The Roman Rural Settlement Project

Preliminary results from the East Midlands

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The East Midlands dataset

- 544 records of LIA/Roman sites
- 15% of Jeremy Taylor’s total of 3635 rural sites for the region
- Compares with 16.5% of Taylor’s sites in the Eastern Region
Distribution of sites with Derbyshire Earthwork survey sites removed
Type of investigation by county

- Derbyshire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Northamptonshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Rutland

- Excavation
- Evaluation
- Watching brief
- Fieldwalking
- Geophysics
- Field survey
Project sites in Northamptonshire (blue dots) and Iron Age/Roman Aerial Photography evidence (in red)
Distribution of Roman Rural Settlement Project sites compared to NMR index records of all investigations
Project records shown against density of NMR index of investigations

Clear correlation between distribution of Roman sites and the quantity of archaeological interventions
Density of RRSP records and woodland and Roman Portable Antiquities Scheme records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site type</th>
<th>Derbyshire</th>
<th>Leicestershire</th>
<th>Lincolnshire</th>
<th>Northamptonshire</th>
<th>Nottinghamshire</th>
<th>Rutland</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>farm*</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

* Consolidated data (i.e. each town may consist of more than one record)  
Record may have more than one site type

** Records may have more than one site type
Chronology

All sites occupied in the Late Iron Age

- 199 sites (37% of total) were occupied in the Late Iron Age

% of sites with Iron Age activity in East Midlands and Eastern Regions

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All sites established mid to late 1st century AD

- 180 sites (c 33% of total) were established during mid-late 1st century AD
- 38.2% of sites with late Iron Age activity were either abandoned or ‘transformed’
Roman sites with evidence for early Saxon activity

- 28 Roman sites have evidence for early Saxon activity (c 5% of total)

Site types with evidence for early Saxon activity (% of site type) EA

Site types with evidence for early Saxon activity (% of site type) EA

Site types with evidence for early Saxon activity (% of site type) EA

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Distribution of all villas

- 48 villas within the dataset
- 252 possible villas listed in the NMR dataset for the East Midlands (many characterised based on fairly spurious evidence)
Density of villas recorded on NMR

Density of villas recorded by Roman Rural Settlement Project
Construction dates available for 67% of East Midlands villas

Establishment date for villas in East Midlands (where date known)

Construction dates available for 67% of East Midlands villas
Number of villas in use in East Midlands

- AD 50-100
- AD 100-150
- AD 150-200
- AD 200-250
- AD 250-300
- AD 300-350
- AD 350-400
Date of establishment of nucleated sites
in the East Midlands

23 nucleated sites
villages and unwalled ‘small towns’

*N some possibly established earlier than LIA

Nucleated sites in use in the East Midlands
Date of establishment of farms in East Midlands

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Farms in use in East Midlands and Eastern Region

- % of East Midlands farms (number = 281)
- % of East region farms (number = 332)
‘Open’ farmsteads

Empingham Site 4: 'Empingham West', Rutland (Cooper 2004)

Fig. 21 Site 4 Phases 1 and 2
‘Enclosed’ farmsteads
131 examples on the database

Clay Lane, Nothants (Windell 1983)

Enderby, Enclosure I, Leics (Clay 1992)
‘Linear’ farmsteads
53 examples on the database

Seagrave Lane,
Sileby, Leics (Albion Archaeology)

Higham Road,
Burton Latimer,
Northants (Albion Archaeology)
Farmstead morphology in the East Midlands

12 unenclosed
131 enclosed
53 linear/developed
143 unclassified

%Farmstead morphology in the East Midlands and East Region
Chronology of morphology of East Midlands farmsteads

% of farms in use

Chronology of morphology of eastern region farmsteads

% of total farms
Distribution of farms with classified morphology
Distribution of stone circular buildings on domestic sites

19 sites. 89% are from Northamptonshire

40% of all domestic sites with circular buildings in Northants

Of 16 dated, 12 were of late 1st/early 2nd century or ‘Early Roman’

8 (42%) from villa sites, often (but not always) pre-dating construction of villa

10 (53%) have evidence for a preceding phase of timber roundhouses

6 are followed by rectangular masonry buildings, 3 are contemporary with masonry rectangular buildings and 3 constructed after masonry buildings

Where farm morphology recorded 3 are from linear sites and 1 is from an enclosed site
Pottery production

38 sites

Sites with pottery production (% of site types)
Iron production

42 sites

Sites with iron production (% of site types)
Salt production

11 sites
Other metal production
16 sites

Sites with other metal production (% of site types)
Linear settlements and industry?
Conclusions

• Surprisingly large number of sites available from East Midlands
• Clear value of developer funded archaeology to our understanding of Roman rural settlement in the region, contributing to our understanding of the chronological, morphological and architectural development of sites in the region
• Results from Roman Rural Settlement Project so far largely supporting patterns previously recognised, but providing firmer evidence for many trends
• Significant intra-regional variation, which requires further investigation in the future