

CHAPTER 10

THE SOUTH-WEST

By Tom Brindle

The South-West region encompasses an area of 10,331 km², including all of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, most of Devon and Lundy and a small part of west Somerset (FIG. 10.1). The entire peninsula has traditionally been viewed as belonging to a single administrative unit (the ‘Dumnonii’) during the Roman period (e.g. Fox 1973, 143), although recent questions have been raised about whether there may have been different systems of administration in the east and west of the region (Quinnell 2004, 217; Mattingly 2006, 407).

THE NATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE

The South-West incorporates a diverse geography, with ten distinctive Natural England landscape

zones within the region (FIG. 10.2). Much of the landscape is of upland character, including extensive areas of moorland on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin, although there are lowland zones in West Cornwall and central, south and east Devon. The modern landscape is primarily rural and there are few extensive built-up areas outside Plymouth, Exeter and the Torbay area in Devon. The modern settlement pattern is characterised by dispersed market towns, villages, hamlets and individual farmsteads, which has meant that there has been relatively little development compared to some other parts of the country, and as a corollary of this there has been only minimal archaeological excavation across much of the peninsula. The soils of the region are highly acidic and this has historically contributed to a greater emphasis on

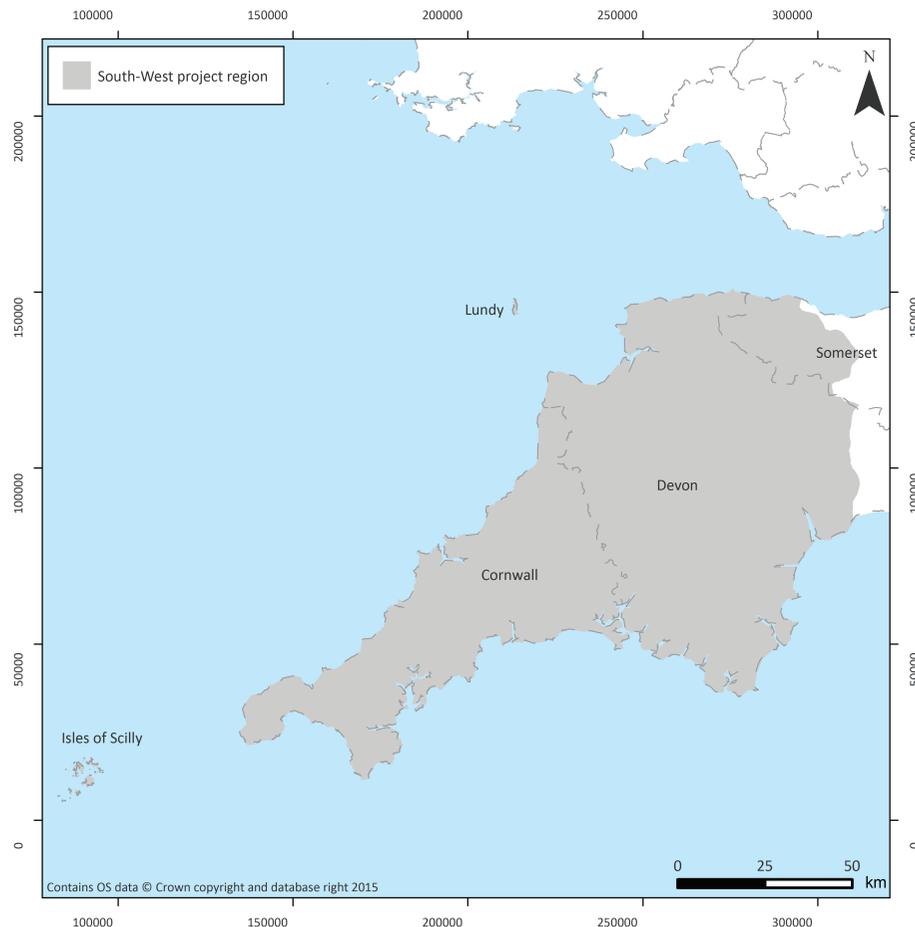


FIG. 10.1. The South-West region in relation to modern county boundaries

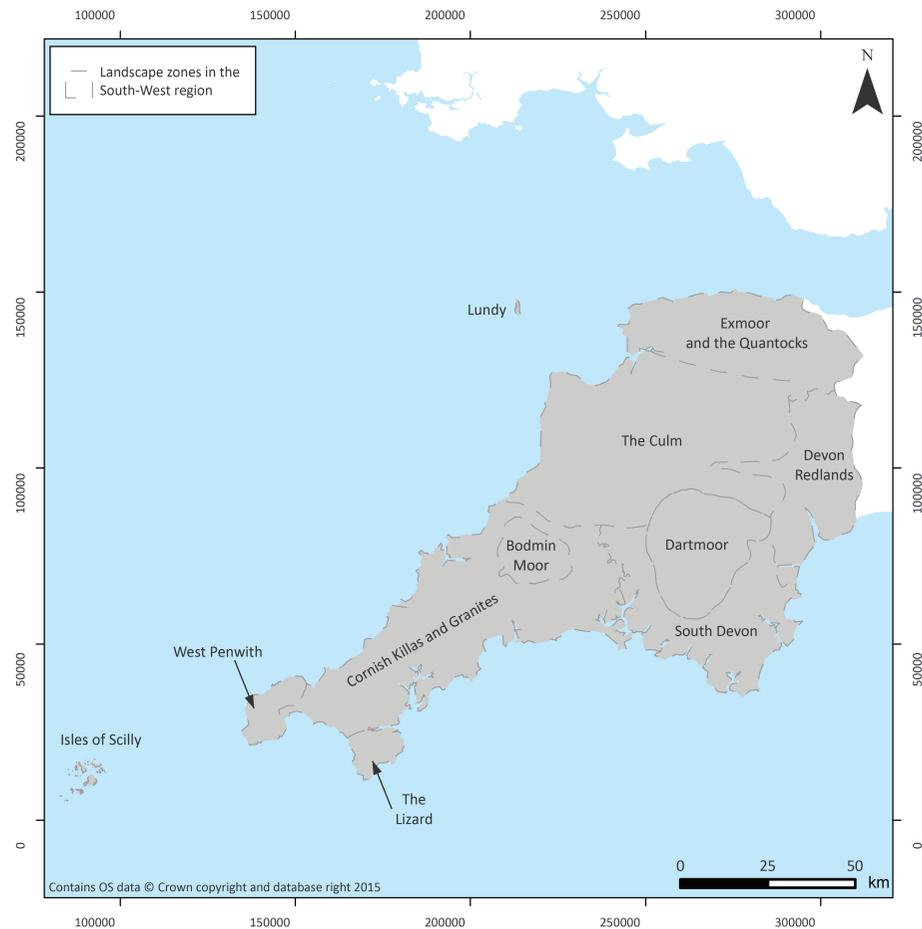


FIG. 10.2. Constituent landscape zones of the South-West region

pastoralism than arable agriculture, which continues today. The acidic soils also have a significant impact on the availability of environmental evidence from excavated sites, with faunal remains and archaeobotanical evidence rarely available.

THE SOUTH-WEST DATASET

The South-West dataset includes 123 records for 120 distinct sites (the three extra records relate to sites with multiple records). These sites include 92 settlements and 28 non-domestic sites, including funerary sites, industrial sites (e.g. iron production, salt production) and field systems. The region's excavated sites are very unevenly distributed (FIG. 10.3, top). Viewed by density (TABLE 10.1), the region's islands, the Scilly Isles and Lundy, stand out as being best represented by excavated sites, though this of course reflects the small land-area of these units and they contain only a small number of sites, with just one on Lundy. The relatively high density of sites in West Cornwall, in West Penwith, The Lizard, and the Cornish Killas and Granites, reflects in large part a strong

tradition of local research-led fieldwork (Taylor 2007, 53), although there have been several development-led excavations in recent years including sites investigated ahead of road improvement (e.g. along the route of the A30: Clark 2007), commercial development (e.g. Penhale Round: Johnston *et al.* 1999) and sewer construction (e.g. Harlyn Bay: Jones and Quinnell 2014). In South Devon a number of sites have seen investigation ahead of infrastructural work including road improvement, as at Aller Cross, Kingskerswell (Hearne and Seager Smith 1995), and pipeline construction, including the Choakford to Langage Gas Pipeline (Tyler 2009) and the South-West reinforcement pipelines in South and East Devon (Mudd and Joyce 2014) (the latter published only after data collection for the region had been completed). In the Devon Redlands a number of excavations have been associated with residential development near Exeter (e.g. Stead and Payne 2013), as well as during road construction/improvement (e.g. Fitzpatrick *et al.* 1999). Whereas much of North Devon is devoid of sites, a number on Exmoor have now been recognised through building development and quarrying (e.g. Reed 1999).

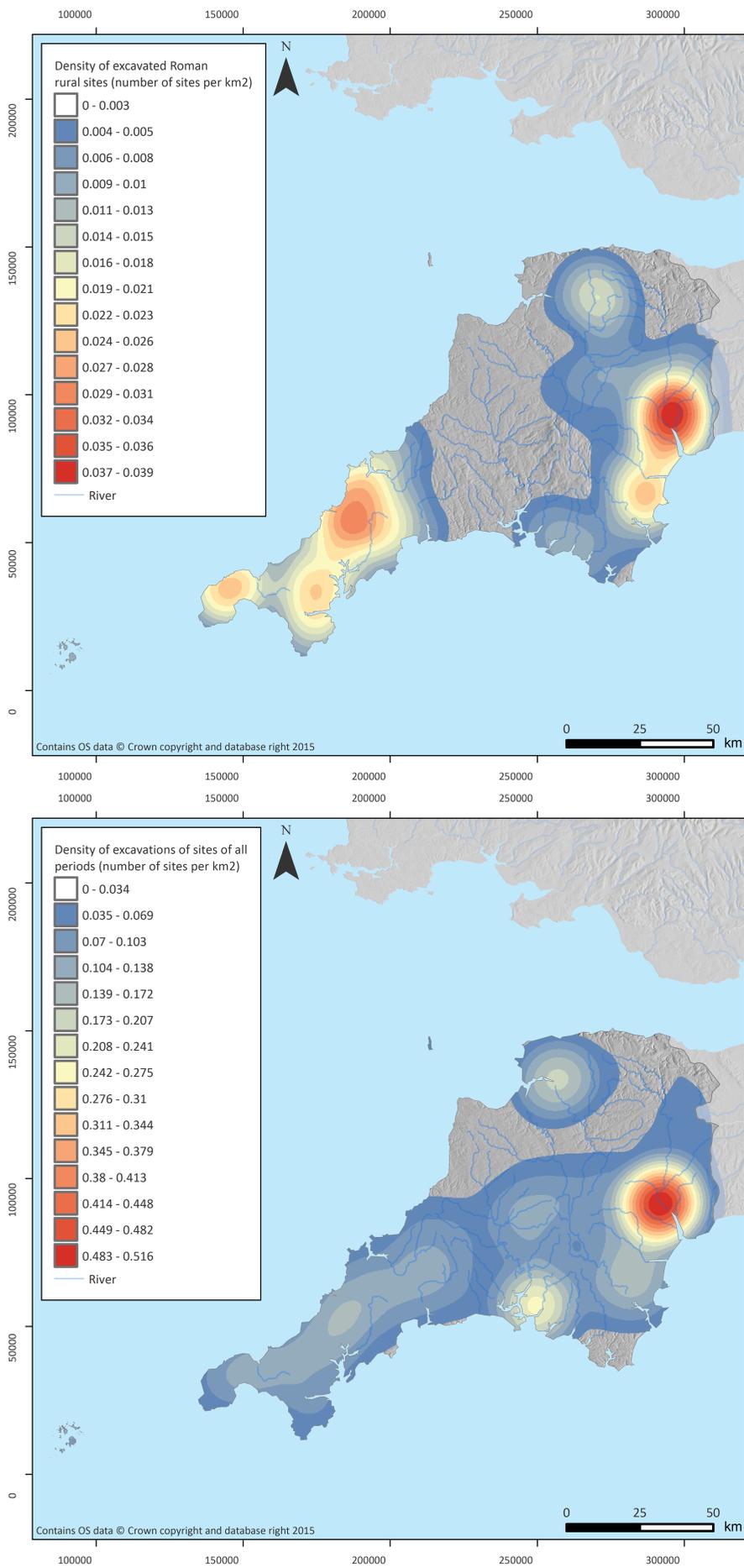


FIG. 10.3. Distribution of excavated Roman rural sites (n=120) and all excavation records (1910–2010) from National Monument Records (NMR) Index (n=1248) in the South-West region

TABLE 10.1: NUMBER OF SITES AND DENSITY (PER KM²) BY LANDSCAPE ZONE IN THE SOUTH-WEST REGION

<i>Landscape zone</i>	<i>Area (km²)</i>	<i>No. of sites</i>	<i>Density of sites per km²</i>
Isles of Scilly	16.38	4	0.2442
Lundy	4.51	1	0.2217
West Penwith	197.88	10	0.0505
The Lizard	151.70	6	0.0396
Devon Redlands	984.73	24	0.0244
Cornish Killas and Granites	2486.59	44	0.0177
South Devon	1212.59	16	0.0132
Exmoor and the Quantocks	1299.57	8	0.0062
The Culm	2817.24	6	0.0021
Dartmoor	874.07	1	0.0011
Bodmin Moor	285.79	0	0.0000
Total	10331.06	120	0.0116

The apparent emptiness of some areas is likely to reflect the rural character of the region and correspondingly low levels of development, as opposed to a genuine absence of Romano-British occupation. Certainly the distribution of excavations of all periods, recorded by the National Monuments Record, suggests that the reason for the lack of sites in north-east Cornwall and much of North Devon is because these areas have witnessed considerably less excavation than the south and west (FIG. 10.3). However, the lack of excavated Roman-period sites in east Cornwall and south-west Devon is harder to explain, given that these areas appear to have seen reasonable levels of excavation. Furthermore, Taylor's distribution map of Iron Age and Romano-British settlements indicates that this area was likely to have been well populated in the Roman period, though much of this evidence derives from undated cropmarks (Taylor 2007, 24, fig. 4.1). The disjuncture between excavated Romano-British sites and Taylor's mapped settlements may suggest that many sites identified by Taylor are actually not of Romano-British date, and that this area was indeed sparsely populated. However, an alternative, and perhaps more likely, scenario is that the excavations that have taken place here have typically been of insufficient scale to allow recognition of late Iron Age or Romano-British settlements.

Some blank areas in the settlement pattern are, however, apparently genuine. Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor are poorly represented by sites in Taylor's map, and few excavations have produced evidence for late Iron Age or Romano-British activity. These areas seem to have been relatively empty of permanent occupation during the late Iron Age and Roman periods, and were perhaps used only seasonally for grazing, as suggested by recent palaeoenvironmental evidence (Rippon *et*

al. 2015, 229–30; Taylor 2007, 70). The abandonment of these areas, which had previously seen widespread settlement in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, may have been a result of climatic deterioration and human impact that resulted in acidification of the soils and nutrient loss (Straker *et al.* 2007, 104).

ROMAN RURAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement pattern in the South-West region is principally of rural character. Nucleated settlements are rare, and the only major town is *Isca*, modern Exeter, which, after being established as a legionary base in the A.D. 50s, became the *civitas* capital of the Dumnonii following the abandonment of the fortress in the 70s. Mount Batten, on the coast immediately south of Plymouth, was a prehistoric and Roman port, although destructive development since the nineteenth century means that the site is not well understood (Cunliffe 1988). Other ports include a site at Topsham on the River Exe, south-east of Exeter, established to serve the legionary fortress; although excavated and published examples of additional ports are currently lacking, many more examples are suspected (cf. Holbrook 2001). A long-running research excavation at Mount Folly overlooking Bigbury Bay in South Devon revealed a number of enclosures with substantial quantities of pottery and other finds, indicating a potentially very important coastal trading centre, especially during the late Iron Age and early Roman period, although the results are yet to be published (<http://www.mtfolly.org/>).

A network of Roman forts and signal stations are known in Devon, contemporary with the occupation of the Exeter fortress, but few have

TABLE 10.2: NUMBER OF SITES BY TYPE IN EACH LANDSCAPE ZONE IN THE SOUTH-WEST REGION

<i>Landscape zone</i>	<i>Farmsteads</i>	<i>Villas</i>	<i>Roadside settlements</i>	<i>Villages</i>	<i>Hillforts</i>	<i>Other sites</i>
Cornish Killas and Granites	29	1	0	1	7	7
Devon Redlands	17	1	2	0	1	4
South Devon	9	0	0	1	2	4
West Penwith	7	0	0	1	2	1
The Lizard	3	0	0	0	1	2
Exmoor and the Quantocks	3	0	0	0	0	5
Isles of Scilly	2	0	0	0	0	2
The Culm	2	0	1	0	0	3
Lundy	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dartmoor	1	0	0	0	0	0
Bodmin Moor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	74	2	3	3	13	28

been extensively excavated (e.g. Bidwell 2007, fig. 1). Until recently only one fort, Nanstallon, was known from Cornwall, although the discovery of two new sites at Restormel and Calstock indicates a greater military presence than previously suspected (Nowakowski 2011, 256; Smart 2014). Villas are also not well represented in the South-West, with only two certain examples, Magor Farm, Illogan, Cornwall (O'Neil 1933), and Crediton, Devon (Griffith 1988a), being excavated. The Cornish example is sometimes interpreted as the residence of an official or private contractor associated with control of the tin industry (Mattingly 2006, 407; Wachter 1995, 342), while the villa at Crediton seems likely to have had an association with the town at Exeter (see below, pp. 342, 346). In addition to these, a small number of sites characterised as farmsteads have produced features that suggest a certain degree of status; Overland (Ugnow 2000), in the Exe Valley, and Otterton Point (Brown and Holbrook 1989), on East Devon's south coast, both produced roof and hypocaust tiles, indicating the presence of substantial structures with heated rooms, and a number of other findspots of Roman tile in Devon might suggest the locations of other buildings of some status (Bidwell 1980, 58, note 49).

Given the above pattern, it is scarcely surprising that the primary site type for the region is the individual farmstead, which made up 74 of the 92 domestic settlements (80 per cent) (TABLE 10.2; FIG. 10.4). Villages are rare, and the only sites classified as such by the project in the South-West are Ipplepen, in Devon, and Chysauster (Hencken 1933) and Carvossa, Probus (Carlyon 1987), both in Cornwall. The precise character of Carvossa is not clearly understood, however, and in the late Iron Age it is more akin to a univallate hillfort (although it does not command the top of a hill).

The defences enclosed an area of around 2 ha, although there are indications from geophysical survey that extra-mural occupation extended well outside the ramparts. The scale of the site and the richness of its finds assemblage indicate that it was rather different from the region's farmsteads, and an early Roman military association has been suggested (*ibid.*, 106). At Ipplepen, in South Devon, an extensive Iron Age and Roman nucleated settlement is the subject of an on-going investigation by Exeter University and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The site has been interpreted as a village, although the full character, extent and chronology of the settlement are currently still very unclear. Although known villages are rare in the region, the recently identified site at Ipplepen, along with other recently investigated sites in Cornwall, indicate that such settlements may have been more common than our current evidence suggests. Geophysical survey and excavation near Polzeath in North Cornwall (reported on after data collection was completed) has indicated the presence of a further two nucleated settlements, where large numbers of unenclosed roundhouses, covering extensive areas, were occupied between the Iron Age and Roman periods (Borlase 2015). The open settlement at Harlyn Bay, North Cornwall (Jones and Quinnell 2014), described in further detail below, was perhaps a similar type of settlement.

There are few roadside settlements in the South-West, all in the east of the region, though a Roman road runs at least as far as Okehampton in West Devon. Despite the presence of the so called 'milestones' with imperial dedications in Cornwall, no Roman roads have yet been confirmed from the county, accounting for the lack of roadside settlements in this part of the region (Quinnell 2004, 234). Where they do occur, roadside settlements are generally ill understood, although

most appear to have had Roman military origins, developing out of forts in the late first century A.D. A site at Newland Mill, North Tawton is thought to relate to civilian occupation that succeeded a Roman fort (Passmore 2005), while a group of sites at Topsham may relate to a roadside settlement associated with the port on the River Exe, which was linked to Exeter by road. Topsham had military origins but occupation continued throughout the Roman period (Sage and Allan 2004). At St Loye's, 2 km south-east of Exeter on the road to Topsham, a late Iron Age farmstead was replaced by an unusual site with military origins (Stead and Payne 2013; Steinmetzer and Salvatore 2010). This may have been a military supply depot that subsequently developed into a civilian settlement or, as Holbrook (2015, 96–8) has suggested, was perhaps a purpose-built civilian settlement from the outset, with defences constructed by the army.

After farmsteads, the other major class of settlement in the South-West comprises sites broadly classified as hillforts. Thirteen excavated examples fall within this class, although there is considerable variation between them and they do

not form a unified group. Some are coastal promontory forts, sometimes referred to as 'cliff castles', a regionally distinctive type of settlement, usually connected to the mainland by a small neck, providing natural defences. Almost all excavated hillforts are in Cornwall, although examples are also known from Devon. The dating of many of the sites is uncertain, but most appear to have had mid- to late Iron Age origins, often continuing into the mid-first century A.D. The principal period of activity at Trevelgue Head, however, one of the best-understood examples, was the mid-Iron Age, when it seems to have been closely associated with iron smelting (Nowakowski and Quinnell 2011). Here, there is little evidence for late Iron Age occupation, although the site apparently saw activity throughout the Roman period and a large number of fourth-century coins and pottery attest to use towards the end of the Roman period. The earliest dating of the promontory fort at Tintagel is somewhat uncertain, although during the early medieval and medieval periods the site was clearly an important trading centre with access to high-status goods from across the Mediterranean. Recent excavations

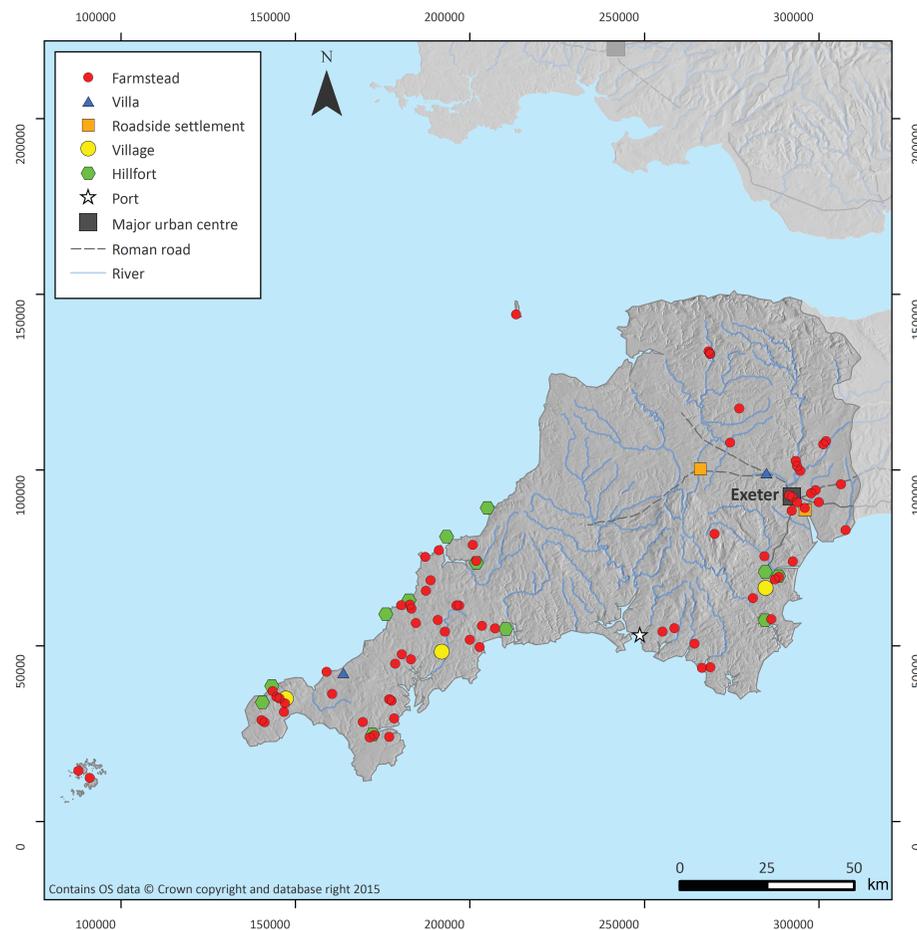


FIG. 10.4. Distribution of excavated late Iron Age/Roman rural settlement in the South-West region in relation to Roman roads and the *civitas* capital at Exeter

have, however, identified a late Roman phase of activity that included a number of structural features, although the precise nature of the site during the Roman period is uncertain (Barrowman *et al.* 2007). In inland areas hillforts with earthwork ramparts occur in a range of sizes and forms. Some are univallate, such as that at Gear, Cornwall (Edwards and Kirkham 2001), and the earliest phase of the enclosure at Carvossa, Probus, Cornwall (Carlyon 1987) (though as noted above, the site at Carvossa, Probus was not a true hillfort), whereas others are bivallate e.g. Castle Dore (Quinnell and Harris 1985) and Killibury, Eglshale (Miles 1977), both in Cornwall. As with promontory forts, these sites typically appear to have originated in the mid- to late Iron Age, and tend to continue until the first century A.D., although in some cases activity may have continued into, or been renewed in, the Roman period, as at Gear. At Cadbury Castle, Devon, west of the Exe Valley, an inland hillfort of likely mid- to late Iron Age date saw some excavation in the nineteenth century, and a deep shaft (then interpreted as a well) was identified (Fox 1952). A number of objects were recovered from the shaft, and the composition of the assemblage, which predominantly comprised dress accessories, strongly suggests it was a votive deposit, indicating that the hillfort had become the focus for a shrine during the late Roman period.

FARMSTEAD CHRONOLOGY

Before discussing the chronology of farmsteads in the South-West, it is important to comment on the issue of the dating evidence from the region. As Iron Age and Romano-British material culture occurs less frequently here than in some other regions, and because many sites, particularly in

Devon, have seen only small-scale investigation, the dating evidence for some sites is based on a relatively small number of pottery sherds. There have also been significant developments in our understanding of the dating of particular types of pottery, such as South Devon ware (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 177–81). The chronology of the various Gabbroic wares of Cornwall is better understood now than during much of the twentieth century, when many sites were excavated and dated (Quinnell 2004, 109–11). Whereas radiocarbon dating has been increasingly employed across the region, this technique often provides only a broad range of dates, and at sites where radiocarbon dates represent the only dating evidence available our understanding of settlement chronology can be very imprecise. At Parsonage Cross, near Littlehempston, Devon, for example, dating of the site is based on a single radiocarbon-dated sample which provided a date range of between cal. A.D. 10 and 410 (Reed and Turton 2005). Nevertheless, as we are dealing with a relatively large sample of 74 farmsteads (though of course this is small compared to the samples from the Central Belt and South regions), chronological patterns can be identified that are hopefully meaningful. Nonetheless, the patterns and interpretations that follow must be regarded as tentative given the limitations of the dating evidence at some sites.

The available dating evidence suggests that farmsteads in the region were occupied over a range of time spans. Some exhibit extremely long periods of occupation spanning several centuries from the mid- to late Iron Age through to the fourth and sometimes fifth centuries (e.g. Halligye: Startin 2010), whereas some may have been occupied for relatively short periods of time (e.g. Clanacombe, Thurlestone: Greene and Greene

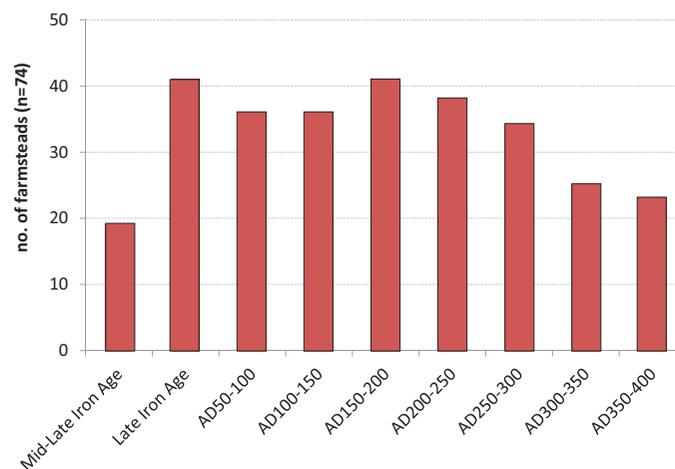


FIG. 10.5. Number of farmsteads in use over time in the South-West region (NB: the M–LIA data only include sites that continued into the late Iron Age)

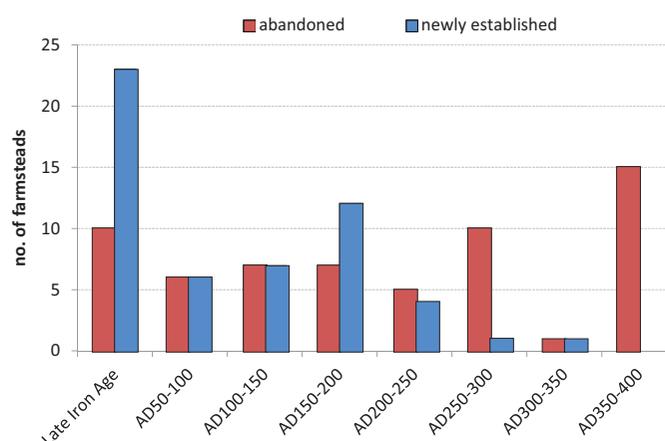


FIG. 10.6. 'New' and 'abandoned' farmsteads over time in the South-West region

1970). The broad chronological data for the region indicates a substantial number of new farmsteads during the late Iron Age, followed by mildly fluctuating, although broadly stable, numbers of sites until the end of the third century A.D. (FIG. 10.5). Many settlements were abandoned during the fourth century, although a number continued into the fifth century and sometimes beyond, particularly in Cornwall, as, for example, at Trethurgy (Quinnell 2004).

Whereas the settlement pattern for the region appears to have been one of broad continuity in terms of the numbers of farmsteads occupied, this belies a dynamic and changing situation, and while many farmsteads did indeed continue throughout much of the Iron Age and Roman periods, some witnessed abandonment or change, and new farmsteads appeared at different times. FIGURE 10.6 reveals how the late Iron Age and early Roman periods appear to have been particularly dynamic. A large number of new settlements appeared during the late Iron Age, though not all of these continued through into the Roman period, with a substantial number going out of use before or at around the time of the conquest. Between the second half of the first century A.D. and the mid-third century there was a mixed and fluid pattern, predominantly of continuation, but with some farmsteads being abandoned and others newly emerging. The second century A.D., particularly the latter half, appears to have seen an increase in the establishment of new farmsteads, alongside widespread continuity at many others. Beyond the second century, however, the number of new establishments decreased quite dramatically, and only three farmsteads in the region were established after the mid-third century, although relatively large numbers continued to be occupied at least until the mid-fourth century. A major phase of settlement disuse seems to have occurred in the second half of the fourth century A.D.

There are some notable intra-regional differences in the chronological development of farmsteads in the South-West region, recognisable when those from Cornwall and Devon are viewed independently (FIG. 10.7). In Cornwall there appears to have been a substantial increase in the establishment of new farmsteads during the late Iron Age, more so than at any other period, and this appears to have been the period during which the largest numbers of Cornish settlements were in use. At most farmsteads with Iron Age origins occupation continued into the late first and second centuries A.D., yet activity ceased at some sites, and the number of farmsteads in use continued to decline as settlements were abandoned at a greater rate than new establishments emerged (FIG. 10.8). The first half of the second century appears to have been a time of major settlement abandonment, although many *new* farmsteads were also established during this century, which appears to have been a very dynamic period.

FIGURE 10.9 maps the major phases in which large numbers of new farmsteads were apparently established, showing the difference between the mid- to late Iron Age, the late Iron Age, and the second century A.D. In the late Iron Age there appears to have been a shift inland, moving away from the coastal areas that had been the predominant focus during the mid-Iron Age. The changing geographical emphasis for new farmsteads continued in the second century A.D., when the focus shifted somewhat towards the central-south of Cornwall.

The reasons for these temporal changes in geographical focus are uncertain, although the typical pattern of continuity at most sites may suggest that territorial boundaries were clearly defined, resulting in new settlements being established in parts of the landscape that were not already intensively settled. Alternatively, the expansion of settlement into new areas may

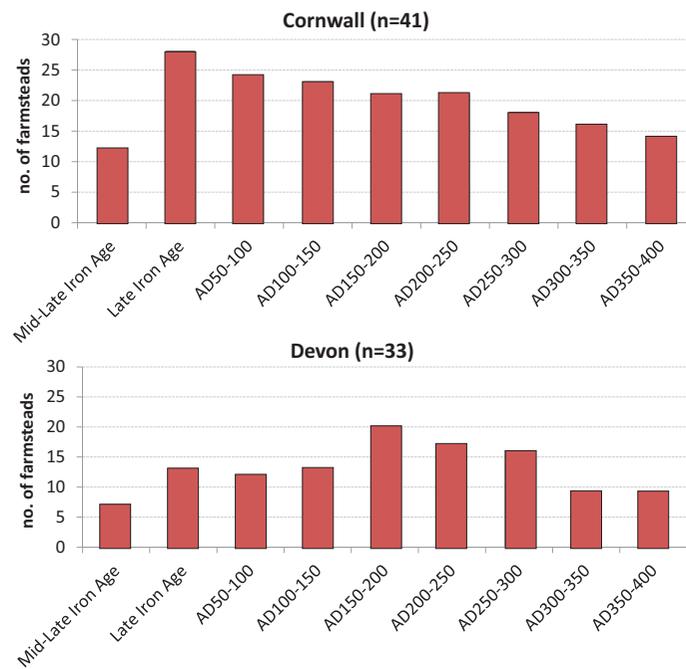


FIG. 10.7. Number of farmsteads in use over time in Cornwall and Devon

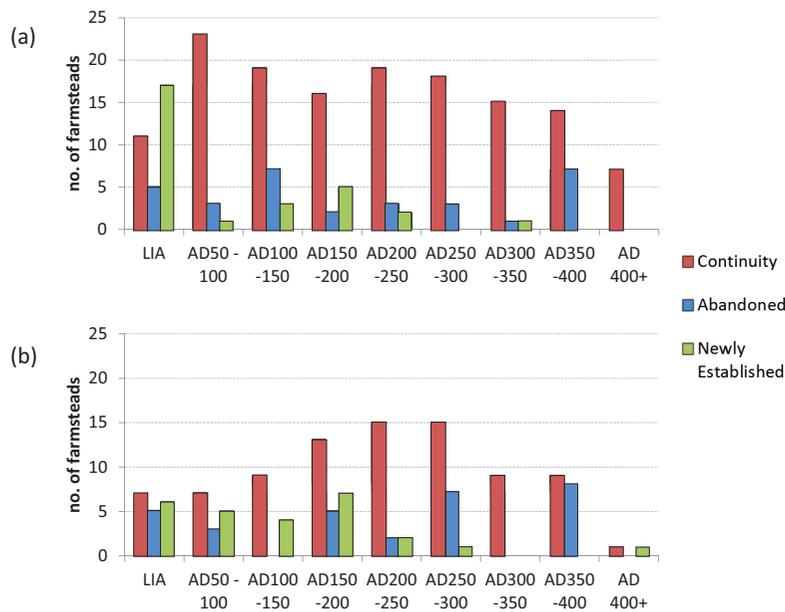


FIG. 10.8. Continuity, abandonment and the establishment of new farmsteads over time in (a) Cornwall and (b) Devon

perhaps represent increased imperial interest in the mineral resources on offer in Cornwall; it is notable that the principal tin lodes are situated in the south of Cornwall, in the same broad area in which the new second-century sites are located. The lack of direct evidence for Iron Age or Roman tin-mining in the area means that this can only be a tentative suggestion, although it is possible that much evidence may have been lost to intensive and destructive medieval and post-medieval mining (Penhallurick 1986, 173–236; Holbrook 2001, 154–5). Nonetheless, some sites have

produced evidence for an association with the tin industry: at St Mawgan in Pydar there was direct evidence for tin smelting and a stamped tin ingot was previously found just south of the site at Carnanton (Threipland 1956; *RIB II* 2405.1), while another tin ingot was recovered from Trethurgy (Quinnell 2004). The only major nucleated settlement in Cornwall at Carvossa also produced extensive evidence for smelting, including of iron and tin (Carlyon 1987). The number of farmsteads in use in Cornwall continues to decline through to the later fourth century.

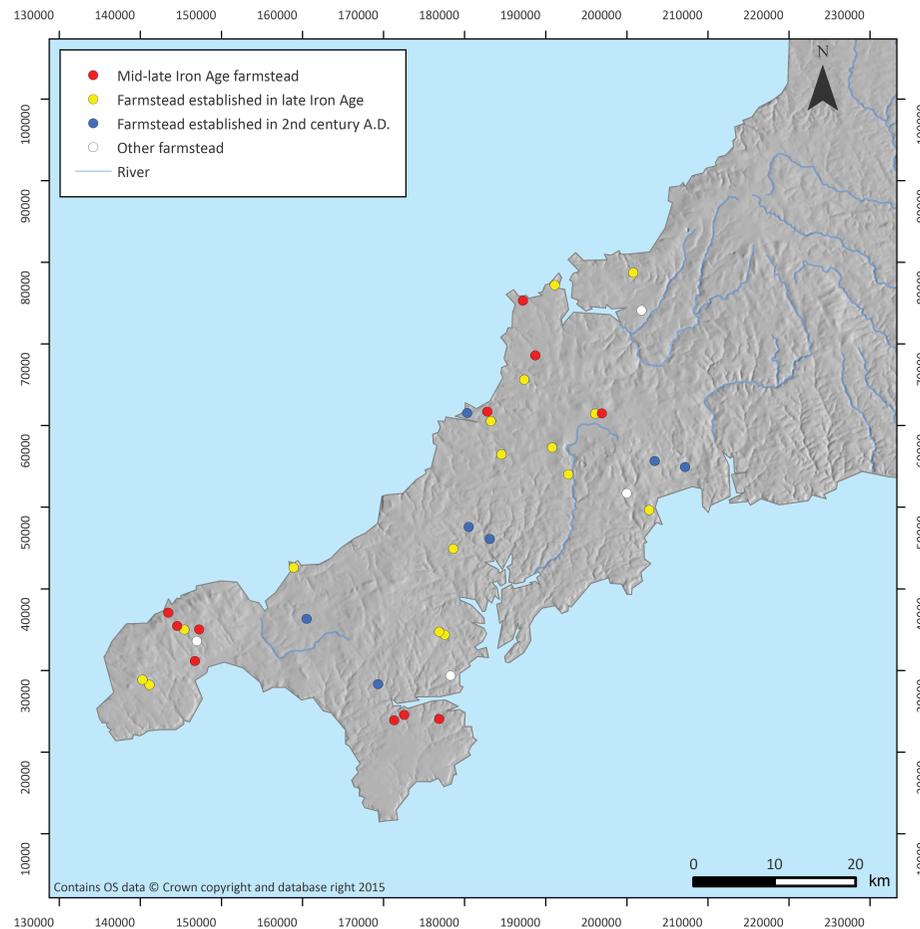


FIG. 10.9. Map showing the geographical shift in focus during major periods of new settlement, showing pre-existing farmsteads of mid- to late Iron Age date (second century B.C. or earlier to first century B.C.); farmsteads newly established during the late Iron Age (100 B.C. to mid-first century A.D.); farmsteads newly established during the second century A.D.

However, a relatively large number of sites continued into the fifth century and beyond, and there is perhaps less evidence for a late Roman major phase of abandonment than has been recognised in many other areas, including parts of the Central Belt, the South and the East.

In Devon the chronological pattern appears to be somewhat different (FIGS 10.7 and 10.8). There is a similar but less dramatic increase in the number of farmsteads in use during the late Iron Age, and then numbers remain relatively stable until the mid- to late second century A.D. Again, however, this seemingly stable pattern belies a fluid situation, and whereas several sites do exhibit continuity between the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, many farmsteads appear not to have continued beyond the late Iron Age. Several new farmsteads were established in the later first century A.D., yet the period that saw the most new farmsteads emerge was the second century, particularly the latter half; the data suggest that this was the period during which most farmsteads were in use in Devon.

The extent to which the increase in farmsteads in Devon during the second century A.D. is associated with the similar increase noted in Cornwall during the same period is unclear, but the shared phenomenon is perhaps part of the wider provincial pattern of rural expansion. It is notable, however, that the new sites established in Devon at this time very clearly cluster around Exeter, in the valleys of the Exe, the Culm and the Clyst (FIG. 10.10, top). The increase in farmsteads here at this time may reflect increased rural settlement associated with the development of the town at Exeter from the late first century onwards and its status as the capital of the *civitas Dumnoniorum* (Wacher 1995, 335–43).

As in Cornwall, very few excavated farmsteads were established in Devon after the second century A.D. In contrast to Cornwall, however, there appears to have been a fairly significant episode of abandonment between the late second and early fourth centuries, which spatially seem to cluster around Exeter (FIG. 10.10). It therefore seems that sites that may have emerged in response to the

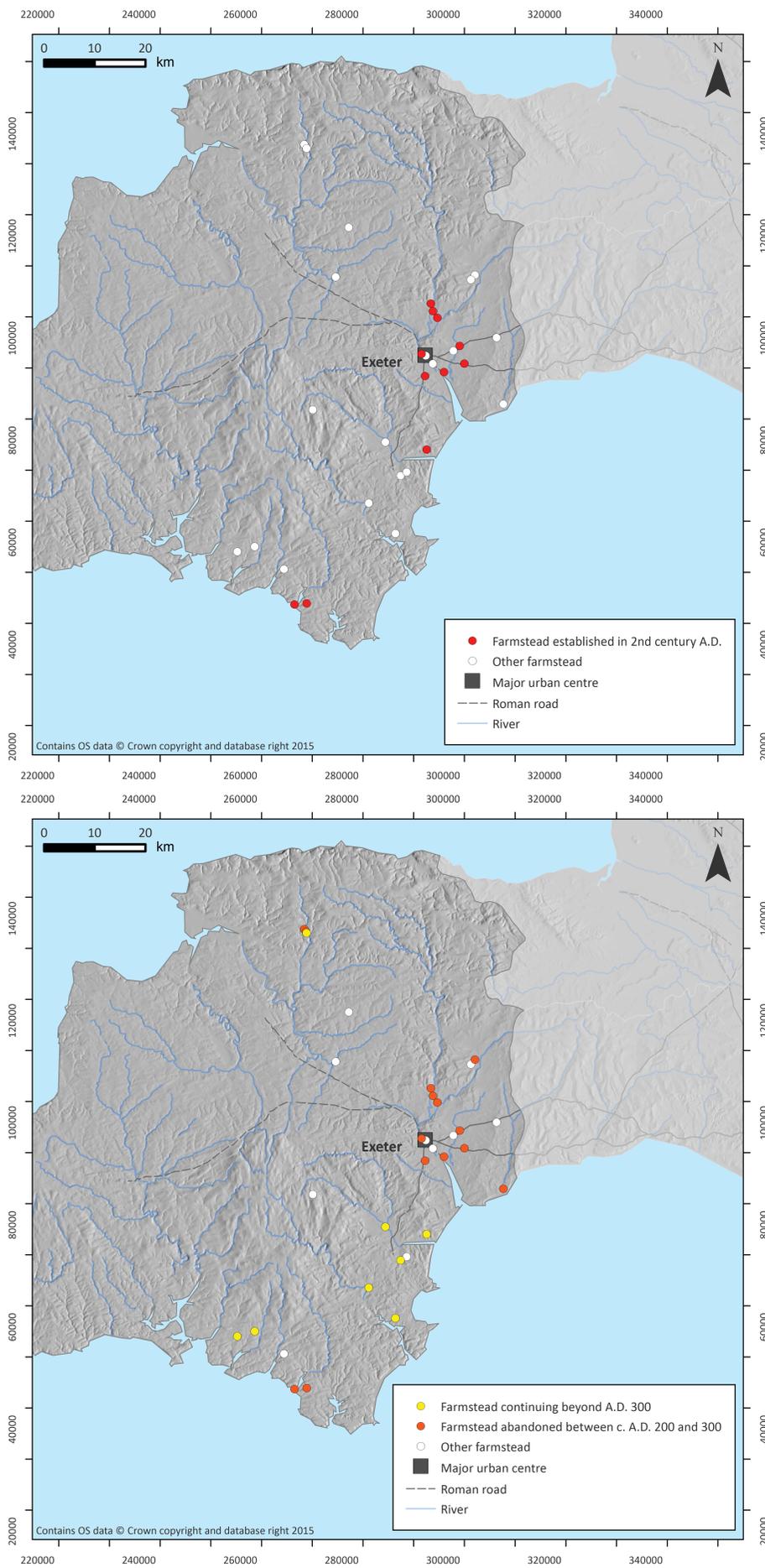


FIG. 10.10 Distribution of farmsteads in the eastern part of the South-West region established during the second century A.D. and distribution of farmsteads abandoned *c.* A.D. 200–300 alongside those that continued into the fourth century

development of the *civitas* capital had relatively restricted date ranges, typically occupied during the second century A.D. before going out of use by the end of the third century. Sites with evidence for continuity into the fourth century are principally situated well to the south-west, in South Devon, with outliers to the north on Exmoor and Lundy. Although dating is often imprecise, these sites typically produce evidence for longer periods of occupation during the Roman period, often with origins in the late Iron Age (e.g. Sherford New Community Development, South Hams, Devon: Best 2006). If these different chronological patterns are genuine, the reasons for them remain unclear. The 'Exeter farmsteads' typically occupy low-lying terrain in the Exe Valley, raising the possibility that settlements in these areas were adversely affected by an episode of climatic instability that appears to have begun at around the turn of the third century (McCormick *et al.* 2012, 185–6), although there may well have been social or political motivators for their early termination.

The only villa known from the east of the region is at Crediton, approximately 10 km north-west of Exeter. The site has only been subject to small-scale excavation and is not well understood, but such dating evidence as there is suggests that it was of late Roman date, perhaps occupied during the third and fourth centuries (Griffith 1988a). It is impossible to establish any direct relationship, but the apparent emergence of this villa at around the time that farmsteads in the area were going out of use raises questions about changing patterns of land ownership and management. Exeter witnessed some contraction in occupation from the mid-fourth century onwards, with the virtual cessation of coin usage by *c.* A.D. 380 (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 11–14), suggesting that its population had peaked during the third and early fourth centuries. It is therefore possible that the inhabitants of the farmsteads abandoned during the late second and third centuries were attracted into the *civitas* capital for economic reasons.

FARMSTEAD MORPHOLOGY

Taylor (2007, 53) characterised the morphological pattern of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement in the South-West as one of abundant, dispersed, enclosed settlement and relatively common open farmsteads, with complex settlements almost entirely absent. Within the current dataset, it was possible to assign firm morphological classifications to 42 (57 per cent) of the excavated farmsteads, and these adhere closely to the pattern established by Taylor, with the vast majority (37 sites, 88 per cent) classified as enclosed farmsteads. A further ten sites were regarded as potential enclosed

farmsteads, but these remained unclassified as it was not possible to be confident about their form based on the available site plans. Only a small number of farmsteads (just four) were classified as open settlements, yet, as elsewhere, these sites must undoubtedly be under-represented owing to the difficulty of recognising them during excavation. Indeed, a further three unclassified sites were considered to be potentially open, or at least had possible open phases. Only one site, Shepherd's Lane, Teignmouth (Haines 2013), was identified as a complex farmstead, and none of the unclassified sites were regarded as potential candidates for this type of settlement.

While dispersed enclosed farmsteads broadly represent the principal settlements of the South-West, there are clear differences in the nature of enclosed sites between the west and east of the region which have long been recognised. The distinctive 'rounds' and courtyard house settlements of west Cornwall, for example, are of an entirely different character to the enclosed farmsteads of the east of the region, and the two areas deserve to be addressed separately.

Cornwall

The principal enclosed settlement type in Cornwall is the small enclosed earthwork sites traditionally referred to as 'rounds'. As the name suggests, these are typically of curvilinear form although enclosures of other shapes are known (FIG. 10.11); Grambla, Wendron, for example, was rectilinear in shape (Saunders 1972). The enclosures at these sites usually comprised ditched and embanked circuits, sometimes with stone revetments (e.g. Goldherring, Sancreed: Guthrie 1969, and Trethurgy: Quinnell 2004). Some were represented by a single ditch and bank, as at St Mawgan-in-Pydar (Threipland 1956), whereas others had multiple ditches, for instance Trevisker, St Eval (Apsimon and Greenfield 1972), which had a rampart and inner and outer ditches.

Rounds are typically regarded as a Romano-British rather than Iron Age settlement form (Nowakowski 2011, 245; Fitzpatrick 2007, 129), and some appear not to have been established prior to the Roman period (e.g. Trethurgy: Quinnell 2004). Several, however, have produced evidence for Iron Age origins, and sites often exhibit complex sequences of change and development. Penhale Round, for example, originated as a univallate enclosure in the late Iron Age, at around 100 B.C., but continued to be used up until the fourth or fifth centuries A.D., and over time there were a series of modifications to the enclosing ditches and ramparts so that it culminated in a multivallate complex of enclosures and ditches (Johnston *et al.* 1999). A rectangular

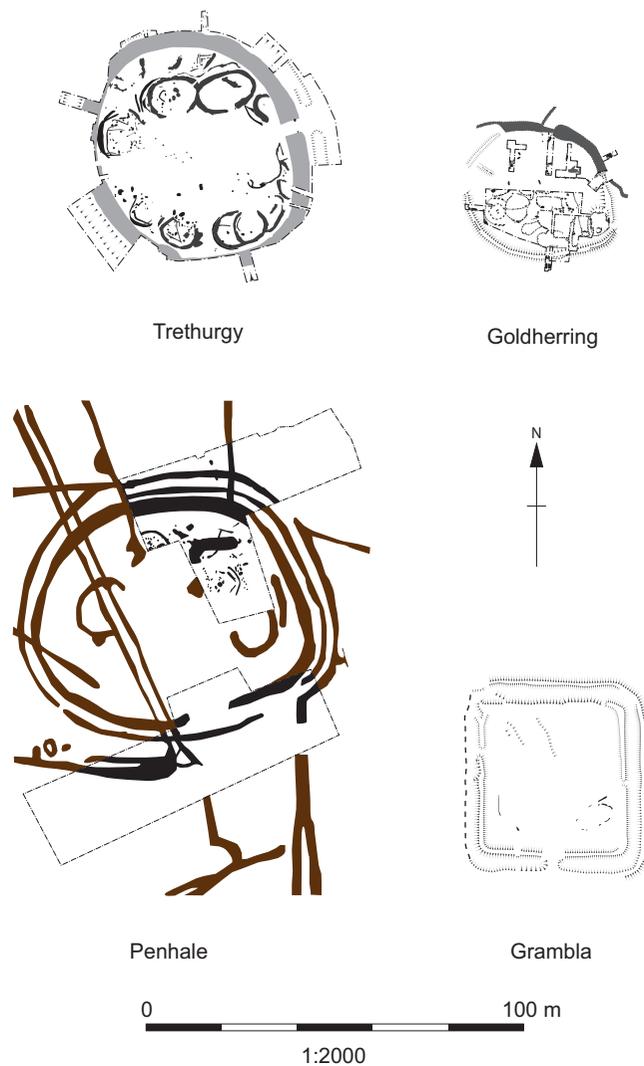


FIG. 10.11. Plans of four Cornish 'rounds' showing the variation in their form (Guthrie 1969; Johnston *et al.* 1999; Quinnell 2004; Saunders 1972)

enclosure at Boden Vean, St Anthony-in-Meneage, on the Lizard Peninsula, was found to have been principally occupied during the early to mid-Iron Age, with evidence of reuse in the late Iron Age and Roman periods (Gossip 2009). While most rounds have produced good evidence for occupation, not all appear to have been domestic settlements. Excavations at Little Quoit Farm, St Columb Major, revealed no evidence for domestic activity and the site appears instead to have been a specialist ironworking site (Lawson-Jones and Kirkham 2010). The round excavated at Nancemere Fields, Truro may also have been used principally for industrial purposes, although this site produced some limited evidence for domestic activity (Higgins 2009).

The excavated rounds, of course, form only one component of the evidence, and many unexcavated examples survive as earthworks. Much of the Cornish lowlands appear to have been settled, and Quinnell (2004, 211) estimates that there may

have been two rounds per km² in densely populated areas. This type of settlement does not occur uniformly throughout Cornwall, however, being focused on the central part of the county, principally on the Cornish Killas and Granites, along with other types of settlement. At Tremough, Penryn, for instance, a small C-shaped shallow-ditched enclosure enclosed an oval timber-built structure (Gossip and Jones 2007), and it has been suggested that the site may have seen only occasional occupation, or was perhaps associated with stock management (Nowakowski 2011, 252).

Unenclosed settlements also occur. At Scarcewater a rectangular timber building was placed outside a series of possible non-domestic enclosures, all set within a rectilinear field system (Jones and Taylor 2010). An extensive, probably open settlement has also recently been identified at Harlyn Bay on the North Cornish coast, thought to have been occupied between *c.* 500 B.C. and the mid-second century A.D. (Jones and

Quinnell 2014). This site is probably associated with a large late Iron Age to early Roman period cemetery, containing over 130 graves, excavated in the early twentieth century, located just 250 m from the settlement (Whimster 1977). As discussed above, it is possible that Harlyn Bay would be better regarded as a village, perhaps similar to the extensive open settlements recently identified near Polzeath (Borlase 2015). At Threemilestone, Higher Besore, an important open settlement is thought to have been occupied between the third and first centuries B.C., and may have been associated in some way with the nearby Threemilestone Round, although the round was probably constructed towards the end of the occupation of the open settlement (Nowakowski 2011, 245–7). As relatively few open settlements have been excavated the pattern is still somewhat unclear, yet unenclosed sites typically appear to have been occupied during the mid- to late Iron Ages, often going out of use before or during the early Roman period, and there seems to have been a temporal shift from open to enclosed settlement in Cornwall, as in many other parts of Britain. At Bodrifty, Mulfra Hill, near Penzance in West Penwith, an open settlement that included a number of stone-built roundhouses was occupied during the mid-Iron Age, possibly continuing from the Bronze Age, and here a number of the buildings only became enclosed in the late Iron Age (Dudley 1956).

West Penwith, in the far west of Cornwall may have been a focus for open settlements, with many identified during the National Mapping Programme (Fitzpatrick 2007, 129). Here, open settlements, sometimes characterised as hamlets or villages, of ‘courtyard houses’ (a type of building discussed in more detail below), are of a somewhat different character to the rounds, which are more typical of central Cornwall (FIG. 10.12). Particularly well-known excavated examples include Chysauster (Hencken 1933), Carn Euny (Christie 1978) and Porthmeor (Hirst 1936). Although many courtyard house settlements appear to have been of open form, some were enclosed by ‘rounds’ like the settlements in central Cornwall. At Porthmeor, for instance, a group of courtyard houses was originally open but later, perhaps during the second century A.D., enclosed by a sub-circular drystone wall; at Goldherring, Sancreed (Guthrie 1969), a group of courtyard houses were enclosed by a ditched and stone-revetted bank. The difference between the rounds of central Cornwall and the courtyard settlements of the west is therefore not clear-cut, although courtyard houses have a very narrow distribution and all excavated examples are restricted to the Lands’ End Peninsula and the Isles of Scilly, with none recorded east of the River Fal.

Whereas Chysauster is classified as a village on the project database and the other courtyard settlements as farmsteads, the sites are essentially

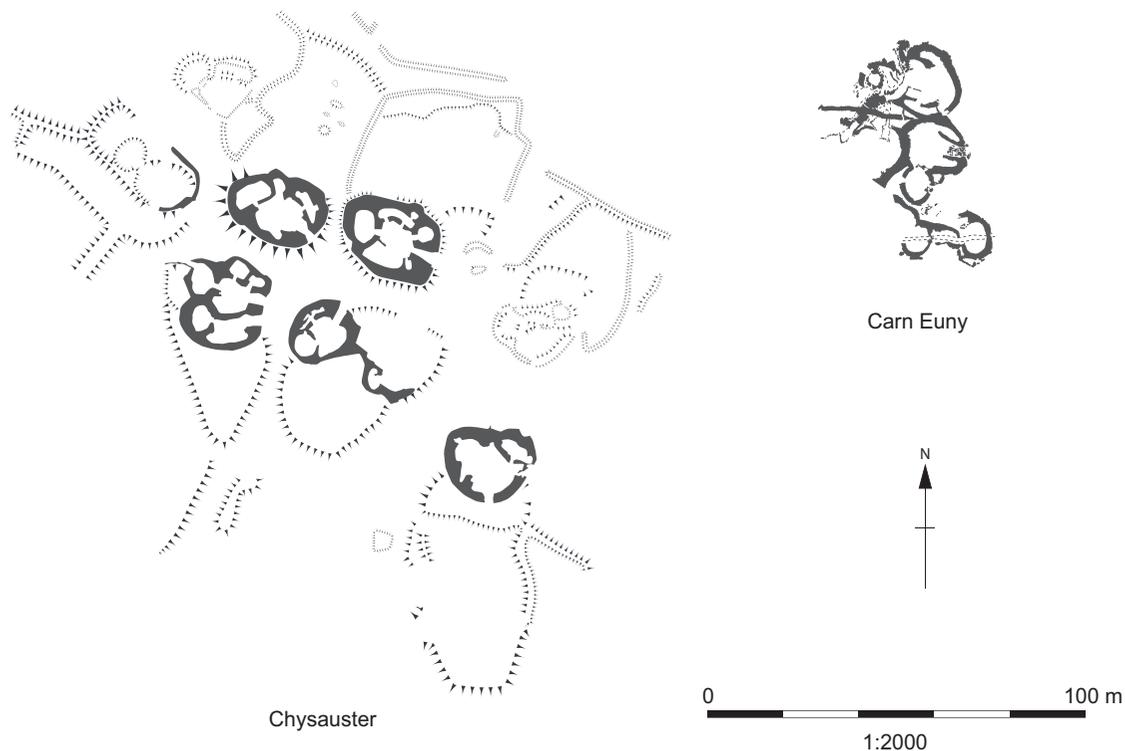


FIG. 10.12. Plans of Courtyard House settlements at Chysauster (Hencken 1933) and Carn Euny, Cornwall (Christie 1978)

of similar character and the distinction between Chysauster and the others is really only one of scale. Over twenty buildings were identified at Chysauster and around eleven at Carn Euny (although unexcavated features suggest that this site may also have been more extensive). Eleven buildings were also identified at Porthmeor, and five at Goldherring, while solitary examples are also known, as at Carnaquidden, Gulval (Nowakowski 2011, 243). These types of buildings therefore occur across a spectrum of settlement sizes, ranging from farmsteads to small villages, and the term hamlet perhaps best describes some sites. Settlements with courtyard houses appear principally to have been of Roman-period date, although in some cases they developed out of sites with Iron Age origins, as at Carn Euny, and perhaps at Chysauster and Porthmeor.

Devon and West Somerset

Farmsteads in the eastern half of the region were strikingly different to those of Cornwall, not typically enclosed by substantial drystone or earthwork enclosures, and therefore less visible and correspondingly poorly understood compared

with their Cornish counterparts. The only farmstead characterised as being of complex form in the region, Shepherd’s Lane, Teignmouth (Haines 2013), occurs in the Devon Redlands. Here, evaluation trenching and geophysical survey revealed a large enclosure formed by several concentric ditches, with a number of ancillary enclosures, perhaps stock enclosures, all dating from between the second and fourth centuries A.D. As the site was not subject to full excavation the phasing of the individual components of the site are not well understood. Other sites in the eastern part of the South-West, where classified, are principally of enclosed type. These occur in a range of different forms (FIG. 10.13), and while curvilinear examples are known (e.g. Southernhay East Car Park, Exeter: Stead 2004), this form does not dominate the settlement pattern as it does in Cornwall. D-shaped (Milber Down site 2: Vachell 1964) and irregular (St Loye’s, Topsham Road, Exeter: Stead and Payne 2013) examples are both known, but in Devon the most common enclosure type is rectilinear (e.g. Hayes Farm, Clyst Honiton: Simpson *et al.* 1989). Only four rectilinear enclosures have been excavated from the east of

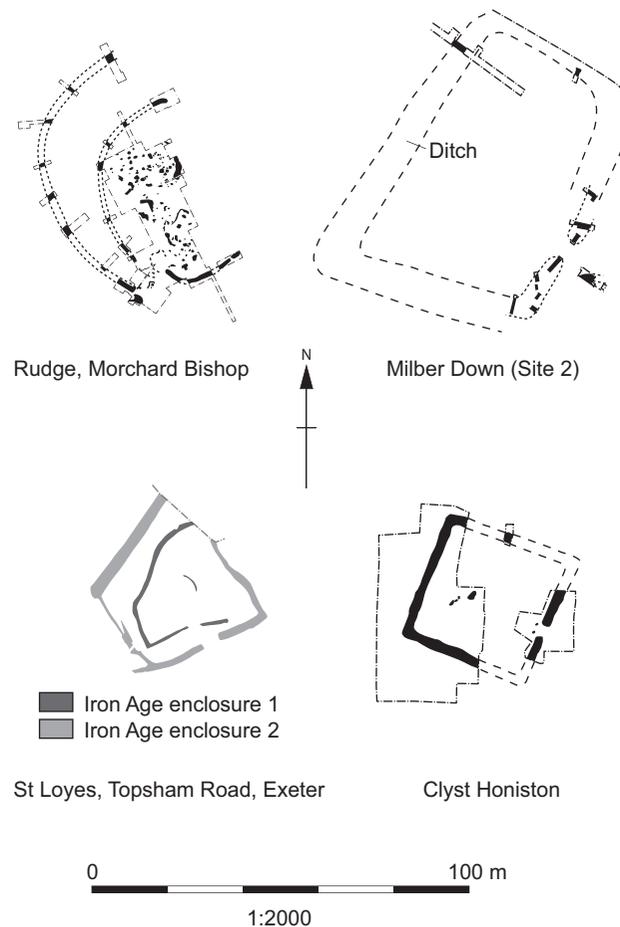


FIG. 10.13. Plans of enclosed farmsteads from Devon (Simpson *et al.* 1989; Stead and Payne 2013; Todd 1998; Vachell 1964)

the region, but their predominance in this area is confirmed by evidence from aerial photography (Griffith 1988b, 57–60). The excavated sites are too few in number to be confident of the pattern, but it is notable that of five enclosed farmsteads in Devon with evidence for Iron Age occupation none were rectilinear, and the emergence of this type of farmstead appears to have occurred during the second century A.D.

Most of Devon's farmsteads had relatively small and insubstantial enclosures, perhaps for demarcation and stock control as opposed to defence (King 2004a, 351). Earthwork enclosures were identified at Lower Well Farm, Stoke Gabriel (Masson Phillips 1966), which had a sub-rectangular double enclosure constructed of drystone coursed masonry, and at Milber Down (site 2), where a small D-shaped enclosure bank may have had a stone revetment. Elsewhere, however, banks often do not survive and enclosures are represented by ditches only. At Rudge, Morchard Bishop, a hilltop enclosure had two concentric ditches with the inner ditch containing traces of a timber palisade (Todd 1998). A timber palisade was associated with a ditched enclosure at St Loye's, Topsham Road, Exeter, prior to its replacement by a site associated with the military in the 50s A.D. (Stead and Payne 2013).

Open farmsteads also occur in Devon, although only two examples have been excavated, at Middle Burrow Farm, East Worlington, where a roundhouse may perhaps have been part of a more extensive open settlement (Gillard *et al.* 2012), and Long Range, to the west of the River Otter (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 1999). Dating evidence from both sites suggested occupation during the mid- to late Iron Age, and neither appears to have continued into the Roman period, suggesting, that in Devon, as in Cornwall (and elsewhere), there may have been a temporal shift from open towards enclosed settlement forms over time.

BUILDINGS

A total of 224 buildings were recorded from 61 sites in the South-West. The vast majority (90 per cent) were of curvilinear form, with only 23 rectilinear buildings identified, present at 12 sites. Fifteen of the 23 rectangular buildings were recorded from sites in Devon, and this majority reflects the tendency for these types of structures to occur at roadside settlements, which are absent from Cornwall. At the unusual mid-first century A.D. military-influenced defended site at St Loye's, Topsham Road, Exeter, a series of timber buildings was recorded, including a possible *fabrica* (workshop) (though see Holbrook 2015, 96–8) and buildings that may have lined the road into

the site (Stead and Payne 2013). At the possible roadside settlement at Topsham a number of timber rectangular buildings were identified, including a three-roomed domestic building with a veranda as well as a possible masonry structure (Jarvis and Maxfield 1975; FIG. 10.14). At North Tawton a civil settlement emerged out of a fort, and here a bathhouse is thought to have been associated with this later Roman phase (Griffith 1984, 24). Cornwall's single villa, at Magor Farm, Illogan (O'Neil 1933), was a relatively small, winged-corridor villa, initially constructed in the late second century and enlarged at a later but uncertain date (FIG. 10.15). The only villa from the east of the region, at Crediton, Devon (Griffith 1988a), was of late Roman date and also of winged-corridor plan. Neither of the villas included circular buildings, and they were also absent at most of the roadside settlements, although at St Loye's a roundhouse was associated with a farmstead that pre-dated the fortress-period site and subsequent civilian settlement. There is therefore little evidence of native influence on the architecture present at most villas and roadside sites. This is in contrast to the situation at Pomeroy Wood (a nucleated roadside settlement situated in East Devon but within the South region rather than the South-West), where a group of roundhouses were built over the site of a former Roman military base (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 1999).

Only five farmsteads (7 per cent of all farmsteads) produced buildings of rectangular shape, and these were sometimes quite different to the types of rectangular building present at the region's roadside settlements. At Halangy Down on the Scilly Isles a stone-built, near-rectangular building stood alongside a group of courtyard houses (Ashbee 1996). Timber, post-built, rectangular structures were identified at Scarcewater (Jones and Taylor 2010) and Trethurgy (Quinnell 2004), along with a further possible example at Harlyn Bay, where circular buildings were also recorded (Jones and Quinnell 2014). An unusual sub-square or rectangular building at Beechwood Parc, Truro, may have had an industrial rather than domestic

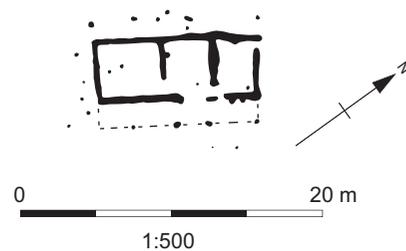


FIG. 10.14. Plan of multi-roomed, timber, domestic building from the possible roadside settlement at Topsham (Jarvis and Maxfield 1975)

function (Chadwick 2012). A rectangular masonry building with a possible hypocaust was identified at Otterton Point, Devon (Brown and Holbrook 1989), and building stone and ceramic building material suggest the presence of such a building at Overland, also in Devon (Uglow 2000). These occasional examples notwithstanding, there is on the whole little evidence for the widespread adoption of rectangular building forms at farmsteads in the region, even during the late Roman period when, in some other parts of the province, they become common.

Whereas the majority of buildings from the South-West have been classified broadly as being of curvilinear form, the term encompasses a range of structures, some of timber construction, some of stone, some circular and some oval. There is also very clear sub-regional variation, with the building forms at farmsteads in the east of the

region being in many cases fundamentally different from those from Cornwall.

In Devon most buildings were of roughly circular form, and principally of timber (or possibly mass-walled; see Ch. 3) construction, as at East Worlington (Gillard *et al.* 2012; FIG. 10.16). Indeed, late Iron Age and Romano-British curvilinear masonry structures are very rare in Devon, with only three examples excavated, one of which, at Beacon Hill, Lundy, was actually a late Bronze Age building that saw reuse during the Roman period (Quinnell 2010). At Gold Park, Dartmoor, a mid- to late Iron Age, circular stone building replaced at least one timber building (Gibson 1992). At Lower Well Farm, Stoke Gabriel, an oval, dry-stone, masonry building was of fourth century date (Masson Phillips 1966).

In Cornwall rural settlement architecture appears to have been far more mixed than in the

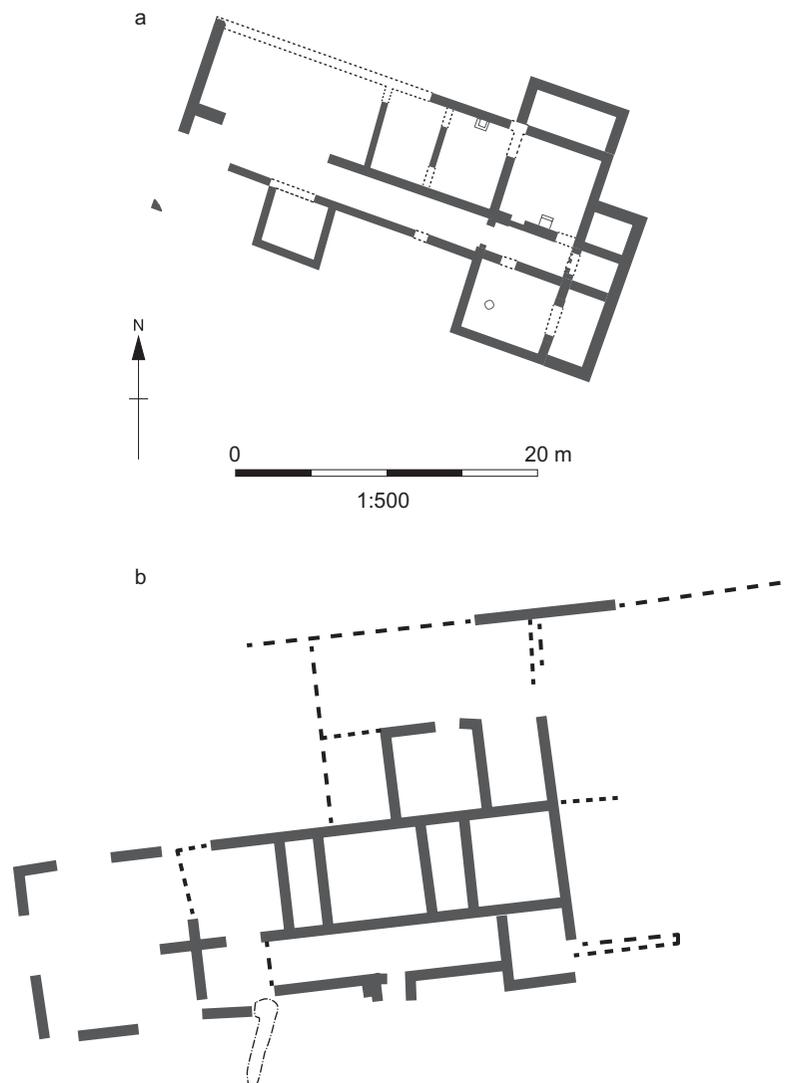


FIG. 10.15. Plans of villas at (a) Magor Farm, Illogan, Cornwall (O'Neil 1933) and (b) Crediton, Devon (Griffith 1988a)

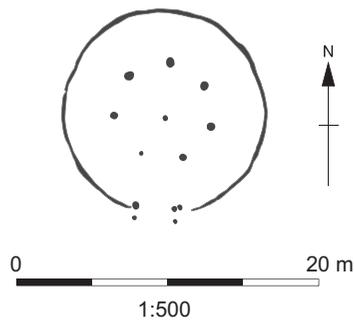


FIG. 10.16. Plan of a timber-built circular building from East Worlington, Devon (Gillard *et al.* 2012)

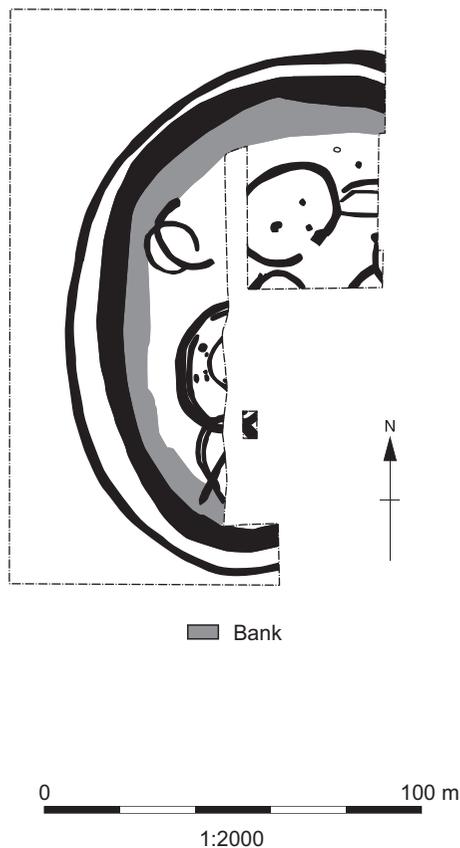


FIG. 10.17. Plan of circular and oval buildings within the round at Threemilestone, Kenwyn, Cornwall (Schwieso 1976)

east of the region. Several settlements produced evidence for houses of curvilinear timber post-built construction. At some sites these were circular, as at the 'Belowda roundhouse' (Clark 2007), whereas at others they were 'boat-shaped' or oval in form, as at Tremough, Penryn (Site 1) (Gossip and Jones 2007) and Pollamounter (Jones and Taylor 2001). At some sites both circular and oval timber structures were present, as at Threemilestone, Kenwyn (Schwieso 1976; FIG. 10.17).

At several sites timber and masonry structures have been recorded together, and the masonry structures are often of oval form. At Penhale

round, for instance, post-built roundhouses and a stone-walled oval building were recorded (Johnston *et al.* 1999). A stone-built oval building was one of several buildings at Castle Gotha, St Austell (Saunders and Harris 1982), and Grambla, Wendron, produced two stone 'boat-shaped' buildings (Saunders 1972). Trethurgy, occupied between the second and sixth centuries A.D. (occupying a location previously used in the late Iron Age, perhaps as a stock enclosure), is the only round to have seen complete excavation (Quinnell 2004), and the site exemplifies the variation in architecture at sites in Cornwall, even at a single settlement. Here, buildings included five large, stone, oval houses as well as a range of other structures of various sizes, constructed in both timber and stone, with sub-circular, oval, rectangular and irregularly shaped buildings represented. A stone-walled, polygonal structure was probably a shrine. Not all buildings were contemporary and they occurred across various phases, with houses sometimes rebuilt in the same location (see above, p. 343, FIG. 10.11).

Courtyard houses have already been referred to above, and we have seen how settlements with this building type are restricted to the far west of Cornwall, in the Lands' End Peninsula and the Scilly Isles. One of the best-known courtyard house settlements is the open 'village' at Chysauster, where at least nine or ten courtyard houses survive as earthworks, some of which have been excavated (Hencken 1933). The buildings at Chysauster typify courtyard houses elsewhere, comprising an open courtyard, defined by a very large drystone wall, with several internal structures, typically a round or oval dwelling built against the face of the wall opposite the entrance, with long rooms, sometimes sub-divided into smaller chambers, constructed in a lean-to fashion against the side walls. These may have been used for storage, as workshops or as animal shelters. The courtyards are likely to have been unroofed, while the internal structures may have had thatched or turf roofs. Sites with courtyard houses often include other types of building, and at Chysauster eleven roundhouses were also present. Courtyard houses appear to have been a predominantly Roman-period phenomenon (although Cripps (2007, 148–9) has argued for an origin in the late Iron Age), and sometimes represent the culmination of several phases of development. At Carn Euny, prior to the construction of several courtyard houses, there was evidence for previous phases of building in timber, dating back to at least the mid-late Iron Age, and there may also have been earlier activity represented by possible Bronze Age roundhouses (Christie 1978). At Porthmeor an open settlement

was enclosed by a 'round' in the second century A.D., and the courtyard houses were believed to be contemporary with this phase of enclosure, although at least one roundhouse may have been in existence before the construction of the enclosure (Hirst 1936).

A further, distinctive, architectural component at several Cornish sites is the fogou, which is only found in West Cornwall, and has parallels in the souterrains known from Brittany, Ireland and Scotland (Mattingly 2006, 405). These features are characteristically subterranean and consist of a series of underground passages constructed out of rough drystone walling, incorporating massive slabs used as capstones. Some fogous are associated with rounds – the large and complex example at Halligye appears to have been designed to facilitate access under the banks of the enclosure into the settlement area (Startin 2010). However, they are also found at open settlements, and examples are known from the courtyard house sites at Chysauster, Carn Euny and Porthmeor. While fogous are often found at settlements that saw occupation in the late Iron Age and Roman periods, they appear principally to be a mid- to late Iron Age phenomenon, and their presence at rounds and courtyard house settlements may therefore indicate previous phases of Iron Age activity, suggesting that some sites had very extensive histories. Some fogous went out of use prior to the Roman period: at Boden Vean a round and associated fogou were constructed during the fourth century B.C., and whereas the enclosure continued to be used into the Roman period, the fogou was abandoned during the Iron Age (Gossip 2009). However, at Carn Euny a fogou underwent a series of construction phases between the fifth century B.C. and the first century A.D., and ultimately adjoined one of the settlement's main courtyard houses (Christie 1978). The Halligye fogou and its associated enclosure were first constructed during the sixth–fifth century B.C., continuing in use until at least the late Iron Age, with some likely reuse in the late Roman period and beyond (Startin 2010). A fogou associated with Penhale Round may not have been infilled until as late as the third or fourth century A.D. (Johnston *et al.* 1999). Although fogous have clear early/mid-Iron Age origins, they continued to be a functional component at some sites for considerable periods of time. What this function was, however, is still uncertain and the subject has attracted considerable discussion. They may have been used for storage, refuge, or perhaps for ritual purposes (Fitzpatrick 2007, 130; Nowakowski 2011, 249; Maclean 1992), and given the long duration of some examples their function may well have been transformed over time.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Rural settlements in the South-West region are quite widely distributed topographically, occupying a range of locations within the landscape, with elevations ranging from 6 m OD at the probable roadside settlement at Topsham to 451 m OD at the farmstead at Gold Park, Dartmoor. This extreme range reflects the varied topography of the region.

As sites other than farmsteads are represented by few examples there is little value in attempting to consider their topographical distribution statistically. The three roadside settlements in Devon are located at a range of elevations. The two sites to the south-east of Exeter, St Loye's and Topsham, occupy very low-lying situations because they both seem to have developed out of military sites that were originally located to take advantage of the Exe Estuary and the River Exe. Newland Mill, North Tawton occupies an elevation of 121 m OD, although this reflects its position on the undulating plateau of the Culm, and its position on the east bank of the River Taw is actually comparatively low lying in relation to the surrounding landscape.

The region's hillforts and cliff castles also occupy a range of elevations, and these sites were clearly positioned to take advantage of relatively elevated positions within their immediate landscapes, wherever they occurred. Several of the Cornish cliff-castles occupy quite low elevations. Rumps Cliff Castle, St Minver (Brooks 1974), for instance, is located at 38 m OD, yet the strategic position of this site, on a promontory, with the cliffs providing natural defences along three sides, must have made the site redoubtable. Inland hillforts typically occupy higher terrain, taking strategic advantage of upper slope and hilltop locations. Castle Dore in Cornwall (Quinnell and Harris 1985) occupies a hilltop position well in excess of 100 m OD, commanding the surrounding landscape, and Chun Castle, Penwith (Leeds 1927; 1931), is situated at an elevation of over 200 m OD on the summit of the Chun Downs, with extensive views north and north-west to the Atlantic Coast and south towards Mounts Bay. Milber Down, Devon, however, is unusual in that it is situated on the northern slope of a hill, overlooking the mouth of the River Teign, at a location that confers little natural advantage (Pickard 1952), and the site may be better regarded as a hillslope enclosure than a hillfort.

There are too few villas recorded from the region to consider meaningful patterns in their topographical distribution, although both occupy

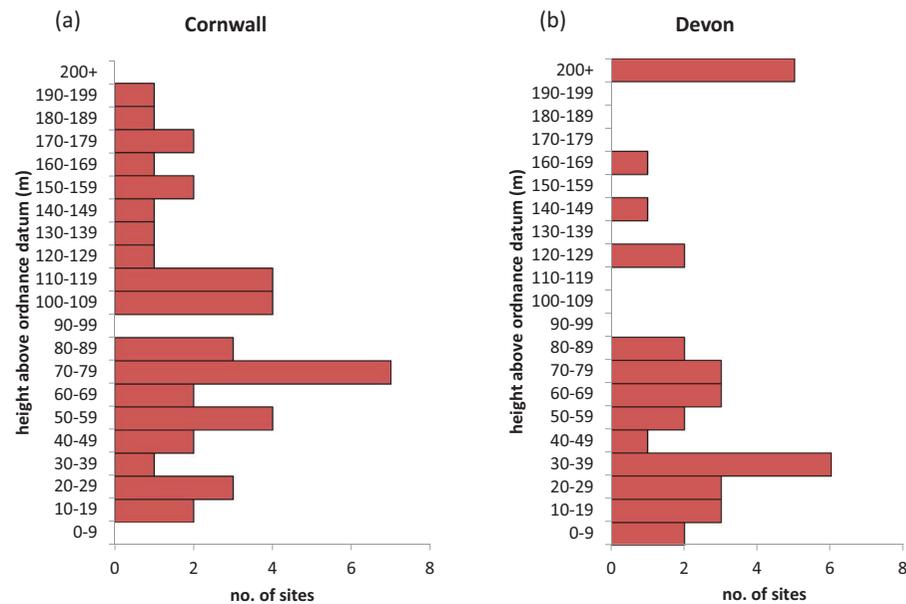


FIG. 10.18. Spot height analysis on farmsteads/villages in Devon and Cornwall

relatively low-lying locations, with Magor Farm, Illogan, occupying a lower valley-slope overlooking the Red River, and the villa at Crediton in the Yeo Valley, adjacent to the River Yeo. The River Yeo flows to merge with the River Exe approximately 3 km north of Exeter, and this communication link with Exeter may be the reason for the villa's location here. Its position between Dartmoor and Exmoor, would mean that it was well placed to take advantage of upland pastoral landscapes on both moors, perhaps suggesting an involvement in the supply of animals, as well as secondary products such as cheese and wool, to the *civitas* capital. However, our understanding of the economic relationship between Exeter and any of the sites in the surrounding countryside is seriously inhibited by the lack of environmental data currently available from most rural settlements (see below, pp. 353–4).

Farmsteads in the region occupy a range of elevations, though there are some clear and important intra-regional differences between Devon and Cornwall, with far more of the farmsteads in the former area (especially south Devon) occupying low-lying terrain than in the latter (FIGS 10.18 and 10.19). It seems likely that this at least partially reflects a tendency for excavations in Devon to be focused on low-lying areas such as the Exe Valley, where many sites were initially identified through cropmarks. In Cornwall it is probable that the distribution partially reflects bias towards upland sites, where the greater visibility of settlements represented by earthwork remains has resulted in higher numbers being excavated. However, Taylor's map of all settlements recorded in his survey (including settlements

identified through excavation, as crop/soil marks, earthworks, and finds scatters) displays a broadly similar pattern of very dense occupation around the coastal zone of South Devon and the Exe Valley, yet less dense settlement in the very low-lying parts of Cornwall (Taylor 2007, 24, fig. 4.1). The Lands' End peninsula, for example, is very well represented by settlements in Taylor's map, whereas the low-lying neck of land joining the peninsula and the mainland, incorporating the Hayle Estuary and the Lelant Saltings salt marsh, is notably less well represented by sites. Immediately to the east, however, where the terrain rises, settlement once again becomes dense. If the pattern is genuine, and not merely a product of reduced visibility of sites, the intermediate low-terrain may have been uninhabitable salt marsh during the Iron Age and Roman periods. Its location may be of significance given the distinctive distribution of open and enclosed settlements with courtyard houses, discussed above, restricted to the west of this area, suggesting that this may have formed a natural physical boundary which, over time, served to distinguish people who built and lived in courtyard houses from those who chose to construct different types of building during the Roman period.

In North Devon, an area that has seen relatively little excavation, the few excavated farmsteads typically occupy elevated positions. These farmsteads are examples of sites sometimes referred to as hillslope enclosures, a form of settlement which, as the name suggests, occupy the sides of hills. They are particularly common in North Devon where many survive as earthworks, but few have been excavated and they are not well

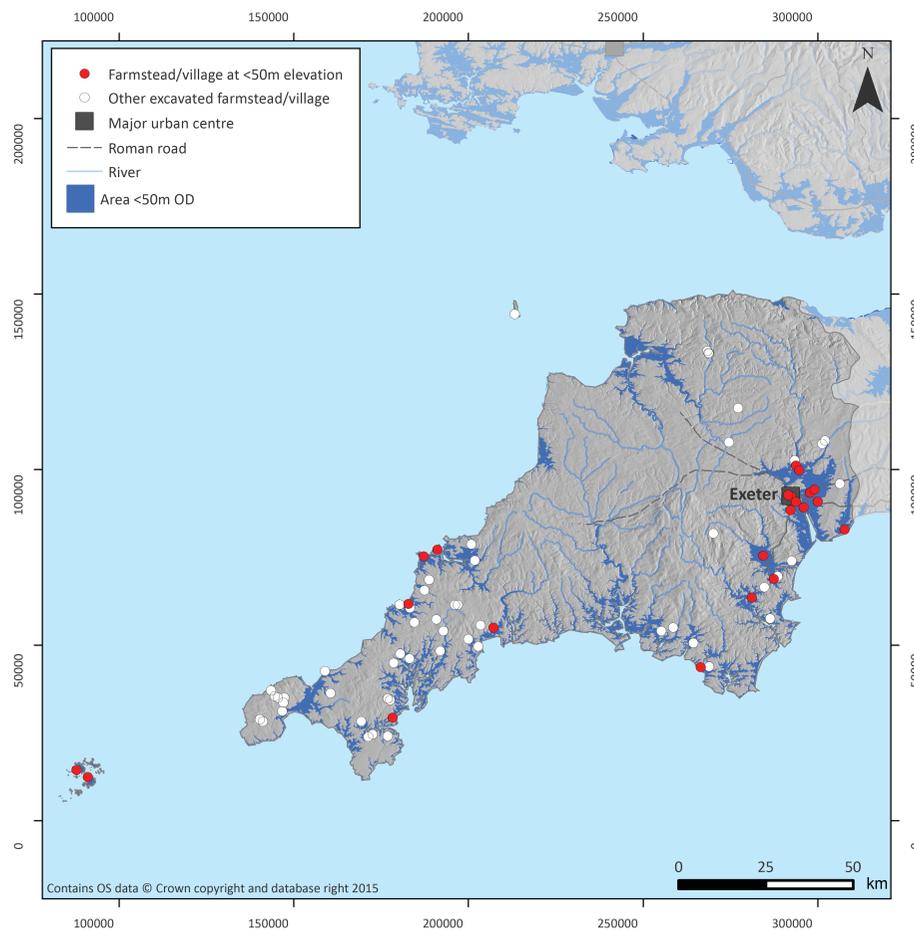


FIG. 10.19. Distribution of farms and villages in the South-West region, identifying those situated at under 50 m elevation

understood (Fitzpatrick 2007, 134). The excavated examples on the database indicate that some were mid- to late Iron Age in date, for instance at East Worlington (Gillard *et al.* 2012), whereas at others occupation extended into the Roman period, as at Brayford (Reed 1999). At this site an enclosure of Roman date appears to have succeeded a late Iron Age or early Roman one, with the Roman enclosure producing evidence for iron smelting, associated with an area of iron production on Exmoor.

The apparent preference for the occupation of different topographical zones seen at farmsteads in Devon and Cornwall requires explanation. Can, for instance, the differences be explained in terms of variation in the availability of good agricultural land? FIGURE 10.20 shows how the distribution of farmsteads in both Cornwall and Devon are predominantly located on soils which, at least in modern times, are fertile soils of neutral or slightly acidic pH (pH 6–7), which is the range within which most crop species do best (Vasey 1992, 18). However, there are also fertile zones elsewhere in the region, notably to the west and north of Dartmoor, which have very little excavated evidence, though Taylor's map of Roman rural

settlement (2007, 24, fig. 4.1) revealed concentrations of earthworks and cropmarks in these areas, suggesting that they were more extensively occupied than the sparse number of excavated sites would indicate. It should come as no surprise that the most fertile landscapes should attract greater numbers of settlements, and the fertile valleys around Exeter, for example, may have been increasingly exploited in response to the growth of *Isca Dumnoniorum*. This would certainly account for the increased number of 'new' settlements in this area during the second century noted above, perhaps representing the colonisation of previously underexploited fertile land, in an area perhaps hitherto avoided, for environmental or cultural reasons, or perhaps a mixture of both.

Nowakowski (2011, 248–9) has suggested that an increase in the number of sites occupying estuarine areas and the coastal belt in Cornwall during the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods was brought about by increased social pressure on the available land. Certainly, some Cornish farmsteads do occupy such landscape zones, and several of these emerged at around the time of, or after, the Roman conquest (e.g.

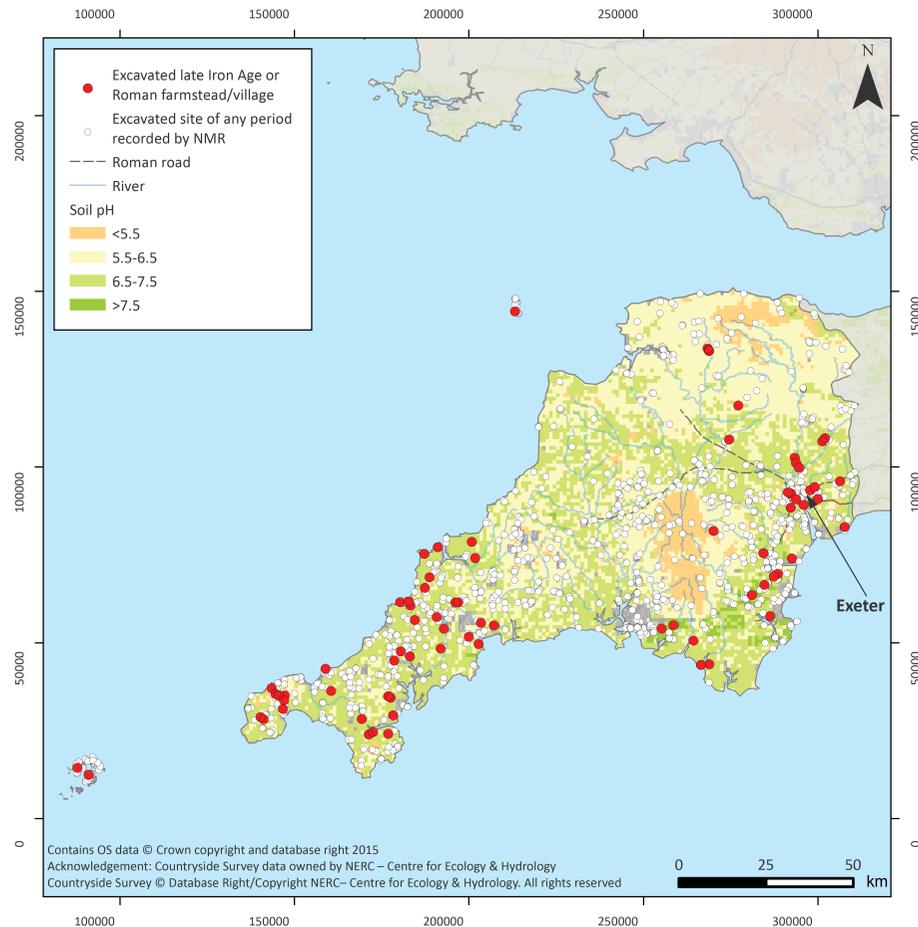


FIG. 10.20. Distribution of late Iron Age and Roman farmsteads/villages and excavated sites of other periods from the South-West region shown in relation to modern soil geochemistry

Lellizick, Padstow: Wessex Archaeology 2008), suggesting new expansion into marginal zones. However, these areas of Cornwall appear to have been less intensively exploited than in Devon, perhaps owing to the lack of major nucleated settlements, and therefore there was limited pressure for more intensive agricultural production.

ROADS, TRACKWAYS AND RIVERS

In terms of the Roman infrastructure in the South-West, sites other than roadside settlements have a less clear association with the Roman road network than in most other regions. In Devon thirteen farmsteads (39 per cent) are located within 5 km of a Roman road, and these are predominantly in south-east Devon, around Exeter, where known and supposed roads are concentrated. No major Roman roads are known from Cornwall, and while five stones with imperial dedications have traditionally been regarded as milestones, this function is not certain (Quinnell 2004, 234). However, the important 'village' site at Carvossa was provided with a well-made metalled road that ran through the defended area, and many other sites were served by trackways that lead to the

entrances of enclosures, including a metalled trackway identified at Rudge, Morchard Bishop, Devon (Todd 1988). In Cornwall the drystone walling enclosing many of the rounds sometimes extended to the trackways that served the settlements, as at Grambla, Wendron (Saunders 1972), where a track was bounded by granite walls.

Rivers must have been important communication routes for some sites in the South-West, as already suggested for the villa at Crediton. The location of Carvossa, adjacent to the River Fal in Cornwall, which is thought to have been navigable during the Roman period (Carlyon 1987), may partially explain the site's regional importance and unusually rich finds assemblage (as would the suggestion that the site had Roman military associations; see above, p. 335). The rounds at Kilhallon, Tywardreath (Carlyon 1982; 1999) on the River Par, just north of the South Cornish Coast, and St Mawgan-in-Pydar (Threipland 1956), approximately 3 km south-west of the North Cornish coast above the River Menalhyl, may likewise owe their rich finds assemblage to their riverside locations. The latter site produced an array of finds including numerous brooches

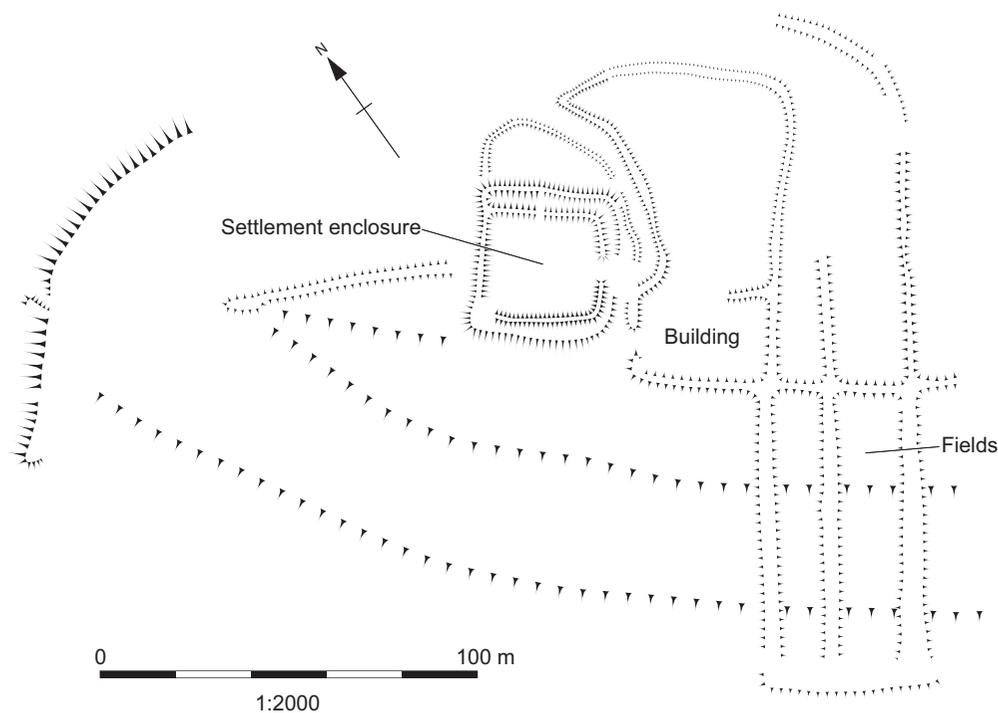


FIG. 10.21. Plan of earthwork remains of a probable field system associated with an enclosed farmstead at Stoke Gabriel, Devon (Masson Phillips 1966)

and other jewellery, coins and imported pottery, and evidence for tin production suggests that the river may have facilitated the export of resources that enabled the acquisition of such exotic goods.

FIELD SYSTEMS

Whereas some sites have produced evidence for industry, most rural settlements in the region are presumed to have been agriculture-based, and a number of sites exist within landscapes of field systems. The evidence for field systems is best in Cornwall, where aerial photography and geophysical survey have allowed recognition of very extensive networks of fields occupying landscapes between neighbouring settlements (Nowakowski 2011, 244; Fitzpatrick 2007, 129; Taylor 2007, 71). Twelve of the excavated sites in Cornwall produced evidence for field systems. At Goldherring, Sancreed, the site sat within a series of terraced, stone-walled fields (Guthrie 1969). At Stencoose a ditched field system was interpreted as a mosaic of small cultivation plots alongside more extensive fields (Jones 2001). Fewer sites with field systems have been identified in Devon, although this may in part reflect differences in the level of fieldwork and survey in the two parts of the region (Taylor 2007, 70). Part of a probable late Iron Age/early Roman rectilinear field system has been identified at Bideford (Hughes 2012), and linear features consistent with field boundaries were identified at Cullompton (Hood 2010; Bray

and Morris 2010) and Pinhoe (Joyce 2010b). At Stoke Gabriel low earthwork banks were interpreted as elements of a field system associated with an enclosed farmstead (Masson Phillips 1966; FIG. 10.21).

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHIES: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF SETTLEMENTS

ANIMAL AND PLANT REMAINS

Efforts to reconstruct the economies of rural settlements in the South-West region are seriously inhibited by the acidic soils of the region, which afford poor preservation of environmental evidence, especially of faunal remains. Twenty-five (21 per cent) of the region's sites produced animal bone, and of these only fourteen were domestic sites, representing just 15 per cent of the excavated settlements. Most of these produced very small assemblages; only seven were represented by more than 50 NISP, only four greater than 100 NISP, and in several cases bone that had survived was entirely unidentified. Of the three sites with sufficiently large and well-preserved assemblages in the region, the farmstead at Lellizzick, Padstow (Wessex Archaeology 2008), and two sites on the Isles of Scilly, on Bryher (Johns 2006) and at Halangy Down, St Mary's (Ashbee 1996), all had domestic animal bone assemblages that were

dominated by sheep, with cattle and pig also represented. All of these sites were coastal settlements and all produced some evidence for exploitation of marine resources. The island sites in particular were well represented by a range of seabird species as well as large numbers of fish bones and limpets, mainly recovered from midden deposits, demonstrating the importance of coastal resources for insular settlements. The dominance of sheep in the domestic animal bone assemblages at these sites is of interest given the emphasis on cattle at most sites in other regions, although this small number of coastal sites cannot be regarded as typical for the region and inland sites may have had very different economic emphases. While we lack data from most rural sites, the faunal remains from Exeter suggest that at least some parts of the region were supplying the town with meat during the Roman period (Maltby 1979). Here, cattle dominated the assemblage, although pigs and sheep/goat were also significant. Notably, lambs were shown to have been favoured considerably over mature sheep, suggesting that a large proportion of the sheep in the countryside were raised principally to supply meat to the urban population, although no doubt secondary products including milk, cheese and wool would also have been important. There was less evidence that cattle were bred specifically for consumption for most of the Roman period, rather they were principally kept as working animals and only slaughtered once they had reached the end of their lives (*ibid.*, 82–9).

The region is marginally better represented by archaeobotanical evidence, although, as with the faunal remains, there is a greater body of evidence from Cornwall than Devon. Plant remains were retrieved from 28 (23 per cent) sites and 23 of these were domestic settlements (25 per cent of domestic sites). Very few sites produced abundant evidence, however, and in most cases the evidence was limited to very small numbers of cereal grains or chaff. The meagre evidence indicates that the principal crops of the region were spelt wheat and barley in equal measure, followed by emmer wheat, with free-threshing wheat, oats and rye also occasionally present. There appears to have been little difference between Cornwall and Devon, and there is no real evidence for a temporal shift towards new crops over time. Although the archaeobotanical evidence is limited, we have already seen how the spatial distribution of sites in the region favours fertile agricultural land, and the presence of field systems at a number of sites in conjunction with the extensive evidence from aerial photography indicates that arable agriculture must have been of importance for many sites. Quernstones are also among the most common

artefacts, recovered from exactly half of the region's farmsteads and villages (although far more were from sites in Cornwall than Devon, as discussed below), and these objects indicate widespread access to grain. Together, the available evidence suggests that many of the region's farmsteads were engaged in arable farming, and the presence of animal bone and arable crops together at a small number of sites (e.g. Lellizzick, Padstow: Wessex Archaeology 2008) suggests mixed economies. At Nancemere Fields, Truro, where there was evidence for processing of spelt wheat and barley, the farmstead was associated with a rectilinear field-system that suggested arable production, and a feature interpreted as a possible paddock with a watering hole may indicate animal husbandry (Higgins 2009).

While the evidence suggests that many sites practised arable farming, it seems likely that this was mostly undertaken at a relatively low level. Palaeoenvironmental evidence indicates that the wider landscape of the region remained predominantly pastoral from the mid-Iron Age through to the Roman period and beyond (Fyfe *et al.* 2004; Taylor 2007, 70; Straker *et al.* 2007, 110), and the crop regime appears to have been very mixed, with little evidence for the sort of specialised production witnessed in other areas (Rippon *et al.* 2015, 230).

MATERIAL CULTURE

Some types of artefact have the potential to provide additional information on rural economies, and this is of particular importance in the South-West, where the environmental evidence is lacking. Few agricultural tools have been found at rural sites in the region, and while this may partially be explained by the acidic soil conditions, which do not favour the preservation of iron objects, the distribution is notably focused on Cornwall, with none from Devon (FIG. 10.22). Examples of such objects include a sickle blade from Carlidnack Round, Mawnan (Harris and Johnson 1976), a pruning hook from Carn Euny, Sancreed (Christie 1978), a sickle or bill-hook from St Mawgan-in-Pydar (Threipland 1956) and part of a possible rake from Trethurgy (Quinnell 2004). The distribution of agricultural objects corresponds with that of excavated field systems, discussed above, which also favours Cornwall, and it is possible that this genuinely reflects a greater emphasis on arable farming in the west, although the uneven levels of survey and excavation in the two areas have already been noted.

Cornwall is better represented than the east of the region in almost all types of artefact, as clearly shown in FIG. 10.22. Even basic utilitarian objects such as quernstones and spindlewhorls, which

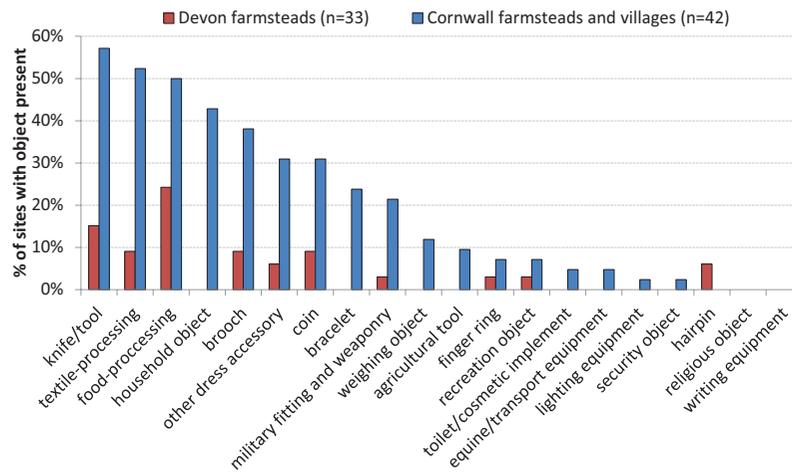


FIG. 10.22. Frequency of major artefact categories on farmsteads and villages in Devon and Cornwall

TABLE 10.3: NUMBERS AND PROPORTIONS OF OBJECTS OF DIFFERENT FUNCTIONAL TYPES RECORDED BY THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME FROM DEVON AND CORNWALL

<i>Object type</i>	<i>No. of objects from Cornwall</i>	<i>Proportion of objects from Cornwall</i>	<i>No. of objects from Devon</i>	<i>Proportion of objects from Devon</i>
Coin	560	80.8%	444	91.9%
Brooch	83	12.0%	20	4.1%
Other dress accessory	9	1.3%	3	0.6%
Food processing	9	1.3%	1	0.2%
Finger ring	6	0.9%	1	0.2%
Textile processing	6	0.9%	2	0.4%
Equine/transport equipment	6	0.9%	0	0.0%
Household object	4	0.6%	0	0.0%
Bracelet	3	0.4%	1	0.2%
Toilet/cosmetic implement	2	0.3%	2	0.4%
Religious object	2	0.3%	3	0.6%
Tool	2	0.3%	1	0.2%
Military fittings and weaponry	1	0.1%	0	0.0%
Hairpin	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Security object	0	0.0%	2	0.4%
Lighting equipment	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Agricultural tool	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Recreation object	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Weighing object	0	0.0%	3	0.6%
Writing equipment	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	693	100.0%	483	100.0%

might reasonably be expected to have been widespread at rural settlements across the region, occur very widely on sites in Cornwall but have seldom been recovered east of Bodmin Moor. The extent to which this reflects genuine differences in the activities carried out at farmsteads in the two parts of the region or differential recovery rates during archaeological investigation is unclear. It is notable, for instance, that the average area of investigation for sites in Cornwall (0.9 ha) is

considerably larger than in the east of the region (0.3 ha), and whereas 84 per cent of the Cornish sites were investigated through open area excavation, in Devon this was substantially lower (47 per cent) with more sites investigated through small-scale evaluations and watching briefs. The uneven distribution of finds is, however, repeated in those recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (TABLE 10.3); Cornwall is again represented by more finds than the east, and

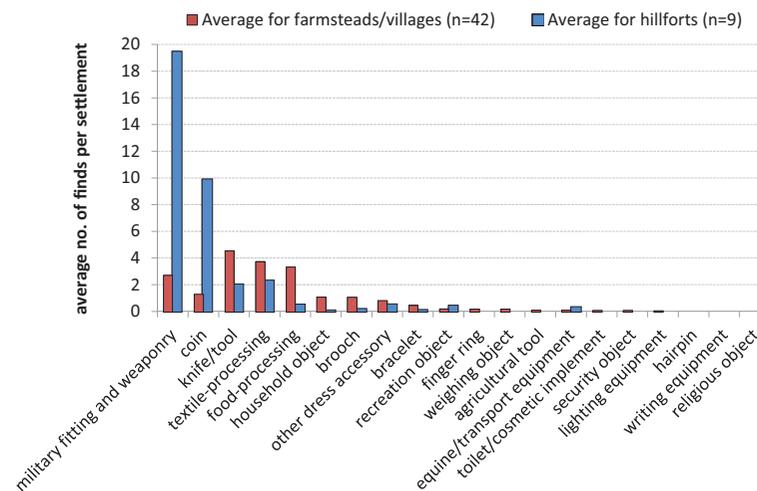


FIG. 10.23. Average frequency of major classes of finds at hillforts and farmsteads/villages in Cornwall (excluding slingshot)

although coins are the most commonly reported find in both areas, Cornwall has produced a greater range of objects. Brooches in particular form a considerably higher proportion of the total number of objects from Cornwall. This suggests that the geographical imbalance in objects recovered from excavated sites reflects more than the uneven levels of excavation, and there are likely to be cultural and/or economic reasons behind the differences.

Although the traditional view has been that Devon and Cornwall both formed part of the *civitas Dumnoniorum*, administered from *Isca Dumnoniorum* (Fox 1973, 143), the stark contrast between the east and the west of the region in terms of the form of settlements and the types of building constructed suggest that the inhabitants of the region, the *Dumnonii*, comprised groups of people with distinctive cultural traditions. The reduced evidence for brooches and other artefacts associated with personal display in the east suggests that many people in this part of the region chose to express personal identity differently from those in the west, through clothing styles and dress accessories that are archaeologically invisible. There have been recent suggestions that Cornwall, at least west of Bodmin, may have had different administrative and legal arrangements to the rest of the *civitas* (Quinnell 2004, 217), and, social structures in the two areas may also have been different. Herring has viewed the Cornish rounds as the settlements of communities who controlled their own territories and resources (Herring 1994, 50; Quinnell 2004, 214), and the wider range of material culture at Cornish sites may reflect increased opportunities and the desire by people at some sites to exchange their assets, whatever they may have been, for objects. There may, perhaps, have been tighter control over the

products of the countryside in the east of the region, limiting the opportunities for people to acquire a wider range of material culture. It is, however, equally plausible that communities in this area had such opportunities, but maintained alternative perceptions of value and had different traditions of negotiating and displaying status, through the control of labour, for instance, or the ownership of livestock (cf. Taylor 2013).

The relationship between hillforts/promontory forts and other rural sites in Cornwall and Devon is still obscure. The traditional view has been that the large, well-defended sites were occupied by an elite order of society, with rounds in Cornwall and their equivalents in Devon inhabited by members of a lower social stratum (e.g. Fox 1973). Herring (1994, 50), and subsequently others (e.g. Quinnell 2004, 214, 216), have taken an alternative view of hillforts in Cornwall, suggesting that they may have been communal centres used by the communities who occupied rounds, at least until the end of the Iron Age when most hillforts seem to have gone out of use. Certainly, there is little in the finds assemblages to suggest that hillforts were of significantly greater status than most rounds. Rounds typically produce greater quantities of pottery than hillforts, but ceramic imports such as amphorae (reflecting access to imported goods such as wine, fish sauce and olive oil) are present at broadly similar proportions of hillforts and farmsteads (26 per cent of farmsteads and 33 per cent of hillforts). Excluding the unusually large number of late Roman coins recovered from the promontory fort at Trelvague Head, only one type of object stands out as being notably better represented at Cornish hillforts than farmsteads, this being slingshot (e.g. large numbers at Trelvague Head (Nowakowski and Quinnell 2011) and Killibury (Miles 1977)). Otherwise, both

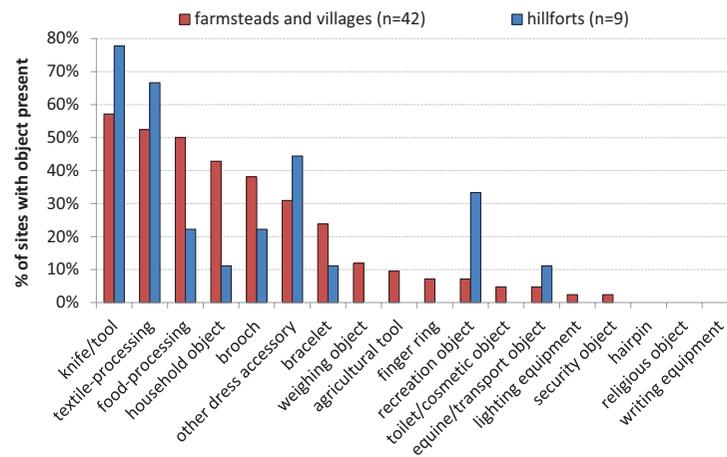


FIG. 10.24. Frequency of major artefact categories on hillforts and farmsteads/villages in Cornwall

types of site are typically represented by similar types of object, with knives/tools and textile-processing equipment being the most commonly recovered objects (FIGS 10.23 and 10.24). As we have seen, nucleated sites are rare in Cornwall, and, although centres for local administration and markets are likely to have existed (Quinnell 2014, 217), few candidates have been identified. The unusually large and rich site at Carvossa perhaps performed such a role. The extent of the distribution of recently identified nucleated sites in North Cornwall, at sites near Polzeath (Borlase 2015) and perhaps at Harlyn Bay (Jones and Quinnell 2014), is unclear. The apparent lack of enclosure at these sites means that they do not survive as upstanding earthworks, and more may await discovery in other areas. Their place within the settlement hierarchy currently remains uncertain, although it is possible that they represent local market centres of some sort.

In the east of the region the small number of hillforts with late Iron Age occupation produced few finds, yet their assemblages are broadly comparable to those from Cornwall. The most widely recovered objects were slingshot and textile-processing equipment, mainly spindle-whorls. This is in contrast to the scarcity of textile equipment at farmsteads in Devon, perhaps suggesting that hillforts in Devon were foci for activities not widely practised at farmsteads, although we need to be mindful of the small number of sites excavated, as well as the issues concerning the recovery of artefacts discussed above. As we have seen, the excavated sites in Devon are also very much biased towards the south-east, where sites often appear to have been new foundations in the Roman period, and it is possible that sites in parts of Devon that have seen less excavation may produce different artefact profiles. Samples from west, central and north

Devon are badly needed. The small number of roadside settlements in Devon are likely to have performed local administrative and market functions, as may the nucleated settlement at Ipplepen. However, the small areas of excavation at these sites and the extremely restricted finds assemblages recovered make the role of these settlements difficult to assess, and the extent to which sites in the countryside engaged with these centres is also unclear. Holbrook and Bidwell have previously drawn attention to the difference between rural sites and Exeter in terms of the composition of their ceramic assemblages, noting how the town is considerably better represented by Black-Burnished wares (BB1) coarse-ware pottery than South Devon ware, which tends to occur much more widely at rural settlements (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 21–3). It seems likely that nucleated settlements such as Ipplepen and Newland Mill, North Tawton, were the primary markets for South Devon Ware, and although the assemblage was unquantified, the North Tawton site was also dominated by pottery of this type (Passmore 2005). While many sites in Exeter's hinterland may have been involved in some way with supplying food for the urban population, the typically limited finds assemblages from rural settlements and the small numbers of finds reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme suggest that material did not flow backwards from the town to the countryside to any great extent.

REGION SUMMARY

The enduring rural character of the South-West region means that it is one of the least well-excavated parts of the country, with just 120 sites recorded on the project database. Restricted development means that large areas remain empty of excavated late Iron Age and Romano-British

sites, and our understanding of the Romano-British countryside is largely derived from data in pockets of sites, notably in West Cornwall and South Devon. However, the wider evidence of settlements defined by cropmarks and earthworks indicates that other parts of the region, Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor aside, are likely to have been relatively well settled. Despite the relative lack of excavated sites compared to other regions, some important observations about the Romano-British settlement pattern can be made.

It is possible to recognise that the settlement pattern of the region exhibited a great deal of variation. In broad terms it would be fair to describe the region as a whole as one of overwhelmingly rural character, dominated by small dispersed farmsteads, a limited number of nucleated sites and barely any villas. Yet, such a region-wide characterisation does injustice to the pronounced distinctiveness of different landscapes to the east and west, approximately coterminous with parts of the modern countries of Devon and Cornwall. This distinctiveness is recognisable through various strands of the evidence.

At the most fundamental level are differences in the settlements themselves and their associated architecture, with the distinctive 'rounds' of west Cornwall, for instance, being of an entirely different character to the enclosed farmsteads of Devon. The Devon farmsteads are typically defined by small, single-ditched circuits, with all of those dating to the Roman period being rectilinear in form. In a wider sense they therefore would seem to belong to the tradition of enclosed farmsteads found across much of central and southern Britain (see Ch. 2, FIG. 2.8). In terms of buildings, the evidence from Devon farmsteads is relatively meagre, though it is typified by timber/mass-walled circular structures, at least during the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, and is thus again fairly similar to the situation further east in parts of the South and Central Belt regions.

The rural settlement evidence from Cornwall is strikingly different to that of Devon, exhibiting a far greater degree of complexity and variability in both buildings and settlement form. The Cornish 'rounds', typified by small enclosed curvilinear earthworks, are largely a development of the Romano-British period, though there is now increasing evidence for Iron Age origins at many of these sites, with some continuing into the post-Roman period, reflecting a general longevity. Such settlements were not ubiquitous across all of Cornwall, instead being focused on the central part of the county, while there is evidence for a

concentration of open settlement in the far west, around West Penwith. Some of these, such as Chysauster, developed to a scale at which they have been termed 'villages', though most remained fairly modest in size. Such localised variation in settlement form in Cornwall is matched by some of the architectural traditions, with, for example, the distinctive courtyard houses having a very narrow distribution, seemingly restricted to the Land's End Peninsula and the Isles of Scilly, in the same area as the concentration of open settlements. It has been suggested in this instance that it may have been an area of low-lying salt marsh that in effect separated groups of people with distinctive cultural traditions, as reflected in the architecture and morphology of their settlements.

The obvious variation in the Roman rural settlement patterns of Devon and Cornwall can for the most part be put down to pre-existing differences in the Iron Age landscapes of the region, although that is not to say that incorporation into the Roman province did not have any effect upon the peoples of these areas. There was clearly a significant early Roman military presence at Exeter (and throughout the South-West), and the subsequent development of the *civitas* capital there probably led to an increase in rural settlement in surrounding landscapes during the second century A.D., possibly geared towards provisioning the town. Elsewhere it is more difficult to directly relate changes in the settlement pattern with Roman influence, though the expansion of settlement in parts of Cornwall may represent increased imperial interest in the mineral resources of this area.

Ultimately it is difficult to escape the conclusion that we are dealing broadly with two very different and distinctive groups of people in the east and west of the South-West region, probably with numerous sub-divisions reflecting a myriad of local groups with diverse cultural traditions. Although these peoples have traditionally been grouped together as part of the *civitas Dumnoniorum*, it is likely, as recent academic opinion suggests, that they were governed under different administrative systems, reflecting their underlying cultural divisions. There is indeed some indirect evidence that has been used to argue for a group known as the Cornovii in Cornwall (distinct from the Midlands 'tribe' of the same name), who gave the place its modern name (cf. Rivet and Smith 1979, 324–5, 350; Thomas 1966, 86), though the territories of all of these 'tribal groups' remains highly uncertain (see discussion, Ch. 12).