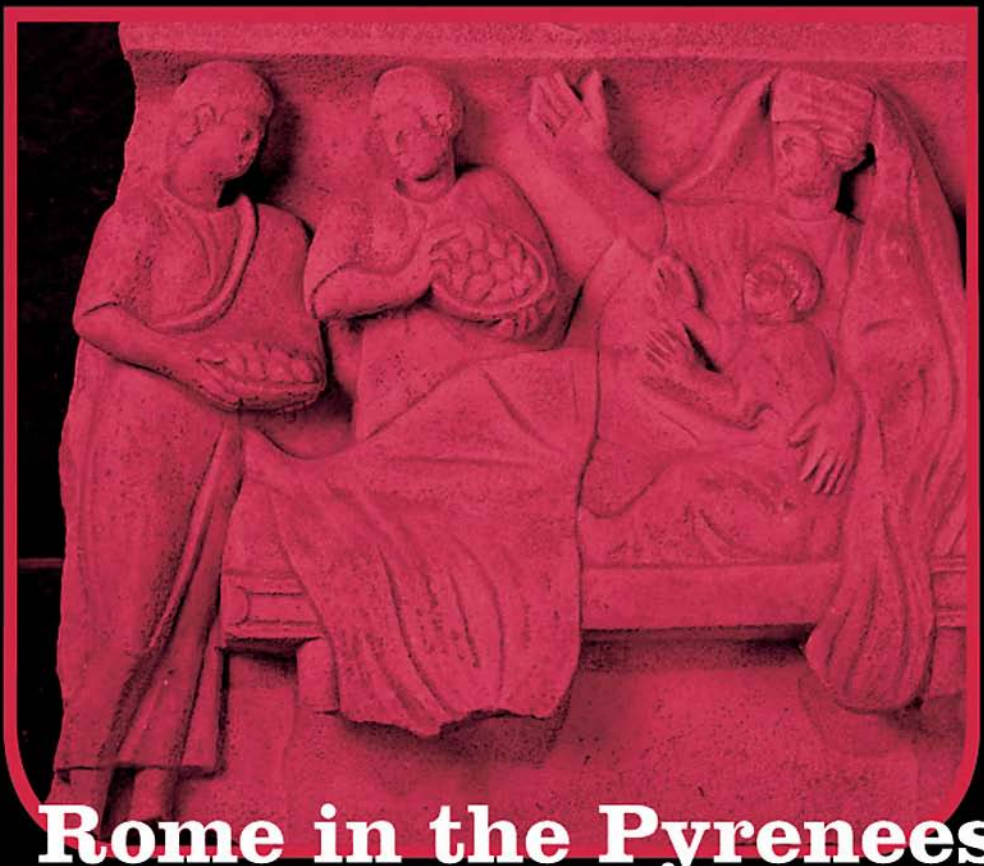

Rome in the Pyrenees

Lugdunum and the Convenae from the First Century B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.

Simon Esmonde-Cleary

ROUTLEDGE MONOGRAPHS IN CLASSICAL STUDIES

ROME IN THE PYRENEES

Rome in the Pyrenees is a unique treatment in English of the archaeological and historical evidence for an important Roman town in Gaul, *Lugdunum* in the French Pyrenees, and for its surrounding people the Convenae. The book opens with the creation of the Convenae by Pompey the Great in the first century B.C. and runs down to the great Frankish siege in A.D. 585 and its aftermath.

Now the town of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, *Lugdunum* is one of the best-known Roman towns in Gaul, with a rich selection of monuments at the town itself and important remains in the countryside, such as the classic villa at Montmaurin or the votive altars, cinerary caskets and sarcophagi in the local marble. The book traces how the Convenae used their marble to help create their identity, invisible before Pompey but amongst the richest and most distinctive in Gaul by the second century A.D.

Drawing on his own excavations at Saint-Bertrand and the extensive earlier and recent work there, Simon Esmonde Cleary combines a clear description of the buildings and monuments of *Lugdunum* and of its countryside with a discussion of what they can tell us about the impact of Rome on this remote corner of its empire.

This book will be extremely valuable to ancient historians, classicists and students of Roman archaeology, and contains a guide to the visible Roman remains of the area.

Simon Esmonde Cleary is Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Birmingham. His research interests include Roman and Late Antique archaeology, Roman towns and the transition from the Roman to mediaeval world.

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Here at Birmingham, two of my colleagues, Drs Ray Laurence and Roger White, both with their own extensive knowledge of Roman towns, but not of Saint-Bertrand, read the entire work in draft, as also did my co-worker at Saint-Bertrand, Jason Wood. The various dismemberments, reconstitutions, corrections and clarifications they recommended have made the resulting work much less worse than it might otherwise have been. To the three of

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INTRODUCTION

'Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges is a decayed town on spurs of the Pyrenees not far from Toulouse and nearer still to Bagnères-de-Luchon ... '. These opening words of 'Canon Alberic's Scrapbook', written in 1894 and published as the first of M.R.James' evocative and atmospheric 1904 *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*, at once transport us to our destination: the foothills of the Pyrenees. On the northern, French side of the range and almost exactly half-way between the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, Saint-Bertrand lies where the young river Garonne leaves its deeply-incised valley in the mountains for the open, rolling lands to the north. Saint-Bertrand is just the latest of a series of names borne by what has successively been a Gallo-Roman administrative centre, a mediaeval and later bishopric and a modern village. To the Roman authorities, it was *Lugdunum*, the chief town of the *civitas*, or administrative area, formed by the lands of the local tribe they called the Convenae. From the late Roman period until the early middle ages (Late Antiquity) it was known by the name of those people – *Convenae*. In the late eleventh century, bishop Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain undertook a great campaign of reform and the building of the present cathedral; after his death and canonization, the town took his name, Saint-Bertrand, and, because in the middle ages it lay in the county of the Comminges, it took the suffix de-Comminges to distinguish it from other Saint-Bertrands. During the French Revolution, the bishopric was suppressed, as was the county, and, when the Napoleonic *départements* were created, Saint-Bertrand ('Hauteville' – an unimaginative secular renaming that did not stick) was included within the *département* of the Haute-Garonne. This *département* comprises essentially the Toulouse agglomeration with a long finger stretching up the Garonne as far as the Spanish border south of Bagnères-de-Luchon; Saint-Bertrand lies in a little bulge of the western side of this finger and is, thus, very close to the *département* of Hautes-Pyrénées immediately to the west and north and only a few kilometres from the *département* of the Ariège to the east.

Nowadays, the tourist income of the tens of thousands of visitors a year to bishop Bertrand's great church, which still dominates this part of the

Garonne valley, means that the town is no longer as decayed as when M.R.James visited it on a donnish cycle tour of French cathedrals in the closing years of the nineteenth century. But, from this varied history of two millennia, it is the seven hundred years or so of Roman *Lugdunum* and late–antique *Convenae* which will be our concern in this book.

From 1994 to 2000, I spent part of each summer with groups of students and my colleague Jason Wood working on the late Roman defences at Saint-Bertrand. The detailed results of that project are now published as *Le Rempart de l'Antiquité Tardive de la Ville Haute*, one of the series of major, French publications of Saint-Bertrand. But our project was only on a small part of the much bigger archaeological complex that is Saint-Bertrand/Valcabrère – a site that had been under investigation for much of the twentieth century, with the result that more was known about it than about almost any other town of Roman Gaul, more indeed than about many towns outside the Mediterranean heartlands of the Roman empire. Having immersed myself in the literature and archaeology of the site, it seemed a good idea to try to produce a single-volume, general introduction to the site and its archaeology for the English-speaking public. But I did not want to produce just a guidebook, I wanted also to use Saint-Bertrand as a case study of how the archaeological remains of a provincial Roman town could be interrogated and interpreted to tell a story about the people who created, lived in and used that town over a period of some seven centuries. Such a book would seek not just to describe the many changes over time but, also, to try to explain what they meant. Whilst formulating the proposal to put to publishers, I looked at the 'market'; what would the competition for such a book be? Rather to my surprise, I found that there was little; currently, there is no such treatment in English of a town from Roman Gaul or, for that matter, Germany or Spain, though there are, of course, single books on some of the towns of Roman Britain. Only Edith Wightman's *Roman Trier and the Treveri* of 1970 stands as an exception. I therefore felt that it might be useful for English-speaking students of the Roman world to have access to the range of information that the work at Saint-Bertrand now furnishes, both for its own sake and to act as a comparison with towns in other provinces, perhaps especially (but not, I hope, exclusively) Britain.

Structure and aims

This book, therefore, has two major strands to it and these are reflected in the structure of the chapters that follow. On the one hand, I want to lay out a narrative of the evidence for and from Saint-Bertrand and its surroundings, arranged chronologically and showing the wide range of types of evidence from buildings to inscriptions to funerary monuments to coins to pottery, and more. Some of these are classics of their types, such as the major public building complexes of the town centre under the early empire

or the 'Aquitanian' sarcophagi under the late empire. Others are well known in French literature, but could do with a wider public; one thinks particularly of the marble industries in the hinterland of Saint-Bertrand, particularly at Saint-Béat and the Augustan Trophy carved from that marble, or the marble votive altars and the cinerary caskets found especially in the mountains and valleys south of Saint-Bertrand, or the anomalous Tranquistan fort at Saint-Bertrand itself, or the evidence for the walls and churches of the late antique town. All these are interesting in themselves and well worth a look, if one is in the area.

On the other hand, I want to use the archaeology of the area as a means to approach the developing and changing attitudes that lay behind the creation of the town of Saint-Bertrand and of the sites and objects from the territory of the Convenae, to show that, because these buildings and objects were created for specific purposes in specific contexts, one can use them to try to reconstruct what those purposes and contexts were and what these tell us about the society which created and used them. The meta-narrative for the analysis will, therefore, be the impact of Rome on a subject people. For the earlier part of the period dealt with, that is the first century BC and the first and second centuries AD, the concern will be with the creation and definition of an identity for the Convenae, and for the third to seventh centuries, the modifications to that identity as the meanings of what it was to be Roman themselves changed. In terms of major debates, the earlier period could be regarded as falling within the debate over 'Romanisation', the later period within that over the changes in Late Antiquity.

Throughout the twentieth century, 'Romanisation' was the most influential means for describing and analysing the changes to the society, economy and culture of the western Roman provinces consequent upon their incorporation into the Roman empire and visible in pretty much all aspects of their archaeology. For much of that time, it was seen as a top-down process, with senior Roman officials, such as provincial governors, requiring the provincial populations to conform to Roman norms and those populations, particularly their élites, responding (cf. Freeman 1996). More recently, and reflecting the rise of post-colonial discourses, there has been an increasing concern with the dominated rather than the dominators, with an increasingly important rôle being accorded to the subject peoples (or, at least, their élites) (cf. Mattingly (ed.) 1997; Millett 1990; Webster & Cooper 1996; Woolf 1998). In fact, there is perfectly good evidence for both top-down and bottom-up processes (cf. Whittaker 1997). But the whole notion of 'Romanisation' has come under sustained attack (cf. Alcock 2001; Barrett 1997). This has been partly because it is seen as overly teleological, that is, it implies a single trajectory of and motivation for change: the desire to 'become Roman' (cf. Woolf 1998). It has also been because it is seen as overly concerned with the activities of the aristocracies, with a commensurate down-playing of the majority of the population (cf. James 2001: 199–202):

it is élitist. Instead, the discourses of 'identity', borrowed from post-modern theory, have been argued to be a preferable means of describing and analysing developments, since they accord equal weight to considerations such as ethnicity, gender, status, age etc. alongside any desire to 'become Roman'. Such arguments also acknowledge that these attributes are generally culturally-constructed and situational; thus, ethnicity may, in part, be genetic, but it may also be a choice and mutable. Ethnic choice may determine such things as language or dress; equally, adopting such markers can, in its turn, mould an individual's or a group's identity. In the specific context of the Roman empire, Roman practice in areas such as social and economic structures, or age categories, or bodily presentation, or diet could impact on local practice. Or, Roman attributes, such as domestic architecture or dress, could be adopted by local populations and adapted to their structures to produce something whose '*Roman-ness*' has been changed or totally reworked, so that it is no longer possible to read directly from its Roman origins to its provincial use.

This book can be seen as a contribution to these debates from a slightly different standpoint. Because of the lack of a pre-Roman archaeology of the area (see Chapter 1) and the consequent domination of the archaeological record by Roman-style buildings or artifacts, it could be seen as an exercise in 'Romanisation'. In a way, it is. But, not in the sense that all the Convenae wanted to do was to ape the ways of the metropolis; rather, in the sense that it was inclusion within the Roman empire which opened to them whole new ranges of ways of defining themselves and of doing things, and which completely altered the trajectories of their behaviour. Amongst other things, it made them visible to us in the archaeological record. Admittedly, the lack of a currently-visible pre-Roman identity may accord these changed trajectories more emphasis. But the book is also a contribution to the debates on 'identity', because central to the book is the argument that the Convenae created their group identity and the subordinate subgroup and individual identities within it, in response to Rome, rather than their being a re-creation or manipulation of existing identities. Instead of the archaeology of this area from the Roman period telling essentially of new ways to demonstrate old identities, it will be argued that it was only in the Roman period that the people of this area created an identity for themselves in response to Roman actions and using a vocabulary derived from Roman practice. There is precious little evidence for a distinct, or distinctive, pre-Roman identity for the people of this area, as will be seen in Chapter 1. It is the Romans who gave them the collective name of 'Convenae' and established the *civitas*, district, as an administrative convenience. My argument is that we can see the 'Convenae' responding to being so designated in the archaeology of the first and second centuries AD: first at their new, principal town, *Lugdunum*/Saint-Bertrand, as we shall see in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, and later in the surrounding countryside, as we shall see in Chapter 4. For the first couple of

generations after the annexation of these territories by Pompey, nothing much seems to happen. It might be that this was because the designation 'Convenae' did not really correspond to an existing group or identity and, so, such things had to be created. Only once there was a group identity could individuals or families rise to dominance and mesh themselves with the particular economic and social structures by which the Romans' society and empire functioned. But, from the late first century BC and through the first century AD, *Lugdunum* gave them a focus for creating a new identity and opened up to them the political and economic structures and intellectual and material culture of the Roman world. From the end of the first century AD, and through the second, the rural areas took up the baton and created a distinct, bounded identity for the Convenae which also served to differentiate them from their neighbours. My argument will be that central to this was marble. The territory of the Convenae contained important marble quarries, and the production of those quarries was used first at Saint-Bertrand to embellish the town in the Roman style; but, its use was then taken up in the countryside, particularly for the so-called votive altars and cinerary caskets, as discussed in Chapter 4. The distribution of these artefacts clearly marks out the territory of the Convenae and distinguishes it from that of its neighbours. So, from a position of anonymity in the late Iron Age of the first century BC, there is little doubt that by the end of the second century AD the Convenae had an acute consciousness of their own identity, of what constituted that identity and of how to express it: above all, through the use of their marble. They were using Roman-style material culture to proclaim difference within the over-arching framework of similarities. So, I would argue that the identity of the Convenae was not a continuation of an Iron Age identity by Roman means but, rather, it was the construction of an identity where there had previously been none, as a response to Roman actions. The idea that non-Roman peoples could create an identity for themselves, in response to what the Romans thought, is one which is increasingly familiar in Late Antiquity, where identities such as 'Visigoth' or 'Ostrogoth' seem to be constructed by these peoples, in large part because they came to understand that that was how the Romans thought of them (cf. Jones 1997: Chapter 4 and refs.; Heather 1996: Chapter 6; 1999). So far, this idea has not had much currency in studies of the earlier empire, but perhaps it ought to. To British readers there are analogies nearer to home; one might point to the case of Yorkshire. No such thing existed prior to the late eleventh century and it was a creation by the Norman rulers who had just ravaged the area in the Harrying of the North: yet who can deny that the people of the new county subsequently created for themselves a very strong sense of identity in response to something that had been imposed on them at the administrative convenience of an occupying power?

The time-span of the book is long, ranging from the origins of Saint-Bertrand and its people, the Convenae, in the first century B.C. down to the

'dark age' where both the texts and the archaeology at present fail, somewhere around A.D.700. I do not see that it can be otherwise; the evidence shows that Saint-Bertrand was a town in pretty much constant development (albeit with periods of greater and lesser intensity) all through this period. But, it does mean that the debates about the adoption or creation of a Roman-style identity, though apposite to the first three hundred years of the existence of the Convenae, cease to be of much use for discussing the subsequent four hundred years of their existence (another systemic failing of 'Romanisation' and related debates). Instead, we need to look to the discourse and debates of 'Late Antiquity' (*c.* A.D.300–700) for an understanding of developments. In general, we are dealing with a people which, in its own way, had 'become Roman' but, as time went on, was to be affected by important changes in what it meant to be 'Roman' and needed to respond to these changes. Two in particular might be flagged up here. One is the advent of Christianity, with its profound changes in the religious and intellectual framework within which people operated. The other is the increasing militarisation of the peoples of the European provinces in the period, in response to the increasing external and internal military threat to the cohesion of the Roman empire, leading ultimately to the military crisis which saw the western empire's dissolution in the course of the fifth century A.D. Both of these developments were to be signalled by profound changes both at Saint-Bertrand and in its hinterland. This is, of course, a continuation of the debates about 'identity', as the structures determining identities altered, with profound consequences for attributes such as ethnic identity, religious affiliation or status structures and markers. Moreover, by taking such a long span, one can trace certain themes over this long period and discern and discuss changes and their meaning alongside those already outlined. For instance, at various points in time, particularly in the first and fifth centuries A.D., a bundle of sites and objects (e.g. the various Baths, the first Coupéré complex, urban and rural burials, the topography of burial) will be interpreted in terms of the crucial place of the body, its presence and presentation, in the way the Convenae (especially their élite) defined themselves. This is a theme which has its own rhythm alongside the grand chronological narratives. Another advantage of the long view is that it abolishes the common, but unhelpful, chronological division in much of traditional Roman studies (archaeology as much as history), with the division lying in the third century A.D., and, instead, allows us to see how the earlier town developed in the fourth century, to understand where the later town came from and, thus, why it developed the way it did.

Because the book deals with a wide range of evidence over a long period, quite a lot has had to be compressed into the space available. This is, of course, a salutary discipline for the writer, enjoining one not to be prolix, but to try to explain things clearly and with economy of words. For many readers, this may be all they need, or want. For those readers who wish to

pursue topics in more detail, I have given references to the extensive literature on Saint-Bertrand, its hinterland and the more general topics raised. Almost all of these are, inevitably, in French; so, I hope that one other service this book will perform is to introduce this impressive landscape, its fascinating Roman remains and all the topics they raise to an audience more at home in English than in French. Who knows, it may even provoke the reader to visit in person?

Research and excavation at Saint-Bertrand

In order to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses, the richness and the lacunas of our current knowledge of Roman Saint-Bertrand and its territory, and how these influence our knowledge and views, we need to understand how that knowledge was arrived at. For it is these strengths and weaknesses which will, in large part, determine both the contents of the chapters that follow and, also, the various frameworks for discussion and analysis that are adopted or left to one side. Inevitably, the descriptions and discussions will play to the strengths of the archaeological record; but, we need, also, to be aware from the outset of the weaknesses, in order to explain why many potentially fruitful avenues of investigation are here left unexplored.

Saint-Bertrand is unusual in French archaeology in that the mediaeval and modern successors to the Roman town did not cover exactly the same area; the move to the hilltop in Late Antiquity left most of the area of the earlier Roman town in open ground. Some Roman structures, notably the 'grande arche' of the Theatre, as well as the masonry massif of the Marroc de Herrane funerary tower, were always visible and drew the attention of the earliest antiquaries, drawn to the site by the ancient texts (cf. Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 248–56 for a discussion of antiquarian and archaeological work). From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, it was collectors and collecting who dominated the rediscovery of the ancient site, in the quest for the marble inscriptions, statuary and architectural stonework (later the coins and other objects) that could be dug out of the Roman town. This, of course, could be destructive, as in the case of the pillaging of the Barsous Roman cemetery on the western side of the town, and involved the dispersal of many objects into public and private collections in the South-West and further afield. But, by the end of the nineteenth century this was, at least, resulting in the first catalogues of material from the Roman town. The early twentieth century saw the first systematic projects on the site. In 1910 the Tarbes schoolmaster Raymond Lizop drew up the first comprehensive catalogue of the monuments of the site. Three years later, Marcel Dieulafoy initiated the excavation of the Plan Christian basilica, a project subsequently taken up by Lizop. It was Lizop who, in 1931, published the first academic synthesis of research on the ancient town in his *Histoire de deux cités gallo-romaines. Les Convenae et les Consoranni.*

But the most significant event was to be the appointment of a young man called Bertrand Sapène (Figure 0.1) to the post of schoolmaster at Saint-Bertrand. Sapène taught and lived in the 'Groupe Scolaire', which still exists at the foot of the hill beside the present car park. From his window he could see the parching of the grass because of the underlying Roman structures. From 1921 he started to dig trenches in various parts of the Roman town. The turning point came in 1926, with the construction of the new road westwards just to the north of the school buildings (the present D26a), when the southern part of the Forum and Forum Temple precinct were exposed and Sapène retrieved the fragments of the Augustan Trophy (Figure 0.1, cf. p. 31). In 1927 Sapène was appointed curator of a new museum, which, in 1931, took physical shape in the former convent of the

Figure 0.1 Bertrand Sapène (in beret) during the 1926 excavations on the Forum. (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: unknown*)

Olivétains hard by the cathedral. During these years, he continued to excavate on the Forum, the Theatre, the 'villa Basc' and elsewhere in the town. In 1931, the *Société Archéologique du Midi de la France* purchased a large property to the north of the school, allowing Sapène to uncover (between 1933 and 1938) the Forum Temple and its precinct, much of the Forum and then the Forum Baths. At the same time, he trenched the area of the North Baths and the surrounding residential and artisan quarter. These were the '*grandes années*' of work on the centre of the Roman town, and photographs of the excavations give some idea of the scale and energy of Sapène's undertakings. His discoveries were recorded in his *carnets* (notebooks), which survive, and annual outlines of his work appeared in the *Bulletin* of the *Commission des fouilles*. But, apart from some summary articles, Sapène never got round to a full analysis and publication of his excavations; this has been taken up by more recent workers who, finally, are seeing the main sites through to publication. The Second World War pretty much put a stop to Sapène's work, and the changed conditions of the post-War years meant that he was never again able to operate on as expansive a scale as before the conflict. But, he continued to work on, particularly from 1946, in uncovering the Macellum, to the east of his pre-War excavations along with trenching on the Pi-shaped Portico and the 'Temple of Hercules' to its south. His final explorations took place in 1967 on the Walls of the upper town, over half a century after his first exploratory trenches. From the 1950s, Sapène's work in the field was complemented by the efforts of Robert Gavelle, who through to the 'nineties undertook a major catalogue of the pottery and other material recovered by Sapène, though apart from some short articles most of this remained unpublished. With the retirement from the field of Sapène, the site of the Roman town was left untended and soon became ruinous and overgrown.

In 1985, the then Director of Antiquities for the region of Midi-Pyrénées, Robert Lequément, envisaged an ambitious plan to disinter the buildings and monuments uncovered by Sapène, conserve them and display them to the public. At the same time, he hoped to undertake the publication of the various sites, whilst taking advantage of the conservation of the remains to pursue complementary excavations in order to resolve questions left unresolved by Sapène. In addition, further sites might be excavated in order to fill out knowledge of the Roman town (for instance, private as opposed to public buildings). Other projects, such as the complete aerial survey of the Roman town by Catherine Petit, were also integrated into the work. This rolling programme of projects, which was to last for some two decades in all, was mounted as a *Projet Collectif de Recherches* under the aegis of the group *Recherches Pluridisciplinaires sur la Cité des Convènes*, whose initials *RPCC* purposely echoed the Roman tile-stamps of the *ResPublica Civitatis Convenarum* found at the site. As well as seeing through the further work on, and the publication of, Sapène's sites, such as the Forum Baths, Forum

Temple, Macellum, Pi-shaped Portico and Theatre, it has also undertaken further work on sites such as the Circular Monument, the Coupéré buildings, the Signan area and the Walls of the upper town to complement the earlier work. As well as numerous interim publications, three major reports have now been published, on the Forum Temple and the Circular Monument, the Forum Baths, and the Walls of the upper town, in a series dedicated to Saint-Bertrand (*Études d'Archéologie Urbaine*), and others are about to appear, or, are in active preparation. In addition, the Musée départemental at Saint-Bertrand has been active in publishing monographs on aspects of its collections (*Collections du musée départemental*) and on other aspects of the archaeology of the area (*Entretiens d'archéologie et d'histoire* 2 and 6). So, before long, Saint-Bertrand will be one of the most extensively researched and published towns of Roman Gaul, complemented by a well-catalogued rural hinterland.

But, at the same time, it is necessary to recognise the limitations of the evidence currently available. This relates, in particular, to the work by Sapène, whose excavations were of their time in concentrating on the monumental buildings of the civic centre of the Roman town. Though this was not to the exclusion of other areas, it did result in an imbalance of our knowledge, particularly of the residential quarters and of day to day life. Moreover, he was a self-taught excavator who learnt his trade on the job; therefore, his methods of excavation and recording were rather rudimentary, even for his time. Thus, there is much we do not know about the stratigraphy in many of his excavations, about the sequence of building phases, about where artefacts and dating evidence were found. This has, to some measure, been deliberately corrected by re-excavation and publication projects of the *RPCC*, but there are still huge gaps in our knowledge of what was found. This is not to repine over what Sapène has not told us. Still less is it to criticise him for being a man of his time, for that would be futile and, anyway, without his work we would know very little about the ancient site. But what it does is to lay out where the strengths and weaknesses of our knowledge lie and how these have driven and shaped the book that follows. This is why it is much stronger on topics such as buildings and monuments and much weaker on houses and objects. The problems of the rural archaeology compound this and are touched on in Chapter 4.

1

SETTING THE SCENE

The first century B.C.

The focus of this chapter is the circumstances which led to the foundation of the Roman town of *Lugdunum*, both in general terms of the topography and resources of the region and in specific terms of the historical circumstances of its creation. Therefore, the chapter opens with a broad-brush survey of the natural setting of this area of the central Pyrenees and, in particular, the mineral and other resources available in the mountains and the agricultural potential of the lowlands to the north. It then examines the evidence for the creation of the Roman *civitas* of the Convenae in the first century B.C., largely, and perforce, from the surviving Roman documentation, before turning to the archaeology and other evidence from the area to see what can be said about the situation before the incorporation of this area into the Roman empire and about the effects that incorporation had on the first generations who experienced it.

Geology and resources

Human settlement and exploitation of the area are dominated by the topography and resources of the Pyrenees and their foothills, so we need to sketch in the principal characteristics of this landscape and the resources that it offered (Figure 1.1). Essentially, the area which came to be occupied by the Convenae consists of two contrasting but complementary zones: in the south the mountains; in the north flatter, more open country. The division between the two is quite marked as the French face of the Pyrenean massif rises sharply: Saint-Bertrand lies at the interface between the mountain and the plain. The mountains, as known to us and to the Convenae, are essentially the result of the northward movement of the African tectonic plate squeezing the Iberian plate into the European in the Upper Cretaceous period. The tearing of the earth's crust and the immense pressures and temperatures this entailed, not only thrust up the range of mountains themselves but, also, exposed or created a range of mineral resources which outcrop along the northern side of the massif. In the present-day *départements* of the Ariège and Pyrénées-Atlantiques were placer deposits of gold

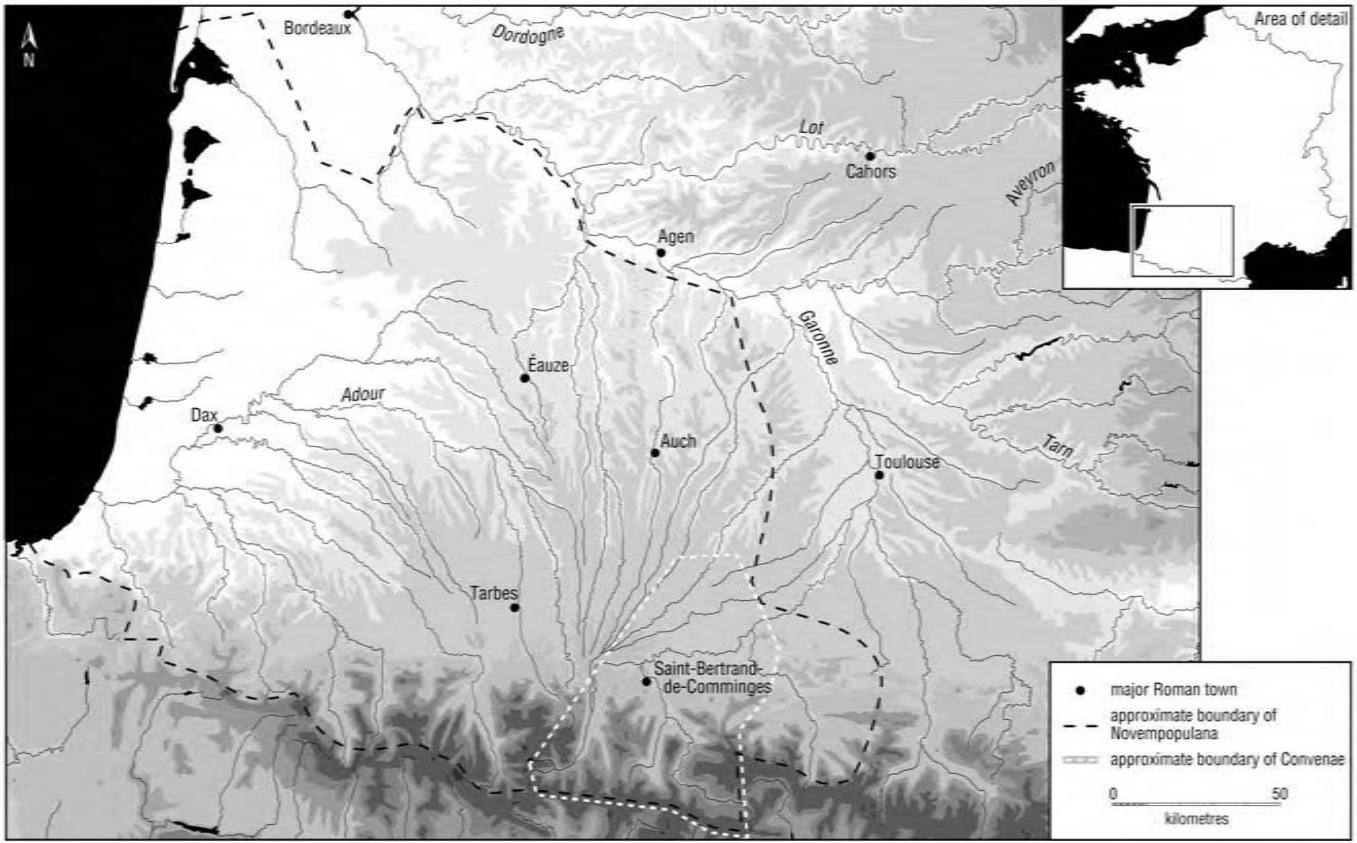

Figure 1.1 South-west France showing the location of Saint-Bertrand and other major Roman towns

in the rivers, the mother-lodes for which were mined in the Roman period (Cauuet 2001), but no such deposits have been found in the lands of the Convenae. In the Pyrénées-Atlantiques too, there were Roman copper-mines which also yielded a small amount of silver. Galena (lead-ore) and cassiterite (tin-ore) are also known in the central Pyrenees, though there is, as yet, no definite evidence for their exploitation in the Roman period (Rodà & Sablayrolles 2001: 196). Another mineral resource available at several points along the mountain front was salt, in the form of brine springs forced to the surface under artesian pressure, one source of which was at Salies-du-Salat in the eastern part of the territories of the Convenae (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 430–31). The most widely-exploited mineral, all along the length of the mountain chain, but with a particular emphasis in the central Pyrenees, was iron and the iron-mines and iron-workings on the massif of the Baronnies, to the west of the Convenae; they have recently been the subject of detailed survey and excavation (Fabre, Sablayrolles, Tolon 2001).

Perhaps the most significant geological resource, though, was marble: the crystalline version of the local limestones metamorphosed by the pressures of the creation of the Pyrenees. Marble outcrops at several points along the front of the massif, but the major deposits and most important workings again lie in the central Pyrenees within the borders of the Convenae. The most massive and most heavily-exploited outcrop lies upriver of Saint-Bertrand in the narrow defile of the upper Garonne around the present-day village of Saint-Béat, just north of the French-Spanish border. These deposits yielded a variety of qualities of marble from white, statuary-quality to the more common, slightly granular, grey-veined stones, more than adequate for architectural use. A little to the north-west, around modern Cierp, was another group of quarries, mainly for red and green breccias or *griotte*. North-west again, around modern Sost, were outcrops of white marble and red breccias. Both Cierp and Sost lie on tributaries of the Garonne, respectively the Pique, joining the Garonne just downstream of Saint-Béat and the Ourse, which falls into the Garonne a little above Saint-Bertrand. Further to the west, in the valley of the Neste d'Aure (an affluent of the Garonne just downstream of Saint-Bertrand), was another series of outcrops round modern Beyrède, yielding breccias of various colours (the Roman exploitation of all these metals and marbles will be considered more fully in Chapter 4).

But the mountains were important, not just for their mineral resources, but, for other reasons also. To this day the mountains carry huge stands of timber of various kinds and forestry is an important local industry. There is no doubt that the same was true in antiquity and that the forests of the Pyrenees would have been a major economic resource. The pollen evidence from a number of sites along the north side of the Pyrenees (Galop 2003) shows that the mountains were, indeed, still thickly-wooded in antiquity, with pine and fir the predominant species at higher altitudes and oak and beech, birch and hazel significant lower down. There is little evidence that

this period was marked by major changes in the quantity and nature of forest cover; these lay earlier in prehistory and later in the Middle Ages. Evidence for deforestation at some sites may suggest exploitation of the woodlands as a source for building and other activities and for fuel and is matched by some evidence for expansion of species related to pastoralism. Amongst the woodlands and up above the tree-line would have been large areas of mountain pasture and, in living memory, the transhumance of flocks and herds in spring up to the summer pastures in the mountains and their return to the lowland winter pastures was a regular part of life all along the Pyrenees.

Metals, marble, timber are not only valuable but heavy and cumbersome and their movement over any distance takes considerable effort. By far the easiest, quickest and cheapest means of transport in the ancient world was by water, and here the Convenae were fortunate since the mountains feed the major river system of south-western France: the Garonne and its affluents, such as the Neste d'Aure and the Ourse (Figure 1.1). After passing Saint-Bertrand, the Garonne traces a huge curve, first north-eastwards, then back again to the north-west before discharging into the great estuary of the Gironde. On the outside of the apex of the curve lies Toulouse, already in the late centuries B.C. a major settlement and destined to become one of the largest cities of Roman Gaul, with overland links through the Carcassonne Gap to the Mediterranean. Near where the Garonne meets the waters of the Gironde lies Bordeaux, another important prehistoric site which was to become a leading city in the Roman period and a major port. The Convenae could therefore transport their valuable resources from the mountains to major trading entrepôts, linking in to the Mediterranean and Atlantic trading circuits. But the Garonne was, and is, not without its problems of navigation. Between Saint-Bertrand and Toulouse there are a number of rock shelves which impede passage, as well as shoals and stretches of turbulent water. Moreover, the Garonne is a highly seasonal river, fed as it, and its tributaries are, from the snows of the high Pyrenees. This means, for instance, that in spring it is liable to run dangerously high and fast, with the risk of flood. On the other hand, in late summer and autumn it can run relatively shallow, when the rock shelves, shallows and shoals either make navigation impossible or force portages by land around them, which is slow and difficult with heavy goods. But these conditions made using the Garonne difficult, not impossible; the boatmen, probably using rafts upstream of Saint-Bertrand and flat-bottomed boats downstream, would have learnt the tricks of their trade – the livelihoods and profits dependent on the river trade would have seen to that. Alternatively, it was possible to pass dry-shod from Saint-Bertrand up to Bordeaux along the route known as the Ténarèze, the watershed between the basins of the Garonne and the Adour.

North of Saint-Bertrand the landscape changes, giving way to the rolling, sometimes hilly, countryside along the Pyrenees front. This is a landscape

much better adapted to mixed farming, with the richer lands of the river valleys, suitable for cereal agriculture, interspersed with hillier areas, better suited to woodland or pasture. These latter would have alternated seasonally with the upland, summer pastures in the mountains. But the animals could also have been pastured in the river valleys after harvest, their droppings returning nutrient to the soil ready for the next crop. Moreover, man cannot live by marble alone; the quarrymen, miners and foresters of the mountain zone would have depended for much of their food on the farmers of the northern part of the *civitas*, as would the population of *Lugdunum* itself. So, though the two zones of landscape and resources did contrast, they did, also, complement each other, giving the *civitas* of the Convenae an unusually wide range of natural resources on which to draw.

The immediate context of the site of Saint-Bertrand is the Val d'Aran, the valley in which runs the upper course of the Garonne from its headwaters on the massif of the Maladeta on the Spanish side of the present border, past the defile of Saint-Béat, after which it widens out before coming to Saint-Bertrand and the foothills of the Pyrenees. Though the Val d'Aran is not one of the major routes up into and across the Pyrenees, it is possible to pass east of the Maladeta by the Port de Bonaigua, just over 2,000 m. in altitude and thus open for most of the year, and so arrive in the upper valley of the Noguera Pallaresa and the long route down to Lérida/Lleida on the Catalan side and thence to the valley of the Ebro. As we shall see, this route over the mountains may have influenced both the original siting of Saint-Bertrand and some of its later functions. The Roman town itself lay on the valley floor between the Jurassic limestone hillock on which the cathedral stands and the course of the Garonne itself, here running roughly east-west.

The story of the creation of Lugdunum *and the Convenae*

The account of the foundation of *Lugdunum* is an unusual one, handed down to us by a rather curious collection of ancient writers, so it needs critical examination. The key text comes in a tract written by Saint Jerome against the priest Vigilantius, where he says, 'Sprung from a set of brigands and persons collected together from all quarters, I mean those whom Cn. Pompey after the conquest of Spain when he was hastening to return for his triumph brought down from the Pyrenees and gathered together into one town, whence the name of the city Convenae' (Jerome: *Contra Vigilantium* 4). This is a problematic passage and could be read as essentially plausible or essentially dubious.

If one takes it at face value, this would place the actions of Pompey in 72–71 B.C. at the end of the Sertorian War in Spain and during his hurried return to Italy to face the menace of Spartacus (for a recent detailed consideration of the context of this episode, see Sablayrolles 2005: 142–44, on

which what follows draws). This scenario is not in itself improbable, since only two years previously Pompey had founded a town on the other side of the Pyrenees in north-central Spain at *Pompaelo*/Pamplona, named with characteristic Roman modesty. Pompey had earlier strengthened the defences of the Roman *provincia* in southern Gaul (cf. Cicero: *Pro Fonteio* 13) after Sertorius had defeated the proconsul L. Manlius in north-eastern Spain in 78 B.C. Indeed, Manlius, defeated near Lérida/Lleida, had had to re-cross the mountains, conceivably by the Val d'Aran, and was relieved of much of his baggage by the Aquitani (Caesar *Bell. Gall*. III.20.1). In both 76–75 B.C. and 75–74 B.C. the Roman armies campaigning in northern Spain crossed the Pyrenees to go to winter quarters in southern Gaul. Moreover, in a letter to the Senate, recorded for us by the historian Sallust (*Hist*. II, 98), Pompey mentions the rôle of southern Gaul in provisioning the Roman armies in Spain, so he was well aware of what was going on north of the Pyrenees and could well have intervened in the upper Garonne valley. But why Pompey in 72–71 B.C. should, apparently, have hastened back to Italy, not by the main route at the eastern end of the Pyrenees, the Col de Perthus where his Trophy of Victory was built, but by the difficult passage over the central massif and down into the Val d'Aran, there pausing to force the local people down from the hills and to found a town, is a bit of a mystery. The Latin word translated above by 'town' is *oppidum*, which could be translated as something more along the lines of a garrison-post rather than a town; so, the origins of *Lugdunum* could have been military.

On the other hand, the context of Jerome's words needs more consideration. First of all, he is writing some five hundred years later than the events he mentions in a polemic against Vigilantius, who came from *Calagurris* (modern Saint-Martory) on the road from Saint-Bertrand to Toulouse. After the passage quoted above, Jerome goes on to say 'he has carried on their brigand practices by his attack upon the Church of God'. So, the Convenae seem to appear here largely as a suitable stick with which to beat Jerome's antagonist: brigand blood will out. Nevertheless, Jerome's description of the Convenae as a grouping together of brigands clearly echoes the geographer Strabo writing at the turn of the first centuries B.C. and A.D., who tells us ' … first, next to the Pyrenees, the country of the Convenae, that is "the assembled rabble", in which are the city of *Lugdunum* and the hot springs of the Onesii, very beautiful springs of very drinkable waters' (Strabo: *Geography* IV.2). The explanation of the tribal name as meaning 'brigands' may be a false etymology. The first element of the name 'Con-' means 'with' or 'together', indicating some sort of association, but whether this applies to people or geographical features such as, for example, rivers is unknown; the second element is also problematic. This then leaves the ascription of the creation of the Convenae to Pompey. Jerome is our only source for this, yet it does not serve him any particular polemic purpose; so, he may have included it because it was a standard story about the Convenae.

Jerome was writing in Palestine at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., far from the events he was describing. It must be possible that he had picked up on a later fabrication, perhaps even an origin-myth created by the Convenae themselves. Or, it could be that he has compressed a more complex series of events for rhetorical effect. The idea of a Pompeian foundation is plausible and cannot be disproved, but it should certainly not be regarded as proven beyond reasonable doubt, because of the nature of its textual source.

Archaeologically, moreover, no trace of a settlement of the Pompeian period has yet been found at Saint-Bertrand, despite much searching; nor are there any items, such as pottery from the extensive excavations on the floor of the valley, which can be dated anything like that early. But if, indeed, Pompey founded a settlement, it may well not have been anything that we might recognise as a town, especially if it was intended much more as a guard-post. It might well have been, therefore, quite small; in that case, it may well be that the modern excavations have not been in the right area to come across it. It is possible that it may not have been on the valley floor like the later town. It may have occupied a more defensible site, such as one of the hilltops, perhaps, even, the one where the cathedral now stands.

It is the case, though, that sometime in the first century B.C. this territory came to be part of the Roman *provincia* of Gallia Transalpina or Narbonensis. This *provincia* comprised the Mediterranean coastlands of Gaul (roughly the modern French regions of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon) with a spur as far west as Toulouse and had been conquered in the years from 125 B.C. At this time, a *provincia* was essentially the area controlled by a Roman governor; it did not necessarily have fixed boundaries and, to a large extent, was as large as the governor said it was. So, the addition of this area to Narbonensis would have caused no administrative problems to the Romans.

The Convenae and the Aquitani, Caesar and after

Our next account of the area and of the Aquitani is that given by Julius Caesar in his account of his conquest of *Gallia Comata* 'Shaggy Gaul' in the 50s B.C. Caesar famously opens his work by telling the reader that *Gallia est omnis in partes tres divisa* – 'All of Gaul is divided into three parts'. These three 'parts' are the three main ethnic groupings that he and other Greco-Roman writers recognised: up in the north, the 'Belgae'; in the centre and west, the 'Celts' or 'Gauls'; but, in the south-west, in the lands bounded by the Garonne, the mountains and the Ocean, lived the 'Aquitani', whom Caesar clearly distinguished from the Gauls and said were more akin in appearance, language and customs to the inhabitants of Spain. In 56 B.C. he sent his legate Crassus to receive the submission of these people, or to conquer those who would not submit. Most submitted, though a few such

as the Sotiates of what is now the southern Lot-et-Garonne and northern Gers *départements* did resist, with unpleasant consequences. Apart from them, Caesar tells us of a few peoples 'right on the margins' who held out, trusting to the onset of winter (Caesar *Bell. Gall.* II.27.2); they were presumably mountain peoples. It was only later, in 52 B.C. that the region did take up arms, revolting against the Romans. They reacted with their usual ferocity, bringing the rebels to bay in a dramatic siege at *Uxellodunum*, the modern Puy d'Issolud in the *département* of the Lot, where recent excavations have revealed traces of the Roman mines and much military equipment (Girault 2005). How all this affected the Convenae, it is hard to tell. Indeed, since technically they probably formed part of the *provincia* of Narbonensis, it may largely have passed them by. But once the revolt of 52 B.C. had been suppressed, it did mean that all the other Aquitanian tribes and peoples were now also under Roman rule and that from being on the edge of the Roman world, the Convenae were now deep in Roman territory. The Aquitani were to attract the attention of Roman military power twice more. From late 40 B.C. till early 37 B.C., Agrippa, Octavian's right-hand-man, was in Gaul and in 38 B.C. he had to intervene amongst the Aquitani because of trouble amongst some of the peoples (Appian *Bell. Civ.* V.92.386). Some ten years later, in 29–28 B.C. a revolt provoked an expedition by M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, for which he was awarded a triumph in 27 B.C. The few pieces of information we have suggest that the main action lay amongst the peoples towards the Atlantic seaboard (Tibullus I.8), especially the Tarbelli within whose territory lay the major western passes into Spain. The final subjugation of the Pyrenees and the peoples to the north and south of them seems to have been commemorated by the erection of a Trophy in the western Pyrenees at Urkulu (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) (Fabre 1994: 179) and at Saint-Bertrand itself (see p. 31).

The Convenae before Rome?

So far, all we have learnt about the Aquitani, in general, and the Convenae, in particular, has been from Roman authors, each of whom had his own agenda in what he chose to record about these groups. Can we try to counterbalance this very one-sided view with the evidence from the archaeology of south-western Gaul and of the area of the Convenae in particular? It has to be said that the answer currently is, not very well. The Aquitani remain elusive to the archaeologist; most of their sites and material do not mark them out as particularly different from their neighbours north and east of the Garonne, and their burials, which might show regional peculiarities, are virtually unknown to the archaeologist. This does not, of course, show that Caesar or other Roman authors who mention the Aquitani are wrong; it is perfectly possible to use similar material culture yet to be perceptibly different from others using the same material. Caesar's statement,

that what marked off the Aquitani from the Celts and made them look more like Spaniards were such things as skin colour, language and bearing, not only shows what the differences were but, also, that they would be essentially invisible to the archaeologist. On the other hand, some of the peoples amongst the Aquitani do show up in the archaeology, particularly through the presence of different types of coinage. This is particularly true of coin distributions in the areas west and north-west of our area, the distributions ascribed by archaeologists to peoples mentioned in Roman sources, such as the Sotiates and Tarbelli. There are also major defended sites, *oppida*, at places such as Sos (Lot-et-Garonne) linked to the Sotiates, or Esbérous-Higat (Gers) linked with the Elusates. But if our knowledge and understanding from archaeology of the Aquitani in general before, and at the time of, the Roman conquest is patchy, that for the future Convenae is vanishingly so. There are hardly any Iron Age coins from the area of the central Pyrenees, and no distinct tradition that could be linked to the Convenae. In the area around Saint-Bertrand, both to the north and the south, we have hardly any certain late Iron Age settlements or burials. There are only two categories of material which may help us to identify the Aquitani and the Convenae in the last two centuries B.C.: one is a small number of fortified settlements; the other is the study of names.

On the territory that under Roman rule would belong to the Convenae were a number of fortified sites, using earthwork and stone defences to enhance the natural defensive possibilities of sites such as hill-tops or projecting spurs of high ground – what the Romans and modern French archaeologists refer to as an *oppidum* (plural, *oppida*), and similar to what archaeologists in Britain would call a hill-fort. The nearest to Saint-Bertrand was the hill of Castéra, between the modern villages of Bagiry and Bertran, on the western side of the upper valley of the Garonne just before the valley opens out towards Saint-Bertrand; survey suggests occupation in the latter part of the Iron Age (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 115). Other fortifications overlooked the valley of the Neste, west of Saint-Bertrand, from the foothills above modern villages such as Montoussé (Lussault 1997: 194). North of the Garonne, in the lowlands, there were the fortified spur at Piroque in the *commune* of Saint-Plancard (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 426) and the 'Camp de César' beside the gorge of the river Save in the *commune* of Lespugue (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 180). Nearby, in the same commune, the Saint-Martin site yielded traces of some seventy structures associated with iron-working and datable to the late Iron Age. Clearly, the land was being occupied and exploited, but in what density we cannot yet be sure. The construction of the fortified sites indicates a level of command over labour and other resources but, in the absence of excavation, we do not yet know whether this was an imposition by some sort of élite to create places of command or, instead, a communal enterprise to create places of refuge. Apart from these sites, a small number of undefended settlements have been located by chance

but, as yet, too few to be able to reconstruct any pattern to them, though iron-working was a regular feature of these sites.

Names are a source for which the evidence all comes from Roman texts or from Roman-period inscriptions; nonetheless, they do give us an impression of a land already inhabited and sanctified at the time of the Roman conquest. Many of the names of divinities and of the place names and personal names recorded on Roman-period inscriptions contain elements that are neither Latin nor Celtic (Gorrochategui 1984). Some of these elements have clear affinities with modern Basque (e.g. *Andere*, mod. Basque *Andere*, woman; *Nescato*, mod. Basque *Neska(ro)*, girl; *Ilunno*, mod. Basque *Ilhun*, dark), and there may well be links with the now-vanished Iberian language spoken on the peninsula at the time of the Roman conquest. Here we may have a reflection of Caesar's comment that the Aquitani resembled the Spanish in language. The Val d'Aran seems to be the eastward limit of this phenomenon. A place name, such as *Aque Onesii* (Luchon) contains the name of a non-Roman presiding deity, Onesius, suggesting that this association goes back before the conquest. The names of other divinities from the area, such as Artahe or Erriapus, attested on the votive altars considered in more detail in Chapter 4 (p. 105), are also 'Aquitanian', rather than Celtic or Latin, again suggesting a pre-Roman substratum to the onomastics of the area.

The paucity of evidence for the late prehistory from this area of the central Pyrenees, while probably, in part, a product of the concentration on Roman Saint-Bertrand itself to the detriment of other periods and the wider landscape, does also stand in contrast to areas further to the west, in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, and the north-west, in the Gers and the Lot-et-Garonne, where there is a rich late Iron Age material. This would seem to argue that there is a difference in the Iron Age archaeology of the area later called the Convenae, and that the Roman tradition of Pompey creating the Convenae out of unruly mountain peoples may have had a kernel of truth.

Augustus, Aquitania and the Convenae

After Caesar left a newly-subjugated Gaul in late 50 B.C., little was done to further the incorporation of the new territories into the Roman empire. The assassination of Caesar himself, on the Ides of March 44 B.C., plunged the Senate and people of Rome into a series of vicious civil wars from which there emerged no clear ruler, until Caesar's nephew and adopted son, Octavian, defeated Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in modern-day north-western Greece in the year 31 B.C. During this period, Gaul was only intermittently a focus of high-level Roman attention, though, as we have seen above, Agrippa did spend some time there and individual events such as revolts did impress themselves upon the competing rulers of the empire. In 27 B.C. the Senate voted Octavian a series of extraordinary

powers and honours, one of which was the title Augustus, by which he is today more commonly known. In the same year, Augustus toured Gallia Comata, and this has traditionally been seen as the date at which he decided to divide Comata into three provinces (the Three Gauls), each now with defined borders, a governor and civil administration, financial oversight and a system of internal administration at the local level. In the north, was Gallia Belgica, and in the centre, Gallia Lugdunensis; in the south-west, Aquitania. Strabo (*Geography* IV. 2.1) tells us that the territories of the Aquitani were considered too small to constitute a province on their own; so, fourteen Celtic tribes covering the area from the Garonne almost to the Loire in the north and over to the Massif Central in the east were added in order to bring the province up to the requisite size. The province was, perhaps, originally named Aremorica (the maritime province) (Pliny the Elder *Hist. Nat.* IV.105; Hiernard 2003) but was very soon renamed after the Aquitani as Gallia Aquitani(c)a. In fact, it is now thought that the provincing of Gaul may have happened a decade or so later, in 16–13 B.C., which was also the time of the taking of the census of people and property, the indispensable prelude to a fully-functional Roman province with governmental and fiscal structures firmly in place. Early on, Aquitania contained a small number of military units, but they would be posted out of the province before the middle of the first century A.D.; thus, the governor (mainly resident at Bordeaux) was essentially concerned with civil administration and justice. The financial administration of the province was the responsibility of a procurator, answerable not to the governor but directly to the emperor. The procurator for Aquitania also oversaw the finances of the province of Lugdunensis and was based at Lyon, the most important city in the Three Gauls.

The number of 'Romans' or at least foreigners to Gaul, in the administrations of the governor and procurator was small and not designed to run the day to day affairs of the peoples within the province. This was achieved by setting up a number of administrative districts based on the territories of the existing tribes and peoples (a *civitas*), or creating them if necessary, each of which would have its own principal town from which a council (*ordo*) composed of tribal aristocrats would control the administration, courts and fiscal affairs of their people. One of the groupings selected was the Convenae, who now found themselves constituted as a *civitas*, though whether this was based on an existing group or 'tribal' identity, or whether it was a creation by the Roman authorities for administrative convenience is something to which we shall return. The Convenae now formed part of the new province of Aquitania, transferred from Narbonensis. Their attribution to Aquitania may partly have been for ethnic reasons; it may also have been to give to Aquitania a people with some experience of Roman ways. The taking of the census in 16–13 B.C. provoked trouble across much of Gaul; in the aftermath, and, perhaps, as a reward for loyalty, a number of towns

were promoted to a higher status. Amongst these was *Lugdunum*, now centre for the *civitas* of the Convenae and which, according to Strabo (*Geography* IV.2.2), was accorded by Augustus a grant of the *ius Latii:* Latin rights. The chief effect of this was that the magistrates of the Convenae would be raised to Roman Citizenship on their retirement from office; so, gradually, the nobility of the Convenae would be further integrated into the Roman system by their possession of the nominal Citizenship of the imperial City, a sought-after status.

The territorial extent of the *civitas* of the Convenae can be reconstructed only very approximately. Over most of Gaul we have a reasonable knowledge of the extent of the Gallo-Roman *civitates*, because when the Church set up its administrative structures in the fourth and fifth centuries, it placed a bishop in each *civitas;* so, the *civitas* boundaries were perpetuated, more or less, by ecclesiastical administrative inertia down to the time of the French Revolution. Unfortunately, Aquitaine was to be one of the few areas of Gaul whose early-mediaeval history was so turbulent that the late Roman bishoprics disappeared (cf. Rouche 1979: 105–6). So, even though we know that by the fifth century there was a bishopric at Saint-Bertrand, its boundaries have not come down to us (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 48–9). That being so, we have to resort to more approximate measures. One is to try to identify the neighbouring *civitates* and their territories to help define the territory of the Convenae by a process of exclusion. Though one of the earliest sources for the internal organisation of this part of Aquitania only gives us two *civitates*, the Convenae in the east, and the Tarbelli (centred on *Aquae Tarbellici*/*Augustae* [Dax]) for the west (Ptolemy *Geography* II.7.9, dependent on the earlier Marinus of Tyre), it is clear that there must have been others. Strabo, the Augustan geographer, when talking of Augustus' grant of *ius Latii* to the Convenae, also specifically mentions the Ausci. These were the people centred on Auch (*Elimberrum* or *Augusta*, the latter place name gives away the date of foundation) to the north of Saint-Bertrand; so the northern borders of the Convenae must lie between the two towns. To the east was the provincial boundary with Narbonensis, which was also the boundary between the Convenae and the Volcae Tectosages of Toulouse. This crossed the Saint-Bertrand to Toulouse road just north-east of *Calagurris*/Saint-Martory (the birthplace of Jerome's foe Vigilantius); at this time the area which under the late empire was to be the *civitas* of the Consoranni, was probably part of Narbonensis (Sablayrolles 2002: 317), so the provincial boundary may have run south along the lower valley of the river Salat, then south from there to the crest of the Pyrenees. To the west of the Convenae, in the later Roman period, there was the *civitas* of the Bigerri, with their principal town at *Turba* (Tarbes), but we do not know whether the *civitas* was an Augustan creation or a later dividing-up of Tarbelli. Even if it were the latter, the boundary of the Convenae probably did not shift much if at all. This boundary came quite close to Tarbes, for the hot springs

at modern Capvern, only 25km. from Tarbes, bore the Latin name of *Aquae Convenarum*. The other major thermal site in the area, *Aquae Onesii* (Luchon), is specifically attributed to the Convenae by Strabo (*Geography* IV.2.1), so the territory of the Convenae would have reached up to the provincial boundary with Hispania Tarraconensis along the crest of the Pyrenees. Putting all these indicators together, it is possible to gain a rough idea of the extent of the *civitas* of the Convenae – a roughly rhomboid area somewhat longer north-south than east-west (cf. Figure 1.1).

Choosing the site for Lugdunum

Having considered the creation of the province of Aquitania and the definition of the *civitas* of the Convenae, we shall move now to the earliest manifestations of their principal settlement, the town of *Lugdunum*.

All *civitates* had to have a principal town, which in many ways was the embodiment of the collective identity of the people of the *civitas*. For the Convenae, the choice settled on the site of *Lugdunum*, a place-name whose first element, *Lug*, was the name of a prominent Gallic god. The fact that this is a Gallic, not an Aquitanian, deity may mean that there was less of a strict division between the Gauls and the Aquitanians than Caesar's summary description would allow. Unlike the common, modern conception of a Roman town, the growth of *Lugdunum* was not the result of the imposition of a unitary vision, marked, in particular, by the laying-out of a regular, right-angled street-grid, which was then infilled with public buildings and with houses and workshops. Rather, as we shall see, it was a relatively slow and piecemeal accumulation of buildings and monuments which only by the end of the process resembled what we think of as a Roman town. The reasons for the choice of the site of what would eventually become Saint-Bertrand (Figure 1.2) have been a subject of debate for some time, mainly centring around the rôle of the hill, which is seen as the determining factor in anchoring the settlement in this precise location. Many have seen the hill as the site of a pre-Roman *oppidum*, an important, fortified settlement of the Convenae. Until recently there has been no way of resolving the case; but the recent excavations on the late Roman defences found no trace of earlier, late Iron Age defences, nor of any late Iron Age occupation or material save a handful of potsherds (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 193). These included a sherd of Campanian black-gloss ware of the first century B.C. and some sherds of amphora of the same date; but their small number and the fact that they came from later, fourth-century A.D. deposits means that they can bear little weight in this argument. But the lack of any trace of Iron Age fortifications along the top of the steepest parts of the slope, the line taken by the later Roman defences, casts serious doubt on the hypothesis of a defended *oppidum*. An alternative might be that there was an important hill-top sanctuary, now buried under the cathedral. Both of these hypotheses essentially

Figure 1.2 Saint-Bertrand, the physical setting and the early road junction

see the Gallo-Roman town as successor to a major indigenous focus, one of the major centres of the Convenae. But the question of a Pompeian foundation must also be borne in mind though, as noted above, nothing of this date has been located, nor do we really know what type of site we should be looking for. In a way this is just a different way of asking the same question, since we would still need to know what it was that made Pompey decide on this spot as the place for his foundation. Until we know a great deal more about the archaeology of the pre-Roman Convenae and of the earliest phases of Saint-Bertrand, the question remains open.

One factor which does seem to have been important is communications. Analysis of the earliest lay-out of the formal, metalled streets of the Gallo-Roman town show that they are later than some major routes whose already-existing alignments were fossilised in the Augustan street lay-out, in large measure accounting for the latter's irregularity (Pailler & Petit 1992). One major axis perpetuates the line of a pre-existing north-west to south-east route-way along the front edge of the Pyrenees foothills. To the west, this was to be prolonged into the main road, linking Saint-Bertrand ultimately with Dax; to the east, the road curved up the valley of the Garonne, to Luchon. Also earlier than the Augustan streets of the town centre was the road leading to Toulouse to the north-east. The road running north to Auch and, thence, to Agen (*Aginnum*), branched off this road outside the town, after the crossing of the Garonne at the Croix du Bazert. The Toulouse road met the east-west route-way at the foot of the hill, creating a central space and road junction that was to last through the life of the Roman city and which was, early on, to be commemorated by the base for a monument, later enclosed within the Circular Monument (see p. 45). The date of these early axes has not been precisely fixed, but the earlier part of the Augustan period (20s B.C.?) would seem to fit the available evidence.

One other feature which seems to have had some significance for the layout of the town was the massif of the Pic du Gar to the south-east. Seen from Saint-Bertrand, this is the most striking and impressive piece of local topography with its steep cliffs and very distinctive horned summit, on which, in the Roman period, there was a sanctuary. Several of the major buildings of the town centre, such as the Forum Temple and the Circular Monument, face in that general direction (cf. p. 46) and the Pic would have been clearly visible (cloud permitting) to anyone coming out of the main entrance to these precincts.

Evidence for an early nucleus?

Excavations in the area of the central metalled esplanade, on the Forum Baths on its western side, under the Tiberian *Macellum* and under the North Baths encountered deposits which have yielded a quantity of pottery earlier than that from the generality of the Roman-period town, consisting

essentially of black-gloss Campanian wares dating from the 40s B.C. and earlier (e.g. Aupert & Monturet 2001: 103). This could be evidence that there was a focus at the foot of the hill, rather than, or as well as, on the hilltop, from soon after the middle of the first century B.C. Though this does not take us back as far as Pompey, it takes us to not long after the Caesarian conquest. What any such focus was, we cannot, as yet, say. It could, on the one hand, mean that we are in the vicinity of the Pompeian foundation, or, on the other hand, it could mean that the Convenae had already marked out this spot as some sort of focal point, creating the target for the major route-ways as laid out in the early Augustan period. But we should be cautious; much of the Campanian ware comes from deposits also containing Augustan pottery of the 20s B.C. and later, so it cannot be used to date these deposits themselves to an earlier period.

Likewise, one other type of evidence should also be considered here: coins. The earliest coins recovered at Saint-Bertrand are seven late Republican silver *denarii*, thirteen indigenous Spanish issues (reverses inscribed BOLSKAN, KE(L)SE, IAKA) of the first century B.C., and seven of the earliest issues of Octavian struck in Gaul (Bost & Namin 2002: 26–7). So, there is a group of coins from roughly the middle of the first century B.C., and a bit later, from Saint-Bertrand; does this bolster our evidence for a pre-Augustan phase? Not really, since the dates ascribed to the coins are the dates of their minting, not of their loss. It is clear from many sites in southern Gaul that pre-Roman coins could circulate down into the Augustan period and Augustan copper-alloy coins could circulate well down into the first century A.D. since Augustus' immediate successors struck very little copper-alloy coinage at the mint of Lyon, which was the principal centre of supply for Gaul. For instance, at Saint-Bertrand two early *asses* of Agrippa and a Group 1 *as* of Nîmes were found in the same deposit on the Forum Baths site as an imitation *as* of Claudius I (reigned A.D. 41–54), a deposit therefore dating to around the middle of the first century A.D. or later, not to the early years of Augustus. Clearly the mere presence of these coins (minted at an early date) at Saint-Bertrand cannot be taken as evidence for an equally early settlement. Nor can the overall distribution of these coins help pinpoint any early settlement focus and, for the same reason, too many of them probably come from later deposits. In fact, their overall distribution (Bost & Namin 2002: 216–17) covers the entirety of what was to become the centre of the Roman town. So in reality, what this shows is the distribution of archaeological work to date; the find-spots coincide almost exactly with the principal excavated areas.

So, though the presence of the early pottery and coins at Saint-Bertrand raises tantalising questions of when they got to the site and under what circumstances, they cannot yet be taken as proof positive of a pre-Augustan phase of settlement; they can only raise the possibility. To be certain, we would need the excavation of deposits containing only material of this date,

sealed beneath the Augustan levels, and, if possible, independently datable, for instance by Carbon-14 assay.

So, there is still no archaeological evidence to allow us to pinpoint the location of any Pompeian foundation, let alone its size and nature. Nor is there any good evidence for what, if anything, was going on at Saint-Bertrand in the fifty or so years (two generations) between the claimed Pompeian foundation and the earlier part of the reign of Augustus. It is at this latter period that we begin to see the conditions being put in place for the creation of the Roman-style town with which we are familiar and which will be the focus of the next chapter.

2

CREATING THE ROMAN CITY

The first century A.D.

Introduction

So far we have seen the Convenae in terms of their landscape, of their situation within the Roman administrative system and of the possible earliest creation of their principal centre, *Lugdunum*. In this chapter, we shall look at the evidence for the development of *Lugdunum* through its early monuments and buildings (see Figure 2.1 for location of these). As was argued in the Introduction, these buildings have two aspects which interest us in this book: physical form and symbolic or ideological significance. In the first part of the chapter we shall look at their physical form and their functions, examining the individual buildings in approximately chronological order under Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, roughly the century 30 B.C. to A.D. 70, and what went on in or at them. In the second part of the chapter it is the symbolism and significance of the buildings and their functions in creating the citizens of the Convenae that will be the focus. How do the buildings individually and collectively fashion the people who used them into participants in the life and thoughts of a community which was part of the Roman empire?

The street system

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the route along the foothills linking Dax with Luchon, the road to Toulouse and the open space at their junction created the early focus of the town. They also determined the overall lay-out of the developing street-system of the town. It was not possible to create an absolutely regular, Roman-style street-grid, since this would have needed the principal roads to meet at right angles. Instead, there was a series of subsidiary streets (the east-west ones, called by the current excavators a *decumanus;* the north-south ones, a *cardo*). Information from the campaigns of excavation and of aerial photography by Catherine Petit show that in the fully-developed street system there were essentially two major elements. In the southern part of the town, at the foot of the hill, there was

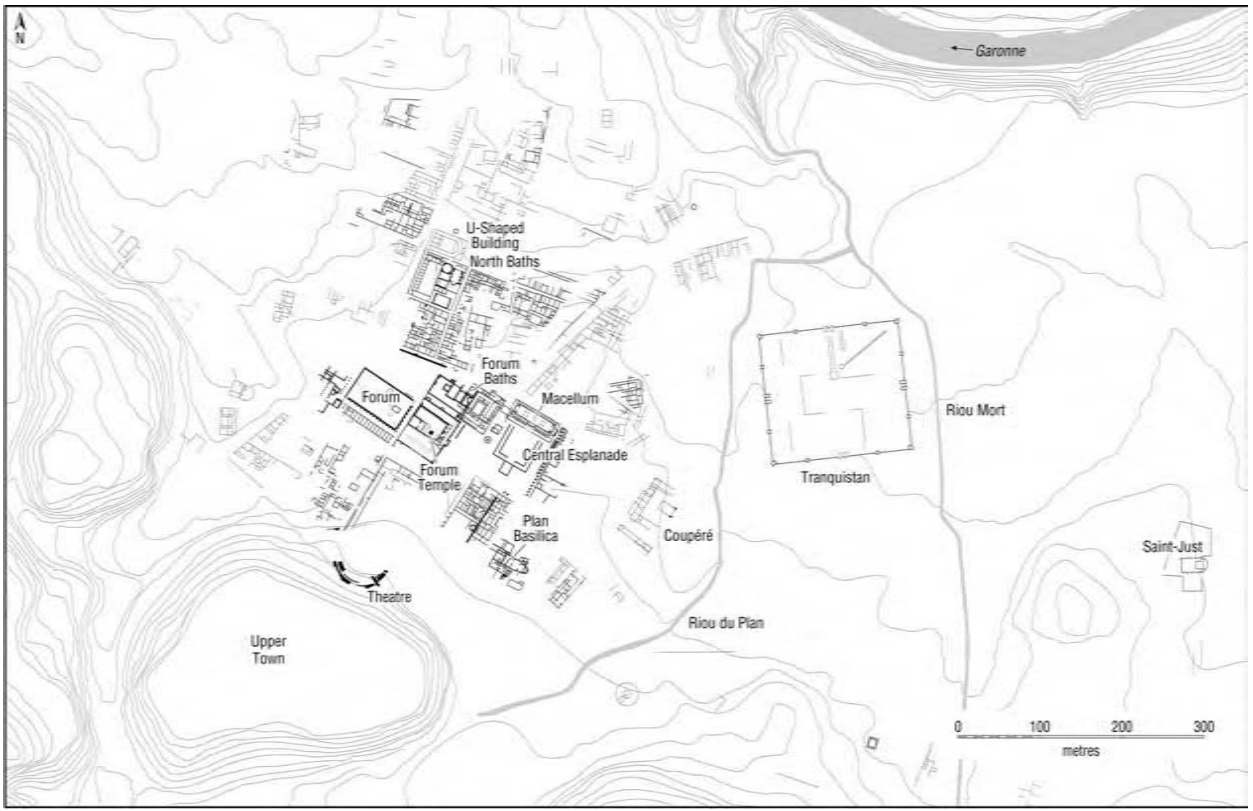

Figure 2.1 Saint-Bertrand, general plan with names of sites (*after J-L. Paillet*)

Figure 2.2 Saint-Bertrand, street system (*after Paillet & Petit 1992*)

a series of streets parallel with, or, at right angles to, the original line of the Dax road (the excavators' *decumanus D4*, Paillet & Petit 1992: 111–12) and the Toulouse road. These streets delimited the blocks or *insulae* of the monumental centre of the town, that is for the Forum, the Forum Temple, the Forum Baths, the *Macellum* and the place to its south, the *porticus post scaenam* of the Theatre, along with some centrally-sited private houses. The other major alignment encompassed the *insulae* north of the Forum Baths and the *Macellum* to the west of the Toulouse road. The road which separated the two major alignments (*decumanus D5*) ran obliquely from the north-western corner of the *Macellum* along the north side of the Forum Baths to join the Dax road near the north-western corner of the Forum. This road seems to have been laid out after the original alignment of the Dax road, along the southern side of the Forum Baths, had been closed off by the construction of the Forum Temple, this latter dating to the period of the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37). Most of the streets in the northern part of the town were laid out parallel with, or, at right angles to, this *decumanus D5*. As can be seen from the plan (Figure 2.2), the two main blocks of streets enclosed *insulae* of differing shapes and sizes and, in addition, there were other streets which respected neither alignment; thus, because of the circumstances in which the town's street-system originated and grew, Saint-Bertrand was never to possess a classic, orthogonal street-grid.

The Trophy (*Le Trophée*)

The earliest dated item from Saint-Bertrand indicating some sort of formal, Roman-style focus is the Trophy. Its fragmentary remains were discovered by Sapène in 1926, concealed in pits in the area west of the Forum Temple. It is carved in the finest white statuary marble that the Saint-Béat quarries yielded. The Trophy consists of three elements; an elaborate central invocation of Rome's power, flanked by two trophies proper, representing the subjugation of Gaul and of Spain (for detailed description and discussion see Boube 1996, on which, what follows is based). In the central element, the prow of a naval vessel parting the waves supports a tritoness bearing on her shoulders the terrestrial globe, surmounted by an eagle with wings open and grasping in its claws a thunderbolt; in turn, the eagle supports the winged figure of Victory with a palm branch in her left hand and holding out a victor's wreath with her right. On the base to either side of the prow are the figures of a dolphin and a crocodile. This composition represents the victories of the emperor, along with the protection accorded him by Jupiter in the form of the eagle. The Trophy also depicts more precisely a naval victory, with the ship's prow, the tritoness and the dolphin. The crocodile evokes Egypt and the Nile, and the whole composition is most probably to be read as a representation of Octavian's great victory over Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt, at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., which closed the civil

Figure 2.3 The Augustan Trophy, captive and personification of Gallia. (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Kitterie Schenck-David*)

wars and left Octavian/Augustus in sole and supreme power. To the viewer's left was a group consisting of a trophy of arms and two human figures. The trophy consisted of a tree-trunk hung with enemy weapons and equipment (only fragments survive), harking back to the original, Greek, form of a trophy set up by the victors in a battle. Either side of the tree-trunk were two figures: one, female, draped and standing; the other, male, kneeling and nude apart from a cloak around his neck and down his back. They represented Gallia, the personification of the land of Gaul, and a defeated Gaulish warrior, his hands tied behind his back by a chain of a type with figure-of-eight links known from Iron Age Gaul. The right-hand (to the viewer) group was similar and balanced the composition; it consisted of a trophy flanked again by a standing, draped female personification and a kneeling, near-nude warrior; these must represent Hispania. Thus the Trophy signalled the final surrender and pacification of the peoples to either side of the Pyrenees and Augustus' military domination of both land and sea. The date of the Trophy was originally suggested as 25 B.C., at the end of the major wars of conquest in north-western Spain. More recently Emanuelle Boube (1996: 43–4) has suggested rather a date around 13–12 B.C., at the suppression of the final risings against Rome both north and south of the Pyrenees, suggesting that the eagle in the central element may be an allusion to the restoration to Augustus of legionary eagles captured by the Aquitani and Spaniards: an event commemorated by a coin issue of 12 B.C. and recorded by Augustus himself in his account of his own achievements (*Res Gestae* 29).

Unfortunately, we can no longer reconstruct where the Trophy originally stood. Sapène thought that, because it consisted of three principal elements, the Trophy originally stood on the three bases to the west of (behind) the Forum Temple, near where the fragments of the Trophy were later buried. However, the more recent and detailed re-examination of the Forum Temple (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 29–32) makes this most unlikely; the bases post-date the Trophy and are far too long for it. Another hypothesis is that the Trophy was free-standing, perhaps associated with the earliest religious focus which is suggested as having taken the form of an altar (ibid.: 113–17). But, it can be argued against this that the lack of weathering on the polished surfaces of the sculpture and the survival in places of traces of the original paint on the marble argue that, from the beginning the Trophy was kept under cover rather than exposed to the rains, snow and freeze-thaw cycles of the Pyrenaean climate; so, very probably, there is an as-yet-undiscovered structure of this period which housed the Trophy.

The Saint-Bertrand Trophy is not, as mentioned above (p. 18), the only monument to the victories of Roman arms to be found along the chain of the Pyrenees. At the eastern end, where the *Via Domitia*, the road from Italy to Spain, passes over the Col de Perthus, Pompey ordered the construction of a Trophy to commemorate the end of the Sertorian wars and the subjugation of northern Spain (Castellvi, Nola, Rodà 1995). Consisting of a large square base, through which the roadway passed, surmounted by a large circular drum, this was a very different type of monument, and half a century earlier than the Saint-Bertrand Trophy, though Augustus himself was to build a similar monument in 7/6 B.C. at La Turbie above present-day Monaco to commemorate the subduing of the peoples of the western Alps. Towards the western end of the Pyrenees was the Urkulu monument (Fabre 1994: 179), also interpreted as some sort of trophy or victory monument, rather like the Col de Perthus monument without its base. Unfortunately, the state of preservation is such that we can say little more about it: least of all its date. So, the main eastern and one of the western routes across the Pyrenees were overlooked by victory monuments, and at Saint-Bertrand near the start of the central route over the mountains there was the Trophy. The Pyrenees, like all mountain areas, were regarded by the Romans as wild and untamed and their fierce mountain peoples, such as the Vascones and Vardulli, cost the Romans much effort to subdue; thus, the effort and the subjugation of the mountains was fittingly memorialised at sites along the chain. We do not know who commissioned the Saint-Bertrand Trophy. It is possible that the orders came from Augustus himself. Given the quality of the piece, this is not impossible, since the sculptors were clearly trained in Mediterranean techniques and iconography; the Trophy has evident links with the sculptural tradition of Pergamum in Asia Minor (Boube 1996: 41–2). Alternatively, if it was commissioned by the Convenae, or one of their number, then it would be a remarkable testimony to their awareness of

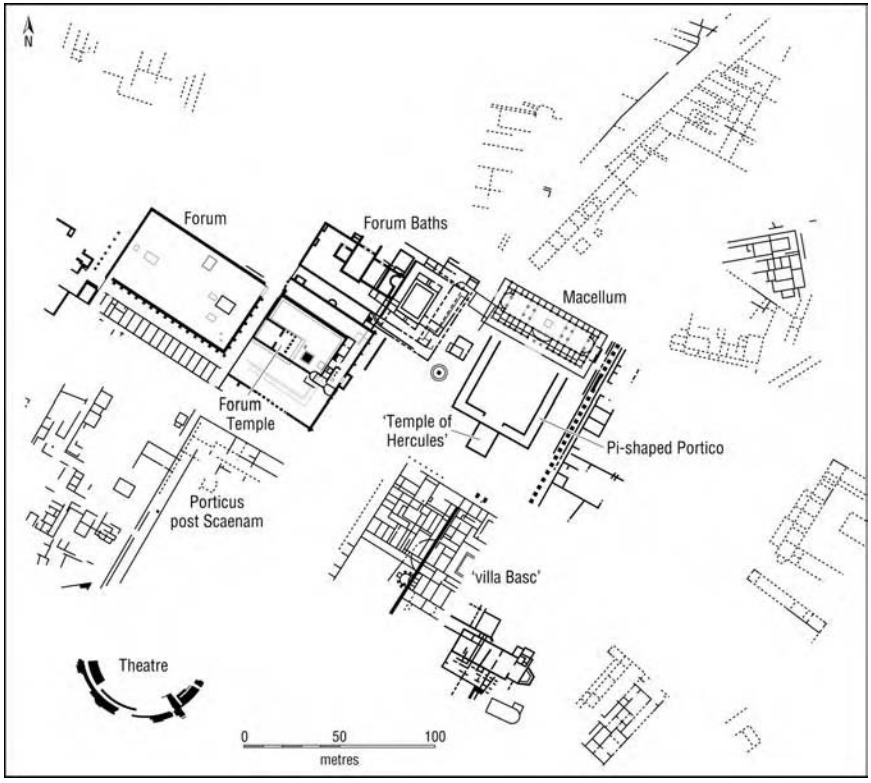

Figure 2.4 Saint-Bertrand, the central area and monuments

wider political and artistic trends in Augustus' reign and to their *devotio* (a loyalty, religious, as well as personal) to the emperor.

A little later than the date proposed for the Trophy, we find the initial development of a monumental, Roman-style town centre as a series of buildings was erected around the central esplanade (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5), which will now be described and discussed in chronological order.

The Forum Baths (*Les Thermes du Forum*)

The stratigraphic evidence makes it clear that the earliest of the series of major public buildings in the central area of the town is the Forum Baths; they are stratigraphically earlier than the enclosure of the Forum Temple (see p. 37) though, as we shall see, the baths are some years later than the Trophy. The plan of the earliest baths is difficult to reconstruct and understand, partly because it is overlain by its late-first-century replacement, and partly because Sapène only encountered parts of the structure and did not really understand what he was dealing with. Nevertheless, thanks to the re-excavation in

Figure 2.5 Saint-Bertrand, the centre of the Roman town from the air. Lower left, Forum Temple; upper left, Forum Baths; upper right, Macellum; centre, Circular Monument (north at top). (*Photo: Catherine Petit*)

many small sondages by Pierre Aupert and Alain Badie, we now have a much better idea of plan, sequence and dating (Aupert & Monturet 2001).

The earliest use of the site was for the road (*decumanus 4*) running west from the central open area, the earliest metalled form of the road to Dax, with its construction probably dating to the turn of B.C./A.D. It was once re-metalled before the building of the Forum Baths. The early baths were laid out on the western side of the central open esplanade, in the angle of the Toulouse road to the east of the early Dax road along their southern side, narrowing the Dax road somewhat. As noted above, the lay-out and room-functions of the early, Phase I (État I) bath-complex are difficult to establish because of the overlying late-first-century baths; but, the earliest plan most likely consisted of (Figure 2.6), on the eastern side, an entrance chamber, probably with an *apodyterium* (changing room), with a three-colour mosaic. Little survived of the central part of the block, but, presumably, it contained a *frigidarium* (cold room) and a *tepidarium* (warm room) (Salles 4, 5). On the western side lay the *caldarium* (hot room) (Salle 6), a long, north-south, rectangular chamber with an apse in the centre of the west wall, probably for a *labrum* – a basin with water. To the south of the main block was a walled enclosure, perhaps an outdoor *palaestra* or exercise-ground, and to the west of the main block was a service-court, with the stoke-hole (*praefurnium*) for the furnace supplying the hot air to circulate under the floors of the *caldarium* and *tepidarium*, which were raised on hypocausts. This simple plan contained the necessary basic elements of a Roman-style bath, operating as what we now call a Turkish bath, and not only cleaning the bather but also allowing for activities such as shaving, even depilation, anointing with scented oils, exercise, as well as acting as a social centre. The dating evidence suggests a date early in the Tiberian period, the later years of the second decade A.D. These baths were constructed in

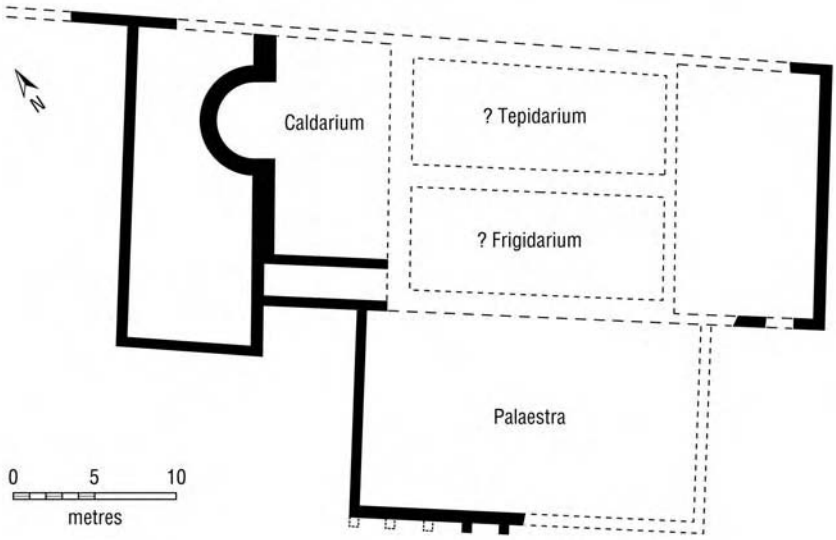

Figure 2.6 Plan of Forum Baths, original building (*after Aupert & Monturet 2001*)

the local limestone, bonded with a lime mortar and faced in a small limestone block of *petit appareil*, probably covered in a plaster rendering with false jointing. There is little evidence, at this date, for the use of marble, the architectural elements recovered from the demolition; deposits preparatory to the construction of the Phase II baths, such as columns, or detailing such as capitals, seem to have been in limestone or even brick covered with plaster (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 34–5).

Later in the reign of Tiberius, the Forum Temple and its precinct were constructed immediately to the south-west of the Forum Baths and on a slightly different alignment. The north-eastern corner of the long room (Salle III) along the northern side of the temple *peribolos* (enclosure) came so close to the baths *palaestra,* that the Dax road (*decumanus 4*) was severely constricted and had to pass through a dog-leg between the two building complexes. Somewhere about this time, a room was added (Salle 8) in the angle between the western chamber of the baths and the *palaestra* on the south side.

Late in the reign of Claudius, around A.D. 50, further modifications were undertaken in the baths, the excavators' Phase II (État II) (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 37–42), partly to upgrade their facilities and partly to address the problem of the constricted dog-leg of *decumanus 4* along their southern side. To eliminate this problem, the *palaestra* was suppressed, opening up a wide passage for the road. On the other hand, *decumanus 5* along the northern side of the baths was encroached upon to gain space to compensate. It was at about this time, or, a little later, that the monument at the main road

junction was surrounded by the Circular Enclosure (see p. 45), perhaps to mark the improvement of the road system, and the rectangular enclosure to its north was built.

Within the baths, the floor levels were generally raised by about 70cm. On the eastern side, the original entrance façade was enhanced by the addition of further rooms. The apse in the western side of the *caldarium* was suppressed and replaced by one in the short, southern wall. To the north was a new enclosed space, perhaps a replacement for the former *palaestra* to the south. In general, the quality of the masonry was less careful, both in its shaping and in its construction, than that of Phase I; but, since it was to be covered with plaster rendering, this did not really matter. The finding of two fragments of marble wall-veneer, one with a chamfered false joint, indicates the desire to create an impression of sumptuousness. Since the internal walls were plastered, the marble veneer may have been applied to the external façade. Otherwise, the finding of brick column segments suggests something less ambitious.

A set of baths necessarily implies water supply and drainage. In the case of Saint-Bertrand we know of one aqueduct, tapping the springs at Tibiran-Jaunac, some 3km. to the west-north-west of the Roman town, which would have yielded some 3,000m^3 of water a day. It ran along the front of the foothills, with the built channel (roofed in marble) mainly lying in a cut-and-cover trench but, occasionally, above ground on a supporting wall (Bailhache 1972). It entered the town alongside the Dax road, but its course within the town to the baths is not known, though it has been suggested (Pailler & Petit 1992: 127) that a square structure with a semi-circular annexe in the area of Signan on the western side of the town might be the *castellum aquae* fronted by a semi-circular basin, a *nymphaeum* (or shrine) to the water-nymphs. In this case, the structure would be where the aqueduct terminated and its waters were channelled to their various destinations. It is possible that there may have been one or more other aqueducts, but no trace of one has ever been found. Otherwise, wells are known at several points in the town, tapping the natural water table and, of course, the Garonne would have been a perennial source of water of seasonally-varying quality. Several drains were excavated on the site of the Forum Baths, but where the waste water was discharged is unclear; it probably fed into a major sewer under the Toulouse road, which would also have drained the *Macellum* (see p. 43) and, presumably, discharged straight into the Garonne.

The Forum Temple (*Le Temple du Forum*)

Soon after the building of the Forum Baths, a large, classical-style temple within a porticoed enclosure was constructed: the Forum Temple. The temple and its precinct was, with the Forum Baths, a major focus of Sapène's work in the town centre between 1921 and 1938. This means that it was extensively

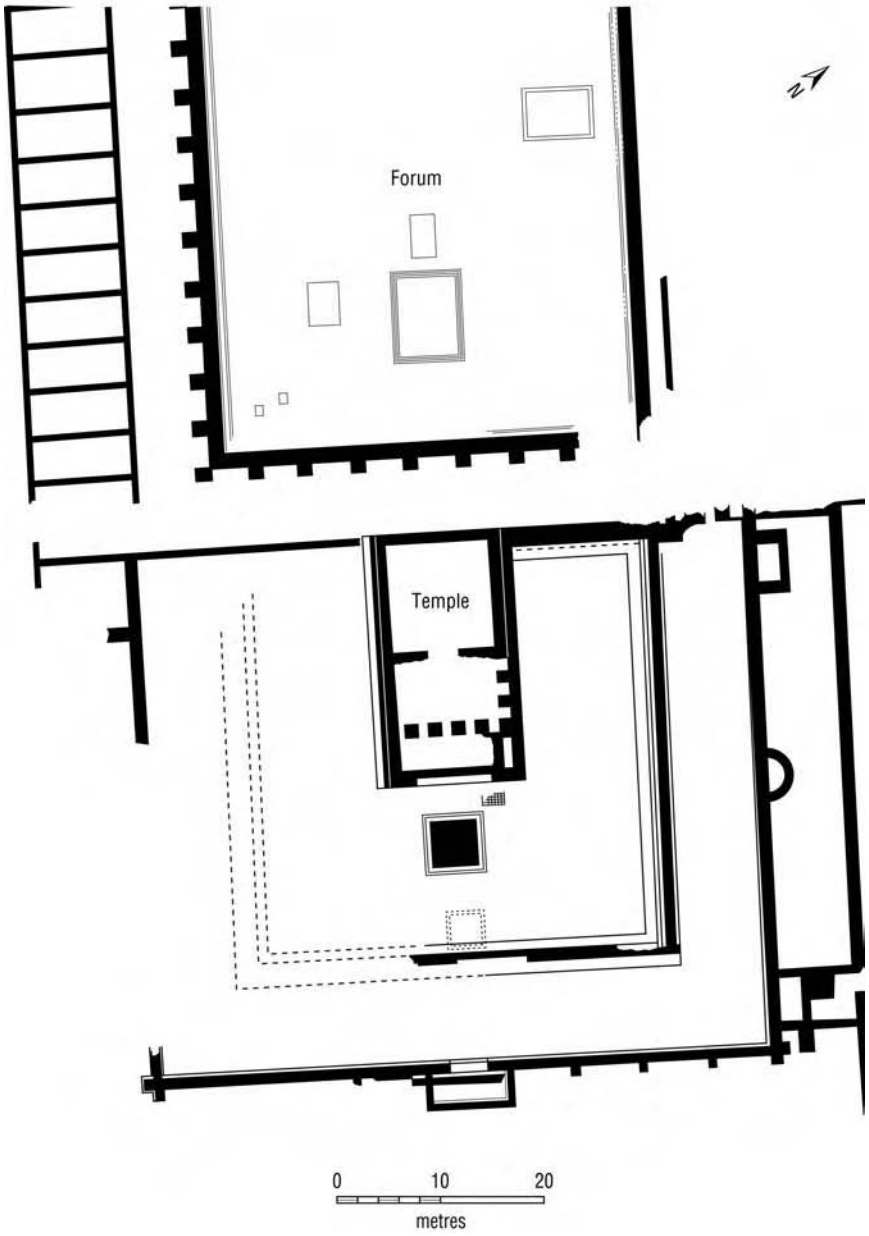

Figure 2.7 Plan of Forum and Forum Temple (*after Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994*)

cleared, destroying much evidence that we would now dearly like to have. After the excavations, it was consolidated and laid out to public display, involving further modifications to the structures as surviving and excavated. Again, as with the Forum Baths, it is only a careful programme of limited excavations where stratigraphy survived and of survey of the remains once the modern accretions had been removed that allowed Robert Sablayrolles and his collaborators to rescue what information on the structures, their sequence and dating was left (see Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 11–119, Annexes I–III for full details and discussion).

The site of the Forum Temple was already partly occupied by *decumanus D4*, the part of the road to Dax within the built-up area running west from the central open area; as we have already seen, this was severely constricted to make way for the temple enclosure. Though the Forum Baths already existed just to the north, the temple complex was laid out on a slightly different alignment, a few degrees nearer an east-west orientation. The reason for this is unclear (it aligns approximately, but, not precisely, onto the Pic du Gar), but, that the existing Forum Baths complex should not have determined the alignment argues either that there was a more important consideration and/or that harmonisation of the alignments of different buildings was not important. Given that the dates for the construction of the Forum Baths complex and of the Forum Temple complex are very close, this is perhaps surprising.

Approximately three-fifths of the temple area was available to Sapène for excavation; the southern two-fifths lay, and still lie, under the modern D26 road. The excavations have given us the plan of a rectangular temple podium facing south-east, a large base in front of and on the axis with the temple and an enclosing gallery or colonnade (*peribolos*) to north and east (and originally to the south, but not to the west), delimiting the sacred area of the temple. So far as can be judged from the scanty stratigraphy left by Sapène, the three elements were contemporaneous. The temple was of classical style, raised on a podium 24.85m. (50 Roman *passus*) long by 14.80m. (30 *passus*) wide. The placing of the reinforced bases for the frontal columns show that there were six, with their centres at a spacing of 2.30m., with a further two returning on each side, their centres at a spacing of 2.40m. In technical terms this makes it a hexastyle, prostyle temple. Forward of the columns was an extension of the podium; a moulding still in place shows that there was not a major stairway along the façade but, instead, two lateral stairways at the ends of the long sides between the columns and the end of the podium. The *cella* (shrine) of the temple (minimum dimensions 10.70m. × 10.20m.) may well have had engaged columns of the same architectural order as the columns of the façade running down its sides and across its back. Like the Forum Baths, the Forum Temple was built out of the local limestone, with limestone also used for the architectural stonework such as the columns, the capitals, the entablatures and the pediment.

In front of the temple, on its long axis, was a large base, 5.92m. square. Normally, this would be the position for the sacrificial altar, in which case the base would have supported a flight of steps up to an altar which would have been of considerably smaller size than the base, an arrangement well-attested elsewhere in the empire. However, the excavators (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 40) prefer an alternative explanation which would see the altar on the front part of the temple podium in front of the columns and the square foundation: in other words, as the base for a piece of statuary (though not the Trophy – it was the wrong shape).

On three sides, the temple was surrounded by an enclosure consisting of a porticoed walkway, with colonnades towards the temple and gutters in front of the columns. On the north side, behind the colonnade, was a long, rectangular room (Salle III), with an entrance at its eastern end, whose purpose is not known. The principal entrance to the temple precinct was, presumably, in the centre of the eastern side; a fragment of wall projecting outwards is, presumably, the remains of such an entrance. The outer face of the south-eastern precinct wall facing onto the central area of the town had four buttresses in its northern half (the southern half remains unexcavated), giving some articulation to what would otherwise have been a flat, blank wall in a very visible position.

Because of the depredations of the original excavations, there was very little intact stratigraphy left in the temple precinct and even less relating to the original construction of the complex. What little pottery there was is dated by the modern excavators to the early years A.D. but, in view of the fact that the complex is stratigraphically later than the Forum Baths, the dating of the Forum Temple probably needs to be revised downwards a bit into the reign of Tiberius. This would fit reasonably well with the evidence for the dating of the architectural stonework, which is related to the architecture of the surviving temple at Nîmes, known as the Maison Carrée, whose dedicatory inscription puts it in the earliest years A.D. The Saint-Bertrand architectural detailing is also related to that at Saintes, in Aquitania north of the Garonne, dated most recently to the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) (Tardy 1989). So a stylistic sequence Nîmes – Saint-Bertrand – Saintes would put the Saint-Bertrand stonework in the same chronological bracket as that suggested by the stratigraphy and dating of the Forum baths: in the reign of Tiberius.

A temple of the Imperial Cult?

The dedication of the Forum Temple is unknown. At a Roman *colonia*, a temple in such a prominent position might be the *capitolium*: a temple dedicated to the three great Roman deities, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, as on the Capitol at Rome. But, though it had the *ius Latii*, Saint-Bertrand was not, at the date of the Forum Temple's construction, a *colonia*, so, an identification as a *capitolium* is unlikely. At other towns in Gaul, a centrally-sited

temple like this would probably have been dedicated to the tutelary deity of the *civitas*: the god, or, more usually, goddess, who personified and protected the *civitas*, as Roma did Rome. But at Saint-Bertrand, there are fragments from the area of the Forum Temple of an inscription dedicated by a *sacerdos Romae et Augusti* (a priest of the cult of Roma and Augustus), the last line of which some have restored to read *concilium* (council, specifically the Council of a province), though this reading has been seriously challenged (Sablayrolles in Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 177; cf. Fishwick 2002: 24–7). There are other inscriptions from the area also mentioning a *sacerdos Romae et Augusti*, which was the cult celebrated in Gaul above all at the federal Altar at Lyon dedicated in 12 B.C., served by the *concilium* of the Gauls, or at the *Ara Ubiorum* (12–9 B.C.) on the Rhine, later to become Cologne. Some scholars, following Sapène's original suggestion, have therefore argued that Saint-Bertrand acted as a centre of the Imperial Cult in south-western Gaul, perhaps defining the Aquitani as religiously distinct from the rest of the Three Gauls. They further suggest that this prefigures the late Roman period when these people were also to become administratively distinct as the province of *Novempopulana* (see p. 91). Other such subsidiary centres of the Imperial Cult are known, for instance at *Aquae Sestianae* in north-western Spain, also at Braga (3–2 B.C.) and Gijón (A.D. 9–10). Moreover, found near the inscription fragments were parts of an architectural frieze (probably of a later date) in marble, decorated with *bucrania* (ox skulls) and garlands (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 101–2). The same decorative motif recurs on the Altar at Lyon and on the *Ara Pacis* of Augustus at Rome. Could this be part of a later redecoration of a similar monument at Saint-Bertrand? But, if that were the case, then we would be dealing with an Altar of the Imperial Cult at Saint-Bertrand – not a temple. Moreover, though there are temples known from major provincial Imperial Cult centres (for example, the Temple of the Deified Claudius at Colchester, for Britain), they are all later than the Saint-Bertrand temple. Add to this the fact that none of the inscriptions or fragments mentioned above can definitely be tied to the Forum Temple, but, rather, were found in its vicinity or re-used in later structures on the site of the temple precinct, and the case loses much of its power. So, at present, the case for an Imperial Cult centre at Saint-Bertrand under Augustus remains weak; the idea that the Forum Temple was that centre is weaker still. So this is of no help in determining the dedication of the Forum Temple. The temple remains more likely to have been dedicated to the presiding deity of the Convenae themselves.

The Forum

Calling this temple the Forum Temple implies that it formed part of a tripartite basilica/forum/temple structure of a type known from several towns

in Gaul. At these towns, such as Augst (now in Switzerland) or Paris, this takes the form of a long, rectangular complex with the basilica forming one of the short sides and the forum one half of the rectangle, with the temple in the centre of the other half looking along the long axis of the complex towards the basilica. This architectural assembly expresses the purposes of a forum as a place for the promulgation of laws, the courts of justice and the transaction of other legal business in the basilica, and for the administration of the *civitas* in the various offices, all under divine surveillance from the temple. Fora were also the principal location in a town where statues, dedications and other monuments were raised to local dignitaries and to powerful patrons of the town, including the imperial family.

In such a scenario, the forum and basilica at Saint-Bertrand would lie to the west of the Forum Temple and its precinct. Today, that land is either under roadways or is on private property. Excavation by Sapène between 1926 and 1931 revealed that there is indeed a substantial building complex in the area, with porticoes to north, south and east (along the back wall of the Forum Temple). The western end of the complex was closed off by a rectangular structure with at least one line of column-bases. All in all this looks very much like a forum-basilica complex enclosing a large, rectangular open space. The long, south side was the most extensively excavated and consisted of a line of rectangular rooms (offices?) with entranceways at each end and in the centre of the range, opening onto the colonnade surrounding the central piazza. In this central, colonnaded space was a series of masonry bases, presumably for statues; the two in the centre at either end of the forum court were particularly massive (the largest is some 5m. square) and might have carried major pieces of sculpture, such as an equestrian group (May 1986: 98–101). Indeed, one of the pieces of statuary recovered from the forum was the torso of a life-size statue of an emperor in military dress, the cuirass decorated with a scene of two captives seated at the base of a trophy. The style of the piece suggests a date in the first half of the second century.

The plan we have today probably dates in essence to the second century. The area of this forum was implicated in the Flavian fire which also seriously damaged the Forum Baths, and traces of this were found in the area of the Forum, for instance to the west of the back wall of the Forum Temple precinct. But, nowhere did the excavations penetrate to what lay beneath, to the earlier phase(s) of the Forum and any earlier developments. The make-up layers covering the debris of the Flavian fire, and preparatory to the rebuilding of the Forum, contained hundreds of sherds of an amphora type (Richborough 527) usually containing alum, suggesting the extensive preparation of textiles and/or hides in the town before the fire in the late first century. The fact that the Forum Temple as it were turns its back on the forum rather than looking down the long axis suggests that the temple and its precinct were designed as a free-standing monument facing

onto the open area and that the forum was subsequently added to the rear of the temple precinct, rather than being the result of a unitary design, as at towns such as Augst or Paris. Again the Convenae seem to be adapting their early buildings to meet developing practice.

The *Macellum*

On the other side of the Toulouse road from the Forum Baths, and dating also from the Tiberian period, lay another major monument, interpreted as a *macellum* (market building), with, to its south, a large, metalled area (cf. Fabre & Paillet in Guyon ed. 1991: 102–6). The area it was to occupy lay on the northern side of the central esplanade and had already been metalled in the Augustan period with plentiful animal bone waste on this surface. There were also traces of timber buildings on river-pebble foundations and of hearths and ovens. On an alignment which matches neither that of the Forum Baths nor that of the Forum Temple, the *Macellum* superficially resembles a basilica, in that it is a long, rectangular structure (54.50m. × 26.60m.) with apses at both ends, some internal pillars and rooms along the two long sides. In fact, the plan is rather more complex. The central vessel of the building seems mainly to have been open to the sky. It was floored in plain mosaic panels and had a central marble basin. One third of the way in from each end was a setting of four column-bases, which the excavators see as enclosing small 'kiosks' or *aediculae*, with the columns perhaps supporting transverse roof elements linking north and south sides; though this is not certain, it could have been a single uninterrupted open space. Under the floor were drains to evacuate rainwater and the central basin, running under the western wall to drain into the presumed main sewer under the Toulouse road. There were three entrances, at the two short ends and in the middle of the south side, marked by apses on the chords of each of which stood two free-standing columns. The two long sides were lined with small, squarish rooms of varying dimensions. It is interesting that this variability was planned in from the start; presumably, the particular functions of the rooms were already envisaged. The central room on the northern side had a raised floor with mosaic and was probably a shrine for the presiding deities of the activities in the building. Along the outside face of the southern wall was a corresponding series of rooms opening into a walkway, which also ran along the short east and west ends. The available parallels for this architectural form suggest that the complex was a *macellum* a market-building (in modern English a 'shopping mall'). In this case, the two settings of four columns might have defined small, canopied areas housing standardised sets of weights and measures as is known from *macella* elsewhere, for instance in North Africa. The small size of the rooms and the consequent relative lack of storage-space, suggests that whatever was traded here was low-volume but high-value (spices? precious metals? fine fabrics? other luxury goods?). Each individual room could

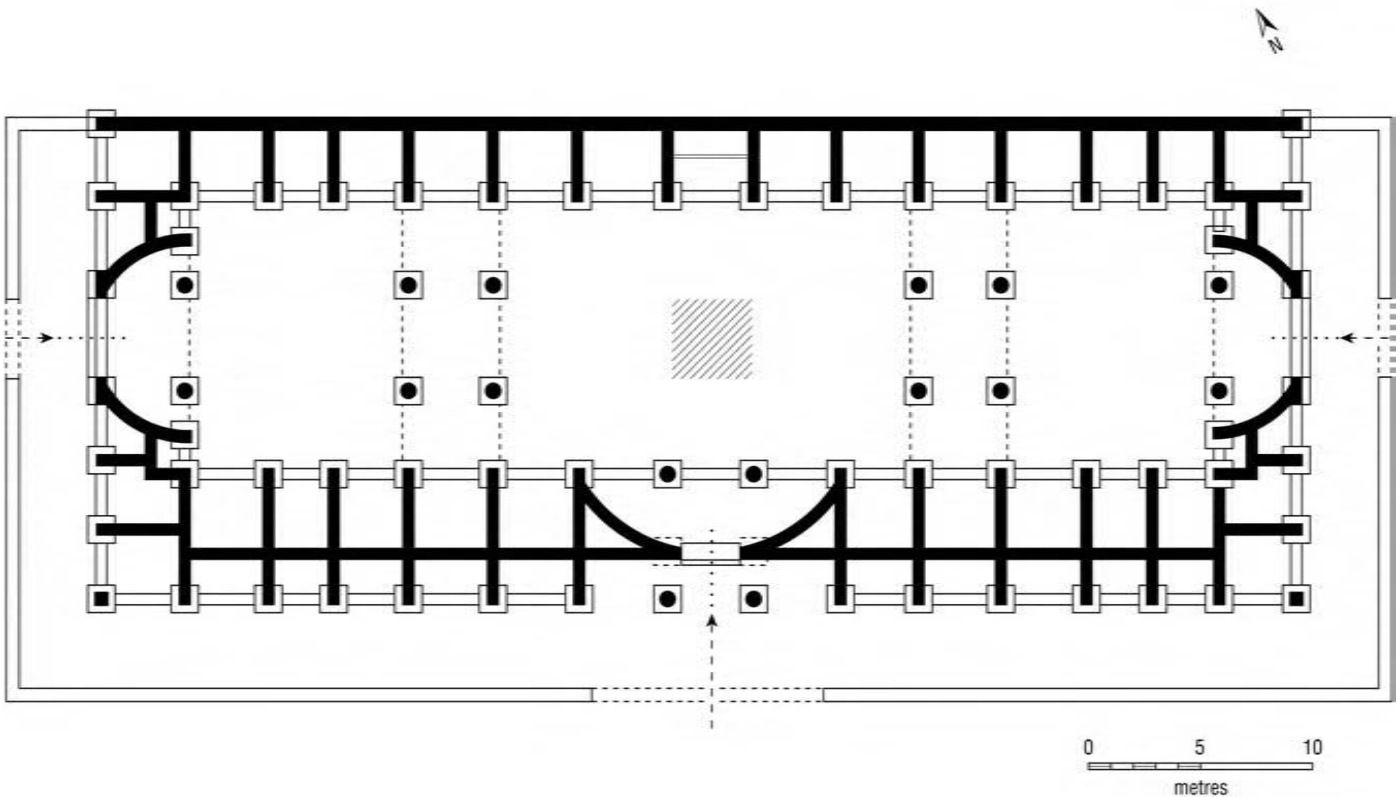

Figure 2.8 Plan of Macellum (*after Fabre & Paillet in Guyon ed. 1991*)

have been shuttered and locked, and the entire building secured. The rooms facing onto the main esplanade would have been less secure.

The dating evidence from the deposits beneath the *Macellum* and from its construction deposits point to a construction date in the 20s A.D. The *Macellum* was constructed throughout in local limestone, greyish for the walls and a pale, soft stone for the architectural detailing such as column drums and capitals. To the east of the *Macellum* and of the open area to its south was a north-south street (*cardo*) bordered along its eastern side by a series of bases. If these were for a colonnade, it suggests an important complex behind (to the east), but unfortunately nothing is known of this.

The Circular Monument (*Le Monument à Enceinte Circulaire*)

Between the Forum Baths and the *Macellum* lay a monument consisting of a central base for a column, surrounded by a low, circular enclosure wall (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 123–63, Annexes IV-VI). The base was the earliest part of this monument, lying at the junction of the main road-axes from Dax to Luchon and to Toulouse and it probably dates to the Augustan period. The low limestone wall with marble coping was added, probably, around the middle of the first century A.D. Clearly the monument was created to memorialise the original cross-roads, the *compitum*, even when its original site became obscured by the remetallings of the central esplanade. The impression that the area of the crossroads was special is reinforced by the fact that it was marked off from the start of the Toulouse road by a line of flagstones across the road (Tassaux in Collectif 2002: 43). A *compitum* was not just a 'transport node', but also a sacred place with its own presiding deities, the *Lares Compitales,* who had their own priests and festivals. Given the importance of the route-ways in the genesis of *Lugdunum*, it is not surprising that this umbilical point should have been perpetuated and commemorated.

A little to the north of, and later than, the Circular Monument was a rectangular, walled enclosure outside the Forum Baths; but, too little of it is known to suggest what its function was.

The Theatre

Carved into the northern flank of the hill and overlooking the centre of the developing town was the theatre (Janon in Guyon ed. 1991: 108–12; Janon & Millette in Collectif 2002: 46–51; Millette 2004), a structure for the performance of dramatic pieces such as tragedies, comedies, mimes and perhaps also for public assembly and for religious rites and festivals. The remains visible today on the hillside consist of the substructures of the semi-circular *cavea* carrying the seating with, on its eastern side, the 'grande

Figure 2.9 The Circular Monument from the north-west, in the background the Pic du Gar

arche' (Figure 2.11), supporting the forward end of the seating-banks and linking the *cavea* to the *scaena* building: the stage with its backdrop. All this dates to the Claudian period in the middle of the first century A.D. But detailed examination of the structural remains (Janon & Millette in Collectif 2002: 46–9) has shown that there was an earlier theatre, evidenced by blocks

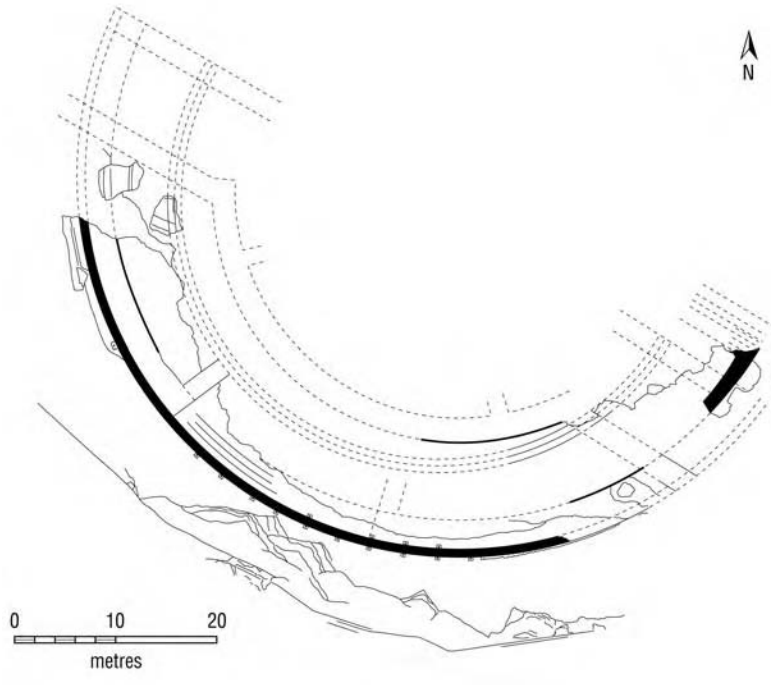

Figure 2.10 Plan of the Theatre (*after Janon in Guyon ed. 1991*)

of masonry which had supported seating-blocks and were overlain by the seating-banks of the Claudian theatre. The curve on the emplacements for the earlier seating suggests a centre for them at several metres remove from that of the second phase of the theatre. Also, tumbled into the corridors of the second phase were marble seating-blocks along with steps from stairways. These had been re-worked, suggesting they may have come from the earlier phase of the structure, and had had to be altered to fit the second phase. All in all, there is now convincing evidence for the existence of a version of the theatre pre-dating the familiar, mid-first-century structure, though, since the recent project on the theatre was one of structural survey only, in the absence of excavation, no more precise dating can be arrived at. It is possible that the first-phase theatre was smaller than its successor, since the upper parts of the surviving *cavea* seem all to be second-phase work.

Excavation on the upper wall of the Claudian *cavea* revealed rare evidence for the way in which the *velum*, the large canvas awning to protect the audience from the sun, was supported (Millette 2004). Along the outside of the wall was a series of rectangular marble blocks; one half was built into the wall, the other half was pierced by a large, circular hole, below which was a rectangular setting of masonry lined with brick. Clearly, this was an

Figure 2.11 The 'grande arche' of the Theatre

arrangement to hold in place a vertical, wooden mast. On the inner face of the wall was a corresponding series of pierced marble plaques, though there is no box structure beneath them. How the *velum* was supported is still a matter for discussion; but, in outline, it looks as though the outer series of holes held the load-bearing vertical masts, with a series of inclined wooden struts projecting into the theatre, from which the fabric was suspended.

Equally, the tensioning and management of the ropes remains a matter for speculation (Millette 2004: 437–41).

The theatre would originally have been completed by a semi-circular *orchestra* in front of the seating and by the stage building, *scaenae frons*, with a tall back wall, as survives at the theatre at Orange in Provence. None of this now survives, as the back wall has long since been dismantled for its stone and the area of the stage and the *orchestra* is now inaccessible under modern farm buildings. Above the top wall of the *cavea* was a further wall designed to shield the theatre (and its audiences) from rocks and other material falling down the hillside.

Behind the *scaenae frons* was a large, rectangular space, 100m. long north-south by 80m. wide east-west, reaching northwards almost to the south side of the Forum Temple precinct, and surrounded by a colonnaded portico with entrances in the centre of the long east and west walls. This was the *porticus post scaenam*, which, to judge from better-known examples elsewhere in the Roman world, was originally a space to provide cover for theatre-goers in case of inclement weather (cf. Vitruvius *de Architectura* V.9.1), but one which came to be embellished with formal gardens in the central space and with statuary, for instance of the imperial family. At Saint-Bertrand we only know the overall dimensions and nothing of the interior lay-out. The construction seems to date to the middle of the first century and may well be linked with the construction of the Claudian theatre. The laying-out of the *porticus post scaenam* involved the clearance of some existing timber buildings and the closing-off of part of an existing east-west road (*decumanus D1*); this is further testimony that the siting of the streets was adaptable, rather than rigid.

The Coupéré Complex

Between 1989 and 2005 a large-scale excavation on the site of the village's former football pitch was undertaken to excavate a large Roman house, in order to try to redress the balance between our knowledge of public buildings and monuments, which had been the focus of attention till then, and our understanding of private housing and everyday life, on which information was woefully short. This was the site of Coupéré on the south-eastern margins of the Roman town, where aerial photography showed a large and complex house-plan. But as well as the house, (discussed below p. 81) there was an earlier phase of buildings, apparently (semi-) public in nature and dating to the first century A.D. (Sablayrolles in Collectif 2002: 54–63).

The complex lay in the angle of an east-west street to the north and a north-south street to the west. It consisted of a large court (47m. north-south by 33m. east-west) surrounded to the north, east and south by a colonnade, but open to the west towards the central area of the town, but, also, oriented towards the Pic du Gar in the other direction. Projecting

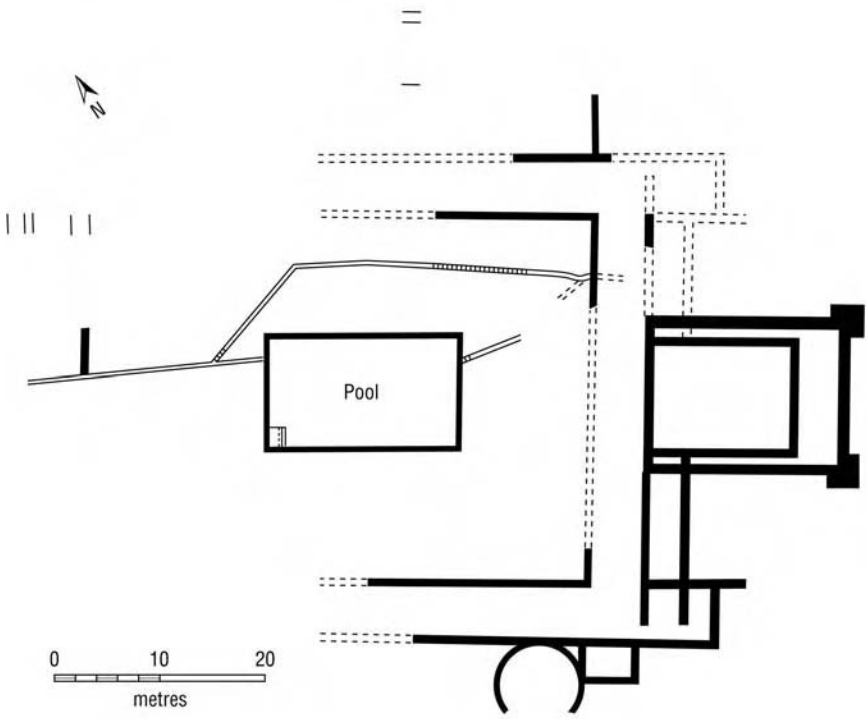

Figure 2.12 Plan of the first Coupéré building (*after Sablayrolles in Collectif 2002*)

eastwards from the centre of the east portico was a large rectangular room (13m. east-west by 9.50m. north-south). In the middle of the first century this was replaced by a larger version (17.50m. east-west by 12.80m. north-south) with clasping buttresses at the north- and south-eastern angles; this almost doubled the size of the room. Other rooms lay along the eastern and northern galleries, while at the eastern end of the southern gallery were a small, rectangular room and a circular chamber open to the south. In the centre of the court was a large rectangular pool (17.80m. east-west by 10.20m. north-south) floored in black mosaic and the sides lined with marble veneers backed by waterproof mortar. Access was by three steps in the south-western corner. The pool was fed from a culvert which passed under the road to the west, then deviated to run to the north of the pool before running out under the eastern gallery north of the central room. Where the culvert turned north a smaller channel branched off, feeding the pool by an opening in the northern part of its western side. Opposite, in the northern part of the eastern side, was the outfall, which rejoined the main culvert to the north-east, with the main culvert, presumably, emptying itself into the Riou Mort stream to the east. The flow in both inlet and outfall

channels could be controlled by sluices, allowing water either to flow through the pool continuously, to be still, or for the pool to be drained.

The function of this complex is difficult to establish. The water culvert was most probably fed from the Tibiran-Jaunac aqueduct, the public water-supply of the town, suggesting that the complex was either public or privileged. Early on it was thought that it might be a temple precinct; however, the large western room has no podium and the western gallery continues across its front, so it does not have the architectural characteristics of a temple. Another suggestion was that it was a *schola*, the meeting-place for a *collegium* or private association, but it seems much too large and elaborate for such a function. At present the preferred option is that it was some form of *palaestra*, or exercise place, with the central court, the pool and surrounding porticoes for taking exercise in fine weather, and the large room in rain or winter. The general lay-out and amenities also reproduce on a smaller scale those of the complex known as the *palaestra* in Pompeii. If the Saint-Bertrand example is a *palaestra*, it could also have served as a *campus*, the area in which the young men from the leading families of a town were formed physically, intellectually and politically for their adult rôle as leaders.

The North Baths

One last building complex which should be mentioned is the North Baths – two *insulae* to the north-west of the Forum Baths. Practically all that we know about this complex relates to the rebuilding of the second century (see p. 69), but limited work in and around the second-century buildings (Aupert in Guyon ed. 1991: 113–4; Aupert in Collectif 2002: 51–2) has shown that they replace an earlier baths complex. To the west there was an open area, again identified as a *palaestra*, separated from the north-south street to the west by a row of rooms. In the south-western part of the *insula* was a *natatio* or plunge-pool, with the main bath-building to its north, this latter subsequently completely obliterated by the construction of the second-century baths. At present it is not possible to date this earlier baths complex with any accuracy, though it is presumably broadly first-century in date; it, in turn, overlies traces of Augustan timber structures and metalled surfaces.

Building *Lugdunum,* constructing the *Convenae*

Having laid out the evidence for the development of the principal excavated civic structures at *Lugdunum* over the first hundred years or so of their existence, we now turn to the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter: how do the ways in which the early town developed reflect wider developments in the society and world-view of the people who built these structures? Also, how did the provision of these buildings act upon the people who used them to create a new sort of identity: the Convenae? In

what ways can we see not only changes in the physical environment but, also, related changes in mental structures and attitudes? The Convenae constructed their buildings and monuments; how did these then serve to construct the Convenae's lives, beliefs and identities?

It is clear that there was an important phase of development at Saint-Bertrand before the appearance of the familiar Roman-style public buildings, such as baths and temples. On all the sites in the centre of the later town (Forum Baths, Forum Temple, *Macellum*, North Baths) there was an Augustan phase consisting of metalled surfaces and timber buildings, with no discernible overall plan. Large quantities of animal bone go back to the earliest phases of the town, having been found in Augustan deposits, particularly under the later *Macellum* and, to its south, under the central esplanade; but, there are also traces from other central sites such as the Forum Temple (Lignereux 2005). Overwhelmingly (from 96.3 % to 99.7 %) these assemblages were for domesticated animals: above all cattle, sheep or goats and pigs along with small numbers of horses, rabbits and hares, some domestic fowl and a few game species (e.g. deer). Cattle was by some distance the dominant animal, both in terms of numbers and percentages of bones (usually around 50%) and, also, when that is turned into a weight of meat (around 80%) in the first-century deposits. Moreover, analysis of the parts of the skeletons present shows that it was principally the axial skeletons (skull, vertebrae) represented in the central esplanade, whereas the more edible parts came principally from the areas of occupation. A similar, though less marked, incidence is also detectable for the sheep/goat and pig bones. This suggests that the central esplanade was being used for the primary butchery of carcasses, with the axial skeleton being discarded and the more edible parts of the carcasses sold on. It should also be remembered that slaughtering cattle can also yield blood, hides for leather, bones for marrow and for turning into objects, offal and sinews. Sheep/goat and pig carcasses, on the other hand, are less useful, apart from their hides. One noteworthy feature of these deposits is the picture they give of the physical environment of *Lugdunum* at this date. Not only were there large quantities of butchered carcasses strewn over the esplanade, the excavators record that the thick dark deposit from which they came was of a consistency suggesting a high organic content. It was literally a 'shambles', a centre for butchery with all the offal, waste and mess that entails; to us a putrescent health hazard and certainly not the image we normally have of the centre of a Roman town. It is not surprising that amongst the bones from the esplanade are those of scavengers, such as fox and rat and birds of carrion, such as buzzard and vulture. So, early *Lugdunum* seems to have become quickly a centre for the processing of large quantities of domesticated animals (mainly cattle), the resulting meat either being consumed at the town or sold on, perhaps after salting or smoking; the town had become an economic focus, probably drawing on a large zone of animal-rearing.

This is not the only early evidence for *Lugdunum* discharging a function as a commercial centre. The same deposits have produced quantities of pottery. Some came from the central Italian town of Arezzo, producing what we call 'Arretine' ware (a very fine pottery with a bright red gloss surface, sometimes with moulded decoration); some came from the Gaulish centres soon established to produce a version of Arretine conventionally called 'samian', particularly at Bram, north of Carcassonne, and then, at Montans, north-east of Toulouse (Martin & Tilhard 2005). Sherds of the big containers for liquids, amphorae, attest to links with the Mediterranean. The animal bone and the pottery argue that early Saint-Bertrand was, in part, defined by this opening-up of the Convenae to the commercial currents and practices of the time, both at a more local level, as with the animal processing, and at a longer distance, as evidenced by the pottery. These would also familiarise those involved with the wider world of Roman Gaul and the changes taking place there.

The only monumental feature which dates to the same period is the Trophy, but, as was argued above in the discussion of this sculpture, the lack of evident weathering suggests that from the start it was housed under cover. Once the Convenae had been constituted as a *civitas*, they would have needed a religious focus where their communal rituals and observances could be carried out. So, it may be that the earliest form of *Lugdunum* consisted of such a religious focus, on the hilltop or at the foot of the hill, which was the point of destination of the major roads and associated with the development of a new commercial focal point. This focus then attracted settlement and commercial activity, soon creating a location in the landscape that was set apart and special and, so, it became a focus for other activities. In this scenario it is significant that the earliest surviving monument we have is the Trophy, for it is an expensive and showy piece of sculpture, rich in the symbolism of loyalty to Rome, to her military victories and to the person of Augustus himself. Whatever the conditions of their personal lives, publicly and collectively the aristocracy of the Convenae knew how the world was changing and what needed to be done to ride the wave of change, rather than be overthrown and drowned by it. Inclusion in the Roman world was the single most important driving force in the changes taking place in politics, ideology and commerce and, through them, in the creation of a community of the Convenae.

But from early in the first century A.D. the form and appearance of the town centre started to change with the construction of major buildings in the Roman style around the central esplanade, albeit that, as we shall see, this major open space continued to serve as a commercial area. Before looking at what the various monuments and buildings which came to adorn the town during the first century A.D. mean both individually and taken together, there are two obvious but important points to be made. First, our knowledge of this early phase is badly skewed; it consists almost exclusively

of public buildings and monuments, and we have little idea of daily life. Second, all the buildings described above, and whose significance we are about to consider further, were 'Roman'. That is to say, their forms, their architectural styles, their functions and their symbolism come from the Roman Mediterranean, and not from indigenous Gallic or Aquitanian practice, even if the Forum Temple may have been dedicated to a local deity. Whoever was paying for all this (a point to which we shall return) was spending huge amounts of money on creating a simulacrum of Rome and of Roman ways, albeit tailored to their particular requirements.

The next monument, chronologically, after the Trophy and whatever housed that sculpture, is the Forum Baths. This might at first sight seem odd, since to us a bath-building is an improbable monument at so early a stage, and so it would be if we see it simply as a means of getting clean; what we need to do is look at the wider symbolism of Roman baths and bathing. Baths were ubiquitous in the Roman world, at sites ranging from great centres such as Rome or Carthage, through almost all the major and minor towns of the empire, to rural villas and agricultural estates, to the fortresses and forts of the army, and to the stopping-points of the imperial communications network (the *cursus publicus*). Nowhere of any consequence lacked baths; this is true not only in the Latin-speaking provinces but also in the Greek-speaking east where Roman-style baths are one of the few perceptible Roman architectural innovations. Because of this, they could have been used by all the various races, language groups and religious persuasions of the empire equally; they were one of the few universals of Roman culture. Clearly, baths were very closely linked to being Roman. So, what was it that made them so? Above all, they are intimately linked to creating the Roman-style body, both within the suite of heated rooms and outdoors in the *palaestra* (cf. Fagan 1999).

The Three Gauls (the three provinces in one of which *Lugdunum* now lay) had previously been *Gallia Comata*, 'shaggy' Gaul, whose inhabitants were defined to the Roman eye by the physical characteristic of hairiness. In a set of baths such as the Forum Baths of Saint-Bertrand, a shaggy Gaul would go in, and out would come an approximation of a Roman, cleaned by the sweating, perfumed by the oils used in bathing, clean-shaven and barbered (possibly even with body hair plucked), draped in some form of Roman provincial dress (even the toga for a Roman Citizen former magistrate of this town holding the *ius Latii*) and, perhaps, taking their first steps in Latin. In the *palaestra* men would learn the regimes of exercise that would shape their bodies to the Roman canon of taste and, in the case of the young men, prepare them for possible service in the Roman army. The sight, sound and smell of these men would be utterly different to that of their pre-Roman ancestors. Since women also could use the public baths, they also would undergo a similar transformation in appearance, hair-style and dress, moving them closer to the Roman ideal of a matron. So, though at first

sight a set of baths seems to us an odd investment so early, in fact it actually shows a quite sophisticated understanding amongst the leaders of the Convenae of what it was to become Roman; a Roman was defined by the way s/he looked, smelt and sounded.

This theme can be taken further amongst the Convenae. The Forum Baths were not the only baths in first-century A.D.; there was also the first set of North Baths with its *palaestra* area. There is also the Coupéré building to consider. The identification of it as a *palaestra* or a *campus* is, admittedly, not secure, but it is currently the most plausible. If it was a *campus*, then again we have an early and prestigious complex provided to help form the young men of the Convenae (particularly, one may assume, the sons of the aristocracy) both physically and mentally in a Roman way. Intellectually they would, presumably, have received tuition in the grammar and rhetoric that were the staples of Roman education, along with the religious and ethical grounding provided by the classic texts used in such an education. Physically, exercise and, perhaps, weapons training would have created the Roman body and fitted them for military service. So the early date of the Forum Baths may not be an oddity, but, rather, the earliest expression of a concern amongst the leaders of the Convenae to remould themselves and their sons physically and culturally as Romans.

Soon after the construction of the Forum Baths came that of the Forum Temple. As we have seen, the most likely dedication of this was to the tutelary, presiding deity of the Convenae. But this deity would now be represented and housed in a temple of Graeco-Roman type with an altar for sacrifices in the manner of Roman ritual; sacrifices would be undertaken by a priesthood dressed in the appropriate Roman manner and following Roman practice. So even if the god, or goddess, to whom the temple was dedicated was a local deity in origin, his or her representation and worship were now transformed out of all recognition. He or she had been incorporated into the wider world of Roman belief and observance.

The construction and use of the temple allow us to glimpse two other ways in which the adoption of Roman forms also involved new ways of looking at and thinking about the world. The temple was clearly laid out using the Roman system of measurement, the *pes* or foot, and its sub-divisions. The form of the temple and the altar show that a Roman-style calendar of religious observance was probably put in place: not a direct copy from Rome's, but based upon it. This would also involve adopting the Roman calendar with its logic of years and months. Two surviving calendars of Roman date show us that there was a Gallic system of five-year cycles, of dividing the year into named months and of dividing those months into two halves according to the waxing and waning of the moon (Duval & Pinault 1986). But the Roman calendar, though it had years and months, did not group these or sub-divide them in the same way. So, the construction and use of the temple involved the Convenae in coming to terms with Roman

ways of dividing up space, of dividing up time and of dividing up the cosmos. Sense of place in time, in space, and in relationship to the divine are all core elements of the way in which an individual, or a people, define and situate themselves. So, for the Convenae to adapt to Roman measurements of time and space went far deeper than simply the conveniences of knowing how long something was or of telling the time; it went to the heart of their notions of where they were situated in relation to the human and divine order. Again it was an aspect of their self-incorporation into the ways of the wider, Roman world, consciously or subconsciously.

If the Forum, as seems likely, came soon after, then this relates to other important aspects of the life and identity of the Convenae. Though a forum was in origin a space for public assembly and commerce, by the time of Augustus it was increasingly becoming a defined, monumentalised space for administration and justice under divine surveillance. It was here that the wider empire impinged upon the Convenae, as laws and imperial decrees were promulgated. Not all lawsuits could be determined locally; more important ones had to be remitted to the jurisdiction of the governor. It was standard practice for governors to progress round their provinces hearing suits, so the governor of Aquitania may well have visited Saint-Bertrand on a regular basis, and would, of course, have been entertained by, and got to know, the leading notables and families of the Convenae. They might, in due course, have asked him for his patronage and support back at Rome once his governorship was over; in this way the Convenae would have been linked into the patronage networks through which so much of Roman politics operated.

The *ordo* (council) of the Convenae, composed of landed aristocrats, was responsible for the tax-render of the *civitas*, for ensuring law and order and the dispensing of day to day justice, and for the administration of the *civitas* and of its principal town. Some laws and decrees might be perpetuated as inscriptions and other inscriptions would record important decisions of the *ordo*. The forum would also gradually acquire its bricolage of statues and dedications; over time this would create an identity for the Convenae and a focus where that identity was manifested. It would also, in due course, give a time-depth to the identity of the Convenae and to the families and clans that ruled the *civitas*. In time, the forum would not only have its day to day judicial and administrative functions, but would also have become the *lieu de mémoire* for the Convenae: the place where their collective identity and memory was made permanent in stone. One more banal piece of evidence for this collective identity is the presence on many sites of bricks stamped *RPCC – ResPublica Civitatis Convenarum*, the Commonwealth of the Civitas of the Convenae.

Following on from the Forum was the *Macellum*. This brings us back to the importance of economics and commerce. What the *Macellum* materialises is *Lugdunum*, not only as a religious and administrative centre, but, also, as an economic focus, a place of trade and exchange. But this was

commerce not just between the Convenae themselves, important though that would have been, but with the wider world of the empire, making available specialist goods and services in exchange for the products of the Convenae or for the money raised on those products. There was probably a system of market-days, *nundinae* (another way in which time was reckoned), when the markets and the *Macellum* of *Lugdunum* would be widely known, within and outside the *civitas*, to be taking place, bringing larger numbers of people to the town. The particular form of the *Macellum*, and the likelihood that it was for the selling of luxury goods, expresses very vividly the way in which this obscure corner was now in contact with the wider commercial and cultural contacts of the empire and how this would, in time, make a wider range of luxury goods available, and, indeed, see some goods, such as fine pottery or glass, become available to a wider range of people. With goods and services, news and information would also have travelled, again linking the Convenae into the wider Roman world. Nor is the *Macellum* the only evidence for Saint-Bertrand's place as a centre of trade; the esplanade to its south continued, to judge from the quantities of animal bone, to be a major centre for butchery. By the second century, cattle were even more the dominant species (sometimes over 90%), with again the skeletal evidence pointing to primary butchery here, with the edible parts being found elsewhere. But the bones of the young males, the prime eating animals, are poorly represented. This may mean that they, or their meat, was being traded on from Saint-Bertrand, perhaps to supply Toulouse and other major centres (Lignereux 2005: 398).

Last in this list is the theatre. Again, this is immediately expressive of wider Graeco-Roman culture; it was a place where plays and other cultural performances would be mounted, bringing these to a wider audience at designated periods of festivals within the new religious cycle of the years. The scale of the theatre, particularly of the Claudian rebuild, which would have held audiences numbered in the thousands, suggests that this was conceived as a popular, not solely an aristocratic, pastime. So large numbers of the Convenae would, in due course, have been exposed to Roman plays, tragedies, farces and mimes and got to know the myths and stories, the personalities and the stereotypes, that they embodied. It may also have been the place for important religious as well as cultural assemblies, as will be explored further in the next chapter (p. 76). Better-preserved theatres from the Roman world show that even here considerations of rank and status were paramount, with seating being allocated according to one's status (best seats at the front for the *ordo* and the priesthoods; artisans a long way back) and gender (women sat separately from men).

So far the creation of these buildings has been taken as a given; now we need to consider who put them up and why. Though they are Roman in style, it is very unlikely that the Roman state would have been involved in providing them. Individual towns might have individual buildings or

monuments paid for by the emperor or a highly-placed patron, but this was not that common. At a provincial town such as Saint-Bertrand the baths and temples and theatres were paid for by the local aristocracy. Why they should do this is fairly clear. On the one hand, it was a way to demonstrate to all and sundry their wealth and status, and at the same time to do so in a way acceptable to the Roman authorities, a way which demonstrated loyalty to Rome, to the emperor and to the Roman way. On the other hand, it also demonstrated a very desirable Roman aristocratic quality: euergetism. Derived from the Greek for 'good works', this was the Roman form of *noblesse oblige* – the wealthy were expected to use their wealth for the common good. In order to live up to the ideal of an open-handed public figure, aristocrats were expected to lavish on their communities the buildings, games, banquets and charities which made their principal town a worthy centre. Thus the town was the arena both for intra-*civitas* rivalry, for competitive euergetism by the notables and grand families of the Convenae in providing public buildings and benefactions to outdo other families, but it was also the arena for inter-*civitas* rivalry, the competitive provision of monuments and facilities to demonstrate the superior worth of one's own town in comparison with neighbouring towns; in this respect the Convenae did themselves proud. But again this shows us the aristocracy of the Convenae taking on Roman aristocratic attitudes and practices, both in the overarching concept of euergetism and in its particular manifestations in the particular Roman-style buildings and monuments chosen for *Lugdunum*.

But as well as giving us windows into the social structure and ideological concerns of the Convenae, these buildings and monuments are also sending out clear signals about the economic structures that underpinned them. Baths, temples and theatres were not only very 'Roman', they were also very expensive, involving huge capital outlay. Not only did a work-force for the quarrying and transport of the stone and other building materials have to be organised locally, but specialist architects/engineers, masons, quarrymen and stone-carvers had to be imported (probably from the Mediterranean provinces), paid, lodged and fed. How the aristocracy of the Convenae arranged for this may suggest the trajectory of economic developments taking place at this time. Clearly the aristocracy could command considerable resources, either through direct labour or through paying for labour. Much of the work simply requiring unskilled or semi-skilled labour could be organised from amongst the Convenae, either through labour owed to the aristocrats by their social inferiors or by paying them. The specialists, on the other hand, probably had to be paid in coin, as well as in kind through things such as board and lodging; thus, the aristocrats had to have the resources to pay them and the means to convert those resources into negotiable form. Ultimately, the wealth of the Convenae, in general, and their aristocrats, in particular, rested on the agricultural and other resources

outlined in Chapter 1. But what we seem to be seeing here is the ability of relatively few to command and mobilise those resources and to profit from the surplus created. What the ability to plan and pay for these buildings betokens is a *rentier* class on the Roman model; this class dominated not only the social structure of the Convenae but, in large measure, based that social dominance on command of an economic system (re)modelled to suit their ends (cf. Chapter 4, p. 101 for further discussion of this point). What we cannot tell, in default of evidence for what went before, is to what extent this developed out of pre-existing social and economic structures or was another aspect of the assimilation of the Convenae to, and their refashioning by, the practices of the Roman world.

This discussion has been much concerned with the changes wrought in the physical environment, mental attitudes and economic power of the aristocracy of the Convenae in the century or so of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. But it should not be imagined that all these changes would not have had profound implications for the ordinary people of the Convenae. For a start, their mental geography would have acquired a new and progressively more splendid centre for their identity as Convenae and for the public expression of their religious identity. In a variety of ways they were, now, more evidently linked into a set of wider networks. At one level this was through the expression of cults such as Roma or the living and dead emperors and the imperial house. But it also manifested itself in such ways as living under a common system of laws and their administration, all in Latin; participation in the wider commercial and information networks made possible by the presence of the new town; even such things as the baths and the theatre; and, of course, they were now all subject to the land- and poll-taxes demanded by the procurator at Lyon. Now of course not all the Convenae would make contact with all these features on a regular basis; a herdsman up in the mountains would see *Lugdunum* rarely, if ever; but, as we shall see in Chapter 4, the upland areas came to house many examples of two of the most characteristic artefacts of the Convenae: votive altars and cinerary caskets. So our hypothetical herdsman would have his own experience of what made the identity of the Convenae. But many other Convenae would see the town for administration or justice or leisure or the markets, and its physical presence would probably come to be the one expression above all of their common identity as Convenae and as citizens of the empire. Indeed, it is legitimate to argue that the Romans had, in effect, created the Convenae as a distinct entity and identity out of territories and peoples who previously might have had little in common; perhaps the story of Pompey bringing down the 'brigands' from the mountains and grouping them together to create 'the Convenae' may not be so far from the truth, though important stages took place under Augustus and his successors as well as under Pompey. If so, then the early stages of development in the town itself could, in many ways, be seen also as the early stages of the

creation of a sense of community and distinctiveness for the Convenae as a whole.

This did not, of course, come about all at once, or even in a short space of time. One of the things that the wide range of buildings and their dating, both in absolute calendar years and in the relative sequence of their provision, allows us to do is to track these changes through time. One way of doing this is to structure the period by the twenty-five years allowed by anthropologists to a generation. In the previous chapter we saw that for two generations from the Pompeian date of 71 B.C. nothing seems to have happened (on the basis of the presently-available evidence). But from 25 B.C. the pace of developments quickens with the laying-out of the main through-roads, then the carving of the Trophy and its placing within whatever structure housed it, as well as the creation of the first nucleus of buildings and commercial activity. But it was the next generation, the generation that remained loyal in the revolts of 16–13 B.C. and were rewarded with the *ius Latii*, that really took up the baton paying for the building of the Forum Baths, the Forum Temple, the Forum, the *Macellum* and the first Theatre. It was their descendants who were responsible for the modifications to the Forum Baths and, perhaps, for the building of the North Baths, the aggrandisement of the Theatre and smaller works such as the Circular Monument. So we come back to the point made earlier that the creation of Roman Saint-Bertrand was not a speedy creation in response to some master plan; rather, it was a long, drawn-out process realised in fits and starts and at an increasing rate. But, it was also the expression of great changes being wrought amongst the Convenae. The very definition of this group has been argued to be more a Roman creation than a continuing indigenous formation; it may have taken time for the Convenae to accept and respond to their designation. It may also be that the social, economic and legal structure of the peoples of the area did not, to start with, mesh well with the land-owning, aristocrat-patron pattern of social and economic organisation on which Roman practice was predicated, requiring a period of adjustment as these were created amongst the Convenae. So we may be seeing gradual changes in the ways in which the evolving aristocracy of the Convenae saw themselves and wished to be seen by others; the gradual creation of a sense of themselves as the political, religious and cultural leaders of a Roman *civitas*; and the developing ideas of how that identity should be materialised in the buildings and monuments with which they would endow their new principal town. Common to all of this is that it results from the legal, administrative, fiscal, religious, cultural and personal assimilation into the wider Roman world, which gave these aristocrats a sense of themselves as sharing in that empire and a sense of how to express their self-image and self-worth both communally in their benefactions and personally in the physical and intellectual formation of themselves and their sons and daughters. To us, this change is all the more

marked because of the absence of any real evidence of what went before; we only see the 'Roman' side and do not have a benchmark with which to compare the extent of the changes. Nevertheless, this sense of a Roman communal and individual identity was one which continued to develop through the second century A.D. and later, as we shall examine in the next chapters.

3

THE CITY IN ITS SPLENDOUR

The second to fourth centuries A.D.

The second century

Once the construction of *Lugdunum* had begun, it was, as can be seen from the previous chapter, a work in more-or-less continuous progress. To an extent, therefore, this chapter division imposes a false break in what was a continuous story. But there are reasons why a break here is not just a device to divide up a long narrative. First of all, there is a perceptible slowing in the provision of new public buildings and monuments at the end of the Julio-Claudian period (60s A.D.), with a resumption of work at the end of the first and beginning of the second century. Second, that resumption of work is in part, probably, the result of a fire which swept areas of the centre of the town in the late first century, making necessary some of the resumption of building work. Third, it is from the late first century that marble seems to become a much more regular component of the building works, marking a threshold in the adornment of the town. This chapter, therefore, will start by looking at the fire and its aftermath and then the new public buildings and monuments raised down into the second century, before turning to the evidence for private housing and finally for the burials and cemeteries. There will then be a discussion of how this evidence contributes to the overall theme of the ways in which the Convenae identified and defined themselves. The chapter will then continue into the later Roman period with a consideration of the evidence for the third and fourth centuries, for, as will be seen and discussed, there is no evidence for a major break in the archaeological sequence at Saint-Bertrand before the later fourth century, in contrast to many other towns in Gaul where the break falls in the later third or earlier fourth century.

The Flavian fire

One of the key modifications to the fabric of the centre of the town in the late first century was the total demolition of the Forum Baths and their replacement by a more grandiose bath-building on the main site. Excavation

in the main part of the baths revealed burnt material mixed with a large amount of molten lead, probably from the stoke-hole nearby (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 44). Sapène found a similar mass of molten lead to the south of the *caldarium*. In their excavations on the eastern extremity of the presumed Forum, Badie and Sablayrolles found a thick deposit containing charcoal and other burnt material, presumably the debris from a fire, dating to the late first century (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 56–61). It looks as though there may have been a major fire in the Forum/Forum Baths area, though not touching the Forum Temple, presumably because the west wall of its precinct acted as a fire-break. The cause of the fire is unknown, but was probably accidental; it is possible that the fire started in the Forum Baths, where there was an ever-present fire risk because of the furnaces used to heat the underfloor hypocausts. Even in these solidly-built masonry buildings, once the fire reached the roof-timbers it would quickly be out of control. The result was that the Forum Baths were demolished and their site thoroughly cleared, so much so that the make-up for the new bath-building did not contain any rubble from the demolished baths. Much of the rubble seems to have been spread over the neighbouring central esplanade, raising its general level. The courtyard of the Forum Temple also received an in-fill some 80cm. thick and containing fragments of marble sculpture (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 61).

The rebuilt Forum Baths

With the Tiberian Forum Baths cleared away, a thick make-up deposit was dumped on the site, raising it by up to 3.50m., and on this was constructed the new set of baths. The opportunity was taken to bring the alignment of the Forum Baths onto that of the Forum Temple and the two complexes were structurally linked, albeit that the façade of the new baths projected some 25m. to the east of the façade of the temple precinct. The linking of the two complexes entailed the definitive closure of the problematic *decumanus 4* between the baths and the temple precinct, with the Dax road now taking the line of *decumanus 5* to the north of the baths, its junction with the Toulouse road now becoming a wide, open, metalled area. Due north from this area ran a street (*cardo*), with buildings aligned on it that seem to overlie those on the grid around the North Baths. This may suggest that this *cardo* was a later addition to the street-system and was only laid out when the junction of the Dax and Toulouse roads shifted north of the Forum Baths.

The overall plan of the new bath-complex is easy to comprehend; it consisted of a main block of three rooms (*frigidarium*, *tepidarium*, *caldarium*) in a block running east-west, fronted to the east by a large colonnaded courtyard in the centre of which lay a large pool (*natatio*). Along the northern and southern sides of the main complex lay subsidiary spaces and rooms. If

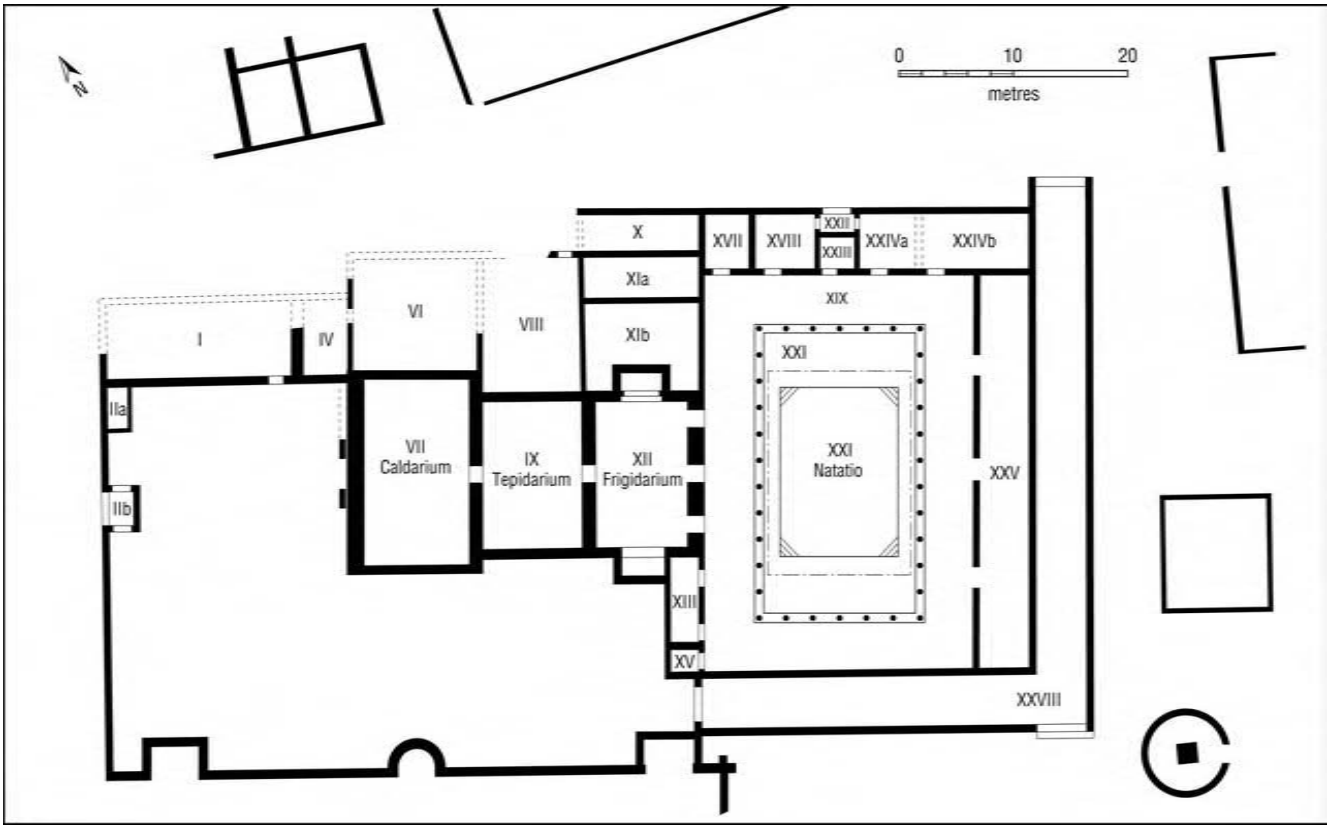

Figure 3.1 Plan of Forum Baths as rebuilt at end of first century (*after Aupert & Monturet 2001*)

Figure 3.2 Rebuilt Forum Baths and the Forum Temple from the air (north at top) (*Photo: Catherine Petit*)

the overall plan is simple enough, it repays more detailed examination. Though the east and south façades of the baths adjoined the central metalled esplanade, the entrance to the complex was from the north (Salle VI); it opened off the open area at the junction of the Dax and Toulouse roads, suggesting that this was now an important focus in the centre of the town. This entrance-way led into the north side of the colonnade around the *natatio* and was flanked by a number of rooms (Salles XVII, XVIII to the west; Salle XXIV to the east), whose function remains obscure; but the large Salle XXIV could well be the *apodyterium* (dressing-room), positioned just beside the entrance so people could undress immediately upon entry and dress just before leaving. The central pool was 14.40m. north-south by 9.55m. east-west and had stairs in the corners. To the east and the west the surrounding colonnades lay close to the lip of the pool; to the north and the south the colonnades lay further back, leaving spaces suggested by the excavators to be for taking the sun (*solarium*); and down the centre of these areas was a drain, perhaps for installations (basins?) in the north and south colonnades. Along the eastern side of the courtyard was what appears to

have been a single, long, narrow room or gallery (Salle XXV): there were no rooms on the southern side. In the northern part of the western side of the courtyard were two rooms. To the north was a latrine (Salle XIa), consisting of a range of seats over a drain, fed from the main water-supply of the baths to remove the waste. Collapsed into the drain was found part of a marble slab with three holes, each with a projection running forwards: this is the characteristic form of Roman lavatory seats with the forward hole serving for the sponges on sticks that were the equivalent of our lavatory paper. The southern room (Salle XIb) has been suggested by recent excavators to be an *unctorium*, a room for anointing bathers with scented oils before they left the baths. In the southern part of the west range was a small, rectangular room (Salle XIII) of unknown purpose; immediately to its south was a stairway (Salle XV) leading down to the *palaestra* (see p. 66). In the centre of the western side of the courtyard lay the three doors to the main bath-block, through a particularly massive wall 1.64m. thick, granting access into the *frigidarium*, the unheated room (Salle XII). This was a large, rectangular room, 12.78m. north-south by 7.98m. east-west, with a plunge-bath at north and south ends, these emptying into drains which discharged into the main sewer running parallel with the east wall of the chamber. A single door in the western wall led into the *tepidarium*, the warm room (Salle IX), marginally longer north-south than the *frigidarium* at 12.92m. and somewhat wider at 8.65m. This room was raised over a hypocaust heated from a furnace at the northern end; it is unusual for a warm room to have a separate furnace, which has led the excavators to suggest that it could also have doubled as a hot, dry room (*sudatorium*). The hypocaust floor was of concrete mixed with brick fragments and powder (*opus signinum*), the upper surface bearing the impressions of the colonettes that held up the raised floor (*suspensura*). These were of the very distinctive tapering type for which we also have evidence from the North Baths (see p. 72). Nowhere did the floor survive intact. A single door led through into the *caldarium*, the hot room (Salle VII); it was the largest of the three main rooms at 16.27m. long north-south by 9.18m. east-west. The room projected 2.00m. north of the north wall of the other two rooms and 1.20m. to the south, making it slightly asymmetrical around the east-west axis of the main block (not that this would have been noticeable to anyone in the room). The main furnace again lay to the north, though there are also two openings in the western wall to allow the circulation of hot air; whether they originated in this phase or are later insertions is uncertain. It is this wall, of which part remained intact above ground down to the present day (now incorporated into the recent reconstruction). There must have been at least one *labrum* (water-holder) in the *caldarium*, along with hot-water tanks (*alvei*) to produce the steamy heat required.

To the north, between the main range of the baths and the street *decumanus 5,* were the service areas. At the eastern end were the two furnace

rooms for the *caldarium* and the *tepidarium* (Salles VI and VIII). To the west of these was another, smaller room (Salle IV) with a particularly massive western wall, apparently a double eastern wall, with east-west wall-bases across the floor of the room. It is suggested that this was the reservoir, with the wall-system designed to support the weight of the stored water. Support for this idea was found by Sapène in the eastern boundary wall of the complex, north of the wall separating Salle I, and to the west of the reservoir from the *palaestra,* in the form of a lead inlet-pipe with a diameter of 16cm. This could have fed the reservoir, though whether it was original or a later modification cannot be determined. To the south of the baths was a large open area (Salle II) interpreted as a *palaestra*, with a separate entrance (Salle V) placed centrally in the western enclosure wall. It was also possible to access the *palaestra* directly from the central esplanade by a doorway leading into the south-eastern angle of the *palaestra*; immediately to the west of this was the bottom of the small stairway (Salle XV) down from the baths courtyard, so it would also have been possible to pass up into the baths proper. The excavators suggest that the whole complex was arranged either to be used more-or-less separately by those who wanted only to exercise in the *palaestra*, who would either have used the main entrance, the courtyard and the small stairway or else entered directly from the south or west. Alternatively, it would have been possible to use just the baths without coming into contact with the *palaestra* and its users. Or one could have used both.

The new Forum Baths were much larger than their predecessors, of the order of twice as large, and much more lavishly embellished. The survival of marble plaques *in situ* shows that not only were the floors paved with grey-white St-Béat marble, as were the *natatio* and the *frigidarium* plunges, but the internal and external walls were covered with marble veneers. Some fragments of red, green and yellow marble were also recovered, suggesting a polychrome decorative scheme, which cannot be reconstructed on the present evidence. Also recovered from the debris were fragments of sculpted panels, including a bird with a bunch of grapes in its beak, a panel with crossed shields, along with elements of statues, some of which were one, two or three times life-size. Unfortunately, because these pieces come from the destruction levels of the baths and the limekilns set up then, we cannot be sure that all the sculpture came from the Forum Baths. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Baths were sheathed in marble with doorways, windows and other surfaces outlined with marble detailing; as we have seen, even the latrine seating was in marble. By contrast, the columns and capitals around the courtyard were in limestone, the capitals being of a particularly lush, modified Ionic order supporting a deep architrave which took the form of a series of flat arches. The main rooms of the baths were covered by vaulted ceilings, of which some of the lightweight tufa vaulting-stones survive; the thickness of the main walls of the baths would have suggested this anyway.

Clearly the new Forum Baths were designed to be a showcase of the latest and most lavish techniques and materials, showing off the wealth and ambition of the Convenae. It is possible that we know who paid for them. Re-used in late Roman structures in the Forum Temple portico, in a modern farm building and recovered from the Forum Baths were fragments of a large, well-carved inscription on marble, which when complete measured more than 6m. long by 89cm. high and commemorated the (re)construction of a building. What can be restored of the text reads:

Line 1: *C. Iulius Sexti fil Caii nep Volt tribu Serenus IIIIvir sacerdos Rome et Aug*
Line 2: *usti. . . praefectus alae VIII Phrygum . . .*
Line 3: *. . . s et parietes su . . .*
Line 4: *. . . a et in.endio co.c . . .*

The first two lines give us some details of the career and offices of a certain C(aius) Iulius Serenus, son of Sextus, grandson of Caius, of the voting-tribe Voltinia, who had been *IIIIvir* (member of a board of four), a priest of Rome and Augustus and Prefect of the Seventh Cohort of Phrygians. This is the career of an ambitious and successful member of the municipal aristocracy, including a spell as commanding officer of a unit of the Roman army (the Seventh Cohort of Phrygians), and as a priest of the imperial cult of Roma and Augustus, quite probably representing his *civitas* at the federal sanctuary at Lyon. He bears the three names (*tria nomina*) characteristic of a Roman Citizen, a status confirmed by his allocation to the Roman voting-tribe Voltinia. It is the third and fourth lines which are as interesting as they are difficult. The text involves walls (*parietes*) and in the last line the word *in.endio* could be restored either to be *inpendio,* 'at the expense', or, *incendio,* 'in the fire', with the following word possibly being a part of *concremare,* 'to burn down'. It is very tempting, but unprovable, to see this inscription as commemorating the rebuilding of the Forum Baths after they had burnt down as an act of euergetism by a leading citizen, C. Iulius Serenus. Five other inscriptions mentioning Serenus have been found at Saint-Bertrand, so he was clearly a major figure amongst the Convenae.

The only other substantial modification to the Forum Baths datable to the second century was the addition of colonnades along the eastern and southern façades under Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–61) or later, and facing onto the central esplanade. Despite this enhancement of the two façades, the opportunity was not taken to create an entrance directly from the central esplanade into the baths: the main entrance remained in the northern side.

The Macellum *and Temple*

The esplanade south of the *Macellum* had received a major re-surfacing at the beginning of the second century, possibly associated with the clearance

of the Forum Baths site (Tassaux in Guyon (ed.) 1991: 106–7). This metalling obliterated the earlier system of roads radiating from the focus at the foot of the hill, in favour of a large metalled area conforming with the prevailing axes of the streets in this southern part of the town centre, again demonstrating that creating the 'street-grid' of the town was a long, drawn-out and piecemeal process.

Around the middle of the century it seems that the *Macellum* was seriously damaged by fire and had to be rebuilt (Tassaux in Collectif 2002: 42–3). This was essentially to the same plan, though the apsidal entrance-ways were remodelled, with walls connecting the formerly free-standing pillars to the end and side walls, thus creating simple entrances, each flanked by two rooms. Nonetheless, it seems that the *Macellum* continued to function much as before.

Towards the end of the second century the southern end of the esplanade was defined by the construction of an east-west wall 46.50m. long, in the centre of which was a solidly-built rectangular building 15.60m. north-south by 12.70m. east-west, facing down the esplanade to the *Macellum* (Collectif 1996: 40–41). The purpose of this building is not clear. In the vicinity, Sapène found fragments of sculptures showing the myths of Hercules; so, he proposed to identify the building as a temple of Hercules. A temple in this position makes sense, but the sculptures are not definitely associated with it; so the ascription to Hercules remains tentative.

The North Baths

The North Baths occupy an entire *insula* 60m. north-south by 54m. east-west. They were originally excavated by Sapène, starting in 1933, and though there have been more recent small-scale excavations, aimed at clarifying the structural sequence and recovering some dating evidence, these have not yet been fully published, so any description and discussion of these baths must, of necessity, be more summary than those for the Forum Baths (cf. May 1986: 113–17; Aupert in Guyon (ed.) 1991: 113; Collectif 1996: 54–56; Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 379–84 for what follows). Though the first elements of the North Baths probably date back to the mid first century A.D. (see p. 51), the complex in its definitive form dates to the late first, or early second, century. Like the rebuilt Forum Baths, with which it is roughly contemporary, the overall plan of the North Baths is not difficult to understand, but repays more detailed study. The main entrance façade was to the west, along a north-south street (*cardo*), and in the first century consisted of a range of rooms or shops along the *cardo* with an open area interpreted as a *palaestra* to the east, with, to the east again the colonnaded *natatio* (pool). What went on on the site of the later baths proper has been totally removed by the construction of those baths. In the remodelling at the turn of the first and second centuries the western range of rooms was demolished and replaced by a colonnade facing onto the *palaestra*, a *xystus,*

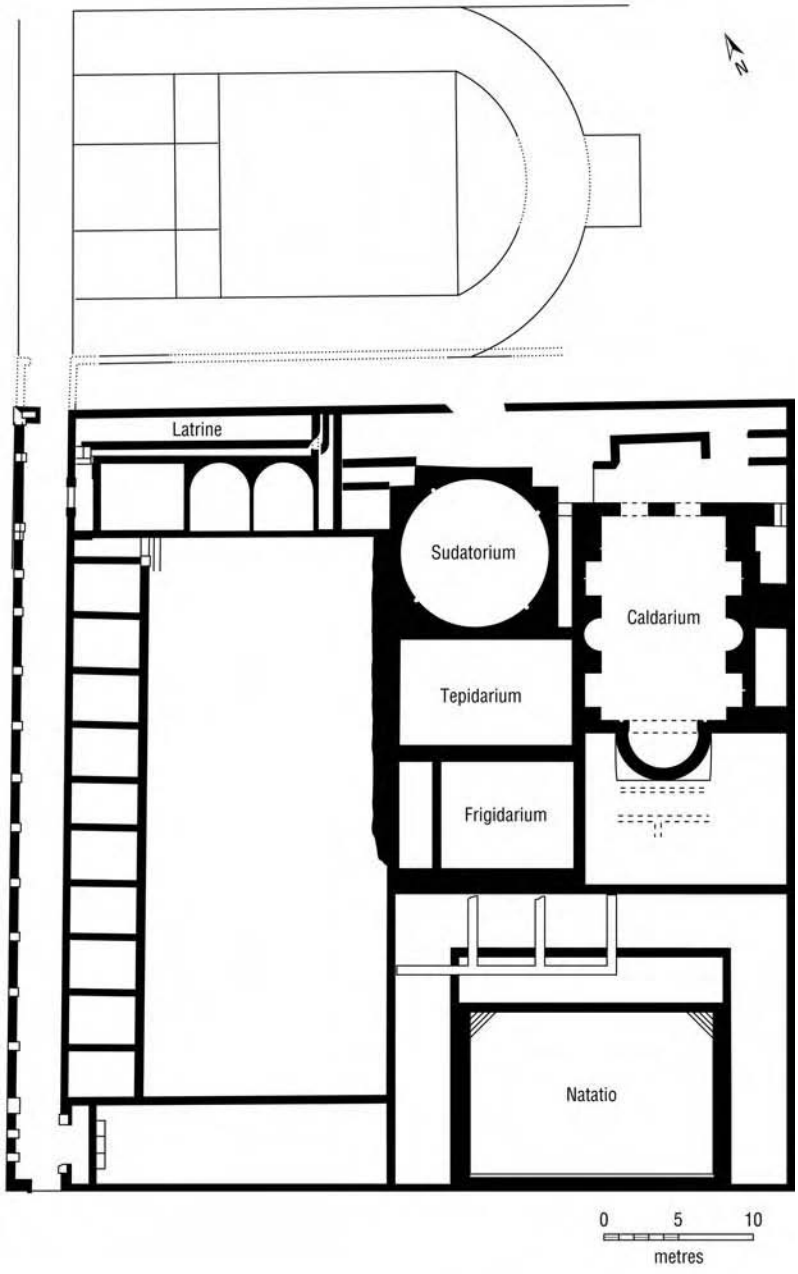

Figure 3.3 Plan of the North Baths and the U-shaped Building (*after Aupert in Guyon ed. 1991*)

Figure 3.4 North Baths and the U-shaped Building from the air (north to left) (*Photo: Catherine Petit*)

or venue, in bad weather. At the southern end lay the main entrance, opening through a vestibule onto a long, rectangular room running all the way to the colonnade around the main pool. This room has been proposed as an *unctorium* (room for the application of oils) but, given its position by the entrance and the fact that it communicates directly with the main baths-complex but not with the *palaestra,* it might be better explained as a changing-room (*apodyterium*), presumably with cupboards lining the long sides. More or less centrally placed in the northern side of the *palaestra* was a pair of rectangular rooms with semi-circular apses, interpreted as shrines overlooking the exercise-area. One, perhaps, was dedicated to the goddess Fortuna (good fortune), the other to the Emperor; fragments of inscriptions to the latter having been recovered from near at hand, from the *palaestra* and from the stoke-holes of the baths. At the north-western corner of the *palaestra*, between the *xystus* and the shrines, was the access to a dog-leg corridor leading to a set of latrines: a rectangular, east-west room with the seating along the south wall, with a drain under. Opening off the corridor and forming the western part of the range with the shrines was a rectangular room entered by a door just next to the latrines. This has been suggested as the *apodyterium*, but it seems small and awkwardly placed for such a function and might, perhaps, be better seen as something like a store-room – perhaps for the *palaestra* equipment, and/or an office. To the east of the shrines was another corridor communicating with the space to the north of the baths and with a door to the latrines.

The main bath-block consisted of four principal rooms with the *natatio* to the south and service areas to the north and east. The *natatio* lay in the southern part of the courtyard area, up against the southern precinct wall of the baths and with colonnades immediately to the east and the west. The northern colonnade lay a little back from the northern lip of the pool, leaving space for a *solarium*, as in the Forum Baths. From the north-western part of the colonnade around the *natatio* the bather entered the *frigidarium*, a rectangular room measuring internally some 12m. east-west by some 9m. north-south. The western quarter of the room was taken up by a marble-lined plunge-pool (*piscina*). Centrally placed in the north and south walls were the doors from the *natatio* on the south and into the *tepidarium* on the north. Between these and the plunge to the west there was a niche in each of the north and south walls, with a further three niches in each wall to the east of the doorways. The next room to the north, the *tepidarium*, was 12.65m. east-west by 9m. north-south, but lacking the architectural embellishments of the *frigidarium*. From the *tepidarium*, the bather had a choice of two hot rooms. Continuing on to the north was a large room, circular in plan with a diameter of 10.65m. internally, and, originally, presumably covered with a dome (a sort of small version of the Pantheon in Rome). This was probably a *sudatorium*, the name for a room with a hot, dry heat, unlike the steamy heat of the normal *caldarium*. It was the other room accessible from the *tepidarium*, through its eastern doorway, that was the *caldarium;* it was much more elaborate in plan and volume than its equivalent in the Forum Baths. It was rectangular, with the long axis running north-south for some 18m., by 11m. east-west. At the southern end was a semi-circular apse with the support for a *labrum*. In the long eastern and western wall were three niches, those to the north and the south were rectangular with a semi-circular one between these two. The south-western rectangular niche housed the door to and from the *tepidarium*. These niches may also have held smaller *labra* to help create, along with the *alvei*, the necessary steamy atmosphere. Presumably the upper parts of the walls would have been solid, carried over the niches, and the *caldarium* covered by a north-south barrel-vault. The main furnaces for the *sudatorium* and for the *caldarium* lay on their northern side, within a service courtyard. One peculiarity, well exampled at the North Baths, is the form of the colonettes supporting the raised floors, the *suspensurae*, of the heated rooms. These were a very distinctive, tapering, truncated conoid, a form for which there is also evidence from the Forum Baths of *Lugdunum*, but rarely paralleled anywhere outside the territory of the Convenae (Nielsen 1990: 14, n.5).

Clearly the North Baths were architecturally more ambitious than the Forum Baths. In particular, the main bath-block was more complex with its four main rooms, three of which were clearly elaborate in three dimensions, above all the *laconicum*. There is plentiful evidence for the use of marble, for

instance in the lining of the *natatio* and in the presence, over the site, of many plaques of wall-veneer, and also fragments of sculpture and of inscriptions. Though the detail remains to be fully published, these baths would have been at least as much an expression of the self-esteem of the Convenae as were the simpler Forum Baths. Even so, neither set of baths at *Lugdunum* was in the forefront of bath-buildings at towns in the western provinces of the Roman empire, either as regards overall area, or sophistication of lay-out; the quantities of marble, though, are unusual, albeit explained by the proximity of the St-Béat and other quarries. One question yet to be answered is the source of the water used in these baths. It is possible that a branch was led off the Tibiran-Jaunac aqueduct but, as that already supplied the Forum Baths and, probably, the Coupéré building, this would run the risk of over-taxing the flow from one aqueduct. The possibility of a second aqueduct is one which should not be discounted.

The U-shaped Building (Le bâtiment/sanctuaire en U)

One of the more remarkable discoveries of the campaign of aerial photography has been the building complex immediately north of the North Baths (Paillet & Petit 1992: 124–25; Aupert in Collectif 2002: 52–4). The exceptionally clear photographs show the plan well. Inscribed in a rectangle some three-quarters of the width of the North Baths *insula*, the complex measured 41.40m. east-west by 29.50m. north-south (150 by 100 Roman feet). At the eastern end was a U-shaped portico, prolonged to the west by straight north and south porticoes, the whole enclosing an open area; a north-south wall lay along the line of the chord of the curved part of the open area. To the west, the open area was closed by three pairs of rooms, the larger fronting the complex to the west, the smaller on the inner, eastern side. In the centre of the curved, eastern portico lay a small, rectangular projection. In default of excavation, it is not possible to be certain of the function of this complex overall, nor whether it is all of one period. The most likely function is that it is some sort of sanctuary. The recovery from the site of a stone relief representing the emasculated Attis, consort of the Great Mother Cybele, may well give the dedication (cf. Aupert & Turcan 1995). The veneration of Cybele is particularly attested south of the Garonne, with a relief from the capital of the Elusates at Éauze (*Elusa*) between Saint-Bertrand and Bordeaux, but, above all by the exceptional group of altars mentioning Cybele and the rite of the *taurobolium* associated with her, found at Lectoure (*Lactora*) between Auch and Agen (Fabre & Sillières 2000). The date of the U-shaped Building is uncertain. Limited excavations in the northernmost part of the North Baths suggest that the Building is later than the modifications, including an enlargement of the latrines, dating to the later second century. A late second or early third century date would fit well with the dating of the sequence of altars from Lectoure.

The linking of the U-shaped Building, a sanctuary, with the North Baths may suggest that the baths had a more than purely hygienic or social rôle; it may be that they came to act as a place of ablution and purification associated with the sanctuary, to prepare devotees before approaching the Great Mother or participating in her rites. Also of interest is that of the sequence of altars from Lectoure; all bar two were dedicated by women, generally noblewomen. If this were true for Saint-Bertrand also, then the sanctuary may well have been a centre for female worship and a focus for female society in the town, in contrast with the largely male world of the Forum Temple and the major collective religious rituals and festivals of the Convenae.

The Wall with Semicircular Buttresses (Le mur aux alvéoles)

North-east again of the North Baths and the U-shaped Building lay one of the largest but least-understood monuments of the town still visible. Along the slope down from the plateau on which the town sits to the flood-plain of the Garonne is a large wall, some 200m. long with semi-circular niches of 1.50m. radius all along its northern (river) side (Paillet & Petit 1992: 143, n.108). These 'niches' (*alvéoles* in French) are structural, being essentially a series of buttresses supporting the Wall against the pressure of the earth behind it, to stop it slipping down the slope. Clearly this formed part of a major complex but, unfortunately, we cannot tell what that complex was; presumably it sat immediately south of the long Wall, which held it up. Whatever it was, it would have been impressive to anyone passing along the river.

An Amphitheatre?

East of the long Wall and, again, on the top of the slope down to the Garonne, just west of the valley of the Riou du Plan stream, there is a hollow in the landscape which Sapène excavated in 1955 and 1956, thinking it was the site of the amphitheatre of *Lugdunum*. In fact, his results were equivocal (cf. May 1986: 121–22). There was an elliptical area of 83m. on the long north-west to south-east axis by 55m. on the short axis. Sapène found a number of masonry emplacements, which may have been to support the seating-banks, along with some marble and some pottery. It is possible that this does represent the lower part of an amphitheatre set in a natural basin, but it really needs further excavation to confirm this.

The Hilltop

Dominating the town as it does, and visible all along this part of the Garonne valley, the hilltop on which the cathedral now stands might well be

thought a good site for a major building or monument. There is some evidence that this was, in fact, the case. North of the cathedral is a major terrace-wall running parallel with the cathedral (Figure 3.5). In the middle ages, the upper part of this wall bounded the bishops' residence to the north of the cathedral. But the lower part is clearly (or, was clearly prior to an insensitive consolidation) Roman work, faced in the characteristic small blockwork (*petit appareil*). This would seem to be the north side of a major platform under where the cathedral now stands; indeed, the view of the upper town from the east clearly shows that the cathedral is raised above the general level of the hilltop. Emergency excavations in advance of trenches for the cabling of the floodlights for the cathedral (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 392–3) have shown that at a considerable depth under the bishops' residence is a very thick and solid flooring of Roman concrete with pounded brick (*opus signinum*). On the upper surface of this were the impressions of substantial flagstones – since removed. Taken together this gives good evidence for a major platform on the top of the hill in the Roman period. More problematic is what the platform was for. One possibility is that there was a temple, running on the alignment of the platform. In front of this would have been an altar, and it is possible to reconstruct an arrangement where the roughly east-west axis of temple and altar would

Figure 3.5 Hilltop, the terrace wall (lower part Roman, upper part medieval)

have been crossed by a roughly north-south axis coming up from the theatre and intersecting at the altar. In that case the theatre would form part of a major religious complex and, as such, may have had a rôle in the communal life of the Convenae above and beyond that simply of the presentation of plays; major assemblies and festivals could have been held there in the presence of large numbers of people. Similar arrangements of a temple on top of a hill overlooking a theatre are known from towns in Provence, such as Orange and Vienne, so it is not impossible for Saint-Bertrand; it is just that it takes the argument further than our available evidence. Alternatively, one could argue for a more modest temple or shrine, or for a major altar. Built into the north wall of the tower and nave of the eleventh-century cathedral are some truly massive blocks of marble, both white and coloured, up to 1.50m. by 1.50m. on the visible face. If these were from a Roman structure on the hilltop, rather than dragged up later from the lower town, this would again argue for an important, monumental focus on the hilltop. In Chapter 1, the possibility that the hilltop was the site of an important pre-Roman religious focus was proposed; so, any Roman-period arrangement may have carried on that tradition.

The Living City: private houses and workshops

As has been noted before, the vast bulk of the work on Saint-Bertrand has focused on the public buildings and monuments on the valley floor. This was understandable at the time, since these represented the most spectacular and rewarding remains of the Roman town and study of them allowed workers to see the impact of Roman civilisation in this out-of-the-way corner of Gaul. But it does mean that we have a very skewed view of the town and of the lives of the people who lived in it; it is a picture composed essentially of what they did when engaged in public affairs or worship – important activities, but, ones which for most people occupy little of their time. In this section, therefore, we shall try to redress the balance a little, looking first at the evidence for the overall extent of the town and for the types of private housing it contained; then we shall look at what can be gleaned from the activities of earlier workers, particularly Sapène, before moving on to the recent detailed excavation of a town-house on the Coupéré site.

Our knowledge of the overall lay-out of *Lugdunum* has benefited enormously from the campaign of aerial photography undertaken by Catherine Petit in the late 1980s (cf. Figure 2.1, p. 29). Because most of the area of the Roman town is unencumbered by modern buildings and because many of the fields that now cover it were planted with grain crops whose growth was affected by the buried remains, Catherine Petit was able to produce a very comprehensive coverage of the area of the town, identifying the plans of many buildings long since buried. The aerial photographs show that the

built-up area of the Roman town extended north from the foot of the hill almost to the Garonne, probably stopping along the line of the slope down to the river's flood-plain. To the east, the boundary is roughly on the line of the ruisseau du Plan stream, but this is a post-Roman watercourse. To the west, there is no natural boundary, but it looks as though buildings ran as far as the foot of Mont Lau, the next hill west of the hill of Saint-Bertrand, and then north towards the river. In all, the built-up area of the town seems to have covered about 40ha. (100 acres); but there is a margin of error, partly because some buildings may not have been discovered, and partly because the built-up area is not continuous – there are gaps and open spaces. As discussed above, the southern part of the town centre was laid out on a rough street-grid around the central esplanade and the forum complex, an orientation governing also the lay-out of a major group of houses between the esplanade and the hill. But to the east of this the alignment shifted, probably determined by the line of the Luchon road. Much of the northern part of the town was on an orientation governed by the north-south *cardo* running to the west of the Forum Baths, though this orientation was interrupted on its eastern side by the *cardo* running due north from the open area at the junction of the Dax and Toulouse roads north of the Forum Baths (see p. 30). The area of the town north and east of the *Macellum* was structured by the wide Toulouse road, curving away north-eastwards towards the river crossing. Around the edges of the town there were buildings on a variety of orientations, responding to local factors rather than to some more general plan.

Sapène undertook excavations on three main areas of private housing, though, as we shall see, his techniques leave much to be desired. The largest and most important complex was that on the south side of the Luchon road, where it formed the southern boundary of the central esplanade and stretched to the foot of the hill immediately north-east of the theatre. This was a prime, central location, and Sapène's excavations, along with partial, modern re-excavation under the Christian church (see p. 134), show that the complex, now known either as the 'villa Basc', from the name of modern land-owners, or 'le Plan' (the name of the quarter), was occupied from the first to the fifth centuries (Figure 3.6). The problem with Sapène's excavation method was that it consisted largely in uncovering walls and floors with little attempt to analyse their sequence or date (cf. Schenck 1985 for photographs giving some sense of Sapène's methods). Because the area of the 'villa Basc' was occupied for half a millennium by more than one property, which may have been sub-divided and re-amalgamated over time, Sapène's plan gives us a jumble of walls which are difficult to make sense of. A recent analysis (Guyon 2003: 138–41, esp. Figures 4 and 5) suggests that along the Luchon road a unified façade was provided by a colonnade, with a monumental entrance, perhaps part of a tetrapylon (four-way arch) spanning the Luchon road. Behind this were at least two major properties: a western one

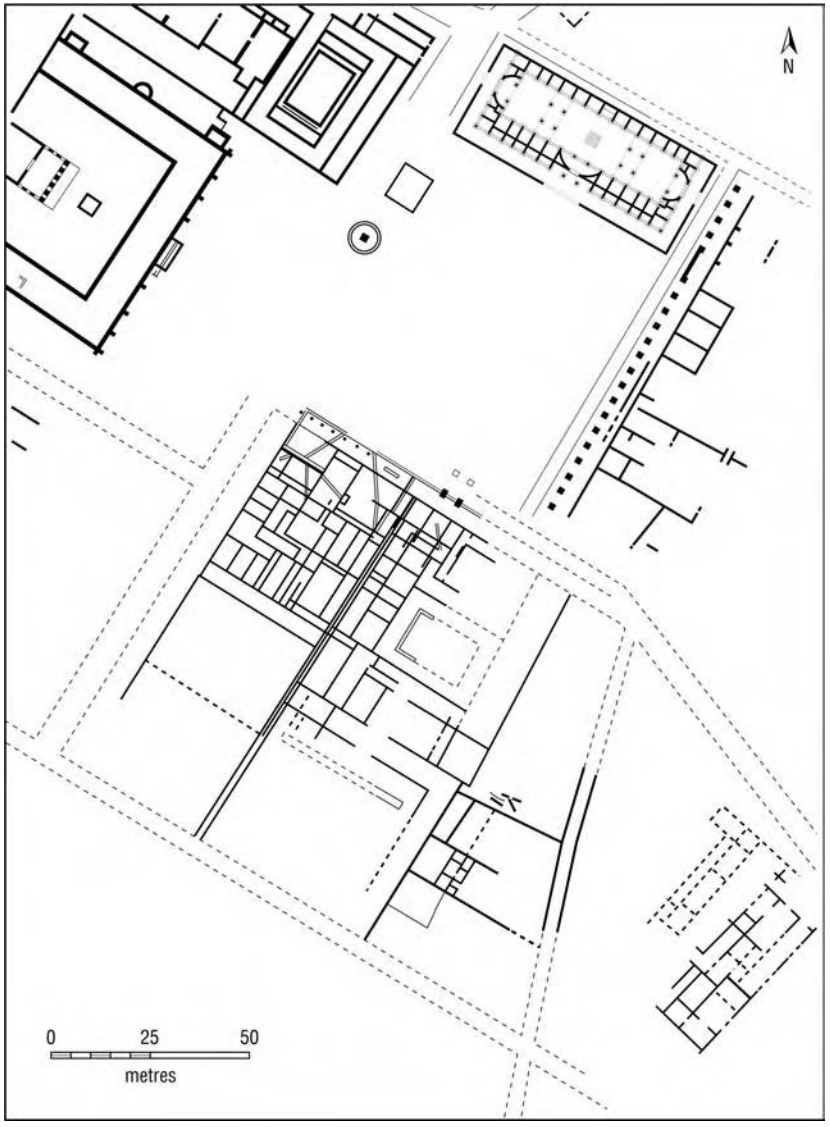

Figure 3.6 Plan of Domus I and Domus II of 'villa Basc' in relation to centre of town

which he labels Domus I, and an eastern Domus II (Figure 3.6). Domus I is the more difficult of the two to interpret from Sapène's plans. It seems to have had a grand entrance leading to an internal courtyard round which were ranged the main rooms of the residence. The south range of these were faced by an east-west portico which opened onto a large open space, presumably a garden, flanked on the south by what may have been another

house. The floors of Domus I included mosaics and plain and patterned marble paving, the luxury of the fittings matching the size and complexity of the residence. Domus I was separated from Domus II by a passageway, an *ambitus*, under which ran the main drains of both houses.

The plan of Domus II is easier to understand and reconstruct and our knowledge of the house also benefits from the limited re-excavation of its eastern side in the course of the re-examination of the later Christian church built over it (cf. Guyon 2003). Domus II was entered by a monumental entranceway towards the western end of the portico along the roadside, perhaps forming part of a four-way arch over the road along the southern side of the central esplanade (the Luchon-Dax road). The actual entrance was reached by two steps: one in green marble; one in red, flanked by two carved bases in grey-white marble, giving some sense of the opulence of the appointments of the house. The western third of the front of the residence was occupied by the reception rooms (and a latrine), leading to the interior of the complex. At the heart of the residence lay a colonnaded courtyard, in the centre of which was a marble-faced mass of masonry surrounded by a marble-lined gutter – quite probably the base for a fountain. The rest of the court was floored with a decorated mosaic bordered by the gutters of the surrounding porticoes. West of the court, a long corridor led to a range of rooms fronted by a portico and opening onto a garden, very similar to the arrangement in Domus I. These rooms included some floored in mosaic and in *opus signinum* (hydraulic cement) and others with hypocausts. It is possible, as Sapène and others have suggested, that some, at least, of these rooms constituted the private bath-suite of the house; this certainly seems to have been the case later in the life of Domus II (see p. 94). The number of rooms floored in mosaic or in marble and the amount of marble recovered from the site indicates that this was a *de luxe* residence. It is unfortunate that it is so difficult to unpick the various phases of modification and rebuilding, because this makes it near impossible to analyse the layout of the Domus and compare it with others in Gaul and Italy; but, overall its plan matches better others from Gaul (cf. Borgard *et al*. (eds.) 1996) than those typical of a site such as Pompeii. The re-excavations of part of the eastern side of the residence in 1987 allowed the dating of the initial construction of Domus II to the years A.D. 30–60. Sapène also excavated a little to the east of the 'villa Basc' complex on a simpler but still substantial house to the south of the Luchon road.

A second major focus of his excavations was in the area to the east and the south of the North Baths in the areas of Les Vignettes and Les Campagnes (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 372–8; cf. May 1986: 116). The overall plan (Figure 3.7) shows a variety of building-types, including a number of simple, rectangular buildings fronting onto the streets. This type of plan suggests that they were relatively simple properties, probably consisting of a range of rooms and, most probably, occupied by an artisan or trader and

Figure 3.7 Plan of the North Baths area (*after May 1986*)

his family. This would make this part of the town centre a commercial area, sensible enough given how close it is to the major monuments and open spaces. There were also some larger and more complex structures, probably the houses of the relatively affluent, an argument supported by the discovery of a number of floors in *opus signinum* and mosaic.

The last major exploration of a private residence undertaken by Sapène was across the *cardo* to the west of the North Baths, and a little to the

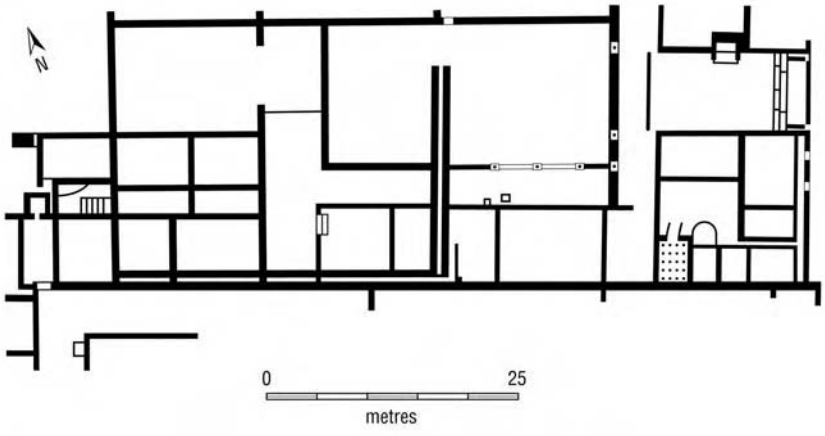

Figure 3.8 Plan of the 'villa Delbès' building (entrance on eastern side) (*after May 1986*)

north, across the road in fact from the U-shaped Building. This site, now known as the 'villa Delbès' (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 387–8: cf. May 1986: 124–5), appears (Figure 3.8) to be a large part of a house of some substance entered from the street to the east by a large, formal vestibule giving onto a central, colonnaded court. To the south of the vestibule was a small, private bath-suite, a marker of a residence of status. Unfortunately, because of the style of excavation, little can be said about the range of rooms uncovered to the south and west of the central court. Overall, Sapène's excavations had not explored a huge tally of private housing and they had produced very little in the way of understanding beyond showing that there was a range of building-stock from the simple to very impressive and complex. Because of this, the Collectif de Recherches decided in 1986 that the time had come to try to redress the balance through a large-scale excavation of a town-house to modern standards. The site selected, because it was available for excavation, was that at Coupéré.

The Coupéré House

As we have already seen (p. 49), the Coupéré excavations also encountered the unforeseen Tiberian complex, probably a *palaestra* or *campus*. This seems to have burnt down early in the second century (for this and what follows, cf. Sablayrolles in Collectif 2002: 54–61). Interestingly, it was not replaced, suggesting that it no longer served a useful purpose for the Convenae. Indeed, the site probably remained empty for some time, since the dating material for the construction of the house is of the middle of the second century. Because it was systematically cleared in the late Roman

period (see p. 129) and the site was later subject to ploughing and to further stone-robbing in the nineteenth century, this building was not well-preserved. However, enough survived of its plan, building sequence and dating evidence to be able to trace the main outlines of its development over the two centuries of its existence. The lack of floors, doorways and so on also makes it difficult to be certain about how the building was structured and, indeed, about its overall function, though a house is clearly the best and simplest solution.

The new building (Figure 3.9) shared the orientation of its predecessor, but whereas the latter faced towards the centre of the town, its replacement turned its back on the town and faced out over open country towards the Pic du Gar. It was arranged around at least three sides of a court 35m. north-south by 29m. east-west and surrounded by a colonnaded walkway;

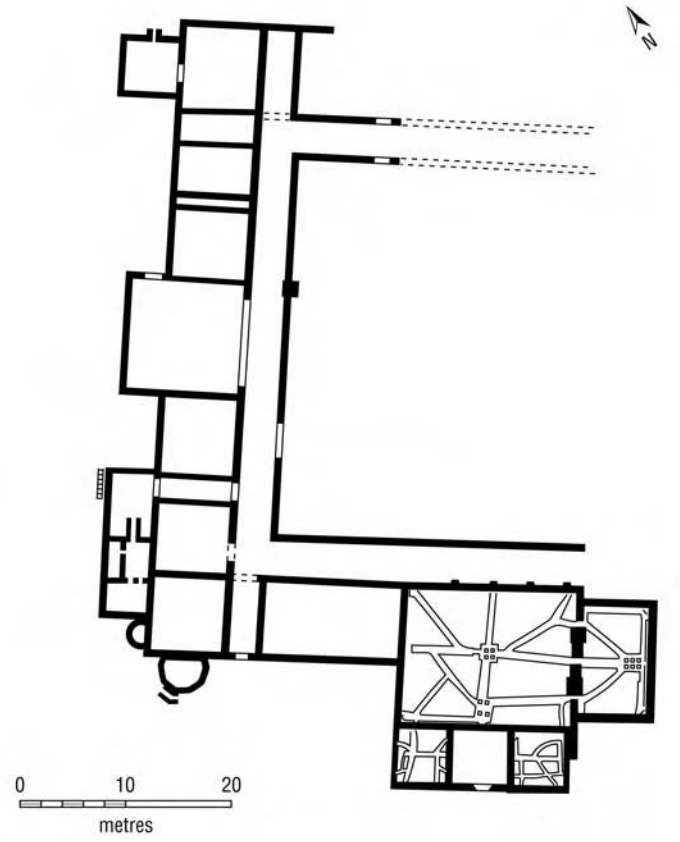

Figure 3.9 Plan of the second Coupéré building (*after Sablayrolles in Collectif 2002*)

whether there was a fourth, eastern range to close off the courtyard is unknown. The principal entrance and reception room seem to have been in the centre of the western range, with the large, almost square (10.50m. north-south by 10.20m. east-west) main room having a very wide doorway looking out through the colonnade towards the mountain. The northern part of the west range consisted of a series of rooms of uncertain functions, whereas the southern part comprised a small, private bath-house, with its stoke-holes on the western side (behind the west range). Only the western extremity of the north range was available for excavation and there is little that can be said about it. The south range, on the other hand, contained the largest rooms in the building. At the eastern extremity of the southern range was a huge (23m. east-west by 12.70m. north-south) rectangular room, buttressed along its northern and southern sides and with another large, rectangular room projecting from its eastern side. Taken together, as the excavator notes, these two rooms resemble in plan a basilica and like the central reception room, face out towards the Pic du Gar. The original function of this pair of rooms is unknown, but in the third century they had channelled hypocausts inserted, fed from a stoke-hole in the centre of the southern side of the larger room; the stoke-hole itself was flanked by two, small, heated rooms. The suggestion is that this modification would make this suite of rooms usable in cold weather, whereas the west-range reception room was not; so, we may suggest that we are seeing the creation of summer and winter reception rooms. The only other significant change was the addition of a small, heated room to the western side of the north end of the west range, probably also in the course of the third century. Though the later denudation of the remains of the Coupéré house have meant it yielded less information than might have been hoped, nevertheless, it showed how much could be gained from the excavation of further domestic buildings of a range of different types.

The City of the Dead: burials, cemeteries and monuments

Since earliest times Roman law had specified that the living and the dead had to be kept separate. This was not, as it might be in our society, for reasons of physical hygiene, but for reasons of religious hygiene: corpses and their associated rites brought ritual pollution upon those who came into contact with them, a pollution which had to be expiated by purificatory rites. Therefore, the dead had to be placed away from the living, and this seems to have been a prescription widely followed amongst Rome's subject peoples. It can certainly be seen amongst the Convenae, demonstrating again how they had adapted to Roman-derived religious norms and their attendant impact on how the Convenae conceived of and divided up physical and ritual space.

The cemeteries of Saint-Bertrand have not been the subject of any sustained programme of research or excavation; only a number of surviving

monuments and casual discoveries give a guide as to where the dead of the town were laid (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 82–7). The normal location for urban cemeteries was along the main approach-roads to the town, where family devotion and wealth could be suitably displayed to passers-by. The sole funerary monument surviving at Saint-Bertrand lies beside the line of the Toulouse road, just to the east of the modern village of Valcabrère, and consists of a four-metre-high, solid masonry block with two 'storeys', the upper housing a niche. This is an example of a regional funerary monument, the *pile funéraire* (funerary tower, as an approximate translation). These are common, south of the Garonne, particularly in the *civitates* of the Convenae and of the Ausci (round Auch), both at the major towns and out in the countryside (cf. Sillières & Soukiassian 1993). Better-preserved and better-excavated examples show that they took the form of a square base surmounted by a two-storey block, covered by a roof (cf. Figure 4.2, p. 100). In the upper storey was a niche, presumably for a sculpture representing a particular person or group of people, such as a family. There would presumably also have been an inscription or inscriptions commemorating the dead buried there. Rural examples are sometimes set in one side of a rectangular funerary enclosure, presumably a family burial plot. Another example of this type of funerary monument survived at Saint-Bertrand into the early twentieth century. This was the so-called Marroc de Heranne, just to the north of the Luchon road east of the town and visible as a mass of masonry on nineteenth-century engravings of the town. Surviving to a height of more than 5m., it was excavated in 1885, yielding a variety of objects but no surviving burials; but it was blown up with dynamite at the beginning of the twentieth century. Not far to the north-east of the Marroc de Heranne monument lay the late Roman cemetery in the area of the church of Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère (see p. 136): a cemetery which may have originated in the earlier Roman period. A cemetery on this side of the town might have been delimited by the valley of the little stream, the ruisseau du Plan, thus separating it from the domain of the living;, but the stream's present course is in all probability post-Roman, though its Roman course must have been broadly similar. West of the town on the Dax road in the area now known as Barsous there was clearly an important cemetery of the first and second centuries. Unfortunately, we only know about it as a result of it being quarried for marble funerary reliefs and tombstones during the nineteenth century, most of these being dispersed into private collections (cf. Lussault 1997: 259–61). Such information as we have suggests the presence of square and circular tomb monuments, each bearing an inscription. The quantity and quality of the evidence is not great, but it shows that, in general terms, the cemeteries of *Lugdunum* conformed to standard practice with the cemeteries lying along the main roads, adorned in places by the more lavish monuments of the richer families.

The Tranquistan fort

In the area of *lieu-dit* (a small area with its own name) of Tranquistan, in the space between the streams of the modern ruisseau du Plan to the west and the Riou Mort to the east, was constructed a most unexpected installation so far from the Rhine and Danube frontiers of the empire: a Roman garrison fort. This location for the fort, in a zone of transition between the cities of the living and the dead, meant that it was associated with, but not part of, the town proper. The fort was of the classic, Roman, military shape: rectangular with rounded corners. The stone walls, 176m. east-west by 162m. north-south and still visible to this day, delimited an area of 2.85ha. (7 acres), giving rise to the site's other modern name *Encraoustos* (in the local dialect: Enclosure). The topography of the site means that the fort is on its own orientation, not matching any of the orientations of the streets of the town centre. In 1989 and 1990, limited excavations on the west gate and in the interior recovered, amongst other things, fragments of a marble inscription, presumably originally over the gate and recording the building of the fort (Schaad & Soukiassian 1990). In 2003, further excavations on the gate and to its west augmented our understanding of the fort and its environs (Schaad & Schenck-David 2003). The west gate was to a standard Roman plan: a passageway flanked by rectangular guard-rooms, the threshold consisting of blocks of limestone and marble. In 1990 the tower attached to the internal face of the south-west angle of the fort was also cleared, and in the same year two small trenches in the interior of the fort revealed a short length of wall robbed out in the recent past (Sondage 2) and the corner of a room with a marble bench along one side and perhaps a mosaic floor (Sondage 3); but neither trench was large enough to yield a coherent plan.

In 2003, the opportunity was taken to investigate the flat area between the west gate and the ruisseau du Plan, an area in which aerial photography had not located any trace of structures. The area was indeed not built on and it had been metalled. How far to the west it extended is not known, but it very possibly encompassed the large, open area to the west of the course of the present ruisseau du Plan. The excavators interpret this large, open space attached to the fort as a *campus*: a parade- and training-ground for the fort, citing similar areas known at forts in Britain and north Africa. On the west side of this open area is the only other structure at Saint-Bertrand on the same alignment as the fort: the baths complex known as the Sales Arrouges (the name resulting from the red colour of the *opus signinum* floors), 150m. west of the west gate of the fort (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 367–8). These baths are interpreted as the fort baths for the use of the garrison and its dependents.

Because of the limited nature of the excavations, few datable deposits were encountered. On balance, the date of the foundation of the fort probably lay towards the end of the second century or at the beginning of the third. This would accord with the shape of the fort, more characteristic of the first

and second centuries than of the later third or fourth. Too few fragments of the inscription survive to be able to restore the name of the emperor under whom it was set up (Schaad & Schenck-David 2003: 34–42), but again, what can be read would not contradict the proposed date-bracket.

Why a fort was founded here at this date remains a complete mystery; there is no record of military problems this deep into the empire at this date, nor are there any other forts in the region which might give a context to the one at Saint-Bertrand. Some have argued either that it is there to supervise the marble quarries, or that it is related to the customs post of the *Quadragesima Galliarum* (see below), but in the absence of any positive evidence these cannot be more than hypotheses. A tombstone (*CIL* XIII, 259) from Valcabrère, and dating to the end of the second century, records the death of two Spaniards and another man, *a latronibus hic interfecti* 'killed here by bandits', suggesting a more violent society than we often assume; but this cannot be linked to the foundation of the fort.

The size of the fort suggests to the excavators that it housed a *cohors quingenaria*, that is, a unit about five hundred strong. Such units could be either *peditata*, purely infantry, or *equitata*, a mixture of infantry and light cavalry. Such a unit would also have had its servants and, if there were cavalry, ostlers, farriers and other attendants. The commanding officer, an Equestrian, so of the second rank of the Roman upper class, would have had his own household and perhaps his family with him. Though the men were not allowed to contract a formal Roman marriage, nonetheless, many of them would have women and children with them. The impact of all this on *Lugdunum* must have been substantial. The initial arrival of the garrison, complete strangers and possibly from a totally different province and race, would have introduced a whole new element into the town's population. The womenfolk and children would have had to be lodged somewhere, possibly in the town. The commanding officer would have been a person of consequence in the town's society, and the other officers (centurions for the infantry; decurions for the cavalry) would also have been men of rank and influence. The generality of the soldiers would have presented the townsfolk with all the financial advantages but social problems unavoidable for a smallish town housing a relatively large, regularly-paid, testosterone-loaded garrison. The garrison would also have had to be supplied with food such as grain, as well as other necessities such as leather and metals. Though these were obtained through the Roman taxation system, it may well have been that this now became an important element of the tax-render of the Convenae (one they were well placed to satisfy), rather than money payments. They may also have supplied recruits.

The Quadragesima Galliarum

An inscription discovered towards the middle of the nineteenth century and, most probably, from Saint-Bertrand records the refurbishment of a *statio* of

the *Quadragesima Galliarum*, a post of the 'One-Fortieth of the Gauls': in other words the customs precept of two-and-a-half percent levied at the frontiers of Gaul (cf. France 2001). The Roman empire had only a few, very large, internal customs zones, Gaul being one of them. Why there should have been such a post at Saint-Bertrand is a matter of debate. As we saw in Chapter 1, the main passes over the Pyrenees were, and are, towards the eastern and western ends of the chain: the Col de Perthus in the east and Roncesvaux or Saint-Jean-de-Luz in the west. The route up the Val d'Aran over the Port de Bonaigua was never a major crossing. As will be seen in Chapter 4 (p. 104), it is, nevertheless, clear that the route was used, as is indicated by the presence of Saint-Béat and associated marbles on sites in the Spanish Pyrenees and the Ebro valley. Presumably, this explains why it was thought worthwhile to construct a permanent customs post here. Some have suggested that the Tranquistan fort was founded to safeguard this route, but there is no real evidence for this; moreover, if it were the case then one would expect similar forts at the major passes – and there are none.

Discussion: continuing the creation of the Convenae

By the turn of the second and third centuries *Lugdunum* had reached its maximum extent and was adorned by its full complement of public buildings and monuments. It had, moreover, been promoted to the more honourable rank of *colonia*, making its free-born citizens also Citizens of Rome. When this happened is not certain; an inscription (*CIL* XIII, 254) of the time of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) refers to it still as a *civitas*, but Ptolemy, writing in the early second century, refers to it as a *colonia* (Ptolemy, *Geography* II.7.13), as does an undated fragment of an inscription from the Forum referring to the *Genius Coloniae* (the presiding spirit of the *colonia*) (Wuilleumier 1963, no. 59). In overall size it was not that remarkable, certainly compared with towns further north which had street-grids covering up to 200ha., rather than the 40ha. of *Lugdunum*. But few towns in Gaul could match the number and embellishments of the public buildings and monuments in the capital of the Convenae: a large forum and temple complex, two sets of baths, the largest *macellum* in Gaul, a theatre with its *porticus post scaenam*, a possible hilltop shrine, the U-shaped sanctuary, the buttressed wall along the edge of the flood-plain, a possible amphitheatre, a fort. This was a suite of buildings it would be difficult to parallel outside the cities of Gallia Narbonensis, such as Arles, Nîmes or Vienne and suggests that it was to this region that the aristocracy of the Convenae looked for their models. Moreover, these buildings made lavish use of marble in a range of colours, both for utilitarian elements such as thresholds, but, also, for their architectural stonework such as columns and capitals, and for sheathing their walls inside and out. The marble was also used for the statues that must

once have been so common, to judge by the remaining fragments, and for the altars and other inscriptions of which a few have come down to us. All this would have made *Lugdunum* one of the most splendid towns, not only of Aquitania but, of all the Three Gauls. The town centre would have been an impressive and complex experience, with its combination of large open areas such as the central esplanade and the area north of the Forum Baths (the former defined by a series of major buildings, monuments and colonnades and containing monuments such as the so-called Temple of Hercules), the Circular Enclosure or the four-way arch over the Luchon road. Then there was a set of enclosed, colonnaded spaces, such as the forum courtyard; the *Macellum* or the theatre and its *porticus post scaenam* with their play of light and shade through the day; their statues and other sculpture. Then there were the completely enclosed but accessible buildings, such as the two bath-complexes opening onto colonnaded courtyards with reflecting pools and flanked by *palaestrae*. Finally, there were the great religious precincts such as the Forum Temple and the potential hilltop temple or shrine.

Compared with the huge changes we saw in Chapter 2, when the town and its buildings were created out of more or less nothing, the developments outlined in this chapter may seem rather tame. In many respects, certainly as far as the monumental centre goes, it was 'more of the same': the aggrandisement and embellishment of existing buildings, with the addition of some new ones, rather than wholesale refashioning of the centre. But, in a way, this is what is important; in the first century the town was created, but was always new and changing. In the second century the town became an accepted, familiar and permanent feature of both the physical and mental landscapes of the Convenae. Year in, year out, whether they lived in it, visited it regularly, or infrequently, it was always there, embodying the collective identity and memory of the *civitas* under the protection of its deities. It was where justice was dispensed, law-suits settled, taxes paid, decrees promulgated. It was to *Lugdunum* that they came for baths, for worship, for entertainment, for trade. By the turn of the second and third centuries all this, and more, had developed around the physical presence of *Lugdunum*. In the words of Winston Churchill, 'We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us'.

But as well as the buildings fulfilling the public and religious functions of *Lugdunum*, an extensive collection of private buildings had developed, which as we have seen ranged from the extensive and elaborate residences of the nobility, such as the 'villa Basc' or 'villa Delbès', through more modest but still grand houses, such as that at Coupéré, through the shop/workshop and accommodation of artisans in the quarter between the Forum and North Baths, down to simple single-roomed dwellings for the poorest. It is notoriously difficult and dubious to give population estimates for ancient towns, since we do not know what the density of occupation was; estimates for towns such as Saint-Bertrand tend to cluster in the low thousands.

Though small by modern standards, this was, nevertheless, a population centre unmatched anywhere else in the territory of the Convenae, but still a minority of the overall inhabitants of the *civitas* of the Convenae. These town-dwellers were not cut off from the countryside and the rural population as so many in the larger cities of the modern world are. They would have had family and friends still living on the land, some may even still have had property out in the country. Moreover, it is highly likely that ancient towns such as Saint-Bertrand could not sustain their own population; they would have needed immigration from the countryside to maintain themselves. For these reasons, *Lugdunum* would have meant more to many of the Convenae than simply its public and religious functions and festivals; it would have been a place of family and friends.

One other aspect of *Lugdunum* that would have been important, both to the town's inhabitants and to the surrounding country folk, was the rôle it would have developed as the principal economic focus of the *civitas*. As yet, this is difficult to reconstruct fully from the evidence from Saint-Bertrand itself, as the necessary material, principally the pottery but also other objects and features such as hearths and tools, from the excavations in the town has yet to be fully published. Nonetheless, in Chapters 1 and 2 we saw that one of the earliest features of the settlement at Saint-Bertrand was its access to goods from outside its immediate locale, in particular fine pottery from production centres beyond Toulouse. As we also saw, there is also good evidence from early on for the focal position of Saint-Bertrand in the economic activity of the countryside of the Convenae and more extended consideration of how that economic system worked will be held over to then, in order to take advantage of the evidence from the hinterland, as well as the town. But one of the features of the Roman period across the empire is the quantity of consumer goods that became available: archaeologists are used to dealing mainly with pottery and, to an extent, with non-precious metalwork because they survive well in the archaeological record, but materials such as wood, textiles, leather were in fact probably more important in terms of volume and value. Any excavation on a provincial Roman town, and Saint-Bertrand is no exception, habitually yields large quantities of pottery and quantities of other goods, far and away above the amounts which characterise an Iron Age or an early mediaeval settlement. In the Roman period there was a version of a 'consumer revolution', with goods and services becoming available in far greater quantities. Moreover, many or most of these were within the reach of anyone who could pay for them, rather than restricted to the rulers and aristocrats as they may have been in the Iron Age. Payment was, of course, facilitated by the presence of Roman coinage, but in the first and second centuries even the copper and copper-alloy coinage was probably relatively valuable, so may not have been used for simple purchases; the gold and silver coinage would have represented considerable value, even wealth, and not surprisingly little is found lost at

places such as Saint-Bertrand (only 1 gold coin and 15 silver from the end of the first to the end of the second century as opposed to 261 base-metal pieces, Bost & Namin 2002: 33–5). So, payment in coin would have been an option at this date, but we should not think that there was purely a monetised urban market economy of the type with which we are familiar; there were other options by which goods and services could also be obtained. Payment by barter would have been a well-established practice and many social and religious interactions may well have required the appropriate gifts; so, a very wide range of people could have had access to the consumer goods Saint-Bertrand had to offer. This is reflected not only in the huge quantities of pottery and the other objects found by archaeologists working on the town, but also in the same sorts of pottery, coins and other objects being found on sites out in the countryside, suggesting that the town was acting as the principal market and distribution centre for such material, presumably in return for the agricultural produce or mineral resources of the peasantry and mountain folk. And along with the flow of goods went the flow of news, ideas, fashions, again linking the Convenae in to the wider political and social changes taking place in the empire.

The third and fourth centuries

One of the unusual things about Saint-Bertrand, compared with many other towns in Gaul, is the way in which the town as it had developed in the second century continued with little apparent break through the third century and well down into the fourth. It is this later perpetuation of the public buildings and monuments and the private housing of the town that will be the focus of this last part of the chapter. In order to understand the wider context for Saint-Bertrand, there will be a historical outline of military and political developments before moving on to the evidence from the town itself.

Developments in the third and fourth centuries

For the Roman empire, the third century is generally seen as a period of military weakness, political instability and economic dislocation, 'the third-century crisis'; the fourth century as a period of recovery and stability, the 'Indian summer' of the empire. Across Gaul can be seen all the symptoms of the imperial malaise. Through the third century it suffered a series of invasions across the Rhine frontier, peaking in the 260s and 270s when the raids went deep; one is even said to have reached north-eastern Spain. Hand in hand with these military reverses went political crisis as the mechanisms of orderly imperial succession broke down and the throne was usurped by military strongmen in command of the armies. From A.D. 260 to A.D. 274 Gaul, Germany, Britain and parts of Spain were under the control of a series of emperors made and broken in Gaul: the 'Gallic empire'. Their

prime function was to try to hold the line of the Rhine frontier to ensure the security of Roman possessions; not that they fulfilled this function with notable success – the 260s saw major incursions across the Rhine.

There is one interesting find which does seem to link the south-west of Gaul, more specifically the area of the Convenae, with the invasions across the Rhine and into the interior of Gaul: the material from Hagenbach in Rheinland-Pfalz (cf. Bernhard 1990). Objects recovered over time from what was then an arm of the Rhine suggest that somewhere in the latter part of the third century, most probably the 260s or 270s, a ship laden with objects from the Roman side of the Rhine sank, quite possibly laden with raiders and their booty returning from incursions into Gaul. Amongst the large quantities of iron tools and other objects were some brooches, or *fibulae*, best paralleled in hoards from the modern *département* of the Landes along the Atlantic coast south of the Gironde. Most revealing, though, were 129 silver votive decorations resembling feathers or leaves, some with dedications inscribed on them. Detailed study (Gorrochategui 2003) shows that both the personal names of the dedicators (largely men, but with at least three women) and the divinity to whom the objects were dedicated, Mars or Mars Augustus, find their closest parallels in the area around *Lugdunum*, particularly at the sanctuaries of Montsérié and Ardiège (see p. 107–8), with the latter proposed (with all due caution) as the sanctuary from which these dedications may have been removed. If so, then we may have evidence that the instability and invasions of the third century touched the Convenae much more directly than we would otherwise have thought.

By the end of the third century, a series of Balkan war lord-emperors had defeated the external threats and restored internal security and some measure of political stability. This was bought at a price: the late Roman empire was increasingly geared to its own survival, and the financial and administrative structures of the State, required to maintain the armies which guaranteed security against external threat and underpinned the internal power of the emperors, grew increasingly oppressive. These symptoms and their cure were manifest in Gaul but, rather than try to describe and discuss them here, we shall, instead, concentrate on the changes in south-west Gaul in general and in Saint-Bertrand and amongst the Convenae more specifically, setting these against developments elsewhere in Gaul as necessary and useful.

Novempopulana *(the Nine Peoples)*

An inscription (*CIL* XIII, 412) of the second half of the third century from Hasparren (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) (Fabre 1994: 110–11) tells of a local official who gained permission for the 'Nine Peoples' to separate themselves off from the Gauls, though the inscription implies that this had yet to be put into effect. Under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian (285–305) the civil administration of the empire was reorganised, with the old, large provinces

being split into smaller groupings, easier to administer and tax. The administrative document known as the Verona List and dating to the 310s gives *Novem Populi* for the south-western part of the former Aquitania; and a century or so later, the *Notitia Galliarum*, a register of the provinces and *civitates* of Gaul, lists the *civitates* of *Novempopulana*. This new, smaller province comprised all the territory between the Atlantic, the Garonne and the Pyrenees, save small areas dependent on Bordeaux and Toulouse (cf. Figure 1.1, p. 12). It is the old territory of the Aquitani as defined by Caesar and Strabo and it seems clear that the Aquitani had in some way maintained their idea of a separate identity and vindicated it some three hundred years after they were subsumed into the province of Aquitania. The creation of this new province probably served the interests both of the Aquitani and of the empire, for of course these smaller provinces could be more closely supervised than the old, vast provinces. The capital of the province was probably at Éauze, half-way between Saint-Bertrand and Bordeaux, though some sources also give Auch.

Amongst the Nine Peoples (the various sources give slightly different lists of *civitates* for the province and almost never nine) were the Convenae, with, to their north, the Ausci and, to their west, the Bigerri. But to the east lay the Consoranni, a *civitas* centred on the valley of the Salat and the twin sites of Saint-Girons, a probable secondary centre under the early empire, and Saint-Lizier-en-Couserans, a hill-top fortified centre of the late empire. Under the early empire the Consoranni (from which derives the mediaeval and modern name of the district, Couserans) seem to have lain, at least in part, in Narbonensis and must have been transferred on the creation of the new province. From now on in Gaul the *civitas* becomes identified with the town, and documentary references to *Convenae* usually mean the town rather than the people or area.

Our knowledge and understanding of developments later in the life of the Roman town have been increasing recently, thanks in part to a greater interest being taken in this period in general and, in particular, thanks to some of the more recent projects of (re-)excavation. It was very often the late Roman and later deposits which suffered most during the earlier excavations on the site of Saint-Bertrand, since they were the ones Sapène and others encountered first and sometimes removed to get at what lay beneath; also, as the Coupéré site shows, they had often been compromised by post-Roman cultivation and by stone-robbing to recover building materials. Nevertheless, enough survives from some of the sites and from more recent projects to reveal the outlines of the later history of the major buildings and monuments.

It can be shown that many of these buildings continued to be used through the third and fourth centuries, even if they sometimes required modification and rebuilding after two centuries or so of use. A good example of this is the Forum Baths (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 89–96). In the

Severan period at the beginning of the third century a new furnace was added to the west wall of the *caldarium*, and a century or so later that wall had to be rebuilt. Other modifications can be dated to the fourth century, for instance in Salles V and VII, and there are some undated but clearly late alterations, such as the insertion of a series of large, stone bases into the former reservoir, Salle IV. The *palaestra* was divided in two at a late date and one half seems to have become a stockyard for pieces of marble statuary and architectural stonework. Though the purpose of some of these alterations may be obscure, there can be little doubt that the Forum Baths complex continued to function as baths well down into the fourth century. The North Baths seem to have had a slightly more eventful late history, with a new heated room being constructed in the area between the old *caldarium* and *frigidarium* and three smaller rooms being built in the north-western part of the courtyard surrounding the *natatio* and encroaching on what had been the north colonnade. Because of the nature of the excavations, it is impossible to be sure whether these represent, as Sapène thought, additions to the baths, or, as others such as Aupert have suggested, arrangements which involved, or resulted from, the disuse of all or part of the main baths. The earlier excavations also prevent us saying anything much about the fate of the Forum Temple and the Forum in the third and fourth centuries (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 62); and the survey of the theatre was not designed to locate and test surviving stratigraphy, so we cannot say if it was still in use through into the fourth century.

By contrast, the later phases of the *Macellum* and of the central esplanade to its south are partially recoverable (Tassaux in Collectif 1992: 106–7; Tassaux in Collectif 2002: 42–44). The *Macellum*, as constructed in the first century and reconstructed in the second, was at some stage suppressed and its place taken by a large, rectangular structure with a rectangular projection in the centre of its eastern short side; it had a central drain lying on the mosaic of the earlier courtyard. Because this building was essentially cleared away by Sapène in order to get at the underlying structures, we know nothing else about it: neither function or date. It is probably to be associated with the construction to its south of the Pi-shaped Portico (*Portique en Pi*), a colonnade enclosing much of the central esplanade (cf. Figure 2.4, p. 34). The south wall was that constructed in association with the 'Temple of Hercules' in the second century; the east and west walls ran north from this to articulate with the east and west ends of the new building on the site of the *Macellum*. The portico was 4.80m. wide and poorly-constructed from building materials re-used from earlier structures. Nevertheless, taken with the building on the site of the *Macellum*, this does represent a substantial, new, public complex, probably datable to the fourth century.

As always, we are better-informed about the public buildings and monuments at this date than about private housing. Nevertheless, there is enough in Sapène's notebooks, and from more recent work, to suggest that much if

not all the area of the second-century town was still occupied in the early fourth century. The recent work on the eastern side of the residences comprising the 'villa Basc' at the foot of the hill has shown that in this area high-quality amenities such as hypocausts and mosaics were still being installed down into the first part of the fifth century (Guyon 2003: 139). This accords with the impression gained from the plans and other information recoverable from Sapène's excavations, particularly on Domus II, the more easterly of the two properties on this site. There on the western side, one may see a substantial (9m. diameter) apse or *exedra* with, to its south, a smaller, buttressed apse; these seem to encroach into the space of Domus I. Such features can be paralleled in other important urban and rural residences of the period in the region, and suggest probably a bath-house (the smaller apse) and a *de luxe* suite of rooms with semi-circular court or garden. It is likely that Domus I also remained occupied during the fourth century, as the finds of coins of this period suggest. To the north-east, the Coupéré residence was also still in use for at least the first half of the fourth century, though the later robbing of its building materials does not allow us to say much about its fourth-century arrangements. In the northern part of the town, especially in the areas around the North Baths and up to the 'villa Delbès', the information at our disposal is similarly patchy; but, in places, Sapène identified what he considered to be 'late' features or floors, and recovered objects and coins dating to the fourth century. These data, sparse and unsatisfactory though they may be, do suggest that many of the areas of housing established in the first and second centuries were still active in the first half of the fourth and that the town had not experienced any major diminution in size or activity.

So it would seem that down into the first half of the fourth century, and perhaps later, Saint-Bertrand retained the appearance of a 'traditional' town, not significantly changed from a century and more earlier. Its public buildings and monuments seem to have discharged their administrative, religious, leisure and other functions and the evidence of pottery and coins suggests that Saint-Bertrand was still playing a central rôle in the economy of the Convenae.

This picture of broad continuity in the buildings and life of the town stands in marked contrast to the picture of towns over much of the rest of Gaul. In the centre and north, instead of the sprawling, undefended towns of the first and second centuries with their lavish public buildings and monuments and their aristocratic residences and artisan quarters, we find small, strongly-defended fortress-towns, surrounded by high, thick, many-towered walls and sheltering principally the institutions, people and supplies central to the defence and administration of the empire. For instance, the principal town of the old Aquitania, Bordeaux, whose street-grid in the second century had covered some 150ha., now consisted of a massively-walled core of some 30ha. (large by the standards of most other defensive circuits

of the time) around the internal river port, with most of the great buildings and monuments of the earlier glory days left outside the walled circuit or else demolished and their stonework re-used in the new walls. Clearly, over much of Gaul, there had been a revolution in what was expected at and of a town. Equally clearly, Saint-Bertrand continued to hark back to a different, more expansive and luxurious idea of the town, conserving the notions of the earlier empire against the new-model military town, such as Bordeaux. In this respect, Saint-Bertrand was more like the towns, not of the centre and north of Gaul, closer to the military exigencies of sustaining the Rhine frontier, but, rather, of the old province of Narbonensis along the Mediterranean littoral of Gaul. Toulouse itself, near neighbour to Saint-Bertrand, seems also to have kept its old-style buildings and monuments (cf. Guyon 2000), as did other major towns such as Arles (cf. Heijmans 2004). So, in this respect Saint-Bertrand still turned to the old Mediterranean heartlands of the empire for its inspiration rather than the new military commands. The pull of tradition was strong amongst the Convenae and, as we shall see in the next chapter, a similar broad continuity from the second to the fourth centuries can be seen in the countryside around *Lugdunum*.

4

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE CREATION OF THE CONVENAE

The first to fourth centuries A.D.

Lugdunum, Saint-Bertrand, was far and away the single largest, most populous, most complex and most important settlement in the territory of the Convenae. But, even so, it probably contained a minority of the total population of the Convenae and the townspeople depended on the rural population to provide their daily bread; the raw materials and the market for their manufactures; for the immigration that sustained the town's population, and for the labour to build and maintain the great buildings of the town. Yet in the archaeology it is the urban population that dominates; in many ways the rural population is a silent majority. The reason for this is not hard to find; the bulk of the efforts of antiquarians and archaeologists over nearly a century has been expended on the site of Saint-Bertrand. There is, in fact, quite a large quantity of evidence for the rural areas, but it is patchy, concentrated on certain activities, areas and sites and, consequently, leaves large gaps. Moreover, until very recently it lacked overall syntheses (see now Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: esp. 69–82). The most significant weakness is our fragmentary knowledge of rural settlements: where they were, what types there were, what went on at them, what their dates were. This is as true for the mountains as for the lowlands. This chapter, therefore, cannot offer a uniform coverage; rather, it will have to play to the strengths of the evidence and where that evidence fails acknowledge the limitations of what can be said (Figure 4.1). The narrative will begin with a brief consideration of the evidence for other important settlements of the Convenae before moving on to the traditional staple of discussions of Roman rural activities, the lowland agricultural settlement pattern and economy, if only to emphasise the patchiness of the evidence. It will then look at those areas for which we have a better evidence base, the extractive industries such as marble, and related groups of material such as the marble altars and cinerary caskets which are mainly known from the mountains and mountain valleys. Then there will be a consideration of the mountain economy and the relationship between this zone and Saint-Bertrand in essentially the second to early third centuries. It will then move on to the fourth century, focusing again on the place of the villas and the products and importance of the marble industry.

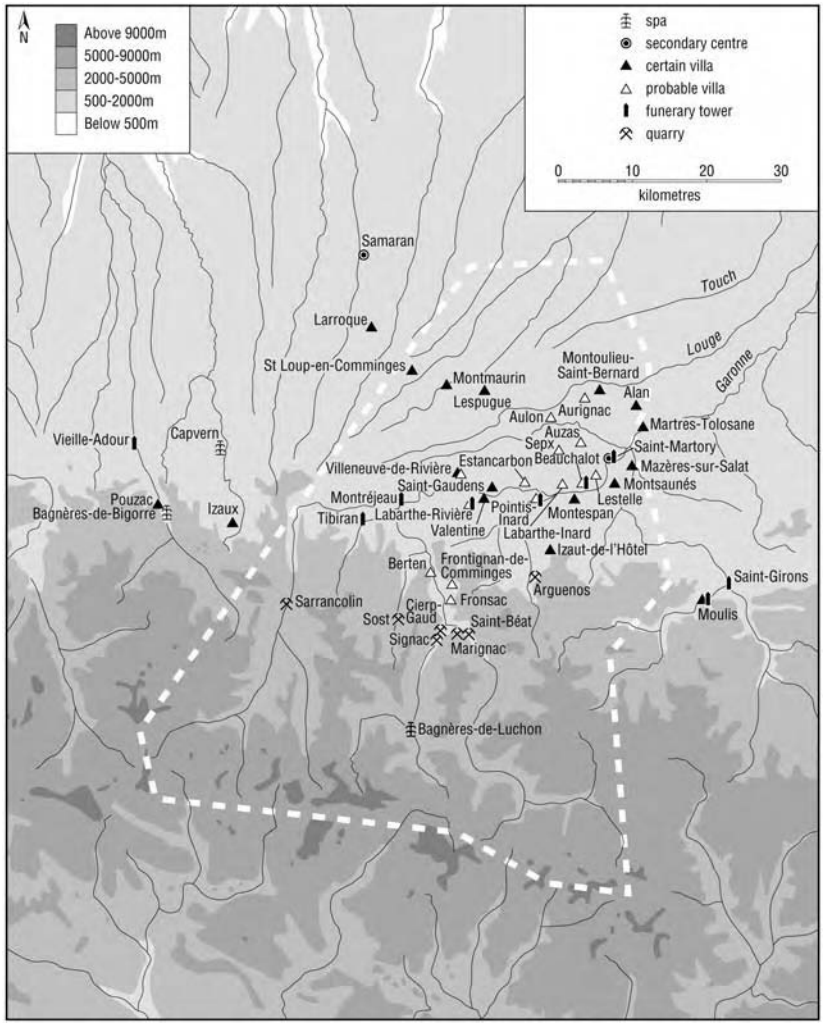

Figure 4.1 Map showing villas, other rural sites and funerary towers in the territory of the Convenae of the Convenae

The lowlands

Spas and local administration

The geological up-thrusting of the northern face of the Pyrenees created a number of places where mineral-rich waters, heated deep in the earth's crust, well up under artesian pressure as thermal springs. In his description of Aquitania, Strabo (*Geography* IV.2) specifically praises the hot springs of the Convenae at *Aquae Onesii*. This is the modern Bagnères-de-Luchon,

south of Saint-Bertrand and deep in the valley of the Pique. Redevelopment of the hot springs during the nineteenth century revealed elements of the Gallo-Roman baths including marble-lined pools and other basins capturing the springs, but such plans as there are not easy to understand (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 116–17; cf. Barthe 1969). At least fifty votive altars (see p. 105), mostly dedicated to the Nymphs were also recovered. Sadly, all that is left is a collection of altars and other objects housed in the local museum. The early-third-century document known as the Antonine Itinerary, a listing of all the installations of the imperial posting-routes, records *Aquae Convenarum* 'the waters of the Convenae' 16 Roman miles along the road from *Lugdunum* to *Oppidum Novum*, the modern Lourdes. This must be in the vicinity of Capvern (Hautes-Pyrénées) near Tarbes, and Roman material suggesting a settlement has been recovered from the *lieu-dit* of Sère overlooking the modern spa (Lussault 1997: 127). Another related site was that of Salies-du-Salat where brine spring surfaced under artesian pressure and some evidence for the Roman-period salt-works has been found (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 430–1). The Antonine Itinerary also lists *Belsino* on the road from Saint-Bertrand to Auch, 23 miles from the former and 12 from the latter. This is identified with a site north of the modern village of Samaran (Gers) (Lapart & Petit 1993: 241), probably near the border between the Ausci and the Convenae. Near the border between the Convenae and the province of Narbonensis was the *Calagorris* (Saint-Martory) of the Antonine Itinerary, about which, again, little is known. These sites were all examples of the second-rank settlements within a *civitas* known to British archaeologists as 'small towns' and to French archaeologists as *agglomérations secondaires*. In general, these seem to have functioned as subordinate administrative centres (Latin: *vici*), local artisan and market centres, probably centres for local cults, with the higher-order functions being centred on the main town of the *civitas* such as Saint-Bertrand.

As well as the urban centres, the *vici*, there is also some information about the *pagi*, the rural administrative groupings (Sablayrolles 2000). The best example is an inscription from Saint-Paul-d'Oueil in the Oueil valley north-west of Luchon and referring to the *pagani O(o)llaies*, clearly the name for the valley. From the valley of the Neste de Louron in the western part of the *civitas* comes a damaged inscription mentioning either the *compagani* or the *convicani Spariani*, the inhabitants of a *pagus* or *vicus* of *Sparius*, perhaps the name for the settlement or valley (cf. Lussault 1997: 118–19). Also in the west of the *civitas*, in the upper valley of the Aure, comes an inscription mentioning the *pagani [.]infovates* and *Harexuates*. An inscription set up by the *vicani Florentini* at Saint-Bertrand (*CIL* XIII, 258) may be an example of the use of *vicus* to mean a division or 'ward' of a larger town. Given that the topography of the mountainous part of the *civitas* essentially created a series of largely self-contained valleys, it would not be surprising

to find they each had an identity. Some other evidence pointing in the same direction will be looked at later in this chapter (p. 114).

Villas and the lowland economy

Turning to settlement sites where the bulk of the population lived, the best-known class of site for the Roman period in Gaul is the 'villa', whose essential economic basis was farming but whose principal buildings, to a greater or lesser extent, were based on Roman models in their lay-out, use of masonry and, where affordable, embellishments such as mosaic. As a result of antiquarian finds and modern surveys, the sites of a number of villas are known in Convenae territory, particularly along the valley of the Garonne and of some of its tributaries (cf. Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006 for details of the sites named below). For the Garonne downstream of Saint-Bertrand, villa sites are known on the right (south) bank at Labarthe-de-Rivière (where there is also a surviving funerary tower (*pile funéraire*) (Figure 4.2)), Valentine, Montespan, Montsaunès, and Mazères-du-Salat and another is suspected between Saint-Bertrand and Labarthe at Pointis-Inard, with a destroyed funerary tower. On the left bank they have been located at Pouech near Saint-Gaudens, Estancarbon and Lestelle-de-Saint-Martory, with, between the two last, a possible site with one or two now-vanished funerary towers at Beauchalot. These villas are spaced at fairly regular intervals along the valley, averaging some 5km. apart. Characteristically, they stand on the first terrace of the river, above the flood plain and the risk of inundation. So far, we do not have as good a picture for the other river valleys of the lowlands of the Convenae. The valley of the Save, north of Saint-Bertrand, houses one of the two great villas of the *civitas*, Montmaurin, discussed below. But other sites, such as Ville Rouge and Es Cabiros in the *commune* of Larroque upstream of Montmaurin, and Gouerris in the *commune* of Lespugue downstream, have yielded building-material such as tile and marble suggesting villa sites. Other valleys such as those of the Gesse and the Louge have produced isolated, possible villa sites, along with concentrations of Roman material, particularly marble sculpture at a number of mediaeval churches, implying Roman sites in their vicinity. All this suggests that campaigns of systematic survey along the terraces of the rivers in the northern half of the *civitas* would probably produce whole strings of villas of varying sizes (and probably, other, simpler, settlements too) along the valleys. Because of our sketchy knowledge of most of these sites, derived from surface finds, it is not possible to be sure that they date back to the first and second centuries, but comparison with better-known sites, such as Montmaurin in the territory of the Convenae and others in the surrounding *civitates*, suggests that it is a likely scenario.

The *civitas* of the Convenae contains one of the most extensively-excavated and best-known villas in all Gaul: the site of Montmaurin in the *commune*

Figure 4.2 The funerary tower at Labarthe-de-Rivière

of that name some 22km. north of Saint-Bertrand (Fouet 1983). The villa is best-known in its fourth-century state, to which we shall return (p. 119), but the excavations also revealed parts of an earlier, probably mid-first-century establishment. The villa was situated on the flat ground on the north-western side of the little river Save, and was aligned approximately north-east to south-west. The principal residence, the *pars urbana*, lay at the north-eastern end, facing onto a long, rectangular, walled court, the *pars rustica,* with a series of small buildings lying just inside the north-western long wall, probably with others inside the unexcavated south-eastern side wall. The overall plan of a principal residence at one end of a long court lined with free-standing buildings is a well-known one in Gaul, especially in the north. But this is also the plan of the largest and most splendid villa in south-western Gaul (possibly in all Gaul), that at Chiragan (cf. Cazes 1999: 76–9), one of the series of villas along the Garonne, just off the Toulouse road and within the territory of Toulouse but close to the Convenae. At Montmaurin we know little of the original residence, *pars urbana*, because it was overlain by the heart of the fourth-century villa, which was the excavator's main

concern. Nevertheless, he recognised that there was an earlier phase and proposed that it was a courtyard building, later the middle court of the fourth-century arrangement, with wings to either side forming the north-eastern 'short' end of the courtyard, and, to the rear of the residence, a bath-suite (Fouet 1983: 46–53). In fact, it would need extensive re-excavation and architectural analysis to be sure of this, since this reconstruction depends rather too much on projecting back the fourth-century plan. The subsidiary buildings inside the north-western enclosure were of much simpler plans and probably represent houses for the estate-workers and buildings to service the running of the estate, such as store-buildings for produce. Sadly, the early phase of Montmaurin is the only villa of which we know anything coherent for the first and second centuries. It is clear that the other major, fourth-century villa in the *civitas* of the Convenae, Valentine (see p. 121), overlay an earlier villa, but nothing can now be reconstructed of its lay-out or date.

Despite the considerable limitation in our knowledge of first- and second-century villas amongst the Convenae, their existence seems assured. This reinforces the suggestion made in the discussion in Chapter 2 (p. 59) that one of the important developments amongst the Convenae at this date was the development of a landed aristocracy or *rentier* class, basing their social position on the ownership of land and command over its produce, probably through the imposition of rents in coin or in kind. The evidence of the *pars rustica* at Montmaurin suggests, also, dominion over a direct labour force, though whether this consisted of slaves, or, perhaps more probable, a free but dependent peasantry, is impossible to say on the available evidence. Given the natural topography and resources of the Convenae, such landowners may well also have had interest in the mountains for their natural resources and for the seasonal transhumance of their flocks and herds into the upland pastures. Moreover, the villas and their estates were geared to the production of agricultural surpluses, both cereal and animal, which makes sense only within the context of an economy which made possible their consumption. Some of this surplus would go in tax, but, more profitably, it would go to such ends as supplying the populations of Saint-Bertrand and, probably, also Toulouse, down the Garonne. In return the proprietors would be able to afford the construction, embellishment and upkeep of villas. The construction of an establishment such as the first villa at Montmaurin would require very considerable capital expenditure, and then the annual income to maintain it. But villas are not only an expression of an economic system, they are also an expression of cultural context. The lay-out, construction techniques and material from a site such as the *pars urbana* of Montmaurin, again demonstrate the openness of the nobility of the Convenae to Mediterranean-derived ways of life and ways of cultural expression, expressions which also cemented their economic and social dominance over their inferiors and their position within the wider Roman world.

The mountains

Turning to the mountains and the southern half of the Convenae we enter a very different world. To Roman writers it was an area lying on the margins of the settled, civilised world, populated by untameable hillmen and bandits. This is the language of Caesar's reference (*Bell. Gall.* II.27.2) to people 'right on the margins' who held out against Crassus in 56 B.C., trusting to the onset of winter. Instead of the open, rolling country of the lowlands dominated by mixed agriculture and with easy communications, there are sharply-defined north-south mountain valleys. But where east-west movement along the mountain chain is difficult, life was structured by the exploitation of mineral resources, timber and pasture and by the harshness of the seasons. Few villas lie south of a line drawn along the mountain front and passing through Saint-Bertrand, the few exceptions, such as Frontignan-de-Comminges up the Garonne from Saint-Bertrand, lying in local widenings of the valley. Little is known of the settlements in the mountains; instead, it is the quarries for marble and products such as the marble votive altars and cinerary caskets which dominate our perceptions and to which we shall turn first.

The marble industry

The origins of Roman-period exploitation of the marble of the central Pyrenees and the date of the first working are very difficult to reconstruct. In part, this is due to the lack of any pre-Roman evidence as to whether the outcrops were already being worked or not, but, above all, because the extensive, more recent quarrying has largely destroyed the Roman workings. The 1946 clearance of a site in the Rapp quarries brought to light some Roman workings associated with amphorae and other pottery dating to the last thirty years of the first century B.C. (Fabre & Sablayrolles 1995: 141–4). On the other side of the Pyrenees, at the town of Empúries/Ampurias on the Catalan coast north of Barcelona, an inscription datable to 18 B.C. was carved on marble from the upper Garonne and there are other pieces of marble from contexts of the late first century B.C. (Rodà 2005: 462–3). This is, of course, the same date-bracket as that proposed for the Trophy from Saint-Bertrand in Saint-Béat statuary marble. On present evidence, therefore, the exploitation of the marble of the upper Garonne commenced in the Roman period, probably in the earlier part of the reign of Augustus. This, we have already seen, is a crucial horizon in the development of Saint-Bertrand itself, even if the town was only to become addicted to marble in the succeeding century. Marble was, of course, an important luxury building material in the ancient Mediterranean, much sought after and transported over long distances in order to embellish buildings and attest to the wealth and power of the builders; even Augustus famously boasted of his adorning of Rome herself with marble (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 28).

The main area of quarries (cf. Figure 4.1) extended for some 4km. from Saint-Béat itself in the east, through Marignac to Cierp and Signac in the west, straddling the courses of the Garonne and its tributary the Pique at their confluence (cf. Fabre & Lucas 2001). The best-known and most widely-distributed products of this complex were the white statuary marbles and the more common grey-veined white marbles, widely used for architectural stonework, veneers, altars, cinerary caskets and a host of other uses. As well as the marbles in the proper sense, there were the breccias or *griottes*: limestones which had not metamorphosed to the same extent but which could be cut and polished and came in a variety of colours, most commonly reddish and green, but also, yellow. In the next valley to the west, that of the Ourse, lay the sources around Sost, yielding both a white marble and reddish breccia. West again, in the valley of the Neste d'Aure, were the sources around Sarrancolin, producing a variety of coloured breccias. Other quarries lay around Campan in the upper valley of the Adour and, thus, in the *civitas* of the Bigerri to the west of the Convenae, and in the upper valley of the Salat and its affluent the Lez in the territory of the Consoranni. But it was the quarries of the Convenae that dominated the output from the central Pyrenees.

Inscriptions from the Saint-Béat area, particularly those from the Rapp quarries, give us some insight into the personnel and organisation of the industry (cf. Fabre & Sablayrolles 1995: 144–56). These altars come from a sanctuary revealed in 1945–6 at the foot of the Rapp quarry-face of Mail dèras Higouras, containing a number of niches with sculptures and a large number of inscribed and uninscribed altars. Sadly, the sanctuary was buried again under modern quarry-waste and the collection of altars broken up, though forty-one ended up in the Museum at Saint-Bertrand (Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988). The majority were dedicated to the god, Erriapus, the god taking his name from Arri, an Aquitanian name related to the modern Basque word for 'rock' (the modern name Rapp appears to be a coincidental formation from the mediaeval name for the mountain). One altar (Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988: no. 45) was set up by the *Gomferani* (cf. Figure 4.4), who seem to be some sort of collectivity, perhaps a *pagus*, perhaps an association (*collegium*) of those working here. Another (Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988: no. 49) was set up by a *marmorarius,* a marble-worker. *Omnes marmorarii* (all the marble-workers) set up another altar, now in Saint-Béat (Wuilleumier 1963: no. 3). Some sense of the internal organisation of the *marmorarii* is gained from an altar, also now in Saint-Béat, which was set up by three named *officinatores* and their *collegae* (Wuilleumier 1963: no. 23). In this context, the likely rôle of an *officinator* is as the overseer of a group of quarrymen; the reference to *collegae* suggests a number of such men, perhaps associated in a *collegium*. Two other inscriptions from the quarries tell of particular events. One (*CIL* XIII, 38) was set up by two dedicators at Marignac to commemorate the first time *columnas vicenarias*

had been cut from the quarry. This means 'columns of twenty', the twenty being a unit of measurement which is not given. Twenty feet in length? Twenty somethings in diameter? Clearly, this was a noteworthy feat. So also was getting a particular stone out or down after three years (Nony 1981: 244–5, 247). The majority of the names of the dedicators were of Roman, not Aquitanian, type, perhaps a comment on the social status of those able to afford inscribed altars. The *marmorarius* referred to above was Severus, a freedman who had been slave to Sennetarus: another glimpse of the social hierarchy at the quarries. Finally, one might mention another altar (Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988: no. 48) set up by a Publius Nuceri(n)us for the well-being of the *navigium*, the 'navigation', probably to be interpreted as the rafting of blocks down the Garonne, the first stage of the journey by which the Saint-Béat and other marbles reached the wider world. Another inscription (*CIL* XIII, 256 & 257), a tombstone, from Saint-Bertrand itself refers to a *negotiator*, a merchant, though does not tell us in what commodity.

Marble from Saint-Béat and its associated quarries is so widely distributed across the southern half of Gaul, and beyond, that it would be a lifetime's work to try to plot it all; so, it has not yet been done. A start has been made on certain recognisable products such as fourth-century column-capitals and sarcophagi (see p. 116). Moreover, the work of Christine Costedoat (1995) has allowed the identification of the isotopic 'signature' of the central Pyrenees marbles, allowing them to be traced to source and to be distinguished from other marbles in use in the Roman world. One area where these products are sufficiently rare for a study to be practicable is on the other side of the Pyrenees in north-central and north-eastern Spain (Álvarez, Rodà, Mayer 2001; Rodà 2005). As well as the examples already mentioned from Empúries/Ampurias, there is a scatter of other instances from sites such as Zaragoza, where the marble was used for the theatre seating (as at Saint-Bertrand), Calahorra, and possibly Celsa, all in the Ebro valley, and at Clunia in the northern Meseta and Labitolosa in the Spanish foothills of the Pyrenees. It is possible to envisage the transport of these bulky and heavy items largely by water, down the Garonne to Toulouse, then overland through the Carcasonne Gap to the Aude and, thus, to the Mediterranean and so up the Ebro. It is more likely that they were carried across the mountains, presumably by routes such as the Port de Bonaigua, and then floated down the tributaries of the Ebro. The use of this route may help explain the presence of the *statio* of the *Quadragesima Galliarum* at Saint-Bertrand.

*The votive altars (***les autels votifs***)*

The altars from the Mail dèras Higouras quarry were examples of one of the two most characteristic types of marble object now found in the territory

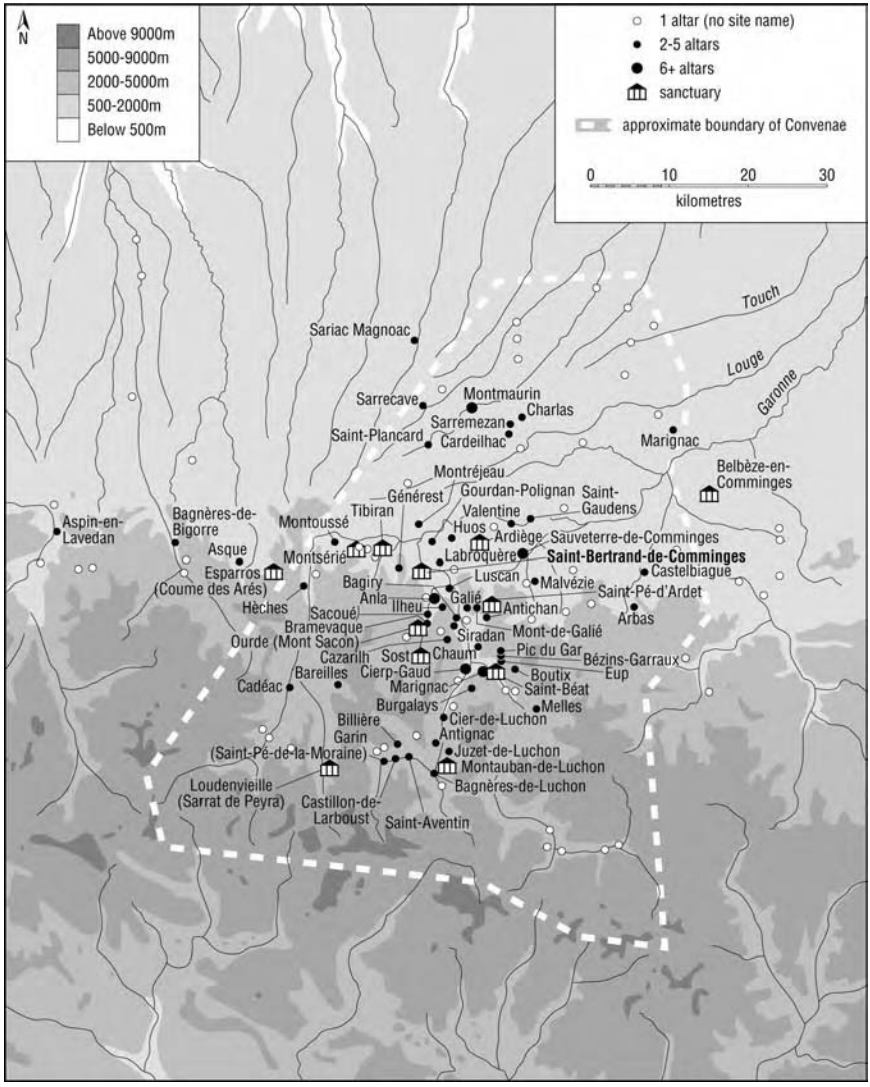

Figure 4.3 Distribution map of votive altars

of the Convenae: the votive altar (Figure 4.4). Between 345 and 370 of these are known, either surviving or, recorded at their time of finding and subsequently lost or disappeared (cf. Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988; Schenck-David 2005). They range from examples which are large and entirely in the Roman style with, on top the *focus* for libations with bolsters to either side, on the front a well-cut, Latin inscription and on the sides carvings of a patera and jug (e.g. Sablayrolles & Schenck 1988: no. 8), through smaller, less carefully

Figure 4.4 Votive altar from Saint-Béat mentioning *Gomferani* (© C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Daniel Martin)

carved and inscribed examples, to altars with no inscription but, instead, carvings of human figures or objects on the front, through to small (down to under 20cm. high) undecorated, uninscribed pieces (which could have had painted inscriptions) that nonetheless conserve the shape and outline of an altar. They are called 'votive' because, on the inscribed examples. by far the commonest form of inscription is: 'To the god XYZ', the name of the dedicator(s), the formula *VSLM* standing for *Votum Solvit Libens Merito* 'willingly and deservedly fulfilled his/her vow'. This is a common expression of the contractual aspect of Roman religion, where a divinity was asked for aid in some matter in return for an offering of some sort; once the divinity had fulfilled their part of the bargain the dedicator had to do likewise.

The study of these altars is hindered by the fact that so many of them have either been found re-used in later buildings (especially churches), or without any record being kept of their find-spot; these often passed into the hands of local collectors. For the majority of these altars, therefore, it is pretty much impossible to reconstruct their original location and use. One

approach that has some value is to map the presence of clusters, the argument being that a cluster of these altars, re-used in a later building, is likely to have come from nearby, for instance at Saint-Pé-d'Ardet on the western side of the Garonne between Saint-Bertrand and Luchon, suggesting the proximity of a sanctuary or temple.

Sanctuaries and mountains

More revealing are the groups of altars from a series of mountain tops (Schenck-David 2005: 20–23) (cf. Figure 4.3). One of these is the Pic du Gar itself, where nineteenth-century discoveries of two altars inscribed to the god Garri/e show that the name of the mountain is ancient. Other such sites are also known on the Templa, which closes the southern end of the Ourse valley; Mont Las, which overlooks the confluence of the Ourse de Sost and the Ourse de Ferrière; and, also, on the Couret de Médan, which allows passage between the upper ends of these two valleys. West of Saint-Bertrand was the site on the hill above Montsérié, overlooking the middle valley of the Neste and from which have come altars dedicated to Mars and to the deity Erge (Lussault 1997: 194–204).

More recently, re-examination of the similar sites on Mont Sacon to the south of Saint-Bertrand and on the Coume de Lias to the west of Saint-Bertrand, and excavation on the site on the Coume des Arés in the Baronnies, west of the Neste and on the borders of the Convenae and the Bigerri, has enabled a fuller picture of such sites to be gained. From the Coume des Arés, at an altitude of 1210m., local amateurs had recovered twelve votive altars or fragments, bases and some coins. The excavations yielded further altars, coins (dating from the second to the fourth centuries) and traces of a structure on a slight platform or terrace (Schenck-David 2005: 51–80). One altar had a dedication to the god Ageio, a god known from other altars in the area, one of which was dedicated by the *pagani ferrarienses*, the people of the iron-working district (probably a *pagus* of the Bigerri). Interestingly, the Coume des Arés site lies in an area of known Roman-period iron-working, with extraction sites and slag-heaps close by (Schenck-David 2005: 78), though there is no evidence of iron-working from the site. So, Ageio may have been the protecting divinity of the *pagus* rather than linked specifically with iron. The re-excavation of the Coume de Lias site, on a low east-west col where earlier workers had recovered altars and, apparently, a stone-built platform or structure, confirmed the site of the sanctuary, which the altars show was dedicated to the god *Fagus* (the Beech). The site on Mont Sacon, by contrast, was to Iupiter Optimus Maximus, chief god of the Romans; but, re-excavation showed that little is now left. The mountain shrines seem to have been very informal, with little trace of permanent structures. Instead, there is the offering of objects such as coins and the small, easily-portable votive altars. Given their altitude,

they were probably only visited seasonally, perhaps in connection with the use of the upland summer pastures.

Temples and gods

More conventional temples and sanctuaries were few in the territory of the Convenae. To the east of the territory lay the temple site at Belbèze-en-Comminges, where there was a well-built, rectangular, stone structure associated with votive altars, coins, miniature pots and other offerings (Manière 2001). Between this site and Saint-Bertrand, again in the foothills on the south side of the Garonne, was the site at Ardiège which has yielded many altars to the local deity Leheren and was, therefore, probably a sanctuary. Luchon itself, presumably, had a temple, and another sanctuary site lay on the other bank of the Pique at Montauban-de-Luchon. Further down the valley was another sanctuary at Gaud, in the area of the major quarries and not far from Marignac. But in terms of temple buildings, altars and other inscriptions, the major site was Saint-Bertrand. In addition to the Forum Temple, the proposed temple of Hercules on the southern side of the central esplanade and the U-shaped Sanctuary discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, there was also a row of three rectangular buildings, probably temples, in the Signan area on the south-western side of the town at the foot of Mont Laü, next to the suggested *castellum aquae* (Paillet & Petit 1992: 125–6).

The incidence of divinities at Saint-Bertrand in comparison with those from the rest of the *civitas* is striking. There are seventeen 'Roman' deities attested on the territory of the Convenae, of which Iupiter Optimus Maximus is widely found, as is Mars, often in conjunction with the name of local deities such as Leheren at Ardiège or Sutugius, and of course in the Hagenbach shipwreck (p. 91). The Nymphs are found, not surprisingly, at the spas. Diana and Silvanus, deities of the chase, are found once or twice in the upland areas. Otherwise, six of the seven dedications to Hercules are from the town, and seven other deities such as Apollo, Juno and Mercury are known only from the capital. By contrast, there is only one dedication at *Lugdunum* to a local deity [Ilum]berris. This pattern cannot be a result of the hazards of recovery; it is another piece of evidence for the way in which the inhabitants of the town regarded themselves as part of the wider Roman world. It may also suggest that the local deities were not thought suitable for dedications at the town. By contrast, the local deities form the majority of those venerated on the altars from the countryside. We have met some of these deities, such as Erriapus or Fagus, already; the latter is the Latin name for a tree (beech), perhaps to be put in the same category as the Sexarbores (the six trees) and a latinisation of a native cult. Otherwise the names are of solidly Aquitanian derivation: Alardos, Arixo, Artahe, just to start the alphabet ...

How should we interpret this very marked, very localised phenomenon of the votive altars? To start with, the great majority of them come from what

is thought to be the territory of the Convenae, so they appear to be intimately linked with this people's religious practice and sense of itself. There are some from neighbouring *civitates*, but not in quantities sufficient to suggest they were anything like as important to them as they were to the Convenae. Of course, having the marble sources is a great help, but not an answer. Marble does not, in itself, lead to the production of such quantities of altars; it did not in other marble-quarrying areas of the empire. The availability of quarry-waste and off-cuts from carving would, though, have been a possible source for the smaller, less-carefully-shaped pieces. One answer may be in the religious function of these altars: the repayment of vows to a deity. These altars were offerings, votive, and where they have been found *in situ*, for instance at the Mail dèras Higouras or at the Coume des Arés, they were associated with other offerings such as coins. So, it may be that it became custom and practice to use the small, inscribed or uninscribed altars, which were perfectly portable, as a class of offering to the deity. The inscribed ones, of course, relate to particular events for which a vow was made, but the uninscribed ones may have been more generalised expressions of gratitude for benefits received. Another indicator of their functions may be gained from the sites where they have been found *in situ*. These are chiefly either formal, built temples or the more informal settings on mountain and hill tops, or on cols and passes in the mountains. In all these settings they help to create a place, or space, which has visibly been made sacred and dedicated to the named deity or deities.

Death and cold marble

Another important group of evidence for the rural population comes from the memorials to its dead. If the evidence for the cemeteries of Saint-Bertrand itself is poor, that for the disposal of the dead out in the country seems, at first sight, to be better; but, it, too, has its problems. The evidence for rural cemeteries comes principally in three forms: the presence of funerary towers (*piles funéraires*) existing or demolished, the finds of *auges cinéraires* or *funéraires* (cinerary caskets) carved in marble, or epitaphs and tombstones. Clearly, therefore, we are lacking the primary evidence of cemeteries, graves, grave-goods and the remains of the dead themselves. Instead, we approach them by proxy: by their markers and containers.

We have already encountered two urban funerary towers in Chapter 3: the one surviving to the north-east of the town on the Toulouse road outside the village of Valcabrère, and the destroyed Marroc de Herranne to the south-east. In this chapter we have already noted the ones at the villas, or possible villas, east of Saint-Bertrand along the Garonne, at Beauchalot, Pointis-Inard, Labarthe-de-Rivière (cf. Figure 4.2, p. 100). One or two such monuments also existed north of the Garonne at Beauchalot. West of Saint-Bertrand there was another, now destroyed, at Tibiran-Jaunac, where there

was probably also a villa (Lussault 1997: 255). These were the grand monuments of important families, marking their estates and emphasising the ancestral descent of their ownership.

Much more numerous and more problematic are the cinerary caskets, the other common marble object in the territory of the Convenae along with the votive altars. These are rectangular, marble boxes, generally about 70cm. long by 40cm. wide by 70cm. high, with a triangular or semi-circular lid about 30cms. high. The hollowed-out interior of the casket was the receptacle for the cremated remains of the dead placed in cremation urns; some are large enough to have held several urns. The 'front' end of a casket was decorated, often with simple pilasters up the sides and the pediment, or tympanum, of the lid decorated with geometric elements, providing a sort of architectural framing. Within this, on the casket proper, was often a schematic representation of humans, presumably the deceased (usually of couples, sometimes of single men or women) with an oversize, ovoid head, rectilinear body and stick-like limbs, with features such as moustaches, jewellery and clothing roughly sketched in. These are not dissimilar to the figures carved on some of the votive altars. Sometimes there are objects such as jugs and cups, or tools such as axes in the field; unfortunately they are not inscribed with the name(s) of the deceased or with any other information. To our eyes these seem crude and, thus, may suggest that these were the monuments of the poorer sections of the Convenae. Not only is this to impose our aesthetic value-judgements on a different society, but it is, also, to forget that marble was in itself a prestigious material and that these caskets are often re-used in the same buildings as other types of monument which suggest wealth and status, such as well-carved epitaphs. These caskets may well have been for people of some standing and it would not be surprising, eventually, to find them in the major urban cemeteries of Saint-Bertrand or in a burial-ground associated with a funerary tower, as well as on other types of rural site.

In all, there are some 398 of these caskets known (Laurens 1998; 1999), of which some 90 % come from the civitas of the Convenae, with small numbers from the Bigerri to the west and the Consoranni to the east. The major problem with these caskets as with the votive altars, but worse, is that they do not survive in their original position. They are most frequently to be found re-used in later buildings, especially churches. As with the altars, one may argue that churches containing a number of these objects, not just the odd one or two, may be sited near the original cemetery; good instances of this are the churches with multiple caskets at Saint-Pé-d'Ardet north of Luchon and Saint-Aventin and Saint-Pé-de-la-Moraine at Garin to the west. The fact that they were usually decorated suggests that they were designed to be seen, but, since none has been found *in situ,* it is not possible to say whether they simply stood on the ground, perhaps in a family or community cemetery, or were incorporated into some sort of funerary

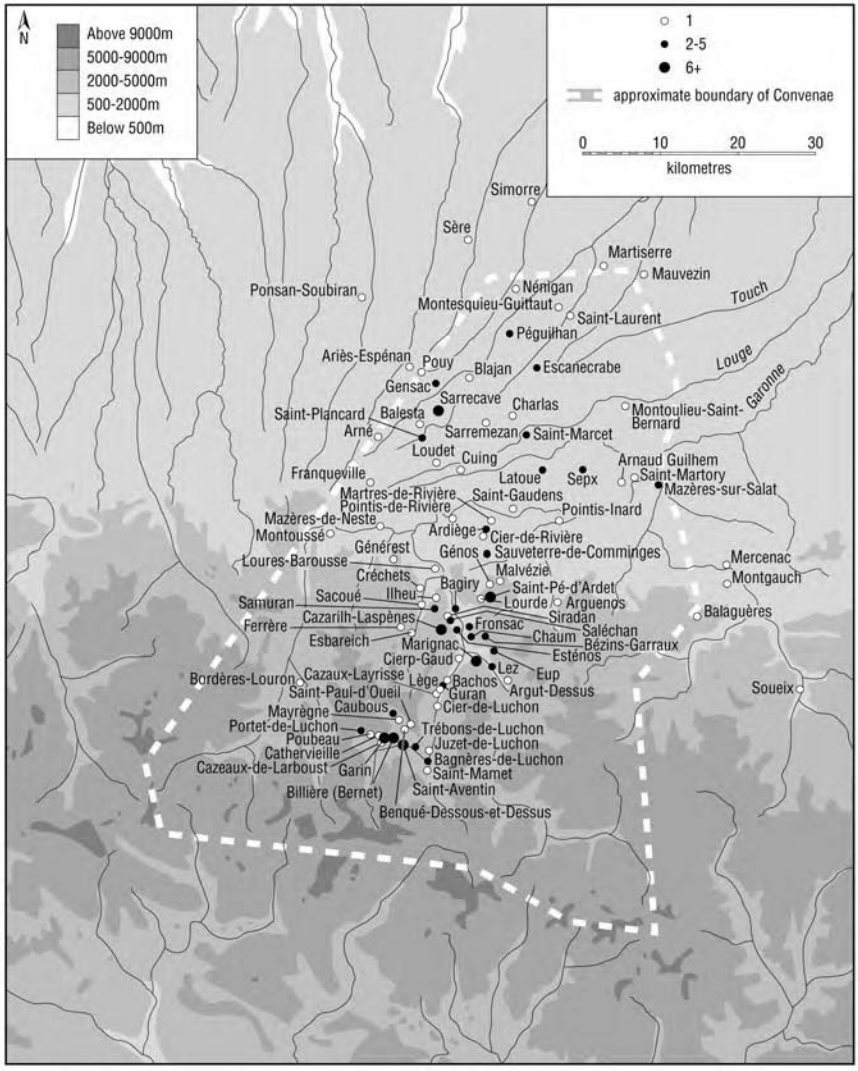

Figure 4.5 Distribution of cinerary caskets

structure such as a mausoleum. Likewise, the original siting of the many tombstones and funerary inscriptions (all on marble) is unknown, but, since they are often found re-used in the same churches as the caskets, they may have formed part of the same burial-ground; it may be that some of the funerary inscriptions went along with the cinerary caskets. Like the collections of votive altars from the temple and sanctuary sites, these marble monuments, particularly if grouped in cemeteries, would also demarcate and delimit certain specific areas as set apart – in this case to the gods of the departed.

Figure 4.6 Cinerary casket from Marignac

At a site such as Saint-Pé-de-la-Moraine, it is tempting to postulate that the many caskets now built into the church on the eastern slope of the moraine might, originally, have been in a cemetery crowning the moraine. This would have been a position visible up and down the middle valley of the Larboust, across to the high Pyrenees to the south and to the ridge of high ground along the north side of the valley: a real marker in the landscape.

One other major problem is that of date, since none of the caskets is inscribed or contains its original grave-goods; they are intrinsically undatable. One comparison that can be made is with the figures and objects carved on the better-dated votive altars. There does seem to be a certain commonality of motifs and execution, suggesting that the two classes of object were more or less of the same date. The votive altars seem to be mainly of the second century, probably starting in the later first century and, in all probability, going on some way into the third. Such a date-range would fit the cinerary caskets perfectly well. It would also accord with the general proposition that cremation was, in general, a practice of the earlier Roman empire in the West, gradually being replaced by inhumation from the late second or early third century. Moreover, there are marble sarcophagi for inhumations known from the territory of the Convenae (see p. 117) and

dating generally to the fourth and fifth centuries, suggesting that the cinerary cremation caskets had ceased to be made by then and were replaced by the sarcophagi.

A people of marble

The distribution maps (Figures 4.3 and 4.5) of the votive altars and the cinerary caskets and other funerary monuments make clear not just the quantity of these marble objects but, also, their near-ubiquity in the presumed territory of the Convenae and their comparative scarcity in the neighbouring *civitates*. Over and above their particular avocations as offerings to the gods or commemorations of the dead, these objects show without any doubt the way in which marble became central to the self-definition and identity of the Convenae. One could belong to the Ausci, Bigerri, Consoranni or Tarbelli without necessarily making much use of marble, but to belong to the Convenae was to belong to a people for whom marble was a part of their being. Yet this was not always so; it seems to be a development of the Roman period, probably from the later first century A.D. on, and deserves more consideration, for it would seem to be an instance of how a people can construct an identity for themselves.

The distribution of these objects centred, above all, on the valley of the Garonne; they were less common in the neighbouring river valleys to the west, such as the Ourse and the Neste. The heartland of the altars and caskets was the mountains and uplands of the Convenae. But they are also reasonably well-represented, if less numerous, in the plains to the north of the Garonne, though the number of them from excavated sites such as Montmaurin argues that they were probably more frequent in the lowlands than at present appears. But they were not the only objects being manufactured in marble at the time. There was the extensive carving of architectural stonework such as columns, capitals, cornices, veneers as found at Saint-Bertrand and further afield, particularly major centres such as Toulouse, Bordeaux and other towns in the South-West, and even across the Pyrenees in northern Spain. One might argue that this was in some senses an 'export trade' – the production and shipping of stonework of types common throughout the Roman world and required for the embellishment of Roman-style towns and buildings. But there was another, internal, manufacture of objects: objects which had meaning mainly for the Convenae – the votive altars and the cinerary caskets. These were objects destined, above all, for communication with their divinities and with their dead. They are also objects (especially the small votive altars) which were relatively simple and, given the presence of the quarries, relatively cheap. Their forms and distributions suggest strongly that, in considering the altars and caskets, we are not dealing with the rich, aristocratic strata of society but, rather, with those of more modest means, or even few means, such as the seasonal

herdsmen of the upland pastures. This is important, since it argues that the creation of a Roman-style identity amongst the Convenae was not limited to the aristocracy and town-dwellers in contact with the wider Roman world, but also embraced the rural population who took up ideas from Saint-Bertrand and elsewhere and from them fashioned their own distinctive identity from their most celebrated local material. It has been suggested above, that clusters of altars and caskets in sanctuary and cemetery were a defining feature of the landscapes of the Convenae, particularly around the upper Garonne, and imbued them with sacred geography and meaning in a way not matched outside the borders of the Convenae.

Marble, clearly, was important, central, to the cultural identity of the Convenae. But there were other factors that linked the mountains and the plains, factors to do with economic and social structures. When outlining in Chapter 1 the natural resources of the central Pyrenees (p. 14), it was noted that transhumance was probably an important element in the pastoral regime of the region, as it remained down into modern times; this idea was reprised above (p. 101) in considering the economy of villas, such as Montmaurin. So the land-owning aristocracy of the Convenae would have been as aware of the mountain areas of the *civitas* as they would have been of their cereal-lands in the plains; they may have been land-owners in the mountains as much as in the plains. Indeed, to refer to this area simply as 'the mountains' is probably misleading, since the bulk of the resident population would have lived in the valleys, not in the mountains proper, except for seasonal pasturing of animals or working of the iron-ores. This is what the clusters of votive altars and, especially, funerary monuments, show clearly. There is some positive evidence to support this argument from general principles. A number of the inscribed altars from the central Pyrenees mention members of major land-owning families also attested in the lowlands (Fabre 2000). The family of the Pompei, known also from the towns of Éauze and Lectoure, is attested in the upper Garonne valley in the vicinity of Ardiège and Saint-Pé-d'Ardet, and even further up at Gessa in the Val d'Aran. From Cortal de Tous, on the upland route joining the upper valleys of the Neste and the Pique, comes a votive altar dedicated by L. Pompeius Paulinianus, who also dedicated a votive altar at Ardiège: both of them to Diana. Other major families such as the M. Valerii and the Antonii also show this pattern of dedications in both the lowlands and the uplands. One might also point to the marble quarries, where the inscriptions give a distinct sense of a strongly hierarchical organisation and division of labour (see p. 103). What we cannot know, at present, is who owned the quarries, organised their exploitation and took the profits. There is no evidence that the Pyrenean quarries were important enough to attract imperial supervision or ownership; so, it could well be that the sources of this most characteristic of materials for the Convenae lay in the possession of the major families of the *civitas*. So it would probably be a mistake to follow the Roman

stereotype and see the mountains and their peoples as in some sense 'free' from the social dominion of the land-owning families of the *civitas*, or as uncontrollable brigands; they were socially and economically as integrated into and dependent on the wider *civitas* and the wider economy as anybody. Indeed, the marble trade was dependent on the much wider economy induced by the cultural prestige of the material in the Roman world.

In Chapter 1 it was noted that there was precious little evidence for an entity corresponding with the Convenae before the Roman conquest, and there and in Chapter 2 it was suggested that the Convenae might, in important ways, be a Roman creation for administrative purposes. If so, then the concept 'Convenae' may well have had little meaning at the beginning of the Roman period. In Chapter 2 it was argued that one thing that the creation of Saint-Bertrand as a capital and the building of its various monuments did was to create over time a focus for the identity of the Convenae, a physical expression of their self-awareness and a *lieu de mémoire* where that identity took on a time-depth. One of the practices that took root at the capital was the expression of Roman-style religious observance, including concepts such as the vow and its physical expression through the votive altar. It was also at the capital that the use of marble first became intense, towards the end of the first century. Whether it was at Saint-Bertrand that the custom of depositing the ashes of the dead in cinerary caskets first took root is, as yet, unknowable. From the late first century on, the exploitation and carriage of marble must have become one of the major industries of the mountain half of the *civitas*, the signature of the upper Garonne and its people. With marble a *de luxe* material in the Roman world, the Convenae came to exploit their privileged access to this resource in their buildings, in their religion and for their dead. They created a sense of community amongst themselves and of distinctness from others out of their most special and characteristic resource. If the Convenae were a nebulous concept in the late first century B.C., by the late first century A.D. they at least had a focus of identity in their principal town and by the late second century A.D. they had created an identity for themselves centring on marble. So here we may have a community or 'people', those of more modest means as well as the élite, retrospectively, as it were, and actively creating for themselves a strong and coherent identity where previously there had been none. This identity was based on Roman models and in response to the somewhat 'artificial' designation of the Convenae as a *civitas* by the Roman authorities and argues for acceptance and accommodation rather than resistance or rebellion.

Marble in the late antique period

The late antique period (roughly A.D. 300–700) was the period in which the marbles of the Pyrenees reached their peak in terms of the quality and

range of products and the range of their distribution. The principal classes of product were: architectural elements (columns, bases and capitals, pilasters, architraves, floor and wall veneers), sculptures (in the round and in low relief), sarcophagi. Their principal distribution was in *Novempopulana* (where they held an effective monopoly) and in the neighbouring provinces, as well as further north and east in Gaul, with a few pieces entering the Mediterranean nexus. Where analysis of the marbles has been undertaken, they have been shown to be largely from the Saint-Béat and associated quarries, with some from sources further east and west; so this is principally a production of the Convenae.

The best-known and most-discussed product of the region is the series of marble sarcophagi widely distributed in the South-West and beyond, and often referred to as 'Aquitanian sarcophagi' (cf. the papers in *Antiquité Tardive* 1 (1993): *Les Sarcophages d'Aquitaine*; Briesenick 1962; Boube 1984; Immerzeel 1995). These are rectangular or trapezoidal chests to contain the deceased, carved usually on one long side and the two short sides, generally with vines, tendrils, palmettes and other 'vegetal' motifs, sometimes with humans, including saints and biblical scenes (Figure 4.7), with Christian symbols such as the Chi-Rho or Christogram (the first two letters of 'CHRist' in the Greek alphabet). Though many bear a panel prepared for an inscription, this is rarely, if ever, inscribed with the name or age of the deceased. Associated with them were, hipped covers of marble, also extensively decorated. Like so many marble objects from the central Pyrenees, most of them are no longer in their original position, having been subsequently re-used for the burials of early-mediaeval notables, particularly

Figure 4.7 'Aquitanian' sarcophagus from Toulouse with Adam and Eve, the serpent and the tree

saints and bishops. Their geographical concentration in the area of the fifth-century Visigothic kingdom (see p. 132) and their association with fifth-to-seventh-century notables and the art style of their carvings, which appeared 'debased' compared with Classical forms, led to them being dated to the fifth-to-seventh centuries and being thought of as productions betraying 'Visigothic' taste. More recent research (e.g. Cazes 1993; Boube 1984) has emphasised the stylistic similarities of the décor on Aquitanian sarcophagi to that of sarcophagi from Arles and from Rome datable to the fourth century, and particularly (Balmelle 1993) the similarity of the vegetal décor on the sarcophagi to the motifs on mosaics of the fourth and fifth centuries in the South-West. Moreover, the distributions of Aquitanian and of Arles-type sarcophagi are largely exclusive, suggesting that the two schools were operating at the same time: in the later fourth and early fifth centuries. As a result, there can now be little doubt that this production came into being in the fourth century, probably the second half, and lasted into the fifth century, possibly later. It should be noted that there was also clearly an extensive production of undecorated marble sarcophagi, of which numbers have been found on the territory of the Convenae, usually, as with their predecessors the cinerary caskets, built into later churches.

Despite the transition from cremation as the dominant burial-rite to inhumation in the later Roman period, the Convenae clearly continued their attachment to marble for the disposal of the dead: at least, for the more prosperous. These elaborately-carved sarcophagi were part of the suite of marble products favoured by the late Roman aristocracy of the region. It is a pity that, as yet, we have none in their original position; given the elaborate carving, they must have been intended to be visible, presumably in a family mausoleum which would have embodied the antiquity of the family and its place in, and claim over, the surrounding landscape.

Other products in marble of the late Roman period have recently been receiving more attention, emerging from the shadow of the sarcophagi. There was a wide distribution of architectural elements in marble, of which column-capitals are the most suitable for study since they vary considerably in style and decoration (cf. Cabanot 1993; 1995; Cabanot & Costedoat 1993; Tardy 1996). These capitals have not only been found at Saint-Bertrand itself, but also, widely distributed in the villas of the South-West (Balmelle 2003: 206–22) and, in due course, in the churches also (Cabanot 1995), with Pyrenean marble being sought for their churches by fifth-century bishops from Limoges and Lyon, well outside the region (cf. Balmelle 2003: 68 for refs.). Columns of whitish or coloured central Pyrenean marbles are equally widely distributed at villas and churches from the fourth century on, as are wall- and floor-veneers (Balmelle 2003: 223–8). Saint-Béat and associated marbles have also been found south of the Pyrenees in this late period, as in the earlier empire (Álvarez, Rodà, Mayer 2001: 61–2) and examples have been claimed as far away as Ostia.

Clearly the quarries of the Convenae were operating as energetically, probably more so, in the fourth to fifth centuries as they had in the second and third centuries, presumably enriching the owners and workers. It is generally accepted that these pieces would leave the quarries as rough-outs to be worked up into final form at, or near, the place they were to be used. The unfinished state of some sarcophagi and capitals suggests strongly this was the case. There is an intriguing piece, though, from Saint-Bertrand itself, found in the area of the late cemetery round Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère (see p. 136). This takes the form of a rectangular, marble panel (probably not in fact part of a sarcophagus, but, perhaps, for a church screen or frieze) with, at one end, a carving (Figure 4.8) of Adam and Eve either side of the Serpent wrapped round the Tree of Knowledge (Dieulafait & Guyon in Pène & Schenck 1991: 66–8). The composition and workmanship are similar to other carved sarcophagi from Saint-Bertrand and to the end-panel of a sarcophagus now in Toulouse. This suggests that there was a workshop of marble sculptors at Saint-Bertrand, though whether it worked only for the town and surroundings, or carved pieces for onward transmission down the Garonne, is at present debatable; but, if it were the latter then it would have been a prestigious and expensive industry at the town.

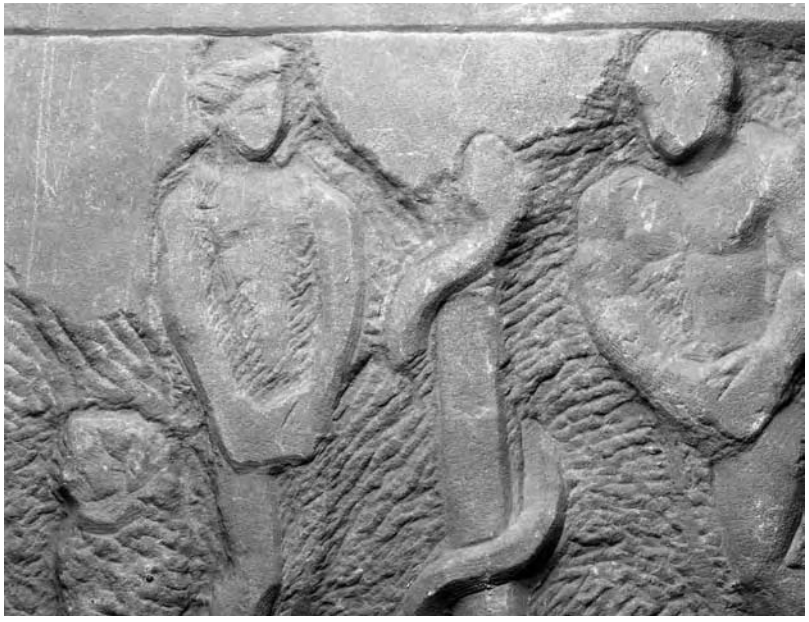

Figure 4.8 Rough-out of Adam and Eve, the serpent and the tree from Valcabrère (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Daniel Martin*)

For the later period, as for the earlier, there is good evidence to suppose that marble played a central part in the self-definition and social order of the Convenae. Of course, as in the earlier period, there was an 'export trade', particularly of the finely-carved sarcophagi and architectural elements. But, within the territory of the Convenae, particularly in the aristocratic urban and rural residences, such architectural use of fine-quality marble was a defining feature; the great villas of Montmaurin and Valentine (see below) made much more use of marble than they did of mosaic, the latter being more common in the other villas of the South-West. But the presence of large numbers of plain sarcophagi relative to those found outside the territory of the Convenae reinforces the impression that marble was still the material of choice for the Convenae, even if the centre of gravity had moved down somewhat from the mountains by comparison with the earlier votive altars and cinerary casks. For all that the range of objects manufactured in marble had altered and for all that the locations of their use amongst the Convenae had also been modified with the passage of time, the rôle of marble as the defining product and material of the Convenae remained.

The late, great villas

It was not only the principal town of the Convenae, Saint-Bertrand, that kept its old-world airs and graces down into the changed world of the fourth century; so also did the aristocracy of the Convenae on their country estates. The fourth century saw the development of two of the greatest luxury villas of the period in Gaul, Montmaurin and Valentine, and the material from small-scale excavations and surface survey at other villa sites in the area suggests that they also were probably at their largest and most lavish at this date.

Thanks to the extensive excavations led by Georges Fouet between 1947 and 1960, Montmaurin is one of the best-known villas of this period anywhere in Gaul (cf. Fouet 1969; 1983), and its plan is often cited in more general works about late Roman villas and residences (Figure 4.9). The famous plan of the residential complex, '*vers 350*', in the mid fourth century, is probably too simple; re-examination of the pottery and coins suggests both a development out of earlier (?late-third-century) structures and a date later in the fourth century for the main *floruit* of the buildings. The entrance to the villa was a semi-circular colonnaded courtyard facing south-west towards the mountains and containing a small, hexagonal well-head and/or shrine. The principal entrance-way led through to a rectangular courtyard off which opened a number of rooms, one on the north-western side apparently with a central, colonnaded space open to the sky. From the north-eastern side of the central court another entrance-way led through into the smaller, inner court in the centre of which was a fountain. To either

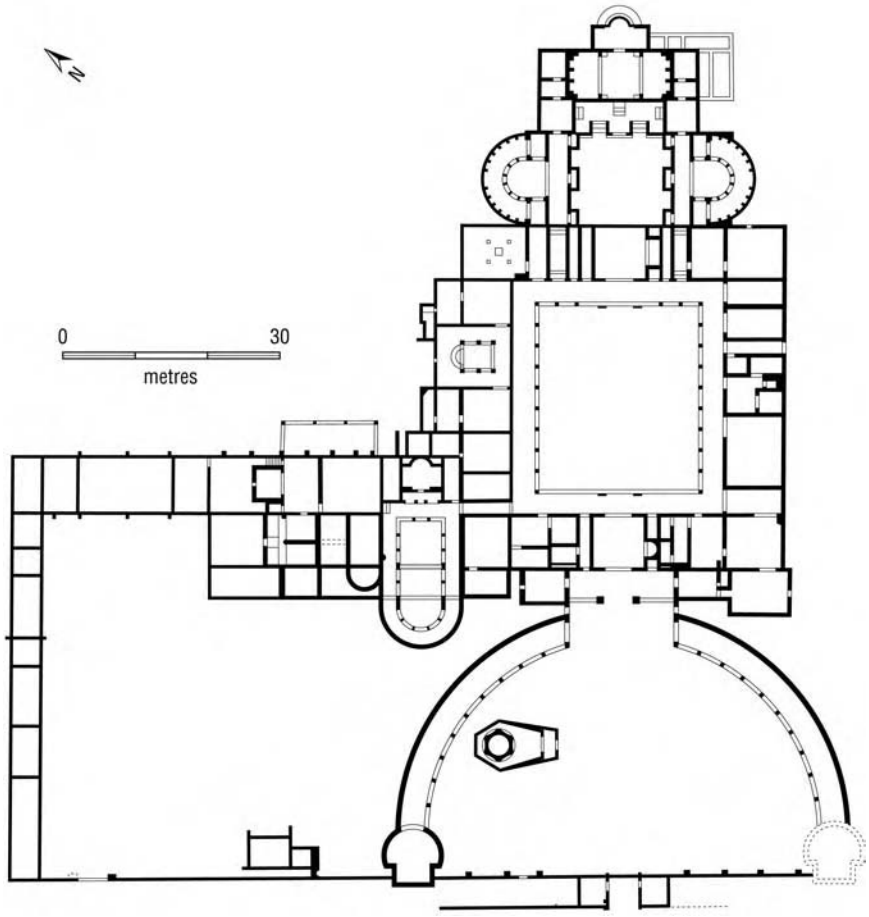

Figure 4.9 Plan of the Montmaurin villa (*after Balmelle 2001*)

side were passageways with steps, leading up to the walkways surrounding the inner court, at a higher level than the court itself. From these opened elaborate rooms, including two lateral *exedrae* or semi-circular courts, reminiscent of the large apse in Domus II of the 'villa Basc' at Saint-Bertrand. Further steps led up from the walkways and from the court to the north-eastern range, in the centre of which was what was probably a major reception room with an apsidal chamber to its rear. From this room one could look out down the axis of the villa, over the entrance court and to the mountains beyond. This was almost certainly the main reception and audience chamber of the villa (not a bath-suite as proposed by Fouet), designed so that the *dominus*, the lord proprietor, could receive guests in a setting befitting his status; they echoed the audience chambers of the great nobility

and, ultimately, the emperor himself. The villa was lavishly decorated with marble floors (few mosaics), wall-veneers, door-cases, column-capitals and statuary, including scenes from Graeco-Roman myth such as Venus and Adonis (cf. Stirling 1996). From the north-western angle of the central court, a passageway led through to a thermal wing, passing a colonnaded court with central, marble-line pool and off which opened a small, apsidal room entirely sheathed in marble and originally with a fountain, perhaps a *nymphaeum* or shrine to the water-nymphs. The baths were large and complex (cf. Bouet 1998), adapted for sport and leisure, as well as for bathing. Here we are dealing with a complex of the highest quality, comparable with luxurious residences of the grand aristocracy, not just in Gaul but across the Mediterranean.

Only 1km. north-east of Montmaurin (properly, Montmaurin-Lassalles) was another extensive, fourth-century building-complex: that at Montmaurin-La Hillère. Only partially excavated and, therefore, less easy to understand than Montmaurin-Lassalles, it has a number of rooms with mosaics and inlaid marble floors and installations, such as a major pool and a hexagonal structure with water-supply and drain which are clearly to do with the management of water. Fouet interpreted this as a shrine for a water cult, but Catherine Balmelle has re-examined all the elements and notes that they are standard at other villas in the South-West and that, therefore, the La Hillère site is probably to be interpreted as a villa as well (Balmelle 2001: 384–5); the control and management of water was a favourite device in late Roman aristocratic residences (cf. the fountain at Montmaurin-Lassalles), demonstrating the wealth of the proprietor and his mastery over nature in the hot, dry lands of the Mediterranean basin.

Even larger and more splendid than Montmaurin was the vast villa at Valentine (Figure 4.10), not far to the north-east of Saint-Bertrand itself. This site has had an unfortunate history of discovery, with partial uncovering by nineteenth-century antiquaries being followed in 1931 by the destruction of important parts of the main residence by the digging of a hydro-electric canal. From 1949 to 1981, the redoubtable Georges Fouet undertook a series of excavations on the principal residential area and on the late Roman baths and later church and burial site to the south-west of the main complex, the site more usually known as Arnesp. Unfortunately, these excavations were never fully published, so there is a great deal of uncertainty over the relative dating of the construction of the various elements of the complex and the absolute dating within the late Roman period.

The main entrance seems to have been in the south-western façade, probably from the road along the south side of the Garonne. This led into a huge, colonnaded court, 157m. long by 87m. wide with, at the far end, an impressive pillared façade leading into a transverse space with apses at each end, reminiscent of the ante-chamber to the imperial audience-hall in the

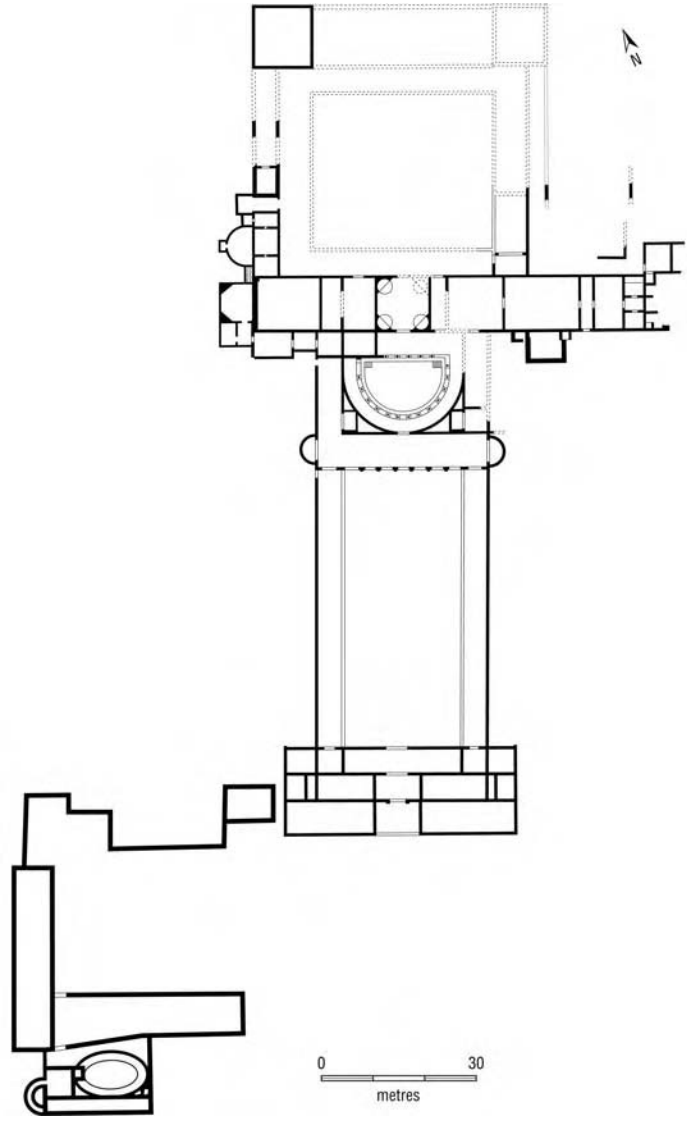

Figure 4.10 Plan of the Valentine villa (*after Balmelle 2001*)

palace at Trier. In turn, this led into a large, colonnaded, semi-circular *exedra*, rather like the entrance-court at Montmaurin, itself giving access to a large, octagonal chamber with niches in the angled sides, and thus into an inner court around which were probably arranged the principal reception rooms, now sacrificed to the 1931 canal. The scale and extravagance of this villa are spectacular, putting even Montmaurin in the shade; this was a villa

of the first rank. Like Montmaurin there was extensive use of marble for floors, wall-veneers, column-capitals and other adornments. One important item recovered from Valentine is a large, marble inscription (*CIL* XIII, 128), later re-used as a Christian altar-table, which accounts for the crosses carved into it. It is the epitaph of one Nymfius, elaborately set out in twenty-four lines of the most ornate Latin hexameters. Amongst other things, it records his career as a leading local councillor and notable, presumably on the council of the Convenae at Saint-Bertrand. Its date is debated, but it is probably of the second half of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth; so it would seem that the old forms of civic power were still functioning in the area at that date. No other probable fourth-century villa site in the territory of the Convenae has yet been excavated on any scale, but several, such as Gouerris in the *commune* of Lespugue not far from Montmaurin, or Pouech near Saint-Gaudens, have yielded traces of several buildings, bath-houses and marble, suggesting that if they were excavated they would have similar characteristics to, though not necessarily the scale of, a Montmaurin or a Valentine.

At an economic level, such lavish complexes can only be the result of a system of extensive dominion over land, people and resources. What we are seeing here is the concentration in a small number of hands of very extensive estates; the rich were getting richer. These estates were not necessarily single land-holdings concentrated around the main villa nor even all necessarily within the province of *Novempopulana*, even if that wealth is expressed in that province as villas, perhaps because the families concerned had their roots in the region (cf. Balmelle 2001: 37–44), and perhaps also for reasons we shall see below. How this exploitation was organised amongst the Convenae is again unclear; evidence from other areas of the empire suggests that it was probably by a mixture of direct, demesne farming of estates, by increasingly tied tenant labour on the land-holdings of the powerful (yielding them rental income in coin or in kind) and, perhaps, also through labour-service owed by a technically still free peasantry (cf. Balmelle 2001: 54–6 for the little direct evidence for the South-West). This would shade into other forms of dependency, such as tax-farming by the land-owners, or the peasants and tenants becoming dependent clients of the wealthy and more and more bound to their service, politically, and socially, as well as, economically. Clearly, agricultural wealth was central to these proprietors, since it is in the agricultural lowlands that they chose to display their wealth rather than the uplands and mountains. But, as has been argued before, some of the wealth may have been derived from ownership of or participation in the marble industry, which, as we have seen, was flourishing in the fourth century. A series of fourth-century imperial legislation preserved in the *Codex Theodosianus* (cf. Balmelle 2001: 63) shows that private persons were permitted, indeed encouraged, to exploit marble sources, upon payment of a 10 % tax to the imperial treasury; this was hardly a

disincentive. Though the edicts in question were addressed to areas other than Gaul, there is no reason to think that Gaul would not have enjoyed the same general system. Both Montmaurin and Valentine make extensive use of this preferred material of the Convenae. This control of extensive land-holdings and involvement in other profitable industries was, of course, a defining characteristic of the aristocracies of the late Roman world, as was the use of the revenues to support a lavish lifestyle.

The scale and appointments of these villas again stand in stark contrast to what was going on over much of the rest of Gaul, where, compared with the second century, fourth-century villas were fewer in number and generally smaller and less lavishly furnished with markers of status such as mosaics. But, in fact, it was the south-west of Gaul, in particular the province of *Novempopulana* and immediately adjacent area, which bucked this trend. There in the fourth and fifth centuries there was a large number of villas, many of them on the scale and ambition of Montmaurin, some of them rivalling Valentine (cf. Balmelle 2001; the map, p. 72, showing the distribution of fourth-century mosaics in France is particularly telling). Like the two great villas of the Convenae, it is not just a matter of scale, but of intricacy of plan and elaboration of décor, such as mosaics and also marble architectural elements and statuary (cf. Stirling 1996; Tardy 1996), or smaller-scale, but no less valuable, pieces such as fine glassware, in particular the fragments of cage-cup (*vasa diatreta*) from the region (Hochuli-Gysel 1996). This is the material corollary of the high literary culture long known from the elaborate poems and other confections of Ausonius of Bordeaux in the second half of the fourth century (Sivan 1993), or the histories and other writings of Sulpicius Severus of the same period and, also, from the South-West (Stancliffe 1983). The two, of course, meet in the linguistic elaboration of the hexameter verses on the marble epitaph of Nymfius from Valentine. The aristocracy of the South-West of Gaul had clearly decided to try to perpetuate the luxurious villa culture of the early empire in the face of what was happening further north; the evidence of their town residences at Saint-Bertrand and of the maintenance of the old-style public buildings and monuments of the centre of the town also attest to this conscious harking-back to, and active perpetuation of, the high style of the High Empire. But at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries this traditional world was to be broken up: above all, at Saint-Bertrand itself.

5

FROM *LUGDUNUM* TO CONVENAE

The fifth to eighth centuries A.D.

Introduction

In the course of the fifth century, Roman imperial power in the West collapsed and was replaced by various 'barbarian' kingdoms overlaid on a substrate of a continuing, increasingly Christianised, Roman provincial population; this process culminated in the sixth century, by which time the economic unity and vigour of the Roman world had irrevocably fragmented along with political authority. Clearly these were difficult and dangerous times to live through, even for a people as far removed from the centres of military and political power and action as the Convenae. But how far can the changes observable at Saint-Bertrand and in the Comminges be put down simply to this instability in power, or how much do they represent other, cultural, factors of which the most important was arguably the spread of Christianity with its new view of this world and the people in it? What was the background against which these changes took place?

From old to new: the transformation of Saint-Bertrand

Given the evidence laid out in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 for the maintenance by the Convenae of the old, high-imperial styles of the town and its buildings and of the high culture of the villas, what happens next at Saint-Bertrand seems like a repudiation of this carefully-nurtured tradition: its rejection in favour of something much more summary and brutal. In fact, as we shall see, there is more than one way of reading the evidence; nonetheless, it is true that in the space of a couple of generations the appearance of the town was altered out of all recognition, apparently by the deliberate acts of the Convenae themselves. But to follow the logic of the argument presented especially in Chapter 2, what we must see here is, therefore, the refashioning of their identity to meet the new situations in which they found themselves. Briefly there are three main changes of which the first two seem certainly to be linked and the third fits in with wider changes. These three changes are:

1 the construction of stone walls on the hill-top;
2 the destruction of much of the old town centre in the valley;
3 the coming of Christianity.

Here we shall consider the first two, reserving discussion of the third till later (p. 133).

The walls

Like most of the towns of Gaul, Saint-Bertrand had in the first and second centuries been undefended. This was a time when town defences were rare in the western provinces and the possession of them very much linked to high urban status (cf. Esmonde Cleary 2003). As we saw earlier (p. 94), the construction of defences was one of the hallmarks of the third and fourth centuries in the centre and north of Gaul, but much less so in the south. But eventually Saint-Bertrand was to acquire walls. These were constructed on top of the hill and though they had seen some of Sapène's final excavations little was known about them other than that they were most probably late Roman (Figure 5.1). From 1993 to 2001 the defences were the focus of a co-ordinated programme of survey of the standing masonry, combined with small-scale excavations along the walls to recover evidence for dating and for the use of the hill-top (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006). The excavations revealed little evidence for human use of the parts of the hill-top investigated before the late fourth century A.D., though it was argued in Chapter

Figure 5.1 The upper town from the air: in the centre of the photograph the monuments of the centre of the lower town (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Catherine Petit*)

3 that there may have been a substantial platform supporting an important structure under the present cathedral on the summit of the hill. But excavation on the north-eastern stretch of the walls did show a well-built structure of the later fourth century just inside the line the walls were to take.

The walls were 885m. long and enclosed a roughly triangular area of 4.43ha. (because of mediaeval and modern rebuilds, the present length is just over 900m. and the area encloses 4.48ha.). Owing to the unstable nature of the subsoil, the steep natural slope and, probably, the low-level seismic activity which still occurs along the Pyrenees front, there has been a whole series of collapses, underpinnings and re-builds, but the regular stonework of the Roman walls remains very distinctive, especially since it tends to rise and fall with the contours rather than run horizontally as the mediaeval and later masonry does. The wall was constructed in a trench, or step, cut into the hillside and consisted of a foundation of large river cobbles on which sat a substructure which in turn supported the wall proper, some 1.70m. thick. Substructure and wall were constructed of regular courses of roughly-shaped limestone and other stone ('rubble') sandwiched between thick beds of lime mortar and faced with typical small block-work (*petit appareil*) with single or multiple courses of bricks at intervals up the facing. These were all covered with a skim of the jointing mortar coated with a lime wash, concealing irregularities in the build and giving a smooth, white face to the walls, which survived in some of the excavations where it had quickly become covered and so protected from the weather. It was the facing-stones which had acted as the form-work for the rubble core. At irregular intervals there were ten large, marble drains (there may originally have been more) to evacuate rainwater. Why their spacing is irregular is unclear; it may well be to do with what lay inside the walls at these points. Several previous workers had suggested that there had been towers projecting from the walls, but on the basis of parallels elsewhere in Gaul rather than direct evidence. However, at the north-western angle of the walls there does remain the scar where there was a tower which had later broken off and fallen away. Changes and irregularities in the surviving Roman masonry of the north-eastern stretch of the walls suggest there may have been up to seven others along this face. The most unexpected find was at the south-western angle where the wall ran low over the rock outcrop of the Rocher du Matacan and the wall-top was subsequently protected by mediaeval infill and heightening. Dismantling this later stonework showed the wall-walk, the parapet, and the bases of five of the merlons (battlements or crenellations), each supported at its left-hand (looking from the interior) end by an internal buttress, technically a 'traverse' (Figure 5.2). Other traverses are visible in the adjacent stretch of wall. No other *in situ* Roman wall-top survives in such a state of preservation elsewhere in Gaul and they are extremely rare anywhere in the Roman world.

In two places, lengths of the foundation trench were excavated along the inner face of the walls. A considerable amount of material, principally pottery

Figure 5.2 The wall-top with the walkway, parapet and traverses

and glass, was recovered with which to date the construction of the walls. The pottery was consistent in suggesting a date around or a little after A.D. 400. Traditionally, the walls at towns in central and northern Gaul had been thought to date to the late third century, though excavations are increasingly showing that in fact there are many which date from down into the fourth century. The beginning of the fifth century, though, is exceptionally late, with few parallels. Such parallels as there are include a regional group in *Novempopulana* (Auch, Bazas, Lectoure, Lescar, Saint-Lizier-en-Couserans and the related military site of Saint-Lézer) of hill-top wall circuits enclosing a small area, the walls not being very powerful and provided with varying amounts of features such as towers and drains. There are indeed differences between them, but they are all more like each other than they are like 'classic' sites such as Bordeaux or a comparable site in *Novempopulana*, Dax. The context for such a regional group is considered below (p. 131).

During the survey work on the surviving Roman masonry it became clear that the walls contained a lot of stonework re-used from earlier structures (cf. Schenck-David in Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 231–61). This was not, as at sites like Bordeaux, the re-use of whole, large architectural elements or tombstones to form the substructure, but rather broken-up remains of limestone and marble architectural stonework, such as capitals and cornices used throughout the walls. It also became clear that the courses of brick and tile consisted not of new-fired bricks but of a mixture of floor-, hypocaust- and roof-tile in no particular order. It seems that the late Roman walls at Saint-Bertrand consisted largely, if not entirely, of masonry re-used from existing buildings. This was the clue to the next stage in understanding the changes to Saint-Bertrand.

The demolition of the lower town centre

Some of the architectural stonework from the wall-circuit closely resembled that from the public buildings and monuments of the old town centre down on the valley floor. So, also, did one of the drains; though nine of the ten were newly-cut in marble, the tenth was a marble gutter-block similar to those known from the public buildings of the lower town. This provoked a survey of the reports on the disuse of these buildings and monuments. In his reports on the Forum Baths, Sapène noted that he did not find the thick overburden of fallen walls, vaults and roofing, suggesting it had been deliberately removed. In addition, in one corner of the *natatio*, the main pool of the baths, a lime-kiln had been constructed at the end of the building's life and by it were still stacked pieces of marble evidently destined to be burnt for quicklime with which to make mortar. It looks as though, rather than being left to fall into ruin, the Forum Baths were deliberately demolished and stripped of their re-usable building materials. This pattern can be seen at other buildings, more or less clearly depending on when they were excavated. The recent excavations on the Circular Monument and the Coupéré building have shown that the former was dismantled somewhere towards the end of the fourth century or later (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 141) and that the Coupéré house was demolished and its re-usable materials (stone, metals) systematically recovered from a date around the end of the fourth century. The other areas are harder to read because of the early date of the excavations. The deposits associated with the Forum Temple in particular had been almost totally destroyed, but a date for the disuse and dismantling of the portico around the end of the fourth century would be acceptable. A similar date has been established for the abandonment of the North Baths (Collectif 1996: 56). The fate of the building over the earlier *Macellum* is unknown.

There is, therefore, a convergence of evidence for the suppression of many (most?) of the major public buildings and monuments of the lower town around the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, with their building materials being carefully recovered and taken away. This may also, as at Coupéré, have extended to some private buildings, but, as we shall see below, other private residences, such as the 'villa Basc' complex, continued in occupation. Given the presence in the walls of fragments of architectural stonework which can be paralleled in the buildings of the lower town, the simplest and most convincing argument is that the centre of the lower town was systematically demolished and cleared and the materials gained, transported up the hill to construct the walls (cf. Figure 5.1). The significance of the razing of the old town centre with the uses and memories embodied in these buildings will be discussed below. Before that, it is worth noting that a calculation (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 143–6, 215–16) of the labour force required for the demolition of the old town centre, the sorting and transport of the

materials up the hill and the construction of the new defences suggests that the whole operation could have been carried out in one season from spring to autumn, or perhaps two: not a huge project. The presence in the construction-trench fills of pottery more normally found on rural sites may suggest where some of the fetchers and carriers were being brought from.

Reasons for building the walls

At first sight, the reason for the construction of the walls is evident: they were there for their obvious purpose of defence. This cannot be denied; the walls stand on and strengthen the naturally-defensible outcrop of the hill and they are themselves fortifications designed to ward off attackers. They are strengthened by the provision of projecting towers along the most accessible side, the north-eastern, from which attackers could be enfiladed (caught between the cross-fire from two adjacent towers). Moreover, unlike most other late town defences in Gaul, the walls of Saint-Bertrand were not built on flat ground over the centre of the existing town but deliberately sought out this more defensible position. This much is incontrovertible, albeit that the walls themselves were not particularly powerful, especially when compared with those at Dax or Bordeaux. But it can be argued that there is more to it than that. Clearly, the position on the hill-top was naturally defensible, but it was also highly-visible, as the present cathedral demonstrates. The summit of the hill would have been girdled by a set of walls which, on the evidence of the mortar and lime-wash coating, would have been a brilliant white, perhaps deliberately recalling the marble so beloved of the Convenae. The towers on the north-eastern side not only guarded the least difficult of the approaches, but they also dominated the town at the foot of the hill, demonstrating the power and military preparedness of the upper town. So what may seem, at first sight, to be motivated simply by defensive considerations, could also, be seen to have a more symbolic purpose, and it would be foolish to try to deny either aspect. Moreover, the idea that the walls were as much a civic monument as a civic defence fits very well with our wider understanding of urban defences in Late Antiquity. Walls became, in more than one sense, the defining monument of a town. In literature they can stand as a metonym for the town itself, indeed the late-fourth-century poet Claudian employs exactly this device when referring to the provincial capital of *Novempopulana*, Éauze, as '*muri Elusae*', 'the walls of Elusa' (*in Rufinum* I,v,137). In many artistic media such as painting, mosaic, precious metals and manuscripts, towns are symbolised by their walls. In the sixth century the Italian aristocrat Cassiodorus described walls as '*et ornatus pacis . . . et bellorum necessitas*': 'an ornament in peace and essential for war' (*Variae* 1.28.1). In the seventh, Isidore, bishop of Seville, summed this up in his lapidary phrase '*urbs ipse moenia sunt*': 'the walls are the very town' (*Etymologiarum Libri* II.XV.1.2).

This appreciation of the powerful symbolic rôle of walls may help us to understand the apparently brutal dismemberment of the centre of the lower town with all its associations and memories. Given what was said in Chapters 2 and 3 about the way in which these buildings served not only their obvious administrative, commercial or religious functions, but also made manifest the self-identity and ambition of the Convenae, and given what was said earlier in this chapter about the way in which the Convenae had looked after these buildings at a time when so many other peoples in Gaul were tearing theirs down, this sudden and wholesale destruction seems shocking. Moreover, the late Roman world recognised public buildings and their sculptures and statuary, inherited from earlier times, precisely as both an ornament (*urbis decus*) and as a representation of towns to themselves; this is made clear in Book XV of the early-fifth-century collection of laws and edicts, the *Codex Theodosianus* (see particularly XV.1.16; XV.1.25; XV.10.15; XV.10.18), in edicts which tried to prevent more important towns making off with the heritage of less important towns. Why should the Convenae lay waste to the buildings and monuments built up over two centuries and more? In part, it may simply be convenience; the buildings were available and in public ownership. The answer is, also, very probably, that just as these monuments had been the means by which the rank and pride of the town were embodied and made manifest under the early empire, so walls were the monument required by a town of any standing. In fact, in Gaul, the correspondence between towns with walls and the lists of *civitas* capitals given in the *Notitia Galliarum* is almost exact; walls and status were inextricably linked. So, essentially, what the Convenae were doing was cannibalising the status monuments of the early empire to construct the status monument of the late empire. One other question is what state were these buildings and monuments in by the end of the fourth century when they were taken down? Two hypotheses can be put forward: one, that they were still being maintained and used, and that, therefore, their wholesale demolition represented a sort of 'year zero' for Saint-Bertrand; or, that they were already falling into decay and were, therefore, no longer the potent symbolic force they had been. Again, because of the conditions of excavation it is difficult to be certain, but there is evidence that the Circular Monument was already partially ruined by the time it was dismantled (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 141) and the re-excavators of the Forum Baths suggest that they were already dilapidated when they were demolished (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 97). The little evidence that there is suggests, therefore, that the Convenae may have been sacrificing complexes which had already outlived their usefulness, rather than ripping out the still-beating heart of their town.

Town walls in *Novempopulana*; Romans and Visigoths

The results of the work on the walls of Saint-Bertrand have implications for wider questions about *Novempopulana* in the early fifth century. As noted

above (p. 128), there is a regional group of hill-top urban fortifications in the province, which broadly resemble those at Saint-Bertrand and are distinct from the types of fortification found at the time elsewhere in Gaul, or, for that matter, Spain. If the dating of the Saint-Bertrand walls to the early decades of the fifth century can, for the sake of argument, be extended to the whole group, then that puts them into a very interesting chronological and political context. The early years of the fifth century saw events which were to lead, before the end of that century, to the extinction of Roman imperial, political and military control over the western part of the empire, with the abdication of the last, powerless western emperor in A.D. 476. At the beginning of A.D. 406, hordes of Germanic tribesmen (Alamanni, Burgundians, Vandals, Sueves) swept across the Rhine, deep into Gaul and on towards Spain. The army in Britain responded by proclaiming an emperor, Constantine III. He attempted to bring order to Gaul with what forces were available to him and tried to prevent the tribes from crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. In this, as in all else, he was unsuccessful and in A.D. 411 he was captured and executed at Arles. In the same year, the Visigoths (Heather 1991), fresh from sacking Rome the previous year, were sent by the Roman authorities into south-west Gaul, where they besieged Bazas, south-east of Bordeaux, before being prevailed upon to move into Spain. Eight years later, in A.D. 419, they were permanently settled in south-west Gaul, being given the middle and lower valley of the Garonne from Toulouse to the ocean. Though settled under treaty with the Romans, the Visigoths soon became, effectively, an independent kingdom with their capital at Toulouse, despite the increasingly feeble efforts of the Roman authorities to rein them in. By the middle of the fifth century they had control of the Pyrenees and were establishing themselves in Spain as well (Mathiesen & Sivan 1999). It would be a mistake to see them as a barbarian horde intent on destroying or carrying off the civilisation of the South-West. By this time, the Visigoths had been living within the empire for some forty years, were Christians (albeit adherents to the Arian heresy), and were intimately linked with the politics and personalities of the western Roman administration. In many ways, it would be more helpful to see them, in Chris Wickham's (2005: 44) phrase, as 'a rogue Roman army'. Certainly, they are very difficult to find in the early to mid fifth-century archaeology of the South-West; they seem more to have wanted to integrate with, and benefit from, the still-rich economy and aristocratic culture of the region. When, precisely, they took control of *Novempopulana* is uncertain: certainly by the middle of the fifth century, probably earlier.

Nevertheless, the early decades of the fifth century were clearly turbulent times in *Novempopulana*. It is difficult to link the relatively wide date-bracket for the Saint-Bertrand walls to any of the particular dates mentioned above – A.D. 411, A.D. 419 or whatever. Indeed, given the obvious care over their construction and their monumental, as well as defensive, qualities, it would probably be a mistake to see them as a response to a particular episode.

More likely, probably, their defensive capacities were a response to troubled times in general. The organisation required for the construction of the walls at Saint-Bertrand suggests that there was still a functioning central authority which could require this labour and had power over the public buildings and monuments of the lower town. Prior to A.D. 419, it could have been the late Roman state, in the person of the governor of *Novempopulana*, ordering the fortification of the cities under his control as a response to the threat of the times. This would fit with the appearance of the regional grouping of walls in the province. Or it might be the remaining civic authorities amongst the Convenae, people such as the Nymfius commemorated at Valentine, who could dispose of their civic buildings as they saw fit. Or it could be that the governor ordered and the civic authorities were responsible for putting his orders into effect. So the double aspect of the walls as defence and civic monument can still be understood in the context of the external events of the time. So far this discussion of Saint-Bertrand at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries has focused on the walls, but if walls were one defining monument of the late antique town, there was one other: the church.

Christianising the Convenae

The rise of Christianity to the position of the state religion of the late Roman empire and its eventual dominance over all other religions is one of the great themes of the late antique period; indeed, it is perhaps the one thing that the Roman empire can truly be said to have set on its way to globalised importance. Its development in the tiny corner of Gaul that is our concern is less clear and dramatic. Though there were communities of Christians in Gaul from at least the later second century, the first Christians amongst the Convenae are unknown to us. It is again Jerome's polemic against Vigilantius that gives us our first pointer, for he accuses the local bishop of laxism in the face of Vigilantius' iniquities. The existence of such a bishop would make sense, for in the fourth century the Church set up a hierarchy of bishops across Gaul, with each *civitas* having a bishop who was expected to live in the principal town; thus a bishop of *Convenae* would be perfectly normal. Our next witness to the bishopric is the writer Sidonius Apollinaris in the mid fifth century, himself bishop of Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne of central Gaul. He notes, in one of his letters (*Epistulae* VII.6), that *Convenae* was one of the bishoprics of the Visigothic kingdom left vacant because king Euric, an obdurate adherent of the Arian heresy, refused to appoint Catholic bishops. A bishop of the Convenae was present at a church Council held at Agde on the Mediterranean coast in A.D. 506, the year before the Visigothic kingdom in Gaul fell to the Franks under their king Clovis at the battle of Vouillé near Poitiers. Bishops of the Convenae were present at several church Councils down into the late seventh

century, at which point Councils covering the South-West ceased to be held (cf. Esmonde Cleary 2004).

A bishop would have had his principal, episcopal church at the main town of his diocese, a *groupe épiscopal* comprising a church, a baptistery and a residence for the bishop, his clergy and lay staff: his *familia*. A number of these have been excavated in Gaul and a distinguishing feature is the presence of a baptistery, for at this date baptism was a sacrament performed by a bishop. To date no church and baptistery complex has been located at Saint-Bertrand. It is possible it lay in the upper town, and the fact that no such complex has been identified in the lower town may suggest that it was always in the defended upper town, in which case it would have been a creation of the fifth century, giving the hill-top divine, as well as human, defence. The upper town is certainly where Gregory of Tours' description of the siege of A.D. 585 locates it, but, as we shall see (p. 143), Gregory's account is not to be taken literally. If the bishop's church were in the upper town, it did not necessarily lie where Saint Bertrand was to build his great church in the eleventh century; much would have changed in the upper town in the intervening half a millennium. Two Christian churches or chapels are known though: one, the so-called *basilique paléochrétienne* (early Christian basilica) at the foot of the hill in the district now called Plan and which will therefore be referred to here as the Plan basilica; the other, a chapel in the main, eastern cemetery, the ultimate predecessor of the existing mediaeval church of Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère (Figure 2.1, p. 29).

The Plan basilica

This basilica was first uncovered in the early twentieth century and, after being left uncovered and decaying, was subject to detailed re-excavation by Jean Guyon and his team between 1985 and 1992 (cf. Guyon 2003). The original building occupied the site of one of the smaller residences, Domus IV, of the 'villa Basc' complex of houses, just to the east of the garden of the large and complex Domus II. The basilica consisted of a rectangular nave with a rectangular apse on its eastern side, and measured 25m. east-west by 13.60m. north-south. To its south was a series of buildings consisting essentially of a rectangular east-west court with porticos to north and south, whose function is unclear. The evidence of the coins from the recent excavations shows that the basilica was originally constructed in the second third of the fifth century. The basilica was later extended to the west, encroaching onto the Domus II complex, and a polygonal extension to the eastern apse encroached somewhat onto the street bounding the Domus IV property to the east. The structures to the south were also modified, though retaining the same essential form. Whether the various modifications were contemporaneous or of different dates can no longer be established because of the destruction of the relevant stratigraphy by the earlier excavators, but,

Figure 5.3 The Plan basilica from the air (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Catherine Petit*)

on the basis of radiocarbon dates on associated burials, can be dated to the fifth and sixth centuries.

The original basilica was constructed in an area of the town that was still occupied; indeed, the evidence is that parts of Domus II had been modified and mosaics inserted early in the fifth century. Since it was built in a part of the town that was still occupied, it may well have served as the church for that area; it cannot have been the episcopal church, for it has no baptistery. At this time the ancient laws enjoining the strict separation of the living and the dead were still in force, and it is not surprising that no burials were found associated with this earliest phase. But, later on, probably from the sixth century, burials were made in and around the basilica: some in plain graves, some in marble sarcophagi. This is a nice example of one of the key transitions from the ancient to the mediaeval form of town and of the reasons behind it. Essentially, unlike their pagan ancestors who believed corpses repugnant and bringers of ritual pollution, Christians developed different views about the dead body. In particular, those who have been termed 'the very special dead': saints, martyrs, great bishops, holy virgins, were thought not really to be dead but alive in glory, and their physical remains became a channel of divine grace. From this grew a different attitude to dead bodies, leading to the development in the later fourth and fifth centuries of the cult of relics, the belief that a fragment of the body of a saint was well-omened and brought grace. These relics crossed the boundary from the cemetery to the churches in the living towns and were soon followed by those who wanted to be buried near the grace they brought and who were powerful enough to ignore the ancient separations of the quick and the dead. Thus

the physical remains of the dead became less objects of fear and revulsion and became familiar to and accepted by the living. The Plan basilica shows this very clearly and, indeed, it remained a focus for burial, probably after it had itself fallen into ruin in the eighth century or later. Eventually it was to be replaced in the eleventh century by the little chapel of Saint-Julien and its graveyard, which still exist.

Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère

The present, eleventh-century basilica of Saint-Just, its charm considerably enhanced by the large number of carved stones and capitals re-used from the Roman town, is the successor to at least two earlier buildings on the site (cf. Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006: 443–6). Excavations in the 1940s and 1950s showed that there was a small, two-cell chapel, probably of fourth-century date, its long axis now marked by the western half of the south wall of the eleventh-century church (Figure 5.4). This chapel was succeeded by a

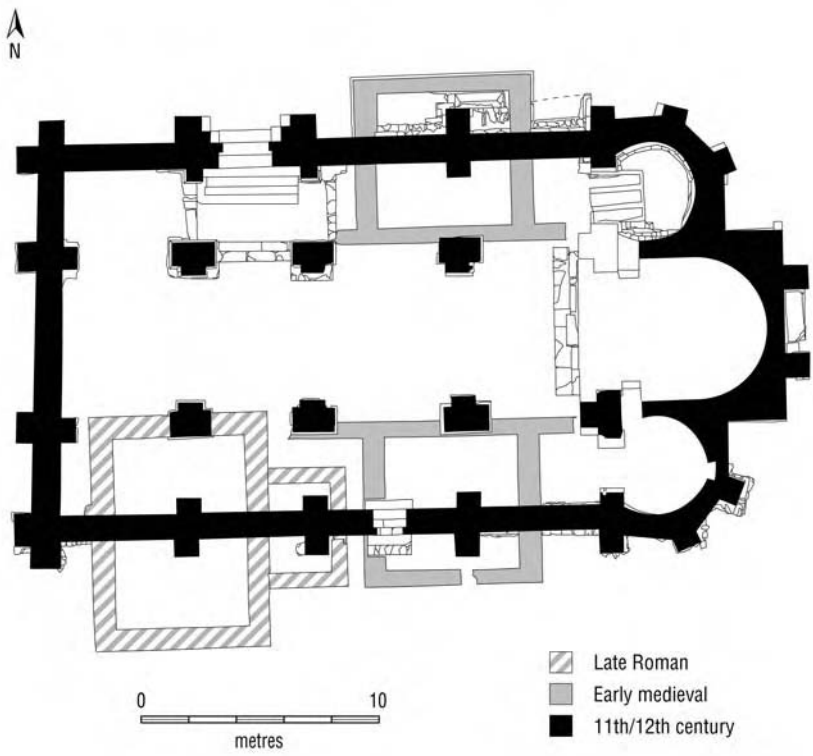

Figure 5.4 Plan of the successive stages of the church of Saint-Just (*after Schenck in Pène & Schenck eds. 1991*)

building whose north and south walls lay on the lines now taken by the columns of the nave of the present church and which had lateral chambers to north and south; this phase is now undatable. What we have here is a development common in Gaul and elsewhere in the empire: a cemetery church or *memoria*. The area round the present church has yielded numbers of sarcophagi and other burials, suggesting a major, late cemetery of the town in which was buried a 'very special' person whose place of burial was then memorialised by the construction of the chapel where commemorative rites could be conducted. Eventually this was replaced by the larger, early-mediaeval edifice, and this, in its turn, by the eleventh-century church. In contrast to the Plan basilica this demonstrates the persistence of the old rules and traditions concerning the separation of the living and the dead; the cemetery was clearly established outside the town whilst this tradition held (Figure 5.5). But whereas in pagan antiquity no place of worship would have been established in the polluting presence of burials, the changing Christian perceptions of the dead meant that it was perfectly permissible, indeed, worthy, to build such shrines and to go out regularly to commemorate the dead: another way in which the barriers between the living and the dead were broken down in Late Antiquity.

Taken together the two churches show one of the crucial changes in the form of towns marking the transition from the world of Classical Antiquity to that of the Middle Ages: the totally changed physical relationship between the living and the dead. This was itself brought about by deep

Figure 5.5 Saint-Just from the east with the upper town

changes in beliefs about the dead and, thus, about their physical remains. In Chapter 2 it was suggested that one of the crucial early markers in the development of the Roman Convenae was the change in their conception of the body, symbolised by the construction and use of the first Forum Baths. Here, at the other end of our chronological period, the importance of the body is again manifest, though this time it is the dead rather than the living body.

Moreover, in the Introduction and Chapter 2 it was argued that the buildings and monuments erected by a people, in this case the Convenae, were a crucial expression of how they perceived their identity and, in turn, the buildings and monuments came to shape that identity. This argument can be pursued down into the period under consideration here. The two chief types of public building and monuments were the walls and the churches. Chronologically, the walls came first and must betoken a growing sense of the militarisation of the identity of the Convenae, hardly unnaturally in a time of increasing military activity and instability but, also, echoing changes further north in the fourth century. The churches, equally, betoken the adoption by the Convenae of a Christian identity, with all the changes in beliefs about the divine, the structure of time and space, how to live, how to die and the fate of the dead that the new religion brought with it. By the end of the fifth century, Saint-Bertrand at least proclaimed a new, militarised and Christianised identity for the Convenae: a people of the Church Militant here on earth.

Saint-Bertrand and the Convenae in the fifth and sixth centuries

The linked events of the demolition and clearance of the centre of the lower town and the construction of the walls around the hill-top, possibly also the construction of the episcopal complex, profoundly altered the physical and conceptual geography of the town. Here we will look at the repercussions of these changes on the type of settlement at Saint-Bertrand and the functions it fulfilled in the longer term, through the fifth century and down into the sixth, starting with the upper town and then moving on to the lower.

As noted above, apart from the probable major, early monument right on the summit of the hill, there was no evidence from the recent excavations for occupation on the hill-top before the closing years of the fourth century. But once the walls had been constructed, the hill-top clearly became a focus of occupation and activity. The building partially uncovered in the 1997–9 excavations in the north-eastern part of the defended area was extended in the course of the fifth century and occupation deposits accumulated in the main room (Figure 5.6). The 1994–5 excavations showed that by the end of the fifth century there was a building up against the internal face of the north-western walls with a hearth of re-used marble plaques and with earth

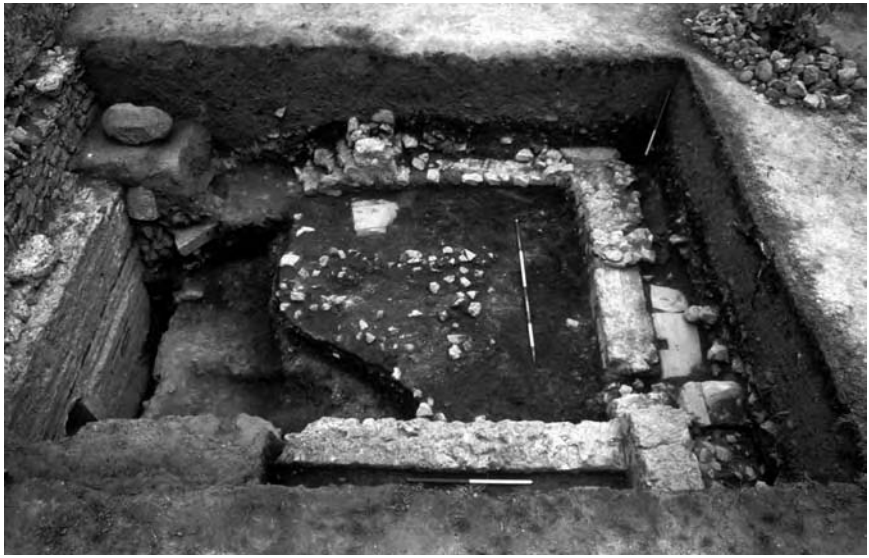

Figure 5.6 Fifth- to seventh-century occupation inside the upper town (defensive walls on left)

floors (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 197–204, 181–2). This is, of course, a tiny sample of the defended area, but if these zones, right at the edges of the upper town, were being heavily used, then it is reasonable to argue that so was the rest of the area. On both sites the fifth- and sixth-century deposits are plentiful and contain relatively large quantities of pottery and animal bone. This would seem to argue for a focus of population, though the impression of activity may, in part, be due to patterns of rubbish disposal, with garbage being deposited in and around the buildings rather than removed elsewhere. But, even rubbish needs to be generated by a resident population. So, from being a peripheral area of the first- to fourth-century town, the hill-top became an important focus after the building of the walls. Clearly the defensive potential of the walled area in a time of increasing military and political instability must have been a great attraction. It may also be that the area became a socially, as well as a topographically, superior place to live, as those in positions of power clustered in the safety of the wall circuit.

The fate of the lower town through the fifth and sixth centuries is more difficult to read, partly because deposits of this date seem to have suffered from later ploughing and robbing (as at Coupéré), and they suffered, also, from summary clearance in the earlier excavations. The re-excavation of parts of the 'villa Basc' complex in the project on the Plan basilica showed that the high-class residences there were still occupied in the first part of the fifth century and, indeed, were being embellished with heated rooms and

mosaics. The construction of the Plan basilica clearly puts an end to domestic occupation in that particular part of the complex, but Sapène's excavations on the 'villa Basc' yielded quantities of pottery types suggesting continuing occupation in this area well into the fifth century. Just to the north was a group of fifth-century pottery from the area of the 'Temple of Hercules' on the south side of the central esplanade. Similar pottery was also recovered from the sites of 'villa Delbès' and 'Veuve Trey', both of them large, fourth-century residences in the northern part of the town. Sapène's excavation of the Forum Temple showed that the eastern wing of the surrounding portico had been colonised after its demolition by a small bath-house (Badie, Sablayrolles, Schenck 1994: 62–8), which must therefore be fifth-century in date. It attests to the continuing importance of bathing, but on a much reduced scale. Sidonius Apollinaris, in his accounts of life at his country villa in the mid fifth century, shows that bathing was still an integral part of social life: for the aristocracy at least. Public baths seem, though, to have fallen into disuse, perhaps because they were now too old and too expensive to maintain, perhaps because Christian ideas about the body and its display meant that public bathing was no longer considered acceptable: the Christian body was becoming different to the classical Roman body of the earlier years of Saint-Bertrand. These few sites are not a large basis from which to draw general conclusions, but it does seem to suggest certain lines of argument. First, the construction of the defences and the demolition of the old urban centre did not lead to an immediate abandonment of the lower town in favour of the upper. Areas of the lower town continued in occupation, including large, high-status residences, suggesting amongst other things that the perception of threat was not too acute. The evidence for a continuing population is buttressed by the construction of the Plan basilica, which presumably served a congregation in its environs sufficient to justify the building of the church. The memorial chapel at Saint-Just and the continuing use of the cemetery there also suggest a focus of population not far away. But there is, at present, no evidence for a continuation of occupation across the area of the lower town; rather, the evidence is for particular discrete areas. It may be that the destruction of the old centre of the town created a sort of dispersion, whereby occupation clustered in particular areas of the town, creating a polyfocal settlement pattern, with the most important and densely-occupied focus being the hilltop and other focuses of occupation and activity on the valley floor at the 'villa Basc' and other occupation sites or the Saint-Just cemetery.

A related question is what was going on at Saint-Bertrand in the fifth century, and were these various foci still fulfilling urban functions similar to those of the earlier town, or were they just farms taking over the ruins? The rubbish deposits that accumulated in the upper town are particularly useful here, because they contain quantities of material, particularly pottery and glass. The pottery (Dieulafait in Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 275–94)

consists largely of the regional fine ware, *DSP*, along with local products. *DSP* was produced in a fine, grey fabric with a dark slip and is often stamped with motifs similar to those on Mediterranean products, particularly African Red Slip Ware (ARS) from modern Tunisia and which, incidentally, gets to Saint-Bertrand in tiny quantities. Some of these motifs are Christian and this, ultimately, explains the long and cumbersome name of which *DSP* is a usable contraction, *Dérivées de Sigillées Paléochrétiennes*. As well as being useful for dating deposits of the fifth and on into the sixth century, the *DSP* is also useful for showing the direction of Saint-Bertrand's commercial links at the time. *DSP* was produced in large quantities in the Languedoc to the east-north-east of Saint-Bertrand and around Bordeaux to the north-west. Despite the river communications afforded by the Garonne, it is, in fact, the Bordeaux – 'Atlantic' – productions which dominate, with 90 % of the material from the upper town and similar proportions amongst the pottery from the lower town. Clearly Saint-Bertrand had major trading links with the Bordelais at this period, attesting to continuing commercial activity at the town. As well as the *DSP*, there was a considerable quantity of pottery, most probably being produced close to Saint-Bertrand itself, particularly '*commune grumeleuse*' (a wheel-turned, rough coarse ware).

The collection of glass (Marty in Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 295–306) from the upper town turned out to be crucial for dating. It is also another expression of commercial activity, though glass is much more difficult to tie to a particular source than is pottery. The principal glass-houses of the fifth and sixth centuries in southern Gaul appear to have been in Languedoc, though there is evidence also from Bordeaux. From a number of sites in the South-West there are also blocks of glass, perhaps for melting down to form vessels. Such a block comes from the Coupéré site and from the upper town came three fragments of sixth-century glass which may be waste from manufacture. Also from the Coupéré site, from the rubble layers, came a marble capital of sixth or seventh century date, presumably carved in the vicinity, probably from a block retrieved from an earlier building.

As well as the artefacts, the animal bone from the upper town is important in proposing possible lines of enquiry (Lignereux in Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 313–29). The considerable quantities of this bone have already been referred to, suggesting either a dense population and/or reflecting methods of rubbish-disposal. The analysis by species shows that cattle remain the dominant animal by number and by meat-weight over sheep/goat and pig. In the later fifth and sixth centuries, not only do the overall quantities show a tenfold rise but, the figures for sheep/goat show a rise at the expense of cattle and pig. This period also shows a marked increase in the representation of game, both animal (deer, stag) and bird (partridge, duck, goose, vulture). These are never in quantities to suggest an important contribution to diet, but they do attest to hunting, in antiquity and in the

middle ages, as an aristocratic pastime. So the upper town seems to be a net consumer of animal carcasses. This may not just have been for meat, but also for the other products from a carcass, such as hides for leather, bone, marrow etc.; it seems reasonable to postulate that the site was still a focus for the processing of domesticated animals for their workable and saleable products.

Taken together, the evidence of the artefacts and the animal bone argues for Saint-Bertrand remaining a centre for the processing of produce from the local area, particularly animals but also receiving pottery. Grain was also, presumably, coming in as well. There may also have been some glass-working and it is more than likely that the ruins of the lower town were gradually being pillaged of their marble for re-working and export. The presence of so much *DSP* from the Bordeaux area and glass, perhaps originally from Languedoc, hints at longer distance contacts. Since trade is a two-way process, one may legitimately ask what Saint-Bertrand had to offer. The most obvious answer is marble, probably recovered and re-worked from earlier buildings and monuments, rather than being freshly quarried, though the latter is possible.

It is difficult to know what the population at this time consisted of. From the documentary evidence, we know of the bishop who would have had his clerical and lay *familia* and would have been a person of consequence, economic as well as spiritual. The evidence for hunting suggests either that the bishop was aping the lay aristocracy in defiance of the canon law ban on the clergy hunting, or that there were high-status lay people at the site as well. One other piece of evidence for Saint-Bertrand retaining an administrative and fiscal importance is the existence of extremely rare, gold coins bearing the name of *Convenae*. These are examples of a coinage struck in the Visigothic kingdom, imitating a late Roman coin called a *tremissis*. Such coins are known bearing the names of a number of towns across the south-west of Gaul (cf. Rouche 1979: 300–8). Their rarity and relative value make it most unlikely that they were produced for commercial purposes. Far more likely is that they had some rôle to play in the fiscal system of taxation and expenditure by the kingdom, suggesting that this was still town-based and that Saint-Bertrand therefore was still recognised as a 'central place' administratively. Unfortunately, we have no rural background with which to compare the evidence from Saint-Bertrand. Very few rural sites of fifth- and sixth-century date have been identified from the presence of *DSP*. The most useful would have been Montmaurin, so extensively excavated, but Fouet convinced himself that the whole villa was destroyed by fire at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries. The evidence for this is very debatable and, in fact, the villa probably survived into the fifth century, if not beyond; but it is no longer possible to reconstruct the stratigraphy and finds which would allow this late phase to be analysed. Valentine is in an even worse case, and no excavation of any size or reliability has yet taken place on other villas or

rural settlements to see how late they were occupied. Evidence from other, better-excavated villas in *Novempopulana* suggests that by the later fifth century these sites were falling out of use, and that occupation was no longer to the same high standards of embellishment and maintenance as a hundred years previously, perhaps as the necessary skilled craftsmen were no longer trained up. Generally, this seems to betoken a decreasing command by the nobility over resources and declining disposable income. This economic levelling-down may perhaps have been accompanied by a corresponding degree of social levelling, with the old aristocratic families far less able to assert and maintain the very considerable distinctions of wealth and culture of the fourth century. But at Saint-Bertrand, for the fifth century and, particularly, for the sixth, we have an impression of a place of some importance in the local economic, social and religious landscape: late-antique Saint-Bertrand seems still to have been discharging several of the functions of its Roman predecessor.

The siege of A.D. 585

The history of Roman Saint-Bertrand opened with the texts relating to the foundation of the town, examined in Chapter 1. The end of the Roman period is traditionally marked by another text, the description by Gregory of Tours of the siege and sack of the town in A.D. 585. In A.D. 507, the Franks under Clovis defeated the Visigothic kingdom north of the Pyreneees at the battle of Vouillé, and the Franks gradually took over the South-West. It is possible that some of the finds from the upper town mark this. There is a small group of pottery which is in a fabric similar to the local '*commune grumeleuse*', but is decorated on the outside with a roller-stamped decoration similar to that found on Merovingian (Frankish) pottery in the north of France and which has no precedents in the South-West. In addition, there is a buckle, datable to the first half of the sixth century, of a 'northern' type widely-distributed in Merovingian territories. It is just possible that there may have been a Frankish garrison in the upper town, similar to the much better-evidenced one at l'Isle-Jourdain (future birthplace of Saint Bertrand himself) to the north-east (Bach & Boudartchouk 1996), but this should not be pushed too far.

One of the persistent features of the Frankish kingdom under the rule of the Merovingian dynasty was its addiction to internecine conflict between the branches and members of the ruling family, conflict which forms much of the narrative of the *History of the Franks* composed by the late-seventh-century Bishop of Tours, Gregorius (Gregory). One of these spasms directly involved Saint-Bertrand (*Hist. Franc*. VII. 34–38). A young man called Gundovald was allegedly of Frankish royal descent, but king Lothar, whose son he supposedly was, disowned him and he fled to Italy and thence to Constantinople. In A.D. 584 he returned to Francia and had himself proclaimed

king. The following year his nephew, king Guntram, son of king Childebert, moved against him with an army, forcing Gundovald ever further south until he retreated to Saint-Bertrand where he tricked the inhabitants into letting him inside the defences, while he shut them and their bishop out. Inside he found a great store of supplies in warehouses belonging to a certain Chariulf, a noble and adherent of Gundovald. We are also told that at the foot of the hill was a water-source, defended by a very strong tower approached by a covered way down from the upper town. Guntram's army laid siege to the upper town and, after the appropriate speeches, insults and catcalls, twice assaulted it without success. The first time, on the fifteenth day of the siege, they moved covered war-engines against the defences and were repulsed; the following day, they tried to fill the ravine between the hills and the upper town with bundles of wood. The commander of Guntram's army, Leudegesil, then opened secret negotiations with some of Gundovald's most important followers. They persuaded Gundovald to leave the fortifications to parley, but it was a trick and he was killed by being pushed over one of the cliffs near the town and then caught on the head by a stone. The following day, the gates of the town were thrown open, but Guntram's army did not spare the place, instead, putting all the people and the priests to the sword 'so that there remained not one that pisseth against a wall'. They then put the town to the torch and left it burnt earth. Not surprisingly, this vivid account has long been taken to be the full stop at the end of the narrative of ancient Saint-Bertrand. The town was apparently utterly undone and would remain an abandoned ruin until, five hundred years later, Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain was sent out as bishop to revive it and the true faith amongst the hill-men of the central Pyrenees.

A recent re-evaluation of the text (Sablayrolles 2003) shows that we should by no means take it at face value (*contra* Bacharach 1994). In the first place, most of the description of the siege consists of the various speeches and arguments of the principal actors in the drama. Such speeches were, of course, a commonplace of ancient historical works and must always lie under suspicion of being confected by the relevant author, in this case an author working a century later than the events he purports to describe and who lived 400km. and more away. Moreover, the description of the water-source recalls those Gregory gives for other sieges he describes, suggesting this is a trope of his. His brief descriptions of the two assaults are also suspect. The first involved bringing up siege-engines to the walls without any apparent construction of the siege-ramp that would have been necessary; that, the following day, Guntram's army tried to fill the valley separating the upper town from the surrounding hills with bundles of wood is pure fantasy. One might also add that the phrase 'pisseth against a wall' is biblical (I Kings 14.10; 16.11–12; 21.21; II Kings 9.8), so has nothing to do with what actually went on at Saint-Bertrand, but is the bishop adding a good biblical gloss to his narrative. All in all, though there is no reason to

doubt that the siege took place and that Gundovald was defeated and killed, there is good reason to doubt that the details of the siege as recounted by Gregory should be accepted. In addition, one might note that in the recent excavations there were no traces of destruction in the upper town towards the end of the sixth century; instead, occupation seems to have continued through this period without check, though gradually diminishing in intensity.

The end of the ancient town

Judging by the archaeology, the end of the ancient town came not with the bang of a devastating siege but with the whimper of gradual abandonment. The occupation on the hill-top in the 1997–99 site (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 204) seems to have continued until the demolition of the building just inside the walls somewhere in the eighth century. A poor-quality wall was then constructed along the line of the south wall of the demolished building, defining a space along the inside face of the walls. At a date which cannot be fixed, it too passed out of use. Dating of these late deposits is difficult because of the lack of a good dated pottery sequence in the region for this period; but, pottery forms which developed out of the datable sixth-century forms are presently attesting to continued activity, and such parallels as there are for these vessels would fit with an eighth-century date.

There is no evidence for occupation this late in the lower town, but that may be a result of the ephemeral deposits and the small quantities of pottery being cleared away by earlier excavators. Nevertheless, most excavations of any scale in the lower town have encountered a final horizon of use: human burials. Characteristically, these were placed alongside the walls of Roman buildings, showing that these must still have been visible, if only as wall-stubs. The best-published ones are those from the area of the Forum Baths (Aupert & Monturet 2001: 99, pl. XXXIII) where Sapène found some forty inhumations, though, sadly, little can be reconstructed from his notes about them. He also noted the presence of other burials in the buildings to the north of the Forum Baths and east of the North Baths, and earlier on others had been found in the area of the Forum Temple. Yet more have been found in the corners of rooms on the Coupéré site and one was found placed against the outer face of the south-west part of the wall-circuit on the hill-top (Esmonde Cleary & Wood 2006: 208–9) and three were also found on the hillside immediately above the upper wall of the theatre (Gangloff 2001). These burials have no grave-goods, though some, particularly from the Forum Baths, seem to have been accompanied by triangular, moulded terracotta objects bearing a human face with the legend *In hoc eduli pulchritudo et pulchra imago:* 'in this the beauty of the representation and the beautiful image' (Figure 5.7), the language suggesting a Christian context (cf. Delaplace in Pène & Schenck (eds.) 1991: 90–98). The form of

Figure 5.7 Christian antefix (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Daniel Martin*)

these objects suggests they were originally intended as antefixes to decorate roofs, and perhaps date to the fifth century. But few of them bear traces of the mortar that would have fixed them to a roof, so they may simply have become objects bearing Christian good luck. One was also found at the pagan shrine on the Coume des Arés: perhaps to Christianise an old pagan place of worship, perhaps continuing an old practice of making an offering, but with a new type of object. The lack of grave-goods means these burials are at present more or less impossible to date. Somewhere in the early mediaeval period (say the sixth to eighth century) would seem reasonable, but unproven. Isolated burials are known from other sites, more often in the north of Francia, at this sort of date and seem to attest to a period of lax ecclesiastical interest in where the dead were buried prior to the increasingly strict insistence on burial in a consecrated churchyard from the ninth century on (Treffort 1996: esp. 165–71; Rébillard 2003; cf. Zadora-Rio 2003). Such a date would be acceptable for Saint-Bertrand also, after which burial was, presumably, centred around the Plan basilica and Saint-Just. But these scattered burials amongst the ruins and the continuing burial of the dead at the two churches attest to a living population in the vicinity; even though the archaeology of the living finally fails us around the eighth century, the living themselves may still have been there.

Later in the mediaeval period, from the eleventh century onwards, and continuing a practice established much earlier, the ruins of the Roman town

Figure 5.8 The interior of the church of Saint-Just (© *C2RA, Musée archéologique Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Photo: Kitterie Schenck-David*)

became simply a convenient quarry for large and small stonework to be built into new buildings. On the hill-top, Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain's great, late-eleventh-century cathedral church contains huge Roman stone blocks, particularly at the base of the north walls of the west tower and the western end of the nave. More plentiful are the architectural fragments and sarcophagi built into the basilica of Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère: some, such as a block with a theatrical mask, on the exterior, but many more capitals, friezes and cornices decorating the interior (Figure 5.8). Perhaps it is appropriate to end here, with the mediaeval builders re-using much of the marble which had been so important to and prized by their Roman predecessors in the times when what was now Saint-Bertrand had been *Lugdunum*.

APPENDIX

Visiting Roman Saint-Bertrand and the Convenae

This appendix is intended as a brief guide to the visible Roman monuments of Saint-Bertrand and to some of the more notable sites in its vicinity. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to all Roman sites and remains in the area. Unfortunately, there is no archaeological guide currently available. The excellent *Guide Archéologique de la France* devoted to Saint-Bertrand (Collectif 1996) is sadly now out of print, though of course it dealt only with the town and not with rural sites. For the dedicated visitor, the magnificent new *Carte Archéologique de la Gaule: 31/2 Le Comminges (Haute-Garonne)* (Sablayrolles & Beyrie 2006) is a wonderful resource, reasonably priced for what it is. In addition to a very detailed treatment of Saint-Bertrand and Valcabrère, it lists, commune by commune, all the Roman sites, monuments and material known about, much of which is illustrated by photographs; so it can be used as a guide-book or for planning itineraries of visits (I have done so). To navigate your way around, maps of the 1:200,000 scale of the Michelin road atlas are perfectly adequate, though supplementing them with the 1:25,000 tourist maps of the IGN (*Institut Géographique National*) would make things that much easier, particularly in the mountains.

Saint-Bertrand

Getting there

Saint-Bertrand itself is not easy to reach by public transport. There are railway stations at Montréjeau on the main line and at Loures-Barousse on the branch line to Luchon, each about 5 km. from Saint-Bertrand. It is easy to reach by car. The 'Pyrénéenne' autoroute/motorway/freeway (A64) runs not far to the north; it is about an hour's drive from Toulouse to the north-east, or from Lourdes to the west, to the Montréjeau exit (17) and Saint-Bertrand and Valcabrère are well signposted before the exit. From Exit 17 follow the signs to Saint-Bertrand/Valcabrère. About 1 km. after the roundabout,

at the end of the road from the autoroute, there is a set of traffic lights where you should bear right to cross the railway line. After the better part of another kilometre, the road drops to cross the river Garonne; immediately after the bridge, turn right. This will take you through the village of Valcabrère; at the end of the village the road bends left and dips, and as it rises again there, straight ahead, is the hill of Saint-Bertrand crowned by the cathedral.

Just by the crossroads at the foot of the hill is a large car park (covering much of the *porticus post scaenam* of the Theatre), or you can go up the hill to the car park in the upper town (ordinary cars leave the upper car park by the road at the far end to exit through the Porte Majou; anything larger has to return down the way it came). In high season vehicular access to the upper town is restricted to residents (and those staying in either of the two hotels there) from about 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., but there is a *petit train* from the lower car park to the upper town for those who quail at the prospect of climbing the hill on foot.

Bizarrely, there is no museum at this first-rank site. In the upper town, the former Gendarmerie (which Sapène did have turned into a museum) just by the car park has recently been refurbished and the upper floor houses the museum offices and a splendid research library, but the lower floor, rather than exhibiting material from the Roman town, is devoted to temporary art exhibitions. With the exception of the Augustan Trophy, the archaeological collections remain for the time being in store.

The lower town

The visible monuments of the lower town are divided in two by the road running south from Valcabrère to the crossroads.

West of the road

Immediately to the north-west of the crossroads lies the Forum Temple with its precinct and the Forum Baths. The Forum Temple area (p. 37) is not made easier to understand by the fact that the road west from the crossroads (D26a) covers the southern two-fifths of the area. So what can be seen is the podium of the temple itself, immediately to the north of the D26a, with, in front (east) of it, the large, square base, and also the northern and western ranges of the surrounding colonnade (with traces of the later, small bath-house over the western range). None of the Forum is visible. To the north of the Forum Temple and precinct lie the Forum Baths (p. 63), recently extensively restored and laid out for viewing. The most noticeable upstanding feature is the fragment of the west wall of the *caldarium*, which survived by being incorporated into a later farmhouse. The area on display comprises about half the *natatio* (the other half is under the road) and surrounding

colonnades and rooms, then the range of the three main rooms (cf. Figure 3.1, p. 64), with the lower area of the *palaestra* to the west and south.

Take the east-west track along the northern side of the Forum Baths and at the first junction, turn right (north). This brings you to the North Baths (Figure 3.3, p. 70). On the eastern side of the track lies the range of rooms up the western side of the complex, opening onto the *xystus*. The *natatio* and the main rooms of the baths are all conserved and open to visitors (note the fragment of surviving floor in one of the eastern niches of the *caldarium*, supported by the very distinctive conical colonettes). The site of the U-shaped Building immediately to the north of the baths is now under pasture.

If you continue north along the track west of the North Baths, eventually the track drops down to the flood-plain of the Garonne. To the west of the track, along the scarp down to the flood-plain, are the remains of the Wall with Semi-Circular Buttresses (p. 74). To the east of the track on a spur overlooking the Garonne is the depression which Sapène identified as the Amphitheatre (p. 74).

N.B this northern part of the Roman town is working farmland.

East of the road

Across the road from the Forum Baths is the surviving building of one of the recent farms (maison Bordères). Go past its northern end to get to the *Macellum* (p. 43), laid out with its shops etc., though the mosaic floor is reburied. To the south of the *Macellum*, the later colonnaded Pi-shaped Portico (p. 93) is marked out, with, in the centre of its southern side, the so-called 'Temple of Hercules' (p.69). Immediately to the east of the eastern arm of the Portico is the line of large bases of uncertain purpose. Between the western arm of the Portico and the Valcabrère road is the Circular Monument (p. 45), whose surrounding wall and marble capping-stones have been reconstructed (the capping-stones on the basis of two original examples found in the excavations).

The Plan basilica and the Theatre Go east along the road running alongside the south side of the Pi-shaped Portico and 'Temple of Hercules', then turn first right. About 50m. along on the left (east) side of the road are the remains of the Plan early Christian basilica (p. 134). The nave (with two re-used, fluted, marble column-drums flanking the doorway) and the two phases of the apse are visible, albeit heavily conserved. Some of the plain marble sarcophagi excavated at the beginning of the twentieth century are still in the nave. Continue south along the road. On the left is the little chapel of Saint-Julien and its cemetery, the mediaeval successors to the Plan basilica with its burials. When you get to the T-junction (note the barn with the very distinctive Comminges, hooped wood framing on the right), turn right. Where the street gets towards the ramp carrying the road up to the upper town, look over the gates of the property on the left and you should see the 'grande arche' of the Theatre

(p. 48). (If at the T-junction you turn left, along on the right you will find the entrance to steps leading up to the upper town: good for the leg muscles.)

The upper town

The upper town is now reached by a road laid out at the end of the eighteenth century and whose construction has considerably altered the appearance of the hill, making its north-eastern and south-eastern sides appear less precipitous. The first stretch of the road lies immediately west of the Theatre, and near the first bend there are good view-points. Halfway up the next stretch of the road on the left a viewing-platform has been constructed giving a good overall view of the Theatre. To the right of the road can be seen the Walls, with, near the next bend, the outfall of one of the marble drains. Round the next corner, to the right is the Porte Cabirole (the present structure is post-mediaeval and incorporates some re-used Roman inscription fragments), with, to the left, a little belvedere (good views over the lower town and the surrounding countryside) built out of the stonework of the demolished barbican to the mediaeval gate. Further along on the right is another marble drain, with, just near it, the one buttress to the Walls. The rest of the Walls from here to the entrance to the upper car park are largely mediaeval and later rebuilds (particularly where they support the cathedral cloister), though in places the Roman stonework can be seen following the contours rather than lying horizontal. Near the site of the former Porte Lherrisson, a tombstone (from outside Saint-Bertrand) is built into the wall of a house.

Defining the outside of the upper car park (the south and west sides) is the best-preserved stretch of the Walls (p. 126). The inside face of the south-western angle is where the Roman structure survives to full height (at present the walkway, parapet and traverses are protected under modern infill, but the inner faces of the traverses can be seen). The external face of the angle has the best-preserved stretch of facing, with its facing-blocks and brick-courses in place. Further along the inside face of the Walls by the car park, the inner ends of further traverses can be made out, at a much lower level than at the south-western angle: what is now a flat car park must, in antiquity, have had a pronounced dip, as shown by the steep incline in the courses of Roman stonework down from the south-western angle. The external face of the walls, with a couple more of the marble drains, down to the Porte Majou is followed by a footpath. There is another well-preserved stretch of facing just before reaching the gate. The present Porte Majou is post-mediaeval in date; above the inside of the arch is a re-used Roman tombstone showing a cart laden with barrels. Just to the north of the gateway is a section of the Roman wall fallen forward on its face.

The obvious destination in the upper town is Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain's great cathedral, which figures so prominently in M.R. James' 'Canon Alberic's

Scrapbook' from his *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (the stuffed crocodile is still there, now hanging somewhat disconsolately at the south-west end of the nave). The twelfth-century cloisters on the south side of the great church are a 'must' in their own right. They also contain a number of re-used inscriptions and the 'Four Apostles' column in the centre of the west walk looks, to judge by the flutes still visible at its base, to be a re-cut Roman column. For the hunter of Roman remains, the lowest part of the north wall of the tower and western end of the north wall of the nave are of interest for the huge blocks of Roman stone and marble re-used there. The terrace to the north of the cathedral is the site of the mediaeval bishops' residence: it is the lower part of the wall supporting this terrace that is Roman and seems to be part of the large platform where the cathedral now stands. The building to the north-west of the cathedral, 'Les Olivétains', houses the Saint-Bertrand tourist information office and has a small bookshop with a range of general and more specialised works of archaeological interest. In the chapel of the former nineteenth-century convent the Augustan Trophy is on display.

Near to Saint-Bertrand

Take the road west from the crossroads towards Tibiran and after about a kilometre take the left turn signposted Saint-Martin/Labat. About 100m. on the left is the one visible section of the Tibiran-Jaunac aqueduct (p. 37), a solid wall presumably carrying the channel across the little re-entrant here.

Take the road east from the crossroads and, immediately after crossing a stream (the ruisseau du Plan), turn left to the campsite signposted 'Es Pibous'. At the bottom (north) end of the campsite are the remains of part of the south and west walls of the Tranquistan fort (p. 85). Continue along the little road eastwards from the campsite and 200m. or so further on is the church of Saint-Just-de-Valcabrère (p. 136). The church repays detailed examination inside and out. Outside, starting from the north door and proceeding clockwise (for good luck), the eastern bay of the north wall of the nave and the apse contain a great many thin, flat slabs of stone. These are the remains of broken-up marble sarcophagi: mediaeval builders usually started building churches from the east end, so it looks as though they first pillaged the surrounding cemetery for building materials. Other parts of the outer walls are built largely of limestone blocks, several of which clearly come from Roman buildings, to judge by the lewis-holes (for lifting the blocks). The buttress on the south side is largely built of re-used blocks, as are the buttresses of the west wall. Also on the south side is part of a carved sarcophagus, and, in the south-eastern buttress, a block sculpted with a Roman theatrical mask. The interior is even richer in re-used Roman sculpture; some of the more interesting pieces include a gaming-board scratched on a marble plaque, now in the jamb to the right (east) of the

door. In the south wall of the south aisle is a rectangular marble plaque carved with two semi-circular arcades, one of which has an inscription commemorating V(aleria) Severa who died on the 5 July A.D. 347 aged 30; the other commemorates the priest (*presbyter*) Patroclus. The eastern part of the church, especially the main apse and the flanking absidioles contain a great many re-used elements from Roman columns of various sizes topped with a heterogeneous collection of early-imperial and late-antique/early-mediaeval capitals. The masonry massifs separating the main apse and the smaller ones contain a great deal of re-used masonry, including several blocks of a frieze of arms depicting military weaponry, gladiatorial weaponry and more symbolic weapons. They may have come from a major aristocratic tomb in the vicinity. Under the eastern window in the north aisle is part of a sculpted, marble sarcophagus with two scenes from the Book of Jonah. On leaving the church, the holy water stoups either side of the door deserve a look.

North of the entrance to the churchyard is a standing fragment of a Roman wall (purpose unknown). If you take the track running east just to the north of this wall, then turn into the first farm track on the right, you will get the justly much-photographed composition with Saint-Just in the foreground and the upper town and cathedral in the left background (cf. Figure 5.5, p. 137). Return to the road by the church and head north into the village of Valcabrère; turn right away from Saint-Bertrand and just after leaving the village there is the stump of a funerary tower (*pile funéraire*) in the right-hand bank of the road (with sign).

North of Saint-Bertrand

Return towards the main road from the autoroute to Luchon. At the traffic lights by the railway level crossing, go straight across. Climb a bit and at the T-junction turn right and keep climbing. Eventually there is a turning to the left with a sign to a '*Table d'Orientation*': a view-point giving a magnificent view (weather permitting) of the central Pyrenees (note the mountain resembling a recumbent face in profile – *le nez de Napoléon*), the upper valley of the Garonne and of Saint-Bertrand on its hill with its surroundings.

Return to the main road, turn right towards Montréjeau and the autoroute, and at the roundabout take the first exit (D8) towards Saint-Gaudens. After going across the level crossing, look out for signs to Labarthe-de-Rivière to the right. Go east through the village towards the village of Valentine. On leaving Labarthe there is a well-preserved funerary tower (Figure 4.2, p. 100) on the left-hand side of the road. Continue on into the village of Valentine and turn left down to the main road. Turn left (west) onto this and, after a short distance, there is a prominent water-tower on the right. Immediately before this, take the little road to the right and after

100m. or so you will find yourself driving across the main courtyard of the Valentine villa (p. 122). This is a rather sad site. The walls delimiting the main courtyard are laid out, and down by the 1931 hydro-electric canal, which did so much damage, are the walls of the entrance to the inner parts of the villa with some columns set back up. Returning towards the main road, head to the right (west) of the water-tower and you come to the site of Arnesp. Almost all of what you see now belongs to a small Romanesque church and associated buildings, but these are constructed over a late Roman building, possibly, but by no means certainly, a temple or shrine.

Return to the D8, heading west to the roundabout. There take the exit for Gourdan-Polignan and Montréjeau and once you have crossed the Garonne into Montréjeau, at the big T-junction turn right out of Montréjeau. At the roundabout by the autoroute exit, the villa of Montmaurin is sign-posted. If in doubt, head for the village of Boulogne-sur-Gesse. The main buildings of the villa (p. 120) are conserved and open to the public (check, e.g. the Green Michelin, for days and hours of opening; there is an entry charge). Since there are guide leaflets available at the site, I shall not attempt to describe the villa in detail here. I would just draw attention to two things. One is the area between the central courtyard and the baths, with its colonnaded U-shaped court and surrounding rooms, all richly sheathed in marble. A more private area? One which, in winter, would be warmed by the baths, but would also be cool and shady in summer. The other point to note is the way the innermost court is raised above the rest of the villa, with the reception rooms at the very end being raised up again, emphasising the dominance of the proprietor. About 1km. north-east of the villa is the site of Montmaurin-la Hillère, marked by a chapel. The key to this chapel, which stands on a late Roman mosaic floor, is normally available from the custodian at the main villa. Other buildings and a hexagonal basin belonging to this site are visible to the north of the chapel.

The upper valley of the Garonne

This is the happy hunting ground for those who want to see examples of votive altars (p. 105) and of cinerary caskets (p. 109). I am going to describe a circuit which can be done in a day, or at a more leisurely pace, if you have the time, taking in a series of sites with good examples or collections of these distinctive objects. This also has the benefit that many of the altars and caskets were re-used in a series of Romanesque churches, most of which are little altered and worth a visit in their own right.

Take the road south to Bagnères-de-Luchon – generally referred to simply as Luchon (in the town there is nothing to see of the Roman thermal establishment, but the small museum next to the Tourist Information Office on the main street has some of the votive altars from the site). Do not go into the town but follow the signs for the Col de Peyresourde (a regular on

the mountain stages of the Tour de France); this will take you up into the valley of the Larboust. The first stopping-point is the village of Saint-Aventin, with parking places to either side of the main road. Walk up to the church (more elaborate than general in this area), and in the south wall of the nave and chancel is a series of marble votive altars and cinerary caskets. Three of the altars (including one, at ground level, only 21.5cm. high) bear inscriptions to the god Abellio. The caskets include two with the common design of two human half-figures, male and female, and one with two stylised birds pecking at bunches of grapes. Go on up the valley, through the village of Cazeaux-de-Larboust (whose church has only a couple of re-used stones, but, also, has a good series of mediaeval frescoes) and through the village of Garin. Just after leaving Garin, on the left is the low hill (a glacial moraine) with the chapel of Saint-Pé-de-la-Moraine (large parking area on right of road). This chapel has one of the largest collections of re-used sculptures in the area. Most of the sculptures are re-used in the buttresses on the south wall and at the east end of the apse; they are largely made up of marble blocks, now generally much discoloured. A number of cinerary caskets with husband-and-wife carvings can be seen (a good example is at the base of the northern side of the apse buttress). Over the south door there are three further pieces, with two more on the north and south walls of the interior of the nave.

Going back down the valley, there are two detours for the keen. One is up the valley of the Oueil – follow the signs for Bourg-d'Oueil. In the south wall of the church of Saint-Paul-d'Oueil is a votive altar mentioning the *pagani O(o)llaies*, the people of the valley of the Oueil. Above the south door (with mediaeval carved tympanum), the keystone is a cut-down cinerary casket. The little church of Benqué-Dessous has a couple of monuments re-used in the south wall. The other detour is through the village of Trébons-de-Luchon and on to the little church of the village of Cazaril-Laspènes, which has a series of re-used blocks in the south wall of the nave. These include part of a casket and a tombstone to the husband and wife, Hotar and Sennar. There is another tombstone in the wall of the apse. The road to Cazaril-Laspènes is narrow and windy (with passing-places) and not recommended for anything larger than a car. The views from it down into the valley are spectacular, if a little vertiginous.

Taking the main road north from Luchon, turn right at the roundabout at Gaud to Marignac. In the churchyard are three good examples of cinerary caskets, and since they are no longer built into anything (they come from a former chapel nearby) they can be seen in the round and give a good idea of what these object were like. Go east from Marignac towards Saint-Béat, passing some good exposures of marble. With the demise of the marble industry, Saint-Béat has become a bit of a ghost town, though it is possible to buy marble souvenirs. Head north again towards Montréjeau and the autoroute. After by-passing Chaum, turn right onto the road through

Fronsac and past Frontignan-de-Comminges, heading for Saint-Pé-d'Ardet. This church incorporates a major collection of altars, caskets and tomb monuments. In the garden to the south of the church is a small collection of caskets with human half-figures and with birds and grapes. There is a variety of caskets and altars built into the exterior and interior walls of the church and others have been removed to the *Mairie*. Built into the east jamb of the south door is the part of a cinerary casket showing the two personages; these have been much worn by being touched as people went into the church. This shows that these sculptures could mean more to mediaeval and later people than simply useful blocks of building-stone. For instance the church of Saint-Pé-de-la-Moraine, Garin is by the hamlet of *Sant-Tritous* whose name is a corruption of *Sants Petitous*, Gascon for *Tout Petits Saints* (the little holy ones). The sculptured figures on the caskets were re-interpreted by more recent peoples within their own systems of belief and religious observation. For those who wish (*mérite le détour,* in the words of the Baedeker Guides) to go, three kilometres on from Saint-Pé-d'Ardet is the little village of Génos, where, built into the west wall of the very simple, apsidal church is a marble funerary plaque in the form of a pair of elaborate doors, above which is an inscription by Atilia daughter of Attixis to her husband, Julianus son of Paullus. The imagery of the doors (to the afterlife?) is unusual and more 'Roman' than many other funerary monuments in the area, and the name of Atilia shows the adoption of a Roman-style name, unlike the Aquitanian name borne by her father, but like those of Julianus and his father.

Retrace your route through Saint-Pé-d'Ardet etc. to rejoin the main road towards Saint-Bertrand or the autoroute.

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