A Persistence of Place: a Study of Continuity and Regionality in the Roman and Early Medieval Rural Settlement Patterns of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset

Volume 1 of 2

Submitted by Fiona Jane Fleming to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology
In March 2013

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……Fiona Fleming……..

To my mother, Morag, who started me off on this path but never saw me complete it.

Abstract

The debate over the continuity, or discontinuity, of the late Roman settlement landscape has reigned long over studies of settlement and landscape transition between the Roman and early medieval periods. Traditionally, these studies have been confined to their period of research, typically taking a site-based perspective and neglecting the wider social and physical context. Since the development of 'landscape archaeology', the importance of the wider physical and social landscape, both as a source of evidence in its own right and the arena in which the processes of settlement change during the Roman and early medieval periods took place, has come to the forefront of settlement and landscape studies for these periods. Much of the research, however, remains qualitative in nature, rich in contextualisation and historical reflection, but lacking in systematic and spatial analysis. This thesis addresses that gap through a broad-scale, quantitative, study of Roman and early medieval settlement, to determine how far patterns of late Roman settlement appear to continue into the 5th to 11th centuries, and to what extent they influenced settlement processes during that period. The results have been systematically assessed across a range of distinctive and adjacent character regions, or *pays*, over three regional study areas, Norfolk, Kent and Somerset, to determine whether trends in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to their physical landscape context, demonstrate regional, or sub-regional, variation. The results reinforce the current understanding of settlement processes for these two periods: that the river valleys were predominantly the favoured areas for Roman settlement, particularly higher status Roman settlement, and that the lighter valley soils potentially saw a greater stability and continuity of settlement during the 5th to 11th centuries. This contrasts with the heavier clay soils and interfluvial areas which more typically saw lower status Roman occupation and were more prone to phases of settlement contraction and expansion during the 5th to 11th centuries. This rather simplistic distinction between areas of potential 'continuity' and 'discontinuity', however, inevitably embraces more nuanced variation in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships at a regional and sub regional level, as demonstrated in the individual discussion for each study area through the concept of '*pays*'.

Acknowledgements

There are so many people to thank for all the support, encouragement and advice that I have received over the last three years and the period of study leading up to it. I'd like to thank my mum for starting me down this road as a mere slip of a thing, attempting to find Roman remains in Ilchester (I was looking in the wrong place but I didn't know it then!) and my undergraduate supervisor, Dr Caradoc Peters, who instilled in me the passion, drive and skills to take my studies further. Also thanks to Steve Hartgroves for teaching me not to take it all so seriously!

Thanks, too, go to all those people who helped me with the practical skills I needed: Bryn Tapper and Jane Powning at Cornwall HES for their help with GIS matters, Drs Richard Sandover and Chris Smart at Exeter for similar help and advice, and Chris, especially, for encouraging me to persevere in the long haul to finishing the writing up. Thanks to Dr Ben Pears for advice and help with soils characterisation. To Anj Beckham, at Norfolk County Council, Ben Croxford, at Kent County Council, and Chris Webster, at Somerset County Council, for providing me with all the digital information, reports and historic environment records for my regional studies, also huge thanks, as this research would not have been so straightforward without their help.

Special thanks and acknowledgement go to my supervisors, Professor Stephen Rippon and Professor Oliver Creighton, for all their help and assistance over the last three years. To Steve, in particular, go thanks for the opportunity to carry out my doctoral research within the scope of the Fields of Britannia Project and for his untiring interest and support.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who were always there to give me support and encouragement, or who dragged me away from the computer to make sure I kept my sanity and perspective: Judy Preston, Jacky Nowakowski, Christine Wilson, Sally Herriett, Amanda Faulkner, my daughters, Kate and Annys, my son, Finn, and my husband, Scott, who really has been my support, my inspiration and my rock. Thank you; it has all been very much appreciated.

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Part One: Introduction and Research Background

Chapter 1. Introduction

'But we are moving in a dim land of doubts and shadows. He who wanders here, wanders at his peril, for certainties are few, and that which at one moment seems a fact, is likely, as the quest advances, to prove a phantom. It is, too, a borderland, and its explorers need to know something of the regions on both sides of the frontier.' (Haverfield 1915, 88)

Introduction

Since the late 19th century our understanding of the physical, social and cultural changes during the centuries following the end of Roman Britain has moved in tandem with shifting theoretical paradigms, yet this crucial period in the history of our landscape remains poorly understood. The long-standing objectives across a range of disciplines, however, continue to be those of determining the identity of the people who populated Britain at a time of significant social transition, and the ways in which they responded to, and subsequently informed, the landscape they inhabited.

In his seminal book *The Making of the English Landscape*, Hoskins (1955, 12) observed that 'everything in the landscape is older than we think'. Although his interpretation of the processes that formed our modern rural landscape was largely based on a body of professional opinion that has changed dramatically from his day, the basic tenet of the historic landscape as a product of social, cultural and environmental change holds good. The extent to which the rural landscape reflects the processes of change is a topical theme of modern landscape studies, particularly relevant to the relationship between patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement where an increasingly integrated archaeological and environmental record is demonstrating the complexity of rural landscape development and a diversity of regional character.

The antiquity of the prehistoric landscape in what was to become the Roman provinces of Britannia was profound. In addition to being essentially rural, it was also socially and culturally complex. Aside from the relatively brief urban flourish

of Roman ‘towns’, the majority of Romano-British society, and its early medieval equivalent, remained predominantly rural. Up until relatively recently, however, the rural settlement landscape has been greatly underused as a body of evidence in its own right, partly due to prevailing methods of archaeological evaluation and interpretation and partly to a degree of invisibility in the archaeological record. As a result, its potential to inform on the nature and extent of social transition between these two major formative periods of provincial history has gone largely overlooked or suffered from being sidelined within other more prevalent social interpretation.

Traditionally the interpretative process for the Roman and early medieval periods has focussed either on the highly visible evidence of Romanitas, or Germanic material culture as evidenced largely through Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. For the earliest medieval period, settlement evidence remains relatively limited and interpreting its ethnic and cultural provenance has typically reflected the shifts in theoretical paradigms. It is also a truism that until the advent of post-processual approaches to archaeological interpretation, the majority of investigation into rural settlement was very much restricted to the site locale, frequently divorced from the wider landscape context. The danger of avoiding contextual analysis, and the temptation to find monocausal explanations for social and cultural change, is to form circular arguments, attempting to fit the evidence to the perceived understanding of the period, or to endorse the historical narrative through the archaeological evidence retrieved.

In the debate over late Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, the still largely unexplored rural landscape has much to offer. This has never been truer than in recent decades with the birth of ‘landscape archaeology’ as a discipline and the development-led changes to archaeological evaluation as a result of PPG16 legislation. In the following chapters, the trends and approaches traditionally adopted in interpreting the late Roman to early medieval transition are discussed. The nature of the evidence is considered, including the extent to which this has addressed the issue of settlement processes in the rural landscape, and how this has informed the continuity debate thus far. The merits of inter-disciplinary approaches to rural landscape studies are also discussed, along with the ways in which these have contextualised current understanding

of socio-economic and cultural change and their potential for moving things forward in this particularly thorny area of debate.

Research Rationale, Aims and Objectives

This thesis is nested within the wider 'Fields of Britannia' research project at the University of Exeter, funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The principal aims of the wider project are to explore the historic rural landscape through its fieldscapes, settlement patterns and environmental signature. The objective is to test how far its origins lie in the period of transition at the end of Roman Britain, when the four provinces of Britannia devolved into smaller British and Anglo-Saxon territories, eventually merging to become the Kingdom of England.

Increasingly, regional studies of the historic landscape are demonstrating that there may be more of a relationship between patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement than previously thought, and it is with this particular aspect of historic landscape studies that this thesis is concerned. Where studies of Roman and early medieval settlement have traditionally been undertaken independent of each other, this research has been aimed at a broad-scale analysis of settlement transition between the two periods, with the objective of identifying to what extent the late Roman settlement landscape influenced processes of early medieval settlement development.

The remit of this thesis has been to develop a wide-scale spatial analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement patterns across three regional study areas, focussing on the period of transition at the end of the Roman period. This has been addressed through two key aims:

- To quantify Roman settlement relationships across a number of distinctive and adjacent character regions, or *pays*, in respect of material evidence for 'Early' to 'Late' Saxon settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. The objective has been to identify to what extent patterns of Roman settlement might suggest continuity, or discontinuity, into the 5th to 11th centuries and whether regional or sub-regional variation can be demonstrated.
- To retrogressively assess patterns of 11th century settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, across these same *pays* for material

evidence of Roman occupation, the objective being to determine how far patterns of 11th century settlement owe their origins to the Roman period and whether regional or sub-regional variation can be demonstrated.

Structure of the Thesis

A historiography of Roman and early medieval settlement studies is followed by a chapter on the development of 'historic landscape' as a research construct, the approaches to interpreting historic landscape character and the concept of *pays*. The methods and principles underlying this thesis are then presented and discussed, along with the recognised biases and limitations of data collection for the Roman and early medieval periods and the principal sources of material and documentary evidence. The research results for the three regional case studies are presented over thirteen chapters, which introduce the physical and historical background to each study area and the settlement results according to *pays*, followed by a regional discussion. The final discussion and conclusion synthesise the research process and its findings and evaluate the success of the research and where it might benefit from refinement through future studies. The traditional interpretation of well-known sites is also explored in the light of this research and its contribution to Roman and early medieval settlement studies, with suggestions for how future research of this nature might progress.

Terminology and Conventions

Terminology

The time period covered by this study is the late Roman period, essentially the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, and the early medieval period, now considered to reflect the 5th to 11th centuries AD (Society for Medieval Archaeology 2003, 199). Traditionally, and particularly for eastern and southeast England, early medieval settlement studies have relied on the chronology and typology of associated material culture. As a result the identification of 'Early Saxon', 'Middle Saxon' and 'Late Saxon' pottery and metalwork has become synonymous with these same sub-periods of settlement development, principally AD 410-650, AD 650-850 and AD 850-1066 (Rippon 2008, 8, although see Blinkhorn 1999, 9 for revised dates of 'Middle Saxon' Ipswich Ware to *c*. AD 720). Consequently,

many county HER's and the majority of published literature for eastern and southeast England use this terminology when referring to both material culture and settlement periods. As Rippon (2008, 143) points out, however, this indirectly infers a particular cultural or ethnic association that may not be wholly representative or accurate; an 'Anglo-Saxon' descriptor of settlement might be taken to imply a typically Germanic character, whereas settlement studies are increasingly showing that surviving indigenous communities and a range of cultural influences, both migrant and native, were responsible for far greater complexities of settlement character than previously supposed.

Outside of eastern and southeast England, in those areas of Britain where an overtly Germanic presence during the first centuries of the early medieval period is lacking, the term 'Anglo-Saxon', and the sub-period divisions 'Early Saxon', 'Middle Saxon' and 'Late Saxon', is particularly inappropriate. In Somerset, for example there was no distinct Germanic presence before the mid 7th century, following the battle of Penselwood in AD 658 (Costen 2011, 27-28). For western Britain, the 5th to 7th centuries have been variously described as 'post' or 'sub' Roman, while the terms 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Saxon' appear to have vague and inconsistent usage in reference to the subsequent 7th to 11th centuries. 'Middle Saxon' and 'Late Saxon' are also terms used in discussion of west Britain for this period, but this is often in connection with documentary evidence rather than explicit material culture, which, for Somerset, is largely absent before around the 10th century.

Whilst the ethnicity or cultural origin of a given community is necessarily of consideration to settlement studies, it is not a primary focus of this thesis and the terminology used will aim to avoid cultural loading except during explicit discussion of this, or where the term is consistent with accepted conventions.

Glossary of terms:

'Roman' – refers to both the generic time period and broader suite of empirical material culture.

'Romano-British' – refers directly to the indigenous population, settlement, or material culture, of the 1st to 4th centuries AD.

‘Late Roman’ – refers to the 3rd to 4th centuries AD.

‘Post-Roman’ – refers broadly to the 5th to 6th centuries AD in western Britain, where an acultural term is required. Where radiocarbon dating gives more specific dates, those dates are used.

‘Early medieval period’ – refers broadly to the 5th to 11th centuries AD.

‘Earliest medieval period’ – refers to the 5th to 7th centuries AD where an acultural term is required (or the time period ‘5th to 7th centuries’ may be used).

‘Early Saxon’ – refers to the 5th to 7th centuries AD in eastern Britain, both in respect of the material culture and the time period to which this relates.

‘Middle Saxon’ – refers to the early 8th to early 9th centuries AD in eastern Britain, both in respect of the material culture and the time period to which this relates. For western Britain this term may be used when referring to existing discussion that uses this term of reference, but for the settlement analysis of Somerset, where this period is distinguished by the point after which an Anglo-Saxon presence is recorded, the time period ‘7th to 9th centuries’ will be used.

‘Late Saxon’ – refers to the mid 9th to mid 11th centuries AD in eastern Britain, both in respect of the material culture and the time period to which this relates. For western Britain this term may be used when referring to existing discussion that uses this term of reference. For the settlement analysis of Somerset, this time period is further qualified as the ‘10th and 11th centuries’, as this is the approximate point when dateable pottery re-emerged in the material record. Where radiocarbon dating gives more specific dating, those dates are used.

‘Anglo-Saxon’ – refers specifically to cultural or historical evidence for Germanic influence or activity, either when the ethnicity and cultural origin of the evidence being discussed is explicit or the sources being referred to also use that term.

‘Saxon’ – used occasionally when referring to existing usage of this term or when a cultural inference is being made that lacks closer dating. Where the term is used in county HER’s in regard to settlement evidence, particularly Somerset, where reference to this later period of early medieval society is typically more generic, it is assumed to reflect the 9th to 11th centuries AD.

‘Later medieval period’ – used to distinguish the period AD 1066 to 1500 from the ‘early medieval’ period.

Conventions

All time periods refer to AD unless otherwise stated. The use of AD is only specifically included following calibrated radiocarbon dates.

To distinguish the later medieval field systems of southern Britain, ‘open field’ is used as the generic term for those irregular field systems that demonstrate some form of sub division into strips and furlongs, but which potentially follow a mixed regulatory system of cropping (Campbell 1981, 114-115; Thirsk 1966, 144). The term ‘common field’ is reserved for the sub-category of open field that follows a fully regulated cropping system: the large two to three field ‘Midlands’ system traditionally associated with nucleated villages in England’s central zone. This follows conventions proposed by Thirsk (1966, 144) and expanded on by Campbell (1981), as recently adopted by Rippon (2008, 6; 2012, 12).

Abbreviations

HER	Historic Environment Record
KARU	Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit
LIA	Late Iron Age
MBA	Middle Bronze Age
MOLAS	Museum of London Archaeology Service
OS	Ordnance Survey
PPG16	Planning Policy Guidance 16
SEAS	South Eastern Archaeological Services
SSEW	Soil Survey of England and Wales

Chapter 2. A Historiography of Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Studies

Introduction

The date of AD 410 is incised into the minds of 20th century scholars as the end of the Romanised world in Britain. At this point, we might believe, the Roman army abandoned the native peoples of Britain due to growing ethnic pressure on the continent, leaving them to their own social and political devices. This is variously considered to have resulted either in instant collapse (eg. Collingwood and Myres 1937; Crawford 1928; Esmonde Cleary 1989; 1995; 2004; Faulkner 2000; 2002; 2004; Frere 1998; Hodges 1989; Hoskins 1955; Reece 1980) or more protracted social breakdown (eg. Brown 1974; Dark 1994; 2004; Härke 1999; Hingley and Miles 2002; Millett 1990; Pryor 2005; Salway 2002; Scull 1993; Wacher 1998), thought by some to have its origins in a late 3rd century crisis (eg. Hodges 1989; Mattingly 2006). In either scenario, from the political and social vacuum of the late Roman period, a new social and cultural entity developed. Whether this was the result of Saxon migrants sweeping away all vestiges of British society and culture, or the mutual acculturation of native and Germanic ideologies, these changes brought with them the building blocks of Kingdoms and national identity that formed the basis of later 'English' society (Dark 1994; Stenton 1943; Welch 1992).

The date for the demise of Roman Britain has long hung on the writings of the historian Zosimus, dating to around AD 500. He records that the Emperor Honorius, under pressure from peasant uprisings in Gaul, sent letters to Britain ordering its cities to look to their own defences (Mattingly 2006, 530). The accuracy of translating this report was contested, even within early Roman studies, by such as Haverfield (1915, 78-79), who argued it more likely referred to *Bruttium*, a region of southern Italy (*ibid*). As Moorhead (2010, 18) points out, without this chronological certainty, the precise date for the end of Roman Britain goes undocumented in any historical account. Any argument regarding this, and indeed the continuity of Romanised life in Britain, therefore falls to the historical and archaeological record: both of which are partial and neither of which are without their bias and subjective content.

Trends and Approaches in Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Studies

The culture-historical approach

In his 19th century account of the history of England, Gardiner (1892, 22) expressed the view 'that a people can never be at its best unless those that compose it have some object for which they can sacrifice themselves'. He believed the native peoples of late Roman Britain had lost their *patria* and become vulnerable to the Saxon invaders who drove them west and settled their lands (*ibid*). That the end of Roman Britain led to indigenous social crisis and the mass superimposition of Anglo-Saxon lordship was a view similarly expressed well into the twentieth century (eg. Collingwood and Myres 1937; 307; Leeds 1913, 9; Haverfield 1915, 23). Many historians and archaeologists further considered the period of 'relative obscurity' (Leeds 1913, 9) that followed as 'a long period of which the history cannot be written' (Stenton 1943, 1), that the surviving Dark Age culture was impoverished and 'as negative as a culture can be' (Myres 1955, 41) and that the Saxon migrants encountered a rural wilderness in which they had to start again from scratch (Hoskins 1955, 44).

Early studies of late Roman and early medieval settlement were conducted very much independent of each other, but both reflected this culture-historical viewpoint. Whilst Rivet (1969, 215), in his studies of Roman villas, argued that if continuity were to exist it would be in the humbler farming communities, others, such as Alcock (1971, 193), for example, believed this impossible as 'they do not survive' (*ibid*). Ultimately, the greatest legacies to early Roman studies were antiquarian and privately funded research excavations, which traditionally focussed on the edifices of Roman social and political administration: the towns, temples, forts and *vici* of urban and military life. Whilst these studies included Roman villas, there was less focus on the wider pantheon of rural settlement, with the native population, estimated to comprise almost 90% of the populace (Hingley and Miles 2002, 153), going largely overlooked.

As a result of this bias towards the social, administrative and political elite of Roman Britain, early studies of the rural Roman landscape almost exclusively focussed on the Romanised areas of lowland Britain (see Hingley and Miles 2002, for example, and Chapter 3, 40; **Fig. 3.1**) from the perspective of Roman villa estates (eg. Rivet 1955; 1958; 1969). Studies of Romano-British farming

economy (eg. Applebaum 1958; 1966; Bowen 1955; 1969) explored the continuity of native practices but believed these newly incorporated into the Roman administrative system. Collingwood and Myres (1937, 213), suggested that villa estates represented a Romanised version of a surviving LIA system of land tenure, basing their argument on Roman principles of *villae* as country buildings and *ager* as open land, all contained within the *fundus*, or farm (*ibid* and see Todd 1988). Below the villa, a hierarchy of farms and villages were thought to variously reflect a lesser Romanised elite and non-Romanised native tenants (*ibid*, 213): although Rivet (1964, 104) later qualified these as reflecting typically native settlements, he nonetheless viewed them as part of Roman tenurial structure. Below the level of these farms and villages, and greatly outnumbering them, it was assumed, were the primitive dwellings of the general peasantry (*ibid*, 113). Beyond the lowland areas, in the 'highland' areas of north and western England, native settlement was considered little affected by the Conquest and, therefore, largely dismissed, although Rivet (1964, 116) did express some interest in the continuity of Romano-British settlement outside of overtly Romanised areas, southwest England in particular.

Within the culture-historical paradigm, the late Roman decline of villa estates was considered to equate with wider discontinuity of the rural settlement landscape (Arnold 1982; Frere 1998; Mattingly 2006; Millett 1990; Wacher 1998). The evidence for such decline came from early excavations, at sites such as Great Casterton (Rutland), Norton Disney (Lincs), Lockleys (Herts) and Lullingstone (Kent), for example (Webster 1969, 235-242). The dismantling of buildings, burning episodes and modified re-use evidenced by timber buildings, hearths cut into mosaic floors and burials placed within villa buildings, were all considered evidence for abandonment or low level 'squatter' occupation (Frere 1998, 365-367; Webster 1969, 233; Welch 1992, 104). Despite this, it was acknowledged by some (eg. Applebaum 1958, 86; Rivet 1964, 215) that wider villa estates may have survived in some devolved form through the corpus of native farms and holdings that continued to be occupied, although local farming communities may have evolved to reflect both native and migrant populations.

Nonetheless, it was widely believed that Anglo-Saxon settlers almost wholly replaced the native population in central and eastern England during the 5th to 7th centuries, (eg. Crawford 1928, 187; Collingwood and Myres 1937, 441;

Hoskins 1955, 45). Hoskins (1955, 45) further argued that English village settlement was an Anglo-Saxon import, with no observable forbear in Roman Britain. At this time, 'villages' were still largely unrecognised as a Roman settlement form: the currently most well known example, Catsgore (Somerset), was simply recorded as a 'building' by Rivet (1955, 33). Even in peripheral areas of Britain, however, where native Romano-British settlement was thought to have survived largely unaltered, Hoskins (1955, 46) argued for Anglo-Saxon villages and open field subsumed within later medieval enclosure.

Early culture-historical studies of Anglo-Saxon settlement, lacking the substantial remains of the Roman period, were more dependent on linguistic, toponymic and documentary evidence. The superimposition of Germanic language and the disappearance of native place-names were seen as further evidence for continental immigration and the replacement of indigenous social culture (Leeds 1913,15; Myres 1955, 42; 1986, 32; Stenton 1946, 18 and see Faull 1977, for example). The rarity of native place-names, in areas such as Sussex, for example, reinforced the evidence for Anglo-Saxon colonisation, which 'left little room for British survival' (Stenton 1946, 18). Finberg (1955), in his contemporary study of Withington (Gloucestershire), however, qualified this somewhat. He obseved that, while the absence of native place-names argued for the replacement of the native population, a wider continuity of place in settlement location and landuse practices could nevertheless be suggested: an early example of landscape orientated study. Nevertheless, in contrast to this, Myres (1955, 42) argued that the lack of surviving Roman villa names, and their absence from the recollections of Gildas, was unquestionable proof of the disaggregation of Roman settlement and Germanic replacement.

As material evidence for settlement was, and still is, scant for this period, Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were the main source of material evidence for occupation, although few could be directly related to settlement (Lucy 2000, 152). Where this association was made during early excavations, at sites such as West Stow (Suffolk), Mucking (Essex) or West Helserton (N. Yorks), for example, it was often compromised by partial excavation or poor publishing (Lucy 2000, 154). Within the culture-historical paradigm, however, the typology of burial practices and grave assemblages were believed direct evidence of migrant communities (Welch 1992, 11). The contemporary disappearance of cemeteries in northern

Europe, thought to be due to extensive flooding of the northwest seaboard, was considered further confirmation of this by archaeologists and historians of the time (Lucy 2000, 162-164). Lacking sufficient settlement evidence, archaeologists, such as Leeds (1913, 15), for example, attempted to link the distribution of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries with place-name evidence to determine rural settlement patterns (and see Lucy 2000, 162-164). Thus, where Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were located along existing rural boundaries or on marginal ground, this was considered to reflect migrant settlement on the peripheries of native settlement and the marking of territorial boundaries (Myres 1986, 38).

In addition to cemetery evidence, early excavation at sites such as Sutton Courtenay (Oxon) and West Stow (Suffolk), for example, along with later additions such as Mucking (Essex) and Yeavering (Northumberland), identified what appeared to be a distinctive Anglo-Saxon architectural form, the sunken-featured building, or Grubenhaus, now ubiquitous to Anglo-Saxon settlement studies (Dixon 1983, 275). Initially these buildings were considered a low architectural form, used for storage or animal penning (Jones and Jones 1973, 25; Welch 1992, 34). Subsequent attempts to compare them with European examples have led to growing debate on their vernacular character and function (eg. Dixon 1983; 1993; Powlesland 1997; Tipper 2004; Welch 1992) and the chronology of their introduction (eg. Dixon 1983; 1993; Welch 1992). Dixon (1993, 145), for example, suggests that examples of Grubenhäuser at Mucking may represent an early phase of colonisation, although Hamerow (1993, 314) argues that the shift of settlement at Mucking between the 5th to 7th centuries contained Grubenhäuser of similar typology at every stage. Powlesland (1997, 104) also argues that the evidence for distinctly Anglo-Saxon pioneering settlement is limited. Nonetheless, in the early days these new settlement forms were thought to demonstrate discontinuity in the rural landscape, displacing earlier, Roman, settlement (Jones and Jones 1973, 25). Latterly, excavation at sites such as Orton Hall (Cambs) and Barton Court Farm (Oxon), for example, identified instances where Grubenhäuser closely respect, or overlie, Roman villas: these two sites, in particular, have since become synonymous with the debate over Roman settlement continuity.

The lack of opportunity to expand any understanding of potential settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between the late Roman and earliest medieval

period was hindered in early years, both by the site-based approach to archaeological studies and the normative approaches that dominated theoretical thinking (Hingley 1989, 3; Taylor 2001, 46). In more recent years the development of more analytical approaches to archaeological investigation and the development of 'landscape archaeology' has impacted on these earlier studies and expanded our understanding of settlement and landscape transition between the late Roman and early medieval periods. Through changing directives in archaeological practice, material evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement has greatly increased but this has often led to persistent re-working and re-interpretation within the strictures of current theoretical paradigms, which have brought their own bias to studies of settlement processes and potential continuity, or discontinuity, between these two periods.

The 'new' archaeology

Through the 1960's and 70's a sea change in theoretical thinking brought more rigour and empirical discipline to archaeological analysis and interpretation, resulting in a growth of quantitative and typological studies (Miles 1989, 120). In addition, an increasing number of Roman and early medieval settlements were identified through rescue archaeology (Gerrard 2003, 164; Rippon 2000a, 47). The constraints of this, however, meant excavation was often targeted at development sites rather than the rural landscape (Rippon 2004, 15-19) and confined to site-based evaluation at the expense of the wider landscape context (Bell 1989, 269; Gerrard 2003, 164). Nonetheless, where large-scale excavation did occur, through the construction of new motorways or the extraction of gravels in areas of Essex and East Anglia, for example, new settlements were increasingly identified: Mucking (Essex), for example (Dixon 1993; Hamerow 1993 and see Hamerow 1992). Furthermore, the exposure of large tracts of countryside was revealing evidence for extensive Romano-British field systems, fossilised in the later medieval landscape (Rippon 2000a, 49 and see Martin and Satchell 2008; Williamson 1987; 1998; 2006a, for example).

In addition to rescue archaeology, a growth in physical survey methods, such as aerial reconnaissance, fieldwalking and palaeoenvironmental sampling, was radically altering how the landscape was viewed as a source of evidence, and from these beginnings 'landscape archaeology' developed as an independent

discipline (eg. Aston 1985; Aston and Rowley 1974 and see Rippon 2004, 17). The study of settlement and field patterns were intrinsic to this, although the concept of 'historic landscape' didn't fully develop until the late 1980's (Rippon 2004, 17). A growing number of rural Roman and early medieval settlements were being identified through aerial survey and fieldwalking projects, in areas such as the Upper Thames Valley, Northamptonshire, East Anglia and the Lincolnshire Fens, for example, (Brown and Foard 1998; Corney 2000; Dark and Dark 1997; Gerrard 2003; Higham 1992; Hingley 1989; Hingley and Miles 2002; Jones and Mattingly 1990; Taylor 1983, 2007). An increasing diversity of rural Romano-British settlement was recognised, from enclosed farmsteads, such as Dunstons Clump (E. Midlands), to more dispersed settlement, as at Lower Slaughter (Gloucs.), for example (Dark and Dark 1997, 57, 61-62). A variety of 'village' type settlement was also identified (*ibid*, 51-54 and see Taylor 1983; 84-92), from linear droveway settlements, such as Burton Fleming (E. Yorks), to more complex sites, such as Chisenbury Warren (Wilts), for example (*ibid* and see Taylor 1983, 85-88). Catsgore (Somerset) was also now shown by Leech (1982a) to comprise a group of farm complexes in the vicinity of a Roman villa, possibly reflecting a village settlement for villa staff (Dark and Dark 1997, 54; Faulkner 2000, 144). This, and the presence of a possible bailiff's house, led Faulkner (2000, 144) to suggest the evidence at Catsgore might reflect nascent processes of manorialisation.

The results of fieldwalking surveys further demonstrated that, while not necessarily simultaneously occupied (Taylor 1974, 5), much of lowland Britain potentially saw a Roman settlement density of at least one settlement per km^2 (Hingley and Miles 2002, 155; Taylor 1983, 83): Foard (1978, 367) observed as many as four or five per km^2 at Great Doddington (Northants), while Williamson (1984, 228; 1986, 125) calculated about 1.5 settlements per km^2 for the boulder clay soils of northwest Essex. Williamson (1984, 227; 1993, 89) and Foard (1978, 369) also suggested that the heavy boulder clay soils of northwest Essex and Northamptonshire saw a degree of Roman settlement contraction by the 5th to 7th centuries, with continuing settlement indicating some mobility and shift in location. Further settlement abandonment by the 7th to 9th centuries in favour of the lighter valley soils was also indicated (Foard 1978, 369; Williamson 1984; 226; 1986, 124), where a greater association of Roman settlements with 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon pottery potentially indicated greater long term continuity and

the beginnings of settlement nucleation (Foard 1978, 370-371; Williamson 1986, 125 and see Rippon 2008, 8, 183; Hall 1981, 34-38; Hamerow 1992, 41; Taylor 1983, 109-124, for example). The growing body of material evidence increasingly suggested a restructuring of the late Roman settlement landscape from around the mid 7th to mid 9th centuries, potentially incorporating shifts in both settlement location and function (Arnold 1982, 456; Foard 1978, 369-370; Taylor 1983, 120 and see Lewis *et al*. 2001; Jones and Page 2006; Rippon 2008; Williamson 2003, for example).

This shift and reorganisation of settlement during the 8th to 9th centuries became universally known as the 'Middle-Saxon Shuffle' (eg. Arnold and Wardle 1981; Hamerow 1991). Arnold and Wardle (1981, 148) argued this was the result of territorial reorganisation, in some contrast to Hodges (1989, 21), who saw it as evidence of population decline and changes in landuse, reflecting pragmatic indigenous 'survival strategies'. It was increasingly apparent, however, that settlement from prehistory through to the early medieval period had always been fluid to a point, with continual shifts in both location and form (Sawyer 1976, 2; Taylor 1974, 7). As Taylor (1983, 120-121) observed, it was no longer sufficient to interpret the potential dislocation of late Roman settlement as an isolated period of abandonment due to social circumstance, but to see it within the context of longer historical processes of settlement and landscape change.

Congruent with the move towards greater contextualisation in Roman and early medieval settlement studies was the development of regionality in landscape studies, particularly manifest in the 'Leicester Approach' (eg. Everitt 1977; 1986; Fox 1977; Thirsk 1967; Tranter *et al*. 1999, 24 and see Rippon 2008, 7; 2009, 230). The idea that the rural landscape comprised distinctive character areas that could demonstrate both physical and social cohesion became embodied in the concept of *pays*, comprehensively explored by Everitt (1986) in his study of Kent and more recently embraced in regional landscape studies by such as Rippon (eg. 2004; 2008; 2012) and Williamson (eg. 1993; 2006b). It also forms the basis of regional analysis for this thesis, discussed in Chapter 3 (53-55).

Within the positivist paradigm, Roman studies were increasingly subjected to statistical analyses and socio-political models, such as Central Place Theory (eg. Grant 1986) or non-random placement in patterns of Roman settlement (eg. Hodder 1972; Hodder and Hassall 1971), for example. Marxist principles

relating to economic structure and socio-political conflict were applied to the study of Roman villas and their demesnes (eg. Hodges 1989; Millett 1990). Such structuralist and functionalist studies did much to challenge existing assumptions in Roman and early medieval settlement studies (eg. Esmonde Clearly 1993; 2001; Faulkner 2002; Millett 1990; Scull 1993; 1999) but were still typically site-orientated or constrained within their period of study. Furthermore, the disparity in settlement evidence for the late Roman and earliest medieval periods compromised the finding of direct comparables (Jones 1996, 104). The creation of testable social models was further constrained, as only abandoned settlements were available for study. How far these settlements might reflect the wider settlement norm was unproven (Jones 1996, 104; Miles 1981, 14; Wood 1997, 46), an issue that continues to be recognised (eg. Rippon 2008, 9).

Some of these sites, such as West Stow (Suffolk), Catholme (Staffs), Raunds (Northants) and Poundbury (Dorset), for example, demonstrated early 5th century origins, potentially reflecting a break from the Roman settlement pattern (Hodges 1989, 26; Taylor 1983, 117-119). Others, however, such as Mucking (Essex), Barton Court (Oxon), Orton Hall (Cambs) and Rivenhall (Essex), for example, indicated some mobility or modification of Roman settlement, but otherwise suggested continuing occupation and adaptation to an existing farming regime (Bell 1989, 277-278; Esmonde Cleary 1995, 19; Higham 1992, 78; Jones and Mattingly 1990, 246 and see Hamerow 1993; Mackreth 1996; Miles 1984; Rodwell and Rodwell 1986). The wider evidence at this time was, therefore, increasingly suggesting potential continuity between the late Roman and earliest medieval periods, albeit with some shifts in form and location and some modification of resource management (Esmonde Cleary 1995; Hodges 1989; Jones and Mattingly 1990; Miles 1973; Rowley 1973; Taylor 1983).

Through advances in environmental archaeology by the late 1980's to early 90's, it was becoming increasingly possible to investigate both individual settlement sites and the wider landscape for patterns of potential continuity, or discontinuity, through the application of science (Bell 1989, 269). Palaeoenvironmental evidence was able to demonstrate the longer perspective of landscape evolution during the late Roman and early medieval periods, suggesting greater stability and continuity of use than could previously be shown, particularly in lowland areas (Bell 1989, 276 and see Bell and Dark

1998; Dark 2000, for example). Pollen sequences from sites such as Sidlings Copse (Oxon) (Bell and Dark 1998, 184), for example, suggested that the early medieval landscape remained predominantly open, with no widespread regeneration of woodland by the 5th century (eg. Bell 1989; Bell and Dark 1998; Dark 2000; Esmonde Cleary 1989; 1995; Higham 1992; Jones 1996; Rackham 1986; 1994; Rippon 2000a). At sites such as Cowdery's Down (Hants), Chalton (Hants), West Heslerton (N. Yorks), West Stow (Suffolk) and Mucking (Essex), for example, palaeoenvironmental sequences also suggested a landscape cleared and exploited well before the 5th century, with no evidence of interim regeneration (Bell 1989, 276). Whilst mollusc evidence from Cowdery's Down suggested some evidence of change from arable to pastoral farming, mollusca and dry valley sediments from the valley floor at Chalton revealed open arable conditions (Bell 1989, 278). The evidence from Barton Court Farm (Oxon) also demonstrated continuing landuse, with flax cultivation indicated in both Romano-British and early medieval contexts (Bell 1989, 277 and see Bell and Dark 1998), although beetle evidence from refuse and manure suggested some contraction in landuse, and a less intensively farmed regime (Bell 1989, 277; Hodges 1989, 37). The wider environmental evidence indicated wetter climate conditions than in the Roman period (Jones 1996, 204 and see Lamb 1981).

Deterioration to a colder, wetter, climate around the early 5th century was also demonstrated by glacial studies of the Polar Regions (Dark 2000; Esmonde Cleary 1995; Higham 1992; Lamb 1981). This resulted in higher sea levels and periodic marine transgression during this period, affecting settlement and land-use in coastal areas (Higham 1992, 79 and see Rippon 1997; 2006). Similar flooding events along the north European seaboard were also suggested as a cause of folk migration from that area (Bell and Walker 2005, 163; Hills 2003, 80): palynological evidence from Flögeln (Lower Saxony) suggested a distinct lapse in settlement there from the mid 5th century to around AD 800 (Zimmerman 1973), although Hills (2003, 80) has argued that pollen evidence for settlement in northern Europe was, and remains, inconclusive.

Clearly, the scientific advances of the 'New Archaeology' allowed great moves forward in Roman and early medieval settlement studies (see Dyer and Everson 2012, for example), although within its theoretical constraints, archaeological interpretation typically remained site-orientated and confined to

its period of study From the late 1980's, however, a more contextualised approach to historic landscape studies developed, with a greater integration of inter-disciplinary skills (Rippon 2004, 15-19).

The impact of post-processualism

The growth in post-processual approaches to archaeological interpretation resulted in a shift away from the typically site-orientated or 'honeypot' approaches (Miles 1989, 120) to Roman and early medieval settlement studies. More recent overviews of rural landscape evolution and transition during these periods (eg. Christie 2004; Collins and Gerrard 2004; Dark 2004; Davey 2004; Draper 2006; Gerrard with Aston 2007; Hingley 2004; Jones and Mattingly 1990; Jones and Page 2006; King 2004a; Martin 2007; Martin and Satchell 2008; Morris 2005; Parry 2006; Smart 2008; White 2007; Williamson 2006a) have introduced even greater regional synthesis, while studies of the historic landscape by human geographers and landscape historians (eg. Hooke 1998; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000; 2002; Taylor 2007; Williamson 1993; 2006b) have explored such facets as soils, landuse, resource management, demographics and settlement patterns, building on earlier work by such as Everitt (1986) and Rackham (1986), for example. Palaeoenvironmental studies, such as the Greater Exmoor Project (Fyfe 2006; Fyfe *et al.* 2004; Fyfe and Rippon 2004; Fyfe *et al*. 2003; Rippon *et al.* 2006), for example, are also addressing historic landscape processes at a regional level. This particular project demonstrated the continuity of Romano-British and post-Roman agricultural practices on Greater Exmoor, indicating a largely stable and open landscape until a period of change somewhere between the 7th to 9th centuries (Fyfe 2006, 11-14; Fyfe *et al*. 2004, 1713; Rippon *et al*. 2006, 34). Increasingly, regional particularities of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships are being demonstrated, with the complexities of regional character defined on many topographic and cultural levels through the concept of *pays* (eg. Everitt 1986; Lake 2007; Morris 2005; Rippon 2004; 2008 and see Chapter 3, 53-55).

Furthermore, while many contemporary overviews of the late Roman and early medieval periods continue to rework old evidence, albeit within a regional framework (eg. White 2007), or specifically catering to either the Roman (eg. Corney 2000; Taylor 2001; Taylor 2007) or early medieval (eg. Hamerow 1997;

2002; 2004; Hooke 1998) perspective, they are increasingly focussed on the broader context, using current social theories to examine processes of settlement and landscape change. Studies such as Laycock's (2008) exploration of the native perspective in late Roman Britain, or Harris's (2003) evaluation of trade links between the native southwest of England and the eastern Roman Empire, for example, expand our understanding of native regional responses to the late Roman/early medieval transition. Whilst linguistics and place-name studies possibly retain a more traditional approach, still largely arguing for migration to explain the spread of language and the domination of 'English' place-names (Rippon 2000a, 49), they, nonetheless, advance our understanding of how place-name patterns potentially reflect changing perceptions of landscape and the assimilation or superimposition of new ideologies (eg. Gelling 1993; 1997).

The ideologies underlying cultural practice and the exchange and assimilation of ideas have also taken increasing precedence in recent studies of early medieval society, looking at aspects of settlement form, mortuary practices, and material culture. Building on earlier studies of Anglo-Saxon settlement forms (eg. Dixon 1983; James, Marshall and Millet 1984), Hamerow (2002, 48) assessed the architectural composition and function of Anglo-Saxon buildings and their European equivalents to conclude they were all part of a wider continental tradition, which equally embraced native British influences and practices (and see Todd 2001, 89). Subtleties of architectural detail and varying patterns of use were considered by Hamerow (2002, 50) as much due to socio-political circumstance and available resources as the reinforcing of cultural identity, demonstrating that late Roman and early medieval studies need to go beyond the traditional insular narrative when interpreting patterns of change.

Recent studies of Anglo-Saxon burial practices have also gone beyond the function of practice to consider concepts of ethnicity and ideological expression (eg. Chester-Kadwell 2009; Crawford 1997; Geake 1997; Glasswell 2002; Hamerow 1997; Härke 1990; 1998; 1999; 2011; Lucy 2000; 2002). Härke (1990; 1999), for example, explored the articulation of wealth and status through association with military strength, countering early assumptions that warrior-like grave goods directly equate to warrior-like people (Härke 1990, 42). Chester-Kadwell (2009, 144) demonstrated the variation in location and function

of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries through the distribution and form of metalwork scatters. She argued for a trend in inhumation cemeteries being deliberately located close to, and intervisible with, nearby settlement, with cremation cemeteries tending towards the lighter soils at some distance from nearby settlement, albeit with some evidence for variation in this. Lucy (2000, 178) argued that distribution patterns in material culture should not, therefore, be assumed, in themselves, to directly imply the movement or ethnicity of people without understanding how such material culture is used and assimilated, or the social ideologies it articulates.

Insight into patterns of migration has, however, been enhanced in recent years by scientific analysis, through metrical studies of teeth and skeletal remains, or DNA analysis, for example (eg. Harke 1990; 1998; 2011; Hills 2003; 2009; Oppenheimer 2007). Whilst the results still lack a degree of cohesive argument as to the ancestral origins of Anglo-Saxon England (Hills 2009, 124-129), they do suggest some small-scale migration from northern Europe during the late Roman and earliest medieval periods, although this appears localised to parts of Norfolk, the Fens and parts of Mercia (Oppenheimer 2007, 382). Overall, however, the evidence for the 5th to 7th centuries is increasingly suggesting that indigenous and migrant communities were far less segregated than previously supposed (see Härke 1998; Hills 2003; 2009, for example), and that the mutual transference of ideologies and material culture was far greater. It is also apparent, through the increasing number of regional and national studies into human demographics, settlement evolution and landscape history, that the extent of Anglo-Saxon influence and wider patterns of settlement and landscape transition between the late Roman and early medieval periods resulted in distinct regional trajectories of historic landscape development.

The Continuity Debate

The broadening of approaches to late Roman and early medieval studies has challenged Romanists and Medievalists alike to raise their heads above their respective parapets and embrace a greater cohesion of evidence in the debate for continuity, or discontinuity, between these two periods. No longer is it sufficient to state, as Crawford did in 1928 (187), ‘that the stream of continuity was unbroken in this island cannot for a moment be maintained by an informed

student of our history'. Whilst definitions of continuity remain, to some degree, an issue of semantics (Snyder 1998, 220), even the most vociferous advocates of crisis and abandonment (eg. Brown 1974; Esmonde Cleary 1989; Faulkner 2000; 2002; 2004; Hodges 1989; Laycock 2008; Reece 1980) now acknowledge a degree of potential continuity in the rural landscape, with social disaggregation predominantly reflected by the edifices of Roman administrative structure. Equally, those who defend the essential continuity of the Romano-British people and their social landscape (eg. Christie 2004; Dark 1994; Dark 2004; Fulford 1990; Snyder 1998), nonetheless agree that failure within the Roman political and administrative 'system' inevitably impacted on how social and cultural continuity during the late Roman and earliest medieval periods was manifested. Whilst under the traditionalist banner it was difficult to move beyond the conclusion that the end of Roman Britain resulted in systemic failure and the death of Romanitas, within the current theoretical paradigm, the debate over late Roman decline increasingly looks beyond normative and traditional explanations, with even entrenched exponents of catastrophic change modifying their approaches to seek more nuanced interpretation.

Esmonde Cleary (2004, 424), for example, now cautions against monocausal explanations, such as equating the decline of Roman towns and villas with systemic decline, for example, arguing greater intricacies of social change. Whilst still arguing for discontinuity between the 'British' and 'Anglo-Saxons', he acknowledges the lack of a dominant narrative for the late Roman and earliest medieval periods, and the need to span the division in interpretative approaches (*ibid*, 91). This sentiment is echoed by Snyder (1998, 220) who argued that the social complexities of the 5th and 6th centuries should be considered as part of longer processes of social change. In further echo of Esmonde Clearly (2001), Snyder (1998, 252) argues for a re-classification of the 5th and 6th centuries as 'The Brittonic Age', reflecting that this was a period when the majority of people in Britain called themselves, and were called by others, 'Britons'. Furthermore, he suggests (*ibid*) that in most areas Britons were politically dominant, albeit having lost most of their *patria* following the withdrawal of Rome (*ibid*, 221). In this he reflects similar views to both Esmonde Cleary (2001) and Dark (1994; 2004). Whilst essentially arguing for the potential continuity of 'native' as opposed to 'Roman' society in late Roman Britain, Dark (1994; 2004) suggests that some important elements of Roman administrative

organisation in lowland Britain not only continued but went on to form the basis of later Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in Britain. Laycock (2008, 207) also argues for tribal continuity at a regional level, suggesting that political continuity in the east of England may be evidenced through the survival of some tribal names in the place-name record. He also suggests (*ibid*, 142) that the evidence for decline in some Roman sites, such as the late 4th century destruction of villas along the Wansdyke in Gloucestershire, for example, may be as much due to inter-tribal conflict in late Roman Britain as with the wider administrative system.

Increasingly then, a far greater diversity of social change in late Roman Britain, and a variety of possible factors for this, is being argued. Nevertheless, with the debate for continuity, or discontinuity, far from concluded, there is still variance in precisely what is being considered to continue, or not. Whilst there appears to be broad consensus towards distinct social changes in the latter years of Roman administration in Britain, probably more directly with the political and economic superstructure than necessarily the basic pattern of human habitation and everyday life, the precise nature and chronology of this change, along with the criteria used to determine continuity or otherwise, continues to be debated. Continuity is a many-stranded concept (see Arnold 1982, 451; Draper 2006, 36; Faulkner 2002, 63; Rippon 2000, 51; Snyder 1998, 220, for example): social continuity need not imply political and administrative continuity, or even the continuity of cultural mores and ideologies. Continuing landuse need not imply continuity of practice or population, while continuity of settlement may not necessarily reflect continuing form or function, all suggesting that ownership may or may not have changed, while ideas and attitudes almost certainly did. This is without the added factor of regionality and the variety of social and political circumstance that can, and almost certainly did, create a variety of responses to social crisis, with diverging outcomes (eg. Burnham and Wacher 1990; Dark and Dark 1997; Higham 1992; Rippon 2000; White 2007).

Conclusion

Studies of late Roman and early medieval settlement have traditionally seen a division of interpretative methods and approaches, inevitably resulting in a polarity of opinion on how the physical evidence for these two periods reflects aspects of continuity, or discontinuity. The bridgehead for these opposing

disciplines falls broadly on the 5th to 7th centuries, the period following the end of Roman administration in Britain and before which major social and political changes took new and cohesive form as the basis of 'English' social structure.

Whilst interpreting the archaeological evidence for late Roman and early medieval settlement has typically reflected current theoretical paradigms, the traditional suite of evidence for each period has changed little in past decades, despite the progression of archaeological opportunity. Over recent years, however, the concept of 'historic landscape', in tandem with a changing suite of theoretical and inter-disciplinary approaches, has advanced studies of settlement and landscape transition during these periods, with the emphasis as much on social agency as environmentally determined factors for change. It has become increasingly apparent that, in exploring the complex social dynamics of the late Roman and early medieval periods, the inter-disciplinary focus to historic landscape studies is ably complemented by current theoretical praxis.

This is never truer than within the arena of settlement studies where the temporal, spatial and material aspects of social expression and organisation can be explored. The perceived lack of a systematic landscape study of Roman Britain (eg. Fullford 1990, 25) has been addressed through a raft of regional studies but the need remains for broader national synthesis against which to set these more detailed regional accounts. The aims of this thesis have been to develop a quantitative analysis of late Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, which will hopefully forward our understanding of the regional and national processes of settlement and landscape change during these two periods, as well as help inform the debate over continuity, or discontinuity, that still prevails. Through achieving a more cohesive interpretation of landscape transition across the late Roman and early medieval divide it might be hoped to move beyond Haverfield's (1915, 88) 'shadowy frontier' towards greater clarity and understanding of this fascinating period of social and ideological transition.

Chapter 3. Historic Landscape Character and the Concept of '*Pays*'

Introduction

The concept of 'historic landscape' as a coherent research construct has developed in recent years through the growing emphasis on multi-disciplinary and contextual approaches to landscape research, but attempts to characterise particular aspects of the social and physical landscape are a long standing feature of settlement and landscape studies.

Traditionally, many of these attempts were confined to their particular discipline, the study of Roman or early medieval settlement, for example, or social and physical geographies at a regional or national scale. More recently, attempts to relate these regional and national studies have syncretised the various themes and approaches that determine historic landscape character. The relationship between the earlier 'antecedent' landscape and later patterns of settlement development and landuse can be explored, along with how social factors, such as population growth, economic development, and social structure, or physical factors, such as climate, soils and topography, for example, influence this. National trends and processes can be compared against regional variance to further more nuanced understanding of settlement and landscape character, and how various social and physical factors combine over centuries to create distinct regional character areas, or *pays*.

This chapter explores the approaches most relevant to this thesis and how they inform the regional study areas that form the basis of its research.

Mapping Roman and Early Medieval Settlement

Haverfield, in *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1915, 24) classified Roman settlement character through the bi-partite division of the provinces into the northern and western uplands, the 'Military Zone', and the eastern and southern lowlands, the 'Civilian Zone' (*ibid*, Fig. 1). This traditional twofold division ran broadly diagonal from the River Tees to the River Exe (Hingley and Miles 2002, 142), distinguishing the 'native' landscape of the north and southwest from the 'Romanised' landscape of the south and east. This rather simplistic approach

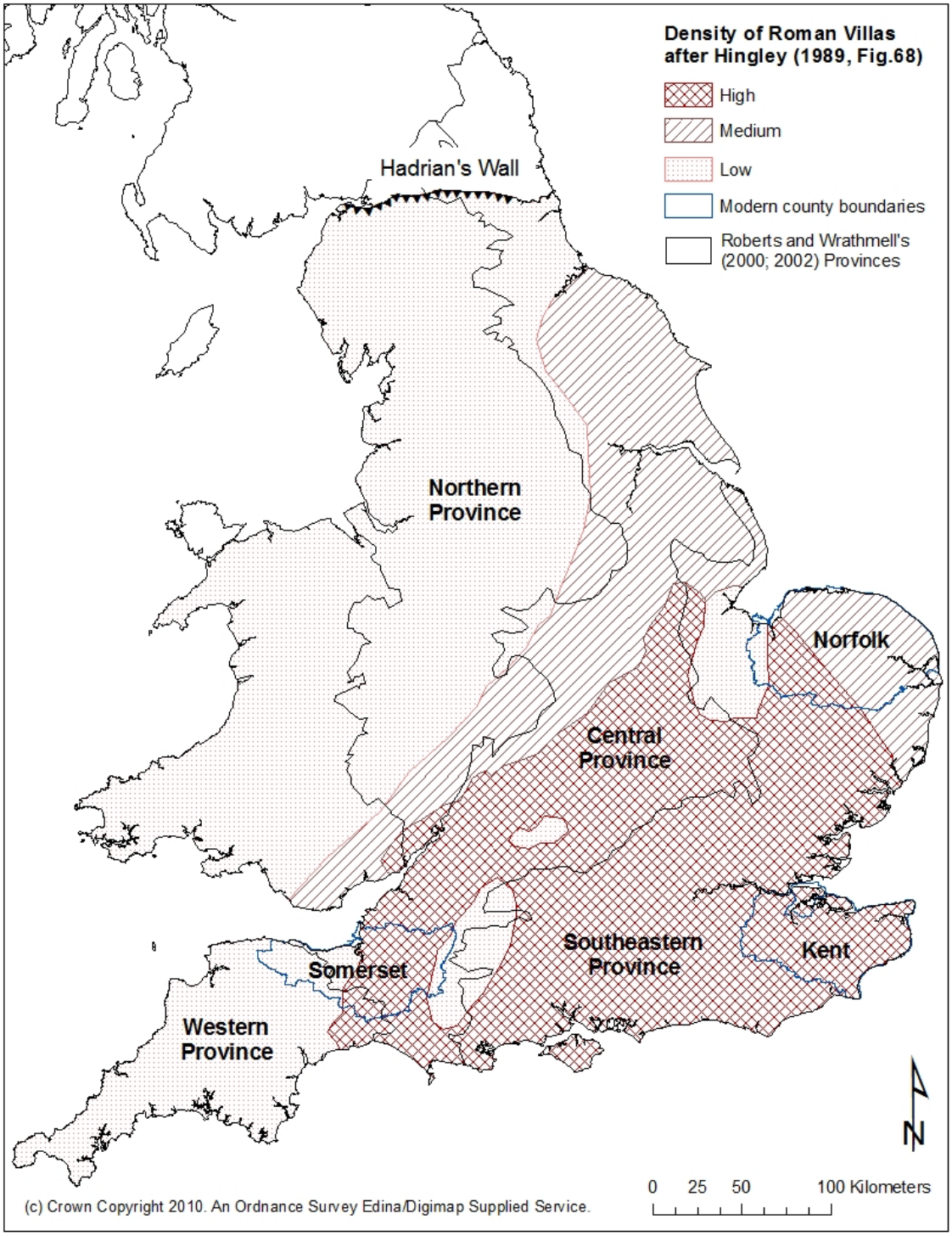


Figure 3.1. The density of Roman villas, drawn after Hingley (1989) and shown against Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000; 2002) 'Provinces'. The counties of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset are also shown. Roman villa density drawn after Hingley (1989, Fig. 68). Provinces drawn after Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, Fig. 1.1). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

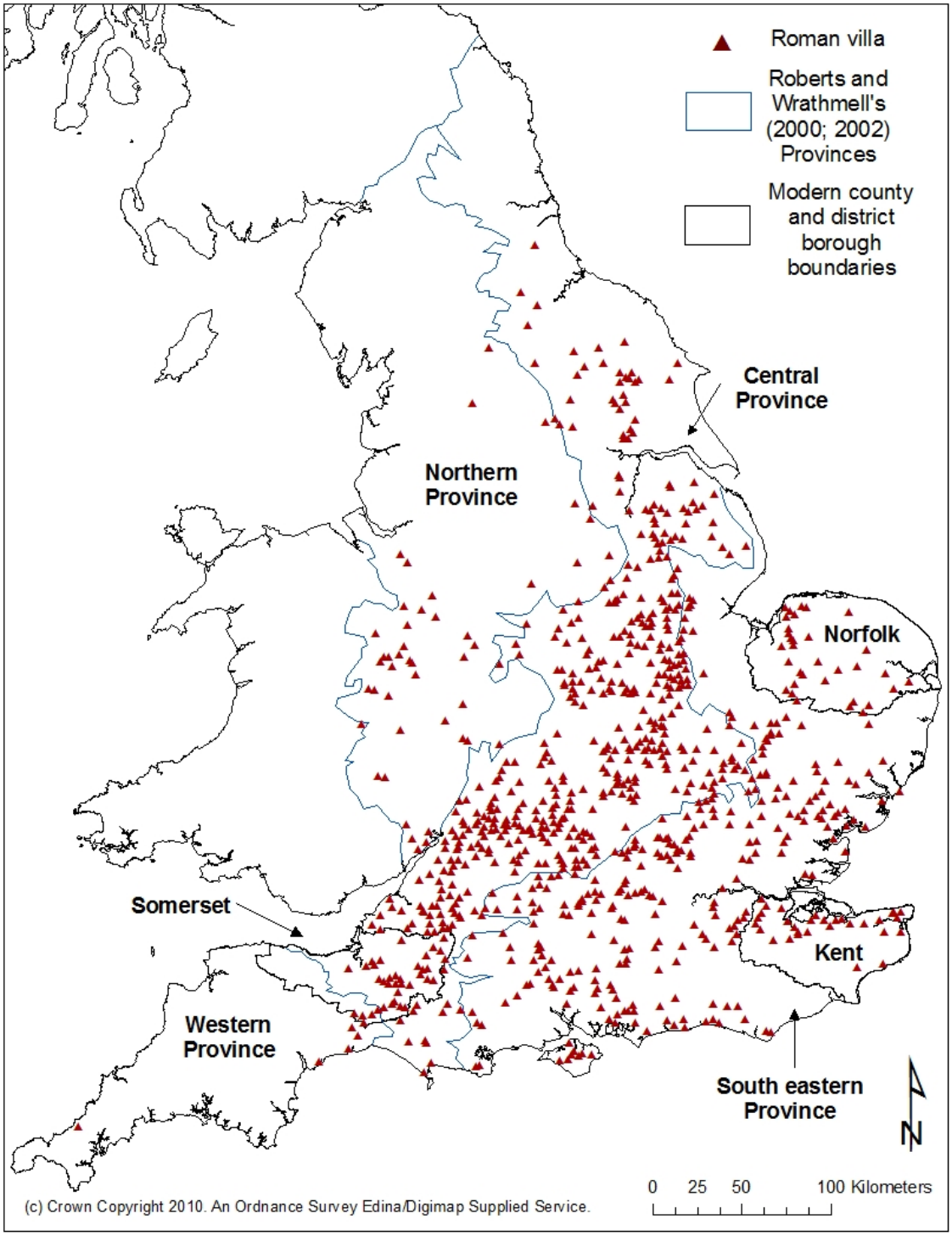


Figure 3.2. The distribution of Roman villas in relations to Roberts and Wrathmell's 'Provinces', drawn after Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, Fig. 1.1). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

has since been refined by Hingley's (1989) three-tier division of Roman villa density (**Fig. 3.1**), and Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000) mapping of known Roman villas (**Fig. 3.2**).

Early characterisation of Anglo-Saxon settlement is largely lacking: Gardiner (1982) in his *Student's History of England* produced a series of maps of Roman and Anglo-Saxon England through several phases of migration and expansion, but, in true culture-historical form, these were based on the perceived extent of tribal territories, *Civitas* and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms rather than patterns of settlement. The distribution of known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and settlement, as mapped by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000, Fig. 2.5), demonstrates how scarce occupation evidence for this period was even recently, although the pattern of distribution demonstrates the predominance of 'Early Saxon' occupation in the east of the country relative to the south and west (**Fig. 3.3**).

Defining early and later medieval settlement landscape character has seen a more comprehensive and complex evolution. The wealth of documentary evidence that complements the archaeological record has furthered greater discourse over the various socio-cultural and physical elements of the historic landscape and the rich variety of regional character. Regional variation as such is a long recognised concept: John Leland's 16th century accounts of his travels around the English countryside documented the open, 'champion', countryside of central England in contrast to the wooded, 'bosky', landscape to the east and west (Rippon 2008, 2). Seebohm (1896), in *The English Village Community*, explored the origins of this countryside, documenting the character of open field and attempting to relate it not only to manorial and Domesday records, but also earlier patterns of Roman land organisation. The study of open field agriculture became a common theme of historic landscape research, from Gray's (1915) characterisation of the 'Midland System', through to the work of Leicester University's English History Department (eg. Bowen 1961; Campbell 1981; Fox 1981; 1989; 1991; Rowley 1981; Thirsk; 1964; 1966; 1967).

Rackham (1986) incorporated the theme of open field agriculture within a broader synthesis of the history of the countryside, which defined areas of 'ancient' or 'planned' countryside across central England, based on aspects of regional settlement and landuse character (*ibid*, Fig. 1.3). Studies by human geographers Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002), using 19th century maps,

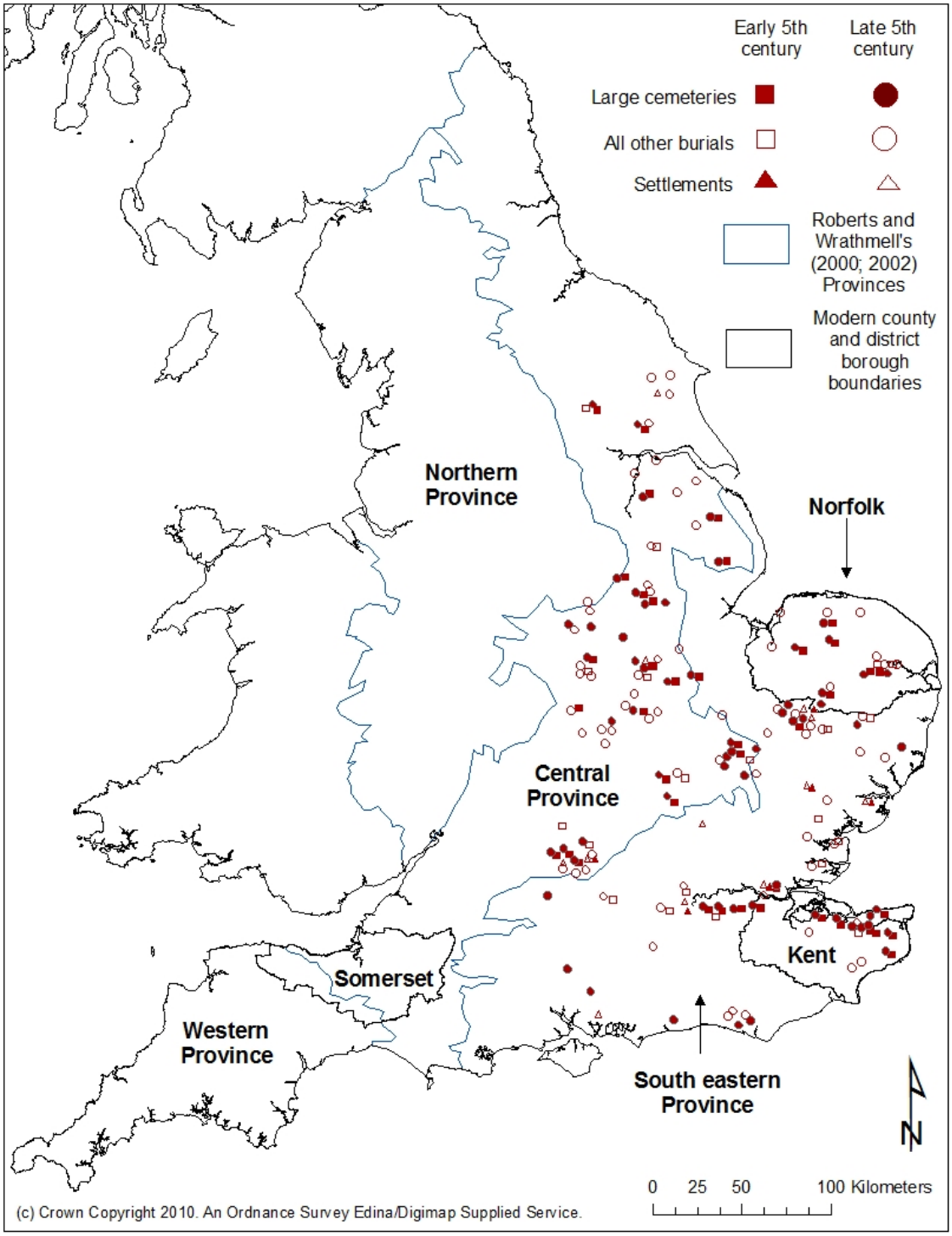


Figure 3.3. The distribution of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, drawn after Roberts and Wrathmell (2000, Fig. 2.5) and shown against Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000; 20002) 'Provinces'. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

developed a similar division of landscape character, defining regional provinces on the basis of dispersed or nucleated settlement distribution (**Fig. 3.4**). They demonstrated that the broad swathe of central England, characterised by Gray (1915) as the extent of the Midlands-style two or three-field open field system, and by Rackham (1986) as 'planned countryside', was also the area of England characterised by nucleated village settlement: their 'Central Province' (**Fig. 3.5**). This was in contrast to the east, north and west of England, where a dispersed settlement character predominated, typified by small hamlets and farms variously associated with irregular fields or small open fields (**Fig. 3.6**). In recent study by Rippon (2008), the precise line of the southwest boundary of the Central Province, in western Somerset, has been qualified by more nuanced exploration of nucleated and dispersed settlement in the region, thus demonstrating how regional studies can develop and refine wider national themes of historic landscape character.

The nature and chronology of settlement nucleation in central England, defined by Lewis *et al*. (1997, 198) as 'the Village Moment', is still a subject of debate (see Brown and Foard 1998; Jones and Page 2006; Lewis *et al*. 1997; Rippon 2008; Taylor 1977; 1983; Williamson 2003, for example). The reorganisation of an antecedent dispersed settlement landscape is generally thought to have occurred some time before the mid 9th century (eg. Jones and Page 2006; Lewis *et al*. 1997), although this was not necessarily concomitant within all parts of the country where it occurred: the chronology and regional variation of settlement evolution between the 7th to 10th centuries, the 'Long Eighth Century' (eg. Rippon 2007), is a research topic in itself. Brown and Foard (1998, 77), for example, observed a lack of 'Late Saxon' pottery in many abandoned settlements in Northamptonshire that were associated with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon pottery, suggesting that settlement nucleation had already occurred there by the mid 9th century, with a later restructuring indicated around the 10th century. In contrast, Taylor (1983, 125) argued that villages were generally a later settlement feature, possibly not occurring until as late as the 11th century, although this argument was based on excavation of deserted settlements, which may not be typical examples (Rippon 2008, 9).

Despite the continuing debate, it is now believed that, rather than the 'planned' landscape of central England being an Anglo-Saxon import, regional settlement

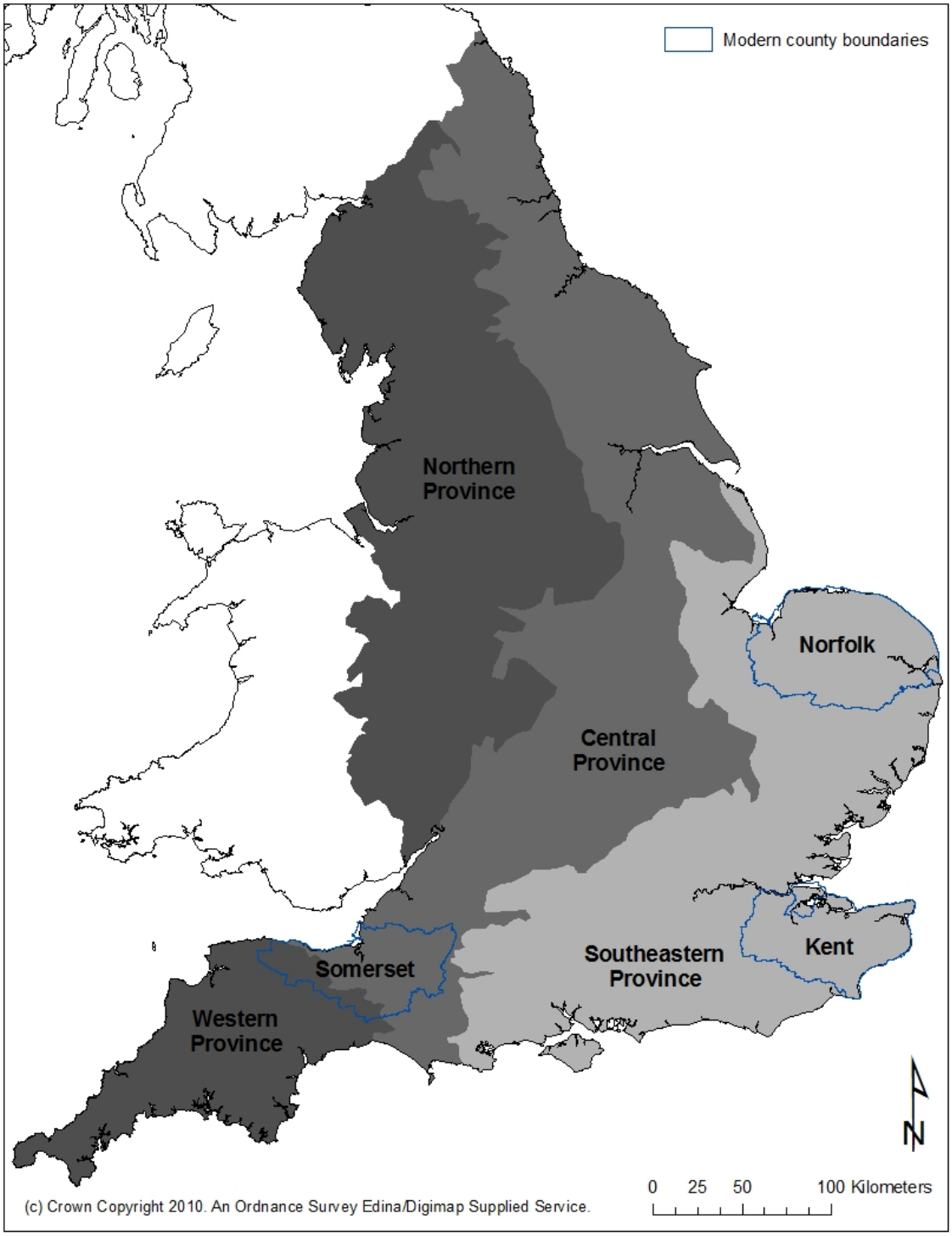


Figure 3.4. Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000; 20002) 'Provinces' of England, with the regional study areas of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset also shown. Drawn after Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, Fig. 1.1). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

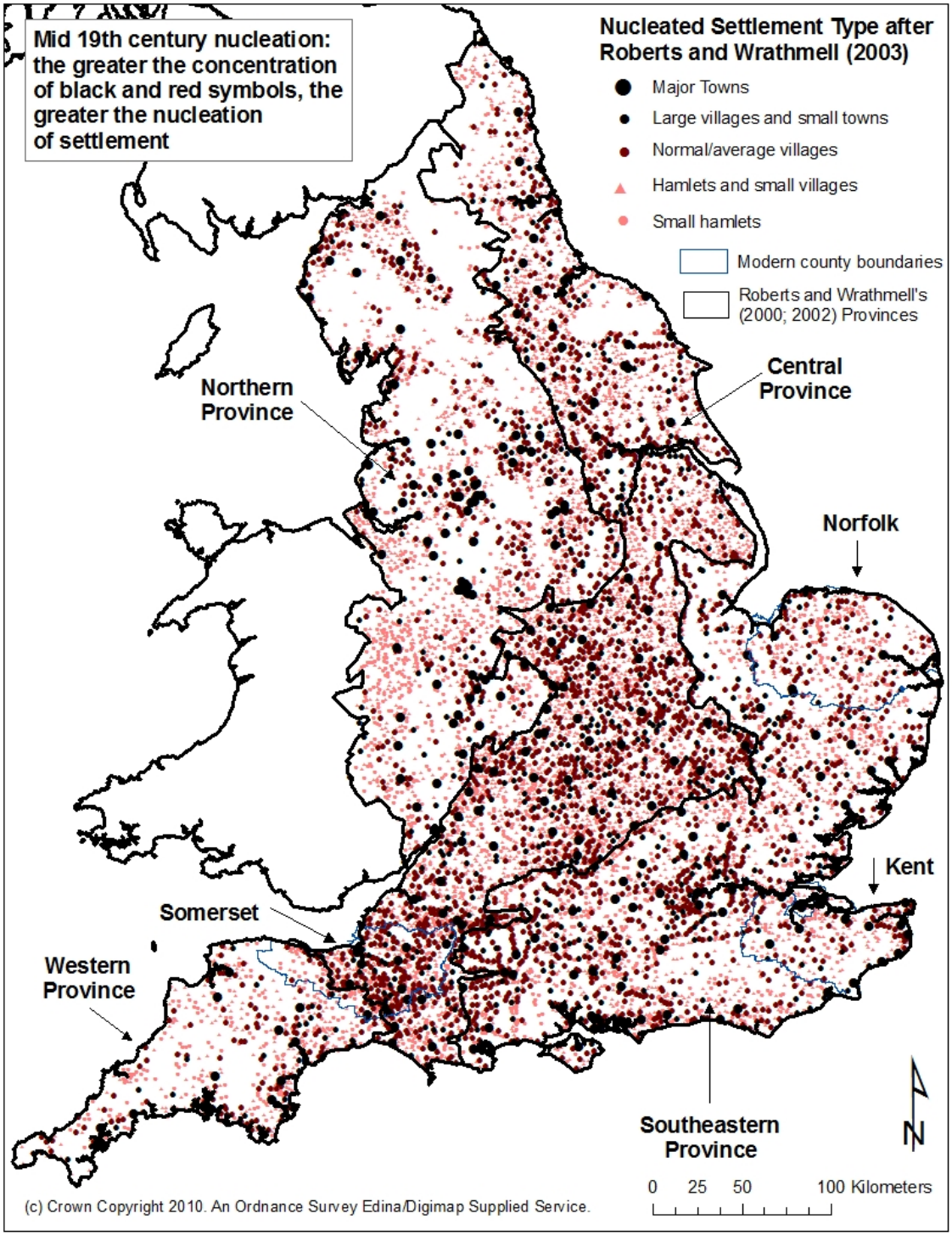


Figure 3.5. The distribution of nucleated settlement in England by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002), based on the characterisation of 19th century mapping. The regional study areas of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset are also shown. Data extracted from Roberts and Wrathmell (2003). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

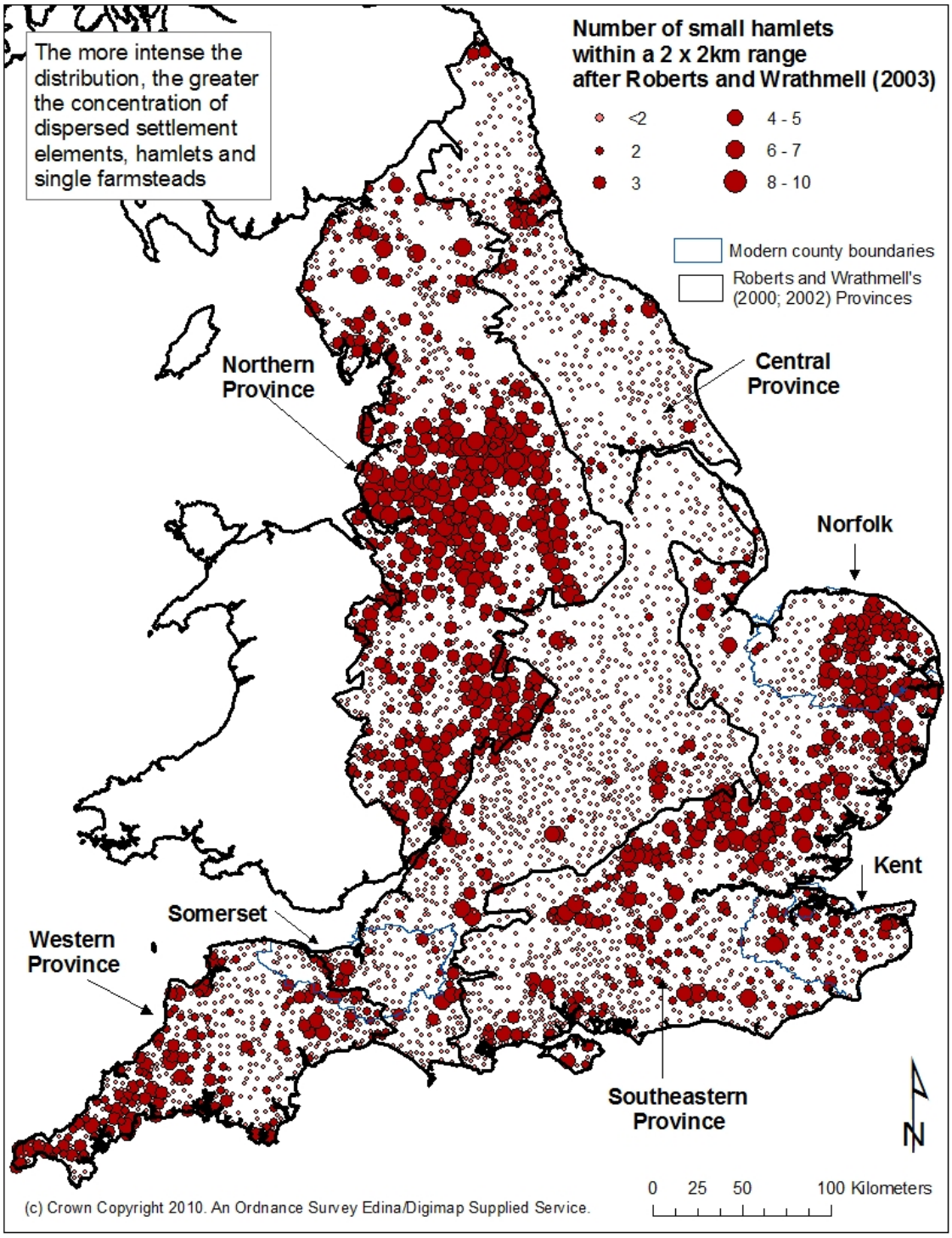


Figure 3.6. The distribution of dispersed settlement in England by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002) based on the characterisation of 19th century mapping. Data extracted from Roberts and Wrathmell (2003) based hamlet count within a 2x2km area. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

character developed through changes in settlement organisation that occurred nationally from around the 9th to 11th centuries, deeply rooted, nonetheless, within the regional antecedent landscape (Jones and Page 2006, 101; Rippon 2008, 9; Williamson 2003, 18). It is still uncertain whether the dichotomy between 'ancient' and 'planned' landscapes reflects differing trajectories of change, or whether a shared, potentially prehistoric, landscape, existed, out of which England's 'Central Province' (Rippon (2008, 12) suggests the 'Central Zone' as a more neutral descriptor) developed in a more obviously structured manner, as suggested by Aston (1988, 71) and Rippon (2008, 23). The historic landscape character of the country peripheries may, therefore, be rooted in, and indicative of, a primary phase of settlement development from the late Roman period based on early indigenous traditions, which was superseded in parts of central England by a more structured phase of landscape reorganisation. It is also possible, however, that a more regional diachronic always existed, and these questions underlie the core of current settlement studies.

Historic Landscape Character and the Regional Study Areas

Regional variation in historic landscape character, and the potential for differing trajectories of settlement history for the late Roman and early medieval periods can be demonstrated by the three county studies selected for this thesis, in advance of the more detailed regional research chapters.

Norfolk

Under Hingley (1989, Fig. 68) and Roberts and Wrathmell (2000, Fig. 2.4), Norfolk demonstrates a high density of Roman villas in the west of the county compared to a medium density in the east (**Figs. 3.1 and 3.2**). Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and settlement are comparatively well represented in Norfolk, with a broad distribution across the centre of the county (**Fig. 3.3**) (and see Chapters 5-8). The modern county of Norfolk falls within Roberts and Wrathmell's 'Southeastern Province' (**Fig. 3.4**), although their more refined evaluation of typically nucleated or dispersed settlement by the 19th century indicates a more subtle two-fold division in historic landscape character (**Figs. 3.5 and 3.6).** This suggests that the lighter soils of western Norfolk saw a degree of loose settlement nucleation, possibly resembling more a conjoining of small hamlets,

than villages proper (see Williamson 2006b, 51) and reflective of Taylor's (1977, 189; 1983, 131) 'polyfocal' settlements. This contrasts with eastern Norfolk, where a more dispersed settlement pattern predominated (**Figs. 3.5 and 3.6**).

Recent research of later medieval field patterns in East Anglia by Williamson (2006b), and the Historic Field Systems of East Anglia Project (Martin 2007; Martin and Satchell 2008) also demonstrates a division in open field character between the lighter soils of western Norfolk and the heavier soils of the east (Williamson 2006a, Fig. 1), with more subtle classification of open field types in Norfolk by Martin and Satchell (2008, 22) demonstrating the complexity of Norfolk's later medieval landscape character even further. The lack of large Midlands'-style fields may reflect a less formally organised communal farming regime in places and a weaker manorial structure (see Campbell 1986; 1994).

Kent

Under Hingley (1989, Fig. 68), the modern county of Kent falls squarely within the area of high villa density for the southeast, although Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000, Fig. 2.4) mapping of known Roman villas indicates these were largely located along the northern coast and down the major river valleys (**Figs. 3.1 and 3.2**). Their distribution map of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and settlements (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, Fig. 2.5) indicates a potentially similar distribution of 5th to 7th century settlement (**Fig. 3.3**). Through his nuanced study of Kent's Anglo-Saxon landscape, Everitt (1986, 97) observed that Kent was divided two-fold during the 5th to 12th centuries, into landscapes of continuity, Kent's 'Original Lands' (*ibid*, 44), principally the northern coastal plain, the Vale of Holmesdale and the river valleys that connected these, and landscapes of colonisation, principally the Chalk Downs, the Chart Hills and the Kentish Weald (and see Chapters 10-13).

Kent also falls within Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000; 2002) 'Southeastern Province' (**Fig. 3.4**). Their characterisation of 19th century settlement suggests a broadly dispersed settlement character, although there is some indication for larger hamlets, or small villages, predominantly along areas of the coast, where some degree of loose nucleation may have occurred (**Figs. 3.5 and 3.6**). Everitt (1986, 39-41), however, speculates that there were few truly nucleated villages

in Kent, on the scale of the larger Midland villages. The origins of Kent's villages may have been more diverse, with the majority developing from small hamlets or farms, some established for functions other than farming, such as trade or industry, and some demonstrating late, or post-, medieval origins (*ibid*, 40).

Kentish villages therefore appear to have largely co-existed within a wider dispersed landscape of ancient farms and hamlets, potentially determined as much by the densely wooded landscape that continued to pervade much of the county between the 5th to 11th centuries as the antecedent Roman settlement pattern. There is a lack of evidence for the communally organised 'Midlands'-style fields associated with Kentish villages, although there were small areas of open field, perhaps suggesting a less formally organised communal farming regime (eg. Campbell 1981) and a weaker tenurial structure (Everitt 1986, 41), much as for Norfolk. Although true common field agriculture is not a principal feature of Kentish field systems (*ibid*, 334), growing pressure on farming land in the more fertile and densely populated parts of northern Kent by the later medieval period might be evidenced by the local custom of 'round tilt land', land that was regularly cropped without a fallow period (*ibid*, 46). This practice gave North Kent's historic fieldscape a more open, 'champion' feel, than other parts the county, although dense tracts of woodland remained characteristic in some areas even into the 19th century (*ibid*, 47).

Somerset

Somerset's historic landscape straddles many attempts to define its landscape character. Under Haverfield's (1915, 24) traditional bi-partite division of Roman Britain, Somerset falls entirely within his Romanised 'lowland' or 'Civilian' zone. The mapping of Roman villas by Hingley (1989, Fig. 68) and Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000, Fig. 2.4), however, distinguish between the densely settled and Romanised 'villa landscape' of eastern Somerset and the 'native landscape' of the west (and see Leach 2001a, 84) (**Figs. 3.1 and 3.2**). The mapping of Anglo-Saxon settlement and cemeteries is irrelevant to Somerset, as there was probably no overtly Anglo-Saxon presence here until around the mid 7th century (Costen 2011, 27 and see Chapters 14-17).

The characterisation of 19th century settlement by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002), however, further distinguishes between the historic landscape

character of eastern and western Somerset, placing these within their 'Central' and 'Western' Provinces, respectively (**Fig. 3.4**). As mentioned above, the precise boundary between these character regions in Somerset has attracted debate (Rippon 2008, 40; Rippon *et al*. 2006, 32) as Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002) include within their 'Central Province' an area of predominantly dispersed settlement across the Quantock Hills and the Vale of Taunton Deane (**Figs. 3.5 and 3.6** and see Chapter 14, **Fig. 14.8**). This anomaly is reflected in Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000, Fig. 9; 2002, Fig. 1.3) own distribution map of 19th century dispersed settlement, illustrating the issues of accuracy when transferring national landscape characterisation to the regional scale.

Rippon (2008), however, in his recent study of Somerset's historic landscape, suggests a greater intricacy of early to later medieval settlement character than the simplistic division, above, suggests (and see Aston 1988a; 1988b). Furthermore, there is evidence for divergent transitional processes in eastern and western Somerset between the 7th to 9th centuries (see Chapters 14-17). For Somerset, straddling the 'Central' and 'Western' Provinces, it could be hypothesised that both east and west saw change from a common antecedent landscape of dispersed settlement, with the east undergoing further modification through one or more subsequent phases of reorganisation. Any or all of these phases potentially reflect common social processes at a national scale, but may also be the result of local social and physical influences that have further defined their particular sub-regional character.

The historic landscape character of eastern Somerset largely reflects typical 'champion' countryside, characterised by compact, nucleated, villages and large common fields (Rippon 2008, 40), although Aston (1988a, 72) notes that the pattern in Somerset is not so clearly defined as the true 'Midlands-style' fields of central England. Whilst parts of eastern Somerset are characterised by smaller hamlets and dispersed farmsteads, these are mostly confined to the north and northeast, on the Limestone Scarp and the Mendip Hills (Rippon 2008, Fig. 2.4) (**Fig. 3.6** and see Chapter 14, **Fig. 14.8**). The western extent of nucleated settlement and common field agriculture appears to be the eastern borders of the Quantock and Blackdown Hills, and it is this boundary that has attracted debate (Rippon 2008, 40; Rippon *et al*. 2006, 32). In contrast, the settlement character west of the Quantock and Blackdown Hills is largely one of scattered

farms and hamlets associated with a fieldscape of irregular closes and small open fields (Rippon 2008, Fig. 2.4) (and see Chapter 14, **Fig. 14.8**).

These overviews of historic landscape character for the regional study areas demonstrate the diversity of settlement histories and landuse between the Roman and early medieval periods at a regional level, but this thesis aims to explore settlement relationships and aspects of continuity, or discontinuity, between the two periods at a sub-regional level, through the concept of *pays*. What defines *pays*, its origins as a construct for exploring historic landscape character and the issues and biases underlying its use, is discussed below.

Regional Landscape Character – the Concept of *Pays*

As Morris (2005, 23) observed, the concept of *pays* originated from outside the archaeological discipline, as so many of its theoretical borrowings have. It was originally advanced within the French *Annales* school of thought as defining areas of innate cultural distinction and character, and was predominantly social in nature (Lake 2007, 36; Rippon 2004, 17). Tranter *et al*. (1999, 24) defined the origins of *pays* as a means of understanding socio-cultural processes in the landscape through 'the identification of spatial arenas in which social, economic and cultural interactions should be most meaningfully understood'.

Even before *pays* was developed as a construct of historical landscape study, the recognition of regional differences in the landscape were recognised by Hoskins (1955) in his *The Making of the Historic Landscape* (and see Rippon 2004, 18). His early study of communities and their landscape was developed in the early days, by such as Thirsk (eg.1967); Everitt (eg. 1977; 1986) and Fox (eg. 1989), through studies of how local communities shaped their landscape through agrarian practices, that were themselves determined by physical factors such as soils, climate and topography (Tranter *et al*. 1999, 24). These regions often transcended modern administrative boundaries but typically shared physical characteristics with other similar topographic regions of the country (Everitt 1986, 6), distinguished by Everitt (ibid, 339) as *field, forest, heath, fell, fen, marsh, down* and 'wald'. Everitt (*ibid*) observed that these regions were not necessarily historically identical, or even entirely physically determined, but that 'they were moulded by complex human responses to a

varied yet indigenous environment'. The inference is that through pragmatic responses to their physical environment over centuries of occupation, distinct social and cultural character developed, reflected in patterns of settlement, place-names and vernacular expression.

In many areas of theoretical archaeology the current emphasis on human agency has steered popular thinking away from the concept that social change was 'environmentally determined' (Rippon 2008, 11), but, particularly in landscape studies, the two need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the European Landscape Convention's (Council of Europe 2006, 100) definition of 'landscape' for the purposes of understanding and protection is 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (and see Lake 2007, 29). As a result, scholars of the historic and socio-cultural landscape are increasingly appreciating the significance of environmental factors, such as soils, climate, and topography, in shaping the way society has adapted to, and been adapted by, its environment. This point was eloquently made by Williamson (2003, 23) when he observed that 'variations in the human landscape mirrored the patterns of soils, the urgings of topography. The boundaries of human, and of natural, landscape regions often corresponded, and still to a large extent correspond'.

Clearly, what constitutes a *pays* for the purposes of landscape research can be realised through a variety of factors, physical, social and cultural (see Rippon 2004, 18, for example). Everitt (1986, 338-340) considered that the physical landscape, primarily defined by geology and soils, but embracing a range of additional physical factors, such as relief and drainage, topography and climate, was key to distinguishing individual *pays*. Upon these physical foundations, patterns of settlement, landuse and lines of communication create a social infrastructure, which is sometimes adapted to the local environment, and sometimes transforms it (*ibid*, 339). Ultimately, the cultural character of a *pays* demonstrates the evolution of social 'place', through less tangible factors of social perception and identity, the way communities organise themselves through patterns of social administration and land tenure, and the way they mould and 'label' the landscape they inhabit.

However, regional character is never wholly immutable, and issues such as the scale and time depth of social change are important considerations. Whilst

physical characteristics are less subject to alteration or modification, the social responses of local communities over time are predictably more susceptible to change. The inter-relationship of local communities across neighbouring *pays* has also been demonstrated in parts of Kent and Somerset, for example, (see Everitt 1986, for example, and Chapters 10-13 and 14-17), indicating that social adaptability can transcend physically distinct regions. For the purposes of this research, therefore, the *pays* identified for each county study are determined principally through local soils and topography, while the evaluation of settlement processes for the Roman and early medieval periods considers how settlement relationships translate across adjacent *pays* in order to explore the wider social inter-relationship of neighbouring communities.

Chapter 4. Methods and Principles

Introduction

The quantitative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships at the core of this thesis focuses on the rural settlement landscape. Key to this is the identification of typical settlement forms for these two periods and the sources of evidence that facilitate this. This chapter introduces the three regional study areas and the sources of evidence used in the research process. The principles underlying the identification of settlement sites and the assessment of settlement hierarchy and settlement continuity are discussed, along with the method of soils characterisation, the relationship of Roman and early medieval settlement to soils, and the definition of *pays*.

Regional Study Areas

The three regional study areas, Norfolk, Kent and Somerset (**Fig. 4.1**), were selected as all three demonstrate distinctive Roman and early medieval settlement histories and vary in the range and nature of material settlement evidence:

Norfolk:

- Densely settled during the Roman period
- Some evidence for Romanisation, but relatively few Roman villas
- Continuous ceramic sequence for the 5th to 11th centuries
- Conspicuous evidence for Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and settlement
- A range of large-scale fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys
- Some targeted research projects and development-led evaluation

Kent :

- Densely settled during the Roman period
- Substantial evidence for Romanisation and many Roman villas
- Good evidence for Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and some settlement
- Less prolific ceramic evidence between the 5th to 11th centuries, with a particular gap between the 7th to 9th centuries
- Good documentary record of early medieval churches and manors
- Some targeted research projects and large-scale excavation work

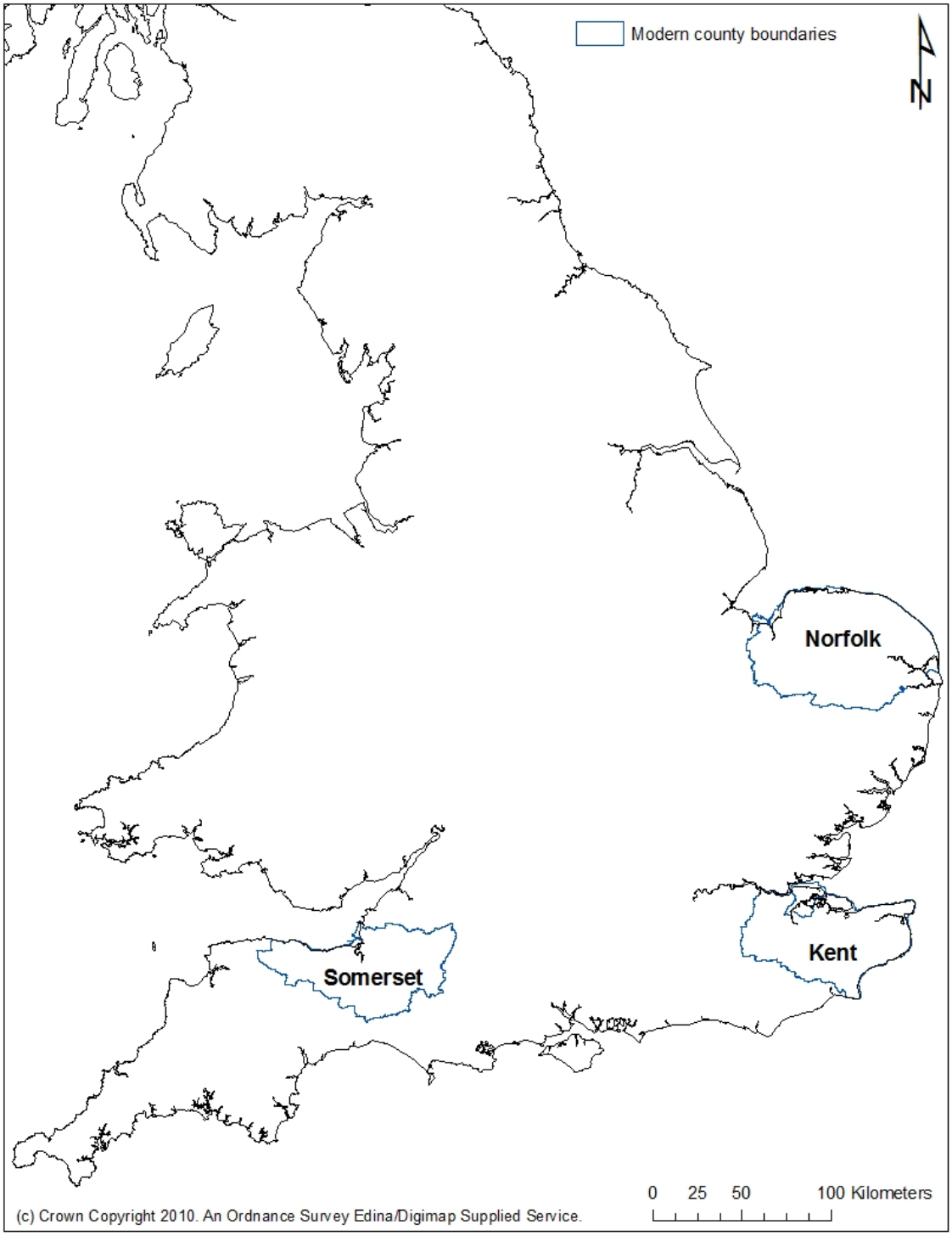


Figure 4.1 Locational map showing the regional study areas of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset, which are defined by the modern county boundaries (and the District Borough of Medway in Kent). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Somerset:

- Eastern Somerset extensively settled during the Roman period, with significant evidence for Romanisation and numerous Roman villas
- Comparatively little evidence for dateable Roman settlement in western Somerset, with little evidence for Romanisation and few Roman villas
- Largely aceramic between the 5th to 10th centuries, save for a few high status 5th to 6th century imported wares
- Little evidence for overt Anglo-Saxon influence before the late 7th century
- Many targeted research projects and some development-led evaluation

For the practicalities of data collection, all three regions have online county HER's and a range of county journals, published research and grey literature. The study areas are principally defined by the modern county boundaries as this complements current data management but, within these parameters, each one is treated differently according to its physical make-up and the range of available evidence. Somerset was also selected because it reflects much of lowland Britain, where there is a relative lack of dateable post-Roman material culture. The objective is to see if anything useful can be surmised about those parts of lowland Britain that lack the wealth of material evidence for 5th to 11th century settlement, through comparison to more prolific areas, such as Norfolk and Kent, for example.

Sources of Evidence

Settlement evidence

The identification and analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relies on datable material evidence for these periods. This is mainly the material culture assemblages and physical remains evidenced through excavation, fieldwalking and metal detecting. The material record is supported through radiocarbon dating where available and documentary evidence where relevant.

The Roman period saw prolific pottery production, added to which the majority of Romanised buildings, even simpler farmhouses, used some solid materials such as brick, stone and tile for their construction (Hingley 1989, 21; Mattingly 2006, 376). The result is a high visibility of material settlement evidence, with the potential for identifying finer subtleties of chronology, status and function.

Less secure are more dispersed pottery scatters or findspots, particularly where the quantity of sherds, their date, or precise location, are unspecified.

Building construction during the earliest medieval period generally reverted to timber, with only ephemeral traces of settlement recoverable through excavation. Furthermore, between the 5th to 9th centuries, pottery production largely reverted to localised hand-made wares, which were generally poor in both quantity and quality, making them less visible in the archaeological record (Hurst 1961, 216). As mentioned above, in parts of lowland Britain, such as Somerset, for example, the 5th to 10th centuries are principally aceramic, making identification of settlement through pottery alone a major issue. During the 8th to 9th centuries, there was some development in pottery production in East Anglia, at sites such as Ipswich, for example (see Blinkhorn 1999; Hurst 1961), although there are still issues of survivability and consistency of distribution, with many parts of the country not well served by pottery for this interim period. It is only with an increase in pottery manufacture from the 9th century, and a return to wheel-thrown ceramics (see Hurst 1961, for example), that pottery returns as a wider indicator for settlement activity once again.

Identifying a settlement 'site' through pottery scatters has been the subject of much discussion since the 1970's (eg. Alcock 2000; Allen 1991; Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988; Bowden *et al*. 1991; Foard 1978; Fentress 2000; Frink 1984; Gaffney *et al*. 1985; Haselgrove 1985; Hayes 1991; Millett 1985; Mills 1985; Moore 1982; Plog *et al*. 1978; Roper 1976; Schofield 1991; Shennan 1985; Upex 2004), when archaeologists began to demand more rigour in fieldwalking practice. Practical experiments to assess artefact displacement in the ploughsoil (eg. Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988; Frink 1984; Roper 1976; Upex 2004) generally indicate little lateral displacement over time, although assessment of the evidence from Maddle Farm Roman Villa (Berks) (Bowden *et al*. 1991; Gaffney and Tingle 1989) has indicated the possibility for differential behaviour of Roman pottery and heavier ceramic building materials in the ploughsoil, potentially resulting in a displacement of surface materials relative to the location of underlying buildings. Nonetheless, fieldwalking in parts of East Anglia (eg. Rogerson *et al*. 1997; Williamson 1984; 1986), for example, have demonstrated how concentrations of Roman pottery can reflect potential settlement sites, through distinguishing from the background scatter that may

be the result of intensive manuring practices (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 14; Williamson 1984, 228; 1986, 125).

The survival of Roman pottery is significantly greater than the hand-formed 'Early/ Middle' Saxon pottery, which was compromised both in quantity and quality. As a result, far greater quantities of Roman, relative to 'Early/Middle' Saxon, pottery sherds are typically observed in ploughsoil assemblages. Millett (1985, 33), for example, calculated a ratio of one sherd of 'Saxon' pottery to 75 Roman sherds, based on his findings from Cowdery's Down (Hants) (Millett and James 1983), whilst Foard (1978, 364) calculated five 'Saxon' sherds sufficient to indicate a settlement 'site'. For the purposes of this thesis the criteria for defining Roman and early medieval settlement 'sites' are as follows:

- Roman settlement site – dateable structural remains as evidenced through excavation, or through a sufficient quantity of Roman pottery. Where only a few Roman pottery sherds are recorded, or the quantity of sherds is unstated, judgement will be used on supporting criteria. Where the pottery derives from a discrete context or secure provenance, this will be recorded as a 'site', although the precise location of related settlement may be less secure. Where no such confidence can be shown, the record will be excluded.
- 'Early/Middle Saxon' settlement site – dateable structural remains as evidenced through excavation, or through a sufficient quantity of pottery. For the 5th to 9th centuries this is on the basis of two or more sherds, although the issues of identifying 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement based on such limited criteria are recognised (eg. Hayes 1991; Schofield 1991). This is particularly pertinent for Norfolk, where many of the fieldwalking surveys available demonstrate conflicting criteria for distinguishing 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement sites from background manuring scatters or chance finds (for further discussion on this see Chapter 5, 94). For Somerset, which is largely aceramic between the 5th to 9th centuries, settlement evidence is largely reliant on radiocarbon dating of features.
- 'Late Saxon' settlement site – dateable structural remains as evidenced through excavation, or a sufficient quantity of pottery. As pottery for this period is more prolific, where the quantity is stated, this will be on the basis of five or more sherds. Where no quantity is stated, judgement will

be used on supporting criteria. A ‘Late Saxon’ site is distinguished by material evidence for occupation and is recorded independent of a Domesday vill, parish church or manor, although these may coincide.

Due to biases in material evidence and recovery for Roman and early medieval settlement, a degree of subjectivity over what determines a settlement ‘site’ for the Roman and early medieval periods is inevitable. Furthermore, collating the evidence from a range of reports, journals and online HER’s potentially creates even greater scope for misrepresentation. In particular, working with the records for online HER’s has demonstrated the inconsistencies in recording material evidence for settlement and the terminology used. This is, again, more evident for Norfolk, where HER records frequently lack clear quantification of sherds recovered through fieldwalking. This argues both for a wider standardisation in the compilation of HER records, and certainly has issues for future research of this nature, which is increasingly turning to these resources as a source of broad-scale data. As a result of these limitations in the consistency of data available, it is possible that a pottery findspot or low-density pottery scatter may be identified as a settlement ‘site’, or a bona fide settlement ‘site’ may go unrecognised due to insufficient evidence. Given this, however, as it is wider patterns and trends in settlement relationships that are being assessed, rather than the continuity, or discontinuity of specific settlement sites, this will hopefully be of limited detriment.

Cemetery evidence

For both the Roman and early medieval periods, cemetery evidence is useful in identifying potential areas of occupation, although mortuary practices and the proximity of cemetery sites to settlement vary between these periods (see Esmonde Cleary 2000; Leech 1977; 1982b; Pearce 2000; Philpott 1991; Quensel-von-Kalben 2000, for example, for Roman cemeteries and Chester-Kadwell 2009; Geake 1997; Glasswell 2002; Hadwell 2002; Lucy 2000; 2002, for example for ‘Early/ Middle’ Saxon cemeteries).

Roman cemeteries

Under Roman law, cemeteries were located on the peripheries of Roman settlement (Leech 1997,132) and Roman burials can generally be taken as

proxies for settlement where no other evidence for settlement is yet shown. The evidence for Roman burials is largely through radiocarbon dating of physical burial remains and/or dateable grave assemblages. Regional variation in Roman burial practices, chronology, and how these impact issues of potential settlement continuity, or discontinuity, are discussed in the research chapters.

Early medieval cemeteries

Early medieval cemeteries are not, in themselves, considered as proxies for settlement, unless associated settlement is clearly evidenced. Nonetheless, in the absence of other material evidence, the relationship between Roman settlement and cemeteries dating between the 5th to 9th centuries can inform aspects of potential continuity, or discontinuity, in patterns of occupation between these periods, albeit with changes in function or relationship. Many cemeteries dating to the 5th to 7th cemeteries were close to settlement, as evidenced at West Stow (Suffolk) (West 1985), Mucking (Essex) (Hamerow 1991), West Heslerton (Powlesland 1997) and more recently, Lakenheath (Suffolk) (Caruth 2005), for example. Spong Hill (Norfolk) (Rickett 1995) was also associated with contemporary settlement but its large size and range of burial practices may indicate that it also served a wider community during the 5th to 7th centuries (*ibid*, 156). The evidence for 'Early/Middle' Saxon and post-Roman cemeteries largely relies on the radiocarbon dating of physical burial remains and/or dateable grave assemblages, where present (eg. Geake 1997; Glasswell 2002; Härke 1990; 1998; 1999; 2011; Lucy 2000; 2002; Rahtz 1977). Regional variation in the distribution of 'Early/Middle' Saxon, or post-Roman, cemeteries, and their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement, is discussed further in the research chapters.

Particularly relevant to Norfolk, are the large metalwork scatters recovered through metal detecting, sometimes isolated from any additional settlement evidence, sometimes incorporating it (see Chester-Kadwell 2009). As evidence for settlement, these scatters are problematic, owing to their coverage of large areas and the potential bias of recovery by metal detectors (*ibid*, 143). Where particular items of 'Early Saxon' metalwork are recorded, however, such as brooches, buckles, tweezers, girdle hangers and spears, for example, this may be evidence of a cemetery site (see Chester-Kadwell 2009; Lucy 2000;

Glasswell 2002, for example). Where 'Middle Saxon' metalwork is recorded, this is more likely to reflect settlement than cemeteries, and in particular may reflect a 'Middle Saxon' 'productive site' (see Brookes 2003; Brookes 2007; Newman 2003; Pestell 2003; Richards 1999; 2003; Ulmschneider 2000, for example), discussed in more detail in chapters 5-8. Cemetery evidence for the 'Middle Saxon' period typically reflects Christian practices and a lack of significant, and dateable, grave-goods (Rippon 2008, 192): Geake (1997, 134) suggests furnished burial ceases around AD 720-230. Although a number of smaller 'Middle Saxon' cemeteries are recorded in close proximity to settlement, such as the 'Middle/Late' Saxon cemetery site recently excavated at Sedgeford (Norfolk) (SHARP 2010), for example, the precise relationship of cemeteries to settlement between the 7th to 9th centuries is less clear (Rippon 2008, 192).

Domesday vills, parish churches and manors

The evidence for Domesday vills, parish churches and manors relies on either documentary evidence or physical remains, whether upstanding or recovered through excavation. Morris (1989, 147) observes that three quarters of all local churches were standing before 1100 AD, with almost all churches in existence by the 13th century (and see Blair 2005). Not all churches are recorded in the Domesday record, and, as Darby (1971, 1) points out, the Domesday Book is a far from straightforward record of 11th century settlement altogether. It focuses on manors and their landholdings and does not necessarily reflect individual settlements as 'manors' typically varied from small independent farmsteads to larger, and often more disparate, landholdings (Lawson 2004b, 36). The Domesday 'vill' named in Domesday records might be considered as the 'head settlement' of the manor to which it relates, and is, therefore, assumed to reflect a manorial centre, even where an associated manor house is not clearly shown. For Kent and Somerset, where material evidence for early medieval settlement is less prolific, the association of Roman settlement, Domesday vills and parish churches forms the basis for quantifying Roman and 11th century settlement relationships, even given the partial nature of the Domesday record. At a wider level, it may also indicate the extent to which 11th century patterns of dispersed or nucleated settlement reflect patterns of Roman settlement, and how far 11th century settlement cores demonstrate potential Roman origins.

The evidence for early medieval manors demonstrates distinct regional variation and identifying manors within the regional study areas has raised several issues of subjectivity and chronology, discussed further in the relevant research chapters. The association between Roman settlement and early medieval manors is of interest in demonstrating how far patterns of land ownership and tenure between the Roman and early medieval periods can be related. This becomes more problematic with later medieval manors: these may reflect earlier patterns of lordship, but may also reflect the fragmentation of manors through subinfeudation during the 12th to 13th centuries (see Bailey 2002; Campbell 1986, for example).

A Domesday 'vill' is considered as the 'head settlement' of the manor that bears its name and is located for the purposes of this thesis on the parish church of that settlement, or the farmstead of that name if no parish church is present. By default, Domesday vills are also recorded as manors.

A parish church is recorded where it is shown to date to before the 11th century, or where it stands on the site of an older, pre 11th century, parish church.

A manor is recorded where the location of an early or later medieval (pre AD 1500) manor house can be identified through the documentary record, historic mapping, or where demonstrated through excavation.

Research Principles

Assessing settlement hierarchy

As discussed in Chapter Two (p 30), the pantheon of rural Roman settlement demonstrated a variety of form and hierarchy. Traditionally, Roman settlement was typically divided into 'villa' or 'non-villa' settlement (Hingley 1989, 20 and see Morris 2005, Chapter 6 for recent discussion of this). The term 'villa' is subjectively loaded and has been variously applied in studies of Roman settlement (Mattingly 2006, 369). As viewed by Romans themselves, a villa was a rural house of some wealth and status, although this could vary in size and function, from a productive farm estate (*villa rustica*) to a more ostentatious luxury retreat (*villa urbana*) (*ibid*, 370). For archaeological purposes, the term 'villa' typically refers to a rural domestic building that demonstrates aspects of

Romanisation and surplus wealth (Hingley 1989, 21; Mattingly 2006, 370), although this does not distinguish between those dwellings of the highly Romanised and wealthy elite and simpler farmsteads, possibly reflecting a native population that wish to express their 'Romanitas', that may be of stone-built construction with tiled roofs, but lack some of the additional trappings of high status living (*ibid*). 'Non-villa' settlement reflects the majority of rural Roman settlement in Britain, however, and is typically characterised by an absence of buildings that demonstrate any investment of wealth or expression of Romanised status (Hingley 1989, 23). The material culture assemblages of these sites also typically demonstrate less range and status of artefacts, although this can vary regionally. In some wealthier parts of Roman Britain, such as eastern Somerset, for example, high status artefacts, such as wheel thrown pottery, Samian ware, coins and metalwork, are ubiquitous even amongst those lesser settlements where no evidence for stone-built dwellings can be shown, suggesting high levels of prosperity, if not overt demonstration of wealth and status. In parts of northern and western Britain, however, such as western Somerset, for example, there is little visible evidence of Romanitas and settlements are generally of simpler form, with no visible evidence of Romanised construction (*ibid*, 24).

For the purposes of this thesis, the hierarchy of Roman settlement distinguishes between settlements that suggest probable 'villa' status, settlements that suggest some form of Romanised construction but not the range of high status features typical of a 'villa', and settlements where no visible evidence of Romanised construction is currently shown, based on Hingley (1989, 20-23), Mattingly (2006, 370) and Perring (2002, 72-73). These settlement types are defined as 'Roman villa', Romanised settlement' and 'Lower status settlement' and the criteria for these are given below:

- Roman Villa - A complex high-status building of rectilinear form, possibly with a number of ranges and courtyards, identified through excavation or cropmark evidence. Associated finds would be expected to include substantial high-status artefacts, including solid construction materials, roof tiles, flue tiles, hypocaust, tesserae, wall plaster, Opus Signinum flooring, window glass, coins and domestic high status wares.
- Romanised settlement – A building of Romanised construction, linear in form, identified through excavation or physical survey. Material evidence

might include construction materials such as stone, brick, or roof tile, but high-status features such as hypocaust tiles, window glass, wall plaster and mosaic tesserae will typically be absent. An association with some domestic high-status wares and limited coinage use may be shown.

- Lower status settlement - Where excavation or physical survey of a site suggests no direct evidence for high-status construction, and where material evidence recovered through excavation or systematic surface collection demonstrates no solid construction materials and scant, or no, coinage. Some high status ceramic wares may be present.

Early medieval settlement hierarchy is poorly understood as there are still relatively few settlements investigated for this period. Although high status settlements associated with Great Halls, at sites such as Yeavering, Cowdery's Down and Chalton, for example, begin to establish themselves from around the late 6th to early 7th centuries (see Arnold 1988; Hamerow 2002; 2004; Hodges 1989; Welch 1992, for example), it is not clear how typical these are for this period. Given the lack of clear evidence, the hierarchy of early medieval settlement is, therefore, not assessed by this thesis.

Assessing settlement continuity

The principal aim of this thesis is to spatially assess Roman and early medieval settlement relationships across a variety of distinctive and adjacent *pays* through the material evidence for 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. The emphasis is on interpreting patterns and trends in settlement processes between these periods, rather than individual site histories. The objective is to identify to what extent patterns of Roman settlement might suggest continuity, or discontinuity, into the 5th to 11th centuries and whether regional or sub-regional variation can be demonstrated.

Quantifying the relationship between 11th century Domesday vills, parish churches, manors and Roman settlement across these same *pays* is also key to this research, to assess how far the underlying pattern of Roman settlement influenced the location of these institutions of 11th century settlement and the extent to which they might demonstrate potential Roman origins. To assess the potential for settlement continuity, or discontinuity, Roman settlements within each regional study area were assessed for evidence of early medieval

settlement within a parameter of 500m. This parameter was determined on the basis of fieldwalking surveys by such as Rogerson *et al*. (1997) and Williamson (1984; 1986), for example, which broadly suggest a Roman settlement density of less than one Roman settlement per km^2 (and see Chapter 2, 29). On this basis, the evidence for Roman settlement within 500m might be assumed to reflect a single 'site', whereas evidence for Roman settlement 500m or beyond might typically reflect two individual 'sites'. It is recognised, however, that some regional variation in Roman settlement patterns is inevitable (Foard 1978, 367, Doddington, for example and see Chapter 2, 30) and that this will not adequately reflect the situation for all cases. Nonetheless, the shift of 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement at Mucking (Essex) also appears to have occurred within a 1km range (Hamerow 1991, Fig.1) and this may reflect wider patterns of settlement shift between the 5th to 9th centuries: Mucking was compared by Hamerow (1993, 7) to Vorbasse, in Denmark, for example, where settlement sites dating from the 1st century BC to the 11th century AD were situated up to 500m apart around the medieval village core.

As gaps in the material evidence for early medieval settlement inevitably compromise the confidence for potential Roman settlement continuity, Roman settlement was assessed for evidence of 5th to 7th century, 8th to 9th century and 9th to 11th century occupation within 500m and for evidence of an 'Early Saxon' or post-Roman cemetery within 500m. The regional terminology for these periods is given in Chapter 1 (pp 21-22). Roman settlement was also assessed for evidence of a Domesday vill, parish church and/or manor within 500m. Retrogressive analysis of 'Late Saxon' settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors also quantified Roman occupation evidence within 500m.

A model for potential relationships between Roman and early medieval settlement (**Fig. 4.2**) attempts to demonstrate:

- Evidence for discontinuity - where Roman settlement suggests abandonment by the late Roman period or where 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon settlement and Domesday vills, parish churches and manors currently demonstrate no evidence for Roman origins.
- Poor evidence for continuity - where Roman settlement demonstrates a relationship to a Domesday vill, parish church or manor but there is currently no material evidence for 5th to 11th century settlement.

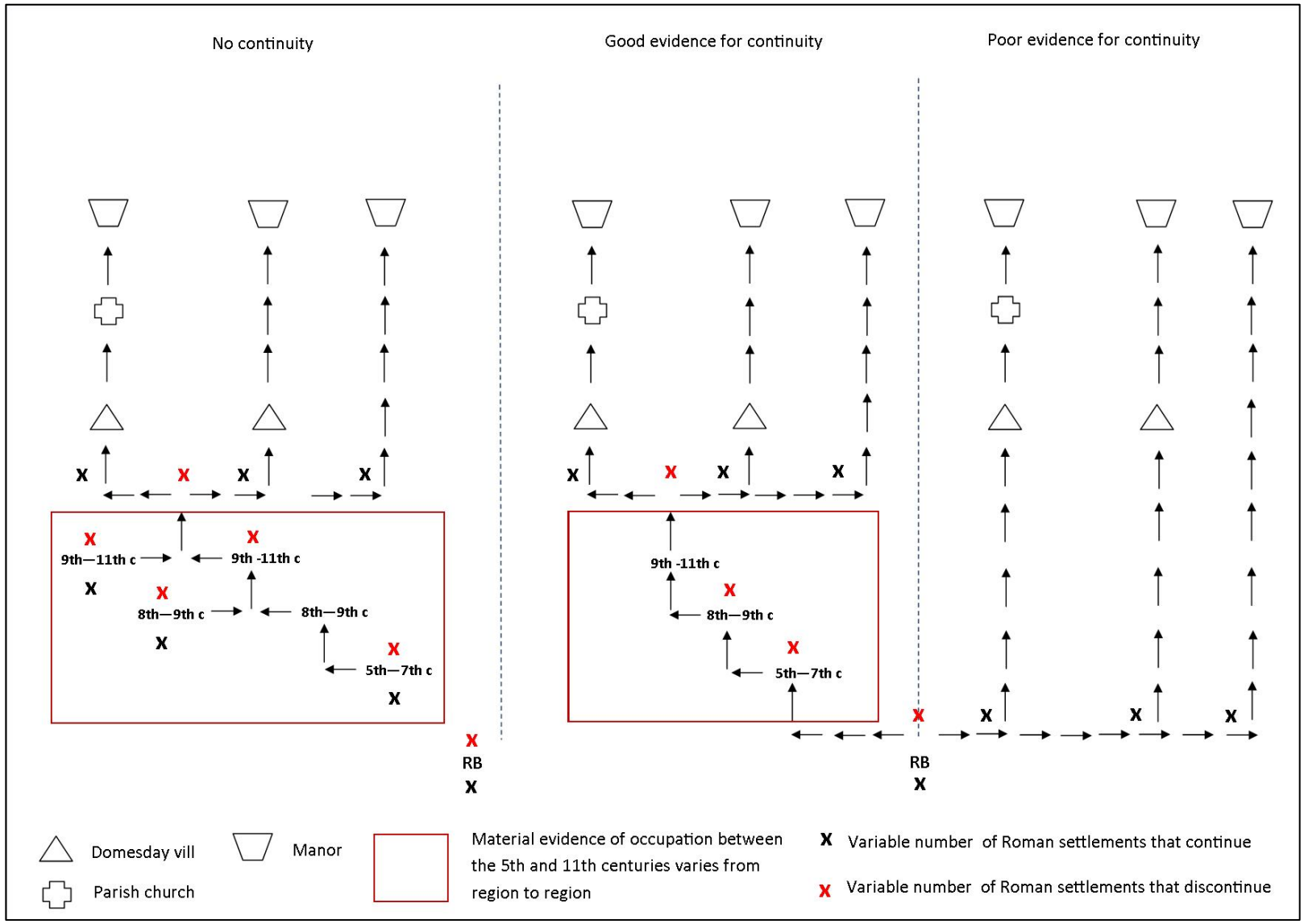


Figure 4.2. Settlement model demonstrating the possible relationships between Roman and early medieval settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors and the confidence for potential Roman settlement continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries. The Evidence for 5th to 11th century settlement (shown in the red box) varies between regions. X represents the variable number of Roman settlements that demonstrate potential continuity into a given period, where the X is red, this represents the number of Roman settlements that suggest discontinuity by a given period.

- Good evidence for continuity - where Roman settlement variously demonstrates a sequence of 5th to 11th century occupation (albeit with possible gaps) and a subsequent relationship with a Domesday vill, parish church and/or manor.

Clearly, there will be some regional variation in the material evidence available to demonstrate this model, and for some areas, such as Somerset, for example, the relationship between Roman settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors may have to suffice. The difficulty is that where a relationship between Roman settlement and a Domesday vill, parish church and/or manor can be demonstrated, but no additional material evidence for occupation is currently shown, it could reflect potential settlement continuity, with the evidence for this as yet absent, or it could reflect a resettlement of that area by the 11th century, in which case a discontinuity of settlement is indicated. On the poorer soils, where a contraction of settlement by the 5th century is suggested (eg. Foard 1978; Williamson 1984; 1986) the possibility of resettlement by the 11th century is potentially greater than on lighter soils where shifts in settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries are more typical. Interpreting the evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in these instances falls to the wider context of regional settlement processes and the relationship of soils and topography. Equally, where Roman settlement currently suggests no relationship with the early medieval settlement landscape, or where early medieval settlement sites indicate no underlying Roman occupation, this may simply be due to biases of data recovery or patterns of settlement shift between the 5th to 11th centuries as much as a real break with the Roman settlement pattern. These issues are recognised, but as it is wider patterns and trends of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships that form the core of analysis, these will hopefully transcend these inevitable biases and limitations.

There are, however, some points to consider with using 500m as the parameter for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships. If the distance between Roman settlements does typically average between one and two settlements per km^2, as suggested in Chapter 2 (p 30), then a 500m 'buffer' around any given Roman settlement would potentially abut that of an adjacent Roman settlement. As this also then potentially incorporates all available land, unless Saxon settlement is located well beyond the margins of settled land

during the Roman period, it will have fallen within 500m of at least one Roman settlement. This has implications for assessing whether such a relationship actually reflects the potential continuity of a settlement 'site', or just continued resettlement of a particularly favoured location, such as the fertile river valley soils, for example, which is in itself an important line of enquiry. There are two points to be made in this respect. Firstly, it is *relative* ratios of continuity, and broad regional patterns and trends, which are being assessed in the analysis presented here, rather than individual settlements, to help provide a regional context for more detailed site-based studies. Current understanding is that some abandonment of Roman settlement had potentially occurred by the 5th to 7th centuries across most regions, even within more favoured locations and on the better soils. The aim of this thesis is to assess how far the statistics for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships within identified character regions (*pays)*, are able to demonstrate patterns of potential abandonment or continuity using the thesis methodology, and whether identifiable regional trends are apparent. Secondly, we still do not yet fully understand individual settlement sizes for the Roman and early medieval periods, or whether the degree of settlement shift between and during these periods is either consistent or measurable. To select an arbitrary parameter below 500m might produce a tighter statistical result but cannot currently be based on any definable criteria. With these issues in mind, however, and to test-case the thesis methodology, an additional, finer grain, analysis will be made of two Norfolk parishes that have seen particularly extensive fieldwalking and research: Barton Bendish, on Breckland (see Rogerson *et al*. 1997), and Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau (see Rogerson 1995). Following an assessment of Norfolk using the main thesis methodology, a separate chapter will assess the evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Barton Bendish and Fransham using parameters of 500m and 250m. This will be to evaluate whether any variation between the two sets of statistics can be demonstrated and what the implications of the findings might be for future studies of settlement continuity, or discontinuity between these two periods.

Soils characterisation

Roman settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors have all been recorded in respect of the underlying soils. The source for this data is the Soil

Table 4.1. The soils groups featured in the regional study areas of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset and their soils description. Soils have been classified as light or heavy soils based on whether or not the parent soil or subsoil is described as containing clay.

Soil classification by soils group, according to the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983)	Soil group no.	Heavy/ Light	Soil description
Brown rankers	3.13	Light	Well-drained non-calcareous soils over rock or massive limestone
Grey rendzinas	3.42	Light	Shallow, well-drained calcareous soils over limestone or chalk
Brown rendzinas	3.43	Light	Shallow, well-drained calcareous soils over limestone or chalk
Typical calcareous pelosols	4.11	Heavy	Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils
Typical argillic pelosols	4.31	Heavy	Slowly permeable clay soils with clay-enriched subsoil
Typical brown calcareous earths	5.11	Light	Loam or clay soils with calcareous subsoil
Gleyic brown calcareous earths	5.12	Light	Loam or clay soils with calcareous subsoil
Typical brown calcareous sands	5.21	Light	Well-drained calcareous sandy soils
Typical brown earths	5.41	Light	Well-drained loams
Typical brown sands	5.51	Light	Well-drained, sandy loamy soils
Argillic brown sands	5.54	Light	Well-drained, non-calcareous sandy soils
Typical brown alluvial soils	5.61	Heavy	Loam or clay soils developed in alluvium
Typical argillic brown earths	5.71	Heavy	Loams or loams over clay
Stagnogleyic argillic brown earths	5.72	Heavy	Loams or loams over clay with slowly permeable clay subsoil
Gleyic argillic brown earths	5.73	Heavy	Loams or loams over clay with slowly permeable clay subsoil
Typical palaeo-argillic brown earths	5.81	Heavy	Loam or clay soils with reddish, clay-enriched, subsoil
Stagnogleyic palaeo-argillic brown earths	5.82	Heavy	Loam or clay soils with reddish, clay-enriched, subsoil
Typical brown podzolic soils	6.11	Light	Well drained soils with dark brown subsoil
Typical stagnogley soils	7.11	Heavy	Slowly permeable soils with clay subsoil, seasonally waterlogged
Pelo-stagnogley soils	7.12	Heavy	Slowly permeable clay soils, seasonally waterlogged
Paleo-argillic stagnogley soils	7.14	Heavy	Slowly permeable reddish soils, with clay subsoil, seasonally waterlogged
Calcareous alluvial gley soils	8.12	Heavy	Soils developed in loam or clay alluvium
Pelo-alluvial gley soils	8.13	Heavy	Alluvial loams or clays, affected by groundwater
Pelo-calcareous alluvial gley soils	8.14	Heavy	Alluvial loams or clays with calcareous subsoils, affected by groundwater
Typical sandy gley soils	8.21	Light	Deep permeable sandy soils, with controlled groundwater
Typical argillic gleys	8.41	Heavy	Deep permeable soils with clay-enriched subsoil
Typical humic-alluvial gley soils	8.51	Heavy	Loamy or clay alluvial soils with humose or peaty topsoil
Typical humic-sandy gley soils	8.61	Light	Sandy gley soils with humic or peaty topsoil
Typical humic gley soils	8.71	Heavy	Deep permeable loamy clays with a humose or peaty topsoil

Survey Map of England and Wales (1983), which has been georeferenced into ArcView GIS for each regional study area. Soils are classified by soil group and are divided between light and heavy soils based on whether the parent soil or subsoil horizon has clay content (**Table 4.1**). This is recognised as a somewhat simplistic division that may justify further refinement. The relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement processes relative to lighter or heavier soils is a theme of contemporary settlement studies (eg. Foard 1978; Fulford 1992; Hamerow 1992; Parry 2006; Robinson 1992; Williamson 1993; 2006) but there is no clear definition for heavy or light soils in relation to settlement processes, while soils classification is generally for the benefit of soil science rather than settlement studies. This thesis uses Burnham (1980), Curtis *et al*. (1976) and the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983) as principal sources.

Defining regional 'pays'

Roman and early medieval settlement relationships are quantified and discussed relative to the distinctive character regions, or *pays*, of each regional study area. As discussed in Chapter 3 (p 55), for consistency and practicality, these *pays* are principally defined on the basis of soils and topography, and the source of this data is the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983), supported by the OS 1:25000 Mastermap (Edina 2010) and the OS Landform Panorama terrain mapping data (Ordnance Survey 2011). Regional studies incorporating *pays* have also been consulted (Norfolk: Williamson 1993; 2006. Kent: Corbett and Dent 1994; Everitt 1986. Somerset: Burrow 1981; Webster 2007a).

Data Sources

In addition to county journals, published research projects and grey literature, the following resources have been used for identifying Domesday vills, parish churches and manors and for the manipulation of data and maps in GIS:

Internet resources:

- Edina (2010) Digimap collections for OS historic mapping and geospatial data downloads for use in ArcView GIS
- OS Opendata (Ordnance Survey 2011) for Landform Panorama terrain mapping for use in ArcView GIS

- Southall and Burton's (2004) electronic map of the ancient ecclesiastical parishes of England and Wales, with metadata by Kain and Oliver (2001)
- Roberts and Wrathmell's (2003) *The Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* GIS shapefile
- Online HER's for Norfolk (Norfolk Historic Environment Service 2007), Kent (Kent County Council 2012) and Somerset (Somerset Historic Environment Service 2010)
- British History Online (University of London and History of Parliament Trust 2011) for the *Victoria County History of Somerset* (1906-2006) and Hasted's (1789) *History of Kent*

Published resources:

- Domesday evidence: The Phillimore editions of the Domesday Book for Kent (Morgan 1983) and Somerset (Thorn and Thorn 1980). Regional Domesday geographies for Norfolk, Kent and Somerset (Campbell 1962; Darby 1971; Darby and Welldon Finn 1967).
- Soils characterisation: the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983) (Map and Legend).

Lastly, there has been much discussion in recent years on the use of computers in archaeological interpretation, particularly with the increase of GIS as a potential mapping tool (eg. Chapman 2006; Lock 2003; Wheatley and Gillings 2002). Whilst GIS is invaluable for compiling and displaying quantitative landscape data, its pragmatic approach towards inductive forms of predictive modelling and spatial analysis must be acknowledged as being necessarily simplistic. The use of distribution maps and statistical analysis in landscape studies can be very useful, but to reduce the human relationship with the historic landscape to one of mere statistics outside of any given theoretical paradigm invites cries of environmental determinism (eg. Gaffney and Van Leusen 1995; Lock 2003; Van Leusen 2002; Wheatley and Gillings 2002). Nonetheless, an empirical approach to landscape analysis has its place, particularly where spatial and temporal comparisons on a broad scale are pertinent to research. The potential bias and limitations of this approach are acknowledged, however, and the aim will be to discuss the research results in respect of their appropriate regional, historical, and social context.

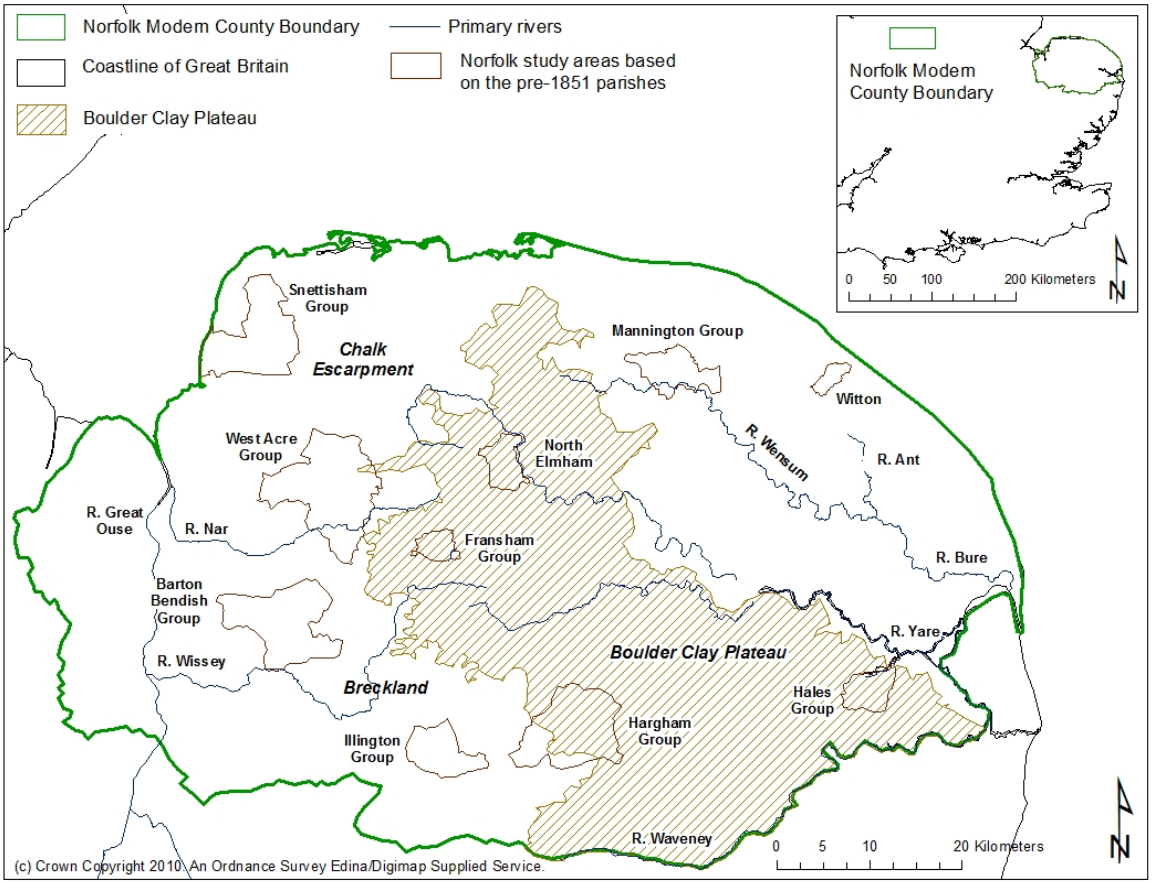


Figure 5.1 Regional location map showing the modern county of Norfolk and the study groups selected for research, based on the evidence available through published fieldwalking reports and the county HER (Norfolk Landscape Archaeology 2010) and defined by the pre-1851 historic parish boundaries. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Introduction

Norfolk is the most easterly county in England (**Figs. 4.1; 5.1**). Bordered by fens to the west, and with an extensive coastline, Norfolk's prominent position on the North Sea's western seaboard has facilitated a long and complex relationship with the European mainland (Williamson 1993, 5; 2006, 25), resulting in a distinctive blend of social, ethnic and cultural influences. During the 5th to 11th centuries, the regional population may have been socially and culturally diverse, but, by the time of Domesday, Norfolk's ancient settlement history and rich agricultural heritage saw the county recorded as the wealthiest and most densely populated in England (Williamson 2006, 46; 1993, 110).

Regional Geography and Historic Landscape Character

Relief and drainage

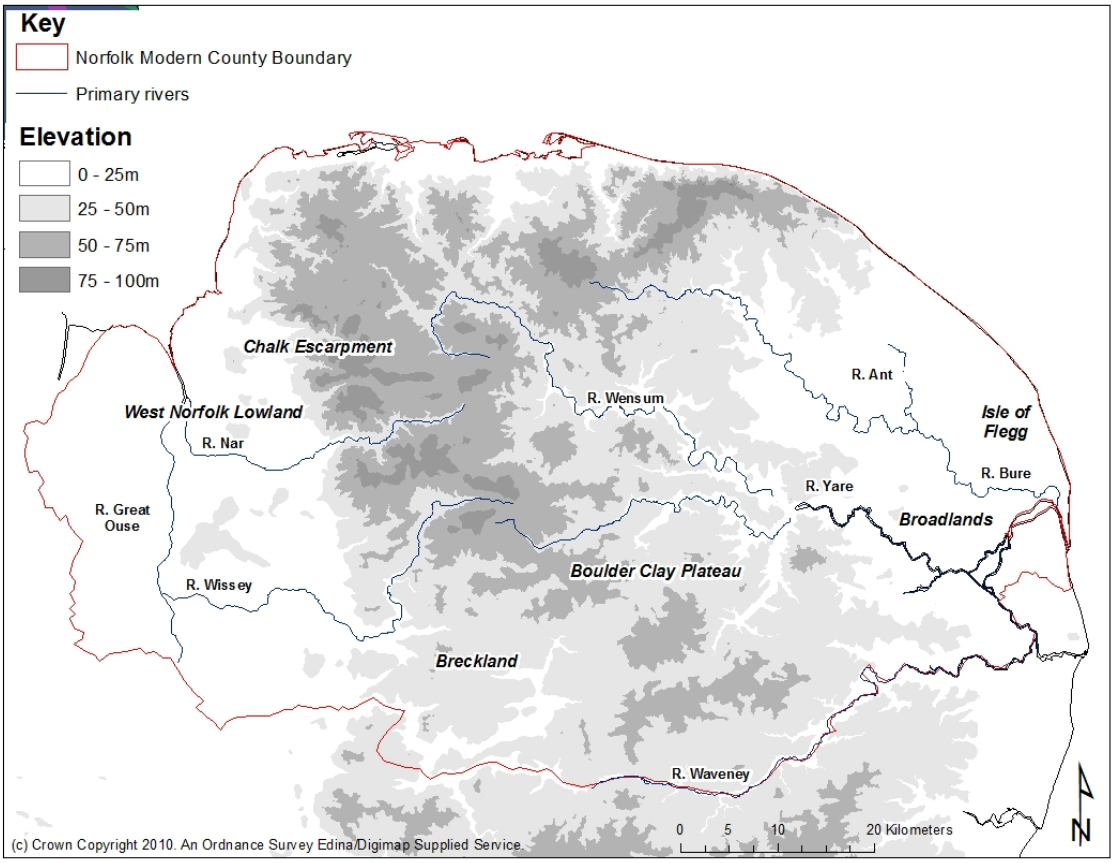


Figure 5.2 Terrain map of Norfolk showing relief and primary drainage. Physical data compiled and mapped by the author. Contour data supplied through Landform PANORAMA. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2011]. Additional mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Norfolk's relief forms a broad plateau, which declines eastwards towards the coast (**Fig. 5.2**). The highest ground lies in the northwest of the county and forms the county's main watershed. The major tributaries of the Yare, Bure, Waveney and Wensum rivers divide the broad clay interfluves of the northwest plateau, draining eastwards towards the coast. The lower reaches of these rivers form the wide, shallow, valleys of the Broadlands, their estuaries merging along the eastern coastline to form extensive marshlands (**Fig. 5.2**) (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; Williamson 1993, 13). With fluctuating sea levels, these low coastal margins have been prone to periodic marine transgression, although a gentle rise of land to the east, the Isle of Flegg, was still an island during the Roman and 'Early Saxon' periods (Williamson 1993, 13). The rivers Nar and Wissey drain westwards into the Great Ouse River and The Wash (**Fig. 5.2**).

Geology and soils

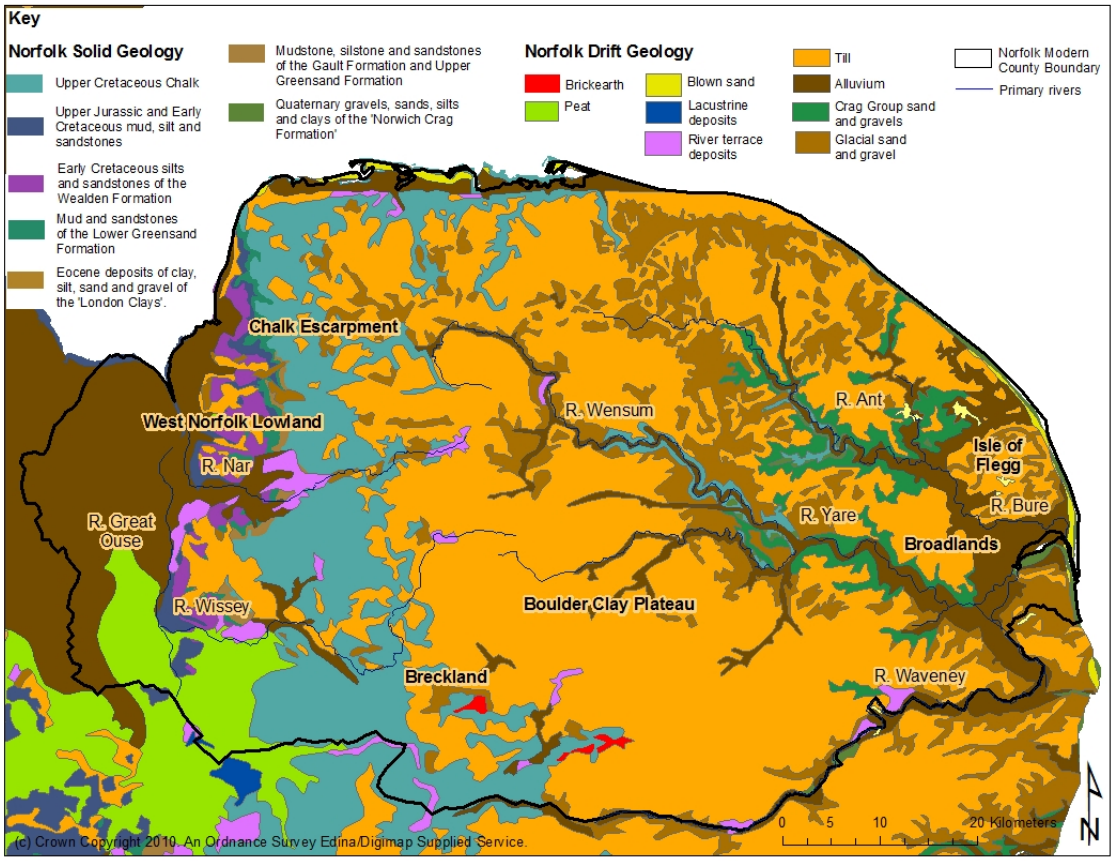


Figure 5.3 Geological map of Norfolk showing surface geology, drainage and major character regions. Compiled by the author using mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Norfolk's geology is sedimentary in origin, overlying a platform of ancient Precambrian and Palaeozoic rocks. The oldest deposits are only exposed in the northwest, with those to the east increasingly overlain by younger geological deposits and surface drift deposited during a succession of glacial advances (**Fig. 5.3**) (Funnel 1994a, 12; 1994b, 14). In the northwest of the county, the chalk escarpment, an exposed outlier of the Chiltern Hills, consists of a band of hard, grey, chalk overlain during the Upper Cretaceous period by extensive deposits of the softer, white, chalk that dominates Norfolk's solid geology. This chalk surfaces across the central plateau, becoming buried under the younger shelly sands and gravels of the Norwich Crag Formation as it declines eastwards (**Fig. 5.3**) (Funnell 1994b, 14; Williamson 2006, 12-13).

The complex surface geology of Norfolk has significantly influenced its soils formation, many of which are traditionally poor or difficult to work (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18). Sands and gravels have been variously deposited through

glaciofluvial action and river terrace drift, although the majority of Norfolk's rivers are sluggish and slow moving due to the county's low relief, and peat, or clay-based, soils predominate in the valley bottoms (Funnell 1994b, 14; Williamson 1993, 16). The most extensive surface deposit in Norfolk is glacial till, the major component being the 'Boulder Clay', a mixture of materials that is sandier in character to the north of the county, forming deep, well-drained loamy soils over clay and sand, and more clay-like in the south where soils are generally slowly permeable loams over clay (Funnell 1994b, 14; SSEW 1983). The more tractable loam over clay soils are also exposed towards the plateau fringes and along its valley sides (Williamson 1993, 8). In the northeast of Norfolk windblown loess has formed deep, fertile, loams, the most productive in the county (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983). In the west, where the chalk lies close to the surface, soils are typically light calcareous rendzinas, while to the west of the scarp, soils are a complex mix of sandy gleys and podzols, with some heavier loams over clay across western outliers of the Boulder Clay (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; Williamson 2006, 20-23). In the southwest of Norfolk, the Breckland soils are typically light, well-drained, sandy loams formed in windblown coversand, making them prone to drought and erosion. Along the western edges of the chalk, where surface deposits are thin, soils are well-drained, calcareous loams, but in the Breckland interior, sandy and calcareous soils are more intricately mixed (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18).

Roman and early medieval settlement history in Norfolk

Roman settlement

Following the Boudiccan revolt of *c*. AD 60, the previously client kingdom of the Iceni became absorbed into mainstream Roman administration, with *Venta Icenorum* (Caistor St Edmund) as the *civitas* (Gurney 1994, 34). Outside of a developing infrastructure of small towns and road networks, the majority of the population of Norfolk during the Roman period remained essentially rural: pottery scatters from numerous fieldwalking surveys suggest the predominant forms of settlement were native hamlets and farmsteads, continuing earlier Iron Age patterns of settlement and farming practices (Gurney 1994, 34). This has been further demonstrated through excavation, at sites such as Kilverstone (NHER 34489), on Breckland and Paper Hall Farm, Snettisham (NHER 1555),

on the Chalk Scarp for example, where evidence of enclosures, roundhouses, and industrial activity were recorded within the context of a wider farming landscape. At Kilverstone, an 2nd century aisled barn and other post-built structures were recorded, with Roman occupation indicated well into the 4th century. A small 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemetery had superseded the Roman settlement by the 5th to 7th centuries (Garrow *et al*. 2006). At Snettisham, an enclosed farmstead dating from the 1st to 3rd centuries was part of a wider area of Roman farming settlement (NHER 26626) (Flitcroft 2001): Associated finds included 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon metalwork and pottery, suggesting that occupation in the area potentially continued into the 5th to 11th centuries, albeit with some mobility of settlement suggested during this period.

The distribution of Roman settlement in Norfolk appears densest in the west of the county, where concentrations of settlement can be shown to border the network of Roman roads that run north to the coast (Gurney 1994, 35). Fieldwalking at Barton Bendish (Rogerson *et al.* 1997), on the light calcareous soils of northwest Breckland, demonstrated an average of 0.74 Roman settlements per km^2, while equivalent surveys at Fransham (Rogerson 1995) and Hales, Heckingham and Loddon (Davison 1990), on the heavier loam over clay soils of the Boulder Clay Plateau, demonstrated an average of 0.85 and 0.89 Roman settlements per km^2, respectively (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 14). These figures do not take into account the fact that settlements were not necessarily occupied simultaneously, although most appear to have been in existence at the end of the 2nd century (Williamson 1993, 43). The results of fieldwalking, as demonstrated above, suggest that both the lighter and heavier soils of Norfolk saw relatively dense Roman occupation. Williamson (1993, 38), however, observes that the majority of Roman settlements across the heavier soils were simpler farming settlements, while higher status Roman settlement and Roman villas tended to favour the lighter soils and river valley locations.

In contrast to many other parts of lowland Britain, few Roman villas were established in Norfolk (Williamson 1993, 38): Gurney (1994, 34) recorded only sixteen certain Roman villas, although evidence from surface finds and cropmark evidence suggest more remain to be discovered. The densest area of villa settlement is in western and northwest Norfolk, where a number of villas, such as Gayton Thorpe (NHER 3743), Fring (NHER 1661) and Snettisham

(NHER 1514), for example, are strung out along the Icknield Way, a prehistoric trackway re-used by the Romans (Gregory 1992, 360-366; Gurney 1994, 34). Williamson (2006, 38) speculates that the paucity of villa settlement in the region may reflect the impoverishment of the Iceni following the AD 60 rebellion, resulting in less residual wealth to facilitate extensive villa construction.

Where fieldwalking surveys do suggest possible villa settlement in Norfolk, the artefactual assemblages often indicate a considerable time-depth of occupation, although these do not so clearly indicate the lifespan of any villa buildings. Fieldwalking at Barton Bendish (Rogerson *et al*. 1997), for example, identified two possible villa sites (NHER 13316 and 18849), both of which produced finds assemblages that included various high status items and construction materials, including roof and flue tile and tesserae. Associated pottery suggested both sites were occupied from at least the 1st century (*ibid*, 13-14), although the scale and chronology of any potential buildings remain unknown at present. Excavation at Gayton Thorpe Roman villa (NHER 3743), however, suggested occupation between at least the 2nd to 4th centuries (Atkinson 1929; Gregory 1982, 366), while the Roman Villas at Park Piece, Snettisham (NHER 1514) and Glebe Farm, Feltwell (NHER 4921) may have been constructed as late as the 3rd century (*ibid*, 357, 368). While the precise chronology of villa settlement in Norfolk remains to be fully understood, fieldwalking evidence has recovered evidence for varying quantities of 'Early Saxon' pottery and metalwork scatters from many villa sites, such as Fring (NHER 1659), Snettisham (NHER 1514), Sedgeford (NHER 1603) and Barton Bendish (NHER 13316), to name but a few examples, potentially indicating their continued use into at least the 5th to 6th centuries, albeit with possible changes in form or function.

Early medieval settlement

Material evidence for settlement during the 5th to 7th centuries in Norfolk is also largely derived from pottery scatters recovered through fieldwalking. The results indicate that the extent of settlement for this period reflects a similar distribution to the Roman period, although the pattern of settlement is more attenuated, with greater distance between individual sites (Williamson 1993, 89). Rogerson (2005, 4) observed that a degree of settlement contraction on the heavier clay soils in Norfolk is indicated by the 5th to 7th centuries, although on areas of

lighter soils, and along the major river valleys, there is a greater suggestion of Roman settlement continuity into this period. Foard (1978, 369) and Williamson (1984, 227; 1993, 89) observed a similar pattern for the heavy Boulder Clay soils of Northamptonshire and northwest Essex (and see Chapter 2, 31). Excavation is also increasingly demonstrating material evidence for structural settlement, at sites such as Grange Farm, Snetterton (NHER 36802) and Witton (NHER 16641/1009), for example, where evidence for 'Early Saxon' Grubenhäuser dating to the 5th to 7th centuries was recorded: both sites also indicated evidence for Roman occupation in the vicinity (Lawson 1983, 45, 53-69; Robertson 2003, 5-6, 20).

In common with much of southeast England, however, most of the evidence for occupation during the 5th to 7th centuries in Norfolk comes from cemetery remains, recovered either through excavation, at sites such as Bergh Apton NHER 1011) (Green and Rogerson 1978), Oxborough (NHER 25458) (Penn 1998), Illington (NHER 1047) (Davison *et al*. 1993) and Spong Hill (NHER 1012) (Rickett 1995), for example, or through metalwork scatters recovered through metal detecting (see Chester-Kadwell 2009 for recent research in this area). The majority of 'Early Saxon' cemeteries in Norfolk demonstrate varying association with Roman material culture: at some sites, such as Oxborough (Penn 1998), for example, this is limited to small quantities of Roman finds, while at others, such as Spong Hill (Rickett 1995), Shingham (NHER 4561), and Caldecote (Rogerson *et al.* 1997), for example, there is clear evidence of associated Roman occupation. The cemeteries at Caldecote, and Shingham also contain both Roman and 'Early Saxon' burials, potentially suggesting a continuity of function into the 5th and 6th centuries, even if the certain continuity of any associated settlement is not so clearly demonstrated.

Settlement evidence in Norfolk for the 'Middle Saxon' period, predominantly the 8th to 9th centuries, is also principally reflected through pottery scatters recovered through fieldwalking (Rogerson 1994, 38; Williamson 1993, 89). Apart from a few local hand-made wares dating to this period, the most durable and widely available 'Middle Saxon' pottery in Norfolk is Ipswich Ware (Blinkhorn 1999, 6; Rogerson 1994, 38). This was originally thought to have been produced in large quantities from the 640's AD (Hurst 1961; Williamson 1993, 79), but Blinkhorn (1999, 9) suggests an AD 720-850 date range.

Blinkhorn (*ibid*, 14) also observes that, although Ipswich Ware is generally considered a high status ware, it is found at all levels of settlement and its widespread distribution is linked to changes in economic and agricultural practices between the 8th to 9th centuries, possibly relating to the perceived reorganisation of settlement during this period. The social and economic development of 'Middle Saxon' settlement in Norfolk is further informed through coin evidence and other high status metalwork recovered through metal detecting. A particular 'Middle Saxon' site type, the 'productive site' (see Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003; Richards 1999, for example), is typified by a distinctive finds assemblage, which incorporates large quantities of metalwork and coins. These sites are thought to have featured prominently in the hierarchy of 'Middle Saxon' economic structure (Newman 2003, 108; Richards 1999, 71) and several examples, such as Congham, Bawsey and Wormegay, for example, are potentially identified for Norfolk (Rogerson 2003).

As for Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement, material evidence for 'Middle Saxon' settlement in Norfolk is gradually increasing through excavation, with recent examples at Sedgeford (NHER 29745), on the Chalk Scarp, and Whissonsett (NHER 44708), on Breckland, for example, adding to the evidence at North Elmham Park (NHER 1013), on the Boulder Clay Plateau, excavated in the 1960's/70's by Wade-Martins (1980a). At Sedgeford, a long-term research project (SHARP 2010) within the village core has uncovered evidence for a 'Middle Saxon' cemetery and 'Middle Saxon' hearths c. 140m west of the parish church, with associated evidence suggesting continuous occupation from the Roman period through to the 12th century (see Hogget 2000, for example). At Whissonsett, evidence for a 'Middle Saxon' enclosure, ditches and a cemetery were recovered during excavation *c*. 115m to the north of the parish church (Mellor 2004; Trimble and Hoggett 2010).

It has been argued that there may have been significant disarticulation in some Roman and 'Early Saxon settlements by the 8th to 9th centuries, and that this shift in the settlement pattern may have largely have occurred before Ipswich Ware came properly into circulation in the early 8th century (Rippon 2008, 186-187; Williamson 1993, 82-189). The evidence from pottery scatters appears to suggest that fewer, but larger, settlements began to develop across the lighter soils of Norfolk, commonly associated with both 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon

pottery, and located close to later parish churches and manors (Rippon 2008, 187; Williamson 1993, 90; 2006, 43). Fieldwalking evidence suggests that 'Early Saxon' ceramic evidence is frequently absent from these sites, although some association with late Roman material is apparent (Rippon 2008, 188). This may suggest a re-occupation of previously Roman settlement sites in prime locations by the 8th to 9th centuries, although, given the poor survival of 'Early Saxon' pottery, this does not, necessarily, preclude potential continuity from the Roman period at sites where 'Early Saxon' evidence is currently lacking.

In addition to the material assemblage for the 8th to 9th centuries in Norfolk, place-name evidence also suggests a change in settlement organisation for this period. Villages with the place-name suffixes *–ham* and *–tun* are suggested to reflect the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements (Penn 1994, 36 but see Gelling 1997, Chapter 5 for wider discussion on this), with *–ham* settlements in particular, becoming the foci of early estates, many subsequently developing into large market towns and administrative centres (Williamson 1994, 44). Wade-Martins' (1980b), in his survey of the Launditch Hundred, further demonstrated a significant association between *–ham* place-names and the distribution of Ipswich Ware, reinforcing the notion of an emergent settlement hierarchy during the 8th to 9th centuries: this has been supported by further fieldwalking surveys, such as Heckingham (Davison 1990), Fransham (Rogerson 1995) and Hargham (Davison and Cushion 1999a; 1999b), for example, which all record concentrations of Ipswich Ware in close vicinity to local parish churches and manors.

In contrast, settlements with the *–tun* suffix are generally less well-associated with Ipswich Ware and appear to have been smaller, subsidiary settlements, possibly more functional in nature, which developed comparatively late as smaller, independently-owned estates (Williamson 1994, 44). The relative distribution of these two classes of settlement place-name shows *–ham* names traditionally located closer to areas of better soils and the main river valleys, with *–tun* names more marginally distributed across the higher interfluves and away from the main valleys (*ibid*). The combined evidence increasingly points to a consolidation of settlement in Norfolk somewhere between the 8th to 9th centuries, with increasing settlement hierarchy and the beginnings of a more organised social order. At a wider level, this transition in settlement organisation

appears to strongly coincide with the replacement of tribal territories by large, royally owned, estates, and the emergence of a more coherent East-Anglian Kingdom (Williamson 1993, 89).

Evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation in Norfolk is aided by the growth of the local pottery industry and an increase in better quality wheel-thrown wares, such as Thetford, St Neots and Stamford wares, for example (Hurst 1961, 218-221; Williamson 1993, 135). The material evidence reflects a growth in population during this period, concomitant with an increase in settlement size across the region, although not, necessarily, settlement number (Williamson 1993, 110). The pattern of settlement development during this period in Norfolk, was not, however, uniform. In the west of the county, the lighter soils appear to have witnessed a degree of settlement nucleation, and the formation of some quite large, albeit loosely articulated, villages: many of these, such as Barton Bendish, on Breckland, for example, lack a clear settlement nucleus, with a structure resembling a string of small hamlets rather than a coherent village (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 31; Williamson 2006, 51). Barton Bendish also features three parish churches (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 31), just one example of the 'polyfocal' nature of some Norfolk settlements by the 11th century (see Taylor 1977, 189; 1983, 131 for discussion on this topic). Across eastern Norfolk, the settlement pattern by the 11th century remained largely dispersed, with a widespread scatter of farms and hamlets: this distinction between the 'Late Saxon' settlement character of eastern and western Norfolk is not so clear-cut, however, with much localised variation (Williamson 2006, 51).

A particular feature of 'Late Saxon' settlement in Norfolk is the scatter of Ipswich Ware that occurs as small concentrations within predominantly 'Late Saxon' assemblages, often situated at a distance from village cores, towards the parish peripheries (Rippon 2008, 188). These sites have been interpreted as possible 'daughter settlements' (*ibid*), and may reflect the early beginnings of a drift in settlement towards the edges of common ground. By the 11th century in Norfolk, and gathering pace into the 12th and 13th centuries, many new settlements formed around the edges of commons and greens, resulting in the isolation of some parish churches (Williamson 1993, 111; 2006, 52).

In addition to the partial re-location of settlement between the 11th to 13th centuries, the evidence from Domesday suggests a growing complexity of land

ownership and tenure. The fragmentation of large estates, through royal grant of land to families of nobility, saw further division through sale and inheritance, resulting in a relatively weak and fluid manorial structure (Campbell 1994, 52; Williamson 2006, 47). By Domesday, the majority of vills recorded for Norfolk contained more than one manorial complex (Campbell 1986, 226; 1994, 52), as demonstrated at Barton Bendish and Fincham, for example (Blomefeld 1806; Rogerson *et al*. 1997). The evidence from the *Nomina Villarum* suggests that by the early 14th century there was a broad differential in the number and scale of manors in Norfolk, with typically numerous, but smaller, manors across the fertile soils in the east of the county, compared with fewer, larger, manors across the less fertile soils in the west (Bailey 2002, 15; Campbell 1986, 228-230; 1994, 52). This belies a far greater complexity of manorial organisation in Norfolk, however, compounded by differences between lay and ecclesiastical lordship, and intricacies of early tenure themselves rooted in the dynamics of 'Late Saxon' social structure (Campbell 1994, 52).

The current understanding of settlement processes in Norfolk between the Roman and early medieval periods remains largely derived from physical survey and documentary evidence and the numerous pottery and metalwork scatters recovered through physical survey offer great potential for quantitative assessment. Whilst Chester-Kadwell's (2009) doctoral research into metalwork scatters in Norfolk addressed this to some extent, the assessment of pottery scatters and the implication of these on Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Norfolk have, to date, been largely qualitative in nature (see Rogerson 2005; Rippon 2008; Williamson 1993; 2006, for example). The following chapters (6-8) present a quantitative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Norfolk across six Norfolk *pays*. A brief outline of these *pays*, their physical character and the nature of settlement during the Roman and early medieval periods, is given below.

Regional landscape character: **pays**

Eight *pays* have been identified for Norfolk (**Fig. 5.4**), of which six are selected for the purposes of this research: The Boulder Clay Plateau, Breckland, The West Norfolk Lowland, The Chalk Scarp, The Good Sands and The Rich Loams. The low-lying Marshland, the Fens and the Broadlands are excluded

because rising sea levels at the end of the Roman period would have resulted in periodic hiatuses in occupation between the late Roman and early medieval period, making them unsuitable for this study.

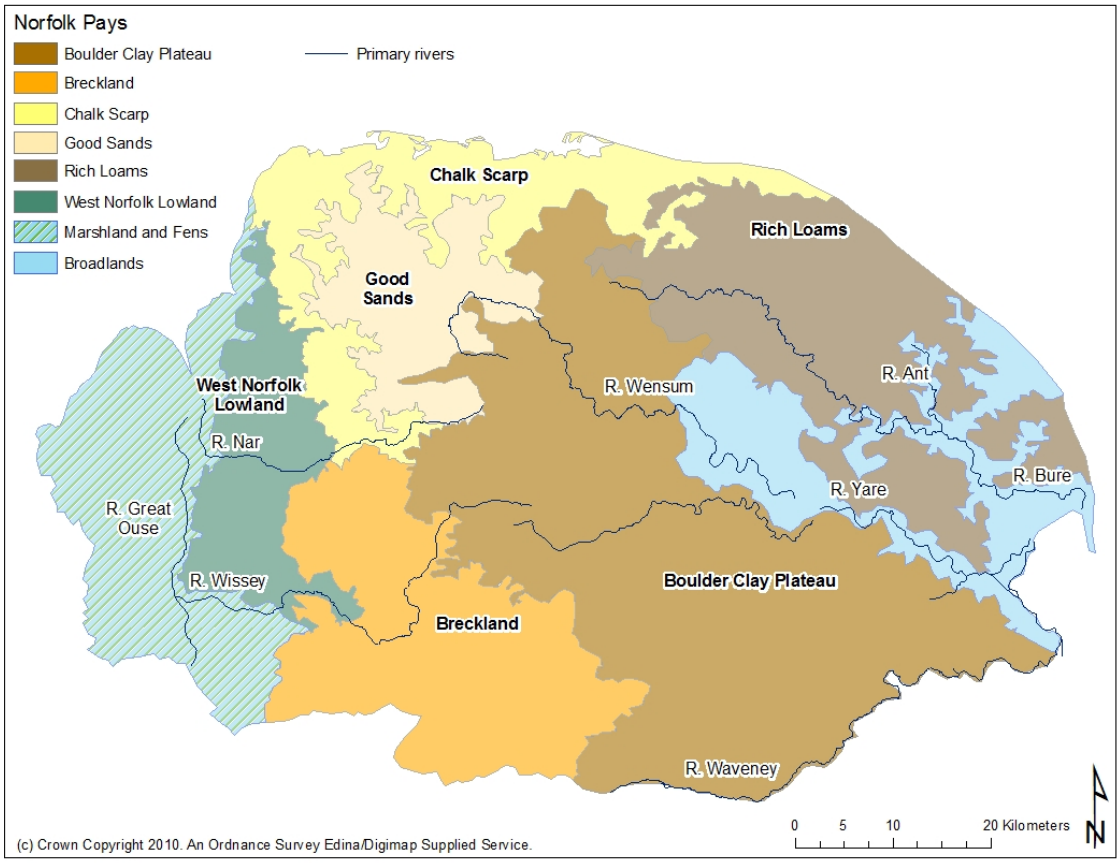


Figure 5.4. Map showing Norfolk's *pays* based on the county's major soils regions after Corbett and Dent (1994, 18). Drawn by the author using the SSEW (1983) map and legend and OS contour data (OS 2011). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

The Boulder Clay Plateau

The Boulder Clay Plateau (**Fig. 5.4**) is the largest of Norfolk's *pays*, situated in the county's heartland and characterised by wide clay interfluves cut by the many river valleys that drain the plateau from the northwest. Pottery scatters recovered through fieldwalking (eg. Davison 1990; Davison and Cushion 1999; Rogerson 1995) suggest the *pays* was relatively well populated during the Roman period, although the distribution of settlement appears to have favoured the more tractable loam over clay soils bordering the major river valleys (see **Fig. 6.4**). The remote northwest of the *pays* was well wooded during the Roman period, with apparently little settlement during this period (Williamson 1993, 18),

and remained well wooded up until at least the 11th century, as the Domesday record demonstrates (Darby 1971, Fig. 29).

In the later medieval period, the Boulder Clay Plateau fell within what Rackham (1986) classed as 'ancient countryside', and field enclosure has largely been created through a gradual, piecemeal, process. Landuse during the Roman and early medieval periods was predominantly pastoral, with large-scale arable cultivation only possible in more recent times through modern advances in technology and drainage methods (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18). Areas of common field featured across parts of the Boulder Clay Plateau by the later medieval period, on a scale similar to that of the Midlands System, but classified by Martin (2007, 125) and Martin and Satchell (2008, 22) as 'Type 2A' common field due to differences in communal management and cropping regimes. These common fields form the major field type for western Norfolk generally (Martin 2007, 131; Rippon 2008, 147) but on the Boulder Clay Plateau were intermixed with smaller fields farmed in severalty (Williamson 1993, 10).

Domesday population and plough-team densities for the Boulder Clay Plateau (Darby 1971) suggest a medium population density of between 10-15 head of population per square mile (*ibid*, Fig. 28) but a low to medium plough-team density of between 1-2.5 plough-teams per square mile (*ibid*, Fig. 26), indicating the *pays* was quite well-populated by the 11th century, albeit with low to medium levels of arable cultivation (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The later medieval period settlement character of the *pays* suggests loosely nucleated villages or hamlets along the lighter soils of the valley sides, interspersed by scattered farms and manors that extended out across the higher clay interfluves (Williamson 2006, 52). From around the 11th to 12th centuries the outskirts of villages saw some breaking away of settlement, with new farms and hamlets forming around the edges of greens and commons. As a result of this, isolated parish churches are a characteristic feature of the Boulder Clay Plateau (*ibid*).

The Rich Loams

The Rich Loams lie in northeast Norfolk, bordering the Boulder Clay Plateau to the southwest and dissected by the wide river valleys and estuarine marshes of the Broadlands to the southeast (**Fig. 5.4**). This area forms part of the Norwich

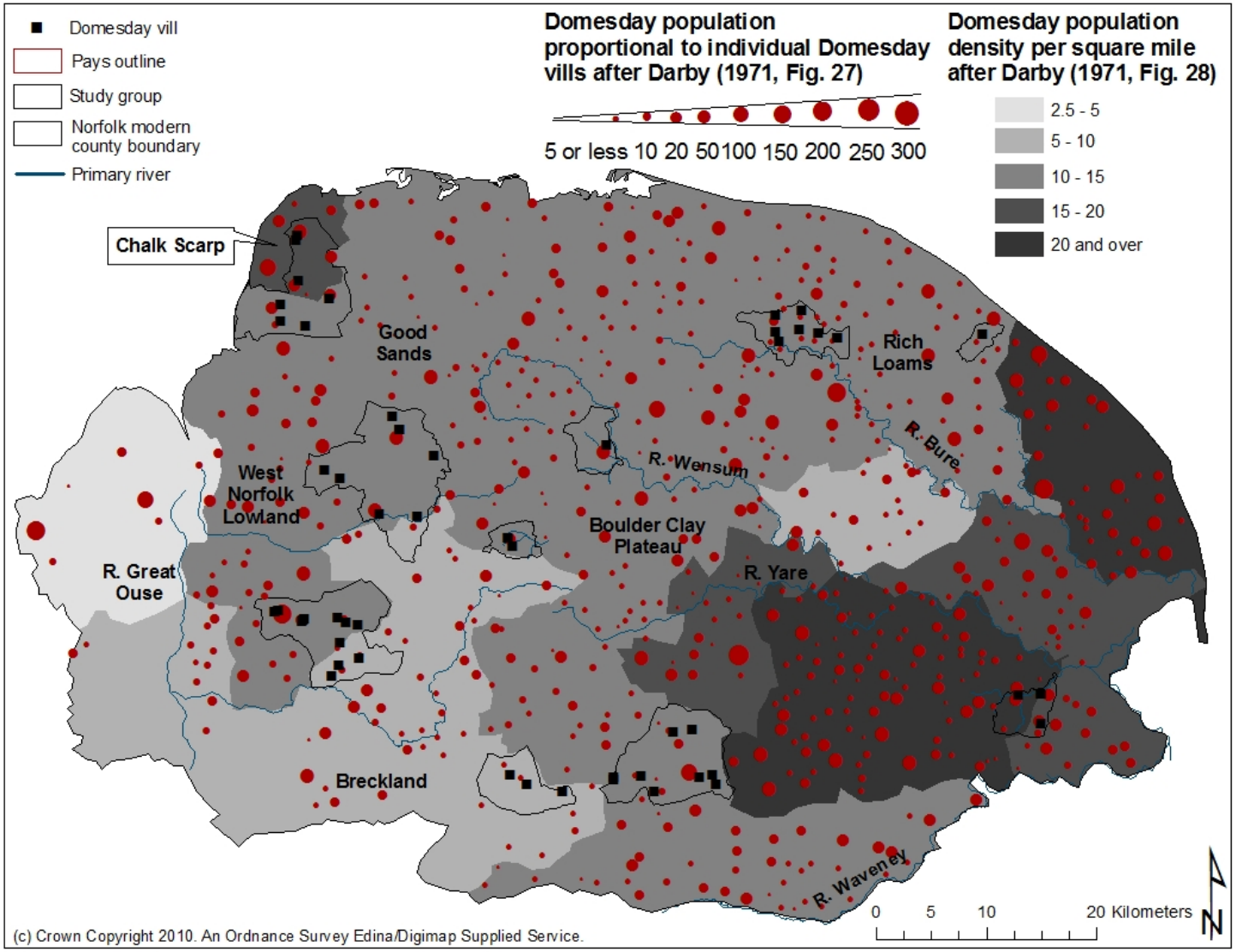


Figure 5.5. The distribution of Domesday vills recorded for the study groups in Norfolk against the Domesday population densities, drawn after Darby (1971, Figs. 27 and 28). Domesday vills recorded using Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

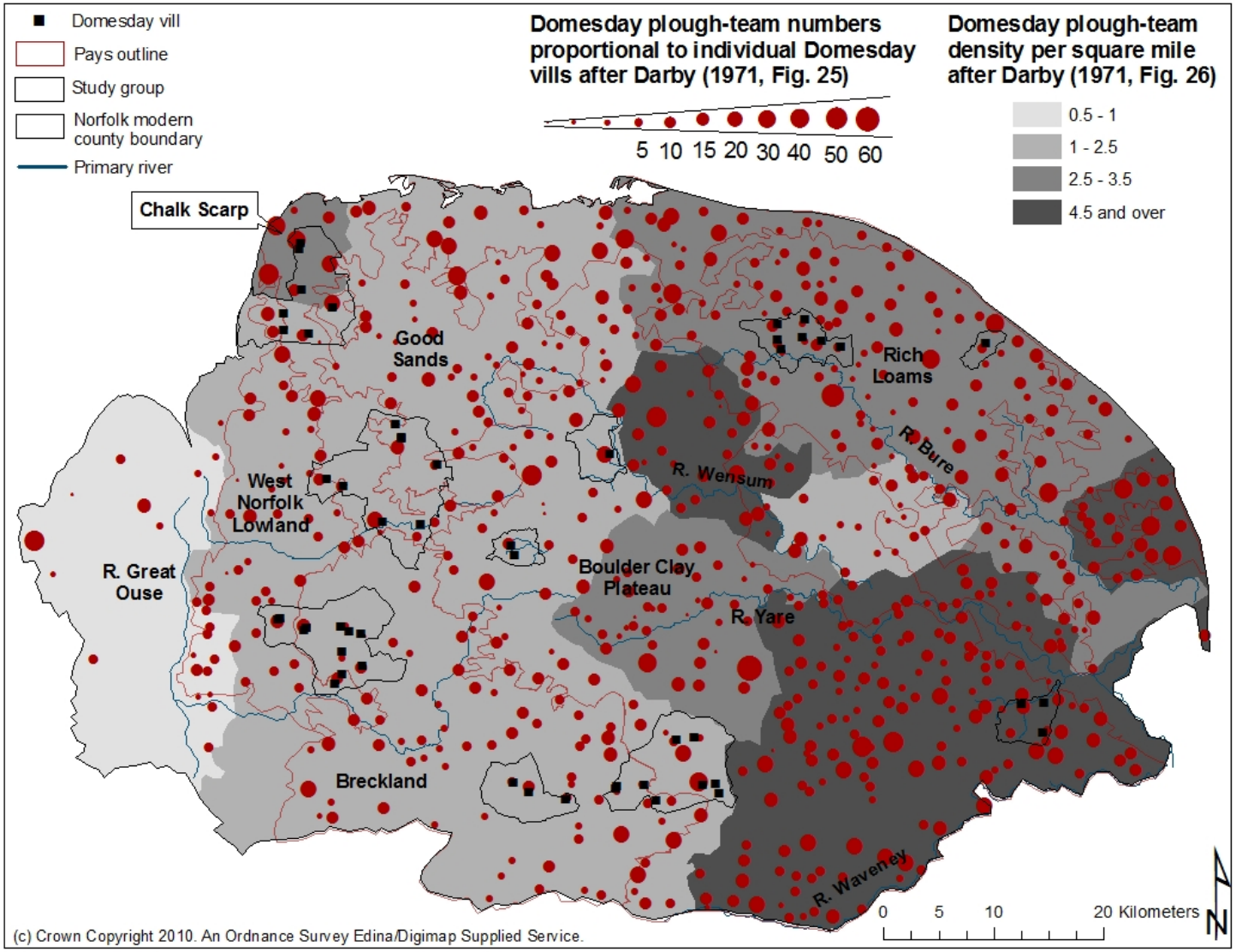


Figure 5.6. The distribution of Domesday vills recorded for the study groups in Norfolk against the Domesday plough-team densities, drawn after Darby (1971, Figs. 25 and 26). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

Crag, a region of complex glacial deposits, including till and outwash gravels, overlying chalk bedrock. The rivers Wensum, Bure and Ant, along with their many tributaries, form wide lush valleys and the arable soils are the most fertile in the county. The current evidence for Roman settlement demonstrates relatively sparse occupation, generally, for northeast Norfolk (see Gurney 1994, 35), although fieldwalking surveys at Mannington (Davison 1995) and Witton (Lawson 1983) suggest comparatively dense settlement for these areas (see **Fig. 6.13**). This may indicate a wider extent of Roman settlement on the Rich Loams than is currently understood.

The Domesday evidence indicates that the wide river valleys in the southeast of the Rich Loams *pays* were certainly densely populated by the 11th century, with an estimated 20 plus head of population per square mile (Darby 1971, Fig. 28), although this falls to between 10-15 head of population per square mile away from the river valleys in the northwest (*ibid*). The plough-team density is also relatively high, at 2.5 to 3.5 per square mile for the majority of the *pays*, rising to 4.5 and over in the far southeast (*Ibid*, Fig. 26) (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The later medieval settlement character of the *pays* was typically dispersed, comprising small hamlets and farms associated with small, 'type 2B', open fields (see Martin 2007, 125; Martin and Satchell 2008, 22). This type of open field reflects less communal management and flexible cropping arrangements, with tenement strips located close to their respective settlements, suggesting land farmed in severalty (Rippon 2008, 147). In common with parts of the Boulder Clay Plateau to the southwest, the *pays* saw a move away from settlement margins from around the 11th to 12th centuries and has its share of common-edge settlements and isolated parish churches (Williamson 1993, 10-13).

Breckland

To the southwest of the Boulder Clay the land falls away to Breckland (**Fig. 5.4**), a low, sandy, plateau characterised by long gentle slopes and flat valley bottoms, part of East Anglia's 'Light Lands' (Williamson 2006, 173). Much of the Breckland plateau remained open heathland until well into the 18th century (Williamson 2996, 173): the woodland of Breckland was largely cleared during prehistory, causing soils to become leached and barren (Bailey 1989, 26). The term 'Breck' survives from early 14th to 16th century documents and was applied

by early 20th century historians to areas of temporary outfield cultivation periodically reverted back to heath (Bailey 1989, 28; Williamson 1993, 11).

The evidence for Roman settlement on the Breckland, largely demonstrated through fieldwalking survey (eg. Davison and Cushion 1999; Davison *et al*. 1993; Rogerson *et al*. 1997) indicates that the major distribution of settlement favoured the more fertile calcareous loams along the river valleys in the northwest of the *pays*, with distinct evidence for high status Romanised settlement and some Roman villas, while the more acid soils and heathland in the southeast of the *pays* was more sparsely occupied (see **Fig. 7.4**). The Domesday evidence indicates that the *pays* may have remained relatively sparsely occupied even by the 11th century: Domesday population and plough-team densities for Breckland are relatively low, between just 2.5-5 head of population and 1-2.5 plough-teams per square mile (Darby 1971, Figs. 26 and 28) (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The distribution of settlement by the 11th century appears to have been largely similar to that of the Roman period, with large, loosely nucleated, villages associated with type 2A arable common fields (see Martin 2007, 125; Martin and Satchell 2008, 22) established along the river valleys or at the *pays* margins, typically located close to a water supply (Williamson 1993, 11-13).

The West Norfolk Lowland

The West Norfolk Lowland lies to the west of Breckland, between the chalk escarpment and the Fens (**Fig. 5.4**). The sandy and low-lying landscape has complex soils, which on the wetter hollows and outlying patches of Boulder Clay along the foot of the chalk escarpment, would have been moderately fertile, but elsewhere would have been typically characterised by open heathland into the medieval period (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; Williamson 2006, 21, 173). Roman settlement distribution on the West Norfolk Lowland indicates a concentration of settlement along the line of the ancient Icknield Way, which cuts the *pays* to the east (Gurney 1994, 35). Physical survey and excavation, at sites such as Fincham (see NHER 4358), Gayton Thorpe (Atkinson 1929; Gregory 1982) and Snettisham (Leah and Flitcroft 1993), for example, suggests distinct evidence for high status Romanised settlement, with a number of Roman villas located along the eastern margins of the *pays*, (see **Fig. 7.15**).

The Domesday evidence suggests the West Norfolk Lowland remained well populated by the 11th century, with a population density of between 10-15 head of population per square mile (Darby 1971, Fig. 28). In common with both the Boulder Clay Plateau and Breckland, low to medium levels of arable cultivation are indicated, with between 1-2.5 plough-teams per square mile (*ibid*, Fig. 26) (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The later medieval settlement character of the West Norfolk Lowland reflects small, loosely nucleated villages, typically associated with type 2A arable common field (see Martin 2007, 125; Martin and Satchell 2008, 22).

The Chalk Scarp

The Chalk Scarp comprises the higher terrain of north and northwest Norfolk, although this ranges between just 65m at its highest point, at Hunstanton, in the north, to near sea level in the south (Williamson 1993, 14) (**Fig. 5.4**). Along its northwestern edge, the chalk is cut by a series of westward draining rivers, forming upland blocks of land separated by wide, formerly marshy, valleys (*ibid*). Through physical survey and excavation, at sites such as West Acre (Davison 2003), Sedgeford (SHARP 2010) and Ringstead (Leah and Flitcroft 1993), for example, the evidence for Roman settlement suggests the *pays* was relatively well populated during the Roman period, particularly in the northwest and along the valley borders, with distinct evidence for high status Romanised settlement and a number of Roman villas (see **Fig. 7.22**).

Similarly to the West Norfolk Lowland, the Domesday evidence for the Chalk Scarp suggests the *pays* was relatively well populated by the 11th century, with an estimated 10-15 head of population and 1-2.5 plough-teams per square mile (Darby 1971, Figs. 26 and 28) (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The later medieval settlement character of the Chalk Scarp is also similar to the West Norfolk Lowland, with small, loosely nucleated villages associated with 'Type 2A' common field (see Martin 2007, 125; Martin and Satchell 2008, 22), largely situated along the ridges bordering the river valleys (Williamson 1993, 14), with the upland areas of the *pays* remaining largely heathland into the medieval period (Williamson 2006, 173).

The Good Sands

The Good Sands lie to the north of Breckland, bordering the Chalk Scarp to the east (**Fig. 5.4**). The *pays* is characterised by dry, rolling, uplands with well-weathered clay subsoil over chalk, itself overlain by windblown coversand (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18). From the medieval period the sandy soils were improved through 'marling', digging down to the chalk and mixing it into the soil to improve the structure and neutralise the acidity, hence the name the 'Good Sands' (Williamson 1993, 11). The central areas of the *pays* may have seen relatively sparse Roman settlement (see Gurney 1994, 35), although there appears to have been a greater concentration in the north and south of the *pays*, bordering the major Roman roads (*ibid*).

The Domesday evidence indicates the *pays* was potentially relatively well populated by the 11th century, with similar population and plough-team densities to the Chalk Scarp and West Norfolk Lowland to the southwest (Darby 1971, Figs. 26 and 28) (**Figs. 5.5 and 5.6**). The later medieval settlement character of the *pays* comprised large, widely spaced, nucleated villages (Williamson 1993, 12) associated with type 2A arable common field (see Martin 2007, 125; Martin and Satchell 2008, 22). Villages were typically located along the lower reaches of principal valleys and on areas of water-retentive clays, largely determined by proximity to a water supply (Williamson 1993, 12).

Method and Principles

The methods and principles underlying the wider body of research are discussed in Chapter 4, but a brief summary of sources and methods particular to Norfolk is included here.

The research area

Ten study groups were selected for Norfolk across the six *pays* covered by this thesis, principally determined by those areas of the county that have seen extensive fieldwalking survey. The study areas were defined by the current civil parishes within which those fieldwalking surveys fall, with additional parishes added to some groups to maximise the research potential for each *pays*.

Sources and methods

Roman settlement

Identifying Roman settlement sites in Norfolk has been largely dependent on the fieldwalking evidence and has principally followed the interpretation of settlement in the original survey reports, although licence for re-interpretation has been taken in some cases, in the light of additional records retrieved from the Norfolk HER. This has sometimes resulted in amalgamating several records where they are considered to potentially reflect one site. So, for example, four of Rogerson *et al*.'s (1997, Fig. 8) Roman sites, RB3, RB4, RB5 and RB6, which form a cluster of sites with a span of approximately 400m, were taken to reflect one larger possible Roman villa site (NHER 13316).

Although the basic criteria in the thesis methodology (Chapter 4, 67) sets the parameters for individual settlements at 500m, the evidence for Roman settlement in some parts of Norfolk, such as Loddon, on the Boulder Clay Plateau (Davison 1990), for example, suggests a density of *c*. 400 - 450m. Inevitably there were some sites, Loddon being one, which were hard to quantify precisely given the complexity of settlement data, making it difficult to disseminate whether the evidence reflected one larger settlement that shifted location over time, or independent settlements, potentially of different date. Clearly the evidence does not always neatly fit the parameters set out by the thesis and subjectivity is an inevitable issue when attempting to interpret large bodies of complex data. It is possible that some Roman settlements have been overlooked or excluded as a result, or that a settlement has been identified where there is none, particularly in those cases where the quantity of Roman pottery recovered from a particular site is not clearly stated: this is more the case where Roman pottery findspots in the county HER records come from antiquarian or casual finds, rather than systematic survey.

Roman settlement in Norfolk is recorded following the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, p 60.

Early medieval settlement

The quantity of 'Early', 'Middle' or 'Late' Saxon pottery considered to represent a settlement 'site' is discussed in Chapter 4 (p 60), and is particularly relevant to

Norfolk, where the principal source of early medieval settlement is still through pottery scatters evidenced by fieldwalking. As noted in Chapter 4 (60), the criteria used in fieldwalking surveys and HER's for identifying a Saxon settlement through pottery scatters demonstrate considerable disparity. Within the fieldwalking surveys available for Norfolk, in particular, it is apparent that there is much variation in what is considered to reflect a settlement 'site' or simply background scatter as a result of manuring activity, including the 'halo' effect of settlement material that diminishes with distance from a settlement core. Davison's (1990, 16; 1995, 166; 2003, 213) surveys of Hales, Heckingham and Lodden, Mannington and Wolterton, and West Acre, for example, identify 'Early Saxon' 'sites' varying between a single sherd and 525 sherds, with several 'sites' featuring less than ten sherds and several 'sites' of between 20 and 75 sherds. 'Middle Saxon' 'sites' vary between just one sherd to 46 sherds, with single sherds underlying the settlements of Calthorpe and West Acre considered sufficient to infer underlying settlement for this period (Davison 1995, 116; 2003, 213). In their fieldwalking surveys of Barton Bendish and Fransham, Rogerson (1995, 93) and Rogerson *et al*. (1997, 18), identify 'Early Saxon' 'sites' varying in size between 6 and 80 sherds, with a number of additional 'Early Saxon' findspots of under five sherds; in Barton Bendish, these are typically within the prolific concentrations of sherds from Roman settlement sites (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 19). 'Middle Saxon' settlement 'sites' identified for Barton Bendish and Fransham are few in comparison, but still demonstrate discrepancies in size, with additional thin scatters of 'Middle Saxon' pottery interpreted as the result of manuring activity rather than evidence of a settlement 'site' *per se* (Rogerson 1995, 111).

Given the absence of common criteria for settlement identification for the 'Early/Middle' Saxon period (see above and Chapter 4, 60), the issues for statistical analysis are clear, in that there is no definitive model. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, and as discussed in Chapter 4 (59), the adopted criteria will be to record an 'Early' or 'Middle' Saxon settlement 'site' on the basis of at least two sherds, and a 'Late Saxon' settlement on the basis of at least five sherds, using Foard 1978, Millett 1985 and Millet and James 1983 as a broad guide (see Chapter 4, 59). However, in Chapter 9, the evaluation of Barton Bendish and Fransham will examine these criteria in greater detail to examine whether a more nuanced settlement analysis can be achieved.

As discussed in Chapter 4 (p 63), Norfolk also benefits from a number of large-scale metal detecting surveys. These have proved particularly useful in identifying the possible presence of 'Early Saxon' cemeteries. The issues and implications of using metalwork evidence as an indication of settlement activity, however, are of particular relevance here. The finer points of interpreting metalwork finds in Norfolk have been extensively covered by Chester-Kadwell (2009), but for the purposes of this thesis, metalwork scatters are considered only to the extent to which they may reflect a settlement or cemetery site.

In addition to 'Early Saxon' settlement, the relationship between Roman settlement and 'Early Saxon' cemeteries in Norfolk is quantified, as this may inform on patterns of 'Early Saxon' occupation where no direct evidence for settlement is currently recorded. With the benefit of metalwork finds, the evidence for an 'Early Saxon' cemetery is further classified as follows:

- 'Cemetery' - Where physical remains dateable through associated grave assemblages or radiocarbon dating are evidenced through excavation
- 'Possible cemetery' – Where a quantity of 'Early Saxon' metalwork is recorded through surface collection, but no physical evidence for a cemetery is otherwise demonstrated
- 'Indeterminate' – Where a small quantity of 'Early Saxon' metalwork (less than three items) is recorded through surface collection but no physical evidence for a cemetery is otherwise demonstrated

The relationship between Roman settlement and 'Early Saxon' cemeteries in Norfolk is qualified in the thesis database by whether the evidence for an 'Early Saxon' cemetery is clearly demonstrated (ie. 'cemetery' or 'possible cemetery') or 'indeterminate'.

Domesday vills and parish churches

The Roman settlements recorded for the ten study groups in Norfolk are assessed for their proximity to the nearest parish church or Domesday vill according to the criteria outlined in Chapter 4 (p 64). The primary source of evidence for parish churches and Domesday vills in Norfolk has been the parish summaries in the Norfolk HER (Norfolk Historic Environment Service 2007). In the majority of cases, the site of a parish church also reflects the location of a Domesday vill, but in some cases, such as Barton Bendish, for example, more

than one parish church may be recorded within a Domesday settlement, reflecting the polyfocal nature of some Norfolk villages and the complexities of manorial lordship in some parts of Norfolk.

Manors

The manors of Norfolk are relatively well documented, both in the Norfolk HER and within the wealth of research projects and fieldworks surveys for the county. Although the landholdings of a given manor may be relatively well documented, however, the actual site of the associated manor house is not always so easy to identify, although there is perhaps better evidence for this in Norfolk than some other counties, such as Somerset, for example. The Norfolk HER documents many medieval moated sites and probable manorial enclosures preserved as earthworks, although moated sites are generally a feature of the 12th to 14th centuries, and may partly reflect the fragmentation of manors during this period through subinfeudation (Campbell 1986, 227; 1994, 52; Rogerson 1994, 66). As the majority of moated sites lie on the Boulder Clay Plateau, this may also reflect the progressive expansion of settlement across the heavier clay soils of Norfolk, indicated by scatters of ‘Late Saxon’ pottery to originate from around the 10th to 11th centuries.

Chapter 6. Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships in Norfolk: the Eastern *Pays*

Introduction

The extensive material data for Roman and early medieval settlement in Norfolk presents the ideal opportunity to assess settlement relationships between these two periods and to quantify how far the evolution of settlement patterns during the 5th to 11th centuries was influenced by earlier patterns of Roman settlement. The objectives of this, as for the subsequent research on Kent and Somerset, have been to demonstrate these relationships within a defined study area, or group of study areas, across distinctive and adjacent *pays* and to assess the subtleties of regional variation through associating settlement processes to physical determiners such as soils and topography. The results of settlement analysis for Norfolk are presented over the two following chapters in relation to the county's *pays*. This chapter discusses the two eastern *pays*, the Boulder Clay Plateau and the Rich Loams. The western *pays*, the Breckland, West Norfolk Lowland, Chalk Scarp and the Good Sands, are discussed in Chapter 7.

The analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships has been quantified and tabulated for each of the Norfolk *pays* covered by this thesis. As the potential continuity, or discontinuity, of Roman settlement patterns into the 5th to 7th centuries is key to this thesis, the Roman settlements recorded for Norfolk have been distinguished by settlement hierarchy and their association with evidence for 'Early' through to 'Late Saxon' occupation, 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors within a 500m radius. This parameter, as discussed in Chapter 4 (p 67-68), was set to allow for a degree of settlement drift between the 5th to 11th centuries.

The discussion of results reflects on the trends and processes observed for settlement patterns between the Roman and early medieval patterns, drawing on site-based examples to illustrate the points being made, although the interpretation of individual sites histories is not the primary focus. The results reflect the evidence available to date, as retrieved through the methods stated in the methodology section. Any omissions or errors in interpreting the available evidence are acknowledged to be the authors' alone.

The Boulder Clay Plateau

Settlement data

Sixty-one Roman settlements are recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 6.1**: **Fig. 6.1**).

Sixty-three 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, in addition to 10 Domesday vills, 11 parish churches and 33 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 6.2**).

Soils Data

The soils of the Boulder Clay Plateau are typically heavy stagnogleys across the clay interfluves, with less heavy stagnogleyic argillic brown earths bordering the river valleys and plateau fringes and lighter humic-sandy gleys along the valley floors (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983) (**Fig. 6.4**). Of the 61 Roman settlements recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, 12 (20%) were located on typical stagnogleys, with 43 (70%) on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths and 6 (10%) on humic-sandy gleys. This demonstrates that, during the Roman period, the relatively better-drained loam over clay soils of the valleys slopes and plateau fringes were favoured over the heavier clay soils of the plateau interfluves. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 6.2**).

Of the early medieval settlements recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, 42 out of the 63 'Late Saxon' settlements (67%), 6 out the 11 parish churches (55%) and 14 out of the 33 manors (42%) were located on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, demonstrating that the loam over clay soils of the valley slopes continued as the preferred location for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is also shown below (**Fig. 6.3**).

The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation on the Boulder Clay Plateau suggests the majority of settlement for both periods was situated on the loam over clay soils of the valley slopes and plateau fringes and along the

Table 6.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 6.2 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author.

Table 6.1: The Boulder Clay Plateau

Total number of Roman settlements 61	Number			Percentage of Total		
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	**0**	**3**	**2**	**0%**	**5%**	**3%**
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	10	7	2%	16%	11%
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	1	5	1	2%	8%	2%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	0	3	4	0%	5%	7%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	2	8	6	3%	13%	10%
Roman settlements having 'Middle Saxon' but no 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m		7	8		11%	13%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	2	18	22	3%	30%	36%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	2	7	2%	3%	11%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	0	8	1	0%	13%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	0	8	1	0%	13%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	0	14	10	0%	23%	16%

Table 6.2: The Boulder Clay Plateau

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of the total number recorded within the study group		
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement
'Late Saxon' settlement	**63**	**2**	**18**	**34**	**3%**	**29%**	**54%**
Domesday vill	**11**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0%**	**55%**	**0%**
Parish church	**11**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0%**	**55%**	**0%**
Manor	**33**	**0**	**9**	**6**	**0%**	**27%**	**18%**

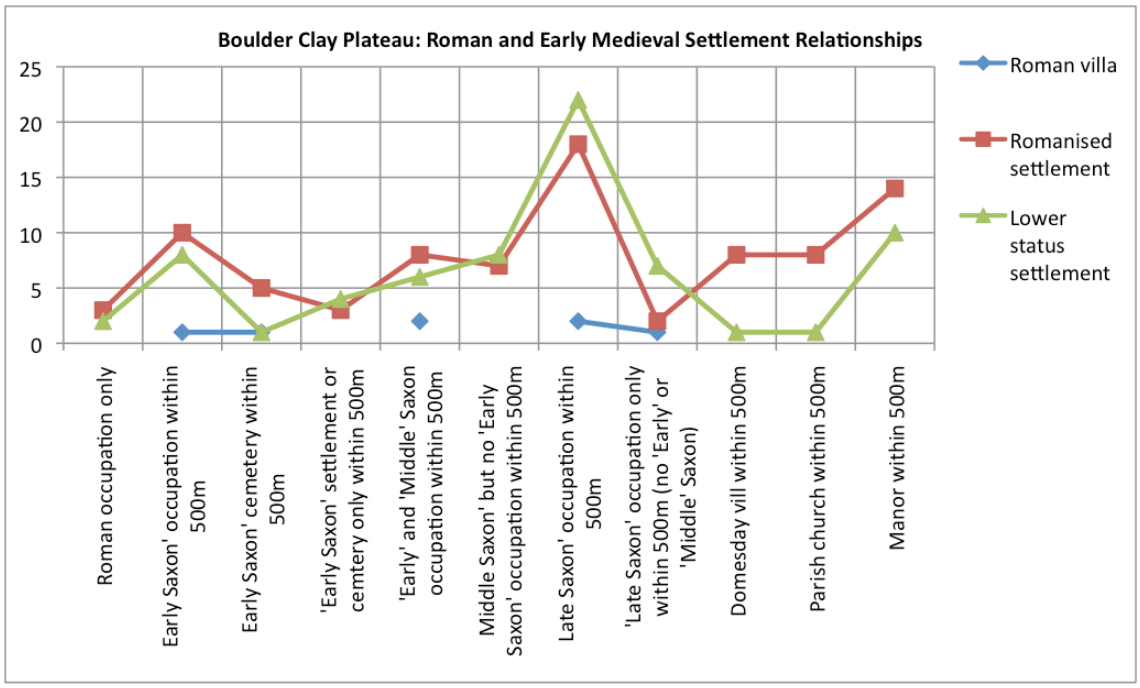


Figure 6.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Boulder Clay Plateau and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

sandy gley soils of the valley floors. In contrast, the heavier clay soils on the interfluves appear potentially subject to phases of settlement expansion and contraction during these periods. Whilst the dataset is admittedly limited, a degree of Roman settlement contraction may be indicated for both the heavier clays and loam over clay soils, however, with possible expansion back across these soils by the 9th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 6.2 and 6.3**).

Where Roman settlement on the Boulder Clay Plateau is associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation, this is most apparent on the valley slopes and, to a lesser extent, the heavier clay interfluves (**Fig. 6.2**). There is an increase in Roman settlements associated with 'Middle' or 'Late' Saxon occupation on the valley slopes and along the sandy gley soils of the valley floors. This potentially indicates that from around the 8th century the valleys became the favoured location for developing settlement cores, largely consolidating the surviving pattern of late Roman settlement. Where parish churches are associated with Roman occupation these also predominate on the valley slopes and along the valley floors, indicating a consolidation of settlement along the valleys of the Boulder Clay Plateau by the 9th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 6.2 and 6.3**).

Where Roman settlement is associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation and/or

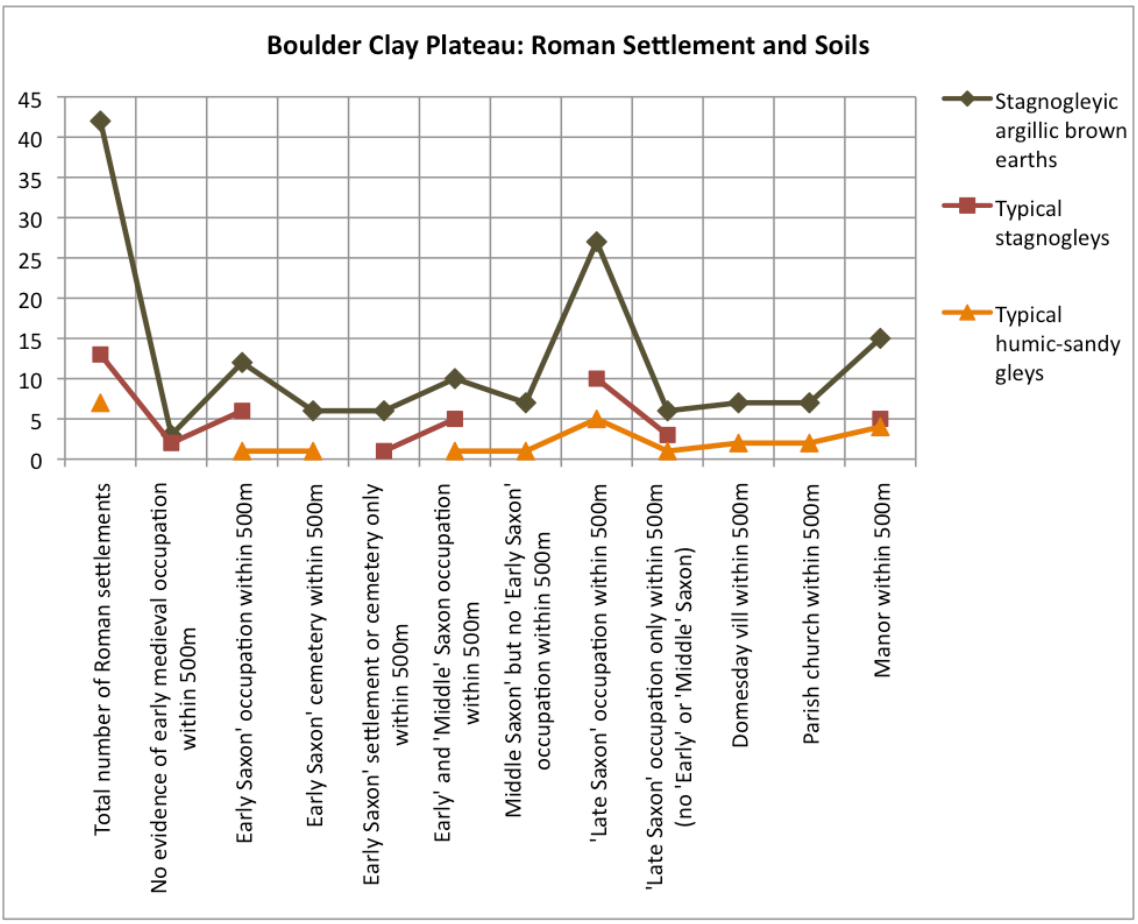


Figure 6.2. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the Boulder Clay Plateau to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

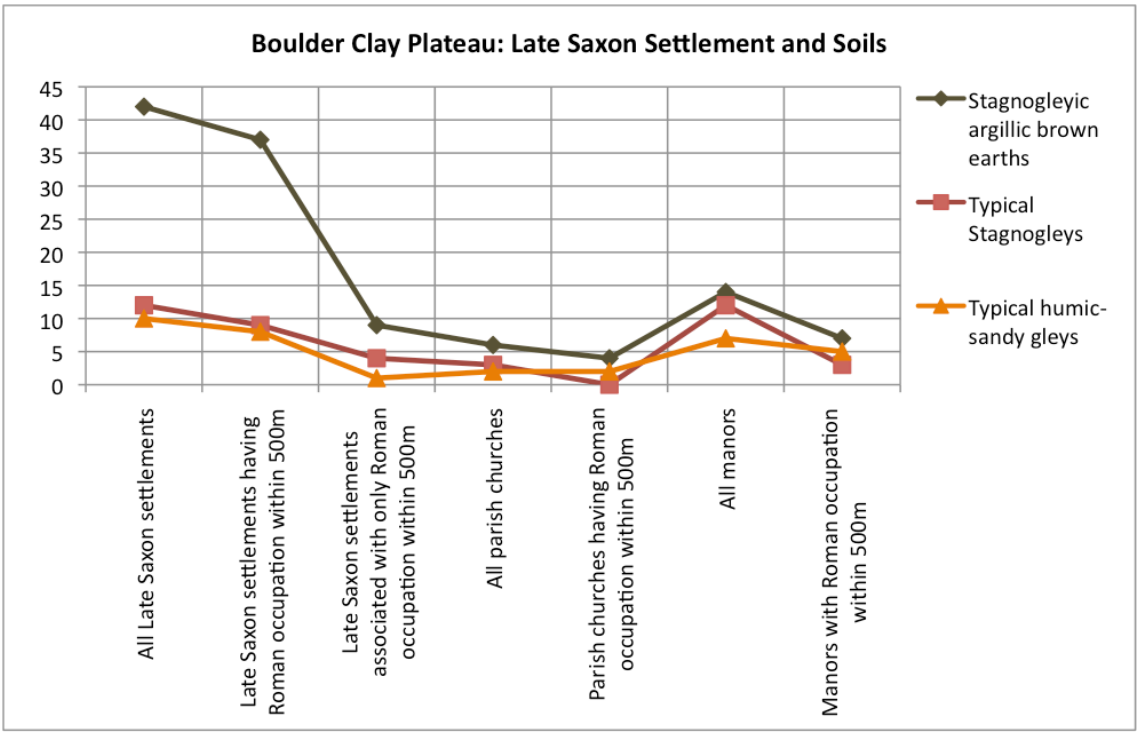


Figure 6.3. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Boulder Clay Plateau to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

manors, this is apparent both along the valley slopes and floors, and across the heavier clay soils of the interfluves (**Figs. 6.2 and 6.3**). As suggested above, this may reflect settlement expansion across the clay interfluves between the 9th to 11th centuries, possibly increasing with manorial fragmentation and the shift of settlement towards common ground from around the 11th to 12th centuries onwards (see Williamson 2006, 52). Where Roman settlements are associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation only, this also occurs largely across the clay interfluves, although an association of Roman settlement and manors is equally indicated for both the valley slopes and interfluvial areas (**Figs. 6.2 and 6.3**).

Discussion

The Boulder Clay Plateau appears to have been densely settled during the Roman period: Williamson (2006, 156) estimates the mean density of Roman settlement across the Boulder Clay at between 1 and 1.5 per km^2. The data further suggests that the greatest density of Roman settlement was located along the major river valleys, with substantial evidence for higher status occupation (**Fig. 6.4**). Roman settlement distribution across the clay interfluves is not so well demonstrated, although a scatter of lower status sites are recorded on the heavier clay soils at Fransham and Hargham, on the *pays*' western borders (**Fig. 6.4**).

Only five Roman settlements on the Boulder Clay Plateau, to date, suggest abandonment by the 5th century, a relative percentage of only 8%. As a result, genuine patterns of Roman settlement contraction across the *pays* as a whole by this point remain uncertain. The abandoned settlements are largely located along the valley slopes and the clay interfluves and are too few, in themselves, to indicate any real trend in settlement contraction by the 5th to 7th centuries. The wider evidence on the boulder Clay Plateau, however, largely suggests the continuity of Roman settlement into the 5th to 11th centuries across large parts of the *pays*, particularly in proximity to the river valleys.

At North Elmham, in the north of the *pays*, for example, there is evidence for Roman occupation along the Wensum and Blackwater valleys, at broadly 1km spacing, with evidence for high status Roman occupation (NHER 1087) on the southern margins of Great Wood, *c*. 1km west of the 'Early Saxon' cemetery at

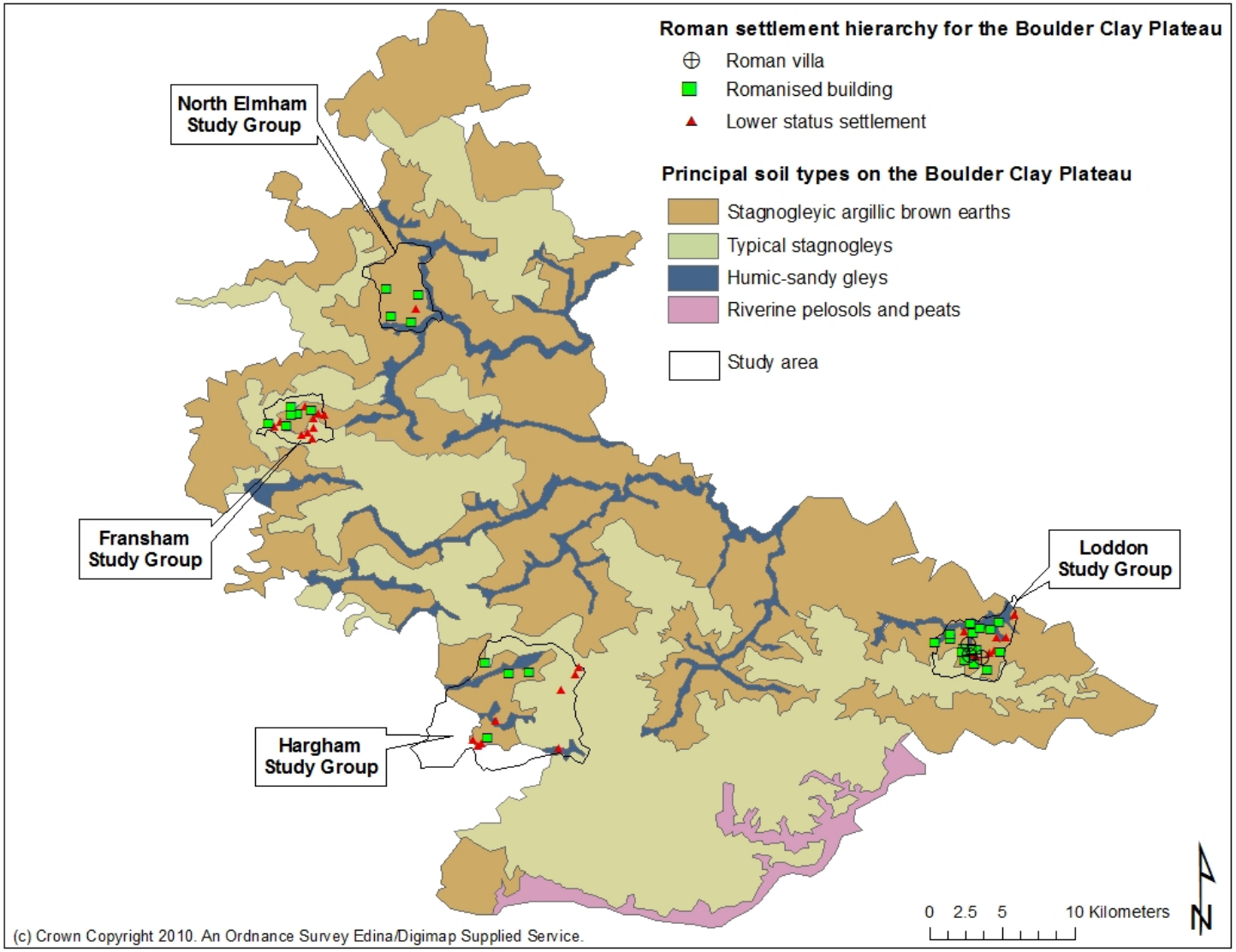


Figure 6.4. The distribution of Roman settlement within the selected study areas for the Boulder Clay Plateau, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the *pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

Spong Hill (NHER 1012), and in close vicinity of the Domesday settlement of North Elmham (NHER 1013) (**Fig. 6.5**). The clearest evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation in North Elmham is associated with both the Spong Hill cemetery, which also overlies an area of lower status Roman occupation, and the higher status Roman settlement *c*. 1km to its west (NHER 1087). Despite being an important focus of the wider community during the 5th and 6th centuries (Rickett 1995, 156), Spong Hill appears to go out of use by the 7th century, with a potential shift of settlement northwards by this point (**Fig. 6.5**).

In Loddon parish, in the southeast of the *pays*, fieldwalking (Davison 1990) revealed a concentration of Roman settlements along a ridge of ground bordering the Loddon Beck (**Fig. 6.6**). Whilst their contemporaneity is uncertain, there is significant evidence for high status occupation, with three possible villa sites (NHER 13009; 1798-18012; 17809). A concentration of 'Early Saxon' pottery is evidenced along the river valley, with a spread of 'Early Saxon' cemetery evidence across the wider group (NHER 1798-18012; 17184; 17977). 'Middle Saxon' pottery, including Ipswich Ware, is also largely distributed along the valley slopes, suggesting a shift in settlement focus in favour of the river valley by the 8th to 9th centuries (**Fig. 6.6**).

At Fransham, on the western margins of the Boulder Clay Plateau, fieldwalking by Rogerson (1995), revealed a broadly dispersed Roman settlement pattern, with predominantly higher status occupation along the river valley slopes and lower status Roman occupation on the heavier clay interfluves (**Fig. 6.7).** The evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation suggests a contraction of settlement towards the lighter soils by the 5th to 7th centuries, particularly concentrated around the main springhead (**Fig. 6.7**). A core of Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement at Great Fransham, including a possible 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 20508), appears to have influenced the later consolidation of settlement here between the 8th to 9th centuries.

The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation across the Boulder Clay Plateau appears to suggest the beginnings of settlement consolidation, largely, but not exclusively, focussed on the river valleys. A 'Middle Saxon' settlement to the west of the parish church at North Elmham (NHER 10113) was exposed during excavation in the 1970's (Wade-Martins 1980a). Residual Roman pottery was scattered across the excavation site, while Roman tile and burnt daub

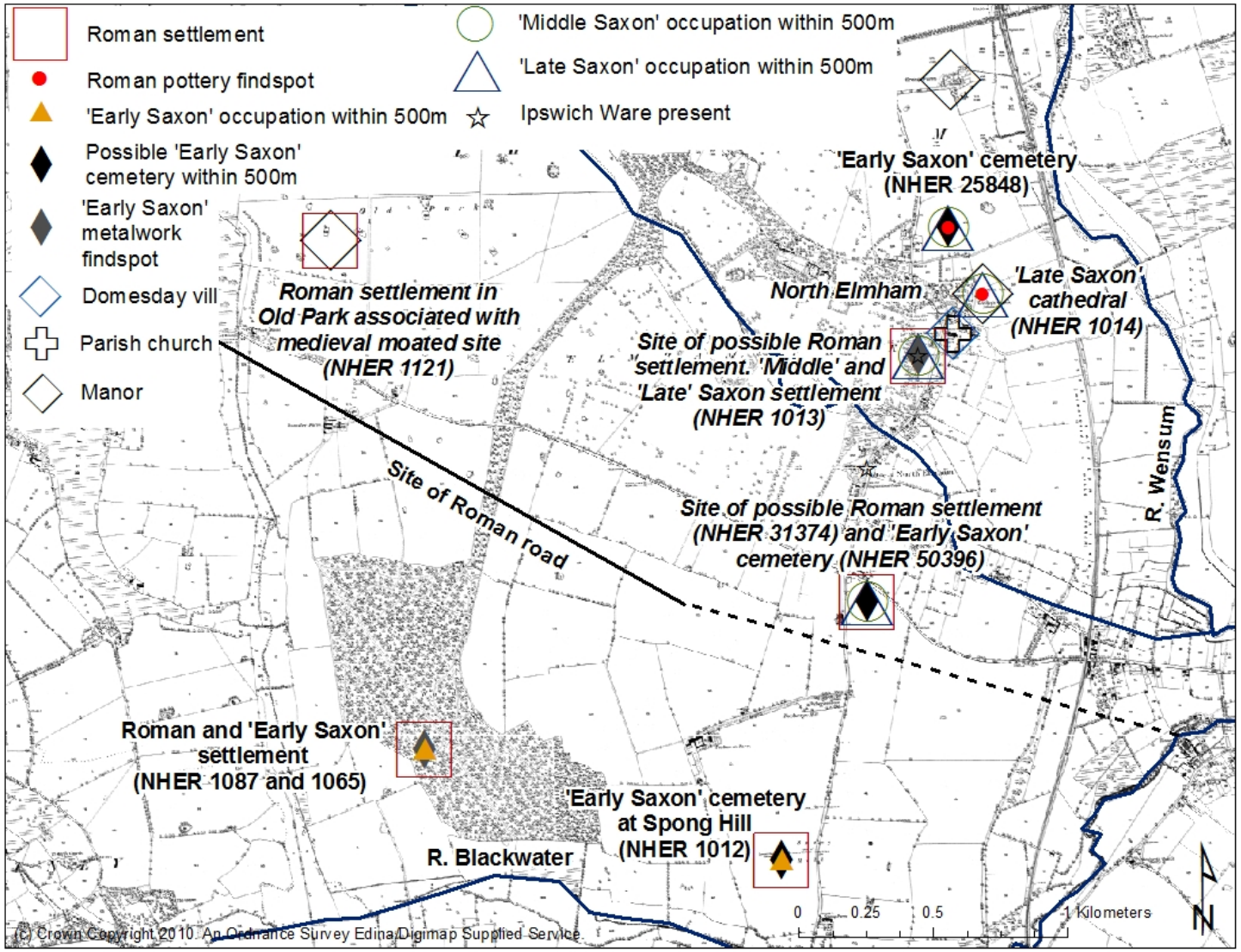


Figure 6.5. Roman and early medieval occupation at North Elmham shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

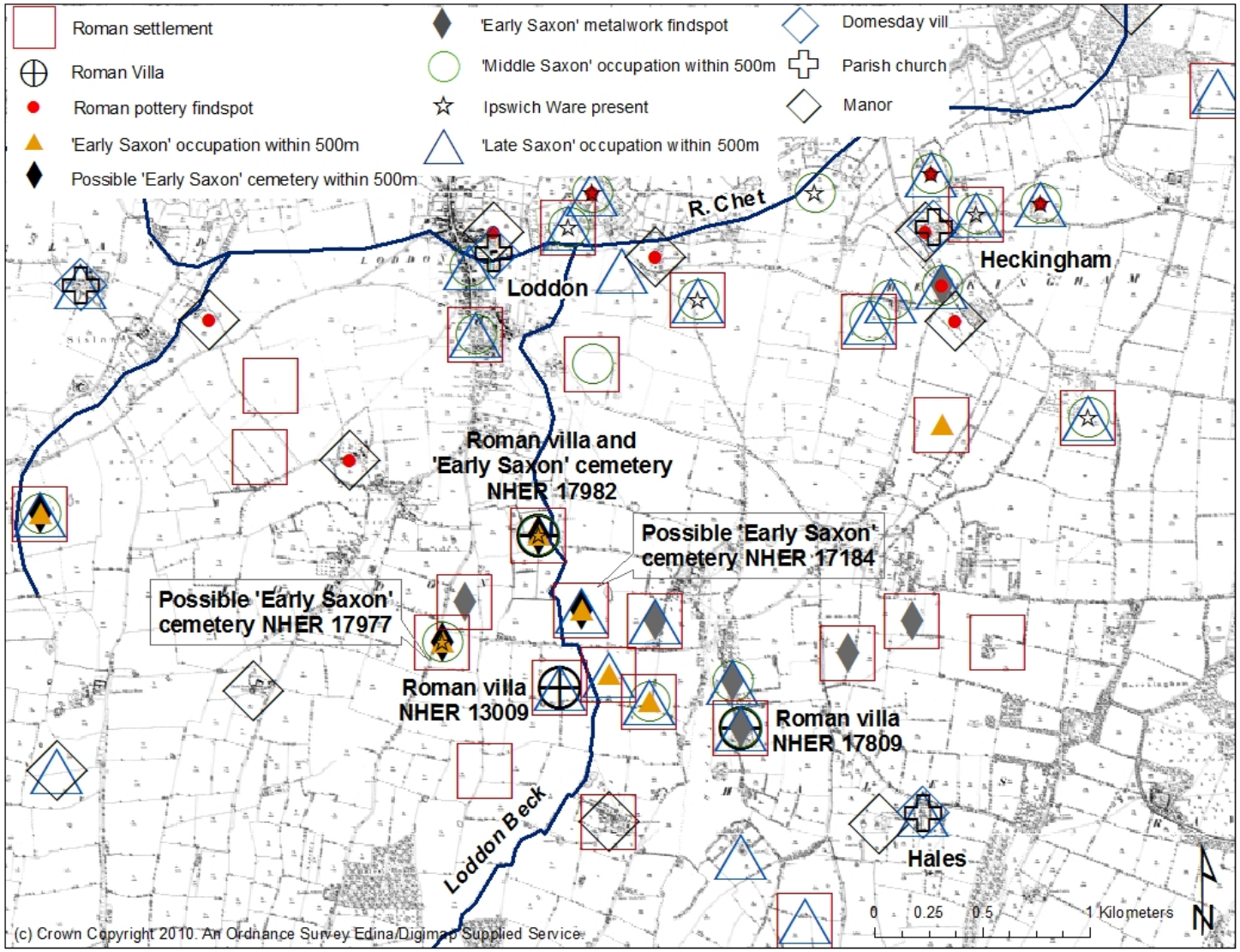


Figure 6.6. Roman and early medieval occupation at Hales, Heckingham and Loddon shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

recovered from the upper fills of two timber-lined wells was stratigraphically dated to around the 9th century AD (*ibid*, 479) (**Fig. 6.9**). This was thought to be reused material from a high status building in the vicinity, which became redeposited following an episode of burning and destruction (*ibid*, 479-483). A cathedral was established at North Elmham, possibly as early as the 8th century. Established over the site of a pre-Conquest church, and subsequently the site of the Bishops' manor, the cathedral is a conjectured site for the see of the Elmham diocese (*ibid*, 13). Its potential proximity to high status Roman occupation reflects the frequently observed relationship between early medieval ecclesiastical buildings and high status Roman remains (see Bell 1998, for example). The re-use of Roman material in church construction was common until about the late 10th century (Eaton 2000, 133), although this was sometimes imported (*ibid* 17). Given this, the provenance of the Roman material at North Elmham, or the precise location of Roman settlement, remains unclear.

At Loddon and Heckingham (**Fig. 6.6**), the introduction of Ipswich Ware may indicate that changing economic factors influenced a shift in administrative control northwards towards the Chet valley by the 8th to 9th centuries, with the villa settlement bordering the Loddon Beck diminishing in importance by this time. Domesday manors are established near centres of high status Roman settlement at Loddon and Heckingham by the 11th century, along with their respective parish churches: a further Domesday manor and parish church is located at Hales to the east, although this does not currently appear to be associated with underlying Roman occupation (**Fig. 6.6**).

The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation at Fransham indicates that a substantial settlement site, or possibly two separate sites (NHER 20651; 20653), had developed near Crowe Hall, around 800m to the east of Great Fransham church, by the 8th to 9th centuries (Rogerson (1995, 108) (**Fig. 6.7**). In addition, there is evidence for a wider scatter of 'Middle Saxon' findspots in Fransham, though the sources for these are these are unclear as to their nature. The Norfolk HER includes some records that quote Rogerson's (*ibid*) thesis amongst its sources, but also refer to additional fieldwalking finds, mostly, but not exclusively, by Rogerson, that appear to variously predate and post date the thesis. It is not always clear, however, whether the earlier records are incorporated within, or additional to, Rogerson's (*ibid*) thesis. There are also

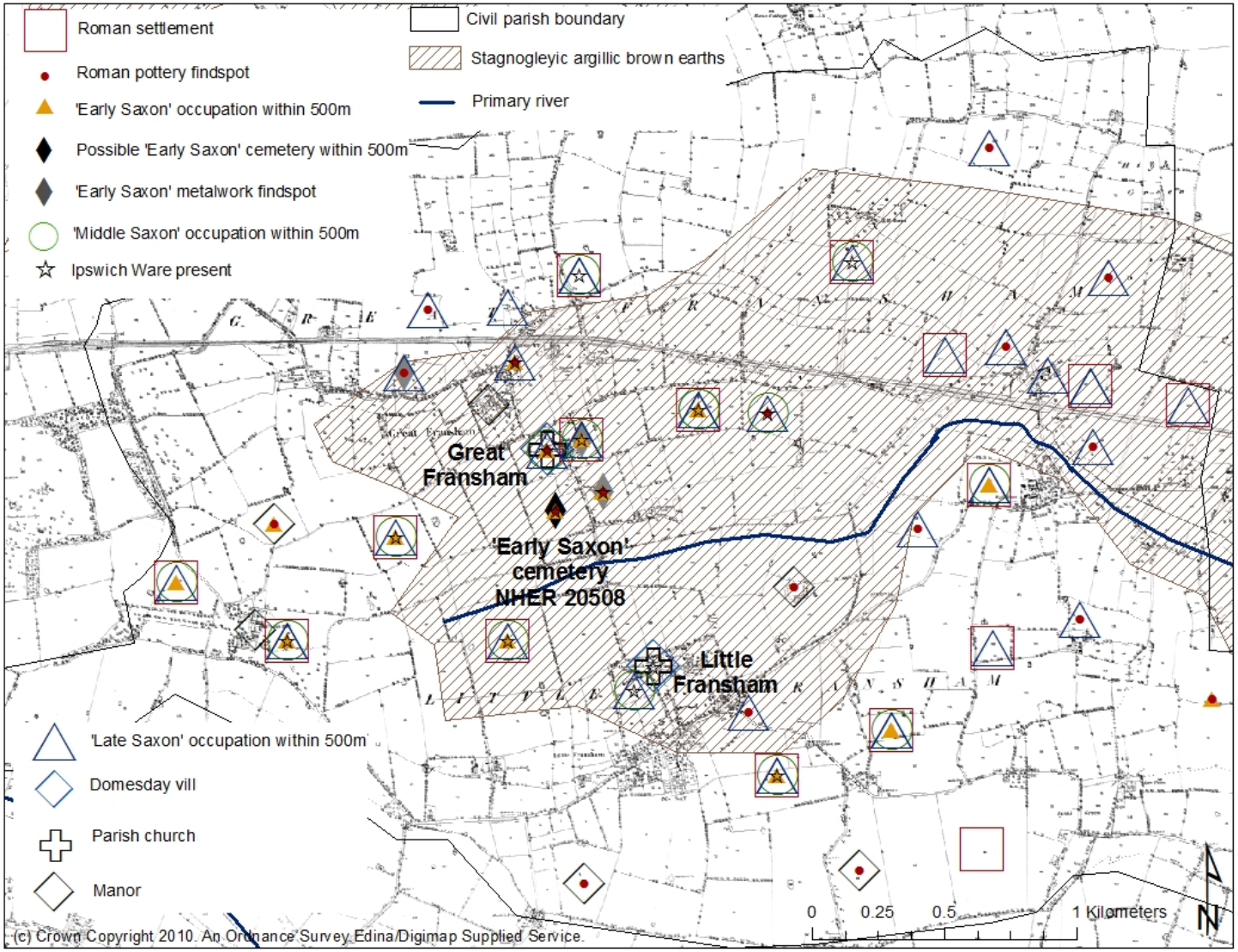


Figure 6.7. Roman and early medieval occupation at Fransham shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The extent of argillic brown earths bordering the river valleys is also shown. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

records in the Norfolk HER detailing more recent evaluations, such as at All Saints Church, Great Fransham and St Mary's Church, Little Fransham, for example, which record 'Middle Saxon' pottery from molehills in their respective churchyards (NHER 4206; 7297, and see Crawley 2007, 6; Crawley and Sillwood 2010, 5). Such evidence potentially suggests the presence of additional 'Middle Saxon' settlement cores in Fransham. The consolidation of settlement at Great and Little Fransham during the 8th to 9th centuries would certainly be in keeping with similar evidence elsewhere in Norfolk, as demonstrated at Barton Bendish, on Breckland (Chapter 6, 140) or Sedgeford, on the Chalk Scarp (Chapter 6, 166), for example.

Rogerson (1995, 111) has interpreted the thin scatter of 'Middle Saxon' findspots across Fransham as manuring activity, rather than evidence of settlement sites, as such. Rogerson (*ibid*, 110-112) also noted that some areas of Fransham appear to be 'blank' of 'Middle Saxon' pottery, possibly reflecting areas of upland pasture or woodland during the 8th to 9th centuries (*ibid*, 110). As discussed above (p 94), the definition of 'Middle Saxon' settlement sites in various fieldwalking surveys of Norfolk varies considerably, and such limited scatters elsewhere have been interpreted as possible evidence for settlement sites during the 8th to 9th centuries. Examples include Mannington and Wolterton (Davison 1995, 166), for example, where three 'Middle Saxon' settlement sites are putatively identified on the basis of less than three sherds, and Heckingham and Lodden (Davison 1990, 16) where several 'Middle Saxon' 'sites' are recorded on the basis of less than ten sherds.

The lack of clarity and consistency in regard to such disparate material evidence means that, for the moment, it is hard to be precise about its interpretation, whether as evidence for wider dispersed settlement during the 8th to 9th centuries, or more simply manuring scatter, as suggested by Rogerson (1995, 111). One observation that can be made for Fransham, however, is that the scatter of 'Middle Saxon' findspots are predominantly situated across the valley slopes bordering Great Fransham, and appear distinctly associated with areas of underlying Roman settlement (**Fig. 6.7**). Furthermore, there appears to be a thin distribution of combined 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon pottery scatters across the wider valley soils of northeast Fransham, spreading out onto the clay interfluves. This may indicate some breaking away of settlement by the

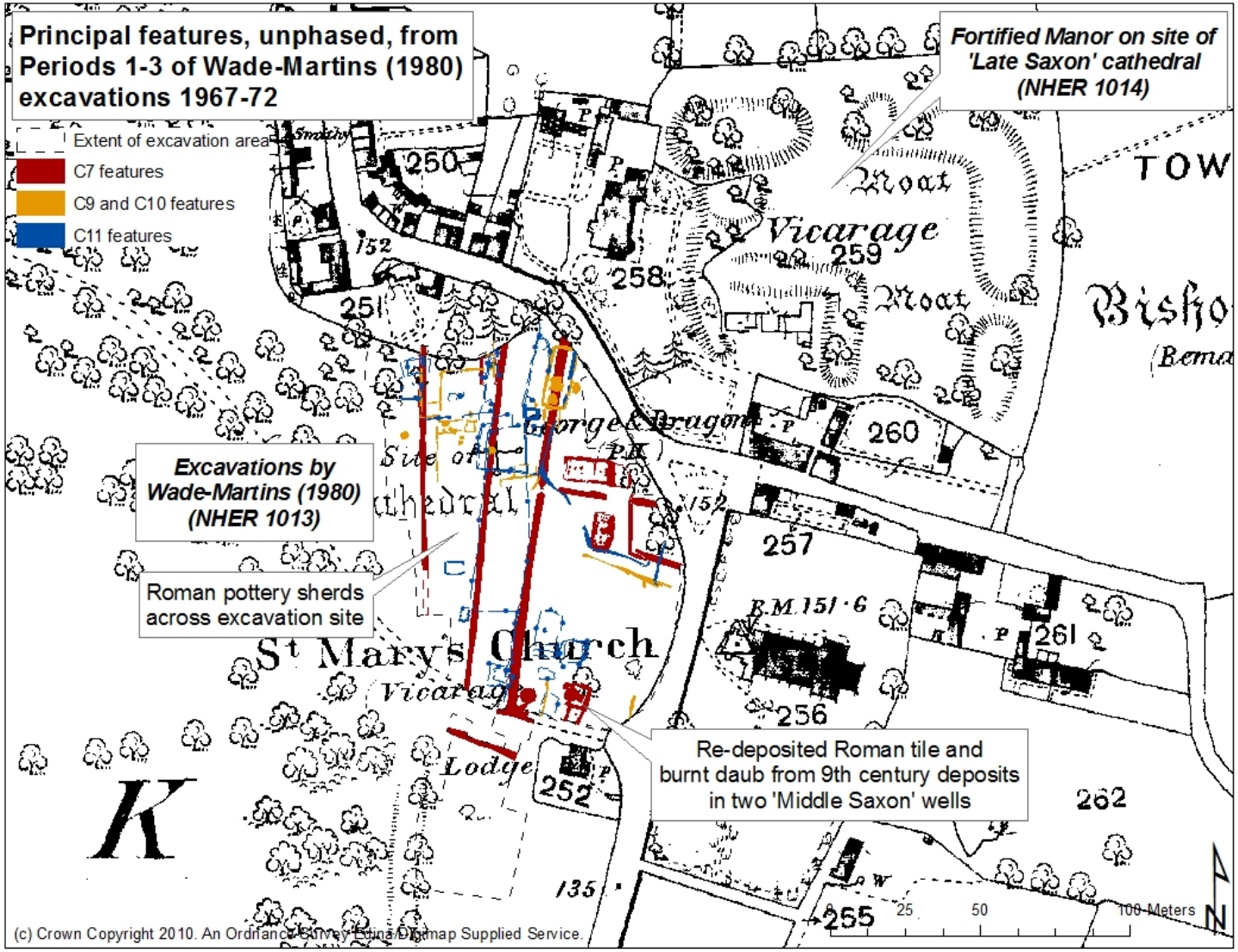


Figure 6.8. The principal features exposed during Wade-Martins' (1980) excavations at North Elmham, showing C8, C9and 10 and C11 features, although not differentiating between the phasing of features during these periods. The site of the 'Late Saxon' cathedral to the northwest underlies the later fortified Bishop's manor. Drawn features reflect the collective data from a series of geo-referenced figures extracted from Wade-Martins (1980), set against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

8th to 9th centuries (**Fig. 6.7**), thus perpetuating a potentially dispersed settlement pattern, if not, necessarily, its continuity. These possible 'daughter settlements' (see Rippon 2008, 188) are also, however, largely associated with evidence for Roman settlement, so their precise origins remain unclear.

The evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation across the Boulder Clay Plateau suggests that settlement consolidation along the river valleys continued to develop between the 9th to 11th centuries, distinctly influenced by patterns of underlying Roman settlement. There appears to have been an expansion of settlement on the wider valley soils and out onto the clay interfluves. Where Roman settlement is associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation and/or manors only across the poorer soils this may reflect resettlement rather than potential continuity. Within Old Park, to the west of North Elmham, for example, an area of 2nd to 4th century Roman occupation partly underlies a medieval moated site (NHER 1121). Situated on the heavier clay soils, this may be an example of resettlement by around the 11th to 12th centuries, although the proximity of the two sites may reflect some surviving memory that sustained its preferential location. Certainly it would appear that the location of the Roman settlement might have influenced that of the manorial site in some way.

The evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement across Loddon, Heckingham and Hales indicates relatively concentrated occupation around Loddon and Heckingham by the 9th to 11th centuries. This appears rather loosely nucleated, with a more widely dispersed settlement pattern of farms and manors away from the river valleys, particularly across the clay interfluves (see **Fig. 6.6**). Where these are associated with Roman settlement it may indicate resettlement between the 9th to 11th centuries, rather than potential settlement continuity, as these soils are suggested to have seen some contraction of Roman settlement by the 5th to 7th centuries. A similar pattern of settlement development by the 9th to 11th centuries can be observed at Fransham, with loosely nucleated cores at Great and Little Fransham, albeit much smaller in scale than Loddon and Heckingham, and a wider dispersed settlement pattern across the wider clay interfluves. This may also partly reflect settlement expansion beyond the valley slopes and across the clay interfluves by the 9th to 11th centuries, concomitant with an increase in manorial sites (**Fig. 6.7**). Whilst a number of 'Late Saxon' settlements and manors on the clay interfluves demonstrate a limited

association with Roman pottery, the evidence would currently appear to indicate resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, particularly as many lack evidence for any interim occupation (**Fig. 6.7**). This contrasts with the majority of Roman settlements closer to Great Fransham itself, which demonstrate continuous occupation chronologies, thereby increasing the likelihood of settlement continuity on the lighter valley soils between the 5th to 12th centuries.

Summary

There were some distinct differences in Roman and early medieval settlement processes on the Boulder Clay Plateau, with patterns of settlement by the 11th century demonstrating clear variation between the individual study groups. Nonetheless, some broader trends can be observed. The lighter valleys soils potentially saw a greater continuity of the late Roman settlement pattern than the heavier clay interfluves, where a contraction of Roman settlement by the 5th to 7th centuries is suggested. A further phase of settlement change is indicated somewhere between the 8th to 9th centuries, reflected in wider patterns of settlement shift, whether through more localised displacement, as suggested at Fransham, for example, or more wholesale dislocation, as suggested at Loddon and Heckingham, for example.

The general trend demonstrates that small, loosely nucleated settlements predominated along the river valleys of the Boulder Clay Plateau by the 11th century, with a more dispersed settlement pattern of farms, hamlets and manors, across the clay interfluves. The pattern of 11th century settlement on the lighter valley soils of the *pays* was clearly influenced by that of the late Roman period, with higher status sites in particular, but excluding Roman villas, distinctly associated with the siting of Domesday manor houses and parish churches. The association of Roman settlement with 'Late Saxon' settlements and manors on the clay interfluves by the 11th century may, however, partly reflect an expansion of settlement back onto the heavier clay soils by this time, particularly where there is no interim evidence for 5th to 9th century occupation.

Rich Loams

Settlement data

Twenty-five Roman settlements were recorded for the Rich Loams. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 6.3**: **Fig. 6.9**).

Twenty-seven 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Rich Loams, in addition to 8 Domesday vills, 8 parish churches and 8 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 6.4**).

Soils data

The soils of the Rich Loams are predominantly typical brown earths, deep, well-drained, loams over glacial till or outwash gravels (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983). Along the river valleys the soils are typical humic gleys, with some humic-sandy gleys (**Fig. 6.12**). Of the 25 Roman settlements recorded for the Rich Loams, 24 (96%) were located on brown earths, with 1 (4%) on humic gleys, demonstrating that the dense loamy soils were the favoured location for Roman settlement. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 6.10**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the Rich Loams, 25 out of 26 'Late Saxon' settlements (96%), 7 out of 8 parish churches (88%) and 5 out of 8 manors (63%) were located on typical brown earths, demonstrating that these soils were still the preferred location for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type is shown below (**Fig. 6.11**).

The broad uniformity of soils type across the Rich Loams makes it difficult to observe trends and processes of settlement relationships between the Roman and early medieval periods, relative to soils alone. The majority of settlement during both periods is situated on the dense loamy soils of the *pays*, with only one Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement, and one parish church, located on the wetter gley soils of the valley floors (**Figs. 6.10 and 6.11**). There is a slightly greater ratio of manors located on the wetter valley soils, although this is

Table 6.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Rich Loams, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 6.4 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors recorded for the Rich Loams, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author.

Table 6.3: The Rich Loams

Total number of Roman settlements 25	Number			Percentage of Total		
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	0	0	3	0%	0%	12%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	2	8	0%	8%	32%
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	0	1	0	0%	4%	0%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	0	1	8	0%	4%	32%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	2	3	0%	8%	12%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	4	13	0%	16%	52%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	0	3	0%	0%	12%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	0	2	6	0%	8%	24%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	0	2	6	0%	8%	24%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	0	3	7	0%	12%	28%

Table 6.4: The Rich Loams

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of the total number recorded within the study group		
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement
'Late Saxon' settlement	27	0	5	17	0%	19%	63%
Domesday vill	8	0	1	3	0%	13%	38%
Parish church	8	0	1	3	0%	13%	38%
Manor	8	0	2	2	0%	25%	25%

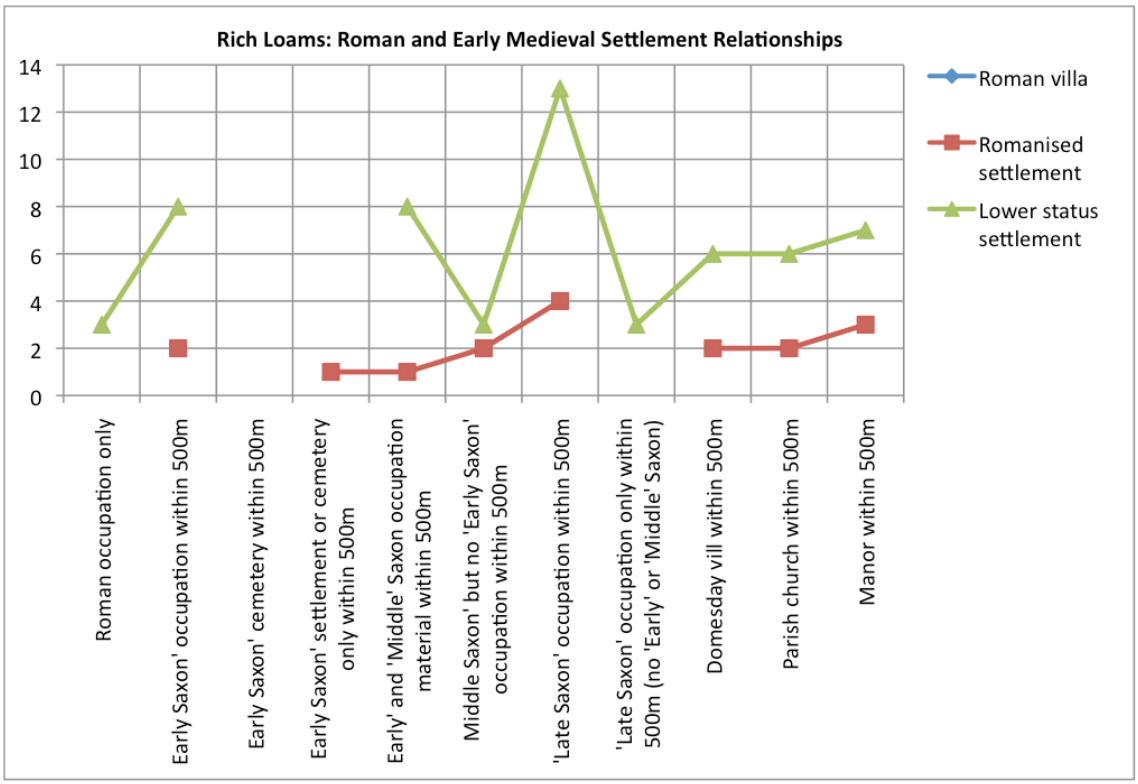


Figure 6.9. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Rich Loams relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

relative, given the small dataset. Only one of these manors is associated with Roman occupation (**Fig. 6.11**).

There is a lower ratio of Roman settlements associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation on the dense loamy soils, compared with greater ratios of Roman settlements on these soils associated with 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon occupation (**Fig. 6.10**). This may indicate that the Rich Loams saw a degree of contraction from these soils by the 5th to 7th centuries, with a shift and/or expansion of settlement back onto these soils between the 8th to 11th centuries. These trends are similar to those observed for the Boulder Clay Plateau and, where 'Early Saxon' occupation is absent, may reflect a degree of resettlement from the 8th century as much as potential settlement continuity from the late Roman period, although the poor survivability of 'Early Saxon' pottery should be borne in mind.

Discussion

The research results for the Rich Loams suggest a dispersed Roman settlement pattern of some density, the majority of which suggests lower status occupation. No Roman villas and only five Romanised settlements were recorded, all within

the Mannington study group, in the west of the *pays* (**Fig. 6.12**). The distribution of Roman settlement largely favours the dense loamy soils of the interfluves, excepting a small concentration of higher status Roman settlement along the River Bure at Mannington (NHER 28041; 11339) (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**).

There is good evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation on the Rich Loams, largely in the form of pottery scatters. Evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement in the Mannington study group is largely confined to Mannington and Wickmere, in the northwest (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**). The close association with Roman settlement indicates the potential continuity of a dispersed settlement pattern into the 5th to 7th centuries in this part of the *pays*, although a possible contraction in the Roman settlement pattern is suggested at Wolterton and Calthorpe, in the east (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**). At Erpingham, a series of undated cropmarks north of the churchyard (NHER 12991) are conjectured as the site of an 'Early Saxon' Great Hall (see NHER), although this is currently unproven. To date, there is no evidence for associated Roman occupation at Erpingham, which lies outside the Mannington and Wolterton estates fieldwalked by Davison (1995) and therefore lacks such detailed survey. Whilst the available evidence might suggest new settlement at Erpingham by the 5th century, the genuine absence of Roman occupation cannot be assumed without further evaluation.

In the Witton study group there is more concrete evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement, as excavation of two independent sites (NHER 1009; 16641) (Lawson 1983) has revealed a substantial number of sunken-featured buildings, hearths, and other related features. At one of these (NHER 1009), the internal hearths were found to contain quantities of Romano-British material, possibly the result of deliberate infill (*ibid*, 57). The presence of Romano-British material, even redeposited, prompts some discussion of the ethnicity of the occupants. On one hand there appears to be newly introduced forms of architecture, on the other the possible continued use, or re-use, of native cultural artefacts. The buildings exposed at Witton were interpreted as differing in form and function from types observed at sites such as Sutton Courtenay or West Stow (*ibid*, 57-58), for example, although how far either of these particular sites can be considered typical of wider 'Early Saxon' settlement is possibly a matter for debate (see Chapter 2, 32, 35; Chapter 4, 66). This could potentially, then,

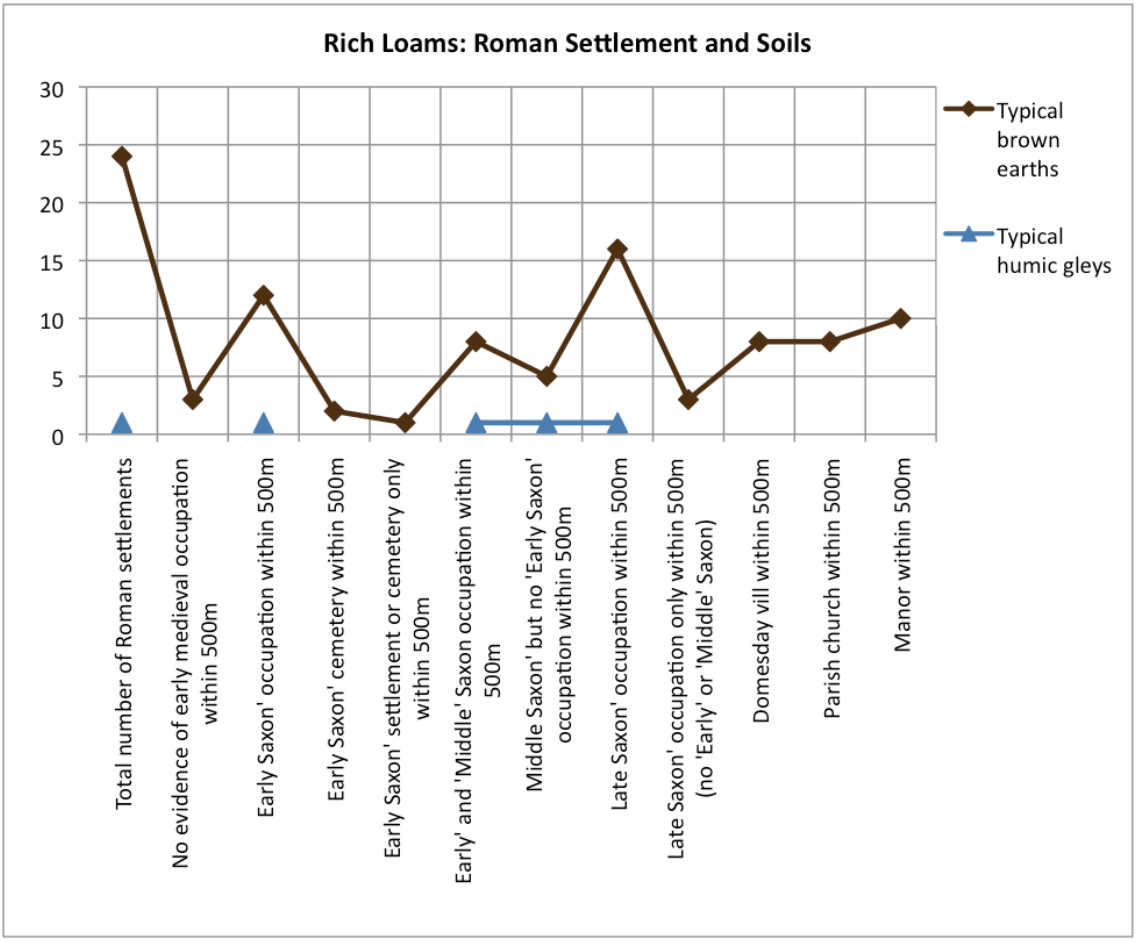


Figure 6.10. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the Rich Loams to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

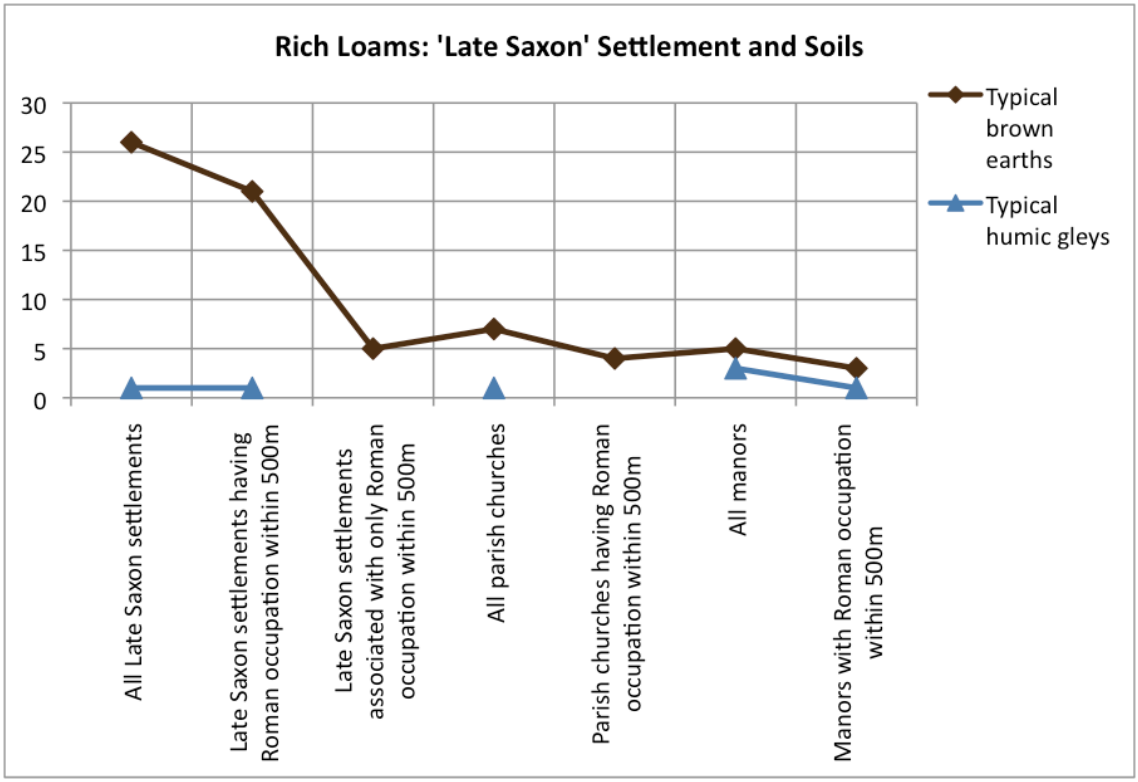


Figure 6.11. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Rich Loams to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

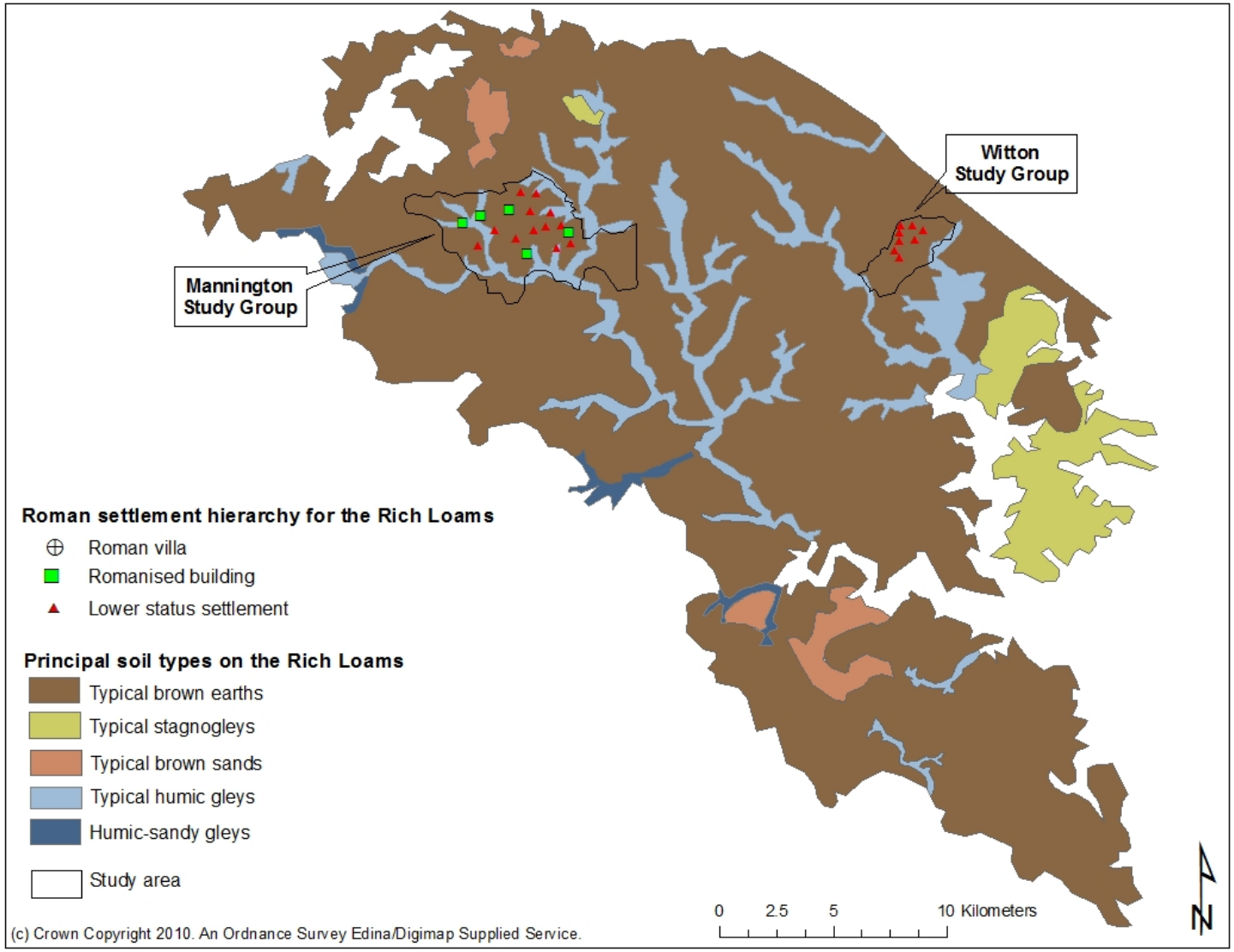


Figure 6.12. The distribution of Roman settlement within the selected study areas for the Rich Loams, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

reflect either native or migrant occupation, and a range of functions and status, with acculturation a possibility on both sides. Occupation at the two sites in Witton dated between the 5th to 7th centuries, although not all the buildings may have been in use simultaneously (*ibid*, 69). Whilst the evidence appears to indicate rudimentary buildings, possibly reflecting early colonisation, as suggested at Mucking (Essex) (see Dixon 1993, 125 and Chapter 2, 28), for example, the buildings, and their close association with Roman settlement, might equally suggest the potential continuity of native occupation.

There is currently a distinct lack of 'Early Saxon' cemetery evidence from the Mannington and Witton study groups to inform either on patterns of occupation or the potential ethnicity of the local population. Whether this is due to a bias in recovery or some genuine difference in the relationship between 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemeteries in this part of Norfolk is unclear. Whatever the explanation, and it could be that some genuine ethnic or cultural difference is reflected here, the evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation on the Rich Loams is almost exclusively associated with Roman settlement, save at Erpingham (NHER 12991), which currently shows no suggestion of Roman origins.

The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' settlement across the Rich Loams appears to reflect mixed patterns of settlement development. In the Mannington study group the evidence suggests a distinct shift in settlement towards the river valleys by the 8th to 9th centuries, with pottery scatters at Erpingham, Calthorpe, Mannington and Wickmere potentially indicating the beginnings of settlement consolidation, which subsequently influenced the location of the respective Domesday vills and parish churches (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**). Although Erpingham, Little Barningham and Itteringham suggest no evidence, to date, for associated Roman occupation these fall outside the area fieldwalked by Davison (1995). Wickmere and Mannington demonstrate an association with both Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation, suggesting potential settlement continuity from the 5th century onwards: at Mannington the evidence for Roman and Saxon occupation (NHER 28533; 28022) also potentially suggests a degree of settlement shift by the 8th to 9th centuries, while Roman and Saxon occupation (NHER 28526) at Wickmere appears more compact and discrete (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**). At Calthorpe there is evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation associated with a relatively extensive area of Roman settlement,

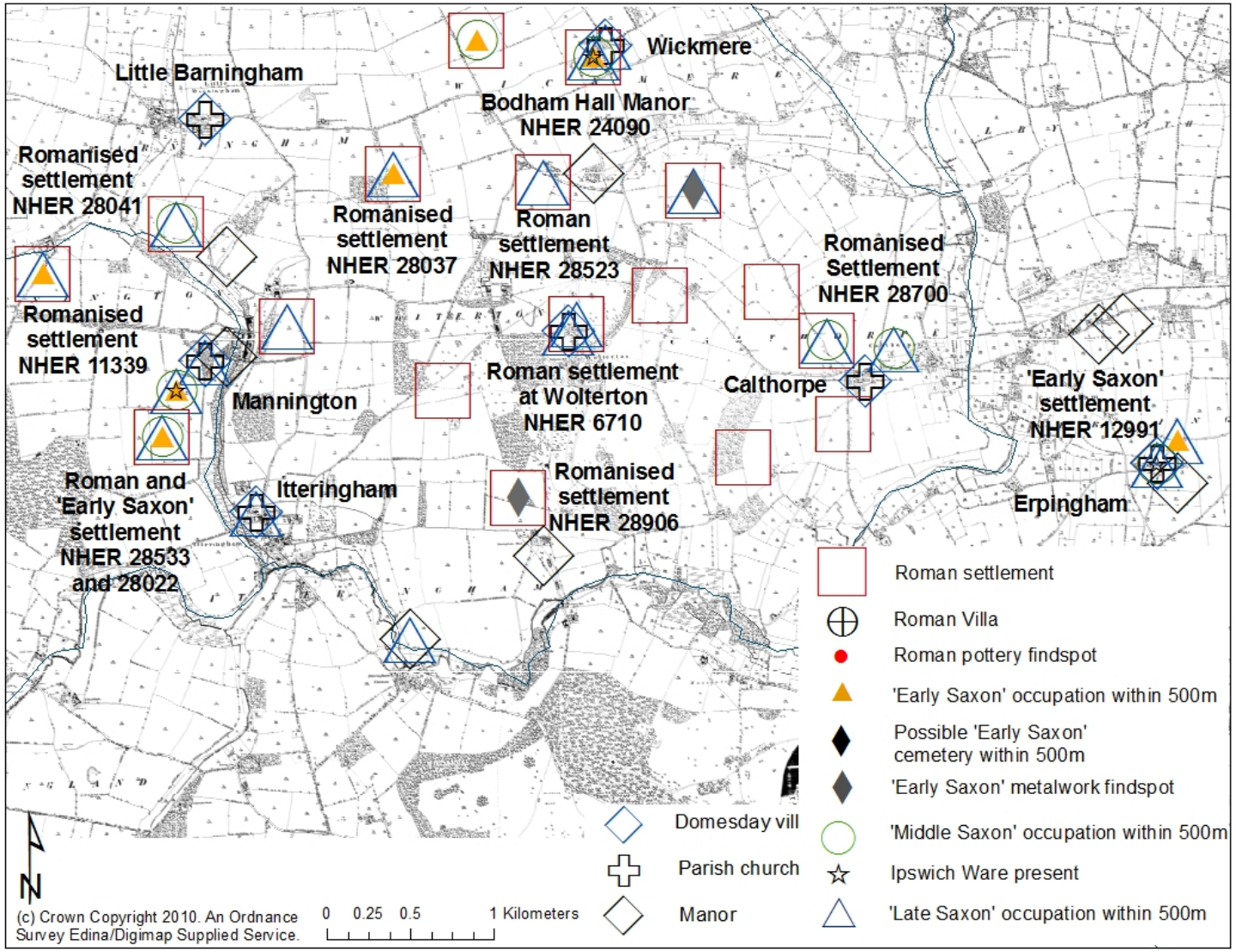


Figure 6.13. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation across the Mannington study group shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

but, to date, there is no suggestion for 'Early Saxon' occupation here. Calthorpe falls within Davison's (1995) survey area, so the absence of 'Early Saxon' pottery is notable. It may reflect genuine absence, with implications of resettlement between the 8th to 9th centuries, although, given the ephemeral nature of 'Early Saxon' pottery, settlement in the vicinity may yet be shown.

At Witton the evidence for 8th to 9th occupation indicates little change in the pattern of dispersed Roman settlement. The documentary evidence at Witton also supports the potential survival of a dispersed settlement pattern at Witton by the 8th to 9th centuries (Lawson 1983, 71), although this does not wholly preclude some degree of settlement shift or abandonment by this time. Towards the edges of Witton Heath, for example, a Roman enclosure (NHER 38866) and kiln site (NHER 7023) is associated with a series of cropmarks (NHER 27242), which may suggest evidence for a phasing and/or shift of settlement here, possibly within the confines of the Roman period (**Fig. 6.15**). Precise dating is unclear, but pottery from the kiln site is tentatively dated to around the 3rd century (*ibid*, 49). 'Early Saxon' occupation evidence is lacking and the nearest evidence for 'Middle Saxon' pottery is from a Roman settlement (NHER 7017), *c*. 400m to the northwest (**Fig. 6.15**). On this basis, the evidence may indicate shifting settlement here between the 5th to 9th centuries, except that 'Late Saxon' pottery has also been recovered from the kiln site. This may equally, then, reflect resettlement in this area between the 8th to 11th centuries, perhaps an example of a 'daughter settlement' (Rippon 2008, 188) to Witton on the edges of Witton Heath. Lawson (1983, 73), however, observes that the wider pattern of weak 'Late Saxon' pottery scatters across Witton parish strongly resemble that of 'Middle Saxon' pottery. As the distribution closely mirrors that of the Roman period, potential continuity of a dispersed settlement pattern at Witton into the 9th to 11th centuries cannot be wholly precluded. The main concentration of 'Late Saxon' pottery at Witton, however, is in the vicinity of the parish church, where excavation also records a possible 'Late Saxon' timber building associated with Roman pits and ditches (NHER 6969) (*ibid*, 73-74).

Across the Mannington Study group the evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation also suggests the potential continuity of a dispersed settlement pattern, not dissimilar to that of the Roman period, but with a greater suggestion of settlement expansion back across the interfluvial areas by the 9th to 11th

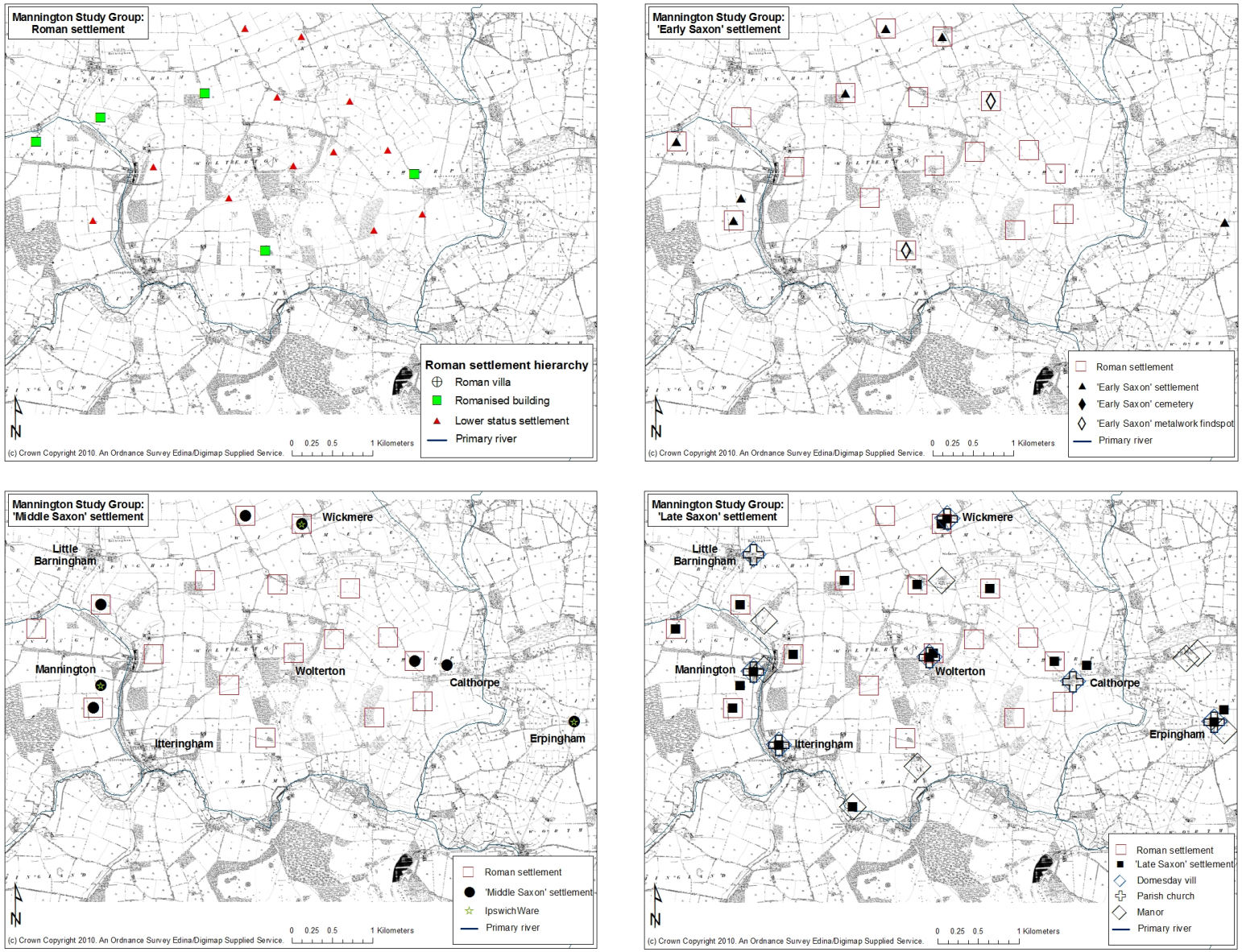


Figure 6.14. The relationship between Roman and early medieval occupation at Mannington and Wolterton by period, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Centuries (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**). Roman settlement (NHER 6710) underlying Wolterton parish church and a higher status Roman settlement (NHER 28037) to its northwest, for example, are associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation only. Another Roman settlement north of Wolterton (NHER 28523), on the edge of Wickmere Common, is also associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation only and lies close to Hall Farm, possibly the site of Bodham Hall Manor (NHER 24090) (**Fig. 6.13**). Evidence such as this may reflect resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries rather than potential Roman settlement continuity: as demonstrated by the Roman settlements on the edges of Wickmere Common and Witton Heath (see p 116), it may also partly reflect a shift away from the primary settlement cores from the 11th century, towards the edges of common ground.

The potential relationship between Roman settlement and manors on the Rich Loams can only be surmised through the evidence from the Mannington study group. Witton is documented in the Domesday Book, but there is only this documentary evidence to suggest a manor here. In addition to the Domesday vills documented at Mannington, manors recorded along the River Bure and across the wider interfluves (**Figs. 6.13 and 6.14**) may be the result of later subinfeudation. In common with many Domesday vills, the majority of these manors are associated with Roman occupation. There is, however, a lack of evidence for interim occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries at many sites, particularly beyond the river valleys, compounding the evidence for resettlement across parts of the Rich Loams interior by the 11th century and beyond.

Potential continuity on the Rich Loams between the 5th to 11th centuries is largely suggested along the major valleys, although some interfluvial areas, to the west of Wickmere and Witton, for example, may also demonstrate this (**Figs. 6.13 to 6.15**). The broader pattern of settlement on the Rich Loams by the 9th to 11th centuries appears to remain relatively dispersed, with only small, compact cores forming around the Domesday vills and parish churches. Whilst these appear distinctly associated with Roman settlement in the majority of cases, patterns of settlement shift are evidenced along the river valleys over the course of the 5th to 12th centuries, with some settlement shift and potential resettlement variously indicated across some interfluvial areas.

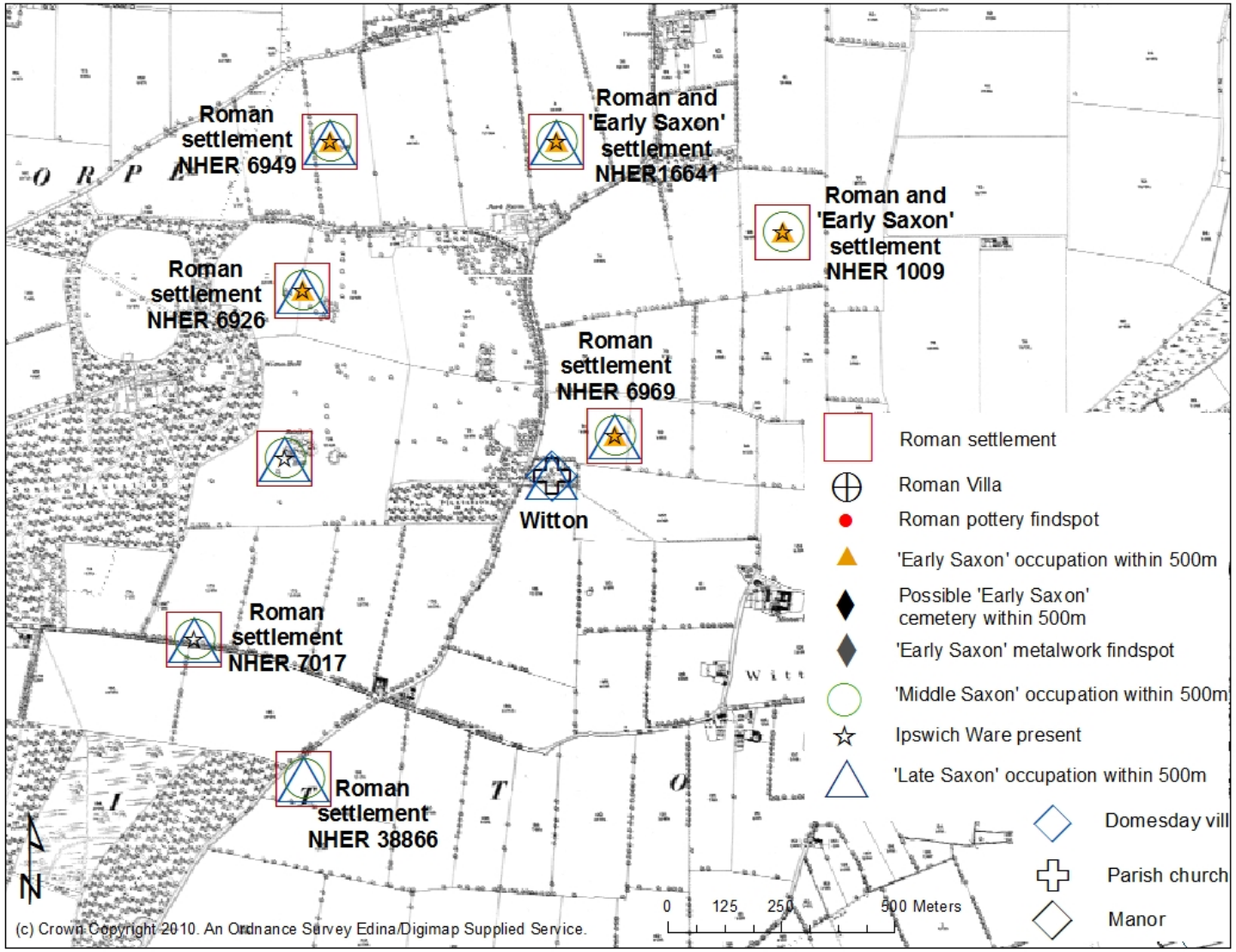


Figure 6.15. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation across the Witton study group shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Summary

The Roman settlement pattern for the Rich Loams indicates dense occupation on the dense loamy soils, both along the river valleys and wider interfluves. No Roman villas are recorded, but several Roman settlements suggest a degree of higher status occupation. These are largely located along the river valleys, with a broader distribution of lower status Roman settlement across the interfluvial areas, a pattern common to many of the Norfolk *pays*, regardless of soils type.

A degree of settlement contraction across parts of the Rich Loams is suggested by the 5th century, largely from the interfluvial areas. Even so, the distribution of Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation suggests potential continuity along the major valleys and across some interfluvial areas into at least the 5th to 7th centuries. The evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement on the Rich Loams is largely derived from fieldwalking, but excavation has revealed some structural evidence for settlement of this period. The ethnicity of its inhabitants is not so clearly shown, however, and there is currently no evidence for 'Early Saxon' cemeteries from the Mannington and Witton study groups to inform this further.

The pattern of 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon occupation across the Rich Loams also demonstrates remarkable parity with that of the Roman period, although this may partly reflect elements of settlement shift or resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, particularly across the interfluvial areas. The association of 'Middle Saxon' occupation with Domesday vills and parish churches suggests nascent settlement consolidation between the 8th to 9th centuries, albeit the developing settlement cores show little sign of extensive nucleation, remaining relatively small and compact. Many of these cores also suggest potential Roman origins.

By the 9th to 11th centuries an increase in both settlement and manors is indicated, particularly across the Mannington study group. The majority of these currently lack evidence for interim occupation between the Roman and 'Late Saxon' periods, particularly across the wider interfluves, potentially suggesting some resettlement of these areas from the 9th to 11th centuries. Nonetheless, the broad survival of a dispersed settlement pattern is generally indicated for the Rich Loams between the 5th to 11th centuries, comprised of small hamlets and farms within a predominantly 'ancient' landscape that owes much to its Roman forebear.

Chapter 7. Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships in Norfolk: the Western *Pays*

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results for Norfolk's eastern *pays*, the Breckland, West Norfolk Lowland, Chalk Scarp and the Good Sands. In contrast to eastern Norfolk, the soils of the west are predominantly lighter sandy and calcareous loams and saw a greater extent of high status Roman settlement, including the majority of Roman villas recorded for the county. The results are presented and discussed as for the eastern county, although, as there was only a limited dataset for the Good Sands, this *pays* will be discussed in summary only.

Breckland

Settlement data

Thirty-seven Roman settlements are recorded for Breckland. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 7.1**: **Fig. 7.1**).

Fourty-four 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for Breckland, in addition to 15 Domesday vills, 15 parish churches and 18 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 7.2**).

Soils data

The Breckland soils are typically calcareous brown rendzinas in the northwest of the *pays*, with more variable brown sands predominating in the south and southeast. Along the valley floors, soils are typically humic-sandy gleys (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983) (**Fig. 7.4**). Of the 37 Roman settlements recorded for Breckland, 16 (43%) were located on brown rendzinas and 12 (32%) on humic sandy gleys, with the remaining 9 (25%) on the variable brown sands. This suggests that the calcareous soils of the northwest Breckland plateau and the wetter gley soils of the valley floors were the favoured location

Table 7.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for Breckland, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 7.2 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors recorded for Breckland, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author.

Table 7.1: Breckland

Total number of Roman settlements 37	Number			Percentage of Total		
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	**0**	**0**	**5**	**0%**	**0%**	**14%**
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	3	7	9	8%	19%	24%
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	2	4	2	5%	11%	5%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	1	1	2	3%	3%	5%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	2	7	8	5%	19%	22%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m		2	2	0%	5%	5%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	3	10	13	8%	27%	35%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	1	3	0%	3%	8%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	0	6	5	0%	16%	14%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	0	6	5	0%	16%	14%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	2	7	5	5%	19%	14%

Table 7.2: Breckland

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of the total number recorded within the study group		
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement
'Late Saxon' settlement	**44**	**2**	**14**	**23**	**5%**	**32%**	**52%**
Domesday vill	**15**	**0**	**6**	**5**	**0%**	**40%**	**33%**
Parish church	**15**	**0**	**6**	**5**	**0%**	**40%**	**33%**
Manor	**18**	**0**	**8**	**7**	**0%**	**44%**	**39%**

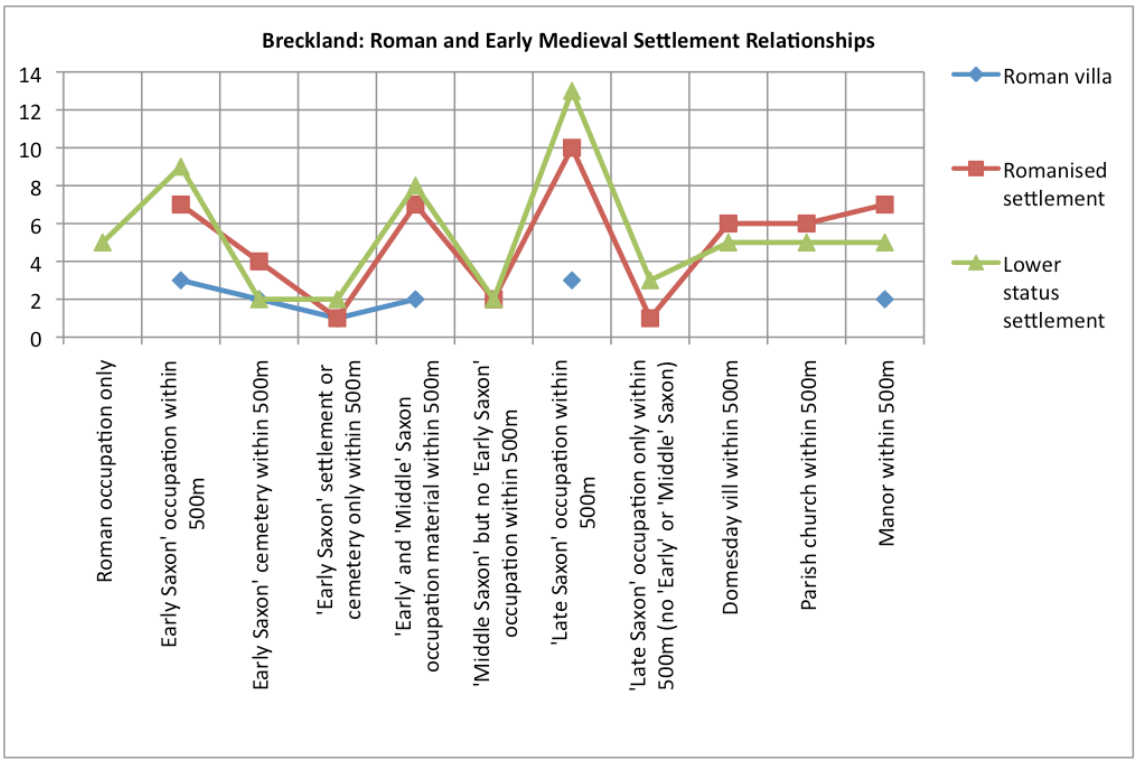


Figure 7.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on Breckland relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

for settlement during the Roman period. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 7.2**). Of the early medieval settlements recorded for Breckland, 23 out of 44 'Late Saxon' settlements (52%), 7 out of 15 parish churches (47%) and 8 out of 18 manors (44%) were located on brown rendzinas, with 11 out of 44 'Late Saxon' settlements (25%), 4 out of 15 parish churches (28%) and 9 out 18 manors (50%) located on humic-sandy gleys. The remainder were located on the variable brown sands. This demonstrates that the calcareous loamy soils and river valley floors were also the preferred location for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is given below (**Fig. 7.3**).

The evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement on Breckland indicates that the majority of settlement for both periods favoured the calcareous loamy soils or the sandy gley soils along the major valleys (**Fig. 7.4**). The largest dataset, however, is from the Barton Bendish study group, in the northwest of the *pays*, which also biases the results in favour of these soils. The available dataset for settlement across the brown sands in the southeast of the *pays* is

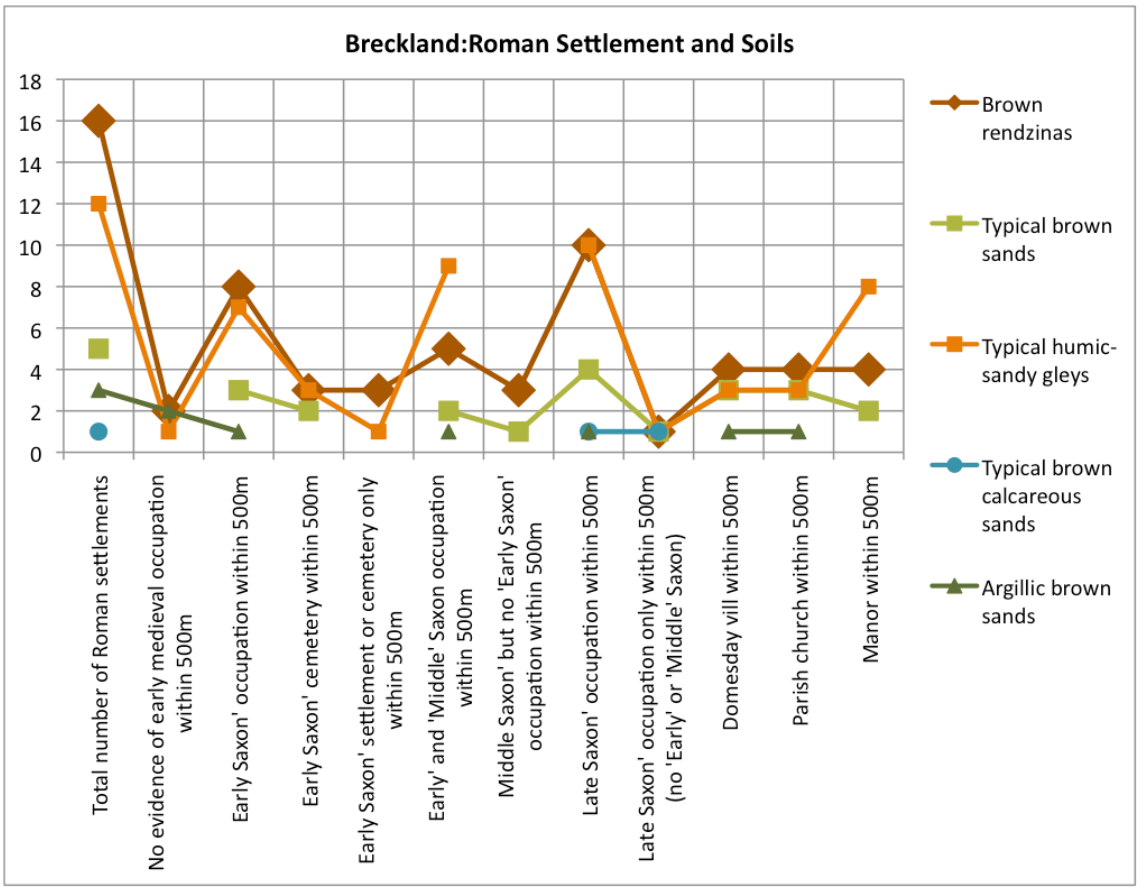


Figure 7.2. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on Breckland to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

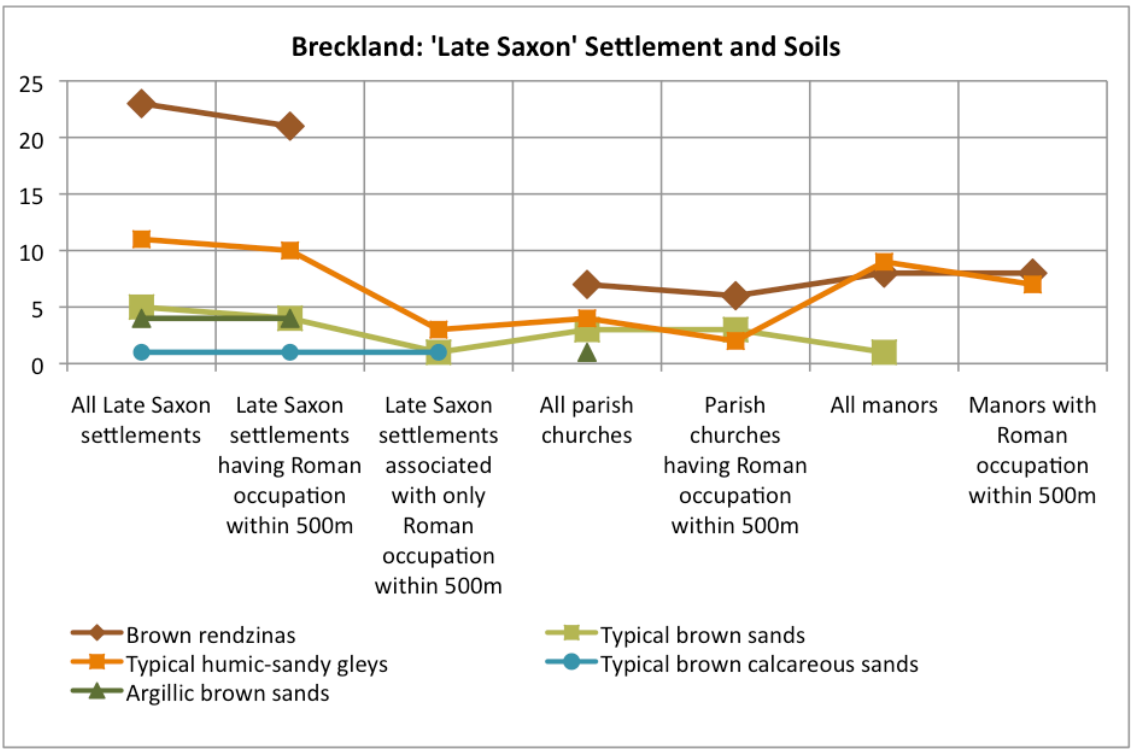


Figure 7.3. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on Breckland to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

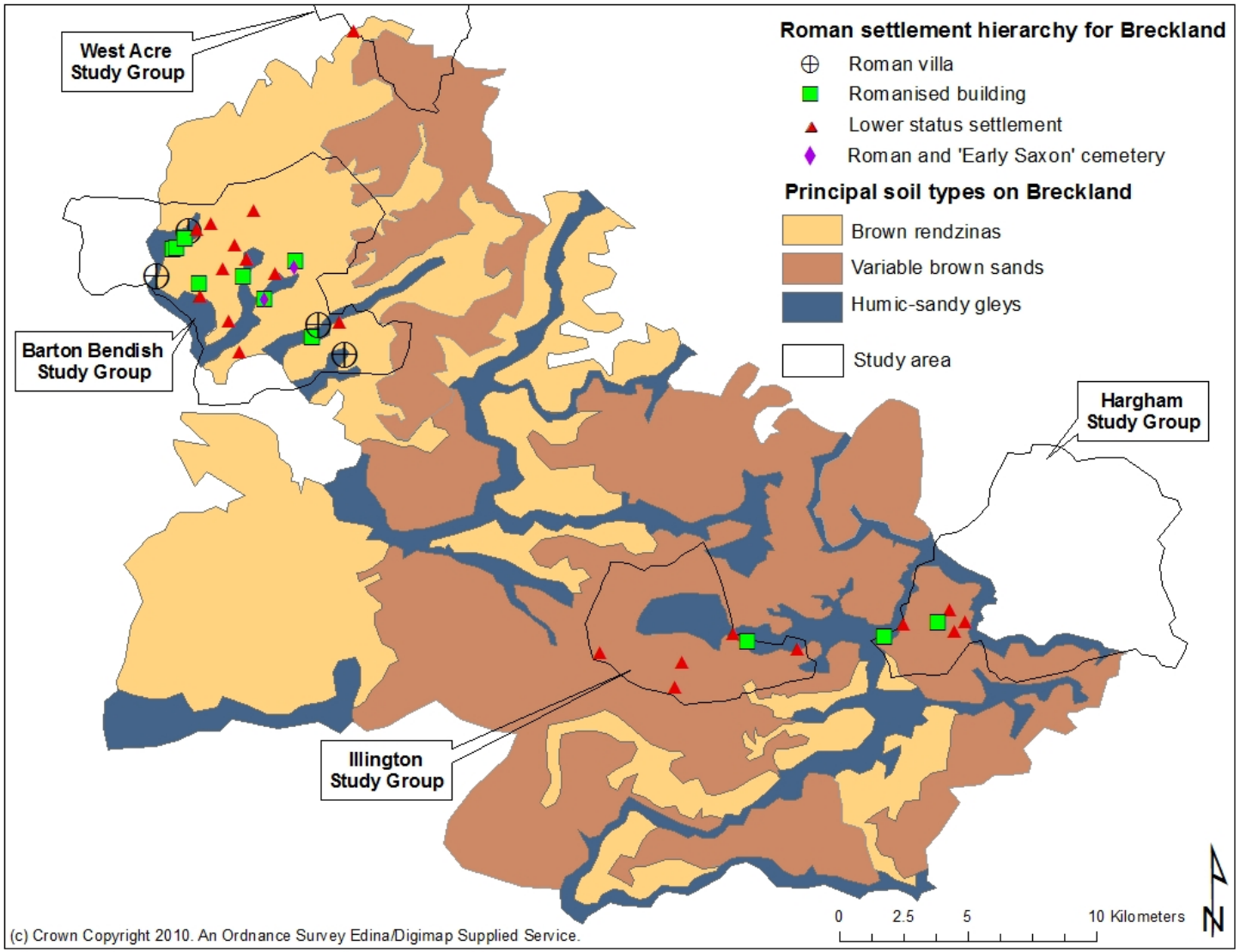


Figure 7.4. The distribution of Roman settlement within the selected study areas for Breckland, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

more limited, but does suggest some distribution of Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement across these soils, suggesting these may have see a contraction in the Roman settlement pattern followed by resettlement by the 11th century.

It is difficult to be precise about patterns of settlement contraction by the 5th century in direct relation to soils. There is some suggestion for settlement contraction on the light sandy soils in southeast Breckland by the 5th century, although the settlement data for this areas is somewhat limited (**Fig. 7.2**). Even on the calcareous loams and wetter valley soils, however, where the relationship between the Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement patterns suggest greater potential continuity of occupation into the 5th to 7th centuries, some possible settlement contraction by the 5th century is also indicated (**Fig. 7.2**).

Roman and 'Middle Saxon' settlement relationships indicate that, following an initial settlement contraction between the 5th to 7th centuries, there was potential continuity in the surviving pattern of Roman settlement across most soil types by the 8th to 9th centuries. The relationship between Roman settlement, Domesday vills and parish churches (**Figs. 7.2 and 7.3**) further suggests that settlement consolidation by the 9th to 11th centuries continued to largely favour the major river valleys.

By the 9th to 11th centuries, the evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement suggests that the calcareous loams and gleyed valley soils both potentially saw an expansion of settlement, largely confined to the river valleys (**Figs. 7.2 and 7.3**). The distribution of Breckland manors also suggests these largely favoured the valley soils and their immediate margins (**Fig. 7.3**). Given the wealth of Saxon pottery scatters recovered through fieldwalking on Breckland, where 'Late Saxon' settlement and manors appear to be associated with Roman occupation only, this could indicate resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries. There is some limited evidence for this across the interfluvial areas, but it is more apparent along the river valleys and their immediate margins. This contrasts with the Boulder Clay Plateau, where settlement expansion by the 9th to 11th centuries appears more widely distributed across the heavy clay interfluves (Chapter 6).

Discussion

As far as the results can demonstrate, the calcareous loamy soils of northwest Breckland were more densely settled during the Roman period than the sandier soils in the southeast of the *pays*: Rogerson *et al*. (1997, 14) estimates the density of Roman settlement across Barton Bendish at 0.93 per km^2. The majority of higher status Roman settlement, including four possible Roman villas, was also situated in northwest Breckland, largely located along the major river valleys, with predominantly lower status Roman settlement across the wider interfluves (**Fig. 7.4**).

Five Roman settlements on Breckland currently suggest abandonment by the 5th century, three on the sandy soils in the southeast of the *pays* and two on the calcareous soils of the northwest: a comparative ratio of about 14% of the total number of Roman settlements recorded for Breckland. This is higher than the Boulder Clay Plateau, at just 8%, although its dataset of Roman settlement is almost twice that of Breckland. Although the pattern of settlement contraction on Breckland by the 5th to 7th centuries remains difficult to quantify precisely, it is apparent that the river valleys were the favoured location for Roman settlement, particularly higher status settlement, and that settlement processes between the 5th to 10th centuries continued to predominate in these areas.

At Barton Bendish in northwest Breckland, for example, there is evidence for higher status Roman settlement along the tributaries of the River Wissey, with two possible Roman villas at Barton Bendish (NHER 18849; 13316) and a further two at Gooderstone (NHER 4575; 36697). Across the wider plateau is a scatter of largely lower status Roman settlement (**Figs. 7.5 to 7.7**). Although precise dating of Roman settlement across some parts of the Barton Bendish study group is lacking, the larger extent of Roman settlement at Barton Bendish itself potentially dates to the 2nd to 4th centuries, with occupation of the Roman villas dating to at least the 1st century (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 13-14). This may indicate an initial phase of Roman settlement along the river valleys, albeit the dating of villa construction itself remains unclear (see Chapter 5, 79), with a spread of lower status settlement inland by the 2nd century (**Fig. 7.5**).

The evidence for continued occupation at Barton Bendish into the 5th to 7th centuries is limited, but there is some association between Roman and 'Early

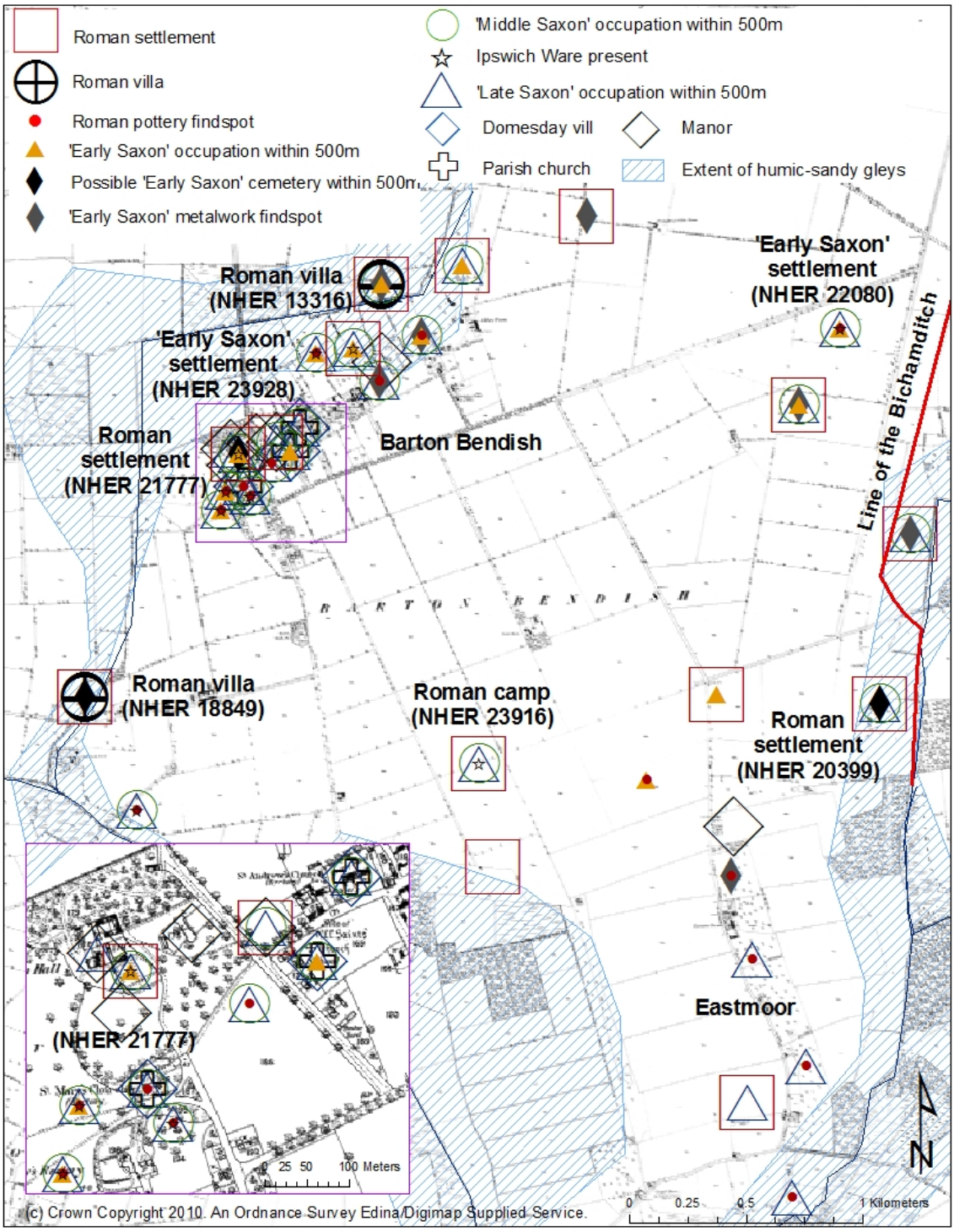


Figure 7.5. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Barton Bendish shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

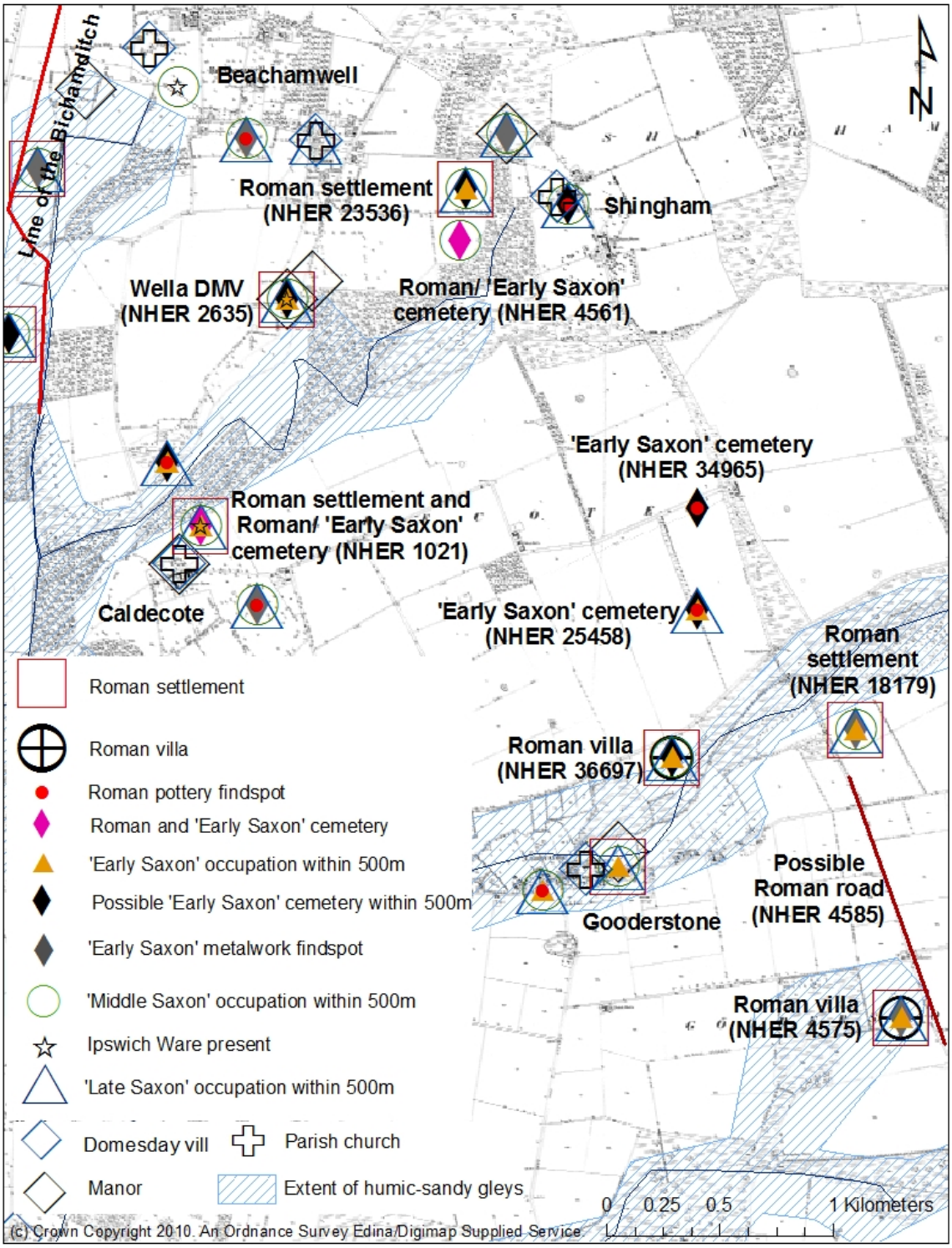


Figure 7.6. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Beachamwell, Shingham and Caldecote shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

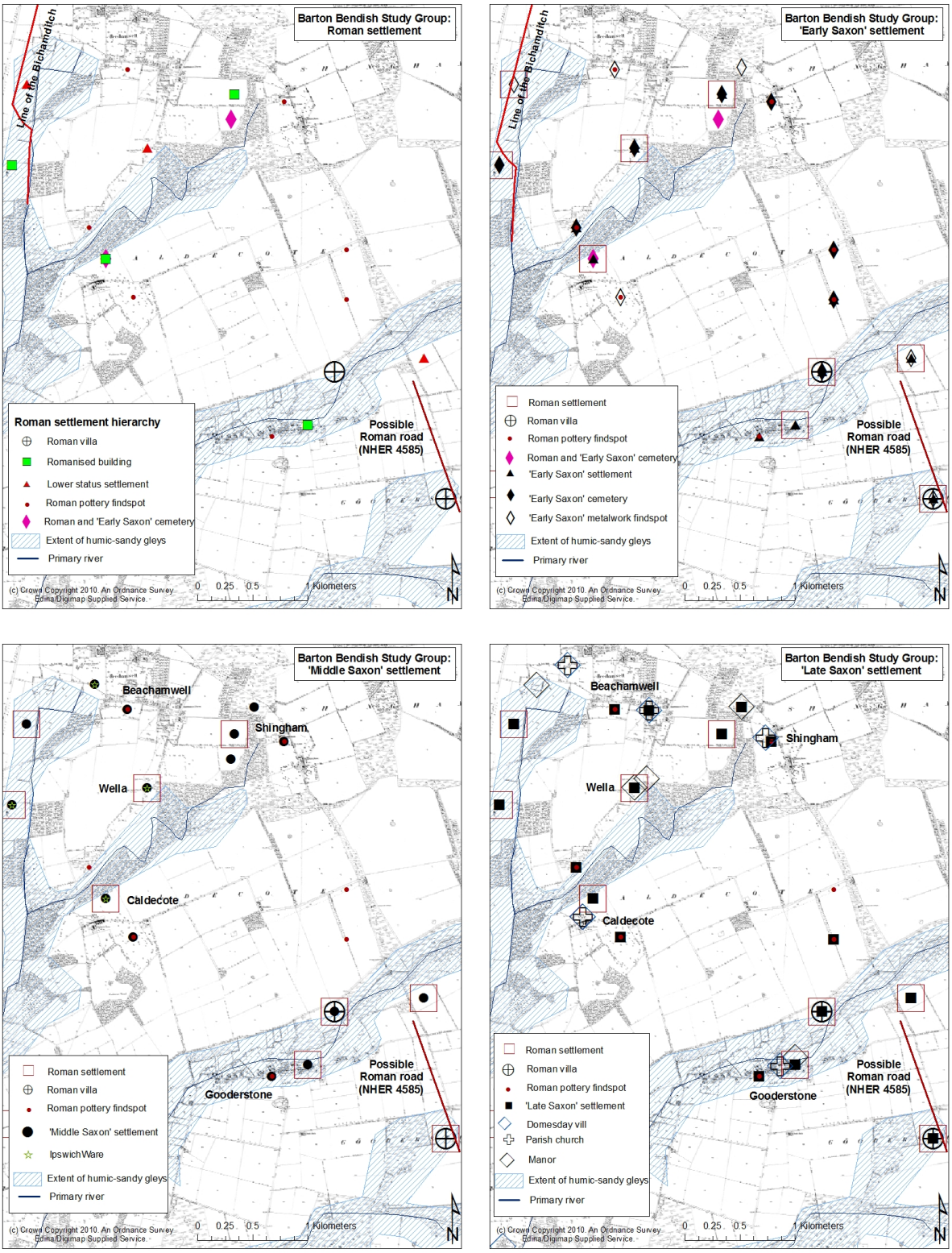


Figure 7.7. The relationship between Roman and early medieval occupation at Beachamwell and Gooderstone by period, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The extent of humic-sandy gley soils bordering the river valleys is also shown. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Saxon' material across the wider study group, particularly along the river valleys (**Figs. 7.5 to 7.7**). Some isolated 'Early Saxon' findspots associated with Roman settlement across the wider plateaux at Barton Bendish (see Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 18-21) may also reflect a broader survival of the Roman settlement pattern into the 5th and 7th centuries. The relative scarcity of finds, however, makes this far from conclusive, and some settlement contraction across the calcareous interfluves by the 5th century cannot be wholly ruled out.

Three potential 'Early Saxon' settlements (NHER 22080; 23928; 21462) are recorded for Barton Bendish, all closely associated with Roman settlement. Findspots of 'Early Saxon' pottery and metalwork also suggest three possible cemeteries in association with high status Roman occupation (NHER 21777; 18849; 20399) (**Fig. 7.5**). Barton Bendish lies to the west of a linear earthwork, the 'Bichamditch', or 'Devil's Dyke', which runs southwards from the Nar Valley to form part of the ancient parish boundary (**Fig. 7.8**). Along with a further linear earthwork to the southeast, the 'Fossditch', these are thought to mark a cultural frontier during the 5th to 7th centuries between the indigenous *Wissa* and migrant Anglo-Saxon communities (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 17). To the east of the Bichamditch, there is less physical evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement, although 'Early Saxon' features and pottery were exposed during evaluations at Gooderstone (Birks 2001a; Weston 2007) (see **Fig. 7.11**). There is, however, substantial evidence for 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, at Caldecote (NHER 4562), Shingham (NHER 23536), Gooderstone (NHER 25458; 34965), and Wella (NHER 2635), all associated with Roman settlement (**Figs. 7.6 and 7.7**).

Whether the disparity in 'Early Saxon' cemetery evidence either side of the Bichamditch reflects any real ethnic or cultural division during the 5th to 7th centuries cannot be determined by this evidence alone. The difference is marked, but cemetery distribution appears as much determined by the river valleys as any artificial cultural boundary. Equally, there is no distinct cultural uniformity in the cemetery evidence. Two 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, at Caldecote and Shingham (NHER 4562; 4561), are associated with Roman cemetery evidence, but the former is a Roman cremation cemetery, the latter, Roman inhumation. At Gooderstone, one cemetery (NHER 25458) is located near a Bronze Age barrow (Penn 1998). Cemeteries at Shingham (NHER 4561) and Gooderstone (NHER 25458; 34965) both have evidence of weaponry,

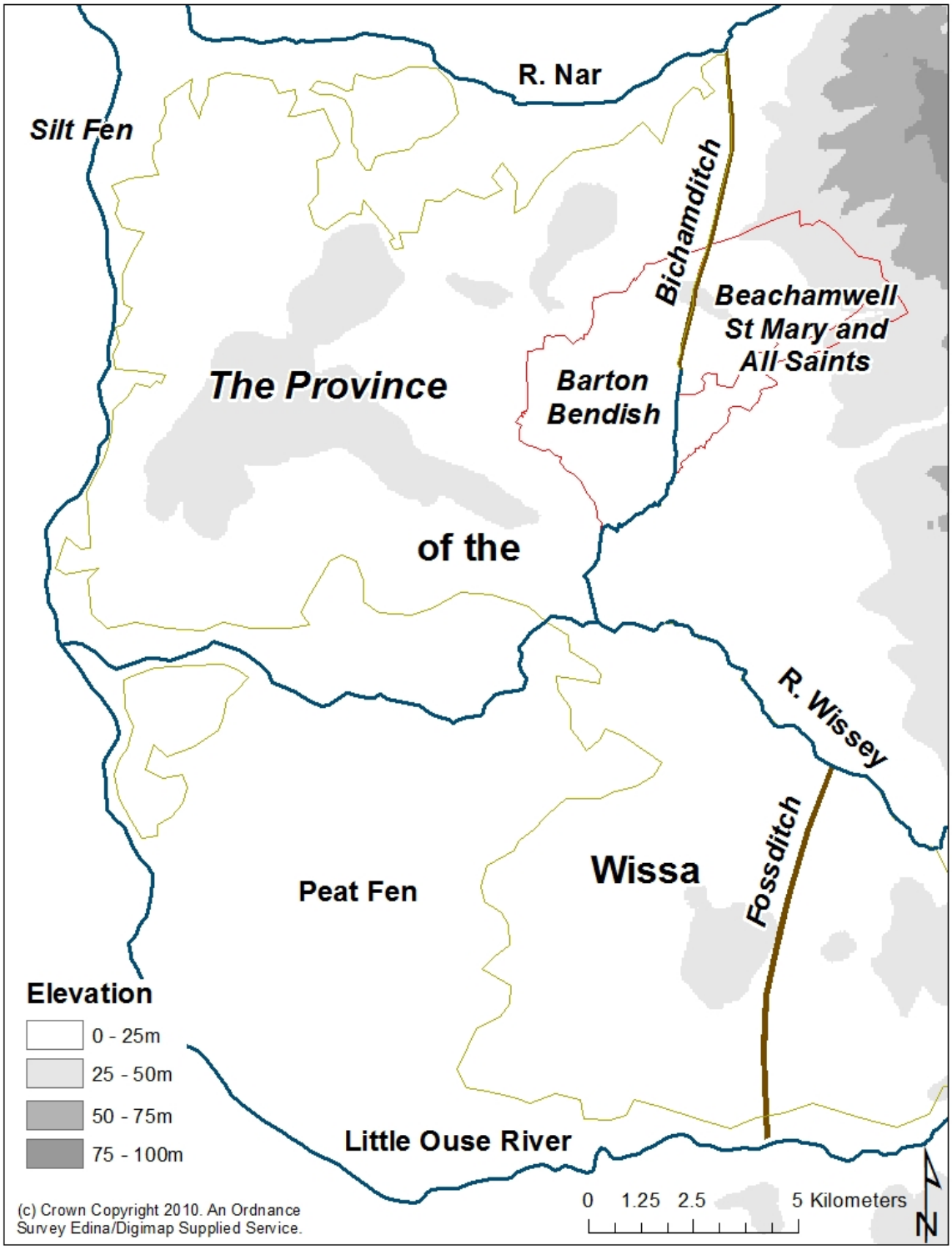


Figure 7.8. The Line of the Bichamditch and Fossditch between Breckland and the Fens in Norfolk, possibly a post-Roman cultural boundary for the people of the Wissa. Drawn after Rogerson et al. (1997, Fig. 9). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

which may infer a high status Germanic presence (see Härke 1990; 1998), but similar evidence from other 'Early Saxon' cemeteries across the wider study group is currently lacking. Differences in 5th to 7th century cemetery practices are, however, not uncommon, and may well reflect varying degrees of cultural negotiation and the exchange of beliefs and practices that served to cement local identities at a time of social and cultural flux (see Lucy 2002, 86). On this basis, then, the evidence either side of the Bichamditch could potentially reflect evolving cultural practices between two post-Roman communities, whether native, Anglo-Saxon or hybrid, which extended study could further enlighten.

Across southeast Breckland, fieldwalking at Hargham (Davison and Cushion 1999) and Illington (Davison *et al*. 1993) and excavation at Snetterton (eg. Birks 2001b; Birks 2002; Robertson 2003; Robertson 2004; Robertson and Warsop 2003; Underdown 2001) have recorded scattered Roman settlement on the gleyed valley soils and across the sandy plateaux. In contrast to northwest Breckland, the majority of Roman settlement suggests lower status occupation, with currently no recorded Roman villas and limited evidence for Romanised settlement, at Snetterton (NHER 36321), Hargham (NHER 36802) and East Hall Manor, Illington (NHER 25352) (see **Fig. 7.4**).

At Illington, the pattern of 'Early Saxon' occupation currently suggests a contraction of settlement from the heathland to the west by the 5th to 7th centuries (**Fig. 7.9**). Roman and 'Early Saxon' pottery scatters (NHER 19706) and an 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 1047) (Davison *et al*. 1993, 3) to the east of the parish church, suggest that any potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries was confined to this area. At Hargham and Snetterton, excavation work (Birks 2001b; Birks 2002; Robertson 2003; Robertson 2004; Robertson and Warsop 2003; Underdown 2001) has recorded evidence for Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement across the sandy interfluves (**Fig. 7.10**). At one site (NHER 36802) at least seven sunken-featured buildings were dated by associated pottery to the 5th to 7th centuries (Robertson 2003, 5). Roman pottery and tile recovered from a pit and posthole indicate a possible Roman building, but Roman activity was largely indicated by a series of field ditches, possibly associated with Roman settlement (NHER 35776) to the northeast. Partial re-cutting of the ditches during the Roman period was indicated, with the 'Early Saxon' structures overlying them on a different alignment (*ibid*, 20).

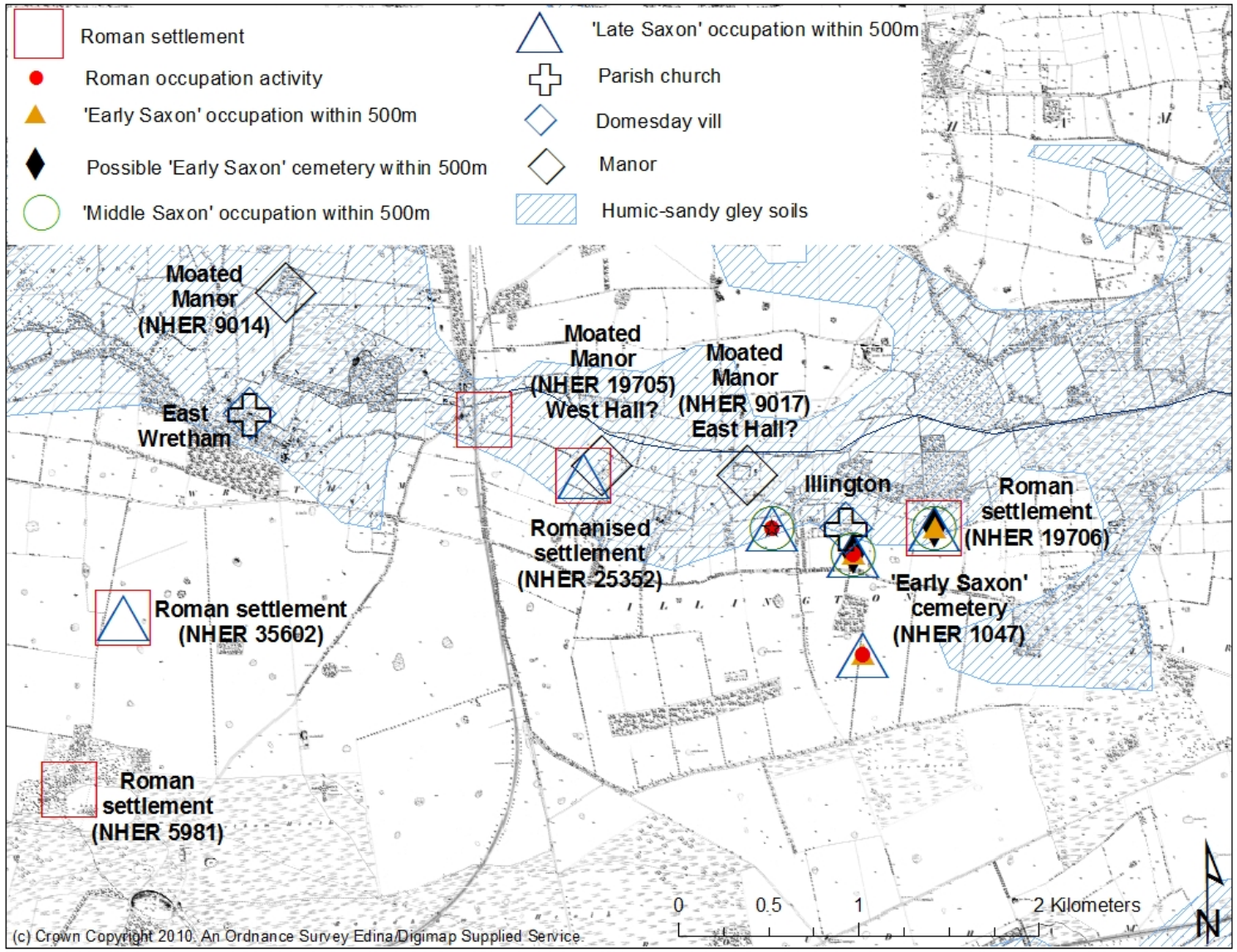


Figure 7.9. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Illington, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

A further 'Early Saxon' settlement (NHER 36321) *c*. 1km to the southwest of Snetterton, bordering the River Thet, also revealed evidence of 'Early Saxon' pits and postholes, broadly dated through associated pottery to the 5th to 7th centuries (Underdown 2001, 2). Metalwork finds to the southwest included a concentration of Roman pottery and metalwork, but may also suggest the site of an 'Early Saxon' inhumation cemetery (NHER 9035) (**Fig. 7.10**). Fragments of Roman tile and burnt daub from two of the pits also suggest the presence of a high status Roman building, although they were considered as evidence for re-use in the contexts from which they were found (*ibid*, 2). This may indicate a Roman settlement nearby, the exact location of which is yet to be shown. Whilst some continuity of occupation across the sandy soils in southeast Breckland between the 5th to 7th centuries is suggested, then, a degree of settlement mobility is also apparent, with possible changes in use or function. Furthermore, the nature of 'Early Saxon' occupation evidence contrasts with that of northwest Breckland, being less weighted towards cemetery-related evidence and more towards structural remains and Germanic-style architecture. This may reflect differentials in fieldwork between the two areas, with less large-scale excavation across the calcareous soils in the northwest, but may also indicate genuine ethnic differences between local communities, an observation previously made for the Rich Loams (Chapter 6, 116), where distinct architectural characteristics in 'Early Saxon' settlement are also demonstrated.

The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation across Breckland is mixed. A variable scatter of 'Middle Saxon' findspots along the river valleys and across the calcareous soils of the interfluvial plateaux, many in proximity to both Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlements, may indicate the potential continuity of a dispersed settlement pattern across northwest Breckland by the 7th century, although the possible distribution of pottery through manuring in arable areas must be borne in mind. There is also, however, increasing evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation underlying some current village cores, as at Barton Bendish, for example, where a small quantity of Ipswich Ware was recorded to the west of St Mary's church (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 21) in close proximity to a high status Roman settlement (NHER 21777) (see **Fig. 7.5**). Recent excavation at Gooderstone (Weston 2007; Adams 2001; Birks 2001) has also revealed a range of features and finds dating between the 8th to 9th centuries, with the broader evidence reflecting a shift of settlement westwards between the 5th to

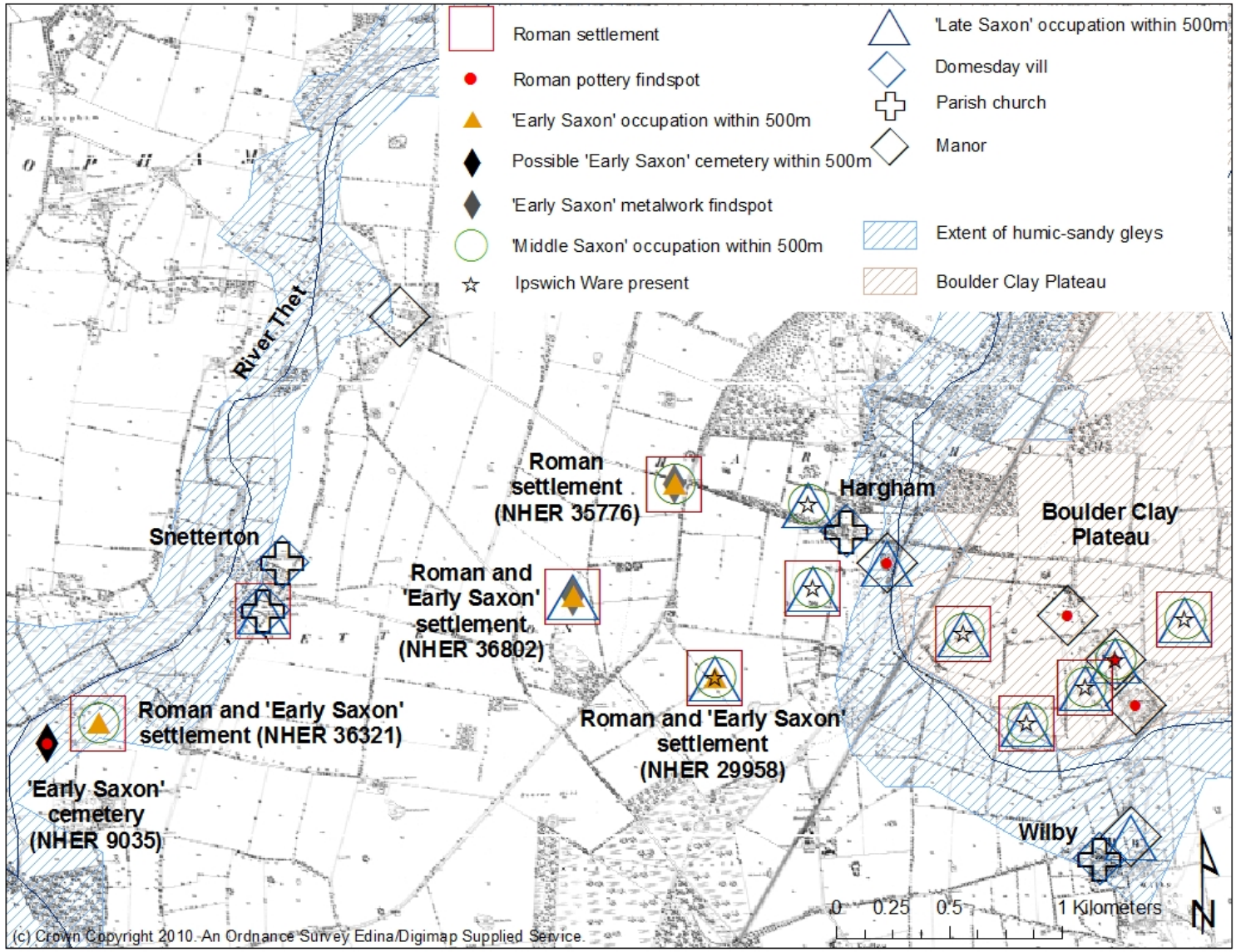


Figure 7.10. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Hargham, Snetterton and Wilby shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

9th centuries, subsequently informing the site of the Domesday vill and parish church (**Fig. 7.11**). 'Late Saxon' ditches *c*. 150m west of the church were suggested to reflect a prior settlement layout between the 9th to 11th centuries, on a slightly different alignment to the current village (*ibid*, 21).

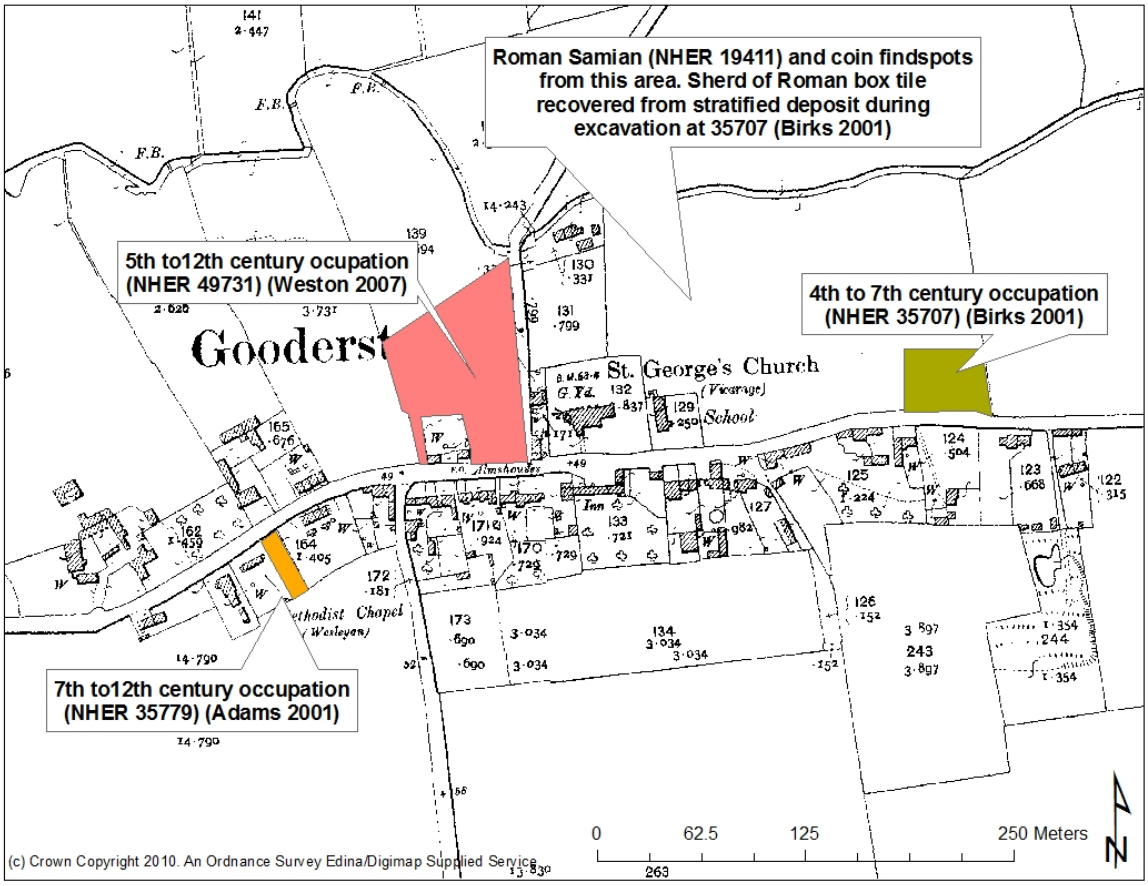


Figure 7.11. The sites of three evaluations undertaken at Gooderstone, which recorded occupation activity dating between the 4th to 12th centuries. Evaluation areas drawn from Weston 2007, Adams 2001 and Birks 2001 and shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

There is some contrast in Roman and 'Middle Saxon' settlement relationships between the calcareous soils of northwest Breckland and the sandy soils of the southeast. The continuation of a dispersed settlement pattern by the 8th to 9th centuries is potentially suggested to the west of Hargham, where a loose cluster of 'Middle Saxon' sites also demonstrate Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation (**Fig. 7.10**). The Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement (NHER 36321) to the southwest of Snetterton also has evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation, which may indicate limited Roman settlement continuity along the river valleys of southeast Breckland by the 8th to 9th centuries, although evidence for any real settlement consolidation at Hargham and Snetterton by this time is less clear (**Fig. 7.10**). 'Middle Saxon' occupation is indicated at Hargham, potentially

indicating a move towards nucleation, but Snetterton, to date, demonstrates only Roman and 'Late Saxon' occupation, while Wilby, to the southeast of Hargham, suggests no evidence, to date, for occupation before the 9th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 7.10**). At Illington, to the west, there is evidence for potential settlement consolidation by the 8th to 9th centuries, with a loose focus of 'Middle Saxon' settlement around the parish church mirroring earlier patterns of Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement (**Fig. 7.9**).

The wider evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation on Breckland suggests continuing processes of settlement consolidation by the 9th to 11th centuries, with distinct settlement cores developing along the river valleys of northwest Breckland, all largely informed by the underlying Roman settlement pattern, as demonstrated at Shingham, Beachamwell, Gooderstone and Caldecote, for example (**Figs. 7.6 and 7.7**). These were relatively small and compact and may have been part of a wider pattern of dispersed settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, although this remained quite proximous to the river valleys.

At Barton Bendish there was also some linear settlement development along the river valley by the 9th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 7.5**). Its origins may lie to the south, with the high status Roman settlement (NHER 21777), which may have remained a principal focus of occupation by the 7th century. Whilst the possible Roman villa to the northeast (NHER 13316) suggests potential continuity into the 9th to 11th centuries, it does not appear to have determined the focus of settlement consolidation, although it does lie in close proximity to East Hall Manor (**Fig. 7.5**). The relationship of Roman villas to early medieval settlement cores is discussed further for the West Norfolk Lowland and the Chalk Scarp, where the majority of villa settlement is found (p 155; 168).

To the southeast of Barton Bendish, settlement expansion during the 9th to 11th centuries saw further linear settlement development along the common margins at Eastmoor (Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 25). A small Roman settlement (RB15), dating from the 1st to 4th centuries, was identified at its southern end (*ibid*, 14), while a small quantity of Roman and 'Early Saxon' material was recovered from the north, within around 300m of two possible manorial sites, Herne Hall and Snore Hall (*Ibid*, 31). Whilst such evidence does not preclude a continuity of settlement into the 5th century, the lack of interim occupation suggests this was more likely an area of resettlement between the 9th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 7.5**).

The wider distribution of 'Late Saxon' settlement and manors on Breckland suggests that settlement expansion between the 9th to 11th centuries largely continued to respect the immediate valleys (**Figs 7.5 to 7.7**), in contrast to the Boulder Clay Plateau where expansion appears to have extended across the wider interfluves. Fewer manors are recorded for Breckland than the Boulder Clay Plateau, possibly indicating larger estate holdings (see Campbell 1986, 230). The association between Roman occupation and manors on Breckland, however, is markedly greater, with a more continuous chronology of occupation between the Roman and 'Late Saxon' periods. Whilst this may suggest greater potential Roman settlement continuity for Breckland, and a greater influence on the early medieval settlement pattern, it could simply reflect continuous resettlement of the favoured river valleys throughout the early medieval period.

The relationship between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement patterns on the sandy soils of southeast Breckland is not so apparent, as the evidence is more limited. At Illington, the sandy heathland to the west may have remained largely unsettled between the 5th to 9th centuries, with some settlement expansion along the river valley west of Illington indicated by the 9th to 11th centuries, possibly associated with the manors at East Hall and West Hall (**Fig. 7.9).** The Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement (NHER 35602) on the heathland, to the southwest, and adjacent to East Hall Manor, to the west (NHER 25352), may reflect resettlement of these areas by the 9th to 11th centuries, as there is currently no 5th to 9th century occupation on these sites. This suggests that settlement expansion on the poorer brown sands in the southeast of the *pays* also remained largely confined within the river valleys. This is largely reinforced by the evidence at Hargham and Snetterton, except for some 'Late Saxon' material associated with the area of Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement west of Hargham, potentially suggesting some limited Roman settlement continuity on the sandy interfluves at Hargham into the 5th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 7.10**).

The bias of settlement data on Breckland, as with the other Norfolk study groups, is mainly derived through large-scale fieldwalking surveys, principally determined by areas of current settlement and the distribution of arable land on better soils. This has inevitably weighted the results in favour of these locations, but more nuanced study of settlement processes during the 5th to 11th centuries across the calcareous soils of northwest Breckland, compared with the sandy

soils of the southeast, nevertheless identifies some potential differences between the two areas. These appear to have resulted in divergent processes in settlement organisation by the 11th century, with greater evidence for settlement nucleation, albeit loosely contrived, in northwest Breckland, in contrast to a more dispersed settlement pattern in the southeast. Whilst there are many common factors in the relationship between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns in northwest and southeast Breckland between the 5th to 11th centuries, distinct sub-regional variation is nevertheless apparent.

Summary

As with the Boulder Clay Plateau, the evidence for Roman occupation on Breckland suggests the river valleys were the favoured location for settlement, with some scattered settlement across the calcareous and sandy soils of the interfluvial areas in the northwest and southeast, respectively. Occupation is broadly demonstrated to date between the 1st to 5th centuries, with the river valleys probably seeing the earliest phases of colonisation.

Certain evidence for Roman settlement abandonment by the 5th century is limited, although there is some indication for a contraction in the settlement pattern away from the interfluvial areas and towards the river valleys. The evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement in the northwest of Breckland is largely through cemetery-related finds, particularly marked to the east of the Bichamditch at Barton Bendish, where the evidence may suggest cultural differences in the post-Roman communities to either side. The evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation in the northwest is also closely associated with developing settlement cores by the 9th to 11th centuries. This contrasts to the southeast, where 'Early Saxon' cemetery evidence is limited but structural evidence for 'Early Saxon' Germanic-style settlement is more prevalent and largely situated on the sandy interfluves away from later settlement cores.

By the 8th century, the beginnings of a move towards settlement consolidation is indicated for the northwest of Breckland, significantly focussed on the major river valleys. The wider spread of Roman settlement associated with 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon material across northwest and southeast Breckland, however,

does not wholly preclude the continuation of a dispersed settlement pattern into the 8th to 9th centuries across some interfluvial areas.

Between the 9th to 11th centuries in northwest Breckland, increasing settlement nucleation is indicated along the major river valleys. This is perhaps more loosely contrived than the conventional style of the Midland villages, and, to the east of the Bichamditch, in particular, often limited in size. Nonetheless, it appears to have been closely influenced by the pattern of underlying Roman settlement, which appears to have distinctly informed the siting of Domesday vills, parish churches and manor houses. An expansion of settlement between the 9th to 11th centuries is apparent, although, in contrast to the heavy clay soils of the Boulder Clay Plateau, this appears more closely confined to the valley margins. Where Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement lacks the evidence for interim occupation, it may indicate some resettlement of the favoured valley soils by this period, rather than continuity as such, although more evidence is required to be conclusive about this.

In southeast Breckland the pattern of settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries appears to have remained largely dispersed in character, with small hamlets and manors along the major river valleys, and a limited scatter of farms inland. The pattern of 9th to 11th century settlement in this part of Breckland also appears less informed by that of the Roman period, based on current evidence, although even here it appears to have determined the siting of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors in some cases, particularly along the river valleys. It does not, perhaps, display such close cohesion as in northwest Breckland, however, as the evidence for underlying occupation between the 5th to 9th centuries is frequently lacking. This may reflect biases in recovery, but may also reflect aspects of settlement disaggregation and/or resettlement during this period. The pattern of settlement expansion between the 9th to 11th centuries is also less clear. At Illington the evidence distinctly suggests a contraction in the Roman settlement pattern, with an expansion of settlement and manors concomitant with the reoccupation of Roman sites by the 9th to 11th centuries. At Hargham and Snetterton, however, the evidence is more obscure: there is no apparent manorial expansion across the sandy soils between the 9th to 11th centuries, while the limited settlement expansion along the river valleys in this part of Breckland suggests little relationship to the Roman settlement pattern.

West Norfolk Lowland

Settlement data

Sixteen Roman settlements are recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 7.3**: **Fig. 7.12**).

Fifteen 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland, in addition to 7 Domesday vills, 7 parish churches and 13 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 7.4**).

Soils data

The soils of the West Norfolk Lowland are complex, typically comprising variable brown sands and podzols on areas of raised ground and gleyed soils cut by argillic and stagnogleyic brown earths and peats in the lower hollows (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983) (see **Fig. 7.15**). Of the 16 Roman settlements recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland, 3 (19%) were located on brown calcareous earths, with 1 (6%) on typical brown sands, 2 (13%) on typical stagnogleys, 6 (38%) on typical sandy gleys and 4 (25%) on humic-sandy gleys. Although the data is rather complex, this would seem to suggest that the majority of Roman settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland favoured the sandy gley soils and calcareous loams over the heavier clays or acid brown sands. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 7.13**).

Of the 15 'Late Saxon' settlements recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland, 4 (27%) were located on brown calcareous earths, with 2 (13%) on typical stagnogleys, 4 (27%) on typical sandy gleys and 5 (33%) on humic-sandy gleys. Of the 7 parish churches, 2 (29%) were located on brown calcareous earths, with 1 (14%) on typical brown sands, 1 (14%) on typical sandy gleys and 3 (43%) on humic-sandy gleys. Of the 13 manors, 2 (15%) were located on brown calcareous earths, with 7 (54%) on typical stagnogleys, 2 (15%) on typical sandy gleys and 2 (15%) on humic-sandy gleys. This would seem to suggest that the sandy gleys and calcareous loams continued to be favoured

Table 7.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 7.4 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the West Norfolk Lowland, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author.

Table 7.3: The West Norfolk Lowland

Total number of Roman settlements 16	Number			Percentage of Total		
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	3	3	0	19%	19%	0%
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	0	1	1	0%	6%	6%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	0	2	0	0%	13%	0%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	3	2	3	19%	13%	19%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	3	2	3	19%	13%	19%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	4	4	5	25%	25%	31%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	0	2	6%	0%	13%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	1	0	3	6%	0%	19%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	1	0	3	6%	0%	19%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	3	0	4	19%	0%	25%

Table 7.4: The West Norfolk Lowland

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of the total number recorded within the study group		
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement
'Late Saxon' settlement	14	4	3	7	29%	21%	50%
Domesday vill	7	1	0	4	14%	0%	57%
Parish church	7	1	0	4	14%	0%	57%
Manor	13	2	0	8	15%	0%	62%

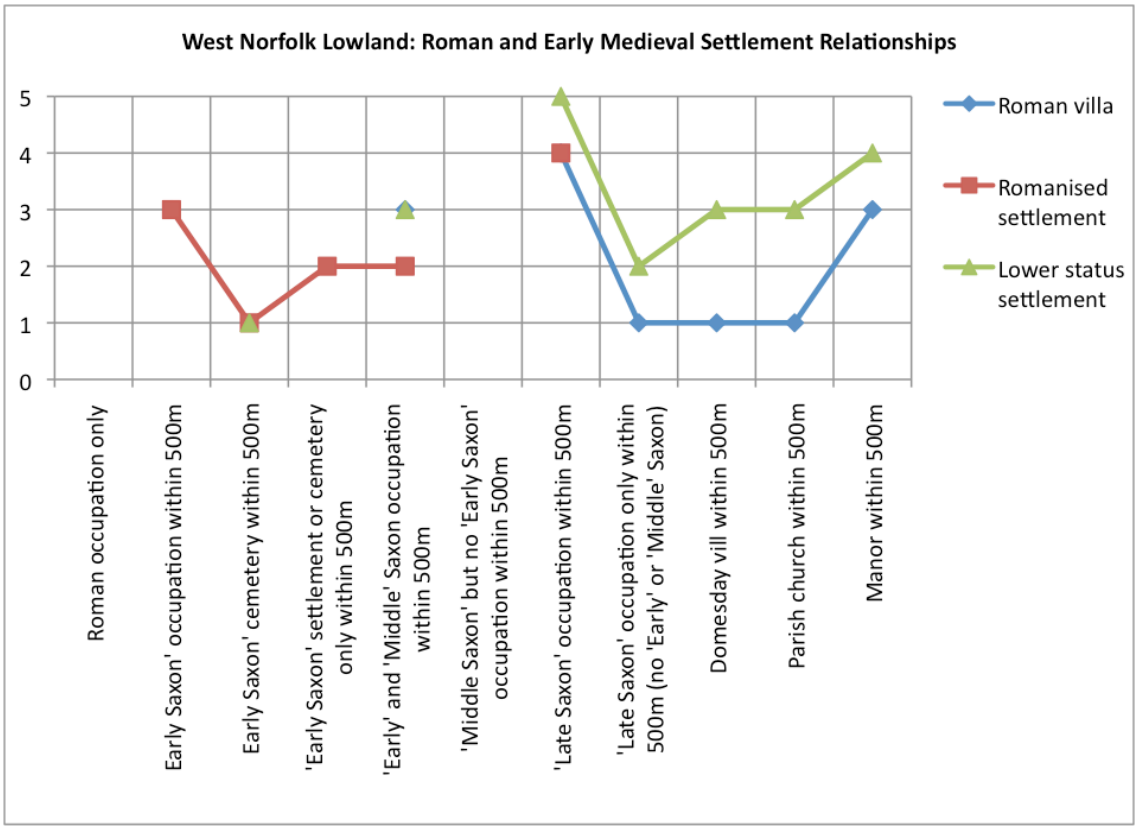


Figure 7.12. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 7.14**).

Given the complex soils on the West Norfolk Lowland and the relatively small dataset for the Roman and early medieval periods, distinguishing clear trends and processes of settlement for the 5th to 11th centuries is complicated. Despite this, however, there is substantial evidence for highly Romanised settlement, including a comparatively high ratio of possible Roman villas, the majority of which are situated on sandy gleys soils (**Fig. 7.15**). Whether there is a wider distribution of lower status Roman settlement across the poorer soils of the *pays* is not so well demonstrated by the available data, although this may be suggested at Fincham and Oxborough, in the south of the *pays* (**Fig. 7.15**). Equally, whilst the relationship of Roman and early medieval settlement to river valleys is not as distinct as for the other *pays* discussed so far, there may be some indication for this, as the sandy gley soils appear to have seen the majority of settlement during both these periods (**Figs. 7.13 and 7.14**).

Patterns of possible Roman settlement contraction on the West Norfolk Lowland by the 5th century are difficult to identify clearly, although the decreased number of Roman settlements associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation on the calcareous loams and sandy gleys may indicate a degree of settlement contraction across these soils by that time (**Fig. 7.13**). On the other hand, where Roman settlements are associated with 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon settlement, this is also predominantly on the sandy gley soils (**Fig. 7.13**), suggesting these soils also saw a degree of settlement continuity into the 5th to 9th centuries. In keeping with the wider picture of developing settlement across the Norfolk *pays*, the evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation on the West Norfolk Lowland suggests some nascent settlement nucleation on the sandy gley soils by the 8th to 9th centuries, although the continuation of a dispersed settlement pattern away from the more favoured soils by this point is also potentially indicated.

The relationship between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors appears to suggest increased settlement of the calcareous loamy and heavier clay soils by the 9th to 11th centuries. The consolidation of settlement and the establishment of parish churches on the calcareous loams by the 9th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 7.13 and 7.14**) may reflect settlement continuity from the 5th century, although the current lack of interim occupation may rather reflect settlement expansion onto these soils by this period. In common with a developing theme across the Norfolk *pays*, however, the relationship between Roman settlements, 'Late Saxon' occupation, and manors across the heavier clay soils of the West Norfolk Lowland (**Figs. 7.13 and 7.14**) is more likely to reflect resettlement during the 9th to 11th centuries than potential continuity, particularly where evidence for interim occupation between the 5th and 9th centuries is lacking.

Discussion

The Roman settlement recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland does not clearly demonstrate settlement densities for this period across the wider *pays*, but does illustrate the comparatively high ratio of Romanised settlement and Roman villas, largely situated on the sandy gley soils at the foot of the chalk escarpment (**Fig. 7.15**). Only five lower status Roman settlements are recorded, four of these on the calcareous loams and heavier clay soils in the south of the

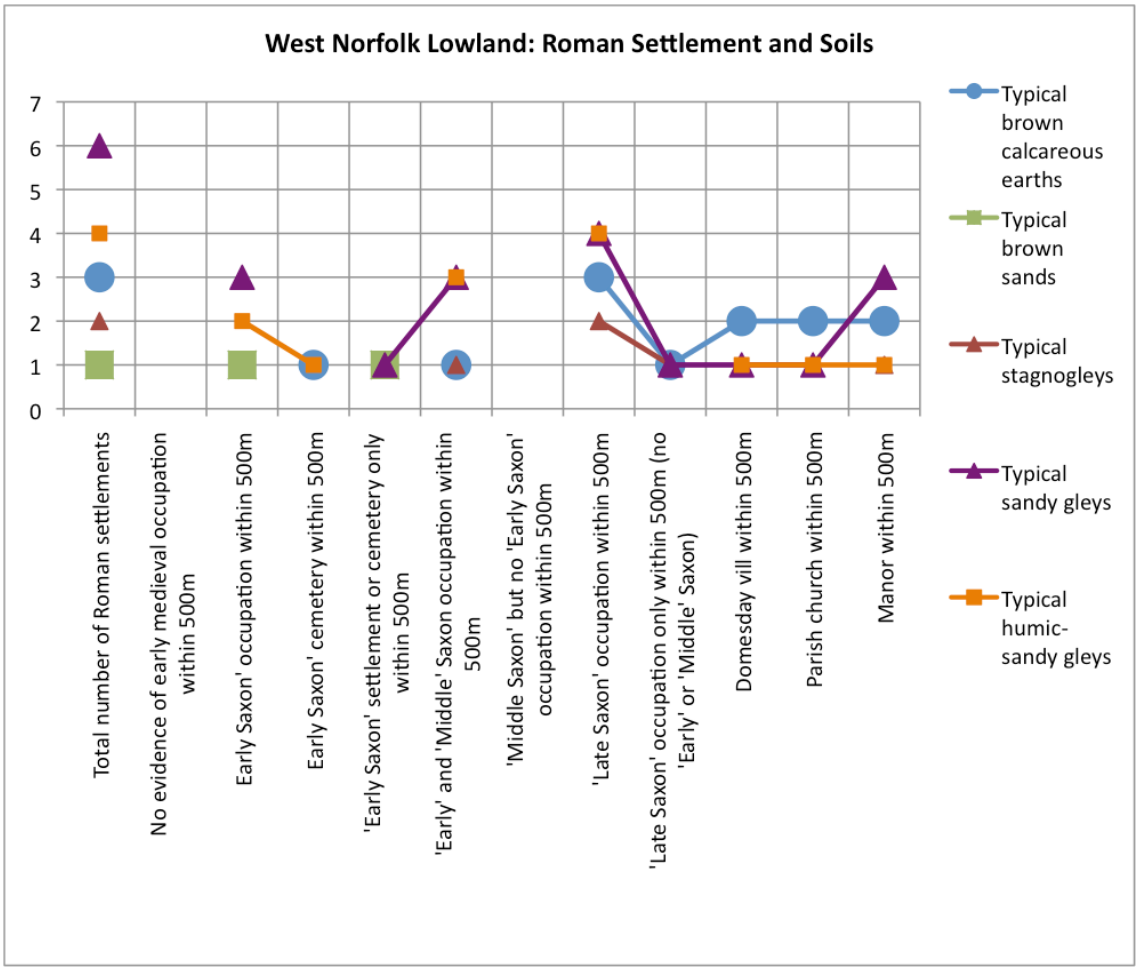


Figure 7.13 Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

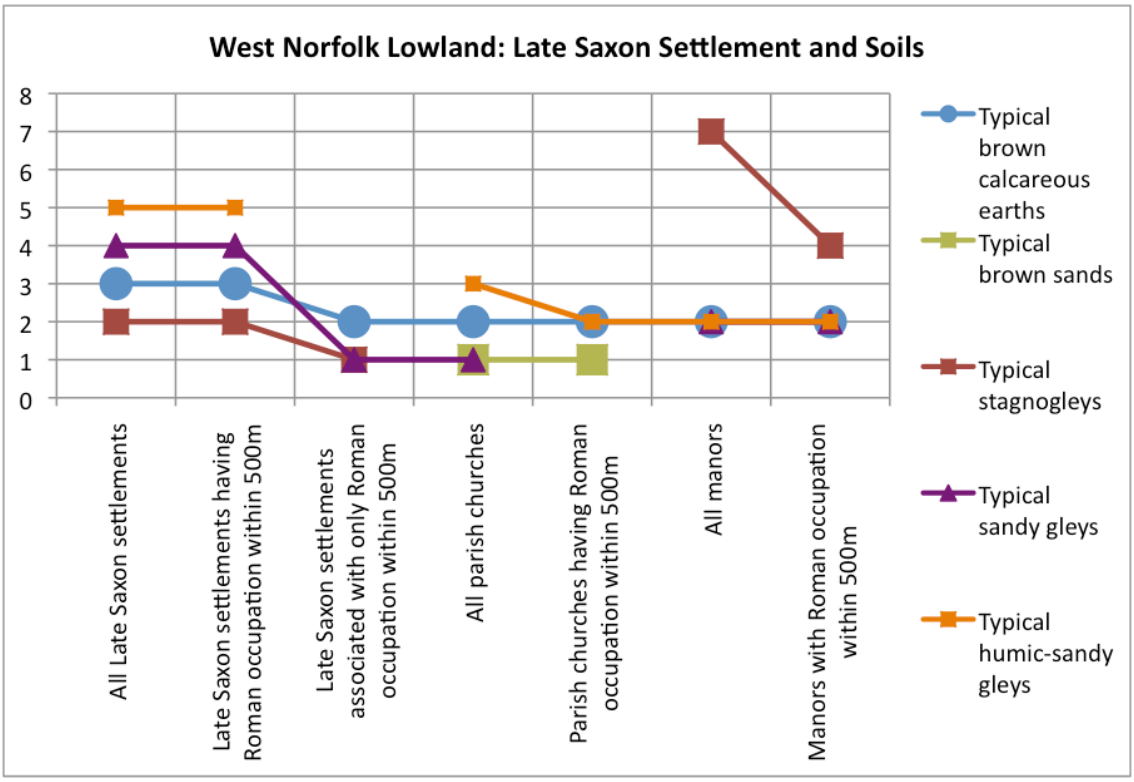


Figure 7.14. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the West Norfolk Lowland to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

*pays (***Fig. 7.15***)*, although it is not clear how representative these are of the wider pattern of lower status Roman settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland.

As mentioned above, patterns of settlement abandonment from the end of the Roman period are hard to distinguish, given the relatively small dataset. There is, however, limited indication for settlement contraction across some of the calcareous loams and heavier clay soils by the 5th century: at Fincham, in the south of the *pays*, for example, four Roman settlements are recorded, including a Romanised settlement (NHER 25857) *c*. 1km to the northwest of the village. Evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation, however, is largely confined to an inhumation cemetery (NHER 30049) associated with Roman settlement (NHER 42869) *c*. 200m east of the parish church (**Fig. 7.16**). There is also some indication that the sandy gley soils saw some abandonment of higher status Roman settlement by the 5th century: in the north of the *pays*, at Snettisham, for example, two possible Roman villa sites (NHER 26634 and 28450) demonstrate no evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation, although villa 26634 lies within 500m of Snettisham Old Hall (NHER 1561), a possible medieval manor, while villa 28450 is associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation (**Fig. 7.17**).

As with both Breckland and the Boulder Clay Plateau, however, the best evidence for any potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries is also across the sandy gley soils. Excluding the two villa sites mentioned above, the broader association of Roman settlement with 'Early Saxon' pottery and metalwork scatters at Snettisham (**Fig. 7.17**), and, similarly, at Gayton and Gayton Thorpe further to the southeast (**Fig. 7.18**), may suggest potential continuity of the wider Roman settlement pattern on the sandy gley soils of the West Norfolk Lowland into at least the 5th to 7th centuries, although a phase of settlement abandonment had possibly occurred at some higher status sites by the 8th to 9th centuries. This is again most evident at Snettisham, where two Romanised settlements, one (NHER 20199) on the sandy gley soils *c*. 1.4km to the southwest of Ingoldisthorpe, and another (NHER 27735) on typical brown sands *c*. 1.4km to the northwest of Snettisham, are associated with 'Early Saxon' pottery scatters only (NHER 11829 and 13010 respectively) (**Fig. 7.17**). Even by the 8th to 9th centuries, the dispersed pattern of Roman settlement may have largely continued across parts of the West Norfolk Lowland, with some

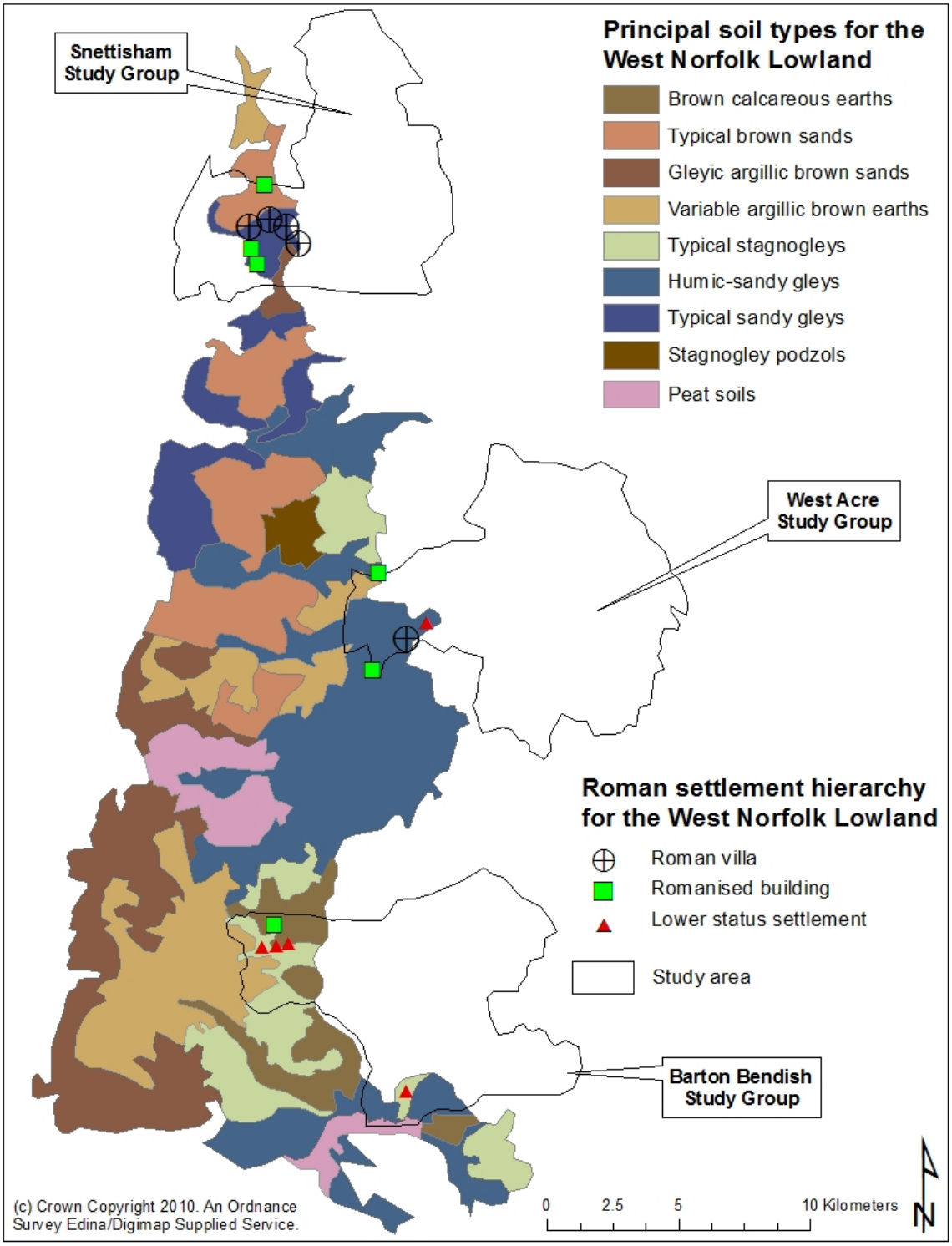


Figure 7.15. The distribution of Roman settlement within the study groups for the West Norfolk Lowland, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

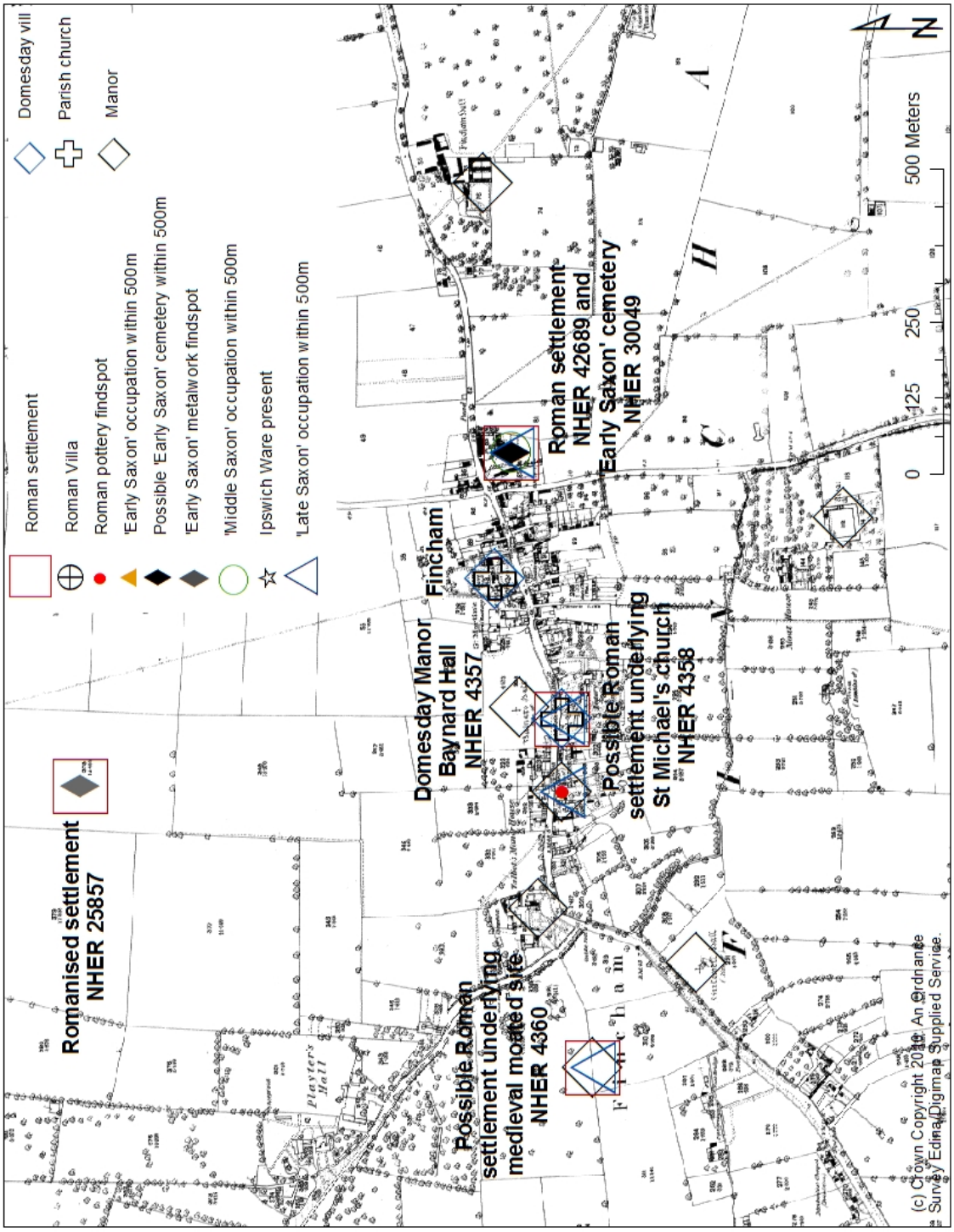


Figure 7.16. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Fincham shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

surviving Roman settlements subsequently influencing processes of settlement nucleation by the 9th to 11th centuries, as demonstrated at Fincham, Gayton, Gayton Thorpe and Ingoldisthorpe, for example.

Whilst patterns of Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland demonstrate remarkable parity by the 9th to 11th centuries, processes of settlement consolidation by this point may have been least influenced by the highly Romanised settlement of the *pays*, particularly Roman villas. As mentioned above, there appears to have been some dislocation of higher status Roman settlement across the *pays* by the 5th to 7th centuries, although some villa sites on the sandy gley soils, such as Gayton Thorpe (NHER 3743) or Park Piece, Snettisham (NHER 1531), for example, nevertheless suggest continuing occupation into the 9th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 7.17 and 7.18**). The Roman villa at Snettisham, however, is situated c. 750m from the Domesday vill and parish church, while the Roman villa at Gayton Thorpe is situated over 1km distant from the Domesday vill and parish church.

Whether this reflects a gradual decline in the significance of villa sites by the 9th to 11th centuries, or whether estate boundaries survived sufficiently to influence the peripheral development of early medieval settlement cores in some way is purely conjectural here. On the basis of recent archaeological evaluation at Fincham (NHER 42689) (Watkins 2006), however, coupled with metal detecting surveys at Fincham and Gayton Thorpe (NHER 30049; 29392; 31812), the current evidence indicates that where the Roman origins of settlement cores on the West Norfolk Lowland may be shown, these largely reflect lower status Roman occupation (**Figs. 7.16 and 7.18**). Roman and Saxon pottery recovered in and around the churchyard at Gayton (NHER 3770 and 3744) reinforces this observation, the wider evidence potentially demonstrating that although some Roman villa settlement on the West Norfolk Lowland may suggest a continuity of occupation into at least the 9th to 11th centuries, it does not appear to have dictated processes of settlement consolidation by this point.

The settlement pattern that develops on the West Norfolk Lowland by the 9th to 11th centuries is one of larger, loosely nucleated, settlements, such as Fincham and Snettisham, for example, which are quite widely spaced across the *pays*, interspersed by smaller, more compact, settlements, such as Gayton, Gayton Thorpe or Ingoldisthorpe, for example. Between the larger settlements were

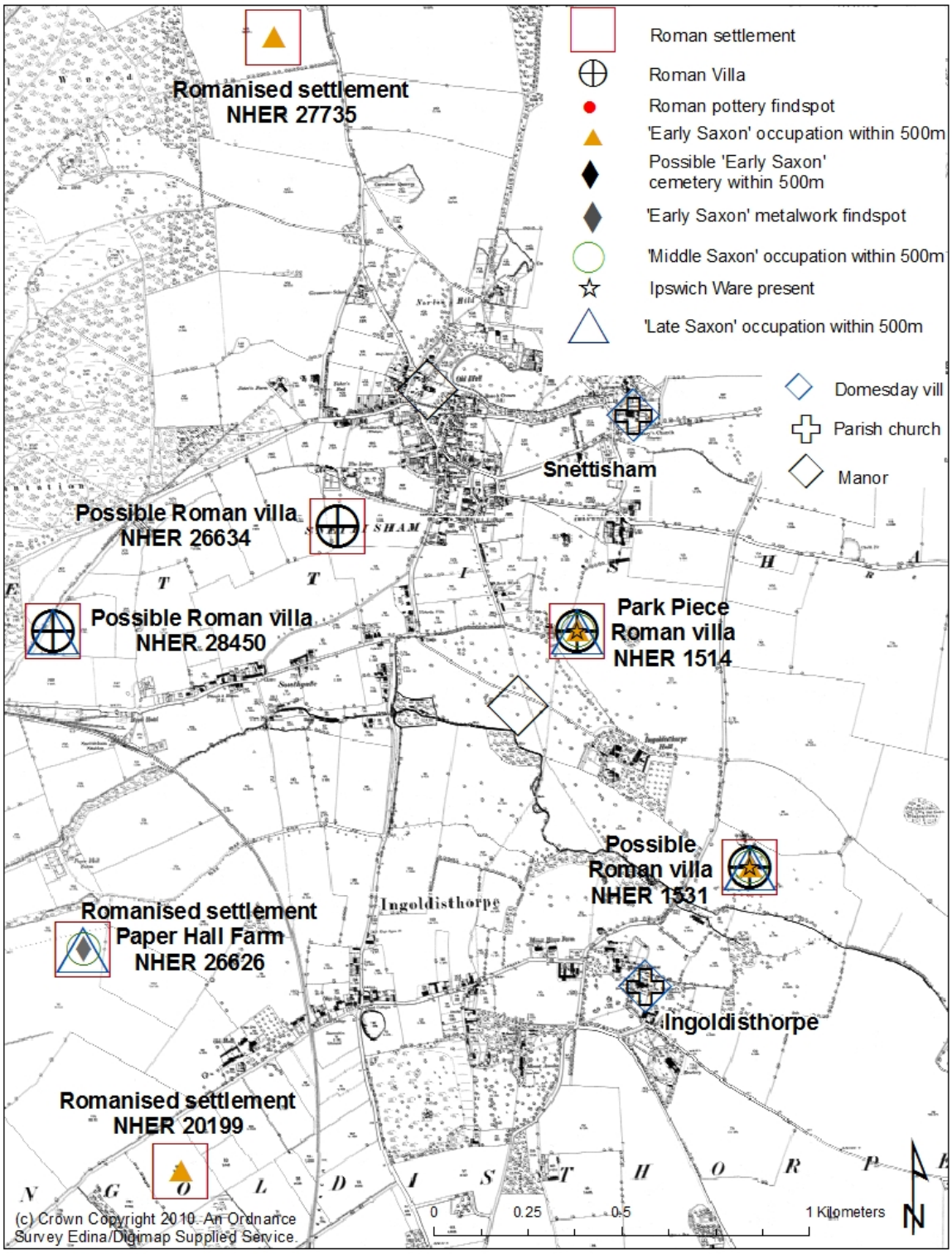


Figure 7.17. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Snettisham shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

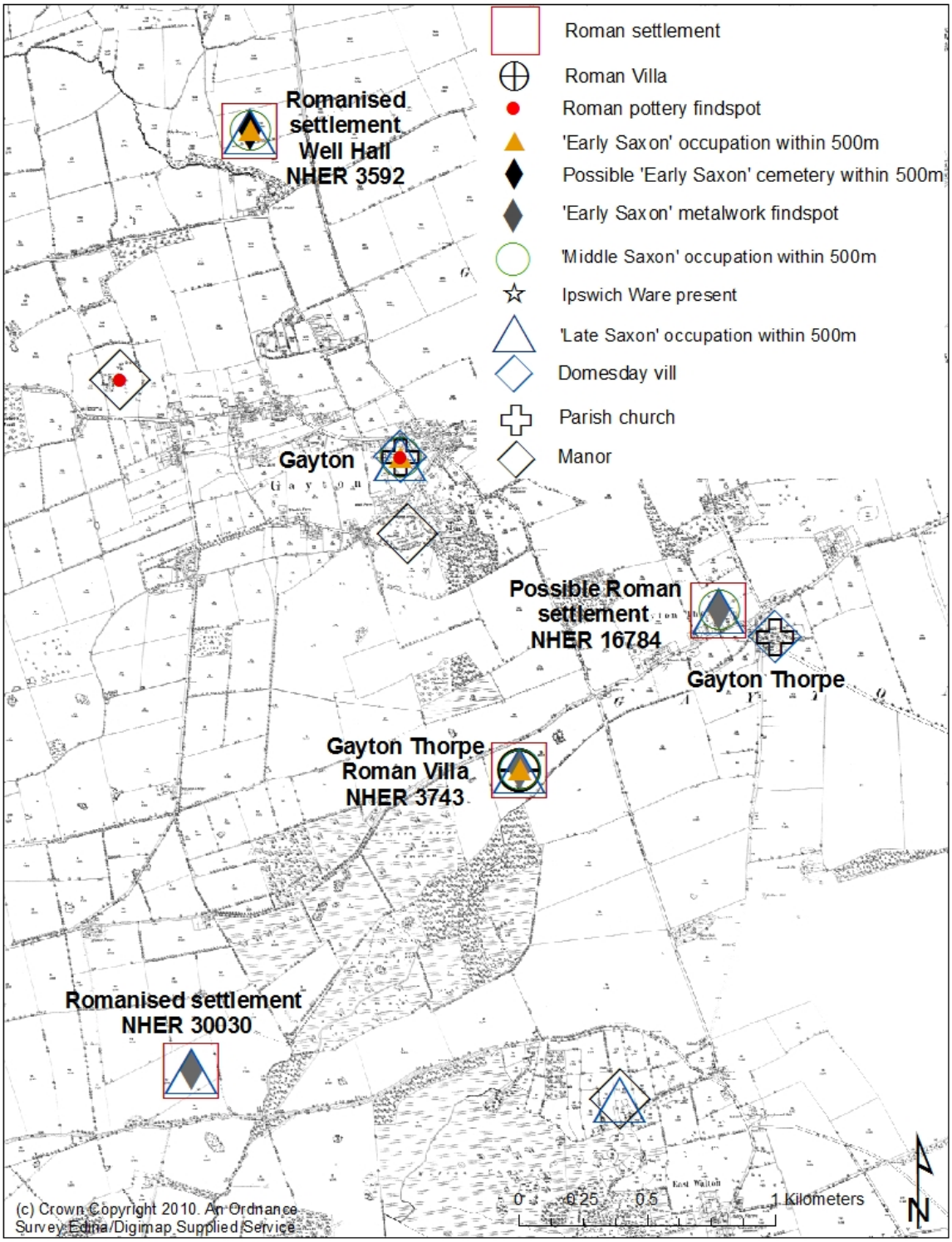


Figure 7.18. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Gayton and Gayton Thorpe shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

scattered farms and manors, particularly evident across the better soils, such as the sandy gleys, and possibly reflecting an increasing settlement expansion and manorial fragmentation from the 9th to 11th centuries onwards. Whether this is equally demonstrated on the poorer soils is not so well shown by this research, although on the calcareous loams at Fincham, the evidence possibly suggests settlement expansion within relatively tight parameters, demonstrated by the number of manors in close proximity to the village: seven manor houses are recorded in the Norfolk HER, although Blomefield (1806) documents thirteen.

The relationship of Roman settlement to 'Late Saxon' occupation and manors across the West Norfolk Lowland potentially reflects a degree of resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, although this is perhaps not so well demonstrated as on Breckland or the Boulder Clay Plateau. At Fincham, for example, two Roman settlements (NHER 4358; 4360) are associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation. NHER 4538, situated on the calcareous loams, underlies the parish church and is situated *c*. 100m southwest of the Domesday manor of Baynard Hall. NHER 4360, on heavier clay soils, may be an example of resettlement rather than continuity as it underlies a medieval moated site and is situated *c*. 600m to the west of the parish church (**Fig. 7.16**). At Snettisham, one possible Roman villa (NHER 28450) with evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation is located on sandy gley soils *c*. 1.6 km to the southwest of Snettisham. This may also be an example of resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, even though it lies on the better soils (**Fig. 7.17**). Whilst the examples at Snettisham and Fincham are clearly limited, they do appear to broadly conform to wider patterns of Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, in relation to soils, as demonstrated on Breckland and the Boulder Clay Plateau, and which further study of the West Norfolk Lowland might better inform.

Summary

The Roman settlement pattern on the West Norfolk Lowland demonstrates a particularly high ratio of Romanised settlement and Roman villas. Although, on current evidence, patterns of Roman settlement contraction by the late 4th to early 5th centuries are not well demonstrated for the *pays*, there is some suggestion for this even across the better soils, possibly with a subsequent phase of abandonment during the 5th to 7th centuries, particularly evident in

higher status settlement. Even given this, however, the distribution of 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation suggests the potential continuity of the larger extent of Roman settlement, and the possible longevity of a dispersed settlement pattern into at least the 8th to 9th centuries, maybe longer. By this point, however, some areas of Roman settlement, largely of lower status, may have been informing nascent processes of settlement consolidation and the subsequent siting of Domesday vills and parish churches. Higher status Roman settlements, however, and Roman villas in particular, appear to have seen a greater dislocation from developing settlement processes by the 9th to 11th centuries, although it is conjectured that this shift may be partly determined by surviving estate boundaries, rather than complete disassociation.

Whilst current evidence is limited, there is some suggestion for settlement expansion on the West Norfolk Lowland during the 9th to 11th centuries, accompanied by a possible increase in manors through processes of subinfeudation. The majority of 'Late Saxon' settlements and manors recorded for the West Norfolk Lowland indicate some association with underlying Roman occupation, although there is a potential bias in this evidence, due to the concentration of 'Late Saxon' occupation and documented manors at Fincham, in the south of the *pays*. Here, the evidence potentially suggests that settlement expansion on the calcareous loams and heavy clay soils between the 9th to 11th centuries occurred within relatively tight parameters, although it is not evident how far this might reflect the wider trend for the West Norfolk Lowland. At Snettisham and Gayton, on the sandy gley soils in the north of the *pays*, expansion appears to have comprised both settlement growth as well as an increase in the number of dispersed settlements and manors. The evidence for underlying Roman occupation from some of these sites may reflect resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, particularly where higher status sites potentially demonstrate earlier abandonment by the 5th to 7th centuries. Where settlement expansion partly reflects processes of nucleation by the 9th to 11th centuries, as at Fincham, in the south of the *pays*, and Snettisham, in the north, for example, relatively large settlements developed as a result. Nucleation was relatively loose in character, however, and a hierarchy of early medieval settlement suggests the larger villages were liberally intermixed with smaller, compact, hamlets and a scatter of outlying farms and manors.

The Chalk Scarp

Settlement data

Thirty-two Roman settlements are recorded for the Chalk Scarp. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 7.5**: **Fig. 7.19**).

Thirty-three 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Boulder Clay Plateau, in addition to 8 Domesday vills, 8 parish churches and 13 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 7.6**).

Soils data

The soils of the Chalk Scarp are almost entirely brown rendzinas save for some limited patches of brown sands and a band of variable argillic brown earths along the north and northwest borders (Corbett and Dent 1994, 18; SSEW 1983) (see **Fig. 7.22**). Of the 32 Roman settlements recorded for the Chalk Scarp, 28 (88%) were located on brown rendzinas, with 2 (6%) on typical brown sands and 2 (6%) on humic-sandy gleys, demonstrating that the light calcareous soils were most favoured for settlement during the Roman period. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 7.20**).

Of the early medieval settlements recorded for the Chalk Scarp, 26 out of the 33 'Late Saxon' settlements (79%), 5 out of the 8 parish churches (63%) and 8 out of the 13 manors (62%) were also located on the brown rendzinas, demonstrating that these soils continued to be favoured for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 7.21**).

The near uniformity of soils type across the Chalk Scarp makes trends and processes of settlement relationships between the Roman and early medieval periods, relative to soils, almost impossible to observe. In common with Breckland, however, it appears that the river valleys were preferred areas of settlement during both periods, as suggested by the distribution of settlement at Sedgeford and West Acre, for example (**Figs. 7.23.and 7.24**). In tandem with

Table 7.5 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Chalk Scarp, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 7.6 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the Chalk Scarp, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author.

Table 7.5: The Chalk Scarp

Total number of Roman settlements 32	Number			Percentage of Total		
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	0	0	8	0%	0%	25%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	3	5	3%	9%	16%
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	3	1	5	9%	3%	16%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	1	0	0	3%	0%	0%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	4	4	6	13%	13%	19%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	2	2	0%	6%	6%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	3	8	11	9%	25%	34%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	0	2	1	0%	6%	3%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	1	5	2	3%	16%	6%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	1	5	2	3%	16%	6%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	1	6	3	3%	19%	9%

Table 7.6: The Chalk Scarp

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of the total number recorded within the study group		
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement
'Late Saxon' settlement	38	3	11	22	8%	29%	58%
Domesday vill	7	0	4	1	0%	57%	14%
Parish church	8	0	4	2	0%	50%	25%
Manor	13	0	6	2	0%	46%	15%

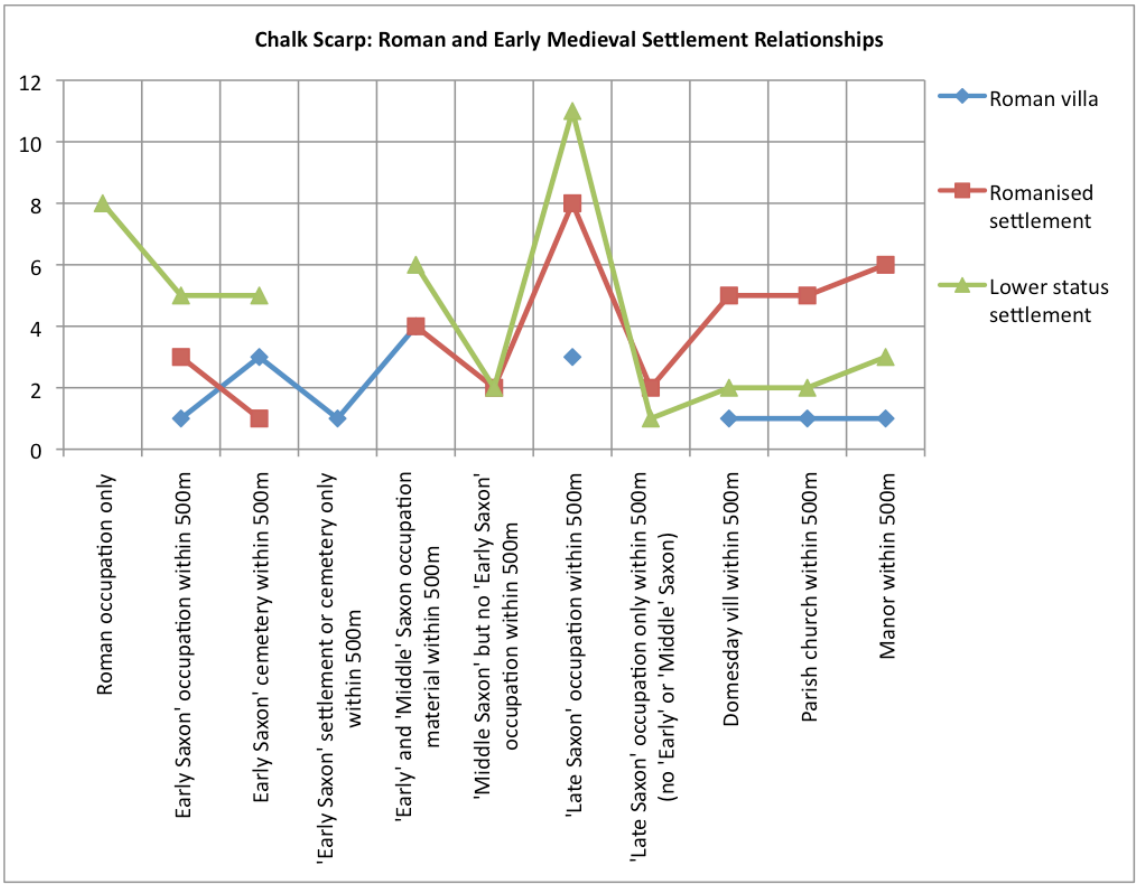


Figure 7.19. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Chalk Scarp relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

this, it seems apparent, in the light of comparison with the Breckland and West Norfolk Lowland *pays*, for example, that the light calcareous soils of the valley sides potentially saw the greater extent of settlement contraction and expansion between the 5th to 11th centuries, although this is not conclusively shown by soils data alone (**Figs. 7.20 and 7.21**).

As far as the available data can show, the distribution of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Chalk Scarp, in common with Breckland, appears largely confined to the valleys or their immediate borders. This may suggest that settlement consolidation by the 9th to 11th centuries, and any subsequent settlement expansion or manorial fragmentation by this period, was equally within relatively limited parameters.

Discussion

The Roman settlement data collated for the Chalk Scarp suggests that the *pays*

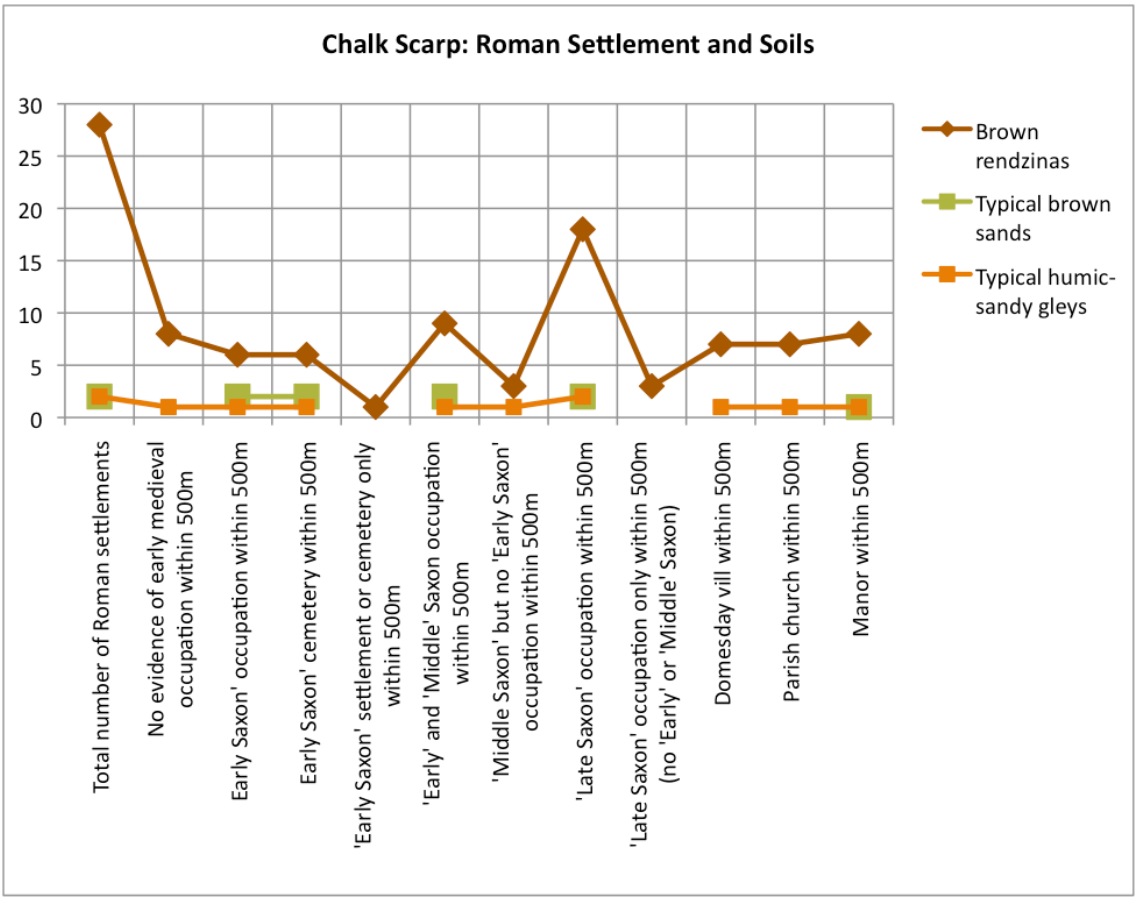


Figure 7.20. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the Chalk Scarp to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

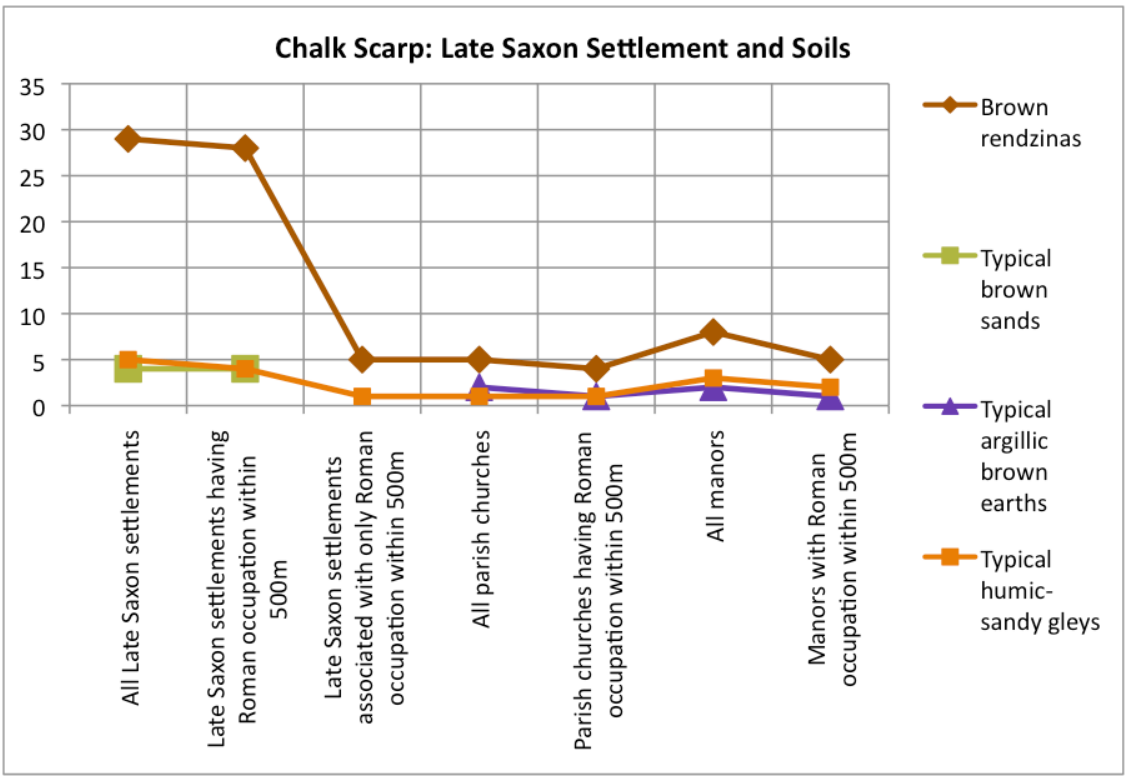


Figure 7.21. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Chalk Scarp to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

was densely settled in places during the Roman period, with a greater ratio of Romanised settlement closer to the valleys and a notable concentration of Roman villa settlement in the north of the *pays* (**Fig. 7.22**). Across the wider chalk interior a dispersed pattern of largely lower status Roman occupation is suggested, although a large part of the *pays* lies outside the research area, or lacks the data to inform this further.

The evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation on the Chalk Scarp suggests the potential abandonment of some Roman settlement across the chalk interior by the 5th century, in favour of the river valleys. This is demonstrated by the notable distribution of 'Early Saxon' occupation and cemeteries along the River Nar at West Acre and Castle Acre (**Fig. 7.23**) and a looser grouping of 'Early Saxon' occupation and cemeteries bordering the River Heacham at Sedgeford and Fring (**Fig. 7.24**). At West Acre, fieldwalking (Davison 2003; 2004) and metal detecting suggests four possible 'Early Saxon' cemeteries (**Fig. 7.23**), with additional 'Early Saxon' pottery, which may be cemetery-related but may also reflect wider contemporary settlement. These cemeteries are also associated with nearby Roman settlement: an 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 3983) recorded on the south bank of the River Nar at West Acre, for example, is situated *c*. 450m northeast of a high status Roman settlement (NHER 3953), itself situated *c*. 275m southeast of the Priory manor (**Fig. 7.23**). On the northern riverbank, a further 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 16841) overlies a Roman settlement (NHER 31884), which is situated *c*. 175m north of the parish church (**Fig. 7.23**). At Castle Acre, 'Early Saxon' pottery scatters are associated with two areas of Roman settlement (NHER 4096; 3449), the latter (NHER 3449) suggesting Romanised buildings nearby. These settlements respectively underlie the 11th century Cluniac Priory (NHER 4096) and the castle, originally the site of a 'Late Saxon' hall (see NHER 349) (**Fig. 7.23**).

At Sedgeford and Fring, 'Early Saxon' evidence leans more towards cemetery related finds, distinctly, but not exclusively, associated with the villa settlement in this area (**Fig. 7.24**). Metal detecting evidence suggests an 'Early Saxon' cemetery associated with a Roman villa at Fring (NHER 1659), with further 'Early Saxon' metalwork scatters (NHER 23001) recorded *c*. 540m to the north. Both sites are situated within 250m of the parish church and may reflect one larger cemetery site. A second Roman villa at Fring (NHER 1661), *c*. 750m to

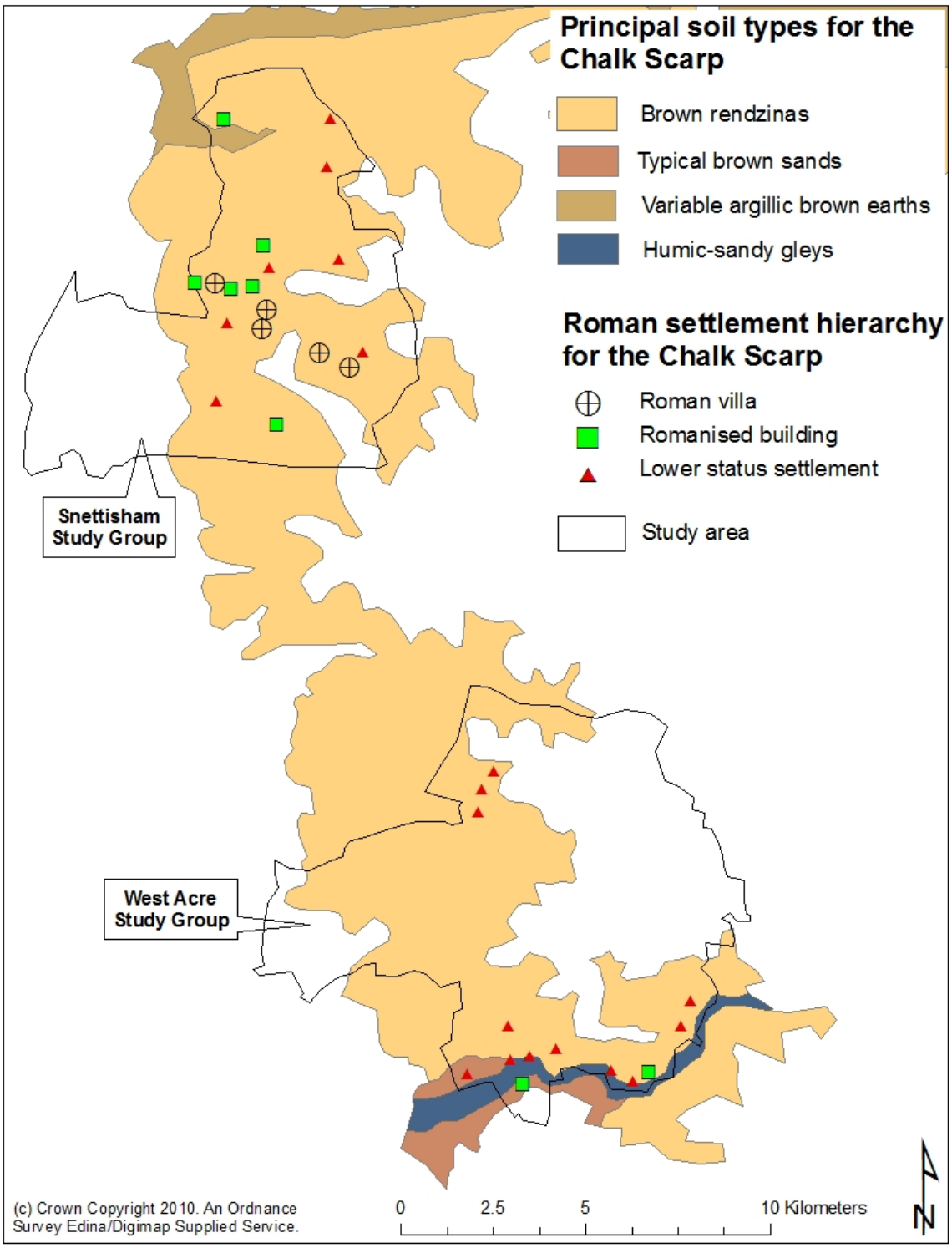


Figure 7.22. The distribution of Roman settlement within the selected study areas for the Chalk Scarp, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

the west, also records a small quantity of 'Early Saxon' brooches (see NHER), although these may be strays from the cemeteries to the east. A possible 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 1612) at Sedgeford is situated on the south bank of the River Heacham, *c*. 300m from a possible Roman villa (NHER 45479), while a further 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 1473) lies on the south bank of the River Heacham, immediately west of Sedgeford, close to the deserted medieval village of Eaton and opposite a possible Roman villa (NHER 1603) on the northern riverbank (**Fig. 7.24**). At Sedgeford itself, excavation (SHARP 2010) along the banks of the River Heacham exposed a possible sunken-featured building, overlain by features dating to the 8th century AD (Hoggett 2000, 6). Whilst the evidence suggests predominantly 'Middle' to 'Late' Saxon occupation (NHER 1609), a scatter of possible 'Early Saxon' pottery was recorded on the site of a Roman farmstead (NHER 31814) within the area of excavation, reinforcing the possibility of 'Early Saxon' occupation in the near vicinity.

The settlement data for 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon settlement on the Chalk Scarp potentially suggests a broad continuity of the settlement pattern along the major valleys between the 5th to 11th centuries. The current evidence does not clearly distinguish patterns of settlement shift or abandonment during this period, nor confidently identifies patterns of settlement expansion between the 9th to 11th centuries, although there is some suggestion for this. As for all the *pays* discussed so far, the association of Roman settlement with 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon occupation has been quanitifed to assess the potential continuity of Roman settlement into the 5th to 11th centuries. The majority of 'Late Saxon' settlements on the Chalk Scarp demonstrate near continuous chronologies of occupation and, on this basis, the evidence appears to suggest that the light calcareous soils of the *pays* potentially saw significant Roman settlement continuity into this period. A point to observe for all the Norfolk *pays,* however, is that very few of the recorded Roman settlements demonstrate a complete absence of associated occupation for the 5th to 11th centuries. As the soils of Norfolk's river valleys have been widely demonstrated as the preferred location for Roman and early medieval settlement, it is not impossible that the relationships being suggested at least partially reflect ongoing resettlement of these favoured soils. Referring back to discussion on what defines continuity, however, (Chapter 2, 37-39), the trends in settlement relationships between the Roman and early medieval periods in Norfolk appear to demonstrate, at the

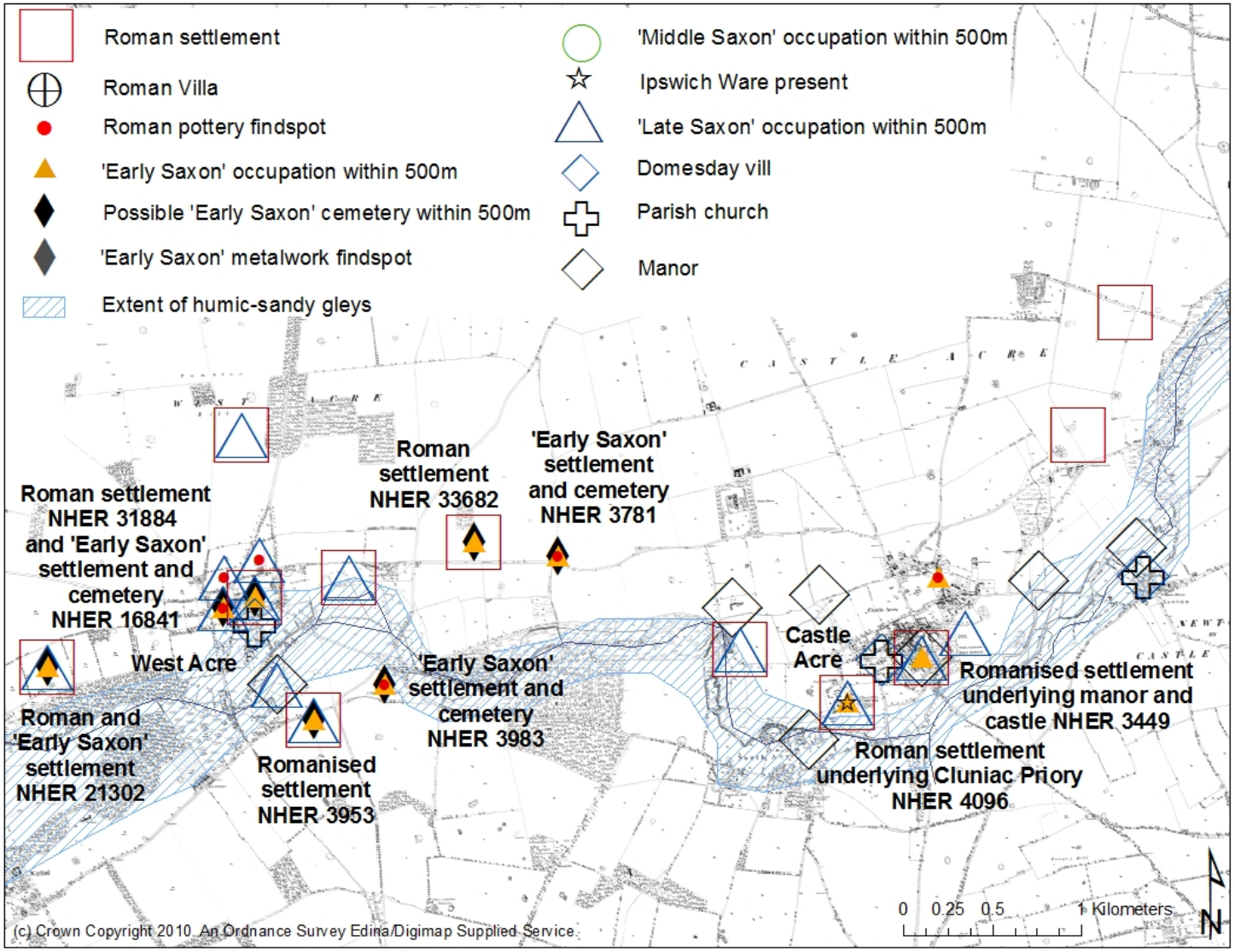


Figure 7.23. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at West Acre and Castle Acre, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

very least, a continuity in patterns of settlement along the major river valleys, if not always the direct continuity of indivdual settlements. Across the interfluvial soils a greater flux in patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement is indicated, as the results discussed, to date, demonstrate.

The settlement character of the Chalk Scarp by the 9th to 11th centuries indicates small and compact settlement cores along the river valleys, which develop as the sites of Domesday vills and parish churches by the 11th century, as demonstrated at West Acre, Castle Acre, Sedgeford and Fring, for example (**Figs, 7.23 and 7.24**). At West Acre and Castle Acre, in the south of the *pays*, the 11th century settlement cores strongly suggest at least Roman origins, with both also demonstrating a continuous chronology of occupation between these dates (**Fig. 7.23**). The 11th century settlement cores at Sedgeford and Fring demonstrate less certain evidence for Roman origins, although the broader continuity of the settlement pattern along the River Heacham between the 5th to 11th centuries is, nonetheless, distinct.

As with Breckland and the West Norfolk Lowland, Roman villa settlement on the Chalk Scarp does not appear to have closely determined developing settlement cores by the 9th to 11th centuries. Possible Roman villas to the southeast of Sedgeford (NHER 45479), and at Fring (NHER 1661), for example, suggest abandonment by the 7th century. A possible Roman villa (NHER 1600) to the south of Sedgeford is associated with both 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon pottery, while a further Roman villa (NHER 1603) to the west of Sedgeford is associated with 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon occupation. Both sites indicate potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, but do not seem to have influenced the location of the 11th century settlement core at Sedgeford (**Fig. 7.24**). A second Roman villa at Fring (NHER 1659) also demonstrates an association with 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon occupation, although the Domesday vill and parish church at Fring are established c. 750m to the north, suggesting a shift in settlement focus here, too, by the 11th century (**Fig. 7.24**).

A small number of Roman settlements, largely of lower status, are situated beyond the immediate margins of the Heacham valley (**Fig. 7. 24**). These demonstrate more limited evidence for potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, lacking either evidence for interim occupation or having only small quantities of 'Early Saxon' metalwork in association (**Fig. 7.24**). They may

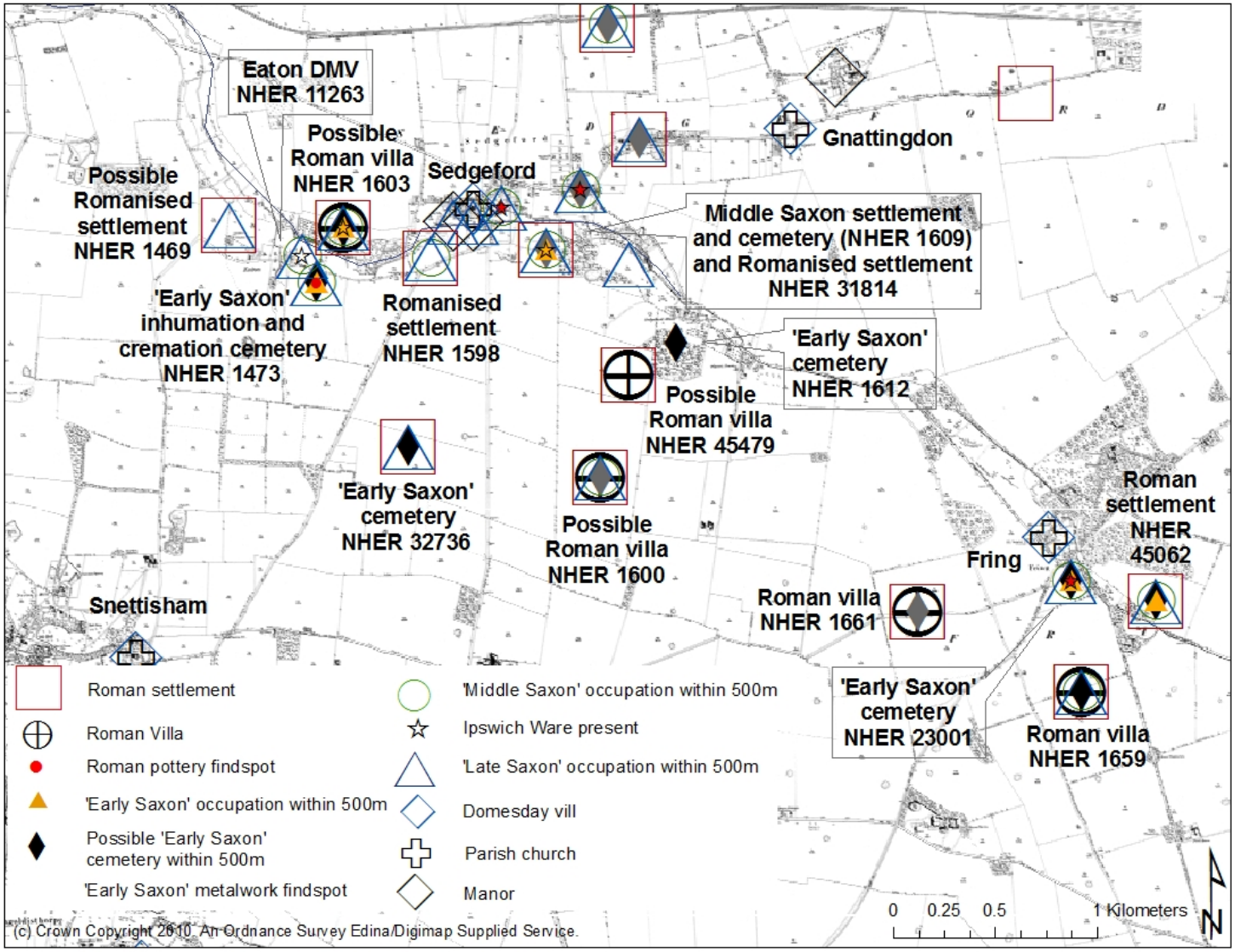


Figure 7.24. The evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Sedgeford and Fring, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

variously demonstrate examples of settlement contraction and expansion during the 5th to 11th centuries, although precise chronologies of abandonment and resettlement remain unclear.

The broader evidence for settlement on the Chalk Scarp between the 5th to 11th centuries appears to have much in common with Breckland, where settlement on the lighter soils appears strongly determined by the proximity to river valleys. Roman settlement contraction from the interior of the Chalk Scarp by the 5th century is distinctly suggested, although this is less well defined for Breckland, where some continuity of a dispersed Roman settlement pattern on areas of calcareous soils is suggested, as at Barton Bendish, for example. Subsequent settlement expansion across the Chalk Scarp between the 9th to 11th centuries also appears predominantly confined to the valley margins. In common with both Breckland and the West Norfolk Lowland, there is a relatively high ratio of Roman villa settlement on the Chalk Scarp, the majority demonstrating potential continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries, although this does not appear to have significantly informed developing settlement nucleation during this period. Whilst both Breckland and the West Norfolk Lowland indicate smaller, more compact settlement cores along some river valleys by the 11th century, at Beachamwell and Gooderstone, for example, there is also marked evidence for larger settlement groupings, such as Barton Bendish or Snettisham, for example, which demonstrate loose settlement aggregation. This is less evident on the Chalk Scarp, where 9th to 11th century settlement appears confined to smaller settlement cores within a wider dispersed pattern of settlement along the major valleys and more scattered settlement across the wider chalk interior.

Summary

The Roman settlement pattern for the Chalk Scarp indicates potentially dense occupation during the period, particularly along the major valleys. The current evidence suggests that the majority of higher status Roman settlement, including a comparatively high ratio of Roman villas, was situated in the north of the *pays*, with largely lower status Roman settlement across the wider chalk interior. By the 5th century a limited contraction of the Roman settlement pattern in favour of the river valleys is indicated, with a notable distribution of ‘Early Saxon’ settlement and cemeteries along the Heacham and Nar rivers, distinctly

associated with underlying Roman occupation. The continuity of a dispersed settlement pattern along the river valleys is broadly indicated throughout the 5th to 11th centuries, with the development of small settlement cores by the 9th to 11th centuries influencing the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches.

In the south of *pays*, the 11th century settlement cores demonstrate distinct evidence for Roman origins, with continuous chronologies of occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries indicated at both West Acre and Castle Acre, for example. In the north of the *pays* there is less certain evidence for Roman origins to the developing settlement cores, although there is some hint of this at Sedgeford and Fring, albeit with a degree of settlement shift by the 11th century. Furthermore, and in common with both the West Norfolk Lowland and Breckland, the pattern of villa settlement appears to have least influenced the development of settlement organisation by the 9th to 11th centuries, even though the majority of Roman villas on the Chalk Scarp demonstrate some evidence for continuity of use, if not, necessarily, function.

Evidence for patterns of settlement expansion and/or manorial fragmentation between the 9th to 11th centuries is limited at West Acre and Castle Acre, in the south of the *pays*, although some suggestion of settlement expansion along the river valleys here may be observed. Association with the underlying Roman settlement pattern is indistinct, although some resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries seems likely, given the relatively confined margins. In the north of the *pays*, at Sedgeford and Fring, there is slightly greater suggestion for settlement expansion beyond the valley peripheries by the 9th to 11th centuries, indicating potential resettlement where limited or discontinuous settlement chronologies of Roman sites are suggested.

The Chalk Scarp appears to share much in common with the light soils of Breckland and the West Norfolk Lowland in the patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement. The possible dislocation in the pattern of Roman villa settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries is also common to all three *pays*. The 11th century settlement character of the Chalk Scarp suggests small, compact, settlement cores within a wider dispersed settlement pattern along the major river valleys, lacking the larger settlement groupings evident on Breckland and the West Norfolk Lowland by the 11th century.

Good Sands

Settlement data

Only seven Roman settlements are recorded for the study groups covering the Good Sands, to include Two Oaks Roman villa at Massingham (NHER 3669), three Romanised settlements and four lower status settlements. All seven settlements are situated on palaeo-argillic brown earths, the loam over clay soils that dominate the *pays* (**Fig. 7.25**).

Nine 'Late Saxon' settlements are recorded for the Good Sands, in addition to 4 Domesday vills, 4 parish churches and 6 manors. The majority of these are also situated on the loam over clay soils.

As the data for the Good Sands is so limited, the Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for the *pays* are discussed in summary only, below.

Discussion

There is very little data for Roman or early medieval settlement from the two study groups on the Good Sands, despite fieldwalking surveys (Davison 2003; 2004; Davison 1988) at West Acre, Castle Acre and Rougham. Except for one lower status Roman settlement to the east of Snettisham, settlement data for the Good Sands comes from the West Acre study group in the southwest of the *pays* (**Fig. 7.25**). Great Massingham parish was largely heathland until the 18th century (Spooner 2006) and currently demonstrates no certain evidence for Roman settlement, although one sherd (NHER 25139) was recovered from an area of 'Late Saxon' settlement *c*. 160m south of Little Massingham parish church, possibly indicating Roman occupation in the near vicinity.

Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for the Good Sands may be limited, but some settlement abandonment by the 5th century may be indicated. The Roman villa at Two Oaks, Massingham (NHER 3669), currently suggests no evidence for associated Saxon occupation. A Romanised settlement at West Acre (NHER 33666) appears equally short-lived, while a lower status settlement (NHER 37821) in the southeast of Rougham parish appears to be 1st to 2nd century in date (Network Archaeology 2004, 15-16). There is some evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation, however: 'Early Saxon' pottery is recorded in

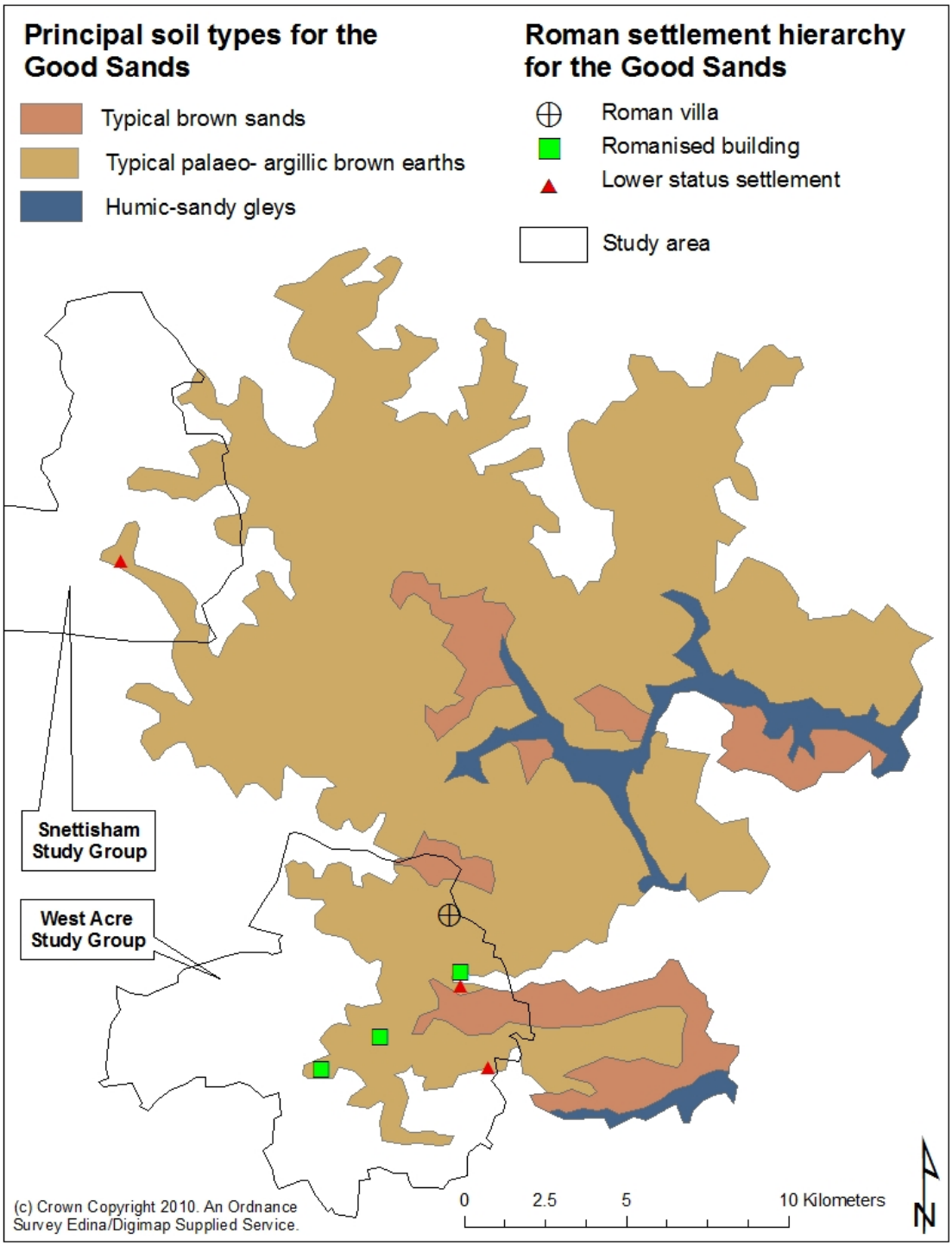


Figure 7.25. The distribution of Roman settlement within the selected study areas for the Good Sands, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

association with a Romanised settlement (NHER 3879) near West Acre, while fieldwalking at Rougham (Davison 1988) recorded 'Early' through to 'Late' Saxon pottery in association with two Roman settlements to the north of Rougham shrunken medieval village (NHER 3671; 3673). The sites may have been one larger settlement, but the gap between them appears barren of pottery (*ibid*, 65). This coincides with the soils evidence, which shows a tract of heavy stagnogleyic soils dividing the two sites (SSEW 1983).

The Romanised settlement at West Acre does not suggest occupation beyond the 5th to 7th centuries, in contrast to Rougham, where the two areas of Roman settlement lie within 500m of the shrunken medieval village and the earthworks of Green Hall, or Finchams, Manor (see Davison 1988, Fig, 19). The broad association of Roman and Saxon pottery at Rougham also suggests the site of the shrunken village remained a focus of occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries. The parish church, however, lies *c*. 800m to the southeast and does not currently demonstrate evidence of underlying Roman occupation, although there is some evidence for the re-use of Roman brick in the church construction (*ibid*, 66). As only 'Late Saxon' pottery (NHER 16175) has yet been recovered from the vicinity of the parish church, this may suggest a shift in the focus of settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries.

The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' settlement across the Good Sands suggests that, in common with other Norfolk *pays*, particularly those having lighter soils, the settlement character of the Good Sands between the 8th to 9th centuries may have been one of nascent settlement consolidation within a wider pattern of dispersed settlement (see the discussions for the West Norfolk Lowland and the Chalk Scarp, p 147-171). At Great Massingham, 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon pottery is recorded from St Mary's churchyard (NHER 2345). At Rougham, as mentioned above, there may have been a shift in settlement focus by the 9th to 11th centuries, coinciding with the siting of the parish church. How far these trends reflect any relationship to patterns of Roman settlement remains unclear, however, as only the, very limited, evidence (NHER 25139) at Little Massingham currently demonstrates any evidence for Roman occupation associated with parish churches and 11th century settlement cores. More collective data for the Good Sands is clearly required for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships to be more effectively assessed.

Chapter 8. Norfolk: Final Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

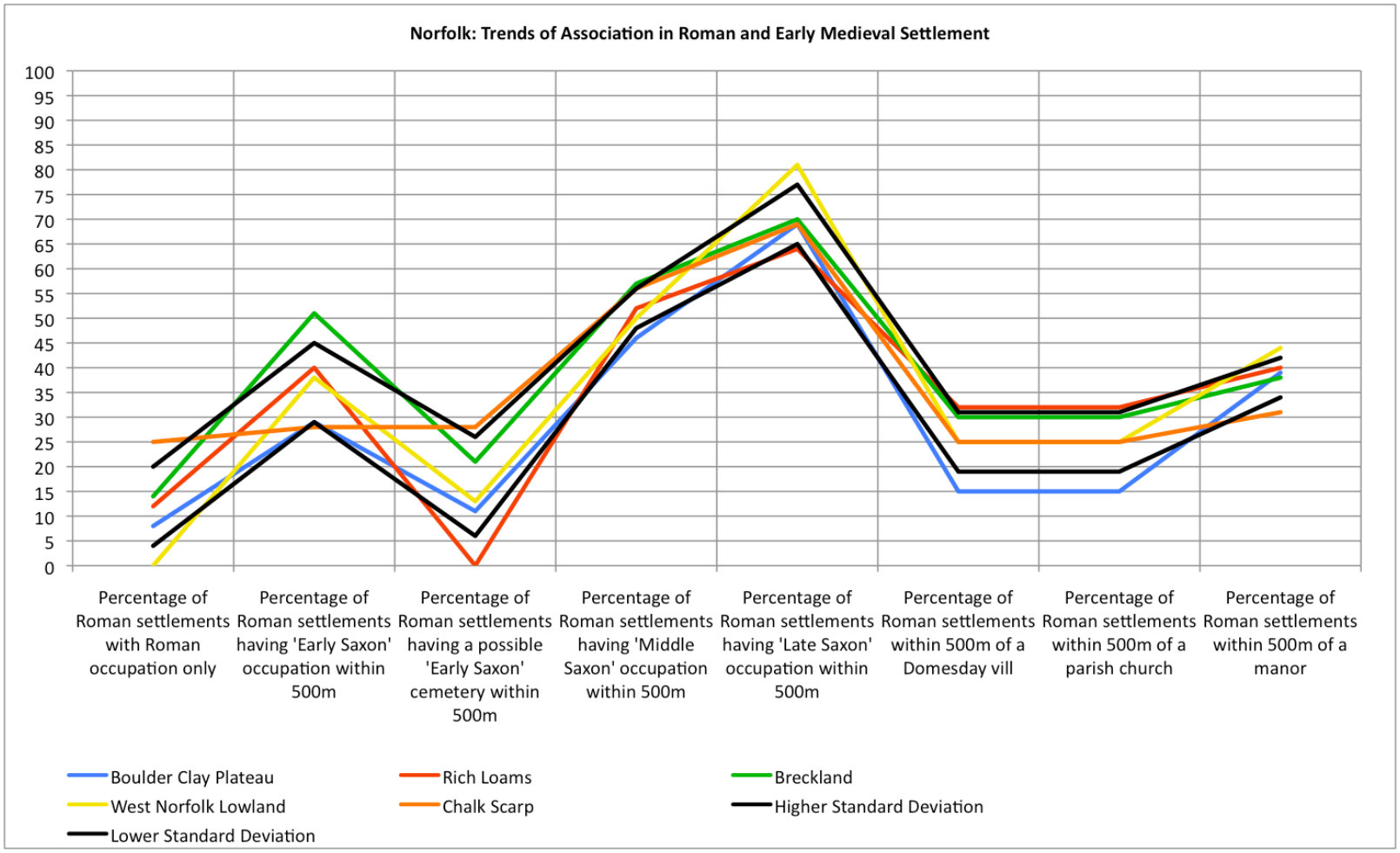
Evaluation of results

The Roman and early medieval settlement landscape of Norfolk has been spatially assessed from two perspectives: from the late Roman period forwards and from the 'Late Saxon' period, effectively the 9th to 11th centuries, backwards. The primary aims have been to assess potential Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, to see how far patterns of Roman settlement continued into the 'Early Saxon', 'Middle Saxon' and 'Late Saxon' periods, and to what extent they influenced developing settlement patterns between the 5th to 11th centuries, as well as to retrogressively assess the extent to which patterns of 'Late Saxon' settlement, including Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, reflected earlier patterns of Roman settlement and how far these 11th century institutions might suggest Roman origins. A secondary aim has been to assess Roman and early medieval settlement patterns in relation to soils. As discussed in Chapter 3 (pp 71-72), soil type has formed the basis for defining the physical *pays* covered by this thesis and it is of interest to see whether settlement processes during the 5th to 11th centuries distinguished between areas of lighter or heavier soils, and if any sub-regional variation can be shown.

The settlement results for Norfolk are illustrated below (**Tables 8.1 and 8.2; Figs. 8.1 and 8.2**), comparing individual *pays* to demonstrate whether Roman and early medieval settlement patterns within a given *pays* either conform to, or deviate from, demonstrated trends. For this, the Good Sands *pays* is excluded, due to the small sample size. The results for each Norfolk *pays* are given as percentages relative to their respective populations. To address potential issues of random sampling, where relative percentages might simply reflect those of a random population, standard deviation is used to give greater confidence. The upper and lower parameters for this are given to one standard deviation, or 1 sigma (σ). This reflects the statistical probability that 68% of a given population will fall within these parameters. Where the results for a given *pays* fall outside these parameters, this suggests lesser or greater deviation from the mean, potentially indicating trends of sub-regional variation.

Table 8.1. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Norfolk. Sample sizes for each *pays* are given, excluding the Good Sands. The results are shown as percentages and the standard deviation for each relationship category has been calculated to one standard deviation, or 1σ, demonstrating 68% probability.

Norfolk *Pays*	The Boulder Clay Plateau	The Rich Loams	Breckland	The West Norfolk Lowland	The Chalk Scarp	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of Roman settlements	61	25	37	16	32				
Percentage of Roman settlements that demonstrate no relationship between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns	8%	12%	14%	0%	25%	12%	8	20%	4%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	29%	40%	51%	38%	28%	37%	8	45%	29%
Percentage of Roman settlements with an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	12%	0%	21%	13%	28%	15%	9	26%	6%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	46%	52%	57%	50%	56%	52%	4	56%	48%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	69%	64%	70%	81%	69%	71%	6	77%	65%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	15%	32%	30%	25%	25%	25%	6	31%	19%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	15%	32%	30%	25%	25%	25%	6	31%	19%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	39%	40%	38%	44%	31%	38%	4	42%	34%



Sample size:

Boulder Clay Plateau: 61

Breckland: 37

West Norfolk Lowland: 16

Chalk Scarp: 32

Rich Loams: 25

Figure 8.1. Line graph showing the relative percentages for trends of association in Roman and early medieval settlement across the Norfolk pays, excluding the Good Sands, due to small sample size. Higher and lower parameters of standard deviation are shown to 1 σ.

The relative ratios in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Norfolk suggest some subtle nuances that may reflect genuine variation in certain patterns of settlement development across individual *pays*, although biases in archaeological fieldwork and material recovery are also possible. The West Norfolk Lowland, for example, demonstrates a lower than average ratio of Roman settlement suggesting no apparent relationship with the early medieval settlement pattern, at 0%, compared with the Chalk Scarp, which suggests a higher than average ratio, at 25% (**Table 8.1; Fig. 8.1**). Breckland, on the other hand, demonstrates a higher than average association between Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement, at 51%, while the Chalk Scarp suggests a higher than average association between Roman settlement and 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, at 28%. The ratio of Roman settlement associated with an 'Early Saxon' cemetery is lower than average for the Rich Loams, at 0%, although this disparity may be the result of differential recovery. The West Norfolk Lowland demonstrates a higher than average ratio of Roman settlements associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation and manors, at 81% and 44% respectively, but, the wider discussion of results (Chapter 7, 155-158) suggests this may actually reflect greater resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries. The relationship between Roman settlement and parish churches is lower than average for The Boulder Clay Plateau, at just 15%, possibly due to phases of abandonment on the heavier clay interfluves between the 5th to 7th centuries, and more pronounced settlement nucleation along its major river valleys by the 8th to 9th centuries (see Chapter 6, 102-112). A slightly higher than average ratio of Roman settlement associated with parish churches is indicated for the Rich Loams, possibly reflecting the more widely dispersed settlement pattern of the *pays* by the 11th century (**Table 8.1; Fig. 8.1**).

Retrogressive analysis suggests that the relative relationships between 'Late Saxon' and Roman settlement is higher than average for the West Norfolk Lowland, at 100%, although this *pays* also demonstrates a higher than average ratio for Roman settlement associated with only 'Late Saxon' occupation, suggesting that the relationship might partly reflect resettlement by the 11th century (**Table 8.2; Fig. 8.2**). The Rich Loams suggest a lower than average ratio of parish churches associated with Roman occupation, at 51%, although this may reflect a bias in fieldwork, as fieldwalking of the Mannington and Wolterton estates by Davison (1995) did not extend to the parish churches of

Table 8.2. Early medieval and Roman settlement relationships for Norfolk. Sample sizes for each *pays* are given, excluding the Good Sands. The results are shown as percentages and the standard deviation for each relationship category has been calculated to one standard deviation, or 1σ, demonstrating 68% probability.

Kent *Pays*	The Boulder Clay Plateau	The Rich Loams	Breckland	The West Norfolk Lowland	The Chalk Scarp	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of 'Late Saxon settlements (having material evidence of 11th century occupation)	64	27	44	14	38				
Percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements with Roman occupation within 500m	85%	82%	89%	100%	95%	90%	7	97%	83%
Percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements with Roman occupation only within 500m	27%	22%	16%	29%	16%	22%	5	27%	17%
Total number of Domesday vills	11	8	15	6	7				
Percentage of Domesday vills with Roman occupation within 500m	55%	51%	73%	67%	71%	63%	9	74%	54%
Total number of parish churches	11	8	15	7	8				
Percentage of Parish Churches with Roman occupation within 500m	55%	51%	73%	71%	75%	65%	10	75%	55%
Total number of manors	33	8	18	13	13				
Percentage of manors with Roman occupation within 500m	45%	50%	83%	77%	61%	63%	15	78%	48%

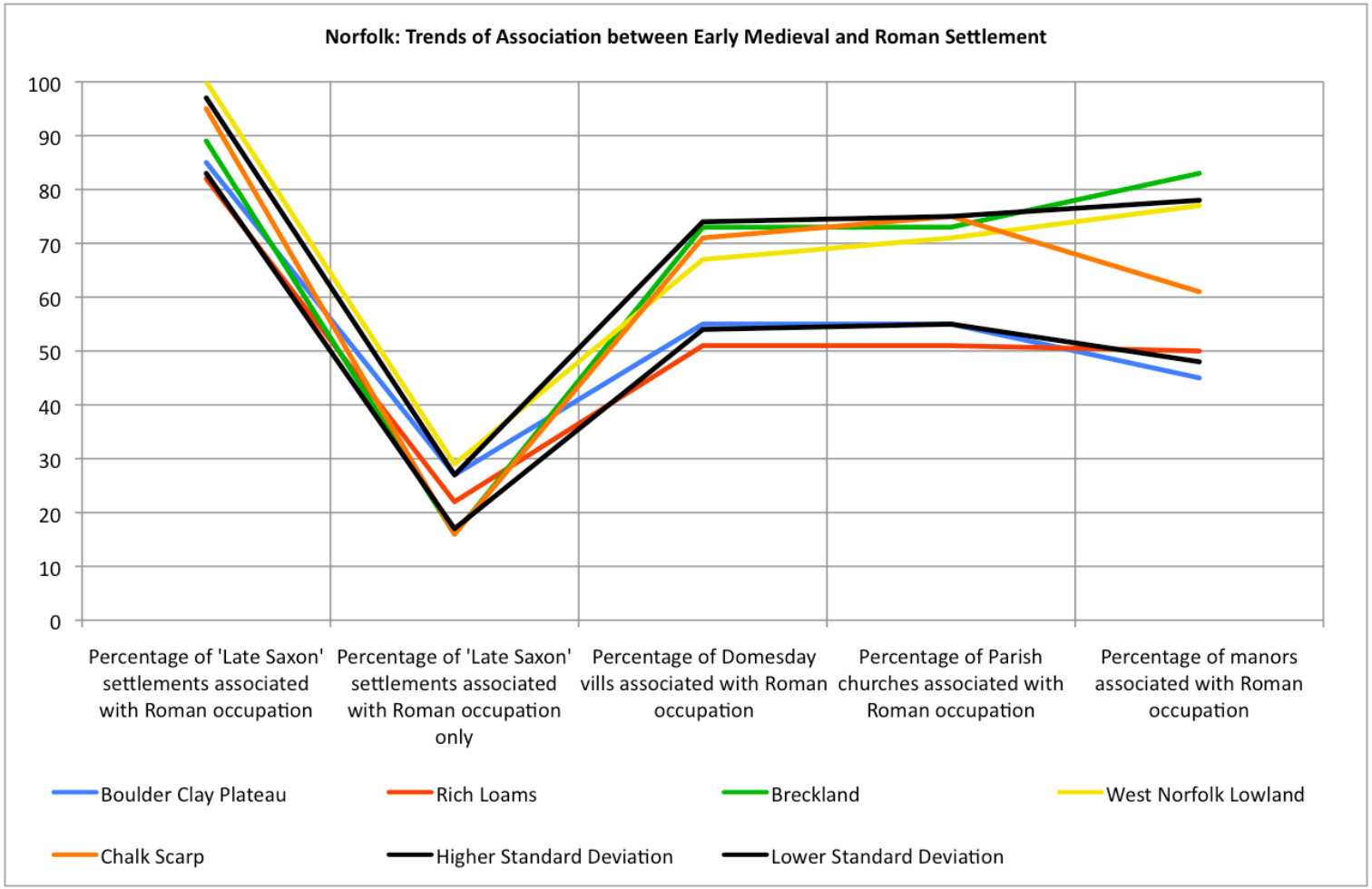


Figure 8.2. Line graph showing the relative percentages for trends of association in early medieval and Roman settlement across the Norfolk pays, excluding the Good Sands, due to small sample size. Higher and lower parameters of standard deviation are also shown to 1σ.

Sample sizes

Boulder Clay Plateau:
'Late Saxon' settlement: 64
Domesday vills: 10
Parish churches: 11
Manors: 33

Rich Loams:
Late Saxon' settlement: 27
Domesday vills: 8
Parish churches: 8
Manors: 8

Breckland:
Late Saxon' settlement: 44
Domesday vills: 15
Parish churches: 15
Manors: 18

West Norfolk Lowland:
Late Saxon' settlement: 14
Domesday vills: 6
Parish churches: 7
Manors: 13

Chalk Scarp:
Late Saxon' settlement: 38
Domesday vills: 17
Parish churches: 8
Manors: 13

Little Barningham, Itteringham or Erpingham. Breckland demonstrates a higher than average ratio of manors associated with Roman occupation, at 83%, which may reflect the relatively confined expansion of settlement and manors along the river valleys between the 9th to 11th centuries, while the lower than average ratio of manors on the Boulder Clay Plateau associated with Roman settlement, at 45%, may reflect an expansion of settlement and manors back across the clay interfluves from the 9th to 11th centuries onwards (**Table 8.2; Fig. 8.2**).

Norfolk* pays*: regional variation and soils evidence

The research results for Norfolk suggest the historiography of late Roman and early medieval settlement for the county broadly conforms to the current understanding of national settlement processes during the two periods. The evidence suggests that Norfolk saw dense Roman settlement across both lighter and heavier soils (**Fig. 8.3**), as originally indicated by Rogerson *et al*.'s (1997, 14) estimations for Barton Bendish, on Breckland, and Williamson's (2006, 156) for the Boulder Clay Plateau. Roman settlement distribution suggests that higher status occupation, including Roman villas, was predominantly located closer to the river valleys or principal water sources, making it more likely that these settlements saw continuity into the early medieval period. The interfluvial areas, on the other hand saw a broader distribution of largely lower status occupation, which was potentially more likely to have seen phases of abandonment by the 5th century and again during the 5th to 7th centuries. The principal concentration of Roman villas was on the lighter soils in the west and northwest of the county, with a few possible Roman villa sites also indicated on the loam over clay soils in the southeast, as at Loddon, on the Boulder Clay Plateau, for example.

A degree of Roman settlement contraction is suggested for all the Norfolk *pays* by the 5th century, predominantly, but not exclusively, away from the interfluvial areas and towards the river valleys. The expectation would be that the heavier soils, such as those of the Boulder Clay Plateau, saw the greatest extent of Roman settlement contraction, a trend that is potentially demonstrated in **Figure 8.4**. The categorisation of soils as light or heavy is tabulated in Chapter 4, **Fig. 4.1**. The settlement data does not conclusively demonstrate this for the Boulder Clay Plateau, however, as only 8% of Roman settlement in the *pays*

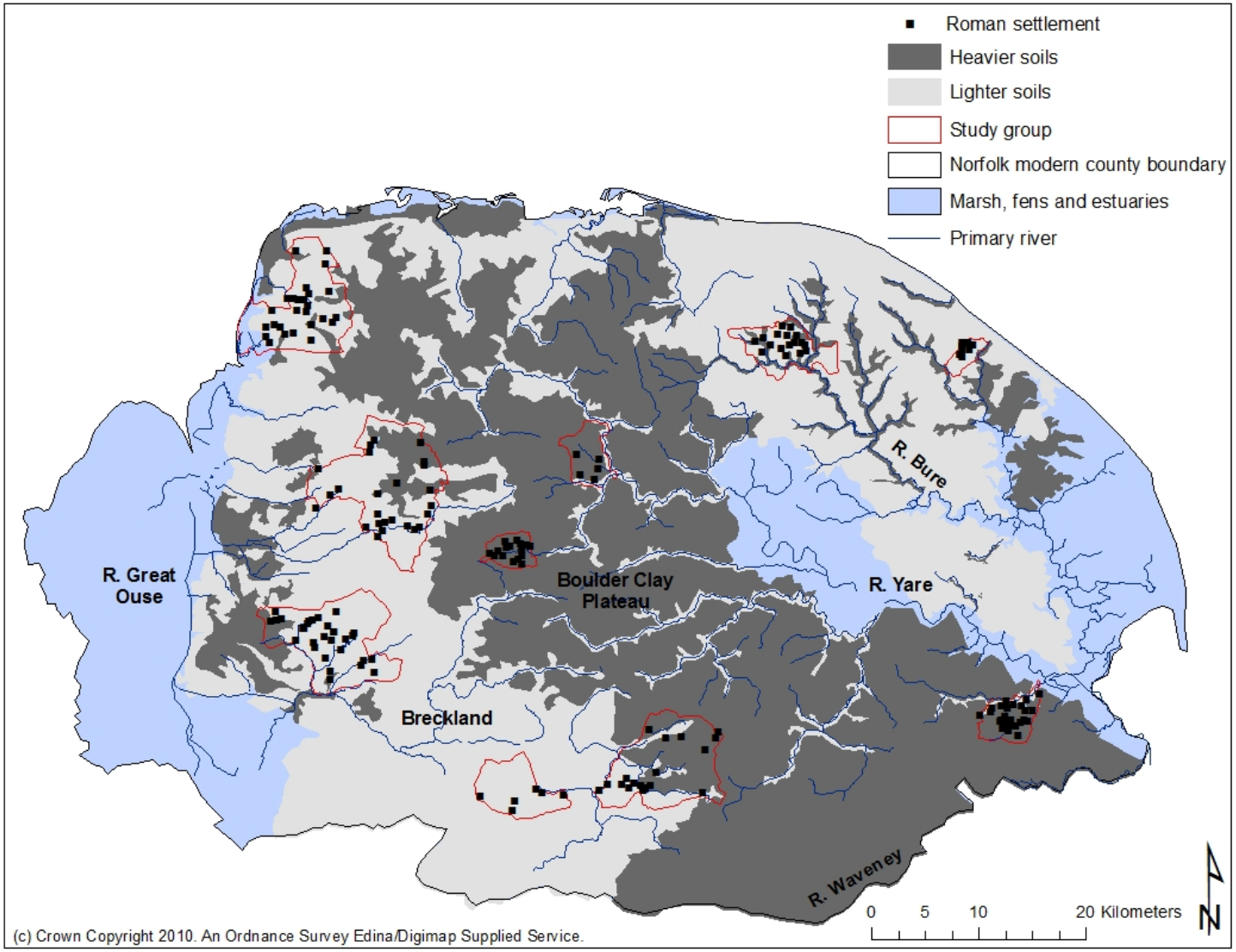


Figure 8.3. The distribution of Roman settlement for the study groups in Norfolk, shown relative to areas of lighter or heavier soils. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

suggested no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern (**Fig. 8.1**). This may be partly due to a bias of fieldwalking surveys (eg. Davison 1990; Davison and Cushion 1999; Rogerson 1995) towards areas of current settlement along the river valleys, although Rogerson's (1995) survey did include areas of heavy clay soils at Fransham. The ratio for Roman settlement on the Boulder Clay associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation only is 16%, which falls within the average parameters for the county, but does potentially reflect some resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, as at Fransham, for example, where the location of Roman settlement associated only with 'Late Saxon' occupation is generally beyond the margins of settlement cores and extending onto the heavier soils (see Chapter 6, **Figs. 6.7 and 6.8**).

Reinforcing the suggestion that the clay interfluves may have seen a retreat of Roman settlement by the 5th century is recent research on the Boulder Clay in Northamptonshire, at Raunds (Parry 2006). The evidence there indicates that Roman settlement largely comprised small, dispersed, farms across the clay interfluves, in contrast to larger settlements along the valley slopes *(ibid*, 76). A marked contraction in the Roman settlement pattern is suggested across the wider plateau by the 5th century, some of which may have occurred before then, as a relative settlement density of 1 per km^2 in the early Roman period had decreased to 0.75 per km^2 by the later Roman period (*ibid*, 76). The Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement patterns across the Boulder Clay at Raunds indicated general unconformity (*ibid*, 90), but where an association could be suggested this was largely along the river valleys or in proximity to a nearby water source (*ibid*, 94). There were, nonetheless, some limited scatters of 'Early Saxon' pottery associated with Roman settlement across the wider plateau as well as further scatters of pottery on the higher crests that appeared to reflect new settlement during the 5th to 6th centuries (*ibid*, 76).

It was not just the heavy soils of Norfolk that saw a contraction of Roman settlement by the 5th century. There is also some evidence for a degree of settlement abandonment across the lighter soils (**Fig. 8.4**) and along the river valleys, albeit to a far lesser degree than on the heavier clays. This is demonstrated across some areas of calcareous loams and sandy soils on Breckland, at Barton Bendish and Illington, for example, and across the interior of the Chalk Scarp, which, at 25%, demonstrates the highest ratio of potential

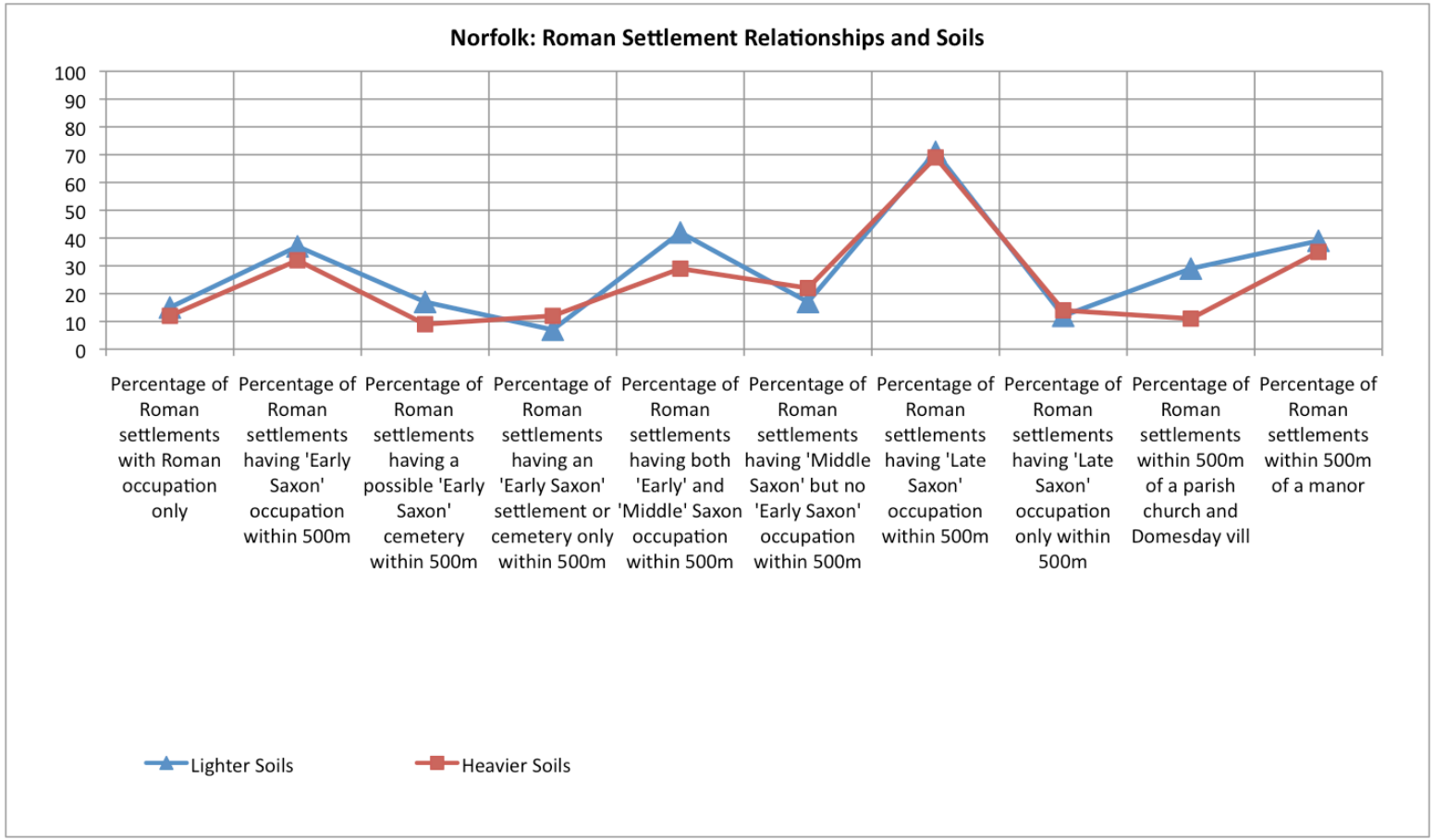


Figure 8.4. Line graph showing the relative percentages for Roman settlement relationships across Norfolk, relative to areas of lighter and heavier soils. This data collates the results across all the Norfolk pays used as part of this research and presents them as relative percentages to the sample size for each category. Sample sizes are shown below: Heavier soils: 65 Lighter soils: 113

Roman settlement abandonment (see **Table. 8.1; Fig. 8.1**). The lighter soils do also suggest a greater association between Roman settlement and 'Early Saxon' occupation, however, with a ratio of 37% compared to 32% for the heavier soils (**Fig. 8.4**). The ratio of Roman settlement associated with 'Early Saxon' cemeteries is also higher across the lighter soils, at 17%, compared with just 9% for the heavier soils (**Fig. 8.4**).

The research on Norfolk has produced no real evidence for new settlement of the 5th to 6th centuries, but does appear to show that 'Early Saxon' settlement in some areas was located beyond the settlement cores that developed from around the 8th to 9th centuries, possibly reflecting the siting of 'Early Saxon' settlement on the periphery of areas occupied during the late Roman period. At Hargham, for example, excavation (Birks 2001b; 2002; Robertson 2003; Robertson and Warsop 2003) uncovered evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation on the sandy interfluves, but neither Hargham nor Snetterton currently suggest evidence of 'Early Saxon' occupation (Chapter 7, 130; **Fig. 7.10**). At Loddon, too, 'Early Saxon' occupation is centred on the core of Roman villa settlement bordering the Loddon Beck, but neither Loddon nor Heckingham currently suggest evidence of 'Early Saxon' occupation (see Chapter 6, 107; **Fig. 6.6**). Both Loddon and Heckingham, and Hargham too, however, suggest possible evidence for Roman origins, but whether this reflects resettlement, or continuity with 'Early Saxon' occupation evidence yet to be found, remains unclear.

These examples in south and southeast Norfolk contrast with the evidence for 'Early Saxon' occupation in the west and northwest of the county, which suggests a distribution of 5th to 6th century settlement and cemeteries along the river valleys, with thinner scatters across the lighter soils of the Chalk Scarp and Breckland, the majority associated with evidence for Roman settlement. This is particularly well demonstrated at West Acre and Sedgeford, on the Chalk Scarp, for example, and Gooderstone, Shingham and Caldecote on Breckland. The distinct contrast in the evidence for 'Early Saxon' cemeteries in western Norfolk, compared to the largely structural evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement at Hargham and Witton to the east, for example, has already been commented on (Chapter 6, 119; Chapter 7, 136) and may, indeed, reflect contrasting ethnicities and cultural practices in some instances. This contrast may equally be due to differential fieldwork, however, such as the fieldwalking and metal detecting

surveys that dominate at Barton Bendish (Rogerson *et al*. 1997) and West Acre (Davison 2003), for example, as a pose to excavation, which has recorded 'Early Saxon' settlement at sites such as Snetterton (Birks 2001b; 2002; Robertson 2003; Robertson and Warsop 2003; Underdown 2001) and Witton (Lawson 1983), for example.

Small-scale excavation across some areas of lighter soils in western Norfolk, at Sedgeford (Hoggett 2000) and Gooderstone (Birks 2001), for example, has, however, uncovered some evidence of 'Early Saxon' settlement features, including possible Grubenhäuser at Sedgeford (*ibid*, 6). Further south on the Suffolk Breckland, excavation at RAF Lakenheath (Caruth 2005) has revealed evidence of fifteen sunken-featured buildings associated with three 'Early Saxon' cemetery groups (*ibid*, 21). With all three cemeteries there is evidence for associated Roman occupation within 500m, while the "Early Saxon' settlement directly overlies the Roman occupation in places (*ibid*, Fig. 7). The evidence in all cases suggests potential continuity into the 5th to 6th centuries, albeit with a degree of settlement shift over time. Possible dereliction layers between phases of Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation at Lakenheath may also suggest short spells of inactivity across some areas, with implications for potential settlement continuity, although these remain to be clarified (*ibid*, 21).

The evidence for Roman settlement in Norfolk associated with 'Middle Saxon' occupation suggests that the river valleys remained the favoured areas for settlement into the 8th to 9th centuries, with the lighter soils, again, potentially seeing the greatest settlement continuity (**Fig. 8.4**). Roman and 'Middle Saxon' occupation underlying many settlement cores may indicate nascent processes of settlement consolidation by the 8th to 9th centuries, strongly influenced in the majority of cases by the underlying Roman settlement pattern. This may not wholly preclude some survival of a dispersed settlement pattern into this period across parts of Norfolk, however, particularly areas of lighter soils. This is potentially demonstrated across parts of Breckland, at Barton Bendish and Hargham, for example, and to a lesser extent the Chalk Scarp, at Sedgeford, where the partial survival of a dispersed settlement pattern may be suggested across some interfluvial areas by the 8th to 9th centuries (Chapter 7, 142, 170).

There is also evidence for scatters of 'Middle Saxon' occupation across some areas of heavy clay soils on the Boulder Clay, and on the loamy soils of the

Rich Loams *pays*. These are frequently associated with Roman occupation, and may also indicate the potential survival of a dispersed settlement pattern across these soils by the 8th to 9th centuries. They are not as extensive as on the lighter soils of western Norfolk, however, and in some instances the settlement assemblages lack 'Early Saxon' material. This is particularly demonstrated at Heckingham and Loddon, for example, and to a lesser extent Great Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau. On the edges of Witton Heath, and at Calthorpe, on the Rich Loams, there is also evidence for Roman settlement associated with 'Middle' and 'Late Saxon occupation only. These examples may reflect 8th to 9th century 'daughter settlements' (Rippon 2008, 188), the early breakaway farmsteads that are a characteristic feature of the Boulder Clay Plateau and Rich Loams by the 11th to 12th centuries (Williamson 1993, 111; 2006, 52).

Settlement expansion in Norfolk by the 9th to 11th centuries is apparent both along the valleys, as existing settlements grew in size, and, to a greater extent, across the interfluvial areas, through an increase in new settlement and manorial fragmentation. On the lighter soils of western and northwest Norfolk this expansion appears to have remained largely confined to the valley slopes and available water supplies, as at Barton Bendish on Breckland, or West Acre and Sedgeford, on the Chalk Scarp, for example. Across the heavier clays and loams of eastern Norfolk, this expansion appears to have been more widespread, as indicated at Fransham and Loddon, on the Boulder Clay, for example, and at Wolterton, on the Rich Loams. Williamson (1993, 17) makes this same distinction between settlement expansion across the lighter or heavier soils of Norfolk, and the complex relationship of settlement evolution to valley and watersheds. His narrative of settlement processes in relation to soils is borne out through the quantitative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships within distinctive *pays* that is key to this thesis. Where a relationship between patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement can be suggested for these areas, therefore, this seems more likely to reflect resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries than Roman settlement continuity.

A final assessment

The assessment of Roman and early medieval settlement patterns in Norfolk has been significantly enhanced by the breadth of settlement data available

through the many fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys carried out across the county. Through these it has been possible to observe and quantify settlement processes and relationships between the late Roman and early medieval periods, which has helped identify the broader themes in settlement relationships relative to aspects of settlement hierarchy, cultural influences and physical determiners such as soils and topography.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (pp 36-38), the debate over Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, by the 5th century has taken many forms, reflecting the various ways in which continuity might be defined. The research results presented and discussed here do not address the potential continuity, or otherwise, of individual Roman settlements, although this has sometimes been possible to observe. The focus has been on patterns of Roman settlement transition at the end of the Roman period, and how these may have influenced settlement development between the 5th to 11th centuries. The research has demonstrated that the river valley soils were the favoured location for both Roman and early medieval settlement and that the lighter soils of Norfolk potentially saw greater settlement continuity and stability between the 5th to 11th centuries. In contrast to this, the heavier soils and interfluvial areas saw greater settlement flux during the Roman and early medieval periods, being largely characterised by phases of settlement contraction and expansion. These were probably variously determined by environmental factors as much as by population change or advances in farming technology. This observation is somewhat simplistic, however, as some areas, such as the acid heaths of the Chalk Scarp and Breckland, for example, may also have seen distinct Roman settlement abandonment by the 5th century, while some areas of more fertile loam over clay soils on the interfluves of the Boulder Clay Plateau and Rich Loams potentially saw greater Roman settlement continuity, as at Fransham and Witton, for example.

The research has also demonstrated that, during the Roman period, the river valleys also saw the majority of higher status settlement, with lower status settlement more characteristic of the wider interfluves. Where processes of settlement nucleation appear influenced by patterns of Roman settlement, these do seem to reflect both higher and lower status occupation, although higher status Roman sites are more visibly associated with 11th century

settlement cores along the river valleys. The ratio of association between Roman settlement and parish churches on the lighter soils (**Fig. 8.4**) is notably higher, at 30%, for example, than that of the heavier soils, at only 12%, where a relatively higher ratio of lower status Roman settlement is also suggested. As observed through discussion of Roman villa settlement in Chapter 7, however, there seems to have been some unconformity between the pattern of Roman villa settlement and processes of settlement organisation by the 9th to 11th centuries, although potential continuity of occupation at some villa sites between the 5th to 11th centuries is, nevertheless suggested, as at Snettisham or Gayton Thorpe, on the West Norfolk Lowland, for example, or Sedgeford and Fring, on the Chalk Scarp.

The nature and distribution of 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemetery evidence in Norfolk may reflect certain differences in ethnic populations by the 5th century, or at least a degree of cultural negotiation that may have involved some re-organisation of settlement and territory boundaries. Some slight marginalisation of 'Early Saxon' settlement may be indicated for some areas, such as the sandy heathland to the west of Hargham, for example, where apparent continuity in the Roman settlement landscape appears to have involved phases of settlement shift and changes in landuse. There is also the possibility that apparent continuity of occupation at some Roman sites masks a broader discontinuity of status or function, potentially demonstrated by the two Roman villas at Fring (NHER 1659; 1661), for example, which appear to have become the site of an 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 23001) by the 5th century.

A notable characteristic of the settlement analysis undertaken for Norfolk is that there are actually very few Roman settlements that demonstrate no evidence at all for 'Early' to 'Late' Saxon occupation, although gaps in occupation chronologies are also not uncommon. The implications of this are several. The Roman and early medieval settlement landscape may have seen close parity in the continuity of settlement and landscape organisation, or it could be that the favoured areas of settlement saw ongoing resettlement over the 5th to 11th centuries that mask potential gaps in occupation or changes in status and function. Equally, patterns of settlement mobility may not be so evident, given the broad background 'noise' of settlement activity during this period. Nonetheless, the wider trends in Roman and early medieval settlement

relationships in Norfolk do appear to suggest distinct areas of potential settlement and landscape continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, essentially the lighter soils and the major river valleys, and areas of potential settlement discontinuity, essentially the heavier soils and the interfluvial areas. They have also demonstrated the distinct relationship between the institutions of 11th century settlement and the antecedent Roman settlement landscape. These broad themes in the relationship between patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement, and their association with the physical landscape, can be taken forward into the research on Kent and Somerset to see where comparables may be drawn and whether regional variation can be shown.

Conclusion

The spatial analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Norfolk has addressed the key aims of the thesis, these being to quantitatively assess the extent to which patterns of Roman settlement suggest continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries and how far they may have influenced settlement processes during this period, as well as to assess how far the institutions of 11th century demonstrate a relationship to the antecedent Roman settlement pattern and to what extent they reflect potentially Roman origins. The results have been able to distinguish areas of potential settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between the 5th to 11th centuries and how these related to the wider physical landscape and the distinctive *pays* regions of Norfolk. On this basis it has been further possible to reflect on the more nuanced analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships at a sub-regional level, on whether sub-regional variation can be demonstrated, and the possible factors for this. Greater subtleties in interpretation will undoubtedly be gained through ongoing evaluation at a site-based level. The assessment of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Norfolk that has been presented and discussed above will hopefully, however, generate the wider context for settlement processes between these periods, against which the evidence from individual sites can more effectively sit. The wider debate on potential continuity, or discontinuity, in the Roman settlement landscape will also hopefully benefit from the broad-scale research presented here.

Chapter 9. Barton Bendish and Fransham, A Case Study

Introduction

The settlement results for Norfolk were presented and discussed in Chapters 6 to 8 based on criteria set out in Chapter 4. Integral to these were the parameters used for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, which were measured using a distance of 500m (see Chapter 4, 69-70). Potential issues and limitations were identified regarding the choice of this parameter, however (Chapter 4, 69), and this chapter explores these through a finer-grained analysis of two Norfolk parishes that have been extensively fieldwalked: Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau, and Barton Bendish, on Breckland. These two parishes lie within contrasting Norfolk *pays* and demonstrate distinct physical and social characteristics and settlement histories. The retrogressive analysis of 'Late Saxon' settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors in Barton Bendish demonstrates that 100% of these have evidence for Roman settlement within both 500m and 250m. In Fransham, the same retrogressive analysis demonstrated that 91% of 'Late Saxon' settlements had evidence for Roman settlement within 500m, 87% within 250m, with 50% of Domesday vills and 100% of manors having evidence for Roman settlement within both 500m and 250m.

This closer assessment of the Roman and early medieval settlement data for Fransham and Barton Bendish aims to examine settlement relationships for these two periods using a reduced parameter of 250m. The objectives will be to identify any observable differences in settlement relationships to those assessed using a 500m parameter and to discuss the potential implications of any findings to future studies of this nature. As noted in Chapter 4 (p 70), the selection of a smaller parameter is arbitrary, as there are currently no clear criteria on which to base a choice, but the selection of 250m is simply based on halving the original distance. For consistency, the results will be presented using similar schema to the previous chapters.

Fransham

Settlement data

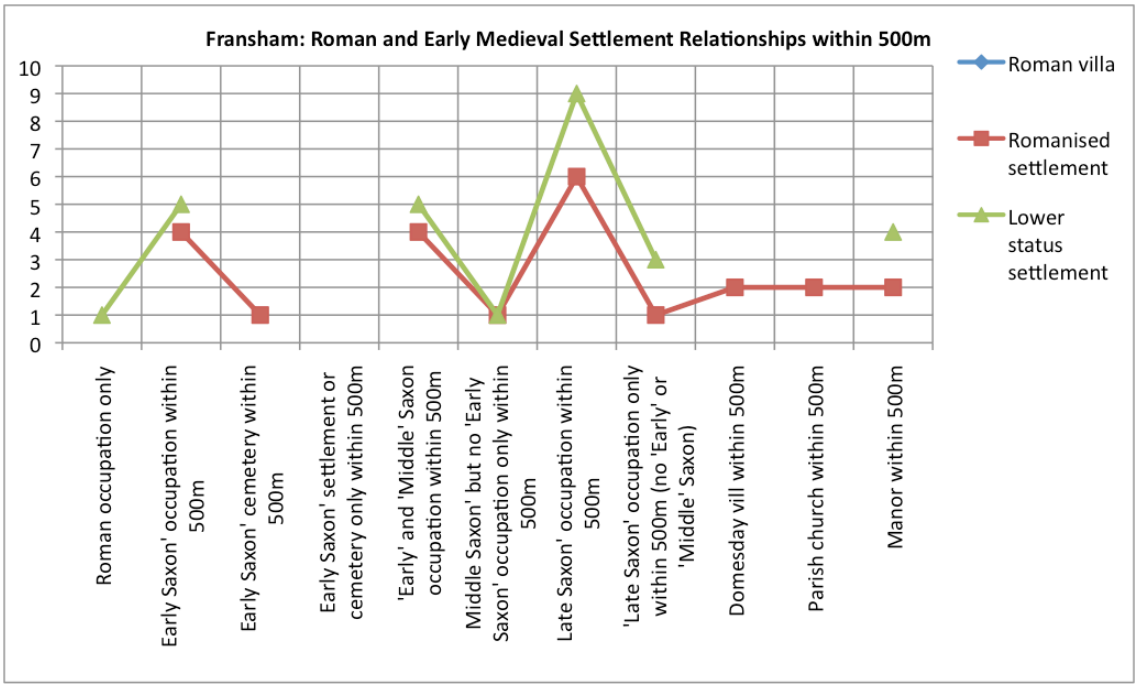
Sixteen potential Roman settlements were recorded for Fransham. This principally amalgamates Rogerson's (1995, 59-85) interpretation of Roman settlement in Fransham with additional data collated from the Norfolk HER. The extensive fieldwalking survey of Fransham by Rogerson (*ibid*) aimed to cover all arable areas within the parish and as many gardens as possible (*ibid*, 14). The survey covered over 85% of the parish and identified 11 concentrations of Roman material (*ibid*, 59-85). In addition to these, the Norfolk HER records numerous lesser scatters and findspots of Roman material, some pre-dating, and some post-dating, Rogerson's (*ibid*) thesis, the majority being distributed across the loam over clay soils bordering the river valleys (see **Fig. 9.4**).

Of the 11 possible Roman settlements identified by Rogerson (1995, 59-85), two are interpreted in the Norfolk HER as a continuation of one settlement 'site' (RB2 and RB3; NHER 20763/20754). Six further possible Roman settlements were identified for the purposes of this thesis, based on additional records for Roman pottery scatters and metalwork in the Norfolk HER. Some of these 'sites' amalgamate two or more HER records, while some have been assessed using more precise locational information provided by the Norfolk HER advice team. Some are incorporated within settlement 'sites' identified by Rogerson (*ibid*) as being predominantly later in date, such as the 'Late Saxon' settlement (LS8; NHER 4193), in the vicinity of All Saints churchyard, Great Fransham, for example (*ibid*, 134). Roman pottery sherds and metalwork recorded under NHER 4193 reflect finds recovered over a period of almost 30 years, many of which pre-date or post-date Rogerson's (*ibid*) thesis. During excavation work in the churchyard (Crawley 2007; Crawley and Sillwood 2010), for example, fragments of Roman tile were recovered, which were interpreted as having been re-used during the medieval period (*ibid*, 11; *ibid*, 13). There was no evidence for Roman mortar in any of the church walling or foundations, however (*ibid; ibid*), which suggests these fragments do not reflect the common practice of re-using Roman material in church construction (see Bell 1998; Eaton 2000, for example). They may, however, indicate the presence of a high status Roman building in the vicinity (*ibid; ibid*), and additional high status

Roman finds have been recovered from NHER 4193, around 150m to the south. This thesis has, therefore, interpreted the cumulative evidence as potentially reflecting a Romanised settlement in the vicinity of All Saints church. The issues of interpreting collated settlement data where the quantities and relationships of material artefacts are not always clearly given in the HER is once more highlighted, and ironically demonstrates how the wealth of finds records from fieldwalking can obscure accurate interpretation of Roman and early medieval settlement patterns, unless they are accurately recorded.

The Roman settlements potentially identified for Fransham have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of 'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon settlement within 500m and 250m, with the comparative results illustrated below (**Fig. 9.1)**. The relationship between patterns of Roman settlement and 'Early/Middle' Saxon occupation has only been quantified from the Roman perspective, to demonstrate patterns of potential continuity, or discontinuity, from the end of the Roman period forwards. Rogerson (1995, 90-101) identified just 5 potential 'Early Saxon' settlement 'sites' at Fransham, although from additional entries in the Norfolk HER, a possible 13 'Early Saxon' settlements 'sites' were identified in total for the purposes of this thesis on the basis of one or more sherds, as discussed in the main methodology (Chapter 4, 60). Rogerson (1995, 101-115) also identified just one concentration of 'Middle Saxon' pottery in Fransham, although several additional 'Middle Saxon' findspots were noted (*ibid*, 110-112). As discussed in Chapter 6 (pp 107-111), as a result of additional evidence for 'Middle Saxon' material from the churchyards at Great and Little Fransham, 4 potential 'Middle Saxon' settlement 'sites' have been identified for the purposes of this thesis, with 16 additional 'Middle Saxon' findspots also recorded.

Twenty-three potential 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for Fransham, in addition to 2 Domesday vills, 2 parish churches and 6 manors (**Tables 9.1 and 9.2**). These results again combine Rogerson's (1995, 116-144) interpretation of early medieval settlement with data from the Norfolk HER. Rogerson (*ibid*, 124-142) identified 20 'Late Saxon' 'sites', although four of these, LS 9 and 10, and LS 12 and 13, are recorded as just two 'sites' in the Norfolk HER (NHER 20752 and 20745). Five further potential 'Late Saxon' settlements were identified for the purposes of this thesis, based on additional data from the Norfolk HER. The



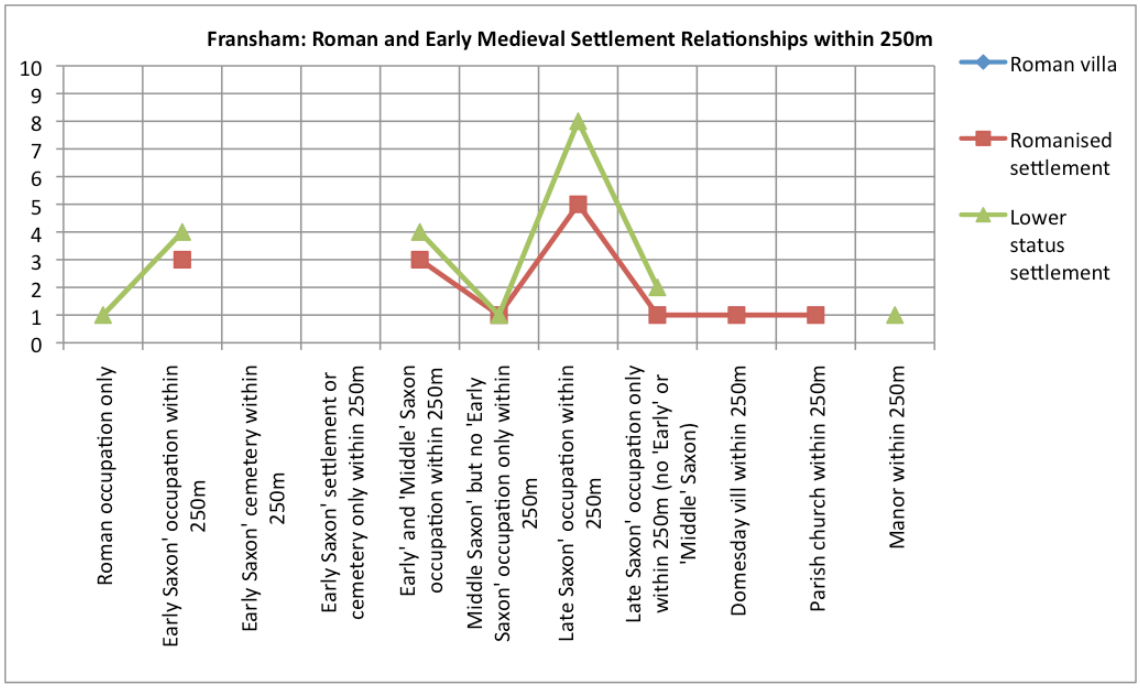


Figure 9.1. Line charts showing the comparative hierarchy of Roman settlement in Fransham relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors within 500m and 250m parameters. All data compiled by the author.

Table 9.1 shows the percentages of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors recorded for Fransham, relative to Roman occupation within 500m. Table 9.2 shows the percentages of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors recorded for Fransham, relative to Roman occupation within 250m. All data compiled by the author.

Table 9.1: Fransham Early medieval settlement relationships within 500m

	Total number recorded within study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of Total			Overall Percentage
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	
'Late Saxon' settlement	23	0	4	17	0%	17%	74%	91%
'Late Saxon' settlement having RB only within 500m	8			8				35%
Domesday vill	2	0	1	0	0%	50%	0%	50%
Parish church	2	0	1	0	0%	50%	0%	50%
Manor	6	0	0	6	0%	0%	100%	100%

Table 9.2: Fransham Early medieval settlement relationships within 250m

	Total number recorded within study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 250m			Percentage of Total			Overall Percentage
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	
'Late Saxon' settlement	23	0	3	17	0%	13%	74%	87%
'Late Saxon' settlement having RB only within 250m	8			8				35%
Domesday vill	2	0	1	0	0%	50%	0%	50%
Parish church	2	0	1	0	0%	50%	0%	50%
Manor	6	0	0	6	0%	0%	100%	100%

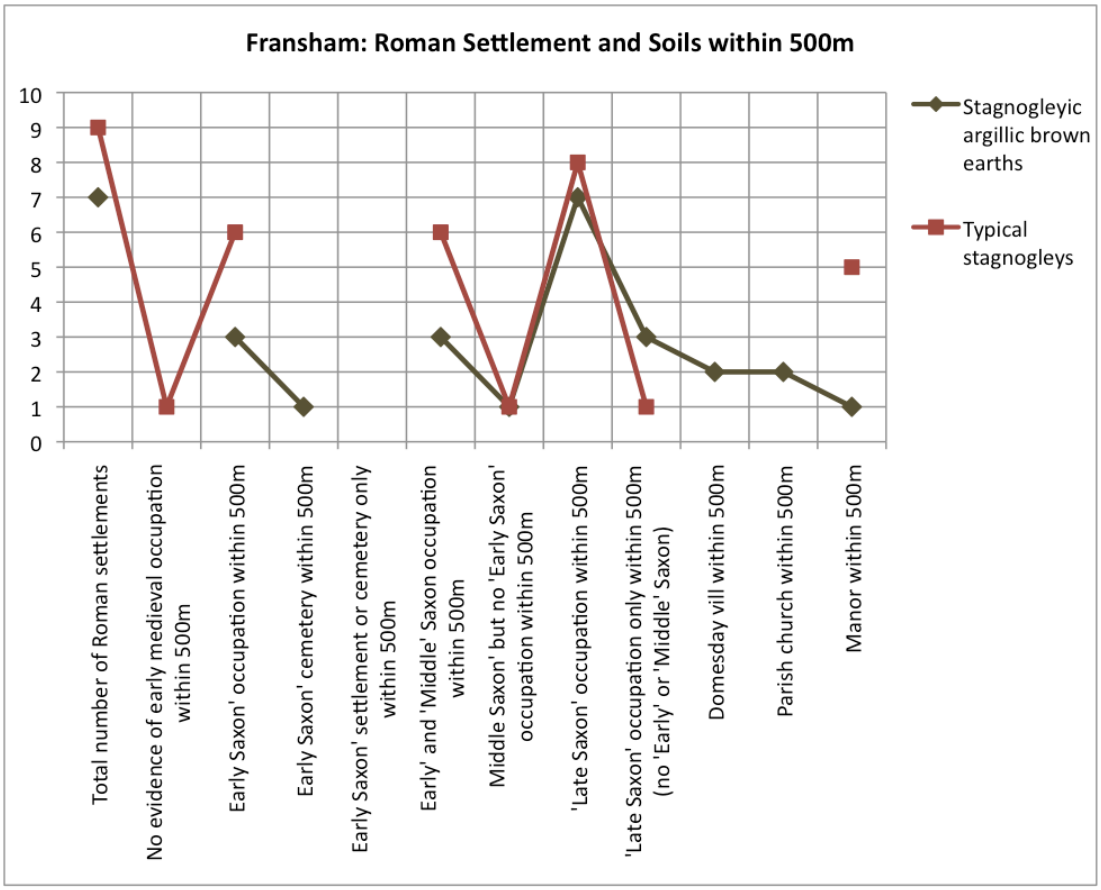
potential issues for subjective interpretation are noted, as above, and again highlight the difficulties of distinguishing settlement 'sites' from background scatter. Rogerson (*ibid*, 124-142) tentatively identifies a number of 'Late Saxon' settlement 'sites' (LS 7; LS10; LS11; LS12; LS13; LS15) on the basis of less than ten sherds, demonstrating just how problematic and subjective the interpretation of clearly defined early medieval settlement 'sites' can be.

The 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, churches and manors identified for Fransham have been retrogressively assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement within 500m and 250m (**Tables 9.1 and 9.2**).

Soils Data

Fransham's soils are typically heavy clays (typical stagnogleys) across the clay interfluves, with less heavy loam over clay soils (stagnogleyic argillic brown earths) bordering the river valleys and plateau fringes (SSEW 1983). Of the 16 Roman settlements recorded for Fransham, 9 (56%) were located on typical stagnogleys, with 7 (44%) on the less heavy stagnogleyic argillic brown earths (**Fig. 9.2**). In addition to these concentrations of Roman pottery, however, are numerous lesser scatters and findspots of Roman material recorded in the Norfolk HER, much of which is distributed across the less heavy loam over clay soils bordering the river valleys in Fransham (**Fig. 9.4**). Whilst these could reflect manuring activity (Rogerson 1995, 78), it is not infeasible that they also potentially indicate a higher density, or more continuous spread, of Roman settlement across the loam-over-clay soils along the river valleys at Fransham.

Of the early medieval settlements recorded for Fransham, 14 out of the 23 'Late Saxon' settlements (61%), both Domesday vills and parish churches (100%) and 2 out of the 6 manors (33%) were located on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths (**Fig. 9.3**). This suggests that the loam over clay soils along the valley slopes were certainly the preferred location for settlement by the 11th century, with the positioning of Domesday vills and parish churches within the river valleys demonstrating that these had developed as the core area of settlement by this period. Conversely, the location of 9 out of 14 'Late Saxon' settlements (39%) and 4 out of 6 manors (67%) on the heavy clay interfluvial soils (**Fig. 9.3**) also suggest a period of expansion back across these soils by this time. The



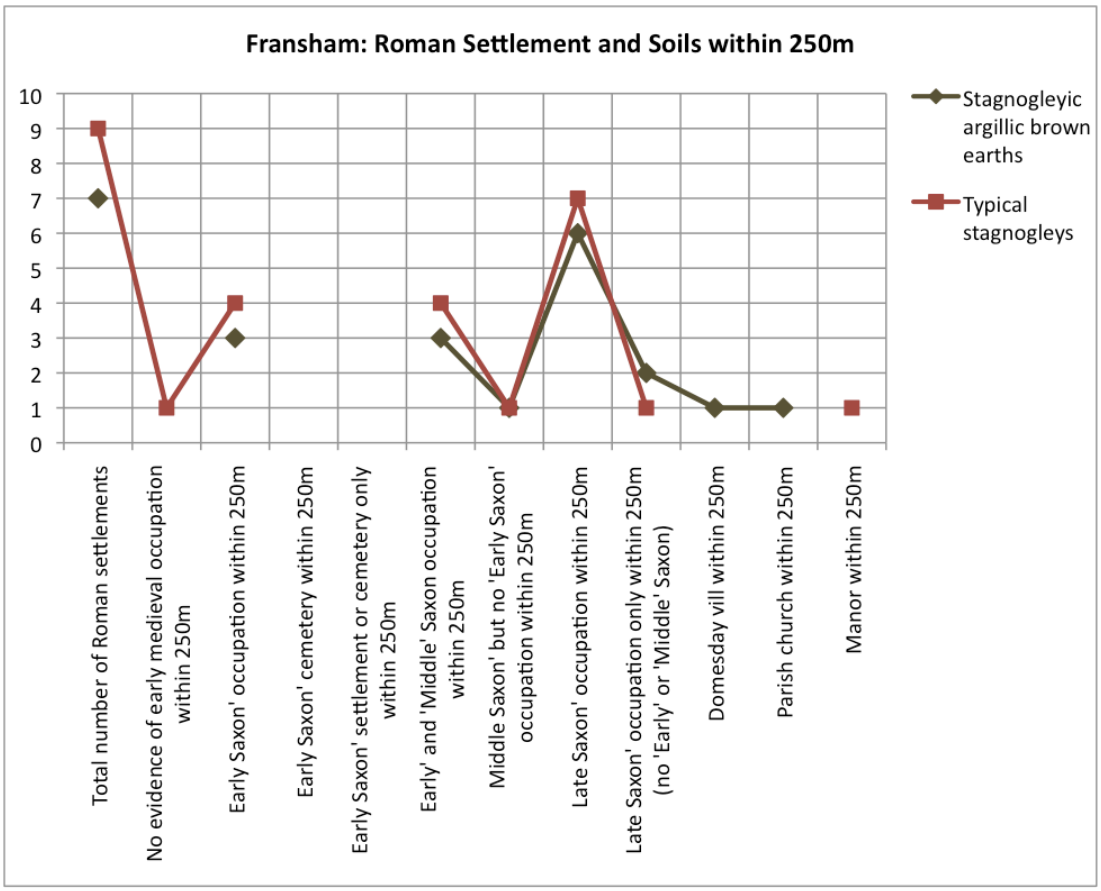
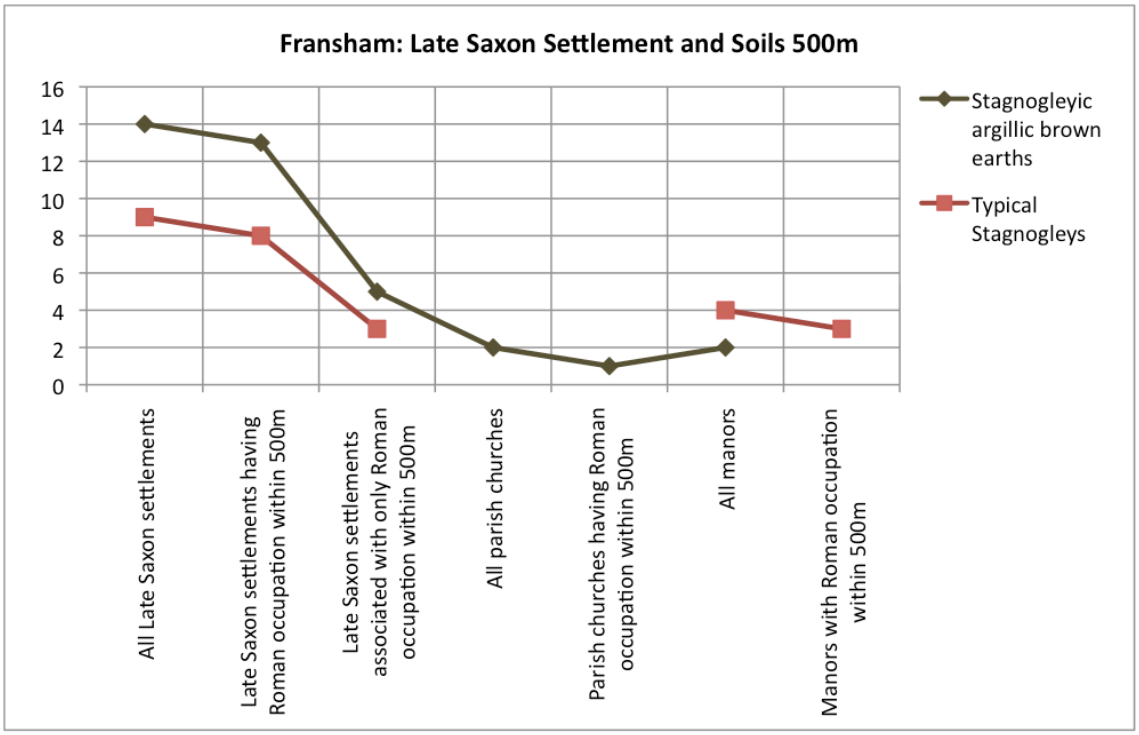


Figure 9.2. Line charts showing the comparative relationships between Roman and early medieval settlement in Fransham within 500m and 250m parameters, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.



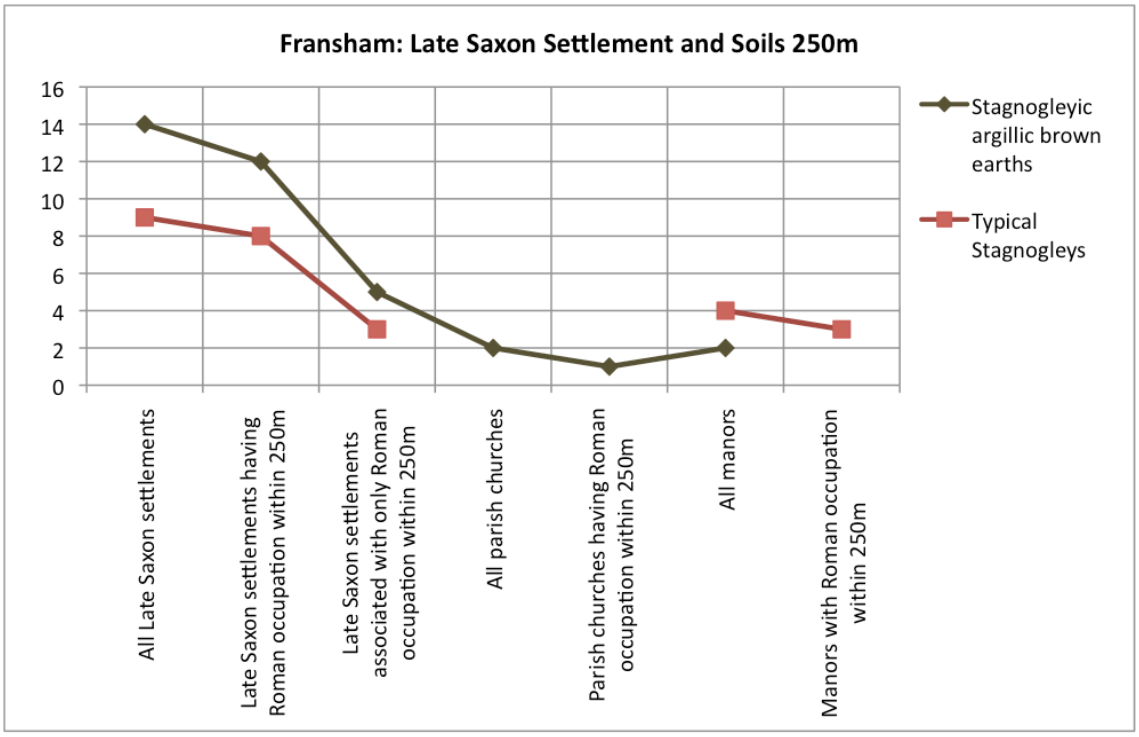


Figure 9.3. Line charts showing the comparative relationships between 'Late Saxon' and Roman settlement in Fransham within 500m and 250m parameters, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

higher number of manors on the heavier clay soils may reflect patterns of manorial fragmentation from the 12th to 13th centuries onwards (see Campbell 1986, 227; 1994, 52; Williamson 2006, 47, for example, and Chapter 5, 82-83).

Discussion

The comparative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Fransham using 500m and 250m parameters indicates some small differences for the 5th to 9th centuries (**Fig. 9.1**). Of the 16 Roman settlements recorded for Fransham, 9 (56%) suggested evidence for 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 500m, while 7 (44%) suggested evidence for

'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 250m: a lower status Roman settlement (NHER 25566) to the south east of Little Fransham and a Romanised settlement (NHER 20519) at Curds Hall to the west of Great Fransham indicated 'Early and 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 500m but not 250m, both settlements being situated on the heavier clay interfluvial soils (**Figs. 9.2 and 9.4**). A Romanised settlement (NHER 4193) in the vicinity of All Saints Church, Great Fransham, which indicated evidence for 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 500m and 250m, also had a possible 'Early Saxon' cemetery (NHER 20508) within 500m, but not 250m (**Fig. 9.1**).

These small differences may simply reflect aspects of settlement shift at Fransham between the 5th to 9th centuries, although the wider trend in results still supports a contraction of settlement away from the heavy clay soils in favour of the river valleys during this period (**Fig. 9.4**). As discussed in Chapter 6 (p 109), the evidence for 'Middle Saxon' settlement at Fransham also consists of a thin scatter of 8th to 9th century material across the clay interfluves, often associated with evidence for Roman settlement (**Fig. 9.4**). Whether this is the result of manuring scatter, a continuation of the dispersed Roman settlement pattern, or a nascent breaking away of settlement by the 8th to 9th centuries back across the heavier clay soils, remains unclear. The assessment of Roman and 'Middle Saxon' settlement using a 250m parameter suggests a slightly less cohesive relationship away from the river valleys, but the differences are too small to be definitive. In general, assessing Roman and 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement relationships in Fransham using a 250m parameter has potentially

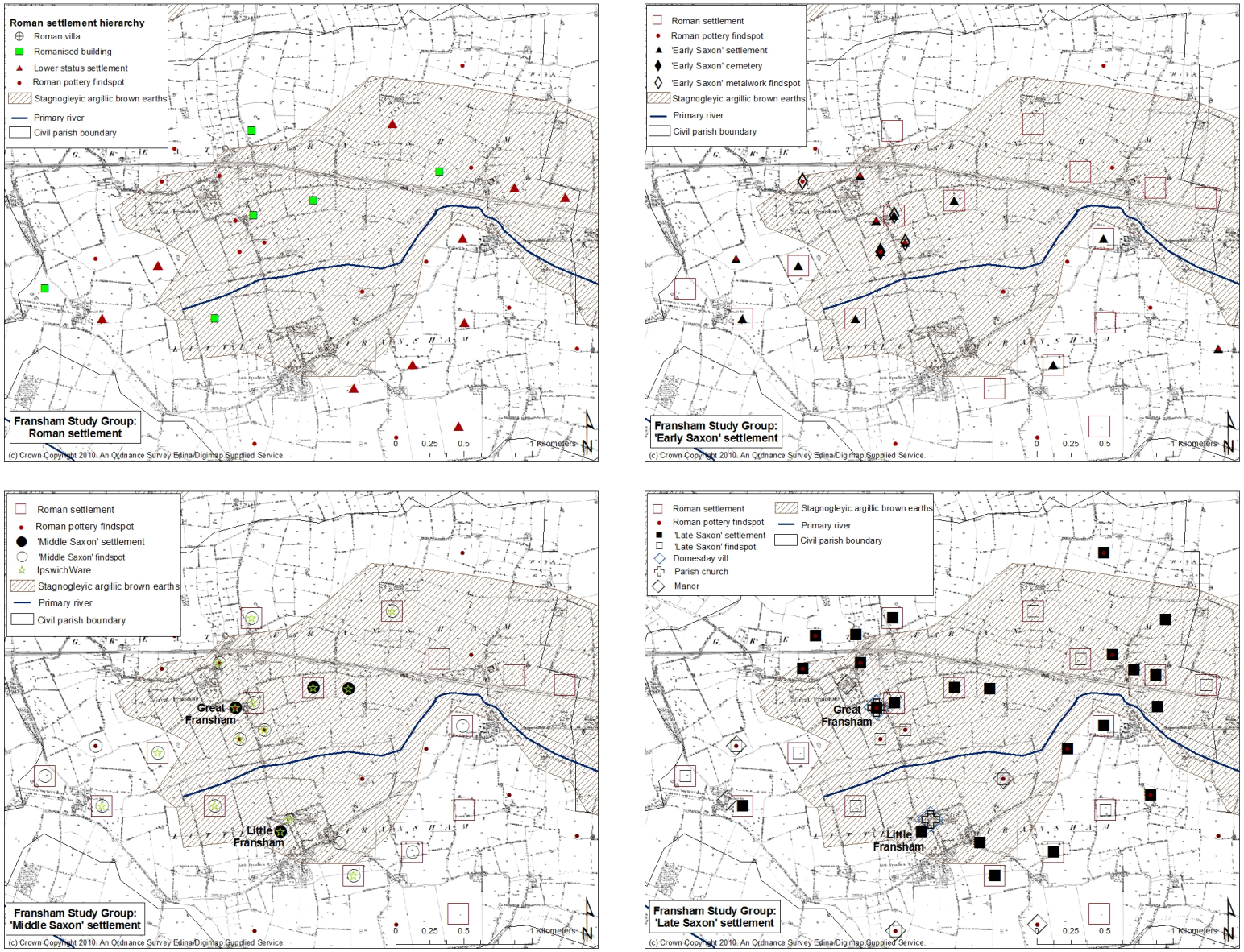


Figure 9.4. The relationship between Roman and early medieval occupation at Fransham, by period, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The extent of argillic brown earths bordering the river valleys is also shown. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

produced a tighter statistical analysis but has not altered the wider overview of settlement patterns and processes for Norfolk during the 5th to 9th centuries, as originally suggested using a 500m parameter for analysis. Both methods effectively demonstrate the potential contraction away from the interfluvial areas and the poorer soils at some point during the 5th to 7th centuries, with the beginnings of a consolidation of settlement along the better soils of the river valleys by the 8th to 9th centuries. Using a tighter parameter for settlement analysis may have greater implications for the potential continuity of individual Roman settlements and the likely extent of settlement shift during this period, but that is not the focus of this thesis.

There is also only a small difference in Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement relationships in Fransham when assessed at 500m and 250m. Of the 16 Roman settlements recorded for Fransham, 15 (94%) suggested evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement within 500m, of which 13 (81%) suggested evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement within 250m (**Fig. 9.1**). The Romanised settlement (NHER 20519) at Curds Hall (see above), on the heavy clay soils, and a lower status Roman settlement (NHER 20749) on the loam over clay soils to the east of Great Fransham, were assessed as having 'Late Saxon' settlement within 500m but not 250m. The lower status Roman settlement (NHER 25566) on the heavier clay soils to the south east of Little Fransham (see above), however, suggested evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement within 500m and 250m, despite lacking evidence for 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 250m.

The assessment of Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement at Fransham has indicated that an expansion of settlement back across the heavy clay interfluves had potentially occurred by the 9th to 11th centuries (see Chapter 6, 111), resulting in a similarly dispersed settlement pattern to that of the Roman period. In addition, the developing cores at Great and Little Fransham during the 9th to 11th centuries continued the consolidation of settlement along the river valleys, typically relating closely to underlying patterns of Roman settlement (**Fig. 9.4**). This pattern of settlement development is demonstrated using both the 500m and 250m parameters, although the smaller parameter does perhaps indicate a less cohesive relationship between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement on the clay interfluves, as it does for 'Middle Saxon' settlement. These results more confidently support the interpretation for a resettlement of the heavy clay soils

somewhere between the 8th to 11th centuries at Fransham, although it does not completely preclude the potential continuity of some Roman settlements, particularly on the less heavy loam over clay soils (and see Chapter 6, 112).

This interpretation of settlement processes at Fransham by the 11th century is also borne out through a retrogressive analysis of 'Late Saxon' settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors using 500m and 250m parameters (**Tables 9.1 and 9.2**). Of the 23 'Late Saxon' settlements recorded for Fransham, 21 (91%) suggested evidence for Roman settlement within 500m, while 20 (87%) suggested evidence for Roman settlement within 250m. Eight 'Late Saxon' settlements (35%) had evidence for Roman settlement only (no intervening 'Early' or 'Middle' Saxon settlement) within 500m and 250m: five of these were located on the loam over clay soils and three on the heavier clay soils (**Fig. 9.3**). Of the two Domesday vills and parish churches, only those at Great Fransham (50%) suggested evidence for Roman settlement within 500m and 250m. All six manors (100%) suggested evidence for Roman settlement within 500m and 250m (**Tables 9.1 and 9.2**).

In summation, the very small differences produced using the 500m and 250m parameters for Roman and early medieval settlement analysis at Fransham have potentially allowed some more nuanced interpretation of settlement processes on the heavier clay interfluves between the 5th to 11th centuries. There has, however, been negligible difference in results on the better soils within the more favoured river valleys. Moreover, the general overview of Roman and early medieval settlement patterns and relationships are equally demonstrated by both methods, reinforcing confidence in the 500m parameter as a viable methodological framework.

Barton Bendish

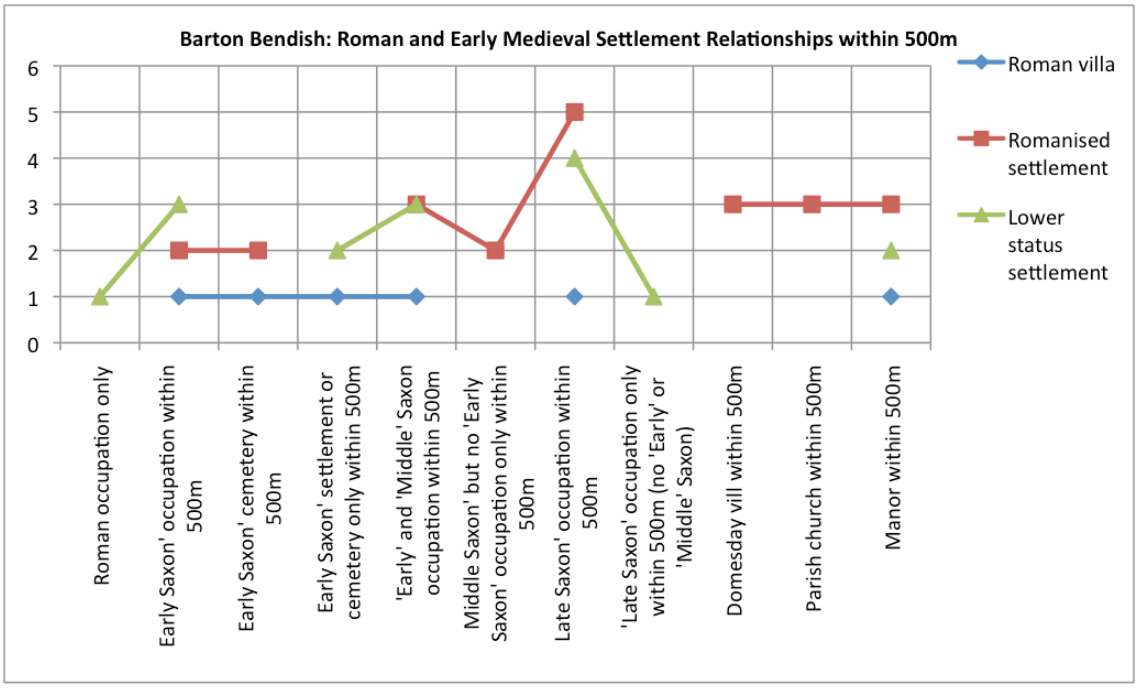
Settlement data

Fourteen potential Roman settlements were recorded for Barton Bendish. This principally incorporates the results of a fieldwalking survey of Barton Bendish by Rogerson *et al*. (1997), with additional data collated from the Norfolk HER. Rogerson *et al*. (*ibid*, 13-17) identified 15 concentrations of Roman pottery, five of which, RB3, RB4 and RB5, and RB8 and RB9, were considered likely to

reflect two larger sites (NHER 13316) and (NHER 21777). Two further potential Roman settlement sites were identified for the purposes of this thesis, based on additional records for Roman pottery scatters and metalwork in the Norfolk HER. These were a ring ditch (NHER 20399) situated in the east of the parish, significantly associated with Roman metalwork finds, pottery and ceramic building materials recorded by the Norfolk HER over a period of around twenty years, and the site of Capel Hall Manor (NHER 21066) around 170m to the north west of All Saints Church, Barton Bendish, from which fragments of Roman pottery and ceramic building materials were recovered in the 1980's.

The Roman settlements potentially identified for Barton Bendish have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Early', 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon settlement within 500m and 250m (**Fig. 9.5)**. As with Fransham, Roman and 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement relationships have only been assessed from the Roman perspective forwards. Rogerson *et al*. (1997, 18-19) identified two distinct concentrations of 'Early Saxon' material, with the addition of six to eight further findspots. Collating the data from both Rogerson *et al.* (*ibid*) and the Norfolk HER, 8 potential 'Early Saxon' settlement 'sites' were identified for the purposes of this thesis, on the basis of one or more sherds (see above, and Chapter 4, 60). The evidence for 'Middle Saxon' settlement at Barton Bendish is rather confusing, although the clear concentration of material for this period is along the river valley at Barton Bendish (**Fig. 9.8**). Rogerson *et al*. (ibid, 20) identifies one clear concentration and several additional findspots of varying size. Collating the data from Rogerson *et al*. (*ibid*) and the Norfolk HER, this thesis suggests 7 possible 'Middle Saxon' settlement 'sites' and 11 additional findspots, although the issues with clearly distinguishing potential settlement sites from background scatter, as noted above, are reiterated again here.

Thirteen potential 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for Barton Bendish, in addition to 3 Domesday vills, 3 parish churches and 6 manors. These results again combine Rogerson *et al*.'s (1997, 17-22) interpretation of early medieval settlement with additional data from the Norfolk HER. Rogerson *et al*. (*ibid*, 22) identified eight 'Late Saxon' settlement 'sites'. Four of these, LS3, LS4, LS5 and LS6, were closely situated around St Mary's Church (*ibid*, Fig. 12), potentially reflecting a larger core of 'Late Saxon' settlement in this area. Five further potential 'Late Saxon' settlements were identified for the purposes of this thesis,



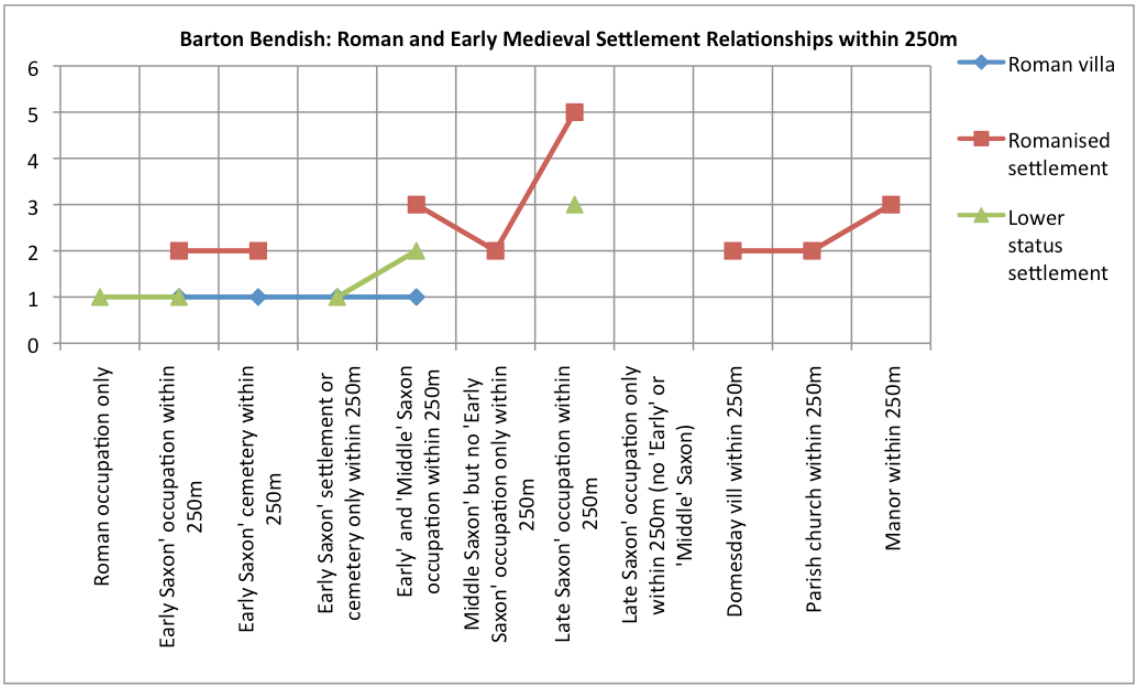


Figure 9.5. Line charts showing the comparative hierarchy of Roman settlement in Barton Bendish relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors within 500m and 250m parameters. All data compiled by the author.

based on additional data from the Norfolk HER. As with Fransham, interpreting the combined data from fieldwalking surveys and HER records has certain limitations of subjectivity and bias, and again highlights the difficulties of clearly distinguishing settlement 'sites' from background scatter. The 'Late Saxon' sites identified by Rogerson *et al*. (*ibid,* 22), for example, range in size from just 12 sherds (LS8) up to 90 sherds (LS4; LS6). The wider overview suggested by Rogerson *et al*. (*ibid*, 25) indicates that two principal settlement foci had probably developed at Barton Bendish by the 9th to 11th century (*ibid*, Fig.12). Additional infill and expansion during this period resulted in a straggling linear settlement along the river valley by the 11th century, with at least five manors and three parish churches (**Fig. 9.8**).

The complexities of manorial tenure in Barton Bendish by Domesday are discussed by Rogerson *et al*. (1997, 25): in particular, what difference there might be in Barton Bendish's three churched vill as compared to three distinct but adjacent vills, each with their own church. As noted in Chapter 4 (pp 62-63), Domesday vills are typically construed as the head settlement of a manor in its broadest sense. The three churches, St Mary's, St Andrew's and All Saints, are associated with the three lordships recorded for Barton Bendish at Domesday (*ibid*, 22-23), although how this was reflected in terms of settlement development or patterns of tenure by the 11th century is not so clear. In line with the main methodology (Chapter 4, 62-63) it was therefore decided to record three separate Domesday vills, although it is noted that this may not accurately reflect the pattern of manorial structure at Barton Bendish by the 11th century, which is clearly complicated and lacking in parallel (*ibid*, 22). Similar issues of divided lordship and a lack of consistency in manorial structure in 11th century Norfolk are discussed by Campbell (1986, 225-226).

By the 9th to 11th century a second linear settlement, or string of settlements, had begun to develop at Eastmoor, in the south east of Barton Bendish parish (**Fig. 9.8**). The site of at least one manor, Herne Hall, is recorded at Eastmoor, but additional manors are also suggested (see Rogerson *et al.*1997, 28-29), although their locations, to date, remain unknown. Some of these manors were likely to be the result of subinfeudation in the 12th to 13th centuries (Campbell 1986, 227; 1994, 52, for example), demonstrating the growing weakness of manorial structure at Barton Bendish by this period. The 'Late Saxon'

Table 9.3 shows the percentages of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors recorded for Barton Bendish, relative to Roman occupation within 500m. Table 9.4 shows the percentages of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors recorded for Barton Bendish, relative to Roman occupation within 250m. All data compiled by the author.

Table 9.3: Barton Bendish Early medieval settlement relationships within 500m

	Total number recorded within study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m			Percentage of Total			Overall Percentage
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	
'Late Saxon' settlement	13	0	6	7	0%	46%	54%	100%
'Late Saxon' settlement having RB only within 500m				1				8%
Domesday vill	3	0	3	0	0%	100%	0%	100%
Parish church	3	0	3	0	0%	100%	0%	100%
Manor	6	0	4	2	0%	67%	33%	100%

Table 9.4: Barton Bendish Early medieval settlement relationships within 250m

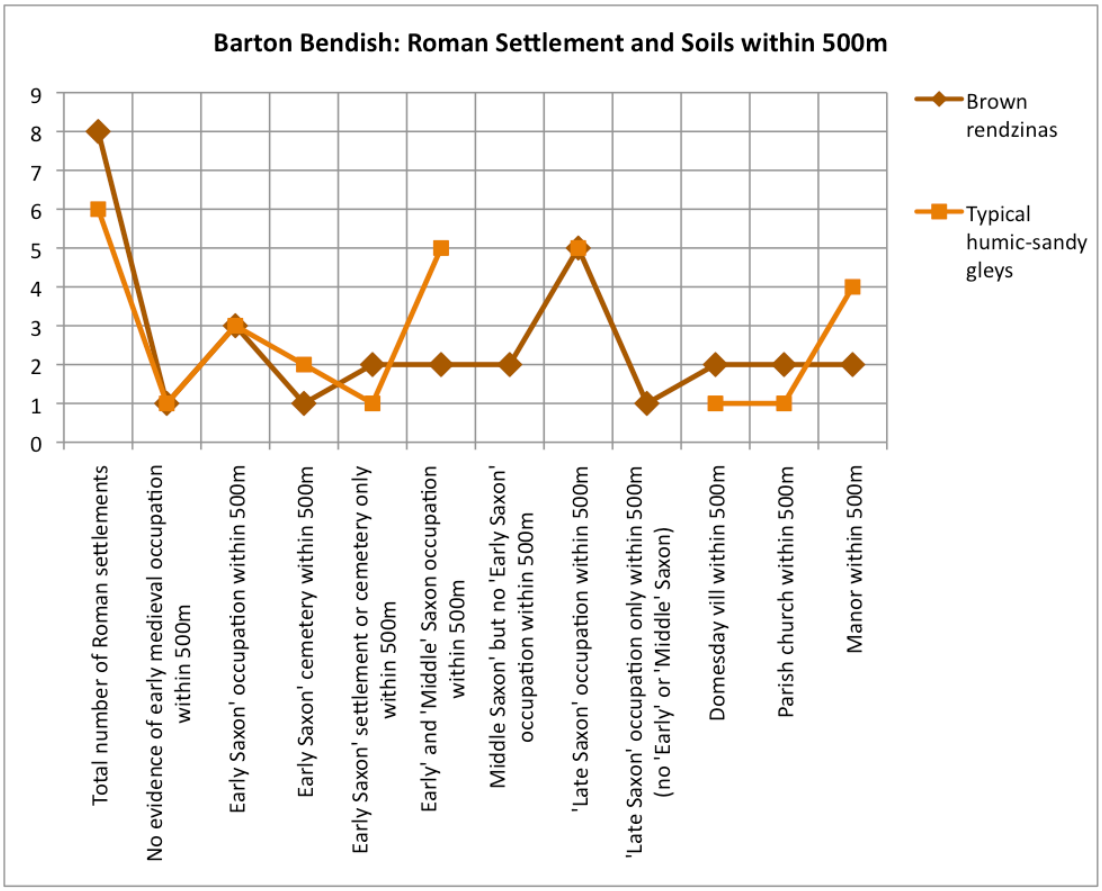
	Total number recorded within study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 250m			Percentage of Total			Overall Percentage
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	
'Late Saxon' settlement	13	0	6	7	0%	46%	54%	100%
'Late Saxon' settlement having RB only within 250m				1				8%
Domesday vill	3	0	3	0	0%	100%	0%	100%
Parish church	3	0	3	0	0%	100%	0%	100%
Manor	6	0	4	2	0%	67%	33%	100%

settlements, Domesday vills, churches and manors identified for Barton Bendish have been retrogressively assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement within 500m and 250m (**Tables 9.3 and 9.4**).

Soils Data

The soils of Barton Bendish are typically calcareous brown rendzinas across the interfluvial plateau and plateau fringes, with humic sandy gleys along the valley bottoms (SSEW 1983). Of the 14 Roman settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 8 (57%) were located on brown rendzinas, with 6 (43%) on humic sandy gleys (**Fig. 9.6**). This suggests a relatively broad distribution of Roman settlement in relation to soils, with a slightly higher ratio of Roman settlement across the lighter calcareous soils of the interfluvial plateaux and valley margins than along the valley bottoms (see **Fig. 9.8**). The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships within 500m and 250m, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 9.6**).

Of the early medieval settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 10 out of the 13 'Late Saxon' settlements (77%), all 3 Domesday vills and parish churches (100%) and all 6 manors (100%) were located on brown rendzinas (**Fig. 9.7**). This suggests that the light calcareous soils continued as the preferred location for settlement by the 11th century. As these soils predominated across the parish of Barton Bendish, however, it is difficult to identify clear trends in settlement contraction or shift across the interfluvial plateau and plateau margins between the 5th to 11th centuries, relative to soils type. It is also unclear how far soils type may have influenced any settlement expansion by the 11th century. As noted in Chapter 7 (p 144), where settlement expansion on Breckland is indicated by the 9th to 11th century this appears generally confined to the sides of the river valleys. This contrasts with the Boulder Clay Plateau, for example, where settlement expansion by the 9th to 11th centuries appears to have spread more widely across the clay interfluves (Chapter 7, 101, 111). The major distribution of 'Late Saxon' settlement and manors at Barton Bendish closely respects the valley sides and demonstrates this contrast particularly well (**Fig. 9.8**). What seems apparent is that the distribution of early medieval settlement on Breckland was influenced by the proximity of a viable water source, but preferred the location of the drier calcareous soils of the valley



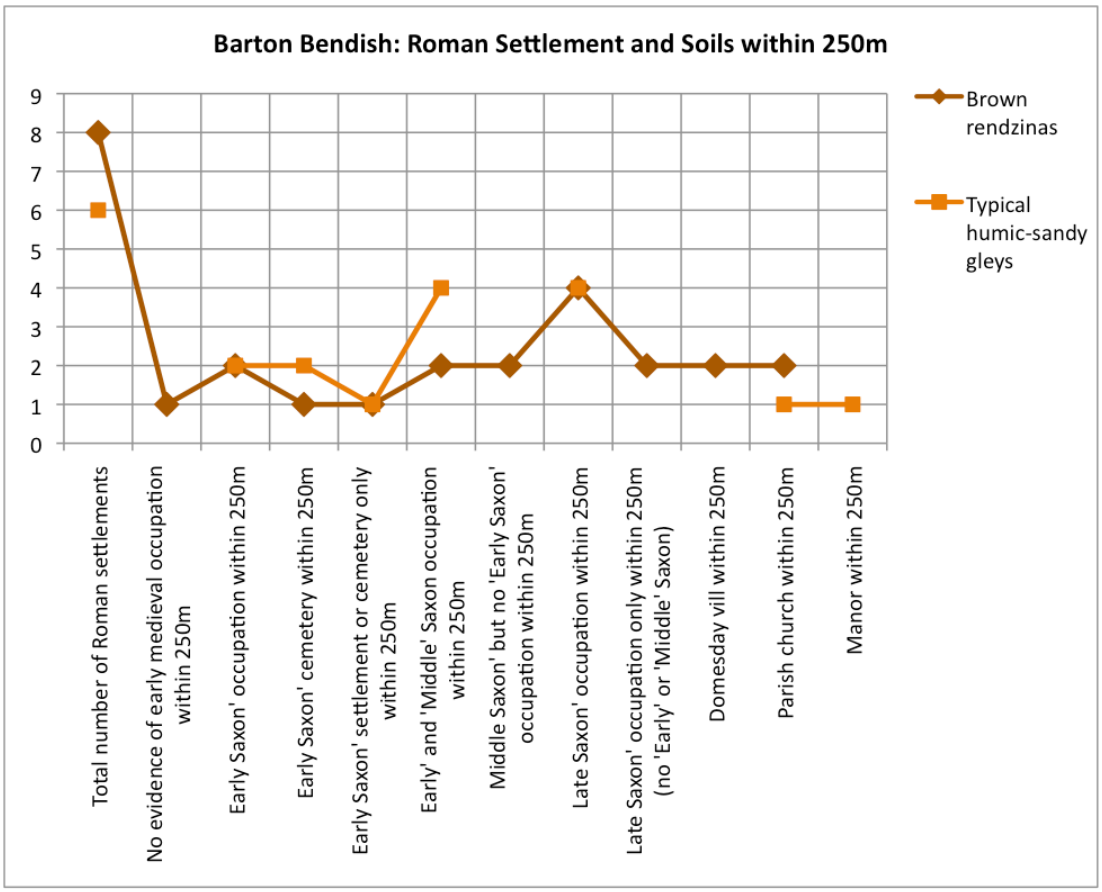
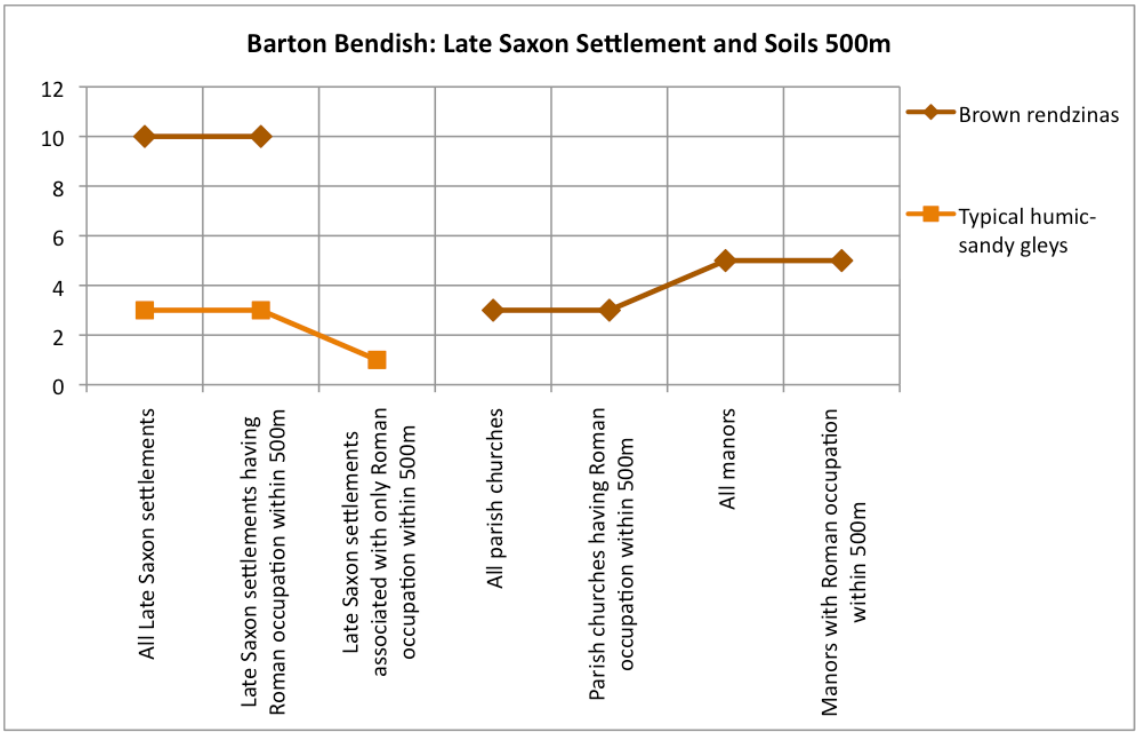


Figure 9.6. Line charts showing the comparative relationships between Roman and early medieval settlement in Barton Bendish within 500m and 250m parameters, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.



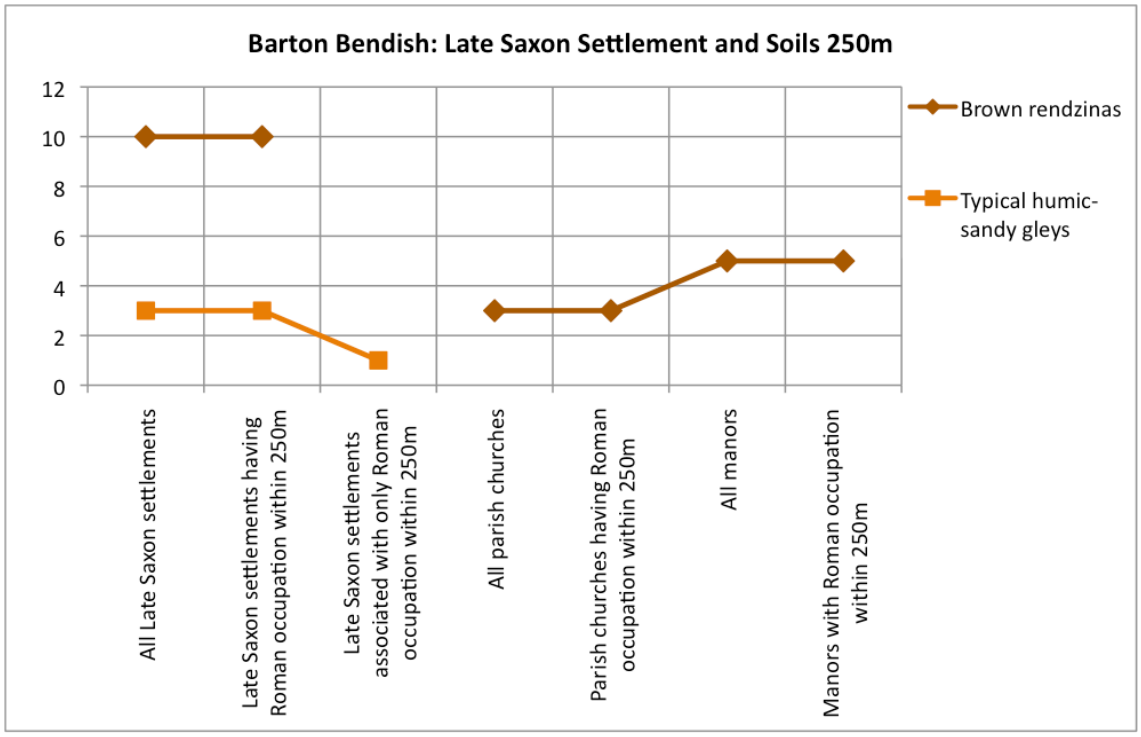


Figure 9.7. Line charts showing the comparative relationships between 'Late Saxon' and Roman settlement in Barton Bendish within 500m and 250m parameters, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

margins. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships within 500m and 250m, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 9.7**).

Discussion

As with Fransham, the comparative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Barton Bendish for the 5th to 9th centuries using 500m and 250m parameters suggests only small differences (see **Fig. 9.5**). Of the 14 Roman settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 6 (43%) had evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement within 500m, of which 4 (29%) suggested 'Early Saxon' settlement within 250m. A lower status Roman settlement on humic sandy gley soils to the northeast of Barton Bendish (NHER 18850, RB2) and a second lower status Roman settlement on the calcareous rendzina soils to the north of Eastmoor (NHER 19085, RB12) appear less closely associated with 'Early Saxon' settlement, which in both cases was located between 350m to 500m to the southwest (**Fig. 9.8**). Nonetheless, RB2 (NHER 18850), which is closer towards the river valley, has both 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon material within 250m, whereas RB12 (NHER 19085), which is situated on the interfluvial plateau, does not. Taken as a whole, the evidence continues to support the suggested trend for a contraction or shift of Roman settlement by the 5th to 7th centuries towards the river valleys. This may, however, have been less of a clearly defined crisis event at the end of the Roman period, so much as the result of selective abandonment and gradual settlement drift. Again, the results have greater implications for the continuity of individual Roman settlements at Barton Bendish, but do not contradict the wider trends in Roman and early medieval settlement processes that form the focus of this thesis.

The comparative relationships between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement in Barton Bendish were also assessed at 500m and 250m. Of the 14 Roman settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 10 (71%) suggested evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement within 500m, of which only 1 (7%) had no interim evidence for 'Early' or 'Middle' Saxon settlement within 500m. Of these 10 Roman settlements, 8 (57%) also had evidence for 'Late Saxon' settlement within 250m: all of these were also associated with evidence for 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 250m. One lower status Roman settlement (RB15) to the south of Eastmoor is associated with 'Late Saxon' material within

500m but not 250m, and has no evidence for interim 'Early' or 'Middle' Saxon occupation. The development of settlement at Eastmoor by the 9th to 11th century generally suggests little evidence for interim occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 9.8**) and it is likely that any association between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement is due to a resettlement of this area by the 11th century rather than any continuity of occupation by this point.

The Roman villa (NHER 13316; RB3, 4 and 5) to the north of Barton Bendish is also associated with 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m but not 250m. In this instance, however, it is also associated with 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon material in close proximity (see **Fig. 9.8**). The wider evidence indicates a nucleus of settlement development in this northern part of Barton Bendish by the 11th century (see Rogerson *et al*. 1997, 25), largely focussed around Easthall manor. Whether the Roman villa itself continued to be occupied between the 5th to 9th centuries is not clear from the available evidence. However, an 'Early Saxon' settlement (NHER 23928) around 400m to the southwest, and a spread of 'Early/Middle' Saxon material in close proximity to the villa, potentially suggests wider settlement continuity in this area between the 5th to 9th centuries, albeit with some probability of settlement shift and/or changes in function and status. The evidence from elsewhere in Norfolk (see Chapters 6 and 7) suggests that whilst some Roman villas, such as Park Farm, Snettisham (NHER 1514) or Fring (NHER 1659), for example, may have continued into the 5th to 7th centuries, these were more likely to have seen a shift in settlement location and status by the 8th to 9th centuries. The proximity of 'Late Saxon' settlement in this part of Barton Bendish is therefore possibly due as much to continued resettlement along the river valley during the 5th to 11th centuries as the direct continuity of settlement from the Roman period forwards.

The assessment of Roman settlement at Barton Bendish relative to Domesday vills and parish churches demonstrates that of the 14 Roman settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 3 Romanised settlements (21%) are associated with a parish church or Domesday vill within 500m. All three Romanised settlements are situated close to the river valley at Barton Bendish, although only two in the southwest of the village (NHER 21777, RB8/9; NHER 21066) are also associated with a parish church or Domesday vill within 250m. Of the 14 Roman settlements recorded for Barton Bendish, 6 (43%) are associated with a

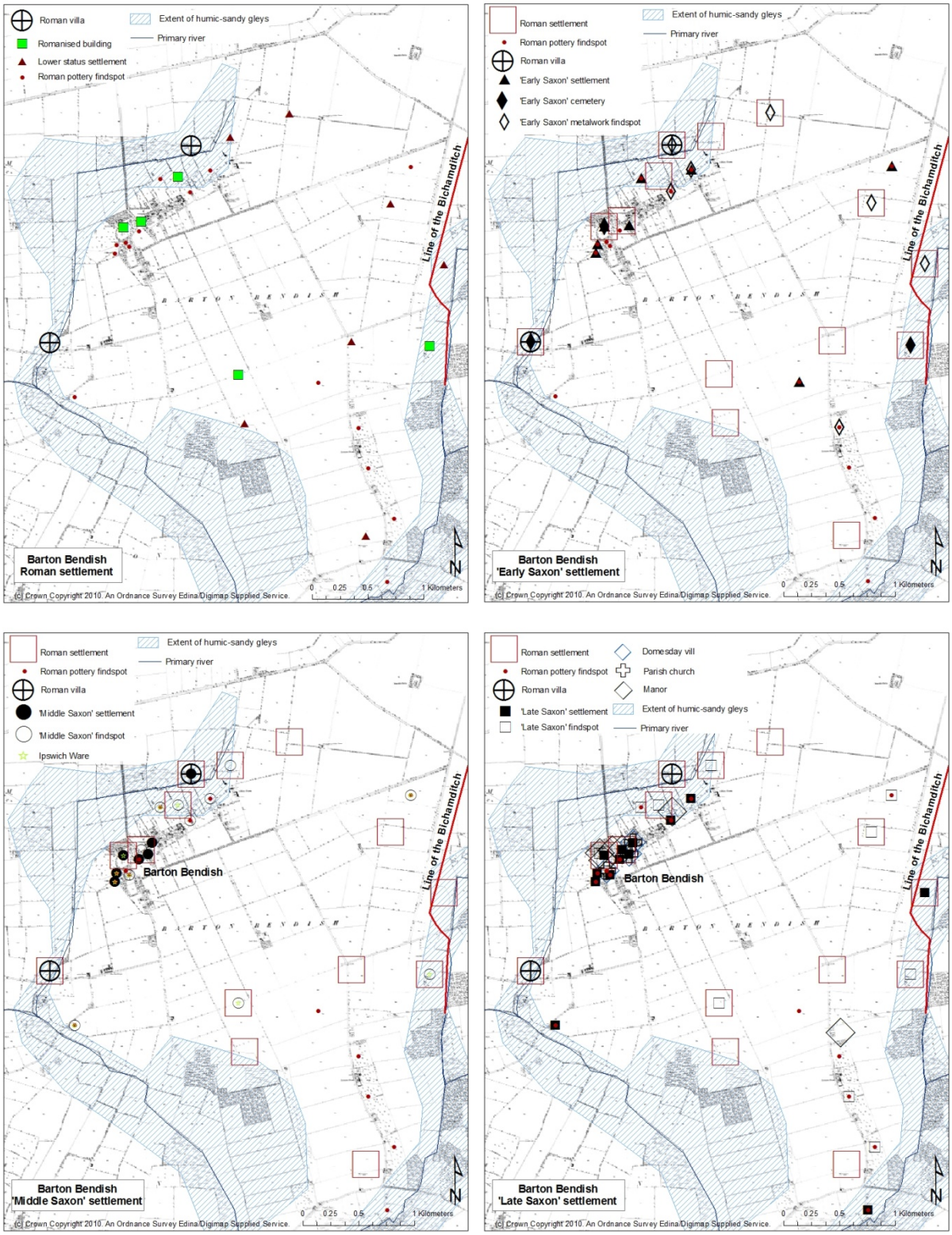


Figure 9.8. The relationship between Roman and early medieval occupation at Barton Bendish by period, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The extent of humic-sandy gley soils bordering the river valleys is also shown. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

medieval manor within 500m, of which 3 (21%) are also associated with a medieval manor within 250m. The Roman villa (NHER 13316; RB3, 4 and 5) and a lower status Roman settlement (NHER 18850, RB2) to the north of Barton Bendish are situated between 300m to 500m north of Easthall Manor, while a second lower status Roman settlement (RB10) on the eastern parish border is situated around 500m west of a probable manor site at Beachamwell. The retrogressive analysis of 'Late Saxon' settlement, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors demonstrates that 100% of these have evidence for Roman settlement within both 500m and 250m (see **Tables 9.3 and 9.4**).

Taken as a whole, the Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Barton Bendish assessed at 500m and 250m broadly suggest a shift of settlement away from the interfluvial areas and towards the river valleys by the 5th to 7th centuries. The predominant settlement core seems to have developed in the southwest of Barton Bendish, closely associated with an area of high status Roman settlement. The Roman villa in the northeast may not have directly continued beyond the 7th to 9th centuries, but a continuity of settlement into this period is indicated for the wider vicinity, albeit with a greater degree of potential settlement shift than is evidenced in the southwest of the village: the 250m parameter potentially demonstrates that settlement development in the northeast of Barton Bendish village over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries was not as closely associated with patterns of underlying Roman settlement as in the southwest. This may indicate a greater degree of resettlement in this area by the 11th century as much as any direct Roman settlement continuity. The settlement that developed at Eastmoor by the 11th century demonstrates little association with the pattern of Roman settlement and has scant evidence for any interim occupation during the 5th to 9th centuries. As with Fransham, the analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships at Barton Bendish using 500m and 250m parameters has resulted in comparatively narrow margins of difference. Both sets of results, however, reinforce the wider patterns and trends of Roman and early medieval settlement processes suggested for Norfolk. The 250m parameter potentially offers more nuanced interpretation of individual Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, in some instances but, as noted above, this has not been the focus of this thesis.

Discussion

The parishes of Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau, and Barton Bendish, on Breckland, have been selected as a case study to explore the differences in using a 500m or 250m parameter as a framework for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships. Despite the small discrepancies that have resulted using these parameters, both methods have suggested the same pattern of settlement trends and relationships in Norfolk between the 5th to 11th centuries. Both methods have also demonstrated the same particularities of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Fransham and Barton Bendish, and by default, the wider *pays* in which these parishes sit. The tighter 250m parameter has perhaps allowed some finer-grain analysis of settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries, although the differences overall have been comparatively slight. Nonetheless, the results concur with those of the wider thesis, which typically suggest a contraction of settlement away from interfluvial area and poorer soils in favour of the river valleys somewhere between the 5th to 7th centuries, with patterns of settlement consolidation in these areas from the 8th century onwards often closely related to the antecedent Roman settlement pattern. Furthermore, they typically demonstrate a poorer cohesion between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement beyond the primary settlement cores established by the 9th to 11th centuries, particularly on areas of poorer or heavier soils. This has been argued throughout the discussion of Norfolk (Chapters 6 to 8) to potentially reflect those areas that saw some degree of settlement contraction or shift at some point from the late Roman period onwards. The 'relationship' between Roman and 'Late Saxon' settlement in these areas may reflect resettlement through a subsequent expansion of settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries, rather than the continuity of Roman settlement as such, particularly where evidence for interim settlement during the 5th to 9th centuries is lacking.

Despite the relatively small differences, these results do, however, suggest that tighter parameters may be useful for assessing patterns of potential Roman settlement continuity on areas marginal to the primary settlement cores or on poorer soils. Conversely, they also suggest that areas of likely settlement continuity between the Roman and early medieval periods, on the better soils or along the river valleys, for example, can potentially be identified even using the

wider parameter of 500m. There are some important points to make in regard to these conclusions and their implications for future studies of this nature. Firstly, the 500m parameter was selected based on existing settlement research and observations on the average density of Roman settlement and the extent of potential settlement shift over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries (see Foard 1978; Hamerow 1991; 1993, Rogerson *et al*. 1997 and Williamson 1984; 1986, for example). Secondly, the primary aim of this thesis has been to assess patterns and trends in settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries, and how these translate across particular types of soils or physical landscape areas, or *pays*. The continuity, or discontinuity, of individual Roman settlements, for which a tighter analytical framework could be argued to be more suitable, has not been its remit.

Furthermore, and crucially to any comparative regional analysis, the more nuanced assessment of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Norfolk has been made possible through the wealth of the material record for the 5th to 11th centuries, and the opportunity to recover this through comprehensive physical survey. For the majority of lowland Britain, and certainly for Kent and Somerset, the other regional study areas selected by this thesis, the material record for this period of settlement history is typically much reduced and/or lacking a continuous chronological sequence. In such cases, a tighter analytical framework for assessing broad scale patterns and processes of settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between the 5th to 11th centuries, may simply not be possible. What this case study has hopefully shown, however, is that a 500m parameter for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships can be used with confidence to demonstrate potential patterns of continuity, or discontinuity during this period. Furthermore, it allows a consistent methodology to be exercised across different regional areas with a varying availability of material culture and contrasting settlement histories.

Conclusion

Comparing the results for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships when assessed using 500m and 250m parameters has demonstrated that the wider parameter can be used with confidence to interpret potential trends and processes of settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between these periods. This

has particular resonance for those regions of the country that lack Norfolk's wealth of material culture for the 5th to 11th centuries, or lack a continuous settlement chronology for this period. On this basis, the regional studies of West Kent and Somerset will continue to use the 500m parameter as a framework for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships. These studies, and the discussion of results that follow, are presented in Chapters 10 to 17.

A Persistence of Place: a Study of Continuity and Regionality in the Roman and Early Medieval Rural Settlement Patterns of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset

Volume 2 of 2

Submitted by Fiona Jane Fleming to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology
In March 2013

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Part Three: Kent

Chapter 10. Kent: Introduction and Background

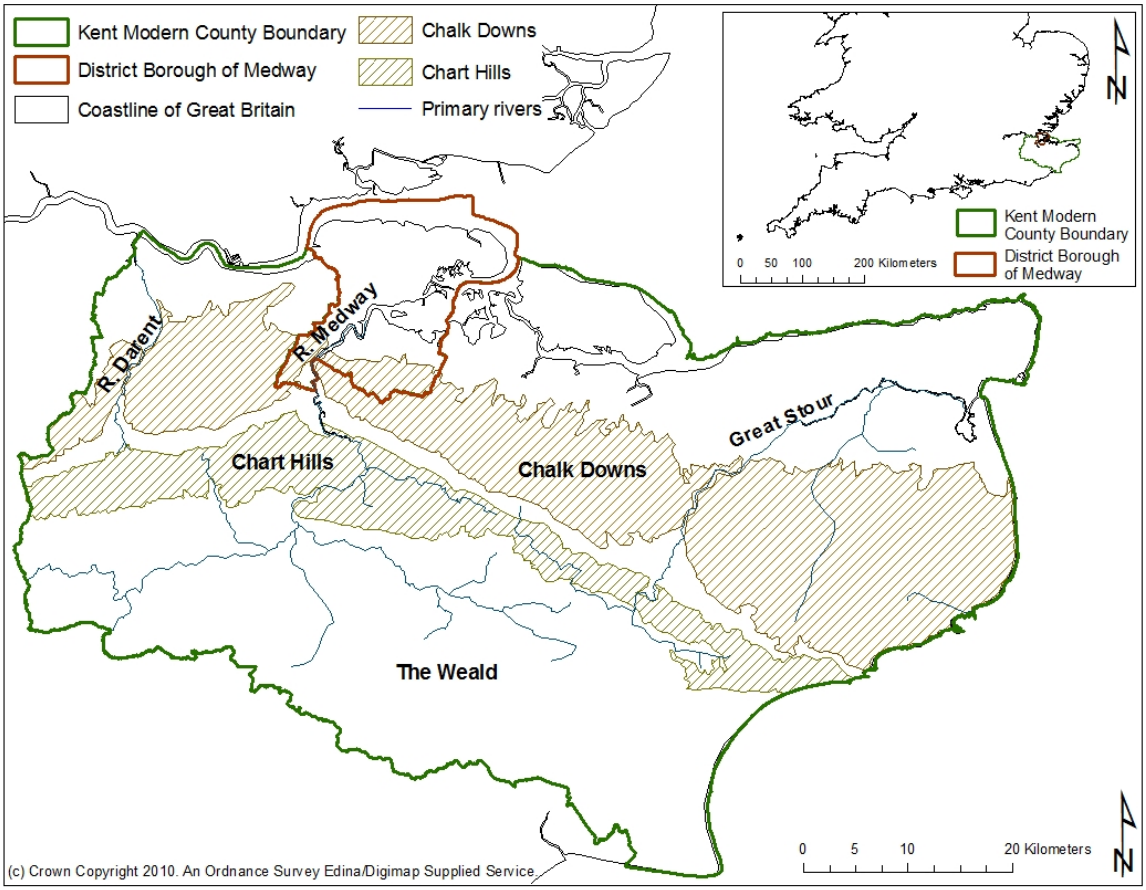


Figure 10.1 Regional map showing the modern county of Kent and District Borough of Medway. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap'

Introduction

Kent is situated in the southeast corner of England (**Figs. 4.1; 10.1**). In his seminal book on the evolution of landscape and settlement in Kent, Everitt (1986) observed that the county comprised contrasting landscapes of 'continuity' and 'colonisation'. The former were the long-settled fertile lowlands and valleys, his 'Original Lands' (*ibid*, 44), as distinct from the intractable soils and impenetrable woodland of the Weald and downlands, which he suggests only saw concerted settlement ingress from the 12th to 13th centuries onwards (*ibid*, 55). This somewhat simplistic division of settlement evolution in Kent, which Everitt (*ibid*, 70), himself, acknowledges, provides an interesting hypothesis against which to research the evolution of Roman and early medieval settlement for the county.

Regional Geography and Historic Landscape Character

Relief and drainage

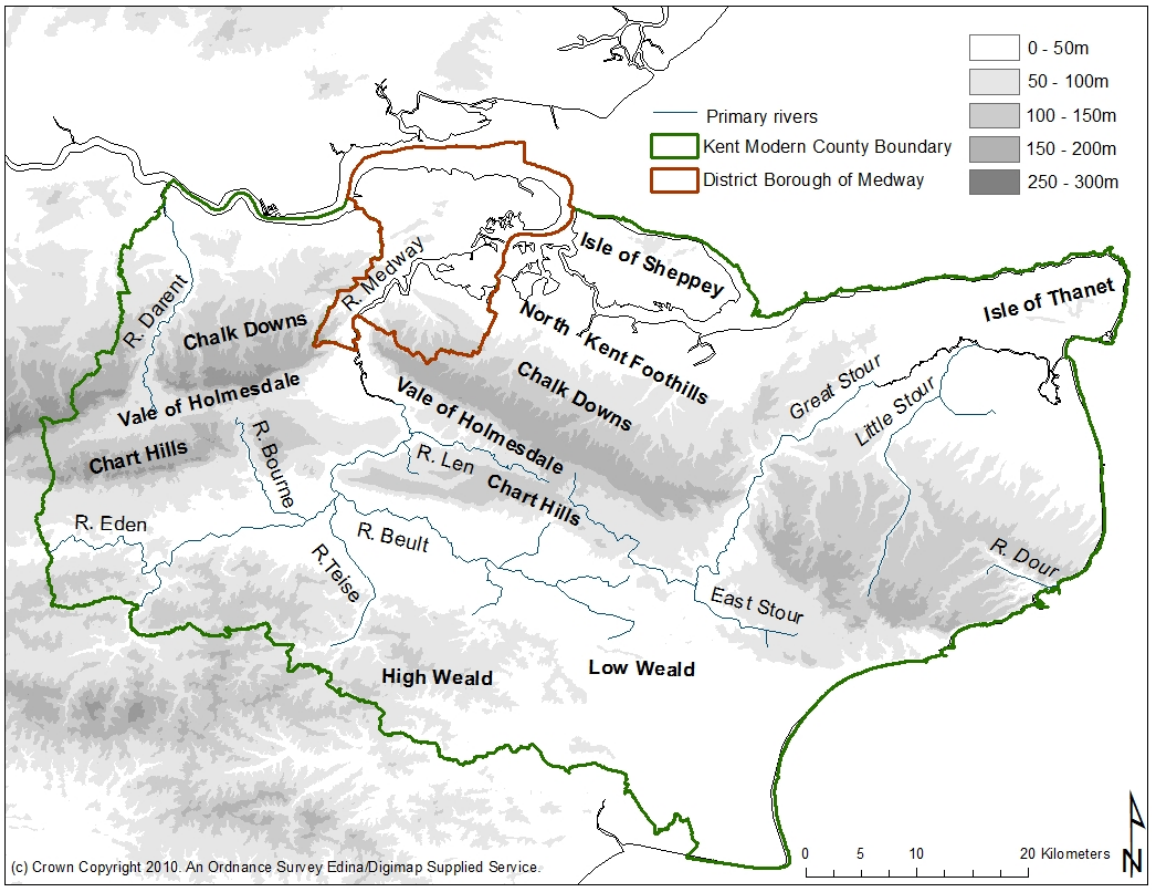


Figure 10.2. The physical geography of Kent, showing principal relief and drainage. Physical data compiled and mapped by the author. Contour data supplied through Land-Form PANORAMA. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2011]. All other mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Kent is of generally low relief, inclining gradually northeastwards through a series of elevated ridges alternated by low-lying clay valleys. The terrain levels out along the north coast, where erosion and sea level changes have resulted in the loss of substantial areas of coastline, forming wide tidal flats and marshes (**Fig. 10.2**).

In southwest Kent the rounded sandstone hills of the High Weald rise to *c.*145m and are cut by numerous steep-sided valleys of streams that drain the region to join the rivers Rother, Teise and Eden. These tributaries of the River Medway have repeatedly re-cut themselves into the low-lying plain that forms the Low Weald (McRae and Burnham 1973, 40; Young 2004, 3) (**Fig. 10.2**).

Northwards of the Weald lie the heights of the Greensand ridge, or Chart Hills, which, at *c.* 250m, reach almost those of the Chalk Downs, particularly in the west, where they are cut by the rivers Bourne and Medway (**Fig. 10.2**). In the east, the Great Stour and East Stour rise, running northwards towards the Wantsum Channel and the coast.

To the northeast of the Chart Hills, and separated by the low-lying Vale of Holmesdale, lie the Chalk Downs. An impressive southwest-facing chalk scarp, cut in places by steep coombes, rises to over 250m at Westerham Hill (McRae and Burnham 1973, 41). An extensive mantle of Plateau Drift covers the higher plateau, while the permeable chalk of the northeastern dipslope forms Kent's main aquifer, the lower plateau cut by a series of dry valleys running north eastwards towards the coast (Young 2004, 2). The Darent and Medway rivers, in the west, and the Great Stour, in the east, have cut major access corridors through the Downs, which have been favoured for settlement from prehistory.

Beyond the Chalk Downs, the ground slopes gently towards the northern coastline and the tidal flats and marshlands of the Thames and Medway estuaries. Across the Hoo Peninsula in the west, and the isles of Sheppey and Blean, the London Clays form rises of higher ground, steeply cut in places through river or coastal erosion (Young 2004, 2). Coastal erosion is a major underlying factor behind significant environmental and social changes during the span of human occupation in the region.

Geology and soils

Kent's solid geology is sedimentary in origin, the oldest deposits being the Wealden and Hasting Bed clays, followed by the Upper and Lower Greensands and Gault Clays (McRae and Burnham 1973, 32; Young 2004, 1). The youngest deposits are Late Cretaceous chalks, folded by earth movement and exposed through erosion into broadly parallel outcrops that incline north eastwards to the coast (**Fig. 10.3**). During the Tertiary Period, a series of marine transgressions formed the sandy Thanet Beds and London Clay deposits along the north coast, whilst further earth movement created the Thanet anticline in northeast Kent, exposing the chalk beneath (Young 2004, 2).

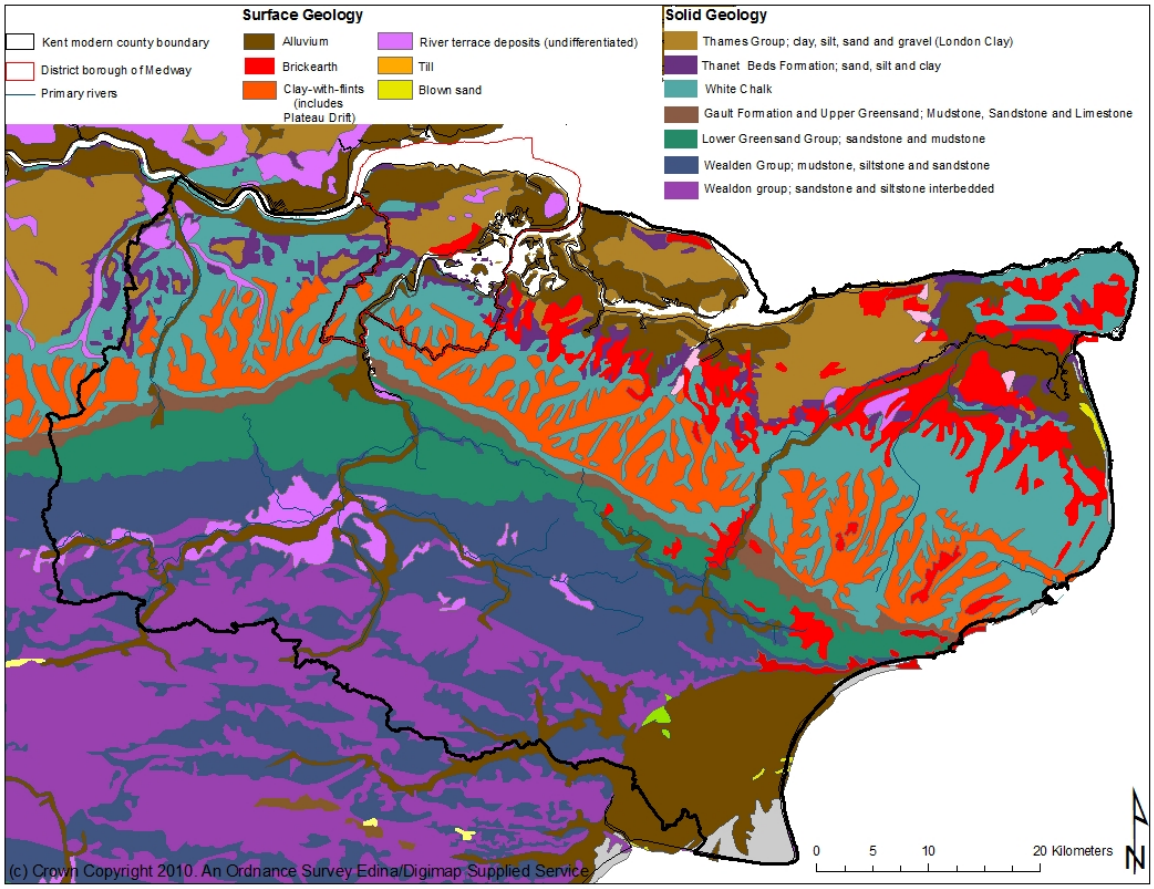


Figure 10.3. The surface geology of Kent, comprising both solid and drift geology, with information compiled and mapped by the author. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

In more recent geological times, the solifluction of peri-glacial Head deposits across the surface of the Chalk Downs formed Coombe Deposits, commonly found along the foot of the steep southern scarp, with a broader coverage of clay-with-flints across the chalk plateau and the interfluves of its northern dipslope. Across the London Clays, loess deposits have formed localised Brickearths, improving the fertility of the local soils (McRae and Burnham 1973, 32-33; Young 2004, 2) (**Fig. 10.3**).

Kent's soils are largely determined by its surface geology, with poorer, waterlogged stagnogleyic soils across the wetter clays contrasting with shallow, well-drained, calcareous soils across the chalk, and well-drained, fertile brown earths, where these overlie deposits of sand and silt. Along the river valleys are more fertile, silty loams (McRae and Burnham 1973, 52-55; SSEW 1983).

Across the Weald the soils are largely the heavy clays of typical stagnogleys or stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, with fertile silty loams, typically pelo-alluvial

gleys and heavier argillic gleys along the shallow floodplains of the lower Wealden plain (McRae and Burnham 1973, 52-55; SSEW 1983).

The soils of the Greensand ridge, or Chart Hills, are typically well-drained fine loams over clay (argillic brown earths) with variable tracts of coarser loamy clays (paleo-argillic brown earths). These soils are generally fertile, particularly across the central belt, but Chert deposits have created acid, sandy, soils in places, especially in the west (McRae and Burnham 1973, 40; SSEW 1983).

North of the Chart Hills the Gault Clay is exposed in the narrow Vale of Holmesdale, creating slowly permeable soils over mudstone, typically pelo-stagnogleys (Young 2004, 2). Along the northern fringes, a band of Lower Chalk is largely overlain by Coombe Deposits, forming typical calcareous brown earths, with some gleyic soils directly overlying the clay (SSEW 1983).

Across the steep slopes of the Chalk Downs, soils are typically calcareous grey rendzinas, with stagnogleyic palaeo-argillic brown earths across the main plateau. The dry valleys of the northern dipslope comprise mainly brown rendzinas, shallow, well-drained calcareous soils over chalk, with typical calcareous brown earths along the northern fringes (SSEW 1983).

Along the coastal plain, the Brickearth deposits overlying the London Clays have formed fertile loams over clay (argillic brown earths). Along the coastal fringes, soils are typically slowly permeable clays, predominantly stagnogleys and pelo-stagnogleys.

Kent's distinctive geology and soils form the basis of its physical character regions, or *pays*, discussed in more detail below.

Settlement history

Roman settlement

The pre-Roman indigenous people of Kent were the *Cantiaci*, which Millett (2007, 138) suggests were a collective of looser tribal groups that came together in response to the threat posed by the Roman invasion. The Roman trait of building local administrative frameworks around existing tribal infrastructures formalised this alliance as the *Civitas Cantiacorum,* with

Canterbury (*Durovernum Cantiacorum*) as its capital (*ibid*, 153). The constraints of Kent's regional topography resulted in Roman settlement distribution being largely confined to the fertile and accessible land north of the Weald. Mattingly (2006, 386) speculates that *civitas* boundaries in Kent may have been similarly determined, keeping the Weald's extensive resources under Imperial control.

After initial resistance, the *Cantiaci* allied themselves with the Romans, with local elites expressing their wealth and prestige through aspects of Romanitas from a relatively early stage. Buildings sufficient to be deemed villas, such as those at Lullingstone (KHER TQ56NW7), Otford (KHER TQ55NW3) and Thurnham (KHER TQ75NE374), for example, were constructed from the latter part of the 1st century. In addition, some exceptional early Roman villas were built in Kent, such as the mid 1st century villa at Eccles (KHER TQ76SW10), which was built on a palatial scale from the outset (Detsicas 1964, 135). Eccles boasts a bathhouse complex and mosaics similar to Fishbourne Palace, constructed a decade or so later, *c.* 75-80AD. Darenth Court Roman Villa (KHER TQ57SE30) was also built on a substantial scale with a possible early bathhouse, perhaps as early as the 2nd century (Philp 1973, 124).

Mattingly (2006, 386) suggests that the propensity of wealthy Roman villas situated in the west of the *civitas*, at a distance from its capital, may indicate that this part of Kent was under separate jurisdiction, perhaps sold, or leased, to private landowners. Alongside the differences in pottery typologies between eastern and western Kent, this reinforces the notion of independent tribal entities prior to the Roman invasion, reflected in the social division of the later *civitas* (Millett 2007, 156). In contrast to impressive villas such as Eccles and Darenth, however, most Kentish villas, such as Thurnham, for example, were modest affairs associated with farming and estate management.

The villa landscape of Roman Kent was only part of its pantheon of rural settlement (see **Fig. 10.4**). The majority of the native population, in common with much of Britain during the Roman period, lived in small farming complexes, typically comprising timbered and thatched buildings within ditched enclosures (Andrews 2004, 20). Many farmsteads, at West Malling (KHER TQ65NE122), Lullingstone Park (KHER TQ56SW22; TQ56SW16) or Boughton Monchelsea (KHER TQ75SE141), for example, indicate continuing occupation from the late Iron Age, although some subsequently appear to have become abandoned by

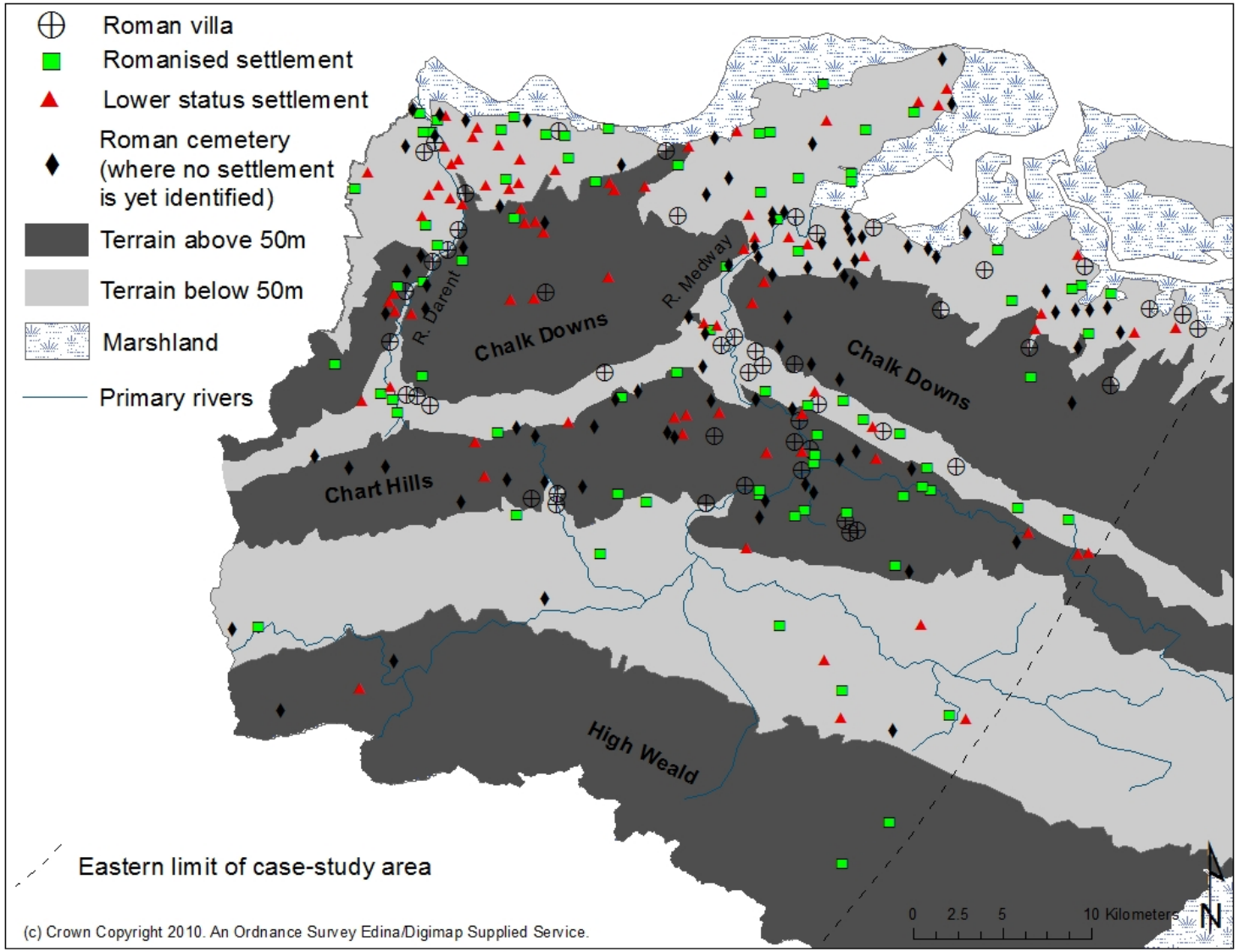


Figure 10.4. Distribution map of Roman settlement recorded for western Kent indicating possible settlement hierarchy. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author from the Kent HER and supporting literature. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

the 2nd to 3rd centuries. Sometimes, although not always, this simply reflects a shift in location, or replacement by more sophisticated buildings: at Lullingstone Park, for example, the Romano-British farmsteads suggest abandonment shortly after the 1st century, potentially coinciding with the first phase of construction at Lullingstone Roman villa (KHER TQ56SW7) *c.*1km to the northeast (Meates 1965, 60-61), whilst at Boughton Monchelsea, excavation (MOLAS 2006) recorded a Romano-British roundhouse and enclosure ditch dating *c.* 45-100 AD truncated by a later masonry building (KHER TQ75SE141) (*ibid*, 16). Beyond the prime arable areas of Kent, however, there appears to have been comparatively little Romano-British settlement, except where associated with local industry. This included a small number of iron-working sites across the Weald and more numerous potteries across the lowland clays and northern marshes (Andrews 2004, 20).

Roman Cemeteries

Roman cemetery evidence in western Kent ranges from isolated inhumations or cremations to larger cemeteries, many of which can be associated with nearby settlement. At Darenth Court Roman villa, for example, a female inhumation dating to the 3rd or 4th centuries was recorded *c.* 65m east of an aisled building (Philp 1973, 124), whilst at Harrietsham, excavation (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998a, 9) recorded an early cremation cemetery in association with a primary phase of Romano-British occupation (KHER TQ85SE138). As demonstrated elsewhere (see Leech 1977 for Somerset, for example), Roman cemeteries may be considered proxy evidence for settlement, where associated occupation has yet to be identified. Many such cemetery remains are casual finds, often found in isolation, some with very little in the way of associated dating evidence. Where cremation burials are recorded, these may be relatively early in date, typically 1st to 2nd century (Philpott 1991, chapter 31), although later, 3rd to 4th century cremations are not unknown in Kent (*ibid*, 42).

Where inhumation cemeteries are recorded in Kent they almost certainly date to the end of the 2nd century or later and are often furnished, unlike many later inhumations in Roman Britain (Philpott 1991, 224). In western Kent the majority of Roman inhumation cemeteries are located in the north of the region, particularly along the Darent and Medway valleys. Some mixed cemeteries,

such as Sutton Valance (KHER TQ84NW1) or Bapchild (KHER TQ96SW25), for example, are also widely distributed across western Kent, although these appear to extend only as far south as the Chart Hills (**Fig. 10.5**). Cremations, on the other hand, appear more broadly distributed, extending further towards the southwest peripheries of known Roman settlement distribution, notably the Chart Hills and the Weald (**Fig. 10.5**). Across many parts of western Kent these cremations appear dissociated from later inhumations or any evidence for settlement. Whether this reflects regional changes in settlement organisation and mortuary practices from the 2nd to 3rd centuries, or a shift in settlement itself from around this point, remains unclear at present. In particular, there is a marked distribution of early cremations across the west of the Chart Hills that currently suggest little, if any, relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern. These may reflect a contraction of settlement from this area during the Roman period itself, although the evidence for this, to date, remains tentative.

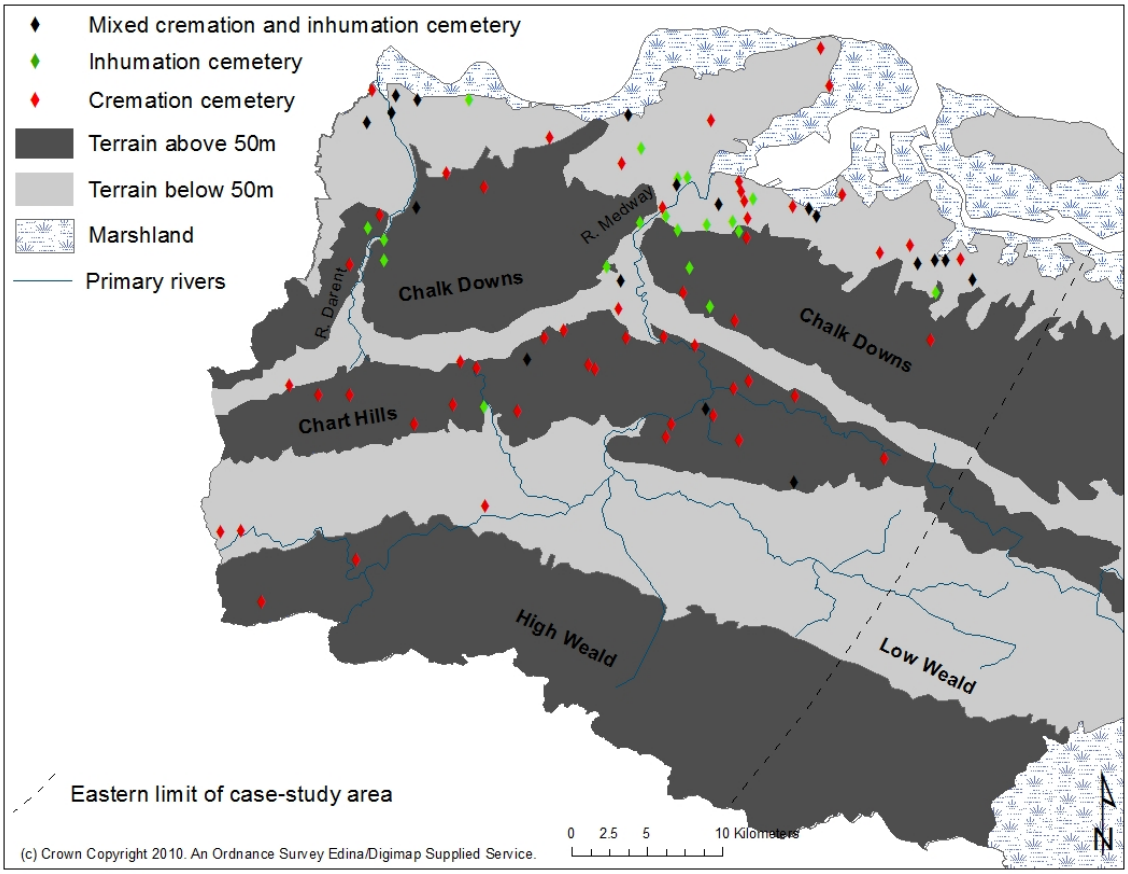


Figure 10.5. The distribution of isolated Roman cemetery sites in western Kent, where associated settlement has not been identified, to date. Cemeteries associated with identified settlement remains are not shown here. Cemetery data compiled and mapped by the author from data retrieved from the Kent online HER. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Early medieval settlement and cemeteries

In common with much of southeast Britain, the principal evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation in Kent comes from cemetery remains. Although continental influences dating to the early 5th century are present at some cemeteries along the Darent and Medway estuaries (Welch 2007, 232-234), however, such as Temple Hill, Dartford (KHER TQ57SW285) or Darenth (KHER TQ57SE29), for example, there does not currently appear to have been substantial Anglo-Saxon settlement in Kent prior to *c.* AD 475 (Riddler 2004, 25). Differing typologies of associated grave goods may also infer a degree of regional distinction between eastern and western Kent (*ibid,* 26), possibly reflecting a range of cultural influences and, potentially, ethnicities that were dominating, or being rapidly assimilated by, the local native population. While there is debate over the potential to distinguish 'Jutish' from 'Anglo-Saxon' burials in Kent (see Richardson 2005, for example, for a synthesis of this) this is not relevant to this thesis and the term 'Anglo-Saxon' is used here to refer to all possible evidence of Germanic immigrants. The broader evidence indicates progressive Anglo-Saxon settlement inland from the coast and along the major river valleys between the 5th to 7th centuries, becoming well established across northern Kent by the early 7th century (*ibid*, 25).

Through the results of rescue archaeology and development-led evaluations, structural evidence for occupation between the 5th to 7th centuries is becoming more apparent, aided by radiocarbon dating where conditions are suitable. There is now increasing evidence for overtly Anglo-Saxon occupation associated with Roman settlement: at Darenth Court Roman villa for example, a timber-framed building and four sunken-featured buildings (KHER TQ57SE91) dating to the 5th to 6th centuries were found to overlie the western peripheries of the villa complex (Philp 1973, 155), whilst at Hoo Road, Wainscott, occupation dating from the 5th to 11th centuries (KHER TQ77SE173) was recorded *c.* 350m south of a Romano-British settlement (KHER TQ77SE159) (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2000a, 2000b; CgMs Consulting 2009).

The Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent was established comparatively early, a little before *c.* 600 AD (Riddler 2004, 28). By the end of the 6th century, Kent was a significant political entity, developing during the 6th to 7th centuries as a major player in the world of continental trade and exchange. There is documentary

evidence of 'Middle Saxon' *wics*, specialized centres of production and exchange, such as Fordwich, but, to date, no material evidence of settlement associated with these (*ibid*, 28). Ceramic wares of the 6th to 7th centuries in Kent incorporated both local and imported wares, mainly from France, with more locally produced Ipswich Ware becoming part of the wider trading network in the southeast by the mid 8th to 9th centuries (see Blinkhorn 1999, 9).

Material evidence for 8th century, and later, occupation in Kent is only gradually emerging. A rubbish pit (KHER TQ55NW324) dating to the late 7th/ early 8th centuries (Bennell 2004, 3) was recorded *c.* 150m southwest of Otford Roman villa, whilst a late 7th/ early 8th century tidal mill (KHER TQ67SW298) was recorded *c.* 75m northwest of the Roman villa at Northfleet (KHER TQ 67SW38) (Andrews *et al*. 2011, 307-8; Fig. 6.1). At Teynham, a sunken-featured building was recorded in association with Deerton St Roman villa (KHER TQ96SE95) (Wilkinson 1997), with wider scatters of pottery, including Ipswich Ware, dating to the 8th and 9th centuries (Southern Ocean Survey Company 1996, 14).

The distribution of early medieval settlement in western Kent appears significantly influenced by the regional topography, just as it was during the Roman period. The poorer soils and extensively wooded areas of the Chalk Downs, Chart Hills and the Weald, only saw gradual settlement ingress from around the 6th to 7th centuries (Welch 2007,197), becoming more widely progressive across these regions from the 7th century onwards (Brookes 2007, 80). This may have coincided with the division of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom into regional provinces, or lathes, organised to apportion shares in natural resource areas, such as the coastal marshes, prime arable land and woodland pastures (*ibid*, 243). This would have encouraged the movement of people, perhaps seasonally at first, with more permanent settlement following over time.

The documentary record for 9th to 11th century settlement in Kent, on issues such as population density, numbers of plough-teams and the distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval churches (see Campbell 1962; Flight 2010; Morgan 1983, for example) (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**) potentially tells us much about regional trends in settlement distribution by this period. By the 9th to 11th centuries, Kent appears to have seen substantial settlement across large parts of the county, densest across the good arable land in the north, much as it had been during the Roman period, but with significant inroads across some areas

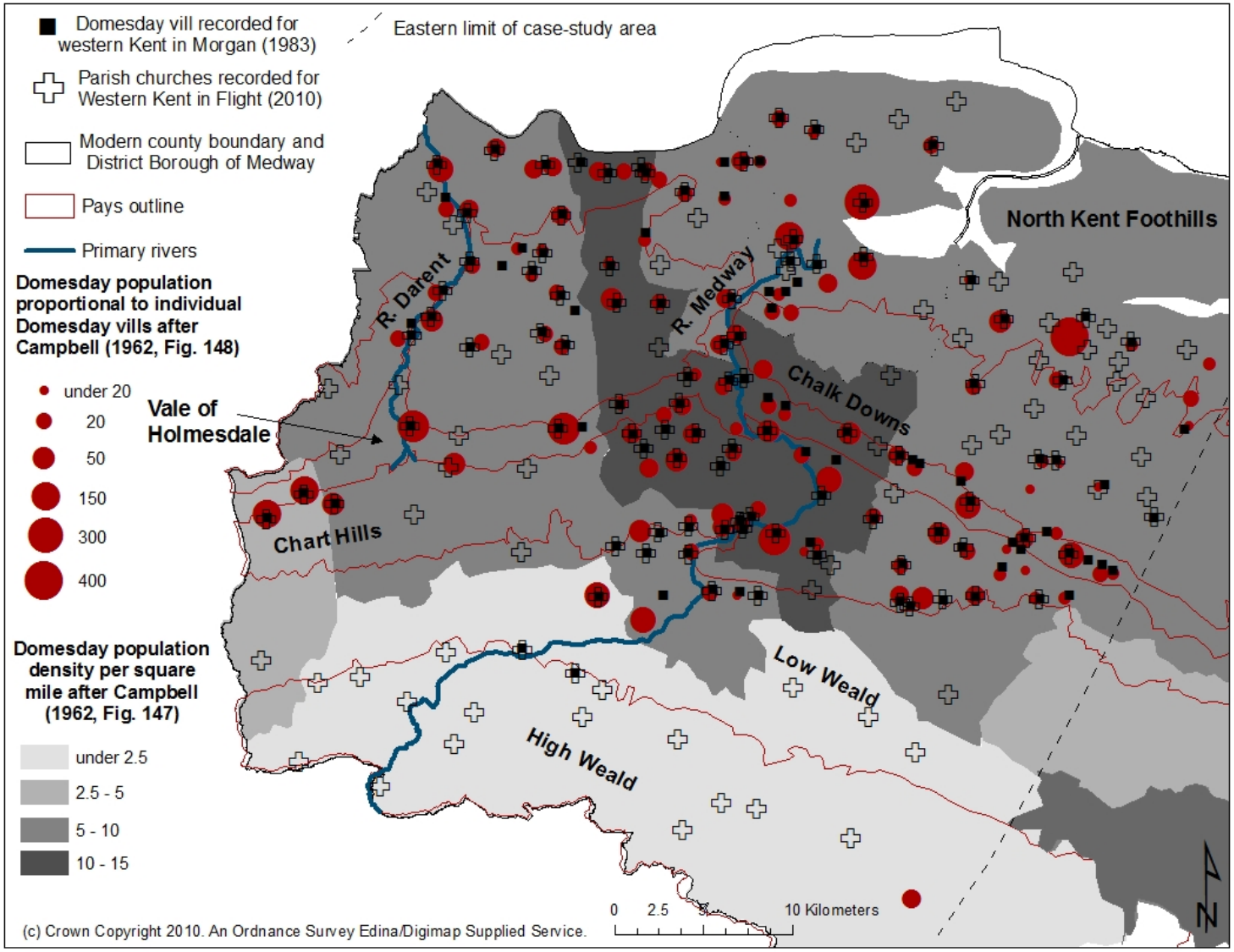


Figure 10.6. The distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval churches recorded for western Kent against the Domesday population densities, drawn after Campbell (1962, Figs. 147 and 148). Domesday vills recorded using Morgan (1983). Early medieval churches compiled and mapped by the author using Flight (2010). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

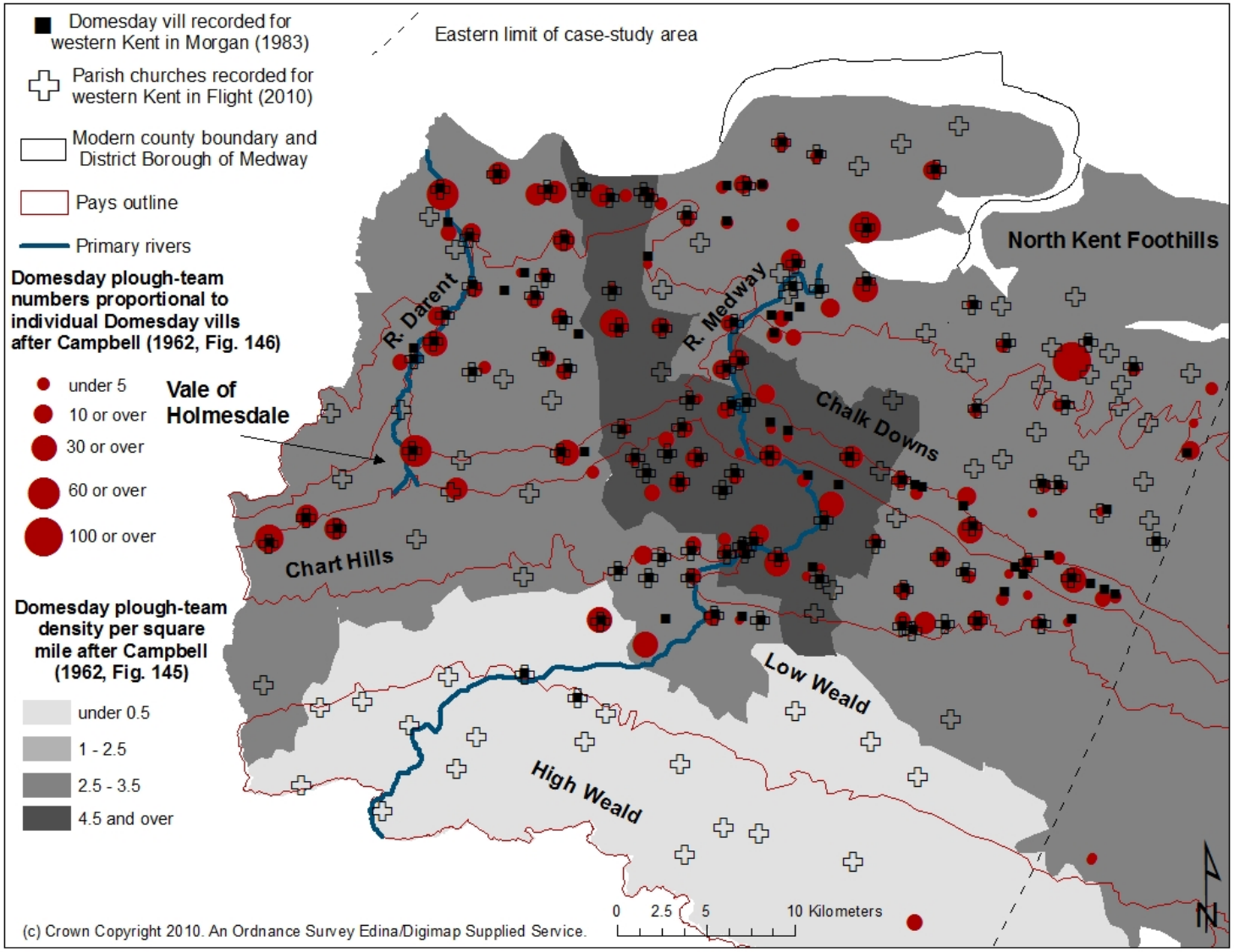


Figure 10.7. The distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval churches recorded for western Kent against the Domesday plough-team densities, drawn after Campbell (1962, Figs. 145 and 146). Domesday vills recorded using Morgan (1983). Early medieval churches compiled and mapped by the author using Flight (2010). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

of poorer soils and woodlands, particularly along the easiest access routes, the river valleys (see Lawson 2004b, 36-37). The evidence from 19th century mapping further indicates that by this time the settlement character of Kent probably reflected a largely dispersed pattern of farms and hamlets, even where fertile soils encouraged more intensive agriculture, although this may have been less pronounced for some parts of the North Kent Foothills (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000; 2002 and see Chapter 3, **Figs. 3.5 and 3.6** and below, p 234).

Increasingly, the documentary evidence is being both reinforced and expanded through archaeological evaluation and large-scale construction projects. At Sittingbourne Road, Boxley, for example, a watching brief for the Channel Tunnel link scheme (Oxford Archaeology Unit 2000) identified 11th to 13th century occupation (KHER TQ75NE377) *c.* 200m west of an area of Roman settlement (KHER TQ75NE78). Excavation at Tonbridge Cattle Market (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2005a) has also identified structural features and pottery dating between the 10th and 14th centuries (KHER TQ54NE86). A pipeline watching brief on the Low Weald (Network Archaeology Ltd 2003) recovered heat-reddened pits radiocarbon dated to the 11th to 12th centuries (*ibid*, 23-24, 34), in close vicinity of Roman settlement (KHER TQ74SE101/100) dating to the 1st to 3rd centuries at Brattle and Broad Forstal Farms, Staplehurst, providing insight into an area not well documented by Domesday, and where material evidence of early medieval settlement is still lacking.

Early medieval churches

In addition to the material evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement, Kent boasts some of the earliest Anglo-Saxon churches in England. Around 400 churches and independent chapels were established across the county by the end of the 11th century, some dating from as early as *c.* 600 AD (Carder 2004, 31). Many are still identifiable through fragmentary remains and/or documentary records, with a significant number of standing early medieval churches demonstrating a re-use of Roman building materials, or a direct association with Roman settlement (*ibid*, 31): at Lower Halstow, for example, the 8th to 9th century parish church (KHER TQ86NE1159) demonstrates extensive re-use of Roman building materials. A Roman building (KHER TQ86NE13) is recorded to the west of the church, with further Roman finds (KHER TQ86NE15) recorded *c.* 200m to the

east. The relationship between Roman buildings and church construction is increasingly being shown, particularly in association with Roman villas, military installations and funerary monuments (Bell 1998, 2 and see Eaton 2000). The potential significance of this was brought into early light by Rodwell and Rodwell (1977), and explored further by Bell (1998). More recently, Brookes (2007, 91-98) has reviewed the evidence for eastern Kent in this regard, combining the evidence from documentary accounts with empirical data.

Surviving manuscripts, dating principally to the 11th to 12th centuries, lists churches and independent chapels within the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester. These were recently collated within a survey of Domesday documents by Flight (2010, chapter 8). The preferential recording of churches in the Domesday Book appears governed by certain criteria that resulted in some early medieval churches being omitted from the record (Morris 1983, 70). Supplemented by the Canterbury and Rochester cartularies, the combined record of Domesday vills and early churches illustrate the spread of settlement across the county by the 11th to 12th centuries in a way the Domesday Book alone does not. This is particularly useful for those areas, such as the Weald, where Domesday information is singularly lacking, and where settlement prior to the 11th to 12th centuries has previously appeared relatively scarce.

Early medieval manors

Through his survey of Kent, Hasted (1798-1801) documented large numbers of early (and later) medieval manors, including their origins and principal lines of inheritance. Whilst some manors have been lost, many are identifiable through surviving documentary records, archaeological evaluation and the evidence from 19th century maps, which preserve many estates and early place-names prior to their obliteration through modern enclosure and urban expansion.

The distribution of early medieval manors in Kent illustrates the predominantly dispersed settlement character of the county by the 9th to 11th centuries. Outlying, and possibly later medieval, manors potentially indicate areas of settlement expansion from the 12th to 13th centuries onwards, particularly where they demonstrate no association to an early medieval church. Whilst the pattern of early medieval settlement was unlikely to have been exclusively determined

by the relationship between church and manor, their juxtaposition may well be assumed to indicate an early settlement locus: Morris (1983, 72) observed that the foundation of many early provincial churches were probably the result of seigneurial initiative. In many instances such churches became the focus for developing settlement through their capacity for survival and frequently retained their original location (*ibid*, 72).

Early medieval manorial structure was largely determined through the division of Anglo-Saxon estates, which may, themselves, have preserved patterns of Roman land organisation. This division largely occurred through aristocratic inheritance and the acquisition of land by the Church, the dominant landholder by the 13th century (Sweetinburgh 2004, 48). Landholdings were typically fragmented and dispersed, a pattern heightened from the 13th century through *Gavelkind,* a form of partible inheritance peculiar to Kent (Brookes 2007, 51; Everitt 1986, 179; Flight 2010, 2; Sweetinburgh 2004, 48). The resulting explosion of manors across Kent illustrates the complexity of manorial holdings and land organisation, with many new manors being carved out of woodland on the Chalk Downs, Chart Hills and the Weald, as the need for land increased.

Regional landscape character: **pays**

Eight *pays* have been identified for Kent (**Fig. 10.8**), of which six are selected for the purposes of this research: The North Kent Foothills, The Chalk Downs, The Vale of Holmesdale, The Chart Hills, The Low Weald and The High Weald. The Isle of Thanet falls outside the study area, while the Marshlands are excluded, as they are wetland regions, which would have been subject to changes in sea level at the end of the Roman period. Kent's *pays* run broadly parallel from the northwest to southeast across the modern county and the District Borough of Medway, and have been largely defined by their topography and underlying soil character This is not, however, to ignore the social and cultural response of local communities to their physical landscape, demonstrated by the patterns of land division and settlement organisation that developed in Kent during the early and later medieval periods, and which made Kentish society regionally distinct (Everitt 1986, 333).

The North Kent Foothills

Kent's northern coast forms a gently undulating plain, fringed by marshland and broken in places by more pronounced hills and spurs of London Clay, notably along the Hoo Peninsula and on the Isle of Sheppey (Young 2004, 2). Everitt (1986, 46) termed this plain the 'Kent Foothills', as distinct from the wider upland ground of the county, and is further refined here to the 'North Kent

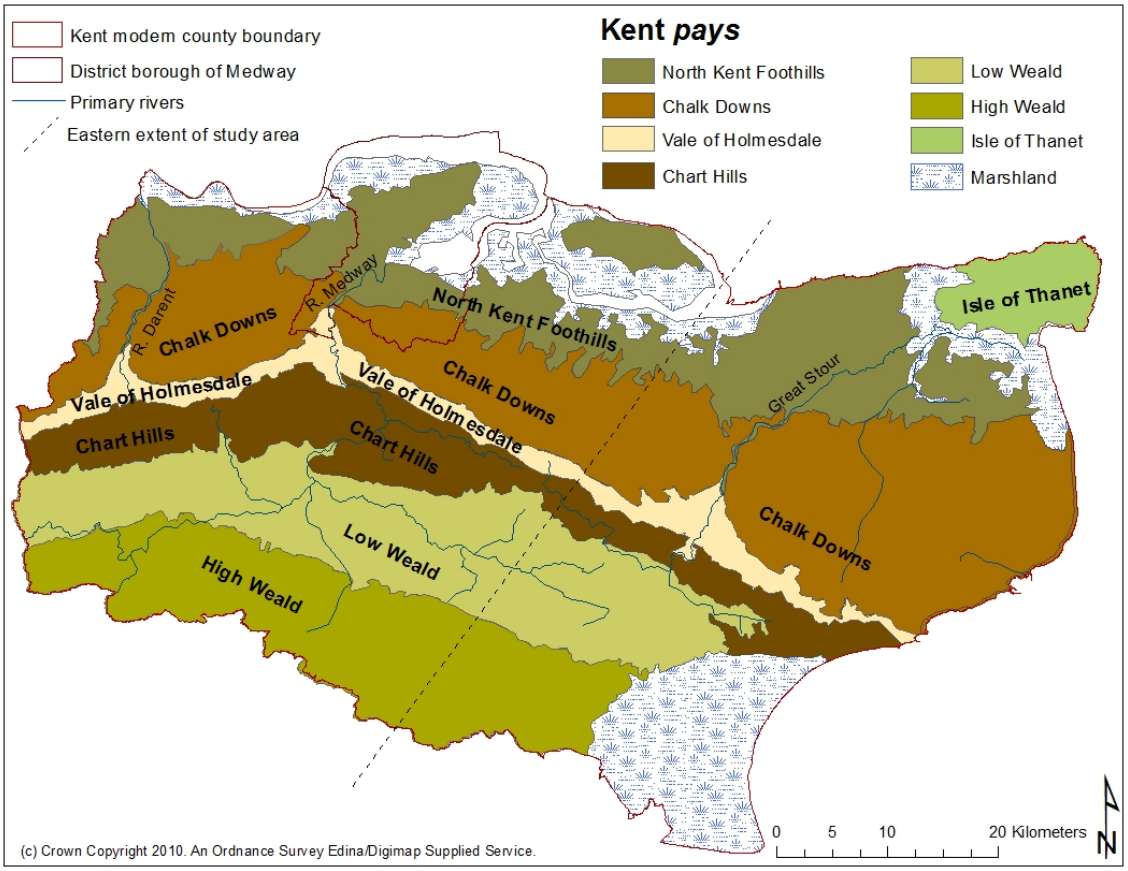


Figure 10.8. Map showing Kent's* pays*, based on the county's major soil regions using Everitt (1986) as a principal reference, with further guidance from Young (2004) and McRae and Burnham (1973). These regions have been defined and drawn by the author using the SSEW (1983) map and legend and OS contour data (OS 2011). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Foothills'. Extensive deposits of alluvium and wind-blown brickearths have increased the fertility of the clay soils to make the region one of the most agriculturally productive in Kent (Everitt 1986, 46; Young 2004, 2).

The North Kent Foothills was one of the primary areas of Roman occupation in Kent, with the major distribution of settlement along the north coastal plain and the major river valleys (see **Fig. 10.4**). The evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement and cemeteries suggests the fertile soils of the *pays* continued as a favoured location for settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries: Everitt (1986,

78) observed that the Darent valley was one of the earliest cradles of English settlement in Kent, with 'practically every churchyard neighboured by a Roman villa'. Likewise, while the number of recorded Domesday vills for the North Kent Foothills is relatively low for such a densely settled region during the Roman and early medieval periods, population density and plough team numbers are moderate to high, with some relatively large and populous vills indicated by the 11th century (Campbell 1962, 510-515) (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**).

Whilst Everitt (1986, 39) suggests that the 11th century settlement character of Kent saw little settlement nucleation proper, studies of 19th century maps by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000; 2002) suggest there might have been less obviously dispersed settlement along the north coast (see **Figs. 3.5 and 3.6**). Although the North Kent Foothills were characterised by large areas of open arable land, or 'roundtilt land' by the later medieval period, however, this appears to have been associated with a particular farming regime of continuous tilth, rather than the communally organised open fields of the Midland System (Everitt 1986, 46). The distribution of Domesday vills on the North Kent Foothills may, therefore, partially reflect patterns of settlement organisation and land tenure by the 9th to 11th centuries, which had been shaped by large local estates. Welch (2007, 189) suggests these landed estates were clearly in evidence by the 7th to 8th centuries, although their origins were potentially Roman, if not earlier (Brookes 2007, 93; Everitt 1986, 342; Riddler 2004, 26).

Documentary sources and 19th century mapping suggest that the later medieval period saw small farms and hamlets still thickly populating the North Kent Foothills, with substantial tracts of woodland still stretching across the *pays* from the Downland slopes (Everitt 1986, 47). Hasted (1798-1801) records numerous medieval manors for the *pays*, reflecting the complexities of land tenure that resulted through settlement expansion and manorial fragmentation from the 12th to 13th centuries onwards (see Brookes 2007, 50-51; Sweetinburgh 2004, 48).

The North Kent Foothills were probably always agriculturally wealthy due to the fertility of its soils. The relatively open character of the later medieval fieldscape, compared to the rest of the county, may have reflected the pressing need for cultivated land, but many of the *pays*' large estates were also deliberately organised to exploit the natural resources of the Chalk Downs, creating a linear pattern of estate lands stretching southwards against the grain of the land

(Brookes 2007, 93; Everitt 1986, 342; Riddler 2004, 26). The inter-relationship of Kentish *pays* over centuries of habitation accentuates not only their topographic differences, but also the characteristic socio-economic organisation of Kent that defined its regional administrative structure (Brookes 2007, 93).

The Chalk Downs

The Chalk Downs, known historically as the 'Hog's Back' or 'Backbone of Kent' (Everitt 1986, 47) is the largest of the Kent *pays*. Defined by the steep escarpment to the southwest, the *pays* is cut only by the major river valleys of the Darent and Medway in the west, and the Stour to the east. The higher plateaux, with their harsh soils and windswept valleys, seem remote in character, with much of the *pays* still characterised by extensive tracts of woodland and narrow coombes. Poor soil fertility generally prohibits widespread cultivation, although across the central plateau the coverage of Plateau Drift inhibits drainage sufficiently to allow moderate fruit production (Young 2004, 2).

The distribution of Roman settlement appears to have been largely confined to the margins of the Chalk Downs and the slopes of the principal river valleys, with scattered settlement across the better soils of the central plateau (**Fig. 10.4**). The *pays* potentially saw a marked contraction of settlement by the 5th century: Welch (2007, 197) observed that post-Roman settlement of the Chalk Downs interior began no earlier than the 6th century, whilst Brookes (2007, 79) suggests resettlement between the 5th to 8th centuries. Everitt (1986, 121) suggests colonisation of the *pays*' interior began around the 7th to 8th centuries with temporary shielings and transhumant shelters on areas of seasonal pasture, which took on greater permanence from around the 11th century onwards. Large areas of common land were utilised for seasonal grazing, not only by local communities, but also those further afield, reflecting the wider patterns of land ownership and resource management associated with large lowland estates, and the inter-dependence of the Kentish *pays.*

The distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval churches potentially indicate limited expansion of settlement across parts of the Chalk Downs by the 9th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**). Although the Domesday population density and plough-team numbers (Campbell 1962, 510-515) suggest the *pays*

was moderately populated and farmed, the size of vills appear relatively small, however, indicating a highly dispersed settlement character comprised of small farms and hamlets. These may have been more sparsely distributed in the east of the region, where wide tracts of woodland probably survived on the steeper slopes (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**). Everitt (1986, 47) described the Chalk Downs even now as a region 'of sudden winding valleys, lonely farms, and solitary churches, everywhere laced with an intricate network of narrow lanes, steep hills, and shady holloways, peaceful, silent, and in many parts remote'.

The Vale of Holmesdale

The Vale of Holmesdale is comprised of a narrow belt of Gault Clay running along the southern foot of the Chalk Downs. Its poorly drained clay soils benefit from a downwash of chalk deposits and an admixture of Upper and Lower Greensand, resulting in a fertile and well-irrigated tract of land. The Vale of Holmesdale forms a major access corridor through Kent and, alongside the North Kent Foothills, constitutes one of the primary areas of early settlement in the region (Everitt 1986, 49).

The evidence for Roman occupation in the Vale of Holmesdale suggests the *pays* was densely settled during the Roman period (**Fig. 10.4**), with a relatively high ratio of higher status settlement and Roman villas. Many of these were located close to the crossing points of the Darent and Medway rivers or along the springline at the foot of the chalk escarpment. Everitt (1986, 75) suggests that many such sites were 'seminal settlements' in Kent's settlement history. In the Vale of Holmesdale many of these continued in use into the early medieval period, forming a core of 'springhead estates' (*ibid*, 87). As with the North Kent Foothills, some of these estates extended northwards onto the Chalk Downs, although the major landholdings ran southwards across the Chart Hills. Whilst the estates centres may be fossilised within 11th century Domesday vills, estate boundaries are typically indistinct, with outlying pastures merging with common land on the Chart Hills and the Low Weald (*ibid*, 88).

Although the number of recorded Domesday vills is relatively low for the Vale of Holmesdale, the high density of population and plough-team numbers (Campbell 1962, 123) indicate a densely populated region by the 9th to 11th

centuries, with some relatively sizeable vills (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**). The 11th century character of the *pays* comprised a network of scattered farms and hamlets, with extensive tracts of arable land and comparatively little woodland (Everitt 1986, 50). The *pays* is distinguished by its significant settlement history, relative to its size, which distinctly contrasts with the neighbouring *pays* on either side. These dominate in size and aspect, but appear historically subservient to it in the organisation of land and resources, re-iterating the co-dependence of the Kentish *pays*, and demonstrating the complexities of social difference that characterised Kentish society at a sub-regional level.

The Chart Hills

The Chart Hills border the Vale of Holmesdale to the south. Characterised by a greensand ridge, these rise in stark contrast to the low-lying land either side. The *pays* comprises extensively wooded hill country, with steep, narrow valleys, particularly in the west, where the higher slopes fall away as a steep scarp to the Weald. Eastwards, the terrain slopes away more gradually to merge with the Weald in the east. Outcrops of hard sandy limestone across the *pays* are the source of the distinctive Kentish ragstone, quarried since before the Roman period. An alternative name for the Greensand is 'Chartland', 'Chart' meaning rocky or sterile ground (Everitt 1986, 50).

Everitt (1986, 51) suggests that, during the Roman period, there may have been little or no primary settlement of the Chart Hills beyond the peripheries of the Medway valley, although the current body of evidence for Roman settlement across the *pays* qualifies this to some extent. Whilst the Medway valley and its tributaries undoubtedly saw the majority of Roman settlement, with notable evidence for higher status occupation, including a number of possible villas, there is equally some evidence for occupation across the higher plateaux in the west of the *pays* (**Fig. 10.4**). Everitt (1986, 51) further suggests that there was a resettlement of the *pays* from around the 7th to 8th centuries, beginning as temporary settlements associated with resource exploitation by lowland estates.

The distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval parish churches (**Fig. 10.6**) suggests that even by the 9th to 11th centuries, however, settlement remained largely concentrated along the major river valleys, as it had been

during the Roman period (and see Everitt 1986, 51). The population density and plough-team numbers documented by Campbell (1962, 510-515) reflect a moderately populated region by the 9th to 11th centuries, with a concentration of settlement along the Medway Valley (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**). Everitt (1986, 52) observes that from the 11th century onwards, the Chart Hills saw recurring phases of settlement expansion, characterised by large numbers of woodland farms and manors. Many settlers were freeholders who carved their farms out of the woodland, building their manors out of the characteristic local ragstone and leaving their names as legacy to the later medieval settlement landscape (*ibid*, 50). Even today, however, the *pays* retains the largest extent of surviving common land, and remains extensively wooded *(ibid*, 51).

The Low Weald

The Low Weald, or 'Vale of Kent', is characterised by a band of lowland clays and discontinuous outcrops of limestone and sandstone about 8-10km wide (McRae and Burnham 1973, 40; Young 2004, 1). During the Roman period the Weald in its entirety fell within the 'Silva Anderida', or forest of Andred, known to the Anglo-Saxons as 'Andredsweald' (McRae and Burnham 1973, 127). Roman settlement of the Low Weald was highly dispersed, suggesting gradual ingress along the major valleys, with a greater concentration in the centre of the *pays* where river terrace deposits mitigated the heavy clays to create more fertile and tractable soils *(ibid*, 40). Many Roman settlements on the Low Weald appear to have been associated with iron working: as with the Chalk Downs and the Chart Hills, however, the earliest evidence for early medieval settlement suggests seasonal origins. Rights of 'pannage' possessed by dislocated manors in the Vale of Holmesdale and North Kent Foothills were passed on through inheritance well into the later medieval period. These remain immortalised in place-names, such as Marden and Frittenden, for example, which fossilise the temporary enclosures, or dens, established from around the 7th to 8th centuries, as well as the, still traceable, network of droveways into the *pays*' wooded heartlands (Everitt 1986, 54; Lawson 2004a, 29).

The combined distribution of Domesday vills and early medieval churches indicates that, by the 9th to 11th centuries, the majority of settlement on the Low Weald remained located along the river valleys, as it had been during the

Roman period, largely concentrated around the confluence of the Medway and Beult rivers. The population density at Domesday was very low, with the small number of plough-teams indicating equally low levels of arable cultivation (Campbell 1962, 510-515) (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7)**. Woodland clearance and ingress into the *pays*' interior are suggested (see Everitt 1986, 55; Lawson 2004a, 29, for example) to have continued beyond the 11th century, although settlement probably remained highly dispersed. Extensive tracts of woodland still survived and lanes were frequently impassable during the autumn and winter months, isolating the communities they served. Everitt (1986, 55) observes that most villages and hamlets were in existence by the 1500's, as were many of the manors. The establishment of new, independent, manors, however, continued across the region into the 15th to 16th centuries (*ibid*, 55).

The High Weald

The High Weald is characterised by low, rounded, sandstone hills, cut by steep sided valleys. The heavily wooded region shares many characteristics with the Low Weald and, although patterns of occupation diverge during the Roman and early medieval periods, the spread of settlement and manors across both *pays* by the later medieval period unites the social history of the Weald once more.

Evidence of Roman occupation across the High Weald is extremely limited to date, confined to a handful of sites associated with iron working (**Fig. 10.4**). Whether these continued beyond the Roman period is, as yet, unknown, but what evidence there is for early medieval settlement on the High Weald may reflect a re-colonisation of the *pays* rather than any potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries. Lawson (2004a, 29) suggests that the seasonal dens established across the Low Weald by the 7th to 8th centuries may have percolated across to the High Weald, with more permanent settlement on areas of sheltered ground by around the late 9th century. No Domesday vills are recorded for the High Weald and the population density and plough-team numbers recorded at Domesday are extremely low (Campbell 1962, 510-515) (**Figs. 10.6 and 10.7**). Fourteen early medieval churches are recorded for the High Weald by Flight (2010, chapter 8), however, suggesting a degree of permanent settlement across parts of the *pays* by the 11th century, although the documentary record indicates this remained relatively limited.

After the 11th century, the pattern of settlement development follows a similar trajectory to that of the Low Weald, although whether the remote areas of the higher forest saw the same extent of settlement ingress is perhaps less clear. The later medieval settlement character of the High Weald was certainly similarly dispersed: the distribution of medieval manors recorded by Hasted (1798-1801) suggests settlement expansion from the 11th century onwards, with the continuing establishment of new manors from the 13th century onwards.

Methods and Principles

The primary methods and principles underlying the wider body of research are presented in Chapter 4, but a brief summary of sources and methods particular to Kent is included here.

The research area

The west of Kent and the District Borough of Medway form the research area for Kent. The western extent of study was defined by the modern administrative boundaries of the county where it meets those of Greater London, as the latter is not included within the Kent HER (Kent County Council 2012). The eastern extent was determined initially by the Domesday vills recorded for western Kent in Morgan (1983), and, subsequently, by the easternmost boundaries of the current civil parishes in which those Domesday vills now lie. This division of Kent was purely utilitarian, as it was impractical to research the entire county. The physiography of Kent facilitated the division of Kent perpendicular to the county's *pays*, whilst the western half was selected, as fewer broad-scale research projects currently exist for this area.

Sources and methods

Roman settlement

The artefactual evidence for Roman settlement in Kent largely derives from pottery assemblages and coinage, with increased development-led evaluation and large-scale excavation increasingly identifying structural remains. Whilst

many Roman sites within the Kent HER have clear dating information, others simply list the major pottery wares recovered. Roman pottery dating to the 4th to early 5th centuries in Kent includes imported fine wares including Oxfordshire, Castor, or Nene Valley, and, possibly, Much Hadham wares, as well as some continental imports (Pollard 1982, 61-63). The majority of grey coarse wares in Kent may have been locally produced, although studies demonstrate significant imports of Alice Holt-Farnham, Oxfordshire, New Forest and Nene Valley wares across western Kent by the 4th century (*ibid*, 145-149). Local Upchurch Ware is less certain as a means of dating late-Roman settlement: its production may not have continued beyond the end of the 3rd century, but it is found on some late Roman sites in conjunction with 4th century material potentially indicating its use beyond the 3rd century in some instances (*ibid*, 176).

The identification of Roman settlement sites in western Kent follows the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 60.

Roman cemeteries

Roman cemeteries are considered as proxy evidence for occupation, where no associated settlement is currently identified. Many Roman cemeteries recorded for western Kent are early cremation burials. Based on Philpott (1991, chapter 31), these are assumed not to date beyond the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries unless otherwise stated: a small number of cremation burials in Kent are recorded with 4th century material, as at West Malling, for example, where a cremation urn (KHER TQ65NE4) was recorded in association with Castor, or Nene Valley, wares. Also based on Philpott (*ibid*), Inhumation cemeteries having no clear dating are presumed to be late Roman in date.

Roman cemeteries are recorded as proxies for Roman settlement following the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 61-62.

Early medieval settlement and cemeteries

Kent lacks the extensive fieldwalking surveys of Norfolk, but there is relatively good evidence for ‘Early Saxon’ occupation in Kent through cemetery remains and associated grave goods, with increasing structural evidence for occupation

recovered through large-scale archaeological evaluation, as for the Roman period. Assessing potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries, where evidence for both Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation is limited to cemetery remains, creates many issues, not least because the location of cemeteries to settlement for the two periods has been observed to differ (see Leech 1977; 1982b and Lucy 2000, for example). Richardson (2005, 75) has also recently questioned the extent to which the association of Anglo-Saxon and Roman cemeteries can potentially infer continuity of occupation into the 5th to 7th centuries. He argues for the preferential use of disused Roman burial grounds and/or earlier prehistoric round barrows during the 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon period, a trend more clearly pronounced during the 7th to 8th centuries than the 5th to 6th centuries. Nonetheless, given that Roman cemeteries are considered proxies for nearby settlement, where 'Early Saxon' material lies in close association, whether cemetery or settlement-related, this is still notable, even where the relationship can be less securely interpreted. Material evidence for 'Middle' and 'Late' Saxon settlement in Kent is relatively limited, to date, but is slowly increasing through archaeological evaluation and research, with radiocarbon dating crucial to dating occupation where other means are lacking.

Early medieval settlement and cemeteries are recorded according to the criteria and principles outlined in Chapter 4, 60-62.

Domesday vills and parish churches

Domesday vills for western Kent have been recorded using Morgan (1983). Owing to the largely dispersed settlement pattern of 11th century Kent, many vills are not associated with a parish church, although an independent church or chapel may be recorded. These are noted, but not otherwise assessed.

There are a considerable number of parish churches in Kent with possible Saxon origins (Carder 2004, 31), although in many cases the evidence for this is largely documentary. Kent benefits from the comprehensive record of early churches and chapels contained in the Canterbury and Rochester cartularies, recently collated by Flight (2010). The early/later medieval parish churches of western Kent have been recorded using both Flight (2010) and the Kent HER.

Early medieval manors

Kent's manors are well documented by Hasted's (1798-1801) historical survey: the changing names of manor houses, their origins, and subsequent lines of inheritance, are generally recorded in a way that can be securely identified in the majority of cases through the correlation of historic 19th century mapping and the county HER. There are certain caveats, however: where manors documented by Hasted could not be securely identified these have been excluded from analysis. Manors that appear to have been established after AD 1500 have also been excluded, although a degree of subjectivity regarding the interpretation of the documentary evidence is acknowledged. It has not always been possible, or practical, to securely identify manors originating before the 11th century, and, whilst many do have such early origins, a large number of Kent's manors reflect the explosion of new manors created from the 13th century onwards. Lastly, Hasted's (*ibid*) documentary record of manors in Kent may not be definitive, and in many cases, existing buildings bearing the name of the manor are medieval or post-medieval. It is therefore possible that some early manors have been overlooked or misrepresented, whilst the precise location of others is obscured due to supersedence by later buildings.

Manors, including Domesday manors, are recorded for western Kent following the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 63-64.

Chapter 11. Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships in Western Kent: the Northern *Pays*

Introduction

The settlement data for western Kent has been quantified as for Norfolk, except in regard to finer grained analysis of 'Early Saxon' metalwork finds, which is not as relevant here. The results for the three most northern *pays*, the North Kent Foothills, the Chalk Downs and the Vale of Holmesdale are presented below.

It is noted here that the results represent only the western half of the modern county, to include the District Borough of Medway, and should not be assumed to equally represent the eastern half. The results reflect the evidence available, to date, as retrieved through the methods stated. Any omissions or errors in interpreting the available evidence are acknowledged to be the authors' alone.

North Kent Foothills

Settlement data

Eighty-six Roman settlements and thirty-seven Roman cemeteries are recorded for the North Kent Foothills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results are illustrated below (**Table 11.1**: **Fig. 11.1**).

Fourteen 'Late Saxon' settlements are recorded for the North Kent Foothills: the definition for these is outlined in the thesis methodology (Chapter 4). In addition, 31 Domesday vills, 41 parish churches and 59 manors are recorded. Their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement has been assessed and the results tabulated below (**Table 11.2**).

Soils data

The soils of the North Kent Foothills are largely typical argillic brown earths along the coastal plain, with some stagnogleyic argillic brown earths and pelo-stagnogleys across the Hoo Peninsula and the Isles of Sheppey and Blean.

Table 11.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the North Kent Foothills, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 11.2 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the North Kent Foothills relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author based on the analysis of west Kent only.

Table 11.1: North Kent Foothills

Total number of Roman settlements 123	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	5	11	25	23	4%	9%	20%	19%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	4	7	3		3%	6%	2%	
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	4	3	2	5	3%	2%	2%	4%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	4	3	3	3	3%	2%	2%	2%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	1	5	2	1	1%	4%	2%	1%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m		3	1	2		2%	1%	2%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	4	8	1	1	3%	7%	1%	1%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	4			1%	3%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	4	8	2	4	3%	7%	2%	3%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	5	8	4	4	4%	7%	3%	3%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	9	13	2	7	7%	11%	2%	6%

Table 11.2: North Kent Foothills

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m				Percentage of the total number recorded within the study area			
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery
'Late Saxon' settlement	14	2	8	4		14%	57%	29%	
Domesday vill	31	3	7	3	3	10%	23%	10%	10%
Parish church	41	3	7	3	2	7%	17%	7%	5%
Manor	59	4	8	1	8	7%	14%	2%	7%

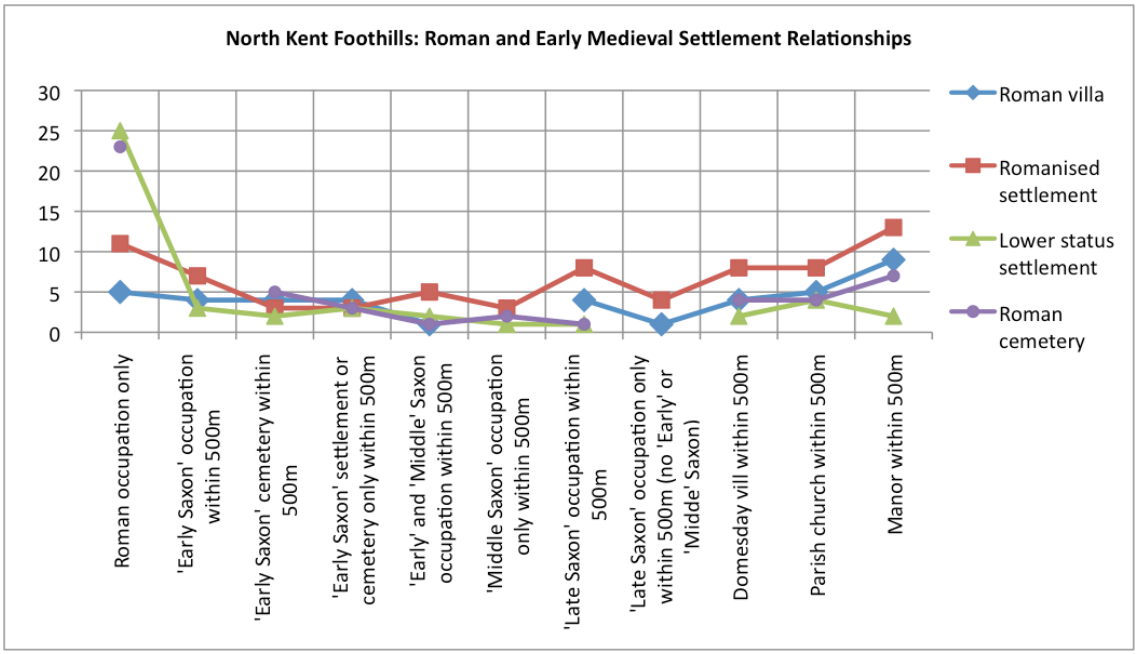


Figure 11.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the North Kent Foothills and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

Along the Darent and Medway valleys the alluvial soils are typically pelo-alluvial gleys (SSEW 1983) (see **Fig. 11.4**). Of the 123 Roman sites recorded for the North Kent Foothills (to include settlements and cemeteries), 89% were located on loam over clay soils (typical argillic brown earths), some with slowly permeable subsoils (stagnogleyic argillic brown earths), demonstrating that these relatively better-drained soils were favoured for settlement during the Roman period over the slowly permeable clay and alluvial clay soils. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 11.2**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the North Kent Foothills, 13 out of 14 'Late Saxon' settlements (93%), 26 out of 31 Domesday vills (84%), 37 out of 41 parish churches (90%) and 47 out of 59 manors (80%) were located on loam over clay soils, suggesting that these continued to be favoured for settlement into the 10th to 11th centuries. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 11.3**).

The fertile loams over clay soils of the North Kent Foothills supported dense settlement during the Roman period, but it is not possible to infer Roman and early medieval settlement relationships across the *pays* based on soils data alone. Settlement for both periods was predominantly located on the better-

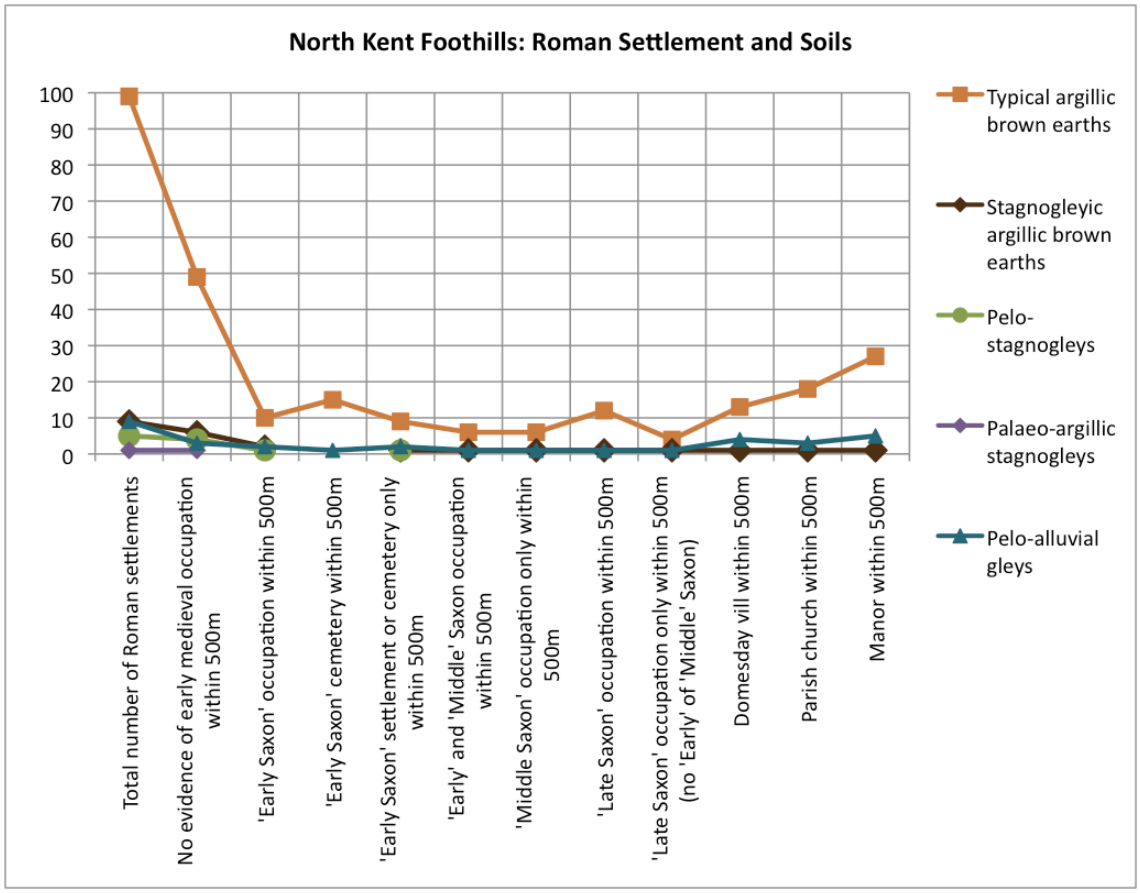


Figure 11.2 Line chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the North Kent Foothills that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

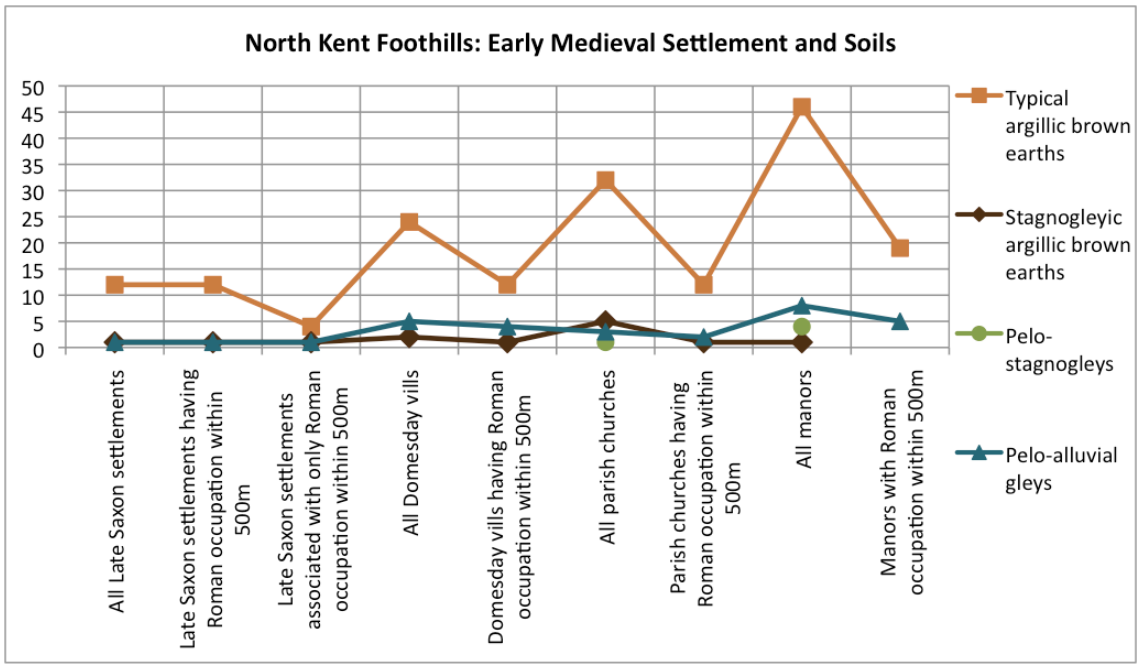


Figure 11.3. Line chart showing the number of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches and manors on the North Kent Foothills demonstrating a relationship to Roman settlement, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

drained argillic brown earths, with the distribution of Roman settlement suggesting a concentration of largely higher status occupation along the Darent and Medway valleys (**Fig. 11.4**). Although the material evidence for occupation during the 5th to 9th centuries remains lacking, current data suggests a potential contraction of Roman settlement on all soil types in North Kent by the 5th to 7th centuries (**Fig. 11.2**), although the extent of this remains to qualified precisely.

Where Roman settlement is associated with a Domesday vills, parish church or manor, this is also largely across the fertile loams over clay soils, although an increased relationship is indicated on the alluvial clays (**Fig. 11.2**). This is more clearly illustrated by the retrogressive evidence for 11th century settlement across the North Kent Foothills: the majority of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors associated with Roman occupation are located across the more fertile soils, but there is also a distinct relationship for these on the alluvial clays of the river valleys (**Fig. 11.3**). Unfortunately the current data is insufficient to indicate whether this reflects potential continuity along the river valleys between the 5th to 11th centuries or resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries.

Discussion

The material evidence for Roman settlement across the North Kent Foothills currently suggests the *pays* was densely settled during the Roman period, particularly in the northwest and along the Darent Valley (**Fig. 11.4**). The contemporaneity of Roman settlement is less certain, however: currently, 51% of lower status settlement recorded for the *pays* lack 4th century dating, at sites such as Blackdale Farm, Darenth (KHER TQ57SE181), Stone Castle Quarry, Stone (KHER TQ57SE54) and Malmayes Farm, Stoke (KHER TQ87NW19), for example, which all indicate a 1st to 3rd century date. Equally, 54% of Roman cemeteries appear to lack 4th century dating, in particular early cremation cemeteries, such as Chattenden Farm, Frindsbury (KHER TQ77SE8), Dartford (KHER TQ57NW24) or Murston (KHER TQ96SW17), for example, which all date to the 1st to 2nd centuries.

There is also some evidence for an abandonment of certain high status Roman settlements by the 3rd century, at Roman villas such as Tenters Field, Dartford (KHER TQ57SW11) and Horton Kirby (KHER TQ56NE30) in the Darent Valley,

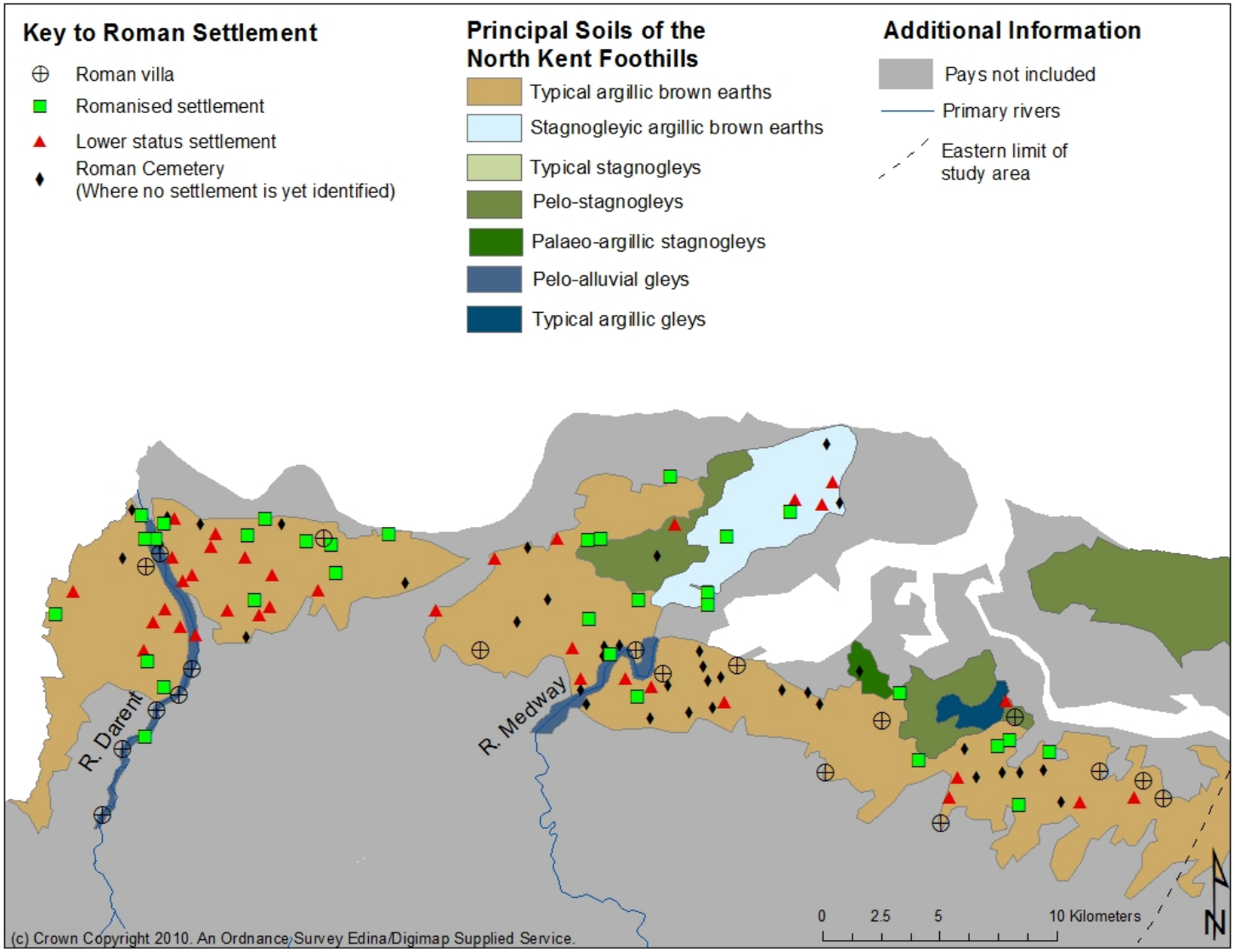


Figure 11.4. The distribution of Roman settlement on the North Kent Foothills in western Kent showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

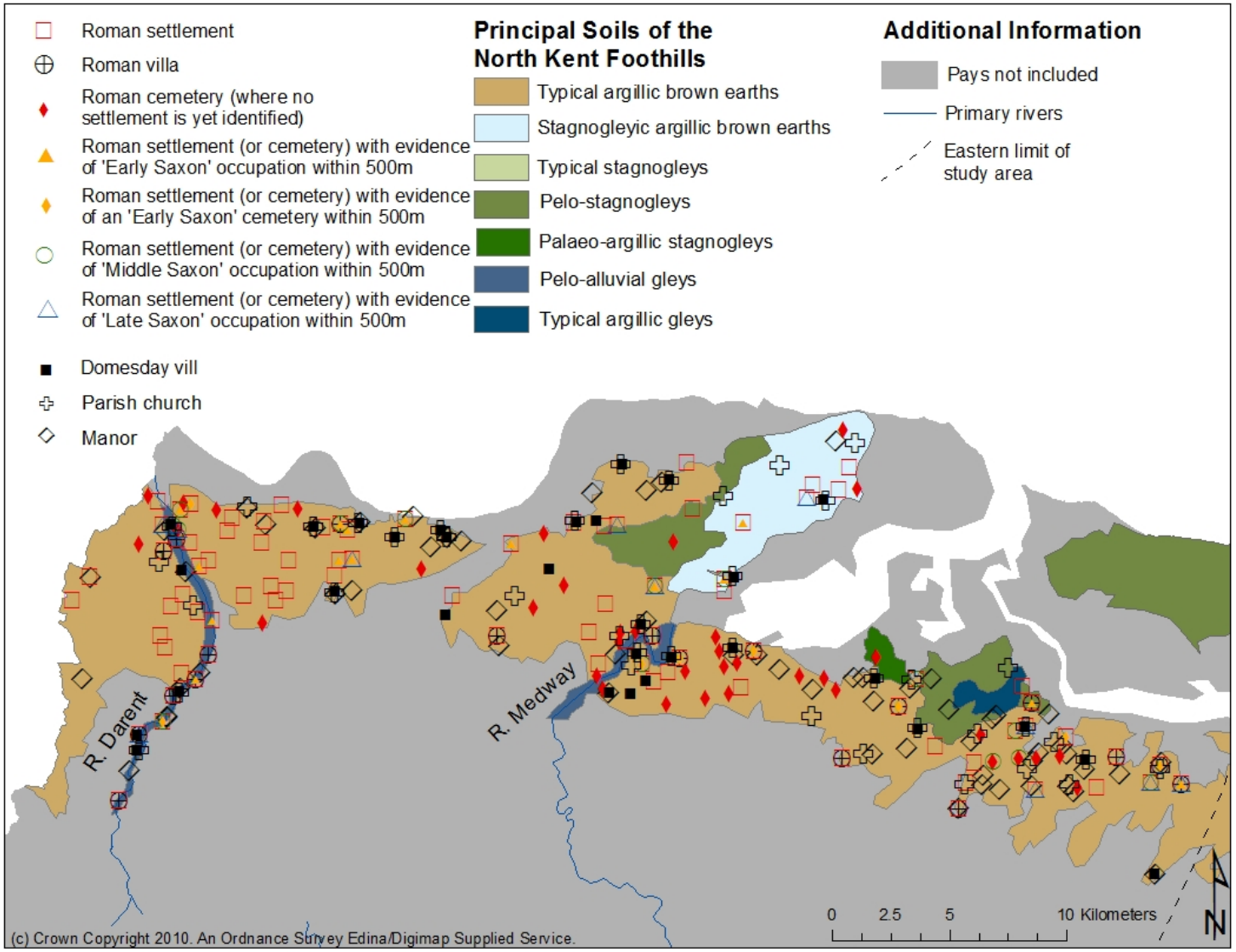


Figure 11.5. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the North Kent Foothills in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

for example, or Romanised settlements, such as Brompton Farm, Frindsbury (KHER TQ77SW48) or Ingress Abbey, Greenhithe (KHER TQ57SE175), for example. Cumulatively, the evidence may reflect a phase of settlement contraction across the *pays* by the 3rd century, prior to any potential abandonment by the 5th century. Whilst indicated for both higher and lower status settlement, it is particularly notable in the concentration of lower status settlement along the Darent valley (**Fig. 11.5**).

Nonetheless, whilst a contraction of Roman settlement before, or by, the end of the Roman period can be suggested, there is some limited evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity into the 5th century and beyond, principally amongst higher status settlements along the northern coast and the Darent and Medway valleys (**Fig. 11.5**). Of the 11% of Roman settlement on the North Kent Foothills demonstrating an association with 'Early Saxon' occupation, for example, 9% indicates high status occupation, whilst only 2% indicates lower status occupation. Of the 11% of Roman settlement demonstrating an association with 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, 7% indicates high status occupation and only 4% lower status occupation (**Table 11.1**). Illustrating this are examples such as the Roman villas at Deerton Street, Teynham (KHER TQ96SE95) and Northfleet (KHER TQ67SW38). At Deerton Street, pits and postholes suggesting a sunken-featured building (KHER TQ96SE1055) are recorded overlying the villa walls (**Fig. 11.6**), with associated pottery dating occupation to the 5th to 9th centuries (Wilkinson 1997, 9, 28).

At Northfleet, sunken-featured buildings dating between the 5th to 8th centuries (Andrews *et al*. 2011, 291) are recorded in association with the Roman villa, although these do not appear to respect the underlying villa buildings and a sealing layer between the Roman and 'Early Saxon' phases may indicate a gap in occupation of about 50 years (*ibid*, 292). A Saxon tidal mill dated by dendrochronology to 684 -720 cal AD (*ibid*, 307) is recorded *c*. 75m northwest of the villa complex. This appears to have gone out of use shortly after this time, speculated to be due to a rise in water levels or a silting up of the river channel (*ibid*, 301). The Ebbsfleet was probably tidal to at least Springhead by the 8th century, and a rise in water levels may have prompted an eventual shift in settlement altogether. The evidence at Northfleet suggests a potential continuity of use between at least the 5th to 8th centuries, although this may have involved

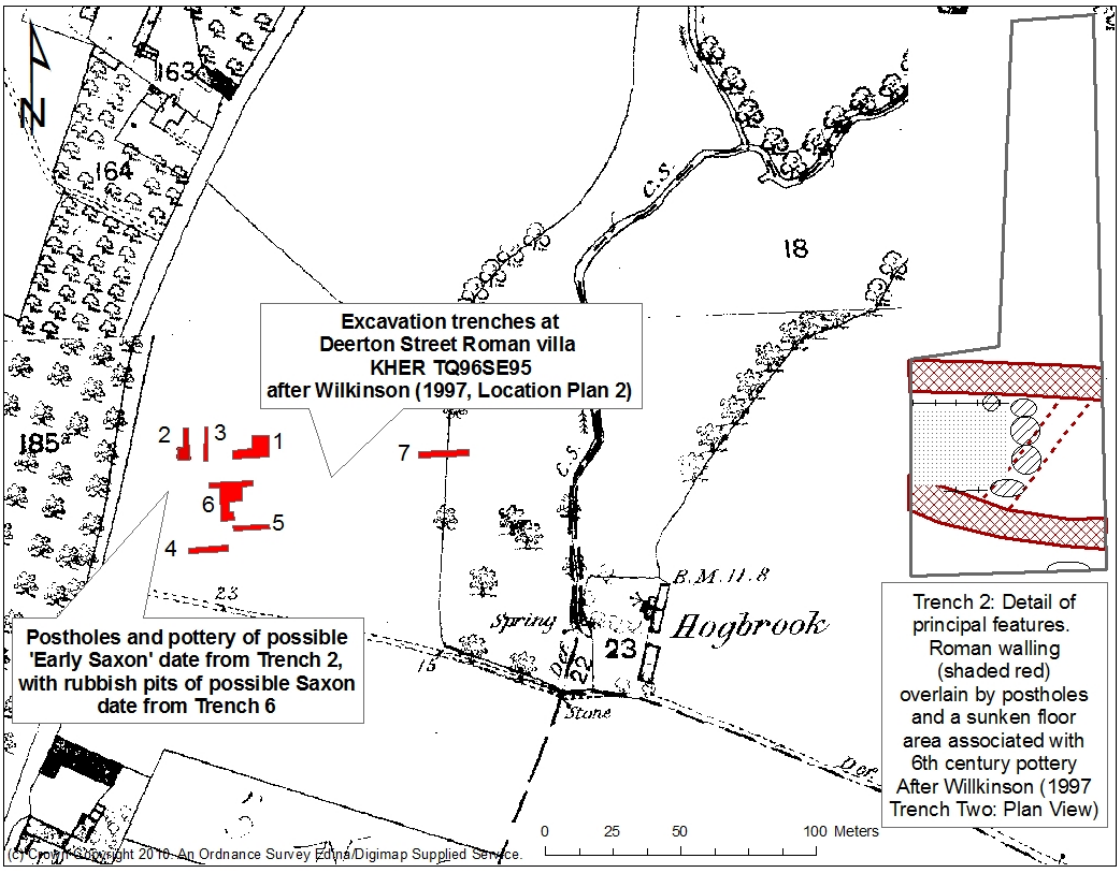


Figure 11.6. The excavation trenches at Deerton Street Roman villa, Teynham with the location of Roman and Saxon features, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Wilkinson (1997, Location Plan 2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

changes in use or function over this time, potentially with short hiatuses in occupation. The Roman villa is situated *c.* 750m southwest of the Domesday vill of Northfleet, across the Ebbsfleet River, suggesting a possible shift in settlement focus by the 11th century (**Fig. 11.7**).

Further evidence for Roman settlement associated with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation has come from Romanised sites, such as Gravesend Hospital (KHER TQ67SW374/424), Cockham Cottages, Hoo (KHER TQ77SE10) and Wainscott, Hoo (KHER TQ77SE159), for example. At Gravesend Hospital, Roman occupation was dated by associated pottery to the 1st to 5th centuries (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2005b, 16; 2005c, 3), with associated fish smoking pits archaeomagnetically dated to the 5th to 6th centuries (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2005b, 20). Pits and postholes (KHER TQ67SW424) recorded during excavation to the west were sealed by a colluvial layer containing pottery dating to around AD 575-650 and may also be 'Early Saxon' in date (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2005c, 3) (**Fig. 11.8**).

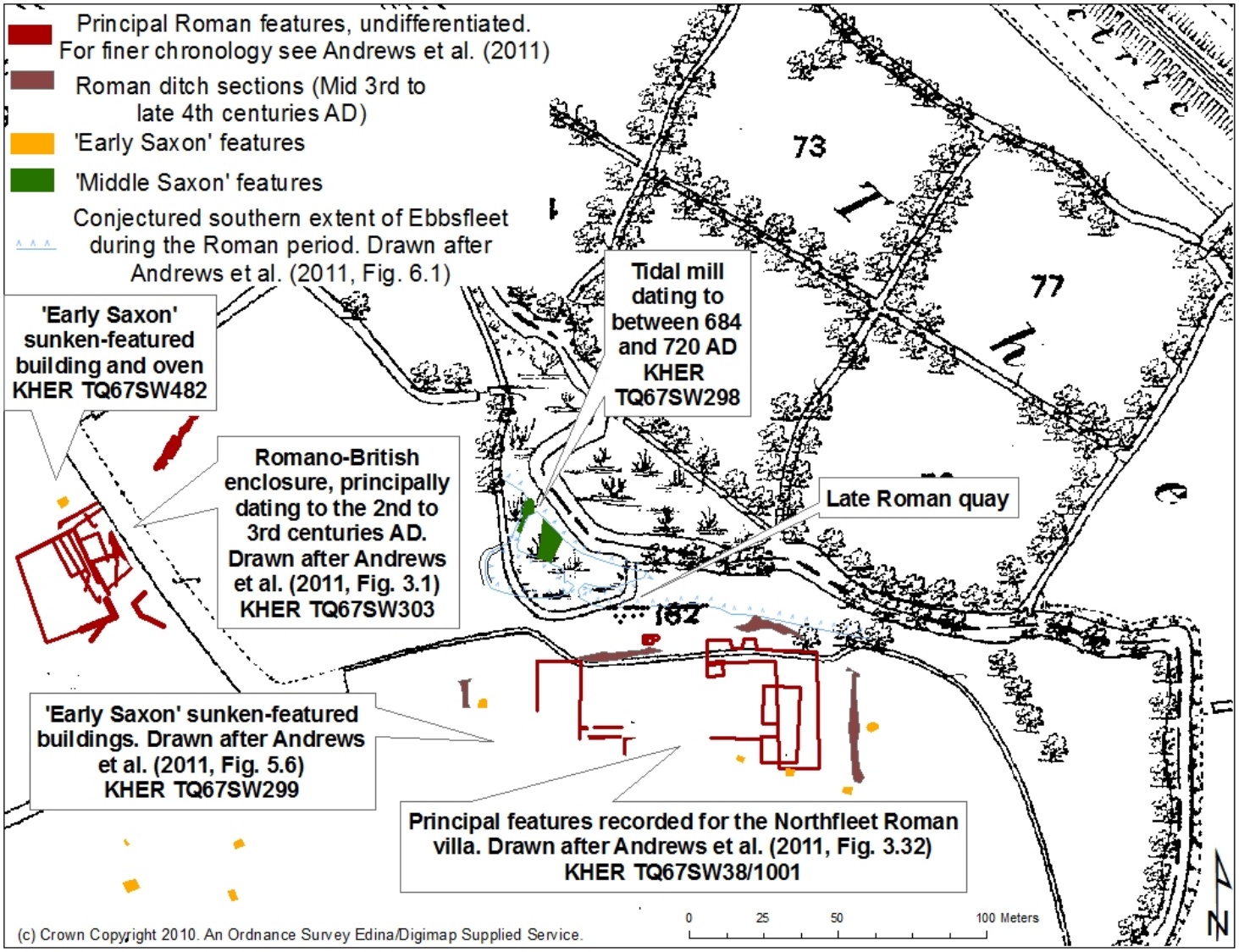


Figure 11.7. The location of Northfleet Roman villa in relation to 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement in the Ebbsfleet Valley, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author after Andrews et al. (2011, Figs. 3.1, 3.32, 5.6 and 6.1) Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

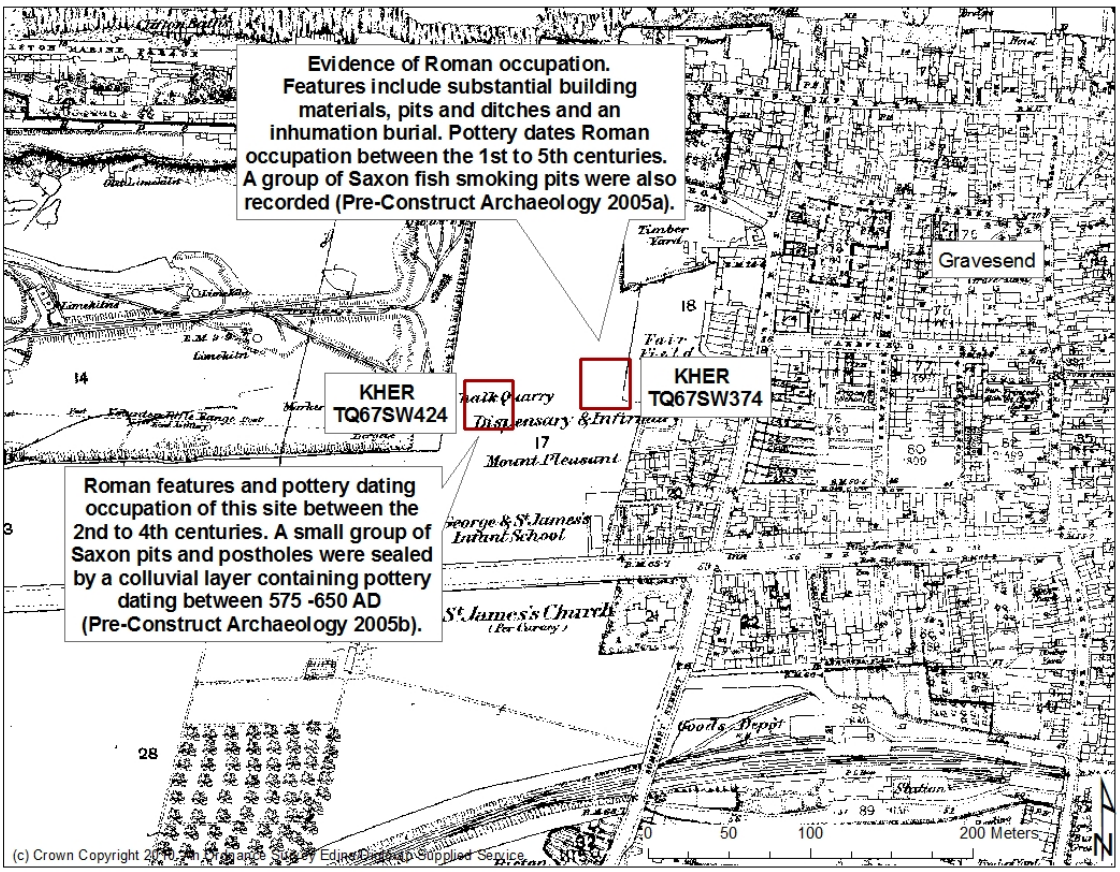


Figure 11.8. The location of Roman and Saxon occupation features recorded during two phases of excavation at Gravesend Hospital, Gravesend, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using settlement records extracted from the Kent HER and information from Pre-Construct Archaeology Excavation reports 2005a; 2005b. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

At Cockham Cottages, Hoo, recent excavation (Wessex Archaeology 2000; 2001) recorded a possible timber structure and enclosure *c.* 100m southeast of a Romanised settlement (KHER TQ77SE10) recorded during the 19th century. Pottery broadly dates occupation to the 5th to 8th centuries, but notably includes some early 6th to 7th century imported wares more commonly associated with cemetery sites, raising questions of status: a nunnery was established at Hoo by the late 7th century and a royal estate by the 8th century (Wessex Archaeology 2000, 7; 2001, 11). Whilst the precise function and status of 5th to 8th century occupation at Hoo remains speculative, it may indicate an early precursor to the Domesday settlement, clearly influenced by the location of high status Roman settlement here (**Fig. 11.9**).

At Wainscott, Hoo, a Romanised settlement (KHER TQ77SE159) was recorded during a road improvement scheme (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2000a), closely overlain by phases of 'Early/Middle' and 'Late' Saxon occupation dated

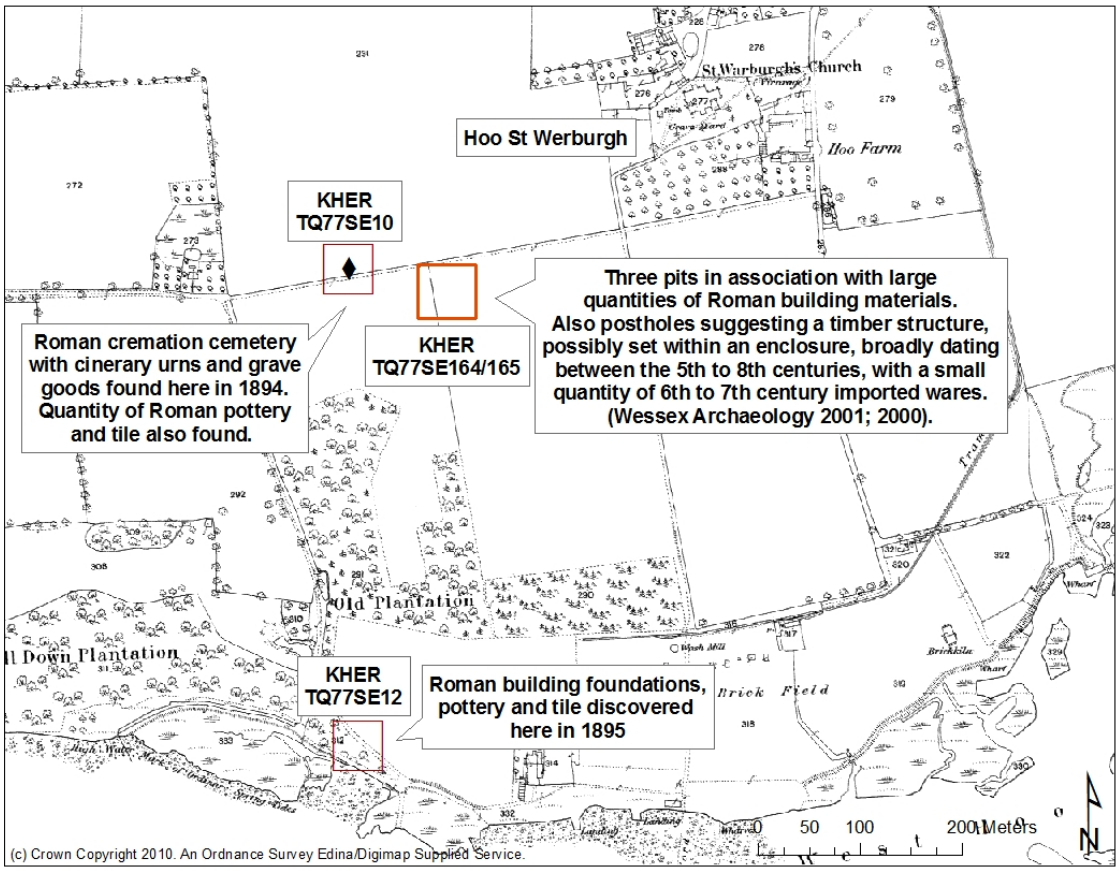


Figure 11.9. The location of Roman occupation and cemetery remains recorded during drain digging in the 19th century in relation to Roman and Saxon features and finds recorded during a pipeline watching brief at Hoo St Werburgh (Wessex Archaeology 2002; 2001), shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using settlement records extracted from the Kent HER and information from Wessex Archaeology reports 2002; 2001. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

broadly by pottery to the 5th to 9th centuries (*ibid*, xxiii). Additionally, through geo-referencing the principal excavation features (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2000b, Fig. 5) against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map, it appears the Roman features broadly align with the road and field boundaries to the south and a linear boundary, or trackway, to the east. Conversely, the Saxon features appear to align with the field boundaries to the northeast (**Fig. 11.10**). A further 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement (KHER TQ77SE173), featuring two sunken-featured buildings within an enclosure, is recorded *c*. 400m to the south, associated with a small quantity of Roman pottery and construction materials (CgMs Consulting 2009, 14). A prehistoric trackway recorded here also appears to respect the alignment of the Roman enclosure to the north (*ibid*, 14). These potential relationships between the man-made landscape of the Roman and early medieval periods have implications for landscape continuity between the

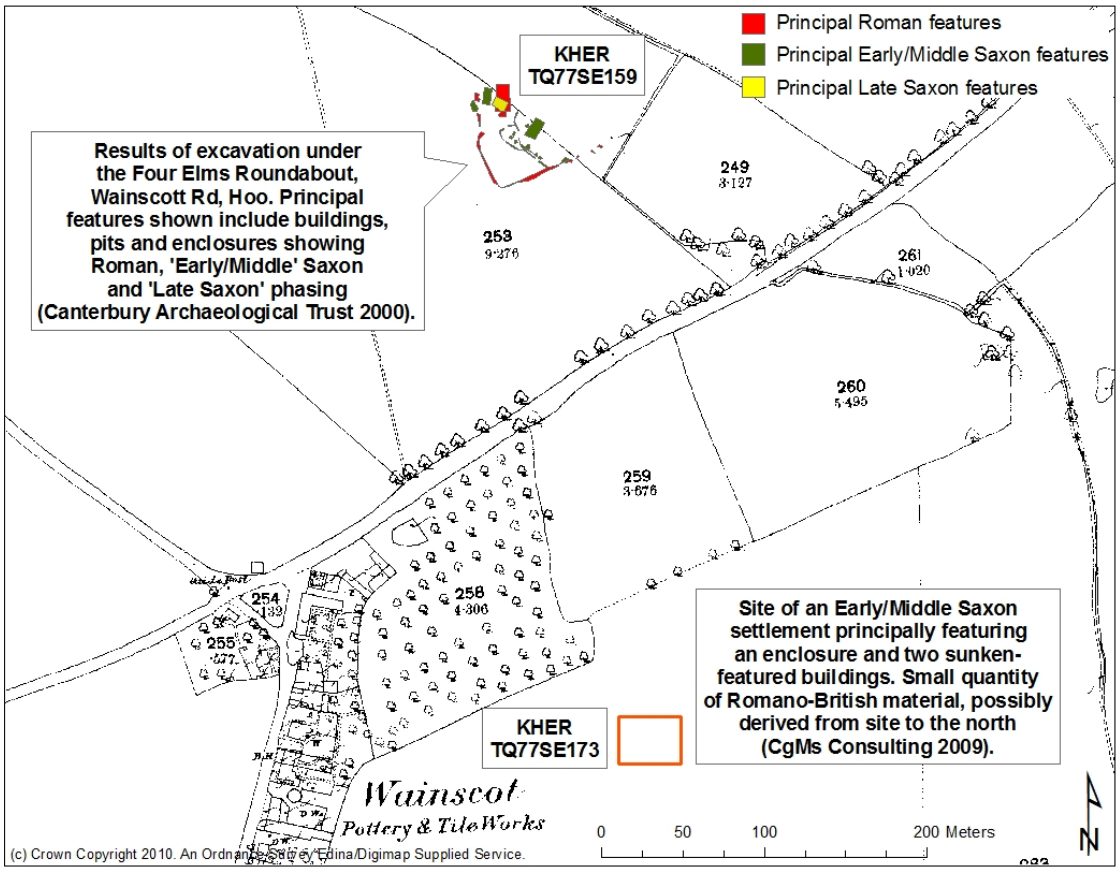


Figure 11.10. The location of Roman and Saxon occupation recorded during a road improvement scheme at Wainscott, Hoo (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2000), shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using settlement records extracted from the Kent HER and information from Canterbury Archaeology Trust 2000a; 2000b. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

5th to 11th centuries and into the late 19th century, with aspects of both continuity and discontinuity variously indicated (**Fig. 11.10**).

Even given the examples above, it is hard to be clear how far the evidence directly reflects potential settlement continuity between these periods. Gaps in chronology may yet indicate phases of brief abandonment, whilst shifts in settlement location and alignment, or architectural diversity, may reflect changes of use or inhabitants, which itself raises further issues of ethnicity and migration. Cemetery remains, in particular, suggest a range of cultural influences and practices, which, as Richardson (2005, 75) infers, must beg the question as to how far their proximity to Roman settlements must beg the question as to how far they might reflect a disaggregation of the Roman settlement landscape before the 5th century, rather than potential continuity.

Roman villa sites at Teynham (TQ96SE71), Boxted (TQ86NE18) and Chatham

(TQ76NE7), for example, have evidence for Anglo-Saxon burials within 500m, but the villas themselves appear to have been abandoned by the 2nd to 3rd centuries. Occupation at Grange Farm Roman villa (TQ76NE425), Gillingham (**Fig. 11.11**), suggests continuity into at least the 5th century, but may have seen a decline in use from the late 4th century (CgMs Consulting 2006, 2-3).
A soil layer sealing the site contained burnt material and charcoal. Quantities of

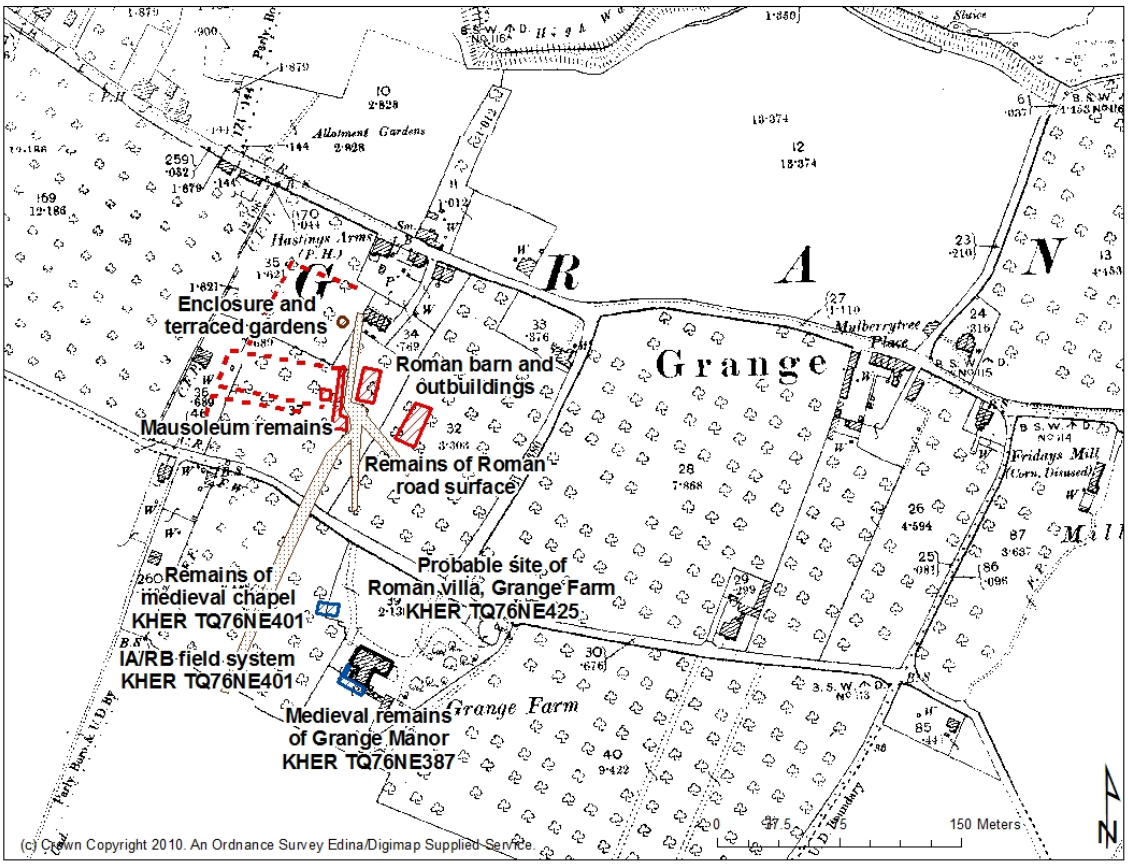


Figure 11.11. The location of the Roman villa buildings at Grange Farm, Gillingham in relation to the early medieval manor, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using settlement records extracted from the Kent HER and information from KARU (1992). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

metal slag suggest that by the late 4th/ early 5th century coins and jewellery were being melted down on an industrial scale (*ibid*, 3). An Anglo-Saxon inhumation (KHER TQ76NE306) was recovered in 1934 from a field *c*. 250m to the west of Grange Farm, whilst finds from the villa site include an Anglo-Saxon brooch, weapons and harness fittings. At Murston, a Romanised building, or villa (KHER TQ96SW9), indicates high status occupation between the 2nd to 4th centuries: a mixed Roman cemetery (KHER TQ96SW50), from which a lead coffin (KHER TQ96SW8) was recovered in antiquity, lies *c*. 200m to the southwest. An Anglo-Saxon burial and grave goods (KHER TQ96SW10) were

recovered from Meres Court Farm, *c*. 350m to the southwest, although the precise location of this is unknown.

These examples statistically suggest a potential relationship between Roman settlement and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, although the evidence for decline or abandonment of high status Roman settlement by the late Roman period may rather indicate a re-occupation, or a change in use or status, of these sites by the 5th to 7th centuries. The proximous relationship of Anglo-Saxon burials to some Roman settlements may suggest these survived in sufficient form to influence the peripheral location of burials, but the precise nature of any association remains unclear. The broader distribution of 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemeteries along the coastline and river valleys of the North Kent Foothills may well reflect an ingress of Germanic migrants, which may, or may not, have directly replaced, or been assimilated by, the native population. Clearly, the relationship between Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation of the North Kent Foothills is complex. The evidence demonstrates aspects of both potential continuity and discontinuity between the pattern of Roman settlement and that of, broadly, the 5th to 7th centuries. It may be, however, that the statistical association suggested for Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation partly reflects the density of settlement on the fertile soils of the North Kent Foothills, and the extent of recurring settlement over the course of the Roman period and into the 5th to 7th centuries.

Material evidence for occupation between the 8th to 11th centuries is scarce in Kent, but retrogressive analysis of the 11th century settlement pattern suggests a similar scenario. The pattern of Roman settlement at Teynham and Northfleet, for example, demonstrates some association with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, but a scatter of Roman settlements also fall in between, reflecting both the dispersed nature of Roman settlement and the possibility of settlement abandonment or shift by the 11th century (**Figs. 11.12 and 11.13**).

This is not dissimilar to eastern Somerset, where Leech (1977, 177; 1982b, 239) observed that the pattern of Roman settlement appeared to fall in between that of the later medieval period, with increasing evidence for Roman origins under many medieval settlements (see Chapter 13, 324). Leech (*ibid*) surmised that the true extent of Roman settlement in eastern Somerset was, therefore, the sum of both the visible Roman and the later medieval settlement patterns, a

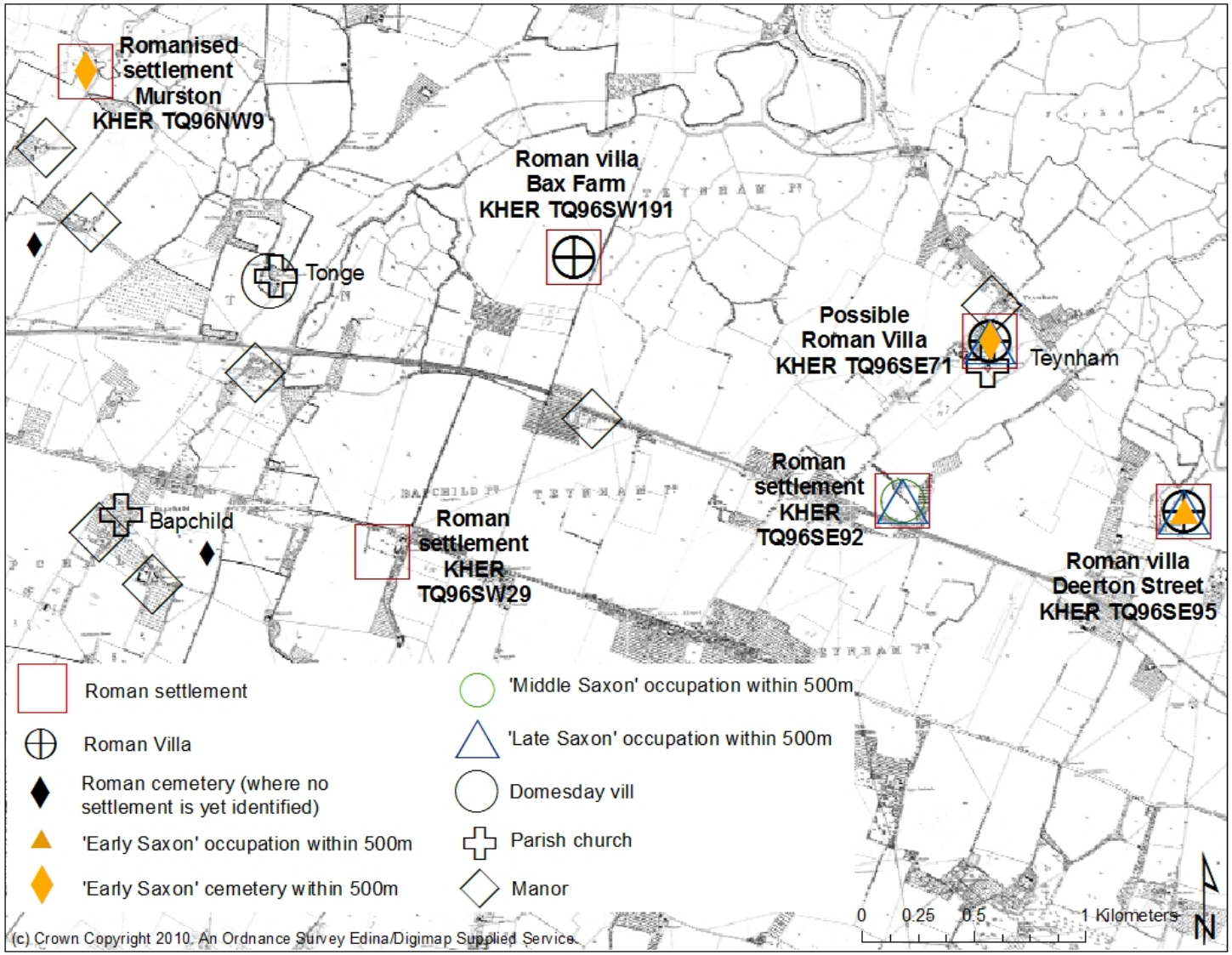


Figure 11.12. The relationship of Roman and early medieval settlement at Teynham, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

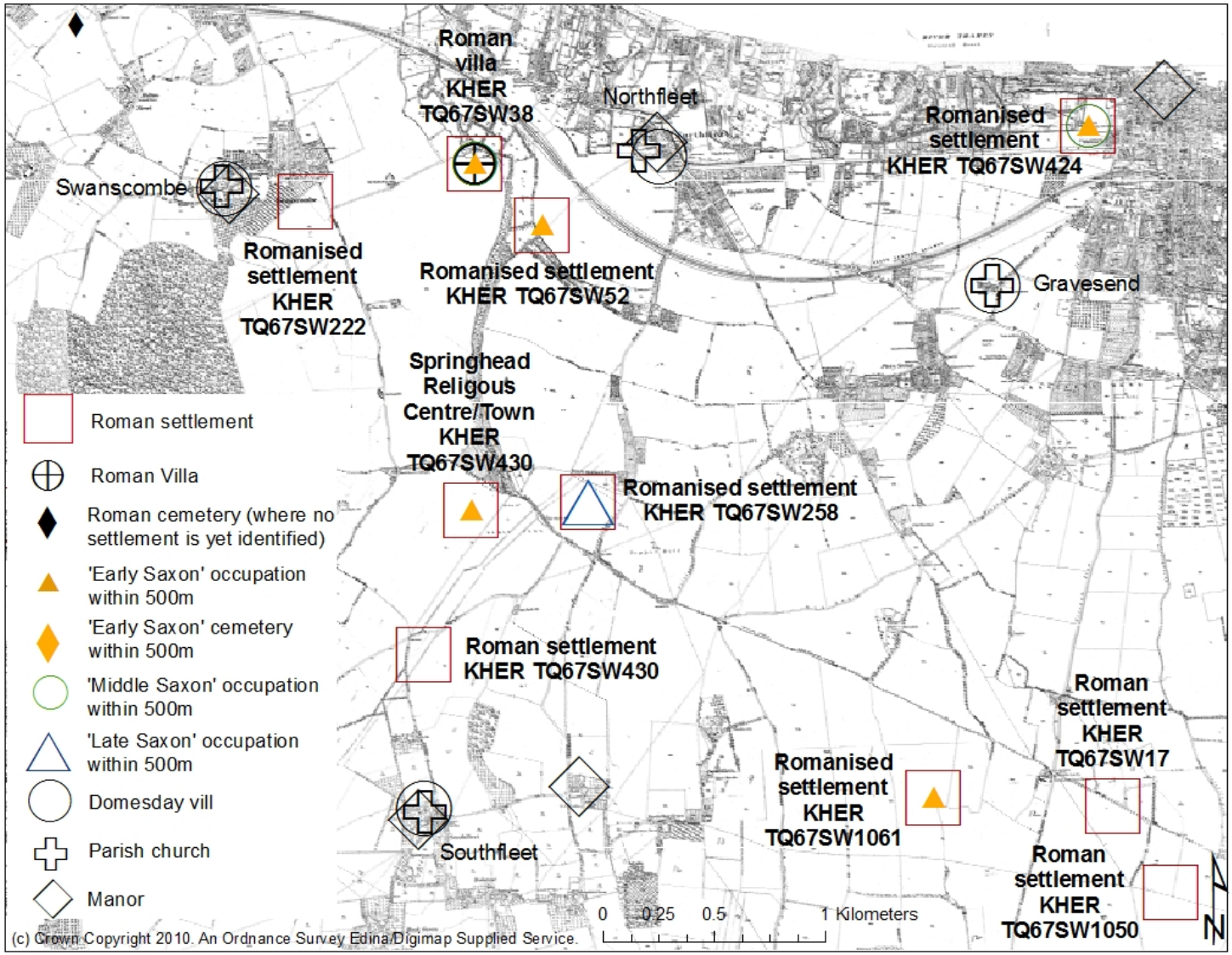


Figure 11.13. The relationship of Roman and early medieval settlement at Northfleet and Gravesend, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

picture yet to be conclusively shown for western Kent. The association between Roman settlement, Domesday vills and parish churches on the North Kent Foothills is relatively low compared to those *pays* in Norfolk and Somerset that were equally densely settled during the Roman period. In Norfolk, for example, 25% of Roman settlement on the Chalk Scarp, and 28% on Breckland, demonstrates an association with a Domesday vill and parish church. In eastern Somerset, 26% of Roman settlement on the Lias Plain demonstrates an association with a parish church, 18% with a Domesday vill, while 30% of Roman settlement on the Mid Somerset Lowlands demonstrates an association with a parish church and 33% with a Domesday vill. On the North Kent Foothills these figures are 16% and 14% respectively (see **Table 11.1**).

Where there is evidence for an association of Roman settlement with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors this largely appears to reflect higher status Roman occupation. At Lullingstone, for example, the remains of the Roman villa (KHER TQ56NW7) are incorporated within an early medieval chapel that may be associated with one of the three Domesday holdings documented for Lullingstone (see KHER), while Roman villas are recorded within 500m of the Domesday vills of Horton Kirby, Farningham and Eynsford in the Darent Valley and at Amherst Redoubt, Chatham, on the River Medway. A high status Roman building (KHER TQ96NW8) underlies the Domesday church at Milton Regis, on the north coast, with high status Roman settlement also recorded within 500m of the Domesday vills of Hoo and Swanscombe.

The true extent of settlement and population across the North Kent Foothills by the 11th century should not be assumed solely on the basis of Domesday vills, however: the number recorded for the *pays* is relatively low for such a large, and previously densely settled, region but many of the Domesday manors in North Kent, such as Hoo (Morgan 1983, *5,93*) and Milton Regis (*ibid*, *1,3*), for example, comprised a number of collective land holdings with associated mills and churches, and all their affiliated households (and see Lawson 2004b, 36). The settlement character of the 11th century appears to have remained generally dispersed, with numerous outlying farms, hamlets and manors. The widely spaced distribution of vills, therefore, was almost certainly interspersed by additional settlements and manorial holdings, as indicated by the number of early medieval churches and manors recorded for the *pays*, beyond those in the

Domesday Book (see Flight (2010) and Hasted (1798-1801). This potentially reflects the complexities of regional settlement hierarchy and land tenure between the 5th to 11th centuries.

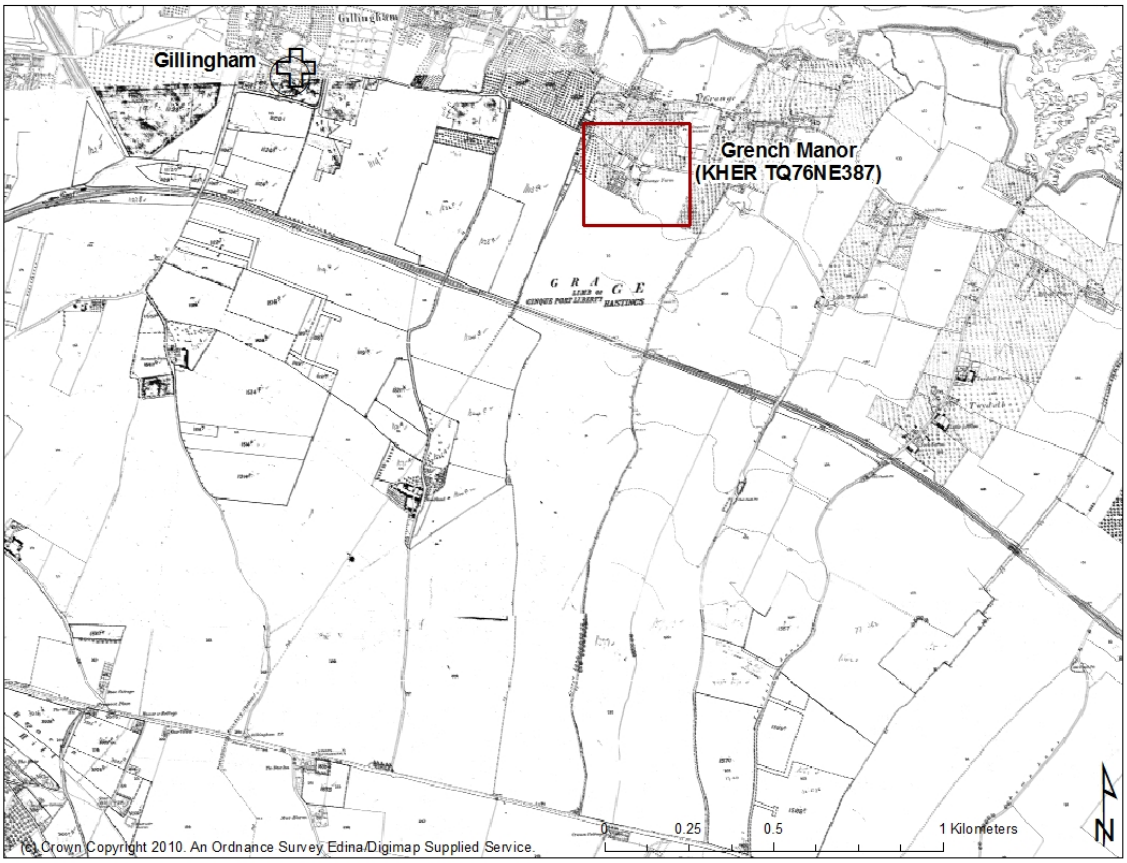


Figure 11.14. The site of Grench Manor, now Grange Farm, Gillingham, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The linear field boundaries may fossilise earlier estate holdings that ran south across the Chalk Downs. Compiled and drawn by the author. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

At Grange Farm, Gillingham, for example, the Roman villa (KHER TQ76NE425) is directly associated with the 12th /13th century remains of Grench Manor, itself thought to overlie an earlier, pre 11th century manorial complex (KARU 1992, 1) (**Fig. 11.11**). Furthermore, the linear field boundaries at Grange Farm, as shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map, suggest the land holdings of the manor may fossilise one of the linear estates that ran across the *pays* up onto the Chalk Downs (**Fig. 11.14**). These may have been successors to the Anglo-Saxon estates that became established across the North Kent Foothills from around the 7th century, which, themselves, potentially reflect Roman, or earlier, origins (Brookes 2007, 93; Everitt 1986, 342; Riddler 2004, 26). Whilst there is negligible evidence for occupation between the 5th and 11th centuries at Grange Farm, the proximity of the Roman villa to the early medieval manorial complex

would seem to imply that, at the minimum, the ideology of the wider estate, and its administrative locus, survived the span of centuries, if not the nature and form of occupation.

As with Somerset (Chapters 14-17), where Roman settlement in western Kent appears associated with a Domesday vill, parish church or manor, but evidence for interim occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries is otherwise lacking, it is difficult to confidently infer either potential settlement continuity during this period or resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries. Given the evidence from sites such as Grange Farm, however, it could be suggested that the high status Roman settlement landscape of the North Kent Foothills, including many of its Roman villas, did survive, at least in part, to influence the pattern of 11th century settlement in some way. This contrasts with Norfolk to some extent where, whilst the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches does appear to have been distinctly influenced by the pattern of high status Romanised settlement, this is not so apparent for its Roman villas (see Chapters 5-9).

Summary

To summarise, there appears to have been a significant contraction of the dense Roman settlement pattern on the North Kent Foothills by the end of the Roman period, although a prior phase of settlement contraction by the 3rd century may also be indicated. Some degree of potential continuity between settlement of the later Roman period and the 5th to 7th centuries is, nonetheless, suggested in places, most notably amongst higher status settlement. There are potential issues in how far the evidence, to date, can be considered to infer potential settlement continuity at some sites, however, due to apparent changes in use and/or status and gaps in chronology. Whilst the evidence may potentially imply the continuity of native settlement in some instances, the distribution of 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemeteries may also reflect patterns of ingress in favoured settlement areas by migrant communities, and the partial replacement of, or assimilation by, the native population.

There is a lack of substantial evidence for settlement on the North Kent Foothills between the 8th to 11th centuries and it is difficult to be certain whether the association between Roman and 11th century settlement reflects a continuity of

settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries, or simply resettlement through recurring occupation of the fertile soils of the *pays*. There is some suggestion, from sites, such as Northfleet villa, for example, that there may have been a shift away from some areas of wetter alluvial soils between the 8th to 9th centuries, a trend that may also be indicated for the low lying areas of central Somerset (see Chapter 15, 375). Retrogressive analysis of the relationship between Domesday vills and Roman settlement suggests there may have been an increased association across the alluvial clays by the 9th to 11th centuries, that may indicate some resettlement along the river valleys by this time. Nevertheless, the pattern of late Roman settlement on the North Kent Foothills appears to have distinctly influenced that of the 11th century, particularly the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches, and wider patterns of estate holdings and land tenure. This is particularly notable in higher status Roman settlement, which, in some contrast to Norfolk, included many Roman villas.

The Chalk Downs

Settlement data

Thirty Roman settlements and 18 Roman cemeteries are recorded for the Chalk Downs. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 11.3**: **Fig. 11.15**).

Five 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Chalk Downs, in addition to 26 Domesday vills, 35 parish churches and 40 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 11.4**).

Soils data

The soils of the Chalk Downs are typically variable palaeo-argillic brown earths across the higher plateaux, with a narrow band of grey rendzinas along the slopes of the southern escarpment. Along the lower northern flanks are dry valleys of brown rendzinas with patches of brown calcareous earths bordering the North Kent Foothills (SSEW 1983) (**Fig. 11.18**). Of the 48 Roman sites recorded for the Chalk Downs (to include settlements and cemeteries), 36

Table 11.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Chalk Downs, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 11.4 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the Chalk Downs relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author based on the analysis of west Kent only.

Table 11.3: The Chalk Downs

Total number of Roman settlements 48	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	3	4	10	10	6%	8%	21%	21%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	1				2%			
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m			1	3			2%	6%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	1		1	2	2%		2%	4%
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m				1				2%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m				1				2%
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		1	1			2%	2%	
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		1	1			2%	2%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill		3	5	4	3%	6%	10%	8%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church		3	3	4	5%	6%	6%	8%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	1	3	5	5	2%	6%	10%	10%

Table 11.4: The Chalk Downs

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m				Percentage of the total number recorded within the study area			
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery
'Late Saxon' settlement	5	0	1	1	0	0%	20%	20%	0%
Domesday vill	25	1	4	3	1	4%	16%	12%	4%
Parish church	35	1	4	3	0	3%	11%	9%	0%
Manor	40	1	0	4	0	3%	0%	10%	0%

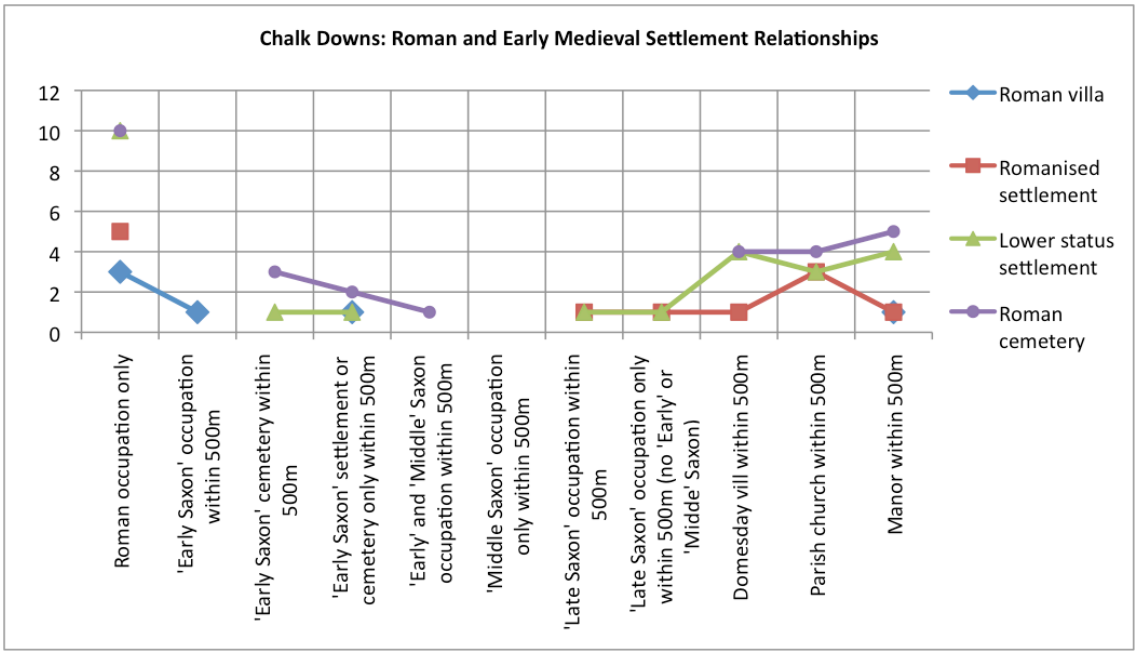


Figure 11.15. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

(75%) were located on lighter calcareous soils (rendzinas and calcareous brown earths), with 12 (25%) on heavier loams over clay (palaeo-argillic brown earths), demonstrating that Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs principally favoured the lighter soils along the dry valleys of the northern dipslope and the *pays* margins. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 11.16**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the Chalk Downs, 3 out of 5 'Late Saxon' settlements (60%), 16 out of 26 Domesday vills (62%), 16 out of 35 parish churches (46%) and 22 out of 40 manors (55%) were located on the lighter calcareous soils of the *pays*. This demonstrates that, while the lighter soils continued to be favoured for settlement into the 9th to 11th centuries, an expansion of settlement across the heavier loams over clay of the *pays* interior by the 9th to 11th centuries is also suggested. Although the chronology of this is not clear from the soils data alone, the lower ratios for parish churches and manors may indicate that this continued into the 12th to 13th centuries and beyond as settlement expansion and manorial fragmentation increased. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils, is also shown below (**Fig. 11.17**).

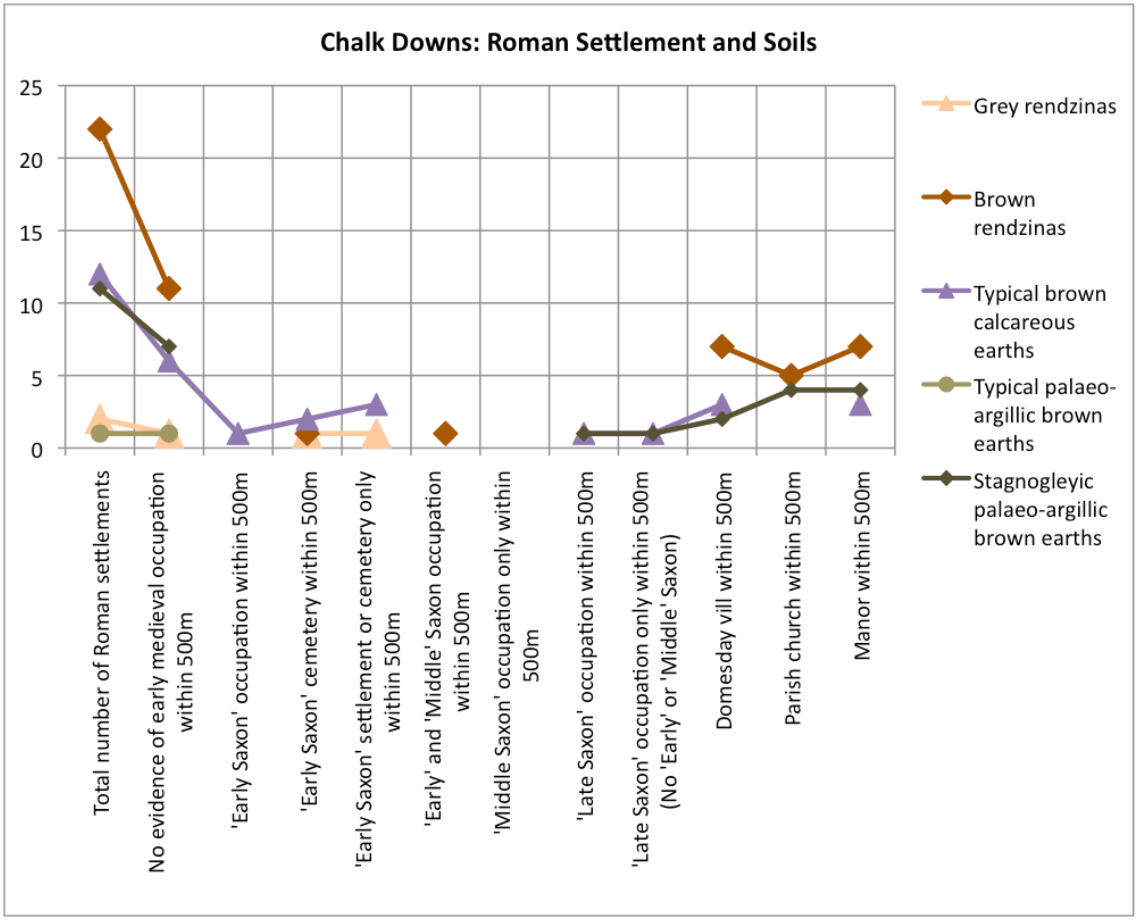


Figure 11.16 Line chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Chalk Downs that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

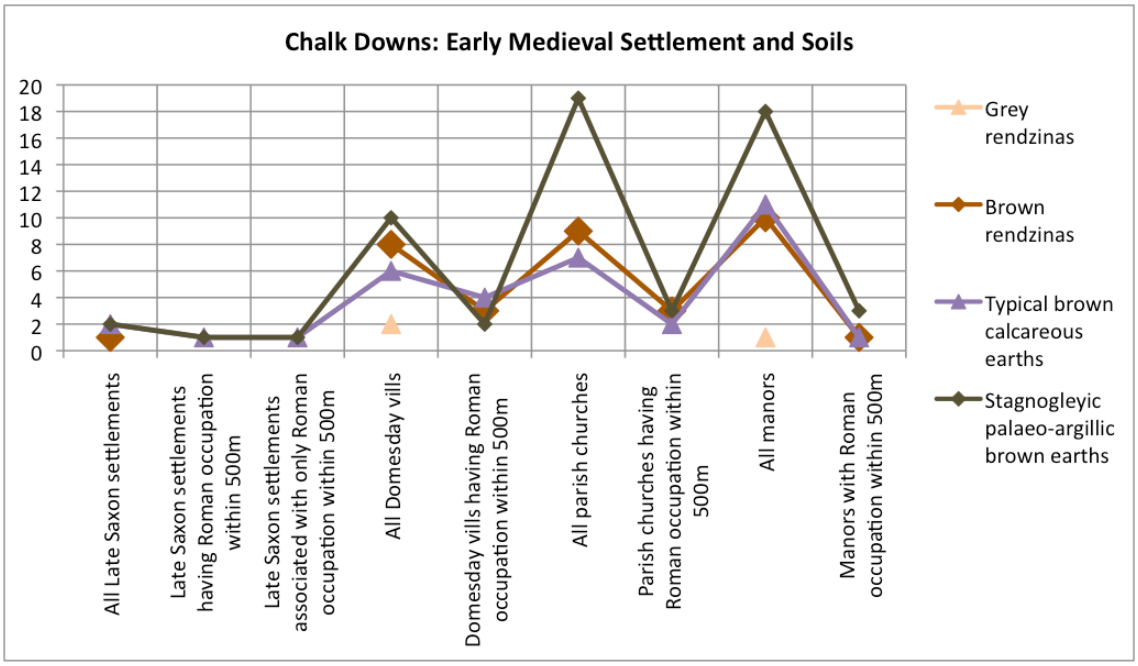


Figure 11.17. Line chart showing the number of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches and manors on the Chalk Downs demonstrating a relationship to Roman settlement, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

The available evidence, to date, suggests the majority of Roman settlement was located on the calcareous soils of the dry valleys and the lower northern slopes, with more limited settlement across the palaeo-argillic brown earths of the *pays* interior. The distribution of Roman settlement and cemeteries appears more concentrated in the west of the *pays*, between the Darent and Medway valleys. To the east of the Medway Valley there is very limited evidence for Roman occupation and this is largely distributed along the calcareous soils of the *pays* margins (**Fig. 11.18**). The broad lack of associated early medieval occupation potentially indicates a contraction of Roman settlement across most soil types before, or by, the end of the Roman period, with settlement becoming confined to the calcareous slopes of the Darent and Medway Valleys and the northern margins of the Chalk Downs in the west. The limited evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemeteries also appears to largely favour the calcareous soils along the Darent and Medway valleys, although, given the current constraints, how far any association with Roman settlement reflects potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries remains uncertain.

There is marked contrast between the apparent Roman settlement pattern on the Chalk Downs and that of the 11th century (**Fig. 11.19**). The distribution of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills and parish churches suggests some settlement ingress across the calcareous soils of the dry valleys by the 11th century. The wider distribution of manors potentially indicates continuing settlement expansion across the palaeo-argillic brown earths of the higher plateau from the 13th century onwards, as a result of manorial fragmentation and changes in land tenure (**Fig. 11.19**). Where an association with Roman settlement is suggested, this is predominantly across the calcareous soils, potentially reflecting a degree of Roman settlement continuity along the *pays* margins between the 5th to 11th centuries, although some resettlement of these areas by the 11th century is also possible. A small number of Roman settlements and cemeteries associated with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors across the palaeo-argillic brown earths also potentially reflects resettlement of these areas by the 11th century.

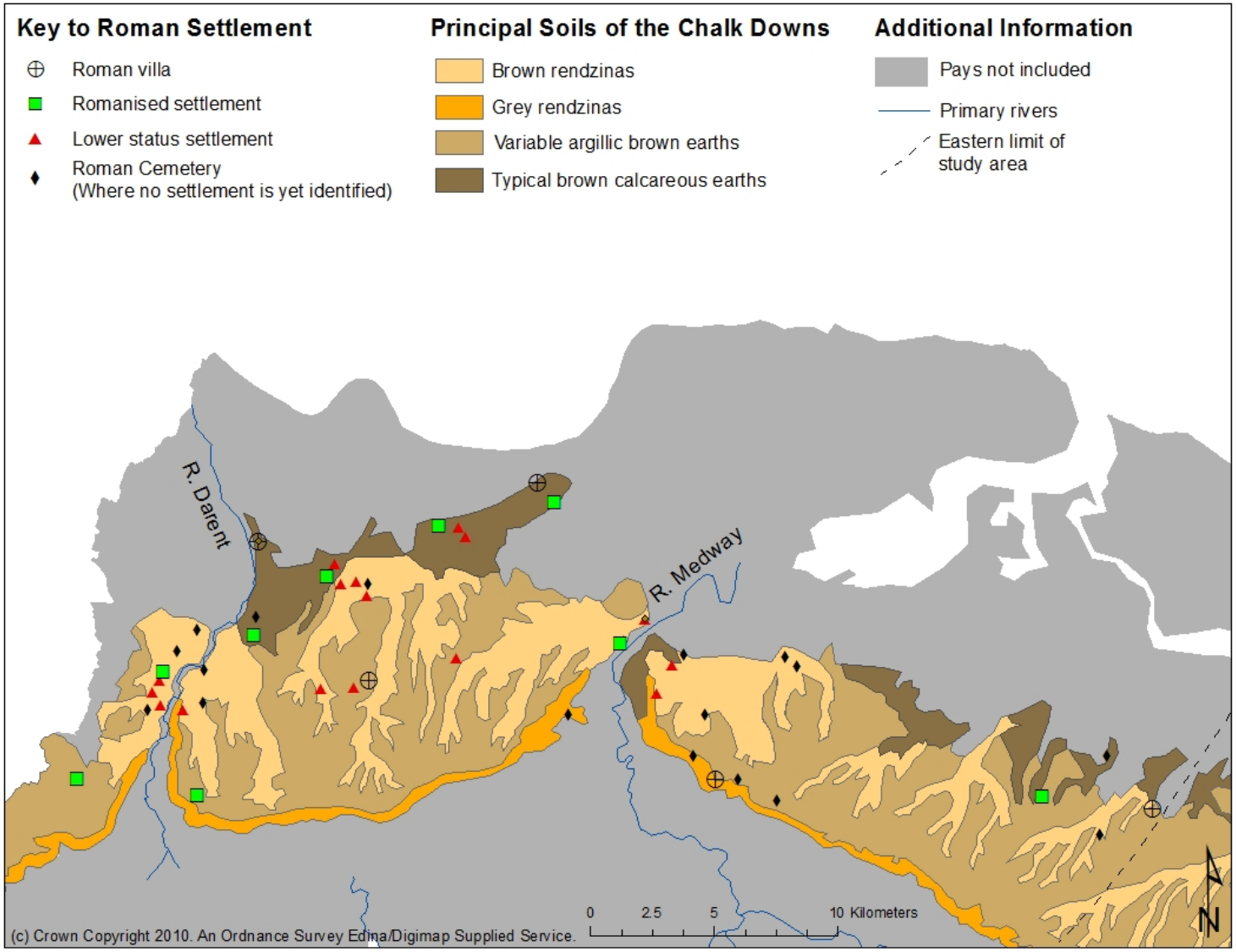


Figure 11.18. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs in western Kent showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

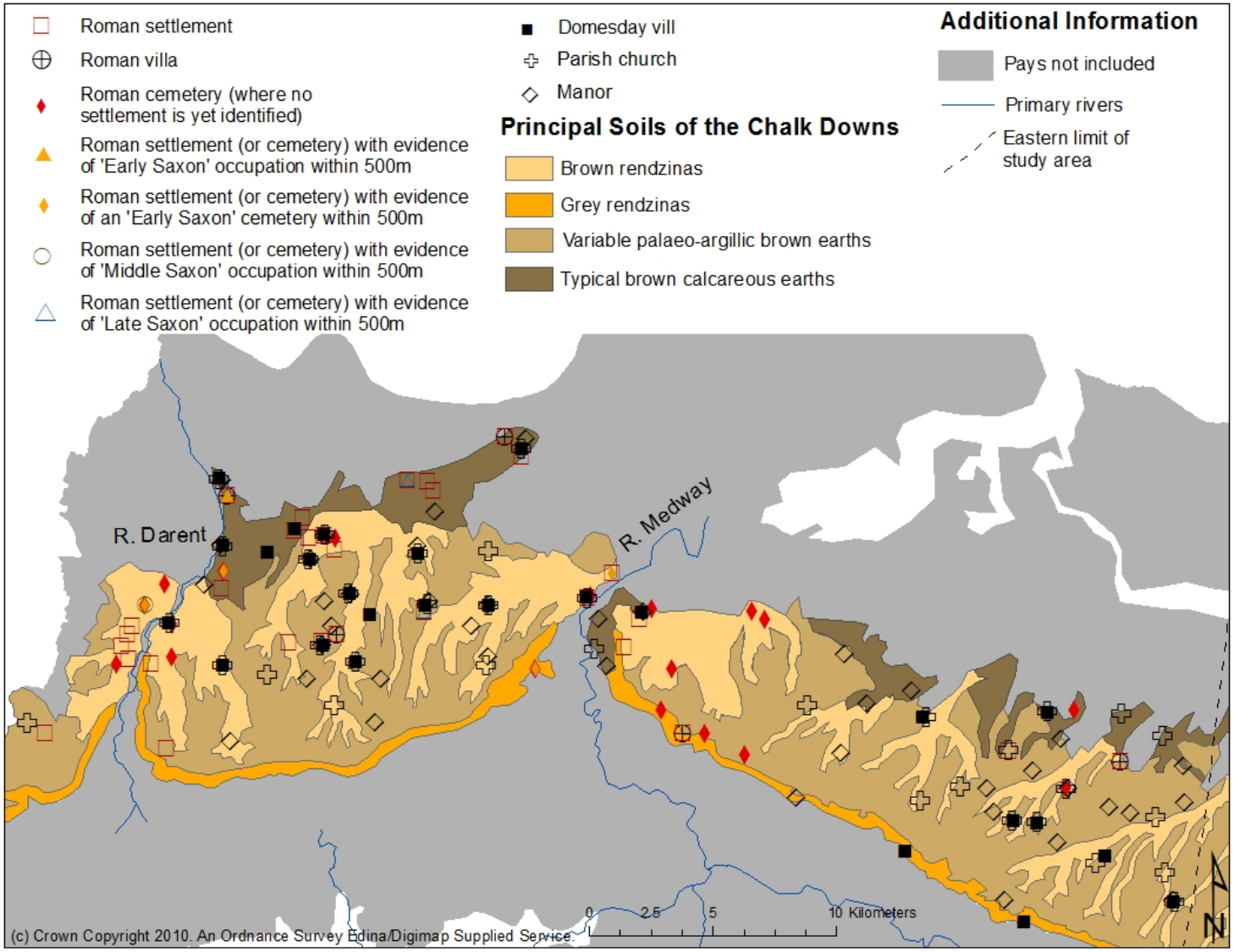


Figure 11.19. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Chalk Downs in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Discussion

The material evidence for Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs, to date, suggests fairly limited occupation during the Roman period, with the majority of settlement distributed along the *pays* margins and up into the dry valleys. Everitt (1986, 47-48) reflects that the woodland on the Chalk Downs during the Roman period stretched 'as far as Watling Street' and that even today the *pays* remains heavily wooded and remote (*ibid*, 47). The distribution of Roman settlement across the *pays* interior certainly appears very limited and largely confined to the west, between the Darent and Medway valleys (**Fig. 11.18**). The hierarchy of Roman settlement across the Chalk Downs suggests largely lower status occupation, although there is evidence for five possible villas and nine Romanised settlements, mainly distributed along the *pays* margins (**Fig. 11.18**), except for the Roman villa (KHER TQ66NW15) at Ash (see **Fig. 11.20**).

As with the North Kent Foothills, there is the issue of contemporaneity in Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs. Over 50% of Roman settlements recorded for the *pays*, and all but one cemetery, suggest an early date, indicating a phase of potential abandonment by, the 3rd century. This is most evident amongst lower status settlements, such as Dene Bottom Farm, Longfield (KHER TQ56NE29), Hartley (KHER TQ66NW21) and Meopham (KHER TQ66NW45) and for example, but includes an early 1st to 2nd century Romanised site at Farningham (KHER TQ56NE27), Ash Roman villa (above) and two further Roman villas at Chalk (KHER TQ67SE15) and Rodmersham (KHER TQ95NW23).

The evidence for 'Early/Middle' Saxon occupation on the Chalk Downs is limited, and largely consists of a string of Anglo-Saxon burials along the Darent Valley, the majority associated with Roman occupation (**Fig. 11.19**). At Horton Kirby (KHER TQ56NE8), South Darenth (KHER TQ56NE6), for example, two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are associated with Roman mortuary activity and artefacts, whilst at Capricorn Farm, Eynsford (KHER TQ56NW5), two Anglo-Saxon burials, one dating to the 7th century, are recorded *c*. 250m to the west of a Romano-British burial. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery (KHER TQ76NW323) at Cuxton, in the Medway Valley, has been dated to AD 550-600 by associated grave goods (MOLAS 1999, 11). The cemetery overlies pits and features radiocarbon dated to the MIA, but the associated finds assemblage contains

residual pottery dating to the late Roman period, suggesting possible settlement in the near vicinity: a group of Romano-British cinerary urns are recorded *c*. 600m to the east (KHER TQ76NW42), whilst a group of possible Romano-British rubbish pits lie *c*. 700m to the northeast (KHER TQ76NW44), both within the North Kent Foothills. Two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, at Thurnham (KHER TQ85NW5), on the southern slopes of the Chalk Downs, and Charton Manor Farm, Farningham (KHER TQ56NE11), in the Darent Valley, suggest no clear relationship with Roman settlement, although the cemetery at Farningham lies *c*. 600m southwest of an early Romanised settlement (KHER TQ56NE27) dating to the 1st to 2nd centuries. Whilst Anglo-Saxon cemetery evidence may potentially reflect a degree of continuing occupation along the slopes of the Darent and Medway valleys, the early dating of some Roman sites may suggest at least partial resettlement of these favoured areas by the 5th to 7th centuries.

The sole evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement on the Chalk Downs, to date, is from Darenth Court Roman villa (KHER TQ57SE30), which is currently dated into the late 4th century (Philp 1973, 135). Trial pitting within the villa complex produced unstratified 'Early Saxon' artefacts, including loom weights and pottery (*ibid*, 155). Later excavation (Philp 1984) revealed two sunken-featured buildings to the west of the southwest corner of the villa, both with later recuts, and a large timber building (KHER TQ57SE91) to their north (**Fig. 11.20**). The Saxon features cut a section of Roman boundary wall, a water channel, and sections of earlier Roman ditches (**Fig. 11.20**), and were all associated with 6th century pottery (Philp 1984, 76; Webster and Cherry 1973, 145) As the Saxon structures at Darenth lie beyond the extent of the villa buildings, the precise nature of 'Early Saxon' occupation at Darenth, and how it relates to the function of the Roman villa, remains unclear. Although, as also demonstrated at Northfleet Roman villa (see p 252), the evidence at Darenth appears to suggest a discontinuity in settlement form (and function?) by the 5th to 7th centuries, there was clearly some continuity of use, although the finer chronology does not yet show the extent of occupation beyond the 7th century, nor whether there were any hiatuses before or during this period. A shift of settlement somewhere between the 8th to 11th centuries is suggested, however, as the Domesday vill and parish church of Darenth lie *c*. 625m to the northwest (**Fig. 11.20**).

The combined evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation, Domesday vills and parish

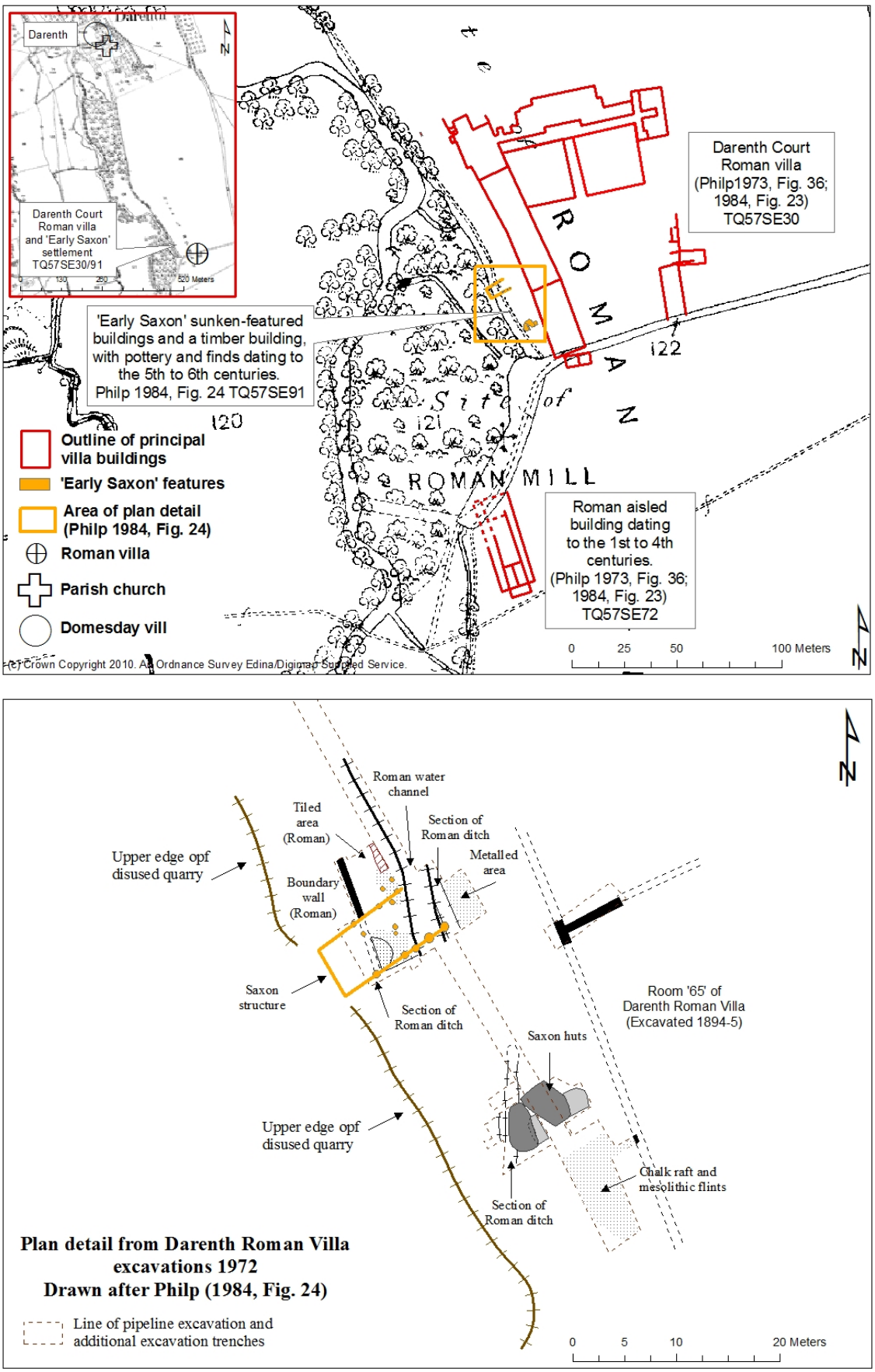


Figure 11.20. The relationship of Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation at Darenth Court Roman villa, drawn after Philp (1973, Fig. 36) and shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Below is a detail from the 1984 excavation plan, showing the location and relationship of the Saxon features to Room 65, drawn after Philp (1984, Fig. 24). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

churches suggests that by the 11th century the Chalk Downs had seen wider settlement of the *pays* interior (**Fig. 11.19**). The ratios of Roman settlement and/or cemeteries within 500m of a Domesday vill or parish church on the Chalk Downs (at 27% and 25% respectively) is considerably higher than for the North Kent Foothills (at 14% and 16% respectively). Conversely, the ratio of Domesday vills suggesting an association with Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs broadly compares with the North Kent Foothills, at 54% and 53% respectively, although the relative ratios for parish churches suggesting an association with Roman settlement is much lower, at only 23%, compared to 36% for the North Kent Foothills. This may indicate a degree of settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries in those parts of the Chalk Downs that did see Roman settlement, principally the lighter calcareous soils of the dry valleys and the lower northern slopes of the *pays* (**Fig. 11.19**). The early dating of the majority of Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs and the subsequent gap in occupation evidence between the 5th to 11th centuries, however, may rather reflect resettlement of those areas of lighter soils already cleared of woodland by the Roman period. Furthermore, the low ratio of Roman settlement to parish churches might indicate an expansion of settlement from the 9th to 11th centuries onwards that extended beyond those areas settled during the Roman period: the comparatively low ratio of manors associated with Roman settlement on the Chalk Downs (at just 13%) potentially supports this hypothesis (see **Tables 11.3 and 11.4**). Although a relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement patterns on the Chalk Downs is suggested, then, the combined evidence suggests the principal trend may have been one of discontinuity and resettlement between the 5th to 11th centuries.

Everitt (1986, 132) considered the Chalk Downs a region of extended colonisation from the 8th to 13th centuries, resulting in a distinctive landscape of scattered settlements and irregular fields, with narrow, winding, shaws denoting the remains of ancient woodland carved away through piecemeal clearance. In the vicinity of Meopham, for example, several Roman settlements are recorded in association with Old English place-names that indicate woodland clearance: suffixes such as ‘Ash’, ‘Leigh’, ‘Ley’, ‘Den’ and ‘Ham’ suggest a landscape of open wood pasture (Hooke 1998, 148 and see Everitt 1986, 127-135), which could reflect both already cleared, and newly cleared, land between the 5th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 11. 21**). Although the early date of the majority of Roman

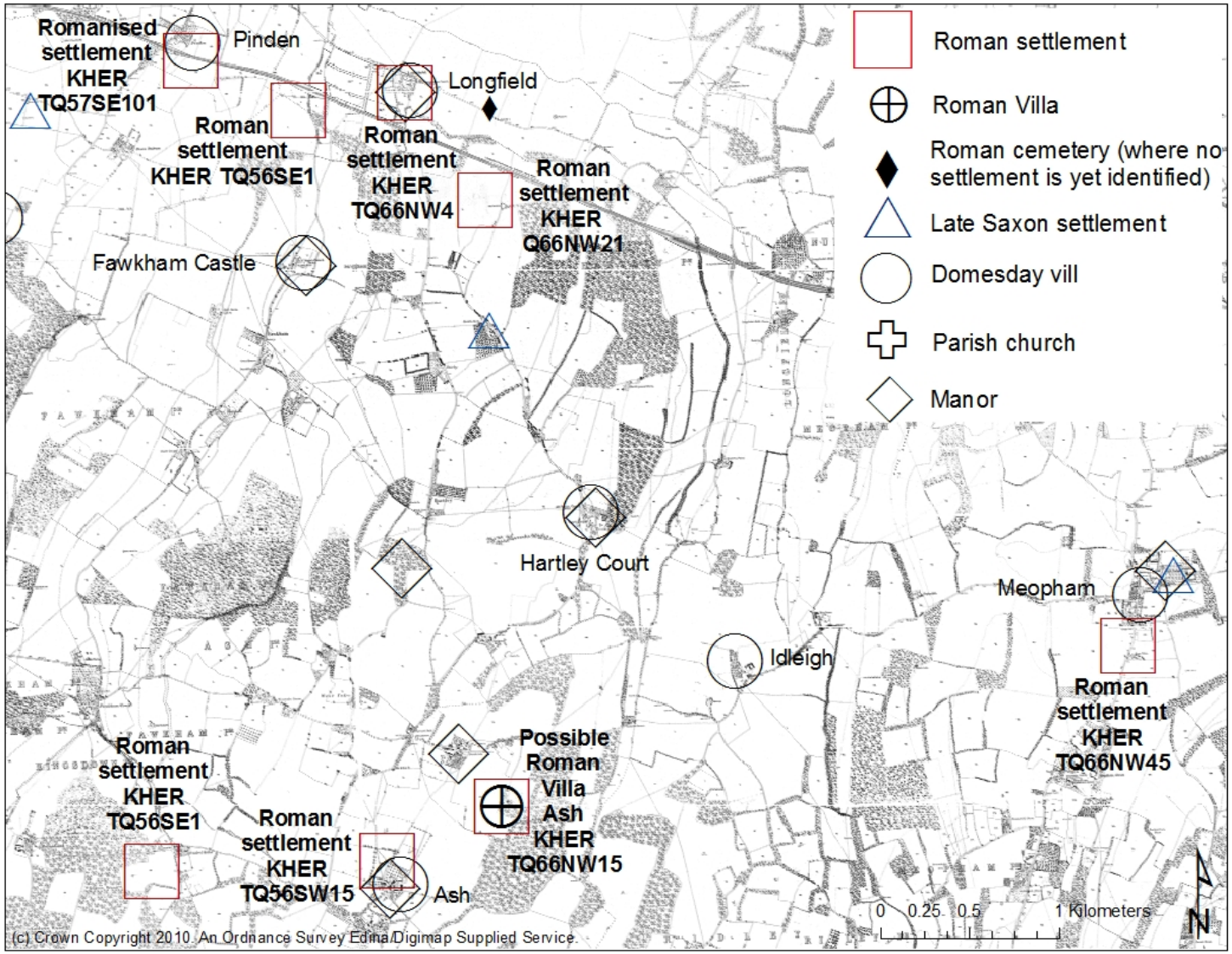


Figure 11.21. The evidence for Roman and Saxon occupation at Meopham, Ash and Longfield, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

settlement in the vicinity of Meopham indicates potential abandonment by, the 2nd to 3rd centuries, the close association between the pattern of Roman settlement and Domesday vills may reflect some prior influence on the location of 11th century settlement in this area, primarily that the cleared areas remained sufficiently open to encourage resettlement. This might further imply a continuing seasonal use of resources during the Roman and early medieval periods, and, therefore, a degree of potential landscape continuity, even though patterns of settlement and landuse may have subtly altered.

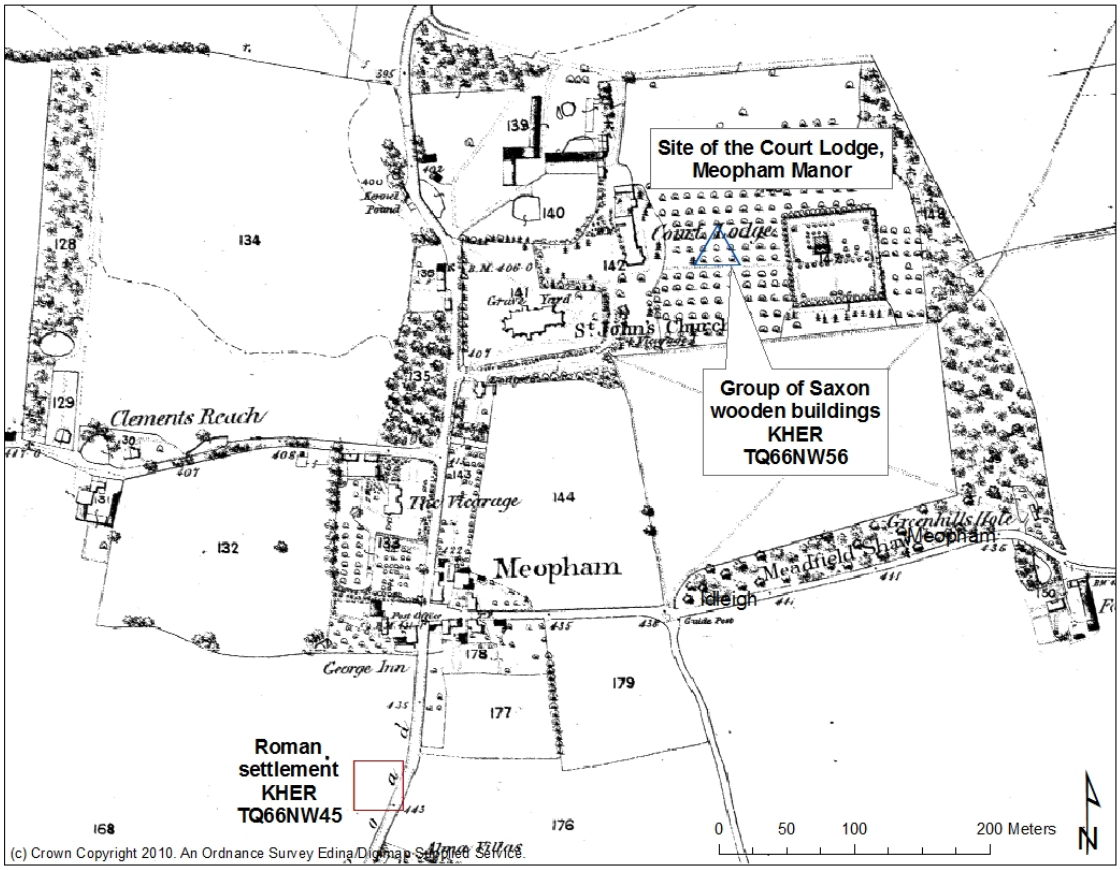


Figure 11.22. The location of Roman occupation at Meopham, in relation to the Domesday manor and parish church, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER, Flight (2010) and Morgan (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Hasted (1798-1801, 356-367) records that Meopham manor was awarded to Duke Eodolf in the early 10th century: a group of several 'Saxon' timber buildings (KHER TQ66NW56) are recorded on the site of the Court Lodge, although there is no clearer dating for these, to date. The pattern of field enclosure at Meopham, shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map, illustrates the clearance of woodland, the strips of woodland boundaries forming relict shaws

that possibly reflect the extent of the early manorial enclosure (**Fig. 11.22**). An early Roman settlement is recorded *c*. 300m southwest of the parish church and *c*. 500m southwest of the Court Lodge. Excavation revealed a series of ditches and an extensive burnt area associated with pottery dating occupation to *c*. AD 60-120 (Philp 1975, 260-266). There is no evidence, to date, that Roman occupation at Meopham continued beyond this point, or that it directly influenced the location of the early medieval settlement and manor there. The proximity of Roman and early medieval settlement, does, however, suggest that patterns of woodland clearance and seasonal use between the 2nd to 11th centuries may have preserved a preferential location for permanent settlement by the 11th century.

The distribution of surrounding manors at Meopham (**Fig. 11.21**) reflects the wider picture for the Chalk Downs, with continuing expansion across the *pays* suggested from the 13th century onwards through processes of manorial fragmentation. Across the *pays* interior, it might be suggested that settlement expansion by the 11th century began to progress beyond the extent of Roman settlement distribution. Whilst potential continuity of Roman settlement is not widely suggested for the Chalk Downs, it would appear that the wider Roman landscape might have persisted in some form between the 5th to 11th centuries, perhaps through seasonal exploitation and temporary settlement, although that need not necessarily imply direct continuity of use. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to describe the Chalk Downs as an area of both resettlement and colonisation between the 5th to 11th centuries, with any potential Roman settlement continuity confined to the *pays* margins and the major river valleys.

Summary

Current evidence suggests that settlement of the Chalk Downs was relatively sparse during the Roman period, principally favouring the lighter calcareous soils along the *pays* margins and the Darent and Medway valleys and extending up into the dry valleys in the west. As with the North Kent Foothills, the early date of many Roman settlements and cemeteries across the Chalk Downs may suggest a phase of settlement shift or abandonment by the 3rd century, largely from the heavy soils of the wooded interior, with further settlement contraction in favour of the river valleys and *pays* margins by the late Roman period.

The limited evidence for 'Early Saxon' settlement indicates that where any potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries may be suggested for the Chalk Downs, this was also largely along the Darent and Medway valleys. The scarcity of material evidence for occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries tells us little about trends of settlement development across the *pays* during this period, although a widely dispersed settlement pattern had developed by the 11th century, potentially as a result of extensive settlement expansion by this point. The ratio of Domesday vills associated with Roman settlement is relatively high for the Chalk Downs, although the ratio of parish churches in this regard is relatively low. It is possible that these relationships on the lighter calcareous soils may yet be shown to reflect a continuity of settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries, but across the heavier soils of the higher plateaux this appears more likely to reflect resettlement by the 11th century, with areas of woodland cleared during the Roman period becoming permanently resettled, following centuries of seasonal resource management. There may also have been further clearance of woodland and progressive colonisation of the Chalk Downs by the 11th century, a trend that continued from the 13th century onwards through increasing manorial fragmentation.

By the later medieval period, the landscape character of the Chalk Downs was one of dispersed settlement, with small hamlets and farms carved out of the ancient woodland. Both Roman and early medieval settlement appear to have principally favoured the lighter soils of the *pays*, with the heavier soils remaining heavily wooded throughout both periods. In addition to local soils, topography may also have determined settlement location and longevity, with the heavier soils and woodland seeing progressive clearance only as pressure for land and resources increased.

Vale of Holmesdale

Settlement data

Thirty-one Roman settlements and 3 Roman cemeteries are recorded for the Vale of Holmesdale. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results are illustrated below (**Table 11.5**: **Fig. 11.23**).

Table 11.5 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Vale of Holmesdale, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 11.6 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors in the Vale of Holmesdale, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author based on the analysis of west Kent only.

Table 11.5: Vale of Holmesdale

Total number of Roman settlements 34	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	2	4	6	2	6%	12%	18%	6%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	1			3%	3%		
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	3	3	1	1	9%	9%	3%	3%
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	2	1	1		6%	3%	3%	
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m	2	1		1	6%	3%		3%
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	1				3%			
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	2	1			6%	3%		
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	2	1			6%	3%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	5	5			15%	15%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	4	4			12%	12%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	6	6			18%	18%		

Table 11.6: Vale of Holmesdale

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m				Percentage of the total number recorded within the study area			
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery
'Late Saxon' settlement	3	2	1	0	0	67%	33%	0%	0%
Domesday vill	22	5	4	0	0	23%	18%	0%	0%
Parish church	17	4	3	0	0	24%	18%	0%	0%
Manor	32	7	4	0	0	22%	13%	0%	0%

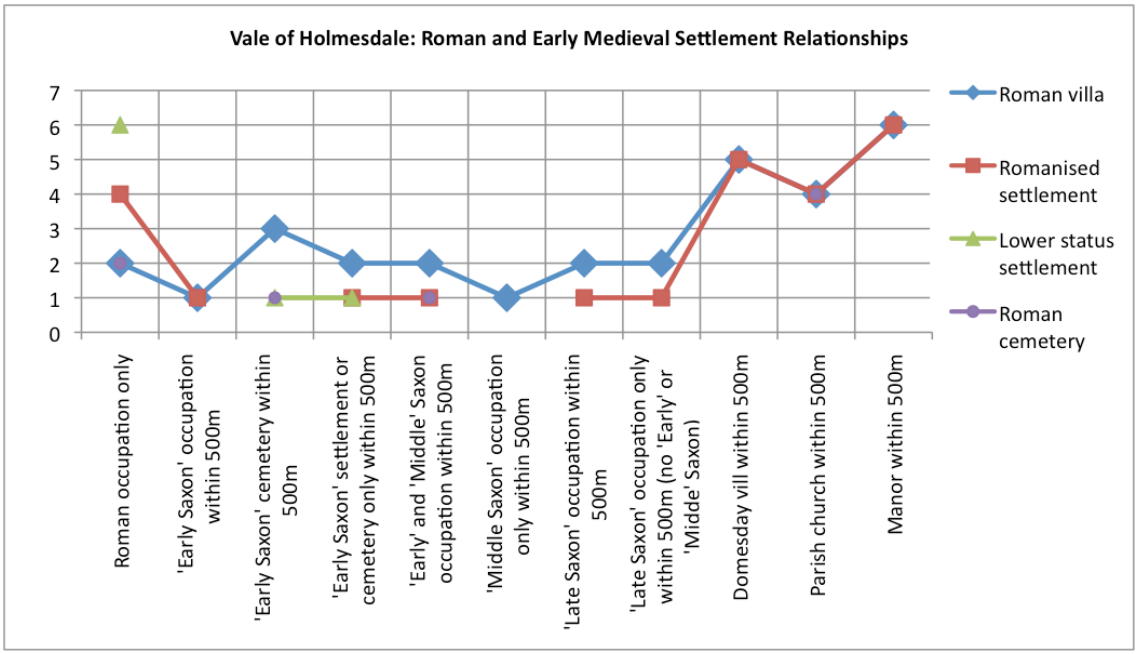


Figure 11.23. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Vale of Holmesdale and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

Three 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Vale of Holmesdale, in addition to 22 Domesday vills, 17 parish churches and 32 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 11.6**).

Soils data

The soils of the Vale of Holmesdale are typically brown calcareous earths along the foot of the chalk escarpment, where calcareous Coombe Deposits overlie the Gault Clay, with heavier pelo-stagnogleys where the clay exposes to the south. Along the Darent and Medway valleys soils are typically pelo-alluvial gleys (SSEW 1983) (**Fig. 11.26**). Of the 34 Roman sites recorded for the Vale of Holmesdale (to include settlements and cemeteries), 22 (65%) were located on the lighter calcareous brown earths, with the remaining 12 (35%) on the heavier clays and alluvial clays, demonstrating that the lighter, fertile soils along the foot of the Chalk Downs were the favoured location for settlement during the Roman period. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 11.24**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the Vale of Holmesdale, 2 out of 3 'Late Saxon' settlements (67%), 17 out of 22 Domesday vills (77%), 14 out of

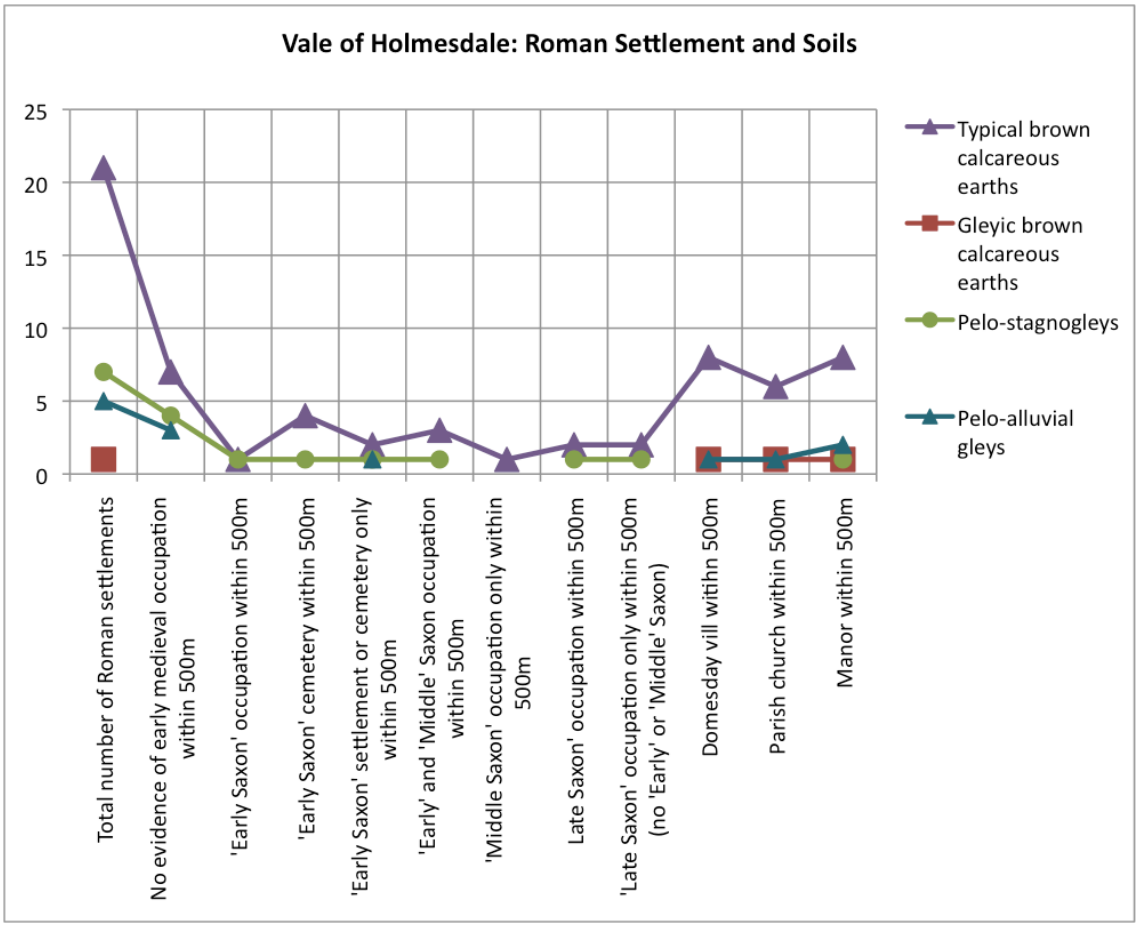


Figure 11.24 Line chart showing the number of Roman settlements in the Vale of Holmesdale that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

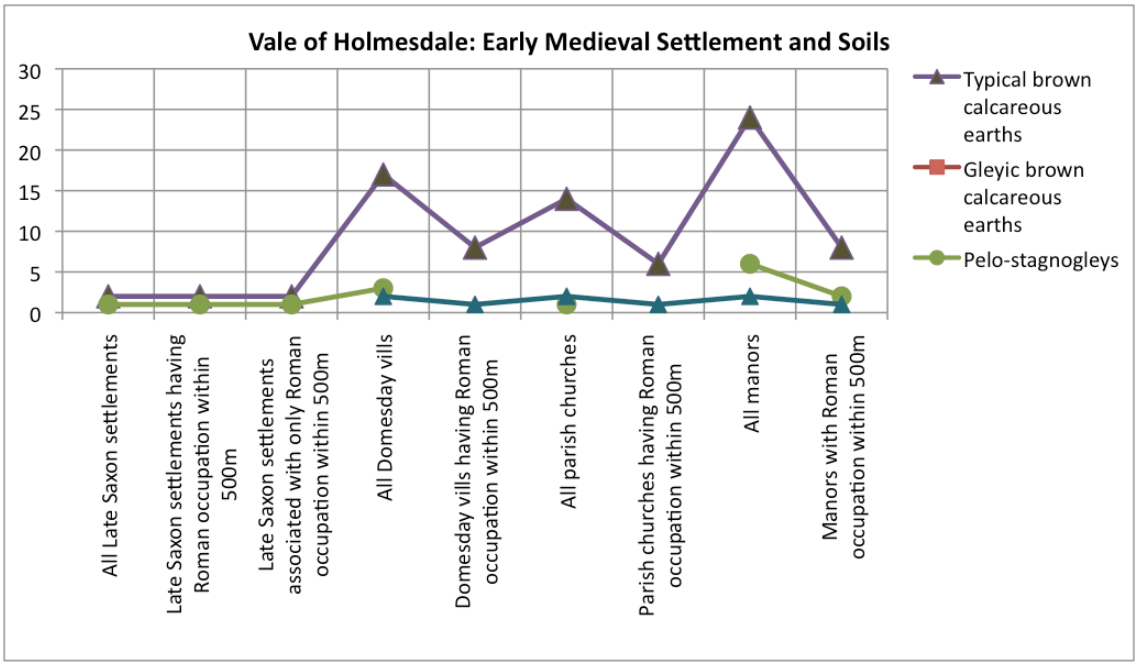


Figure 11.25. Line chart showing the number of 'Late Saxon' settlements, parish churches and manors in the Vale of Holmesdale demonstrating a relationship to Roman settlement, relative to soils. All data compiled by the author.

17 parish churches (82%) and 24 out of 32 manors (75%) were located on the lighter calcareous brown earths, demonstrating that these soils continued to be the favoured location for settlement during the early medieval period and that these soils are where any potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries is most likely to be found. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is also shown below (**Fig. 11.25**).

The current distribution of known Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale indicates that this was predominantly located on the lighter calcareous soils bordering the chalk escarpment (**Fig. 11.24**), with the greater concentration along the Darent and Medway valleys (**Fig. 11.26**). Whilst the research results may indicate a contraction of settlement across all soil types by the end of the Roman period, they may simply reflect the limited evidence for material occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 11.24**). The apparent increase in the relationship between Roman settlements associated with a Domesday vill, parish church and/or manor may also be due to biases in the available evidence, but does effectively demonstrate that the lighter calcareous soils continued to be favoured for settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries (**Figs. 11.24 and 11.25**). Whether this reflects potential continuity on these soils during this period is harder to distinguish, although retrogressive analysis of early medieval and Roman settlement (**Fig. 11.25**) suggests a distinct relationship Where an association between Roman and early medieval settlement is indicated on the wetter clays and alluvial clays, however, this may rather reflect resettlement by the 9th to 11th centuries. The increased relationship between manors and Roman settlement on the wetter clay soils reinforces this hypothesis, potentially reflecting an expansion of settlement and manors across the heavier soils from the 11th century onwards (**Fig. 11.25**).

Discussion

The material evidence for Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale, to date, suggests the *pays* was relatively well settled during the Roman period, with a significant ratio of high status settlement, including 12 possible Roman villas (**Fig. 11.26**). The dating of Roman settlement also suggests distinct evidence for occupation into the 4th century or later. Where settlements lack 4th century dating these largely suggest lower status occupation, as demonstrated at Otford

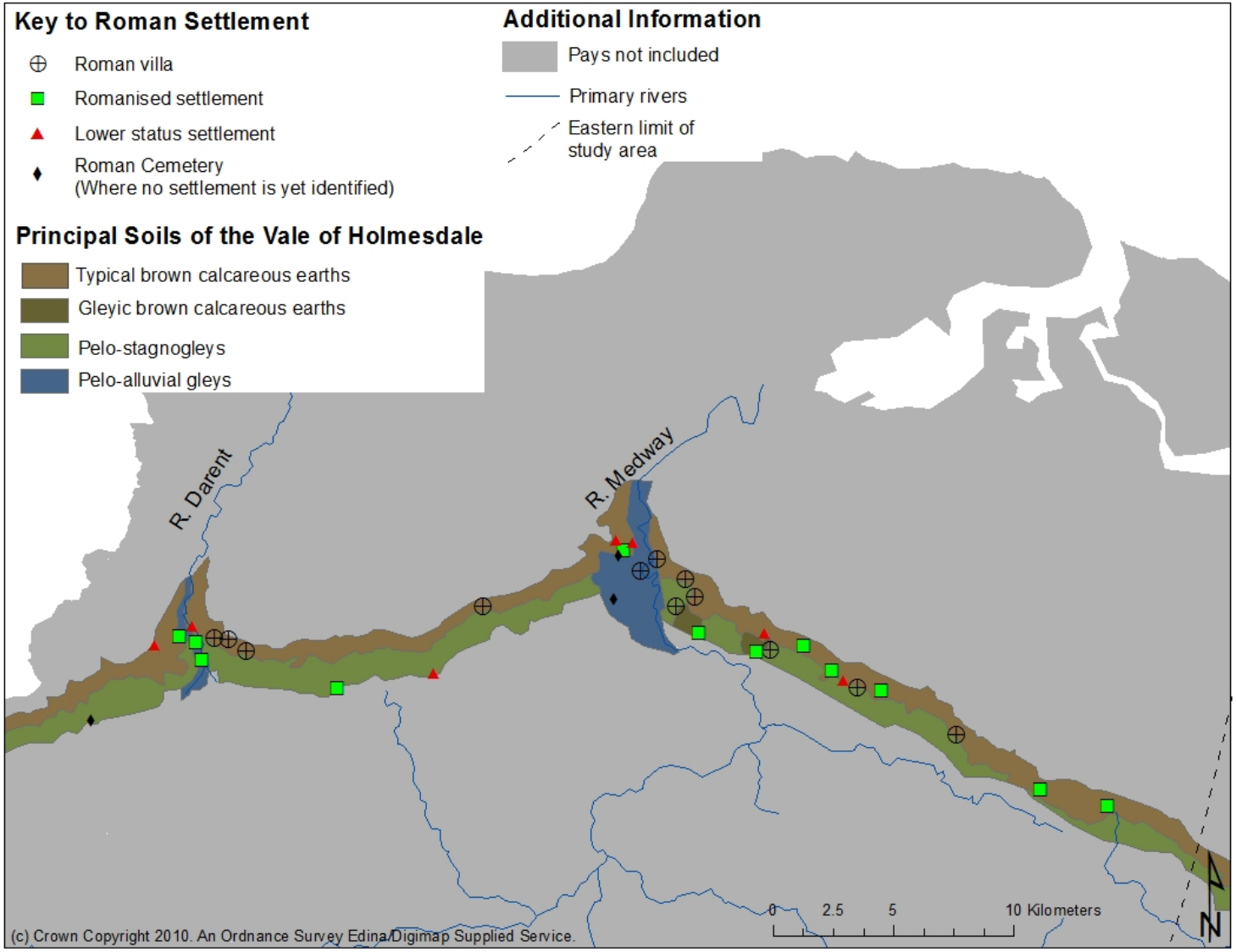


Figure 11.26. The distribution of Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale in western Kent showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

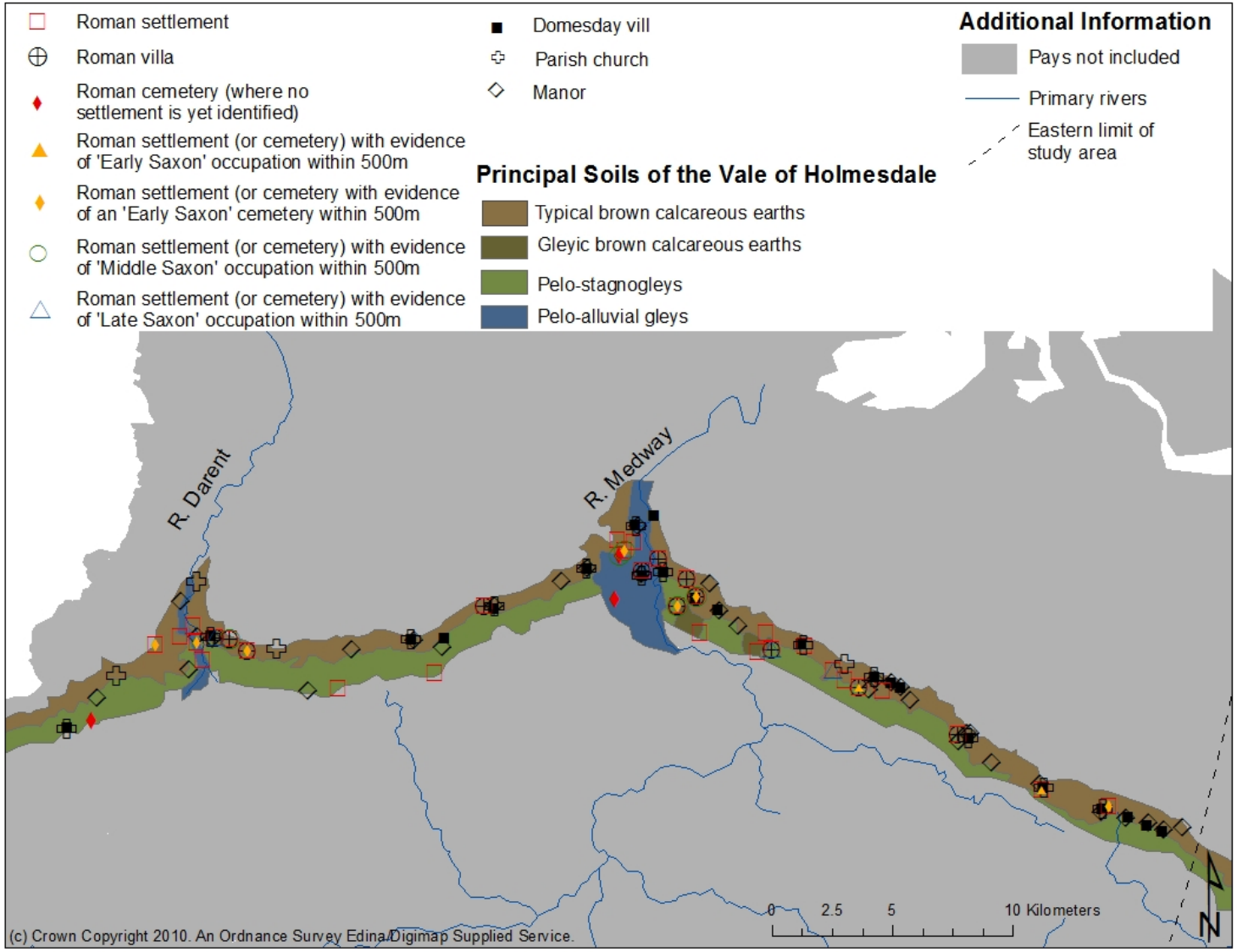


Figure 11.27. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in the Vale of Holmesdale in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

(KHER TQ55NW6), Holborough (KHER TQ66SE45), and Halling (KHER TQ76SW119), for example, although three Romanised settlements, at Ightham (KHER TQ55NE3), Otford (KHER TQ55NW2/329), and Holborough (KHER TQ76SW103), also suggest occupation dating to before the 3rd century. Three Roman cemeteries, at Sundridge (KHER TQ45NE8) and Snodland (KHER TQ66SE11/18), are recorded independent of associated settlement, all suggesting dating to the 3rd century or earlier. As with the North Kent Foothills and the Chalk Downs, a phase of potential settlement abandonment by, the 3rd century may be suggested for the Vale of Holmesdale, although this may not have been as pronounced as elsewhere: the Chalk Downs, for example.

Although the evidence for 'Early/Middle' Saxon occupation in the Vale of Holmesdale is not extensive, in common with elsewhere in Kent, this is largely cemetery-related, with burial sites distributed broadly along the more fertile soils at the foot of the Chalk Downs, the majority associated with high status Roman settlement (**Fig. 11.27**). The dating of this Roman settlement largely indicates occupation into at least the 4th century, thereby increasing the probability for potential continuity, although how far this reflects continuity of function and status is not so apparent. At Lenham, for example, excavation (MOLAS 2004) recorded evidence for high status Roman occupation *c*. 275m northeast of the parish church, dated by associated pottery to the 1st to 4th centuries (*ibid*, 15). In the 1940's three 6th century burials were recorded *c*. 100m west of the parish church (**Fig. 11.28**). Although it is unclear to what extent Roman occupation at Lenham may have continued beyond the 4th century, the close association of the burials may indicate potential continuity of use into the 6th century, albeit with possible changes in function and/or status. The burials lie within the core of the Domesday settlement at Lenham, although, on the current evidence, it is impossible to say how their location relates to the siting of settlement here by the 11th century. The earliest documentary record for Lenham dates to AD 804, with a royal grant of land to St Augustines Priory, Canterbury *(ibid*, 11), while its location on a springline at the foot of the Chalk Downs suggests one of Everitt's 1986, 88) 'springhead estates'. On current evidence, Lenham appears to have remained a significant locus of settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries, subsequently influencing the siting of the Domesday vill and parish church.

An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery (KHER TQ76SW37) is also associated

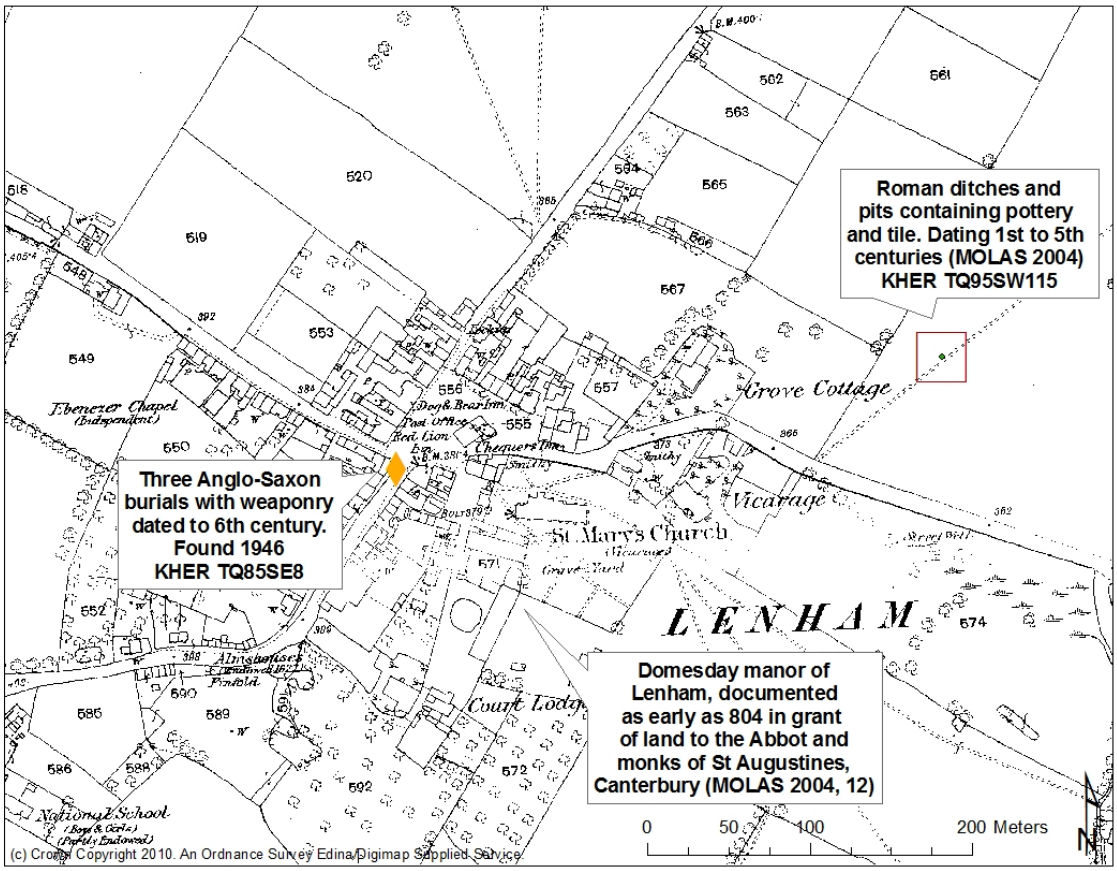


Figure 11.28. The location of Roman settlement at Lenham in relation to Anglo-Saxon burials dating to the 6th century, recovered in 1946, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER and MOLAS 2004. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

with the Roman villa at Eccles (KHER TQ76SW10) (**Fig. 11.29**), the more organised burials of which suggest a late 7th to 8th century date, possibly even continuing into the 9th to 10th centuries (Upex 2006, 1). Burials underlying these were associated with grave goods, suggesting an earlier, pre-Christian, phase of use dating between the 5th to 7th centuries (Detsicas 1974, 129-130). Several burials were also recovered from within the villa complex during the initial phases of excavation (Detsicas 1963, 140; 1964, 133; 1965, 88). Although the precise stratigraphic relationship of these burials to phases of reorganisation within the villa's lifespan is unclear, they appear to relate to the later occupation of the villa, and its decline from the 4th century onwards (Detsicas 1964, 33).

The villa at Eccles demonstrates several phases of reorganisation, with its potential decline from the 4th century in keeping with the wider understanding of Roman villa historiography. The possible change of use and status of the villa site from the 5th century onwards is also common to many other late Roman

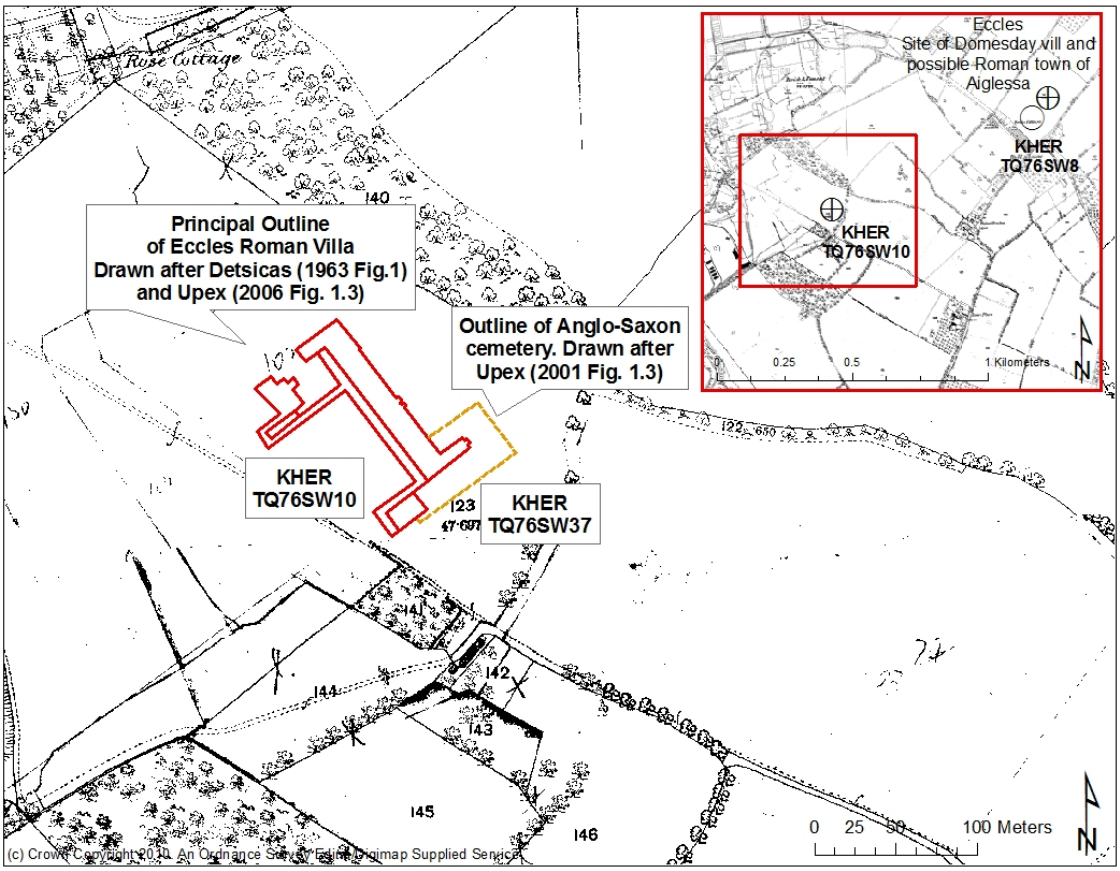


Figure 11.29. The location of Eccles Roman villa in relation to the Anglo-Saxon cemetery dating between the 7th to 8th centuries, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The principal outline of the Roman villa has been drawn after Detsicas 1963, Fig.1 and Upex 2006, Fig. 1.3. Additional settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER and Morgan 1983. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

villas: both Northfleet Villa on the North Kent Foothills (p 251-252), and Darenth Court Villa, on the Chalk Downs (p 272-273), suggest similar histories.

The evidence at Eccles, to date, therefore leaves us no clearer on how this might directly reflect any potential continuity of occupation. Looking at the site located against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map, however, there appears to be several boundaries within the immediate fieldscape that potentially align with the villa buildings (**Fig. 11.29**). This alignment extends northeast towards the Domesday settlement of Eccles, where it incorporates the site of a further high status Roman settlement (KHER TQW76SW8), possibly a villa, but also possibly the Roman town of Aiglessa. In common with Wainscott, Hoo, on the North Kent Foothills (p 254-256), the mapping evidence at Eccles may reflect elements of potential landscape continuity, with the alignment of the man-made landscape partially fossilising earlier Roman boundaries. Whilst direct evidence for occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries may be lacking, then, the wider

early medieval landscape potentially respects that of the Roman period to some extent: this might argue more for potential continuity of Roman occupation at Eccles and against resettlement by the 11th century.

There is scant evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale. At Otford (**Fig. 11.30**), a small-scale evaluation (Bennell 2004) ahead of construction work recorded a rubbish pit (KHER TQ55NW324) containing animal bones, oyster shells and a knife handle. Charcoal from the pit was radiocarbon dated to 650-790 cal AD (*ibid*, 7.4). Fragments of daub also retrieved from the pit retained the impressions of stakes or withies, suggesting a possible structure nearby (*ibid*, 7.2). The pit is located *c*. 175m southwest of a Roman villa (KHER TQ55NW3), which was occupied between the 1st to 4th centuries, with a phase of rebuilding following a fire in the 2nd century. A second Roman villa (KHER TQ55NW7) is situated *c*. 520m to the northeast, associated with the Saxon manor at Otford (**Fig. 11.30**). Land charters document Otford

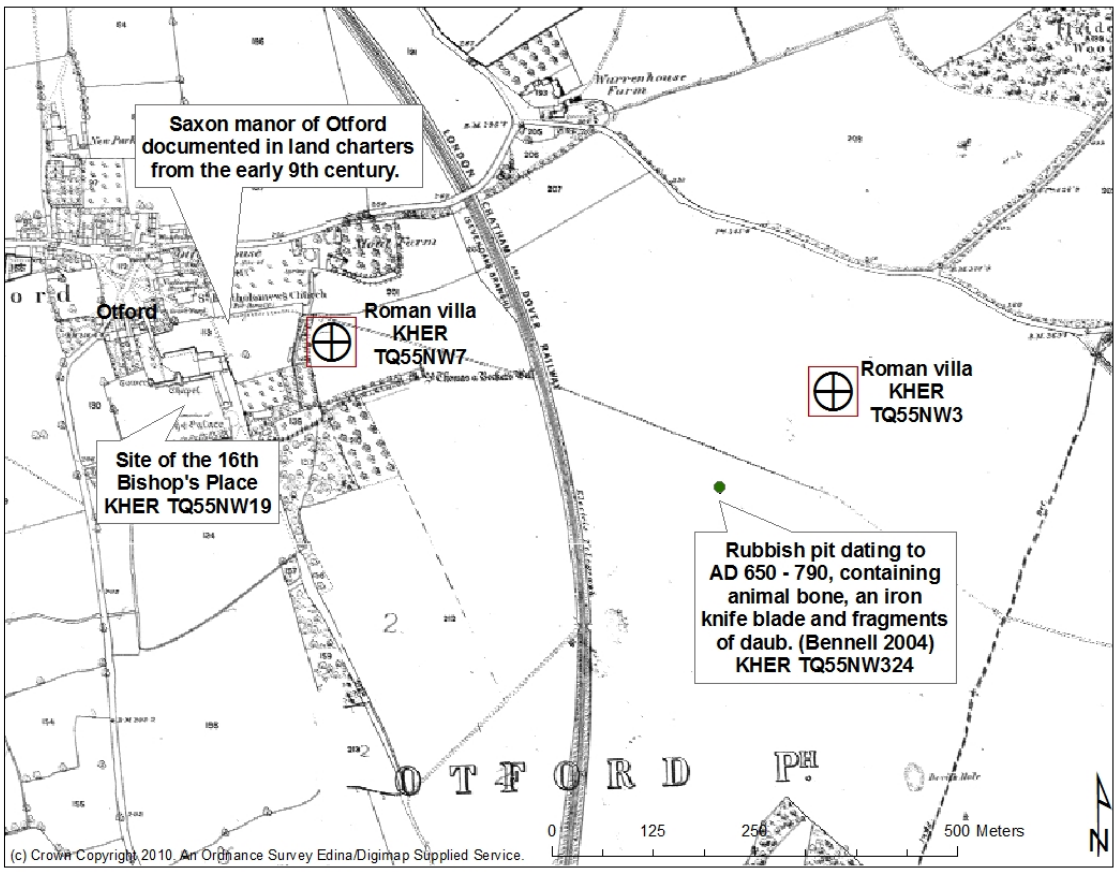


Figure 11.30. The location of the two Roman villas at Otford in relation to the evidence for 'Middle Saxon' occupation and the general location of the Saxon manor, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author after Bennell (2004), with additional information extracted from the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

from the early 9th century, and the site of the current parish church is thought to overlie the site of a 10th century church founded by St Dunstan (*ibid*, 4.18). Whilst precise evidence for the potential continuity of settlement at Otford since the late Roman period may be lacking, the broader evidence would seem to point to this, possibly with a shift in settlement between the 5th to 9th centuries.

At Harrietsham, extensive evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon settlement was recovered during rescue excavation (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998a; 1998b) prior to development. Previous evaluation by KARU (unpublished) suggested an area of high status Roman settlement underlying the Rectory in the west of the development site (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998a, 2), while finds recovered from the churchyard to the north, include two Roman cinerary urns and an Anglo-Saxon goblet and bronze fibula (KHER TQ55SE2). The first phase of evaluation exposed further evidence of Roman occupation, mainly concentrated in the west of the site, with principal features including a large boundary ditch running broadly southwest to northeast, a length of LIA/ early Roman road, which had been realigned during the course of the Roman period, and a group of early cremation burials where the two met (**Fig. 11.31**).

Roman occupation at Harrietsham was dated by associated pottery and tile to the 1st to 4th centuries AD (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998a, 1), although this appears to have been sealed by a silty soil horizon, suggesting a phase of potential abandonment or contraction at the end of the Roman period. The foundations of at least seven buildings (KHER TQ85SE139) were cut into this, including a sunken-featured building to the northwest and three possible aisled halls dated by associated pottery to the 5th to 7th centuries (*ibid*, 2). The second phase of evaluation (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998b) recovered further evidence for Roman occupation extending eastwards (**Fig. 11.31**), with at least two further aisled Anglo-Saxon halls and additional sunken-features buildings (*ibid*, 7). The manor of Harrietsham is documented in Domesday, and the current parish church dates to at least the 11th century. The area of Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation, on what later became Glebe land, appears to reflect the original locus of settlement at Harrietsham, although the evidence suggests shifting settlement over the course of the Roman and early medieval periods, possibly with short hiatuses of occupation in some areas. Whilst evaluation (Canterbury Archaeological Trust 1998a, 11) recorded no material evidence for

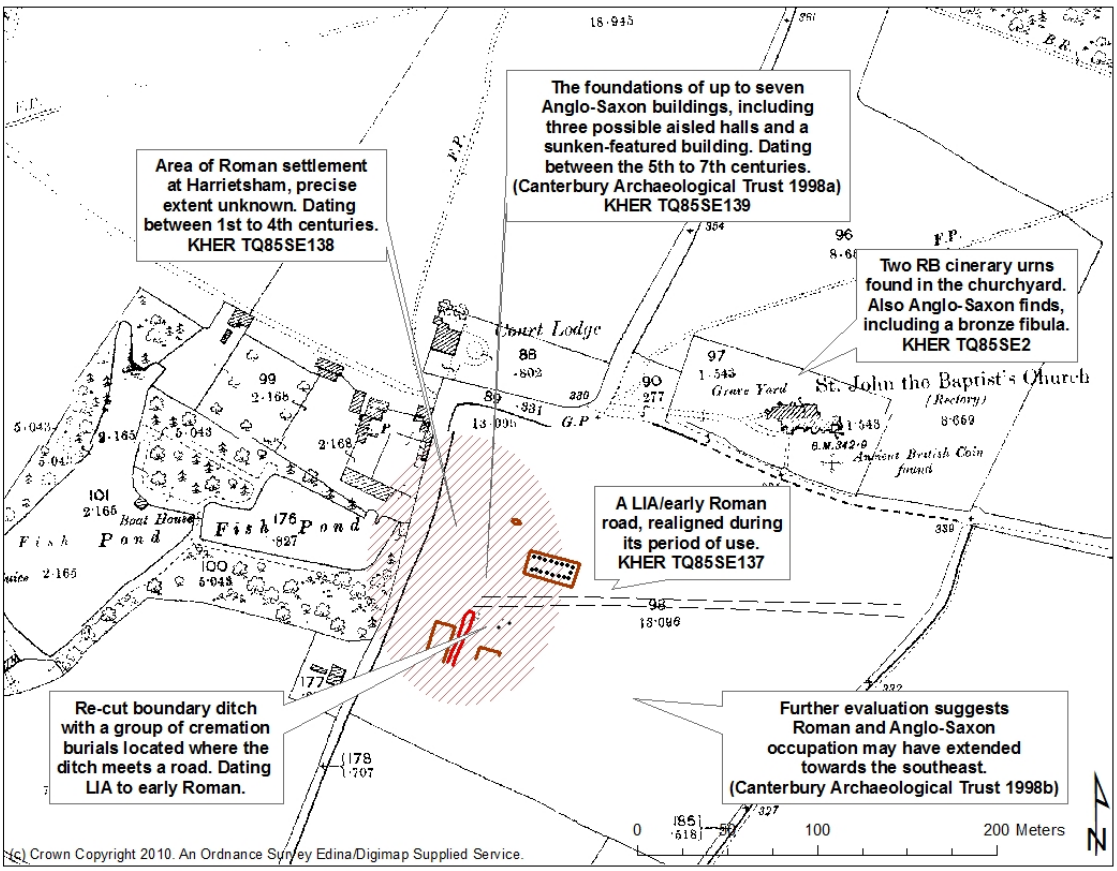


Figure 11.31. The principal features demonstrating the relationship of Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation at Harrietsham, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Canterbury Archaeological Trust (1998a; 1998b), with additional information extracted from the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

'Late Saxon' occupation, the focus of Domesday settlement appears to have been to the west of the parish church (**Fig. 11.31**), although the current village centre now lies some distance to the southwest.

As with the North Kent Foothills and the Chalk Downs, the combined distribution of 'Late Saxon' occupation, Domesday vills and parish churches in the Vale of Holmesdale potentially suggests an expansion of settlement across the *pays* by the 11th century, which largely continued to favour the more fertile soils at the foot of the Chalk Downs (see **Fig. 11.27**). The ratio of Domesday vills associated with Roman settlement is surprisingly low at 41%, compared with the North Kent Foothills and Chalk Downs, at 53% and 54% respectively, although the ratio of parish churches associated with Roman settlement is much higher, at 42%, compared with 36% and 24% respectively. The relative ratios of Roman settlement situated within 500m of a Domesday vill or parish church are 30% and 24% respectively, broadly comparable with the Chalk

Downs, at 27% and 25% respectively, although the greater extent of 4th century dating for Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale increases the confidence for potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries.

The distribution of Domesday vills along the foot of the Chalk Downs are indicative of Everitt's (1986, 87) 'springhead estates': the origins of these are potentially Anglo-Saxon or earlier (*ibid*), many being closely associated with high status Roman settlement. These estates ran north eastwards onto the Chalk Downs and southwestwards onto the Chart Hills. The estate boundaries and droveways joining the different resource areas created a linear pattern of field boundaries and trackways still evident on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic maps, suggesting the alignment of estate boundaries remained preserved in much of the agrarian landscape of the Vale of Holmesdale well into the 19th century. As demonstrated at Eccles, the alignment of the man-made landscape of the 5th to 11th centuries also potentially fossilised elements of Roman land organisation (**Fig. 11.32**), suggesting a wider continuity of settlement and landscape in the Vale of Holmesdale by the 11th century.

The ratio of Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale situated within 500m of a manor is considerably higher than either the North Kent Foothills or the Chalk Downs, at 36%, compared with 25% and 28% respectively. Equally, the ratio of manors demonstrating an association with Roman settlement in the Vale of Holmesdale is 35%, compared with 30% and 13% respectively. This may partially reflect the confines of the *pays* in supporting any increase in manors by the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, although there is some indication for an expansion back onto some of the heavier clays by this point. Whilst the association between Roman settlement and manors in the Vale of Holmesdale is distinct, however, the common lack of interim occupation means resettlement, rather than potential continuity, cannot be precluded as a factor. The broader relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement across the *pays* nevertheless suggests potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries may have been more likely, albeit with a degree of settlement shift and resettlement in some instances. This no doubt reflects the fertility of the local soils and their favoured location for settlement, which, by the 11th century retained a widely dispersed settlement character, comprising numerous hamlets, farms and manors within a strongly linear pattern of land holdings.

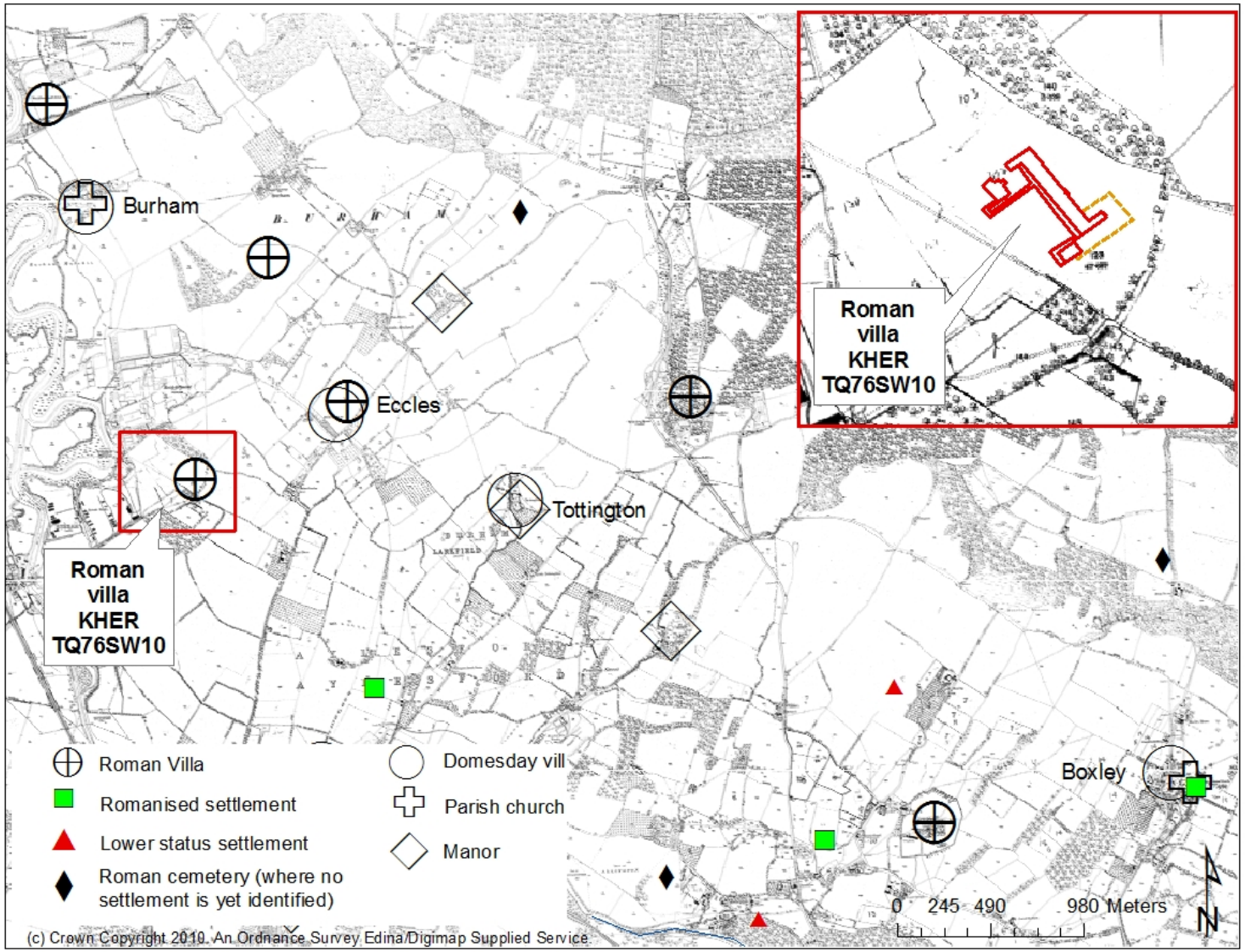


Figure 11.32. The distribution of Domesday vills along the foot of the Chalk Downs near Eccles in relation to the current evidence for Roman settlement, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The NW to SE alignment of the fieldscape may reflect both Anglo-Saxon estate boundaries and aspects of Roman land organisation. Eccles Roman villa drawn after Detsicas (1963, Fig.1) and Upex (2006, Fig. 1.3), with additional information extracted from the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Summary

The Vale of Holmesdale was comparatively well settled during the Roman period, with a large ratio of high status settlement. A degree of settlement contraction is indicated across the *pays* by, the 3rd century, although this does not seem as pronounced as elsewhere in western Kent. The dating of Roman occupation suggests a significant ratio of settlement continued into at least the 4th century, largely of higher status, although further abandonment of some Roman settlement by the end of the Roman period may also be indicated. There is limited evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation in the Vale of Holmesdale, largely cemetery-related, with only two 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon settlements currently recorded. The broader relationship between Roman and 'Early/Middle' Saxon settlement, however, indicates a degree of potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 9th centuries, although some possible settlement shift and changes in function and status may also be observed.

There is comparatively low association between Roman settlement and Domesday vills in the Vale of Holmesdale, although this is compensated for by a relatively high ratio of Roman settlement to parish churches and manors. Both Roman and early medieval settlement favoured the light calcareous soils at the foot of the Chalk Downs, and the density of Roman and early medieval settlement may obscure the true extent of either settlement shift or expansion by the 11th century, and the possible resettlement of the favoured soils. There is, nonetheless, some evidence for patterns of Roman settlement alignment and land organisation becoming fossilised in the linear holdings of early Anglo-Saxon estates that may indicate broader continuity of the Roman settlement landscape, if not individual settlements. Combined with the wider evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, a greater probability for potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries can be suggested, overall, although this would benefit further clarification.

The later medieval settlement character of the Vale of Holmesdale remained one of widely dispersed settlement, comprising numerous hamlets, farms and manors within a landscape of small, irregular fields and wooded shaws. Distinct linear trends in the alignment of land holdings and trackways across the *pays*, still visible by the late 19th century, nonetheless appear distinctly influenced by antecedent patterns of Roman settlement and social organisation.

Chapter 12. Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships in Western Kent: the Southern *Pays*

Introduction

The analysis of the three southern *pays* in western Kent, the Chart Hills, the Low Weald and the High Weald, is given below. As the data for the High Weald, in particular, was extremely limited, this *pays* is discussed in summary only.

The Chart Hills

Settlement data

Forty Roman settlements and 25 Roman cemeteries are recorded for the Chart Hills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 12.1**: **Fig. 12.1**).

Five 'Late Saxon' settlements are recorded for the Chart Hills, in addition to 35 Domesday vills, 34 parish churches and 59 manors. Their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement has been assessed and the results tabulated below (**Table 12.2**).

Soils data

The soils of the Chart Hills are predominantly fine loams over clay (typical argillic brown earths) across the broader extent of the *pays*, with variable tracts of coarser loams over clay (palaeo-argillic brown earths) across the centre and the west (SSEW 1983) (**Figs. 12.4 and 12.5**). Of the 65 Roman sites recorded for the *pays* (to include settlements and cemeteries), 59 (91%) were located on typical argillic brown earths, with 6 (9%) on palaeo-argillic brown earths. The metrics indicate that the majority of Roman settlement favoured the finer loams over clay soils that dominate across the centre and east of the Chart Hills. In the west of the *pays,* the loamy clay soils overlie non-calcareous sandstones with variable coverage of cherty drift, creating sandy acid soils that are typically wooded (McRae and Burnham 1973, 40). The current distribution of Roman settlement and cemeteries in the west of the *pays* is largely around the

Table 12.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Chart Hills, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 12.2 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the Chart Hills, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author based on the analysis of west Kent only.

Table 12.1: Chart Hills

Total number of Roman settlements 65	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	5	4	7	15	8%	6%	11%	23%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	1	3	1		2%	5%	2%	
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m		2				3%		
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m	1	4			2%	6%		
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m			1				2%	
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m		1	3			2%	5%	
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		3	2			5%	3%	
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		1				2%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	3	6	2	4	5%	9%	3%	6%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	4	6	1	4	6%	9%	2%	6%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	3	7	5	9	5%	11%	8%	14%

Table 12.2: Chart Hills

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m				Percentage of the total number recorded within the study area			
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery
'Late Saxon' settlement	5	0	2	3	0	0%	40%	60%	0%
Domesday vill	35	3	5	1	4	9%	14%	3%	11%
Parish church	34	2	4	1	4	6%	12%	3%	12%
Manor	59	2	8	4	8	3%	14%	7%	14%

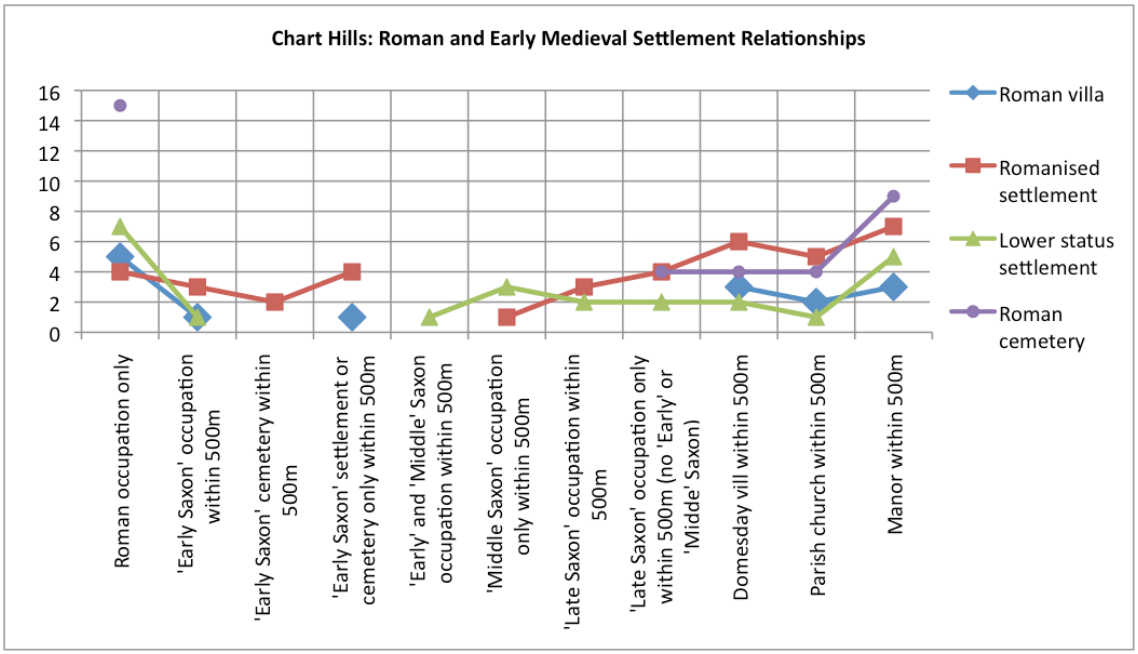


Figure 12.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Chart Hills and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

perimeter of these poorer soils (**Fig. 12.4**). The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 12.2**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the Chart Hills, all 5 'Late Saxon' settlements (100%), 33 out of 35 Domesday vills (94%), 31 out of 34 parish churches (91%) and 50 out of 59 manors (85%) are located on typical argillic brown earths, clearly demonstrating the preference for the finer loam over clay soils between the 5th to 11th centuries, with settlement distribution similar to that of the Roman period (**Fig. 12.5**). The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is also shown below (**Fig. 12.3**).

The evidence for the Chart Hills suggests that Roman settlement predominantly favoured the finer loam over clay soils of the *pays* (typical argillic brown earths) (**Fig. 12.2**), these being highly fertile where they are free of acid cherty drift (McRae and Burnham 1973, 40). The greatest density of Roman settlement is situated across the *pays*' central belt, largely concentrated along the tributaries of the River Medway (**Fig. 12.4**). A potential contraction of Roman settlement may be suggested across both the argillic and palaeo-argillic brown earths by the end of the Roman period, which, as with other areas of Kent, may have incorporated phases of settlement abandonment earlier in the Roman period. The relationship between Roman settlement and Domesday vills, parish

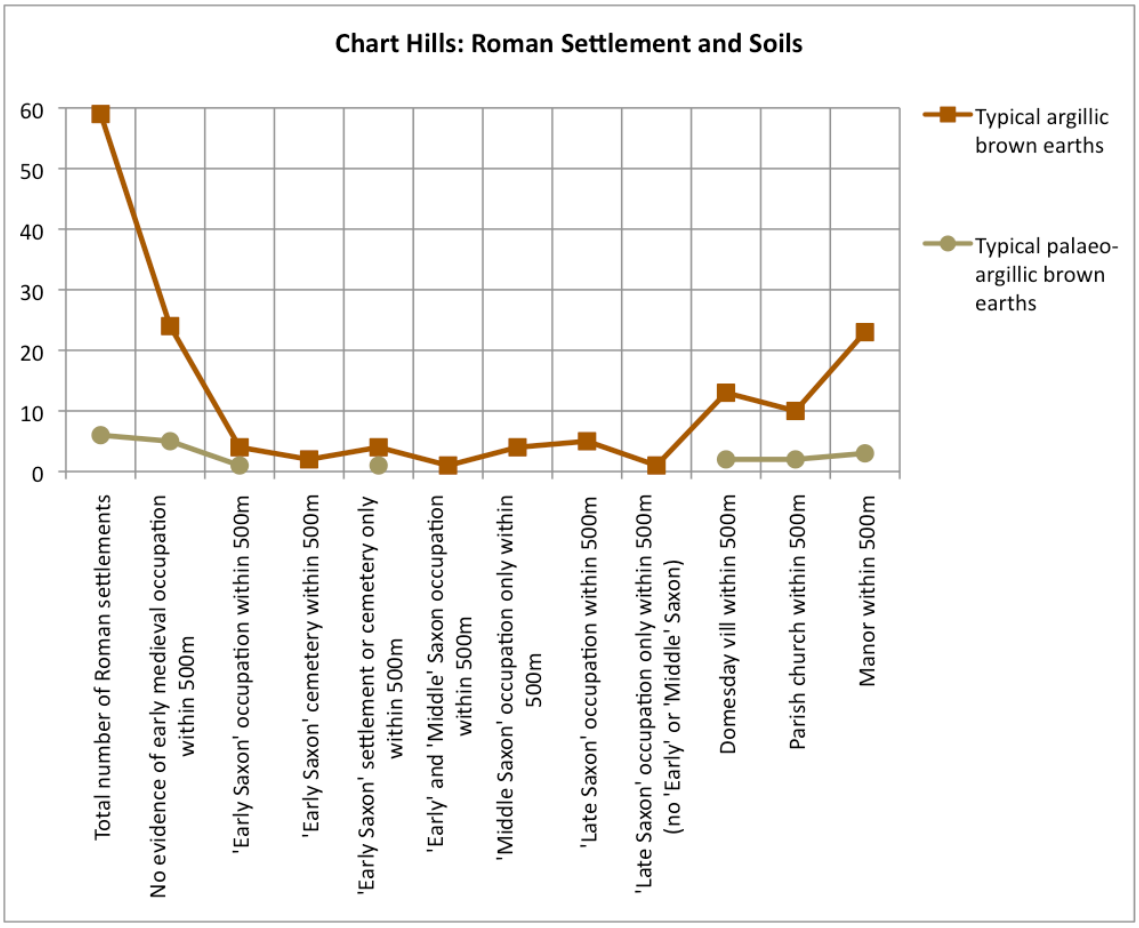


Figure 12.2. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the Chart Hills to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

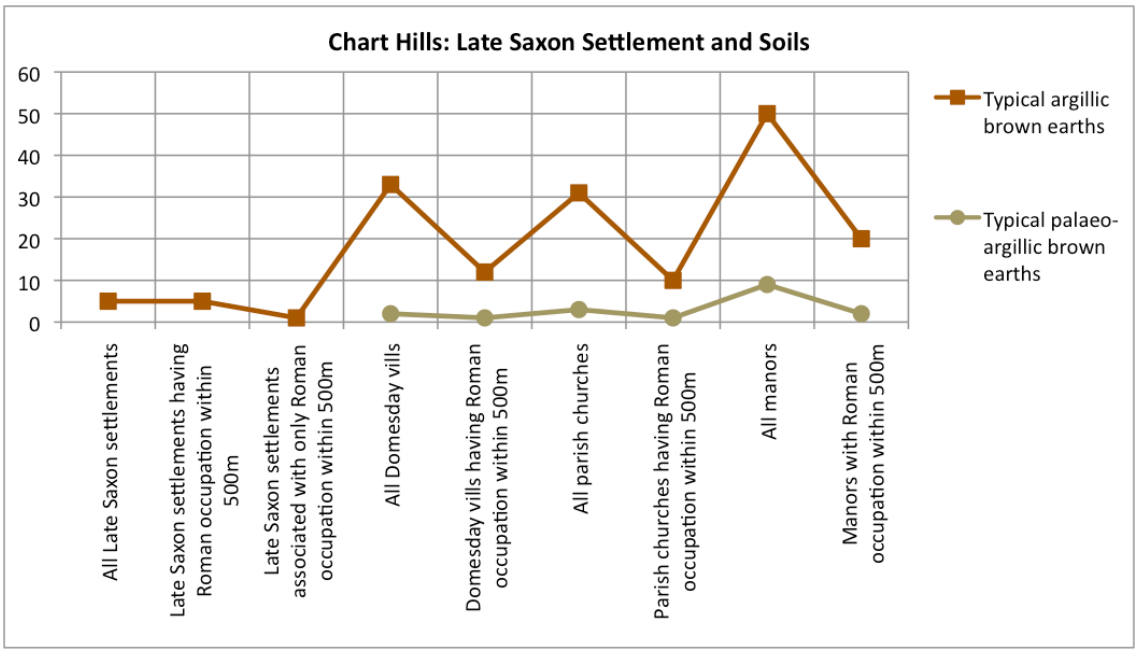


Figure 12.3. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Chart Hills to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

churches and manors, suggests that settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries continued to prefer these fertile soils, although there is insufficient data to demonstrate how far these relationships indicate potential continuity during this period or simply progressive resettlement of these favoured areas (**Figs. 12.4 and 12.5**). There are a small number of Domesday vills and parish churches, and a larger number of manors, located on palaeo-argillic brown earths (**Fig. 12.5**). This indicates a degree of settlement ingress onto these soils by the 11th century, potentially corresponding with settlement expansion and the continuing fragmentation of manors from the 13th century onwards. The considerable number of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors that demonstrate no apparent association with Roman settlement may partly reflect a lack of fieldwork for the Chart Hills, but may also suggest a shift or expansion of settlement by the 11th century that currently appears to bear no relationship to the antecedent Roman settlement landscape.

Discussion

The research results for the Chart Hills produced a comparatively high number of Roman settlements and cemeteries, which, at first glance, suggests the *pays* was densely settled during the Roman period, with a large ratio of high status settlement, including 10 Roman villas (**Fig. 12.4**). Almost 40% of the recorded sites, however, are early cremation cemeteries, broadly distributed across the *pays* and along the margins of heath and woodland (**Fig. 12.4**). The majority of these cemeteries, such as Ryarsh (KHER TQ65NE22), Crismill Farm, Bearsted (KHER TQ85NW6) and Cobtree Hall, Aylesford (KHER TQ75NW19), for example, suggest a 1st to 3rd century date. Of the 15 lower status Roman settlements recorded for the Chart Hills, nine also suggest a 1st to 3rd century date, at sites such as Leybourne (KHER TQ65NE119), Bradbourne Fields, Ditton (KHER TQ75NW137) or Foxbury, Seal (KHER TQ55SE11) for example. The majority of higher status Roman settlements indicate occupation into at least the 4th century, although two Romanised sites, at Snarkhurst Wood, Leeds (KHER TQ85NW11) and East Farleigh (KHER TQ75SW8) and a possible Roman villa at Plaxtol (KHER TQ65SW162) also suggest dating to the 3rd century. Taken together, the evidence may suggest a potential shift or contraction of Roman settlement across the Chart Hills by the 3rd century,

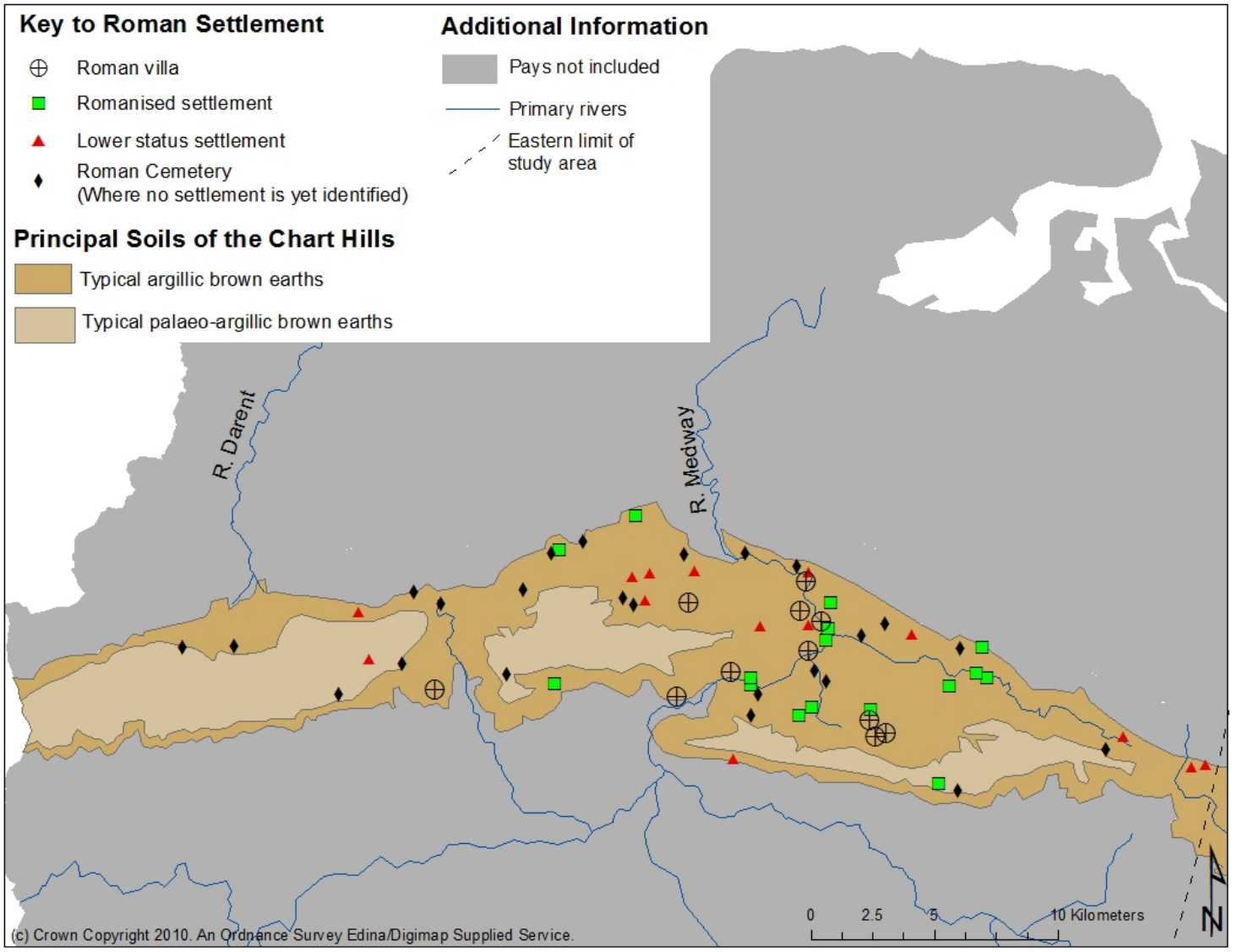


Figure 12.4. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Chart Hills in western Kent showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

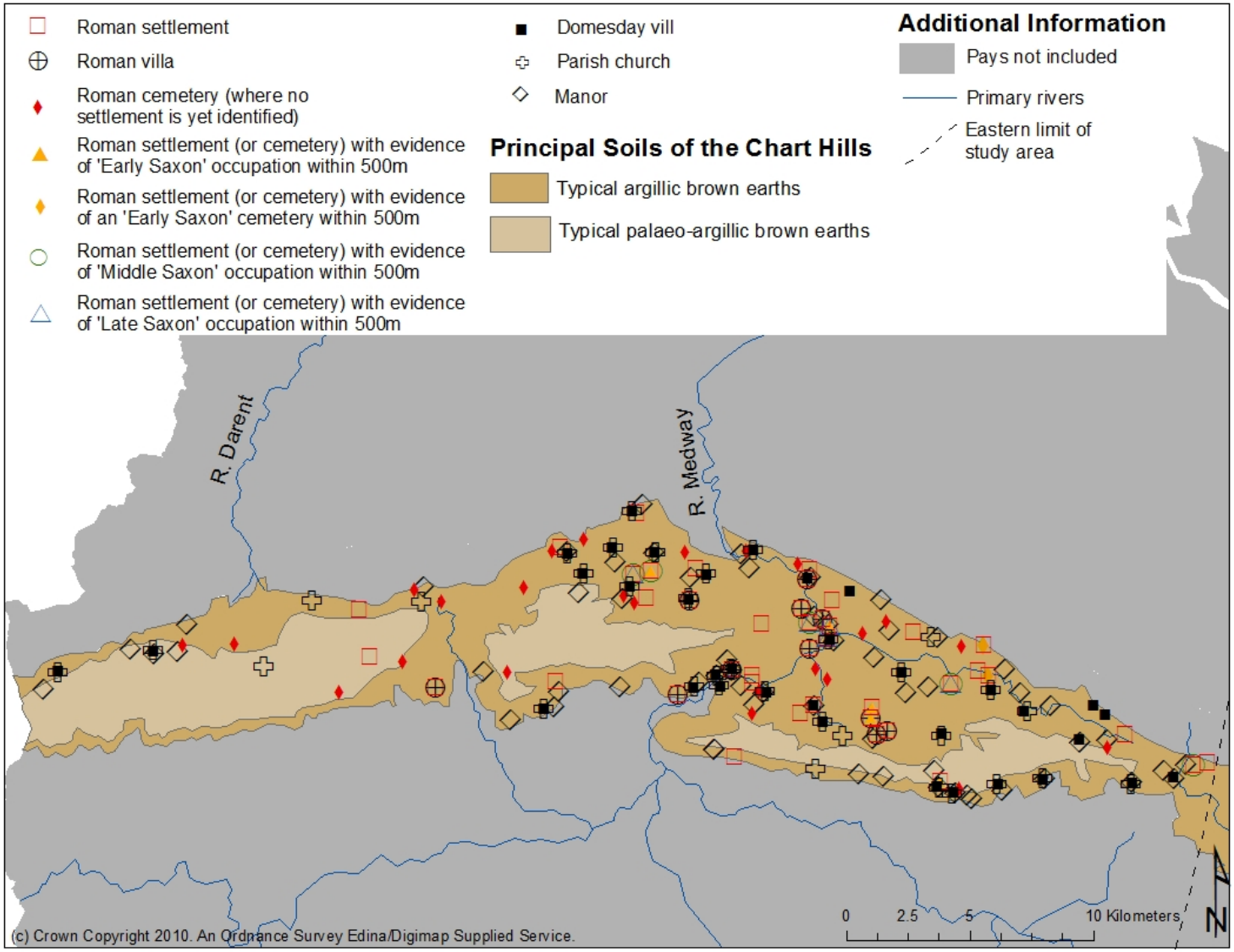


Figure 12.5. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Chart Hills in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

largely away from the interfluves and the woodland margins, and principally related to lower status occupation. By the late Roman period the major concentration of Roman settlement, predominantly of higher status, appears to favour the river valleys, with a reduced scatter of more mixed status settlement across the interfluvial areas of the central *pays*.

In common with much of Kent, material evidence for early medieval occupation is relatively limited for the Chart Hills (**Fig. 12.5**) and it is, therefore, difficult to make secure observations regarding potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries. Two Roman settlements potentially indicate an association with an 'Early Saxon' cemetery, although evidence for 4th century dating is not clearly apparent, and the provenance of associated Anglo-Saxon material is also uncertain. A Romanised settlement at Snarkhurst Wood, for example, dating to the 1st to 2nd centuries, lies *c*. 350m to the northeast of a Bronze Age barrow in which two Anglo-Saxon cremations (KHER TQ85NW11) form secondary burials. A further Anglo-Saxon burial was recorded *c*. 1km to the southeast in the early 1900's. Although the record for this site is vague, it locates the burial *c*. 300m east of a possible Romanised building at The Old Forge, Leeds (KHER TQ85SW20), the dating of which is unclear. Whilst a statistical association between the respective Roman and Anglo-Saxon sites is demonstrated, however, this does not confidently indicate potential continuity of occupation into the 5th to 7th centuries, based on the current evidence.

The limited evidence for Roman settlement associated with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon settlement on the Chart Hills is also largely related to higher status occupation. At Fremlin Walk, Maidstone, for example, excavation has recorded evidence for Roman settlement (KHER TQ75NE304) (**Fig. 12.6**) dating between the 1st to 4th centuries, with a possible phasing of occupation during this period (AOC Archaeology Group 2004; 2006). Several inhumation burials were recorded in association with 1st to 3rd century pottery and grave goods, although the greater extent of occupation, including a possible timber building tentatively ascribed to this period, dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries (AOC Archaeology Group 2006, 16-18). Wider evidence of Roman occupation in the vicinity includes a Romanised building (KHER TQ75NE139) *c*. 175m to the southeast and a Roman villa (KHER TQ75NE28) *c*. 400m to the northwest, as well as additional cemetery finds (**Fig. 12.6**). A small pit associated with the Roman

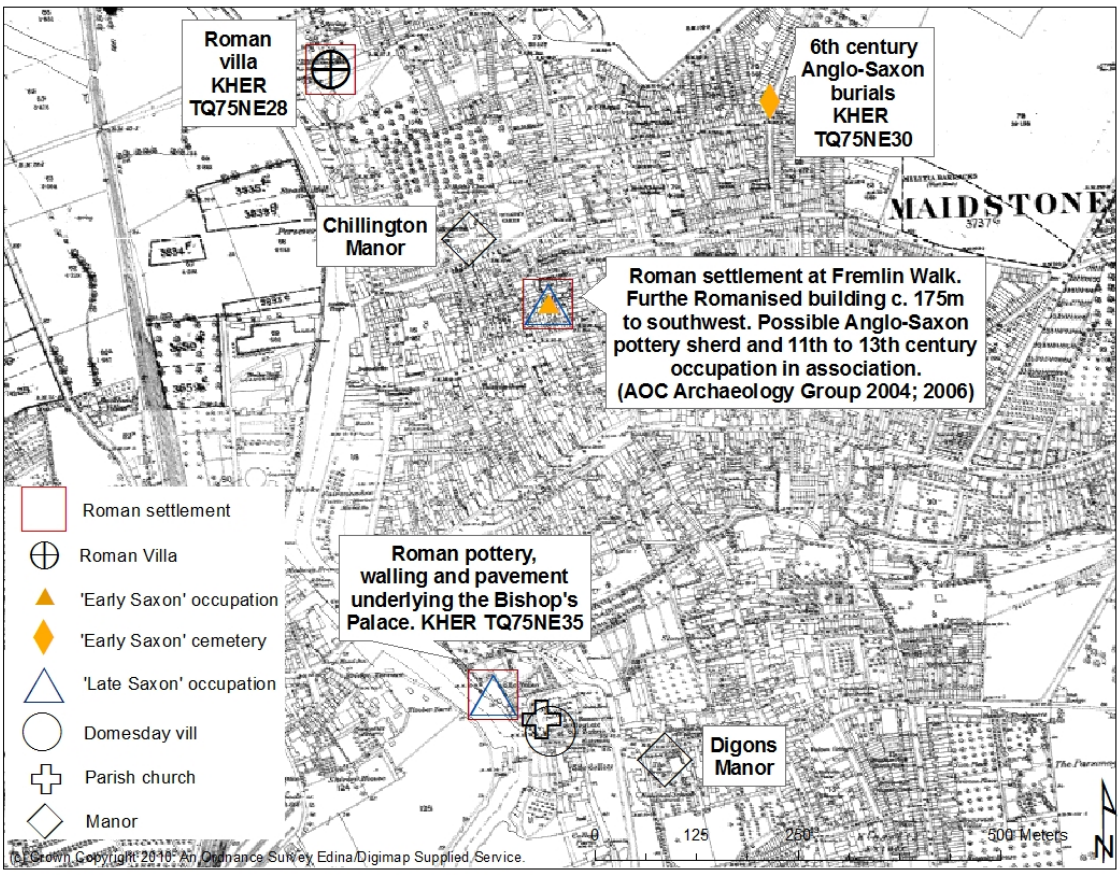


Figure 12.6. The evidence for Roman and Saxon occupation at Maidstone shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

occupation at Fremlin Walk contained a possible Saxon sherd, although the typology could equally reflect an Iron Age date (AOC Archaeology Group 2004, 12; 2006, 11). An Anglo-Saxon cemetery (KHER TQ75NE30), dated to the 6th century through associated grave goods, was recorded in the mid 19th century *c*. 350m to the northeast. Further pits and features (KHER TQ75NE302), across the excavation site, including evidence for a possible structure, were broadly dated to between the 11th to 13th centuries (AOC Archaeology Group 2004, 13; 2006, 18). Chillington Manor (KHER TQ75NE39) is located *c*.125m to the northeast: the standing house has a 16th century core, but the manor is documented at least as early as the 14th century (Hasted 1798-1801, 260-307). The Domesday church of St Mary's, *c*. 525m to the south may indicate the centre of the Domesday vill of Maidstone, bordering the Medway River, from where Roman pottery, ragstone walling and paving are recorded underlying the Norman foundations of the adjacent Archbishop's Palace (KHER TQ75NE35).

Taken as a whole, the broader evidence of Roman and early medieval occupation along the banks of the Medway at Maidstone reflects both the density and status of Roman settlement along the river valleys of the Chart Hills, and its potential influence on the developing settlement of the 5th to 11th centuries. The relationship, if any, between the Roman settlements at Maidstone is unclear, and the evidence for potential continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries is ephemeral in the extreme. The Roman villa at Maidstone suggests abandonment by the 4th century, but the high status Roman settlements associated with Chillington Manor and the core of Domesday settlement at Maidstone conceivably reflect potential continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries. Certainly they appear to have distinctly influenced the location of the Domesday vill and parish church, and, possibly, one of its associated manors.

At Boughton Monchelsea a Romano-British walled cemetery (KHER TQ75SE2) dating between the 1st to 3rd centuries was recorded in the mid 19th century. Excavation by SEAS (1996, Trenches T16 and T23) recorded sections of robbed out ditch relating to the cemetery's perimeter, whilst later excavation (MOLAS 2001) recorded more of the cemetery enclosure and internal tombs. External ditches relating to field boundaries and a possible enclosure were also recorded, aligned on a section of the Roman road from Rochester to Lympne, which borders the site to the southwest (*ibid*, 3) (**Figs. 12.7, 12.8 and 12.9**). Pottery associated with these features dated generically between the 1st to 4th centuries (*ibid*, 8). Large quantities of Roman tile, flue tile, painted wall plaster, and glass recovered from within the enclosure potentially relate to a high status building in the vicinity (*ibid*, 29), the assemblage possibly that of a Roman villa. Excavation by SEAS (1996, Trench T26) recorded a pit, or possible posthole (KHER TQ75SE130), *c*. 200m to the west of the cemetery, which contained 32 sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery (*ibid*, 5) (**Figs. 12.7, 12.8 and 12.9**). Subsequent excavation by MOLAS (1998, Trench 5) recorded pottery and loomweights from the same vicinity (KHER TQ75SE131). These shared some characteristics with the earlier finds but were considered LIA in date (*ibid*, 12-14). Despite some contradiction in the possible dating of these two sites at Boughton Monchelsea, however, the consensus seems to fall in favour of 'Early Saxon' occupation (MOLAS 1998, 4; SEAS 1996, 5).

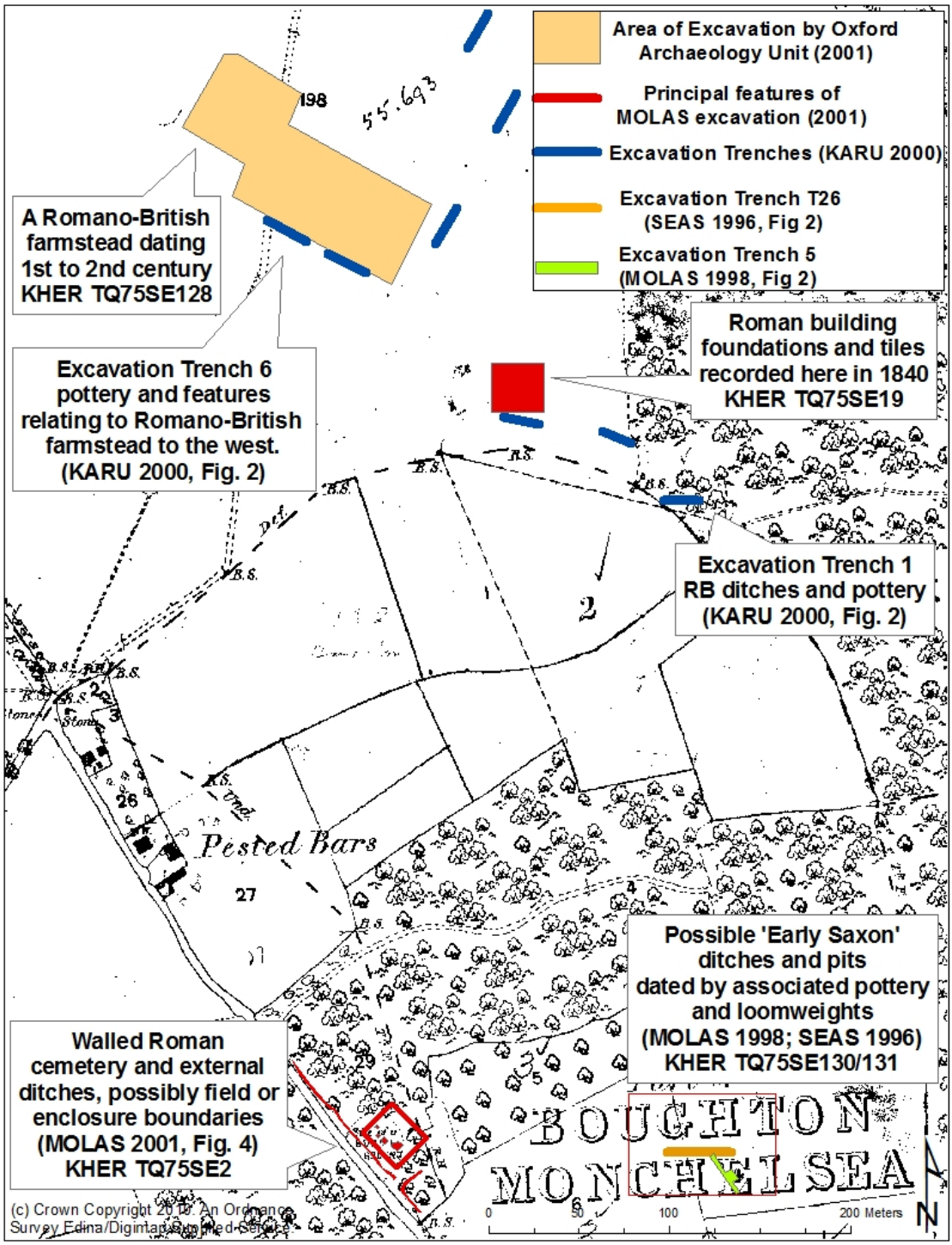


Figure 12.7. The evidence for Roman and Saxon occupation through excavation at Pested Bars Road, Boughton Monchelsea, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn by the author after KARU (1998, Fig.2), MOLAS (1998, Fig. 2; 2001, Fig. 4), Oxford Archaeology Unit (2001, Fig.1), SEAS (1996, Fig. 2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

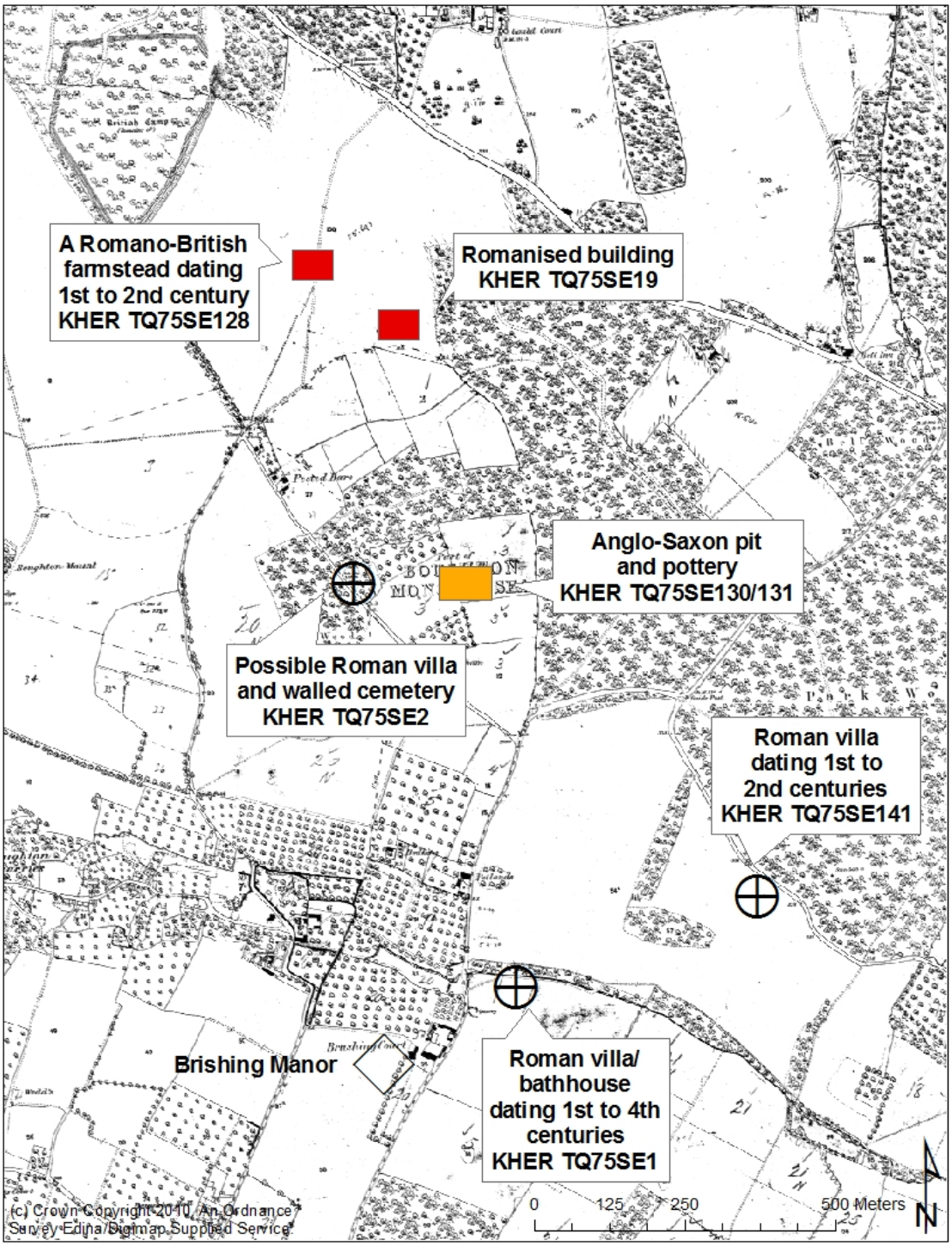


Figure 12.8. The location of Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation at Boughton Monchelsea in relation to the wider historic landscape context, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

The wider evidence for Roman settlement at Bought Monchelsea includes a Roman building (KHER TQ75SE19) recorded *c*. 450m to the northeast of the walled cemetery in the mid 19th century. Excavation (KARU 2000) targeting its recorded location exposed a section of ditch containing 2nd century pottery, with additional fragments of tile to its west (*ibid*, 14). LIA/early Roman ditches and pottery (KHER TQ75SE128) were recorded *c*. 175m to the northwest, possibly indicating a Romano-British farmstead in the vicinity (KARU 2000*,* 17-18; Oxford Archaeology Unit 2001, 4-5). Whilst the provenance and dating of the Roman occupation to the southeast remains unclear, it seems conceivable that a Romanised building may have superseded the early farmstead from the 2nd century (**Figs. 12.7 and 12.8**).

Another high status Roman building (KHER TQ75SE141) (and possible villa) is situated *c*. 850m southeast of the walled cemetery. Occupation largely dates to the 1st to 3rd centuries, with decline by the early 2nd century (MOLAS 2006, 64). A Roman bathhouse (KHER TQ75SE1) (and possible villa) lies *c*. 425m to its southwest (**Fig. 12.8**), with occupation dated through coin evidence to the 1st to 4th centuries (see KHER). Both sites may have bordered the Roman road from Rochester to Lympne although by the 2nd to 3rd century the principal focus of settlement had potentially shifted to the southwest (**Fig. 12.8**).

Although the possible 'Early Saxon' settlement is more closely associated with the Roman cemetery and possible villa lying adjacent to the Roman road, the wider landscape evidence is thought provoking. The alignment of the walled Roman cemetery and possible villa mirrors that of the Roman road and, also, some of the field boundaries that border the site as shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic maps (**Figs. 12.7 and 12.9**). A curvilinear boundary, shown on the same historic map, appears to suggest a large enclosure encompassing both the cemetery and the 'Early Saxon' settlement to its east (**Figs. 12.8 and 12.9**). Whether this is contemporary with either settlement is unknown, although it appears to truncate the Roman road to the southeast, suggesting it post-dates that. At the southern end of this potential enclosure lies Brishing Manor, documented at least as early as the mid 13th century (Hasted 1798-1801, 346-352). The manor is situated *c*. 150m west of the Roman bathhouse (KHER TQ75SE1) and possible villa, which may indicate a relationship, although whether the enclosure then relates to either the manor or this villa is also

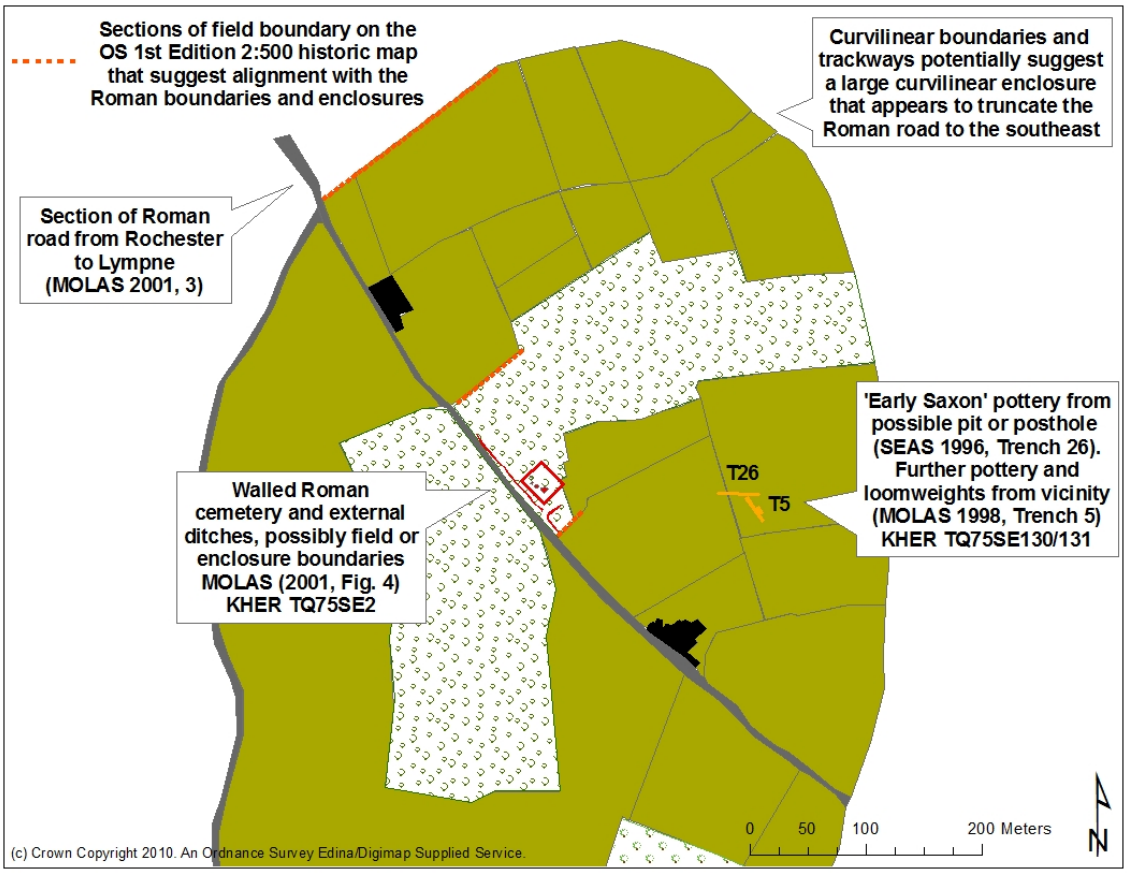


Figure 12.9. The pattern of field boundaries bordering Pested Bar Road, Boughton Monchelsea, and the outline of a possible curvilinear enclosure. The Roman walled cemetery, and possible villa, is situated at its centre, with an area of possible 'Early Saxon' occupation to the east. Some sections of linear field boundary, as shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map, indicate an alignment with the Roman field boundaries and enclosures, suggesting a possible relationship. Drawn after the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map, MOLAS (1998, Fig. 2; 2001, Fig. 4) and SEAS (1996, Fig. 2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

unknown. To interpret the wider evidence at Boughton Monchelsea as an indication of potential settlement continuity beyond the late Roman period is possibly a step too far. Whilst interpretation of the combined data is speculative, however, it appears to suggest a relationship between the Roman and early medieval landscape that conceivably hints at phases of occupation and settlement shift before the 3rd century, and patterns of Roman and/or Anglo-Saxon land organisation that remained fossilised within the early medieval landscape and into the late 19th century (**Figs.12.8 and 12.9**).

In addition to the material evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation, the Roman settlements discussed above demonstrate aspects of potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries through the ways they conceivably influenced subsequent organisation of the historic landscape, and their varying association with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. The combined evidence for

‘Late Saxon’ occupation, Domesday vills and parish churches on the Chart Hills broadly suggests settlement expansion across the *pays* by the 11th century, in common with the Kentish *pays* discussed so far. The distribution of 11th century settlement indicates this was still largely confined to the better soils, with only limited ingress into areas of surviving heath and woodland. In particular, there is a notable distribution of 11th century settlement in the west of the *pays* that currently demonstrates no association with Roman settlement (**Fig. 12.5**).

Everitt (1986, 51-52) observes that the Chart Hills west of the River Medway appears to have seen a phase of new settlement between the 11th to 13th centuries. The majority of Roman settlement in this part of the Chart Hills is represented by early cremations or lower status settlements of early Roman date. The cremation cemeteries do not currently indicate any evidence of later inhumations or associated settlement, potentially indicating a shift or contraction of settlement by the 3rd century. The perceived discontinuity between the Roman and early medieval settlement pattern in this part of the Chart Hills, therefore, may well reflect resettlement from the 11th century onwards, that was not influenced by any visible continuity of the early Roman settlement pattern.

The ratio of Domesday vills associated with Roman settlement on the Chart Hills is the lowest of the four *pays* discussed so far, at just 37%, with the ratio of parish churches associated with Roman settlement the second lowest, at 33%, above only the Chalk Downs (**Table 12.2**). The relative ratios of Roman settlement situated within 500m of a Domesday vill or parish church are 23% in both cases, also the lowest of the four *pays* discussed so far. The majority of these Roman settlements, however, suggest occupation into at least the 4th century, which may suggest that the contracted pattern of late Roman settlement did influence that of the early medieval period to some degree.

The ratio of Roman settlement in the Chart Hills situated within 500m of a manor is the highest of the four *pays* discussed so far, at 38%, as is the ratio of manors demonstrating an association with Roman settlement. As the extent of heath and woodland may have constrained the expansion of manors across the Chart Hills to some degree, these ratios may partially reflect dense resettlement of the better soils by the 11th century, with the spread of new manors by the 13th century making further ingress into the *pays* interior through progressive woodland clearance (Everitt 1986, 52). Although a distinct relationship between

Roman settlement and manors is suggested, in similar vein to the Chalk Downs (Chapter 10, 246), it remains unclear how far this reflects potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries or resettlement of areas already cleared of woodland during the Roman period.

Summary

The Chart Hills appears to have been relatively well settled during the Roman period, with a comparatively large ratio of high status settlement, including villas. The early Roman cremation cemeteries recorded for the *pays*, however, may indicate a distinct phase of settlement contraction away from the poorer soils by, the 3rd century, in favour of the principal river valleys and the fertile interfluves. The very limited evidence for Roman settlement associated with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation may reflect a further contraction of settlement by the late Roman period, although the current absence of evidence may simply be due to more mundane biases of recovery. Where material evidence for occupation between the 5th to 9th centuries is suggested, however, the wider association with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, as well as the intrinsic organisation of the historic landscape, indicates good probability for potential Roman settlement continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries, although this may have incorporated a shift or reorganisation of settlement on the better soils and along the major river valleys.

The ratios of Roman settlement associated with Domesday vills and parish churches are the lowest of the four *pays* discussed so far. As with other parts of rural Kent, this may reflect a lack of archaeological evaluation, but may also indicate a shift, or expansion, of settlement by the 11th century that was not influenced by the underlying Roman settlement pattern. This is particularly noticeable in the west of the *pays*, although even by the 11th century the broader extent of settlement appeared to continue to favour the better soils, with only limited ingress across areas of surviving heath and woodland.

The considerable number of manors recorded for the Chart Hills suggests the continuing increase of settlement into the 11th to 13th centuries and beyond, resulting in a densely dispersed settlement pattern, although this may have remained largely confined to the better soils, with relatively limited woodland

clearance. The association between Roman settlement and manors, therefore, may partly reflect resettlement of the better soils by the 11th century, although there is some potential evidence for higher status Roman settlement influencing patterns of estate holdings between the 5th to 11th centuries, through the alignment of field boundaries, and patterns of enclosure.

Low Weald

Settlement data

Thirteen Roman settlements and 4 Roman cemeteries were recorded for the Low Weald. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, with the results illustrated below (**Table 12.3**: **Fig. 12.10**).

Four 'Late Saxon' settlements were recorded for the Low Weald, in addition to 10 Domesday vills, 14 parish churches and 60 manors. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 12.4**).

Soils data

The soils of the Low Weald are predominantly typical stagnogleys, with extensive argillic gleys and pelo-alluvial gleys along the major river valleys and an isolated tract of gleyic argillic brown earths to the northwest of the River Medway (SSEW 1983) (**Figs. 12.13 and 12.14**). Of the 17 Roman sites recorded for the Low Weald (to include settlements and cemeteries), 15 (88%) were located on the heavy, slowly permeable clays (typical stagnogleys) of the Wealden plain, with just 2 (12%) on gleyic argillic brown earths. This might suggest that, although the river system provided easy access to the heavily wooded Weald, the wetter alluvial soils of the river floodplains were not so well favoured for settlement. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 12.11**).

Of the early medieval settlement recorded for the Low Weald, 2 out of the 4 'Late Saxon' settlements (50%) recorded for the Low Weald, 5 out of the 10 Domesday vills (50%), 9 out the 14 parish churches (64%) and 40 out of the 60

Table 12.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Low Weald, relative to Saxon occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 12.4 shows the percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements, Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the Low Weald, relative to their association with Roman settlement. Compiled by the author based on the analysis of west Kent only.

Table 12.3: The Low Weald

Total number of Roman settlements 17	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	2	2	2	2	12%	12%	12%	12%
Roman settlements having 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m		1				6%		
Roman settlements having an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m								
Roman settlements having just an 'Early Saxon' settlement or cemetery within 500m		1				6%		
Roman settlements having both 'Early' and 'Middle' Saxon occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having just 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		2		1		12%		6%
Roman settlements having just 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m		2		1		12%		6%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill		1				6%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church		3		1		18%		
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor		3	2	1		18%	12%	6%

Table 12.4: The Low Weald

	Total number recorded within the study area	Number having evidence of Roman occupation within 500m				Percentage of the total number recorded within the study area			
		Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery	Roman Villa	Other Romanised Settlement	Lower Status Settlement	Roman Cemetery
'Late Saxon' settlement	4	0	2	0	1	0%	50%	0%	25%
Domesday vill	10	0	1	0	1	0%	10%	0%	10%
Parish church	14	0	2	0	1	0%	14%	0%	7%
Manor	60	0	4	2	2	0%	7%	3%	3%

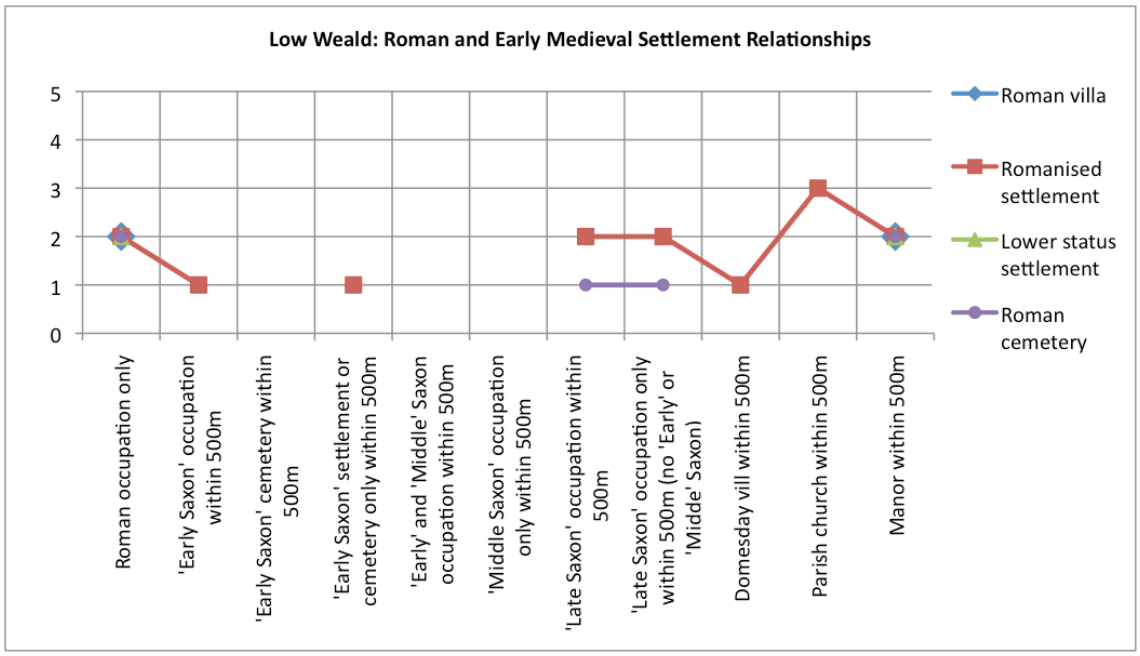


Figure 12.10. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Low Weald and the number of Roman settlements relative to 'Saxon' occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

manors (67%) were located on the heavy, slowly permeable clays. This would seem to suggest increased settlement along the wetter alluvial soils by the 11th century, although the widespread distribution of manors might also indicate distinct settlement expansion across the heavier clays of the wider plain from the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, potentially coinciding with progressive woodland clearance. The point data for early medieval and Roman settlement relationships, relative to soils type, is also shown below (**Fig. 12.12**).

The current evidence for Roman settlement on the Low Weald is relatively limited, but potentially suggests a highly dispersed settlement pattern across the heavy clay interfluves, with some indication for higher status settlement predominating along the alluvial clays of the principal river valleys (**Fig. 12.13**). As with the other Kent *pays*, soil type appears to have been only one factor in determining the course of settlement development at a sub-regional level during the Roman and early medieval periods. The heavily wooded landscape of the Weald, in conjunction with its heavy clay soils, was an obstacle to widespread settlement during the Roman period, whilst the easy access provided by the river valleys and the location of the rich local iron reserves influenced the progress of settlement ingress (Lawson 2004a, 29). There is a distinct lack of material evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation across the Low Weald, which may be partly due to a lack of archaeological fieldwork, but may

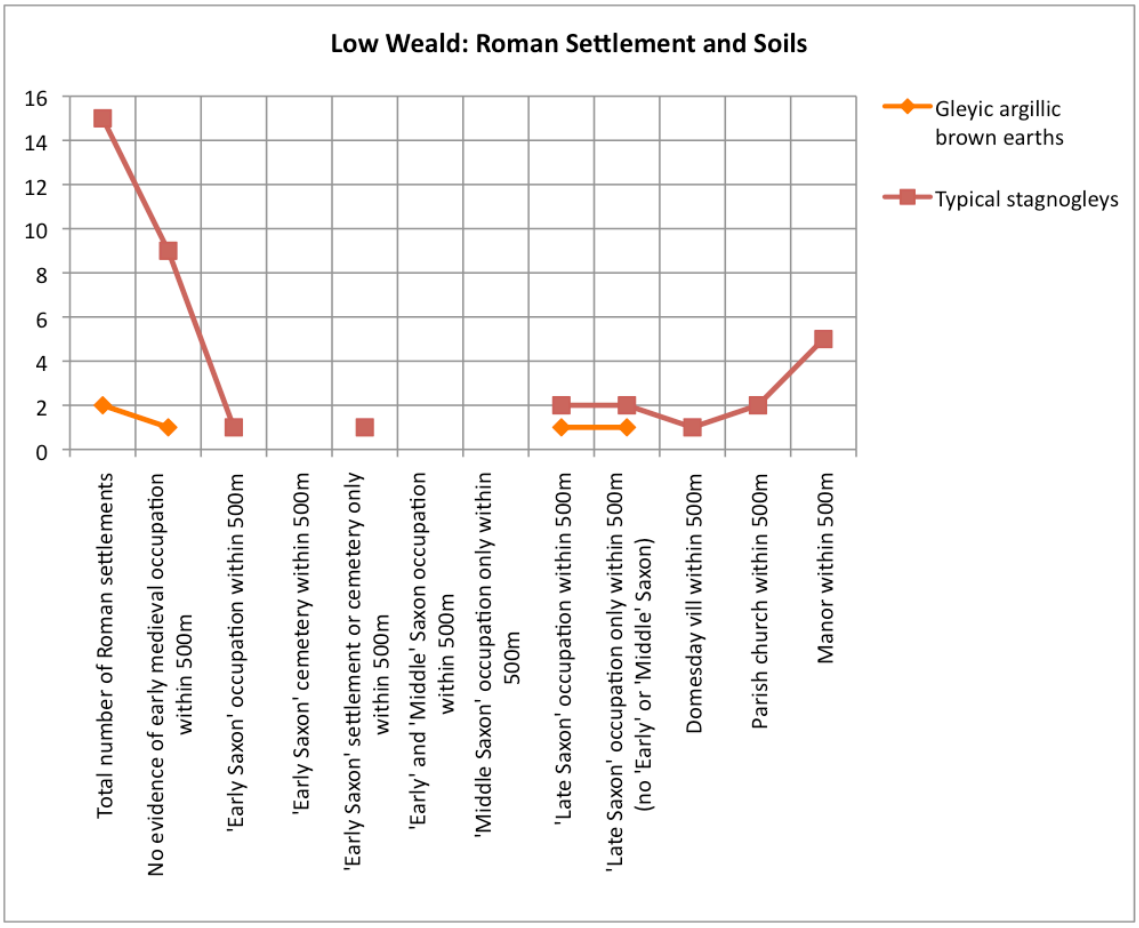


Figure 12.11. Line chart showing the relationship of Roman settlement on the Low Weald to aspects of Saxon settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

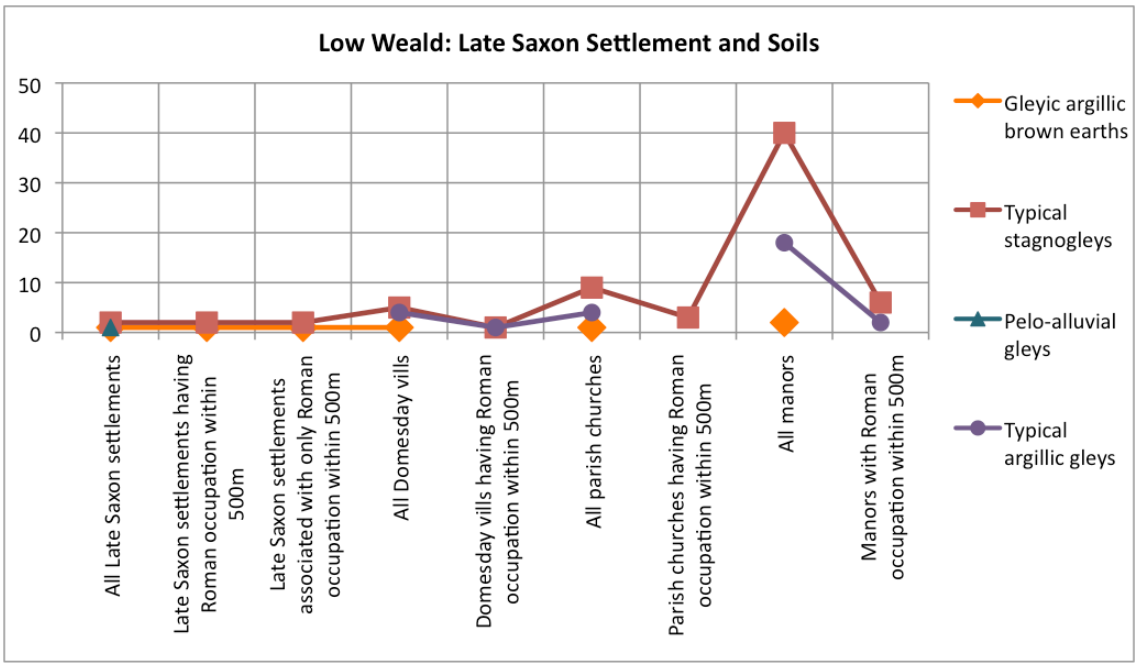


Figure 12.12. Line chart showing the relationship of 'Late Saxon' settlement, parish churches and manors on the Low Weald to Roman occupation activity, relative to soil type. All data compiled by the author.

equally reflect a marked contraction of Roman settlement across the wider *pays* by the end of the Roman period. There is only limited evidence to suggest the potential continuity of Roman settlement by the 11th century, through association with Domesday vills or parish churches, although, again, this does not clearly relate to soils so much as proximity to the river valleys. In contrast, the marginal increase in Roman settlement associated with manors across the typical stagnogleys (**Fig. 12.14**) seems likely to reflect resettlement of the heavier interfluvial soils through woodland clearance and manorial fragmentation from the 13th century onwards.

The evidence for 11th century settlement on the Low Weald suggests increasing settlement along the alluvial clays (**Fig. 12.14**). The distribution of Domesday vills and parish churches also potentially indicates limited expansion across the heavy interfluvial clays by the 11th century, broadly mirroring the extent of settlement during the Roman period. This contrasts with the documentary evidence for manors on the Low Weald, which, as well as suggesting a continuing increase of settlement along the alluvial clays of the river valleys, indicates considerable expansion across the heavy interfluvial clays. There is only a limited association between manors and Roman settlement across the Low Weald (**Fig. 12.14**), suggesting that settlement expansion beyond the extent of Roman occupation may not have occurred until at least the 13th century, or later. Where manors are associated with Roman settlement this seems likely to indicate resettlement by the 13th century, or later, rather than potential settlement continuity from the 5th century onwards.

Discussion

The research results for the Low Weald returned a comparatively low number of Roman settlements and cemeteries that currently suggest the *pays* was sparsely settlement during the Roman period. Over half the Roman settlements, however, indicated relatively high status, with two Roman villas recorded at Plaxtol (**Fig. 12.13**). Dating evidence suggests the majority of Roman cremation cemeteries, such as Skeynes Park (KHER TQ44NW4), Tonbridge (KHER TQ64NW2) and Leggs Wood, Frittenden (KHER TQ84SW3), for example, and lower status settlements, such as Lashenden (KHER TQ84SW104), Lovehurst (KHER TQ74SE103) and Lindridge (KHER TQ75SE147), date between the 1st

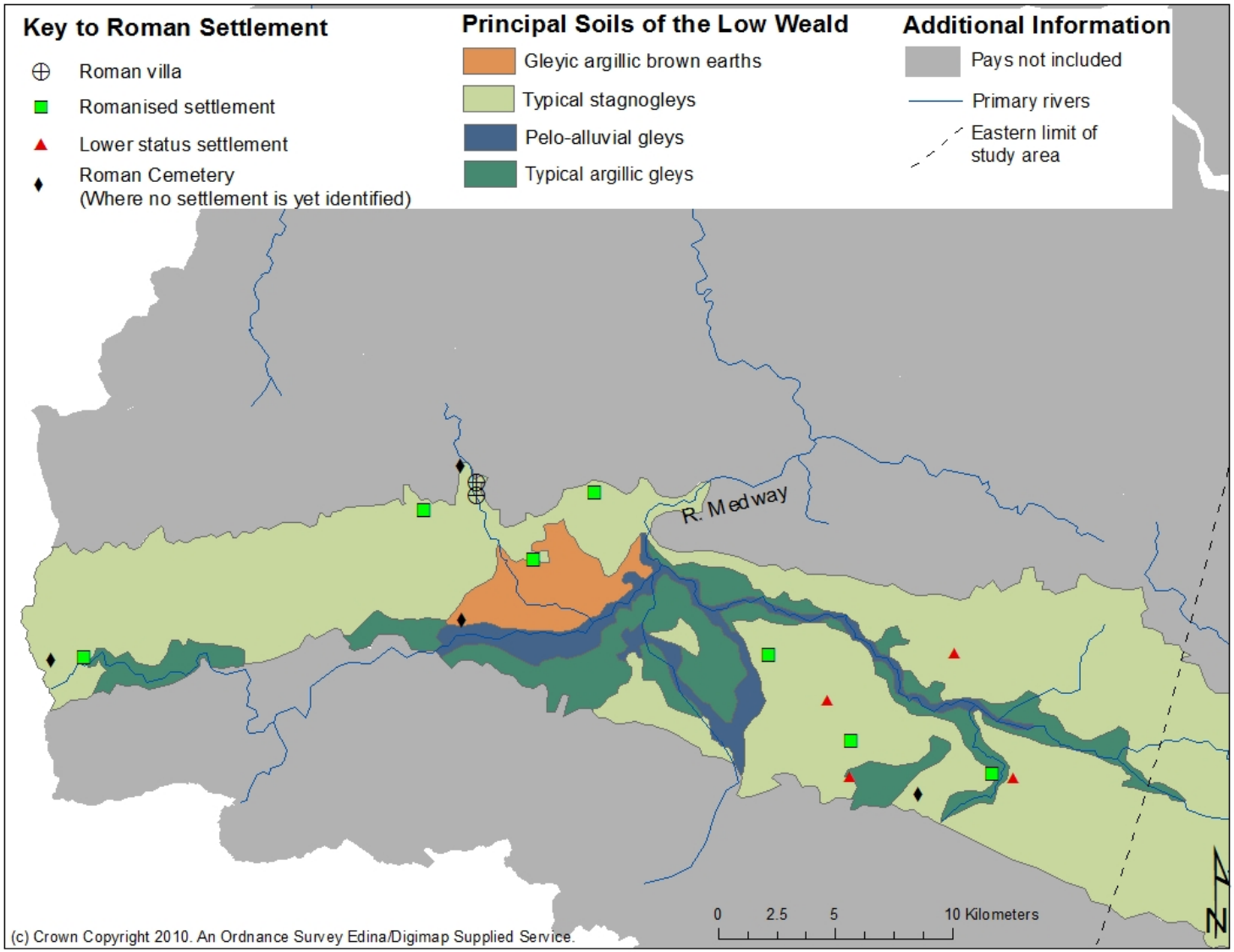


Figure 12.13. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Low Weald in western Kent showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soils types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983).

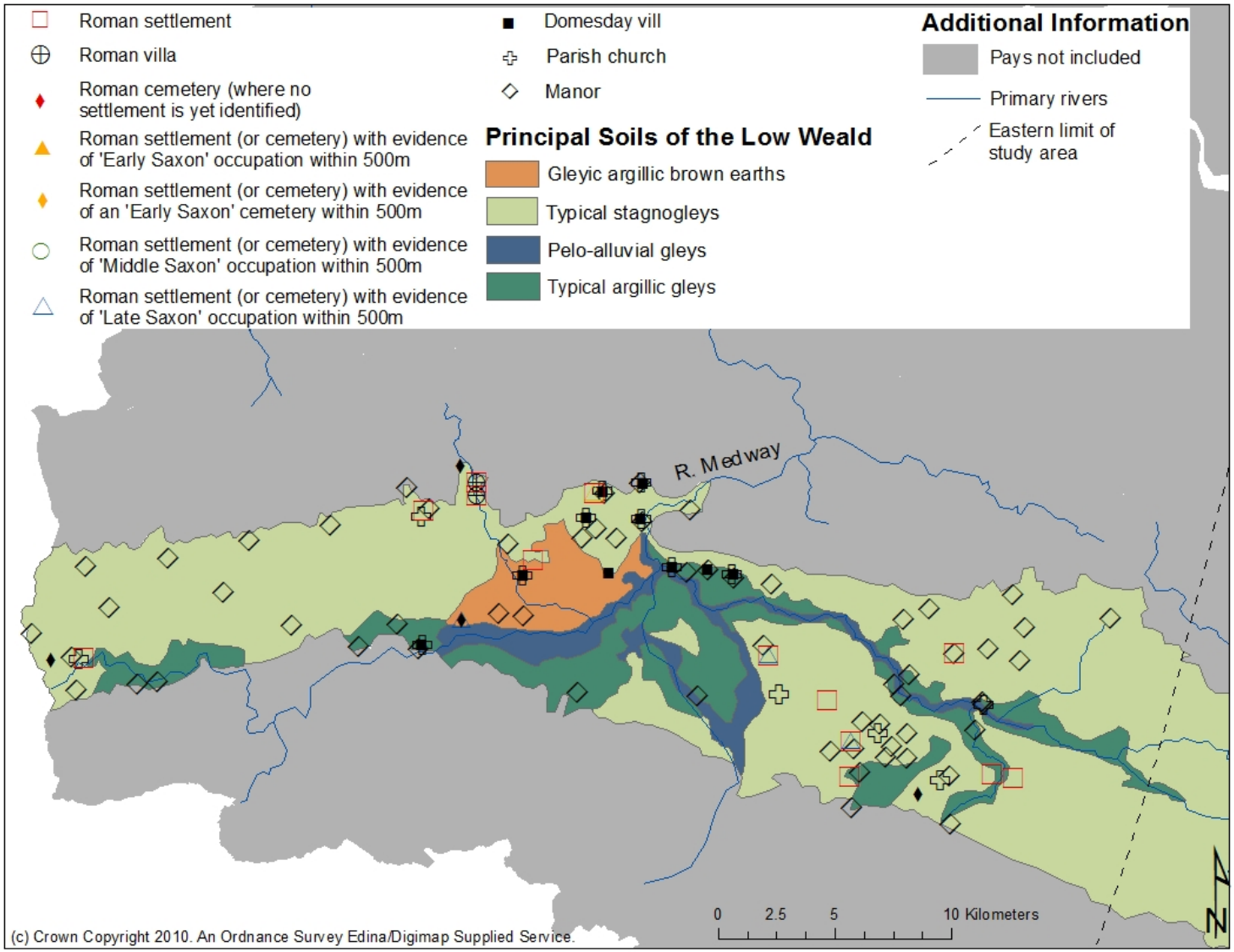


Figure12.14. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Low Weald in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

to 3rd centuries. Higher status Roman settlements on the Low Weald lack clear dating evidence in many cases, although two Romanised settlements, at Brattle and Broad Forstal Farms, Staplehurst (KHER TQ74SE100/101) also suggest a 1st to 3rd century date. The pattern of Roman settlement abandonment across the Low Weald, therefore, appears to have much in common with other Kentish *pays*, potentially demonstrating a shift or contraction of settlement away from the heavier interfluvial soils by the 3rd century. By the late Roman period the major extent of Roman settlement, largely of higher status, appears to favour the river valleys: the two villas (KHER TQ65SW4/20) at Plaxtol, on the River Bourne, and a Romanised settlement (KHER TQ44NW3) at Edenbridge, on the River Eden, for example, all suggest dating into the 4th century. On the current evidence, however, even this may have been comparatively limited.

Material evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation on the Low Weald is presently confined to just two sites. A 'Saxon' (but possibly Iron Age) pottery assemblage is recorded in association with a Roman barrow and/or Romanised building (KHER TQ65SE4) at Mereworth Castle. The site record is ambiguous as finds relate to excavation work in the mid 19th century, but an assemblage of Roman tile and pottery, including Samian, was recorded in the vicinity of the barrow, potentially suggesting a Romanised building nearby. A Saxon billhook and pottery sherds were also recorded, although the sherds from the site held at Maidstone Museum appear to be of Iron Age date (see KHER TQ65SE4). The Roman barrow is situated *c*. 300m southwest of the site of the old parish church and *c*. 400m west of Mereworth Castle, which overlies the site of the ancient manor house (**Fig. 12.15**). Mereworth is situated on the heavy clay interfluves between the rivers Medway and Bourne, on the northern margins of the Low Weald, and is documented as a Domesday manor (Morgan 1983, 12,3). The combined evidence at Mereworth suggests the potential for continuity of occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries, although both the Roman and Saxon evidence here merit further clarification.

At Borough's Oak, East Peckham, a sherd of 'Middle Saxon' pottery and further possible 'Late Saxon' sherds were recovered from several pit-like features exposed during excavation (Archaeology South-East 2004, 5-6) of the possible royal Saxon manor of 'Stontynburgha' (KHER TQ64NE7), documented in the Domesday Book. A 4th century Roman coin was found in association, but no

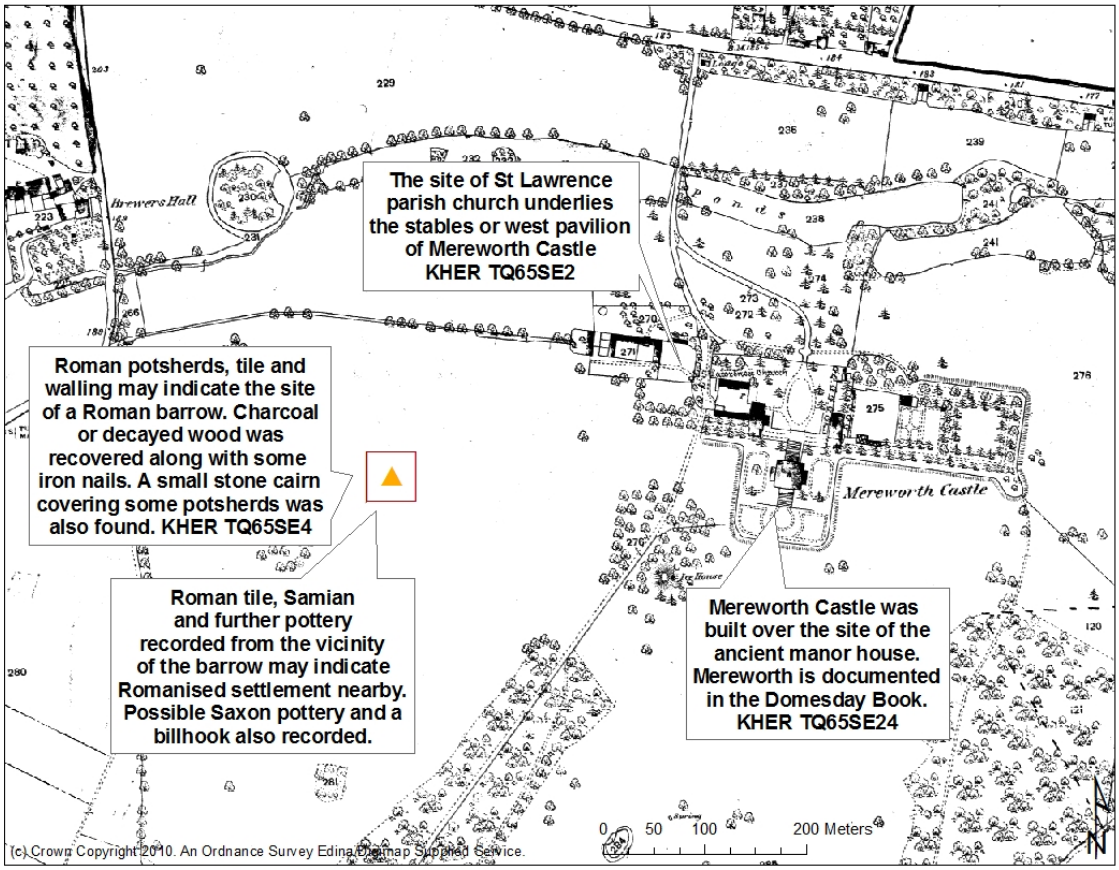


Figure 12.15. The location of the possible Roman barrow at Mereworth Castle, potentially associated with Roman and 'Early Saxon' occupation, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

certain evidence for either the Saxon manor, or associated Roman occupation, was recovered. The OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map shows a large area variously bound by streams and a road to the northeast, suggesting a possible enclosure (**Fig. 12.16**). Whilst excavation failed to identify certain evidence for the Saxon manor, this could, potentially, lie elsewhere, although the parcel of land may rather reflect a land holding of a distant lowland estate (*ibid*, 8). Based on the current evidence it is also not possible to say whether the Saxon occupation evidenced at Borough's Oak had Roman origins.

It seems plausible, on the evidence available to date, that where Roman settlement continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries may have occurred, this was principally along the tributaries of the River Medway, particularly around the confluence of these rivers in the central north of the *pays* (**Fig. 12.14**). Only one Roman settlement (6%), however, demonstrates an association with a Domesday vill, while only four Roman settlements (18%) suggest an association with a parish church. Looking retrogressively, of the ten Domesday

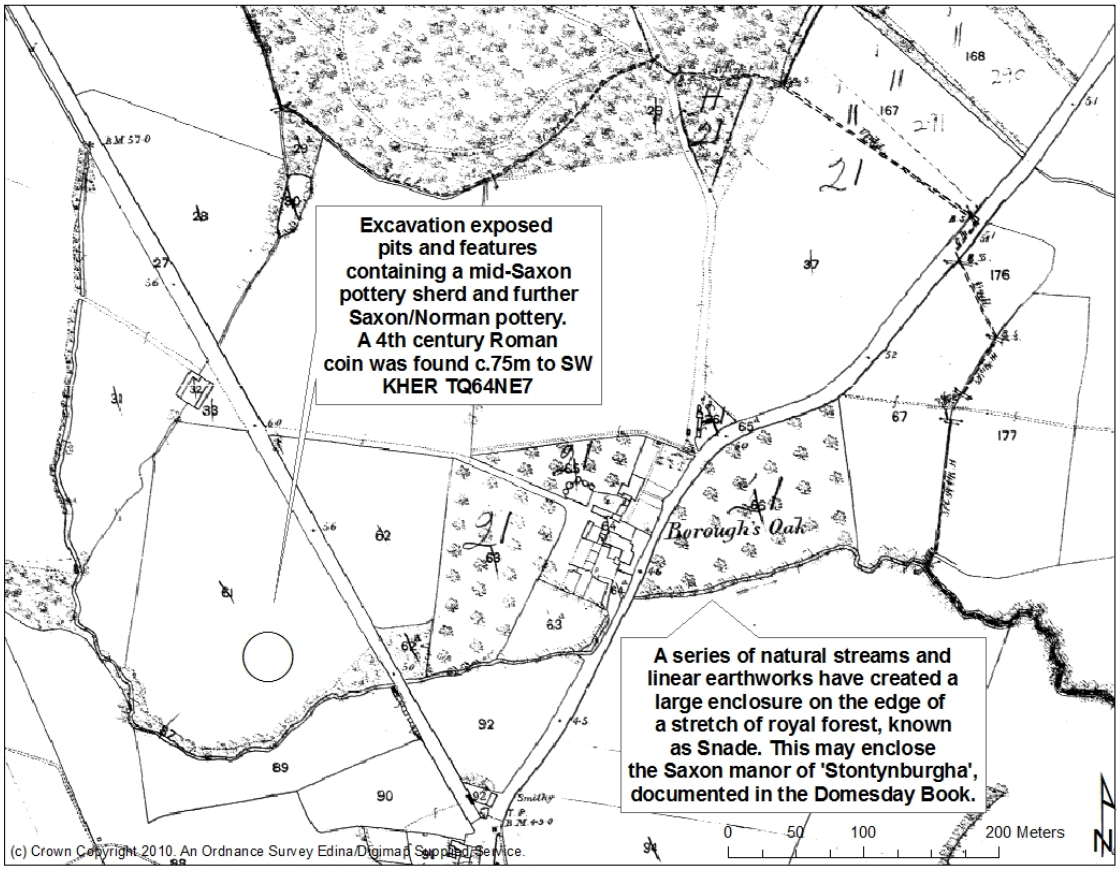


Figure 12.16. The possible location of the Saxon manor of 'Stontynburgha' and the associated evidence for potential Roman and Saxon occupation, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

vills recorded for the Low Weald, only two (20%) suggest possible Roman origins. Likewise, of the 14 parish churches recorded, only 3 (21%) suggest associated Roman occupation. Although the lack of evidence could partially reflect the extent of archaeological fieldwork across the Low Weald, the overarching interpretation appears to be one of potential Roman settlement discontinuity between the 5th to 11th centuries.

The distribution of Domesday vills and parish churches suggest that the extent of 11th century settlement may have been similar to that of the Roman period, with an expansion of settlement along the river valleys, and limited ingress back onto the clay interfluves (and see Lawson 2004a, 29). The only material evidence for 11th century activity associated with Roman settlement on the Low Weald comes from a series of heat reddened pits, possibly charcoal pits, recovered at Broad Forstal and Brattle Farms as part of a pipeline watching brief (Network Archaeology 2003). At Broad Forstal, excavation recorded evidence for at least one Romanised building (KHER TQ74NW100), with

postholes and fragments of daub suggesting further structures (*ibid*, 19-22). Occupation was dated by pottery to the 1st to 3rd centuries (*ibid*, 19). Five heat-reddened pits (KHER TQ74NW101) were recorded *c*. 150m east of this site, two of which were radiocarbon dated to 1030-1230 cal AD (*ibid*, 23-24). At Brattle Farm the evidence for Roman occupation (KHER TQ74SE101) also suggested possible structures, with tile fragments indicating a possible Roman building in the vicinity (*ibid*, 30). Occupation was dated by pottery to the 1st to 2nd centuries (*ibid*, 28-29). A further heat-reddened pit (KHER TQ74SE102) was recorded *c*. 400m to the south of this site, radiocarbon dated to 1030-1210 cal AD *(ibid*, 34). The medieval moated farmstead (KHER TQ74SE3) at Brattle Farm lies *c*. 300m to the southeast (**Fig. 12.17**).

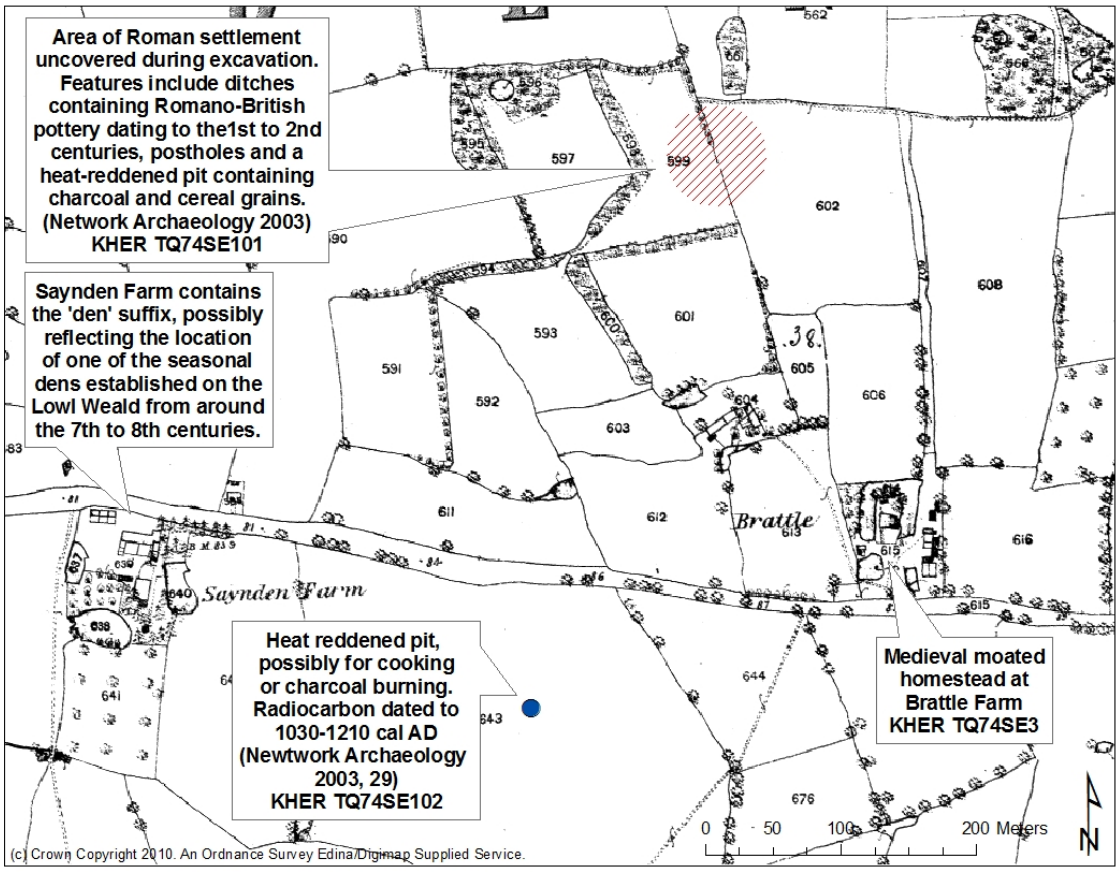


Figure 12.17. The location of Roman settlement at Brattle Farm, in association with evidence for 11th to 13th century industrial activity, possibly charcoal burning, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER and Network Archaeology (2003, Figs. 23 and 30). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

The charcoal from the pits was generally from oak heartwood, potentially related to charcoal working (Network Archaeology 2003, 67-68). This would seem to indicate that by the 11th century substantial woodland still survived in

the vicinity of Brattle and Broad Forstal Farms. Furthermore, the evidence from the pits indicates 11th to 12th century activity, but not, necessarily, settlement, although this may have been present nearby. One of the pits at Broad Forstal was radiocarbon dated to the LIA/early Roman period: its proximity to the early medieval pits may reflect some continued activity in those pockets of cleared woodland across the Low Weald between the 1st to 11th centuries: Saynden Farm, *c*. 500m west of Brattle Farm, contains the 'den' suffix, possibly indicating the location of one of the seasonal dens that were established across the Low Weald from the 7th to 8th centuries onwards (see Everitt 1986, 54) (**Fig. 12.17**), with the medieval moated farmstead at Brattle Farm potential evidence for more permanent resettlement somewhere between the 10th to 13th centuries. Although this is somewhat conjectural, the wider evidence at Brattle Farm appears to demonstrate some persistence of activity between the 5th to 11th centuries. This need not have been consistent across the centuries, however, nor required permanent settlement in itself. The broader evidence for early medieval settlement of the Low Weald suggests that seasonal exploitation of the *pays* did not develop as more permanent settlement before around the 10th century (Everitt 1986, 54), although this may have occurred earlier along some of the major access routes (Lawson 2004a, 29).

Currently, only 6 Roman settlements demonstrate an association with a manor, although this reflects 36% of the total, equal to the Vale of Holmesdale. In contrast, only 8 manors demonstrate an association with Roman occupation, just 13% of the total, equal to the Chalk Downs. The relationship between Roman settlement and manors may further reflect patterns of resettlement of cleared woodland from the 11th to 13th centuries onwards. The potential continuity of Roman settlement, and its influence on the location of Domesday vills and additional manors, may yet be shown in some instances, but the evidence does not currently support this. The widespread distribution of manors across the Low Weald illustrates the broad ingress of settlement across the *pays* from the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, possibly more prevalent in the east (**Fig. 12.14**). The evidence from 19th century mapping suggest the later medieval settlement character of the Low Weald was highly dispersed, with small, irregular fields potentially illustrating the piecemeal enclosure of land through woodland clearance, as illustrated by the strips of relict woodland that divide the fields surrounding Brattle Farm (**Fig. 12.17**).

Summary

The Low Weald suggests sparse settlement during the Roman period, with settlement distribution largely governed by ease of access along the river valleys, and by the location of local iron resources. Over half the Roman settlement recorded demonstrates some degree of higher status, which includes two Roman villas. As with the other Kentish *pays*, a contraction of Roman settlement by the 3rd century is suggested, with a general move away from the heavy clay soils of the interfluves and towards the river valleys. This is mainly apparent in lower status settlements, although there is potential evidence for abandonment by the 3rd century at some Romanised sites in the wooded interior of the *pays*, such as Brattle and Broad Forstal, for example.

Evidence for Saxon occupation on the Low Weald is limited in the extreme. This may simply reflect the lack of archaeological fieldwork, but could potentially reflect significant settlement contraction by the 5th century. The distribution of Domesday vills and parish churches broadly mirrors that of the Roman period, potentially indicating that settlement of the Low Weald remained at a lower level than that of the Roman period until around the 11th century. With such limited evidence for 5th to 11th century occupation, however, these observations remain somewhat speculative. Evidence from some sites, such as Brattle and Broad Forstal Farms, for example, on the clay interfluves east of the River Medway, suggests that activity across the *pays* interior by the 11th century probably related to the exploitation of timber and mineral resources. This may have involved some degree of temporary settlement, but not, necessarily, permanent occupation. Where an association with Roman settlement is potentially demonstrated, as at Brattle and Broad Forstal, for example, this would seem to reflect resettlement by the 11th century, rather than potential settlement continuity, although a lower level of activity may have persisted in the interim.

As with the Chart Hills, the considerable number of manors recorded for the Low Weald suggests progressive woodland clearance and continuing settlement ingress across the clay interfluves of the *pays* into the 11th to 13th centuries and beyond. The result was a highly dispersed settlement pattern and complex patterns of land division and tenure. The limited association between Roman settlement and manors may indicate some longevity in patterns of land clearance and social organisation that influenced the location of manors from

the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, particularly along the river valleys, but it seems likely that this involved a resettlement of previously cleared land by the 11th century, rather than potential Roman settlement continuity.

High Weald

A summary of results

The High Weald returned only five Roman settlements: two Romanised settlements, one lower status settlement and two early cremation cemeteries. Three sites were located on heavy, slowly permeable clays (typical stagnogleys), with two on less heavy loams over clay (stagnogleyic argillic brown earths). There was a lack of 4th century dating for all but one site, a Romanised settlement (KHER TQ73SE3) where the dating was unclear. No apparent evidence of Saxon occupation was recorded for the Low Weald and no viable analysis of the changes in settlement patterns for the *pays* between the 5th to 11th centuries can be made, beyond one of potentially broad settlement discontinuity before, or by, the 5th century.

Only one Domesday vill was recorded for the High Weald, although there are 17 documented parish churches, broadly distributed across the stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the *pays* (**Fig. 12.18**). This suggests that there was some degree of settlement ingress across the loam over clay soils of the region by the 11th to 12th centuries, although this cannot be related to the pattern of Roman settlement, based on current evidence. The distribution of manors demonstrates continuing settlement expansion from the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, again, largely across the loam over clay soils (**Fig. 12.18**).

In view of the limited settlement data for the High Weald, no further analysis of the results will be made for this thesis.

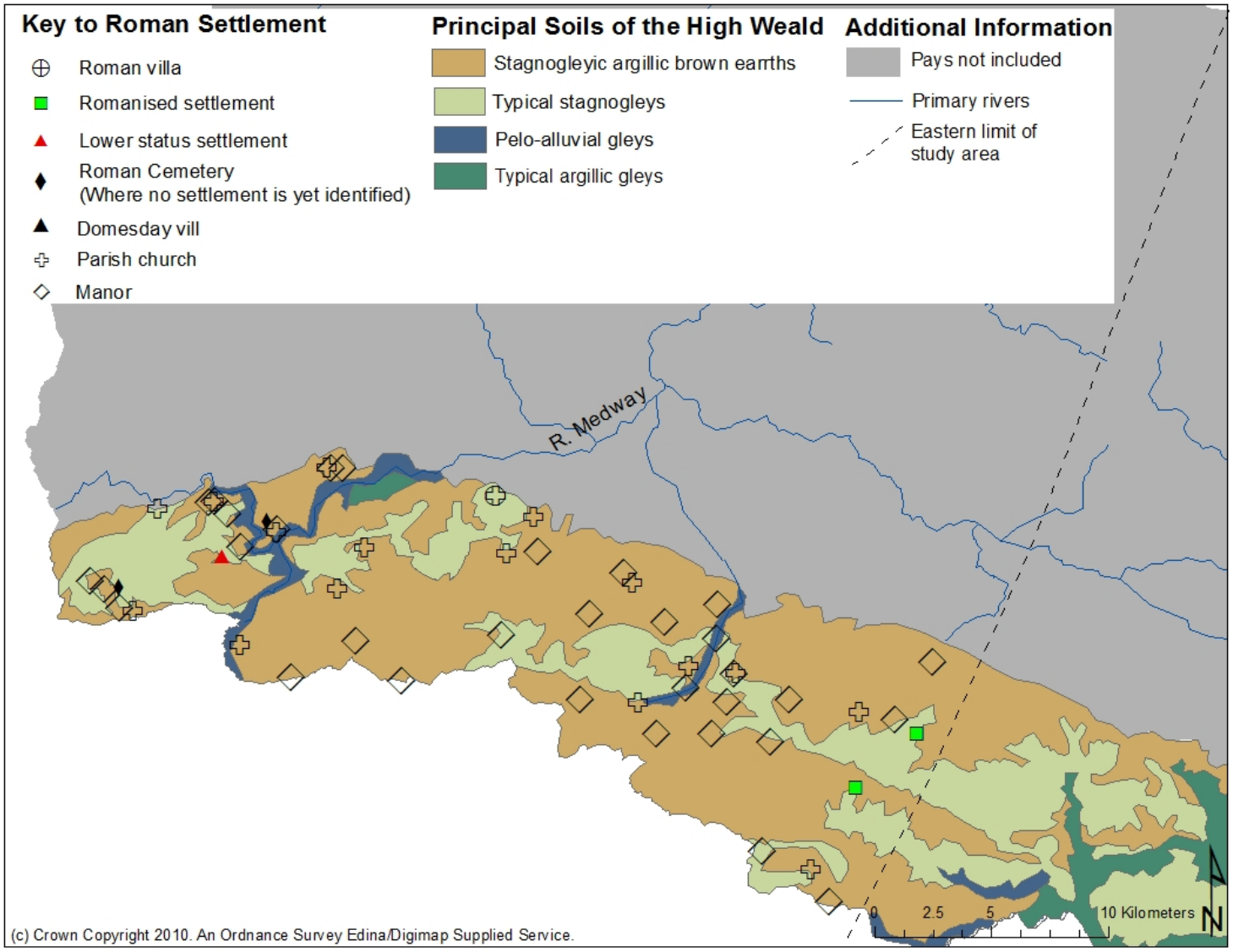


Figure12.18. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the High Weald in western Kent shown in relation to soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using SSEW (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Chapter 13. Kent: Final Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Evaluation of results

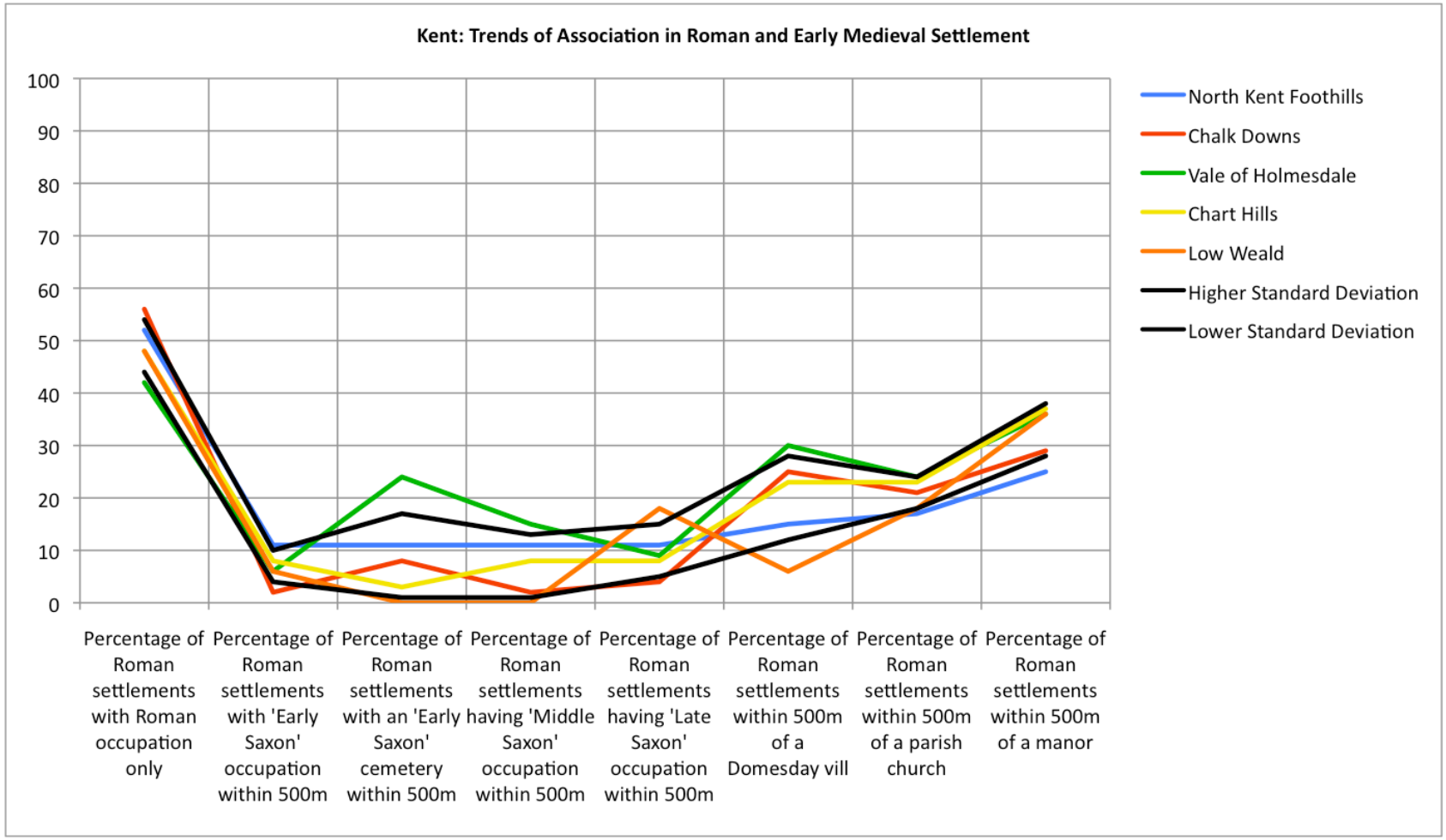
The settlement data for western Kent has been metrically assessed by *pays*, excluding the High Weald due to its small sample size. Comparative analysis of the results attempts to demonstrate whether Roman and early medieval settlement patterns within any given *pays* conform to, or deviate from, suggested settlement trends (**Tables. 13.1 and 13.2; Figs. 13.1 and 13.2**). As with Norfolk, the results for each *pays* are given as percentages relative to their respective populations, with standard deviation shown to 1σ. Sample sizes reflect combined totals of Roman settlements and cemeteries, irrespective of dating, as the evidence for this is not broadly consistent.

The ratio of Roman settlements in western Kent suggesting no relationship to early medieval settlement falls between 42% (the Vale of Holmesdale) and 56% (the Chalk Downs) across the five *pays* represented. The ratio of Roman settlements associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation falls between just 2%, for the Chalk Downs, and 11%, for the North Kent Foothills. The Vale of Holmesdale demonstrates a comparatively high ratio of Roman settlement associated with 'Early Saxon' cemeteries, at 24%. Overall, the North Kent Foothills and the Vale of Holmesdale demonstrate the greatest association with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation, with the Vale of Holmesdale consistently suggesting the highest deviation from the mean (**Table 13.1; Fig. 13.1**). Whilst the ratios for Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement relationships are relatively low compared to Norfolk (as to be expected, given the relative lack of material evidence), the results confirm that the fertile loam over clay soils of these two *pays* consistently demonstrate greater potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries, compared to the calcareous soils of the Chalk Downs or the loamy clays and clay soils of the Chart Hills and the Low Weald.

The Low Weald consistently indicates the lowest deviation from the mean for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships (**Table 13.1**; **Fig. 13.1**), except for a jump to the highest deviation for Roman settlement associated with

Table 13.1. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for western Kent. Sample sizes for each *pays* are given, excluding the High Weald. The results are shown as percentages and the standard deviation for each relationship category has been calculated to one standard deviation, or 1σ, demonstrating 68% probability.

Kent *Pays*	The North Kent Foothills	The Chalk Downs	The Vale of Holmesdale	The Chart Hills	The Low Weald	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of Roman settlements	123	48	34	65	17				
Percentage of Roman settlements that demonstrate no relationship between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns	52%	56%	42%	48%	48%	49%	5	54%	44%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Early Saxon' occupation within 500m	11%	2%	6%	8%	6%	7%	3	10%	4%
Percentage of Roman settlements with an 'Early Saxon' cemetery within 500m	11%	8%	24%	3%	0%	9%	8	17%	1%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Middle Saxon' occupation within 500m	11%	2%	15%	8%	0%	7%	6	13%	1%
Percentage of Roman settlements with 'Late Saxon' occupation within 500m	11%	4%	9%	8%	18%	10%	5	15%	5%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	15%	25%	30%	23%	6%	20%	8	28%	12%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	17%	21%	24%	23%	18%	21%	3	24%	18%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	25%	29%	36%	37%	36%	33%	5	38%	28%



Sample size:

North Kent Foothills: 123

Chalk Downs: 48

Vale of Holmesdale : 34

Chart Hills: 65

Low Weald: 17

Figure 13.1. Line graph showing the relative percentages for trends of association in Roman and early medieval settlement across the western Kent pays, excluding the High Weald, due to small sample size. Higher and lower parameters of standard deviation are shown to 1 σ.

‘Late Saxon’ occupation (material settlement evidence, independent of Domesday vills, parish churches or manors). The caveats to all the analysis discussed here are potential biases in archaeological evaluation or the effect of small sample sizes on statistical accuracy. The Low Weald potentially reflects both issues but the consistently low ratios nonetheless suggest that its 11th century settlement pattern was least shaped by that of the Roman period

The ratio of Roman settlement associated with Domesday vills is highest for the Vale of Holmesdale, at 30%, which sits just above the highest standard deviation from the mean. The ratio of Roman settlement associated with a parish church is also highest for the Vale of Holmesdale, at 24% (**Table 13.1; Fig. 13.1**). This may suggest that the *pays*’ 11th century settlement pattern was influenced by the pattern of underlying Roman settlement to a greater than average extent, compared to the other *pays* in western Kent. The ratio of Roman settlements associated with a Domesday vill, parish church or manor are all surprisingly low for the North Kent Foothills, at just 15% and 17% respectively (**Table 13.1; Fig. 13.1**). This may suggest the *pays* saw a degree of settlement shift somewhere between the 8th to 11th centuries, but may also partly reflect patterns of settlement organisation particular to the North Kent Foothills by the 11th century, where Domesday vills possibly represent the caputs of the large estates in this part of Kent, with the lower hierarchy of 11th century settlement not so clearly visible in the documentary record.

The ratios of Roman settlement associated with manors in western Kent demonstrate remarkable parity for the Vale of Holmesdale, the Chart Hills and the Low Weald, at 36%-37%, although these figures may reflect differing processes at work (**Table 13.1; Fig. 13.1**). In the Vale of Holmesdale the relationship may be linked to the large estates that developed across the *pays* during the early medieval period, but which typically indicate potential Roman origins, suggesting a greater likelihood of continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries. Across the poorer soils and wooded areas of the Chart Hills and the Low Weald, the relationship between Roman settlement and manors may party reflect the growth in new manors from the 11th to 13th centuries onwards, suggesting a greater likelihood of resettlement by this period.

Retrogressive analysis of 11th century and Roman settlement relationships in western Kent largely concurs with the trends demonstrated above, although

there are a few conflicts that may be partly due to comparatively limited material evidence for 'Late Saxon' occupation and possible biases in archaeological fieldwork creating some spurious results. This is most apparent for the Chalk Downs, which suggests contrasting ratios for Domesday vills and parish churches associated with Roman occupation (**Table 13.2; Fig. 13.2**). This may, however, indicate that the pattern of late Roman settlement did determine the siting of Domesday vills to a large degree. The suggested lack of association with parish churches possibly reflects the dispersed settlement character of the *pays* and a lesser influence on the wider 11th century settlement pattern as a result of settlement shift or expansion. The results broadly suggest that the 11th century settlement patterns of the Vale of Holmesdale, the North Kent Foothills, and to a lesser extent, the Chart Hills, were most closely influenced by patterns of late Roman settlement, with that of the Low Weald most clearly disassociated from the late Roman settlement pattern (**Table 13.2; Fig. 13.2**).

The ratio of manors associated with Roman occupation on the Chalk Downs and the Low Weald fall below the lowest parameter of standard deviation, potentially reflecting the increase in manors across these *pays* from the 13th century onwards and, possibly, expansion beyond the original extent of Roman occupation. In contrast, the higher than average ratio of manors associated with Roman occupation on the Chart Hills, may suggest that, by the 11th century, the *pays* had seen greater than average resettlement of land previously cleared and occupied during the Roman period (**Table 13.2; Fig. 13.2**).

Kent pays: regional variation and soils evidence

The distribution of Roman settlement in western Kent largely favoured the fertile loams over clay soils of the north coast, the Vale of Holmesdale and the Darent and Medway valleys. Across the western Chart Hills and the broader extent of the Chalk Downs and the Weald, traditionally areas of acid heath or woodland, Roman settlement may have been largely confined to sites associated with resource exploitation or local industry. As with Norfolk, higher status settlement, including the majority of Roman villas, appears predominantly located along the river valleys, with lower status occupation more broadly distributed across the interfluves. There are also a number of Roman villas to the east of River Medway, spaced out along the north coast and the foot of the Chalk Downs.

Table 13.2. Early medieval and Roman settlement relationships for western Kent. Sample sizes for each *pays* are given, excluding the High Weald. The results are shown as percentages and the standard deviation for each relationship category has been calculated to one standard deviation, or 1σ, demonstrating 68% probability.

Kent *Pays*	The North Kent Foothills	The Chalk Downs	The Vale of Holmesdale	The Chart Hills	The Low Weald	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of 'Late Saxon settlements (having material evidence of 11th century occupation)	14	5	3	5	4				
Percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements with Roman occupation within 500m	100%	40%	100%	100%	75%	83%	24	107%	59%
Percentage of 'Late Saxon' settlements with Roman occupation only within 500m	43%	40%	100%	20%	75%	56%	28	84%	28%
Total number of Domesday vills	31	26	22	35	10				
Percentage of Domesday vills with Roman occupation within 500m	53%	54%	41%	37%	20%	41%	12	53%	29%
Total number of parish churches	41	35	17	34	14				
Percentage of Parish Churches with Roman occupation within 500m	36%	23%	42%	33%	21%	31%	8	39%	23%
Total number of manors	59	40	32	59	60				
Percentage of manors with Roman occupation within 500m	30%	13%	35%	38%	13%	26%	11	37%	15%

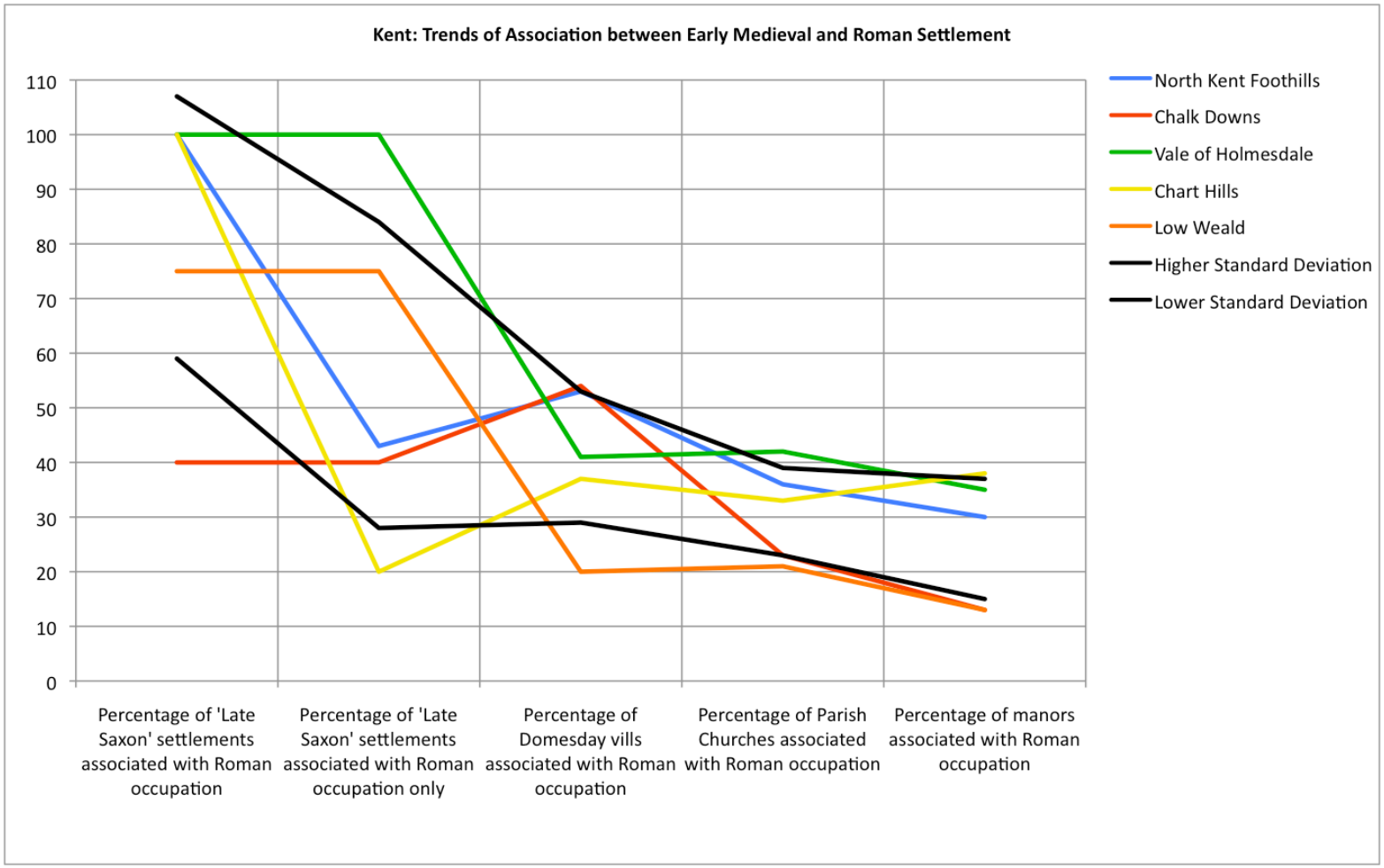


Figure 13.2. Line graph showing the relative percentages for trends of association in early medieval and Roman settlement across the western Kent pays, excluding the High Weald, due to small sample size. Higher and lower parameters of standard deviation are also shown to 1σ.

Sample sizes

North Kent Foothills:
'Late Saxon' settlement: 14
Domesday vills: 31
Parish churches: 41
Manors: 59

Chalk Downs:
Late Saxon' settlement: 5
Domesday vills: 26
Parish churches: 35
Manors: 40

Vale of Holmesdale:
Late Saxon' settlement: 3
Domesday vills: 22
Parish churches: 17
Manors: 32

Chart Hills:
Late Saxon' settlement: 5
Domesday vills: 35
Parish churches: 34
Manors: 59

Low Weald:
Late Saxon' settlement: 4
Domesday vills: 10
Parish churches: 14
Manors: 60

There are a large number of Roman cemeteries in western Kent, particularly early cremation cemeteries. The distribution of these may suggest a broader density of Roman settlement across the interfluves in western Kent during the 1st to 3rd centuries. There is currently a lack of later inhumations or settlement associated with these sites, however, which may indicate an abandonment or shift in settlement, or a change in the relationship between mortuary practices and settlement, by the 3rd century. Where a shift or displacement of settlement by the 3rd century is more clearly suggested, newly established settlement commonly reflects some degree of Romanisation, as potentially demonstrated at Boughton Monchelsea, on the Chart Hills (Chapter 11, 303-307), and Northfleet, on the North Kent Foothills (Chapter 10, 251-252), for example. Across some parts of western Kent, however, the lack of later inhumation burials or late Roman settlement potentially suggests more wholesale abandonment of the poorer or heavier clay soils by the 3rd century, on the Weald, the west of the Chart Hills and the Chalk Downs, for example. The wider pattern of late Roman settlement suggests a concentration of largely higher status Roman settlement along the river valleys and fertile soils of the north coastal plain and the Vale of Holmesdale, with both higher and lower status Roman settlement more widely dispersed across the interfluves (**Fig. 13.3**).

The assessment of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in western Kent, relative to areas of heavier and lighter soils, is potentially compromised due to the disparity in sample size (**Fig. 13.4**). Nonetheless, there are some possible points of comparison to be made: the relative ratios for potential Roman settlement abandonment and Roman settlement associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation are both higher for the heavier soils (**Fig. 13.4**), in some contrast to Norfolk (Chapter 8, 183-185), where the ratios for Roman settlement associated with 'Early Saxon' occupation are higher for the lighter soils. The ratio of Roman settlement associated with an 'Early Saxon' cemetery in western Kent, however, is distinctly higher for the lighter soils (**Fig. 13.4**). Relative ratios of Roman settlement associated with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors also appear higher for the lighter soils (**Fig. 13.4**). These soils principally relate to the margins and dry valleys of the Chalk Downs, some areas of the north coastal plain and along the foot of the chalk scarp in the Vale of Holmesdale. The statistics seem to indicate that the lighter soils saw a greater relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement during the

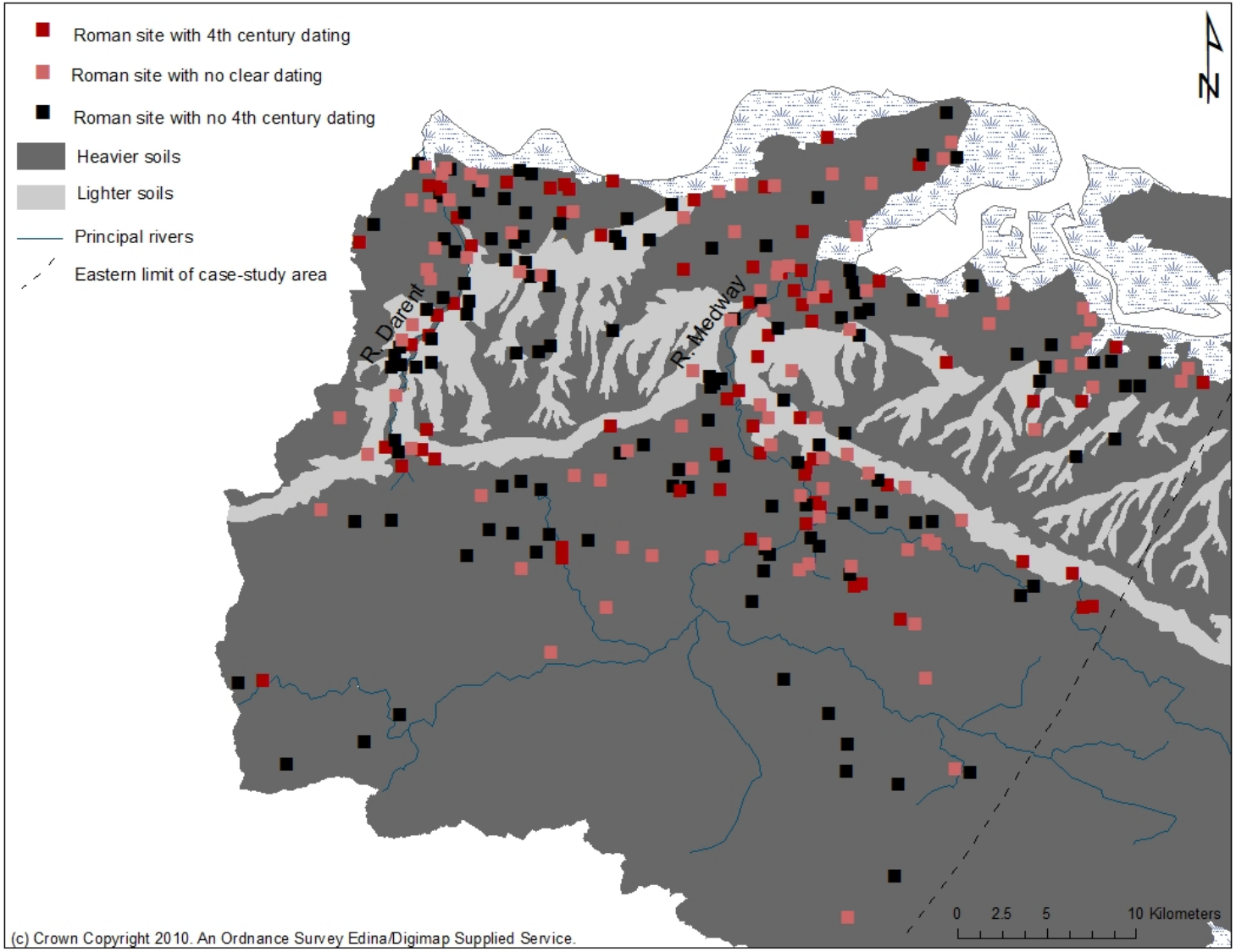


Figure 13.3. Distribution map of Roman settlement in western Kent, in relation to the evidence for 4th century dating in Roman settlement and areas of lighter or heavier soils. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER and supporting literature. Soils data redrawn after the Soils Survey of England and Wales 1983. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

5th to 11th centuries, albeit the results do not distinguish between potential continuity and resettlement by the 11th century. Whilst these are relative ratios, with all the issues that the disparity in sample sizes creates, the results are, perhaps, surprising, given the broader extent of heavier soils in Kent.

There is certainly distinct evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity across the lighter soils. At Otford and Darenth, along the Darent Valley, for example, high status Roman settlement located on the lighter calcareous soils is distinctly associated with evidence for 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation. Everitt (1986, 116) lists Otford and Darenth as 'seminal places', places 'where things always seem to happen' (*ibid*, 116). Many such primary settlements were located in the north Kent Foothills and the Vale of Holmesdale, or along the margins of the Chalk Downs where these are cut by the major river valleys. Wider evidence of this in Kent has recently been demonstrated by a long-term research project (University of Reading 2012) at Lyminge, also listed as one of Everitt's (ibid, 116) 'seminal places': located on light calcareous soils on the southeast margins of the Chalk Downs, the evidence at Lyminge suggests a continuous chronology of occupation from the Roman period through to the 12th century (Thomas 2005; 2008; 2009; 2010; Thomas and Bray 2010).

Whilst there is distinct evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity on the lighter soils, however, it is not confined to them. There is equally evidence for this across the heavier clays of the North Kent Foothills, and even the Chart Hills, where the clay-enriched soils are rendered more fertile. Still classified as heavier soils, they do not adequately reflect trends of settlement relationships reduced to a bi-partite system of classification into 'light' or 'heavy'. At sites such as Milton Regis and Northfleet, on the argillic brown earths of the North Kent Foothills, for example, or Maidstone, on the argillic brown earths of the Chart Hills, there is equally evidence for high status Roman settlement associated with 'Early' to 'Middle' Saxon occupation, with all three places also considered 'seminal settlements' and recorded as Domesday vills: Milton Regis was additionally the caput of a major royal estate, recorded by Domesday as one of the most valuable manors in Kent (Everitt 1986, 311).

There does, however, appear to have been comparatively less stability across the heavier soils of western Kent during the Roman and early medieval periods. The statistics indicate that the heavier soils potentially saw the major extent of

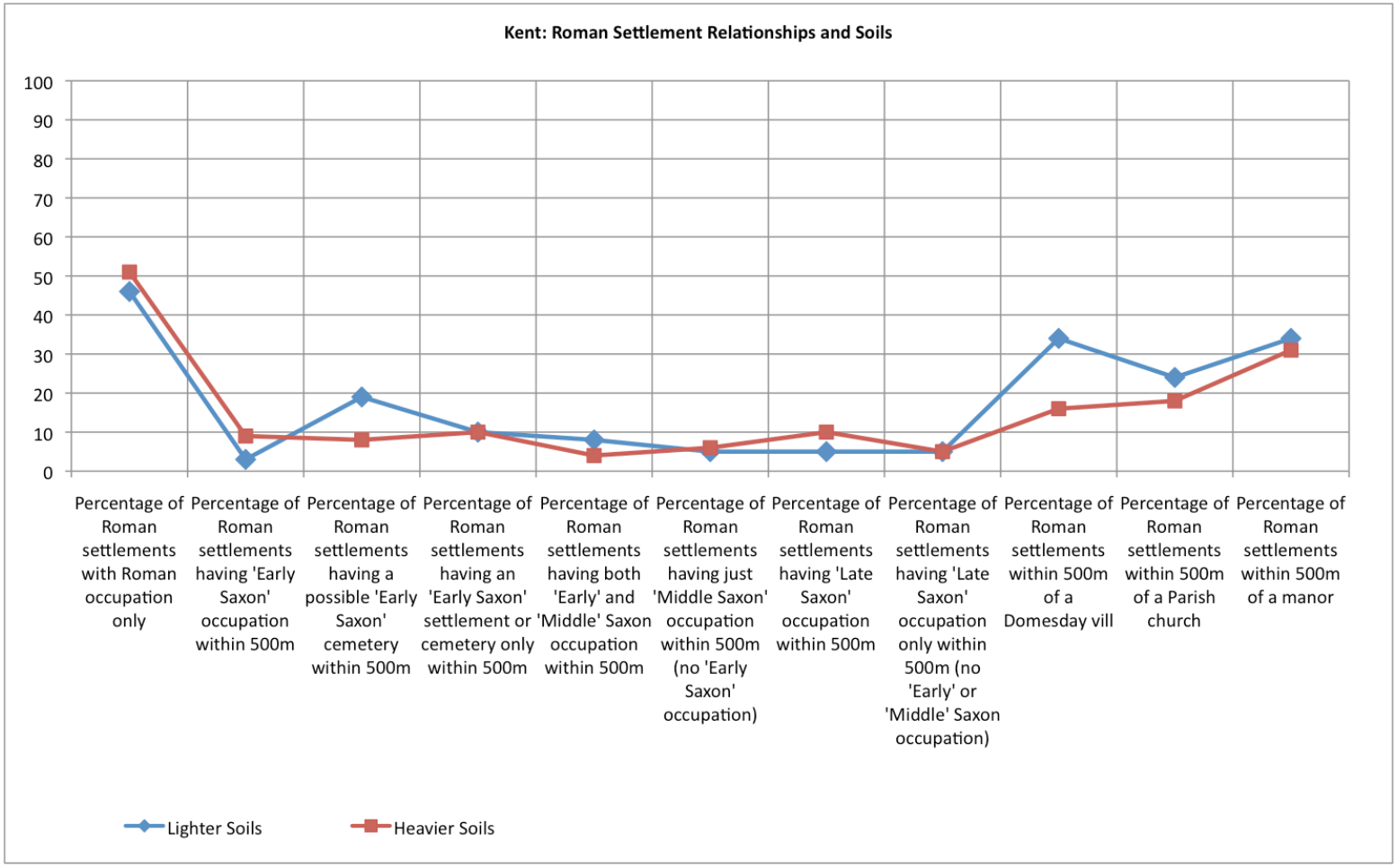


Figure 13.4. Line graph showing the relative percentages for Roman settlement relationships across western Kent, relative to areas of lighter and heavier soils. This data collates the results across all the Kent pays used as part of this research and presents them as relative percentages to the sample size for each category. Sample sizes are shown above.

settlement contraction and expansion during the Roman and early medieval periods, with the distribution of Domesday vills suggesting that settlement expansion by the 11th century had begun to reach beyond the extent of Roman settlement across parts of the Chalk Downs, the west of the Chart Hills and the Weald. The distribution of parish churches indicates that this expansion was even more pronounced across both lighter and heavier soils by the 11th century than the Domesday vills, alone, suggest (**Fig. 13.5**). The distribution of manors demonstrates continuing expansion into the 13th century and beyond, with pronounced ingress and woodland clearance across the heavy clay interfluves of the Chalk Downs, Chart Hills and the Weald (**Fig. 13.5**), resulting in a typically dispersed settlement character. Through patterns of early Roman settlement currently disassociated from late Roman occupation, or the lack of interim evidence for occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries, the ratios for Roman settlement associated with Domesday vills, parish churches and manors on the heavier soils (**Fig. 13.4**) may, therefore, partially reflect resettlement by the 11th century as much as potential Roman settlement continuity.

To summarise, it would appear, drawing on Everitt's (1986) distinctions of the Kentish landscape, that the North Kent Foothills and the Vale of Holmesdale were largely landscapes of continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, although the North Kent Foothills potentially saw greater flux in patterns of settlement shift and contraction during this period. The Chart Hills was perhaps not, technically, a landscape of colonisation during the 5th to 11th centuries: there was undoubtedly widespread occupation across the *pays* during the Roman period, particularly in the central region, although the distribution of early cemeteries and some early Roman settlements potentially suggests some distinction between the early and late Roman settlement patterns. Whilst the contracted pattern of Roman settlement on the Chart Hills appears to have clearly influenced the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches along the major river valleys, there is not such close cohesion with the wider distribution of 11th century settlement across the *pays,* suggesting broader trends of settlement shift and abandonment across the clay interfluves by the end of the Roman period, with some resettlement of these areas by the 11th century. The Chalk Downs appears to have seen the greatest extent of settlement discontinuity following the end of the Roman period, although, as with the Chart Hills, the pattern of contracted Roman settlement appears to have influenced

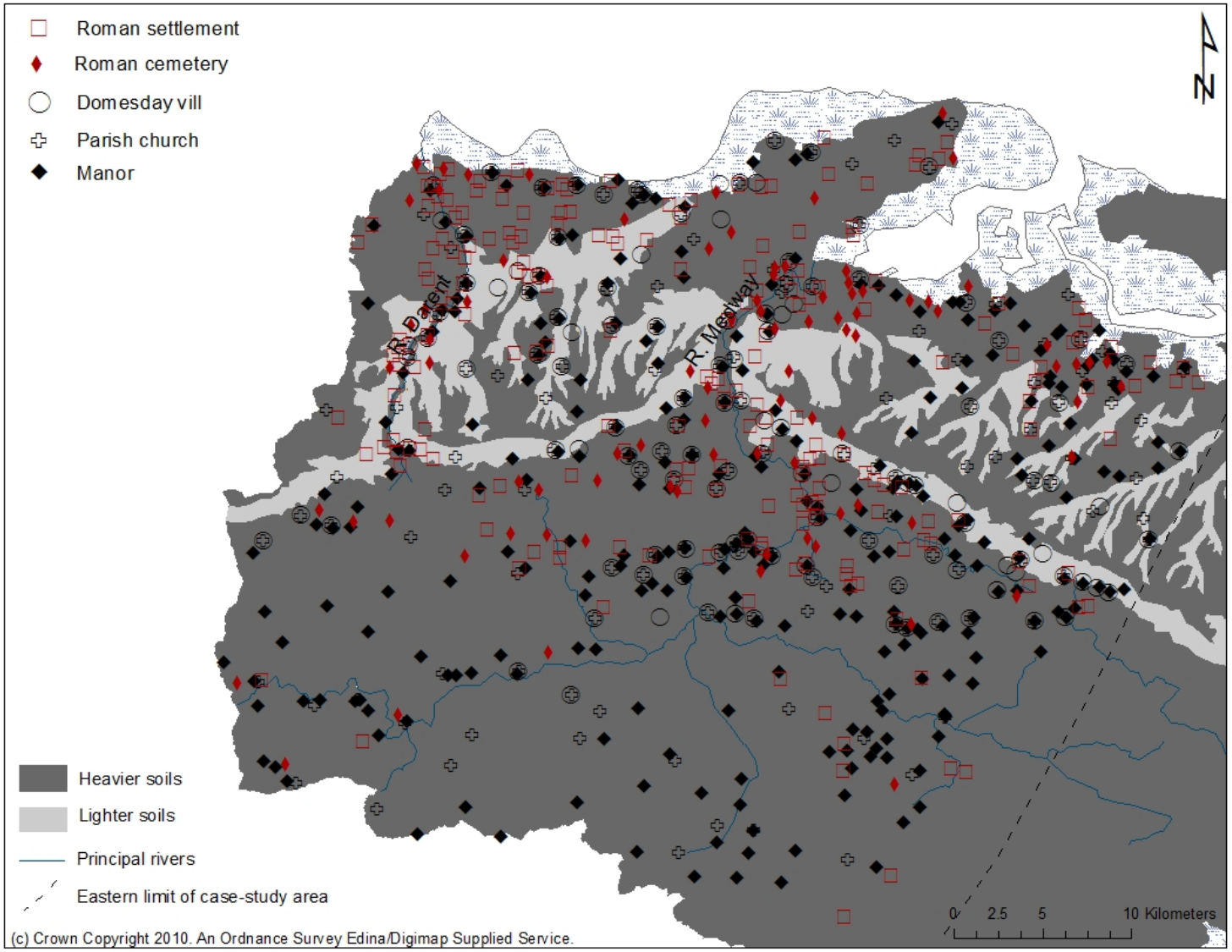


Figure 13.5. The distribution of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors in western Kent, in relation to Roman settlement and cemeteries, shown relative to areas of lighter or heavier soils. Compiled and mapped by the author using the Kent HER, Flight (2010,) Hasted (1798-1801-1801) and Morgan (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches to some degree, particularly in the west of the *pays* and bordering the Darent and Medway valleys, although a wider expansion of settlement on the Chalk Downs by the 11th century may have colonised new land and reached beyond the original extent of Roman occupation. The Low Weald saw the least association between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns. As for the Chart Hills, the distribution of early Roman settlement and cemeteries apparently disassociated from any evidence for late Roman occupation may suggest a potential contraction away from the heavy clays by, the 3rd century. Furthermore, the pattern of contracted Roman settlement by the 5th century appears to demonstrate little, if any, influence on the siting of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors across the *pays*, which demonstrates the greatest extent of newly colonised land by the 11th century. The High Weald returned only a small number of Roman settlements that currently demonstrate no association with early medieval settlement. Based on the limited evidence available, the *pays* may have largely been a landscape of colonisation by the 11th century, suggesting complete disjuncture between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns.

A final assessment

The research into Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in western Kent has lacked some of the breadth of settlement data available in Norfolk for these periods. Whilst the Roman settlement data has been relatively prolific, it has raised its own questions about the chronology of potential settlement abandonment and shift between the 1st to 5th centuries, although quantitative analysis of the trends in Roman settlement hierarchy relative to the developing settlement pattern of the 5th to 11th centuries has been able to demonstrate some of the broader themes already explored for Norfolk. The differences in archaeological fieldwork between Norfolk and Kent have produced very different suites of material evidence for the 5th to 11th centuries, with comparatively little still available for the 'Middle' to 'Late' Saxon periods in Kent. 'Early Saxon' occupation is relatively well represented, however, and, in addition to cemetery remains, is increasingly producing evidence for 5th to 7th century settlement through large-scale development-led projects. Culturally, cemetery evidence for the 5th to 7th centuries raises discussion as to the range

and extent of ethnicities and cultural influence introduced into Kent during the 5th to 7th centuries, although this is not directly addressed by this research.

The lack of material evidence for occupation between the 8th to 11th centuries has made it difficult to observe processes of settlement development during this period, principally any potential shift in settlement between the 8th to 9th centuries, or the beginnings of settlement consolidation and nucleation, which in Norfolk has demonstrated some sub-regional variation. Ultimately, evaluating the relationship between Roman and 11th century settlement patterns has predominantly fallen to the quantitative analysis of Roman settlement in relation to the Domesday vills, parish churches and manors of Kent, for which there is a relatively abundant record. Whilst the gaps in chronology for early medieval settlement in western Kent raise issues as to how far potential Roman settlement continuity can be inferred, it has been possible to tentatively identify wider patterns of association for this period. Assisted by more nuanced evidence at a site-based level, it has been possible to demonstrate where patterns of Roman settlement appear to have closely shaped those of the 11th century, and where patterns of Roman settlement abandonment and subsequent resettlement by the 11th century are suggested.

This latter has been assisted by the considerable documentary evidence for manors in Kent, although there are certain considerations in regard to this. Many Kentish manors, particularly across consistently settled areas, such as the North Kent Foothills and the Vale of Holmesdale, have very early origins, some potentially vested in the pattern of early Anglo-Saxon estates (see Brookes 2007, 93; Everitt 1986, 342; Riddler 2004, 26; Welch 2007, 189, for example), while others, particularly across areas such as the Chart Hills, Chalk Downs and the Weald, may originate from the 13th century onwards (see Brookes 2007, 51, Everitt 1986, 52; Flight 201, 2; Sweetinburgh 2004,48, for example). This is an oversimplification and there are potentially exceptions on both sides. Furthermore, the landholdings of many early Kentish manors, as discussed in Chapter 10 (p 232), were typically fragmented and dispersed, so that identifying distinct manorial centres becomes more problematic. It has not always been practical, or possible, to determine the precise origins of documented manors, although those that are clearly 15th century or later have been excluded where possible. Where an association between Roman

settlement and manors is suggested on areas of poorer soils, such as the Chalk Downs, the Chart Hills and the Weald, it is often between early Roman settlements and potentially 13th century or later manors, suggesting a greater likelihood of resettlement of these areas. There are, however, clear examples, such as Grange Farm, Chatham on the North Kent Foothills, Brishing Manor, Boughton Monchelsea, on the Chart Hills, or Mereworth, on the Low Weald, to name but a few, where a manor complex appears directly associated with underlying Roman occupation, suggesting the relationship between Roman settlement and manors in western Kent is potentially far more complex.

The quantitative analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement in Kent has facilitated certain levels of comparison with Norfolk as well as introducing particular themes of regional difference. In the main, the research has reinforced the current understanding of settlement processes and relationships between the 5th to 11th centuries in both counties, although this could no doubt benefit from further quantitative study as well as the more nuanced evidence from continuing site-based studies.

Conclusion

The spatial analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in western Kent, as for Norfolk, has quantitatively assessed the extent to which patterns of Roman settlement helped shape those of the 11th century, and to what extent patterns of 11th century settlement, and the institution of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, suggest potentially Roman origins. A secondary strand of analysis has been the assessment of these relationships in relation to the county's soils and physical *pays*, to determine whether areas of lighter or heavier soils influenced settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries an whether any sub-regional variation could be shown.

The material evidence for early medieval settlement has lacked the breadth of data available in Norfolk, making certain processes and trends more difficult to assess. This is, however, representative of much of lowland Britain, where issues of partial data and gaps in settlement chronology are more typical to early medieval settlement studies. Nonetheless, a degree of analysis has been possible for Roman settlement associated with 5th to 7th century occupation,

through cemetery evidence and, increasingly, physical settlement remains. The evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, however, has principally relied on the excellent documentary record for Domesday vills, parish churches and manors in western Kent, although this has raised its own issues of interpretation, particularly in regard to early medieval manors.

The research results for western Kent have been able to demonstrate those areas that potentially suggest settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between the Roman and early medieval periods. They also identify subtleties of sub-regional variation in settlement trajectories between the 5th to 11th centuries, and the extent to which these were influenced by the antecedent Romans settlement landscape. The research has particularly considered Everitt's (1986) hypotheses regarding Kent's landscapes of continuity and colonisation and the research results are suggested to largely support the current understanding of settlement development for Roman and early medieval Kent, with perhaps some added definition for those parts of western Kent that saw a re-colonisation of previously settled land by the 11th century, as opposed to colonisation in its true sense. The lack of material settlement evidence available for the 5th to 11th centuries has been compensated for, to some extent, by the considerable documentary record for 11th century Kent. This has undoubtedly assisted the depth of analysis that has been achieved, although there is plenty of scope for further revision in the light of new evidence.

Part Four: Somerset

Chapter 14. Somerset: Introduction and Background

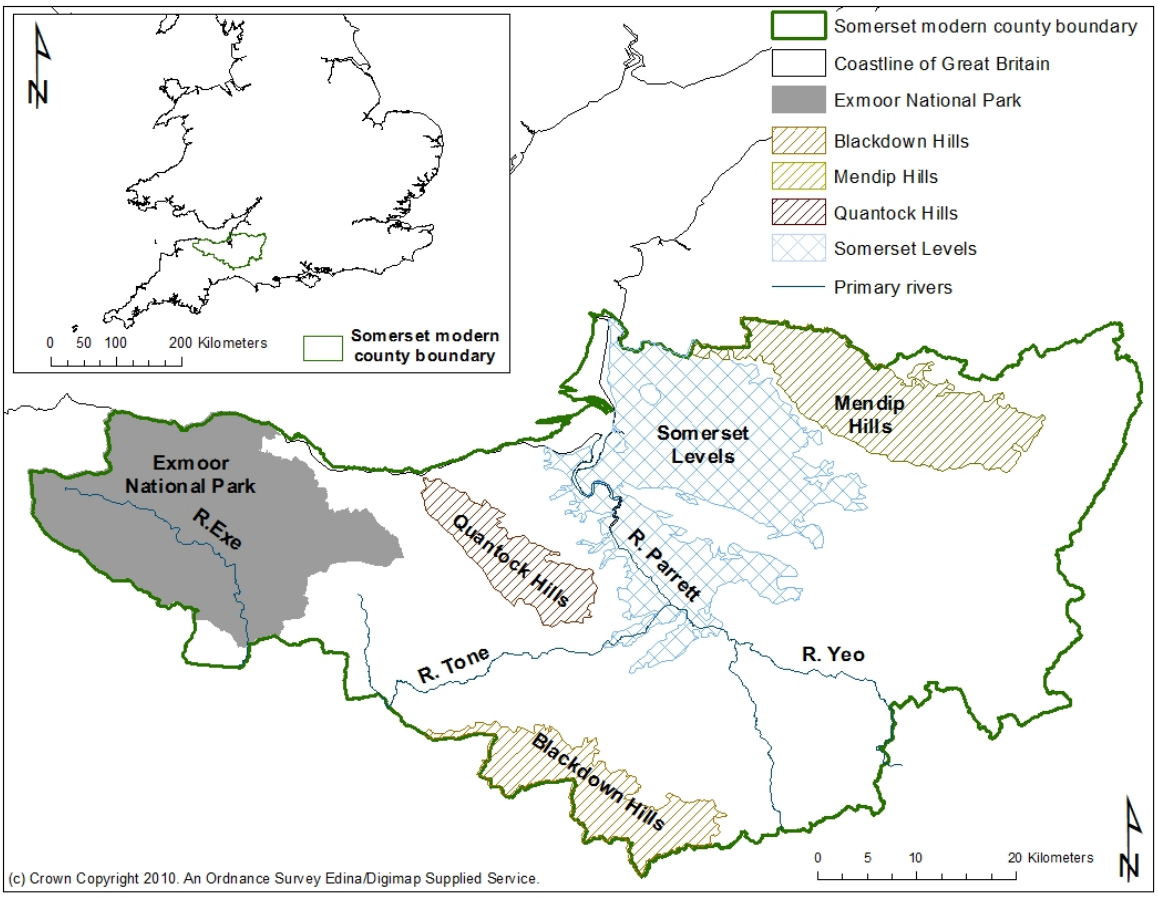


Figure 14.1. Regional map showing the modern county of Somerset. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Introduction

The modern county of Somerset is situated in the southwest of England, bordering the Bristol Channel (**Fig. 14.1**). It is a county of diverse physical landscapes and varied geology, correspondent with an equally diverse and dynamic settlement history, which has resulted in notably different patterns of settlement evolution between east and west. This contrast in settlement history, and the determiners for it, offer an opportunity to study unique trajectories of social evolution within a single regional framework. The disparity between eastern and western Somerset in regard to material evidence for settlement and landscape transition between the late Roman and early medieval periods, however, significantly challenges this field of research. Somerset has been

selected as a case-study precisely because of these challenges, the objective being to explore productive methods of research into Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in those regions of the country where significant material evidence for these periods is similarly lacking.

Regional Geography and Historic Landscape Character

Relief and drainage

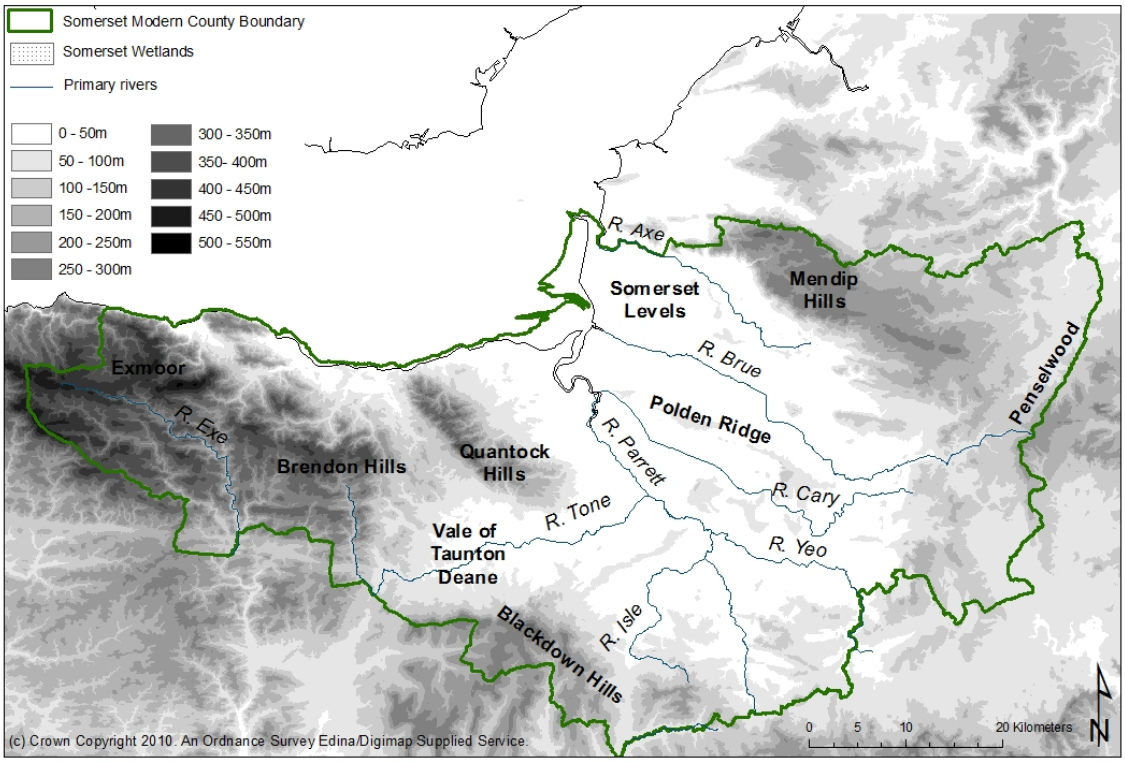


Figure 14.2. The physical geography of Somerset showing principal relief and drainage. Physical data compiled and mapped by the author. Contour data supplied through Land-Form PANORAMA. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2011]. All other mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Somerset's physical landscape is complex, the product of geological processes and centuries of human intervention. Within its heart are fertile clay vales and lowlands bordered on three sides by a series of hills and uplands. Exmoor, the Brendon Hills and the Quantocks rise to the northwest, above the low-lying Vale of Taunton Deane. To the southwest rise the Blackdown Hills, stretching west into Devon. Somerset's easterly county borders are edged by a low limestone scarp, which inclines north towards the Mendip Hills and dips away eastwards towards the rolling clay vales of Blackmore and Wardour. North of Penselwood

this scarp is heavily wooded: along with the clay vales to the east this was once part of the royal Forest of Selwood (Rippon 2008, 33). Along Somerset's northern borders rise the Mendip Hills, completing a series of uplands that delineate the modern county and cradle the low-lying coastal plain (**Fig. 14.2**).

Somerset's primary rivers flow from the upland ground along its borders, joining to drain the low-lying vales and lowlands before running north westwards to the coast (**Fig. 14.2**). Inland from the tidal mudflats and sand dunes of the Bristol Channel are the distinctive fen and peat lowlands of the Somerset Levels, intersected by ridges and islands of higher ground. Across the Levels the nature, and even the course, of some rivers have been modified over time: the River Brue, for example, was partially re-routed in the mid 13th century under a drainage management scheme by Glastonbury Abbey (Havinden 1981, 110).

Geology and Soils

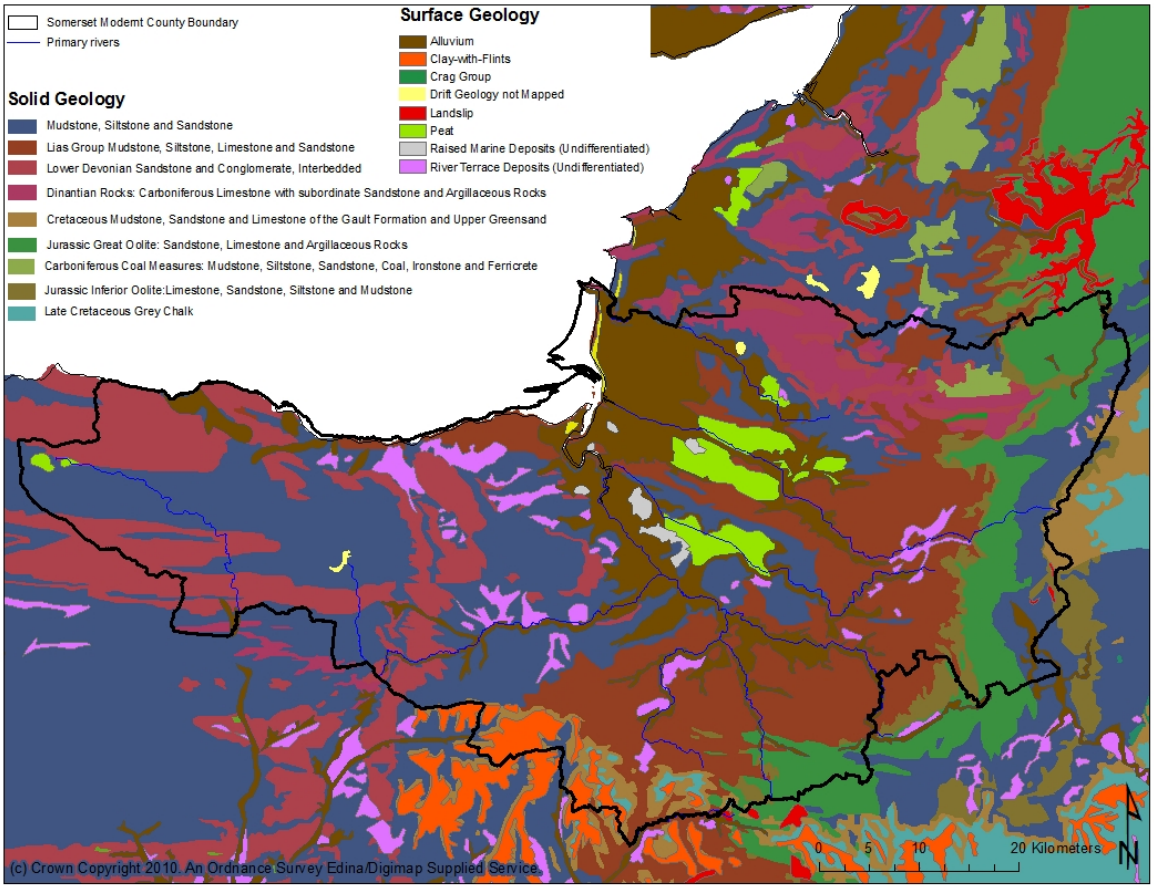


Figure 14.3. The surface geology of Somerset, comprising both solid and drift geology, with information compiled and mapped by the author. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

The high uplands of Exmoor and the Brendon and Quantock Hills, in the northwest of Somerset, were formed during the Devonian period and are sedimentary in origin (Edmonds *et al*. 1985, 30; Hardy 2002, 22) (**Fig. 14.3**). Across the hillcrests soils are typically podzolised, well-drained soils with mineralised subsurface horizons (SSEW, 1983). To the west of these uplands, lower-lying beds of red Triassic marls, clays and shales, underlie the lower hillslopes and the Vale of Taunton Deane (Hardy 2002, 107). Soils are typically slowly permeable stagnogleyic argillic brown earths and pelosols on the lower ground, with well-drained brown earths on the hillslopes (SSEW, 1983). Southwest of the Vale of Taunton Deane rise the Blackdown Hills, derived from Cretaceous Upper Greensand and overlain by chert deposits of clay and flint drift (Edmonds *et al*. 1985, 68-70; Hardy 2002, 175-176) (**Fig. 14.3**). Soils are complex, largely comprising variable argillic brown earths, pelo-stagnogleys and humic gleys (SSEW, 1983). To the northeast of the Blackdown Hills lie a series of low hills and vales formed of Jurassic and Cretaceous clays, sands and limestones, with more durable limestone outcrops forming a low scarp to the east (Hardy 2002, 139; Leach 2001a, 30) (**Fig. 14.3**). To the east of the scarp is a low vale of Jurassic mud and sandstones, with typically wet pelo-stagnogley soils (SSEW, 1983). To the west of the scarp is a broad plain of Triassic mudstones and limestones, commonly termed Blue Lias. Soils across this central and eastern part of Somerset are highly variable, typically featuring stagnogleyic argillic brown earths and pelo-stagnogleys interspersed by typical brown earths along the base of the limestone scarp. Across the scarp, and to the west and northwest of the Lias plain, Oolitic clays and limestones typically form well-drained calcareous rendzinas on the hillslopes, with less permeable calcareous pelosols over lower ground (*ibid*).

The Mendip Hills rise to the north of Somerset's central plain, characterised by a steep scarp facing southwest across the Levels and a gentler dipslope to the northeast. On the high crests are exposed outcrops of Devonian sandstone, surrounded by steep slopes and dramatic limestone gorges of Carboniferous limestone (Hardy 2002, 45) (**Fig. 14.3**). Local soils are typically brown earths and palaeo-argillic brown earths, with shallow, non-calcareous, brown rankers along the southern scarp slopes (SSEW, 1983). Within the low-lying coastal basin of the Somerset Levels, extensive alluvial and marine deposits overlie Triassic marls (**Fig. 14.3**). Soils are typically slowly permeable pelo-alluvial,

pelo-calcareous alluvial and argillic gleys, prone to waterlogging, with extensive peat formation through recurrent marine and freshwater transgression (*ibid*).

As with Norfolk and Kent, Somerset's geology and soils form the basis of its physical character regions, or *pays*, discussed in more detail below.

Settlement history

Roman settlement

Roman Somerset was probably divided between three *civitates*, based on the territories of three indigenous tribal polities: the Dobunni, Durotriges and Dumnonii (Leach 2001a, p8) (**Fig. 14.5**). Whilst the precise boundaries of these tribes, and the *civitates* deriving from them, remain unclear, pottery distribution, and coins where they existed, indicates the broad territorial parameters, with all three tribal entities displaying distinct cultural identities: both the Durotriges and Dobunni became highly Romanised, with the Durotriges, in particular, demonstrating significant material wealth (*ibid*, 14). Dobunnic territory incorporated North Somerset and the Mendip Hills, although the majority of their land lay to the north, in Gloucester, with Cirencester (*Corinium Dobunnorum*) the *civitas* capital (see Fulford 2002, 18, for example). Dobunnic lands in Somerset may have been apportioned to the Belgic *civitas*, a Roman construct whose precise cultural basis is unclear, but whose capital was Winchester (Leach 2001a, 32; Mattingly 2006, 389 and see Fulford, 2002, 18). The Durotrigian *civitas* was located at Dorchester (*Durnovaria*), but a sub-tribe of the Durotriges, the Lendiniensis, are conjectured as having a centre at Ilchester, even before the Roman Conquest (Leach 1994, 3). This may also have become a *civitas* (*Lindinis*) at some stage (Leach 1982, 76; Leech 1977, 5), although evidence for this remains uncertain (Mattingly 2006, 261). Whilst precise tribal boundaries are unknown, the distribution of Durotrigian coins and pottery, and the extent of defended hillforts in Somerset, suggests the Quantock and Blackdown Hills, and the River Parrett watershed, mark the western limits of Durotrigian territory (Leach 2001a, p8) (**Fig. 14.4**).

The Durotrigian and Dobunnic lands in central and eastern Somerset were densely settled during the Roman period: Leech (1977, 170) calculated the typical distance between Roman settlements in central Somerset at 500m-1km.

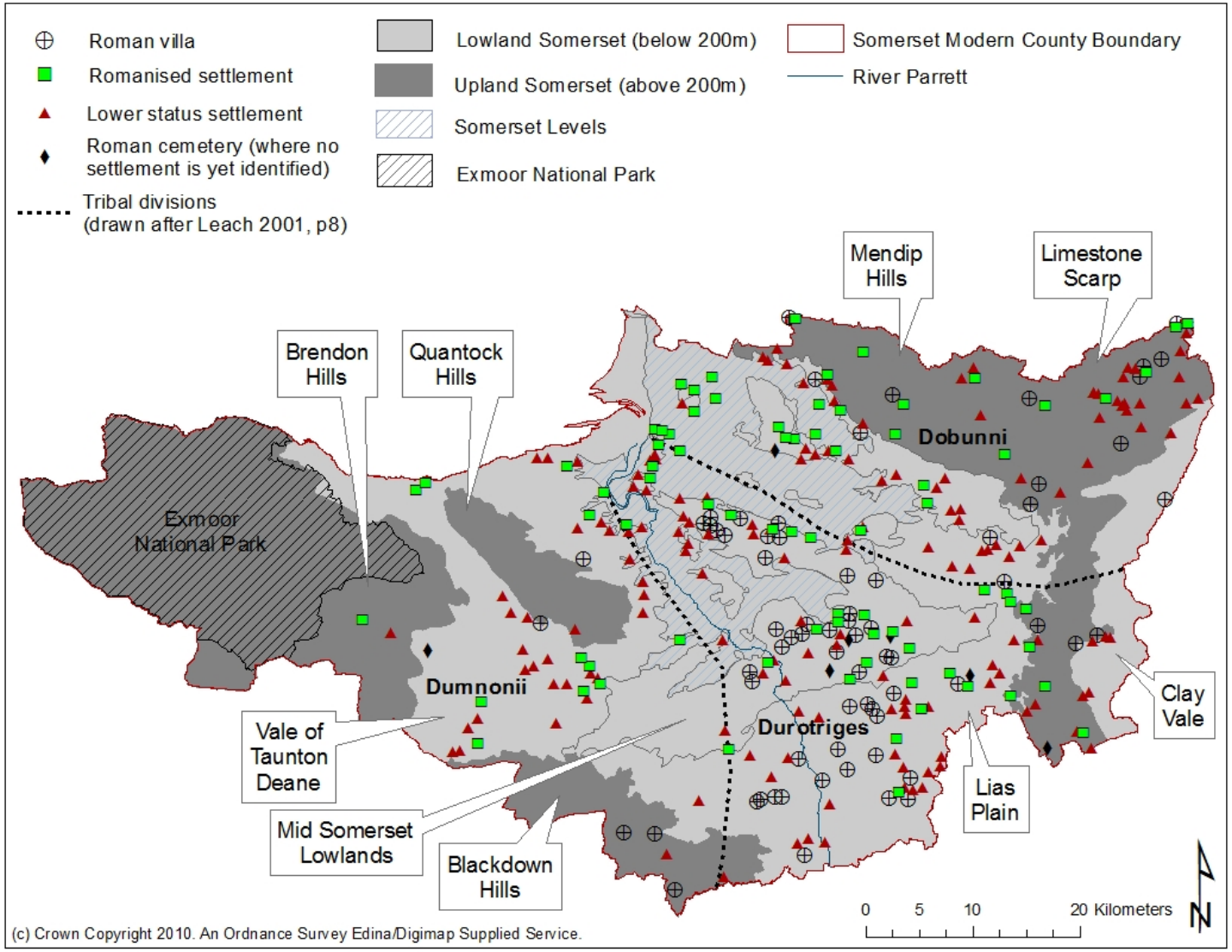


Figure 14.4. The distribution and hierarchy of Roman settlement recorded for the modern county of Somerset, excepting that of the Somerset levels and Exmoor National Park. The estimated tribal boundaries of the Dumnonii, Durotriges and Dobunni are shown, drawn after Leach (2001, 8). Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Somerset HER. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Across the Mendip Hills, settlement was more limited and largely related to the exploitation of mineral resources by the Roman authorities, such as the Roman *vicus* (SHER 23021) at Charterhouse, or the Roman villa (SHER 23946) at Priddy, for example. The relatively large number of Roman villas and other high status settlements across eastern Somerset (**Fig. 14.4**) reflect the region's considerable wealth and status, although even the lower status settlements visibly demonstrate some extent of Romanisation and accumulated material culture, indicating the strength of the local market economy, and the generally widespread distribution of wealth.

Within eastern Somerset a number of Roman settlements, such as Ilchester, Charlton, Shepton Mallett, Littleton and Westland, for example, may have developed through economic and administrative control to become small urban 'towns' (Costen 2011, 8; Leech 1977, 10 and see Burnham and Wacher 1990). Charterhouse, originally postulated as the Roman town of *Iscalis*, and more recently as *Vebriacum* (Costen 1992, 28), may be added to this list, particularly in the light of recent re-appraisal by Fradley (2009, 118). In western Somerset, studies at Crandon Bridge (Rippon 2008), on the western margins of the Somerset Levels, also identify this as a port and possible small town, based on comparison of the finds assemblage with other known sites, such as Ilchester (Leach 1982; 1994) and Shepton Mallet (Leach 2001b), for example (*ibid*, 131).

In addition to urban Roman settlement in eastern Somerset, a number of hillforts demonstrate possible evidence for re-occupation during the Roman period, such as Cannington (Rahtz 1969) and Ham Hill (Burrow 1981, 94), for example. Others, such as Brean Down or Brent Knoll, for example, may have been associated with Roman temples (*ibid*, 94), suggesting that hillforts continued to have a significant, if varied, function within the Roman settlement hierarchy of eastern Somerset. Whilst eastern Somerset boasts a full suite of sites related to Roman cultural, religious and administrative control, however, the majority of Roman settlement was predominantly rural in character, centred around the villa estates and the wider farming landscape and it is with these rural settlements that this thesis is primarily concerned.

Whilst villas were probably the domain of the native aristocracy, or their descendants, rather than necessarily Roman officials, they would have controlled a far wider series of dependant rural communities on whom they also

relied for labour and the provision of goods. Interspersing the high status 'villa landscape', and constituting the major extent of rural Roman settlement in eastern Somerset, are a series of farmsteads of varying size and wealth, such as more obviously Romanised settlements at Little Park and Pulpits, Chilton Polden (SHER 12749), Nash Lane, East Coker (SHER 53910) or Sladwick Field, Shapwick (SHER 16690), for example, or less clearly high status settlements, such as South Cadbury (SHER 56896), Lakeview Quarry, Keinton Mandeville (SHER 28510) or Great Lyde, Yeovil (SHER 18280), for example. In addition to these are a number of roadside settlements, which in some instances, Catsgore (SHER 54504) (Leech 1982a, 7) being the most well known, resemble villages in their size and make-up. Whilst the general wealth and status of domestic Roman settlement in eastern Somerset is notable, however, the danger of assigning any homogeneity of status and function to the broad suite of Romano-British settlement has been recently demonstrated at Bradley Hill (SHER 54501). Leech's (1981, 205-6) original interpretation of a substantial and affluent farming complex has been recently challenged by Smart (2008, 270) who re-interprets the site as a possible temple, based on its isolated location, building typology and a distinct lack of agricultural function, as well as the significant number of burials and associated ritual practices present.

In western Somerset, principally the Dumnonii lands west of the River Parrett, there is much less material evidence for Roman settlement, to date, compared to the east, with relatively little suggestion of Romanisation. Only five Roman villas are currently recorded, three in the Blackdown Hills, at Whitestaunton (SHER 53262), South Chard (SHER 53159) and Wadeford (SHER 53187), and two at the foot of the Quantock Hills at Yarford (SHER 17298) and Spaxton (SHER10802) (**Fig. 14.4**), although the common occurrence of field names such as *Chessils*, *Blacklands*, and *Chester* may suggest more Roman villas waiting to be found (Costen 1992, 35). There is also limited evidence for other higher status settlement, at sites such as Nynehead (SHER 14030), Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine (SHER 44496) and Cambria Farm, Stoke St Mary (SHER 28221), for example, where stone foundations and ceramic building materials suggest substantial Romanised buildings.

The majority of Roman settlements identified for western Somerset, however, appear to be lower status farmsteads, such as Upper Holway (SHER 44781),

Ten Acres Field, Holway (SHER 43671) and Maidenbrook Farm (SHER 43152), for example, all on the fertile loamy clay soils of the Vale of Taunton Deane: Leech and Leach (1982, 63) calculated the relative distance of Roman settlements in western Somerset as averaging one every 1050m. The results of aerial photography, however, are increasingly revealing enclosures and ditched field systems on the slopes of the Quantock and Brendon Hills and across the Vale of Taunton Deane (see Riley 2006, for example). Many of these remain undated, although recent excavations by St Alfred's College, Winchester (Wilkinson *et al*. 2003), suggest many of these enclosed farmsteads may have been typically occupied into at least the early Roman period. At some sites, such as Stoneage Barton (SHER 44931) (Webster and Brunning 2004) and Yarford (SHER 17298) (Wilkinson *et al*. 2003), for example, occupation has been demonstrated into at least the 3rd to 4th centuries.

Roman cemeteries

The evidence for Roman burials in Somerset is extensive, particularly in the east of the county, and a range of sites has been shown, from isolated burials to larger cemeteries. The range of Roman burial practices, from cremation to inhumation, placement and orientation, the location of burials in relation to settlement and the landscape, and the presence or absence of grave goods, has given rise to much speculation over religious and cultural practices during the Roman and post-Roman periods, the contrast between Romanised and provincial practices, and the potential to extrapolate evidence for settlement, and possible settlement continuity, by proxy (see Esmonde Cleary 2000; Pearce 2000, Philpott 1991; Quensel-von-Kalben 2000; Rahtz 1977, for example). Under Roman law, cemeteries were situated outside settlements: an exception to this was the burial of infants, with the result that many infant burials are found within settlement complexes, both inside and outside of buildings (Leech 1977, 132). Adult inhumations from within Roman settlements are not unknown from Somerset, however: at Kenn Moor (North Somerset), for example, two north-south facing inhumations were recovered during excavation (Rippon 2000b, 85), while at Bradley Hill, adult inhumations were recovered from various contexts (see Leech 1981), although, as discussed above, this site's function has recently been brought into question (Smart 2008, 270).

Inhumation replaced cremation as the predominant funerary practice in Roman Britain around the mid 3rd century (Philpott 1991, 53). Philpott (*ibid*, 223), however, suggests that, away from the major centres of Romanised population, inhumation remained the primary indigenous practice, resisting the early Roman (1st to 2nd century) traditions of cremation which were introduced immediately post-Conquest. Cremation burials, where present in Somerset, then, may potentially be assumed to represent evidence of both early Roman activity and Romanised cultural traditions. In contrast, inhumations within less obviously Romanised contexts in Somerset should, perhaps, be considered more judiciously where issues of chronology are concerned. The typology of inhumation practices suggested by Philpott (*ibid*, 223) shows that crouched inhumations most likely reflect Late Iron Age or early Romano-British practices into the 1st to 2nd centuries, whereas extended inhumations are more likely to be later Roman in date (from the mid 3rd century onwards).

Less clearly indicative of Roman settlement are the isolated burials or burial groups where no associated settlement has yet been identified. Many isolated burials, such as those at Wiveliscombe (SHER 43796) and Sparkford Hill (SHER 54565), for example, are found through chance discovery or small-scale evaluations and may well be part of larger, as yet unidentified, sites, although see Esmonde Cleary (2000, 136-139) and Pearce (2000, 7-8) for discussion of rural Roman burials in relation to roadside locations or estate boundaries. Cemetery groups, such as Long Sutton (SHER 54174), for example, may be more obviously assumed to indicate settlement nearby, given the accepted relationship of Roman cemeteries to settlement (Leech 1977, 134). The cemetery at Long Sutton is situated within 500m of the parish church and associated Roman settlement may feasibly underlie the present day village.

Post-Roman settlement

The principal issues with evaluating post-Roman settlement in Somerset are the effects of economic changes during the 3rd to 4th centuries in Roman Britain, and the cessation of major industries, such as pottery manufacture, which resulted in the region becoming largely aceramic between the 5th to 10th centuries (Rippon 2008, 53; Webster 2007b, 79 and see Rahtz 1982; Rahtz and Fowler 1972). There was no major Roman pottery industry in Somerset, apart

from some small-scale local production (Leach 2001a, 81), and it may be that late Roman pottery was curated and used beyond its date of manufacture (Webster 2007b, 80) (and see Gerrard 2004). There are some examples of 5th to 7th century imported wares from specialist sites, such as Cadbury Castle (SHER 55105), Cannington (SHER 10503) and Cadbury Congresbury (North Somerset), for example, (Alcock 1975, 174; 1995, 111; Rahtz *et al*. 1992, 134; 2000, 295). Grass marked pottery from Cornwall is also recorded at Cannington and Cadbury Congresbury (Rahtz *et al*. 1992, 298; 2000, 155), while Anglo-Saxon glassware similar to an example from Spong Hill (Norfolk) is recorded at Cadbury Congresbury, suggesting evidence for internal trade (Rahtz *et al*. 2000, 135). Evidence for potential continuity, or discontinuity, beyond the 5th century from the majority of ordinary rural settlement, however, remains elusive, although modern excavation and dating methods are improving on this.

Before the advent of PPG16 and development-led archaeology, much of the excavation work in Somerset focussed on the Roman villas of the county. The evidence regarding the fate of many Roman villas in Somerset is, therefore, complicated by the fact that many were investigated prior to modern methods of excavation, during a time when evidence of disrepair and demolition were taken at face value to indicate a period of decline followed by abandonment (see Chapter 2, 25). It is certainly apparent that many Roman villas in Somerset, almost without exception, experienced some decline or reorganisation from around the 3rd to 4th centuries (Leach 2001a, 117). Nonetheless, there is also evidence, mainly through the stratigraphic relationships of late Roman coins and pottery, for potential continuity of use into at least the 5th century at a number of sites, such as Ilchester Mead (SHER 53104), Hinton Mill, Lopen (15148) and Ford Farm, Bawdrip (SHER 15532), for example, although this remains frustratingly inconclusive and difficult to date securely.

In more recent years, targeted research projects and development-led evaluation has provided increasing evidence for potential continuity into the 5th to 6th centuries from the wider pantheon of Roman rural settlement, although this, too, is often ephemeral and difficult to relate to the wider context. Recent excavation (SHER 22957), at Castle Farm, South Cadbury, for example, has identified possible traces of a post-Roman structure in the northern section of the Roman settlement (SHER 54549), with some possible evidence for a ditch

recut during the 5th century Davey (2005, 50). The Roman settlement within the hillfort at Cadbury Castle, to the west, has been shown to continue into the 5th to 6th centuries, but how the settlement at Castle Farm might relate to this remains unclear (*ibid*, 50). At Woolston Manor Farm, Yarlington (SHER 22758), test pitting has stratigraphically demonstrated a probable post-Roman phase of activity in association with a Romanised settlement, although no dateable finds, nor any clear settlement features, were recovered (Tabor 2008, 123). At Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine (SHER 44496), excavation (Cox and Samuel 2001) revealed a pit with oak seeds and charcoal radiocarbon dated to 420-657 Cal AD (*ibid*, 43). The pit was set within a Romano-British roundhouse but it was unclear whether the charcoal was an intrusive deposit and the function and relationship of the pit to the roundhouse could not be ascertained (*ibid*, 65). Slightly more secure is the recent evidence from Brent Knoll (SHER 14485), where excavation (Young 2009) has identified an aceramic phase of ditches and features overlying residual 3rd to 4th century Roman pottery, which were themselves sealed by layers radiocarbon dated to the 7th to 10th centuries AD (*ibid*, 107). Additional pottery finds suggest Roman settlement in the vicinity of the parish church around 100m to the northeast and although the precise relationship between the Roman and post-Roman phases remains to be demonstrated, their relative proximity potentially indicates continuity of occupation between the 5th to 10th centuries.

Unlike Norfolk and Kent, Somerset lacks extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery evidence and the few examples that are known, at Camel Hill, Queen Camel (SHER 54429) or Evercreech (SHER 23484), for example, are mainly poorly recorded antiquarian finds (Webster 2007b, 82). The evidence for post-Roman cemeteries in Somerset, however, particularly where these are not associated with specialist sites, has the potential to inform on more typical post-Roman settlement in Somerset. Post-Roman inhumation burials are indicated at a number of sites, predominantly based on grave typology and associated ritual practices. Rahtz (1977, 53) suggested that many east-to-west orientated burials in Somerset, such as those found at Bradley Hill (Leech 1981, 201), for example, represent a particular class of burials that demonstrate Christian influences but lie outside of Christian contexts, making a late or post-Roman date more likely (see Gerrard 2005 for Bradley Hill, for example). At Puckington, for example, inhumation burials (SHER 54423) aligned east to west, and

accompanied by a single beach pebble, were recorded in association with Roman occupation debris and burnt stone slabs suggesting a possible building (Gray 1911, 91-97). These may be considered to reflect an early post-Roman date, possibly with a late pagan or early Christian context (Ellison 1983, 81).

At Stoneage Barton, excavation (Webster and Brunning 2004) of the enclosed Roman farmstead revealed a 7th century cemetery (SHER 11696), which suggested 'special' post-Roman burial practices: it contained a number of enclosed cist burials, found at other post-Roman cemeteries in Somerset, such as Wembdon Hill (Rahtz 1977) and Cannington (Rahtz *et al*. 2000), for example, as well as a number of east-to west facing burials, some within square ditched enclosures (Webster and Brunning 2004, 67). The form and typology of the cemetery is thought to reflect secular burial practices of familial groups in areas beyond Anglo-Saxon control by the 8th century (*ibid*, 79). At Sladwick Field, Shapwick, human remains were found deposited in the demolition rubble of a high status Roman building (SHER 16690) suggesting partial abandonment some time after the 4th century (Gerrard with Aston 2007, 964). The remains were radiocarbon dated to the 5th to 7th centuries AD and appear associated with a contemporary phase of clearance and re-use of the building, suggesting the bones may have been deliberately deposited to forge ancestral links between the living and the dead *(ibid*, 964-5 and see Smart 2008, 330-332 for a wider discussion of further examples in southeast Somerset and Gloucester).

Recent palaeoenvironmental research in Devon (Fyfe *et al*. 2004; Rippon *et al*. 2006) may aid our understanding of the broader Romano-British settlement landscape west of the River Parrett. A series of palaeoenvironmental sequences across transects of lowland and upland ground on Greater Exmoor indicated some settlement contraction and woodland regeneration on upland ground at the end of the Roman period. The lowland landscape, however, suggested continuity into the 5th to 6th centuries, with a change in settlement organisation and landuse happening somewhere between the 7th to 9th centuries (Fyfe 2006, 11-14; Fyfe *et al*. 2004, 1713; Rippon *et al*. 2006, 34).

Early medieval settlement

The material evidence for early medieval settlement in Somerset becomes more visible in the archaeological record from about the 10th century, with the re-introduction of wheel-thrown pottery wares. There is evidence for Roman settlements associated with occupation dateable to the 10th century, or later, at higher status sites, such as St Cleers, Somerton (SHER 53262), Whitestaunton (SHER 53262) and Wearne, Huish Episcopi (SHER 54039) and lower status sites, such as Brent Knoll (SHER 14485), Muchelney (SHER 15994) and Evercreech Park Farm, Evercreech (SHER 25729), to name but a few examples. The major evidence for early medieval settlement in Somerset, however, remains largely documentary, although there have been attempts to record and/or assess the potential relationship between Roman and early/later medieval settlement through targeted studies, such as Ellison's (1983) study of medieval village morphology in southeast Somerset, for example, or doctoral research, such as Davey (2005), Leech (1977) or Smart (2008), for example, although this is largely focussed on eastern Somerset.

Leech (1977, 177; 1982b, 239) observed that many later medieval settlements in Somerset appear to demonstrate underlying Roman occupation, whilst the majority of recorded Roman settlements appear to fall between the later medieval settlement pattern, although Ellison (1983, 7), while admitting a more limited database, has questioned this to some extent. Leech (*ibid*) further accredited the relative invisibility of Roman settlement in western Somerset to a greater degree of continuity following the end of the Roman period, suggesting the majority of Roman settlement underlay the dispersed later medieval settlement pattern. In contrast, deserted Roman settlement in eastern Somerset potentially indicated where settlement contraction and abandonment had occurred, with the later medieval settlement pattern thus reflecting the reduced extent of potential Roman settlement continuity. The hypothesis to be drawn from this is that Roman settlement continuity might be assumed to be greater in the west than the east, although the lack of large-scale fieldwalking and excavation in Somerset makes this difficult to test (Rippon 2008, 55).

Our understanding of developing settlement processes in eastern Somerset between the 5th to 11th centuries has, however, been greatly aided by recent multidisciplinary research projects, such as those at Shapwick (Aston and

Gerrard 1999; Gerrard with Aston 2007) and South Cadbury (Tabor 2002; 2004), for example. The evidence at Shapwick indicates a contraction of settlement at some point from the end of the Roman period, although radiocarbon dating at sites, such as Sladwick, above, for example, suggests reduced levels of occupation at some sites into at least the 6th century (Gerrard with Aston 2007, 964). A degree of settlement shift and reorganisation is indicated around the 7th to 8th century, with the present village having come into form by the 10th century (*ibid*, 979). This settlement chronology fits our current understanding of the social processes that preceded settlement nucleation and the formation of villages (see Jones and Page 2006; Lewis *et al*. 2001; Williamson 2003, for example) and the evidence at Shapwick may well reflect the broader pattern for eastern Somerset. Although similar research is lacking from western Somerset, it is becoming apparent, as discussed above, that both eastern and western Somerset saw some form of settlement change during the 7th to 9th centuries, although whether this represented one uniform process or two separate, but concurrent, processes remains unclear. Settlement nucleation in eastern Somerset may, then, reflect subsequent processes of social reorganisation from around the 9th century onwards, not necessarily reciprocated in the west, or at least not in the same way.

Regional landscape character: **pays**

Eleven *pays* have been identified for the modern county of Somerset, of which nine are selected for the purposes of this research (**Fig. 14.5**). Excluded are the Exmoor National Park, which is not covered by an online HER, and the Somerset Levels, because of hiatuses in occupation between the Roman and early medieval periods resulting from periodic marine and freshwater transgression. The *pays* included in the research are identified below.

The Lias Plain

The low rolling hills and vales of central and eastern Somerset are classified by Natural England (2011, jca 140) as the 'Yeovil Scarplands' (and see Webster 2007a, Fig. 1.3). Burrow (1981, Fig. 6) classified the limestone scarp and the low-lying clays to the west of it as two separate physical character areas, the

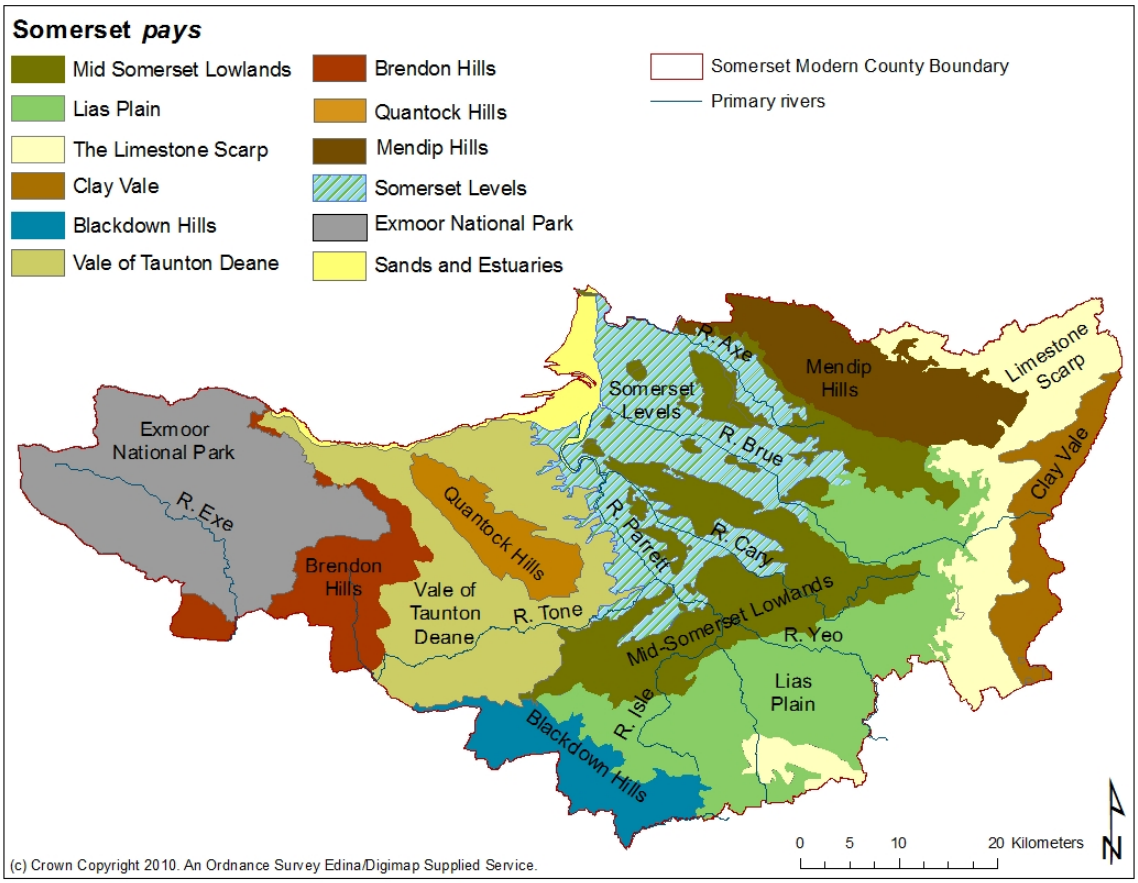


Figure 13.4. Map showing Somerset's pays, based on the county's major soils using Everitt (1986) as a principal reference, with further guidance from Young (2004) and McRae and Burnham (1973). These regions have been defined and drawn by the author using the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) and contour data. Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

'Lias Plain' and the 'Limestone Scarp'. Within his 'Lias Plain', Burrow (*ibid*) partially includes the Oolitic limestone ridges edging the Somerset Levels, defined in Webster (2007, Fig. 1.3) as the 'Mid-Somerset Hills'. Clearly, the definition of these complex character areas in this part of Somerset reflects diverse physical, social and cultural criteria, which lend themselves to variable and subjective interpretation. For the purposes of this thesis, the 'Lias Plain' is defined as the rolling hills and clay vales to the west of the limestone scarp, with the limestone scarp itself, and the Oolitic hills and ridges to the west, defined independently as the 'Limestone Scarp' and the 'Mid Somerset Lowlands' (see below). The criteria for this principally fall to the localised soils and topography; although there is no simple definition of these for this part of Somerset.

The Lias Plain has low-lying relief, between just 50m and 150m in height, and is crossed by many of the county's major rivers, which drain the *pays* to the northwest. Soils are predominantly slowly permeable clays and brown earths in the west, with more typical brown earths and calcareous rendzinas in the east,

towards the foot of the limestone scarp, and alluvial deposits and river terrace gravels along the valley floors (SSEW 1983). The fertile soils of the *pays* were densely settled during the Roman period, with many farmsteads and larger villas demonstrating considerable wealth and status (see **Fig. 14.4**).

The Domesday record for Somerset, principally the combined data for Domesday vills, estimated population density and plough-team numbers (Darby and Welldon Finn 1967, Figs. 37 and 40; Thorn and Thorn 1980), suggests the Lias Plain was densely settled by the 11th century (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). Analysis of 19th century mapping by Rippon (2008, Fig. 2.4) demonstrates that by the later medieval period the *pays* was almost wholly characterised by nucleated villages and common field agriculture, with some smaller hamlets and open fields (**Fig. 14.8**). Some villages distinctly suggest a degree of deliberate planning (Ellison 1983, 8; Rippon 2008, 37), whilst others appear more agglomerated, reflective of Taylor's (1977, 189; 1983, 131) polyfocal villages.

The Mid-Somerset Lowlands

The Mid-Somerset Lowlands comprise the low-lying hills and islands that surround and dissect the wetlands and peat moors of the Somerset Levels. These ridges of higher ground, such as Glastonbury Tor, the Polden Hills and the Wedmore Ridge, are formed of resistant Triassic mudstones and sandstones, uplifted through geological action to pierce the younger Jurassic clays overlying the Levels (Hardy 2002, 196). Subsequent erosion and fluvial action have incised through these low-lying rocks to form the many isolated hills and ridges that dissect the Levels to the north and southeast (*ibid*, 196). The soils of the *pays* are predominantly slowly permeable calcareous and argillic pelosols and well-drained brown rendzinas (SSEW 1983).

During the Roman period the Mid-Somerset Lowlands was one of the wealthiest and most densely settled of the Somerset *pays*, with the majority of Roman settlement suggesting higher status occupation, including numerous Roman villas (**Fig. 14.4**). Roman settlement distribution is almost exclusively confined to the east of the River Parrett, with only six recorded Roman sites to the west, near Langport and Ilminster, bordering the rivers Parrett and Isle. Neroche

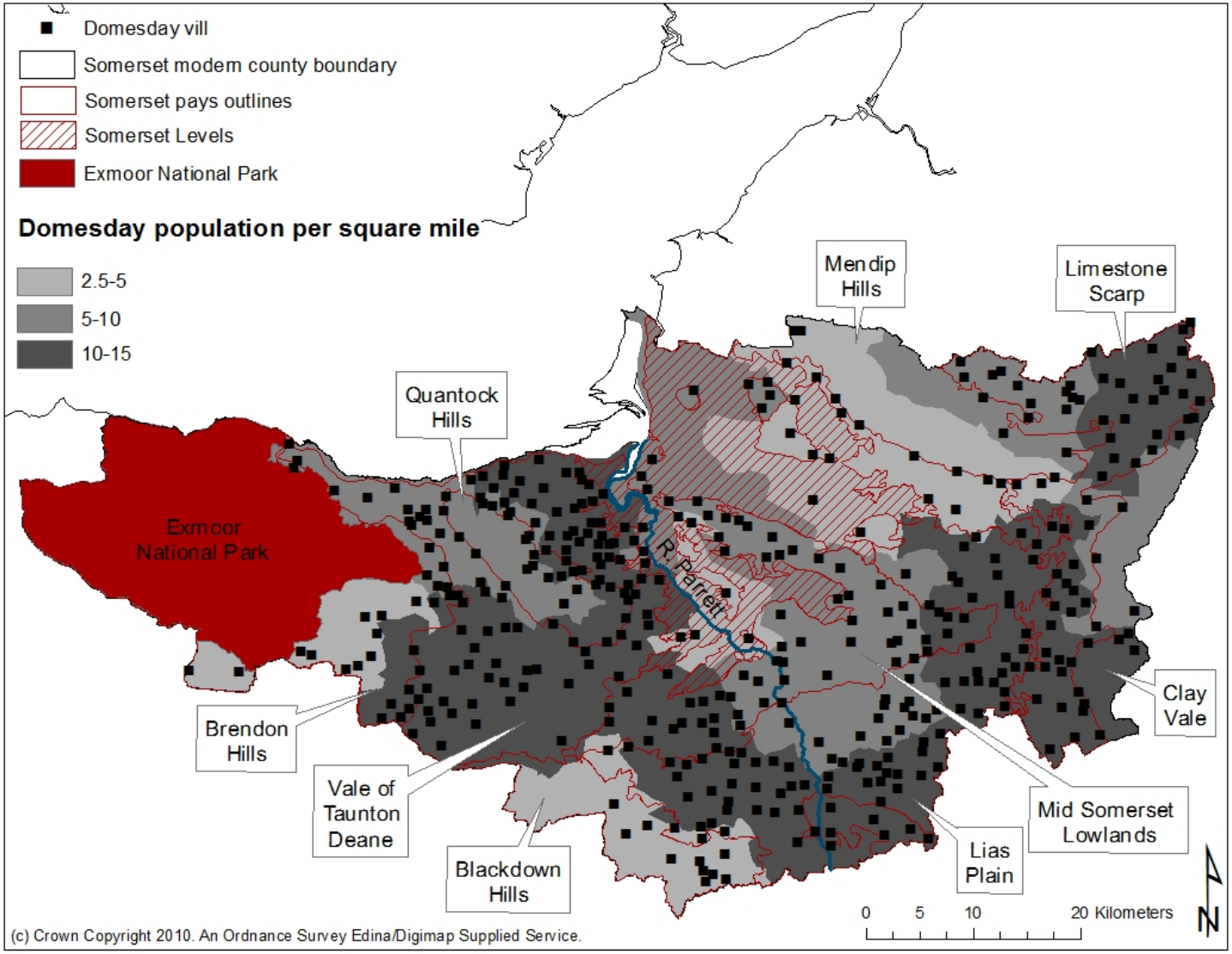


Figure 14.6. The Domesday vills recorded for the modern county of Somerset, excepting the Somerset Levels and Exmoor National Park, overlying Darby and Welldon Finn's (1967, Fig. 40) estimated population density per square mile. Population densities drawn after Darby and Welldon Finn (1967, Fig. 40), with the Domesday vills compiled and mapped using Thorn and Thorn (1980). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

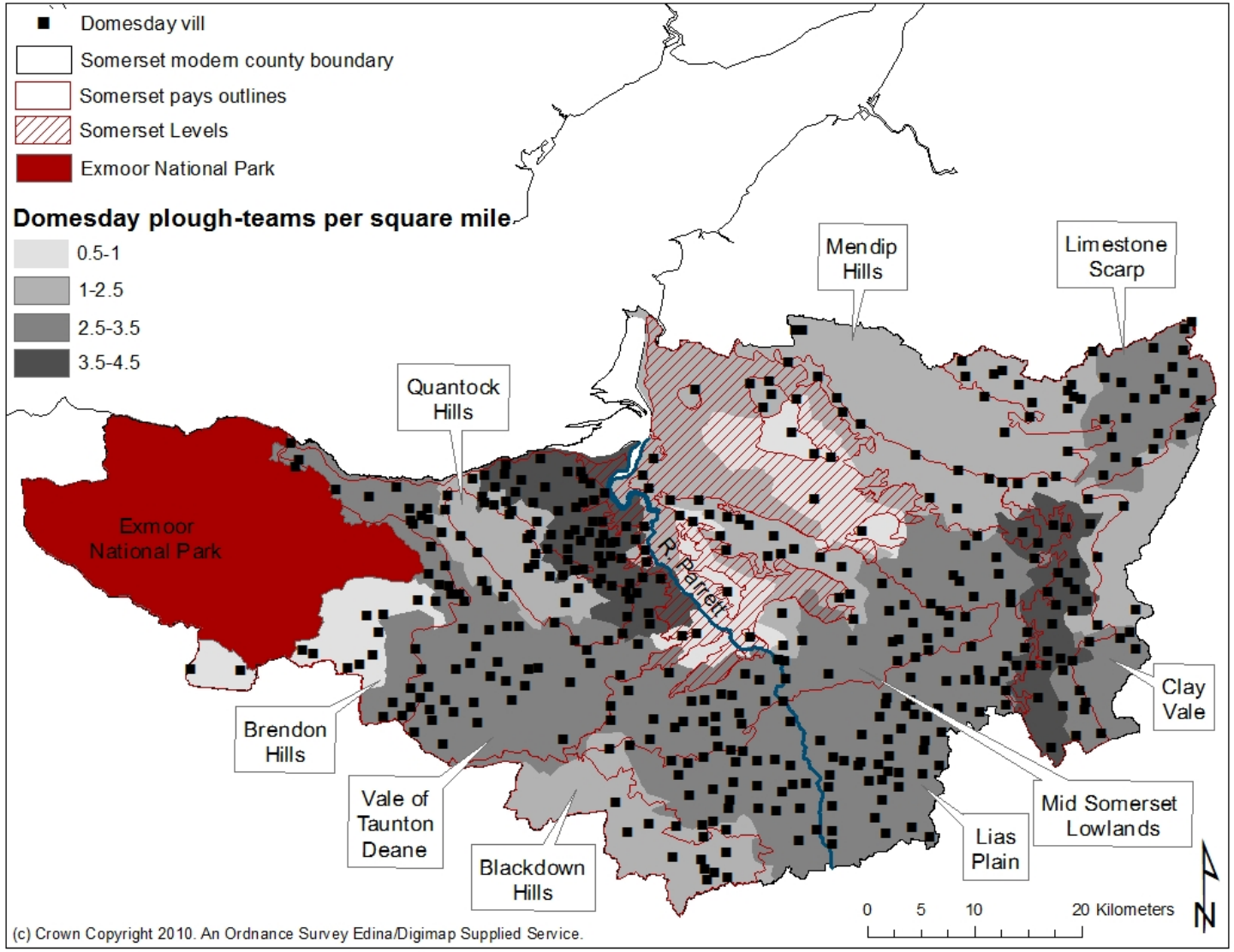


Figure 14.7. The Domesday vills recorded for the modern county of Somerset, excepting the Somerset Levels and Exmoor National Park, overlying Darby and Welldon Finn's (1967, Fig. 37) estimated number of Domesday plough-teams per square mile. Plough-team densities drawn after Darby and Finn (1967, Fig. 37), with the Domesday vills compiled and mapped using Thorn and Thorn (1980). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

Forest lies to the west of the River Parrett and the comparative lack of Roman settlement may reflect its extent during the Roman period. The River Parrett has also been suggested to mark a cultural boundary between the Dumnonii and Durotriges (Leach 2001a, 32), however, which may also partly account for the disparity in Roman settlement distribution.

The Domesday evidence suggests the Mid Somerset Lowlands remained densely settled by the 11th century, although the estimated population density and plough-team numbers indicates this was not evenly distributed across the *pays*, being notably lower in the northeast (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). The suggested later medieval settlement character of the *pays* is largely one of nucleated villages and common fields, with some scattered hamlets and farms in the northeast. Along the southern margins of the Mendip Hills a string of compact villages, and a few larger ones, developed, broadly reflecting the distribution of earlier Domesday vills (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Limestone Scarp

The Limestone Scarp lies to the east of the Lias Plain. Defined by low outcrops of Jurassic limestone, the scarp is essentially an extension of the Mendip Hills to the northwest and soils are predominantly shallow calcareous pelosols and rendzinas. Historically, the east of the *pays* lay within the forests of Selwood and Bruton, which, based on place-name evidence, may have extended as far west as Wells before the 11th century (Costen 1988, 41 and see Darby and Welldon Finn 1967, Fig. 41).

Recorded Roman settlement appears largely confined to the north and south of the Limestone Scarp with a gap in the centre of the *pays*, possibly reflecting woodland coverage during the Roman period. Roman settlement hierarchy reflects both higher and lower status, with several Roman villas recorded. There is a particular concentration of lower status Roman occupation in the northeast (**Fig. 14.4**). The Domesday evidence for the limestone Scarp indicates a dense distribution of Domesday vills by the 11th century, coinciding with comparatively high population density and plough-team numbers (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). This potentially reflects extensive settlement and arable agriculture, possibly the result of protracted woodland clearance between the 5th to 11th centuries. The

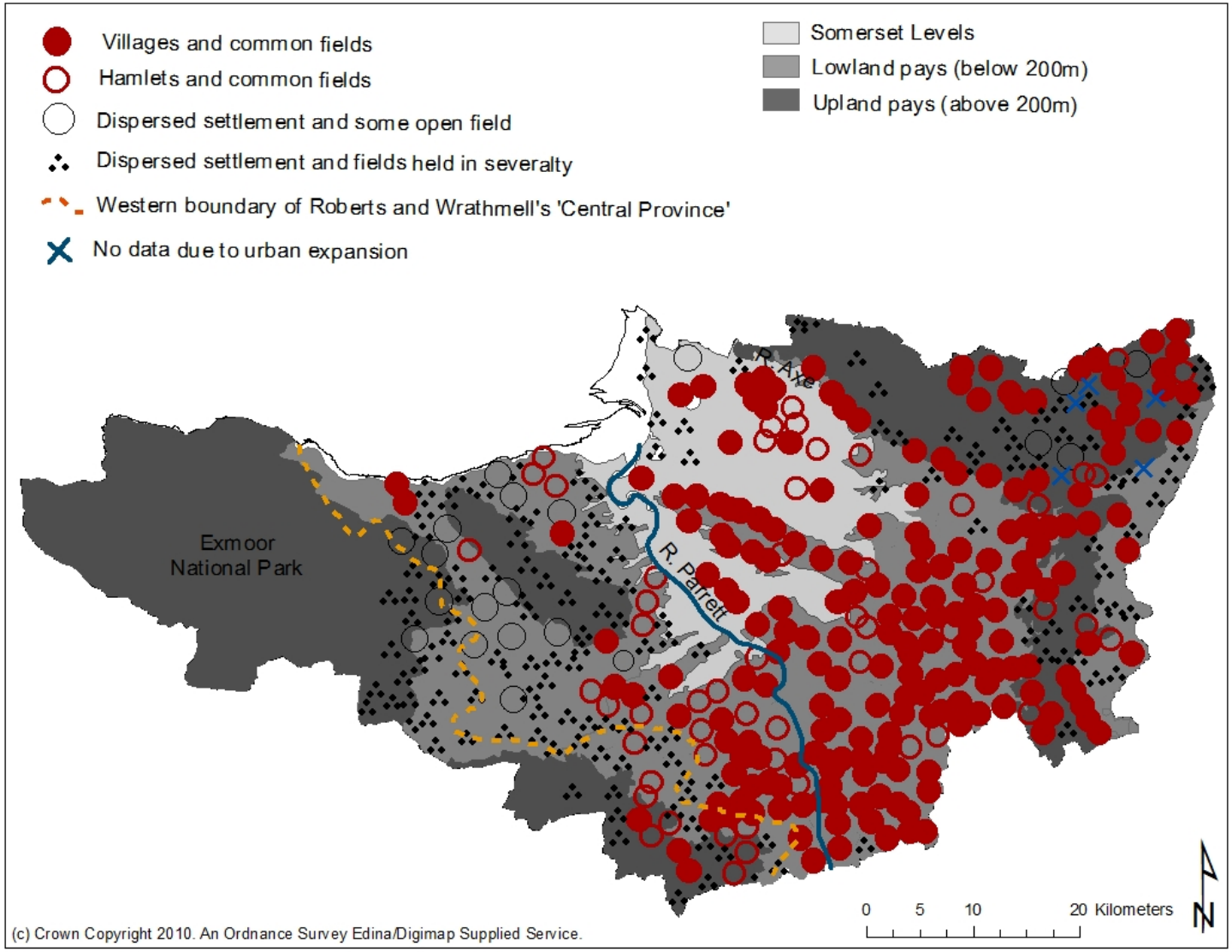


Figure 14.8. The historic landscape character of Somerset, derived from OS 1st Edition 6" maps, mapping the extent of nucleated settlement with common field agriculture against a more dispersed settlement character of hamlets and farms associated with smaller open fields, commonly farmed in severalty. The boundary of Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000; 2002) 'Central Province' is shown to the west. Settlement characterisation is drawn after Rippon (2008, Fig. 2.4), with the boundary for the 'Central Province' drawn after Rippon (2004, Fig. 2.4) and Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, Fig 1.1). Geographical mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright.

suggested later medieval settlement pattern for the Limestone Scarp indicates predominantly nucleated settlement and common fields across the larger extent of the *pays*, with some smaller hamlets and scattered farmsteads across the central belt (Rippon 2008, Fig. 2.4) (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Clay Vale

The Clay Vale lies to the east of the Limestone Scarp, comprising rolling clay valleys overlying Jurassic mudstones and sandstones, with largely heavy pelo-stagnogley soils (SSEW 1983). During the Roman period the Clay Vale was probably still part of Selwood Forest: recorded Roman settlement for the *pays* indicates sparse occupation, with only a few lower status sites along the foot of the Limestone Scarp, and a possible Roman villa at Selwood, to the east (SHER 24463) (**Fig. 14.4**). The *pays* may well have remained predominantly wooded even by the 11th century, particularly along its north and west borders (Darby and Welldon Finn 1967, Fig. 41). The distribution of Domesday vills is largely limited to the south and west of the *pays*, widely spaced along the foot of the Limestone Scarp, as during the Roman period. Combined with relatively low estimated population density and plough-team numbers (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**), this potentially reflects relatively limited occupation and small settlement size by the 11th century. The suggested later medieval settlement pattern of the *pays* continues to largely indicate scattered hamlets and farms with small, irregular, open fields (**Fig. 14.8**). Along the foot of the Limestone Scarp, some nucleated villages developed, with long common fields extending onto the higher ground (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Mendip Hills

The Mendip Hills rise to the north of the Somerset Levels, forming a barrier between the Severn Estuary to the west and the county boundary to the east, where the land descends in a series of ridges to merge with the southern Cotswolds and the Limestone Scarp (Hardy 2002, 45). The underlying geology is largely Carboniferous limestone, pierced by outcrops of Red Devonian Sandstone on the high peaks in the west. The limestone forms a typical Karst landscape of steep gorges and complex underground cave and river systems

(*ibid*, 51). Soils are mainly well-drained brown earths and paleo-argillic brown earths, with non-calcareous brown rankers along the *pays* margins and ferric podzols on the high peaks. In the east the brown earths and rankers on the lower slopes intermix with slow-draining stagnogleys (SSEW 1983).

During the Roman period the exploitation of the *pays*' rich lead and silver deposits led to some large mining settlements on the higher ground, at sites such as Charterhouse and Priddy, for example. Roman occupation of the Mendip Hills appears to have been otherwise relatively scarce, although some limited settlement along the lowland soils bordering the *pays* margins in the southwest, near Cheddar, may be argued to straddle the boundaries of both the Mendip Hills and Mid Somerset Lowlands, with Cheddar clearly having been a site of considerable size and status (**Fig. 14.4**).

The Domesday evidence for the Mendip Hills suggests little evidence for permanent settlement of the *pays* even by the 11th century, although a string of Domesday vills along the foothills within the Mid Somerset Lowlands, Lias Plain and Limestone Scarp may have been located on the *pays* boundaries in order to exploit both upland and lowland resources (**Fig. 14.6 and 14.7**). This interdependence was ably demonstrated in Kent (see Chapters 10-13), and highlights the issues of defining *pays* solely by fixed physical characteristics when social organisation and exploitation is not only far more complex, but also potentially alters over time. The suggested later medieval settlement character of the Mendip Hills demonstrates some ingress onto the higher ground, with a scatter of farmsteads in the west of the *pays* and a greater density of scattered farmsteads and hamlets on the more fertile soils to the east (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Vale of Taunton Deane

The Vale of Taunton Deane comprises the low-lying river plain of the River Tone in the southwest and rolling clay vales to the north and northeast and along the north coast where they skirt the northern slopes of the Quantock Hills (Havinden 1981, 34). The *pays* is bordered by the Brendon Hills to the west, the Blackdown Hills to the south and the Somerset Levels to the east. Within the *pays*, the Quantock Hills rise in stark contrast to the surrounding vales. Soils overlying the Triassic mudstones south of the River Tone are typically

calcareous and argillic pelosols. Further north, bordering the Quantocks and Brendon Hills, Triassic sandstones and river terrace deposits have given rise to more typical argillic brown earths, with some wetter stagnogleys. Along the north coast late Triassic/early Jurassic mudstones are again overlain by calcareous and argillic pelosols (SSEW 1983).

The River Tone and its tributaries drain eastwards across the south of the *pays*, forming a wide level floodplain, whilst to the north the Doniford Stream, fed by a number of tributaries rising from the Brendon and Quantock Hills, runs north to the coast at Watchet. Further streams drain east from the Quantock Hills to form the River Parrett's western watershed. The low-lying floodplain of the Tone Valley gives way to a more undulating landscape as it rises northwards towards the fringes of the Quantock and Brendon Hills, with winding lanes and rich ancient hedgerows (Havinden 1981, 36).

Recorded Roman settlement for the Vale of Taunton Deane suggests a concentration of occupation along the Tone valley, with a further distribution of settlement to the east, between the Quantocks and the Somerset Levels, and a handful of sites along the north coast, between Watchet and Hinckley Point, where the rolling landscape meets open, windswept, cliffs (**Fig. 14.4**). The Domesday evidence for the Vale of Taunton Deane indicates a relatively high density of Domesday vills and estimated population, notably in the south and east of the *pays* (**Fig. 14.6**). East of the Quantocks the concentration of Domesday vills is particularly pronounced, corresponding with a comparatively high number of plough teams (**Fig. 14.7**), potentially indicating extensive settlement on the highly arable soils of the region by the 11th century.
The suggested later medieval settlement character of the Vale of Taunton Deane continues to largely reflect dispersed farms and hamlets with irregular open fields, more prevalent in the west and southwest of the *pays*. To the south and east of the Quantocks, and on the north coast near Watchet, however, there is a broadly attenuated distribution of larger nucleated hamlets with some villages and common field (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Blackdown Hills

The Blackdown Hills are of complex and diverse character. In the north and east are high scarps and steep ridges of durable Cretaceous Upper Greensand, with a gentler, undulating, landscape towards the south coast, overlying softer Triassic and Jurassic clays and mudstones (Havinden 1981, 35; Hardy 2002, 175-183). On the Greensand, cherty deposits of clay-with-flints form generally poor and acidic brown earths and stagnogleyic soils: this is similar to parts of the Chart Hills in western Kent (Chapter 10, 231). On the softer mudstones of the lower valleys are more fertile brown earths and clays (SSEW 1983).

Recorded Roman settlement for the Blackdown Hills appears limited to just five sites along Somerset's southwest borders, although three of these suggest possible Roman villas (**Fig. 14.4**). The Domesday evidence suggests wider settlement of the lowland in the south of the *pays* by the 11th century, although this is combined with relatively low estimated population density and plough-team numbers, possibly indicating generally small settlement sizes (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). The ancient forest of Neroche extends across the northeast of the *pays*, near Staple Fitzpaine (Havinden 1981, 36): Rackham (1988, 20) reflects that the lack of recorded Domesday settlement in this area is because its resources were apportioned to estates at Ilminster, to the east, suggesting it remained largely woodland or woodland pasture by the 11th century. The suggested later medieval settlement pattern for the Blackdown Hills indicates scattered farmsteads and small hamlets in the higher valleys and along the spring lines, with some larger hamlets and villages with common fields to the south and east along the lower valleys (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Brendon Hills

The Brendon Hills are eastern outliers to Exmoor, with a shared underlying geology comprising Red Devonian slate and sandstones (Hardy 2002, 22). Upland soils are typically poor and acidic brown podzols, with more fertile brown earths on the lower slopes (SSEW 1983). Palaeoenvironmental evidence demonstrates that the upland ground of the *pays* was cleared of woodland in prehistory and predominantly used for seasonal grazing during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods (Fyfe *et al.* 2004, 1710; Rippon *et al.* 2006, 49).

There is a lack of dateable evidence for Roman settlement on the Brendon Hills, although numerous enclosures and ditches identified through aerial photography are recorded in the Somerset HER (Somerset Historic Environment Service 2012). The distribution of these suggests that LIA/Roman settlement was principally situated on the lower slopes along the moorland margins. Palaeoenvironmental evidence suggests that Roman settlement and landuse across the lower slopes of the Brendon Hills broadly indicate continuity until around the 6th - 7th centuries, when change in farming practices are observed (Fyfe *et al.* 2004, 1713; Rippon *et al.* 2006, 34-35). An intensification of cereal production between the 7th to 9th centuries is thought to indicate a move towards a mixed farming regime, possibly reflecting the origins of convertible or 'ley' husbandry (Fyfe *et al*. 2004, 1713; Rippon *et al*. 2006, 55), a farming practice distinctive to the southwest (and see Fox 1991).

The Domesday evidence for the Brendon Hills indicates widely spaced Domesday vills, predominantly along the lower slopes in the south and east. Combined with relatively low estimated population density and plough-team numbers, this potentially reflects limited settlement by the 11th century (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). The suggested later medieval settlement character indicates scattered hamlets and farms across the lower slopes of the *pays*. These are largely associated with small irregular fields, although some areas of larger open field are observed along the northeast margins (**Fig. 14.8**).

The Quantock Hills

The Quantock Hills rise out of the Vale of Taunton Deane as a discrete landmass, more steeply inclined to the west with gentler, rolling, slopes to the east. The underlying geology is Red Devonian slates and sandstones, elevated above the surrounding vales through geological action (Riley 2006, 4; Hardy 2002, 22). To the west the prominent scarp is deeply incised by wooded valleys, where springs cut through the permeable rock. To the east the gentler dipslope contains long broad valleys where streams flow east towards the Vale of Taunton Deane (Riley 2006, 1-3). Soils are typically brown earths on the lower slopes, with extensive podzols on the high moors (SSEW 1983).

As with the Brendon Hills, evidence of dateable settlement for the Roman period is limited. Whilst numerous enclosures and ditches are visible through aerial photography, these are generally without dating evidence, although excavation at Volis Hill, Kingston St Mary (SHER 15910), has revealed evidence of mid to late 2nd century occupation (Thorpe 2002, 139). The enclosure is one of a series situated on the lower slopes of the Quantock Hills between Kingston St Mary and Broomfield (Riley 2006, 71), many of which may also demonstrate Romano-British occupation if evaluated further.

The Quantock Hills are documented as a Saxon hunting ground, with the earliest grant of land dating to the 7th century (Riley 2006, 82). Following the Norman Conquest it was formalised as a royal forest, with settlement of the higher ridges by the 11th century probably confined to small, enclosed, hunting lodges (*ibid*, 83). The distribution of Domesday vills suggests that permanent settlement of the *pays* by the 11th century largely favoured the gentler landscape to the east and southeast (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). The suggested later medieval settlement character appears to reflect a dispersed pattern (**Fig. 14.8**), with some settlements possibly established through the fragmentation of surrounding royal estates from the 10th century onwards (*ibid*, 85).

Methods and Principles

Somerset was selected as a regional case-study because it presented a number of specific challenges to the study of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, in part because of a clear division in settlement character between the east and west of the county, and in part because of the limitations in material evidence for 5th to 10th century settlement. The primary research methods and principles of the broader thesis are presented in Chapter 4, but those sources and methods particular to Somerset are discussed below.

The research area

The research area is defined as the modern county of Somerset, excluding Exmoor National Park and North Somerset. This partly reflects current data management, which is largely organised according to modern administrative

districts. The Exmoor National Park and North Somerset are excluded because they have independent HERs, which are not currently available online.

Sources and methods

Roman settlement

The evidence for Roman settlement in eastern Somerset is relatively ubiquitous, with large quantities of pottery, coins and high status artefacts, often associated with substantial structural remains. Local pottery production was fairly limited: kiln sites are known from Congresbury and Shepton Mallett, and others may be guessed at, but the main sources of local pottery may have come from the Poole potteries and an, as yet unidentified, site in south Somerset or North Dorset (Leach 2001a, 83). Somerset lacks the extensive fieldwalking surveys of Norfolk, and excavation of Roman sites has traditionally focussed on the major Roman villas and towns. This is slowly changing through development-led evaluation and targeted research projects and a fuller picture of the rural Roman settlement of eastern Somerset is beginning to emerge. In western Somerset there is still a distinct lack of dateable Roman settlement. Whilst excavation at some of the many enclosures identified through aerial photography is suggesting Romano-British occupation, this cannot yet be widely shown and must, for the moment, be excluded from any quantitative analysis. Even in western Somerset, however, there is growing evidence for Roman settlement through the auspices of development-led evaluation and targeted research projects.

Roman settlement in Somerset is recorded following the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 60.

Roman cemeteries

As with Norfolk and Kent, and based on Leech (1977, 134), Roman cemeteries in Somerset are considered as proxy evidence for settlement, where no associated settlement is yet identified. Cremation burials may be assumed, based on Philpott (1991, 53), to pre-date the mid 3rd century. Roman inhumation burials, as discussed above (p 351), may generally be assumed to

date to the 3rd century or later (*ibid*, chapter 31). Somerset, however, demonstrates contrasting responses to Romanitas between the east and west of the county (see Leach 2001a, 84), and lacked any overt Anglo-Saxon influence, generally, until around the mid 7th century (see Costen 2011, 27), and many inhumation cemeteries across the county as a whole have been shown to variously reflect a range of LIA and post-Roman native practices (*ibid*, 24 and see Rahtz 1977). In the absence of other evidence, but bearing these provisos in mind, where inhumation burials are recorded as Roman (as a pose to post-Roman) in the current archaeological record, this interpretation is used.

Roman cemeteries in Somerset are recorded as proxies for settlement following the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 61.

Post-Roman settlement and cemeteries

Post-Roman Somerset is largely aceramic between the 5th to 10th centuries, excepting some specialist sites that fall outside the remit of this thesis. Identifying material settlement between the 5th to 10th centuries in Somerset largely relies on scientific dating methods, although in some cases, cemetery remains, at sites such as Stoneage Barton or Bradley Hill, for example, may suggest post-Roman activity, as discussed above (and see pp 353-354). Unfortunately, much of the material evidence for post-Roman occupation in Somerset is ephemeral and difficult to relate securely to Roman settlement. By quantifying this where possible, however, it may be possible to identify themes or trends that can be compared to those of Norfolk or Kent.

Early medieval settlement

The material evidence for settlement in Somerset from the 10th century onwards becomes more readily available with the reintroduction of more durable pottery wares. As with Norfolk and Kent, where there is material evidence for settlement of the 9th to 11th centuries, qualified as 'Late Saxon' settlement for Norfolk and Kent, this is assessed independently to Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, although these all potentially reflect aspects of early medieval settlement, and in many cases coincide. The aim has been to try and differentiate these relationships statistically, particularly as for many early

medieval settlements, and notably in a dispersed settlement landscape, such as western Somerset, for example, the Domesday evidence may be all that is available. As discussed above (p 356), settlement evolution between 5th to 11th centuries in Somerset potentially saw phases of settlement shift and consolidation that may not have been either uniform nor concurrent countywide. To assume evidence of settlement continuity, or discontinuity, for this period without accounting for such interim changes is to stretch credibility, yet the limited evidence currently available for Somerset means some leaps of judgement must inevitably be made. In the absence of additional dating evidence, where settlement evidence is referred to as 'Saxon' in the Somerset HER, this is assumed to broadly reflect the 7th to 9th centuries, when the material influences of Anglo-Saxon culture and social organisation begin to be more clearly evidenced in Somerset (see Costen 20011, 25-30, for example). Equally, where settlement evidence is referred to as 'early medieval', this is assumed to broadly reflect the 10th to 11th centuries, when distinct social and economic changes are observed, and when the county's archaeological record sees the re-emergence of dateable material culture.

Domesday Vills

The Domesday accounts for Somerset potentially provide us with the most comprehensive record for 11th century settlement, although, as discussed in Chapter 4 (p 63), the record of Domesday vills does not necessarily reflect the definitive number or size of individual settlements in existence by this time. Furthermore, there are some discrepancies between the two Domesday accounts for Somerset, the Exchequer and the Exeter texts, added to which, there are some records that do not include place-names or that refer to the caput of the larger manors (Taunton, for example) but omit the names of their dependencies (Darby and Welldon Finn 1967, 141). The Domesday source used for Somerset is Thorn and Thorn (1980). Where it documents vills that now lie outside the modern county, these have been omitted. Where Domesday vills are recorded as 'lost' in Thorn and Thorn (*ibid*), further enquiry has been made using Darby and Welldon Finn (1967), the Somerset HER (Somerset Historic Environment Service 2011) and the online volumes of the *Victoria*

County History of Somerset (1906-2006). Where Domesday vills could not be securely located via these sources they were also omitted.

Whilst not quantatively assessed, the supporting evidence for estimated population density and plough-team numbers as compiled by Darby and Welldon Finn (1967) has been mapped in relation to the distribution of Domesday vills (**Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**) to enable a fuller picture of the relative extent of settlement and arable cultivation across the county by the 11th century.

Domesday vills have been located and mapped according to the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 63-64).

Early and Later Medieval Manors

Somerset lacks the relatively well-documented record of early and later medieval manors in Norfolk and Kent. These are not well represented in the Somerset HER, although some manorial sites were identified using this, with some further manors identified through the available grey literature and county journals. The location of a Domesday vill is also considered to reflect the location of a Domesday manor, even where no obvious manor house can be identified. The OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map was also used to potentially identify early/later medieval manors. This worked on the assumption that where settlements recorded a 'Manor', 'Manor House', 'Manor Farm', 'Manse' or 'Grange', this feasibly represented the location of an early/ later medieval manor house. This is not an infallible assumption, as some dwellings were given these names during the 19th century (Ellison 1983, 9), but greater confidence was achieved by using the earliest edition map source and where potential manors were located within a village core.

Manors, including Domesday manors, are recorded for Somerset according to the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, 64.

Chapter 15. Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships in Eastern Somerset

Introduction

The settlement results for eastern Somerset are presented below, relative to their *pays*. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships are quantified and tabulated as for Norfolk and Kent, although the terminology for the 5th to 11th centuries has been modified to avoid the cultural connotations of the term 'Saxon'. For the Clay Vale and the Mendip Hills, settlement data for the Roman and early medieval periods is relatively scarce, and the discussion for these *pays* reflects this limitation. The broader results reflect the evidence available, to date, as retrieved through the methods stated. Any omissions or errors in interpreting the available evidence are acknowledged as the author's alone.

The Lias Plain

Settlement data

Sixty-six Roman settlements and one Roman cemetery are recorded for the Lias Plain. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results are shown below (**Table 15.1**: **Fig. 15.1**).

Ninety-five Domesday vills are recorded for the Lias Plain. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 15.2**).

Soils data

Of the 67 Roman sites recorded for the Lias Plain (settlements and cemeteries), 22 (33%) were located on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, with 18 (27%) on typical brown earths, and 8 (12%) on typical brown calcareous earths, accounting for 72% of the total and demonstrating that the majority of Roman settlement potentially favoured the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.2**).

Table 15.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Lias Plain, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 15.2 shows the percentage of Domesday vills recorded for the Lias Plain, relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 15.1: The Lias Plain

Total number of Roman settlements 67	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	1	4	12		2%	9%	28%	
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m		2	1			5%	2%	
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m		1				2%		
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m		1	1			2%	2%	
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m			1				2%	
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m			1				2%	
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		2	5			5%	12%	
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		2	5			5%	12%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill		4	11			9%	26%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church		1	7			2%	16%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor		4	14	1		9%	33%	2%

Table 15.2: The Lias Plain

Total number of Domesday vills recorded 95		Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		30	32%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		17	18%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		2	2%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	2	2%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	4	4%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	10	11%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	0	0%
	Roman town within 500m	2	2%
	Roman findspot within 500m	1	1%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		19	20%

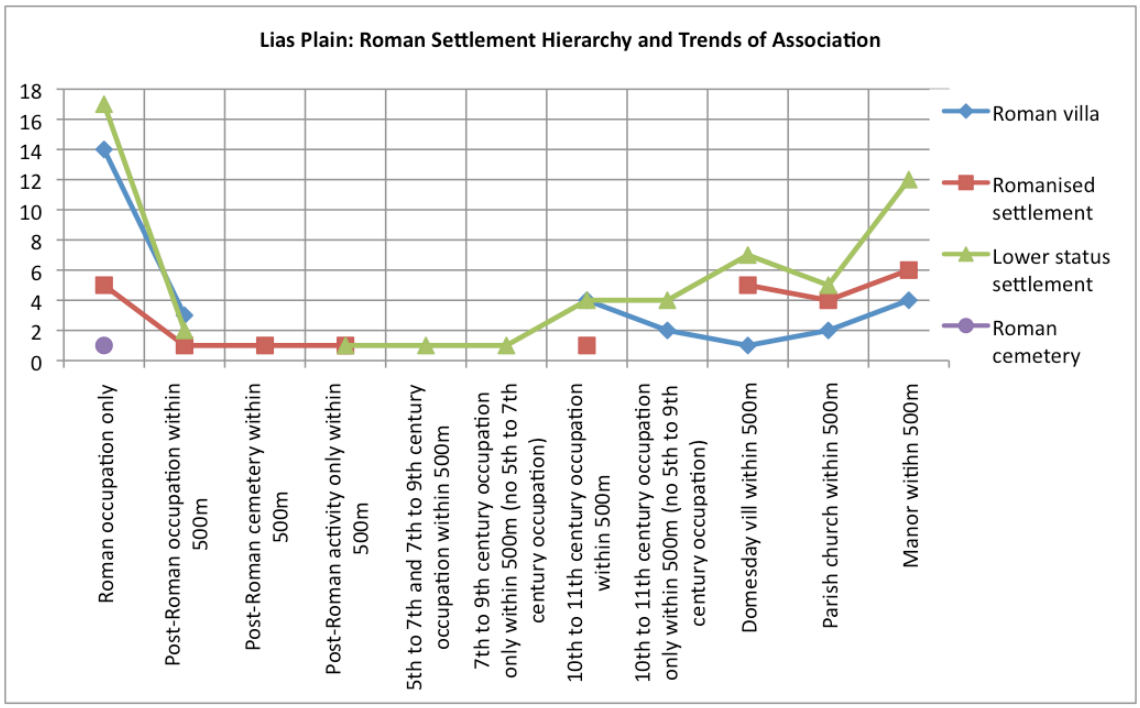


Figure 15.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Lias Plain and the number of Roman settlements relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. All data compiled by the author.

Of the 95 Domesday vills recorded for the Lias Plain, 46 (48%) were located on the stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, with 21 (22%) on typical brown earths and 5 (5%) on typical brown calcareous earths, accounting for 75% of the total number of Domesday vills recorded. This suggests that the loams and loam over clay soils continued to be favoured into the 11th century and, by association, that these soils are where potential Roman settlement continuity on the Lias Plain is most likely to have occurred. The point data for Domesday vills associated with Roman settlement, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.3**).

The limited evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries on the Lias Plain makes it rash to attempt any firm conclusions over how settlement processes during this period may have related to soils. Interestingly, while the available evidence appears to suggest the loams and loam over clay soils saw the major extent of potential Roman settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries (**Fig. 15.2**), there is also limited indication for this across some of the wetter clays and alluvial clays. This is not currently indicated for the 7th to 9th centuries, possibly reflecting a move away from the wetter soils over the course of the 5th to 9th centuries.

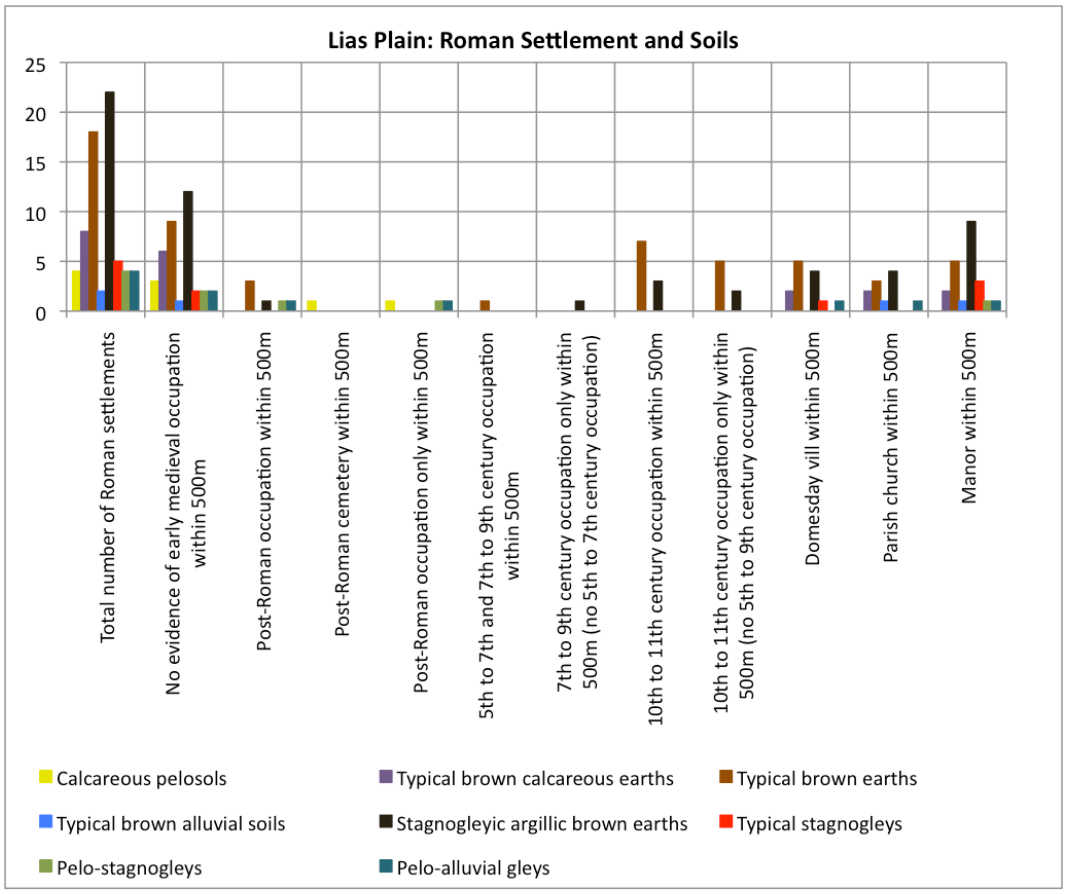


Figure 15.2 Bar chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Lias Plain that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of post-Roman and early medieval settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils.

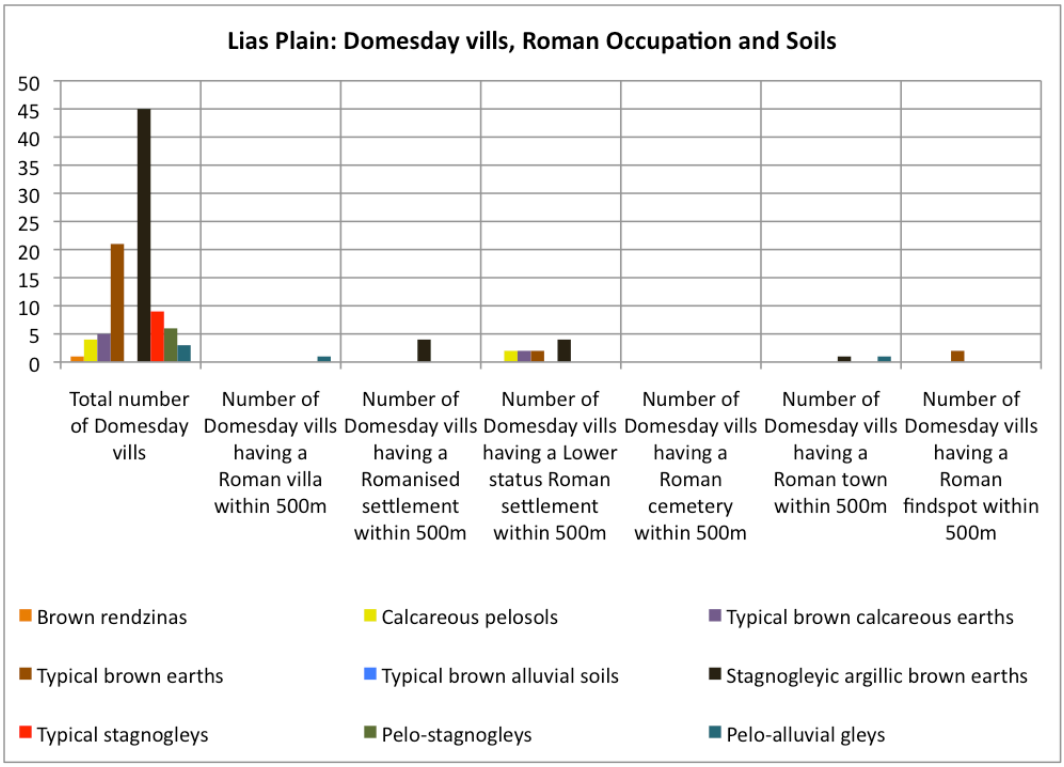


Figure 15.3. Bar chart showing the number of Domesday vills on the Lias Plain and their relationship to Roman occupation and suggested Roman settlement hierarchy, relative to soils.

Where Roman settlement appears associated with a Domesday vill or parish church, this is also largely across the loams and clay loams, and the calcareous earths overlying river gravels (**Fig. 15.2**), although some association on the wetter soils is also indicated. The association between Roman settlement and manors indicates a broader distribution of settlement across the loams and clay loams as well as the wetter gleys and stagnogleys. The lack of interim evidence for occupation prevents speculation regarding the potential continuity of Roman and 10th to 11th century settlement on these wetter soils. The evidence from both Norfolk and Kent, however, also gives some indication of an association between Roman settlement, Domesday vills and manors on poorer or wetter soils, possibly due to progressive settlement expansion from around the 10th to 11th centuries onwards. This would seem, partly at least, to point to resettlement of the poorer soils from this point, rather than settlement continuity, and it may be that this is what the results are indicating here.

Retrogressive analysis of Domesday vills and Roman settlement on the Lias Plain has returned limited results, but appears to support the hypothesis that potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries is more likely for the loams and loam over clay soils than the wetter clays and alluvial gleys (**Fig. 15.3**).

Discussion

The evidence for Roman occupation on the Lias Plain suggests the *pays* was densely settled during the Roman period, with significant indication of higher status occupation: 21 sites, 31% of the total, indicate potential villa status, with a further 12 sites (18%) suggesting some degree of Romanised construction (**Fig. 15.4**). The remaining 34 sites (51%) suggest comparatively lower status occupation, in that there is no apparent evidence for Romanised construction, although, as discussed in Chapter 14, the general wealth and status of Roman occupation in eastern Somerset is notable. Whilst 30 Roman settlements had no clear indication of occupation date, where this was explicit, occupation into at least the 4th century was indicated in all cases.

Taking the evidence demonstrated for Norfolk and Kent, it seems feasible that a degree of settlement abandonment occurred across eastern Somerset at some

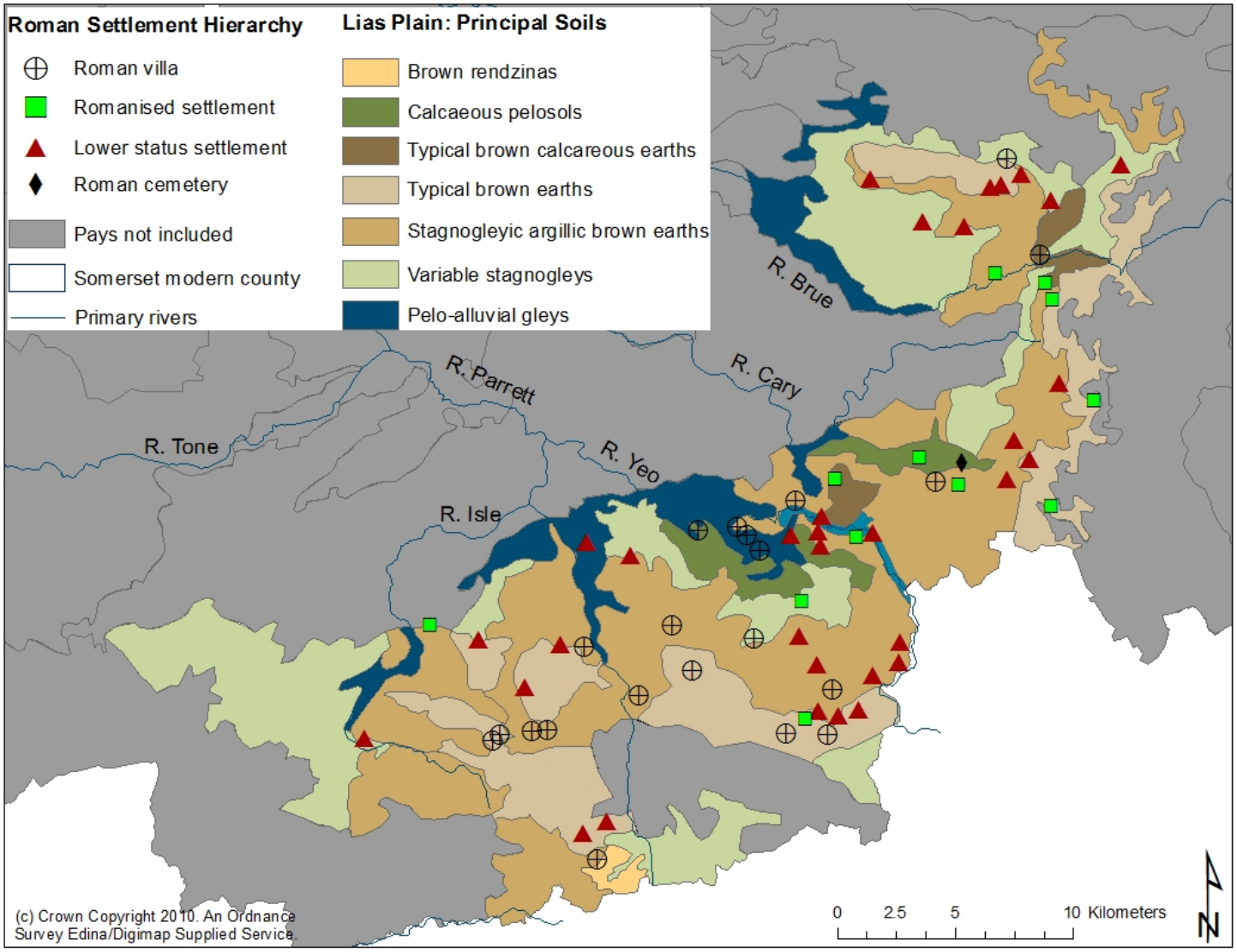


Figure 15.4. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Lias Plain showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soil types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soil Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

point between the 5th to 11th centuries, although the lack of supporting data makes this difficult to quantify, both as to the extent of settlement contraction and when it occurred. However, whilst current evidence for potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries is limited, the cumulative data suggests some indication for this. Seven Roman settlements on the Lias Plain, to date, have evidence for potential continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries, with five of these distinctly demonstrating higher status occupation: the Roman villas at Hinton Mill, Lopen (SHER 15148), Northfield Lane, Dinnington (SHER 53887) and Ilchester Mead (SHER 53104) and two Romanised settlements at Woolston Farm, Yarlington (SHER 22758) and Camel Hill, West Camel (SHER 11607).

At Hinton Mill, pottery from the site includes material dateable to the early 5th century (Bellamy and Graham 2004, 9). Phases of partial modification and demolition appear to have occurred after this date, although these cannot be securely dated due to a lack of associated finds: a pit dug into one of the mosaic floors, for example, contained a layer of Lias roof tiles overlain by rubble that suggested it had been cut into the floor before the subsequent collapse of the building, but there is nothing to securely date this event (*ibid*, 9) (**Fig. 15.5**). The villa itself lies on clay loams and the principal Domesday manor of Lopen (SHER 53407) is situated *c*. 530m to the north, on better-drained loamy soils (**Fig. 15.5**). Earthworks and fieldname evidence suggests the manor house may have lain to the south of the parish church (Ellison 1983, 56): a Roman coin was found in the vicinity during metal detecting but no firm suggestion of underlying Roman occupation has otherwise been shown, to date. A second Domesday manor, belonging to the Knights Templar, is situated about 375m northwest of the Roman villa, also on the better-drained loams. A watching brief here (Allum and Pegg 2009, 216) recovered 11th to 12th century pottery, while the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map appears to suggest an area of common field associated with the manor, between the villa and the current manor farm, further reflecting the presence of an early medieval settlement (**Fig. 15.5**). The evidence as a whole may suggest potential continuity of the villa into at least the 5th to 7th centuries, with a shift northwards onto the better-drained soils by the 10th to 11th centuries, although a more precise chronology for this remains lacking at present.

Figure 15.5. The excavation site plan of Hinton Mill Roman villa, drawn after Bellamy and Graham (2004, Fig. 3) (above) and the location of the villa in relation to the Domesday manors at Lopen, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

At Dinnington Roman villa, grain overlying a mosaic floor in the west range was radiocarbon dated to 410-570 cal AD at 95.4% probability (Wilkinson 2012, pers comm). 'Saxon' pottery was also recorded from the site during excavations in 1976 (Aston 1977, 113), taken to refer to pottery dating to the 10th to 11th centuries, although no clearer indication is given. At Ilchester Mead, excavation (Hayward 1982) revealed evidence for a period of decline and significantly reduced or modified use of the site, which was dated by associated coin evidence to the late 4th/ early 5th centuries (*ibid*, 25). Partial demolition and new building on a reduced scale is also attributed to this phase, although clearer dating of the chronology of events is lacking (*ibid*, 25). An articulated male skeleton overlying building rubble in Room 16 of the western range may indicate post-Roman activity related to the deliberate deposition of human remains: Hayward (*ibid*, 53) draws comparison with late Roman burials in cemeteries on the outskirts of Ilchester, which may have continued in use into the 5th centuries (see Leach 1982, 99; Smart 2008, 237), potentially adding further weight to post-Roman activity at Ilchester Mead.

The villa at Ilchester Mead does, however, lie on wet pelo-alluvial gley soils and excavation (Hayward 1982, 26) revealed a sealing layer of alluvial clays. These have been attributed to the post-Roman period, but prior to the 9th to 10th centuries, on the basis of an overlying soil layer, which indicates evidence for early medieval cultivation (Leach 1982, 107; Smart 2008, 224). The evidence suggests Ilchester Mead was abandoned before the point of post-Roman inundation. Extensive alluviation may have been caused by the backing up of the river system, possibly associated with a contemporary phase, or phases, of marine transgression identified across the Somerset Levels: Rippon (1997, 126) suggests the date for this cannot be securely identified, but that a decline in Roman settlement is indicated along the wetter soils of the Levels from as early as the 4th century. This has inferences for potential Roman settlement discontinuity across the wetter soils of the county, which, as illustrated by the wider evidence in the Ilchester environs (**Fig. 15.6**), may have differentially occurred along the inland riverine soils of Somerset over the course of the 5th to 9th centuries. As Smart (2008, 225) also observes, this reinforces the suggestion that potential Roman settlement continuity is more likely to be observed across the higher, drier, soils of the county, demonstrating that a wider extent of Somerset may have been affected by post-Roman flooding

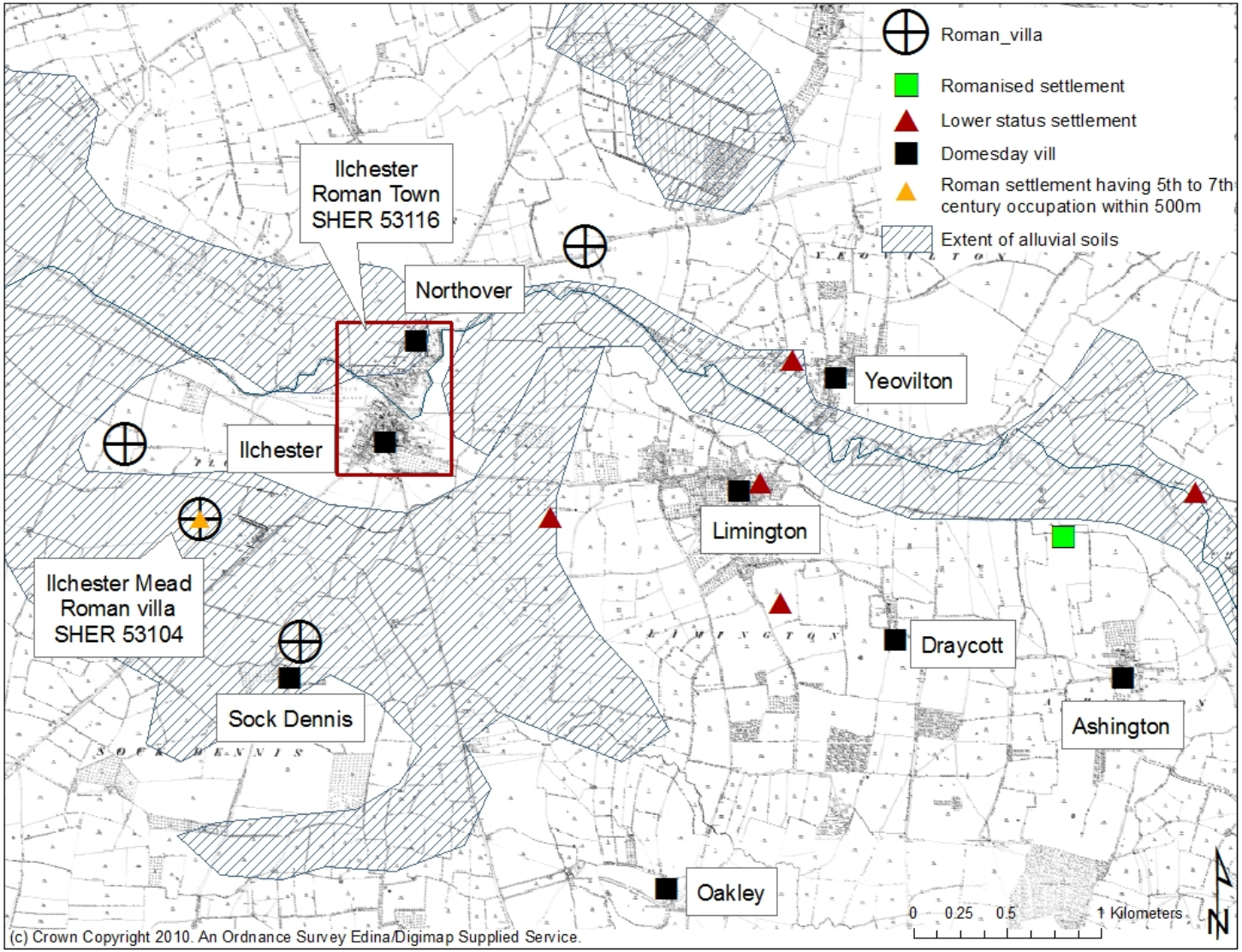


Figure 15.6. Ilchester's rural hinterland and the association of Roman and early medieval settlement, relative to the wetter alluvial soils, and shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Roman settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Somerset HER. Domesday vills compiled and mapped by the author using Thorn and Thorn (1980). Historic mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

events, beyond just the Levels proper. A further point to make at this juncture, then, is that this potential discontinuity of rural Roman settlement in Somerset may not be the result of late Roman social crisis so much as post-Roman environmental change, possibly related to marked climatic decline in the 3rd to 5th centuries (see Lamb 1981, 57; Higham 1992, 79-80, for example).

There is also evidence for post-Roman occupation from just two comparatively lower status Roman settlements, Cutterne Mill Farm, Evercreech (SHER 25731) and South Cadbury (SHER 54549). At Evercreech, a concentrated scatter of Roman pottery, stone and bone (SHER 25731) was revealed during ploughing (Broomhead 1988a), with five sherds of non-local chaff-tempered pottery (SHER 25732) from a ploughed out hedge around 250m to the northeast attributed a probable 5th to 6th century date (Broomhead 1988b). The settlement is situated on wet pelo-stagnogley soils on a stretch of Roman road between the Fosse Way and Lamyatt but demonstrates no clear relationship to the early medieval settlement landscape. At South Cadbury, on the other hand, ongoing excavation has produced evidence for Roman occupation (SHER 54549) to the northeast of the hillfort, on the southern edge of the current village. Postholes and timberslots suggest possible timber buildings, with occupation dating to the 1st to 4th centuries (see Leach 1996, 147-148; Randall 2009, 213, for example). Excavation has revealed postholes cut into a dark soil layer, the fills of which were aceramic except for some abraded fragments of BB1 pottery (Tabor 1999, 195-196). This, and the stratigraphic relationship of the postholes, has been interpreted as evidence for a possible post-Roman structure (SHER 22957). The same excavation produced an 8th century Sceat (SHER 28275) from a possible timber slot (Tabor 1999, 196; 2008a, 169). The Roman settlement is situated on well-drained brown earths and is closely respected by the 11th century Domesday vill and parish church (**Fig. 15.7**). Although tentative, the chronology of occupation at South Cadbury, albeit with some gaps, may well be indicative of Roman settlement continuity during the 5th to 11th centuries.

Roman settlement associated with material evidence for 10th to 11th century occupation is recorded for just ten sites on the Lias Plain. These include higher status sites such as the Roman villas at Hinton Mill, Lopen and Dinnington, discussed previously, and two Romanised settlements at Manor Farm, Castle Cary (SHER 16009) and Woolston Farm, Yarlington (SHER 22758), where

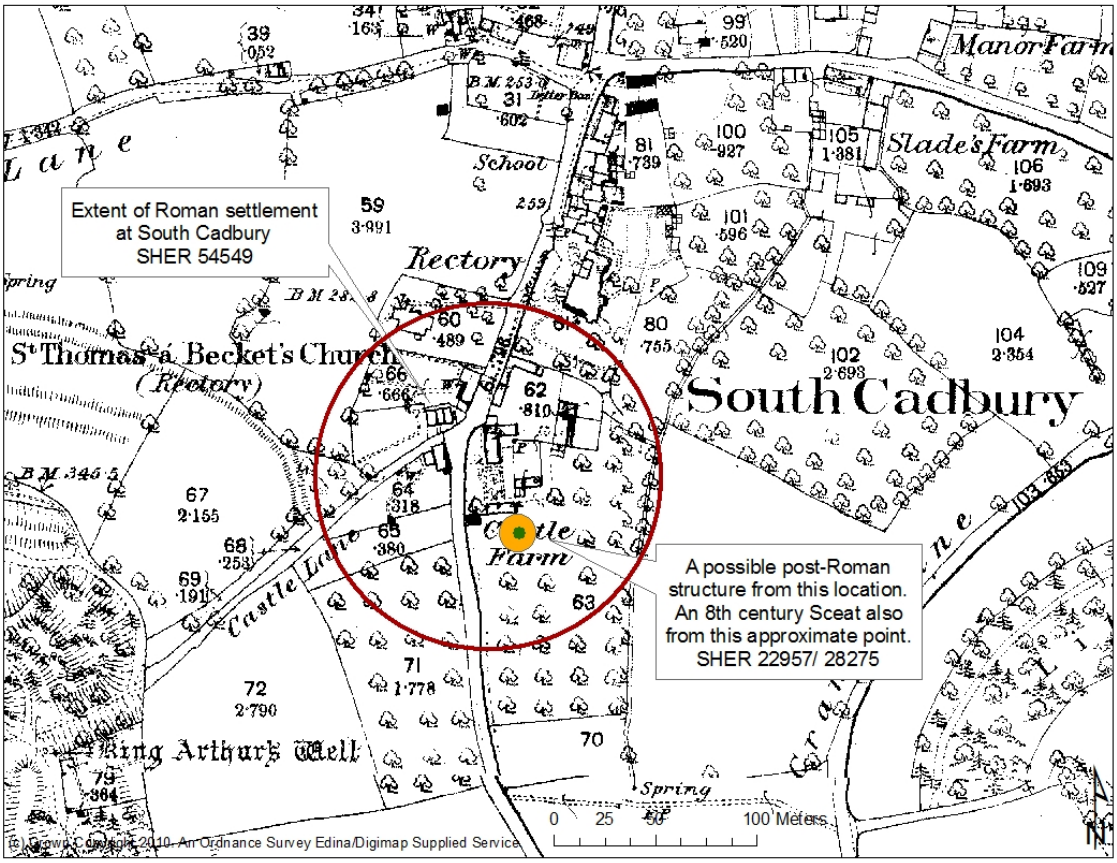


Figure 15.7. The extent of Roman settlement currently recorded for South Cadbury, showing the relationship of the post-Roman occupation and the proximity to the 11th century Domesday vill, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Somerset HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

post-Roman activity is also suggested (see above). Comparatively lower status sites include Yew Tree Close, Yeovil (SHER 54759), Evercreech Park Farm, Evercreech (SHER 25729) and Crewkerne (SHER 17072), for example. Geophysical survey and test pitting at Woolston Farm revealed evidence for Roman settlement dating between the 1st to 4th centuries to the northeast of the manor farm (Tabor 2008b, 91). Late or post-Roman activity was indicated through the stratigraphic relationship of a curving trackway cutting the northeast corner of the Roman settlement extent, while 10th to 14th century pottery was also recorded in close proximity (*ibid*, 92). Roman occupation at Castle Cary focuses on a 3rd century kiln site and sections of ditch within the 12th century manor complex (**Fig. 15.8**). A bronze Lar was recovered, which, along with the kiln, may indicate a high status mortared stone building in the vicinity (Leach and Ellis 2004, 118). Excavation recovered 10th to 13th century material from features overlying the kiln site, presumably related to the early manor (*ibid*, 90). A post-Roman ditch section appears to pre-date these features, although no

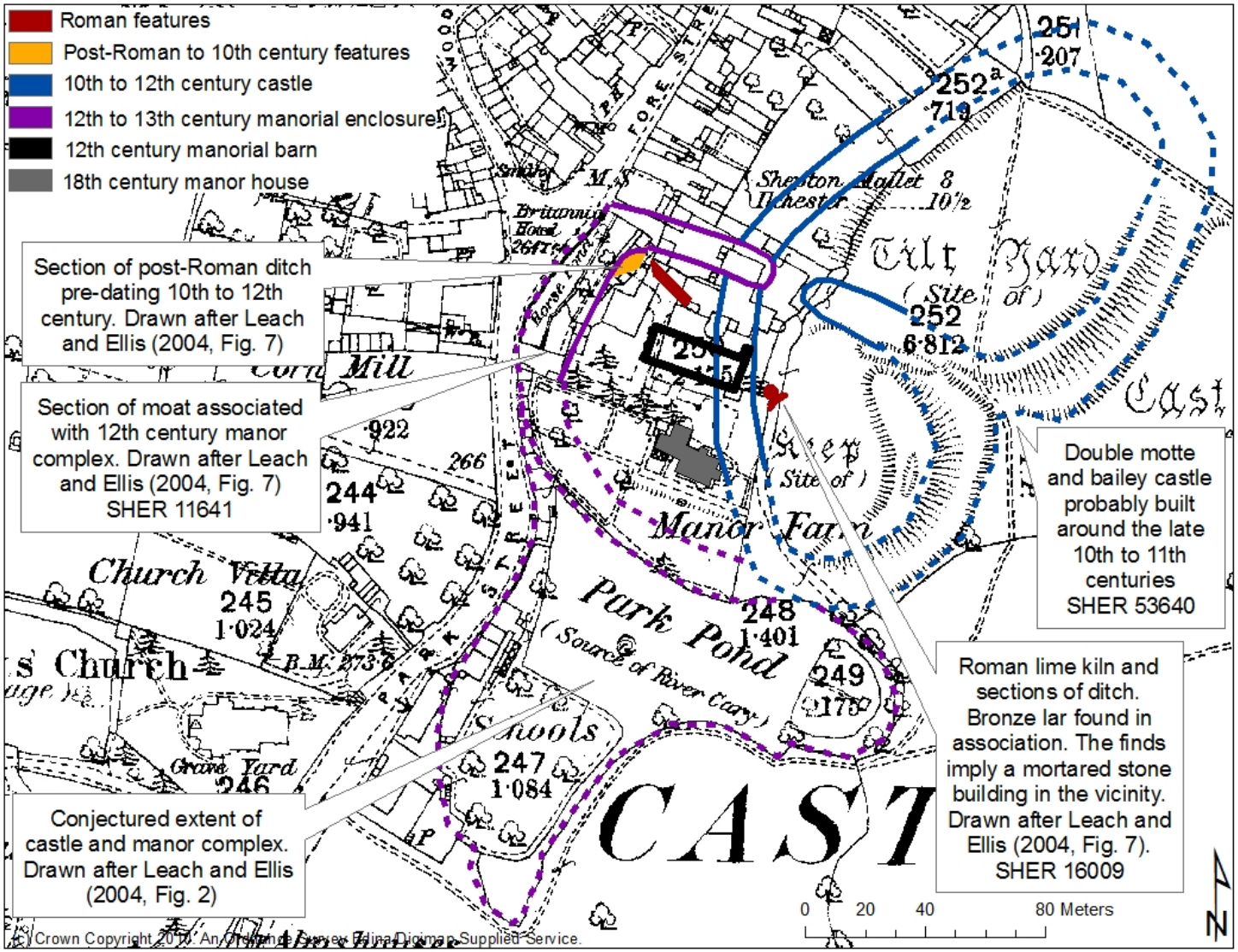


Figure 15.8. Roman and post-Roman features in relation to the 10th to 11th century motte and bailey castle and 12th century manorial enclosure at Castle Cary, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Leach and Ellis (2004, Figs. 2 and 7). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

clearly dateable relationship could be ascertained (*ibid*, 90) (**Fig. 15.8**). Roman settlement at both Castle Cary and Crewkerne is located within 500m of the Domesday vill and parish church, as are a further 11 Roman settlements across the *pays*, demonstrating a range in status, but predominantly situated on better-drained loams and loam over clay soils (**Fig. 15.9**).

The lack of interim occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries for many of these sites makes it difficult to assume potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries with any confidence: the better drained, higher, soils of the *pays* have potentially been long favoured for settlement, and the possibility that the relationships suggested for Roman and early medieval settlement on the Lias Plain are partly the result of progressive resettlement during the 5th to 11th centuries, rather than continuity, cannot be wholly ruled out. Whilst the evidence from individual sites remains limited, the wider trend of settlement processes on the Lias Plain appear to reflect the move from a dispersed Roman settlement pattern to that of more nucleated settlement by the 11th century. Where this occurs across the better-drained loamy soils it seems feasible that surviving patterns of underlying Roman settlement influenced that of the 11th century to some degree. Given this, Leech's (1977, 177; 1982a, 239) hypothesis in regard to patterns of potential Roman settlement abandonment and continuity may be shown to stand, although this remains difficult to quantify precisely. In contrast, where an association between Roman and early medieval settlement is indicated across the wetter soils of the *pays*, this may rather reflect periodic resettlement of these soils during drier phases over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries, although potential continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries is, nonetheless, suggested for a limited few sites.

Summary

The Lias Plain was densely settled during the Roman period, largely on the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils. Whilst it is feasible that some degree of Roman settlement contraction occurred over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries, this is difficult to quantify precisely. Nonetheless, there is some suggestion for potential continuity into the post-Roman period, particularly across the drier soils, where an association between Roman settlement and Domesday vills is also distinctly observed. Whilst some Roman settlement on

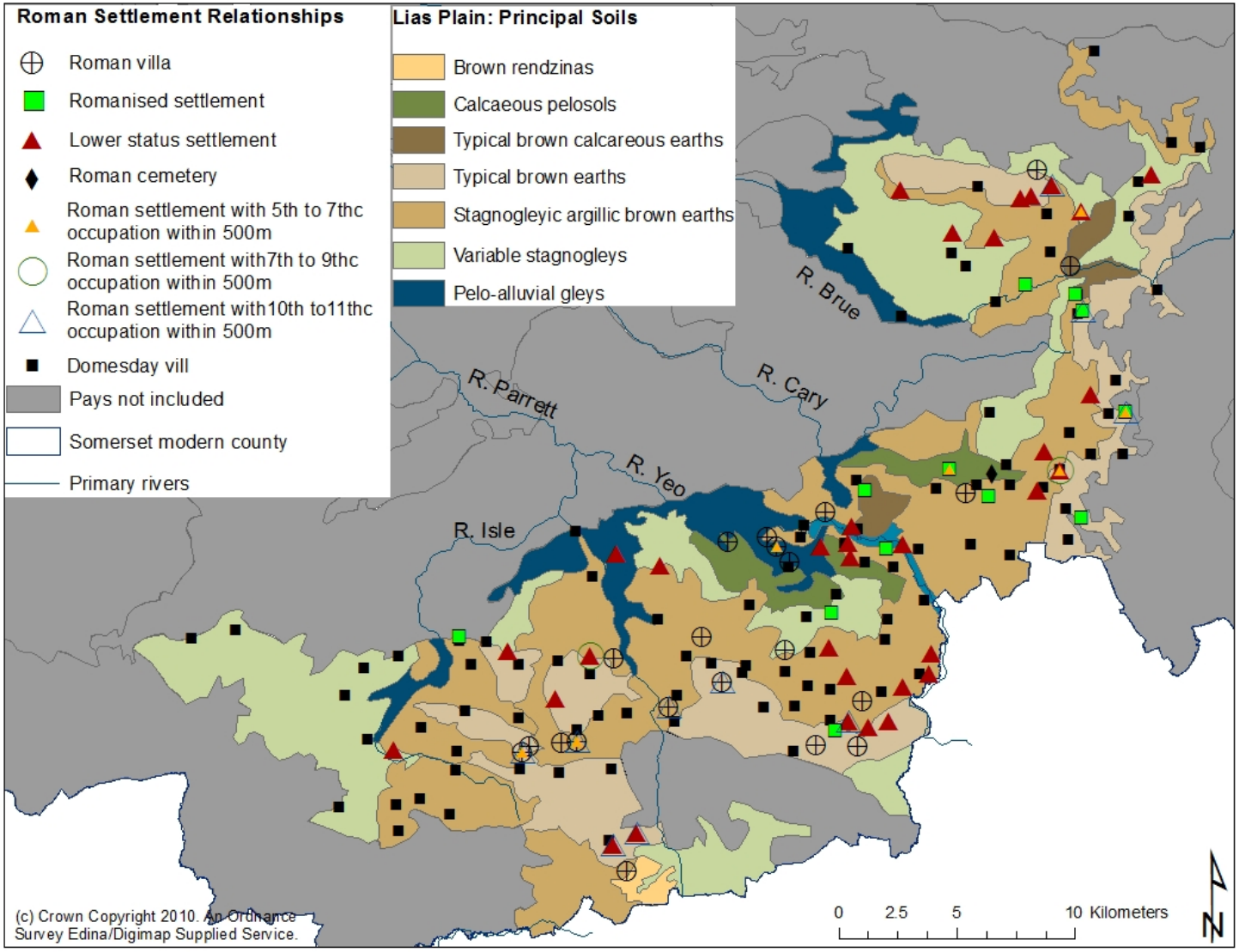


Figure 15.9. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Lias Plain shown in relation to the primary soil types for the* pays. *Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

the wetter soils also suggests evidence for post-Roman activity, there is a greater indication for subsequent abandonment during an extensive phase, or phases, of post-Roman flooding, somewhere between the 5th to 9th centuries. Overall, the evidence appears to suggest that the greatest potential for Roman settlement continuity was across the higher, drier soils of the *pays*, where the pattern of predominantly nucleated villages and common field by the 11th century potentially reflects that of the relict late Roman settlement pattern. Across the wetter soils, the association of Roman and early medieval settlement may rather be due to periodic resettlement during drier conditions over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries.

The Mid Somerset Lowlands

Settlement data

One hundred and four Roman settlements and four Roman cemeteries are recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results are shown below (**Table 15.3**: **Fig. 15.10**).

Ninety-two Domesday vills are recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 15.4**).

Soils data

Of the 108 Roman sites recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands (to include settlements and cemeteries), 25 (23%) were located on light brown rendzinas, with 56 (51%) on calcareous or argillic pelosols and 19 (18%) on stagnogleyic brown earths, making up 92% of the total. The complex relationship between Roman settlement and soils on the Mid Somerset Lowlands suggests the majority favoured the slowly permeable or calcareous loam over clay soils, with just under a quarter of Roman settlement located on lighter calcareous soils. The remaining Roman settlement was located on the wetter clays (stagnogleys) and alluvial clays (pelo-alluvial gleys). The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.11**).

Table 15.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 15.4 shows the percentage of Domesday vills recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands, relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 15.3: The Mid Somerset Lowlands

Total number of Roman settlements 108	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	17	13	27	1	16%	12%	25%	1%
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m	3	4			3%	4%		
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m								
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m	2	2			2%	2%		
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m	1	1			1%	1%		
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m	1		1		1%		1%	
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	4	3	11	1	4%	3%	10%	1%
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	2		10		2%		9%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	12	6	15	2	11%	6%	14%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	9	6	15	2	8%	6%	14%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	13	7	24	3	12%	6%	21%	3%

Table 15.4: The Mid Somerset Lowlands

Total number of Domesday vills recorded 92		Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		18	20%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		32	35%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		4	4%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	11	12%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	5	5%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	13	14%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	3	3%
	Roman town within 500m	2	2%
	Roman findspot within 500m	2	2%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		36	39%

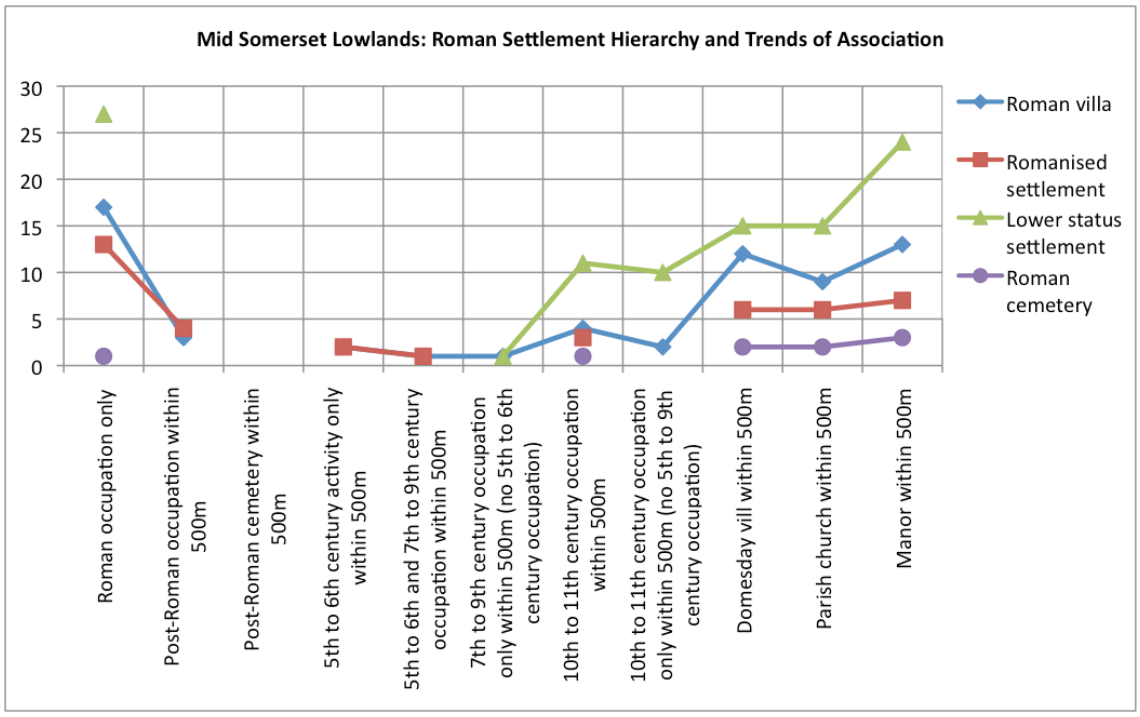


Figure 15.10. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Mid Somerset Lowlands and the number of Roman settlements relative to post-Roman and early medieval occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors.

Of the 92 Domesday vills recorded for the Mid Somerset Lowlands, 21 (23%) were located on light brown rendzinas, with 51 (56%) on calcareous or argillic pelosols and 12 (13%) on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, also making up 92% of the total. The location of Domesday vills, relative to soils, demonstrates similar ratios to that of Roman settlement, suggesting that the same loam over clay soils of the *pays* continued to be favoured for settlement by the 11th century. The point data for Domesday vills and associated Roman settlement, relative to soils type, is shown below (**Fig. 15.12**).

The current evidence for Roman settlement on the Mid Somerset Lowlands potentially suggests a contraction of settlement across the range of soil types: whilst particularly pronounced for the heavier loam over clay soils, there may also have been some abandonment of Roman settlement on the lighter calcareous soils (**Fig. 15.11**). Nonetheless, where any suggestion of potential continuity is indicated into the post-Roman period and beyond, this appears more evident on the better-drained loams over clay and calcareous soils, with a potential indication for settlement expansion back across some of the wetter loams over clay by the 11th century (**Fig. 15.11**).

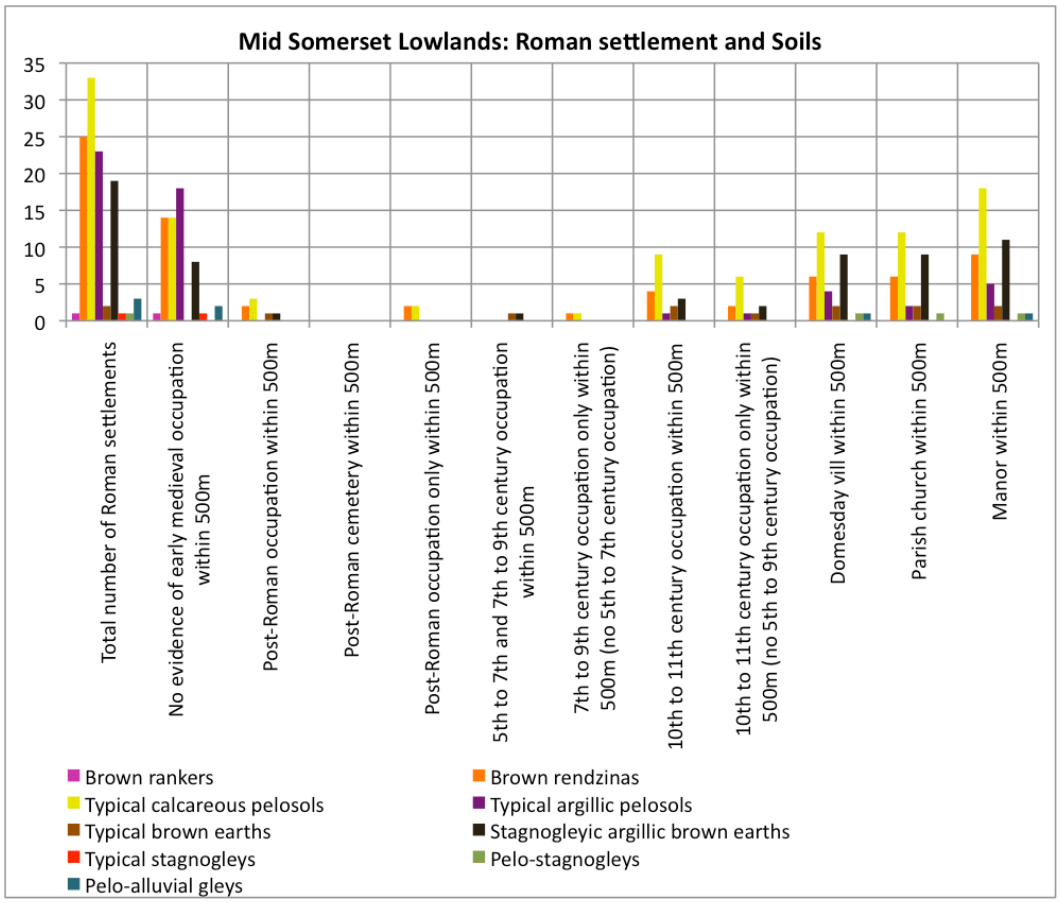


Figure 15.11. Bar chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Mid Somerset Lowlands that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of post-Roman and early medieval settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils.

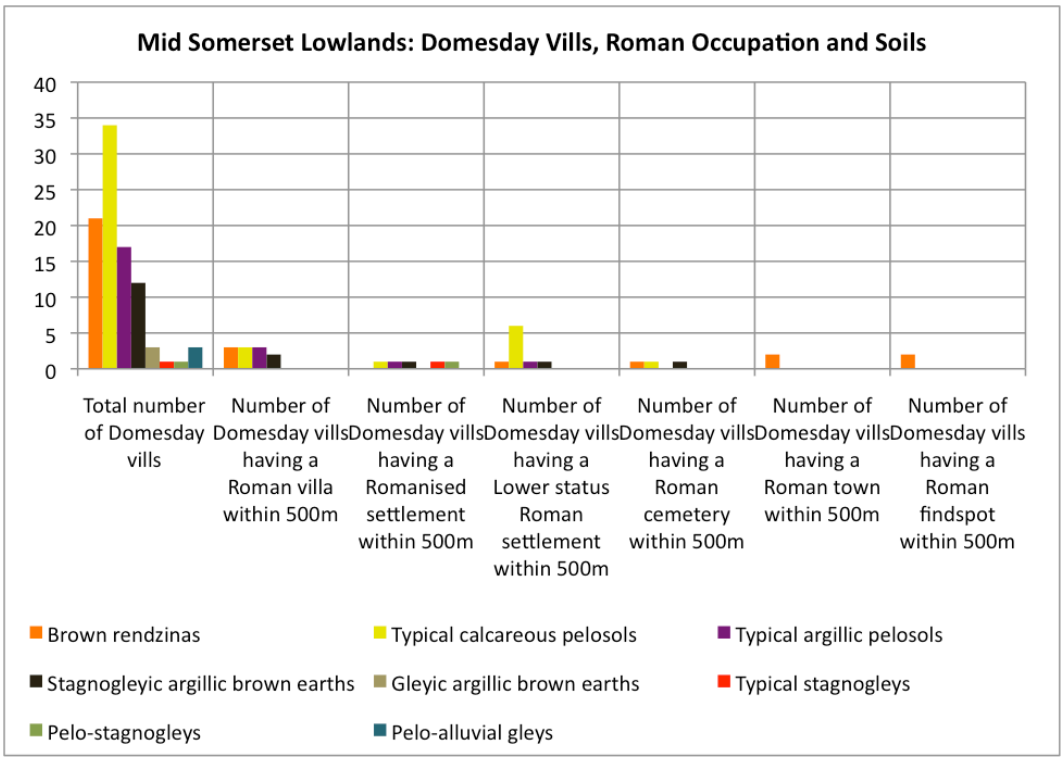


Figure 15.12. Bar chart showing the number of Domesday vills on the Mid Somerset Lowlands and their relationship to Roman occupation and suggested Roman settlement hierarchy, relative to soils.

Retrogressive analysis of Domesday vills relative to Roman occupation and soils is more limited, but would appear to reiterate that the better-drained loams over clay and calcareous soils saw the greatest potential Roman settlement continuity (**Fig. 15.12**). The relative lack of interim evidence for occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries, however, makes it difficult to confidently distinguish patterns of potential Roman settlement continuity from later resettlement, and on the current evidence, both must remain a possibility.

Discussion

The evidence for Roman settlement on the Mid Somerset Lowlands indicates that the *pays* was densely settled during the Roman period, with distinct evidence of high status occupation. Twenty-nine sites, 28% of the total, indicate potential villa status, with 23 (21%) suggesting some degree of Romanised construction. The remaining 56 sites, (52 settlements and 4 cemeteries) (51%) indicate comparatively lower status occupation, although, as discussed above (Chapter 14, 349), this was relative, indicating only that no distinctly Romanised buildings were recorded. There is no clear occupation chronology in the Somerset HER for 46 of the Roman settlements recorded for the *pays*, but of the remaining 62, all suggest occupation into at least the 4th century.

As with the Lias Plain, the true extent of any settlement abandonment during the late to post-Roman period is difficult to quantify. Evidence for potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 6th centuries is currently confined to just seven higher status sites, the Roman villas at Edington (SHER 12608), Beggars Field, Butleigh (SHER 28497) and Cheddar (SHER 11442) and Romanised settlements at Glastonbury (SHER 23565), Catsgore (SHER 54504), Sladwick Field, Shapwick (SHER 16690) and Bradley Hill (SHER 54501). Even for these examples, much of the evidence for post-Roman activity is ephemeral or speculative, largely reliant on coin and/or pottery chronologies, as at Catsgore (Leech 1982a, 7) and Bradley Hill (Leech 1981, 238), for example, where late-Roman hand-made shell-tempered BB1 wares were recorded (see Gerrard 2005, 1-10 for a discussion of potential continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries at Bradley Hill), or stratigraphic relationships, as at Butleigh (Martin and Driscoll 2010, 10, 18) and Edington (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1995, 28, 39-40), for example, where phases of building activity appear to post-date a late-Roman

demolition phase. At Sladwick Field, Shapwick, human remains recovered from Roman building debris were radiocarbon dated to the 5th to 7th centuries AD (Gerrard with Aston 2007, 964-5). Sladwick Field is situated *c*. 250m northeast of the early medieval manor site at Shapwick House, which currently suggests occupation from the late 10th to 11th centuries onwards (*ibid*, 540, 976).

At Glastonbury, Roman pottery and coins (SHER 23614) suggesting a broad span of occupation dating to the 1st to 4th centuries have been periodically recovered from within the Abbey enclosure: although some of the pottery may have been imported in the clay used to rebuild the Abbey buildings during the 12th century, this may have been from a local source, possibly the Abbey pond (Radford 1981, 111). Excavation in the early 1950's (Radford 1953; 1955; 1981) recorded postholes for several possible wattle and daub buildings from the western walk of the 13th century cloister, closely associated with an east to west aligned cemetery of stone slabbed graves to the immediate south (Radford 1981, 115). The postholes were dated by associated pottery to the 5th to 6th centuries: one particular building measuring approximately 3m by 4m may be the church of the early Christian monastery (Radford 1954, 34; 1981, 115). Radford (1981, 113-4) also recorded a substantial bank and ditch running north to south and cut by the 12th century Chapter House. Later evaluation by Ellis (1978) exposed further sections of this enclosure and timbers from a probable palisade were radiocarbon dated to the 7th to 8th century AD (*ibid*, 17-18; Fig. 8) (**Fig. 15.13**). The Roman, and post-Roman, settlement at Glastonbury might be considered unique or specialist in function, as might Bradley Hill, to some degree (see Smart 2008, 270). How far the evidence for potential continuity of Roman settlement at these sites might truly reflect the wider trend of rural Roman settlement across the *pays* must, therefore, be borne in mind.

This may also be the case for Cheddar, where extensive and complex Roman settlement (SHER 11441) includes a substantial high status building, possibly a villa, on the basis of associated finds and parchmark evidence (Hirst and Rahtz 1973; Rahtz 1966 and see Webster 2007b, 80 for a recent discussion of this) (**Fig. 15.14**). Roman occupation at Cheddar broadly dates into at least the late 4th century (see Broomhead 1999, 16; Hirst and Rahtz 1973, 67; McConnell *et al*. 2007, 33; Rahtz 1966, 52; 1979, 48, for example), although the evidence may reflect a small town rather than a villa estate (Webster 2007b, 80), which

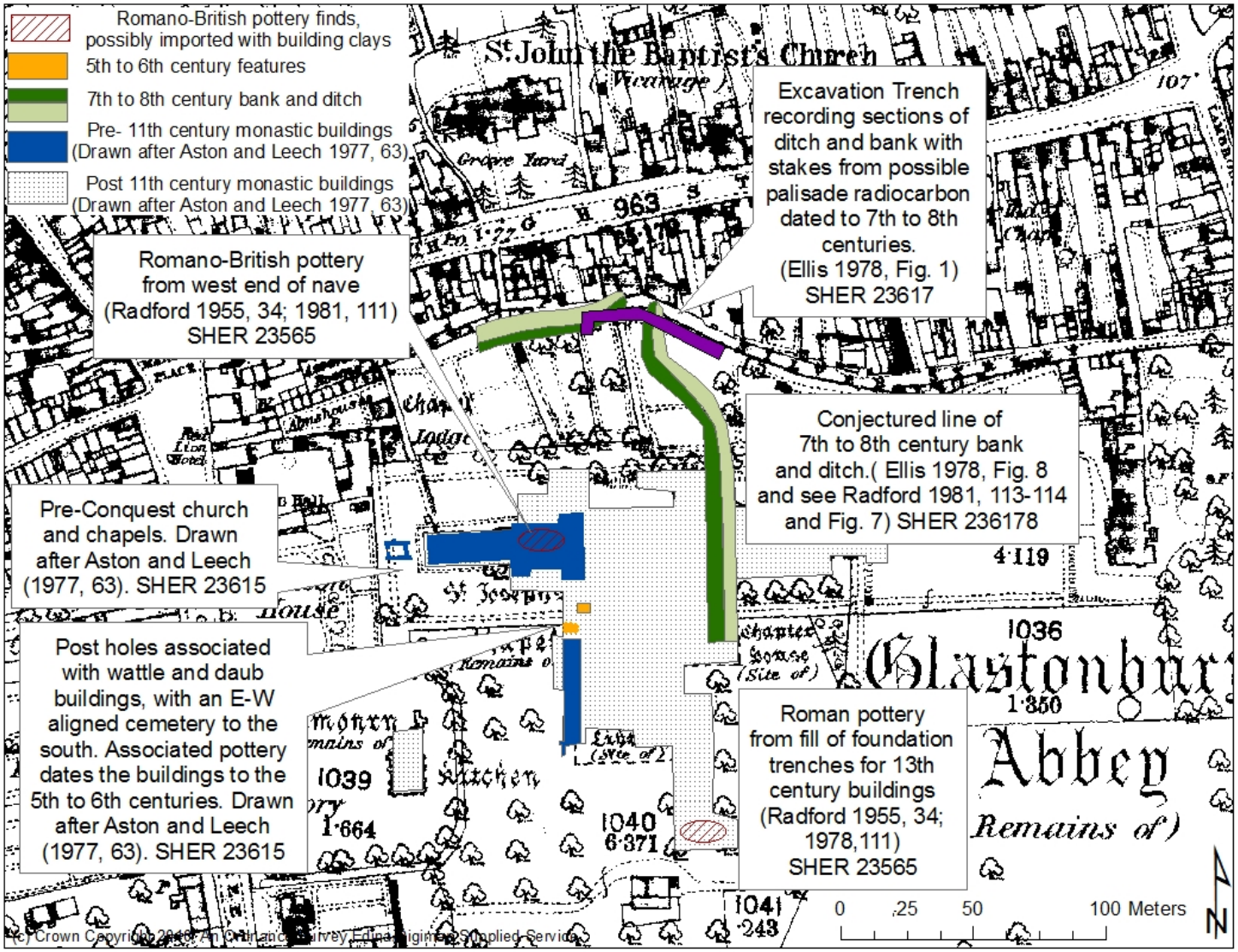


Figure 15.13. The location of Roman pottery found at Glastonbury Abbey in relation to 5th to 6th century wattle and daub buildings and a 7th to 8th century palisaded enclosure bank and ditch, possibly related to an early Christian monastery, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The location of the pre-Conquest monastery buildings and post-Conquest Abbey buildings are also shown. Drawn after Aston and Leach (1977, 63) and Ellis (1978, Figs. 1 and 8). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

had become a Saxon minster by the 9th century (see Blair 1996, 108-120).

Ditches and features broadly attributed through pottery and stratigraphic positioning to the 9th to 11th centuries were recorded during excavation of the vicarage gardens (Rahtz 1966, 59-60). The site of a Saxon palace (SHER 11442) is recorded to the northwest of the Roman villa, thought to date from around the mid 10th century (Rahtz 1979, 6), although two 9th century coins from the fill of an associated ditch may indicate an earlier phase of construction (Rahtz 1964, 101; 1979, 52, although see Blair 1996, 114 for a review of this evidence) (**Fig. 15.14**). Recently, excavation (Evans and Hancocks 2006) on the site of the Old Showground, *c*. 60m to the north of the Saxon palace, recorded further evidence for 9th to 12th century occupation, with a holloway and a series of postholes reflecting a two-roomed structure radiocarbon dated to this period (*ibid*, 109-110). The excavation also revealed a ditch (SHER 44783), which yielded a radiocarbon date of 340-570 cal AD from the upper fill (*ibid*, 109) (**Fig. 15.14**), although this was recut by a second ditch whose upper fill contained residual 4th century pottery. As Evans and Hancocks suggest (*ibid*, 20), the stratigraphic evidence alone indicates that the ditch remained at least partially open by the 4th century, although this cannot be considered conclusive evidence in itself of post-Roman activity. Alongside the radiocarbon date, however, an early post-Roman presence can be inferred, and taken as a whole, the wider evidence at Cheddar amply indicates potential settlement continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries and beyond.

In addition to the sites discussed above, Roman settlement (SHER 10882) at Wedmore is recorded within 500m of the documented site of a 9th century Saxon royal palace and manor (SHER 10880), with a further Roman settlement (SHER 44904) at Axbridge recorded within 500m of the documented 9th century Saxon burgh (SHER 11408) (see Batt 1975, 22). At Somerton, documented as an important Saxon 'town' (SHER 54507) from around the 8th century (Aston and Leech 1977, 123), two east-west facing burials (SHER 54532) were recovered from the vicarage garden to the northwest of the parish church, one in a Lias slabbed grave. These are probably Roman in date (see SHER 54532) and, if so, may be considered proxies for Roman settlement nearby: a possible sherd of Roman pottery was recorded during an evaluation *c*. 350m to the west (SHER 28167) (Hollinrake 2009, 221). There is currently no material evidence

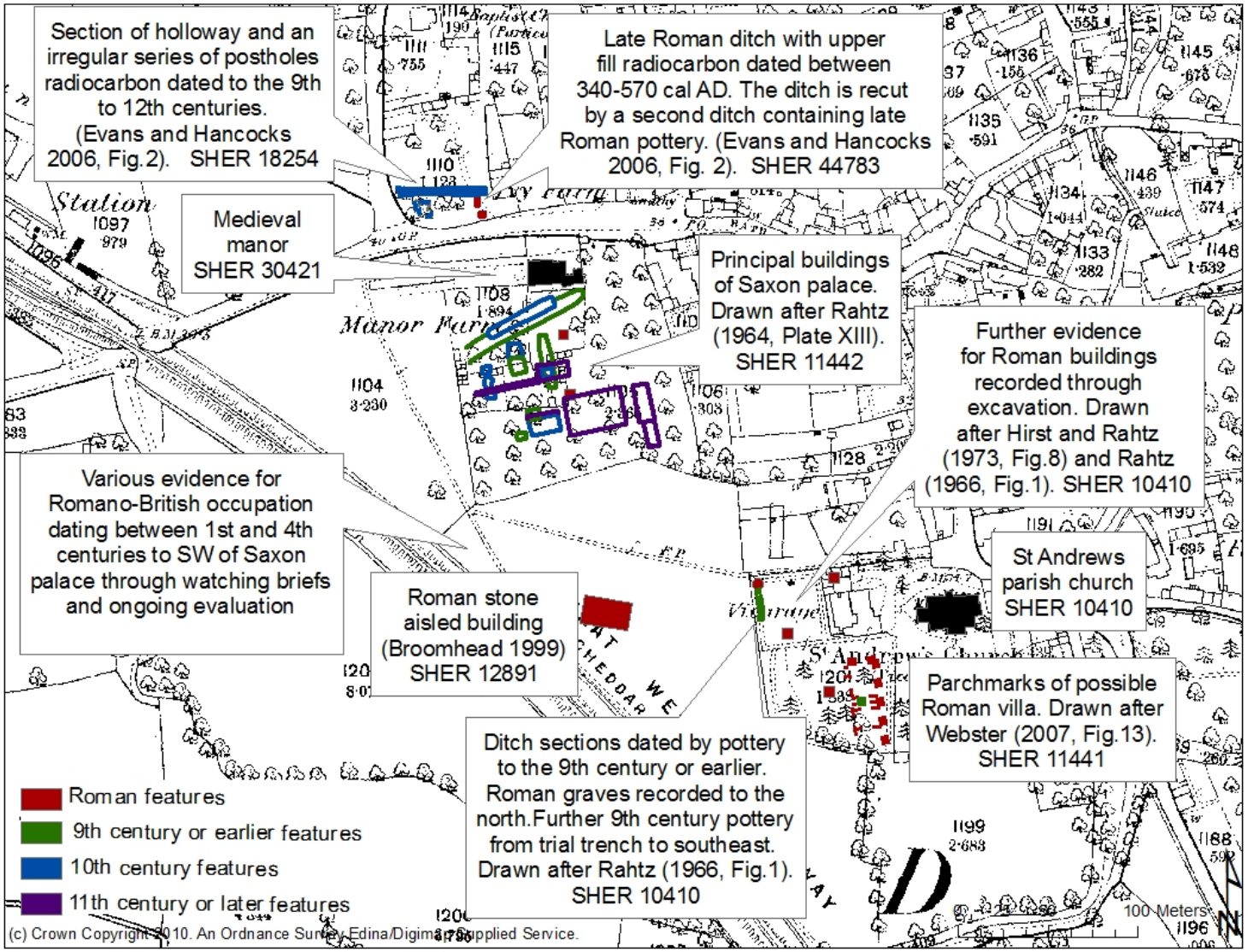


Figure 15.14. The site of the Roman villa and wider Roman settlement at Cheddar and its relationship to the evidence for possible post-Roman activity and the site of the 10th century Saxon palace, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Evans and Hancocks (2006, Fig. 2) and Webster (2007, Fig. 13.2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

(dating to the 7th to 9th centuries at Wedmore, Axbridge or Somerton, although all three are documented as Domesday vills by the 11th century. In addition, 10th to 11th century pottery (SHER 12541) is recorded *c*. 100m west of the Roman settlement at Wedmore (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1992a, 176), whilst an 11th century coin hoard (SHER 29830) was recovered *c*. 475m to the northeast, from the parish churchyard. At Somerton, excavation (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2006) *c*. 50m to the south of the two Roman inhumations recorded further burials (SHER 14757), radiocarbon dated to 1040-1280 cal AD at 95.4% probability (University of Waikato 2006).

Material evidence for 7th to 9th century occupation is associated with two additional Roman settlements, a lower status settlement (SHER 10089/10092) at Brent Knoll and a probable Roman villa (SHER 29741) at Beerway Farm, Shapwick. At Brent Knoll, archaeological evaluation in the vicarage grounds (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2000), recovered further residual Roman pottery and a range of features, including two aceramic sections of ditch (*ibid*, 24). Animal bone from the ditch fills was radiocarbon dated to between the 7th to 10th centuries AD (Young 2009, 107), with later excavation to the west recording further contemporaneous ditches (*ibid*, 107) (**Fig. 15.15**). Overlying these was an extensive soil deposit, suggesting a phase of diminished activity (*ibid*, 107), which was followed by the construction of a sunken-featured building during the 11th century, subsequently abandoned by the 12th century when a large ditch was constructed across the site (*ibid*, 111). By the 7th century the Brent estates had been granted to Glastonbury Abbey (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2000, 4): the village of Brent Knoll probably represents the Domesday holding of South Brent (*ibid*, 4-5), part of the larger manor of *Brentemerse* (Thorn and Thorn 1980, 8.33 and p 356), with the underlying Roman settlement closely respecting the site of the early medieval manor house and parish church (**Fig. 15.15**).

At Beerway Farm, Shapwick, 1st to 4th century Roman pottery was recovered during fieldwalking on the site of the Domesday church (SHER 10727) (Aston and Gerrard 1999, 18-23; Gerrard with Aston 2007, 137). Subsequent excavation (Gerrard with Aston 2007, 409-415) exposed collapsed Roman walling and other features indicating a possible courtyard villa (*ibid*, 137) (**Fig. 15.16**). On the northern Roman settlement perimeter, excavation (*ibid*, 418-423) also revealed a timber building, radiocarbon dated to 540-760 cal AD at 95%

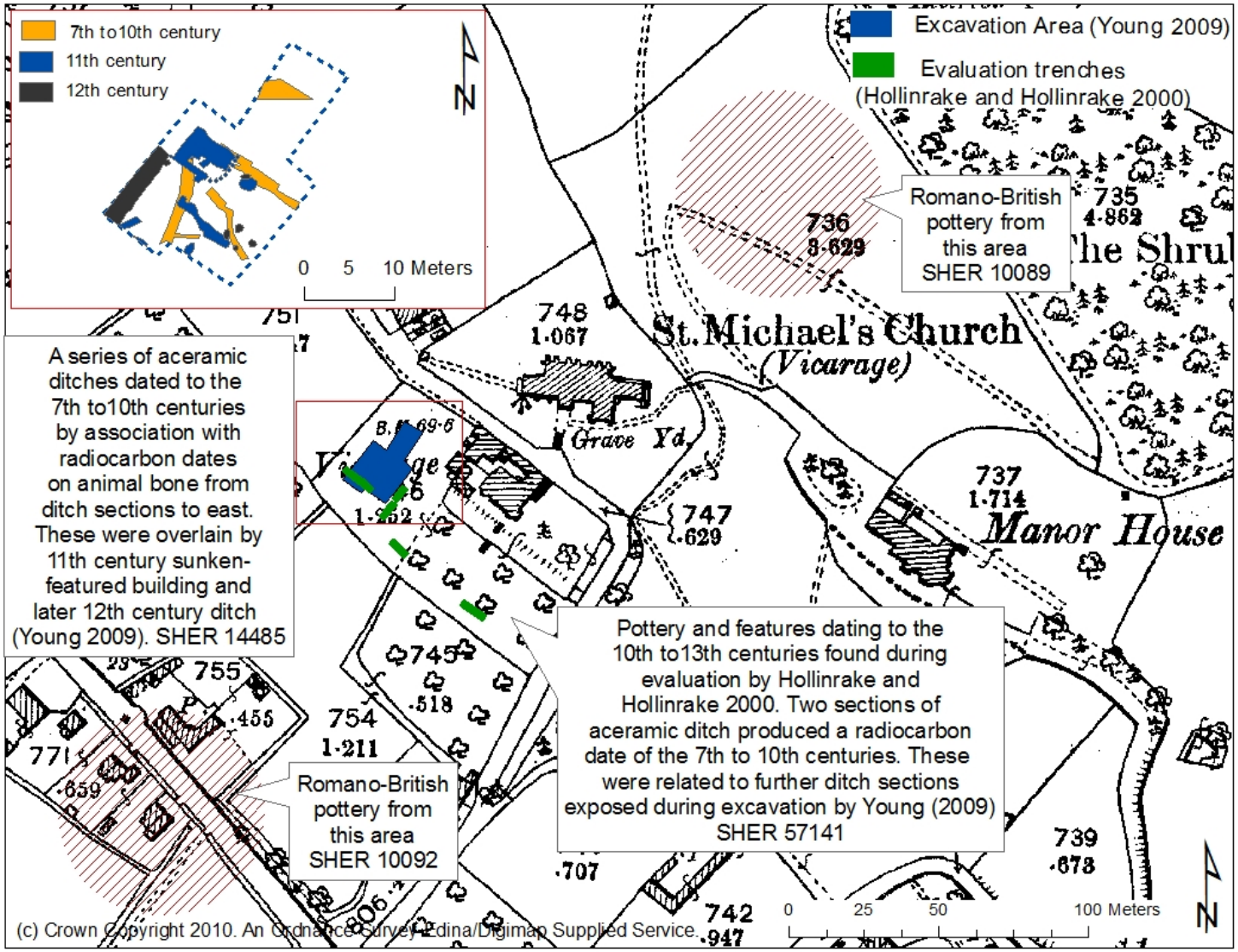


Figure 15.15. The evidence for Roman settlement at Brent Knoll and the location of archaeological evaluation revealing evidence for 7th to 12th century occupation activity, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Hollinrake and Hollinrake (2000, Fig. 4) and Young (2009, Fig. 5) and using the Somerset HER data. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

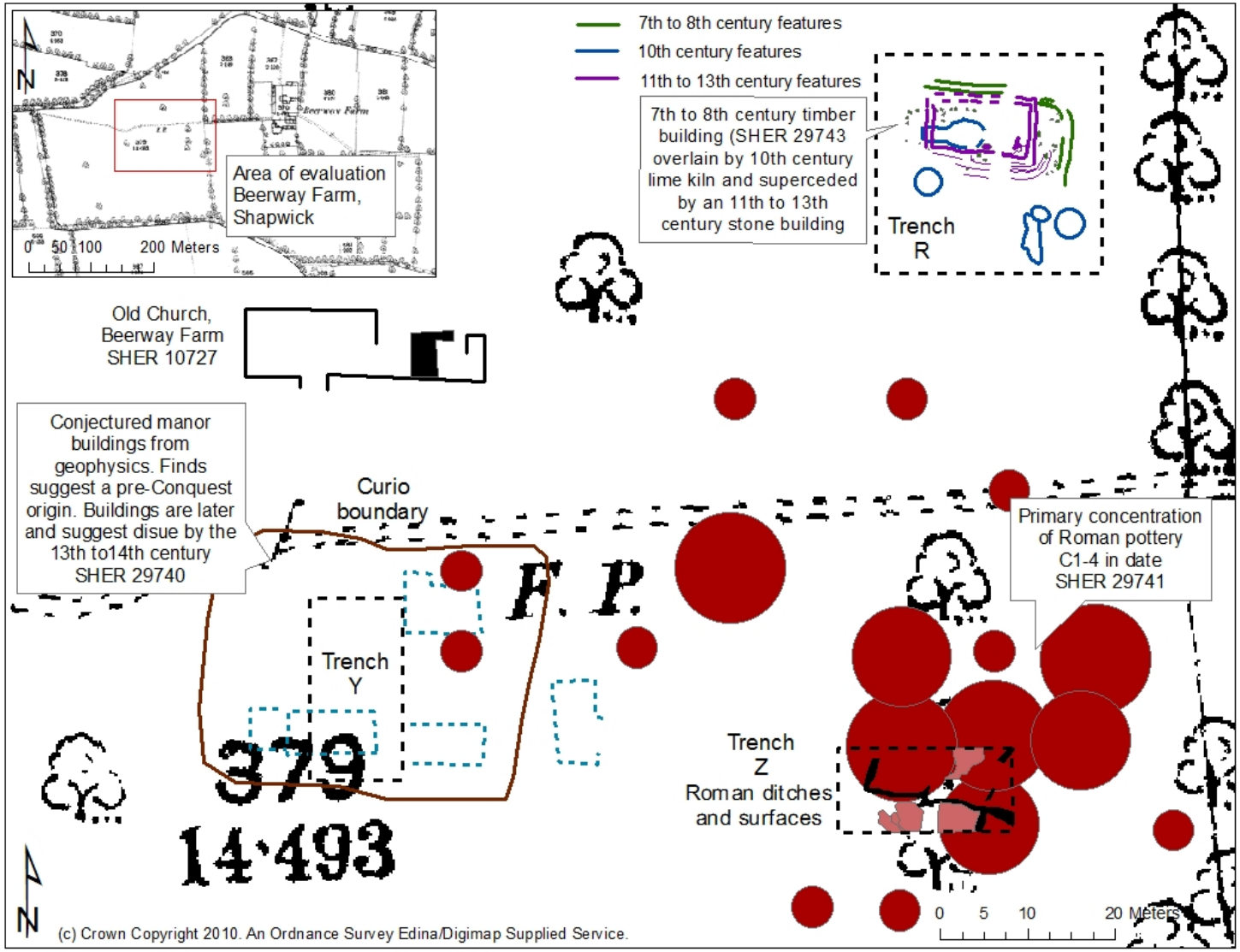


Figure 15.16. The location of Roman and early medieval settlement at Beerway Farm, Shapwick, in association with the Domesday church and manor, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Drawn after Gerrard with Aston (2007, Figs. 9.1, 9.16, 9.37 and 9.4). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

probability (*ibid*, 419, 965), which may reflect the origins of a 7th to 8th century caput for a royal estate and possible minster (*ibid*, 968). A series of subsequent buildings, including the church and the manor immediately to its south, date broadly between the 9th to 13th centuries: there was a particular concentration of 10th century pottery (*ibid*, 154) and burials associated with the church were radiocarbon dated to 900-1150 cal AD at 95% probability (*ibid*, 969). The church and manor suggest abandonment after the 13th century, by which time the site may have been an isolated outlier of Shapwick village, to the west. Shapwick probably developed as a nucleated settlement by around the late 10th century (*ibid*, 979), amalgamating several smaller hamlets and farmsteads in the process (Aston and Gerrard 1999, 27).

So far, much of the evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity on the Mid Somerset Lowlands between the 5th to 9th centuries seems dominated by the relationship between higher status Roman and Saxon settlement, although this feasibly reflects the focus of archaeological fieldwork towards sites of perceived importance, as much as any real trend. Unfortunately, the level of current data is insufficient to inform this further. Evidence for Roman settlement associated with 10th to 11th century occupation is more widely demonstrated, although this brings its own issues in regards to evidence for potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 10th centuries. In addition to the sites discussed above, two Roman villas at Greinton (SHER 44866) and Wearne, Huish Episcopi (SHER 54039), are associated with material evidence for 10th to 11th century occupation (Leech 1976, 48-49; Young 2002, 14) and further lie within 500m of the 11th century Domesday vill. Nine lower status Roman settlements also have material evidence for 10th to 11th century occupation, including Muchelney (SHER 15994), Huntspill (SHER 10164), Church Farm, Bawdrip (SHER 57049) and Bove Town, Glastonbury (SHER 25569), for example, although only these four also lie within 500m of a Domesday vill. Lastly, Roman settlement (SHER 54136) is also suggested within 500m of the documented Saxon burgh and Domesday vill at Langport (SHER 54140), although no material evidence of occupation for these is currently recorded.

At St Cleers, Somerton (SHER 54515), however, documented as a possible royal Saxon manor (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1992b, 2), evidence for Roman settlement is associated with a series of cropmarks to the southwest of the

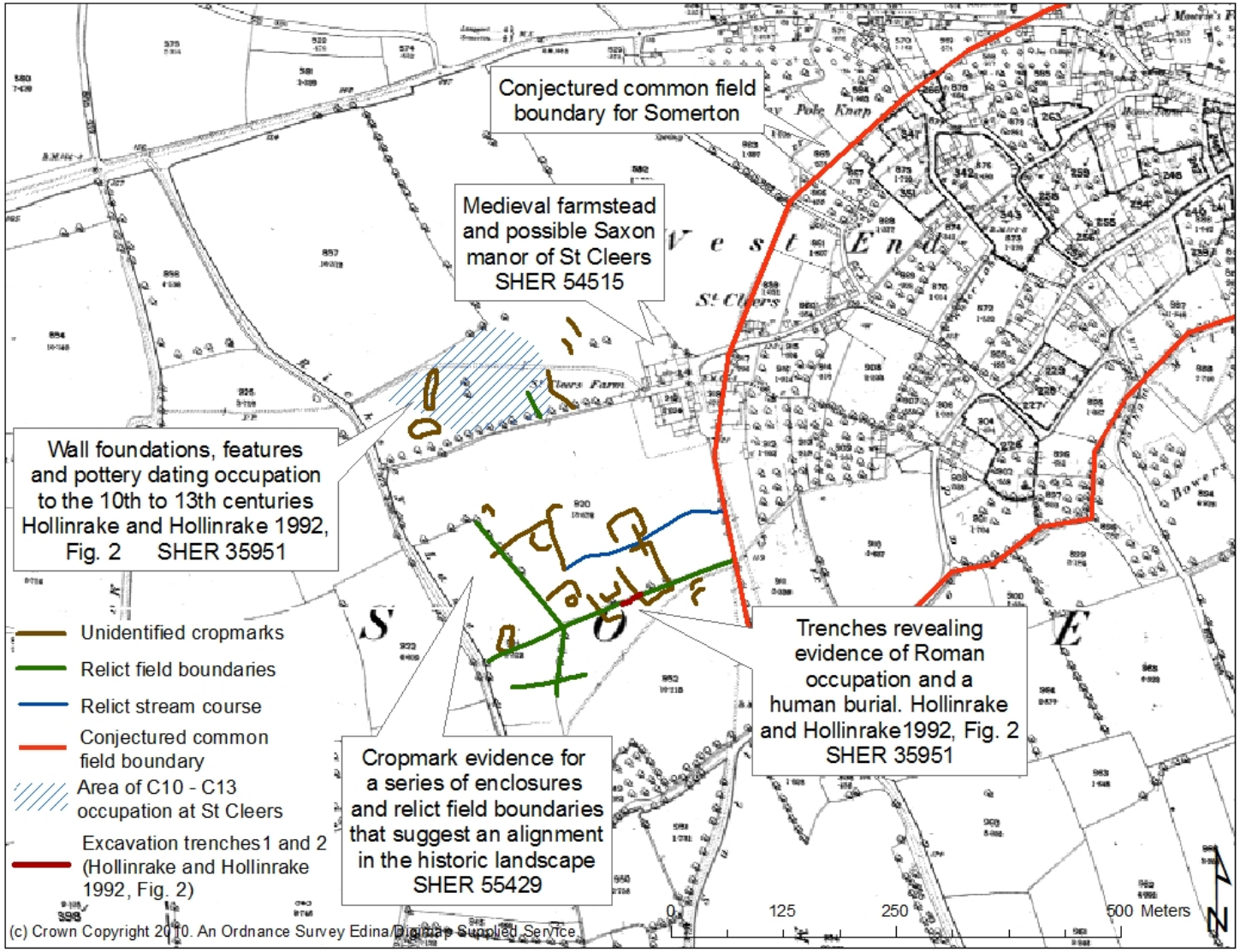


Figure 15.17. Cropmark evidence in association with Roman occupation at St Cleers, Somerton, and the area of 10th to 13th century occupation to the west of the current manor complex, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The cropmarks suggest enclosures and relict field boundaries, which appear to align with the historic fieldscape to the west of an area of common field at Somerton. Drawn after Hollinrake and Hollinrake (1992, Fig. 2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

current farm and medieval manor house (**Fig. 15.17**). Pottery, animal bone and fragments of daub were recovered during excavation, along with a partial north-south facing inhumation (*ibid*, 12), which may suggest later Roman occupation, although no clear dating is given. Further excavation of cropmarks and earthworks to the west of St Cleers farmhouse revealed evidence of stone walling and 10th to 13th century occupation, although no clear evidence for a Saxon palace was indicated (*ibid*, 13). The Roman settlement at St Cleers is situated about 1.2km southwest of the Domesday vill of Somerton and a large curving common field boundary associated with the vill lies immediately to its east (**Fig. 15.17**). In contrast, the cropmark evidence at St Cleers suggests a southeast to northwest alignment, corresponding to the historic fieldscape west of the curving boundary, which may reflect the independent holdings of the medieval manor at St Cleers. If the cropmarks at St Cleers do relate to the Roman settlement, this may be evidence for potential landscape continuity from at least the Roman period onwards (**Fig. 15.17**).

The combined evidence for Roman settlement associated with 10th to 11th century occupation demonstrates, much as for the Lias Plain, that the greatest extent of potential Roman settlement continuity might be suggested across the better-drained calcareous soils and loams over clay soils (**Fig. 15.18**). This does not preclude possible resettlement of these favoured locations by the 10th to 11th centuries, through settlement reorganisation or the creation of new settlement and manors as a result of settlement expansion. Across the wetter clays and alluvial soils along the margins of the Somerset Levels and the rivers Cary and Yeo, fluctuating water levels and the backing up of rivers may also have resulted in phases of settlement abandonment and resettlement over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries. By the 11th century, the *pays* was distinctly characterised by nucleated villages and larger hamlets associated with common field agriculture. Along the wetter margins, the location of these villages may reflect an element of shift from the Roman settlement pattern and a move towards drier ground, as may be suggested at Wedmore, Woolavington, Puriton and Ashcott, for example. Roman settlement is recorded *c*. 1km distant from all these village cores, closer towards the Levels, although this is not to say that future evaluation may not demonstrate underlying Roman occupation for these villages. Across the higher, drier, soils, the evidence from some sites, such as Shapwick, Cheddar and Brent Knoll, for example, suggests a distinct

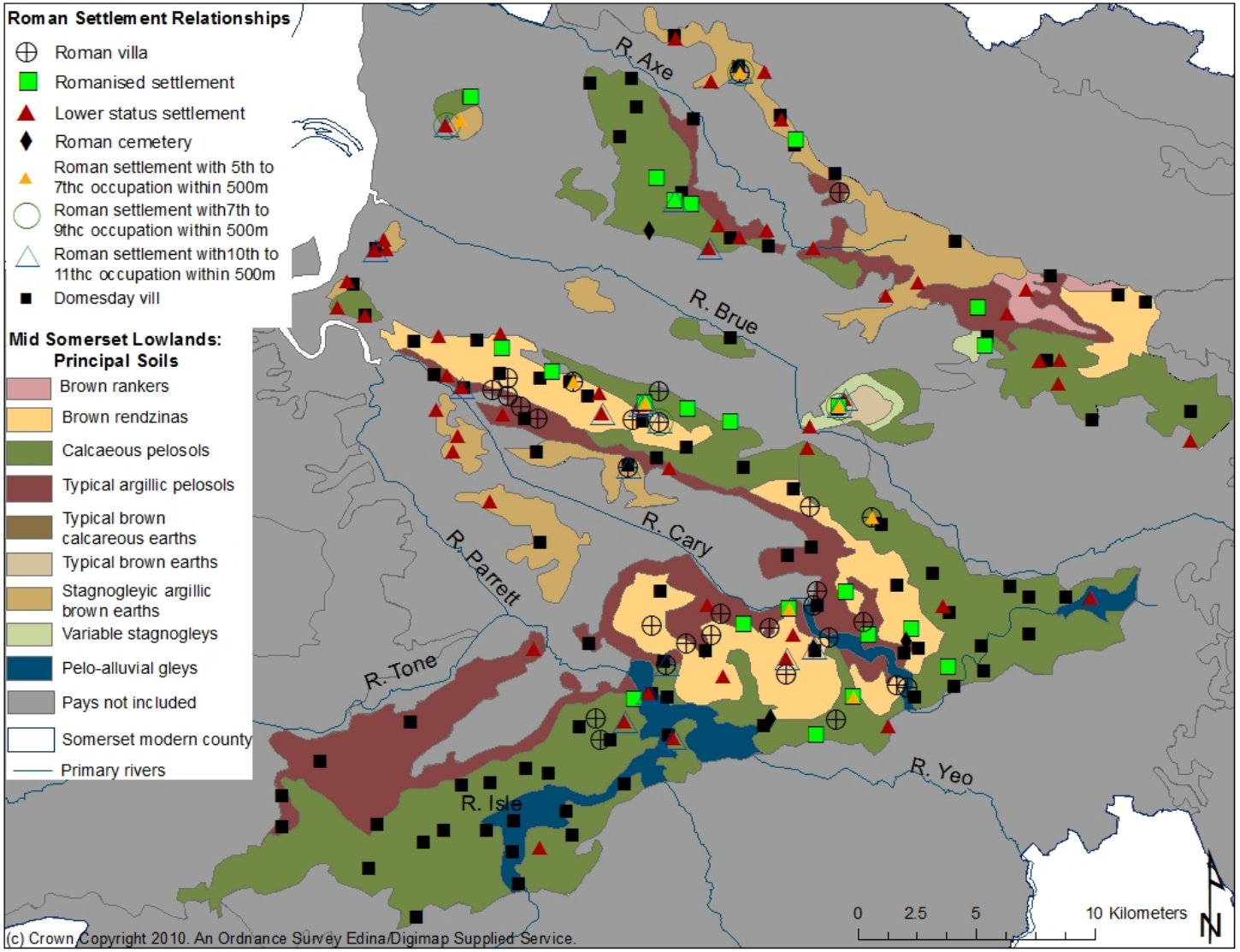


Figure 15.18. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Mid Somerset Lowlands shown in relation to the primary soil types for the* pays. *Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

relationship between the 11th century settlement pattern and the antecedent Roman settlement landscape.

Summary

The Mid Somerset Lowlands were densely settled during the Roman period, with distinct evidence for higher status occupation. The distribution of Roman settlement suggests the better-drained calcareous soils and loams over clay soils were favoured over the wetter clays and alluvial soils, a trend mirrored by the suggested 11th century settlement pattern. A contraction of Roman settlement may have occurred across most soils types at some point between the 5th to 11th centuries but, although most apparent across the wetter clays and loams over clay soils, this is difficult to quantify with any certainty. There is some evidence for post-Roman occupation from a number of settlements, particularly across the better-drained calcareous soils and loams over clay soils, with many sites of obvious status and significance during the Roman period, such as Cheddar, Wedmore and Somerton, for example, appearing to retain their importance into the 5th to 11th centuries.

By the 11th century the pattern of dispersed Roman settlement had developed a more typically nucleated character, with larger settlement cores associated with common field agriculture. Along the margins of the Somerset Levels, this may have involved a shift away from the wetter soils, where less parity with the Roman settlement pattern is suggested. Across the higher, drier, soils, there is greater indication for potential Roman settlement continuity, much as there was for the Lias Plain. Some shift and abandonment over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries may still be observed, however, at sites such as Shapwick, for example, whilst the lack of interim occupation from the majority of sites means progressive resettlement of these soils during the 5th to 11th centuries cannot be wholly ruled out. Nonetheless, it can be suggested that the 11th century settlement pattern on the better-drained soils does appear influenced, to some degree, by that of relict late Roman settlement, although quantifying both the extent and chronology of this association remains to be achieved more fully.

The Limestone Scarp

Settlement data

Forty-eight Roman settlements and one Roman cemetery are recorded for the Limestone Scarp. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results illustrated below (**Table 15.5**: **Fig. 15.19**).

Sixty-six Domesday vills are recorded for the Limestone Scarp. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 15.6**).

Soils data

Of the 49 Roman sites recorded for the Limestone Scarp (settlements and cemeteries), 29 (59%) were located on typical brown rendzinas, with 20 (41%) on typical calcareous pelosols, indicating that the majority of Roman settlement potentially favoured the lighter, well-drained calcareous soils over the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.20**).

Of the 66 Domesday vills recorded for the Lias Plain, 28 (42%) were located on typical brown rendzinas, with 31 (47%) on typical calcareous pelosols, making up 89% of the total of the total number of Domesday vills recorded. Six Domesday vills are located on wetter argillic pelosols and stagnogleys, with one on brown rankers. While a similar preference for the well-drained calcareous soils by the 11th century is, therefore, suggested, there is also a marginally higher ratio of Domesday vills located on the slowly permeable calcareous and non-calcareous clay soils, potentially the result of settlement expansion across these soils by the 11th century. The point data for Domesday vills and associated Roman settlement, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.21**).

The limited evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 9th centuries on the Limestone Scarp may indicate a degree of contraction away from the lighter rendzina soils, which by the 10th to 11th centuries had seen some renewed expansion and resettlement, but this observation must remain tentative, given the current lack of evidence. Some expansion across

Table 15.5 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Limestone Scarp, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 15.6 shows the percentage of Domesday vills recorded for the Limestone Scarp, relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 15.5: The Limestone Scarp

Total number of Roman settlements 49	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	8	5	17		16%	11%	35%	
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m			2				4%	
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m			2				4%	
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m			2				4%	
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	1		3	1	2%		6%	2%
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	1		3	1	2%		6%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	1	2	9	1	2%	4%	18%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	1	2	7	1	2%	4%	14%	2%
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	1	2	9	1	2%	4%	18%	2%

Table 15.6: The Limestone Scarp

Total number of Domesday vills recorded 66		Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		21	32%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		6	9%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		11	17%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	2	3%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	3	5%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	12	18%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	0	0%
	Roman town within 500m	0	0%
	Roman findspot within 500m	1	2%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		18	27%

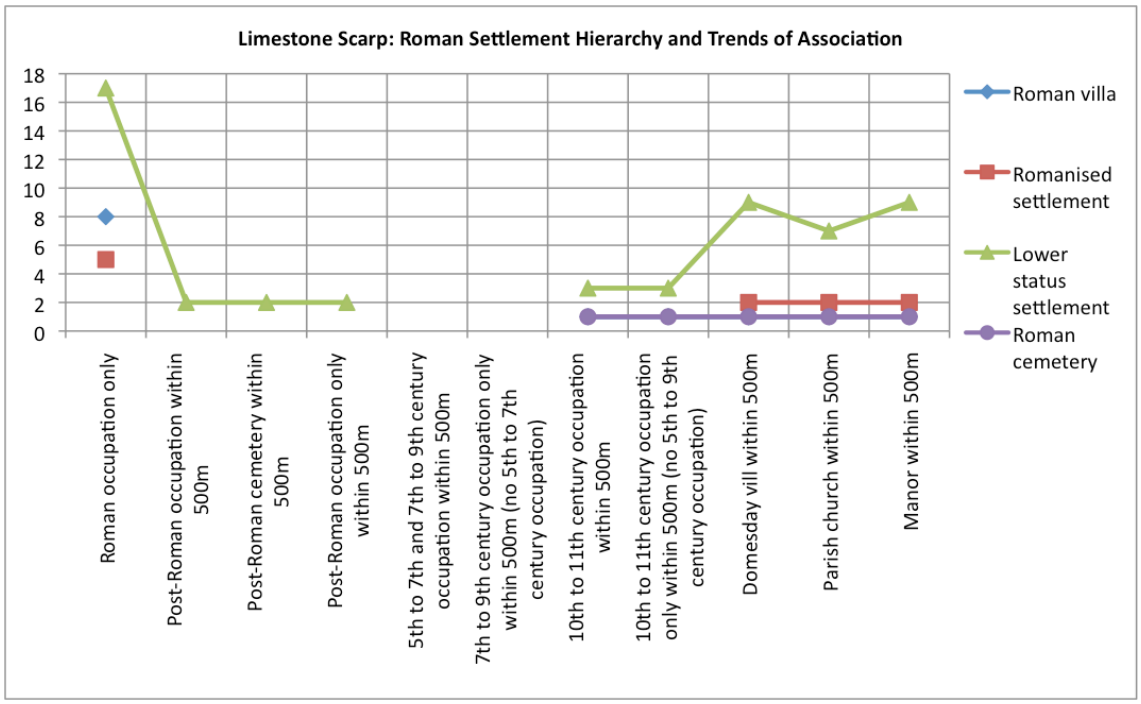


Figure 15.19. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Limestone Scarp and the number of Roman settlements relative to post-Roman and early medieval occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors.

the slowly permeable clay soils may be suggested by the 10th to 11th centuries: whilst this is also tentative, it would be in keeping with settlement trends observed for the wider county, as well as for both Norfolk and Kent.

Discussion

The current evidence for Roman occupation of the Limestone Scarp indicates highly dispersed settlement, predominantly distributed along the lighter calcareous soils of the *pays* margins but with a small concentration on the calcareous loams over clay in the north where the scarp merges with the foothills of the Mendip and Cotswold Hills. Ten Roman villas and seven Romanised settlements are recorded, but, to date, the remaining 22 suggest comparatively lower status occupation (**Fig. 15.22**). Whilst 22 Roman settlements have no clearly recorded occupation chronology, 21, including six Roman villas and three Romanised settlements, suggest occupation into at least the 4th century, with only six, all of lower status, indicating abandonment before this date. There is currently a distinct lack of Roman settlement evidence across the central scarp, in the vicinity of the River Brue, which may partially

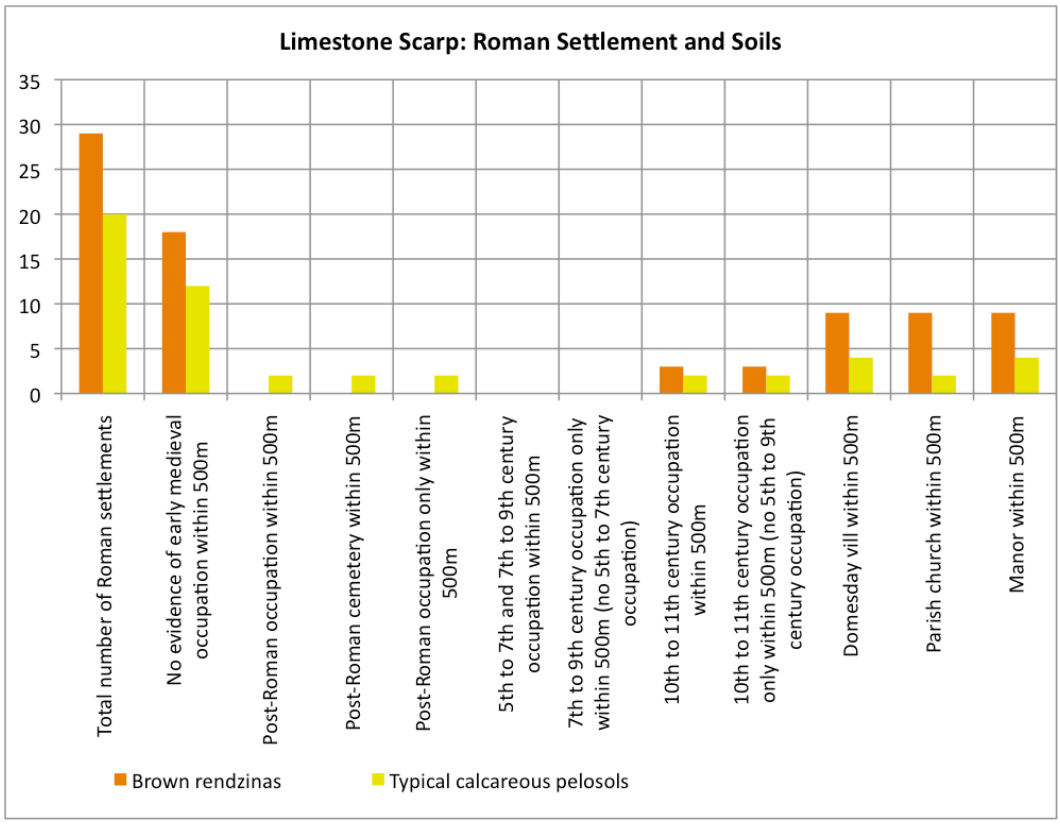


Figure 15.20 Bar chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Limestone Scarp that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of post-Roman and early medieval settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils.

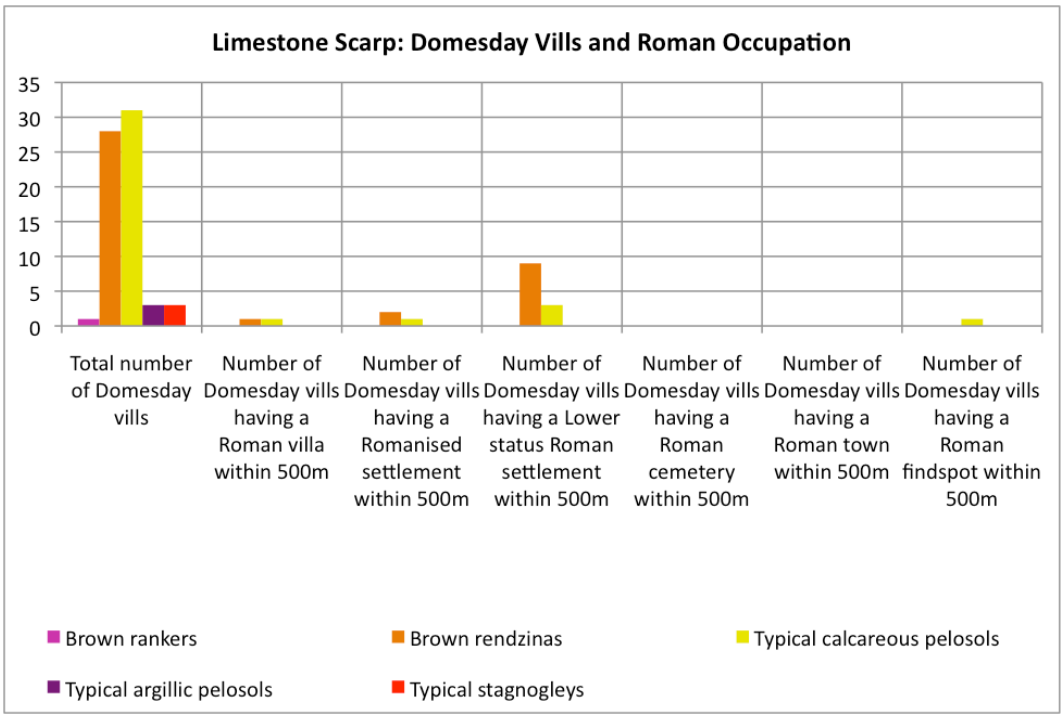


Figure 15.21. Bar chart showing the number of Domesday vills on the Limestone Scarp and their relationship to Roman occupation and suggested Roman settlement hierarchy, relative to soils.

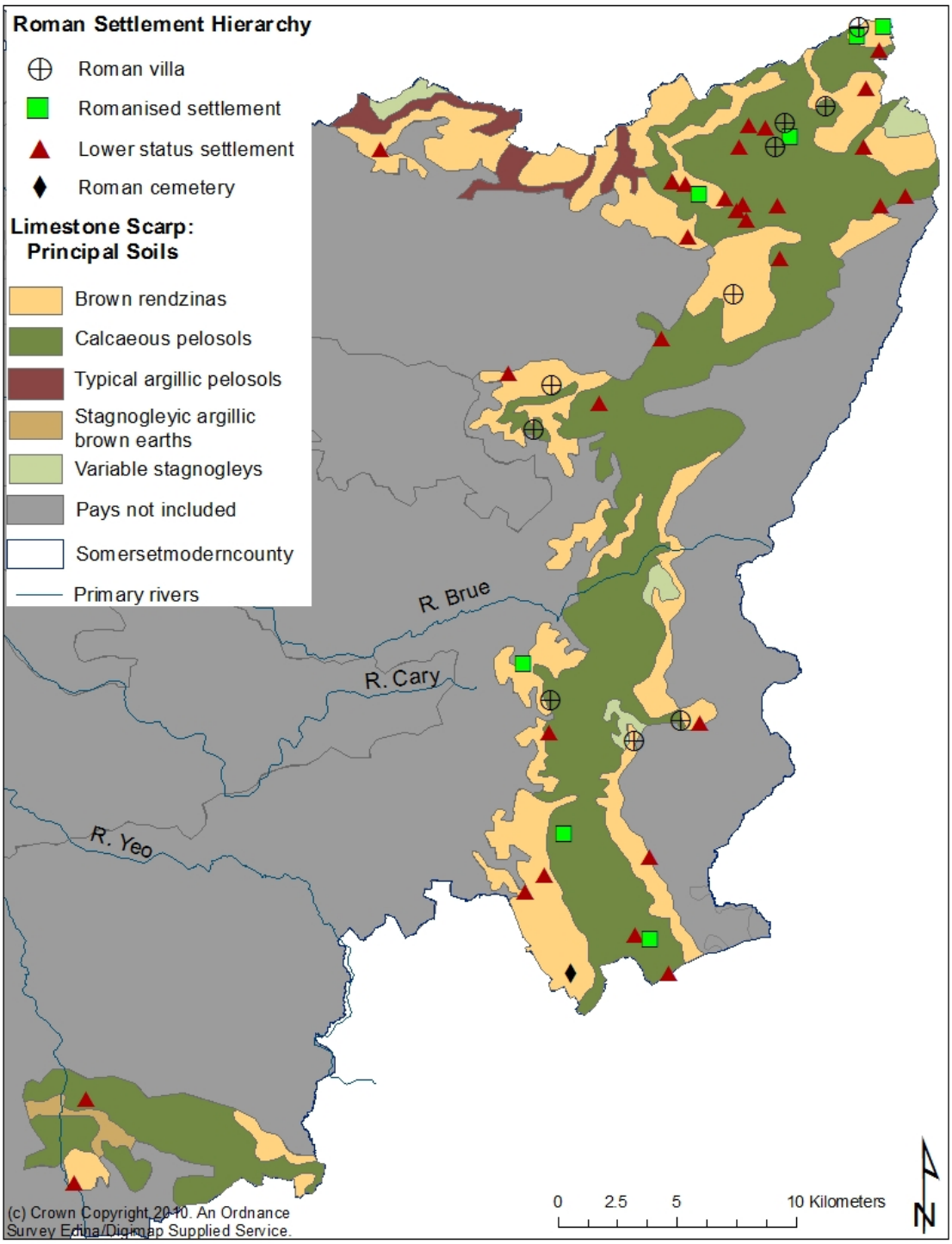


Figure 15.22. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Limestone Scarp showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soil types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

reflect the wooded nature of the *pays*, and the extent of the royal forests of Bruton and Selwood during the Roman period.

Identifying trends in settlement contraction across the Limestone Scarp from the late Roman period is problematic due to the lack of available evidence. Equally, only two lower status Roman settlements currently indicate an association with post-Roman occupation, both at Buckland Dinham. Field survey (Bath and Camerton Archaeology Society 2003) recorded an enclosure (SHER 26277) and two possible roundhouses to the southwest of Buckland Dinham associated with a concentration of Roman pottery, including Samian ware and 3rd to 4th century Oxford ware (*ibid*, 2). Additional Roman pottery scatters were recorded *c*. 600m to the southeast (SHER 29331) and *c*. 350m to the northeast (SHER 26668), the latter associated with sections of burnt wattle and daub: together the three occupation areas indicate an arc of settlement around two low spurs of ground separated by a small river valley, on slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, and broadly equidistant between the Domesday vills of Buckland Dinham and Great Elm (**Fig. 15.23**). Two barrow cemeteries are situated on the western valley slope, at Barrow Hill, between the Romano-British enclosure and the southernmost pottery scatter and in the early 20th century Horne and Bulleid excavated a small inhumation cemetery (SHER 23162) adjacent to these (Costen 2011, 53). One female skeleton had her head to the northwest and lay with her skull on her breast (Horne 1926, 77). She was accompanied by grave goods including two fine silver wire rings and quartz, glass and white shell beads, dated by typology to the 5th to 6th centuries (*ibid*, 78). The cemetery was originally considered as Anglo-Saxon (*ibid*, 78), but recent comparison with the post-Roman cemetery at nearby Camerton, in North Somerset, suggests a late to post-Roman native community is more likely (Costen 2011, 53).

An association between Roman settlement and 10th to 11th century occupation is also scarce for the Limestone Scarp, with just five sites recording this potential relationship (**Fig. 15.24**), and all somewhat ephemeral in nature: at Buckland Dinham, the lower status settlement (SHER 26668) to the northeast of the Romano-British enclosure is also situated *c*. 350m southwest of a possible building platform (SHER 26663), where dark soils and a scatter of early medieval pottery are recorded (**Fig. 15.23**). At Manor Farm, Chesterblade, a potential Roman villa (SHER 23485), given two possible locations in the record,

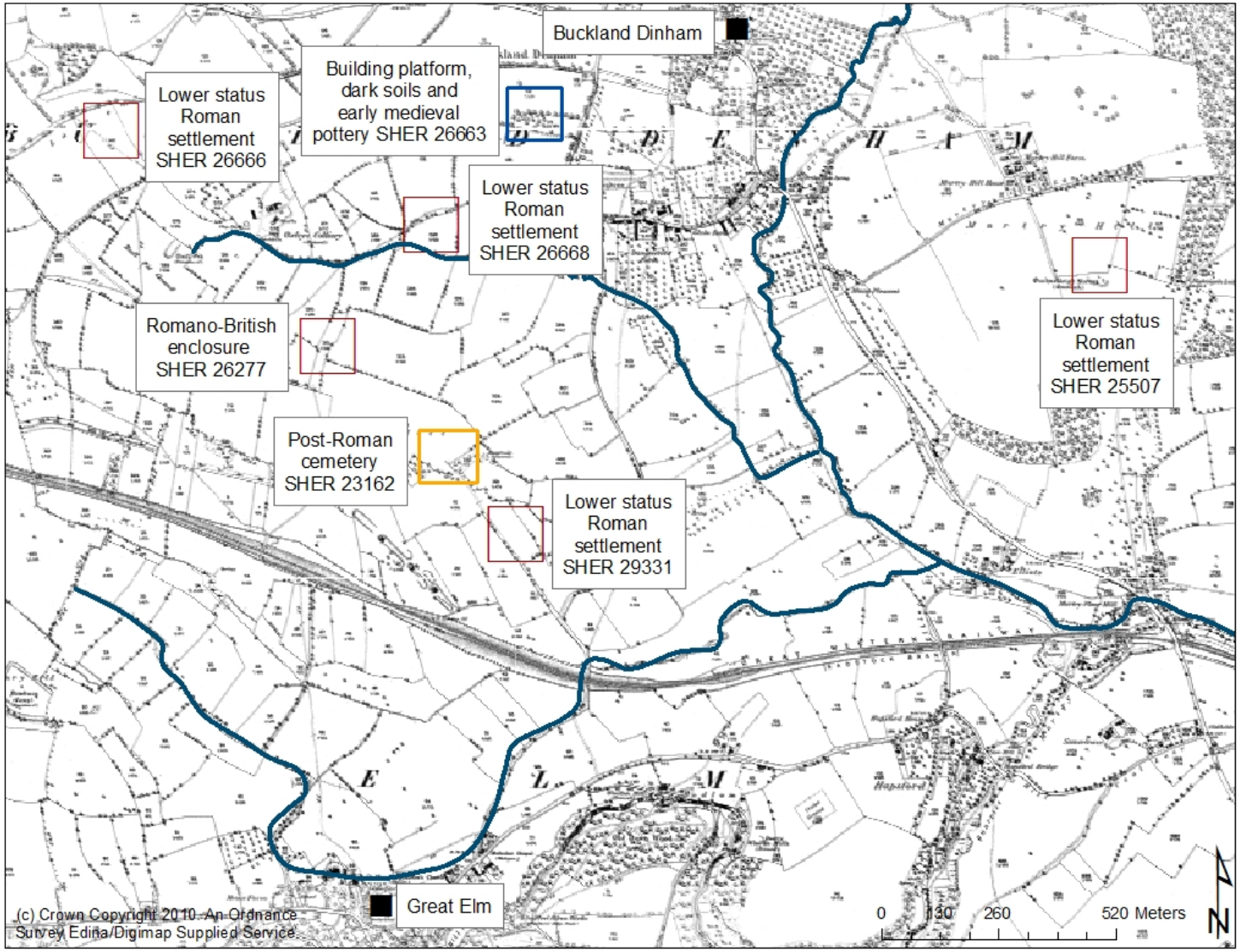


Figure 15.23. The location of Roman settlement at Buckland Dinham in relation to a post-Roman cemetery dating to the 5th to 6th centuries, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. A possible early medieval building and associated pottery is also recorded to the southwest of Buckland Dinham. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author using the Somerset HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

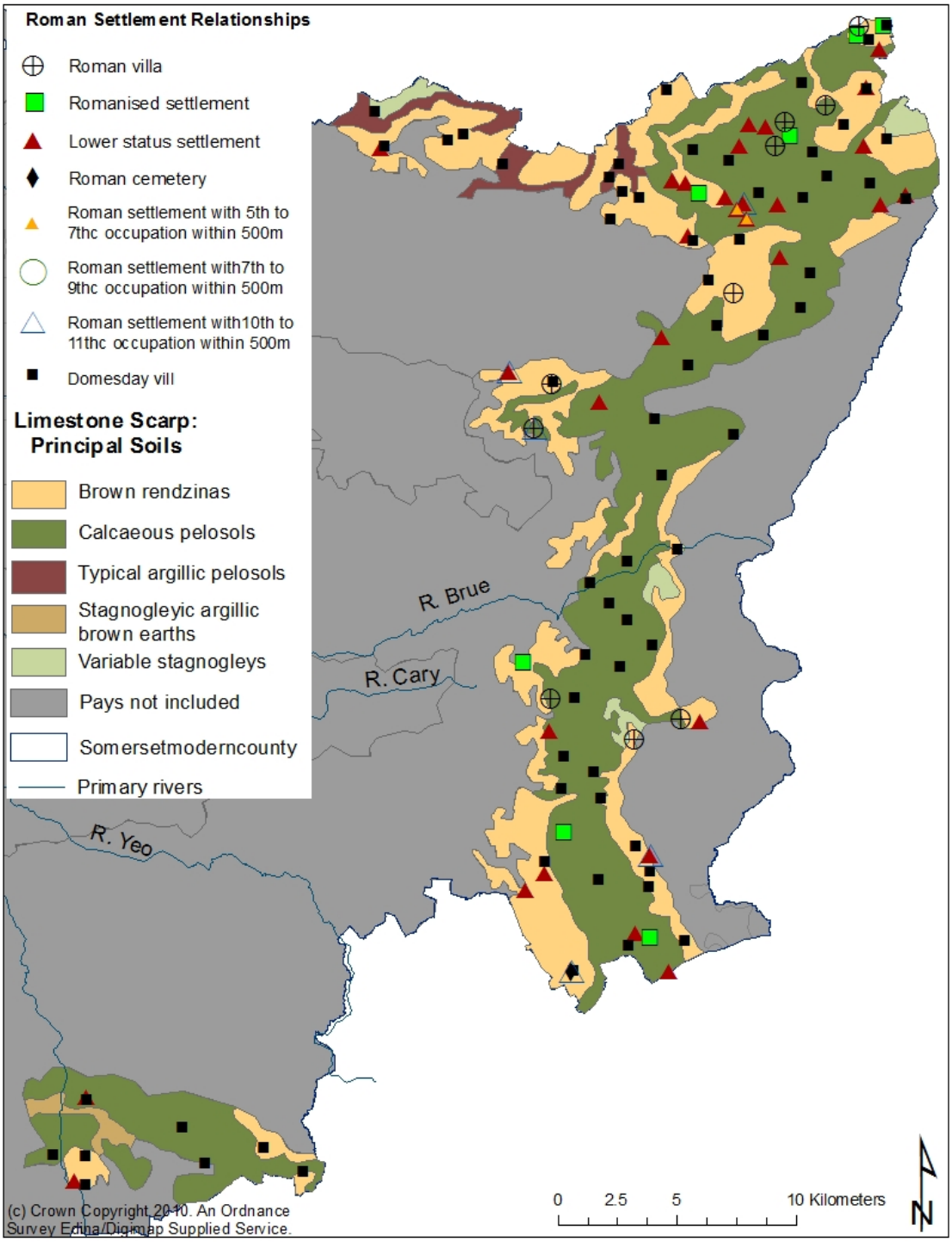


Figure 15.24. ***Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Limestone Scarp shown in relation to the primary soil types for the*** **pays.** ***Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright***

appears to lie in the close vicinity of the medieval manor and shrunken village of Chesterblade, where early medieval pottery sherds (SHER 14776) were recorded during fieldwalking (see SHER). At Abbey Quarry, Doulting, evaluation (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1998; 1999) recorded concentrations of Roman pottery and features relating to a probable Romano-British field system (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1999, 12-14). The evidence suggested a Roman settlement (SHER 15598) in the vicinity, with occupation dating into at least the late 4th, possibly early 5th centuries (*ibid*, 7). Associated features (see SHER 35944) include a linear gully containing 11th to 13th century pottery (*ibid, 8)*. The site lies on light calcareous rendzina soils *c*. 780m to the northeast of the Domesday vill and parish church at Doulting, documented from the early 8th century (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1998, 4). At Milborne Port, 60 north-south aligned burials (SHER 54265) recorded adjacent to the churchyard are thought to be Roman in date (Aston and Leech 1977, 92). Milborne Port is documented as a royal Saxon manor and 'Late Saxon' port and market centre (*ibid*, 92). Evaluation work (SHER 15566; 15570; 16418) to the east of the church has exposed features and pottery that currently date the earliest occupation to the 11th to 12th centuries (Croft 1989, 177). The Roman cemetery may be assumed to reflect settlement in the vicinity of the parish church, located on light calcareous rendzina soils within the extent of the 11th century Domesday vill.

Lastly, at Hiscock's Lane, Abbas Combe, evidence for LIA/early Roman settlement (SHER 55106/57115) was recorded during a pipeline watching brief (Bonner and Newman 1991, 17). Substantial ditches and features were dated by associated finds to the early 1st to 2nd centuries (*ibid*, 17), although a later Roman settlement (SHER 57116) dating to the 3rd to 4th centuries (*ibid*, 17) is recorded *c*. 700m to the northeast, on the heavier clay soils of the Clay Vale (**Fig. 15.25**). To the northwest, undated linear earthworks indicating settlement enclosures and/or fields may relate to a wider extent of Roman settlement (see SHER 57113), although they may equally be early medieval in date (Newman 1992, 71): the earthworks underlie traces of ridge and furrow cultivation and appear to predate the ancient parish boundary between Abbas Combe and Horsington. Furthermore, an early medieval cemetery (SHER 55104) is recorded on the southern perimeter (**Fig. 15.25**), straddling the parish boundary Eleven burials are currently recorded, nine of which are extended inhumations on an east-west alignment, with no associated grave goods.

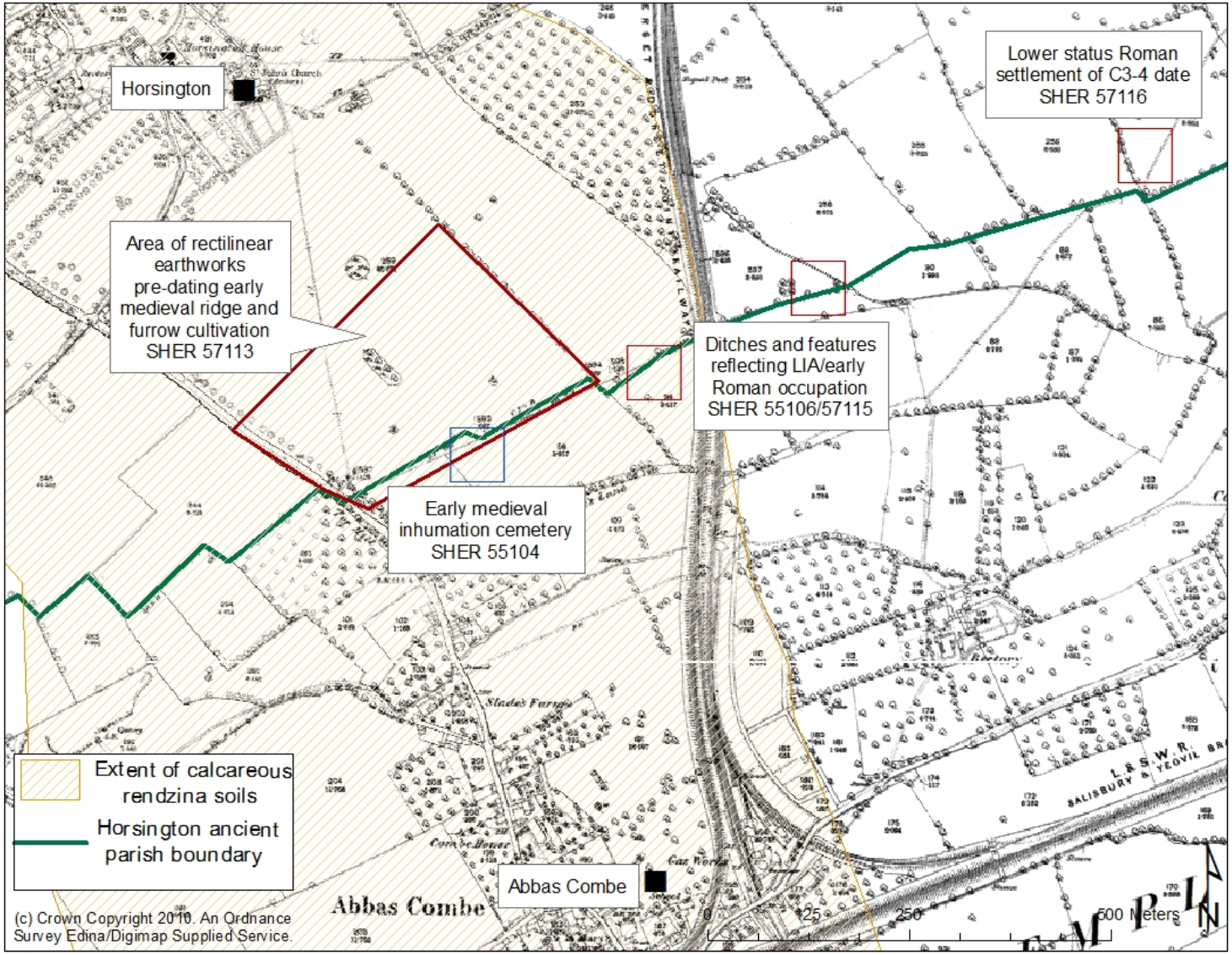


Figure 15.25. The location of Roman settlement at Abbas Combe in relation to the 10th century inhumation cemetery and the 11th century Domesday vills of Abbas Combe and Horsington, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. The extent of light calcareous rendzina soils and the ancient parish boundary between Horsington and Abbas Combe is also shown – to the east the soils are the heavy clays of the Clay Vale. Compiled and drawn by the author using Bonner and Newman (1991), Newman (1992) and the Somerset HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Radiocarbon dating indicates a date range of 681-974 and 794-1026 cal AD at 95% probability (*ibid*, 70), although two flexed burials, on the western edge of the cemetery, may relate to an earlier mortuary phase (Bonner and Newman 1991, 12; Newman 1992, 64). On the basis of Philpott's (1991, 223) burial typologies (Chapter 13, 320), these may reflect early Roman burials associated with the settlement to the east.

Although tentative, the wider evidence for Roman and early medieval occupation at Hiscock's Lane may reflect a shift of settlement across the contrasting calcareous rendzina soils of the Limestone Scarp and the heavier clays of the Clay Vale during the Roman period, with the lighter soils potentially seeing the greater likelihood for Roman settlement continuity. The location of both the Roman settlement and the 7th to 11th century cemetery appear to respect some older boundary, which subsequently defined part of the ancient ecclesiastical parish. The Domesday vills of Horsington and Abbas Combe are situated broadly 600m equidistant to either side of this, both on calcareous rendzina soils and reflecting processes of nucleation, with some evidence for common field agriculture (**Fig. 15.25**). There is currently no evidence for Roman occupation underlying either Horsington or Abbas Combe, although further evaluation might yet show this. If the earthworks at Hiscock's Lane do reflect 7th to 11th century occupation, it would appear that a shift of settlement, or at least a shift of focus, occurred by the later 11th century. This is similar to sites such as Shapwick, Lopen and Buckland Dinham, for example, where a move towards settlement nucleation appears to date to around the 9th to 10th centuries.

Including the examples above, a total of 13 Roman settlements (27%) on the Limestone Scarp are located within 500m of an 11th century Domesday vill, nine of which are situated on the calcareous rendzina soils of the *pays* margins and just four on the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils. Retrogressive analysis indicates that 18 Domesday vills (also 27%) currently demonstrate associated evidence for Roman occupation within 500m, 12 of which are located on the calcareous rendzinas, with only six on the calcareous loam over clay soils. The evidence, to date, would suggest that the lighter soils demonstrate the greatest potential for Roman settlement continuity, with the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils potentially being areas of settlement contraction and resettlement between the 5th to 11th centuries, possibly linked to settlement expansion and

ongoing woodland clearance. By the 11th century the Limestone Scarp was largely characterised by nucleated hamlets and villages associated with common field agriculture, potentially reflecting a degree of settlement shift at some point between the preceding 5th to 10th centuries, as demonstrated at Buckland Dinham and Abbas Combe, for example. On the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, pockets of dispersed settlement may reflect those areas that remained predominantly wooded by the 11th century (see **Fig, 14.8**).

Summary

The current evidence for Roman settlement on the Limestone Scarp suggests highly dispersed settlement, largely distributed along the lighter calcareous soils of the *pays* margins, but with some concentration on the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils in the north, where the scarp merges with the foothills of the Mendip and Cotswold Hills. Neither the extent of potential abandonment nor the continuity of Roman settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries can be clearly observed from the evidence currently available. Based on the association of Roman settlement with Domesday vills, however, it might be suggested that the greatest potential Roman settlement continuity occurred on the lighter calcareous soils, which demonstrate some relationship with the antecedent Roman settlement landscape, albeit with some suggestion of settlement shift by the 11th century. Across the *pays* interior, however, the slowly permeable calcareous clay soils may have been more prone to phases of settlement contraction and resettlement during the course of the 5th to 11th centuries, with the pattern of 11th century settlement possibly reflecting a degree of settlement expansion through progressive woodland clearance. By the 11th century there had been a shift from a dispersed Roman settlement pattern to one of predominantly nucleated hamlets and villages associated with common field agriculture, although some pockets of more dispersed settlement remained across the central belt, bordering the River Brue. These may reflect areas that remained predominantly wooded by the 11th century.

The Mendip Hills

Settlement data

Eighteen Roman settlements are recorded for the Mendip Hills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results illustrated below (**Table 15.7**: **Fig. 15.26**).

Eight Domesday vills are recorded for the Mendip Hills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 15.8**).

Soils data

Of the 18 Roman sites recorded for the Mendip Hills, 7 (39%) were located on brown rankers, with 3 (17%) on typical brown earths, and the remaining 8 (44%) distributed across variable argillic brown earths, demonstrating that the majority of Roman settlement was situated on the shallow, non-calcareous soils (brown rankers) around the *pays* margins or the better-drained loams or loam over clay soils (brown earths and argillic brown earths) on the lower slopes of the *pays*. The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.27**).

Of the 8 Domesday vills recorded for the Mendip Hills, 1 (12%) was located on brown rankers, with 3 (38%) on typical brown earths, 3 (38%) on stagnogleyic palaeo-argillic brown earths and 1 (12%) on typical stagnogleys. This suggests relatively limited settlement of the *pays* by the 11th century, with some possible ingress onto the heavier loam over clay soils (stagnogleyic argillic brown earths) and wetter clays (stagnogleys) by this point, although the relatively limited data makes this harder to quantify precisely. The point data for Domesday vills and associated Roman settlement, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 15.28**).

Discussion

Evidence for Roman occupation on the Mendip Hills is not extensive but suggests that the majority of settlement was distributed along the lighter non-calcareous soils and better-drained brown earths of the *pays* margins, with only limited settlement across the wider interior (**Fig. 15.29**), potentially related to

Table 15.7 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Mendip Hills, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 15.8 shows the percentage of Domesday vills recorded for the Mendip Hills relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 15.7: The Mendip Hills

Total number of Roman settlements 18	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	1	7	3		6%	39%	17%	
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m								
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		1	2			6%	11%	
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		1	2			6%	11%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	1		1		6%		6%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	2	1	2		11%	6%	11%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	1		2		6%		11%	

Table 15.8: The Mendip Hills

Total number of Domesday vills recorded 8		Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		2	25%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		2	25%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		0	0%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	1	13%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	0	0%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	0	0%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	0	0%
	Roman town within 500m	0	0%
	Roman findspot within 500m	1	13%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		2	25%

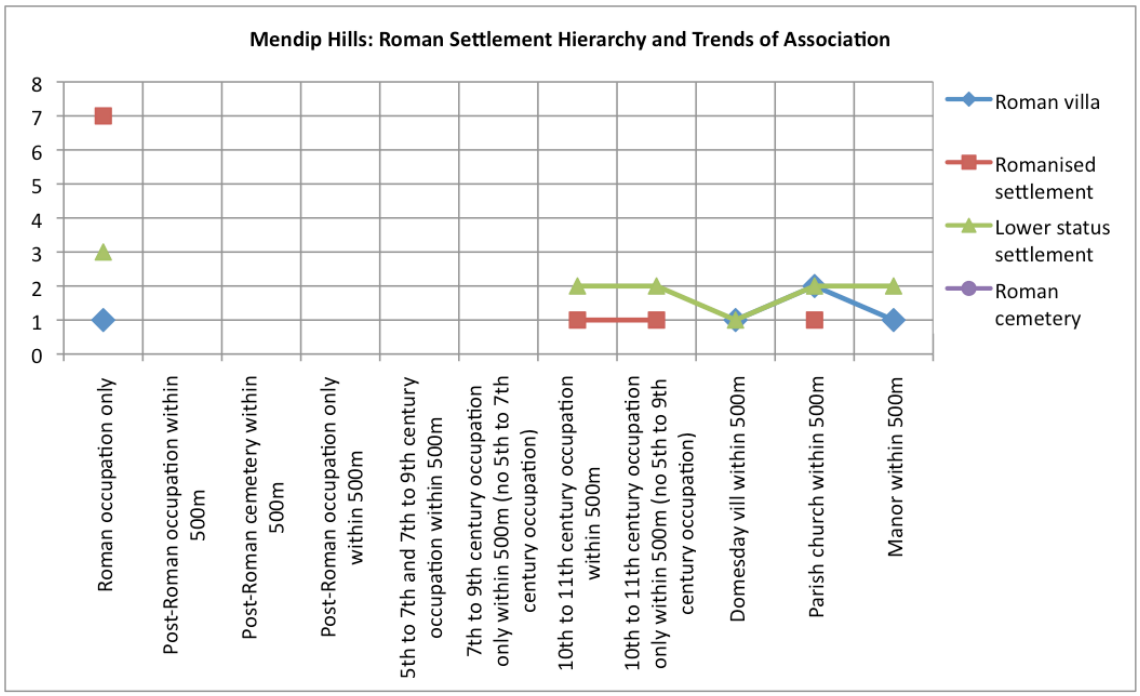


Figure 15.26. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Mendip Hills and the number of Roman settlements relative to post-Roman and early medieval occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors.

lead mining. While there appears to be several comparatively lower status settlements along the lower foothills of the Mendip Hills in the southwest, the majority of settlement indicates some degree of higher status, with three Roman villas recorded at Star (SHER 10757), Priddy (SHER 23946) and Stratton-on-the-Fosse (SHER 44773). The distribution of higher status settlement predominantly respects the line of two major Roman roads running through the *pays*: the Fosse Way (SHER 25358) runs from north to south along its eastern borders, while the second road (SHER 25357/29809) runs from southeast to northwest, crossing the Fosse Way at Ashwick and running through the Roman lead mining complex at Charterhouse, where it continues to the south of the Roman villa at Star. The Roman villas at Priddy and Stratton-on-the-Fosse currently suggest occupation only as far as the 3rd century, but there is no clear occupation chronology for seven of the remaining Roman settlements recorded for the *pays*, to include two Romanised, and five lower status, settlements. The remaining nine Roman settlements, of mixed status, suggest occupation into at least the 4th century.

There is currently little evidence in respect of potential Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, on the Mendip Hills (**Fig. 15.29**). To date, just one

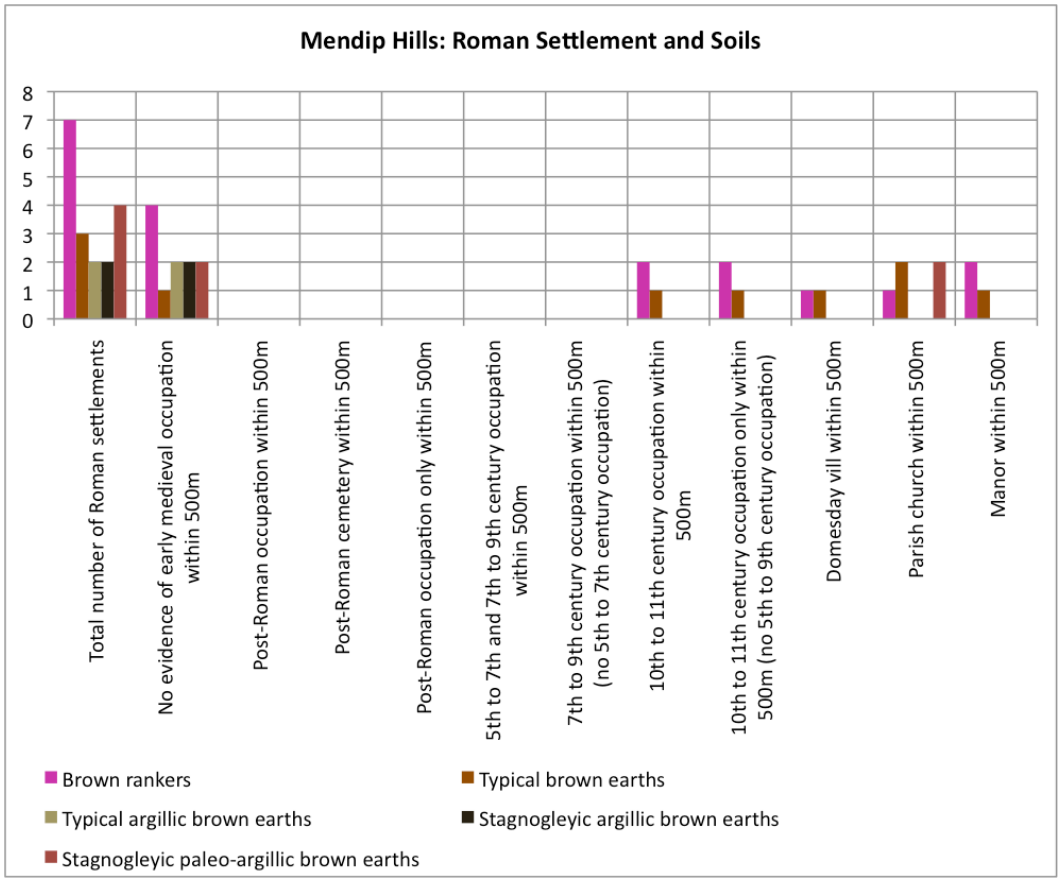


Figure 15.27 Bar chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Mendip Hills that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of post-Roman and early medieval settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils.

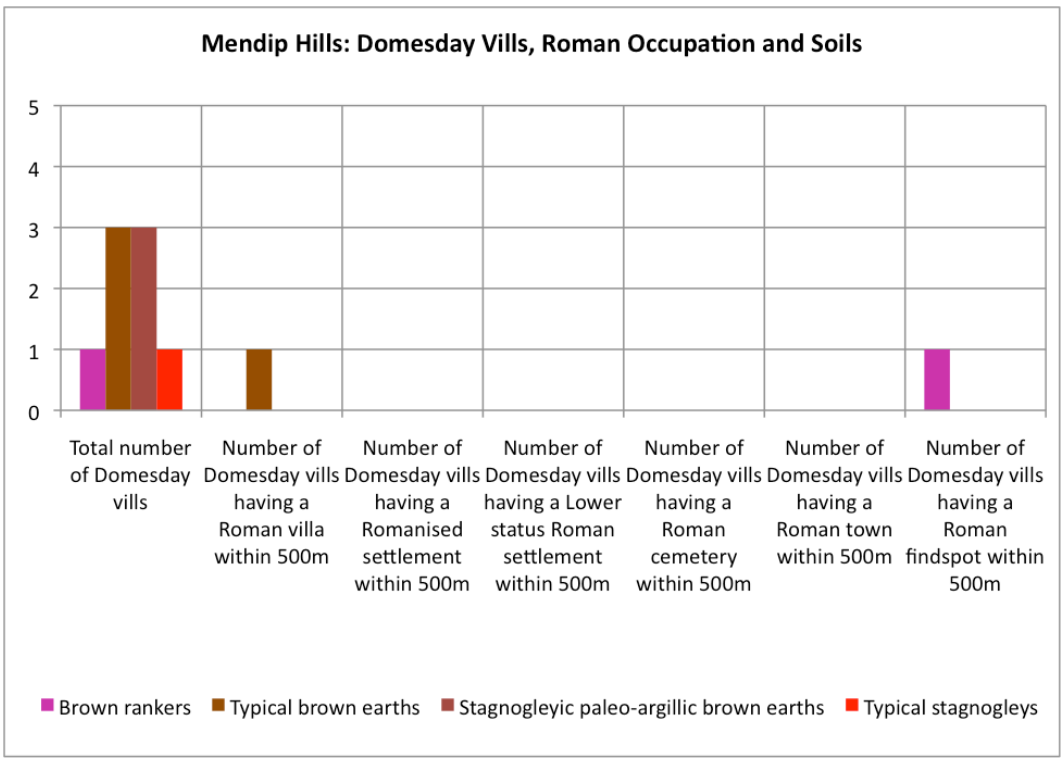


Figure 15.28. Bar chart showing the number of Domesday vills on the Mendip Hills and their relationship to Roman occupation and suggested Roman settlement hierarchy, relative to soils.

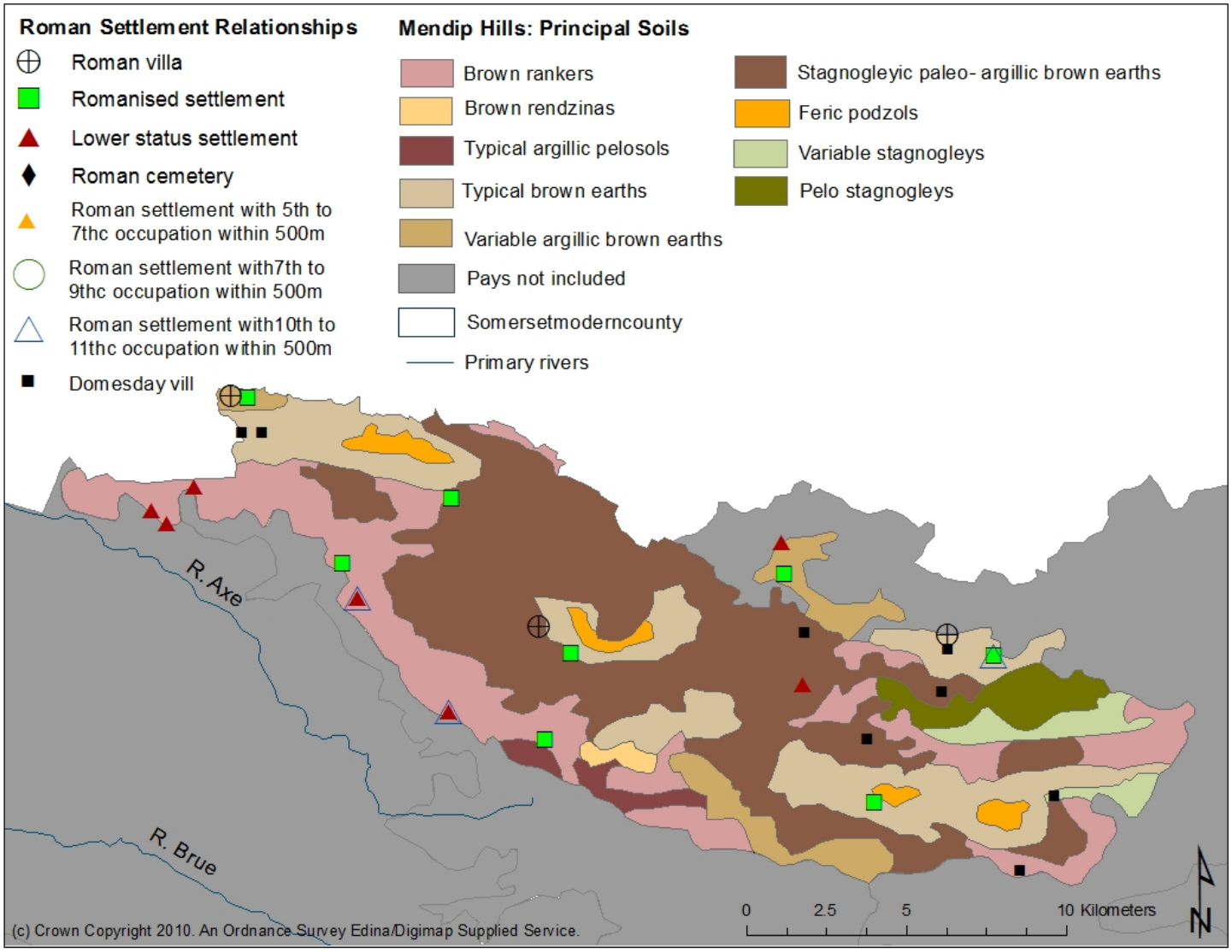


Figure 15.29. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Mendip Hills shown in relation to the primary soil types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Romanised settlement at Holcombe (SHER 23688) and two lower status settlements, at Westbury-sub-Mendip (SHER 31606) and Carscliff Farm, Cheddar (SHER 10347) are recorded in association with 10th to 11th century pottery. The settlements at Holcombe and Carscliff Farm were recorded in the early 20th century and have no clear Roman occupation chronology. At Carscliff Farm, the Roman settlement is situated *c*. 250m west of the deserted medieval village (SHER 11586), where material evidence of occupation currently dates back as early as the 10th to 11th centuries (Horton 1997, 182). At Holcombe, a substantial Roman building is recorded *c*. 480m southeast of the old parish church of St Andrews, on the site of the original early medieval village (SHER 23690). Sherds of possibly 'Norman' pottery are recorded in association with the Roman settlement (see SHER 23688), while 11th to 13th century pottery is recorded from the churchyard (Croft, Hollinrake and Hollinrake 1989, 176). At Westbury-Sub-Mendip, test pitting (Lane 2010, 222; 2011, 236) recorded a section of mortared wall along with quantities of late Roman and 10th to 12th century pottery (SHER 31606) around 375m northeast of the parish church and within the parameters of the 11th century Domesday vill.

In addition to the sites above, the Roman villa at Stratton-on-the-Fosse (SHER 44773) is also located within 500m of the Domesday vill and parish church, although, as mentioned above, there is currently no evidence for occupation of this site beyond the 3rd century. Retrogressive analysis of the Domesday vill of East Cranmore records a Roman pottery findspot (SHER 11306) within 500m, which may yet relate to Roman settlement in the vicinity, although this is clearly tenuous, to date. The five sites illustrated here are all located on the lighter non-calcareous soils and well-drained loams, suggesting that these may be where any potential continuity of rural Roman settlement of the *pays* into the 5th to 11th centuries most likely occurred.

The distribution of Domesday vills on the Mendip Hills suggests relatively limited settlement of the *pays* even by the 11th century, however (**Fig. 15.29**): a string of Domesday vills are variously recorded along the base of the Mendip Hills on the loam over clay soils and calcareous soils of the Mid Somerset Lowlands, the Lias Plain and the Limestone Scarp. This may indicate a shift of settlement away from the shallow soils of the lower Mendip slopes by the 11th century, with the nucleation of hamlets and villages favouring the more fertile lowland soils

yet ideally placed to continue exploiting the upland pastoral resources. This illustrates the complexities of social inter-relationships across neighbouring *pays* at a regional level, as demonstrated in Kent (Chapters 10-13), for example. Within the Mendip Hills *pays*, the 11th century settlement pattern indicates a dispersed and highly attenuated character (see **Fig. 14.8**), with little to currently suggest any major influence from the antecedent Roman settlement landscape.

Summary

There is currently limited evidence for Roman settlement of the Mendip Hills, primarily indicating some relatively lower status sites along the southwest margins of the *pays*, with some higher status sites along the two major Roman roads that dissected it, these potentially related to the control and transport of resources affiliated with the lead mining industry. It is not currently possible to demonstrate the potential continuity, or discontinuity, of Roman settlement of the *pays* into the 5th to 11th centuries with any certainty. Only four Roman settlements can be associated with material evidence for 10th to 11th century occupation, and only two with an 11th century Domesday vill and parish church. It is, however, possible to suggest that the lighter non-calcareous soils of the *pays* are most likely to have seen any potential Roman settlement continuity, although even these may have seen a shift of settlement by the 11th century, with a string of nucleated hamlets and villages variously developing along the base of the Mendip Hills, on the calcareous soils and loam over clay soils of the neighbouring lowland *pays*. Across the interior of the Mendip Hills the distribution of 11th century settlement remained both dispersed and highly attenuated, with little to currently suggest any major relationship to the antecedent Roman settlement landscape.

The Clay Vale

Just five Roman settlements are recorded for the Clay Vale, to include one possible Roman villa (SHER 24463) in the west of the *pays*, at St Algar's Wood, Selwood, and four lower status settlements, broadly distributed along the *pays*' eastern borders. All five settlements are situated on heavy stagnogleyic soils

and, although the Roman villa and two of the lower status settlements, at Combe Throop, Horsington (SHER 57116) and Higher Sycamore Farm, Stoke Trister (SHER 54615) demonstrate occupation into at least the 4th century, there is no currently no evidence to suggest potential continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries (**Fig. 15.30**).

Ten Domesday vills are recorded for the Clay Vale, predominantly situated on heavy clay soils, except for Penselwood, which is located on a narrow band of well-drained loamy brown earths (**Fig. 15.30**). Only Penselwood and Wincanton have seen any archaeological evaluation but there is currently no indication for Roman occupation within 500m of any of the Domesday vills on the Clay Vale, although there is Roman settlement within 750m of the Domesday vills of Stoke Trister and Wincanton. It might be suggested that the heavy clay soils of the Clay Vale saw little in the way of Roman settlement continuity, being largely an area of settlement expansion and resettlement by the 10th to 11th century. The basis for this observation, however, is largely derived from regional evidence elsewhere, such as the similarly heavy clay soils and wooded character of the Weald in Kent, for example.

By the 11th century some nucleated villages and hamlets had developed in the south of the *pays*, around Stoke Trister and Wincanton, typically associated with long common fields that extended up onto the calcareous soils of the Limestone Scarp to the west. These may be loosely influenced by patterns of underlying Roman settlement, possibly with a shift of settlement by the 11th century (**Fig. 15.30**), although this observation remains largely speculative, to date. Elsewhere a largely dispersed settlement character is suggested to have developed by the 11th century, potentially surrounded by extensive tracts of surviving woodland.

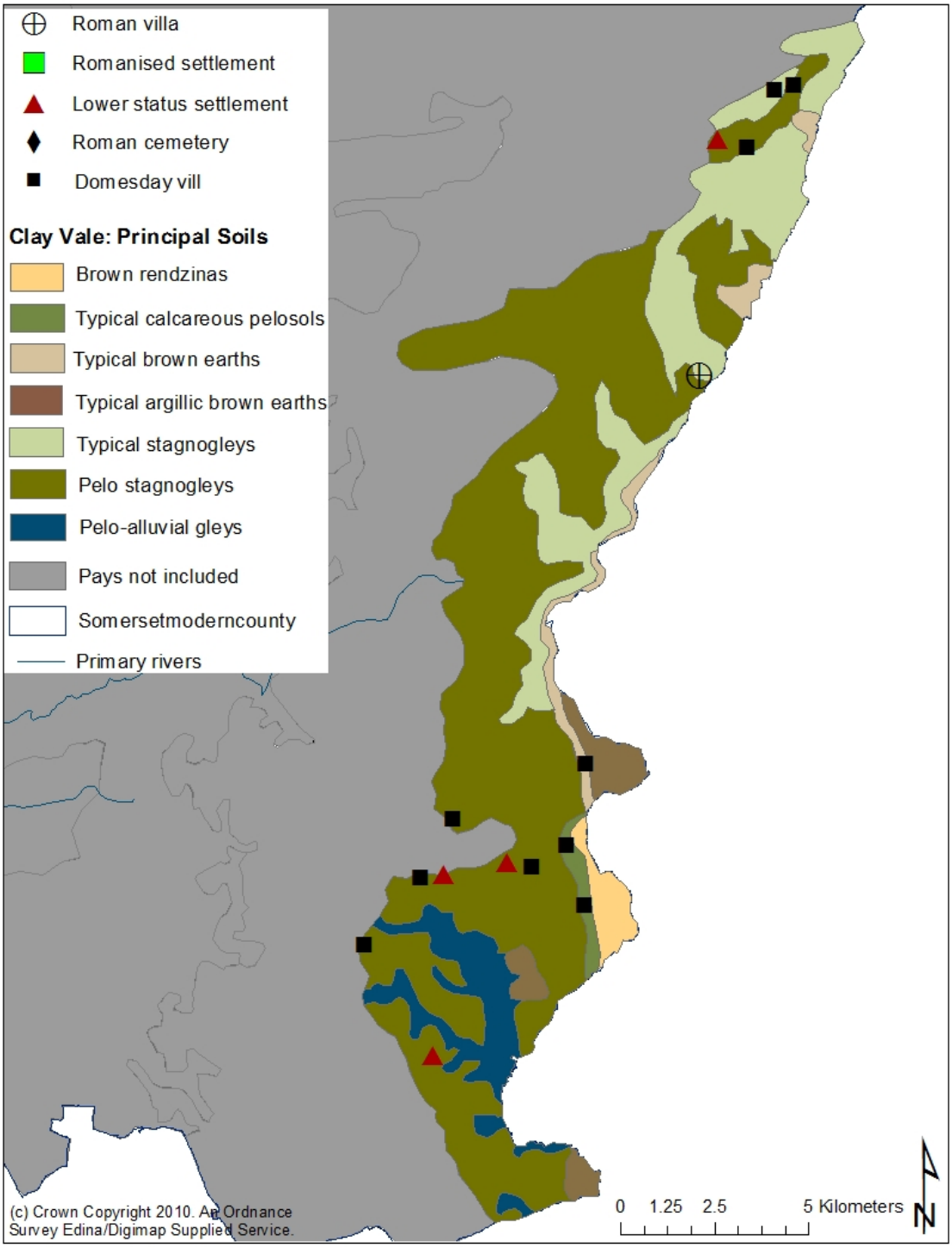


Figure 15.30. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on the Clay Vale, shown in relation to the primary soil types for the* pays*. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils data compiles using the Soils Survey of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Chapter 16. Roman and Early Medieval Relationships in Western Somerset

Introduction

The settlement results for the western Somerset *pays* are given below. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships are quantified and tabulated as for eastern Somerset. For the Brendon and Quantock Hills there is little, dateable, settlement data for the Roman and early medieval periods and the discussion for these *pays* reflects this. The broader results reflect the evidence available, to date, as retrieved through the methods stated. Any omissions or errors in interpreting the available evidence are acknowledged as the author's alone.

The Vale of Taunton Deane

Settlement data

Forty-two Roman settlements and one cemetery are recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane. These have been assessed on their relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern, as shown below (**Table 16.1**: **Fig. 16.1**).

One hundred and eleven Domesday vills are recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated below (**Table 16.2**).

Soils data

Of the 43 Roman sites recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane (settlements and cemeteries), 6 (14%) were located on calcareous or argillic pelosols, with 10 (23%) on typical brown earths, 20 (47%) on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, 3 (7%) on typical stagnogleys and 4 (9%) on pelo-alluvial gleys. The results demonstrate that the majority of Roman settlement in the *pays* potentially favoured the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils (brown earths and argillic brown earths) over the wetter clays and alluvial soils (pelosols, stagnogleys and alluvial gleys). The point data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 16.2**).

Table 16.1 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 16.2 shows the percentage of Domesday vills recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane, relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 16.1: The Vale of Taunton Deane

Total number of Roman settlements 43	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern	1	4	12		2%	9%	28%	
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m		2	1			5%	2%	
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m		1				2%		
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m		1	1			2%	2%	
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m		1				2%		
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m			1				2%	
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		2	5			5%	12%	
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m		2	5			5%	12%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill		4	11			9%	26%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church		1	7			2%	16%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor		4	14	1		9%	33%	2%

Table 16.2: The Vale of Taunton Deane

Total number of Domesday vills recorded 111		Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		27	24%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		14	13%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		4	4%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	0	0%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	4	4%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	13	12%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	0	0%
	Roman town within 500m	0	0%
	Roman findspot within 500m	1	1%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		18	16%

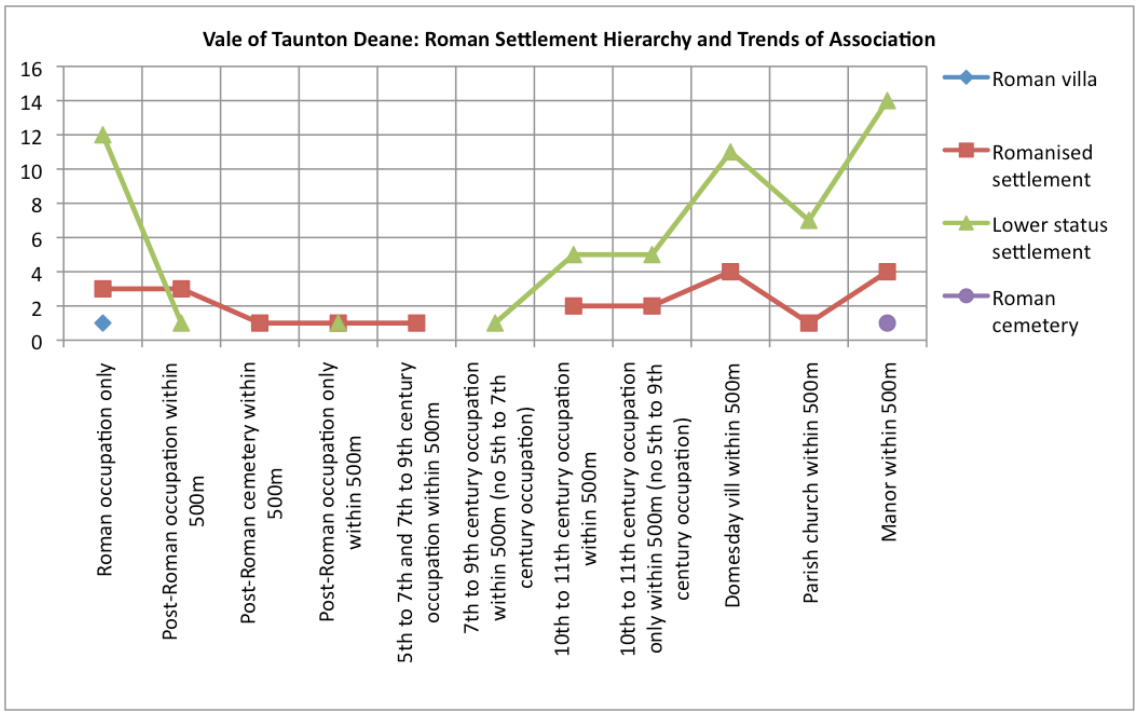


Figure 16.1. Line chart showing the hierarchy of Roman settlement on the Vale of Taunton Deane and the number of Roman settlements relative to post-Roman and early medieval occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors.

Of the 111 Domesday vills recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane, 18 (17%) were located on calcareous or argillic pelosols, with 28 (25%) on typical brown earths, 59 (53%) on stagnogleyic argillic brown earths, 4 (4%) on typical stagnogleys and 2 (2%) on pelo-alluvial gleys. This demonstrates that the better-drained loams and loams over clay soils continued to be favoured into the 11th century, with 78% of recorded Domesday vills located on these soils, suggesting by association that these soils are also where the greatest extent of potential Roman settlement continuity for the *pays* might be anticipated. The point data for Domesday vills and associated Roman settlement, relative to soils, is shown below (**Fig. 16.3**).

As demonstrated for much of Somerset, there is only limited evidence for potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries on the Vale of Taunton Deane (**Figs. 16.1 and 16.2**). The data currently indicates a potential contraction of Roman settlement from all the major soils of the *pays* (**Fig. 16.2**), although the precise chronology and extent of this remains uncertain. Where evidence for possible settlement continuity into the 5th to 9th centuries is suggested, this appears to be across the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils, as previously hypothesised (**Fig. 16.2**). The data also

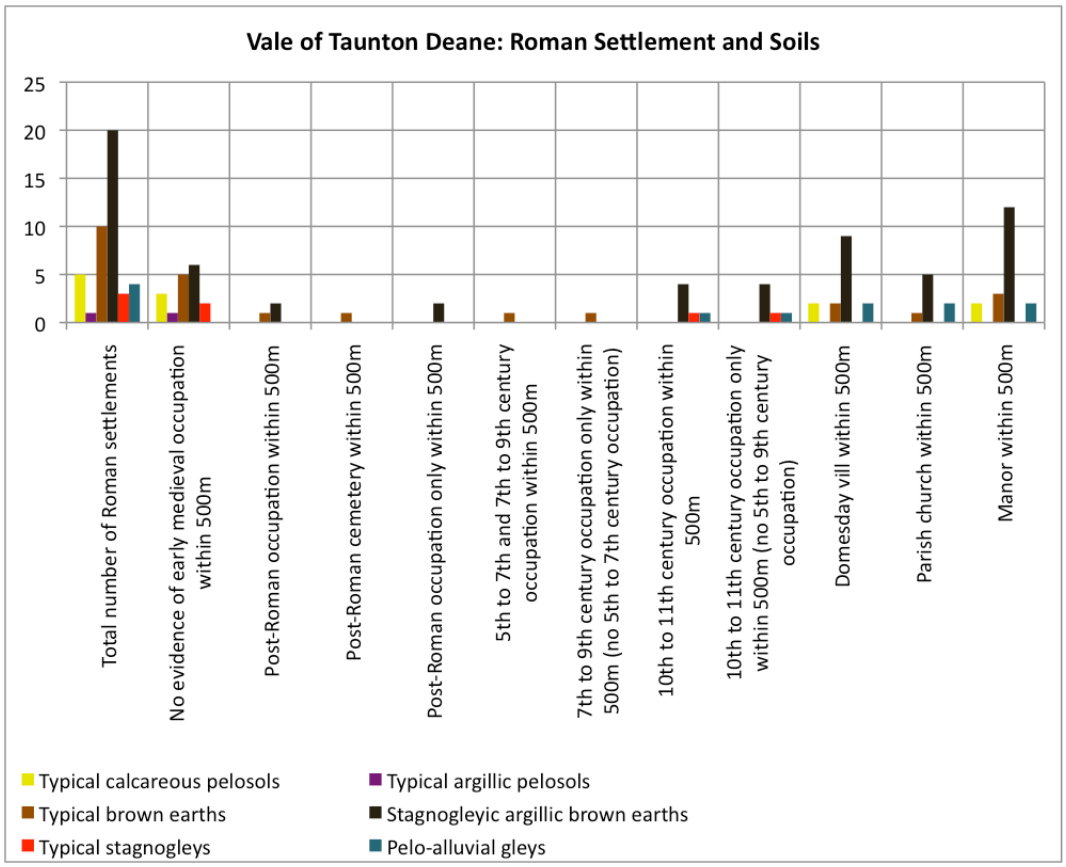


Figure 16.2 Bar chart showing the number of Roman settlements on the Vale of Taunton Deane that demonstrate a relationship to aspects of post-Roman and early medieval settlement, parish churches and manors, relative to soils.

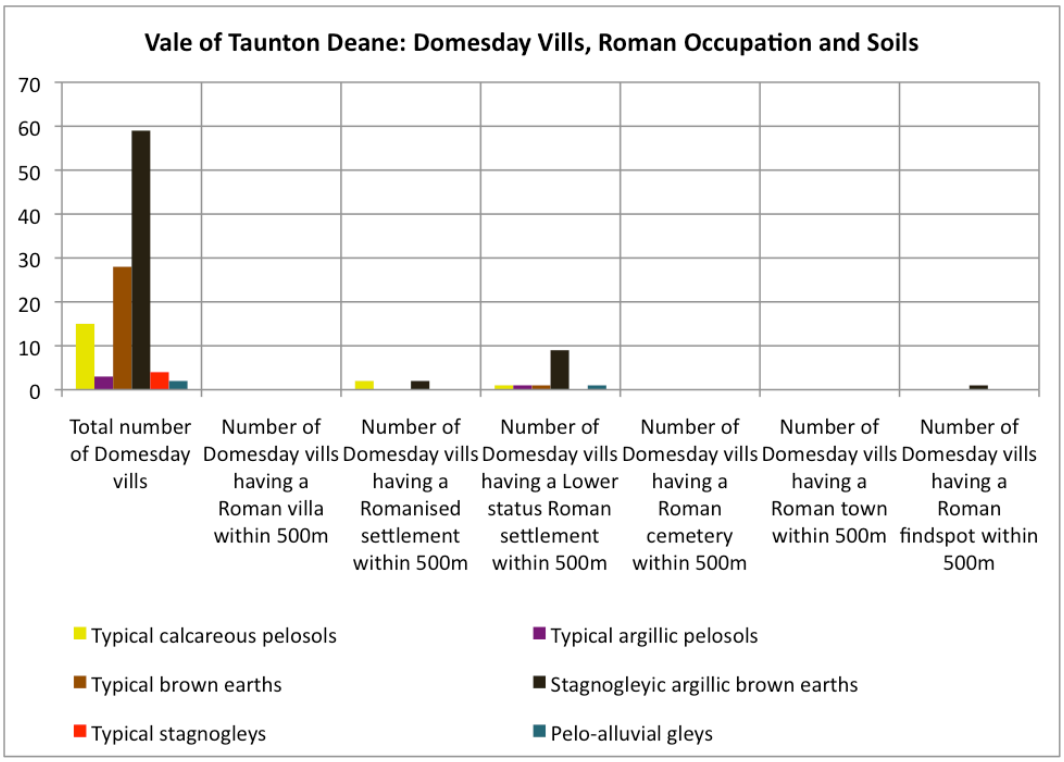


Figure 16.3. Bar chart showing the number of Domesday vills on the Vale of Taunton Deane and their relationship to Roman occupation and suggested Roman settlement hierarchy, relative to soils.

potentially indicates a resettlement of the wetter clays and alluvial soils from the 10th century onwards, although this may simply reflect the reappearance of a more durable material record for early medieval settlement (**Fig. 16.2**).

Where Roman settlement can be associated with a Domesday vill or parish church this is largely across the loams and loam over clay soils but includes some sites on the wetter clays and alluvial soils (**Fig. 16.2**). Similarly to the observations above, however, it is unclear whether this reflects potential Roman settlement continuity or a resettlement of the wetter soils and river floodplains by the 10th to 11th centuries. The association between Roman settlement and manors reflects a similar trend but with an increased association across the loamy clay soils: as shown for parts of Norfolk and Kent, this may partly be due to settlement expansion from the 10th to 11th centuries onwards.

Retrogressive analysis of Domesday vills and Roman settlement on the Vale of Taunton Deane has returned limited results, possibly due in part to the *pays*' typically dispersed settlement character congruent with a lack of archaeological evaluation. The limited data does, however, reinforce the hypothesis that any potential Roman settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries most likely occurred on the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils, rather than the wetter clays and alluvial soils (**Fig. 16.3**).

Discussion

The evidence for Roman occupation on the Vale of Taunton Deane indicates the fertile loam over clay soils bordering the Tone Valley and the western margins of the Somerset Levels were relatively well settled during the Roman period (**Fig. 16.4**). The majority of settlement, currently 31 sites (72%) in total, indicates lower status occupation, with 11 sites (26%) suggesting some degree of Romanised construction and only one Roman villa (2%), to date, at Spaxton (SHER 10802), to the east of the Quantock Hills (**Fig. 16.4**). Six Roman settlements currently lack evidence for 4th century dating, while 14 have no clear occupation chronology. The remaining 23 Roman settlements indicate occupation into at least the 4th century.

As for much of eastern Somerset, the extent or chronology of potential Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, on the Vale of Taunton Deane from the

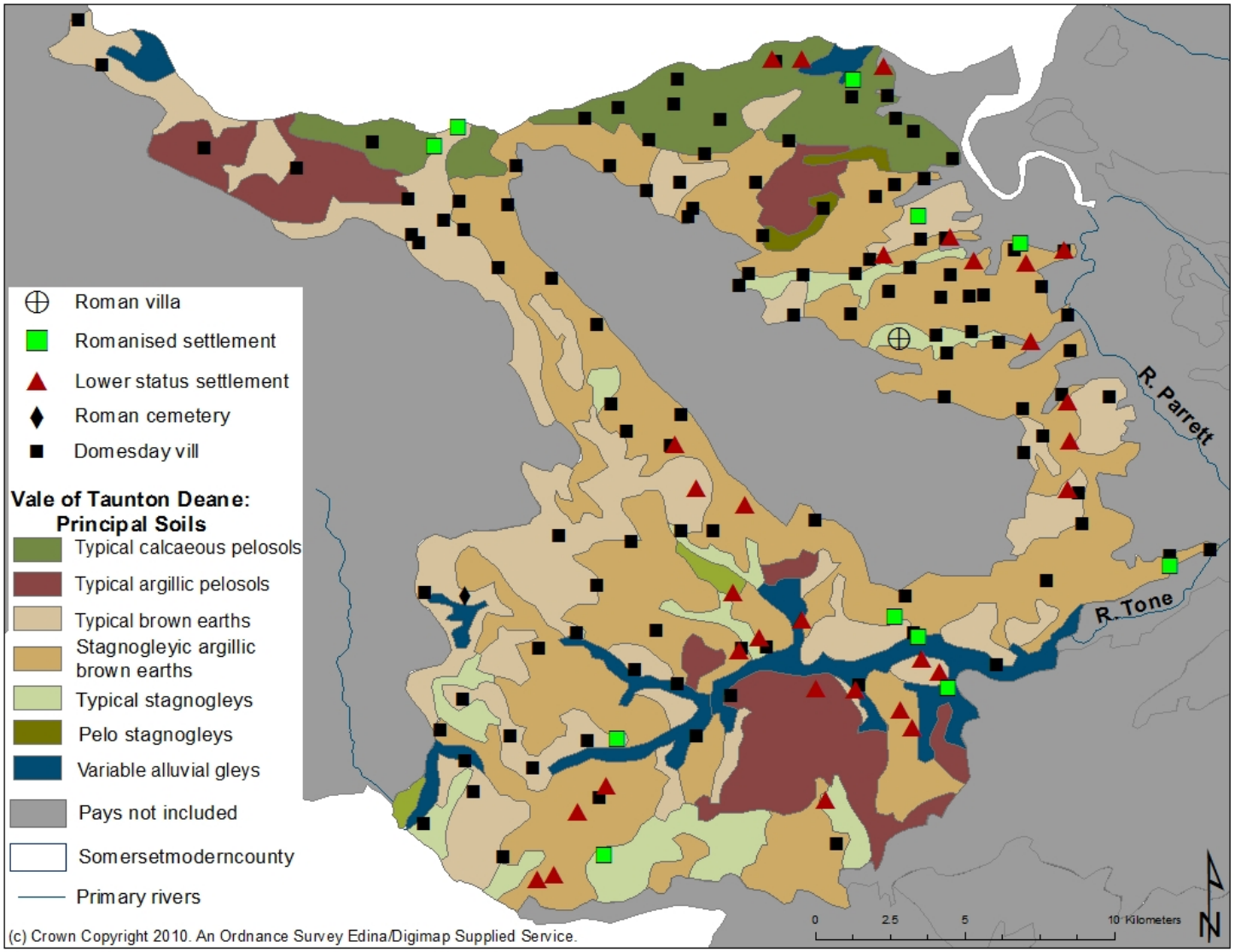
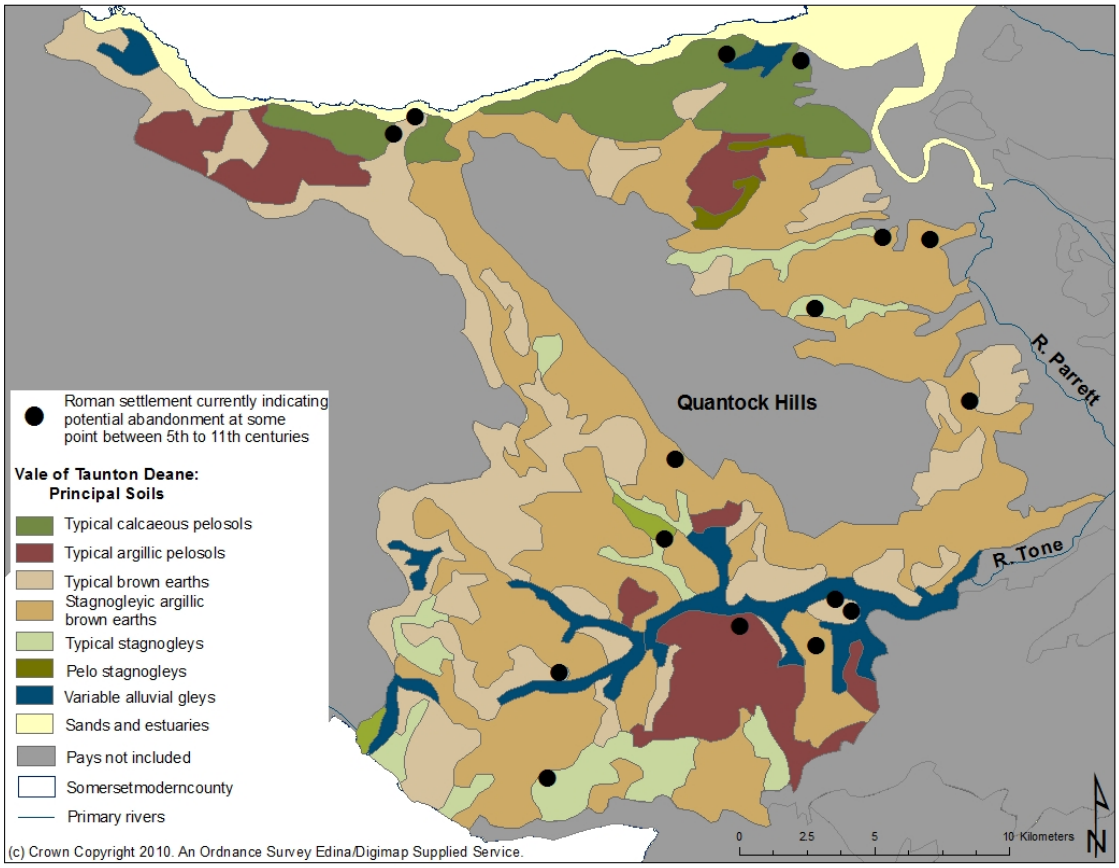


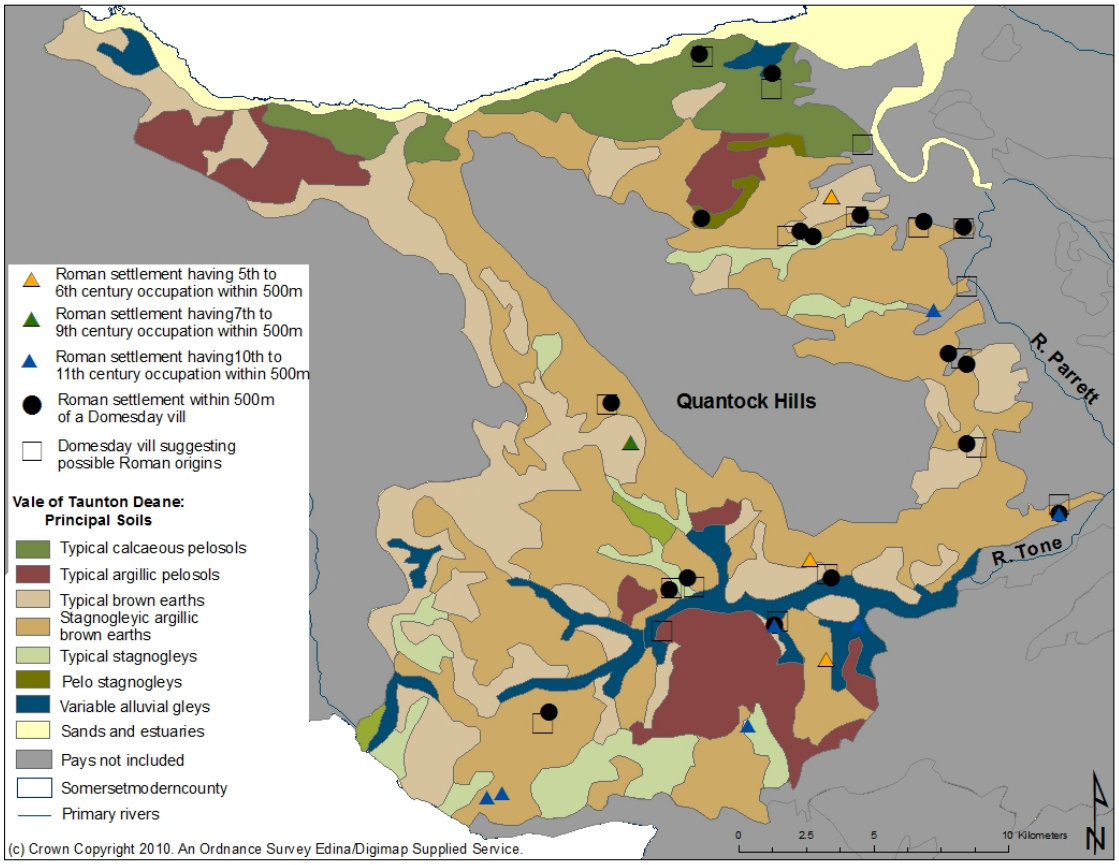
Figure 16.4. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Vale of Taunton Deane showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to Domesday vills and the primary soil types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

4th century onwards is difficult to quantify with any certainty. Currently, 16 Roman settlements across the *pays*, to include four Romanised settlements and the Roman villa at Spaxton, indicate no relationship with early medieval settlement. The distribution of these appears largely concentrated either on wetter stagnogleyic soils or along the floodplain of the River Tone and the western margins of the Somerset Levels (**Fig. 16.5**). This may indicate a potential contraction of Roman settlement away from the wetter clays and alluvial soils at some point during the late 4th to 11th centuries: a similar trend is indicated for the wetter soils in eastern Somerset during the 7th to 9th centuries (see p 350; 371) as well as for parts of western Kent (see Chapters 10-13). The evidence for this in the Vale of Taunton Deane is somewhat speculative, however, as the distribution of Roman settlements indicating potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries is not dissimilar (**Fig. 16.6**), nor the distinction between their respective relationships to soils clearly apparent.

To date, three Roman settlements across the *pays* have tentative evidence for potential continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries, Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine (SHER 44496), Ten Acres Field, Holway, Taunton (SHER 43671) and Cannington Park, Cannington (SHER 10444). At Holway, within the southeast suburbs of Taunton, two skeletons and an urn containing coins dating between 342-405 AD (SHER 16740) were recorded from the north corner of Ten Acres Field in the late 19th century (Pring, 1881, 104). Pring (*ibid*) also noted that rectangular undulations in the soil had been observed in the vicinity as well as a section of long flint stones, which he speculated to belong to a length of Roman road: the name of Holway is thought to derive from 'hollow way' (*ibid*, 103), suggesting there may have been a long standing routeway here. Excavation at Ten Acres Field in the 1970's (Fowler 1971, 10; Fowler and Bennett 1972, 7), revealed evidence for rectilinear timber buildings, enclosure ditches and cobbled surfaces (SHER 43671) dated by pottery to between the 1st to late 4th centuries, with associated coin evidence potentially pushing occupation here into the early 5th century.

At Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine, a Romano-British farmstead is recorded around 500m northwest of the current farm complex (Cox and Samuel 2001). Two phases of Roman occupation are indicated, with the latter producing evidence for stone walled buildings and a cobbled courtyard surrounded by a





Figures 16.5 and 16.6. The current evidence for potential Roman settlement abandonment (above) and continuity (below) in the Vale of Taunton Deane between the 5th to 11th centuries. Compiled and mapped by the author using the Somerset HER and supporting literature. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

large enclosure ditch. Occupation is dated by associated pottery to the 3rd to 4th centuries (*ibid*, 5). A roundhouse structure recorded *c*. 100m to the south of the Romano-British farmstead (*ibid*, Fig. 2) was dated by associated pottery to the LBA/EIA (*ibid*, 60) and appears to be part of a wider extent of contemporary settlement (Cox and Samuel 2001, 59-62; Mason 2010, 32). Within the roundhouse was a small oval pit, the fill containing a seed and a small quantity of oak charcoal radiocarbon dated to the 5th to 7th centuries AD (Cox and Samuel 2001, 56, 65) (**Fig. 16.7**). Whilst these could be intrusive materials, the presence of two separate taxa within the fill makes this less likely, in which case it may indicate post-Roman agricultural activity on the site (*ibid*, 65). Evaluation to the south of Nerrols Farm produced features and pottery suggesting a simple farmstead of 11th to 13th century date (Mason 2010, 32). The Roman and early medieval farmsteads at Nerrols farm lie *c*. 550m apart, potentially reflecting a shift of settlement to the southeast by the 11th century (**Fig. 16.7**).

At Cannington Park, earthworks to the south of the Iron Age hillfort indicate settlement and field enclosures of possible Roman, or post-Roman, date (Burrow 1981, 78-80) (**Fig. 16.8**). A concentration of Roman pottery (SHER 10308) was recorded in association with two or three possible house platforms and the outline of a possible rectangular building in the east of the site (*ibid*, 80) (**Fig. 16.8**). Excavation of a corner of the southern ramparts (Rahtz 1969, Fig.6) recorded a stone-packed posthole along with fragments of burnt daub and a possible floor surface dated by associated pottery to the late Roman period (*ibid*, 65) (**Fig. 16.8**). The Roman and post-Roman cemetery (SHER 10503) at Cannington Park Quarry is situated around 300m to the east of the earthworks. Excavation here by Rahtz *et al*. (2000) recorded evidence for underlying structures associated with Roman pottery in the south of the excavation site, which were speculated to potentially reflect an area of underlying Roman settlement (*ibid*, 398), whilst dating of the burials indicated its use as a cemetery site into at least the 7th to 8th centuries (*ibid*, 129, 397). More recently, evaluation (Saunders 2001) at Knapp Farm, around 400m to the southwest, recorded a range of features including walling and floor surfaces (SHER 30403/30406), which has produced Roman pottery dating to the 1st to 3rd centuries (*ibid*, 10-12). Roman ceramic building materials were also recorded, including a fragment of box-flue tile from one of the walls (*ibid*, 10, 20).

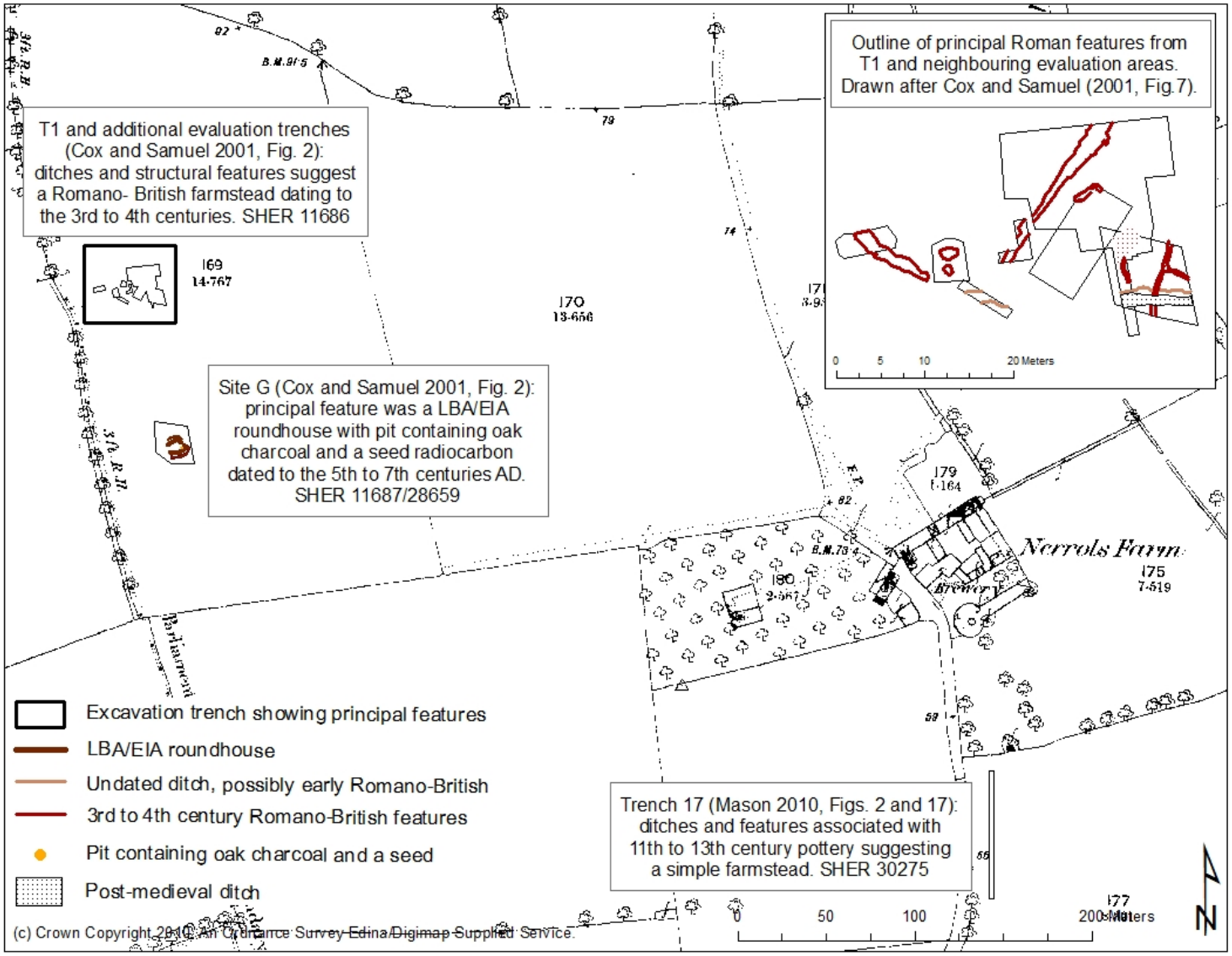


Figure 16.7. The location of the Romano-British farmstead at Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine, in relation to the evidence for possible post-Roman occupation and the 11th to 13th century farmstead preceding the current farm complex, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author after Cox and Samuel (2001, Figs. 2 and 7) and Mason (2010, Figs. 2 and 17). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

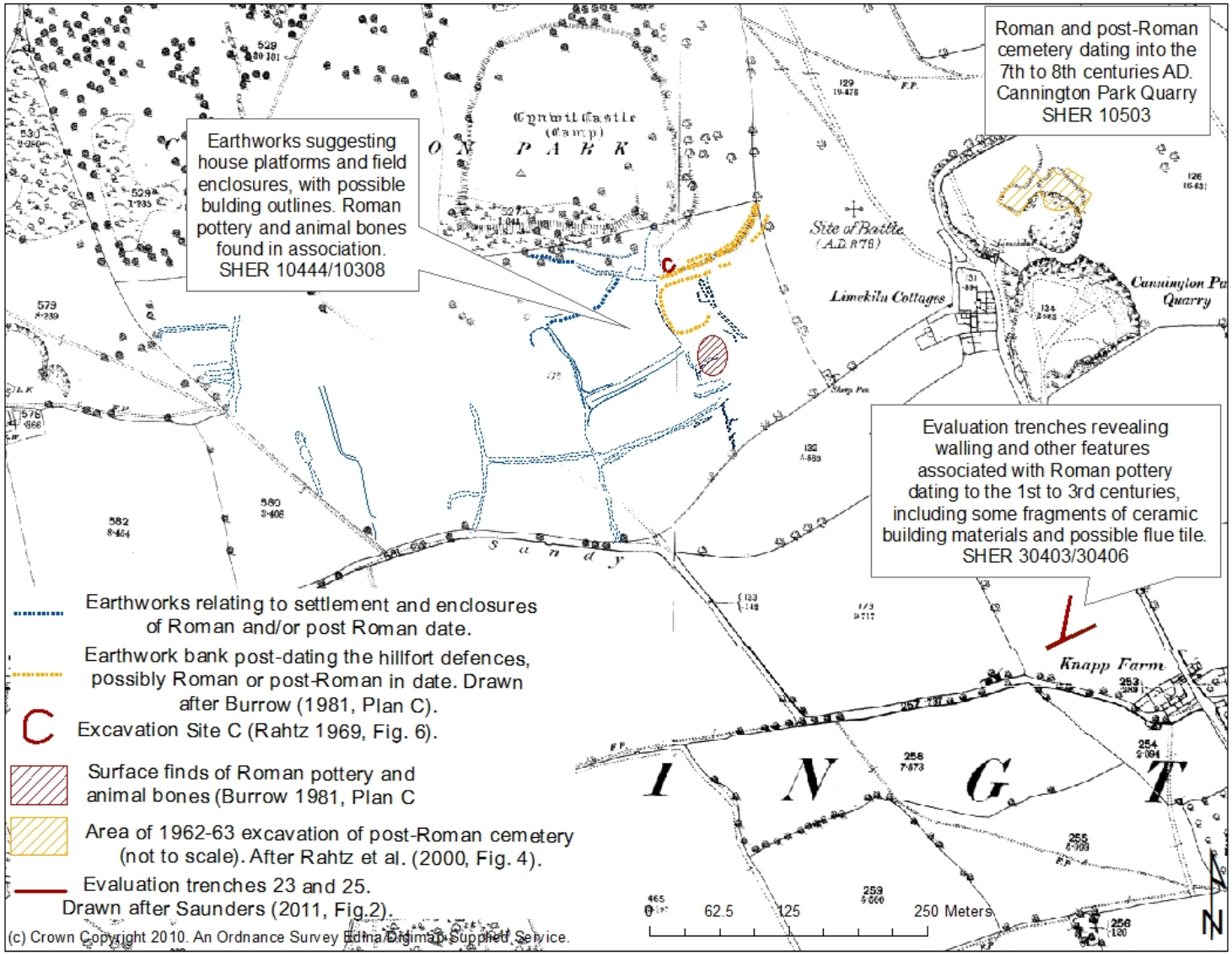


Figure 16.8. The location of possible Roman and post-Roman settlement at Cannington Park in relation to the Iron Age hillfort and the Roman and post-Roman cemetery, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using Burrow (1981, Plan C), Rahtz (1969, Fig. 2), Rahtz et al. (2000, Fig. 4), Saunders (2011, Fig. 2) and the Somerset HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Whilst the relationship of the later settlement to the hillfort is still poorly understood, the wider evidence at Cannington Park suggests potential settlement continuity into at least the 8th century. The area of Roman settlement is situated on well-drained brown earths *c*. 550m to 750m north and northwest of the Domesday vills of Withiel and Cannington, indicating a potential shift of settlement southwards by the 11th century (**Fig. 16.8**). Looking at the evidence for Roman settlement at Cannington Park in its wider landscape context, it further appears that the NNW-SSE alignment of settlement and field enclosures is closely respected by many of the historic field boundaries and trackways at Knapp Farm, as shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map (**Fig. 16.9**). This adds yet another strand to the argument for Roman and early medieval landscape continuity at Cannington Park, which, although aspects of settlement shift and changes in landuse may be observed during this period, appears clearly influenced by the pattern of underlying Roman settlement. Settlement

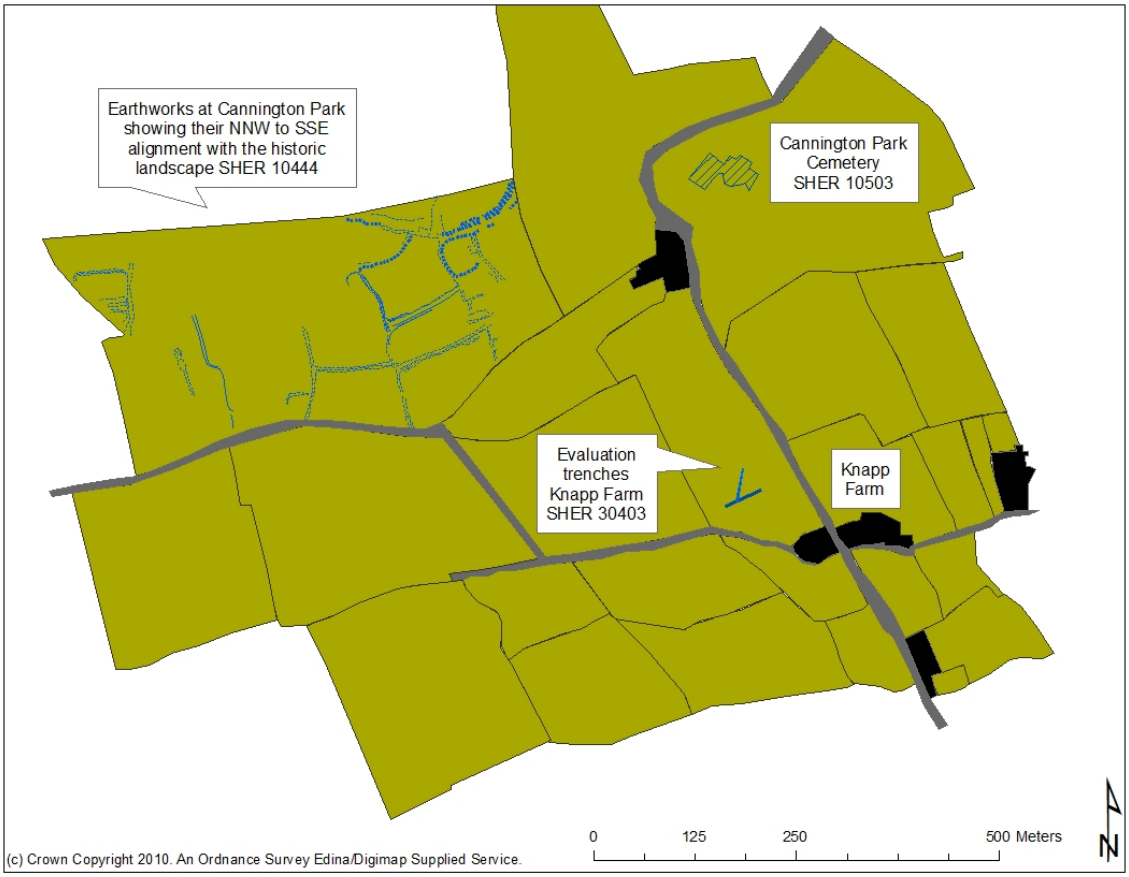


Figure 16.9. The relationship of the earthworks at Cannington Park and the historic fieldscape at Knapp Farm, Cannington, both of which suggest a NNW to SSE alignment. Historic landscape drawn from the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Earthworks drawn after Burrow (1981, Plan C). Additional information drawn from Rahtz* et al. *(2000, Fig. 4) and Saunders (2011, Fig. 2). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

processes and relationships on the Vale of Taunton Deane between the 7th to 9th centuries are impossible to quantify, as only the Roman settlement at Stoneage Barton (SHER 44931) demonstrates any dating evidence for this period, as discussed in Chapter 14 (p 354). The evidence for Roman settlement associated with 10th to 11th century occupation is marginally higher, however, with seven Roman settlements, 16% of the total and largely of lower status, associated with 10th to 11th century pottery (see **Table 16.1**). Furthermore, fifteen Roman settlements, 35% of the total, are situated within 500m of a Domesday vill, with 18% of Roman settlement situated within 500m of a parish church (see **Table 16.1**). Whether these relationships reflect potential continuity from the late Roman period, or resettlement by the 10th to 11th centuries, remains inconclusive, however, as none of these Roman settlements currently indicate any evidence for occupation between these periods. Nonetheless, as suggested above, the broader distribution of Roman settlement demonstrating a potential relationship with the 10th to 11th century settlement landscape clearly favours the better-drained loams over clay along the Tone Valley and the western margins of the Somerset Levels (see **Fig. 16.6**).

By the 11th century the Vale of Taunton Deane was characterised by a highly dispersed settlement landscape consisting of numerous small farms and hamlets surrounded by irregular open fields. Where Domesday vills suggests a relationship with the underlying late Roman settlement pattern, this is also largely across the better-drained loam over clay soils, with the broader evidence for Domesday settlement indicating that these fertile soils were densely populated and farmed by the 11th century (see Chapter 14, **Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**). From the results elsewhere in Somerset, as well as for Norfolk and Kent, it might be anticipated that these soils saw greater potential continuity of Roman settlement between the 5th to 11th centuries, with the more limited relationship between Roman and 11th century occupation on the wetter clays reflecting potential resettlement by this point. Current evidence, however, cannot quantify these hypotheses with any certainty.

Summary

The evidence for dateable Roman settlement on the Vale of Taunton Deane suggests the *pays* was well settled during the Roman period, with the

distribution of settlement predominately favouring the fertile loams and loam over clay soils along the low lying Tone valley and the western margins of the Somerset Levels. There is currently very limited evidence for continuing occupation into the 5th to 6th centuries and, as a result, neither the extent of any potential Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, during this period can be realistically quantified. Nonetheless, where no relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement is currently indicated, this is largely across the wetter loam over clay and alluvial soils, suggesting that these soils saw the greatest potential discontinuity at some point during the 5th to 11th centuries.

Likewise, where a relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement is suggested, this is largely across the better-drained loams and loam over clay soils of the *pays.* Although the evidence, to date, cannot confidently distinguish between potential continuity or resettlement by the 10th to 11th centuries, it does suggest that these soils were more likely to have seen the greatest potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, with the wetter soils being more likely to have seen resettlement during this period. These trends are observed elsewhere in Somerset as well as in parts of Norfolk and Kent. The large numbers of Domesday vills recorded for the Vale of Taunton Deane are widely distributed, reflecting a typically dispersed settlement character by the 11th century. Although potential biases in archaeological fieldwork should not be discounted, where these indicate potential Roman origins, this is also largely across the better drained loam over clay soils, with their distribution also respecting the Tone Valley and the western margins of the Somerset Levels. This reinforces the hypothesis that these soils are potentially where any Roman settlement continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries might have occurred.

The Blackdown Hills

Settlement data

Just five Roman settlements are currently recorded for the Blackdown Hills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of early medieval settlement, and the results illustrated below (**Table 16.3**: **Fig. 16.10**).

Table 16.3 shows the percentages of Roman settlements recorded for the Blackdown Hills, relative to post-Roman occupation, parish churches, Domesday vills and manors. Table 16.4 shows the percentage of Domesday vills for the Blackdown Hills, relative to their association with Roman settlement.

Table 16.3: The Blackdown Hills

Total number of Roman settlements 5	Number				Percentage of Total			
	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery	Roman villa	Other Romanised settlement	Lower status settlement	Roman cemetery
Roman settlements demonstrating no relationship to the early medieval settlement pattern								
Roman settlements having post-Roman occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having a post-Roman cemetery within 500m								
Roman settlements having just post-Roman occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having both 5th to 7th and 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having just 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m								
Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	1				20%			
Roman settlements having just 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	1				20%			
Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	1		2		20%		40%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	1		2		20%		40%	
Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	3		2		60%		40%	

Table 16.4: The Blackdown Hills

Total number of Domesday vills recorded	10	Number	Percentage of total
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation but no evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		1	10%
Domesday vills with archaeological evaluation and with evidence of Roman occupation within 500m		2	20%
Domesday vills having chance finds reflecting possible Roman occupation within 500m		2	20%
Domesday Vills demonstrating evidence of Roman occupation through either archaeological evaluation or chance recovery of material artefacts	Roman villa within 500m	1	10%
	Romanised settlement within 500m	0	0%
	Lower status settlement within 500m	2	20%
	Roman cemetery within 500m within 500m	0	0%
	Roman town within 500m	0	0%
	Roman findspot within 500m	1	10%
Total of Domesday vills having probable or possible evidence of Roman origins		4	40%

Ten Domesday vills are recorded for the Blackdown Hills. These have been assessed on their relationship to patterns of Roman settlement and the results are tabulated above (**Table 16.4**).

Soils data

All five Roman settlements, and ten Domesday vills, are located on typical argillic brown earths in the southeast of the *pays* (**Fig. 16.10**). Whilst this demonstrates that these better-drained loam over clay soils were favoured for settlement during the Roman and early medieval periods, over the wetter gleyed soils on the high slopes to the northwest it reveals nothing about trends in settlement patterns and relationships during these periods, relative to soils.

Discussion

With such a small dataset of Roman settlement for the Blackdown Hills there is little that can usefully be said about the real extent of Roman occupation across the *pays*, or its potential relationship to the early medieval settlement landscape. Of interest is that of the five Roman settlements recorded, three are possible Roman villas, two of which, South Chard (SHER 53159) and Whitestaunton (SHER 53262), suggest clear dating into the 4th century. The two remaining Roman settlements both suggest lower status occupation, with one site, at Chard (SHER 15436), currently indicating 2nd to 3rd century dating, and the other, at Winsham (SHER 54806), having no clear dating at present. Both sites, however, have only limited evidence for occupation, to date, and these observations may change as more comes to light.

Although there is currently no material evidence from the Blackdown Hills for occupation between the 5th to 9th centuries, three of the Roman settlements (60%) are situated within 500m of a Domesday vill, with the possible villa at Whitestaunton also associated with 10th to 11th century pottery (**Fig. 16.11**). Unfortunately, the Roman remains at Whitestaunton were poorly excavated and recorded in the late 19th century (see Elton 1883, 98-103), with the standing walls subsequently ‘restored’ and incorporated into the ornamental manor gardens (Wessex Archaeology 2004, 8). The buildings recorded during later excavation clearly suggested a Roman bathhouse of 3rd to 4th century date,

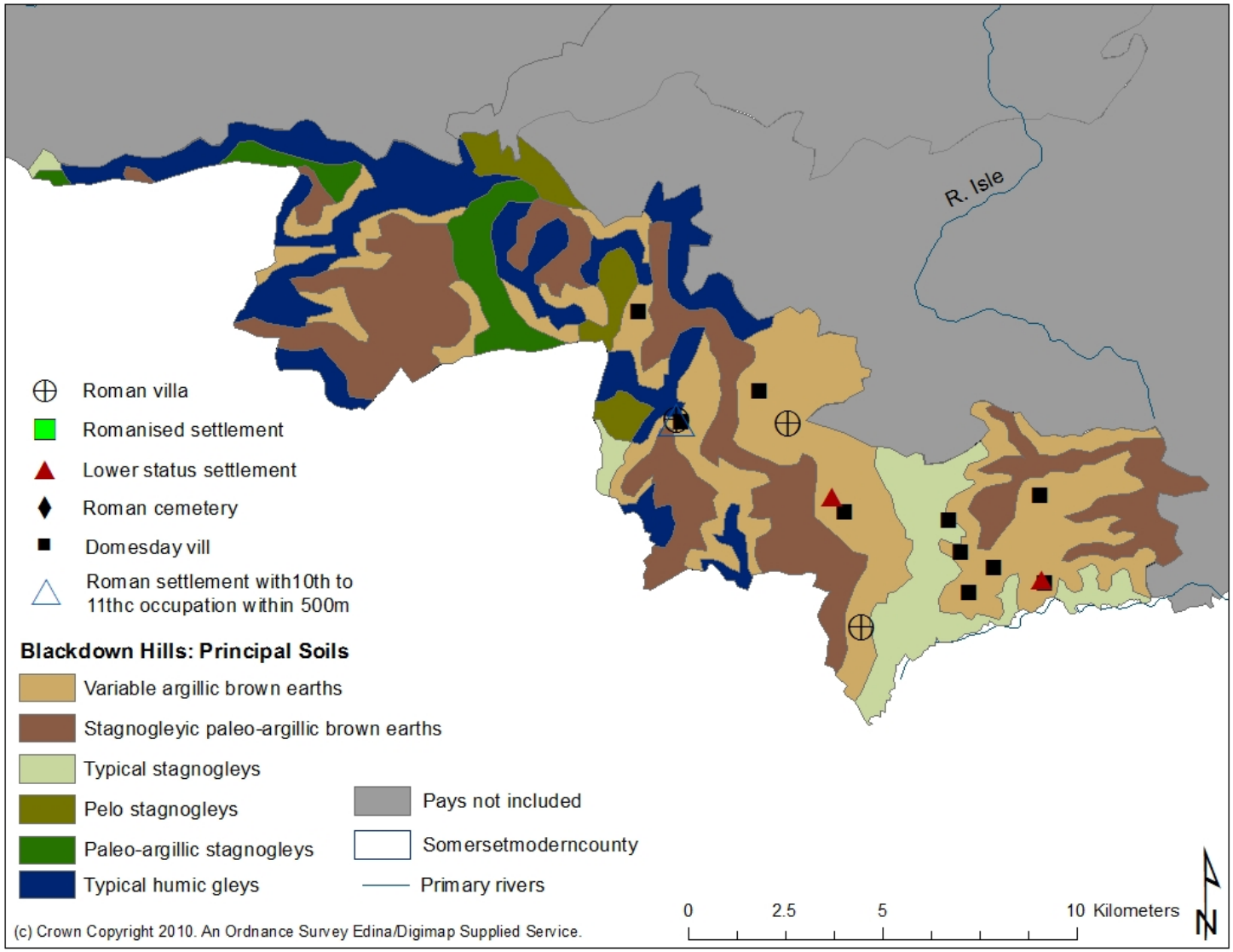


Figure 16.10. The distribution of Roman settlement on the Blackdown Hills showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to Domesday vills and the primary soil types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

situated at the head of a small stream valley (*ibid*, 8). No evidence for further buildings or a villa complex at Whitestaunton is currently known, and the site has been the subject of variable interpretation (*ibid*, 5). Nonetheless, the bathhouse is situated within 100m of the Domesday church and manor house and 10th century pottery (SHER 14497) is recorded from the churchyard. If the bathhouse is associated with a Roman villa, it seems feasible this would be situated somewhere in the vicinity of the Domesday settlement, even though certain evidence for this remains to be shown. Even with the absence of interim occupation evidence, the proximous relationship of the Roman buildings to the Domesday church and manor would appear to reflect some degree of settlement continuity at Whitestaunton between the 5th to 11th centuries, even if changes in function and status occurred during this period.

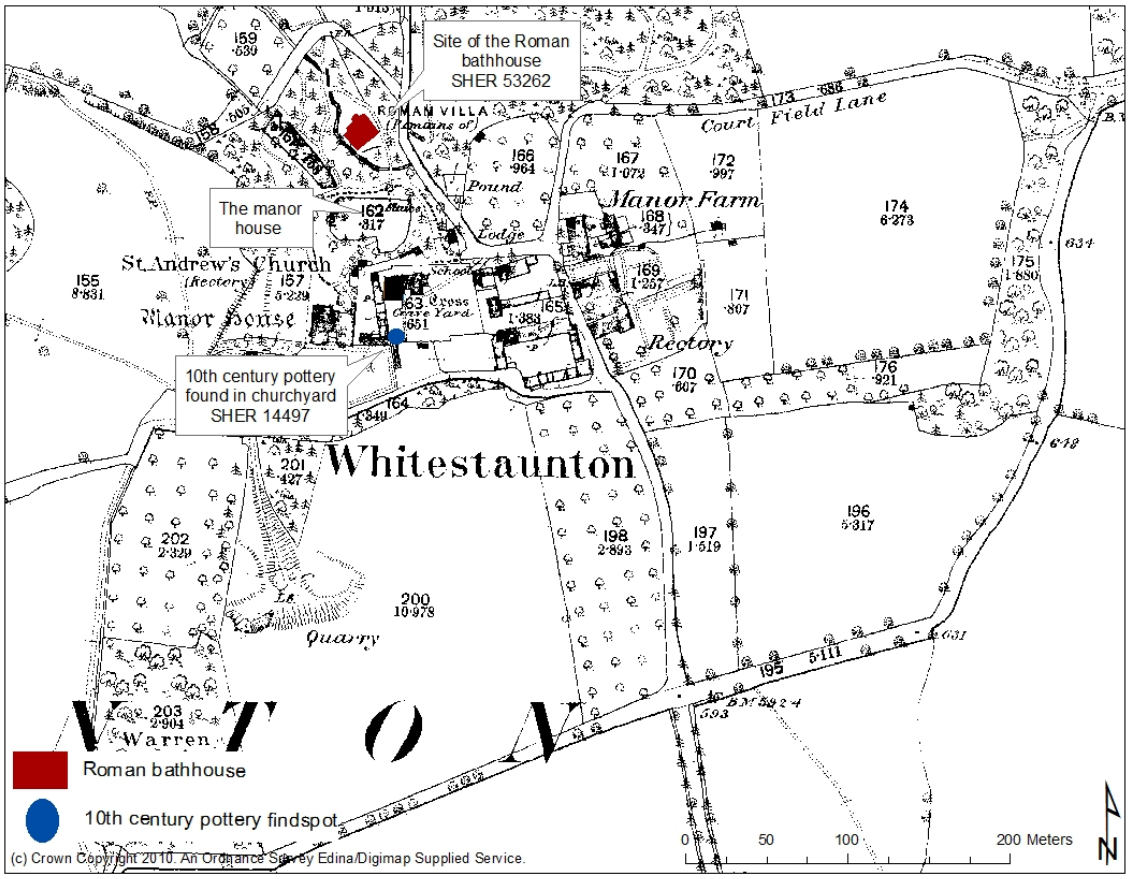


Figure 16.11. The location of the Roman bathhouse and possible villa at Whitestaunton in relation to the 11th century Domesday manor and parish church, shown against the OS 1st Edition 1:2500 historic map. Compiled and drawn by the author using Wessex Archaeology (2004) and the Somerset HER. Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

Of the ten Domesday vills currently recorded for the Blackdown Hills, four (40%) suggest potential Roman origins (**Table 16.4**). Clearly, with such a small sample size, it is impossible to say how far this ratio accurately reflects that of the wider *pays*. Nonetheless, it is interesting to observe the level of suggested relationship between the patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement for the *pays*, given the evidence currently available. All five Roman settlements are located within 500m of an early medieval manor and within areas of associated open or common field, except for Whitestaunton, where the field pattern suggests land farmed in severalty (**Fig. 16.11**). Whether this can be said to reflect potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, however, or resettlement by the 10th to 11th centuries, remains to be fully ascertained.

Taking the cumulative evidence for Domesday settlement into account (see Chapter 14, **Figs. 14.6 - 14.8**), the Blackdown Hills may have remained relatively sparsely occupied by the 11th century, although there is some evidence for the development of nucleated settlement and common field agriculture in the southeast of the *pays* by the later medieval period, broadly across the same relatively well-drained loam over clay soils favoured during the Roman period and into the 5th to 11th centuries, as mentioned above. There is currently no evidence to indicate whether the highly dispersed settlement pattern across the remainder of the *pays* by the 11th century, however, bears any relationship to the late Roman settlement pattern.

The Brendon and Quantock Hills

The settlement results for the Brendon and Quantock Hills are discussed together here, as the dataset for both is too small to merit independent treatment. Two Roman settlements are recorded for each *pays*, discounting the possible contenders that currently lack dating evidence (**Fig. 16.12**). For the Brendon Hills, a late Roman farmstead (SHER 28438) is recorded at Maundown, Wiveliscombe, in addition to a high status Romanised building (SHER 35065) associated with iron smelting at Syndercombe, Clatworthy. Although this latter currently suggests a 1st to 2nd century date (Bray 2006, 171), it is situated *c*. 450m southwest of the Domesday vill of Syndercombe, now submerged beneath Clatworthy Reservoir.

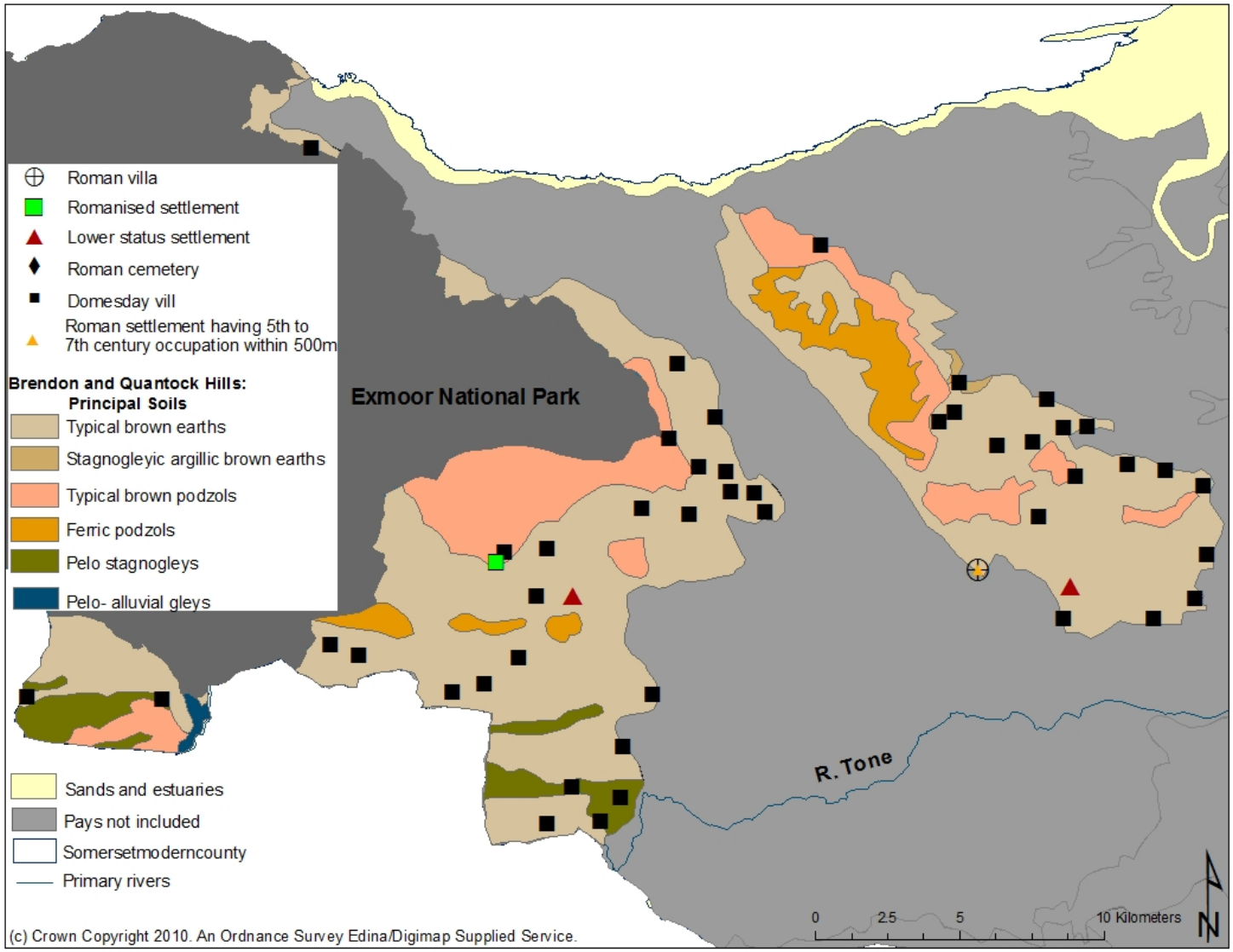


Figure 16.12. Current distribution of Roman settlement and Domesday vills on the Brendon and Quantock Hills, showing suggested settlement hierarchy in relation to the primary soil types for the pays. Settlement data compiled and mapped by the author. Soils types redrawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

For the Quantock Hills, a Roman villa (SHER 17298) was recorded at Yarford during excavation of a cropmark enclosure (King 2004b, 2). The small corridor villa is situated on well-drained typical brown earths on the lower southwestern slopes of the *pays*, where it superseded a 2nd century phase of modification and modest Romanisation by the 3rd to 4th centuries (*ibid*, 7). Typical of the history of many Roman villas, there appears to have been a decline in living standards during the mid to late 4th century, with a phase of inferior construction overlying the mosaic floor in the main living room. Areas of burning and late 4th century deposits in this room potentially reflect workshop activity rather than habitation, which, based on the stratigraphic evidence, feasibly continued into the early 5th century (*ibid*, 20). In contrast, a second enclosure at Volis Hill, Kingston St Mary (SHER 15910) revealed evidence of early Roman occupation but appears to have been abandoned during the mid 2nd century (Thorpe 2002, 139).

Clearly, this limited evidence for Roman settlement on the Brendon and Quantock Hills offers no real discourse on aspects of potential continuity, or discontinuity, across these *pays* between the 5th to 11th centuries. Even so, there is a suggestion, however minimal, that some relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement existed, even if this is impossible to quantify at present. Where examples such as Syndercombe or Yarford may be found, however, others may yet be shown. The distribution of Domesday vills, combined with the evidence for Domesday population and plough team density (Chapter 14**, Figs. 14.6 and 14.7**), suggests the relatively well-drained loamy soils of these two *pays* supported moderate occupation by the 11th century, typically comprised of small farms and hamlets associated with small open fields and closes. It seems feasible that, as evaluation of these *pays* progresses, the relationship between these and the antecedent Roman settlement landscape will be increasingly revealed.

Chapter 17. Somerset: Final Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Evaluation of results

The settlement data for Somerset has been quantified for individual *pays*, excluding the Brendon and Quantock Hills, due to their small sample size. Comparative analysis of the results will attempt to explore how far anything useful can be said about the settlement trends and processes indicated for Somerset between the 5th to 11th centuries, and how far these can be related to those observed for Norfolk and Kent during this period. The results for Somerset are given as percentages relative to their respective populations, with standard deviation shown to 1σ. As for both Norfolk and Kent, sample size reflects the combined total of settlement and cemeteries, irrespective of dating.

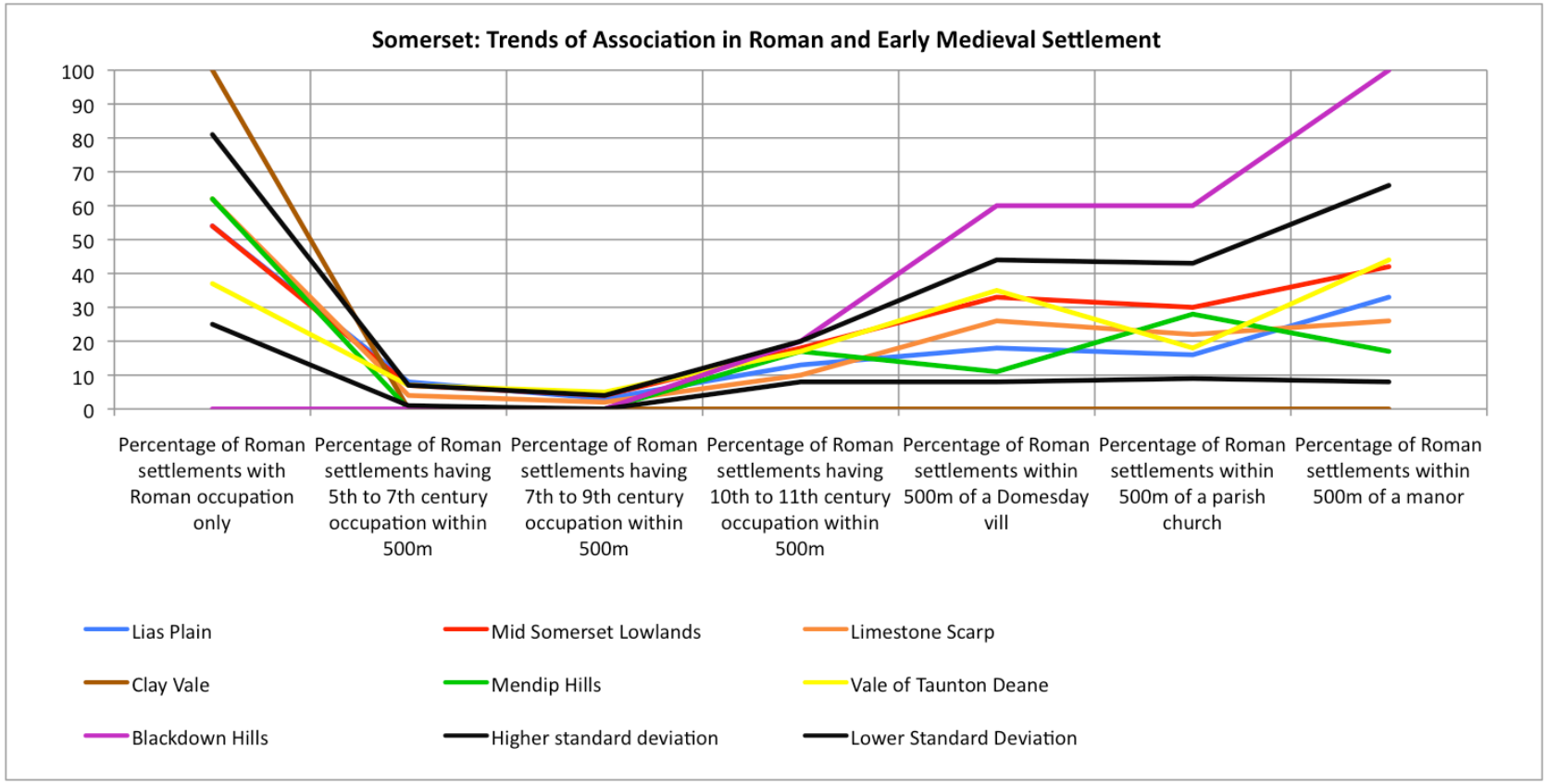
Not surprisingly, the limited evidence for 5th to 10th century settlement in Somerset, combined with some relatively small sample sizes for Roman settlement, particularly the Clay Vale and the Blackdown Hills, has resulted in some extreme metrics. The Clay Vale, for example, currently indicates no relationship at all between Roman and early medieval settlement patterns, whereas the Blackdown Hills indicates 100% relationship between the two (**Table 17.1; Fig. 17.1**). Clearly, until further data is available, it is impossible to know how far these statistics are representative for these two *pays*, and they will not be discussed further here.

For the remaining *pays*, the ratio of Roman settlement associated with 5th to 7th century occupation demonstrates relative parity for the Lias Plain, Mid Somerset Lowlands and the Vale of Taunton Deane, at 7-8%, compared to just 4% for the Limestone Scarp. The Lias Plain indicates the highest ratio, sitting marginally above the highest standard deviation (**Table 17.1; Fig. 17.1**). As might be expected, the ratios are generally lower than for Norfolk and Kent but, even so, demonstrate that where potential Roman settlement continuity can be suggested, this was more evident on the fertile loams and loam over clay soils of lowland Somerset than on the shallow calcareous and non-calcareous soils of the Limestone Scarp and the Mendip Hills. This is not dissimilar to Kent, but

Tables 17.1 and 17.2. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships for Somerset. Sample sizes for each *pays* are given, excluding the Brendon and Quantock Hills. The results are shown as percentages and the standard deviation for each relationship category has been calculated to one standard deviation, or 1σ, demonstrating 68% probability.

Somerset *Pays*	The Lias Plain	The Mid Somerset Lowlands	The Limestone Scarp	The Clay Vale	The Mendip Hills	The Vale of Taunton Deane	The Blackdown Hills	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of Roman settlements	67	108	49	5	18	43	5				
Percentage of Roman settlements having 5th to 7th century occupation within 500m	8%	7%	4%	0%	0%	7%	0%	4%	3	7%	1%
Percentage of Roman settlements having 7th to 9th century occupation within 500m	3%	4%	2%	0%	0%	5%	0%	2%	2	4%	0%
Percentage of Roman settlements having 10th to 11th century occupation within 500m	13%	18%	10%	0%	17%	17%	20%	14%	6	20%	8%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a Domesday vill	18%	33%	26%	0%	11%	35%	60%	26%	18	44%	8%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a parish church	16%	30%	22%	0%	28%	18%	60%	25%	17	42%	8%
Percentage of Roman settlements within 500m of a manor	33%	42%	26%	0%	17%	44%	100%	37%	29	66%	8%
Percentage of Roman settlements that demonstrate no relationship between the Roman and early medieval settlement patterns	54%	54%	62%	100%	62%	37%	0%	53%	28	81%	25%

Somerset *Pays*	The Lias Plain	The Mid Somerset Lowlands	The Limestone Scarp	The Clay Vale	The Mendip Hills	The Vale of Taunton Deane	The Blackdown Hills	Mean Percentage	Standard Deviation	Higher Percentage to one Standard Deviation	Lower Percentage to one Standard Deviation
Total number of Domesday vills	95	92	66	10	8	111	10				
Percentage of Domesday vills having Roman occupation within 500m	20%	39%	27%	0%	25%	16%	40%	24%	13	37%	11%



Sample size:

Lias Plain: 67

Mid Somerset Lowlands: 108

Limestone Scarp: 49

Clay Vale: 5

Mendip Hills: 18

Vale of Taunton Deane: 43

Figure 17.1. Line graph showing the relative percentages for trends of association in Roman and early medieval settlement across the Somerset* pays*, excluding the Brendon and Quantock Hills, due to small sample size. Higher and lower parameters of standard deviation are also shown to 1 sigma.

possibly contrasts slightly with Norfolk, where the lighter calcareous soils in the west, and the fertile loams in the east, potentially saw far greater settlement continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries compared to the heavier clays of the Boulder Clay Plateau and the West Norfolk Lowland. Nonetheless, as discussed above (Chapter 15, 381, 402; Chapter 16, 432), the wetter alluvial soils of inland Somerset did potentially see some extent of Roman settlement contraction, although this may have occurred between the 7th to 9th centuries, rather than the 5th to 7th centuries.

The ratio of Roman settlement associated with 7th to 9th century occupation demonstrates a range of between 2%, for the Limestone Scarp, and 5%, for the Vale of Taunton Deane. Although this latter sits just above the higher standard deviation, the overall range is too minimal to infer any real trends in regional variation. The relative ratios of Roman settlement associated with 10th to 11th century occupation all fall within one standard deviation, with the Limestone Scarp again demonstrating the lowest ratio, at just 10%, compared to the Lias Plain at 13% and the Mid Somerset Lowlands, Vale of Taunton Deane and the Mendip Hills at 17-18% (**Table 17.1; Fig. 17.1**).

More meaningful comparison is possibly made from the relationship of Roman settlement to Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. The ratio of Roman settlement associated with a Domesday vill ranges between 12% for the Mendip Hills and 35% for the Vale of Taunton Deane. The Lias Plain also returns a comparatively low ratio for this category, at just 13%: one possible explanation for this is the shift of settlement observed for this *pays* by the 10th to 11th centuries, away from the wetter low lying soils towards drier ground. Across the slightly elevated ground of the Mid Somerset Lowlands, the ratio of Roman settlement associated with a Domesday vill is much higher, at 33%, possibly due, in part, to the sheer density of Roman settlement recorded for this *pays*, and the potential for greater settlement stability on the better-drained loamy clay soils. Possibly for this reason, too, the *pays* returns a comparatively high ratio of Roman settlement associated with a parish church, suggesting that the pattern of nucleated settlement across the Mid Somerset Lowlands by the 10th to 11th centuries partly respected that of underlying Roman settlement: this conforms to Leech's (1977, 177; 1982b, 239) hypothesis on Roman and early medieval settlements relationships in Somerset. In contrast, the lower ratios for Roman

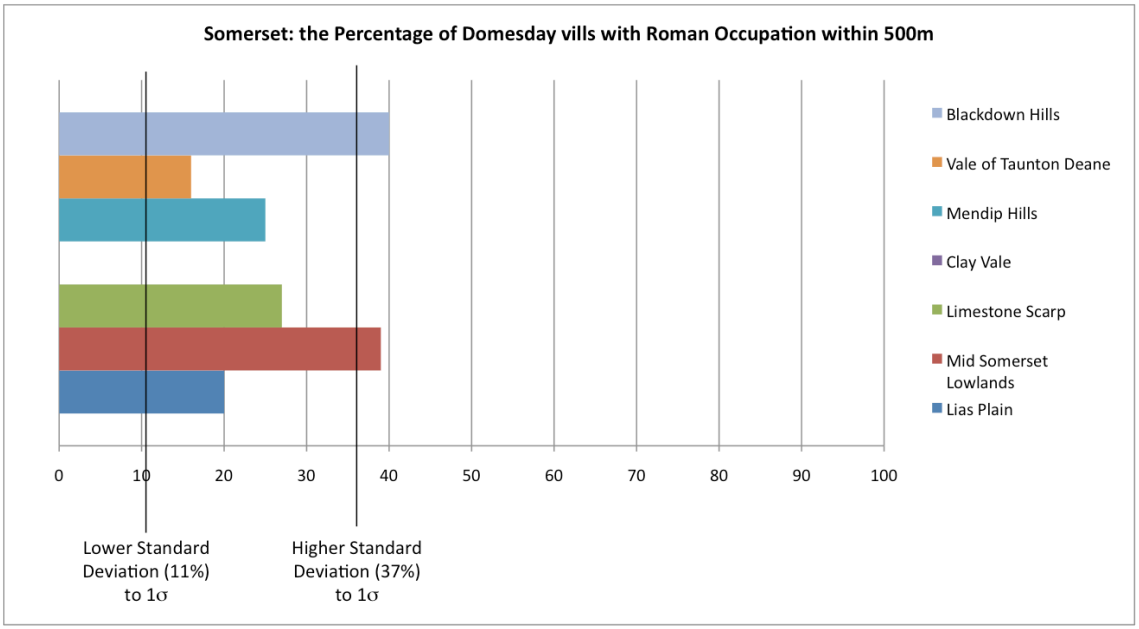


Figure 17.2. Bar chart showing the percentage of Domesday vills in Somerset suggesting possible Roman origins. The vertical black lines indicate lower and higher range of standard deviation to 1σ.

settlement associated with a parish church on the Limestone Scarp and the Vale of Taunton Deane may partly reflect their dispersed settlement character by the 10th to 11th centuries. Again, the Lias Plain returns the lowest ratio in this category, at just 16% (**Table 17.1; Fig. 17.1**).

As for both Norfolk and Kent, the ratios of Roman settlement associated with a manor generally demonstrate an increase in value, with the exception of the Mendip Hills (**Table 17.1; Fig. 17.1**). The relationship between Roman settlement and manors in Somerset has not been as thoroughly discussed as for Norfolk and Kent due to the comparative lack of documented manors, beyond those assumed by the presence of a Domesday vill. Nonetheless, the metric data indicates a greater relationship between Roman settlement and manors on the fertile lowland soils compared with the poorer soils of the Limestone Scarp and the Mendip Hills, although whether this reflects potential continuity of place between the 5th to 11th centuries, or resettlement during this period, remains to be qualified.

Retrogressive analysis of Domesday vills for potential Roman origins has returned somewhat contrasting results to those indicated above (**Table 17.2; Fig. 17.2**). This may be partly due to differences in early medieval settlement character and bias in the scope of archaeological fieldwork. The Vale of

Taunton Deane, for example, has a considerable number of Domesday vills, largely reflecting a highly dispersed pattern of farms and hamlets that have probably seen limited, if any, evaluation. This contrasts with the Mid Somerset Lowlands, for example, where the, still notable, number of Domesday vills are more closely distributed, many having formed nucleated villages by the 10th to 11th centuries and with continuing development prompting ongoing evaluation and research. The Vale of Taunton Deane correspondingly demonstrates the lowest correlation between Domesday vills and associated Roman occupation, at 16%, but the Lias Plain is only slightly higher, at 20% (**Table 17.2; Fig. 17.2**), despite the fact that this *pays*, too, was densely settled during the Roman period and has seen considerable archaeological fieldwork. This may, however, reiterate the conjectured shift of settlement across the Lias Plain during the 5th to 11th centuries, away from the wetter soils towards drier ground.

Somerset* pays*: regional variation and soils evidence

Roman settlement in Somerset demonstrates a marked difference in form and status between the east and the west of the county. The current evidence for dateable Roman settlement as a whole, however, suggests that the lowland loams and loam over clay soils were most densely populated during the Roman period, compared to the lighter calcareous soils of the Limestone Scarp to the east or the poorer acid soils or heavier clays of the upland *pays*. Whilst the relationship of Roman settlement to river valleys is not so clear in Somerset as it is in Norfolk and Kent, there is some suggestion for this, particularly observed along stretches of the Rivers Yeo, Parrett and Tone.

As demonstrated above, the current evidence for post-Roman occupation in Somerset tells us little about the extent of potential settlement abandonment during the late to post-Roman period, although where potential settlement continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries can be suggested, this is largely across the better-drained loams and loams over clay soils of the lowland *pays*. Although few, if any, Roman settlements in Somerset confidently demonstrate a continuous chronology of occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries, there is some indication for this, at sites such as Beerway Farm, Shapwick, Brent Knoll and Cheddar, for example, all on the Mid Somerset Lowlands. How far such evidence extrapolates out across the wider county, particularly in regard to the

disparities of settlement form and status between east and west, remains to be determined, but some broader trends in settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries can be surmised from the evidence currently available.

The lowland areas of central Somerset, which saw the densest Roman occupation, suggest a potential continuity of Roman settlement into the 5th to 7th centuries, after which a change in water levels, or a backing up of the river systems, may have prompted a shift away from the wetter alluvial soils of the river valleys and floodplains to drier ground. This is particularly observable at sites such as Ilchester Mead and Hinton Mill Roman villas, for example, or at some settlements along the margins of the Somerset Levels, such as Bawdrip, Crandon Bridge or Wedmore, for example, where the relationship of Roman settlement and Domesday vills potentially indicates a shift to higher ground by the 10th to 11th centuries. In western Somerset, too, there is some suggestion for a potential shift of settlement along the floodplain of the River Tone between the 5th to 11th centuries, although there is currently less evidence for the precise chronology or extent of this. These observations do, however, have some parallels in parts of Kent (see Chapters 10-13).

As observed previously by Leech (1977, 177; 1982b, 239), a consolidation around surviving Roman settlements can certainly be suggested by the 10th to 11th centuries for some villages in eastern Somerset, such as Castle Cary, for example, where Roman settlement appears to underlie the Domesday manor and Norman castle complex, or Shapwick, where Roman settlement is recorded within 350m of the parish church. There is also, however, some suggestion for a further dislocation between the Roman and early medieval settlement pattern in places by the 10th to 11th centuries, again most noticeably in eastern Somerset. On the Limestone Scarp, for example, there is evidence for Roman through to 10th century occupation equidistant between the two Domesday vills of Abbas Combe and Horsington. Equally, at Buckland Dinham, also on the Limestone Scarp, Roman settlement associated with a post-Roman cemetery is situated broadly equidistant between the Domesday vills of Buckland Dinham and Great Elm. Three of these vills, Abbas Combe, Buckland Dinham and Great Elm, have seen some degree of archaeological evaluation, yet none currently suggest Roman origins. Whilst Domesday vills are not a definitive representation of 10th to 11th century settlement (see Chapter 4, 63), this trend, however slight at

present, may reflect processes of settlement nucleation by this point that are not wholly determined by the antecedent Roman settlement pattern.

Furthermore, owing to the lack of material evidence for occupation between the 5th to 10th centuries in Somerset, where Roman settlement appears associated with 10th to 11th century occupation, it cannot conclusively indicate either potential continuity or resettlement by this period. Certainly some resettlement might be anticipated by the 10th to 11th centuries, given the evidence from Norfolk and Kent, particularly across the poorer or wetter soils, but the evidence for this in Somerset remains poorly understood at present. The ratios of Roman settlement to Domesday vills in Somerset are generally higher than for either Norfolk or Kent, however, which cannot be wholly coincidental. Even given aspects of resettlement by the 10th to 11th centuries, a degree of potential settlement continuity in the pattern of Roman and early medieval settlement might be inferred, even if the precise extent of that remains to be quantified at present. The distribution of Domesday vills in Somerset also appears to suggest areas of new settlement and woodland across some areas of the county by the 11th century, however, particularly observable across parts of the Limestone Scarp and the Forest of Neroche in the Blackdown Hills, for example. In this, there are some similarities to the wooded parts of Kent, such as parts of the Chart Hills, Chalk Downs and the Weald.

In some contrast to Norfolk and Kent, where the results suggest the lighter soils potentially saw the greatest extent of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, such differentiation for the lighter and heavier soils in Somerset is less discernable (**Fig. 17.3**). Nonetheless, some interesting, if cautious, observations can be made. Contra to the evidence for both Norfolk and Kent, a greater extent of potential Roman settlement abandonment is currently indicated on the lighter soils of Somerset (**Fig. 17.4**). Where Roman settlement appears to indicate potential continuity only as far as the 5th to 7th centuries, this is currently greater on the heavier soils of Somerset: this may partly reflect the conjectured shift of settlement away from some wetter soils somewhere between the 7th to 9th centuries: the ratios of Roman settlement associated with material evidence of 7th to 11th century occupation (excluding Domesday vills or parish churches) also appear greater on the lighter soils. The association between Roman settlement and Domesday vills and parish churches is,

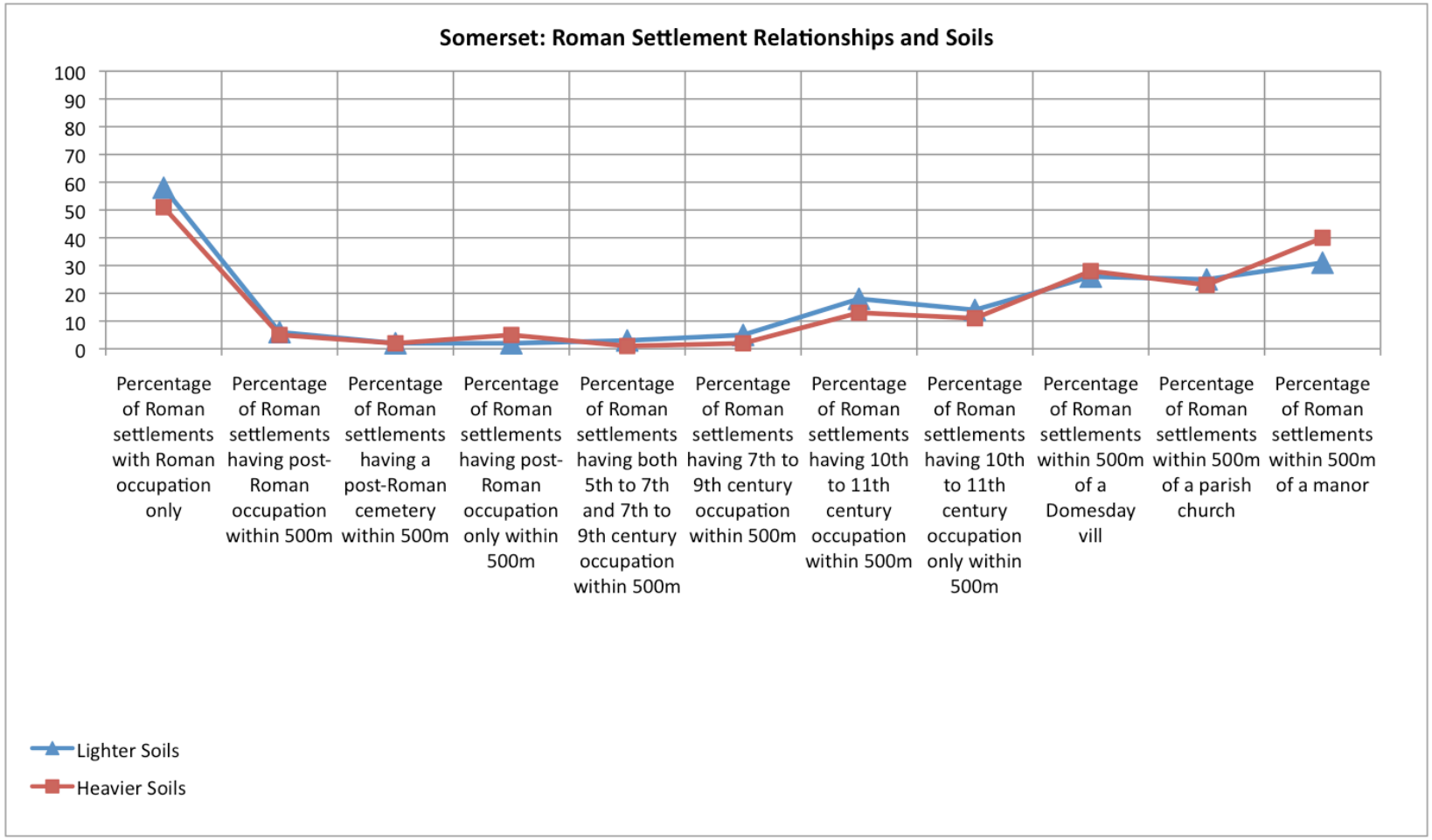


Figure 17.3. Line graph showing the relative percentages for Roman settlement relationships across Somerset relative to areas of lighter and heavier soils. This data collates the results across all the Somerset *pays* used for this research and presents them as relative percentages to the sample size for each category. Sample sizes are shown above.

however, greater on the heavier soils (**Figs. 17.3 and 17.5**). This may partly reflect processes of settlement nucleation by the 10th to 11th century, which appear less determined by the antecedent Roman settlement pattern on the lighter soils of Somerset, as demonstrated on the Limestone Scarp, above, for example. It is not so clear how this trend relates to settlement processes by the 10th to 11th century on the heavier loam over clay soils of western Somerset, however, where the settlement pattern remained typically dispersed: while the comparatively low number of Domesday vills suggesting Roman origins on the Vale of Taunton Deane may indicate a shift, or expansion, of settlement by the 10th to 11th century, this may equally reflect a lack of fieldwork in this area.

The association between Roman settlement and manors in Somerset is also greatest on the heavier soils (**Fig. 17.3**): while it remains unclear how this relationship informs potential settlement continuity or resettlement in Somerset between the 5th to 11th centuries, the results nevertheless contrast with Norfolk and Kent, where the relationship between Roman settlement and manors is consistently greater for the lighter soils (Chapters 8, **Fig. 8.3** and 12, **Fig. 12.4**). For all three regional study areas, the analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships relative to lighter or heavier soils is acknowledged to be somewhat simplistic, and a finer grain of soils characterisation would undoubtedly assist more nuanced analysis. Nonetheless, even given the constraints of the settlement data for Somerset, it has been possible to suggest some hypotheses for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships that will hopefully profit future research as more data becomes available.

Conclusion

The relationship between Roman and early medieval settlement in Somerset has been quantitatively assessed to determine how far patterns of Roman settlement influenced those of the early medieval period, and to what extent the 11th century settlement pattern owed its origins to the Roman period. The principal aim for including Somerset as a regional case study has been to explore what can usefully be said about aspects of potential Roman settlement continuity, or discontinuity, for the majority of lowland western Britain, where material evidence for 5th to 10th century occupation remains lacking. The analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Somerset has

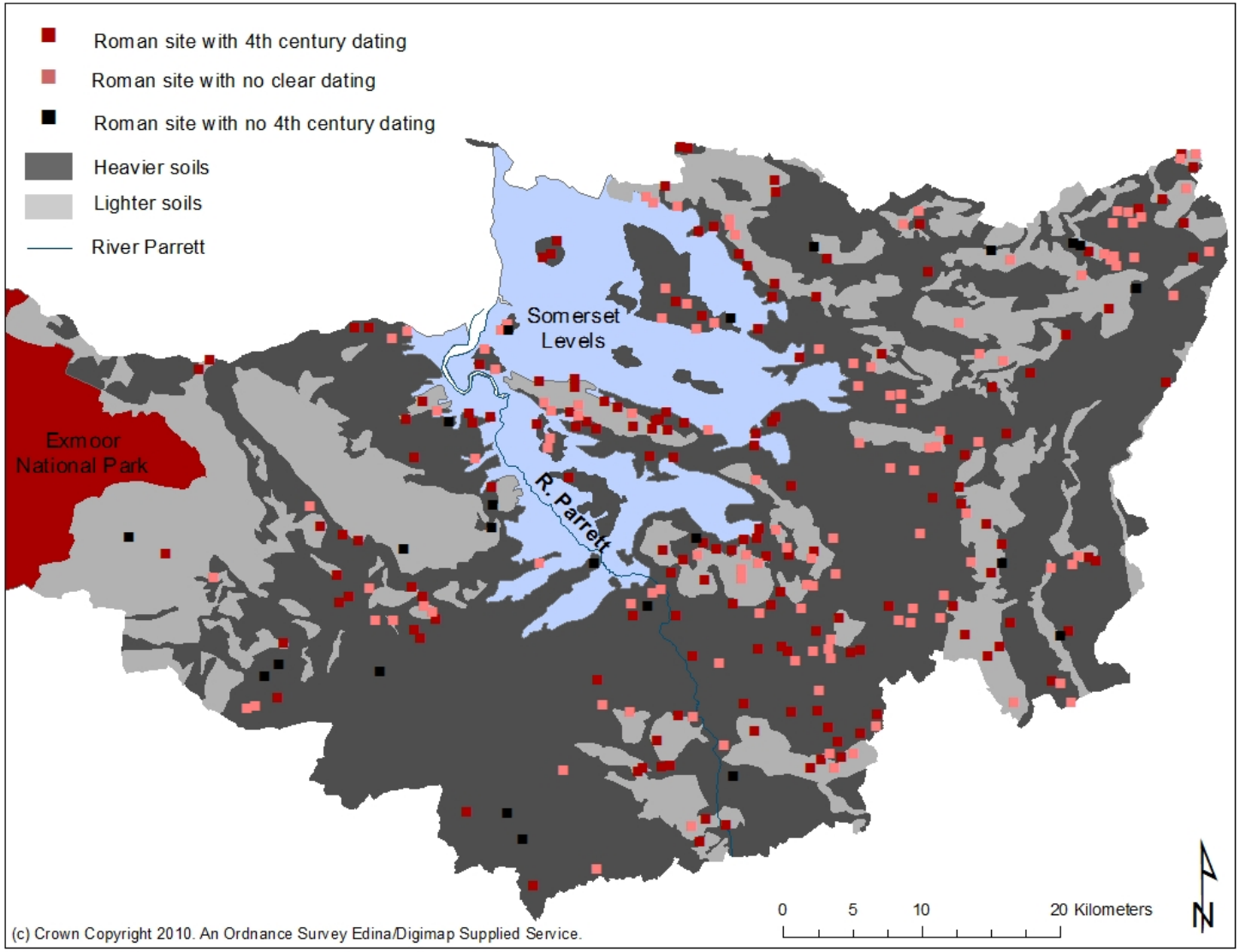


Figure 17.4. The distribution of Roman settlement in Somerset, relative to areas of lighter or heavier soils. Roman settlement data compiled by the author using the Somerset HER and distinguished by the presence or absence of C4 dating. Soils distribution drawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

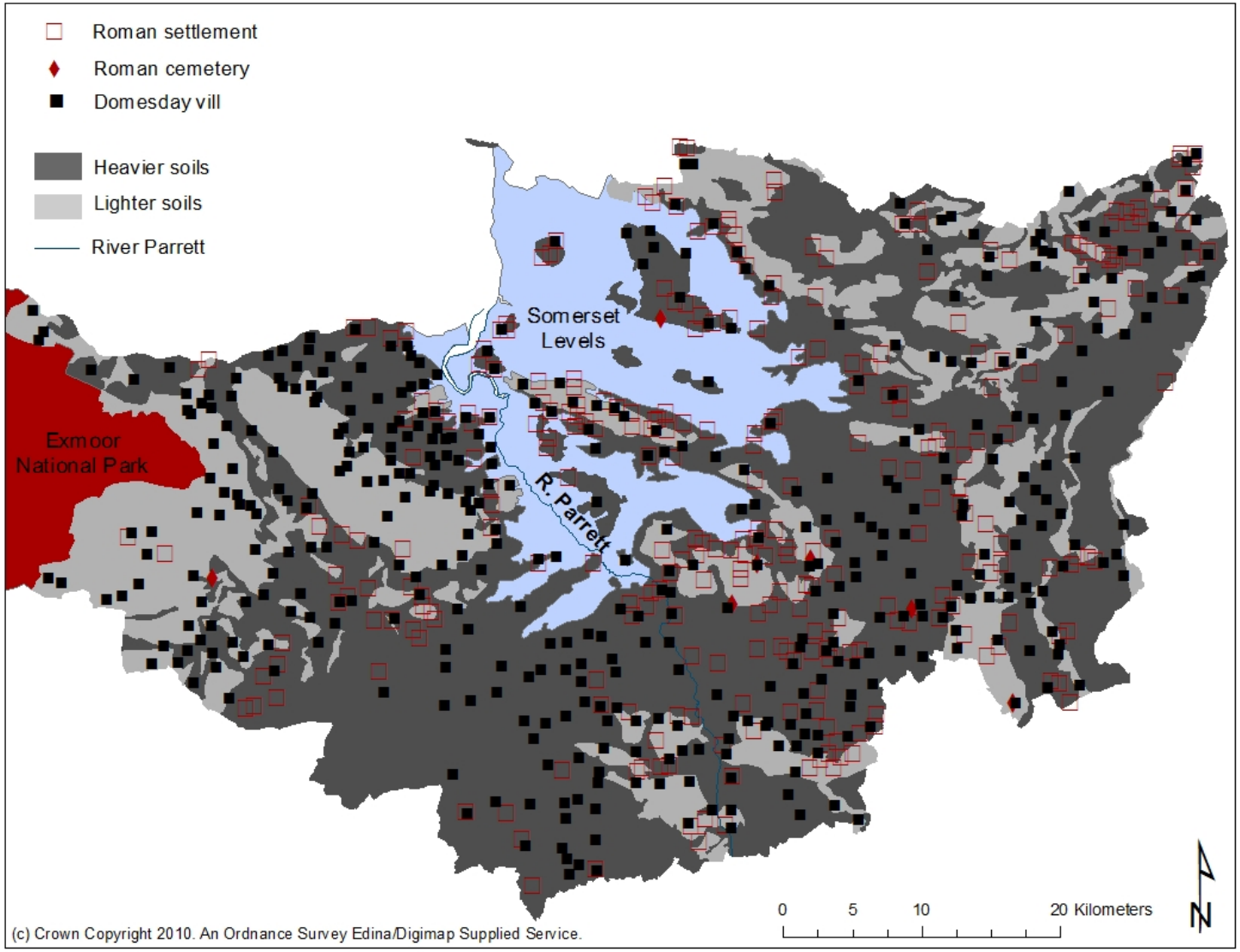


Figure 17.5. The distribution of Roman settlement and Domesday vills in Somerset, relative to areas of lighter or heavier soils. Roman settlement data compiled by the author using the Somerset HER and Domesday vills compiled using Thorn and Thorn (1982). Soils distribution drawn after the Soils Survey Map of England and Wales (1983). Digital mapping data supplied by Ordnance Survey Edina 'Digimap' services © Crown Copyright

clearly been challenged by this lack. Furthermore, identifying either overarching trends or regional variation in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships has been coloured by evident differences in Roman settlement form and status between eastern and western Somerset, and the possibility that these responded differently to the social circumstances of late Roman Britain.

Ultimately, it was not possible to clearly distinguish whether cultural differences between the dateable Roman settlement of eastern and western Somerset significantly impacted settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries. It has, however, been possible to identify some broad trends in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships across the county as a whole, with some evidence for regional variation, particularly in regard to potential shifts in settlement between the 7th to 9th and 9th to 11th centuries, and the possible factors for these. It has also been possible to show that some *pays* demonstrated distinct variation in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships, and that these may have been at least partly impacted by physical characteristics such as topography and soils.

As a whole, although the data for Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Somerset remains to be fully understood, current analysis has been able to confirm and quantify much of what is already surmised and relate this to wider national themes. Whilst the lack of dateable evidence has inevitably compromised the analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Somerset to some extent, the research results nonetheless offer a coherent framework of suggested settlement trends between these two periods in relation to the county's physical *pays*, that identifies points of both commonality and regional variation. Through comparison with the regionally distinct counties of Norfolk and Kent, it has been possible to relate the lesser evidence of Somerset to more widely visible settlement processes between the 5th to 11th centuries, allowing discourse on aspects of regional similarities and differences that may not otherwise have been apparent. Nonetheless, there is much scope for future research into Roman and early medieval relationships in Somerset, which might usefully build on the research presented here.

Part Five: Final Discussion and Conclusion
Chapter 18. Final Discussion

The Research Process

The research aims of this thesis have been to develop a method of spatial analysis that quantifies certain relationships in the patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement. The approach for this has been twofold: looking from the Roman period forwards to see how far patterns of Roman settlement suggest continuity, or discontinuity, into the 5th to 11th centuries and to what extent they may have influenced processes of settlement development during this period, and looking from the 11th century backwards to see how far patterns of 11th century settlement and the institution of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors suggest potential Roman origins. The nature and availability of material settlement evidence for the Roman and early medieval periods have varied across the three regional study areas of Norfolk, Kent and Somerset, as has the range of archaeological fieldwork. This has challenged certain aspects of interpreting settlement sites and regional settlement relationships for these periods, with some strands of research potentially more successful than others.

The development of the research method was based on assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships within a 500m radius. This parameter was established on the basis of fieldwalking surveys and excavation work, which suggested that settlement evidence within this parameter probably reflected one individual site, while settlement evidence beyond this parameter might reflect two, or more, separate sites (see Chapter 4, 66-67). It also allowed for a typically observed radius of settlement shift during the 5th to 11th centuries, as demonstrated at sites such as Mucking (Hamerow 1991; 1993), for example. On the whole this parameter worked well, although there were some interpretative issues that arose: it was not uncommon for a Roman settlement to be situated between 500-550m from a Domesday vill, parish church or manor, which excluded it from the metrics but may well reflect a relationship that was, nonetheless, discounted. Another issue particularly relevant to Norfolk, was where distinct concentrations of Roman pottery were situated about 400-450m apart but appeared, nonetheless, indicative of individual sites. This was

demonstrated across most of the study groups, but was particularly observed on the heavier soils, as at Fransham, for example (Rogerson 1995 and see Chapter 6, **Figs. 6.7 and 6.8**). A bigger issue arose if there were three or more concentrations within 500m of each other but spanning a greater distance when combined. This was evident at Loddon, for example, where the definition and phasing of Roman settlement was particularly complex (Davison 1990 and see Chapter 6, 104, **Fig. 6.6**). Such situations were relatively few but inevitably some subjective judgement was brought to bear in these cases. As parish churches and manor houses, in particular, have more of a fixed point, there is some argument for tighter parameters in assessing their relationship to Roman settlement in order to demonstrate how precisely the location of a parish church or manor house was determined by that of any underlying Roman settlement.

Certain issues with adopting a 500m parameter for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships were raised in Chapter 4 (pp 69-70). As the typical average distance between Roman settlement sites has been shown to be around 500m (see Rogerson *et al*. 1997; Williamson 1984; 1986, for example), then setting a 500m parameter as a framework for analysis does not allow for any buffering of space between settlements. This potentially infers that any given early medieval settlement within a settled landscape is likely to fall within at least one Roman settlement. This has implications for accurately assessing patterns of continuity, or discontinuity, between the Roman and early medieval periods, particularly for distinguishing between potential continuity, or discontinuity, of individual Roman settlements and ongoing resettlement of favoured locations, such as the fertile valley soils, for example. As was also pointed out in Chapter 4 (p 70), however, the principal remit of this thesis has been to explore trends and processes in the patterns of settlement and settlement development between the Roman and early medieval periods. Nonetheless, in order to test-case the thesis methodology, a finer-grain analysis of two Norfolk parishes, Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau, and Barton Bendish, on Breckland, was included in the regional study of Norfolk. These two parishes have seen extensive fieldwalking and research, and are particularly well served by material evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement. Through a comparative analysis of settlement relationships for these periods using 500m and 250m parameters, it was shown that there was only a small difference between the two sets of results. Furthermore, both sets of results

demonstrated the same overall trends in settlement patterns and processes between the 5th to 11th centuries. It was therefore argued that the 500m parameter could be used with confidence as a methodological framework. Furthermore, it was observed that this was particularly pertinent to those regions of the country, such as Kent and Somerset, for example, that lacked the wealth of early medieval material culture, or where a continuous chronology of settlement evidence between the 5th to 11th centuries was absent.

Nonetheless, the comprehensive material evidence for Roman and early medieval settlement in Norfolk, principally recovered through fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys, has facilitated more nuanced analysis of settlement relationships for these periods than for Kent or Somerset, although the complexity of data has complicated the definition and chronology of individual sites at times. Being able to distinguish relatively clear patterns of potential settlement continuity and abandonment has, however, aided regional comparison with Kent and Somerset, which both have gaps in the material sequence for early medieval settlement. It is notable how few Roman settlements in Norfolk seem completely devoid of any associated occupation evidence for the 5th to 11th centuries, particularly away from the interfluvial areas. This raises certain implications, however, of how far the evidence reflects direct continuity of individual settlements or ongoing resettlement of favoured areas, potentially incorporating settlement shift and/or phases of abandonment and reoccupation over the course of the 5th to 11th centuries.

The distribution of 'Early Saxon' settlement and cemeteries in Norfolk appears to suggest potential ethnic and cultural differences across the region during the 5th to 7th centuries, a distinction that is not so clear in Kent, although some allowance must be made for differential recovery of settlement and cemetery evidence for this period. The material evidence for 8th to 9th century occupation in Norfolk makes it further possible to distinguish patterns of potential settlement shift and consolidation during this period: again, this is not so straightforward for either Kent or Somerset, due to the broader lack of settlement data. The advantage of selecting three distinct regional study areas, however, has been the opportunity to compare and contrast various settlement trends and relationships to evaluate how far these extrapolate out to the wider national scale or whether they demonstrate particular regional bias.

Whilst the inconsistencies in material evidence for 5th to 9th century occupation in Kent and Somerset compromise the clarity of settlement relationships during this period, the situation is improved for the 9th to 11th centuries, both through the material evidence for settlement and the opportunity to assess relationships of Roman settlement to Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. This has particularly facilitated analysis of how far processes of settlement nucleation by the 11th century were influenced by the late Roman settlement pattern and to what extent 11th century settlement cores suggest potential Roman origins. In particular, this addresses Leech's (1977, 177; 1982b, 239) hypothesis that the medieval villages of Somerset largely suggest Roman origins, with the Roman settlements that fall between reflecting a relict pattern of settlement abandoned either during the Roman period or at some point before settlement nucleation occurred. This hypothesis is borne out to some extent through the research on Somerset for this thesis (Chapters 14-17) and is also potentially observed in parts of Kent, the North Kent Foothills, for example (see Chapter 11, 258).

Assessing how far areas of dispersed settlement by the 11th century mirror an antecedent Roman settlement pattern has been slightly more problematic as these areas are typically highly rural and less likely to have seen systematic physical survey or development-led evaluation. Nonetheless, the spatial analysis of Roman settlement, Domesday vills and parish churches across all three regional study areas has been able to demonstrate broader patterns of nucleated and dispersed settlement by the 11th century and, to a certain extent, been able to quantify how far these suggest a relationship to the antecedent Roman settlement pattern. This is demonstrated particularly well at Fransham, on the Boulder Clay Plateau (Chapter 6, **Figs. 6.7 and 6.8**) and Beachamwell, on Breckland (Chapter 7, **Fig. 7.6**), for example, which respectively suggest dispersed and nucleated settlement patterns by the 11th century. A similar comparison can be made between the Vale of Taunton Deane and the Mid Somerset Lowlands in Somerset (Chapters 15 and 16). The evidence for Kent is not so distinct, as much of the 11th century settlement pattern is relatively dispersed, with any evidence for nucleation rather loosely defined.

Assessing the relationship between Roman settlement and manors was hoped to inform how far early medieval manorial estates were potentially based on existing patterns of Roman land organisation and tenure and how far settlement

expansion and manorial fragmentation by the 11th century suggested a resettlement of previously Roman sites by this time, rather than direct Roman settlement continuity. Although much has been gained from quantifying the relationship between Roman settlement and manors, this has been one area of research that possibly lacks some clarity and would benefit further refinement. The documentary and archaeological record for early medieval manors, beyond those assumed by the presence of a Domesday vill, is inconsistent across the three regional study areas, and the precise identification and dating of an associated manor house has presented certain issues, as discussed in the respective regional methodologies. In Kent, for example, there is an excellent documentary record for manors (Hasted 1798-1801), although their date of origin is not always so easy to discern (eg. Brookes 2007, 51; Everitt 1986, 179; Flight 2010, 2; Sweetinburgh 2004, 48, for discussion of Kentish manors). It is possible, therefore, that a number of Kentish manors included in the research are post- 11th century in date (see Chapter 4, 63-64). Some moated manor sites in Norfolk may also date to the 12th to 13th centuries rather than to the 11th century or earlier (Campbell 1986, 227; 1994, 52; Rogerson 1994, 66).

Given these limitations, the relationship between Roman settlement and manors may not clearly distinguish between manors in existence by the 11th century and those that were established after this date, although broad trends in the relationship of manors to Roman settlement can still be assessed. It has also not always been possible to clearly demonstrate where the relationship reflects a continuity of Roman settlement or land organisation, or resettlement at some point during the medieval period, although it has been possible to suggest where these scenarios are more likely. Where a Roman settlement is associated with a Domesday vill or manor on the better lowland soils that more broadly suggest potential continuity between the 5th to 11th centuries, a continuity of settlement and land organisation is more feasibly suggested, although resettlement cannot always be precluded. Where a relationship between Roman settlement and manors is observed on those soils that saw a potential abandonment of Roman settlement by the 5th century it is more likely that it reflects resettlement of those soils by the 11th century or later, as a result of manorial fragmentation, for example, particularly where no evidence for interim occupation between the 5th to 11th centuries is otherwise recorded.

A secondary strand of analysis in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships has been the assessment of these in regard to soils. Soils type, along with topography, has been the basis for defining the regional *pays* that form the basic unit for interpreting patterns and trends in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships at a regional and sub-regional level. This thesis has also attempted to establish a template for classifying settlement relationships in regard to soils, which can be refined and tailored through future research projects. The bi-partite division of heavier or lighter soils as a basis for assessing Roman and early medieval settlement relationships is acknowledged to be somewhat simplistic, however, and this might benefit from a finer grain of classification. It would be useful, for example, to include some form of locational distinction as well as soil classification and a possible suggestion for future consideration would be:

Heavy interfluvial soils	Light interfluvial soils
Heavy soils on valley sides	Light soils on scarp or valley sides
Heavy upland soils	Light upland soils

Despite its limitations, the assessment of Roman and early medieval relationships to soils has facilitated the definition of regional *pays* and the interpretation of settlement trends and processes during the 5th to 11th centuries in relation to these. It has also drawn out some interesting regional comparisons in settlement relationships on which future research can build.

Themes and Trends in Roman and Early Medieval Settlement Relationships

This thesis has succeeded in identifying some broad themes in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships. Patterns of Roman occupation suggest widely dispersed settlement across both the lighter and heavier soils of all three regional study areas. The broader trend indicates that higher status Roman settlement and Roman villas were typically situated on the more fertile soils or closer towards the river valleys, with the poorer soils and interfluvial areas typically, although not exclusively, seeing lower status occupation. This trend is particularly distinct in Norfolk and Kent but not so well defined in Somerset,

although the main concentration of higher status Roman settlement and Roman villas is clearly located in the east of the county (Chapter 14, Fig. 14.4).

The distribution of early Roman cremation cemeteries in Kent, having no indication of later inhumation burials or associated settlement, may be evidence for a shift or reorganisation of Roman settlement from around the 2nd to 3rd centuries (see Chapter 10, 224-225). The evidence from sites such as Boughton Monchelsea (Chapter 12, 303-307) or Northfleet (Chapter 11, **Fig. 11.7**), for example, reinforces this suggestion, both potentially demonstrating early Roman settlement superseded by a 2nd to 3rd century phase of reorganisation and Romanisation (see Andrews *et al*. 2011; KARU 2000; Oxford Archaeology 2001, for example). Such clear evidence for this trend in Norfolk or Somerset is not so forthcoming, although there is some suggestion for a phasing or shift of Roman settlement bordering the Loddon Brook at Loddon (Norfolk) (Davison 1990 and see Chapter 6, 99, Fig. 6.6), for example, while, in Somerset, a phase of 2nd to 3rd century reorganisation and stone constructed buildings is recorded on a Romano-British farmstead at Nerrols Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine, (Samuel and Cox 2001, 5 and see Chapter 16, 432-434, **Fig. 16.7**). This trend is also more widely noted by regional research projects elsewhere: a gradual abandonment and reorganisation of Romano-British settlement during the 2nd to 3rd centuries was observed on the boulder clay at Raunds (Northants) (Audouy and Chapman 2009, 22; Parry 2006, 80-81), for example. The introduction of stone construction and Romanising features in some rural Romano-British settlements from around the 2nd to 3rd centuries is also a broader theme in Roman studies, generally, (eg. Frere 1998, 298; Hingley 1989, 33; Mattingly 2006, 376; Perring 2002, 51), as demonstrated at traditionally quoted sites such as Barton Court Farm (Oxon) and Rivenhall (Essex), for example: a shift or reorganisation of settlement may have preceded the construction of the late Roman farmhouse at Barton Court Farm (Miles 1984, 49), while the Roman villa at Rivenhall appears to have been constructed around the early 2nd century, superseding a wider native farming landscape (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, xi).

In addition to any interim shift or reorganisation of settlement, all three regional study areas suggest that a broader phase of settlement contraction had occurred by the end of the Roman period: this was evident across both lighter

and heavier soils but was particularly evident on the heavier clay interfluves and the calcareous and acid heathlands of Norfolk and Kent. Unfortunately, the lack of available data makes it hard to identify this trend as clearly in Somerset. The broader evidence suggests that where Roman settlement indicates potential continuity into the 5th to 7th centuries, this is largely on the more fertile and tractable soils or along the river valleys and more typically evident in higher status Roman settlement across all three study areas (**Fig. 18.1**). This could partly reflect the bias of excavation in the past towards higher status settlement and Roman villas, although the trend is particularly well demonstrated for Norfolk, where the material evidence largely derives from fieldwalking.

The material evidence for Roman and 'Middle Saxon' settlement in Norfolk has been able to demonstrate a degree of settlement shift and the beginnings of settlement consolidation along the river valleys between the 8th to 9th centuries. Although this trend is not so clearly demonstrated for either Kent or Somerset, the limited evidence from these two counties does not contradict the hypothesis that this period saw a more coherent organisation of settlement, or that the surviving late Roman settlement pattern was a distinct influence on this. There are, however, some regional particularities in settlement processes that might also be attributed to this period of development. In Norfolk, for example, there may also have been a move of settlement back across some interfluvial areas during the 8th to 9th centuries, particularly well demonstrated at Fransham and Witton (Chapter 7, **Figs. 7.7 and 7.16**), for example, where scatters of Ipswich Ware are recorded on predominantly 'Late Saxon' settlement sites (and see Rippon 2008, 188). These sites may mark the beginnings of more widespread settlement migration towards the edges of greens and common ground by the 11th to 12th centuries (*ibid* and see Williamson 1993, 111; 2006, 52).

In parts of Kent and Somerset a shift of settlement away from some wetter soils and low lying coastal areas is also potentially indicated around the 8th to 9th centuries. Both study areas suggest evidence for a broad continuity of Roman settlement on the wetter inland alluvial soils into the 5th to 7th centuries, at sites such as Northfleet Roman villa (Kent) (Chapter 11, **Fig. 11.7**) and the Roman villas at Hinton Mill and Ilchester Mead (Somerset) (Chapter 15, 379-383, **Figs. 15.5 and 15.6**), for example, with a potential silting up or backing up of the rivers from somewhere around the 8th to 9th centuries potentially prompting a

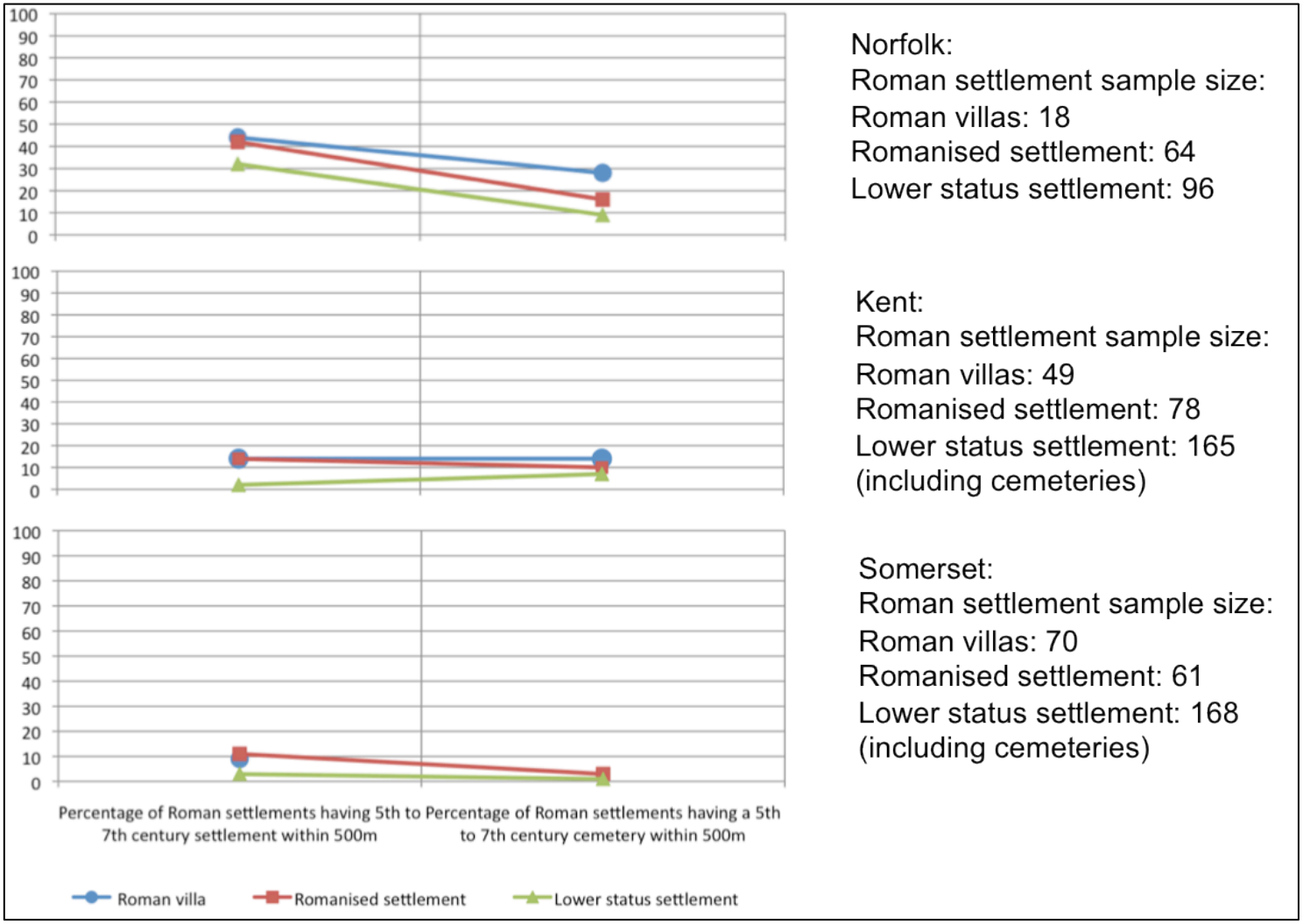


Figure 18.1. Comparative line chart showing the relative percentages of Roman settlement with evidence for a 5th to 7th century settlement or cemetery within 500m, relative to settlement hierarchy and shown for Norfolk, Kent and Somerset. The sample sizes for Roman settlement are included, irrespective of date and including Roman cemeteries (where no additional settlement is currently recorded) for Kent and Somerset. All data compiled by the author.

shift to higher ground. This was not so evident in the study groups selected for Norfolk, where the river valleys clearly remained the favoured location for Roman and early medieval settlement.

Wider evidence for flooding events in the Upper Thames and Nene river valleys during the early medieval period was observed by Robinson (1992, 60), however, variously affecting shifts in settlement during that time. At Raunds, (Northants), a phase of alluviation along the Nene River was radiocarbon dated to AD 740-88 but may have accelerated into the 11th century (Parry 2006, 25): the 'Late Saxon' settlement of West Cotton was originally situated above the floodplain but alluviation and flooding forced the construction of flood defences by the 11th century (*ibid*, 174). Roman settlement along this stretch of the river appears to have typically continued into the 'Early/Middle' Saxon period (see Audouy and Chapman 2009; Parry 2006), and observed shifts in settlement may conceivably relate, at least in part, to alluviation and flooding events around this time. The palaeoenvironmental evidence from Barton Court Farm (Oxon) also suggests a waterlogged environment along the lower gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley during the Roman to 'Early/ Middle' Saxon periods (Miles 1984, 25). There appears to have been a shift in settlement some 300m to the northeast by the 8th to 9th centuries (*ibid*, 53), although it is not clear whether this reflects the broader trend of 'Middle Saxon' shift (eg. Arnold and Wardle 1981; Hamerow 1991 and see Chapter 2, 31), or whether the shift also relates to flooding events around this time. Nonetheless, the broader evidence could suggest that environmental factors potentially resulted in a dislocation of the Roman settlement pattern along some major river systems from around the 8th to 9th centuries.

The material evidence for 9th to 11th century settlement in Norfolk, however, suggests that by this period there was an increase in the number and size of settlements, both along the river valleys and across the interfluvial areas. Although the material evidence for contemporary settlement in Kent and Somerset is not sufficient to corroborate this trend, it can be broadly assumed from the supporting evidence of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. The combined data indicates that the consolidation of settlement patterns as nucleated or dispersed was broadly established by the 9th to 11th centuries, and that this coincided with the cohesion of Domesday vills and manors and the

establishment of the majority of parish churches (see Blair 2005; Morris 1983; 1989; Rodwell and Rodwell 1977, for example). This trend of events is already current to our understanding of settlement development by the 11th century (see Jones and Page 2006; Lewis *et al*. 2001; Rippon 2008; Williamson 2003, for example), but the remit of this thesis is to demonstrate how far these processes relate to antecedent patterns of Roman settlement.

The combined evidence from all three regional study areas demonstrate that, where Roman settlement was associated with a Domesday vill or parish church, this was more evident in Romanised settlement than either Roman villas or lower status settlement: between 30% and 33% of Romanised settlement across all three regions was situated within 500m of a Domesday vill, and between 23% and 33% of Romanised settlement was situated within 500m of a parish church (**Fig. 18.2**). As observed in the discussion on Norfolk (Chapter 10), the Roman villa landscape in Norfolk appears to have least influenced patterns of 11th century settlement, although the number of villas recorded for the county are relatively few compared to either Kent or Somerset. In Somerset, however, where Roman villas are comparatively numerous, it also appears that Roman villas had less of a relationship with the 11th century settlement pattern than either Romanised or lower status settlement: for Somerset, the evidence actually suggests that lower status Roman settlement may have been more closely associated with 11th century settlement and manors, although the data margins are relatively narrow (**Fig. 18.2**). In Kent, there is more of a suggestion that the distribution of Roman villas closely related to the siting of Domesday vills and parish churches by the 11th century. In particular, there is a distinctly greater relationship between Roman villas and manors in Kent, suggesting that the county's pattern of villa estates may also be more closely related to early medieval patterns of land ownership and tenure (**Fig. 18.2**).

Looking retrogressively, the comparative ratios for Domesday vills in Norfolk, Kent and Somerset that currently demonstrate potential Roman origins are 63%, 39% and 23% respectively. For Somerset, this is further distinguished for western Somerset, where only 14% of Domesday vills currently suggest potential Roman origins, compared to 28% for eastern Somerset. Clearly, there are several issues of bias to these figures: the highly dispersed settlement

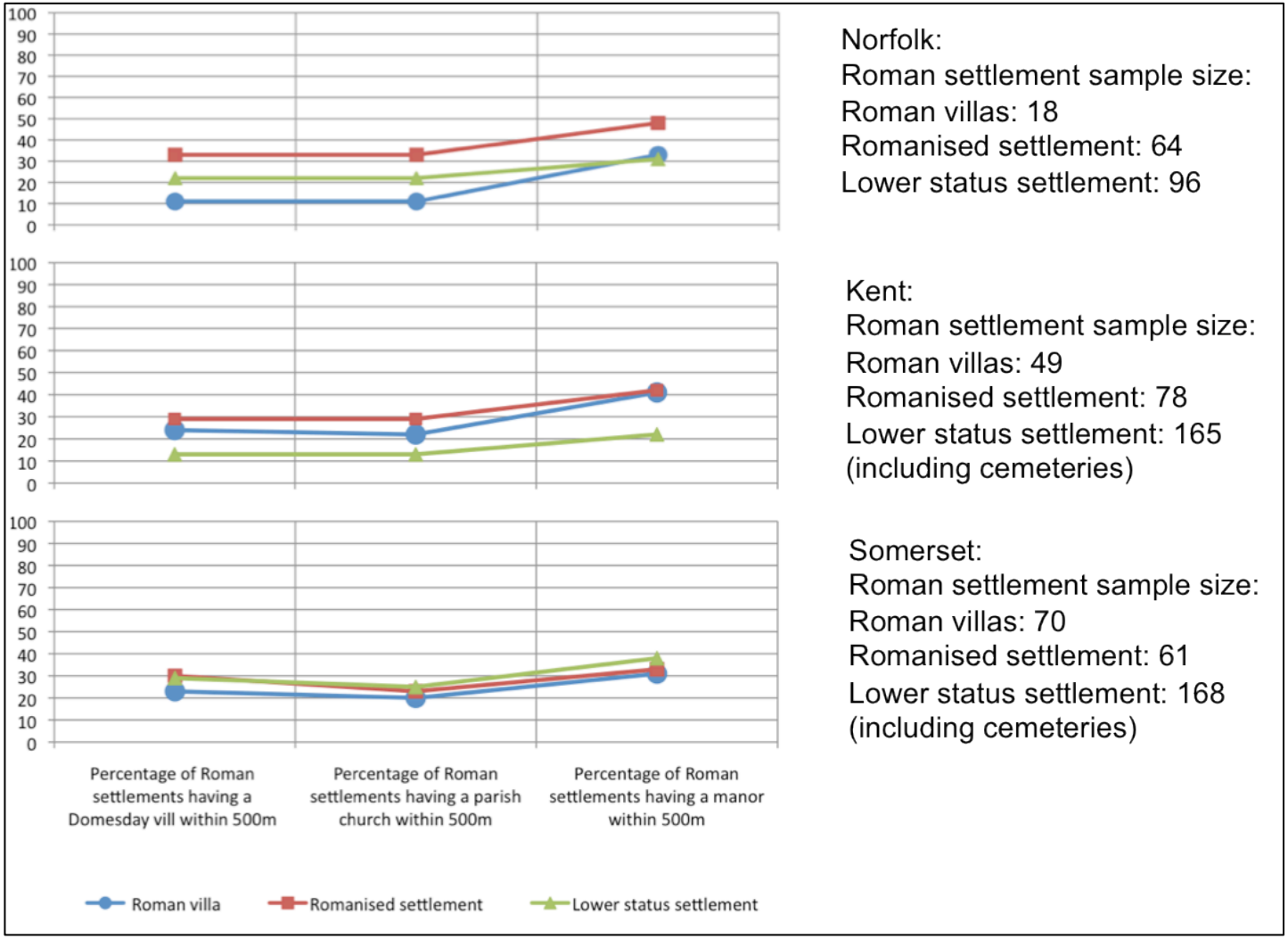


Figure 18.2. Comparative line chart showing the relative percentages of Roman settlement having a Domesday vill, parish church or manor within 500m, relative to settlement hierarchy and shown for Norfolk, Kent and Somerset. The sample sizes for Roman settlement are included, irrespective of date and including Roman cemeteries (where no additional settlement is currently recorded) for Kent and Somerset. All data compiled by the author.

pattern of west Somerset, in particular, may have seen little archaeological evaluation, but this limitation potentially applies to some parts of rural Kent as well. The particularly high ratio for Norfolk may reflect the constraints of the smaller study groups, containing fewer Domesday vills and all selected for their extensive fieldwalking surveys, which have generated greater levels of Roman and early medieval settlement association, generally. The ratio for eastern Somerset is, however, rather lower than might be anticipated, given the extent of Roman settlement and archaeological evaluation across this part of the county. This may reflect the extent of settlement nucleation in eastern Somerset by the 11th century, and goes some way to quantifying Leech's (1977, 177; 1982b, 239) original hypothesis regarding the relationship between patterns of late Roman and early medieval settlement: the analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in Somerset particularly suggest the potential continuity of some Roman settlements into the 8th to 9th centuries, after which a shift in settlement focus may have seen new Domesday vills established by the 10th to 11th century, as potentially demonstrated at Abbas Combe and Buckland Dinham, on the Limestone Scarp (Chapter 15, 413-416), for example.

Although the soils classification used by this thesis is acknowledged as rather simplistic (see above, p 465), it is, nonetheless possible to demonstrate some ratios for Roman and early medieval settlement across all three regional study areas, relative to lighter or heavier soils (**Fig. 18.3**). Although the sample sizes for the heavier soils in Norfolk, and the lighter soils in Kent, are relatively small, the comparison of results suggests that the lighter soils of both Norfolk and Kent saw a greater relationship between Roman and 'Early Saxon' settlement, although in Kent, the relationship between Roman settlement and 'Early Saxon' cemeteries is greater on the heavier soils (**Fig. 18.3**). In Somerset there is broad parity in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships on both lighter and heavier soils (**Fig. 18.3**). Overall, the lighter soils appear to have seen a greater stability and continuity of Roman settlement into the 5th to 11th centuries, whereas the heavier soils may have seen some greater flux in settlement contraction and expansion during this period. In both Kent and Somerset, the relationship between Roman settlement and manors appears greater on the heavier soils (**Fig. 18.3**).

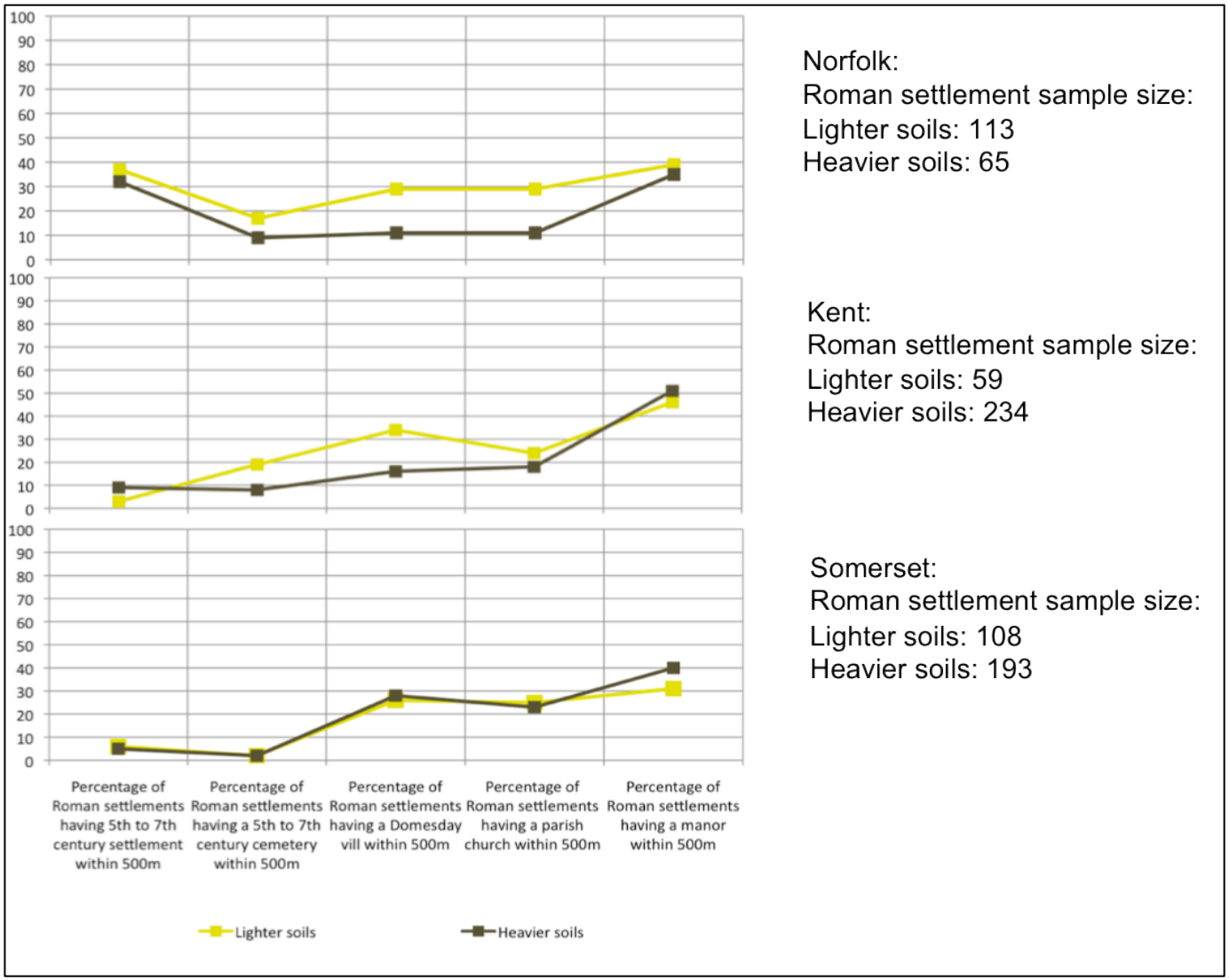


Figure 18.3. Comparative line chart showing the relative percentages of Roman settlement having a Domesday vill, parish church or manor within 500m, relative to lighter or heavier soils and shown for Norfolk, Kent and Somerset. The sample sizes for Roman settlement are included, irrespective of date and including Roman cemeteries (where no additional settlement is currently recorded) for Kent and Somerset. All data compiled by the author.

Continuity or Discontinuity?

In addressing the debate over continuity, or discontinuity, in the late Roman rural settlement landscape, it would appear that both circumstances variously apply. A discontinuity of Roman settlement on some areas of heavy or poorer soils by the early 5th century can certainly be demonstrated. Whether this was due to climatic and environmental factors prompting a shift of settlement to better soils, or a genuine reduction in settlement and population due to the social and political pressures of the time, remains to be demonstrated, although it does not currently appear that this settlement abandonment necessarily coincided with an increase in settlement size or numbers on the better soils. What is apparent, however, is the potential continuity in wider patterns of settlement on the better soils and along the valley sides during the late Roman and earliest medieval periods: continuity, but not stasis. The 5th to 7th centuries were clearly a period of social change, and this is reflected both in the physical modification of some settlements, through altered living standards and changes in architecture, and the wider organisation of settlement, which suggests a return to a more subsistence-based regime. During this period the systemic decline in late Roman administration and patterns of Anglo-Saxon migration may well have impacted on rural communities, albeit to various effect across the country. It has not, however, been the remit of this thesis to directly explore the ethnicity or cultural make-up of rural populations during the 5th to 7th centuries, and these issues remain best addressed at a site-based level.

Nevertheless, what this thesis has demonstrated, through the analysis of wider settlement relationships during the 5th to 7th centuries, is that, while a degree of settlement flux is apparent for this period, broader patterns of settlement and land organisation in the lowland rural landscape during the 5th to 11th centuries demonstrate remarkable stability, albeit with some fluidity of individual sites over this time. Furthermore, it has been shown that many Roman settlements discussed during this thesis, such as Barton Bendish, North Elmham, Fincham and Snetterton, in Norfolk, Milton Regis and Boxley, in Kent and Beerway Farm, Shapwick, and Cheddar, in Somerset, to name but a few, not only suggest potential continuity into the 5th to 11th centuries but are also closely associated with a Domesday vill, parish church and/or manor by the 11th century. The evidence from these sites and wider patterns of Roman and early

medieval settlement relationships can help re-examine some of the traditional sites of Roman studies, such as Rivenhall (Essex) or Barton Court Farm (Oxon), for example. The Roman villa at Rivenhall became the site of a 5th to 6th century post-built hall and, subsequently, a 10th century timber built church (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, xi-xii). Whilst some shift of settlement is indicated during the 8th to 9th centuries (*ibid*, xi), Rivenhall continued as the site of the Domesday church and manor and demonstrates a continuous chronology of Roman to early medieval occupation. Occupation of the Roman villa at Barton Court Farm also continued in a reduced form into the 6th to 7th centuries, after which there may have been a shift of settlement to the northeast (Miles 1984, 49-53). The estate of *Bertune* is documented as far back as the late 7th century and was recorded at Domesday: although the precise site of the Domesday manor is unknown, the ruins of the 16th century manor are recorded *c*. 700m southeast of the Roman villa (*ibid*, 54). The context of potential settlement continuity at both Rivenhall and Barton Court Farm between the 5th to 11th centuries, then, can be suggested to reflect the wider patterns of potential Roman settlement continuity demonstrated by this thesis.

At this juncture, it is perhaps worth making the point that there is an inevitable logic to the better soils and fertile river valleys, with their available supply of water, being a preferential location for settlement during the Roman and early medieval periods. Equally, it should come as no great surprise that, in times of population increase and pressure on available land, or with the advent of advanced agricultural technologies, an expansion of settlement across poorer, lower yielding, soils should occur. Although it is important not to presume that trends and processes of settlement development between the 5th to 11th centuries were wholly environmentally determined, nonetheless it must also be acknowledged that there probably was a largely pragmatic impetus, particularly given the practical requirements of subsistence agriculture and the need for effective communication networks for trade and exchange. What is crucial to the remit of this thesis is that the methodology employed here, and the statistical analysis that has resulted, have been able to physically demonstrate these patterns of settlement continuity, or discontinuity, between the Roman and early medieval periods, as well as some subtler nuances of settlement shift and consolidation within particular physical landscapes. It has also been able to distinguish certain aspects of regional difference.

Whilst the subtleties of social and cultural change during the 5th to 7th centuries remain to be fully understood, this thesis has shown the broader relationship between post-Roman rural communities and their physical landscape: a relationship that reflects longer processes of social evolution and landscape transition and embraces both environmental and social factors for change. As well as demonstrating a persistence of place, this influenced the development of settlement organisation during the 5th to 11th centuries as communities evolved and a greater national identity was born. At a regional level, however, greater particularities in the late Roman and early medieval settlement landscape become apparent, expressed at both a physical and cultural level through the concept of *pays*. These *pays* illustrate the finer nuances of settlement development during the 5th to 11th centuries, variously and closely influenced in many instances by the underlying late Roman settlement pattern.

Chapter 19. Conclusion

The aims of this thesis have been to develop a broad-scale spatial analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships across three regional study areas: Norfolk, Kent and Somerset. The objectives have been to quantify certain aspects of the late Roman settlement pattern in these three counties to determine how far potential continuity, or discontinuity, into the 5th to 11th centuries can be demonstrated, and to what extent patterns of 11th century settlement, and the institution of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors, reflect potential Roman origins. Roman and early medieval settlement relationships have been assessed across a number of distinctive and adjacent *pays*, which have been defined on the basis of soils and topography. The evaluation of these relationships, relative to soils, has been with the objective of identifying both overarching trends and processes and regional variation in these. The thesis has identified the largely site-orientated approach to traditional Roman and early medieval settlement studies in the past, which were typically confined to their period of research. Whilst the study of individual settlement sites remains an invaluable source of detailed local evidence, this thesis has addressed the need for a systematic evaluation of broader Roman and early medieval settlement patterns and relationships that both provides a wider landscape context against which such site-orientated studies can sit and bridges the divide between these two periods of social transition.

The range and variability in material settlement evidence across the three regional study areas for the Roman and early medieval periods, and the differentials of archaeological evaluation, have inevitably raised certain issues of bias and limitation. A degree of subjectivity in interpreting individual settlement sites for these two periods has been acknowledged, although it is hoped that wider patterns of settlement and settlement relationships transcend any particular oversights at a site-based level. It was hoped that through the comparative analysis of contrasting regional studies it would be possible to identify both common themes in settlement processes between the late Roman and early medieval periods and particularities of regional difference. The detailed evidence from fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys in Norfolk has

proved invaluable in this, as the trends in settlement relationships identified for these two periods have provided a useful regional template against which to set the results for Kent and Somerset, where there are greater gaps in contemporary settlement evidence. The research method has highlighted some areas of analysis that would benefit further refinement, the clearer identification of early medieval manors and a finer grain of soils classification, for example. The analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement patterns, relative to soils, has, however, been key to defining the regional *pays* explored by this research and to drawing out some broader settlement relationships, relative to soils and topography. The concept of *pays* is a developing theme of historic landscape studies and the research of this thesis has been aimed at advancing this further. The analysis of regional settlement patterns and relationships for the late Roman and early medieval periods has been able to identify some broad trends in settlement processes during these periods:

- The late Roman rural settlement pattern was predominantly dispersed, with the better soils and river valleys seeing a greater concentration of higher status Romanised settlement and Roman villas, and the poorer interfluvial and plateau soils seeing largely lower status occupation.
- There was a partial contraction of the Roman settlement pattern by the 5th to 7th centuries, largely away from the poorer interfluvial and plateau soils in favour of the better lowland soils and river valley locations. It is not so clear, however, how far this coincided with an increase in settlement size or numbers in these favoured areas during this period.
- There was a broad continuity of the Roman settlement pattern on the better soils and along the river valleys into the 5th to 7th centuries. This was predominantly, although not exclusively, reflected by higher status Romanised settlement and Roman villas.
- The 8th to 9th centuries saw distinct shifts in the late Roman settlement pattern and the beginnings of settlement consolidation on the better soils and along the river valleys. The evidence from Norfolk suggests there may have also been some early settlement expansion back across some interfluvial areas during this period. The evidence from Kent and Somerset, reinforced by the findings from other regional research projects, also indicates a possible shift away from some wetter alluvial soils to higher ground during this period.

- During the 9th to 11th centuries, settlement consolidation and nucleation continued, with many Roman settlements on the better soils and in river valley locations appearing to influence the siting of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors by the 11th century. This was more evident in higher status Romanised settlement than either Roman villas or lower status occupation, with Roman villas in Norfolk and Somerset, in particular, appearing to have least influenced these processes.
- There is also evidence for an expansion of settlement by the 9th to 11th centuries. This was largely back across the poorer interfluvial and plateau soils, although on the lighter calcareous soils of western Norfolk this appears more confined to the river valleys. The expansion of settlement coincided with manorial fragmentation during this period and where Roman settlement on the poorer soils appears associated with 11th century settlement and/or manors, this may partially reflect the resettlement of these soils rather than potential settlement continuity.

These broad trends in Roman and early medieval settlement relationships have already been variously identified through the work of targeted research projects and archaeological evaluation, with many nuances in regional variation and exception demonstrated both by these and the regional studies explored by this thesis. The results, in effect, tell us little that is not already known or understood. What the thesis has achieved, however, is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, analysis of these trends and processes, and the development of a practical method of research that has been able to physically demonstrate these and relate them to wider regional and national contexts. It also contributes to the debate over continuity, or discontinuity, in the late Roman settlement landscape by exploring broader patterns of Roman and early medieval settlement and their historic landscape context, looking at the trends and processes of settlement and landscape transition, rather than the fate of individual settlement sites.

The continuity debate has raged on through changing theoretical paradigms. Whilst still relevant to contemporary studies, there is a broader consensus of opinion that the wider systemic decline of Roman administrative and political governance was not necessarily so keenly felt by the predominantly rural native population. Changes in settlement patterns are undoubtedly observed for this

period but the growing evidence suggests there was not the catastrophic decline in settlement and population that has been previously suggested (eg. Brown 1974; Crawford 1928; Esmonde Cleary 1989; Faulkner 2000; 2002; 2004; Hodges 1989; Reece 1980). Rather, it is apparent that the social transition observed during the early centuries following the end of Roman Britain demonstrates a persistence of place, a connection to the physical and cultural landscape that demonstrates particularities of regional adaptation and the broader continuity of the rural lowland settlement landscape.

This thesis aimed to quantify certain aspects of late Roman and early medieval settlement relationships and to demonstrate the extent to which patterns of late Roman settlement survived to influence the developing settlement landscape of the 5th to 11th centuries. This has been achieved on many levels, but there is much that remains poorly understood. It is still unclear whether the abandonment of Roman settlement on poorer interfluvial and plateau soils by the 5th century, which may have been due as much to changing environmental and climatic conditions as social factors for change, coincided with an increase in settlement size and number on the better soils and along the river valleys. This desertion appears to have largely affected lower status farming settlements and it seems unlikely that this was solely in response to social and political crisis, so it begs the question as to where these farming communities went. If there is no discernable increase in farming settlement along the fertile valley soils, did these local populations fill the void left by ranking Roman officials and the Roman elite? Is the evidence for continued, if somewhat reduced, occupation of Roman villas and their wider estates partly due to a reconfiguration of farming settlement during the 5th to 7th centuries and the return to a largely subsistence-based regime? If the villa estates did partially absorb some of the native population it could partly explain why Roman villas and lower status settlement appear to have seen the greater flux during this period, although it doesn’t necessarily explain the changes in material culture and architecture that accompany the modified occupation at many villa sites. Nor does it explain the apparent continuation of villa estate holdings if there was no accompanying lordship to maintain this. Some of these questions can only be addressed through continuing site-orientated study, but further targeted research of Roman settlement patterns across adjacent physical landscapes and soils regions may shed some insight on this.

Building on the work of interdisciplinary research projects, such as Shapwick (Somerset) (Aston and Gerrard 1999; Gerrard with Aston 2007), for example, which targets both medieval settlement cores and related areas of infield and outfield, would increasingly inform our understanding of the parameters of early medieval settlement shift and how far the late Roman settlement pattern determined the location of early medieval settlement cores and the siting of Domesday vills, parish churches and manors. It would be useful, however, to extend this method of research to dispersed settlement areas, such as western Somerset, for example, to explore how far the smaller Domesday vills and 11th century farming settlements relate to patterns of late Roman settlement. For areas such as western Somerset, and the south-west peninsular, generally, it would also be beneficial to achieve a broader dating of the many enclosure sites that remain to be fully incorporated into the corpus of Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement in that region. Only then can we hope to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of late Roman and early medieval settlement patterns and relationships for this part of the country. Somerset is not alone in reflecting a largely native population during the Late Roman and earliest medieval period, however, and the lack of material settlement evidence for the 5th to 10th centuries across many lowland areas means that the bias of historic landscape research is still towards those areas of England that may have seen a greater flux in ethnic and cultural exchange during this period. That imbalance needs to be addressed. Nonetheless, as Esmonde Cleary (2004, 424) observed, we need to move beyond monocausal explanations for social change at the end of the Roman period, as there are many potential intricacies of social and cultural transition that remain to be convincingly explained through the broader themes of contemporary regional research.

Through the exploration of regional *pays* and the analysis of Roman and early medieval settlement relationships in relation to the wider historic, social and physical landscape, it has been possible to demonstrate the persistence and adaptation of local communities through periods of environmental and social change. Through assessing patterns of settlement trends and processes during these periods it has been shown that continuity is a many-stranded concept that demonstrates much regional variation in how it can be applied and interpreted. Nonetheless, it is apparent that, on many levels, the early medieval settlement landscape of lowland England owes much to its late Roman forbear.

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