MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

RESEARCH

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The MSRG AGM 2023 and Events

The Winter Seminar and AGM will take place on 9 December 2023. This year's theme will be 'Settlement at the Margins: Living on the Edge', for which we will return to the University of Leicester. The latest information regarding the Winter Seminar, including details of how to register, will be found on our website: https://medieval-settlement.com/events. Additional information will also be issued with the journal, so please do read all of the additional paperwork carefully.

Research Grants

The MSRG can make grants for the support of research by members of the Group within its field of interest. A maximum of £5,000 is available annually until 2026, and applications for sums *up to* this amount or smaller requests are invited. Grants can cover fieldwork and associated analysis, documentary research, and other appropriate forms of assistance towards eventual publication. A summary report will be required upon completion of the work and, subject to editorial consideration, may be published in *Medieval Settlement Research*. The deadline for applications each year is 31 January. Prospective applicants can find more information and download an application form from https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/research -grants.

MEMORIAL PRIZES AND BURSARIES

John Hurst Memorial Prize

The Medieval Settlement Research Group is dedicated to enhancing our understanding of the rural landscape and its settlement in the period *c.* AD 400–1600. The late John Hurst was a major figure in the development of the Group and in his honour, and to encourage new and young scholars, an annual prize of £200 is offered for the best student paper concerning medieval rural settlement and landscape exploitation in Britain and Ireland. The winning applicant may also be invited to submit their paper for publication in *Medieval Settlement Research*. Full details, including an application form, can be found at https://medieval-settlement.com/grants-awards/dissertation-award.

Maurice Beresford Memorial Bursaries

In accordance with its aims and in memory of Maurice Beresford, pioneer in medieval settlement studies and a founder member, the Group awards as many as four student bursaries annually up to the value of £100 to help to defray the expenses of attending a conference within the Group's field of interests. Applicants must be registered as full-time or part-time students. Applications, including full details of the venue, topic and costs of the conference and its relevance to the applicant's interests, together with the name of a referee, should be submitted in writing to the MSRG Secretary. There is no deadline for accessing this fund. A panel appointed by the Committee of the Group will decide on the awards. Successful applicants should note that cheques will be sent only after attendance at the conference and after verification of the costs involved.

Medieval Settlement Research **39 (2024)**

Next year's journal will once again include refereed research articles and reports on fieldwork, excavation and other recent work. Submissions should be focused on topics relevant to the core interests of the MSRG, which are primarily medieval rural settlement and landscape in Britain and Ireland from the fifth to sixteenth centuries AD. Articles and reports focusing on landscapes and settlements from other parts of Europe are also welcomed, especially where they can be demonstrated to be of relevance to British and Irish research in terms of methodology and/or subject matter.

Please submit all copy to the Editor by **1 April 2024**. Please note:

- **Research Articles** should be 4,000–10,000 words in length, with as many illustrations as are deemed necessary to support the argument. As the journal is printed in full colour, there is no limit on the amount of colour illustrations. All submissions to this section are fully peer-reviewed by *at least* two reviewers.

- Short **Reports** summarising fieldwork or projects should be kept concise, in the range of 1,500–4,000 words plus one or two illustrations (unless the work is of a scale that necessitates a longer article – for example, reports on major projects). Shorter items, such as project announcements or reports under 1,500 words, can be included in the MSRG digital newsletter.

- Submissions should adhere to the **journal's guidelines**, which can be downloaded from

  https://medieval-settlement.com/publications/journal/.

- Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor at an early stage for advice on your potential submission: medieval.settlement.research@gmail.com

HORNDON-ON-THE-HILL, ESSEX: A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

By DANIEL SECKER[1]

Introduction

Location and geographical context

Horndon-on-the-Hill (centring on TQ67058352), hereafter simply 'Horndon', is a former small medieval market town with suspected origins as a late Saxon fortified settlement (Rippon 1996, 121–22; Essex County Council 2006, 7–9, 21–22). It is situated in southern Essex, some 35 km east of London and just to the north of the Thames estuary (Fig. 1a). Horndon occupies one of a number of low hills which are isolated features in an otherwise flat landscape (Fig. 1b). The latter is part of the topographical zone or *pays* of the Lower Thames Terraces which form a distinct contrast with the hilly *pays* of the South Essex London Clay District to the north (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 125). Horndon is situated on a prominent crescentic or 'horn-shaped' hill from which it derives its name (Fig. 2). The hill is on the London Clay Formation (British Geological Survey 1996). Neighbouring parishes are Mucking to the south, Orsett to the west, Laindon Hills to the north and Stanford-le-Hope to the east, the last originating as the Domesday estate of Hassenbrook (Williams and Martin 2002, 986; Kemble 2015, 5). The latter takes its name from the stream dividing Horndon from Stanford.

Local historic environment

Horndon is located within Barstable hundred. That hundred and the neighbouring Chafford hundred to its west possibly once comprised a single earlier Saxon territory of *Fænn-ge* ('fen-district'), defined to the west by the River Ingrebourne, to the east by the Rayleigh Hills, and to the north by the boundary between the Domesday estates of Ingrave and Hutton (Rippon 2022, 101–5). The Roman road system in the area has been reconstructed by Holbrook (2010, 3), and an additional Roman road has been identified running from the recently excavated Roman saltworks at Stanford Wharf, Stanford-le-Hope through the Laindon Hills (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 156–57). Immediately south of Horndon is the site of the early Saxon settlement at Mucking (Hamerow 1993). At East Tilbury, the probable Roman road corresponds with a routeway leading to Lower Higham in Kent, where a ferry first documented in 1293 possibly replicates the location of a Roman crossing (Hirst 2011, 111–13). Bede recounted how St Cedd founded a minster at Tilbury in 653 in the process of converting the East Saxons (*HE* III, 22). Its location is uncertain, although East Tilbury is a more likely contender than West Tilbury (Hirst 2011, 115; Rippon 2022, 106). There is also evidence for a significant Anglo-Saxon minster at South Benfleet, and another – probably of no more than local importance – at Upminster (Rippon 2022, 103–7). To the south of the Thames, the church at Dartford was of minster status (Kent County Council 2004, 12).

This study

Horndon is of interest as the site of a short-lived late Saxon mint, as evidenced by a single coin of Edward the Confessor, and the presence of earthworks to the east of the High Road which have been interpreted as a defensive enclosure of late Saxon origin (Rippon 1996, 121–22; Essex County Council 2006, 7–8, 21). There have been some archaeological excavations at Horndon (Wallis 1992; Boden 1997; Godbold 1997; Roy 2003; Peachey 2005; Allen, in prep.). While these give some insight into medieval developments here, they need to be considered in the context of the settlement topography as a whole. The approach taken here is one of morphological interpretation based on cartography, combined with the recording of ditch profiles where this was practicable. The first element will inevitably involve a degree of conjecture, as did, for instance, the analysis of Little Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire, by the late Christopher Taylor (2010). Taylor proposed that the advantage of this method was that it would 'enable ideas, even if based on the flimsiest of evidence, to be developed and then left to be taken up or rejected by other scholars using different methods' (Taylor 2010, 40). This paper takes a similar approach. After outlining the documentary history of the settlement, the latter is placed in its broader landscape context before the focus shifts to Horndon itself. The methodology used here is one of regressive analysis. The form of the later medieval settlement can be confidently recovered from a combination of the existing topography, extant buildings, the 1873 First Edition six-inch Ordnance Survey map, and the recent excavations cited above. From the elimination of probable later elements, the

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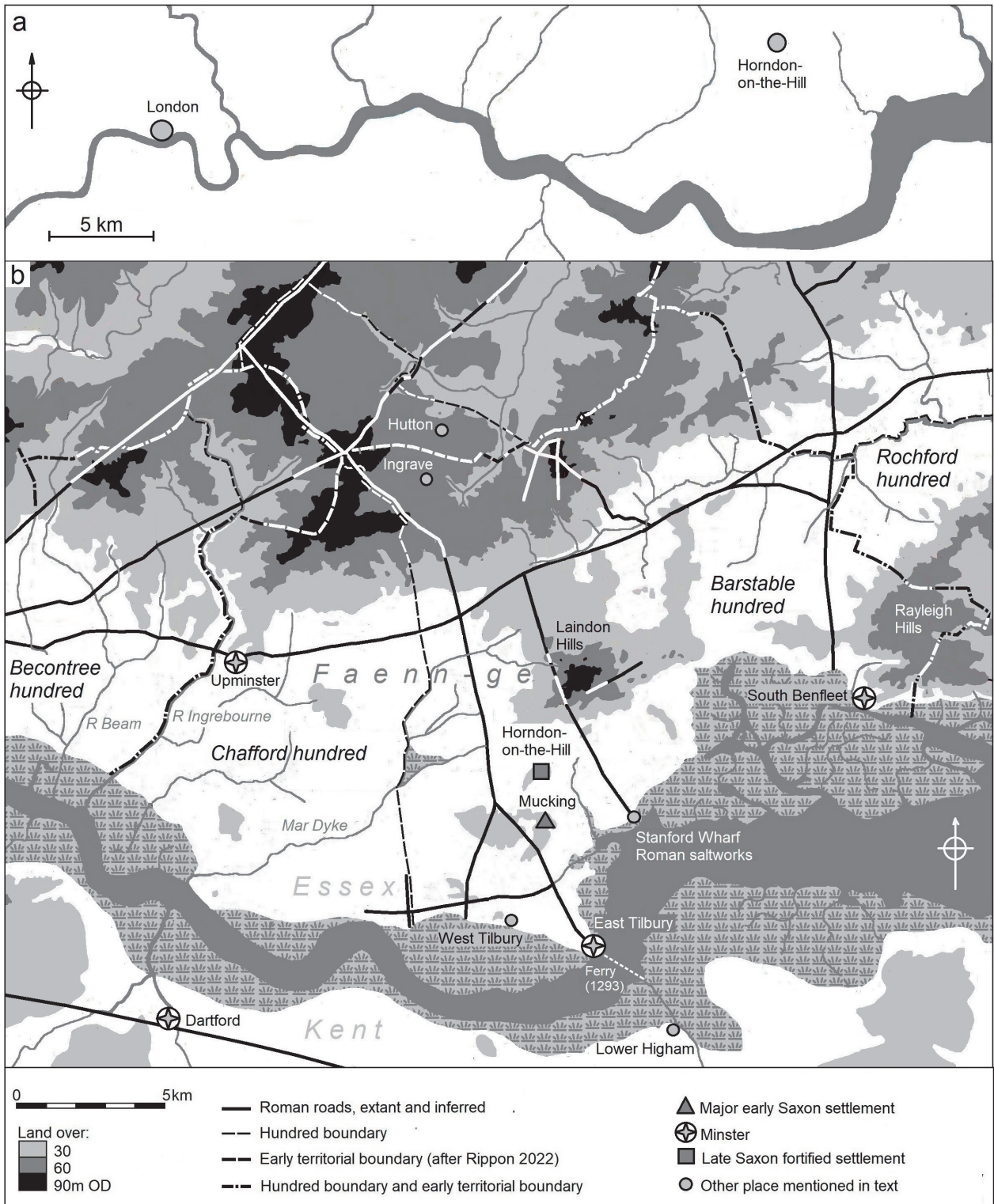
Figure 1   Horndon-on-the-Hill: (a) location in relation to London; (b) situation in relation to the Thames estuary, the Lower Thames Terraces and the South Essex London Clay District. Figure by D. Secker.

form of the earlier settlement can be deduced. It has been suggested that Horndon was grid-planned on a module of short perches of 4.57 m or fifteen feet (Blair *et al*. 2020, 226). This proposal is tested here. A tentative model for the development of the settlement is then offered, and Horndon placed in its military and economic context. Finally, it is concluded that while the recent excavations and this study have contributed to

our understanding of the early development of Horndon, there are many uncertainties which remain to be resolved by future fieldwork.

Historical summary

The earliest evidence for the existence of Horndon-on-the-Hill is numismatic: a single coin of Edward the Confessor inscribed HORNINDVNE and issued by the

Figure 2   Horndon-on-the-Hill: situation and post-medieval topography. Figure by D. Secker.

moneyer Dudinc, datable to 1056–59 (Metcalf and Lean 1993, 206, 223). In 1066, Horndon comprised five holdings held by four freemen, a further presumed freeman called Winge, and Ælfric the Priest (Table 1). The church was staffed by a deacon as well as by Ælfric. The latter had personally endowed a church, presumably that at Horndon, with half a hide and 30 acres of land, but his Norman successor, Swein of

Essex, appropriated the endowment (Williams and Martin 2002, 1000). The freeman Wulfric held fifteen acres belonging to the church in alms while a deacon held 30 acres of land in the king's alms (ibid, 988, 1041). John Blair (1996, 27) has suggested that the endowments represent a fragmented minster estate, but an alternative interpretation is that the church was a recent collegiate foundation in which the benefactors

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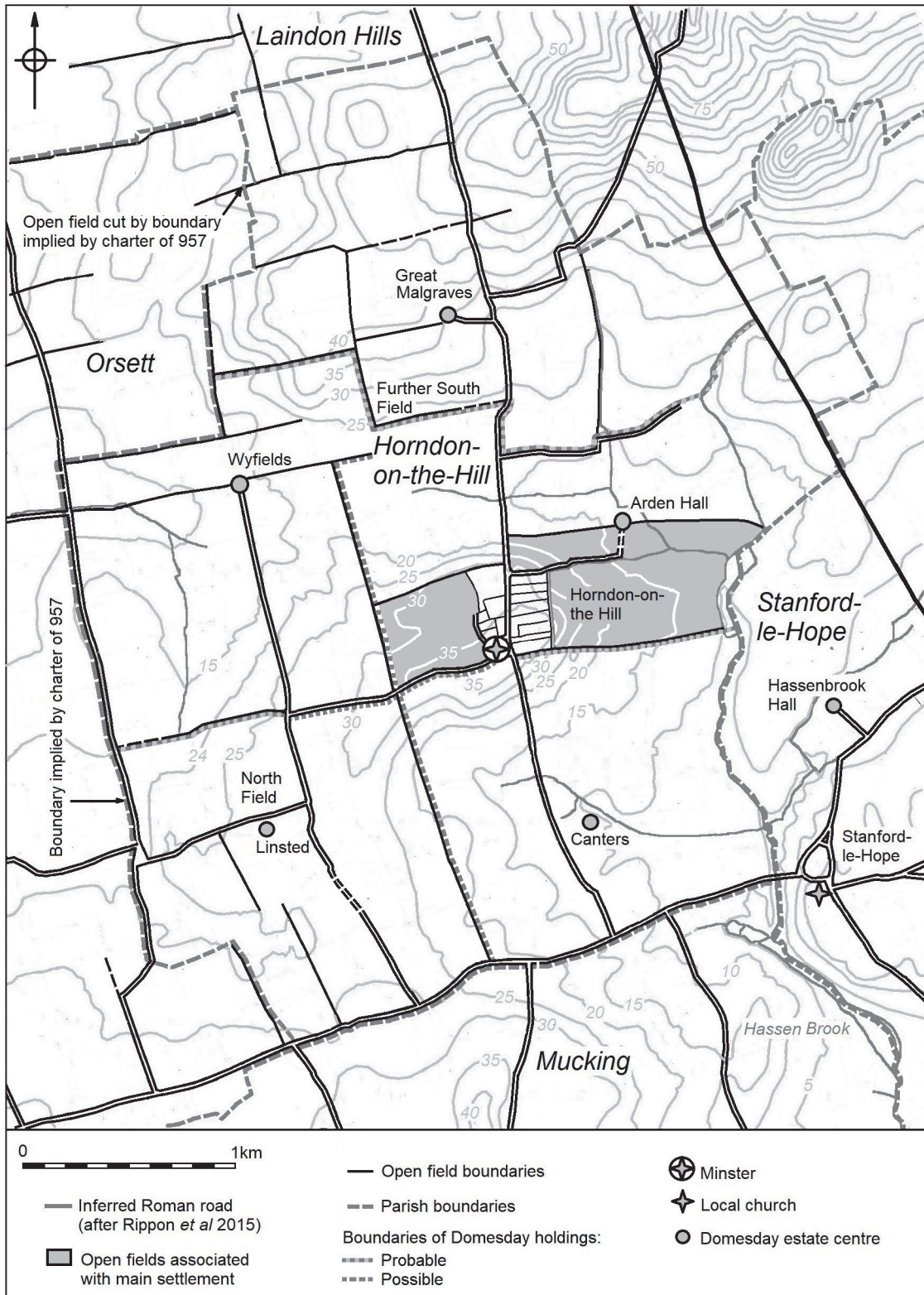
Figure 3   Horndon-on-the-Hill: reconstructed medieval topography. Figure by D. Secker.

mentioned in Domesday had a stake. That the church's endowment was greatly reduced after the Conquest may imply its transformation into a proprietary church. Between the time of the Conquest and the Domesday survey, a certain Godwine Woodhen appropriated two *mansiones* from Winge (Williams and Martin 2002, 1040). It has been suggested that these were houses rather than hides (Rippon 1996, 122, citing Boyden 1986, 280). An interpretation proposed here is that they were *hagae* or tenement plots (for a discussion of *hagae*, see Blair 2018, 342–47). Although Horndon was largely in the hands of freemen by 1066, the fact that the church was held in the king's alms in 1066 and the existence of the short-lived mint together suggest a

close royal interest in the place. Moreover, in 957, King Eadwig granted neighbouring Orsett to Brihthelm, Bishop of London (Sawyer 1968, No. 1794). This suggests that Orsett was carved out of a larger royal estate which included Horndon.

By 1086, two of the holdings had passed to subtenants of two of the most important lay barons of Essex, Eustace of Boulogne and Swein of Essex, while another was held by a subtenant of the Bishop of London (Table 2). The remaining two holdings were held by minor tenants-in-chief. Of the five Domesday holdings, three are directly relatable to later and post-medieval sub-manors while there is more circumstantial evidence that two other places in Horndon originated as Domesday holdings (Table 3). The Bishop of London's estate, later that of Canters, was still held of the bishop in 1634 (Morant 1768, 219). Eustace's holding was held by Arnulph Malgreffe for the Honour of Boulogne in *c*. 1200, and became known as Malgraves or Great Malgraves (Morant 1768, 218). Swein's holding became that of Wyfields and was held by his descendants' Honour of Rayleigh. While the holding of Edmund son of Algot apparently disappears without trace, it is notable that among his tenants was the deacon holding 30 acres of land. Very soon after Domesday, the manor of Ardern (later Arden Hall) emerged. Thomas Ardern was mentioned in 1122 when he granted tithes of corn to Bermondsey Priory (Morant 1768, 216). That Thomas held a right of tithe suggests that his predecessor had an interest in the church. It might thus be postulated that the predecessor in question was Edmund son of Algot, whose tenants included the deacon. Hugh de St Quentin's holding is obscure, but was likely to have been at or near Linsted Farm in the south-western part of the parish, since this area is not accounted for by other Domesday holdings.

Farms of non-manorial status are recorded in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Rands Barn takes its name from William son of John Rande mentioned in 1485; Saffron Garden is mentioned in 1594; Gore Ox Farm was *Goreoke* in 1479; and Rucks is named after John Rukke documented in 1319–32 (Kemble 2014, 6, 10, 12–13). Cholleys, Linsted and Wrens Park are documented in the 1839 Tithe Awards (Kemble 2014, 7–8, 13). Horndon House was held of Arden Hall when it was documented in 1555 (Morant 1768, 219). Its location immediately adjacent to the manor house of Canters, however, suggests that it was originally carved out of the Bishop of London's estate. Some of the Domesday holdings and non-manorial farms perhaps originated as dispersed settlement foci pre-dating the creation of the nucleated settlement which, it is argued below, was founded in the late tenth or early eleventh century.

The church is apparently not documented between Domesday and 1291 when, in the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas IV, it was a possession of Barking Abbey and worth £20 6s 8d, while portions worth £2 and £1 13s 4d were then held by St John's Abbey, Colchester and Bermondsey Priory respectively (Denton 2014). The last portion presumably originated as the grant of Thomas Ardern made in 1122.

A market was first recorded in 1280, when a moiety was held by Robert Giffard of Wyfields (Letters 2013). This market was prescriptive – in other words, one which never received a formal charter and was of uncertain age when first documented. A further quarter of the market was held by Thomas Peverel of Arderns in 1353, the other quarter being held by John Malegreff of Malgraves in 1286 (Morant 1768, 217–18).

Landscape context

Horndon is situated within a landscape of co-axial fields covering southern Essex, which have been discussed elsewhere (for example: Drury and Rodwell 1980; Rippon 1991). The field system around Horndon, which has been termed the 'Basildon' system, appears to have Roman origins (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 143). Key to the dating of the skeleton of the system is the complex at Orsett Cock, where a late Iron Age and early Roman enclosure was superseded in the second century by pottery kilns and NNW–SSE field boundaries (Carter 1998, 56–62). The boundaries are aligned on many extant field boundaries and roads which may have originated as Roman-period droveways (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 160–61). If the latter interpretation is accurate, it is notable that the boundaries terminate to the south at the road adjacent to Orsett Cock, running east to Stanford-le-Hope, suggesting that this route too is of Roman origin. The latter might have once joined the recently identified Roman road which ran NNW from the Roman saltworks at Stanford Wharf (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 156–57).

It has previously been suggested that the north-south road through Horndon is of prehistoric origin (Hirst 2011, 105–6, 112). While this is debatable, the road was probably the *herestrete* ('army-road') documented in *c*. 1350 (Reaney 1935, 118; Baker and Brookes 2013, 289). It possibly originated as one of the Roman-period droveways posited by Rippon, since small amounts of Roman pottery have been found in Horndon (see below). There is evidence that the present landscape of rectilinear fields has Roman origins, but that the Roman precursors evolved into small medieval open fields before being enclosed in the early post-medieval period, the last being evident in recent cartography (Rippon *et al*. 2015, 164). If probable post-medieval enclosed fields are eliminated, the medieval field system can be deduced (Fig. 3). It has been seen that in 957, King Eadwig granted Orsett to Brihthelm, Bishop of London (Sawyer 1968, No. 1794), Orsett being carved out of a royal estate which included both the former and Horndon. Notably, the medieval parish boundary between Horndon and Orsett cuts through that of a probable open field. This suggests that the field system pre-dated the grant of 957. Two exceptions are the fields adjacent to Horndon itself, which appear to be later and specifically related to that settlement.

Some of the boundaries of the Domesday holdings are identifiable from the later extent of their lands as recorded in the 1839 Tithe Awards (Kemble 2014, 6–16). That between Wyfields and Malgraves presumably preserves the eleventh-century boundary. It has been seen that the Bishop of London's Domesday holding probably originally included that of late medieval Horndon House, whose lands bordered the southern boundary of the probable eastern open field serving Horndon. The field itself and the land to its immediate north were held by Arden Hall, which apparently originated as the land of Edmund son of Algot (Table 3). The vast majority of field names relate to post-medieval enclosures, but two directional names

Table 1   Owners of Horndon-on-the-Hill in 1066. Table by D. Secker.

Estate	Owner	H	V	A	Vi	B	S	Glebe	Value	Ref
1	Godwine, a freeman	1	2	-	-	4	1	-	£1	977
2	Wulfric, a freeman	2	1	20	2	7	2	15 acres	£3	988
3	Ælfric the Priest	2	1	-	-	11	3	90 acres	30s	1000
4	Winge	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	£1	1040
5	2 freemen	2	2	15	1	14	3	Deacon with 30 acres (¼ of church)	50s	1041
Total	-	10	-	35	3	39	9	1 hide, 15 acres	£9	-

Key: H: hides; V: virgates; A: acres; Vi: villeins; B: Bordars; S: slaves; Ref: reference to pages in Williams and Martin 2002.

Table 2   Owners of Horndon-on-the-Hill in 1086. Table by D. Secker.

Estate	Owner	H	V	A	Vi	B	S	Glebe	Value	Ref
1	William for Bishop of London	1	2	-	-	4	1	-	£1	977
2	Warner for Eustace of Boulogne	2	1	20	2	7	2	15 acres	£3	988
3	Pain for Swein of Essex	2	1	-	-	11	3	Appropriated by Swein of Essex	30s	1000
4	Hugh de St Quentin	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	£1	1040
5	Edmund son of Algot	2	2	15	1	14	3	Deacon with 30 acres (¼ of church)	50s	1041
Total	-	10	-	35	3	39	9	1 hide, 15 acres	£9	-

Key: H: hides; V: virgates; A: acres; Vi: villeins; B: Bordars; S: slaves; Ref: reference to pages in Williams and Martin 2002.

Table 3   Medieval manors at Horndon-on-the-Hill and their origins. Table by Patrick Allen.

Modern name	Medieval or 16th-century	Earliest known	Owner in 1086
Great Malgraves	Margraves 1486 (Court Roll)	Adulf de Malgreffe 1198 (Curia Regis Roll)	Eustace of Boulogne
Wyfield	Wythefeld 1240 (Feet of Fines)		Swein of Essex
Arden Hall	Ardenhalle 1338 (Feet of Fines)	Thomas de Ardern 1122 (Morant 1768, 216)	Edmund son of Algot?
Canters and Shaw	Cantesmylne 1555 (Court Roll)	William le Kenteys 1235 (Feet of Fines)	Bishop of London
Linsted/Linstead	Not known		Hugh de St Quentin?

Figure 4 Horndon-on-the-Hill: (a) later medieval settlement; (b) inset detail of Village Hall excavations, phase 1; (c) southern ditch; (d) northern holloway and ditch converted to road. Figure by D. Secker; Figure 4b adapted from Allen, in prep.
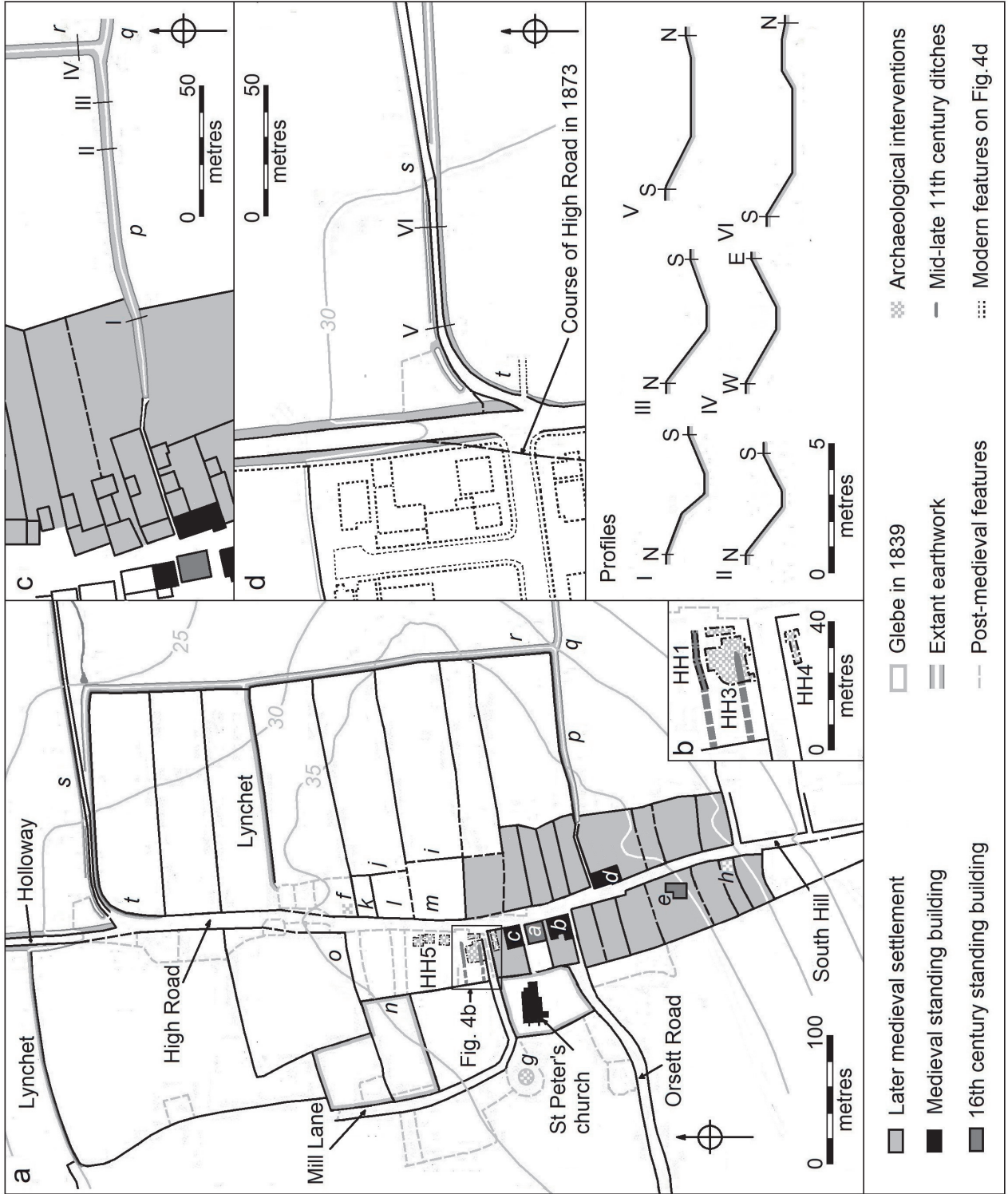
probably recall former open fields. A Further South Field relates to Malgraves manor (Kemble 2014, 13), while a North Field – held by the post-medieval farm of Linsted – occurs in the south-west of the parish (Kemble 2014, 8). The seemingly incongruous directional name of this field perhaps implies that it was originally the north field of a lost medieval landholding in the south-west of the parish later known as Linsted. This would support the theory that Linsted originated as the medieval Domesday holding of Hugh de St Quentin, which is otherwise unaccounted for (Table 3).

The extent of the Domesday holdings was disrupted by substantial changes in landholding patterns made between 1086 and the 1839 Tithe Award. The long linear NNW–SSE boundary dividing the southern part of Horndon in two may, however, be significant. It is postulated here that this was the original boundary between the lands of Hugh de St Quentin (Linsted?) and the Bishop of London (Canters), as well as that between Swein of Essex (Wyfields) and Edmund son of Algot (Arden Hall?).

Settlement

Horndon was a minor medieval market town and this is evident in the topography (Essex County Council 2006, 8–9, 22). The western part of the settlement has been largely obliterated by twentieth-century development, but its form can be recovered from the 1873 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4a). The church of SS Peter and Paul was known simply as St Peter's in the eighteenth century (Morant 1768, 219). The church, which incorporates some re-used Roman brick in its fabric, is largely of thirteenth-century and later date (RCHME 1923, 74–75). Two partly blocked early Romanesque windows survive, however, in the nave north wall (author's observation). The Market Hall (marked *a* in Fig. 4) dates from *c.* 1600, an earlier postulated fourteenth-century date being erroneous (Essex County Council 2006, 6). Of genuine late medieval date is an early fifteenth-century half-timbered and jettied house (*b*) to the south of the Market Hall (ibid, 7). Oxley House (*c*) originated as a jettied two-storey timber-framed building with an open floor, dating from *c.* 1400, which now has an eighteenth-century façade (Watkin 1998; Thurrock Council 2007, 5). These buildings indicate that the marketplace was being infilled by the late medieval period. The Bell Inn (*d*) is of late fourteenth-century origin (Essex County Council 2006, 6–7). To the south of the medieval town, Old House (*e*) is of sixteenth-century date (Thurrock Council 2007, 6–7).

A watching brief at Mayfield Cottage (*f*) revealed a pit producing only post-medieval finds (Austin 1994), but the small scale of the intervention means that the possibility of earlier occupation cannot be ruled out. Excavations at a post-medieval windmill site (*g*) produced some Roman pottery and possible human remains (Roy 2003, 5–6). This and the re-used Roman brick in the church raise the possibility that a Roman structure existed in the vicinity. Further excavations at 1 South Hill (*h*) indicated the site of a building of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century date (Essex County Council 2006, 9).

The most informative excavations at Horndon occurred on the Village Hall site to the west of the High Road, on the corner with Mill Lane, which were initially published as short notes (Wallis 1992; Boden 1997; Godbold 1997). A more detailed assessment of the results is, however, now in progress (Allen, in prep.). The following account summarises the draft report. The main excavated area (Site HH3) measured 17 x 14 m (Fig. 4b). The earliest feature (in Phase 1) was a west–east boundary ditch fronting Mill Lane which was 2.0 m wide and 0.7 m deep. The ditch fill produced pottery mainly comprising shell-tempered ware but also including small amounts of Thetford-type ware and sandy early medieval ware, suggesting use in the twelfth century. The ditches may thus have been initially cut early in that century. A large amount of cattle bone, much of it showing evidence for butchery, was also recovered. At a point 11.5 m to the north of that ditch, a trial-trench (Site HH1) indicated a further west–east ditch of similar proportions to that described above.

There were five subsequent phases (not illustrated). Phase 2, spanning the early to mid-thirteenth centuries, comprised the recutting of the ditches, the digging of a southwest–northeast drainage ditch, and the construction of a post-built structure fronting the High Road. In the late thirteenth to late fourteenth centuries (Phase 3), the ephemeral post-built structure was replaced by a more substantial timber strip-building of post-in-trench construction. At this time, the marketplace to the south received a clay-and-gravel surface, a feature also evidenced at the Hudson House excavations to the south (Site HH4; Peachey 2005, 4–6, 27). In the late fourteenth to late fifteenth centuries (Phase 4), the marketplace was given a flint-cobbled surface, while the Hudson House site to the south was built over. A flint dwarf-wall to the north of the latter site defined Mill Lane, first evidenced at this time. The lane's northern limit was marked by the strip-building which was reconstructed during this phase. Phase 5, spanning the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, saw the replacement of the Phase 4 building by one with brick dwarf-walls. In the final Phase 6 (*c.* 1700 and later), that building was replaced by two cottages which survived until the late nineteenth century.

To the north of the Village Hall site (Fig. 4a), three house plots (Site HH5) were excavated in advance of development (Roy 2003, 5). Medieval features were confined to three pits and two postholes (Roy 2003, 9–16). Two of the pits and one posthole produced shell-tempered pottery of twelfth-century date (Walker 2003). While the medieval postholes possibly relate to a truncated structure of twelfth- to thirteenth-century date, it is probable that this area remained open until timber structures represented by postholes and beam-slots were constructed along the High Road in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries (Roy 2003, 21). This area has been previously interpreted as part of the medieval settlement (Essex County Council 2006, 22). The above excavations show, however, that it was only developed after *c.* 1500. Before this, it was an open area, almost certainly the northern part of the marketplace.

Cartographic evidence indicates that the area to the east of the High Road at this point was unoccupied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Chapman and André 1777; Ordnance Survey 1st Edition six-inch map 1873). Some earlier twentieth-century housing is now present. The 1873 map, however, indicates a north-running boundary (marked *i* on Fig. 4a). North of this and staggered to the west is a further north-running

Figure 5   Horndon-on-the-Hill: (a) southern arm of enclosure ditch, looking west; (b) holloway approaching settlement from north, looking south-west. Photographs by D. Secker.

boundary (*j*) which is joined by a transverse boundary connecting with the High Road to form a small plot (*k*). This was possibly the northernmost of a group of abandoned medieval tenement plots (*k–m*). This proposal remains to be archaeologically tested, but in the light of the above, the plan of later medieval Horndon must be revised. It would appear that the early marketplace was much larger than previously thought. Settlement was concentrated in irregular tenement plots to the east of the marketplace and extended southwards, as represented by the extant Bell Inn (*c*) and the 1 South Hill site (*h*) . Both occupy regular tenement plots which extend as far south as the plot to the south of 1 South Hill on the western side and a side-lane on the eastern side.

The extant medieval settlement, the possible former medieval tenement plots and the features revealed by excavation need to be understood in the context of the overall settlement topography. Running parallel to the excavated areas to the north of the Village Hall site is a north–south boundary (*n*) axially aligned on the eastern boundary of the churchyard and terminating in a west–east boundary at the northern end of the former marketplace (*o*). The early twelfth-century ditches thus represent the marketplace's partition. Why this might have occurred is discussed in the latter part of this paper. The observation that these ditches are secondary features in relation to boundaries (*n*) and (*o*) provides a *terminus ante quem* for the establishment of the settlement. The eastern part of Horndon is bounded by a ditch, profiles of which were recorded by the author. To the south (*p*), the western termination is only 2.1 m wide, but to the east, it is 4.3–4.6 m wide, 1.5 m deep to the north, and 0.6 m deep to the south (Fig. 4c and Profiles I–III; Fig. 5a). A further ditch (*q*) is also 4.6 m wide, being 1.2 m deep to the north and 0.6 m deep to the south (Fig. 4a). This runs east for some 500 m. The eastern part of the ditch has been obliterated, but it probably extended as far as Hassen Brook (Fig. 3). The southern part of the eastern settlement ditch (Fig. 4a, *r*) is 4.8 m wide and 1.6 m deep (Profile IV). The road entering the settlement from the north runs through a substantial holloway (Fig. 5b). This is generally 1.2–1.5 m deep, but up to 2.5 m deep to the west, at a point

where it is joined by a lateral west-running lynchet about 1 m high, now revetted by modern garden walls (Figs 4a, 4d). The southern end of the western bank of the holloway represents, however, a modern deepening, since the road widened to the west at this point in 1873 (Fig. 4d). From the south-eastern end of the holloway, a lane (*s*) leads to Arden Hall, where it overlies the former ditch. The lane is generally 3.0–5.3 m wide and is bounded by a southern bank 0.9–1.2 m high with a slight counterscarp bank to its north (Profiles V–VI). Further east of this, the lane diverges ENE towards Arden Hall, where it is bounded to the north by a lynchet about 0.9 m high. To the east of this, the ditch is overgrown and inaccessible, but LiDAR suggests it is about 4.0 m wide (Fig 4a). The western end of the lane to Arden Hall terminates in a curving bank 0.6 m high, which joins the High Road (*t*).

Within the area enclosed by the ditch are a number of subdivisions which appear to represent former plots. The third of these from the north is particularly prominent, being defined by a north-facing lynchet some 0.9 m high. To the west of the High Road, the 1873 Ordnance Survey map indicates further boundaries which have been obliterated or obscured by modern development. Two fields to the north-west of the later medieval settlement were glebe in 1839, owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's and the then vicar respectively (Kemble 2014, 12).

Topographical interpretation

It is evident that the later medieval market town (Fig. 4a) straddles the southern part of an earlier settlement (Fig. 6a). The latter's northern extent is defined by a lynchet to the west of the holloway. The sinuous western boundary of the settlement to the north of Mill Lane appears to be a later modification. The original boundary probably ran straight from the western end of the northern lynchet to the northern termination of Mill Lane (Fig. 6a, *a*). The eastern side of the western arm of Mill Lane is axially aligned on the southern part of the western boundary of the churchyard (*b*). This is interpreted here as being an early boundary which the lane followed. Likewise, the southern arm of Mill Lane probably respected a pre-existing churchyard boundary

Figure 6   Horndon-on-the-Hill: (a) interpretation of earlier medieval settlement; (b) metrology, with grid of four square short perches superimposed. Figure by D. Secker.
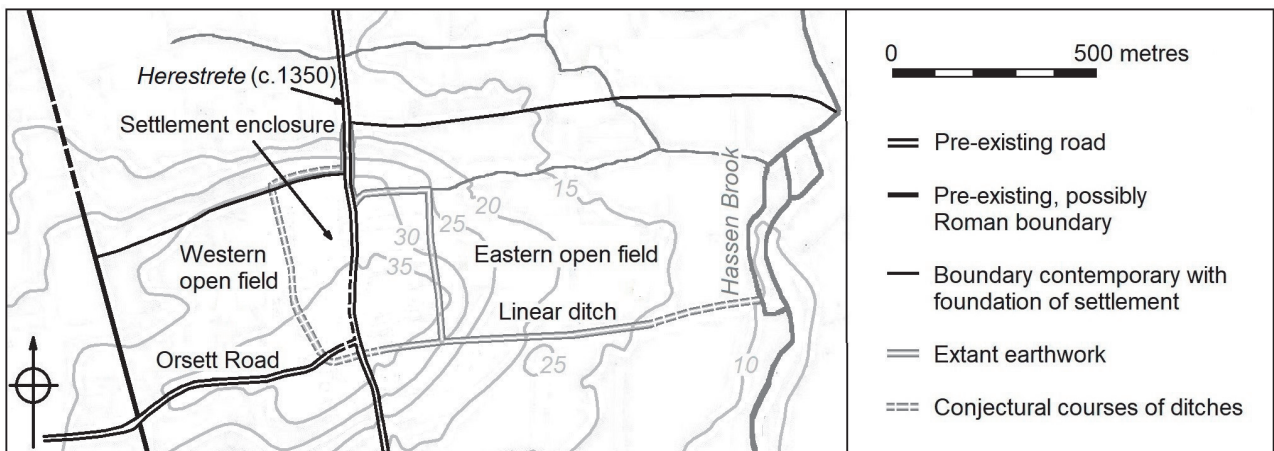

Figure 7   Horndon-on-the-Hill: relationship of primary settlement to pre-existing boundary and roads and contemporary open fields. Figure by D. Secker.

(*c*). The putative western settlement boundary terminates at Orsett Road, which veers markedly north-eastwards here, perhaps because it pre-dated the foundation of the settlement. The reconstructed boundary of the western part of the settlement may once have been fronted by a ditch of similar proportions to the extant eastern one. To the south of the churchyard, any former ditch would have turned a corner just south of Orsett Road before following the line of a later medieval tenement plot (*d*). The latter is axially aligned on the denuded western end of the south arm of the ditch surrounding the eastern part of the settlement (*e*). That ditch presumably once extended as far as the High Road (*f*).

The block forming the eastern part of the settlement is subdivided into eight plots, the third from the north being defined by a north-facing lynchet which probably represents an early division. The anomalously narrow second plot to the south (*g*) may be a later modification, having been carved out of the plot to its north.

To the west of the High Road, it has been noted above that the marketplace was much larger than previously thought and was subdivided by the early twelfth-century ditches (*h*). A boundary to the west of the marketplace is possibly later medieval (*i*). North of the former open area, further boundaries suggest that there were two plots (*j–k*) corresponding to the central plots in the eastern settlement, but that the former were amalgamated in the late medieval or post-medieval period. There is no evidence of plots to the north of this, the area being meadow by 1839 (Kemble 2014, 12). While it is possible that there were once western plots here which mirrored those on the east, it is perhaps safest to assume that this was an open area which was never developed.

Metrology

It has been proposed by John Blair that certain Anglo-Saxon settlements were planned on modules of short perches of 4.57 m or fifteen feet (Blair 2013, 18–21) and that, in the late Saxon period, these were grouped into modules of four short perches of 18.28 m or 60 feet (Blair 2018, 317). Although the theory has inevitably encountered some scepticism, it is supported by an increasing body of circumstantial evidence (Blair *et al*. 2020, xiv).

Horndon has been proposed as a candidate for a potentially grid-planned settlement on a short perch module, although there is some uncertainty over this (Blair *et al*. 2020, 226). Here, I have attempted to test the hypothesis (Fig. 6b). Baselines (*x–y*) were plotted on the most regular part of the settlement plan, namely its north-eastern part, using a datum point (*da*) near the junction of the holloway and the road to Arden Hall. The results indicate that, overall, there is a good conformity to the short perch and the four-perch module to the east of the road. The ditches enclose an area approximately equivalent to two 'short furlongs' of 40 square short perches each. To the north, there is a boundary eight short perches north of the lynchet, with a further boundary nine short perches north of this. South of this, the plot boundaries do not conform to the grid. To the north of the lynchet, the western boundary aligns on the grid, but to the south, the boundary bulges out to the west. While this might be partly due to the encroachment of late medieval properties on the earlier

road, the bulge begins north of the point where late medieval settlement is evident. The only feature which conforms to the grid in the settlement west of the High Road is the church.

The results suggest that the eastern element of the settlement was grid-planned but that the western part was not. The most tightly planned zone is that north of the lynchet, which largely conforms to an area of 40 x 28 short perches. South of this, there is the westward bulge of the High Road mentioned above, but also an eastward skew in the boundary ditch. The easternmost part of the southern ditch is at the south-east corner of the southern 'square short furlong', but it then veers southwards. There may be two explanations for these deviations. First, it has been suggested that surveyed grids acted only as guidance for subsequent developments, which did not necessarily follow them (Blair *et al*. 2020, 192). Second, the grid could have been partly laid out over, or respected, pre-existing features. Both explanations may, at least in part, be applicable. If the western curvature of the High Road already existed, there could have been no particular need to alter this. On the other hand, the deviation of the eastern part of the southern ditch, and the slight eastward skew of the east ditch south of the lynchet from the grid, may reflect the fact that the grid-plan was not strictly adhered to.

Date, form, function and agency

Dating of the primary settlement relies on indirect evidence: firstly, the ditches representing the partition of the marketplace in the centre of the settlement can be dated to the early twelfth century; and secondly, the north ditch of the eastern part of the settlement is partly oversailed by the lane to Arden Hall, probably in existence by 1086 x 1122 and possibly in 1066 x 86 (see above). The eastern part of the settlement exhibits a combination of grid- and row-planning, an exclusively late tenth- or eleventh-century phenomenon encountered in only a few places such as West Cotton in Northamptonshire and Sompting in West Sussex (Blair *et al*. 2020, 193, 196–97). Based on analogy with these two examples, the settlement at Horndon is unlikely to be earlier than the last decade of the tenth century. Conversely, a *terminus ante quem* is provided by the probably later eleventh-century lane to Arden Hall. The above evidence suggests that the settlement was founded at some time between the late tenth and mid-eleventh centuries.

Grid-planned settlements based on the short perch unit in Anglo-Saxon England occur in two periods: *c*. 590–800 and *c*. 940–1050 (Blair *et al*. 2020, 203–7). Horndon obviously belongs to the second of these. It has been suggested that this phase was associated with the contemporary monastic revival and that grid-planning was absent on the royal demesne (Blair *et al*. 2020, 144–47, 171). There is, however, at least one exception, in that grid-planning is evidenced at Isleham, Cambridgeshire (Blair *et al*. 2020, 12–14, 261–63). In 1066, Isleham was jointly held by the king, his sheriff Ordgar, his huntsman Wulfwine and fourteen sokemen (Williams and Martin 2002, 520, 522–23, 542). Given the apparent royal interest in Horndon (see above), the grid-planning here could have been a royal initiative. Unlike Isleham, Horndon was not – at least by 1066 – royal demesne. It may once have been, however, since it

has been seen that King Eadwig's grant of Orsett to the Bishop of London was probably out of royal land which included Horndon.

An unusual feature at Horndon is that its eastern portion exhibits evidence of grid-planning, but the western portion does not, apart from the church. Moreover, the grid-planned element is unlikely to be of a different date since, as discussed below, the first phase of the settlement appears to have been planned as a single episode. How can this anomaly be explained? To some extent, topography is a factor. On the north-western flank of the settlement, it would have been desirable for the boundary to respect the break of slope on the 30 m contour. This would not, however, explain why the western boundary of the settlement does not follow the grid. One explanation for the discrepancy is that the planning of the western and eastern halves of the settlement were directed by different agencies. It has been seen at the beginning of this paper that while Horndon was held by five freemen and a landholding priest in 1066 (Table 1), there was a strong royal interest in the place, hence the church being held in the king's alms and the existence of a mint. In the half-century or so before the Conquest, it may have been the case that some of the estate was held by freemen, but that there was a portion of royal demesne which was subsequently alienated. If ownership of Horndon was divided between king and freemen at the time of the settlement's inception, they could have jointly founded the latter. One scenario is that the king's agents who were responsible for the eastern part of the settlement employed surveyors while the freemen who raised the western half did not.

Development: a proposed model

The plan of Horndon was determined in part by pre-existing features (Fig. 7). To the settlement's west, a straight linear NNW–SSE boundary may be of Roman origin, while it has been suggested above that the north-south road may have originated as a Roman-period droveway. The latter was probably the *herestrete* of *c.* 1350 (Reaney 1935, 118; Baker and Brookes 2013, 289). Orsett Road might well been in existence by this time. It forms the southern boundary of the western of two open fields which appear to have been created at the same time as the settlement. The northern boundary of the western field continues as the lynchet defining the north-eastern boundary of Horndon. The southern boundary of the eastern field comprises a linear ditch which, where it survives, is 4.6 m wide and 1.2 m deep to the north (Figs 4a–b, Fig. 7). It is apparently contemporary with the settlement ditches and is of similar size. This ditch is somewhat too substantial to have been a mere field ditch and could have had some defensive potential in impeding the northward movement of an aggressive force.

The development of the settlement is here divided into four phases (Figs 8–9), three of which broadly coincide with the phases 1 to 4 of the Village Hall excavations summarised above. The exception is the settlement Phase 1, which pre-dates any substantial activity on the Village Hill site.

Phase 1: late tenth to later eleventh centuries

It is proposed here that the extant eastern ditch once extended around the entire settlement (Fig. 8a). That the

lynchet subdividing its eastern part was a primary feature is evidenced by its alignment on the grid associated with the laying out of this part of the settlement, as discussed above. The south-eastern area, on the highest point of the site east of the road, might have originated as a high-status compound. If, as is suggested above, Horndon was partly royal demesne before being entirely alienated to freemen before 1066, this could represent a royal enclosure. That the plots to the north of the lynchet are primary is indicated by their alignment on the setting-out grid. The plot on the western side of the road, which mirrors the southernmost eastern plot and that immediately to the former's south, were probably also original features, likewise the marketplace. The earliest details of the church date to *c.* 1100 (see above). The fact that it is aligned on the grid, however, suggests that it occupies the site of the church implied in Domesday. The area to the north of the churchyard which was later glebe may have always been so, while the north-western quadrant was possibly a stock enclosure.

The archaeological and topographical evidence outlined above indicates that the settlement was planned sometime between *c.* 990 and *c.* 1050, while the historical context discussed below suggests that it was founded during the troubled reign of Æthelred II (978–1016). The hilltop location might suggest a defensive role for the settlement. Although the extant ditches do not represent particularly strong defences, their defensive value is enhanced by the site's hilltop location. Comparison can be made with the defences of the fortification raised by Edward the Elder in 912 at Maldon, which has ditches only 1.2 m deep, but which like Horndon is located on a prominent hilltop (Haslam 2015, 314–15). The staggered northern entrance at Horndon is most unusual, but might be explained by the topography of the site, the lynchet to the west of the holloway taking advantage of the break of slope here. The form of the entrance has a certain defensive logic. To borrow from the terminology of castle studies, the holloway could have acted as a 'barbican' which channelled and confined aggressors. The northward-projecting part of the settlement's circuit to the west of the holloway would have provided defenders with a vantage point from where any would-be intruder could be attacked with missiles at close quarters.

Phase 2: later eleventh to early thirteenth centuries

This phase (Fig. 8b) begins slightly before phase 1 of the sequence in the Village Hall excavations (Allen, in prep.). The mint was in existence by this time, as evidenced by the coin of 1056–59 (Metcalf and Lean 1993, 206, 223). Two of the plots in the settlement were presumably the 'places' or *mansiones* seized by Godwine Woodhen between 1066 and 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002, 1040). While these probably pertain to Phase 1, it is likely that the proposed high-status compound was being subdivided at this time. If this was indeed a royal enclosure, subdivision could have occurred following the possible alienation of royal demesne to freemen shortly before the Conquest. That the defences were already disused is evidenced by the conversion of part of the north ditch into the lane leading to Arden Hall, probably at some time between the Conquest and 1122 (see above). In any case, Horndon would have been redundant as a fortified

settlement following King Cnut's accession to the throne in 1017.

The most important excavated features from this phase are the two substantial parallel early twelfth-century ditches which subdivided the marketplace into northern and southern components. The documentary history of the settlement and marketplace may provide a clue as to why they were created. Before the Conquest, Horndon had been held by five freemen and a landholding priest (see above, Table 1). These people might have constituted a local oligarchy who co-operated in the administration of the place, including the market. Following the Conquest, ownership passed to subtenants of the Bishop of London, those of two important lay barons, and two minor tenants in chief (Table 2). When the prescriptive market was first recorded in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two quarter-shares were held by Thomas Peverel of Arden Hall and John Malegreff of Malgraves, while a moiety was held by Robert Giffard of Wyfields (Morant 1768, 217–218; Letters 2013). The Arden quarter-share may have been carved out of a moiety held by the owners of Malgraves. To back-project to the early twelfth century, the overlord of the later Malgraves portion of the market would have been Eustace III of Boulogne (1087–1125). The Wyfields portion could either have been held by Swein, Sheriff of Essex, or by his son Robert. Given the location of their estate centres around Horndon (Fig. 3), it is likely that Eustace held the northern part of the marketplace and Swein or Robert the southern (Fig. 8b). The ditches might therefore have been cut to define each baron's jurisdiction.

Phase 3: early to late thirteenth century

Phase 3 (Fig. 9a) is coeval with phase 2 of the Village Hall sequence (Allen, in prep.). At this time, the ditches partitioning the marketplace were recut and an ephemeral structure raised between them. It may have been at this time that in the eastern part of the settlement, the second southernmost eastern plot was subdivided. Although they have not been archaeologically investigated, there is some circumstantial evidence that the irregular tenement plots within the larger, earlier plots date from this time. In Phase 4, discussed below, there is evidence for a planned extension to the south of the settlement which cannot be later than the fourteenth century. This evidence thus provides a *terminus ante quem* for the irregular plots to the north. It has been suggested above that boundaries to the east of the northern part of the marketplace may represent abandoned medieval tenement plots (Fig. 4a, *i–m*). They are reconstructed as such on Fig. 9a.

Phase 4: late thirteenth to late fifteenth centuries

This long phase (Fig. 9b) conflates phases 3 and 4 at the Village Hall excavations (Allen, in prep.). It includes all activity prior to the infilling of the north marketplace which commenced at the close of the fifteenth century (Roy 2003, 17, 21). The earlier part of this phase saw alterations to the marketplace area in the form of the replacement of the ephemeral structure within the partition with a more permanent building, and the furnishing of the south marketplace with a gravel surface in the late thirteenth century before the area was

infilled a century later (Allen, in prep.). There were two more fundamental alterations to the settlement topography in this time. First, there was the southward expansion of the settlement, which occurred no later than the fourteenth century, as evidenced by the surviving Bell Inn and the excavated building at 1 South Hill (Essex County Council 2006, 6–7, 9). The extension would have obliterated the central and western parts of the southern ditch, while the regularity of the former's plots suggests deliberate planning. Second, there is the creation of Mill Lane in the fifteenth century, the western arm of which overrode the long-redundant western defences.

The foundation of the fortified settlement at Horndon: historical and geographical context

It has been proposed above that the first phase of the settlement at Horndon stood within a defensible enclosure (Fig. 8a). The site enjoys extensive views over the Thames Estuary (Fig. 10). The latter was the scene of Viking activity in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. In 994, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that Viking commanders Olaf Tryggvason and Swein Forkbeard attacked London but were repelled and proceeded to raid the Essex coast (Swanton 2000, 127–29). In 1009, the Vikings 'took winter quarters off the Thames, and lived off Essex and off the shires which were nearest on both sides of the Thames', before proceeding completely to overrun Essex in 1011 (Swanton 2000, 139–41). The attack on London and subsequent raiding of the Essex coast would have caused both local and national alarm, and it is plausible that fortifications were established at this time to counteract future threats.

Horndon would have been a suitable place for such an installation. The site overlooks a major bend in the Thames estuary known as the Hope, which separates the safely-navigable inner estuary from the treacherous outer one (Hirst and Clark 2009, 442). In the later eighteenth century, the Essex antiquary Philip Morant noted: 'Seamen have given it the name of Hope, because they find it a safe anchoring place after they are passed the dangers of the Goodwin and other sands near the Thames mouth, and can here safely cast their anchor' (Morant 1768, 237). What applied to eighteenth-century seamen equally applied to earlier Viking fleets. The low-lying land in this area is former marsh which was reclaimed in the late and post-medieval periods (Rippon and Wainwright 2011). While the marsh would have been a barrier to disembarkation, the creek at Mucking and the peninsula at East Tilbury would have provided potential landing-places. Horndon commands Mucking Creek and also would have blocked the path of any Viking army who made landfall at East Tilbury and wished to penetrate the interior of Essex. A hostile force might attempt to bypass Horndon to the east and gain access to the High Road – the *herestrete* mentioned in *c.* 1350 (Reaney 1935, 118; Baker and Brookes 2013, 289). They would, however, encounter the linear ditch which, while hardly an insurmountable barrier, might slow the aggressors down so that any force based at Horndon could mount a counter-attack.

As well as controlling access to inland Essex, Horndon could also have served as a refuge for local rural estuarine communities who would have been especially vulnerable to a Viking attack. In Domesday,
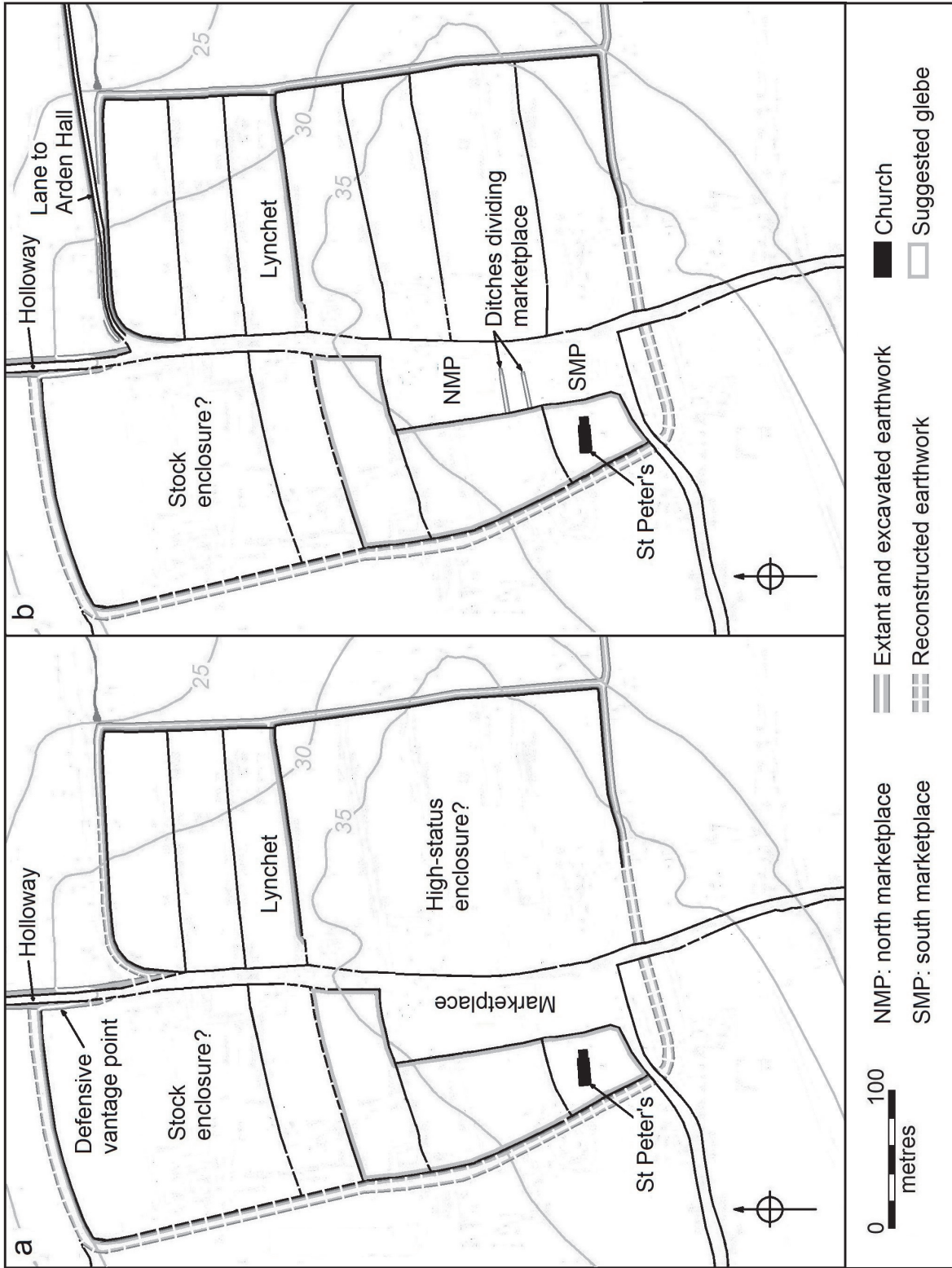
Figure 8   Horndon-on-the-Hill development: (a) Phase 1: late tenth to later eleventh centuries; (b) Phase 2: later eleventh to early thirteenth centuries. Figure by D. Secker.
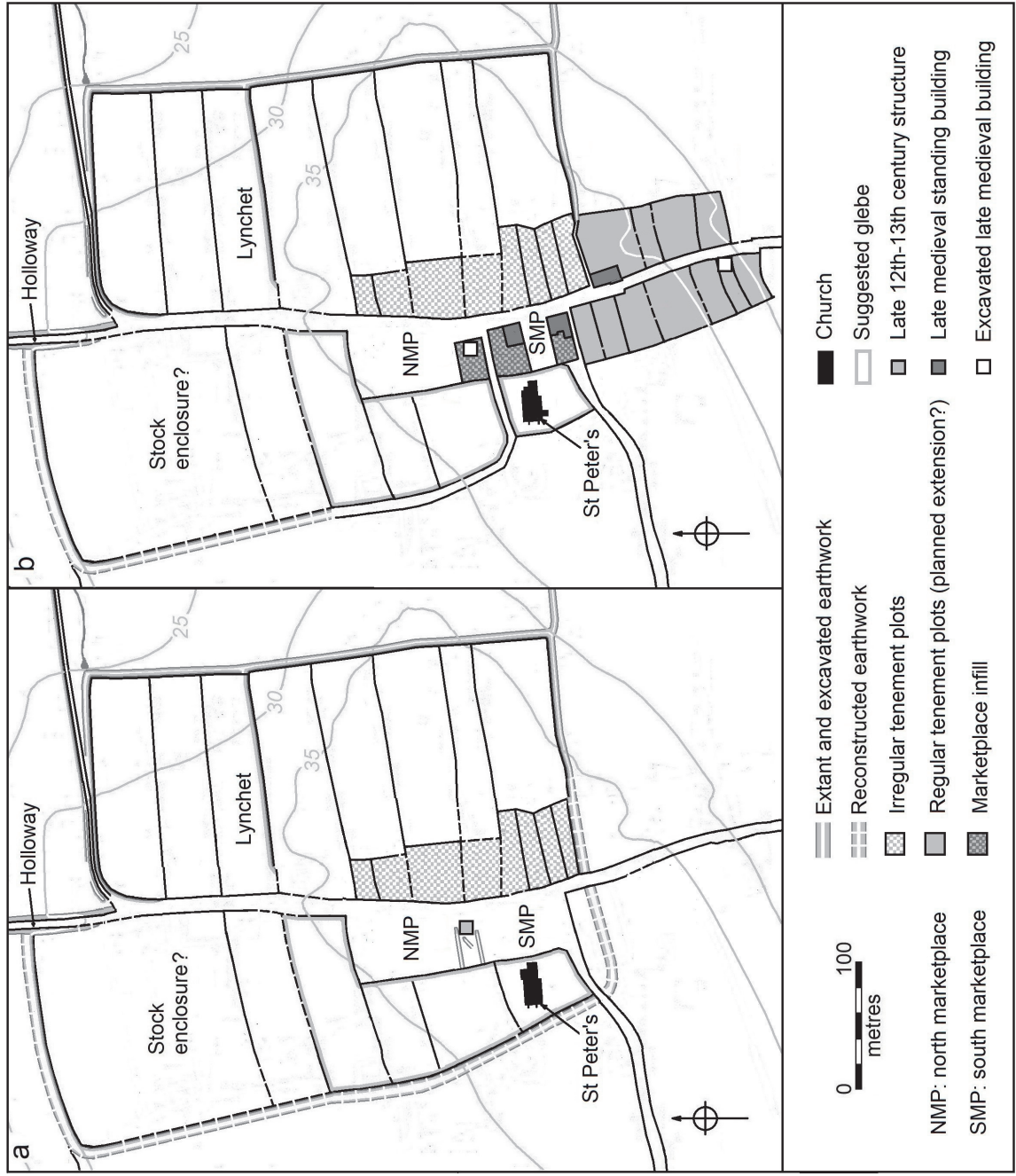
Figure 9   Horndon-on-the-Hill development: (a) Phase 3: early to late thirteenth century; (b) Phase 4: late thirteenth to late fifteenth centuries. Figure by D. Secker.

Figure 10   Horndon-on-the-Hill and environs in relation to the Thames estuary in the eleventh century. Figure by D. Secker.

such communities are evidenced at Corringham, Mucking, Hassenbrook, Fobbing, and West and East Tilbury (Williams and Martin 2002, 977, 981, 986, 995, 1000, 1014, 1043). It is likely that these places were in existence by the late tenth century. By the latter part of the eleventh century, Corringham and Fobbing had acquired masonry churches (RCHME 1923, 25–26, 44–46).

The place-names *here-stræt* ('army street') and the associated *here-pæð* ('army-path') denote Anglo-Saxon military roads (Baker and Brookes 2013, 140–52). That Horndon is at the southern end of *herestrete* supports the hypothesis that the settlement had a military role and was integrated into a pre-existing civil defence network (Fig. 11). Chapman and André's map (1777) indicates that the *here-stræt* terminated west of Little Burstead

(Fig. 11, *a*). It probably originally ran, however, towards Hutton (Fig. 11, *b*) to join the London–Colchester Roman Road, itself a *here-stræt* documented in 1344 (Baker and Brookes 2013, 289). The Roman road linked London, refortified by King Alfred in 886, with the *burhs* of Witham, Maldon and Colchester, founded by Edward the Elder in 912, 916 and 917 respectively (Swanton 2000, 80–81, 96, 100, 103). The *burhs* were in turn associated with the network of royal estate centres in Essex evidenced in Domesday (Rippon 1996, 117–22).

While defence may have been the main motivation behind the foundation of Horndon, there is also evidence for economic and ecclesiastical activity from the outset. Although the earliest evidence of a mint is the single coin of 1056–59 (Metcalf and Lean 1993,
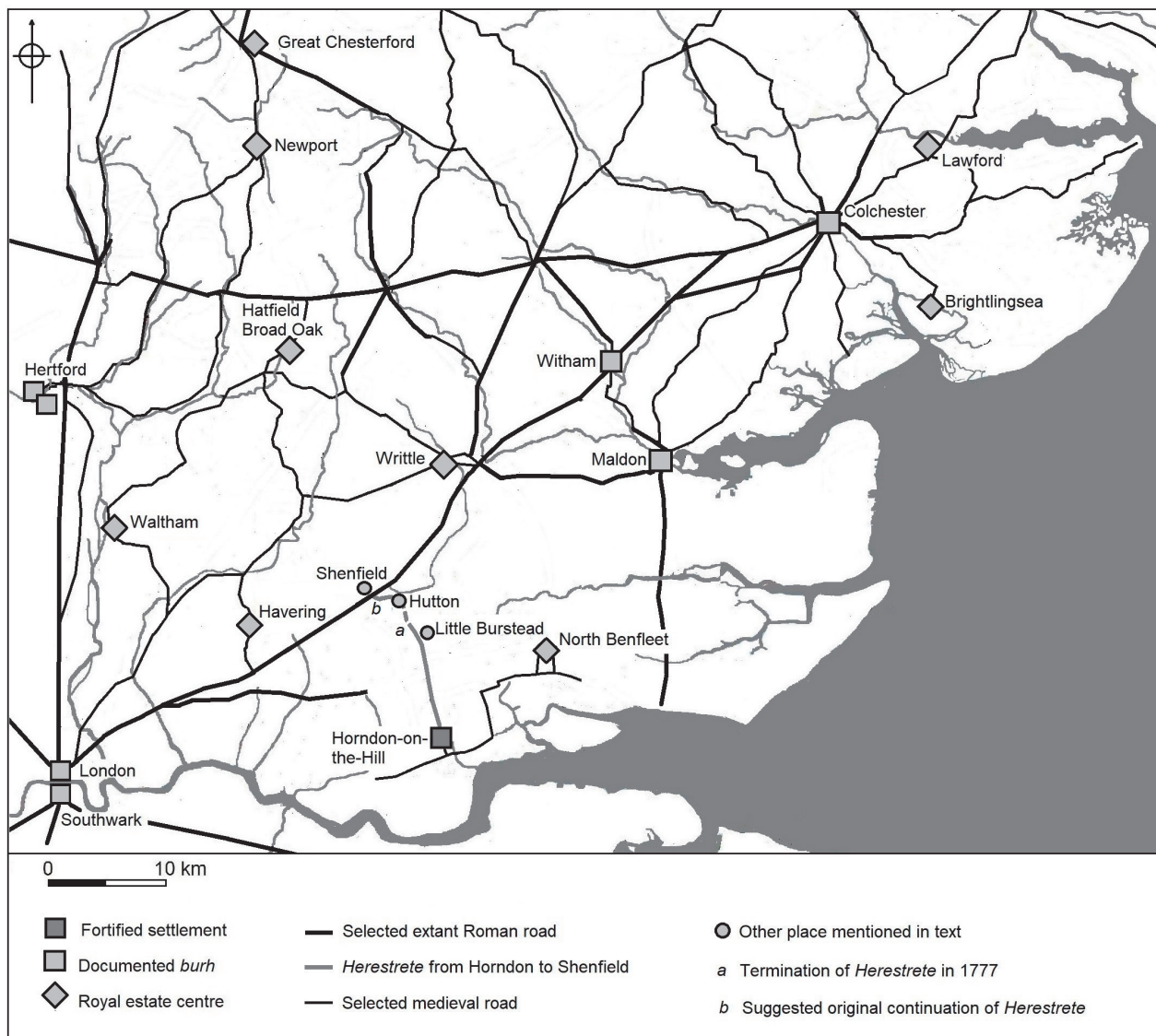
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Figure 11   Horndon-on-the-Hill in relation to late Saxon burhs *and royal estate centres in Essex. Figure by D. Secker.*

206, 223), this only provides a *terminus ante quem* for its foundation. Topographical analysis indicates that the settlement had a marketplace from its inception. It was thus of ancient origin when first documented in 1280 (Letters 2013). A church whose staff included a landholding priest and a deacon was in existence before 1066 (Table 1). There is no evidence that it was an old foundation (*contra* Blair 1996, 27). It is more likely that a new collegiate minster was founded specifically to serve the settlement.

There remains the question of the agency involved in the early development of the settlement at Horndon. While the presence of a mint certainly indicates the king's patronage, and the grid-planning may have been a royal initiative, considerable influence may have rested with the freemen and landholding priest who held Horndon in 1066 (Table 1). The agency of higher-ranking freemen and sokemen is increasingly being suggested in the design of both some settlements and the churches that served them, Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire being a recently explored example (Everson

and Stocker 2012). In the above and other cases, this is suggested as being a result of weak overlordship, the sokemen being almost minor lords themselves (Everson and Stocker 2012, 13). At Horndon, a slightly different scenario is envisaged, in which there was a 'social contract' between the freemen and the king. As a fortified site, Horndon would have contributed to national defence, but those with the most to lose from Viking raids would have been local landowners. The freemen who held Horndon presumably profited from any market, but the dues from the latter and the mint also served the interests of the king.

Conclusion

That Horndon originated as a fortified settlement with quasi-urban characteristics, as has previously been proposed (Rippon 1996, 121–22; Essex County Council 2006, 7–9, 21–22), is supported by the evidence discussed in this paper. Horndon was probably founded at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries when Viking aggression in the Thames estuary became an

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increasing problem (Swanton 2000, 127–29). While its military role would have soon become obsolete, and the mint represented by a single coin was clearly short-lived, Horndon continued to develop as a market settlement. Topographical analysis demonstrates that the marketplace was a primary element of the plan. The prescriptive market first recorded in 1280 (Letters 2013) was by then already over two and a half centuries old.

Although excavations within Horndon have been on a small scale, their results are of the utmost importance in understanding the place's development. A crucial factor is the realisation that the Saxo-Norman pottery in the southern parallel ditch at the Village Hall excavations represents a primary fill and was not residual as was previously believed (Allen, in prep., *contra* Godbold 1997). That topographical analysis shows this ditch to be a secondary feature supports a late Saxon date for the settlement's foundation (Fig. 8a). In the excavations to the north of the Village Hall site, an equally important discovery was the general absence of medieval occupation (Roy 2003, 21). This indicates that the marketplace was much larger than previously thought and that the later medieval plan of Horndon must be redrawn (Fig. 9b, *contra* Essex County Council 2006, 22).

Despite these developments, our understanding of the origins and development of Horndon is far from complete and there are multiple avenues for further research. It has been suggested that the extant ditch surrounding the eastern part of the settlement once extended around the latter's entirety. The presence of such a ditch awaits archaeological confirmation. No excavations have taken place in the medieval settlement area on the eastern side of the marketplace (Fig. 4a). Given that the town has a medieval historic core and is a conservation area (Thurrock Council 2007), future development-led excavations are unlikely, but community-based fieldwork, for example, might test the theory proposed above that boundaries to the east of the northern part of the marketplace (Fig. 4a, *i–m*) represent former medieval tenement plots (cf. Lewis *et al.*, this volume). There is also scope for non-intrusive investigation regarding the later medieval town. There is evidence for a planned extension to the south of Horndon in the fourteenth century, or possibly earlier (Fig. 9b). This might benefit from a more detailed morphological analysis and research into its historical context.

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JOHN HURST MEMORIAL PRIZE 2022

In 2004, the Medieval Settlement Research Group announced the launch of a prize, set up in honour of the late John Hurst, who did so much to promote the field of medieval archaeology and in particular the study of medieval settlement. This annual prize of £200 is intended to encourage new and young scholars in the field. Originally a prize for the best master's dissertation, since 2018 the prize is awarded for the best student presentation at the MSRG winter seminar (further details on the Announcements page at the start of this volume). For the 2022 award, we are delighted to announce that the prize winner is Alexandre Mateu Picó, a predoctoral fellow under the directorship of Professor Josep Torró at the University of València.

CHRISTIAN COLONISATION OF THE URBAN SPACE OF SAGUNT, VALENCIAN COUNTRY (1238–1350)

By ALEXANDRE MATEU[1]

This study addresses the process of appropriation of urban space by Christians in the Kingdom of Valencia, after the conquest by King James I in 1238. Using Sagunt as a case study, our aim is to examine what the *medina*, i.e. the older part of the town, was like during the era of Muslim rule (the 'Andalusi' period); and how it changed after the expulsion of its Muslim inhabitants in 1248. By utilising extant urban morphology and historical maps, alongside documents and archaeological reports, we can demonstrate the complete transformation of residential areas following Christian colonisation. During this process, the Andalusi street network was modified but never entirely transformed, retaining much of its historical character. The nature of these urban changes leads us to propose the crucial importance of the Christian settlers and the small- to medium-scale building operations they carried out as the principal subject of study when conducting this type of analysis.

Introducing Sagunt

Sagunt is situated on the Valencian coast, in the east of the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 1). The first settlement here was built on the western peak of the hill on which Sagunt's castle now stands. This Iberian *oppidum* was encircled by a double line of walls (Martí Bonafé 1998, 114–22). After the siege and subsequent conquest by Hannibal in 218 BC, the Romans built a new town that stretched to the bank of the river Palància. The objective of this occupation of the plain, as it was in many other *civitates*, would have been to control the bridge across the river (Ferrer *et al.* 2016, 143, 147). From the first century AD, the city experienced a great building boom, with the construction of the forum on top of the hill, the theatre on the way up to the forum, and the circus next to the river (Aranegui 2004, 98, 142, 165).

During the Visigothic period (fifth to eighth centuries AD), the town went into a period of decline, but it did not disappear, as is shown by the intermittent striking of coinage in the local mint, by different kings of Toledo between 600–700 (Ripollés 2002, 313–17). After the Arab-Berber conquest of 711, the town was virtually deserted and the population was composed mainly of *Imazighen* (Berber) settlers who lived in agricultural hamlets (*qurā*) surrounded by small farms. This settlement and agricultural pattern, coupled with limited influence from the state, led to an escalating trend of de-urbanisation in the eastern region of al-Andalus (*Šarq al-Andalus*) (Guichard 1969, 112–23). The toponym *Saguntum* was relocated to the hinterland of the former town, while the now-ruined city came to be known as *Murbīṭar*. This name, originating from *muri veteres* (old walls), remained in use until the nineteenth century, appearing as *Muriveteris* in Latin, *Morvedre* in Catalan and *Murviedro* in Castilian (Guichard 1969, 120).

In the forum, a castle (*ḥiṣn*) was built, mentioned in the tenth century by al-Rāzī and in the eleventh by Ibn Hayyān (Catalán and De Andrés 1974, 37; Viguera and Corriente 1981, 245; Guichard 1990–1991, t. I: 215–21; doc. 38). After the proclamation of the Caliphate of Córdoba by Abd al-Rahmān III in 929, the state managed effectively to dominate the whole of its

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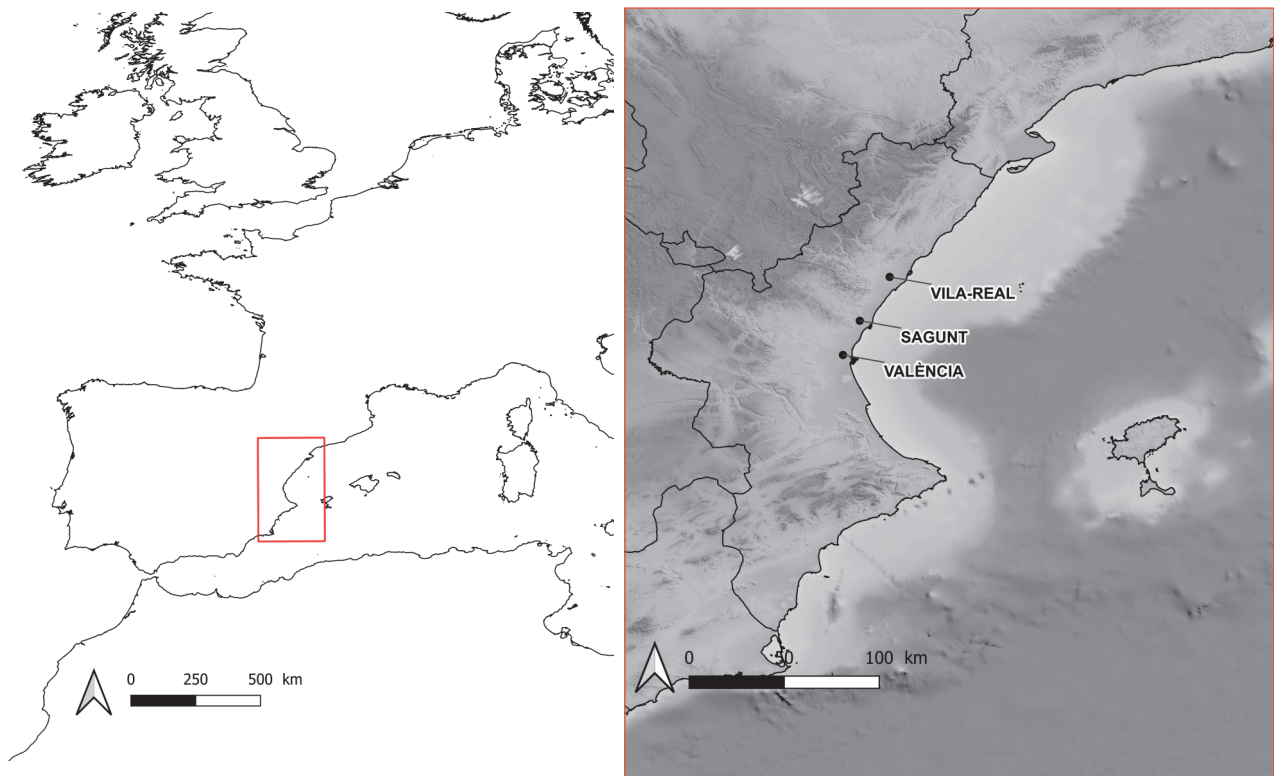   alexandre.mateu@uv.es

Figure 1   Location of main cities mentioned in the text.

territory, and the *ḥiṣn* of *Murbīṭar* became the administrative centre of a district slightly larger than the modern region of *El Camp de Morvedre* (Guinot 2007, 103).

Urbanisation began in the eleventh century, as in other towns in eastern al-Andalus – notably Valencia, Murcia and Tortosa (Guichard 1990–1991, I: 57–58). The new town was located on the slopes of the hill and has been inhabited ever since. This continuity of occupation has been conducive to the persistence of different features on the map. The most obvious survivals are the streets, whose rigidity is due to the inherent difficulty of altering them: transformation would require all the houses next to them to be demolished at once and rebuilt with a different layout – a very infrequent occurrence (Lavedan and Hugueney 1974, 162; Rossi 1984, 55–61). This resilience makes it possible to study extant urban morphology as historical evidence, provided that we are able to distinguish between medieval and modern urban developments.

Methodology

The first step was to make a map of the current blocks of houses within the walls of the Muslim town. Next, all the most modern alterations to the streets were eliminated, using a GIS tool to exclude all but the blocks and streets that were in existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to maps made during the Napoleonic invasion by General Suchet (Collin 1834) and Alexandre de Laborde (1811, t. I, second part, 89). The resulting map (Figs 2–3) thus illustrates the Andalusi (i.e. Muslim-period) urban fabric with all the changes made to it during the late medieval and early modern periods. The next step is to discern which street morphologies belong to each period

– Andalusi or Christian – by considering the morphological differences between Muslim and Christian towns, and the social contexts which explain those differences.

Andalusi houses carefully considered the arrangement of the paternal extended family: multiple married couples sharing a common ancestor, residing together in one dwelling, overseen by the *sheikh* or patriarch. This familial organisation was articulated in houses arranged around a central courtyard, from which access was gained to living quarters, not interconnected, where the married couples lived (Pascual *et al.* 1990, 306–9; Guichard and Van Staëvel 1995, 46–49; Fentress 2013; Gutiérrez 2013). This familial structure was expressed in urban life through the sheikh's regulation of family affairs, particularly in relation to women – influence that was then reflected in the very layout of the town. Control over women was enforced through their seclusion and familial restrictions within the household. The home served as the designated sphere for women, but they were able – though not recommended – to visit other places such as cemeteries, markets, baths, or mosques (Romero 2008; Mazzoli-Guintard 2022, 27–36; Camacho 2018). Within this overall urban context, narrow dead-end alleys provided a transitional zone between domestic privacy and communally-controlled public domains. Women had to be accompanied by a male relative through the streets (Marín 2000, 218), until they reached the expansive communal areas within the city, which were designed to allow collective surveillance of their activities. This resulted in the creation of environments characterised by heightened mutual visibility.

Consequently, the regulation and seclusion of women emerged as the pivotal factors around which the
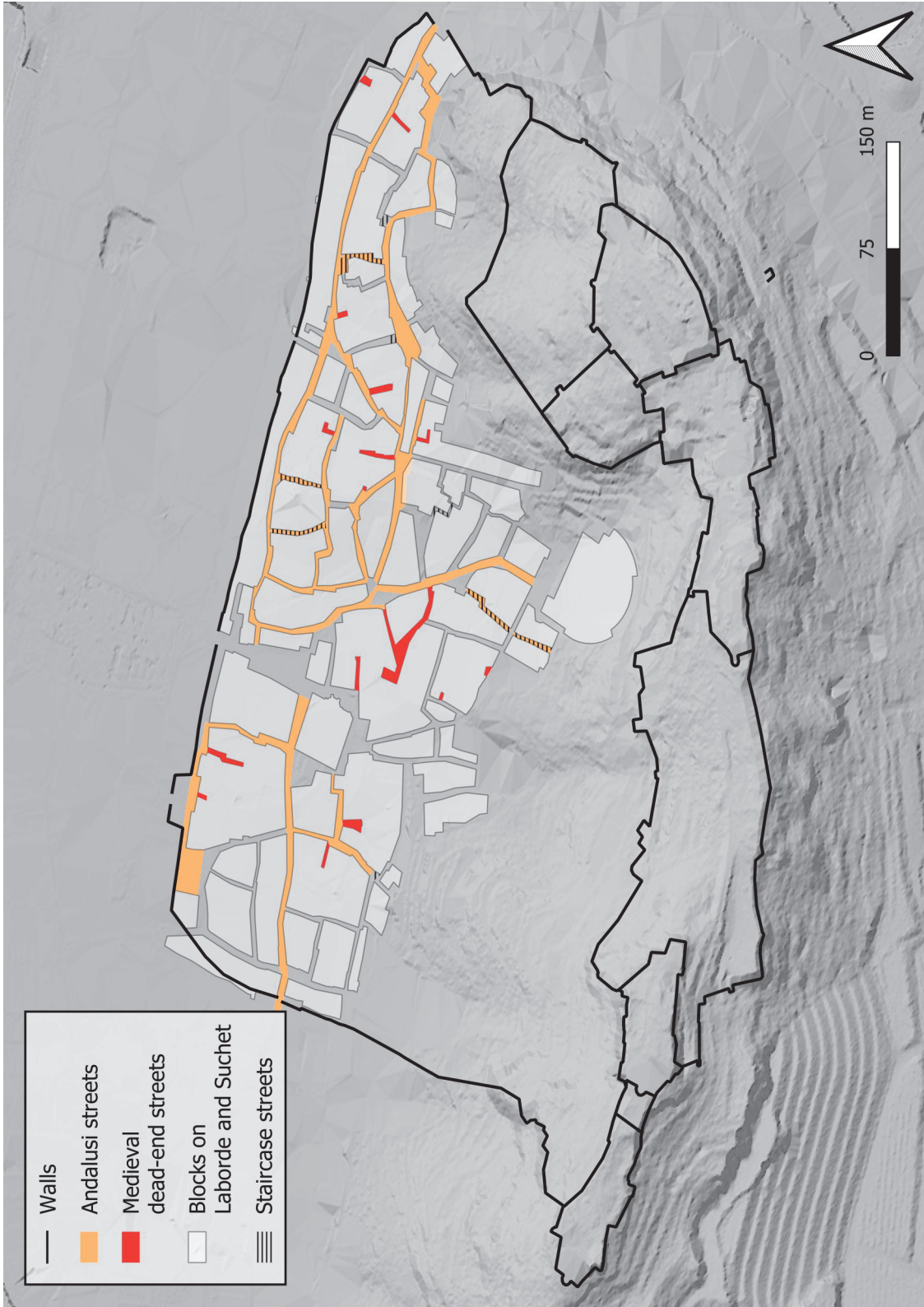
Figure 2   Plan of intramural Sagunt, illustrating the blocks existing in 1811, and highlighting streets which existed in the Andalusi (Muslim) period and dead ends which existed in medieval period.

Legend:
— Walls
Andalusi streets
Medieval dead-end streets
Blocks on Laborde and Suchet
Staircase streets

0   75   150 m

Voconio Romano 9
Penyetes
Major
bishop's house
baths' gate
baths
olive press butcher's
Cavallers
Plaça Major
aljama mosque / church of Santa Maria
Placeta de la Jueria
Casa del Mestre Peña
Castell
Roman Theatre

Walls and castle
Sequiola dels pouets / Canal of the wells
Blocks in 1811
Stately homes 14th c.
Bread ovens

0   50   100 m

Figure 3   Map of places and streets within Sagunt, mentioned in the text.

arrangement of residences developed (Pérez Ordoñez 2009). These dwellings were meticulously designed with limited egress points, preventing any external view into the interior. The entranceway stood as a vital nexus in preserving this sense of privacy. In alignment with this concept, the establishment of cul-de-sacs, secluded thoroughfares exclusive to inhabitants, served as a prevalent strategy to diminish the exposure of domestic entrances to public view (Brunschvig 1947, 131; Van Staëvel 2000, 41). These 'dead ends' led to side streets, which structured the neighbourhoods by connecting the cul-de-sacs to the main streets of the town which ran from the gates to the centre, where the great mosque stood. As it was necessary for the public to pass along them, they were ideal places for the market (Torres Balbás 1970, 130–31, 335, 369–71; Youssef 1993; Jiménez Castillo and Navarro Palazón 2001, 87; Hakim 2010, 63–101).

Latin Christian society, for its part, was shaped through the accrual of public power by lords, who implemented policies aimed at grouping the peasant population together in close-knit centres, with just one nuclear family living in each house (Higounet 1979, 143–44). With numerous nuclear families residing in the same town, it was impossible for peasants to accumulate large compact estates and they were force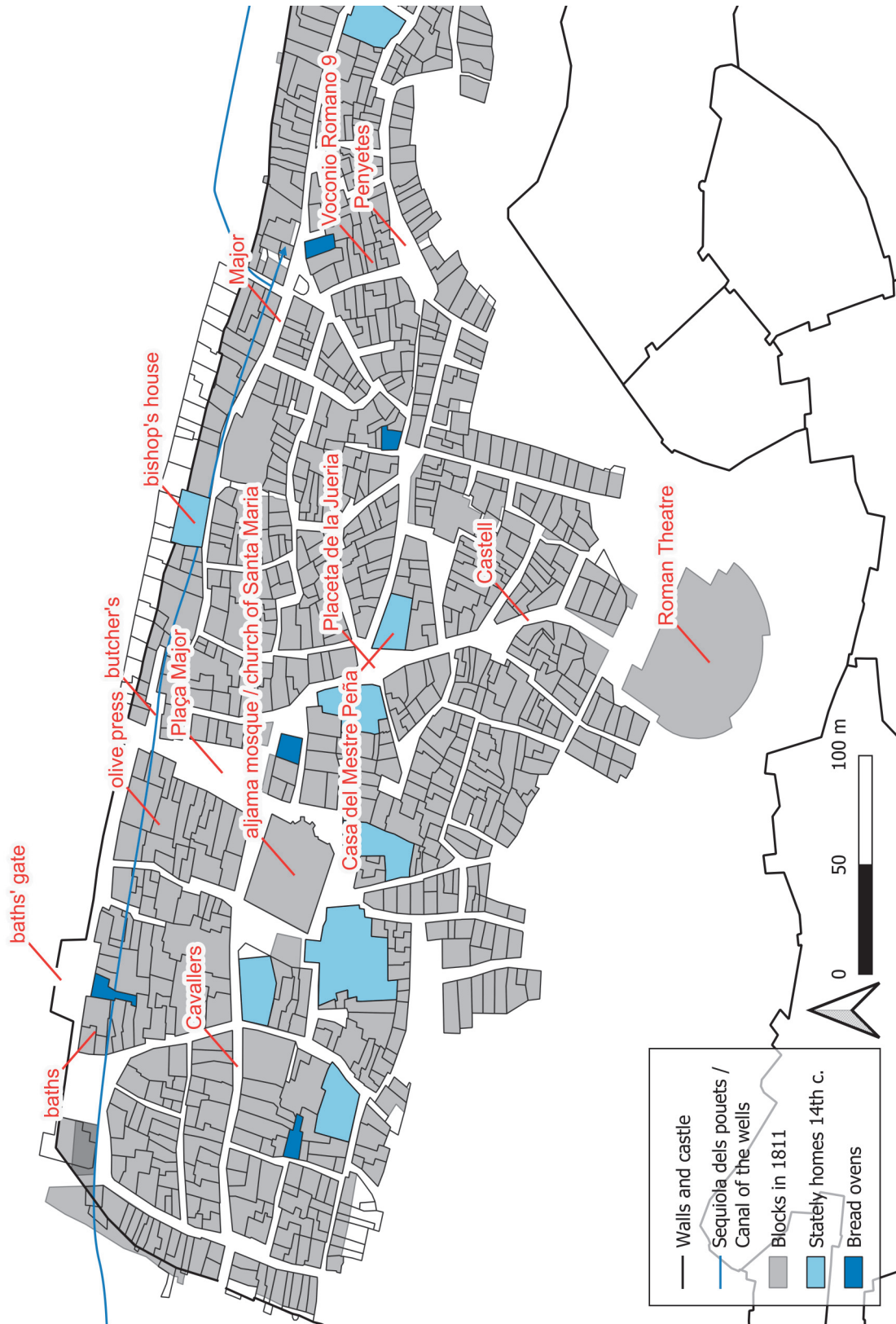d to relate socially with the local community, which was ultimately dependent on the lord. Large families were thus broken up, and neighbourly relations replaced kinship ties as the key elements that structured residential spaces, communal solidarity and mutual vigilance (Morsel 2007, 137–47). Socialising therefore took place not in the courtyards of houses but out in the streets. These were designed to be passed along continuously, and long, narrow, rectangular single-family houses were arranged transversally on either side (Torró 1995, 537). The aggregation of these rectangular houses in rows resulted in a rectilinear street layout. Such arrangements could be seen in the new towns founded throughout Latin Christendom by seigniorial authorities with a threefold objective: (i) grouping together the settlers, (ii) increasing rents, and (iii) effective control of recently conquered territories, like those founded in Wales by King Edward I of England (1272–1307) (Lilley *et al.* 2007). The majority of the towns founded in east al-Andalus after the thirteenth-century Christian conquest adopted this rectangular morphology. There is some evidence for the presence of Occitan surveyors hired for the construction of rural and urban plots – the most regular street layouts having been developed in the fortified 'bastides' of Languedoc, Gascony and Aquitaine (Higounet 1975, 387–97; Torró 2022, 291–92).

So, to summarise, there is a marked distinction in urban morphology between the Andalusi and Christian periods. Andalusi urbanism created cul-de-sacs, widely regarded as one of its most distinctive morphological characteristics (Guidoni 1981, 59–63; García–Bellido 2000, 254–55; Jiménez Castillo and Navarro Palazón 2001, 87, 90; Mazzoli-Guintard 2010, 62–63). Cul-de-sacs were a solution, included and ordained by Islamic jurisprudence, to the need for privacy for the extended families living in urban areas (Van Staëvel 2000; Vidal-Castro 2020, 131–37). Meanwhile, Christian planners arranged houses on streets that were straight, perpendicular and connected to one another (Lavedan

and Hugueney 1974, 6; Linazosoro 1978, 41–43; Guidoni 1989, 197–212; Boucheron *et al.* 2010, 136–44). Of the 40 Valencian towns analysed by Rosselló (2017), 22 have no cul-de-sacs, while in the rest the number ranges between one and four – located, in most cases, next to the town walls. Since cul-de-sacs date back to the Andalusi period, the streets onto which they open must have already been in existence at that time.

Madīna Murbīṭar: urbanism in Andalusi-period Sagunt

The Andalusi town was encircled by the walls, which descended from the castle, enclosing a surface area of about 22 hectares. The town was arranged on an east–west axis, formed by the modern streets *Cavallers* and *Major*. These ran from the east gate to the west gate, passing the great mosque (now the church of Santa Maria) in the centre of the *medina*. In many towns, the street which after the Christian conquest was called *Major* in Catalan or *Mayor* in Castilian had previously been the main street in the Andalusi period, called *šāri' al-kabīr* ('high street') (Tamari 1966, 58; Torres Balbás 1970, 335–38). In Sagunt, the *carrer Major* toponym existed as early as 1275, when the king granted to Pedro Garcés some houses located '*in carraria maiori Muriveteris*'. The bishop's house was built on this street, on a site between two houses, the town wall (*muro ville*), and the 'public thoroughfare' (Huici Miranda and Cabanes Pecourt 1978, III: doc. 708). The plot was given by the king to the bishop in 1256, just eighteen years after the Christian conquest, and eight years after the expulsion of the Muslim inhabitants. The street, therefore, had existed since the Andalusi period and was virtually unchanged in the mid-thirteenth century.

Running off these two main streets was a series of side streets that led to the dead ends and alleys. Parallel to *carrer Major*, but narrower and more winding, *carrer Penyetes* ran between *Major* and *carrer del Castell*, which went up to the theatre and the castle. Today it is generally straight and wide; at its narrowest point, the houses are just over three metres apart. In the Andalusi period, however, it would have been significantly narrower, continually twisting and turning, as demonstrated by the discovery of several living quarters found in an excavation in what is now *placeta de la Jueria* (Vizcaíno 2001, 90–95). This discovery shows that the square did not exist until the fourteenth century, and had hitherto been occupied by residential plots. The adjacent streets must consequently have been narrower.

Both *carrer Major* and *carrer Penyetes* adapt to the curving slope of the castle's hill. These streets are designed to stay as even as the intricate topography allows, yet they still exhibit noticeable undulations. Between them, we find a series of streets that climb towards the hill, perpendicularly from *carrer Major*. They lead to the narrow winding alleys in an almost dendritic structure. While the modern alleys are interconnected, many of them might not have been linked in the Andalusi era: after the Christian conquest, arrangements were often altered by extending cul-de-sacs to establish connections between them. There are numerous cases in Valencia of houses being demolished to elongate dead-end alleys into intersecting streets: the city council frequently undertook such modifications,

Figure 4   Dead-end streets in Sagunt: between the carrer Major and Sant Miquel (top); at the eastern end of carrer Major (middle); at plaça Sant Tomeu (bottom).

especially from the fourteenth century onwards (Cárcel and Trenchs 1985, 1491–94; Rubio Vela 1994, 30–37).

In other cities, such as Toledo or Murcia, numerous dead-end streets were removed through private acquisition or else integrated into adjoining houses during the same period (Passini 2000, 211–13; Jiménez Castillo and Navarro Palazón 2001, 114–15). Hence, it is reasonable to suggest that Sagunt originally had a greater number of cul-de-sacs than the fifteen documented cases. These fifteen can all be attributed to the Andalusi period for two key reasons: first, none of them are due to streets terminating at the city walls, as is visibly the case with cul-de-sacs in certain other Christian settlements; and second, among the fifteen instances, six display an irregular morphology characterised by twists and turns – a feature which is uncommon in known Christian contexts.

In summary, Sagunt presents an urban layout similar to many Andalusian cities, characterised by a plethora of dead-end streets (Figs 4–5) and a predominantly non-rectilinear street grid. There is a conspicuous absence of any Roman remnants within the urban plan. This absence is common to most cities in the Iberian Peninsula, leading to their categorisation as fundamentally new urban entities from the Andalusian period onwards (Acién 2001, 23). In this context, the urban layout of *Murbīṭar* mirrors that of the majority of cities in al-Andalus. Only a handful of Roman cities which sustained their urban existence until the Islamic conquest of 711, such as Zaragoza, retained a street grid with rectilinear characteristics inherited from Roman urban planning (Almagro 1987; Kennedy 1998, 57).

Murbīṭar to *Morvedre*: Christian colonisation of an Andalusi city

In 1238, the Catalan-Aragonese armies successfully captured Valencia under the leadership of King James I (ruled Valencia 1238–1276). The Muslim residents were not immediately displaced from Morvedre (*Murbīṭar*). However, their uprising in 1247 prompted the king to decree their expulsion in 1248, an expulsion which was enforced especially strongly in regions under direct royal jurisdiction (Torró 2019, 78–83). In this period, settlers began arriving in Morvedre, attracted by ambitious colonisation policies manifested in the sharing out of land and houses, and the granting of financial and political privileges. The settlers arrived in cities of unfamiliar morphology, in which they were given plots of land that contained several Andalusi-style buildings. These houses were gradually demolished in order to build new dwellings in a process that was not completed until the middle of the fourteenth century, hence the removal at this time of the houses in *placeta de la Jueria*, for the purposes of widening the street (demonstrated by the excavated evidence discussed above: Vizcaíno 2001, 95). Another example is to be found at No. 9, *carrer Voconio Romano*, where the party walls which had divided up the living quarters in the Andalusi period were eliminated in the fourteenth century, and replaced by a tiled floor (Sánchez Martín 2005).

When the Christians built their houses, they had to comply with the laws of Valencia. One of these obliged anybody rebuilding a house to set the front back from the public thoroughfare by half an *alna* of Valencia (45.5 cm) (López Elum 2001, 113). The law was

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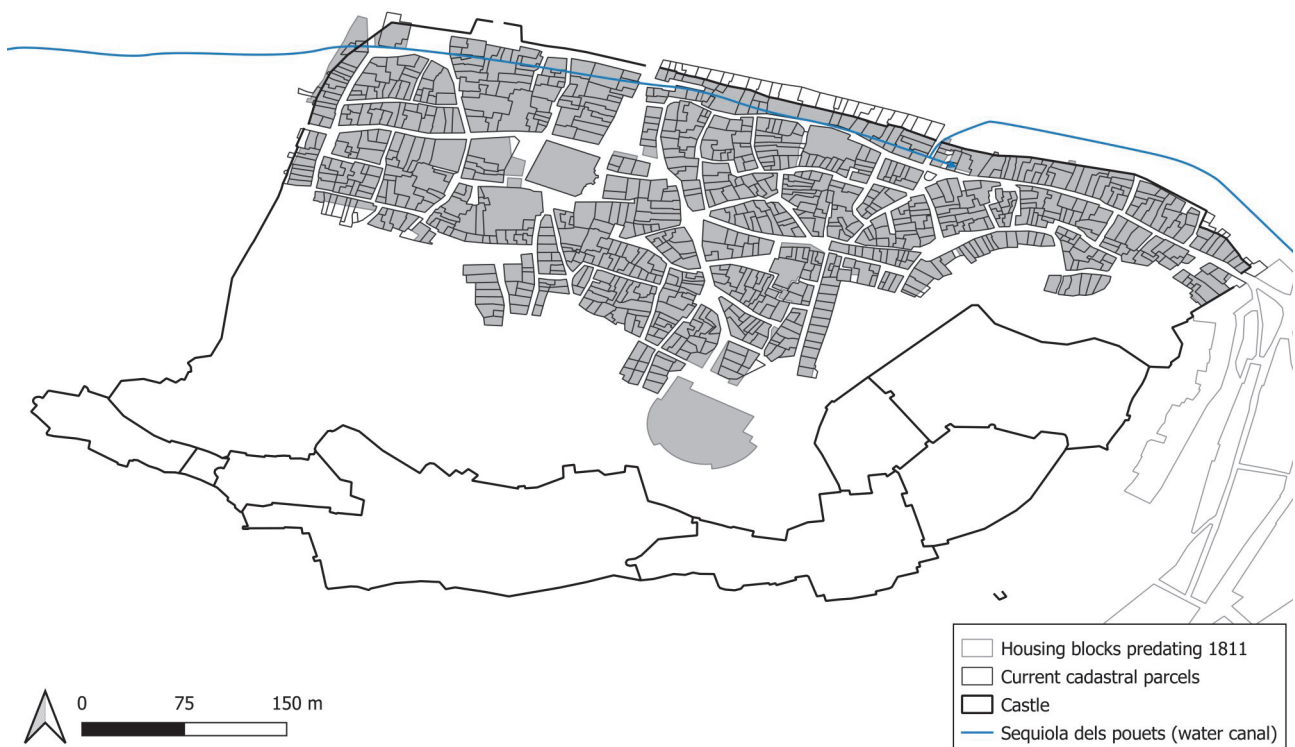
Figure 5   Current cadastral plots (thin black lines) in the islands of existing houses in 1811 (grey). The plots tend to be rectangular, but set within a non-rectilinear street layout. The thick black line represents the walls and the blue line the Sequiola dels Pouets, the main urban water supply canal in medieval times.
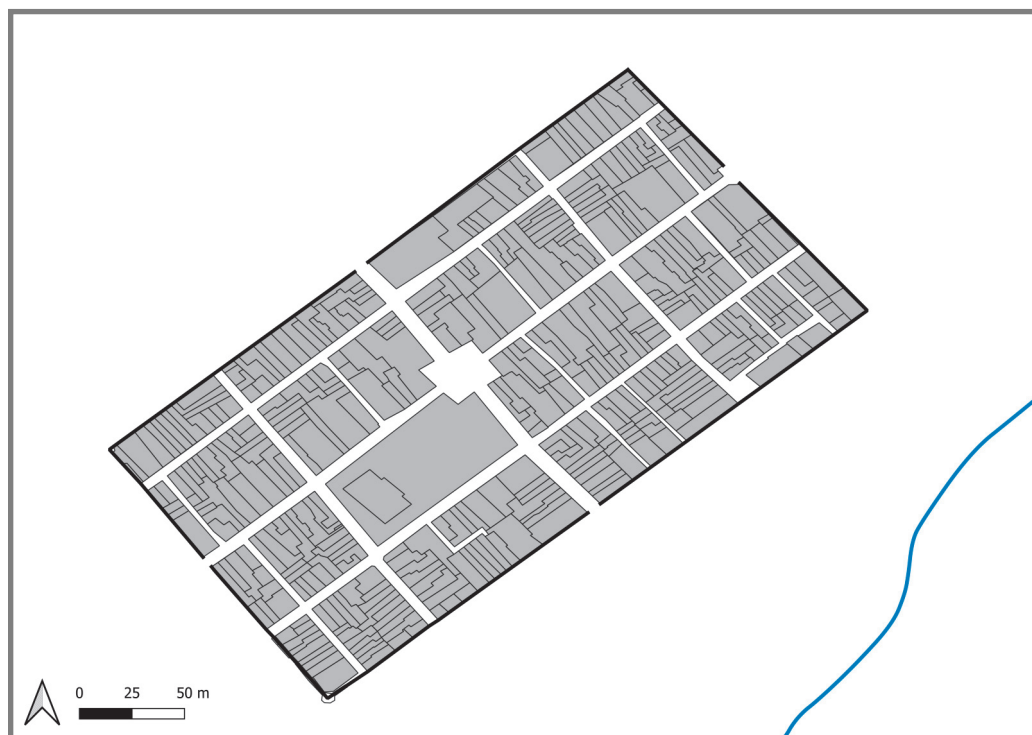
Figure 6   Plan of Vila-Real, a new town founded by James I in 1274. The outer black line represents the wall, in grey the blocks and in black lines the current plots of land, heir to the rectangular, elongated houses with party walls of the medieval period. The blue line represents the Séquia Major de Vila-Real.

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Figure 7   Parish church of El Salvador, Sagunt.

Figure 9   Portico in the Plaça Major reusing a Tuscan column.

Figure 8   The house of Mestre Peña, now the historical museum, is an example of fourteenth-century modular architecture based on pointed arches.

sometimes enforced rather leniently, while in other cases it was not even necessary to comply with it: a privilege granted everywhere in the Kingdom of Valencia in 1271 lifted this obligation whenever the owner wished to create arcades and the street was more than 3.96 m wide (Baydal 2023, 73–74). This relaxation led to a general widening of streets, as well as variations in how far some house fronts were set back from the street, due to the multiplicity of ways and periods in which new houses were built. Overall, this evidence clearly shows that the process of transforming dwellings was dominated by small- and medium-scale building work that, to a large extent, resulted in the fossilisation

of the Andalusi street layout within piecemeal adaptations – as opposed to large-scale replanning of the urban morphology.

Given that many Andalusi dwellings were completely demolished, we must ask why the streets nonetheless remained intact. The reason lies in the 'capillary' transformation of the houses: a complete mutation of individual domestic spaces, but no collective endeavour across larger areas. Every new Christian resident independently redeveloped their assigned plot of land. When a resident of the street razed their plot of one or more houses in order to build a new one in the Christian fashion, they did not do so at the same time as the rest of the settlers in their street. Hence, while all the plots were gradually transformed, the street remained. The modern cadastral map is a reflection of this process of colonisation. In it, one sees urban plots similar to those which were laid out in new towns, among which the Valencian city of Vila-Real – founded by the king in the thirteenth century – stands out as one of the best examples of Christian rectangular urban planning (Fig. 6; Torró 2022, 288–92). Nevertheless, this rectangular layout at the level of individual plots contrasts with a wider urban morphology that in many cases maintains the Andalusi-period street network.

Thus, the town gradually took on a Christian shape, whilst keeping what was essentially the Andalusi street layout. The settlers built long rectangular houses, divided into bays supported by ogival diaphragm arches (i.e. curved to a point), between which wooden beams were placed. This represented a basic modular structure of a kind of rapidly-built but long-lasting architecture that was used after the conquest in the construction of

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most buildings, not just single-family houses (Zaragozá Catalán 2008, 13–15). It was also used to build churches, like that of El Salvador (Fig. 7); to make aristocratic houses wider and more spacious, like that of the bishop in *carrer Major*; or in exchange buildings, like the house of El Mestre Peña, now the historical museum (Fig. 8; Muñoz Antonino 1999, 5–74 and 180–96).

The Andalusi streets remained as the structural axes of urban spaces, even amidst a complete architectural transformation. The endurance of the original street grid did not impede its modification. Consequently, in numerous instances, streets were extended to interconnect with nearby counterparts, making them passable where previously they had been dead ends. The great mosque was converted into the archpriest's church, the exit towards the walls became a porticoed square (Fig. 9), and mansions and other more modest houses were built along the streets, with numerous workshops and wine cellars, as well as five bakeries inside the walls (Chabret 1901, 56), olive oil mills (Roca Ribelles 2004) and butcher's premises (Chabret 1888, II: 265–66).

Conclusions

Murbīṭar was established as an urban centre in the eleventh century, during the Muslim rule, and was subsequently settled by Christians following the conquest of 1238. This appropriation entailed the transformation of individual dwellings, and thus a piecemeal modification – and partial fossilisation – of the Andalusi-period urban fabric. Residential plots tended to change the most, while the streets are the elements that remained the least changed: comprehensive modifications to the housing stock failed to give rise to a new street layout (Rossi 1984, 61).

The intense building activity carried out by the settlers in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries has left little trace in the historical record. This has caused it to be underestimated by historians, who have tended to highlight what was done by the promoters of 'urban *pobles*'. These were large areas of land purchased by private individuals, upon which to build houses that were established in emphyteusis (i.e. with the aim of charging the occupiers an annual income). This particular urbanisation mechanism resulted in a morphology of straight streets, similar to that of the new towns (Rodrigo Pertegás 1923, 292–98; Torró and Guinot 2001–2002; Kovaks *et al.* 2022, 34–58).

These new building projects were undoubtedly one of the principal mechanisms in the construction of residences for settlers. However, this type of action tells us little or nothing about how Andalusi urban space was colonised, as it mostly took place in previously unbuilt areas – in the city of Valencia, for example, where the majority of the new residential areas were located outside the walls; or in Morvedre, where one of the few documents that describes an operation of this kind locates it outside the Baths Gate of the rampart (Torró 2022, 263).

All of the considerations above lead us to one conclusion: that the settlers – whether residents with a house of their own, or wealthier people who demolished a group of Andalusi houses and built new ones in order to lease them – were the principal agents of the colonisation of the Kingdom of Valencia. Their small-and medium-scale actions were pre-eminent in the process of appropriating and modifying Andalusi towns. Consequently, any study that sets out to analyse this process of urban colonisation must look for this building work, carried out in every individual distributed plot of urban land, and not in large urban development operations.

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THE MATERIAL EXPERIENCES OF 'PEASANT' LIFE IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN AND IRELAND (c. 1200–1500)

By BEN JERVIS *and* KAREN DEMPSEY[1]

The Material Experiences of 'Peasant' Life project seeks to encourage a comparative approach to the study of non-elite rural medieval lifeways in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. The project builds on the success of two other recent research projects: *Home is Where the Heart(h) is* (Dempsey forthcoming a–b) and *Living Standards and Material Culture in English Rural Households c.1300–1600* (Jervis *et al.* forthcoming), which examine the material worlds of non-elite rural communities in Ireland and England respectively. A key outcome of these separate, but related, projects, has been the recognition of a need to foster deeper inter-regional comparison between people, their things, and the settlements in which they lived. Both projects identified this lack of systematic inter-regional research as a major opportunity for future study. A workshop – supported by the Medieval Settlement Research Group – has been held to initiate the project, with the core aim of progressing beyond Anglo-centric understandings of medieval rural life, which have long dominated medieval archaeology.

Exploring material experiences

What do we mean by *material* experiences of peasant life? We use this phrase as a way of capturing the emotional and sensorial aspects of medieval life. We want to explore encounters between people, animals, plants and things in households. We believe that later medieval archaeology is uniquely placed to access these aspects of daily life, or lived experience, because of its comparatively rich material record (in the widest interpretation of that term). Still too often in medieval archaeology there is an over-emphasis on descriptive accounts or interpretations which do not engage with social questions. In this new project, we want to stimulate conversations around the following questions:

- How can we develop comparative understandings of material experiences of rural life, within and between different parts of medieval Britain and Ireland, that transcend national boundaries?

- How can we explore the material experience of an embodied space full of feelings, thoughts and desires rather than a dry architectural description or layered archaeological sequences?
- How can we explore embodied experiences of rural landscapes and their role in building memory and community?

The first step in addressing these questions was the organisation of a workshop at Cardiff University in June 2022 (Fig. 1). The event brought together experts from across Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England to discuss the current state of understanding and to explore some key themes which could underpin a comparative approach. Summaries of work in England (Ben Jervis), Wales (Sian Iles and Alice Forward), Scotland (Piers Dixon) and Ireland (Karen Dempsey) were presented. Subsequent papers explored how rural experience can be examined across different scales through the use of Portable Antiquities Scheme data (Mark Lodwick) in combination with landscape approaches (Arthur Redmonds). Two broader themes were then explored. The first, 'Feelings of Home', encompassed presentations on the archaeology of emotions (Eleanor Standley, Mark Gardiner) and play (Mark Hall). The second, 'Living in the Landscape', discussed skeletal (Sophia Mills), place-name (Richard Jones) and landscape (Sarah Jane Gibbon) evidence for material experiences, closing with an examination of peasant experiences of religious houses in Ireland (Tracy Collins).

The workshop was punctuated with discussions of the potential of comparative approaches and the key issues faced by the development of such approaches. A particular area of concern was the high level of variability in the quality and quantity of data. This issue need not be a barrier to carrying out broader comparative analysis, however, as it is, in itself, a pertinent topic to consider. Why are data so varied? Is it owing to variability in preservation contexts (land management or soil conditions), or is it related to variability in archaeological and mitigation practices? The latter factor is related to the impact of national heritage management regimes and approaches to development, which can prioritise certain geographical areas over others, and limit the possibility of

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Figure 1   Workshop attendees discussing important issues pertaining to medieval settlement at dinner. Photograph by Karen Dempsey.

investigating certain types of sites or landscapes. Finally, there is the ongoing and longstanding variability in terminology which does not allow for easy comparative analysis.

More positively, a range of future studies or topics of interest were identified. Key themes discussed include:

- The relationships between people, animals, landscapes, plants, buildings and objects.
- The composition and practices of households, their fluidity and relationship to community.
- The relationship between rural lifeways and landscape character.
- Understanding why artefacts are often scarce on rural sites, and what this means in terms of variability in access to and understanding of objects.
- The identification of variability and the challenging of normative/typical narratives.
- The interpretation and understanding of 'blank' spaces in settlements as socially significant.

The workshop resulted in the emergence of a collaborative research network which we hope to continue to build in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and data. Building on the momentum provided by our two national research projects and recent MSRG activities (Rippon and Morton 2020; Wrathmell 2020), we want to engage further with the mass of data provided by development-led excavations. As a first step, we want to examine specific landscapes/ geographical areas through a series of detailed case studies: for example, exploring the ties that might connect the practices and experiences of households and

their daily life in comparative landscape regions such as the Bristol Channel region, Solway Firth, the Humber, and the Shannon Estuary.

One particular point made at the workshop by Dr Alice Forward, was that there is a tendency to use particular 'classic' sites such as Wharram Percy (Yorks), West Whelpington (Northumberland) or Raunds (Northants) as 'benchmarks'. These unusually evidence-rich sites can often be treated as norms, against which other sites are measured. This bias results in an almost binary system of categorisation, in which these sites skew interpretation, leading to a negative view that different sites are impoverished. We believe that these are 'unreasonable benchmark' sites and want to challenge ourselves (and others) to disrupt our over-reliance on them. In addition to this, many of the commonly-cited settlement sites are typically in the English midlands, where, of course, many deserted medieval villages survive. But we have to look beyond this region, to decentre Anglo-centric narratives but also to rethink what is considered the norm. As demonstrated by the recent MSRG lecture series on infrastructure, we have never been in a better position to address these questions from a comparative perspective because of the proliferation of large road schemes and development-driven excavations. To realise this potential, we will continue to seek to open new narratives which move beyond those built on the evidence largely provided by a small number of major English excavations. Overall, in doing so, we will develop comparative understandings of medieval rural material culture and related social practices from Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England. This approach will result in a deeper and more nuanced understanding of medieval rural life, including aspects

such as material culture and settlement contexts. This speaks directly to Priority 4 of the *MSRG Research Priorities* (Wrathmell 2020) by focussing on areas which are comparatively under-researched, especially within Wales and Scotland. In sharing new, more wide-ranging evidence, the commonalities and divergences in everyday experiences of rural life will emerge.

Future steps

In order to achieve this goal, it is intended that the workshop will stimulate longer-term collaborative working in the study of the diverse material environments and related practices across medieval Ireland and Britain. This collaborative endeavour will result in an inter-regional overview of the material culture of rural communities, offering an important counterpoint to narratives of rural life which centre simply on England. This will provide a valuable contribution to a growing body of comparative work on the material culture of rural life across Europe (e.g. Jervis *et al*. 2016; Haggren and Rosendahl 2016; Fernandez 2018; Hotun and Kazymir 2020; Sawicki and Leva 2022).

We intend to continue the collaborations built during the workshop through future activities including collaborative publications, field visits and a session at a future conference of the European Association of Archaeologists, placing the Irish and British evidence into a wider context. Videos of the workshop presentations will be made available on the Medieval Settlement Research Group and Society for Medieval Archaeology webpages.[2] We welcome contributions to this effort from other researchers interested in furthering the aims of the project.

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NEW DISCOVERIES AT
YEAVERING, NORTHUMBERLAND

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Introduction

Yeavering in Northumberland (NT926305) is well known for its appearance in the eighth-century *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* by the Venerable Bede. Bede describes a visit to the royal vill of *Adgefrin* during the reign of King Edwin (*c.* AD 627). During this visit he tells how the Christian missionary Paulinus 'instructed and baptised', in the river Glen, 'many people who gathered there from the surrounding settlements and places' (*HE* II, XIV). The site was recognised in antiquarian accounts but had largely been lost and forgotten until air photography in 1949 revealed traces of sub-surface features delineating a series of rectangular 'hall-like' buildings (Hope-Taylor 1977, 4).

The subsequent excavations by Brian Hope-Taylor are now legendary in British archaeology. Between 1953 and 1962, using large-scale, open-area trenches, he and his team brought to light almost unique evidence at the time for a putative royal palace, argued to operate in the sixth and seventh centuries AD. The site of the palace complex, encompassing halls, ancillary buildings and structures, such as the Great Enclosure and Building E (a timber theatre), is positioned on an elevated natural gravel plateau overlooking the flood plain of the River Glen, and in the shadow of the Cheviot Hills and the hillfort of Yeavering Bell (Figs 1a–b). Despite the extensive investigation led by Hope-Taylor, and later excavation by Anthony Harding of the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze-Age henge immediately south of the palace complex, the full extent of the developmental sequence for this key site remains open to question (Harding 1981; Tinniswood and Harding 1991).

Several years of collaboration between Durham University and the *Gefrin Trust*, with input from key regional stakeholders, resulted in a Research Assessment and Research Agenda for the site (Semple *et al*. 2020a–b). A programme of non-intrusive survey using resistivity, gradiometry and infrared air photography was set in motion, formalised as the *Yeavering Environs Project* in 2020. A MoRPHE-compliant Project Design, developed by Durham University and the *Gefrin Trust*, underpins a new phase of survey and excavation at this iconic multi-period site. Primary aims of the project include establishing secure dating control and phasing of archaeological features on the gravel terrace and characterising the full extent of multi-period activity on and beyond the site environs.

Between August and September 2021, the team undertook an initial three-week pilot season of geomagnetic survey and excavation at the site. Extensive cart-based geomagnetic survey across c. 54 ha, alongside a further 12 ha of hand-held geomagnetic survey in 2022, has delivered a detailed picture of the site and environs, identifying a wide range of new multi-period features, including, notably, circular structures and rectilinear enclosures close to the western outer ditch of the Great Enclosure. Further (probable) early medieval structures can be identified in the vicinity of Hope-Taylor's Area C, and features of unknown date are evident within the compass of the Great Enclosure.

Despite many years of work and a seminal publication in 1977, Hope-Taylor's chronology was framed by the dates and events described in Bede's historical account of the kingdom of Northumbria. In our Project Design, we therefore place emphasis on targeting excavation in areas where we can open and re-excavate features originally uncovered by Hope-Taylor with the intention of securing material for dating. Concurrently we seek to investigate and explore new features, allowing us to expand knowledge and understanding of multi-period activity at the site.

With this in mind, in 2021, two trenches were opened in Hope-Taylor's Area C (Trenches A and B) (Fig. 2). Trench A was positioned to relocate Hope-Taylor's excavation of Building C1, which original site photographs had indicated contained substantial carbonised timber remains. Trench B was located to the north, to explore a sub-rectangular anomaly present on aerial photographs.

The discoveries have been significant. In Trench B we identified a new early medieval structure (C0), part-sunken and cut into the northern slope of the plateau. On the south side, where the building was cut sharply into the hillside, excellent preservation enabled the team to expose working floor levels, evidence of subsequent repairs to the structure and later infilling of the feature

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Figure 1a   The gravel terrace in the lower central foreground is the location of both cropmarks and the later excavated evidence for an early medieval royal palace complex. © Airphotos Ltd.
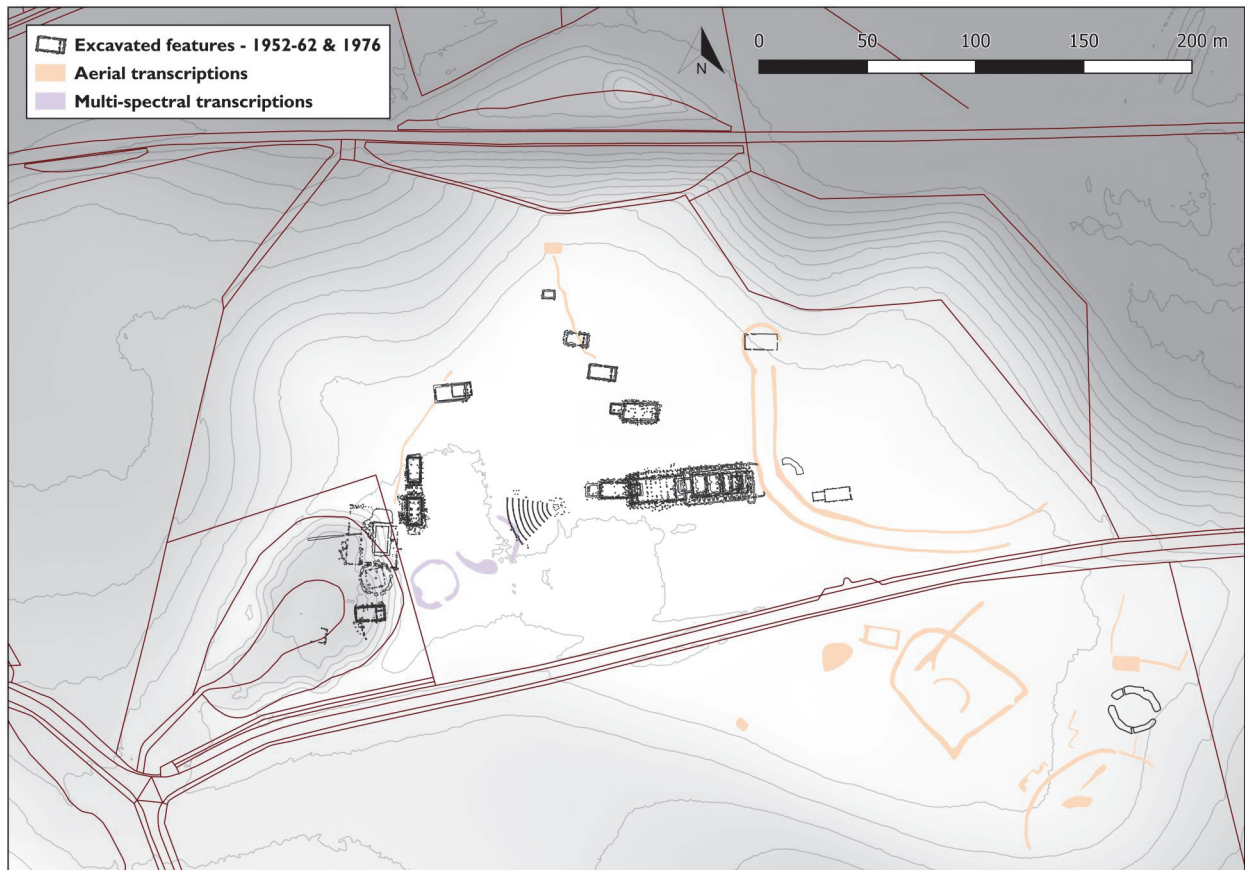

Figure 1b   Digitised general plan of features and excavations at Yeavering 1952–62 (after Hope-Taylor 1977, Fig 12). By A.T. Skinner. © Durham University and The Gefrin Trust.

Figure 2   Aerial photograph showing the 2021 excavations underway with Trench A to the left and Trench B to the right. © Durham University and The Gefrin Trust.

after abandonment. Post-excavation analysis and environmental processing continues, while radiocarbon dates are awaited, but deposits, including a surface potentially exposed to heat, were extensively sampled. Good preservation of animal bone, teeth and charcoal deposits have provided a secure, well-stratified sequence of materials suitable for scientific dating, while discoveries of bead fragments, clay loomweights (baked and unbaked) and an iron knife, all associated with floor levels, strongly suggest this structure served as a multi-purpose, multi-phase workshop area, perhaps open-sided to the north.

A summary of these recent findings is forthcoming in *Medieval Archaeology*, and a full publication is in preparation. In this short article, we focus particularly on discoveries in Trench A and the re-excavation of Hope-Taylor's Building C1, which has not only yielded material suitable for radiocarbon dating but has raised questions over Hope-Taylor's understanding and reconstruction of the architecture of this sunken-featured structure.

Excavation in 1956/7

Of the many structures excavated by Hope-Taylor with evidence of destruction by fire, Buildings D3 and C1 provided him with most information as to their original appearance, principally owing to the enhanced protection their sunken interiors afforded to the debris fallen in conflagration. Of the two, C1 proved the more informative, primarily because of the greater depth and therefore capacity of the pit within to contain a larger volume of the fallen structure. Its high sides would

prove critical in creating the enclosed 'smouldering combustion' environment so conducive to converting wood into charcoal (see Harrison 2012). Additionally, unlike D3, Building C1 had been neither rebuilt nor replaced but had its contents sealed intact beneath a surface levelling. C1 provided Hope-Taylor with sufficiently detailed information to enable him to present the best evidence-based reconstruction of a building, complete from foundation to ridge-line, of any he would encounter at the site (Fig. 3).

Hope-Taylor's record of what he had found of Building C1 – its former appearance as a structure and his interpretation of it as a weaving hut, based upon the discovery of a loomweight within – is summarised together with a plan and section and four photographs published in his report (1977, 88–91, Fig. 37, Pls 55–8) (Figs 4a–b). Re-excavation carried out in 2021 of two opposed quadrants within the eastern half of Building C1 confirmed his general observations regarding the structural elements encountered, but also identified some differences of measurement and, critically, the addition of one structural feature that has significant implications for his reconstruction (Hope-Taylor 1977, 91, 181–82, Fig 86, D2) (Fig. 5).

Hope-Taylor envisaged a tent-like roof resting on the ground surface and covering an area of some 4.7 m in width by a minimum of some 6.0 m in length (Fig. 3). Its central ridge had been supported by a single post at the mid-point of the gable ends, and rafters along both of the long sides. His record of what he interpreted as the residue of 'white ash' and 'straw or reeds' across the floor indicated to him that the roof had been
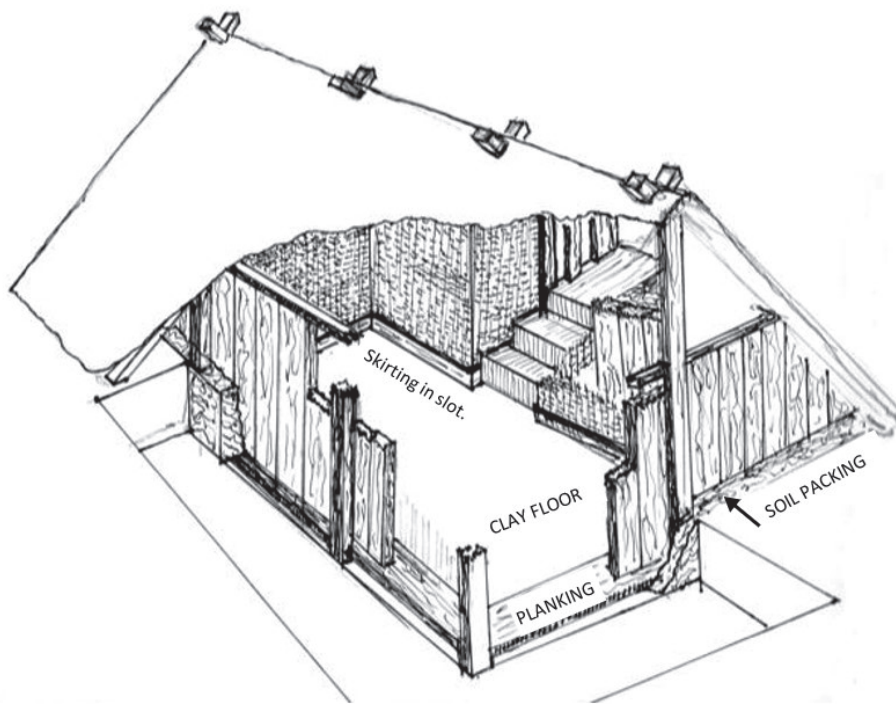
Figure 3 Reconstruction of Building C1 as envisaged by Hope-Taylor. Drawing by R. Miket. © The Gefrin Trust.

thatched. A porch-like entrance had stood at the centre of the south side with access to the interior through a doorway measuring a little over 0.6 m in width.

Beneath its roof, the building had been constructed wholly within a vertically-sided rectangular pit measuring some 4.2 m in width and 6.0 m in length. This had been cut into the natural sand and gravel substrate to a depth of around 0.9 m with an internal area of 25.2 m². Hope-Taylor begins his description of the interior with the rectangular framework of a double-setting of planks on edge, forming a narrow groove or slot a little over 0.6 m distant from the sides of the pit (Fig. 4a). The inner setting of planks provided a 'skirting' edge defining a rectangular space at its centre. This was occupied by a well-laid, beaten, thick clay floor measuring 2.7 m in width by 4.6 m in length. The narrow slot formed between the inner and outer concentric settings of planks was filled with 'clay and charcoal' that Hope-Taylor saw as the remains of walls of wattle-and-daub panels, defining the limits of the room. Just as the clay floor within held the inner skirting in place, so too an outer framework of exceptionally wide planking was laid up against the outer plank uprights of the slot, so buttressing them in place. In the space between their outer edges and the vertical sides of the pit's long walls, Hope-Taylor records the intermittent occurrence of upright posts. His plan shows that they were spaced at distances of, on average, around 1.2 m. Apart from a single reference to them as 'retaining posts', he attempts no further interpretation as to their possible structural function.

He regarded the fallen thick and wide burnt timber 'balks' overlying the above as representing the inward collapse of the north wall of the building during conflagration. This wall, he believed, had stood vertical, seated upon the planks laid around the exterior of the slot. Its outer face would thus have been set at a little distance from the sides of the pit; the space between he envisaged as being filled with a 'packing soil'. One final element noted by him was the exceptional degree of 'wear and patching' of the floor, 'along a line roughly 18 inches (0.45 m) from and parallel to the long axis' (Fig. 4b).

Though correct in all major respects, the reconstruction invites scrutiny. Hope-Taylor did not consider the possibility, for example, of the sunken interior as a cellar space beneath a suspended floor within the building (see, for example, Stanley West's work at West Stow, Suffolk: West 1985), or that the fallen timbers might themselves have been from such a floor rather than a wall. Visualising the building invites questions as to its practicalities. Not least of these is that with a clay floor of 12.4 m² occupying only half the 25.2 m² area of the pit floor, why was such a large pit excavated for a structure of significantly smaller size? His reconstruction posits the space between the outer face of the balks and the enclosing pit as filled with soil and intermittently spaced upright posts, and that between their inner face and the wattle-and-daub panels as an open space. Neither does he address the question of how the feet of the thick wall timbers were secured in place, resisting lateral pressure from the 'substantial packing' between them and the pit sides.

Discoveries in 2021

Re-excavation in 2021 of Building C1 showed that much of the evidence upon which Hope-Taylor's reconstruction was based had survived to varying degrees within the interior (Fig. 5). This new work allowed for minor details and additional measurements to be added to those previously recorded, and – crucially – resulted in the recovery of datable material and environmental samples. One unanticipated outcome, however, was the discovery of an additional feature, which raises questions over the accuracy of Hope-Taylor's reconstruction.

Hope-Taylor's excavation photographs and plan had shown that the horizontal planks had been set, not up against the side walls of the pit, but at a relatively uniform distance of 0.2–0.3 m from them. Where best

Upright posts

Outer planks

Double-setting
of inner planks

C1   PLAN :

5   0   5   10   FEET

A   B

TWIGS
CLAY FLOOR   WHITE ASH   FALLEN DAUB

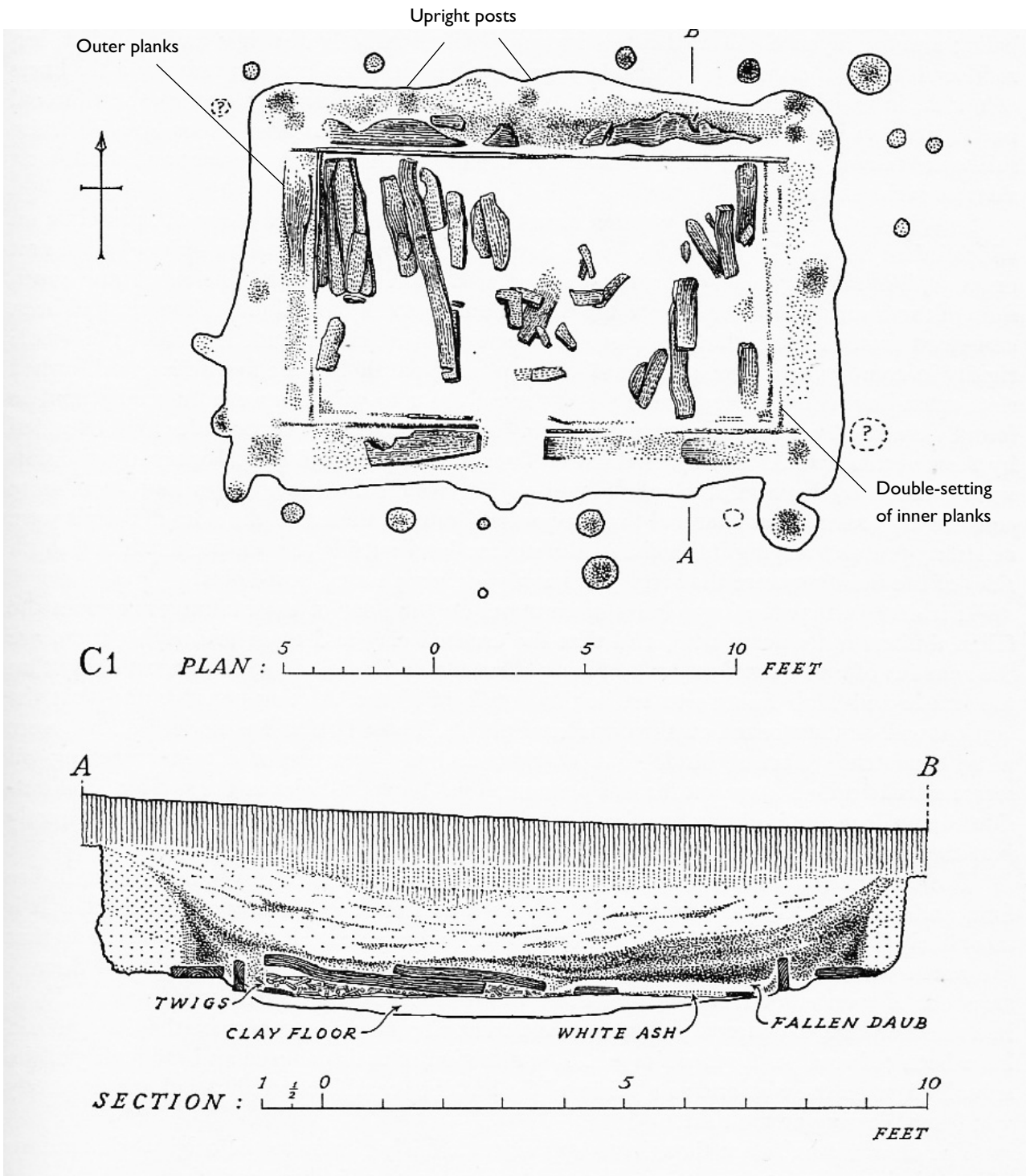SECTION :   1 ½ 0   5   10

FEET

Figure 4a   Hope-Taylor's plan and section of Building C1 (Hope-Taylor 1977, Fig 37), with new annotations. Original illustration reproduced from HES archive with permission of Historic Environment Scotland.

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Figure 4b   Hope-Taylor's photograph of the interior of C1 in 1956. The position of individual upright rectangular posts are visible within their bedding slot, cut at the foot of the pit sides in lower right in the photograph. Reproduced with permission from Historic Scotland Archive [Y56 91 5591].

preserved, notably along the line of the south wall, this space was filled with a grey sand, sealed beneath charcoal and debris deposits (Fig. 6). These deposits partially directly overlay the substrate upon which the horizontal planks rested, but also appear to have continued further downwards, filling a square-sectioned slot cut into this substrate and running parallel to the side walls of the pit. The section lying within the south-west quadrant was excavated in its entirety in 2021, to reveal a slot cut some 0.10–0.15 m in width and depth, running unbroken the full length of the excavated area. A single post-pit lay within its line, 0.15–0.18 m in diameter and filled with the same dark grey sand as the slot (Fig. 7). The position of this post-pit corresponds to those Hope-Taylor had identified elsewhere as 'retaining posts', and it is assumed to be a further addition to this group. The grey sand filling was not continuous throughout the length of this cut feature but terminated c. 0.3 m from the western section within the excavated quadrant (Fig. 7). Here, a darker filling containing some charcoal replaced the grey sand. This not only filled the slot but also spread further northwards to the edge of the clay floor of the interior.

In extent, it occupied the space Hope-Taylor shows on his plan as being bounded by the terminals of the horizontal planking and 'skirting' slot that coincides with what appears to have been the point of access through a porched entrance (see Fig. 4a).

How Hope-Taylor – an excavator with such a precise eye for detail – could have overlooked this feature is unclear, but the archives reveal some detail on the site and conditions at the time. Re-examination of Hope-Taylor's black-and-white photographs provide a record of this feature at several places around the perimeter, and also appear to show in places the carbon imprints marking the positions where individual timber wall balks had stood when set upright along the wall line (Fig. 4b). They also reveal the pressures on Hope-Taylor as he was attempting to complete his investigation of the C complex of buildings. The loose granular nature of sand and gravel, and its susceptibility to movement under even the gentlest atmospheric conditions, is familiar to those experienced in the excavation of such soils. With winter just a few weeks away, the investment of time required to keep the site clean and the base of the pit's sides clear of banked

Figure 5   The quadrants excavated in the eastern half of Building C1. Note the spread of charcoal-debris at the lower left corner of the south-west quadrant, coincident with position of a stepped descent form the porch entrance. North at the top. Drone photograph by Brian Buchanan. © East Washington University and The Gefrin Trust.

sand was a luxury Hope-Taylor did not have. Some photographs show the cleaning of small areas preliminary to his taking photographic records, others do not.

Our discoveries, though minor in the full realm of Hope-Taylor's results, allow a modification of his proposal for the architecture of the building. The information gathered in 2021 shows that five posts were set vertically at an average spacing of 1.2 m along the north face of the pit, with a minimum of four along the south face. Their positions do not correspond with those of the raking roof rafters, but would allow them to function in supporting purlins. The discovery of the slot cut along the foot of the pit sides can be suggested as a seating slot for the upright wall balks, at a stroke remedying several of the problems inherent in Hope-Taylor's reconstruction. Bedded around the full

perimeter of the pit, these uprights would provide a necessary revetment to the pit sides. At the same time, we can now see the horizontal planks performing a double function as retainers not only to the outer 'skirting' of the slot holding the wattle-and-daub panels, but also to the base of the wall of the building. Estimations based upon carbonised balks within the pit indicate that these wall balks would have had a minimum height of 1.4 m to where their ends might have been fixed to the purlin, so adding further support to a steeply-pitched roof and strengthening the building.

By moving the side walls outwards against the pit sides, an even greater space is now created between these walls and the rear of the wattle-and-daub panels that Hope-Taylor regarded as full-height walls defining the space within the building. We would like to propose that the wattle-and-daub, which he envisioned as walls

Figure 6   The south-western quadrant of C1 in 2021, from the east. The grey sand slot is visible running east/west tight against the foot of the cut (left), with the post-pit midway in its length. Photograph by R. Miket © Durham University and The Gefrin Trust.

Figure 7   East-facing section of the timber slot, revealing fragmentary charcoal near its base, overlain by grey sand and a darker silt fill. Photograph by R. Miket © Durham University and The Gefrin Trust.

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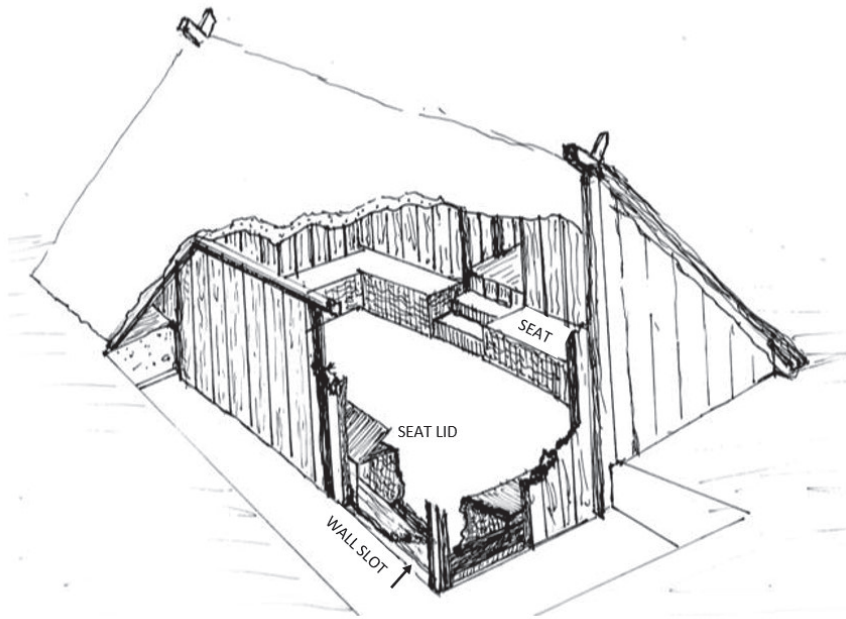
Figure 8 Reconstruction of Building C1 with internal bench seating and space for storage beneath. Drawing by R. Miket © Durham University and The Gefrin Trust.
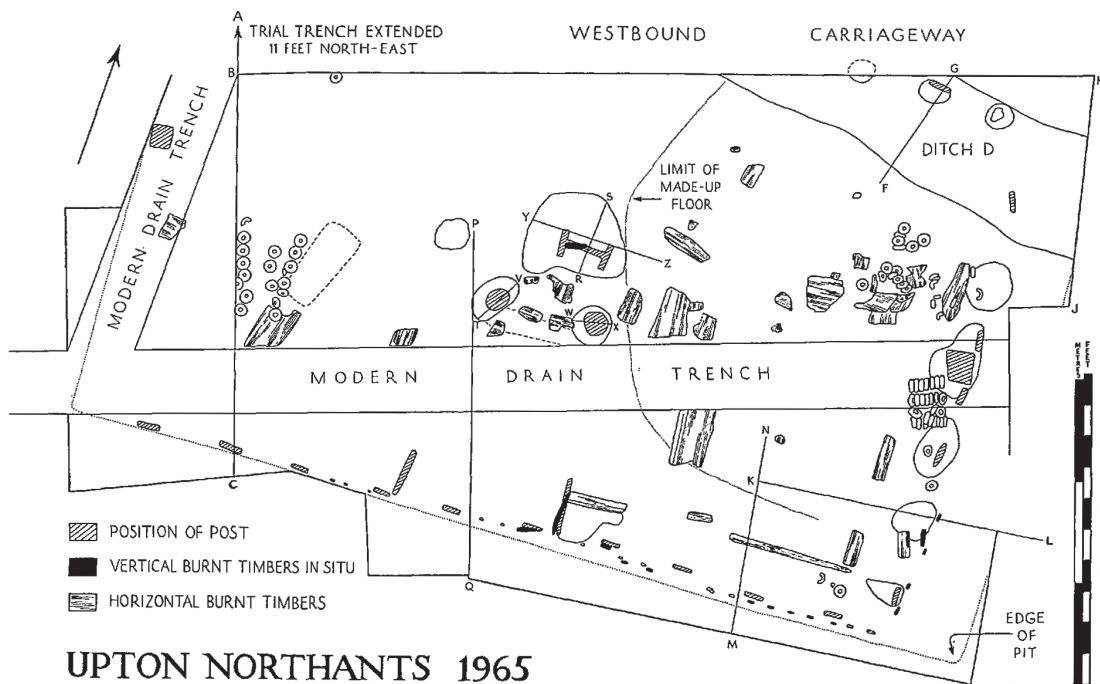
Figure 9 Plan of excavated features at Upton, Northants. From Jackson et al. *1969, Fig 4. Reproduced with author permission.*

lining an inner room space, marked instead a front face of bench seating running around the interior. This makes all the space available within the building accessible and accounts for the pattern of heavier wear in the floor around the edges of the room (Fig. 8).

On the basis of the minimum wall height calculated from the carbonised wall balks and estimation of a minimum roof angle for a thatched roof of 45° (Walker *et al.* 1996, 20), a bench seat height of 0.45 m around this interior would allow for headroom of around 0.95 m from the seating to the underside of the pitched roof. This low height excludes the possibility of a suspended floor within the building, while the well-laid floor is another obvious contradiction. With a horizontal plank base, and walling at the rear, the space created beneath this bench seating would have offered a convenient area

for storage. In this respect we may note Hope-Taylor's record of a loomweight, discovered standing 'almost vertically… against the outer edge of the horizontal plank along the north wall of the building' (1977, 88–89). This positioning is at odds with Hope-Taylor's reconstruction of this as an inaccessible space behind the balk and walling and within packing soil, but would work very well with a reinterpretation of this as a storage space beneath benching around the interior of this workshop.

Comparative Architectures

An early medieval sunken-featured building found at Upton (Northants) in 1965 shares many features in common with Building C1 and, like C1, owed the preservation of its internal features to its destruction by fire (Jackson *et al*. 1969, 206–10 and Fig. 4) (Fig. 9). The pit was estimated to have measured around 9 m in length by 5.5 m in width, with an estimated maximum depth of 0.7 m. It had an internal area of 49.5 m^2, almost double the floor area of Building C1 (25.2 m^2). As with C1, the ridge of the Upton building was carried upon a single post set at the mid-point of each end gable. It is possible that the line of post-pits running parallel with the north wall at its eastern end may represent the footing of principal rafters or flanking buttresses in a similar arrangement to C1. The vertical sides of the pit were faced with wattle-and-daub, revetted with upright planks 0.17–0.25 m in width and 0.025 m in thickness, spaced c. 0.5 m apart.

In relation to the reinterpretation of the architecture of C1, the similar arrangement of planking set some 0.6 m within the wall face in its circuit, and running parallel to it, is significant. The excavators believed it might represent 'the remains of wooden fittings or furniture which had been burnt *in situ*', and suggest the possibility of this being a form of benching or box-bedding running around the interior of the building (Jackson *et al*. 1969, 208, 214). The discovery of a cache of loomweights, 'threaded on short lengths of sticks lying between the eastern wall and the inner plank-line', also lends support to an interpretation of bench seating as providing further storage areas. Puzzled by the continuation of the planking along the line of the south wall, the excavators failed to consider the interruption in the line of the inner planking as a possible point of entry from ground level by stepped descent to the interior, an architectural model suggested by Building C1. Further information, in the form of a setting of posts near the centre of the room, was considered by the excavators as suggestive of an emplacement for a loom, and adjacent to this an 'H'-shaped timber setting they believed indicated bench seating. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the discovery of over 60 loomweights from within the building.

Final comments

On the basis of its internal evidence, we argue that Building C1 presents compelling evidence for being a thatched, tent-like timber building with a southern porched entrance leading by stepped descent to the sunken clay floor within. Here, we can suggest, bench seating ran around the whole circuit of an outer wall, broken only by the stepped descent of the entrance. The evidence from Upton, for wattle-and-daub panels and vertical planking directly revetting the pit sides, supports the revision of Hope-Taylor's reconstruction of Building C1. We can now dispense with the constructional difficulties presented by his wattle-and-daub 'walling' and over-sized pit construction. Weaving was plainly an activity carried out in the building at Upton, and from the evidence of the loomweight within C1, here also. As multi-purpose buildings, however, they would surely have served the varied needs of the seasonal round as required. The wear requiring repair, as noted by Hope-Taylor around the base of the proposed seating, would be consistent with this view.

The outcomes from our first pilot season in 2021 at Yeavering offer a rich vein of new evidence, from the awaited scientifically-dated phasing and chronology for the site to the potential offered by the environmental evidence from the newly excavated features. They also underline how much more we can elicit from this iconic site about early medieval activity, life and interactions at such royal palace complexes. Hope-Taylor, through necessity and reliance on the historical accounts, prioritised the story of the royal presence and elite nature of the site. Our discoveries in 2021, in relation to both Building C1 and the newly discovered building C0, provide balance in terms of information about craftworking, production, and potentially activities that accompanied the seasonally-determined visits of a royal entourage. In our reinterpretation of C1, we can begin to add to Hope-Taylor's story of this early medieval complex, and achieve a better sense of human industry and the lived experience of those working and supporting the better-known characters recorded by Bede in his descriptions of the Northumbrian kingdom.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT OF PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS AT UNDER WHITLE, SHEEN, STAFFORDSHIRE

By IAN PARKER HEATH[1] *and* TUDUR DAVIES[2]

Since 2015, a small local heritage group (TFIG: the Tudor Farming Interpretation Group) has been investigating the origins of a farmstead known as Under Whitle near Pilsbury Castle, on the Staffordshire/ Derbyshire border in the Peak District, centred on SK107640 (Fig. 1). The archaeological potential of the farmstead was first recognised by Rylatt (2005), who identified several standing earthworks of mixed date within the study area, including a possible building platform, holloways, enclosures, and a field system with lynchets, ditches, banks and areas of ridge-and-furrow likely to date to the medieval period. In addition to these features, there were areas identified as having potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains.

Research from 2016–2022

A LiDAR survey in 2016 by the Environment Agency Geomatics Group (EAGG 2016) noted additional features associated with those identified by Rylatt, with more extensive areas of ridge-and-furrow than previously appreciated. Fieldwork in that same year, undertaken by TFIG, revealed a number of additional structures in the vicinity, such as the remains of a seventeenth-century house and nineteenth-century barn. A key focus for the work was the possible building platform identified by Rylatt and thought to be the site of a medieval house. Excavation recovered a range of ceramic materials including sherds dated to the fourteenth century, and charcoal recovered from the platform produced a complementary radiocarbon date range of cal. AD 1299–1404, with 95.4% probability (Parker Heath 2017).[3] A second season of fieldwork was commissioned by TFIG – *Digging Deeper: the Origins of Whitle* – which sought to explore the platform further. Excavation of the platform failed to find any further evidence of a structure, but did recover more ceramic material, including a small number of sherds potentially datable to the twelfth century (Parker Heath 2022; Budge 2022).

In addition to a programme of excavations, a second element of work focused on the palaeoenvironmental potential of the site. Analysis of charred plant remains recovered from the platform itself revealed very limited potential to provide evidence for cereal crops, and no potential to provide evidence of crop husbandry or processing practices. Positive identification of barley grains could be made, but an oat grain could not be fully determined as either wild or cultivated, as is usual in archaeobotany (Simmons 2022).

A parallel programme of palaeoenvironmental investigations examined the research potential of wetland areas previously identified within the study area (Davies 2022). After preliminary fieldwork, including a walkover survey and auger trials, detailed investigations were undertaken on a very small (c. 15 x 30 m) spring-fed bog at the southeast corner of the study area (hereafter the Under Whitle Bog: Site 3 on Fig. 1). Further fieldwork allowed for a detailed examination of the stratigraphy of the bog, indicating that it represents a sequence of colluvium and peat deposits overlying a gravity spring, located at the base of a slope immediately south of the medieval field system.

A 0.95 m core was collected from the centre of the Under Whitle Bog, which was subsequently subject to geoarchaeological, pollen and chronometric analysis. The results of initial radiocarbon dating analysis and age-depth modelling (Fig. 2) suggest that the core contains a sequence dating from the late Bronze Age onwards, but with either a change in accumulation rate or truncation of the core in the late ninth century AD. The results of this chronometric modelling were used to guide the selection of samples for pollen analysis, ensuring that they were contemporary with archaeological remains identified by the *Digging Deeper* project, i.e. of broadly medieval date.

Preliminary pollen analysis examined 11 samples from deposits of 44–72 cm depth, covering the c. 600 years between the late ninth and late fifteenth centuries. This initial pollen analysis – whose results are presented more fully in an archive report (Davies 2022) – indicated that the area surrounding Under Whitle Bog was open for the majority of the period investigated, with exceptionally high levels of arable indicators and lower percentages of pastoral indicators. The percentages of cereal-type pollen identified in the samples are higher than in any other palynological study

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[1] Digging Deeper: A Community Archaeology Project

[2] Cardiff University

[3] Beta-452848 UW16 218: 610 ± 30 BP, calibrated with IntCal20 (Reimer *et al.* 2020) using OxCal v.4.4.4 (Bronk Ramsey 2009).
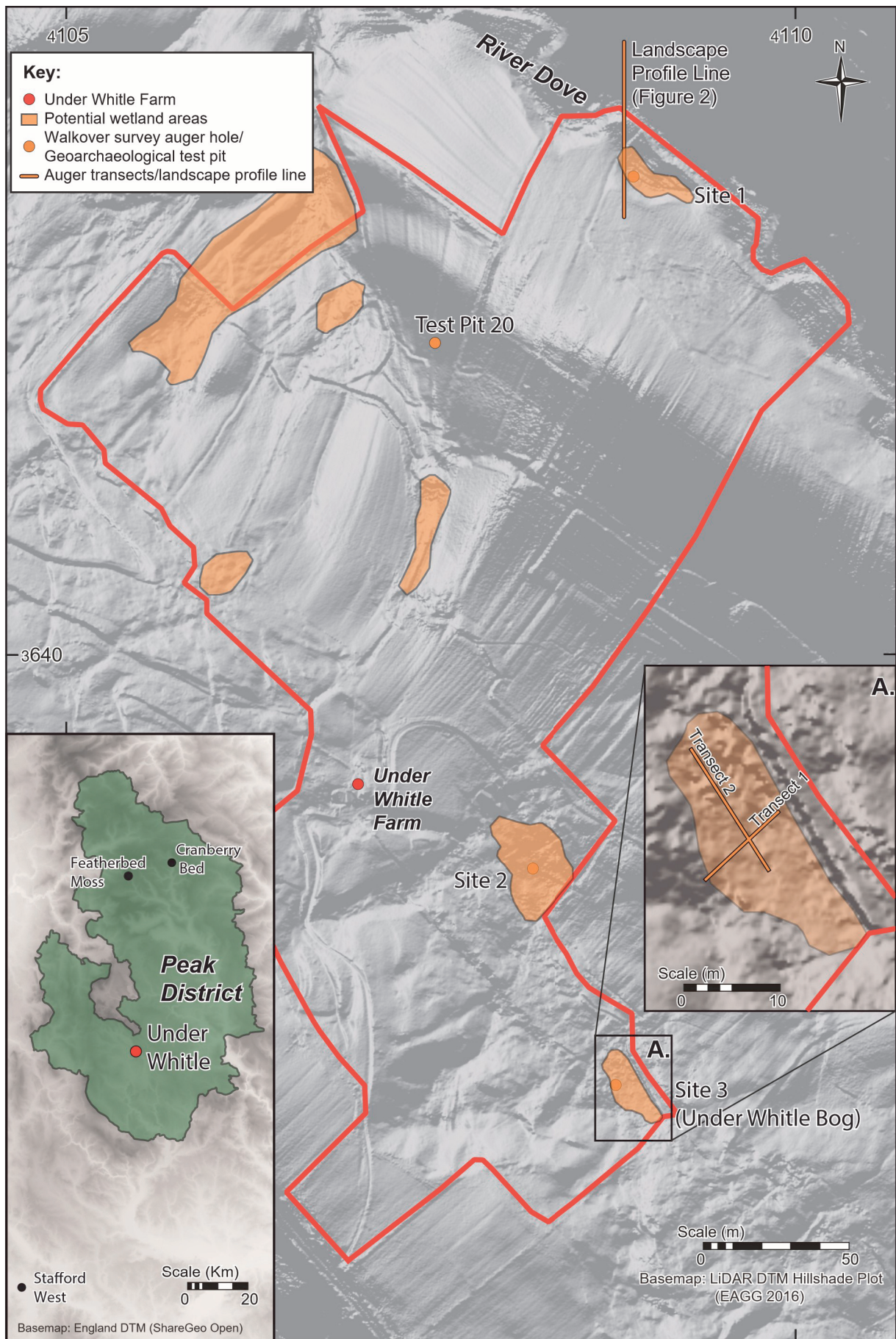
Figure 1   Map of the study area showing the locations of work areas and studies mentioned in the text. LiDAR base map commissioned by TFIG; data processed by Dr Steve Malone of Trent & Peak Archaeology.
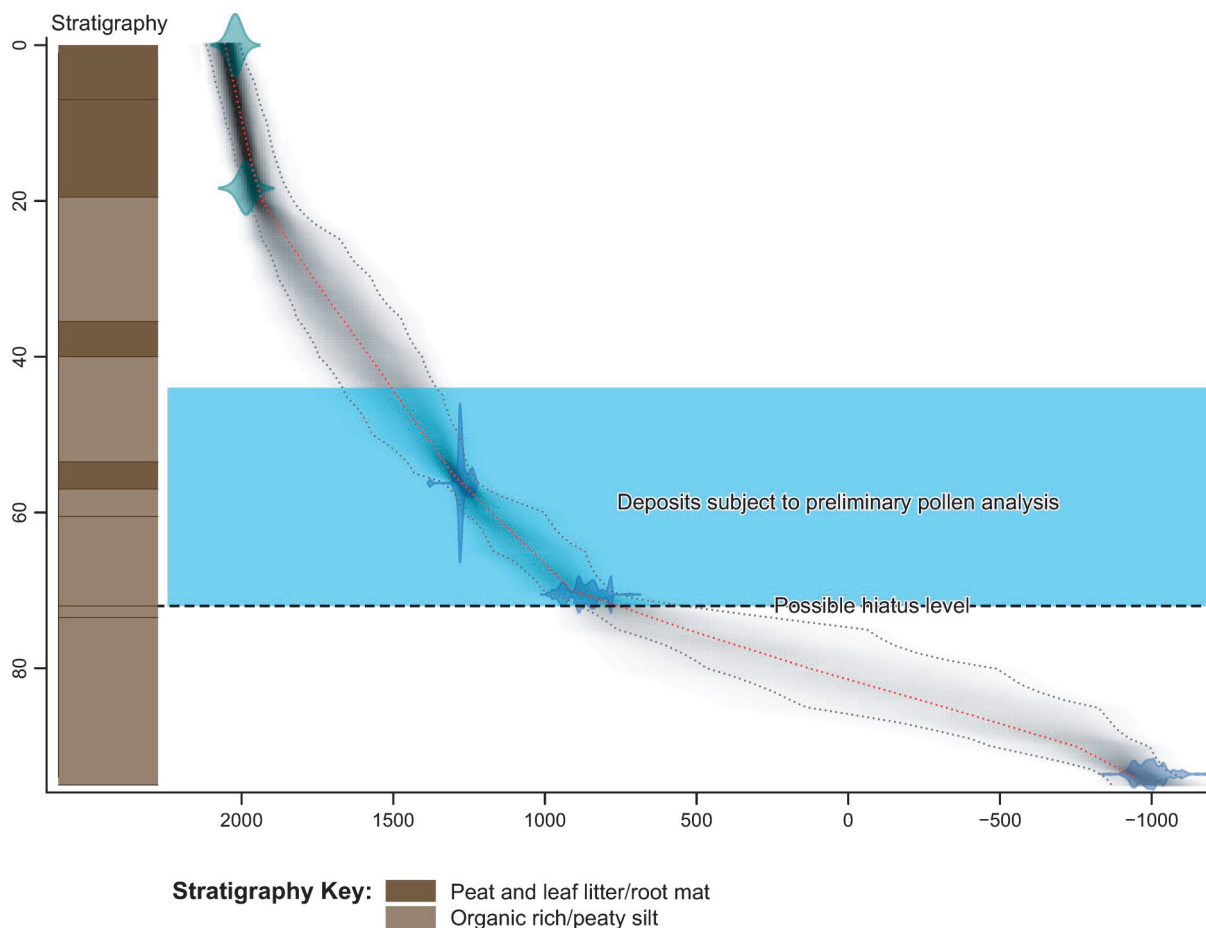
Figure 2   Age-depth model for the core subject to palaeoenvironmental analysis; years on x-axis, depth in centimetres on y-axis.

of medieval deposits identified in the Peak District and Midlands (cf. Hamerow *et al*. 2020). These early results indicate that the core provides an excellent record of environmental change for a medieval community undertaking significant arable activity in this locale.

It is very rare to be able to obtain and analyse palynological data presenting such a strong arable signature in this part of the country, as most pollen sampling sites in Britain are located in upland settings, away from the usual lowland focus of medieval arable activities and core settlement areas (cf. Rippon *et al*. 2015, 56–57). It appears that the proximity of the sampling site to a medieval field system has rendered it particularly sensitive to variations in arable activity. Despite the relatively localised pollen catchment of the site, some trends in its palynological record are comparable to other studies in the wider region, such as a reduction in woodland pollen in the late eleventh/early twelfth century also seen at Featherbed Moss, a much less arable sequence (Fig. 3; Tallis and Switsur 1973; cf. also Stafford West: Hamerow *et al*. 2020). Such parallels suggest that the data from Under Whitle Bog may reflect broader environmental changes in this part of medieval England (Davies 2022).

The interim report on pollen analysis hypothesises correlations between the palaeoenvironmental sequence and known historical events and climatic changes, such as the 'Harrying of the North' after the Norman Conquest, the fourteenth-century depredations of the Great Famine and the Black Death, and the so-called 'Little Ice Age' – a climatic downturn beginning c. 1300 (Davies 2022).

The *Digging Deeper* project now intends to seek additional funding to produce a more robust chronological framework for this core and to examine its palynological record in greater detail.

Future research

This preliminary report serves to summarise our findings so far and to highlight the potential of this site, in a region where archaeological evidence for medieval farming is relatively rare. In order to capitalise on these results and the potential they have for producing an extremely detailed record of environmental change over the medieval period, the landowner and the heritage group are now considering future directions – including further dating, excavation, and palaeoenvironmental analysis – for continuing the research into the farmstead. The extant field systems with their lynchets, ridge-and-furrow and associated earthworks, in close proximity to the peat bog, present an exciting opportunity to integrate different strands of evidence from such a rich source. Excavation of some of these features holds the prospect of establishing the nature of the agricultural practices adopted in this upland valley as well as resolving a secure chronology for their origins.
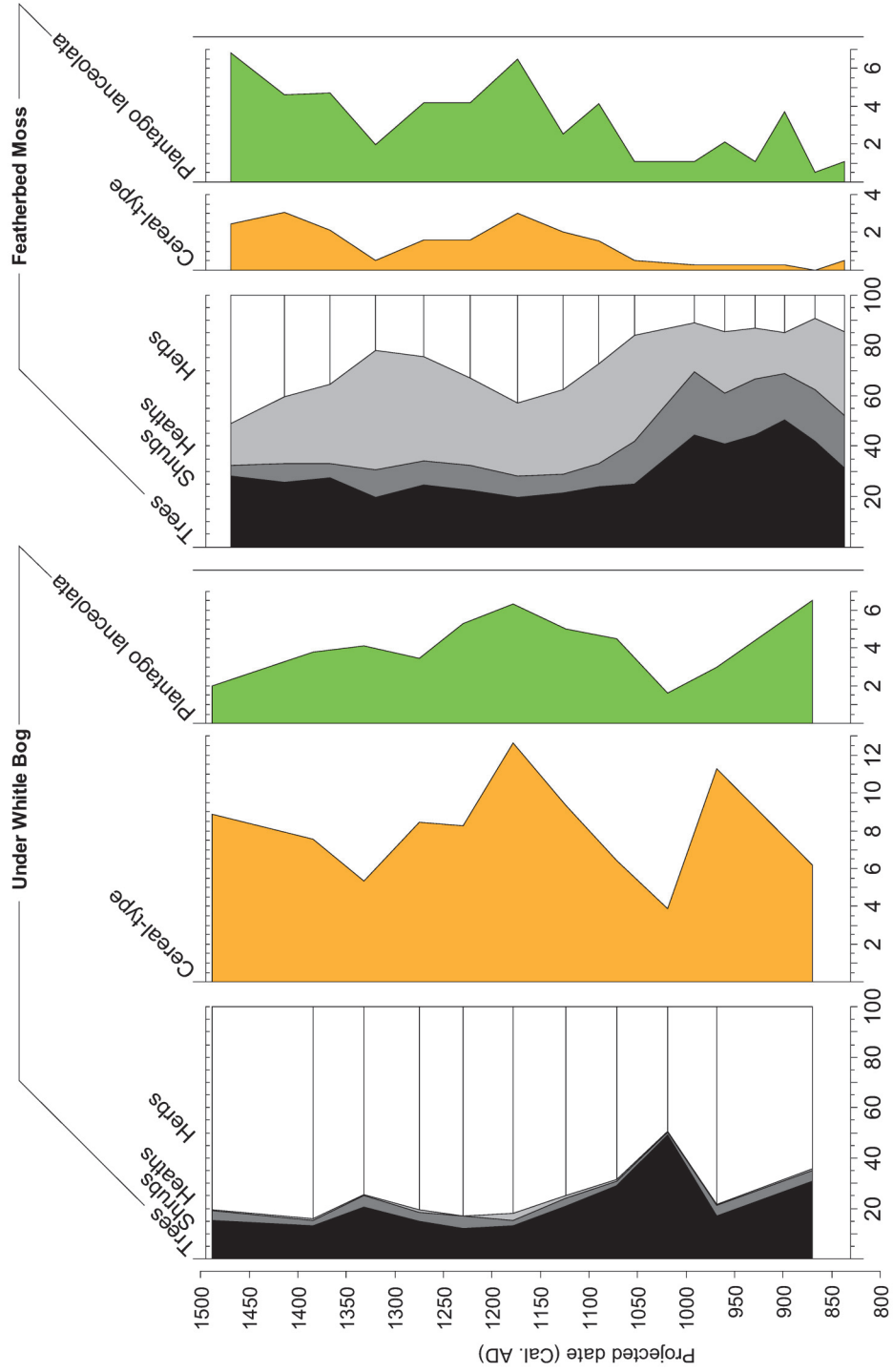
Figure 3   Comparative pollen summary diagrams for Under White Bog and Featherbed Moss plotted against projected chronology. Featherbed Moss pollen data obtained from the supplementary material provided by Hamerow et al. (2020); projected chronology obtained from a depth model produced in Bacon 4.0.5 (Blaauw & Christen 2011) from the original radiocarbon dates provided by Tallis & Switsur (1973).

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TEST PIT EXCAVATION WITHIN CURRENTLY OCCUPIED RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, NETHERLANDS, POLAND AND UNITED KINGDOM – RESULTS OF THE CARE PROJECT IN 2022/23

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2022–23 was the final full year of the 'Community Archaeological in Rural Environments Meeting Societal Challenges' (CARE-MSoC) project, which was granted an extension to compensate for delays caused to the test pit excavation programme in 2020 and 2021 by the COVID-19 pandemic. The extension enabled fieldwork to take place in the Netherlands, Czech Republic and UK (Fig. 1). 120 test pits were excavated and the results of these are summarised here as an update to previous reports in *Medieval Settlement Research* reviewing the outcomes of nearly 200 test pits excavated in 2019 and 2020 (Lewis *et al*. 2020; 2021; 2022a). The reviews published here in *Medieval Settlement Research* focus on information pertaining to the historic development of medieval rural settlements. The CARE project has also investigated the social impact of public participation in local research-driven archaeological investigation, and data pertaining to this have also been collected, analysed and published in journals focussed on heritage and health (e.g. Lewis *et al*. 2022b; Brizi *et al*. 2023).

Results

Czech Republic (P.V.)

The priority for the CARE project in the Czech Republic in 2022 was to excavate one or two more test pits in villages where this would bring the total number up to the target of 25, while focussing most attention on villages such as Merboltice where the number of excavated pits remained well below this target.

Merboltice/Mertensdorf, distr. of Děčín (50° 41' 06" N; 14° 20' 25" E)

Fourteen more test pits were excavated by fifteen local people in Merboltice in 2022 (Fig. 2), adding to those excavated in 2021 (Lewis *et al*. 2022a, 51–57) bringing the total overall to 25. Eight of these pits were sited to recover further information about the St Catharina church (demolished in 1974) and the character of its remains (test pit Nos 12–14, 16–20). The excavations in 2022 enabled the complete plan of the building to be recovered, with these archaeological data being used to inform the architectural project aiming to reconstruct the church.

The other six test pits excavated at Merboltice in 2022 (Nos 15, 21–25) investigated three farms that were selected to cover all three sections of the village: the central part near the parish church (Farm No. 141) and the north-eastern (Farm No. 106) and south-western (Farm No. 15) ends. The aim was to obtain archaeological data which would help us understand the development of the village layout, which takes the form of a long plan arranged along the stream valley. The excavations also aimed to explore the stratigraphic development of these farm plots, which lie on terraces on steep slopes above the bottom of the narrow valley. Test-pitting revealed intact layers associated with the earliest phase of the village (of thirteenth- to fifteenth-century date) in Farm Nos 15 and 141, and pottery fragments dating to this same period were also found in the third farm (No. 106), although here they were residual in a later deposit. Based on this evidence, we can infer that the village was founded in the thirteenth/fourteenth or fifteenth century along the entire length of the stream valley, with the present layout of the settlement developing by a process of infilling between farms originally separated by greater distances. The observed depth of the stratigraphic sequences ranged from 0.5 m (Farm Nos 15 and 106) to almost one metre (Farm No. 141) (Fig. 3). This appears to reflect different processes of settlement and deposition on terraces that were constructed when the village was established. Finds of burnt daub fragments in some later medieval and post-medieval horizons may indicate destruction of timber farm buildings by fires, followed by their re-establishment.

Netherlands (J.V. and H.v.L.)

The easing of remaining COVID-19 regulations in the Netherlands enabled planned community test pit excavations in Schijndel, Boxtel and Esch to proceed for the first time in 2022, and some additional test pits to be excavated in Gemonde and Liempde to explore sites which could not be excavated during the pandemic. Several history teachers asked us to organise a participatory archaeology day for their students in the lead-up to the archaeology weekend in Schijndel, and in collaboration with the Elde College and with the assistance of the Sisters of Charity, we organised a dig

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Figure 1   Map of northern Europe showing the villages/territories where test pit excavation took place as part of the CARE project 2019–2022/3. Locations where investigation focussed in 2022/3 shown in yellow (J. Verspay).

in the garden of the monastery. In Esch, a reduction in the number of board members during the pandemic meant that the local historical society, De Kleine Meierij, no longer had the capacity to organise a village-wide test pit excavation. Instead, we decided to organise an archaeology project for students in grades 7 and 8 at St Willibrordus primary school. Thanks to a subsidy from the province of Noord-Brabant, CARE was able to continue beyond the end of its funded programme in 2023. Building on the results of previous projects, residents of Gemonde and Liempde continued their involvement in their respective villages. The level of interest stimulated by the test pit excavations to date in the Netherlands means that later in 2023 work will begin in new villages.

Boxtel (51° 35' 23" N; 5° 19' 48" E)

Boxtel is situated on a sandy elevation within the river valley of the Dommel. The area saw sporadic human occupation from the Middle Stone Age until it was abandoned for an extended period during Roman times. Not until the early Middle Ages were new settlements created and cultivation undertaken in the region, with the relatively fertile forested lands on the higher parts of the surrounding cover sand ridges the first to be cleared

and developed. These initial clearings formed the foundation for later agricultural complexes and their associated farmsteads. The earliest post-Roman remains in the vicinity of the town date back to the (late) Carolingian period.

A prominent site in Boxtel's early history is the church mound, presently occupied by St Peter's/Petrus Basilica. This elevated spot, formed by a sandy knoll within an old meander of the Dommel, played a significant role in the development of the town. Around the middle of the eleventh century, the lord of Boxtel constructed a motte-and-bailey castle on this site, accompanied by a church (Dijstelbloem and Van der Eerden 2011). This fortress served as the power base for the lords of Boxtel and the centre of their immediate jurisdiction.

The feudal origins of Boxtel can be traced back to the tenth century, when a manorial estate was established under the authority of the German Emperor. Initially, the lords of Boxtel were probably appointed as stewards overseeing the domain, eventually receiving it as a fief. Throughout the High Middle Ages, their growing autonomy transformed the fief into their personal property (De Visser 2013). By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Boxtel became increasingly

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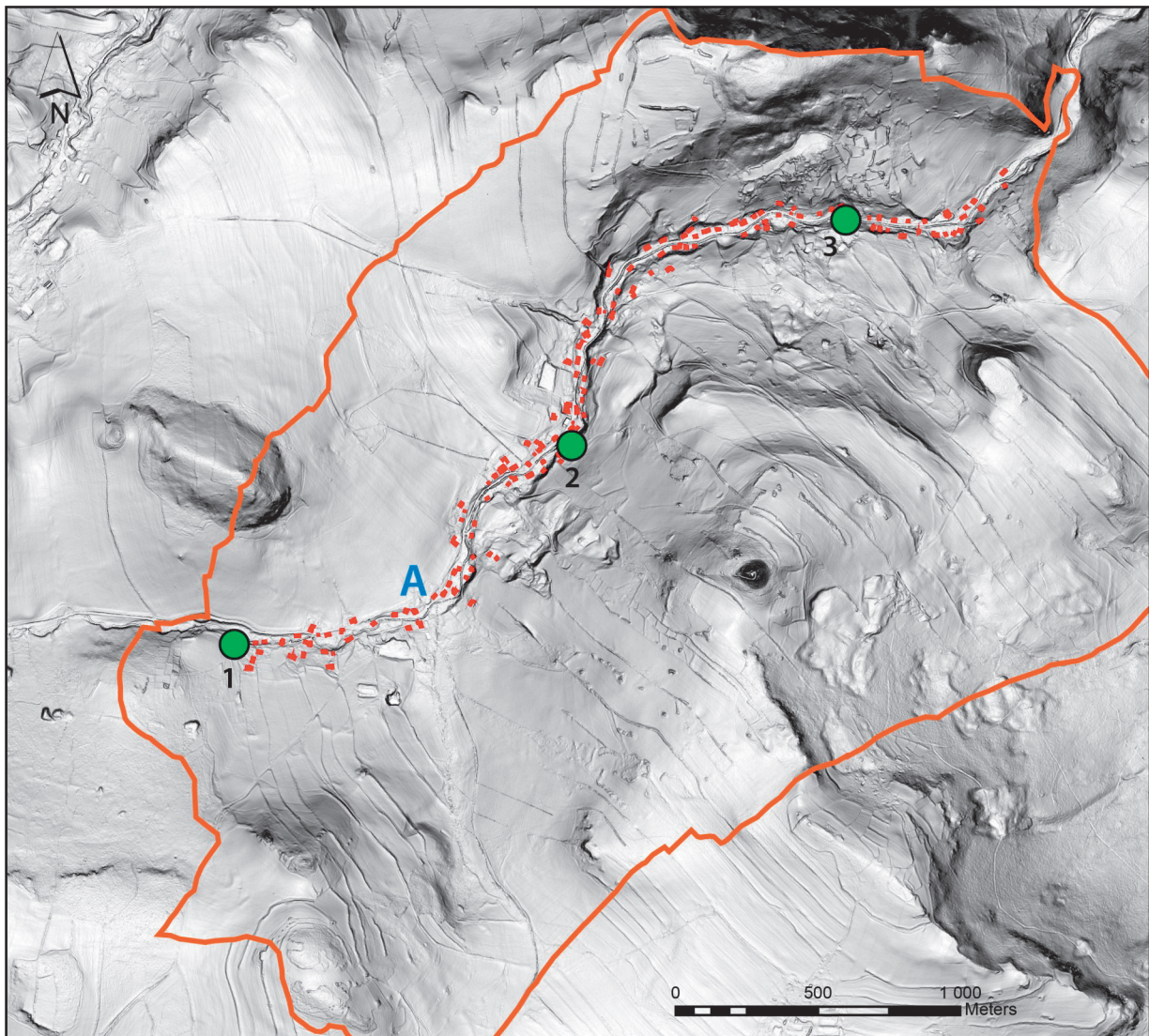
Figure 2   Digital Relief Model of the Merboltice (Czech Republic) cadastral territory based on airborne laser scanning, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022. A: former parish church; red dots: contemporary houses; orange line: cadastral boundary (data provided by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre; map by P. Vařeka).

integrated into the Duchy of Brabant, facing pressures to align with the authority of 's-Hertogenbosch. In 1439, Boxtel pledged its allegiance to the Duke of Burgundy, breaching feudal loyalty to the Emperor. Despite this, Boxtel retained its exceptional status within the Bailiwick until the area became part of Staats-Brabant following the Peace of Münster. The French invasion in 1794 and the establishment of the Batavian Republic led to the abolition of feudal rights, resulting in Boxtel losing its status as a lordship.

According to Leenders' model, Boxtel's historical development can be categorised into five distinct phases (Leenders 2000) (Fig. 4). Phase 1 (1050–1200) saw the construction of the moated motte around 1050 on a sand knoll in a bend of the Dommel, with a central building, a forecourt with grain storage and an accompanying church. The moat was fed by the Kleine Dommel artificial canal. Adjacent to the castle, an agricultural complex known as Borgakker may have been cultivated

directly by the castle farm, Spijkerhoeve. To the east lay the Strijpt, an area of arable land characterised by narrow strips typical of open-field systems. The Rechterstraat thoroughfare, intersecting the southern portion of the agricultural complex, was initially an uninhabited access causeway from a river crossing to the castle. Phase 2 (thirteenth century) saw the emergence of the earliest nucleated settlement along the riverbank of the Dommel, known today as Clarissenstraat. Boxtel expanded eastward with the creation of a substantial rectangular market square surrounded by residential buildings and additional water channels, suggesting a well-planned seigneurial development. The existing castle chapel became the village church, signifying the growing importance of the settlement. Phase 3 (Late Middle Ages) saw more house plots laid out along the Rechterstraat in a deliberate, phased approach to urban planning. The road was paved by the late fifteenth century, reflecting its growing

Figure 3   Test pit at Farm 141 in Merboltice (P. Vařeka).

importance. Phase 4 (Early Modern Period) saw further residential expansion of the southern section of the Borgakker, and Phase 5 (1741–1832) the establishment of a stone paved road connecting 's-Hertogenbosch to Eindhoven in 1741, which played a significant role in Boxtel's development as new buildings were constructed along the Steenweg between 1741 and 1832.

The excavation of nine test pits by more than 50 participants aimed to test Leenders' model in Boxtel-Binnen, the central part of the town located between the watercourses (Fig. 5). Substantial soil re-deposition at various stages of the town development, including the raising of the banks of the Dommel to increase the amount of usable surface behind the houses, used locally sourced soil but meant it was not possible for every test pit to reach the natural subsoil.

Flint tools and debitage found in test pits 2, 5, 8, 9 and 15 indicate that Mesolithic hunter-gatherers sustained themselves here over 7,500 years ago. A much later fragment of glass La Tène bracelet and some pottery fragments in test pits 6 and 7 provide evidence of habitation in the Late Iron Age or early Roman period. Although these artefacts were found in the later soil deposits on the Dommel bank, a clue to their origin

can be found in the deformation of the bracelet, which indicates that it was burned and can be inferred to have come from a cremation grave. Burial sites from this period are usually found on higher parts of the landscape, the nearest of which is the sand knoll on which St Peter's Basilica now stands. It is therefore likely that there was a late Iron Age cemetery here.

The origin of the seigneury of Boxtel is thought to date back to the tenth century, associated with the establishment of a manorial estate under the authority of the German Emperor. In several test pits, we found materials from this earliest phase. However, pottery discovered at Molenstraat (test pit No. 8) indicates that people had already been living there as early as the ninth or even eighth century. This suggests that the area around the present Zwaansebrug played a prominent role during that time, with the river crossing serving as the initial focal point of the settlement before it shifted to the castle area.

Although not all test pits could be excavated to the natural subsoil, a significant amount of medieval pottery was found in this area, identified by Leenders as the origin of the seigneury. Elmpt, Paffrath, Pingsdorf, and Zuid-Limburg pottery found in the test pits on Clarissenstraat (Nos 5–7) correlate with the earliest phase of the town. Additionally, Andenne pottery and Elmpt ware from test pit 16, as well as a piece of Zuid-Limburg pottery in test pit 15, indicate that the Strijpt area was indeed used as arable land in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, prior to the establishment of the market around 1290.

No medieval pottery was found in the southern Borgakker area (test pit No. 10), but test pit 9 on the opposite bank of the Dommel did yield small numbers of Elmpt and Paffrath ware sherds indicating that the area was used for agriculture in the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Boxtel flourished as a prosperous town in the late Middle Ages. Discoveries from the Rechterstraat (test pit No. 15) bear witness to a lavish food culture, including roast meat and oysters brought in from the Zeeland delta (De Jong 1994). In this region such delicacies are only known from castle sites and aristocratic town houses (De Jong 1992; Van Genabeek and Nijhof 2019). From more recent periods, the material culture from the test pits in Boxtel also differed significantly in some respects from that of other villages nearby. For instance, a considerably larger number of tobacco pipes were found here, indicating that smoking was adopted more widely in the seventeenth century. Another notable finding was the high number of writing styli or slate pencils found in various locations, indicating that a significant portion of the inhabitants were literate. The presence of various schools in the seigneury certainly contributed to this. Some of these differences can be attributed to a higher population density, but they also hint at a subtly distinctive, somewhat more urbanised cultural milieu.

Esch (51° 36' 41" N; 5° 17' 36" E)

Located within the municipality of Boxtel, the small church village of Esch is situated on a cover sand ridge along the Essche Stroom river. Its historical roots can be traced back as early as AD 773 when Nebelung, an individual of note, bestowed various properties in the villa of 'Hesc' upon the Abbey of St Willibrord in

Figure 4   Model for the historic development of Boxtel, after Leenders 2000 (J. Verspay).

Figure 5 Map of Boxtel, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022 (topographic map © Kadaster) (J. Verspay).
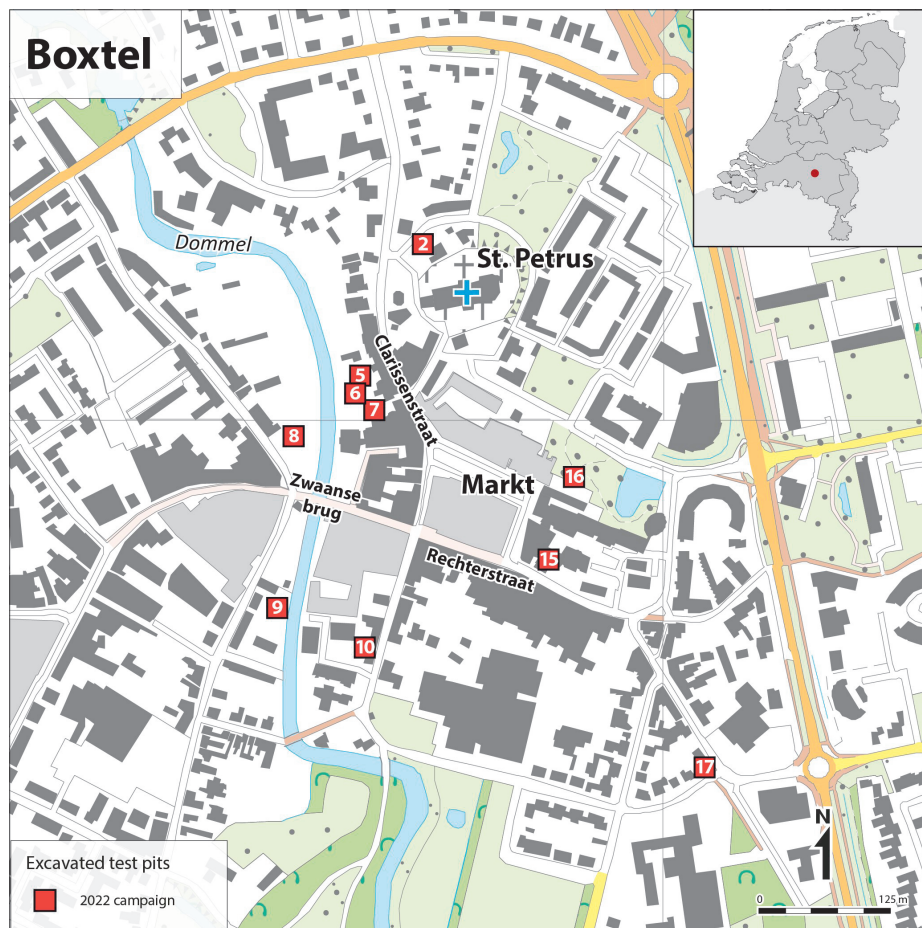

Figure 6 Map of Esch, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022 (topographic map © Kadaster) (J. Verspay).

Figure 7 Excavations on the Baerschot estate confirmed its transformation from a farm to a moated country estate took place in the second half of the sixteenth century (J. Verspay).

Echternach, Luxembourg. This endowment included four farms, land, houses, fields, meadows, forests, standing and flowing water resources, and the dependent peasantry. It is noteworthy that one of the Echternachtse rights extends to Kollenberg, an area where a number of Roman-era elite graves were discovered from 1950 to 1952 (Van den Hurk 1986; De Bont 1989). During this period, Esch appears to have held a prominent position, as subsequent excavations have confirmed the presence of two villas on either side of the river. However, apart from the discovery of a single Merovingian throwing axe along the riverbank, there is no evidence for settlement continuity after the Roman era (Sambeek and Van de Langenberg-Scheepers 2010).

Medieval Esch developed on a high river terrace to the east of the Essche Stroom. The location was probably chosen because of its proximity to an ancient river crossing, facilitating communication and trade (Roymans and Keijers 2008). The original centre of the village, adjacent to the church, later expanded along the course of the Essche Stroom, resulting in a more or less linear settlement pattern. The village is surrounded by cultivated lands and retains a mostly agrarian character. The church probably played a role in nucleating the spatial organisation of the settlement. Across the river, farms were dispersed along the sand ridge, delineating the transition zone between cultivated fields and extensive grasslands. During the late Middle Ages, Esch attracted affluent individuals from 's-Hertogenbosch, who sought to establish prestigious manor farms and country estates. Often these were surrounded by moats used primarily as markers of social status rather than for defensive purposes.

One such manor house is Baerschot, located on the northern bank of the Essche Stroom. A pen drawing by Joshua de Grave from 1681 depicts an exquisite country house, which was documented as a castle in 1715. The location of the estate is known from the Ordnance Survey. Interestingly, the house is depicted outside the moat during this period, raising the possibility that an earlier structure lay within the moat. The earliest record of Baerschot dates back to 1501, when it is described as

a substantial farm that included two other houses and fishing rights. It is worth noting that this estate paid rent to the prestigious Abbey of Echternach, whose properties in this region were mostly acquired during the Carolingian period, raising the possibility that Baerschot farm might date back to that time and be one of the properties bestowed by Nebelung to Willibrord.

50 students from the local primary school carried out metal detector surveys and dug three test pits. The pits were excavated in the garden behind the current (twentieth-century) country house (Fig. 6), strategically positioned to observe different areas (Fig. 7): test pit 1 where the earlier house was thought to have been; test pit 2 on the site of the eighteenth-century country house; and test pit 3 west of the manor near the former coach house which was demolished in 1965, after which the current country house was constructed on the contours of the original (sixteenth-century) farmstead.

Test pit 3 produced debris and pottery dating from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, corresponding to the converted old coach house. Test pit 1 revealed a layer of arable soil, in which finds predominantly of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pottery and tobacco pipes also included a piece of hand-formed pot dating back to the late prehistoric period and a Roman coin from the first century AD. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the excavation down to the natural subsoil level. Test pit 2, within Baerschot castle grounds, revealed a layer of arable soil overlying well-preserved large soil features, potentially a pit or moat, containing pottery and stoneware from the second half of the sixteenth century. This coincides with a change in the description of Baerschot in the archival records from a farmstead (1558) to a moated manor (1604) (Sambeek and Van de Langenberg-Scheepers 2010, 35). No identifiably older material was found at this location.

The lack of late medieval artefacts suggests that the 1604 manor was not constructed on the exact location of the documented fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century farmstead, although the creation of the pit or moat may have displaced earlier deposits. If the existing farm was not replaced, it might have been put to a different use. Possibly the coach house originates from this.

Figure 8 Map of Gemonde, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019, 2022 and 2023 (topographic map © Kadaster) (J. Verspay).

Regrettably, test pit 3 only yielded eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artefacts among the construction debris. Thus far, no archaeological evidence has been uncovered to support a Carolingian origin of Baerschot. However, the discoveries do indicate that the area was utilised during the Iron Age and the early Roman period.

Gemonde (51° 37' 9" N; 5° 21' 29" E)

In 2019, our findings indicated that the habitation in the current village centre of Gemonde was preceded by a settlement cluster at the Hogert, the head of an elongated glacial sand ridge along the river Dommel (Lewis *et al*. 2020, 85–6). The discovered artefacts supported the presumed presence of a manorial complex associated with a domain estate (Verspay 2022). Pottery from the Merovingian period confirms the actual occupation of this location during the Christianisation activities of Lambertus and Willibrordus, to whom the estate was endowed at the end of the seventh century. The site already seems to have held significance, as is evidenced by continuous occupation dating back to the Iron Age, and even earlier, as finds also indicate habitation sometime during the Bronze Age.

The earliest evidence of habitation or agricultural land use within the current village centre can be traced back to the High Middle Ages and early Late Middle Ages. Rather than a nucleated settlement, however, these finds indicate the establishment of a number of dispersed farms, situated at the foot of the cover sand ridge, on the edge of open fields. A more densely occupied settlement, clustered around the Dorpstraat, seems to have developed only in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. This nucleation appears to coincide with the establishment of a barn church in 1674 (Coenen 2004, 266).

On the eastern side of the village, the wilderness named 'Bodem van Elde' in 1314 by the Duke of Brabant appears to mark the starting point for the reclamation of this area. Each of the test pits excavated on this side in 2019 yielded some artefacts from the Late Middle Ages. A sherd of a globular pot dating from the eleventh or twelfth century tentatively suggests that the hamlet of Besselaar might have already existed at that time, possibly as a property of the illustrious lords of Rode. This could explain why Besselaar has always remained under the jurisdiction of the town of Sint-Oedenrode, the main town of the seigneury.

The 2022 excavation aimed to gather additional data from the historical village centre and the area surrounding Besselaar. At the request of several amateur archaeologists, a few test pits were also dug on the

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Figure 9 Finds of high medieval pottery, like this globular pot sherd, indicate that Besselaar predates the grant of the Bodem van Elde forest in 1314 and its subsequent reclamation (J. Verspay).

cover sand ridge to the west of the village to verify a suspected presence of an early medieval settlement based on surface finds they had previously made. Ultimately, 40 participants excavated nine test pits over the weekend (Fig. 8).

In the open-field complex along the Dommel river, a row of four pits was dug at right angles to the direction of the sand ridge. Each pit yielded pottery from the late prehistoric period. The highly fragmented nature of the pottery can be attributed to extensive ploughing, indicating that the entire area has long been part of the cultivated land. It also suggests that the land was already being actively fertilised during this period through the deposition of household waste on the fields. Subsequent finds from different periods further demonstrate the continuous use of the sand ridge as agricultural land. In the westernmost test pit (No. 26), near the Dommel river, intact archaeological features were discovered beneath the thick man-made ploughsoil. Roof tiles and a sherd of a coarse-ware pottery bowl date these features to the Late Roman or Merovingian period.

In the pit located near the rectory, the soil was found to have been recently disturbed. However, in the front garden of a nearby former farmhouse at Sint Lambertusweg 113 (No. 28), pottery from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries confirmed the relatively recent formation of the village centre.

In the former clay forest area along the road to Schijndel, test pit 35 revealed well-preserved features containing substantial fragments of grey-fired pottery of fourteenth-century date. If these are associated with a toft, it could potentially indicate the presence of a reclamation farm.

The test pit in the green of Besselaar (No. 33), however, did not yield any medieval pottery. This might be due to its low position in relation to its surroundings. The soil bore evidence of deep tillage in the eighteenth century, probably carried out to improve drainage.

To investigate further the reclamation of the Bodem van Elde, and the possibility that Besselaar was in existence in the twelfth/thirteenth century, we conducted additional test pit excavations in the hamlet in 2023. Our focus was primarily on the historic farm where we previously discovered high medieval pottery, as well as the elevated fields adjacent to the Beekse waterloop, a nearby brook. These areas were identified as the most probable locations of arable fields in the marshy region prior to reclamation. Over three days, a team of 47 participants excavated nine test pits. Five pits yielded fragments of high medieval pottery (Fig. 9), including Andenne, Elmpt, Kempen, and Pingsdorf ware. This supports the notion that the settlement dates back to the twelfth or even eleventh century, a finding that aligns with the hypothesis that Besselaar originated as part of a manorial estate belonging to the lords of Rode. Of particular interest is a Roman coin dating to the second century AD, discovered during a complementary metal detector survey, which suggests human activity in this area predating previous estimates. Until now, evidence from this period was known solely from the Dommel area.

Liempde (51° 34' 15" N; 5° 22' 25" E)

Liempde has a multitude of iconic historic farms, which greatly contribute to the village's rural character and evoke an era when most of its inhabitants sustained themselves through agriculture. A comprehensive study was recently published by a group of local historians on the history of these farms, drawing on the extensive examination of timber frames, dendrochronological analysis and study of archival records. The CARE project offered the opportunity to establish how old the historical roots of these farmsteads are. On the three available former farmyards a total of four test pits were excavated by 32 participants.

At Eikendaal 6 (dated 1856), historical research reveals that the timber frame of this farmhouse dates back to the sixteenth century (De Witte 2022, 22). However, the earliest cadastral map published in 1832 does not depict the farmstead. It is not until 1856 that a house and yard are first registered on the plot. Based on a note in the cadastre, De Witte suggests that the farmhouse nevertheless may have existed at the time of

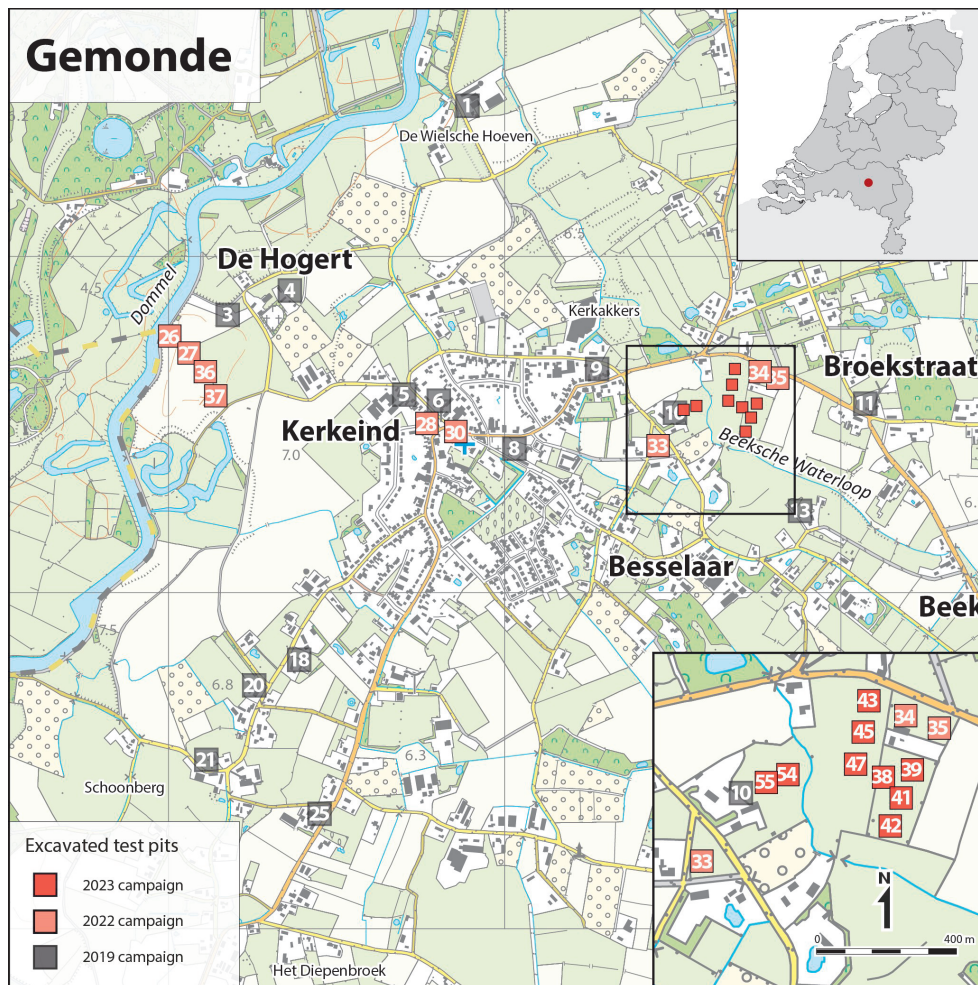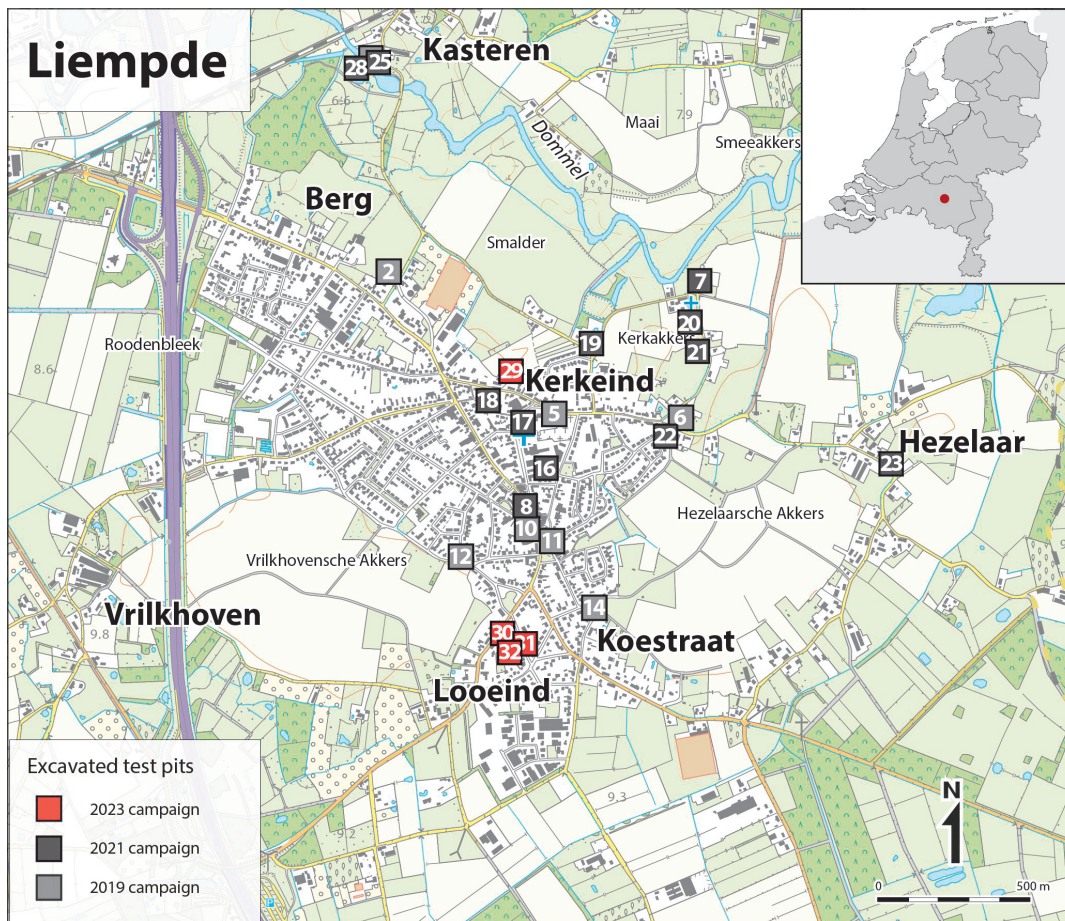*Figure 10 Map of Liempde, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2023 (topographic map © Kadaster) (J. Verspay).*

the Ordnance Survey in 1832 but was not included on the map, possibly to evade taxes (De Witte 2022, 11). To test this hypothesis, two test pits were excavated on the premises. The absence of substantial quantities of material dating from the early nineteenth century or earlier, despite an abundance of artefacts from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, provides a strong indication that the farmhouse was indeed constructed in 1856, utilising an older timber frame. The suggestion that the farmhouse is older but not recorded in the cadastre lacks archaeological support. However, signs of previous activity are evident on the site. In the test pit located in the old orchard, an older feature was found. The pit was too small for us to determine its nature, and the examination of the upper fill did not yield any finds that could provide further dating.

The farm at Barrierweg 23 (dated 1635 ± 3 years) sat on the same (now lost) unpaved road as Eikendaal 6. It was situated against the road and had all its entrances in the long façade of the building, as was common in the region. The timber frame was dendrochronologically dated to the seventeenth century, with an extension that incorporates constructional elements from the sixteenth century (Steenbakkers 2017, 40). Due to practical constraints, the test pit was positioned at the periphery of the yard, close to the former road. The cultural layer in this area exhibited a relatively thin and slightly disturbed profile. Notably, pottery fragments (Elmpt ware) retrieved from this context can be traced back to

the early fourteenth century. Whether these artefacts can be attributed to the farmstead itself remains uncertain from this specific context. However, the presence of this material indicates that the hamlet, documented since the fifteenth century (Coenen 2004, 45), had been inhabited for at least a century.

At Kapelstraat 22 (dated 1728) in the Kerkeind hamlet, the iconic longhouse named 'De Vonder' derives its name from the narrow bridge that historically granted access to its forecourt (Steenbakkers 2017, 125). The timber frame of this listed monument dates back to 1728, although earlier finds suggest that the farm existed as early as the sixteenth century. Test pit excavation near the north-eastern portion of the short façade revealed remnants of a small annex that had housed a farm labourer (Fig. 11). The broken bricks in the back fill of the wall were discarded during its demolition around 1925. Analysis of the soil stratigraphy indicated that the structure was built on the former vegetable garden area. The layer of rich humus soil showed signs of cultivation. The oldest artefacts from this layer, salt-glazed stoneware and grey ware, date back to the fifteenth century, possibly even the fourteenth century.

As a result of the light shed by these test pit excavations, several other historic farm owners have expressed an interest in participating in future iterations of CARE test pit excavations.

Figure 11 Façade and test pit at the 'De Vonder' farm in the Kerkeind hamlet of Liempde, whose timber frame was built in 1728, possibly traces its origins back to the fifteenth century (J. Verspay).

Schijndel (51° 37' 9" N; 5° 21' 27")

The village of Schijndel is situated between the rivers Aa and Dommel. The distinctive landscape features are attributed to clay deposits that were formed during the most recent glacial period and subsequently overlain by a thin layer of drift sand (Heesters 1984). This clay impedes rapid drainage, resulting in the development of wetland forests and marshy heathlands. Schijndel is located on a modest cover sand ridge in this area where the soil was suitable for some agriculture. The village probably originated as an agricultural settlement, consisting of a number of dispersed farms. In addition to Schijndel itself, the village historically encompassed five outlying hamlets.

The first documented references to Schijndel in the thirteenth century are closely linked to the emergence of 's-Hertogenbosch as a thriving trading city and administrative centre in the northern region of the Duchy of Brabant. The strategic location of the village along a major thoroughfare connecting 's-Hertogenbosch with Maastricht, Aachen and Liège, as well as Venlo and Cologne, played a pivotal role in shaping its subsequent development. This route gave rise to a number of taverns and breweries. Set back from the main street were the church and market square. Drawing from the toponym *Cluijs*, Heesters postulates the presence of a (moated) stone house belonging to a local aristocrat who originally erected the church on their estate. The church, dedicated to St Servatius, probably dates back to around 1300. As the village came under the authority of the bailiff in 1232, it could no longer have been a seigneury at that time. By the early fifteenth century, the village had a school and a Gothic church with a clocktower.

Due to the unsuitability of the marshy grounds surrounding the village for growing cereal crops, hop cultivation was adopted prior to the early fifteenth century. The hop industry thrived, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bolstered by the presence of numerous local breweries and access to supra-regional markets such as Antwerp and 's-Hertogenbosch (Van de Rijdt and Berkvens 2006). Over the course of the sixteenth century the Meierij region became a recurrent theatre of war and military conflicts. Schijndel endured several instances of pillaging and extortion, with Dutch forces completely devastating the village in 1583.

Subsequent periods witnessed the recurrent presence of marauding armies, mutinous troops and quartered soldiers, which posed a continuous threat to the area. These burdens heavily impacted the local population, leading to regional impoverishment. Additionally, the construction of a road between 's-Hertogenbosch and Eindhoven (1741–1789) significantly diminished the commercial traffic passing along Schijndel's old road.

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, the craft of clog-making experienced a notable upswing. The clayey soils around Schijndel proved exceptionally suitable for the rapid growth of Canadian poplar trees whose soft wood is well suited to clog-making. Through the pre-emption right obtained in 1465, these trees were extensively planted along paths, roads, and property boundaries, resulting in the distinctive poplar landscape that characterises the region.

The test pit excavation programme aimed to investigate the correlation between the development of Schijndel, its proximity to the emerging city of 's-Hertogenbosch, and its position along a major trade route. A team comprising 100 volunteers and students excavated a total of 21 test pits (Figs 12–13). As the local historical society wished to process and analyse the finds themselves, the results are not yet fully complete. Nonetheless, analysis to date shows compelling evidence for late medieval settlement along the main road. Finds of Carolingian pottery (test pits 10, 11 and 26) indicate that this route may have existed for some time and connected several farmsteads as early as the early medieval period. Roman and Iron-Age pottery found in test pit 14 shows that the cover sand ridge was
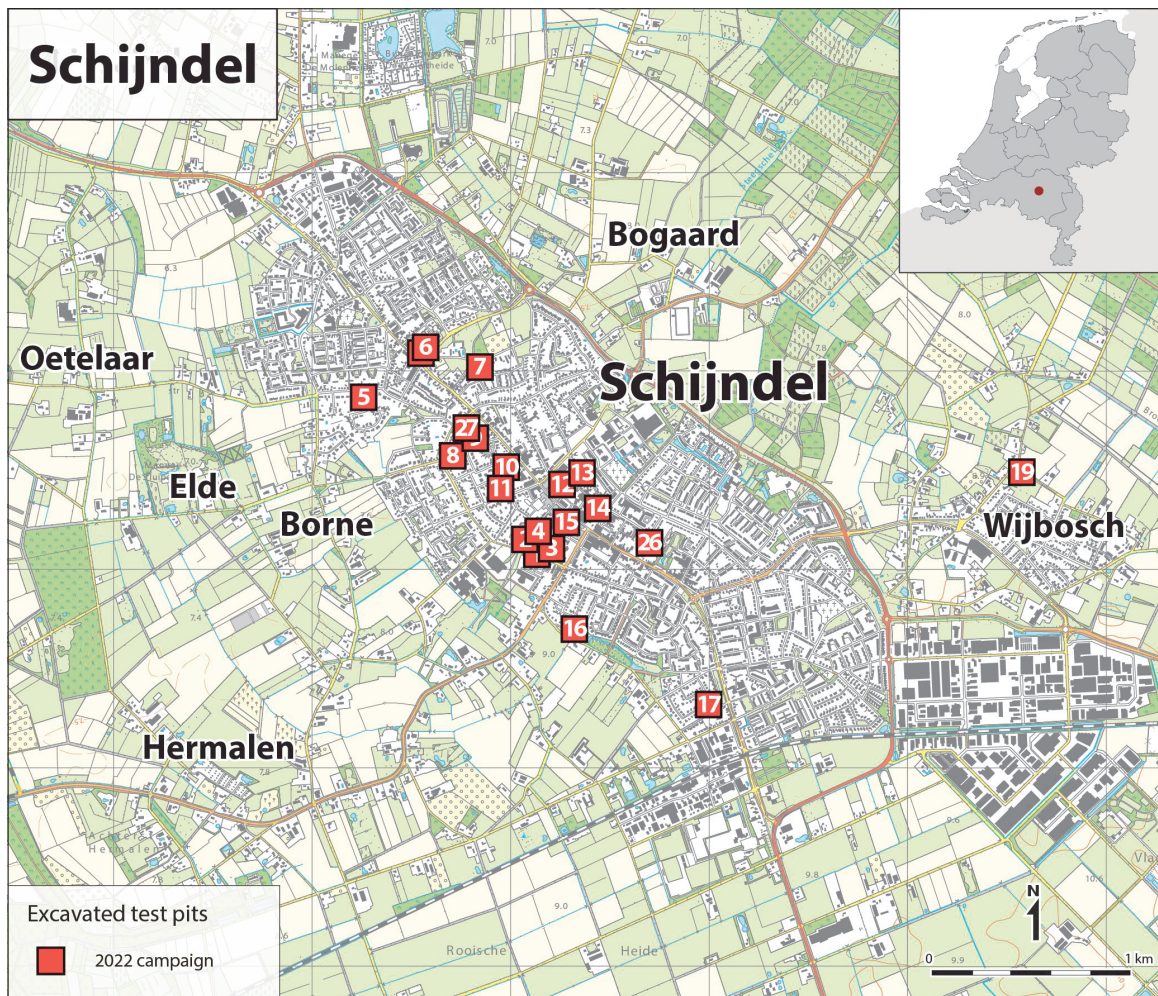
Figure 12 Map of Schijndel, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022 (topographic map © Kadaster) (J. Verspay).

Figure 13   A test pit in Schijndel, North-Brabant under excavation by local children in a densely built-up residential area of Schijndel (J. Verspay).
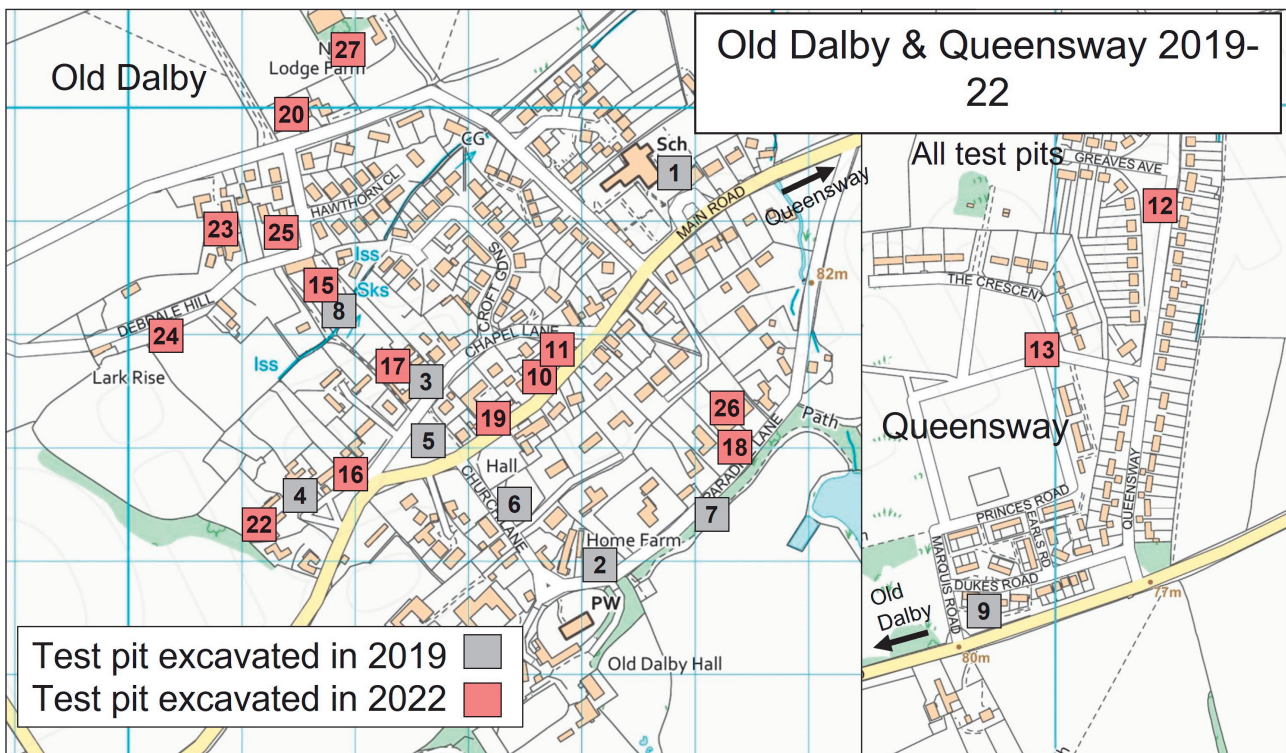
Figure 14 Map of Old Dalby, Leicestershire, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022 (map © Ordnance Survey) (C. Lewis).

inhabited even earlier. The lack of finds around the periphery of this dune illustrates the significance of the landscape in settlement location. The presence of hunter-gatherer societies, meanwhile, was demonstrated by the notable discovery of a Neanderthal tool from the Middle Palaeolithic era in test pit 17. A much more recent demonstration of the close link between industry and landscape was beautifully illustrated by the long spoon auger, a tool used in clog-making, that was found among the foundations of a nineteenth-century farmhouse (No. 6).

Poland

No further test pit excavations were carried out in Poland in 2022 as all planned/funded work for the CARE project in Poland was completed in the preceding years.

United Kingdom (C.L.)

Old Dalby and Queensway (Leicestershire) (52° 48' 25" N; 1° 00' 07" E)

In 2022, sixteen test pits were excavated in Old Dalby and Queensway (Fig. 14), adding to the nine excavated in 2019 (Lewis *et al.* 2020, 90–91) before the COVID-19 pandemic prevented further excavations in 2020 and 2021. This brings the total number of pits excavated in Old Dalby over the two years to 25. Attention in 2022 focussed on areas not investigated in 2019, including the centre of the present village along Chapel Lane, the east end of Paradise Lane, and the northern part of the existing village where a single test pit, in the garden of the present pub, produced the earliest pottery in 2019 (Lewis *et al.* 2020, 90). Although there remain some areas where test pits have not been excavated – the

(mostly recent) north-east of the village and the area south-west of the church – some useful observations can be made about the development of the settlement.

No pottery predating the later Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian period (ninth to eleventh centuries) has been found in any of the test pits in Old Dalby or Queensway. We can thus infer that the present settlement did not develop on the site of a Romano-British predecessor. Three test pits produced pottery of later Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian date (mid-ninth- to mid-eleventh-century). Two of these (ODA22/15 and ODA22/17) were in the centre of the present village near the existing pub, in the same area where test pit ODA19/08 produced Stamford Ware in 2019. It seems likely that this area, close to a north-south-orientated footpath running through the village, was the earliest core of the medieval settlement. It is notable, however, that a small number of test pits in other areas of Old Dalby have also produced one or two sherds, possibly suggesting a dispersed pattern of settlement at this time. One of these was on the eastern edge of the present settlement near the school (two sherds), another along Paradise Lane north-east of the present church and eighteenth-century hall (one sherd), although the latter single find may relate to arable manuring.

Pottery dating to the high medieval period (twelfth to fourteenth centuries) was found in seven pits in 2022, but five of these produced only single sherds, likely at this date to relate to arable manuring rather than habitation. Overall, the high medieval settlement seems to have been focussed in two nodes, one near the pub (although, unusually, this seems to be smaller in extent than it was in the late Anglo-Saxon period) and the other along Paradise Lane. The evidence from the test pits for habitation on the north-western side of Paradise
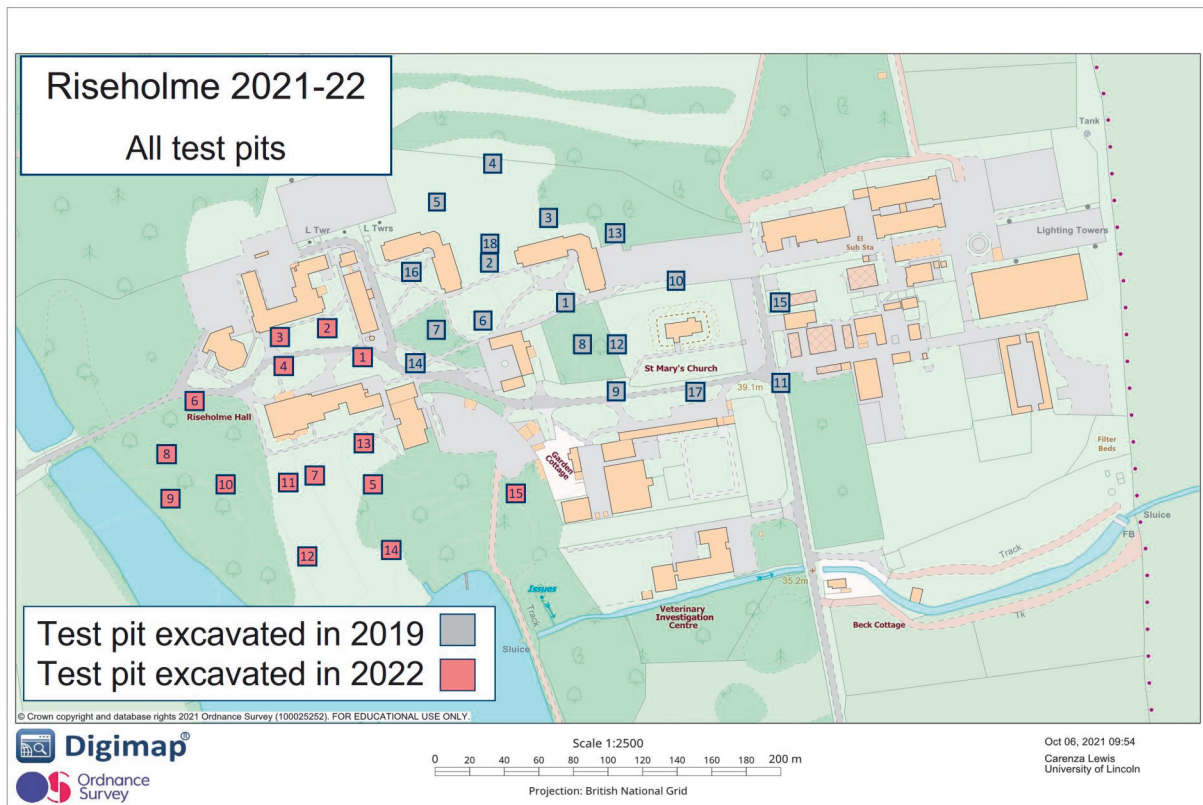
Figure 15 Map of Riseholme, Lincolnshire, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2022 (map © Ordnance Survey) (C. Casswell and C. Lewis).

Lane complements the earthworks of deserted medieval settlement remains on the other (south-eastern) side of Paradise Lane, thus the test pits both provide a date for this area of settlement and suggest that it was larger than has previously been known from the earthwork survey. It seems likely to have been a new extension/foundation in the Norman period, given that only a single sherd was found predating the twelfth century. It is tempting to infer that the extension of settlement into this area may have been associated with the foundation of the Hospitaller preceptory in 1206 (Hoskins and McKinley 1954), whose earthworks lie nearby in the same field.

For the later medieval period, the amount of pottery post-dating the fourteenth-century demographic decline is greater at Old Dalby than that for the high medieval period. All three pits along Paradise Lane produced habitative amounts of pottery, with smaller amounts from the pits in the centre of the village near the pub, suggesting that the latter area may have contracted at this time while the former did not. This is also the period when, for the first time, pottery is found in test pits along Main Road and along Chapel Lane – these two streets run either side of an oval area likely to be a former green. We can infer that overall the village increased in size at this time, probably after replanning established the new 'Main Road' street, where previous excavation in advance of development discovered ditches, post holes and gullies containing stratified pottery dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (Parker 2005). It is tempting to speculate that the presence of the Hospitaller preceptory, located just outside the present village south of Paradise Lane, may

have increased the resilience of Old Dalby to contraction during a period of widespread settlement contraction by attracting visitors and providing diverse sources of revenue.

The preceptory at Old Dalby was suppressed in 1540 during Henry VIII's dissolution of nearly all monastic establishments in England (1536–41): this period sees a stark change in secular settlement at Old Dalby. Test pits along Paradise Lane (nearest the preceptory site) produced no pottery definitively dating to the mid-sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, suggesting that this was when this area, and the adjacent area surviving as earthworks, were deserted. Likewise, test pits near the pub, the oldest core of the village according to test pit data, also produced no pottery of this date, with the settlement in the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appearing to lie exclusively along Main Road and Chapel Lane: the most recent parts of the village, established after the fourteenth century.

Riseholme (Lincolnshire) (52° 48' 25" N; 1° 00' 07" E)

In September 2022, more than 50 University of Lincoln students took part in a second season of test pit excavations around the deserted medieval settlement of Riseholme. Fifteen test pits were excavated in 2022, adding to the eighteen excavated in October 2021 (Lewis *et al.* 2022a, 63–64: incorrectly noted on p.64 as having been excavated in 2022) to bring the total to 33. In 2022, the test pits were sited around the existing eighteenth-century hall (Fig. 15) which lies *c.* 200 m west of the church, which was the focus of test pit excavation in 2021. The excavations in 2022 aimed to

test the hypothesis that settlement of medieval date may have lain near the hall, as it was in this direction that larger amounts of pottery of this date were found in 2021.

Five of the 2022 test pits produced pottery of Roman date, all in the area nearer the former stream (now a lake) south and west of the existing hall, including two pits south of the hall (TP RIS/22/05 and 07) which produced more than would be expected from non-intensive activity such as manuring. Test pit 5 also produced a fragment of a silver bracelet of Roman date. It is reasonable to infer that there may have been a small habitative focus of Roman date in this area.

It was notable that more pottery of late Anglo-Saxon (mid-ninth- to mid-eleventh-century) date was found in 2022 than in 2021 (when just two pits produced a single small sherd each). In 2022, three test pits produced ten sherds of this date, with RIS/22/09, the westernmost pit excavated near the former stream, yielding four sherds representing three vessels from undisturbed pre-modern contexts. This is more than would be expected from non-intensive use and can be taken to indicate intensive activity such as settlement nearby. The other two pits producing pottery of ninth- to eleventh-century date (RIS/22/01 and 06) were both located within *c*. 20 m of the later hall. We inferred that this might indicate a pre-Norman core of habitation in the areas north and west of the hall. Importantly, the ninth- to eleventh-century pottery assemblage from the 2022 test pits is the first evidence for medieval settlement of pre-Norman date found anywhere in Riseholme, and as such is of some significance, especially given its location on the opposite side of the stream (now lake) to the known medieval settlement site which now survives as earthworks (Everson *et al*. 1991; Thompson 1960).

More pottery of high medieval date (twelfth- to fourteenth-century) was found than in 2021, with three sherds of twelfth- to thirteenth-century date and 31 sherds of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date recovered from nine of the fifteen pits excavated in 2022. Pits with more than a single sherd (RIS/22/02, 04, 05, 06, 07 and 09) were all located around the hall, suggesting that there was a node of settlement in this area: this appears to have extended not only across broadly the same areas north and west of the hall as in the ninth to eleventh centuries, but also south of the hall, i.e. immediately north of the stream/lake. The 2022 test pit evidence indicates that the pre-Norman settlement north of the stream/lake continued in existence in the high medieval period, when the known medieval settlement site south of stream/lake was also in existence. Given the record of five holdings at Riseholme in Domesday Book, with three surviving to at least 1166, the presence of two discrete areas of settlement, either side of the then stream, is not implausible. The assemblage is predominantly locally produced in Lincoln, the only regional import being a sherd from an internally- and externally-glazed Beverley 2-type jug of thirteenth- to mid-fourteenth-century date.

For the later medieval and early post-medieval periods, considerably less pottery was found, supporting previous inferences that the settlement was severely affected by demographic decline after the fourteenth century. From all fifteen pits, just four small sherds from two Cistercian ware cups and a Midlands Purple ware jug or jar are the only late medieval/transition period finds, all likely to date from the mid/late fifteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries; only two sherds of post-medieval pottery pre-date the early eighteenth-century construction of the present hall, one of which is from an imported German stoneware mid-sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Frechen-type drinking jug. Overall, the assemblage supports the inference of a gap in occupation in this part of the settlement landscape from the late fourteenth century which extended until the present hall was built in the early eighteenth century.

Review and summary 2019–23

The CARE-MSoC project aimed to involve members of the public in excavating archaeological test pits within historic rural settlements in the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Poland and UK. It ran from 2019–2023. The project faced many, many obstacles, restrictions and delays. We had expected those caused by the inevitable challenges of introducing a type of archaeological activity (public participatory research excavation) which was entirely new to the non-UK states, but we did not anticipate the extreme and unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which repeatedly made fieldwork impossible for months on end in all four states. In spite of these challenges, 298 test pits were excavated by *c*. 1,200 members of the public, most of whom were residents of the settlements in which the excavations took place. The number of pits excavated (at the time of writing) was 99% of the planned target (300), and the number of settlements investigated (fifteen) significantly exceeded the target of twelve.

Analysis of the archaeological data was ongoing in summer 2023 (when some additional test pits may be excavated), and plans are in hand for a synthesising comparative overview of the results for publication, which will include an assessment of the new insights into medieval settlement development gained from the archaeological discoveries, as well as an analysis of the social impact of the project on individuals, communities and the wider heritage sector.

In the meantime, the outcomes of the test pit excavations in 2019–23 are summarised very briefly in the synthesis below of provisional 'thumbnail' sketches of the key new insights and evidence for the development of rural medieval settlements from the test pit excavations published in *MSR* each year, in order to bring together insights and offer a flavour of what has been achieved, in advance of final, more detailed publication.

In the Czech Republic, test pitting explored five villages. In Drválovice (reported in *MSR* vol. 37), a hamlet near Vanovice where more extensive test pitting took place, just two test pits were excavated. These pits, while revealing a large assemblage of middle Bronze-Age pottery, produced none relating to medieval occupation which is documented from 1256, leaving open the question of its medieval origins and development. In Merboltice (reported in *MSR* vols 37 and 38), by contrast, excavation of 25 test pits not only revealed the baroque church destroyed during the communist era, but also showed the village to have originated in the thirteenth/fourteenth or fifteenth century, when it extended along the entire length of the stream valley it currently occupies, with the present

layout developing by infilling between a series of medieval farms originally separated by greater distances. In Myslinka (reported in *MSR* vols 35 and 36), test pit data showed that the currently occupied settlement was established on a new, previously unoccupied site in the later eighteenth century, after the medieval settlement (whose location remains unproven) was abandoned during the religious wars of the sixteenth/seventeenth century. At Předhradí-Rychmburk (reported in *MSR* vols 36 and 37), test-pitting of an area of settlement within the fourteenth-/fifteenth-century fortified castle bailey produced no finds earlier than the sixteenth century, but showed how extensively this area has been modified in recent times; possible factors contributing to the lack of recovered finds of earlier date include the removal of earlier deposits, or the presence of re-deposited material impeding access to earlier deposits. In Vanovice (reported in *MSR* vols 36 and 37), test-pitting revealed widespread Bronze-Age and Iron-Age activity, and indicated that the early medieval settlement consisted of several small, dispersed hamlets, which became concentrated around the parish church in the twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, and only later acquired a regular planned layout.

In the Netherlands, seven settlement territories were involved in the CARE test-pitting programme, although in several of these the pandemic prevented many test pits from being excavated. In Aarle (reported in *MSR* vol. 35), just four pits were excavated, with medieval finds limited to later (fifteenth-century) pottery from only one pit. However, the test-pitting did usefully demonstrate the potential of deposits of greater depth for producing earlier material, although post-pandemic social changes made it impossible to return as planned to investigate these. At Boxtel (reported in *MSR* vol. 38), nine test pits usefully ground-truthed prior theories about the development of the settlement, dating the central part of the town to the high medieval period and showing that the nearby Strijpt area was used as arable land in the eleventh and twelfth centuries before the market was founded. In Esch (reported in *MSR* vol. 38), the excavation of just three test pits raised the possibility that the documented fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century farmstead may not have been in the same place as the 1604 manor, highlighting the need for further work to test this inference. In Gemonde (reported in *MSR* vols 35 and 38), test pitting demonstrated the presence of a Roman villa which continued into the seventh century, and showed that medieval habitation took the form of a number of dispersed farms and small settlement clusters, with some farms of medieval origin and others apparently later. In Liempde (reported in *MSR* vols 35, 37 and 38), test pitting showed that the nucleated village developed from an agglomeration of hamlets, which originated as dispersed farms set amidst their arable fields, but suggested no direct link between the medieval settlement and the Late Roman or Merovingian period – although Iron-Age and Roman finds have previously been made at various sites in the surrounding open fields. In Schijndel (reported in *MSR* vol. 38), excavation of 21 pits showed the late medieval settlement to have been arranged along the main road, which may date from as early as the Carolingian period (eighth to ninth centuries), possibly with roots in land use in the Roman and even Iron Age periods. In Woensel (reported in *MSR* vol. 35), six test pits in what

appears at first glance to be an entirely modern suburb showed habitation in the centre of the present settlement to date back to the Carolingian period, with a single sherd of Merovingian pottery from a different test pit hinting at the possibility that this resulted from settlement shift between the Merovingian and Carolingian periods; in contrast, habitation at an outlying historic farmhouse was dated at least as far back as the sixteenth century.

In Poland, excavation of fifteen test pits in Biadki (reported on in *MSR* vol. 37), in three different parts of the current settlement, produced no pottery predating the seventeenth century, usefully indicating which parts of the settlement first documented in the sixteenth century might be the earliest, but raising the possibility that the historic settlement was not founded on a medieval predecessor. In Chycina (reported in *MSR* vol. 35), excavation of twelve test pits in the central square or green revealed extensive Bronze-Age land use and showed that the village green, hitherto presumed to have always been open, was intensively used from the thirteenth century onwards, possibly initially for habitation and then in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries for rubbish pits. In Sławsko (reported in *MSR* vol. 36), excavation of thirteen test pits produced a relatively large assemblage of Bronze-Age/Early Iron-Age pottery and showed that the medieval settlement may have existed in 1300–1600 as a nucleus near the church, and then developed after 1600 by extending along a central street running up the valley.

In the UK, where many medieval settlements have benefitted from test pit excavation before the CARE project began (e.g. as reported in *MSR* vols 20–34), and where the CARE excavations were carried out primarily to provide social impact data, the test pit excavations nonetheless provided new insights. At Old Dalby (reported in *MSR* vols 35 and 38), 24 pits indicated that the settlement developed from one or more small pre-Noman nuclei into two or three small nodes in the high medieval period, and bucked national trends by expanding after the demographic collapse of the fourteenth century, probably helped by the presence of a preceptory whose sixteenth-century demise heralded severe contraction and replanning of the village. At Riseholme (reported in *MSR* vols 37 and 38), 33 test pits provided the first evidence from this well-known deserted settlement excavated in the 1950s for medieval activity predating the thirteenth century and hints of pre-Norman settlement.

The paragraphs above offer very short summaries of key points in complex narratives, but even these point to the emergence of wider cross-cutting themes, within and across different nation states. These include new evidence for pre-medieval settlement and land use; the impact of pre-medieval activity on the development of settlement and land use in the medieval period; the origins and development of the nucleated village; the origins and development of dispersed patterns of settlement and farms; the ways in which one form of settlement develops into another; the impact of landscape, agricultural regime and catastrophe (pandemics, warfare, climate change); the development of village greens and plot frontages; the role of communication, industrialisation and political factors on settlements; the archaeological potential of currently occupied rural settlements; and the impact of modern

development (since AD 1900) on the archaeological resource. These themes will be amongst those explored in more detail, along with site-by-site analyses, in the final publication.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by NEIL CHRISTIE

Archaeology and History of Peasantries 2. Themes, Approaches and Debates. (Documentos de Arqueología Medieval, 16). Edited by Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo. 21 x 30 cm. 236 pp, 70 b&w pls, figs and tables. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco/ehupress, 2021. ISBN 978-84-1319-370-9. Price: €20.00 pb.

This volume is the second in a series examining pre-industrial peasant communities across Europe, with a particular focus on the Iberian Peninsula. The series springs from the project 'Peasant agency and socio-political complexity', which ran between 2018–21, and was funded by Spain's Ministry of Science and Innovation. While ostensibly interdisciplinary in nature, Volume One focused on archaeology, whereas this volume meets that objective more readily, with contributors drawing on history and sociology in addition to archaeology in a variety of forms. A supplementary focus for this volume is 'to explore … new theoretical and methodological approaches' to the study of pre-industrial peasant society across Europe.

The volume contains eleven papers plus an Introduction, arranged within three key themes: 'Peasant Societies', 'Encompassing Societies and Peasantries' and 'Peasant Societies in the Longue Durée'. Eight of the papers (including the Introduction) are in English, three in Spanish and one in Italian; all have English abstracts. The papers within the first themed section focus predominantly on theoretical matters; those in the second on peasant communities' relationships with other status groups and the wider hinterland and its associated socio-economic structures; and the final section addresses the subject diachronically, here keying into a call made by the editor, Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo, in the first volume. This review will focus on papers relevant to the theme of medieval settlement and landscape.

In the introductory chapter, Quirós Castillo identifies several recent trends in the study of rural landscapes and peasant communities: the emergence of a greater focus on rural landscapes as a result of the increase in rescue archaeology – more commonly known as developer-led archaeology in the UK; how scholarship on the subject is developing at different paces across Europe; the increasing importance of theoretical approaches; and a common theme that peasant communities are not homogeneous, but demonstrate evidence of hierarchy. In terms of the issues highlighted, he suggests that the concept of 'marginality' needs to be questioned, something that British scholars will be aware of, having been first noted in the UK in the late 1980s by Mark Bailey.

João Pedro Tereso offers an archaeobotanical analysis for southern Europe, suggesting that, in this region hitherto, studies of medieval agriculture have usually drawn upon written data, within which, the author argues, rural communities remain largely invisible. Focusing on sites ranging from the south of France to Spain and Portugal, he notes that some cereal varieties, such as naked wheat, were more demanding than hulled wheat, barley, millet, oat and rye. Rye and oats appear as the main crops in areas of poor soil, and barley and wheat in fertile zones. In 2000, Bruce Campbell determined that in England from the thirteenth century, while rye was hardy, barley was generally favoured for cropping on poorer soils, and this contrast might have been usefully explored, although Tereso's dataset was from earlier, pre-thirteenth-century contexts.

Ros Faith explores the longevity of the peasantry as a social form by looking at modern isolated farms that have endured from the Middle Ages in Provence and England. She suggests that the reasons for resilience include an ability to adapt to changing market and environmental conditions, and the importance of the household, bound by the values that governed and structured social relationships – the 'moral economy'. She identifies that 'household' in this context did not necessarily mean biological family, but extended groups including non-family members with one 'leading' member; and that, partly because of this, the reciprocal arrangement in which obligations to work were rewarded by entitlement to food helped to ensure longevity.

In another diachronic essay, Carlos Tejerizo García compares two case studies in the Valdeorras region of north-western Iberia in the period immediately after the collapse of the Roman West and again in the post-Francoist era. Like Faith, he concludes that resilience and adaptation were key to peasant communities' long-term survival. The region was a connective hub between mountains and coast, resulting in ongoing political and territorial conflicts well into the modern period. He notes several phases of elite control, with initial reoccupation of hillfort sites after *c.* 450, followed by their abandonment by the eighth century, after which there emerged a new network of farms and villages. Despite their relative distance from peasant communities in this phase, he argues that elites enforced control through church, state and parish administration, which for the most part limited peasant autonomy, with isolated farmsteads proving an exception.

Finally, Eva Svensson focuses on the region encompassing northern arboreal inland Scandinavia (within modern Sweden and Norway) between 1000–1500. Her study, a largely excellent interdisciplinary paper, was conceived following unexpected pollen results which showed an increase in cereal cultivation during the late medieval agrarian crisis of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. While agrarian settlements were apparent from the earliest centuries AD, these adapted as settlement expanded onto poorer soils to encompass farmstead, shieling and outland. From the seventh century, the outland became the focus of industrial activity. In the eighth and ninth centuries, a strong

market for industrial products such as bloomery iron, soapstone and tar developed, requiring communities to increase the scale of production. Influenced through urban trading networks, this in turn led to innovations in vernacular dwellings, also leading to more hierarchical, status-driven communities. A downturn in the thirteenth century meant that peasant communities adapted their outlands back toward an agrarian focus, explaining the unusual pollen results.

Despite evidence of editorial errors (or lack of careful checks) throughout, this is an interesting volume, containing some extremely good scholarship on medieval rural settlement and landscape and covering an interesting range of case study areas and sites.

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Peasant Perceptions of Landscape. Ewelme Hundred, South Oxfordshire, 500–1650. By Stephen Mileson and Stuart Brookes. 19 × 25 cm. xx + 363 pp, 93 b&w and colour figs, 11 tables. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. ISBN 978-0-19-289489-2. Price: £85.00 hb.

In recent decades, peasants have gradually emerged from the historical shadows to take their place in the forefront of our perceptions of the past – a growing visibility that has been accompanied by an increased emphasis on mentalities. This word, or at least its French equivalent, is firmly associated with Emmanual Le Roy Ladurie, notably his inspirational study of Montaillou, a work showcased in the introduction to Mileson and Brookes' engaging book on Ewelme Hundred. Together with Susan Kilby's publications, peasants' engagement with, and sense of, their surroundings has become a key feature of recent research. These refreshing evocations of landscapes and their meaning reflect the richness of the archaeological and documentary record and the meticulous yet innovative ways in which these forms of evidence are being analysed and combined.

The two introductory chapters explore the book's themes, its chronological and geographical focus, and the evidence on which the work is based. For readers of this journal, the thematic emphasis on the layout of settlements and their agrarian resources, and on deciphering how the use of space affected interactions between inhabitants, will be particularly rewarding. So, too, will the long perspective that is offered: subsequent chapters cover two Anglo-Saxon periods (500–1100), two medieval periods (1100–1530) and an early modern chapter that takes the story up to 1650. The region, Ewelme hundred, spans clay vale to the north and west, dominated by villages and fields, and the Chilterns to the south and east, characterised by woodland, early enclosure and dispersed settlement. This region is well-served by archaeological, architectural and historical evidence, providing – apart from anything else – an abundance of place-names, field names and bynames.

Each chapter is divided into 'Structures and structural change' and 'Perceptions', the latter including 'social space', 'making meaning in the landscape' and 'belonging'. In the Anglo-Saxon chapters, structures that are discerned include trading contacts that are visible in the spread of pottery and emerging distinctions between lowland and upland villages and their fields. In terms of perceptions, discussion in these chapters includes the significance of commemorative landscapes, with features such as 'Ceolwulf's tree', 'hostage's ridge' and 'victory dene', and the importance of routeways, meeting places and lookouts.

For me, the pivotal chapter is that covering the years 1100 to 1350: a significant increase in documentary evidence in this period brings greater detail and clarity to the analysis. Differing daily routines are distinguished in different settlements, against a backdrop in the vale of the abandonment of isolated Anglo-Saxon sites, the infilling of settlements, the amalgamation of strips and the expansion of demesnes. An impressive aspect of the book is the sensitivity to language, enabling the building up of 'a richer picture of the way village social relations were embodied and expressed in settlement plans' (p.199). Areas such as 'bovetown' seem to have been occupied by free tenants, while the middling sort inhabited more regularly laid-out plots, leaving comparatively marginal spaces for poorer peasants. Field names are also used to bring meaning to the landscape in fascinating ways, some with historical and supernatural overtones, generating a much sharper sense of peasants creating 'what geographers would call a cultural landscape' (p.229).

The final two chapters assess how the Black Death and the Reformation changed peasant perceptions of landscape. The growing seclusion of housing and the developing fixity of names for homesteads are highlighted, as well as more familiar themes such as increasing farm size. Social space is usefully analysed in terms of the orientation of houses: most were originally broadside on to the road, encouraging access rather than privacy; but, increasingly, houses were set back and built gable-end on, aping the status and privacy sought by higher social classes. Another intriguing layer in the analysis is the use of church bells to develop a medieval and early modern soundscape for each settlement.

Many further examples could be highlighted that, together, reveal the landscape of Ewelme hundred as a 'collectively understood mosaic' (p.318). The examples I have picked out are those that carry particular meaning for me in the landscape in which I am situated. As this suggests, this thought-provoking book encourages you to examine documents, maps and artefacts afresh and to perceive the landscape with renewed attention. In the introduction, the authors express the hope that the book will 'stand as a model for future research in different regions and landscapes' (p.9). They have succeeded admirably in this aim, combining painstaking research with inventive means of exploring the landscape forged by, and in turn influencing, the peasants of Ewelme hundred.

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Peasants Making History. Living in an English Region 1200–1540. By Christopher Dyer. 16 x 24 cm. xvi + 379 pp, 30 colour and b&w figs, 19 tables. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. ISBN 978-0-19-884721-2. Price: £75.00 hb.

Drawing on his half-century of fieldwork and documentary research on the west midlands, Chris Dyer here delivers a data-rich, yet intimate picture of peasant life and society over some 400 years. His region is Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (the home territory of Piers Plowman), the contrasting landscape divisions of which – Arden, Felden, the Cotswolds, the Vale of Gloucester and the Forest of Dean – allow investigation of local character and variation in economy, society and settlement types. Those familiar with Dyer's earlier work will not be surprised to find that a central theme is that many peasants had a better life, and both individually and as communities exerted greater control over their lives, than was long thought.

Naturally the book pivots about the mid-fourteenth century and the Black Death, when perhaps half the region's population perished. Before that were the expansionist centuries, as the steeply rising population saw the division of yardland holdings, the erection of ever more cottages (to accommodate widows, non-inheriting children or wage labourers), and assarting into the region's extensive woodlands and wastes. Ripple (Worcestershire) provides a good example of how a community could grow, and how a village might become more tightly packed with houses; here, of an original 32 full yardland holdings, each perhaps of around 30 acres, just fourteen remained intact in 1170, while by 1299 only one survived alongside 62 half-yardlands – and with three of those held jointly by two tenants.

In the region as a whole, the availability of vacant land after the plague years meant an enterprising peasant could build up a holding of two or three yardlands, and keep ever-more stock, say a flock of 90–180 sheep, depending on local stinting customs. The better-off peasants were 'farmers' who took on a lease of at least a part of the demesne; but while this might give them greater local standing, few became gentry. Communities' responsibilities expanded and often, for instance, peasants played a notable part in fundraising for perpendicular churches and their fixtures and decoration. By-laws became more prescriptive, with (to give but one example) responsibilities for road-mending becoming more formalised; thus, in the 1420s at Teddington (Gloucestershire) each tenant had an annual obligation to bring two cartloads of roadstone from Bredon Hill, two and a half miles away.

How else might peasant life have been better, or at least different, than traditionally envisaged? For a start, there was considerable geographical mobility as individuals and families moved to improve themselves, and sometimes quitted settlements which might move towards desertion. Kinsfolk who stayed in a place over generations – 'ancient inhabitants' as they were sometimes known – were in fact in the minority. Communal responsibility through office-holding was the norm. For better or worse, most yardlanders, and even some smallholders, served terms as one of the myriad officials who regulated communities, including churchwarden, hayward, ale taster and warden of the stream. The impression that Dyer gives is that most male villagers, other than the lowliest, played a regular part in trying to enforce the agreed norms: they had roles and identities beyond simple ploughmen.

For peasants, Dyer emphasises that the prime function of the village was to manage common fields and co-ordinate farming. These are well-studied subjects and Dyer gives a concise overview of topics such as how fields were organised, and sometimes later subdivided or enclosed. Titbits here and there bring into focus the scale and complexity of the region's open fields: a village's (typically two) open fields will have contained at least 2,000 selions or strips, and each acre required 18 days to work it. Recurring problems included theft of crops, and villagers were often forbidden to have gates at the ends of their crofts lest they use them to access the field-land and steal corn. Most problematic were animals straying into growing crops, and accordingly stock-proof pleached hedges around the open fields were carefully maintained, even on the stone-rich Cotswold uplands.

The typical – if there could be such a thing – peasant household in the west midlands consisted of parents, two or three children, and one or two servants; a grandparent might live in a cottage elsewhere on the croft. The houses themselves varied between one and five bays, but most were of two or three, divided between a hall and an inner chamber. As has long been recognised, houses with stone foundations replaced earth-fast ones by or in the thirteenth century. Cruck construction was commonplace and larger houses sometimes had two-storey cross wings added in the later Middle Ages; chimneys and full second storeys over the hall only appeared in the study region after 1540. Peasant barns were typically of three bays, capable of storing a yardland's crops alongside occasional use as livestock shelters and vehicle and implement sheds. As well as heavier equipment such as ploughs, carts and wains, sources citing accounts of stolen property mention tools such as forks, spades, seedlips, hoes, weeding hooks, scythes and many more, all essential for arable farming.

Many other topics are covered beyond those noted here, such as family and household, livestock, industry (including an interesting section on peasant smiths), towns, and peasant outlooks, values, perceptions and attitudes. There are 36 informative illustrations, proper footnotes signposting a vast hinterland of references and a clear and full index. Best of all, not only is this a very fine work of scholarship, but it is also one that is hugely enjoyable to read, bringing English medieval rural society vividly to life.

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Churches in the Irish Landscape AD 400–1100. By Tomás Ó Carragáin. 25 x 31 cm. ix + 424 pp, 293 colour and b&w pls and figs. Cork: Cork University Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1-78205-430-6. Price: €49.00, £45.00 hb.

A deceptively straightforward premise underpins this wonderful book: that, for any church, '…regardless of the historical or archaeological information available for

the site itself, its position in the landscape can reveal a lot' (p.2) The sophisticated conceptual approaches informing the analysis are introduced with an enviably light touch. Using Pierre Bourdieu on the relationship between structures and actions, landscapes are considered social arenas in which religious identities are negotiated while disposing of the dead, assembling, worshipping or processing the resources necessary to support such activities. Inspired by Clifford Geertz, thick descriptions are pursued, because landscapes are 'the wider canvas on which the activities, or fields of discourse, that take place within and between sites and locales are bound together into absorbing and dynamic social worlds' (p.5). Echoing recent work on religious beliefs, religious landscapes are seen to collapse false dichotomies between orthodox, literate and clerical Christianity, and popular, magical or superstitious beliefs.

What makes this study possible are the distinctive social institutions, settlements and burial grounds of early medieval Ireland. An eleventh-century hierarchy of land divisions seems to allow reconstruction of early local kingdoms (sometimes *túatha*, but in later sources *trícha*), later subdivisions of these early kingdoms (late-*túatha*) and subsequent subdivisions of these representing the lands of a free kin-group (known as *baili*). (Much of this rests on the work of Paul MacCotter, who supplies a detailed explanation of the land divisions for one of the case studies, Corcu Duibne, at the end.) Secular settlements appear as ringforts – curvilinear enclosures 20–50 m across – broadly divided into 'royal' multivallate raths from before *c.* AD 600 and peasant and noble univallate raths from *c.* 600–850. Some church sites occur as curvilinear enclosures varying in diameter from 50–500 m, mostly dug before *c.* AD 800 and sometimes backfilled thereafter; individual churches were generally turf or wattle structures, only later rebuilt in stone. Underground passages for defence and storage known as souterrains survive from *c.* 800–1100. Burial grounds may be divided up into those with burials ten years apart, perhaps representing selective interment from a wider kin-group; those with burials one to two years apart, perhaps representing an inclusive kin-group; and those with burials less than one year apart, perhaps representing extended kin-groups or communities and a shift to larger burial grounds after *c.* AD 800. Together with contextual evidence for the date and status of settlements – settlement and building sizes, burials, sculpture, craftworking activities and ecclesiastical place-names – this enables the identification of clear synchronic and diachronic relationships.

To lay the groundwork for analysis, Chapter 1 establishes contexts for conversion and concepts of territory before conversions to Christianity. To make detailed analysis feasible, the focus is on four case studies connected to local kingdoms, two from Leinster (the Southern Uí Fáeláin and Mag Réta) and two from Munster (Fir Maige Féne and Corcu Duibne); these case studies were selected for the existence of pre-development excavations, textual coverage, and field archaeology. Chapters 2–6 consider what distributions of churches reveal about conversions to Christianity up to *c.* 550, the nature of ecclesiastical estates, the ecclesiastical structures through which lay experiences were mediated *c.* 550–800, and the social contexts, roles

and changing distributions of churches from *c.* 800–1100.

Over the course of a monumental, 424-page *tour-de-force*, Tomás Ó Carragáin supplies us with a wealth of conclusions about settlements, conversion, production, social status and power, to which a short review cannot do justice. During the period of conversions, there may be a pattern of royal territories each with a royal centre and twinned *domnach* church, allowing for variations within distinctive *longue durée* assembly landscapes and caused by the contingencies of elite negotiations. Ecclesiastical lordships – which is a more preferable way to conceive of the impact of churches exploiting landscapes than 'ecclesiastical estate' or 'ecclesiastical landholding' – seem in once sense revolutionary, because there does not appear to be any pre-Christian equivalent of religious institutions controlling so many resources. Yet such lordships incorporated a range of relations of production with people who might be termed *manaig*: tenants of core blocks of ecclesiastical land, varying in status; tenants of portions of kin-lands transferred to the church; or possessors of 'secular' land with a reciprocal relationship to a church. Sometimes different types of spatial relationships can be hypothesised resulting from different circumstances of patronage (grants of royal core lands, grants adjacent to royal core lands, or grants of liminal locations). Unsurprisingly, therefore, lordships encompassed lands of varying scales. Strikingly, and contrary to many current assumptions, ecclesiastical lordships seem to reveal little difference in the intensity or nature of exploitation or the development of specialisation or craft production from secular lordships. What marks Ireland out is the high density of early churches from before *c.* AD 800, best illustrated amongst the Fir Maige, but visible elsewhere: *túath* churches (about 2 km from the residence of king or local lord, religious communities, with enclosures, and perhaps pastoral roles); *baile* churches (close to elite residences, endowed, sometimes religious communities, signs of links with elite lineages, and sometimes with saints' cults); and non-*baile* churches (linked to univallate ringforts, perhaps from middle-ranking kin-groups). Indeed, 'Viewed in its European context, pre-Viking Ireland emerges as an important – perhaps the pre-eminent – illustration of the fact that Christianity did not always go hand in hand with highly centralised systems of power' (p.210). After this high-point in the number and distribution of churches, major churches survived, but few lesser churches were founded and some were abandoned.

Perhaps what will make the most immediate impact on those picking up this book – and everyone should – is the characteristically excellent job Cork University Press and Tomás Ó Carragáin have done in producing a text supplemented by beautifully drawn colour maps, plans and full-page as well as inset photographs: reading it is like taking multiple pilgrimages.

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St Peter-on-the-Wall: Landscape and Heritage on the Essex Coast. Edited by Johanna Dale. 16 x 24 cm. xx + 389 pp, 81 colour and b&w pls and figs, 8 tables. London: UCL Press, 2023. ISBN 978-1-80008-436-0; epub: 978-1-80008-438-4. Price: £35.00 pb. Open access download available: https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/211163

The cover of this volume immediately grabs the reader with an evocative aerial (drone?) view looking from coastal mudflats towards a flat, farmed landscape with intermittent hedge-lines, preceded by grazing-marsh and with a wooden observation tower for viewing local birdlife. On the margin between natural and farmed stands an isolated structure, namely the chapel of St Peter, whose construction dates back to the seventh century in the context of the progressive expansion of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. Key in this was the establishment of a set of churches as beacons of the faith in diverse former Roman sites, starting in Canterbury at the time of the Augustinian mission (promoted by Rome), and then with a notable installation of churches and monks in abandoned forts belonging to the late Roman 'Saxon Shore' network, which extended from Portchester in the south to Brancaster in Norfolk, and encompassing sites like Richborough and Reculver in Kent, and Walton Castle in Suffolk. St Peter's Chapel was inserted over a gatehouse at the 'central' fort of *Orthona* (called by Bede when writing in the 730s the *civitas* of *Ythancæstir*), near modern Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex, sited in the Dengie parish and facing the Blackwater Estuary. Bede relates, however, that the *Ythancæstir* foundation was led by St Cedd in 654 as part of a Northumbrian mission to the East Saxons; Cedd subsequently transferred, with 30 monks, to a northern base at Lastingham in Yorkshire. One argument holds that the extant chapel is in fact a 'second-generation church founded after 669, when Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury brought the kingdom of Essex under the influence of the Roman church emanating from Kent' (p.136). While the available archaeology is not sufficient to solve this argument, a seventh-century origin is not in doubt.

This remarkable building is both the focus and the launchpad for this publication which is far more than a contextualising of the early medieval monument; rather it seeks to highlight the place of the chapel and site in the modern world, the threats faced by it and its coastal setting, and local and wider engagements with this structure. Major marks of the modern in this seemingly tranquil part of Essex are the diverse, but often failed or semi-failed efforts at progress: mid-nineteenth-century plans at major land reclamation; a light-railway with piered supports proposed in 1901–02; plans drawn up in the 1960s for an airport-seaport at Foulness (with 18,000 acres of land required), but cancelled in 1974; and the selection of the Bradwell zone in the 1950s for a nuclear power station, which only ceased generating electricity early this century and is now 'a redundant hulk encased in aluminium, a state in which it must remain until at least 2083' (p.11). Alongside all this is the area's long-term military usage, from firing range to airfield and weapons-research facilities. A new threat has arisen: the proposed 'Bradwell B' (BRB) nuclear power plant, whose development site would extend to within 150 m of the ancient chapel. As editor and local resident Johanna Dale states, 'this book is a response to the public consultation launched by BRB in early 2020… [and] aims to establish an academic baseline around the [church] monument and the landscape surrounding it and to inform debate and policy around Bradwell B… [and] to be the catalyst for subsequent research leading to a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation…' (pp. xix, 2. The introduction provides full coverage of this 'contested landscape').

Dale has expertly marshalled a series of expert contributors (all working to produce during the rigours of the Covid pandemic) to what is an attractive, wide-ranging and hugely informative volume, divided into two main parts, each with seven papers/chapters. Part I considers 'St Peter's Chapel and its pre-modern contexts' and Part II the modern contexts. The latter kicks off with James Bettley recounting the chapel's rediscovery or rather recognition of it as an ancient place of worship behind its adapted use as a barn since the late seventeenth century; visits by members of the Essex Archaeological Society from 1864 onwards prompted speculation and then pride in identifying here St Cedd's foundation, and led to its careful restoration in 1919–20 (the paper has some great archive photographs). The chapel's saintly connections have led to diverse modern appreciations – from the creation in 1946 of the Orthona Community, an open Christian retreat and sanctuary, exploiting wartime Nissen huts and now sleeping yurts (Ch. 9 by Ken Worpole), to a modern pilgrim and heritage walk, St Peter's Way, started in the 1970s, now extended to commence from the famous wooden church of St Andrew at Greensted (Ch. 11 by Dale). Modern art and architecture are also linked to local landscape, space and memory in Chapters 12–14, whereas Gillian Darley (Ch. 10) explores the context of and diverse voices at the public inquiry for establishing Bradwell A nuclear power station in the mid-1950s.

Part I by contrast centres on the early medieval site and context: Andrew Pearson tidily discusses our understanding of the late Roman fort of *Othona* in terms of plan, construction, extramural activity and burials (Ch. 2); in Chapter 5, Richard Hoggett looks to *Othona* and other Saxon Shore forts that saw 'religious afterlives' and efforts to exploit the Romanised built landscape in the processes of Anglo-Saxon conversion; and in Chapter 6, David Petts extends discussion of early medieval monastic North Sea coastal colonisation to the value of contemporary seascapes. Barbara Yorke lucidly brings the figure of Cedd – and his brothers – into closer focus in the context of Northumbrian, Mercian and East Saxon religious politics and conflict, while highlighting Irish links too (Ch. 4). Of value is Stephen Rippon's careful reconstruction of the landscape setting of early medieval *Ythancæstir*, specifically the folk territory or *regio* of *Deningei*, using historic maps, place-names, parish boundaries, charters and archaeology (Ch. 3), while I very much appreciated the careful reading of the standing archaeology – plan, materials, architecture – of St Peter's Chapel itself by David Andrews in Chapter 1, reproducing the excellent stone-by-stone elevation drawings made by Jane Wadham in 1978.

Andrews notes (p.37) how St Peter's was superseded in the Middle Ages by St Thomas' church at Bradwell

village and likely lost both chancel and apse as a consequence, leaving the chapel to become an isolated building; striking then is its ongoing survival, aided much later by its agricultural conversion. The chapter by Kevin Bruce and Christopher Thornton (Ch. 7) does a thorough job in charting the missing medieval centuries, exploring evolving lands, owners, farms and fisheries, to which St Peter-on-the-Wall will have been a quiet, neglected witness.

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Surveying the Domesday Book. By Simon Keith. 19 x 25 cm. xiv +153 pp, 7 b&w figures, 32 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Windgather Press, 2022. ISBN 978-1-91442-710-7; epub: 978-1-91442-711-4. Price: £34.99 pb.

The data-rich Domesday Book has been explored in many ways, from the detail of each entry to its meaning and intention. In this new publication, Simon Keith, a retired Chartered Surveyor, aims to study the timeframe for the creation and compilation of the Domesday Book (DB) from the viewpoint of someone who has first-hand experience of valuing land. Keith sets out at the start how he views the DB as a 'fiscal failure', since he sees the purpose as fiscal in nature, particularly looking at arable land. Although he acknowledges there would be secondary value in the information recorded, taxation was its key focus. As it was never used directly to gather the taxation, he therefore deems DB a failure.

This book is very much a personal journey, using the professional experience of a lifetime as a surveyor to seek to travel back into the mindset of the compilers of the DB. The structure follows the journey of setting forth on such an endeavour, looking at why it might have been undertaken, what it records, the method of valuation and the logistics of the survey. It reflects that the task of compiling the finished copy of the DB would have taken at least three years (against the more usual estimated time of a year). And these three years would have been for a re-evaluation of a current system – not starting from scratch, which supports the notion that Domesday was based on an already recorded system.

Some interpretations arise more from reflections on modern perspectives than from historical evidence. While discussing the purpose of the survey and how some scholars have dismissed it as a tax document, Keith notes 'I am that taxman… the survey provides me with exactly the three essential items of information that I would require for each manor' (p.22). Keith also notes that the lack of recording of buildings seems to have been a massive omission compared to modern taxation methods.

Although this provides a fresh approach to the DB by reflecting on current practice, transposing this back to eleventh-century England does not come without issues. The lack of a full understanding of various elements of medieval settlement and landscape makes some of Keith's assertions not as fully developed as they could be. While noting that much has been written on the DB, he does not consider all this much in detail,

acknowledging that this would increase the length of his own publication considerably. However, without some of this material properly considered, the contested nature of the DB record cannot be appreciated. Thus, although often convincing in tone and experience, this book is certainly not the final word on – nor a wholly watertight reading of – the DB's compilation.

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A Vanishing Landscape. Archaeological Investigations at Blakeney Eye, Norfolk. By Naomi Field. 21 x 29 cm. ix + 226 pp, 109 colour and b&w pls and figs, 71 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2021. ISBN 978-1-78969-840-4; epub: 978-1-78969-841-1. Price: £45.00 pb.

This well-illustrated volume reports on a series of archaeological excavations undertaken at Blakeney, north Norfolk, on behalf of the Environment Agency in advance of a policy of managed retreat along this stretch of coast. Within this area a notable feature was an extant building constructed of flint pebbles and known locally as 'Blakeney Chapel'; this formed the main target of later excavations.

Following the decision to allow coastal erosion to progress in this area, a programme of archaeological evaluation (comprising geophysical survey, 56 trial trenches and a borehole survey) was undertaken in 2002 –03. These surveys established that, in addition to the later medieval and post-medieval building activity on the Eye, Neolithic activity was evident. A stunning find during trial trenching – sadly a stray find, even if associated with a buried soil horizon (p.19) – was an early Anglo-Saxon bracteate, which adds to a gently growing corpus of these enigmatic finds, with possibly Kentish or Jutish links, from Norfolk (see A. Rogerson and S. Ashley 2023: 'A selection of finds recorded in Norfolk in 2022 and earlier'*, in *Norfolk Archaeology*, Second Series, Vol 1, pp.239–48, at p.255).

Subsequent excavation in 2004–05 targeted two areas: to the south, Area 1 identified Neolithic and Bronze-Age pottery, associated with several pits and postholes, indicative of settlement activity of an uncertain character; additional (probably residual) worked flints were recovered in Area 2 to the north, in association with an early land surface. The borehole surveys demonstrated that the early prehistoric coastal landscape comprised a ridge separated from the higher ground south of the saltmarsh by a freshwater channel, which later became tidal (p.208).

The main chunk of the fieldwork and artefact reports concern the results from the Area 2 excavation. Here, investigation around the noted extant flint building revealed an intriguing sequence, comprising fragmentary remains of a thirteenth- to fourteenth-century possible farmstead which was then replaced by the two-celled building of 'Blakeney Chapel' in the later sixteenth century. This structure, viewed by the excavators as most likely a secular structure, was occupied until the seventeenth century; at this point a

series of storm breaks (seen in the archaeological sequence as flood deposits) partially destroyed the structure and it was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. In conclusion, the authors propose, based on extensive documentary analysis, an interpretation of the main building as a warrener's house (p.218).

Although the broad developmental sequence of the site is established, there is an unfortunate lack of a precise and coherent narrative for the site, mainly because of problems of phasing several of the identified features, due to 'mixing' of material following the various storm and flood events that resulted in a high degree of artefact intrusion and residuality (outlined in Chapter 3). This is a shame, as there are some significant artefact and ecofact assemblages from this site (Chapters 4–7), including thirteenth- to fourteenth--century pottery, imported Cornish roofing slate, animal bones that suggest a transformation from an animal economy dominated by cattle to one dominated by sheep (p.212), and a number of fishbones. Nonetheless, Naomi Field and the other contributors should be commended on extracting as much insight as they have from what was evidently a problematic site to interpret.

GARETH DAVIES
York Archaeological Trust, York

Great Bricett Manor and Priory. Lords, Saints and Canons in a Suffolk Landscape. By Edward Martin. 21 x 30 cm. ix + 173 pp, 63 colour and b&w pls and figs. Ipswich: The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History, 2021. ISBN 978-1-8381223-2-4. Price: £13.50 pb.

A number of years in the making, this well-researched volume was prompted by the owners of Great Bricett Hall (who formerly held the title of Lord of the Manor, purchased by auction in 1996, but transferred in perpetuity to Great Bricett Parochial Church Council in 2017). The first lords, detailed in Chapter 3, were Norman knights: Ranulf Peverel was a high-ranking tenant-in-chief for William the Conqueror for lands between Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Oxfordshire – sizeable holdings, though Ranulf is only ranked as a 'Class C' magnate by modern scholars (p.13); at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 one Ralph fitz Brien appears as Ranulf's tenant, holding the manor at Bricett, displacing a Saxon lord, Leoftsan. Ralph and his wife, at the encouragement of the bishop of Norwich and others, established a nearby priory of Augustinian Canons between 1114–19 (figs. 6.9 and 6.10 illustrate the priory's foundation charter and a seal of *c.* 1190). In a charter of 1152–54 the market at Great Bricett was granted by King Stephen to the priory (pp.73–4; charter illustrated as fig. 6.11). Always a small establishment, only six canons are recorded here in 1381; Martin states how while most priors' names are known, 'none appear to have been of any importance outside their priory' (p.73). From the early fourteenth century, the Bohun family oversaw the manor, though in the 1330s this was transferred to the priory. Under King Henry V the properties of this 'alien priory' and others like it were confiscated; Great Bricett Priory endured, however, and was passed with its possessions to the new royal college (King's College) at Cambridge in 1444. A subsequent range of tenants, such as the Longe,

Methwold and Hubbard families, tended the manor across later centuries (detailed in Chapter 4).

The manor or hall is itself attached to the north-west flank of the priory church, which survives as a long (33.5 x 6.2–6.8 m), aisleless church, dedicated to St Mary and St Lawrence, but originally dedicated to St Mary and St Leonard; the present co-dedication to St Lawrence may denote an early nineteenth-century borrowing/transfer of the St Lawrence from the lost church of Little Bricett (pp.80–81). The cult of St Leonard and the mother-house of Saint-Leonard-de-Noblat, near Limoges in central France, are discussed on pp.59–67. Chapter 6 also outlines the origins of the Augustinian order, while the brief Chapter 7 summarises 'Daily life in an Augustinian priory'.

Martin does a careful job exploring the form, features and fittings of the church, tracing, for example, the late twelfth-century western extension and likely west tower location. But there are issues understanding the layout of the priory, with the old assumption being that the manor overlies or replaced the former prior's house – this based on the other assumption that the priory was laid out in typical monastic format with central (northern) cloister and associated rooms around (see fig.8.6, p.85). However, magnetometry survey in 2016 failed to trace any signals for such an arrangement (p.101), and in Chapter 8, Martin asks whether a much simpler plan prevailed here, perhaps with an unrecognised timber range. Key is a reconsideration of Great Bricett Hall by John Walker, recognising a medieval aisled hall of fourteenth-century form; this dating fits with dendrochronological results from a set of oak timberworks (doorways, arches, trusses, joists) within, some first revealed in house restoration works in 1956 and dated then to the mid-thirteenth century, but now seen to relate to winter-felled trees of 1325/6, alongside some elements that may be a generation older (pp.94–100). Martin offers the attractive possibility that these timbers denote a (re)building of the manor under the Bohuns (who bought the manor/site in 1318), upgrading from an older manor structure which may have lain to the west, within the moated area known as 'Nunnery Mount'. As discussed in Chapter 5, this oval earthwork of 50 x 60 m, now set in open fields just 160 m from the church (and very nicely captured in the volume's snowy cover image), originally had an attached trapezoidal ditched enclosure, whose entry aligns with the church (and with the manor's west wing, which joins the church at an awkward angle). Why and when the label 'Nunnery' was applied is unknown, especially since Bricett never had a nunnery; instead, the enclosure is interpreted as a twelfth-century 'forcelet', a compact defended castle-cum-manor set up in the Anarchy. While a 2016 magnetometry survey picked up no clear signs of any internal units in the trapezoidal area, fair hints of a rectangular structure emerged in the oval zone – but only excavation would reveal if this could relate to the first, pre-Bohun manor.

The volume features eight appendices, opening with Bricett in the Domesday Book (Appendix I) and a selection of charters (II) – very usefully with translations (and an explanation of the DB entry) – followed by lists of priors and curates of Great Bricett (III, IV) and rectors at Little Bricett (VI), plus place-names (VIII). Readers may well appreciate the glossary (pp.148–50), which includes tidy entries for the oft-used

terms 'open hall', 'cross-wing', 'crownpost roof' and 'demesne'.

NEIL CHRISTIE
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Burton Dassett Southend, Warwickshire. A Medieval Market Village. (The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 44). By Nicholas Palmer and Jonathan Parkhouse. 21 x 30 cm. xii + 250 pp, 164 colour and b&w pls, figs and tables. Abingdon & New York: Routledge & The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2021. ISBN 978-1-032-43001-0; ebook 978-1-003-36527-3 (ISSN 0583-9106). Price: £34.99 pb.

30 years' delay preceded publication of this very significant volume, but it was worth the wait. Non-stop excavation between May 1986 and September 1988 took full advantage of an abundant workforce supplied by the Manpower Services Commission and the landowner's generosity in permitting sufficient time before construction of the M40 Oxford-to-Birmingham motorway extension, with results more closely resembling those of a research rather than a rescue project.

Supplemented by earthwork survey and a fieldwalking programme, a sample (*c.* 5,400 m²) of a well-preserved medieval village in the Warwickshire Feldon district was subjected to open-area excavation either side of an E–W street which may have served as a marketplace. Ten tenements with plans of 25 houses, many of which went through phases of expansion and adaptation, were recorded in great detail made possible by shallow, but largely undisturbed, stratigraphy. Walls were both timber-framed on stone sills and of stone up to eaves level. Numerous outbuildings served a variety of functions including a possible dog kennel, and some were constructed with earth-fast posts, even in the fifteenth century.

One of five settlements within the present parish of Burton Dassett, Southend was most closely associated with a weekly market and annual fair granted by charter in 1267. It soon gained a reputation as a commercial centre, as shown by its place-name Chipping Dassett, in use by 1295. Occupation had begun in the twelfth century but a first phase of laying out plots based on modules of the perch occurred in the early thirteenth, some time before the charter. After further phases of planned expansion towards the end of the century, the settlement reached optimum prosperity in the early fourteenth when it would have closely resembled a town. Slow decline set in during the fifteenth century, but occupied properties remained healthy and in a quite wealthy state until a sudden extinction through enclosure in 1497, resulting from collusion between the manorial lord and the lessee of the demesne.

Part 1 contains highly informative introductory chapters on the project's aims and origins and on the geological, archaeological, historical and toponymic backgrounds of Burton Dassett. In Part 2, the excavation sequence unfolds – with remarkable clarity given the complexity of deposits – over almost 100 pages, with the aid of numerous well-chosen illustrations, maps, plans and photographs, but strangely without the use of any section drawings. Many are illustrated in the very

full online archives hosted by the Archaeology Data Service, and it is regrettable that none appears in hard-copy where the provision of a few would have afforded the reader more appreciation of the site's triple dimensionality, an aspect so lacking on most rural sites. It is also unfortunate that no excavation of the E–W street was possible. A chapel, founded in the late thirteenth century, stands to the east of the main excavation. Details of its excavation and architectural recording in 2003 before conversion to a house are included here.

There is much worth reading in Part 3, which firstly deals with spatial organisation: plot and building layout, boundaries, yards, drainage, forecourts, streets, rubbish disposal and the distribution of various categories of objects. Following discussions on many aspects of the buildings, this part concludes with a summary of the metalworking residues from the one property interpreted as a smithy – important because it 'was the first medieval site which was systematically sampled for hammerscale in Europe'.

Part 4 is equally useful, examining many aspects of everyday life and the economy through animal and plant remains, artefacts, agriculture, craft activities, trade and commerce. There follow stimulating discussions on the status of Chipping Dassett as an urban settlement, on why its market failed and on how and why the settlement rose and fell. In the conclusion, Part 5, the project's results are set in context against changes in research directions taken by medieval archaeology since the late 1980s, and judgements are made on the degree to which the original research aims have been met. The final paragraphs, on 'cautionary tales' and future directions, should not be missed.

ANDREW ROGERSON
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The Victoria History of the County of Oxford: Volume XX. The South Oxfordshire Chilterns: Cavesham, Goring and Area. Edited by Simon Townley. 21 x 31 cm. xx + 509 pp, 8 colour pls, 117 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for the Institute of Historical Research, 2022. ISBN 978-1-904356-54-7. Price: £95.00 hb.

The Victoria County History project was founded in 1899 as a national project to write the history of every English county. Its stated aims are, according to the website of its host the Institute of Historical Research in London, to produce 'authoritative, encyclopaedic histories of each county, from the earliest archaeological records to the present day, as well as topics such as topography, landscape and the built environment'. Over the course of more than a century, the iconic red volumes have continued to appear. The series was re-dedicated in 2012 to Elizabeth II, whose death was announced late on 8 September 2022, only hours after the publication of the most recent red book, the two-part volume XX of the Essex County History, was tweeted by the IHR team. Though with many volumes still to be completed, the series is an established national treasure, the starting-point for any local history research and a much-used *vade mecum* thereafter.

Volume XX in the Oxford series is the seventh under

the editorship of Simon Townley; published in February 2022, following Volume XVIII (Ewelme Hundred) in 2016 and Volume XVI Henley and environs in 2011, it does not disappoint. Richly illustrated with 23 maps and plans, plus numerous photographs and drawings ranging across landscapes and a range of buildings ancient and modern (some no longer standing), as well as a wealth of original documents, it reveals what is distinctive about these still predominantly rural parishes and how they fit into the mosaic of surrounding parishes covered in other volumes. With the accounts of Shiplake, Eye and Dunsden and Caversham, it completes the account of Binfield Hundred begun in the noted Henley volume, thereby rounding off the account of an area of the pre-1974 south of the county situated in a large loop of the Thames, then the boundary with Berkshire, and straddling the south-west end of the Chiltern hills. With the exception of Caversham, now a populous suburb of Reading, Berkshire, most of the area covered lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the mid-nineteenth century it consisted of twelve, mostly long, thin 'strip' parishes, apart from rectangular Mapledurham, all of which bordered the Thames; for the most part, the parish churches lie near the Thames. All share the characteristics of nucleated riverside parish centres with hinterlands of scattered settlements in the wooded uplands of the hills, of predominantly agricultural economies, but with a significant role in woodland and associated crafts, while local industry included small-scale brickmaking and quarrying. With the advent of the railway from 1840, various of the pretty riverside villages attracted wealthy newcomers and associated building programmes in a gradual process of gentrification, most notably in Caversham, where ease of access to Reading via the Thames bridge saw incomers of a wider social range and a marked population increase.

Considerable boundary changes resulted in the early twentieth century, with some small parishes absorbed into larger ones (Newnham Murren, Mongewell and North Stoke are now part of Crowmarsh) and others splitting apart (Kidmore End and Caversham, Binfield Heath and Shiplake). The tale of these two halves is well-illustrated by the maps on pp.2 and 3, which contrast the twelve original strip parishes and their topography with the current seventeen civil parishes and their relative population densities. Caversham, with 12,894 households in 2011 far outstrips Goring at 1,375 households, and dwarfs Mapledurham's 317. Mapledurham is mapped on p.270; it was described as still a 'feudal' parish in the 1970s, having been held by the descendants of Sir Michael Blount since his purchase of the manor and most of the village in 1582; his son Sir Richard (d. 1628) completed the present Mapledurham House (Plate 5) – one of many fine buildings found within these parishes. Sir Richard's descendant Edward Eyston is the current owner. This line was one of a number of recusant Catholic families in south Oxfordshire, with others being the Moleyns of Mongewell, the Hildesleys of Crowmarsh, and the Stonors of North Stoke. Crowmarsh was one of the larger settlements, boosted by proximity to Wallingford and its bridge on the Berkshire side, the honour of which owned five of the twelve parishes, including Newnham Murren. The latter originated as part of a large estate granted to a tenth-century queen from the

royal manor of Benson, much of which was absorbed by the honour at one time or another. It was associated with quarrying and lime-burning from 1233 (when it probably supplied material for repairs to Wallingford Castle) until the 1920s; much gravel is still quarried in the area. It was also the home of the Wilder iron foundry, established on the site of a former farmstead by the church and based there until the start of this century. Today, the nearby Howbery Park estate, a nineteenth-century creation, is home to the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and its very twenty-first-century concerns. Altogether, this volume is a fascinating and very welcome addition to the VCH stable.

KATHARINE KEATS-ROHAN
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A History of Rowley-Wittenham. Deserted Medieval Village and Lost Parish. (Bradford-on-Avon Museum Monographs No 6). By Robert Arkell. 17 x 25 cm. 96 pp, 76 colour and b&w pls and figs, 10 tables. Bradford-on-Avon: Bradford-on-Avon Museum, 2022. ISBN 9781912020102. Price: £8.00 pb.

Overwhelmingly concerned with documentary sources, this lavishly illustrated small book leaves the presentation of the archaeological evidence for the deserted village of Rowley-Wittenham until page 73. Both understanding and interpreting the historical record are rendered more difficult by a boundary which shifts between Wiltshire and Somerset, the mutability of the place-names, the confusion of manorial tenures and the transference of the parish from Salisbury diocese to Bath and Wells in 1428. Problems are compounded by parts of the book's text which jerk from one historical topic to another, often losing the narrative thread in the process and voyaging along more than one tangential cul-se-sac. Despite many references to primary and secondary sources in the form of end-notes, it is sometimes unclear on what evidence a given statement is based. Similarly, some maps are inadequately captioned, and some boundaries they show are questionable.

An earthwork survey of the village site, conducted for a Bristol University MA dissertation in 1997, is reproduced along with LiDAR images, plots from two areas of resistivity survey and a photograph of a test-pit. Unfortunately, the relative positions of these are not correlated. More than one test-pit was excavated though none is located or described. By whom and for whom they (and the geophysical survey) were carried out is not stated. Beyond the plotting of rivers and streams on several maps, there is sadly little in the way of topographical description, while geology and soil types are not mentioned.

It would be quite mean-spirted not to suggest that this work is worth reading. Produced with great enthusiasm and touching on a huge variety of local subjects, it contains much that will interest students of medieval rural settlement in Wiltshire, Somerset and further afield.

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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS ON
MEDIEVAL RURAL SETTLEMENT 2019–2021

By CHRISTOPHER DYER[1]

This list includes books and articles on British and Irish settlement between the fifth and fifteenth centuries, published in 2019, 2020 and 2021, with the works of each year separately recorded. Books from continental Europe are included if they have some British or Irish content. The 2019 list includes some items (mainly from 2018) previously omitted. There are bound to be omissions from the three years covered here, and these should be notified to the compiler for future inclusion: cd50@le.ac.uk.

The bibliography is focussed on the Group's specialism of medieval rural settlement. It includes publications deriving from archaeology, place-names, geography and history. It does not attempt to cover works in social, economic, cultural and agrarian history and place-name studies unless they feature settlements. Archaeological work on towns, castles, cemeteries or religious sites, or on artefacts or environmental evidence, are not included, except those explicitly connected to rural settlements.

2019

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MEMBERSHIP CHANGES 2022

Changes during the 2022 membership year are set out below. Members are asked to send any changes of address, corrections, information, etc. to Dr Helen Fenwick (Membership Secretary MSRG), School of Humanities, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX. Email: h.fenwick@hull.ac.uk.

NEW FULL MEMBERS

A. Curtis	K. Dempsey	R. Fosberry	M. Harding
York	*Dublin*	*Cambridge*	*Ansty*

P. Harding	K. Johnson	D. Jones	D. Leach
Chipping Norton	*Scarborough*	*Pen-y-Bont Ar Ogwr*	*York*

C. Merrony	J. Mobbs	P. Sarris	J. Townsend
Sheffield	*Halesworth*	*Shepreth*	*Newark*

NEW STUDENT MEMBERS

R. Kahlenberg	M. Leake
Durham	*Morpeth*

DECEASED

F. Day   M. Morris   V. Proudfoot

RESIGNATIONS

D. Barker	J. Earley	C. Foster	C. Gibbons	D. Gulland
C. Reedman	D. Robinson	T. Sly	C. Starr	L. Weston
M. Wise				

CURRENT POSTAL ADDRESSES WANTED

D.M. Griffiths	(was in Exeter)	S. Harrison	
N. Instone	(was Southampton)	B.E.A Jones	(was in London)
J.P. Northover	(was in Oxford)	S.A. Pinter-Bellows	(was in Canewdon)
C.J. Wright	(was in Salisbury)		

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR 2023
MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP
Registered Charity No. 801634

Objectives

The objective of the Group is the advancement of public education by promoting interdisciplinary involvement in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data relating to the history, geography and archaeology of medieval rural settlement, primarily in Great Britain and Ireland from the fifth to the sixteenth centuries.

Trustees' addresses

Prof Carenza Lewis (President), School of History and Heritage, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS
Dr Susan Kilby (Secretary), 4 Main Street, Tansor, Peterborough, PE8 5HS
Dr Andy Seaman (Treasurer), School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University, John Percival Building, Column Drive, Cardiff, CF10 3EU
Dr Mark McKerracher (Editor), 2 Channels Farm Court, 8 Channels Farm Road, Southampton, SO16 2PL

Review of activity during the year

The Group's activities (policy making, conferences and publication) have continued as before. The range of interests and issues is reflected in the content of the journal (*Medieval Settlement Research* 38) covering the year 2023.

Result of the year

There was an excess of expenditure over income of £4,244 (excess of £6,781 in 2021-22).

Reserves policy

The trustees' policy is to maintain reserves at a level that will enable the Group to perform its core activities for the foreseeable future. The minimum sum to be held in unrestricted reserves is £12,500 and the maximum sum is £250,000. Should reserves rise above the maximum sum or below the minimum sum the trustees will review the activities of the Group and consider such changes as are deemed to be appropriate.

Grant-making policy

The charity makes grants towards research projects and to other bodies involved in similar areas of education and research in respect of medieval settlement.

Investments policy

The charity's funds are invested in National Savings and a bank bond, deposits that are regarded as a safe liquid investment with an adequate return, and suitable for a small charity.

Risk policy

The trustees have reviewed the major risks facing the charity and presently conclude that no specific action is required.

<div align="right">A P Seaman, Treasurer</div>

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES
OF MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 January 2023 which are set out on the following page.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 145 (1) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.
It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145(5) (b) of the Act;
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
* to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with accounting requirements of the Act have not been met: or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Anthony Bourne   11 August 2023
Maritime Operations Officer
Her Majesty's Coastguard,
Langdon Battery, Dover, Kent, CT15 5NA

MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP
Registered Charity No. 801634

GENERAL FUNDS – RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
Financial Year ended 31 January 2023

Note 1 Accounting policies
Historical Cost Convention
The Receipts and Payments account and Statement of Assets and Liabilities are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Stocks of Publications
Stocks of Publications are not valued or included in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Note 2 Funds
All funds of the charity are unrestricted.

RECEIPTS	2022-23	2021-22	PAYMENTS	2022-23	2021-22
Donations, and other similar sources			**Charitable Payments**		
Tax recovered through Gift Aid	£ -	£ -	Grants	£ 6,301	£ 7,077
Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society	£ 208	£ 266	J. G. Hurst Memorial Prize	£ -	£ -
Public Lending Right	£ 12	£ -	Student bursaries	£ 140	£ -
Donations	£ -	£ 559	**Charitable Activity**		
Operating activities to further the charity's objectives			Journal: printing and postage	£ 4,580	£ 6,137
Subscriptions	£ 7,246	£ 6,721	Spring Conference	£ -	£ -
Conferences	£ 2,211	£ -	ADS upload	£ 120	£ -
Publication Grants	£ 280	£ 497	**Management and Administration**		
Investment Income Receipts			Secretarial and Committee	£ 274	£ 593
Current account Interest	£ -	£ -	AGM and Seminar	£ 2,213	£ -
Deposit account Interest	£ 34	£ 5	Insurance	£ 263	£ 360
	£ 9,991	£ 8,047	CBA Affiliation Fees	£ -	£ 125
Statement of Assets and Liabilities			Postage	£ 232	£ 152
Balance Brought forward	£ 37,544	£ 44,326	Refunds	£ -	£ -
Balance of payments over receipts	-£ 4,244	-£ 6,781	Website	£ 36	£ 337
	£ 33,301	£ 37,544	Bank Charges	£ 77	£ 47
				£ 14,235	£ 14,829
Pettit Legacy					
Brought forward	£ 64,975	£ 64,139	Current bank account	£ 1,451	£ 149
Added Interest	£ 845	£ 836	National Savings Deposit Account	£ 36,430*	£ 37,396
	£ 65,820	£ 64,975		£ 37,881	£ 37,544

* £4,580 debit on 25/01/2023 was not visible on NS&I statement by end of financial year.