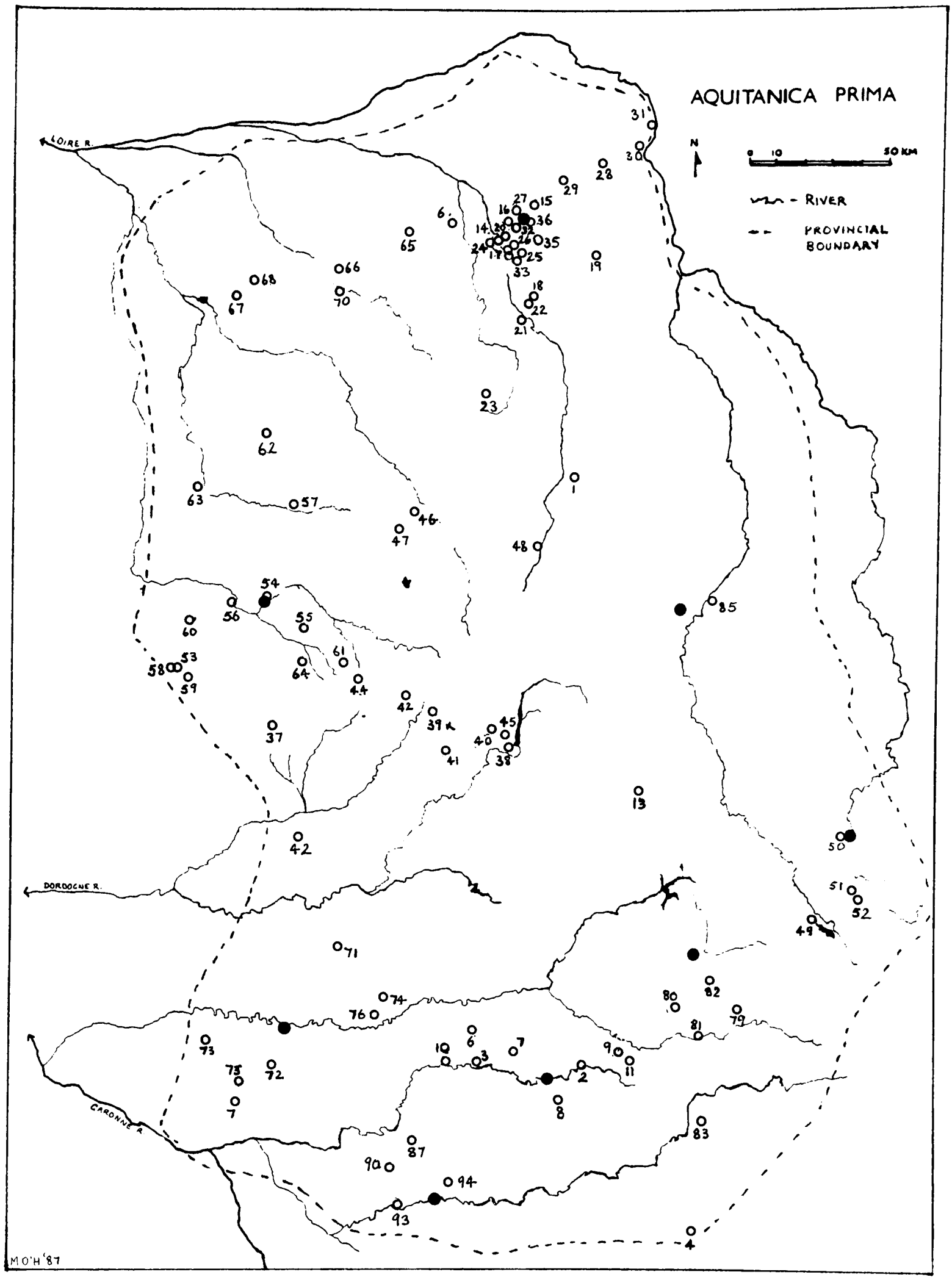
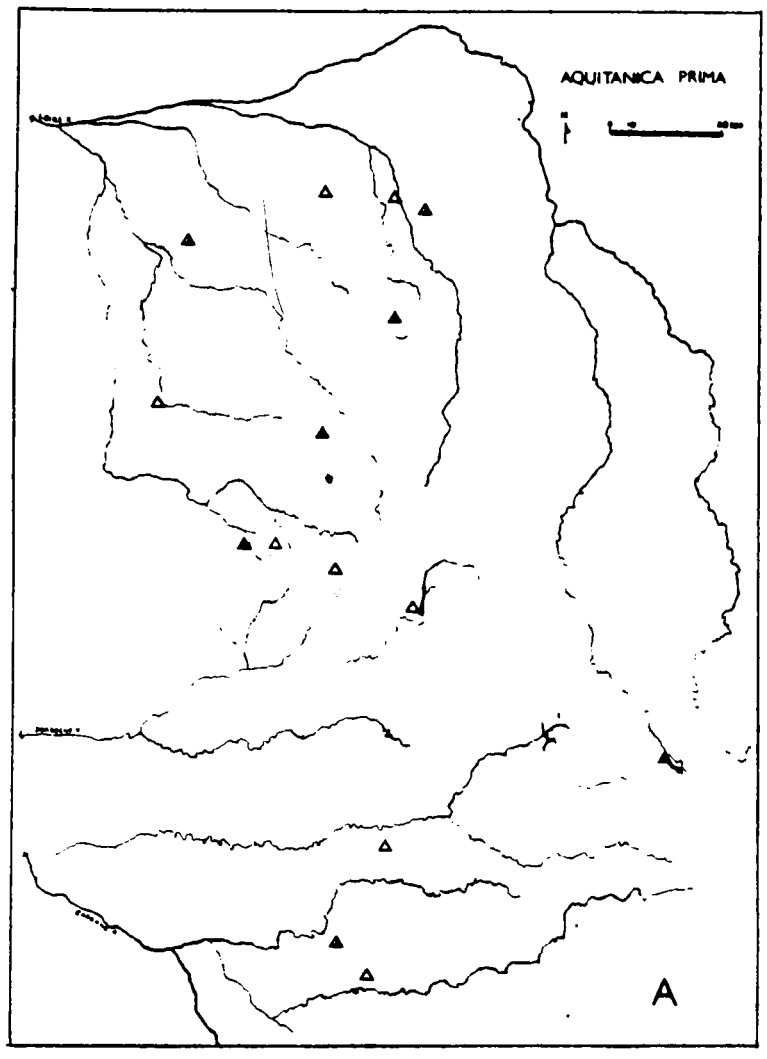
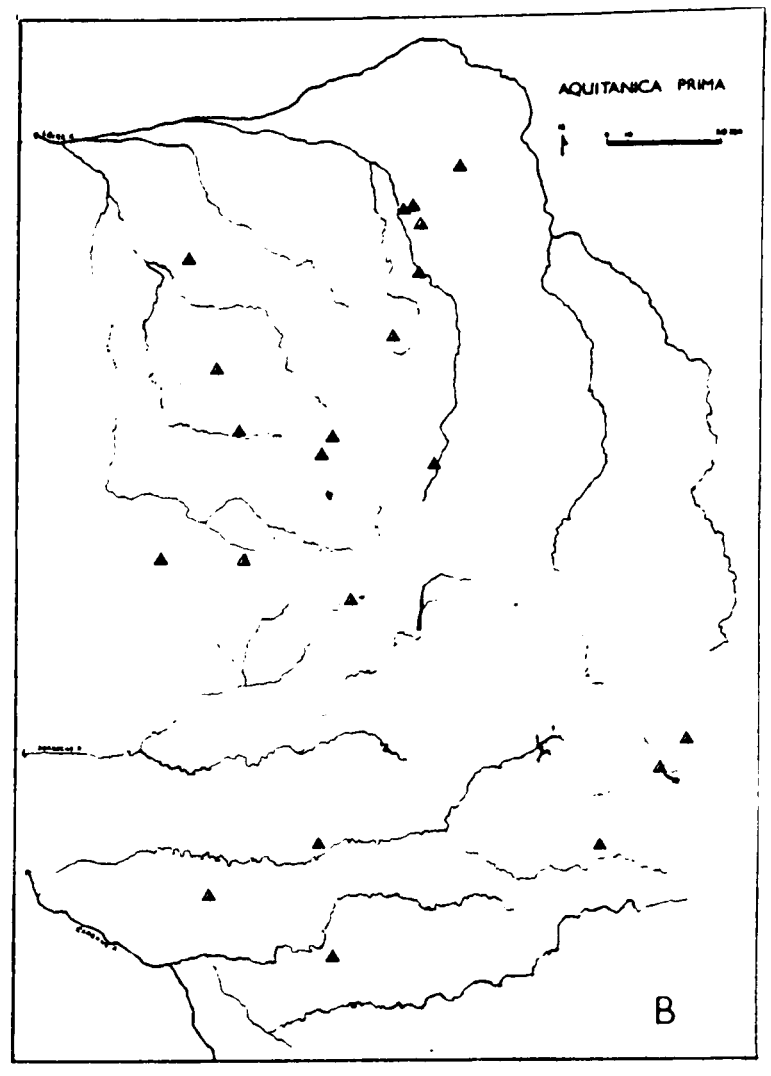


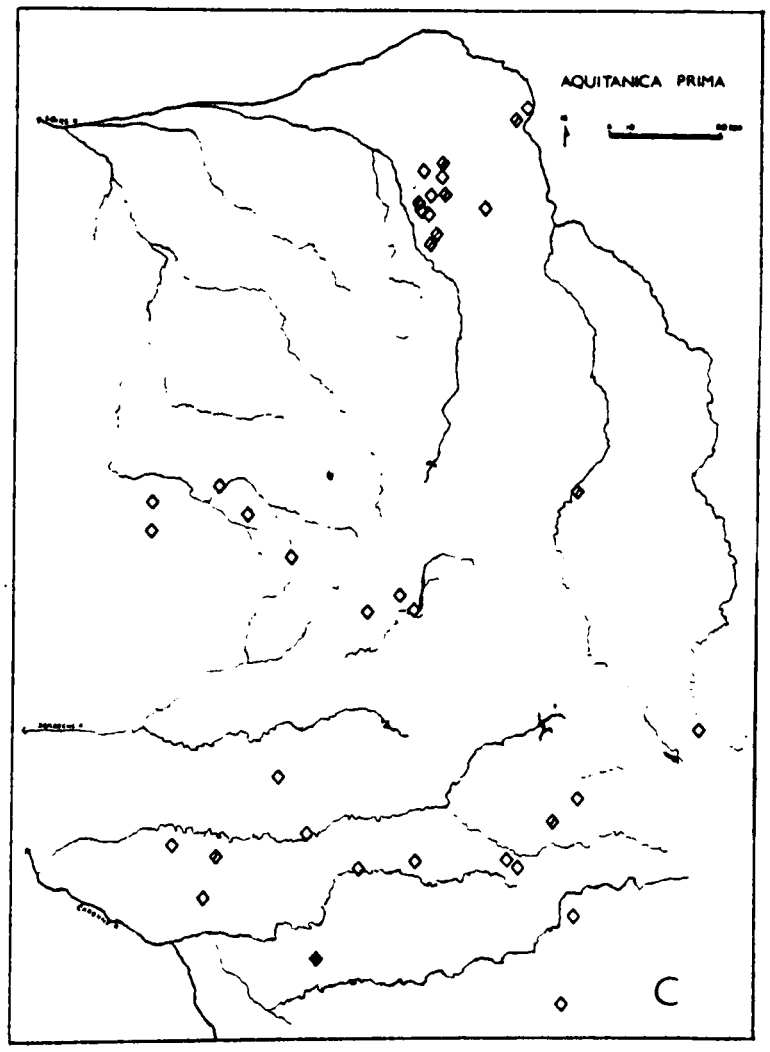
Fig 3 Map of villa-sites listed in Appendix I (Site Catalogue)

● : indicates civitas-capital

o : indicates villa-site







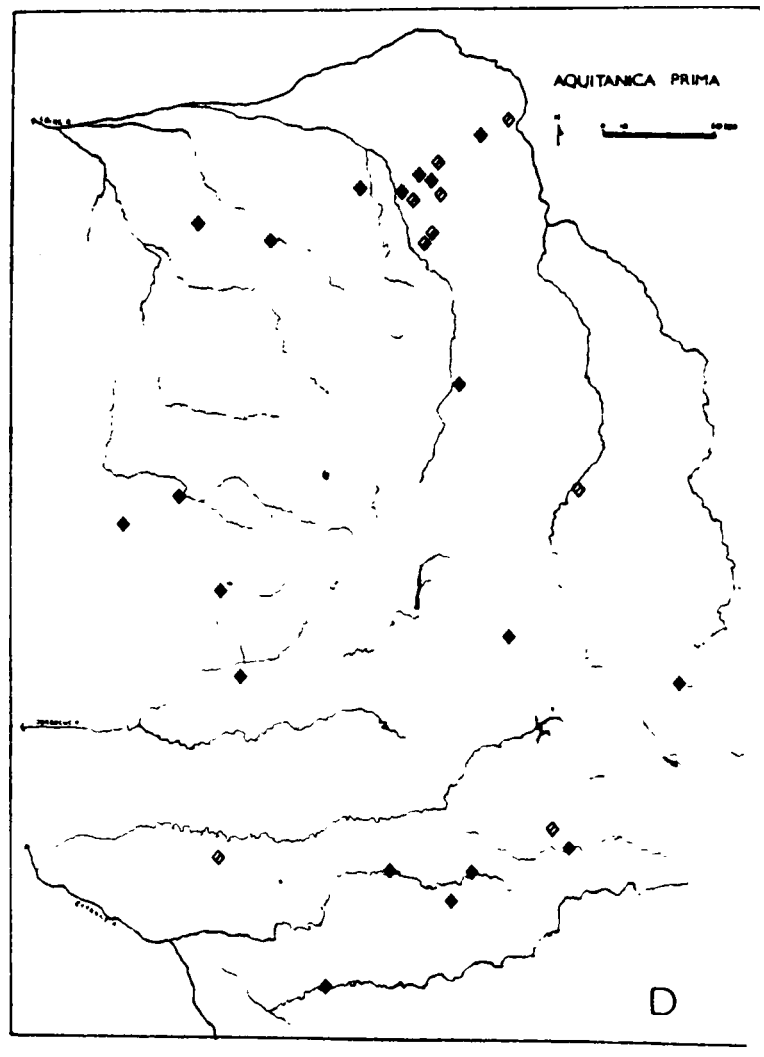


Fig.4 Villa-sites & their apparent demise. A) A.D. 200 - 250 B) 250 - 300

(N.B.: Both show ▲ sites datable only to the 3rd century in general)

C) 300 - 350 D) Post 350

(N.B.: Both show ◆ sites datable only to the 4th century in general)

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Plate 3. Pissevieille [SN 32]

Plate 4. La Chaume aux Couards [SN 18]

Plate 5. Lunery [SN 26]

Plate 6. La Garenne [SN 22]

Plate 7. Champ des Pois [SN 17]

Plate 8. ***a.*** Châteaufort [SN 67] ***b.*** Les Bonnes [SN 15]

Plate 9. ***a.*** Pouplin [SN 34] ***b.*** Pontbordat [SN 70]

Plate 10. ***a.*** Mazières [SN 27] ***b.*** La Mazère [SN 63]

Plate 11. ***a.*** Les Cachons [SN 16] ***b.*** Les Grandes Pièces [SN 24]

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c. Les Cars [SN 39] ***d.*** Laroche [SN 42]

e. Le Souquet [SN 78] ***f.*** Les Couvents [SN 59]

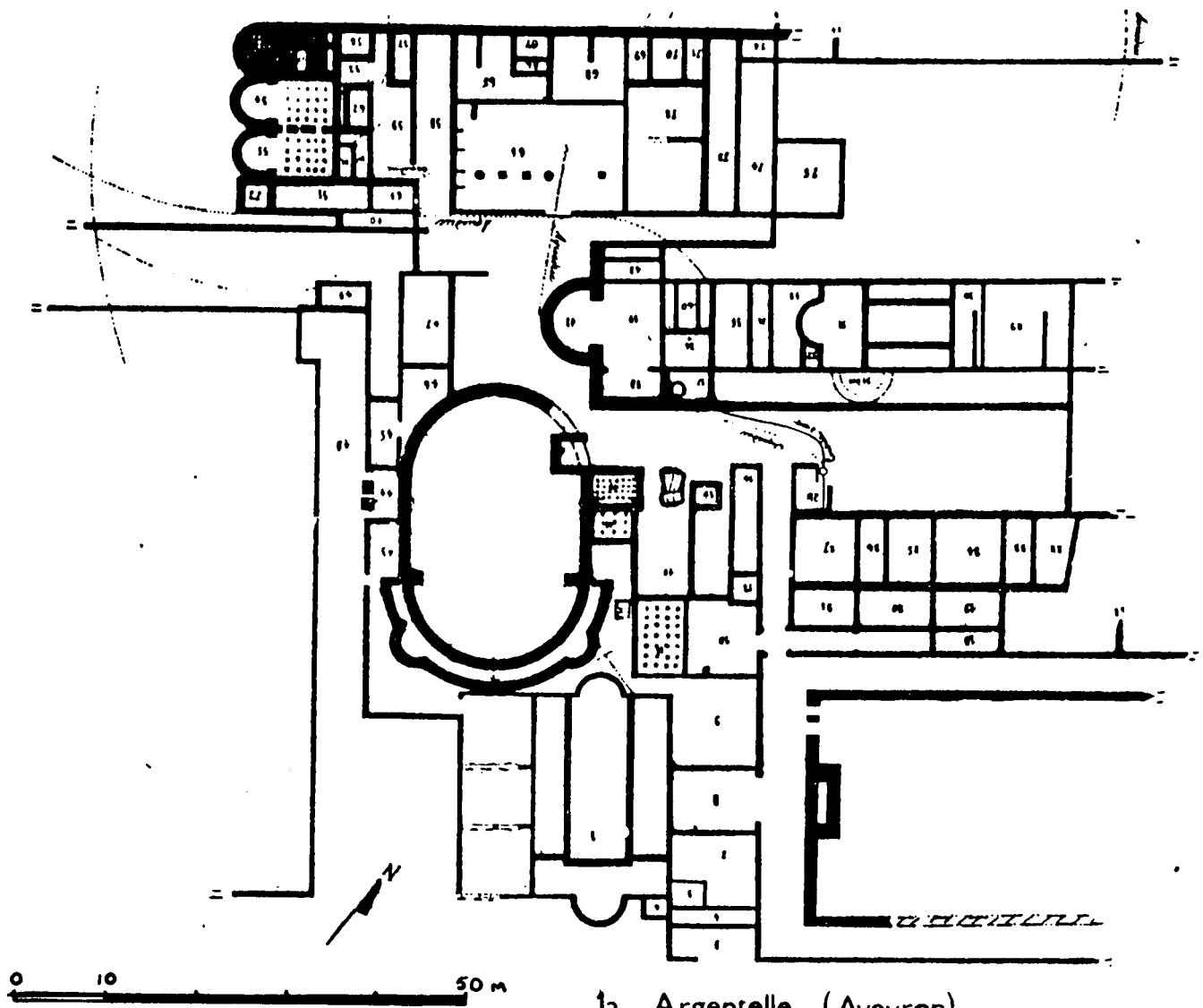
Plate 14. ***a.*** Le Plaix [SN 33] ***b.*** Cros des Serves [SN 40]

c. Le Bois-Boudou [SN 38] ***d.*** Fontorte [SN 77]

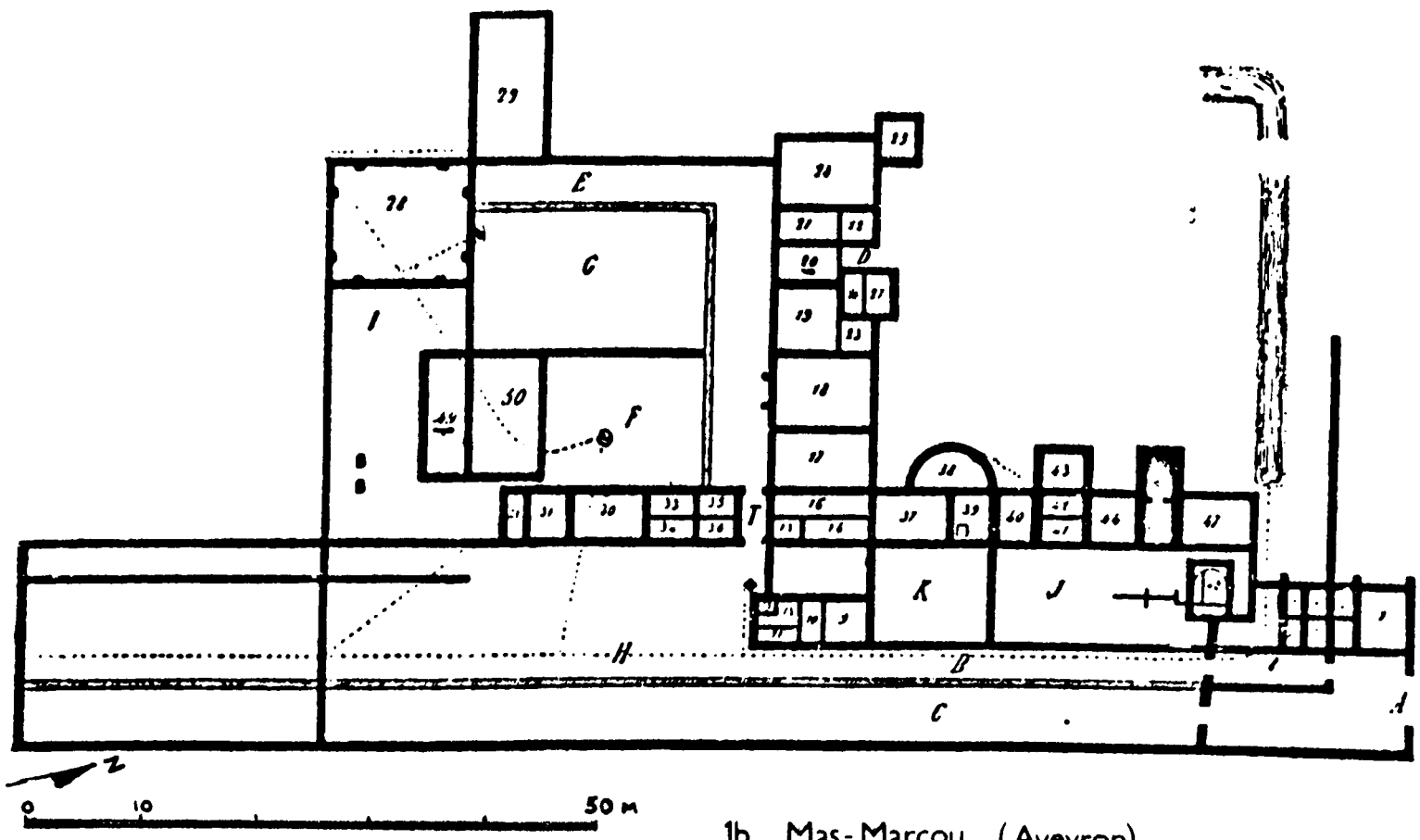
e. La Pétonnière [SN 69] ***f.*** Chez-Roger [SN 57]

Plate 15. ***a.*** Brachaud [SN 55] ***b.*** Croix-du-Ban [SN 19]

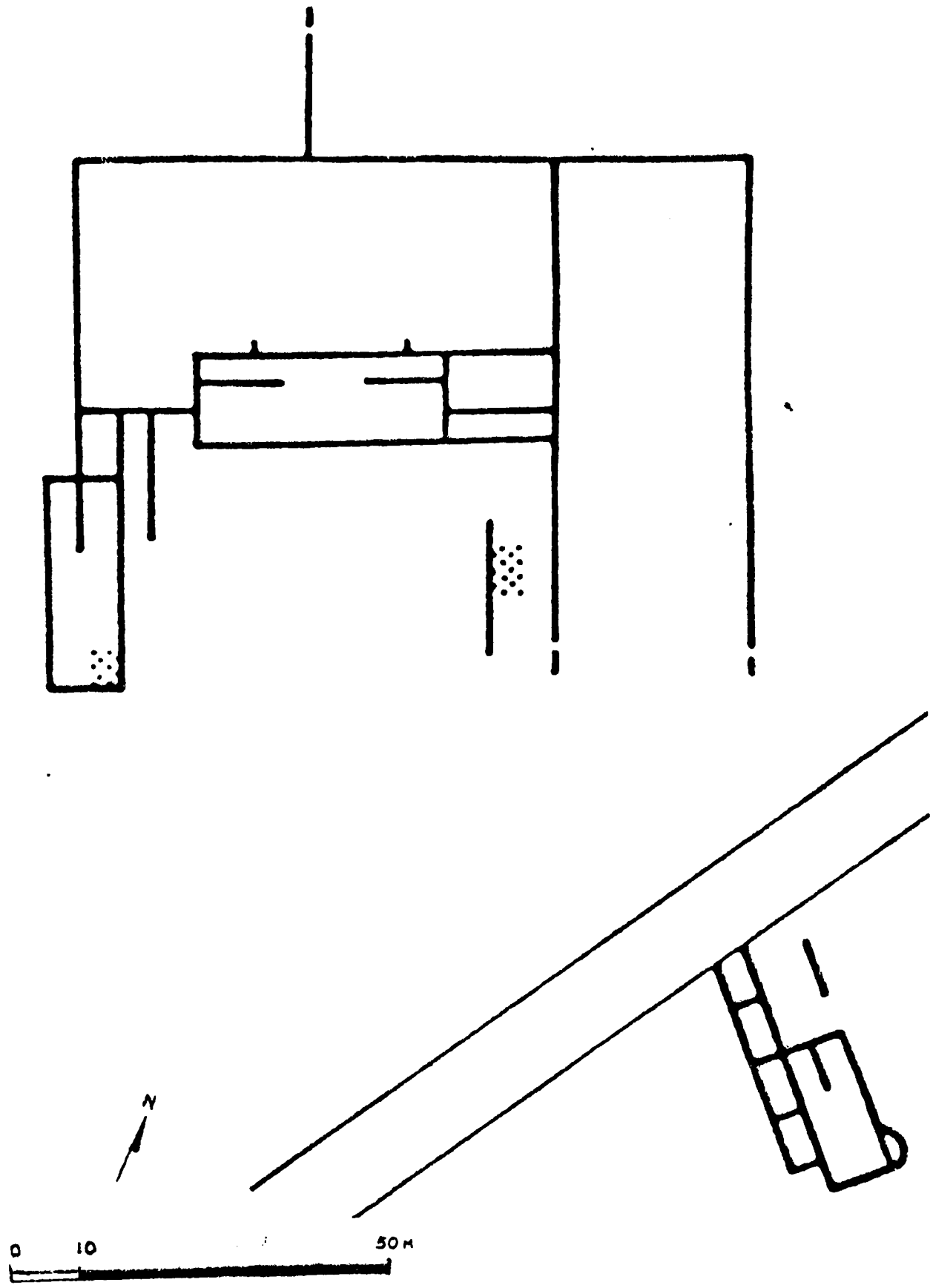
Plate 16. ***a.*** Villedieu-sur-Indre [SN 71] ***b.*** Les Souils [SN 52]



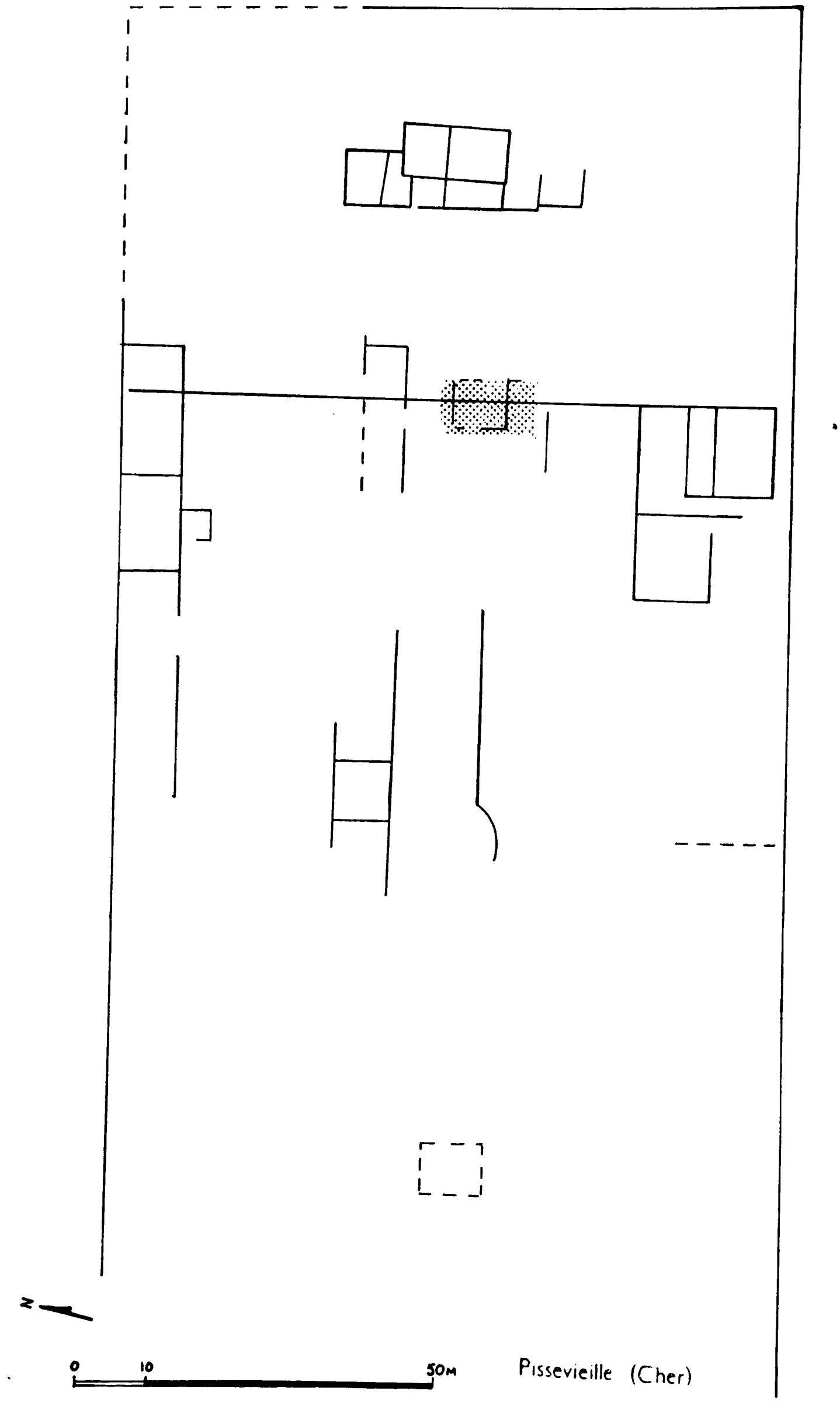
1a. Argentelle (Aveyron)



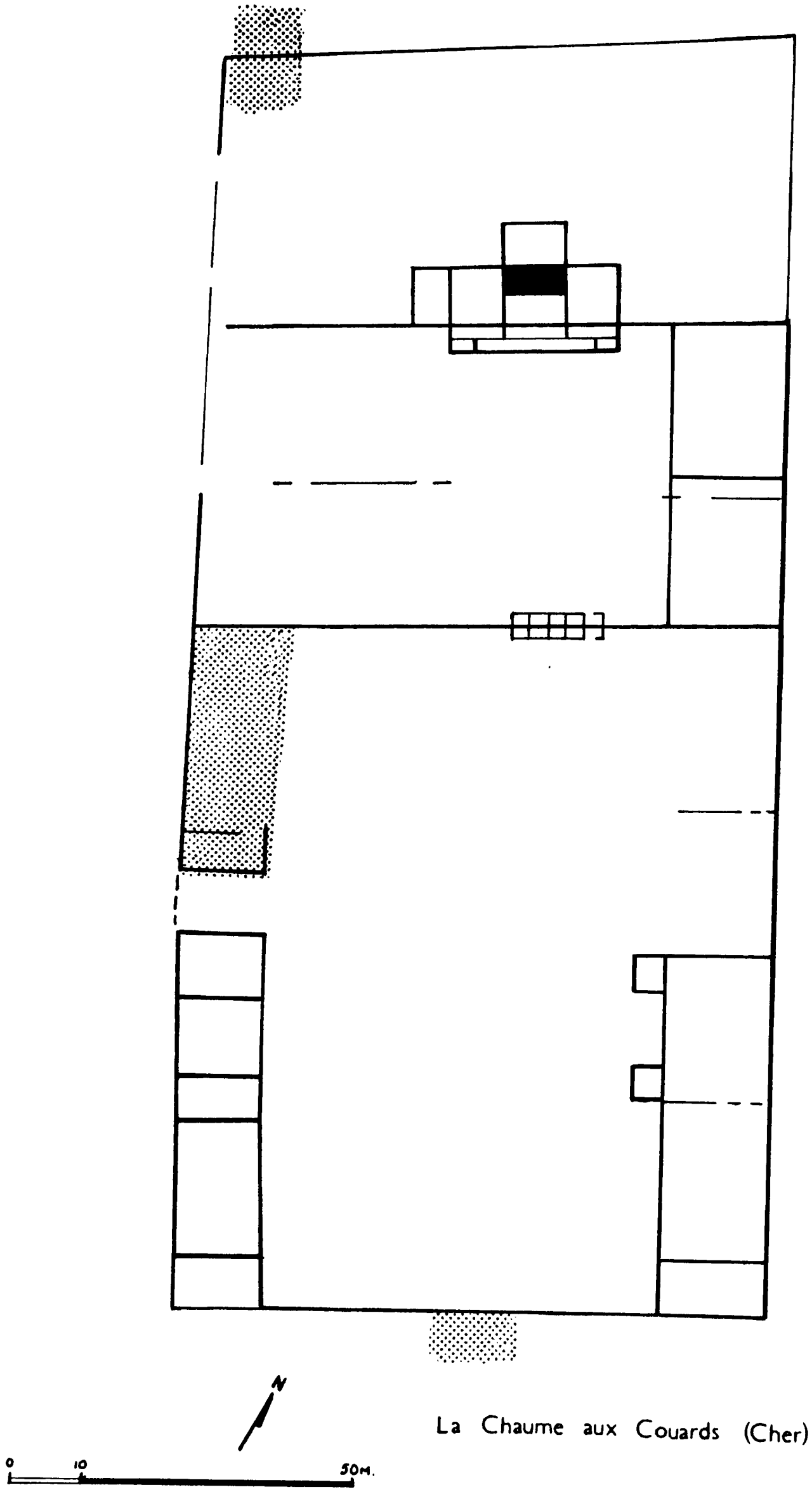
1b. Mas-Marcou (Aveyron)



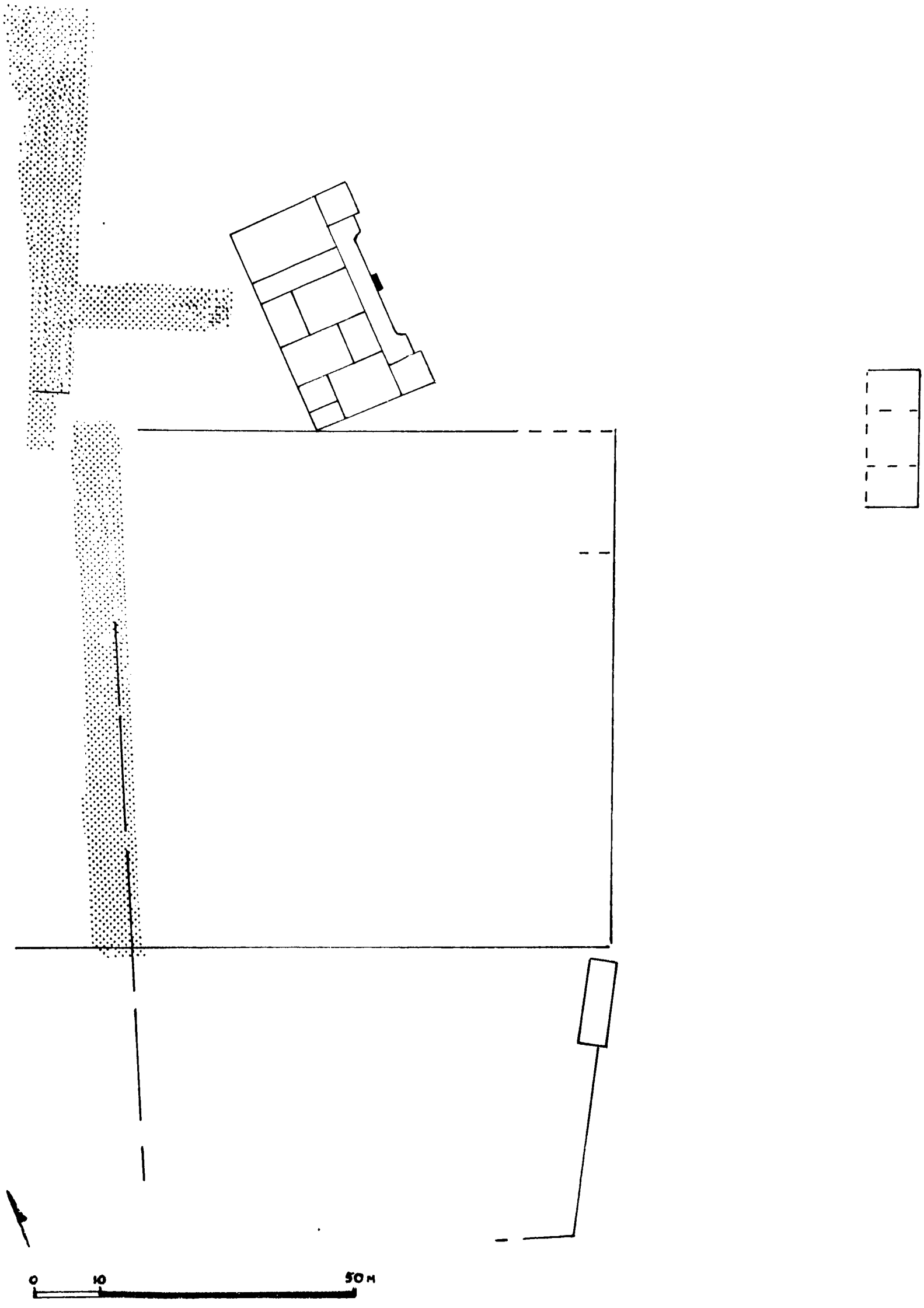
Ardilliers (Cher)



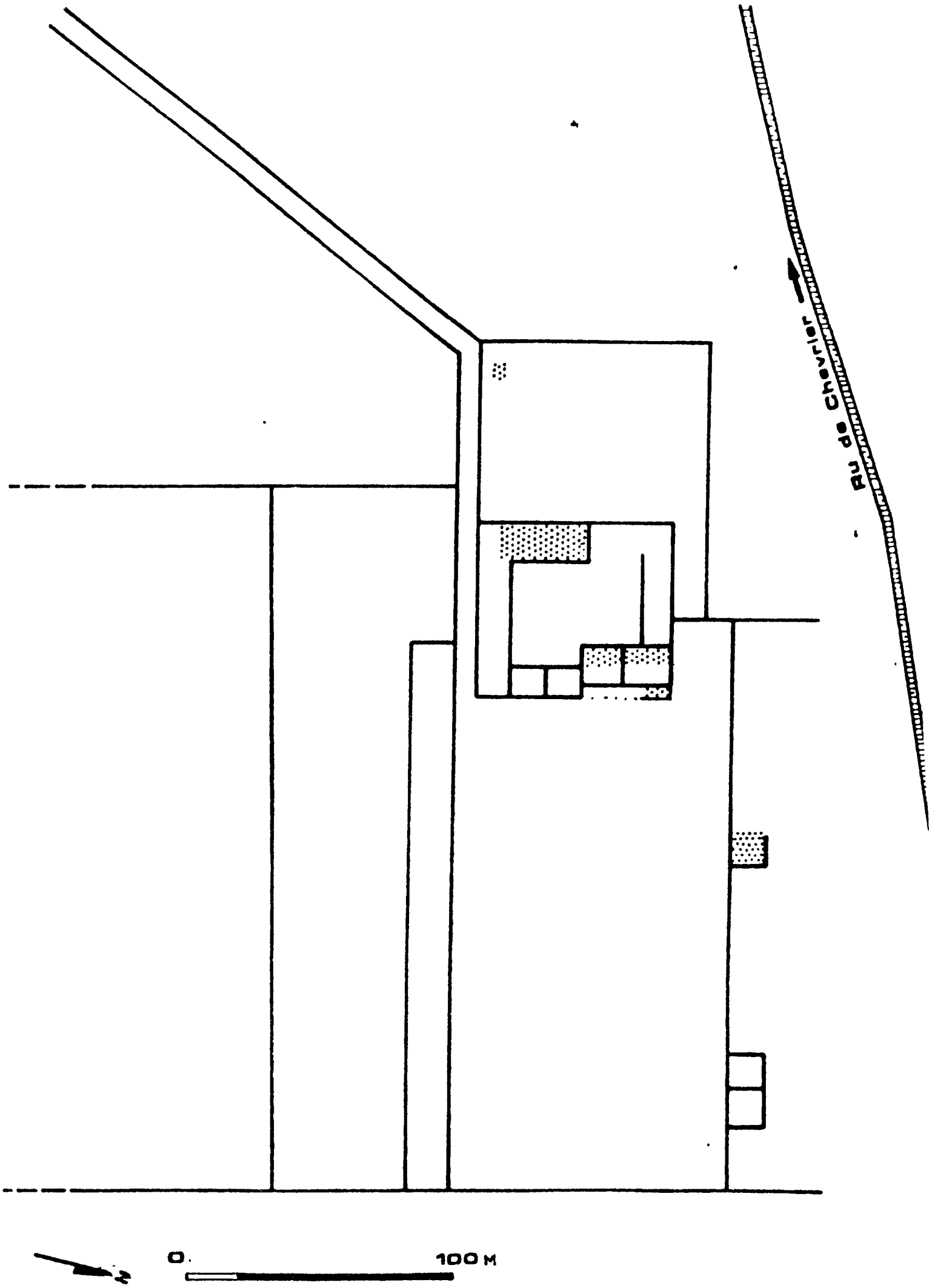
Pissevieille (Cher)



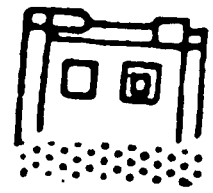
La Chaume aux Couards (Cher)

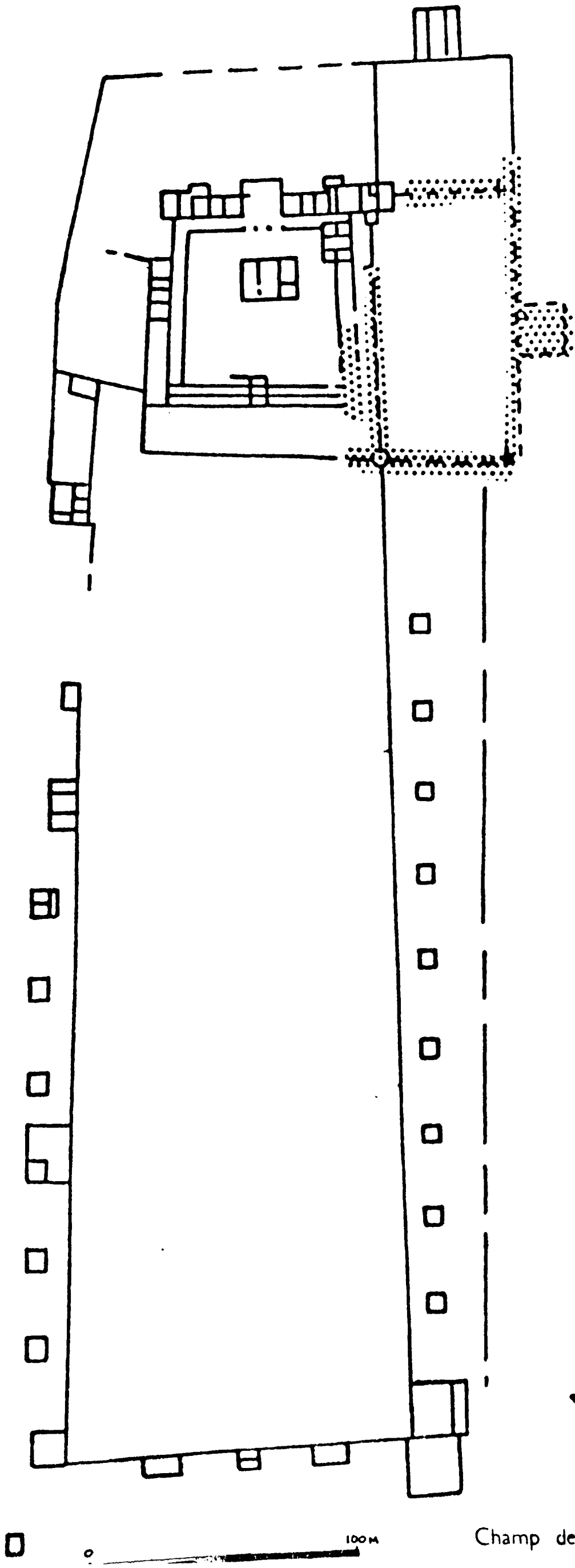


Lunery (Cher)

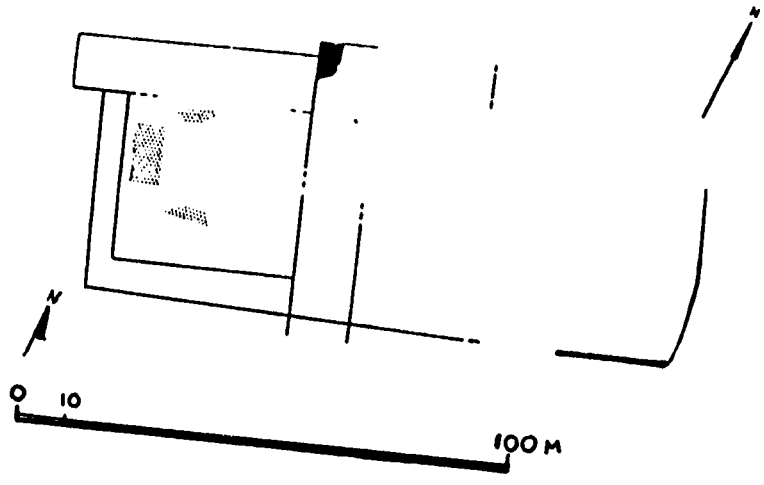


La Garenne (Cher)

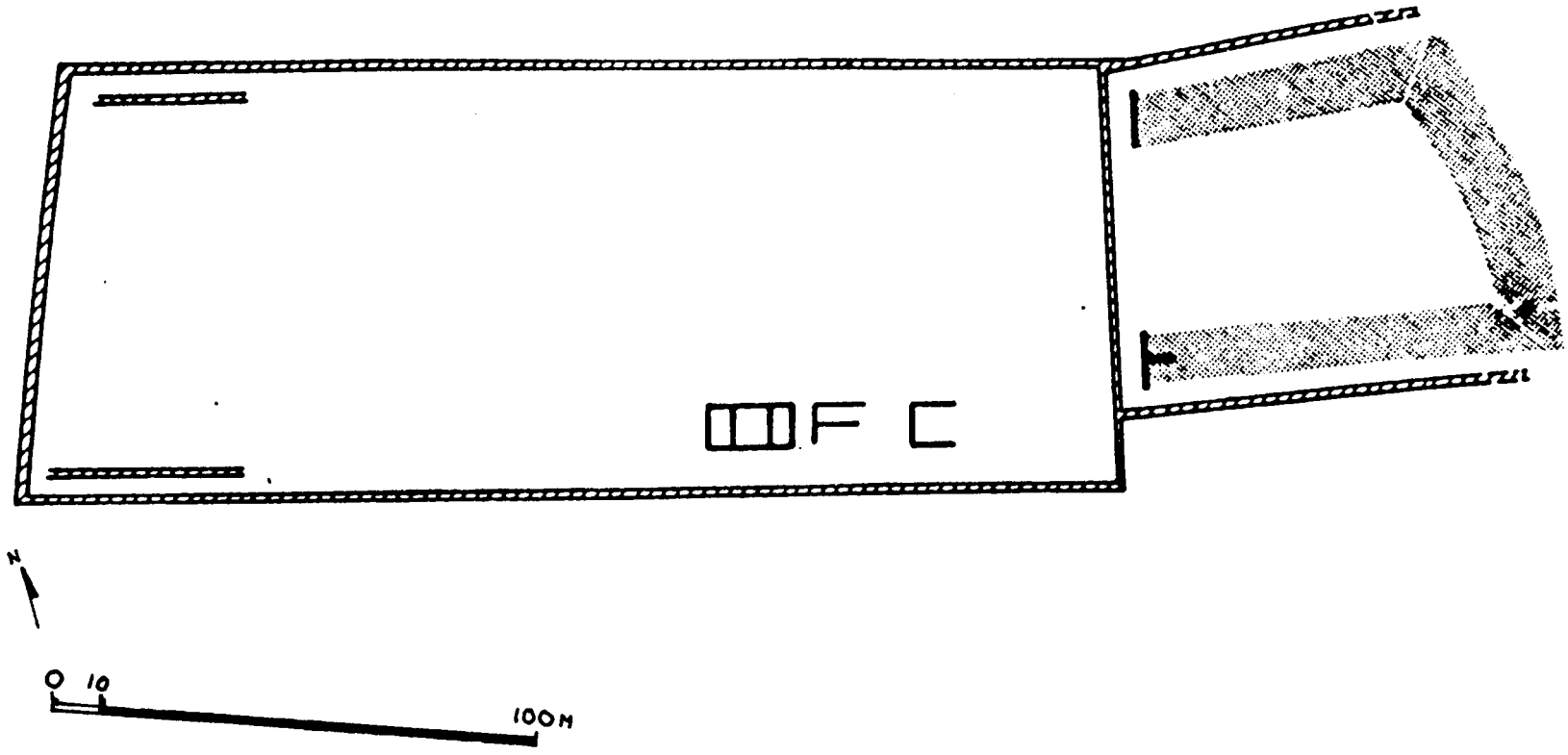




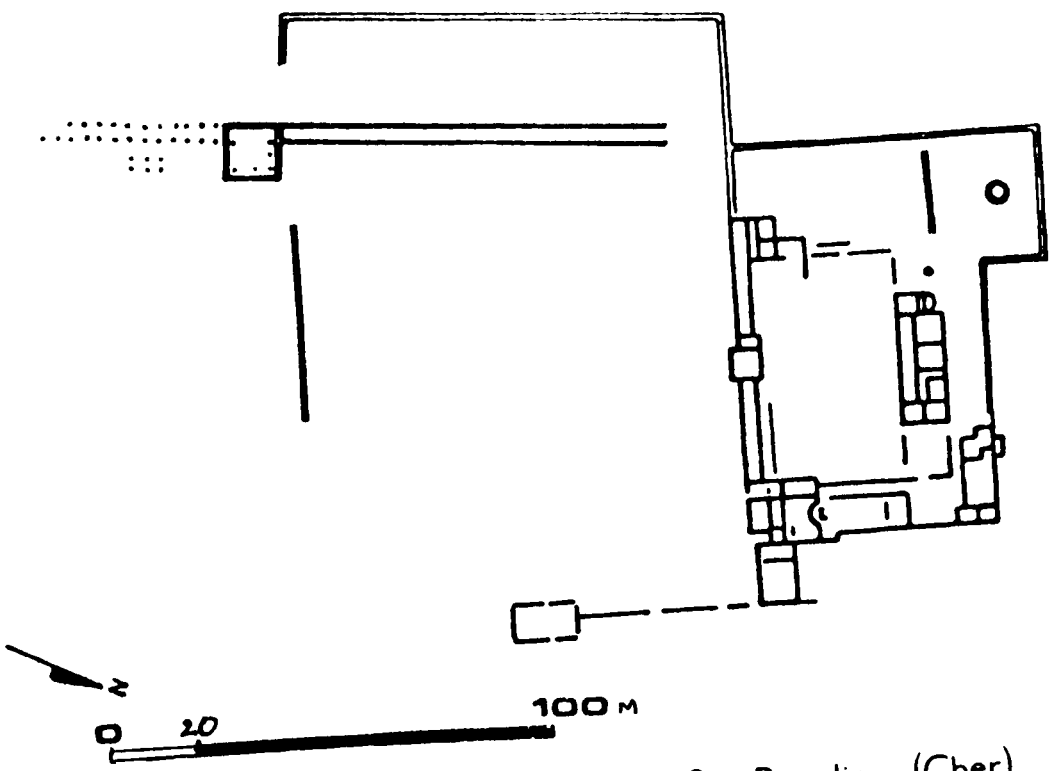
Champ des Pois (Cher)



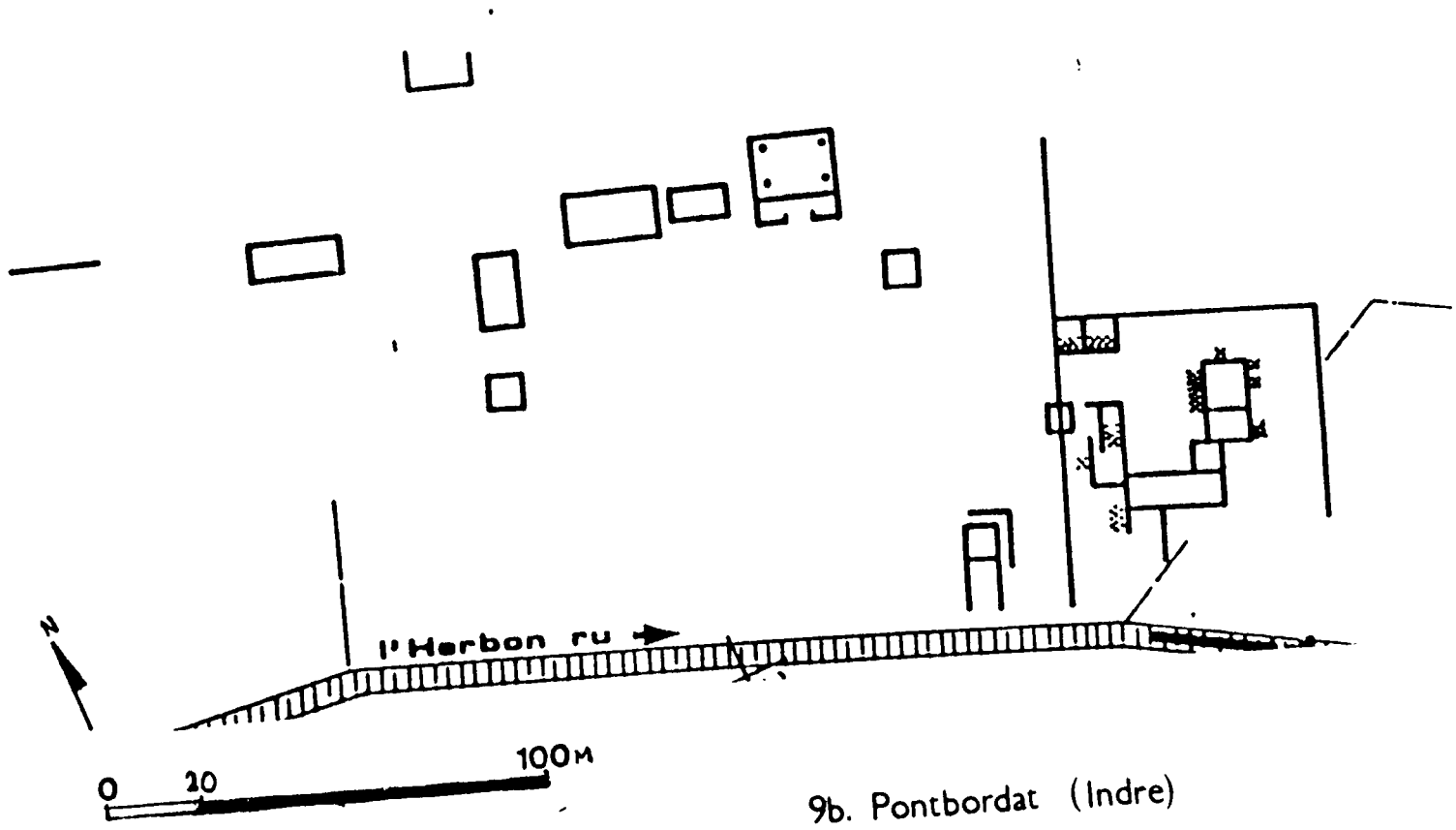
8a. Les Bonnes (Cher)



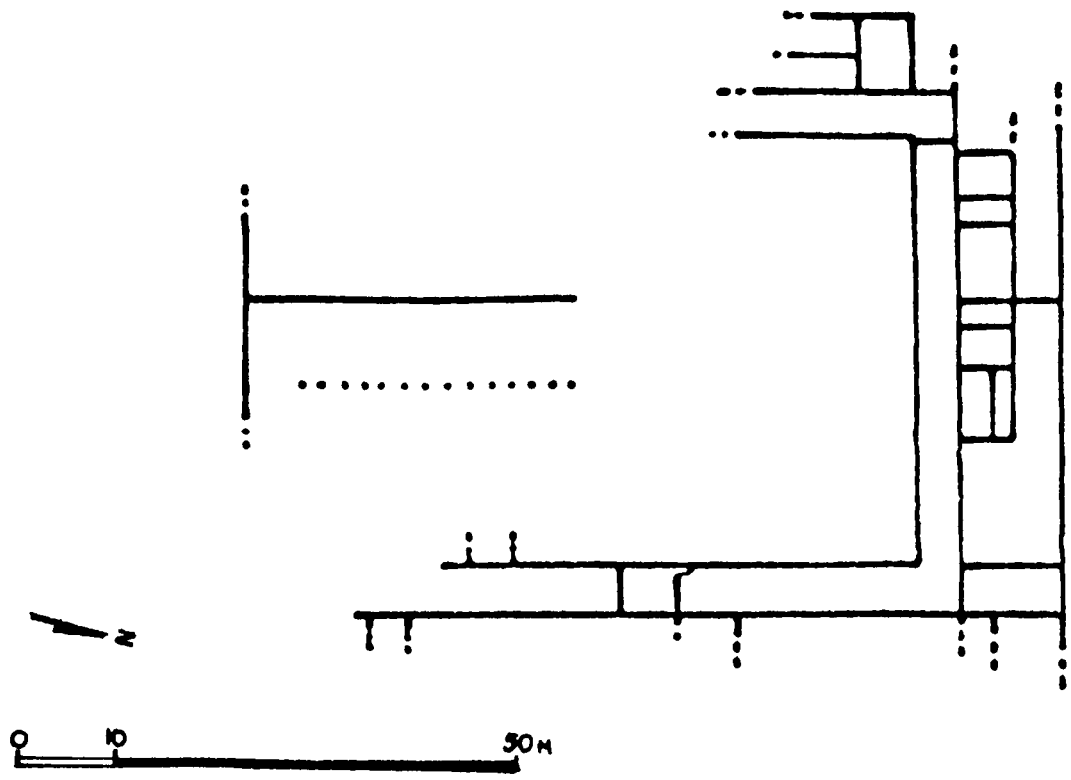
8b. Chateaufort (Indre)



9a. Pouplin (Cher)



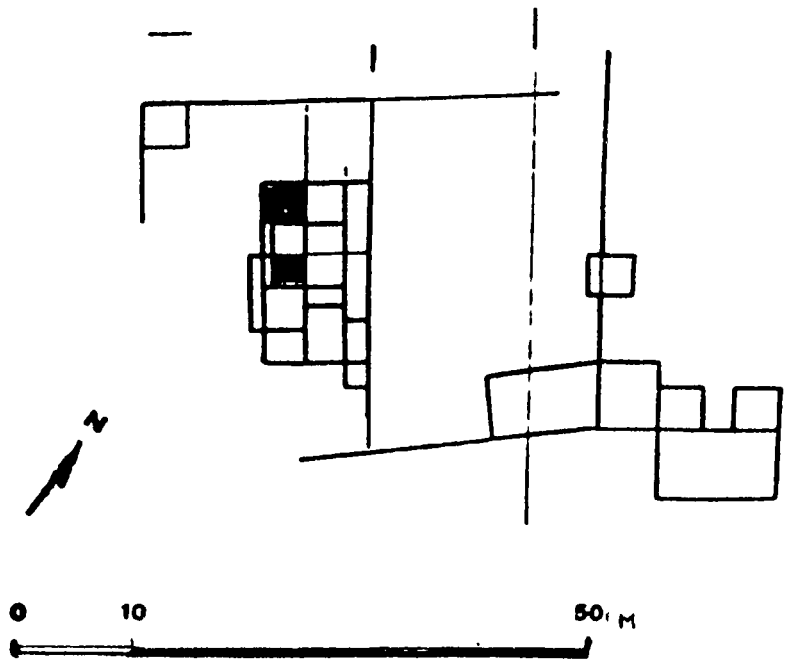
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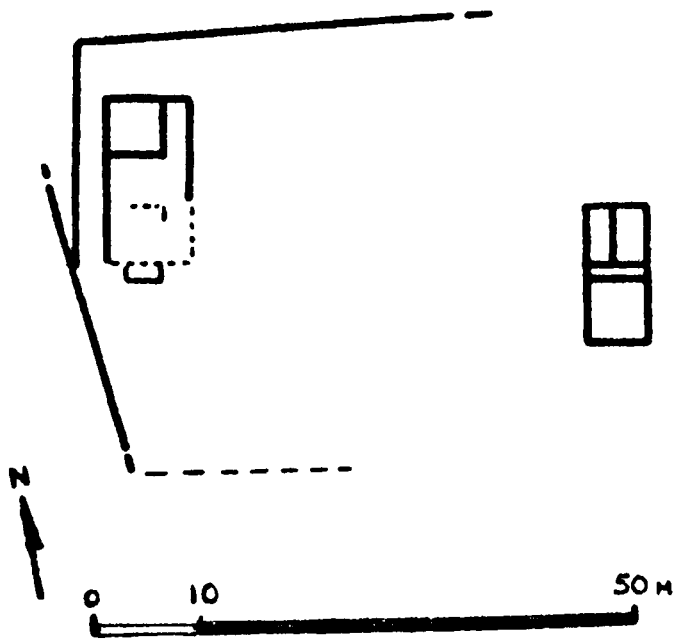
10a. Mazières (Cher)



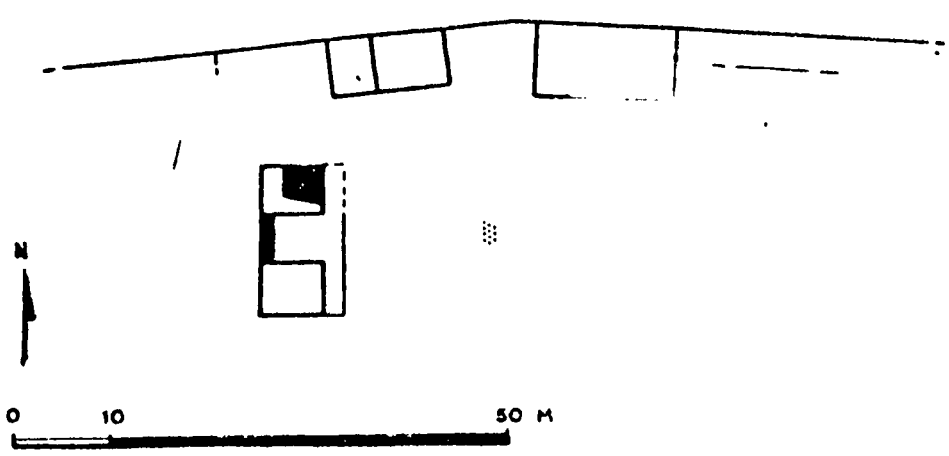
10b. La Mazère (Hte-Vienne)



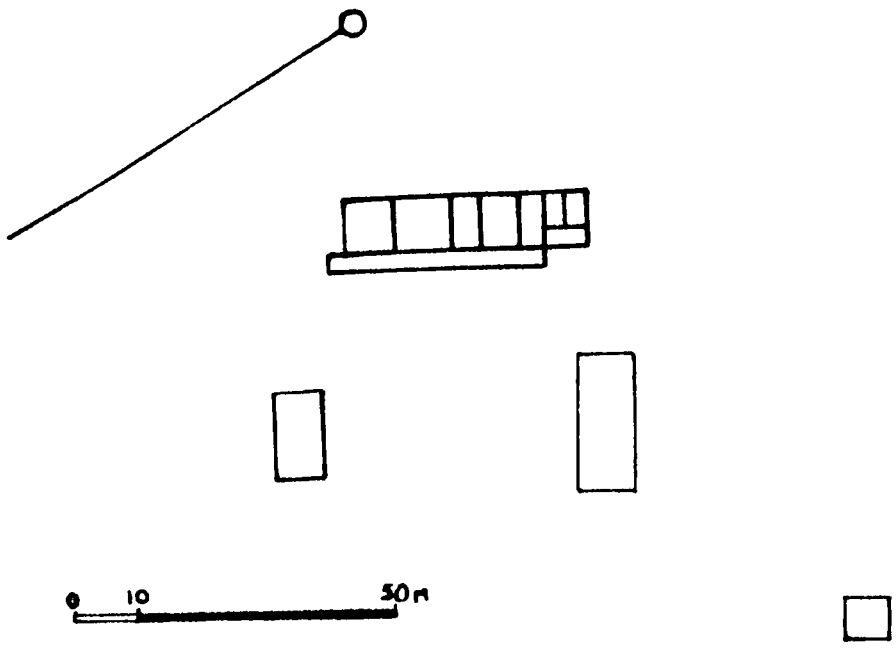
IIa. Les Cachons (Cher)



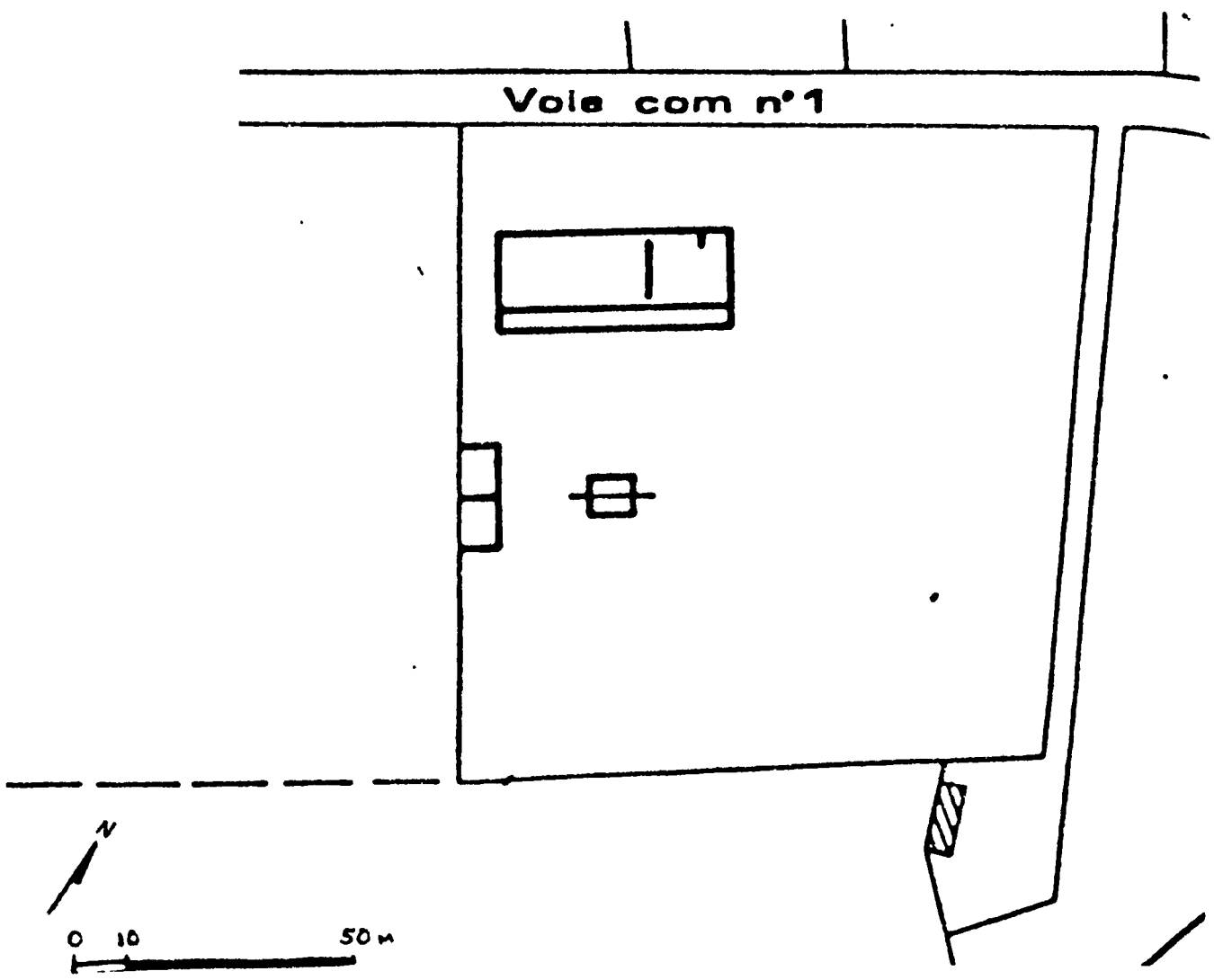
IIb. Les Grandes Pièces (Cher)



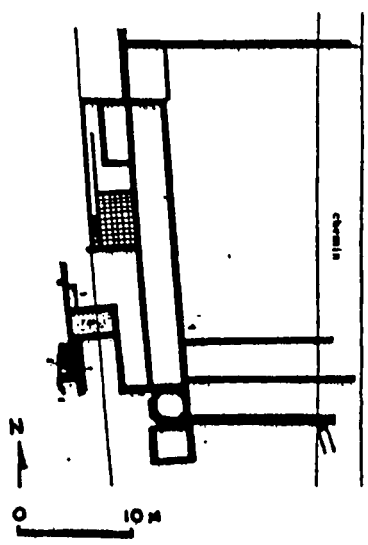
IIc. Le Crot Rouge (Cher)



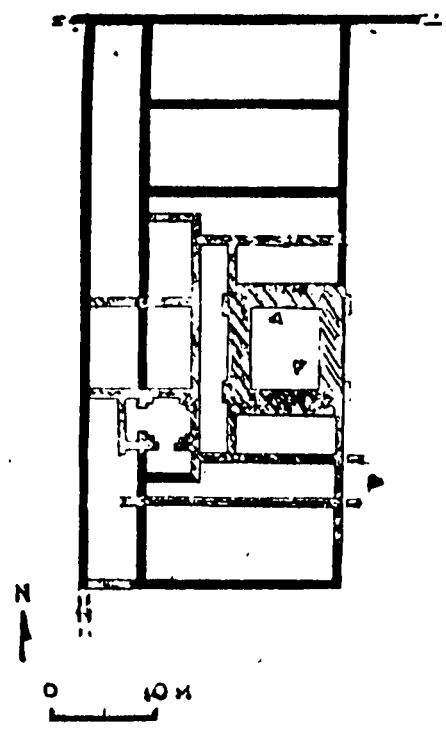
12a. Brignes (Lozère)



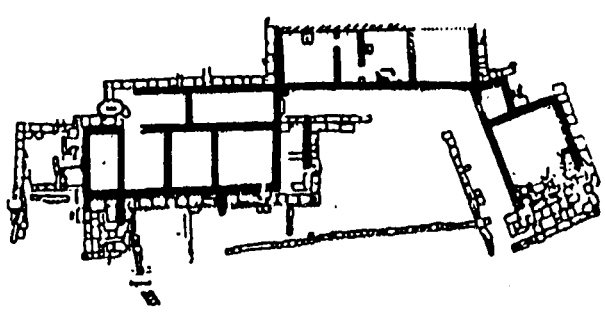
12b. Le Champ Pillault (Indre)



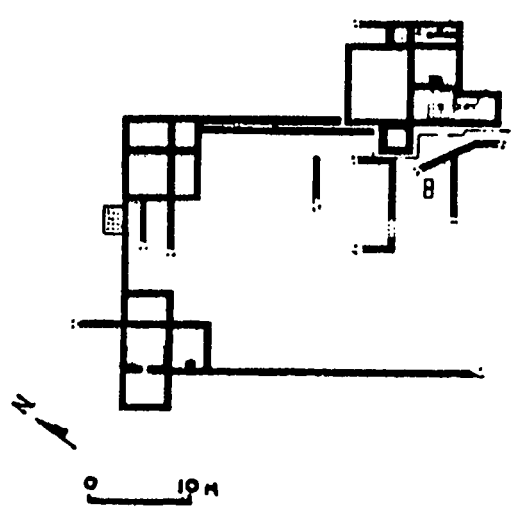
13a. Vauvert (Cher)



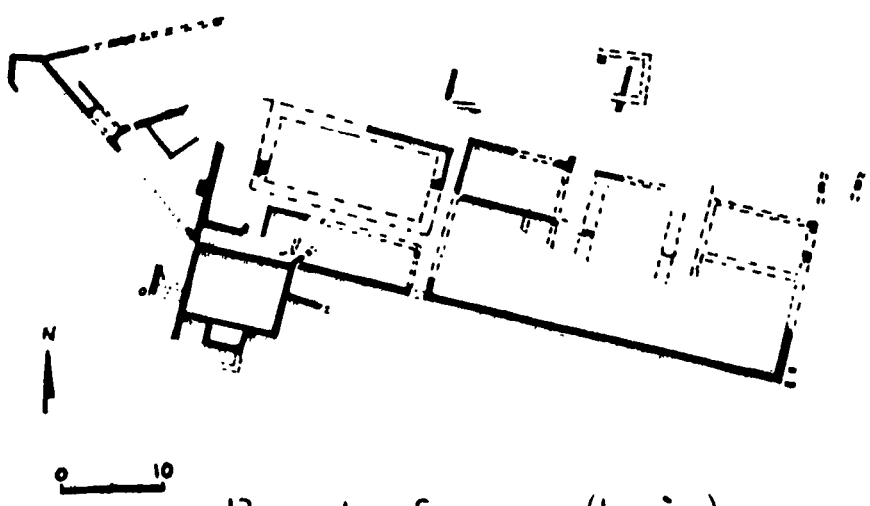
13b. Espaly (Hte-Loire)



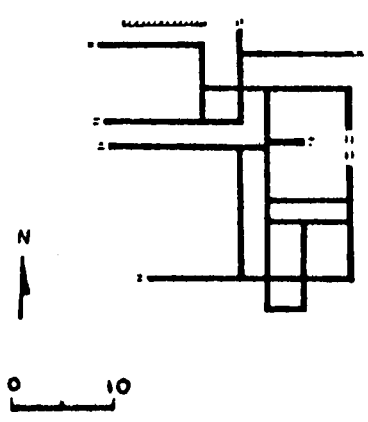
13c. Les Cars (Corrèze)



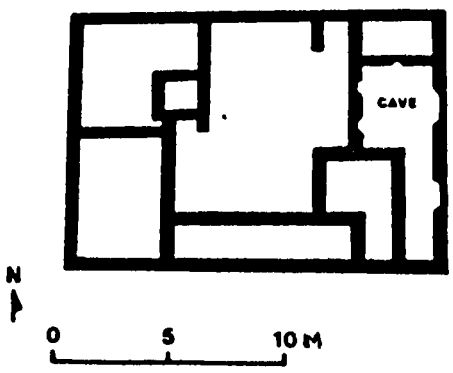
13d. Laroche (Corrèze)



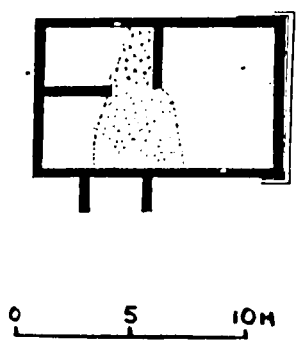
13e. Le Souquet (Lozère)



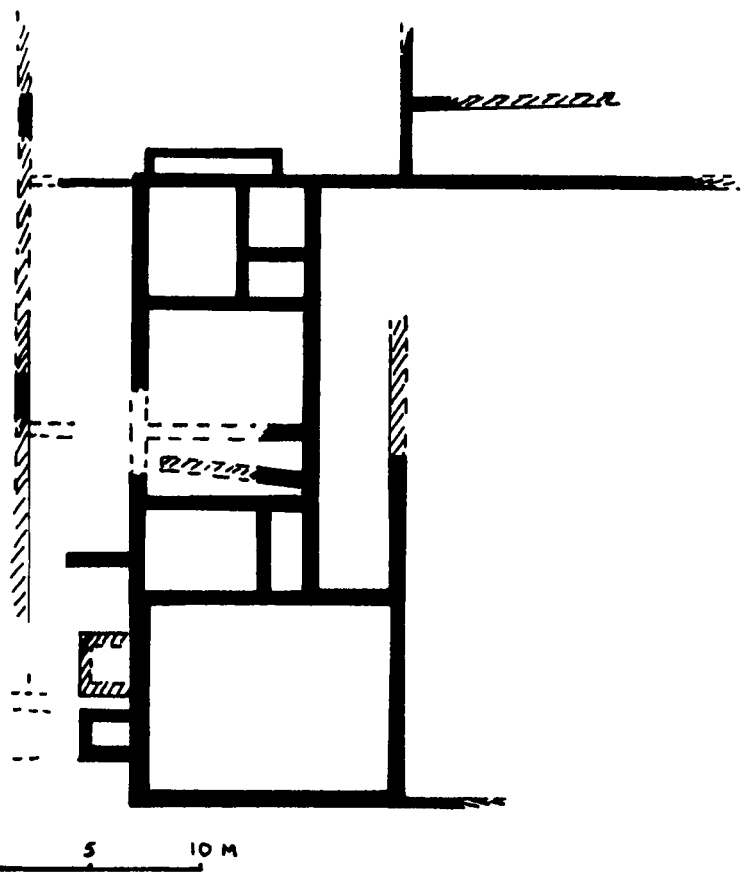
13f. Les Couvents (Hte-Vienne)



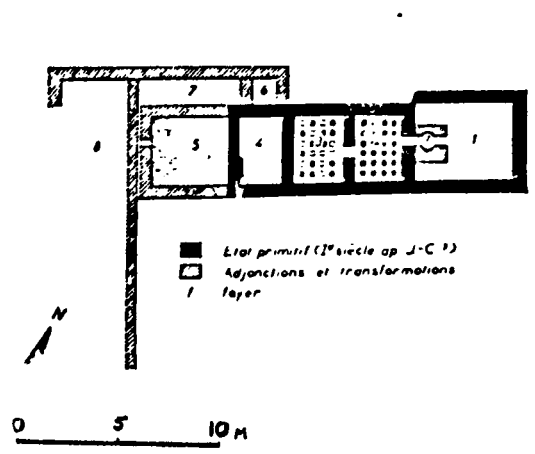
14a. Le Plaix (Cher)



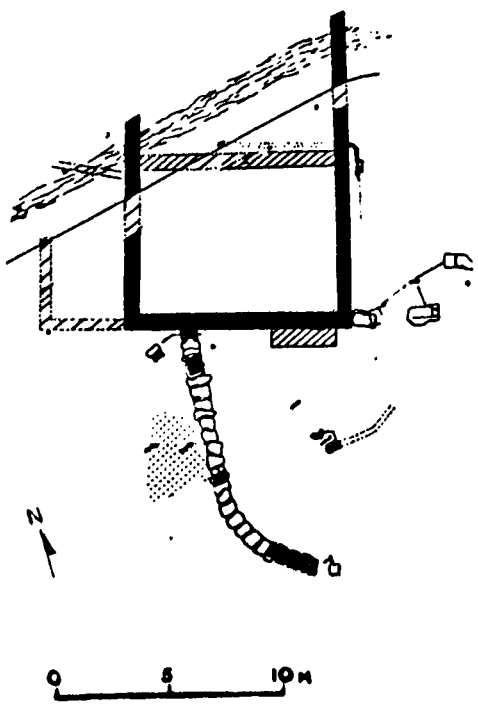
14b. Cros des Serves (Corrèze)



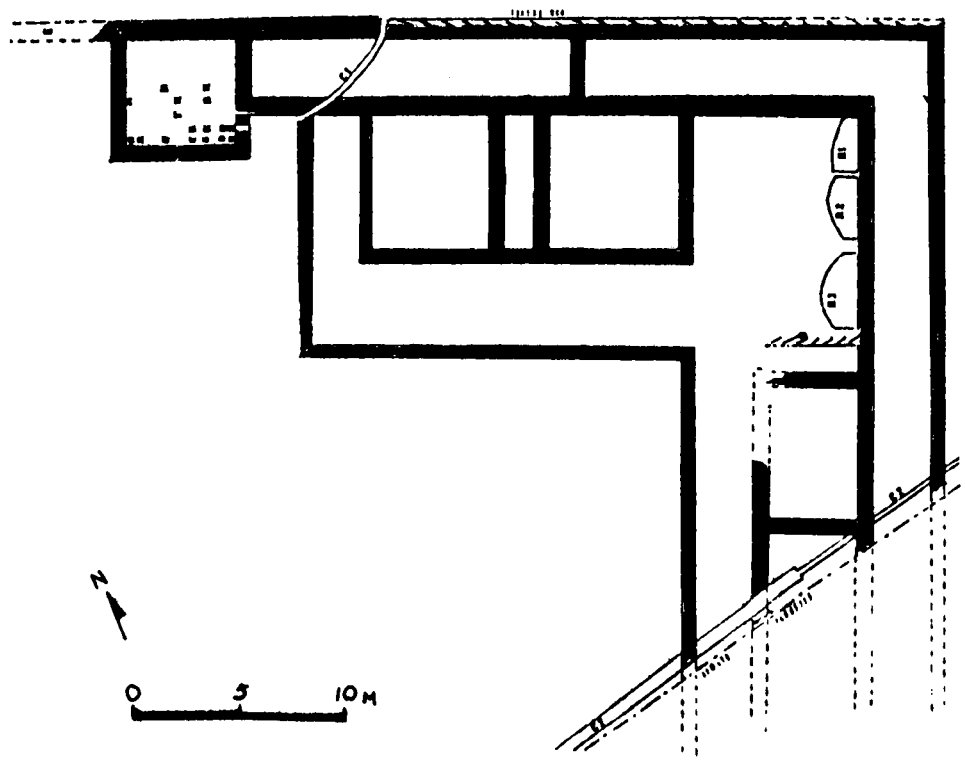
14c. Le Bois-Boudou (Corrèze)



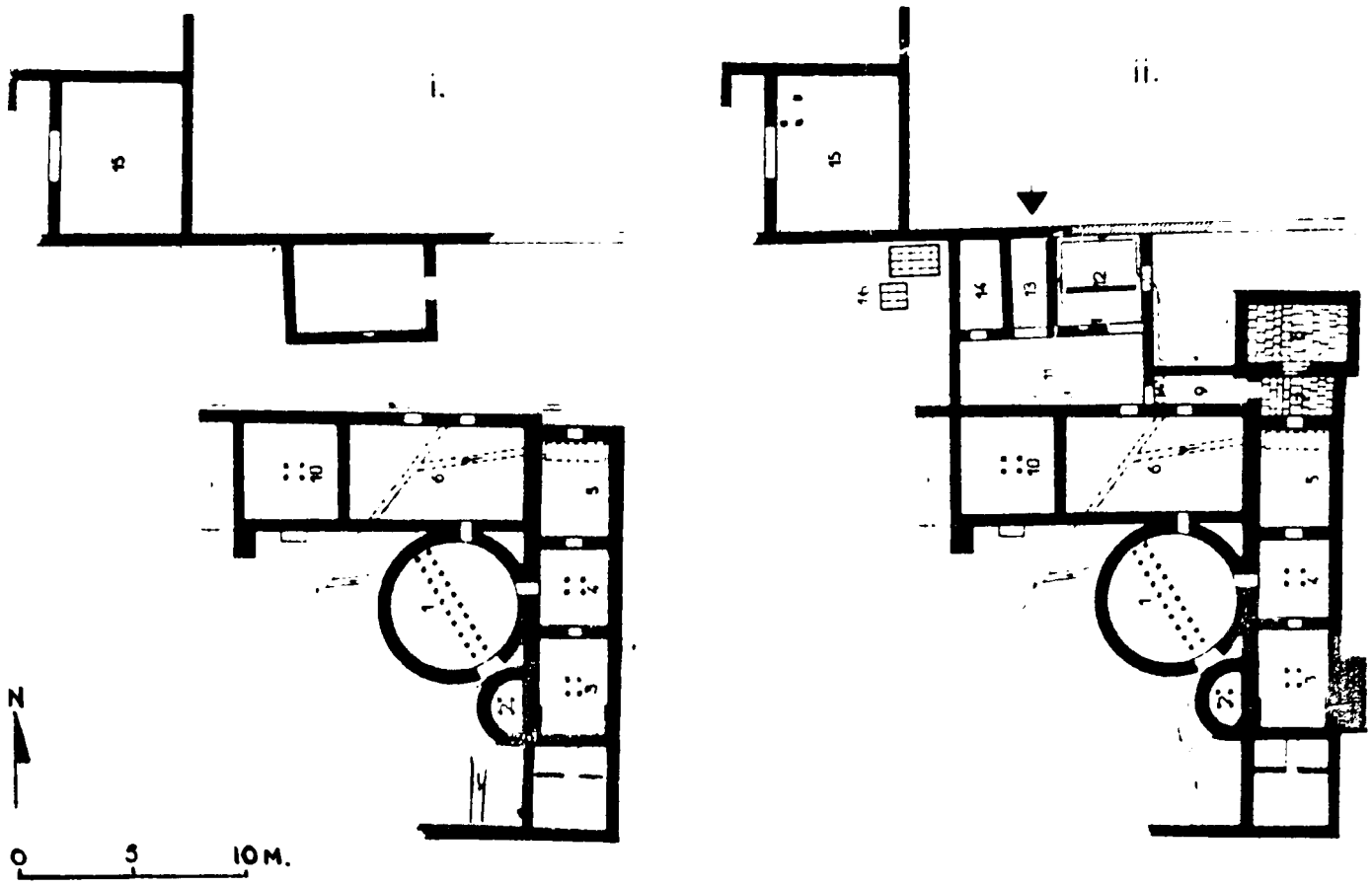
14d. Fontorte (Lot)



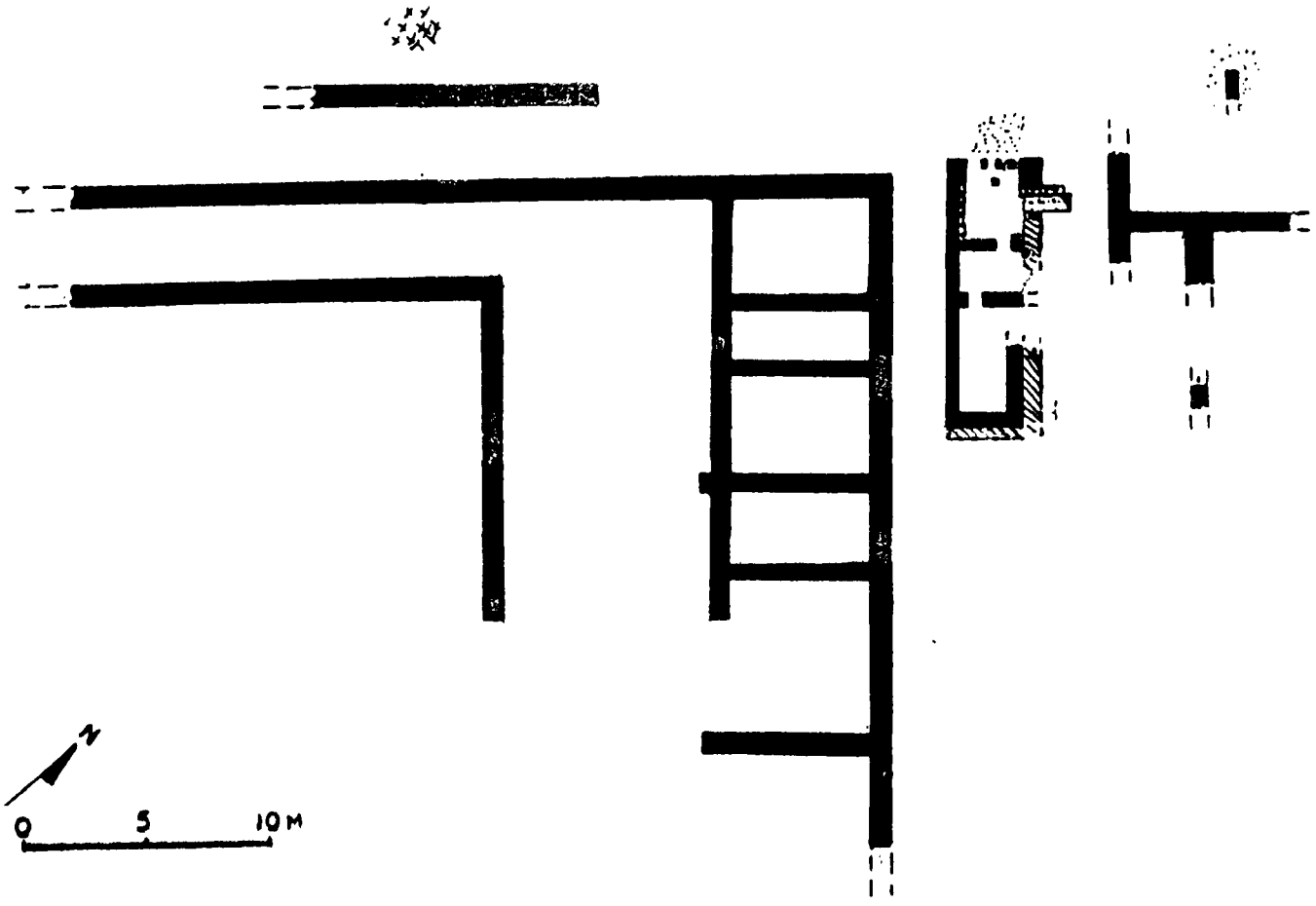
14e. La Pétonnière (Indre)



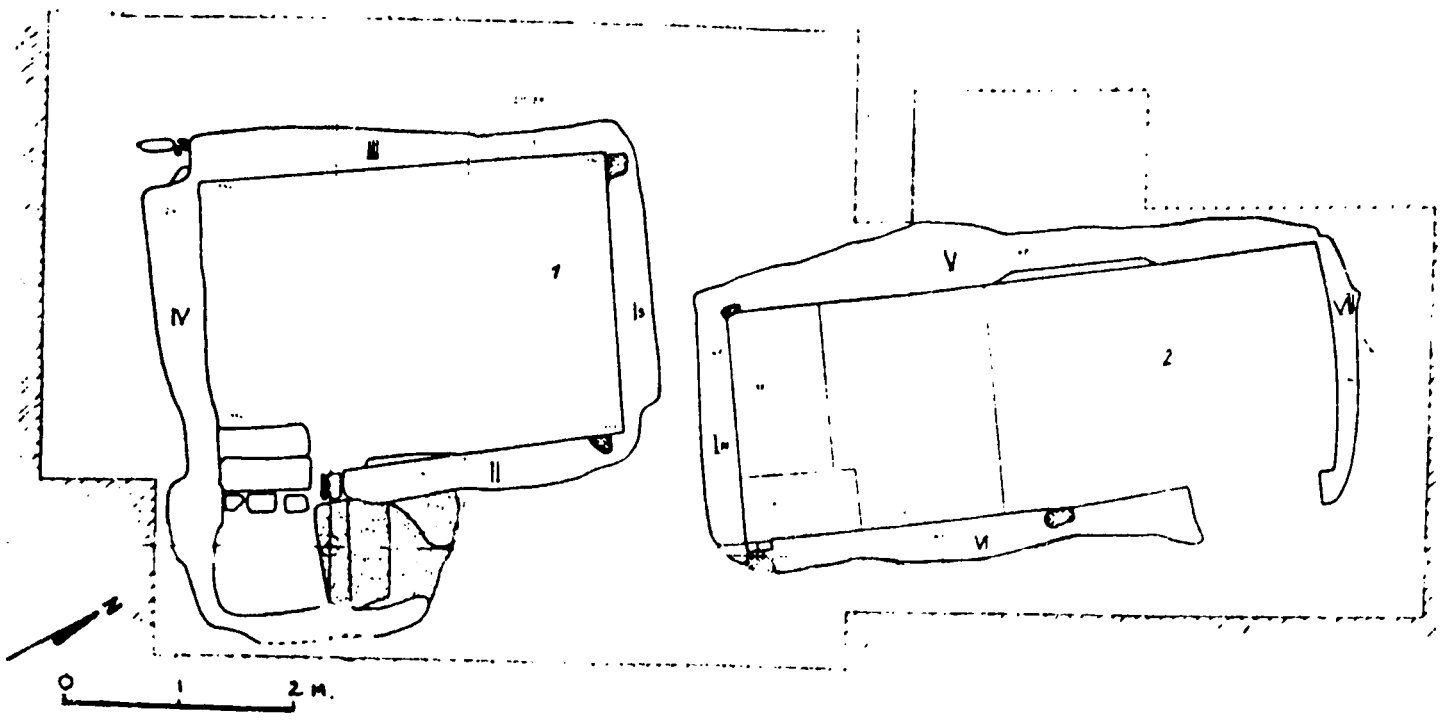
14f. Chez Roger (Indre)



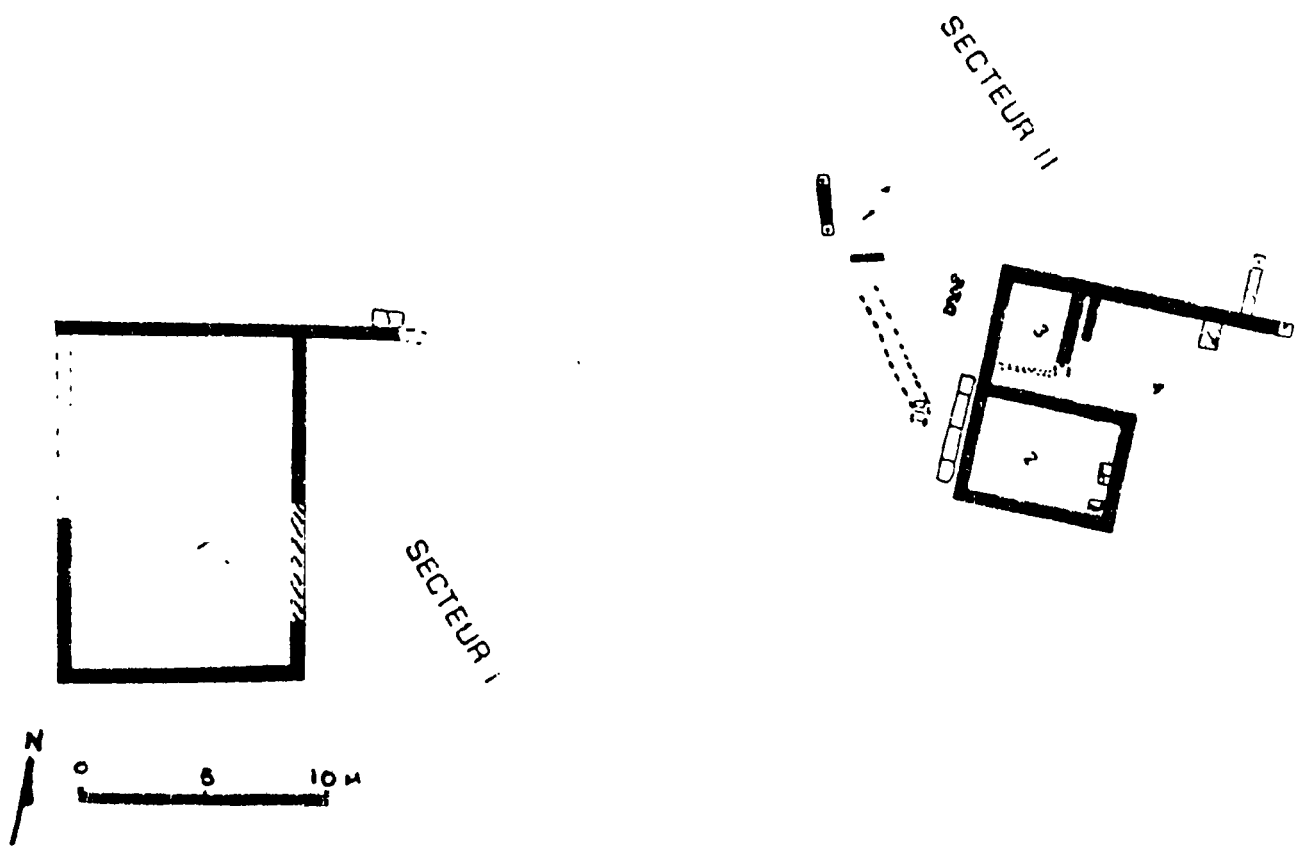
15a. Brachaud (Hte-Vienne): i, phase 1; ii, phase 2



15b. La Croix-du-Bân (Cher)



16a. Villedieu-sur-Indre (Indre)



16b. Les Souils (Hte-Loire)